



Report to Planning Committee 4 December 2025

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Report Summary	
<b>Report Title</b>	Wildlife Features as part of new development Guidance Note
<b>Purpose of Report</b>	To inform members of the publication of a Guidance Note to encourage wildlife features as part of new development.
<b>Recommendation</b>	That Committee note the production and publication of the Guidance Note (attached at Appendix A)

## 1.0 **Background**

- 1.1 At Full Council on the 15 July 2025 a motion was agreed in relation to swift bricks which included the following:

“This Council acknowledges the significant and ongoing decline in swift and other cavity-nesting bird populations across the UK, with four species known to use swift bricks now on the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern. These species, including swifts and house martins, rely entirely on buildings for breeding and are rapidly losing nesting sites due to modern construction practices and insulation schemes that seal off access to traditional cavities.

Council therefore resolves to:

- 5) Encourage developers within Newark and Sherwood District** to install swift bricks in all suitable new residential developments and publish guidance on best practice placement.
- 6) Support the Planning Policy team to continue exploring opportunities** to embed swift bricks within local planning policy or supplementary planning guidance—such as in future iterations of the Newark Town Centre Design Code—and report back with options for their inclusion in upcoming Local Plan updates and biodiversity net gain assessments.”

- 1.2 Planning Policy Board considered the issue during the summer of 2025 and endorsed an approach to provide a guidance note setting out how the Council will encourage developers to address this issue. This would be ahead of the drafting of more formal policy in the new Local Plan or in any formal Design SPD. The Board also endorsed the approach of the inclusion of bats and hedgehogs within any guidance reflecting national policy.

## **2.0 Wildlife Features as part of new development – Guidance Note**

- 2.1 Attached at **Appendix A** is final wording of the guidance note produced by Planning Policy and the Biodiversity and Ecology teams. The guidance note is currently being designed up by the communications team for publication.
- 2.2 The guidance note sets out that Paragraph 187d of the National Planning Policy Framework states that through their decision making Local Planning Authorities should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: *“minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs.”*
- 2.3 Core Policy 12 Biodiversity and Green Infrastructure in the Amended Core Strategy (Adopted March 2019) sets out that the District Council will: *“Seek to secure development that maximises the opportunities to conserve, enhance and restore biodiversity and geological diversity and to increase provision of, and access to, green infrastructure within the District”.*
- 2.4 The guidance note goes on to explain the urgent need to provide nest bricks and boxes, bat boxes, and hedgehog friendly design as part of new development. It explains what these are and how the Council will seek to secure them as part of new development.
- 2.5 It is important to note that this is guidance explaining the Council’s approach to implementing the NPPF and Core Policy 12 of the Amended Core Strategy. Whilst it is not policy it does capture how the Council seeks to address national and local policy in this particular area, reflecting existing practice.

## **3.0 Implications**

- 3.1 In writing this report and in putting forward recommendation’s officers have considered the following implications: Data Protection, Digital and Cyber Security, Equality and Diversity, Financial, Human Resources, Human Rights, Legal, Safeguarding and Sustainability, and where appropriate they have made reference to these implications and added suitable expert comment where appropriate.

### **Legal Implications - LEG2526/6456**

- 3.2 This report is for noting.