



A GUIDE FOR LOCAL AUTHORITIES ON THE USE OF THE CUMBRIA BIODIVERSITY EVIDENCE BASE

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**PREPARED BY JUDY PALMER, COUNTY ECOLOGIST, CUMBRIA COUNTY
COUNCIL, ON BEHALF OF THE CUMBRIA BIOLOGICAL DATA NETWORK**

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A Guide to the Cumbria Biodiversity Evidence Base

1 Introduction

The project Report “Cumbria Biodiversity Evidence Base for Cumbria’s Planning Authorities, June 2008” and other documents are available on www.lakelandwildlife.co.uk & click on the PLANNING link. The initial package of information was produced in July 2008; it will require regular updating to ensure that the most up-to-date information is being used in planning decisions.

The GIS data are made available to Local Authorities and it is anticipated that this will be updated on a regular basis as part of their Service Level Agreement with the Cumbria Wildlife Records Centre (developed from the Cumbria Biological Data Network), which is based at Tullie House Museum.

Developers seeking the GIS data on nationally identified protected sites and habitats can go to <http://www.magic.gov.uk/> or view it on the Natural England website, Nature on the Map <http://www.natureonthemap.gov.uk/>. For locally identified sites and species information they should go to the Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre at Tullie House Museum, contact nature@tulliehouse.co.uk.

A summary of the biodiversity resource of Cumbria is shown in Appendix 1 of this guide.

2 Legal and Policy Background

There is a legal obligation to conserve biodiversity as stated in the NERC Act 2006, Section 40 (1) *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, and (3) Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat.*

Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation sets out the government policies for regional and local planning authorities. Key principle (i) states that *Development plan policies and planning decisions should be based upon up-to-date information.* Key principle (ii) requires *policies and planning decisions to maintain, and enhance, restore or add to biodiversity and geological conservation interests.* In addition *Local Development Frameworks should (para 5) identify areas or sites for the restoration or creation of new priority habitats which contribute to regional targets, and support this restoration or creation through appropriate policies..*

The Regional Spatial Strategy Policy EM1:

Plans, strategies, proposals and schemes should secure a ‘step-change’ increase in the region’s biodiversity resources by contributing to the delivery of national, regional and local biodiversity objectives and targets for maintaining extent, achieving condition, restoring and expanding habitats and species populations. This should be done through protecting, enhancing, expanding and linking areas for wildlife within and between the locations of highest biodiversity resources, including statutory and local wildlife sites, and encouraging the conservation and expansion of the ecological fabric elsewhere.

EM1 also requires Local Authorities to *develop a more detailed representation of this spatial information for use in their Local Development Frameworks, and to develop functional ecological frameworks that will address habitat fragmentation and species isolation.*

3 Cumbria Biodiversity Evidence Base Spreadsheet

National policy (PPS 9 key principle (i)) requires Local Authorities to base their policies and decisions on up-to-date information. This spreadsheet attempts to summarise the constituents of a standard biodiversity evidence base for Cumbria, to comply with the PPS 9 Guide to Good Practice. See Appendix 2.

Note: the [spreadsheet](#) includes descriptions of, and links to, the full range of information that should be considered in the planning process, including some areas of information that are not yet available (notably biodiversity opportunities mapping). It identifies which information is provided within the package in 2008, and where other information can be obtained. It provides the following:

- A description of each element of information
- Additional associated information and guidance
- Current availability/ future development
- Its source/ reference with dates as relevant
- Currency of information, i.e. how up-to-date

This spreadsheet is particularly useful for Local Development Framework and Minerals and Waste Development Framework preparation as it describes the full range of information currently considered to make up a Biodiversity Evidence Base.

4 Cumbria Broad Character and Policy Documents

Various documents provide information on the broad character of Cumbria in relation to its main landscape types, the current action for biodiversity within the Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan, the key natural systems and processes, including river basin and coastal processes, and climate change.

This information is essential for MWDF preparation and general contextual understanding. Interesting bedtime reading for development control planners.

5 GIS data

5.1 International Designations

RAMSAR

Wetland areas designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, 1971 (Ramsar Convention). Government policy is that these should be treated the same as SACs and SPAs in terms of protection. All are SSSIs, marine sites may extend beyond the SSSI boundary. There are 5 Ramsar Sites in Cumbria. <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-4>

Important information on sites identified in PPS9. This information is useful for Local Development Framework and Minerals and Waste Development Framework site allocations, planning application scoping, pre-application discussions and planning application determination. See Part I of the ODPM Circular 6/2005.

Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

Areas given special protection under the European Union's Habitats Directive, in the UK through the Habitats Regulations 1994, reviewed 2007. It is Government policy that all candidate SACs should be considered in exactly the same way as designated SACs. With SPAs they form the Natura 2000 series across Europe. All are SSSIs, marine sites may extend beyond the SSSI boundary. <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-4> They are designated

for their habitats, and for certain plant and animal species specifically. Planning authorities are required to carry out a Habitats Regulations Assessment for any plan, programme or project (including development plans and planning permissions) to ensure that any impacts are not detrimental to the features for which the sites are designated. Where a SAC incorporates subtidal and/or intertidal areas it is referred to as a 'European Marine Site' (EMS) and additional information is available in the form of a 'management scheme'.

Important information on sites identified in PPS9. Useful for Local Development Framework and Minerals and Waste Development Framework site allocations, planning application scoping, pre-application discussions and planning application determination. See Part I of the ODPM Circular 6/2005.

Special Protection Area (SPA)

Areas given special protection under the European Union's Birds Directive, and through the Habitats Regulations 1994, reviewed 2007. It is Government policy that all potential SPAs should be considered in exactly the same way as classified SPAs. With SACs they form the Natura 2000 series across Europe. All are SSSIs, marine sites may extend beyond the SSSI boundary. <http://www.jncc.gov.uk/page-4>. They are designated for their birdlife, including rare and vulnerable birds and for regularly occurring migratory species. Planning authorities are required to carry out a Habitats Regulations Assessment for any plan, programme or project (including development plans and planning permissions) to ensure that any impacts are not detrimental to the features for which the sites are designated.

Important information on sites identified in PPS9. Useful for Local Development Framework and Minerals and Waste Development Framework site allocations, planning application scoping, pre-application discussions and planning application determination. See Part I of the ODPM Circular 6/2005.

5.2 UK Designations

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Nationally designated sites. The best wildlife and geological sites in the country designated under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the CROW Act 2000. There are 279 in Cumbria. Planning authorities have specific duties and responsibilities in respect of SSSI's.

Important information on sites identified in PPS9. Useful for Local Development Framework and Minerals and Waste Development Framework site allocations, planning application scoping, pre-application discussions and planning application determination. See Part II of ODPM Circular 6/2005.

Limestone Pavement Orders (LPO)

Limestone Pavement Orders are made under Section 34 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, by Cumbria County Council, LDNPA and YDNPA, as appropriate. This gives statutory protection for these limestone pavements and prohibits the removal or damage of limestone within the designated area. LPO sites are often, but not exclusively, SSSIs. Note: LPOs can include areas where limestone is below the surface, this limestone is also protected. In addition, strictly-speaking, all walling limestone is also protected.

Important information for scoping, pre-application discussions and planning applications. Statutory protection discussed in Part III of ODPM Circular 6/2005.

5.3 Nature Reserves

Nature Reserves UK – Local (LNR)

Local Nature Reserves are declared by local authorities (County, District, National Park, or Parish) under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 as living green spaces in towns, cities, villages and countryside. They are declared and managed for nature conservation, to provide opportunities for research and education, or for simply enjoying and having contact with nature. All LNR's are owned or controlled by local authorities, though they may be managed by others. Some are also SSSIs. There are 8 in Cumbria and approx 1200 nationally.

Important information on sites identified in PPS9. This information is useful for Local Development Framework and Minerals and Waste Development Framework site allocations, planning application scoping, pre-application discussions and planning application determination.

Nature Reserves UK – National (NNR)

National Nature Reserves are some of the most important sites in the UK for wildlife and geology in England, declared by Natural England under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They are managed primarily for their habitats and species but also provide great opportunities for people to experience nature. Almost all NNR's have some form of access provision. They are usually, though not always, managed by Natural England. Cumbria has c 10% of the national number of NNRs.

This information is useful for Local Development Framework and Minerals and Waste Development Framework site allocations, planning application scoping, pre-application discussions and planning application determination.

Nature Reserves - Other

Cumbria Wildlife Trust, RSPB and Woodland Trust reserves in the management control, if not always under the ownership, of the associated organisation. The boundaries given are those currently identified as being under the organisation's control. These are open to change and do not necessarily represent the total area of management control /ownership within the immediate area at a given time.

This information is useful for Local Development Framework and Minerals and Waste Development Framework site allocations, planning application scoping, pre-application discussions and planning application determination. They may have SSSI or County Wildlife Sites designation and will usually support priority habitats and/or priority species.

5.4 Local (County) Sites

County Wildlife Sites (CWS)

County Wildlife Sites are defined areas, identified and selected at a county level for their nature conservation value based on important, distinctive and threatened habitats and species within a national, regional and local context. They are part of the hierarchy of nature conservation site designations present in the UK. They are designated and reviewed at a county level by the Wildlife Sites Selection Panel, using the Wildlife Sites Selection Guidelines. Their designation and management are overseen by the Cumbria Local Sites Partnership. They are recognised within the planning system and are also referred to as Cumbria Local Wildlife Sites. County Wildlife Sites are equivalent to RIGS and together these are known as Local Sites.

Important information on sites identified in PPS9 as requiring protection. This information is useful for Local Development Framework and Minerals and Waste Development Framework site allocations, planning application scoping, pre-application discussions and planning application determination.

Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS)

These are the most important places for geology and geomorphology outside statutorily protected land. They are designated and reviewed at a county level by the Cumbria RIGS Group; selected according to their value for education, scientific study, historical significance or aesthetic qualities. Their designation and management are overseen by the Cumbria Local Sites Partnership. They are recognised within the planning system and are also referred to as Cumbria Local Geological Sites. RIGS are equivalent to County Wildlife Sites and together these are known as Local Sites.

Important information on sites identified in PPS9 as requiring protection. This information is useful for Local Development Framework and Minerals and Waste Development Framework site allocations, planning application scoping, pre-application discussions and planning application determination.

Sites of Invertebrate Significance

These sites are known to have importance for invertebrates but they are not formally designated; some are within SSSIs or County Wildlife Sites. Boundaries of these Sites are not ground-truthed, thus site visits would be required to assess the invertebrate habitat and value. These Sites are determined from analysis of invertebrate records held at Tullie House Museum. A scoring system based on the number of invertebrate species, with national or regional, rare or scarce status, recorded at a site from 1979 to 2005, has generated an index value. Qualifying sites are those that reach a minimum value. This value is equivalent to the minimum selection criteria for a County Wildlife Site (although it may be based on older data).

This information is useful for Local Development Framework and Minerals and Waste Development Framework site allocations, and planning application scoping, pre-application discussions and planning application determination. More of these will become County Wildlife Sites in due course.

5.5 Habitats

Ancient Woodland

Sites mapped by Natural England include two categories, ancient semi-natural woodland (ASNW) and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS). The ancient semi-natural woodland status (ASNW) infers that the site has been a wooded habitat since 1600AD and primarily consists of indigenous, native species that have regenerated naturally. The plantation on ancient woodland status (PAWS) has also been a wooded habitat since 1600AD but has been replanted in the past with primarily non-native species.

Important information on sites identified in PPS9 as requiring protection. This information is useful for Local Development Framework and Minerals and Waste Development Framework site allocations, planning application scoping, pre-application discussions and planning application determination.

Orchards

The location of orchards as defined by Ordnance Survey – MasterMap. Not ground-truthed in Cumbria. These link to the Traditional Orchards UK Priority Habitat, and are discussed in the Traditional Orchards Statement produced for the CBEB.

http://www.lakelandwildlife.co.uk/biodiversity/key_hb_traditionalorchards.html

Useful for site allocations, planning application scoping, pre-application discussions and planning application determination.

Special Roadside Verges

Verges regarded as Special due to their wildflower composition, requiring specific management regimes as a consequence. These verges have been identified by Cumbria County Council from a series of surveys between 1993 and 2004. The 'Special' status is identified using broad guidance rather than strict criteria. Some of these sites are already SSSIs or County Wildlife Sites. Cumbria County Council holds detailed species information, contact judy.palmer@cumbriacc.gov.uk.

This information is useful for scoping, pre-application discussions and planning applications. More of these will become County Wildlife Sites in due course.

UK Priority Habitats

Likely extent of UK priority habitat within Cumbria, with the best assessment of the habitat type available – see Appendix 3 The data should only be used as a guide. Derived statistics should be relative. Area statistics will be misleading. The dataset has been built from a series of input datasets of highly variable quality. Frequently the original datasets identify more than one habitat within each polygon. Where this occurs each polygon was assigned to one priority habitat type. Where conflicts occur, they have been resolved primarily using the 'digitising quality' assessments within the datasets. Where conflicts could not be resolved in this automated way, individual sites were assessed by considering the surrounding habitat types.

Information is presented for the UK priority habitats/ grouped habitats - Blanket Bog, Calcareous Grassland, Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh, Coastal Habitats above High Water, Saline Lagoons, Fen, Marsh and Swamp, Hay Meadows and Pastures, Heathland, Lowland Dry Acid Grassland, Lowland Raised Bog, Semi-Natural Woodland.

This information is useful for Local Development Framework and Minerals and Waste Development Framework site allocations, planning application scoping, pre-application discussions and planning application determination. UK Priority and Cumbria BAP habitats are material to planning decisions - PPS 9

At development plan level this information provides an overview and general location of the priority habitats that need protection, enhancement and linking. Overlaying with the SSSI, County Wildlife Sites and Phase 1 layers reveal the current differences between the information. Whilst one would expect that the majority of SSSIs and CWS would be priority habitat it can be expected that not all priority habitat will be designated. Any undesignated habitat forms essential green infrastructure.

In development control matters the boundary information should be used with caution. The mapping may not be completely accurate but it will provide an indication of the likelihood of finding the priority habitat in the location. This should be raised in scoping opinions and pre-application discussions, with the aim of protection and enhancement or all priority habitat.

5.6 Phase 1 Map and grid for Target Notes

The Habitat Survey of Cumbria was carried out 1983-87 to the standard Phase 1 Nature Conservancy Council method. Standard Phase 1 Method. Coloured habitat maps were produced at 1:10000 scale with each colour representing a different habitat.

There are target notes for particular locations shown by a red circle with a red dot in the centre. Target notes provide brief additional habitat / plant species information. (Note, since the Phase1 survey and notes were undertaken at a time before GIS /GPS there may be errors in the grid references). The information was collated and presented in Wildlife Habitat in Cumbria, ed by Kelly and Perry, 1990.

See guidance in Appendix 6 on the use of the target notes grid.

Although relatively old this information is still useful to check whether semi-natural habitat is likely to be found in a location – the more the colour, the more semi-natural. Use in conjunction with the UK Priority Habitats layer. Target notes require ecological expertise to interpret.

5.7 Key Species

Areas of Key Species Interest

These areas (Appendix 4) are identified from the best available data and their representation varies from species to species (see below). The areas do not represent the full knowledge of any species' distribution, but rather identified areas that are associated with particular species, for various reasons.

The information underlying this layer has been derived from a range of datasets and/or with expert interpretation. They identify areas for which a particular species, or group of species, has been highlighted, through surveys and special projects. The information for these species will require regular updating. This approach could be extended in due course to a wider range of species.

The following are given:

- Great crested newt potential areas and known sites – potential areas are 1km buffers around sites (Note: there are additional great crested newt records on the Key Species layer);
- High Brown & Pearl-bordered Fritillary butterflies extinct and known sites – these are actual areas of known butterfly habitat;
- Hen Harrier wintering area – what it says on the tin;
- Medicinal leech known sites – all in the Lake District;
- Natterjack toads, potential areas generalized to 1 km: extinct and known sites identified by Herpetological Conservation Trust;
- Red Squirrel Reserves and Buffer zones – grey squirrel control, squirrel monitoring and feeding areas. Reserves are conifer plantations, buffer zones are areas identified for management;
- Small Blue butterfly known sites identified by Butterfly Conservation, and potential areas generalized to 1 km (note some extinct sites can no longer support Small Blue because of complete habitat loss);
- Barnacle Goose, Pink-footed Goose and Whooper Swan feeding grounds and flyway areas – identified by RSPB with support from Natural England mainly in response to wind farm development pressures;
- Water Vole core area with known population (area around Warcop is a reintroduction area), and potential area (current potential and future potential).

This information is useful to help to identify whether there may be species issues associated with a development site, and whether positive management/enhancements may be of benefit.

Observations of Key Species

These are records of Cumbria Key Species (Protected, UK Priority (UKBAP) and Cumbria BAP) since 1980, with basic observation data (what, where, when). Further information about any individual record is available from Tullie House. The different-sized squares indicate the resolution of the grid reference provided with the record, e.g. 10m resolution, 100m or 2km resolution - the species was recorded somewhere within the square.

The species records information will normally require interpretation by someone with ecological expertise. It will help to identify the likelihood of a species being present within a certain area. Sometimes the records can give very specific information about the location, e.g. bat roosts and great crested newt ponds. Otherwise they give an indication of the possibility that species may be found in a general location. The absence of a record of a species in a particular area is not proof that it does not occur there.

Wildlife distribution is not fixed and some species are more mobile than others. Whilst some recorded populations may have been lost from some sites during this period, many will persist.

Resources do not exist for comprehensive monitoring of all species, or even of all Key Species, within Cumbria. Species records are collected on an ad hoc basis or through targeted survey work, either focused on particular species or species groups, or on specific areas (e.g. site surveys for development purposes). The species records, therefore, are an indicative, rather than definitive, assessment of the current distribution and frequency of a species.

The Birds information can be separated from the rest for ease of use. It is possible to set up display queries for any species or group of species e.g. European Protected Species.

Some species are 'sensitive' species, which could be damaged by widespread dissemination of detailed locality data. For these records please contact Matt Grose at Tullie House Museum for further advice.

This information is useful for Local Development Framework and Minerals and Waste Development Framework site allocations, planning application scoping, pre-application discussions and planning application determination. Protected and UK Priority and Cumbria BAP species are material to planning decisions - PPS 9

6 Summary Table of UK Priority Habitats Presence in Cumbria

Information on the current extent of UK Priority Habitats in each of the districts, national parks and in the Joint Character Areas throughout Cumbria is provided in the [spreadsheet](#). (See 10 below for explanation of UK Priority Habitats and S41 NERC Act Habitats of Principal Importance in England)

The priority habitat area information is presented as absolute area figures and % area figures for various administrative areas - the county as a whole, each district (whole district and area of district outside the national parks), the national parks and the Joint Character Areas. It should be noted that the Cumbria and district administrative boundaries are used, which include intertidal land, so the % figures need to be considered with this in mind. The absolute area figures for the habitat types are generated directly from the habitat layer provided to the Local Authorities.

Note - the national habitat inventory information does not cover all UK priority habitats. Therefore the actual total area figures of priority habitat within any one district or natural area will increase as more habitats are mapped, and the relative percentages of priority habitat will therefore change.

This information is particularly useful for Local Development Framework and Minerals and Waste Development Framework preparation and general contextual understanding of these habitats within the county.

7 List of Cumbria Key Species

This list is on the website <http://www.lakelandwildlife.co.uk/biodiversity/keyspecies.aspx>. It provides information on the legislative and policy status of each protected, UK Priority (UK BAP) and Cumbria BAP species. It provides links to the relevant species statements through the English name, and links to the Tullie House Museum information with distribution maps through the scientific name. There are also photographs of many of the species.

This list is very useful for carrying out quick checks and learning about the status of these species in Cumbria. In addition Tullie House Museum holds a wide range of additional notable, rare and scarce species that Tullie House Museum holds information on – for these follow the SPECIES link at the top of the page.

8 Summary Table of Cumbria Key Species Presence

Information on the current known presence of Cumbria Key Species in each of the districts, national parks and in the Joint Character Areas throughout Cumbria is provided in the [spreadsheet](#):

This information is particularly useful for Local Development Framework and Minerals and Waste Development Framework preparation and general contextual understanding of these species within the county. In due course it is expected that there will be at least a minimal statement on each of these species in relation to the planning system.

9 Key Species-Richness Map

The map in Appendix 5 shows the distribution of ‘richness’ of Key Species (protected, UK priority and Cumbria BAP) currently recorded on the wildlife records database at Tullie House Museum, for 2km squares. It is interesting to compare this with the UK priority habitat map and note that some of the areas with a reduced extent of priority habitat nonetheless have high species diversity. This map complements the priority habitat map in providing a broad overview of the priority biodiversity resource in Cumbria.

The information underlying the Key Species Richness Map is limited by the lack of comprehensive systematic coverage and, to some extent, represents recorder effort, i.e. reflects the locations that recorders have visited, and under-records those that are not visited. In addition some Key Species are not included as data for these are not yet included in the wildlife records database at Tullie House Museum.

This information is background information for general understanding of the priority biodiversity resource in Cumbria

10 Species and Habitats Statements for Cumbria

What are UK Priority Species and Habitats? These are animal and plant species, and habitats listed by the UK Biodiversity Partnership as being in need of conservation action; they are therefore part of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. This list of species and habitats was revised in the Species and Habitat Review June 2007. The list is used as the basis for the Sec of State's S.41 NERC Act list of Species and Habitats of Principal Importance in England, and these lists are now the same, except that the S41 list also includes the Hen Harrier.

In Cumbria we currently have 240 of the 1149 UK priority species (941 Species of Principal Importance in England) and 47 of the 65 UK priority habitats (56 Habitats of Principal Importance in England).

Many of the UK Priority Species are also protected by law through the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended, and the Habitats Regulations (European Protected Species). The total list of protected and UK priority species in Cumbria is 290.

Cumbria-specific species information has been prepared for Barn Owl, Bats, Great Crested Newts, Hen Harriers, Natterjack Toad, Otter, Red Squirrel, Small Blue butterfly, Reptiles, Water Voles, and wintering geese and swans. In future it is expected that a statement, however brief, will be prepared for the majority of protected and priority species in Cumbria.

Cumbria-specific habitat statements are provided covering all priority habitats in Cumbria, except the 'arable field margins'. Where appropriate they have been grouped together.

These statements are found on <http://www.lakelandwildlife.co.uk/biodiversity/index.html>. They are useful for Local Development Framework and Minerals and Waste Development Framework site allocations, planning application scoping, pre-application discussions and planning application determination. Priority habitats and species are material to planning decisions – PPS9. The statements have sections on planning considerations and enhancements.

11 Summary Document – Habitat Targets, Planning Considerations and Enhancement Opportunities

This [summary](#) draws together all of the separate 'Planning Considerations' and 'Enhancement Opportunities' sections from all of the species and habitats statements, and adds selected Habitat Targets taken from the North West Biodiversity Forum paper 30 April 2008. The Targets focus on those habitats most likely to be impacted upon by the planning system and where Local Authorities can have the most positive impact.

PPS 9 and RSS Policy EM1 require Local Authorities to contribute to regional biodiversity targets, and PPS 9 requires Local Development Frameworks to identify areas for restoration or creation of habitats, with policy support (para 5 (ii)).

This information is useful in both development control and forward planning work. The Planning Considerations and Enhancement Opportunities sections identify issues that should be considered through protection and enhancement measures. The Habitat Targets provide a focus for enhancements through planning decisions.

12 Supplementary Guides and Planning Issues Statements

These two guides provide definitions and links to websites with further information. Well worth a look. Here are links to them on the www.lakelandwildlife.co.uk website.

[A Guide to Biodiversity Planning Policy and Guidance](#)

[A Guide to Wildlife Legislation and Site Designations](#)

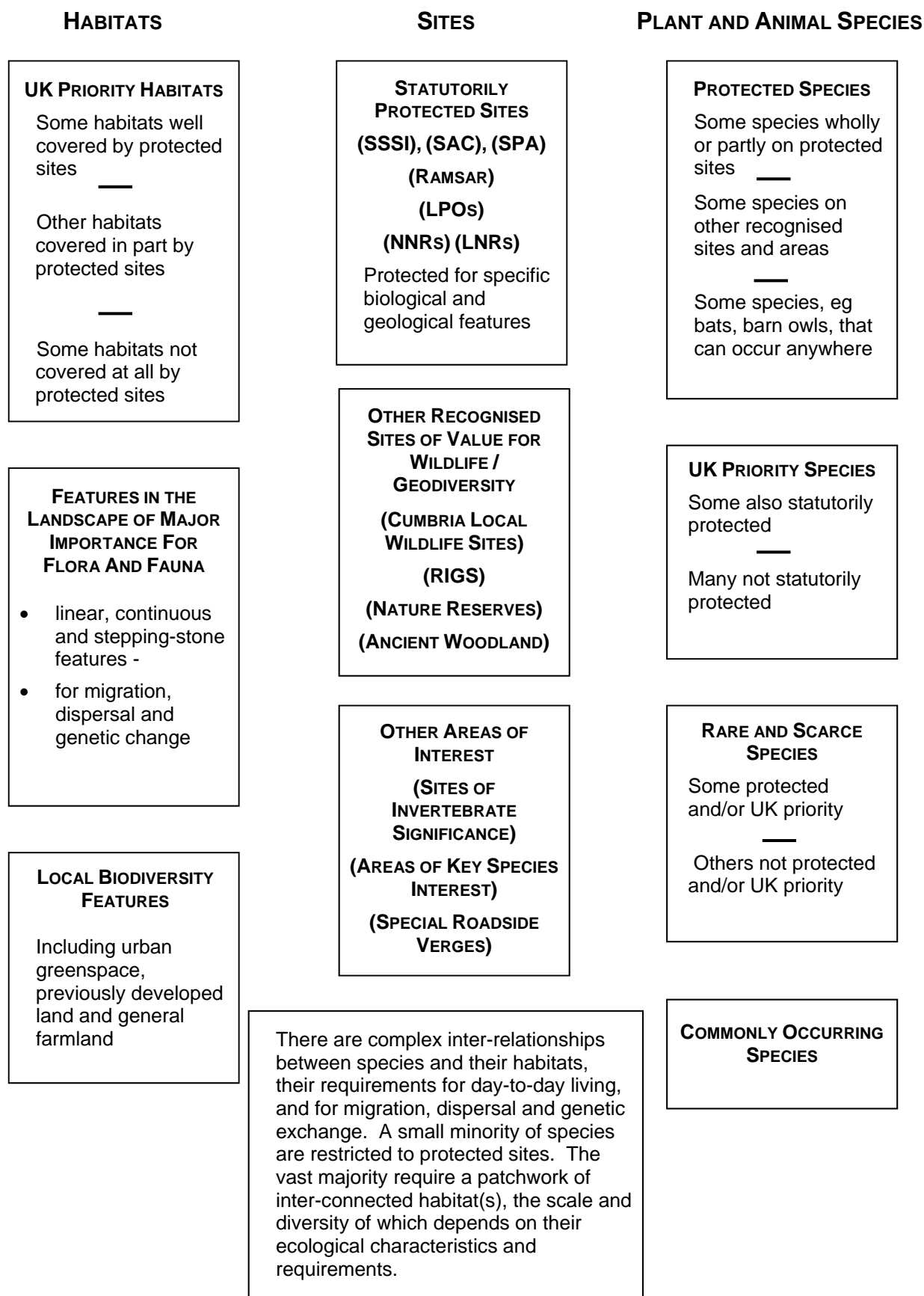
Planning Issues Statements are being prepared for the following frequently occurring issues:

- Buildings and biodiversity
- Biodiversity enhancement

- Previously developed land and biodiversity
- Rivers and wetland issues
- Off-site impacts
- Timing of works and surveys
- Mitigation and compensation

Appendix 1 Cumbria's Biodiversity Resource

Cumbria's Biodiversity Resource



Appendix 2: Extracts from PPS9 Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: A Guide to Good Practice

ODPM, Defra and English Nature, 2006, pp. 3-4. Section 2: Information and Evidence

Good practice summary

The planning system requires a strong environmental evidence base and planning authorities can help establish and maintain this by adopting the following good practice:

- making full use of GIS and other web-based information sources;
- identifying key information gaps and filling these with further survey work;
- using information to identify and map areas best suited for proactive enhancement measures,
- integrating information and priorities established in biodiversity/geodiversity action plans and partnerships;
- supporting the establishment of a Local Record Centre;
- ensuring access to in-house or shared ecological/geological expertise; and tapping the knowledge and experience held within the wider community

2.1 The first key principle of PPS9 reflects the requirement set out in paragraph 19 of PPS1⁵ that plan policies and planning decisions should be based on up-to-date information about the environmental characteristics of an area. PPS9 makes clear that these characteristics should include the relevant biodiversity and geological resources.

2.2 Information on biodiversity and geological resources is required to:

- Provide the evidence base needed to prepare regional spatial strategies (RSS) and local development frameworks (LDFs), to carry out Sustainability Appraisals and to ensure the test of soundness is met at Examinations.
- Deliver a spatial planning approach which applies information from all policies and programmes influencing the nature of places and how they can function, including regional and local Biodiversity and Geodiversity Action Plans.
- Set targets and indicators to measure the implementation of RSS and LDF policies and other regional and local government objectives, such as those of Regional Sustainable Development Frameworks and sustainable community strategies.
- To contribute to the provision of information needed for the Annual Monitoring Reports required for RSS and LDDs⁶.
- Appraise environmental impacts of all development proposals, including where necessary to satisfy the requirements of the Environmental Impact Assessment Regulations (EIA Regulations) and the Habitats Regulations⁷.
- Inform a strategic and spatially planned approach to the conservation, enhancement and restoration of biodiversity and geology.

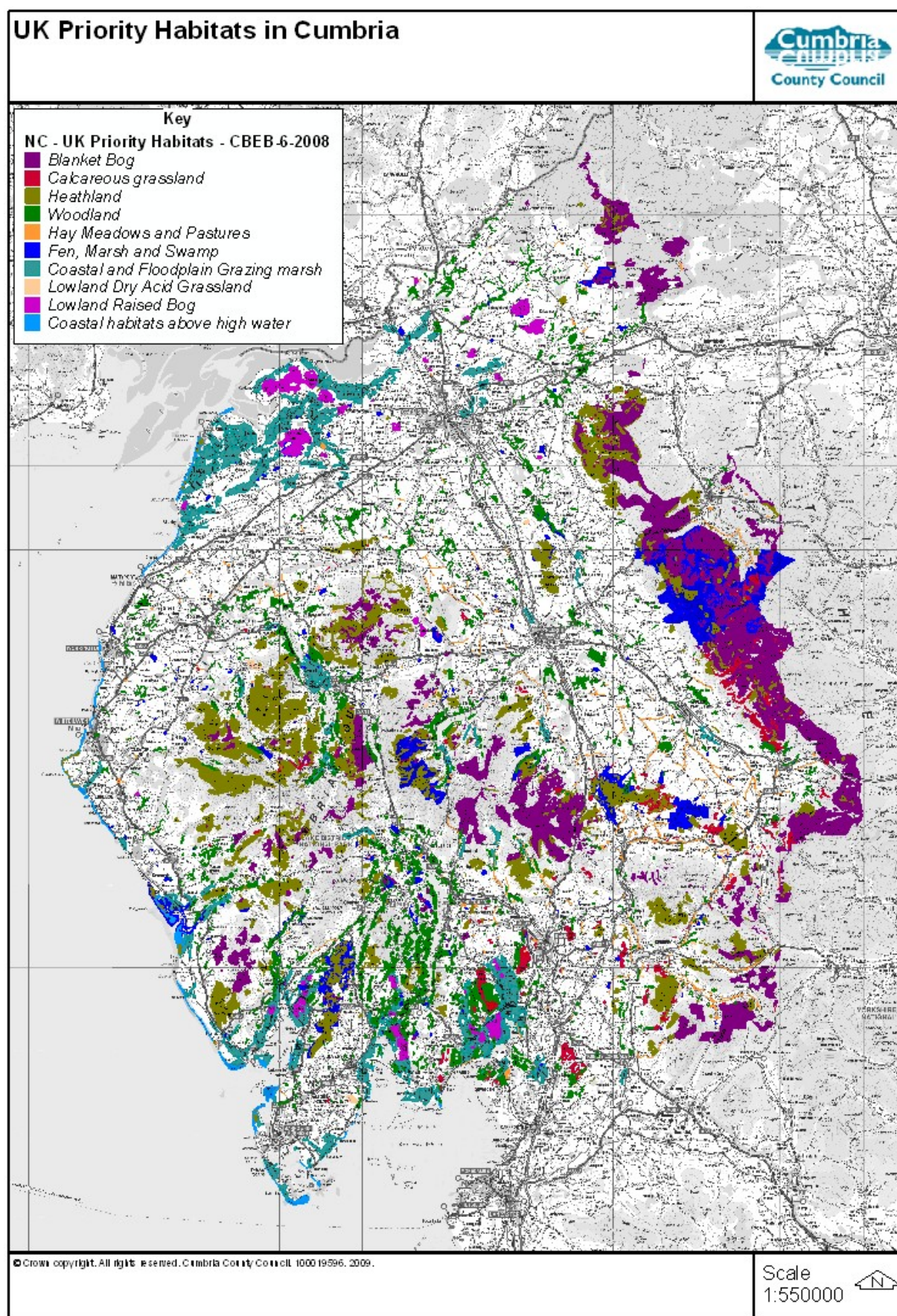
THE KEY ELEMENTS OF AN EVIDENCE BASE

2.3 A good information base must provide planners with an understanding of the natural environment including the landscape and its underlying geology, the range of habitats it supports and the natural processes and human activities which shape and influence this. It should enable planners to recognise those natural features distinctive to their area, their distribution and extent and the trends affecting them, particularly those likely to be most vulnerable to the effects of climate change. Below is a checklist of key elements to this information base:

A checklist of components of an environmental information base

- the broad bio-geographical, geological and geomorphological character of the area, creating its main landscapes types;
- key natural systems and processes within the area, including fluvial and coastal;
- the location and extent of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites;
- the distribution of UKBAP priority habitats and species as well as areas of irreplaceable natural habitat, such as ancient woodland or limestone pavement;
- habitats where specific land management practices are required for their conservation;
- main landscape features which, due to their linear or continuous nature, are important for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchanges of plants and animals, including any potential for new habitat corridors to link any isolated sites that hold nature conservation value, and therefore improve species dispersal;
- areas with potential for habitat enhancement or restoration, including those necessary to help biodiversity adapt to climate change or which could assist with the habitats shifts and species migrations arising from climate change;
- an audit of green space within built areas and where new development is proposed;
- information on the presence of protected and priority species and areas where these are likely to occur;
- information on the biodiversity and geodiversity value of previously developed sites and the opportunities for incorporating this in developments; and
- areas of geological value which would benefit from enhancement and management.

Appendix 3 UK Priority Habitats in Cumbria

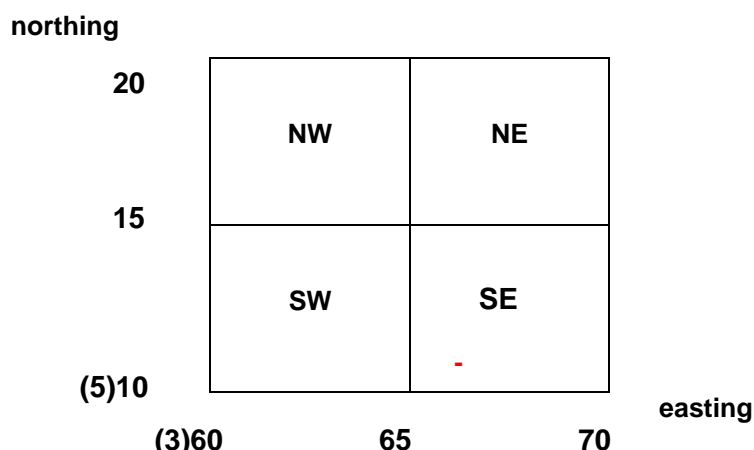


Appendix 4 Phase 1 Habitat Survey - Target Note Guidance

Target Notes are additional habitat / plant species information.

Target Notes are available by clicking on the Phase 1 Target Note layer. The individual Target Notes are listed in 5km x 5km grid squares groups (i.e. four to the 10km square SW, NW, SE, NE), and, within this, in 1 km x 1km square groups.

Each 5km x 5km grid square list (e.g. SD 61 SE) has an introductory brief description followed by the 1km square groupings.



Target Notes are found using their grid references. The Target Note lists use NY/SD format whereas the GIS grid references use the corresponding number format. SD = 3.....4....., whilst NY = 3.....5.....

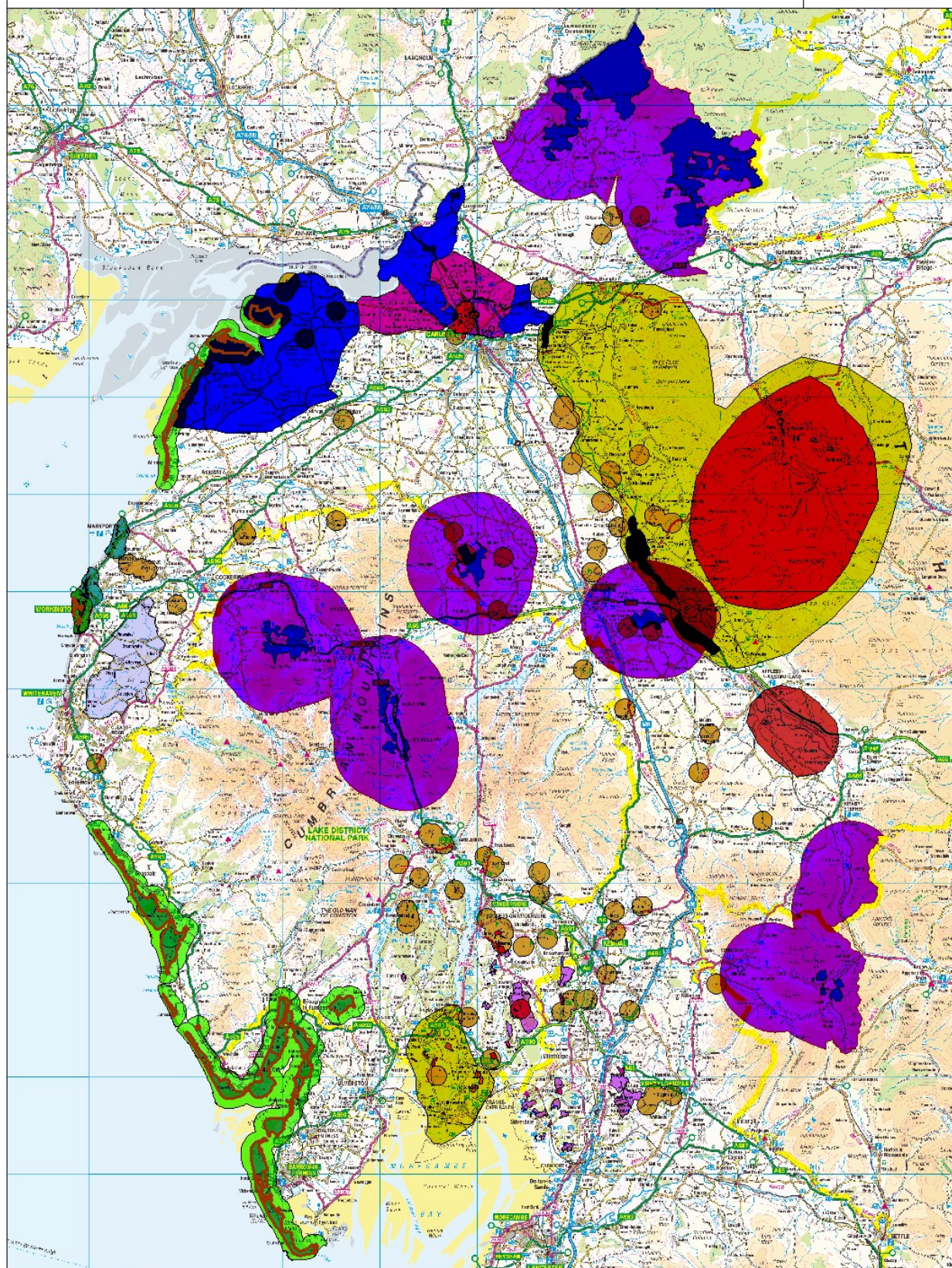
To find a Target Note:

1. Estimate the grid reference by placing the GIS cursor over the Target Note symbol e.g. 366289 (easting) 510695 (northing)
2. Convert the grid reference to SD or NY – the above example is NY 66289 10695; that is you remove the 3 from the easting and the 5 from the northing
3. Work out the 6 figure grid reference (100m resolution) - NY 662 106
4. Work out the 4 figure grid reference (1km resolution) - NY 66 10
5. Click on the hotlink to the Target Notes to find the 5km x 5km square document (NY 61 SE).
6. The target note listings are not always in the same order so the easy thing to do is to scroll down the list and look for the correct 4 figure grid reference (i.e. for the 1km square).
7. If there is more than one target note per 1km square please be careful to check the grid references carefully and bear in mind that the Phase 1 was done long before GIS so grid references are not as accurate, and often do not match up exactly. It is usually possible to work out which is which.

J A Palmer, County Ecologist and former Phase 1 Surveyor.....

Appendix 5 Areas of Key Species Interest

Key Species Interest Zones



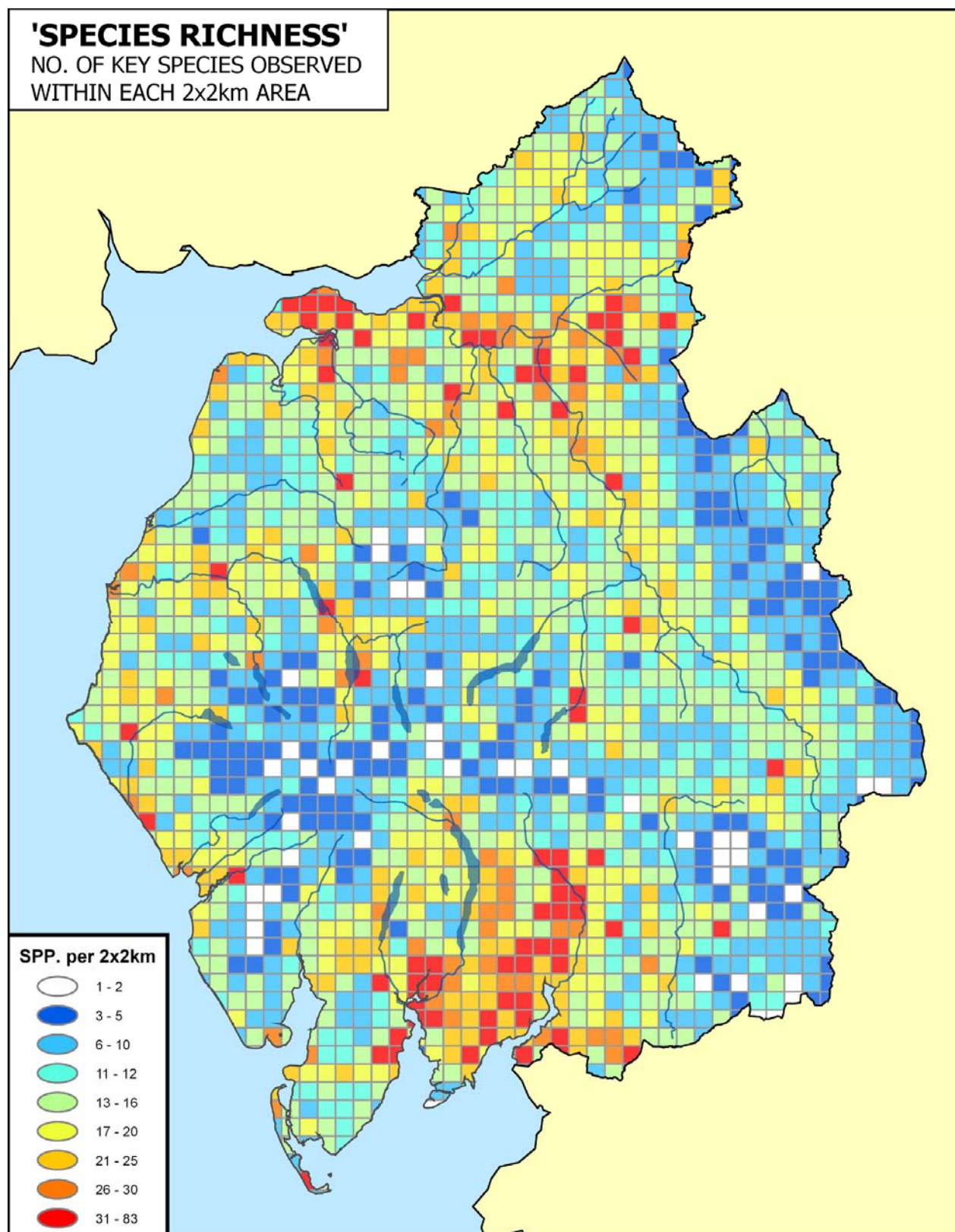
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Scale
1:350000



Appendix 6 Key Species Richness

See above for limitations of this map. It is interesting to compare this with the UK priority habitat map and note that some of the areas with a reduced extent of priority habitat nonetheless have high species diversity. This map complements the priority habitat map in providing a broad overview of the priority biodiversity resource in Cumbria.



Appendix 7: Checklists for use of the Evidence Base for Planning Purposes - LDF preparation, development control and monitoring

The information can be used at a range of levels. For **policy preparation** knowledge is required of the designated sites, habitats and species, their location, potential threats and trends, areas of irreplaceable habitat, key habitat networks, and areas with potential for biodiversity enhancement (PPS9 paragraph 5 (ii)).

Area Action Plans and Site Allocations, in addition, require information at a site-based level to ensure that biodiversity requirements are fully taken into account both on the site itself and in relation to the site, to ensure that development will not detrimentally impact upon wildlife on the site, on adjacent sites or on wildlife that uses the site as a movement corridor.

The **development control process** requires this information to ensure that planning applications are adequate and can be validated, in particular to scope the information required to be submitted with an application.

The **annual monitoring reports** require background knowledge of the sites, habitats and species that should be monitored, as both contextual and core output indicators.

Further information:

[Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation](#)

[Government Circular ODPM 6/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation](#) - Statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system, Government Circular 6/2005

[Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: A Guide to Good Practice](#), March 2006, the companion guide to PPS 9 and the Government Circular 6/2005

Checklists

1. Local Development Framework Core Strategy & Policy Preparation

Cumbria Broad Character Documents

- Natural Area Profiles and Joint Character Area Documents
- Community Strategy District Biodiversity Profiles
- North West Regional Spatial Strategy Resource and Opportunity Diagram (and any follow-up Regional mapping)
- Cumbria Biodiversity Resource and Opportunity Map (not yet available)
- Supportive information: A Flora of Cumbria, Breeding Birds of Cumbria, Wildlife habitat in Cumbria, UK Biodiversity Action Plan, North West Biodiversity Audit

Key Natural Systems and Processes

- Shoreline Management Plans
- Catchment Flood Management Plans (in prep)
- River Basin Management Plans (in prep)
- European Marine Site Management Schemes and Reg 33 advice
- Defra Guidance on Building Capacity to adapt to Climate Change
- The Cumbria Climate Change Strategy

Detailed Knowledge of the Biodiversity Resource

- Internationally and nationally designated sites
- Local (County) Sites

- Other sites (for example Nature Reserves, Ancient Woodland, Sites of Invertebrate Significance)
- UK Priority Habitats list, distribution, maps
- Phase 1 Habitat Survey information
- Key Species List (protected and priority) and distribution
- Areas of Key Species Interest maps
- Supportive Information: Cumbria Species & Habitat Statements, Cumbria and UK Biodiversity Species Action Plans, Species' distributions from www.lakelandwildlife.co.uk, Flora of Cumbria, Breeding Birds of Cumbria

Planning Considerations

- Cumbria Habitats and Species Statements
- Planning Issues Statements (in preparation - Previously developed land and biodiversity, Rivers and wetland issues, Off-site impacts)
- Spatial Planning Guide for On-shore Wind Farm Developments in Cumbria

Biodiversity Enhancement Opportunities

- Cumbria Habitats and Species Statements
- North West Region and Cumbria Priority Habitat Targets
- Natural Area Profiles
- Planning Issues Statements (in preparation - Biodiversity enhancement, Buildings and biodiversity, Previously developed land and biodiversity, Rivers and wetland issues)
- North West Wetland Network

2. LDF Site Allocations, Area Action Plans

Detailed Knowledge of the Biodiversity Resource

- Internationally and nationally designated sites
- Local (County) Sites
- Other sites (for example Nature Reserves, Ancient Woodland, Sites of Invertebrate Significance)
- Phase 1 Habitat Survey information
- UK Priority Habitat maps
- Areas of Key Species Interest maps and Key Species Observations (expert interpretation required)
- Site specific habitat and species field surveys and assessment of likely impacts
- Supportive Information: Cumbria Species & Habitats Statements, Cumbria and UK Biodiversity Species Action Plans, Species' distributions from www.lakelandwildlife.co.uk,

Planning Considerations

- Cumbria Habitats and Species Statements
- Planning Issues Statements (in preparation – Timing of Works and Surveys, Buildings and Biodiversity, Previously developed land and biodiversity, Rivers and wetland issues, Off-site impacts)
- Spatial Planning Guide for On-shore Wind Farm Developments in Cumbria
- Supportive Information: Cumbria and UK Biodiversity Species Action Plans

Biodiversity Enhancement Opportunities

- Cumbria Habitats and Species Statements
- North West Region and Cumbria Priority Habitat Targets
- Natural Area Profiles
- Planning Issues Statements (in preparation - Biodiversity enhancement, Buildings and biodiversity, Previously developed land and biodiversity, Rivers and wetland issues)
- North West Wetland Network

3. Development Control

Detailed Knowledge of the Biodiversity Resource

- Internationally and nationally designated sites
- Local (County) Sites
- Other sites (for example Nature Reserves, Ancient Woodland, Sites of Invertebrate Significance)
- Phase 1 Habitat Survey information
- UK Priority Habitat maps
- Areas of Key Species Interest maps and Key Species Observations (expert interpretation required)
- Site specific habitat and species field surveys and assessment of likely impacts
- Supportive Information: Cumbria Species & Habitats Statements, Cumbria and UK Biodiversity Species Action Plans, Species' distributions from www.lakelandwildlife.co.uk,

Planning Considerations

- Cumbria Habitats and Species Statements
- Planning Issues Statements (in preparation – Timing of Works and Surveys, Buildings and Biodiversity, Previously developed land and biodiversity, Rivers and wetland issues, Off-site impacts)
- Spatial Planning Guide for On-shore Wind Farm Developments in Cumbria
- Supportive Information: Cumbria and UK Biodiversity Species Action Plans

Biodiversity Enhancement Opportunities

- Cumbria Habitats and Species Statements
- North West Region and Cumbria Priority Habitat Targets
- Natural Area Profiles
- Planning Issues Statements (in preparation - Biodiversity enhancement, Buildings and biodiversity, Previously developed land and biodiversity, Rivers and wetland issues)
- North West Wetland Network

4. Monitoring

Contextual

- SSSI favourable condition (Natural England)
- Cumbria Local Sites Condition (Cumbria Local Sites Partnership)
- Priority habitat extent and ancient woodland extent
- North West Region and Cumbria Priority Habitat Targets
- Key Species Interest – Species Statements and Areas of Key Species Interest maps
- Supportive information: Wildlife Habitat in Cumbria for 1987 habitat areas; Cumbria Biodiversity Resource and Opportunities Map (not yet available); Breeding Birds of Cumbria; National indicators

Core Output (Options for monitoring delivery of planning policies through development control)

- Loss of existing area of designated and other sites through planning decisions
- Loss of existing area of priority habitat through planning decisions
- Gain in area of wildlife habitat created for biodiversity benefit through planning decisions
- Length of hedgerow lost/gained through planning decisions
- Number of planning applications approved including a packet of measures to promote biodiversity (e.g. business parks and housing developments)

- Number of planning applications approved that have a significant negative impact protected or priority species
- Number of planning applications approved with specific measures for protection of protected or priority species/ or number with these conditions discharged
- Number of planning applications approved with enhancement measures for protection of protected or priority species/ or number with these conditions discharged