# STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING FAVOURABLE CONSERVATION STATUS IN ENGLAND

**TEMPLATE CHANGE CONTROL**

**HABITAT: >Insert habitat name<**

**AUTHOR/S: >Insert name/s<**

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| **DATE** | **VERSION** | **DESCRIPTION** | **REASON** | **WHO?** |
| 28/6/2023 | V0.1 | Initial version  |  | TM |
|  | V0.2 |  |  |  |
|  | V0.3 |  |  |  |
|  | V0.4 |  |  |  |
|  | V0.5 |  |  |  |
|  | V0.6 |  |  |  |

**REVIEW COMMENTS**

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| **Version number** | **Reviewer** | **Date**  | **Key issues raised****Link to full comments (TRIM)** | **Actioned? (y/n)** |
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## ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

*Please include details of anybody you would like to acknowledge in this section. These should be people who have actively contributed to producing this document. These could be either named individuals or more generic – a group of colleagues or a group in another organisation. The details should include:*

* *Those who have supplied data or analysis.*
* *Those who have reviewed and commented on the document (individuals or representatives of organisations).*

## About the DFCS project

Natural England’s Defining Favourable Conservation Status (DFCS) project is defining the minimum thresholds at which habitats and species in England can be considered to be thriving. Our Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) definitions are based on ecological evidence and the expertise of specialists. We are now also producing FCS strategies, which describe the objectives and actions required to achieve FCS.

We are doing this so that we can use “what good looks like” for species and habitats in England to guide ambitious decision making and actions that achieve and sustain thriving wildlife.

We are publishing FCS definitions and strategies so that you, our partners and decision-makers, can do your bit for nature, better.

As we publish more of our work, the format of our definitions and strategies may evolve, however the content will remain largely the same.

This strategy has been prepared using current data and evidence. It represents Natural England’s view of how to achieve FCS based on the situation and best available information at the time of publication.

# STRATEGY FOR ACHIEVING FAVOURABLE CONSERVATION STATUS IN ENGLAND

**HABITAT: >*Insert habitat name<***

**AUTHOR/S: >*Insert name/s<***

## INTRODUCTION

This document sets out Natural England’s view on how to achieve Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) for *habitat name* in England. Favourable Conservation Status strategies describe the objectives and actions needed to achieve FCS in England, thus ensuring that prioritised conservation actions contribute to national nature recovery ambitions. Please see the Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for *habitat name* [hyperlink].

Section 2 provides a summary of the priority actions and objectives needed to achieve FCS for *habitat name* in England. Section 3 sets out necessary background to the habitat. Section 4 outlines the actions necessary to achieve FCS, a breakdown of where FCS could be delivered, and a monitoring and evaluation plan. Section 5 assesses whether FCS is achievable within the timeframe of the strategy, considering potential conservation actions and external constraints.

FCS strategies are living documents and will be updated as new information becomes available.

Further information on how to produce and use FCS strategies can be found in the accompanying guidance document Producing and using Favourable Conservation Status Strategies. Please also see the guidance document [Defining Favourable Conservation Status in England](http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6449642545086464?category=5415044475256832) for background to Natural England’s approach to defining FCS.

## 2. SUMMARY OF STRATEGY

*This section is a 1-2 page summary of key points from the rest of the document.*

### 2.1 Priority actions

*Once sections 3 to 5 are complete, summarise the following, in 4-6 bullet points:*

* *The priority actions needed to achieve FCS (see section 4.1).*
* *An overarching perspective of where in England potential contributions to FCS could be made (from section 4.2).*

Below are the high-level priority actions needed to achieve Favourable Conservation Status for *habitat name* in England:

### 2.2 Achievability

*State whether FCS is achievable within the timeframe of the strategy. Where this is not the case, briefly describe why and provide the expected timeframe of long-term delivery (see section 5.1). Identify any key factors that are likely to impede progress towards FCS, such as a lack of delivery tools or external processes such as climate change (see sections 5.1 & 5.2).*

*In the below table, provide the favourable values for each parameter from the habitat’s FCS definition document, the changes required to achieve these thresholds, and the time-specific objectives set out by this strategy (see section 5.3). Where FCS is achievable within the strategy, objectives should be favourable values.*

**Table 1**. Objectives towards Favourable Conservation Status for *habitat name*.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
| **Favourable Conservation Status parameter** | **Favourable Conservation Status**  | **Change needed to achieve Favourable Conservation Status**  | **Objective of Favourable Conservation Status strategy**  |
| **Natural range and distribution** |  | Maintain/Increase the natural range/distribution within the range *x to y [unit]*. |  |
| **Area** |  | Maintain / Increase the area of habitat by *x to y [unit].* |  |
| **Structure and function** |  | Maintain/Increase the favourable area of the habitat that meets the structure and function requirements from *x% to* at least 95% |  |

## 3. BACKGROUND

*This section provides the necessary context for understanding the strategy. It should be a maximum of a page long.*

### 3.1 Habitat background

*Provide a succinct background to the habitat, avoiding information that is provided in its FCS definition. Focus on the habitat’s current conservation status and the primary threats it faces. Highlight any significant changes in its status since the publication of its FCS definition.*

### 3.2 Related species and habitats

*Highlight any other habitats or key species that may be influenced by the strategy. This strategy should aim to maximise synergies between different species and habitats. Advice on how to integrate delivery for species and habitats is provided in the* [*Nature Networks Evidence Handbook*](http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6105140258144256) *and* [*Generating more integrated biodiversity objectives – rationale, principles and practice*](http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/5891570502467584) *(paying particular note to the appendices), and should be at the core of thinking around delivery of FCS.*

## 4. DELIVERING FCS

*This section outlines the actions necessary to achieve FCS and a breakdown of where FCS could be delivered. It should be 2-3 pages long.*

### 4.1 Priority actions

*Describe the priority actions that are required to achieve FCS. These should be high-level strategic actions rather than detailed measures for individual sites and typically will need to be ambitious.*

*Consider a range of evidence when assessing the potential conservation actions the habitat requires. Natural England habitat specialists will be able to recommend relevant internal and external sources of evidence. The FCS definition for this habitat may point towards conservation priorities and, in such cases, can be used as a starting point. There may also be existing published conservation strategies or action plans for the habitat, which may be useful for initial reference. Authors may also consult* [*Defining Favourable Conservation Status in England*](http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6449642545086464?category=5415044475256832) *for advice on collating evidence.*

### **4.2 Place-based delivery**

*Include a strategic breakdown of where potential contributions to FCS could be made. This should be provided in the table below alongside a short accompanying narrative to highlight any general patterns and key populations or regions.*

*It may be appropriate to prioritise geographically where conservation actions have the greatest potential to contribute towards FCS. This could mean focusing efforts on particular areas of habitat that contribute strongly to FCS, or restoring an area of degraded habitat with strong potential to contribute to FCS in the future.*

*The selected spatial scale should be appropriate for the habitat. For terrestrial habitats, a county- or National Character Area-scale focus will facilitate the link between FCS strategies and delivery. Geographical breakdowns are likely to be more challenging in marine environments. Where possible, marine strategies should quantify potential contributions to FCS at a regional scale. For strategies focused on coastal features, authors may prioritise FCS contributions by county or Area Team region. Potential contributions are indicative only and thus should be rounded appropriately.*

The geographical breakdown in Table 2 provides a guide to where potential contributions to Favourable Conservation Status of *habitat name* could be prioritised across *spatial unit* in England. Potential contributions are indicative, based on expert judgement and the best available data.

**Table 2**. *Spatial unit*-specific historic and current area of *habitat name*, and indications of where contributions to Favourable Conservation Status could be made. Potential contributions to FCS are indicative, based on expert judgement and current data.

|  |  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- | --- |
| ***Name of spatial unit***  | **Historic area** | **Current area** | **Potential area contribution to FCS** | **Commentary of priority actions** |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |
|  |  |  |  |  |

### **4.3 Role of protected sites**

*Quantify the potential contributions to FCS from protected sites, following the strategic principles of section 4.2. This should be provided in the table below alongside a short accompanying narrative to highlight any general patterns and key sites. This section is intended to assess the importance of the designated site network for achieving FCS and to identify any key sites with the potential to make strong contributions to FCS. Where possible, provide estimates for all individual protected sites where the habitat is found (absolute values) and for the protected site network as a whole (absolute and proportional values). For terrestrial habitats, we recommend focusing on Special Areas of Conservation or Special Protection Areas. Do not differentiate between protected sites where the habitat is or is not designated.*

This breakdown by protected sites provides a guide to where potential contributions to Favourable Conservation Status of *habitat name* could be prioritised across *type of protected site* in England. Potential contributions are indicative.

**Table 3.** Historic and current area of *habitat name* inside and outside *type of protected site*, and indications of where contributions to Favourable Conservation Status could be made.

|  |  |  |  |
| --- | --- | --- | --- |
|   | **Historic area** | **Current area** | **Potential area contribution to FCS**  |
| **Inside** *type of protected site* | *Absolute* (*Proportional* %)   | *Absolute* (*Proportional* %)   | *Absolute* (*Proportional* %) |
| *Site A* | *Absolute* |  *Absolute* |  *Absolute* |
| *Site B* |  |   |   |
| *Site C* |  |   |   |
|  |  |   |   |
|  |  |   |   |
|  |  |   |   |
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|  |  |   |   |
|  |  |   |   |
| **Outside** *type of protected site* | *Absolute* (*Proportional* %)   |  *Absolute* (*Proportional* %)   |  *Absolute* (*Proportional* %)   |

### **4.4 Links to other strategies or action plans**

*Reference any important – particularly national – conservation strategies, action plans or other guidance for this habitat. Identify any links to this strategy that may be relevant to delivery.*

## **5. ACHIEVABILITY OF FAVOURABLE CONSERVATION STATUS**

*This section provides an assessment of how to achieve FCS, considering potential conservation actions and external constraints. From this assessment, it should be possible to develop time-bound objectives towards FCS. This section should typically be around 2 pages long.*

### 5.1 Assessing achievability

*Assess the likelihood of achieving Favourable Conservation Status for the habitat, considering the following:*

* *The current status of the habitat and the change in status required to meet FCS.*
* *The past impacts of conservation actions on the status of the habitat, which will reflect earlier societal choices and other factors that affect delivery.*
* *Other evidence of the efficacy of conservation actions.*
* *The availability of delivery tools and mechanisms to implement conservation actions, identifying where lack of delivery tools may constrain implementation of appropriate actions.*

*Based on this assessment, state whether it is likely to be feasible to achieve FCS for each parameter within the timeframe of this strategy. Be aware of not constraining or overestimating the level of ambition based on historical delivery. Where FCS is not achievable with the timeframe of the strategy, indicate the expected long-term delivery of FCS.*

### 5.2 External factors

*Discuss how any other external factors that may impede or facilitate progress towards FCS. Avoid duplicating information in FCS definition documents on analyses of current and past threats. In particular consider persistent threats and drivers, such as climate change, which cannot be controlled without structural shifts in economic or social sectors and which may lead to future deterioration or improvement in the conservation status of the habitat. Natural England climate change specialists can be consulted about the predicted impacts of climate change on the habitat and potential adaptation options. Where appropriate, maps of potential climate change impacts or sensitivity should be included or referenced to.*

### 5.3 Objectives

*Describe England-scale objectives for each parameter within the timeframe of the strategy. Objectives should be ambitious steps towards FCS or – if achievable within the timeframe of the strategy – FCS itself. Objectives must be specific, measurable, and achievable. When defining the objectives, consider the trajectory of expected delivery and define short-term milestones towards objectives (e.g., 5 years). For example, where a strategy uses habitat restoration, consider the time required to restore a particular habitat and for the return of any associated focal species. It also may be useful to provide a figure to represent the delivery of milestones and objectives over time.*

### 5.4 Monitoring and evaluation

*Outline a concise plan for monitoring and evaluating progress towards the strategy’s objectives. This should describe the monitoring processes currently in place for the habitat, including the type of data collected and its frequency of collection. This plan may identify any gaps in existing monitoring, such as a lack of survey effort, and any additional monitoring needs.*

*Describe how monitoring data will be used to evaluate progress towards FCS objectives, for instance by describing any modelling required to quantify conservation status from monitoring data. It may be useful to refer to the approaches used to define favourable conservation status for this habitat.*

## ANNEX 1: REFERENCES

*Reference all documents used to develop this strategy*