Ecology Unit Planning Newsletter

Issue 2, 2007

Welcome to the second Warwickshire County Council Ecology Unit's Planning newsletter.

The aim of this newsletter is to keep all interested parties informed of the work we are doing and also of any issues affecting ecological considerations in planning applications.

Great Crested Newt ♀ © Lucy Cash

In this edition:

NERC Act Guidance For Local Authorities.

40 Duty to conserve biodiversity

"Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity."

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) is part of Defra's 'Modernising Rural Delivery Programme'. The act came into force in October 2006 and is to help conserve biodiversity through modernised and simplified arrangements for delivering government policy. Defra's Local Authorities Guidelines was published in May 2007 with Section 4 relating to planning, infrastructure and development.

"The planning system has an important part to play in meeting the UK's national and international commitments for habitats and species. Local authority planning is the key mechanism for determining the location, scale and nature of development. The conservation of biodiversity is highly dependant on the extent to which it is addressed in infrastructure and development projects and how well the planning process integrates biodiversity into planning and development control policies."

Examples of potential effects of development on Biodiversity

Positive effects

Creative master planning to integrate improvements to biodiversity features and encourage sensitive management

More sustainable design e.g. green walls and roofs, measures to sustain water resources and quality

Creation of wildlife corridors including restoration of redundant routes.

Protection of wetland habitats through flood defences.

Creation of new or improved habitats alongside access routes.

Habitat creation through appropriate restoration of former minerals sites.

Improvement in air quality by encouraging walking and cycling as alternative to car use.

Reduced noise pollution e.g. through development screening, reduced car use.

Increasing peoples access to and awareness of wildlife.

Negative effects

Direct loss of land including biodiversity rich brownfield sites

Fragmentation of habitats

Death or injury to wildlife resulting from population pressures e.g. disturbance through increased access, fire setting etc.

Disturbance and pollution from increased transportation.

Loss of life to wildlife due to collision with vehicles.

Changes in local hydrological regimes e.g. increased water abstraction may have effects on habitat quality.

Noise, air, light and water pollution from construction and operation of buildings and machinery.

http://www.defra.gov.uk/wildlife-countryside/pdfs/pdf

Key messages

- National planning policy on biodiversity conservation is the primary reference point for those developing or appraising development plans or projects.
- Establishing a good evidence base is essential when developing planning policies and determining planning applications.
- Biodiversity conservation involves taking opportunities to enhance biodiversity, as well as protect it.
- Local authorities should play the leading role in establishing systems to conserve and enhance Local Sites and Local Nature Reserves and to give proper consideration to biodiversity outside designated areas.
- It is important that local authorities screen development proposals for potential effects on biodiversity to ensure biodiversity is fully considered and prevent delays in determining planning applications
- Effective monitoring is key to ensuring measures put in place to conserve biodiversity are successful.

Publicly Available Specification PAS 2010

Planning to halt the loss of biodiversity

Biodiversity conservation standards for planning in the United Kingdom – Code of Practice

The Publicly Available Specification , PAS 2010 has been produced by the British Standards Institute in consultation with the Association of Local Government Ecologists, to help the planning system play its part in halting biodiversity decline.
One of the main aims of PAS 2010 among others is to achieve a reduction in the net loss of biodiversity arising from development to zero by 2010.
It is relevant to land use and spatial planning in terrestrial, coastal and freshwater environments and provides information in biodiversity conservation and forward planning, development and control management, and a practical checklist to assist pre-decision assessment.

'The Home Builders Federation welcomes PAS 2010 as a practical specification that illustrates how planners and developers can identify and promote a consistent and effective means of conserving biodiversity within the planning and development process'
John Slaughter, Home Builders Federation

PAS 2010 provides recommendations on the following:

- Key tasks to be undertaken to ensure lawful compliance and good practice.
- Key planning responsibilities that should incorporate biodiversity conservation.
- A consistent framework for incorporating biodiversity into both forward planning and development control and management functions.
- Main source of information (including both statute, policy guidance and advice).

To purchase a copy of PAS 2010 publication *(ISBN 0580488446)* please contact BSI Customer Services department on +44 (0)20 8996 9001, email at orders@bsi-global.com or buy online at www.bsi-global.com. Further information can be also found at www.alge.org.uk.

Species Surveys Guidance

Recommended survey time
Possible survey time
No surveys

For an ecological consultant try (others are available): Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management Directory at http://www.ieem.net/

Species Surveys Timing

Species/ Group	Month: Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Bats	D/H	D/H	D	D/N	D/N	D/N	D/N	D/N	D/N	D/N	D/H	D/H
Birds	W	W	BM	BM	BM	B	B	BM	BM	BM	W	W
Great crested newt	H	H	E/P	E/P	E/P	E/P	E/P	E	E	E	H	H
Reptiles	H	H									H	H
Water vole	R	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	R
White clawed crayfish												
Badger	S	S/M	S/M	S/M	S/M	S/M	S/M/	S/M	S/M	S/M	S	S
Dormouse												
Otter	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F	F

D: Day inspection of hibernation roosts, trees & buildings **N**: Nocturnal activity survey season **W**: Winter bird surveys **BM**: Breeding & migrant surveys **B**: Breeding surveys **H**: Hibernation **E**: Evaluation of terrestrial habitats **P**: Pond surveys **R**: Reduced activity **F**: Searches for field signs **S**: Searches for setts **M**: Bait-marking