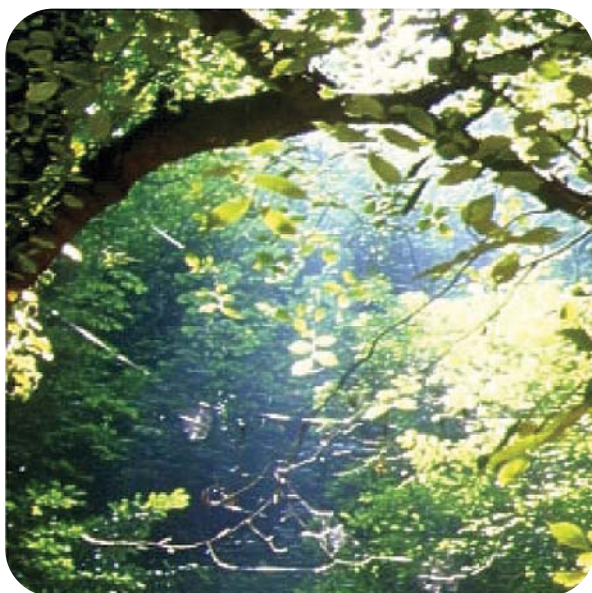


CP5 – Biodiversity



Supporting Documents:

Draft South East Plan - 2006
Draft Nature Conservation and Development
SPD - 2008
Biodiversity Strategy in England - 2002
PPS9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - 2005
Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan - 1998 onwards
Sustainable Community Strategy - 2006
Draft Green Networks Study - 2008
UK Biodiversity Action Plan - 1994

Introduction

3.32 Biodiversity is the variety of life on earth, and includes all species of plants and animals and the natural systems that support them. Through 'ecosystem services', such as air and water purification and the amelioration of the effects of Climate Change, biodiversity is a core component of sustainable development, underpinning economic development and prosperity. It also has an essential role in maintaining and improving quality of life, particularly in urban areas, and contributes to developing locally distinctive and sustainable communities.

3.33 All local authorities have a Duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in exercising all their functions. The Duty aims to make biodiversity conservation an integral part of policy and decision making.

Preferred Option – CP5 Biodiversity

The council will develop programmes and strategies which aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity and promote improved access to it through the following:

1. Promote the establishment of a 'green network' of nature conservation features as an integral part of the open space framework, which incorporates the urban area, urban fringe and surrounding downland. Within the network, a strategic approach to nature conservation enhancement will be taken, with the objectives of :
 - linking and repairing existing habitats and nature conservation sites;
 - creating new habitat to achieve Biodiversity Action Plan targets;
 - enabling improved access to and understanding of natural green space and nature conservation features.

2. Through detailed guidance within a Supplementary Planning Document on 'Nature Conservation and Development', ensure that all development proposals:
 - a) Provide adequate up-to-date information about the biodiversity which may be affected;
 - b) Maximise opportunities to conserve and enhance biodiversity both on and off site, taking account of the wider ecological context of the development and of Biodiversity Action Plan objectives;
3. Establish criteria-based policies against which development proposals affecting designated sites of international, national and local importance; protected species; and biodiversity in the wider environment will be judged. Such policies will distinguish between the relative importance of each of these nature conservation features to provide clarity about when development may be permitted and about any mitigation, conservation and enhancement which may be required.

Supporting Text

3.34 Brighton & Hove has a strong foundation for biodiversity conservation, having two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (including one Special Area of Conservation), eight Local Nature Reserves (either proposed or declared) and thirty-two Sites of Nature Conservation Importance. Nevertheless consultation responses, national and regional policy all strongly support the need for biodiversity enhancements, including those which extend key habitats, reduce the isolation of existing areas of habitat and improve 'local biodiversity' close to where people can appreciate it on a daily basis. These developments will make a vital contribution to the city's commitment to qualify for UNESCO Biosphere Reserve status by 2020, which is set out in the Sustainable Community Strategy. Further details will be described in a forthcoming City Biodiversity Strategy which will aid future detailed policy development.

3.35 Clear objectives for the maintenance, connection and extension of key habitats and species have been established through the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. The England Biodiversity Strategy also sets a range of objectives specifically for urban development which are promoted through Planning Policy Statement 9. The objective of the policy is to ensure an adequate contribution to these objectives is made from development within Brighton & Hove.

3.36 Working with the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre, Brighton & Hove Council will complete an audit of the biodiversity of the city. This will be used to establish a baseline for future monitoring from which national and Sussex-wide biodiversity creation targets (promoted through the Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan) can be extrapolated to the local level. The audit highlights fragments of isolated habitat and identifies strategic opportunities for their reconnection as part of a city-wide network of natural green space.

3.37 A separate study is also being carried out in partnership with the Sussex Environment partnership and Sussex Wildlife Trust to identify the location of a green network in the city. Taking account of existing natural open space, existing and proposed development density and national objectives to improve access to natural green space, the study will establish the location of the green network to reconnect the urban area, urban fringe and wider downland. The green network will be an integral component of a wider open space framework throughout the city which will incorporate sports provision,

recreation and children's play amongst other functions. The framework is being developed through the emerging Open Spaces Strategy which is discussed in more detail in the CP6 Open Space preferred option.

Implementation

3.38 The location of the Green Network was defined in Spring 2008 and is set out in the Draft Green Networks Study and its implementation will be described in a Supplementary Planning Document and defined on the Proposals Map to accompany the Submission Core Strategy DPD.

3.39 The draft Supplementary Planning Document 'Nature Conservation and Development' includes a clear procedure for identifying existing nature conservation features which may be affected by a development and for quantifying the amount of new nature conservation features which should be delivered, either on or off site. The SPD can also be used to quantify the amount of developer contributions which will be required from development proposals which do not deliver adequate nature conservation benefits. These contributions will also be used by the council to deliver pre-defined objectives within the green network. It is anticipated that the SPD will be adopted in September 2008.

3.40 Designated sites of international, national and local importance are shown on the Local Plan proposals Map (and remain unchanged).