



South West Nature Map - A Planners Guide

*Helping to Shape Spatial Planning
for Biodiversity in Local
Development Frameworks*



CONTENTS

Foreword

1.0 Introduction

1.1	Purpose of the Document and Target Audience	1
1.2	What is SW Nature Map	1
1.3	Why We Need Nature Map	4
1.4	Regional Biodiversity Targets and Nature Map	4
1.5	Biodiversity at the Landscape Scale	4
1.6	Landscape Character Assessment and SNAs	5
1.7	Links With Biodiversity Designations	6
1.8	Links With Protected and Priority Species	7
1.9	How Does Nature Map Fit with Other Biodiversity Initiatives and Strategies?	7

2.0 Statutory and Policy Context

2.1	Statutory Obligations for Biodiversity	9
2.2	Planning Legislation	9
2.3	National Policy Context	9
2.4	Regional Policy Context	10

3.0 What SW Nature Map has to Offer

3.1	Local Delivery of Regional Targets in SNAs	11
3.2	Nature Map, Habitat Networks and Green Infrastructure	11
3.3	Integrating SNA Objectives with Other Strategies and Programmes	12

4.0 Using SW Nature Map with LDF documents

4.1	Principles for Spatial Planning with SNAs	14
4.2	Introducing SNAs into LDFs	14
4.3	SNAs and the local evidence base	14
4.4	SNAs and Core Strategies	15
4.5	SNAs and Site Specific Allocations	15
4.6	SNAs and Area Action Plans	16
4.7	SNAs and Proposals Maps	17
4.8	SNAs and Annual Monitoring Reports	17
4.9	SNAs Supplementary Planning Documents	18
4.10	SNAs, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA)	19

5.0 Practical Delivery of SW Nature Map Objectives

5.1	Planning Delivery Mechanisms for SNAs	20
5.2	Integration With Other Delivery Mechanisms	20
5.3	Scope for Potential Developer Contributions Towards SNA Targets	21
5.4	Illustration of How to Plan for SNAs: Scenarios Presented in Figures 3 to 8	21

Annexes:

Annex 1	Regional biodiversity objectives and targets	29
Annex 2	National Planning Policy Context	30
Annex 3	County Scale Nature Maps	32

References	36
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Useful organisations and web links	37
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Prepared for Biodiversity South West by Mike Oxford (2007)

Foreword

Background to the Preparation of Nature Map

Nature Map has been prepared to give a clear strategic picture of our region's biodiversity for organisations operating at a regional scale such as the Regional Assembly, Regional Development Agency and Government Office.

The Map has been prepared through regional consultation using the best available biodiversity data, local expert knowledge and the South West Wildlife Trust's Rebuilding Biodiversity methodology. Strategic Nature Areas (SNAs) will contain a mosaic of habitats, building on established core habitats interspersed with other land uses, such as agriculture and recreation. The principal rivers are also included on the Nature Map as important linear features for biodiversity.

Biodiversity South West

Biodiversity South West is responsible for the preparation of this guidance. The Partnership includes representatives of Government, local authorities, statutory agencies, non-government organisations and businesses.

The partnership aims to: *"Promote and enable the delivery of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan through regional and local biodiversity action in line with the England Biodiversity Strategy"*.

- Further information on the Partnership can be found at <http://www.swbiodiversity.org.uk/>

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose of The Document and Target Audience

PPS 9 *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation* (2005; paragraph 5ii) requires Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) to “*identify any areas or sites for the restoration or creation of new priority habitats which contribute to regional targets, and support this restoration or creation through appropriate policies*”.

The principal purpose of this guidance is to assist forward planners to:

- (a) identify areas and sites at the local level that can contribute towards regional targets for the restoration and creation of priority habitats;
- (b) inform the formulation and use of appropriate policies in their LDFs.

This guidance will also be of interest and assistance to any organisation with an interest in promoting, through the planning system, the restoration and creation of biodiversity in the South West.

The preparation of detailed proposals in LDFs is likely to be easier and more effective where planning authorities work closely with their Local Biodiversity Action Plan Partnerships.

An outline for incorporating the south west’s regional targets into LDFs is provided in Figure 1.

1.2 What is South West Nature Map?

South West Nature Map is a broad-scale, strategic vision for change which offers a spatially-based tool for identifying where biodiversity enhancement should be delivered in the future, using existing areas of wildlife value as a starting point.

Nature Map identifies at the landscape scale blocks of land, known as ‘*Strategic Nature Areas*’ (SNAs) that represent the best areas to maintain and expand wildlife habitats through their management, restoration and/or re-creation. It is important to stress that land outside of the Nature Map areas also contain wildlife sites and species, much of which is especially valuable in their own right. There are many different tools and mechanisms in place that contribute to their conservation, and Nature Map is a significant addition to the wider strategy for biodiversity conservation in the region.

It is expected that Nature Map will be used by the region’s decision-makers, organisations and businesses to:

1. identify where most of the major biodiversity concentrations are found and where targets to maintain, restore and re-create wildlife might best be met;
2. formulate sustainable choices for development *e.g.* through Local Development Frameworks and the Regional Spatial Strategy;
3. assist in targeting the new Environmental Stewardship Scheme;
4. develop partnerships and projects for biodiversity in the region;
5. provide a focus for projects that will help biodiversity to adapt to climate change.

Nature Map was produced by Biodiversity South West and can be viewed and downloaded at: http://www.swenvo.org.uk/nature_map/nature_map.asp. See also Figure 2.

Figure 1 How to Incorporate SNAs into LDFs

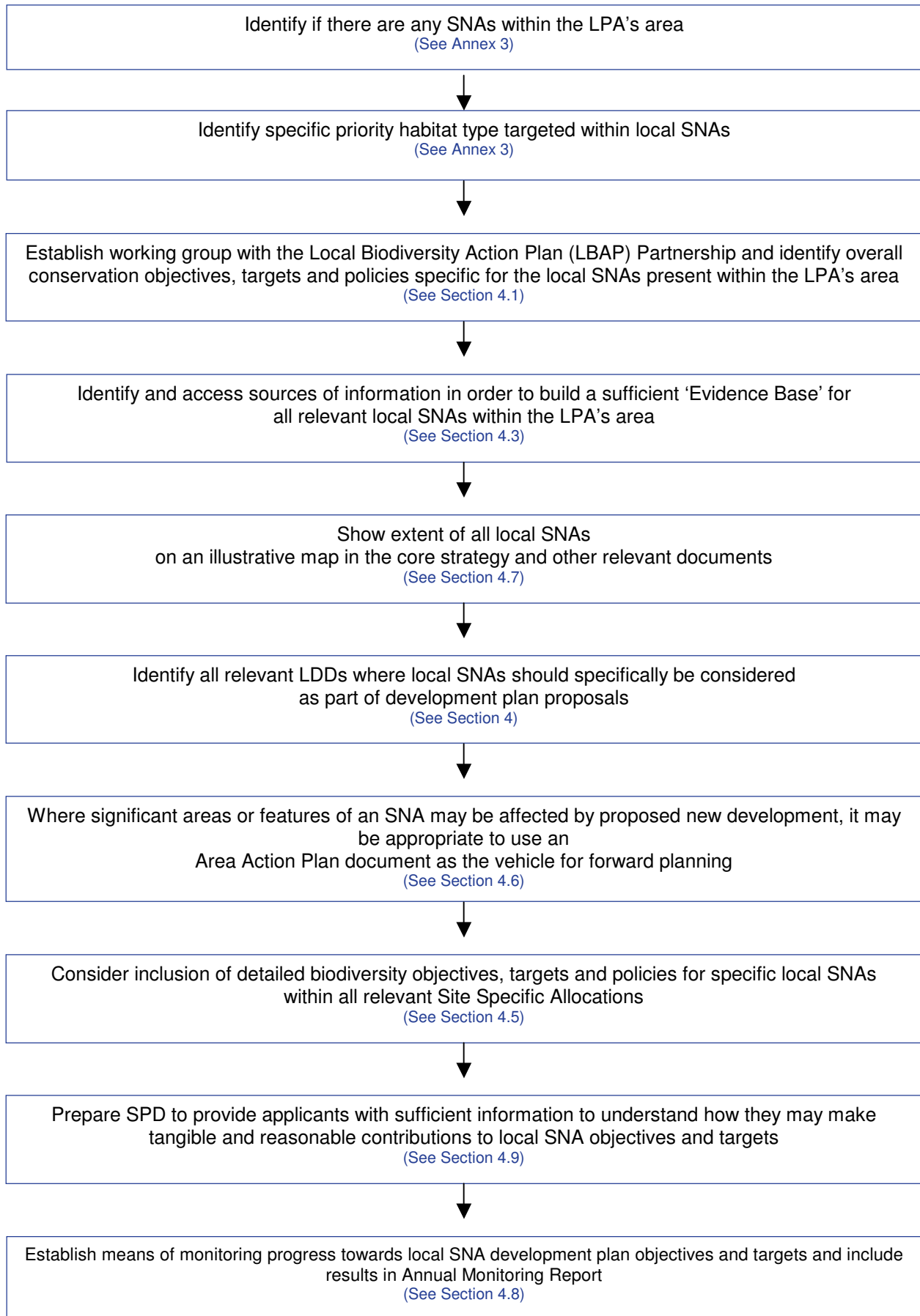
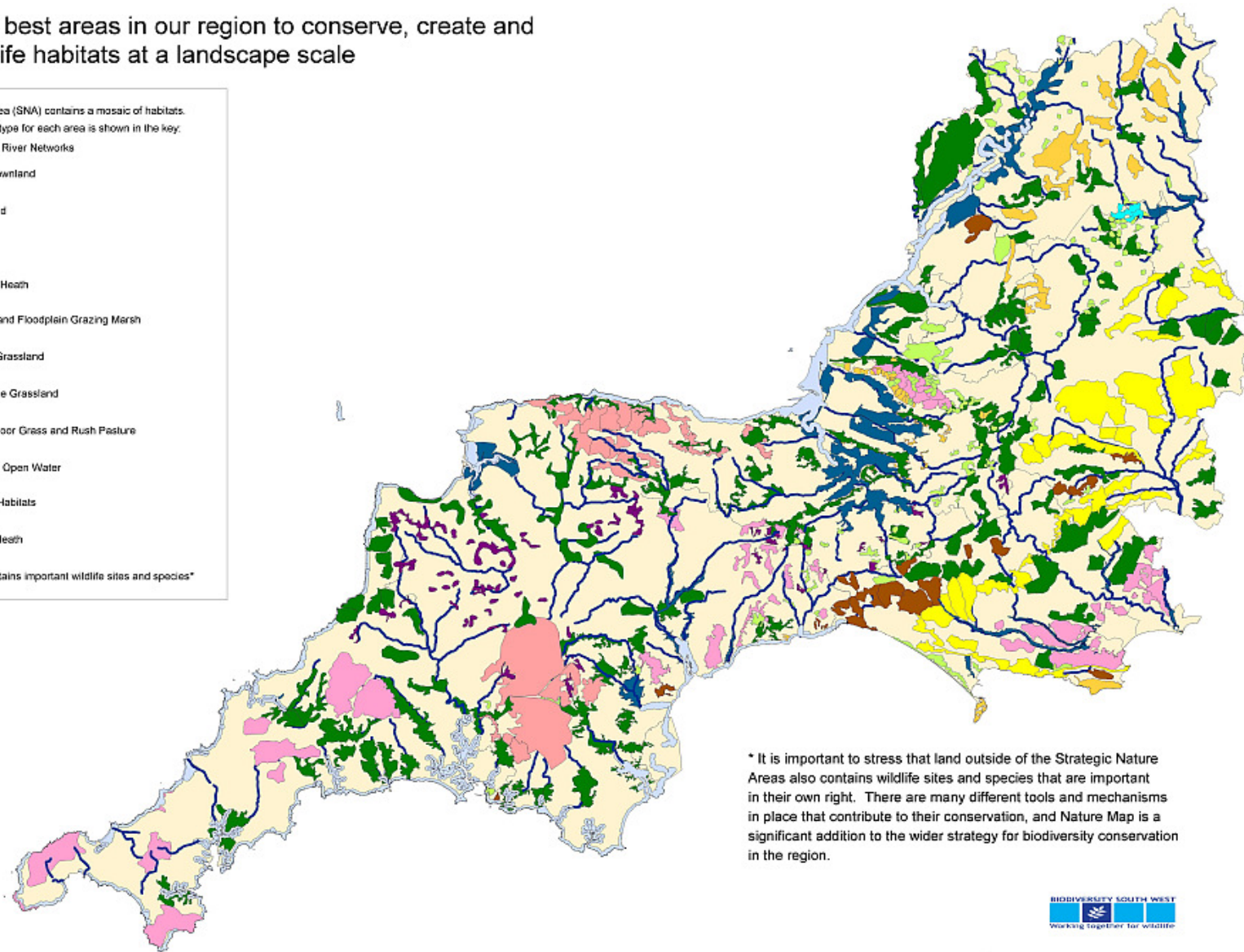


Figure 2 South West Nature Map

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identifies the best areas in our region to conserve, create and connect wildlife habitats at a landscape scale



* It is important to stress that land outside of the Strategic Nature Areas also contains wildlife sites and species that are important in their own right. There are many different tools and mechanisms in place that contribute to their conservation, and Nature Map is a significant addition to the wider strategy for biodiversity conservation in the region.

1.3 Why We Need Nature Map

The natural environment has been highlighted as a major asset for the South West in various regional documents¹. These documents share a vision for a landscape rich in biodiversity and comprising ecologically coherent networks of habitats that create a high quality environment for people and business.

It is crucial that LDFs contain the right policy approach for biodiversity if the visions contained in regional and national policy are to be achieved. Biodiversity South West therefore believes that Nature Map can facilitate this process by assisting forward planners to identify in their LDFs:

- areas with the highest potential for restoration or creation of priority habitats;
- where efforts to reverse fragmentation are likely to be most effective, and;
- where we may be able to most effectively safeguard biodiversity against the effects of climate change.

These areas comprise the Strategic Nature Areas (SNAs).

This guidance is intended to help forward planners to understand the concepts behind the Nature Map, and to transfer this understanding into policies and proposals at the local level.

Nature Map offers an opportunity to create a vision for a future landscape richer in biodiversity. Mapping of this kind encourages practitioners to recognise and plan for ecologically functional landscapes, where we can hopefully manage the effects of climate change on natural systems. It represents a natural spatial progression to the biodiversity action planning process, allowing us to identify 'opportunity space' for the achievement of BAP targets. It enables integration between the heritage (historic and cultural) sectors, and between environmental, social and economic planners. The map can also convey an agenda for biodiversity to a wider audience in a much more user-friendly way than can text and figures alone. (English Nature Research Report 641: 2005).

1.4 Regional Biodiversity Targets and Nature Map

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan has established targets for priority habitats and species. The way that these national targets have been interpreted and 'cascaded down' to the regional level in the South West is shown in Annex 1. The targets shown are those associated with the habitat priorities shown spatially in Nature Map.

Note: there are some priority habitats that are not shown on Nature Map. For instance, it would be impractical to try and map species rich hedgerows, but we should remember that such linear features often provide much of the crucial connectivity within and outside of the SNAs.

1.5 Biodiversity at the Landscape Scale

As Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) targets have been developed and refined, recognition has grown of the need to restore ecological health at a landscape scale, and to secure long term environmental sustainability, especially in the face of the growing threat from climate change. This requires conservation planning to look beyond protected areas and discrete wildlife sites, to wider natural processes functioning across landscapes. As such, the South West Regional BAP targets are insufficient by themselves to define this landscape functionality.

When viewed at the landscape scale, existing priority habitats, together with landscape features which provide wildlife corridors, links or stepping stones from one site to another help to form

¹ These include the SW Biodiversity Action Plan and the Biodiversity Implementation Plan, the Regional Sustainable Development Framework, the SW Environment Strategy, Regional Economic Strategy and the Regional Spatial Strategy.

important *networks of habitats* (see also 3.3 below). This network is crucial to maintaining the current range and richness of our biodiversity, and also provides the best hope of enabling our priority habitats to adapt to the effects of climate change.

However, what is also apparent at the landscape is that most priority habitats represent the remaining fragments of what was once much more extensive areas of natural and semi-natural habitat. These fragments are often the most important features in the landscape for nature conservation and provide the best characterisation of an area's wild flora and fauna.

Typically though, such fragments are highly vulnerable. They are often small and their quality is threatened or actually deteriorating through pervasive edge effects, airborne pollution, altered hydrology and changes in land management. They can also be isolated from each other by inhospitable an agricultural and urban landscape, which makes them even more susceptible to the effects of climate change.

Landscape ecology recognises that habitat patches in a landscape do not exist in isolation, but are influenced by their size, their position relative to one another, and the physical structure of the landscape in between them. Bigger habitat patches, closer to one another, set in an intervening landscape which is not hostile to species movement, are likely to be more robust and 'functional' in ecological terms. As such, they will be more resilient and less sensitive to all manner of external disturbance, and more adaptable to change (*i.e.* climate change).

The future sustainability of habitats demands not only that existing habitat patches are protected, but also that they are expanded and connected across landscapes, and that such expansion will be more feasible and appropriate in some locations than others.

Nature Map identifies these locations across the South West, and illustrates where there is greatest opportunity to achieve gains for biodiversity at the landscape scale.

1.6 Landscape Character Assessment and SNAs

In the past, English Nature and the Countryside Agency have done extensive work to define local character. These initiatives have been brought together as Joint Character Areas.

Landscape Character Assessment (LCA) has now evolved to become a high profile tool for planners and decision makers in a wide range of fields.

The Landscape Character process aims to identify areas of broadly similar character, distinct from their neighbours, along with the characteristic patterns and features within them. It seeks to record the character of a place rather than to judge or rank it, and to outline the key influences on its development over time. Typically, this is achieved by analysing layers of information including landform, the underlying geology and soils, as well as the strong influence of human activity as seen in patterns of settlement, land cover and differences in tree cover. The existence of national guidance means that this is carried out to a consistent set of procedures.

Every region in the UK possesses its own distinctive landscapes, habitats, species, geology and landforms, and as a result priority habitats and species are not distributed evenly across the country. Many of the priority habitats in the South West have a very limited distribution across the region. For instance, chalk grassland is very characteristic of parts of Dorset and Wiltshire but not found in other counties, whereas upland heath is only found in North West Somerset, Devon and Bodmin Moor in Cornwall.

The character approach provides a useful tool which can give an indication of the types of habitat which, through the interaction of natural and manmade conditions, are characteristic of a given locale. These can form the basis upon future conservation measures can be planned.

Note: the LCA has identified *character areas* derived at 1:250000. However, the approach is now being applied at the local scale through Landscape Description Units (LDUs). These LDUs

are the smaller building blocks of Landscape Character Areas and are derived at a scale of 1:25000, using a range of ecological and cultural data.

Landscape Description Units may be of use in 'fine tuning' enhancement proposals so that they are a good fit with character at the very local level. For instance, LDUs may inform the pattern of hedgerows and woodland in the landscape. Or going further still, they may also inform the species composition and, thereby planting mix, appropriate to the local type of ancient woodland in any part of the region.

Landscape characterisation and LDUs should become an increasingly important tool and should help the regional strategic approach to be carried forward to a very local scale without the need for designations. All sites have the opportunity to offer something to biodiversity, and this will be best achieved by being informed by what is locally characteristic.

Strategic Nature Areas are a practical way of applying a character approach at the landscape scale. They show the spatial distribution and pattern of priority habitats that are characteristic of the different sub-regions of the South West, and thereby which habitat, of regional importance, is most appropriate for restoration and expansion in any particular area.

Each Strategic Nature Area relates to the restoration and enhancement of just one priority habitat type, even though there is likely to be a mosaic of other habitat also present within that area.

The SNAs are a practical application of landscape ecology and, as such, they define the areas with the highest potential to deliver regional biodiversity targets for the enhancement, restoration and re-creation of important habitats.

In addition to the SNAs, Nature Map also shows the principal rivers, since these are important linear features for biodiversity.

1.7 Links with Biodiversity Designations

There is a hierarchy of formal designations for biodiversity conservation. Some of these are of international status, while others are of national, regional and local importance. These include:

International Sites

- Special Protection Areas (SPAs) – designated for bird interest.
- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) – designated for habitats and species.
- Ramsar sites – designated for their wetland interest.

National Sites

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
- National Nature Reserves (NNRs)

Local Sites

- Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)
- Local Sites (e.g. Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation or Local Wildlife Sites)

The boundaries for international and national designations can be found on the South West Observatory's web site at: http://www.swenvo.org.uk/environment/fig31_wild_desig.asp.

Full details on the special interest associated with all international, national sites and LNRs are available from Natural England.

The boundary for local designations should already be shown in 'old style' development plans, and full details for these should be available from local authority ecologists, local wildlife trusts and local environmental records centres.

SNAs are not a formal environmental designation. The features described above protect existing assets through statutory and non-statutory designations. Instead, SNAs identify and represent large scale areas of **opportunity**. It is important to note that SNAs may be comprised of a number of formally designated sites as well as land that has no designation for biodiversity conservation. Designated sites may also occur outside of SNAs, and these must be subject to appropriate levels of planning protection in their own right (as explained in PPS 9). Consistent with the key principles in PPS 9, planners may also seek local scale enhancements in association with designated sites.

1.8 Links with Protected and Important Species

Many individual wildlife species receive statutory protection under a range of legislation ² (see also Part IV of ODPM/Defra Circular ODPM 06/2005).

Other species have been identified as requiring conservation action as species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England ³. PPS 9 (paragraph 16) states "Local authorities should take measures to protect the habitats of these species from further decline through policies in local development documents".

ODPM (2005) states that protected and important species are a material consideration for planning authorities. Working with the Local Biodiversity Action Plan Partnership, LPAs should establish which, if any, protected and important species are associated with the type of priority habitat found within SNAs in their plan area. For instance, otters and water voles are closely associated with rivers and coastal and floodplain grazing marsh.

Where protected and important species are present within a local SNA, LPAs may wish to include measures for their conservation in the planning objectives and policies set for that SNA. Local BAP partners will be able to advise further on what measures will be appropriate.

1.9 How Does Nature Map Fit with Other Biodiversity Initiatives and Strategies?

For the first time, Nature Map provides for the South West a visual and spatial representation of priorities for habitat conservation and restoration that have been identified at the national and regional scale.

As such Nature Map is a spatially-based tool that is firmly based upon the work, objectives and targets set out in earlier biodiversity documents, including:

- The UK BAP
- The UK Steering Group Report
- The England Biodiversity Strategy
- South West Wildlife Trusts - Rebuilding Biodiversity Technical Manual
- The South West Biodiversity Action Plan

² Certain plant and animal species, including all wild birds, are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. European plant and animal species are protected under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c) Regulations 1994. Some other animals are protected under their own legislation, for example Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

³ Lists of habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biological diversity in England published by the Secretary of State for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, in response to Section 74 (2) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 are available on the Defra website at www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/cl/habitats/habitats-list.pdf

- The South West Biodiversity Implementation Plan

Nature Map has also been reliant upon local data and expertise that has been collected and made available through Local Biodiversity Action Partnerships in their Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs).

2.0 Statutory and Policy Context

2.1 Statutory Obligations for Biodiversity

Statutory responsibilities for biodiversity are underpinned by a range of nature conservation legislation. The primary responsibilities for local planning authorities are explained in detail in ODPM Circular Advice 06/2005 *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system*.

Key pieces of legislation that planning authorities must have due regard to in the exercise of their planning functions are:

- *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*
- *The Habitat Regulations 1994*
- *The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000*
- *The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006*

Section 40 of the NERC Act states that:

“Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity”. Where “conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat”.

This duty applies to local planning authorities, and makes clear that they have a statutory duty to consider biodiversity conservation, including its restoration and enhancement.

2.2 Planning Legislation

Section 39 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires that local planning authorities in exercising their planning functions must do so *“with the objective of contributing to the achievement of sustainable development”*. In doing so, they must have regard to national policies and advice in guidance issued by the Secretary of State.

2.3 National Policy Context for Biodiversity

The achievement of sustainable development and the conservation, restoration and enhancement of biodiversity are themes that are picked up strongly in Government policy statements and advice. Annex 2 provides a brief summary of key policy statements regarding biodiversity found in the following documents:

- The England Biodiversity Strategy
- Planning Policy Statement 1 Delivering Sustainable Development
- Planning Policy Statement 12 Local Development Frameworks
- Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide
- Planning Policy Statement 9 Biodiversity And Geological Conservation
- Planning For Biodiversity And Geological Conservation: A Guide To Good Practice

The Government recognises that the planning system is a key mechanism for the delivery of sustainable development and for meeting the UK’s statutory responsibilities for its natural environment. More specifically, the Government intends the planning system to play a significant role in not only halting the decline in the UK’s nature conservation resource but also in helping to reverse that decline through the creation of new areas of habitat and the management of existing habitats to increase their value for wildlife. Throughout the above

strategies and policy guidance, the word 'enhance' is repeatedly used alongside 'conserve' when discussing the role of the planning system and nature conservation.

2.4 Regional Policy Context

Chapter 7 of the draft South West Regional Spatial Strategy (SW RSS) builds upon national policy; it states:

"Local authorities should use Nature Map and work with interested local stakeholders including local biodiversity partnerships and local record centres to map local opportunities for biodiversity enhancement in LDDs ..."

Also: *"It is important that targets for maintenance, restoration and recreation of priority habitats are met, taking an ecosystem approach, including opportunities for linking and buffering habitats and making them more coherent units. Local authorities should use the development process positively to achieve these outcomes and should promote beneficial management of priority habitats and species found in their areas. This should result in more resilient habitat units across the region."*

And: *"Provision for the maintenance, restoration and enhancement of habitats and species should be a significant component in the provision of 'green infrastructure.'"*

These policy requirements are then expressed in **RSS Policy ENV4**, which states:

"The distinctive habitats and species of the South West will be maintained and enhanced in line with national targets and the South West Regional Biodiversity Action Plan. Local authorities should use the Nature Map to help map local opportunities for biodiversity enhancement in LDDs, taking into account the local distribution of habitats and species, and protecting these sites and features from harmful development. Priority will be given to meeting targets for maintenance, restoration and recreation of priority habitats and species set out in Appendix 1, focusing on the Nature Map areas identified in Map 7.3. Proposals which provide opportunities for the beneficial management of these areas and habitats and species generally, should be supported, including linking habitats to create more functional units which are more resilient to climate change."

The importance of green infrastructure is also emphasised in Chapter 6 and through Policy GI1 which states:

"Development of networks of Green Infrastructure (GI) will be required to enhance quality of life in the region and support the successful accommodation of change. GI networks will comprise multifunctional, accessible, connected assets, planned around existing environmental characteristics. This may take the form of protection, enhancement or extension of existing resources or the provision of new or replacement facilities."

When planning the proposed distribution of development, GI is required as an integral part of development, with provision for a network of GI incorporated in the spatial strategy. Local authorities and partners will:

- *build upon existing expertise and initiatives to identify priorities and partnerships for GI;*
- *incorporate GI policies setting out broad locations for GI appropriate to the extent and distribution of development proposed, coordinated across administrative boundaries as appropriate; and*
- *develop a GI Plan with a delivery programme to support GI policies."*

Note: All local development frameworks in the South West should be in general conformity with the above policies ⁴.

⁴ Local Development Frameworks are required to be in general conformity with the RSS (Paragraphs 4.19 and 4.20 of PPS 12).

3.0 What SW Nature Map Has To Offer

3.1 Local Delivery of Regional Targets in SNAs

PPS 12 states that LPAs will need to “*establish conservation and enhancement objectives*”. PPS 9 (paragraph 5) develops this further and makes it clear that LDFs should identify any areas or sites for the restoration or creation of new priority habitats which contribute to regional targets.

Nature Map helps meet this requirement. It provides a practical planning tool, identifying at the local level which priority habitats should be emphasised for restoration or creation, and shows spatially where this effort should be concentrated. In other words, it shows where and what LPAs need to consider locally in their LDF, in order to contribute to regional biodiversity targets.

This guidance on Nature Map also recommends that LPAs should work very closely with LBAP partnerships and Local Environmental Records Centres to develop detailed objectives and appropriate policies relating to the particular SNAs found in their shared area. This work should include:

- compiling a sufficient evidence base necessary to inform local scale planning within their SNAs (for further information on the evidence base for SNAs see Section 4.3), and;
- jointly establishing local priorities, objectives and targets for each SNA based on local information and LBAP targets *etc*;

It should, however, be noted that SNAs present only part of the picture. Sites and features that are of importance for biodiversity conservation exist both inside and outside of the SNAs (and many of these features will already be protected by international, national, regional and local designations). LPAs and their partners should therefore also consider:

- identifying how objectives set for each SNA will relate to and integrate with wider biodiversity objectives and policies that are applicable outside of SNAs. This may include planning for the provision or enhancement of green infrastructure that links features within and outside of SNAs, and thereby improves the overall network of habitats.

Since each SNA targets one priority habitat, this presents a clear, positive and proactive agenda for both planners and developers. Therefore, as a principle of ‘*front loading*’, development⁵ proposed within SNAs should be expected to make a contribution towards the targets for the relevant priority habitat. LPAs should identify the circumstances where they would expect such contributions, and it may be appropriate to plan for these provisions in *Site Specific Allocation* documents or in *Area Action Plans* (see Part 4.4 and 4.5 below).

Alternatively, some smaller scale developments may come forward without the benefit of ‘*front loaded*’ biodiversity objectives. However, by taking into account their location and context, it should still be possible to assess their potential to make a contribution towards biodiversity enhancement within an SNA. Such opportunities may first be encountered within development control, so it is important that LDD policies also provide for this eventuality.

3.2 Nature Map, Habitat Networks and Green Infrastructure (GI)

Nature Map can be used to inform spatial planning for habitat networks and Green Infrastructure.

⁵ In view of their small scale nature, it is not expected that householder, listed buildings and conservation area applications will contribute to targets within SNAs.

Habitat networks form linkage between sites of biodiversity importance and provide routes or stepping stones for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of species in the wider environment.

As described in 1.5 above, such networks provide a valuable resource and make an invaluable contribution to ecologically functional landscapes; they are nature's 'green infrastructure', and are as equally important to biodiversity as our built infrastructure is to modern society. Neither can function without their own supporting systems and networks.

Planning positively for 'GI' can therefore play an important role in maintaining such networks by avoiding or repairing fragmentation and isolation of natural habitats and by creating new features wherever possible (see PPS 9; paragraph 12).

GI can be applied at all scales. For instance, the Town and Country Planning Association (2004)⁶ defines it as:

"The sub-regional network of protected sites, nature reserves, green spaces and greenway linkages. The linkages include corridors and floodplains, migration routes and features of the landscape, which are of importance as wildlife corridors. Green infrastructure should provide for multi-functional uses i.e. wildlife, recreational and cultural experience, as well as delivering ecological services, such as flood protection and microclimate control. It should also operate at all spatial scales from urban centres through to open countryside. "

GI has been identified by the South West Regional Assembly (SWRA) as an important component of the positive benefits that new development should provide for the Region.

The draft Regional Spatial Strategy (RSS) states GI should be planned around existing environmental and cultural characteristics. GI networks should consist of a series of features (both existing and new), appropriate at various spatial scales, preferably with links connecting smaller, more local sites with larger, more strategic ones. Networks should provide links between town and country, between different parts of an urban area, and between existing and new development. Refer to RSS Policy GI1 (see section 2 above).

The suite of SNAs therefore provides the mechanism through which local authorities can contribute, using their land use planning functions, to a regional scale green infrastructure that extends across the South West. Furthermore, by using Nature Map in conjunction with Character Assessment and Landscape Description Units, LPAs will be able to help guide the way in which land use changes are both distributed and implemented. As a result, it will be possible to enhance and strengthen the ecological functionality of landscapes within and between SNAs through enhancement of local scale GI.

Green infrastructure and its potential relationship with SNAs and also new development are illustrated in a number of hypothetical scenarios in Figures 3 to 8 in Section 5.

3.3 Integrating SNA Objectives with Other Strategies and Programmes

Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function. PPS 12 (paragraph 1.8) states that local authorities should therefore take account of the principles and characteristics of other relevant strategies and programmes when preparing Local Development Frameworks.

LPAs may therefore wish to consider how these other initiatives may also contribute towards or conflict with the delivery of SNA biodiversity targets, and how these may interact and be

⁶ TCPA's *Biodiversity by Design* provides excellent guidance on how to integrate green infrastructure into spatial planning at all scales, from the regional to the very local.

integrated with planning proposals in the LDF. The LBAP partnership is likely to be able to assist with this integration exercise.

Key initiatives include:

- Agri-environment schemes (such as Environmental Stewardship)
- Forestry Commission South West Regional Woodland and Forestry Framework 2005 (supported by the English Woodland Grant Scheme)
- Flood Management (EA Catchment Flood Management Plans, Catchment Management Plans, Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes)
- The Water Framework Directive and River Basin Management Planning
- Integrated Coastal Zone Management

Note: The Water Framework Directive introduces a new high level water planning process – based on river basin districts (which are approximately the size of a region). Key aims of the Directive in relation to nature conservation and the planning system are the promotion of sustainable water use and to establish a framework for the protection of surface and groundwaters which protects and enhances the status of aquatic ecosystems and, with regard to their water needs, terrestrial ecosystems and wetlands directly dependent on the aquatic ecosystems (ODPM Circular 06/2005).

Planning authorities, in the exercise of the planning functions, are required to have regard to river basin management plans for river basin districts⁷. SNAs may be used, at the local level, to assist the integration of regional biodiversity objectives with those set under the directive for river basin management plans.

⁷

Regulation 17 of the Water Environment (Water Framework Directive) (England and Wales) Regulations 2003

4.0 Using SW Nature Map with LDF Documents

4.1 Principles for Spatial Planning with SNAs

In addition to the 'Key Principles' set out in PPS 9 for planning and biodiversity conservation, LPAs in the South West should also:

- Identify which SNAs, and associated types of priority habitat, are found within their plan area;
- Establish a suitable evidence base, identifying and accessing sources and types of information necessary to inform forward planning in the identified SNAs, working closely with local environmental record centres and LBAP partnership;
- Work closely with LBAP partners to formulate planning objectives, local targets and policies specific to the SNAs in question;
- Show the extent of any SNAs on appropriate maps in relevant LDDs;
- Provide guidance to prospective developers to explain what is required of them when seeking planning permission within these SNAs;
- Ensure that development control decisions achieve an overall positive contribution to biodiversity targets for any SNAs in their plan area;
- Ensure that forward planning and development control decisions lead to an overall reversal of habitat fragmentation in SNAs;
- Ensure that forward planning and development control decisions take account of evolving and up to date proposals aimed at improving biodiversity resilience to climate change.

Figure 1 provides a flow diagram for an at-a-glance view of how an LPA may incorporate planning for SNAs in the overall process of LDF preparation.

4.2 Introducing SNAs into LDFs

The new format for the Development Plan means that various documents in the Local Development Frameworks may be used to promote spatial planning within SNAs. The following sections explain how an LPA might integrate SNAs into each of their Local Development Documents.

4.3 SNAs and the Local Evidence Base

As a starting point for the information they should consider, LPAs should refer to *Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: a Guide to Good Practice* (ODPM 2006). Chapter 2 (section 2.3) provides useful help on the key elements of an evidence base for biodiversity, which is particularly applicable to spatial planning within SNAs.

However, in particular, LPAs should work with their partners on the following:

- A detailed desk top review of the distribution of priority habitats (and priority species particularly associated with the habitat) within the SNA;
- Where there are gaps in the above, additional field based survey of SNAs may be necessary to provide an up to date picture of habitat quality and distribution within SNA;

- Assessment of current condition and opportunities for enhancement of priority habitat within SNA (this may include consideration of existing management agreements; obstacles/pressures hindering delivery of targets; opportunities to achieve enhancements);
- Assessment of opportunities for enhancement of populations of priority species associated with the priority habitat within SNA;
- Development of specific priority habitat and priority species targets for each SNA that may be delivered by new development;
- Development of 'opportunities and constraints' map for each SNA;
- Map based illustration of links and needs for provision of GI within and between SNAs;
- Agreement over appropriate monitoring principles to be applied to SNA targets *etc.*, consistent with guidance in PPS 12 and *Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide* ODPM (2005).

4.4 SNAs and the Core Strategy

Since any LDD may include proposals and policies that might affect SNAs, it is important that the LPA's strategic position for SNAs is stated first in the Core Strategy.

This guidance recommends that the most appropriate LDD in which to identify *Strategic Nature Areas* is the Core Strategy, since the SNAs are of regional strategic significance and should therefore influence and form part of the LPAs overall strategic vision and objectives.

The SNAs should be identified spatially, within the Core Strategy, on a *Key Diagram or Illustrative Map*, the key areas proposed for the creation or restoration of priority habitats that contribute to regional targets. This approach complies with PPS 9, paragraph 5 (see Annex 2 of this guidance).

The SNAs should be supported with a clear objective and/or policy that states that within these areas, specific action will be taken towards meeting targets for the maintenance, restoration and recreation of priority habitats and species, and to linking habitats to create more coherent units which are more resilient to climate change. This approach complies with RSS ENV 4 (see section 2.4 above) and with PPS 12 pages 68 and 69 (see Annex 2 of this guidance).

The Core Strategy is also the appropriate LDD in which to state that SNAs should be protected from adverse impacts that compromise their potential to achieve regional biodiversity targets and/or that reduces their resilience to climate change.

LPAs should ensure that all policies, proposals and allocations in other LDDs reconcile any potential conflict with the objectives set for SNAs. Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment should be used as a tool to test that such reconciliation is achieved.

Note: In formulating such objectives and/or policies for SNAs, the LPA should recognise that regional biodiversity targets will be delivered through the planning system and a variety of other very important mechanisms, including national agri-environment or forestry schemes (see section 3.8 above). This approach is consistent with PPS 12 paragraph 1.8.

4.5 SNAs and Site Specific Allocations

In order to meet the objectives and/or policies set out for SNAs in the Core Strategy (see 4.3 above), Site Specific Allocations should ensure that the *'Key Principles'* from PPS 9 have been applied to site selection and that alternatives have been fully explored with regard to the location, form, type and scale of development allocated to each specific site (see section 4.1 and 4.2 above).

Especially, Site Specific Allocations within SNAs should:

- (i) identify how the proposed development might reasonably make a contribution towards regional biodiversity enhancement targets;
- (ii) ensure that specific allocations do not cause adverse impacts that compromise the potential of an SNA to achieve regional biodiversity targets that might be delivered through other mechanisms (*e.g.* agri-environment or forestry schemes, where these may provide the means to achieve substantial contributions towards the improvement of a priority habitat as long as the land is not subject to inappropriate development);
- (iii) ensure that specific allocations do not reduce the SNAs overall resilience to climate change; for instance by locating development between two parcels of priority habitat where it would restrict the migration and dispersal of species between the two.

It may be appropriate to supplement site specific allocations with Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) that includes guidance on how the LPA expects development to take account of the biodiversity objectives and targets set for an SNA. This guidance might be incorporated into a master plan or design guide SPD, or it might take the form of specific SPD on biodiversity.

4.6 SNAs and Area Action Plans (AAPs)

In light of Government guidance, as explained in the footnotes below, there is a strong case that AAPs are particularly suited to spatial planning for Strategic Nature Areas.

Proposed below are reasons why an LPA should give careful consideration to defining some, if not all, SNAs as Area Action Plans (Note: these recommendations are referenced to footnotes linking them directly to current Government policy guidance in PPS 12):

- SNAs are areas where “*significant conservation is needed*” and have been identified as “*areas particularly sensitive to change*” (*i.e.* sensitive to increased fragmentation and thereby increased vulnerability to climate change)⁸.
- LPAs will need to set out “*policies and proposals for action to preserve or enhance*” biodiversity in the SNAs and should ensure that their biodiversity potential is maintained and is “*subject to specific controls over development*”⁹.
- Proposals within SNAs should “*ensure development is of an appropriate scale, mix and quality*” to safeguard “*opportunities*” to achieve regional biodiversity “*conservation*” targets within the area¹⁰.
- In light of their importance in delivering national and regional biodiversity targets in a spatial dimension, SNAs would “*benefit from having full development plan status*”¹¹.

⁸ PPS 12 paragraph 2.17 states: “*Area action plans should be used to provide the planning framework for areas where significant change or conservation is needed. A key feature of area action plans will be the focus on implementation. They should (among other things) ... protect areas particularly sensitive to change ...*”.

⁹ And PPS 12 paragraph 2.18 states: “*In areas of conservation, area action plans should set out the policies and proposals for action to preserve or enhance the area, including defining areas where specific conservation measures are proposed and areas which will be subject to specific controls over development*”.

¹⁰ The Companion Guide to PPS 12 (paragraph 3.6) states that Area Action Plans: “*should focus upon implementation, providing an important mechanism for ensuring development of an appropriate scale, mix and quality for key areas of opportunity, change or conservation*”

¹¹ The Companion Guide (paragraph 3.6) also states: “*Action Plans or area strategies with a geographic or spatial dimension will benefit from having development plan status as area action plans in contrast to their previous status as supplementary planning guidance*”.

- LPAs will need to “*establish conservation and enhancement objectives*” for SNAs, and will have to demonstrate how these may be “*reconciled with sensitive development*”¹².
- In addition to contributions from spatial planning and development, biodiversity objectives and targets within the SNAs will rely upon other various “*area-based initiatives*” and mechanisms for their delivery e.g. agri-environment and forestry schemes¹³.

Where Area Action Plans are used to achieve spatial planning for SNAs, they may:

- i) Provide a rationale for why the SNA Area Action Plan is necessary and the specific priority habitats (and other biodiversity) that it will conserve, restore or enhance and the objectives and targets that it will help achieve;
- ii) Explain why an SNA may be particularly sensitive to change or development, for instance around the Dorset Heaths;
- iii) Establish the specific local conservation and enhancement objectives for the SNA;
- iv) Explain how the protection of existing priority habitat features in an SNA Area Action Plan might be reconciled with sensitive development, and what form and type that development should take without compromising the SNAs objectives;
- v) Be used to identify key areas within the SNA where biodiversity gains are to be sought as a priority;
- vi) Identify how an SNA might be particularly sensitive to the impacts of climate change and how action can be taken to lessen these effects.

4.7 SNAs and the Proposals Maps

PPS 12 states that the Adopted Proposals Map should identify areas to be protected (e.g. the hierarchy of statutory and non-statutory designated sites) and may show areas where biodiversity will be enhanced. PPS 9 adds that LDFs should identify any areas or sites for the restoration or creation of new priority habitats which contribute to regional targets. Adopted proposals maps should therefore show the full extent of SNAs in an LPA’s area.

Since the targets for SNAs will also be delivered through a number of mechanisms other than development, it is important that LPAs show, for spatial planning purposes, the full extent of all SNAs within their plan; this will then accord with policy guidance in PPS 12 (paragraph 2.5).

4.8 SNAs and Annual Monitoring Reports

Section 35 of the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004 requires every local planning authority to make an annual report to the Secretary of State containing information on the extent to which the policies set out in the local development documents are being achieved.

¹² The Companion Guide (paragraph 3.6) continues that Area action plans could be relevant in a wide range of circumstances, including:

“Areas that are particularly sensitive to change or development, such as areas of significant natural or cultural heritage value. Plans for such areas would establish the conservation and enhancement objectives and how these might be reconciled with sensitive development;

And also:

¹³ *“Focusing the delivery of area based initiatives”.*

Biodiversity is one element that LPAs should report on, as required by ODPM (2005)¹⁴.

Consequently, biodiversity monitoring requirements should be considered at the Pre-production stage of the LDF as part of evidence gathering. At this stage it is important that SNAs are included in each authority's outline LDF monitoring framework. Subsequently, a full set of *contextual*, *core output* and *significance of effects* indicators should be developed for SNAs, with clear linkage to the policy objectives that they are measuring.

In particular, ODPM (2005; page 29), has suggested the following biodiversity core output indicators:

"Changes in areas and populations of biodiversity importance, including:

- (i) change in priority habitats and species (by type) and*
- (ii) change in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites of international, national, regional and sub-regional significance".*

Where changes in the above are defined as:

- Change to be considered in terms of impact of completed development, management programmes and planning agreements. Measurement includes additions and subtractions (losses) to biodiversity priority habitats (hectares) and numbers of priority species types.
- Areas of environmental value should be measured in hectares.

The SW RSS states that suitable regional indicators will be established and used to monitor progress towards enhancement targets and to ensure that SNAs remain resilient to climate change and that their objectives are not compromised by inappropriate development proposals.

As part of their wider reporting on biodiversity, LPAs should measure the extent of change in priority habitat in their Strategic Nature Areas that is attributable to development, reporting on subtractions (losses) and additions expressed in hectares. LPAs may choose to highlight the results from SNAs to demonstrate the progress they are making towards the achievement of regional targets.

The results of the above monitoring should be fed into other national, regional and local biodiversity monitoring initiatives, such as the national Biodiversity Action Reporting System (BARS). Members of the LBAP partnership may be able to advise further on whether there is scope to do this locally.

Note: Local Record Centres are likely to be able to assist LPAs with the data management requirements associated with monitoring.

4.9 SNAs and Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs)

A number of options exist for how an LPA may deal with SNAs in supplementary planning documents. These include:

- Specific SPD on one or all SNAs within the plan area;
- Inclusion of SNAs within broader SPD covering other aspects of biodiversity conservation and spatial planning;

¹⁴ ODPM (2005) *Local Development Framework Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide*

- Reference to SNAs within SPD produced as masterplans or design briefs to support site specific allocations.

Whichever option is selected, SPD provides an opportunity to elaborate on the purpose, characteristics and planning objectives and targets for each SNAs within its plan area. It can be used to explain in detail how the authority expects development to make a practical contribution towards biodiversity enhancement.

4.10 SNAs, Strategic Environmental Assessment (SEA) and Sustainability Appraisal (SA)

PPS 9 (page 1) states that part of the Government's objectives for planning are to promote sustainable development by ensuring that biodiversity is conserved and enhanced as an integral part of social, environmental and economic development.

In this respect, biodiversity enhancement within the SNAs can be considered a key test for sustainable development, and one that should be carefully considered in both Sustainability Appraisal and Strategic Environmental Assessment – both of which are tools that LPAs should use to demonstrate that they have discharged their duties under S.39 of the 2004 Act.

A copy of the Strategic Sustainability Appraisal for the SW Regional Spatial Strategy can be found at: http://www.southwest-ra.gov.uk/nqcontent.cfm?a_id=836

5.0 Practical Delivery of SW Nature Map Objectives

5.1 Planning Delivery Mechanisms

In seeking to secure developer contributions towards biodiversity enhancements within the Strategic Nature Areas, planning authorities should make full use of traditional and new planning mechanisms provided for this purpose, including planning conditions and planning obligations.

Note: As this guidance is being prepared, the Government is in the process of reviewing the planning obligations system, with a view to introducing a new levy (Planning Gain Supplement) to allow the wider community to share more broadly in the financial gains arising from new development. A strong case has been submitted to Government that an element of this new levy should contribute towards the delivery of the biodiversity rich environmental infrastructure needed for sustainable communities.

If such a planning gain supplement is introduced, it is very likely that this will in the future represent the primary mechanism by which an LPA might seek developer contributions towards biodiversity enhancements in an SNA.

5.2 Integration with other Delivery Mechanisms

The achievement of regional targets for the enhancement of priority habitats found in the SNAs does not rely solely upon contributions from new development. Other sectors and delivery mechanisms will play a vital role as well, especially those associated with agriculture and forestry. In many situations, it is very likely that conservation organisations, rather than developers, will be key players in the promotion and implementation of action that leads to biodiversity enhancements.

Below is a list of only some of the key mechanisms and funding sources that may be used to achieve biodiversity enhancement targets.

- Aggregates Levy Sustainability Funds
- English Woodland Grant Scheme
- Environmental Stewardship
- Heritage Lottery Funding
- Wildspace Grant Scheme

Details of the above and other funding mechanisms available for biodiversity conservation can be found on the Defra web site at: <http://www.defra.gov.uk/funding/what/natres.htm>

The degree, to which development is likely to make practical contributions towards SNA targets, will vary throughout the region. For some SNAs, where they are relatively close to proposed new large scale development (e.g. where there will be a new and larger population looking to use and enjoy its natural surroundings while simultaneously increasing pressure upon it), the opportunities are likely to be greater than in SNAs that are remote from any new development.

LPAs should therefore work closely with their LBAP partnership to identify which of the other mechanisms are also appropriate locally, and how contributions from development can reasonably be expected to integrate with and compliment these to ensure that biodiversity targets are ultimately achieved.

5.3 Scope for Potential Developer Contributions Towards SNA Targets

Developer contributions towards maintenance and enhancement targets in SNAs may be provided in a number of different ways. In some situations, the contribution may be modest and involve only one of the measures discussed below. In other circumstances, a combination of measures may be more appropriate.

Developers may reasonably be expected to contribute directly or in kind to some or all of the following:

- **Habitat and species surveys** to establish a sound information base for all subsequent decision making and for action on the ground;
- **Land provision or acquisition** for biodiversity purposes. This may include land provided as part of the application site, or within the 'blue line', or it may warrant provision or acquisition of land elsewhere within the SNA;
- **Capital works** for nature conservation purposes. This may involve provision of appropriate mitigation and compensation for potential adverse impacts, and/or actions aimed at habitat creation, restoration and enhancement;
- **Nature conservation management** designed to maintain or improve in the long term a particular biodiversity site or feature;
- **Provision for public access and interpretation** to enable local communities to enjoy and understand their natural surroundings;
- **Biodiversity monitoring** required to measure how sites and features are changing over time (*e.g.* net gains and losses and also interim progress towards stated conservation targets), either as a result of some potential impact or in response to positive measures and action *e.g.* conservation management.

5.4 Illustration of How to Plan for SNAs: Scenarios Presented in Figures 3 to 8

Figures 3 to 8 together provide a visual summary and graphic illustration (using a hypothetical example) of how an LPA may take account of SNA objectives within their plan area when preparing proposals for a large scale development allocation in their LDF.

It is to be emphasised that the SNA objectives shown in the figures 7 and 8 would in reality be delivered by a locally tailored package of developer contributions (as discussed in section 5.3) in conjunction with other conservation work and funding mechanisms as discussed in section 5.2.

Figure 3 Two SNAs relevant to a hypothetical area in an LDF are shown: '*ancient woodland*' and '*floodplain grazing marsh*'.

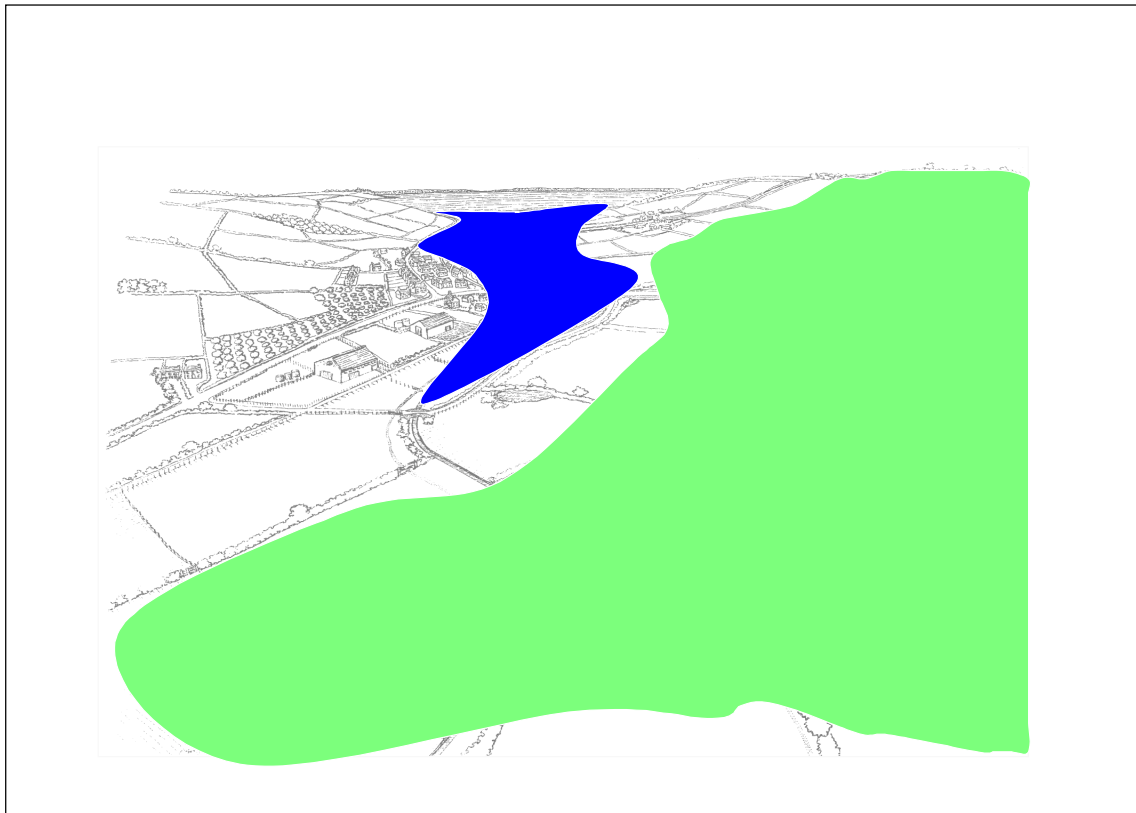


Figure 3 illustrates how SNAs may be defined at the local level. For this hypothetical location the SNA approach has identified that the areas shown are best capable of delivering regional priorities for '*ancient woodland*' and '*floodplain grazing marsh*' habitats.

Figure 4 Basic evidence base for potential rural allocation showing key habitats and species of importance within and around the SNAs.

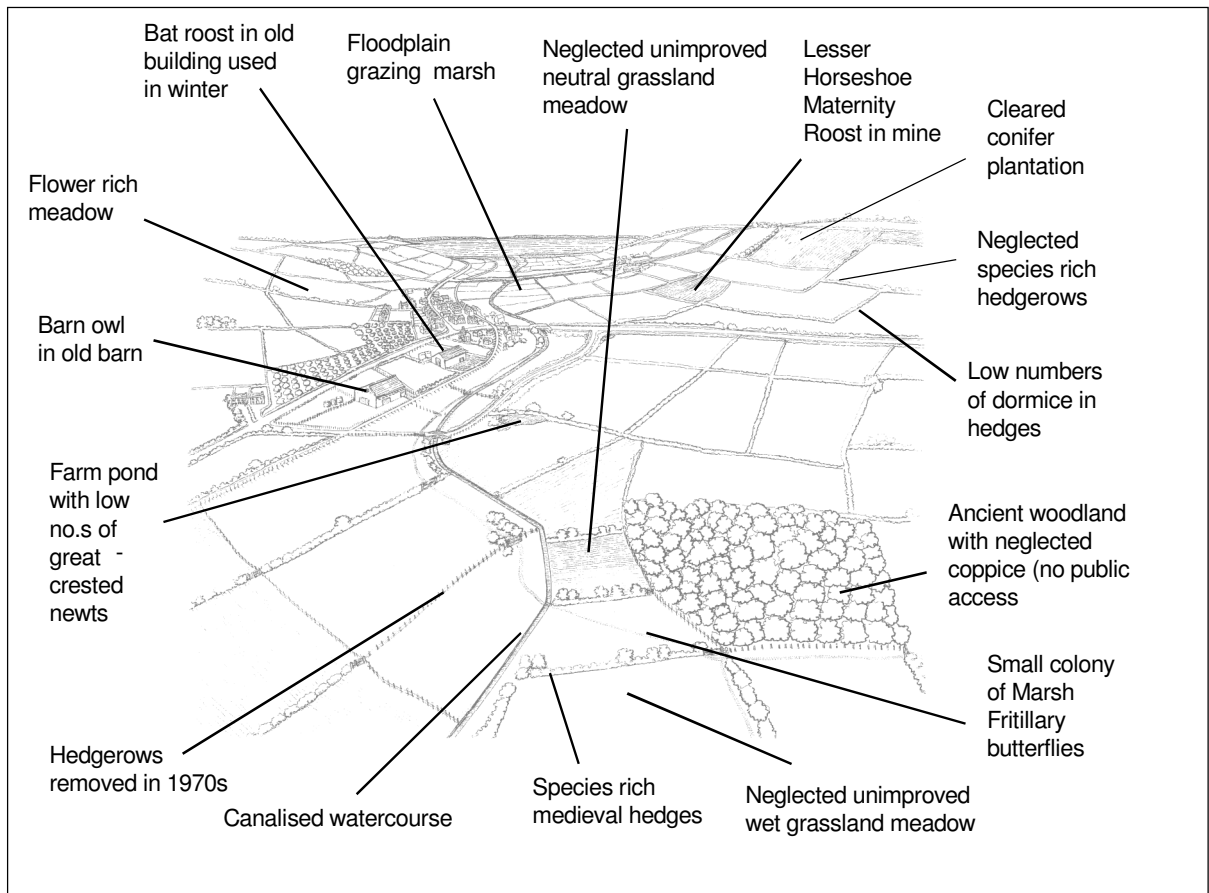


Figure 4 illustrates how local data can be used to build up the necessary evidence base that will enable detailed development proposals to be prepared that take account of the presence and close proximity of the two SNAs. In particular, floodplain grazing marsh is identified downstream, and an area of ancient woodland is shown in the foreground. Also, examination of the evidence base reveals that the area of cleared conifer plantation on the hillside is on a former ancient woodland site. In addition, data also shows that two European protected species (*e.g.* Dormouse and Lesser Horseshoe Bats) are present in the area; these are both species associated with ancient woodland and/or a strong network of mature well established hedgerows.

Figure 5 Existing key linear features and wildlife stepping stones (based on the evidence base shown in Figure 4) that together contribute towards local green infrastructure

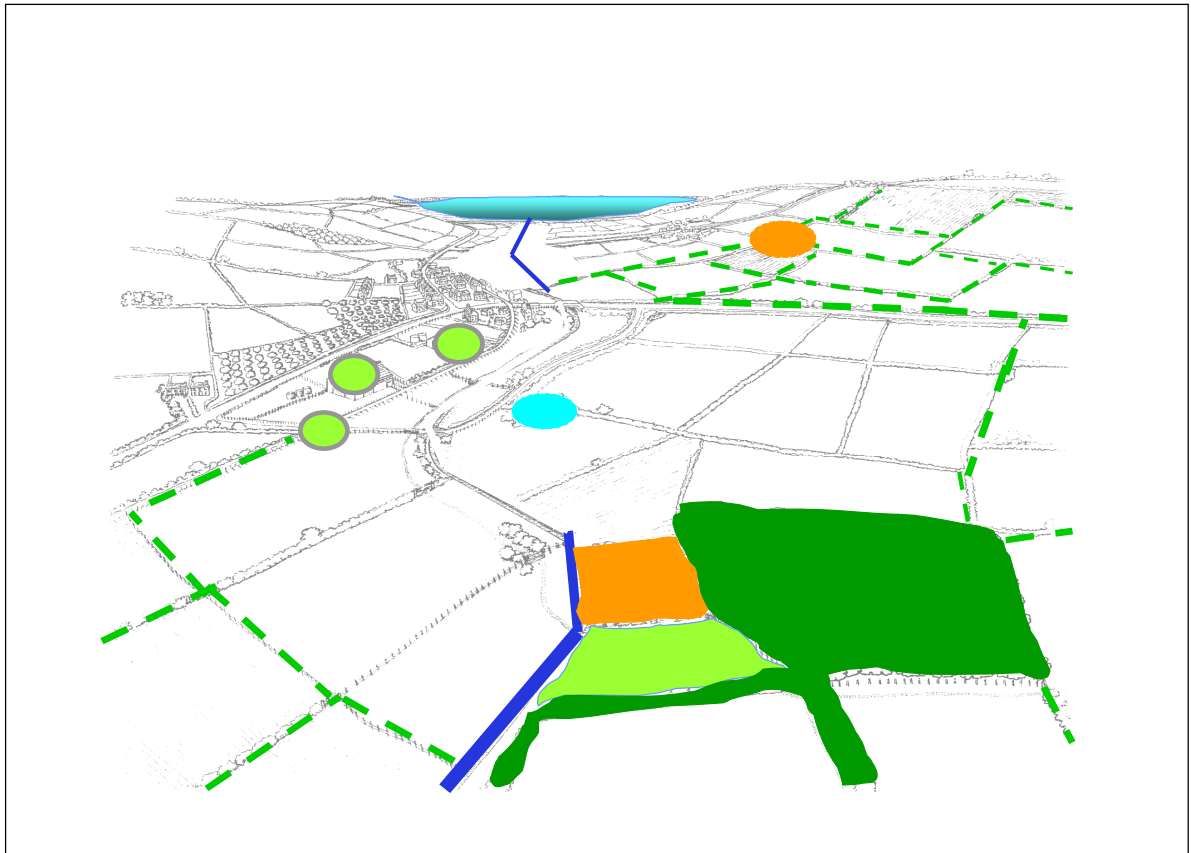


Figure 5 illustrates how the evidence base can also be used to establish the key wildlife features that together contribute towards a network of habitats and consequently to the locality's existing green infrastructure.

Figure 6 Proposed mixed development for the allocation within the LDF with opportunities for biodiversity mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures incorporated into the initial concept design layout based on the evidence base and following the key principles from PPS 9

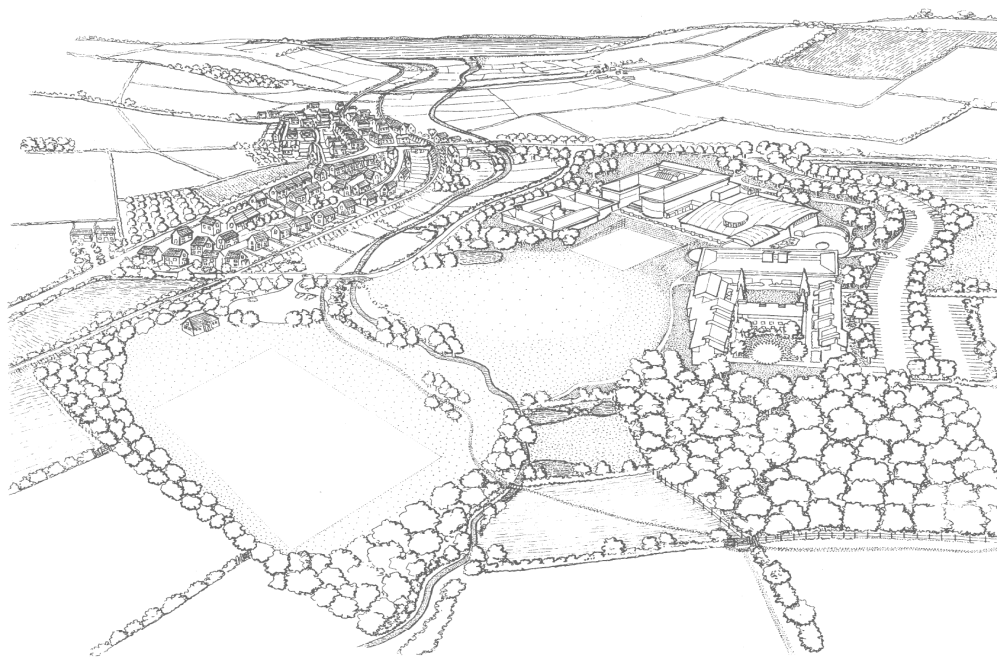


Figure 6 illustrates how a mixed use development may be designed so as to avoid direct harm to key existing features (and associated green infrastructure). The design layout shown attempts to apply the key principles from PPS 9. In this respect, it first avoids direct physical impacts to identified important habitats and species wherever possible (e.g. through land-take). However, the design also recognises that impacts arising from increased public pressure and access, and curtailment of traditional farming practice may also have indirect an adverse effect on some features. Consequently, the scheme includes measures for impact mitigation and compensation, such as the introduction of appropriate visitor access/management within the woodland. The scheme also provides for the enhancement of a number biodiversity features, including restoration of on-site ponds and species-rich grassland. A number of new features are also proposed for creation, including the planting of a new woodland and hedgerows – as discussed in relation to figure 7 below.

Appropriate Assessment may be required under Regulation 48 of the Habitat Regulations 1994 to identify the significance of potential indirect impacts on the Lesser Horseshoe Bat maternity roost nearby – designated as a Special Area of Conservation.

Figure 7 Contributions towards SNA biodiversity enhancement objectives; particularly targeting measures for ancient woodland restoration and management and with additional woodland planting, along with other conservation measures resulting in improved green infrastructure on site (see Section 5 for more details).



Figure 7 illustrates that the overall concept for biodiversity mitigation, compensation and enhancement on site has been influenced significantly by the ancient woodland SNA objectives. In the scenario shown, existing ancient woodland has been brought under appropriate conservation management, and there is a sizable area of new woodland planting in the foreground (that at the same time makes a valuable contribution to green infrastructure provision). An attempt has also been made to improve linkage between woodland habitats by (i) 'beefing' up the hedgerows between the existing and new woodland and also (ii) through the creation of new linear planting and hedgerows, particularly as part of the landscaping around the areas of car parking shown on the right hand side of the diagram.

Figure 8 Major contribution towards SNA biodiversity objectives for ancient woodland and floodplain grazing marsh – with proposed conservation measures both inside and outside of the development site, resulting in a greatly improved green infrastructure between the site and the surrounding countryside and targeting species linked to ancient woodland and a rich hedgerow network (see Section 5 for more details).

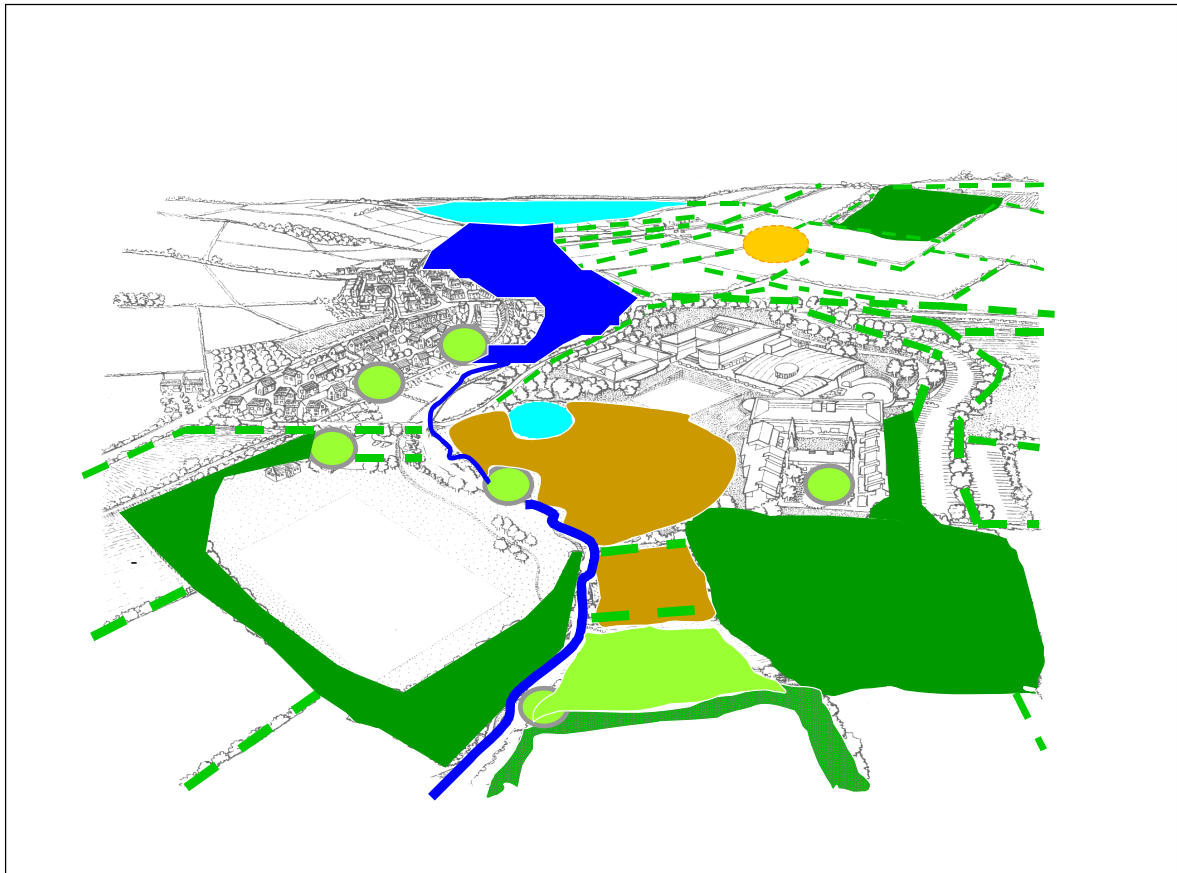


Figure 8 illustrates that opportunities also exist for development to make contributions towards SNA objectives off site. In the scenario shown, an area of conifer plantation that has recently been cleared on the hillside, has been identified for new woodland planting on what was formerly an ancient woodland site. The species composition for the new planting will be informed by reference to (i) local character description units and/or (ii) the species composition within the existing ancient woodland in the foreground. In addition, conservation measures are also proposed to enhance significantly the surrounding network of neglected species-rich hedgerows, aiming particularly to provide strong linkage between the new woodland planting and areas of existing ancient woodland. It is hoped that the above measures will also provide benefits for the two European protected species occurring in this area through enhancement of woodland and hedgerow habitat used by both dormice and lesser horseshoe bats.

In addition to measures to provide for ancient woodland enhancement, opportunities also exist offsite to contribute towards floodplain grazing marsh objectives on areas of land downstream from the proposed development allocation. At least some of the biodiversity objectives for the floodplain might be delivered in conjunction with proposals for flood attenuation and sustainable urban drainage, and to meet locally the requirements of the Water Framework Directive.

Annexes

Annex 1
Regional Biodiversity Objectives and Targets
For The Maintenance, Restoration and Expansion of Priority Habitats within the Region

Habitat	Existing Priority Habitat to be Maintained (Ha)	Additional Priority Habitat to be Restored and Recreated (ha) by 2010	Additional Priority Habitat to be Restored and Recreated (ha) Aspiration for 2020 (incl. 2010 target)
Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh	29,300	3,140	9,400
Reedbeds	1,000	110	330
Fens	890	70	220
Chalk Rivers	1,060km	Not quantifiable	Not quantifiable
Coastal Saltmarsh	2,100	50	220
Mudflats	13,000		
Coastal Vegetated Shingle	120	1	3
Sand Dunes	2,400	20	60
Sabellaria Reefs	20	Not quantifiable	Not quantifiable
Maritime Cliff and Slope*	14,200	50	200
Saline Lagoons	550	2	6
Seagrass Beds	1,170	Not quantifiable	Not quantifiable
Native woodland	95,000	10500	30,500
Lowland meadows	2,500	900	5,630
Lowland dry acid grassland	720	40	180
Lowland calcareous grassland	21,800	2,630	7,900
Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pasture	5,300	200	1,000
Arable Field Margins	180,000m	No reduction	Not quantifiable
Lowland Heathland (outside of upland areas)	18,400	1,000	3,000
Heathland within upland areas	17,800	4,090	12,270
Blanket Bog	2,180	7,100	

Note 1 Quantifiable targets could not be set with existing data for the following habitats. However retaining the existing extent of these habitats and realising opportunities for their expansion is highly important: Lowland Raised Bog, Mesotrophic Lakes, Eutrophic Standing Water, Maerl Beds, Sublittoral Sand and Gravel, Hedgerows and Wood Pasture and Parkland.

Note 2 The definition of the maintenance target is to *maintain the current extent of resource*. These targets are based on the best available data for those priority habitats identified in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP), which occur in the South West. It is likely that more priority habitat exists in the region than has been recorded so far. All priority BAP habitats should be safeguarded as part of our commitment to the UKBAP. Quantifiable targets cannot be set for some habitats due to lack of information, but it is important that these habitats are safeguarded wherever they occur. Targets for restoration/expansion should be met through active conservation work both within and outside of the Nature Map selected areas. The targets set out above may be revised as initiatives develop and further surveys take place. A major review of the aspirational target for 2020 will be carried out in 2010.

The Maritime Cliffs & Slopes targets may take in some areas of Lowland Heathland and be double accounted.

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Annex 2 National Planning Policy Contexts for Biodiversity

The England Biodiversity Strategy

Working with the Grain of Nature, the England Biodiversity Strategy (EBS) was published by the Department for the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) in 2002. The Strategy sets out a national programme for meeting the country's responsibilities for biodiversity. These responsibilities stem from the *Convention for Biological Diversity* that arose from the Rio summit in 1992 and are embodied in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (1994).

The actions set out in the EBS address a range of issues that affect biodiversity in England. Among its aims for *Towns, Cities and Development* (see chapter 7), the EBS seeks "to ensure that construction, planning, development and regeneration have minimal adverse impacts on biodiversity and enhance it where possible".

This aim, in addition to protecting biodiversity features from damage, makes it clear that planning and development should seek to provide additional biodiversity gains or enhancements.

Planning Policy Statement 1

In *Planning Policy Statement 1: Delivering sustainable development* (PPS1) the Government sets out how the planning system should contribute to the delivery of sustainable development objectives. Paragraph 27 of PPS1 states that sustainable development should underpin the formulation of development plan policies, including a requirement to "enhance as well as protect biodiversity, natural habitats, the historic environment and landscape and townscape character".

Paragraph 18, also acknowledges the wider benefits of a 'healthy' environment, stating that "the condition of our surroundings has a direct impact on the quality of life and the conservation and improvement of the natural and built environment brings social and economic benefit for local communities".

Planning Policy Statement 12

In 2004, the Government published *Planning Policy Statement 12: Local Development Frameworks* (PPS 12). Paragraph 1.8 states:

"Local planning authorities should adopt a spatial planning approach to local development frameworks to ensure the most efficient use of land by balancing competing demands within the context of sustainable development. Spatial planning goes beyond traditional land use planning to bring together and integrate policies for the development and use of land with other policies and programmes which influence the nature of places and how they function. This will include policies which can impact on land use, for example, by influencing the demands on or needs for development, but which are not capable of being delivered solely or mainly through the granting of planning permission and may be delivered through other means."

And in paragraph 1.9

"Local planning authorities should therefore take account of the principles and characteristics of other relevant strategies and programmes when preparing local development documents (LDDs) and in particular the core strategy. These should include the community strategy, strategies for education, health, social inclusion, waste, biodiversity, recycling and environmental protection".

Local Development Frameworks (LDFs) can also show on the Adopted Proposals Map areas of regional or local significance for biodiversity and where biodiversity will be enhanced.

Furthermore, PPS 12 (Annex B pages 68 and 69) states:

"Climate change is a significant environmental threat, the effects of which will be increasingly felt in future years. The Government attaches great importance to acting on a precautionary basis to reduce the emissions that cause climate change and to prepare for its impacts".

And

“Local planning authorities should seek first to avoid, or where this is not possible seek to reduce, the effects of development on climate change and vice versa. LDDs should therefore include policy on (among other things) the way that the distribution of nationally or regionally significant species and habitats may alter with climate change, and the effects on biodiversity and nationally or internationally designated sites”.

Local Development Frameworks Monitoring: A Good Practice Guide

The Good Practice Guide provides a Core Output Indicator (No 8) for biodiversity that local authorities should report against; this is as follows:

“Changes in areas and populations of biodiversity importance, including:

- (i) change in priority habitats and species (by type) and*
- (ii) change in areas designated for their intrinsic environmental value including sites or international, national, regional and sub-regional significance”.*

Where changes in the above are defined as:

- Change to be considered in terms of impact of completed development, management programmes and planning agreements. Measurement includes additions and subtractions to biodiversity priority habitats (hectares) and numbers or priority species types.
- Areas of environmental value should be measured in hectares.

Planning Policy Statement 9

In 2005, the Government published *Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and geological conservation* (PPS9). Previous guidance placed a significant emphasis on the need to protect nature conservation interests, but little mention was made of enhancement. Perhaps as a result, development plan policies have historically focused on the protection of nature conservation rather than its restoration, creation and expansion.

However, in PPS9, new objectives and principals relating to the enhancement of biodiversity have been introduced. Paragraph 1 of PPS9 contains a set of key principles that local planning authorities should adhere to in delivering their planning function. Among these is a requirement that:

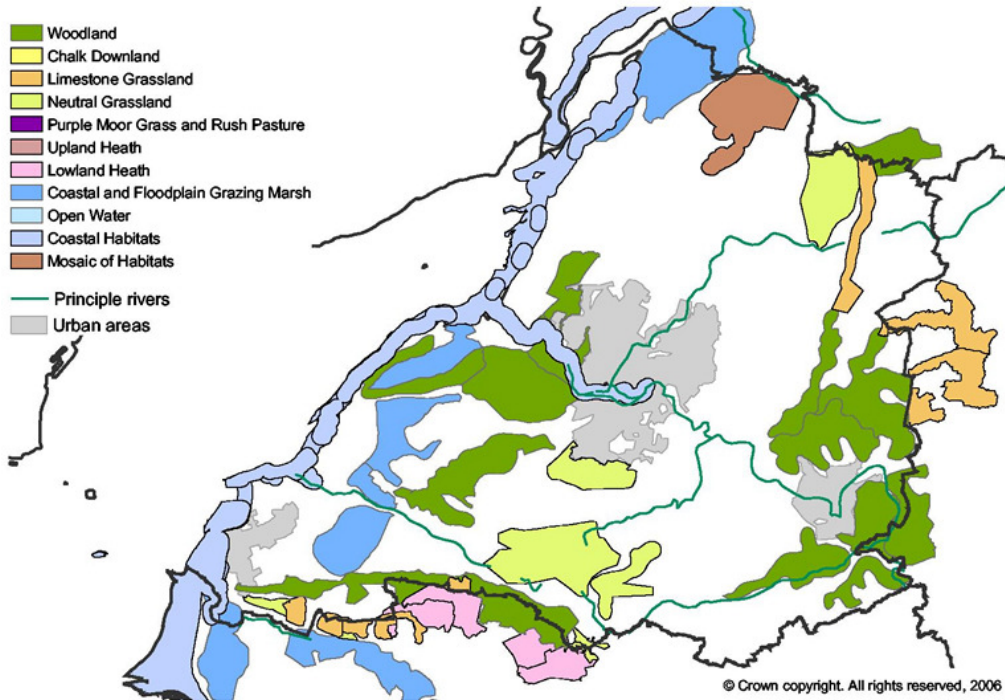
“plan policies and planning decisions should aim to maintain, and enhance, restore or add to biodiversity and geological conservation interests”.

Furthermore, paragraph 5 states that LDFs should:

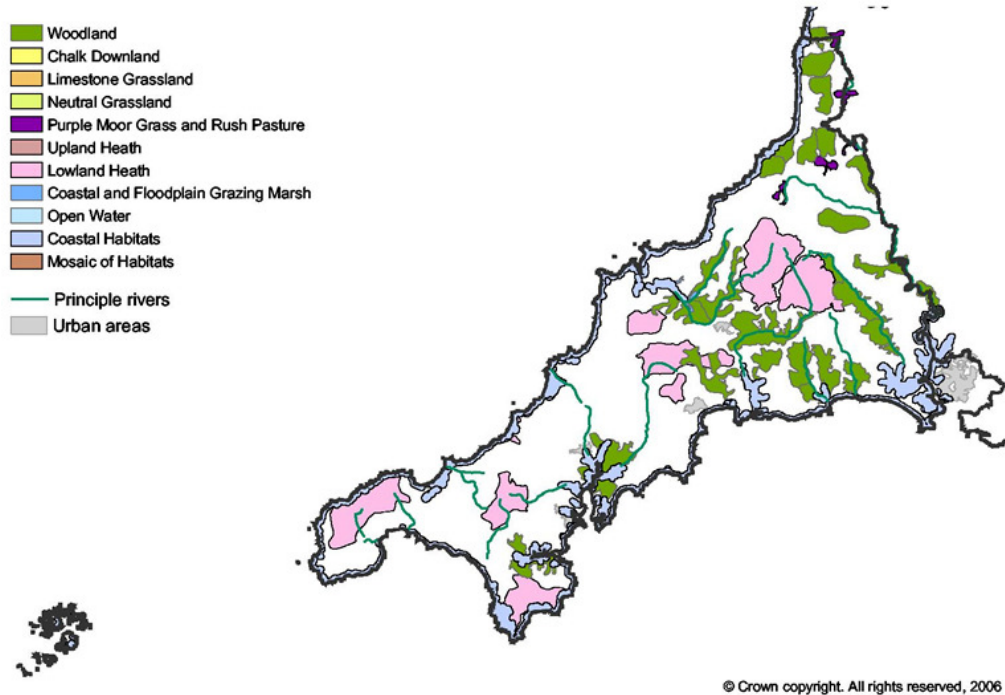
“identify any areas or sites for the restoration or creation of new priority habitats which contribute to regional targets, and support this restoration or creation through appropriate policies”.

Annex 3 County Scale Nature Maps

Avon Nature Map http://www.swenvo.org.uk/nature_map/Former_Avon.asp

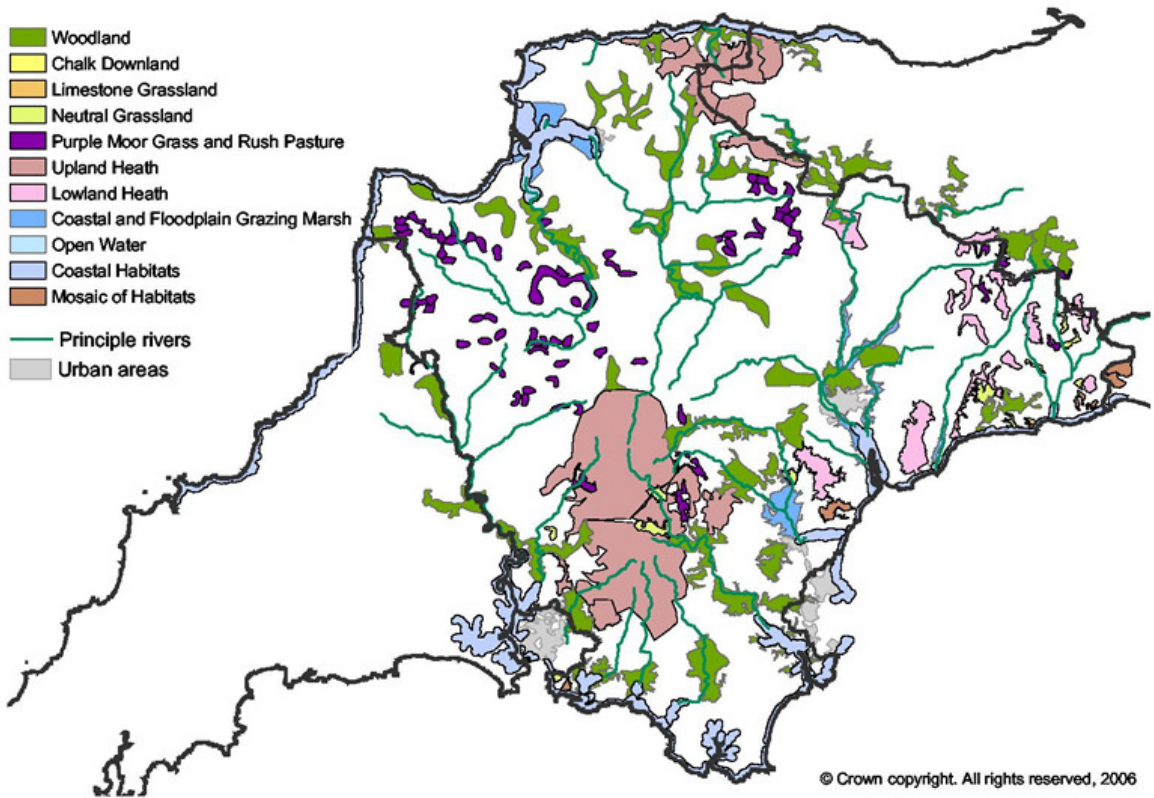


Cornwall Nature Map http://www.swenvo.org.uk/nature_map/Cornwall.asp



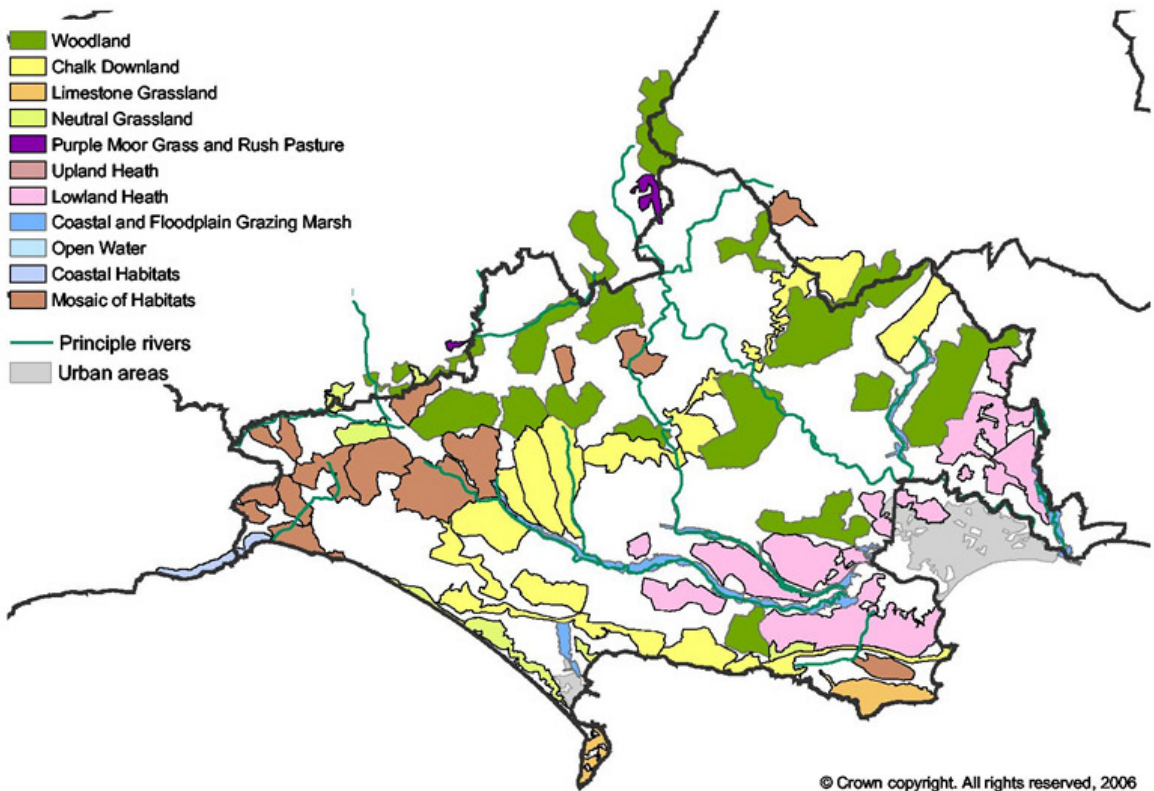
Devon Nature Map

http://www.swenvo.org.uk/nature_map/Devon.asp

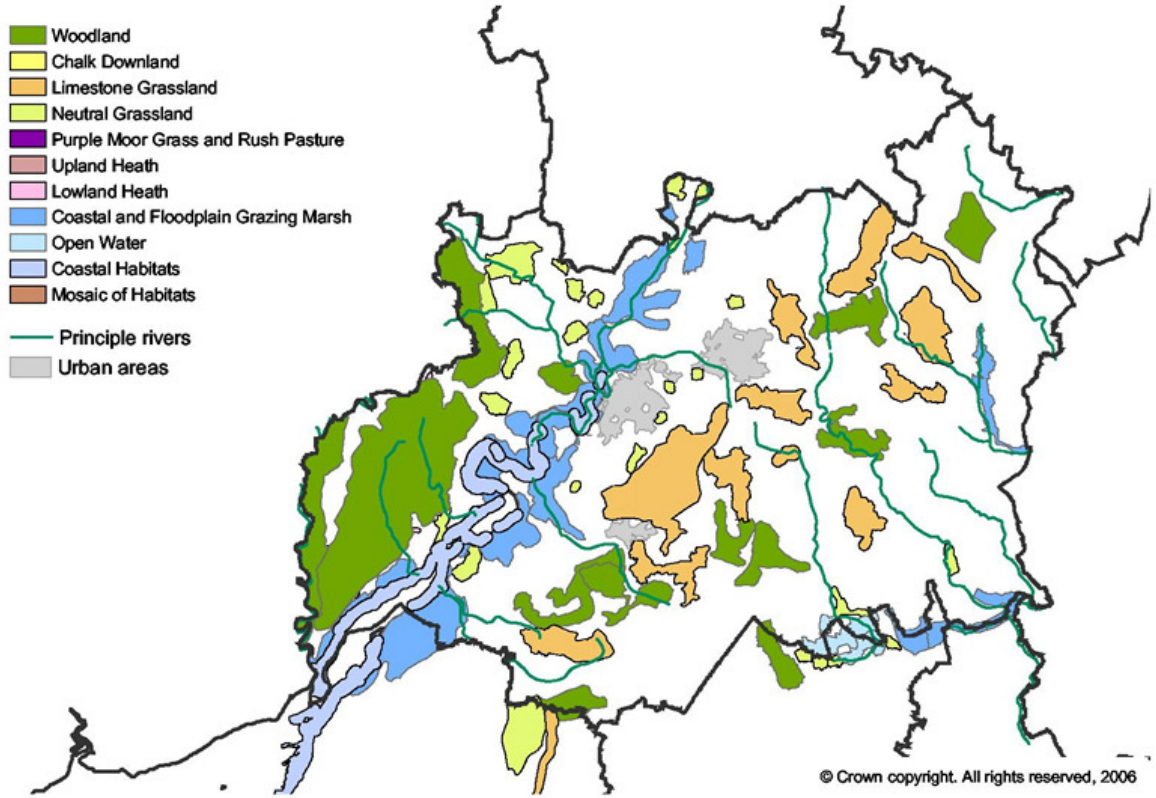


Dorset Nature Map

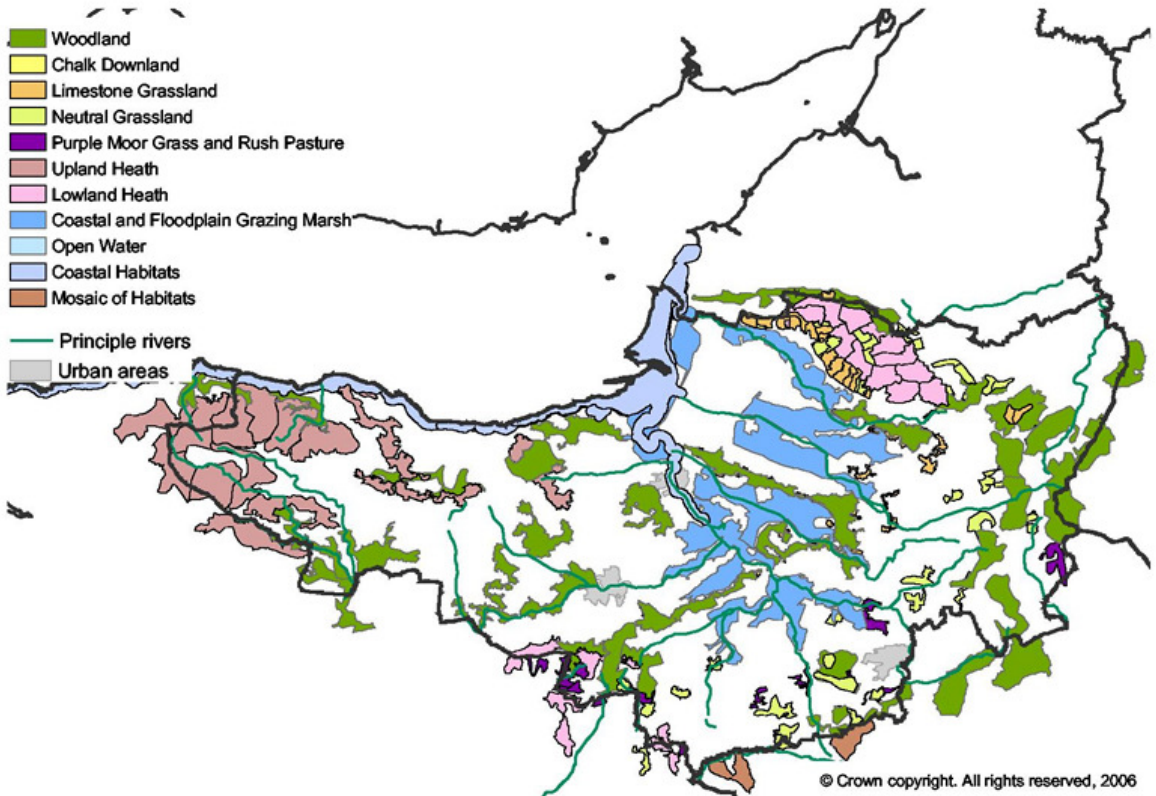
http://www.swenvo.org.uk/nature_map/Dorset.asp



Gloucestershire Nature Map http://www.swenvo.org.uk/nature_map/Gloucestershire.asp

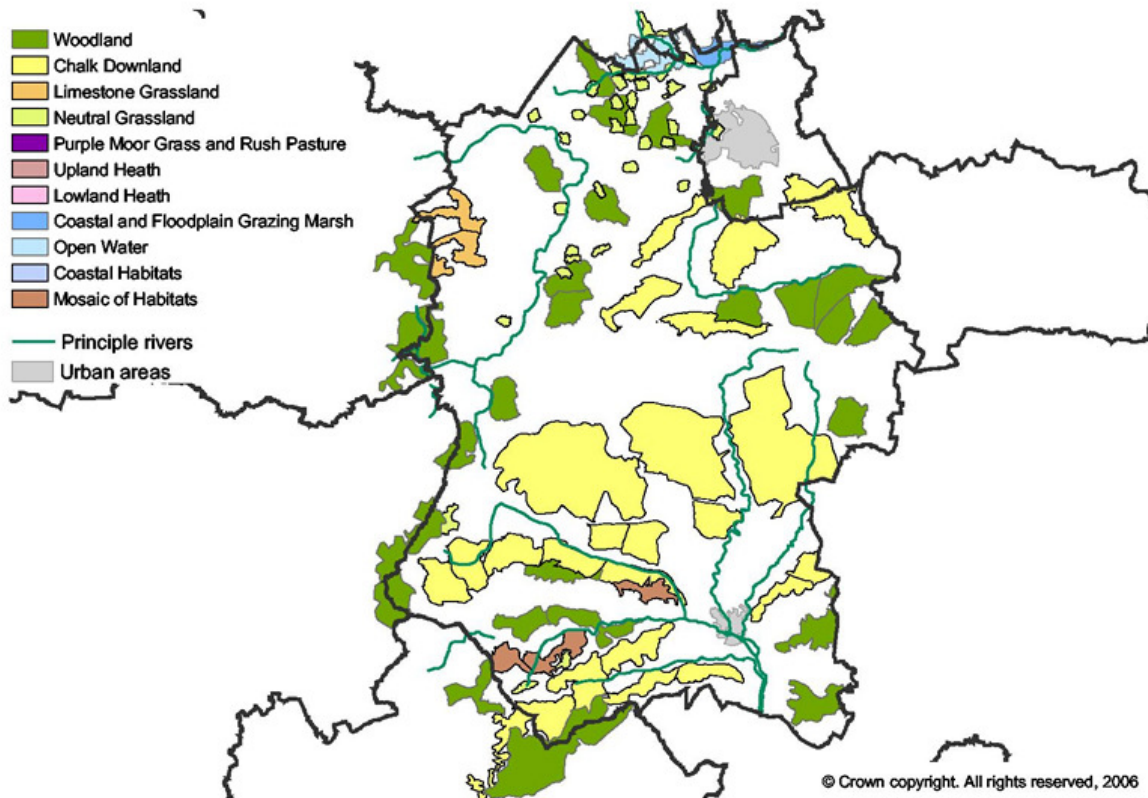


Somerset Nature Map http://www.swenvo.org.uk/nature_map/Somerset.asp



Wiltshire Nature Map

http://www.swenvo.org.uk/nature_map/Somerset.asp



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English Nature (2006) Using A Planning Gain Supplement for Nature Conservation Purposes. English Nature Research Report No.: 672.

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ODPM (2004) Planning Policy Statement 12 Local Development Frameworks

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ODPM, Defra and English Nature (2006) Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: A Guide to Good Practice.

South West Regional Biodiversity Partnership (1997) The SW Biodiversity Action Plan

South West Regional Biodiversity Partnership (2004) The SW Biodiversity Implementation Plan

TCPA (2004) Biodiversity by Design. Town and Country Planning Association

Useful organisations and web links

Natural England: <http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/regions/southwest/default.htm>

South West Observatory (including all online SW Nature Maps):
http://www.swenvo.org.uk/nature_map/index.asp

South West Regional Biodiversity Partnership: <http://www.swbiodiversity.org.uk/>

South West Protected Landscapes Forum: <http://www.southwestlandscapes.org.uk/>

South West Regional Assembly: <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/regions/southwest/?lang=e>

Environment Agency (South West): <http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/regions/southwest/?lang=e> -

Environmental Records Centres in the South West

Bristol Regional Environmental Records Centre: <http://www.brerc.org.uk/>

Dorset Environmental Records Centre ; <http://www.derc.org.uk>

Cornwall Environmental Records Centre: <http://www.cornwallwildlifetrust.org.uk/record/ercis.htm>

Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records Church House, Standish, Stonehouse, Gloucestershire. GL10 3EU Tel: 01453 822761 | Fax: 01453 791338 | E-mail: gcer@gloswild.cix.co.uk

Wiltshire Biological Records Centre: <http://www.wsbrc.org.uk/> -

Somerset Biological Records Centre: <http://www.somerc.com/>

Devon Biodiversity Records Centre:
<http://www.devonwildlifetrust.org/index.php?section=services:biodiversitycentre>

Wildlife Designations in the South West: <http://www.magic.gov.uk/>

Biodiversity Partnerships in the South West

Avon Biodiversity Partnership: <http://www.avon-biodiversity.org.uk/>

Cornwall LBAP: <http://www.cornwallwow.org.uk/>

Devon LBAP:
http://www.devon.gov.uk/index/environment/natural_environment/biodiversity/devon_biodiversity_action_plan.htm

Dorset LBAP: <http://www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/dorset/projects/biodiversity.htm>

Wiltshire LBAP: <http://www.wiltshirewildlife.org> (they don't have a specific page but it is hosted by the Wildlife Trust)

Somerset LBAP:

<http://www.somerset.gov.uk/somerset/ete/countryside/biodiversity/index.cfm?override=subtopic&infoid=3756>

Local Biodiversity Action Plans in the South West: <http://www.ukbap.org.uk/GenPageText.aspx?id=39>