

6.2 Urban – built up areas, greenspace and wasteland.

Main Objectives & Key Actions:

1) Increase positive management for biodiversity in the urban environment.

- Provide 'natural' greenspace sites within 300m of every home in the urban area by 2012.
- Ensure wildlife friendly policies are incorporated into all greenspace management plans by 2010.

2) Raise public awareness of the importance of urban biodiversity and greenspace.

- Launch an awareness campaign and community involvement programme to encourage people to take action on their doorstep to help biodiversity by 2009.
- Promote wildlife-friendly gardening by establishing links with garden centres
- Promote biodiversity through other, connected programmes (e.g. Bay Walks) by 2009.
- Set up exemplar sites of good practice for biodiversity. Establish at least one exemplar site per category (developments, school grounds, gardens, churchyards, businesses) by 2009.

6.2.1 Background & Current Status

This action plan encompasses all managed greenspace (domestic gardens, golf courses and playing fields, public parks, churchyards, school grounds, tourist facilities e.g. caravan parks, zoos and allotments), buildings, industrial estates and derelict land, retail parks, railway embankments and roadside verges.

Torbay is the 10th most populated local authority in the South West and it is predicted that by 2010 Torbay's population will have increased by 6.7% and by 23.31% by 2028 (Torbay Greenspace Strategy). This growth in population will put greater pressures on the need for new housing and the transport infrastructure, which will in turn threaten Torbay's biodiversity.

Domestic gardens and public greenspaces (Figure 3) can provide wildlife havens in a concrete landscape for butterflies, bumblebees and garden birds such as the UK BAP species, the song thrush. Garden ponds increase urban biodiversity by providing a habitat for frogs, newts, insects and aquatic plants. Brownfield sites in Torbay, which are under threat from development, are very important for scarce and rare invertebrates, birds and plant species. These areas only occupy a small area in Torbay and therefore even more care needs to be taken to protect them.

Urban biodiversity has been given priority status because of increasing pressures from development, recreation and inappropriate management. Urban wildlife also

offers a high potential for public involvement and it is where Torbay's local population will enjoy Torbay's biodiversity the most. The main aim is to raise public awareness of wildlife and focus people's attention on what they can do on their own doorstep to achieve biodiversity targets.

Species which will be highlighted:

Pipistrelle bat

Song thrush

House sparrow

Swift

Frogs, toads, newts, grass snakes and slow worms.

Bumblebees

Butterflies – Garden species

Species rich lawns and grasslands

Autumn ladies tresses

Dragonflies – Garden pond species

Great green bush cricket

Grasshoppers

Tiger moths

Bloxworth snout

Sawyer beetle (*Prionus Coriarius*)

6.2.2 The Current Problems/Threats to these Habitats:

Domestic Gardens and Public Greenspace

- Neat and tidy gardening– little 'death and decay' (lack of log piles and leaf litter), intensive mowing, removal of 'weed' species and lack of nectar rich flowers, use of fertiliser, pesticides and herbicides.
- Unsustainable garden materials – use of peat compost and limestone pavements for rock gardens and water features.
- Cats – predation on wildlife.
- Alien species – dumping of non-natives in private gardens.
- Cutbacks in public sector funding, lack of information, health and safety issues, reduction in area size.
- People pressures – dog fouling leading to enrichment, trampling, vandalism and desire for clean, neat and tidy parks.
- Lack of interpretation and community involvement with urban biodiversity.

Buildings, Development & Industry

- Development pressures – Government policy encourages the development of new housing on 'Brownfield' sites. Torbay Council's aim is for 65% of new development to be on Brownfield Sites (Torbay Local Plan).
- Lack of awareness by developers of building for biodiversity e.g. use of native species, planting with biodiversity in mind.

- Traffic and the over-use of cars leading to an increase in air pollution.
- Inappropriate management of roadside verges – tarmacing over, not replacing highways trees.
- Railways – inappropriate management of embankments.
- Infilling with a reduction in garden size and loss of mature trees through lack of planning control. The current plans for Torbay are to construct 500 new houses per year and many could be located in gardens.

Tourist Facilities

- Inappropriate management for biodiversity e.g. constant grass cutting, lack of nectar rich flowers, trampling.

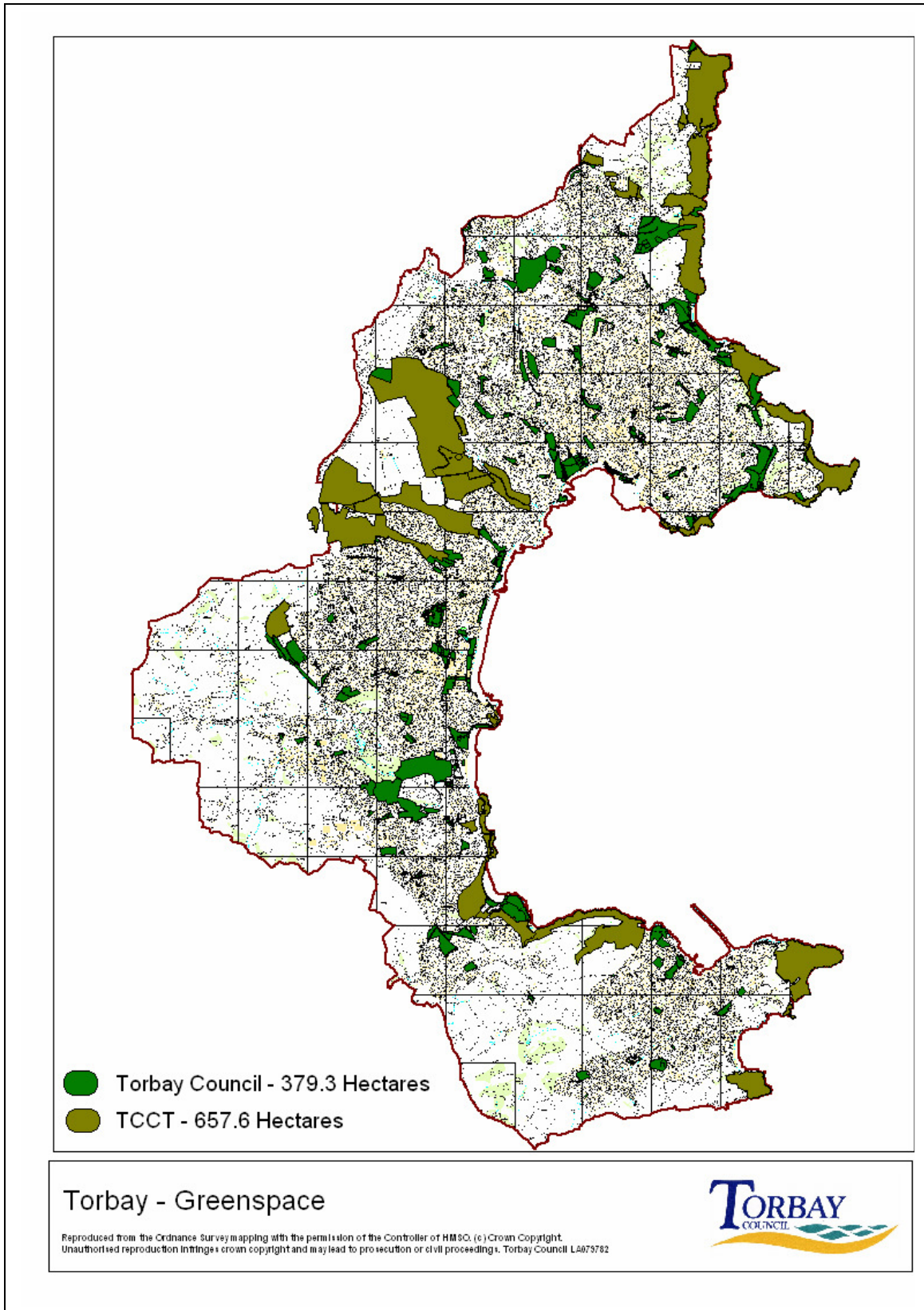


Figure 3: Map showing sites managed by Torbay Coast & Countryside Trust (TCCT) and Torbay Council. The plan does not show greenspace land in private ownership.

Table 4: Urban Action Plan. Actions shaded in grey indicate further funding is required.
High priority actions are proposed for completion within the next 3 years (to end of 2009).
Medium priority actions are proposed for completion within the next 6 years (to end of 2012).
Low priority actions are proposed for completion within the next 10 years (to end 2016)

Actions for Urban Priority Habitat Action Plan	Priority (High, Medium and Low)	Objective	Partners	Ongoing Action
Policy & Legislation				
U1 - Improve policy implementation by greenspace contractors working for public bodies.	H	1	TC, Contractors	✓
U2 - Ensure Torbay LDF includes biodiversity within housing developments.	H	1	TC	
U3 - Ensure biodiversity is incorporated in greenspace management plans	H	1	TC	✓
U4 - Ensure that new developments meet greenspace requirements and adhere to Section 106 Agreements.	H	1	TC, NE	✓
Site Management				
U5 - Encourage the use of national quality standards in public greenspaces and working towards schemes such as the 'Green Flag'.	H	1	TCCT, TC	
U6 - Adopt policies and promote reductions in the use of pesticides, fertilisers and peat in gardens and public greenspace.	H	1, 2	TC, TCCT, Owners, PZ	✓
U7 - Encourage management of gardens, greenspace ,churchyards, school grounds, tourist attractions, business parks, golf courses and holiday parks for biodiversity and encourage community involvement. Promote success stories and encourage others to follow suit.	M	2	TCCT, TC, PZ, Church Groups, Developers and media.	✓
Communication & Publicity				
U8 - Educate public about green waste and dogwaste in public greenspaces and enforce dog fouling byelaws.	H	2	TC, TCCT	✓

U9 - Improve interpretation of biodiversity at public greenspaces.	H	2	TC, TCCT, WWCT	
U10 - Promote importance of gardens and damage caused by re-developing them. Highlight historic changes.	M	2	TCCT, TC	✓
U11 - Promote sustainable tourism initiatives based on Torbay's wildlife-rich greenspaces.	M	2	TDA, PZ	✓
U12 - Integrate biodiversity of railways with promotion of tourist attractions e.g. Steam Railway	M	2	TCCT, Network Rail, Steam Railway	
U13 - Raise awareness of biodiversity value of 'Brownfield' sites with planners, public and developers.	H	2	TCCT, TC, Developers, Public	✓
U14 - Launch community-based programme to promote wildlife-friendly gardening	H	2	TCCT	
U15 - Promote the importance of garden ponds and the Pond of the Year Award.	M	2	TCCT, PZ	✓ (yearly)
U16 - Promote, conserve and enhance demonstration garden at Cockington and involve garden centres – through Bay Blooms, Parks Groups.	M	2	TCCT, Bay Blooms, TC	
U17 - Create more allotments and link with Bay Blooms	M	1	TC, Bay Blooms	✓
U18 - Create an example organic allotment.	L	1	TCCT, TC	
U19 - Increase membership of conservation organisations in Torbay and volunteer involvement.	H	2	TCCT, PZ	✓
Advisory				
U20 - Encourage developers to take biodiversity into design from the start and build around wildlife corridors not through them. Refer to literature that explains incorporating wildlife-friendly features into development design.	H	1	TC, Developers, Architects	✓
U21 - Educate contractors, managers about biodiversity value of public greenspaces and	H	1	TCCT, NE, TC	✓

improved management practices.				
U22 - Introduce developers to SUDS and promote.	M	1	TC, Developers,	✓
U23 - Communicate with railway management (eg Network Rail, Steam Railway) and advise on management for biodiversity.	H	1	TCCT, Network Rail, TC	
Research & Monitoring				
U24 - Identify and prioritise important brownfield sites if not already listed as CWS or LWS.	M	1	TC, Buglife DBRC	
U25 - Encourage the local community to get involved in recording sightings.	M	2	TCCT, PZ	✓
U26 - Encourage developers to survey 'Brownfield' sites before development – identify flagship species to survey for. Use recognised survey methods e.g. Buglife Tool Kit.	H	1	TC, TCCT, Developers, Buglife	✓ (identify flagship 2007)
U27 - Research and develop an accreditation scheme for biodiversity with golf courses, holiday parks, tourist attractions.	M	1	TCCT, TDA	

Abbreviations: Torbay Coast & Countryside (TCCT), Torbay Council (TC), Natural England (NE), Torbay Development Agency (TDA), Devon Biodiversity Records Centre (DBRC), Sustainable Drainage System (SUDS), Paignton Zoo (PZ) and Whitley Wildlife Conservation Trust (WWCT).