



# Planners' Update

## Summer 2017

### Issue 6

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## Welcome to the SBIS Planners' Update!

We aim to provide accessible information about biodiversity issues in relation to planning. If we can help with training events, factsheets or in any other way, please do contact us and we'll do our best to provide what you need. Previous Updates are available on the [SBIS Planners' Page >](#)

## East Anglian Planning and Biodiversity Seminar 2017

**Save the date! 24th November 2017**

**Venue: East Suffolk Councils' offices in Melton, near Woodbridge**

The agenda is in draft at present - the day will include the following topics:

- **Update on key national issues related to biodiversity in Development Management and Spatial Planning**
- **Green Roofs and Living Walls**
- **Biodiversity Enhancements / Net Gain for Biodiversity**
- **District Level Licensing for Great Crested Newts**
- **The implications of Brexit**
- **A section highlighting what planners can do for farmland birds and dormice**
- **Ipswich Borough, Babergh and Suffolk Coastal District Councils Recreational disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)**

Places will be free for non-commercial organisations; a small fee will be charged for others. Please note that space is limited, so numbers may be restricted.

Updates will be available on the [SBIS Planners page >](#) Last year's presentations are available on the [SBIS ISSUU website >](#)

Please contact Gen for further information (email [gen.broad@suffolk.gov.uk](mailto:gen.broad@suffolk.gov.uk))

## Free training available for Planning Authorities - Biodiversity and the Planning System

Suffolk Wildlife Trust, in partnership with the Suffolk Biodiversity Planning Group, will be leading free training sessions for interested planning authorities on biodiversity and the planning system.

There will be two types of session available. One is for validation staff looking at what ecological information is required with an application and how this fits into the 1App validation process. The other is for development management and planning policy staff looking at assessing ecological information and using it in decision making and plan writing.

If you would be interested in either type of session (or both!) for your team please contact James Meyer ([james.meyer@suffolkwildlifetrust.org](mailto:james.meyer@suffolkwildlifetrust.org)) for more information.

## **Ipswich Wildlife Network - Linking Habitats around the Town**

The role of formal and informal green spaces in towns in supporting biodiversity is growing in importance in face of pressures such as climate change, the need for development and modern farming practices. At the same time, national planning policy encourages local planning authorities to plan for biodiversity at a landscape scale. Ipswich Borough Council's response to this has been to adopt a joined-up approach based on defining an Ipswich Wildlife Network. The network joins existing nodes, such as the town's magnificent parks, through both existing and aspirational corridors and stepping stone links – areas such as railway embankments, roadside verges and private gardens. The network is supported by a new policy in the adopted local plan and supplementary planning

documents promoting biodiversity measures to be incorporated into new development. It also provides a focus for the work of the Council's Parks and Cemeteries Service and partners such as the Greenways Project. This includes work with Ipswich residents to encourage the provision of wildlife-friendly homes, habitat and features.

***Planning is one important piece of a far bigger picture, but the wildlife network provides a clear, single focus for a full range of activities and policies.***

**Links:**

[Ipswich Wildlife Network web page >](#)

[Core Strategy Review, policy DM31 The Natural Environment \(page 135 of the document\) – adopted 22<sup>nd</sup> February 2017 >](#)

[Core Strategy Review Plan 5 Ecological Network >](#)

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## **Urban Greenspace and Health - World Health Organisation**

Two recent reports from the World Health Organisation demonstrate a growing interest in the role that greenspace plays in our mental and physical health and wellbeing. The [Synthesis of the Evidence \(2016\) report >](#) sets out the available evidence of beneficial effects of urban green spaces such as improved mental health, reduced cardiovascular problems, obesity and risk of type 2 diabetes and improved pregnancy outcomes. Mechanisms leading to these health benefits include psychological relaxation and stress alleviation, increased physical activity and reduced exposure to air pollutants, noise and excess heat.

The [Review of the Impacts and Effectiveness report >](#) looked at the most effective ways to deliver urban interventions in green spaces and how to make sure that the environmental, social and health benefits are maximized while potential side effects are prevented or reduced. Results indicate that urban green space is a necessary component for delivering healthy, sustainable and liveable cities. Interventions to increase or improve urban green space can deliver positive health, social and environmental outcomes for all levels of society. This WHO report concludes that there are very few, if any, other public health interventions that can achieve all of this, and especially the impact on active lifestyles, mental well-being and social interaction, which are frequently highlighted as key benefits.

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## **MP's call for immediate release of 25-year plan for nature**

The government's long-delayed 25-year plan for improving nature in England should be published immediately, MPs have said in a letter to the Environment Secretary Andrea Leadsom. They asked her to explain why the strategy due in 2016 is still not out. They say it's essential that ministers have agreed and published a clear plan before negotiations on Brexit begin.

[Find out more >](#)

## UK Government publishes Brexit White Paper (CIEEM March 2017)

The UK Government has published a White Paper - *The United Kingdom's exit from and new partnership with the European Union* - intended to provide Parliament and the country with a clear vision of what they are seeking to achieve in negotiating the UK's exit from, and new partnership with, the European Union.

The paper says that leaving the EU will enable the Government to "*deliver ... a cleaner, healthier*

*environment*" and "*a cleaner, healthier and more productive marine environment.*" The paper also maintains the Government's commitment to "*ensuring we become the first generation to leave the environment in a better state than we found it. We will use the Great Repeal Bill to bring the current framework of environmental regulation into UK and devolved law.*"

[Find out more >](#)

**[CIEEM updates their Brexit and the Natural Environment page regularly >](#)**

## Natural England to roll-out new national approach of District Level Licensing for Great Crested Newts

Natural England is to implement a new approach to the conservation of Great Crested Newts in England. The new approach has been piloted in partnership with Woking Borough Council. It has focused on bringing the greatest benefits to the amphibians while streamlining the licensing process for housing developers. The approach will now start to be introduced across the country after its roll-out was announced in the Department for Communities and Local Government's Housing White Paper.

This new 3-year programme will survey areas where newts are most prevalent, map the potential impacts of development and propose local conservation strategies for the species in partnership with District level planning authorities. As part of the project, compensatory Great Crested Newt habitat will be created or enhanced by the Local Planning Authority prior to any development taking place, saving developers time and money, and making newt populations healthier and more resilient. The Local Authority will be required to fund the cost of the set up work plus ongoing habitat long term management and Great Crested Newt habitat monitoring to meet the conditions of the organisational licence. CIEEM welcomes the new approach on the grounds of benefits to both developers and newt populations. However, they do have ongoing concerns, which can be found in the CIEEM response to the initial consultation.

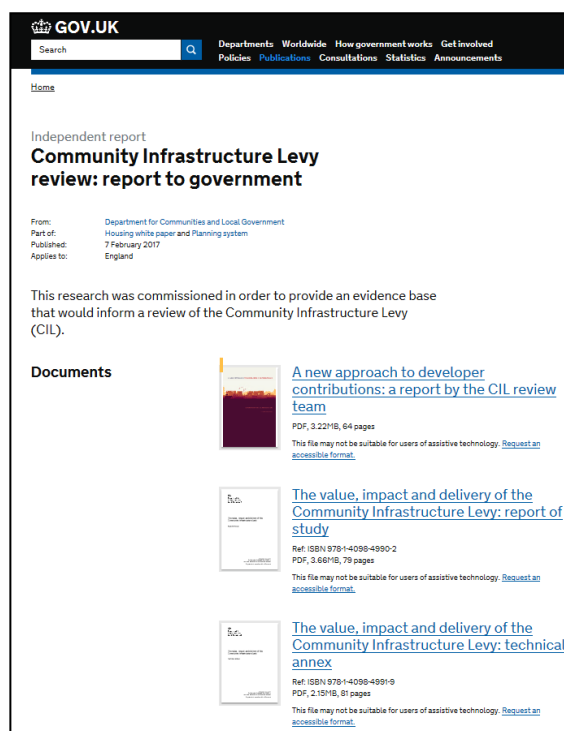
[Find out more >](#)

## Community Infrastructure Levy review

The government commissioned an independent review of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL) in November 2015 to assess the extent to which CIL does or can provide an effective mechanism for funding infrastructure, and to recommend changes that would improve its operation in support of the government's wider housing and growth objectives.

The independent review group submitted their report to ministers in October 2016. The research examined the amount of revenue CIL is raising, the types of development that are paying CIL, impacts on viability and the operation of the neighbourhood share of CIL.

[Find out more >](#)



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Independent report  
**Community Infrastructure Levy review: report to government**

From: Department for Communities and Local Government  
Part of: Housing white paper and Planning system  
Published: 7 February 2017  
Applies to: England

This research was commissioned in order to provide an evidence base that would inform a review of the Community Infrastructure Levy (CIL).

**Documents**

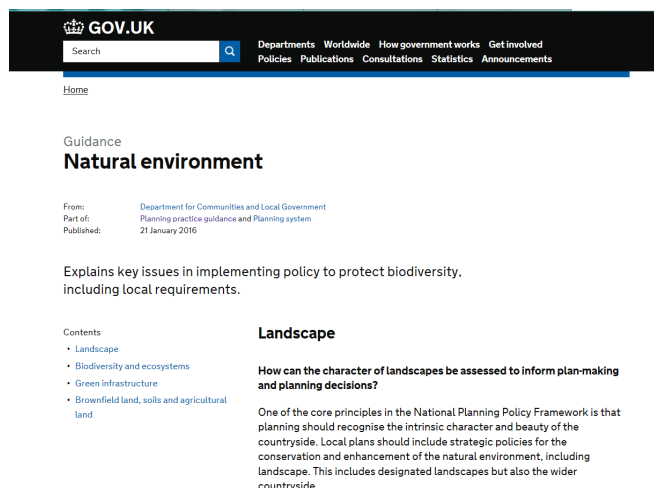
-  [A new approach to developer contributions: a report by the CIL review team](#)  
PDF, 3.22MB, 64 pages  
This file may not be suitable for users of assistive technology. [Request an accessible format.](#)
-  [The value, impact and delivery of the Community Infrastructure Levy: report of study](#)  
Ref: ISBN 978140984890-2  
PDF, 3.66MB, 79 pages  
This file may not be suitable for users of assistive technology. [Request an accessible format.](#)
-  [The value, impact and delivery of the Community Infrastructure Levy: technical annex](#)  
Ref: ISBN 978140984891-9  
PDF, 2.15MB, 81 pages  
This file may not be suitable for users of assistive technology. [Request an accessible format.](#)

## How can the character of landscapes be assessed to inform plan-making and planning decisions?

Guidance from Department for Communities and Local Government, Part of: Planning practice guidance and Planning system Published: 21 January 2016—Natural environment

One of the core principles in the National Planning Policy Framework is that planning should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Local plans should include strategic policies for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including landscape. This includes designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.

Where appropriate, landscape character assessments should be prepared to complement Natural England's National Character Area profiles. Landscape Character Assessment is a tool to help understand the character and local distinctiveness of the landscape and identify the features that give it a sense of place. It can help to inform, plan and manage change and may be undertaken at a scale appropriate to local and neighbourhood plan-making. Natural England provides guidance on undertaking



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Guidance  
**Natural environment**

From: Department for Communities and Local Government  
Part of: Planning practice guidance and Planning system  
Published: 21 January 2016

Explains key issues in implementing policy to protect biodiversity, including local requirements.

Contents

- Landscape
- Biodiversity and ecosystems
- Green infrastructure
- Brownfield land, soils and agricultural land

**Landscape**

**How can the character of landscapes be assessed to inform plan-making and planning decisions?**

One of the core principles in the National Planning Policy Framework is that planning should recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside. Local plans should include strategic policies for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, including landscape. This includes designated landscapes but also the wider countryside.

## Green Roofs and Living Walls

The Green Roof Organisation (GRO) was established in 2008 in response to the demand for UK relevant guidance for the increasing number of green roofs being built in the UK. The GRO Green Roof Code of Best Practice for the UK 2011 is based on the German FLL guidelines, but adapted to suit the UK market. This GRO Code has gained widespread acceptance in the construction market, being used as a reference document by standards bodies, specifiers, manufacturers and contractors. The 2014 update provides more detailed installation information and changes within the industry and a further update is underway in 2017. [GRO Code of Practice >](#)



Two Local Authorities in London have produced planning advice and good practice guidance - [Islington Council](#) and the [London Borough of Barking and Dagenham](#).



### Courses available:

12th Aug

[How to build a green roof for biodiversity](#)

13th Sep

[Landscapes for brownfields](#)  
[invertebrates workshop](#)

Venue: Horndon on the Hill, Essex.

Fee: £90 per person

***Come to the East Anglian  
Planning and Biodiversity  
seminar on 24th November to  
find out more (see p. 1)!***



## Protected Species focus - GREAT CRESTED NEWT

### Key facts

- Eat Anglia is a stronghold of the species.
- Need aquatic AND terrestrial habitat.
- Over-winter on land from autumn to early spring in refuges such as rock piles, dead wood or crevices.
- Migrate to ponds in spring and breed March - June.
- Leave ponds in early summer and then need rough grassland, scrubland and woodland for feeding on invertebrates such as earthworms, insects and slugs.



Great Crested Newt, Thurston

Photo: Trevor Goodfellow

### Planners should be aware of :

- The loss of suitable breeding ponds due to development.
- The loss and fragmentation of terrestrial semi-natural habitat around ponds as a result of development.
- Great Crested Newts are European Protected Species under EU Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.
- The species is strictly protected by British and European law which makes it an offence to: kill, injure, capture or disturb them; damage or destroy their habitat; and to possess, sell or trade. This law refers to all great crested newt life stages, including eggs.

*Please send me information about any relevant biodiversity and planning issues that should be highlighted. The update is published twice a year and goes to a wide audience in East Anglia. I look forward to hearing from you!*

*Gen Broad*

### Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service

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### Suffolk Biodiversity Planning Group members:

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Gen Broad, Suffolk Biodiversity Information Service  
Simone Bullion, Suffolk Wildlife Trust  
Lisa Chandler, East Suffolk Council  
Alison Collins, Natural England  
Clare Dawson, Babergh & Mid Suffolk District Councils  
Jaki Fisher, West Suffolk Councils  
James Meyer, Suffolk Wildlife Trust  
Jacqui Miller, RSPB

### Collaborative members:

Sue Hooton, Place Services Essex County Council  
David White, Norfolk County Council  
Martin Horlock, Norfolk County Council

Visit us at

<http://www.suffolkbis.org.uk/biodiversity/statutoryobligations/plannerspage>