

Introduction

1. The term ‘biodiversity’ was coined at the Rio Earth Summit in 1992. At this summit many of the World’s governments recognised the importance and the decline of global biodiversity, and signed up to a programme of biodiversity conservation. Biodiversity encompasses the whole variety of life on Earth. It includes not only all species of plants and animals, but also their genetic variation, and the complex ecosystems of which they are all 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. Biodiversity includes the wide range of habitats that these animals and plants live in and depend upon.
2. The intricate network of ecosystems, habitats and species that comprises biodiversity provides the support systems that sustain human existence. It provides many of the essentials of life – our oxygen, water, soil, food, clothing, health and recreational opportunities. The value of biodiversity extends from the spiritual benefits gained from contact with nature, to the economic potential of wild species for new sources of food or medicines. In a local context, biodiversity has particular importance in giving a distinctive character to an area, whether it is estuary, woodland or moorland. Even in towns and villages, oases of wildlife habitat make an important contribution to the quality of life.
3. The world is losing biodiversity at an increasing rate mainly as a result of human activity. In the UK alone, 100 species became extinct in the twentieth century, with many more species and habitats in danger. Local extinctions are also at a high level. On a world scale, the rate of loss is now recognised to be a cause for serious concern, requiring international action to prevent continued loss of biodiversity.
4. We need to restore habitats, and populations of some species, because mankind has adversely affected them. We have an obligation to future generations, to act sustainably.
5. The UK Government published:
 - Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan, 1994 (UKBSG¹).
 - Biodiversity: the U.K. Steering Group Report Volume 1: Meeting the Rio Challenge, 1995 (UKBSG^{2a}).
 - Biodiversity: The UK Steering Group Report Volume 2 (UKBSG^{2b}),
 - UK Biodiversity Group Tranche 2 Action Plans, Volumes 1 to 6, referred to as the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) (UKBSG³).
 - UK Biodiversity Group: Index to the Steering Group Reports and Tranche 2 Action Plans (UKBSG⁴).
6. Together these are referred to as the UK BAP and to date 45 habitat and 391 species plans have been written. Each plan has a nominated lead partner.

7. However the UK BAP recognised the fact that much biodiversity conservation would have to be delivered on a local basis, so a suite of county and district plans, referred to as Local BAPs, have been produced.
8. The Selby Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) is one such plan and closely links to many neighbouring LBAPs.
9. The target audience for the Selby BAP is landowners and land managers, policymakers and policy implementers, developers, individuals in the wider community and businesses, their employees and customers.

The need to conserve biodiversity

- Ecosystem services – natural systems provide our basic life-support structures, based on air, soil and climate. These provide our food, oxygen and materials, act as carbon sinks to process carbon, mitigate pollution and can reduce flooding.
- Products – sustainably harvested, natural products such as food, fuel, medicines, cosmetics and construction materials.
- Economic development – eco-tourism.
- Quality of life – the natural world offers enjoyment, health, spiritual enrichment, learning, cultural diversity and artistic inspiration.
- Knowledge – the pursuit of scientific discoveries.
- Wildlife has an intrinsic value.

Quality of life

10. Quality of life is important to us all, and is dependent on a number of factors. Amongst others, these include access to a decent home, work, education and health. It also depends on a healthy environment – clean air and water, and a rich and diverse natural world. In the UK the destruction of the countryside and the loss of wildlife has been such that a rich and healthy natural environment is no longer guaranteed. For example, 98% of wildflower meadows, 448,000 kilometres of hedgerows, over two million skylarks and 95% of high brown fritillary butterflies have been lost in less than a lifetime (UKBSG¹). We need to halt decline and put back, where we can, what has been lost, not just in protected areas or nature reserves, but in the wider countryside too. Neither the scale of the task nor the need for urgent action should be underestimated.

Sustainability

11. The principles of Local Agenda 21 are for a sustainable lifestyle and cover the following:

- We must hand over to the next generation a world no less rich than the one we inherited.
 - The culture of a nation - music, literature and visual art – is inspired by its landscape and wildlife.
 - Respect for the environment encourages respect for ourselves.
 - Power over other organisms confers responsibility.
 - Life takes time to evolve but can be lost quickly and is impossible to replace.
 - Our environment’s health determines our own.
 - Some organisms are useful to us but we should not limit our efforts to these - we must conserve all those about which we still know little.
12. Biodiversity is not only significant for those who have a direct interest in nature conservation. It has much wider impact on our daily lives and sustainable development in general:
- Our rich wildlife heritage encourages people to get out and take exercise, helping to improve the health of society and reduce the impacts on the health service.
 - It is important to people’s mental and physical health and well being.
 - Wildlife-rich landscapes have economic benefits. For example, environment-related economic activity contributes jobs and income to the economy.
13. The conservation of our natural resources, including wildlife, is a key test of sustainable development, and is of relevance to us all. The threats to biodiversity cannot be dealt with by targeted species or habitat recovery work alone. Many of the threats and constraints to protecting biodiversity arise from broader issues relating, for example, to the unsustainable use of land, air and water. An integrated approach is needed if positive impacts are to be made, for example through:
- Support for environmentally friendly agricultural methods, and the protection of the rural economy.
 - Development Planning to have a clear approach to the avoidance or mitigation of adverse impacts on habitats as a result of development.
 - Controls on water management and pollution.
 - Protection of areas of high biodiversity interest (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest) (SSSI).
 - Action on climate change, through wiser energy and transport use.
 - Enlightened management of publicly owned land.

Planning context for biodiversity

14. Planning Policy Guidance 9: Nature Conservation, (DoE⁵), (PPG9) advises how the Government’s policies for the conservation of our natural heritage are to be reflected in land use planning. It embodies the Government’s commitment to sustainable development and to conserving the diversity of our wildlife. Regional Planning Guidance for Yorkshire and The Humber to the year 2016 (RPG12, published October 2001) now requires local planning

authorities to identify and develop policies for areas important to the conservation of biodiversity. This is to be done by drawing on Local Biodiversity Action Plans and by reference to the Regional Biodiversity Audit and the national UK BAP Habitat and Species Action Plans (Policy N1).

15. The Selby District Council Community Strategy (2002 – 2005) incorporates environmental and biodiversity concerns.
16. The North Yorkshire County Structure Plan (Alteration Number 3, October 1995) contains policies stating that development will normally be permitted only where it would not harm the character and appearance, general amenity value or nature conservation interests of the surrounding area.
17. The Deposit Draft Selby District Local Plan (1997⁶), as amended by modifications, contains policies with clear objectives to:
 - Protect sites and habitats of nature conservation interest from inappropriate development.
 - Protect the nature conservation heritage of the District wherever it is found.
 - Improve the number and diversity of sites and habitats of nature conservation value in the District.
18. The preparation and use of the Selby Biodiversity Action Plan is an important part of the planning process because, in addition to providing valuable information and supplementary planning guidance, it also identifies specific and positive actions that can be undertaken to conserve the District's biodiversity.

Legal context for biodiversity

19. Biodiversity Action Plans are not a statutory requirement of the Local Planning Authority. However, Planning Policy Guidance (PPG) 1 advises that detailed issues may best be considered by preparing Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG). The content of the BAP has been kept consistent with Local Plan policies, and was formally adopted as SPG on the 3 August 2004. It is a material consideration in determining planning applications.
20. Further, PPG9 directs that Local Authorities should understand their nature conservation resource.
21. The Local Government Act 2000, places a statutory duty on local authorities to prepare Community Strategies, and Biodiversity Action Plans have been recognised as examples of 'good practice'.
22. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 places a duty on local authorities to conserve biodiversity (Section 74). Section 78 (amended) deals with duties in relation to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The Act recognises biodiversity as part of 'natural beauty'.

23. The European Communities Council Directive on nature conservation, the Habitats Directive, has been translated into UK law and is referred to as the Habitat Regulations in this document.
24. There is a whole suite of relevant legislation. Some, which are relevant to wildlife, are noted below.

Primary legislation:

- Ground Game Act 1880
- The National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949.
- The Allotment Act 1952.
- The Control of Weeds Act 1959.
- The Forestry Act 1967 (amended).
- The Countryside Act 1968.
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, (Schedule 5 – relates to protected animals, Schedule 8 to plants).
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990.
- The Planning and Compensation Act 1991.
- The Land Drainage Act 1994 (chapter 24).
- The Environment Act 1995.
- The British Waterways Act 1995
- The Local Government Act 2000.
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.
- Ragwort Control Act 2004

Secondary legislation:

- The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (referred to as the Habitat Regulations). These are the Regulations that put the Habitats Directive into UK law.
- The Environmental Protection (Duty of Care) Regulations 1995.
- The Hedgerow Regulations 1997.
- The Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999.
- Plans to bring uncultivated and semi-natural land into intensive agricultural use, require assessment for significant environmental effects (based on UK BAP priority habitats), under the Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) (Uncultivated Land) Regulations (2003).

Policy guidance:

- The UK Biodiversity Action Plan 1994.
- Biodiversity: The UK Steering Group Report 1995.
- Planning Policy Guidance N^o 9 Nature Conservation 1994.
- Mineral Planning Policy Guidance N^o 7 The Reclamation of Mineral Workings 1996.

- Preparing Community Strategies: Government Guidance to Local Authorities (2000).

Others:

- Some species, such as bats and great crested newt, are protected by Appendix 3 of the Bern Convention (Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats), expressed in UK Law as The Conservation (Natural Habitats, & c.) Regulations 1994.
- The Local Authority can issue Tree Preservation Orders (TPO) to protect amenity trees.
- Common ragwort is notified as a noxious weed under the Weeds Act (1959) and Ragwort Control Act (2003).
- There is a duty for landowners to control rabbits and brown hares that are affecting neighbours' land, (Game Laws 1880).
- Felling licences required under Forestry Regulations.
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 includes restrictions on Japanese knotweed and giant hogweed.
- Selby District Council is the regulating authority under various legislation components affecting the environment and proactively enforces this legislation.

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan

25. The UK BAP is the UK's initiative to maintain and enhance biodiversity. Through this plan, the Government committed itself to a process designed to conserve and enhance:
 - The range and numbers of wildlife species and the quality and extent of wildlife habitats.
 - Species and habitats that are internationally important or characteristic of local areas.
 - Species and habitats that have declined significantly over recent decades.
26. English Nature (EN) and other organisations from across all sectors are committed to achieving the Plan's conservation goals over the next 20 years and beyond. Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP) form part of this structure.
27. The UK BAP aims to achieve conservation in three ways:
 - Protect the existing resource.
 - Restore the degraded resource.
 - Re-create the resource.

Regional Biodiversity

28. Local BAPs are being prepared across the Yorkshire and The Humber region, based on administrative boundaries and are at various levels of completion.

They are complimentary to one another in terms of their priority habitats and species. This is important for species such as the otter, which is best looked at on a river catchment scale, which covers more than one local authority area. The North Yorkshire Biodiversity Co-ordinators Group brings together those involved with Local BAPs in North Yorkshire, the two National Parks and the City of York.

Regional Wildlife Audit

29. Work published by the Yorkshire and Humber Biodiversity Forum in 1999 (YHBF⁷) provides a best account of the status of all UK BAP priority habitats and species occurring in the region. The 'Regional status' accounts in the Selby BAP are largely based upon this work.
30. As an addition to the Biodiversity Audit, the YHBF has produced a report on species and habitats of regional importance (YHBF⁸). Unfortunately the tables in this document are incorrect but this is currently being addressed through a consultation process.
31. This document gives lists of the habitats and species considered by local naturalists to be definitive to the Region and they now form the Regional Biodiversity Indicators for Yorkshire and The Humber Region. In April 2003 Yorkshire Forward adopted these as the key regional species with which to measure biodiversity progress in the region.

Habitats and species of regional importance

32. The report (YHBF⁸) identifies 33 habitats of regional importance. Of these six are represented in Selby District.

Table 1. Regionally important habitats.

Regionally Important Habitats	Link to Selby BAP
Wet woodland	Woodland HAP
Cereal field margins	Arable farmland HAP
Lowland meadows	Grazing marsh HAP
Magnesian Limestone grassland	Unimproved grassland HAP
Lowland acid grassland	Unimproved grassland HAP
Reedbeds	Reedbeds HAP

33. The 2003 report (YHBF⁸) identifies 288 species of regional importance. Of these, the North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre (NEYEDC) has Selby District records for 92 of them. Others will have been recorded but are not on the NEYEDC database, for example the forester moth. A few of the birds have only been recorded in Selby as vagrants, whereas their regional importance lies in their status as either breeding or wintering birds. Species marked with * have been adopted by the Regional Assembly as biodiversity indicators. Also grayling * and adder *.

Table 2. Regionally important species.

Regionally Important Species recorded in the Selby District.		
Vertebrates		
Water vole *	Red kite *	Beetle <i>Pryopteris nigroruber</i>
Brown hare *	Northern gannet *	Beetle <i>Rhizophagus picipes</i>
Otter *	Yellow wagtail	Depressed river mussel
Brandt's bat	Curlew *	Cylindrical whorl snail
Daubenton's bat	Bearded tit	Scarce vapourer moth
Whiskered bat	Willow tit	Argent and sable moth
Natterer's bat	Marsh tit	
Water shrew	Tree sparrow	Lower plants
Noctule bat	Grey partridge	Moss <i>Aloina brevirostris</i>
Pipistrelle bat *	Ruff	Moss <i>Hennediella stanfordensis</i>
Brown long-eared bat	Black redstart	
Skylark	Redstart	
Kingfisher	Golden plover	Vascular plants
Shoveler	Grey plover	Sand leek
Teal	Black-necked grebe	Fingered sedge
Wigeon	Spotted crake	Rare spring-sedge
Gadwall	Avocet	Yellow star of Bethlehem
Short-eared owl	Sand martin	Marsh gentian
Pochard	Whinchat	Mudwort
Bittern	Woodcock	Tasteless water pepper
Brent goose	Turtle dove	Pillwort
Sanderling	Redshank	Greater water parsnip
Dunlin	Song thrush	
Knot	Ring ouzel	
Nightjar	Barn owl	
Linnet	Lapwing *	
Twite	Great crested newt *	
Little ringed plover	Palmate newt	
	Bullhead fish	
Corncrake		
Reed bunting	Invertebrates	
Merlin	Bee <i>Andrena humilis</i>	
Peregrine	Bee <i>Andrena nigriceps</i>	
Snipe	Wasp <i>Ectemnius ruficornis</i>	
Swallow	Wasp <i>Nysson trimaculatus</i>	
Bar-tailed godwit	Aquatic beetle <i>Agabus uliginosus</i>	
Woodlark	Tansy beetle	
Goosander	Beetle <i>Corticus unicolor</i>	
Corn bunting	Beetle <i>Hypera diversipunctata</i>	

Local Biodiversity Action Plans

34. One of the important facets of the UK's approach to biodiversity has been the production of Local BAPs (LBAPs). These plans are being developed to help foster action for UK priority species and habitats at a local level, but also to determine and take action for wildlife of local importance. LBAPs have been produced at a number of administrative levels including parish, district, county and region.
35. The LBAP can help integrate biodiversity action into the decision making of statutory and non-statutory bodies at a local level. For example, planners can use LBAPs to influence planning decisions, both to avoid harming wildlife and to encourage the restoration of habitats through after-use conditions.
36. Business and industry can use LBAPs to highlight the biodiversity priorities, which should be taken into account in their environmental management systems, such as ISO 2001 (International Organisation for Standardisation, for businesses). This is an audit that businesses can be accredited with, to demonstrate good environmental practice.
37. A Local Biodiversity Action Plan is both a product and a process and it should include the following:
 - Establish a plan partnership.
 - Review wildlife resource.
 - Identify priorities within the national and local context.
 - Prepare action plans, which set specific targets, identify partners and list actions.
 - Publish the BAP.
 - Identify and co-ordinate delivery mechanisms, funding and advice.
 - Implement action.
 - Establish a long term monitoring programme.
 - Feed information back to national lead agencies.

The Selby District Council Approach

38. North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) has provided the lead for the preparation of a Local Biodiversity Action Plan for Selby. A full time biodiversity officer employed by NYCC (part funded by District Council's, including Selby) has led the project throughout. The Selby District Council's Planning Policy team have provided a facilitator role. The Selby BAP is part of a larger initiative to prepare Local BAPs for all of the North Yorkshire districts.
39. A Selby Local BAP steering group has been established. Membership is given in Annex A.
40. The Selby Biodiversity Action Plan seeks to achieve the following:

- Ensure national targets for species and habitats (in the UK BAP) are translated into effective action at the local level.
 - Identify targets for species and habitats of local value.
 - Develop effective, long-term local partnerships.
 - Raise awareness of the need for biodiversity conservation.
 - Consider opportunities for conservation of the whole biodiversity resource.
 - Set up a monitoring programme for local priorities.
 - Set up a reporting programme.
41. The Selby Biodiversity Action Plan will tackle wildlife conservation issues. Habitat classification work has shown that the habitats that are of highest value for wildlife are scarce in the District. Referred to as semi-natural habitats, these cover just 3.7% of the District land area (Warburton⁹), (BioDAT¹⁰), (Baker¹¹), (Megson¹²), (Weston¹³) and (Phillips¹⁴).
42. The Selby Biodiversity Action Plan aims to safeguard and enhance these rare habitats and their wildlife. Many are being lost through neglect and the Plan will encourage their management in order to keep them in favourable condition for wildlife. It may also be possible to restore habitats lost to recent changes in land use, or to create new habitats, but these measures are inferior to the adequate safeguarding of our existing resources. A rich and varied countryside benefits wildlife by sustaining the habitats they need and also by providing corridors between these key sites.
43. The Selby BAP will achieve this in three ways:
- Co-ordinate direct action.
 - Inform Development Control planning.
 - Give general conservation advice.

Biodiversity actions and developers

44. The principle of biodiversity action is one that developers can incorporate into their development proposals when seeking planning permission from the local planning authority, and it is hoped that through the Selby BAP, Selby District Council will encourage this. There are a number of easy, biodiversity-based actions, which developers can include in development proposals, and which council planners can encourage. Architects, engineers, landscape architects and other professionals should consider these at the design stage. Some examples of actions that developers could consider are given below, and others appear in the list of generic actions on pages 25 to 27:
- Conserve existing wild-space and create new wild-space, such as scrub, rough grassland, ponds, bogs, species-rich hedges. For larger areas create wetland with reedbeds.
 - For large schemes that will be reverted back to land at the end of their working period, such as mineral extraction and landfill, design ambitious habitat creation schemes principally to benefit biodiversity. These to include significant wetlands, reedbeds, species-rich grassland and woodland as appropriate.

- Seek strong mitigation with mineral extraction companies for the much more strategic creation of semi-natural habitat, for the after use of mineral sites.
- Incorporate cavities into buildings, to be used by bats.
- Incorporate a bat home, which is a large construction with multiple compartments, into development schemes.
- Incorporate swift bricks into the roof spaces of buildings, to be used by swifts.
- Incorporate small cavities in brick or stonework for masonry bees, especially on south-facing walls.
- Erect artificial, house martin nesting boxes onto buildings.
- Leave points of access for swallows into buildings, such as in barn conversions.
- Erect secure, nest platforms for kestrels.
- Incorporate barn owl nest sites into buildings.
- Erect multiple tree sparrow nest boxes onto buildings, especially on east facing walls.
- Design balancing ponds that maximise marginal habitats such as bare ground, emergent vegetation and bank-side scrub and provide habitat for great crested newt and water vole.
- Avoid the culverting of streams.
- Use native species of local provenance to create plant communities typical of the area, in landscaping schemes.
- Include flowering plants and shrubs in landscaping schemes.
- Use berry-producing species in landscaping schemes.
- Use climbers in landscaping schemes.
- Use 'green roofs', made of species-rich turf.

Selby Wildlife Audit

45. The Selby BAP is complimented by the Selby Wildlife Audit (in prep), (Megson¹⁰), which gives information on the district status of priority habitats and species. This document covers all semi-natural habitat types and all scarce species.
46. The audit demonstrates the importance of designated sites for protecting semi-natural habitats. These include SSSIs. Notified by English Nature, these sites have statutory protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1982 (amended) (W&CA) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW Act).
47. Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) are non-statutory sites that are ratified by the SINC Panel and are listed in district Local Plans, where they receive policy protection. SINC information is managed in a database called BioDAT¹⁰, which is held by members of the SINC Panel. Most sites were surveyed at Phase 2 Habitat Survey standard by qualified ecological surveyors, between 1998 and 2001. There are currently 187 existing and potential SINC listed for Selby District. Survey findings are currently being matched to the SINC criteria guidelines to prepare a definitive list (Baker¹¹).

48. The entire district was surveyed in 1993 to Phase 1 Habitat Survey standard. This survey was the first time that good ecological sites were identified. Many of these sites went on to be designated as SINCs (Warburton⁹).
49. The Selby Wildlife Audit (Megson¹²) reviews scarce and threatened species in Selby District. It is based on a review of published records and some unpublished reports together with information from specialist recorders.
50. Other species of conservation concern will occur in the district but records are widely dispersed amongst various data holders. Records remain the intellectual property of recorders unless previously published. There is a lack of records for many species and a general need to undertake baseline surveys.
51. The Red Data Book (RDB) and Nationally Scarce (NS) designations are based on inventories published by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) or its predecessor, using the most up-to-date account available. In the case of moths and butterflies, aquatic beetles and flies, updated status designations awaiting publication have been used because these are considered more accurate than those initially published. Lists of Red Data and Nationally Scarce plants (including vascular plants, bryophytes and lichens) and Red Data fungi are available on the JNCC website (¹⁵).
52. Criteria for inclusion in this report are as follows:
 1. UK BAP priority species.
 2. Red Data Book species.
 3. Nationally Scarce species.
 4. Species identified in published Red Data Books for the Yorkshire region.
 5. Birds of Conservation Concern, including species on the red list (highest concern) and on the amber list.

1. The UK BAP priority species were initially published as the short, medium and long lists.

2. Red Data Book species are those considered to be nationally:

Endangered (RDB1) – species considered to be in serious danger of extinction in Great Britain.

Vulnerable (RDB2) – species believed to be declining throughout their British range and which may become endangered.

Rare (RDB3) – species which are not endangered or vulnerable but are extremely localised in Britain and believed to occur in fewer than 15 OS hectads (ten km squares).

Insufficiently Known (RDBK) – species, which are believed to merit Red Data listing but which are insufficiently known to determine their status more accurately.

The new criteria categorise RDB species as Critically Endangered, Endangered, Vulnerable and Near Threatened (see JNCC website for definitions¹⁵).

3. Nationally Scarce species are considered to have a very localised distribution in Great Britain and are estimated to occur in fewer than 100 hectads (out of a total of 2,877 hectads). For some of the better-known invertebrate groups, this category has been subdivided into Nationally Scarce A [Na] (very scarce species estimated to occur in fewer than 30 hectads) and Nationally Scarce B [Nb] (those estimated to occur in 31-100 hectads). For others the category has not been subdivided. The category Nationally Scarce replaces the term Nationally Notable.

It should be recognised that assessments of conservation status are based on constantly changing knowledge. In some cases, species identified as Nationally Scarce may no longer merit a national conservation status, whilst others may merit Red Data listing.

4. Yorkshire Red Data inventories have been published for land & freshwater molluscs (Norris¹⁶) and bees, wasps & ants (Archer¹⁷) These include regionally rare or threatened species as well as those of national conservation concern.

5. The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB) has lead on the publication 'The Population Status of Birds in the UK, Birds of Conservation Concern', Anon, 2002¹⁸. This lists 40 birds of primary conservation concern (the red list), 121 birds of secondary concern (the amber list) and 86 others of concern (the green list). A full report on the breeding population status of UK birds occurs in Gregory¹⁹.

The criteria for including species in this audit inevitably exclude many which may be of more local conservation concern. An important part of the Local BAP process will be to identify these in consultation with local experts.

Selby BAP priority habitats and species

53. Although all species of wildlife are important, LBAPs concentrate on priority habitats and species. Priorities are selected by the steering group, based on the following recognised criteria.

Criteria for selecting habitats

- Any habitat for which a UK BAP has been prepared that occurs in the Selby District.
- Any semi-natural habitat that occurs in the Selby District.
- Any habitat that is characteristic of the Selby District.
- Any habitat that is locally distinctive within the Selby District.
- Any habitat that supports a priority species and occurs in the Selby District.
- Some habitats are grouped into broad habitat types, such as 'farmland'.

Criteria for selecting species

- Any species (not including vagrants) that has recently occurred in Selby, and for which a UK BAP has been prepared.
 - Any species that has been issued with a status showing that it is of conservation concern (such as Red Data Book listing, Nationally Scarce or red/amber listed birds) and regularly occurs in Selby.
 - Any species that has statutory protection under The Habitats Directive or the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and has recently occurred in Selby.
 - Any species occurring in the District that is considered by experts to be regionally rare.
 - Any species that is considered to be locally distinctive.
 - Any species that is considered to be locally valued.
 - Any species that is considered likely to make a good flagship species for promoting action plans.
54. The habitats and species were evaluated against the above criteria, discussed by experts on the steering group and priorities were selected. Baseline information, where available, is given in the Selby Wildlife Audit (Megson¹²).
55. The Selby Wildlife Audit has identified the need for on going survey work. This is required to enable the partnership to establish the status of both habitats and species. Surveys are also needed to monitor change. Although the Selby BAP sets out to monitor biodiversity gain, there is no mechanism for measuring and recording biodiversity losses. This may lead to misleading statements concerning the state of biodiversity.
56. The Yorkshire Naturalists' Union intends to arrange its future field excursions to sites containing semi-natural habitats, to undertake field recording. Some of these will be in Selby District over the next five years.
57. There is also a continuing need for research, especially in to the ecological requirements of priority species. The Selby BAP occasionally makes assumptions that habitat conservation measures will benefit species. This may not always hold true.
58. Many organisations are currently undertaking research, which will inform the BAP process. This includes the Game Conservancy Trust (GCT) (grey partridge and brown hare), the RSPB (farmland birds), the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) (breeding birds, wintering birds), Froglife (great crested newt, adder, slow worm) and many others.
59. Monitoring should be undertaken by those agencies with the capability, for example the monitoring of river biology by the Environment Agency (EA).

Priorities covered by the 25 habitats and species action plans

60. The Selby BAP steering group selected 13 habitats and twelve species for the Selby BAP. An individual action plan has been prepared for each. These are referred to as Habitat Action Plans (HAP) and Species Action Plans (SAP).
61. Farmland is a major broad habitat in the District and consequently supports populations of farmland birds, a group that is nationally declining. There have been many effective conservation projects on farmland in the last twenty years and there is high potential for further initiatives.
62. The largely urban habitats around towns and villages are significant in terms of both wildlife and the involvement of local communities. The plan for Towns and villages gives the main opportunity by which Selby District residents, planners and developers can participate in the process. In urban areas the importance of the phrase ‘all biodiversity’ is seen, as very common species are valued.
63. The total land area of the District is 60,190 hectares. Of the semi-natural habitats, only fragments remain. Figures below are taken from Warburton¹⁰ and are based on the pre-boundary change area of Selby District, which was 72,486ha. Although now slightly inaccurate, the data emphasise the scarceness of semi-natural habitat in the District.

Percentage land area of semi-natural habitat types

Semi-natural habitat	%	ha
Woodland	1.7	1,023
Scrub	0.4	241
Neutral grassland	0.8	482
Calcareous grassland	0.05	30
Acidic grassland	0.2	120
Marsh	0.3	181
Swamp	0.2	120
Heathland	0.05	30
Total	3.7%	2,227

64. Species are dealt with in two ways:
1. Some, such as tansy beetle, are so rare that they require a dedicated plan. Others, such as bats, do not fit easily into one habitat plan, because they utilise a mosaic of habitats. These have dedicated Species Action Plans.
 2. Species that are closely linked with a major habitat type (such as farmland birds with Arable farmland), are referred to as ‘associated species priorities’ and so are dealt with in the appropriate Habitat Action Plan.

- 65. The Selby BAP covers 46 species, in the twelve SAPs, and a further 43 'associated species priorities' within the 13 HAPs.
- 66. Of the 89 species, 21 are also UK BAP priorities. These are indicated as '(UK BAP)' in the text.
- 67. The European otter is regularly using some river systems in Selby, and nationally threatened species such as brown hare, great crested newt and water vole occur. Eleven UK BAP priority species of bird breed. The District is important for a number of very rare invertebrates, including water beetles, moths and the cylindrical whorl snail.

Aims of the Habitat and Species Action Plans

- 68. Action plans have been written for the priority habitats and species and these form the bulk of this document. This gives the opportunity for a series of targets to be set.
- 69. Each Habitat Action Plan gives details of the habitat including an introduction, national, regional and local status, legal status, threats, requirements to maintain in favourable condition, current local initiatives, opportunities, and the priority species associated with that habitat. Brief information is given on the local status of each priority species (where known). Where the habitat is important for priority species covered by dedicated Species Action Plans, links are made. The habitat resource is illustrated on a map. Where appropriate, the key targets in the UK BAP are given.
- 70. For each habitat, one or more sites are listed (with OS grid reference) as local examples, where members of the public can visit. Some sites are open to the public while others can be experienced from public rights of way. It should be remembered that the majority of sites containing semi-natural habitat are in private ownership and are not accessible to the public.
- 71. Each Species Action Plan gives details of the priority species, including an introduction, national, regional, local and legal status, threats, ecological requirements, current local initiatives, opportunities and key UK BAP targets where applicable. A distribution map illustrates the baseline status of each.
- 72. UK BAP targets are given; although many of these were set in 1994 and a few have yet to be revised.

Conservation targets

- 73. Each action plan gives a long-term objective, which the Selby BAP partnership aspires to and one or more biodiversity targets (usually five-year targets).
- 74. As with the UK BAP, the Selby BAP aims to achieve conservation through targets based upon protection, enhancement and re-creation:

- The key means of conserving habitats and species is by protecting the existing resource at sites, often using designations such as: SSSI, SINC, Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Nature Reserve (NR). Such sites require favourable management, often through Management Agreements with the owners.
- Enhancement seeks to improve existing degraded habitat to a state of favourable condition for wildlife.
- Re-creation seeks to expand the resource.

75 Most of the targets seek to increase, or at the very least maintain, the biological resource. They positively seek gains such as ‘increase the area of...’; ‘increase the breeding distribution of ...’ and ‘improve the condition of ... for wildlife.’*

76 **During the consultation phase, a wide range of partners formally signed up to the actions. It was noted that these organisations would not be held responsible if the stated targets were not met. This was to avoid organisations declining to agree to actions, for fear of under performing. The tables of actions, shows how targets should be met, indicating which organisations are best positioned to co-ordinate them.**

Baseline information

77. The NEYEDC is the Biological Records Centre for the Region and has prepared baseline habitat maps and species distribution maps for each action plan. These are based upon current data held by NEYEDC. The habitat maps are based upon a number of habitat surveys undertaken in the last 15 years. For each species, the maps show all records held by NEYEDC for the period 1970 to 2003.

78. The partnership is aware that the maps are missing data not held by NEYEDC, and efforts will be made to encourage the submission of such information to the Data Centre. There is a need to gather further information for all of the priority habitats and species.

79. The maps will be made available on a North Yorkshire BAPs website from 2004, with an on-line recording form to encourage members of the public to add to the database.

80. Habitat creation as a consequence of BAP actions will be recorded. However, other habitat creation schemes may not be known about by the BAP steering group and there is no current mechanism in place for recording the loss of habitat.

Monitoring

81. NEYEDC will be responsible for collating habitat change and records of priority species and updating the appropriate maps. The updating of maps will

be used to monitor progress towards the biodiversity target set for each action plan. Targets have been set, based on increases to this baseline data. This will necessitate some comprehensive field survey work.

BAP implementation

82. The most important part of the BAP process, is the co-ordination and delivery of projects that encompass the published actions and achieve the action plan targets. This will require a high level of commitment from the partners. The co-ordination of BAP projects will require a degree of fund raising to initiate local projects. Ideally each action plan will be championed by an Organisation.

BAP co-ordination

83. The two local planning authorities, Selby District Council and North Yorkshire County Council, are in the best position to co-ordinate BAP partners, projects, fund raising and reporting. However, a formal mechanism has yet to be agreed.

Reporting

84. A key element of the BAP process is the reporting stage. Reporting on progress will be undertaken by the NEYEDC on behalf of the BAP partnership, using the software produced by English Nature called the Biodiversity Action Reporting System or BARS. Using BARS, annual progress reports will be printed off for partners and biodiversity gains for UK BAP priorities are likely to be up-loaded via the internet to the UK BAP steering group.
85. Progress towards each of the targets is likely to be assessed annually and it is anticipated that the Selby BAP will be fully reviewed after five years. The BAP is a flexible process, which is able to incorporate changes. Further habitats and species may be identified as priorities and have action plans prepared at a future stage.
86. The use of targets in the action plans is a useful tool for assessing success. If targets are not met then the BAP partnership will investigate the reasons and alter the targets as necessary. This will be done via the five-yearly reports in a five-yearly review process.

Geography of the District

87. The Selby BAP covers the area that is covered by the Deposit Draft Selby District Local Plan (1997⁶), as amended by modifications. A large proportion of the District lies within the Vale of York and is essentially low lying, fertile, land, dissected by the River Wharfe, River Aire and River Ouse and bordered by the River Derwent. Much of the area is intensively farmed as pastoral and

arable land, with fragments of unimproved grassland, heathland and woodland.

88. The undulating topography rarely exceeds 50m above sea level. Glacial deposits obscure the underlying geology, which includes the Selby coalfield. Mineral extraction in the District has mainly focused on coal, limestone and clay.
89. Magnesian Limestone (which extends from County Durham to Nottingham in a narrow band), outcrops in the west of the district where it has been quarried in a number of places. Along its length important calcareous grasslands occur. Disused quarries, often small in scale, provide thin soils and bare ground, important for many species, such as lichens, vascular plants and invertebrates.
90. Rivers in their mature, or meandering, phase dissect Selby District. Historically, wetland habitat associated with river flood plains, such as flood meadows and reed beds, were much more extensive.

English Nature Natural Areas

91. The geography of the district relates to two series of landscape maps. English Nature has divided the country into Natural Areas, based on the distribution of wildlife and natural features. The Countryside Agency (CA) has created a very similar series, called Landscape Character areas, based on landform. Neither is based on administrative areas.
92. The following EN Natural Areas cover Selby District:
 - Vale of York and Mowbray (N^o 16)
 - Humberhead Levels (N^o 22)
 - Southern Magnesian Limestone (N^o 23)
93. Natural Areas offer a more effective framework for achieving nature conservation objectives than do administrative boundaries and they are recognised in Government Planning Policy Guidance.

Generic actions

94. While the individual action plans itemise targets and actions that aid specific conservation measures, the following actions demonstrate good practice and apply to all of the individual action plans.
95. Advice and expertise is available from local organisations such as the Rural Development Service (RDS Defra), Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG), Linking Environment And Farming (LEAF), Forestry Commission (FC), Forest Enterprise (FE), English Nature, Selby District Council (SDC) and North Yorkshire County Council (NYCC) amongst others.

Table 3. Generic actions.

Generic action	Rational	Relevant Action Plan
Control of invasive alien species.	Alien or non-native species can have a negative impact upon native wildlife, through direct competition or predation. There are numerous species, but some of the more notorious are as follows: American mink, American signal crayfish, Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam, giant hogweed, Canadian waterweed, water fern and New Zealand pygmyweed. These invasive species should be controlled and if possible eradicated. Field surveys and public participation is necessary.	HAP 1-13
Wildlife gardening (including non use of peat and rock from limestone pavement).	The c.50 million domestic gardens in the UK offer a huge potential for wildlife. Wildlife gardeners should embrace two areas of best practice: 1. The use of peat alternatives to help safeguard peat bogs. Retailers should be encouraged by customers and the BAP partnership to stock a good range of peat alternatives. 2. The non-purchase of 'water worn limestone' sold as rockery stone. This product exploits limestone pavement, a scarce and irreplaceable natural habitat, which is fully protected by law. (It might be marketed under other names such as 'Cumbrian limestone'). Eire still exports this rock, so everyone should seek to reduce the demand by not using it in the garden. Pass information to the Limestone Pavement Action Group (see Annex D).	HAP 13
Publicity.	Public awareness campaigns help to spread the biodiversity message and all opportunities should be taken to further the understanding of nature conservation. Businesses should inform their employees of their environmental actions.	All
Environmental education opportunities.	Natural history is poorly represented in the National Curriculum, yet young people need to become stakeholders in the BAP process, as much as older generations. Opportunities to impart knowledge and responsibility to all age groups should be undertaken. These could be through illustrated talks, trips to sites, classroom visits, WATCH groups, after school projects, guided walks, countryside events, media exposure, etc.	All

Generic action	Rational	Relevant Action Plan
Promote and facilitate the uptake of grants.	There are opportunities for farmers, businesses, Parish Councils and community groups to undertake conservation work through charitable and other funding schemes. Grant information, advice and where appropriate, assistance should be offered to those undertaking biodiversity actions.	All
Promote the use of the North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre	The North and East Yorkshire Ecological Data Centre is a key partner for data handling, especially where survey work has been identified as an action, and for the overall monitoring of action plan targets. All holders of natural history data should share their information with the NEYEDC.	All
Key partners to reflect main BAP targets in their organisation's own policies.	The Selby Biodiversity Action Plan is a partnership of organisations. Where appropriate, the key targets found within the BAP should be reflected in the internal policies of those organisations.	All
Policies and targets.	The inclusion of BAP targets into the policies of a wide range of organisations should be promoted.	
Reduced disturbance.	One of the fundamental requirements of wild animals is freedom from disturbance, so that they can concentrate resources on breeding, foraging or resting. Care should be taken to minimise disturbance, for example when exercising dogs close to a concentration of birds (e.g. at a roost or where ground-nesting birds may be present).	All
Wildlife surveys on development sites.	Where it is considered that there is wildlife interest on a site facing a change of land use, a wildlife survey should be carried out.	HAP 13
Habitat creation schemes should be carefully sited.	Nature conservation schemes should not be implemented until the site has been checked for existing wildlife interest. There are cases of habitat creation schemes, such as tree planting, being undertaken on established semi-natural habitats, to the overall detriment of biodiversity.	All
Non collection of fungi and flowers.	Many species of plant are specially protected from up-rooting or picking by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and there is a code of conduct. Recent guidelines to protect fungi from over picking have been published. The Selby BAP promotes the non-collection or picking	HAP 1-13

Generic action	Rational	Relevant Action Plan
	of any wild plant or fungi.	
All sites of nature conservation interest to be considered as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) by the SINC panel.	The Selby BAP focuses on district-wide habitats, but recognises that sites are important biological units within the BAP process. All local authorities maintain a site-based system of non-statutory wildlife sites, which are given protection by local plan policies. In North Yorkshire this system is operated by the SINC panel. If permission from the site owner is forthcoming, sites of biological interest should be surveyed by an ecological surveyor and the NEYEDC should assess the results against the published guidelines. The SINC panel meets to discuss the ratification of sites as SINCS.	HAP 1-13
CAP reform – Environmental Stewardship (Entry Level Scheme and Higher Level Scheme).	Reforms to the Common Agricultural Policy (CAP) agreed in 2004, will replace headage and production subsidies with a single farm payment based on land area and subject to cross compliance measures on land management. This will break the link between subsidies and production and will be phased in over eight years. Some of the money that would have gone to subsidy will be put into the new agri-environment scheme to be launched in 2005. In 2005 a new voluntary scheme, ‘Environmental Stewardship’, should replace its predecessors Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS) and Environmentally Sensitive Areas (ESA). Farmers will be rewarded for undertaking environmentally beneficial actions. It is intended that a basic ‘Entry Level Scheme’ (ELS) will achieve high uptake for generic measures on a land holding. Agreement holders in Environmental Stewardship ELS will be eligible to put land with current or potential wildlife value into a ‘Higher Level Scheme’ (HLS), Environmental Stewardship HLS, which allows more specific management or enhancement measures and capital works.	HAP 1-12, especially HAP 4
Statutory duties	Many of the Selby BAP partners undertake statutory duties, which have a direct impact upon nature conservation. These are not noted as targets or actions, as the BAP seeks to bring added value to nature conservation.	All

Selby BAP Habitat Action Plans and UK BAP lead partners

96. The following table lists the Selby Priority habitats and species and gives the UK BAP lead partners (if any). It also shows the main links between the species and habitat plans.
97. The table includes both the associated species priorities that are included within Habitat Action Plans, and those with dedicated Species Action Plans.

Table 4. Selby BAP priorities and UK BAP lead partners

Selby Habitat Action Plan and priority species	UK BAP lead partner	Links to Selby Species Action Plans
Woodland	FC	Otter, Bats, Bumble bees, Clearwing moths, Rare moths
Bluebell	-	
Primrose	-	
Spotted flycatcher	EN	
Song thrush	RSPB	
Bullfinch	RSPB	
Lowland wood pasture and parkland	EN	Bats
Ancient and / or species-rich hedgerows	Defra	Bats
Arable farmland	Partly Defra	Bats, Bumble bees
Tree sparrow	RSPB	
Corn bunting	EN, RSPB	
Grey partridge	GCT	
Turtle dove	EN, RSPB	
Starling	-	
House sparrow	-	
Yellowhammer	-	
Linnet	RSPB	
Skylark	RSPB	
Twite	-	
Brown hare	GCT, MS	
Grazing marsh	Partly EN, partly CCW	Water vole, Tansy beetle, Bats, Bumble bees
Harvest mouse	-	
Barn owl	-	
Snipe	-	
Lapwing	-	

Selby Habitat Action Plan and priority species	UK BAP lead partner	Links to Selby Species Action Plans
Redshank	-	
Yellow wagtail	-	
Unimproved grassland	EN	Dingy Skipper, Bats, Bumble bees, Rare moths
Green hellibore	-	
Lowland heathland	EN	Pillwort, An aquatic beetle <i>Agabus uliginosus</i> , Bats, Clearwing moths, Rare moths, Bumblebees
Marsh gentian	-	
Nightjar	RSPB	
Tree pipit	-	
Woodlark	RSPB	
Adder	-	
Fens	EN	Water vole, An aquatic beetle <i>Agabus uliginosus</i> , Bats, Clearwing moths, Rare moths
Aquatic beetle <i>Acilius canaliculatus</i>	-	
Aquatic beetle <i>Agabus labiatus</i>	-	
Aquatic beetle <i>Helophorus strigifrons</i>	-	
Aquatic beetle <i>Dryops auriculatus</i>	-	
Reedbeds	EN	Otter, Water vole, Bats, Rare moths
Reed bunting	RSPB	
Lakes and ponds	Partly EA, partly SEPA	Otter, Water vole, Great crested newt, Pillwort, An aquatic beetle <i>Agabus uliginosus</i> , Bats
Whooper swan	-	
Shoveler	-	
Canals	-	Otter, Water vole, Bats
Rivers, streams and ditches	-	Otter, Water vole, Tansy beetle
Allis shad	EA	
River lamprey	-	
Sea lamprey	-	
Atlantic salmon	-	
Grayling	-	

Selby Habitat Action Plan and priority species	UK BAP lead partner	Links to Selby Species Action Plans
Depressed river mussel	EA	
Towns and villages	-	Water vole, Great crested newt, Bats, Bumble bees, Clearwing moths
Sand leek	-	
Swift	-	
Selby Species Action Plan – species	UK BAP lead partner	Links to Selby Habitat Action Plans
Otter	EA, WTs	Woodland, Reedbeds, Fens, Rivers, streams and ditches, Canals, Lakes and ponds
Water vole	EA	Reed beds, Fens, Rivers, streams and ditches, Canals, Lakes and ponds
Great crested newt	F, BHC, HCT	Canals, Lakes and ponds, Towns and villages
Tansy beetle	-	Rivers, streams and ditches
Dingy skipper butterfly	-	Unimproved grassland
Pillwort	SNH	Lakes and ponds
Cylindrical whorl snail	-	-
An aquatic beetle <i>Agabus uliginosis</i>	-	Canals, Lakes and ponds
Bats		All thirteen
Whiskered bat	-	
Brandt's bat	-	
Daubenton's bat	-	
Natterer's bat	-	
Common pipistrelle bat	BCT	
Soprano pipistrelle bat	BCT	
Noctule bat	-	
Leisler's bat	-	
Brown long-eared bat	-	
Bumble bees		Arable farmland, Neutral grassland, Unimproved grassland, Lowland heathland, Towns and villages
A bumble bee <i>Bombus lucorum</i>		
A bumble bee <i>Bombus terrestris</i>		
A bumble bee <i>Bombus pratorum</i>		
A bumble bee <i>Bombus lapidarius</i>		
A bumble bee <i>Bombus hortorum</i>		
A bumble bee <i>Bombus pascuorum</i>		
A bumble bee <i>Bombus bohemicus</i>		
A bumble bee <i>Bombus vestalis</i>		
A bumble bee <i>Bombus campestris</i>		

Selby Habitat Action Plan and priority species	UK BAP lead partner	Links to Selby Species Action Plans
A bumble bee <i>Bombus sylvestris</i>		
A bumble bee <i>Bombus jonellus</i>		
A bumble bee <i>Bombus rupestris</i>		
Clearwing moths		Woodland, Lowland heathland, Fens, Towns and villages
Lunar hornet moth <i>Sesia bembeciformis</i>		
Currant clearwing <i>Synanthedon tipuliformis</i>		
Yellow-legged clearwing <i>Synanthedon vespiformis</i>		
Red-tipped clearwing <i>Synanthedon formicaeformis</i>		
Large red-belted clearwing <i>Synanthedon culciformis</i>		
Six-belted clearwing <i>Bembecia ichneumoniformis</i>		
Rare moths		Woodland, Unimproved grassland, Lowland heathland, Fens, Reedbeds
	UK BAP lead partner	
A micro moth <i>Monochroa suffusella</i>	-	
A micro moth <i>Crambus uliginosellus</i>	-	
A micro moth <i>Apomyelois bistriatella subspecies subcognata</i>	-	
Scarce vapourer moth <i>Orgyia recens</i>	-	
Triple-spotted pug moth <i>Eupithecia trisignaria</i>	-	
The forester moth <i>Adscita statices</i>	-	
Argent and sable moth <i>Rheumaptera hastata</i>	BC	
White-marked moth <i>Cerastis leucographa</i>	-	
Angle-striped sallow moth <i>Enargia palacea</i>	-	
Twin-spotted wainscot moth <i>Archanura geminipuncta</i>	-	
Dotted rustic moth <i>Rhyacia simulans</i>	-	

For abbreviations see Annex C.