Ecology and Trees Checklist

This checklist is required for **ALL** planning applications. Understanding the ecology on and near a site and taking action can avoid delays in planning, create a better quality scheme and avoid criminal prosecution.

Tick all features present and those that **COULD** be affected by any aspect of the proposal, including:

- development above and below ground, including matters such as the connection of utilities
- large vehicles accessing the site, such as cranes or delivery lorries
- materials storage and where building works (e.g. concrete mixing) would take place

Are the following within the specified distance to the red line boundary? Are they affected or unaffected by the proposal?	Yes - affected by proposal	Yes - unaffected by proposal	No
1. Buildings and features			
Agricultural buildings (e.g. farmhouses and barns) within 200m	☐	☐	☒
A building over 15 years old (to be demolished) within 200m	☐	☐	☒
A pre-1960 building (in or within 200m of woodland) within 200m	☐	☐	☒
A pre-1914 building (in or within 400m of woodland) within 200m	☐	☐	☒
Underground structures (such as cellars or tunnels) within 200m	☐	☐	☒
Bridge structures, aqueducts or viaducts within 200m	☐	☐	☒
Clay or slate roof tiles, hanging tiles or timber weather boarding	☐	☐	☒
Loft space, including gables within 200m	☐	☐	☒
2. Trees and Hedges (see section **6** Additional guidance on Trees and Hedges for guidance)			
Trees with a girth of 125cm or greater within 15m of the proposal (including offsite and access)	☐	☐	☒
Trees with a girth of 25cm or greater within 10m of the proposal (including offsite and access)	☐	☐	☒
Hedgerows on or within 5m of the site	☐	☐	☒
3. Habitats (see section **7** Additional guidance on Habitats for guidance)			
Special Protection Area or Special Area of Conservation within 2km	☐	☐	☒
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within 500m	☐	☐	☒
Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland (ASNW) within 100m	☐	☐	☒
Local Wildlife or Biological Notification Site on or adjacent to site	☐	☐	☒
Designated Priority habitat on or adjacent to site	☐	☐	☒
Meadows or unmanaged scrub, woodland, grassland, heathland or wetland within site	☐	☐	☒
Ponds within 250m	☐	☐	☒
Rivers, streams or water filled ditches within 10m	☐	☐	☒

Have any of the following species been known to use the red line site? (see section **8** Additional guidance on Known Wildlife for guidance)		
☐ Nesting birds	☐ Dormice	☐ Otters
☐ Bats	☐ Great Crested Newts	☐ Water Voles
☐ Badgers	☐ Reptiles	☐ White-clawed Crayfish

What to do next

1. If you answered entirely "No" / "Yes – unaffected"

1.1 Please submit the completed checklist with your planning application. After that, there is no further action for you to take. Please note that if it is later found that a feature is affected, development work may be stopped immediately and legal action taken.

2. If you answered one or more "Yes – affected" in Section 1 (Buildings and features) or "Yes – affected OR unaffected" in Section 3 (Habitats)

2.1 You must submit the completed checklist. If your application is for a minor or major development you must also submit an **Ecology Report** (guidance below) with your planning application. An ecology report is not required for householder applications at the time of submission, but may be asked for during determination.

3. If you answered "Yes – affected" in the Trees and Hedges section

3.1 You must submit the completed checklist and a **Tree Report** (guidance below) with your planning application. You may also be asked to submit an Ecology Report.

4. Preparing an Ecology Report

4.1 To avoid delays and ensure you only do the work you need to, we strongly advise using our Planning Advice Service (external website).

4.2 The preparation of an Ecology Report should follow this 3-step process:

I. Survey and Assessment (to understand and assess the ecology of the area)
II. Design (to minimise, mitigate and compensate impacts and maximise benefits)
III. Implementation (ensure that the agreed protection and enhancement takes place)

4.3 The best format for an Ecology Report is usually a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (external website). It includes:

- A desk study – including a search of Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre's records
- A walkover survey – identifying signs of species and habitats requiring further consideration
- A phase 1 (or UK Habs) Habitat Survey – mapping the habitats on site
- Recommendations – for further surveys or specific measures to avoid harming wildlife.

4.4 Any surveys must be carried out by a suitably qualified person. Some can only be carried out at certain times of the year, so we recommend you start researching this now. Professional ecologists can be found on the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (external website).

5. Preparing a Tree Report

5.1 A Tree Report must include the findings from a tree survey carried out by a suitably qualified person. It must be of the appropriate level of detail as set out in Table B.1 in BS5837:2012 Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations (external website). See also further guidance (external website) on how countryside hedgerows should be surveyed.

5.2 Suitably qualified arboriculturists are often members of the Arboricultural Association (external website) or the Institute of Chartered Foresters (external website).

Further Information

6. Additional guidance on Trees and Hedges

6.1 For guidance relating to protected hedgerows see: Countryside hedgerows: protection and management (external website).

7. Additional guidance on Habitats

7.1 Using the interactive maps on DEFRA (external website) you can locate your site and view nationally designated sites for wildlife conservation and priority habitats.

7.2 Habitats have special ecological importance. For advice on habitats with the highest level of protection, see Natural England's guidance (external website).

7.3 For advice on Ancient Semi Natural Woodland, see Natural England's guidance (external website).

7.4 Rivers and streams are important for ecology and have special consideration in Wycombe's planning policy. Guidance on this can be found in the River Wye Advice Note (external website).

7.5 Biological Notification Site details, Local Wildlife Site details and other ecology records are available from Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre (external website) (BMERC).

8. Additional guidance on Known Wildlife

8.1 The Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre (external website) hold records for species and habitats. For a fee they can search their database (external website) and produce a report which provides the core to an ecological desk study of a site.

8.2 Some basic records are freely available on the internet, e.g. https://nbnatlas.org/

8.3 The wildlife mentioned in this section of the checklist may be protected species. See Natural England's guidance: Protected species: how to review planning applications (external website).

8.4 Great Crested Newts are often found in ponds in the district. Even if the pond is not on site it may need consideration. Buckinghamshire and Milton Keynes Environmental Records Centre hold records of Great Crested Newts. The **Aylesbury Vale area** currently holds a license for Nature Space UK on the assessment and mitigation for Great Crested Newts. More details can be found on the Aylesbury Vale website (external website).

9. Additional sources of information

9.1 Joint Nature Conservation Committee advice on wildlife law (external website).

9.2 Priority Habitats and Species lists as published in accordance with s41 of the NERC Act (external website).

9.3 General information on biodiversity in Buckinghamshire can be found in the Biodiversity in Planning in Buckinghamshire (external website) publication.