



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

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Wordsworth Property Partnership

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Updated	29/07/2026 - RHW - changed red line boundary.
Report duration	In accordance with CIEEM (2019), unless otherwise stated the findings of this report remain valid for a period of 18 months. After this period advice should be sought on the scope of any updating work required.



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Summary

This report is produced to inform Wordsworth Property Partnership of potential ecological constraints associated with their proposed development site and the need for further reporting or output to support a planning application.

This report is based on a desk study of designated wildlife sites and records of protected or notable species, and an extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey carried out in May 2026.

Key Findings

The Site is a currently well-used business / industrial park mostly comprised of built / surfaced development, but with small areas colonised by opportunistic vegetation. It is of low ecological value.

Ecological constraints have not been identified at the Site.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Details on measurement of the Site's biodiversity and the implications of complying with the requirement to provide a net gain for biodiversity are provided in our separate report ER-9254-02.

Further surveys

Further surveys have not been recommended.

Introduction

1. Brooks Ecological Ltd was commissioned by Wordsworth Property Partnership to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of land at Unit 1 Wordsworth Business Park, grid ref. SE321082. The survey includes land within the red line boundary shown in Figure 1, opposite.
2. This report is produced with reference to British Standard BS:42020 'Biodiversity Code of Practice for Planning and Development' and the CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

Purpose of a PEA

3. A PEA is an *initial assessment* of the baseline for a proposed development site and establishes whether the Site is likely to be constrained by ecology, and whether more information is needed to identify the ecological baseline.
4. The subsequent Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (PEAR) is intended to give guidance to a developer and assist with the early stages of project planning and design. Where a site is not complex or constrained, and no additional ecological input is necessary, the PEAR may be sufficient and suitable to support a planning application.
5. Biodiversity Accounting metrics are used separately to quantify the value of a Site in Biodiversity Units, which helps in the later stage of assessing the ecological impacts of the proposed development. This process is set out separately in the Biodiversity Gain Report which accompanies this PEAR.

Proposals/Reason for PEA

6. The PEA has been commissioned to inform proposals to re-develop this employment site.

The Site

7. The application site 'the Site' comprises part of an existing business park development on the eastern fringes of Barnsley. For the purposes of metric calculations, the Site area has been measured using GIS against the provided red line boundary as 2.20 ha.

Figure 1 The Site (red line boundary).



Desk Study

Landscape

8. The Site lies within a wider industrial park / business park development so is surrounded by developed land used for storage, works, parking and vehicle movement. To its north-east this use is less formal with stored machinery and stock-piles separating the Site from a steep slope descending to the nearby railway line.
9. The Site overlies the Pennine Coal Measures, but any influence of geology on ground conditions will be negligible given the recent use of the Site.

Wildlife Corridors

10. The Site is not well linked to any obvious wildlife corridors, these being associated with the River Dearne, the former Barnsley Canal and a railway line all found to the north of the Site.

Figure 2 Analysis of wildlife corridors and structured habitat visible on mapping in relation to the Site.



Designations

11. The assessment uses a 2km area of search around the Site for records of protected and notable species and locally or nationally designated wildlife sites.

Statutory Designations

12. A search has been made to identify any nationally designated sites within a 2km radius of the Site, or internationally designated sites within a 10km radius. The results are shown in the below table.

Table 1 Statutory Designated Sites.

Site Name	Distance from Site	Designation	Summary Interest
Denby Grange Colliery Ponds	8.3km	Special Area of Conservation	The main reason for designation is the population of breeding Great Crested Newt

13. The Site is well separated by a large expanse of largely developed land. Direct and indirect impacts on this site because of this development are unlikely.

SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs)

14. The Site lies within the IRZ for a single SSSI but does not appear to fall into any of the highlighted categories (below) which require the LPA to consult with Natural England in relation to potential impacts.
15. **Infrastructure:** Airports, helipads and other aviation proposals.
16. **Air Pollution:** Livestock & poultry units with a floorspace > 500m², slurry lagoons > 4000m².
17. **Combustion:** General combustion processes >50MW energy input. Including: energy from waste incineration, other incineration, landfill gas generation plant, pyrolysis/gasification, anaerobic digestion, sewage treatment works, other incineration/combustion.
18. **Discharge:** Any discharge of water or liquid waste of more than 20m³/day that is discharged to ground (ie to seep away) or to surface water, such as a beck or stream.

Non-Statutory Designations

19. There are four Local Wildlife Sites in the search area. Of these none are of potential relevance to the application. Direct and indirect impacts on all sites as a result of this development being unlikely due to the Site's separation and distance.

Nature Improvement Area

20. The Site is not within any Nature Improvement Area.

Wildlife Habitat Network

21. The Site is not within any mapped Wildlife Habitat Network.

Granted EPSM Licences

22. There are no granted European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licences shown within 1km of the Site.

Mapped Ancient Woodland and Trees

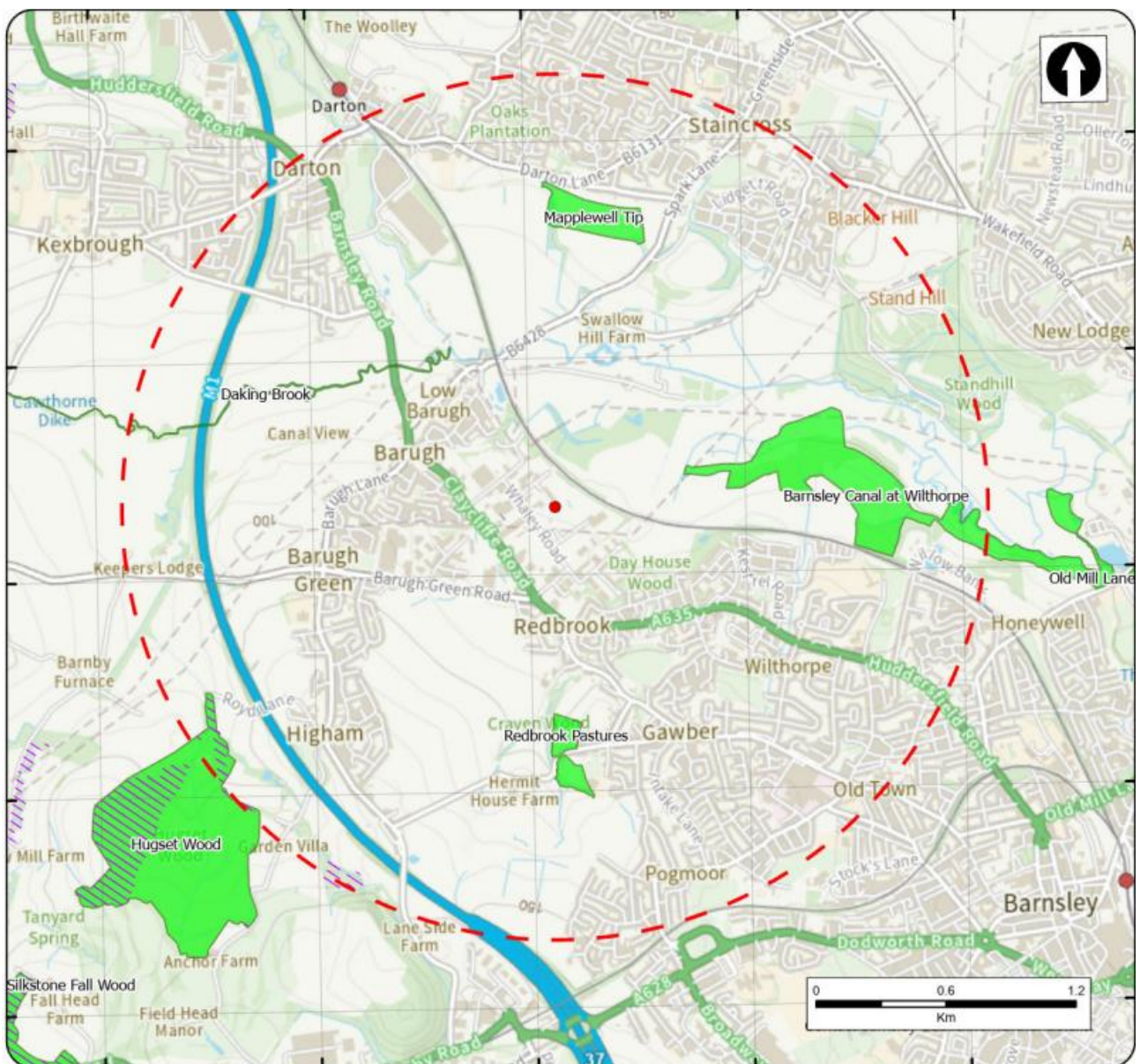
There is no mapped ancient woodland (AW) or Plantation on an Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS) within influencing distance of The Site, the nearest being AW at Higham just over 1.85 km to the southwest.

23. Records of Ancient Trees have not been returned for the search area.

Mapped Priority Habitat

24. There is no mapped Priority Habitat within, or within influencing distance of the Site The nearest being mapped deciduous woodland c. 220m north of the Site

Figure 3 Records of designated sites and notable species within 2km of the Site; West Yorkshire Ecology. If not from WYE check that we have permission to reprint before including here



- Centre of Search Area
- Ancient Woodland Natural England
- Local Wildlife Sites - Barnsley
- Barnsley Boundary
- 2km radius

Survey

25. The survey was carried out during May 2026¹ and followed the principles of Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology (JNCC, 2010).
26. The timing of the survey meant that it was possible to confidently classify the type and condition of habitats present on this Site.
27. Certain habitats are difficult to assess outside of optimal survey seasons. Where surveys are carried out outside of this period we take a precautionary approach in our current classification. Further survey recommendations during optimal season may be made to provide a more robust baseline assessment.
28. Enough time was afforded the surveyor to carry out the survey. The survey was not constrained by poor weather.
29. Whilst most of the Site was accessible, at least 10% of the Site was inaccessible due to cabins and machinery, which could not be closely inspected. This could have concealed invasive species or protected species evidence.

Habitat Appraisal

30. The Site's habitats are described in order on the following pages. In line with the requirement to provide information on Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), habitats are named in accordance with the UK Habitats classification system. We have used the UK Habitats v2.01 guidance in identifying habitats. Habitat descriptions are divided into the 'distinctiveness' categories used in the calculations presented in the Biodiversity Gain Assessment, with more weight being afforded the more distinctive/important habitats.
31. Generally, the following apply to each tier of distinctiveness, although some authorities might highlight some lower distinctiveness habitats as having a higher importance locally. Where relevant we have highlighted these.

Very Low Distinctiveness Habitats

32. Habitats of little or no habitat value, i.e., lacking any significant native vegetation, but could still provide supporting habitat for protected or notable fauna such as birds or bats. In the context of BNG, their areas are included in calculations, but mitigation or compensation is not required.

Low Distinctiveness Habitats

33. Habitats which are ubiquitous, often which have been created or modified intentionally. They tend to lack diversity of species and structure. They are unlikely to support notable flora but could still provide supporting habitat for protected or

notable fauna. In the context of BNG, they are included in calculations, but compensation/mitigation needs only to provide habitat of similar or higher distinctiveness.

Medium Distinctiveness Habitats

34. Habitats which are common but provide a higher level of structural and species diversity. Though unlikely to support more notable assemblages, species of interest could be present here and they are more likely to be important supporting habitat to fauna. In the context of BNG, mitigation needs to provide habitat of the same broad habitat type, or that of higher distinctiveness.

High Distinctiveness Habitats

35. Habitats which are more natural and contain more important assemblages of plants and potentially species which are rare in their own right. They will provide good habitat for fauna. These habitats are likely to be targeted as conservation priorities and will be the subject of additional policy guidance or legislation. In the context of BNG, whilst mitigation or compensation for loss or damage is possible, provision of more of the same type of habitat would be required, which (with a few exceptions) is likely to be difficult.

Irreplaceable Habitats

36. These are habitats of high biodiversity value, which are so difficult to recreate that it would be impossible to achieve the requirement to increase biodiversity on top of no net loss. These habitats have significant protection in the NPPF; any impacts from development require a strong justification and will flag as unacceptable in the Biodiversity Metric. Bespoke compensation for any loss of these habitats must be agreed with the LPA.
37. Each habitat is mapped and an area for each type is provided in the format of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool. The areas can be used to quantify the impacts of development in an Ecological Impact Assessment if this is required by the Local Planning Authority.

Condition Assessment

38. Our condition assessment for each habitat described references where available the criteria set out in DEFRA (2024) Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments. A completed version of this spreadsheet is provided digitally with the Biodiversity Gain Report which accompanies this report.

¹ This Report has been prepared during June 2026 following a visit to the Site in May 2026, and our findings are based on the conditions of the Site that were reasonably visible and accessible at that date. We accept no liability for any areas that were not

reasonably visible or accessible, nor for any subsequent alteration, variation, or deviation from the Site conditions which affect the conclusions set out in this report.

Habitats of Low/Very Low Distinctiveness

Figure 4 Approximate location and extent of these habitats.

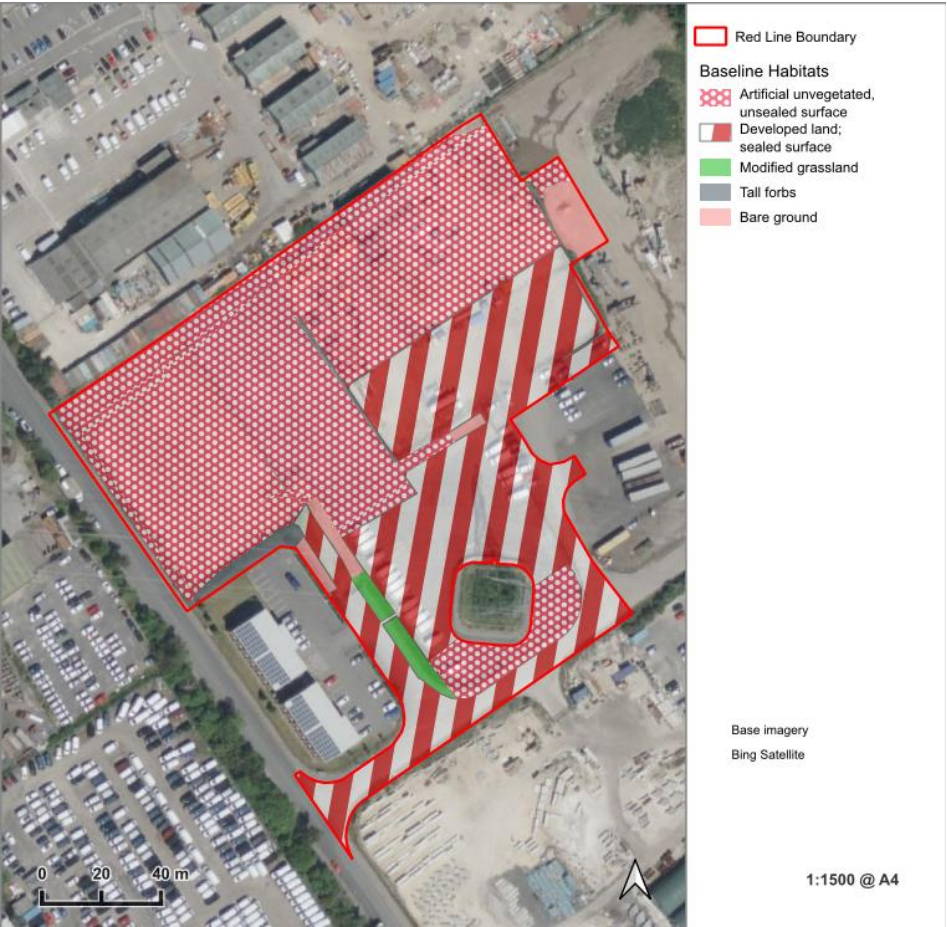


Table 2 Summary - Habitats of Low/Very Low Distinctiveness.

UK Habitats	Summary Description
Developed land sealed surface	Buildings or Concrete or tarmac surface.
Artificial Unvegetated un-sealed surface	Compacted earth or gravel surface devoid of significant vegetation.
Bare Ground	Areas of disturbed ground with thin soils. These are colonised sparsely by a range of common ruderal species such as creeping bent, coltsfoot, scentless mayweed, smooth sow thistle, rape, ragwort, oxeye daisy, narrow leaved ragwort and weld.
Tall Forbs	A dense stand dominated by comfrey with occasional nettle and creeping thistle.
Modified Grassland	A section of closely managed grassland border with some evidence of rabbit grazing. Considering location and use it is relatively diverse, but all species are typical of this type of habitat. c. 8spp/m2 Over 30% cover of perennial rye grass and white clover, but also with; creeping bent, Yorkshire fog, barren brome, creeping cinquefoil, daisy, self-heal, parsley piert and ragwort.

Habitats of Medium Distinctiveness

Figure 5 Approximate location and extent of these habitats.



Table 3 Summary of Medium Distinctiveness habitats.

UK Habitats	Summary Description
Mixed Scrub	Less disturbed areas at the edge of the Site, or against fences. Here perennial / woody plants such as bramble, dog rose, hawthorn, silver birch, knapweed, teasel and goat willow have been able to colonise.

Habitats

Figure 6 Artificial Unvegetated un-sealed surface



Figure 7 Developed land and bare ground



Figure 8 Artificial Unvegetated un-sealed surface and bare ground



Figure 9 Modified grassland



Figure 10 Tall forbs



Figure 11 Mixed scrub



Faunal Appraisal

39. The following pages discuss only the groups and species that could be reasonably expected to be found on the type of habitats present on, or adjacent to, the Site.

Amphibians

Desk evidence

40. There are no ponds within 250m of the Site. A single pond lies just outside of this buffer and is labelled as pond 1 opposite, this is an old reach of the former Barnsley Canal.
41. There are records of common frog, common toad, smooth newt and great crested newt in the search area. Records of great crested newt (GCN) returned for the area, and which are most relevant to the Site are shown opposite. Most relate to ponds next to a housing development at Low Barugh, with others being associated with wetland habitats associated with the course of the old canal. GCN class license returns are similarly located.

Field Evidence

42. There are no ponds within the Site which could be used for amphibian breeding. Nearby suitable waterbodies which could support breeding populations are all beyond the 250m buffer applied for this species.
43. Habitat at the Site is highly sub-optimal for amphibians and is isolated with trafficked development.

Summary Evaluation

44. Amphibians accessing suitable habitat at the Site is very unlikely, and the likely absence of GCN can be reasonably concluded.

Further Surveys and Recommendations

45. No further surveys or precautions are considered necessary.

Figure 12 Ponds mapped in relation to the Site.



Bats

Desk evidence

46. Records of pipistrelle, Daubenton's, noctule and Leisler's bats have been returned for the search area. There are no roosts records close to the Site.

Field Evidence (Roosting)

47. All of the mapped buildings on the Site are temporary cabins, or industrial units of simple construction. These have single skin panel wall and roofs and do not present any suitable voids for roosting.
48. There are no trees on the Site.

Table 4 Bat Roost Suitability Assessment.

Ref	Notes	Suitability
All Buildings	Not suitable due to age and lack of suitable features	Negligible

Field Evidence (foraging and commuting)

49. The Site presents an already developed and well used parcel of land, it is unlikely to contribute much, if anything to local foraging resources.
50. The Site does not form part of any apparent network of habitat which could provide key commuting habitat locally.

Summary Evaluation

51. The Site's current use suggests that it will not be important to this group.

Further Surveys and Recommendations

52. Further surveys are not recommended.

Figure 13 Typical buildings and habitat



Birds

Desk Evidence

53. Many records were returned, none of which relate to the Site, or are considered relevant to the assessment.

Field Evidence

54. The Site provides little in the way of cover or foraging for this group.
55. A very small number of common bird species were noted during the survey including starling and black headed gull seen over the Site but not interacting with it.

Summary Evaluation

56. Based on its size and habitats the Site will not be important to local bird populations

Further Surveys and Recommendations

57. No further surveys are considered necessary to demonstrate current baseline in respect of birds.
58. Standard precautions apply in respect of restrictions on clearing vegetation during the nesting season.

Badgers

Desk evidence

59. There are no records of badgers returned for the search area.

Field Evidence

60. The Site provides very poor potential habitat for sett building with only limited areas of uncompacted / developed ground.
61. No evidence of badger was found.

Summary Evaluation

62. Badger setts are unlikely to be present at the Site.

Further Surveys and Recommendations

63. Further precautions in respect of badgers are not required.

Hedgehogs (NERC Act 2006/Local BAP)

Desk evidence

64. Hedgehogs are recorded within the search area.

Field Evidence

65. No evidence of hedgehogs was found on site.

Summary Evaluation

66. The Site provides very poor habitat for this species, with only occasional foraging around the edges of the Site possible.

Further Surveys and Recommendations

67. Possible presence assumed; no further surveys are considered necessary however measures to allow them continued access to the site should be planned for.

Reptiles

Desk evidence

68. Records of reptiles have not been returned for the search area.

Field Evidence

69. The Site provides very poor, unconnected habitat for this group.
70. No field evidence was found.

Summary Evaluation

71. Reptiles are assessed likely absent from the Site.

Further Surveys and Recommendations

72. No further surveys or precautions are considered necessary.

Invasive Non-Native Species (INNS)

73. INNS are species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), for which it is an offence to cause or allow it to grow in the wild.

74. The following INNS were noted during survey²:

- Cotoneaster spp.

Survey constraints

75. This site presents a risk of supporting undetected INNS based on the following factors:

- Areas of site inaccessible to survey due to cabins / containers and stored machinery
- Potential for recent earthworks or management which may have obscured viable material
- Proximity to nearby potential sources of infection
- Potential for tipping of material

76. Should further assurances be needed in relations to INNS, a dedicated Invasive Weed Survey should be commissioned.

77. Cotoneaster does not present a high risk of 'spread in the wild' in this situation and should be removed and disposed of carefully by a suitably qualified contractor, as part of any wider Site clearance.

Figure 14 Location of INNS



Figure 15 Location of INNS - Cotoneaster Spp. on Site boundary



² Whilst our ecologists are trained in the identification of invasive species, this report is not a dedicated invasive species survey. Detectability of invasive plant species can be affected by several factors, and conclusive determination status, or extent, is not

possible through preliminary survey alone. As the presence of invasive species can generate significant costs to development, the client may wish to instruct a dedicated invasive species survey prior to entering into contracts.

Ecological Constraints

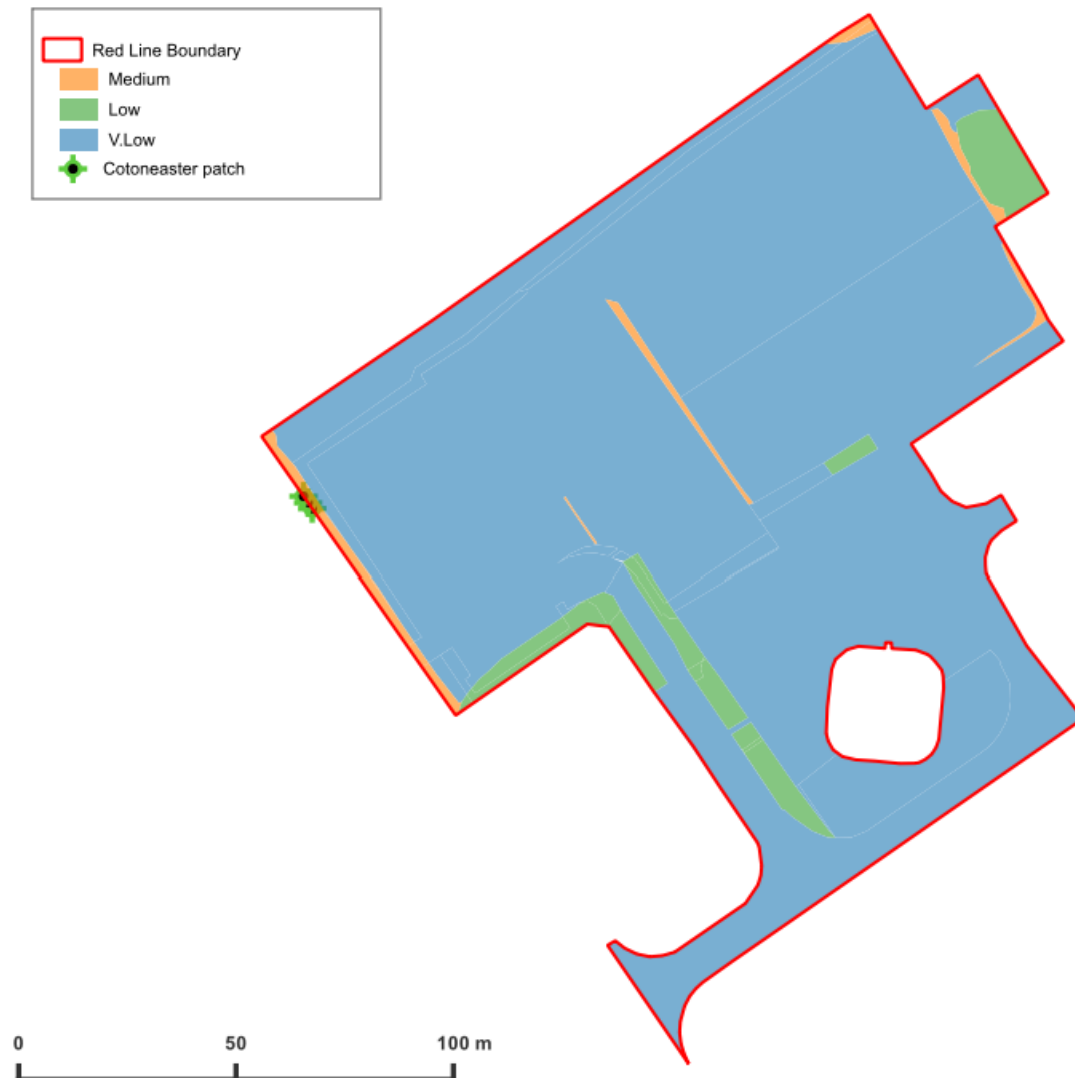
Habitat Value

78. The usual approach to development is to minimise any net loss of biodiversity towards a gain in biodiversity value where this is possible on-Site. Our separate report on Biodiversity Gain sets out the position of the Site in terms of measured biodiversity.
79. Irrespective of the Biodiversity Gain process, development should still seek to retain what is best about the Site.
80. The plan opposite shows the Site in the context of mapped habitat distinctiveness with the aim of informing the design of any layout. It shows that there are only small areas of medium or distinctiveness which would ideally be avoided by the proposals where possible. The Site is relatively uniform in terms of potential impact.
81. Habitats do not impose any particular design constraints. Loss of habitat of this nature are not of the order which (outside of Biodiversity Net Gain) would require specific mitigation or compensation as they are common locally.

Faunal constraints

82. Faunal constraints have not been identified.
83. Standard precautions apply in respect of restrictions on clearing vegetation during the nesting season.

Figure 16 Habitat distinctiveness.



Ecological Opportunities

84. Ecological opportunities at the Site relate to:

- Potential to improve connectivity locally by providing linear planting of trees or scrub.

Figure 17 Ecological Opportunities.



Conclusions and Recommendations

Planning considerations		
Recommendation	Rationale	When
R1 Additional Surveys		
R1.1 Vegetation	Not required	n/a
R1.2 Fauna	Not required	n/a
R2 Produce a layout which minimises loss of biodiversity	Engage with the Constraints and Opportunities set out above, involve your ecologist in designs at an early stage. The proposals will need to consider the NPPF hierarchy of Avoid-Mitigate-Compensate, and the biodiversity gain hierarchy of Avoid–Enhance–Create–Offset in minimising any loss of biodiversity. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) policy mandates a minimum 10% Net Gain in Biodiversity Units, and the LPA may request additional gains. Your layout may need to change to accommodate your findings from R1 surveys.	During the design process
R3 Design	Make sure your design team follows ecological advice to and make sure there are no design conflicts. <u>Produce a habitat retention plan at an early stage</u> which can be used to inform BNG and maximise scores. A habitat retention plan should identify areas which can be excluded from any impacts of clearance and construction. In producing a plan you should consider the need to provide (amongst other things) Site compounds, to store and move materials, to install drainage, flood storage, access and services, all with suitable easements. <u>Decide on the extent of red-line vs blue/black-line land.</u> Minimising the extent of your red line can limit exposure to BNG, but can also leave you needing separate legal agreements to use off-Site land for BNG delivery. Work out at an early stage what is right for your project. Your planning consultant should be able to help with this decision.	During the design process
R4 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	Carry out a BNG Assessment using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool and accompanying Condition sheets produced by Defra. Prior to development commencing, a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) and Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) will likely be requested by the LPA.	During the design process. Baseline survey to be completed during the appropriate season.
R5 Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA)	This report summarises all survey findings and assesses the impacts of the scheme in respect of these. Due to the scale of this development and the potential issues at hand it would seem an unlikely requirement, but may be requested by the LPA.	Prior to submission, after a fixed design is agreed and all key additional surveys are completed
R6 Produce a Biodiversity Management Plan	To specify in detail how the development will cater for biodiversity on-Site and to show how habitats incorporated will be managed.	Delivery report Suitable for planning condition
Other considerations (managing legal or financial risks)		
Issue	Rationale	When
R7 Nesting bird management	As with most sites, the standard precaution in relation to birds would apply. To prevent the proposed works impacting on nesting birds, any clearance of vegetation will need to be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season, which runs from 1st March–31st August inclusive. Any clearance required during the breeding bird season should be preceded by a nesting bird survey to ensure that the law is not contravened through the destruction of nests and that any active nests are identified and adequately protected during the construction phase of the development.	Prior to and during clearance
R8 INNS	Cotoneaster does not present a high risk of 'spread in the wild' in this situation and should be removed and disposed of carefully by a suitably qualified contractor, as part of any wider Site clearance.	Prior to and during clearance

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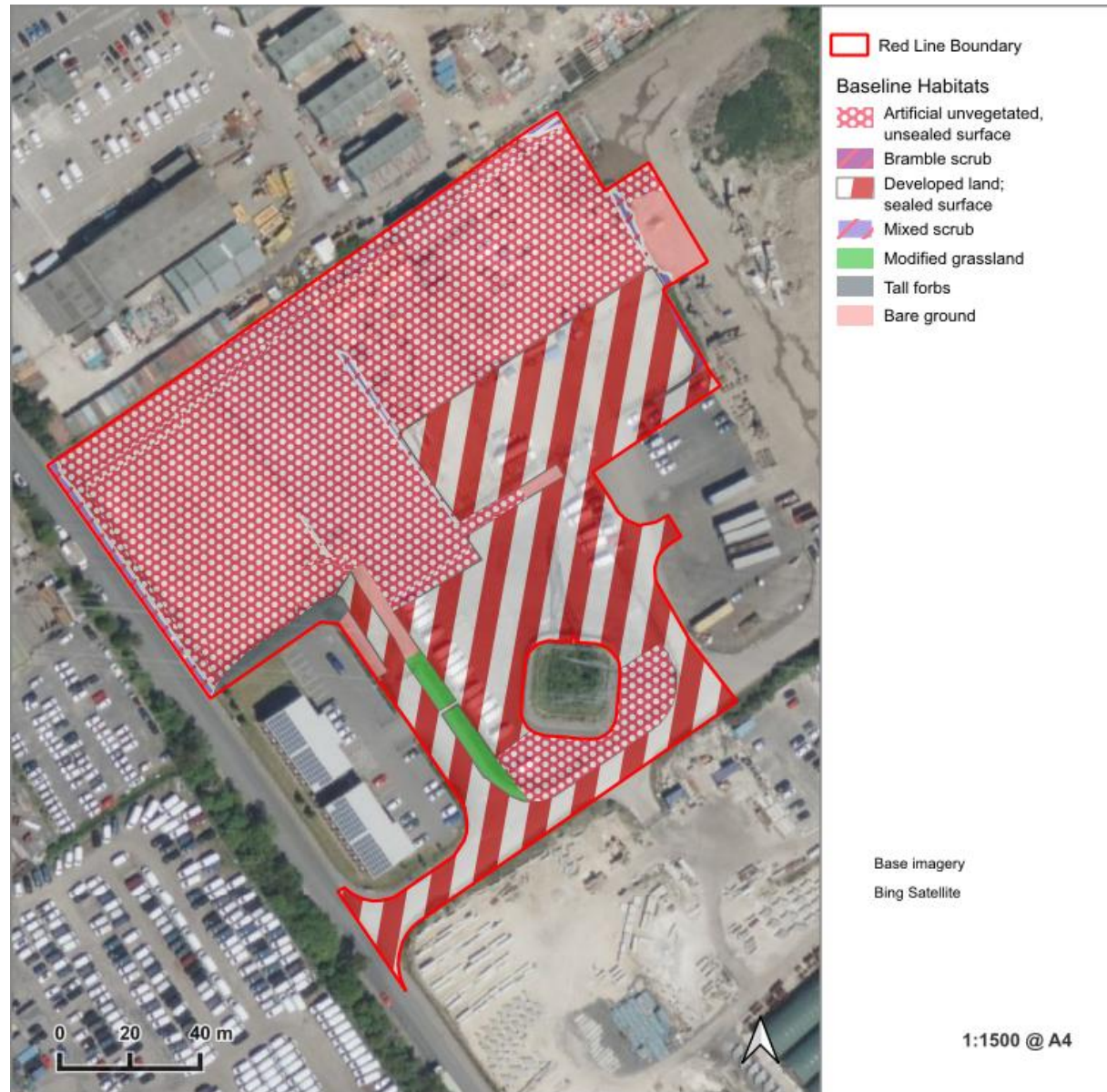
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Appendix 1 Habitats and Ecological Features



Appendix 2 List of species recorded

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Appendix 3 Explanatory Notes and Resources Used

Site Context

Aerial photographs published on commonly used websites were studied to place the site in its wider context and to look for ecological features that would not be evident on the ground during the walkover survey. This approach can be very useful in determining if a site is potentially a key part of a wider wildlife corridor or an important node of habitat in an otherwise ecologically poor landscape. It can also identify potentially important faunal habitat (in particular ponds) which could have a bearing on the ecology of the application site. Ponds may sometimes not be apparent on aerial photographs so we also refer to close detailed maps that identify all ponds issues and drains.

Designated Sites

A search of the MAGIC (Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside) website was undertaken. The MAGIC site is a Geographical Information System that contains all statutory (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest [SSSIs]) as well as many non-statutory listed habitats (e.g. ancient woodlands and grassland inventory sites). It is a valuable tool when considering the relationship of a potential development site with nearby important habitats. In addition, information from the local record holders was referred to on locally designated sites.

Functional linkage with off-Site habitats

When assessing these we consider whether the Site could be functionally linked to them, considering links such as:

- Hydrological links – is the Site upstream downstream, or could ground water issues affect it?
- Physical links – is the site in close proximity and could it be directly or indirectly affected by construction and operational effects? Conversely it may be that despite proximity major barriers separate the two.
- Recreational links – do footpaths and roads make it likely that increased recreational pressure could be felt?

- Habitat links – is the site part of a network of similar habitat types in the wider area? These could be joined by linear corridors or could simply be ‘stepping stones’ of habitat of similar form or function.

Method

Phase 1 habitat survey methodology (JNCC, 2010). This involves walking the site, mapping and describing different habitats (for example: woodland, grassland, scrub). The survey method was “Extended” in that evidence of fauna and faunal habitat was also recorded (for example droppings, tracks or specialist habitat such as ponds for breeding amphibians). This modified approach to the Phase 1 survey is in accordance with the approach recommended by the Guidelines for Baseline Ecological Assessment (IEA, 1995) and Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM 2017).

Faunal Appraisal

This section first looks at the types of habitat found on Site or within the sphere of influence of potential development, then considers whether these could support protected, scarce, or NERC Act 2006 Section 41 species (referred to collectively as ‘notable species’).

Records of notable species supplied from a 2km area of search by Barnsley Biodiversity Centre are used to inform this appraisal.

We discuss further only notable species or groups which could be a potential constraint due to the presence of suitable habitat and their presence (or potential presence) in the wider area. We screen out and do not present accounts of notable species or groups which do not meet these criteria – in some cases it may be necessary to explain this reasoning.

Consideration is given to the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP), which for this site is the 'Barnsley Biodiversity Action Plan'.

Species/Group	Habitat
Hedgehog	Mixed deciduous woodland
Bats	Upland oakwood
Water vole	Wet woodland
Otter	Parkland and wood pasture
Grey partridge	Traditional orchard
Bittern	Scrub
Kestrel	Hedgerows
Little ringed plover	Arable field margins
Lapwing	Acid grassland
Barn owl	Neutral grassland
Skylark	Amenity grassland and verges
Tree sparrow	Floodplain grazing marsh
Twite	Reedbeds
Great crested newt	Lowland fen
Salmon	Upland flushes, fens and swamps
Bullhead	Rush pastures
White-clawed crayfish	Blanket bog
Glow worm	Standing water and ponds
Dingy skipper	Running water, rivers & streams
Bluebell	Upland heathland
	Lowland heath
	Open mosaic habitats on previously developed land
	Built environment and gardens

Bats

Bat roosting potential is classified according to the following criteria set out below, taken from the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines (2023).

Bat Roosting Suitability of Buildings

Suitability	Criteria
<i>None</i>	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).
<i>Negligible</i>	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
<i>Low</i>	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats).
<i>Moderate</i>	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation - the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
<i>High</i>	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.

Bat Roosting Suitability of Trees

Suitability	Criteria
<i>None</i>	Either no PRFs in the tree, or highly unlikely to be any.
<i>FAR</i>	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present within the tree.
<i>PRF-I</i>	Potential roost feature suitable to support individual or low numbers of bats
<i>PRF-M</i>	Potential roost feature suitable to support multiple bats and possibly be used by a maternity colony

Evaluation

In evaluating the Site, the ecologist will take into account a number of factors in combination, such as:

- the baseline presented above,
- the Site's position in the local landscape,
- its current management and
- its size, rarity or threats to its integrity.

There are a number of tools available to aid this consideration, including established frameworks such as Ratcliffe Criteria or concepts such as Favourable Conservation Status. Also of help is reference to Biodiversity Action Plans in the form of the Local BAP and Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) to determine if the Site supports any Priority habitats or presents any opportunities in this respect.

The assessment of impacts considers the generic development proposals from which potential effects include:

- Vegetation and habitat removal
- Direct effects on significant faunal groups or protected species
- Effects on adjacent habitats or species such as disturbance, pollution and severance
- Operation effects on wildlife such as noise and light disturbance

Appendix 4 Bat Activity Survey Rationale

The Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (BCTG) (Collins 2023) is now widely accepted as providing a basis and rationale for scoping and conducting bat surveys. It is acknowledged that the guidelines provide a wealth of background and are a very useful tool in standardising approaches to survey, it is also felt that an over reliance on some of the guidelines within this document can result in the provision of complicated surveys where they have significant consequences for the cost, or timescale of a large project, but could never deliver positives for bat conservation.

Taking the BCTG document as a whole, Chapter 2 helps the reader understand whether or not surveys are required, and that in the context of planning and development survey is required in relation to ensure;

- the avoidance of legal offences, and;
- the provision of a sufficient level of information – such that will allow the Local Planning Authority to make an informed decision on the proposals and their potential impacts on the Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) of bats.

Attendance at seminars presented by, and discussions with, those involved in production of the BCTG document has emphasised the point that it is within the remit of the consultant ecologist to make a decision on the necessity and scope of surveys – they will use the guidelines in doing so but are not in any way bound by them: this is reflected in Section 1.1 of the guidelines –

‘The Guidelines do not aim to either override or replace knowledge and experience. It is accepted that departures from the guidelines (e.g. either decreasing or increasing the number of surveys carried out or using alternative methods) are often appropriate. However, in this scenario an ecologist should provide documentary evidence of (a) their expertise in making this judgement and (b) the ecological rationale behind the judgement.’

Such decisions require a consideration of the potential of the project to impact on bat habitat, alongside analysis of the value of habitat on and around the site and of local records and the likelihood that bats might occur in significant numbers. Our reports aim to present information on how we have arrived at our decision on the Site, what assumptions we have based this on, and where further survey is recommended we indicate what the objective of this survey should be and how best this would be achieved.

The Site provides poor foraging habitat and is not strategically located and does not contain any potential key habitat features for bats, its use by this group can be easily predicted making any requirement for additional survey disproportionate.

This assessment was made by (you) Rob Weston BSc (Hons) MSc MIEEM. Rob is a Registered Consultant (RC065) under the Bats Low Impact Class License and is registered to use the Class Survey Licence WML CL18 (Level 2).

Appendix 5 Wildlife Legislation, Policy and Guidance

This is not an exhaustive list but sets out briefly the relevance of Legislation, Policy and Guidance in terms of planning applications and this assessment.

Legislation

Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (EC Habitats Directive).

Provides framework at an international (EU) level for the consideration/protection of European Protected Species (EPS), and habitats through the designation of sites.

Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of wild birds (EC Birds Directive) and The Ramsar Convention on Wetlands of International Importance (1971)

Provides framework at an international (EU) level for the consideration/protection of important bird populations and the sites on which they are dependant.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010)

This transposes the EC Habitats Directive into UK law and provides the basis on which all EPS are protected and impacts on them can be licensed in the UK.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended

This provides the basis on which UK species are legally protected or restricted and confers protection on Sites of Special Scientific Interest SSSIs. It contains annexes of plants and animals which are legally protected as well as those which are considered to be invasive or harmful. It provides the basis on which impacts on such species can be licensed in the UK and provides controls on work on or near SSSIs.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW)

Provides a statutory basis for nature conservation, strengthens the protection of SSSIs and UK protected species and requires the consideration of habitats and species listed on the UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans (UKBAP/LBAP).

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC)

Sets out the responsibilities of Local Authorities in conserving biodiversity. Section 41 of the Act requires the publishing of lists of habitats and species which are "of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity". At present these largely reflect those making up the UKBAP lists.

Hedgerows Regulations (1997)

Define and provide protection for Important Hedgerows.

Protection of Badgers Act (1992)

Protects badgers from persecution, this includes excavation/development in the proximity of setts.

Protected SitesStatutory EU/International Protected Sites

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs); and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar Sites contain examples of some of the most important natural ecosystems in Europe. Work on or near these sites is strictly protected and Local Authorities will be expected to carry out 'Appropriate Assessment' of development in proximity of them. In this case there is often an increased burden on the developer in relation to provision of information and assessment.

Statutory UK Protected Sites

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs); National Nature Reserves (NNRs); Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) all receive strict protection under UK legislation. Work in or in proximity to these sites would be restricted with any needing to be agreed with Natural England. Natural England now provide guidance on the nature of development which could impact on SSSIs through Impact Risk Zones.

Locally Protected Sites

Local Authorities have a variety of protected wildlife sites designated at a local or regional level. These are gradually being brought under the banner of Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) but at present a plethora of different designations exist – all subject to local policy.

Protected SpeciesEuropean Protected Species

A number of species (most relevantly bats, great crested newts [GCN], and otters) receive strict protection from killing, injury and disturbance under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010). Protection is also conferred on the habitats on which they rely such as roost space in the case of bats and ponds and fields etc. in the case of GCN.

UK Protected Species

A number of species (including bats, GCN, water vole and white clawed crayfish) are strictly protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended, from killing, injury, disturbance and damage or destruction of their resting places etc. Certain species (such as reptiles) and some birds (such as barn owl) receive partial protection e.g. at certain times of the year or from certain activities only. All

nesting bird species are protected from damage or destruction of their nests – whilst active.

Invasive speciesSchedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended.

Lists these species and makes it an offence to cause or allow their spread in the wild. This often has impacts on development and planning in relation to the presence of invasive plant species such as: Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*), and giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*).

Irreplaceable Habitats

Irreplaceable habitats in the context of Biodiversity Net Gain are defined by The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024 as including:

- Blanket bog
- Lowland fens
- Limestone pavements
- Coastal sand dunes

Additional descriptive guidance is provided for four further irreplaceable habitats:

Habitat	Description
Ancient woodland	Ancient woodland is areas of woodland that have been continuously wooded since at least 1600. Ancient woodland includes– (i) Ancient Semi-Natural Woodlands (ii) Plantations on Ancient Woodland Sites (iii) Ancient Wood Pasture and Parkland (iv) Infilled Ancient Wood Pasture and Parkland
Ancient trees and veteran trees	Ancient and veteran trees can be found as individual trees or collections of trees in any setting. Ancient trees have passed beyond maturity into an ancient life stage or are old in comparison with other trees of the same species which exhibit one or more of the following– (i) demonstrably great age relative to others of the same species (ii) changes to their crown and trunk development indicative of the ancient life stage Veteran trees are mature trees that share physical and other characteristics in common with ancient trees, due to their life or environment, but are neither developmentally nor chronologically ancient. All ancient trees are veteran trees, but not all veteran trees are ancient. Veteran and ancient trees which have died are still recognised as such because they retain significant biodiversity value for many decades. Veteran trees exhibit one or more of the following–

- (i) significant decay features such as deadwood, hollowing or signs of advanced decay in the trunk or major limbs
- (ii) a large girth, depending on and relative to species, site and management history
- (iii) a high value for nature, especially in hosting rare or specialist fungi, lichens and deadwood invertebrates

<i>Spartina</i> saltmarsh swards	<i>Spartina</i> (cord-grass) saltmarsh swards colonise a wide range of substrates, from very soft muds to shingle, in areas sheltered from strong wave action. It occurs on the seaward fringes of saltmarshes and creek-sides and may colonise old pans in the upper saltmarsh
Mediterranean saltmarsh scrub	Mediterranean and thermo-Atlantic halophilous (salt-tolerant) scrub develops in the uppermost levels of saltmarshes, often where there is a transition from saltmarsh to dunes, or in some cases where dunes overlies shingle. The form that most closely resembles the scrub vegetation of the Mediterranean is restricted to south and south-east England and is formed predominantly of bushes of shrubby sea-blite <i>Suaeda vera</i> and sea purslane <i>Atriplex portulacoides</i>

Planning Policy/Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework was updated in December 2024 with additional clarifications made in February 2025. The most relevant paragraphs from the NPPF are set out below.

The approach to assessing the natural environment is now embedded within the definition of what 'sustainable development' is and this falls under one of three objectives of the planning system – the 'environmental objective' applying in this case. Paragraph 8c (P8c) of the NPPF states that sustainable development should "protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment", including "improving biodiversity". P10 sets out the Framework's presumption in favour of sustainable development.

Section 11 of the NPPF details making effective use of land. The Framework states that planning policies and decisions should take "opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation" and should "recognise that some undeveloped land can perform many functions, such as for wildlife" (P125).

Section 15 details conserving and enhancing the natural environment; policies and decisions should be "protecting and enhancing valued landscape [and] sites of biodiversity [...] value", "recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside" and contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution (P187). Allocations of land for development should, "allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework" and "take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats" (P188).

The Framework sets out ways to minimise the impacts on biodiversity through plans which "identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity" and promote the "conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity" (P192).

It is made clear in P193 that local planning authorities should apply a set of principles when determining planning applications. Planning permission should be refused "if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from development cannot be avoided [...], adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for".

Development should not normally be permitted where an adverse effect on a SSSI is likely, and "opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity".

UK Biodiversity Indicators 2023; update to Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services

The UK Biodiversity Indicators 2023 provide updates to the indicators set out in Biodiversity 2020 including new species abundance targets as set out in the Environment Act 2021. Biodiversity 2020 builds on the Natural Environment White Paper (June 2011) – Setting out the current UK Government's approach to nature conservation. It promotes a more coherent and inclusive approach to conservation and the valuing in economic and social terms of economic resources.

The strategy promotes initiatives such as Biodiversity Offsetting, Nature Improvement Areas and a focus on well-connected natural networks and introduces the concept of securing a 'no net loss' situation with regard to UKBAP/Section 41 habitats and species.

ODPM circular 06/05 (2005) Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within the Planning System

Provides guidance to Local Authorities on their obligations to biodiversity – particularly in relation to assessing planning applications and ensuring the adequacy of information.

BSI (2013) British Standards Institute BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development

Provides a standard for the biodiversity assessment and development industries and decision makers such as Local Planning Authorities to work to.