

Cambridgeshire and
Peterborough

**County Wildlife
Site system**

INTRODUCTION

This handbook is designed to be a complete guide to how the County Wildlife Site (CWS) system operates in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough. It is aimed at people who work with this system of non-statutory sites. Across the country these sites have a number of different names and whilst known locally as County Wildlife Sites readers need to be aware that Defra is promoting the use of the generic term '*Local Site*' in Government guidance to promote a common understanding of the kind of sites in question.

The aim of the handbook is to enable relevant organisations to understand their role within the County Wildlife Sites system, both in promoting sympathetic land management practice and in forward planning and development control. It is hoped that this handbook will be a useful source of information for countryside advisers, planners and landowners alike.

If you have any queries or would like further information on the CWS system please contact:

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| Conservation Manager or Wildlife Sites Officer Wildlife Trust | Tel (01954) 713500 Email cambridgeshire@wildlifebcn.org |
| Wildlife Officer Peterborough City Council | Tel (01733) 747474 Email wildlife@peterborough.gov.uk |
| Ecology Officer Cambridgeshire County Council | Tel 0345 045 5202 Email ecology@cambridgeshire.gov.uk |

For further information on specific CWSs and requests for associated survey information please contact:

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| Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Environmental Records Centre | Tel (01954) 713570 Email data@cperc.org.uk www.cperc.org.uk |
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This handbook has been compiled with reference to the document **Local Sites: Guidance on their Identification, Selection and Management** produced by Defra (2005).

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SECTION 1 – Background Information

WHAT ARE LOCAL SITES?

The term *Local Site* may be subdivided into Local Wildlife Site, Local Geological Site or Local Wildlife/Geological Site if interests happen to coincide. The principle is that whilst they may provide other benefits a Local Site contains features of ‘*substantive nature conservation value*’. The selection criteria define what qualifies as ‘substantive’ in the local context. The purpose of selection is to provide recognition of the site’s value and to help conserve those features by affording it a degree of protection (Defra 2005).

Local Wildlife Sites or County Wildlife Sites (CWS) as they are known in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough are defined areas, identified and selected locally for their nature conservation value based on important, distinctive and threatened habitats and species within a national, regional and importantly a local context.

CWS are areas of land important for their wildlife and can be found on public and private land. They vary in shape, size and may encompass a variety of different habitat types such as ancient woodland, species-rich grasslands, wetlands, roadside verges and hedgerows. The habitats and species present are often because of past management and many sites provide a refuge for rare or threatened plants and animals.

These sites play a vital role in the conservation of the UK’s natural heritage by providing essential wildlife refuges, stepping-stones, corridors and buffers linking and protecting other site networks and open spaces found in towns and the wider countryside.

CWS complement the series of internationally and nationally designated sites such as Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas for Conservation (SACs) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). However, because the SSSI system is representative rather than comprehensive many sites of SSSI quality are not designated as such. Instead sites of SSSI quality are selected locally as CWS. The CWS system operates on a comprehensive basis, therefore all sites that meet the given selection criteria are selected. CWS are often viewed as a tier below SSSIs in terms of their conservation value, but in reality this is often not the case. The comprehensive nature of the CWS system means that as a suite of sites they are at least of national importance for nature conservation, supporting significant areas of national priority habitats. In 2010 “Making Space for Nature” (the Lawton Review) identified that the statutory system of SSSIs was not fit for purpose and was insufficient in itself to act as a functioning ecological network. CWS together with SSSIs provide the core sites and building blocks for re-creating functioning ecological networks.

There are over 500 Local Sites in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and over 42,000 across the country. This figure is subject to change as survey data is continually gathered and the complement of sites amended.

WHAT IS A LOCAL SITE SYSTEM?

Local Site systems now exist across most of the U.K. - A Local Site System is a partnership for the identification, selection, assessment and protection of Local Sites with the objective of ensuring conservation and enhancement of habitats and species.

The comprehensive network of sites selected within Local Sites systems contribute significantly to delivering both UK and Local nature conservation priorities and are therefore of county, regional and national importance. They represent local character and distinctiveness, and can contribute to the quality of life and the well-being of the community, with sites often providing opportunities for research, education and informal recreation.

LEGISLATIVE AND POLICY CONTEXT

Local Sites are not designated and protected by law but are recognised and protected within the development planning system.

In 2010 “Making Space for Nature” (the Lawton Review), an independent review of England’s wildlife sites, was published. This review recognised the key role Local Sites play in providing joined-up ecological networks which can respond and adapt to the challenges of a changing climate and recommended we improve protection for non-designated wildlife sites.

Under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, *‘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 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) also recognises the importance of Local Sites and requires Local Planning Authorities to identify and map all of the components of their local ecological networks, to allow them to accurately assess the potential impacts of development proposals. The NPPF also recommends that planning policies and decisions provide net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks. This provides protection for Local Sites as development policies or decisions which would result in the loss of important habitats in a CWS are very unlikely to be able to demonstrate a net gain in biodiversity.

All District Councils or Unitary Authorities prepare Local Plans which provide policies for development control. All of the current Local Plans in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough make reference to Local Sites and include policies which discourage development which would negatively affects CWSs.

There are a number of other strategic plans which should give due consideration to CWSs. These include:

- Minerals and Waste Plans prepared by the County Council and Peterborough City Council

- Neighbourhood Plans
- Catchment Flood Management Plans and Catchment Abstraction Management Strategies prepared by the Environment Agency
- Water Level Management Plans

Policies and Plans are revised regularly so for the most recent versions of Local Plans refer to the relevant District Council or Unitary Authority website.

SECTION 2 – Management of the County Wildlife Site System

CAMBRIDGESHIRE AND PETERBOROUGH’S CWS PANEL

The CWS Panel operates under its own aims and objectives. The CWS Panel maintains an overview of the County Wildlife Sites system, meeting once or twice annually to network, share information, plan and monitor CWS activities, review the CWS selection criteria and assess proposed additions, deletions or amendments to the network of CWS. Membership of the CWS Panel remains open to anyone who expresses an interest. All members share ownership of the CWS system (including this document), and have a responsibility to contribute to and play an active role in helping to administer the CWS system to help meet objectives.

The Wildlife Trust takes the strategic lead with respect to the management of the County Wildlife Sites system in conjunction with Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council. Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC) are responsible for disseminating information and making data available on CWS accessible to all those who need to use it.

CWS Panel membership:

- Cambridge City Council
- Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre
- Cambridgeshire County Council
- East Cambridgeshire District Council
- Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group for the Eastern Region
- Fenland District Council
- Geological experts
- Huntingdonshire District Council
- Natural England
- Natural history experts
- NFU / CLA & landowner representatives
- Peterborough City Council
- South Cambridgeshire District Council
- The Environment Agency
- The Wildlife Trust for Bedfordshire, Cambridgeshire and Northamptonshire

The success of the CWS system depends on the support of the organisations above and the involvement of land owners and managers who can have an influence on the protection and enhancement of sites.

CWS PANEL AIM

To conserve and enhance the important habitats, natural features and populations of notable species that are of national, regional or county importance outside of statutory designated sites in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

CWS PANEL OBJECTIVES

- Promote and develop the CWS system as a mechanism for maintaining and enhancing the wildlife resource in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- Agree the basis for site selection, the CWS selection criteria, reviewing and amending them as necessary.
- Co-ordinate site selection and the identification of candidate sites.
- Co-ordinate the survey, re-survey and condition monitoring of CWS.
- Establish and develop a process for monitoring the condition of CWS.
- Maintain a register of CWS in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough and work with CPERC to ensure the effective dissemination of information on CWS.
- Promote and support the provision of advice to CWS owners to ensure the appropriate management of the CWS so that they are in a favourable condition / positive management and contribute to wider habitat networks and connectivity.
- Promote the role and importance of CWS at a strategic level (for example in delivering Biodiversity 2020 priorities, delivering green infrastructure, land use planning and the targeting of agri-environmental schemes).
- Ensure the protection of CWS through policies within local development plans and their inclusion on proposals maps.
- Develop the CWS system as a comprehensive mechanism for recording and monitoring biodiversity habitat priorities in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.
- Identify and promote funding opportunities for CWS work and management.
- Promote access to and educational use of CWS where appropriate and supported by landowners. Raise awareness of CWS (e.g. general public, landowners, decision makers) and the need for management.
- Review the operation of the CWS system at suitable intervals to ensure that in

principle it follows national guidelines whilst accounting for local experience and circumstances.

CWS PANEL MEMBERS AND THEIR ROLES

The resources available define the extent and success of the CWS system. The CWS Panel actively seeks funding to undertake survey, monitoring and other work associated with the objectives described in this document. All members are involved in raising awareness of the importance of CWS. The CWS Panel also undertakes the vital work of reviewing the CWS selection criteria and assessing sites against the selection criteria.

The role of members is to represent their organisation in respect of the organisation's functions related to nature conservation and ecology. It is anticipated that the Wildlife Trust, Cambridgeshire County Council or Peterborough City Council where sites are within the unitary authority will form the permanent members of the CWS Panel, with district local authority representatives and Natural England staff attending as and when it is relevant. As a minimum, 3 members of the CWS Panel must be present to approve any new CWS, de-select a site or change a site boundary, one of which must be the Wildlife Trust and one a relevant local authority.

Wildlife Trust

Manages the CWS system and maintains a database of landowner contacts. The Trust co-ordinates and undertakes site survey work and provides management advice to land owners and managers.

Cambridgeshire County Council

Has a leadership role relating to the operation of the system through the CWS Panel. Encourages a collaborative approach and liaison between members.

Peterborough City Council

The Council encourages a partnership approach and liaison between partners and has a leadership role relating to the operation of the system. Under a service level agreement with the Wildlife Trust a number of CWS are re-surveyed each year.

Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre

Collates and stores CWS information in conjunction with the Wildlife Trust and co-ordinates the exchange of information ensuring it is available to all who need to use it. CPERC also produce an annual update to the CWS Register and GIS layer.

District and City Councils - Cambridge City Council, East Cambridgeshire District Council, Fenland District Council, Huntingdonshire District Council and South Cambridgeshire District Council

Have a responsibility to ensure that they use up to date information in their decision making processes particularly for development control and forward planning. They also have powers to promote the social, environmental and economic well-being of their administrative area and have a range of statutory roles and responsibilities relating to land use planning, biodiversity, waste, education, transport, land reclamation, pollution

and land drainage (these duties also apply to Cambridgeshire County Council and Peterborough City Council).

Natural England

Provides support and input to the CWS system through its role as the statutory nature conservation organisation for England.

The Environment Agency

Has a particular role in the protection of rivers and wetlands, but also a wider conservation role as a regulator and consultee in the planning process, aiming to protect and enhance the environment.

Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group

Assist the people who manage the countryside with environmental management expertise and are a dedicated provider of environmental and conservation advice and consultancy to farmers and landowners.

Natural history or geological experts will be asked to attend relevant CWS Panel meetings where their expertise will improve the quality of decision making or where CWS Panel members collectively do not have the relevant knowledge or experience to make a decision.

The **National Farmers Union** and **Country Land and Business Association** have valuable links with the private landowning community who represent the majority of CWS owners. Should a landowner have an objection to any proposal for selection, de-selection or amendment of a CWS, they would be invited to attend the Panel meeting at which an appeal would be heard.

SECTION 3 - Operation of the CWS system in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough

PURPOSE OF THE CWS SYSTEM

The purpose of the CWS system is to identify, protect and enhance the most important places for wildlife outside land with legal protection. The 'system' is a simple way of describing the processes involved in the selection and assessment of sites, the informing and advising of land owners and managers about management, and the protection and monitoring of sites. In broad terms CWS are selected by assessing their wildlife importance in a county context. Site selection is based on available information. Programmes of survey are resource dependent however a proportion of sites are surveyed each year. The survey data are assessed against carefully constructed selection criteria. Those meeting the thresholds contained within the selection criteria are put forward for selection. Throughout this section please make reference to the table in Appendix 4 (operational stages in the CWS system).

An integrated and effective CWS system can contribute greatly to the delivery of biodiversity priorities and targets, however for the effective operation of the CWS system as described in this document adequate resourcing is essential. The CWS system is designed to be flexible, and is considered to be 'live' and evolving. As information becomes available newly discovered sites that meet the selection guidelines can be added and existing ones amended. Exceptionally sites may also be removed.

The CWS system provides the framework for

- The selection of CWS
- Notifying landowners
- The compilation and updating of a CWS Register
- The dissemination of information on CWS
- Liaison with land owners and managers
- Site survey
- CWS condition monitoring
- Site safeguard and management
- Raising awareness of the importance of CWS

CWS SELECTION CRITERIA

The current selection criteria were developed during the 1990's and are reviewed regularly. They were last updated in April 2014 (Cambridgeshire & Peterborough CWS Selection Criteria version 6.2). The application of selection criteria in a standardised, objective manner promotes confidence that a CWS meets a minimum standard. The selection criteria take into account available information on habitats and species as well as historical information where relevant.

The thresholds contained within the selection criteria are sensitive to local conditions and are a matter of judgement based on a number of factors including an understanding of ecological processes, the distribution, abundance and trends in the local wildlife resource. The selection criteria therefore have been developed to define what qualifies as '*substantive nature conservation*' value in a local context.

The habitat thresholds are linked to the National Vegetation Classification (NVC) and the UK Priority habitat priorities. Thresholds are based on the numbers of species that are particularly indicative of naturalness, a lack of improvement and or longevity of that habitat type. The presence of red data book species, nationally rare, nationally scarce, locally rare, or UK Priority species may also be considered.

The aim is to select all sites that meet the thresholds within the selection criteria. This enables sites to be evaluated against a structured framework and demonstrate why some are selected and others are not. The selection criteria will be reviewed in full by the CWS Panel every 5 years, though more frequent reviews may occur if relevant information becomes available, for example information related to a particular species group.

The selection criteria were developed using widely accepted habitat attributes, adapted from those used in the assessment of the national series of SSSIs (Ratcliffe, 1977), Nature Conservancy Council (1989), The Wildlife Trusts (1997) and other publications. The degree of significance of the attributes varies between different habitat types, and when used in evaluation of sites of county significance, will generally have lower thresholds than those applying to SSSIs.

The attributes taken into account in identifying CWSs are described in general terms below.

Additional elements that may also be considered are recorded history and connectivity within the wider landscape.

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| Naturalness | Assessment of the closeness of a habitat to its form unmodified by human influence. As elsewhere in Britain, all terrestrial habitats have been modified to varying extents. In many cases, therefore, this characteristic seeks to relate a site to its state under traditional management. |
| Diversity | Most sites will show diversity in vegetation communities and in |

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| | complement of species. Many will be species-rich in county terms. |
| Size | The importance and value of a site generally increases with its size. It is generally accepted that each habitat has a size below which its nature conservation value may not be sustainable. |
| Rarity | The decline and thus increasing rarity of semi-natural habitats is a basic presumption of the CWS designation. The presence of rare or scarce species may warrant CWS status. |
| Typicalness | This is important when including intrinsically species-poor habitats in Cambridgeshire, which need to be included in the CWS system as characteristic and important habitats of the County. |
| Fragility | All sites are sensitive to environmental change. Some sites may be particularly susceptible, and as a consequence may be particularly rare and therefore important, but also difficult to safeguard. |
| Potential Value | Some sites with remnants of former habitats will often show a substantial increase in their nature conservation interest through positive management. Similarly sites with a predictable course of natural succession can show an increase in their nature conservation interest through non-intervention. |
| Intrinsic Appeal | Some sites may have considerable and widely perceived intrinsic appeal such as encouraging people's contact with nature. Others may be important for informal recreation or education. |

CWS SELECTION

A site will be selected as a County Wildlife Site based on up to date survey information with other factors also being considered such as current management and land use. The CWS Panel carries out the selection process by collating a list of sites to survey including new sites, existing sites and any proposed for de-selection, however anyone can ask for a site to be considered. A professional approach is taken to the consideration of CWS and the CWS Panel will ensure that it has the technical knowledge to make informed decisions. The CWS Panel will make decisions based on robust information and will seek further advice from particular specialists or experts as necessary.

If the site meets the thresholds within the selection criteria the site is put forward for selection as a CWS. The justification for its selection is noted. Amendments to the boundaries of existing CWS or reasons for selection can also be considered.

It should be noted that inevitably there will be sites of CWS quality that have been missed to date. Some may have been overlooked or undervalued in previous survey projects and deserve consideration as new CWS. Others may require detailed surveys of particular specialist fauna or flora groups, while for others new data may become available. Positive management subsequent to previous survey may also have brought a site up to the thresholds contained within the selection guidelines. Examples of these types of sites could include:

- Borderline CWS
- Sites where access for survey was refused, but whose owners may have recently changed
- Sites recommended by others
- De-notified SSSIs
- Former mineral workings
- Habitat creation areas (e.g. landscape scale environmental projects, new areas associated with development)
- Mitigation areas associated with development

The survey process

Habitats - Habitat survey for CWS is based upon an extended 'Phase 1' type survey with site and habitat descriptions, a habitat map and species list. Phase 2 survey data may also be collected and used on some occasions.

Surveyors will record details of structures and features on the site, current or desirable management, potential threats to the site, and any contact made with the landowner or manager during survey.

Species - Where a CWS is designated due to the presence of a species or species assemblage of conservation value then re-survey effort will focus on this CWS feature. The habitat assessment methodology described above can be useful in conjunction with this targeted survey work. However, in order to establish presence or absence and likely population of the species of interest a specific species survey will be required. CWS designated for their species interest can for example include sites important for invertebrates and amphibians.

Ideally a complete list of up-to-date information on all species of flora and fauna present on any given site would be available. However, it takes time and resource to accumulate and maintain species information at a useful level, and such work is inevitably an ongoing process. The main sources of information on species are county recorders and amateur naturalists. A further source of species information comes from strategic surveys carried out by organisations such as the Environment Agency and increasingly through the work of organisations undertaking biodiversity conservation initiatives.

Permission for access to survey an existing or potential new CWS will be sought through writing or telephoning the landowner where ownership information is available; otherwise approaches will be made on the day of proposed survey. This might be the first contact a landowner has with the CWS system and provides the foundation for later

liaison.

When requesting access, the landowner will be provided with a clear and unambiguous explanation of the purpose of the survey. The landowner should be fully informed of who is to undertake the survey on whose behalf, and why. It is important that the landowner feels involved and informed throughout the process.

If no permission is forthcoming, either through inability to contact the landowner or through refusal, then surveyors will not trespass on land in order to acquire data. If access permission is refused, then the landowner's wishes will be respected.

CWS surveyors should carry identification when conducting surveys. Once a survey has been completed, the landowner will be informed of the findings and offered management advice as appropriate.

Re-survey of existing sites

Existing CWS may be re-surveyed for the following reasons:

- As part of a monitoring or re-survey programme;
- To provide further information required by the Local Authority for use in planning casework;
- To provide extra information on a site which may be available at a different time of year from the time of the original survey. This might be for a variety of reasons such as in connection with a planning application or for deciding on appropriate and sensitive site management;
- To survey for particular species not covered by a previous survey.

Survey reports on sites should include:

- who conducted the survey and or collected the data used in the assessment and when it was collected;
- as many taxa as possible and be clear about data that is not available and any limitations;
- a map showing habitats occurring on site;
- a justification for the site to be selected as a CWS;
- the reasons for any proposed boundary or boundary change, and a map at an appropriate scale that clearly identifies the boundaries of the CWS;
- an assessment detailing if the site either qualifies or continues to qualify as a

CWS and recommendations for site management to either bring it into a favourable condition or to maintain and enhance the features of the CWS;

- If the site has been significantly damaged or destroyed a report outlining what has happened and the opportunities for recovery of the site should be written.

In exceptional circumstances certain records (particularly of sensitive species) collected as part of a survey for a CWS may not be widely released. However to ensure decisions are taken on the best available data sensitive records will be made available to the CWS Panel when assessing whether a site is of CWS standard.

Where permission for access is unobtainable for an existing CWS, the site will remain a CWS on the basis of previous data.

This process overlaps with the selection process described below. A number of existing and new sites may be surveyed each year depending on the resources available. As a result of these surveys some CWS may be added, some may be deleted and others may have their boundaries amended.

Stages in the CWS survey & selection process (see Appendix 4)

- 1 CWS Panel members identify which sites to survey (new and existing);
- 2 Landowners are contacted to request permission to undertake surveys;
- 3 Competent surveyors undertake the surveys at appropriate times of the year;
- 4 A copy of the survey report is sent to the landowner with an explanation of any proposed changes in site status, boundaries or reasons for selection. An explanation of the CWS operational procedures and right of challenge will also be provided;
- 5 Survey reports are summarised and submitted to the CWS Panel for consideration;
- 6 The CWS Panel evaluates each site against the selection criteria, hears any appeals from landowners, and approves or rejects proposals.
- 7 Landowners are notified of agreed changes and if necessary reasons for decisions.
- 8 CWS Register and GIS layer updated to complete formal ratification.

Notifying landowners

Ensuring that CWS owners and managers are informed of the wildlife value of their land and the significance of the CWS status is an ongoing, but important aspect of the process because sites can change ownership frequently and information is not always

passed onto the new owner. The objective is to provide information and an offer of further liaison, advice and assistance if requested. Relationship building with owners and managers helps to safeguard and improve the wildlife resource of County Wildlife Sites and should help to reduce the number of objections to CWS status potentially being received.

Benefits of CWS

The recognition of a CWS has helped landowners to apply for funding through agri-environment schemes and other grant schemes, and this is likely to continue for the foreseeable future as many CWS in agricultural ownership contain priority habitats and species. Surveyors and advisers should point out to site owners that while sympathetic management of CWSs for wildlife is voluntary it is to be encouraged to contribute towards national and local efforts to conserve biodiversity.

Concerns of landowners

The primary concerns of landowners about CWSs include concern over development restrictions, constraints on agricultural practice and fear of public access implications.

However, conferring CWS status does not in itself place significantly additional restrictions on land owner's use of their land, as the CWS system is voluntary and has no statutory basis. It does not confer any rights of access beyond those legally in place, or limit agricultural or forestry operations beyond the rules in place to protect uncultivated land.

With respect to planning, local authority commitments to biodiversity mean that consideration of planning applications takes into account biodiversity issues including the presence of a formally selected CWS or areas not formally selected but still of CWS quality. It should be noted that there will be sites reaching CWS status that have yet to be selected, and this information will be a material consideration in determining a planning application. The absence of CWS recognition would not significantly diminish the protection provided to important habitats and species.

Objections to CWS status

Representations against selection of or amendments to a CWS can be made in writing to or in person at a meeting of the CWS Panel. The main reasons stated for objection must relate to the ecological status of the site with reference made to the CWS selection criteria; however other relevant factors may also be taken into account.

Removal of CWS status

A site, or part thereof will remain a CWS until data are collected that prove otherwise. A site cannot have its status removed or be removed from the register for political reasons or as a result of wilful and deliberate destruction or neglect. The general

principle is to avoid the de-selection of sites.

Sites will be considered on a case-by-case basis. Any site being considered for de-selection would be subject to survey. The CWS Panel will consider and evaluate this information against the selection criteria before making their recommendations. The CWS Panel may de-select a site if the nature conservation interest has deteriorated to such an extent that it no longer qualifies as a CWS and it is not feasible to restore it through appropriate management. The potential for restoring the site's features of interest will be an important factor in the decision.

Where survey results show that a site has failed to meet one of its qualifying criteria, resulting in the loss of the site's only criterion or the loss of an entire category of criteria, the Panel will be consulted and will decide whether to retain the site and/or its historical criteria on the CWS Register. The Panel will normally decide to retain a site on the Register provided there is a reasonable likelihood that the site could requalify as a CWS again in future, and to retain a site's historical criteria on the Register provided there is a reasonable likelihood that the site could meet those criteria again in future. Where the decision is taken to retain the site and/or its historical criteria on the Register, this will normally be for a limited time period or specified number of re-surveys and will be subject to review by the Panel at the end of this period. If subsequent re-surveys show that the condition of the site has improved to the point where it meets its historical qualifying criteria again, the Panel will be informed of this change and will be asked to confirm that the site is no longer subject to review.

Additions or changes of criteria within the same category (e.g. criterion 2b – calcareous grassland to criterion 2c – calcareous indicators) will be considered minor changes. For minor changes, the CWS Register will be updated to reflect the change without consulting the Panel.

The Ratification process

Ratification is the formal procedure for the selection of a new CWS, amendments to existing CWS or the potential removal of a CWS. It is required to prevent a site being included or excluded from the CWS Register without the knowledge and agreement of Partners or landowners. This helps ensure accountability and demonstrates integrity.

It is acknowledged that effective protection of the site however may only occur when the site has found its way onto the relevant land use planning systems, the CWS Register is updated and the landowner receives confirmation about the site's status. It is essential therefore that information be given to those who need to know in reasonable timescales and those who receive it know the importance of keeping their records up to date.

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| <p>1. Landowner consultation</p> | <p>Following completion of site surveys or an assessment of survey information provided by a third party, the Wildlife Trust will send a standard letter informing a landowner of the outcome of the survey work with a thank you for allowing the survey to be carried out. For reference it should also include a copy of the survey outlining the habitat and species interest of the site and a map. The landowner must be informed of any protected species recorded in the survey and the implications of this in any proposed management works. Information on the CWS system should also be sent along with details of management and grant advice available from various organisations.</p> <p>Landowners will be informed of any changes in their site's status, boundaries or reasons for selection. For major changes, the letter will specifically highlight these changes and will invite the landowner to make representations about the proposed changes within a period of 28 days. They will also be informed of their right of appeal to the CWS Panel and the grounds on which objections can be made. Major changes are; changes to site status (i.e. selection or de-selection), significant boundary alterations, additions of criteria within a new category, and permanent removals of a category of criteria.</p> <p>Additions or changes of criteria within the same category and minor boundary realignments to match base map/on the ground features will not be considered major changes.</p> |
| <p>2. CWS Panel recommendations</p> | <p>The Panel will consider each case based on the technical information presented to it and any written or in person representations by landowners.</p> <p>The Panel will then make a decision to recommend whether a site should:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Be accepted as a new CWS, at which point it is considered a 'proposed CWS', pending completion and circulation of the updated CWS Register. • Be rejected as a CWS • Remain a CWS with its existing boundaries or with an amended boundary • Remain a CWS but with amended reasons for selection • Be removed from the CWS Register <p>All decisions will be recorded in the minutes of the Panel.</p> |

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| | <p>If it is not possible to make a decision it may be deferred with a suggestion for further survey work or further liaison with the landowner to promote sympathetic land management that could bring the site into a favourable condition to reach CWS status.</p> <p>At least 3 members of the Panel must be present to make a recommendation, which should include representatives from The Wildlife Trust, Cambridgeshire County Council or Peterborough City Council where sites are within the unitary authority and one other. Decisions will be made by consensus.</p> <p>Rejected sites could be re-considered at a later date if they subsequently reach a favourable condition for example through positive management.</p> |
| 3. Notification of decisions to landowner | <p>Following the Panel meeting, landowners will be sent a formal letter confirming the decision of the Panel. This should include the new citation and site map, if relevant. It may also explain why any representations were dismissed or accepted.</p> |
| 4. Formal ratification | <p>Formal ratification of decisions made by the CWS Panel occurs once the annually updated CWS register is published and made available to partners. At this point proposed CWS receive full CWS status.</p> |

The CWS Register

The CWS Register comprises a list of sites with County Wildlife Site status (including a note on the reason why the site was selected) accompanied by a digital mapping layer. The list of the current approved CWS is prepared and maintained by the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre in conjunction with the Wildlife Trust and CWS Panel. Production of the CWS Register is the final stage in the ratification process. It will be updated annually to show which sites have been added, deleted or had their boundaries amended. Updates will be distributed at least annually to listed recipients of the CWS Register.

Other non-statutory sites

In addition to CWS there are also a number of other types of non-statutory sites in the County, which are worth mentioning here for completeness.

City Wildlife Sites

Within the urban district of Cambridge City a complementary sites system has been

developed. The County Wildlife Sites (CWS) system is still used, but an additional system of City Wildlife Sites has been developed, along similar lines and with a similar process, in order to take account of urban greenspaces. The City Wildlife Site system also has a set of selection criteria (City Wildlife Sites Selection Criteria, version 2.2, 2005) though the biological thresholds are set at a lower level than for CWS. The CWS Panel will also consider proposed changes to City Wildlife Sites in accordance with the same procedures used for selection of CWS.

Protected Road Verges (PRVs)

Some roadside verges are of special botanical significance, and some are even the last havens for particular plants. Verges also provide continuity of habitat across intensively managed land and can form important sanctuaries for wildlife.

Cambridgeshire County Council and the Wildlife Trust co-ordinate efforts to identify and protect verges of special wildlife value in the County. A few of these verges have been selected as CWS, while the rest have been selected as Protected Road Verges (PRVs). In conjunction with colleagues in the County Council work is ongoing to ensure that these verges receive appropriate conservation management.

Road verges of nature conservation value in Peterborough are designated as CWS and are covered as part of ongoing work on CWS.

Geological sites

A system of Local Geological Sites has been established across Cambridgeshire and Peterborough to operate alongside the CWS system. Within Peterborough a system of Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites (RIGGs) was identified, and a local Geosites group has formed to formalise the criteria used to select these sites and to get them formally selected as Local Geological Sites. Within Cambridgeshire, work has recently commenced on establishing a Geosites group and identifying criteria for the selection of Local Geological Sites. Further information on Local Geological Sites will be available in a future update to this handbook.

SECTION 4 – County Wildlife Site Data

CWS DATA

The CWS system generates a wide range of data such as those listed below that need to be stored:

- site records
- habitat surveys
- species records
- site ownership records
- liaison and contact records

The Wildlife Trust holds site records, habitat surveys, site ownership records, liaison and contact records in various paper and electronic formats in accordance with the General Data Protection Regulations. The Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre (CPERC) hold a copy of the site information including information on species and habitats to disseminate to others on behalf of the CWS Partnership.

Once ratified each CWS has what is termed a citation sheet written for it, which contains a site description, information on the habitats contained within it, and the reason for selection. Sites are also added to the CWS Register which comprises a list of sites including basic site information: site name, location, and current reason for selection. A separate list showing the management condition of each CWS is maintained in order to provide data for the national indicator on local biodiversity, which local authorities are required to report on annually.

Ownership of data

The CWS Partnership and the funding bodies as appropriate to the data in question own the data collected as part of the CWS system. As much of this information is commissioned by, and provided to local authorities and public bodies, much of it is technically in the public domain.

However, site owners have a say in whether a survey is undertaken. Site owners may request that the species and habitat information is not shared with third parties without prior written permission. Surveyors and advisors will seek to persuade landowners of the benefits of environmental information being in the public domain and available to benefit nature conservation and education and inform policy and land use planning decisions, however the wishes of landowners will always be respected. CPERC have a robust system in place to flag up where species and habitat data must not be released

to third parties. The Wildlife Trust will ensure that CPERC are aware of any survey data that must be treated in this manner. In exceptional circumstances and where a landowner insists, the Wildlife Trust will not transfer species and habitat data to CPERC.

Distribution and use of data

Data on CWS is mainly used by the following parties:

- Site owners
- Conservation and advisory organisations
- Planning authorities
- Statutory organisations
- Environmental consultancies and organisations with an interest in environmental information

As the manager of the information on behalf of the partnership the Wildlife Trust is responsible for ensuring that CPERC is provided with the most up to date information on CWS for it to be disseminated to those who need to use it. They also act as a central point of contact for enquiries relating to the CWS system, except for formal enquiries from organisations and individuals about the location, boundaries and wildlife interest of sites which should be directed to CPERC. Key organisations such as planning authorities, statutory and advisory organisations are automatically provided with a copy of the CWS Register annually. Local authorities also receive an annual update summarising the management condition of each CWS, while Defra receive summary figures showing the overall proportion of CWS in positive management for each Local Authority area.

Confidentiality and data protection

The systems used to store and handle CWS data have been assessed against the relevant data protection legislation and are, to the best of the partnerships knowledge, fully compliant.

All data collected as part of surveying current and potential CWSs is covered by the provisions of the Environmental Information Regulations 2004. This means all species and habitat data will be considered available for release to third parties (including consultants and developers) unless it is in the public interest not to do so. If future release of the data would lead to a landowner not granting permission to survey, it may be considered that it is in the public interest not to release the data, though as the policy is in favour of the release of survey data, this will be the exception.

In exceptional circumstances certain records (particularly of sensitive species) collected as part of a survey for a CWS may not be released. Information on protected species and advice on relevant legal implications is given to the owners and managers of sites

where appropriate. CPERC, the Wildlife Trust and the landowner will consider the release of sensitive species information on a case by case basis.

Data that has historically been in the public domain and details of the boundaries and reason for CWS selection will remain available for release.

However, land ownership and contact details that are covered by the General Data Protection Regulations are not divulged without prior permission.

Charging for information

An administration charge may be made to meet the costs of searching for, collating and preparing data on request. For further information on charging for the cost of providing information and the Terms and Conditions under which data is supplied please contact CPERC Tel (01954) 713570 www.cperc.org.uk

SECTION 5 – SITE SAFEGUARD AND MANAGEMENT

Environmental Impact Assessment

Whilst CWS are not designated on a statutory basis, they do receive some protection through inclusion in the formal planning and development control process. Site protection largely relies on the commitment of local authorities, public bodies and utilities to protect sites against damaging development.

The **Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (Agriculture) 2006** also provide a measure of protection against changes in land management. For those landowners in the Basic Payment Scheme, cross compliance and the codes relating to maintaining land in Good Agricultural and Environmental Condition require that semi-natural habitats be protected. If intensification of land use is being considered it may be necessary to undertake an Environmental Impact Assessment under the 2006 regulations.

The Forestry Commission is responsible for administering the **Environmental Impact Assessment (Forestry) (England and Wales) Regulations 1999**. These regulations affect four “forestry” projects. These are:

- **Afforestation:** Planting new woods and forests, includes direct seeding or natural regeneration, planting Christmas trees or short rotation coppice;
- **Deforestation:** Felling woodland to use the land for a different purpose;
- **Forest roads:** The formation, alteration or maintenance of private ways on land used (or to be used) for forestry purposes. This includes roads within a forest or leading to one; and
- **Forestry quarries:** Quarrying to obtain materials required for forest road works on land that is used or will be used for forestry purposes or on land held or occupied with that land.

If work is planned that could be classed within these four forestry projects The Forestry Commission should be contacted for further information and advice. If the Commission’s opinion is that the proposed project will have a significant impact on the environment, consent for the work needs to be sought.

However, beyond this, there is little protection against changes in land use that do not require planning permission and sites are not protected from damage through neglect. County Wildlife Sites therefore rely on the goodwill and interest of owners and managers if their wildlife is to thrive.

The network of CWSs provides a comprehensive framework and proactive approach for

the promotion and prioritisation of nature conservation including the management of and targeting of grant schemes to UK Priority habitats. A further important function is their use in monitoring the condition of the best habitat remaining in the area and hence to some extent the effectiveness of conservation action being taken. Most Local Sites systems in the UK are small and under-resourced in relation to their potential, so regular comprehensive monitoring of the condition of sites remains a luxury to many; however, the usefulness of such an exercise should not be under-estimated.

Planning policies and using the planning system

It is important that CWSs are afforded the maximum protection currently available to them through the planning system. At every opportunity, the planning system should be used to encourage appropriate management for the conservation of these important sites - at the very least to maintain present conservation interest, and ideally to enhance them. Mechanisms to deliver this already exist through section 106 agreements, planning conditions and local development plans.

Development plans should include provision for the protection of sites important for nature conservation in the wider countryside, including CWS. Policies and proposals to protect and enhance CWS should be included as well as the locations of CWS shown on the adopted proposals map. If not they may be found in an appendix, and include a brief description or explanation of what these sites represent. It is important that policies are written in such a way that they apply to all sites that meet the CWS selection guidelines whether or not they currently appear on the CWS Register.

In line with the mitigation hierarchy the presumption should always be in favour of site protection rather than mitigation. Development on CWSs is to be avoided. Impacts should be mitigated wherever possible to maintain the value and integrity of sites and the system as a whole. If significant harm to biodiversity interests cannot be prevented, adequately mitigated for, or compensated for, then planning permission should be refused. Policies should indicate that where development is approved which affects a CWS, appropriate measures would be required to protect the interest of the site.

Applications which may impact a CWS should be accompanied by an appraisal of likely impacts and recommendations of how such impacts can be avoided or mitigated. The report should also identify residual impacts and compensatory measures to offset the residual impacts. A suitably qualified ecologist should produce such appraisals with other specialist input as required e.g. arboricultural impact assessment or pollution control measures.

Where the planning authority is minded to grant permission, planning conditions and agreements should be used to secure recommended mitigation and or compensatory measures. Measures to enhance the wildlife value of a CWS should be a condition of planning permission wherever sites are significantly affected by a development. The emphasis of site protection and management within the system is on encouragement and partnership. Where sites are affected by development, conditions and/or planning agreements should be used to minimise the impact of development on any CWS. With

careful thought and planning these can often bring positive benefits. An imaginative and flexible approach by the planning authorities is therefore encouraged, although work of this kind is largely reactive and successes of this approach need to be reviewed.

In some development cases it is not necessary for a formal application to be presented to the local authority. Some of these are 'permitted' developments, where planning permission has been granted by a development order or a specific statutory provision. Other developments are controlled or carried out by organisations other than Local Authorities. These include statutory undertakers such as the Water Companies. Operations outside planning control may still have an impact on CWSs and therefore consultation in such cases should be encouraged wherever possible. Some developments, such as agricultural operations, are excluded from the planning process altogether, but may be covered by the agriculture and forestry Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations. In these circumstances positive management is to be encouraged.

Promoting the positive management of CWS

The key to conservation is information. It is crucial that people are aware of where CWS are and why they are important. Local Authorities have a responsibility as part of their planning function to take account of sites of substantial nature conservation value and to consider them alongside other material planning considerations. Given information about where sites are and why they are important, owners, planners and conservation bodies can work together to make informed decisions about the future of these sites.

Developing links with CWS owners and managers

It is important that throughout the operation of the CWS system, landowners are aware of the presence and significance of their site for wildlife, its value in a wider county context and the role of the CWS system as a tool for achieving nature conservation objectives. Landowners will be offered support and encouragement to maintain and enhance the wildlife habitat.

Consistent and regular contact with landowners, at all appropriate stages is essential. From the outset, CWS owners will be provided with both information on how the CWS system works and its implications, and survey information for their site(s). This approach provides a baseline from which to encourage site management and further involvement in nature conservation.

A leaflet on the CWS system and its implications with information on survey or resurvey will be sent to landowners. This will emphasise that the majority of ordinary land management and agricultural operations remain unaffected, identification of a County Wildlife Site does not give anyone other than the landowner or manager control over land management, but there is a need for positive management for the site to retain its wildlife interest. The ownership or presence of a County Wildlife Site does not mean that there will be open public access across their land or within the CWS. Existing public rights of way remain unaffected and no rights of access are created through the

selection process, but this does not preclude negotiation of access through any agri-environment scheme or other initiatives.

In recent years letters have been sent to all known site owners to notify them about the presence and value of their CWS. An occasional newsletter for CWS owners is produced.

Advice to CWS owners

It is essential that organisations advising on County Wildlife Sites in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough work together closely to ensure that expertise is used to its full potential for the benefit of the CWS and their wildlife. It is also important to avoid duplication of effort on sites that have been, or are being, worked on by others, especially where the advice leads to securing a management grant. Much of the communication needed for this work is delivered through the CWS Panel and by maintaining a high level of contact with other conservation organisations.

Advice can include identification of appropriate grants, assisting with application forms or help with writing management plans. Funding is often the key to encouraging positive management for nature conservation on a CWS. Management sympathetic to wildlife is characteristically less intensive and often less economically productive than the current 'norm'. Advice on appropriate grants is therefore an important part of the CWS system. Useful contacts for further information and advice can be found in Appendix 2 and details of potential sources of funding in Appendix 3.

Publicity and raising awareness

Awareness of CWSs plays an important part in the overall success of the CWS system. A core feature is to encourage a sense of 'ownership' of, and pride in, the nature conservation value of CWSs. In providing information and general advice on CWSs, the value of individual sites, and the incentives available for their management, enthusiasm for wildlife is encouraged among landowners which not only helps protect CWSs against development, but also ensures their long-term management and enhancement. A professional and diplomatic approach is essential in this very sensitive area of work.

Organisations involved in work on CWSs need to be aware of the CWS system and what it is trying to achieve to help further understanding of it. Communication between members of the CWS Partnership will have benefits for all concerned and most importantly maximise the success of CWSs in delivering nature conservation in Cambridgeshire and Peterborough.

The exchange of information, expertise and local knowledge is invaluable in furthering work on specific sites and developing work in the wider countryside.

It is also important that the general public are made aware of the CWS system in order to increase awareness of the need to conserve and enhance biodiversity in the wider countryside (as opposed to a perception that conservation is solely nature

reserve-based). Raising awareness also encourages local communities to take action on land in their control and to become more involved in practical nature conservation work such as surveying and site management.

However, the availability of detailed information on CWSs to a wide audience may, unintentionally imply unrestricted access to County Wildlife Sites, which is a major fear of many landowners. Such publicity may jeopardise relations with landowners and therefore undermine the success of the whole system. Therefore promotion of access for informal recreation and education will be restricted to those CWS that are owned by a Local Authority or voluntary organisations and where public access is appropriate without being detrimental to the nature conservation value of the CWS.

To help raise awareness publications associated with the CWS system such as the selection guidelines, a CWS leaflet and newsletters will be made available in a number of formats and where possible available to download from the internet (Section 6: Supporting documentation).

CWS condition monitoring

Monitoring the condition of County Wildlife Sites is essential for the following reasons to:

- ensure data is up-to-date
- help focus resources on priority sites
- assess the effectiveness of site protection
- assess the effectiveness of site management
- increase the understanding of causes of site loss and damage and habitat change
- establish and justify the need for continued action

The distribution and abundance of habitats and species is always changing in response to natural and man-made influences. CWS are vulnerable to change so regular surveying and monitoring is needed to help keep the CWS Register up to date and support action to protect and enhance CWS.

In general terms the CWS Panel aims to ensure that all CWS are comprehensively resurveyed periodically. For sites that are prone to rapid change such as grasslands each site should ideally be checked at least once every 7 years. For more robust habitats such as ancient woodland or gravel pits, sites should ideally be checked at least once every 10 years. No site should be left un-surveyed for more than 20 years.

Monitoring is a valuable tool in assessing how successful the CWS system is in achieving its aim of protection and enhancement of sites, and of deciding how to use the system to its maximum effectiveness.

Section 6 - SUPPORTING DOCUMENTATION

The following documents are available in support of this handbook. Copies can be downloaded from

<http://wildlifebcn.org/wildlife/wider-countryside/local-wildlife-sites/cambridgeshire> or requested by contacting the Wildlife Trust

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| CWS Selection Criteria | Version 6.2, 2014 |
| City Wildlife Site Selection Criteria | Version 2.2, 2005 |
| Protected Road Verge Selection Criteria | Version 2, April 2007 |
| Publicity materials | The Partnership has produced a CWS leaflet for landowners and managers and an occasional newsletter is also available. |

Appendix 1: Recipients of the CWS Register

Cambridge City Council

Cambridgeshire County Council

East Cambridgeshire District Council

Environment Agency

Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group

Fenland District Council

Forestry Commission

Huntingdonshire District Council

Natural England

Peterborough City Council

South Cambridgeshire District Council

Appendix 2: Potential sources of funding

The CWS Partnership can play a valuable role in identifying, publicising and providing access to sources of information, advice and funding for environmental land management.

Potentially there are a wide range of sources for land management advice and funding support such as:

Planning conditions and section 106 agreements with developers for work to secure public benefit. These could include measures to improve public access and interpretation. Section 106 agreements could also include one-off or ongoing payments for positive management.

Local authorities can make **payments under section 39 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981** for entering into management agreements in respect of any land in their area for the purpose of conserving or enhancing its natural beauty, or promoting its enjoyment by the public.

Natural England now administer **Countryside Stewardship schemes** set up under section 18(1) of the Agriculture Act 1986 and section 98 of the Environment Act 1995.

In economically depressed and socially deprived areas, **regeneration funding** for activities to improve the social value of sites may be available. This might include training towards accredited qualifications in environmental and land management skills, as well as improving public access, educational value, and community safety around sites.

A range of **lottery, landfill tax credit schemes, foundation and trusts grants** are available for voluntary and community sector led initiatives geared to environmental, health, quality of life, social inclusion and other objectives which may be relevant to Local Sites

The local **District Council** may also have a small grants or community fund programme that offers a contribution towards the costs of environmental projects.

Glossary

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| Agri-environment schemes | Schemes offering payments to farmers to promote farming methods that can deliver benefits to the environment. |
| Biodiversity | The variety of living things around us, from mammals and birds to plants and microbes, and the habitat they live in. |
| Biodiversity 2020 | The government's strategy for people and wildlife, published in 2011. Linked to the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework with delivery overseen by a Defra Biodiversity Programme Board. |
| Environmental Records Centre | A Centre based often at county level for the collection, management, analysis and dissemination of information on wildlife and habitats within the geographic area covered. |
| City Wildlife Site/City Wildlife Site system (CiWS) | A complementary system to the County Wildlife Sites system developed and used within Cambridge City that takes into account the value of urban greenspaces for people and wildlife. Sites are identified against a set of selection criteria, although the biological thresholds are set at a lower level than for County Wildlife Sites. |
| Conservation | The management of human use of the environment to sustain the diversity of wildlife. |
| Convention on Biological Diversity | The Prime Minister and other Heads of State of Governments at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 signed this Convention. |
| County Wildlife Site (CWS) | A non-statutory site identified for its local importance for wildlife. |
| Diversity | An assessment of the richness of different types in a location (can be a large or small area) including the number of different habitats or numbers of different species. |
| Earth Summit | International conference held in Rio de Janeiro in June 1992 to discuss issues concerning climate change, world poverty, environment and development, the worlds forests and biodiversity. |
| Fauna | All animal life. |
| Flagship species | A species that often has public appeal and used to promote the conservation of the habitat. The species need not be directly threatened. |
| Flora | All plant life. |
| Geological sites/RIGGS | Identified using locally developed criteria these sites are the most important places for geology and geomorphology outside statutorily protected land such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). |
| Habitat | The places in which wild animals and plants live. Shaped by their underlying soils, hydrology, topography and climate, |

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| | habitats have a characteristic fauna and flora, and most species are confined to a particular habitat. |
| Habitat Action Plan (HAP) | A document that describes current status, sets objectives, targets, management/restoration or creation measures and proposes action necessary to achieve them. |
| Habitats and Species Directive | This Directive promotes the conservation of certain key habitats and species within the European Union by requiring Member States to take measures to maintain or restore natural habitats and populations of wild species. |
| Indicator species | A species indicative of a particular habitat which can be used to assess habitat quality, age, context etc. |
| Nature conservation | The mechanisms to protect and conserve the natural environment, which includes geological features, landforms, hydrology, soils and wildlife. Biodiversity conservation focuses on wildlife and its support systems (soils, water, air). |
| Phase I (habitat survey) | A land survey to establish land-uses and, in particular, the location of important wildlife sites and habitats within a given area. Extended Phase 1 goes beyond this scope but doesn't quite reach Phase II coverage. |
| Phase II (habitat survey) | A detailed survey of an area of land, identifying precise vegetation communities and important habitats, species or other features. |
| Priority Habitat | Habitats targeted for action through habitat action plans. Can be targeted at national, regional or local levels |
| Priority Species | The most threatened species in the UK which are targeted for conservation action. Can be targeted at national, regional or local levels |
| Protected Road Verge (PRV) | A section of road verge that has been surveyed and selected for protection because of its wildlife interest. |
| Red Data Book species | A species listed in catalogues published by the International Union for the Conservation of Nature (IUCN), national agencies or county-level organisations. The catalogues list species that are rare, endangered or vulnerable to extinction. Local Red Data Books also exist compiled against local criteria. |
| Semi-natural vegetation/habitats | There are virtually no purely natural habitats (those that haven't been influenced by people's activities) in England. To reflect this, ecologists often term the present-day woodlands, wetlands, heaths and downs as semi-natural. |
| Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) | An area of land notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as being of special nature conservation interest. |
| Special Protection Area (SPA) | Legally protected sites designated for rare and vulnerable birds and for regularly occurring migratory species as listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive. |
| Special Area for | Legally protected sites designated under the EC Habitats |

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| Conservation (SAC) | Directive. |
| Survey | An inventory of the attributes of a site, area or region, usually in terms of habitat and associated species and normally following a standardised procedure. |
| Sustainable | In ecological terms, a process or activity that can be maintained into the future without adverse environmental impacts (for example on water resources or species populations). |
| Target (biodiversity target) | A quantified conservation objective. Targets state, for example, projected population numbers for species or areas of habitats. Setting such numerical targets provides a tight focus for what the Biodiversity Action Plan is aiming to achieve. |
| UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework | The UK Government plan published in 2012, which shows how work in the four UK countries and the UK as a whole contributes to international biodiversity targets and obligations. Replaced the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. |

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Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Biodiversity Partnership Biodiversity Action Plan for Cambridgeshire and Peterborough www.cambridgeshire.gov.uk/biodiversitypartnership

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