

Response ID ANON-MWX6-MJZX-U

Submitted to Melton Local Plan Update: Issues and Options Consultation
Submitted on 2024-01-07 12:49:51

About you

What is your name?

Name:

Mr Michael Priaux

What is your organisation? (if relevant)

Organisation:

Swifts Local Network: Swifts & Planning Group

What is your Job Title/Role (if relevant)

Job title/role:

Chair

What is your email address?

Email:

[REDACTED]

Are you making a submission on behalf of someone else?

No

If you are submitting on behalf of someone else, please provide details:

Name (on behalf of):

Organisation (on behalf of):

About you (equalities questions)

Please provide the first 5 digits of your Postcode (for example LE13 1).

Enter the first 5 digits of your postcode:

Gender: How do you identify?

[REDACTED]

If self-describe, please state :

Would you describe yourself as transgender?

[REDACTED]

What is your sexual orientation?

[REDACTED]

If other, please state:

What is your age?

[REDACTED]

Do you consider yourself to have a health problem or a disability which has lasted, or is expected to last at least 12 months?

[REDACTED]

If you selected other, please state:

What is your ethnic origin?

Please describe your ethnicity and race:

What is your religion?

Please state your religion:

Policy EN2. Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy EN2: Relevant context to respond to the questions below

Question 49: Looking at the options above, which option do you support?

Question 49 - Option 1: Delete the policy:
Strongly disagree

Question 49 - Option 2: Amend the policy:
Strongly agree

Question 49 - Option 3: Split the policy:
Somewhat agree

Question 50: Please use the comment box below to explain your response or provide any additional information you would like us to consider in our review of this policy

Please, provide further context:

In summary, it is important to add in to the new policy: Swift bricks to be installed in new developments including extensions, in accordance with best practice guidance such as BS 42021:2022 or CIEEM which require at least one swift brick per home on average for each development.

In more detail, the reason for this is that bird boxes and other species features are excluded from the Biodiversity Net Gain metric, so require their own policy. The Government's response in March 2023 to the 2022 BNG consultation stated that: "We plan to keep species features, like bat and bird boxes, outside the scope of the biodiversity metric... [and] allow local planning authorities to consider what conditions in relation to those features may be appropriate" (page 27, https://consult.defra.gov.uk/defra-net-gain-consultation-team/technicalconsultation_biodiversitymetric/).

Swift bricks are the only type of bird box specifically mentioned as valuable to wildlife in national planning guidance, along with bat boxes and hedgehog highways (NPPG Natural Environment 2019 paragraph 023).

Swift bricks are considered a universal nest brick suitable for a wide range of small bird species including swifts, house sparrows and starlings (e.g. see NHBC Foundation: Biodiversity in New Housing Developments (April 2021) Section 8.1 Nest sites for birds, page 42: https://www.nhbcfoundation.org/wp-content/uploads/2021/05/S067-NF89-Biodiversity-in-new-housing-developments_FINAL.pdf).

Swift bricks are significantly more beneficial than external bird boxes as they are a permanent feature of the building, have zero maintenance requirements, are aesthetically integrated with the design of the building, and have improved thermal regulation with future climate change in mind. Therefore, swift bricks should be included in all developments following best-practice guidance (which is available in BS 42021:2022 and from CIEEM (<https://cieem.net/resource/the-swift-a-bird-you-need-to-help/>)).

Many other Local Authorities are including detailed swift brick requirements, such as Wiltshire Local Plan Regulation 19 stage which requires an enhanced number of 2 swift bricks per dwelling (policy 88: Biodiversity in the built environment, page 246), so this enhanced level should also be considered: "As a minimum, the following are required within new proposals: 1. integrate integral bird nest bricks (e.g., swift bricks) at a minimum of two per dwelling;" <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/8048/Current-consultation-Reg-19>)

Also, please add that existing nest sites for building-dependent species such as swifts and house martins should be protected, as these endangered red-listed species which are present but declining in Melton return annually to traditional nest sites. Mitigation should be provided if these nest sites cannot be protected.

Definitions

Equalities Impact

Question 80: Do you have any views on the potential impact of the proposals raised in this consultation on people with protected characteristics as defined in section 149 of the Equality Act 2010?

Not Answered

Question 81: If you responded 'yes'/'unsure' to question 80, please provide your reasons and whether there is anything that you think could be done to mitigate any impacts identified

Please, provide further context:

Appendix A. Summary of the conclusions of the Local Plan Review

Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Please use the comment box below to provide any information you would like us to consider in relation to the Sustainability Appraisal Scoping Report

Please, provide a reference to the section and your comments: