



## Delivering B-Lines; our guiding principles

Delivering a landscape-scale biodiversity initiative nationwide will clearly be a major challenge! The effectiveness of B-Lines at this scale will be dependent on maintaining the integrity of its vision across a large geographic area and many individual delivery partnerships. The following simple guiding principles have therefore been produced to help partners deliver B-Lines in a reasonably consistent manner. Used in conjunction with the guidance/information provided in the B-Lines report they should enable the B-Lines concept and vision to be delivered by communities, local partnerships, farmers and wildlife organisations. Staying true to these principles will ensure the creation of a comprehensive and coherent B-Lines network, while allowing full expression of distinctiveness, character and approach.

### Guiding Principles

- 1) *B-Lines should be identified as 3 km wide linear zones within which the aim should be to deliver a continuous wide (averaging 300m wide- but with thinner and thicker stretches) strip of permanent wildflower-rich habitats, encompassing, expanding and linking together existing wildlife areas.*
- 2) *Where a continuous strip of habitat is not practical/achievable, the core benefits of B-Lines can be delivered through the maintenance, restoration and creation of large blocks of permanent wildflower-rich habitat (min 2 ha sized blocks) extending to a minimum of 10% of the identified zone (i.e. 300 ha of new/restored habitat per 10km length of the network). The aim of these 'stepping stones' should be to ensure that the distance between individual habitat blocks is no greater than 0.5km.*
- 3) *B-Lines should be mapped in such a manner as to link together existing important wildflower-rich areas (SSSI, Local Wildlife Sites, nature reserves, BAP habitats) – these areas will provide the foundations of the new B-Lines network.*
- 4) *B-Lines should ideally be mapped at a 'regional' or county level; each county having at least two, one running approximately north-south and one east-west. County/region-wide mapping would be best refined at a more local level, using local data/knowledge (for example, through Local Biodiversity/Nature Partnerships, Green Infrastructure Partnerships, local communities etc). To ensure a coherent network is developed key connecting nodes must be agreed between adjacent/neighbouring administrative areas.*
- 5) *Within B-Lines the primary aim should be to maintain, restore and create high quality semi-natural habitat types that fulfil the requirements of pollinators and other invertebrates. Wildflower-rich grasslands of a type typical of the locality should comprise the core of this new habitat, however other habitat types which reflect local landscape character and wildlife interests could also be included (for example lowland heathland/grassland mosaics, lowland fen, wood pasture and parkland).*

- 6) *Opportunities for wider wildlife enhancements should also be taken within the B-Line zones to help improve the overall environmental quality of the landscape, for example targeting of other agri-environment options, including hedgerow management, floristically enhanced margins, and pollen and nectar mixes*
- 7) *Priority should be given to the enhancement of the quality of existing sites and restoration of degraded sites through changes/improvements to management. The formation of the B-Lines will, however, require significant areas of wildflower-rich grassland creation and in these circumstances B-Lines will be sensitive to the conservation of our native flora, and use exclusively seed from native plant species, wherever possible sourcing this from local grassland habitats.*
- 8) *At a landscape-scale, B-Lines will look to achieve a diversity of habitat structure and function aimed at supporting the needs of invertebrates and other wildlife. A range of management regimes will therefore be required/promoted designed to create a diverse natural environment and associated wildlife interests. Development of management plans for individual stretches of the B-Lines should be guided by species and habitat in adjacent areas and surrounding habitats.*
- 9) *Villages/communities within or adjacent to the B-Lines should be encouraged to participate in the initiative through appropriate garden planting, management of community areas, churchyards, roadside verges etc.*
- 10) *In more urbanised areas, unitary authorities, local communities and developers will be encouraged to deliver B-Lines through green infrastructure initiatives, enhancing existing community green space and council-owned land, and looking for new opportunities such as living roof initiatives. To ensure the ecological connectivity of the overall network is maintained, it may also be appropriate in some location to identify a 3km wide B-Line around the urban conurbation.*
- 11) *Delivery of B-Lines will necessitate a wide range of farmers, landowners, wildlife organisations, government agencies, business and local authorities delivering parts of the network in a co-ordinated fashion. To achieve connectivity across the network will require all these parties to target and deliver habitat creation in a joined up and integrated manner.*
- 12) *To enable the success of the B-Lines to be assessed, monitoring must be put in place to help determine changes over time both at a field and landscape-scale.*

