

Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel DATE: 6 March 2008	Agenda Item No. 10
Title of the Report Draft Supplementary Planning Document “Conserving Walsall’s Natural Environment” Ward(s) All	
Portfolios: Councillor Adrian Andrew - Regeneration Report: The Supplementary Planning Document (SPD) “Conserving Walsall’s Natural Environment” builds on existing Unitary Development Plan policies and explains how good quality design which respects the natural environment can be achieved. The main aim of the SPD is to protect and enhance the boroughs natural environment. The SPD covers ecology, geology and trees, woodlands and hedgerows. Central to the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment is the need to define for planning applicants, the sites, species and habitats which the council expects to be protected and to ensure site surveys and impact assessments are based on sound scientific principles and their conclusions properly reflected in the design and layout of proposed development. The SPD also provides advice to applicants on the means of enhancing the borough through habitat creation and tree and shrub planting. The consultation period ran from 11 January until 22 February. Responses have been incorporated into the final draft. However, some key consultees have asked for further time to respond. It is therefore proposed to report any changes proposed at the committee. A copy of the ‘Conserving Walsall’s Natural Environment’ SPD is enclosed separately. Recommendation That the ‘Conserving Walsall’s Natural Environment’ Supplementary Planning Document is submitted to Cabinet for approval.	
Background papers: All published.	

Reason for scrutiny:

To give the Regeneration Scrutiny and Performance Panel the opportunity to consider and influence the drafting of the SPD before it is considered by Cabinet for formal adoption.

Resource and legal considerations:

The cost of producing this document, including officer time, has been met from approved resources and will be contained within existing budgets. The content of the report aims to ensure that future development across the borough will be of a higher quality whilst conserving and enhancing the natural environment, including designing in measures for adapting to climate change and making building and spaces more sustainable in the long term.

SPD has to follow strict guidelines and must conform to national, regional and local planning policy. It cannot introduce new policy areas. Once adopted the SPD will carry weight in the development control planning process. The consultation process is also has to follow guidelines.

Citizen impact:

The SPD will help to ensure that the quality of natural environment makes a positive contribution to peoples' quality of life. It will discourage poor quality development having a detrimental impact upon the borough's natural environment. Improving the quality of development within the borough will help attract investment and improve the economy of the borough.

It is also intended to be helpful to planning applicants in providing advice and information to make it easier to incorporate the natural environment into new development.

Environmental impact:

The SPD will improve the environmental quality of development across the borough in line with the other policies of the SPD. It will also address issues concerning climate change and encourage the creation of environmental sustainable developments. It will emphasise the need to protect species, habitats and earth heritage features of regional or national importance.

Performance management:

Adoption of the SPD is a priority within Regeneration Services for 2007/2008. Performance against the Local Development Scheme (LDS) is a factor in the

Council-wide Performance Assessment (CPA) and in setting the level of Planning Delivery Grant (PDG). The LDS programmes adoption by the end of March 2008. Not adopting the SPD may lead to a reduction in PDG and a poorer CPA score.

Equality Implications:

An Equality Impact Assessment (EqIA) was not considered necessary for this SPD.

Consultation:

The draft SPD has been subject to public consultation in line with the Local Development Regulations and the Statement of Community Involvement. This is described in more detail in the Statement on Consultation, which is required to accompany the SPD.

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CONSERVING WALSALL'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

**SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT
TO THE WALSALL UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN**

DRAFT FOR CABINET APPROVAL



Walsall Council

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Dudley Metropolitan Borough
Norwich City Council
Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country

CHAPTER 1: INTRODUCTION: THE PURPOSE AND STATUS OF THIS SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

- 1.1 Walsall Council expects all new development in Walsall to be designed to a high standard. In many cases this requirement will present designers with obligations and opportunities to protect, conserve and enhance the natural environment. The natural environment includes all plants and animals, the habitats where they are found and the underlying rocks, soils and landforms. The Council's Unitary Development Plan describes the ways new development should respect the natural environment. The policies apply to development of all sizes from alterations to private houses to large developments changing whole neighbourhoods.
- 1.2 Conserving Walsall's Natural Heritage provides guidance on complying with the Unitary Development Plan policies for the protection of the natural environment to ensure it is properly considered in the development control process. This guidance is written for anyone who is contemplating development of any scale which may either adversely affect trees, important species, habitats and geological features or which offers the opportunity to enhance the natural environment.
- 1.3 Walsall Council is committed to improving the local environment by securing high quality design resulting in development which respects existing natural features of value as well as restoring and extending the resource. It is vital to ensure that populations of wild plants and animals survive and flourish for future generations to enjoy and for trees and woodlands to be sustained throughout the borough. It is also important to conserve the visual quality of the natural environment for all people currently living or working in Walsall as well as for visitors and prospective investors.
- 1.4 New development brings new opportunities and it is important that development makes a positive contribution to Walsall's natural environment and does not detract from or erode it. This document has been prepared following wide consultation and is adopted as a Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). It will therefore be a material consideration in determining planning applications. Planning applications which disregard this guidance may not be granted planning permission.
- 1.5 Wildlife does not respect human administrative boundaries and this SPD has been written to complement similar SPD already adopted by Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council. Currently there is no other SPD relating to the natural environment adopted by any neighbouring authority.
- 1.6 The Unitary Development Plan policies relevant to this guidance are listed in **Annex 6**. They are key policies which address major topics within this SPD and are therefore central. There are also more peripheral policies which extend natural environment-related considerations into other areas of policy. This guidance must be read in conjunction with all policies listed in **Annex 6**.
- 1.7 This SPD is in conformity with national planning guidance, the Regional Spatial Strategy, the Unitary Development Plan and the Community Strategy. It has been subject to a Sustainability Appraisal and Screening for Strategic

Environmental Assessment (SEA). It has also been screened to determine the need for a Habitats Regulations Assessment. After consultation with Natural England, this was found to be unnecessary. Public consultation has taken place in line with the Statement of Community Involvement. A statement of the consultation undertaken, the representations received and the authority's responses to these representations can be found in the Consultation Summary Report.

- 1.8 In order to secure development that meets policy requirements, officers of the Council are available to discuss the advice in this guidance with planning applicants before they submit a planning application. This may involve discussion with an individual officer or, for more complex projects, a meeting of the Council's Development Team. The early submission of supporting information is recommended.
- 1.9 In implementing the policies covered by this guidance, the authority will consider the use of planning conditions, planning obligations or agreements and Article 4 Directives.

CHAPTER 2: BACKGROUND TO THE SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENT

SUSTAINABLE DEVELOPMENT AND CARE OF THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

- 2.1 The Council is committed to moving towards sustainable development and the conservation of the natural environment. The Council believes that the provision and maintenance of a healthy, sustainable and attractive natural environment is essential in ensuring continuing economic prosperity. Of equal importance, it also contributes to quality of life and encourages perceptions of the borough as a desirable place in which to live and invest. The Council also recognises the vital importance of conserving the diversity of the borough's natural environment together with the range of plants and animals it supports. It is not only the visible features which must be conserved but also the underlying soils, rocks, landforms and the essential natural processes which take place.
- 2.2 The Council must encourage development which is crucial to the regeneration and general well-being of the borough, both now and in the future. It is possible for all development to make a contribution to the maintenance and enhancement of the natural heritage of the area. To achieve this objective, the Council will continue to work in partnership with the development and regeneration sectors to find means of securing high quality development contributing to environmental conservation and enhancement.

NATIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.3 The Government's objectives for conservation biodiversity and geodiversity through planning are set out in Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.
- 2.4 Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9) sets out key principles for planning authorities to ensure that biodiversity and geological heritage are fully considered in the decision-making process. The accompanying ODPM Circular 06/2005: *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System* gives guidance on how the legal provisions for site and species protection and local authority duties for nature conservation, need to be taken into account. This SPD will help the Council adhere to the PPS9 principles and meet legal obligations.
- 2.5 The key principles listed in PPS9 state that planning decisions should be based on up-to-date information on biodiversity and geological resources. They should aim to maintain, restore, enhance or add to existing biodiversity and geological interest, including that on previously developed land. One of the aims of all planning decisions is to prevent harm to nature conservation interests. This means ensuring that where significant nature conservation interest is involved, alternatives have been fully considered and adequate mitigation is provided. If this has not been done, an application may be refused planning permission.
- 2.6 PPS9 and Circular 06/2005 complement national and international legislation such as the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994 (as amended), the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. EU Directives on the Conservation

- of Wild Birds (1979) and on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (1992) are also relevant.
- 2.7 In addition to the objectives described above, the Government has introduced a duty on all public authorities to conserve biodiversity in Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
 - 2.8 The Government's objectives for trees and woodlands are described in the Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests. Although not primarily a town planning document, the development planning and control system is identified as a key mechanism for implementing the Strategy.
 - 2.9 Section 197 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) states that it is the duty of the Local Planning Authority *'to ensure whenever it is appropriate that, in granting planning permission for any development, adequate provision is made by the imposition of conditions for the preservation or planting of trees'*.

REGIONAL POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.10 The West Midlands Spatial Strategy (RSS) published in January 2008 sets the regional planning policy context. Policy QE7 'Protecting, managing and enhancing the Region's Biodiversity and Nature Conservation Resources' identifies the priority nature conservation assets that are regionally important.
- 2.11 This policy also gives priority to Biodiversity Enhancement Areas (BEA). One of these designated areas extends from Cannock Chase to Sutton Park. The object is to link heathland areas and much of the eastern part of the borough is included. New development within this area, shown in Annex 7, is expected to contribute to the objectives of the BEA.
- 2.12 The creation and definition of an integrated network of green infrastructure is required in Policy QE10: 'Transforming the environment of the Black Country' with the aim of creating a Black Country Urban Park. The importance of the green network and habitat mosaic for wildlife is also described in policy CC1: 'Climate Change' which emphasises the need to maintain a network of interlinked wildlife sites both to act as a carbon sink and to increase the ability of species to adapt to climate change.
- 2.13 Policy QE4 of the RSS 'Greenery, Urban Greenspace and Public Spaces' stresses the importance of increasing the urban tree stock while Policy QE8 'Forestry and Woodlands' seeks to secure the planting of new woodlands for their economic, sustainability and community benefits. This policy also provides a presumption against the loss of existing woodlands, especially ancient woodlands.
- 2.14 Other documents which contribute to the strategic and policy context for the conservation of the natural environment are the local and national Biodiversity Action Plans. The Birmingham and Black Country Biodiversity Action Plan was adopted in 2000. The plan describes, evaluates and prescribes actions to protect and conserve species and habitats of national and regional importance. It is one of many local Biodiversity Action Plans which have been compiled across the country to ensure that the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and the England Biodiversity Strategy: 'Working with the grain of nature' are implemented locally. The Council is committed to furthering the objectives of adopted Biodiversity Action Plans at all levels.

- 2.15 The Regional Biodiversity Strategy for the West Midlands was adopted by the Regional Assembly in 2005. The Strategy identifies the main issues and opportunities relating to the region's wildlife. *Towns, Cities and Development* is a key part of the strategy which links a green and attractive environment that sustains biodiversity to the Regional Spatial Strategy objectives of encouraging urban living rather than out-migration to rural areas. Means of contributing to this strategy through the planning system include ensuring that new development supports biodiversity.
- 2.16 Work on developing and strengthening the sub-region's green infrastructure is on-going. The West Midland's Regional Assembly's Environmental Partnership published 'Green infrastructure: a prospectus for the West Midlands Region' to guide local initiatives.
- 2.17 Guidance has been issued by the UK Biodiversity Steering Group; 'Conserving Biodiversity in a changing climate'. Climate change is a serious threat to the natural environment and the principals set out in this document have been incorporated into this SPD.
- 2.18 The Black Country Geodiversity Partnership has published a Geodiversity Action Plan for the conservation of geodiversity in the Black Country.

UNITARY DEVELOPMENT PLAN POLICIES AND THE LOCAL POLICY CONTEXT

- 2.19 This SPD is designed to ensure that the Council complies with government guidance, regional policy, statutory and non-statutory obligations for the natural environment in exercising its development control function.
- 2.20 The current Unitary Development Plan policies relating to the natural environment are listed in **Annex 6** of this guidance. The key policies and the role of this guidance in their implementation are described below.

ENV19: Habitat and species protection

ENV21: Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation

- 2.21 The Council's commitment to protection and enhancement of Walsall's natural environment has resulted in a series of site designations. These policies aim to give appropriate protection to the most important nature conservation sites. These designations are described in **Chapter 5**.
- 2.22 Some of the borough's most significant habitats, species and geological features are found within the statutory sites (Special Areas of Conservation and Sites of Special Scientific Interest) but these sites contain only a fraction of the borough's natural heritage and cannot, on their own, maintain the area's overall biodiversity or geological value. The most important sites outside the statutory system are designated Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and are identified through the application of approved selection criteria and endorsed by a panel comprising representatives of Natural England, the Council, the Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country and the Black Country Geodiversity Partnership.
- 2.23 Local Nature Reserve (LNRs) is a statutory designation and sites are declared by the Council in consultation with Natural England for their nature conservation interest and their value for public education and enjoyment. All the borough's LNRs are usually SSSIs or SINCs.

- 2.24 The borough's SSSIs, SINCs and LNRs receive strong protection through policy ENV19. Other sites of lesser quality containing important wildlife habitat and geological features are identified as Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation (SLINCs). The policy ENV21 does not preclude development providing that replacement features of equivalent value are provided where sites are lost or damaged.
- 2.25 All designated sites are essential components of the borough's Green Infrastructure and form critical links in the network of green spaces and corridors stretching across the wider conurbation and linking into the surrounding countryside. **Chapter 4** gives guidance on how designated sites and their nature conservation interest should be taken account of in the development control process.
- 2.26 The process of identifying and designating sites of value for nature conservation and geology is entirely separate to the preparation of the Development Plan and the exercise of the Council's development control function.

ENV24: Wildlife corridors

- 2.27 To prevent the isolation and fragmentation of key habitats and sites, a network of wildlife corridors has been identified to provide linkages for the movement and colonisation of wildlife. Many corridors are focused on canal or road corridors. Policy ENV24 ensures that corridors continue to function as conduits for the movement of wildlife despite development taking place within them. Corridors also allow species to more readily migrate and adapt to climate change. **Chapters 5-8** identify the ways in which green infrastructure should be incorporated into new development.

ENV22: Protected species

- 2.28 Many rare and protected species and the habitat on which they depend are found outside the network of protected sites and may only be discovered when development is proposed. **Chapters 5-7** inform planning applicants how to take the needs of endangered and protected species into account in development proposals.

ENV40: Conservation, protection and use of water resources

ENV10: Pollution

- 2.29 Policy ENV40 reflects the importance of rivers, canals, lakes and ponds for wildlife which are easily damaged by pollution and other reductions in water quality. Water bodies provide habitat for rare and protected species. Despite the urban and industrialised nature of the Black Country, water quality is improving. Past development has often marginalised water courses and modified and culverted them, reducing their wildlife value and breaking ecological connectivity. New development offers opportunities to restore watercourses for both wildlife and amenity. Policy ENV10 discourages development giving rise to pollution.

ENV23: Nature conservation and new development

- 2.30 This policy requires all new development to protect habitats, species and earth heritage features where they exist outside designated sites. New development also brings opportunities to enhance the borough's biodiversity and geodiversity resource or to mitigate loss elsewhere. **Chapter 7** of this guidance advises developers on meeting the requirements of this policy by identifying protection and enhancement measures and suggesting ways of

implementing them. The aim is to encourage high quality development creating environmental quality within the borough.

ENV26: Industrial archaeology

- 2.31 This policy is aimed at ensuring that the borough's industrial heritage is protected. This may require the retention of stone building materials which often originate locally and therefore have geological interest. **Chapter 5** of this SPD provides advice.

ENV18: Existing woodlands, trees and hedgerows

- 2.32 The Black Country Urban Forest comprises all trees and woodlands, both established and recently planted. Collectively it contributes to environmental quality and supporting biodiversity. The Forest of Mercia Community Forest operates in the eastern part of the borough and is involved in practical tree planting and management. As well as benefits for nature conservation, landscape and amenity, urban trees contribute to environmental quality by removing pollutants and absorbing the carbon dioxide which cause climate change. Trees have the potential to cause nuisance or damage and it is therefore essential that they are given sufficient space within new development to avoid these problems. **Chapter 8** describes to planning applicants how the Council expects woodlands, trees and hedgerows to be incorporated into development.

ENV17: New planting

ENV15: Forest of Mercia

ENV16: Black Country Urban Forest

H10: Layout, design and dwelling mix

LC1: Urban Open Space

- 2.33 This group of policies encourage new development to increase tree cover in the borough for its environmental benefits and in furtherance of the aims of the Forest of Mercia and the Black Country Urban Forest.

ENV14: Development of derelict and previously developed sites

ENV30: Registered Parks and Gardens

ENV32: Design and development proposals

ENV33: Landscape design

H10: Layout, design and dwelling mix

LC1: Urban Open Space

M9: Working of coal

- 2.34 All the above policies require new development to take account of the natural environment. This SPD provides advice on how this should be done.

ENV8: Great Barr Hall and estate and St Margaret's Hospital

JP4.1: East of M6 Junction 10

M6: Etruria marl- south of Stubbers Green Road

M8: Brownhills Common

- 2.35 This group of policies require developments on specific sites to take full account of the natural environment. The advice in this SPD is relevant to these sites, although site specific advice is not provided.

CHAPTER 3:

WALSALL'S NATURAL ENVIRONMENT

NATURE CONSERVATION

- 3.1 The Black Country contains a diverse and important natural heritage. A historic pattern of mining and industrial development lying side-by-side with traditional farming and undisturbed pockets of woodland, hay meadow and wetland has resulted in a modern mosaic of ancient and more recent habitats sprinkled amongst built development. The area is underlain by a rich and complex geology which, where it is exposed, presents a valuable window into the ancient past and is an important part of local history.
- 3.2 In Walsall, ancient woodlands, old grasslands, and other important habitats can still be found. Much of the Black Country's, once extensive, heathland resource survives in the Pelsall and Brownhills areas. The borough also has fine examples of hay meadows and teeming wetlands that have survived development and changes in farming practices. Walsall holds many of the finest and most diverse wetlands and grasslands in the Black Country.
- 3.3 Many of the Black Country's most valuable wildlife habitats have established on land abandoned after mining or industry. These brownfield sites often provide the physical and chemical conditions for diverse habitats and rare plants. In Walsall, limestone grassland is found at Park Lime Pits Local Nature Reserve around the fringes of a former limestone quarry. Similarly, at Clayhanger SSSI, diverse vegetation has grown amongst spoil heaps and wetlands caused by mining subsidence.
- 3.4 The Black Country's canals provide habitat for protected species such as water vole, kingfisher and, more recently, otter. Studies of water voles in Birmingham and Black Country in 2002 indicated that water voles were still present in at least 74% of sites surveyed in a major survey carried out in 1997. Bats forage over the canal network and many other habitats and roost in buildings and other structures. Many small pools provide breeding sites for great crested-newts. Black redstart is an important species found on brownfield sites close to Walsall town centre.
- 3.5 Many of the habitats and species covered by this guidance are priorities within the UK and Birmingham and Black Country Action Plans and the West Midlands Regional Biodiversity Strategy.

GEODIVERSITY

- 3.6 The Black Country is one of the most geologically diverse areas of the world. Walsall is underlain by a rich and varied geology, which has strongly influenced historic and industrial development and remains apparent in the landscape and pattern of development. Geological features revealed by centuries of limestone, coal, clay, sand, gravel and other mineral extraction have a cultural as well as scientific value. Geological features include rock exposures and spoil as well as locally quarried building and paving materials. Geological sites are protected by a range of designations reflecting their national and local importance. The Black Country's varied geology determined its industry, settlement patterns, agriculture and the species and habitats present. It plays a fundamental part in local community history.

- 3.7 Walsall lies on the South Staffordshire Coalfield. Rich deposits of coal, fireclay and ironstone of the Middle Coal Measures, together with older seams of Silurian limestone were exploited locally. Other raw materials, notably Carboniferous dolerite were also exploited and Silurian and Triassic sandstones continue to be worked, albeit on a small scale. Mostly these natural resources are depleted but their extraction left a legacy of rock exposures and spoil mounds.
- 3.8 The evidence of the earth heritage of the borough is also found in local buildings, gravestones and paving materials. Dolerite kerb stones are still in use and limestone is sometimes found in old buildings and walls.

TREES AND WOODLANDS

- 3.9 Trees and woodlands provide some of the richest wildlife habitats in the borough. Walsall's few surviving ancient woodlands and veteran trees are irreplaceable. Trees, woodlands and hedgerows comprise the largest living things in the Black Country and are found everywhere from the town centres to the rural fringe.
- 3.10 Trees bring great benefits: environmental, visual and socio-economic. Trees add beauty, a sense of place and provide important landmarks. The beech plantation on the summit of Barr Beacon is a well known local landmark and many of the borough's parks contain long-established and cherished trees. Trees provide seasonal change, texture and colour. They are also important components of the urban landscape, providing screening, focal points, privacy and shade. Trees contribute to quality of life and mature and veteran trees provide a link with the past as the oldest living things in a neighbourhood.
- 3.11 Trees and woodlands are greatly valued by the local community.
- 3.12 The Council is committed to tree protection and management. Walsall has over 800 Tree Preservation Orders protecting single trees to whole woodlands. The Council is also a strong supporter of the Forest of Mercia Community Forest and the Black Country Urban Forest.

CHAPTER 4: THE SCOPE OF THIS GUIDANCE

INTRODUCTION

- 4.1 This guidance identifies those features of the natural environment which the Council requires to be properly considered in proposals for development requiring planning permission. These are subdivided into the following groups:

- Sites, habitats and earth heritage features.
- Protected and important species.
- Trees, woodlands and hedgerows.

Not every part of the natural environment is worthy of conservation and protection. This chapter defines those parts of the natural environment which are within the scope of this guidance.

SITES, HABITATS AND EARTH HERITAGE FEATURES

- 4.2 The following categories of sites, habitats and earth heritage features fall within the scope of this guidance.

- Designated sites.
- Important habitats and earth heritage features outside designated sites.
- Other features.

A more detailed description of each is provided below.

Designated sites

- 4.3 Policy protection for nature conservation sites is commensurate with their position within the national and international hierarchy as shown in Table 1. Policy will be applied in line with the requirements of relevant legislation. Where protected species are found, whether on designated sites or not, additional legal protection and policy requirements apply.

TABLE 1: HIERARCHY OF DESIGNATED SITES

Site	Designation basis and type	Status
SAC	Special Areas of Conservation are designated under the EU Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Flora (Directive 92/43/EEC) and the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994. These sites are also SSSIs. Represent the best examples of sites for European priority habitats and species.	European (Statutory) Proposals damaging to the special interest are only permitted in very exceptional circumstances where full mitigation is secured. A Habitats Regulations Assessment is required. GDPO proposals are also subject to assessment.
SSSI	Sites of Special Scientific Interest are notified by Natural England under Section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They represent the best examples of sites for important UK habitats, species and features of geological and geomorphological interest.	UK (Statutory) Proposals damaging to the special interest are only permitted in exceptional circumstances where full mitigation is secured. GDPO proposals are also subject to assessment.

SINC	Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation are selected by a panel representing Natural England, the Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country, the Black Country Geological Society and the Local Authority. This designation is applied to all sites which meet the selection criteria.	Regional: West Midlands County (Non-statutory)
SLINC	Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation are selected by a panel representing the Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country, the Black Country Geological Society and the Local Authority. This designation is applied to all sites which meet the selection criteria.	Local: borough-wide (Non-statutory)
LNR	Local Nature Reserves are declared by the Local Authority in consultation with Natural England under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. They are selected for both nature conservation interest and value for public education and enjoyment. Sites are almost invariably SSSIs, SINC's or SLINC's.	(Statutory)

4.4 The Cannock Extension Canal Special Area for Conservation (SAC) was designated for its populations of floating water plantain and is the borough's only site. There are 6 other SSSIs within the borough. Two of these are designated for their geological interest and the remainder for ecological value. There are currently 36 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation, 61 Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation and 11 Local Nature Reserves.

4.5 It is Council policy to maintain and enhance the designated site network so that it can continue to maintain and protect local biodiversity and show the range of earth heritage features which occur in the borough.

Important habitats outside designated sites

4.6 Very often habitats and earth heritage features occur outside designated sites but are still worthy of protection and conservation. For the purpose of policy NE1 in this SDP, an important habitat is defined as follows:

- A habitat for which there is a national or local Biodiversity Action Plan.
- A habitat of principal importance for the conservation of biological diversity in England.
- Habitat features which, because of their linear and continuous structure or their function as stepping stones, are essential for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange as described in Regulation 37 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994 and Article X of the EU Habitats Directive.

4.7 A schedule of habitat types present in the borough which are national priority habitats or for which there is a national or local Biodiversity Action Plan is

found in **Annex 4** together with the current list of habitats of principle importance identified by the Government as required in Section 74 of the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000.

4.8 In addition there are networks of natural habitats of linear and stepping stone features which provide potential for use by wildlife such as: hedgerows (especially where species-rich), disused railways, canals, river and stream corridors, green lanes, groups of small woods and ponds. These features are described in Regulation 37 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994 and are also identified for retention in policy ENV23 (b) of the Council's UDP. These features are essential for migration, dispersal and genetic exchange because of their linear and continuous nature or their function as stepping stones. Maintaining and enhancing this network also allows for the migration of species into new areas providing opportunities to adapt to the effects of climate change.

4.9 As a broad guide, the following habitats and features are of particular significance in a Black Country context and most relevant to this SPD.

- **Woodland:** ancient woodland, 'aged' or 'veteran' trees, native broad-leaved woodland and scrub, hedgerows and wet woodland such as alder or willow carr;
- **Grassland:** unimproved or semi-improved neutral, calcareous, acid or marshy grassland whether managed or not;
- **Heathland:** heather, bilberry or gorse heath, wet heathland and bog, acid grassland/ heath mosaic where heather is present in any proportion;
- **Open water and wetland:** watercourses, canals, reservoirs, ponds and their banks, reed beds and swamps;
- **Geological exposures and features:** particularly important are the sites where Wenlock shales and limestones or exposures of Triassic sandstones can be seen.

4.10 Some habitats, such as ancient woodland and old grasslands have been present for centuries but many habitats have developed more recently on disused industrial or mineral extraction sites. Unitary Development Plan nature conservation policies do not therefore distinguish between brownfield and greenfield land.

Other features

4.11 UDP policy ENV23, part (b) requires all new development to take full account of existing features of value for wildlife or geology. Where loss or damage of such features is unavoidable the Council will require mitigation measures which adequately compensate for the features lost. The nature and extent of the mitigation works required should be appropriate to the size and quality of the feature lost or damaged. Features which fall within the scope of this policy are as follows:

- Areas of diverse vegetation which is not within a habitat type described above.
- Small scale wetlands such as garden ponds.
- Spoil mounds from mineral extraction.
- Locally quarried building or paving materials.
- Micro habitats used by invertebrates such as sunny banks, old walls or dead wood.

- Trees and shrubs (but see also paragraph 4.13)

Chapter 7 gives detailed advice on the implementation of this policy.

PROTECTED AND IMPORTANT SPECIES

- 4.12 The Council will expect planning applicants to take into account the species of animals and plants described below if one or more is present or likely to be present on a development site.
- 4.13 Two categories of species fall within the scope of this SPD.
- 4.13.1 A **protected species** is any species of animal or plant which receives legal protection through UK or European legislation.
- 4.13.2 An **important species** is any species of animal or plant which is:
- The subject of a national or local Biodiversity Action Plan.
 - Listed by the Government as a species of principal importance for the conservation of biological diversity in England. This list stems from Section 74(2) of the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000. PPS9 advises local authorities to 'ensure these species are protected from the adverse effects of development, where appropriate' and to 'take measures to protect the habitats of these species policies in local development documents'. **Annex 4** lists the Section 74 species recorded in the Black Country as well as the national priority species and those which are the subject of a national or local Biodiversity Action Plan.

TREES, WOODLANDS AND HEDGEROWS

- 4.14 The following categories of trees, woodlands and hedgerows fall within the scope of this SPD.
- **Tree(s) protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO).** TPOs are made under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as amended) and can protect individual trees, groups of trees and woodlands which have 'amenity' value.
 - **Ancient woodland** is woodland identified on the Nature Conservancy Council Schedule of Ancient Woodlands in the West Midlands published in 1989. Such woodlands are defined as those present in 1600. Most Ancient Woodlands would also be protected through nature conservation site designations and Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.
 - A **'significant tree'** is any tree over 75 millimetres in diameter measured 1.5 metres above ground and which meets the criteria for protection by a Tree Preservation Order.
 - A **'significant hedgerow'** is any hedgerow which is visually substantial which contributes to the landscape character of an area. Some hedgerows would also be protected through nature conservation site designations.
- 4.15 Guidance on development with the potential to affect trees, woodlands and hedgerows is found in **Chapter 8**. Where trees and hedgerows have an important nature conservation value, the guidance in **Chapters 5-7** also applies.

CHAPTER 5: DEVELOPMENT WITH THE POTENTIAL TO AFFECT SPECIES, HABITATS OR EARTH HERITAGE FEATURES

GENERAL REQUIREMENTS

- 5.1 Where there is potential for a proposed development to cause significant harm to designated sites, protected or important species, habitats or earth heritage features, the applicant must undertake an impact assessment to a nationally accepted standard. 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the United Kingdom' by the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2006) is recommended. 'Developing Naturally: a Handbook for Incorporating the Natural Environment into Planning and Development' by Michael Oxford (2000) and 'Biodiversity by Design' by the Royal Town Planning Institute (2004) may also be useful.

ENVIRONMENTAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EIA)

- 5.2 Development may come within the scope of the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment (England and Wales) Regulations 1999. Any proposed developments described in Schedule 1 of the Regulations will require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) while those described on Schedule 2 may require an EIA. For projects of a kind listed in Schedule 2 of the Regulations, the Council will be 'screened' by the Council to determine whether a formal EIA is required.

HABITATS REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT

- 5.3 Where development is likely to have a significant effect on a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) (see **Chapter 4**) the Council is required to undertake an assessment under Regulation 48 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994. The applicant must provide detailed information on the proposed development and its likely impact on the SAC. Planning permission will not be granted until the information has been received and it is adequately demonstrated that the proposal will not harm the integrity of the SAC.

IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.4 For all other planning applications with the potential to cause significant impacts on designated sites, protected or important species, habitats or earth heritage features, a less formal impact assessment is required. The scope and detail of the impact assessment will depend on the size, complexity and ecological/ earth heritage value of the site. Applicants are advised to seek specialist expertise and to discuss their proposals with Walsall Council's Natural Environment Team at an early stage in the design process. For large or complex developments applicants should consider presenting their proposals to the Council's Development Team which meets regularly to give multi-disciplinary advice at a pre-application stage.
- 5.5 The key requirement for an impact assessment is to ensure that potential impacts are properly considered during the design process. All impact assessments should include the following information in a report:
- Description of the proposal.
 - Description of the value of the site.
 - Impact assessment.
 - Mitigation strategy.
 - Implementing mitigation measures.

- Monitoring.

These requirements are described in more detail later in this chapter.

- 5.6 The impact assessment methodology is an integral part of the design process and should inform detailed development proposals. Where significant adverse impacts on the natural environment are identified, alternative design options should be explored. The ecological impact assessment should be underpinned by adequate and appropriate ecological data. The Council's survey standards are described in **Chapter 6**.
- 5.7 In judging whether planning proposals might affect designated sites, habitats, species or earth science features, consideration must be given not only to features within the planning application boundary but also to those adjacent or to even more remote sites where development could have an adverse impact by causing environmental change such as: hydrological change, pollution, isolation or severance of connecting features.
- 5.8 Policy ENV22 in the Council's Unitary Development Plan protects the habitats and features required by protected species to survive and maintain their populations. The life cycles of species may require different habitats at different life stages which may not necessarily be found exclusively within a proposed development site. The Council will therefore seek impact assessments for protected or important species to consider the wider requirements of the species.
- 5.9 It is common for studies in a number of technical disciplines to be required in support of a planning application, e.g. arboricultural or visual impact surveys. Recommendations from individual experts must be compatible with one another and the development proposals themselves. Any contradictions should be properly resolved before the design of development is finalised and the planning application is submitted.

- NE1(a) All planning applications with the potential to destroy, damage or adversely affect any site, habitat or earth heritage feature within the scope of this guidance should be supported by an impact assessment to a nationally recognised standard.**
- (b) All planning applications on sites where protected or important species are present should be supported by an impact assessment to a nationally recognised standard.**
- (c) All planning applications on sites where protected or important species have been recorded, reported or can reasonably expected to be present should be supported by survey work to properly demonstrate presence or absence. Where evidence of an important or protected species is found, part (a) of this policy is relevant.**
- (d) Planning applications which are not supported by an adequate impact assessment or survey in accordance with the advice in this SDP are likely to be refused.**

DETAILED ADVICE ON THE CONTENT OF AN IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 5.10 The Council's advice on the content of each stage of the impact assessment (listed in paragraph 5.5) is described below.

Description of the development proposal.

- 5.11 Details of the type, scale, location, timing and methodology of the proposed works, including relevant plans, diagrams and schedules should be submitted.

Description of the value of the site

- 5.12 Site descriptions should be based on a recent and robust survey of the development site and any other areas likely to be affected by the proposals.

For sites and habitats described in Chapter 4 the description of the value of the site should contain the following information:

- Habitats present, their extent and location.
- Conservation status of the site.
- Underlying factors which determine habitat structure and functioning.
- Important species present.
- Location within ecological networks.
- Potential for expansion and natural colonisation.

For sites containing features of earth heritage value the description of the value of the site should contain the following information:

- **Description and assessment of the site.**
- **Historic associations.** Any association with earth science advances is required together with links with local industry, mining or local culture.

For important or protected species outside designated sites the following advice is relevant:

- 5.13 Where protected or important species are recorded, reported or likely to be present on or adjacent to a planning application site, the Council will seek an appropriate site investigation. The first stage is to establish whether a species is present which will almost always require survey work. Absence is difficult to prove and any reports concluding that a species is not present must demonstrate that an adequate search has been made in accordance with published guidance on survey methods.
- 5.14 If a protected or important species is discovered the following information should be submitted. Specific information requirements for key protected species are provided in the annexes to this SPD.
- Species present.
 - Population size and status.
 - How the species uses the site and the surrounding area.
 - Conservation status of the site.
 - Location within ecological networks.
 - Potential for expansion and natural colonisation.

Impact assessment

- 5.15 An impact assessment should clearly and unambiguously identify likely impacts of the proposal on the habitats, sites and species described in Chapter 4.

Mitigation strategy

- 5.16 A mitigation strategy is needed to clarify how the likely impact will be addressed. Mitigation and enhancement measures should be identified to offset adverse impacts. Where significant adverse impacts cannot be avoided or reduced, compensatory measures should be identified and justified. The implications of legislation and planning policy must also be considered. Mitigation should be proportionate to impacts and must include clear site-specific prescriptions rather than vague, general or indicative possibilities.
- 5.17 The Council's strong preference is for the avoidance of impacts. The extent to which impact reduction and/ or compensation is acceptable will depend on the ecological/ earth heritage importance of the proposed development site and the significance of the development proposals. Policy ENV19 in the Council's Unitary Development Plan does not permit development damaging to SACs or SSSIs. For development adversely affecting a SINC, it must be 'clearly demonstrated that there are reasons of overriding regional significance which outweigh its level of nature conservation importance. If development is permitted on a ... SINC, compensatory provision of equivalent value will be required for areas destroyed or damaged'. Policy ENV21 of the UDP requires any development proposals to be shown to be more valuable than the nature conservation value of the site. If a SLINC is damaged or destroyed, 'compensatory provision of equivalent value will be required'.
- 5.18 Where a protected or important species is present, full details of measures to avoid, reduce and compensate for impacts in both construction and operational phases of the proposed development should be submitted.
- 5.19 Again, the Council's strong preference is for the avoidance of impacts. Policy ENV22 in the Council's adopted Unitary Development Plan requires planning applicants to demonstrate that their proposals will not have an adverse impact on local populations of protected and important species.

NE2(a) Any justification for loss or damage to SINC's or SLINC's should be based on comprehensive, relevant and up-to-date data with reference to the national, regional or local contexts of the site. Where sites have become degraded through neglect or inappropriate management the Council will consider the potential for recovery and restoration in assessing the merit of development proposals. Some types of habitat or earth heritage features such as ancient woodland or long-established species-rich grassland are irreplaceable and it is probable that providing replacements of equivalent value is not feasible.

NE2(b) Any compensatory provision of equivalent value should comply with the requirements set out below.

- (i) Habitats or earth heritage features lost should be replaced on land capable of supporting the same habitats and species or showing the same earth heritage features.**

(ii)	Areas of replacement habitat/ features should be of equivalent size or larger than those lost.
(iii)	Habitat translocation will not be supported unless it can be demonstrated that there is a high likelihood of success and that there is no prospect of retention <i>in-situ</i> .
(iv)	Provision should be made for the long-term monitoring and management of the compensatory habitat/ features to ensure the effective and long-term replacement of features lost through planning agreements or other mechanisms.
(v)	Compensatory provision should be the same as the features lost.
NE2(c)	In instances where parts (a) and (b) of this policy relate to features and sites of earth heritage value the Council will seek the following additional measures:
(i)	Conservation by the recording of temporary exposures where permanent physical preservation cannot be achieved.
(ii)	Conservation by preservation of site investigation samples, borehole data and geological records.
NE2(d)	Any proposed development affecting a protected species should demonstrate that:
(i)	The species is effectively accommodated within the design and layout of the proposed development.
(ii)	Work is appropriately timed to avoid disturbance during breeding season or other periods when a species is vulnerable.
(iii)	Proposals for replacements will be effective in maintaining local populations of the species where any feature or habitat is unavoidably lost.
(iv)	There is a high likelihood that translocation will be successful and there is no prospect of retention <i>in-situ</i> .

5.20 The content of the site protection policies in the Unitary Development Plan is designed to ensure that the borough's wildlife resource is not eroded. It is not envisaged that the provision of compensatory habitats or earth heritage features of equivalent value will necessarily be easy for planning applicants to achieve where SINCs, SLINCs or important habitats are involved.

5.21 In many cases there are opportunities for enhancing the natural environment. These may include:

- Habitat creation;
- Restoration and management of existing habitats or features;
- Provision of artificial features e.g. bird or bat boxes.

5.22 Where development incorporates a designated site, the Council will encourage the site owner to allow public access and work with the Council and Natural England to declare a Local Nature Reserve.

5.23 For compensatory features provided as a requirement of UDP policy ENV23(b) the standards required are described in **Chapter 7**.

Implementing mitigation measures

- 5.24 Mitigation proposals have to be implemented to be effective and therefore the Council will seek the inclusion of any additional information required to ensure that the proposed mitigation works are practical. For example, architects' plans, licenses, planning agreements and/or contractors' precautionary method statements.
- 5.25 The interest and diversity of sites will rarely remain unless the site is appropriately managed. In many cases submission of a management plan will be a condition or planning obligation. A management plan should contain the following details:
- A description of the feature(s) to be managed.
 - The aims and objectives of management.
 - A five year detailed work plan. (Longer term if necessary).
 - A start date for management to commence.
 - The organisation and personnel responsible for implementing the plan.
 - The success criteria and monitoring measures.

Monitoring

- 5.26 Where habitat creation or other remedial measures are to be carried out the Council will seek detailed monitoring. The effective long-term retention of populations of protected species will also often require management intervention. Unless the results of the measures are monitored it is impossible to ascertain whether they are effective, ineffective or positively harmful. Monitoring will always be recommended where new habitat is created or translocated and site management will be expected to take account of changes required as the results of monitoring.
- 5.27 The Council will ensure management and monitoring are secured in appropriate situations through use of planning conditions and obligations.

Management and monitoring of sites, habitats, earth science features and species.

NE3(a) Where the Council accepts proposals for management, mitigation or compensatory measures, the applicant should demonstrate that appropriate long-term management will be carried out and that responsibilities for this are clearly identified. This will normally be secured through a planning agreement.

NE3(b) The Council will seek monitoring work to ascertain the outcomes of habitat and species management, habitat creation and other practical measures. Monitoring arrangements should make provision for remedial action if the introduced measures have not had the intended effect.

CRITERIA USED IN ASSESSING PLANNING APPLICATIONS AFFECTING SPECIES, HABITATS OR EARTH HERITAGE FEATURES

- 5.28 In applying the UDP policies to any planning application which may affect important species, habitats or earth heritage features, the Council will consider the following:

- The status of the site, species or earth heritage feature;
- The underpinning survey data.
- The potential impact of the development on species, habitats and earth heritage on the site.
- The potential impact of the development on species, habitats and earth heritage features outside the development site.
- The identification, evaluation and scale of likely impacts on the natural environment.
- The effectiveness of proposals to retain features within a development;
- The adequacy and appropriateness of compensation and mitigation proposals.
- The opportunities for creating new features or enhancing existing.
- The management and monitoring measures proposed.
- The timing of works.

EUROPEAN PROTECTED SPECIES GUIDANCE

- 5.29 The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended) sets out conditions that must be met before a licence can be issued for work affecting any European Protected Species and their resting, and breeding habitat. A licensing system exists to permit activities, such as building development, which would otherwise be illegal.
- 5.30 Licences are issued for the purpose of 'preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment'.
- 5.31 A licence cannot be granted unless:
- 'There is no satisfactory alternative'.
 - 'The action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range'.
- 5.32 Natural England will not issue a licence unless it is satisfied that the development will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the populations of the species concerned at favourable conservation in their natural range and the Council as Local Planning Authority can provide evidence that European Protected Species have been adequately considered in the planning process.
- 5.33 The Council does not consider that it can provide evidence that a European Protected Species has been adequately considered unless it has the information described in this SPD.
- 5.34 European Protected Species currently recorded in the Black Country are listed in **Annex 1**.

INTRODUCTION

6.1 Surveys are required to provide a scientific basis to:

- assess the impact of a proposed development on the natural environment.
- demonstrate to the Council that the impacts of proposed development on the natural environment have been properly considered.
- consider alternatives and whether the impact of the proposal can be avoided, mitigated or whether compensatory measures are required.
- determine whether licences need to be applied for.
- determine whether a Habitats Regulations Assessment is required.

This chapter deals with ecological and earth science surveys. Requirements for arboricultural surveys are described in **Chapter 8**.

NE4 Surveys carried out in support of a planning application should be carried out to nationally accepted standards. Planning applications which are not supported by an adequate survey are likely to be refused.

SCOPING

6.2 An initial 'walkover' survey will provide an early examination of the physical characteristics of the site, the potential nature conservation interest and likely impacts of development together with the options for their elimination, mitigation or compensation. More detailed survey work should be programmed into the planning application preparation process at an early stage to avoid delays.

DESKTOP STUDY

6.3 A desktop study should include consultations with appropriate organisations and conservation bodies to help identify key issues and potential impacts. A desk study which assembles existing data for the site and its surroundings is also recommended. The organisations below are likely to either have local nature conservation knowledge and/ or hold site data.

6.4 Consultations should include:

- Walsall Council Natural Environment Team.
- Adjacent local authorities where development is close to boundary.
- EcoRecord (the ecological database for the Black Country and Birmingham).
- Natural England where a SAC, SSSI or LNR may be affected.
- Environment Agency where wetlands, rivers or streams are affected.
- British Waterways where canals are affected.
- Black Country Geological Society where earth heritage features are affected.
- Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country.
- Other conservation groups where appropriate.

(See the contacts list in Appendix 2 of this guidance.)

- 6.5 In carrying out a desk study it is recommended that a search is carried out within a defined distance of the proposed development site. This may be 1, 2 or more kilometres from the site depending on the likely impact of the development. This will reduce the risk of missing important and relevant data.
- 6.6 Initial consultations and a desk top study, together with an initial inspection of the proposed development site, should identify gaps in information and the need for survey work. In some cases it may be apparent at this stage that there will be no adverse ecological impacts. In most cases it is likely that new survey work will be required. It is essential that desk study work is undertaken at the outset of the project before the design of the proposed development is finalised.

SURVEY

- 6.7 The following information should be provided:
- **Survey objectives.** The reasons for carrying out the survey and an explanation of what the survey will achieve must be set out clearly.
 - **Method statement for survey.** Full details should be provided of the survey methodology used together with a justification for its selection. The limitations of the survey methodology adopted and gaps in survey information should also be described. Survey data submitted with a planning application should be copied to EcoRecord/ Black Country Geological Society to ensure that knowledge of the site's natural environment value is not lost.
 - **Extent, location and timing of surveys.** The date and time when surveys were carried out together with time spent on the site should be recorded. For ecological surveys, visits must be carried out at an appropriate time of the year (see **Tables 2 and 3**) in appropriate weather conditions. Details are required of the full extent of the area surveyed and the location from which all data submitted was collected on plans to an appropriate scale.
- Survey results.** The results of survey work should be presented clearly and unambiguously in full. Analysis of data should be fully explained together with a justification of the conclusions reached.
- **Responsible person.** All surveys should identify the personnel responsible for the survey with details of relevant experience, qualifications and any necessary licences. It is the responsibility of this person to ensure the survey methodology selected is fit for its purpose and provides adequate information to justify the design of development proposals.
- 6.8 It is essential that where the initial survey identifies the need for further survey work, the additional survey is undertaken at an appropriate time of the year prior to the submission of the planning application. Failure to undertake this additional survey work is likely to result in the refusal of the application.

- 6.9 There is published advice for the survey of many habitats and species. This should be used where appropriate. Information on survey requirements for protected species found in the Black Country is given in annexes to this guidance.
- 6.10 Where a European Protected Species is present or can reasonably expected, paragraph 98 of Circular 06/2005 states that 'the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat'. Natural England therefore advises local planning authorities to direct developers to commission an ecological survey of the proposal site 'prior' to determination of an application so this material consideration is fully addressed in making a decision.
- 6.11 It is the responsibility of the developer to provide this information to enable Natural England to make a substantive response and for the local planning authority to fully assess the proposal. Circular 06/2005 states that the 21 day consultation period for statutory consultees will not start until receipt of adequate information to make a substantive response.

TABLE 2: Optimum survey times for vegetation surveys

Habitat	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Rivers, canals, ponds												
Grassland and marsh												
Reedbed and swamp												
Heathland												
Woodland and scrub												
Hedgerows												

TABLE 3: Optimum times for species surveys

Species		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Badger	Setts												
	Habitat quality												
Bats	Summer roost activity												
	Foraging & commuting												
	Tree surveys												
	Buildings												
	Hibernating												
Birds (exact period dependant on species surveyed)	Breeding												
	Wintering												
Barn owl	Presence												
Black redstart	Presence												
Hobby	Presence												
Kingfisher	Presence												
Little ringed plover	Presence												
Peregrine falcon	Presence												
Floating water plantain	Presence												
Great crested newt	Breeding												
	Terrestrial												
	Habitat quality												
Otter	Presence												
Reptiles	Breeding												
	Basking												
Water vole	Presence												
	Habitat quality												
White clawed crayfish	Presence												

CHAPTER 7: THE NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND NEW DEVELOPMENT

BACKGROUND

- 7.1 Protection and management of designated sites and protected species cannot alone sustain the natural heritage of the borough. New development has the potential to contribute to the protection and enhancement of the borough's natural heritage by incorporating features of value into landscape and built design and by creating new features of wildlife or earth heritage value.
- 7.2 This chapter provides advice on compliance with Unitary Development Plan policy ENV23: Nature Conservation and New Development and ENV17: New Planting.
- 7.3 UDP policy ENV23: Nature Conservation and New Development is organised in four parts.
- **Part (a)** requires all new development to take account of the potential to enhance the natural environment through habitat creation or providing roosting/ nesting places for animal species.
 - **Part (b)** requires all new development to take full account of existing features of value for wildlife or geology. Where loss or damage is unavoidable mitigation measures are required which adequately compensate for the features lost. This policy lists the following criteria describing when this part of the policy will be applied:
 - I Within a wildlife corridor.
 - II Containing a species or habitat for which a national or local Biodiversity Action Plan has been prepared.
 - III Within a site where wildlife is accessible to the local community, especially in heavily built-up parts of the borough.
 - IV Used by species protected by European law and/ or British legislation.
 - V Containing mature or semi-mature trees.
 - VI Containing linear features such as: rivers, streams, canals, field boundaries, tree belts, green lanes and road verges or 'stepping stone' features such as lakes, reservoirs, ponds and small woodlands.
 - **Part (c)** of the policy requires habitat creation, enhancement and the implementation of other appropriate measures to encourage the conservation of wildlife on sites which meet criteria listed below:
 - I In proximity to a SSSI, LNR, SINC or SLINC.
 - II In proximity to or within sites where wildlife is accessible to the local community, especially in heavily built-up parts of the borough.
 - III In proximity to or within wildlife corridors.
 - IV Containing a species or habitat for which a national or local Biodiversity Action Plan has been prepared.
 - V Used by species protected by European law and/ or British legislation.

- **Part (d)** of the policy refers to the intention of the Council to publish a Supplementary Planning Document to give more detailed advice on the implementation of this policy.

- 7.4 The key aim of this policy is to ensure that the quality and extent of the natural environment remains constant and, where opportunities arise, is improved and increased.
- 7.5 UDP policy ENV17: New Planting sets out priority locations where tree, woodland and hedgerow planting will be promoted. This chapter of the SPD also advises on the implementation of this policy. **Chapter 8** of this SPD is also relevant.

NE5 The Council will expect new developments to contribute to the planting of trees, woodlands and hedgerows planting described in policy ENV17 of the Council's Unitary Development Plan, where appropriate.

PROPOSALS FOR ENVIRONMENTAL ENHANCEMENT

- 7.6 Most development provides opportunities for improving the natural environment. In many cases this is achieved principally through habitat creation or the design and implementation of appropriate landscape schemes enhancing open space, site boundaries and other areas. By careful design and use of species native to the Black Country, it is possible for landscaping schemes to achieve both amenity and nature conservation objectives. Wherever possible, locally sourced and grown plant stock should be used as it is usually better suited to local conditions. A list of tree and shrub species native to the Black Country is provided in Annex 8.
- 7.7 Soil and the complex community of micro-organisms associated with it, is an important feature for both habitat creation and landscaping. Existing site soils should be stored appropriately for re-use. Where additional subsoil or topsoil is required it should match the natural soils found in the neighbourhood. Some wildlife habitats, such as species-rich grasslands or heathland require low fertility soils so introduced topsoils can be disastrous. Consideration should be given to soil-making to ensure the right properties for the habitat creation or landscape treatment proposed.
- 7.8 In many places the incorporation of ornamental and non-native species into landscape schemes adds colour, texture and seasonal interest to development sites. Through the selection of berry-bearing plants together with shrubs and herbaceous species providing nectar or pollen for insects, even highly ornamental planting can have wildlife value. This can be effective on the smallest sites. Carefully selected plant species can provide food or shelter for a range of wildlife.
- 7.9 Below are examples of ways in which the natural environment can be enhanced.
- **Trees, woodland and scrub** can be managed for nature conservation, for example, by coppicing or thinning dense growth or by creating glades for woodland flowers and grasses. New areas can be planted. For the best results for wildlife, locally native trees and shrubs should be used

with a woodland ground flora added as the woodland develops.

- **Hedgerows** are particularly good for wildlife if they are linked to other habitats such as woodland or wildflower grasslands. Old hedgerows can be laid or coppiced and gaps re-planted. New hedges can be planted using native shrubs and trees. This is particularly useful when planting links or extends an existing network of hedges.
- **Heathland** once covered large tracts of the borough but much has been lost. Areas of heather, bilberry and gorse can be planted only where soil conditions are right. No topsoil, fertiliser or lime should be used. Encouragement will be given to the planting of heathland on suitable sites in the north of the borough to expand the resource and contribute to the Biodiversity Enhancement Area.
- **Wildflower meadows and grassy banks** can be created in a range of situations and should be considered an alternative to closely mown grass. They can form an attractive and colourful element of landscaping and attract a range of insects. They may be particularly suitable for steep slopes, hummocks and undulating surfaces where regular management is difficult. This type of habitat can also be useful on problem soils where other plants are difficult to establish. It is essential to use native species found and sourced locally. Expert advice is required on seed mixes. No topsoil or fertiliser is required.
- **Ponds** can be important features for birds, amphibians and invertebrates as well as providing a focal point for external spaces. The Council will encourage the creation of new ponds, particularly in those areas of the borough where great crested-newts occur. Ponds should be sited in sunny positions, have shelving edges and be stocked with native plants. Invasive non-native plants should not be planted, especially where there is a risk they may escape into neighbouring canals or water courses. Fish should not be introduced where amphibian or invertebrate interest would be harmed. Many invertebrate species will colonise naturally.
- **Reedbeds, swales and marshes** can be incorporated into Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems for the treatment, storage and release of surface water. Such water bodies can look attractive as well as being good for wildlife.
- **Rivers and streams** can often be enhanced to improve channel or bank habitats. Often sites contain culverted watercourses. In these cases the Council will encourage the restoration of open channels. Linear features such as rivers and streams are important corridors for wildlife and interruptions to their continuity can badly affect their corridor function.

The Environment Agency recommends that an 8 metres wide strip on either side of a water course is protected from development. It is recommended that planning applicants consult the Agency where development may impact on a water course or wetland. The Council too will also consult the Environment Agency in such situations.

- **Canals** are a key component of the borough's green infrastructure and support a variety of protected species. Development which encroaches

onto the canal edge can affect their corridor function. The council will encourage planning applicants proposing development adjacent to a canal to prepare and implement an enhancement strategy for the canal frontage. It is recommended that planning applicants consult the British Waterways where development may impact on a canal. The Council too will consult the British Waterways in such situations.

- **Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SUDS).** All development should adopt the principles of Sustainable Urban Drainage. Many drainage features can be incorporated into habitats for wildlife. Even on small developments the use of soakaways or permeable paving can allow groundwater levels to be maintained and help prevent flooding. Advice is provided in Annex F of Planning Policy Statement 25: Flood risk and development. Details are provided in Annex 5.
- **Built environment.** Small scale, features of value for wildlife can be incorporated in any location including:
 - ◇ Green and brown roofs.
 - ◇ Siting of bird and bat boxes on buildings or existing trees.
 - ◇ Bat bricks and tiles to allow bat colonies access to roof spaces.
 - ◇ Nest sites on buildings for swifts, martins or swallows such as suitable eaves design, tiles or customised units.

However, these features should only be sited where there is suitable foraging habitat nearby.

- **Disused land** such as former industrial sites that have been partially cleared can be valuable for wildlife. Disused land goes through a sequence of changes, offering habitats to a range of uncommon plants and animals. These habitats are often ephemeral and landowners and developers can make a valuable and inexpensive contribution to wildlife conservation by carrying out occasional management work. These sites can be important for black redstarts and the Council encourages planning applicants proposing development near known breeding areas to incorporate habitat of value to this species. **Annex 2C** describes the requirements for black redstarts.
- **Earth heritage** features are part of a finite resource which is ultimately irreplaceable. The accessible resource can be enhanced through:
 - ◇ Stabilisation and consolidation of rock exposures.
 - ◇ Creation of new rock exposures.
 - ◇ Provision of site interpretation.
 - ◇ Provision of safe access to view exposures and other features. (Not necessarily unrestricted public access.)
 - ◇ Re-use of locally quarried building materials such as Dolerite kerbs, slag or local limestones where these cannot be retained *in-situ*.

7.10 Proposals for environmental enhancement should be demonstrated to be appropriate to the location in question.

- 7.11 In many cases developers will be required to submit a landscape scheme as part of a new development. The landscape proposals must be fully integrated with proposals for ecological enhancement.
- 7.12 Proposals which further the aims and objectives of the Birmingham and Black Country Biodiversity Action Plan and/ or the Black Country Geodiversity Action Plan will be encouraged and supported. These two plans identify practical actions for the conservation of ecological and geological features.
- 7.13 Part (c) of UDP policy ENV23 requires habitat creation and enhancement on development sites in proximity to designated sites, wildlife corridors or places where protected or important habitats or species occur. To this list is added the need for habitat creation and enhancement to apply within the Biodiversity Enhancement Area which will provide ecological links and green infrastructure between Cannock Chase and Sutton Park. Where development meets the criteria set out in UDP policy ENV23(c) the Council will expect all development to also comply with the published aims of the BEA.
- 7.14 Where public open space is created, the Council will encourage habitat creation, especially in areas of the borough with little accessible greenspace. These benefits would be secured through planning conditions, management agreements or planning agreements.

RETENTION OF EXISTING FEATURES

- 7.15 For development meeting the criteria set out in UDP policy ENV23(b) all new development must take full account of existing features of value for wildlife. Where loss or damage is unavoidable mitigation measures are required which adequately compensate for the features lost. The types of features within the scope of this policy are described in **Chapter 4**.
- 7.16 Taking full account of existing features of value for wildlife may involve the following measures:
- Locating development away from any features of value.
 - Incorporating trees, hedgerows and other vegetation into a landscaping scheme.
 - Integrating watercourses or ponds into the development as a focal point.
 - Restoration of damaged, neglected or poorly managed habitat.
 - Preserving or creating linkages from the site into surrounding areas to encourage movement of species.

The measure chosen should be appropriate to the site.

- 7.17 Measures for the protection of features to be retained during construction should also be considered. Examples are:
- Timing of site clearance or construction to avoid disturbance to nesting birds or other species.
 - The erection of exclusion fencing around important features and habitat.
 - The construction of bunds to protect water courses, water bodies or wetlands.
- 7.18 Situations may occur where it is not possible to keep all the nature conservation interest on the site and still develop it. In these cases the

Council will seek compensatory provision, either on or off-site, to replace features lost.

- NE6** Any compensatory provision proposed under policy ENV23(b) of the Council's Unitary Development Plan should comply with the requirements set out below.
- (i)** Areas of replacement habitat/ features should be of equivalent size or larger than those lost.
 - (ii)** Compensatory provision should be the same or similar to the features lost.

MANAGEMENT

- 7.19 Planning applicants should consider how habitat and features will be managed after development so that their contribution to the natural environment is maintained in the future. See **Chapter 5**.

CHAPTER 8: DEVELOPMENT WITH THE POTENTIAL TO AFFECT TREES, WOODLANDS AND HEDGEROWS

INTRODUCTION

- 8.1 This advice in this chapter of this SPD is applicable to all development proposals which affect trees, woodlands and hedgerows.
- 8.2 Policy ENV18 in the Council's Unitary Development Plan seeks to protect trees, woodlands and hedgerows from damaging development as well as securing their positive management and enhancement. The categories of trees, woodland and hedgerows protected by the policy below were identified in **Chapter 4**. Where development is permitted which would result in the loss of such trees or hedgerows, developers will be encouraged to minimise the loss and provide appropriate planting of commensurate value. This chapter of this SPD provides advice on how this policy will be applied.

NE7 All planning applications with the potential to damage or destroy trees, woodlands or hedgerows identified in paragraph 4.14 of Chapter 4 should be supported by an arboricultural impact assessment to a nationally accepted standard.

Planning applications which are not supported by an adequate arboricultural impact assessment are likely to be refused.

DEVELOPMENT WITH THE POTENTIAL TO AFFECT TREES, WOODLANDS OR HEDGEROWS

- 8.3 Where a formal EIA is not required by the Town and Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment (England and Wales) Regulations 1999 but where tree(s), woodland(s) or hedgerow(s) included in policy NE8 are growing on or adjacent to a proposed development site, the Council will require planning applicants to carry out an impact assessment of the effects of the development on these features.
- 8.4 This should be carried out to a nationally accepted standard. The Council recommends that the British Standards Institute British Standard BS 5837: 2005 Trees in Relation to Construction is used.
- 8.5 In judging whether planning proposals might affect any tree, woodland or hedgerow consideration must be given not only to the development site itself but also to those growing adjacent to the development site. Normally consideration should be given to trees up to 10 metres beyond the site boundary. However, where the development could have an adverse impact through major changes to ground levels or by lowering the water table those growing further away should also be considered.
- 8.6 The scope and detail within the impact assessment will depend on individual sites. Applicants are advised to seek specialist expertise and to discuss their proposals with Walsall Council's Natural Environment Team at an early stage in the design process. The specialist advice of an arborist will often be required throughout the development process and applicants should plan for this involvement at the outset. For development on sites with significant tree

cover, applicants should consider presenting their proposals to the Council's Development Team which meets regularly to give pre-application multi-disciplinary advice.

- 8.7 Development requiring an arboricultural impact assessment is not limited to larger development proposals. Many much smaller developments can have an adverse impact on important trees. For example, the installation of a dropped kerb or house extensions can severely damage the root systems of important trees. This SPD applies to any development with the potential to damage or destroy trees, woodlands or hedgerows identified in paragraph **4.14 of Chapter 4**.
- 8.8 The impact assessment methodology used is an integral part of the design process and should inform detailed development proposals. Survey and evaluation of trees, woodlands or hedgerows should take place before any specific layout or design is produced. Planning applications which are not supported by an adequate impact assessment or where the proposed development takes insufficient account of the submitted assessment are likely to be refused.
- 8.9 It is common for studies in a number of technical disciplines to be required in support of a planning application, e.g. ecological or visual impact surveys. Sometimes recommendations from individual experts are incompatible with one another or with the development proposals themselves. Any contradictions should be properly resolved before the planning application is submitted.

ARBORICULTURAL SURVEY AND EVALUATION

- 8.10 The information requirements for tree surveys are described below. The survey should provide an informed basis for development decisions and all survey information should be submitted at the outset. Planning applications which should be supported by a tree survey are likely to be refused without this information.
- **Method statement for survey.** The Council will seek the submission of tree surveys carried out to the standards described in the British Standards Institute British Standard BS 5837: 2005 Trees in Relation to Construction. This chapter of this SPD is based on the assumption that this standard will be adopted. Full details of the survey objectives and methods used, together with a justification for their selection should be submitted. Any limitations of the survey methodology used and gaps in survey information should be described.
 - **Date of survey.**
 - **Responsible person.** All surveys should identify the personnel responsible for the survey with details of relevant experience and qualifications.
 - **Land survey.** An accurately measured land survey should be submitted to underpin the tree survey information. For tree survey purposes the land survey should:

- ◇ Show the position and canopy spreads of all trees, significant shrubs, woodlands and hedgerows. Trees, woodlands and hedgerows within 10 metres of the proposed development site must also be shown in the same detail. For some major developments where substantial changes in levels are proposed it may be necessary to consider trees further into an adjacent site.
 - ◇ Show the position of water courses, buildings and structures, boundary features, services, drainage runs and similar existing features.
 - ◇ Show existing ground levels throughout the site in order to provide baseline data of ground levels in proximity to retained trees.
 - ◇ Be submitted as a scaled drawing.
- **Hydrological and/ or soil survey.** On large or complex sites further survey work may be requested to facilitate an Arboricultural Implications Assessment of the proposed development.
- **Tree surveys.** Should include:
 - ◇ A plan showing (to within 300 mm accuracy) the location of all existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows on site. Trees should be numbered as individuals or groups of trees. Where woodlands occur on or adjacent to the site, all boundary trees and their spreads should be plotted. If development is proposed within a woodland area or amongst a group of trees, all trees with a diameter of 75 mm or above measured 1.5 metres above ground level must be plotted.
 - ◇ Data relating to individual trees and woodlands should be recorded. Information required is as follows: tree species/ height in metres/ stem diameter in millimetres/ branch spread to the north, east, south and west/ height of crown clearance/ age class/ physiological condition/ structural condition/ preliminary management recommendations/ estimated safe useful life expectancy in years/ retention category grading.
- **Tree Constraints Plan.** Survey data must be evaluated to be useful. A Tree Constraints Plan (TCP) is a design tool which illustrates on a plan the influence that existing trees will have on a development site. The TCP show both the below-ground constraints represented by the Root Protection Area (RPA) and above ground constraints posed by tree size, position, aspect and future growth potential.
- **Assessment and response to predicted arboricultural impacts.** The Council's strong preference is for the avoidance of impacts. Full details are therefore required measures to avoid, reduce and compensate for impacts in both construction and operational phases of the proposed development.

The Council will encourage planning applicants to provide information to:

- ◇ Justify the removal of trees from within any development site.
- ◇ Demonstrate that trees shown for retention can be effectively retained both during construction and occupation phases of development.

The preferred methodology for doing this is the preparation and submission of an Arboricultural Implications Assessment (AIA). The AIA should include:

- ◇ A detailed site description including: tree cover, topography and soils.
- ◇ An analysis of the tree cover including: total number of trees, the numbering sequence, analysis of trees to be lost for development (and for any other reasons) and proposals for replacement planting.
- ◇ A protected tree protocol for site workers (to be integrated into the site induction process.)
- ◇ An Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) containing specifications and a method statement for the implementation of those parts of the development with the potential to lead to loss or damage to trees. A full specification for tree works is required. For trees proposed to be felled for the sole purpose of accommodating the development proposals, this should be clearly stated. (Further detailed requirements for AMS are described below.)
- ◇ A tree protection plan comprising a scale drawing showing the final layout, the tree retention and protection measures described within the AMS illustrating Root Protection Areas (RPA) and the Construction Exclusion Zone (CEZ).

An Arboricultural Method Statement details how a particular process will be carried out. For example, how construction works will be carried out in close proximity to trees. Details should be submitted to show how the work will be managed and how trees will be protected. The Council will request appropriate AMSs as part of an AIA. For sites containing any tree or trees with a diameter of 75 mm or more measured 1.5 metres above ground level an AMS should be submitted when the application is submitted. An AMS will be requested where any of the following work is proposed:

- ◇ Tree surgery works.
- ◇ Demolition of existing structures within close proximity to trees.
- ◇ Lifting and removal of hard standing.
- ◇ Excavation techniques within 2 metres of RPA.
- ◇ Installation of root-barriers.
- ◇ Installation of tree protective fencing.
- ◇ De-compaction or amelioration of soils, root pruning.
- ◇ No-dig construction methods for proposed roads and footpaths.
- ◇ Landscape and horticultural works.
- ◇ Any other site operations which need to be strictly controlled to prevent damage to trees.

The AMS should provide full details of:

- ◇ Timing of works.
- ◇ Full specification of works.
- ◇ Methods of installing/ implementing works.
- ◇ Precise locations and extent of both permanent and temporary works. This will include: site preparation/ the storage of materials/ lighting of bonfires/ welfare facilities/ existing and proposed levels/ trenching and excavation/ movement of vehicles/ erection of scaffolding etc.
- ◇ Contingency plans. This will include: chemical spillage/ vehicle collision/ emergency access to RPA.

- ◇ Contact details of responsible person for each operation.

NE8 All planning applications proposing the retention of trees, woodlands or hedgerows within a development site should demonstrate that the trees to be retained will survive without causing significant nuisance beyond the development phase. Adequate space should be retained for the trees to develop in the future without causing severe shading or requiring damaging containment pruning.

The Council may refuse planning applications where inadequate consideration has been given to tree retention beyond the development phase.

- 8.11 The AIA should provide evidence that trees will not cause nuisance in the medium to long term and can be retained successfully within any development. It is common on new development for trees to be quickly lost due to shading or other nuisance caused by trees that have been retained within a development.

REPLACEMENT PLANTING

NE9 Where trees or hedgerows defined in paragraph 4.14 of Chapter 4 are unavoidably lost, the Council will seek compensatory planting. The level of compensatory provision should be commensurate with that lost and should be provided at a ratio of between 2 for 1 and 5 for 1 depending on the size and visual importance of trees lost. Replacement planting should be of a similar ultimate size and visual impact to that lost.

- 8.12 In deciding on an appropriate level of replacement planting under policy NE9 of this SPD the Council will have regard to the tree's condition, visual prominence, feasibility of retention and the safe useful life expectancy. Therefore semi-mature trees in healthy condition will tend to require replacement planting, if lost, at a ratio of 2 for 1. Mature healthy trees in a visually prominent position will tend to require replacement at a ratio of 5 for 1.

- 8.13 Any hedgerow which is unavoidably lost and which is visually substantial and contributes to the landscape character of an area should be replaced with a replacement of the same length and species composition.

- 8.14 Development should be designed from the outset to accommodate replacement planting. Where replacement planting is provided, the Council will require a Tree Constraints Plan to be provided to demonstrate that the new planting can be accommodated within the development in the long term without causing nuisance.

PROPOSALS FOR ENHANCEMENT

- 8.15 In many cases there are opportunities for enhancing the site through tree and hedge planting.

- 8.16 Tree planting works which contribute to the Black Country Urban Forest or accord with the aims of the Forest of Mercia will be encouraged and supported.

MANAGEMENT OF RETAINED AND NEW TREE PLANTING

- 8.17 Provision should be made for the monitoring and management of any replacement and compensatory tree or hedge planting to ensure any new provision secures the effective and long-term maintenance of tree and hedge cover. Applicants should demonstrate that long-term management will be carried out and that responsibilities for this are clearly identified. In some cases monitoring, or the submission of a management plan will be a condition or planning obligation.
- 8.18 All the information requirements described in this chapter should be incorporated into a report. Reports which fail to adequately explain the work undertaken, the results obtained or to justify the conclusions reached will be rejected which is likely to lead to a refusal of planning permission.

TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS.

- 8.19 Whether a Tree Preservation Order is made will depend on the visual, cultural, ecological or historic importance of the trees on the site, the level of information provided to the Council with regard to the development or the conduct of site operations at any stage during the development process.
- 8.20 In the event that a Tree Preservation Order is made on a site where development is proposed the Council encourages consultation between planning applicants/ developers and the Council's Natural Environment Team.

NE10 The Council will use Tree Preservation Orders in a flexible way. This may include the serving of a Tree Preservation Order at any stage prior to, during or after the implementation of development proposals.

ANNEXES

Annex 1A Guidance for European Protected Species Bats (General)

Legal framework

All of Britain's bat species are protected through inclusion on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended) and by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994. This legislation meets the UK government's wider European obligations to protect bats enshrined in the Bern Convention, the EC Habitats Directive and the Agreement on the Conservation of Bats in Europe (Bonn Convention).

Bats are protected from killing, capture and injury, deliberate disturbance, (whether in a roost or not) and damage, destruction or obstruction of roosts. Since bats often return to the same roosts, the roost is protected whether or not bats are present at the time. Natural England will often be consulted in respect of applications where bats (and other protected species) are affected by a planning proposal.

It is therefore important that where development might have an adverse impact on bats, steps are taken to ascertain their presence. If bats are detected early in the development process it is more likely that they can be accommodated within any development without causing undue delay. Proposals for mitigation, future management and monitoring can then be considered at an early stage in the design process.

People who need to work with bats for survey and research purposes are controlled by the Wildlife and Countryside Act, which states that they are only allowed to catch or mark bats, enter roost sites or photograph them if they have been granted a licence issued by Natural England that covers them for these activities. Activities associated with development are controlled by means of licences issued by Natural England.

Eleven species of bat have been recorded in Birmingham and the Black Country. Detailed guidance is available for the following six species:

- Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*)
- Whiskered (*Myotis mystacinus*)
- Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*)
- Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)
- Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)
- Brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*)

The following five species are less frequently encountered in Birmingham and the Black Country and detailed guidance has not been prepared. However, in the absence of such guidance, developers are advised that the same legal powers, information requirements, survey standards and mitigation needs will apply to these species.

- Serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*)
- Brandt's bat (*Myotis brandtii*)
- Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*)
- Leisler's bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*)
- Nathusius's pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*)

All bats are covered by the Birmingham & Black Country Biodiversity Action Plan. Objectives include the protection of bat roosts and the maintenance and enhancement of features in the landscape important to bats.

The Council will work closely with Natural England, the local bat group and planning applicants to ensure development proposals do not have an adverse impact on bats.

Information Requirements and Survey Standards

Bats can be found anywhere and it can be difficult for applicants to determine whether a proposed development site is likely to be used by bats. Local research has led to criteria being devised that can give an indication as to whether bat roosts are likely to be present on a site or not. Planning applications for development on sites that meets these criteria should be supported by a detailed bat survey/ impact assessment before a planning application can be approved. A detailed bat survey should be submitted:

- If any part of the application site lies within 50 metres of open land. This includes parks, golf courses, cemeteries, agricultural land, Green Belt, river valley or other open land.
- If any part of the application site lies within 50 metres of the following habitats or features: woodland, mature trees, wetlands, water-courses, canals and all designated wildlife sites.
- If the application site lies within a neighbourhood characterised by large mature gardens.
- If any part of the application site lies within 150 metres of a known bat roost.
- If neighbours or other consultees make credible claims that bats are present on an application site.

These criteria are used by the Birmingham and Black Country authorities and will be reviewed regularly to ensure they remain a good indicator of likely bat presence.

Not all developments meeting these criteria will necessarily have an adverse impact on bats. However, householder applications which result in building works to places where bats may be roosting can be as damaging as much larger developments. Any development which involves any of the following could potentially have an adverse impact on bats and therefore a bat survey should be submitted in support of a planning application:

- Demolition of substantial buildings. This excludes timber sheds and other insignificant, lightweight outbuildings.
- Partial demolition or modification of buildings, particularly of the roof, cavity walls, cellars or hanging tiles and weatherboarding. Normally a conservatory or a single storey extension would not require a bat survey under this criterion.
- Demolition or modifications of other structures such as underground sites, culverts, masonry bridges and large retaining walls. This criterion would rarely affect a householder application.
- Development involving heavy pruning or felling of a mature or semi-mature tree or trees.
- Any development which would potentially reduce or destroy areas or features of value to foraging or commuting bats. Such features may include: grassland, watercourses, ponds, trees, scrub and hedgerows. This criterion would not normally apply to householder applications.

Where bats are known to be present, either roosting or habitually foraging*, or where their presence is suspected, the applicant will be expected to gather sufficient information to ensure that an accurate and reasonable opinion can be reached about the importance of the site to bats and likely impacts should the development go ahead.

This must include:

- Type of roost-hibernation/ maternity/ summer/ temporary and timing of occupation.
- Foraging habitat and commuting routes used by bats.
- In the case of foraging habitat, its importance to the local bat population.

- Impacts of the development on roosts, foraging habitat, commuting routes.
- Mitigation proposals.
- Monitoring provision for mitigation work.

**Foraging habitat includes woodland and woodland edge, hedgerows, scrub, parkland, gardens, grassland, wetland and open water.*

The Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys- Good Practice Guidelines* (2007) and English Nature's *Bat Mitigation Guidelines* (2004) set out the standards expected by the Council. In particular:

- Survey work and the development of mitigation measures and monitoring work should be undertaken by suitably qualified, experienced people. It is also important that the personnel are licensed by Natural England to carry out any survey work that would potentially contravene the legislation protecting bats.
- The number of surveyors is also critical. Even on small sites, it is usually difficult for one person to observe all parts of a building to check for emerging bats.
- The timing of field survey work is seasonally restricted and failure to carry out work at an appropriate time of the year will lead to the refusal of planning permission.
- The number of survey visits required to ascertain the presence/ absence of bats should be a minimum of 2-3 visits, one of which should include a dawn visit. Survey visits should be spread throughout the optimum survey period. Certainly survey visits must take place in non-consecutive weeks.
- Applicants should be aware that protection of existing habitat and/ or roosting sites will be preferred over provision of alternatives. If loss cannot be avoided, incorporation of equivalent replacement roost sites/ habitat will be required as part of development.
- If development does not take place immediately after planning permission is granted the Council will require further survey work to the standards set out in this SPD after about 12 months.

General Design Considerations

Planning proposals, particularly those involving demolition, loft conversions, roofing work and house extensions, need to consider the following:

- Timing of work
- Need for the exclusion of bats;
- The type of roost present, for example summer, maternity, winter roost;
- The likelihood of disturbance;
- The use of chemicals in timber treatment;
- The maintenance of access to roost sites;
- The retention of known summer and winter roost sites and/or provision of alternatives.

Annex 1B Guidance for European Protected Species Bats (Individual species guidance)

Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*)

Additional Design Considerations

In addition to the general design considerations above, planning proposals need to consider the following:

- The presence of underground cavities or structures and their possible suitability as roost sites.
- Protection of potential roost sites by retaining old trees and perhaps stonework with holes, cracks and fissures within new development.
- Protection or provision of above water feeding habitat.

Whiskered bat (*Myotis mystacinus*)

Additional Design Considerations

In addition to the general design considerations above, planning proposals need to consider the following:

- The presence of underground cavities or structures and their possible suitability as roost sites;
- Provision of alternative roost sites where old houses containing roosts are demolished.
- The creation, where possible of fissures, artificial cavities and cracks by use of bat bricks, bat tiles, bat boxes etc.;
- The retention and/or provision of trees and shrubs as feeding habitat;
- Wherever possible the retention of old and decaying trees.

Noctule bat (*Nyctalus noctula*)

Additional Design Considerations

In addition to the general design considerations above, planning proposals need to consider the following:

- Retention of known roost sites in trees.
- Provision of potential roost sites by retaining old trees with holes within development.
- Protection or provision of trees, woodland and wetland feeding habitat.

Common and Soprano pipistrelles (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*/ *P. pygmaeus*)

Additional Design Considerations

In addition to the general design considerations above, planning proposals need to consider the following:

- The presence of underground cavities or structures and their possible suitability as roost sites;
- The creation, where possible of fissures, artificial cavities and cracks by use of bat bricks, bat tiles, bat boxes etc.;
- The retention and/or provision of grassland, trees and shrubs and the presence of water as feeding habitat;
- Wherever possible the retention of old and decaying trees.

Brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*)**Additional Design Considerations**

In addition to the general design considerations above, planning proposals need to consider the following:

- The presence of underground cavities or structures and their possible suitability as roost sites.
- The creation, where possible, of fissures, artificial cavities and cracks by use of bat bricks, bat tiles, bat boxes etc.
- The retention and/or provision of, trees and shrubs, parkland and orchards as feeding habitat.
- Wherever possible the retention of old and decaying trees.

Annex 1C Guidance for European Protected Species

Great crested-newt (*Triturus cristatus*)

Legal Framework

The great crested newt is protected under Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (Regulation 8) and Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

It is illegal to deliberately kill, injure, capture or disturb great crested newts or obstruct access to areas where they live. It is also an offence to intentionally damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which this species uses for shelter or protection. The law applies to eggs, tadpoles and juveniles, as well as adults. A licence, issued by Natural England, is necessary for any scientific or survey work that will involve catching or handling great crested newts, or where newts will be prevented from moving freely to and from the places where they live. A licence issued by Natural England is required for any development or permitted development works affecting great crested newts (see above under European Protected Species).

The Black Country supports a population of great crested newts whose conservation is significant in national terms. The species is known to be present in about 30 localities with well-recorded strongholds in Walsall. A Local Biodiversity Action Plan exists for this species. Objectives are to sustain existing populations, preventing loss through development, to create suitable new ponds and to secure suitable habitat management.

Information Requirements and Survey Standards

Expert advice is necessary to establish the potential impact of development. Surveys should be submitted where:

- There are historical or current records for this species on or connected to the proposed application site.
- There is suitable habitat on or connected to make the presence of the species reasonably likely.
- There are reliable reports that great crested newts are on or connected to the proposed application site.

English Nature's *Great Crested-newt Mitigation Guidelines* (2001) sets out the standards expected by the Council. Developers should demonstrate that they have followed the widely accepted methodologies and guidelines contained in this publication.

Once presence has been established the following aspects should be investigated:

- Long term records of species use of the site, if available;
- Population size;
- Breeding status;
- Breeding site(s);
- The nature and size of feeding habitat;
- Routes of movement;
- For terrestrial habitat, the importance of the site to the species;
- An assessment of the impact and proposals for mitigation;
- Opportunities for habitat creation or enhancement.

March to July is the best period to survey breeding ponds. Survey of terrestrial habitat can take place at other times. A licensed surveyor should undertake fieldwork. Where great

crested-newts are recorded in an area, all surface water features on a site should be surveyed. Newts have been known to breed even in ditches and puddles.

Design Considerations

Planning proposals should consider the following:

- Natural England requirements;
- Timing of development work;
- Retention and/or provision of breeding ponds;
- Links to other breeding ponds/newt populations in the immediate area;
- Location of roads and footpaths and features such as drains and culverts which can be a problem during migration periods and means of mitigating against impacts of these;
- Retention and/or provision of suitable terrestrial habitat;
- Protection of populations and habitat during development;
- Management of ponds and terrestrial habitat;
- Monitoring of the effect of the development on newt populations.

Annex 1D Guidance for European Protected Species

Otter (*Lutra lutra*)

Legal Framework

Otters are protected under Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (Regulation 8) and Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This legal protection means it is illegal to deliberately kill, injure, capture or disturb otters or obstruct their access to areas where they live. It is also an offence to intentionally damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which the species uses for shelter or protection. A licence issued by Natural England is required for any development or permitted development works affecting otters (see above under European Protected Species).

Absent from the Black Country for over a quarter of a century, otters are now again being recorded in the conurbation. They are thought to be re-colonising the area from historic strongholds in the upper Severn catchment by making use of the conurbation's extensive canal network and the rivers Cole, Tame, Stour and Blythe. There is currently one confirmed record for Walsall but it may be a species which becomes more common.

Development proposals can have a number of impacts on otters' use of watercourses and associated wetland habitat. Such impacts include loss of undisturbed breeding and lying up habitat, degradation and fragmentation of habitat, and increased disturbance. Changes in traffic patterns resulting from development may mean that otters are more at risk from being killed while crossing roads.

Information Requirements and Survey Standards

Sprints are used to mark territories and are a key sign of an otter's presence. They are most likely to be found in dry weather when the water level has been steady or is falling. Since they are used as a form of communication, sprints will be left in obvious locations such as under or near bridges, at tributary junctions and on prominent bank side or mid-stream features including boulders, tree stumps and sand bars. Winter surveys are easier because bank side vegetation will have died back, but heavy rains can wash signs away. In addition to looking for sprints, surveys should record other signs of the presence of otters such as footprints, feeding remains and bank slides, and should provide a general assessment of habitat condition and potential for improvement.

All developments involving watercourses, especially those which affect the integrity of river/canal corridors or impact upon waterside habitat, should provide the following information:

- Otter presence and status, including recent survey information and past records;
- As otters are rarely seen, surveys should be based on the presence of characteristic signs along the watercourse and adjacent habitats which may be used for lying up. Signs should be recorded on a detailed map.
- Records of otters for adjacent stretches of any watercourse or canal affected;
- If present, appraisal of the effect of the development on otters and details of mitigation.

Surveys can be carried out at any time of the year, but best results are achieved in dry periods between November and January. Recognised and competent ecological consultants, with experience of otter work, should undertake survey work and the development of mitigation proposals. A Natural England licence is required for survey work which causes disturbance to otters such as checking of known holts. Where development proposals impact on otters, Natural England and the Environment Agency should be consulted.

Design Considerations

Planning proposals should consider the following:

- Natural England requirements;

- Inclusion of otter safeguards in new road developments, such as appropriate design of bridges, inclusion of otter passes above flood level; restricting use of culverts, provision of otter fencing;
- Retention, restoration or creation of safe, undisturbed lying up areas in urban riverside developments;
- Retention/enhancement of watercourses to provide safe passage;
- Deculverting of urban watercourses, combined with favourable habitat creation/enhancement;
- Provision of artificial holts;
- Appropriate management post-development;
- Monitoring of the effect of the development on otter populations.

Annex 1E Guidance for European Protected Species

White-clawed crayfish (*Austropotomobius pallipes*)

Legal Framework

This species is protected under Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981 (as amended) and by inclusion in Annex II and V of the EC Habitats Directive. Natural England should always be consulted when freshwater crayfish are affected by a planning proposal since a Natural England licence may need to be issued. The Environment Agency should be consulted in relation to proposals affecting watercourses. A Local Biodiversity Action Plan exists for this species.

Information Requirements and Survey Standards

All proposals involving waterside habitat, especially watercourse engineering, bank modification or strengthening and bridge works should provide the following information:

- Records of white-clawed crayfish for the watercourse concerned and the catchment as a whole.
- Up-to date survey where records indicate crayfish presence anywhere on the watercourse or within its immediate catchment.
- Measures to protect crayfish populations and habitat should they be present.
- Monitoring proposals.

When surveying for crayfish, it is important that competence and confidence in identification can be demonstrated. The non-native Signal crayfish (*Pacifastacus leniusculus*) has been recorded occasionally in the West Midlands and it is therefore essential that surveyors can recognise the presence of this problematic alien. Survey work and the development of mitigation measures and monitoring work should be undertaken by suitably qualified and experienced surveyors. It is also important that the personnel are licensed by Natural England to carry out any survey work that would contravene the legislation protecting crayfish.

This species is best surveyed either at dusk, by netting or pond dipping, or using torchlight after dark when the crayfish are more active. Surveys should be undertaken between April and October.

Design Considerations

Planning proposals affecting crayfish habitat should consider the following:

- Maintenance of suitable water quality and chemistry.
- Measures to avoid sediment or other polluting material entering the watercourse/water body.
- Protection or provision of refuges within and along the edge of water bodies, together with aquatic vegetation.
- Maintenance or provision of soft banks for burrows.

Annex 1F Guidance for European Protected Species

Floating water-plantain (*Luronium natans*)

Legal Framework

The provisions of Section 13 of the WCA 1981 make it an offence for a person to intentionally uproot any wild plant unless they are authorised to do so by the landowner.

Some rare plants, listed in Schedule 8 of the WCA 1981 and listed in Schedule 4 of the Habitats Regulations 1994, have additional protection. It is an offence for any person, including the landowner, to intentionally pick, uproot or destroy these specially protected wild plants. Floating water-plantain (*Luronium natans*), which occurs on canals in Birmingham and the Black Country, is one such species subject to this greater level of legal protection. In Walsall the Cannock Extension Canal SAC is the stronghold of this species but other locations in the borough are known.

In addition to its protected species status, floating water-plantain is a priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. A Local Biodiversity Action Plan also exists for this species. Objectives are to maintain its current range, protect it and its habitat and increase population size where possible.

A licence is required from Natural England for any survey or research work affecting this species, including the taking of samples for survey and identification purposes. Natural England should be consulted should floating water-plantain be found. Activities associated with development are controlled by means of licences issued by Natural England.

Information Requirements and Survey Standards

All proposals affecting canals and associated water-bodies, especially dredging, restoration or alterations to the channel, should provide the following information:

- **Evidence of a records search.**
- **Aquatic plant survey.**
- **Should floating water-plantain be found, measures to protect the population.**

The plants die back in the autumn and winter so survey should be carried out between May and August. A competence in botanical identification, especially of submerged and floating aquatic plant species, is a prerequisite when surveying for this species which must be identified in the field as samples cannot be taken. Verification of the identification by a licensed surveyor will be required.

Design Considerations.

If floating water-plantain might be affected by planning proposals, the following should be incorporated into scheme design:

- Protection of individual plants during works affecting the habitat;
- Creation of refuges within and alongside water bodies to protect against disturbance;
- Protection of water quality.

Annex 2A Guidance for species Protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act

Water vole (*Arvicola terrestris*).

Legal Framework

The water vole receives protection through its inclusion on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. This legal protection makes it an offence to intentionally damage or destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which water voles use for shelter or protection; or disturb water voles while they are using such a place. Licences are available from Natural England to allow activities that would otherwise be offences, for example for scientific or educational purposes. In relation to riverbank or channel management work, the Environment Agency should be consulted.

A Local Biodiversity Action Plan exists for this species. Objectives are to protect current populations, to restore population levels, and to protect, enhance and restore habitat. This century has seen a long-term decline, which has accelerated in the 1980's and 90's, making this formerly common species a rare sight over much of the country. The reasons for this decline are complex but certainly involve degradation and loss of bank side habitat, isolation of populations, and the spread of mink, an effective predator of water voles. Recent research in Birmingham and the Black Country suggests that the urban area is of increasing importance as populations in rural counties decline.

Information Requirements and Survey Standards

The Council will expect applications with the potential to affect water vole populations to follow guidance on survey methods and mitigation techniques contained in the *Water Vole Conservation Handbook* (Second edition) by Strachan and Moorhouse.

All developments involving waterside habitat, especially watercourse engineering or bank modification or strengthening and bridge works, should provide the following information:

- Water vole presence and status, including recent survey information and past records, on the development site;
- As water voles are rarely seen, surveys should be based on the presence of characteristic signs up to 2m away from the banks and edges of watercourses and ponds. Signs should be recorded on a detailed map.
- Records of water voles for adjacent stretches of any watercourse or canal affected;
- If present, appraisal of the effect of the development on water voles and details of mitigation.

Surveys should be carried out between late April and early October when voles are active. Expert advice will be required to assess development impacts.

Design considerations

Planning proposals need to address the following:

- Retention/creation of features of water vole conservation value such as soft banks

or gaps in reinforcement, stands of marginal vegetation, bank side shrubs and long grass for cover

- As water voles confine their activities to within 5 metres of water, they can be accommodated by maintaining or creating wildlife corridors along watercourses and undeveloped areas around ponds.
- The straightening, deepening, piling, concreting and canalisation of watercourses exclude water voles. Any such proposals will not be supported unless vole habitat is incorporated or alternative habitat provided nearby.
- The loss of riverbank or canal habitat or a pond or ditch may be mitigated by the construction of a new habitat of equivalent area or length. The new habitat should be ready before the old one is destroyed.
- Phasing of dredging and canalisation work in an upstream direction and creation or retention of refuges to allow maintenance of local populations.

Annex 2B Guidance for species Protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act

Birds

General

All wild birds and their nests are protected under the WCA 1981 and CROW Act 2000. It is an offence to kill or injure any wild bird, nests may not be damaged or destroyed while in use or being built, and eggs may not be taken or destroyed. In addition, species listed on Schedule 1 of the WCA are protected by special penalties. For these species, it is an offence to disturb any nesting bird or dependent young and/or to interfere with its nest and nesting site. Where birds are present and/or breeding on a development site, appropriate timing of works will be required to ensure no adverse effects on nesting, breeding and feeding.

Natural England should be consulted when Schedule 1 birds are affected by a development proposal. Consideration should be given to protection and enhancement of foraging habitat.

Six WCA Schedule 1 species of bird have been recorded breeding in Walsall or in the wider area of Birmingham and the Black Country and are covered by detailed guidance. They are:

- Barn owl (*Tyto alba*)
- Black redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*)
- Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)
- Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)
- Little ringed plover (*Charadrius dubius*)
- Peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)

General Information Requirements and Survey Standards

Information Requirements

Where there is evidence that a Schedule 1 species breed on or use the site,

- or there is a strong suspicion that this is the case;
- or that suitable breeding habitat is present in proximity to a known population;
- or that development may have a significant effect on an area of continuous or discontinuous but linked feeding habitat e.g. barn owl feeding territory:

The following information is required:

- Long term records of species use of the site/locality if available;
- The size of population and breeding status;
- Location of breeding site(s) where directly or indirectly affected by development;
- The nature and size of feeding habitat;
- An assessment of the importance of the site to the species;
- An assessment of impact of the development and proposals for mitigation.
- Proposed management of breeding resting and feeding habitat

Survey standards

Survey should be carried out by appropriately qualified/ experienced personnel.

Survey methods depend on the species concerned. The timing of surveys for each species is found in **Table 3**.

Annex 2C Guidance for species Protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act

Detailed guidance for individual bird species.

Barn owl (*Tyto alba*)

Design Considerations

Planning proposals need to consider the following:

- Protection and/or provision of safe and secure nesting sites;
- The retention and provision of suitable foraging habitat on and/or off site and access to this;
- Appropriate foraging habitat management.

Black redstart (*Phoenicurus ochruros*)

Design Considerations.

Planning proposals need to consider the following:

- Renovation, alteration or demolition may well be controlled by the Wildlife & Countryside Act if the species is present and breeding.
- Where the renovation, alteration and demolition of old buildings are anticipated, especially those located alongside canal, rail or Metro corridors, the incorporation of features providing secure cavities or ledges for breeding purposes.
- The protection, provision and/or availability of foraging habitat, normally of a wasteland type, near to the nest site. 'Brown roofs' on buildings should be considered where sufficient terrestrial landscaping cannot be provided.

In Walsall the following mitigation zones have been identified based on record data. Any planning applications within the 1 km radius zones shown on this plan will be required to provide habitat and nesting sites for black redstarts, where appropriate.



Hobby (*Falco subbuteo*)

Design Considerations

Planning proposals need to consider the following:

- Use of the site for nesting and/or foraging.
- Retention or provision of suitable nesting sites such as old trees and/or pylons.
- Where hobbies are known to use a site suitable foraging habitat such as open habitat with woodland edges, trees and hedgerows should be protected and/or provided.

Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*)

Design considerations

Planning proposals, which affect watercourses, canals and other surface water features need to consider the following:

- Bank side nesting sites, habitat and fishing perches.
- Effects on water quality.
- Water quantity and flow and effects on breeding and feeding habitat.
- Provision of artificial nesting sites along appropriate watercourses.

Little ringed plover (*Charadrius dubius*)

Design Considerations

Planning proposals for a little ringed plover breeding site need to consider the following:

- The retention and/or provision of open bare habitat of a shingly nature close to water.
- Measures to ensure that no work is carried out or disturbance caused during the breeding season.
- Control of public access to any breeding and /or feeding areas during the breeding

season.

Peregrine falcon (*Falco peregrinus*)

Design Considerations

Planning proposals need to consider the following:

- Protection of existing breeding or potential breeding sites.
- Where development consists of the refurbishment of existing tall structures, the provision/retention of ledges sheltered from prevailing weather and from disturbance.
- Where proposals involve quarrying, opportunities for creating ledges sheltered from prevailing weather and from disturbance.

Annex 2D Guidance for species Protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act

Reptiles

General

Four species of Britain's protected reptiles have been recorded in Birmingham and the Black Country. They are:

- Slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*)
- Common lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*)
- Adder (*Vipera berus*)
- Grass snake (*Natrix natrix*)

Legal Framework

These species are protected under Schedule 5 of WCA 1981 against intentional killing or injuring. The animals themselves can be moved, however if this is necessary. It is recommended that it is carried out in liaison with Natural England.

Information Requirements and Survey Standards

Where reptiles are known to be present or have been recorded on or immediately adjacent to a site that is the subject of a planning application, developers will be requested by the Council to provide:

- Information about population status and hibernation, feeding and basking sites.
- An evaluation of the importance of the site to the population using it.
- An assessment of the impact of the proposed development.
- Proposals for mitigation in respect of the population.

Records of these species usually result from chance encounters in suitable habitats. They are mostly inconspicuous and difficult to find. April, May and September are the best months for surveying, when animals are most likely to be seen basking. Use of artificial refugia is a useful survey technique in certain situations. *The Herpetofauna Workers Manual* produced by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee in 1998 provides the most comprehensive digest of surveying.

The future management and monitoring of reptiles and their associated breeding, resting, feeding and hibernating habitat may need to be addressed whilst determining any planning application.

Developers should be aware that re-location schemes are not favoured by the Council as they are not proven and are not regarded as a substitute for the retention and/ or provision of suitable habitat and hibernation sites.

To assist developers, the specific requirements of the four species are set out below.

Annex 2E Guidance for species Protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act

Guidance for individual reptile species.

Slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*)

Design Considerations

Planning proposals need to consider the following:

- Retention and/or provision of dry grassland and scrub where disturbance is minimal.
- Provision of habitat piles of stones and logs, which are important as resting/hibernation sites.

Common lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*)

Design Considerations

Planning proposals need to consider the following:

- Retention and/or provision of access to areas of suitable open habitat.
- Management to prevent the growth of trees and scrub that would shade the open habitat.
- Protection and/or provision of good quality wildlife corridors linking breeding/foraging habitat, and enabling dispersal.
- Provision of habitat piles of stones, logs or other suitable material to provide resting/hibernation sites.

Adder (*Vipera berus*)

Design Considerations

Planning proposals need to consider the following:

- Retention and/or provision of access to areas of suitable open habitat.
- Management to prevent the growth of trees and scrub that would shade the open habitat.
- Protection and/or provision of access routes linking breeding/foraging habitat.
- Well-drained frost-free areas, such as banks or walls retained or provided for winter hibernation.

Grass snake (*Natrix natrix*)

Design Considerations

Planning proposals need to consider the following:

- Protection and/or provision of suitable accessible habitat on and/or off site.
- Protection and/or provision of access routes linking areas of breeding/foraging habitat.
- Provision of incubation sites in the form of piles of vegetation or grass clippings.
- Well-drained frost-free areas, such as banks or walls with holes, are needed so that they can survive the winter.
- Management to prevent the growth of trees and scrub that would shade the open habitat.

Annex 3A Other protected species

Badger (*Meles meles*)

Legal Framework

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 protects the animals themselves from harm or from disturbance when occupying a sett, and protects setts against damage, destruction or obstruction. In order to undertake the development of land (as defined in Section 55(1) of the Town & Country Planning Act (1990)) or to carry out any work that would entail interference with or disturbance of setts, a licence from Natural England, must be obtained. A Local Biodiversity Action Plan exists for this species. Objectives are to protect their setts and to protect and enhance habitat.

Information Requirements and Survey Standards

The amount of information required in support of a planning application will depend on the potential impact that the work is likely to have on the local badger population. This information should address:

- The status and occupancy of all setts affected or not, available to the social group(s);
- Effects of the development on setts and on the badger social group(s);
- The presence and location of badger walkways and pathways;
- The extent and location of foraging habitat;
- The scale, nature and timeframe of badger activity;
- Mitigation required to avoid damage to badgers and to comply with legal requirements.

Given this specie's liability to persecution, it is of utmost importance that the issues relating to development proposals are dealt with in a confidential manner.

Survey and mitigation proposals and licensed work should be undertaken by recognised and competent ecological consultants with a proven record of badger work.

Design Considerations

Planning proposals should take into account the following:

- Any work affecting badgers or their setts is illegal without a licence, issued by Natural England. This may apply to activities up to 30 metres from a sett;
- Timing of work. There is a presumption against issuing licences between December 1st and June 30th when significant disturbance could affect breeding badgers;
- Design layout to accommodate setts and access to foraging habitat;
- Badger use patterns within the site and to and from adjacent habitat;
- Management of foraging habitat where appropriate;
- Protection of badgers and their setts will not be considered sufficient mitigation if foraging habitat or safe access to this is not safeguarded. This should include provisions to avoid or minimise risks of road casualties.

Annex 4A Priority species and habitats listed in Section 74 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 found in the Black Country.

Habitats

Ancient and/ or species-rich hedgerows
Cereal field margins
Eutrophic standing waters
Lowland calcareous grassland
Lowland dry acidic grassland
Lowland heathland
Lowland meadows
Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
Lowland wood-pasture and parkland
Reedbeds
Wet woodland

Species: Amphibians

<i>Triturus cristatus</i>	Warty Newt / Great Crested Newt
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Species: Birds

<i>Acrocephalus palustris</i>	Marsh Warbler
<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Sky Lark
<i>Botaurus stellaris</i>	Bittern
<i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	Nightjar
<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	Linnet
<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Reed Bunting
<i>Jynx torquilla</i>	Wryneck
<i>Lanius collurio</i>	Red-backed Shrike
<i>Melanitta nigra</i>	Common Scoter
<i>Miliaria calandra</i>	Corn Bunting
<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	Spotted Flycatcher
<i>Passer montanus</i>	Tree Sparrow
<i>Perdix perdix</i>	Grey Partridge
<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Bullfinch
<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>	Turtle Dove
<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Song Thrush

Species: Mammals

<i>Arvicola terrestris</i>	Water Vole
<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	Brown Hare
<i>Lutra lutra</i>	Otter
<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Common Pipistrelle

Species: Invertebrates

<i>Amara famelica</i>	a ground beetle
<i>Asilus crabroniformis</i>	a robber fly

Austropotamobius pallipes
Bombus ruderatus
Euphydryas aurinia
Mythimna turca
Melanapion minimum

Freshwater Crayfish
Large Garden Bumble Bee
Marsh Fritillary
Double Line
a seed weevil

Species: Vascular (Higher) Plants

Arabis glabra
Carex vulpina
Centaurea cyanus
Dianthus armeria
Juniperus communis
Luronium natans
Mentha pulegium
Pilularia globulifera
Potamogeton compressus
Ranunculus tripartitus
Scandix pecten-veneris
Silene gallica

Tower Mustard
True Fox-sedge
Cornflower
Deptford Pink
Common Juniper
Floating Water Plantain
Pennyroyal
Pillwort
Grass-wrack Pondweed
Three-lobed Crowfoot
Shepherd's-needle
Small-flowered Catchfly

Annex 4B National biodiversity priority species and habitats

(The list of UK priority species and habitats has been substantially revised in 2007. This annex needs further work to ensure that all the species recorded in Walsall and the Black Country are listed.)

HABITATS.

Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land.

This is a new priority habitat that covers post-industrial/ brownfield areas.

Definition: A mosaic of semi-natural vegetation types and development stages.

- Very early pioneer communities on skeletal substrates (includes bare ground and spoil mounds).
- Established areas of open, species-rich grasslands and/or patches of other habitats (heathland, swamp, ephemeral ponds, inundation grassland).
- Important for Hymenoptera and Coleoptera species. especially on sandy substrates used for burrowing, nesting with particular value added if in mosaic with bare ground and flower-rich areas.

Rivers.

This is a new priority habitat.

Definition: This covers all types of natural and near-natural running water. As a minimum the habitat is defined as extending to the top of the adjacent banks, recognising that;

- It may be desirable to restore the river to a previous course;
- A river's floodplain (present or **historical**) may be essential to its ecological functioning.
- Areas of adjacent habitat (fen, carr, grassland) may be an integral component of the river system but are excluded from the definition, but adjacent ponds formed by river dynamics are included (oxbows).

The following are excluded:

- Canals
- Ditches
- Heavily modified rivers, streams or reaches.

Ponds.

This is a new priority habitat.

Definition: Permanent and seasonal standing water bodies up to 2 ha in extent which meet **one or more** of the following criteria:

- Ponds that meet the criteria under Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive.
- Ponds supporting Red Data Book species, UK BAP species, Wildlife and Countryside Act Schedule 5 and 8 species, Habitats Directive Annex II species, a Nationally Scarce wetland plant species, or three Nationally Scarce aquatic invertebrate species.

- Ponds supporting exceptional populations or numbers of key species that meet the biological SSSI criteria (relating to amphibians and dragonflies) or sites with exceptional assemblages of plants or invertebrates (more than 30 species of wetland plants or more than 50 aquatic macroinvertebrate species).
- Ponds that score more than 75% using the Predictive System for Multimetrics (PSYM).
- Ponds that are of a specific type (e.g. pingos, dune slack ponds, dew ponds, machair ponds) due to their rarity, age or cultural significance.

The above criteria are designed to identify the best examples of ponds within a region. It has been estimated that 20% of UK ponds will meet one or more of the above criteria.

Inland Rock Outcrop and Scree Habitats.

This is a new priority habitat. The definition includes scree slopes, cliff ledges, crevices and the vertical faces of outcrops. Within the borough there are a number of rock outcrops resulting from quarrying activities and the construction of road, rail and canal cuttings. However, the age and isolation of these areas has not produced vegetation that is characteristic of natural cliffs and scree slopes. Within the borough these areas are important for invertebrates and birds.

The Geodiversity Action Plan covers rock outcrops from a geological perspective.

Hedgerows.

This is a name change from **Ancient and/or Species-rich Hedgerows**. The revised definition widens the scope for inclusion of important hedgerow mosaics on a landscape scale. It is recommended that each county produces a list of woody species that are considered to be native to their respective counties.

Definition:

A hedgerow is defined as any boundary line of trees and shrubs over 20m in length and less than 5m in width and where any gaps between trees or shrubs are less than 20m wide.

Features that are considered to be integral to a hedgerow are any bank, wall, ditch or tree within 2m of the centre of the hedgerow. Included within this is the herbaceous vegetation within the 2m zone.

N.B. Climbers, for example, honeysuckle and bramble are not to be included as woody species since they require other woody plants to be present in order to form a distinct woody boundary.

It is estimated that at least 80% of UK hedgerows will be included within this new definition.

Arable Field Margins.

This is a name change from **Cereal Field Margins** and is intended to cover field margins sown with non-cereal species.

Definition:

This is the zone between the hedgerow boundary (note the hedgerow extends to 2m from the centre of the hedge) and the arable crop. It can vary in width dependent upon the type of crop, field size, agri-environment grant conditions, but is considered to be the outer 2-12m margin of the arable field. These limits are defined by the type of management that is undertaken to specifically benefit wildlife. The following margin types are included:

- Cultivated low-input margins – margins periodically cultivated (annually or biennially) that are not sprayed during the Spring/Summer with insecticides and not sprayed with herbicides unless they are used to control injurious weeds as defined by the Weeds Act. Margins managed specifically for annual arable plants are included under this definition.
- Margins or blocks sown with specific seed mixes to encourage birds or invertebrates.
- Margins of permanent grass strips that have tussock forming species and fine-leaved grass species.
- Margins that are excluded under the above definition include:
- Set-aside, biomass and organic crops (it is noted that these activities have incidental benefits for wildlife but are not managed specifically for wildlife and are excluded from the definition).
- Margins that are established as cross compliance requirements under the Single Payment Scheme or as a mandatory requirement of an Entry-Level Agri-environment Scheme.
- Whole-field options e.g. over-wintered stubbles, and in-field options e.g. skylark plots. It is recognised that these areas are beneficial to wildlife and in particular BAP priority species, but are currently excluded from the definition but will be reviewed at a later date.

Lowland Heathland.

The definition has been refined to include areas of heathland in its broadest context. The revised definition states that:

- Lowland heathland is a broadly open landscape on impoverished, acidic mineral and shallow peat soils, characterised by ericaceous plants and dwarf gorses. It can also develop on drift soils and weathered flint beds over calcareous soils.
- It is usually found below 300m in altitude.
- Good condition is defined as areas having an ericaceous layer of varying heights and structures, including some or all of the following dependent upon management and or environmental conditions: scattered and clumped trees and scrub; bracken; bare ground; acidic grassland; lichens; gorse; wet heaths; bogs and open water.
- The presence of characteristic birds, reptiles, invertebrates, vascular plants, bryophytes and lichens.

N.B. For mapping purposes, a general rule is if there is <25% dwarf shrub cover (heathers but includes bilberry, cowberry and crowberry) it is classed as grassland, obviously, >25% cover is heathland.

Wood-Pasture and Parkland.

This is a name change from **Lowland Wood-Pasture and Parkland**, and has been extended to include upland examples of this habitat.

Definition: The following examples are to be included:

- Wood-pastures and parklands that have been derived from medieval forests and emparkments, wooded commons, parks and pastures with trees in them. A range of native tree species are dominant amongst the old trees but old/veteran non-native species may also be present.
- Parklands dating from the 19th century and later but contain examples of older trees derived from an earlier landscape.
- Under-managed and unmanaged wood-pastures with veteran trees, in a matrix of secondary woodland or scrub that has developed through regeneration or planting.
- Parkland or wood-pasture that has been converted to other land uses, e.g. arable, forestry or amenity land but where the surviving veteran trees are of ecological importance.

Areas excluded from this habitat type are:

- Parklands with 19th century origins or later that do not have the above characteristics (relic veteran trees etc).

SPECIES.

A number of species (1149) have been added to the UK priority list which have been split into sections on birds, freshwater fish, herptiles, lower plants and fungi, marine species, terrestrial and freshwater invertebrates, terrestrial mammals and vascular plants. The list below are species that occur within Birmingham and the Black Country but further work is required, particularly with invertebrates, fungi and lower plants where existing data sets need to be filtered for the presence of priority species. BAP against a species indicates that a UK Biodiversity Action Plan has been produced.

Birds:

Marsh Warbler BAP
Sky Lark BAP
Tree Pipit
Hawfinch
Common Cuckoo
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
Yellowhammer
Reed Bunting BAP
Common Grasshopper Warbler
Wood Lark BAP
Corn Bunting BAP
Spotted Flycatcher BAP
Willow Tit
Marsh Tit

House Sparrow
Eurasian Tree Sparrow BAP
Grey Partridge BAP
Common Bullfinch BAP
Common Starling
Song Thrush
Northern Lapwing
Hedge Accentor (Dunnock)

Freshwater Fish.

European Eel
Spined Loach

Herptiles.

Slow-worm
Common Toad
Common Lizard
Grass Snake
Great Crested Newt BAP
Adder

Lower Plants and fungi.

More research is required to filter the published list in relation to our region.

Terrestrial and Freshwater Invertebrates.

More research is required to filter the published list in relation to our region. There are a number of moth species added to the list which occur within our area, especially daytime flying species of grasslands, but expert opinion on these is required before further actions are taken.

Terrestrial Mammals.

Water Vole BAP
West European Hedgehog
Brown Hare, BAP
Otter BAP
Noctule
Soprano Pipistrelle BAP
Brown long-eared bat
Lesser Horseshoe Bat BAP

Vascular Plants.

Red Helleborine
Floating Water Plantain BAP
Three-lobed Water-crowfoot BAP

Annex 4C Species and habitats which are the subject of a local Biodiversity Action Plan

Local Biodiversity Action Plan: Habitats.

Arable fields
Arable field margins and beetle banks
Buildings and the built environment
Canals
Deadwood
Eutrophic urban pools
Gardens, allotments, parks and public open space
Garden ponds
Grassland:
Lowland dry acid grassland
Lowland neutral and base-rich grassland
Lowland wet grassland
Hedgerows
Lowland heathland:
Rivers and streams
Urban "wasteland"
Woodland
Ancient and semi-natural woodland
Wet woodland
Lowland wood-pasture and parks
Veteran and notable trees
Scrub and naturally regenerating woodland
Introduced woodlands
Secondary woodland

Vaccinium species (bilberry and relatives)

Wall brown

Water vole

White-clawed crayfish

Local Biodiversity Action Plan: species

Amphibians (frog / toad / smooth newt)
Badger
Bats
Black redstart
Bluebell
Brown hare
Floating water plantain
Great crested -newt
Green hairstreak
Grey partridge
Kestrel
Orchids
Skylark
Snipe
Song thrush
Tree sparrow

Annex 5 List of existing plans, policies and programmes relevant to this SPD (In chronological order)

Government Circular 36/1978: Trees and Forestry. DoE 1978.
Not available in-line.

Biodiversity: the UK Action Plan. HMSO 1994.
Not available on line. £18.50 (ISBN 0-10-124282-4)

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in the West Midlands. English Nature 1997.
Not available on-line.

A Better Quality of Life – A Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK. DETR 1999
<http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/uk-strategy99/index.htm>

Birmingham and Black Country Biodiversity Action Plan. 2000.
<http://www.wildlifetrust.org.uk/urbanwt/ecorecord/bap/html/main.htm>

Tree Preservation Orders: A Guide to the Law and Good Practice. DETR 2000.
<http://www.comunities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1127782>

Working with the Grain of Nature- A Biodiversity Strategy for England. Defra 2002.
<http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/biodiversity/biostrat/biostrategy1to4.pdf>

Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands. ODPM 2004. <http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=47>

Black Country Study. Black Country Consortium 2005.
<http://www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk/page.asp?pageref=10>

Black Country Study Urban Park Concept. Black Country Consortium 2005.
www.blackcountryconsortium.co.uk/download.asp?fileid=377&detailsid=100

Government Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system. ODPM 2005
<http://comunities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1143832>

Planning Policy Statement 9: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. ODPM 2005
<http://comunities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1143832>

Restoring the Region's Wildlife: Regional Biodiversity Strategy for the West Midlands. West Midlands Biodiversity Partnership 2005.
<http://www.wmbp.org/assets/userfiles/000424.pdf>

Securing the Future - UK Government Sustainable Development Strategy. TSO 2005.
<http://www.sustainable-development.gov.uk/publications/uk-strategy/index.htm>

Walsall Unitary Development Plan March 2005.
http://www.walsall.gov.uk/index/environment/planning/unitary_development_plan.htm

Working together for a stronger community: Walsall's Community Plan 2005-2010. Walsall Council 2005.

<http://www.walsall-ll-alliance.co.uk/pdf/Community%20Plan%202005.pdf>

Black Country Geodiversity Action Plan. Black Country Geodiversity Partnership 2006.

<http://www.laws.sandwell.gov.uk/ccm/content/urbanform/planninganddevelopment/ldf/supplementary-planning-documents/black-country-geodiversity-action-plan.en?textonly=yes>

Local Sites: Guidance on their Identification, Selection and Management. Defra 2006.

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/ewd/local-sites/localsites.pdf>

Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: A guide to good practice. ODPM 2006.

<http://comunities.gov.uk/index.asp?id=1143832>

Planning Policy Statement 25: Development and flood risk. C&LG 2006.

<http://www.communities.gov.uk/documents/planningandbuilding/pdf/planningpolicystatement25>

Walsall Statement of Community Involvement. Walsall Council 2006.

http://www.walsall.gov.uk/statement_community_involvement.pdf

A Strategy for England's Trees, Woods and Forests. defra 2007.

<http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/rddteam/pdf/0706forestry-strategy.pdf>

Green Infrastructure: A prospectus for the West Midlands Region. West Midlands Regional Assembly Environmental Partnership (2007)

<http://www.growingourfuture.org/wmwff/taskgroups/gip/prospectus.pdf>

Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands. Government Office for the West Midlands:

Communities & Local Government (2008). <http://www.wmra.gov.uk/page.asp?id=47>

Annex 6 Unitary Development Plan policies relevant to this SPD

KEY POLICIES

ENV8: Great Barr Hall and estate and St Margaret's Hospital
ENV10: Pollution
ENV14: Development of derelict and previously developed sites
ENV15: Forest of Mercia
ENV16: Black Country Urban Forest
ENV17: New planting
ENV18: Existing woodlands, trees and hedgerows
ENV19: Habitat and species protection
ENV21: Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation
ENV22: Protected species
ENV23: Nature conservation and new development
ENV24: Wildlife corridors
ENV26: Industrial archaeology
ENV30: Registered Parks and Gardens
ENV32: Design and development proposals
ENV33: Landscape design
ENV40: Conservation, protection and use of water resources
JP4.1: East of M6 Junction 10
H10: Layout, design and dwelling mix
LC1: Urban Open Space
M6: Etruria marl- south of Stubbers Green Road
M8: Brownhills Common
M9: Working of coal

OTHER POLICIES

ENV6: Protection and encouragement of agriculture
ENV9: Environmental improvement initiatives
JP8: Bad neighbour industrial uses
T5: Highway improvements
LC9: Canals

Annex 7 Plan showing extent of Biodiversity Enhancement Area (BEA) (Cannock Chase to Sutton Park)

To be incorporated

Annex 8 Trees and shrubs native to the Black Country

Common name	Scientific name	Notes on use of the species.
Alder	<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Wet sites
Alder Buckthorn	<i>Frangula alnus</i>	
Crab apple	<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	
Aspen	<i>Populus tremula</i>	
Black Poplar	<i>Populus nigra</i> <i>subsp. betulifolia</i>	Only stock of local origin should be used
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Hedging
Broom	<i>Cytisus scoparius</i>	Acid sites
Crack Willow	<i>Salix fragilis</i>	Wet sites
Dog Rose	<i>Rosa canina</i>	
Dogwood	<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>	
Downy Birch	<i>Betula pubescens</i>	Wet, acid sites
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	
Field Maple	<i>Acer campestre</i>	
Goat Willow / Pussy Willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>	Wet sites
Gorse	<i>Ulex europaeus</i>	Acid sites
Grey Willow	<i>Salix cinerea</i>	Damp sites
Guelder-rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	Wet with heavy soils
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hedging
Hazel	<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Shaded sites
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>	Climber
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>	Climber
Midland Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus laevigata</i>	Shaded sites. Only stock of local origin should be used
Osier	<i>Salix viminalis</i>	Wet sites
Pedunculate Oak/ Common Oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>	
Rowan/ Mountain Ash	<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>	
Sessile Oak	<i>Quercus petraea</i>	
Silver Birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>	Acid sites
Small-leaved Lime	<i>Tilia cordata</i>	Only stock of local origin should be used
Spindle	<i>Euonymus europaeus</i>	Neutral or alkaline soils
White Willow	<i>Salix alba</i>	Wet sites
Wild Cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	
Yew	<i>Taxus baccata</i>	

Please note that some of these species should not be planted close to buildings. In selecting plants for inclusion in a landscape plan it is therefore recommended that appropriate professional advice is obtained.

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1: REFERENCES

WALSALL SITES & SPECIES

Annual Monitoring Report 2006. Walsall Council 2006.

Annual Monitoring Report 2005. Walsall Council 2005.

Ecological survey work commissioned by the Council between 1990 and 2007.

Schedule of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation boundaries and descriptions.

- Nature Conservancy Council 1977 (up-dated 1982)
- Nature Conservancy Council 1989.
- English Nature 1991.
- EcoRecord 1996.
- Walsall Council 2007 in preparation.

Schedules of Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation boundaries and descriptions.

Walsall Council 2007 in preparation.

West Midlands Inventory of Ancient Woodland. Nature Conservancy Council 1989.

Walsall Tree Preservation Orders 1960-2007.

Conservation Area Appraisals.

GENERAL

Birmingham City Council (1997) ***A nature conservation strategy for Birmingham.***

Black Country Boroughs & English Nature (1994) ***Black Country nature conservation strategy.***

DETR (1994) ***Planning Policy Guidance note 9-nature conservation.*** The Stationery Office, London

Dudley MBC (2006) ***Nature conservation supplementary planning document.*** Dudley MBC
<http://www.dudley.gov.uk/environment--planning/planning/local-development-framework/naturecons-spd>

English Nature (1998) ***Species conservation handbook.*** English Nature, Peterborough

English Nature (1994) ***Nature conservation in environmental assessment.*** English Nature, Peterborough.

Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2006) ***Guidelines for ecological impact assessment in the United Kingdom.*** <http://www.ieem.org.uk/ecia/index.html>

Institute of Environmental Assessment (1995) ***Guidelines for baseline ecological assessment.*** E & F N Spon, London

Nature Conservancy Council (1990) ***Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey.*** JNCC Revised reprint 2004

Oxford M (2000) ***Developing naturally: A handbook for incorporating the natural environment into planning and development***. ALGE

Pisolkar E (2005) ***Endless village revisited: Technical background***. Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country.

Prosser C P, Murphy M, Larwood J G (2006) ***Geological conservation: a guide to good practice***. English Nature

Royal Town Planning Institute (1999) ***Planning for diversity - Good practice guide***. Royal Town Planning Institute, London

Stace H, Larwood J G (2006) ***Natural foundations: geodiversity for people, places and nature***. English Nature.

Teagle WG (1978) ***Endless village***. Nature Conservancy Council

UK Biodiversity Partnership (2007) ***Conserving biodiversity in a changing climate. Guidance on building capacity to adapt***. Defra.

BADGERS

Clark M (1994) ***Badgers***. Whittet Books

English Nature (2002) ***Badgers and development***. English Nature, Peterborough

Harris S et al (1994) ***Problems with badgers?*** RSPCA Wildlife Department, Horsham West Sussex

Harris S, Cresswell P, Jefferies D (1989) ***Surveying badgers***. An occasional publication of the Mammal Society No 9. MammalSociety.

BATS

Bat Conservation Trust (1997) ***Bats and trees- A guide to the management of trees***. (leaflet)

Bat Conservation Trust (2007) ***Bat surveys- Good practice guidelines***. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

English Nature (2004) ***Bat mitigation guidelines***. English Nature, Peterborough. Can be

English Nature (1992) ***Focus on bats*** (leaflet) English Nature, Peterborough

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2001) ***Habitat management for bats***. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

Mitchell-Jones A & McLeish A (eds) (2004) ***The bat workers' manual*** (3rd edition). JNCC, Peterborough.

Nature Conservancy Council (1985) ***Bats in Roofs: a Guide for Surveyors***. (leaflet)

Richardson P (1990) ***Bats***. Whittet Books

Stebbins R, Walsh S (1985) ***Bat boxes***. Flora and Fauna Preservation Society

BIRDS

Batten L A *et al* (1990) **Red Data birds in Britain**. Published on behalf of the Nature Conservancy Council and RSPB by T & A D Poyser.

Gilbert G, Gibbons DW, Evans E (1998) **Bird monitoring methods**. RSPB

Harrison G (ed) (1982) **The birds of the West Midlands**. West Midlands Bird Club

Harrison G & J (2005) **The new birds of the West Midlands**. West Midlands Bird Club

Mead C (1990) **Owls**. Whittet Books

GREAT CRESTED-NEWTs

English Nature (2001) **Great crested newt mitigation guidelines**. English Nature, Peterborough.

English Nature (1996) **Great crested newts- Guidelines for developers**. English Nature, Peterborough

English Nature (1994) **Facts about great crested newts**. (leaflet) English Nature, Peterborough

Froglife (2001) **Great crested newt conservation handbook**. Froglife, Suffolk.

Langton TES, Beckett CL, Foster JP (2001) **Great crested newt conservation handbook**. Froglife, Halesworth

REPTILES & AMPHIBIANS

Beebee TJC & Griffiths RA (2000) **Amphibians and reptiles**. Collins New Naturalist

English Nature (2004) **Reptiles: guidelines for developers**. English Nature

Frazer D (1983) **Reptiles and amphibians in Britain**. Collins New Naturalist

Gent T & Gibson S (eds) (1998) **Herpetofauna workers' manual** Joint Nature Conservation Committee

WATER VOLES

English Nature (1999) **Water Voles Guidelines for Developers and Planners**. English Nature, Peterborough

Strachan R, Moorhouse T (2006) **Water Vole Conservation Handbook Second Edition**. Wildlife Conservation Research Unit, Oxford

WHITE-CLAWED CRAYFISH

Holdich D M (1991) "The native crayfish and threats to its existence." **British Wildlife** 2 (3): pp141 - 151

National Rivers Authority **A Guide to Identifying freshwater crayfish in Britain and Ireland** (leaflet)

TREES

British Standards that apply to vegetation management and development proposals. *(BSI standards are subject to regular revision)*

BS 5837	Trees in relation to construction - Recommendations (2005)
BS 1192	Construction drawing practice Part 4 Recommendations for landscape drawings
BS 1377	Methods of test for soils for civil engineering purposes
BS 1722	Fences - o Part 1 Specification for chain link fences - o Part 4 Specification for cleft chestnut pale fences
BS 3882	Specification for topsoil and requirements for use
BS 3936	Nursery Stock - o Part 1 Specification for trees and shrubs - o Part 4 Specification for forest trees - o Part 5 Specification for poplars and willows
BS 3998	Recommendations for tree work
BS 4043	Recommendations for transplanting root-balled trees
BS 4428	Code of practice for general landscape operations (excluding hard surfaces)
BS 5930	Code of practice for site investigations
BRE Digest 240	Low-rise buildings on shrinkable clay soils: Part 1, 1993
BRE Digest 241	Low-rise buildings on shrinkable clay soils: Part 2, 1990
BRE Digest 298	The influence of trees on house foundations in clay soils, 1999
NHBC Standards, Chapter 4.2	'Building near trees'

APPENDIX 2: CONTACTS: ECOLOGY & GEODIVERSITY

Walsall Council

Natural Environment Team, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall, West Midlands. WS1 1TP.
Tel: 01922 652469, Fax: 01922 652535.

Natural Environment Team:-Information and advice on nature conservation matters including surveys, records, habitat protection, restoration and creation and the Birmingham and Black Country Biodiversity Action Plan.

Planning & Building Control, Civic Centre, Darwall Street, Walsall, West Midlands. WS1 1DG.

Tel: 01922 652452, Fax: 01922 623234

Development Control:- Information and advice on submission of planning applications.

Bat Conservation Trust

Advice and information on bat ecology, conservation and legal requirements. Leaflets on bat species and their conservation.

15 Cloisters House, 8 Battersea Park Road, London SW8 4BG
Bat Helpline 0171 627 8822

Birmingham and Black Country Biodiversity Partnership

Co-ordinates the implementation of the Black Country Biodiversity Action Plan.

28 Harborne Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 3AA.
Tel: 0121 454 1199

Black Country Geodiversity Partnership

Co-ordinates the implementation of the Black Country Geodiversity Action Plan.

The Studios 53 High Street, Stourbridge DY8 1DE
01384 443644

British Waterways

Information and advice relating to canals and their wildlife, including water voles.

Conservation Officer, National Office:
Llanthony Warehouse, Gloucester Dock, Gloucester, GL1 2BJ

Birmingham and Black Country:
Peel Wharf, Lichfield Street, Fazeley, Tamworth B78 3QZ
01827 252000

EcoRecord

The Local Biological Records Centre for the Black Country and Birmingham.
Site and species data provided (a fee may be charged).

28 Harborne Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 3AA.
Tel: 0121 454 1808

Environment Agency

For any proposal affecting watercourses, ponds or other surface water features and disposal of waste water. For advice on sustainable treatment of surface water, management of water courses, pond creation and management.

Upper Trent catchment:

Sentinel House, Wellington Crescent, Fradley Park, Lichfield, Staffordshire, WS13 8RR

Froglife

Advice on the conservation of all amphibians and on pond creation and management.

White Lodge, London Road, Peterborough PE7 0LG

Herpetological Conservation Trust

Advice on the conservation of amphibians and reptiles.

655a Christchurch Road, Boscombe, Bournemouth, Dorset BH1 4AP

National Federation of Badger Groups

Advice on badger conservation and legal requirements, contact for local badger groups.

c/o 15 Cloisters House, 8 Battersea Park Road, London SW8 4BG

Natural England

Must be contacted regarding any proposal affecting protected species.

Information on habitat and species management practices.

Information on National and Local Biodiversity Action Plans

West Midlands Region:

Attingham Park, Atcham, Shrewsbury, SY4 4TW

01743 282000

National Office:

Natural England, 1 East Parade, Sheffield, S1 2ET

Wildlife Licensing Unit

Burghill Road, Westbury-on-Trym, Bristol, BS10 6NJ

0845 6014523

<http://www.natural England.org.uk/conservation/wildlife-management-licnesing/habsregs.htm>

Royal Society for the Protection of Birds

Information on habitat and management requirements for birds.

Headquarters:

The Lodge, Sandy, Bedfordshire SG19 2DL. Tel: 01767-680551

Midlands Regional

Office Banbury, Oxfordshire, OX16 9AB

Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country

Information on National and Local Biodiversity Action Plans.

Information on site, habitat and species management practices.
Environmental appraisal and surveys

28 Harborne Road, Edgbaston, Birmingham B15 3AA.
Tel: 0121 454 1199

APPENDIX 3 CONTACTS: TREES AND WOODLANDS

Arboricultural Advisory and Information Service

Forest Research Station, Alice Holt Lodge, Wrecclesham, Farnham,
Surrey GU10 4LH

Helpline: 09065 161147

Tel: 01420 22022. Email:

admin@treehelp.info

Website: www.treehelp.info

Arboricultural Association

Ampfield House, Ampfield, Nr. Romsey, Hants SO51 9PA

Tel: 01794 368717.

Email: admin@trees.org.uk

Website: www.trees.org.uk

Ancient Tree Forum

c/o Woodland Trust, Autumn Park, Dysart Road, Grantham, Lincolnshire
NG32 6LL

Tel: 01476 581135

Email: ancient-tree-forum@woodlandtrust.org.uk

Website: www.woodland-trust.org.uk/ancient-tree-forum

Horticultural Trades Association (HTA)

Horticulture House, 19 High Street, Theale RG7 5AH

Tel: 0118 930 3132

Email: info@the-hta.org.uk

Website: www.the-hta.org

Institute of Chartered Foresters

7A Colme Street, Edinburgh EH3 6AA

Tel: 0131 225 2705

Email: icf@charteredforesters.org

Website: www.charteredforesters.org

International Society of Arboriculture, UK and Ireland Chapter

148 Hydes Road, Wednesbury, West Midlands WS10 0DR

Tel 0121 556 8302

Email: enquiries@isa-uki.org

Website: www.isa-uk.org