

# Policy BW2

## Biodiversity in Development

The biodiversity of the District will be protected and enhanced.

Proposals should demonstrate how they have:

1. Applied the mitigation hierarchy and minimised their impact on biodiversity;
2. Conserved, restored and/or enhanced priority habitats, where applicable;
3. Conserved, restored and/or enhanced ecological networks, where applicable; and,
4. Protected and supported the recovery of priority and threatened species, including installing appropriate ecological features e.g. swift bricks and porous boundaries.

Proposals should have regard to and be informed by the most up-to-date strategies, including the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy, once published.

Once published, proposals should demonstrate:

1. How they align with the Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy's priorities for nature recovery;
2. Where they are in an area identified in the LNRS as one that could become of particular importance for biodiversity, how and which of the mapped potential measures have been incorporated; and,
3. How and which wider measures have been incorporated, where the site is located outside of the areas identified as those which could become of particular importance for biodiversity.

Proposals which result in the loss or damage to irreplaceable habitats (which include Ancient Woodland and Ancient and Veteran Trees) will be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable mitigation strategy exists.

# Policy BW2 (continued)

## Biodiversity in Development

### **Biodiversity Net Gain**

Proposals for new development which are exempt under the regulations should seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity and are encouraged to achieve measurable net gain.

All proposals for new development (qualifying development), which are not exempted through regulations, must provide biodiversity net gain in accordance with the statutory requirement of 10%.

Planning applications which are not exempt from the biodiversity net gain requirement are encouraged to include additional information, over and above the statutory validation requirements, to support the application and to enable consideration of if and how the biodiversity net gain objective could be secured and that the biodiversity mitigation hierarchy has been applied.

Biodiversity net gain should be provided on the application site, wherever possible, and in developing the proposed habitat conservation or enhancement measures to secure the biodiversity gain objective, regard should be had to the published local nature recovery strategy and where it is within a National Landscape, to the applicable management plan.

Where off-site provision is proposed this should, wherever possible and appropriate, align with the following approach:

1. Off-site units should be provided on land with Sevenoaks District;
2. Where 1. is not possible, off-site biodiversity units should be in the same national character area as the application site but within an adjoining local planning authority area; or,
3. Where 2. is not possible, off-site biodiversity units should be in the same national character area as the application site but may be beyond adjoining local planning authority areas.

Where off-site provision is proposed, clearly demonstrate and justify why it is not possible to provide all or even some of the biodiversity net gain on the application site and demonstrate that the above hierarchy has been followed.

Off-site provision within Sevenoaks District should be delivered within or provide connections between areas of noted conservation value such as designated sites, priority habitats, Local Wildlife Sites, Nature Reserves and irreplaceable habitats. Regard should be had to the:

- Interim Strategic Significance guidance (until the LNRS for Kent and Medway is published)
- Kent and Medway Local Nature Recovery Strategy (once published)

An appropriate funding mechanism may need to be secured to include funding for the Council to cover the costs of long-term monitoring, where applicable.