

ECOLOGY & BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN – Interim Advice and Information Note – December 2022 Update



From 7th July 2020 New Forest District Council has sought a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain as a requirement of planning permission for 'major' new build development

What type of development is required to provide biodiversity net gain?

The requirement to deliver biodiversity net gain will be applied to **all new build development**. For ‘major’ applications the target is to achieve a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain as a requirement of planning permission to be demonstrated via use of the Natural England Biodiversity Metric.

‘Minor’ applications, defined as residential development of nine units or less, on a site having an area of less than 1 ha, or all other development types where the site area is less than 0.5 ha, are not exempt from providing biodiversity net gains but use of the Natural England Biodiversity Metric will not normally be required. A beta version of a Small Sites Metric (SSM), a simplified version of Biodiversity Metric 3.1 is available for use – this is not however currently a requirement although NFDC would welcome submissions of the SSM by applicants in support of their minor development proposals.

It should be noted that exceptions on a case-by-case basis may apply e.g. for development at the upper limits of these thresholds where a medium or high impact on biodiversity might be expected or where priority habitats are present within the development area (excluding hedgerows and arable margins). Householder development (such as extensions) falls within the definition of ‘minor development’. The requirement for biodiversity net gain does not apply to change of use of an existing building though ecological enhancements are welcomed.

In the interim period before the Government sets the national policy standards and requirements, a pragmatic approach will be taken, ensuring opportunities to maximise biodiversity net gain as part of new development are taken, while not preventing otherwise acceptable development.

Policy background

The Environment Bill received Royal Assent on 9 November 2021, meaning it is now an Act of Parliament. Mandatory biodiversity net gain as set out in the [Environment Act](#) applies in England only by amending the Town & Country Planning Act (TCPA) and is expected to become law in 2023.

This interim policy is underpinned by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) paragraph 170(d), which requires planning decisions to provide net gains in biodiversity. Paragraph 174(b) requires plans to identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity. Paragraph 175(a) suggests that if significant biodiversity losses cannot be avoided, mitigated or compensated then permission should be refused.

New Forest District Council’s policy STR1 (iii) in the New Forest District (outside the National Park) Local Plan Review 2016-2036 Part One: Planning Strategy, adopted 6 July 2020 has a requirement for all development to achieve an environmental net gain. ‘Environmental Net Gain’ encompasses ‘Biodiversity Net Gain’ and is an approach to development that leaves the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand.

What is biodiversity net gain and how is it measured?

Biodiversity net gain is an approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before¹. Development can produce a biodiversity net gain if it seeks to make its impact on the environment positive, delivering improvements to biodiversity through habitat creation or enhancement after avoiding or mitigating harm.

Where biodiversity net gain is successfully incorporated into the design of a development it can be an asset to the local community as well as to wildlife. Properties near to greenspace often command higher market value than houses further away and encourage healthier lifestyles².

Using a standardised approach, biodiversity net gain will be measured by comparing habitat losses and gains before and after a development has taken place. Where areas of the same site are being utilised for other activities e.g. Alternative Natural Recreational Greenspace (ANRG) / Public Open Space (POS) it will be necessary to demonstrate how the biodiversity net gains are additional to other provisions which would be made irrespective of the biodiversity net gain requirement. (See policy ENV1. of the Local Plan 2016- 2036.)

Biodiversity net gain uses habitat type and quality as a proxy for biodiversity. The Government (Defra/Natural England) have developed a metric which helps to measure biodiversity losses and gains in a more transparent and verifiable way and provides a common reference point for agreement between a developer and a Local Planning Authority.

The metric enables practitioners to calculate the potential biodiversity losses and gains associated with a development proposal by assessing a habitat against four key considerations:

- **Type and Distinctiveness:** is the habitat of particular ecological importance?
- **Condition:** is the habitat a good example of its type?
- **Extent:** what is the extent of the area, in hectares or kilometres (depending on habitat types), that the habitat occupies?
- **Strategic Significance:** Is the habitat a local priority or located in a priority area for habitat creation/enhancement?

The metric translates this information into biodiversity units. To achieve net gain, a development must have a higher biodiversity unit score after development than before the development. A minimum 10% biodiversity net gain is required for 'habitat units', 'hedgerow units' and where applicable 'river units'.

¹ <https://cieem.net/i-am/current-projects/biodiversity-net-gain/>

² <https://www.ons.gov.uk/releases/thecontributionofpublicgreenspacetohouseprices>

This guidance now reflects the release of Biodiversity Metric 3.1 and associated guidance. (Previous New Forest District Council guidance required the Beta test toolkit (Biodiversity Metric 2.0) to be used until the final version (3.1) was published). All new projects or those projects where biodiversity net gain calculations are yet to be undertaken should now use Biodiversity Metric 3.1 or the latest published version.

This document does not provide guidance on how to use the biodiversity metric. It is advised that the biodiversity net gain calculations and associated evidence is prepared by a professional, suitably qualified and experienced ecologist. The [Natural England website](https://naturalengland.org.uk) provides guidance on how to use Biodiversity Metric 3.1. available at: <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6049804846366720>

Guiding principles

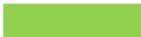
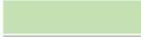
The requirement of biodiversity net gain as part of giving planning permission for development will have a significant impact on the information you need to consider when submitting a planning application. The 'Guiding Principles' for biodiversity net gain and submissions in general are set out in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Guiding Principles

Guiding Principles	
Have the right support – Accessing ecological expertise	<p>Assessing the likely ecological impacts of a development is often complex so employing a suitably qualified ecological consultant is usually cost effective and valuable. Appropriately qualified ecological consultants can be found by looking on the Chartered Institute Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM) website (http://www.cieem.net/members-directory) or by calling CIEEM on 01962 868626.</p> <p>Pre-application discussion with the Local Planning Authority will ensure all issues are considered before an application is submitted and help prevent delays. Natural England also offers a Discretionary Advice Service for prospective developers.</p>
Ensure adequate and robust baseline information is gathered	<p>Adequate survey information must be gathered before preparing detailed site layouts or masterplans and submitting a planning application. This information should then be used to inform the design of the development from the earliest stage. You should allow time and budget for the initial survey and any further protected species or habitats surveys. Ecological surveys are seasonally constrained and can only be undertaken at certain times of year, this should be factored into the development programme (See Table 2 for guidance).</p> <p>It is important that planning decisions are based on up-to-date ecological reports and survey data – Reference should be made to CIEEM's April 2019 Advice Note on the lifespan of ecological reports and surveys (https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Advice-Note.pdf). Part of your pre-application discussion will include confirmation of the surveys you will need to support your application.</p>
Apply and demonstrate use of the mitigation hierarchy	<p>Do everything possible to first avoid and then minimise impacts on biodiversity. It will be necessary to demonstrate that the mitigation hierarchy has been followed. Only as a last resort, will compensation for losses that cannot be avoided be considered. If compensating for losses within the development footprint is not possible or does not generate the most benefits for nature conservation, then offset biodiversity losses by gains elsewhere. Remember, biodiversity net gain is <u>additional</u> to any requirement for mitigation/compensation measures which may be necessary – for example to mitigate impacts on internationally important nature conservation sites.</p>
Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset elsewhere	<p>Irreplaceable habitat is a habitat that, once lost, cannot be recreated elsewhere within a reasonable timeframe. Ancient woodland is an example of an irreplaceable habitat. Where irreplaceable habitat is at risk of loss or deterioration after applying the mitigation hierarchy, any losses of this habitat cannot be offset to achieve biodiversity net gain.</p>

Table 2: Guideline Survey Timetable

Type of Survey	Jan	Feb	March	April	May	June	July	Aug	Sept	Oct	Nov	Dec
Habitats												
Phase 1 habitat survey	Less effective	Less effective	Less effective	Optimum	Less effective	Less effective						
Bats												
Summer roost/ activity survey	Less effective	Less effective	Less effective	Less effective	Optimum	Optimum	Optimum	Optimum	Optimum	Less effective	Less effective	Less effective
Hibernation roost survey	Optimum	Optimum	Less effective	Optimum								
Swarming survey	Less effective	Optimum	Optimum	Optimum	Less effective							
Badger												
Activity survey	Optimum	Optimum	Optimum	Optimum	Less effective	Less effective	Less effective	Less effective	Optimum	Optimum	Optimum	Optimum
Bait marking survey	Less effective	Optimum	Optimum	Optimum	Less effective							
Birds												
Breeding bird survey	Less effective	Less effective	Less effective	Optimum	Optimum	Optimum	Optimum	Optimum	Less effective	Less effective	Less effective	Less effective
Wintering bird survey	Optimum	Optimum	Less effective	Optimum								
Dormice												
Breeding survey (nest tubes)	Less effective	Less effective	Less effective	Less effective	Optimum	Less effective	Less effective	Optimum	Optimum	Less effective	Less effective	Less effective
Great crested newts												
Breeding pond surveys	Less effective	Less effective	Less effective	Optimum	Optimum	Optimum	Optimum	Less effective				
Reptiles												
Population survey	Less effective	Less effective	Less effective	Less effective	Optimum	Optimum	Less effective	Less effective	Less effective	Optimum	Less effective	Less effective
Water vole												
Activity survey	Less effective	Less effective	Less effective	Optimum	Optimum	Optimum	Optimum	Optimum	Optimum	Less effective	Less effective	Less effective
Otter												
Activity survey	Optimum											
White clawed crayfish												
Activity survey	Less effective	Less effective	Less effective	Optimum	Less effective	Less effective	Optimum	Optimum	Optimum	Optimum	Less effective	Less effective

 Optimum survey time
 Less effective / sub-optimal survey time
 Outside survey season

What ecological information is required to support a planning application?

The information you will need to submit with your planning application will vary by site and scale of development. Guidance is provided as to whether a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) or Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) is appropriate to support an application.

- **Biodiversity Checklists** – A biodiversity checklist is to be completed for ALL applications. There is a separate checklist for [Full applications](#) and [Householder applications](#). These are provided in Appendix A and Appendix B of this advice note respectively. If further ecological considerations are shown to be required, then a PEA or EclA (supported by appropriate survey effort) should be submitted to support the application (noting the comment in **bold** below).
- **Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)** – PEAs provide an initial assessment of any ecological constraints and opportunities relevant to a proposed development and consist of a desktop study and a site survey to identify and map features of ecological value. Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal are published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)³. Where the PEA process identifies potential ecological constraints (such as the presence of protected species), further surveys and assessment are likely to be necessary. The PEA will usually contain some initial recommendations as to how the potential ecological impacts of a proposal might be avoided or mitigated, and where biodiversity enhancements could be delivered. **A PEA is not a substitute for Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) described below and are not suitable to support a planning application unless no significant ecological constraints have been identified.**
- **Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA)** - For development where potentially significant ecological effects are likely to arise from proposals, an EclA will be required. Typically, the EclA report prepared for planning submission will collate the baseline information gathered during the PEA and/or other detailed surveys. It will value existing ecological features, consider the potential effects of development and assess any residual ecological impacts after mitigation (both adverse and beneficial). In addition to any mitigation required, ecological enhancements to be provided should be set out in detail. The Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment published by CIEEM in 2018 (updated 2019) should be adhered to⁴.

³ CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

⁴ CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester

Delivering biodiversity net gain ('major applications')

For 'major' applications the planning application should also be supported by Natural England Biodiversity Metric calculations, details are provided below:

- **Natural England Metric Net Gain Calculations (Biodiversity Report)**
 - **Baseline** - Should include full details of the ecological baseline including detailed justifications for the choice of habitat types (Using UKHabs Classification System⁵), distinctiveness and condition. Condition sheets should be submitted for each habitat type where applicable. An interim score of Fairly Poor or Fairly Good should only be used in special circumstances where a habitat does not fit the standard outcome of Good, Moderate or Poor. Justification for allocating an interim condition score must be provided within the condition assessment proforma and within the Biodiversity Metric 3.1 tool assessors comments. Any assumptions made should be presented and likewise justified. A plan should clearly illustrate the areas covered by each of the existing habitat types and the area/length in hectares/km of each habitat type.
 - **Proposed** - A proposed habitats plan, for example taken from the site layout plan, illustrative masterplan, green infrastructure plan or landscape plan should also be included. The plan should detail what existing habitats are to be retained and enhanced, and any new habitat types that will be created. The plan should ensure that each habitat type is identified, and the area/length of each habitat type should be quantified in hectares/km. In line with changes made in 3.1 this should instead comprise 'urban vegetated gardens' and 'urban developed land sealed surface'. A standard split of 70/30 developed land / garden should be used.
 - **Reporting** – The report should demonstrate how each of the BNG good practice principles have been applied and the mitigation hierarchy adhered to. A copy of the Metric (i.e. the completed spreadsheet) should be submitted. A summary is not sufficient and will not be accepted. The information in the metric should correspond directly to the Biodiversity Report and the Proposed Habitats Plan. An example BNG design stage report template is provided in CIEEM's publication 'Biodiversity Net Gain Report & Audit Templates' Guidance⁶.

⁵ Phase 1 habitats can be translated into the new system using online resources

⁶ CIEEM (2021). Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Audit Templates Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester, UK.

Key Points to Consider	
Habitat creation	The choice of habitats will depend on various site-specific factors including aspect, drainage, soil conditions and use. Proposals need to be realistic and achievable. Ensure (and where appropriate evidence) that these factors have been taken into account. Likewise, it's important to consider long term maintenance requirements of habitats and site uses. Successful long-term provision may favour provision of robust habitats which are easy to maintain such as broadleaved woodland, community orchards, scrub, hedgerows, waterbodies and grasslands (low to moderate distinctiveness). Grasslands could incorporate wildflowers which grow well in lawns and/or are robust such as lady's bedstraw, rough hawkbit, oxeye daisy, bird's-foot-trefoil, cowslip, selfheal, meadow buttercup, black knapweed sorrel, yarrow and red clover. Habitat creation in advance of impacts occurring is encouraged and in appropriate circumstances increases the Biodiversity Units generated for a given area. It is unlikely that high or very high distinctiveness habitats will be deliverable. Should these be proposed (almost only where existing high-quality habitats can be further enhanced), detailed justification and management prescriptions should be provided to give confidence these can be secured in the long-term.
Target condition	Ensure that the target condition is realistic given the site uses, this is particularly relevant where a BNG uplift has been incorporated into the ANRG, which, by its nature and design is intended to be used for recreation including dog walking and informal 'kick about' space. Consequently, these habitats would be unlikely to be of any greater than moderate condition.

- **Additionality** - Where areas of the same site are being utilised for other activities e.g. ANRG, it will be necessary to demonstrate how the biodiversity net gains are additional to other provisions which would be made irrespective of the biodiversity net gain requirement. Natural England and Defra are currently looking at 'additionality' or 'stacking' and a position is expected to be set out in the forthcoming Defra consultation on BNG secondary legislation. The current position is that it is possible to use sites delivering other mitigation to also deliver BNG, on the basis that:
 - Delivery of the non-BNG outcomes via habitat creation/enhancement could contribute up to a point equivalent to no net loss of BNG but not beyond.
 - To achieve the required biodiversity unit uplift beyond no net loss (and into net gain) to meet the BNG requirement, there must be habitat provision, additional habitat features or enhancement beyond the minimum requirements of other non-BNG provisions e.g. ANRG.
 - Good practice would be to illustrate BNG contributions derived from incidental non-BNG mitigation and specific BNG measures using a separate accounting line for each source in the interests of transparency

Examples of how this has been addressed on other applications can be provided, discussed and you are encouraged to liaise with the NFDC Ecologist to agree an appropriate way of addressing additionality in the absence of a wider agreed approach for practitioners.

- **Further enhancements** - Whilst other ecological enhancements, not related to habitats do not get factored into the biodiversity metric, these should still be provided and can be included within the Biodiversity Report. Such measures could include bird boxes, bat boxes, gaps in close board fences for hedgehogs, invertebrate bricks e.g. bee bricks, hibernacula and deadwood features. It is the expectation of NFDC that one built in enhancement

feature be provided per dwelling (from bird nesting, bat roosting or bee brick) – some dwellings may have more than one feature, others may not have any and the most suitable locations should be identified by the project ecologist.

- **BNG Implementation and Delivery** – Details should be provided for how the masterplan or design concept will be delivered. This should include drawings, for example detailed landscape planting schedules, management proposals and/or a construction handover checklist or timetable.
- **Management and Monitoring** - A Biodiversity Monitoring and Management Plan (MMP) will be critical to the successful delivery and long-term (covering a minimum 30 years) provision of BNG. The BNG MMP should provide detailed management and maintenance information for years 1-5 and broader management aims for the lifetime of the BNG commitment and be updated at appropriate intervals with sufficient detail. It will be necessary to secure the long-term management and monitoring of BNG through any planning permission. Monitoring should utilise the same version of the metric as was utilised within the planning application. In outline, the monitoring and management plan should include:
 - Methods for delivering BNG;
 - Roles, responsibilities and competency requirements for delivering BNG – during and after construction;
 - Detail legal, financial and other resource requirements for delivery of BNG;
 - Description of the habitats to be managed;
 - Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management;
 - Clear timed and measurable ‘SMART’ objectives in the short, medium and long-term for BNG - Detail objectives for all habitats (target condition) and define key indicators to measure success;
 - Define appropriate management options and actions for achieving aims and objectives;
 - A commitment to adaptive management in response to monitoring to secure the intended biodiversity outcomes;
 - Preparation of a work schedule;
 - Details for a formal review process when objectives are not fully reached;
 - Key milestones for reviewing the monitoring;
 - Establish a standard format for collection of monitoring data to make it repeatable and consistent including methods, frequency and timing. The number of monitoring assessments required will depend on the habitat type and extent, but a typical schedule for a medium sized habitat creation project might require surveys and reports preparing for years 2, 5, 10, 20 and 30;
 - Identify and define set monitoring points (representing the key habitats on site) where photographs can be taken as part of monitoring to record the status of habitats on site; and
 - Detail reporting procedures.

The measures to deliver biodiversity net gain will normally be agreed prior to the issue of a planning permission. Planning conditions or a legal agreement will be used to ensure the agreed measures are implemented and maintained for a period of no less than 30 years after the development is completed.

Species

Target species	Within landscaped areas	Within building fabric / building mounted
Birds	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Establish native planting particularly berry and seed producing trees and shrubs Provision of tree / wall mounted bird nest boxes e.g. Schwegler 1B (or similar) 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> 
Bats	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Bat friendly planting (BCT Guidance here) Provision of bat boxes (Schwegler type or similar – made from woodcrete for longevity) at a minimum height of 3m in an open sunny position. 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Incorporate bat roosting features into the building fabric e.g. bat boxes at least 4-5m above the ground, close to hedge and tree lines, sheltered from strong winds and exposed to sun for part of the day (usually S/SW).
Hedgehog	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Consider post and rail fencing and/or hedgerow planting in place of close board fencing. Where close board fencing is required provide hedgehog gaps (13cmx13cm) in gravel boards. 	

Target species	Within landscaped areas	Within building fabric / building mounted
Invertebrates	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Create biodiverse roofs on new buildings • Create mosaic of scrub, hedges, grassland • Create pond(s) with shallow sides • Retain and create deadwood habitats • Plant trees with early spring blossom such as hawthorn, blackthorn and willow • Create 'insect hotels' • Plant species given in the Royal Horticultural Societies (RHS) "Perfect for Pollinators" list 	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provide bee bricks built into building fabric. These should be located on a south facing elevation, in a warm sunny spot. They need to be placed at least 1 metre from ground level with no upward height limit. 

Further reading and advice:

Natural England Biodiversity Metric 3.1: [The Biodiversity Metric 3.1 - JP039 \(nepubprod.appspot.com\)](https://nepubprod.appspot.com)

Natural England The Small Sites Metric (JP040): [The Small Sites Metric - JP040 \(naturalengland.org.uk\)](https://naturalengland.org.uk)

CIEEM Biodiversity Net Gain – Good Practice Principles for Development: <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/C776a-Biodiversity-net-gain.-Good-practice-principles-for-development.-A-practical-guide-web.pdf>

CIEEM EcIA Guidelines: <https://cieem.net/resource/guidelines-for-ecological-impact-assessment-ecia/>

CIEEM /ALGE EcIA Checklist: <https://cieem.net/resource/ecological-impact-assessment-ecia-checklist/>

CIEEM PEA Guidelines: <https://cieem.net/resource/guidance-on-preliminary-ecological-appraisal-gpea/>

[CIEEM Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Audit Templates: Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Audit Templates | CIEEM](#)

Standing advice for protected species:

- [bats, all species](#)
- [great crested newts](#)
- [badgers](#)
- [hazel or common dormice](#)
- [water voles](#)
- [otters](#)
- [wild birds](#)
- [reptiles](#)
- [protected plants](#)
- [white-clawed crayfish](#)
- [invertebrates](#)
- [freshwater fish](#)
- [natterjack toads](#)

- [ancient woodland and veteran trees](#)

Appendix A: Biodiversity Checklist (Full Application)

Biodiversity Checklist for Full Applications

Planning ref: (for office use)

Site address:

There are many legally protected sites of nature conservation importance (see Note 1) across Hampshire alongside non-statutory wildlife sites (Note 2), priority habitats (Note 3) and a wide range of legally protected and other notable species (Note 4). Developments can adversely affect these and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are legally required by Government to consider the conservation of biodiversity when determining a planning application. Government planning policies for biodiversity are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), while the Local Authority's local plan will set out how they address these requirements in local policy terms. LPAs need to be able to understand what the potential impacts of the development might be and if there are impacts on biodiversity, how these will be avoided, mitigated, or compensated.

This Checklist will help you work out if your proposal is likely to affect biodiversity, what additional information you will need to provide to support your application and how to get that information.

Guidance for applicants

If your answers to the questions in **Sections 1, 2** and/or **3** identify that your project may potentially have an adverse impact on designated sites, priority or other important habitats or legally protected or notable species then you will need to submit a suitable report such as a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Ecological Impact Assessment or species-specific survey which demonstrates the following:

- Information about the sites, species, habitats or features that could be affected (such as location, size, abundance, importance)
- Likely impacts of your development on habitats, sites or species identified
- How alternative designs and locations have been considered
- How adverse impacts will be avoided
- How any unavoidable impacts will be mitigated (reduced) (*see note 6*)
- How impacts that cannot be avoided or mitigated will be compensated (*see note 6*)
- Any proposals for enhancement of biodiversity

Where more targeted and specific reports are necessary (for example bat surveys), these must:

- Be undertaken by an appropriately qualified and experienced person
- Be of appropriate scope and detail (i.e. be carried out to established standards)
- Be conducted at an appropriate time of year, in suitable weather conditions and using approved methodologies.

Reports may not be required where applicants are able to provide pre-application correspondence from Natural England, the Local Authority ecologist or your ecological adviser that confirms that they are satisfied that the proposal will not have an adverse impact on any features identified in Sections 1, 2 or 3. Your local authority ecologist contact details are given on page 5.

The application may not be validated if any of the information submitted proves to be inadequate. If validated and the information is subsequently found not to fully address any potential impacts then further information may be required during the course of any planning application, for instance if any of the information you have provided needs clarification, or if other potential impacts are identified. **If sufficient information on ecological issues is not provided by the time the application needs to be determined, the application may be refused. This can include information (surveys and data searches) considered out of date.**

It is strongly advised that you consider biodiversity at the **earliest** possible stage in your project as there are seasonal constraints to much of the survey work that may be needed to support your application.

For further advice on competent ecologists who can undertake specialist survey work, please see the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management <http://www.cieem.net> in the first instance.

Please let us know if this checklist has been completed or checked by a qualified ecologist;
YES/NO

SECTION 1 – Legally protected sites for nature conservation

<p>Please answer Yes or No to the following question. If you answer ‘YES’, it is possible that the development could have an impact on the designated site. (see note 5). Please provide further information with your application.</p>	<p>YES ✓ NO X</p>
<p>Does the application lie within:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 2km of a SAC, SPA or Ramsar site • An SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) and does it correspond to any of the development types listed in the results. <p>See Note 1 and http://magic.defra.gov.uk/Metadata_for_magic/SSSI%20IRZ%20User%20Guidance%20MAGIC.pdf for guidance on the interpretation and use of the Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest</p>	

SECTION 2 – Habitats and locally designated sites

<p>Please answer ALL questions Yes or No</p> <p><i>Many of the features described below may support a Priority Habitat. See <u>note 3</u> for further information on identifying these.</i></p> <p>If you have answered ‘YES’, is it possible that the development may have an impact on the designated site or habitat? Please PROVIDE further information if that is the case</p>	<p>YES ✓ NO X</p>
<p>Are any of the following present on or within 100m of the application site?</p>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) See Note 2</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Native woodland including ancient semi-natural and <u>replanted</u> woodlands</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Veteran (particularly old / large) trees</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Water courses (rivers or streams)</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Lakes or ponds</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Wetlands or marshes</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Unimproved/semi-improved species-rich grassland</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Arable field margins supporting assemblages of rare arable plants</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Heathland/acid grassland/mire/scrub</i> 	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Coastal grassland/saltmarsh/shingle/mudflats</i> 	

- Hedgerows supporting mainly native species

The [Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre](#) can provide detailed maps showing boundaries of all site designations and Priority habitats.

Section 3 – Legally protected and other notable species

PROPOSAL DETAILS Please answer ALL questions Yes or No by marking against each feature	YES ✓ NO ✗	If you have ticked 'YES' to any of these, you will need to consider potential impacts to these species.	Survey attached?
3.1 Will the proposal affect any of the following features / structures? (see note 2 and note 7)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Buildings or structures exhibiting features likely to support bat roosts or swift nests e.g. gaps/crevices /cracks/voids within roofs or building materials such as hanging tiles, soffits, cladding etc. ▪ Underground structures (e.g. cellars, caves, mines) ▪ Bridges or similar structures ▪ Structures where there is known current or historic bat use 		Bats and bat roosts Swift nests	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Agricultural buildings particularly of traditional brick, timber or stone construction and/or with exposed timber beams greater than c.20cm thick. 		Bats and bat roosts Barn owl/Little owl Nesting birds	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Other large agricultural buildings 		Barn owls/Little owl	
3.2 Will the proposal affect trees with any of the following features? (see note 2)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Old and veteran trees or other trees with a circumference greater than 1m at chest height</i> 		Bats and bat roosts Nesting birds	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Trees exhibiting, or likely to exhibit holes, cracks, splits, cavities etc. and/or heavy vegetation</i> 		Other Notable species	
3.3. Will the proposals affect any of the following wetland features (note 2)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ streams, rivers or lakes on or within 25m of the application site that would be affected (including their banks and adjacent habitat) by the development? 		Bat foraging habitat Otters, Water vole White-clawed crayfish Nesting birds Other Notable species	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ponds within 100m, particularly any that are well-connected to the application site by e.g. hedges, ditches, woodland, grassland or field boundaries? 		Amphibians (particularly with respect to great crested newts)	
3.4 Will the proposals affect any of the following features (note 2)			

PROPOSAL DETAILS Please answer ALL questions Yes or No by marking against each feature	YES ✓ NO X	If you have ticked 'YES' to any of these, you will need to consider potential impacts to these species.	Survey attached?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>deciduous woodland?</i> 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>field hedgerows over 1m tall and over 0.5m thick?</i> 		Bat foraging habitat Dormice Nesting birds Badger Reptiles Other Notable species	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>areas of scrub well-connected to woodland or hedgerows?</i> 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ species-rich meadows or grassland on or directly adjacent to the site? 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ mature or overgrown gardens, rough grassland, derelict/brownfield land, railway land or allotments 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ coastal grasslands/arable 		Waders and Wildfowl feeding/roost sites	

Notes

Note 1

Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) is a GIS tool developed by Natural England to make a rapid initial assessment of the potential risks to SSSIs posed by development proposals. They define zones around each SSSI which reflect the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified and indicate the types of development proposal which could potentially have adverse impacts. The SSSI IRZ Dataset can be downloaded from the [Natural England Open Data Geoportal](https://open.data.naturalengland.org.uk/). It is also available to view on www.magic.gov.uk

SSSI = Site of Special Scientific Interest, designated and protected under UK law.;
<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/>

SAC = Special Area of Conservation and SPA = Special Protection Area. These are designated and protected under EU law. See <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1527> They will also be designated as SSSI

Ramsar site = internationally important wetland, designated under the Ramsar Convention. These sites may also be SPAs / SACs and SSSIs. See <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1527> for more information.

You can find out if your application site is on or near any of these sites from www.magic.gov.uk or the LPA's Local Plan Proposals Map, or from the [Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre](http://www.hampshire.gov.uk/biodiversity)

Note 2

[SINC – Site of Importance for Nature Conservation](http://www.magic.gov.uk). These are not legally protected, but are identified in planning policy as being of importance for biodiversity and are considered during the planning process.

The LPA's Local Plan Proposals Map may identify the location of any SINC's but more definitive and up-to-date maps are available from the [Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre](http://www.hampshire.gov.uk/biodiversity)

Note 3

Priority Habitats are also called [Habitats of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 NERC Act 2006](http://www.magic.gov.uk). They comprise natural or semi-natural habitats that have been identified as being at risk (in that they are rare or in decline) or are important for certain key species of plant or animal. Areas of designated Ancient Woodland and some Priority Habitats can be found on www.magic.gov.uk. More definitive and up-to-date maps of Priority habitats are available from the [Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre](http://www.hampshire.gov.uk/biodiversity)

Note 4

Notable species include species protected under European legislation and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); species listed under; S41 of the Natural & Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (Priority species); the IUCN Red List of Threatened Species; the Birds of Conservation Concern Red list; and species listed as being nationally, county, or vice-county rare or scarce.

The [Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre](#) holds data on the known locations of over 1million protected and notable species records. However absence of a record does not mean absence of a species.

Note 5

Effects could be DIRECT, such as destruction, removal or modification, or INDIRECT through disturbance such as run-off, noise, dust, lighting or increased recreational use.

Note 6

Avoidance = measures taken to avoid impacts – should be the first consideration; Mitigation = measures which make unavoidable impacts less severe; Compensation = measures which counterbalance remaining impacts, resulting in an overall no net loss of biodiversity. (NB 'Mitigation' as a general term, or a 'mitigation strategy' is often used to cover all these processes).

Note 7

The types of feature highlighted in this Checklist have a higher likelihood of supporting bats and is taken from the list produced by the Bat Conservation Trust in their good practice survey guidelines (see <http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/guidanceforprofessionals.html>) .However, it is important to recognise that many buildings that do not meet these criteria may also support bats.

Important: this checklist cannot include reference to *all* protected or notable species in *all* circumstances where they may be affected. Legislation relating to protected species does apply in all circumstances and it is the responsibility of the developer to ensure that the species and their habitats are not impacted as a result of development.

If protected species are found during the course of development, work should be halted and advice sought from Natural England, the local authority ecologist or a qualified private ecologist.

Contacts

If you are unsure about any of these questions, please contact us on 02380285345 or by email at: planning@nfdc.gov.uk

For office use:

1	Have ALL questions on ALL sections been completed?	Y / N	If YES, go to 2	If NO, application should not be validated
2	Have any questions been answered 'Yes'?	Y / N	If YES, go to 3	If NO, application can be validated. Evidence that a data search has been carried out by the applicant or their adviser would be helpful at this point.
3	Does the applicant identify likely impacts and address potential issues in any comments made on the checklist?	Y / N	If YES, application can be validated	If NO, go to 4
4	Has a separate statement, report or other supporting information been submitted to address potential impacts?	Y / N	If YES, application can be validated	If NO, application should not be validated

Appendix B: Biodiversity Checklist (Householder Application)

Planning ref: (for office use)

Biodiversity Checklist for Householder Applications

Site address:

There are many legally protected sites of nature conservation importance (see Note 1) across Hampshire alongside non-statutory wildlife sites (Note 2), priority habitats (Note 3) and a wide range of legally protected and other notable species (Note 4). Developments can adversely affect these and Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are legally required by Government to consider the conservation of biodiversity when determining a planning application. Government planning policies for biodiversity are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), while the Local Authority's local plan will set out how they address these requirements in local policy terms. LPAs need to be able to understand what the potential impacts of the development might be and if there are impacts on biodiversity, how these will be avoided, mitigated, or compensated.

This Checklist will help you work out if your proposal is likely to affect biodiversity, what additional information you will need to provide to support your application and how to get that information.

Guidance for applicants

If your answers to the questions in **Sections 1** and/or **2** identify that your project may potentially have an adverse impact on designated sites, priority or other notable habitats or legally protected or notable species then you will need to submit a suitable report such as a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Ecological Impact Assessment or species-specific survey which demonstrates the following:

- Information about the sites, species, habitats or features that could be affected (such as location, size, abundance, importance)
- Likely impacts of your development on habitats, sites or species identified
- How alternative designs and locations have been considered
- How adverse impacts will be avoided
- How any unavoidable impacts will be mitigated (reduced) (*see note 6*)
- How impacts that cannot be avoided or mitigated will be compensated (*see note 6*)
- Any proposals for enhancements of biodiversity

Where more targeted and specific reports are necessary (for example bat surveys), these must:

- Be undertaken by an appropriately qualified and experienced person
- Be of appropriate scope and detail (i.e. be carried out to established standards)
- Be conducted at an appropriate time of year, in suitable weather conditions and using approved methodologies.

Reports may not be required where applicants are able to provide pre-application correspondence from Natural England, the Local Authority ecologist or your ecological adviser that confirms that they are satisfied that the proposal will not have an adverse impact on any features identified in Sections 1, or 2. Your local authority ecologist contact details are given on page 5.

The application may not be validated if any of the information submitted proves to be inadequate. If validated and the information is subsequently found not to fully address any potential impacts then further information may be required during the course of any planning application, for instance if any of the information you have provided needs clarification, or if other potential impacts are identified. **If sufficient information on ecological issues is not provided by the time the application needs to be determined, the application may be refused. This can include information (surveys and data searches) considered out of date.**

It is strongly advised that you consider biodiversity at the **earliest** possible stage in your project as there are seasonal constraints to much of the survey work that may be needed to support your application.

For further advice on competent ecologists that can undertake specialist survey work, please see the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management <http://www.cieem.net> in the first instance.

Please let us know if this checklist has been completed or checked by a qualified ecologist;
YES/NO

SECTION 1 – Designated Sites and Habitats

Please answer ALL questions Yes or No If you have answered ' YES ' is it possible that the development could have an impact on the identified site? (<i>see note</i>) Please provide further information***	YES/ NO X
1.1 Is the application site on or within 50m of a SSSI, SAC, SPA or Ramsar site? (<i>see note 1</i>)	
1.2 Are any of the following present on or within 50m of the application site? <i>Please see <u>note 2 & 3</u> for further information on identifying these.</i>	
a) Site of Importance for Nature Conservation	
b) Native woodland including ancient semi-natural <u>and replanted</u> woodland	
c) Veteran (particularly old / large) trees	
d) Water courses (rivers or streams)	
e) Lakes or ponds	
f) Wetlands or marshes	
g) Species-rich meadow / grassland	
h) Heathland/acid grassland/mire/scrub	
i) Coastal grassland/saltmarsh/shingle/mudflats	
j) Hedgerows supporting mainly native species	

*** This may simply be a brief explanation stating that the identified feature is outside the development footprint and boundaries, or it may be a more formal biodiversity assessment or survey report. Please note that submitted information will be reviewed by the Planning Authority's ecological advisor and you may be asked for further clarification if necessary either prior to validation or during the application process.

Data on site designations, habitats and species can be obtained from the [Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre](#)

Section 2 – Legally protected and other notable species

PROPOSAL DETAILS Please answer ALL questions Yes or No by marking against each feature	YES v NO X	If you have ticked 'YES' to any of these, you will need to consider potential impacts to the following:	Survey attached?
3.1 Will the proposal affect any of the following features / structures? (see note 5 and note 7)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ Buildings or structures exhibiting features likely to offer bat roosting potential e.g. gaps/crevices/cracks within building materials; hanging tiles, timber weatherboarding/cladding; roof voids; etc. ▪ Underground structures (e.g cellars, caves, mines) ▪ Structures where there is known current or historic bat use 		Bats and bat roosts	
3.2 Will the proposal affect trees with any of the following features? (see notes 4, 5 and 7)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Old and veteran trees or other trees with a circumference greater than 1m at chest height</i> 		Bats and bat roosts Nesting birds	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>Trees exhibiting, or likely to exhibit holes, cracks, splits, cavities etc. and/or heavy vegetation</i> 		Other Notable species	
3.3. Will the proposals affect any of the following wetland features (notes 4 and 5)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ streams, rivers or lakes on or within 25m of the application site that would be affected (including their banks and adjacent habitat) by the development? 		Bat foraging habitat Otters, Water vole White-clawed crayfish Nesting birds Other Notable species	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ ponds within 100m, particularly any that are well-connected to the application site by hedgerows, ditches, woodland, grassland or field boundaries? 		Amphibians (particularly with respect to great crested newts)	
3.4 Will the proposals affect any of the following features (notes 4 and 5)			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>deciduous (i.e. not mainly conifer) woodland?</i> 		Bat foraging habitat Dormice Nesting birds Badger	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>field hedgerows over 1m tall and over 0.5m thick?</i> 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ <i>areas of scrub well-connected to woodland or hedgerows?</i> 			

PROPOSAL DETAILS Please answer ALL questions Yes or No by marking against each feature	YES ✓ NO X	If you have ticked ' YES ' to any of these, you will need to consider potential impacts to the following:	Survey attached?
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ species-rich meadows or grassland on or directly adjacent to the site? 		Reptiles Other Notable species	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ mature or overgrown gardens, rough grassland, derelict/brownfield land, railway land or allotments 			
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> ▪ coastal grasslands/arable 		Brent Geese & wader feeding/roost sites	

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Notes

Note 1

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