

Further information

Sussex Wildlife Trust along with Sussex Environment Partnership is working to promote an ecological network approach in Sussex through local programmes, plans and policies. This is to ensure that sufficient space is available for nature to function for its own sake and provide the environmental 'services' people require.

We therefore welcome contact with decision makers and planners to further this initiative.

Please see the following websites for updates on this emerging agenda.

Sussex Wildlife Trust
www.sussexwt.org.uk
planning@sussexwt.org.uk

Sussex Environment Partnership
www.thinkingforward.org.uk
ssx.envpart@environment-agency.gov.uk

Sussex Wildlife Trust is working with Sussex Environment Partnership with support from the Environment Agency.



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Make the Connection

An Ecological Network for Sussex



Peter van Bolhuis / PANDION



Taking Care of Sussex

Sustaining Nature, Sustaining Sussex, Sustaining Us

A healthy environment is essential to our existence

We rely on the natural environment for our health, wealth and well being. Whether we are aware of it or not our every day needs are intimately linked to the important 'services' it provides.



Lewes in flood 2000

Trying to achieve these services through artificial means would place huge economic burdens on society and would jeopardise the aims of sustainable development.

For nature to be able to deliver these benefits it must have space to function.

Nature cannot be contained solely in 'boxes' such as protected nature sites or restrained by hard defences, for example, canalised rivers or sea walls. Nature needs to be allowed to evolve and adapt to changing conditions especially to the major threat of climate change.

Environmental 'services' include:

- Biodiversity
- Flood alleviation and defence
- Water quality and quantity
- Air quality
- Mitigating the effects of climate change
- CO₂ sequestration
- Economic benefits of tourism and associated work
- Natural landscapes and views
- Health – physical and mental well being
- Prevention of soil erosion

An ecological network for Sussex

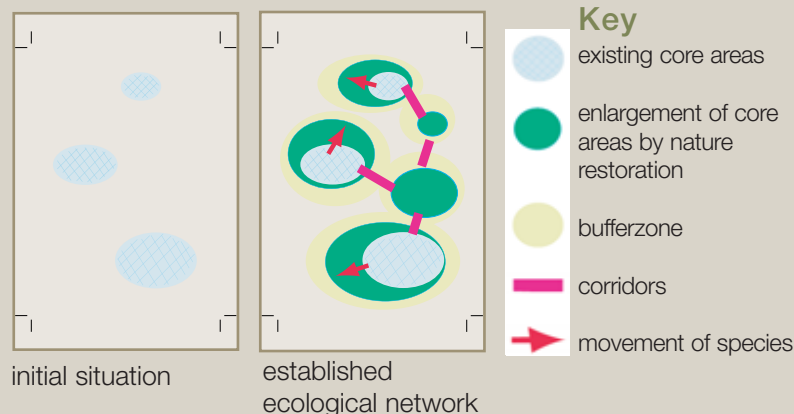
In order to harness the benefits of natural systems we need to plan a robust, adaptable natural environment within our modern landscape. This can be done by enhancing, expanding and linking our wildlife habitats that are currently isolated.

The establishment of an ecological network promotes the need for connecting and buffering core areas of high nature value. Such network features include river systems, coastal zones, natural areas, wildlife corridors and stepping stones. An ecological network spans both built up development zones, as well as the wider countryside, allowing functioning ecosystems to occur across otherwise potentially hostile sites.

Connecting and buffering natural features in the landscape via an ecological network produces a greater overall ecological richness than the sum of its individual parts.



Establishing an ecological network



Government policy

There is considerable Government support for working with natural processes. This includes policies to reverse fragmentation of habitats, for the management of river systems in a more holistic way and for the re-naturalisation of coastal defences. There are further general statements within policies promoting the enhancement of the environment through to explicit requirements on authorities to identify and maintain ecological networks.

There is now a pressing need for an ecological network in Sussex and the opportunities exist to create one, along with the policy guidance from Government to deliver it.