

Eastside Biodiversity Strategy

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Prepared for Sustainable Eastside by
The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham and the Black Country and
The University of Birmingham



Information required when submitting planning applications.

| Actions required | Type of application | | | |
|--|---------------------|--------|-----------|------------|
| | Change of use | Refurb | New Build | Demolition |
| UDP Nature Conservation Policies relevant to application considered | | | ✓ | ✓ |
| Aims of BBCBAP and City's Nature Conservation Strategy should be furthered as far as possible | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Wildlife survey carried out to assess presence of rare, protected and BAP species on site – if protected species are found 'Requirements for Proposals Affecting Protected Species' (below) must be followed | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Potential impact of work on existing areas of wildlife interest considered | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Timing of work must not coincide with breeding/nesting times for protected species | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Sufficient measures to protect existing areas of wildlife interest on and close to the site during and after development | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Sufficient compensation for any areas of unavoidable loss of wildlife interest areas provided for, either on or off site | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Opportunities for enhancing wildlife interest be taken | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Consideration given to linkages with sites of wildlife interest beyond the site | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |
| Plan for management of future wildlife interest produced | | | ✓ | |
| Building design should include where appropriate, features in accord with urban sustainability (green/brown roofs, bird & bat boxes, native & wildlife friendly planting schemes etc) | | ✓ | ✓ | ✓ |

✓ Denotes areas where action is necessary if proposed work will affect building exterior or roof, where various species of bird or bat may currently roost or nest, and where they may be able to roost or nest in the future if consideration is given to them during the planning stage.

Requirements for Proposals Affecting Protected Wildlife Species

The presence of three protected species in Eastside (the black redstart and two bat species), has serious implications in the planning process. PPS9 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, 2005) stresses that the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a local authority is considering a development proposal which 'if carried out, would likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat.'

PPS9 further states that the local authority should:

'consider attaching planning conditions or entering into planning obligations under which the developer would take steps to secure the protection of the species.'

Where a legally protected species is recorded, reported or there is evidence to suggest its presence, the Council will require developers to carry out an appropriate appraisal of the effects of the development on the species' breeding, feeding, nesting and hibernating requirements. This appraisal should comprise:

- **A records search.** This can be achieved by consulting organisations likely to hold records such as: English Nature; EcoRecord (the ecological database for Birmingham & the Black Country); The Wildlife Trust for Birmingham & the Black Country; Birmingham City Council - Planning Ecologist; Birmingham City Council - Nature Conservation Officer; The Environment Agency; British Waterways (where canals are affected).
- **Ecological survey work.** Survey should be carried out at the appropriate time by suitably qualified/experienced surveyors and should include: Breeding status; Location and requirements; Hibernation/roosting/nesting sites; Feeding habitats and requirements; Commuting routes or regular routes of movement (see strategy for further information).
- **Ecological evaluation** assessing the effect of any proposed development on the breeding, feeding, nesting and hibernating habitat and on the population using the site. Off-site effects should also be considered.
- **Mitigation** and/or compensation measures proposed.

The appraisal of the effects of development should address:

- Accommodation of the species within the layout and design of the development.
- The timing of the work to avoid disturbance during the breeding season.
- The protection of the species and its habitat during the development process.
- Avoidance measures or ways of mitigating the effect of the development and compensating for loss of habitat.
- Opportunities for enhancement within the development such as the creation of new breeding or roosting sites.
- Consideration of the aims and objectives of relevant national and/or local Biodiversity Action Plans.
- How the site is to be managed after development to ensure the ongoing viability of the habitat and/or the features important to the species.
- Monitoring of the impacts of the development on the species – including what indicators will be used to monitor success during a post-development monitoring programme.

Sources of further information

Eastside Biodiversity Audit reports (November, 2003 and July, 2004); Eastside Biodiversity Strategy (December, 2005); Eastside Planting Guide (and other relevant Eastside publications); Biodiversity Action Plan for Birmingham and the Black Country; Nature Conservation Strategy for Birmingham; EN Bat Mitigation Guidelines; www.blackredstarts.org.uk; www.livingroofs.org.uk; www.bct.org.uk

Building for Biodiversity in Eastside

Introduction

There are many reasons why natural environments should be integrated into high-density urban developments. Natural environments are good for people's health and well-being, act as an educational resource and can encourage greater social interaction. Vegetation reduces the risk of flooding and conditions the quality of the air making cities safer and more comfortable places to live. In addition to significantly improving the quality of life in residential and mixed-use urban areas, properties surrounded by high-quality habitat attract higher rental and sale prices and have higher occupancy rates.

The UK Government has identified four key objectives which need to be achieved simultaneously to create sustainable developments: effective protection of the environment; economic growth and employment; social progress; and prudent use of natural resources. Our vision for Eastside is to meet these four objectives through the creation of a vibrant and popular area encompassing good quality design.

In 2004, a biodiversity audit of Eastside revealed the wealth of wildlife currently resident there, including nationally rare and protected species. The purpose of this guidance note, which is a summary of the more detailed Eastside Biodiversity Strategy document, is to promote the opportunities for nature in Eastside. The suggested targets have been designed with architects, developers, landowners and planners in mind so that development can proceed sustainably while minimising delays.

Key Targets for Biodiversity Enhancement

If Eastside is to be sustainably developed, the following key targets must be achieved:

- Plans for each development should be informed by an ecological survey for species and habitats known to be found in Eastside (see Eastside Biodiversity Audit 2004) carried out at the appropriate time.
- All new developments should, following guidance from a suitably experienced ecologist, score at least 100 'Green Points' per hectare.
- Each development should have wildlife friendly maintenance regimes supported by approved management plans and briefs.
- Areas of semi-mature woodland should be protected.
- Areas of bare/ephemeral ground may be lost in places provided they are replaced temporarily in others by early clearance of sites earmarked for development, and created permanently after development. The overall area of this habitat must be maintained.
- Green / brown roofs should be used to mitigate for areas of bare ground lost.
- Each new/renovated building should have at least one bird and one bat box.
- Each new/renovated building should make provision for the protection and enhancement of the black redstart.

- Each new/renovated building should make provision for the protection and enhancement of bat species.
- Each new building should make provision for the enhancement of insect species.
- Formal landscaping / planting should include native wildlife-friendly species and be maintained in a wildlife-friendly way.
- It will be a requirement of the Water Frameworks Directive that all heavily modified water bodies (e.g. River Rea) should be brought up to good ecological potential.

Relevant Planning Policy Documents

Birmingham's Nature Conservation Strategy (SPG) has identified Eastside as a key node – the confluence of four or more wildlife corridors (the River Rea, the railway network and the canals). The value of corridors and links between sites has been encapsulated in a number of local, national and international guidelines. The planning and environmental policies guidance documents which are relevant to development and wildlife issues in Eastside, and which should be consulted to satisfy planning conditions are outlined below.

National Planning Policy Guidance

- **PPS1 – Delivering Sustainable Development (2005)** states that: 'a high level of protection should be given to most valued townscapes and landscapes, wildlife habitats and natural resources'.
- **PPG 2 – Green Belt.**
- **PPG 3 - Housing, March 2000.** In particular paragraphs 2, 3, 11, 46, 52 to 56, 63 and ANNEX C: Definitions-Previously-developed land.
- **PPS 9 - Biodiversity and Geological Conservation, September 2005** - uses the **EU Habitats Directive** to place an obligation to maintain and develop features essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.
- **The Planning Response to Climate Change: Advice on Better Practice, 2004.**
- **Sustainable Development - a better quality of life - A Strategy for Sustainable Development for the UK, May 1999.**
- **Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation Statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system, June 2005.**
- **PPG 17 - Planning for Open Space, Sport and Recreation, July 2002** in particular paragraphs 10, 14, 16, 17, 24 and Annex - Definitions, Open Space paragraphs 1 & 2.
- **PPG 25 - Development and Flood Risk, July 2001, in particular Appendix E (recently updated).**
- **England Biodiversity Strategy – Working with the Grain of Nature, DEFRA 2002.**
- **UK Biodiversity Action Plan.**

Regional Planning Policy Guidance

- **RSS 11 - Regional Spatial Strategy for the West Midlands Region, June 2004.** In particular, Chapter 7 Prosperity for All and Chapter 8 Quality of the Environment.
- **Regional Biodiversity Strategy, March 2005.**

Local Planning Policy Guidance

- **The Birmingham Plan – incorporating alterations approved by Birmingham City Council for adoption, 11th October 2005, contains relevant policies in respect of the Environment, Housing and Sustainable Drainage:**
- **The Built Environment (New Development) 3.14.**
- **Canals 3.34, 3.35, 3.36.**
- **Nature Conservation 3.37, 3.38, 3.40.**
- **Green Belt 3.41, 3.44, 3.45 and 3.46.**
- **Open Space 3.47, 3.48, 3.49, 3.50, 3.51, 3.52, 3.53, 3.54.**
- **Birmingham's Nature Conservation Strategy – March 1997** refers to links and corridors frequently:
- **Section 3.4.13** states that it is important to maintain links between sites of quality to help species spread from one site to another and to sustain genetic variability.
- **Section 3.4.15** emphasises the links between sites of quality and other open spaces.
- **Section 3.4.16** stresses the benefits of links to urban fringe countryside.
- **Section 3.4.17** recognises that features not normally thought of as corridors, such as hedgerows, verges, street trees etc., can function as corridors at a more local level.
- These concepts have been incorporated into **Policy no. 7: 'the intrinsic value of any land or natural features having a corridor function, in terms of nature conservation and associated access and amenity, will be safeguarded wherever possible'**.
- This policy will be implemented by bridging gaps and strengthening weak links in the open space network. In the context of Eastside the River Rea was designated a weak link and is therefore a priority.
- **The Biodiversity Action Plan for Birmingham and the Black Country, July 2000.**
- **Birmingham City Council Sustainability Strategy & Action Plan 2000-2005.**
- **Mature Suburbs Residential Development Guidelines Interim Supplementary Planning Advice – February 2005.**
- **Places for Living, March 2001.**
- **Places for All, November 2001.**
- **Draft Eastside Design and Movement Framework.**
- **Sustainable Eastside a Vision for the Future 2002.**