

Policy BW1

Safeguarding Places for Wildlife and Nature

Designated Sites

Designated sites of importance for biodiversity will be protected, from direct and indirect adverse impacts, in line with the hierarchy set down in the NPPF.

Locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity will be protected from development which would result in an adverse effect, directly or indirectly, to its nature or geological conservation interest.

Locally designated sites include:

- Local Wildlife Sites
- Nature reserves including Local Nature Reserves, Roadside Nature Reserves and Kent Wildlife Trust Reserve
- Regionally Important Geological Sites

The enhancement of biodiversity through the creation, enhancement, extension and management of locally designated sites will be supported.

Blue-Green Infrastructure

The District's blue-green infrastructure (BGI) network comprises a wide range of elements as detailed in the supporting text.

Proposals which protect, retain, restore and enhance the blue-green infrastructure network will be supported.

Proposals for major development will be expected to identify, as a baseline, existing blue-green infrastructure features and its condition, on-site, off-site and links with the BGI network.

Blue-green infrastructure features include, but are not limited to:

- Open/green space (including parks and burial grounds)
- Private domestic gardens
- Orchards
- Allotments
- Traffic-free routes

- Street furniture and utility structures
- Green and blue roofs
- Green walls
- Trees, woodlands, hedges and hedgerows, including street trees
- Rainwater harvesting and smart controls
- Downpipe disconnection planters
- Rain gardens
- Biofiltration strips, swales, ponds and detention basins
- Vegetated sustainable drainage systems
- Ponds, ditches and watercourses
- Features for species e.g. bird boxes or nests, swift bricks and hedgehog holes

Development proposals on sites containing existing Blue-Green Infrastructure will be expected to retain, protect, where necessary restore, and enhance existing blue-green infrastructure features.

For example, where a site includes a river, that could include river restoration.

All development proposals are expected to maximise opportunities for the provision of new or additional BGI.

Development proposals will be supported where the BGI has been fully considered, has taken account of the existing network, is suitable for the location, addressing local need, and includes new connections to the existing network, where possible and has had regard to and responded to appropriate and applicable strategies and evidence.

Any BGI should be multi-functional and supporting documentation should set out what functions it seeks to provide.

Proposals will be expected to include details demonstrating how it will be maintained and managed, including how it will be funded, for the life of the development.

Schemes and projects which would enhance the blue-green infrastructure network will be supported.