

2 Application Requirements Checklist

Surveys and Reports

The Local Plan includes information on designated landscape and nature conservation sites and the Local Authority planning department may hold additional information on some sites. However, it must not be assumed that the Local Authority holds all relevant information, and other bodies such as English Nature and Kent Wildlife Trust should be contacted for further information. In most cases an independent ecological and landscape assessment is recommended to be certain of the particular issues that affect a particular site or proposal.

Set out below is a checklist of surveys and reports that will be required to accompany an application involving landscape or nature conservation issues. The landscape or ecological features found on a site or affected by the works will dictate the survey and report that will be required, although the detail of information may vary according to circumstance. In simple terms, the larger or more complex the proposals and the more sensitive the site, then the more information that will be required. Applicants or their agents should employ appropriate specialist consultants such as an ecologist, landscape architect or an arboriculturalist, as necessary.

Feature	Survey/report	Information/comment
Sites of nature conservation interest	Detailed ecological survey	Details of likely impacts and mitigation. Applications affecting SSSIs or SNCIs will require consultation with English Nature and Kent Wildlife Trust respectively.
Designated landscape	Designations and policies referring to them are normally covered by the Local Plan	The Local Plan Area includes the High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty, Special Landscape Areas, Areas of Landscape Importance, Areas of Important Open Space and Conservation Areas.
Natural or semi-natural vegetation/habitat e.g. woodland, hedgerows, ponds, & grassland etc	Ecological site assessment	A general site assessment covering key ecological characteristics will often give a good overall picture of nature conservation issues and indicate if further surveys will be required. Report should include information on impacts and mitigation. Particular note should be made of any ancient woodland or BAP priority habitats on, or adjacent to, the site. Refer to Part 5: Protected Species.
Protected species – known or likely to occur	Species specific survey	This may be determined through site assessment, consultation with English Nature/Kent Wildlife Trust or public records.
Trees, woodland and hedgerows	Tree Condition Surveys to: BS 5837 'Trees In Relation To Construction' 1991	Condition survey in accordance with BS5837 indicating tree height, girth, spread, condition and category. Refer to Protecting Trees on Development Sites. Trees to be numbered on plan (corresponding to tree tags on site) illustrating crown spread and development limit.
Hedgerows	Survey and Assessment	Assessment of hedgerow according to the criteria under the 1997 Hedgerow Regulations.
Landscape features and changes in level	Topographical survey and landscape assessment	Levels and contours, all existing landscape and topographical features such as watercourses, ditches, vegetation, fences and paths. To include, where appropriate, land use, landscape quality and character. Refer to Supplementary Planning Guidance: Borough Landscape Character Area Assessment.
Historical Sites – known or likely to contain archaeological remains or historical artefacts	Archaeological/historical study and report	Historical maps are a useful source of information but local societies and individuals often provide useful information. Also refer to Supplementary Planning Guidance – Rural Lanes. Report should include summary of study, details of likely impacts and proposed mitigation.
Water bodies and streams	Hydrological survey	This will be particularly relevant where the nature conservation or landscape interest of the site or nearby sites is dependent on water quality or volume.
Views and visibility	Visual impact assessment	Information to illustrate the effect of the proposal on important views, visually sensitive sites and views from public places.

The Proposal

Government guidance suggests that 'applicants for planning permission should, as a minimum, provide a short written statement setting out the design principles adopted as well as illustrative material in plan and elevation. That material should show the wider context and not just the development site and its immediately adjacent buildings'¹. The extent and level of detail required at the application stage will depend upon the nature of the proposal.

Set out below is a list of the areas that information included with all planning applications should cover. The information should show a relationship with, and a response to, site surveys and reports. The mitigation proposed by the surveys and reports should be clearly illustrated by the proposal drawings and other information.

Information	Description	Comment
Location and Context Plan	Plan – possibly supported by text and photographs	Each application should be accompanied by a clear location plan, which shows the local and area context for the site. This should include indications of surrounding landscape, character, habitats and properties.
Existing Site	Plan – Site surveys and reports as outlined above	The existing site should be fully described by plans, text and/or photographs as appropriate. Site constraints should be accurately identified.
Design Statement	Written statement	The statement should set out the adopted design principles and response to the features and issues identified by the surveys and reports. The statement may include photographs and sketches to illustrate key points.
Tree/Vegetation Retention and Protection	Plan and specifications	The plan should show clearly which trees and/or other vegetation is to be retained or lost to the development and how retained elements are to be protected. Refer to Part 3: Protecting Trees on Development Sites. Protection for trees and other vegetation will be in accordance with BS 5837 'Trees In Relation To Construction' 1991.
Layout Plans	Plan	The Layout Plan should clearly show the whole scheme illustrating all principal components, all changes in levels and land uses together with pedestrian and vehicular circulation. This is expected to include all components of the landscape strategy and mitigation proposals.
Typical Arrangements and Details	Plans, elevations, sections and perspectives	Further explanation of the Layout Plan should be provided on separate drawings illustrating typical arrangements and details for principal areas, landscape features or important generic components.
Services	Plans and reports	The location, run and size of all services and site drainage should be indicated on plan.
Operational Constraints	Plan and/or report	The full extent of all site operations, access, temporary work areas and service requirements that impact on the environment should be clearly stated by either plan or report. The proposal may include a Construction Code of Practice as part of mitigation proposals.

¹Planning Policy Guidance Note 1 1997: General Policy and Principles Paragraph A4

Supporting and Detailed Information

Information which is fundamental to a proposal must be included with the application. Some aspects and details, however, may be dealt with after planning consent is granted, as a condition. Conditions may restrict or control the development in terms of protected areas, seasonal operations or methods of working. Commonly conditions are used to require additional, more detailed information on particular aspects such as detailed design, materials or management plans.

Set out below is a list of the areas of information that supporting and detailed information should cover. Whether this will be required, as part of the application or a condition, will depend on the nature of the proposal and the condition of the site. Pre-application discussions with the planning department and others may assist in determining the most suitable approach.

Information	Description	Comment
Management Plans	Plans and/or report	Both existing and proposed landscape features will require management plans that illustrate how landscape and nature conservation objectives assigned to an area or feature by the proposal will be met. Management Plans should include details of funding and time period that they cover.
Phasing or Programme Details	Statement and/or report	If the works are to be phased or restricted to a particular time-scale then this should be clearly explained by the proposal, as timing and duration can have a significant impact on landscape and nature conservation.
Method Statements and Technical Information	Statements, specifications and illustrative material	Important and specialised features will require a description of materials and construction methods. Sites involving earth moving will require a topsoil management strategy and specification.
Detailed Planting Plans	Plans, schedules and specification	Detailed planting plan showing location, extent and nature of all planted areas. Schedule of all planting material including species, form, size and density. Specification for topsoil including depth, quality and analytical testing. Specification for all associated landscaping works such as preparation, planting and protection methods, e.g. rabbit guards. Specification for grass seed & wildflower mixes.
Detailed Maintenance Works	Schedule/ specification	Schedules and specification of works and performance criteria for landscape areas.
Construction Details and Materials	Drawings, specifications and samples	For important features and structures associated with new works.
Monitoring Arrangements	Method statements and agreements	Documents setting out how monitoring is to be carried out and who will be consulted or informed of any modifications to the management plan.
Section 106 and other Legal Agreements	Statements, schedules and plans	Management plans, offsite works and monitoring arrangements may be subject to a legal agreement tied to the planning permission that will ensure appropriate management of green spaces for the lifetime of the development and the long term success of proposed mitigation works.

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