

# Natural Environment Policy

## - Preliminary Draft -

### Objective

To deliver, throughout the period of this plan, continuous measured improvement in the quality and diversity of the natural environment.

### WBC LPR and NPPF Policies

SP10

SP11

DM15

### Policies

### Developments

Development will be permitted where it:

- conserves the environment for nocturnal species, through the avoidance of lighting and mitigating the impact of external lighting likely to increase night-time human presence
- avoids the fragmentation and maximising opportunities for restoration, enhancements and connection of linear features which enables strong connectivity of biodiversity as part of an integrated habitat network shall use the map 1 in this plan or subsequent updates as the base case, the opportunities will identify the probable timescale for their achievement
- provides an enhanced wildlife friendly environment by installing such things as hedgehog gates and bat roosts
- protects and enhances wildlife corridors assessments including specific habitat elements, vegetation cover (esp. mature woodland and biodiverse grassland), water sources and an array of structural diversity

## **Nationally Designated Sites**

### Biodiversity Opportunity Area 13

Within the part of BOA13 identified by the Berkshire Local Nature Partnership such development will need to show positive changes for biodiversity. Opportunities will be taken to create links between natural habitats and biodiversity improvements will be actively pursued within Biodiversity Opportunities Areas. Opportunities will be sought to restore, expand, link and buffer existing priority habitats within the BOA including Ancient Woodland, Habitats of Principal Importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity and Local Wildlife Sites.

## **Irreplaceable Habitats**

- Irreplaceable Habit assessments shall include, in addition to the features in WBC policy, water quality management of the chalk streams. monitoring of the flow to maintain “as natural” as possible natural flow patterns

## **Green Infrastructure (GI)**

- Development proposals will be supported where they protect and/or enhance existing GI and individual GI assets and priorities as highlighted on figures x, y, z
- Proposals for development on, or adjacent to, primary green corridors, as defined by map x, must maintain and if possible enhance the function of the corridor. Planning applications for new dwellings must clearly demonstrate how they have incorporated appropriate measures to secure the connectivity of the corridor and the freedom of movement for species on and through the site
- Developments with boundaries to green space shall augment and enrich wildlife corridors and seek to incorporate habitat-rich wildlife areas which deliver net gains in biodiversity
- Opportunities will be taken to create links between natural habitats and biodiversity improvements will be actively pursued
- Opportunities will be sought to restore, expand, link and buffer existing priority habitats including Ancient Woodland, Habitats of Principal Importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity and Local Wildlife Sites

NOTE Discussions need to be had with the Greening Campaign to agree the mapping of existing Green Infrastructure

## **Trees, Woodlands and Hedgerows (TWH)**

- The most up to date biodiversity accounting metric developed by Natural England will be used to establish the base and to determine the contribution of enhancements to the TWH biodiversity
- No development shall lead to a loss or deterioration of protected habitats including Ancient woodlands, Habitats of Principal Importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity and Local Wild life Sites

## **Designated Green Spaces**

Designate the following as Local Green Spaces:

- The Fairground,
- War Memorial island
- The Alfred Palmer Memorial Field
- Windmill Common
- Woodland known as Lampton's Wood

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## **Supporting Text**

### **1. Reference consultations**

- a. July 2022
- b. November 2022

### **2. Key Community Issues**

- Protect and enhance biodiversity, important landscape views and geological features and avoid irreversible losses.
- Ensure new developments do not threaten biodiversity and positively encourage it.
- Create and augment and enrich wildlife corridors incorporating habitat-rich wildlife areas which deliver net gains in biodiversity
- Identification of possible new spaces to be designated 'Green Space'.

### **3. How Green is Our Plan Wildlife and Biodiversity**

Put in Scores

4. Neighbourhood planning in a climate emergency green infrastructure and biodiversity pp 66 – 71
5. Include reference to the need to measures to be taken to reduce point and non-point source pollution including run-off from urban areas and agricultural sites
6. Soil needs to be included in consideration of the loss or deterioration of an irreplaceable habitat - this is generally overlooked. could constitute geodiversity
7. Consideration needs to be given to the impact of a stream of minor developments which collectively might be "major". Insert something about the cumulative effect of multiple minor developments