

Ecosystem Services and Householder Planning Applications

1. What is this note, how can I use it and why will it help me?

1.1 This note will help those applying for planning permission for 'householder' applications to comply with Policy SD2 of the South Downs Local Plan, which is the National Park Authority's policy on Ecosystem Services. This note explains what Ecosystem Services are and how they apply to your proposal. It will assist you in thinking about the environmental circumstances of your property, its location and what Ecosystem Services 'actions' are the most appropriate for your application. In order to make your application valid, you will need to complete the template at the end of this document and include it with your planning application. The planning officer assessing your application will use this completed form to check how you have complied with the policy.

2. What are Ecosystem Services?

2.1 Ecosystem Services are the benefits that people and society get from the natural environment. An ecosystems approach helps us to identify the benefits we get from nature, value them and build them into planning, decision making and management. Further details are set out in the Local Plan.

2.2 Everyone uses, has an impact upon, and is affected by our natural resources, which provide us with energy, clean water, air, food and wildlife. The complexity of the natural environment means many of these are related to one another, and Policy SD2 has been developed to guide us to use and manage these resources more sustainably in the National Park. Your householder planning application needs to comply with this Local Plan policy:

Development proposals will be permitted where they have an overall positive impact on the ability of the natural environment to contribute goods and services. This will be achieved through the use of high quality design, and by delivering all opportunities to:

- a) Sustainably manage land and water environments;
- b) Protect and provide more, better and joined up natural habitats;
- c) Conserve water resources and improve water quality;
- d) Manage and mitigate the risk of flooding;
- e) Improve the National Park's resilience to, and mitigation of, climate change;
- f) Increase the ability to store carbon through new planting or other means;
- g) Conserve and enhance soils;
- h) Support the sustainable production and use of food, forestry and raw materials;
- i) Reduce levels of pollution;
- j) Improve opportunities for peoples' health and wellbeing; and
- k) Provide opportunities for access to the natural and cultural resources which contribute to the special qualities.

2.3 We can all play a role and contribute towards making a positive difference to the natural environment of the National Park. The policy asks you to consider how the changes to your property can include Ecosystem Services actions to the benefit of everybody. Even small actions can deliver multiple benefits for both people and wildlife. For example, planting a native hedge could create habitats and provide food for wildlife, whilst also storing surface water and improving air quality. The following daigram show how a householder can take several actions to provide Ecosystem Services and therefore meet poicy SD2 of the Local Plan.



Figure 1. Jill's House

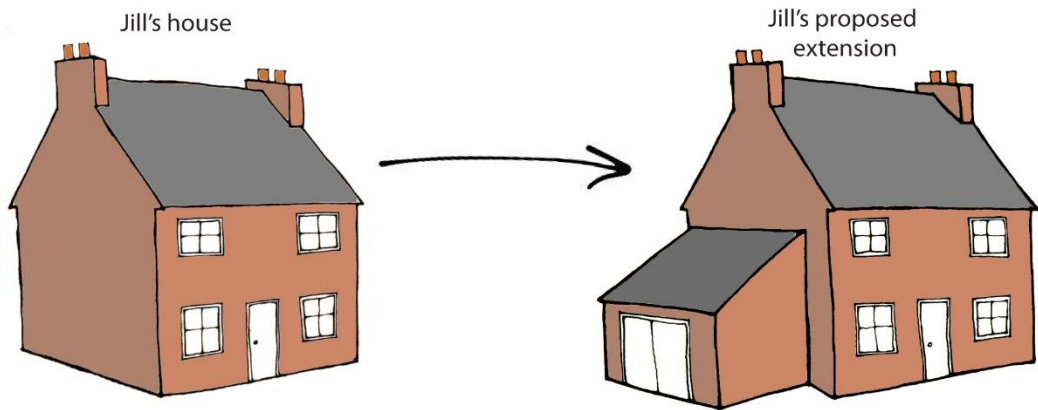
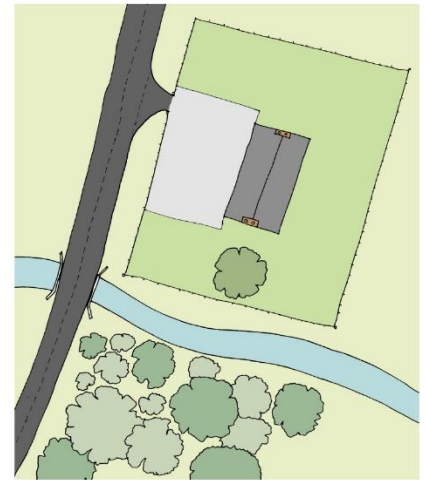


This is Jill. She is thinking about getting an extension and needs to get planning permission. However she also wants to help the environment.

Jill lives in the South Downs National Park. She observes following about her home:

- There is a river and woodland alongside her house
- The busy road in front of her house sometimes floods
- Her house is surrounded by a close boarded fence
- She has noticed bats flying over her garden
- There is a large concrete parking area

In order for her plans to have a positive impact on the environment, Jill will need to address these issues.



Jill's actions

Replacing the close boarded fence with a native hedgerow helps to soak up excess water, improves air quality and is great for wildlife



Replacing the concrete parking area with permeable surfacing helps reduce flood risk and surface water



Installing bat boxes is an easy way for Jill to support the local bat population



Planting wild flower mix is great for insects, which provides a food source for bats



Solar panels are one which which can reduce Jill's carbon footprint



3. How do I find the best Ecosystem Services actions for my proposal?

3.1 To ensure that your proposal incorporates the most appropriate Ecosystem Services actions we would recommend that you follow these three stages:

Stage 1: Consider your environmental constraints: Consider what the characteristics of your property and the surrounding area are. For example, does it suffer from localised flooding? Is it near a busy road? Are there any special animals such as badgers or bats that you regularly see?

Stage 2: Look at the criteria listed in policy SD2: Decide which of these criteria (the more you choose the better) present the best opportunity to improve your property and its surrounding area.

Stage 3: Select your Ecosystem Services action: Consider what specific actions you can take as part of your proposal to best deliver the Ecosystem Services criteria you have chosen. A few examples of how you can do this are set out in Table I.

3.2 Table I sets out some example actions that help to support some of the important functions carried out by the natural environment. The policy criteria each action supports are also set out. The list is not exhaustive and you may wish to use your own ideas for actions, which relate better to your own circumstances.

Table I: Potential Ecosystem Services Actions

Possible actions	Relevant Policy SD2 Criteria
Install green roofs or rain-gardens to capture, filter and manage excess water;	A, B, C, D, E, F
Create new habitats on site, including ponds and bog gardens to deal with heavy rain fall;	A, B, C, D
Use permeable surfacing;	A, C, D
Increase areas of planting including a diverse mixture of native species to intercept surface water;	A, C, D, E
Create a compost heap to compost waste and improve soils;	B, G
Create new habitats including; ponds, bog gardens, areas with log piles and long grass;	B, G
Create new wildlife friendly linear features (e.g. native, mixed-species hedgerows) particularly along the edges of roads, to improve air quality;	B, I, J
Select plants to provide a variety of food for wildlife e.g. nectar rich/berries/grasses;	B, E, F, I
Protect and retain existing mature trees;	B, F, I
Safeguard wildlife habitats and protected species;	B
Use new planting to connect up nearby habitats;	B, F, I
Increase tree cover ensuring trees are native and locally characteristic;	B, F, I, J
Minimise areas of heavily managed amenity grass considering using wildflower and meadow mixes on less intensively used areas; and	A, G



Ensure that linear features on site such as watercourses, hedgerows, boundary features or other planned landscaping is friendly to wildlife.	A, B, F, G
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4. How can I show the Planning Officer looking at my application that I've done this?

4.1 Now that you have selected the way in which you will incorporate Ecosystem Services into your proposal it is important that the Planning Officer assessing your application is aware of this. Complete Table 2 at the end of this note and include it in your application. Make sure these actions are also marked up on any plans or sketches you submit.

5. Tell me more

5.1 If you would like to know more about Ecosystem Services we would suggest that you look at Policy SD2 and its supporting text in the South Downs Local Plan <https://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/national-park-local-plan/> or the non-householder technical advice note (link to follow).

5.2 Alternatively, you could pursue a pre-application enquiry with the SDNPA <http://www.southdowns.gov.uk/planning/making-an-application/pre-application/> where you could discuss it with a Planning Officer.



6. Please complete this form and send it in with your planning application remembering:

- Actions which relate to your local area.
- As many actions as possible.
- Actions which meet as many different criteria as possible.

A worked example is shown in the first row for your information.

Ecosystem Services Actions	Policy SD2 criterion
<i>Rainwater from the extension will be collected and used for watering the garden. The rainwater harvesting system is shown on submitted plan 101C dated 12.03.2018.</i>	A, C and D
	a) Sustainably manage land and water environments;
	b) Protect and provide more, better and joined up natural habitats;
	c) Conserve water resources and improve water quality;
	d) Manage and mitigate the risk of flooding;
	e) Improve the National Park's resilience to, and mitigation of, climate change;
	f) Increase the ability to store carbon through new planting or other means;
	g) Conserve and enhance soils;
	h) Support the sustainable production and use of food, forestry and raw materials;
	i) Reduce levels of pollution;
Increasing the height of the outbuilding's roof will ensure that my children, one of which has just started university will be able to use the space for studying.	j) Improve opportunities for peoples' health and wellbeing;
	k) Provide opportunities for access to the natural and cultural resources which contribute to the special qualities.

