Derry City & Strabane District Council
Comhairle Chathair Dhoire & Cheantar an tSratha Báin
Derry Cittie & Stràbane Destrick Cooncil

DERRY CITY & STRABANE DISTRICT COUNCIL

LOCAL DEVELOPMENT PLAN (LDP) 2032

PLAN STRATEGY

Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) - Providing Biodiversity in New Development, DRAFT - June 2025

https://www.derrystrabane.com/subsites/ldp

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Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG)

Providing Biodiversity

in New Development

DRAFT – June 2025

Derry City & Strabane District Council
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1. Purpose of the guidance

1.1 This Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) is intended to guide planning professionals and other interested parties in the application of **Biodiversity in New Development** and **General Development Principles 1 and 7**, as set out in the Derry City and Strabane District Council (DCSDC) Local Development Plan (LDP) Plan Strategy 2032.

1.2 SPGs represent non-statutory planning guidance that supports, clarifies and/or illustrates by example the policies of the LDP 2032 Plan Strategy. This guidance is not intended to replace the need for the professional judgement of planning officers and those making planning applications; nor is it intended to be a source of definitive legal advice. Rather, SPGs will serve to inform the design and assessment of proposals. The information set out in this SPG should therefore be read in conjunction with the existing planning policy framework, most notably the Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) for Northern Ireland and the DCSD LDP Plan Strategy 2032.

2. Methodology

2.1 Below sets outs the different stages of this SPG.

- Explain Biodiversity and what it encompasses.
- Provide information on Biodiversity policy objectives within the LDP Plan Strategy.
- Explain Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Provide examples of Biodiversity opportunities within landscaping.
- Devise a clear list of what is required of the developers/applicants in relation to this policy at application stage.
- Research examples of Biodiversity enhancement ideas that the developer/applicant may want to include in their proposal – use visuals to keep it interesting for readers.

3. Biodiversity

3.1 A simple definition for Biodiversity (short for biological diversity), is the variety of all living things and their interactions. This includes diversity within species, between species and of ecosystems.

3.2 An ecosystem refers to the complex of living organisms (plants, animals & microbes), their physical environment, and all their interrelationships in a particular unit of space. In other words an ecosystem is a community of organisms and their physical environment interacting together.

3.3 Ecosystem services are the direct and indirect contributions ecosystems (known as natural capital) provide for human wellbeing and quality of life. This can be in a practical sense, providing food and water and regulating climate, as well as cultural aspects such as reducing stress and anxiety.

3.4 Protecting and enhancing biodiversity can also be of benefit to development proposals. It can enhance the aesthetics of a development and support local climate change adaptation such as flood mitigation through retention & planting of trees and vegetation. Incorporating SuDs can also help in dealing with surface water and reedbeds can assist in treating foul water. Improving a site's natural assets can help to improve the health and wellbeing of occupiers making developments more attractive to prospective end users.

4. Policy Context and Supplementary Guidance

Regional Planning Policy and Guidance

Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035

4.1 The Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035 provides an overarching strategic planning framework to facilitate and guide the public and private sectors. The RDS contains guidance to provide policy direction in relation to the environment, as well as the economy and society, and spatial framework guidance tailored to each component of the spatial planning framework. It sets the context in which to make policy and development decisions in order to achieve sustainable development throughout the region.

4.2 RG11 recognises the importance of conserving, protecting and, where possible, enhancing our natural environment. It aims to 'sustain and enhance biodiversity in line with the objectives of the NI Biodiversity Strategy to halt the loss of indigenous species and habitats by protecting existing, or creating new, ecological or wildlife corridors particularly in our cities and towns which can provide valuable help to halt the decline in biodiversity.

4.3 SFG9 aims to protect and enhance the quality of the setting of Derry City and the North West and its environmental assets. It makes particular reference to enhancing ecological corridors, which have the potential to support biodiversity by linking existing habitats, creating a network of green spaces throughout the North West.

Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) for Northern Ireland (2015)

4.4 The Strategic Planning Policy Statement (SPPS) identifies core principles to assist with plan-making and decision-taking. The Council is required by the SPPS to secure the orderly and consistent development of land, whilst furthering sustainable development; in addition to improving well-being and pursuing social and economic priorities alongside the careful management of the built and natural environments for the overall benefit of society.

4.5 Under 'Preserving and Improving the Built and Natural Environment' the SPPS recognises the importance of the environment and working towards the restoration of and halting the loss of, biodiversity. It highlights that we all share the collective responsibility to preserve and improve the natural environment and halt the loss of biodiversity for the benefit of future generations. The SPPS states that LDPs should consider incorporating biodiversity into plans for regeneration, which can help deliver economic and social growth by creating places where people want to live, work, invest in and visit.

A Biodiversity Strategy for Northern Ireland to 2020

4.6 The Strategy sets out how Northern Ireland plans to meet its international obligations and local targets to protect biodiversity and ensure that the environment can continue to support our people and economy. It builds on the first Biodiversity Strategy published in 2002 but adopts an approach that emphasises the management of biological systems to deliver the materials and services upon which people depend – the ecosystem services approach. While protection of individual species and habitats is essential, the thrust of the Strategy is to manage natural and man-modified systems to deliver a multitude of outputs which support society and the economy.

4.7 Protection of individual species and habitats is both a tool for delivery and a result of this approach. However, recognition of and a focus upon ensuring the interconnectedness and complexity of biological systems enables a more coherent approach, that makes it clear that biodiversity protection is fundamental to society and the economy.

4.8 The mission of the strategy is *"to make progress towards halting overall biodiversity loss, establish an ecosystem approach and help business and society in general have a greater understanding of the benefits that nature can bring to everyday life in Northern Ireland."* Please note that the Department is developing a new strategy and this document may be updated in the coming months.

Local Planning Policy and Guidance

LDP 2032 Plan Strategy

4.9 Policy GDPOL 1 of the Plan Strategy (PS) states that planning permission will be granted where the development results in no net loss of biodiversity. Preferably, biodiversity net gain will be incorporated into the development in a manner that is proportionate to the type and scale of development and the presence of existing valuable habitats and species in the area. Para. 26.12 notes that an SPG on 'biodiversity net gain & ecological enhancements through development' will be prepared. It will focus on housing and minerals development but also encompass other sectors.

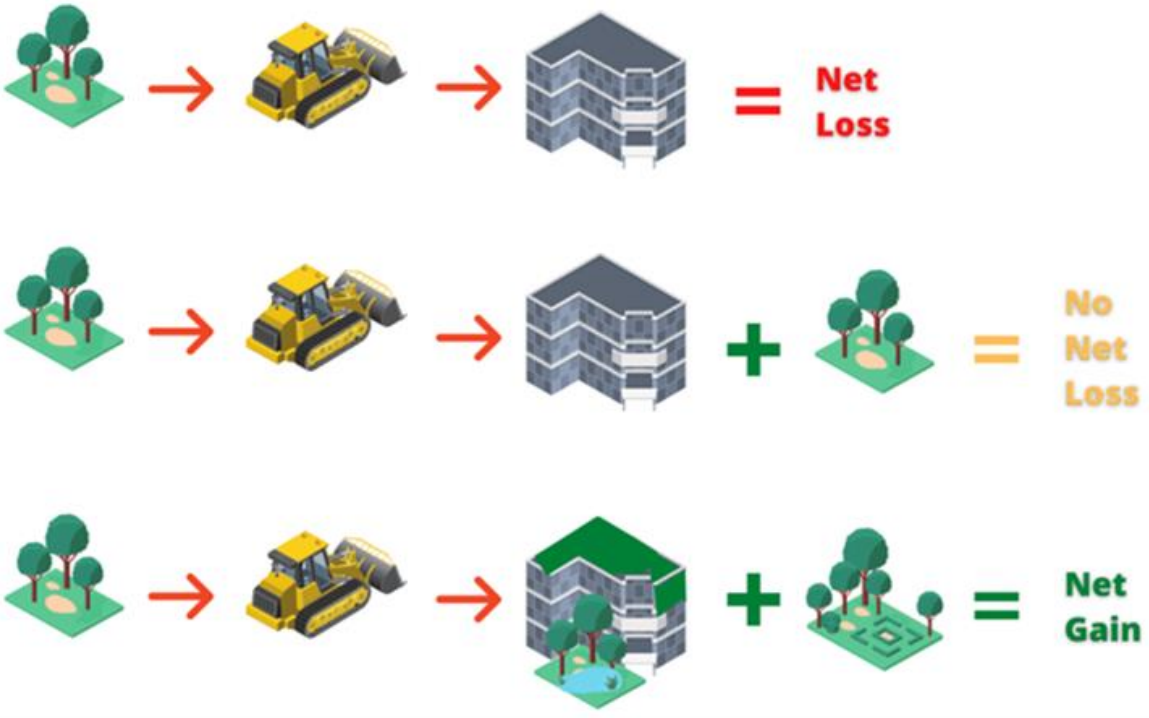
4.10 It is the duty of every public body, in exercising any functions, to further the conservation of biodiversity so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions. (WANE Act (NI) 2011)

4.11 The requirement is to halt the loss of biodiversity, not to provide an enhancement (though this would be encouraged), in recognition that some proposals may have a neutral effect on biodiversity but have significant other benefits justifying approval. Development proposals vary widely in size and design, and their individual circumstances will determine which types of biodiversity action are most appropriate. Developers should identify existing biodiversity assets before any works commence and retain where possible, and look at the potential to enhance these as part of the development and management of a site. Always think and plant native in the first instance.

5. Biodiversity Net Gain

5.1 Biodiversity net gain describes an approach to development which requires that habitats for wildlife must be left in a measurably better state following development. Existing habitats and natural features should preferably be safeguarded and extended or improved as part of a development or project. Foraging, nesting and roosting opportunities can be provided as part of site landscaping. Development should be designed in a way that provides benefits to people and nature and reduces its impacts on the wider environment.

5.2 A proposal to deliver biodiversity net gain does not affect the weight that should be given to other planning considerations, matters of planning policy, or legal obligations including those relating to protected sites, protected species and irreplaceable habitats.


Net Loss
No Net Loss
Net Gain

6. Biodiversity opportunities within the development

6.1 The following table lists actions that could be incorporated into design proposals, including a mitigation hierarchy i.e. know what you have – avoid & protect (retain) – enhance – mitigate – compensation.

Biodiversity feature	Actions	Wider Benefits
Hedges 	• Plant hedges consisting of a number of wildlife friendly species so that fruit, seed and nectar will be provided throughout most of the year. • Provide sufficient space for dense hedges to grow to at least 2 metres wide with a wide margin on each side for long grasses to grow at their base. • Plant native hedges, such as hawthorn, blackthorn and holly. -underplant with spring flowering bulbs such as primroses and bluebells.	• Native hedges provide secure boundaries, screening, noise & pollution reduction, clean air, carbon storage, protect against erosion. •Native hedges will contribute towards local wildlife habitat network with neighbouring hedges, trees, shrubs, scrub, and watercourses. •Native hedges provide shelter, breeding, nesting and foraging sites for a wide variety of species and can act as wildlife corridors.
Trees and shrubs (photo os an Oak TPO at Maydown) 	• Provide wildlife friendly trees and shrubs, with a preference for native species, of varying height and structure, as a diverse structure will be beneficial to more wildlife species. A variety of species will also provide a protracted supply of pollen, nectar and fruit throughout the year. • Consider soil type and space for the trees to mature when selecting species • Retain trees with holes and dead wood as these are particularly valuable for wildlife such as bats, birds, insects and fungi. Retain woody cuttings & fallen branches on site. • Long grass in vicinity will soften edges & provide additional interest and maintain moisture and humidity beneath.	• Trees provide clean air, help mitigate against climate change through carbon storage, provide shade and cooling in towns & cities. •Trees and shrubs provide shelter, nesting sites and fruit for birds. Their flowers provide nectar for bees and other insects. • Provision of dead and decaying wood is valuable to a range of invertebrates which depend upon it to complete all or part of their life cycles.

Biodiversity feature	Actions	Wider Benefits
Green walls 	• Erect green walls along external walls of buildings or fences/garden walls. • Green walls are essentially vertical gardens that can attach to the outside of a wall. They can be created using wires or trellises to provide a framework for climbing plants. But 'vertical garden' can also mean plants living in pots fixed to the wall, hanging baskets, or on ladders or steps, giving depth to patios, driveways and small spaces	• Green walls provide an excellent platform for cultivating a diverse array of native plants. By carefully selecting plant species that are indigenous to the region, green walls become a microcosm of local ecosystems, attracting, and supporting native wildlife. • Climbing plants like Clematis, Honeysuckle, rose sp. and Jasmine can create an amazing scent and are loved by many creatures from butterflies to bees.
Scrub  	• Consider generating or retaining scrub habitat adjacent to existing wildlife rich habitat. Native scrub includes; Bramble Gorse Willow Rushes	• Consider retention and regeneration of scrub habitat adjacent to existing wildlife rich habitat.

Biodiversity feature	Actions	Wider Benefits
Grassland Options <u>Traditional Hay Meadow</u>  <u>Pollinator lawn</u>  <u>Non-native wildflower area</u> 	<u>Traditional Hay Meadow</u> • Maintain patches of long grass, to create a native hay meadow allowing plants to flower and seed, and providing habitat for grasshoppers and other invertebrates, and a food source for birds, amphibians and mammals. • Cut and remove once a year <u>Pollinator Lawn</u> • Short sward pollinator lawn is created where a cut and lift takes place every 4-6weeks, allowing native wildflowers such as clover, selfheal and dandelions to thrive <u>Non-native wildflower area</u> • Provide non-native wildflower rich planting as part of informal landscaping. To keep the showy effect reseed annually.	• Wildflower rich grassland provides cover for small mammals and invertebrates and the wildflowers are a nectar source for insects. Short grass can be enhanced by adding flowering species tolerant of frequent mowing and trampling. Cutting and/or collecting will be required at appropriate intervals to achieve optimum results. • Structure is crucial to most grassland invertebrates; areas of long grass will benefit a range of species. Areas of undisturbed grassland, cut on a 2 or 3 year cycle will provide additional value. A mosaic of habitats can be more valuable.

Biodiversity feature	Actions	Wider Benefits
Watercourses and their banks 	• Enhance and restore the naturalness of an existing water course, by buffer planting with native riparian species, soft contouring of steep sides, and removal of culverts. • Avoid development and hard landscaping, which may impact the ability / capacity of the watercourse to function, including flood alleviation.	• natural watercourses with native riparian species along their banks aid flood prevention & protection. Along with improving water quality •Streams, wet ditches and seasonal watercourses, and their banks, are important wildlife habitats.
Amphibians  	• Provide wildlife friendly ponds, water channels and wetland areas, with associated vegetation, independently and as part of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems. • Locate these features so that they provide, as far as possible, continuity with nearby existing habitat.	• Amphibians likely to be encountered include frogs and Smooth Newts. • The most important factor in pond creation is ensuring clean water. It is therefore important to ensure some ponds/water features are created separately from SuDS systems which may be contaminated by road or other potentially polluted run-off.

Biodiversity feature	Actions	Wider Benefits
Invertebrates 	• Provide native species rich grassland within the countryside and flower grassland in urban areas. • Provide wildlife friendly hedges, native trees and shrubs. • Provide wildlife-friendly ponds with buffer zones and good water quality. • Retain/create “brownfield” open mosaic habitats within landscaping featuring bare ground and early successional pioneer habitats. • Retain patched of bare earth for invertebrates to bask, nest and forage.	• Invertebrates cover a wide range of species including bees, butterflies, moths, ants, flies, beetles, spiders, molluscs etc. •Brownfield sites can be an important habitat for a wide range of invertebrates. •Pollinator ecosystem services, food crop pollination, pest control
Small mammals  	• Provide native species rich grassland, trees, hedges and habitats which provide a variety of fruit and seeds for small mammals. (Small mammals include mice, Pygmy Shrews and Hedgehogs). • To encourage bats, consider the following steps: Grow plants that flower early and late in the season to support insects, which are a favourite food of bats. Plant evening-scented flowers like honeysuckle to attract night-flying insects. Avoid showy, double-petaled cultivars, as they don't produce much nectar. Install a bat box to provide shelter. Plant native trees and shrubs like Oak, Ash, Beech, Blackthorn or Hawthorn to create suitable roosting and foraging habitats. •Reduce outdoor lighting and only use amber LED lights that are directed downward only (if	•Small mammals play critical roles in ecological systems, occupying diverse niches and contributing to ecosystem functioning. They are highly abundant in all ecosystems and assume multiple roles •Bats are insectivorous, meaning they eat insects and in an average night of feeding can eat up to 3,000 insects. They play a very important role in keeping insect populations under control, which helps crop growers and farmers.

	necessary), which has less of an impact on bats. But no outdoor lighting is better for nocturnal wildlife, particularly near important habitats such as waterways and woodlands	
Homes for Wildlife  	• Provide native hedges, shrubs and trees, which will provide natural nesting sites as the plantings mature. Bird, bat and bug boxes can provide shelter and breeding places for a range of species in areas where natural opportunities are limited. There is an extensive range of boxes that have been designed to cater for the needs of particular species. Some of these can be integrated and built within structures in the development, such as swift bricks, others can be retro-fitted. Knowing what species are in the area will help dictate the most appropriate boxes. The provision of nesting and roosting boxes should be explored and incorporated into every development.	• Bird nest sites and bat boxes can be provided as part of landscape planting design. If suitable habitat in the area • These cost very little to include but have major beneficial impact and are very practical of renovating a house, building a new development or converting barns.

Source: The Devon Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) – RSPB referenced this as best practice. This table has been amended to reflect wildlife and species within N.I.

6.2 Biodiversity enhancement should be fully integrated through the development scheme and not fragmented into isolated pockets or restricted to peripheral parts of the development site. Opportunities to connect habitats in the wider landscape must also be taken into consideration and maximised where possible.

Planting – Recommended Species Lists

6.3 The lists below are advisory and are not exhaustive. In general, native plant species should be the first choice when it comes to incorporating plants into developments adjoining wildlife rich and semi-natural habitats, or where a more natural sense of place is required and in rural areas. Native trees support more biodiversity, are home to more insects which in turn feed more birds & mammals. It is best to source your hedging plants locally, as 'local provenance' trees, that is, those that are grown from native trees growing in Northern Ireland, are more likely to thrive in our climate. Some 'native' trees bought in nurseries are from the continent, so take care purchasing. The sensitive use of non-native species can provide additional food and shelter for wildlife and can be considered for use as part of the palette of plant species for new development sites and in urban settings.

Note: care should be taken to avoid spreading or planting invasive non-native species (also known as invasive alien species), of which a considerable number have been introduced through landscaping & gardening. In addition, some other species which are also invasive such as laurel should be avoided. See the below links for more information and lists of invasive species in Northern Ireland.

List of identification guides – Invasive Species Northern Ireland
https://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/list-of-identification-guides/

List of species included on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (as amended) – 2020
https://invasivespeciesni.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/06/List-of-schedule-9-speciesV4.pdf

Invasive plants - Your legal responsibilities in Northern Ireland
https://www.netregs.org.uk/environmental-topics/land/japanese-knotweed-giant-hogweed-and-other-invasive-weeds/invasive-plants-your-legal-responsibilities-in-northern-ireland/

Native Tree species

- Alder
- Aspen
- Downy Birch
- Silver Birch
- Blackthorn /Sloe
- Bird Cherry
- Wild Cherry
- Crab Apple
- Elder
- Guelder Rose
- Hawthorn / Whitethorn
- Hazel
- Holly
- Juniper
- Pedunculate Oak
- Sessile Oak
- Rowan/Mountain Ash
- Scots Pine
- Spindle
- Whitebeam

- Eared Willow
- Goat/Pussy Willow
- Grey/Rusty Willow
- White Willow /Golden Weeping
- Wych Elm
- Yew

6.4 Where possible and if space allows, developers/applicants should be thinking about habitat creation instead of specific species, for example creating woodland. They retain existing habitat where possible as the first step. Please see the below the Northern Ireland Habitat Action Plan which was published to assist delivery of the Northern Ireland Biodiversity Strategy, for the protection and enhancement of Northern Ireland Priority Habitats. These may assist with helping create 'Action Plan Targets' for developments, thinking about how you can protect existing habitat and provide further habitat thus more meaningfully protecting and contributing to biodiversity.

Publications | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Native Hedge species

- Hawthorn / Whitehorn
- Blackthorn
- Dog Rose
- Hazel
- Elder
- Holly

Grow or retain rambling plants, such as wild rose, bramble and honeysuckle, through your hedge to provide even more shelter and food for wildlife.

Please see the below leaflet for the Hedgerows Grow West project, this outlines guidance on hedgerow planting in Northern Ireland.

Hedgerow-Hero-Leaflet.pdf

Protected species

6.5 Derry City and Strabane district is rich in biodiversity, much of which is protected by various pieces of legislation, including wild birds, bats and badgers. Therefore, it is important to identify all biodiversity features and highlight any that may be impacted by development from the outset, ensuring you are compliant with all wildlife legislation. The links below outline guidance on protected species and habitats.

- https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/daera-2016-wildlife-law-and-you.pdf
- https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/protected-areas
- https://www.netregs.org.uk/environmental-topics/land/nature-conservation/protected-sites-and-priority-habitats/
- https://www.nidirect.gov.uk/articles/wildlife-reserves-and-designated-landscapes
- https://www.netregs.org.uk/environmental-topics/land/nature-conservation/conservation-and-biodiversity-legislation/
- https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/plant-or-animal-species-protected-law#:~:text=The%20Wildlife%20(Northern%20Ireland)%20Order,picking%20of%20certain%20wild%20plants.

Birds

6.6 All wild birds and their active nests are protected under the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (as amended). Birds are particularly vulnerable to disturbance while breeding. Therefore where loss of suitable nesting habitat, such as hedgerows, scrub or buildings is proposed the impact on birds needs to be considered. Impacts on wild birds from developments can be mitigated for by retaining hedgerows and trees and carrying out any works which may impact on nesting sites outside of the bird breeding season (usually considered, but not exclusively from March to August). Note - the law does not define dates for the bird breeding bird season so disturbances to active nests will be an offence regardless of the time of year.

Please note this is not legal advice- seek legal and ecological advice.

Bats

6.7 All species of bats are European protected species under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) and have a strict level of protection. This means that it is illegal to injure, kill or disturb them; and their places of rest (roosts) are also protected from damage or destruction. Bat roosts are protected at all times, whether the bats are present or not.

Bats & Development | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Please note this is not legal advice- seek legal and ecological advice.

Badgers

6.8 In Northern Ireland, badgers and their setts are protected under the Wildlife Order (Northern Ireland) 1985 as amended by the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011. It is a criminal offence to harm or disturb these animals, obstruct access to their place of refuge or destroy or damage anything which conceals or protects their place of refuge. Badgers are also protected by the Welfare of

Animals Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 which prohibits acts of cruelty such as badger baiting. In Northern Ireland, the statutory body with responsibility for wildlife and the environment is the Northern Ireland Environment Agency (NIEA), an Executive Agency within the Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs (DAERA).
Advice on badgers | Department of Agriculture, Environment and Rural Affairs

Please note this is not legal advice- seek legal and ecological advice.

Note: Prior to doing any work, ecological advice must be sought as many habitats and species are protected, eg bats, birds, etc. Please see the below document Wildlife Law and You. The purpose of this booklet is to outline those areas addressed by the law, particularly, but not exclusively, those relating to the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order (as amended) 1985. However, this booklet can only give a broad outline of the law and should not be taken as interpreting statute. If in doubt on any matter, contact Northern Ireland Environment Agency's Wildlife Team who will be able to give you advice.

Wildlife Law and You

7. What is required of the developers/applicants?

7.1 Developers/applicants will be required to demonstrate that they have considered biodiversity throughout their proposal. To that end it is considered that a planning statement be submitted along with the planning application that includes a biodiversity section highlighting how the development proposal will not result in a biodiversity loss and will preferably contribute to biodiversity net gain. The information and detail must be sufficient for consideration. This document should be frontloaded with the application.

7.2 Developers or applicants should identify existing biodiversity features that will possibly be affected due to the proposal and apply a mitigation hierarchy (retain habitat wherever possible. They should explain how they propose to compensate for any loss and potentially enhance biodiversity as part of the development of a site. Where achievable, Biodiversity Net Gain will be incorporated in a manner that is proportionate to the type and scale of development and the presence of existing protected or valuable habitats and species on the site or nearby in the area.

7.3 An NI Biodiversity Checklist is already required within this Council for developments that may affect protected species or habitats. This will be a useful tool for Biodiversity No Net Loss. It is a ‘step by step’ tool which can be used by developers or applicants to help identify if a development proposal is likely to adversely affect biodiversity and whether ecological surveys may be required.

8. Biodiversity enhancement ideas

8.1 Biodiversity enhancement is a process of improving the ecological condition and diversity of a site (or an alternative site). Below includes a list of biodiversity enhancement ideas. This is not an exhaustive list, more a 'menu' of ideas.

Green buildings

Bat and bird boxes.

Bee bricks

Sustainable Urban Drainage (SUD's)

Ponds and pools

'Bee hotels'

Trees and hedges

Hedgehog highway. Vital to safely connect feeding areas away from roads.

Green roofs

Wildflower gardens (urban area)

Hay meadow (countryside)

APPENDIX 1

Best Practice Case Study examples in Northern Ireland, the Republic of Ireland and England

Kingsbrook- Aylesbury Buckinghamshire

The urban expansion at Kingsbrook involved new residential and community facilities. From the start, it was designed to incorporate various features for wildlife including nectar-rich plants, ecological networks, conservation work for Black Poplars (an extremely rare tree), and the installation of wildlife nesting boxes, newt ponds and hibernacula.

A selection of the new homes include 'swift bricks' (bricks that double up as nest cavities for Swifts, a declining migrant bird that nests in buildings and winters in sub–Saharan Africa) and bat boxes.

Kingsbrook has been designed to allow animals to move freely across parks, avenues, streams and open spaces. A large proportion of the gardens at Kingsbrook have a small hole at the base of their garden fence, which allows small animals like hedgehogs to move easily between gardens.

Kingsbrook Meadow has also been approved as a supplementary element to the housing development. Ecologically bereft silage fields will be converted into wildflower-rich hay meadows for butterflies, poppy fields will be sown for bees and birds, numerous ponds and pools will be created for ducks, herons and kingfishers and hedgerows and areas of bushes and woodland will be planted for a range of bird species.

The Kidbrooke Village development, SE London

The development is a long-term regeneration project that began in 2009 and has delivered 1450 homes to date. It involves the regeneration of what was the Ferrier Estate (large former modernist housing development) in south-east London into a vibrant new village community with 35 hectares of green parkland as the centrepiece. The parkland includes lakes, swales and planting, as well as 'brown roofs' on the buildings, these replicate wildlife rich derelict land and provide habitat for rare Black Redstarts (a bird). The swales are part of the wider SuDs design across the development.

The developer partnered with the London Wildlife Trust to deliver a programme of free community events called 'Wild about Kidbrooke Village'. This is part of a wider project looking for opportunities to enhance the ecological value of the green spaces within the Kidbrooke Village development and encourage the local community to become an active stakeholder in their long-term use and management. Activities included craft events, nature talks, pond dipping, mini beast hunts, mammal surveys and a trip to Woodbury Wetlands in North London, as well as workshops at local schools.

Enhancing biodiversity on large-scale solar farms

Wychwood Biodiversity has been working with several solar farm asset owners to develop biodiversity management plans, oversee habitat creation and maintenance, and to monitor wildlife annually. The main activities included habitat creation through sowing species rich grasslands, planting hedges and scrub, and creating nesting and roosting habitats, including hibernacula, bird and bat boxes and bug hotels. The process of habitat creation on a solar farm is straightforward, with many approaches being borrowed from agri-environment schemes. After four to five years the most successful sites are starting to demonstrate increases in the diversity and abundance of common native flowering plants, bumblebees and breeding birds.

Sharrow School, Sheffield

A 2,044 sqm green roof was created on Sharrow School in Sheffield it was designed to reflect the different habitats surrounding the city and includes a wildflower meadow and grassland plants as well as a wetland area with a small pond. Almost 700 plants were planted by volunteers from within the community. The green roof was designed with different vegetation types to provide a range of habitats for invertebrate and bird species. This was achieved in a number of ways, including the use of a variety of substrates to create varied soil conditions that promote the establishment of different plant communities. Plants were largely allowed to colonize naturally, and some seed mixes were specifically introduced to benefit pollinators in particular.

The aim of the green roof was to provide added value by assisting the control of stormwater, humidity, noise, heat and pollution. It has been declared as a Local Nature Reserve by Sheffield City Council with the support of Natural England, in recognition of the importance of the roof to wildlife and educating the school's pupils about nature and the environment.

Source: https://www.bauder.co.uk/case-studies/sharrow-primary-school

Brooke Park, Derry

Brooke Park,an historic landmark in Derry/Londonderry is an 8 hectare public park 1km northwest of the city centre. It runs from Infirmary Road in the south to Rosemount Avenue to the north. Brooke Park has provided a valuable green space for recreation and relaxation for the citizens of Derry since 1901.

Brooke Park has retained its Green Flag status in 2024. The Green Flag Award is the benchmark national standard for parks and green spaces in the UK.

The café in Brooke Park benefits from a Green roof. Green roofs provide biodiversity benefits by creating habitats for plants and wildlife, supporting pollinators and other beneficial insects, and contributing to urban green spaces and ecological connectivity.

The Square, Ballyclare

In June 2024 Choice Housing updated design requirements for their new homes, including requirements relating to biodiversity. Working in partnership with Ulster Wildlife they developed guidance to make proposals for improvement at a number of sites, with a number of these recommendations now being implemented.

Working with their design teams and contractors at their new housing schemes Choice Housing are considering opportunities to protect the existing ecological features of each site, and to consider opportunities for biodiversity improvements. This has led to the planned inclusion of measures such as bird boxes, swift bricks, bat boxes, hedgehog homes, insect hotels, and the planting of wildflowers. They aim for all our new trees to be native or wildlife friendly.

As part of this initiative, they included Swift Bricks in their new housing development "The Square". All Swift bricks at The Square are occupied and the residents of the scheme are delighted by their presence.

As well as The Square, Choice Housing are incorporating this biodiversity conservation technique at Belfast Road, Antrim and Stiles Avenue, Antrim.

In January 2025 Choice Housing confirmed that over 20 bird or bat boxes have been installed at one of their new housing developments in Lisburn.

They installed single bat boxes, multi-chamber bat roosts, and different types of bird boxes, to house a range of birds such as Robins, Wrens, Blackbirds and Blue Tits. Many of these new homes have also been located close to an area which was recently planted with wildflowers, providing food for pollinating insects, birds and bats. Swift boxes are being fitted on the new apartment blocks at the housing development which are due to be completed later this year.

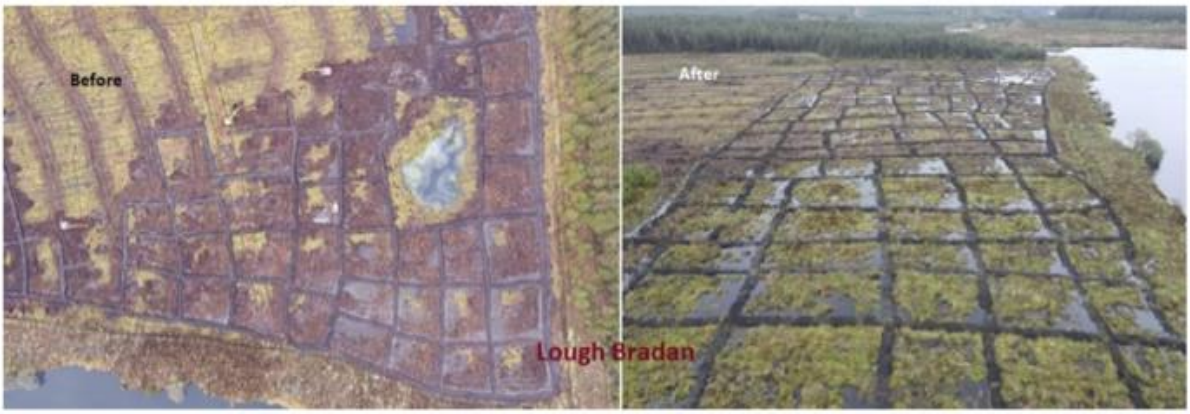
Lough Bradan, Drumquin Co. Tyrone

NI Water are working alongside RSPB NI in a partnership to carry out a peatland restoration project under the DAERA Peatland Challenge Fund. This project is funded through the Peatland Challenge Fund, under the Shared Island Initiative, a partnership between NIEA, National Parks and Wildlife Ireland and NatureScot. The aim of the project is to improve water quality and habitats in the drinking water catchment area, at Lough Bradan, Co Tyrone.

NI Water is currently carrying out work in the Lough Bradan catchment area to restore 28 hectares of previously forested peatland adjacent to Lough Bradan reservoir. These works will also enhance biodiversity, reduce carbon losses from the land and provide a habitat for many rare and endangered species

Peatlands are essential to society as they provide many key services including wildlife habitat protection, a carbon sink, drinking water filtration, flood prevention and more.

Those behind the project hope that Lough Bradan will serve as a model for future forest to bog restoration projects in Northern Ireland.



Cloughjordan Ecovillage, Tipperary

Cloughjordan Ecovillage is built on a 27 hectare site behind the main street. With a planned 130 residential units and the completion of infrastructure works in 2008, the first houses were constructed in 2009 and the ecovillage's first residents moved in during December 2009. By 2015, 85 building sites had been sold and 55 housing units were built containing approximately 140 residents

The development also includes an eco-enterprise centre, allotments for growing food and a community farm. A native woodland consisting of 17,000 native trees has been planted across one-third of the 67 acre site as part of the development. The Ecovillage aims to not only be a model for sustainable living but also contribute towards safeguarding Ireland's natural heritage and biodiversity.

To enhance the local efforts and contribute to global restoration efforts, the Ecovillage organises tree planting days around the village. They also celebrate local biodiversity with events focused on preserving and appreciating the natural flora and fauna in the area.

Dunhill Integrated Constructed Wetlands (ICW), Waterford

The first ICW in Ireland has been operational since 2000, in this time the 10 hectare site has provided a valuable habitat for a wide range of wildlife along with treating wastewater from local communities. An ICW is a type of sustainable wastewater treatment system that is designed to look and function like a natural wetland.

Today it treats all the storm and waste waters from Dunhill Village. It also serves as a popular amenity and recreational area, hosting educational groups and café amenities. It has grown from strength to strength with fantastic public and local engagement.

The Dunhill ICW is linked with the Anne Valley Project, whose key objective is to improve the valley's various habitats towards delivering a range of social and environmental benefits.

Wetlands are one of the world's most biodiverse habitats. They provide homes for many endangered species, offer a lifeline for freshwater species and act as vital 'service stations' for millions of migratory birds to rest and refuel.

Uisce Éireann recognises the urgent need to increase and accelerate efforts to halt the decline of biodiversity. They are committed to building infrastructure that protects and, where possible, enhances ecosystems.

They have developed a biodiversity action plan (BAP) to help conserve, enhance and work with the natural environment. This BAP outlines the strategic aims and the actions they will take to achieve them.

Cherrywood SDZ Planning Scheme, Dublin

Cherrywood SDZ is the single largest undeveloped land-bank in Dún Laoghaire-Rathdown, and is approximately 360 hectares in size, nestled at the foot of the Dublin Mountains, is strategically located between the M50 and N11 transport corridors approximately 1km north of where they fork from the M11 and approximately 8km south of Dún Laoghaire town centre. The overall Biodiversity Strategy for the SDZ includes four underlying principles:

1. To retain and manage existing semi-natural habitats wherever possible and to integrate them into the layout, design and development of the SDZ so that ecosystem, habitat and species diversity, richness and abundance are maintained and that ecological corridors are permitted to function through and beyond the area.
2. To protect species that are protected by law or deemed to be endangered, rare or threatened.
3. Promote the restoration of disturbed areas following construction to replace lost biodiversity.
4. Promote the creation of new features in the landscape that allow for biodiversity gain.

Below is a strategic development zone Master Plan

In October 2023 residential developers Quintain secured planning permission for Cherrywood's first village centre. Quintain is in the process of delivering over 3,000 homes and 27 acres of green space in Cherrywood as part of its Cherrywood Village masterplan. Cherrywood Village is located on a 65-acre site within the Cherrywood SDZ and aims to be the most "connected" village in Ireland. With 3 new public parks, 6 new schools and landscaped biodiversity at Cherrywood offers a wealth of amenities. Cherrywood has seen the planting of more than 3,000 trees to add considerable urban ecology and interest to the landscape. Ecological corridors traverse the development ensuring an ongoing commitment to biological diversity and improved urban water quality.

For more information about biodiversity in Northern Ireland see the following

- https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/sites/default/files/publications/doe/natural-policy-biodiversity-strategy-to-2020-2015.pdf
- https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/topics/biodiversity
- https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/list-northern-ireland-priority-species-2023
- https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/publications/standing-advice-development-land-may-affect-natural-heritage-interests
- https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/articles/biodiversity-checklist

For more information about biodiversity in the Republic of Ireland see the following

- Landscaping and Biodiversity Guide for New Developments – Clúid Housing https://www.cluid.ie/wp-content/uploads/2023/05/Landscaping-and-Biodiversity-Guide-for-web.pdf
- The All-Ireland Pollinator Plan All-Ireland-Pollinator-Plan-2021-2025-WEB.pdf
- FCC, DCC and DLR in Dublin region are currently developing guidance for developers on biodiversity in developments while these are not currently ready at the time of writing this report, these may be further documents applicants/developers may want to read for ideas and inspiration.
- Implementation of Urban Nature-based Solutions Guidance Document for Planners, Developers and Developer Agents - Local Authority Waters Programme (LAWPRO) Publications - Local Authority Waters Programme

APPENDIX 2

What is required to be submitted along with the planning application?

A planning statement can help support most types of planning application through providing justification for the development in relation to a number of issues. It should consider the local context, the Local Development Plan, the SPPS and the Regional Development Strategy (RDS) 2035. It should seek to demonstrate how the development will meet the relevant policies and why approval should be granted.

Developers/applicants will be required to demonstrate that they have considered biodiversity throughout their proposal. It is considered that a planning statement be submitted along with the planning application that includes a biodiversity section.

This biodiversity section should cover the below points:

- Identify existing biodiversity features that will possibly be affected due to the proposal.
- Include a list of protected species on site or known protected species in the locality.
- Include how you propose to compensate for any loss of biodiversity.
- Include a section on how you can potentially enhance biodiversity as part of the development of a site (not a requirement but preferable)

This document must be frontloaded with the application and provide sufficient information for consideration. Please be aware the Council will take into account recent google maps/ Ortho satellite imagery when establishing the baseline position of biodiversity on site.