Biodiversity Checklist for Householder Applications

Planning Authority ref: (for office use)

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There are numerous legally protected sites of nature conservation interest across Hampshire. Hampshire also supports a wide range of legally protected species and non-statutory important sites. Developments can adversely affect these and in many cases Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) are **legally required** to address potential impacts to these. LPAs are required by the 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 / core strategy will set out how they address these requirements in local policy terms. In order to meet these requirements, 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 or mitigated.

This Checklist has been designed to help you work out if your proposal is likely to affect biodiversity, and if so, help you understand 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 you will need to submit a Biodiversity Statement or other suitable report 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 in this Checklist
- How alternative designs and locations have been considered
- How adverse impacts will be avoided
- How any unavoidable impacts will be mitigated or reduced (*see note 4*)
- How impacts that cannot be avoided or mitigated will be compensated (*see note 4*)
- 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 recognised methodologies.

Reports may not be required where applicants are able to provide pre-application correspondence from Natural England, the Local Authority or their 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.

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.

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.

SECTION 1 – Sites and Habitats

PROPOSAL DETAILS Please answer ALL questions **Yes** or **No** by marking the appropriate box against each question	**YES**	**NO**	If you have answered **'YES'** to any of these, is it likely that the development would have an impact on the identified site? (*see note 2*) Please explain why / why not, or state if further information is provided (see below***)
1.1 Is the application site on or within 50m of a SSSI, SAC, SPA or Ramsar site? (*see note 1*)		**X**	
1.2 Are any of the following present on or within 50m of the application site? ***NB:*** *If Yes, there may be a* ***SINC**** *,* ***Priority Habitat**** *or other important feature within or adjacent to the application site – please see note 3 for further information on identifying these.*			
a) Broad-leaved woodland		**X**	
b) Veteran (particularly old / large) trees		**X**	
c) Water courses (rivers or streams)		**X**	
d) Lakes or ponds		**X**	
e) Wetlands or marshes		**X**	
f) Flower-rich meadow / grassland		**X**	
g) Water meadow		**X**	
h) Heathland		**X**	
i) Mature hedgerow		**X**	

* SINC – Site of Importance for Nature Conservation. These are not legally protected, but are identified in the LPA's Local Plan as being of importance for biodiversity and are considered during the planning process – see http://www3.hants.gov.uk/biodiversity/hampshire/sincs.htm
** Priority Habitat – natural or semi-natural habitats that have been identified as being at risk (in that they are rare or in decline) or that are important for certain key species of plant or animal – see http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/biodiversity/protectandmanage/prioritylist.aspx

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

Section 2 - Species

PROPOSAL DETAILS Please answer ALL questions **Yes** or **No** by marking the appropriate box against each question	**YES**	**NO**	If you have ticked **'YES'** to any of these, you will need to consider potential impacts to the following:	**Survey attached?**
2.1 Will the proposed works affect **existing buildings** with **ANY** of the following features? (*see note 2*)				
a) *buildings with hanging tiles (see note 5), timber cladding / weatherboarding where the building is within 200m of woodland or water*		X	▪ Bats and bat roosts	
b) *pre-1960 buildings or structures within 200m of woodland and/or water*		X		
c) *pre-1914 buildings or structures within 400m of woodland and/or water*		X		
d) *pre-1914 buildings with gable ends, traditional clay tile roofs or slate roofs, hanging tiles or weatherboarding regardless of location*		X		
e) *structures where there is known current or historic bat use*		X		
2.2 Will the proposal affect trees with ANY of the following features? (see *note 2*)				
a) *old and veteran trees*		X	▪ Bats and bat roosts ▪ Nesting birds	
b) *trees with obvious holes, cracks, cavities or heavy vegetation*		X		
c) *trees with a circumference greater than 1m at chest height*		X		
2.3 Are there 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?		X	▪ Bat foraging habitat ▪ Otters ▪ Water vole ▪ White-clawed crayfish	
2.4 Will the proposals affect (see *note 2*) any of the following features?				
a) *deciduous (i.e. not mainly conifer) woodland?*		X	▪ Bat foraging habitat ▪ Dormice ▪ Breeding birds ▪ Badger	
b) *field hedgerows over 1m tall and over 0.5m thick?*		X		
c) *areas of scrub well-connected to woodland or hedgerows?*		X		
2.5 Is the proposal within 200m of a pond, where the surface area of the pond, when water is at its highest level (excluding flood events), is 225m^2 (c.15m x 15m)?		X	▪ Amphibians (particularly with respect to great crested newts)	
2.6 Will the proposal affect mature/overgrown gardens over 0.25ha, or any rough grassland, derelict/brownfield land, railway land or allotments? (see *note 2*)		X	▪ Reptiles ▪ Breeding birds	
2.7 Will the proposal affect flower-rich meadows or grassland on or directly adjacent to the site? (see *note 2*)		X	▪ Breeding birds	

Notes

- ***Note 1***

You can find out if your application site is on or near any of these sites from www.natureonthemap.org.uk, www.magic.gov.uk or the LPA's Local Plan Proposals Map for your local planning authority.
SSSI = Site of Special Scientific Interest (designated and protected under UK law); SAC = Special Area of Conservation; SPA = Special Protection Area (these are designated and protected under EU law and are also SSSIs); Ramsar site = internationally important wetland, designated under the Ramsar Convention – these will also be SPAs / SACs and SSSIs. See http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/conservation/designatedareas/default.aspx for more information.

- ***Note 2***

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 3***

Areas of designated Ancient Woodland and some Priority Habitats can be found on www.magic.gov.uk. The LPA's Local Plan Proposals Map for your local planning authority may identify the location of any SINCs. Ordnance survey maps may also help.

- ***Note 4***

Avoidance = measures taken to avoid impacts – should be the first considerations; 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 5 – a note on hanging tiles.***

This checklist, where relating to potential impacts on **bats**, is adapted from the Bat Conservation Trust's guidelines (see http://www.bats.org.uk/pages/guidanceforprofessionals.html) on where bats might reasonably be likely to be found. However bats can be found in other locations, types or areas of buildings. It is particularly important to note that where a building has **hanging tiles** but is not within 200m of woodland or water, there is still potentially a reasonable likelihood of bats being present and a survey may be required in situations other than those specifically identified in this checklist.

Important: this checklist can not include *all* protected species and *all* circumstances where they may be affected. Legislation relating to protected species applies in all circumstances and it is the responsibility of the developer to ensure that protected species and 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 or a qualified ecologist.

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
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

If you are unsure about any of these, please call the Hampshire County Council Development and Biodiversity team (part of the Strategic Environmental Delivery Group) on 01962 832313

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