



**Oadby and Wigston Borough Council**

# **Nature Conservation Strategy**

**2007- 2017**

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**Foreword** by Councillor Bill Boulter, Chair of Services Committee

We all have a responsibility to safeguard and look after the environment, not only for now but also for our children and grandchildren.

We do not own the Earth but have inherited it from previous generations and it is this same inheritance that we need to pass on in a good, if not better, state to future generations. In other words it is all about Sustainable Development, ensuring that the environment is not driven to destruction as a result of economic growth, but recognising that people are also an important element.

This Nature Conservation Strategy is a method of focussing our commitment to safeguarding the environment of Oadby and Wigston. It sets out the Borough Council's policies and plans in partnership with other organisations for the management of nature conservation over the next five years.

The strategy also informs the work which has been carried out to date and how this will be continued over the next ten years in relation to other strategies and work which is being undertaken by the borough council.

We have consulted with bodies such as Natural England, Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust, East Midlands Regional Biodiversity Forum, Leicestershire Badger Group, Leicestershire and Rutland Bat Group, Leicestershire County Council, Leicester City Council, neighbouring district councils and other departments within Oadby and Wigston Borough Council in drawing up this strategy.

Whilst it is important to protect wildlife and habitats, it is also important for us to have a much better understanding of what is on our doorstep and therefore enjoy the environment more.

Residents will be encouraged to take an active part in helping the Borough Council achieve the objectives of this strategy

Councillor Bill Boulter  
Chair of Services Committee

## **1. Introduction**

1.1 The Borough Council has worked together to develop this first edition of the Nature Conservation Strategy for Oadby and Wigston.

1.2 Oadby and Wigston Borough Council has three corporate priorities:

1. A good quality of life for all residents.
2. A clean, greener and safer environment.
3. A successful economy

1.3 Whilst the strategy will act as a framework for the delivery of the second priority and the wider nature conservation issues associated with regional and national policy, much of the work undertaken is and will continue to contribute to achieving the other priorities.

1.4 While various projects are already underway to protect, conserve and enhance biodiversity within the borough, it is felt that by addressing the importance of nature conservation through the power of the written word, that there will be a more cohesive and holistic approach to conserving nature within the borough, whilst equally ensuring that other aspects are not overlooked or missed out altogether.

1.5 Nature Conservation is a cross-cutting theme which impacts on or is impacted upon by many council services. This strategy will bring together the elements of the services which can impact on nature conservation and natural resources and seek a more sustainable solution, thus demonstrating a Code of Good Practice, which can be used by other organisations.

## **2. Why Nature Conservation is Important**

2.1 The environment underpins everything we do. The geology and the soil determine the types of crop that can grow and where it is grown, providing mankind with the foodstuffs necessary for survival. The same foundation also provides the landscape we live in, and the habitats for our wildlife along with the unseen interaction of organisms that occurs between the air, soil and water, all important for human survival.

2.2 In short we need to look after our environment if we are to look after ourselves.

2.3 Nature Conservation is not a new concept – it has been around for many decades, but in 1992 at the United Nations Conference on Environment and Development held in Rio de Janeiro, nature conservation took on a much more strategic, global role.

2.4 The Convention on Biological Diversity signed up to by 159 countries is one of the most significant and far-reaching environmental treaties ever developed. (Heywood and Watson 1995)

2.5 The recognition that mankind is a part of the environment and not separate to it is important. Man is a species living alongside and sharing the planet with other species. These other species have needs and requirements just like us. The Convention on Biological Diversity recognises this and has put into place a framework by which nations around the globe need to address the conservation of habitats and species, including the conservation of natural resources and to take steps to limit the destruction caused by problems such as pollution, deforestation, global warming, etc.

2.6 The Convention on Biological Diversity has three objectives:

1. Conservation of biological diversity.
2. Sustainable use of its components.
3. Fair and equitable sharing of the benefits arising out of the utilisation of genetic resources.

2.7 Each of the 159 nations (including the UK) who signed up to the Convention on Biological Diversity has had to produce national Biodiversity Action Plans which have categorised priority habitats and species important to that nation and state how they will address the conservation of those particular habitats and species.

2.8 In order to effectively conserve these priority habits and species at national level, requires devolved responsibility at county level. Most, if not all counties throughout the UK have now produced Biodiversity Action Plans, and in some cases at a more, local district authority level.

2.9 This Nature Conservation Strategy will act as a driver for updating the Borough Council's Biodiversity Action Plan.

### **3. Legislation conserving Nature Conservation**

#### **The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006**

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 states: "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".

The aim of this duty is to raise the profile and visibility of biodiversity, to clarify and consolidate existing commitments with regard to biodiversity and to help stimulate a culture change so that biodiversity issues become a natural part of decision-making right across the public sector.

Section 40 replaces and extends a similar pre-existing duty on Ministers and Government which was set out in Section 74 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000.

#### **Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004**

This promotes the achievement of biodiversity within the planning framework, including Local Development Frameworks and Regional Spatial Strategies. The Act is supported by a number of regulations and Planning Policy Statements.

**Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000** amended the duty of public bodies in respect of nature conservation interests to take reasonable steps, consistent with the proper exercise of the authority's functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of the flora, fauna or geological or physiographical features by reason of which the site is of special scientific interest.

Section 74 (3) of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of species and habitats which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.

#### **Local Government Act 2000**

Section 4 states that Local Biodiversity Action Plans are amongst the elements that local authorities should build upon when preparing Community Strategies.

#### **Conservation (Natural Habitats and c) Regulations 1994**

This is the domestic legislation which implements the EC Directive 92/43/EEC. In the UK it is an offence to kill, disturb, take or destroy any wild animal of a European protected species.

#### **Protection of Badgers Act 1992**

Whilst badgers are not an uncommon species, the legislation has been brought in to protect badgers from illegal activities and to also set parameters in relation to working around badger setts.

#### **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981**

This Act contains the main legal provisions for the conservation of species at risk.

#### **Countryside Act 1968**

The Council has a duty under Section 11 of the Countryside Act 1968 "to have regard to the desirability of conserving the natural beauty and amenity of the countryside."

**Forestry Act 1967**

Affords protection to trees and woodland, whereby permission is normally required from the Forestry Commission to fell growing trees.

In some circumstances Woodland creation projects can fall under the Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 whereby the Forestry Commission has to determine whether consent is required or not.

### 3. Environmental Challenges

#### 3.1 Linking the Nature Conservation Strategy to **National** Policy Context

3.1.1 The Government's "**A better quality of life – A strategy for Sustainable Development in the UK**" 1999 stresses the need to achieve all four of its objectives at the same time, including:

- Effective protection of the environment
- Prudent use of natural resources

#### 3.1.2 **The UK Biodiversity Action Plan**

Biodiversity encompasses the whole variety of life on Earth. It includes all species of plants and animals, but also their genetic variation, and the complex ecosystems of which they are part. It is not restricted to rare or threatened species but includes the whole of the natural world from the commonplace to the critically endangered.

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) was published in January 1994 in response to Article 6 of the Biodiversity Convention, to develop national strategies for the conservation of biological diversity and the sustainable use of biological resources.

3.1.3 The **Government's Biodiversity Strategy** sets out a series of key action points including:

- To ensure appropriate planning policies are in place and implemented;
- To ensure each region is covered by local Biodiversity Action Plans;
- To restore the full range of characteristic habitats and species to achieve BAP targets and maintain or enhance other natural assets;
- To create or re-create habitats to ensure sustainable and linked species populations;
- To encourage people to come into contact with, understand and enjoy nature;
- To support farming and countryside practices that enhance biodiversity and landscape quality;
- To manage water quality and water resources to maximise value to people and wildlife

3.1.4 The **Department for Environment and Rural Affairs (Defra) Public Service Agreement** aims to make the countryside attractive and enjoyable for all and preserve biological diversity by:

- Reversing the long-term decline in the number of farmland birds by 2020 as measured annually against underlying trends.

#### 3.1.5 **Planning Policy Statements**

PPS 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation sets out planning policies on protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system.

#### 3.1.6 **EU Water Framework Directive (2000/60/EC)**

This document makes demands from government, its agencies and the private sector on the management of water resources and specifically on the achievement of high ecological status in surface waters.

#### 3.1.7 **England's Forestry Strategy 2007**

The strategy sets out the Government's vision for England's tree and woodland resource both in urban and rural areas. Recently re-launched in June 2007, the strategy includes a greater recognition of climate change.



Appendix 1 of this Nature Conservation Strategy outlines the key programmes and actions, whilst demonstrating how there is synergy between the strategy and work already being carried out in the Borough.

### **3.1.8 England's Ancient and Native Woodlands**

The Forestry Commission and Defra have produced a statement of policy for England's Ancient and Native Woodland. The Government's vision is that "Ancient woodlands, veteran trees and other native woodlands are adequately protected, sustainably managed in a wider landscape context, and are providing a wide range of social, environmental and economic benefits to society". This is believed to be achievable by 2020. Forestry Commission England will work closely with Natural England Partners to ensure delivery of the policy. Appendix 2 of this Nature Conservation Strategy demonstrates how the policy objectives are being met within the Borough.

### **3.1.9 Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group**

FWAG is a charitable organisation providing environmental, conservation advice and consultancy to farmers and landowners in order to secure environmental benefits on their land. Appendix 3 of this Nature Conservation Strategy has outlined the synergy between the objectives of the organisation and the Borough Council.

### **3.2.0 Natural England**

Natural England has been formed by bringing together English Nature, parts of the Rural Development Service and the Countryside Agency.

Natural England has the responsibility to ensure that England's unique natural environment including its land, flora and fauna, freshwater, marine environments, geology and soils are protected and improved.

### 3 Environmental Challenges

#### 3.2 Linking the Nature Conservation Strategy to **Regional** Policy Context

There are excellent policies for biodiversity in the Regional Spatial Strategy, Regional Environment Strategy and the Regional Tourism Strategy. (Keymer and Bull 2005)

These strategies will now be addressed individually to demonstrate the contribution to biodiversity and how Oadby and Wigston Borough Council can contribute to the achievement of the regional targets.

##### 3.2.1 Regional Biodiversity Strategy

This document provides a strategic framework for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.

The Region's biodiversity – wildlife and habitats constitutes a key resource, contributing to and underpinning peoples' quality of life. Biodiversity is fundamental to health and well being and is a key determinant of economic success.

The Regional Biodiversity Strategy has five key issues:

- Keeping Wildlife on the Map
- Putting Wildlife back on the Map
- People and Wildlife
- Wildlife and the Economy
- Keeping track of Wildlife

Appendix 4 outlines the objectives that need to be met to address the above issues, and shows how the objectives of the Borough Council's Nature Conservation Strategy can help to fulfil the Regional Biodiversity Strategy

##### 3.2.2 Regional Environmental Strategy

Aims to enhance and reduce the impact of our activities on the environment around five key components:

- Managing and conserving the wealth of historical, archaeological, geological, geomorphological, biodiversity and landscape assets of the sub regions and local areas, fostering a sense of place and making people more aware of their environment, with appropriate access provision;
- Enhancing biodiversity and the character and quality of the region's variety of landscape types and characteristics in line with regional priorities;
- Minimising greenhouse gas emissions and protecting the environment whilst adapting to the challenges and opportunities that climate change will bring us;
- Ensuring the prudent use of resources, such as minerals and aggregates, woodland and forestry, soils and land, minimising waste and adverse impacts on the environment;
- Continuing improvements in the efficiency and quality of increasingly scarce water resources, whilst increasing the use of sustainable drainage and respecting natural processes wherever possible in floodplains.

It is intended that the objectives, policies, actions and indicators in the Regional Environment Strategy will be used to inform the revisions and new emerging strategies within the Integrated Regional Strategy. (Regional Environment Strategy 2004)

Appendix 5 outlines the objectives that need to be met to address the above issues, and shows how the objectives of the Borough Council's Nature Conservation Strategy can help to fulfil the Regional Environmental Strategy

### **3.2.4 East Midlands Integrated Regional Strategy**

Produced by the East Midlands Regional Assembly, this strategy draws together key component regional strategies and any other related strategies, thus ensuring compatibility between key issues and challenges for the region.

One of the five agreed priorities is '**to conserve and enhance the natural environment by tackling the biodiversity deficit and enhancing the environmental infrastructure**'

Within the Integrated Regional Strategy are the region's overarching sustainable development objectives. The objectives relating to the environment are:

- To protect, enhance and manage the rich diversity of the natural, cultural and built environmental and archaeological assets of the region;
- To enhance and conserve the environmental quality of the region by increasing the environmental infrastructure;
- To manage prudently the natural resources of the region including water, air quality, soil and minerals;
- To involve people, through changes in lifestyle and at work, in preventing and minimising adverse local, regional and global environmental impacts.

There are five agreed priorities for the region. Priority 2 addresses the environment: "Conserve and enhance the natural environment by tackling the biodiversity deficit and enhancing the environmental infrastructure".

The individual component strategies include the more detailed and specific objectives.

### **3.2.5 Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan 1996-2016**

The Structure Plan sets out the broad planning strategy for Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland and is required to interpret national and regional planning guidance. It provides a strategic context for Local Plans and Local Development Frameworks which contain more detailed land use policies and earmark specific sites for development.

One of the aims of the Structure Plan is to conserve the natural assets within the Plan area, reverse the decline in wildlife and habitats and redress the environmental damage of the past.

The policy for Green Wedges is set out in the Structure Plan and these are discussed further in Section 3.3.2.

### **3.2.6 Space4Trees – the Regional Forestry Framework for the East Midlands**

This document has been developed as part of the region's Integrated Regional Strategy (IRS). It supports the IRS vision for sustainable development by highlighting the growing contribution that trees and woodlands make to the health and diversity of our environment, to the vitality of our economy and to the quality of life of people who live and work in the region. Regional Forestry Frameworks have their origins in the national England Forestry Strategy. Appendix 6 demonstrates how the nature conservation strategy meets their objectives.

### **3.2.7 Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust**

The organisation works towards the protection and enhancement of Leicestershire and Rutland's wildlife places. They are dedicated to securing a better future for wildlife and improving peoples' understanding, appreciation and enjoyment of wildlife. Appendix 7 sets out the Wildlife Trust's development strategy and how the Borough Council's Nature Conservation Strategy objectives may be able to help towards this.

### **3. Environmental Challenges**

#### **3.3 Linking the Nature Conservation Strategy to Local Policy Context**

##### **3.3.1 Local Plan/ Local Development Framework**

The current Local Plan which is in place to 2006 will gradually be phased out and replaced by the LDF.

PPS9 states that Local Authorities should take an integrated approach to planning for biodiversity and geodiversity when preparing local development documents. They should ensure that policies in local development documents reflect, and are consistent with, national, regional and local biodiversity priorities.

Local Development Frameworks should also indicate the location of designated sites of importance for biodiversity and geodiversity, making clear distinctions between the hierarchy of international, national, regional and locally designated sites.

The Local Plan already contains a suite of policies relating to nature conservation. These policies will be reviewed as part of the LDF process. The nature conservation strategy will act as a framework for ensuring the relevant policies remain in place and additional policies drawn up where necessary.

##### **3.3.2 Green Wedges**

Green Wedges are structurally important areas of open land that influence the form and direction of urban development. The primary function is to maintain the physical separation between communities and help protect their individual identities and secondly to contribute towards the quality of life for all people living in the urban areas.

The general location of the Green Wedges is set out in the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland Structure Plan and the detailed boundaries are defined in the Oadby and Wigston Local Development Framework and the planning policy document of adjoining authorities.

In identifying the two Green Wedge areas within Oadby and Wigston, the Borough Council has given consideration to the implementation of the following aims, which are stated in the Structure Plan's Explanatory Memorandum (1994):

- 1) To protect structurally important areas of open land that influence the form and direction of urban development, prevent coalescence and maintain the physical identity of adjacent settlements.
- 2) To ensure that open areas of land extend outwards from urban centres to preserve links with the open countryside.
- 3) To provide appropriate recreational facilities within easy reach of urban residents.
- 4) To promote the positive management of such wedges to ensure that they remain or are enhanced as attractive environmental features with good public access.

##### **3.3.2.1 Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge**

In 2003 the Borough Council commissioned consultants to write a Strategy, based on a land use survey and a landscape character assessment in order to guide the future planning and management of the Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge. This document is being used by the local authority partners and the Stepping Stones Countryside Management Project in order to improve the nature conservation and biodiversity

interest of the area. Much of the work is complementary to the Biodiversity Action Plan and is also considered to be achievable should landowners put their land into Entry Level Scheme.

The Washbrook Management Plan (2005) and the Access Management Plan (2006) are two pieces of work which have arisen from the Strategy since. These will be implemented as the Local Development Framework evolves.

#### **3.3.2.2 Oadby, Thurnby, Stoughton Green Wedge**

In 2005 the Stepping Stones Countryside Management Project commissioned consultants to write a Management Strategy for the Oadby, Thurnby, Stoughton Green Wedge. This was completed in 2006 and projects linked to the strategy are now being put into practice through Stepping Stones.

#### **3.3.2.3 Tree Preservation Orders**

Local planning authorities have specific powers to protect trees by making tree preservation orders. Orders are made to protect trees which make a significant impact on their local surroundings. This means that should a householder wish to carry out any work on a tree which includes cutting down, uprooting, topping or lopping, permission must be sought from the local planning authority prior to any work being carried out.

All types of trees, including hedgerow trees can be covered by the order, but hedgerows, bushes and shrubs are exempt.

#### **3.3.2.4 Conservation Areas**

Conservation Areas are areas whose character or appearance created by architectural or historical interest need to be conserved or enhanced. Trees also play a role in contributing to the special character of a Conservation Area, and all trees are automatically protected within a Conservation area, regardless of whether they have a Tree Preservation Order.

Any householder who is proposing to cut down or carry out work on in a tree in a conservation area is required to give the local planning authority 6 weeks notice.

### **3. Environmental Challenges**

#### **3.4 Linking the Nature Conservation Strategy to Local Context**

Oadby and Wigston Borough has an attractive countryside accented by the Grand Union Canal and the River Sence.

The landscape has been characterised in the following ways:

- ❖ Natural England Natural Areas
- ❖ Countryside Agency Character Areas
- ❖ Landscape Character Assessment at the Borough Level.

##### **3.4.1 Natural Areas**

Oadby and Wigston Borough falls within the Trent Valley and Rises Natural Area profile. The aim of categorising landscapes into these areas is to produce long-term nature conservation objectives that organisations can implement within their own projects.

##### **3.4.2 Character Areas**

In 1996 English Nature (now Natural England) and the Countryside Agency published the Character of England map. This identified 181 Regional Character Areas throughout the country, 12 of which lie either wholly or partially within Leicestershire.

Oadby and Wigston District lies almost wholly within the Leicestershire Vales Regional Character Area with only the most extreme north-eastern corner of the district falling within High Leicestershire.

These Landscape Areas were used as an initial reference point and baseline for the following study into producing a local Landscape Character Assessment.

##### **3.4.3 Landscape Character Assessment**

The Borough Council are working towards replacing the adopted Local Plan with a Local Development Framework (LDF) to 2016. A Landscape Character Assessment was commissioned in 2005 to inform the LDF process and inform the effective management of the landscapes within the Borough.

The Assessment has recognised that the differences in the character of the landscape across the borough are very subtle. In essence the Borough is a transition zone between the more distinct plateau and steep sided valley landscapes to the north and east and the more open, rolling landscapes to the south and west.

The Borough has been divided into 4 different Landscape Character types and these are:

- Oadby and Wigston Vales
- Upper Soar (North)
- Sence Valley
- Upper Soar (South)

The Landscape Areas are defined by the nature of the habitat and farmed landscape.

### **3.4.4 Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Biodiversity Audit**

A Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Biodiversity Audit of Oadby and Wigston were carried out in 2005. As well as determining the type and extent of the habitats and species within the Borough, both these pieces of work serve as a baseline for the Sustainability Appraisal for the progress of the Local Development Framework.

A synopsis of the habitats are given below:

#### **3.4.4.1 Hedgerows**

The total length of hedgerows recorded during the survey was 84.96km.

The most frequent hedge type is dominated by hawthorn with smaller amounts of blackthorn, elder and dog-rose. Ash and elm occur frequently within hedgerows as both shrubs and standard trees with pedunculate oak being found almost entirely as a standard.

Mature crack willow are a common feature within the hedgerows between the River Sence and Grand Union Canal. Several hedgerows within the Borough have been identified as being 'species-rich' (ie averaging at least 5 woody species per 30 metres)

About 13 hedgerows meet the criteria for Hedgerow Regulations.

Hedgerows are a common sight throughout the Borough and act as an important patchwork of routes throughout the rural and urban areas, thus linking countryside and town, and enabling fauna of various description to move safely into adjacent habitats.

Many of the hedgerows are species-rich and it will be a challenge to ensure that these remain so in the future, with sustainable management being the key.

#### **3.4.4.2 Trees**

Trees of differing ages, structure and maturity are important in any landscape. The ash tree is dominant in Leicestershire and is extensive throughout the Borough as hedgerow trees or mature woodland trees. Oak is also predominant. The Borough has an extensive tree stock throughout both the rural and urban areas and it will be a challenge to maintain this stock in the future, not least because of their contribution to mitigating climate change and reducing air pollution but also for the role they play in supporting many species.

Many Veteran Trees have been identified within the Borough via the Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Biodiversity Audit. These will be protected through policies within the Local Development Framework.

Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9) states that Aged or Veteran trees are particularly valuable for biodiversity and that their loss should be avoided.

Woodland is scarce in Leicestershire with that scarcity being mirrored in the Borough. None of the existing woodland has been classified as Ancient, but there are isolated pockets of semi-natural secondary woodland within both the urban and rural areas.



#### **3.4.4.3 Grassland**

There have been significant changes in the composition of grassland since a survey carried out in 2001.

The most extensive grassland type in the Borough is amenity grassland making up 220.76 hectares (ha) of the current grassland resource, an increase of 114ha in four years.

Of particular note is the reduction of good semi-improved grassland. About 100 ha has disappeared in four years reducing the area available to 32 ha. Much of this loss has occurred in the south of the Borough, between the River Sence and the Grand Union Canal. This has been directly attributed to agricultural practices improving the grassland but which has the affect of reducing the wildlife interest.

Very little unimproved grassland exists in the Borough and most of what remains is to be found in Sites of Importance of Nature Conservation.

#### **3.4.4.4 Ponds**

83 ponds were recorded on the survey. This includes both permanent areas of standing water and those that are possibly seasonal but were dry at the time of the survey.

Waterbodies found on SINC's are generally of better quality than those outside these areas. However, a small number of ponds outside designated areas were considered to have some good qualities for wildlife, including a number of field ponds.

Adjacent habitats also play a crucial role in adding value to waterbodies. Tall grass, scrub and proximity to woodland are important features for amphibians and a wide range of aquatic invertebrates.

#### **3.4.4.5 River Sence**

A narrow, meandering water-course with occasional mature crack willow along its banks, the river is very much influenced by its adjacent land-use. This is predominantly improved pasture and arable farmland, with field drains flowing from these areas into the river. As a consequence of this the river is considered to have high levels of eutrophication as indicated by the results of the aquatic macrophyte survey which formed part of the 2005 Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Biodiversity Audit work.

Where grazed, the top of the river-bank is generally fenced off to livestock, but as these are in varying states of repair, do not prevent livestock from poaching the banks and grazing emergent and bank vegetation.

The river supports two Biodiversity Action Plan species: Otter and Water vole, both of which require clean water and good marginal vegetation.

#### **3.4.4.6 Grand Union Canal**

The canal, as expected, is of very similar character throughout the Borough with a uniform channel which possesses very few features. Banks are generally of man-made reinforced structures or of vegetation typical of the surrounding land use.

The land use where the canal flows through the rural landscape is predominantly arable, improved grassland, semi-improved grassland, and hedgerows with trees.

However where the canal flows through the urban fringe, gardens immediately abut the canal banks, thus causing a demise in natural vegetation. The canal is also susceptible to nutrient-rich run-off from agricultural land and like the River Sence has been identified as having high levels of eutrophication.

#### **3.4.4.8 Urban Habitats**

While the wider countryside is important for the conservation of habitats and species, the urban areas play a complementary and sometimes synergistic role in helping many species to survive.

Gardens, school-grounds, parks, open spaces and allotments provide stepping stones within the urban landscape and contribute to Green Infrastructure.

It is intended to focus more on these particular spaces within the review of the Borough Council's Biodiversity Action Plan.

## **4. Designations relating to Nature Conservation within the Borough**

### **4.1 National Statutory Sites**

#### **4.1.2 Sites of Special Scientific Interest**

##### **The Kilby-Foxton Canal and Lime Delves SSSI**

**Grid Reference SP611 969**

**SP 699 899**

Natural England (which came into being in 2006, through the Rural Communities and Environment Act and is an amalgamation of English Nature and the Countryside Agency) are responsible for the designation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

The Kilby-Foxton section of the Grand Union Canal, from its junction with Welford Road eastwards into Harborough District is scheduled as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, as is the 3.5 hectares of land at Kilby Bridge Quarry (also known as the Lime Delves).

This section of the canal and adjacent wetlands make up an important site for water plants and animals. The Lime Delves are the excavated pits from an old lime quarry and the Site of Special Scientific Interest includes the surrounding grassland. Water within the pit is influenced by the under-lying geology and gives rise to clear, clean and very hard water. It is the high quality of the water that enables the pit to support a rich flora and fauna.

#### **4.1.3 Sites of Geological Interest**

**Kilby Bridge Pit** (also known as Fishpond Pit and Mason's Delph) lies north of the railway line at Grid Reference SP612971. The pit is a former limestone quarry and is flooded at the bottom. The steep sides of the pit contain an exposure of Blue Lias Limestone which is of regional value because of its accessibility. There is an aquifer link with the Site of Special Scientific Interest to the south of the railway line so care needs to be taken that no contamination of the flooded pit occurs through tipping or any other activity.

### **4.2 National Non Statutory Sites**

#### **4.2.1 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation**

The SINC system replaces the three tier system of County, District and Parish level sites introduced in 1979.

SINCs (also known as wildlife sites) are the most important places for wildlife in Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland together with legally protected land such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The term SINC arises from PPS9 and the County Structure Plan. A more formal definition would be:

*SINCs are important reservoirs of rare, local and declining native species and are the best examples of typical Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland habitats. SINCs may also be areas of ecological interest that provide people with the opportunity to learn about, appreciate and experience habitats and species of the natural world. (Lott 2001)*

SINCs are selected using the "Guidelines for the selection of SINCS" and then presented to the Leicestershire, Leicester and Rutland SINC Review Panel to be agreed that a potential site meets all the relevant criteria.

The SINC system enables sites of nature conservation importance to receive a measure of protection in Local Development Frameworks against unsuitable development. Landowners are then informed and provided with a written statement and guidance for appropriate management where required.

Within the Borough of Oadby and Wigston, 18 SINC's have been designated, with several others in the process of being put forward. These are all in private ownership, but three in particular are in the process of being transferred to the Borough Council through legal agreements. The SINC's may only be accessed by the general public if a public right of way passes through the site.

### **4.3 Local Designations**

#### **4.3.1 Brocks Hill Country Park**

##### **Grid Reference: 619998**

Brocks Hill Country Park in Oadby was established in 2000 as a Millennium project. It sits within the Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge and is 30 hectares of land where native trees have been planted, wild flower meadows, an orchard and ponds have been created. A play area, wheelchair and pram friendly paths have been laid out within the Park for visitors, whilst a Café and Visitor Centre, which has been designed around sustainability, acts as a focal point for visitors, schools, and local organisations for meetings.

#### **4.3.2 Oadby Grange Country Park**

##### **Grid Reference: 638004**

Situated at the north-eastern tip of the Borough, this land is expected to be leased by the Borough Council off the land-owner by the end of 2007. A permissive footpath has been created as a circular walk, but which also enables residents to access the public rights of way in the countryside from the urban edge. The site is a mosaic of hedgerows in different states of maturity, with mature trees, grassland, and a brook. A management plan is in the process of being agreed with the landowner.

#### **4.3.3 Lucas Marsh Local Nature Reserve**

##### **Grid Reference: 621997**

Immediately adjacent to and on the eastern boundary of Brocks Hill Country Park, Lucas Marsh (1.5 hectares) is owned by Oadby and Wigston Borough Council. The reserve is leased to the Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust.

The marsh developed as a result of excavation for building materials at the turn of the century. Habitats include a reedbed, ponds, rough grassland, dense scrub, scattered trees and a mature hedge.

The site can be accessed off Washbrook Lane or from Brocks Hill Country Park.

#### **4.3.4. Clifton Bridge Local Nature Reserve**

##### **Grid Reference: 617967**

Clifton Bridge is immediately adjacent to the Grand Union Canal, situated on the tow-path side of the canal and accessed from Kilby Bridge. The site can also be reached from the public footpath off Cooks Lane. Unimproved mesotrophic grassland with meadowsweet and great burnet, scrub and mature hedgerows provide a refuge for tree sparrow and spring migrants.

## **5 Policies for Nature Conservation**

The policies below are specific policies for the management of nature conservation through the Borough.

All Borough Council departments will ensure that nature conservation interests are taken into account in all the Council's work. The Council will also encourage all statutory undertakings, public and private bodies and individuals to have regard to the Strategy when carrying out any operations which may affect nature conservation interests in the Borough.

### **5.1 Planning Considerations**

The Borough Council will make appropriate consideration for nature conservation issues, all appropriate wildlife, and other legislation when determining planning applications as well as in formulating the Local Development Framework and other policy documents.

### **5.2 Wildlife Networks**

The Council has defined a wildlife network of corridors and links. These include sites of importance for nature conservation, the Grand Union Canal, River Sence and the railway corridor. Planning Policy Statement 9 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation focuses on the need to be mindful in establishing links between the SINC's themselves, where possible. This is to contribute towards the effects of climate change.

### **5.3 Site and Building Design**

The Council will promote and encourage where appropriate, site and building design principles and practices, which benefit flora and fauna.

### **5.4 Community Involvement**

Local communities, schools and voluntary groups will be encouraged to participate in the creation, enhancement and management of grounds and open space for nature conservation. The Council will also seek to provide information on wildlife and nature conservation and will promote a greater awareness and understanding of nature conservation.

### **5.5 Site Works**

All site works proposed on any site, will be undertaken as so to minimise their effect on wildlife and to secure the retention of enhancement of existing features of nature conservation interest.

### **5.6 Environmental Protection**

As part of its commitment to protecting the environment, the Council will adopt and encourage land management practices and principles that reduce or limit pollution, or that conserve resources or contribute to a cleaner, greener environment.

### **5.7 Public Access**

Where there is no existing right of way, the Council will seek to promote other means of public access so that residents are able to access open spaces and the wider countryside.

### **5.8 Local Nature Reserves**

The Council will work with the necessary organisations to seek the feasibility of establishing additional local nature reserves in areas considered suitable for the purposes.

### **5.9 Land Management/Habitat Creation**

The Council will seek an overall improvement in the ecological value of the Borough by delivering the Borough Council's Biodiversity Action Plan.

The next section explains how these policies will be implemented.

## **6 Putting the Policies into practice, in order to conserve what we have now and into the future**

The policies outlined in Section 3 fall into four major themes. These are:

- 1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation**
- 2. Habitat Creation**
- 3. Habitat Enhancement**
- 4. Community**

These four major themes are developed further through the following objectives:

### **1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation**

#### **Objective 1.1**

To conserve the existing habitats as reflected in the Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan and the Borough Council's Biodiversity Action Plan

#### **Objective 1.2**

To conserve the existing species as reflected in the Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan and the Borough Council's Biodiversity Action Plan

#### **Objective 1.3**

To review and implement the current Borough Council's Biodiversity Action Plan to ensure that all habitats and species relevant to the Borough Council area are reflected.

#### **Objective 1.4**

To ensure that via the Planning system, habitats, species, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Regionally Important Geological Sites and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation are protected through policies within the Local Development Framework and procedures within Development Control.

#### **Objective 1.5**

To ensure that the new Biodiversity Duty is reflected in all relevant departments throughout the Borough Council.

#### **Objective 1.6**

To ensure that management plans are written and implemented for all woodland sites, appropriate flood-basins, open spaces and parks within the Borough Council's ownership.

#### **Objective 1.7**

To develop and maintain a system of recording habitats and species compatible with national and county databases.

## **2. Habitat Creation**

### **Objective 2.1**

To work in partnership with Leicestershire County Council to work towards the establishment of a South Leicestershire Community Forest

### **Objective 2.2**

To work in partnership with landowners and FWAG to implement the new agri-environment schemes within the Borough.

### **Objective 2.3**

To work in partnership to ensure that the rural and urban landscape is managed in a way that enables species to adapt in response to climate change.

### **Objective 2.4**

Identify within the review of the Borough Council's Biodiversity Action Plan, the targets which seek to create habitats and implement.

## **3. Habitat Enhancement**

### **Objective 3.1**

To work in partnership to improve the habitat of the Grand Union Canal, in order to reduce eutrophication.

### **Objective 3.2**

To work in partnership to improve the water quality of the River Sence, in order to reduce eutrophication and improve the bank-side habitat for priority species.

### **Objective 3.3**

To work with land-owners within the SINC Scheme to manage the SINC's effectively.

### **Objective 3.4**

To provide a Grant Scheme to local residents, landowners and schools to improve biodiversity.

### **Objective 3.5**

Identify within the review of the Borough Council's Biodiversity Action Plan, the targets which seek to enhance habitats and implement.

## **4. Community**

### **Objective 4.1**

To raise awareness of the importance of conserving biodiversity.

### **Objective 4.2**

To encourage residents to become involved in the recording of habitats and species.

### **Objective 4.3**

To continue to support the Volunteer Tree Warden Scheme.

### **Objective 4.4**

To provide training courses where appropriate in relation to habitat management and recording.



**Objective 4.5**

To work in partnership to ensure that the countryside is accessible to the wider public.

**Objective 4.6**

To ensure that all residents have wildlife habitats and wildlife rich open space within easy reach of their homes.

**Objective 4.7**

Promote the Borough's Country Parks, open spaces, woodlands and parks through the development of appropriate interpretation material.

**Objective 4.8**

Provide information on all protected species within the Borough.

**Objective 4.9**

To use the environment as a tool in order to improve resident's health.

**Objective 4.10**

To engage with the angling community in furthering the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.

These objectives are further developed within an Action Plan which is outlined in the next section.

## Nature Conservation Strategy – Action Plan

### 1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Action</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Officer/partners</b>
<b>1.1</b>	To conserve the existing habitats as reflected in the Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan and the Borough Council's Biodiversity Action Plan	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Carry out a Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Biodiversity Audit to determine precise habitats within Borough, area covered and condition of habitats.</li> <li>2. Conserve species-rich rural hedgerows within Entry Level Scheme, as identified within Habitat Survey.</li> <li>3. Liaise with FWAG/Natural England to look at the management of the SSSI</li> <li>4. Liaise with Woodland Trust/Forestry Commission to offer landowners advice for protecting Veteran trees and near Veteran Trees as identified in Biodiversity Audit.</li> <li>5. Create a Community Woodland Group for Fludes Lane Woodland to assist the council with habitat management.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Completed 2005</li> <li>2. Deadlines for Entry Level Scheme in liaison with FWAG</li> <li>3. To be completed by 2010.</li> <li>4. To be completed by December 2008</li> <li>5. To be set up by April 2008.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Countryside Officer/ Ecological Services Ltd.</li> <li>2. Countryside Officer/FWAG</li> <li>3. FWAG/Natural England</li> <li>4. Countryside Officer/Woodland Trust/Forestry Commission</li> <li>5. Countryside Officer/British Trust for Conservation Volunteers</li> </ol>
<b>1.2</b>	To conserve the existing species as reflected in the Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan and the Borough Council's Biodiversity Action Plan.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Carry out a Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Biodiversity Audit to determine which protected and priority species exist in the Borough.</li> <li>2. Write new plans to be incorporated into existing District Biodiversity Action Plan.</li> <li>3. Undertake specific surveys to determine presence/absence of particular species.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Completed 2005</li> <li>2. Garden Action Plan to be written 2010.</li> <li>3. Rural pond survey for great crested newt by Christmas 2009</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Countryside Officer/ Ecological Services Ltd</li> <li>2. Countryside Officer/Natural England</li> <li>3. Borough Council/Pond Conservation Trust</li> </ol>

		4. Produce information relating to the protection of reptiles.	4. Leaflet to be produced Winter 2008.	4. Borough Council and Herpetological Trust
<b>1.3.</b>	To review and implement the current Borough Council's Biodiversity Action Plan to ensure that all habitats and species relevant to the Borough Council area are reflected.	1. Re-draft District's Biodiversity Action Plan.	To be completed by April 2008.	Countryside Officer
<b>1.4</b>	To ensure that via the Planning system, habitats, species, SSSI, RIGS and SINC sites are protected through policies within the Local Development Framework and procedures within Development Control.	1. Review the current procedure relating to protection of habitats and species within Development Control. 2. Ensure pertinent policies are drafted into the emerging Local Development Framework. 3. Draft list of Section 74 species relevant to the Borough. 4. Produce an Supplementary Planning Document covering Biodiversity and nature conservation issues, particularly in relation to development. 5. Ensure that all existing SINC's are included within the emerging Local Development Framework.	1. To be completed by August 2008.  2. To meet milestones identified within the Local Development Scheme. 3. To be completed by June 2008. 4. To incorporate timescales in the Local Development Scheme when next reviewed.  5. To be completed by Autumn 2008.	Countryside Officer/Development Control
<b>1.5</b>	To ensure that the new Biodiversity Duty is reflected in all relevant departments throughout the Borough Council.	1. Extrapolate information relevant to each department. 2. Present relevant information in a suitable format to each department. 3. Work with each department to put pertinent work into practice.	1. To be achieved by December 2008. 2. To be achieved by March 2009. 3. To be achieved by September 2009.	Countryside Officer
<b>1.6</b>	To ensure that management plans are written and	1. Fludes Lane Woodland Management Plan in process of being reviewed.	1. To be completed by December 2007.	1. Countryside Officer.

	implemented for all woodland sites, appropriate flood-basins, open spaces and parks within the Borough Council's ownership.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Other urban woodland sites within townscape – work in progress.</li> <li>3. Draft Glaisdale Flood-basin and Foston Gate Flood-basins management plans.</li> <li>4. Draft Management plan for proposed Oadby Grange Country Park.</li> <li>5. Consider other appropriate sites within Borough requiring plans.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Liaise with Client Services re timescale.</li> <li>3. Draft plans completed August 2007.</li> <li>4. Draft completed March 2007.</li> <li>5. By December 2008.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Grounds Maintenance Supervisor.</li> <li>3. Countryside Officer/Grounds Maintenance Supervisor.</li> <li>4. Countryside Officer.</li> <li>5. Countryside Officer/Grounds Maintenance Supervisor.</li> </ol>
<b>1.7</b>	To develop and maintain a system of recording habitats and species compatible with national and county databases	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Phase 1 Habitat Survey recorded and mapped Habitats on ArcGIS. (2005)</li> <li>2. Input field data already gathered on species into GIS format.</li> <li>3. Liaise with other organisations to ascertain sharing of data.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. To be completed by March 2009.</li> <li>3. To be completed by March 2009.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Countryside Officer/GIS officer (to be appointed)</li> <li>3. Countryside Officer.</li> </ol>

## Nature Conservation Strategy – Action Plan

### Theme 2. Habitat Creation

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Projects</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Officer/partners</b>
<b>2.1</b>	To work in partnership with Leicestershire County Council to work towards the establishment of a South Leicestershire Community Forest	1. Liaise with FWAG/Forestry Commission to establish potential for creating further woodland within the Borough, linked to existing woodland and hedgerows.	1. To be incorporated into the framework and timescale of the Community Forest Project and Entry Level/Higher Level Schemes and Woodland Grant Scheme.	Countryside Officer/Stepping Stones Countryside Management Project/FWAG
<b>2.2</b>	To work in partnership with landowners and FWAG to implement agri-environment schemes within the Borough	1. Liaise with FWAG using the Phase 1 Habitat Survey, Biodiversity Audit and Landscape Character Assessment to determine where most benefit can be achieved for conservation of habitats and species. 2. Use the designated SINC as a focal point for looking at habitat management on a landscape scale.	1. To be incorporated into the framework and timescale of the Community Forest Project and ELS/HLS Schemes.	Countryside Officer/FWAG
<b>2.3</b>	To work in partnership to ensure that the rural and urban landscape is managed in a way that enables species to adapt in response to climate change	1. Using the Phase 1 Habitat Survey, Biodiversity Audit and Landscape Character Assessment, draft a map demonstrating potential habitat creation linkages.	1. To be incorporated into framework of potential Climate Change Strategy at District level and regional level.	Countryside Officer/FWAG/Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust/East Midlands Biodiversity Forum
<b>2.4</b>	Identify within the review of the Borough Council's Biodiversity Action Plan, the targets which seek to create habitats and draw up programme of implementation in relation to Entry Level/Higher Level Scheme Timescales	1. Using the Phase 1 Habitat Survey, Biodiversity Audit and Landscape Character Assessment, draft a map demonstrating potential habitat creation linkages.	To be incorporated into the framework and timescale of the Entry Level/Higher Level Schemes	Countryside Officer/FWAG

## Nature Conservation Strategy – Action Plan

### Theme 3. Habitat Enhancement

Objective	Objective	Actions	Timescale	Lead Officer/partners
3.1	To work in partnership to improve the habitat of the Grand Union Canal in order to reduce eutrophication	1. Liaise with landowners through FWAG to incorporate habitat creation/management.	1. Timescale for Entry Level/Higher Level Schemes	Countryside Officer / FWAG
3.2	To work in partnership to improve the water quality of the River Sence, in order to reduce eutrophication and improve bankside habitat for priority species.	1. Investigate feasibility of wetland habitat creation to replace concrete flume, through partnership working with Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group/Environment Agency. 2. Liaise with landowners through FWAG to incorporate habitat creation/management for otter and water vole. 3. Ensure that Otter Monitoring Programme continues. 4. Undertake water vole survey along River Sence prior to habitat creation/management	1. 2010-11  2. Timescale for Entry Level/Higher Level Schemes.  3. Ongoing.  4. By December 2008.	Countryside Officer / FWAG/EA
3.3	To engage with land-owners within the SINC Scheme to manage SINC effectively.	1. Set up meeting with the Wildlife Trust to drive forward. 2. Attend SINC Review Panel to keep up to date with SINC Notification Criteria. 3. Maintain database of sites. 4. Identify existing SINC which may benefit from agri-environment schemes. 5. Identify programme of monitoring for each SINC to assess criteria is still being met.	1. By March 2009.  2. Meetings twice a year.  3. Database already set up. 4. By August 2009.  5. Biodiversity Audit completed in 2005 re-assessed all SINC. Monitoring programme to be	Countryside Officer / Wildlife Trust / SINC Review Panel

		6. Review potential SINC's and take to SINC Review Panel.	designed around this. 6. By December 2008.	
<b>3.4</b>	To provide a Grant Scheme to local residents, landowners and schools to improve biodiversity.	<p>1. Environmental Grant Scheme established 2007-08 for hedge-laying urban hedges.</p> <p>2. Environmental Grant Scheme established 2007-08 for schools to Plant hedges, lay existing hedges, hedge-lay, habitat creation, plant orchard trees.</p> <p>3. Investigate feasibility of establishing grant scheme for land-owners in liaison with FWAG</p>	<p>1. Several residents have been visited to assess hedges.</p> <p>2. Advertised in Letterbox in Spring and Summer editions.</p> <p>3. Liaise with FWAG by March 2008.</p>	<p>1. Countryside Officer / tree wardens</p> <p>2. Countryside Officer</p> <p>3. Countryside Officer / FWAG</p>

## Nature Conservation Strategy – Action Plan

### Theme 4. Community

	<b>Objective</b>	<b>Actions</b>	<b>Timescale</b>	<b>Lead Officer/partners</b>
<b>4.1</b>	To raise awareness of the importance of conserving biodiversity	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Produce Nature Conservation Strategy.</li> <li>2. Review District Biodiversity Action and publish.</li> <li>3. Organise an event relating to a particular species action plan.</li> <li>4. Create a Community Woodland Group for Fludes Lane Woodland to assist the council with habitat management.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. To be drafted within timescale of Local Development Framework baseline evidence – October 2007</li> <li>2. To be completed by April 2008.</li> <li>3. Organise event for 2009/10.</li> <li>4. To be set up by April 2008.</li> </ol>	Countryside Officer.
<b>4.2</b>	To encourage residents to become involved in the recording of habitats and species.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Volunteers continue to monitor Marbled White Butterfly on Wigston Triangle.</li> <li>2. Volunteers continue to monitor otter along the River Sence and Grand Union Canal.</li> <li>3. Veteran Tree Survey Training Course organised for tree wardens.</li> <li>4. Volunteers continue to record bird species along the canal.</li> <li>5. Organise volunteers to record birds within Fludes Lane Woodland and the proposed Oadby Grange Country</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Once a month Annually, between June and August.</li> <li>2. Once a month all year round.</li> <li>3. Completed in 2006.</li> <li>4. Once a month all year round.</li> <li>5. Organise for Spring 2008.</li> </ol>	Countryside Officer



		park		
<b>4.3</b>	To continue to support the Volunteer Tree Warden Scheme	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Meetings continue to be held four times a year.</li> <li>2. Identify training needs for individual tree wardens.</li> <li>3. Prepare Powerpoint presentation for new tree wardens.</li> <li>4. Tree wardens experienced in hedge-laying to assess hedges for the Environmental Grant Fund.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>2. Identify by April 2008.</li> <li>3. Prepare by August 2008.</li> <li>4. Grant Fund in place 2007-08. Hedgerows being assessed July 2007 onwards.</li> </ol>	Countryside Officer/Brocks Hill Ranger/Stepping Stones Countryside Management Project
<b>4.4</b>	To provide training courses where appropriate in relation to habitat management and recording	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Continue to train volunteers in transect methods on Wigston Triangle.</li> <li>2. Train volunteers in bird monitoring for Fludes Lane Woodland and proposed Oadby Grange Country Park.</li> <li>3. Identify individual training needs for all tree wardens.</li> <li>4. Engage with Angling community to record dragonfly, water vole, otter and mink.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Annually each summer.</li> <li>2. By April 2008.</li> <li>3. By April 2008.</li> <li>4. By July 2010.</li> </ol>	Countryside Officer/Holly Hayes Resource Centre/Stepping Stones Countryside Management Project.
<b>4.5</b>	To work in partnership to ensure that the countryside is accessible to the wider public.	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Respond to the County Council's Public Right Of Way consultation demonstrating where there may be issues relating to health and safety on specific routes and identifying further requirements.</li> <li>2. Access Management Plan – feasibility study to look at improving</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Responded July 2007.</li> <li>2. Completed March 2006.</li> </ol>	Countryside Officer

		<p>access across the Green Wedge.</p> <p>3. Proposed Oadby Grange Country Park on outskirts of Oadby will enable residents to access official rights of way, via new paths.</p> <p>4. Investigate the feasibility of constructing a new pedestrian footbridge over the Grand Union Canal at Ervin's Lock to link new development with countryside.</p>	<p>3. Residents already using new paths.</p> <p>4. Various meetings have been held with British Waterways and Leicestershire County Council. Estimated costs have been put forward. Funding being sought.</p>	
<b>4.6</b>	To ensure that all residents have wildlife habitats and wildlife rich open spaces within easy reach of their homes.	<p>1. Apply the Greenspace/Natural England standard to parks and open spaces to evaluate proximity of areas to all residents.</p> <p>2. Green Infrastructure funding may provide opportunity for improving parks and open spaces. Attend funding events and meetings to drive this forward.</p>	<p>1. June 2009</p> <p>2. First meeting September 2007</p>	Countryside Officer / Grounds Maintenance Supervisor
<b>4.7</b>	Promote the Borough's Country Parks, open spaces, woodlands and parks through the development of appropriate interpretation material.	<p>1. Prepare display board for proposed Oadby Grange Country Park.</p> <p>2. Prepare display board for Fludes Lane Woodland.</p> <p>3. Develop plan of interpretation for open spaces</p>	<p>1. By March 2008</p> <p>2. By March 2008</p> <p>3. By December 2008</p>	<p>1. Countryside Officer</p> <p>2. Countryside Officer</p> <p>3. Grounds Maintenance Supervisor</p>
<b>4.8</b>	Provide information on protected species in the Borough.	<p>1. Draft leaflet on reptiles.</p> <p>2. Liaise with Badger Group to provide information to allotment holders.</p>	<p>1. By December 2008.</p> <p>2. By December 2008.</p>	Countryside Officer / Badger Group / Herpetological Society /

		<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. Draft leaflet on amphibians.</li> <li>4. Draft planning advice for developers.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>3. By December 2008.</li> <li>4. Timescale of Local Development Framework.</li> </ul>	Pond Conservation Trust.
<b>4.9</b>	To use the environment as a tool for improving residents' health	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Establish a Green Gym in the Borough.</li> <li>2. Encourage residents to undertake practical conservation tasks.</li>   <li>3. Encourage residents to undertake species recording and monitoring.</li> <li>4. Set up Fludes Lane Woodland Community Group</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Green Gym set up February 2007.</li> <li>2. Volunteer days well established at Brocks Hill Country Park</li>   <li>3. Volunteers established at Brocks Hill Country Park, Wigston Triangle, river and canal.</li> <li>4. By April 2008.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Countryside Officer / British Trust for Conservation Volunteers.</li> <li>2. Brocks Hill Ranger.</li>   <li>3. Countryside Officer / Brocks Hill Ranger.</li> <li>4. Countryside Officer/British Trust for Conservation Volunteers</li> </ul>
<b>4.10</b>	To engage with the angling community in furthering the protection and enhancement of biodiversity.	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Engage with Wigston Angling Association to monitor water vole, otter and mink in the Borough.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. By July 2010.</li> </ul>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Countryside Officer</li> </ul>

## Appendix 1

### England Forestry Strategy

Key Programme	Action	How action may impact on the work of Oadby and Wigston Borough	How the action may be delivered through the Nature Conservation Strategy
Forestry for Economic Regeneration	<p>1. Review Circular 36/78 on Trees and Forestry and consider, as part of a rolling programme, how the role of woodlands might be highlighted through regional and national planning guidance.</p> <p>2. Encourage the development of new urban forestry initiatives which can demonstrate achievement through partnership approaches.</p> <p>3. Seek opportunities to consider how the setting of future built development might be enhanced by the incorporation of wooded and other green elements, and how to encourage such development through planning guidance.</p> <p>4. Create new woodlands along transport corridors as part of a programme of environmental improvements</p>	<p>1. Once reviewed this may impact on emerging policies through the Local Development Framework.</p> <p>2. A Climate Change Strategy is being developed for the Borough, and an Urban Forestry Initiative may go some way to achieving outcomes within the strategy.</p> <p>3. The Borough is considering the development of a Supplementary Planning Document on Biodiversity within the Local Development Framework for developers</p> <p>4. The A6 in Oadby is a major transport thoroughfare between Leicester and the South Midlands and could contribute to this action with the planting of mature trees along the central reservation</p>	<p><b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.4 <b>Habitat Creation</b> Objective 2.1</p> <p><b>2. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.1, 1.4, 1.6</p> <p><b>3. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.4</p> <p><b>4. Habitat Creation</b> Objective 2.1, 2.3, 4.9</p>
Forestry for Recreation, Access and Tourism	<p>1. Develop the Forestry Commission's Woodland Park Network close to towns and cities.</p> <p>2. Engage with the public to promote</p>	<p>1. May assist with the implementation of the proposed Community Forest.</p> <p>2. The Borough Council engages with</p>	<p><b>1. Habitat Creation</b> Objective 2.1</p> <p><b>2. Community</b></p>

	<p>the benefits of trees, woods and forests.</p> <p>3. Support the Forest Education Initiative by developing the national network of local groups to encourage children to better understand the importance of woods and forests.</p>	<p>the public through the voluntary tree warden scheme.</p> <p>3. Being developed through Leicestershire. There may be opportunity to link Fludes Lane Woodland and the proposed Oadby Grange Country Park with this.</p> <p>3. Brocks Hill Country Park delivers this through school-groups visiting the park.</p>	<p>Objective 4.3</p> <p><b>3. Community</b> Objective 4.7</p>
Forestry for the Environment and Conservation	<p>1. Promote greater appreciation of the value and use of locally native trees and shrubs.</p>	<p>1. The Borough is considering the development of a Supplementary Planning Document on Biodiversity within the Local Development Framework for developers.</p> <p>The Borough Council organises Save the Saplings each year, whereby self-set native saplings are collected from residents' gardens and planted in more suitable locations.</p> <p>The Borough's Tree Warden Scheme promotes native trees</p>	<p><b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.1, 4.3</p>

## Appendix 2

### A statement of Policy for England's Ancient and Native Woodlands (Forestry Commission and Defra)

Policy	Objectives	How the objective is being met in Oadby and Wigston.	How the objective may be delivered through the Nature Conservation Strategy
Existing area of ancient woodland should be maintained and there should be a net increase in the area of native woodland	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Take steps to avoid losses of ancient woodland and of ancient and veteran trees.</li> <li>2. Sustain the total extent of other native woodland (ensuring that gains exceed any losses)</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. No ancient woodland recorded in the Borough. Veteran Trees and semi-veteran trees identified and located within the Phase 1 Habitat Survey (2005) Need a policy protecting Veteran Trees within the emerging Local Development Framework. (LDF)</li> <li>2. Total extent of native woodland recorded within the Phase 1 Habitat Survey (2005). Ensure policy included in emerging LDF to protect existing woodlands</li> </ol>	<p><b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.4</p>
Ancient and native woodland and trees should make an increasing contribution to our quality of life	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Increase opportunities for the public to visit and walk in ancient and native woodland.</li> <li>2. Improve the quality of recreational experience in woods open to the public.</li> <li>3. Improve understanding and enjoyment of trees and woodland.</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. The existing woodlands within urban areas are already well used by local residents, as is the Brocks Hill Country Park.</li> <li>2/3 Management plans are currently being written/reviewed for all woodland sites and recreational experience will be addressed through these.</li> </ol>	<p><b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.6</p> <p><b>4. Community</b> Objective 4.6, 4.7, 4.9</p>

Ecological condition of ancient and native woodland should be improved and maintained	1. Increase knowledge of both woodland condition and threats, particularly climate change	1. The Borough Council is in the process of developing a Climate Change Strategy and this will need to be considered.	<b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.1, 1.4 <b>2. Habitat Creation</b> 2.1, 2.3

## Appendix 3

### Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group

**Aim: To promote the protection of wildlife and the conservation of nature and landscape in particular with relation to modern agricultural needs.**

FWAG's Objective	How the Borough Council may be able to assist FWAG in achieving its objectives.	Borough Council's objectives which FWAG may be able to help achieve.
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• To encourage understanding between farming and conservation interests by promoting liaison and the exchange of information, ideas and experience between individuals and organisations who are concerned with or interested in the objects of the company.</li> <li>• To support and co-operate with others in proposals and activities which encourage understanding and co-operation between conservation, wildlife and farming interests and which are calculated to assist the promotion of the company's objects.</li> </ul>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1. Ecological Services Limited were employed by the Borough Council in 2005 to undertake a Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Biodiversity Audit. The Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Biodiversity Audit has provided a spatial snapshot of the Borough's countryside which may be of value in assisting FWAG with preparing farm plans and in encouraging farmers to enter Entry Level/Higher Level Scheme. Copies of both reports have been passed to FWAG.</li> <li>2. A volunteer monitors otter and mink presence along River Sence and Grand Union Canal on a monthly basis. This information may help to focus particular habitat enhancement/creation to any Entry Level/Higher Level Scheme.</li> <li>3. Veteran trees/trees of special interest have been located throughout the Borough. Planning Policy Statement 9 states that local authorities should now be protecting these trees within Local Development Frameworks. Raising awareness with individual landowners</li> </ol>	<ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li><b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation.</b> Objective 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.8</li> <li><b>2. Habitat Creation</b> Objective 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4</li> <li><b>3. Habitat Enhancement</b> Objective 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5</li> <li><b>4. Community</b> Objective 4.1, 4.2, 4.4</li> </ol>



	<p>will play an important role in protecting trees.</p> <p>4. Tree sparrow and lapwing have been identified as key species which can be safeguarded or increased within the Kilby Bridge Area. Both species have been included as a key target within the Joint Character Area 094 Leicestershire Vales Targeting Statement for 2005.</p> <p>5. The Borough Council has set up an Environmental Grant Fund in 2007-08 for the purposes of providing funding to residents for laying hedges within the urban areas. This may be extended for farmers and landowners within the rural area in 2008-09.</p>	
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## Appendix 4 Regional Biodiversity Strategy

Objective	Nature Conservation Strategy objectives which may help to achieve the Regional Biodiversity Strategy
1. To manage effectively the remaining wildlife habitats and reduce fragmentation by extensive habitat creation	<b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, <b>2. Habitat Creation</b> 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 <b>3. Habitat Enhancement</b> 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5
2. To minimise the effects of diffuse pollution in aquatic and wetland habitats.	<b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> 1.1, 1.2 <b>3. Habitat Enhancement</b> 3.1, 3.2, <b>4. Community</b> 4.1
3. To promote the management, restoration and creation of wetlands	<b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.1, 1.5, 1.7 <b>2. Habitat Creation</b> 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4 <b>3. Habitat Enhancement</b> Objective 3.1, 3.2,
5. To improve water quality	<b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.1, 1.5, 1.7, <b>2. Habitat Creation</b> Objective 2.2 <b>3. Habitat Enhancement</b> Objective 3.1, 3.2
6. To enhance the character and quality of the region's environment by a landscape scale approach to woodland management, tree planting and	<b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.1

woodland creation.	<b>2. Habitat Creation</b> Objective 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, 2.4
7. To identify, protect and sustainably manage the ancient woodlands, veteran trees and other historic features	<b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7, 1.9, <b>2. Habitat Creation</b> Objective 2.1, 2.2, 2.3, <b>4. Community</b> Objective 4.1, 4.3,
12. To protect and conserve urban and post industrial habitats of significant biodiversity value.	<b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5
13. To manage urban and post industrial habitats to enhance their biodiversity value	<b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.1, 1.2, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7
14. To involve local communities in urban green space conservation	<b>4. Community</b> Objective 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10
15. To develop a clear spatial framework for Green Infrastructure delivery at regional and sub-regional levels to help guide prioritisation	<b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.5
19. To listen, understand and be more open to ensure effective communication of biodiversity concepts and messages	<b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.4, 1.7 <b>4. Community</b> Objective 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 4.7, 4.8, 4.10
20. To ensure meaningful community engagement in biodiversity activities	<b>4. Community</b> Objective 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.6, 4.9, 4.10
22. To secure the management of industry owned/managed land to benefit biodiversity.	<b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.5

## Appendix 5 Regional Environmental Strategy

Policy	Nature Conservation Strategy objectives which may help to achieve the Regional Environmental Strategy
3. To equip people with the skills and knowledge so that they value the environment and can contribute to its enhancement.	<b>4. Community</b> Objective 4.1, 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.7, 4.8, 4.9, 4.10
4. To ensure that all East Midlands people have sustainable access to a diverse, well managed environment of which they can be proud.	<b>4. Community</b> Objective 4.6, 4.7, 4.9
9. To conserve, enhance and manage our natural heritage of geology, landforms and natural processes so that the best is safeguarded and available as a scientific and educational resource.	<b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.1, 1.5, 1.7 <b>3. Habitat Enhancement</b> Objective 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4 <b>4. Community</b> Objective 4.1, 4.2, 4.4
12. To achieve an agricultural system which is economically viable whilst protecting and enhancing the environment.	<b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.1 <b>2. Habitat Creation</b> Objective 2.2
13. To protect and appropriately manage all ancient and semi-natural woodland and increase the extent of multi-purpose forests and woods that deliver environmental, as well as social and economic benefits.	<b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 1.6 <b>2. Habitat Creation</b> Objective 2.1, 2.2,
15. To optimise the use of brownfield sites of all kinds, whilst recognising and suitably protecting them as environmental assets.	<b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.5
22. To enhance the character and quality of the region's landscape by protecting the best and enhancing the rest.	<b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.1, 1.4, 1.5, 1.7 <b>3. Habitat Enhancement</b> Objective 3.1, 3.2, 3.3, 3.4, 3.5

## Appendix 6

### Space4Trees – The Regional Forestry Framework for the East Midlands

Priority Area	Aim	Objective	How objective is met in Oadby and Wigston	How the objective will be delivered further through the Nature Conservation Strategy
Trees and People	To provide and promote more opportunities for everyone to enjoy the social, health and educational benefits of trees and woodlands	<p>1. More opportunities for people to enjoy high quality recreational, cultural and educational experiences close to where they live.</p> <p>2. A greater contribution to public health and well being through more community participation, public access, active recreation and sport.</p>	<p>1/2 Brocks Hill Country Park created in 2000. All new woodland planted out, and visitors today reap the benefit of this as the landscape changes.</p> <p>1/2 Fludes Lane Woodland in process of having areas of woodland in Jelson ownership transferred to Borough Council for effective long term management.</p> <p>1/2 Through woodland planting schemes in new development of Pochins Bridge and elsewhere as appropriate.</p> <p>1/2 In process of leasing land for Oadby Grange Country Park with links to Fludes Lane Woodland and access to countryside.</p> <p>1/2 The Borough Council co-ordinates the Borough's Tree Warden Scheme.</p>	<p><b>Habitat Enhancement:</b> Objective 3.5</p> <p><b>Community:</b> Objective 4.2, 4.3, 4.4, 4.5, 4.6, 4.7, 4.9</p>

Trees and the environment	To maximise the contribution of trees and woodlands to the region's natural, cultural and historic environment and ensure that trees and woodlands are better able to withstand external environmental pressures	1. Character and quality of the region's environmental resources are better understood and conserved, protected and enhanced by a landscape scale approach to woodland management, tree planting and woodland creation.	1. As above. In addition, Departments' Service Delivery Plans are creating cross cutting targets to increase tree planting in the Borough as mitigation against climate change. Borough Council sits on Stepping Stones Countryside Management Steering Group, the latter of which is leading a feasibility study into creating a Community Woodland in south-east Leicestershire. Borough Council co-ordinates the Borough's Tree Warden Scheme. Borough Council sits on Local Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group. Save the Saplings Scheme has been run for 13 years taking self set native saplings from residents' gardens and re-planting them in more suitable locations.	<b>Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation:</b> Objective 1.1, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6. 1.7, 1.8  <b>Habitat Creation:</b> 2.1, 2.2, 2,3, 2,4 <b>Habitat Enhancement:</b> 3.3, 3.4, 3.5 <b>Community:</b> 4.3
Trees and the Economy	To encourage innovation, enterprise and growth of woodland related business and to enhance their contribution to the regional economy.	1. The economic sustainability of woodland made more secure through support for business activity in key areas of environmental management, leisure and tourism, renewable energy, added value wood products and processing.	1/2. To date, although it is recognised that trees and woodlands play an important role in the economy, there has been little scope for developing this within the Borough. The position of Economic Development Officer has recently been filled in the Borough and this may be an opportunity for this to be addressed.	<b>Habitat Creation:</b> 2.1

		2. A wider acknowledgement and support for the role that trees and woodlands play in assisting regeneration and creation of an attractive setting for inward investment and growth	2. The proposed Community Forest may also be an opportunity to move this forward.	
Communication and collaboration	To create a better understanding of the roles and benefits of trees, woodlands and wooded environments and support the sharing of information, innovation and good practice.	<p>1. Woodlands, trees and wooded environments used more widely as a resource for community participation and a wide range of learning activities and supported by high quality accessible information and interpretation.</p> <p>2. A shared approach to issues and opportunities supported by more effective communication.</p>	<p>1. Brocks Hill Country Park developed since 2000 and with acres of trees planted. Visitor centre ideally suited to raise awareness of trees. Borough Council co-ordinates the Borough's Tree Warden Scheme, which seeks to raise the importance of trees at local events to the public, offering advice on hedge-laying, and assisting with management of Tree Nursery. Fludes Lane Woodland in process of having areas of woodland in Jelson ownership transferred to Borough Council for effective long term management.</p> <p>2. Environmental Grant Fund is providing 50% funding for residents to have suitable native hedgerows laid. Hedgerows are assessed and advice given by tree wardens.</p>	<p><b>Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation:</b> Objective 1.6 <b>Habitat Creation:</b> Objective 2.2 <b>Community</b> Objective 4.7</p>

## Appendix 7

### Leicestershire and Rutland Wildlife Trust – Five Year Development Strategy 2005-2010

Trust's Objective	How the Borough Council may be able to assist the Trust in achieving its objectives.	Borough Council's objectives which the Trust may be able to help achieve.
<p><b>Educational activity, resources and outreach:</b></p> <p>1. Work in partnership with Oadby and Wigston Borough Council to develop work with school groups at Brocks Hill Environment Centre and Country park.</p>	<p>1. School-groups are already well established visitors at Brocks Hill Country Park. However a partnership between the Borough Council and the Trust can only help to strengthen what is already being accomplished.</p>	<p><b>4. Community</b> Objective 4.1, 4.7</p>
<p><b>Wildlife Sites and Regionally Important Geological Sites:</b></p> <p>2. Work in partnership with Leicestershire County Council and others to further develop the Wildlife Sites System.</p> <p>3. Identify Wildlife Sites and maintain up to date records of these valuable areas.</p> <p>4. Work with farmers, landowners and other partners to prevent damage and destruction of wildlife sites and provide advice to enhance their wildlife value.</p> <p>5. Work with others to identify, conserve and promote the counties' RIGS.</p>	<p>2. Borough Council is represented alongside the Wildlife Trust on the SINC Review Panel.</p> <p>3. The Borough Council has assisted the Wildlife Trust to undertake a SINC survey on particular sites within the Borough; Biodiversity Audit on SINC's information to be given to the Trust.</p> <p>4. Borough Council and Wildlife Trust have undertaken a great crested newt survey on Glen Gorse Golf Course, and provided report with recommendations on habitat management.</p> <p>5. Liaise with the Trust with regards to the one RIG site within the Borough.</p>	<p><b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation</b> Objective 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4</p> <p><b>3. Habitat Enhancement</b> Objective 3.3</p> <p><b>4. Community</b> Objective 4.1, 4.2</p>



<p><b>Wildlife Champions:</b> 6. Continue to lead the implementation of the Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan working in partnership with a wide range of organisations, seeking to increase activity.</p>	<p>Borough Council is represented on the Leicestershire and Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan Steering Group</p>	<p><b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation.</b> Objective 1.1, 1.2, 1.3, 1.4, 1.6, <b>2. Habitat Creation</b> 2.1, 2.3, 2.4 <b>3. Habitat Enhancement</b> Objective 3.3, 3.5</p>
<p><b>Standing up for Wildlife:</b> 7. Encourage Local Authorities to include nature conservation in their plans and strategies</p>	<p>The Borough Council is held up as an example of Best Practice, due to the emphasis that the Council places on incorporating biodiversity into its mainstream work. Work undertaken to date as baseline evidence for the Local Development Framework includes a Phase 1 Habitat Survey, Biodiversity Audit, Oadby and Wigston Green Wedge Management Plan and Landscape Character Assessment. The Brief to the background for the Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Biodiversity Audit project has been requested from a neighbouring authority. Various council strategies also make reference to biodiversity. These include Parks and Open Spaces Strategy, Corporate Plan and Community Plan</p>	<p><b>1. Landscape, Habitat and Species Conservation.</b> Objective 1.4  <b>4. Community</b> Objective 4.1, 4.2, 4.7</p>