



**Kent Nature Partnership
Strategic Priorities and Action Plan
2018-23**

Final Draft

Priority 1 - Strengthening the consideration of biodiversity within local plans and the growth agenda

Lead Partner: Kent County Council

Outcomes:

- Biodiversity is provided for in local plans, so that local plans are making a coordinated, active and demonstrable contribution to the Kent Biodiversity Strategy targets with greater protection of Local Wildlife Sites.

Objectives:

- By 2019, the KNP has secured a way of resourcing input to local plans.
- By 2025, all of Kent's local authorities are seeking engagement of the KNP at appropriate points in their local plan process.
- Local plans are embedding policy that will deliver The Kent Biodiversity Strategy and, in particular, increased protection for Local Wildlife Sites.
- A change in the culture of Kent's local planning authorities, where the value of nature is embraced and recognised.

Context

It is recognised that Kent's local plans are at differing stages; hence the objective cannot be any more defined than aiming for engagement at "appropriate" points. This engagement will, ideally, be as early as possible to inform the evidence base and issues and options. Active contribution can be defined as policies and allocations that have considered biodiversity do not result in net loss and ideally deliver net gain; they will also not hinder the achievement of the Kent Biodiversity Strategy targets and, where appropriate, will contribute. It is recognised that not all Kent Biodiversity Strategy will be relevant to all local plans.

Associated actions (draft)

Objective	Action	Proposed timescale	Proposed lead
By 2019, the KNP has secured a way of resourcing input to local plans; and by 2025, all of Kent's local authorities are seeking engagement of the KNP at appropriate points in their local plan process.	KNP planning demonstration project to provide input to a pilot district authority's plan, to help shape future role for KNP in local plan development and develop a business case for LPA funding.	Short	KCC
	Revise existing KNP planning protocol and consider more effective ways of encouraging LPAs to utilise it	Short	KCC
	A review of the various KNP levers in the plan making process/various stages for sign off	Medium	KCC
Local plans are embedding policy that will deliver Kent Biodiversity Strategy 2020 and, in particular, increased protection for Local Wildlife Sites.	Review, refine and publish the Kent Biodiversity Strategy to ensure it is current and fit for purpose, particularly in relation to being used within local plans	Short	KWT
	Provide guidance for recommended evidence base documents, identifying what layers are useful/critical and how to use the data.	Medium	TWBC
	Provision of an evidence base to support biodiversity policies and related decisions (links to Kent Landscape Information System).	Medium	KMBRC
	Investigate the best way to provide Local Wildlife Site and BOAs information to LPAs for	Short	KWT &

	constraint maps		KMBRC
	Guidelines on how to contribute to Kent Biodiversity Strategy targets	Medium	KCC
	Provision of Kent Biodiversity Strategy targets at the local district/borough/unitary level	Long	KWT
	The development of model planning policies (that have passed the examination stage) to deliver biodiversity protection and gain	Medium	KCC and KWT
	Appraise existing and proposed strategic approaches for biodiversity in Kent and identify additional requirements. In order to provide robust, strategic approaches to spatial planning (accompanied by mapping for biodiversity in Kent linked to Biodiversity 2020 targets and model policies)	Long	RSPB
A change in the culture of Kent's local planning authorities, where the value of nature is embraced and recognised.	Survey of how biodiversity is valued by LPAs (to understand baseline, provide a measure for improvement and inform onward work to achieve this objective).	Short	University of Kent
	Develop training package utilising different media and formats for planners and councillors/elected members.	Medium	KCC & KWT
	Identify simple ways for LPAs to measure/monitor provision for the natural environment in local plans	Medium	TWBC/ SDC
	Development of indicators for success in regards to planning input (e.g. if policy is being implemented and whether it is having a difference), which provides a framework for monitoring	Medium	KCC
	Make links with government to lobby for the strengthening of the role for LNPs in plan making and improved drivers for the consideration of the natural environment; ensure the KNP is responding to any relevant consultations in this regard.	Short to medium	KCC

Priority 2 - Embedding natural capital into planning and decision making

Lead Partner: Natural England

Outcome:

- Natural capital accounting is better understood as a way of valuing the natural environment and is used as a part of a decision-making toolkit for a wide range of sectors.

Objectives:

- The natural capital of Kent is identified and exemplar projects, valuing specific areas, are used to demonstrate its value.
- Improved understanding of natural capital and how this can be used in decision making.

Context

Natural capital is comprised by all the ecosystem services which natural assets provide. Accounting for natural capital is important as many of the most valuable services it provides are intangible so they're often overlooked; natural capital accounts provide one way of representing the environment in decision making. A natural capital assessment for the county will be a large undertaking and therefore work under this priority will first focus on improving understanding and providing demonstration projects.

Associated actions (draft)

Objective	Action	Proposed timescale	Proposed lead
The natural capital of Kent is identified and exemplar projects, valuing specific areas, are used to demonstrate its value.	Undertake a basic review of the county's natural capital	Medium	Natural England
	Using a local plan as a pilot area, demonstrate the development and application of natural capital accounting.	Medium	Natural England
	Develop a pilot project that demonstrates the multiple Natural Capital benefits that can be derived from Kent's woodlands. This will encompass goods and services and involve both the industry workforce and environmental organisations.	Long	University of Greenwich
	Pilot that demonstrates multiple Natural Capital benefits (ecosystem services) that can be derived from floodplain management	Long	TBC
	Research on the role of coppiced woodlands on ecosystem services	Long	University of Greenwich
Improved understanding of natural capital and how this can be used in decision making.	Communicate the benefits of Natural Capital: promote good practice and embed this into planning	Medium	Natural England

Priority 3 - Taking forward the health and nature agenda

Lead Partner: Kent Public Health and Medway Public Health

Outcome:

- Kent’s residents have improved opportunities to have contact with nature with accessible semi-natural, greenspace in the right place (near people); and these areas are being used to generate significant benefits to the physical and mental health of the population.

Objectives:

- By 2025, local plan development, green infrastructure projects and big new developments will have addressed deficiencies identified in the KNP green space needs assessment.
- GI development will not only deliver more accessible green space where it is needed, but also measureable benefits to biodiversity.
- By 2025, contact with nature will be promoted by local healthcare providers (and other health and wellbeing agencies), with demonstration projects being run by each of the 8 Clinical Commissioning Groups.

Context

In addition to ensuring the provision of opportunities to access green space and have contact nature, this priority must also focus on people actually having that contact.

Associated actions (draft)

Objective	Action	Proposed timescale	Proposed lead
By 2025, local plan development, green infrastructure projects and big new developments will have addressed deficiencies identified in the KNP green space needs assessment.	Examine green space needs assessment to see how it can be incorporated into local plans to deliver both health and wellbeing and biodiversity benefits.	Short	Kent & Medway Public Health
	Assessment of value of natural environment green space to health and wellbeing of Kent and business case for investment	Long	Kent & Medway Public Health
GI development will not only deliver more accessible green space where it is needed, but also measureable benefits to biodiversity	Strategic GI plan(integrating BOAs) for the county or address ways to strategically deliver on county scale in addition to biodiversity gain, coordinated with Local Authorities GI plans	Long	KCC
By 2025, contact with nature will be promoted by local healthcare providers (and other health and wellbeing agencies), with demonstration projects	Working with health and social care professionals identify and promote where the natural environment can support healthy lifestyles.	Medium	Kent & Medway Public Health

being run by each of the 8 Clinical Commissioning Groups.			
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Priority 4 - Improving the quality, extent and connectivity of our high value habitats

Lead Partner: Kent Wildlife Trust

Outcome:

- The network of Kent’s high value natural and semi-natural habitats, made up of locally and nationally recognised sites, is well managed and connectivity between these sites is delivered through a range of initiatives.

Objectives¹:

- Increase the proportion of Kent’s semi-natural habitat in positive management.
- Increase the extent of well managed semi-natural habitat.
- Increase the connectivity of Kent’s high value habitats.

Context

20% of the county is semi-natural but only two thirds of this is in management that benefits its biodiversity. In order to deliver net gain, we need to not only increase the extent of semi-natural habitat but also increase the proportion of existing habitat in good management and improve connectivity.

Associated actions (draft)¹

Objective	Action	Proposed timescale	Proposed lead
Increase the proportion of Kent’s semi-natural habitat in positive management			KWT & KCC
Increase the extent of well managed semi-natural habitat	BOA’s to provide spatial framework for the Kent Biodiversity Strategy, for stronger use in planning and decision making - design for biodiversity’ tailored to each area.		KWT & KCC
	Consider how BOAs might be used as SMART targets/reported on.		KWT & KCC
	Landscape scale projects that directly deliver Kent Biodiversity Strategy targets to be developed across the county.		
Increase the connectivity of Kent’s high value habitats			
	Engage in environmental stewardship/agri-environment/agricultural reforms in order to ensure the best outcomes for the environment. Develop a lead/influencing role for the KNP in future delivery	Ongoing	

¹A task and finish group has been established to better define these with quantitative targets and work up associated actions.