

Proposed Modification: Policy ENV2

Policy ENV2: Biodiversity

~~Major~~ All development proposals will be expected to incorporate features to encourage biodiversity where appropriate, and where possible enhance existing features of nature conservation value within and around the development.

Habitat and species surveys and associated reports will be required to accompany planning applications which may affect the areas listed below ~~above~~ or sites showing likely ecological value based on past ecological surveys.

Hierarchy of Biodiversity Sites

To ensure a net gain in biodiversity, the following areas will be conserved and enhanced where possible and the council will support their designation and management:

1. Nationally designated sites:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

SSSI will receive the highest level of protection for habitat conservation value ~~due to their national importance~~ in line with national legislation, policy and guidance.

2. National Planning Policy Framework sites:

- Ancient woodland, aged or veteran trees

Planning permission will not be granted for development that results in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss. A buffer zone between ~~new~~ development and ancient woodland will be required in line with Natural England Standing Advice.

3. Locally designated sites and habitats and species outside designated sites:

- Local Nature Reserves
- Sites of Nature Conservation Importance
- Nature Improvement Areas
- ~~Other sites, including Priority Habitat areas~~ Habitats of Principle Importance identified in S41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Biodiversity Action Plans and mapped ~~as~~ within Biodiversity Opportunity Areas
- ~~sites~~ Where Protected Species are present
- ~~sites~~ Where Species of Principal Importance are present, as identified in S41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

Proposals which would result in significant harm to biodiversity will be refused unless:

- i) this can be avoided by locating on an alternative site with less harmful impact; or
- ii) the harm can be adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for.

Clauses (i) and (ii) above particularly apply to, but are not restricted to, areas that contain locally designated sites, habitats and species, where development may, depending on the nature of the proposal and overall biodiversity value of the area, amount to significant harm.