

This note is one of a series aimed to improve design standards and reduce delays in processing applications. It cannot cover all situations. Applicants and agents are encouraged to discuss proposals with the biodiversity officer prior to a formal submission. For large and complex schemes, applicants are advised to employ a professionally qualified ecologist from the outset.

## Definition of Biodiversity

‘Biodiversity’ means the wealth and diversity of all our wild plants and animals and their habitats. It is also used to include our geological and geomorphological heritage. Much of our biodiversity is under threat of some kind, but there are good reasons to protect and enhance it.

A surprising range of planning proposals, from householder applications to major developments can impact on biodiversity.

## Why is Biodiversity important?

- Wildlife features and habitats provide an attractive setting for homes and businesses enhancing value and sales potential
- Management of wildlife assets assists qualification for the Code for Sustainable Homes (category 9) and scores for BREEAM assessments
- High quality schemes to conserve or enhance wildlife habitats and species provide a company with positive ‘green credentials’ and enhance image.

## Is my Land or Building of Value to Wildlife?

Suburban gardens, neglected ‘brown-field sites’ and of course ‘green field’ land in the countryside or on the edge of towns can all support surprising amounts of wildlife, for instance dormice in hedges, slow-worms in rough grass or badger setts in small woods. Buildings may support roosting bats or nesting birds. All these species and many others are legally protected or recognised by planning policy and must be suitably protected during development.

Land that is important for wildlife may be legally protected too (Sites of Special Scientific Interest, SSSI) or may be recognised as important by planning policy (County Wildlife Sites, CWS, and priority habitats).



Major oak, Chudleigh

When you submit your planning application you need to tell us if your building or land has protected species or a wildlife designation. To find out about ‘designated sites’ visit the Biodiversity area of the Teignbridge website, or ask the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre. To find out how likely your building or land is to have protected species or



Dormouse © Mabel Cheung

priority habitats and to find out more about getting an expert survey, see PAN No.7.1 Bats, Birds and Development and PAN No. 7.3 Ecological and Geological Reports, or talk to the Council's Biodiversity Officer.

Undesignated wildlife habitats, and species without legal protection, are also an important part of our biodiversity and should be protected and enhanced wherever possible during development.

## Will the Presence of Wildlife prevent Development?

The presence of important or protected wildlife won't necessarily prevent development: we may apply conditions to your permission requiring avoidance/mitigation/compensation measures to make the development acceptable. But sometimes it is necessary to refuse permission on wildlife grounds.

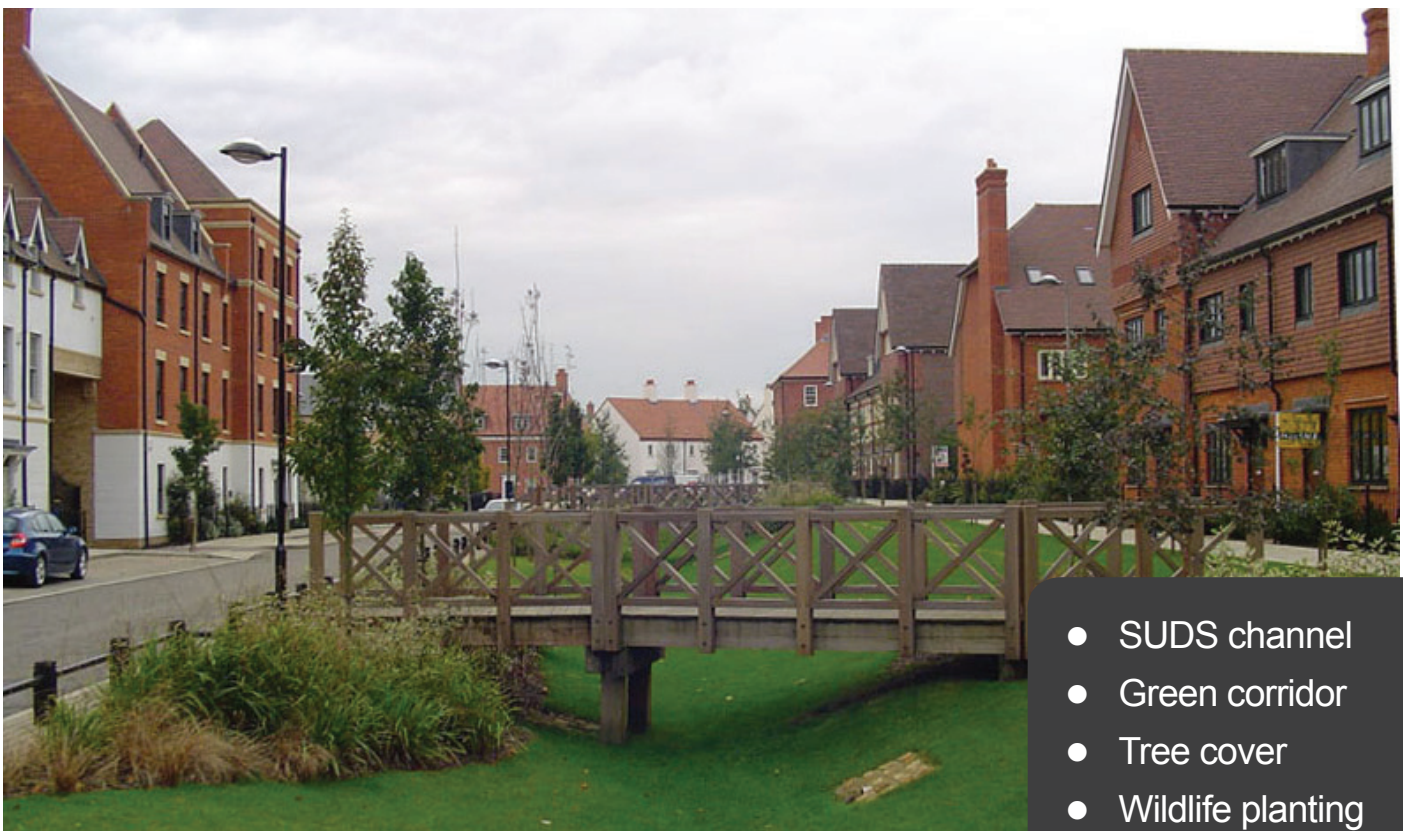
If a development proposal might impact on a European wildlife site, directly or indirectly, the Council will undertake an Appropriate Assessment of the impacts. Mitigation measures are likely to be stringent and may include financial contributions to a range of off-site measures. We must refuse applications where the potential impacts on European wildlife sites cannot be fully mitigated.

There is also a strong presumption against allowing any harm to an SSSI, whether directly or indirectly. Sometimes proposals affecting a CWS or priority habitat may be refused too.

It is more often possible to protect individual species through conditions, for example you may have to do works at a certain time of year, or you may need to make replacement provision for the wildlife elsewhere nearby. But proposals that would harm very important species (e.g. a bat maternity roost site) may also sometimes be refused.

## What about Geology?

Some sites are designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS) because they have important rock formations, fossils or landforms. These sites must be protected from inappropriate development in the same way as important wildlife sites. For instance it may be acceptable to develop in the base of an old quarry, provided the works stay away from the rock exposures forming the sides of the quarry. To find out if your land has a designation ask DBRC or see the Council website.



- SUDS channel
- Green corridor
- Tree cover
- Wildlife planting

*Sustainable Urban Drainage System, Upton, Northampton.*



- Open fronted timber building attracts swallows
- New hedging
- Pond
- Marginal planting



Surveys and Reports must be done by a suitably qualified and experienced ecological or geological expert. For bats, dormice, otters and great crested newts the consultant must hold an appropriate licence. We can provide a list of suitable local ecological consultants, who can produce your Report.

## How can I make my Site more attractive to Wildlife?

There are plenty of things you can do to increase the wildlife value of your site. Sometimes you will be required to do this by conditions or obligations. Try to protect and enhance the wildlife that is already there. Where this really won't be possible think about ways to enhance or recreate wildlife opportunities elsewhere, 'off-site', eg via 'Offsetting'.

You will need to think about the on-going maintenance and management of your wildlife enhancement measures. Major developments may have to make ongoing financial provision and may need to consider using a separate management company. You can get expert help to design a good scheme for larger developments or visit wildlife organisations' websites for information such as nest boxes and bat boxes.

## What Information do I need to submit?

For many types of application we will require the applicant to submit an Ecological or Geological Report. This will include a survey, an assessment of the likely impacts, and proposed measures to mitigate or compensate for the impact. The Council's Biodiversity Officer checks all planning applications for their potential to affect wildlife or geology. There may be delays if you have not submitted the necessary information with your application.

For loft conversion, roof raising, roof extension, barn conversion, demolition and other developments involving alterations to roofs, cellars, cladding, outbuildings and various other structures, we will often require a Bat and Bird Report. We may also require a Bat and Bird Report for developments involving external lighting or works to large or old trees. See PAN No.s 7.1 and 7.2, or talk to the Biodiversity Officer.

For 'green field' or 'brown field' sites, we will need a more in-depth Ecological Report covering habitats as well as species. You must commission the Report well in advance, as surveys must be done at the right time of year and may take months to complete (for some legally protected species). PAN No. 7.3 will tell you more, or talk to the Biodiversity Officer.

## Useful References

### TDC Contacts

Biodiversity Officer  
Teignbridge District Council  
01626 215753 / 215794  
[designandheritage@teignbridge.gov.uk](mailto:designandheritage@teignbridge.gov.uk)  
[www.teignbridge.gov.uk/biodiversity](http://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/biodiversity)

### Expert advisors

DBRC Devon Biodiversity Records Centre  
[www.dbrc.org.uk](http://www.dbrc.org.uk)  
Natural England [www.naturalengland.org.uk](http://www.naturalengland.org.uk)  
Bat Conservation Trust [www.bats.org.uk](http://www.bats.org.uk)  
National Bat Helpline: 0845 1300 228  
RSPB [www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)

### Legislation

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981  
Conservation of Habitats and Species  
Regulations 2010  
[www.legislation.gov.uk](http://www.legislation.gov.uk)

### Policy Documents

National Planning Policy Framework  
[www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk)  
Teignbridge Local Plan  
[www.teignbridge.gov.uk/planteignbridge](http://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/planteignbridge)

### Wildlife Planning Advisory Notes

No 7.1 Bats, Birds & Development  
No 7.2 Bat & Bird Report Checklist & Bat  
Consultants  
No 7.3 Ecological & Geological Reports  
No 7.4 List of Ecological Consultants  
[www.teignbridge.gov.uk/biodiversity](http://www.teignbridge.gov.uk/biodiversity)

### Bat and Bird Boxes info

[www.bats.org.uk](http://www.bats.org.uk)  
[www.rspb.org.uk](http://www.rspb.org.uk)  
[www.bto.org](http://www.bto.org)  
<http://www.swift-conservation.org/>

If you need this document in another language, print size or colour, braille, BSL, as an e-mail attachment, MP3 file or disc - phone 01626 215818 or e-mail [info@teignbridge.gov.uk](mailto:info@teignbridge.gov.uk)