

Reptile Strategy Supplementary Planning Document – Call for Ideas

Ipswich Borough Council is preparing a Reptile Strategy Supplementary Planning Document (SPD). The SPD will provide additional guidance to policies contained in the Ipswich Local Plan adopted in February 2017. Further information on the Local Plan can be found at www.ipswich.gov.uk/localplan. The SPD will not set new policies, but it 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/services/supplementary-planning-documents.

The Suffolk Biological Information Service 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. 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 such as amphibians – 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 is a repeat of a scoping process first conducted in 2015. As some time has passed since the last 'call for ideas', a further consultation is considered necessary to ensure that we have your up to date views on what the SPD should cover. However, we still have the comments submitted last time, for which we are grateful. This consultation is being carried out under Regulation 12 of the Town and Country Planning (Local Planning) (England) Regulations 2012. Following this second Call for Ideas consultation, there will be a public consultation on the draft SPD which is anticipated to take place during autumn 2017.

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?

- If you are a wildlife group/professional what are your expectations of our guidance to developers and what areas of the mitigation hierarchy could be emphasised to achieve the successful outcomes for both habitat and species?.

Please send any comments by **11.45pm on Wednesday 26th July 2017** to the planning policy team via e-mail at planningpolicy@ipswich.gov.uk or by post to Planning Policy, Ipswich Borough Council, Grafton House, 15-17 Russell Road, Ipswich, IP1 2DE. A comments form is available on our website at www.ipswich.gov.uk/consultations. If you would like further information, please contact Planning Policy on 01473 432019.