

Five stage biodiversity assessment process for site allocations

GIS technician analysis of allocation sites using the Cumbria Biodiversity Evidence Base (CBEB)

Stage 1 Exclude sites which fall within the following designations:

- Natura 2000 sites (SAC, SPA, Ramsar)
- SSSIs
- Limestone Pavement Orders
- County Wildlife Sites
- Local Nature Reserves
- Nature Reserves belonging to other organisations (e.g. Wildlife Trust, RSPB)
- Ancient Woodland

Stage 2 Identify species and habitats both on and surrounding allocation site and also their proximity to excluded sites

Within 2km of the site

- Protected and UK BAP Species from Key Species Records layer (within 2km of each site)

Within 500m of the site

- Key Species Interest areas
- RIGS
- Special Roadside Verges
- Orchards
- Sites of Invertebrate Significance
- UK BAP Habitats (except Ancient Woodland and Limestone Pavement, excluded in Stage 1)
- Identify any protected sites (listed in step 1) which fall within 500m of a site allocation boundary
- Identify sites which may be hydrologically linked to the proposed allocation site
- For each allocation site produce a list of the above which this process identifies as likely to be affected

Step which policy planner/planning technician should carry out

Stage 3 Fill in the simple checklist of ecological indicators when visiting proposed allocation site

- Identify features on site that may be of value for wildlife e.g. brownfield, hedges, trees, flowery grassland, bushes/scrub, ponds and streams. See separate checklist.
- Take photos of features for reference in Stages 4 and 5

Steps which need to be carried out by someone with ecological expertise

Stage 4 Ecological analysis of each proposed site allocation

- Check Phase 1 habitat layer
- Check aerial photos
- Use broad habitat checklist and photographs provided by site visiting planning staff
- Looking at habitats and species information pulled out in stage 2

Stage 5 Interpretation of data

Analyse the data pulled together in stage four for each site and:







- produce a short summary ecological statement of potential impact and grade site for potential to damage biodiversity
- identify sites which may need to be removed from the list
- identify work that developers will need to undertake if the site is to be brought forward for development
- identify mitigation, compensation and enhancement opportunities (this should be done for all sites even where no potential ecological impact is identified)


Checklist of ecological features found at proposed allocation site

Site Reference _____ Site Name _____

Settlement _____

Does the site have the following features on or directly adjacent to it?

What's on site	Picture example	What's on site	Picture example
A waterbody (stream, pond, ditch, lake etc) or wet area		Brownfield (tussocky grass, bushes, piles of stone and debris)	
Yes/No		Yes/No	
Comments		Comments	
Wet or marshy grassland		Existing or derelict buildings	
Yes/No		Yes/No	
Comments		Comments	
Flowery meadows or grassland		Hedgerow	
Yes/No		Yes/No	
Comments		Comments	

What's on site	Picture example
Woodland	
Yes/No	


Comments

Individual mature trees (either in hedgerows or standing within the site)	
Yes/No	


Comments

Orchard	
Yes/No	

Comments

What's on site	Picture example
Bushes or scrub (e.g. gorse, willows, hawthorn)	
Yes/No	

Comments

Coastal features such as sand dunes and estuaries	
Yes/No	

Comments

Heather and heathland	
Yes/No	

Comments

Are there any other features on site that might be used by wildlife?