



Wildlife and
Countryside



amphibian and reptile
conservation



Campaign to Protect
Rural England
Standing up for your countryside



Butterfly
Conservation

Saving butterflies, moths and our environment



giving
nature
a home



NEWS RELEASE

For Immediate release: 2nd June 2015

Wildlife-rich areas must not suffer at the expense of land development

Following the Government's recent proposal to introduce a statutory register for brownfield land, environmental charities call on the Government to honour its original commitment to 'protect previously developed or brownfield land that is of high environmental value for wildlife'.

To help Government fulfil this commitment - originally set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) - Wildlife and Countryside Link (Link) has today published guidelines to determine '*high environmental value*'. The definition will make it easier for local authorities and developers to appropriately prioritise brownfield sites for development while honouring the Government's commitment to protect wildlife.

Alice Farr, Buglife's Planning Manager and member of Link's Land Use Planning Working Group said "While the NPPF commits to protecting brownfield land of high environmental value, it fails to define it. As a result, wildlife is continuing to suffer. We have now provided guidelines to clarify the process for everyone. After all, it is important that brownfield sites of high environmental value are properly considered in the planning process. This guidance will give ecologists, planners, developers and land managers the information they need to make good planning decisions."

Brownfield land includes places such as abandoned industrial sites, former railway sidings and extraction pits. Most brownfield land can be beneficially redeveloped in order to reduce the need to build on greenfield land in the countryside. But a small but important number of sites are hugely valuable for both people and wildlife: it is often the only greenspace available to communities within urban environments and can also provide havens for wildlife, including rare species like the Shrilc carder bee, Black redstart or Great crested newt.

Alice added "We hope that the clarity we have provided will mean that brownfield sites that come forward for development are subject to the appropriate ecological assessments, which will ensure

sustainable development whilst protecting and enhancing greenspaces and the wonderful wildlife they support”.

Some brownfield land is being used, by wildlife, to replace habitats that have suffered dramatic losses in recent years, such as colourful wildflower grasslands and heathland. In fact, two of the five most wildlife rich sites in the UK are brownfield. One of these sites, Canvey Wick, is a former oil refinery which was designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest for its rare invertebrates and is home to species which were believed to be extinct in the UK.

The document is available at: www.wcl.org.uk and

<http://www.wcl.org.uk/docs/Guidance%20for%20brownfield%20land%20of%20high%20environmental%20value.pdf>.

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Notes for editors

1. Wildlife and Countryside Link (Link) is a charity which brings together 44 voluntary organisations concerned with the conservation and protection of wildlife and the countryside. Our members practise and advocate environmentally sensitive land management, and encourage respect for and enjoyment of natural landscapes and features, the historic and marine environment and biodiversity. Taken together our members have the support of over 8 million people in the UK and manage over 750,000 hectares of land.
2. Wildlife and Countryside Link's Land Use Planning Working Group acts to conserve the natural and historic environment by seeking improvements to the national planning system for the benefit of biodiversity and landscape. The group works to ensure that the reform of the planning regime in England helps to deliver better protection and enhancement of the natural environment as a key component of sustainable development.
3. For more information and for interviews, contact Alice Farr, Planning Manager, Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust M: +44 (0)7880 316031 or Dr Elaine King, Director, Wildlife and Countryside Link M: +44 (0) 7846 571252.

The following 8 organisations support this press release:

Amphibian and Reptile Conservation
British Mountaineering Council
Buglife – The Invertebrate Conservation Trust
Butterfly Conservation
CPRE
Open Spaces Society



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RSPB
The Wildlife Trusts



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