

Exmoor Biodiversity Trigger List

	Triggers for a wildlife report	Yes	No
Size	Is the application site (red line boundary) greater than 0.1ha?		
Designations	Will the proposal involve impacts* on a designated site (see Natural Environment Record)? - Special Area of Conservation (SAC) - Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) - National Nature Reserve - County/Local Wildlife Site (CWS/LWS)		
Buildings/structures	Will the proposal involve any of the following? - Demolition of (all or part of) building or structure - Renovation or conversion of a building or structure - Work to a roof, roof space, barge boards/fascias/soffits or chimney - Work to walls with crevices, wooden cladding, hanging tiles or climbing plants - Work to underground structures such as cellars, ice-houses, tunnels, mines, kilns or adits - Work to a bridge structure		
Habitats	Will the proposal involve impacts* on any of the following? - An area of woodland - An area of scrub connected to woodland or hedgerow - An area of heathland, species-rich grassland, rough grassland or marshy (wet) grassland - Derelict land, quarries, railway land or allotments		
Trees	Will the proposal involve impacts* on old or veteran trees, or any trees with obvious holes, cracks, cavities, dense ivy or deadwood or a bird or bat box?		
Hedges	Will the proposal involve removal or moving of any section of hedgerow or line of trees (excluding non-native garden hedges unless >10m being removed)		

Water	Will the proposal involve impacts* on a river, stream, intertidal area or pond (consider all ponds within 500m of the proposal, excluding ornamental garden fishponds, and any proposal within 10m of either side of a watercourse)		
Species	Are there known records of protected/priority species on site which will be affected by the proposal?		
Lighting	Will the proposal result in either of the following? - Illumination or light spill onto mature trees, hedgerow, woodland, pasture, water course, waterbody or known bat roost? - Lighting or impacts on woodland, tree line, hedgerow within the Exmoor and Quantock Oakwoods SAC Consultation Zones (link to document on website)?		
Other	Will the proposal result in the generation of renewable energy, for example wind turbines, hydro-powered schemes or photo-voltaic arrays?		

*If YES to any of the above, then an Ecological Impact Assessment **must** be submitted alongside any planning application. The application will not be validated without it and surveys to support it cannot be conditioned.*

Invasive non-native species

Work near a known invasive non-native species e.g. Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam, montbretia?

If YES to the above, then an invasive species management plan will be required.

Agricultural development

Will the proposal result in new or replacement housing for animals and/or slurry/manure management?

If YES to the above, then an air quality assessment may be required – please seek advice pre-app.

*Impacts can be direct or indirect and you may be advised on this by your ecologist. Direct impacts are where there would be a loss of habitat e.g. an area of grassland removed, indirect impacts may occur through root compaction, via a water course or as run-off for example. Impacts can be both positive and negative but we are principally looking at negative impacts here.

Signed	(Applicant/agent)	Print name		Date	
---------------	-------------------	-------------------	--	-------------	--

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

From January 2024, under the statutory framework for Biodiversity Net Gain, every grant of planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to a general biodiversity gain condition to secure the biodiversity gain objective. This objective is to deliver at least a 10% increase in relation to the pre-development biodiversity value of the development granted permission. The general biodiversity gain condition is a pre-commencement condition: once planning permission has been granted, a Biodiversity Gain Plan must be submitted and approved by the planning authority before commencement of the development. Where applicants consider that the development would not be subject to the general biodiversity gain condition, as outlined by the exemptions listed below, the applicant must provide a statement setting out why they believe this is the case.

BNG exemptions	Yes	No
Is the application for non-major development? <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - Residential development of 1-9 dwellings on a site of <1ha - Where the number of dwellings is not known the site area is <0.5ha - For non-residential, the floorspace to be created is <1000m² or the site area is <1ha There is a temporary exemption for non-major developments, defined as development not defined as major development under the Article 2 Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (until April 2024).		
Is it a householder application?		
Is the application for retrospective planning permission (made under section 73A)?		
Is the application a variation/removal of condition application (section 73 permissions) where the original permission was either applied for or granted before statutory BNG?		
Development granted planning permission by a development order under section 59 (this includes permitted development rights)		
Is the development proposed impacting an area habitat less than 25 square metres (e.g. 5m by 5m) or 5m of linear habitats such as hedgerows, that is not a priority habitat? These would be subject to the de minimis exemption.		
Self-build and custom build development which: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> - consists of no more than 9 dwellings, and - is carried out on a site which has an area no larger than 0.5 hectares, and - consists exclusively of dwellings which are self-build or custom housebuilding as defined in section 1(A1) of the Self-build and Custom Housebuilding Act 2015 		
Is the application urgent Crown development (granted under s293A TCPA 1990)?		
Does the application relate to the development/creation of a biodiversity gain site (“habitat bank”)? Defined as development which is undertaken solely or mainly for the purpose of fulfilling, in whole or in part, the biodiversity gain planning condition which applies in relation to another development		

What does the production of an Ecological Impact Assessment involve?

Stage 1: Initial survey

Initial site walkover / preliminary roost assessment to identify known or potential impacts on protected/priority species or habitats. These can usually be carried out at any time of year.

Stage 2: Further surveys

If potential impacts are identified, the ecologist may have to undertake further survey work e.g. dormouse surveys or bat activity surveys. These have to be carried out at specific times of year, depending on the focus species. It is important to factor these further surveys into your timetable to minimise the risk of wasting time and money.

Stage 3: Planning

The ecologist will produce a report (Ecological Impact Assessment or EclA) for planning detailing the impacts of the project and recommending appropriate avoidance, mitigation or compensation measures – these are likely to be secured by conditions in the planning system. The scope of the report will be proportionate to the impacts and scale of the project.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) – depending on the scale and type of the project/application 10% BNG may be required (see Technical Guidance Note), if the proposal falls below the threshold for 10% BNG then wildlife enhancements will be required in line with ENPA Local Plan policies.

Stage 4: Post-planning

If there are going to be impacts on European Protected Species (e.g. bats, dormice, otters), then you are likely to need a licence from Natural England. These are separate to the planning process and your consultant will provide advice on this. There is also information on Natural England's [website](#).

Please note, you may need a licence from Natural England whether planning permission is required or not.

Implementation of planning – secured by conditions and monitored by the Local Planning Authority (LPA)

All reports must be produced by suitably qualified and experienced ecological consultant. Ideally, survey data should be from the last survey season before a planning application is submitted (BCT, 2016). CIEEM provide a useful [advice note](#) on the lifespan of ecological reports and surveys.

FAQs

Do I need to submit a completed biodiversity trigger list?

Yes. All planning applications must be accompanied by a completed biodiversity trigger list. The list asks a series of simple questions about your proposal, with the aim of providing you with an informed answer to the biodiversity question on the application form. The trigger list is designed to be completed by the applicant or their agent, with no specialist input required at this stage.

When do I need to submit an ecologist's survey report (Ecological Impact Assessment)?

If the trigger list indicates that your proposals may have an impact on protected/priority species or habitats, then you will need to submit a survey report alongside your planning application. Failure to submit the report means that the application may not be validated.

Are there any exceptions?

You will not need to submit an ecologist's report if you have had pre-app advice from one of Exmoor National Park Authority's (ENPA's) Wildlife Conservation Officers and they have stated in writing that no survey is required.

Who should complete the report?

The Ecological Impact Assessment report must be completed by a suitably qualified ecologist and the report should include the details of the person who prepared the report. The report should be completed in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM's) guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment and Report Writing and up-to-date species-specific survey guidelines.

How do I find an ecologist?

CIEEM recommends the best way to find an ecologist is through their Registered Practices Directory, which is available online: <https://cieem.net/i-need/finding-a-consultant/>. CIEEM also maintains a directory of their members and it is possible to search by name to check if someone is a member: <https://cieem.net/i-need/about-our-members/members-directory/>.

Alternatively, ENPA hold a list of some professional ecologists working in this area, please ask if you would like a copy of this.

How long are reports valid for?

Ideally, survey data should be from the last survey season before a planning application is submitted (BCT, 2016). CIEEM provide a useful [advice note](#) on the lifespan of ecological reports and surveys.