

# Achieving protection and enhancement of biodiversity

In accordance with the Core Strategy policies CS1 and CS7, development will be encouraged which demonstrates that it protects and enhances biodiversity. The Royal Town Planning Institute in "Planning for Biodiversity" achieves this through the following approach:

- 1) **Information** - survey information
- 2) **Avoidance** - avoiding impacts
- 3) **Mitigation** - reducing impacts
- 4) **Compensation** - offsetting impacts
- 5) **New Benefits** - opportunities for enhancement

Appropriate monitoring and management of biodiversity must be included in proposals for a development. Evidence of these steps should be submitted within the planning process.

## The application process

**Pre-Applications** - designed to give advice on specific proposals at a site (fee required).

**Application stage** - if ecological surveys are required they must be submitted with the application in order for planning decisions to meet statutory duties for biodiversity. Standing advice from Natural England also requires that further surveys are submitted with the application. Outline, Reserved Matters and Time Extension applications must also be supported by up-to-date survey information.

**Householder Applications** - consideration of biodiversity must be made in proportion to the proposed work which could take the form of a brief statement made by a qualified ecologist.

## Further Information

### Ecological guidance:

Directory of qualified ecologists - Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (IEEM) [www.ieem.net](http://www.ieem.net)

Survey and mitigation guidance is provided by a range of organisations including the Bat Conservation Trust and Natural England.

### Planning Guidance:

Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact within the Planning System [www.communities.gov.uk](http://www.communities.gov.uk)

Natural England Standing Advice - Protected Species [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)

Royal Town Planning Institute "Planning for Biodiversity" Good Practice Guide. [www.rtpi.org.uk](http://www.rtpi.org.uk)

### Legislation:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010
- Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities
- (NERC) Act 2006 [www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

### Biodiversity Action Plans:

Bracknell Forest Biodiversity Action Plan [www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/bap](http://www.bracknell-forest.gov.uk/bap)

Berkshire Biodiversity Action Plan [www.berksbap.org](http://www.berksbap.org)

UK Biodiversity Action Plan [www.ukbap.org.uk](http://www.ukbap.org.uk)

### Contacts:

Bracknell Forest Council Tel. 01344 352000  
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Before you apply ...

Planning and biodiversity guidance



Your guide to the requirements for protecting wildlife in your planning application

# How is biodiversity related to Planning?

Biodiversity is the 'variety of all life'.



Local Authorities have a statutory duty to consider biodiversity when assessing planning applications (NERC Act 2006). Where there is a likelihood that a planning proposal might affect protected species or habitats, the council will require survey information in order to make an assessment of the impacts of the proposals. This information will need to be provided before a planning decision is made (Planning Policy Statement 9, Circular 06/2005).

## The purpose of this guide

The early consideration of biodiversity before applying for planning permission is in the interest of your application in order to prevent delays and associated costs. This guide provides basic advice to anyone considering submitting a planning application, in order to keep you on the right side of wildlife legislation and help the wildlife on your doorstep.

## When is an ecological survey required?

Where there is a reasonable likelihood that a planning proposal will adversely affect important biodiversity, the planning authority will require information about the species/habitats and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development before granting planning permission.

The type of assessment needed will vary from an ecological survey and assessment report to an Environmental Impact Assessment and Appropriate Assessment if a European site is involved.

The list below aims to provide some basic indications on the type of site features where an ecological survey may be required.

## Site features:

- Buildings, bridges or other man-made structures with features that may support roosting bats (guidance available from Natural England)
- Agricultural buildings or rural outbuildings
- Trees with features that may support roosting bats on or adjacent to the site
- Ponds or slow flowing waterbodies on or within 500m of a major development or 100m from a minor development.
- Rough grassland, parkland, meadows or pasture
- Watercourses including rivers, ditches or lakes on or adjacent to the site
- Woodland on, or adjacent to the site
- Scrub/hedgerows on or adjacent to the site
- Heathland on or adjacent to the site
- Gravel pits or quarries
- Derelict land



NB - This list is not exhaustive. [Natural England's Standing Advice on Protected Species](#) provides further guidance on these features.

# What should the ecological assessment include?

The ecological assessment will need to identify features on or adjacent to the site that may be impacted upon by the proposed development and the likely impacts that the development would have on these features. These features include:

- European protected species e.g. bats and great crested newts
- Nationally protected species e.g. badgers, reptiles and amphibians
- Protected sites i.e. Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protected Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- Important habitats and species - UK, Berkshire and Local Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats, Habitats and Species of Principle Importance.

## Survey standards

Surveys should be carried-out by appropriately qualified ecologists with experience of undertaking the survey required. Surveys should be up-to-date and follow a recognised methodology.

Due to the shifting nature of species and habitats, ecological surveys may need to be repeated if survey information is considered to have expired.

For householder applications, a targeted species survey report may be adequate where only a single species or feature is concerned.

