



Valuing our natural life support system

Building with Nature introduces a positive way of thinking about new development. By providing an opportunity for people and nature to flourish together, Building with Nature sets the standard for places that existing and future communities can enjoy and be proud of.

People value living in places that are close to nature. As well as allowing wildlife to thrive, green infrastructure provides spaces for people to enjoy, and cost effective ways to manage water naturally and prevent flooding. There is ample evidence that green infrastructure can deliver all these benefits, but its implementation and provision for long term maintenance can often be challenging.

There is a need for more housing – but the challenge is not just about building new homes. Building with Nature helps to create places where people want to live, work and play; places where people can enjoy the environment around them; and places where people can have happier and healthier lives.

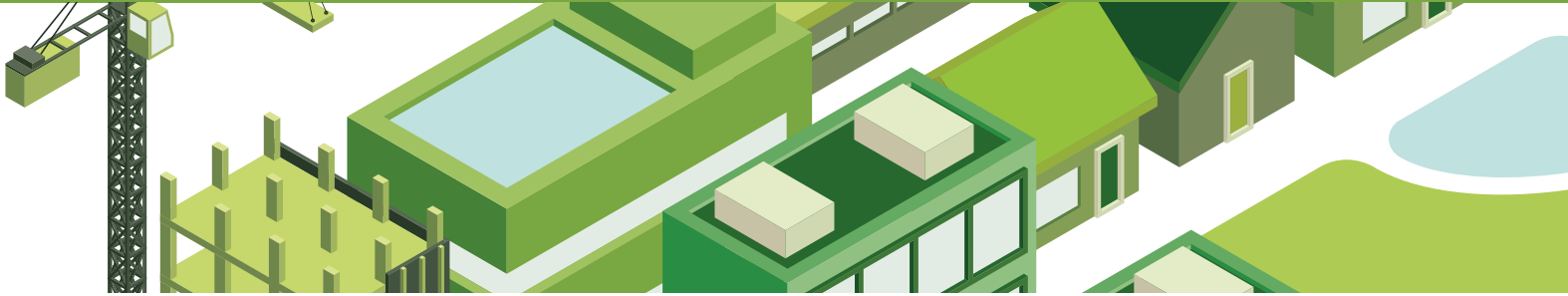
What is Building with Nature?

Building with Nature is a new benchmark for the design and maintenance of green infrastructure in housing and commercial development.

Building with Nature has been designed to support those involved in the creation of places to deliver high quality green infrastructure features through the planning and development process. This green infrastructure includes parks, play areas, nature reserves and street trees, as well as rivers, ponds and other water features.

It is not just about providing space for wildlife and recreation. Green infrastructure can improve water management, public safety, and the health and wellbeing of individuals and communities. In this way, green infrastructure is as important as buildings, roads and power supplies in providing the essential ingredients that go into making a place work effectively – now and in the future.

Why you need Building with Nature



All developments now need to demonstrate that they have included green infrastructure in their plans. Planning policy asks all developers to outline how they will do this. However, there is still uncertainty amongst local authority planners and developers about how to provide good quality green infrastructure. This is where Building with Nature can help.

Building with Nature has been designed to be used throughout the life of a development, from pre-application, to outline and detailed planning application stages, and through to post-construction maintenance. An applicant to Building with Nature can be awarded 'candidate' status based on pre-construction plans, and the full award after the project or development phase has been delivered.

Policy makers

For policy makers, Building with Nature is a voluntary standard that supports the priorities in local plans, providing a tool that can be localised to address your needs alongside national planning guidance.

Building with Nature can also be used to support policy development such as green infrastructure strategies and strategic site selection. Used in partnership with developers it can save time and money by setting a clear framework for what is expected early in the planning process.

Developers and planners

For developers and planners, Building with Nature is a tool to help create better and more attractive places to live and work, building on research that shows people value living in homes and communities which promise a higher quality of life.

Building with Nature makes it clear how development can meet the local priorities for green infrastructure. It brings existing green infrastructure guidance together into one place and offers ideas about how best to design and deliver high quality green infrastructure at different scales. It includes advice on how to plan for the long-term management and maintenance of green infrastructure within development.

Three themes

Three awards



Keeping it simple

At its simplest, Building with Nature defines what good green infrastructure is. We are not trying to reinvent the wheel so, wherever possible, we have drawn on the good work that already exists and brought it together under one umbrella.

A set of mandatory standards are our starting point. These define the basic approach to green infrastructure through a policy document, or through a development scheme. They include alignment with the local policy context and a commitment to long-term maintenance.

Next, there are three key themes: wildlife, water and wellbeing.

• Wildlife

To protect and enhance wildlife, creating networks where nature can thrive, and supporting the creation of development which more effectively delivers a net gain for wildlife.

• Water

A commitment to improving water quality, on site and in the wider area; reducing the risk of flooding; and managing water naturally for maximum benefit.

• Wellbeing

To deliver health and wellbeing benefits through the green features on the site, making sure they can be easily accessed by people close to where they live and work.

There are three levels of Building with Nature award: candidate, achieved and excellent.

• Candidate

For those applicants who apply pre-construction or at the draft stage of a policy document, 'candidate' status enables a development to be promoted as certified subject to sign-off post-completion.

• Achieved

A successful application will be awarded 'achieved' if it has met all of the mandatory and nine standards across the three themes.

• Excellent

A successful application will be awarded 'excellent' if they can meet all the standards for achieved plus six out of nine additional standards across two or three themes.

Applying

It's possible to apply for an award at any stage in the development process. For phased developments, the award can be granted for each phase as it's delivered. It is also possible to apply for certification of a scheme which has already been built out, or for a policy document which has already been adopted.

We have tried to keep the application process simple, making the delivery of high quality green infrastructure easier, whatever the scale of development.

Next steps



Help and advice

Building with Nature technical user guidance will be available to help interpret the benchmark and to demonstrate what is required of each standard before you prepare an application.

There will also be trained Building with Nature assessors who will help you prepare your application. They will offer advice and guidance how you can show your development or policy document meets the standards.

In addition, Wild Service, the ecological and land management consultancy of the Gloucestershire and Avon Wildlife Trusts, is developing bespoke products specifically aimed at supporting delivery of high quality green infrastructure. For more information, contact:

www.wildservice.net

Partnership

A pilot version of the benchmark is being tested across a number of developments in Gloucestershire and the West of England, and will be launched in September 2017. We are looking for opportunities to test the benchmark nationwide, to help extend the reach and impact of Building with Nature. So if you reading this and you are not in Gloucestershire or the West of England, please also get in touch to see how we might be able to work together.

Get in touch

If you are interested in certification through Building with Nature, or have any questions about the benchmark, please get in touch with Gemma Jerome at Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust.

gemma.jerome@gloucestershirowildlifetrust.co.uk

Find out more at

www.gloucestershirowildlifetrust/buildingwithnature



Gloucestershire

Building with Nature has been developed by Gloucestershire Wildlife Trust, in partnership with the University of the West of England, Bristol. It has been developed through collaboration with planners and developers from across Gloucestershire and the West of England.

