

NGOs call for wildlife havens to be protected from new development

Wildlife and Countryside Link (Link) has published [new guidance](#) to help Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) deal with development applications on brownfield land in England. The coalition of green NGOs is hoping the guidance will reduce the number of inappropriate developments given the go-ahead.

The guidance, produced by a number of environmental NGOs, encourages the appropriate development of brownfield sites, while providing clear guidance to safeguard areas of environmental and archaeological significance. It builds on recent government-issued guidance, to provide bespoke advice to help LPAs identify and protect those brownfield sites that are valuable for wildlife and communities.

The Housing White Paper promises more of the right houses in the right places, meeting a demand of between 225,000 and 275,000 homes every year. Link recognises the pressing demand for new homes, however, the quality and location of new housing is just as important as the numbers.

Chair of Link's Land Use Planning Working Group Victoria Bankes Price said: "With so many issues to consider, we hope this new guidance will help planning officers collate and consider all of the available evidence to empower them to preserve important brownfield sites."

Juliette Young, a member of Link's Land Use Planning Group added: "Brownfield sites can be real havens for wildlife. Canvey Wick an SSSI in Essex, is the site of a former oil refinery and an amazing example of a wildlife-rich brownfield site, supporting over 1,400 species of invertebrates. It is the most important site in the Thames Gateway for the shrill carder bee. We wish to see such important sites protected from development."

Redeveloping brownfield land can provide opportunities for sustainable development, reducing pressure on other sensitive green space. However, a number of brownfield sites support some of the UK's most threatened species, as well as being of archaeological significance.

Often brownfield sites offer the last 'wild space' in urban areas for local communities, improving people's access to nature and, consequently, improving health and well-being. Link's guidance offers advice to LPAs to determine when a brownfield site is of high environmental value, and therefore should be protected from development.

The guidance is available online, and will be sent to every Local Planning Authority in England, as well as other interested stakeholders, including the Department for Communities and Local Government.

Ends

Notes for editors

1. [Wildlife and Countryside Link](#) brings together 46 environment and animal protection organisations to advocate for the conservation and protection of wildlife, countryside and the marine environment. Our members practice and advocate environmentally sensitive land management, and encourage respect for and enjoyment of natural landscapes and features,

the historic and marine environment and biodiversity. Taken together we have the support of over eight million people in the UK and manage over 750,000 hectares of land.

2. Wildlife and Countryside Link's [Land Use Planning Working Group](#) works to conserve the natural and historic environment by seeking improvements to the national planning system for the benefit of biodiversity, landscape and people. The Group works to ensure that the reform of the planning regime in England helps to deliver better protection and enhancement of the natural environment as a key component of sustainable development.
3. The Department for Communities and Local Government released guidance in July 2017 to accompany new legislation on brownfield land registers and permission in principle.
4. The 2017 Conservative Party Manifesto reiterated the commitment to deliver a million homes by end of 2020 and half a million more by the end of 2022 by building on the reforms proposed in the Housing White Paper. This includes freeing up more land for new homes in the right places.
5. For more information, contact Emma Pereira, Policy and Campaigns Manager, Wildlife and Countryside Link, 0207 820 8600.