

SOUTH SOMERSET LOCAL BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN



May 2008

Action plan name

South Somerset Local Biodiversity Action Plan

Background

For each Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) there are a number of actions that are cross cutting between all of the Species Action Plans (SAPs) and Habitat Action Plans (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	Habit and Species Action Plans
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

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
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
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
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
4. Retain or acquire in-house ecological expertise as a matter of priority in order to most effectively meet statutory obligations and imbed biodiversity across the whole authority	SSDC	By end of 2009	All local authorities to have in-house ecological expertise in place	SCC
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
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
7. Ensure that species protection legislation is effectively enforced	NE	By end of 2009	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
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

9. Develop an agreed vision for the wetlands of Somerset	EA	2010	One report on the agreed vision for Somerset's wetlands is completed	All partners
10. Develop 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 2009	SSDC can demonstrate their good performance with biodiversity indicators	SERC SCC
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
12. Prevent development that has an avoidable adverse impact on protected or priority species.	SSDC	2009	All planning decisions comply with the principles of PPS9 and the NERC Act	SCC NE SWT
13. Seek to secure compensatory measures for biodiversity loss in exceptional cases where biodiversity loss cannot be avoided	SSDC	2009	All planning decisions comply with the principles of PPS9 and the NERC Act	SCC NE SWT EA
14. Promote habitat enhancement opportunities within development	SSDC	2010	Increase in number of substantive new developments that make a positive contribution to biodiversity	SCC SWT NE
15. Support the work of the Somerset Environmental Records Centre in identifying sites that fit the criteria for Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).	SSDC	Commencing 2008 and then ongoing	A comprehensive survey to identify all LWS is developed by SERC	NE SCC SWT SERC EA
16. Support the work of the Local Wildlife Sites Partnership in securing funding for the management of existing LWS	SWT	By 2018	95% of sites in positive	SSDC SCC NE
17. Give LWS and BAP-priority habitats protection within Local Development Frameworks	SSDC	2009	All LWS and BAP Priority Habitats identified within proposals maps	SERC NE SCC SWT
18. Ensure 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

19. Declare suitable sites as Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) 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
20. Ensure that funding the Local Area Agreement (LAA) is adequately directed towards biodiversity and that the links between other sectors are emphasised	SCC	2009	At least one biodiversity improvement target included in the forthcoming LAA	SSDC NE SWT
21. Continue to support the Somerset Landscape Scheme Grant fund and help to ensure that it delivers benefits for wildlife	SCC	2010	Increase in area of priority habitat under agreement or under construction through Somerset Landscape Scheme	SSDC
22. Ensure that biodiversity news and events are given sufficient coverage within the local print, television and radio media and that messages are targeted at appropriate sections of the community	SSDC	Ongoing	The work of the partnership and/or biodiversity news is included within at least one article per month of the local newspaper, or a radio or television appearance	SERC NE SWT EA
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	2009	10% Increase in number of wildlife sites with interpretation resources or events programmes	SCC NE SWT
24. Develop ideas about how best to promote and publicise the LBAPs and the Somerset Biodiversity Strategy	SCC	2009	One marketing strategy is created to promote the newly revised LBAPs and The Biodiversity Strategy	SWT SSDC
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
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

27. Support a targeted biodiversity-monitoring programme, coordinated through SERC	SSDC	2009	All partners to agree a SLA with SERC to provide a targeted biodiversity monitoring programme	All partners
28. Support a regular rolling monitoring programme of habitat mapping across Somerset through SERC	SCC	2011	Aerial photograph interpretation habitat mapping framework in place for all SNAs and all urban areas as a basis for all future fieldwork	All partners
29. Local Authorities to designate management plans for the benefit of biodiversity on all their land, surveying those of high wildlife value	SCC	2011	Management plans favouring wildlife created for all of the local authority land, to include surveys where identified (using existing survey data and aerial photo interpretation)	SSDC SERC
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
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 at least one green infrastructure component	NE SWT SCC
32. Develop conservation projects that bring 'added value' to local communities e.g. marketing the link between local food products and an area managed for the benefit of wildlife, or developing traditional industry around woodland projects	SWT	By 2010	A minimum of two landscape-scale projects underway that contain a strong focus on local produce	RSPB SSDC EA FWAG
33. Encourage local business to help deliver BAP targets through work on their land and by assisting funding of local biodiversity projects	SCC	By 2009	One marketing model produced to promote business sponsorship of BAP action	All partners
34. 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

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
36. Work with the Tourist Board and others to raise the profile of our major natural attractions	SCC	2010	One Somerset Green Tourism guide, focussed on visiting wildlife sites, produced and publicised	SWT RSPB SSDC