



Planning Information and advice for local residents

Planning requirements

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 requires planning authorities to have regard to the conservation (this means protection and enhancement) of biodiversity when determining a planning application.

The Government's planning policies and how they are expected to be applied are set out in the National Planning Policy Framework. This Framework makes it clear that all planning authorities have a crucial role to play in restoring, recreating and reconnecting wildlife-rich places through strategic planning and sound decision making. The conservation of biodiversity is a material consideration according to Planning Policy Statement (PPS) 9, and Government Circular 06/05. "Biodiversity" includes these elements:-

- Species and habitats listed in Local BAPs and notables lists
- Legally protected plant and animal species
- Linear and continuous habitat features that are of major importance to flora and fauna, enabling dispersal, migration and breeding. These features include hedgerows, rivers and their banks, small woodlands, and ponds.

Somerset Environmental Records Centre (SERC) role

SERC has two key roles to play in the planning process;

- it acts as an information centre for ecologists, developers and landowners planning work by collecting and providing data on all forms of flora and fauna known to be in an area; and
- it provides the same data to all planning authorities in Somerset, i.e. the County and District Councils and Exmoor National Park, to assist them with their decision making process.
- SERC is not however able to provide planning advice on any specific developments.

SERC's data comes from a variety of sources including wildlife surveys and information from residents and members of the public. Please let us know if you are aware of the presence of any wildlife on a site as we may not already know about it and we can let the planning authority know. You can do this on-line by going to our web page at Somerc.com and selecting recording and then single record from the menu or follow the link below

<http://www.somerc.com/recording/single+records/>

The planning officer needs to know what wildlife is out there to be able to fulfil all the requirements. In most cases, without ecological survey information, a sound planning decision cannot be reached. Ecological information is provided as part of the planning application process (sometimes referred to as a desk study in the planning submission). All developments, no matter how small, are required to mitigate the impact of what they are doing and also provide enhancements such as bat or bird boxes. If it is not known what wildlife is on or near a site, the planners can't protect it.

Somerset Environmental Records Centre

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Next steps

Information on individual planning applications can be obtained via the line facility provided by the District and County Councils. Members of the public can use this to find out further information and submit a representation.

- [Taunton Deane District Council Planning](#)
- [Sedgemoor District Council Planning](#)
- [South Somerset District Council Planning](#)
- [West Somerset Council Planning](#)
- [Mendip District Council Planning](#)
- [Somerset County Council Planning](#)
- [Exmoor National Park Authority Planning](#)

