

## SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL

**REPORT TO:** Conservation Advisory Group  
Conservation, Sustainability &  
Community Planning Portfolio Holder

**AUTHOR/S:** Conservation Manager

27<sup>th</sup> April 2005

### SOUTH CAMBRIDGESHIRE DISTRICT COUNCIL BIODIVERSITY STRATEGY

#### Purpose

1. To update Members on progress for the preparation of the South Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Strategy and to seek members views and support for the vision of the strategy.

#### Effect on Corporate Objectives

2. Quality, Accessible Services	The Biodiversity Strategy will be fundamental to the enhancement of the delivery of high quality planning services.
Village Life	The Strategy will have a significant impact upon the enhancement of village life by ensuring that new development seeks to conserve and further enhance biodiversity.
Sustainability	The Strategy will be fundamental to the achievement of sustainable development by seeking the conservation of priority species and habitats.
Partnership	The Strategy outlines the current extent of external and internal partnerships. Hopefully the Strategy will act as a catalyst for the forging of further partnerships.

#### Background

3. On 26<sup>th</sup> January 2005 the Conservation Advisory Group considered a report on the developing "Biodiversity Strategy" which is designed to be statement of the Council's policy towards the preservation and enhancement of the district's biodiversity. An amended draft is now nearing completion and will be shortly presented for discussion with members of the CAG sub-group who have agreed to scrutinise the document.
4. The intention is that the Biodiversity Strategy will be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) as part of the family of SPDs prepared in support of the new Local Development Framework (LDF). The revised draft has been reviewed by the colleagues in the Planning Policy team, who confirm support for the approach being taken.
5. The aim is to adopt the document by November 2006. The Biodiversity Strategy cannot be formally adopted as an SPD in advance of the LDF.

#### Considerations

6. The Biodiversity Strategy will be an integral part of the LDF, establishing both the Council's philosophy and action with respect to biodiversity conservation. This is based upon the identified need to strengthen biodiversity conservation and to produce a suite of specific 'biodiversity policies' to guide both its regulatory, development control responsibilities and its more pro-active initiatives.

7. The overall structure of the Biodiversity Strategy has been significantly changed in the light of CAG members' previous comments. The intention is to develop the strategy from the following underlying policy statements which members are now asked to consider and support or comment upon.

<p><b>Biodiversity Statement 1:</b> <i><b>Biodiversity Gain</b></i></p>	<p>In undertaking its duties and implementing its daily functions the District Council will strive to conserve and further enhance biodiversity, and to contribute towards sustainable development. Biodiversity gain should be seen as the ultimate goal.</p>
<p><b>Biodiversity Statement 2:</b> <i><b>Green Space Access</b></i></p>	<p>The District Council will endeavour to adopt the English Nature Open Space Standard as a long-term target in addition to the minimum Public Open Space requirement as proposed within the Local Develop Framework for development proposals.</p>
<p><b>Biodiversity Statement 3 :</b> <i><b>Biodiversity Guidance</b></i></p>	<p>The District Council will provide guidance on biodiversity issues within the development control process. The South Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Site Checklist will be used as a planning tool in order to secure high quality applications.</p>
<p><b>Biodiversity Statement 4 :</b> <i><b>Biodiversity Partnerships</b></i></p>	<p>The District Council will actively seek partnership opportunities in order to progress actions contained within National, County and the South Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs).</p>
<p><b>Biodiversity Statement 5:</b> <i><b>Biodiversity Action</b></i></p>	<p>The District Council will continue to fund the Wildlife Enhancement Scheme at the current funding level in order to :</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1) Facilitate the achievement of BAP targets.</li> <li>2) Encourage a diverse range of wildlife enhancement projects, with both private and public bodies.</li> <li>3) Promote the scheme across the whole district.</li> </ol>
<p><b>Biodiversity Statement 6:</b> <i><b>Biodiversity Promotion</b></i></p>	<p>The District Council will use its position to ensure the general positive promotion of biodiversity conservation and the associated benefits that it can bring to an individual's health and community.</p>

### Options

8. The Conservation Advisory Group are asked to either :
- a. Consider the presented draft "policy statements" and recommend their adoption as the fundamental basis for the Biodiversity Strategy.
- Or

- b. To consider the presented draft “policy statements” and recommend appropriate revisions or additions to ensure that the emerging strategy reflects members’ biodiversity objectives.

### **Financial Implications**

9. The production of the Biodiversity Strategy will be funded from the existing departmental resources.

### **Legal Implications**

10. The Biodiversity Strategy is to be adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document in support of the Local Development Framework and the statutory Local Plan.

### **Staffing Implications**

11. None specific.

### **Risk Management Implications**

12. Failure to complete the publication and adoption of the Biodiversity Strategy may result in a lack of clear guidance and missed opportunities for biodiversity conservation within the district.

### **Consultations**

13. The Planning Policy team has been consulted on the emerging content of the Local Biodiversity Policies section of the Biodiversity Strategy. The Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Partnership has been consulted on the South Cambs BAP.
14. The following bodies are proposed for future consultation: all Parish Councils, Cambridgeshire County Council, Go East, Cambridge Horizons, Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Partnership, the Wildlife Trust and relevant amenity groups.

### **Conclusions/Summary**

15. Members will be aware of the increasing need to ensure greater level of conservation and further enhancement of biodiversity in order to ensure sustainable development in the context of an increasing need for development in South Cambridgeshire. Fundamental to the achievement of biodiversity conservation is the establishment of appropriate guidance and planning policies as well as facilitating pro-active action to enhance the potential for wildlife development.
16. The Biodiversity Strategy will, therefore, be fundamental to support and implement the emerging policy framework and will consequently have a major role to play in both conserving biodiversity and guiding the management and creation of new habitats, inline with biodiversity action plan targets.

### **Recommendations**

17. The Conservation Advisory Group are requested to consider the above policy statements (para. 7 above) and recommend that the Conservation, Sustainability and Community Planning Portfolio Holder agrees to the adoption of the presented draft “policy statements” as the fundamental basis for the Biodiversity Strategy to enable the strategy to be progressed towards the consultation stage.

**Background Papers:**

the following background papers were used in the preparation of this report :

- “Developing Effective Biodiversity Policies” presented to the Conservation Advisory Group 23<sup>rd</sup> May 2003.
- “South Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Strategy. CAG 26<sup>th</sup> January 2005.

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