

Brokenshire orders house builders to protect wildlife

- ‘Hedgehog highways’ recommended for new housing estates for the first time
- Swifts and other wildlife to coexist with new homes during building
- Rules recommend ways developers can identify new habitat for wildlife

Developers have been ordered to do more to protect Britain’s cherished wildlife, Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP announced today (Sunday 21 July).

For the first time the government has set out its expectations on how developers can protect specific species, including using ‘hedgehog highways’ and hollow swift bricks – which are installed into the walls of new build homes, allowing the birds to nest safely. This follows public interest for protecting these much-loved animals, with one petition receiving support from over half a million people.

From submitting proposals to councils to then building new homes, house builders should think about the long-term impact of their developments on the local ecosystem, both during and after construction.

This includes greater emphasis on using innovative ways to allow nature to thrive – such as drainage areas to create attractive wetlands for birds and amphibians to live alongside people.

Communities Secretary Rt Hon James Brokenshire MP said:

Building the new homes this country needs must not come at the detriment of our natural heritage.

It’s right that as we deliver houses for people, we must also provide homes for wildlife too – whether that’s for hedgehogs, frogs, newts or birds.

The public have told us that protecting wildlife is important to them – so my message to house builders is to harness this support and get building in a way that protects the environment for the next generation.

The Communities Secretary has also called for developers to plant more trees and green meadows – giving vital insects such as the British honey bee a safe haven to thrive.

The [guidance](#) published today builds on the government’s planning rulebook adopted last year, which set out the bold new principle of environmental net gain, where developers have to ensure space for wildlife is provided in

addition to the new homes they wish to build.

A ‘hedgehog highway’ can be created by making space for hedgehogs to roam through back gardens, allowing them to seek food and habitat to nest. This can range from making small holes in the base of garden fences to removing the fences entirely, creating a free-flowing green space.

Swift bricks are installed into the outer wall of a new home during the construction process, allowing the birds to nest peacefully throughout the year once the home is completed.