

Relevant Legislation and Planning Policy

Legislation

The main legislation relating to nature conservation in Great Britain is the **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)**.

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act, 2000

This amends the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) to strengthen protection for SSSIs and protected species, and places a duty on government departments to have regard for the conservation of biodiversity.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006

This extends the statutory duty of the CROW Act (2000), relating to biodiversity, to all public bodies. The duty to conserve biodiversity, under the NERC Act, states that: “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.”

Two important **European Directives** governing biodiversity have been transposed into UK law. The objective of the Wild Birds Directive is to conserve wild bird populations. The objective of the Habitats Directive is to protect biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora. Both lay down rules for the protection, management and exploitation of such species.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (‘the Habitats Regulations’)

These regulations transpose the Habitats Directive and certain elements of the Wild Birds Directive in England and Wales. The Habitats Regulations 2010 were amended by The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2012. In Northamptonshire, these Regulations are of particular importance in relation to the Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area (SPA), and to birds listed on Annex I of the Wild Birds Directive wherever they occur.

National policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The NPPF replaced Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9) on Biodiversity and Geological Conservation in 2012. It introduced a presumption in favour of sustainable development, which includes a need to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural environment, and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity. Section 11 of the NPPF lays out the key requirements relating to biodiversity (paragraphs 109-119). Paragraph 117 is of particular relevance here, as it provides the national policy basis on which Local Authorities and developers should

implement the kind of actions laid out in this BAP.

Local Policy and Guidance

The NPPF places great weight on the importance of up-to-date Local Plans in decision-making. Each Local Planning Authority in Northamptonshire has, or should have, up-to-date adopted Local Plans that include policies to protect and enhance biodiversity in line with the requirements of the NPPF and national legislation.

In addition to these Local Plans, two Supplementary Planning Guidance documents have been developed to provide extra advice and guidance to local authority planners and developers in Northamptonshire. These are the **Biodiversity Supplementary Planning Document**, and the **Upper Nene Valley Gravel Pits Special Protection Area Supplementary Planning Document**. The first is designed to be used by those considering and applying for planning permission in Northamptonshire. It will also be a useful tool for those developing planning policy and making site allocations. The latter has been produced to help Local Planning Authorities, developers and others ensure that development has no significant effect on the SPA, in accordance with the legal requirements of the Habitats Regulations. The SPD outlines a consistent approach to both consulting Natural England and identifying potential significant effects on the SPA's qualifying features.

Glossary

Achieving condition	Maintaining the area of habitat already in good condition and working on some poor condition habitat. Poor condition habitat still meets UK BAP criteria; good condition habitat meets LWS criteria.
Biodiversity	A contraction of 'biological diversity', refers to the number, variety and variability of living organisms. It is often defined in terms of genes, species and ecosystems. Biodiversity is widely considered to be a measure of ecosystem quality or health: greater biodiversity indicates better health.
BAP (or priority) habitat	Area of habitat that meets the definition set out in the UK BAP list of priority habitats
Climate space	The area of land which is climatically suitable for a particular species or habitat. The space in which a particular species/habitat can survive will change (both in location and size) with a changing climate, forcing many species to relocate.
Countryside Stewardship	A government scheme that provides financial incentives for land managers to look after their environment through activities such as conserving and restoring wildlife habitats, flood risk management and woodland creation and management
Creation	The establishment of new BAP habitat in areas where it is not currently present and no significant remnants exist.
Ecosystem Services	The benefits which the natural environment provides to humans. These are generally classified as 1) supporting services (e.g. soil formation, photosynthesis), 2) provisioning services (e.g. food, fibre, fresh water), 3) regulating services (e.g. pollination, water purification) and 4) cultural services (e.g. recreation, spiritual enrichment).
LWS-standard	Habitat meets the UK BAP definition but also meets the higher standards of the Local Wildlife Site criteria for the specified habitat. Sites that meet the LWS criteria will be recognised as Local Wildlife Sites.
Maintaining extent	No reduction in the area of habitat that qualifies as the UK BAP or other specified type.
Natural Capital	The world's stocks of natural assets which include geology, soil, air, water and all living things. It is from this Natural Capital that humans derive a range of services, often called ecosystem services, which make human life possible.

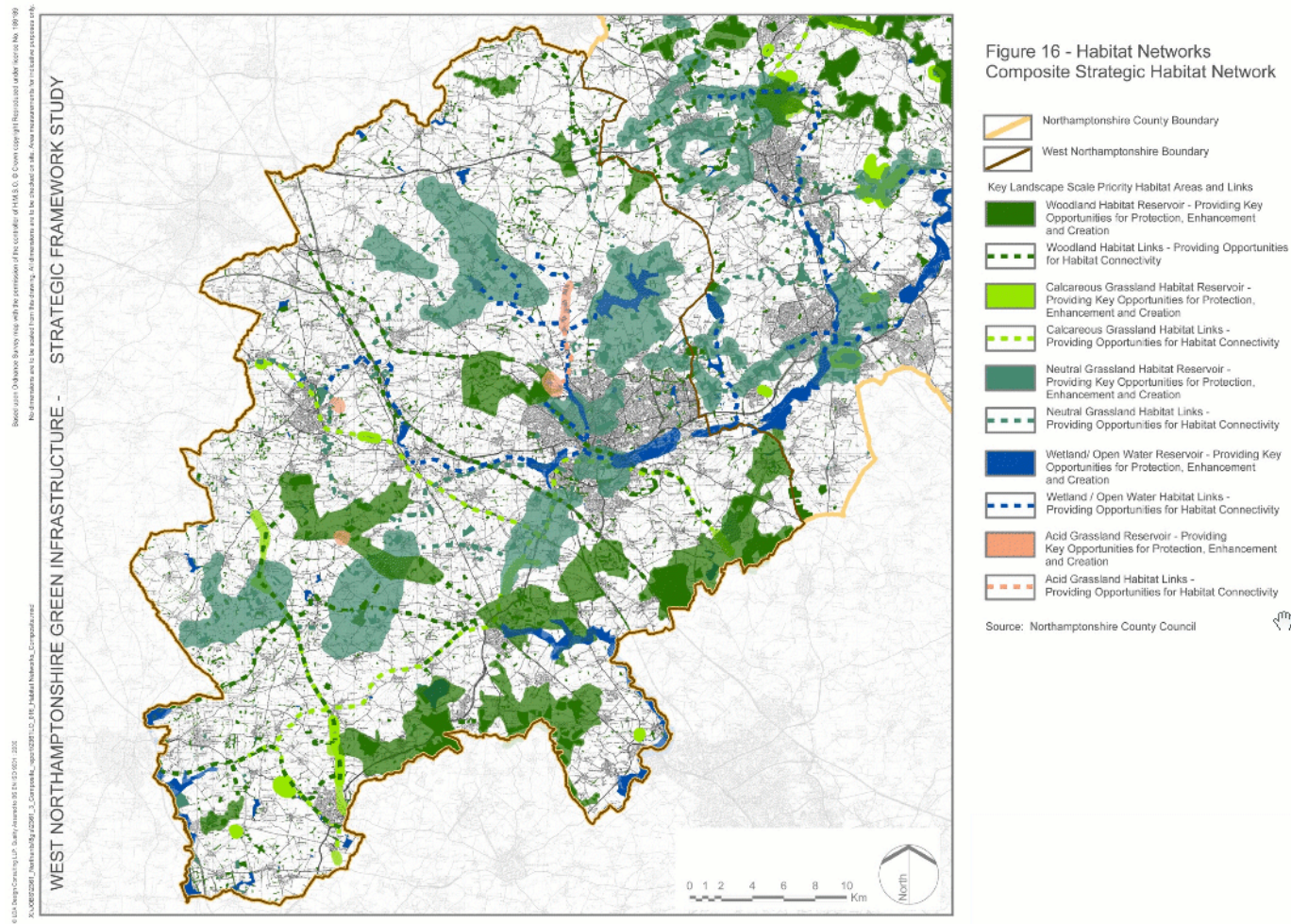
Natural Character Area	A natural subdivision of England based on a combination of landscape, biodiversity, geodiversity and economic activity. They are defined by Natural England.
Restoration	Work on relic habitat that currently does not meet UK BAP criteria but shows indicators of that habitat.
SMART targets	Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Realistic, Timely

Guide to Acronyms and Abbreviations

BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
CS	Countryside Stewardship
GI	Green Infrastructure
JPU	Joint Planning Unit
LNP	Local Nature Partnership
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
NACRE	Northamptonshire ACRE (Action with Communities in Rural England)
NBP	Northamptonshire Biodiversity Partnership
NBRC	Northamptonshire Biodiversity Records Centre
NIA	Nature Improvement Area
PWS	Potential Wildlife Site
RSPB	Royal Society for the Protection of Birds
SPA	Special Protection Area
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest

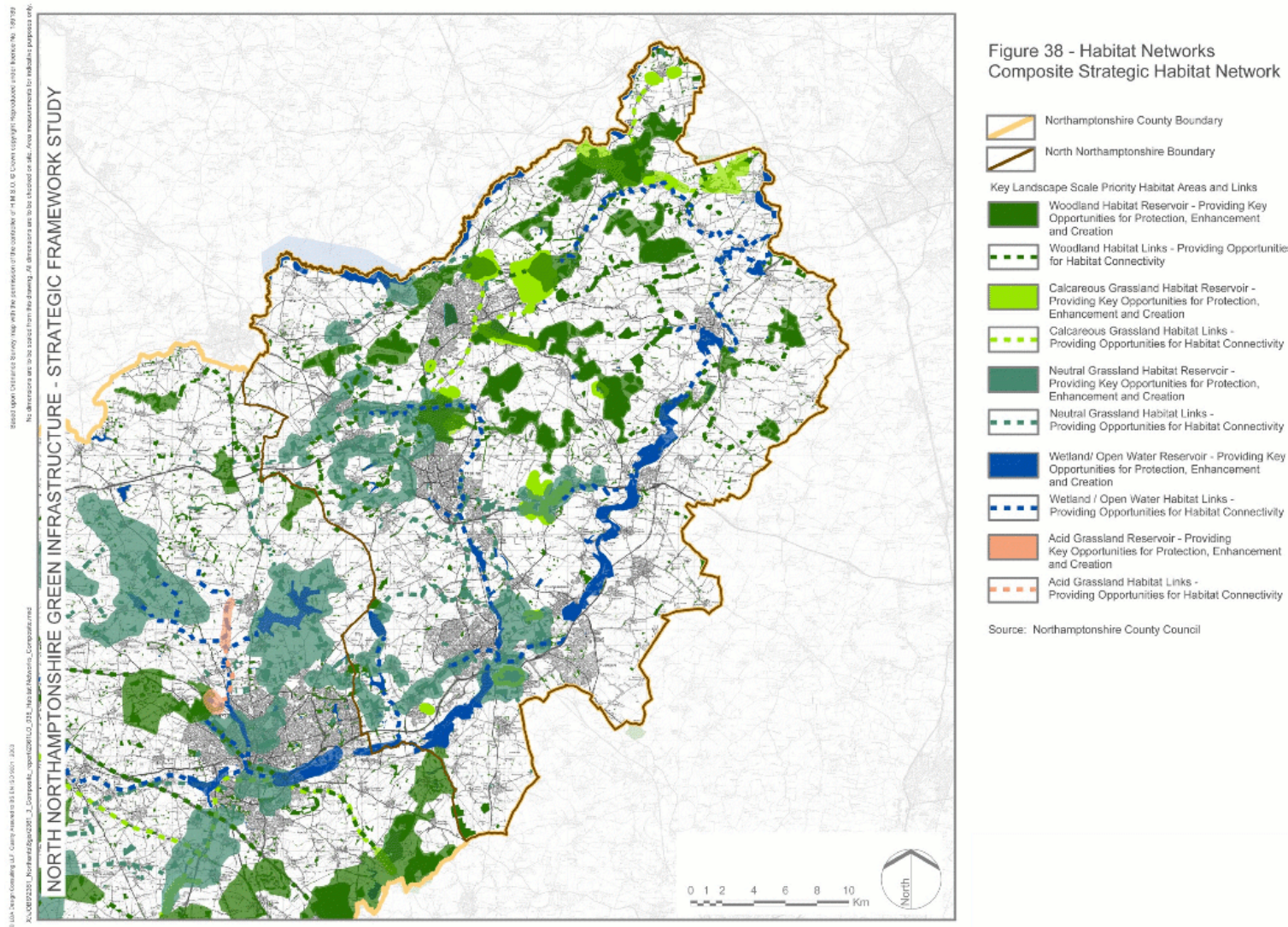
Figures

Figure GS1 The GI Strategic Biodiversity Network Map for West Northamptonshire. After Northamptonshire’s Environmental Character and GI Suite.



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE MAKING THE CONNECTION STUDY A FIGURE 16

Figure GS2 The GI Strategic Biodiversity Network Map for North Northamptonshire. After Northamptonshire’s Environmental Character and GI Suite.



GREEN INFRASTRUCTURE MAKING THE CONNECTION STUDY B FIGURE 38