

**ROMNEY MARSHES AREA  
INTERNAL DRAINAGE BOARD**

**BIODIVERSITY ACTION PLAN**

**April 2010**

*Romney Marsh Countryside Partnership,  
Romney Marsh Day Centre,  
Rolfe Lane,  
New Romney,  
Romney Marsh,  
KENT. TN28 8JR  
01797 367934  
mail@rmcp.co.uk  
www.rmcp.co.uk*

This Biodiversity Action Plan has been prepared by the Romney Marshes Area Internal Drainage Board in accordance with the commitment in the Implementation Plan of the DEFRA Internal Drainage Board Review for IDBs to produce their own Biodiversity Action Plans by April, 2010.

It also demonstrates the Board's commitment to fulfilling its duty as a public body under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 to conserve biodiversity.

Many of the Board's activities have benefits for biodiversity, not least its water level management and ditch maintenance work. It is hoped that this Biodiversity Action Plan will help the Board to maximise the biodiversity benefits from its activities and demonstrate its contribution to the Government's UK Biodiversity Action Plan targets.

The Board has adopted the Biodiversity Action Plan as one of its policies and is committed to its implementation. It will review the plan periodically and update it as appropriate.

..... Date .....

**William Maylam**  
Chairman of the Board

This Biodiversity Action Plan is a public statement by the Board of its biodiversity objectives and the methods by which it intends to achieve them.

We would welcome appropriate involvement in the delivery of the Plan from interested organisations, companies, and individuals.

You can contact us about this Biodiversity Action Plan by writing to the following address:

Name **Romney Marshes Area Internal Drainage Board**

Address **Suite 7, Old Barn Offices, Salts Farm, East Guldeford, Rye East Sussex**

or by email: [info@rmaidb.co.uk](mailto:info@rmaidb.co.uk)

Further information is available on the Board's website: [www.rmaidb.co.uk](http://www.rmaidb.co.uk)

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## 1 IDB BIODIVERSITY – AN INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Introduction

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The Romney Marshes Area IDB has conducted a biodiversity audit of its district and identified those habitats and species that would benefit from particular management or actions by the IDB. Using this information, which is presented in later sections, the IDB's Biodiversity Action Plan has been developed. The Plan identifies objectives for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity within the drainage district, and goes on to describe targets and actions that will hopefully deliver these objectives. The intention is to integrate, as appropriate, biodiversity into the Board's activities, such as annual maintenance programmes and capital works projects.

The action plan will help to safeguard the biodiversity of the drainage district now and for future generations. In particular, it is hoped that implementing the plan will contribute to the achievement of local and national targets for UK BAP priority species and habitats. Species and habitats which are not listed in the UK BAP but may be locally significant for a variety of reasons have also been considered.

The Plan is an evolving document that will be reviewed and updated on a regular basis. It covers the entire drainage district of the IDB, as shown in Figure 1.



Figure 1. Romney Marshes Area IDB District Map.

## 1.2 What is Biodiversity?

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The Convention on Biodiversity agreed at the Earth Summit in Rio de Janeiro in 1992 defined biodiversity as:

*“The variability among living organisms from all sources, including terrestrial, marine and other aquatic ecosystems and the ecological complexes of which they are part; this includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.”*

Biodiversity can be defined simply as “the variety of life” and encompasses the whole spectrum of living organisms, including plants, birds, mammals, and insects. It includes both common and rare species, as well as the genetic diversity within species. Biodiversity also refers to the habitats and ecosystems that support these species.

## 1.3 The Importance of Conserving Biodiversity

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Biodiversity is a vital resource and it is essential to acknowledge its importance to our lives along with the range of benefits that it produces:

- Supply of ecosystem services – water, nutrients, climate change mitigation, pollination
- Life resources – food, medicine, energy and raw materials
- Improved health and well-being
- Landscape and cultural distinctiveness
- Direct economic benefits from biodiversity resources and ‘added value’ through local economic activity and tourism
- Educational, recreational and amenity resources

## 1.4 The Biodiversity Action Planning Framework

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This IDB Biodiversity Action Plan is part of a much larger biodiversity framework that encompasses international, national and local levels of biodiversity action planning and conservation.

## 1.5 Biodiversity – The International Context

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The international commitment to halt the worldwide loss of habitats and species and their genetic resources was agreed in 1992 at United Nations Conference on the Environment and Development, commonly known as the Rio Earth Summit. Over 150 countries, including the United Kingdom, signed the Convention on Biological Diversity, pledging to contribute to the conservation of biodiversity at the global level. These states made a commitment to draw up national strategies to address the losses to global biodiversity and to resolve how economic development could go hand in hand with the maintenance of biodiversity.

The Rio Convention includes a global commitment to achieve by 2010 a significant reduction of the current rate of biodiversity loss at the global, regional and national level ([www.biodiv.org/convention/default.html](http://www.biodiv.org/convention/default.html)). The 2002 World Summit in Johannesburg on Sustainable Development subsequently endorsed this target.

## 1.6 Biodiversity – The National Context

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The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) is the UK commitment to Article 6A of the Rio Convention on Biological Diversity. It describes the UK's priority species and habitats, and seeks to benefit 65 priority habitats and 1149 species in total. It identifies other key areas for action such as the building of partnerships for conserving biodiversity and gathering vital biodiversity data.

In England, *Working with the Grain of Nature* sets out the Government's strategy for conserving and enhancing biological diversity, and establishes programmes of action for integrating biodiversity into policy and planning for key sectors, together with appropriate targets and indicators. The Strategy has a Water and Wetlands Working Group and an associated programme of action that includes:

- Integrating biodiversity into whole-catchment management.
- Achieving net gain in water and wetland BAP priority habitats through Water Level Management Plans, Catchment Flood Management Plans, and sustainable flood management approaches.

## **1.7 Local Biodiversity Action Plans**

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For the UK Biodiversity Action Plan to be implemented successfully it requires some means of ensuring that the national strategy is translated into effective action at the local level. The UK targets for the management, enhancement, restoration, and creation of habitats and species populations have therefore been translated into targets in Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs), which tend to operate at the county level.

## **1.8 Internal Drainage Boards and Biodiversity**

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The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 places a duty on IDBs to conserve biodiversity. As a public body, every IDB must have regard in exercising its functions, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.

The Act states that conserving biodiversity includes restoring or enhancing a population or habitat. In so doing, an IDB should have regard to the list published by the Secretary of State of living organisms and types of habitat that are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. In effect, this list comprises the Biodiversity Action Plan priority species and habitats for England.

In 2007, the Government's IDB Review Implementation Plan established a commitment that IDBs should produce their own Biodiversity Action Plans.

This IDB Biodiversity Action Plan has been produced to help fulfil these requirements and seeks to set out targets and actions that complement the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and Local Biodiversity Action Plans.

## **1.9 The Aims of the IDB Biodiversity Action Plan**

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The aims of the Romney Marshes Area IDB BAP are:

- To ensure that habitat and species targets from the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and the local LBAP are translated into effective action within the drainage district.
- To identify targets for other habitats and species of local importance within the drainage district.
- To develop effective local partnerships to ensure that programs for biodiversity conservation are maintained in the long term.
- To raise awareness within the IDB and locally of the need for biodiversity conservation, and to provide guidance to landowners, occupiers and their representatives on biodiversity and inland water management.
- To ensure that opportunities for conservation and enhancement of biodiversity are fully considered throughout the IDB's operations, and
- To monitor and report on progress in biodiversity conservation.

## 2 THE IDB BAP PROCESS

### 2.1 The Biodiversity Audit

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To produce the Romney Marshes Area IDB Biodiversity Action Plan, information on the habitats and species present in the catchment was first obtained. This “Biodiversity Audit” involved the collation of existing data primarily held by the Romney Marsh Countryside Project over the last fourteen years and by the IDB plus other biodiversity partners.

### 2.2 Evaluating and Prioritising Habitats and Species

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The Biodiversity Audit identified those priority habitats and species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and the Local Biodiversity Action Plan that can be found in the Romney Marshes Area IDB drainage district. Additional non-BAP habitats and species deemed to be important within the drainage district were also identified.

Further habitats and species, together with additional targets and actions, may be added in the future, as knowledge is improved and delivery of the IDB BAP is reviewed.

A range of criteria was then used to select those species and habitats that are of particular importance to the IDB – that is to say, those habitats and species that could benefit from IDB actions. The criteria used included their national and local status, the opportunities for effective IDB action and the resources available.

### 2.3 Setting Objectives, Targets and Indicators

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For each habitat and species identified as being important to the IDB, conservation objectives and targets have been drawn up and set out in the Plan. The objectives express the IDB’s broad aims for benefiting a particular habitat or species. The related targets have been set to focus IDB programmes of action and to identify outcomes that can be monitored to measure achievement. For each target an indicator has been set – a measurable feature of the target that, when monitored over time, allows delivery to be assessed.

In order for this BAP to be as effective as possible the targets and actions have been devised to be SMART (Specific, Measurable, Achievable, Relevant and Time-limited). The targets are realistic, but are also considered to be proportionate and practicable given the resources available.

Procedural targets and actions have also been considered. These are targets that the Board will use to measure the way in which it considers and incorporates biodiversity across the whole range of its operations. These may involve changes to administrative, management and operating procedures.

### 2.4 Implementation

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Once targets have been set for habitats and species, it is important that the actions to deliver the Biodiversity Action Plan are described. The Plan sets out how the Board intends to implement the actions in the plan, often in partnership with other organisations or individuals.

### 2.5 Monitoring

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Achievement of the Plan targets will be measured by a programme of monitoring which the Board will undertake, in some instances with assistance from its partners, and the methods to be used are described in the Plan.

### 2.6 Reporting and Reviewing Progress

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It is important to review the implementation of the BAP, assess changes in the status of habitats and species and the overall feasibility of objectives and targets. In addition, it is vital that the successful achievement of targets is recorded and the gains for biodiversity registered in the public domain.

The Plan sets out the methods the IDB will be using to review the delivery of targets and to communicate progress to partner organisations and the public.

### 3 THE BIODIVERSITY AUDIT

#### 3.1 Introduction

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The following Sections 4, 5 and 6 summarise the results of the Biodiversity Audit, undertaken in 2009. Section 4 provides information about the drainage district and a list of the nature conservation sites that occur within or bordering its boundaries. Sections 5 and 6 list respectively the habitats and species occurring within the district that are of potential importance to the IDB.

#### 3.2 Local Biodiversity Action Plans

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The following Local Biodiversity Action Plan(s) cover the IDB's drainage district:

Kent BAP

Sussex BAP

#### 3.3 IDB Biodiversity Audit Boundary

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The Biodiversity Audit covers the entire district of the IDB, as shown in Figure 1. Where data has been obtained that shows a record of a species in a 1km square or 10km square which the district wholly or partially covers, this has been included in the area of the audit.

#### 3.4 Sources of Data - Habitats

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Information on habitats of relevance occurring within the drainage district was obtained from the following sources:

Romney Marsh Countryside Project

Romney Marshes Area IDB

Kent County Council

East Sussex County Council

#### 3.5 Sources of Data - Species

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Information on species of relevance occurring within the drainage district was obtained from the following sources:

Romney Marsh Countryside Project

Romney Marshes Area IDB



## 4 NATURE CONSERVATION SITES

### 4.1 The Drainage District

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The drainage district covers an area of 33,170 hectares and contains 350km of IDB-maintained watercourses.

The geology of the Romney Marshes Area IDB drainage district is characterised by wide expanses of marshland bounded on the coast by shingle ridges and sand dunes rising a few metres above them. The inland boundary of the area is the old shoreline of Lower Cretaceous Wealden and Lower Greensand rocks, which rise sharply and form a marked contrast with the flat coastal plain.

#### 4.1.1 Landscape Designations

Kent Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

High Weald AONB

#### 4.1.2 Landscape Character

Natural England has divided the whole of England into a number of Joint Character Areas (JCA) based on characteristic landforms, wildlife and land use. They are not designations and are not confined by traditional administrative boundaries. For each JCA, Natural England has prepared a profile that characterises the wildlife and natural features, identifies the influences that act upon those features and sets objectives for nature conservation.

The complete drainage district is covered by the Romney Marshes Character Area.

Romney Marsh Local Landscape Area (LLA)

Old Romney Shoreline Special Landscape Area (SLA)

#### 4.1.3 Sites and Monuments Records

Scheduled Monuments (SM)

The Royal Military Canal (21SM's)

Martello Tower No.24 – Dymchurch

Martello Tower No.28 – Rye Harbour

Martello Tower No.30 – Dymchurch Rebourt

Dymchurch Rebourt

World war II Underground Operational base

World War II Operational Post

Artillery Castle and associated earthworks – Camber

Early Medieval Flood defence at Botolph's Bridge, Wets Hythe

Part of the Rhee Wall, Snargate

Medieval Farmstead – Pilchers

Moat and fields Marshalls Bridge, Dymchurch

Moat and fields – Austin Friars Chapel

Eastbridge Church

Hope All Saints ruined church  
 St.Mary’s Church, West Hythe  
 Cistercian Grange  
 Winchelsea Friary (known as Greyfairs)  
 Winchelsea  
 Ferry Gate, Winchelsea  
 Strand Gate, Winchelsea  
 Town ditch, New Gate, Winchelsea  
 Water Tower, Churchyard  
 Stutfall Castle, West Hythe  
 Rye Town walls  
 The Land gate  
 Ypres Tower

**Local Designations**

**Conservation Areas (CA’s)**

Rye CA  
 Winchelsea  
 New Romney  
 Lydd  
 Hythe  
 Old Romney  
 Newchurch  
 Dymchurch  
 Brookland  
 Appledore

Over 860 Listed Buildings within drainage district.

**4.2 Statutory Nature Conservation Sites**

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**4.2.1 International Sites**

The following internationally-designated conservation sites are found within the district:

**Table 1. International Designations**

Site name	Designation	Features Relevant to IDB
Dungeness	SAC	e.g. shingle, gravel pits, ditches, breeding waders
Hastings Cliffs	SAC	Geology, invertebrates
Dungeness to Pett Level	SPA	Wintering waders, wildfowl, breeding seabirds.

#### 4.2.2 National Sites

The following nationally-designated conservation sites are found within the district:

**Table 2. National Designations**

Site name	Designation	Features Relevant to IDB
Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay	SSSI	Grazing marsh, breeding seabirds, vegetated shingle, gravel pits
Hastings Cliff to Pett Beach	SSSI	Geology
Houghton Green Cliff	SSSI	Geology
Lympne Escarpment	SSSI	Grazed pasture, ancient woodland
Dungeness	NNR	Vegetated shingle, gravel pits, breeding seabirds
Hamstreet Wood	NNR	Ancient Woodland

#### 4.2.3 Local Nature Reserves

The following Local Nature Reserves, which are designated by local authorities under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, are found within the district:

**Table 3. Local Designations**

Site name	Designation	Features Relevant to IDB
Rye Harbour	LNR	Vegetated Shingle, shingle invertebrates, breeding seabirds, water voles, gravel pits.
Romney Warren	LNR	Great crested newt, water beetles, medicinal leech, old fixed sand dune.

#### 4.3 Non-statutory Local Sites

A number of sites have been identified locally as being important for wildlife. Whilst these designations do not have statutory status, the sites themselves are important for their contribution to biodiversity and planning policy requires that they are given consideration. The following local sites are to be found within or bordering the drainage district:

**Table 4. Non-Statutory Designations**

Site name	Designation	Features Relevant to IDB
St.Georges Churchyard, Ivychurch	Local Wildlife Site	Lichens
St.Augustines Churchyard, Snave	Local Wildlife Site	Lichens
Pasture, Ditches, Pond, Dymchurch	Local Wildlife Site	Water Vole, Great-crested Newt, ditch flora
Royal Military Canal	Local Wildlife Site	Rich aquatic flora and fauna
Rother Levels and adjacent woods, Wittersham	Local Wildlife Site	Ditch flora, woodland fauna
Pett Levels	Sites of Nature Conservation Interest	Aquatic flora and fauna
Brede Valley	Sites of Nature	Aquatic flora and fauna

	Conservation Interest	
Shingle Beach, Dog's Hill	Sites of Nature Conservation Interest	Vegetated Shingle
Greyfairs, Winchelsea	Sites of Nature Conservation Interest	Grassland

## 5 HABITAT AUDIT

### 5.1 Habitat Audit Summary

This habitat audit summary lists the broad habitat types and UK BAP priority habitats that occur within the IDB district as identified by the information gathering exercise. Also listed are habitats deemed to be of local importance and/or featured in the county Local Biodiversity Action Plan that occur in the IDB district. Habitats that are of potential importance for the IDB, where water level management or other IDB activities may be of benefit, are identified. Finally, brief notes are included on the potential for the IDB to maintain, restore or expand its important habitats.

**Table 5. Habitat Audit Summary**

Broad Habitat Types	UK BAP Priority Habitat	Local Biodiversity Action Plan Habitat	Habitat of Importance for IDB	Location of Habitat of Importance for IDB	IDB Potential for Maintaining, Restoring or Expanding Habitat
Rivers and streams			Rivers and Streams	River Rother, Brede, Tillingham	Habitat restoration by bank management in partnership with EA
Improved grassland	Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	Floodplain grazing marsh and ditch systems	Grazing marsh and associated ditch systems	Romney Marsh, Walland Marsh, East Guldeford Levels, Pett Level and River Valleys.	Maintain condition of habitat
					Restore condition via WLMP
					Expand habitat by landowner partnership and new WLMP
	Coastal Vegetated Shingle	Coastal Vegetated Shingle	Vegetated Shingle	Dungeness, Lydd and Rye Harbour	Enhance shingle plant communities through maintenance if suitable.
	Reedbed	Reedbed	Reedbed	Romney Marsh IDB	Retain reed fringe on certain water courses.
	Saline Lagoons	Saline Lagoons	Saline Lagoons	Rye Harbour, Lydd Ranges MOD	
	Coastal Sand Dunes	Coastal Sand Dunes	Coastal Sand Dunes	Littlestone, Greatstone, Camber	
	Wet Woodlands	Wet Woodlands	Wet Woodlands	River Valleys	



## 6 SPECIES AUDIT

## 6.1 Species Audit Summary

This species audit summary lists the BAP priority species that occur within the IDB district as identified by the information gathering exercise. Also listed are species deemed to be of local importance and/or identified in the county Local Biodiversity Action Plan that occur in the IDB district. Species that are of potential importance for the IDB, where water level management or other IDB activities may be of benefit, are identified. Finally, brief notes are included on the potential for the IDB to maintain or increase the population or range of species of importance.

Table 6. Species Audit Summary

Common Name	Group	Order	Scientific Name	UK BAP Priority Species	Local Biodiversity Action Plan(s) Species	Non-BAP Species But Important in IDB District	Location of Species of Importance for IDB	IDB Potential for Maintaining or Increasing Species Population or Range
Greater water-parsnip	Vascular plants	Flowering plant	<i>Sium latifolium</i>	Yes	Yes		Found on 8 sections of IDB Channel on Romney Marsh, Walland Marsh and Rother Valley.	Extend range by sympathetic ditch management near existing plants.
Marshmallow Moth	Terrestrial Invertebrates	Moth	<i>Hydraecia osseola subsp. hucherardi</i>	Yes	Kent BAP List		Walland Marsh, Lower Rother Valley, scattered records throughout Romney Marsh IDB area.	Increase Marshmallow plant stands through seeding grassland and ditch management at suitable sites.

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Medicinal Leech	Terrestrial Invertebrates	Annelida (Worms)	<i>Hirudo medicinalis</i>	No	No	Yes	Found mainly on Walland Marsh, Dungeness and Rye.	Increase host abundance (ie frogs, newts, fish and birds). Water quality Shallow Ditch bank profile where desilting if suitable
Brown Banded Carder Bee	Terrestrial Invertebrates	Bee	<i>Bombus humilis</i>	Yes	Kent BAP List		Throughout Romney Marsh IDB area, although distributed more towards shingle.	Seed Clover Mixes in any new works. Grassland Management on bankside.
Eel	Fish	Fish	<i>Anguilla anguilla</i>	Yes	Kent BAP List		Throughout Romney Marsh IDB Area.	Specific eel passes/ improve ditch structures.
Great-crested Newt	Herptiles	Amphibian	<i>Triturus cristatus</i>	Yes	Kent BAP List		Around 110 waterbodies within Romney Marsh IDB Area. Possible more ponds on higher river valleys	Grass management and terrestrial habitat. Pond Creation where appropriate.
Common Toad	Herptiles	Amphibian	<i>Buo bufo</i>	Yes	Kent BAP List		Scattered distribution across Marsh. Serious decline over 25 years.	Maintain good ditch management in breeding ditches.
Viviparous Lizard	Herptiles	Reptile	<i>Lacterta vivipara</i>	Yes	Kent BAP List		Scattered throughout the Romney Marsh IDB Area. Prefers the shingle.	Grass and ditch management Habitat Piles at Pump Stations.
Slow Worm	Herptiles	Reptile	<i>Anguis fragilis</i>	Yes	Kent BAP List		Scattered throughout the Romney Marsh IDB Area.	Grass and ditch management Habitat Piles at Pump Stations.



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Grass Snake	Herptiles	Reptile	<i>Natrix natrix</i>	Yes	Kent BAP List		Throughout Romney Marsh IDB Area.	Grass and ditch management. Habitat Piles at Pump Stations.
Bittern	Birds	Bird	<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	Yes	Kent BAP List		Throughout Romney Marsh IDB Area., mainly on reserves	Extend population by increasing length of reed fringe on certain IDB channels.
Barn Owl	Birds	Bird	<i>Tyto alba</i>	No		Yes	Throughout Romney Marsh IDB Area.	Provide nesting boxes on IDB Pumping Stations.
Tree Sparrow	Birds	Bird	<i>Passer montanus</i>	Yes	Kent BAP List		Throughout Romney Marsh IDB Area. Status on river valleys unknown.	Provide nesting box racks on IDB Pumping Stations.
Reed bunting	Birds	Bird	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus schoeniclus</i>	Yes	Kent BAP List		Throughout Romney Marsh IDB Area.	Extend population by increasing length of reed fringe
Brown Hare	Terrestrial mammals	Terrestrial mammals	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	Yes	Kent BAP List Sussex Biodiversity Partnership		Throughout Romney Marsh IDB Area.	Maintain current population
Water Vole	Terrestrial mammals	Terrestrial mammals	<i>Arvicola terrestris</i>	Yes	Kent BAP List Sussex Biodiversity Partnership		Throughout Romney Marsh IDB Area, with hotspots. Scarcer on river valleys.	Improve ditch management for Water Vole through leaving reed margins on certain channels (depending on width).
Harvest Mouse	Terrestrial mammals	Terrestrial mammals	<i>Micromys minutus</i>	Yes	Kent BAP List		Walland Marsh, Dungeness Pett Levels/Brede	Improve ditch management for Harvest Mouse through leaving reed/grass margins if possible.

Internal Drainage Board – Biodiversity Action Plan

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Otter	Terrestrial mammals	Terrestrail mammals	<i>Lutra lutra</i>	Yes	Kent BAP List Sussex Biodiversity Partnership		Occassional evidence on river valleys, Brede, Rother.	Create Otter Holts on River Valleys.
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## 7 HABITAT AND SPECIES ACTION PLANS

### 7.1 Habitat and Species Action Plans

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The following sections contain action plans for each of the habitats and species that have been prioritised for action by the Romney Marshes Area IDB. The plans set out the objectives, targets and actions that the IDB believes are appropriate for each. These plans will be reviewed and updated periodically.

Some Priority Habitat and Species Action Plans have not been drawn up. For instance Sand Dunes or Saline Lagoons where no IDB channels cut through these habitats, so the IDB will have minimal impact on these habitats.

The same applies to the species like Brown Hare, Harvest Mouse which will benefit from other aspects of the plan, if certain margins are left for Water Vole, or bankside vegetation for bumble bees.

### 7.2 Action Plans for the Romney Marshes Area IDB

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#### 7.2.1 Habitat Action Plans

The following Habitat Action Plans are included for Romney Marsh drainage district:

Rivers, streams and ditches  
Coastal Floodplain Grazing Marsh  
Coastal Vegetated Shingle  
Reedbeds

#### 7.2.2 Species Action Plans

The following Species Action Plans are included for Romney Marsh drainage district:

Greater Water Parsnip  
Marshmallow Moth  
Medicinal Leech  
Brown Banded Carder Bee  
Eel  
Great Crested Newt  
Grass Snake  
Bittern  
Barn Owl  
Water Vole  
Otter

## 8 HABITAT ACTION PLANS

### **8. Rivers, Streams and Ditches**

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Rivers, streams and ditches whether semi-natural, modified or man made, provide important habitats for a range of species. Rivers, streams and ditches also provide a wildlife corridor link between fragmented habitats in intensively farmed landscapes.

#### **National UK BAP Targets**

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Throughout the UK, the plant and animal assemblages of rivers, streams and ditches varies according to the geographical area, underlying geology and water quality.

In the UK, very few watercourses have not been physically created or modified by human actions. Such actions have altered the frequency and magnitude of flooding, changed seasonal patterns of flows and modified patterns of sediment transport and nutrient exchange.

Rivers are listed as a UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitat.

#### **Local Biodiversity Action Plan Targets**

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In Kent and Sussex, chalk rivers are a Priority Habitat.

#### **Local Status**

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There are no chalk rivers in the drainage district.

#### **Status within the Drainage District**

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The Biodiversity Audit identified the main rivers as the Rother, Brede and Tillingham. However, there are many streams, ditches in the river valleys which drain directly into the river systems.

In most lengths of the river systems the main rivers have been managed and altered by human intervention. Most of this work is carried out by the Environment Agency. The lower parts of the Rother Valley are tidal and the flood defence of these banks is the responsibility of the Environment Agency.

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**Objectives and Targets**

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Reporting
1	Restore and recreate marginal bankside habitat of adjoining tributaries and streams	1.1	Identify areas where a fringe of vegetation along a watercourse can be maintained	IDB, RMCP, EA, Rye Harbour, Wetland Trust, SWT	2010	Channel length (m)	2011
		1.2	Assess existing habitat suitability for key species.	IDB, RMCP, EA, Rye Harbour, Wetland Trust, SWT	2010	Channel length (m)	2011
		1.3	Undertake restoration of habitat where required	IDB, Landowner, EA.	Annual	Channel length (m)	Annual

**Associated Species**

Greater Water Parsnip  
 Eel  
 Grass Snake  
 Water Vole  
 Otter

## **9. Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh**

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The Romney Marsh and adjoining river valleys holds significant coastal and floodplain grazing marsh. The vast majority of this habitat across Walland Marsh, East Guldeford Levels, Pett Level are part of the Dungeness, Romney Marsh and Rye Bay SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest). However, the river valleys and the main part of the Romney Marsh have no legal protection.

### **National UK BAP Targets**

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Throughout the UK, the plant and animal assemblages varies according to the geographical area, underlying geology and water quality.

Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh are listed as a UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitat.

### **Local Biodiversity Action Plan Targets**

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In Kent, Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh are a Priority Habitat.

### **Local Status**

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The Romney Marsh and adjoining river valleys holds significant coastal and floodplain grazing marsh. The vast majority of this habitat across Walland Marsh, East Guldeford Levels, Pett Levels have a wildlife designation (Site of Special Scientific Interest). However, the river valleys and the main part of the Romney Marsh no there is no protection.

### **Status within the Drainage District**

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In Kent there are 6,900ha of Coastal Floodplain habitat of which in Kent 88% is protected within a SSSI. On the Romney Marsh, the IDB have a management agreement or consent with Natural England to maintain the IDB channels through all parts of the SSSI.

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**Objectives and Targets**

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Reporting
1	Restore and recreate marginal bankside habitat of adjoining tributaries and streams	1.1	Identify areas where a fringe of vegetation along a watercourse can be maintained	IDB, RMCP, EA, Rye Harbour, Wetland Trust, SWT	2010	Channel length (m)	2011
		1.2	Assess existing habitat suitability for key species.	IDB, RMCP, EA, Rye Harbour, Wetland Trust, SWT	2010	Channel length (m)	2011
		1.3	Undertake restoration of habitat where required	IDB, Landowner, EA.	Annual	Channel length (m)	Annual
2	Control non-native invasive species in ditches and main channels	2.1	Record, monitor and control non native invasive plants and animals	IDB, EA	Annual	Length of channel treated/ Area treated.	Annual

**Associated Species**

Greater Water Parsnip  
Marshmallow Moth  
Medicinal Leech  
Brown Banded Carder Bee  
Eel  
Grass Snake  
Barn Owl  
Water Vole  
Otter

## **10. Coastal Vegetated Shingle**

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Coastal Vegetated Shingle is found in the Dungeness, Rye and Pett area and along with an area of the Hythe Ranges. Around 40% of the Vegetated Shingle in the UK is found in the Dungeness complex. The unusual feature is that the shingle is found a considerable distance inland around the town of Lydd and towards New Romney.

The habitat is home to many rare, endangered species and vegetated shingle is rare in a global context. The presence at Dungeness of the largest cusped shingle foreland in Britain (and one of the few such large examples in the world).

### **National UK BAP Targets**

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Throughout the UK, the Dungeness complex holds around 40% of the vegetated shingle habitat. Targets involve not losing more land to development, or mineral extraction.

Vegetated Shingle is listed as a UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitat.

### **Local Biodiversity Action Plan Targets**

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In Kent, coastal vegetated shingle is a Priority Habitat with around 90% of the habitat found in the county. In Rye Harbour a sizeable proportion of the Sussex vegetated shingle is found here.

### **Local Status**

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In Kent, coastal vegetated shingle is a Priority Habitat with around 90% of the habitat found in the county. In Rye Harbour a sizeable proportion of the Sussex vegetated shingle is found here.

### **Status within the Drainage District**

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Within the drainage district - coastal vegetated shingle is a Priority Habitat with around 90% of the habitat found in Kent is found at Dungeness. At Rye Harbour a sizeable proportion of the Sussex vegetated shingle is found here.



**Objectives and Targets**

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Reporting
1	Enhance any shingle habitat adjacent to IDB channels, primarily in Greatstone, Lade, Lydd, Camber and Rye.	1.1	Identify areas where vegetated shingle along watercourse can be maintained or enhanced.	RMCP, NE, EA, Rye Harbour LNR, RSPB, SWT.	2011	Channel length (m) or Area (sq.m)	2011
		1.2	Undertake any restoration of habitat where required	Landowner, IDB	2011	Channel length (m) or Area (sq.m)	2011

**Associated Species**

Brown Banded Carder Bee

Grass Snake

Barn Owl

## **11. Reedbeds**

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Reedbeds provide important habitats for a range of species. Reedbeds and more importantly reed fringed ditches also provide a wildlife corridor link between fragmented habitats in intensively farmed landscapes for breeding birds and key wintering bird species like Bittern. It is also vital for species like Water Vole to survive with some food and cover on these channels, ditches or sewers.

### **National UK BAP Targets**

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Throughout the UK, the plant and animal assemblages of varies according to the geographical area, underlying geology and water quality.

In the UK, very few watercourses have not been physically created or modified by human actions. Such actions have altered the frequency and magnitude of flooding, changed seasonal patterns of flows and modified patterns of sediment transport and nutrient exchange.

Reedbeds are listed as a UK Biodiversity Action Plan habitat.

### **Local Biodiversity Action Plan Targets**

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In Kent, reedbeds are a Priority Habitat with around 477 ha. Areas like Stodmarsh in the Stour Valley hold 50% of the County's reedbed, while a figure of around 40% of reedbed has been lost in the UK between 1945 and 1990. However, a number of reedbed schemes have reversed this decline at present. In Kent the target is to create new reedbeds by a net increase of 60% by 2020 and at least 75% by 2026

### **Local Status**

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On the Romney Marsh and River Valleys there are a number of reedbed areas and new reedbed areas created in recent times under LIFE projects, namely Dungeness (RSPB), Castle Water on Rye Harbour LNR and Pannel Valley.

### **Status within the Drainage District**

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On the Romney Marsh and River Valleys there are a number of reedbed areas and new reedbed areas created in recent times under LIFE projects, namely Dungeness (RSPB), Castle Water on Rye Harbour LNR and Pannel Valley.

There is extensive reed fringed ditches and channels across the drainage district, although not all large channels have a reed fringe. The Environment Agency have a code of practice to leave a 20% fringe to nearly all main channels to improve biodiversity. This has been in place for several years across the Romney Marsh.

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**Objectives and Targets**

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Reporting
1	Maintain and enhance quality of reedbed habitat along certain IDB channels within drainage district	1.1	Identify areas where a fringe of reeds along watercourse can be maintained	RMCP, IDB, EA, SWT, RSPB, NE, Rye Harbour, Wetland Trust	2011	Channel length (m)	2009
		1.2	Assess existing habitat suitability for key species.	RMCP, IDB, EA, SWT, RSPB, NE, Rye Harbour, Wetland Trust	2011	Channel length (m)	2009
		1.3	Undertake restoration of habitat where required	Landowner, IDB	Annual	Channel length (m)	Annual
2		2.1	Expand the suitable reed fringe habitat where appropriate following assessment of current resource	Natural England, RMCP, FWAG, Rye Harbour, SWT,	2012	Channel length (m)	Annual and 2012
		2.2	Encourage the use of buffer strips and field margins to increase the area of habitat available for key species.	Natural England, RMCP, FWAG, Rye Harbour, SWT,	2011 onwards	Number of Landowner meetings	Annual

**Associated Species**

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Greater Water Parsnip  
Medicinal Leech  
Eel  
Grass Snake  
Bittern  
Reed Bunting  
Water Vole  
Otter

## 12. SPECIES ACTION PLANS

### 12. GREATER WATER PARSNIP (*Sium latifolium*)

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Greater Water Parsnip (*Sium latifolium*) is a species of wet ditches and tall herb fens and swamps. It grows in shallow, still water that is alkaline and rich in nitrogen. It is able to tolerate strong growth from other emergent plants like Common Reed or Reed Mace. It thrives in ditches where water is kept open by occasional clearance, but suffers decline from over grazing and regular ditch maintenance. Greater Water Parsnip has a UK BAP species action plan and is included in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

#### Legal Protection Status

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The plant receives general protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

#### National UK BAP Targets

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Maintain the range and viable populations within the UK

#### Local Biodiversity Action Plan Targets

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Included in both Kent and Sussex Biodiversity Action Plans.

#### Local Status

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Within the South East of England, the Greater Water Parsnip maintains its stronghold on the Romney Marsh and adjoining river valleys. The species is also found in The Stour Valley around Canterbury and on the Ouse Valley in Sussex.

#### Status within the Drainage District

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The Biodiversity Audit identified Greater Water Parsnip of this species in the drainage district. There has been a downward trend over the last 50 years, through the historical records. The plant is in the top ten fastest declining plants nationally, with the majority of the rest being arable plants.

The Romney Marsh Countryside Project conducted a survey for the plant in 1999 and 2000 and revisited and monitored key ditches to 2010. The distribution of the plant is along the Royal Military Canal from West Hythe to Appledore, with small populations at Shirley Moor, Small Hythe, Rother Valley and the Pannel Valley. The plant is not found on Dungeness, Walland Marsh, East Guldeford Levels, maybe due to soil and water chemistry and it appears to struggle in the intensive arable and ditch maintenance landscape. The population size of the Greater Water Parsnip in the Romney Marsh IDB catchment is c1,500 plants over 130 sites. From this data 3.6% of the plants are found on Environment Agency maintained ditches, 2.8% on Internal Drainage Board maintained ditches and 93.6% on private maintained ditches.

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**Objectives and Targets**

<b>Target Reference</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Action Reference</b>	<b>IDB Actions</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Reporting</b>
1	Maintain and enhance suitable habitat for Greater Water Parsnip across the catchment area	1.1	Assess existing habitat suitability for greater water parsnip	RMCP, EA, NE,	2010	Channel length (m)	2010
		1.2	Identify areas where suitable bankside vegetation can be maintained	RMCP	2010	Channel length (m)	2010
2	Create margin along key Greater Water Parsnip sites	2.1	Expand the suitable habitat where appropriate following assessment through leaving strips of marginal vegetation	Landowners, Natural England, RMCP	2012	Channel length (m)	Annual and 2012
		2.2	Work with adjacent landowners to increase the area of habitat available for the GWP	Landowners Natural England FWAG, RMCP, EA	2010 onwards	Number of Landowner meetings	Annual
3	Monitor populations of Greater Water Parsnip along the key IDB sites	3.1	Collate Greater Water Parsnip data	RMCP, IDB	2010	Number of plants	Annual
4	Monitor populations of Greater Water Parsnip along the Bonnington site, RMC - EA	4.1	Collate Greater Water Parsnip data	RMCP, EA	2010	Number of plants	Annual

## **12. MARSHMALLOW MOTH (*Hydraecia osseola* subsp. *hucherardi*)**

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Marshmallow Moth is found only the Romney Marsh and on the River Medway in North Kent. It was first discovered in the UK in 1951. The Marshmallow Moth has a UK BAP species action plan and is a priority species. The moth depends on large stands of the larval foodplant Marsh Mallow and flies in September. The foodplant is uncommon in Britain and favours ditch banks and marginal habitats next to water bodies.

### **Legal Protection Status**

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The Marshmallow Moth is a Red Data Book 1 (Endangered).

### **National UK BAP Targets**

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Maintain the range and viable populations at all sites on the Romney Marsh and Medway (Kent).

### **Local Biodiversity Action Plan Targets**

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The moth is in the Kent and Sussex Biodiversity Action Plans. To retain the populations and to increase the stands of the foodplant – Marshmallow.

### **Local Status**

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Within the UK, the Marshmallow Moth is only found on the Romney Marsh in five colonies and a second population on the Medway in North Kent.

### **Status within the Drainage District**

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The Biodiversity Audit identified Marshmallow Moth as a species within the drainage district.

The Marshmallow Moth is found at five colonies across the Romney Marsh. The main sites are on the Kent/ east Sussex border, with a further colony at Fairfield and at Iden on the River Rother.

**Objectives and Targets**

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Reporting
1	Maintain and enhance suitable habitat for Marshmallow Moth and the foodplant Marshmallow across the catchment area	1.1	Assess existing habitat suitability for Marshmallow Moth	BC, RMCP, EA, NE,	2010	Channel length (m)	2010
		1.2	Identify areas where suitable bankside vegetation can be maintained	BC, RMCP	2010	Channel length (m)	2010
2	Create margins along key Marshmallow Moth sites	2.1	Expand the suitable habitat where appropriate following assessment of current resource through seeding or planting of foodplant	Landowners, Natural England, RMCP, Rye Harbour, RSPB	2010	Channel length (m)	Annual
		2.2	Work with adjacent landowners to increase the area of habitat available for the Marshmallow Moth and foodplant. – through seeding or planting	Landowners Natural England FWAG, RMCP, Rye Harbour, EA	2010 onwards	Number of Landowner meetings	Annual
3	Monitor population of Marshmallow Moth and the foodplant along the key IDB sites	3.1	Collate Marshmallow Moth data	BC	2010	Number of Moths or Number of plants	Every year



### **13. MEDICINAL LEECH (*Hirudo medicinalis*)**

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Medicinal Leech (*Hirudo medicinalis*) is a creature which is found in around 20 isolated populations in the UK. It requires warm, shallow waterbodies with a rich assemblage of potential food items, like fish, amphibians, birds. The water quality must be good and it cannot tolerate brackish conditions. Medicinal Leech has a UK BAP species action plan.

#### **Legal Protection Status**

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The Medicinal Leech is listed as rare in the British Red Data Books and is protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). It is protected internationally by inclusion in Appendix II of the Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species (CITES) Listing (1987) and Appendix III of the Berne Convention. It also appears in Annex Va of the Directive on Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora and Fauna (EEC, Council Directive 92/43 (1992).

#### **National UK BAP Targets**

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Maintain the range and viable populations at no less than 87 sites within the UK

#### **Local Biodiversity Action Plan Targets**

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Present within Kent Biodiversity Action Plan.

#### **Local Status**

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Within the South East of England, the Medicinal Leech is only found across parts of the Romney Marsh, Dungeness and the Rye Harbour area. There are historical records for the Lower Rother Valley. No Medicinal Leeches have yet be found in the Royal Military Canal, river valleys or the Dowels/Fairfield area.

#### **Status within the Drainage District**

---

The Biodiversity Audit identified Medicinal Leech as a species within the drainage district.

The Romney Marsh Countryside Project conducted a survey for the Leech in 1998 and 1999 and revisited and monitored key ditches/waterbodies up to 2003. New leech surveys have been carried out on Walland Marsh and East Guldeford Levels in 2005. The main populations are at Dungeness and through Lydd out onto East Guldeford Levels and onto Rye Harbour. Leeches have not been found in the Royal Military Canal, Shirley Moor or up the Rother Valley or further north or east from Romney Warren SSSI (New Romney). The population size of the Medicinal Leech in the Romney Marshes Area IDB catchment is around 100 sites.

**Objectives and Targets**

<b>Target Reference</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Action Reference</b>	<b>IDB Actions</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Reporting</b>
1	Maintain and enhance suitable habitat for Medicinal Leech across the catchment area	1.1	Assess existing habitat suitability for medicinal leech	RMCP, EA, NE,	2010	Channel length (m)	2010
		1.2	Identify areas where suitable bankside vegetation can be maintained	RMCP	2010	Channel length (m)	2010
2	Create margin along key Medicinal Leech sites	2.1	Expand the suitable habitat where appropriate following assessment of current resource	Landowners, Natural England, RMCP	2012	Channel length (m)	Annual and 2012
		2.2	Work with adjacent landowners to increase the area of habitat available for the medicinal leech	Landowners Natural England FWAG, RMCP, EA	2010 onwards	Number of Landowner meetings	Annual
3	Monitor population of Medicinal Leech along the key IDB sites	3.1	Collate Medicinal Leech data where possible	RMCP	2011	Number of Leeches	Every 3 years

#### **14. BROWN BANDED CARDER BEE (*Bombus humilis*)**

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The Brown banded Carder Bee (*Bombus humilis*) is found in flower rich grassland and makes its nest on the surface in the base amongst long vegetation. It is one of the bumble bee species to have undergone a drastic reduction in range and abundance, due to loss of habitat in the modern agricultural landscape.

##### **Legal Protection Status**

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No legal protection.

##### **National UK BAP Targets**

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No National Targets.

##### **Local Biodiversity Action Plan Targets**

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The Brown Banded Carder Bee is found within Kent and Sussex BAP Plans.

##### **Local Status**

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Within the South East of England, the Brown Banded Carder Bee is considered local and is found in flower rich grassland habitats.

##### **Status within the Drainage District**

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The Biodiversity Audit identified Brown Banded Carder Bee of this species in the drainage district.

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**Objectives and Targets**

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Reporting
1	Maintain and enhance suitable habitat for Brown banded Carder Bee across the catchment area	1.1	Assess existing habitat suitability for Brown Banded Carder Bee	RMCP, EA, NE,	2010	Area (m)	2010
		1.2	Identify areas where suitable bankside vegetation can be maintained	RMCP	2010	Area (m)	2010
2	Create suitable margin along key sites	2.1	Expand the suitable habitat where appropriate following assessment.	Landowners, Natural England, RMCP	2012	Area (m)	Annual and 2012
		2.2	Work with adjacent landowners to increase the area of habitat available for the Brown Banded Carder Bee	Landowners Natural England FWAG, RMCP, EA	2010 onwards	Number of Landowner meetings	Annual
3	Monitor population of bumble bee populations along any key IDB sites	3.1	Collate Brown Banded Carder Bee data	NE, Bumble Bee Working Group, RSPB, Rye Harbour, RMCP	2011	Number of Bees	Every 3 years

**15. EEL (*Anguilla anguilla*)**

The Eel (*Anguilla anguilla*) is a migratory fish which is found across the Romney Marshes Area IDB Catchment area. However, the numbers have been declining over the last 25 years. It has suffered a massive decline over the last 25 years, down by 50%.

**Legal Protection Status**

It has no legal status.

**National UK BAP Targets**

Eel is on the National BAP Priority List.

**Local Biodiversity Action Plan Targets**

No Local Targets

**Local Status**

Eels are found across the drainage district and in the past have been caught commercially on Greatstone Beach and by anglers across the Marsh. The numbers of eels have declined across the drainage district over the last 25 years, similar to the national decline of the species. Initiatives to help eels move into the drainage district from sea outfall/water level structures have been ongoing between Environment Agency, RSPB and partners in Rye Harbour.

**Status within the Drainage District**

The Biodiversity Audit identified Eel as a species within the drainage district.

**Objectives and Targets**

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Reporting
1	Help in the construction of eel passes on any water level structures which are identified across the district.	1.1	Identify sites where suitable eel passes/runs can be constructed and installed.	IDB, EA, RSPB, Rye Harbour, landowners	2011	Numbers	2011
		1.2	Monitor the numbers of eels at key times	IDB, EA, landowner	2011	Numbers	2011

## **16. GREAT CRESTED NEWT (*Triturus cristatus*)**

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The Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) is still reasonably widespread in distribution across Britain. However, the species has suffered a drastic decline due to loss of ponds and the surrounding habitat. This is due to watertable reduction, development, fish management and loss of habitat.

### **Legal Protection Status**

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The Great Crested Newt is listed on Annexes II and IV of the EC Habitats Directive and Appendix II of the Bern Convention. It is protected under Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations, 1994, (regulation 38) and Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

### **National UK BAP Targets**

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The Great Crested Newt is within the UK Priority BAP List.

### **Local Biodiversity Action Plan Targets**

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The Great Crested Newt is found within both Kent and Sussex BAP Plans.

### **Local Status**

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Within the South East of England, the Great Crested Newt is considered local and is found in ponds, ditches and other waterbodies.

### **Status within the Drainage District**

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The Biodiversity Audit identified Great Crested Newt as a species within the drainage district. It is estimated that the species is found in around 120 ponds in the catchment area which does not include garden ponds.

**Objectives and Targets**

<b>Target Reference</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Action Reference</b>	<b>IDB Actions</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Reporting</b>
1	Maintain and enhance suitable habitat for Great crested Newt across the catchment area	1.1	Assess existing habitat suitability Great Crested Newt	RMCP, EA, NE,	2010	Area (m)	2010
		1.2	Identify areas where suitable bankside vegetation can be maintained	Rye Harbour, RMCP	2010	Area (m)	2010
2	Create suitable margin along key sites	2.1	Expand the suitable habitat where appropriate following assessment of current resource	Landowners, Natural England, RMCP	2012	Area (m)	Annual and 2012
		2.2	Work with adjacent landowners to increase the area of habitat available for the Great Crested Newt	Landowners Natural England FWAG, IDB, RMCP, EA	2010 onwards	Number of Landowner meetings	Annual
3	Monitor population of great crested newt populations at any key IDB sites	3.1	Collate Great Crested Newt data	NE, RMCP	2011	Number of Newts	Every 3 years

### **17. GRASS SNAKE (*Natrix natrix*)**

The Grass Snake (*Natrix natrix*) is found across the Romney Marsh and favours the ditch network to feed on Marsh Frogs, newts and fish. Grass snakes also need shelter and grassy habitat adjacent to the waterbodies.

#### **Legal Protection Status**

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Grass Snake is protected like all reptiles under legislation

#### **National UK BAP Targets**

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It is part of the UK BAP Plan

#### **Local Biodiversity Action Plan Targets**

---

Grass Snake is in both the Kent and Sussex BAP Plans

#### **Local Status**

---

Within the South East of England, the Grass Snake is considered local but widespread and is found in landscapes like river valleys and marshes like the North Kent and Romney Marshes.

#### **Status within the Drainage District**

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The Biodiversity Audit identified Grass Snake as a species within the drainage district and with the species to be encountered anywhere within the catchment. However, good sites for the species include Littlestone Golf Course, Lade, Dungeness, Camber, Rye Harbour and Pett.



**Objectives and Targets**

<b>Target Reference</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Action Reference</b>	<b>IDB Actions</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Reporting</b>
1	Maintain and enhance suitable habitat Grass Snake across the catchment area	1.1	Assess existing habitat suitability for Grass Snake	RMCP, EA, NE,	2010	Area (m)	2010
		1.2	Identify areas where suitable bankside vegetation can be maintained	RMCP	2010	Area (m)	2010
2	Create suitable margin along key sites	2.1	Expand the suitable habitat where appropriate following assessment.	Landowners, Natural England, RMCP	2012	Area (m)	Annual and 2012
		2.2	Work with adjacent landowners to increase the area of habitat available for the Grass Snake.	Landowners Natural England FWAG, RMCP, EA	2010 onwards	Number of Landowner meetings	Annual
3	Monitor population of grass snake populations along the key IDB sites if possible.	3.1	Collate Grass Snake data	RMCP, SWT, Rye Harbour	2011	Number of Snakes	Every 3 years

### **18. BITTERN (*Botaurus stellaris*)**

The Bittern (*Botaurus stellaris*) is found across the Romney Marsh primarily in the winter time and favours the ditch network to feed on Marsh frogs, newts and fish. Grass snakes also need shelter and grassy habitat adjacent to the waterbodies. The Bittern has boomed from several sites in recent years and is hoped the population will increase in time in the area/drainage district.

#### **Legal Protection Status**

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The Bittern is listed on Annex 1 of the Ec Birds Directive and Appendix III of the Bern Convention. It is protected in the UK under Schelude 1 of the WCA 1981 and Schedule 1 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985.

#### **National UK BAP Targets**

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To increase the number of booming male Bitterns in the UK. Numbers in the winter are boosted by birds from Europe, which number no more than roughly 100 birds.

#### **Local Biodiversity Action Plan Targets**

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Retain wintering population within Kent and Sussex and increase the number of booming males.

#### **Local Status**

---

Within the South East of England, the Bittern is considered very local and a rare breeding species and is found in reedbed landscapes and marginal vegetation of certain waterbodies. The regular haunts for the species is North Kent Marshes, Stour Valley (ie Stodmarsh) and the Romney Marsh drainage district.

#### **Status within the Drainage District**

---

The Biodiversity Audit identified Bittern of this species in the drainage district and with the species to be encountered anywhere within the catchment. However, good sites for the species include Dungeness, Rye Harbour, Walland Marsh and Pannel Valley.

**Objectives and Targets**

<b>Target Reference</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Action Reference</b>	<b>IDB Actions</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Reporting</b>
1	Maintain and enhance suitable habitat for Bitterns across the catchment area where appropriate	1.1	Assess existing habitat suitability for Bittern	RMCP, EA, NE,	2010	Area (m)	2011
		1.2	Identify areas where suitable bankside vegetation (ie reed) can be maintained	RMCP	2010	Area (m)	2011
2	Create suitable margin along key sites on IDB channels	2.1	Expand the suitable habitat where appropriate following assessment of current resource	Landowners, Natural England, RMCP	2012	Area (m)	Annual and 2012
		2.2	Work with adjacent landowners to increase the area of habitat available for the Bittern.	Landowners Natural England FWAG, RMCP, EA	2011	Landowner Meeting	2011
3	Monitor population of bittern populations along the key IDB sites	3.1	Collate Bittern data	RSPB, Rye Harbour, NE, EA, Wetland Trust, RMCP, DBO.	2011	Number of birds	Every 3 years

## **19. BARN OWL (*Tyto alba*)**

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The Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) is found across the Romney Marsh and favours the ditch network to feed on voles and mice in particular. Barn Owls need grassy habitat to feed, but also favoured nesting sites, which naturally are becoming scarce.

### **Legal Protection Status**

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#### **National UK BAP Targets**

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No national UK BAP targets.

#### **Local Biodiversity Action Plan Targets**

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Present within Kent and Sussex BAP Plans.

### **Local Status**

---

Within the South East of England, the Barn Owl is considered local but widespread and is found in landscapes like river valleys and marshes like the North Kent and Romney Marshes and North Kent.

### **Status within the Drainage District**

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The Biodiversity Audit identified Barn Owl as a species within the drainage district. The species can be encountered anywhere within the catchment.

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**Objectives and Targets**

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Reporting
1	Maintain and enhance suitable habitat for Barn Owl across the catchment area	1.1	Assess existing habitat suitability for Barn Owl	RSPB, Rye Harbour, RMCP, EA, NE,	2011	Area (m)	2011
		1.2	Identify areas where suitable bankside vegetation can be maintained	RSPB, Rye Harbour, IDB RMCP	2011	Area (m)	2011
2	Create suitable margin along key sites	2.1	Expand the suitable habitat where appropriate following assessment	Landowners, Natural England, RMCP	2012	Area (m)	Annual and 2012
		2.2	Work with adjacent landowners to increase the area of habitat available for the Barn Owl.	Landowners Natural England FWAG, RMCP, EA, IDB	2011 onwards	Number of Landowner meetings	Annual
3	Monitor population of barn owl populations along the key IDB sites	3.1	Collate Barn Owl data	RSPB, Rye Harbour, DBO, RMCP	2011	Number of Barn owl pairs	Every 3 years
4	Install Barn Owl boxes at pump stations	4.1	Install Barn owl boxes at pump stations	RMCP, IDB, RSPB	2010	Used	Annual

## **20. WATER VOLE (*Arvicola terrestris*)**

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The Water Vole is found throughout Britain but is confined mainly to lowland areas near water. Once common and widespread, this species has suffered a significant decline in numbers and distribution. A national survey in 1989-90 failed to find signs of voles in 67% of sites where they were previously recorded. A recent population estimate based on the number of latrines found suggested a total GB pre-breeding population of 1,200,000 animals.

As the lower reaches of rivers become unsuitable for habitation, the distribution of water voles becomes discontinuous and existing sites become isolated and vulnerable. There are few data available on the ecology or conservation requirements of this species as its former common status means that it has attracted little study.

The Water Vole (*Arvicola terrestris*) is found across the Romney Marsh and favours the ditch network to feed and shelter. Water Voles also need shelter and grassy habitat adjacent to the waterbodies as well.

### **Legal Protection Status**

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The Water Vole has full legal protection in the UK, which includes their burrows on banksides as well.

### **National UK BAP Targets**

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To stem the decline and reverse the population for this species with a network of areas/regions which are strongholds for the species.

### **Local Biodiversity Action Plan Targets**

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Water Vole is found the Kent and Sussex Biodiversity Action Plans.

### **Local Status**

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Within the South East of England, the Water Vole is considered local but widespread and is found in landscapes like the Romney Marshes and North Kent Marshes and parts of the river valleys of Rother and Stour.

### **Status within the Drainage District**

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The Biodiversity Audit identified Water Vole a species to be found within the drainage district and with the species to be encountered anywhere within the catchment. However, good sites for the species include parts of the Romney Marsh, Walland Marsh, East Guldeford Levels, Dungeness and Rye Harbour. The species is erratic on the river valleys due to seasonal flooding and the species tends to be found on the upper streams and ponds of the catchment.

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## Objectives and Targets

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Reporting
1	Maintain and enhance suitable habitat Water Vole across the catchment area	1.1	Assess existing habitat suitability for Water Vole	RMCP, EA, NE,	2010	Area (m)	2010
		1.2	Identify areas where suitable bankside vegetation can be maintained	RMCP	2010	Area (m)	2010
2	Create suitable margin along key sites	2.1	Expand the suitable habitat where appropriate following assessment	Landowners, Natural England, RMCP	2012	Area (m)	Annual and 2012
		2.2	Work with adjacent landowners to increase the area of habitat available for the Water Vole.	Landowners Natural England FWAG, RMCP, EA	2010 onwards	Number of Landowner meetings	Annual
3	Monitor population of Water Vole populations along the key IDB sites	3.1	Collate Water Vole data through monitoring and surveys and Water Level Management Plans	RMCP, IDB, EA, NE, SWT, RSPB	2011	Length of ditch occupied by Water Voles	Every 2 years

## **21. OTTER (*Lutra lutra*)**

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The Otter (*Lutra lutra*) used to be found across the Romney Marsh up to the 1960's, in particular in the Scotney area and on parts of the Rother Valley. Since then the species has been recorded by sightings or scats on the River Rother/ River Brede in the last ten years.

Formerly widespread throughout the UK, the otter underwent a rapid decline in numbers from the 1950s to 1970s and was effectively lost from midland and south-eastern counties of England by the 1980s. Populations remain in Wales, south-west England and much of Scotland, where sea loch and coastal colonies comprise one of the largest populations in Europe. There is also a significant population of otters in Northern Ireland. The decline now appears to have halted and sightings are being reported in former habitats.

### **Legal Protection Status**

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The otter is listed on Appendix 1 of CITES, Appendix II of the Bern Convention and Annexes II and IV of the Habitats Directive. It is protected under Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981 and Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations, 1994 (Regulation 38). The European sub-species is also listed as globally threatened on the IUCN/WCMC RDL.

### **National UK BAP Targets**

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To reverse the decline and to increase the population in the South East. Improve habitat and create safer road crossings/underpasses in well used areas.

### **Local Biodiversity Action Plan Targets**

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Otter is found within the Kent and Sussex Biodiversity Action Plan reports.

### **Local Status**

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Within the South East of England, the Otter is considered rare and scarce but landscapes like the river valleys and Romney Marsh are ideal landscapes for Otters to recolonise after the species die out in the 1960's.

### **Status within the Drainage District**

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The Biodiversity Audit identified Otter as a species within the drainage district. The Otter has been confirmed on the river valleys over the last five years and it is a symbol of the quality of the drainage district if the species is able to return and breed in greater numbers.



**Objectives and Targets**

<b>Target Reference</b>	<b>Target</b>	<b>Action Reference</b>	<b>IDB Actions</b>	<b>Partners</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Indicators</b>	<b>Reporting</b>
1	Maintain and enhance suitable habitat Otter across the catchment area	1.1	Assess existing habitat suitability for Otter	SWT, RMCP, IDB, EA, NE.	2010	Area (m)	2010
		1.2	Identify areas where suitable bankside vegetation can be maintained	SWT, IDB, RMCP	2010	Area (m)	2010
2	Construct Otter Holts	2.1	Help construct Otter Holts on river valleys at key sites to be identified	SWT, IDB, EA, RMCP	2011	Number	Annual
3	Monitor population of otter	3.1	Collate Otter data	SWT, RMCP, IDB, EA.	2011	Number of Otter Signs	Every 3 years

## 22. PROCEDURAL ACTION PLAN

### Introduction

A number of procedural targets and actions have been established within this Procedural Action Plan. These are intended to integrate biodiversity considerations into IDB practices and procedures.

### Objectives and Targets

1. A Procedural Action Plan should cover overarching and cross-cutting objectives and actions that the IDB will undertake as part of the delivery of its Biodiversity Action Plans.

Target Reference	Target	Action Reference	IDB Actions	Partners	Date	Indicators	Reporting
1	Promote best practice in all drainage works	1.1	Train any IDB contractors in appropriate areas where Biodiversity Habitats/Species are relevant	IDB, SWT, RMCP, NE, EA	Ongoing	Staff numbers	2011
		1.2	Advise landowners on environmental best practice	IDB, SWT, RMCP, NE, EA	Ongoing	Contractors covered	2011
2	Publish material to give out to landowners, contractors and partners	2.1	Produce a leaflet highlighting the IDB BAP, ditch maintenance and projects	IDB, EA, RMCP, RHLNR, SWT	2011	Number of Leaflets Circulated	When required

## **23. IMPLEMENTATION**

### **a. Implementation**

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Many partners/landowners have a wealth of information of the Romney Marshes Area IDB Catchment area.

Implementing the BAP Plan will draw on all these partners to help achieve the targets set.

The Walland Marsh Water Level Management Plan is one key document which should be incorporated into the Romney Marshes Area IDB BAP when the review is published.

## 24. MONITORING

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### **a. Monitoring**

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The Monitoring of certain key species will be done as part of monitoring across the Romney Marsh.

Greater Water Parsnip - RMCP

Marshmallow Moth – Butterfly Conservation

Medicinal leech – RMCP/Rye Harbour/RSPB

Brown banded Carder Bee – NE/Dr Nikki Gammans

Eel – EA

Great-crested Newt – RMCP, NE, Rye Harbour/RSPB

Grass Snake – All partners

Bittern – RSPB, Rye Harbour, RMCP, local birdwatchers

Barn Owl – RMCP, Hawk and Owl Trust

Water Vole – RMCP, WTrusts

Otter – RMCP, WTrusts

## 25. REVIEWING AND REPORTING PROGRESS

### **a. Reviewing and Reporting Progress**

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Progression of the Romney Marsh BAP requires monitoring by all partners and the reporting to key working groups and also to the IDB Groups and the UK BAP in the future.

Targets are mostly annual targets and it is anticipated that the Romney Marshes Area IDB BAP will be reviewed after three years.

However, with such a large, rich and diverse landscape there has to be flexibility in this process to accommodate maybe new or exciting projects, discoveries or grant streams.

The Annual reporting will be done through a report to IDB Meetings, but further reporting will be done through partners which are already set up ie RMCP Working Group, Rye Harbour LNR Working Group/Steering Group.