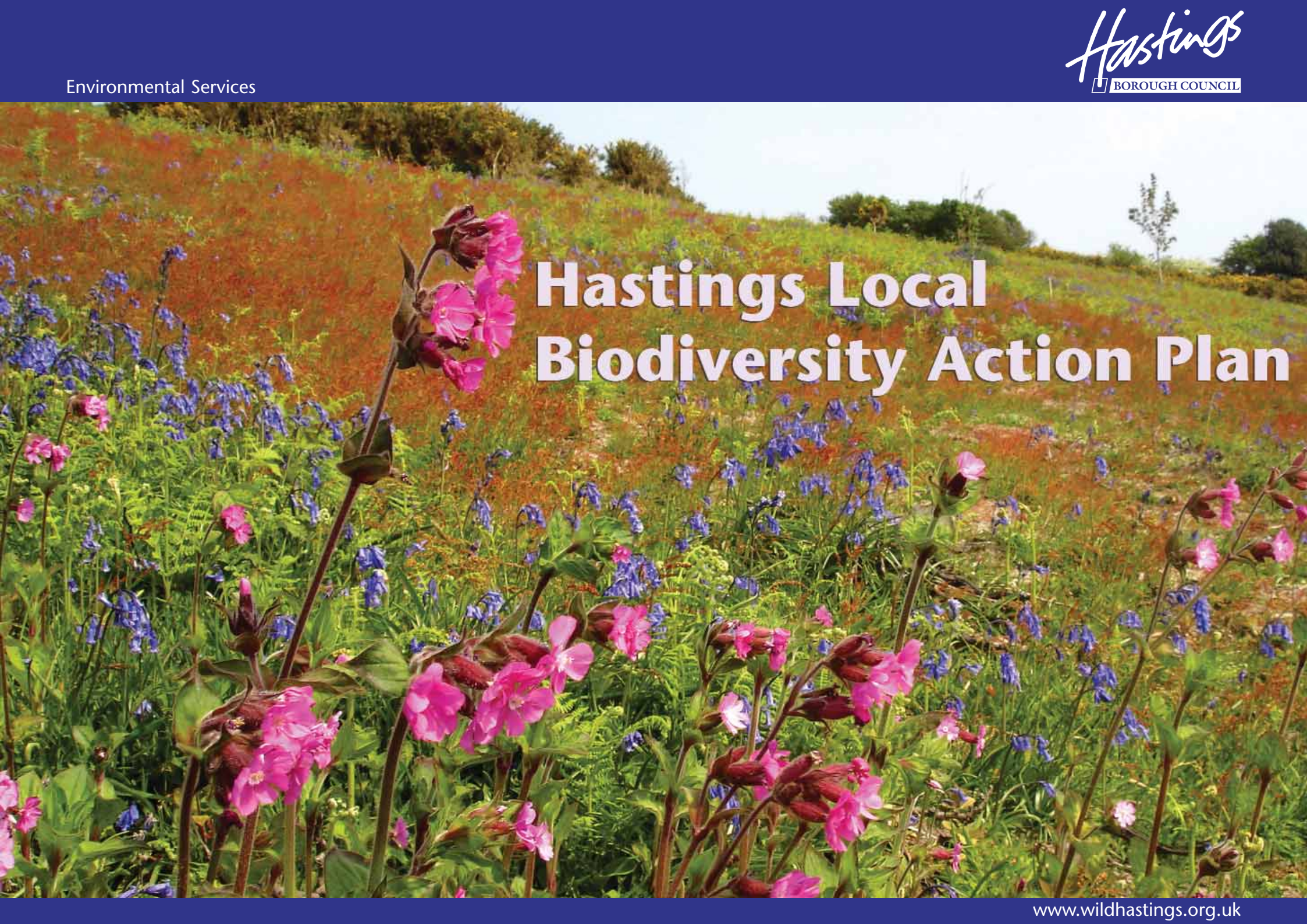




Hastings Local Biodiversity Action Plan





Contents

Hastings Biodiversity Action Plan - part 1

- 1 Introduction 4
 - 1.1 What is biodiversity and why is it important?
- 2 The National and Local Picture 4
 - 2.1 What is being done both nationally and locally to halt the decline in biodiversity?

Hastings Biodiversity Action Plan - part 2

- 1 The Councils commitment to biodiversity 6
 - 1.1 What is the Hastings Biodiversity Action Plan and how will it work?

Hastings Biodiversity Action Plan - part 3

- The Action Plan 8

Appendices 20

Appendix 1 20

Summary of Legislation and Guidance on Biodiversity for Local Authorities

Appendix 2 22

A summary of the Council's Achievements

Appendix 3 23

Key Principles from Planning Policy Guidance 9, Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

Appendix 4 24

Development Control Good Practice Summary from PPS9

Appendix 5 25

The Royal Town Planning Institute Five-Point Approach to Planning Decisions for Biodiversity

Appendix 6 26

National Priority Habitats which occur in Hastings Borough

Hastings Biodiversity Action Plan - part 1

1 Introduction

1.1 What is Biodiversity and why is it important?

Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth. Locally, it is the variety of wildlife species and habitats that occur all around us.

Biodiversity touches and influences all aspects of the quality of our lives, from the common birds and animals that visit our garden to the rare and endangered plants and animals we may never have seen or know about; all represent our biodiversity and all are equally important.

The conservation of biodiversity is one of the most crucial issues facing our planet today. The rate of habitat destruction across the world is alarming. The loss of a single species in the world is a loss that cannot be replaced.

We obtain our food, fuel, medicines, cosmetics and construction materials from diverse, healthy and balanced ecosystems. As our demands on finite natural resources increase, our life-support systems are damaged causing the extinction of species, loss of habitats, pollution and the world's climate to be seriously affected.

Nationally, our stewardship of the natural environment has fallen far short of that required to ensure the survival of some of our more precious habitats and species. Increasing demands on natural systems, the pressures exerted by development, the intensification of agricultural production, together with simple neglect, all contribute to the decline in the quantity, diversity and quality of our natural environments.

The natural environment and the species and habitats that constitute the variety of life, our biodiversity, are under threat as never before.

The Hastings Biodiversity Action Plan is our commitment to conserving the wonderful variety of wildlife that make up our local biodiversity.

2 The National and Local Picture

2.1 What is being done both nationally and locally to halt the decline in biodiversity?

2.1.1 Nationally

The Government first highlighted the plight of our national biodiversity in 1994 with the publication of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. The Plan set out a series of actions and targets aimed at recovering the status and viability of threatened habitats and species. www.ukbap.org.uk

Since then, Government and its partners have consistently set a challenge to local authorities to fully integrate biodiversity considerations into their policies and strategies; for instance, to promote biodiversity objectives within social and economic activities and promote an understanding of biodiversity through community involvement.

Government circulars, legislation and guidance have sought to explain how local authorities can play their part in conserving biodiversity in their local area and therefore contribute to UK wide biodiversity conservation. A summary of guidance and legislation is listed in Appendix 1.

2.1.2 Locally in Sussex

There is a Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan. The Sussex Biodiversity Partnership publishes and reviews the Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan as an on-going process. The partnership consists of key public and voluntary sector agencies and bodies in East and West Sussex whose aim is to publish and update targeted action plans for habitats and species of national biodiversity priority and regional or local importance. Hastings Council contributes to the work of the partnership by exchanging information on species relevant to our area and assists in developing specific habitat action plans.

The Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan can be found at www.biodiversitysussex.org



2.1.3 Locally in Hastings

The traditional model for Biodiversity Action Plans, as outlined in the UK Action Plan and the Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan is to outline a series of actions and targets required to safeguard and enhance the survival of individual habitats and species. There is therefore no need to duplicate these action plans for species and habitats that occur in Hastings. It is not cost effective, or ecologically expedient, to try and identify where all the nationally threatened habitats and species are within the Borough and then monitor their extent.

Appendix 6 of the Hastings Biodiversity Action Plan details the national priority habitats, as outlined in the UK Action Plan, which occur in the Borough of Hastings. The objectives and targets form part of the Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan for County wide implementation and monitoring.

www.biodiversitysussex.org

There are 382 priority species in the UK Action Plan. It is not practical to list all the priority species that occur in Hastings. By careful management of designated sites, we are in the best position to ensure the survival of a diverse range of species in the Borough. Continued surveys and monitoring of our designated areas ensures our information on species and habitats is current and up to date and informs our management practices.

The majority of areas of high biodiversity importance in the Borough occur in designated sites. The key issue in protecting biodiversity and meeting the Government's biodiversity objectives in a small urban borough like Hastings, is to ensure adequate provision and protection of designated sites where biodiversity can flourish and where people can have easy access to the natural environment.

The Council has therefore developed a green network of designated sites that are protected and managed to safeguard threatened habitats and species. By focusing on the management of sites that are in themselves ecologically diverse and contain priority habitats and species, we can make the greatest contribution to the enhancement of the UK's biodiversity.

There are currently 7 Local Nature Reserves in the Borough; Churchwood, Filsham Reedbeds, Marline Valley Woods, Hastings Country Park Nature Reserve, St Helens Woods, Summerfields Woods, Old Roar Gill. All are owned by the Borough Council except for St Helens Woods which is owned by the St Helens Park Preservation Society. There are 3 Sites of Special Scientific Interest either wholly or partly within the Borough, Marline Valley Woods, Combe Haven and Hastings Cliffs to Pett Beach. The majority of land within each SSSI is owned by the Borough Council. Hastings Cliffs is further designated a Special Area of Conservation under the European Habitats Directive.

2.1.4 Continuing to safeguard biodiversity

Hastings Borough Council has developed a number of initiatives in recent years that have focused attention on the wonderful variety of natural green spaces around Town. We have listed some of these initiatives in Appendix 2.

We have sought to integrate biodiversity into our policies and plans and within our key strategic documents. These include the Local Plan, the Community Strategy, the Cultural Strategy, the Sustainable Development Strategy and most recently, the emerging Parks and Open Spaces Strategy.

Together with the innovative and interactive Wild Hastings web site, we are able to engage with local communities to exchange information on the wonderful variety of species and habitats that make up the biodiversity of Hastings.

www.wildhastings.org.uk

Hastings Biodiversity Action Plan - part 2

1 The Council's commitment to biodiversity

Local Authorities are in an ideal position to lead on biodiversity conservation by example. They have unparalleled knowledge of the natural environment within their boundaries, have direct contact with local communities and undertake a range of services and decisions which directly affect biodiversity.

As a key democratically accountable body, Hastings Borough Council as a central role in promoting the quality of life of its communities through environmental, as well as physical and social regeneration.

We have therefore developed the Hastings Biodiversity Action Plan to provide a framework for the council to meet its legal and social obligations for protecting, conserving and enhancing biodiversity in our Town and to engage local communities in environmental issues that are important to them locally and nationally.

1.1 What is the aim of the Hastings Biodiversity Action Plan and how will it work?

The Hastings Biodiversity Action Plan aims to reflect national biodiversity priorities locally, protect and enhance local biodiversity and engage local communities in learning about biodiversity on their doorstep.

The Hastings Biodiversity Action Plan is a working tool for the Council and its partners to help deliver its statutory duties and obligations to biodiversity. The Plan is further aimed at helping the authority achieve the best possible outcome in any government appointed assessment process pertaining to nature conservation and biodiversity.

The Plan works by establishing broad themes of accountability accompanied by a statement of our commitment to biodiversity relating to that theme. We then explain what we will do to fulfil that commitment and set ourselves clear targets to undertake the work. Establishing targets further enables us to monitor our progress in implementing the Plan.

The Hastings Local Biodiversity Action Plan was adopted by Hastings Borough Council in October 2006. The Plan will be reviewed and reported every 3 years although some targets that reflect national priorities have longer timescales.

The full Action Plan is presented in Section 3.



wildhastings
.org.uk

Theme 1 Political leadership, democratic accountability, statutory responsibility, professional competence and financial management.

Aim	We will do this by
We will demonstrate political and senior management leadership, democratic accountability, inter-departmental support and financial management for biodiversity whilst demonstrating full professional competence in all our decisions in order to fulfil our compliance with legislation and guidance on the protection, restoration and enhancement of local and national biodiversity habitats and species.	Ensuring full compliance in all decisions and actions with relevant legislation and statutory duties and ensuring ecological competence in all our decisions and activities that potentially affect biodiversity interests.
	Encouraging elected members to actively engage with local community biodiversity partnerships.
	Ensuring that biodiversity is recognised as a cross cutting theme when undertaking strategic and corporate assessments.
	Ensure representation on key national bodies as appropriate to ensure that biodiversity issues are continually reviewed at a national level.
	Investing in training and continual professional development for all relevant staff to ensure the Authority meets a sufficient level of competence in biodiversity conservation.
	Providing a service of professional ecological advice to all departments and elected members of the Council to ensure it is informed by statutory requirements and national, regional and local policy guidance.



Key targets	Key responsible departments
• Ensure all Executive Directors are aware of statutory obligations to biodiversity by March 2007 • Ensure all Elected Members on Planning Board are fully informed of the biodiversity implications of relevant planning applications by March 2007 • Ensure all Elected Members who are appointed to serve on Planning Board are informed of relevant national and local biodiversity issues through appropriate training seminars by March 2007	Environmental Services in conjunction with Regeneration and Planning
Have at least one Elected Member attend the local management boards for each Local Nature Reserve. This will be reviewed during the cycle of the Plan.	Environmental Services
• Ensure that all departmental and corporate strategies recognise potential impacts on biodiversity and ensure that where possible no negative impacts result • Promote the natural environment as a key tourist and visitor attraction for Hastings and St Leonards in all relevant publicity and marketing material during 2007 and thereafter	Environmental Services in conjunction with all other departments
Have at least one member of staff appointed to the committee of the Association of Local Government Ecologists to work with Government agencies, as appropriate, from 2006.	Environmental Services
Review training and CPD requirement of appropriate staff annually through the Council's staff appraisal process.	Environmental Services
Review annually as an on going commitment.	Environmental Services in conjunction with all other departments

Theme 2 Collection and use of biodiversity data

Aim	We will do this by
We will ensure that the collection and use of biodiversity data forms part of the strategic management and monitoring of services that further inform strategic and local decision-making	Ensuring that good quality and up to date biodiversity data is utilised in; • Strategic land use planning and development control • Determination of planning applications affecting areas of biodiversity importance and species protected under legislation • Identification and protection of local Biodiversity • Strategic environmental appraisal of Council plans under the Strategic Environmental Assessment Regulations • Management of biodiversity areas and key designated sites
	Providing annual reports on bird populations and their relationship with management techniques at Hastings Country Park Local Nature Reserve
	Regularly exchanging data with the Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre in order to keep information current and relevant on habitats and species in the Borough whilst working with the Sussex Biodiversity Partnership to review and update the Sussex Biodiversity Action Plans



Key targets	Key responsible departments
• Map all designated wildlife sites on GIS during 2006 • Incorporate and implement action for national and local priority habitats and species in all management plans for designated sites and corporate strategies by 2008 • Undertake at least one biodiversity field survey annually	Regeneration and Planning in conjunction with Environmental Services
• Reverse the long term decline in the number of native wild birds associated with farmland in line with the Government's stated target by 2020 • Annual report on wild bird populations at Hastings Country Park LNR to be published on the Wild Hastings web site	Environmental Services
• Undertake an annual exchange of biodiversity records • Assist the Partnership in its annual review of the Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan, making the Plan available through links on the Wild Hastings website	Environmental Services

Theme 3 Planning Policy and Development Control

Aim	We will do this by
We will ensure that biodiversity conservation informs all new development projects, with the objective of having minimal impact on biodiversity and enhancing biodiversity wherever possible, thereby ensuring that environmental benefits are seen as integral to the physical and social regeneration of the Town.	Ensuring that all relevant policy objectives and targets within the Hastings Local Plan 2004 are met
	Ensuring that biodiversity conservation is fully integrated within forthcoming Local Development Frameworks documentation and policy
	- Ensuring that all planning decisions are fully informed by awareness of the Key Principles and other guidance relating to Planning Policy Statement 9, Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, in so far as the aim of planning decisions will be to prevent harm to biodiversity interests, ensure adequate mitigation and or compensation, or where mitigation or compensation are not possible and significant harm to biodiversity cannot be prevented, to refuse permission (Appendix 3) - Ensuring we adopt the principles of good practice for development control as outlined in PPS9, Planning for Biodiversity Good Practice Guide, and the five-point approach to planning decisions as outlined by the Royal Town Planning Institute (Appendix 4 and 5)
	Ensuring that all key decision makers understand and make full use of published good practice and technical advice on biodiversity conservation prepared specifically for planners and developers.
	Ensuring the continued protection and survival of nationally identified priority biodiversity habitats and species and Prime Biodiversity Areas that occur locally and monitor the impact of the planning and development process on the Borough's habitats and species through the corporate GIS
	Implementing the principles of PPS9 to ensure no development adversely affects identified ancient woodland in the Borough as identified through the Local Plan



Key targets	Key responsible departments
Annual review of the successful implantation of nature conservation policies from the Local Plan 2004	Regeneration and Planning
Relevant officers to work with Planners in the development of the Core Strategy to ensure biodiversity conservation is fully considered	Regeneration and Planning in conjunction with Environmental Services
Publish guidance on biodiversity information that will be expected to accompany relevant planning applications as detailed by PPS9 and the Royal Town Planning Institute by March 2007 Ensure that all planning applications granted have no adverse effect on designated areas of nature conservation and/or locally significant species or habitats identified in local and national biodiversity action plans or, where such impacts are unavoidable, provision is made for compensatory measures	Regeneration and Planning in conjunction with Environmental Services
Review relevant Hastings Borough Council corporate planning conditions annually, modifying where appropriate to take account of up to date good practice	Regeneration and Planning in conjunction with Environmental Services
Collate data reflecting impacts and publish results from 2009 and thereafter every five years	Regeneration and Planning in conjunction with Environmental Services
Identify all areas of ancient woodland that do not have statutory protection by 2007	Regeneration and Planning in conjunction with Environmental Services

Theme 4 Enabling and encouraging partnerships, community participation, involvement and education

Aim	We will do this by
We will significantly increase people's awareness and appreciation of, involvement in and access to areas of biodiversity value whilst encouraging local co-ordination and partnerships for biodiversity conservation.	Recognising that biodiversity is vital to our well-being and key to quality of life in the borough
	Encouraging the involvement and participation of local community groups and residents in decision-making that affects local biodiversity
	Supporting programmes and initiatives that enable local people to volunteer for practical conservation tasks in their local areas
	Recognising biodiversity action planning is one of the cornerstones of sustainable development, most efficiently delivered through local coordination and action

continued on page 16



Key targets	Key responsible departments
• Provide one accessible 20 hectare site of biodiversity importance within 2km and one accessible 100 hectare site of biodiversity importance within 5km of 90% of households by 2010 • Have at least one new art feature in a Local Nature Reserve by 2008	Environmental Services
• Establish local community management groups and/or Friends Groups for all Local Nature Reserves and significant wildlife sites by December 2008 • Investigate the feasibility of a new Interpretative Centre at Hastings Country Park by December 2007	Environmental Services
Work with partners such as BTCV and Sussex Wildlife Trust and local community groups to organise and publish an annual programme of conservation tasks, walks and events from 2006	Environmental Services
Review and fully incorporate biodiversity planning and action through the Local Strategic Partnership and Community Strategy by its next review date in 2008	Environmental Services in conjunction with Corporate Resources
<i>continued on page 17</i>	

continued

Aim	We will do this by
We will significantly increase people's awareness and appreciation of, involvement in and access to areas of biodiversity value whilst encouraging local co-ordination and partnerships for biodiversity conservation.	Supporting programmes and initiatives aimed at raising awareness of the unique and wonderful wildlife and nature areas of the Borough to local residents and visitors



Key targets	Key responsible departments
• Provide relevant support and expertise, for community management groups and friends groups associated with key wildlife areas and Local Nature Reserves from 2006 • Update information on local wildlife areas, habitats and species on the Wild Hastings Web site monthly and review the contents of the web site annually • Publish at least one item of popular information annually either through the Wild Hastings web site or in hard copy • Establish at least one inter-authority event with key agencies such as East Sussex County Council, Rother District Council and Natural England to promote biodiversity by 2008 • Participate with key partners such as Natural England, East Sussex County Council, Sussex Wildlife Trust, the High Weald Unit, and others, to promote strategic links between key regional sites of national and international biodiversity importance such as the High Weald, Hastings Cliffs, Rye Bay and Dungeness by 2008 • Engage with partners at Rother District Council and East Sussex County Council to promote the creation of a Countryside Park at Pebsham aimed at safeguarding and enhancing the biodiversity of the Combe Haven area and promoting it as a place of quiet recreation and national biodiversity significance by 2020 • Ensure a coordinated and consistent approach to signage and interpretation, promotion and publicity of wildlife areas and green spaces around the Borough in line with the Council's Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, by 2012	Environmental Services

Theme 5 Management of Local Authority Land

Aim	We will do this by
We will increase the nature conservation value of all publicly managed land in the Borough, from land designated for its nature conservation value to our parks and open spaces	Ensuring that management of sites of biodiversity importance strengthens existing habitats and populations and communities of species where they are identified within the UK or Sussex Biodiversity Action Plans, or where any species and habitat is rare and characteristic of this area of the High Weald
	Ensuring all applicable public land is brought under the most beneficial agri-environment agreement.



Key targets	Key responsible departments
• Ensure all designated sites have approved management plans that incorporate and implement action for national and local priority habitats and species by 2008 and are reviewed every 5 years • Ensure all Council owned and managed Sites of Special Scientific Interest comply with the Government's Public Service Agreement to have such sites in a favourable condition by 2010 • Declare Hastings Country Park and Fairlight Place farmland a Local Nature Reserve by the end of 2006 • Support the declaration of South Saxons Wetlands and Ponds Wood as Local Nature Reserves as identified from the Borough Plan • Work with Natural England to pursue the declaration of the integrated land unit of Hastings Country Park Local Nature Reserve as a National Nature Reserve by 2015, in conjunction with the biodiversity improvements being undertaken through agri-environment grant aid	Environmental Services
Identify and review all applicable public land eligible for beneficial agri-environment schemes by December 2009	Environmental Services

Appendix 1

Summary of Legislation and Guidance on Biodiversity for Local Authorities

WEB LINKS

- 1994; the UK Biodiversity Action Plan outlined a series of Action Plans and targets aimed at recovering the status and viability of threatened habitats and species. The Plan provided a blueprint for a coordinated approach between Government, Local Government and the voluntary sector to prioritise work aimed at reversing the decline in Britain's wildlife.
www.ukbap.org.uk
- 1998 – on going; The Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan is one of a number of UK wide regional and county Biodiversity Action Plans which recognise the distinctive character of local environments and champion work aimed at safeguarding local habitats and species whilst contributing to the national biodiversity agenda. The Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan is coordinated by the Sussex Biodiversity Partnership, collaboration between public and voluntary organisations.
www.biodiversitysussex.org
- 2000; Government published the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 which imparted a statutory duty on Local authorities to enhance the condition of SSSIs that it owned or managed.
www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2000/20000037.htm
- 2000; Government published a list of habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biological diversity in England.
www.ukbap.org.uk/GenPageText.aspx?id=54
- 2001; Local Government Association (LGA) in conjunction with the Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE) produced a Position Statement on Biodiversity. This advises local authorities on how to integrate biodiversity across their functions, including land use planning, development control, education and social and economic development.
www.lga.gov.uk/Documents/Briefing/Our_Work/Environment/biodiversity.pdf
- 2002; Improvement and Development Agency (IDeA) produced a set of voluntary indicators aimed at encouraging local authorities to participate in measuring progress towards conserving biodiversity.
www.local-pi-library.gov.uk/LIBRARY_ALL_PIS.ASP?MENUID=609
- 2002; Government published A Biodiversity Strategy for England. The strategy recognises that the decline and destruction of the nation's natural environment cannot be allowed to continue. The Biodiversity Strategy for England encapsulates a coherent national framework for measuring progress towards;
 - o Halting, and if possible reversing, declines in habitats and species.
 - o Promoting the general acceptance of biodiversity's essential role in enhancing the quality of life, with its conservation becoming a natural consideration in all relevant public, private and non-governmental decisions and policies.The Biodiversity Strategy for England recognises that local biodiversity conservation policies and programmes involve local authorities, local communities, businesses, landowners and the voluntary sector.
www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/biodiversity/biostrat/index.htm



- 2004; Association of Local Government Ecologists (ALGE) published a vision statement on best practice for biodiversity in local government entitled Increasing the Momentum. The vision sets out the hallmarks of a well-performing authority in relation to biodiversity conservation aiming to assist local authorities achieve the highest possible competence in Government assessments of their services.
www.alge.org.uk
- 2004; Environment Agency, English Nature, Countryside Council for Wales and the RSPB published Strategic Environmental Assessment and Biodiversity: Guidance for Practitioners which aims to ensure that biodiversity considerations are appropriately addressed in strategic environmental assessments
www.environment-agency.gov.uk/commondata/acrobat/sea_and_biodiversity_839620.pdf
- 2005; Government published its Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9) on Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. PPS9 provides a framework for conserving, enhancing and restoring the diversity of England's wildlife through the Planning Process. A corresponding Government circular accompanied the PPS9 outlining the statutory obligations to biodiversity and their impact within the planning system.
www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1144318
- March 2006; Government published A Good Practice Guide to accompany PPS9 Planning for Biodiversity Conservation. The purpose of this guide is to complement PPS9 and the corresponding Circular. It provides good practice guidance, via case studies and examples, on the ways in which local planning authorities can help deliver the national policies in PPS9 and comply with legal requirements set out in the Circular.
www.communities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1144318
- April 2006, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act received royal assent. The Act places a statutory duty on Local Authorities to consider the conservation of biodiversity in their policy and decision making procedures and 'in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.'
www.opsi.gov.uk/acts/acts2006/20060016.htm
- 2005/6; Government, through, the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) is currently developing recommendations for incorporating biodiversity measures into local government assessment frameworks.
www.defra.gov.uk

Appendix 2

A Summary of the Council's Biodiversity Achievements

- Hastings Borough Council was the first, and remains the only, district or borough authority in East Sussex to employ a full time Ecologist and Nature Reserve Officer to ensure the Council is at the forefront of biodiversity conservation locally and to promote biodiversity issues within the local community;
- The designation and management of Local Nature Reserves; we have increased the number of Local Nature Reserves in the Borough from three to seven since 2003;
- Increased access to nature areas and open space; we have provided new access to nature areas such as Churchwood Local Nature Reserve and provided Access For All Trails at Hastings Country Park;
- Supporting partnerships aimed at encouraging local communities to manage and promote the wildlife areas on their own doorstep; by working in partnership with BTCV, we now have community management groups at Churchwood and Summerfields Local Nature Reserves and South Saxons Wetland, as well as an active Volunteer Ranger Service at Hastings Country Park and a Friends of Alexandra Park group which includes Old Roar Gill Local Nature Reserve;
- We have a long standing management partnership with the Sussex Wildlife Trust to manage Marline Valley Woods and Filsham Reedbeds Local Nature Reserves;
- Developed the trail blazing Wild Hastings interactive web site, www.wildhastings.org.uk dedicated to promoting and disseminating up to date information about the wildlife and wildlife areas in the Town;
- Invested in the most ambitious conservation management project ever undertaken in the Borough at Hastings Country Park Local Nature Reserve. The Park includes agricultural land, a Site of Special Scientific Interest, a Country Park and a Special Area of Conservation;
- Ensured our natural open spaces form a key component in the Parks and Open Spaces Strategy;
- We were awarded Green Flag status for Hastings Country Park Local Nature Reserve in 2006 in recognition of our exemplary management and community engagement with the Country Park Volunteer Rangers;
- Published a series of articles, leaflets and brochures on wildlife and nature areas for the residents and visitors;
- Placed biodiversity firmly within our planning obligations under the Local Development Framework; our Local Plan policies aim to protect and enhance our natural environment through the planning system.

Appendix 3



Key Principles from Planning Policy Guidance 9, Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.

Regional planning bodies and local planning authorities should adhere to the following key principles to ensure that the potential impacts of planning decisions on biodiversity and geological conservation are fully considered.

1. Development plan policies and planning decisions should be based upon up-to-date information about the environmental characteristics of their areas. These characteristics should include the relevant biodiversity and geological resources of the area. In reviewing environmental characteristics local authorities should assess the potential to sustain and enhance those resources.
2. Plan policies and planning decisions should aim to maintain, and enhance, restore or add to biodiversity and geological conservation interests. In taking decisions, local planning authorities should ensure that appropriate weight is attached to designated sites of international, national and local importance; protected species; and to biodiversity and geological interests within the wider environment.
3. Plan policies on the form and location of development should take a strategic approach to the conservation, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity and geology, and recognise the contributions that sites, areas and features, both individually and in combination, make to conserving these resources.
4. Plan policies should promote opportunities for the incorporation of beneficial biodiversity and geological features within the design of development.
5. Development proposals where the principal objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity and geological conservation interests should be permitted.
6. The aim of planning decisions should be to prevent harm to biodiversity and geological conservation interests. Where granting planning permission would result in significant harm to those interests, local planning authorities will need to be satisfied that the development cannot reasonably be located on any alternative sites that would result in less or no harm. In the absence of any such alternatives, local planning authorities should ensure that, before planning permission is granted, adequate mitigation measures are put in place. Where a planning decision would result in significant harm to biodiversity and geological interests which cannot be prevented or adequately mitigated against, appropriate compensation measures should be sought. If that significant harm cannot be prevented, adequately mitigated against, or compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.

Appendix 4

Development Control Good Practice Summary from PPS9

The development control process is a critical stage in delivering the protection and enhancement of biodiversity conservation required by PPS9.

The following key examples of good practice can help better achieve those objectives;

- Adopting the five-point approach to decision-making – information, avoidance, mitigation, compensation and new benefits
- Ensuring that planning applications are submitted with adequate information using early negotiation, published checklists, requiring ecological surveys and appropriate consultation
- Securing necessary measures to protect, enhance, mitigate and compensate through planning conditions and obligations
- Carry out effective planning enforcement
- Identifying new ways to build biodiversity conservation into the design of new development

Appendix 5



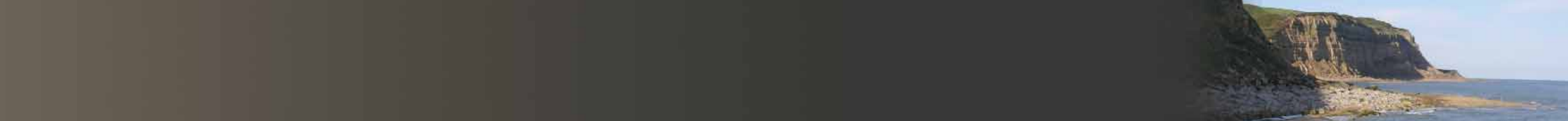
The Royal Town Planning Institute Five-Point Approach to Planning Decisions for Biodiversity

- 1 **Information** – is more information about a site's biological resource needed? Is more information about the development and its potential effects needed? Is the significance of effects clear? Is relevant internal or external expertise available?
- 2 **Avoidance** – have all adverse effects on wildlife species and habitats been avoided wherever possible?
- 3 **Mitigation** – where adverse effects are unavoidable, have they been or can they be minimised by the use of mitigation measures that can be guaranteed by, for example, conditions or planning obligations?
- 4 **Compensation** – where, despite mitigation, there will be residual adverse effects that cannot be reduced further, have they been or can they be compensated for by measures aimed at offsetting harm? Can the compensatory measures be guaranteed by conditions or planning obligations?
- 5 **New Benefits** – where there would be no significant harm to wildlife species or habitats, are there opportunities to provide new benefits for wildlife, for example by habitat creation or enhancement? Can these new benefits be guaranteed by planning obligations?

Appendix 6

National Priority Habitats which occur in Hastings Borough.

Priority UK Habitat and Link to UK Biodiversity Action Plan	Habitat Description
Lowland dry acid grassland www.ukbap.org.uk/GenPageText.aspx?id=69	Lowland acid grassland typically occurs on nutrient-poor, generally free-draining soils with pH ranging from 4 to 5.5 overlying acid rocks or superficial deposits such as sands and gravels. Acid grassland is characterised by a range of plant species such as heath bedstraw <i>Galium saxatile</i>, sheep`s-fescue <i>Festuca ovina</i>, common bent <i>Agrostis capillaris</i>, sheep`s sorrel <i>Rumex acetosella</i>, sand sedge <i>Carex arenaria</i>, wavy hair-grass <i>Deschampsia flexuosa</i>, bristle bent <i>Agrostis curtisii</i> and tormentil <i>Potentilla erecta</i>, with presence and abundance depending on community type and locality. Dwarf shrubs such as heather <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> and bilberry <i>Vaccinium myrtillus</i> can also occur but at low abundance. Lowland acid grassland often forms a mosaic with dwarf shrub heath, the latter being covered in the separate lowland heathland action plan. Acid grasslands can have a high cover of bryophytes and parched acid grassland can be rich in lichens. Acid grassland is very variable in terms of species richness and stands can range from relatively species-poor (less than 5 species per 4m²) to species-rich (in excess of 25 species per 4m²).
Cereal Field Margins www.ukbap.org.uk/ukplans.aspx?id=8	For the purposes of this Action Plan the term "cereal field margin" refers to strips of land lying between cereal crops and the field boundary, and extending for a limited distance into the crop, which are deliberately managed to create conditions which benefit key farmland species. They can take a variety of forms, the principal types being: • A 'Wildlife Strip' 6m wide adjacent to a cereal crop, together with a 1 m 'Sterile Strip' between the wildlife strip and the crop. The wildlife strip is cultivated once a year but not cropped; the Sterile Strip is maintained so as to prevent aggressive arable weeds spreading into the adjacent cereal crop • A 'Conservation Headland' either 6m or 12m wide forming the outer margin of the crop and separated from an adjacent field boundary or other vegetation by a 1 m Sterile Strip. The Conservation Headland is cropped with cereals but is managed with reduced inputs of pesticides so as to favour wild arable plants and invertebrates • A combined wildlife strip and Conservation Headland, separated by a Sterile Strip and managed as described as above • Game crops, stubble or grassland fallows lying between annually cropped land and the field boundary

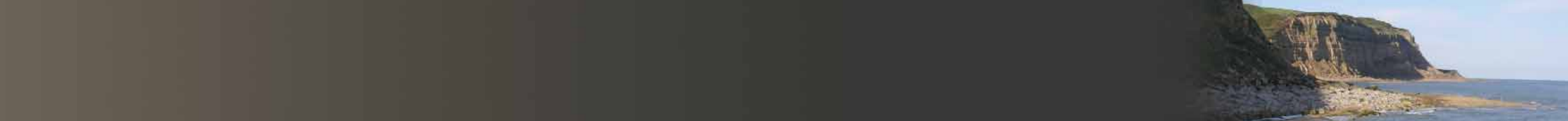


Where it occurs in Hastings	National Objectives and Targets from the UK BAP
Due to the underlying sandstone and clay throughout Hastings, fragments and areas of lowland dry acid grassland can be found throughout the Borough and on most major designated sites such as Hastings Country Park LNR, St Helens Woods LNR, Marline Valley Woods SSSI.	• Arrest the depletion of lowland acid grassland throughout the UK • Within SSSIs and ASSIs initiate rehabilitation management for all significant stands of lowland acid grassland in unfavourable condition by 2005 • Wherever biologically feasible, achieve favourable status of all significant stands of lowland acid grassland within SSSIs and ASSIs by 2010 • For stands outside SSSIs, secure favourable condition over 30% of the resource by 2005 • For stands outside SSSIs, secure favourable condition over as near to 100% of the resource as is practicable by 2015 • Attempt to re-establish 500 ha of lowland acid grassland of wildlife value at carefully targeted sites by 2010
Areas of agricultural land are managed as integral to the Hastings Country Park Local Nature Reserve. Arable field management is undertaken as part of our Agri-environment grant aid to improve biodiversity and increase populations of wild birds associated with farmland.	• Maintain, improve and restore by management the biodiversity of some 15,000 ha of cereal field margins on appropriate soil types in the UK by 2010

Appendix 6

National Priority Habitats which occur in Hastings Borough.

Priority UK Habitat and Link to UK Biodiversity Action Plan	Habitat Description
Lowland Beech and Yew Woodland http://archive.jncc.gov.uk/pdf/UKBAP_BAPHabitats-24-LowlandBeech.pdf	Lowland beech and yew woodland spans a variety of distinctive vegetation types reflecting differences in soil and topographical conditions. Beech can grow on both acidic and calcareous soils, although its association with yew tends to be most abundant on the calcareous sites. These woods have been managed historically as coppice, coppice with standards, wood-pasture, high forest and minimum intervention.
Lowland wood pasture and Parkland www.ukbap.org.uk/GenPageText.aspx?id=73	Lowland wood-pastures and parkland are the products of historic land management systems, and represent a vegetation structure rather than being a particular plant community. Typically this structure consists of large, open-grown or high forest trees (often pollards) at various densities, in a matrix of grazed grassland, heathland and/or woodland floras.



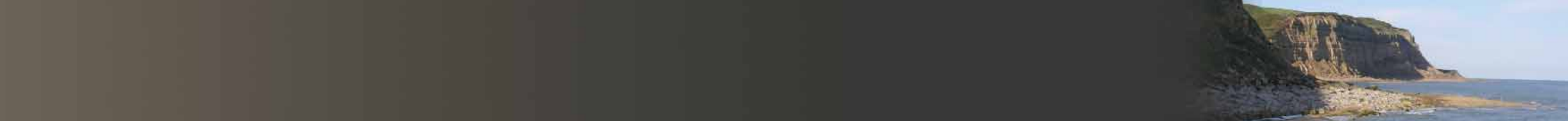
Where it occurs in Hastings	National Objectives and Targets from the UK BAP
The nation priority habitats for different kinds of woodland are difficult to fully match with the woodland types in Hastings. However examples of this priority woodland habitat type in Hastings could include areas of Marline valley Woods SSSI, St Helens Woods LNR and Hastings Country Park LNR.	• Maintain the total current extent (c. 30,000 ha) of lowland beech and yew woodland • Establish by colonisation or planting a further 1,500ha of lowland beech and yew woodland on unwooded sites or by conversion of non-native plantations by 2015 • Maintain the existing area of ancient semi-natural lowland beech and yew woodland (estimated to be between 15000 and 20000ha) • Initiate by 2004 measures intended to achieve favourable condition in 100% of lowland beech and yew woodland within the SSSI/ASSIs and Special Areas of Conservation • Initiate by 2004 measures intended to achieve favourable condition in 80% of the total resource of lowland beech and yew woodland • Achieve favourable condition over 70% of the designated sites by 2010 • Achieve favourable condition over 50% of the total resource by 2010 • Restore to site-native species at least 750 ha of former lowland beech woodland which has been converted to non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites, by 2010 • Restore to site-native species at least a further 750 ha of former lowland beech woodland which has been converted to non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites, by 2015 • Establish by colonisation or planting 1,500 ha of lowland beech and yew woodland on unwooded sites or by conversion of non-native plantations by 2010
The only area where remnants of this habitat type occur is St Helens Woods LNR.	• Maintain the current extent and distribution of the total resource of wood-pasture and parkland • Maintain the current extent, distribution and condition of wood-pasture and parkland that is in favourable ecological condition • Initiate in areas where examples of derelict wood-pasture and parkland occur a programme to restore 2,500ha to favourable ecological condition by 2010

continued on page 31

Appendix 6

National Priority Habitats which occur in Hastings Borough.

Priority UK Habitat and Link to UK Biodiversity Action Plan	Habitat Description
Lowland wood pasture and Parkland www.ukbap.org.uk/GenPageText.aspx?id=73	
Wet Woods www.ukbap.org.uk/GenPageText.aspx?id=73	Wet woodland occurs on poorly drained or seasonally wet soils, usually with alder, birch and willows as the predominant tree species, but sometimes including ash, oak, pine and beech on the drier riparian areas. It is found on floodplains, as successional habitat on fens, mires and bogs, along streams and hill-side flushes, and in peaty hollows.

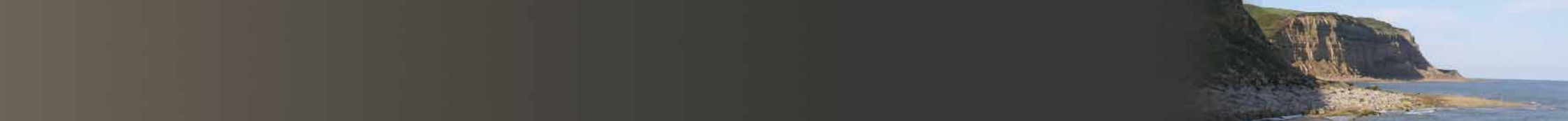


Where it occurs in Hastings	National Objectives and Targets from the UK BAP
	• By 2002 initiate the expansion of 500 ha of wood-pasture or parkland, in appropriate areas, to help reverse fragmentation and reduce the generation gap between veteran trees
As well as traditional wet woodlands, areas of gill woodlands that host wet flushes and wet margins can conform to this habitat type; South Saxons Wetlands, Combe Haven SSSI, Hastings Country Park, Marline Valley Woods SSSI, Old Roar Gill LNR and Ponds Woods Site of Nature Conservation Importance all host areas of this habitat type.	• Maintain the total extent (50,000-70,000 ha) and distribution of wet woodlands. • Complete establishment of a further 3,375 ha of wet woodland on unwooded sites or by conversion of plantations by 2015 • Maintain the current area (currently estimated at 24,000-30,000 ha) of ancient semi-natural wet woodlands. • Initiate measures intended to achieve favourable condition in 100% of wet woodlands within SSSI/ASSIs by 2004. • Initiate measures intended to achieve favourable condition in 80% of wet woodlands of the total resource by 2004. • Achieve favourable condition over 50% of the total resource of wet woodlands by 2010. • Achieve favourable condition over 70% of the designated sites by 2010. • Complete restoration to site-native species of 1,600 ha of former native wet woodland that has been converted to non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites by 2010. • Complete restoration to site-native species of a further 1,600 ha of former native wet woodland that has been converted to non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites by 2015. • Complete establishment of 3,375 ha of wet woodland on unwooded sites or by conversion of plantations by 2010.

Appendix 6

National Priority Habitats which occur in Hastings Borough.

Priority UK Habitat and Link to UK Biodiversity Action Plan	Habitat Description
Lowland Heathland www.ukbap.org.uk/ukplans.aspx?id=15	Lowland heathland is characterised by the presence of plants such as heather, dwarf gorses, and cross-leaved heath and is generally found below 300 metres in altitude. Areas of good quality heathland should consist of an ericaceous layer of varying heights and structures, some areas of scattered trees and scrub, areas of bare ground, gorse, wet heaths, bogs and open water. The presence and numbers of characteristic birds, reptiles, invertebrates, vascular plants, bryophytes and lichens are important indicators of habitat quality. Lowland heathland is a priority for nature conservation because it is a rare and threatened habitat. In England only one sixth of the heathland present in 1800 now remains. The UK has some 58,000 ha of lowland heathland of which the largest proportion (55%) is found in England. The UK has an important proportion (about 20%) of the international total of this habitat.
Reedbeds www.ukbap.org.uk/ukplans.aspx?id=19	Reedbeds are wetlands dominated by stands of the common reed <i>Phragmites australis</i>, wherein the water table is at or above ground level for most of the year. They tend to incorporate areas of open water and ditches, and small areas of wet grassland and carr woodland may be associated with them. Reedbeds are amongst the most important habitats for birds in the UK.
Fens www.ukbap.org.uk/ukplans.aspx?id=18	Fens are peatlands which receive water and nutrients from the soil, rock and ground water as well as from rainfall: they are minerotrophic. Fen habitats support a diversity of plant and animal communities. Some can contain up to 550 species of higher plants, a third of our native plant species; up to and occasionally more than half the UK's species of dragonflies, several thousand other insect species, as well as being an important habitat for a range of aquatic beetles.

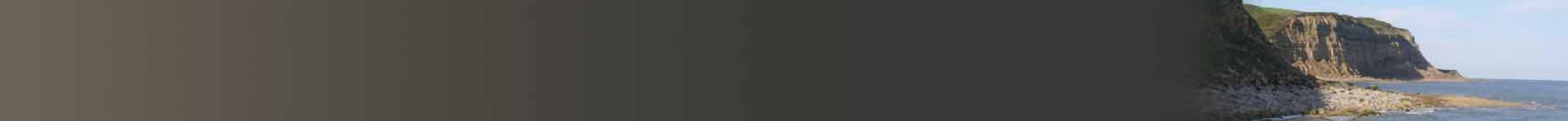


Where it occurs in Hastings	National Objectives and Targets from the UK BAP
The largest areas of lowland heathland in the Borough occur at Country Park LNR and Hastings Cliffs Special Area of Conservation. Hastings Country Park and areas of the SAC are being managed to increase and restore areas of this priority habitat.	• Maintain the extent of all existing lowland heathland (58,000 ha) • Improve by management all existing lowland heathland currently in unfavourable condition • Encourage the re-establishment by 2005 of a further 6,000 ha of heathland with the emphasis on the counties of Hampshire, Cornwall, Dorset, Surrey, Devon, Staffordshire, Suffolk and Norfolk in England and Pembrokeshire, Glamorgan and west Gwynedd in Wales, particularly where this links separate heathland areas
The largest areas of reedbed habitat in the Borough occur to the west of the Town at Filsham Reedbeds LNR, South Saxons Wetlands Site of nature Conservation Importance and the Combe Haven SSSI.	• Rehabilitate by the year 2000 the priority areas of existing reedbed (targeting those of 2ha or more) • Maintain priority areas of existing reedbed by active management • Create 1,200 ha of new reedbed on land of low nature conservation interest by 2010
Fen is a very rare habitat which is confined to the wetland areas of the Combe Haven SSSI and Filsham Reedbeds LNR.	• Initiate restoration of priority fen sites in critical need of rehabilitation by the year 2005 • Ensure appropriate water quality and water quantity for the continued existence of all SSSI/ASSI fens by 2005

Appendix 6

National Priority Habitats which occur in Hastings Borough.

Priority UK Habitat and Link to UK Biodiversity Action Plan	Habitat Description
Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh www.ukbap.org.uk/ukplans.aspx?id=9	Grazing marsh is defined as periodically inundated pasture, or meadow with ditches which maintain the water levels, containing standing brackish or fresh water. The ditches are especially rich in plants and invertebrates. Almost all areas are grazed and some are cut for hay or silage. Sites may contain seasonal water-filled hollows and permanent ponds with emergent swamp communities, but not extensive areas of tall fen species like reeds; although they may abut with fen and reed swamp communities.
Maritime Cliff and Slope www.ukbap.org.uk/ukplans.aspx?id=27	Maritime cliffs and slopes comprise sloping to vertical faces on the coastline where a break in slope is formed by slippage and/or coastal erosion. Soft cliffs are formed in less resistant rocks such as shales or in unconsolidated materials such as boulder clay; being unstable they often form less steep slopes and are therefore more easily colonised by vegetation. Soft cliffs are subject to frequent slumping and landslips, particularly where water percolates into the rock and reduces its effective shear strength. Soft cliffs are particularly important for invertebrates as they provide a suite of conditions which are rarely found together in other habitats. The combination of friable soils, hot substrates and open conditions maintained by cliff slippages offer a continuity of otherwise very restricted microhabitats and these support many rare invertebrates which are confined to such sites.



Where it occurs in Hastings	National Objectives and Targets from the UK BAP
Coastal grazing marsh is confined to the Combe Haven SSSI.	• Maintain the existing habitat extent (300,000ha) • Maintain the quality of existing habitat (300,000ha) • Rehabilitate 10,000 ha of grazing marsh habitat which has become too dry, or is intensively managed, by the year 2000. This would comprise 5,000 ha already targeted in ESAs, with an additional 5,000 ha • Begin creating 2,500 ha of grazing marsh from arable land in targeted areas, in addition to that which will be achieved by existing ESA schemes, with the aim of completing as much as possible by the year 2000
Maritime Cliff and Slope is a habitat of international importance. The most significant area of this habitat type in the south east of England occurs at Hastings Country Park LNR where the cliffs are designated under international legislation as a Special Area of Conservation, SAC. Cliff outcrops of this habitat type occur in other areas in the Borough where the built environment has isolated the cliff habitat from its direct maritime influence of the sea. However areas at Bulverhythe shingle Beach and Cliffs SNCI, Castle Hill SNCI and West St Leonards Railway embankments SNCI, Caves Road Cliffs SNCI.	• Seek to maintain the existing maritime cliff resource of cliff-top and slope habitat, of about 4000 km • Maintain wherever possible free functioning of coastal physical processes acting on maritime cliff and slope habitats • Retain the amount of maritime cliff and slope habitats unaffected by coastal defence and other engineering works • Where possible increase the amount of maritime cliff and slope habitats unaffected by coastal defence and other engineering works • Increase the area of cliff-top semi-natural habitats by at least 500 ha over the next 20 years • Improve by appropriate management the quality of at least 30% of the maritime cliff and slope habitats, including cliff-top vegetation, by 2010 • Improve by appropriate management the quality of as much as possible of the remaining maritime cliff and slope habitats, including cliff-top vegetation, by 2015

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