



East  
Northamptonshire  
Council

## Planning Policy Committee – 10 December 2014

### Draft Northamptonshire Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document

#### Purpose of report

For the Committee to endorse the Draft Northamptonshire Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for public consultation in January 2015.

#### Attachment(s)

Appendix 1- Draft Northamptonshire Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document  
Appendix 2- Annex 1 to SPD: Habitats and species of importance in Northamptonshire

#### 1.0 Background

- 1.1 In 2009 the Wildlife Trust undertook training sessions with officers at each of the Local Authorities in North Northamptonshire. Arising from this, a need was identified for planning guidance to ensure that biodiversity matters are dealt with at an early stage. As a result a draft Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) for North Northamptonshire was drawn up by the Wildlife Trust and adopted by the four Local Planning Authorities in July 2011.
- 1.2 Since the Biodiversity SPD was adopted, national planning policy has changed substantially, resulting in parts of the SPD now being out of date. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has come into force, Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9) Biodiversity and Geological Conservation has been revoked and new Planning Practice Guidance has been released. Furthermore, the Nene Valley Nature Improvement Area was designated in March 2012 after the document was produced; the SPD has therefore been updated to reflect and comply with these changes.

#### 2.0 Biodiversity SPD

- 2.1 Biodiversity (a contraction of 'biological diversity') refers to the number, variety and variability of living organisms. Biodiversity is a key aspect of sustainable development. Every Local Authority has a statutory duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of its functions. This duty is addressed in part by including nature conservation policies in Northamptonshire's Core Spatial Strategies (both adopted and emerging), policies in the Rural North, Thrapston and Oundle Plan (2011) and emerging Four Towns Plan.
- 2.2 The draft SPD builds on these existing policies in the Local Plan. It also explains how biodiversity should be incorporated into the planning process to ensure that policy and legislation requirements are met and best practice standards are achieved. It provides a standard approach to be followed for all planning applications and is to be used together with expert ecological assessment of the details of each specific case.

- 2.3 The draft SPD has been written for applicants but with consideration of feedback from Development Management Officers. It outlines a process for identifying biodiversity features on and around an application site and collecting the required ecological information. It then guides the user through the mitigation hierarchy to first avoid, mitigate, then compensate for biodiversity impacts.
- 2.4 In addition to updated text, the draft SPD includes a more robust, step-by-step biodiversity checklist to assist applicants in completing Question 13 of the '1APP' planning application form. It also provided a simplified ecological survey calendar and document checklist for case officers. An annex to the SPD contains a list of important species and habitats found in Northamptonshire, a summary of relevant legislation and policy and a list of relevant contacts and information sources.
- 2.5 Officers from East Northamptonshire Council will review this document during the consultation period (consultation dates yet to be set) to consider if they have any comments to make. Any proposed draft response will be submitted for approval to the next Planning Policy Committee (subject to the consultation timeline). Members are therefore advised to submit any comments they may have directly to the Planning Policy and Conservation Team, or alternatively they can submit in their own right. Once all comments have been received and reviewed, a final draft SPD will be prepared, which will then be put before the Planning Policy Committee for adoption. It is important to note that this is a county-wide joint consultation document, therefore each Local Authority will be asked to consider and then adopt the SPD separately.

### **3.0 Equality and Diversity Implications**

- 3.1 There are no equality and diversity implications arising from the proposals.

### **4.0 Legal Implications**

- 4.1 There are no legal implications arising from the proposals.

### **5.0 Risk Management**

- 5.1 There are no significant risks arising from the proposed recommendations in this report.

### **6.0 Resource and Financial Implications**

- 6.2 There are no resource or financial implications arising from the proposals.

### **7.0 Constitutional Implications**

- 7.1 The proposal would not require an amendment to the Council's Constitution.

### **8.0 Corporate Outcomes**

- 8.1 The Relevant Corporate Outcomes are:

- Good Quality of Life – the proposal will ensure consideration and enhancement of Biodiversity within the district.
- Effective Partnership Working –the document has been produced at a strategic North Northamptonshire level, including three other Councils.
- High Quality Service Delivery – endorsement of the SPD will ensure that

biodiversity is considered and enhanced as part of development proposals.

## 9.0 Recommendation

9.1 It is recommended that the Planning Policy Committee approve the Draft Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document for the purposes of public consultation.

- (1) *(Reason - so that it can be used to ensure that biodiversity is considered across the district).*

<b>Legal</b>	Power: Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012 (Statutory Instrument 2012 No. 767)				
	Other considerations: None				
<b>Background Papers:</b> North Northamptonshire Core Spatial Strategy (2008) Rural, North, Oundle and Thrapston Plan (2011)					
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<b>Date: 21 November 2014</b>					
<b>CFO</b>		<b>MO</b>		<b>CX</b>	