

Section F: Turning plans into action

1. Partnership and leadership

1.1 The need for partnership

Conserving bio- and geodiversity is not the sole preserve of scientists and conservationists. It relies on the work of virtually all sectors of society, whose activity either directly impacts on the natural environment, or influences the attitudes or understanding of those who do. In Devon, as in the rest of the British Isles, the fate of the natural world is shaped by people in government and statutory agencies, local authorities, the farming and land-owning profession, voluntary conservation organisations, industry and commerce and, very importantly, all of us in our everyday lives.

If conservation relies on the actions of us all, then it has to compete with all the pressing demands on resources, time and money facing every individual and organisation. It tends to fair badly in this competition, and the resources for conservation have always been limited. Aside from the limitation placed on conservation by a lack of recognition of its legitimacy, another major obstacle to progress in the past was the lack of co-ordination between those engaged in conservation activity. For many years there was inadequate linkage between the conservation actions of different sectors, such that actions have often been disparate and *ad hoc*, following no common objectives.

If the limited resources for conservation are to be put to best use, there needs to be co-ordination between those with resources at their disposal. Partnership is needed, based on the recognition and agreement of common objectives, and the sharing of effort. Partnership - real partnership based on agreement and commonality of approach - is the guiding principle behind biodiversity planning, and is the driving force behind this document. There has been a big increase in partnership work over the last few years. This is one of the major successes of the bio- and geodiversity action planning process.

It is important that this partnership work continues and develops. Partnership for bio- and geodiversity conservation needs to embrace not only those organisations traditionally associated with environmental conservation, but also those sectors who, because of their powers, activities, responsibilities or interests have important roles to play in

ensuring that our natural resources are utilised in a environmentally sustainable manner.

Partnership through bio- and geodiversity action plans at the County level is about more than words. If it is to mean anything at all it has to be about true engagement between disparate interest groups, and real agreement over objectives which can be held in common. If the process behind the development of this document has succeeded, every member of the Devon Biodiversity Partnership should regard themselves as being part of a genuine partnership which shares a common set of goals for Devon's natural environment.

A local partnership for bio- and geodiversity in Devon offers the chance to generate a new sense of common ownership of the subject, the problems and the solutions. It offers perhaps the best chance of gaining the commitment necessary to secure real conservation of Devon's natural environment in the future.

The Action Plans set out in this document reflect the roles of a wide variety of organisations and sectors in Devon. They seek to play to the strengths and abilities of those organisations and sectors, while setting challenging targets which will stretch the efforts of all parties. Whilst the action plans list the key partners in the delivery of the priority actions, it should be recognised that their full achievement will require the active co-operation of a wide range of bodies and individuals.

2. The roles of key sectors

2.1 The role of farmers and land managers

Farmers and land managers are central to achieving the goal of maintaining a rich and varied natural environment in Devon. As stewards of most of the land surface of the County, it is they who ultimately control the future of much of Devon's biodiversity and even aspects of its geodiversity.

In a rural County like Devon the land has traditionally been the basis of much of the local economy, as well as being the backdrop to everybody's lives, and the habitat of wildlife. Farmers and landowners are expected to balance their need to gain a viable return from their land with their responsibility to maintain the landscape and wildlife qualities enjoyed by the rest of the community. This has never been an easy task, and has become harder in recent times, as the farming industry experiences troubled times.

As the practitioners at the sharp end of the land use process, farmers' activities have always been fundamental for biodiversity. If economic circumstances, subsidy weighting, public opinion and personal preference do not favour conservation on the farm, then it will not happen. Until recently the first three of these factors, and often the fourth as well, did not provide a climate which encouraged conservation, and subsidy structures in particular gave a strong incentive to intensify land use at the expense of wildlife. That any biodiversity has survived at all in Devon's countryside has much to do with the personal preferences of many farmers who chose to retain wildlife habitats despite the pressures and incentives that might cause them to do otherwise.

However, much biodiversity has survived on farmland, and the circumstances affecting farmers' choices over its future are changing quickly. In June 2003, the Common Agricultural Policy was reformed in England such that subsidy and production are due to be decoupled. Instead, there will be a [Single Payment Scheme](#), based on farm area. There will also be an element of cross-compliance, with receipt of subsidy being dependent on the meeting of certain basic environmental standards. Meanwhile the vagaries of the market will determine what succeeds and what fails for the farmer, even more directly than it does now. Farmers are already turning to alternative sources of income from their land, to supplement their traditional products, and amongst these alternatives the value of an attractive and diverse natural environment on the farm is being seen more and more as a potential economic asset.

The use in recent years of agri-environment measures such as Countryside Stewardship, the Environmentally Sensitive Areas (both of these programmes are now replaced by [Environmental Stewardship](#)), and woodland establishment and management grants has served to demonstrate that maintaining features which contribute to biodiversity can be a viable part of running a successful farm enterprise. As these schemes develop further the biodiversity targets set out in this document are likely to influence their extent and local targeting.

To support the farmer in meeting the challenge of retaining and enhancing biodiversity as a part of the farm business, advisory services have developed in Devon over recent years, and are developing further. Such advice may come in the form of environmental information in the context of wider farm business support services, as offered by the Agricultural Development and Advisory Service (ADAS), facilitation of agri-environmental grant schemes as provided by Defra's Rural Development Service (RDS – now part of Natural England), or guidance on statutory environmental regulations as provided by the Environment Agency and local authorities. Local authorities, National Park Authorities and AONB Services also offer more general countryside management services to the farmer. Several conservation organisations offer practical advice on farm management for wildlife, ranging from those focusing on designated sites

(Natural England), Wildlife Sites (Devon Wildlife Trust), special species (RSPB), and general advice on wildlife on the farm (Devon FWAG). Forestry and woodland management advice also affects biodiversity interests, and includes statutory providers (the Forestry Commission) and more recently established independent services such as the South West Forest project and Silvanus.

2.2 The Role of Industry and Commerce

Alongside the farming industry, the rest of Devon's business community is also instrumental in determining the quality of the County's natural environment. From the siting of built development to the education of its employees, all sectors of industry and commerce can affect Devon's bio- and geodiversity positively or negatively.

Environmental issues have become significant for marketing departments, if not always yet for boardrooms, for the simple reason that customers now rate environmental performance and quality as an important factor when making their consumer choices. A company which demonstrates a good environmental track record, offers products whose creation and packaging has not and will not harm the environment, and which develops, uses resources and deals with its waste in a manner which does not deplete or pollute the natural environment is likely to gain some customer preference over one which does not.

As well as ensuring that their working practices do not harm or deplete the natural environment, business is also in a position to contribute hugely to its conservation and enhancement. The investment and return from developing industrial sites and business premises offers opportunities to put something back, by providing financial, material or project management support for environmental projects on or near the sites concerned. An enlightened transport policy can promote car sharing, use of public transport, home working and other measures which reduce a business's impact on its local environment. These and similar measures look good in the brochures and the annual review, and also have a real and positive effect.

A company with a commitment to its local natural environment can contribute significantly to generating awareness of that environment, by offering its employees training and personal development opportunities in the form of chances to experience wildlife, work on local conservation projects, and learn about environmental issues and the part the company has to play in influencing those issues.

Some aspects of industry, however, have a much more fundamental role to play in the maintenance of Devon's natural diversity, and especially its geodiversity. The County's geology is a valuable economic resource in its

own right, as a source of aggregate, clays for ceramics and manufacturing and as a source of building and decorative stone. The many working quarries and dormant sites present are a fundamental part of the County's geodiversity. It is therefore essential that a dialogue is maintained between the industry at all levels from multinational companies to local operators to ensure that the rich resource they have revealed remains available, wherever appropriate, for geological study and education and as an cornerstone of Devon's rich geodiversity.

An attractive countryside with rich and varied wildlife and a natural or historical landscape is crucial to SW England's tourist industry. Without its patchwork of hedgerows, flowery meadows, rocky coastlines, clean beaches, colourful rockpools, steep wooded valleys and boulder-strewn rivers, Devon would not attract the millions of visitors who come to the County every season. Without them the millions of pounds injected into the local economy through the tourist trade would also be largely lost. In this respect the economic good sense for business to contribute to maintaining a rich and varied natural environment in Devon is directly apparent. An increasing interest and demand for 'Green Tourism' products in the County serves to reinforce the links between a flourishing biodiversity and healthy commercial sector.

2.3 The Role of Government Departments and Agencies

The local representatives of Government Departments and Agencies in Devon and the South West, especially (but not exclusively) the Department of the Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra), occupy pivotal roles in the achievement of bio- and geodiversity conservation. In the allocation of resources and expertise at the local level, the implementation of regulation and the approval of development policy and in influencing national and European policy and funding mechanisms, officials can have far-reaching influences on the County's bio- and geodiversity. Though confined by the national frameworks in which they operate, an understanding of established bio- and geodiversity conservation objectives offers Departments a valuable opportunity to mould and monitor their actions and policies, in the knowledge of their impact and effect.

Statutory Agencies, notably Natural England, the Environment Agency and the Forestry Commission, have been instrumental in achieving environmental conservation for many years. Today they are working more than ever to co-ordinate their actions and initiatives to achieve a strong and coherent approach to the promotion of biodiversity and geodiversity conservation. As regulators and statutory undertakers with regard to water conservation and designated sites, providers of advice and assistance to landowners, business and local authorities, funders of countryside projects through voluntary bodies and local authorities, and

land managers in their own right, these Agencies figure frequently as Key Partners in the Action Plans in this document.

2.4 The Role of Local Authorities

Many of the roles and responsibilities of local government have a direct or indirect bearing on bio- and geodiversity conservation. As planning authorities, the County and District Councils, the Unitary Authorities and the National Parks determine the impact of almost all development subject to planning law on the natural environment. The degree to which planning authorities appraise themselves of the environmental features of land subject to planning proposals, the extent to which they seek to develop policies which recognise the need to steer development away from land rich in biodiversity or with key geodiversity features, and the nature of the working relationships they develop with outside sources of expertise and advice on conservation matters, will determine their effectiveness in using the planning system to serve the interests of the natural environment. Local authorities also exercise discretionary powers which can be used to promote conservation initiatives and facilitate a more co-ordinated approach to land use and management, in partnership with others.

Devon's two National Park Authorities, for Dartmoor and Exmoor, have a specific nature conservation remit and take a central role in the delivery of bio- and geodiversity objectives within their respective areas. Through direct land management, development control functions, advice to land owners and managers, survey and monitoring work and visitor management and information services, National Park staff are actively pursuing bio- and geodiversity conservation both in terms of the protection and proactive enhancement of the natural environment of these especially rich and magnificent elements of the Devon landscape.

Devon is fortunate in containing a number of local authority-based countryside services which exist to support initiatives or directly carry out work to protect and enhance the natural environment. Operating in some of the most attractive and wildlife-rich areas of the County, bodies such as Coast & Countryside Services are instrumental in carrying out community exercises to generate support for conservation, for instance within the County's Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty. In addition, they provide finance for conservation initiatives, either directly or via voluntary bodies equipped to deliver conservation on the ground.

2.5 The Role of the NGO and Voluntary Sector

A range of NGO, including voluntary bodies concerned with wildlife, geological or landscape conservation operate in Devon. The political

significance of voluntary organisations lies in their support from and direct links with the public, through members and supporters. In addition, the strength of voluntary bodies lies in their ability to react quickly and adapt their operations in order to fulfil specific conservation functions, and their relative freedom to operate beyond the immediate scope of political constraints. These factors, combined with a professional approach and access to new sources of funding, are serving to increase the importance of NGOs in bio- and geodiversity conservation action in Devon.

NGO and voluntary bodies such as the National Trust, Devon Wildlife Trust, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds, Vincent Wildlife Trust and the Woodland Trust acquire and manage land directly as nature reserves, and between them own and manage some of the most important sites in the County, not only for biodiversity but also for geodiversity. Several of these bodies offer expertise and advisory service to other land managers such as farmers. These include Devon Wildlife Trust, Devon Farming & Wildlife Advisory Group (FWAG) and the RSPB. For example, Devon FWAG offers a whole-farm advisory service to farmers on request, and the RSPB has developed an advisory project specifically for owners of land supporting the curlew in South Devon.

Devon RIGS Group is responsible for coordinating the selection of County Geological Sites in Devon (also known as Regionally Important Geological Sites, or RIGS). The group is an NGO whose voluntary membership includes a wide body of professional and amateur geological and environmental specialists, including representatives of the local universities of Plymouth and Exeter, Natural England, the British Geological Survey, Natural England, the Environment Agency, independent geological consultants and local authorities including Devon County Council. The group carries out or oversees surveys for local authorities to identify those sites considered to be of at least County importance for geological heritage. These sites are then notified to the relevant planning authority and protected through local development plans and policies and voluntary agreements. Devon RIGS Group also provides advice to the same authorities concerning development and other proposals which may affect RIGS sites.

Other voluntary bodies such as the British Trust for Conservation Volunteers contribute directly to practical action through the involvement, training and deployment of volunteers on conservation projects. Several bodies such as Devon Wildlife Trust, RSPB and Friends of the Earth campaign directly on conservation issues, seeking to influence policy makers and reflecting local priorities in national lobbying. A larger number of smaller organisations focus on more specific wildlife or Earth heritage subjects and are involved in local recording, research, involving the public in enjoyment of wildlife, habitat management and advice. These include Butterfly Conservation, the Barn Owl Trust, Devon Birdwatching & Preservation Society, the Botanical Society of the British

Isles, Devon Bat Group, Devon Badger Group, Devon Reptiles & Amphibians Group, Devon Karst Research Society, to name only a few.

A number of non-commercial organisations, some with semi-commercial elements, operate in Devon with objectives closely linked to biodiversity. Forestry and woodland management is a particular focus for some of these, such as the Silvanus Trust and the South West Forest initiative.

2.6 The Role of Universities, Colleges and Research Institutions

Quality information is a prerequisite for effective action for bio- and geodiversity conservation, examples being: information on the habitat requirements of certain species, the response of habitats to different management regimes or environmental influences, the distribution and ecology of species of conservation concern, establishing the national and international scientific significance or of a geological site and improving the documentation of the geological heritage present. Universities, colleges and research institutions undertake much of the basic research and information gathering of this kind. The expertise of these institutions can contribute greatly to ensuring that land management, advice and policy across all sectors is founded upon principles of good science, in terms not just of ecology but also of economics and sociology, gained through quality academic research. Academic research on issues which impact closely on bio- and geodiversity, such as agricultural economics, sustainable development, tourism, education and other disciplines, has a potentially huge contribution to make to the future of the County's bio- and geodiversity, in the context of a prosperous society in all senses.

Universities and other educational institutions have another important role, through their degree courses and other education and training services, they inform and stimulate students and staff in all aspects of bio- and geodiversity and engender support for their conservation. Crucially, they also train the next generation of countryside and environmental specialists and managers.

3. Funding biodiversity conservation

A key potential benefit of planning for bio- and geodiversity conservation is the opportunity afforded to co-ordinate the work programmes of a range of organisations in a way which maximises use of limited finance (and other resources) by directing effort to commonly agreed priorities. To a large extent such co-ordination will require no more than a refinement or change of emphasis in an organisation's existing work programme. Some of the actions identified in the Plans in this document call for the maintenance and continuation of existing programmes,

requiring a continued allocation of existing funding. Other actions may require the redirection of existing funding towards different priorities. In other cases still, the achievement of actions may necessitate seeking funds from new external sources.

Nevertheless it should be recognised that the successful achievement of bio- and geodiversity targets identified in some Plans will require new money. In times of increasing strictures on public expenditure budgets, the availability of such additional funding is becoming ever more remote, yet commitment to bio- and geodiversity protection and enhancement cannot avoid this need. In particular, the preparedness of government departments, agencies and local authorities at least to maintain and often to increase expenditure in areas already receiving funding, notably agri-environment schemes, countryside services, and funding support for programmes and services operated by voluntary bodies, will represent the most significant measure of political commitment to biodiversity conservation.

Recently introduced sources of external funding are becoming increasingly important mechanisms for the achievement of biodiversity actions. These include the Landfill Tax, which has begun to release substantial funds through partnerships between landfill operators, local authorities and voluntary bodies; Heritage Lottery Funding, which has been accessed extensively by voluntary bodies to fund land acquisition and management of heritage assets; European Structural funding, which has provided the basis for some important initiatives operated by private partnerships or local authorities, and the Aggregates Levy Sustainability Fund which has supported a number of geodiversity initiatives.

Increasingly, external funders are asking, as part of the process of evaluating funding applications, whether projects seeking funding form part of a recognised biodiversity action plan, whether it be at local, county or regional level. Funding bodies are thus becoming aware of the strategic significance of bio- and geodiversity action plans, and are recognising their value as a means of assessing the contribution which projects can make to commonly-agreed priorities.

Commercial sponsorship is another avenue to explore. Local or national companies may wish to act as Sponsor for a species or habitat, thereby contributing towards the conservation and enhancement of Devon's wildlife and geological heritage resource, and reinforcing the links between commerce and nature conservation.

4. Application through other plans and strategies

The Devon Biodiversity Action Plan has not been produced to stand in isolation from other plans and initiatives. Rather, it is intended to guide and influence the work programmes of a range of organisations, statutory and non-statutory, and be used as a source of reference during the revision of existing plans and the formulation of future ones. The Devon Biodiversity Action Plan should not be seen as a burdensome addition to already over-loaded work programmes, but an aid to identifying the priorities and therefore streamlining existing strategic initiatives which impact on the natural world.

A wide range of plans stand to gain by drawing on the objectives, targets and actions set out in the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan. Indeed, a number of agencies and organisations in Devon have incorporated elements of action plans into their own strategic plans, such as estuary partnerships in Estuary Management Plans. This process can help to ensure local action for certain important estuarine species and habitats coincides with and contributes to county-wide priorities in the Devon BAP. Other such 'functional plans' from a number of agencies and organisations stand to benefit from this approach, including those produced by Devon County Council, Unitary and District Councils, English Nature (now part of Natural England), the Forestry Commission, the Highways Agency, and some non-statutory bodies such as the National Trust.

Planning documents and strategies have always had the potential to play important roles in determining the strategic role of development control as a deliverer of biodiversity conservation actions in Devon, and as such should be informed by the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan. Structure Plans and Local Plans have traditionally had this role, but as these are replaced by the Regional Spatial Strategy and Local Development Frameworks, we must work to ensure that local planning policy continues to fulfil its potential for delivering nature conservation.

As well as their role in the protection of important biodiversity and geodiversity sites, such as candidate Special Areas of Conservation and SSSIs, and non-statutory sites such as County Wildlife Sites and County Geological Sites, development plans also play an important role in the protection and enhancement of the wider countryside. Government guidance to local authorities states that "*statutory and non-statutory sites, together with countryside features which provide wildlife corridors, links or stepping stones from one habitat to another, all help to form a network necessary to ensure the maintenance of the current range and diversity of our flora and fauna*" (PPG 9). In this respect, the Devon BAP is well placed to guide local authorities in translating these themes into action for habitats such as species-rich hedgerows, rivers and streams, which are

important as wildlife corridors, and for species such as dormouse, greater-horseshoe bat and water vole.

5 Next steps and future developments

5.1 Implementation, monitoring and review

The publication of the Devon Biodiversity Action Plan marked the beginning of a process, not the completion of one. The implementation of the actions contained in this document, through co-operation, partnership and close communication, will require input from all parties. Impetus for this process will be provided by the on-going work of the Working Group and the wider Partnership which has supported the development of this document to date. However, the spirit of the bio- and geodiversity planning process requires this impetus to be generated from a wide circle of organisations, through the 'championing' of the individual Action Plans by bodies best placed to take such a role. Beyond this initial championing of the implementation process, it is important that the progress of the initiative as a whole is monitored, that results are fed back to partners, and that a mechanism for review and updating of plans is put in place. These elements are set out below.

5.2 Implementation - the need for Champions

In the case of each Action Plan presented in this document, one or more organisations stand out as being particularly well placed to take a lead role in co-ordinating progress. Such a lead may in some cases be appropriately taken by an agency whose statutory functions are closely linked to the subject of a given Plan, or in other instances by a voluntary body which specialises in the conservation of a given species or habitat.

To manifest this lead role, Champions have been identified for the majority of Action Plans. It should be emphasised that the use of the word Champion in this respect differs somewhat from the definition being used in the UK Biodiversity process. Nationally, Champions have come forward to provide financial or other material support for the implementation of Action Plans. In the Devon context, the Champion concept will be used more broadly to describe organisations which agree to co-ordinate progress of a Plan, with or without an associated financial commitment. Staff or volunteer time will be the main commitment required. Champions have been invited to undertake the following roles:

- **Co-ordinating action:** Champions can help to co-ordinate action amongst the key players, and so help the efficient delivery of objectives and targets. The revised BAP no longer has long lists of specific and

prescriptive actions. These lists have been replaced by shorter lists of priority or indicative actions. This makes the BAP a more flexible document but it means that the role of Champions in co-ordinating short-term action is all the more important. The question to be asked by the Champions and other key players is, *“Over the next 12 months or so, what action can we take to help achieve the objectives and targets of this action plan?”*

- **Developing and maintaining partnerships:** an informal but important role, this includes providing encouragement and guidance to partners, and acting as an initial contact point.
- **Reporting:** Champions have a key role to play in reporting on progress. They will be in the best position to assess what action has been undertaken.

By their nature, some Champions will be able to do more than others but it is not intended that Champion's do more than a reasonable share of the work in implementing actions, nor that other organisations take a 'back seat'. The Champions are not watchdogs and are not accountable for a lack of progress. All relevant organisations need to work together in implementing Action Plans, overseen and encouraged by the Champion.

The name of the Champion is given at the foot of each Action Plan and a list is provided in appendix vii. Guidance has been produced for Champion organisations and is included here as appendix viii.

5.3 Monitoring of Progress

The Devon Biodiversity Action Plan sets out ambitious and challenging targets for the conservation and enhancement of the County's biodiversity and geological heritage. For progress or problems in the delivery of these targets to be recognised, it is important to establish a means of monitoring the Plan as a whole. Such monitoring should serve to evaluate the functioning of working partnerships, the role of Champions, and ultimately the achievement of actions towards agreed targets. The end point of this process, clearly, should be to seek to identify tangible difference on the ground for the habitats, species and geological features which are the subject of targeted action.

Monitoring of actions - Champion's have a key role to play in monitoring progress. It is sensible to co-ordinate our own reporting with that requested by the UK Biodiversity Partnership (i.e. every 3 years). This will enable us to also report on the contribution we in Devon are making to achieving UK action plans.

Whilst reporting is vital it does not have to be an onerous task. Information can be gathered continually as part of the Champions' general liaison roles (or in a single effort once every three years if that is considered appropriate). We need to make reporting work for us, and keep it simple, without duplication. Where appropriate, we should use the national reporting system, [BARS](#) (Biodiversity Action Reporting System). BARS is an online system designed for UK and local reporting. Where relevant, local action plans can be linked to related national action plans within the BARS system, so reporting on our own plans will automatically update national progress.



The Devon BAP Co-ordinator also has a clear role to play in reporting, particularly with regard to designing the nature of the reporting round, co-ordinating the reporting process and, in most cases, inputting the data onto BARS.

Monitoring of biodiversity and geodiversity change - The ultimate test of the success of the implementation of Biodiversity Action Plans will be the practical difference they make for the features they describe, in terms of the quality and extent of habitats and geological features, and the range and health of species populations.

For a number of species for which Action Plans have been prepared, monitoring programmes are currently underway, or are proposed within Plans. These will generally be ideal for the long term monitoring of the species Plans, while many species with Action Plans will themselves serve as useful indicators of the quality of the habitats in which they occur.

Biological monitoring can be an expensive, labour-intensive process, and to date not enough has been carried out in Devon, in a co-ordinated way, to provide even an adequate baseline assessment of the condition of some key species and habitats. Yet Devon is fortunate in having a wide network of committed and skilled local species recorders, professional and amateur, and professional conservation staff carrying out habitat survey. Central to gathering and collating information, and identifying gaps in knowledge that require further survey, is the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre based with the Devon Wildlife Trust. DBRC is working with a range of organisations and individuals throughout the County, to ensure that the wealth of information on species and habitats which exists and which will develop, can be put to most effective use in supporting the monitoring of the Action Plans in this document (see Common Theme Action Plan for Data and Information).

Geological monitoring is also a challenge for the future. Natural England continues the work established by English Nature in setting conservation objectives for geological and geomorphological SSSIs, but will require local geological knowledge and expertise to ensure that its priorities and actions for these sites are informed by the best quality scientific

information. Devon RIGS Group, whilst coordinating the selection of selecting County Geological Sites, does not have the resources to systematically review their condition, post selection. A major challenge for the future is also the current absence of a County Geological Records Centre – a place where site-related geological data including monitoring information can be not only stored, but also be made available to those that might need it (including researchers, educationalists, conservation agencies and environmental consultants).

There is a need to ensure a co-ordinated approach to monitoring in the County. For example, the South West Regional Biodiversity Partnership is proposing its own monitoring programme. Target habitats and species are to be established at both regional and county levels and there is a need to ensure that, where appropriate, these reflect priorities outlined in the Devon BAP.

5.4 Reviewing the Action Plans

The Devon Biodiversity Action Plan needs to remain a 'live' document. It must adapt to changing circumstances and respond to the lessons learned through the processes of implementation and monitoring. The loose-leaf binding of the original document was intended to allow for parts of it to be revised and new elements inserted over time.

The electronic presentation of the present document has the same intention. The BAP is to be a flexible document which will remain contemporary. It can be updated at almost any time in the light of, for example, advice from Champions or other key players, or revision of UK action plans. This allows for a process of ongoing review, which is more manageable and more flexible than occasional, large-scale updates.