

Ecology and Trees Checklist

This checklist is required for **ALL** planning applications. Understanding the ecology on and near a site and taking action can avoid delays in planning, create a better quality scheme and avoid criminal prosecution.

Tick all features present and those that **COULD** be affected by any aspect of the proposal, including:

- development above and below ground, including matters such as the connection of utilities
- large vehicles accessing the site, such as cranes or delivery lorries
- materials storage and where building works (e.g. concrete mixing) would take place

1. Are the following features on or within the specified distances of the red line site?

Buildings and features	Yes - affected	Yes - unaffected	No
Agricultural buildings (farmhouses or barns)	☐	☐	☒
Derelict or dilapidated buildings in a rural location	☐	☐	☒
A pre-1960 building in or within 200m of woodland	☐	☐	☒
A pre-1914 building in or within 400m of woodland	☐	☐	☒
Underground structures (such as cellars or tunnels)	☐	☐	☒
Bridge structures, aqueducts or viaducts	☐	☐	☒
An existing roof or over-hanging eaves	☐	☐	☒
Hanging tiles or timber weather boarding	☐	☐	☒
Dense climbing plants	☐	☐	☒

Trees and hedges (see section 8 Additional guidance on Trees and Hedges for guidance)	Yes - affected	Yes - unaffected	No
Trees with a stem wider than 75mm (measured 1.5m above ground level) on or within 15m of the site	☐	☐	☒
Hedgerows on or within 5m of the site	☐	☐	☒

Habitats (see section 9 Additional guidance on Habitats for guidance)	Yes - affected	Yes - unaffected	No
Special Protection Area or Special Area of Conservation within 2km	☐	☐	☒
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within 500m	☐	☐	☒
Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) within 100m	☐	☐	☒
Local Wildlife or Biological Notification Site on or adjacent to site	☐	☐	☒
Priority habitat on or adjacent to site	☐	☐	☒
Meadows or unmanaged, dense ground vegetation within site	☐	☐	☒
Ponds within 250m	☐	☐	☒
Rivers, streams or water filled ditches within 100m	☐	☐	☒

2. Have any of the following species been known to use the red line site?

Known wildlife (see section 10 Additional guidance on Known Wildlife for guidance)		
☐ Nesting birds	☐ Dormice	☐ Otters
☐ Bats	☐ Great Crested Newts	☐ Water Voles
☐ Badgers	☐ Reptiles	☐ White-clawed Crayfish

What to do next

3. If you answered entirely “No” / “Yes – unaffected”

- 3.1 Please submit the completed checklist with your planning application. After that, there is no further action for you to take. Please note that if it is later found that a feature is affected, development work may be stopped immediately and legal action taken.

4. If you answered one or more “Yes – affected” in Section 1 or “Yes” in Section 2

- 4.1 You must submit the completed checklist. If your application is for a minor or major development you must also submit an **Ecology Report** (guidance below) with your planning application. An ecology report is not required for householder applications at the time of submission, but may be asked for during determination.

5. If you answered “Yes – affected” in the Trees and Hedges section

- 5.1 You must submit the completed checklist and a **Tree Report** (guidance below) with your planning application. You may also be asked to submit an Ecology Report.

6. Preparing an Ecology Report

- 6.1 To avoid delays and ensure you only do the work you need to, we strongly advise using our [Planning Advice Service](#).
- 6.2 The preparation of an Ecology Report should follow this 3 step process:
- I. Survey and Assessment (to understand and assess the ecology of the area)
 - II. Design (to minimise, mitigate and compensate impacts and maximise benefits)
 - III. Implementation (ensure that the agreed protection and enhancement takes place)
- 6.3 The best format for an Ecology Report is usually a [Preliminary Ecological Appraisal](#). It includes:
- A desk study – including a search of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre’s records
 - A walkover survey – identifying signs of species and habitats requiring further consideration
 - A phase 1 (or UK Habs) Habitat Survey – mapping the habitats on site
 - Recommendations – for further surveys or specific measures to avoid harming wildlife.
- 6.4 Any surveys must be carried out by a suitably qualified person. Some can only be carried out at certain times of the year, so we recommend you start researching this now. Professional ecologists can be found on the [Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management](#) website.
- ### 7. Preparing a Tree Report
- 7.1 A Tree Report must include the findings from a tree survey carried out by a suitably qualified person. It must be of the appropriate level of detail as set out in Table B.1 in [BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations](#). See also [further guidance](#) on how countryside hedgerows should be surveyed.
- 7.2 Suitably qualified arboriculturists are often members of the [Arboricultural Association](#) or the [Institute of Chartered Foresters](#).

Further Information

8. Additional guidance on Trees and Hedges

- 8.1 For guidance relating to protected hedgerows see: [Countryside hedgerows: protection and management](#).

9. Additional guidance on Habitats

- 9.1 Using the interactive maps on <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/> you can locate your site and view nationally designated sites for wildlife conservation and priority habitats.
- 9.2 Habitats have special ecological importance. For advice on habitats with the highest level of protection, see [Natural England's guidance](#).
- 9.3 For advice on Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, see [Natural England's guidance](#).
- 9.4 Rivers and streams are important for ecology and have special consideration in WDC's planning policy. Guidance on this can be found in the [River Wye Advice Note](#).
- 9.5 Biological Notification Site details, Local Wildlife Site details and other ecology records are available from [Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre](#) (BMERC).
- ### 10. Additional guidance on Known Wildlife
- 10.1 The [Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre](#) hold records for species and habitats. For a fee they can [search their database](#) and produce a report which provides the core to an ecological desk study of a site.
- 10.2 Some basic records are freely available on the internet, e.g. <https://nbnatlas.org/>
- 10.3 The wildlife mentioned in this section of the checklist may be protected species. See Natural England's guidance: [Protected species: how to review planning applications](#).
- 10.4 Great Crested Newts are often found in ponds in the district. Even if the pond is not on site it may need consideration. Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre hold records of Great Crested Newts.

11. Additional sources of information

- 11.1 Joint Nature Conservation Committee [advice on wildlife law](#).
- 11.2 Priority Habitats and Species lists as published in accordance with [s41 of the NERC Act](#).
- 11.3 General information on biodiversity in Buckinghamshire can be found in the [Biodiversity in Planning in Buckinghamshire](#) publication.