

Our Strategy for Sustainable Development

2008 - 2012

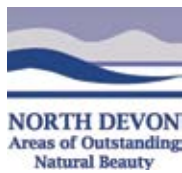
“

North Devon will be a superb place in which to live and work, and to visit, where an excellent quality environment underpins jobs, recreation and healthy living.

The area will be a world class exemplar for sustainable development

”

The strategy for sustainable development has been endorsed by the following members of the partnership.





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Faye Webber.



Ashley Bayle



Miranda Cox



Devon



Foreword



The designation, by UNESCO, of North Devon's Biosphere Reserve* represents a fantastic opportunity and unique selling point for the area. I am therefore delighted to introduce our Strategy for the period 2008-2012.

North Devon is special – you know that! – and this designation helps us to define that specialness:

- **A superb natural environment that is rich in wildlife, including gems such as Braunton Burrows, the Taw/Torridge estuary and river-systems, Lundy and our adjacent National Parks of Exmoor and Dartmoor.**
- **A rich cultural heritage which has shaped the wonderful landscapes across the area.**
- **An economy which is strongly based on a healthy environment.**
- **A vibrant “island” community which appreciates the quality environment we live in and gives a warm welcome to visitors and new residents.**
- **A wealth of expertise, entrepreneurs and innovators.**

Our Strategy has received input from numerous individuals, communities and organisations. They all want to retain and enhance this specialness, and have identified a Vision and Scenario for what the area might look like in 100 years time, in the context of climate change, growing populations and other pressures. This Strategy sets out how we plan to achieve that Vision.

Biosphere Reserves are uniquely modern designations – certainly not nature reserves – but test-beds for sustainable development within areas of high environmental quality. Our Biosphere Reserve is zoned, with a focus on the core area of Braunton Burrows and parts of the estuary, but encompassing a much wider coastal Buffer Area, as well as taking account of the whole of the catchments of the Taw and Torridge rivers and offshore marine areas. This is the inter-connected “ecosystem” or Biosphere Region we live in, which both supports us and is affected by our behaviour and activities.

Let's use this designation to “raise the bar” in our approaches to sustainable development, to learn from other Biosphere Reserves around the world, to demonstrate to others in Europe, and to generate new resources and new partnerships to achieve our Vision. Whether, you are an individual, a local community group, a company, an educational establishment, an agency or whatever, please join us to celebrate and make the most of this designation. North Devon deserves it!

There is much to be done and, if you would like to help, we would like to hear from you.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'Mike Moser', with a long horizontal line underneath.

Dr Mike Moser
Chair, North Devon's Biosphere Reserve Partnership

**The formal name of the designation is “Braunton Burrows Biosphere Reserve”*

A special place for people and nature

North Devon is a very special place to live, work and to visit - special for its people, its culture and its outstanding environment. It hosts some of the finest examples of special landscapes and wildlife areas in Europe with its marine wildlife, coastal and estuarine features as well as Culm Grassland, Atlantic oak woods, rivers and the moors of Exmoor and Dartmoor. Furthermore, it has a community that cares about, and for, this special place.

It is for this blend of culture, environment and desire for sustainable living that the Biosphere Reserve designation was awarded by UNESCO. The designation provides us with an opportunity to showcase innovation in how to live sustainably and develop within a world class environment. This designation is modern and unlike any other because:

- **It operates at a logical ecosystem scale – taking in the whole of the catchments of the Rivers Taw and Torridge and the offshore marine areas stretching out to Lundy and beyond;**
- **It is where all of the different facets of sustainable development can be brought together to develop a thriving economy, to have a good quality of life and a wonderful environment**
- **It is where we can test and demonstrate innovative approaches to caring for and developing our best assets: wildlife, landscapes, culture and people**

Our Biosphere Reserve is the first of its kind in the UK, and because of our collective responsibility to look after this wonderful area, it has become known publicly as “North Devon’s Biosphere Reserve”.





What is a Biosphere Reserve?

Biosphere Reserves are areas of world-class natural value, designated by UNESCO (the United Nations Educational and Scientific and Cultural Organisation). They demonstrate the best examples of people working in harmony with nature for the benefit of all. In doing so, they show how we all have responsibility for our natural environment. They have been described as the biological equivalent of World Heritage Sites, but they differ in approach.

Biosphere Reserves are 'living laboratories' for testing out and demonstrating sustainable development on a regional scale. They have 3 functions and 3 zones.

Functions:

- **Conservation.**
- **Learning and research.**
- **Sustainable Development.**

Zones:

- **A Core area - the iconic world-class eco-system.**
- **A Buffer zone: which surrounds and supports the core area, and where local people can derive direct benefits from the ecosystem (such as quality recreation areas and opportunities to develop tourism or locally-branded foods).**
- **A Transition area: where individual and community contributions to sustainable development, can greatly enhance environmental quality of the area.**

The aspiration for Biosphere Reserves is to be sustainable communities, where people can live and work in an area of high environmental quality and be a beacon for other areas to learn from. Given the broad range of concepts involved in sustainable development, the aim is to be:

- Environmentally sustainable through the wise use of our natural resources and mindful of the impacts that we have on wider society and future generations,
- Economically sustainable through the development of an economy that ensures a good quality of life for our residents and visitors,
- Socially sustainable through reducing inequalities, sharing benefits derived from our special environment, empowering people and striving to support their well-being.

To achieve these challenging goals will require innovation, entrepreneurs and bold leaders, willing to make the most of this opportunity that UNESCO has given us.

Why is North Devon a Biosphere Reserve?

There are 529 Biosphere Reserves in the world, and ours is the only one of its type in the UK. North Devon is special and that is why the United Nations has given it this tremendously prestigious designation.

Some of the special features of North Devon are:

Diverse wildlife and landscapes:

- **One of the best dune systems in the northern hemisphere owned by the Christie family for 350 years.**
- **A marine biodiversity to warrant the UK first Marine Nature Reserve around Lundy and a Voluntary Marine Conservation Area.**
- **Endemic and rare species such as Lundy cabbage, water germander, sand bowl amber snail, golden hair lichen.**
- **Iconic Species such as the European Otter and Atlantic Salmon, greater sea stock, marsh fritillary and dormouse.**
- **Flagship marine species such as common dolphins and porpoises, grey seals, Basking and porbeagle sharks.**
- **Characteristic landscapes such as Culm Grasslands, Devon hedgerows, the estuary basin and the dramatic coastal landscapes of the North Devon Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty.**
- **Special western oak woodlands with a plethora of pollution-sensitive lichens.**
- **Coastal grazing marshes and biodiversity-rich flood plains.**
- **Important blanket bogs of Exmoor and Dartmoor.**
- **High level of tranquillity and nocturnal darkness in the area.**

Cultural richness

- **Neolithic settlements.**
- **Saxon, Celtic and Viking overlays of settlement.**
- **A strong maritime heritage.**
- **Strong links with the land and traditional farming.**
- **Thriving cultural communities with festivals that celebrate the area's environmental richness.**



Photo: North Devon Marketing Bureau
www.northdevon.com

Why is North Devon a Biosphere Reserve?

Diverse economy

- Traditional farming and land management, and associated services.
- Ball Clay extraction.
- Tourism and increasing sustainable tourism based on outdoor activity such as surfing, sailing, walking and cycling.
- Locally significant fishing industry.
- A strong manufacturing sector accounting for just under 20% of GDP.
- Industries located here because of low pollution, such as pharmaceutical, medical filters and Electromagnetic testing.

A culture of innovation and learning

- The Lundy No Take Zone as an experiment to support a sustainable fishery.
- The Tarka Trail and SW Coastal Path.
- North Devon College in Barnstaple as candidate to be affiliated with Plymouth University.
- Experimentation with habitat management and creation on Braunton Burrows and in the estuarine areas for new saltmarshes and recreating Culm Grassland.
- Institute of Grassland and Environmental Research is based in the area as well as being close to Exeter and Plymouth Universities.



Where is North Devon's Biosphere Reserve?

North Devon's Biosphere Reserve Zones (see map page 6)

1. The Core Area

Comprises Braunton Burrows and part of the estuary and is a site of excellent ecological value. This zone is managed for conservation of that ecosystem. It is defined by the boundary of the Special Area of Conservation for Braunton Burrows. Lundy Marine Reserve is worthy of being another core area, and subject to the wishes of the stakeholders may be included at a future date.

2. The Buffer Zone

Comprises the remainder of the Taw-Torridge Estuary Site of Special Scientific Interest, Braunton Marsh and Great Field and a large section of the Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty from Westward Ho! to Croyde, with supporting designation value from the Site of Special Scientific Interest and the Heritage Coast. Land management that is sympathetic to the conservation of the core area is promoted in this zone and there are legal policies in place to support this. At the next review of the Biosphere Reserve, the partnership would like to explore whether the entire Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty and the supporting SSSIs in the north Devon area could define the buffer zone.

3. The Transition Area

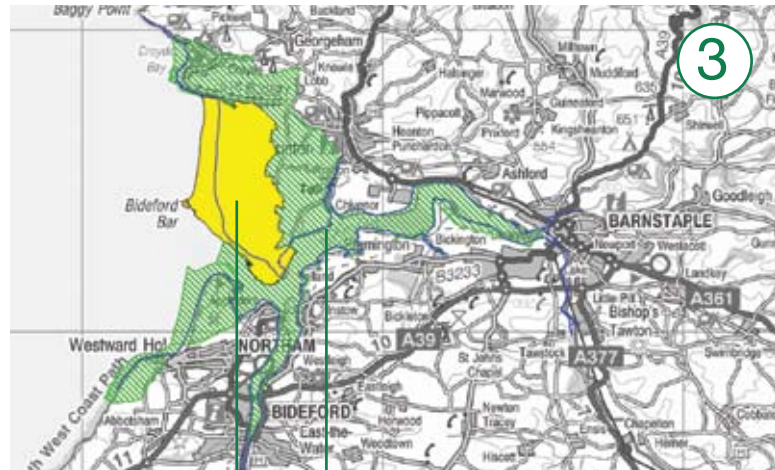
Because rivers are such important ecosystem connectors for water, wildlife and pollutants, the landward boundary of the transition area is defined by the river catchments of the Taw and Torridge all the way to Exmoor and Dartmoor and the Devon river catchments along the coast between Lynmouth and Welcombe. The Seaward boundary is principally defined by the sea bathymetry as an ecological boundary around Lundy and linking back to the land-based boundaries.

The functions of sustainable development, learning and conservation apply in each of the zones. For example, if diffuse pollution is affecting the site, then the river catchments where the pollution originates will define the boundary. If we are considering sediment supply to the estuary to maintain the integrity of the dune systems and the pebble ridge, then the Bristol Channel and the sediment cells along the coast define the boundary. The transition area and buffer zone are also the areas where community involvement and the promotion of Sustainable Development in its widest sense are encouraged.



Photo: North Devon Marketing Bureau
www.northdevon.com

North Devon's Biosphere Reserve



The Core

The Buffer Zone

Our Strategy

What is the purpose of this strategy?

This strategy sets out our vision for the next 100 years. It will provide strategic guidance for the coming 10 years for all of those working in, living in and providing resources to the Biosphere Reserve. It sets out the values and aims of the concept and how it applies to North Devon's Biosphere Reserve. Our Biosphere Reserve Strategy is the local statement of how we will meet the requirements of the designation and how we will interact at the national and international level.

The strategy identifies the policies and actions that are needed to achieve the Vision of the Reserve and for it to be worthy of being a world-class demonstration area. It describes how everyone in the area can contribute to our Biosphere Reserve. It also sets the benchmarks to ensure that this area retains the credibility of an area that can demonstrate sustainable development on a regional scale and disseminate that practice elsewhere. The Strategy is intended to give guidance to the other statutory plans for the area such as the Sustainable Community Strategies and the Local Development Frameworks.

The strategy is accompanied by an Action Plan and a Technical appendix. The Action Plan sets out the priorities for the coming 5 years, from which each partner will subscribe to delivering its role within the Biosphere Reserve. Through the good practice of adaptive management, the strategy will be reviewed in 5 years time to ensure that we are on target for our long-term vision and to renew the actions in the rolling 5-year action plan.

The technical appendices provide more detailed information gathered over the development of the Strategy and include the policy context and issues for each of the zones.

Relationship to other strategies:

The Biosphere Reserve Strategy is intended to show how the area can meet the strategic aims of the statutory plans and strategies whilst, at the same time, it can inform the further development of those strategies towards incrementally more sustainable outcomes.

Development of this Strategy

The development of this Strategy builds on the range of strategies that have been produced for different agencies and disciplines over the last three years.

Work has been done by a range of people and partners, including the Northern Devon Coast and Countryside Service, to raise the awareness of organisations and individuals throughout the area working collectively for the Biosphere Reserve.

Strategy development has included direct projects, developing programmes to tackle specific issues, and presentations to local authorities and community groups. There has been public involvement through events such as open days and workshops. We have also commissioned research to show how our Biosphere Reserve can add value to the range of work that is already being done in the area that contributes towards sustainable development.

The Strategy has been the subject of consultation via the internet, as well as through direct mailing to key organisations, parish councils and community groups. These responses have been analysed and incorporated into the revision so that the final product reflects the view of the community.



Our Vision for North Devon's Biosphere Reserve

“ North Devon will be a superb place in which to live and work, and to visit, where an excellent quality environment underpins jobs, recreation and healthy living. The area will be a world class exemplar for sustainable development. ”

The Core Area

The Core area of Braunton Burrows and its part of the estuary will be managed and maintained as a world-class exemplary mix of dynamic coastal habitat features. The core area will be used as a study area for conservation of these types of habitats and activities that positively promote their conservation.

The Buffer Zone

This will be an area where the careful management of natural and cultural resources ensure that the communities can enjoy access to the natural environment and a cultural landscape maintained by local people.

The Transition Area

North Devon will be an area where the community thrives through effective participation in developing sustainable lifestyles that are reflected in the enhancement of the environment in which they live and work.

Summary of the Issues:

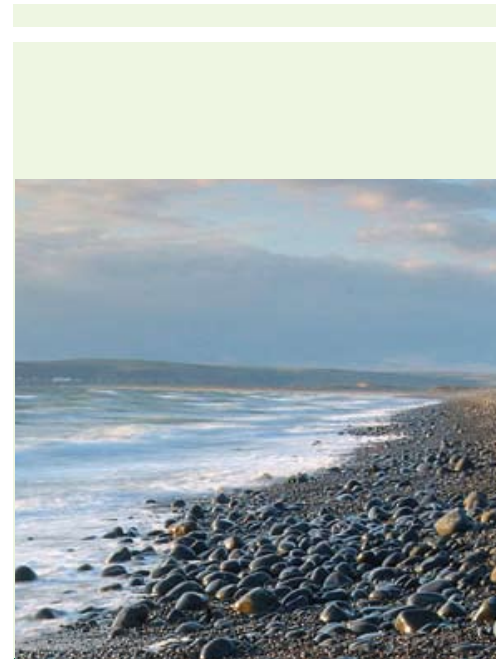
Although North Devon is a wonderful place, there are problems that have been inherited that will need to be addressed in order to reach the vision that has been articulated. Through consultation with working groups and area-wide analysis, these problems have been summarised as follows:

Environment:

Through successive post-war policies of land improvement, there has been a decline in biodiversity. Fortunately, traditional family farming had reduced the negative impacts to a degree. The loss in biodiversity some areas has recently begun to recover through interventions such as environmental stewardship schemes.

Problems include:

- **Scrub encroachment on the dune systems.**
- **Saltmarsh erosion in the estuary and loss associated with coastal squeeze.**
- **Change in marine wildlife such as disease attacks on sea fans near Lundy.**
- **Heavy exploitation of crab and lobster.**
- **Fragmentation of habitats is reducing the resilience of some of the ecosystems.**
- **Problems of diffuse pollution impacting on the aquatic wildlife in the rivers and estuary.**
- **Pressure for development along the coastline.**
- **Unquantified impacts arising from climate change.**
- **Our special landscapes are under pressure generally through insensitive development and long-term change arising from global warming.**
- **Recycling targets are good, but the need for higher levels of waste minimisation are needed to counter the fact that there is no landfill capacity in the area.**



Summary of the Issues:

Economy:

The area's peripheral position leads the area to be treated almost like an island, which brings strengths as well as challenges:

- **The area GDP per head is around 75% of the national average.**
- **The economy lacks resilience and self reliance.**
- **traditional industries need to be supported in order to make a transition to a more sustainable economy.**
- **Tourism industry does not adequately value and use the benefits of the natural environment.**
- **An overall drive to low-cost production of commodities that make it difficult to fit in environmental improvements.**
- **Businesses need support to make a transition to being more environmentally friendly and find niche markets.**

Social:

The area hosts some of the most deprived wards in the south west of England arising from poverty, ill health and access to services. Changes in demographics are skewing the populations towards being more elderly. Although basic skills are good, higher education attainment in the area is not as high because young people move out of the area.

- **Changing demography in the rural areas away from traditional family farms and associated social networks.**
- **Obesity is a growing problem in the more deprived areas arising from poor diet and lack of exercise, and also leading to coronary heart disease.**
- **Out-migration of young people and in-migration of older people.**
- **Erosion of rural life through loss of services and lack of affordable of housing.**



How can we achieve our vision?

The following Strategic Aims have been prepared to help us to meet these visionary statements. They are underpinned by some examples of action that should be taken:

1

To reverse the decline in biodiversity:

In the core area by:

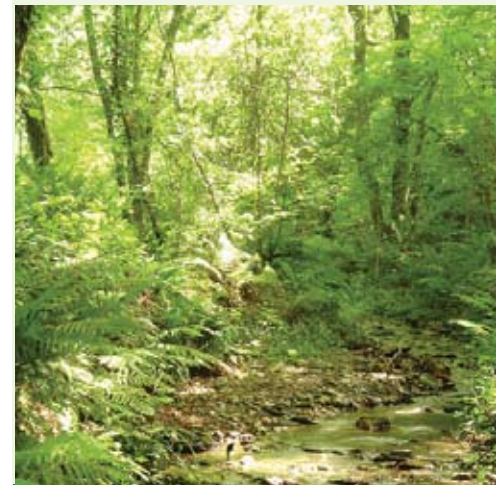
- Restoring the habitats to favourable condition as the best examples of their type in the bio-geographic region. This is a joint responsibility of the landowner, its tenant(s) and Natural England. A separate detailed plan for this will be prepared by Christie Devon Estates and Natural England. The site also has significant cultural or archaeological interest which should be conserved.

In the buffer zone by:

- Improving the matrix of habitats to support the movement of species, energy and nutrients to and from the core area to increase biodiversity.

In the transition area by:

- Improving the matrix of habitats leading to reduced impacts on the core area and to raise the health generally of the ecosystems on a landscape scale through ensuring habitats are not fragmented and facilitating the movement of species, nutrients and energy.
- Improving our marine environment through conservation and management measures with the community.



How can we achieve our vision?

2 To conserve and celebrate our heritage and culture and best landscapes:

In the buffer zone and core area by:

- Implementing the Management Plan for the North Devon AONBs.

In the transition area by:

- Carrying out a fine-grain Landscape Character Assessment of the whole Biosphere Reserve.
- Using these procedures to inform the Local Development Frameworks whilst supporting development.

3 To use our natural resources wisely:

In the core area by:

- Ensuring that resource extraction or use (such as aggregates) near or linked to the site does not impact on the natural processes at work.

In the buffer zone and transition areas by:

- Reducing the ecological footprint of the North Devon community (households, businesses and organisations), particularly its impact on waste, water and land, and by improving energy efficiency.
- Working with the relevant sectors to ensure the recovery and sustainable use of biodiversity on land and in the sea.
- Encouraging a more sustainable approach to development by promoting sustainable design and construction of commercial and residential properties and through supporting policies in Local Development Frameworks.
- Improving the opportunities for sustainable transport in the area and encouraging its use.



How can we achieve our vision?

4 To tackle on a local, national and international basis the issues relating to climate change:

In the core area, buffer zone and transition area by:

- Working with natural processes where possible to ensure our coastline remains as natural as possible.
- Communicating effectively with partners and the public about the issues around climate change and actions we all need to take.
- Instigating appropriate mitigation through the promotion of renewable energy and energy saving and carbon sequestration based on a regional strategy.
- Researching and putting in place land use and behavioural changes that will help adaptation to climate change.



Photo: North Devon Marketing Bureau
www.northdevon.com

How can we achieve our vision?

5 To develop and strengthen a robust economy for the entire Biosphere Reserve that enhances the environment:

In the core area by:

- Continuing its use for MOD training in the same controlled manner especially where this been shown to make a positive contribution to the biodiversity of the site.
- Working with the landowners to ensure that tourism and recreation on the site is appropriate.

In the buffer zone and transition area by:

- Increasing the circulation of funds within the local economy and reducing the impact of globalisation of markets on local livelihoods.
- Developing producer co-operatives for land-based and environmental produce to support it to gain a premium through - keeping all stages of the production as local as possible.
- Increasing the range, quality and quantity of local produce from the land and sea such that it supports the environment and creates a stronger alternative local economy.
- Increasing the amount of local produce bought and used by local people by making the link between local supply, demand and local retailers.
- Marketing the area through brands based on the strengths of its environmental credentials and attracting customers who appreciate the quality of the area.
- Supporting existing businesses, visitors and communities to be more environmentally friendly through waste minimisation, energy reduction, re-cycling and supply policy.



How can we achieve our vision?

⑥ To have a safe, strong, proud and healthy community in North Devon:

In the buffer zone and transition area by:

- Using the environment as part of the guarantee of healthier lifestyles for the local community, through healthy local foods, access to and enjoyment of the environment for physical and mental benefits particularly through the Tarka Trail and Southwest Coast Path.
- To improve the safety of the community by using the environment as a tool to support the reformation of offenders.
- Encouraging communities to take part in the decision processes about their environment in both the global and the local context.
- Celebrating and sharing the rewards of working together in a world-class area.
- Celebrating and preserving our traditions and environment through cultural activities and embracing diversity through collaboration with international partners and people of all backgrounds.
- Ensuring appropriate access to the environment as a cultural and economic activity.



How can we achieve our vision?

7 To be a community of learning for the wider world:

In the core area by:

- Using the core area as a major education resource relating to good environmental management and ecology.
- Monitoring and research on the core area:
 - i. To test management methods to maintain the habitats in good condition and spread this good practice to other sites.
 - ii. To evaluate the changes arising from climate change and other human impacts on the ecosystems.
 - iii. To use the site for experimental observation in ecological and earth sciences.

In the buffer zone and transition area by:

- Developing the area as a centre for accredited environmental learning at a range of levels from Key Stage 1 to further and higher education, vocational training and curricular activities within schools, by means of demonstration and institutional-based training.
- Establishing a facility in the area for the training of specialists in ecosystem management, research and sustainable development.
- Providing better opportunities for the public (locals and visitors) to understand the ecosystems in which they live and their impacts on culture and landscape on a range of scales from local to global. This would be through education and interpretation facilities such as the proposed Oceanic Centre, schools, colleges, evening classes, in-service training and learning groups.
- Furthering the implementation of the Strategy for Learning for Sustainable Development promoted by Department for Education and Skills.
- Raising public awareness of and generating ideas and initiatives to deal with global and local environmental issues, such as climate change, economy and biodiversity.
- Exploring management methods to maintain the habitats in good condition and to spread this good practice to other sites.
- Evaluating changes arising from climate change and other human impacts on the community.



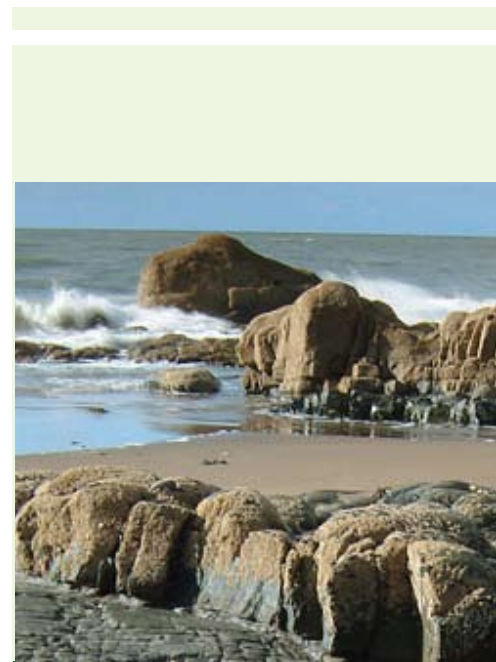
How can we achieve our vision?

- Demonstrating the approach of sharing the benefits of better environmental stewardship, whether in domestic, business or land management.
- Understanding the effectiveness of new methods and practices for communities in terms of business and lifestyles.
- Establishing the area as a centre for research and training related to the management of the environment and its sustainable use, given its global accolade and function as a Biosphere Reserve.
- Accepting our responsibilities as global citizens through partnership programmes with other Biosphere Reserves, in both Europe and developing countries.

8

To develop the organisational arrangements for the Biosphere Reserve to ensure it remains fit-for-purpose and integrates fully with the Man and Biosphere (MAB) Programme by:

- Providing an accountable and transparent governance structure.
- Supporting a process of challenge to all organisations and individuals in the area, so as to meet the aims of the Biosphere Reserve.
- Providing a team dedicated to facilitating the activities for the Biosphere Reserve.
- Developing a fully-funded programme of work in coordinated partnership that adds value to the area through external funding applications.
- Monitoring the effectiveness of the Strategy and our function as a Biosphere Reserve through the Periodic Review Process and an efficient programme to avoid unnecessary risks.
- Participate in National and International MAB programme work to ensure North Devon's Biosphere Reserve is recognised as demonstrating good practice.





Risk Assessment of the Strategy

The Biosphere Reserve designation is very new; this brings some inherent risks; Each identified risk in the following register was scored High, Medium or Low according to its **Likelihood** and **Impact**.

Likelihood – the probability of the threat being realised:

Low 30% or less chance of the problem occurring.

Medium 31-70% chance of the problem occurring.

High Over 70% chance of the problem occurring.

Impact – the effect of the threat being realised:

Low Threat would have little impact on delivering the Strategy.

Medium The threat would have an impact on the delivery of the Strategy, including benefits and time-scales.

High The threat would jeopardise the entire Strategy.

A cumulative risk score (High, Medium or Low) was then assigned according to the matrix below:

Likelihood	HIGH	M	H	H
	MEDIUM	M	M	H
	LOW	L	M	M
		LOW	MEDIUM	HIGH
		Impact		

Only those risks that fall within the High (Red) category were incorporated into the risk register, as their incidence would severely impact on the project. Appropriate countermeasures and contingencies are proposed.

Biosphere Reserve Strategy Risk Register (Jan 2008)

There are 529 Biosphere Reserves in the world, and ours is the only one of its type in the UK. North Devon is special and that is why the United Nations has given it this tremendously prestigious designation.

Some of the special features of North Devon are:

Description	Impact	Likelihood	Countermeasure	Contingency
1. Poor stakeholder understanding about the scope and purpose Biosphere Reserve leading to low interest/support	H	M	Excellent communications with all stakeholders. Continual dialogue with the community about their aspirations for the reserve through a forum and through regular communication.	Appoint local community officer to work more closely with local community.
2. Lack of cohesion of the partnership	H	M	Regular meetings and updates and ensuring everyone is heard and recognised for their part.	Arrange special meetings to deal with issues
3. Core funders reduce their contributions	H	M	Secure 3-year arrangements through a Memorandum and Service Level Agreement	Seek other external funding partners. Establish a charity to support the co-ordination and delivery work
4. Risk of lack of funding or resources to deliver the strategy	H	M	Established an effective funding group that will operate through a range of funding vehicles each chosen to be best suited for purpose.	Reduce ambitions of Strategy to meet available resourcing
5. Policy conflict with protected areas / landscapes	H	M	Address potential conflicts before they arise, and seek innovative solutions	Protected areas must take primacy within their designated sites. Find win-win solutions to emerge from conflict.
6. The Biosphere Reserve is undermined by other authorities taking unsustainable actions	H	M	Inappropriate decisions will be reduced as far as possible through continual promotion of the benefits of working within ecosystem limits. Sustainability is about society learning lessons and working collectively, so every decision will not be a perfect one.	If there are major developments that seriously contravene the spirit of the MAB concept, then UNESCO should be invited to intervene / comment

Other risks not quantified:

Risk of activities being taken over or subsumed within actions over areas greater than the Biosphere region. This is not a risk. The crucial thing is that projects and events happen, are known and measured so that their impacts on the area can be monitored. The worst risk is duplication, which can be mitigated by communication with a wide range of actors and agencies.



Who is who in the Biosphere Reserve?

UNESCO is the body that runs the Man and Biosphere Programme, which oversees the designation of World Biosphere Reserves. The UNESCO Secretariat in Paris facilitates the exchanges and linkages between the Worldwide Network of Biosphere Reserves, as well as co-ordinates integrated work programmes to address the themes for expanding our understanding of sustainable development. UNESCO does not provide resources directly for Biosphere Reserves, but they can support and facilitate collaborative projects between member states.

UKMAB is the national committee for the MAB programme and oversees the UK designations and overseas territories. It co-ordinates and encourages activity on a UK level and promote cross-boundary co-operation. The MAB programme is a broad science programme, although it is in the Biosphere Reserve where most activity is focussed. The UK committee also collaborates with the other nationally represented intergovernmental science programmes, as well as the National Commission for UNESCO.

Christie Devon Estates are the owners of the core area and other significant areas in the Biosphere Reserve.

The North Devon Coast and Countryside Service was acknowledged by UNESCO as the co-ordinating body for the Biosphere Reserve when the latter was extended in 2002. As a group dedicated to the Biosphere Reserve, its role is to facilitate and co-ordinate projects as well as to deliver some of them directly. The service also provides the secretariat for the Biosphere Reserve and AONB Partnerships.

The Biosphere Reserve Partnership

The Biosphere Reserve Partnership is a group of key governmental and non-governmental organisations and individuals who are working together to support the Biosphere Reserve designation, through the promotion of sustainable development in our area. The group includes the full range of disciplines that need to be actively involved in bringing sustainable development to the area. It meets several times a year and serves as the route through which the community can be part of the decision-making for the Biosphere Reserve.

The partnership is supported by three Working Groups:

- **Environmental Quality**
- **Outreach**
- **Evidence and Assessment**

Who is who in the Biosphere Reserve?

The principal purpose of the Partnership is to enable the relevant organisations, 'acting collectively', to fulfil their commitments to North Devon's Biosphere Reserve through the development and implementation of the Strategy. The Partnership encompasses a wide membership in order to engage an appropriate range of relevant national, regional and local interests in the management of the area and to facilitate co-operation and co-ordination between these stakeholders.

North Devon's Biosphere Reserve Partnership currently includes the following members:

1. A representative of Christie Devon Estates.
2. Representative of the Ministry of Defence.
3. Representative of the Joint Local Strategic Partnership.
4. Elected members appointed by the constituent local authorities, North Devon District Council, Torrington District Council, Devon County Council, West Devon Borough Council.
5. North Devon Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty Partnership (chairman or vice chairman).
6. Taw Torrington Estuary Forum.
7. Environment Agency.
8. Natural England.
9. South West Regional Development Agency.
10. North Devon Chamber of Commerce and Industry.
11. Bideford College.
12. North Devon College.
13. University of Exeter.
14. University of Plymouth.
15. Devon Association of Parish Councils.
16. Exmoor National Park.
17. Dartmoor National Park.
18. Westcountry Rivers Trust.
19. South West Forest.
20. National Farmers' Union.
21. Fishing industry representative.
22. MP Torrington and West Devon.
23. MP North Devon.
24. Local Member of House of Lords.
25. Tarka Foundation.
26. National Trust.
27. Devon Wildlife Trust.
28. North Devon Marketing Bureau.
29. up to 3 experts co-opted by the partnership
The Partnership elects its own Chair.



Photo: North Devon Marketing Bureau
www.northdevon.com



Glossary

Agri-environment Schemes

A range of schemes operated by DEFRA designed to encourage environmentally friendly farming and public enjoyment of the countryside.

AONB Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty

An area designated under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, with the primary purpose of the designation being to conserve natural beauty.

BAP Biodiversity Action Plan

In 1992 at the Earth Summit in Rio, 150 national governments (including the UK) agreed to the production of National Biological Plans. These highlight the important wildlife habitats and species that are under threat or worthy of conservation. This has led to the production of various Biodiversity Action Plans at a National (UK), Regional (South West), County (Devon) and Local (North Devon) level.

Biodiversity

The common term for “biological diversity”, meaning the whole variety of life on earth or any given part of it and its interaction.

Coastal Squeeze

This is the loss of habitats created by rising sea levels and the inability of these natural habitats to retreat in response because of development or human land uses.

Countryside Stewardship Scheme (CSS)

Was the government’s main scheme for conserving and improving the countryside. Under the scheme farmers are paid grants to follow more traditional farming methods that enhance the landscape, encourage wildlife and protect historic features. The scheme is administered through the Rural Development Service of DEFRA and has been recently replaced with Environmental Stewardship.

Culm Grassland

A habitat which comprises a characteristic mixture of marshy grassland, bog, wet heath and scrubby woodland which supports a wide range of flora and fauna. The habitat is underlain by geological formation of sandstones and shales.

DEFRA

Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, formerly the Ministry of Agriculture Fisheries and Food (MAFF). DEFRA was set up to promote sustainable development of rural and marine areas by providing a better environment, a sustainable use of resources, economic prosperity and support for thriving rural communities.

Glossary

Ecological Footprint

This is the theoretical area of land that a community or individual needs to sustain a given lifestyle, in terms of energy, food and material demand.

Habitat

A place in which a particular plant or animal lives, or the wider interaction of plants and animals that are found together.

HLF

Heritage Lottery Fund. The National Lottery was introduced in 1994 to raise money for good causes. The Heritage Lottery is one of six good causes that is supported. The HLF enables communities to celebrate, look after and learn more about our diverse heritage. This includes important natural habitats and countryside, historic parks and gardens, museums and historic archives, historic buildings, industrial, transport and maritime heritage.

LEADER +

European Community initiative, providing funding for assisting rural communities in improving the quality of life and economic prosperity of their area.

Market and Coastal Towns Initiative

A programme involving several regional and national bodies to enable communities in small towns to draw up action plans that address identified needs and priorities.

NE Natural England

Is responsible for the designation and monitoring of National Nature Reserves (NNRs), Marine Nature Reserves, Special Areas for Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). It has the overview of protected landscapes and is responsible for the delivery of agri-environment schemes.

North Devon Marketing Bureau

The Marketing Bureau was set up in 1996 and is a private/public sector partnership company which was established to promote and develop tourism in North Devon. It is funded by over 550 businesses together with contributions from North Devon and Torridge District Councils.

NT

The National Trust is a conservation charity which looks after countryside and buildings in England, Wales and Northern Ireland for the benefit of the public. It achieves its aim through ownership of land and buildings.





Glossary

Ruby Country

- is the new tourist/marketing name for an area of north west Devon centred around the Holsworthy and Hatherleigh taking its name from the locally distinct Red Devon cattle. The Ruby Country Initiative, previously known as the Upper Tamar Trails Project, is supported by Torridge District Council, West Devon Borough Council, Devon County Council and Devon Wildlife Trust with grant support from Leader +. It is a new regeneration project that promotes a series of recreational walking, riding and cycling routes available to assist in the economic and social well being of the area.

SAC Special Area of Conservation

An area designated under the European Union Habitats Directive (EC Directive 92/43) on the conservation of Natural Habitats and of Fauna and Flora to afford protection.

SSSI Sites of Special Scientific Interest

- are given statutory designation under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, because of their particular importance to nature conservation. SSSIs form the best examples of our natural heritage and range from wildlife habitats to geological features and landforms. In England SSSIs are notified and monitored by Natural England.

Sustainable Development

The widely used definition is "Development that meets the needs of the present without compromising the ability of future generations to meet their own needs".

SWCP

The South West Coast Path at 630 miles is England's longest National Trail. It was designated by the Countryside Commission in the early 1960s and opened in 1978. It is managed through local authorities and the National Trust with grant support from the Countryside Agency. It provides great economic benefit to the South West Region and has a SWCP team based at County Hall in Exeter who promote its development.

SWERDA

The South West Regional Development Agency was set up in 1999 and has a role to ensure the long-term economic success of the region, by promoting the right skills among its workforce, the most innovative businesses and a high-quality environment. It is involved in developing the Regional Economic Strategy (RES) and writing the Environment South West Report. It is involved with the European Structural Funding in the region - Objective One, Two and Three.

Glossary

SWF

The South West Forest was established six years ago with a focus towards creating new woodland within the area. It aims to support new woodland creation, woodland management and woodland utilisation as a way of stimulating and supporting farm business, rural incomes and enhancing the lifestyles and landscapes of local communities.

Taw Torridge Estuary Forum

A voluntary forum that serves to communicate issues to the estuary to interested groups and seeks to support the sustainable use and management of the Taw Torridge Estuary.

Tarka Country

A name given to a region of northern Devon, which includes the AONB that is used to promote and market the area to tourists and visitors in a sustainable way. The Tarka Trail Regional Walking Route and Tarka Cycleway are central to this area, the name coming from Henry Williamson's book *Tarka the Otter*, which was set in North Devon.

UNESCO

The United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organisation.

UKMAB

The United Kingdom Man and the Biosphere Committee is responsible for the overview of Biosphere Reserves in the UK and reporting their progress to Euro MAB and to MAB secretariat in Paris.

VMCA

The Voluntary Marine Conservation Area was set up in 1994 and stretches from Hangman Point near Combe Martin to Downend Point near Croyde. The main aim of the VMCA is to raise people's awareness, understanding and enjoyment of the marine environment. The initiative is currently run by Devon Wildlife Trust.

WT

The Woodland Trust is the UK's leading conservation charity dedicated to protecting our woodland heritage. They are involved in raising awareness of the importance of woodlands and own their own woodland sites, some within the North Devon AONB.



Photo: North Devon Marketing Bureau
www.northdevon.com



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