

SOUTH SOMERSET LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN



May 2008

Action plan name

South Somerset Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Background

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

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

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

Plan species and habitats

District	LSP Date	HAPs & SAPs
County-wide	28 March	Ditches & Ponds (focusing on rare plants and invertebrates) Gardens & Urban Greenspace Hedgerows & Hedgerow Trees Roadside Verges & Green Lanes Traditional Orchards Water & Wetlands Wood Pasture, Parkland & Veteran Trees Bats Lapwing Otter
South Somerset District Council (SSDC)	28 March	Native Wildflowers of Arable Land Woodland Heathlands Calcareous & Neutral Grasslands

	Purple Moor Grass & Rush Pasture
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Proposed partners

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

Target description and target goals

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

Key factors

- Transfer of information (landowner details for SERC use, management plans etc).

- Training for staff involved in processing planning applications. Must understand the range of legislation and agreements that discourage or disallow development on certain habitats. In house Ecologists make this much easier.

Action text	Lead organisation	Action start and end dates	Action goals	Key partners	SSDC Comments	SSDC Resource implications
1. Support the work of the Somerset Biodiversity Partnership and the Biodiversity Coordinator	SCC	Ongoing	All partners regularly attend well facilitated meetings and along with other key stakeholders contribute to achieving targets within the Strategy and LBAPs	All Partners		No Additional resource requirement
2. Contribute to the production of Biodiversity Action Plans when they need to be reviewed	SERC	2011	LBAPs are reviewed and completed in consultation with all interested parties promptly	NE SWT SCC		None
3. Enter the output from LBAP actions to the Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS)	SERC	2008 and ongoing	Progress on all actions within the LBAP are entered into BARS	All partners		No additional resource requirement
4. Review ecological expertise as a matter of priority in order to most	SSDC	By end of 2009	All local authorities to have in-house ecological expertise in	SCC	Current half-time Ecologist post is at full	Planning Delivery Grant

effectively meet statutory obligations and imbed biodiversity across the whole authority			place		capacity with Bioplan monitoring and advising on planning applications. No capacity to deal with other statutory requirements, NERC Act etc	(PDG)
5. Put in place measures necessary to adopt BioPlan, a tool that automatically searches all planning applications against biodiversity data	SSDC	By end of 2009	All local authorities have BioPlan operational	SERC SCC	Bioplan planning application monitoring in place	No addition
6. Support the use of 1APP to search all planning applications in relation to Somerset LBAP species, and ensure that local customisation takes all Somerset LBAP priority species into account	SSDC	2009	The 1 app system is in place and fully takes into account Somerset LBAP and priority species	SCC SWT SERC NE	I-APP adopted	No addition
7. Ensure that species protection legislation is effectively enforced	NE	By end of 2008	A procedure for passing on information about, and acting upon, wildlife crime is in place and made available to all partners	SWT RSPB SCC SSDC	General duty	No addition
8. Develop and support large-scale conservation projects (e.g. Mendip Hills, Blackdowns, Brue Valley) through the provision or funding of conservation work and advice to landowners	SWT	2012	A minimum of five landscape-scale conservation projects, at least one in each district, aimed at delivering BAP targets and helping wildlife to adapt to climate change have been established.	All partners	Somerset Landscape Scheme is currently supported by SSDC. Some project specific individual bids possible	Funded through existing Somerset Landscape Scheme. Some project specific individual bids possible. Any new schemes will be subject to a funding/

						business case as and when.
9. Develop an agreed vision for the wetlands of Somerset	EA	2010	1 Report on the agreed vision for Somerset's wetlands is completed	All partners		None
10. Consultant to review and recommend the development of a robust monitoring framework that will enable reporting on the LDF Annual Monitoring Report indicator on Biodiversity and the Local Performance Indicator on Biodiversity (NI197)	SSDC	In place by end of 2008	SSDC can demonstrate their good performance with biodiversity indicators	SERC SCC	LSP/SCC to obtain quotation from SERC delivery of data required by NI197 on behalf of all Somerset LAs. COI 8 data needs resourcing	PDG funded
11. Include Local Biodiversity Action Plans within Sustainable Community Strategies	SSDC	By 2009	LBAPs included within Sustainable Community Strategies of SSDC	SWT SERC NE SCC	Already included in SCS	No addition
12. Consultant to review the requirements of preventing development that has an avoidable adverse impact on protected or priority species.	SSDC	2008	All planning decisions comply with the principles of PPS9 and the NERC Act	SCC NE SWT	Existing policy	PDG
13. Consultant to make recommendations on how to seek to secure compensatory measures for biodiversity loss in exceptional cases where biodiversity loss cannot be avoided	SSDC	2008	All planning decisions comply with the principles of PPS9 and the NERC Act	SCC NE SWT EA	Required by PPS 9 but not fully implemented.	PDG
14. Consultant to make recommendations on promoting habitat enhancement opportunities within development	SSDC	2010	Increase in number of substantive new developments that make a positive contribution to biodiversity	SCC SWT NE	As 13	PDG

15. Support the work of the Somerset Environmental Records Centre in identifying sites that fit the criteria for LWS	SSDC	Commencing 2008 and then ongoing	A comprehensive survey to identify all LWS is developed by SERC	NE SCC SWT SERC EA	Completed by SERC with SSDC contribution	No addition
16. Consultant to make recommendations on supporting the work of the Local Wildlife Sites Partnership in securing funding for the management of existing LWS	SWT	By 2018	95% of sites in positive	SSDC SCC NE	Contribution to LWS Partnership	PDG
17. Give LWS and BAP-priority habitats protection within adopted proposals maps	SSDC	2008	All LWS and BAP Priority Habitats identified within proposals maps	SERC NE SCC SWT	PPS9 requirement - to be included in development plan	None
18. Consultant to make recommendations on ensuring that planning decisions do not compromise the biodiversity value of LWS and BAP-priority habitats	SSDC	Ongoing	Decrease in number of Local Sites damaged as a result of planning decisions	NE, SWT SERC	PPS9 requirements deal with this – see 12,13,14 above	PDG
19. Declare suitable sites as Local Nature Reserves, and create management plans that focus on improving the biodiversity value of the site, wildlife interpretation and accessibility for all	SCC	2012	Statutory LNRs at a minimum of one hectare per thousand population	SSDC SERC	In LAA	None
20. Ensure that funding the Local Area Agreement is adequately directed towards biodiversity and that the links between other sectors are emphasised	SCC	2008	At least one biodiversity improvement target included in the forthcoming LAA	SSDC NE SWT		LSP funded
21. Continue to support the Somerset Landscape Scheme Grant fund and help to ensure that it delivers benefits for	SCC	2010	Increase in area of priority habitat under agreement or under construction through Somerset Landscape Scheme	SSDC	Supported at present by SSDC	no addition

wildlife						
22. Consultant to review and make recommendations on the coverage needed to ensure that biodiversity news and events are reported within the local print, television and radio media and that messages are targeted at appropriate sections of the community	SSDC	Ongoing	The work of the partnership and/or biodiversity news is included within at least 1 article per month of the local newspaper, or a radio or television appearance	SERC NE SWT EA		PDG
23. Explore the opportunity to improve interpretation resources at sites attracting large numbers of visitors, or at those sites identified through survey, which represent key wildlife locations	SSDC	2008	10% Increase in number of wildlife sites with interpretation resources or events programmes	SCC NE SWT	Sites managed by SSDC already interpreted	None
24. Consultant to review and make recommendations on how best to promote and publicise the LBAPs and the Somerset Biodiversity Strategy	SCC	2008	1 marketing strategy is created to promote the newly revised LBAPs and The Biodiversity Strategy	SWT SSDC		PDG
25. Promote an annual "Somerset Wildlife Day" with associated media coverage	SWT	2010	One annual "Somerset Wildlife Day" takes place, and at least one takes place in each district	All partners		PDG
26. Support appropriate bids from environmental education centres and outreach programmes	SCC	2012	Where required, support is given to all appropriate bids from environmental education centres and outreach programmes	All partners	Project specific – individual bids possible	
27. Consultant to make recommendations on supporting a targeted biodiversity-monitoring programme, coordinated through SERC	SSDC	2008	All partners to agree a SLA with SERC to provide a targeted biodiversity monitoring programme	All partners	Existing SLA with SERC does not include this	PDG
28. Support a regular rolling monitoring programme of habitat	SCC	2011	Aerial photograph interpretation habitat mapping framework in	All partners		

mapping across Somerset through SERC			place for all SNAs and all urban areas as a basis for all future fieldwork			
29. Consultant to make recommendations on how Local Authorities designate management plans for the benefit of biodiversity on all their land, surveying those of high wildlife value	SCC	2011	Management plans favouring wildlife created for all of the local authority land, to include surveys where identified (using existing survey data and aerial photo interpretation)	SSDC SERC	NERC Act responsibility	PDG
30. Incorporate Strategic Nature Area's into LDFs in accordance with the recommendations set out in 'South West Nature Map – A Planners Guide'	SSDC	By 2010	The LDF incorporates all Strategic Nature Area's	NE SWT SCC	Included in existing Planning Policy work programme	None
31. Planning authorities to look at habitat connectivity and providing high quality 'green infrastructure' within urban areas within the LDF	SSDC	2010	The LDF must include 1 green infrastructure component	NE SWT SCC	Included in existing Planning Policy work programme	None
32. Consultant to make recommendations on developing conservation projects that bring 'added value' to local communities e.g. marketing the link between local food products and an area managed for the benefit of wildlife, or developing traditional industry around woodland projects	SWT	By 2010	A minimum of two landscape-scale projects underway that contain a strong focus on local produce	RSPB SSDC EA FWAG		PDG
33. Consultant to review and make recommendations to encourage local business to help deliver BAP targets through work on their land and by assisting funding of local biodiversity	SCC	By 2009	One marketing model produced to promote business sponsorship of BAP action	All partners		PDG

projects						
34. Consultant to provide recommendations to maximise the linkages between Somerset's top natural attractions and existing local business e.g. local craft shops or pubs and restaurants selling local food	SWT	2010	Strong linkages made between a minimum of two important local wildlife site attractions and surrounding businesses	All partners		PDG
35. Ensure that the links between climate change strategies and biodiversity are created or maintained	SCC	By 2009	All climate change strategies are fully aligned with biodiversity strategies and wherever possible include action on wildlife adaptation	SSDC	To be included in climate change strategy	None
36. Consultant to provide recommendations on working with the Tourist Board and others to raise the profile of our major natural attractions	SCC	2010	One Somerset Green Tourism guide, focussed on visiting wildlife sites, produced and publicised	SWT RSPB SSDC		PDG