

Matter 10 – Development management policies

Issue 10.1 Are the development management policies justified and written in such a way so as to be effective?

In Policy 182 of the NPPF, the definition of **Effective** states that:

“the plan should be deliverable over its period and based on effective joint working on cross-boundary strategic priorities.”

Joint working on cross-boundary priorities, or working with adjacent authorities in general, is not mentioned in section 10 of the Core Strategy or in any of the development management policies. There is also no indication of the authority having approached nature conservation/biodiversity on a landscape scale, or that it intends to do so.

Issue 10.2 Are the policies consistent with national policy? If there are any divergences, how are these justified by local circumstances?

Policy 117 of the NPPF states that in order *“to minimise impacts on biodiversity ... planning policies **should**”*:

- *plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across **local authority boundaries**;*
- *identify and **map components of the local ecological networks**, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and **stepping stones** that connect them and areas identified by local partnerships for **habitat restoration or creation**;*

There is no indication in the Core Strategy of the Council having worked with neighbouring authorities to develop their policies. There is also no indication of the authority having approached nature conservation / biodiversity on a landscape scale, or that there is an intention to do so.

In 10.4 of the Core Strategy (Policy DMG1), the ninth bullet point states that:

- *“With regards to possible effects upon the natural environment, the council propose that the principles of the mitigation hierarchy be followed. This gives sequential preference to the following: 1) Enhance the environment 2) Avoid the impact 3) Minimise the impact 4) Restore the damage 5) Compensate for the damage 6) Offset the damage.”*

The Wildlife Trust is pleased to see the mitigation hierarchy included and is supportive of its inclusion, however, the sixth bullet, which is to:

- *“Consider the environmental implications such as SSSIs, County Heritage Sites, Local Nature Reserves, Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Habitats and Species, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, protected species, green corridors and other sites of nature conservation.”*

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Is not consistent with the wording of the NPPF or the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006), the latter listing Habitats of Principal Importance in England and Species of Principal Importance in England. The Habitats and Species of Principal Importance in England should also be referred to in 10.14 Policy DME3.

Policy 157 of the NPPF states that "*Crucially, Local Plans should:*

(eighth bullet point) "*contain a **clear strategy for enhancing the natural, built and historic environment...***"

Ribble Valley Borough Council has a Sustainable Community Strategy (2007-2013) and an Economic Strategy (2009-2014) but has not produced an Environmental Strategy.

Issue 10.3 A number of policies refer to the 'proposals map'. What is the Council's intention in relation to the Policies Map?

Policy 117 of the NPPF states that in order "*to minimise impacts on biodiversity ... planning policies should:*

- *plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local authority boundaries;*
- ***identify and map components of the local ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by local partnerships for habitat restoration or creation;***
- ***promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, linked to national and local targets, and identify suitable indicators for monitoring biodiversity in the plan;***"

Policy 165 of the NPPF states that:

*"Planning policies and decisions should be based on up-to-date information about the natural environment and other characteristics of the area including drawing, for example, from River Basin Management Plans. Working with Local Nature Partnerships where appropriate, this **should include an assessment of existing and potential components of ecological networks...**"*

The Lancashire Environment Record Network (LERN), hosted by the Environment Directorate of Lancashire County Council, is managed by a core partnership comprising the Lancashire Wildlife Trust, Lancashire County Council, Natural England, Environment Agency and GeoLancashire. LERN delivers a service to the 13 partner district and unitary authorities, excluding Blackpool (see www.lancspartners.org.uk/lern).

LERN has been working on a Lancashire Ecological Network and has produced draft Corridor maps for Grassland, Wetland and Woodland that show Core Areas, Stepping Stones and Corridors of varying distances between land supporting the habitat type.

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The proposals/policies map should include both existing and potential components of ecological networks.

Ends.

Notes by

John Lamb B.Sc. (Hons.), M.Sc., MCIEEM
Senior Conservation Officer (Lancashire)

The Wildlife Trust for Lancashire, Manchester & N. Merseyside
The Barn, Berkeley Drive, Bamber Bridge, Preston. Lancs. PR5 6BY
Tel: 01772 324129 Fax: 01772 628849 www.lancswt.org.uk

mailto: jlamb@lancswt.org.uk
direct dial & voicemail: 01772 317240

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