

# A GUIDE TO BIODIVERSITY PLANNING POLICY AND GUIDANCE

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Produced by the Cumbria Biological Data Network to complement the Cumbria Biodiversity Evidence Base.

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## 1. [Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation](#)

PPS9 sets out the planning policies on protection of biodiversity and geological conservation through the planning system. This replaces PPG9.

Paragraph 4 states that *'[Local Authorities]... should ensure that policies in local development documents reflect, and are consistent with, national, regional and local biodiversity priorities and objectives (including those agreed by local biodiversity partnerships).'*

Also, notably, paragraph 5(ii) states that: *'Local Development Frameworks should identify 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.'*

## 2. [Circular 6/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation](#) – Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System

This circular provides administrative guidance on the application of the law to planning and nature conservation. It complements PPS9 and the accompanying Good Practice Guide.

## 3. [Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: A Guide to Good Practice](#), March 2006. The companion guide to PPS 9 and the Government Circular 6/2005

## 4. Validation of Planning Applications

[Government guidance](#) has been prepared setting out changes to the validation procedures aimed at clarifying the information needed to enable the proper validation and determination of an application for planning permission.

## 5. [PAS 2010: Planning to halt the loss of biodiversity](#), British Standards Institute, 2006

Biodiversity conservation standards for planning in the UK – Code of Practice

PAS 2010 has been developed to help the planning system play its part in halting the decline of biodiversity. It provides recommendations for the integration of biodiversity conservation into land use and spatial planning in the UK. PAS 2010 identifies where competent authorities have clear responsibilities for biodiversity conservation, and recommends tasks that should be undertaken to discharge their planning functions in a manner that is compliant with statutory obligations, government policy and professional good practice. This Publicly Available Specification (PAS) is particularly relevant to land use and spatial planning in terrestrial, coastal and freshwater environments, but its principles can also be applied to planning in the marine environment.

## 6. [Regional Spatial Strategy](#) policies

The responses to the Proposed Changes are currently being considered by Government Office North West; it is anticipated that the final version of the RSS will be issued as a statutory document by the Secretary of State in August 2008.

Policies DP7, EM1 and EM3 of the draft North West Regional Spatial Strategy seek to conserve and enhance biodiversity as part of an integrated approach to protection and enhancement of the region's environmental assets.

Specifically the nature conservation section of Policy EM1 (proposed changes to the draft RSS, following the Examination in Public) states that:

*“Plans, strategies, proposals and schemes should seek to deliver a ‘step-change’ increase in the region’s biodiversity resources by contributing to the delivery of national, regional and local biodiversity objectives and targets for maintaining, restoring and expanding habitats and species populations. This should be done through protecting, enhancing, expanding and linking areas for wildlife within and between the locations of highest biodiversity resources, including statutory and local wildlife sites, and encouraging the conservation and expansion of the ecological fabric elsewhere.”*

It also states that:

*“Plans, strategies proposals and schemes should protect and enhance the region’s geological and geomorphological resources including statutory and local sites by contributing to the delivery of national, regional and local geodiversity objectives and targets.”*

## **7. Regional Spatial Strategy Indicative Biodiversity Resource and Opportunity Diagram and Functional Ecological Frameworks (Ecological Networks)**

RSS Policy EM1 currently states that:

*“Broad locations where there are greatest opportunities for delivering the biodiversity targets are shown on the Indicative Biodiversity Resource and Opportunity Diagram (see Diagram 9.1). More specific locations will be informed by sub-regional biodiversity maps and frameworks of statutory and local wildlife sites.*

*Local Authorities should:*

- *Develop a more detailed representation of this spatial information for use in their Local Development Frameworks; and*
- *Develop functional ecological frameworks that will address habitat fragmentation and species isolation, identifying and targeting opportunities for habitat expansion and re-connection. Active arrangements will be needed to address ecological cross-boundary issues within the region; and within areas such as the Pennines, Solway Firth, the Mersey Estuary, the River Dee Estuary and the Cheshire Meres and Mosses, as well as including biodiversity policies in any developing Marine Spatial Planning System in the Irish Sea “*

The Biodiversity Resource and Opportunity diagram is currently being revised as part of the RSS production process. It is produced at a regional level and summarises the distribution of the North West’s priority habitat resource and highlights broad areas of opportunity for delivering biodiversity targets within Cumbria.

The ecological framework for Cumbria will be further developed with the proposed production of a Cumbria biodiversity resource and opportunities map. This will need to include significantly more detail and guidance than the regional map.

## **8. Regional Spatial Strategy Green Infrastructure**

RSS Policy EM3 describes Green Infrastructure as the planned network of multi-functional green spaces and interconnecting links that is designed, developed and managed to meet the environmental, social and economic needs of communities. The Policy states that Local Authorities should ensure that a key aim of green infrastructure is the maintenance and improvement of biodiversity.

## **9. North West Region Priority Habitat Targets**

The North West Biodiversity Forum has produced biodiversity targets for the maintenance, restoration and expansion of UK priority habitats. Some Cumbria interpretation is available, with a summary of Planning Considerations and Enhancement Opportunities taken from the Species and Habitats Statements, on [www.lakelandwildlife.co.uk](http://www.lakelandwildlife.co.uk).

**10. UK Biodiversity Action Plan**

The UK Biodiversity Partnership was set up after the Rio Earth Summit in 1992 to implement the Biodiversity Convention in the UK. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan was prepared in 1994 and required a range of actions and initiatives to take place. UK Priority species and habitats were identified and action plans prepared 1995-99.

PPS9 requires Local Authority policies to be consistent with these national biodiversity priorities and objectives, and to enable the restoration and creation of new priority habitats.

**11. UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species and habitats**

These are animal and plant species, and habitats listed by the UK Biodiversity Partnership as being in need of conservation action. This list of species and habitats was reviewed in the Species and Habitat Review June 2007. Species were both added and removed. Habitats were added and some were redefined. This list is used as the basis for the Section 41 NERC Act list (previously S 74 CROW Act), and these lists are now the same, except that the S41 list also includes the Hen Harrier. In Cumbria there are 290 of the 1149 UK priority species and 47 of the 65 UK priority habitats.

For the Habitat Statements in Cumbria, UK priority habitats have been grouped together, where this is appropriate, into Cumbria Key Habitats, each of which has a Habitat Statement.

**12. Cumbria Key Species**

The Cumbria list of protected, UK priority and Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan species, listed in the Cumbria Key Species Designations Spreadsheet (see section 4.4).

**13. Cumbria Key Habitats**

The Cumbria grouped list of UK priority habitats, each of which have a Habitat Statement.

**14. Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan**

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan 1994 encouraged the setting up of Local Biodiversity Partnerships and the production of Local Biodiversity Action Plans, to take forward the UK action plans and also address further local priorities. The Cumbria Biodiversity Partnership was set up in 1998 and the Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan, which was widely consulted and agreed, was launched in 2001. This Action Plan covers a range of species, habitats and general issues. The Plan still forms the basis of significant conservation action in Cumbria and includes extremely useful background and detailed information on Cumbria's biodiversity priorities.

PPS9 requires Local Authority policies to be consistent with these local biodiversity priorities and objectives, and to enable the restoration and creation of new priority habitats.

**15. Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan species and habitats**

These are animal and plant species and habitats listed in the Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan 2001 as being in need of priority conservation action. The list includes tranche 1, for which action plans were written, and tranche 2 which have yet to have action plans

**16. North West Regional Geodiversity Action Plan**

In preparation.