

Frequently asked questions: Criteria for nature friendly development

<p>What are DWT's Criteria for nature-friendly development?</p>	<p>DWT wishes to see development schemes which are designed to -</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> benefit the wildlife, habitats and species on site <ol style="list-style-type: none"> following the mitigation hierarchy; whilst creating a substantial net gain in biodiversity; and provide better proximity to nature for people, addressing the physical and mental wellbeing of residents; and be subject to monitoring and maintenance in the long term
<p>What can a design do to benefit wildlife habitats and species?</p>	<p><u>DWT Criteria 1: benefit the wildlife habitats and species of the site</u></p> <p>Clearly, development will not benefit the wildlife habitats and species of the site if the development destroys it.</p> <p>National planning policy requires a net gain in biodiversity (the difference between the pre-development situation and the situation after the development has been implemented) of at least 10%. The net gain in biodiversity should occur by provision on-site but, if this cannot be achieved, national planning policy allows compensation off-site as a last resort. For further information on the mitigation and compensation hierarchy look at the planning application FAQ sheet.</p> <p>DWT considers that a nature-friendly development should incorporate –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> existing semi-natural assets (such as hedgerows, trees, species rich grassland and water features), with measures to enhance them new wildlife habitat, which is located to enhance the connectivity of habitats within the site to habitats outside the site. (The importance of such ecological networks is recognised in national planning policy) measures to prevent disturbance (through artificial lighting and human activity) to this habitat and its associated species. Such measures might include design modification and physical barriers (walls/fences/double hedgerows/buffer zones with defensive shrubs etc) new wildlife habitat in conjunction with sustainable urban drainage systems (SUDS) the inclusion of bird and bat brick boxes in buildings <p>But DWT regards the following as examples of bad practice -</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> grassy areas which are intended as species-rich wildflower grassland but also proposed as informal play areas. Long term use for such activity will nullify any initial biodiversity value. They should not, therefore, be taken as providing biodiversity gain. the location of development where it will cause lighting disturbance to hedgerow wildlife corridors. the reliance on residents not to install garden lighting, where it would otherwise adversely affect hedgerow wildlife corridors. Planning Conditions of this sort are of little use, as they are not monitored and seldom enforced.

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	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> existing and proposed habitats which are left totally isolated by the built development around them.
<p>How can a nature-friendly design benefit the well-being of residents?</p>	<p><u>DWT Criteria 2: provide better proximity to nature for people, addressing the physical and mental wellbeing of residents</u></p> <p>Research in recent years has revealed the benefit that nature can have for people's physical and mental well-being. Nature is a 'feel-good' factor, and developments that incorporate it in a meaningful way are popular places to live.</p> <p>DWT considers that a nature-friendly development, for people, is one where –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> existing and new habitat runs throughout the development (rather than being confined to one area), so that it is encountered by residents in their daily activities (including walking to shops and facilities etc) care is taken in the design of places so that people can relax in the presence of semi-natural habitat (looking out onto hedgerows, trees, species rich grassland and water features etc) there are information boards which stimulate interest in the wildlife features and species in their area <p>However, DWT regards the following as examples of bad practice –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> nature is not an integral part of the design. It is not seen as an asset to the development and its residents and is only a token gesture. wildlife habitat is pushed to the perimeter of the development, so that it doesn't get in the way. A line may be drawn around part of an existing field and denoted as the 'access to nature' area. the provision of wildlife habitats is a secondary consideration in the face of landscape design objectives and the need for clean visual lines no attention is given to nature in the provision of street planting
<p>How do we ensure developments remain nature-friendly in to the future?</p>	<p><u>DWT Criteria 3: subject to monitoring and maintenance in the long term</u></p> <p>DWT considers that a nature-friendly development is one which –</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> must remain nature-friendly for the lifetime of the development will have arrangements in place to finance and administer the monitoring, management and maintenance of wildlife habitat and features, for the life of the development