

EXAMINATION IN PUBLIC (EIP) OF THE BASINGSTOKE & DEANE LOCAL PLAN

Hearing Statement On Behalf of Natural Basingstoke (NB)

Hearing Session:

Addressing: Issue 10 Environment Q20 EM4 Biodiversity

20. The environment:

20.1 Do policies EM4-5 provide a clear and integrated framework for conserving, managing and increasing the Borough's green infrastructure, bio-diversity and other environmental assets?

ISSUE 10 EM4 BIODIVERSITY

1. Local Plan and Policy are not effective or consistent with national policy for biodiversity sustainability.
 - a. NB does not set out a strategic approach in the Local Plan to describe how it will manage, NPPF114, the council's responsibilities and obligations for biodiversity in urban and rural areas (NERC Act, new development, living landscapes, green infrastructure); how it will partner local organisations and neighbouring authorities or, how it will raise awareness and increase community involvement.
 - b. Para 6.20 does not set out clearly the role and relationships between the authority, the **Local Nature Partnership (LNP)** NPPF165, 180 and the **Local Enterprise Partnership (LEP)** NPPF180 for improving biodiversity;
 - c. There are no Local Plan targets or timescales for biodiversity net gains which should be "*significant*"¹, linked to national targets (Biodiversity 2020) and UK Indicators², nor commitment to measuring success against targets NPPF117. Policy Para 6.22 makes reference only to "*....seek to avoid a net loss in biodiversity.....* " .

¹ **Appendix 1** PPG ID: 8-007-20140306 Biodiversity

² **Appendix 2** UK Biodiversity Indicators

- d. The planning policy and overall process is not positively encouraging the securing of opportunities for net gains from development applications or other related opportunities.

HOW TO MAKE PLAN SOUND

1. Positive policy statements should be incorporated to make clear that development proposals with respect to priority, notable and other protected species should;
 - a. promote the protection and recovery of sustainable and new populations and their ability to move through the landscape;
 - b. deliver net gains from development, fully mitigate or fully compensate ahead of development if achievable;
 - c. encourage opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments NPPF118.
2. NPPF114. The Local Plan should set out a strategic approach in their Local Plans not just to the formation of networks of biodiversity but for their protection, enhancement and ongoing management. To NB as well as the above this includes
 - a. Approach to integration of (urban and rural) networks in the longer term
 - b. Responsibilities of authority for planning, delivery and management
 - c. Organisation, skills and resources required
3. NPPF114 The strategic approach should also relate to raising awareness in biodiversity and increase community involvement to deliver a sustainable, biodiverse natural environment delivering ecosystem services whose benefits people value and challenges people learn to appreciate.
4. We propose that there should be a breakdown of targets and measures of success between; existing obligations (NERC Act), new development, landscape scale priority habitat restoration and re-creation for priority, notable and other protected species. There needs to be a calculation of losses as well as gains both defined. Targets and measures of change for which there are formal national indicators derived to support Biodiversity 2020 and international commitments using UK Indicators³. The following are proposals for local monitoring intended to fit within the national framework:

³ **Appendix 2** UK Biodiversity Indicators.

- a. Change in priority, notable and other protected species abundance and distribution across network (relates to changes in priority habitats, extents, distribution, condition and connectivity).
 - b. Changes in community awareness by age group, monitoring of participation in educational and other activities and extent of volunteering.
- 5. Assess available data and acquire missing data on priority, notable and other protected species for a development site and in the area and assess conditions that affect populations and movement as a standard process as is the case for any other infrastructure evaluation. Include opportunities for restoration or re-creation of priority habitats contributing to species expansion.
- 6. **Amend Para 6.21.** The council will be guided in this enabling approach by actively pursuing opportunities for biodiversity improvement *that will exceed the requirements of Section 40 of the NERC Act*, within allocated sites *and adjacent areas* and within the relevant Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOA) and Biodiversity Priority Areas (BPA), as defined in the Borough's Green Infrastructure (GI) Strategy.
- 7. **Amend F)** There will be no harm to the integrity of linkages or potential linkages between designated sites and key habitats.
- 8. **Proposed Definition of Significant Harm.** Significant harm is the threshold that justifies an intervention in the best interests of maintaining priority, notable and other protected species diversity, sustainable populations and capacity to move through the landscape including to repopulate new areas.
- 9. **Proposed Definition of Net Gain (and net losses).** Overall changes to; priority (and other) habitats as well as species diversity, abundance and distribution (capacity to move through the landscape). This should be calculated after all positive and negative influences in land use recognised by the planning system have been fully accounted for.

Changes in priority (and other wildlife) habitats might include, the total area of land for which a change of use occurs or is permitted and a calculation of gain or loss.

10. **Proposed Definition of Compensation.** Compensation should be designed and implemented to achieve *in situ*, measurable conservation outcomes that can reasonably be expected to result in no net loss and preferably a net gain of biodiversity. Losses and gains will always, at some level, be biologically dissimilar.
11. **Local Plan Glossary** should include definitions of terms like; Ecological Network, Wildlife Corridor, Stepping Stone; Priority Habitat, Priority Species, and other protected species. It should include definitions of terms used to measure targets and measures of success for biodiversity and habitats. It is noticeable that the Local Plan includes definitions for words like; amenity, housing completions, open space. But not for the above.
12. **Para 6.23** include need to “.....maintain populations *and for affected priority, notable and other protected species their capacity to move through the landscape*”.
13. **Para 6.27** refers to “key habitats” which is otherwise undefined except by reference to Living Landscapes. Priority Habitats are defined along with Priority Species in s41 and will be dominate usage. NB propose that; Priority Habitats, Priority, Notable and Other Protected Species be used, with “Other Protected Species” given a superscript that references relevant legislative lists, perhaps abbreviated, at the bottom of a page.
14. **Landscape and Biodiversity SPD.** NB would like to review this policy in the light of recent planning applications including how policy works in relation to ancient woodland protection and whether there are grounds for a separate provision from that provided for in Appendix 4 Adopted Standards of the Local Plan.

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Natural Basingstoke

Appendix 1 PPG Biodiversity, ID: 8-007-20140306

Note word “*significant*” in last sentence para 1.

Natural Environment
Landscape
Biodiversity, ecosystems and green infrastructure
Brownfield land, soils and agricultural land



Biodiversity, ecosystems and green infrastructure

Paragraph: 007 Reference ID: 8-007-20140306

Is there a statutory basis for planning to seek to minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible?

Yes. [Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006](#) , which places a duty on all public authorities in England and Wales to have regard, in the exercise of their functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. A key purpose of this duty is to embed consideration of biodiversity as an integral part of policy and decision making throughout the public sector, which should be seeking to make a significant contribution to the achievement of the commitments made by Government in its [Biodiversity 2020 strategy](#).

Guidance on statutory obligations concerning designated sites and protected species is published separately because its application is wider than planning and links are provided to external guidance. Local planning authorities should take a pragmatic approach – the aim should be to fulfil statutory obligations in a way that minimises delays and burdens.

The National Planning Policy Framework is clear that pursuing sustainable development includes moving from a net loss of biodiversity to achieving net gains for nature, and that a core principle for planning is that it should contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution.

[Revision date: 06 03 2014](#)

Appendix 2 UK Biodiversity Indicators

http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-4233

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 - C1. Protected areas
 - C2. Habitat connectivity
 - C3a. European habitats
 - C3b. European species
 - C4a. Species - abundance

The Biodiversity Indicators

Indicator number, title, and measures where applicable	Status of indicator	Last updated ¹	Latest data ²	
A1. Awareness, understanding and support for conservation	Finalised	2014	2014	
A2. Taking action for nature: volunteer time spent in conservation	Finalised	2014	2013	
A3. Value of biodiversity integrated into decision making	Under development	2013	Not Applicable	
A4. Global biodiversity impacts of UK economic activity / sustainable consumption	Under development	2014	Not Applicable	
A5. Integration of biodiversity considerations into business activity	A5a. Environmental Management Systems	2014	2012	
	A5b. Environmental consideration in supply chains	2014	2012	
B1. Agricultural and forest area under environmental management schemes	B1a. Area of land in agri-environment schemes	B1a(i) Higher-level or targeted schemes	2014	2013
		B1a(ii) Entry-level type schemes	2014	2013
	B1b. Area of forestry land certified as sustainably managed	Finalised	2014	2014
B2. Sustainable fisheries	Finalised	2014	2012	
B3. Climate change adaptation	Under development	2014	Not Applicable	
B4. Pressure from climate change	Interim measure available	2014	2014	
B5. Pressure from pollution	B5a. Air pollution	B5a(i). Area affected by acidity	2014	2011
		B5a(ii). Area affected by nitrogen	2014	2011

- C4b. Species - frequency
- C5. Birds of the countryside
- C6. Insects of the countryside
- C7. Plants of the countryside
- C8. Mammals of the countryside
- C9a. Animal genetic resources
- C9b. Plant genetic resources
- D1a. Fish size classes
- D1b. Greenhouse gas removal
- D1c. Pollinating insects
- E1. Biodiversity data
- E2. Biodiversity expenditure
- Enquiries
- UK Forum
- **UK Habitats and Species**
- **UK Protected Sites**
- **UK Geoconservation**
- **UK Legislation**

	B5b. Marine pollution		Finalised	2014	2012
	B6. Pressure from invasive species	B6a. Freshwater invasive species		2014	2014
		B6b. Marine (coastal) invasive species	Interim measure available	2014	2014
		B6c. Terrestrial invasive species		2014	2014
	B7. Surface water status		Finalised	2014	2012
	C1. Protected areas	C1a. Total area of protected areas: on-land		2014	2014
		C1b. Total area of protected areas: at-sea	Finalised	2014	2014
		C1c. Condition of Areas / Sites of Special Scientific Interest		2014	2014
	C2. Habitat connectivity		Under development	2014	2007
	C3. Status of European habitats and species	C3a. Status of UK habitats of European importance		2013	2013
		C3b. Status of UK species of European importance	Finalised	2013	2013
	C4. Status of UK priority species	C4a. Status of priority species – relative abundance		2014	2012
		C4b. Status of priority species – frequency of occurrence – insects	Finalised	2014	2011
	C5. Birds of the wider countryside and at sea	C5a. Farmland birds		2014	2013
		C5b. Woodland birds		2014	2013
		C5c. Wetland birds	Finalised	2014	2013
		C5d. Seabirds		2014	2013
		C5e. Wintering waterbirds		2014	2012-13
	C6. Insects of the wider countryside	C6a. Semi-natural habitat specialists		2014	2013
		C6b. Species of the wider countryside	Finalised	2014	2013
	C7. Plants of the wider countryside		Under development	2014	2007
	C8. Mammals of the wider countryside (bats)		Finalised	2014	2013
	C9. Genetic resources for food and agriculture	C9a. Animal genetic resources – effective population size	C9a(i). Native sheep breeds		2014
			C9a(ii). Native cattle breeds	Under development	2014
					2007
	D1. Biodiversity and ecosystem services	D1a. Fish size classes in the North Sea	Finalised	2013	2011
		D1b. Removal of greenhouse gases by UK forests	Interim measure available	2014	2012
		D1c. Status of pollinating insects	Interim measure available	2014	2010
	E1. Biodiversity data for decision making	E1a. Cumulative number of records		2014	2014
		E1b. Number of publicly accessible records at 1km ² resolution or better	Finalised	2014	2014
	E2. Expenditure on UK and international biodiversity	E2a. Public sector expenditure on UK biodiversity		2014	
		E2b. Non-governmental organisation expenditure on UK biodiversity	Finalised	2014	2013-14 financial year (public sector) and 2012-13 (NGOs)
		E2c. UK expenditure on international biodiversity		2014	

¹ This is the year the indicator graph(s) or fiche was last changed (minor typographical changes will not be recorded).

² This is the latest year for which data for this indicator / measure are available.