

Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation – Guidance Note

What is the issue?

A large part of the Epping Forest contains a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which has been identified primarily for its value in respect of beech trees and wet and dry heaths and for its population of stag beetle. As an internationally important site it is afforded the highest level of protection due to its habitats and species that are vulnerable or rare within an international context.

The Council, as a competent authority under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), has a duty to ensure that plans and projects for whose consent it is responsible will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of these designated sites either alone or in-combination with other plans and projects.

The Council has identified two main issues (known as 'Pathways of Impact') that are currently adversely affecting the health of the Epping Forest.

The first is recreational pressure. Surveys have demonstrated that most visitors live within 6.2km of the Epping Forest. As new residential development within 6.2km is likely to result in more people visiting the Epping Forest on a regular basis this will add to that recreational pressure.

The second issue is atmospheric pollution which is caused primarily by vehicles travelling on roads in close proximity to the Forest emitting pollutants (Nitrogen Dioxide and Ammonia). Development proposals (regardless of their type, size and location within the District) which would result in even an increase in just one additional vehicle has the potential to contribute to increases in atmospheric pollution within the Epping Forest.

What information do I need to provide?

Planning applications need to be supported by sufficient information to enable the Council to conclude that the proposals would not result in an adverse effect on the integrity of either the Epping Forest SAC. Such information may include the identification of specific avoidance or mitigation measures and how they would be secured and delivered. To help applicants identify such measures, the Council has developed and adopted the following strategies:

Recreational Pressure

[Epping Forest Strategic Access Management and Monitoring \(SAMM\) Strategy](#)

- **[Cabinet](#)** agreed on 11 April 2022 that a tiered level of financial contribution will be sought from net increases in new dwellings in the District within 0 – 3 km and 3 - 6.2 km radius of the SAC arising from the granting of planning permissions and prior approval consents under permitted development rights as follows:

- Within 0 – 3 km radius of the SAC: contribution of £1852.63 per net dwelling
- Within 3 - 6.2 km radius of the SAC: contribution of £343.02 per net dwelling

A map showing the 0 - 3km and 3 - 6.2km radius of the Epping Forest Special Area of Conservation can be accessed on the **[Interactive planning map](#)**.

Air Pollution

To determine the effects of traffic related air pollution, the Council will require that you provide information relating to the Annual Average Daily Traffic (AADT) generated by the proposed development. A step-by-step guide/explanation of how to do this can be read here under section 3: **[AADT Guidance Note](#)**

[Interim Epping Forest Air Pollution Mitigation Strategy](#) – For residential units a financial contribution of £335 per net dwelling will be sought - see pages 28 - 29 for tariff information.

Green Infrastructure Strategy

It is important to acknowledge what other recreational mitigation/avoidance measures are being secured from development within the District. These costs are separate to the costs arising from the SAMM Strategy and will continue to be secured as set out below:

Within 3km of the Epping Forest SAC:

- £716 per net dwelling is required from new residential development within the parishes of Buckhurst Hill/Loughton/Theydon Bois to contribute toward the implementation of the Roding Valley Recreation Ground/Public Rights of Way infrastructure enhancement projects.
- SANG at South Epping Masterplan Area.
- Contributions to mitigation measures within Lea Valley Regional Park from Waltham Abbey North Masterplan Area.

Within 3 - 6.2km:

- Provision of SANG at Latton Priory, Water Lane and North Weald Bassett.

[Epping Forest District Green Infrastructure Strategy](#) – (see infrastructure enhancement projects document for tariff information on page 176)

PLEASE NOTE ALL TARRIFS ARE SUBJECT TO CHANGE. THE COUNCIL WILL PUBLISH ANY CHANGES/UPDATES WHEN NECCESARY