Surrey Wildlife Trust

Surrey Wildlife Trust
Ecology Services

ECOLOGICAL INFORMATION GUIDE

Expectations for ecological information to inform planning applications

Surrey Wildlife Trust and SWT Ecology Services review ecological information to inform planning applications. This guide aims to outline the key considerations when we review ecological information to help streamline the process.

Ecological Information submitted to inform a planning application must:

- Be undertaken by a reputable professional (e.g. CIEEM Members' Directory have the relevant survey licences where applicable/evidence their experience)
- Be undertaken in line with good practice
- Acknowledge limitations and detail how these have been addressed such that the results can be relied upon to determine the application

Impacts must be assessed against:

- Correct development footprint (all redline boundaries MUST align)
- Arboricultural Impact Assessments
- Landscaping plans

Maps must be:

- Clearly labelled, with all Compartment IDs aligning with the ecology report AND biodiversity net gain assessment (where relevant) and Target Notes defined in the report
- In colour and at an appropriate scale for someone to review against the report conclusions

Reports must:

- Be written, reviewed and/or approved by an ecologist with appropriate experience
- Be supported by useful photographs to evidence the conclusions
- Be informed by surveys undertaken with no residual limitations and follow good practice - where deviations have occurred these must be fully justified and evidence of reliability provided
- Assess the impact of all the proposals on the ecological receptors
- Include mitigation that considers seasonal constraints across all relevant species and ensure these are not contradictory
- Evidence how the mitigation hierarchy has been applied, including details of meetings held between the ecologists and design team to reach submitted designs
- Detail why ecological receptors have been scoped out, and evidence how barriers (e.g. roads) prevent species from moving across the landscape

Biodiversity net gain assessments must:

- Be undertaken by a reputable professional
- Complete all sections of the metric, including Compartment IDs and ensure maps clearly present these
- Be accompanied by the condition assessment forms
- Ensure watercourse assessments follow good practice guidance and have been undertaken by an accredited assessor

Recommended further surveys:

- Surveys must be based on the evidence gathered during the desk study and surveys, noting an absence of a species from a desk study does not preclude the species being present in the survey area
- If a species is not present during a habitat survey, this does not mean the species is likely to be absent
- Where suitable habitat is recorded and will be adversely impacted by the proposals, presence/likely absence surveys should be undertaken to inform the Ecological Impact Assessment

swtecologyservices.org Tel: 01483 795 465 Email: ecologyservices@surreywt.org.uk

SWT Ecology Services is a fully owned subsidiary of Surrey Wildlife Trust. Registered Charity number 208123. Registered company number 11034197. VAT number GB 791 3799 78. Registered office – School Lane Pirbright, Surrey, GU24 0JN