



Operational Framework

Updated July 2015

Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service

Operational Framework

This document outlines the operations of the Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service with regards to its activities, steering group, partners, management and financial arrangements.

Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service

The Norfolk Biodiversity Information Service (NBIS) is a Local Records Centre (LRC) covering the whole of the county of Norfolk. NBIS is a member of the Association of Local Environmental Records Centres and operates within the framework of the National Biodiversity Network.

Based at County Hall, Norwich and hosted by Norfolk County Council, the service currently has 2 full time and 2 part time members of staff. The service sits within the Environment Team of Norfolk County Council, part of the Community and Environmental Services Department.

Operating principles

NBIS aims to be a single, central point for obtaining high quality environmental information for Norfolk, providing quick and easy access to information on species, geodiversity, habitats and protected sites.

To fulfil this aim NBIS operates under the following principles:

Data Collection

- We will seek to collect all available biodiversity and geodiversity information for Norfolk with particular reference to Species of Conservation Concern, protected sites and priority habitats.
- We will work to encourage the provision of data from individuals, voluntary groups, local authorities and conservation bodies to NBIS.
- We will seek to obtain data from national recording schemes and make them available locally.
- We will support and co-ordinate the work and activities of local recorders, volunteers and others to collect wildlife records for NBIS and assist with the organisation of specific projects where appropriate.
- We will encourage the public to record wildlife through the use of citizen science surveys.

- We will operate a Local Recording Fund, providing grants to support and encourage recorders.

Data Management

- We will manage all data with care.
- We will ensure all data is verified and validated by County Recorders or appropriate experts.
- We will store data securely using appropriate database and GIS software, in accordance with the NBN guidelines.
- We will manage confidential data sensitively in accordance with the requirements of the data provider.
- We will maintain Metadata about the NBIS data holdings and make it freely available.
- We will employ enough fully trained staff to manage the data holdings.
- We will liaise with local, regional and national users of the data to ensure that we are meeting current and future data management needs.
- We will adhere to the Data Protection Act (1998) and the Environmental Information Regulations (2004).

Data Provision

- We will provide data to those who need it.
- We will provide data quickly in a form appropriate to the user.
- We will operate the Standard Data Enquiry Service developed by NBIS with the East of England Local Records Centres Forum.
- We will give priority data provision to our funding partners with reference to their SLA requirements.
- We will manage access to confidential or sensitive data appropriately.
- We will charge for staff time when responding to commercial enquiries.

- We will continue to develop tools to speed up the provision of data to users, including the use of GIS, and online data provision via the NBN Gateway and the NBIS website.

Funding

- We will seek core funding via long term Service Level Agreements with appropriate partners.
- We will undertake paid contract project work on appropriate projects.
- We will maintain a reserve of at least one years running costs.

Relationships with External Professional Bodies

- We will operate within the guidelines of the National Biodiversity Network (NBN) as outlined in the guidance document *Running a Local Record Centre*. NBIS will also pay particular regard to the essential and enhanced functions of a LRC as identified by the NBN.
- Work to achieve and maintain accreditation with the Association of Environmental Records Centres (ALERC). Accreditation works at both a standard and advanced level; NBIS aims to achieve accreditation at the advanced level.

Partners

NBIS is partner funded via Service Level Agreements (SLA) by the following organisations:

Broads Authority
 Environment Agency
 Natural England
 Norfolk County Council

Agreements are pending with South Norfolk District Council and the Norfolk Rivers, Broads and King's Lynn Internal Drainage Boards. Discussions are in progress with North Norfolk District Council.

Norfolk County Council (NCC) also acts as host organisation providing payroll, management and administration support. NBIS has the legal status to be able to enter contractual agreements as a part of Norfolk County Council.

NBIS also has an important set of non-funding partners who provide essential support and encouragement, these include:

Association of Local Environmental Records Centres
East of England Regional Local Records Centre Forum
Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society
Norfolk Wildlife Trust

Service Level Agreements

The preferred manner of funding for NBIS is via an SLA lasting for a term of 3 years. Whilst a template SLA is available, each agreement will be negotiated individually with the funding body to meet their requirements.

Steering Group

NBIS is guided and supported by a Steering Group that is made up of representatives of its users. These include funding partners, Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society, Norfolk Wildlife Trust, County Recorders and ecological consultants.

The Steering Group meets at least twice a year and provides direction and reviews of the work of NBIS.

The Steering Group is currently chaired by a member of NBIS.

In order to meet the needs of its Steering Group and users NBIS operates under the following terms:

Management

The Biodiversity Officer (Information), the Assistant Biodiversity Officer (Information) and the Senior Biodiversity Technician are line managed by the Senior Biodiversity Officer, of whose time 0.3FTE is spent on NBIS business. The Senior Biodiversity Officer is currently line managed by the Coastal and Countryside Manager. Day to day management of NBIS is provided by the Biodiversity Officer (Information).

Finance

NBIS Finances are managed through the Norfolk County Council Finance Department.

The Senior Biodiversity Officer is permitted to sign off financial requests up to the value of £10000. Requests above this value need to be signed off by the Countryside and Coastal Manager.

Communications

NBIS will communicate with the Steering Group via update reports at meetings of the group.

NBIS will communicate with its users via a website, social networking and a monthly e-bulletin.

Termination

In the event of dissolution of NBIS, the database, all files, books and archival materials will pass to the Norfolk and Norwich Naturalists' Society.

In the event of dissolution of NBIS, any monies will be passed back to partners as agreed in their respective Service Level Agreements.