

## NELMS target statement for NCA 130 Hampshire Downs

Your application is scored and a decision made on the points awarded. Both top priorities and lower priorities score points but you should select at least one top priority.

Scoring is carried out by...

## Choosing priorities

To apply you should choose at least one of the top priorities, and you can choose lower priorities - this may help with your application.

### Top priorities

Priority group	Priority type
<a href="#">Biodiversity</a>	Priority habitats
	Priority species
<a href="#">Water</a>	Water quality
	Flood and coastal risk management
<a href="#">Historic environment</a>	Designated historic and archaeological features
	Undesignated historic and archaeological features of high significance
<a href="#">Woodland priorities</a>	Woodland management
	Woodland planting
<a href="#">Landscape</a>	
<a href="#">Climate Change</a>	
<a href="#">Multiple environmental benefits</a>	

### Lower priorities

Priority group	Priority type
<a href="#">Lower priorities</a>	Water quality

	Archaeological and historic features
	Woodland

## Biodiversity - top priorities

### Priority habitats

You should carry out land management practices and capital works that maintains, restores and creates priority habitats.

Maintain priority habitat such as:

- Deciduous woodland
- Good quality semi-improved grassland including water meadows
- Coastal & floodplain grazing marsh
- Wood pasture and parkland
- Lowland fens
- Lowland calcareous grassland
- Lowland meadows

Restore priority habitats (especially proposals which make existing sites bigger or help join up habitat networks) such as:

- Deciduous woodland
- Good quality semi-improved grassland including water meadows
- Coastal & floodplain grazing marsh
- Wood pasture and parkland
- Lowland fens
- Lowland calcareous grassland
- Lowland meadows

Create priority habitats – to extend or link priority habitat to increase connectivity and reduce fragmentation. Defra is looking for proposals to create priority habitat that will also contribute significantly to improvements in:

- water quality
- air quality
- flood and coastal risk management

### Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Proposals to maintain or restore Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs including SACs) with eligible features are a priority, and both on-site and off-site options (such as to reduce diffuse water and air pollution impacts on SSSIs) are relevant.

### Priority species

For the majority of priority species found on the priority habitats listed above, their ecological requirements can be met through good generic habitat management. Managing for those essential elements associated with priority habitats - in particular bare ground, areas of scrub, varying sward structures will allow these species to thrive.

A number of priority species associated with the area require specific and tailored management and advice. You should carry out land management practices and capital works that meet the specific needs of priority species such as:

- Corn Bunting
- Lapwing
- Stone Curlew
- Turtle Dove
- Willow Tit
- Pearl-Bordered Fritillary
- Duke of Burgundy
- Brown Hairstreak
- Striped Lychnis
- Six-spotted Pot Beetle
- Carline Thistle Leafhopper
- *Anaptychia ciliaris* subsp. *Ciliaris* A lichen
- *Caloplaca virescens* A lichen
- Pheasants-eye
- Ground-pine
- Cornflower
- Upright Goosefoot
- Shepherd's needle
- Red Hemp Nettle

Further guidance on the priority species in this area that require more tailored targeted management and advice, as listed, can be found:

- [Links to guidance on those bespoke species' needs found in this area]

Parts of this area are targeted for their woodland bird assemblage, i.e. they contain area(s) assessed as being nationally significant for four or more species (of Lesser Spotted Woodpecker, Tree Pipit, Redstart,

Pied Flycatcher, Spotted Flycatcher, Wood Warbler, Marsh Tit, Lesser Redpoll and Hawfinch). Where your land includes such areas, you should carry out land management practices and capital works that:

- maintain/enhance conditions for woodland birds

This area has also been identified as a hotspot for wild pollinators, farmland birds and other wildlife associated with the wider countryside – through the Wild Pollinator and farm Wildlife package implement these options to make sure these species thrive all year around:

- option 1
- option 2

## Water - top priorities

### Water quality

The area has particular issues with:

- Phosphates, nitrates, sediment and pesticides in the Wey, Upper and Middle Test, Lower Test and Southampton Streams, Loddon and Kennet catchments.
- Phosphates, nitrates and sediment in the Hampshire Avon, East Hampshire and Itchen catchments
- Sediment and pesticides in the Western Rother catchment

This includes:

- Groundwater drinking water safeguard zones near Andover, Chilbolton, Hungerford, Otterbourne, Overton, Timsbury, Twyford and Upper Wooton affected by nitrates and near Boxall's lane safeguard zone, Aldershot affected by pesticides
- Drinking waters affected by pesticides on the Lower Test, the Thames between Cookham and Egham, the Western Rother and part of the River Wey
- European designated sites catchments of the River Avon and Avon Valley affected by phosphates, nitrates and sediment
- European designated sites catchments of the River Itchen and Solent affected by phosphates and nitrates and the River Kennet affected by phosphates and sediment
- River Test, River Itchen and Alresford Pond SSSIs affected by phosphates and sediment

You should consider options and capital works that address these issues. These are detailed in X guidance document. These options help to improve water quality by controlling the source or the movement of potential pollutants. For this area, this includes:

- nutrients from fertilisers and manures
- sediment problems from soil erosion and run-off
- pesticides from their use and disposal

## Flood and Coastal Risk Management

Applications that select options to address flood risk issues within the area will also be welcomed, primarily within the flood risk priority areas of:

- upper reaches of the River Itchen catchment above Winchester
- upper reaches of the River Test catchment above Romsey
- top of the River Wey Catchment
- small section of the Loddon Catchment.

You should consider options that:

- reduce the amount and rate of surface water run-off
- reduce soil erosion
- slow the movement of floodwaters on floodplains
- slow peak in-stream flows
- reconnect the floodplain with the river channel

These are detailed in X guidance document.

## Historic environment - top priorities

Active management is important for the long term survival of historic environment remains and to protect them against damage and decay brought about through cultivation, scrub growth, burrowing animals or poor maintenance. These features cannot be recreated once they have been lost.

In this area there are a number of designated heritage features and other historic environment features reflecting *the long human occupation of this landscape from the Neolithic resulting in monuments in this landscape through the Neolithic, Bronze Age and Iron Age periods. Bronze Age barrows, Iron Age Hillforts in prominent locations are the iconic monument of the downs.. Banjo enclosures are more frequent across the mid and western areas. The area was important in the Roman period, with villas and farms In some areas Historic drove routes survive as prominent hedgerow lines these provided the framework for the ladder field systems created by Parliamentary Enclosure of the late 18th century Traditional historic buildings are brick or brick and timber in the valleys, or of brick and distinctive knapped flint in the hills. Large aisled timber-framed barns are typical of many farms many of which are thatched.*

The 2014 Heritage at Risk 2014 survey has identified [XXX %] of designated features as being 'at risk', particularly from *XXX tbc*

The following historic environment features are a high priority for active management in this area:

- Designated Features - archaeological features of national significance Scheduled Monuments (SM), Registered Parks and Gardens (RPG) and Registered Battlefields (RB)

- Designated and undesignated traditional farm buildings and non-domestic historic buildings on holdings
- Undesignated historic and archaeological features of high significance which are part of the Selected Heritage Inventory for Natural England (SHINE)

You should carry out land management practices and capital works that:

- revert archaeological sites under cultivation to permanent grass
- reduce damaging cultivation and harvesting practices through minimum tillage or direct drilling where this offers a suitable level of protection
- remove scrub and bracken from archaeological or historic features
- maintain below-ground archaeology under permanent uncultivated vegetation or actively manage earthworks, standing stones and structures as visible 'above ground' features
  - maintain and restore historic water management systems, including those associated with water meadows and designed water bodies
  - restore historic buildings that are assessed as a priority in the area.
  - address the condition of Registered Historic Parks and Gardens, through the proactive maintenance or restoration of structures or features that make a major contribution to the design intentions or feel of the parkland, provide for their biodiversity and amenity value].
  - address the condition of Registered Historic Battlefields and maximise opportunities for its protection, enhancement and amenity value].
  - deal with specific issues that are causing damage or decay to archaeological and historic features, but which are not covered by standard options.

## Woodland - top priorities

### Woodland management

Management of all woodland to improve structure and species mix is important for biodiversity and to make them more robust in relation to future threats such as climate change, pests and diseases.

Certain types of woodland are a high priority for bringing into management, including:

- protected woodland – those designated for their national biodiversity value
- priority woodland habitat – other unmanaged broadleaved woodland
- priority species – all woodland within current red squirrel range, or within areas important for woodland butterfly and woodland bird species
- Planted Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS) restoration – conversion of conifer plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites to broadleaf woodland where they are in close proximity to existing broadleaf woodland
- United Kingdom Forestry Standard – unmanaged conifer woodland within catchments subject to eutrophication and acidification, both to reduce pressures on the water environment and improve biodiversity

Woodlands not included in the categories above are a lower priority for management.

All management should comply with the United Kingdom Forestry Standard and other relevant guidance such as 'Managing Ancient and Native Woodland in England'.

High priority woodlands or woodland management initiatives in this area include:

- Deer control at a landscape scale across multiple land ownerships

### **Woodland planting**

High priority areas for the planting of new woodlands include:

- biodiversity – planting to buffer and link existing woodlands and other semi natural open habitats within priority woodland habitat networks
- water quality – planting designed to reduce and intercept diffuse pollution from agriculture
- flood risk – planting designed to increase infiltration of heavy rain into the ground, reduce erosion, or slow the flow of floodwaters on floodplains

In order to provide the required biodiversity and/or water benefits, new woodland planting needs to be in the right part of the landscape and to the right design.

High priority areas for new planting or local initiatives prioritising woodland creation in this area include:

- woodland creation to address green infrastructure and water quality issues as a result of significant development schemes proposed in the Basingstoke area
- woodland planting should be encouraged in appropriate areas of the Itchen floodplain to offset any loss of woodland that would exacerbate the flood risk around Alresford and Winchester

## **Landscape – top priorities**

High priorities are the management, restoration or re-creation of landscape features that contribute significantly to the local character by reinforcing the overall pattern and scale of the landscape, together with other important features that give an area its unique and distinctive sense of place.

Top priority in the Hampshire Downs NCA is the restoration of these features:

- hedgerows, especially in sheltered valleys and the east side of the NCA
- in-field trees
- bankside trees alongside chalk streams
- small woods and shelterbelts
- permanent grassland on steep slopes and in river valleys
- arable margins and winter stubbles

# Climate Change

Climate change will pose variable threats and opportunities in different landscapes. Priority should be given to targeted features and issues that are particularly vulnerable to or affected by climate change.

You should carry out land management practices and capital works that help to:

- make existing priority habitat sites bigger
- extend or link priority habitat to increase connectivity and reduce fragmentation
- reduce the impacts of climate change on local communities, for example by targeted planting of woodland to reduce flood risk
- reduce loss of carbon and emissions of other greenhouse gases
- increase carbon uptake, for example by tree planting
- increase carbon storage, for example by converting arable land to permanent grassland

## Multiple environmental benefits

### Opportunities for multi-objective agreements

You should look to provide for multiple priorities by selecting options that achieve multiple environmental benefits.

In the NCA 130 Hampshire Downs you have the greatest opportunity to achieve multiple objectives with:

- restore floodplains through reconnection with the rivers to improve flood control, water quality, add to biodiversity and enhance key landscape features such as historic watermeadows
- establish new wet woodland within *appropriate areas and not to the detriment of other important habitats* upon the floodplain of the river *Itchen*, to benefit biodiversity, landscape character, water quality, flood risk and historic features
- adopt a range on in-field arable options such as pollen and nectar plots and beetle banks and cultivated fallow plots within the downland area where the measures will protect historical features and benefit farmland birds, rare arable flora, water quality, landscape character, groundwater resources, flood risk and biodiversity
- restore hedgerows to manage water flow, decrease soil erosion, create wildlife habitats and corridors, and strengthen the local landscape



- select options such as the use of rural sustainable drainage systems, buffer strips and erosion control in the *Test and Itchen* catchments to improve both water quality and support flood risk management
- management of chalk grassland and scrub habitats along the scarps of the North Wessex Downs will create wildlife habitats to favour pollinators, reduce run-off rates into watercourses, strengthen landscape character and protect historical features

## Lower priorities

You should select one of the top priorities. However, you can also select lower priorities as well as this will attract points used to score your application.

You should consider the following other priorities that are of specific interest in this area.

## Historic environment - lower priorities

The Historic environment features set out below are a lower priority.

- Maintain designated and undesignated traditional farm buildings.
- Undesignated SHINE features of medium and low Significance
- Priority Undesignated Historic Parklands

## Woodland – lower priorities

### Woodland Management

Woodlands not included in the top priority categories listed above are a lower priority for management but may still be supported.

### Woodland Planting

Areas are prioritised for new planting based on their potential to create biodiversity and water benefits. Woodland planting schemes are scored depending on where the proposed scheme is in relation to the opportunity maps for woodland planting in England and how well the planting design will benefit biodiversity and water.

Lower priorities for appropriately designed biodiversity schemes exist across the whole of England. Opportunities for new woodland planting for water only exist in certain parts of England.

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