

Biodiversity Action Plan for Wokingham District 2003-2012



Countryside Service

WOKINGHAM DISTRICT COUNCIL COUNTRYSIDE SERVICE

Progress Report 2008



WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

WOKINGHAM BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN 2003-2012 – PROGRESS REPORT 2008

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Acknowledgements

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1.INTRODUCTION

The Wokingham District Biodiversity Action Plan 2003-2012 was produced as a result of a partnership between the council, local representatives of the statutory agencies, local wildlife trust, the parish and town councils and the local community. This Plan was approved by the Wokingham Borough Council on 13th November 2003 and sets out the Council's policies and actions for protecting and conserving local biodiversity.

The Wokingham District Biodiversity Action Plan 2003-2012 – Progress Report 2008 aims to assess the progress, celebrate successes and highlight areas for further work at the half way stage. The following chapters cover the various habitats dealt with in the Wokingham District Biodiversity Action Plan 2003-2012 itself. In addition there have been a number of achievements not included in the Plan, which have underpinned and contributed to our success.

Community Involvement

During the plan period five new community groups have been established in the borough, Friends of the Emm Brook (FOTEB), Holt Copse Conservation Volunteers (HCCV), Wokingham District Veteran Tree Association (WDVTA), Earley Environment Group (EEG) and Berkshire Reptile and Amphibian Group (BRAG). In addition membership of the Wokingham Biodiversity Forum has increased to 200 during the last 5 years.

Funding

Wokingham Borough Council has financially supported the implementation of Wokingham District Biodiversity Action Plan 2003-2012 through its Countryside Grants budget. Over the last 5 years (since 2003/4) the council with its partners has secured external funding of £160,360 for biodiversity projects in the wider countryside in Wokingham achieving a total spend of £186,718.

| Year | WDC Countryside Grant (£) | External Match Funding (£) | Total spend on biodiversity Projects (£) |
|--------|---------------------------|----------------------------|--|
| 2003/4 | 5460 | 23,673 | 29,184 |
| 2004/5 | 5996 | 24,282 | 30,278 |
| 2005/6 | 5617 | 53,420 | 59,037 |
| 2006/7 | 5961 | 26,753 | 32,714 |
| 2007/8 | 3273 | 32,232 | 35,505 |
| Totals | 26,307 | 160,360 | 186,718 |

Species Actions

The first Wokingham Biodiversity Action Plan 1998 included 17 Species Action Plans (SAP) for the following species; - Stag beetle, bats, barn owl, water vole, loddon lily, otter, smew, gadwall, great crested newt, reed bunting, ragged robin, bog bush cricket, round leaved sundews, nightjar, song thrush, bullfinch and adder. In 2003 it was decided to concentrate action on the

habitats, as most species are entirely reliant on their habitat. Great crested newts, for instance will undoubtedly benefit from the success in creating new ponds in the Borough. In addition work on certain species has continued during the last 5 years and there have been some significant successes.

- Ten artificial otter holts have been installed on the River Loddon.
- 19 barn owl boxes have been erected in the borough and in 5 years 58 barn owl chicks have been counted.
- The number of tower mustard plants at the only Berkshire location has increased from around 40 to 514 in 2007.
- A thriving population of pennyroyal has been maintained at California Country Park.
- Two artificial sand martin nesting walls have been installed providing 90+ nesting holes each. In the first year around 40 breeding pairs used the walls.
- Wokingham District Veteran Tree Project established and so far 850 trees have been recorded. There are currently over 100 volunteers involved in the project.

Summary of Progress

The report shows that we have made good progress with implementing the Wokingham District Biodiversity Action Plan 2003-2012. Of the identified targets 40 (58%) are completed 20 (29%) are underway/ongoing and 9 (13%) have not started. The first 5 years have seen 60 (87%) targets either completed or underway.

2. GLOSSARY OF ABBREVIATIONS

| | |
|-------|--|
| WHS | Wildlife Heritage Site |
| SSSI | Site of Special Scientific Interest |
| LNR | Local Nature Reserve |
| BAP | Biodiversity Action Plan |
| HAP | Habitat Action Plan |
| BARS | Biodiversity Actions Reporting System |
| LDF | Local Development Framework |
| ASNW | Ancient Semi Natural Woodland |
| PAWS | Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites |
| BBOWT | Berkshire Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire Wildlife Trust |
| TVERC | Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre |
| BNCF | Berkshire Nature Conservation Forum |
| FWAG | Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group |
| FRCA | Farming and Rural Conservation Agency |
| FC | Forestry Commission |
| RTPI | Royal Town Planning Institute |
| DEFRA | Department of Environment Farming and Rural Affairs |
| LA | Local Authority |

3. ACTIONS COMMON TO ALL PLANS

Introduction

A number of the targets and the actions required to achieve those targets are common across all the Habitat Action Plans. In order to reduce the amount of work required in monitoring and reporting on the plans, these targets have been grouped together and will be reported on separately rather than within each of the Habitat Action Plans.

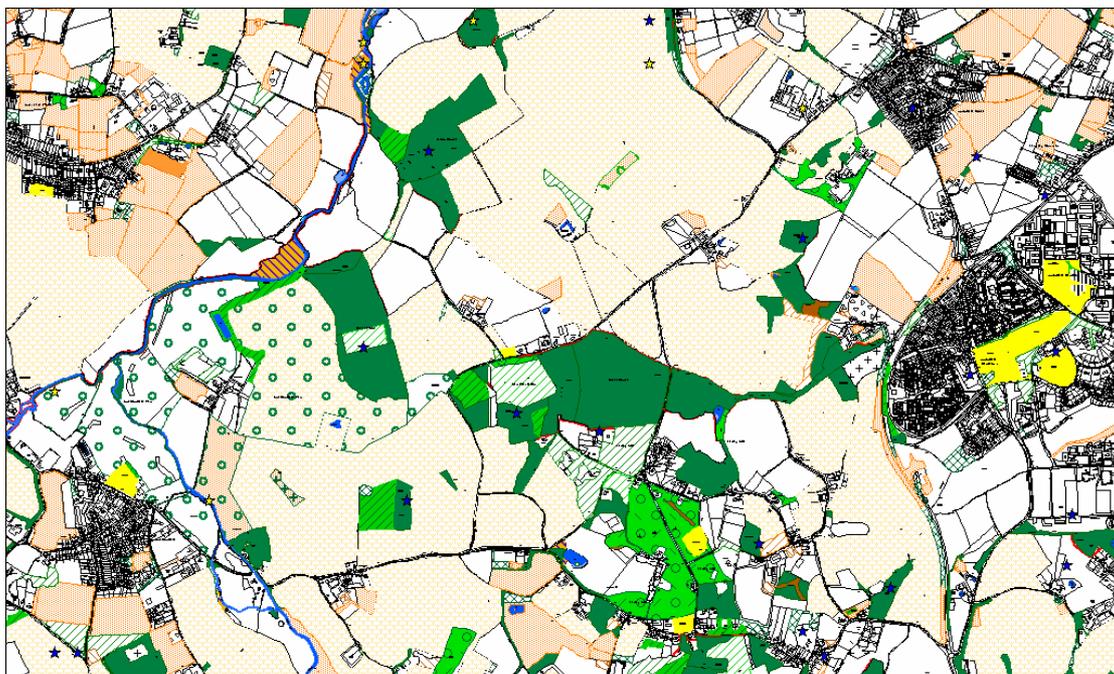
As part of the monitoring process, indicators of success have been defined for each of the actions set in the plan which are used to define when an action has been completed and how successful it was.

Common Actions: Key Successes

- Phase 1 habitat survey carried out.
- Agreement with Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) on rolling programme to review Wildlife Heritage Sites (WHS).
- All planning applications reviewed by Biodiversity Officer
- Strong programme of educational walks/talks/events/articles

Common Actions: Further Work required

- Input to Local Development Plan to ensure that strong policies are included for WHS, habitat/green corridors and associated protected species.
- Roll out effective site condition monitoring programme for Wildlife Heritage Sites.
- Review whether a further action is required to ensure that all council owned WHS have a management plan in place by 2012.



Actions Common to all Plans - Progress

Objective: There is no decline in area or wildlife value of SSSI and WHS for each habitat within the District.

Target: Create comprehensive habitat data management system by 2004.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😞

It was originally planned to create a system at a District level, but this was superseded by the creation of the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC). The responsibility for carrying out the phase 1 habitat survey and adopting databases to monitor Wildlife Heritage Sites was transferred to TVERC with Wokingham retaining responsibility for ensuring that actions were monitored in a way that was compatible with the national biodiversity action reporting system. Progress on all these actions has been delayed, partly due to the transfer to TVERC and partly because the national biodiversity action reporting system (BARS) was not available until 2005. However the Phase 1 habitat survey has now been completed and the adoption of the databases is in progress. At present there is no data on BARS relating to the Wokingham Habitat Action Plans, although data is available at county level. The use of BARS for recording at the District level is to be reviewed.

Target: Ensure that all suitable sites within the District are designated as Wildlife Heritage Sites (WHS) by 2003.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

Again TVERC have taken over some of the actions on this target as part of their responsibility for surveying WHS and, whilst the original dates have slipped, all actions are now back on schedule. A system for recording WHS has been established and data continues to be loaded on to it. TVERC have an agreement with Wokingham Borough Council to review 10 WHS sites per year and assess whether they meet the new criteria. An audit of all farmland owned by Wokingham Borough Council was carried out by TVERC as part of the phase 1 habitat survey to identify any potential Wildlife Heritage Sites.

Target: Ensure that all "developments" affecting Wildlife Heritage Sites are objected to within the relevant consultation processes

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

Both the Wokingham District Local Plan and the Berkshire Structure Plan contain policies on WHS, habitat/green corridors and associated protected species conforming to RTP1 model policies. However the Local Plan is being superseded by the Local Development Framework (LDF), which will not be in place until 2010. There is a WHS policy in

the core LDF strategy, but it needs strengthening. The comprehensive system of green/habitat corridors for District which was scheduled for completion by 2004 has not yet been started. The work for this will be carried out by TVERC and will need to be input into the LDF. On a more detailed level, better progress is being made with planning applications routinely being reviewed by the Biodiversity Officer and information held by TVERC being made available to organisations on request.

Objective: All WHS, SSSI and LA owned sites have achieved either favourable or unfavourable, recovering management status.

Target: Ensure that all Wokingham Borough or Parish/Town council owned WHS have a management plan in place by 2012.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😞

Whilst much progress has been made on drafting of Management Plans for publicly owned sites, progress on a system of site condition monitoring criteria (originally scheduled for completion in 2003) has been limited. TVERC are currently reviewing WHS criteria and a list of condition indicator species will be produced in 2007 using the revised criteria. It is hoped that the first assessment of site condition for the WHS network will now take place by 2010. On the positive side, an inventory of all sites containing both national and local BAP species was created ahead of the scheduled date of 2005 and is regularly updated.

Objective: That the habitats included in the Habitat Action Plan are a valued and appreciated part of our natural heritage.

Target: Promote the use and appreciation of all habitats to the general public

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

The original action was to ensure that at least 10 educational walks/talks/events/articles on each habitat type had been produced by 2012. However no breakdown of these is available by habitat type. An active programme of educational walks/talks/events/articles is carried out by the Countryside Service and other volunteer bodies and individuals; e.g. 39 guided walks had been run by the Countryside Service up to April 2006.

4. TOWNS, VILLAGES & PEOPLE HABITAT ACTION PLAN

Introduction

There has been considerable achievement in getting people more connected with their local environment through courses and consultations. It is also good to see the encouragement and advice being given to the Town and Parish Councils to enable them to carry out their role. The lack of progress in managing areas for biodiversity (including the production of management plans and designation of Local Nature Reserves) is disappointing.

Key Successes

- The growth in membership and involvement of the Biodiversity Forum has been key in involving local groups and individuals more closely with the implementation of the Biodiversity Action Plan. The Forum has also given encouragement to both Town and Parish Councils and local businesses through the presentation of awards in recognition of work carried out to encourage biodiversity.
- The programme of education and training for wildlife specialists, children and adults has given people an opportunity to broaden their knowledge of, and involvement with, the local environment.

Further Work required

- Work needs to be carried out with Town and Parish Councils to identify and overcome the obstacles preventing designation of Local Nature Reserves.
- Continued progress by the Countryside Service in designation of Local Nature Reserves.
- Additional resources need to be secured to enable production of management plans for churchyards, cemeteries, allotments and school grounds.



Towns, Villages & People Habitat Action Plan – Progress

Objective: An active and involved local community that supports and promotes the district’s biodiversity.

Target: To increase the membership of the Biodiversity Forum to 200 by 2012.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 

This target was achieved by 2007.

Target: Ensure that at least 6 local press articles a year mention the Biodiversity Forum/Action Plan.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 

All biodiversity successes have been the subject of an appropriate press release

Target: Promote at least 3 Wildlife training courses per year.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 

39 courses have been provided between 2001 and 2006. The Biodiversity Forum is consulted on the course programme, though consultation could possibly be widened. The courses continue to be well attended.

Target: Produce at least 2 issues a year of the Biodiversity Newsletter, and increase print run to 2000 copies by 2012.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 

The Biodiversity newsletter has been produced twice a year. The target for the print run has been reduced as the newsletter is available on the Council website and is distributed to Forum members and representatives of local groups by email. The total distribution cannot be measured as group representatives may circulate the newsletter further among their group members.

Target: Ensure that all Wokingham District children have access to an appropriate biodiversity focused outdoor educational programme.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 

A programme of activities is published annually. In addition a Wildlife Watch group is run at Dinton Pastures.

Target: Audit the biodiversity work of Parish/Town Councils every 3 years.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

A biodiversity questionnaire was circulated to all Parish & Town Councils in 2003 and 2006 with awards being presented the following year. As a result of the returns, the following councils were commended for their action on biodiversity:

- Special commendation (2004): Earley Town Council
- Commendations (2004): Ruscombe Parish Council, Shinfield Parish Council, Sonning Parish Council, Swallowfield Parish Council, Wokingham Town Council & Wokingham Without Parish Council.
- Commendations (2007): Arborfield and Newland Parish Council, Earley Town Council, Ruscombe Parish Council, Sonning Parish Council, Swallowfield Parish Council, Wokingham Town Council and Wokingham Without Parish Council.

Target: Promote wildlife friendly gardening in the district.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😐

Courses on wildlife gardening were run in 2003 and 2007; there appears to be insufficient demand to run these annually. Funding has not yet been secured for the BBOWT Wildlife Gardening project.

Objective: The amount of urban natural green space and Local Nature Reserves at least matches the English Nature recommendation.

Target: Carry out a survey of urban green spaces to assess current level of provision by 2004.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😐

Initial audit carried out, but data not being maintained annually. There is no rolling improvement programme in place, but the need for enhancements is reviewed as sites identified.

Target: Ensure that all surveyed urban green spaces meeting the relevant criteria are designated as Wildlife Heritage Sites.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

Initial audit carried out by Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre, which is also currently reviewing the criteria that may be used to select Wildlife Heritage Sites based on community value.

Target: Ensure that all relevant new major developments contribute to the provision of urban green space.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

There has been no drop in the area of public open space per 1000 population.

Objective: That the District contains a network of at least 50 Local Nature Reserves.

Target: Encourage and support at least 1 Parish/Town Council a year to designate a Local Nature Reserve.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😞

Only 2 of the Local Nature Reserves identified in the plan (Holt Copse and Swallowfield Meadow) have been designated since 2002. In addition Sonning Parish Council designated Ali's Pond in 2001. No revised schedule is available for the other sites identified in the plan. Wokingham Borough Council's Biodiversity Officer continues to advise councils on ongoing management issues and provides assistance with funding applications.

Target: Ensure that Wokingham Borough Council's Countryside Service designates 5-10 new Local Nature Reserves by 2012.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😐

Pearman's Copse and Keephatch Park have been designated as Local Nature Reserves during the plan period. Need to encourage Borough Council to focus on achieving this target before 2012. Three of the sites identified in the plan have yet to be transferred to the authority.

Objective: That all our urban green spaces/public open spaces (over 2ha) are managed with biodiversity as one of the objectives.

Target: Ensure that at least 10% of our urban parks have an agreed biodiversity management statement by 2012.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😐

A complete audit has not taken place but priority sites have been selected informally. A Management Statement has been prepared for Bluebell Meadow (Winnersh).

Objective: All churchyards, cemeteries, allotments and school grounds are managed with biodiversity as one of the aims.

Target: Ensure that at least 25% of our churchyards, cemeteries and allotments have an agreed management statement by 2012.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 

It has not been possible to find sufficient resources to progress this target. Additional resources will be necessary to achieve this target.

Target: Ensure that at least 10% of our school grounds have an agreed management statement by 2012.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 

It has not been possible to find sufficient resources to progress this target. Additional resources will be necessary to achieve this target.

Objective: All new developments have biodiversity taken into account at the design stage.

Target: Produce guidance material and advice on biodiversity and development for local authority officers, parish councils and developers.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 

A guidance leaflet on biodiversity and development has been produced and the Biodiversity Officer is consulted on all appropriate plans, policies and planning applications

Target: Develop a network of strategic biodiversity corridors by 2004.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 

Indicative biodiversity corridors have been identified, but, under the timetable for the Local Development Framework, these will not be adopted until 2008. Once this has happened, then any development that adversely affects the integrity of these corridors can be objected to as part of the planning process.

5. WOODLAND HABITAT ACTION PLAN

Introduction

There has been a measure of success, particularly in the protection and management of publicly owned woods. Good progress has been made on restoring conifer plantations to broad-leaf woodland.

Key Successes

- New developments are not resulting in a net loss of woodland.
- Conversion of mixed woodland to native broad-leaf is underway
- TVERC are providing much information to progress the HAP



Further work required

More information is needed from local woodland owners on management and new planting.

Need to progress new planting sites to meet 2012 targets.



Woodland Habitat Action Plan – Progress

Objective: There is no decline in area of Ancient Semi Natural Woodland and Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites within the district.

Target: Ensure that all Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW) and Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (PAWS) sites within the District of over 1ha are designated as Wildlife Heritage Sites by 2003

Progress 2002 - 2007 overview 😞

This has not happened. The Berkshire Biodiversity Co-ordinator is currently exploring funding a survey of all ASNW and PAWS of 0.25-2.0ha within Berkshire.

Target: Ensure that all development adversely affecting ASNW or PAWS sites is objected to within the planning consultation process

Progress 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

The Biodiversity Officer is consulted during the planning consultation process and there has been no decline in the area of ASNW or PAWS due to development pressure.

Target: Support the Forestry Commission Native Woodland Management Plan concept on all ASNW and PAWS sites within the district

Progress 2002 – 2007 overview 😐

This is happening. PAWS planted by Forestry Commission (FC) in the 1960's can be sensitively restored. There is a need to revise the wording of this target to fit in with the new FC plans.

Objective: Total area of woodland in the District is increased from 14% to 17%

Target: Instigate a phase 1 habitat survey of the entire District by 2003

Progress 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

TVERC have produced a habitat map from aerial mapping.

Target: Plant 50ha of new native broad-leaved woodland within the District by 2012

Progress 2002 – 2007 overview 😐

In the mid to late 1990's there was a flourish of woodland planting within the District. The District Council planted 35ha on its own land and secured 13ha of wet woodland at Sandford Farm after mineral

extraction. Since then only relatively small schemes have come forward totalling 10.6ha over 4 sites.

Target: Ensure that no development within the district results in a net loss of woodland area or increased fragmentation of woodlands.

Progress 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

Achieved through the planning process. Key success was old Met Office site where woodland was retained. Buffer zones and corridors have been created.

Target: Identify priority areas for future woodland planting by 2003

Progress 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

This will be done by TVERC by 2008 under the Habitat Opportunity Mapping project.

Objective: All PAWS sites within the district are replanted with native broad-leaved woodland.

Target: Ensure that all District, Parish and Town council owned PAWS have started the process of restoring to native broad-leaved species by 2010

Progress 2002 – 2007 overview 😞

There are no known sites

Target: Encourage Forest Authority where possible to make restoration to native broadleaves a condition of grant aid.

Progress 200 –2007 overview 😊

The Forestry Commission has done this. The Woodland Grant Scheme is for broadleaf woodland

Target: Obtain survey data on the Ancient Woodland Inventory from English Nature by 2002

Progress 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

Incorporated in the Berkshire habitat mapping project.

Target: Advise at least 10% of private PAWS landowners on appropriate management by 2010

Progress 2002 – 2007 overview 😞

An inventory is needed. Forestry Commission might know how many are under restoration

Objective: Broad-leaved woodland increased from 62% to 76% of the total woodland area within the district

Target: Commence the conversion of 25ha of mixed woodland to native broad-leaves by 2010

Progress 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

Three sites totalling 16ha are currently under conversion. Pinewood (6ha, WDC); Hewlett Packard (8ha, private); Ashdale Park Woods (2ha, private)

Target: Ensure that all new plantings are of locally appropriate native broad-leaved species

Progress 2002 –2007 overview 😊

This is taking place where Wokingham Borough Council are involved.

Target: Identify priority mixed woodland sites for heath-land restoration by 2002.

Progress 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

Included in Heathland Habitat Action Plan

Objective: All ASNW, PAWS and WHS woodlands have achieved either favourable or unfavourable recovering management status.

Target: Ensure that at least 10% of the number of ASNW, PAWS and WHS woodland sites have achieved either favourable or unfavourable, recovering management status by 2010

Progress 2002 – 2007 overview 😐

TVERC are currently undertaking a review of WHS selection criteria and this will include site condition monitoring. Due to be available by 2008.

Target: Ensure that at least 10% of private WHS woodland owners have an appropriate management plan in place by 2010.

Progress 2002 – 2007 overview 😞

There has been little progress on this target. However in 2008 it is hoped that a grant application will be made to DEFRA to establish a local Biomass Infrastructure Scheme. If successful, this scheme should encourage private woodland owners to introduce traditional management of their woods. At the time of writing, approx 50 acres of private woodland (2 separate woods) is being considered for participation.

Target: Ensure that all District, Town and Parish Council owned woodlands have an appropriate management plan in place by 2010

Progress 2002 – 2007 overview 

All Borough or Town and Parish Council owned woodland have appropriate management plans except for Maiden Erlegh Lakes LNR (Maiden Erlegh Lakes is however in favourable condition) and Hogwood Shaw WHS (WBC)

6. GRASSLAND HABITAT ACTION PLAN

Introduction

There have been a number of practical achievements against this plan, particularly regarding the creation and restoration of existing grassland sites, and the number of sites with management plans. Special thanks are due to the Parish Councils and private landowners involved in these projects.

Key Successes

- Over 30ha of grassland restoration projects are underway within the borough.
- Management plans produced for all Borough, Town and Parish council-owned grassland sites
- Farmland biodiversity is now monitored on countywide basis by the Berkshire Farmland Biodiversity Monitoring report, which is now produced by the Berkshire Nature Conservation Forum (BNCF) annually.



Further Work required

- Developing an agreed site condition monitoring methodology.
- More progress securing restoration and management of privately owned grassland WHS, especially those on chalk.



Grassland Habitat Action Plan – Progress

Objective: Total area of semi-improved grassland being managed with nature conservation as a priority is increased from 32.5ha to 300ha.

Target: Identify priority areas for future grassland re-creation by 2002, 2006 & 2012.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

Currently working on informal list of known sites. However the Habitat Opportunity Mapping Project should guide future efforts.

Target: Re-create 30ha of neutral/chalk grassland within the District by 2012.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

Restoration has commenced on five grassland sites in the District - Wyvols Court Farm (8ha), Viking Field (7ha), Clare's Green Field (7ha), Bluebell Meadows (1.5ha), Swallowfield Meadow (1ha) and Sindlesham Meadows (7ha). Our target has already been achieved.

Objective: All unimproved grassland SSSI, WHS and LA owned grassland sites have achieved either favourable or unfavourable recovering management status.

Target: Ensure that at least 70% of the number of unimproved grassland WHS and SSSI sites have achieved either favourable or unfavourable, recovering management status by 2012.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😐

There is currently no agreed methodology to undertake site condition monitoring.

Target: Ensure that at least 10% of private WHS grassland owners have an appropriate management plan in place by 2012.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😐

Although relatively little progress has been made on this target, Shepperlands Farm WHS, a privately owned site now has a management plan.

Target: Ensure that all District, Town and Parish Council owned grasslands have an appropriate management plan in place by 2012.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

All Council owned grassland sites within the borough now have appropriate management plans. This includes sites owned by

Wokingham Town Council, Sonning Parish Council and Swallowfield Parish Council.

Objective: All agricultural grasslands are managed within the confines of an agri-environment scheme.

Target: Produce a Farmland Habitat Action Plan in partnership with FWAG, FRCA and the local farming community by 2004.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 

The Berkshire Farmland Biodiversity Monitoring report is now produced by BNCF annually.

Target: Ensure that at least 20% of agricultural grasslands are covered by the Countryside Stewardship scheme by 2010.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 

Changes to the agri-environment scheme have made this objective very difficult to achieve, and it is unlikely that it will be included in any future plans.

7. WETLAND HABITAT ACTION PLAN

There have been some tremendous practical achievements within this plan, particularly regarding the creation and restoration of ponds; special thanks are due to the Parish Councils involved in these projects. It is encouraging to see the various councils taking a lead in such projects and in the creation of management plans to ensure that these sites remain in a healthy state.

Key Successes

- 17 new ponds have been created and 7 old ponds restored.
- It is likely that the target for 10ha of new reedbed by 2012 will be exceeded.
- Management plans have been produced for all Borough, Town and Parish council-owned wetland sites.



Further Work required

- Minerals policies need to be incorporated into the Minerals Local Development Framework.



Wetland Habitat Action Plan – Progress

Objective: The river floodplains are maintained as fully functioning wetland corridors.

Target: Establish an inventory of floodplain site landuse by 2012.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 

This has been achieved through the survey carried out by the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre.

Target: Support catchment wide initiatives for biodiversity, recreation and flood defence.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 

A strategy for the Loddon Catchment area was published on schedule and a steering group established to discuss any issues that arise.

Target: Maintain and enhance where appropriate floodplain functioning

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 

Policies have been incorporated into the local structure plans, but will also need incorporating into the Local Development Framework when it is produced. Links have been established with the Environment Agency to discuss work relating to flood control.

Objective: All wetland WHS, SSSI and LA owned sites have achieved either favourable or unfavourable, recovering management status.

Target: Ensure that at least 10% of private WHS wetland owners have an appropriate management plan in place by 2012

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 

Management plans for Moor Green Lakes and the reserve at Thames Valley Business Park have been produced and are due for review in 2012. The plan for Thames Valley Business Park has not yet been implemented. Work is progressing to provide other site owners with assistance in producing management plans.

Target: Ensure that all District, Town and Parish Council owned wetlands have an appropriate management plan in place by 2012.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 

Management plans have been produced for Grazeley and Ruscombe Village Ponds (both to be reviewed in 2008) and the Marshes, Riseley

(to be reviewed in 2012). All Wokingham Borough Council Countryside Service sites have management plans in place.

Objective: All mineral extraction sites contribute a net benefit to wetland biodiversity.

Target: Ensure that The Minerals Local Plan for Berkshire takes account of this aspiration.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😞

This has been incorporated into the Minerals Local Plan, but policies also need to be incorporated into the Minerals Local Development Framework

Objective: Increase area of reedbed from 10ha to 100ha, including 2 of at least 10ha and 1 of at least 20ha.

Target: Create at least 10ha of new reedbed by 2012.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

Agreement has been gained to include 10ha of new reedbed in the restoration plan for the gravel extraction site at Manor Farm, Finchampstead. The timescales for the creation of this reedbed will depend on when gravel extraction is completed. In addition, advantage has been taken of new opportunities that have been identified for the creation of new reedbed at Sandford Farm and Lavell's Lake.

Objective: Maintain a network of at least 100 non-garden ponds in favourable condition and integrated into the wider countryside.

Target: Audit Districts pond resource by 2012

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😞

The production of a list of existing ponds has been delayed, but the programme of Great Crested Newt surveys has continued with a report being produced annually.

Target: Excavate at least 5 new ponds and restore at least 5 old ponds by 2012.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 

15 new ponds have been created since the Action Plan was published:

- 2 at the Marshes in Riseley
- 1 at Clare's Green Field
- 2 at Whistley Mill
- 1 at Black Boy junction
- 1 at Shepperlands Farm
- 3 at the Moors, Finchampstead
- 1 at the Hatch farm Diaries Winnersh
- 2 at Bluebell Meadows in Winnersh
- 2 at the Millennium Arboretum in Winnersh

2 ponds were also created on the Speedway Heath at California Country Park at the end of 2002.

Ponds at Grazeley (Village Pond), Grazeley Road Three Mile Cross, Ruscombe Woods, Ruscombe (Village Pond), Castle End Road (Ruscombe), Bluebell Meadows and Clare's Green Field were all restored and management plans put in place. More ponds are being identified as suitable for restoration; work will take place on these when funding becomes available and ground conditions are suitable.

8. HEATHLAND HABITAT ACTION PLAN

Introduction

There has been a lot of progress made in conserving and enhancing the Borough's heathland in the first 5 years of this plan's implementation. One area of concern is that although management plans have been produced for all of the key sites, there has been reluctance on the part of some of the site owners to implement them.

Key Successes

- California/Longmoor Bog has been restored to favourable status and is now being grazed.
- An assessment of Gorrick Plantation has been successfully undertaken.



Further Work required

- The key to future progress is ensuring that the management plans that have been produced are implemented.



Heathland Habitat Action Plan – Progress

Objective: Identify priority areas for future heathland re-creation by 2002, 2006 and 2012

Target: Identify sites for restoration to heathland within the plan period 2001-6 by 2003

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

All sites suitable for restoration within the Borough have been assessed.

Target: Identify sites for restoration to heathland within the plan period 2006-12 by 2006

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😞

This target has not been achieved as the heathland restoration sites originally identified have not all been completed.

Target: Identify sites for restoration to heathland within the plan period 2012-22 by 2012

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😐

Completion of this target is not required until 2012.

Objective: Re-create 20ha of heathland within the district by 2012

Target: Continue development of heathland restoration/re-creation project at Simons Wood

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😐

Whilst there has been some activity on this site, it is on too small a scale to fully meet the target.

Target: Undertake restoration/re-creation of heathland at Heathlake LNR by 2006

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😞

This site is awaiting direction from Natural England and therefore whilst a small amount of restoration was achieved pre-plan, very little has been achieved since then.

Target: Investigate potential heathland restoration at Gorrick plantation by 2006

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

A report has been produced identifying the potential for restoring heathland to this site.

Target: Undertake restoration/re-creation of heathland on other identified sites by 2012

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

3 hectares of heathland has been recreated at Longmoor Bog and a further hectare has been restored at Shepperlands Farm. There has been no progress at Highwood.

Objective: Ensure that at least 50% of the number of heathland WHS have achieved either favourable or unfavourable recovering management status by 2012

Target: Compile and maintain an inventory of livestock owners in order to facilitate grazing of heathland and grassland sites by 2004

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😐

An inventory has not been formally compiled although Wokingham Biodiversity Officer has a number of contacts for grazing within the Borough.

Objective: Ensure that at least 20% of private heathland WHS owners have an appropriate management plan in place by 2012.

Target: Produce management plan for Simons Wood by 2003

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😐

A plan has been produced for this site but unfortunately the site owners have not yet accepted it.

Target: Produce management plan for heathland at Shepperlands Farm by 2004

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

The site is covered by a Countryside Stewardship Agreement and all of the capital works have been implemented by the landowner in partnership with BBOWT

Target: Assist private heathland WHS owners to produce and implement site management plans.

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

Management plan has been drafted and implemented for Shepperlands Farm WHS

Objective: Ensure that all District, Town and Parish Council owned heathland sites have an appropriate management plan in place by 2012.

Target: Produce a management plan for Heathlake LNR

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😐

This project is currently on hold awaiting advice from Natural England.

Target: Produce management plan for Highwood LNR

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

A management plan has been produced for this site.

Target: Produce management plan for Longmoor Bog SSSI

Progress: 2002 – 2007 overview 😊

The management plan for this site was updated in 2006.