

**Epping Forest District
Biodiversity Action Plan
2008 - 2012**

**CONSULTATION
DRAFT**

The Epping Forest District Biodiversity Action Plan

Introduction

The aim of this document is to give a brief introduction to the biodiversity of the district and to establish a five year Action Plan containing a range of targets aimed at conserving and enhancing biodiversity across the district. The Epping Forest Biodiversity Action Plan is a partnership document, (produced by the Epping Forest Biodiversity Partnership, involving the organisations listed in Annex 1) where the council has taken the leading role. However, the process has actively involved important partners in nature conservation activities across the district. The targets set out in the plan reflect priorities and targets that have been developed in the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan and UK's National Biodiversity Action Plan.

What is Biodiversity?

Biological diversity, or "biodiversity" is the variety of life that is all around us and all over the world. It encompasses all living things from microscopic organisms to the largest trees. Not just exotic, rare and endangered plants and animals are included, but also those that are found in back gardens, parks and ponds. Although biodiversity surrounds us, we cannot take it for granted. It is not just the large-scale human activities such as urban development, agricultural intensification and road building that have an impact on wildlife. Even seemingly minor things such as cutting down a tree or allowing a pond to dry up can make a difference by isolating or reducing habitats. Many ordinary, daily activities are slowly modifying the variety of wildlife – our local biodiversity.

“Biological diversity means the variability among living organisms from all sources including, *inter alia*, terrestrial, marine, and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are a part; this includes diversity within species and of ecosystems.” (Convention on Biological Diversity, 1993)

Why are we developing a Local Biodiversity Action Plan?

Biodiversity is vital to our quality of life. It provides us with clean air and water, and resources for recreation and education. It improves our well-being and maintains a whole range of environmental protection functions such as flood control and climate regulation. Ultimately it acts as the life support system for the planet and is essential for our very survival. Species can take millions of years to evolve, but once a species is extinct it is lost forever. So as much as we need to conserve biodiversity for our quality of life we also owe it to future generations not to destroy this wonderful heritage.

In the UK the loss of wildlife and the destruction of the countryside are such that a healthy and rich natural environment is no longer guaranteed. For example, studies have shown that 98% of wildflower meadows, 448,000 kilometres of hedgerows, over 2 million skylarks and 95% of high brown fritillary butterflies have been lost in less than a lifetime. It is clear that we need to halt this decline and help these species to recover. This work is being carried out at all levels - internationally, nationally, regionally and locally. Epping Forest District Council has therefore decided to take action and produce a Local BAP to help conserve, enhance and promote awareness of biodiversity in the district. The Epping BAP focuses on habitats, following the recent drive by the UK Biodiversity Action Plan to focus on habitats and larger scale ecosystem plans. These are now considered a more effective conservation tool capable of delivering biodiversity gains for both habitats and the species dependent upon them.

Biodiversity Action: “Think globally act locally”

In June 1992, leaders from over 150 countries gathered in Rio de Janeiro for the ‘Earth Summit’. The loss of the world’s biodiversity was the major environmental issue discussed. As a result, the Convention on Biological Diversity was signed committing all countries to act to conserve and enhance their biodiversity to contribute to the global resource.

The UK Government signed this Convention and began to fulfil its commitment in 1994 when it published the UK’s Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

The aim for this plan is:

“To conserve and enhance biological diversity within the UK and to contribute to the conservation of global biodiversity through all appropriate means”

By this aim the Government has 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.

The Government recognised that the national objectives could only be achieved if there was action at all levels and by all sectors of the community. The principal means of achieving this is through the preparation of Local Biodiversity Action Plans. These plans have two broad functions.

- To ensure that national action plans are translated into effective action at the local level.
- To establish targets and action for species and habitats characteristic of each local area

The process to produce the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan (EBAP) began in 1997 when the Association of Essex Councils hosted an Essex Sustainability Conference. The species and habitats that occur in the EBAP were selected from a national list together with some extra ones that are characteristic or indicative of the Essex countryside.

The Epping Forest LBAP has been developed with close links to the Essex BAP.

The purpose of this plan is to help achieve some of the targets set out in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and the Essex Biodiversity Action Plan. Hopefully it will:

- Concentrate on making local people more aware of the biodiversity around them and of the need to conserve it.
- Produce a more detailed understanding of the biodiversity in the district;
- Guide the work of Epping Forest District Council officers where this may impact on biodiversity;
- Set high standards for Epping Forest District Council as land managers;
- Support the work of all organisations in the district that are engaged in biodiversity action;
- Develop opportunities for active participation in biodiversity action by all members of the community

BIODIVERSITY IN EPPING FOREST DISTRICT

Background

Epping Forest District is fortunate to have a number of highly important wildlife sites including Epping and Hainault Forests, the Lee Valley Regional Park and the Roding Valley Meadows Local Nature Reserve. These key sites are our most important protected areas with international or European recognition as Ramsar sites, Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) or Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and national significance as Sites of Special Scientific interest. (SSSIs).

Beyond these core sites are a linking network of Nature Reserves and Local Wildlife Sites which gives the district its character and biodiversity.

Designated wildlife sites in Epping Forest District.

<u>Designation</u>	<u>No of sites</u>
<i>Ramsar Site</i>	1
<i>SPA</i>	1
<i>SAC</i>	1
<i>SSSIs</i>	7
Local Nature Reserves	9
Local Wildlife Sites	181

Natura 2000

The Habitats Directive 1992 required EU Member States to create a network of protected wildlife areas, known as Natura 2000, across the European Union. This network consists of SACs and SPAs, established to protect wild birds under the Birds Directive. These sites are part of a range of measures aimed at conserving important or threatened habitats and species. The District has one SAC (Epping Forest covering 1604 ha) and one SPA (Lee Valley covering 451.29ha).

Ramsar Sites

The Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (the Ramsar Convention) was signed in Ramsar, Iran in 1971. It was an intergovernmental treaty which provided for the conservation and wise use of wetlands. The district has one of 157 Ramsar sites in the UK - the Lee Valley. This great wildlife resource comprises a series of embanked water supply reservoirs, sewage treatment lagoons and former gravel pits which straddles 24km of the valley

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

SSSIs are the country's very best wildlife and geological sites (Ramsar sites and SPAs and SACs are also SSSIs) and are designated by Natural England. They are selected for their value in terms of flora or fauna, or their geological or physiographical (i.e. landform) features. There are around four thousand sites across the country with eighty six in Essex. There are eight designated SSSIs which are partially or wholly in the District covering 2506ha. These are:

- 1) Epping Forest (including Wintry Wood, Epping; Gernon Bushes, Coopersale; Yardley Hill, Sewardstonebury; and Lord's Bushes, Buckhurst Hill) The SSSI extends into the London Boroughs of Redbridge and Waltham Forest (total area not all in district 1729 ha)
- 2) Hainault Forest, Chigwell and Lambourne, extends into the London Borough of Redbridge (total area not all in the district 136ha)
- 3) Royal Gunpowder Factory Woodlands, Waltham Abbey (34.2ha).
- 4) Roding Valley Meadows, Loughton and Chigwell. (19.8ha)
- 5) Cornmill Stream and Old River Lea, Waltham Abbey. (24.6ha)
- 6) Turnford and Cheshunt Pits (extends into Broxbourne Borough 173.28ha).

7) Chingford Reservoirs - extends into the London Boroughs of Enfield and Waltham Forest. (total area not all in the district 391ha)

8) River Lee diversion (a very small part of the Chingford Reservoirs SSSI)

Three SSSIs abut the district boundary. These are Curtismill Green (near Stapleford Abbots); Harlow Woods, Harlow; and Hunsdon Mead, Roydon. A further two SSSIs are very close to, but do not abut, the district. These are Parndon Wood, Harlow and Rye Meads near Stanstead Abbots.

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)

Under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, local authorities (including district, town and parish councils) have the power to establish Local Nature Reserves.

An area of land can be declared as an LNR if it has a high value for nature conservation, provides special opportunities for study and research or if the natural features of the site are of special interest to the public because they are used for recreation and education.

There are now 1050 LNRs in England. Epping Forest District Council has declared 9 LNRs to date between 1986 and 2007. These are;

- Roding Valley Meadows
- Chigwell Row Wood
- Linder's Field
- Roughtalley's Wood
- Church Lane Flood Meadow
- Nazeing Triangle
- Home Mead
- Thornwood Flood Meadow
- Weald Common Flood Meadow.

Natural England has put forward a target of 1 hectare of LNR per 1,000 head of population if LNRs are to play a role in sustainability. This figure has been adopted by the Audit Commission as a local performance indicator. EFDC currently has a figure of 1 hectare of LNR per 1,325 head of population.

Local Wildlife Sites (LoWS)

Local Wildlife Sites are "discrete areas of land which are considered to be of significance for their wildlife features in at least a District context". LoWS were identified and declared by the Essex Wildlife Trust following a Phase One habitat survey of the district in 1991(See Annex 2) (revised 1996 and 1998). They were formerly known as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), County Wildlife Sites and Wildlife Sites. Epping Forest District has 181 LoWS comprising 118 woodlands, 39 grasslands, 19 mosaic sites and 5 fresh water aquatic.

Key Sites of Nature Conservation Importance in Epping Forest District.

The Lee Valley Regional Park extends 26 miles from Ware in Hertfordshire to East India Dock on the bank of the Thames.

The Park incorporates the western border of the district and is characterised here by an almost continuous mosaic of floodplain grassland, flooded gravel pits and wet woodland. Key sites include Gunpowder Park, Cornmill Meadows, Royal Gunpowder Mills and the River Lee Country Park. There are three SSSIs with one of them, Turnford and Cheshunt Pits SSSI, forming part of the Lee Valley Special Protection Area. This was designated under the EU Birds Directive on account of the large flocks of moulting and wintering ducks as well as its strategic importance as a stop-off for birds, including the bittern, outside the breeding season.

Although perhaps best known for its birds, the Park also supports over half of the dragonflies and damselflies species found in the UK, with Cornmill Meadows a well known spot. Water voles, which have undergone a dramatic decline throughout their range, can still be found in reasonable numbers at several sites throughout the Park, although much work remains to be done to link up these fragmented populations and safeguard them from predation by mink and other threats. (Lee

Valley Regional Park Authority (LVRPA) website
www.leevalleypark.org.uk)

Hainault Forest constitutes a remaining fragment of a once much larger medieval woodland. It is thought to have been declared a specially protected forest by Henry I around 1130. Traditionally it would have been managed as wood pasture with livestock grazing the open grassy “plains”. Worked pollarded trees were scattered throughout. In 1851 an Act of Parliament led to large scale destruction of the Forest with, in just six weeks, an estimated 100,000 trees felled. The ensuing public outrage did serve to save Epping Forest from a similar fate and eventually led to the creation of a Hainault Forest Country Park in 1906. The remains of this ancient woodland are hugely significant for the district and of historic, cultural and landscape importance on a national scale.

Today, the Hainault Forest Country Park is split between the Woodland Trust (118 ha) which manages the northern part of the woodland (which is all within Epping Forest District) on a fifty year lease from Essex County Council. The remaining 100 ha is owned and managed by the London Borough of Redbridge.

The Forest has a broad range of habitat types including ancient wood pasture with old growth stands, native broadleaved woodland, mature scrub and open grassy margins, amenity grassland, semi-improved acid grassland, and a small area of heathland. Some 136ha is designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

(<http://www.wt-woods.org.uk/HainaultForest>)

Epping Forest is by far the largest public open space near to London. At almost 2428 ha it stretches for about 12 miles from Manor Park in East London to just north of Epping. Since 1878, the Forest has been owned by the City of London and is managed under the Epping Forest Act which stipulates;

“The Conservators shall at all times keep Epping Forest unenclosed and unbuilt on as

an open space for the recreation and enjoyment of the people.”

As well as being a huge recreational resource the Forest is the key biodiversity resource of the district with over 1618 ha being designated as SSSI and SAC.

The Forest is really special for its ancient trees with around fifty thousand thought to exist. This in turn supports a vast variety of flora and fauna species, many of which have specialised to live in this unique environment. Perhaps the most significant of these are the saprophytic invertebrates (dead wood insects) many of which are found almost nowhere else in the country. In addition to the ancient trees, what makes the Forest so valuable is its unique blend of old grasslands, heaths, ponds and lakes.

(http://www.cityoflondon.gov.uk/Corporation/living_environment/open_spaces/epping_forest.htm)

The Roding Valley Meadows Local Nature Reserve (LNR) includes the largest traditionally managed lowland hay meadows in Essex running along the banks of the River Roding through Loughton, Chigwell and Buckhurst Hill on the southern edge of the district. Incorporating herb-rich flood-plain pasture and sedge fen, the meadows represent a huge regional biodiversity resource of national importance. This is recognised in the site’s designation as a Local Nature Reserve, LoWS and part SSSI.

At 66.7 hectares the meadows are easily the largest single block of grassland in the district which has otherwise lost much of its herb rich grassland. Today the meadows, which are owned by Epping Forest District Council and The Grange Farm Centre Trust, are managed by the Essex Wildlife Trust. In addition to the important SSSI grassland and fen habitats, the reserve has a fine network of hedgerows, scrub and secondary woodland. Being close to a large urban area, the meadows offer a unique place for local people to come into contact with wildlife.

(<http://www.essexwt.org.uk>)

Key Habitats of the District

Urban Areas

Within the district's urban areas, public open spaces, cemeteries, allotments, derelict land and gardens all support a huge variety of wildlife. Across the UK it has been estimated there are more than 15 million gardens and it is becoming increasingly obvious that these areas are playing a vital role in providing habitats for wildlife. The potential for biodiversity could be huge if more people could be encouraged to garden for wildlife.

The district's population currently stands at 120,896 (2001 Census) of which 70% live in the suburban or market towns of Loughton, Buckhurst Hill, Chigwell, Waltham Abbey and Epping. In the south of the district these urban areas directly abut Epping Forest and therefore must be seen as a vital wildlife corridors between important sites such the Forest and the Roding Valley Meadows. In a time of increasing pressure for development, especially from housing, the careful planning of effective green spaces and corridors which take account of both wildlife and people will be vital.

Farmland

Around 90% of the district could still be described as countryside with agriculture being by far the largest land use. The sympathetic management of this land is therefore vital for the effective conservation of our wildlife. The mosaic of ditches, ponds, hedgerows, woodland and field margins supports a great diversity of wildlife and all of the district's key biodiversity species rely on farmland. This land also forms the vital corridors linking the "hotspots" of biodiversity which still remain. Working with the farming community will be vital if any success is to be achieved.

Woodland

Since 1945 Essex has lost 24% of all its ancient woodland. This district is fortunate in having part of Hainault Forest and

Epping Forest within its borders. As one of the UK's most coherent blocks of ancient woodland it is a hugely important site not only for the district, but nationally too. The key fauna are associated with dead and decaying wood and the Forest supports many nationally important invertebrate populations.

Only 9.8% of the district is in fact wooded (EWT Phase 1 habitat survey 1996) and of this just 2501.6 ha is biologically rich semi-natural ancient woodland (7.38% of the land area of the district)

Across the farmland areas of the district there are numerous small semi-natural broad-leaved woods. Of these some 119 are designated LoWS. These are almost exclusively neglected hornbeam coppice woodlands. Despite lack of recent management the woods still support a wide range of birds, mammals, plants and fungi.

Veteran Trees

Hainault and Epping Forests include a collection of veteran trees of European importance, but such trees are by no means confined to the Forest areas. The widespread practice of pollarding (the successive cutting of trees above the browsing height of deer and cattle) has left a legacy of many veteran trees across the whole of the district. In addition, numerous deer parks include large numbers of old trees. Today, many of these trees find themselves surrounded by urban development or arable farmland. It will be an aim of this biodiversity action plan to survey the district and record all the veteran trees. This will also include recording rarities such as the native black poplars and wild service trees.

Hedgerows

Across England since 1945 the average hedgerow loss in each parish has been around 50% and this figure can be fairly accurately applied to this district. Despite this loss the ancient nature of much of the district's landscape means that there is still a significant hedgerow network. This coupled, with significant replanting by the farming community, gives reason for optimism. The EWT 1996 updated Phase

1 habitat survey for the district gives a figure of 1245km of hedgerow which can be coupled with 577 km of tree-lines.

Species rich grassland and heathland

Since 1945 intensive food production involving the application of chemical fertilizers and the use of ever bigger machines addressed the nation's demand for plentiful and cheap food. To the credit of the farming community this goal has been largely achieved. The downside is a significant loss of wildlife habitat, even more apparent in a county like Essex, which for over 50 years has been dominated by arable farming. Unimproved grassland has been the one major habitat that has seen catastrophic losses. Across the county there has been a 99% loss of all its flower rich grasslands. In Epping Forest District there are only 106.3 ha remaining equating to just 0.31% of the district's land area. (EWT Phase 1 habitat survey 1996)

While the loss of a wood or hedgerow is often dramatic, involving heavy machinery and noisy chainsaws, the demise of a grassland is often far less obvious. Whether by the plough, over grazing, development or neglect, many grasslands are still slowly disappearing unnoticed. Many of the larger important sites which remain, such as the Roding Valley Meadows LNR (at 66.7ha this equates to over 60% of this rare grassland resource within the district), are being looked after but it is the smaller sites such as the old churchyards, village greens, roadside verges and small fields which are gradually being lost. Often these small areas are the only remnants within a parish, an oasis of unploughed, unsprayed meadowland. These sites can have a unique association of plants and offer a haven for birds, small mammals and invertebrates.

Heathland was never a widespread habitat across the district, but was restricted to the Forest areas on poor sands and glacial gravels overlying the London Clay. Historically the heaths were maintained by grazing, but in the last 70 years this has largely ceased. Consequently, heathland sites have been lost to encroachment by

woodland. The exact area of heathland that still remains is hard to calculate, but the area of stand-alone heathland sites amounts to under 3 hectares.

Ponds

The word "pond" can be used to describe all static areas of water such as small pools, canals, reservoirs and lakes, but for the purposes of this plan lakes, canals and reservoirs will be defined as open water.

In the EWT Phase One habitat survey 1996 some 982 ponds were recorded in the district (315 ha given as open water) and in terms of pond density this equates to a figure of 2.89 ponds per kilometre square. Ponds are found scattered across the whole district, but many are now under threat from lack of management through land use changes. Influencing farmers to manage existing ponds and encouraging people to create new ones will be a priority.

How to use the BAP

The aim of the plan is to raise public awareness and focus practical action on those biodiversity priority species and habitats occurring across the district. Each species and habitat action plan lists 'local actions' that should be undertaken within the district, and indicates the lead agencies or group concerned. To avoid unnecessary repetition, actions common to more than one plan have been listed under 'Generic objectives and actions'.

The biodiversity initiative is an ongoing process. The implementation and review of this and subsequent plans will be co-ordinated by the Epping Forest Biodiversity Steering Group, working with EFDC and other business and community partners.

Epping Forest biodiversity priority habitats, and species showing relationship to UK and Essex lists.

	<u>E BAP</u>	<u>LV BAP</u>	<u>UK BAP</u>
Habitats			
Urban areas	P	P	P
Farmland	P		P
Woodland	P		P
Veteran Trees			P
Hedgerows	P		P
Lowland Meadows			P
Lowland Heath	P		P
Ponds		P	P
Species			
Black Poplar	P		
Wild Service Tree			
Veteran Trees			
Great Crested Newt	P		P
Skylark	P		
Stag beetle	P		P

E BAP – Essex Biodiversity Action Plan

LV BAP – Lee Valley Regional Park Biodiversity Action Plan.

UK BAP – UK Biodiversity Action Plan

Epping Forest District Council's Local Biodiversity Action Plan

GENERIC ACTIONS

Aim 1	Develop a partnership to work with biodiversity issues in the district				
Target	Actions	Partners	Lead	Target Date	Monitoring
1.1 Establish effective mechanism for promotion, implementation, monitoring and developing of LBAP.	1.1.1 Develop and maintain (quarterly meetings) a partnership/steering group with agencies in the district where information and ideas can be shared.	Epping Forest Biodiversity Partnership (EFBP)	EFDC	Ongoing	EFBP
	1.1.2 Monitor and evaluate effectiveness of BAP during quarterly meetings through review of actions and targets.	EFBP	EFDC	12/2008 Ongoing	EFBP
	1.1.3 Compile an annual monitoring report detailing all activities that have taken place during preceding year.	EFDC	EFBP	Ongoing	EFBP
	1.1.4 Develop 2 new biodiversity projects, with agencies in the district, e.g. town and parish councils. This year these are: 1. District wide Veteran Tree hunt 2. Cripsey Brook Nature Reserve with Ongar Town Council	EFBP	EFDC	04/2008	EFBP

Aim 2	Raise awareness and profile of, and involvement with, biodiversity in the district				
Targets	Actions	Partners	Lead	Target Date	Monitoring
2.1 Establish mechanism to publicise and raise awareness of biodiversity issues to local residents.	2.1.1 Publish a minimum of four articles per year in either EYE, Forester, 'Making the links' (ECC e-newsletter) or any other local newspaper and supply articles to relevant parish or town councils for their magazines.	EFBP	EFDC	01/2009	EFBP
	2.1.2 Develop a webpage on EFDC website for biodiversity, to promote the issue throughout the district.	EFBP	EFDC	05/2008	EFBP
	2.1.3 Identify individual contact person within all parish and town councils in the district to facilitate closer working and better communication.	Town/parish councils	EFDC	05/2008	EFBP
2.2 Engage schools and higher education establishments in biodiversity projects. Provide them with suitable materials and promotional activities.	2.2.1 Organise a minimum of two biodiversity projects per annum in schools and higher education establishments.	EFBP	Epping Forest Field Studies Centre	06/2008	EFBP
2.3 Organise and participate in promotional events across the district to highlight biodiversity issues.	2.3.1 Hold one promotional event per year, e.g. LNR Week.	EFBP	EFDC	03/2008	EFBP
	2.3.2 Ensure at least 7,000 volunteer hours are spent on biodiversity projects across the district.	EFBP	EFDC	03/2008	EFBP
	2.3.3 Organise a minimum of five nature walks per year across the district.	EFBP	EFDC	03/2008	EFBP

HABITAT ACTION PLANS

URBAN AREAS

Aim 3	Maximise the biodiversity potential of the urban environments of the district				
Targets	Actions	Partners	Lead	Target Date	Monitoring
3.1 Increase public understanding and interest in the value of biodiversity in private gardens.	3.1.1 Publish 'a Green Gardening Guide'. 3.1.2 3.1.2 Promote 'wildlife-friendly gardening' during Council –run and other events. 3.1.3 Publish monthly garden updates on the Council website. 3.1.4 Produce list of gardening societies and allotment associations in the district. 3.1.5 Promote the use of allotments, through the website, events and articles.	Environment Agency (EA) Town/parish Councils Town/parish Councils, Allotment organisations	EFDC EFDC EFDC EFDC EFDC	04/2008 Ongoing Ongoing 07/2008	EFBP EFBP EFBP EFBP
3.2 Identify location and quality of garden ponds in the district.	3.2.1 Develop and circulate a public survey leaflet of garden ponds in the district.	Essex Amphibian Reptile Group (ARG)	EFDC	04/2010	EFBP

Aim 3	Maximise the biodiversity potential of the urban environments of the district				
Targets	Actions	Partners	Lead	Target Date	Monitoring
3.3 Raise the awareness about the impact on biodiversity of invasive alien plants in the garden.	3.3.1 Distribute “Protecting our native wildlife” by the Environment Agency on invasive alien species.	Essex Biodiversity Project (EBP), Invasive species group EA	EFDC	05/2008	EFBP
	3.3.2 Produce an article for publication in the Forester/local council magazines.		EFDC	06/2008	EFBP
	3.3.3 Highlight invasive alien species in EYE – one species per quarter.		EFDC	04/2008	EFBP

FARMLAND

Aim 4	Raise awareness of biodiversity issues within farming community				
Targets	Actions	Partners	Lead	Target Date	Monitoring
4.1 Establish effective links/partnership projects with six farmers by 2010.	4.1.1 Identify and establish good communication and relations with two farmers per year	EFDC	Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group(FWAG)	Yearly 2010	EFBP
	4.1.2 Distribute existing publications to farmers to encourage wildlife-friendly farming.		FWAG	Ongoing	EFBP

Aim 5	Achieve optimum biodiversity condition for farmland in the district through high quality management.				
Targets	Actions	Partners	Lead	Target Date	Monitoring
5.1 Maintain, improve and restore the biodiversity of 30 ha of farmland in the district by 2010.	5.1.1 Identify good quality* field margins in the district by working with farmers.	FWAG, local farmers, Natural England	EFDC	11/2010	EFBP
	5.1.2 Identify ponds on farmland through targeted public survey.**		EFDC	02/2010	EFBP
	5.1.3 Identify good quality woodland on farmland through public survey.**		EFDC	11/2010	EFBP
	5.1.4 Offer assistance to farmers to enable the uptake of agri-environment schemes across the district.		FWAG	Ongoing	EFBP

* See Annex 2

** See Annex 2

WOODLANDS

Aim 6	Achieve favourable management of woodlands in the district				
Targets	Actions	Partners	Lead	Target Date	Monitoring
6.1 Promote positive management of LoWS woodland sites across the district.	6.1.1 Encourage all “partner” owned woodland to have up to date management plans. 6.1.2 Facilitate woodland owner applications to grant schemes where appropriate.	Wildlife Trust(WT), Essex Wildlife Trust(EWT), City of London(CoL), EFDC, LVRPA, FWAG	EFDC FWAG	06/2008 06/2008	EFBP EFBP
6.2 Identify the owners of LoWS woodland sites.	6.2.1 Send maps identifying woodland wildlife sites to all parish and town councils.	Parish and town councils, EWT	EFDC	12/2008	EFBP

TREES

Aim 7	Conserve and raise awareness of veteran trees across the district				
Targets	Actions	Partners	Lead	Target Date	Monitoring
7.1 Identify the location of all veteran trees across the District on a parish by parish basis.	7.1.1 Complete survey of Stapleford Abbotts parish.	EFDC, WT	EFDC	12/2008	EFBP
	7.1.2 Complete survey of Lambourne parish.	EFDC, WT		12/2008	EFBP
	7.1.3 Complete survey of Chigwell parish.	EFDC, WT		12/2008	
	7.1.4 Complete survey of Theydon Bois parish.	EFDC, WT		12/2008	EFBP
	7.1.5 Complete survey of North Weald parish.	EFDC, WT		12/2008	
	7.1.6 Start survey of Ongar parish.	EFDC, WT,	Ongar tree strategy group	09/2008	EFBP
	7.1.7 Record 1000 trees per year on the Favourite Trees web site.	EFDC, WT,	Ongar tree strategy group	12/2008	EFBP
	7.1.8 Conduct a survey of veteran trees in Epping Forest.	EFDC	City of London	12/2010	EFBP
7.2 Involve the local community tree wardens in surveying.	7.2.1 Organise 3 veteran tree awareness days.	EFDC, WT, City of London	EFDC	12/2008	EFBP

TREES

Aim 8	Conserve and raise awareness of wild service trees in the district				
Targets	Actions	Partners	Lead	Target Date	Monitoring
8.1 Ensure the protection and conservation of wild service trees across the District.	8.1.1 Record trees on Favourite Trees web site.	EFDC, WT,CoL	EFDC	Ongoing	EFBP
	8.1.2 Start survey of Chigwell parish.	WT, EFDC	EFDC	12/2008	EFBP
	8.1.3 Start survey of Theydon Bois parish.	WT, EFDC	EFDC	12/2008	EFBP
	8.1.4 Start survey of Ongar parish.	EFDC, WT,	EFDC	09/2008	EFBP

TREES

Aim 9	Conserve and raise awareness of the native black poplars in the district				
Targets	Actions	Partners	Lead	Target Date	Monitoring
9.1 Ensure the protection and conservation of native black poplars in the district.	9.1 Identify all owners of black poplars across the district.	Botanical Society of the British Isles, EWT, EFDC, EA	Botanical Society of the British Isles	12/2008	EFBP
	9.2 Offer management advice as appropriate.			Ongoing	EFBP
	9.3 Produce a leaflet for tree owners on the ecology of native black poplars and why they are special.			12/2009	

Aim 9	Conserve and raise awareness of the native black poplars in the district				
Targets	Actions	Partners	Lead	Target Date	Monitoring
	9.4 Take cuttings of individual trees for inclusion in "clone bank" nursery.			Ongoing	EFBP EFBP

HEDGEROWS

Aim 10	Encourage the appropriate management of hedgerows and endeavour to extend existing area of hedgerows				
Targets	Actions	Partners	Lead	Target Date	Monitoring
10.1 Record species rich and ancient hedgerows across the district.	10.1.1 Undertake hedgerow surveys across the district starting with Roding Valley Meadows and Ongar parish.	EWT	EFDC	12/2008	EFBP
10.2 Extend areas of hedgerows in the district.	10.2.1 Promote four free hedge schemes per year to landowners.	Parish/town Councils, Essex County Council(ECC)	EFDC	Annually	EFBP
10.3 Increase the number of hedgerows that receive appropriate management	10.3.1 Inform and educate landowner with ancient hedgerows on their land to manage their hedgerows properly.	EFDC	FWAG	12/2009	EFBP

SPECIES RICH GRASSLANDS AND HEATHLAND

Aim 11	Achieve favourable management of species rich grassland and heath in the district				
Targets	Actions	Partners	Lead	Target Date	Monitoring
11.1 Halt the loss of species rich grassland.	11.1.1 Identify the owners of all grassland wildlife sites.	EFDC, Parish/town councils	EWT	08/2008	EFBP
	11.1.2 Continue to manage special roadside verges.	ECC,EWT	EFDC	12/2008 ongoing	EFBP

SPECIES RICH GRASSLANDS AND HEATHLAND

Aim 12	Increase the area of species rich grassland and heathland by appropriate restoration and creation				
Targets	Actions	Partners	Lead	Target Date	Monitoring
12.1 To create 10 ha of species rich grassland in the district by 2010.	12.1.1 Create and restore 3.5 hectares of grassland per year.	WT, CoL, EWT, EFDC, LVRPA	EFDC	12/2008 annually to 2010	EFBP
12.2 To restore 1 ha of heathland by 2010.	12.2.2 Restore one third of a hectares of heath land per year.	WT, CoL, EWT, EFDC, LVRPA	EFDC	11/2008 annually to 2010	EFBP

PONDS

Aim 13	Support the protection and appropriate management of ponds and their surrounding habitats in the district				
Targets	Actions	Partners	Lead	Target Date	Monitoring
13.1 Ensure that ponds and surrounding habitats are surveyed.	13.1.1 Identify location of Parish ponds by undertaking Parish pond surveys.	Essex ARG EWT	EFDC	12/2010	EFBP
	13.1.2 Produce list of significant ponds on partners land holdings.	Essex ARG EWT,WT, COL, LVRP, FWAG	EFDC	12/2010	EFBP
13.2 Raise awareness of importance of ponds in the wider countryside/gardens.	13.2.1 Promote pond management and creation for biodiversity value when attending events.	Essex ARG EWT FWAG	EFDC	Ongoing	EFBP
	13.2.1 Distribute leaflets on pond management/creation.				
13.3 Restore existing ponds in the District through appropriate management.	13.3.1 Restore a minimum of 2 ponds per year.	WT, CoL, EWT, EFDC, LVRPA, FWAG	EFDC	12/2008	EFBP
13.4 Create new ponds across the District.	13.4.1 "Partners" to create a min of 2 ponds per year.	Essex ARG, EA	EFDC	Annually	EFBP
	13.4.2 Encourage the public to create ponds where appropriate via website and by giving advice on creation and grant funding.	Essex ARG, EA, FWAG	EFDC	Ongoing	EFBP
13.5 Conduct surveys for Great Crested Newts (GCN).	13.5.1 Undertake a GCN survey of Nazeing Parish, then concentrate surveys on know areas of population.	Essex ARG	EFDC	03/2008	EFBP

Aim 13	Support the protection and appropriate management of ponds and their surrounding habitats in the district				
Targets	Actions	Partners	Lead	Target Date	Monitoring
	13.5.2 Undertake further surveys in known areas of population.	Essex ARG	EFDC	12/2008	EFBP

LOCAL NATURE RESERVES (LNRs)

Aim 14	To achieve Natural England's access to natural greenspace target of at least one hectare of LNR per 1000 population.				
Targets	Actions	Partners	Lead	Target Date	Monitoring
14.1 Increase the area of land declared as LNRs within the district.	14.1.1 Investigate the potential for the following sites to be declared LNRs 1) Norton Heath Common, High Ongar 2) Swaines Green, Epping 3) Worlds End, Roydon	Parish and town councils	EFDC	12/2010 12/2009 12/2011	EFBP

Annex 1

Organisations in Epping Forest Biodiversity Partnership (Nov 2007)

Epping Forest District Council (EFDC)
Essex County Council (ECC)
Essex Biodiversity Project (EBP)
City of London (Epping Forest) (CoL)
Essex Wildlife Trust (EWT)
Lee Valley Regional Park Authority (LVRPA)
Botanical Society of the British Isles

Farming and Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) to join 2008

Annex 2 - Glossary of terms used and explanations.

Good Quality Field Margins

Field margins refer to the land between the field boundary feature and crop on arable fields (particularly cereals) or grasslands. Field margins of good quality are defined as ones which have high species and structural diversity and support key farmland species.

Public Surveys

Within the document reference is made to public surveys. This refers to survey work which will be co-coordinated by EF Countrycare and partners and the local community. E.g. Epping Forest Tree Wardens for Veteran Tree Surveys and Essex Amphibian and Reptile Group for pond surveys.

Phase 1 Habitat Classification

This classification was developed in the 1980s for the purpose of mapping terrestrial and freshwater habitats within SSSIs and nature reserves, and for larger scale strategic surveys. The classification has subsequently been used extensively for major surveys, including a Phase 1 habitat survey of Wales completed in 1996. The classification has been adopted by the Institute of Environmental Assessors as one of the standard methods for preparation of Environmental Statements under the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations 1988. The classification was originally published by NCC (reprinted by JNCC) and is supported by a field manual (JNCC)

Ancient semi-natural woodland is woodland that is known to have existed before 1600 and **Secondary Woodland** is woodland that has developed on land which at sometime has not been wooded.

Local Wildlife Sites are “a discrete area of land which is considered to be of significance for its wildlife features in at least a District/Borough/ Unitary Authority context”. LWS were identified and declared by the Essex Wildlife Trust following a phase one-habitat survey of the District in 1991 (revised 1996 and 1998). Formerly known as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs), County Wildlife Sites and Wildlife Sites. The Epping Forest District has 181 Wildlife Sites. That breaks down into 118 Woodlands, 39 grasslands, 19 mosaic sites and 5 fresh water aquatic.

Veteran trees are of interest biologically, culturally or aesthetically because of its age, size or condition. As a rule, a tree that is either over 250 years old or has a diameter of over 3 metres at breast height can be described as a veteran. However, other factors must be considered such as the location and past management of the tree.

