



Natural Cambridgeshire Local Nature Partnership

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Biodiversity Net Gain & Developing with Nature Toolkit

How to demonstrate enhancement of nature through new development

Agenda Item 5



Natural Cambridgeshire Local Nature Partnership

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Our Vision

A Cambridgeshire, that has the highest quality of life, because we place **nature at the heart** of our agenda.

A Cambridgeshire which appreciates that to prosper people need a **high quality environment** in which **nature thrives alongside jobs and housing**.

1. Establish a **globally recognised** environment and heritage
UNESCO Biosphere
2. Secure a coordinated, combined and sustainable approach to the stewardship of our green spaces by establishing a **Parks and Green Spaces Trust**
3. Deliver **significant environmental gain** across the area through our **Developing with Nature toolkit**, supported by key developers

Biodiversity Net Gain

National Planning Policy Framework (2018):

Paragraph 170

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- minimising impacts on and **providing net gains for biodiversity**, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures”

Paragraph 175

“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, **then planning permission should be refused”**

City & SCDC Local Plan Policies back this up (but could be strengthened)

Biodiversity Net Gain

- To be effective **Biodiversity Impact and Net Gain must be measurable!**
- Defra produced their Biodiversity Metric in 2012, which has been piloted in several areas and is now established best practice for measuring impacts on habitats (does not cover species, habitat fragmentation and loss of connectivity, or indirect impacts)
- **Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculator** developed by Warwickshire County Council in one of the Defra pilots has further developed Defra biodiversity metric. This could form the basis for a Cambridgeshire wide system
- System helps make assessments of biodiversity less subjective and allows developers / LAs & conservation organisations to speak a common language when assessing gains / losses
- **Local Plan Policies and Supplementary Planning Documents need to be updated to embed this approach**
- However, good development is more than just about simple calculations – **LNP Developing with Nature Toolkit**

Natural Cambridgeshire
Developing with Nature
Toolkit

Developing with Nature Toolkit

- Prepared by a working group of developers, Local Authority Officers, NGO Ecologists, and landscape / ecology consultants.
- Sets out a best practice approach to the integration of biodiversity throughout the development process.
- Helps identify local priorities for biodiversity enhancement at both strategic and development scales.
- If followed would give assurance to LPAs that a development has properly integrated biodiversity (and should be able to demonstrate a net gain).
- Scoring system included.
- Currently only applies to Major Development.



10 THINGS TO DO FOR NATURE (Greater Cambridgeshire Developing with Nature Toolkit)

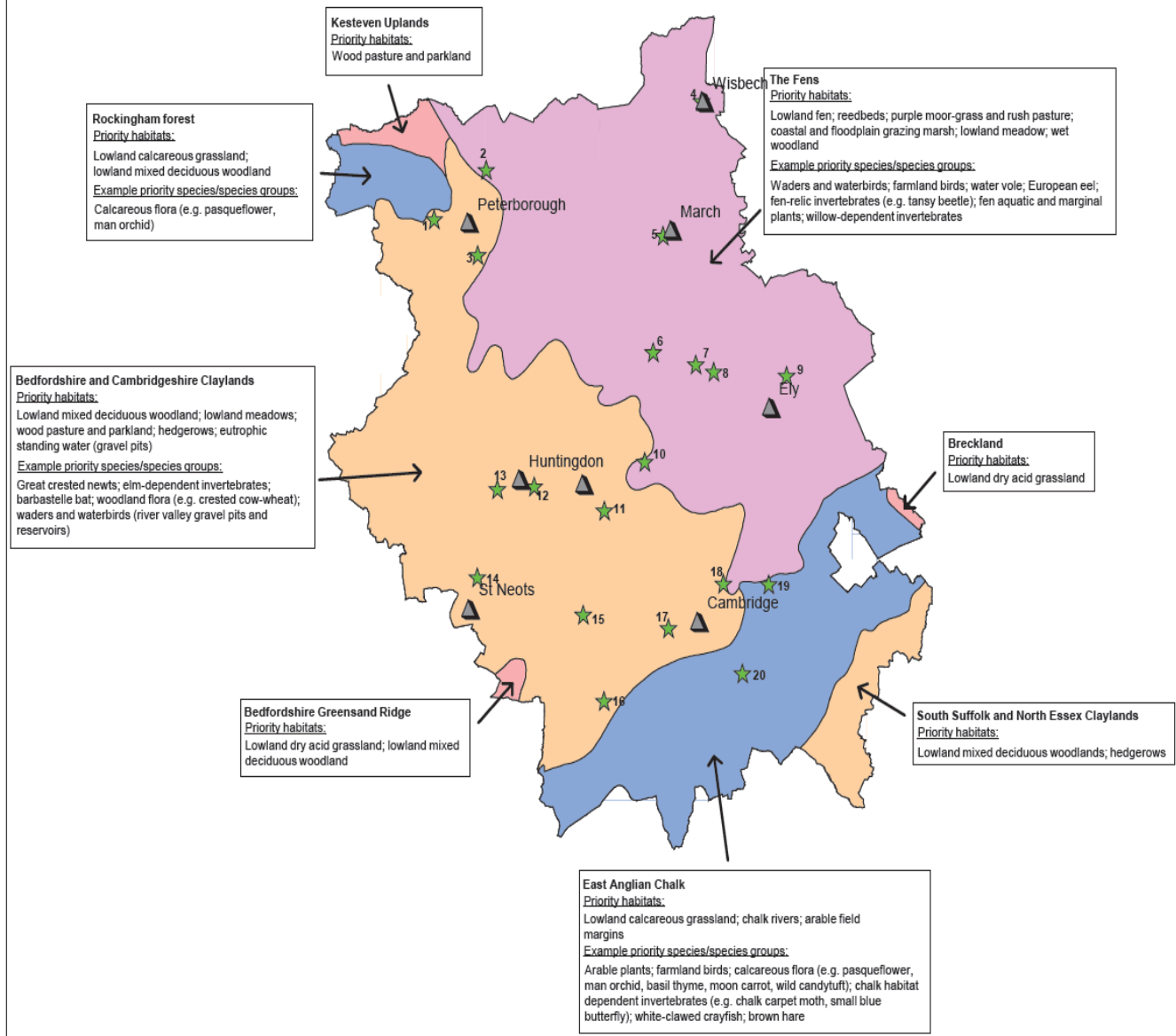
	Site selection (strategic definition)	Strategic planning (concept design)	Detailed planning (technical design)	Implementation (construction)	Long-term management (in use)
1 Demonstrably avoid impacts on irreplaceable biodiversity, or locating development where it would cause significant damage to protected sites, priority habitats or the favourable conservation status of priority species					
2 Engage local nature conservation organisations and other local experts throughout the development process					
3 Appoint professional ecological expertise at the start of the concept design process (this can help facilitate engagement with local experts)					
4 Understand the context of the development site within the wider landscape and ecological networks so that it contributes to strategic green infrastructure and enhancement of the natural environment beyond its boundaries, including the network of protected sites, and priority and locally important habitats and species					
5 Plan green and hard infrastructure at the same time and retain existing natural features in situ. Provide sufficient quantity and quality of green infrastructure to deliver quality of place, provide accessible natural greenspace, enhance natural capital, & achieve a net gain in biodiversity					
6 Provide Sustainable Urban Drainage systems with source control measures and integral wildlife features. Ensure buildings and landscape designs are highly water efficient with use of grey water systems integral. Contribute to Water Framework Directive objectives for nearby water bodies					

10 THINGS TO DO FOR NATURE (Greater Cambridgeshire Developing with Nature Toolkit)

	Site selection (strategic definition)	Strategic planning (concept design)	Detailed planning (technical design)	Implementation (construction)	Long-term management (in use)
7	At the start of the planning process, undertake a biodiversity accounting exercise (e.g. using Defra Net Gain (Offsetting) Metric). Quantify changes in biodiversity, including areas and quality of habitats to be lost, affected, enhanced or created and impacts on populations and distribution of priority and locally important species. Identify those habitats and species / groups of species for which positive conservation action will be undertaken (above and beyond mitigation or legal statutory requirements).				
8	Demonstrate a clear rationale for landscape design including how landscape character has been followed, the rationale for choice of tree, shrub and other species, and how locally native species will be used. Avoid the use of invasive non-native species in landscaping schemes.				
9	Provide the full range of breeding sites, shelter, and all year round food resources within the development and its immediate vicinity for those species or groups identified for positive conservation action in the biodiversity audit.				
10	Demonstrate continuity of management of important natural features from site acquisition, during construction and throughout the lifetime of the development. Green infrastructure should be provided in an early phase in a development				

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 - Labels for National Character Are
 - National Character Areas
 - Districts

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John Clare Country (Peterborough part of Rockingham Forest)
Priority habitats:
 Lowland calcareous grassland; lowland mixed deciduous woodland; wood pasture and parkland; hedgerows

Green arrows show ecological network area continues beyond county boundary.

The Nene
Priority habitats:
 Lowland meadows; coastal and floodplain grazing marsh; wet woodland

Nene Valley
Priority habitats:
 Lowland meadows; coastal and floodplain grazing marsh; wet woodland

Great Ouse Wetland
Priority habitats:
 Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh; reedbeds; eutrophic standing water (gravel pits)

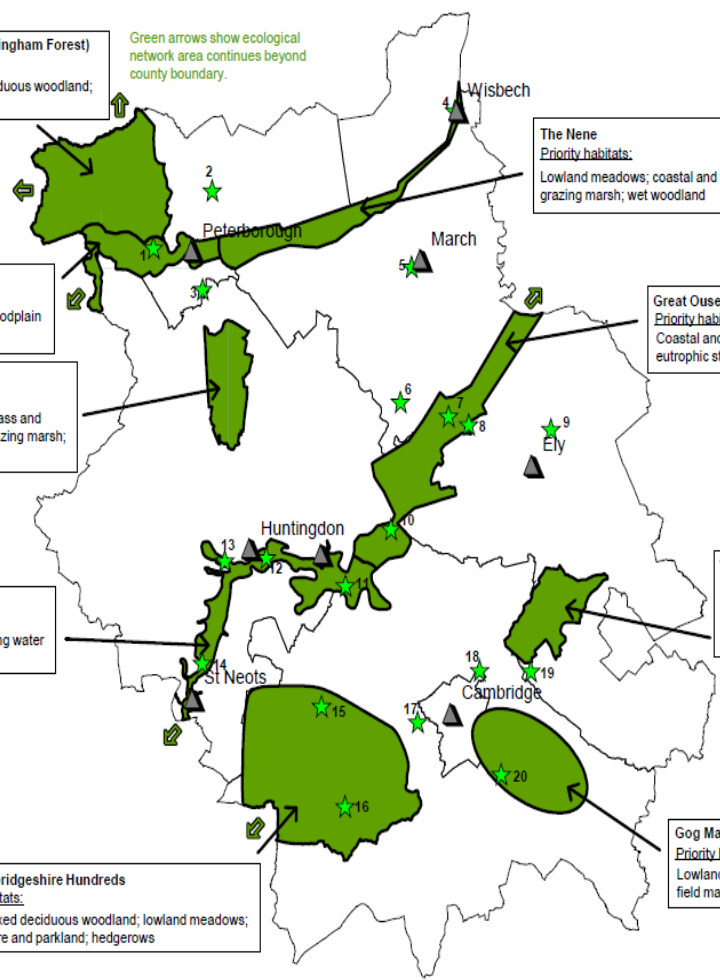
Great Fen
Priority habitats:
 Lowland fen; reedbeds; purple moor-grass and rush pasture; coastal and floodplain grazing marsh; lowland meadow; wet woodland

Wicken Fen
Priority habitats:
 Lowland fen: reedbeds; purple moor-grass and rush pasture; coastal and floodplain grazing marsh; lowland meadow; wet woodland

Ouse Valley
Priority habitats:
 Lowland meadows; eutrophic standing water (gravel pits); wet woodland

Gog Magogs Countryside Area
Priority habitats:
 Lowland calcareous grassland; arable field margins

West Cambridgeshire Hundreds
Priority habitats:
 Lowland mixed deciduous woodland; lowland meadows; wood pasture and parkland; hedgerows



Within Development Red-line Boundary:

- **Provide the full range of breeding sites, shelter and all year round food resources within the development and its immediate vicinity for those species or groups of species identified for positive conservation action in the biodiversity accounting exercise**
- Choose from the following list of species (and any other species / groups identified from the biodiversity audit). The selections should be justified as appropriate to the context and location of the development including opportunities for enhancement of biodiversity:
 - Garden birds including house sparrows and swifts;
 - Urban mammals including bats and hedgehogs;
 - Freshwater species including amphibians and water voles;
 - Specialist invertebrates (local Greater Cambridgeshire priorities include bees, other pollinating and nectar feeding species, species of open mosaic habitats, and elm and willow dependent species);
 - Farmland birds;
 - Arable plants
- Score highest if provide for 3 of the above species groups, medium score if provide for two groups, and lowest if only provide for 1 group
- Separate scoring for integration of biodiversity in SUDs or into landscaping and tree planting schemes

Developing with Nature Toolkit

Next Steps:

- Developing with Nature toolkit launched **October 2018**
- Local Authorities, LEP and Developers sign up to use
- Embed use of toolkit throughout Cambridgeshire & Peterborough – formally linked to planning (through Local Plan policies, validation checklists, Supplementary Planning Documents, or other mechanism)
- Goes alongside use of Biodiversity Impact Assessment Calculators to demonstrate measurable Net Gain
- LNP Developing with Nature working group to:
 - Design & manage charter mark & award system
 - Develop case studies and sharing best practice
 - Adapt toolkit for small / medium developments (10 to 99 homes)