D9 BIODIVERSITY

OBJECTIVES

D9/a To achieve and maintain a thorough understanding of the existing biodiversity of the Plan area before, during and after construction.

D9/b To minimise any adverse impact on the existing species and habitats of particular biodiversity importance that may arise as a result of development.

D9/c To maximise the biodiversity value of the green spaces that either remain or are created as a result of development, in balance with other functions for these areas.

D9/d To maximise the biodiversity of the urban areas.

D9/e To establish awareness within the local population of the biodiversity within and beyond the urban quarter and thus encourage its protection and enhancement.

D9/f To establish a high degree of connectivity between 'green' areas associated with the development of the urban quarter and the wider countryside, balanced with a need to minimise the adverse impacts to the surrounding ecology that might arise due to the substantial population increase in the area.

D9/g To ensure the maintenance and funding of the resources for biodiversity including the habitats and flora and fauna of merit.

D9/h To make use of existing features of ecological value to contribute to the creation and retention of key habitats within the new development.

D9/i To develop an appropriate management strategy to ensure high quality, robust and effective implementation, adoption and maintenance of the biodiversity areas.

POLICY CE/19 Biodiversity

1. The development of Cambridge East will have regard to the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity, and every opportunity should be taken to achieve positive gain to biodiversity through the form and design of development. As appropriate, measures will include creating, enhancing and managing wildlife habitats and natural landscape. Priority for

habitat creation should be given to sites which assist in achieving targets in the Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs).

2. **Development will not be permitted if it would have an adverse impact on the population or conservation status of protected species or priority species or habitat[1] unless the impact can be adequately mitigated by measures secured by Section 46 agreements or planning conditions.**

3. **Where there are grounds to believe that a development proposal may affect a protected or priority species or habitat, applicants will be expected to provide an adequate level of survey information to establish the extent of the potential impact together with possible alternatives to the development, mitigation schemes and / or compensation measures.**

4. **Development proposals will take account of the impact, either direct or indirect on people's opportunity to enjoy and experience nature on a site together with opportunities to improve public access to nature.**

5. **Exceptionally, where the economic or social benefits of a proposal outweigh harm to an important site or species, the approach will be first to avoid or minimise the harm, then to seek mitigation of the impact, and finally to secure appropriate compensation for any residual impact in order to ensure no net loss of biodiversity. Planning conditions and obligations will be used as appropriate to secure this.**

FOOTNOTE:

[1] 'Priority species or habitats' are those identified in a Biodiversity Action Plan, such as the UK, County or District Biodiversity Action Plans.

D9.1 Cambridge City Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council are both committed to the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and will work with partners to ensure a proactive approach to the protection, enhancement and management of biodiversity in support of the National, County and District Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs). Whilst the need for development will be carefully considered against its impact on biodiversity, opportunities can arise through sensitively located and carefully designed developments. Change can bring about new opportunities where the use of conditions and Section 46 agreements can be used to create new habitats and manage existing ones. The integration of biodiversity within new developments is an important measure of sustainable development.

D9.2 Biodiversity Action Plans provide guidance on targets and actions for habitats and species conservation. Guidance for developers is also set out in the Biodiversity Checklist for Land Use Planners in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough (Cambridgeshire County Council, 2001).

D9.3 'Protected species' are those species of plants and animals that are afforded legal protection, for example, under the European Union Birds Directive and Habitats Directive (these "European Protected Species" are the highest priority for protection), or under Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

D9.4 Policy CE/19 is in accordance with species protection legislation and Biodiversity Action Plan targets, and ensures that any harm to a species or its habitat is weighed against the benefit of a development proposal. The judgement will be made on the basis of the expected effect on the species, the local, national or international significance of the population of the species, and its abundance, rate of decline or degree of threat.

D9.5 In developing such proposals it is important to afford first priority to maintaining and enhancing the existing habitats of species. The translocation of species should only be considered as a measure of last resort. Measures should facilitate the survival of the species' population, reduce disturbance to a minimum and provide adequate habitats to sustain at least the current level of a population.

D9.6 Mitigation may include the provision of specific measures to reduce disturbance, harm or potential impacts, provision of adequate alternative habitats to sustain, and where possible enhance the affected population, or facilitating the survival of individual members of the species.

D9.7 Policy CE/19 also applies to the effects of development on people's opportunity to enjoy and experience nature on a site; development on or adjacent to an important site can have an adverse impact upon people's enjoyment of the site's biodiversity and landscape value, for example, through intrusive visual features, restrictions on access or a significant increase in noise levels.

EXISTING BIODIVERSITY FEATURES

POLICY CE/20 Existing Biodiversity Features

Biodiversity Surveys

1. **The developer will be required to undertake a full programme of ecological survey and monitoring before, during and after construction to establish which areas of biodiversity need protecting and enhancing. The surveys should conclude by proposing strategies for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity. These should be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authorities before the granting of planning permission.**

Management Strategy

2. The developer will be required to develop a management strategy which must be submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authorities before planning permission is granted to ensure high quality, robust and effective implementation, adoption and maintenance of the biodiversity areas.

Retention of Existing Features

3. Existing features including trees in the Park & Ride site will be retained as biodiversity and landscape features.

4. Development will not be permitted if it will have an adverse impact on a Local Nature Reserve (LNR), a County Wildlife Site (CWS), or a City Wildlife Site (CiWS) unless it can be clearly demonstrated that there are reasons for the proposal which outweigh the need to safeguard the substantive nature conservation of the site. Where development is permitted, proposals should include measures to minimise harm, to secure suitable mitigation and/or compensatory measures, and where possible enhance the nature conservation value of the site affected through habitat creation and management.

Biodiversity Surveys

D9.8 The function of the site as an Airport has resulted in a heavily managed landscape and the biodiversity of the area is perceived as poor. However, the grassland of the airport is likely to be of value to the skylark, brown hare and grey partridge all of which are species included within the Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Action Plan. Therefore, in order to protect and enhance the biodiversity of the area it will be essential to undertake full programmes for ecological survey and monitoring before, during and after construction

D9.9 It will be important to draw up strategies for the creation, retention and management of key habitats important for foraging, shelter and mitigation for protected species to ensure and encourage their continued presence within the new development.

Management Strategy

D9.10 As with landscape, a Biodiversity Management Strategy will be needed to maintain and fund biodiversity (see Phasing and Implementation chapter). The land-ownership structure of public open space should be as simple as possible and subject to a single agreed management strategy in order to be comprehensive and all embracing. It will be important that any biodiversity management strategy receives the full support of the local communities who

should be involved in creation and care of habitats. This can be achieved by informing the residents of the town about the biodiversity of the area through community / wildlife groups, on site information boards and local newsletters.

Retention of Existing Features

D9.11 The only areas currently identified as of notable biodiversity value are the local nature reserve adjacent to Barnwell Road and the Park & Ride site, although there may be small pockets elsewhere on the site, such as fringe habitats along watercourses and on roadside verges. There is also potential to find rare arable plants along field boundaries. The wooded area of the Park and Ride together with the associated open grassland habitats have potential for bat roosts, flight paths and feeding areas. All watercourses and their network of ditches and associated hedges and trees provide important corridors for biodiversity moving through the Action Plan Area. Opportunities for habitat linkage to reverse the historic fragmentation of habitats will be valuable in terms of the wider biodiversity.

D9.12 Existing biodiversity features will be incorporated into a green network to facilitate the movement of people and wildlife between them and prevent them becoming isolated.

NEW BIODIVERSITY FEATURES

POLICY CE/21 New Biodiversity Features

Green Corridor

1. **A Green Corridor with water features running through the development from the countryside around Teversham and linking through to Coldham's Common will be created to offer landscape and biodiversity value as well as recreational use.**

The Country Park

2. **A Country Park will be created on land to the north of Teversham linking to the green corridor in order to provide a substantial resource of trees, grassland and other areas of semi-natural vegetation which is sympathetic to local landscape character.**

Green Fingers within the Urban Quarter

3. **Green Fingers will be established through the new urban quarter to provide links to larger scale wildlife habitats such as the Green Corridor and the Country Park.**

Creating Habitats Within The Urban Area

4. Every opportunity will be taken to incorporate features within the urban fabric, through urban design and through the use of sympathetic materials to create wildlife habitats.

New Biodiversity Features

D9.13 A landscape strategy will be developed for Cambridge East (see Landscape chapter) which envisages the creation of a Green Corridor running through the development from the countryside around Teversham and linking through to Coldham's Common, a Country Park on land to the north of Teversham and a network of Green Fingers within the urban quarter. This strategy will also address the opportunities landscaping offers to maintain and create new wildlife habitats thus increasing biodiversity.

D9.14 The landscape strategy suggests that Green Fingers will penetrate into and through the urban area, based on drainage infrastructure and existing landscape features will also act as wildlife corridors. For biodiversity it is the connectivity between these open areas and the links to the larger green areas on the periphery and thence into the open countryside which will enable wildlife to spread and flourish.

Creating Habitats Within The Urban Area

D9.15 There are a number of ways in which biodiversity can be maximised within urban areas, such as by incorporating green roofs, the erection of bat bricks and boxes, bird nest boxes, installation of mammal tunnels and other means of crossing points along severed routes. All of these will need to be designed and installed at appropriate locations to gain maximum net gains. The urban design and landscaping of the town can also contribute through the establishment of a network of open spaces planted with indigenous species which will support a wide range of wildlife.