

Reptile Strategy Supplementary Planning Document – Call for Ideas

The Council is preparing a Reptile Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD will provide additional guidance to policies contained in the Ipswich Local Plan (currently the Core Strategy and Policies development plan document 2011 and remaining saved policies of the Ipswich Local Plan 1997). Further information on the Local Plan can be found at www.ipswich.gov.uk/localplan. The SPD will not set new policies but will be a material consideration in taking decisions on planning applications. The Council has already adopted a number of SPDs which can be found at www.ipswich.gov.uk/content/current-and-proposed-supplementary-planning-documents.

The Suffolk Biological Records Centre indicates that there are records of sightings in Ipswich of Common Lizard, Slow Worm, Grass Snake and Adder. These are protected species through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and Suffolk Biodiversity Action Plan species. To deliver development in the Borough in accordance with the Biodiversity Duty, the Council needs to ensure that the ‘mitigation hierarchy’ is followed – avoiding and reducing biodiversity losses, mitigating unavoidable impacts and compensating for any remaining biodiversity losses if there are still impacts after avoidance and mitigation. It is also desirable for developments to aim for a ‘net gain’ in biodiversity overall, for example by providing more habitat than is needed for mitigation and compensation.

Therefore, the aim of the Reptile Strategy SPD is to provide guidance on how to work within the ‘mitigation hierarchy’ in relation to reptiles on development sites. This includes guidance on how to avoid or minimise impacts to reptiles, such as by retaining populations or part of a population on-site, and how to mitigate impacts, for example by moving (‘translocating’) populations of reptiles to other sites. It is not proposed that the strategy should address other species – it is a response to the particular issues and needs associated with reptiles on development sites.

At this stage we are asking for ideas on what the SPD should contain. This consultation is being carried out under Regulation 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Following this initial Call for Ideas consultation, there will be a public consultation on the draft SPD which is anticipated to take place during Spring 2016.

We would appreciate any ideas you may have on the content of the SPD – the questions below may act as useful prompts.

- If you are planning a development, what guidance would you find it useful to have about how to protect and/or enhance reptile populations on the site during and after construction?
- What criteria should the Council use to identify potential ‘receptor’ sites for reptiles translocated from development sites?
- Do you know of any specific sites in and around Ipswich, which may be suitable to be ‘receptor’ sites for reptiles translocated from development sites?
- Are you aware of good practice elsewhere that the proposed SPD could refer to?

Please send us any comments by **11:45pm on Monday 17th August 2015**. A comments form is available on our website at www.ipswich.gov.uk/consultations. If you would like further information, please contact Felicia Blake on 01473 432019.