



Minor Development Biodiversity Validation Checklist

Uttlesford District Council

This checklist is one of three prepared by Place Services. Please ensure that you are using the one that is most appropriate to the size and scale of your development. Please use this checklist for any development which does not fit into either of the categories below:

- For **major developments** (developments that contain more than nine houses and/or are greater than one hectare, as defined by the Town and Country Planning Act 1990) you must use Essex County Council's [Essex Biodiversity Validation Checklist](#).
- For **householder developments and/or works requiring listed building consent** please use the [Householder and Listed Building Consent Biodiversity Validation Checklist](#).

The purpose of this checklist is to assess potential impacts upon important wildlife sites, habitats or species from proposed development. Sites, habitats and species are afforded varying levels of protection under European and/or UK legislation and through national and local planning policies. The Council also has a [duty under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act \(2006\)](#) to have regard to biodiversity in all its functions.

Applicants are reminded that they have a legal responsibility to ensure their development does not result in harm to biodiversity and that an offence is not committed during any work on site.

All applications are required to provide measurable net gains for biodiversity, as outlined under Paragraph 170d of the National Planning Policy Framework 2019. [Reasonable biodiversity enhancement measures](#) will need to be provided in order to do this and can include but are not limited to bird boxes, bat boxes, invertebrate boxes, green roofs, native-species planting, wildlife pond creation, habitat improvements, permeable boundaries for hedgehogs and hedgehog nest boxes. Submission of details of enhancement features, their proposed location and their maintenance will avoid the need for a separate condition of any planning consent.

This checklist will help the applicant and the Local Planning Authority comply with national policy, legislation and the British Standard ([BS 42020:2013](#)), thereby reducing the likelihood of delays resulting from the provision of inadequate information. **If biodiversity (ecological) surveys are required but not included, your application will not be validated.** If the information received is not adequate, the application may be refused. It is therefore important for both the applicant and the Council that the questions enclosed are answered accurately.

This checklist must be completed by the applicant, or their agent or their ecologist, and submitted with a planning application. It must be viewed electronically to access the internet links enclosed. If additional information is required, it will need to be provided by a professional and suitably qualified ecologist.

This Checklist is divided into four sections. All four sections should be completed.

1. **Protected Sites and Habitats**
2. **Protected and Priority Species**
3. **Ecological Assessments, Surveys and Mitigation**
4. **Site Details and Declaration**



Information links:

The Government's [MAGIC](#) website provides location details for Habitats (European) Sites e.g. [Special Protection Areas](#) (SPA), [Ramsar sites](#), [Sites of Special Scientific Interest](#) (SSSI), [National Nature Reserves](#) (NNR), [Local Nature Reserves](#) (LNR), [Priority habitat](#) (also known as 'Habitats of Principal Importance' and 'Biodiversity Action Plan habitats'), and irreplaceable habitats (e.g. [ancient woodland](#), [veteran trees](#) and unimproved grassland). The location of SSSIs, NNRs, [Special Roadside Verges](#) and Local ('County') Wildlife Sites can be found on Uttlesford District Council's [Proposals Map](#).

If your ecologist predicts adverse impacts on an SSSI or NNR, you can obtain Pre-application Advice from [Natural England developer advice](#). If there are likely to be adverse impacts on a Local Wildlife Site we recommend that you contact the [Essex Wildlife Trust](#). If there are likely to be adverse impacts on a Special Roadside Verge we recommend you contact [Saffron Walden Museum](#).

SECTION 2: PROTECTED AND PRIORITY SPECIES

Question 4: Are you aware of any [protected](#) or [Priority species](#) present on or adjacent to your development site?

Records of protected and Priority species can be found through a data search from [Essex Field Club or Essex Wildlife Trust Records Centre](#).

YES / NO

If YES, please list all the protected species of which you are aware are on or adjacent to the development site. That is, those species protected under legislation such as the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended; Protection of Badgers Act 1992; and/or Priority species (also known as 'species of principal importance', NERC Act (2006)):

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Question 5: Please tick all of the following that apply to your development:

Note: this will help to determine the need for a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal or Ecological Impact Assessment (see Section 3) by taking into consideration habitats and features associated with protected and Priority species. The list below has been adapted from the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition (Collins, 2016) and indicates the likelihood of bats (European protected species) being present and affected by the development & may trigger the need for survey & assessment to support an application.



- the modification, disturbance or removal of arable field(s) with a hedgerow and/or grass margin.

Proposals located in or within 50 metres of:

- woodland;
- quarries or gravel pits;
- natural cliff faces/rock outcrops with crevices, caves or sink holes;
- heathland; or
- meadow grassland, previously developed land ('brownfield site'), parkland or pasture.

Proposals:

- within a District Level Licensing [Amber or Red Risk Zone for Great Crested Newts](#);
- within 200m of rivers, streams, canals, lakes, reed beds or other aquatic habitats;
- within 500m of a pond or slow-flowing water body (e.g. ditch) that is linked to the site by semi-natural habitat; or
- where bats are known to be present (including development affecting any type of building, structure, feature or location).

If you have answered NO to all parts of Section 2 and established that there will be no impacts on statutory or non-statutory wildlife sites or Priority habitats or species, please go straight to the Declaration in Section 4. No further ecological information is required for planning submission.

SECTION 3: ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENTS, SURVEYS AND MITIGATION

Note: the documents referred to in this section must be completed by a *competent and qualified ecologist* and submitted with your planning application.

3.1: Ecological assessment

If you have answered YES or ticked any part of any of Sections 1 or 2, an ecological assessment will be required to support your application. This will be either:

a) A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA);

OR

b) An Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA);

OR

c) Justification from an ecologist that no ecological survey & assessment is required.

All Ecology reports shall meet the requirements of [BS 42020](#) and age of data should follow CIEEM's [Advice Note 'On the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys'](#) (April 2019) summarised here:



c) Justification from an ecologist that no further action is required

The information supplied should be proportionate to the habitats and species on and adjacent to your site, the scale of the development, and its potential to affect biodiversity. There are occasions where PEA or EclA would be disproportionate. If you have answered YES or ticked any part of the previous sections, but your ecologist considers that a PEA or EclA is not necessary, they should provide justification of this, including supporting photographs. This justification must contain an explanation of how all potential impacts on biodiversity will be avoided and/or why protected and Priority species will not be affected by the proposed development. If the ecological information received does not provide certainty of likely impacts, the application may be refused.

Question 6: Have you submitted an ecological assessment with your application?

YES / NO

3.2: Further species surveys

The results of the ecological assessment will determine whether further species surveys will be required. All results of any required surveys should be submitted with your planning application, as required by paragraphs 98 and 99 of the [ODPM Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation](#) and paragraph 174 of the [NPPF](#). The results and mitigation will be needed prior to determination.

Additional species surveys should be up-to-date, carried out at the [right time of year](#) and use [recognised methods](#) that are appropriate for the species and the scale/type of habitat. Any previous surveys referred to should also be submitted.

You should carry out a protected species survey if there is a reasonable likelihood of protected species being present on the site and affected by the development, based on the findings of your ecological assessment. Please go to the [Government's website](#) for further information.

Question 7: Does your ecological assessment recommend additional surveys?

YES / NO

If YES, please list the surveys in the space below:

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SECTION 4: SITE DETAILS AND DECLARATION

Site Name and Address:

CHURCH FARM, CHURCH HILL,
HEMPSTEAD, ESSEX, CB10 2PA

I confirm that to the best of my knowledge the information provided in this checklist is accurate. I understand that if the information provided is inaccurate it may result in a delay in the determination of my application, or its refusal.

Applicant/Agent's name:

T SILLS

Applicant/Agent's organisation (where applicable):

SWORDERS

Signed: 

Date: 10/1/23