



CFE County Priorities for Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire

1. Aim

This document has been drawn together by the CFE Local Liaison Group (LLG) for Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire (BBO) with input from all LLG members and their respective organisations. The aim is to ensure that all advisers and partners have a clear, concise and consistent message about the aims of CFE in BBO that can be used by farmers and landowners to ensure their actions deliver maximum benefit to the environment. The action undertaken on each farm may differ depending on the farm type and enterprise.

2. Counties overview

Berkshire, Buckinghamshire and Oxfordshire all have diverse geology and landform with a corresponding diversity of landscape, habitat and farming types.

BBO's landscape falls within 11 National Character Areas (NCAs):

- 88 Bedfordshire Claylands
- (90) Bedfordshire Greensand Ridge
- (91) Yardley - Whittlewood Ridge
- (95) Northamptonshire Uplands
- 107 Cotswolds
- 108 Upper Thames Clay Vales
- 109 Midvale Ridge
- 110 Chilterns
- 115 Thames Valley
- 116 Berkshire and Marlborough Downs
- 129 Thames Basin Heaths
- (130) Hampshire Downs

(NCA numbers in brackets indicate that only a small area falls into this NCA)

Further information and details [NCA South East and London](#)

3. County designated sites

Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AoNBs):

North Wessex Downs, Chilterns, Cotswolds

Special Protection Areas (SPAs):

Thames Basin Heaths, London Reservoirs and Gravel Pits

Special Areas for Conservation (SACs):

Aston Rowant, Cothill Fen, Hackpen Hill, Hartslock Wood, Little Wittenham, Oxford Meadows, Burnham Beeches, Chiltern Beechwoods, Kennet and Lambourn Floodplain, Kennet Valley Alderwoods, River Lambourn, Windsor Forest and Great Park

National Nature Reserves (NNRs):

Aston Rowant, Burnham Beeches, Chimney Meadows, Cothill Fen, Wychwood Forest

Sites of Special Scientific interest (SSSIs):

Berkshire x 72 (5989ha), Buckinghamshire x 69(3907ha), Oxfordshire x 110 (4413ha)

BOAs and CTAs:

Berkshire <http://berkshirelnp.org/index.php/what-we-do/strategy/biodiversity-opportunity-areas>

Buckinghamshire http://www.buckinghamshirepartnership.gov.uk/biodiversity/biodiversity-opportunity-areas/#.UmVa_XCmiSp

Oxfordshire <http://www.oncf.org.uk/biodiversity/cta.htm>

4. County Priorities

The over-arching aim of the CFE is to create a complex farming environment that has the capacity to buffer change.

The following sections aim to define the county priorities by three themes; habitats, species and water quality. Please note this should be broken down further than county level where relevant.

a) Habitats - priority farmland habitats and description

Ancient woodland / native woodland / wet woodland
Ancient / species- rich hedgerows
Unimproved grassland / species-rich grassland / wet grassland
Wetlands / ponds and lakes / ditches
Rivers / streams
Heathland / acid grassland
Parkland
Arable and grass margins

Any specific action required:

- to embed environmental management as core principle of all farm businesses
- identify, assess, protect, manage, buffer, extend and link habitats and features on the farm
- no net loss principle
- extend good quality advice to farmers and land managers
- measure indicators of success

Relevant ELS/HLS options and equivalent CFE options for habitats:

ELS/HLS			CFE	
Code	Description	£ rate	Code	Description
EB3	Enhanced hedgerow management	42/100m		
HC7	Woodland Man on SNAW	100/ha		
EK3	Very low input grassland	400 & 150/ha	VM19	Fertiliser-free permanent grassland
EK5	Mixed stocking	9/ha		
EE22	Supp for wildflowers to grass corners/buffers	63/ha	VM6	Wildflower mix
EF1	Management of field corners	400/ha	VM17	Field corners
EF2	Wild bird seed mixture	450/ha	VM10	Wild bird seed mix & maize-free game strips
EF4	Nectar flower mixture	450/ha	VM7	Pollen & Nectar Mix
			VM13	Unsprayed and/or unfertilised cereal headlands
EF6	Overwinter stubble	120/ha	VM15	Overwinter stubble
EF7	Beetle banks	580/ha	VM18	Beetle banks
EF8	Skylark plots	5 ea	VM11	Skylark plots
			VM12	Lapwing plots
EF10	Unharvested cereal headlands	330/ha		
EF11	Uncropped cultivated margins	400/ha	VM14	Cultivated margins
EF15	Reduced herbicide cereals followed by overwinter stubble	195/ha		
EF22	Extended overwinter stubble	410/ha		

b) Species: priority species and requirements

Brown hare – mixed livestock and arable farming
Hazel dormouse – hazel woodland
Water vole – clean, vegetated ditches and streams, absence of predators
Bat species – woodland, water
Stone curlew – open arable landscape, absence of predators
Corn bunting – open landscape, chick food
Grey partridge – tussocky grassland, absence of predators, chick food
Turtle dove – tall hedges, chick food
Tree sparrow – trees, scrub, chick food
Lapwing – arable and short grass, wet grassland, absence of predators, chick food
Yellow wagtail – mixed livestock and arable farming, chick food
Linnet, yellowhammer, reed bunting, skylark, curlew, willow tit
Bumblebee species - nectar
Butterfly species – scrub (eg. juniper), woodland glades, chalk grassland
Dragon and damselfly species – clean water, vegetation as shelter
Amphibian and reptile species – ponds (rabbits)
Arable plants – no herbicides or fertiliser

Any specific action/management required:

- ideally a mixed farming system with grass, diverse habitats plus winter and spring cropping
- habitat protection and appropriate management + wildlife corridors for mammal species
- provision of nesting habitat, summer chick food and winter food for farmland birds
- summer food and winter hibernation sites at different life cycle stages for invertebrates
- breeding, hibernation, warming sites and refuges for amphibians and reptiles
- disturbed or deliberately cultivated soil for arable plants
- managed sward/ larval food plants/microclimate for chalk grass plants and invertebrates

Relevant ELS/HLS options and equivalent CFE options for species

ELS/HLS			CFE	
Code	Description	Rate	Code	Description
EG1	Undersown spring cereals	200/ha		
EG4	Cereals for whole crop silage followed by OWS	230/ha		
EK3	Very low input grassland	400 & 150/ha	VM19	Fertiliser free permanent grassland
EK20	Ryegrass seed-set	80/ha	VM9	Ryegrass seed for birds
EK21	Legume & herb rich sward	200/ha	VM8	Legume & herb rich temporary grass
EE22	Supp for wildflowers to grass corners/buffers	63/ha	VM6	Wildflower mix
EF1	Management of field corners	400/ha	VM17	Field corners
EF2	Wild bird seed mixture	450/ha	VM10	Wild bird seed mix & maize-free game strips
EF4	Nectar flower mixture	450/ha	VM7	Pollen & Nectar Mix
			VM13	Unsprayed and/or unfertilised cereal headlands
EF6	Overwinter stubble	120/ha	VM15	Over winter stubbles
EF7	Beetle banks	580/ha	VM18	Beetle banks
EF8	Skylark plots	5 ea	VM11	Skylark plots
			VM12	Lapwing plots
EF10	Unharvested cereal headlands	330/ha		
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EF15	Reduced herbicide cereals followed by overwinter stubble	195/ha		
EF22	Extended overwinter stubble	410/ha		
			VM20	Arable land reverted to grass

c) Water quality: priority river and groundwater catchments

Catchment Sensitive Farming (CSF) Priority Catchments

33 Rivers Kennet and Lambourn
54 Upper Cherwell
64 Cotswolds
A Upper Great Ouse

Environment Agency Thames Area Catchments

Cherwell, Colne, Evenlode, Loddon, Ock, Pang, Ray, Thame, Thames, Windrush

- soil erosion and run-off, nitrates, phosphates and pesticides

Any specific action required:

1. Nitrates and phosphates

Best practice in nutrient management planning and application; improved farm infrastructure for better slurry and FYM storage; clean and dirty water separation; use RB209 for crop input calculations; NVZ compliance

2. Pesticides

Best practice in pesticide handling and application (including slug pellets); improved farm infrastructure for sprayer filling and washing facilities, biobeds and biofilters; Defra COGAP

3. Sediment

Best practice to improve soil organic matter, prevent soil erosion, compaction and run-off and reduce levels of phosphate entering water via soil particles; encourage buffer strips against watercourses and fencing of watercourses where appropriate.

Catchment Sensitive Farming officers:

http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/Images/csf-contact-details_tcm6-34556.pdf

EA Catchment coordinators:

http://www.environment-agency.gov.uk/static/documents/Research/FS_Thames_River_Basin_District_final_v3.pdf

Relevant ELS/HLS options and equivalent CFE options for water quality

ELS/HLS			CFE	
Code	Description	Rate	Code	Description
EE1-10	2,4 & 6m buffer strips		VM1	Grass buffer strips on watercourse/pond
EJ2	Management of maize crops to reduce soil erosion	18/ha	VM3	Management of maize to avoid erosion
EJ5	Infield grass areas to prevent erosion & run off	454/ha	VM2	In-field grass strips to avoid erosion
EJ9	12m buffer for watercourses on cultivated land	400/ha		
EJ10	Enhanced management of maize crops	94/ha		
EJ11	Maintenance of watercourse fencing	4/100m	VM4	Watercourse fencing
EJ13	Winter cover crops	65/ha	VM5	Winter cover crops

Tim Clarke BBO CFE coordinator, 3.11.2013