

Springfields Site Biodiversity Policy and Action Plan

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INTRODUCTION

The Springfields Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) supports the ‘QEH&S Excellence’ strategic objective and the requirement for continual improvement under ISO 9001/14001.

The Nuclear Sector Plan (NSP) requires all nuclear sites to assess the need for a BAP and to develop and maintain such a plan, as appropriate. Springfields was the first nuclear site in the UK to put a BAP in place

OBJECTIVES

The following Overarching Objectives have been determined following a detailed assessment [1] and form the basis for the Biodiversity Action Plan:

- *Overarching Objective No 1:* ensure that new build, the demolition of old buildings and plant modifications, are sensitive to site conservation areas and protected species;
- *Overarching Objective No 2:* ensure that newly decommissioned land is managed in an environmentally sensitive manner;
- *Overarching Objective No 3:* ensure that woodland areas of conservation status, on and off site, are managed and protected responsibly;
- *Overarching Objective No 4:* ensure that land is managed to optimise biodiversity, without compromising the site’s function as a nuclear fuel manufacturing facility;
- *Overarching Objective No 5:* develop a management plan for Great Crested Newts, ensuring compliance with legislation;
- *Overarching Objective No 6:* raise awareness of biodiversity issues with the workforce and the local community.

TARGETS

Overarching Objective No 1:

Ensure that new build, the demolition of old buildings and plant modifications, are sensitive to site conservation areas and protected species.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 [2] makes it an offence to ‘damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a European Protected Animal Species’ whether inadvertently or wilfully.

On Springfields site, there are two known protected species: the Great Crested Newt and the Common Blue Butterfly. However, the site also offers potential habitat for other protected species, such as various species of bat. Work which may disrupt bats should be preceded by a survey carried out by a licensed ecologist (contact Nexia Solutions or EHS&Q Dept for further information).

Goal	Action	Timescale
1. Biodiversity considerations incorporated into routine plant operations.	- Include conservation/ biodiversity issues in PMP process	Complete
2. Biodiversity considerations incorporated into decommissioning and repair activities.	- Raise awareness of potential for disturbance of bat roosts/colonies during building demolition/roof maintenance	2007/08
2. Gain further understanding of protected species and legal requirements.	- Research and review information on species such as the Common Blue butterfly, to improve understanding of the issues and any potential implications for SFL	Complete
3. Ensure legal requirements discharged with respect to tree preservation orders (TPOs), hedgerow removal notices and bat/bird colonies	- Introduce requirement to carry out survey by qualified ecologist as part of Demolition Safety Case and prior to construction work	Complete
4. Comply with requirements of TPOs	- Develop management plan for trees in Ryelands car park	Complete

Overarching Objective No 2:

Ensure that newly decommissioned land is managed in an environmentally sensitive manner.

Newly decommissioned land should be landscaped in such a way as to provide maximum benefit to the environment, where this can readily be achieved. Consideration should be given, in particular, to the introduction of native species.

Goal	Action	Timescale
1. Improved co-operation between Estates, Design and Decommissioning leading to clearer decision-making	- Develop integrated approach to landscaping based around regular strategic meetings between Decommissioning/Design Office/Facilities and include provision for 'aftercare'	Complete
2. Learning from past	- Review the Specification of	Complete

Goal	Action	Timescale
experiences	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Work document on the basis of past experience - Make provision for the planting of native trees (oak, beech, lime, ash) in the Specification of Work 	Complete
3. Prioritisation of resources	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Identify priority areas for enhancement of biodiversity through to site closure - Develop plan for old [location emitted for security reasons] Building Site. 	Complete Complete

Overarching Objective No 3:

Ensure that woodland areas of conservation status, on and off site, are managed and protected responsibly.

Deepdale Wood and Springfields Works ponds are Biological Heritage Sites (BHSs). Although BHSs are non-statutory wildlife designations (i.e. not covered by specific legislation), together with SSSIs, these areas make the most significant contribution to Lancashire's biodiversity. The decline of traditional practices (e.g. coppicing), loss of ancient trees and replanting with inappropriate tree species all have the potential to cause habitat loss and degradation to woodland areas.

Goal	Action	Timescale
1. Deepdale Wood protected and managed appropriately.	- Manage brambles to allow key indicator species to show through	Ongoing
	- Remove dead trees only where these constitute a safety hazard	Ongoing
	- Maintain Deepdale Brook banking where it is unsupported and keep channel free from organic debris	Complete
2. Optimise biodiversity within Deepdale Wood.	- Remove sycamore saplings and replace with native trees	Ongoing
	- Leave piles of logs, branches and dead wood as habitat for wildlife	Ongoing
3. Protect existing trees, shrubs and other vegetation on site	- Develop risk assessment and complete rabbit cull	2007/08
4. Maintain biodiversity in woods on NDA owned land offsite.	- Thin and prune trees	Complete
	- Develop and implement management plan	Action transferred to BNG

Overarching Objective No 4:

Ensure that land is managed to optimise biodiversity, without compromising the site's function as a nuclear fuel manufacturing facility.

Where business plans permit, there is scope for careful management to proactively improve the biodiversity of the site. One of the simplest options, given the geology of the site, is to develop wetland areas providing shelter and food for aquatic/semi-aquatic wildlife, and emergent and submerged plants. Such areas require little or no management.

There is also scope for developing more natural woodland and meadow areas where these do not detract from the appearance of the site.

Goal	Action	Timescale
1. Optimise land management to promote greater biodiversity.	- Where a landscaped area is naturally wet, allow development of wetlands	Ongoing
	- Plant more berry and fruit-bearing trees/shrubs	Ongoing
	- Introduce wild flowers to areas which can be left to grow naturally	Ongoing
	- Develop Site Management Plan	Complete
2. Develop further areas of natural woodland.	- Create further natural plantations in the area between Main Road East and Seventh Avenue North	Ongoing

Overarching Objective No 5:

Develop a management plan for Great Crested Newts, ensuring compliance with legislation.

Springfields Works ponds and the land surrounding them represent a known habitat for a population of GCNs.

Great Crested Newts (GCNs) are afforded protected status under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 [2] and other legislation. It is an offence under this legislation to:

- intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take a GCN;
- intentionally or recklessly disturb GCN populations.

Additionally, under Annexes II and IV of the EC Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC), implemented in the UK under the Habitats Regulations 1994 [3], it is an offence to:

- deliberately capture or kill a GCN [Regulation 39 (1)(a)];
- deliberately disturb a GCN [Regulation 39 (1)(b)];
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a GCN [Regulation 39 (1)(d)].

Goal	Action	Timescale
1. Protect existing populations of GCNs	- Raise awareness of protected status with employees (refer also to objective 6.2)	Complete

Goal	Action	Timescale
	- Discontinue pond dipping until a licence has been obtained	Complete
2. Ensure compliance with legislation	- Obtain a licence for conservation and educational purposes - Update license annually	Complete Ongoing
3. Safeguard relevant habitats	- Consult with qualified ecologist to carry out risk assessment for intrusive work in [location emitted for security reasons] area and develop plan for cleaning/maintaining newt habitats and linking corridors. - Ensure budget allowed in 2008/09 LTP for maintenance of ponds - Clear excess vegetation from ponds in line with best practice (see Nexia report (05) 6811) to maintain habitat suitable for newts and to protect other native species	Complete 2007/08 2008/09

Overarching Objective No 6:

Raise awareness of biodiversity issues with the workforce and the local community.

To avoid repetition of mistakes and to ensure that resources are used efficiently, the management of land on the ground, must be underpinned by a greater understanding of available options and techniques.

Promoting ecological/biodiversity issues with the workforce would stimulate a greater interest and understanding, and help to further raise the profile of environmental issues generally.

Goal	Action	Timescale
1. Promote general awareness of biodiversity issues on site	- Provide a general information sheet to all employees on biodiversity issues	Complete
2. Provide specific advice for key groups.	- Provide detailed information sheets on protected species and habitats for PMP authors - Provide information sheets on specific management options for practitioners (e.g. grass cutting, tree planting)	Complete Complete

3. Review the future of the nature trail.	- Consider the future of the nature trail and develop an appropriate management strategy	Complete
4. Seek wider recognition for BAP	- Discuss potential for certification of BAP with Wildlife Trust	2007/08

Nb. The baseline information contained within this document is extracted from a more detailed report, carried out by NSTS (now Nexia Solutions) on behalf of Environment, Health and Safety Department (now EHS&Q Dept). For further information refer to the accompanying NSTS report [1].

REFERENCES

- [1] Biodiversity at Springfields. NSTS report 5020.
- [2] Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (amended 1991). HMSO
- [3] The Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations, 1994. HMSO

END

APPENDIX 1

OMITTED FOR SECURITY REASONS

APPENDIX 2: PLANNED OPTIMISATION OF HABITAT ON SPRINGFIELDS SITE

OMITTED FOR SECURITY REASONS

