

BS42020 : 2013 Biodiversity : Code of Practice for Planning and Development

Introduction

The UK commitment to halt overall loss of biodiversity by 2020 in line with the European Biodiversity Strategy and UN Aichi targets, is passed down to local authorities to implement, mainly through planning policy. To assist organizations affected by these commitments, BSI has published BS 42020 which offers a coherent methodology for biodiversity management.

Currently there is considerable variation in:

- a) the quality and appropriateness of ecological information submitted with planning applications, and;
- b) the capacity, consistency and effectiveness of planning authorities and other regulatory bodies when they consider proposals for development or land management that potentially affects biodiversity.

This situation is not necessarily due to insufficient legislation, policy or guidance, or even lack of ecological methods and techniques. It is more a reflection of widespread inconsistency in professional ecological practice, compounded by the difficulty that decision-makers have in distinguishing between high or low quality ecological information and its relevance to an application.

High-quality information is important for:

- a) effective decision-making;
- b) compliance with statutory obligations and policy requirements;
- c) successful implementation of practical conservation and enhancement measures during development; and the achievement of desired outcomes.

BS42020

This British Standard therefore sets out to assist those concerned with ecological issues as they arise through the planning process, in matters relating to permitted development and activities involved in the management of land outside the scope of land use planning, which could have site-specific ecological implications.

The standard has been produced with input from a number of organisations including CIEEM¹ and ALGE² and provides:

- Guidance on how to produce clear and concise ecological information to accompany planning applications
- Recommendations on professional ethics, conduct, competence and judgement to give confidence that proposals for biodiversity conservation, and consequent decisions/actions taken, are sound and appropriate
- Direction on effective decision-making in biodiversity management
- A framework to demonstrate how biodiversity has been managed during the development process to minimize impact.

Many different ecological consultants work for developers operating within the boundary of Central Bedfordshire. Reports submitted vary in quality considerably and as a consequence it can be frustrating and time consuming trying to glean the necessary information needed in order to make a decision on a the impact of a planning application.

Following the Standard within the Authority would clearly define what is required when submitting applications, facilitating the Council in dealing effectively with applications which have an ecological impact.

The following link provides a synopsis of the document.

http://www.bsigroup.com/Documents/biodiversity/BS-42020-Smart-Guide.pdf?utm_source=PM-STAN-NEWS-SUST-0-VOL-1308&utm_medium=et_mail&utm_content=2659450&utm_campaign=&utm_term=Download

¹ Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management

² Association of Local Government Ecologists