



Uttlesford District Council: Draft Local Plan

Pre-Publication Report on behalf of Takeley Parish Council

Appendix 3

Statement by Countryside Manager, Hatfield Forest

Recognising the importance of Wildlife Corridors within planning decision-making.

Boundary features are an important feature in the British landscape, and many can be described as "Wildlife Corridors"; for example lines of trees and shrubs, grassland and other semi-natural habitats. These are usually linear and often occur on agricultural land or alongside roads and railway lines.

Wildlife corridors have long been recognised as a means of dispersal for many species by linking isolated habitats such as woodland and grassland, allowing the safe movement of species through otherwise open terrain. They are also important in the dispersal of plants, acting as a linear habitat for the dispersal of seeds, and attracting insects for pollination. An appendix of some of the likely species dependent on these corridors can be found on the next page.

The wildlife corridors can be replicated along development boundary lines, but as a rule of thumb, due to the ability of many species only to move very slowly, and with the maximum protection from predators as possible are more effective when in a wide, straight line offering some dense cover, as opposed to a narrow, sparse and haphazard one.

They contain a large part of the countryside's biodiversity, but are also considered important for agricultural, cultural and archaeological reasons. They can often be used recreationally, for example as walking routes and therefore add much value to an urban environment.

There is a great need for wildlife corridors in maintaining viable populations that would otherwise suffer as a result of fragmentation and isolation.

Housing development, industry and road construction and widening are the main threats to wildlife corridors

We feel that attention to this threat must be taken in to account within every planning application, no matter how small, because it only takes one small development to break a vital wildlife corridor. One fairly obvious example of this is a recent development to the East of Takeley Four Ashes where deer were essentially trapped within a fenced off building development to the North of the B1256. They had found their way to the main road in what was once scrub woodland with the intention to cross it and reach the other side which was at that point still wooded but has since also been built on. Post development, RTAs involving deer collisions have increased at several pinch-points where deer are now forced to congregate and cross the road in order to maintain their natural range, which for fallow deer can be as far as 16km.

To prevent this kind of scenario, what is ideally needed is a larger integrated plan. Within it could be actions as straightforward as:

- extending wildlife corridors to increase cover and connect isolated habitat fragments
- ensuring the planting of hedgerows in new developments
- applying sound ecological principles by planting mixtures of native species rather than single species.

To conclude, we can look at Hatfield Forest as the beating heart containing some of the most important wildlife in the area, which is itself under intense visitor pressure as a result of local housing development. The wildlife corridors can be seen as the veins and arteries, linking up with other viable wildlife sites – woodlands, grasslands, wetlands and ponds, which themselves are the vital organs maintaining a healthy and diverse wildlife population at a landscape scale.

Appendix. A few species reliant on Wildlife Corridors around Takeley and Canfield, extending outwards in to the wider landscape

- **Birds:** Tree sparrow, grey partridge, bullfinch, song thrush, redstart, green woodpecker, barn owl, buzzard, kestrel, chaffinch
- **Mammals:** pipistrelle (three species), brown long-eared, barbastelle, daubentons, serotine, noctule, natterers and leislars bats, dormouse, deer, badger, stoat, weasel, fox, brown hare, wood mouse, harvest mouse, yellow-necked mouse, field vole, common shrew, water shrew, hedgehog
- **Amphibians:** great-crested and smooth newts, common frog, common toad
- **Reptiles:** common lizard, slow worm, grass snake
- **Invertebrates:** dragonflies, moths, butterflies, bees, wasps, hoverflies and beetles
- **Plants:** oxlip, cowslip, early purple orchid, southern marsh orchid, bluebells, lichens and ferns

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