



## Durham Biodiversity Partnership

Action for wildlife in Gateshead, South Tyneside,  
Sunderland, Darlington & County Durham

### **Policy, Strategy and Procurement**

The environment is at the heart of delivering sustainable development. Local Authorities are ideally placed to link environmental management to their wider priorities and through their activities contribute positively, both directly and indirectly to social cohesion, community well-being and quality of life.

There are other benefits of integrating environmental issues and more specifically biodiversity into a range of functions and services. These include helping to deliver sustainable communities by, for example, enhancing local distinctiveness or creating improved access to parks and greenspaces, and using Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems to help improve our resilience to climate change.



Herrington Country Park ©Sunderland Council

#### ***Integrating biodiversity into corporate priorities and internal policy***

By fully integrating biodiversity conservation objectives throughout all services and functions service delivery can be improved, added momentum can be given to partnership working and awareness of biodiversity can be improved both internally and externally.

Taking positive action to reduce a Local Authorities' environmental impact on resource efficiency, energy efficiency, planning, environmental health, education, waste management and pollution control clearly demonstrates commitment. It also illustrates the seriousness the Local Authority takes over its environmental obligations, improving its efficiency whilst also increasing environmental awareness and wider engagement of staff in environmental schemes mainstreaming environmental improvements.

Decisions made regarding the procurement of materials and services can have far reaching environmental impacts. Procuring materials that are sourced via sustainable modes of transport will help to reduce pollution and carbon dioxide emissions and associated effects of climate change. Those produced using sustainable methods help to reduce demands on natural resources such as soil, air and water. Leading by example in this way ensures our operations maximise the positive effects on the environment, including on biodiversity, and minimises any potential negative impacts.

#### ***Examples of integrating Biodiversity through partnership working***

**Local Area Agreement.** These provide a vital mechanism for achieving sustainable development. They add impetus to a range of other policy and strategy documents, in particular the objectives and aspirations set out in Sustainable Community Strategies, and provide an opportunity for action for biodiversity whilst delivering cross-cutting benefits such as improved health, community cohesion and education for local communities. A good example is the opening of a new park where opportunities are created for promoting physical exercise, as well as creating green space that can be managed to enhance biodiversity. In addition, conserving the natural environment helps to promote tourism and encourages business investment.

## **Action for Wildlife – Guidance note: Policy, Strategy and Procurement**

**Sustainable Community Strategies.** The setting of appropriate local biodiversity indicators and targets within the community planning process, and participation in the process of drafting Sustainable Community Strategies is important to ensure a holistic approach, and crucial in determining the effectiveness of their delivery.

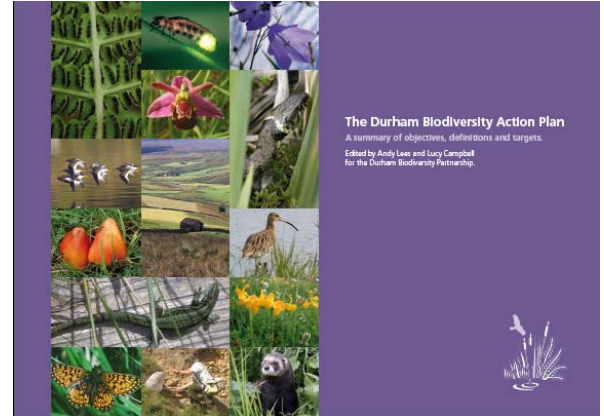
**Providing and delivering green space.** Incorporating green infrastructure into development plans will help deliver many of the social, economic and environmental benefits required for sustainable communities. Green Infrastructure is the network of protected sites, nature reserves, greenspaces (including local parks, sports grounds, cemeteries, school grounds, allotments, commons) woodlands, the countryside in and around towns, river and canal corridors, flood plains, roadside verges, hedges and railway sidings which together offer multiple benefits for both people and wildlife.

Green infrastructure plays a positive role in achieving objectives for health and well-being, clean air, water, soil, and biodiversity, and provides multi-functional uses e.g. wildlife, recreational and cultural experience, as well as delivering ecological services, such as flood protection, pollution control and moderating microclimate. These services are increasingly important in adapting to climate change.

**Local Wildlife Sites.** As representatives of local communities, Local Authorities have an important role to play in the selection, protection and management of Local Wildlife sites. This is in addition to existing legal duties applying to the conservation and enhancement of statutory designated sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). As part of National Indicator 197, Local Authorities are required to report on positive management of Local Sites.

**Durham Biodiversity Action Plan.** This is a key strategy document dedicated to the delivery of biodiversity conservation at the local level. Local Authorities have a crucial role in leading and contributing to the development and implementation of the action plan. Widely recognised within and outside Local and Public Authorities, biodiversity action plans influence service areas where biodiversity conservation is not a primary function.

In addition, the targets are often used by grant-giving bodies, such as the Heritage Lottery Fund and SITA Trust to help identify priorities and to determine grant applications.



Durham Biodiversity Action Plan ©Durham Biodiversity Partnership

**North East Biodiversity Action Plan, Regional Spatial Strategy, Regional Economic Strategy and the North East Environment Strategy.** These are key documents that set out policies at the regional level. Getting involved in the relevant partnerships can help you integrate biodiversity into your policies and strategies and comply with the NERC Biodiversity Duty.

**Durham Biodiversity Data Service and the North East Environmental Records Information Centre.** These organisations have been set up to gather, store and share information on the area's wild species, habitats and protected sites. The aim of this is to make biological information more accessible to a wide range of people and bodies including schools, individuals and organisations. Building up a good database of records for biodiversity in regions, sub-regions and locally, is important for a variety of reasons:

- Understanding where important wildlife sites are, especially for protected species.
- Finding new important sites for species and helping to maintain them.
- Monitoring changes in the populations of species or habitats, to help target action

- Records can also be used for monitoring environmental changes; for example lichens can be an excellent indicator of clean air and pollution levels.

Supporting these bodies will allow this work to continue.

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These notes were adapted from those prepared by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership and the South Yorkshire Biodiversity Forum

**Guidance notes are also available on:** Education, advice and awareness, Planning, Regeneration and Economy, and Management of Land and Buildings, from [www.durhambiodiversity.org.uk](http://www.durhambiodiversity.org.uk)

#### References and Further Information

‘Guidance for Local Authorities on implementing the Biodiversity Duty’ (Defra 2007) and ‘Guidance for Public Authorities on implementing the Biodiversity Duty’ (Defra 2007) [www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/biodiversity/index.htm](http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/biodiversity/index.htm)

‘Local Sites, Guidance on their Identification, Selection and Management’ (Defra 2006) <http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/pdf/protected-areas/localsites.pdf>

‘Guidance on the Improved Local Biodiversity Indicator (NI 197)’ (Defra 2008) <http://www.defra.gov.uk/environment/localgovindicators/documents/ni197-guidance-revised.pdf>

Durham Biodiversity Partnership [www.durhambiodiversity.org.uk](http://www.durhambiodiversity.org.uk) North East Biodiversity Forum [www.nebiodiversity.org.uk](http://www.nebiodiversity.org.uk) One North East [www.onenortheast.co.uk](http://www.onenortheast.co.uk) Durham Wildlife Trust [www.durhamwt.co.uk](http://www.durhamwt.co.uk) Durham Biodiversity Data Service [www.dbds.org](http://www.dbds.org) Exploring your Environment [www.eyeproject.org.uk](http://www.eyeproject.org.uk)