

# BOA's and planning

Vanessa Evans

Planning and Policy Officer

Kent Wildlife Trust

# Planning mechanisms through which BOA's can be used include:

- 1. forward planning policy** through new or emerging Local Plans
- 2. evidence base documents** such as Green Infrastructure Plans
- 3. development management** by targeting opportunities for enhancement or habitat creation in individual case work

# 1. Forward planning policy

- Include the BOA's within the biodiversity policy section of the Local Plan
- Make it clear that BOA's are not a "constraint"
- Provide a map of BOA's within local authority area boundary
- A description of each BOA and its characteristic features and opportunities
- Make them a visible layer on any mapping tools

# Forward planning policy

Ashford:

- BOA's for this area are **Mid Kent Greensand Gault, Low Weald Woodlands, East Kent Woodlands and Downs, Mid Kent Downs, Woods and Scarp, Medway and Low Weald Wetlands and Grasslands, High Weald**
- emerging Local Plan due imminently- include reference to BOA's in "Biodiversity Policy" section
- strategic site allocations or Area Action Plans- include BOA's within "Development Principles" or "Topic Policies"
- through the emerging draft "Ashford Green Corridor Strategy and Action Plan"

# Forward planning policy

Shepway:

- BOA's for this area are Romney Marshes, Mid Kent Greensand and Gault, East Kent Woodlands and Downs, Dover and Folkestone Cliffs and Downs
- Emerging Local Plan, Issues and Options March 2015
- At preferred options stage- include reference to BOA's in "Natural Environment" section NE5 "promoting positive enhancement of biodiversity" paragraph
- Will there be a supporting GI document, similar to GI report 2011?

## 2. Evidence base documents

### Green Infrastructure Plans:

- Not always planning-led
- Draw the attention of colleagues in other services to BOA's during consultation on GI Plans
- Be aware that BOA's can be used to build biodiversity opportunities into GI Plans

### GI Plan needs to also:

- make the link across from the GI Plan to planning policy and the emerging Local Plan
- Emphasise the importance of broad GI as distinct from public open space
- Identify financial support and long-term management plans

# Evidence base documents

Example: Maidstone draft Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy:

- Maidstone draft “Green and Blue Infrastructure Strategy” consultation late 2015
- including an Action Plan that brings projects, funding and delivery together including partner organisations, leisure services and planning

BOA’s included as follows in Maidstone draft:

“Ensure that existing habitats and protected species are accommodated and appropriately mitigated in all new development and that development within Biodiversity Opportunity Areas do not significantly increase the fragmentation of wildlife habitats or neutralize significant opportunities for habitat restoration or recreation.”

*Suggestion:*

swing this around so that new development makes use of the BOA maps, in order to help to create better connectivity between areas of distinctive local habitat and offers opportunity for enhancement or creation.

# Maidstone example contd.

Examples of positive biodiversity measures it captures:

- Makes reference to BOA's
- Targeted planting of hedgerows to link habitats and counter habitat fragmentation
- Produce good practice guidance for integrating green and blue infrastructure into new developments, including how to future-proof new planting using species that are climate change resilient
- Require developers to create new habitats focusing on the 12 priority BAP habitats as part of green infrastructure planning and design in new developments
- Include biodiversity actions in green space management plans to enhance the biodiversity of all public open spaces, where this would not conflict with its recreational use
- Create new and improved wildlife corridors in areas which are a priority for habitat improvements and where there is limited progress towards achieving favourable condition as listed in the LBAP, (lowland dry acid grassland, lowland meadow, wet woodland, lowland heathland, lowland wood pasture and parkland).
- Ensure developers provide details of how green and blue infrastructure will be managed and maintained to a high quality over the long term
- Encourage neighbourhood plans to provide detailed local guidance on how green and blue infrastructure needs are to be met
- education and community projects by partners within GBIS areas



# 3. Development management

- Include BOAs where proposals are within or adjacent to BOA areas- make use of BOA maps
- Consider whether there is an enhancement or habitat creation opportunity on site
- Think about connectivity with surrounding countryside- can a BOA help to improve this? Eg. polytunnels



# Task: now try this

How could previous policy be updated to consider BOA's?

Use the handouts provided- you can take this away if you prefer:

Ashford

Take one of the BOA descriptions.

How can this be effectively combined with

a) Core Strategy 2008 policy CS11: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation?

b) the "draft Ashford Green Corridor Action Plan" outline information? Clue: Mid kent greensand and gault

Shepway

Take one of the BOA descriptions.

How can this be effectively combined with

a) Core Strategy 2013 policy CSD4?

b) Shepway Green Infrastructure Report July 2011 (supplementary actions)?