

## **Issue: Natural Features – securing conservation and enhancement**

### **Scope**

This issue covers habitats, species, geological sites, trees and hedgerows and sees them as components of the wider landscape. Previously natural features have tended to be regarded as something separate from other issues and activities. However, it is increasingly the view that they are fundamental to people's wellbeing and prosperity. While individual sites and features will need protection and management, action is tending to focus on solving problems at the landscape scale in response to a greater appreciation of the challenges posed by climate change. Relevant to consideration of the wider landscape are the ways in which formal designations such as Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty can be used to further landscape scale environmental management.

"Biodiversity" is a term that covers the variety of life on earth, i.e. the richness of nature. It encompasses the variety of plants and animals and the natural systems that support them. The Issues and Options document highlights biodiversity as an important component of a healthy environment. This is a reflection of current national, strategic and local policies, while the evidence base shows that trends in the distribution and quality of habitat in the local area have been largely negative. This depletion and deterioration of habitat and consequent reduction in the local populations of certain species underlines the need for this issue to be addressed by the Core Strategy.

### **Desirable Outcome by 2026**

At the international level, in 2001 European Union Heads of State or Government agreed that biodiversity decline should be halted with the aim of reaching this objective by 2010. In 2002, Heads of State at the United Nations World Summit on Sustainable Development committed themselves to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level as a contribution to poverty alleviation and to the benefit of all life on Earth. In response the UK Government has developed a set of UK biodiversity indicators that show changes in aspects of biodiversity such as the population size of important species or the area of land managed for wildlife. Unfortunately most of these indicators show negative trends, so there is much to be done at all levels to make an appreciable impact on this situation.

International agreements relating to biodiversity are not exclusive to this decade. The Convention on Biological Diversity was signed by 150 government leaders at the 1992 Rio Earth Summit. One outcome of this agreement was the UK Biodiversity Action Plan that contains action plans with targets for priority habitats and species, some of which are to be found in Stratford-on-Avon District. The Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) provides details of ways in which the national action plans can be implemented locally, together with action plans for species and habitats which are of significance only at the local level. In basic terms these targets are aimed at increasing the extent and quality of habitats and at increasing the populations of species.

At the local level the Government has asked single tier and county councils to monitor a National Indicator (NI197) to measure the improvement in local biodiversity. This is the proportion of Local Sites where positive conservation management has been or is being implemented. This achievement of this outcome is to a large degree outside the scope of an LDF Core Strategy, although there are measures that the latter can specify that can make a positive contribution, e.g. ensuring that provision of new green infrastructure is underpinned by secure arrangements for long-term beneficial management.

NI197 is only a small part of the national policy background. For example, PPS9 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation is framed with general objectives rather than specific outcomes but it does highlight the Government's concern to ensure that LDFs contribute to meeting biodiversity and geodiversity objectives whether they be set at national, regional or local level. PPS9 is accompanied by a Guide to Good Practice which states that LDF Core Strategies should embrace an integrated approach to biodiversity and geological conservation secured in two key ways:

- development control policies and allocations relating to all sectors of land uses should be consistent with the strategic objectives for biodiversity and geological conservation;
- LDFs should promote a spatial planning approach to biodiversity and geological conservation and seek to bring together and integrate policies for development and other land uses with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function.

The Guide to Good Practice suggests that a Core Strategy should provide a spatial strategy that incorporates strategic objectives for biodiversity and geological conservation. This could be delivered through a core policy that includes criteria with which to direct corporate activity and shape development control decisions. The Guide contains a checklist of biodiversity and geological issues which might be covered in a Core Strategy or other DPD policy:

- recognition of environmental trends resulting from climate change and provision for natural systems, habitats and species to adjust to this;
- a strategic framework for the protection, restoration or creation of priority BAP habitats (and for Ancient Woodland and other habitats of recognised importance) and the protection and enhancement of the populations and habitats of priority BAP species;
- managing land use in step with naturally functioning processes and systems and aligning objectives for biodiversity and geological conservation with, for example, Shoreline Management Plans and River Basin Management Plans;
- maintaining, restoring or adding to networks of natural habitats and other landscape features essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species (incorporating this into a more broadly functioning 'green infrastructure');
- promoting sustainable design standards for the construction and management of development which includes features beneficial to biodiversity or geological conservation;
- identifying the role of a hierarchy of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites;
- safeguarding the biodiversity value of previously developed land through planning decisions;
- promoting and supporting the enhancement and management of local geological sites through the planning process.

In the Joint Environmental Prospectus agreed between the Local Government Association and Defra, there is a "Shared High Level Environmental Aim" to protect natural resources and this should involve local authorities using local strategic plans to deliver biodiversity priorities. One of the "Signs of Success" specified in the Prospectus is improved biodiversity.

At the regional level, Annexe B of the approved RSS includes targets for the protection, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats in the West Midlands Region. The targets are set at the regional level and are the minimum targets necessary to meet the England share of the UK BAP targets. Action at the local level will of course contribute to the achievement of these targets.

The emerging Regional Spatial Strategy Revision covering the period to 2026 seeks the enhancement and extension of natural habitats so that the opportunities for species migration are not precluded. This is a measure proposed as a response to climate change. It is seen as a way of mitigating the effects of climate change by reducing "heat islands", providing "carbon sinks" and areas where flood water can be absorbed and also providing biomass for use in renewable energy production.

The Regional Biodiversity Strategy for the West Midlands "Restoring the Region's Wildlife" highlights five key challenges:

- maintaining and improving the condition of habitats, species and ecosystems;
- developing an area based approach to restoring wildlife;
- monitoring the condition of habitats, species and ecosystems;
- re-connecting and integrating action for biodiversity with other environmental, social and economic activity;
- coping with impacts of climate change.

The Landscape for Living Prospectus published by the West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership provides a vision for managing and enhancing the natural environment at the landscape scale. The document includes a regional biodiversity map that describes landscape in terms of the extent of habitat and how well the latter is inter-connected. Four key principles for delivery are stated:

- increase provision of wildlife-rich open space accessible to people in towns and cities;
- maintain existing bio-diverse habitats;
- restore habitat quality, expand habitat area and re-connect habitats ;
- re-create natural systems to support biodiversity and other land management objectives including sustainable farming and flood alleviation.

The Cotswolds AONB Management Plan 2008-2013 sets out the Cotswolds Conservation Board's objectives, policies, actions and tasks for the management of the Cotswolds AONB, part of which falls within Stratford-on-Avon District. The objectives and policies are designed to be taken up by the many organizations and individuals involved in managing the AONB. The District Council is considering whether to endorse the Management Plan in accordance with para. 6.3 of PPS12. The policies of the Management Plan most relevant to the natural features issue are:

- Policy PP1: that the conservation and management of the AONB and its special qualities is fully taken into account in strategies, plans and guidance produced to address development, transport and service provision in and around the AONB;
- Policy LP1: that the unique character, tranquillity, and special qualities of the Cotswolds landscape are conserved and enhanced;
- Policy RLMP5: that the conservation and enhancement of ancient woodland, parkland, hedgerow, urban and veteran trees is undertaken to maintain their landscape, ecological and cultural value;
- Policy BP1: that UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats and species in the Cotswolds AONB have been maintained and where possible, enhanced, by the end of the plan period;
- Policy BP2: that 95% by area of designated sites and UK BAP priority habitats in the Cotswolds AONB are in "favourable" or "unfavourable improving" condition by the end of the plan period;
- Policy BP3: that a coordinated programme of work is in place to restore, recreate, link and buffer UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats and species assemblages.

At the local level, the Community Plan has aims specifically relating to biodiversity:

- the number and variety of natural habitats will have increased and be in good condition;
- more land area will be under environmental stewardship schemes;
- there will be an on-going need to ensure the protection and enhancement of the District's natural environment.

The Community Plan also has an aim which states that the district will have a natural and built environment that is equally as attractive as it is now.

The District Council's Corporate Strategy has "a high quality environment" as a desired outcome and refers to the protection and maintenance of the district's varied green spaces as a priority.

## Existing Evidence to Justify Option

Issue/ Challenge:	Current State:	Trends:	Source of Information:
<p><b>Protecting and Enhancing Biodiversity</b></p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local authorities have a duty to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in exercising their functions (s.40 of the NERC Act 2006).</li> <li>Government policy as expressed in PPS9 and related documents emphasises the need to take biodiversity into account in the planning process, with plan policies aiming to maintain and enhance, restore or add to biodiversity interests.</li> <li>SDC has been participating in the Partnership which has been managing the Warwickshire, Coventry &amp; Solihull Habitat Biodiversity Audit (Part 1 Survey) and towards the Wildlife Sites Project which undertakes Part 2 site surveys and the selection of Local Sites which are known as "SINCs" in Warwickshire.</li> <li>There are no sites of international importance within or adjacent to the district.</li> <li>There are 37 SSSIs in the district. Just over 80% are in a wholly favourable condition.</li> <li>By the end of September 2007, 27 SINCs had been designated within the district. This is only a small proportion of sites which have the potential for meeting the criteria for site selection.</li> <li>The SINCs designated so far include woodlands, semi-improved grasslands, water bodies and former quarries &amp; railways.</li> <li>There are 11 woodlands managed as nature reserves by Warwickshire Wildlife Trust.</li> <li>About 11% (530ha) of ancient woodland was destroyed between 1925 and 1988 and a further 38% (1797ha) was converted to plantation.</li> <li>A small part of the district falls within the Forest of Feckenham Biodiversity Enhancement Zone defined in the RSS and in WM Regional Biodiversity Strategy.</li> <li>The district has all of Warwickshire's calcareous grassland (68 ha.) together with 20% of the county's neutral grassland. The district also holds 72% of the county's traditional orchards, a valuable and vulnerable habitat. However, 85% of the land outside settlements comprises arable land or improved grassland. Only 5% comprises woodland.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Effects of climate change including change to habitats and movement &amp; loss of certain species.</li> <li>Decline in extent of some habitat, e.g. major loss of lowland neutral grassland.</li> <li>Increase in some habitats, e.g. woodland and field margins.</li> <li>Loss of quality of habitat through lack of appropriate management, e.g. scrub encroachment on grassland through lack of grazing by livestock, lack of coppicing in woodland.</li> <li>Veteran trees being left isolated and vulnerable through unsympathetic land management.</li> <li>Pressures on some types of habitat, e.g. recreational activity.</li> <li>Fragmentation and isolation of habitat through loss of links such as hedgerows.</li> <li>Decline in some species at the national and local level, e.g. farmland birds such as grey partridge and corn bunting, mammals such as water vole &amp; brown hare, invertebrates such as the large garden bumblebee &amp; argemone &amp; silver moth, and plants such as those that used to be typical of arable land.</li> <li>At the national level there are signs that some species previously very limited in their distribution are on the increase, e.g. otters, red kite, buzzard, raven.</li> <li>The population index for woodland species in West Midlands has increased by 59% since 1970. 15 species have increased in number and 6 have declined.</li> <li>High take-up of new agri-environment schemes which is having a beneficial effect on habitats such as field margins and hedgerows.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Local Plan.</li> <li>Natural England.</li> <li>Community Plan.</li> <li>"Restoring the Region's Wildlife" – the Regional Biodiversity Strategy for the West Midlands.</li> <li>Warwickshire Biological Records Centre.</li> <li>Warwickshire Habitat Biodiversity Audit.</li> <li>Warwickshire, Coventry &amp; Solihull Wildlife Sites Project.</li> <li>Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP).</li> <li>"The State of Warwickshire's Biodiversity – Local Area Agreement 2007-2008 Reporting".</li> <li>LBAP Progress Report 2001-2007.</li> <li>Breeding Bird Survey 2007 – BTO.</li> <li>UK Butterfly Monitoring Scheme.</li> <li>Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC).</li> <li>Botanical Society of the British Isles.</li> <li>"Plant Diversity Challenge" - Plantlife International.</li> <li>RSPB.</li> <li>Butterfly Conservation.</li> <li>Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust</li> </ul>

## Analysis of public consultation on the Issues and Options stage

Representations were received on a specific question concerning this issue.

Question 8: Should more attention be given to protecting and enhancing habitats?

If yes, what proactive measures should be taken to improve the situation?

### Answer to parent question

93% said yes;

7% said no.

### Comments made on topic

Waterways can contribute to linking of biodiversity sites.

Keeping areas open to public access and encourage and enforce case of each area.

Minimise loss of biodiversity in redevelopment of mature gardens and brownfield sites. Develop green infrastructure to 'join up the dots'.

Local BAPs should be mentioned.

Greater emphasis needed on biodiversity. Strategy should take a landscape rather than field approach which will build on existing sites of interest such as local nature reserves and SINCS and aim to create large wildlife corridors throughout the district. Floodplains and river valleys can form ideal corridors. Sustainable development in rural areas should not adversely affect wildlife corridors. Improving the district in this way can act as an attraction for tourism.

Development in appropriate locations can facilitate improved management of a site and its wildlife.

Appropriate level of attention already given.

But new development cannot be perceived as inherently bad.

The question appears to relate to existing habitats, whilst the issues and options focus more on the creation of new habitats. With regard to the creation of new habitats, it is considered appropriate that development proposals should include provision for biodiversity gain of a type and form appropriate to the development. The Council will also need to be flexible over the type of habitats to be provided as part of new developments to ensure that the creation of habitats does not result in a future constraint.

Good consultation with WCC ecologist and Warks Wildlife. Support the concept of new development to fund green infrastructure. There should be a strengthening of existing wildlife corridors and physical links between wildlife areas and green spaces which will increase biodiversity value of green spaces.

Within reason. Developments are damaged more by agriculture than development.

Established trees, hedgerows and meadows should be vigorously protected and restored where already damaged.

Every effort should be made to protect habitats of declining wildlife. Keep links between green spaces and open countryside.

The existing Warwickshire LBAP establishes priorities for action. The district is the stronghold within Warwickshire for orchard habitat, which is now a priority habitat in the UKBAP and is vulnerable to loss through development. Priority should also be given to enhancing biodiversity

### Response

There is a very clear majority in favour of doing more to protect and enhance wildlife habitat. It is evident that there is considerable public dissatisfaction with the current state of biodiversity in the district.

The theme of protecting existing habitat is taken up strongly in the detailed comments of respondents. The need to prevent the loss of habitat-rich "brownfield" land to development is emphasized, particularly in the case of mature gardens. Protection is also sought by means of the use of designations such as SINC.

Enhancement of the nature conservation resource is sought by many with the idea of the strengthening and creation of green corridors and green infrastructure being popular. The role of development in facilitating the creation and management of wildlife habitat is seen as important by some respondents. Design needs to take on board biodiversity enhancement rather instead of maximizing density.

The role of agriculture attracts attention. Some view agriculture in a critical light, while others see farmers as being willing partners in habitat enhancement, particularly if financial incentives are provided.

A cautionary note is sounded in some cases where respondents see natural features as something which should be balanced against other factors such as the needs of business.

along the River Avon corridor.

Biodiversity should be presented as a key asset of the District rather than a challenge. The preferred option should identify pressures on biodiversity and how spatial planning can protect and enhance habitat networks and biodiversity resources. This would have been assisted by the identification of specific options rather than suggestions on joining the dots. Spatial planning objectives for the historic environment need to consider the conservation of the world class heritage assets and how other historic assets might support the development strategy. The preferred options need to clearly identify policy options to reflect the rural renaissance agenda.

Better care of hedgerows and verges. Encourage more planting of trees.

Hedge replanting, protect green belt. Avoid roads encroaching on verges.

More green corridors. More brownfield site development instead of greenfield sites.

Less intensive farming.

Designate and protect specific sites through the planning process.

Ensure that planning gives full attention to it. Don't let large developers/organisations get away with destruction of the environment.

Sensible land use with appropriate agricultural techniques.

Partnership with specialist organisations to advise SDC.

Avoid GM crops. Establish green corridors and keep existing. Establish new woodland and retain scrub.

Start project groups in parishes and have a local co-ordinator to work on projects, funding and objectives.

Provision of definitive lists of special sites and endangered habitats to be included in planning consideration. Encourage each parish to take more responsibility.

Farm management - hedgerows, headlands and road verge management.

Do not permit felling of trees in Bancroft Gardens, the tramway, along the Avon. It is claimed that the 40+ trees are diseased. If so, maintenance needs to be improved and checked that it is properly carried out.

Sensible land use with appropriate agricultural techniques.

Concentrate construction in main rural areas, reuse brownfield sites including more open space in developments.

Identify and categorise sensitive habitats, make them available for controlled public access. Give parts to private landowners to achieve this.

Leave more suitable habitat areas particularly on new build estate and new commercial premises.

Protect suburban gardens. Retain and restore hedgerows with marginal strips around fields. Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and CPRE do hedgerow surveying.

New development should include schemes that increase or improve biodiversity

Assist farmers to plant more trees, maintain/plant hedgerows/spinneys.

Apart from Canada Geese and mink. Plant trees and hedges, avoid backland development as destroys valuable habitats and runs.

Give local wildlife trusts the opportunity to manage sensitive areas.

But new development cannot be perceived as inherently bad.

We support principle and demonstrate this in recent proposals, but need to balance this against other factors such as needs of businesses and local communities. Would support a criteria-based policy in Core Strategy.

A greenspace strategy as suggested on page 8 which might also focus upon some of the legislation passed by the EU.

Proactive control of unwanted pests.

Reinstate hedges where possible enlarge grass verges along roads.

Require more hedge and tree planting in new developments.

Hedgerows should be left to January/February to but back thus leaving food for birds. Grass verges along the roadside should only be cut back to an absolute minimum.

TPO more trees and protect hedgerowscampaign to prevent spaying of set aside before June. Preserve green land.

Preserve hedgerows. Clear up litter. Make decent walks.

Greater responsibility from landowners and farmers.

The idea of green semi-wild corridors seems good.

More conservation areas, which are available for public recreation.

Moratorium on barn conversions to allow swallows to re-establish.

Those set out on pages 7-8 of the LDF paper.

Prevent river being opened up for boat traffic. No marina by Weir Brake. No cutting down healthy trees.

Fencing off selected areas.

Protect all trees on development sites. Prevent back garden development. Encourage wild flower meadows on council land.

Discouraging developers/builders from destroying trees, hedges to squeeze the maximum number of houses onto building sites.

Protect existing open spaces, less new building

No building on domestic gardens. Trees should not be cut down unless diseased.

Each case should be looked at on its own merits.

Follow expert advice from WCC ecologist and Warwickshire Wildlife Trust.

greater need to work with outside bodies ie. farmers, environmentalists and education

Good maintenance of existing habitats.

Stop chopping down trees, encourage new development to put in gardens, green spaces, trees and orchards.

Tree planting and unmanicured open space managed for wildlife.

Minimum management of sites only manage where there is a danger of sites being badly affected by foreign species. Where possible on new sites look for village greens and ponds

Protect and enhance existing habitats.

where necessary and appropriate, new development should be seen as a means of securing and improving the management of habitats

Retain economic sustainable agriculture

Habitats should be given due attention in identifying sites and determining applications, but not necessarily "more" attention.

Put resources behind activities specified in Stratford District Partnership climate change and environment group plan.

There is an opportunity for the District Council to lead the development of the proposed improvements to the Warwick Road lands, where the UDF proposes a wetland/ park land area with associated education centres.

No Green Belt development

Join up the dots to allow species to travel. New Zealand may show good practice.

Stop building in Green Belt. Out-of-date farm buildings should be demolished or replaced.

More tree and shrub planting in new developments.

Integrated approach with employment and tourism

Insist on verges to be left in fields and hedges only cut when nesting has finished.

Don't develop.

Ensure wildlife corridors are protected.

With reservation - complete protection of all historic buildings and remains is not feasible.

Don't interfere with natural changes to the community and the environment.

Encourage more ponds. Release agricultural land (which has low biodiversity value) rather than build on gardens.

New development to incorporate more trees or more natural habitats.

No infill - as population is elderly homes should become available over next 20 years as people downsize.

More green spaces and back gardens in developments.

Stop backland development as gardens are valuable habitats. Plant more trees. Extend protected areas.

Discuss with local communities and look at the bigger picture.

Measured opinion.

Encourage improvement and creation of habitats.

Restrict public access along small watercourses and some woodlands. Safety cuts only on country roads to give linear corridors. 5 metre headland around fields.

Absolute protection for those areas that are deemed to be biologically important. Habitat creation incorporated into development when this is appropriate.

The options for natural features emerging from the consultation responses and from the evidence base relate to the degree to which the issue is embraced positively by the Core Strategy. The opinions and the data do not give any support for the Core Strategy taking a do-nothing approach as regards biodiversity. Rather, the options can be characterized as follows:

Option 1 - Ensure that development does not contribute to further net loss of natural features;

Option 2 - Ensure that development contributes to net gain of natural features.

The first option is the less ambitious approach which seeks to secure the status quo in terms of the quality and extent of existing natural features by preventing development that would exacerbate the negative trends detailed above. However, it is based on acceptance that the existing natural features in the district amount to a sufficient contribution to biodiversity, geodiversity and landscape character at all levels, from the global to the local.

The second option sees development as an opportunity to secure enhancement of the quality and extent of natural features within the district. The option is based on the understanding that recent negative trends have reduced natural features to a level at which the district does not contribute adequately towards the achievement of biodiversity, geodiversity and landscape character objectives. The option sees this situation as unsatisfactory and needing redress.

The two options are subject to a Sustainability Assessment in the following Table:

Factors	Option 1	Option 2	Commentary
<b>Consistency with national policy</b>	-	++	The tenor of national policy represented by PPS1, PPS7 & PPS9 and related documents such as the UK Biodiversity Action is one that encourages action to sustain <i>and enhance</i> natural features. It is not enough merely to secure the future of the current resource. The trend data indicate the extent to which the resource has been depleted over recent times and the parlous state of some species and habitats.
<b>Consistency with regional policy</b>	-	++	Again, regional policy clearly advocates enhancement of the resource, not just entrenchment. For example, the ethos of the Regional Biodiversity Strategy for the West Midlands is one of restoration and one of the key challenges defined by the Strategy is the maintenance <i>and improvement</i> of the condition of habitats, species and ecosystems.
<b>Consistency with Community Plan and Corporate Strategy</b>	+	++	The Community Plan also seeks increase in the number, variety and condition of habitats and sees this as a long term commitment. The Corporate Strategy has a “high quality environment” as a desired outcome although it does not refer specifically to the enhancement of natural features as being a means to achieve this outcome. However, it does refer to the protection and maintenance of the district’s varied green spaces being a priority. Option 1 would be in line with this objective.
<b>Consistency with response to Issues &amp; Options consultation document</b>	-	++	Consultation responses show a widespread concern about the state of the natural environment within the district and Option 2’s bias towards enhancement would better address this concern than the limited approach of Option 1.
<b>Participation – scope to contribute to decision-making</b>	0	0	No impact.
<b>Crime – reduce crime/anti-social behaviour and fear of crime</b>	0	+	Option 2’s proposed increase in natural features likely to provide increase in opportunities for local people to value their local environment and get involved in looking after their surroundings, encouraging a greater sense of responsibility.
<b>Health – provide facilities and promote healthy lifestyles</b>	0	+	Again, Option 2 is more likely to encourage people to take up a more active lifestyle through on-going conservation work and the leisure opportunities presented by a greener environment. The links between the natural environment and public health have long been recognized and have recently been highlighted in reports published by the RSPB.
<b>Poverty – tackle disadvantage</b>	0	0	No impact.
<b>Access – improve services and opportunities</b>	0	0	No impact.
<b>Culture &amp; recreation – increase participation</b>	0	+	As above. More opportunities for recreation presented by the Option 2 with its net gain in natural features.
<b>Housing – provide good quality and affordable homes</b>	+	+	There is little evidence to suggest that the provision of green infrastructure would constrain the provision of good quality and affordable homes on development sites. On the contrary, the creation of high quality settings for dwellings through the provision of green infrastructure should be integral to the provision of good quality and affordable homes. They should not be treated as conflicting objectives.
<b>Population – balance needs of residents and visitors</b>	0	0	Protection of existing natural features and the introduction of additional features would be of benefit to both residents and visitors.
<b>Historic and cultural heritage – preserve and manage assets</b>	0	0	No impact.

<b>Landscape and townscape – character and appearance</b>	+	++	Both options will have beneficial effects on the character and appearance of both the landscape and the townscape by retaining natural features that already make a positive contribution. However, Option 2 has greater potential to ensure that the landscape setting and townscape of new developments make a positive contribution to the quality of life of residents.
<b>Environmental assets – natural and built</b>	0	++	Option 2 looks to use development to provide green infrastructure that broadens the range of environmental assets in the district. Option 1 will merely seek to preserve the status quo.
<b>Biodiversity – ecology and habitats</b>	0	++	Again, Option 2 would seek opportunities that would provide an expansion of habitat to support a greater variety and populations of species in the district. The provision of that additional habitat will need to be planned to support the achievement of targets within the Local Biodiversity Action Plan. A network of green spaces will do much to support species that are vulnerable to fragmentation of habitats. However, Option 1 will not address this kind of problem and would assume that the current situation is satisfactory.
<b>Land use – optimise use of brownfield land</b>	-	-	Both of the options may conflict with this objective in that some brownfield sites provide good habitat for a range of species and would be best left undeveloped and managed to enhance their capacity to support biodiversity. Mature gardens are an example: officially brownfield they provide habitat for species that are under pressure from other trends, e.g. changes in farming practice. The LBAP underlines the role of different types of brownfield land in providing valuable wildlife habitat.
<b>Urban development – high quality environments</b>	0	++	Option 2's emphasis on adding to the resource of natural features will help to enhance the quality of the urban environment. Designs for new development will have to recognize the need to incorporate green infrastructure at the outset rather than treating it as an afterthought. By contrast, Option 1 would only seek the retention of existing natural features and these might be absent from or peripheral to a development and not have much bearing on the overall quality of a scheme.
<b>Stewardship – encourage local responsibility</b>	+	++	By retaining natural features, both options would provide opportunity for residents to become involved in caring for the local environment. The second option would underpin the provision of additional green infrastructure which in some cases may be managed by local trusts in which residents would play a significant role. Participation in the design and stewardship of green space can help strengthen communities.
<b>Pollution - minimise air, water and soil pollution</b>	+	++	Green infrastructure performs ecological services, e.g. trees absorb carbon dioxide, vegetation attenuates noise and filters air pollution, street trees can remove sulphur dioxide and reduce particulates, while wetland ecosystems are also effective in filtering polluted run-off and sewage. The second option score more highly as it will give rise to a larger area given over to natural ecosystems.
<b>Climate change – minimise District's contribution</b>	+	++	An option which will lead to the provision of additional green infrastructure will give greater scope to offset climate change effects. For example, vegetation provides natural air conditioning, trees provide shade, while vegetation can reduce excessive run-off and increase rainfall capture.
<b>Flood risk – avoid increasing risk</b>	+	++	Again, an option that leads to the creation of more green infrastructure will provide greater mitigation of the potential effects of a development on flood risk. Vegetation can reduce excessive run-off and increase rainfall capture. Areas set aside for green infrastructure can include areas used for sustainable drainage systems.
<b>Energy – increase efficiency and use of renewable sources</b>	0	+	If green infrastructure incorporates cycleways and footpaths, then it will encourage people to access local facilities without using motor cars.
<b>Conservation – reduce consumption of natural resources</b>	+	+	Both options would seek to avoid the destruction of existing natural features.
<b>Standards – design and construction of buildings</b>	0	0	The options relate mainly to the settings of new buildings although building design can aim to encourage biodiversity, e.g. the provision of balconies and roof terraces that can provide spaces for plants to grow.

<b>Planning – sustainable locations and use of infrastructure</b>	0	0	No impact.
<b>Transport – encourage modal shift from use of private car</b>	0	+	If green infrastructure incorporates cycleways and footpaths, then it will encourage people to access local facilities without using motor cars.
<b>Waste – reduce consumption and increase re-use and recycling</b>	0	0	No impact.
<b>Local sourcing – goods and materials</b>	0	0	No impact.
<b>Growth – achieve sustainable economic growth</b>	0	++	The Government has made clear that enhancing biodiversity is an integral part of sustainable economic development, not just conserving the existing resource. Option 2 is intended to deliver enhancement whereas Option 1 merely seeks to avoid loss.
<b>Employment – opportunities suited to workforce</b>	0	0	No impact.
<b>Investment – assist prosperity</b>	0	+	Property values tend to be enhanced by views of natural features.
<b>Skills – engage in learning and skills development</b>	+	+	Natural features provide a valuable educational resource which can be enhanced by the provision of interpretation facilities.
<b>Innovation – encourage culture of enterprise</b>	0	0	No impact.
<b>Technology – promote new technologies</b>	0	0	No impact.
<b>Responsibility – local organisations and agencies</b>	0	+	Design and stewardship of new natural areas within and around development likely to be placed in the hands of local trusts and parish/town councils.
<b>Tourism – enhance visitor experience</b>	0	0	No significant effects on this factor. It is unlikely that the green infrastructure to be provided in relation to new development will be used by tourists to any great degree. It is more likely to be valued and used by people who live locally.

### Preferred Option

Option 2 is promoted as the preferred option in that it clearly scores more highly in relation to a range of SA factors. In summary the reasons for choosing this option are:

- it is closer to the intentions of international, national and regional policy;
- it more closely reflects the views expressed during the Issues and Options consultation;
- it will underpin the creation of high quality urban environments;
- it will support the enhancement of biodiversity;
- it will contribute more strongly to the mitigation of climate change effects.

Option 1 is not the preferred option because it would not harness the development process to produce enhancement of natural features. Retention of existing features is not enough when the current resource is the result of a long-term trend towards depletion. This relatively neutral approach would be an insufficient response to climate change and the opportunities presented by the development that the Core Strategy is aiming to

facilitate.