

# SUFFOLK BIODIVERSITY PARTNERSHIP

## Moving forward update

### March 2014

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## 1. In brief

Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership (SBP) has undergone some changes following an extensive consultation with partners and the public during the spring of 2013. The consultation successfully identified the most important and valued aspects of our work, which has led us to revise and more clearly define the focus of our activities. Our services will now focus on providing advice on, and facilitating communication about, Priority Species and Habitats in Suffolk.

SBP will continue to engage with a range of organisations to support the delivery of wildlife projects and to raise awareness of the importance of biodiversity. We will work particularly with Suffolk's Local Authorities (County, District, Borough and Parish Councils), community groups and schools and our strong links with Norfolk will be maintained.

We have been working towards a new governance structure which can be really effective. Since February 2014, SBP has worked within Suffolk Biological Record Centre (SBRC), rather than running alongside it. This works well as the Biodiversity Officer post is hosted at SBRC and line-managed by the SBRC Manger. SBP is now in a strong and stable position to add significant value to the services of SBRC whilst maintaining existing partnerships.

The re-invigorated SBRC steering group will now be responsible for guiding the work of SBP. The group is comprised of representatives from Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Council, Waveney & Suffolk Coastal District Council, RSPB, Ipswich Museum & Ipswich Borough Council, Suffolk County Council, Suffolk Naturalists' Society, Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Environment Agency, Natural England, West Suffolk Council and Essex & Suffolk Water.

We greatly value the strong relationships built up with partners since our formation in 1998. Thank you all for many years of successful collaboration and we look forward to working with you in the future.

## 2. Our aim

Our aim is now sharply focused and clear:

#### **Aim**

**To provide guidance on Suffolk's Priority Species and Habitats, which make up Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan. This will be especially relevant to those organisations with associated statutory duties, such as Local Authorities and utility companies, but is also important in supporting community groups and schools.**

All public bodies have a statutory duty to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity, as set out in the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 s.40. Section 41 of the Act covers priority species and habitats (referred to in the Act as 'living organisms and types of habitat which are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity' (in England)). These were previously referred to as 'UK Biodiversity Action Plan' or 'BAP' species and habitats. There are 262 priority species and 23 priority habitats in Suffolk.

Suffolk's BAP, which comprises a list of priority species and habitats in the county, is embedded in our local planning policies. Priority species and habitats remain as material considerations in the planning process. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Sections 109-125) also sets out the need to '*conserve and enhance the natural environment*' by minimising impacts and providing net gains to biodiversity; thus contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity.

The NPPF also requires local plans to promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, linked to national and local targets. Suitable indicators for monitoring biodiversity should also be identified in the local plans.

In addition to the statutory duty public bodies have towards biodiversity, there are many communities, organisations and individuals who care passionately about the future of wildlife in Suffolk. We will support all those working to protect and enhance priority species and habitats in our county.

### 3. Services SBP will provide

- a. *Priority species and habitats factsheets (new user-friendly format)*
- b. *Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership quarterly e-newsletter*
- c. *Small projects fund and funding advice*
- d. *Local Authority training workshops on understanding legal obligations towards biodiversity*
- e. *Advice for communities and schools on all aspects of biodiversity*
- f. *Hosting an annual forum / networking event*
- g. *Facilitating communication through website and social media*

### 4. What's happened to the UK BAP?

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) has been replaced by the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework (2012). The Framework was developed in response to the UK government's commitment to the Convention on Biological Diversity's 2010 'Aichi Biodiversity Targets'.

In England, the process is outlined in "*Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services (2011)*". Its mission is to *halt overall biodiversity loss, support healthy well-functioning ecosystems, and establish coherent ecological networks, with more and better places for nature for the benefit of wildlife and people*. There are four priority areas: 1) A more integrated large-scale approach to conservation, 2) Putting people at the heart of policy, 3) Reducing environmental pressures and 4) Improving our knowledge.

### 5. The BAP in Suffolk

The BAP process has now been devolved to local level with each county deciding how to deliver for biodiversity. This led to the wide-ranging survey undertaken by the Biodiversity Partnership to determine how it should focus its work and the subsequent decision to provide the list of services above. These services will support statutory bodies in their duties with regard to biodiversity and others working with priority species and habitats.

## 6. Relationship to Wild Anglia and Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership

(Wild Anglia is the Norfolk and Suffolk Local Nature Partnership)

SBP will support Wild Anglia's strategic aims in Suffolk which include promoting sustainable economic growth, investment in the natural environment and making the most of nature's capacity to improve human health and well-being. SBP will work closely with the Norfolk Biodiversity Partnership to ensure effective joint projects which span both counties-

## 7. Useful links

- *Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services* (2011): [www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/englands/biodiversitystrategy2011.aspx](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/englands/biodiversitystrategy2011.aspx)
- *CBD Strategic plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020, including Aichi Biodiversity Targets* <https://www.cbd.int/sp/>
- *Leading the Way Green Economy Pathfinder manifesto 2012-2015 New Anglia* (Norfolk and Suffolk Local Enterprise Partnership) [www.newanglia.co.uk/Assets/Files/Content/2012-06-08%20New Anglia Manifesto art lo-res.pdf](http://www.newanglia.co.uk/Assets/Files/Content/2012-06-08%20New%20Anglia%20Manifesto%20art%20lo-res.pdf)
- National Planning Policy Framework March 2012 Communities and Local Government. [www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment\\_data/file/60777/2116950.pdf](http://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/60777/2116950.pdf)
- Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan [www.suffolkbiodiversity.org/biodiversity-action-plans.aspx](http://www.suffolkbiodiversity.org/biodiversity-action-plans.aspx)
- UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework (2012): <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-6189>

**We are most grateful to all those who contributed to the consultation. Your views are valuable and have been used extensively in determining our focus and future direction.**