Kirton-in-Lindsey Town Council

Policy 30: BIO-DIVERSITY POLICY

Last Reviewed: 27/07/2022 [*FC2207/11*]
Next Review: June 2023

Biodiversity measures should be incorporated into developments including, for example (but not exclusively), installing artificial nest sites to provide nesting and roosting opportunities for birds, bats and some invertebrates, and planting living (green) roofs and walls to provide valuable habitats in areas that are often lacking in biodiversity. This should be guided by what is locally appropriate and should include a desire for Biodiversity Net Gain - this being is the idea that new developments should actually enhance biodiversity, which the Government has committed to making mandatory. All developments (big or small) should include the installation of solar panels to generate electricity & to produce hot water but, if not, to be aligned so as to maximise generation for when they are installed. In addition, all developments should aim to be carbon neutral.

Key messages:

A biologically diverse natural environment has an important role in economic prosperity, health and wellbeing of Kirton-in-Lindsey residents, workers and visitors.

Councils have a statutory duty to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity, particularly where there are protected species and habitats.

Biodiversity may be a material consideration whether or not the site or any features (e.g. habitats, species) benefit from any statutory protection.

Proposals must demonstrate:

- how biodiversity considerations have been incorporated into the development;
- how the five-point Mitigation Hierarchy (see below) has been addressed; and,
- what positive measures for enhancing biodiversity are planned.

Biodiversity is integral to the planning process. Where a protected species is present or where biodiversity can be enhanced, the Council will expect biodiversity to be fully incorporated into the design and construction stages of a proposal as well as post completion where appropriate. In principle, all development activity should have minimal impacts on biodiversity and enhance it wherever possible.

Development can harm biodiversity either directly by destroying or fragmenting habitat, or indirectly by altering local conditions for species. Conversely, sensitively designed developments can increase connectivity between urban habitat patches, and contribute to landscape scale conservation and enhancement of biodiversity.

Applicants are also expected to consider opportunities to improve biodiversity for proposal sites. It is important to conserve and improve land outside designated areas to provide space for nature to respond to environmental challenges. These spaces support biodiversity networks, by strengthening habitat corridors (green and blue corridors) connecting or creating stepping stones and providing buffering qualities.

Five-point Mitigation Hierarchy

1. Information - Pre-planning & design stage

i. With the submission of their proposals, applicants will need to provide appropriate information about any habitats and species that will be affected by their development or any within close proximity to it;

ii. ii. Assess what impact the development will have on the species and/or habitats and any opportunities for enhancement that have been identified.

2. Avoidance - Pre-planning and design stage & planning application stage

i. Demonstrate how the development, as its primary objective and through good design, will avoid adverse effects to wildlife and habitats. Include in submitted plans where alternative site selection, layouts and design options have been chosen to avoid adverse impacts;

ii. Submit ecological reports (EcIA or ECOP) including any surveys and assessments that have been undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist.

3. Mitigation - Planning application stage & construction planning stage

i. If a proposal is unable to avoid adverse impacts, applicants will need to demonstrate how the biodiversity impact will be adequately mitigated;

ii. Mitigation measures should minimise the negative impacts on wildlife from a proposal throughout its lifetime from its implementation to construction, completion and post-completion and may include precautionary approaches to demolition/construction, additional surveys, alternative provision of habitat on site, translocation of species etc.;

iii. Additional mitigation measures may be required by the Council

iv. All mitigations measures will be secured through planning conditions or legal agreement

4. Compensation Construction - planning stage

i. The Council expects biodiversity asset protection to be achieved through avoidance and mitigation wherever possible;

ii. Compensation will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances – as a last resort after all avoidance and mitigation measures have been fully considered;

iii. Compensatory measures should only be considered to address residual impacts that cannot be avoided or mitigated;

iv. Wherever possible compensatory measures must be achieved on site and should be timed so that biodiversity losses do not occur until compensatory measures are in place.

5. Enhancements - Construction & Post-completion stage

i. Enhancements are additional to any measures necessary to deal with potential impacts on a given site;

ii. All proposals should demonstrate opportunities to enhance or create new benefits for wildlife. This should be explored alongside the hierarchy of measures employed to resolve potential adverse effects.