

Development Management Plan Regulation 19 Consultation Fact Sheet

Biodiversity / Nature Conservation

Designations:

- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
- Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs)
- Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGS)
- Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)
- Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs)

This note also covers:

- Geology
- Biodiversity offsetting
- Trees and ancient woodland

DMP objective	DMP Policy Approach	Document Ref
Objective SC10: Ensure new development protects, and enhances wherever possible, the borough's landscapes and biodiversity interest features, providing the highest degree of protection to internationally and nationally designated areas	NHE2 – Protecting and enhancing biodiversity and areas of geological importance	Theme 2, Section 5, Pages 58-61
	NHE3 – Protecting trees, woodland areas and natural habitats	

Context

Reigate & Banstead Borough has a number of sites that are internationally and nationally recognised for nature conservation. The Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is important internationally, and requires the highest level of protection. Other sites in the borough are locally recognised as being important for geology and/or biodiversity. In addition to this, across the borough there are areas where the opportunity exists to enhance habitats and the biodiversity they support.

Trees, hedges and woodlands make a particularly valuable contribution to the landscape and biodiversity of the borough. They support a wide range of species, and provide visual interest contributing to the character of the borough. Areas of Ancient Woodland are irreplaceable and require special consideration and protection.

Development Management Plan (DMP) policy starting point

The starting point for the policy approach to Biodiversity and Nature Conservation is:

- [National planning policy](#), which requires local authorities to include policies against which developments affecting protected wildlife or geodiversity sites will be judged, and should plan for biodiversity at a 'landscape-scale', promoting the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority species and habitats. National planning policy also requires the protection of ancient woodland and other veteran trees.
- The Council's adopted [Core Strategy](#), which requires that the greatest level of protection is given to the SAC, and requires that SSSIs, SNCIs, LNRs and ancient woodland are protected and where appropriate enhanced.

Summary of policy approach

The SAC: Development which is likely to have a detrimental impact on the SAC will not be permitted. Proposals which will divert recreational pressure away from the SAC will be supported subject to protection of wider biodiversity and habitats.

SSSIs: Development which could have an adverse effect on a SSSI will only be permitted if the benefits of the development outweigh the negative impacts, and they can be suitably mitigated

SNCIs, RIGs, LNRs: Development which could have an adverse effect on these areas will only be permitted if the need for the development outweighs the negative impacts and appropriate mitigation (or compensation as a last resort) is provided.

BOAs: Within BOAs, development proposals will be expected to enhance priority habitats and biodiversity interest features, and be designed to achieve a net gain in biodiversity.

Biodiversity offsetting: Developers may be required to offset the loss of biodiversity resulting from a development by contributing to appropriate biodiversity projects elsewhere, if it is not possible to achieve this on site.

Activities to enhance biodiversity: These will be considered favourably.

Trees: New development should be designed to protect existing trees, woodland and hedgerows. Where loss can be justified (due to benefits outweighing the loss or due to the condition of the tree) compensatory provision will be required, of an appropriate size and species.

Frequently asked questions

Has a Habitats Regulation Assessment been undertaken to determine whether the Council's proposals will have an adverse impact on the Mole Gap to Reigate Escarpment SAC? Yes, a Habitats Regulations Assessment has been undertaken and is available [here](#).

How will nature be protected when new development takes place? The policies mean that new development will need to be carefully designed to avoid negative impact on nature, and where possible contribute to enhancements. Enhancements may include new or improved habitats on the site or nearby. Measures to safeguard protected species will be secured through legal agreement or planning permission conditions.

How will the Council ensure that trees are protected and any replacement planting is appropriate? The policies protect trees in general, however where it is perceived that trees may be under threat, the Council can issue Tree Protection Orders. When new development takes place, it may not always be possible to retain all trees – in the case that replacement planting is required, the policies require that appropriate species should be planted and that sufficient space must be provided to allow trees to reach maturity.

Have your say

If you would like to find out more, or comment on the Development Management Plan Regulation 19 consultation document, please visit www.reigate-banstead.gov.uk/DMP where the full set of consultation documents is available, and where you can complete or download a comments form. Alternatively contact the Planning Policy Team at LDF@reigate-banstead.gov.uk or 01737 276178.