Ecological Appraisal

Land off Lundhill Road, Barnsley

Report reference: R-2667-01.3

September 2017

Report Title:	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Land off Lundhill Road, Barnsley
Report Reference:	R-2667-01.3
Written by:	Rob Weston BSc MSc MCIEEM Technical Director
Technical review:	Sam Kitching BSc (Hons) Grad CIEEM Ecologist
QA review:	Peter Brooks BSc (Hons), MA, MCIEEM, CEnv Managing Director
Approved for issue	Peter Brooks BSc (Hons), MA, MCIEEM, CEnv Managing Director
Date Updated in response to LPA Comments	07.09.17

The information which we have prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions. This report does not constitute legal advice.

Brooks Ecological
Grounded advice

Unit A, 1 Station Road, Guiseley, Leeds, LS20 8BX
Phone: **01943 884451**
01943 879129
Email:admin@brooks-ecological.co.uk
www.brooks-ecological.co.uk
Registered in England Number 5351418

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Non-technical Summary

Purpose of report

This report is produced to present an initial assessment of the potential ecological constraints and opportunities relating to a Site known as land off Lundhill Road, Wombwell, Barnsley; to inform the Site's potential for development.

The report is suitable in its current form for submission to planning.

Methodology

The 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 August 2016 and is updated in respect of surveys carried out during 2017.

Findings Key-Points

The Site is suitable for the proposed development but the layout and design is likely to need to account for the retention of semi-improved grassland and the retention of habitat for great crested newt.

Further pre-planning surveys were recommended in relation to bats, white clawed crayfish, great crested newt and water-vole have been recommended and carried out – findings are summarised.

A large stand of Japanese knotweed (Fallopia japonica) is present on one of the Site boundaries – this plant will require eradication prior to works.

Introduction

1. Brooks Ecological Ltd was commissioned by Persimmon Homes to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of land at Lundhill Road, Wombwell, Barnsley SE 405 018.

2. This report is produced with reference to British Standard BS42020 'Biodiversity Code of Practice for Planning and Development' and the CIEEM (2013) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

Scope

3. The application site 'the Site' is a series of four fields of mixed use situated on the southern edge of Wombwell. It is defined in figure 1 below.

4. 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. Information was provided by the Barnsley Biodiversity Records Centre (BBRC). Reporting was also informed by a broad-brush ecological assessment carried out on the site on behalf of the Council and provided to the applicant as part of Pre-Application consultation.

Figure 1 The Site (red and blue outlined areas)

Proposals

Figure 2 Proposals - from Persimmon LRW 2017 – 001B

5. Proposals for the Site are shown above - assessment is based on the provision of residential development with associated access and open space.

Site context

6. The site is underlain by mixed geology of the middle coal measures and the oaks rock sandstone formation. This geology is likely to lead to neutral to slightly acidic soil conditions in the area. The Site lies on land which slopes gently above the Dearne Valley and from the abandoned Elsecar Canal which is found to its south.

7. Immediate boundaries are formed by residential development to the north and east and the Elsecar Canal and a small landholding to the south. To the west is Lundhill Road.

8. Beyond the canal to the south the landscape is characterised by the busy dual carriageway of the A6195 Dearne Valley Parkway and a large retail park development. To the north extends the residential development of Wombwell and then Barnsley. In other directions, open countryside is not far away, this being typified by open arable fields and Wombwell Woods to the west, with the Dearne Valley and its wetland bird reserves to the east.

Wildlife corridors

9. The Elsecar Canal passes the Site to the south and provides a somewhat tenuous link with the open habitats described above to the east and west. Otherwise the Dearne Valley Parkway, Lundhill Road and residential development result in the Site's being isolated from surrounding higher value habitats and it could not be said to play any key part in local ecological networks.

Figure 3 Analysis of wildlife corridors and higher value habitat in relation to the Site.

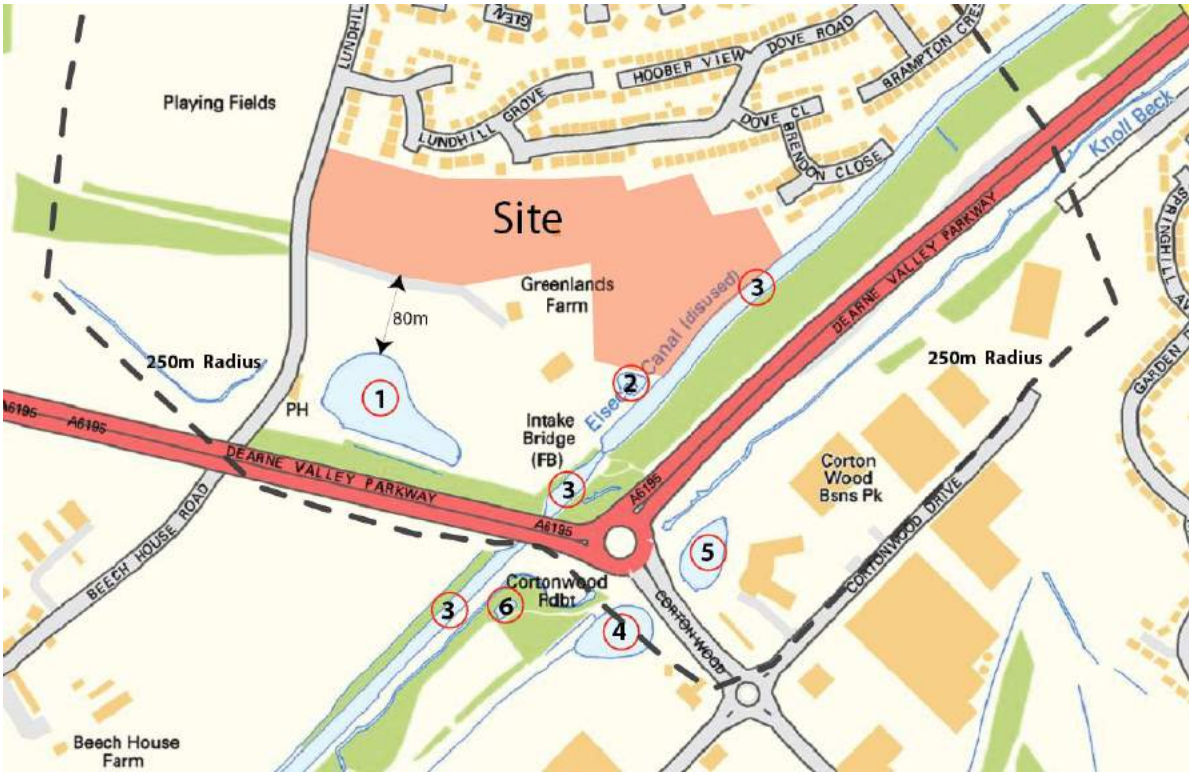
Water bodies

10. There are several waterbodies within the vicinity of the Site. These are summarised in the plan below.

11. Pond 1 is a large and well established balancing pond behind the pub on Lundhill Road. This is fringed by marginal vegetation dominated by reedmace (Typha latifolia), but has a significant area of open water. This pond is separated from the Site by c.80m of rough grassland.

12. Pond 2 is much smaller and is dominated by dense greater reed mace. Aerial photographs suggest it is has terrestrialised significantly over recent years and it contained no open water during survey in August 2016. This pond borders the Site directly.

Figure 4 Local waterbodies in relation to the Site numbered ponds are discussed below



13. Pond 3 is the linear 'pond like structure' created by the dead arm of the Elsecar Canal. It seems likely that the Canal still takes some flow of water, however this is imperceptible close to the Site. The canal is steep sided in most places although it banks are now silted up and colonised by riparian vegetation including reed mace, greater willowherb (Epilobium hirsutum) and burr reed (Sparganium erectum). Much of the canal is colonised by a dense screen of floating duckweed (Lemma sp.). The canal supports a good head of fish with many perch being apparent during the survey, and introduced red-necked terrapin could be seen basking next to the Site. The canal borders the Site directly.

Figure 5

Pond 1 viewed from its perimeter fence.

Figure 6

Pond 2 viewed from the west looking back towards the Site.

Figure 7

The canal viewed from the Site – note terrapin in centre.

Figure 8

The canal viewed from the footbridge to the south east - looking up the canal with the pond 2 and then the Site boundary on the left.

14. Other numbered ponds are balancing features apparently created as part of works to the Pennine Trail and the Cottonwood Retail Park. Although not completely isolated form the Site, access between these ponds and the Site is made very difficult by a combination of the canal, the fast-flowing Knoll Beck and the Dearne Valley Parkway.

15. The only watercourse in the vicinity of the Site is Knoll Beck. This is separated from the Site by the canal and has no hydrological links with it.

Designated Sites

Statutory Designations

16. A search of the Magic database revealed no international statutory designations within 10km of the Site or national designations within 2km.

SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs)

17. The Site lies within the IRZ for Denaby Ings SSSI, but does not fall into one of the highlighted categories which requires consultation between the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and Natural England (NE). The development is of a scale and nature which is unlikely to impact on this SSSI.

Non-Statutory Designations

18. There are two locally designated sites within 1km of the Site these are is Parkhill Nature Reserve LWS (Local Wildlife Site) c. 1km to the north of the Site and Gypsy Marsh LWS 1km to the north east. These are separated from the Site by a broad swathe of residential and industrial development and the two have no functional links to the Site. These designations would not be impacted by the proposed development.

19. The Site lies wholly within the Dearne Valley Green Heart 'Nature Improvement Area' for which the Council's adopted Core Strategy requires developers to also offer biodiversity enhancements. Measures to provide enhancement are discussed later in the report.

Habitats

Method

20. The survey was carried out during August 2016[1] and followed Phase 1 habitat survey methodology (JNCC, 2010).

Limitations

21. The vast majority of the Site was accessible with exceptions being the densest bramble scrub - which accounts for no more than 5 % of the Site by area.

22. Sufficient time was afforded the surveyor to carry out the survey. The survey was not constrained by poor weather.

Results

23. The Site comprises four fields, three used for grazing by horses and one occupied by recently created improved grassland. Habitats suggest that the three northern fields have at one time supported more diverse grassland managed more traditionally. Present now in these fields is grassland reflecting the transition of this to a semi-improved sward of less value - presumably the result of improvement through fertilisation, or simply management through grazing with horses.

24. The fields contain an increasing scrub element and discrete areas of damp marshy grassland vegetation.

25. The following habitats were identified within the Site and on its immediate boundaries:

- Semi-improved neutral grassland
- Tall ruderal vegetation
- Scrub
- Marshy grassland

[1] This Report has been prepared during December 2016 following a visit to the site in August 2016 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.

- Improved grassland
- Hedgerows
- Buildings

Figure 9

Characteristic picture of the Site. This looking across the semi improved grassland in the north of the Site - viewed from east to west.

Semi-improved neutral grassland

26. This habitat is the basis of the three northern fields used for grazing horses and is typical of this management having short areas which are tightly grazed along with longer coarser patches avoided by grazing. The shorter habitat supports a dense sward dominated by common grasses including perennial rye grass (Lolium perenne), timothy (Phleum pratense), red fescue (Festuca rubra), common bent (Agrostis capillaris), yorkshire fog (Holcus lanatus) and rough meadow grass (Poa trivialis). Forbs are a constant component of this sward at relatively low levels and include birdsfoot trefoil (Lotus coniculatus), white clover (Trifolium repens), red clover (Trifolium pratense), greater plantain (Plantago major), red bartsia (Odontites vernus), dandelion (Taraxacum vulgare agg.), bush vetch (Vicia sepium), ribbed melilot (Meliotus officionalis), creeping buttercup (Ranunculus repens), field bindweed (Convolvulus arvensis), meadow buttercup (Ranunculus acris), and broad leaved dock (Rumex obustifolius).

Figure 10

Typical view of the mix of neutral semi-improved grassland in the north of the Site.

27. In areas where the sward is longer, species include the grasses cocksfoot (Dactylis glomerata) and false oat grass (Arrhenatherum elatius) alongside meadow vetchling (Latyrus pratensis), hoary ragwort (Senecio erucifolius), tufted vetch (Vicia cracca), hairy tare (Vicia hirsuta) creeping thistle (Cirsium arvens) and knapweed (Centaurea nigra).

28. A section in the south of this part of the Site slopes down to meet the track to Greenland Farm. This bank is south facing and is in parts dominated by knapweed alongside occasional teasel (Dipascus fullonum), yarrow (Achillea millefolium), mugwort (Artemesia vulgaris), creeping cinquefoil (Potentilla reptans) and tansy (Tanacetum vulgare). This area is indicated as target note 1 on plan D-2667-01.1.

Figure 11

Knapweed dominated bank at target note 1

Tall ruderal vegetation

29. This is not really found as discrete parcels within the Site but grades between the areas of scrub and wetland vegetation described below into the grassland. Typical species include greater willowherb (Epilobium hirsutum), hoary ragwort (Senecio erucifolius),

rosebay willowherb (Chamerion angustifolium), bracken (Pteridium aquilinum), comfrey (Syphytum officionale), raspberry (Rubus idaeus) and in one part of the Site a large stand of invasive Japanese knotweed (Fallopia japonica) - this is identified as target note 2 on plan D-2667-01.1. Field horsetail (Equisetum arvensis) is also found within this boundary.

Scrub

30. In many parts of the Site scrub is taking over from the coarse grass and tall ruderal components described above. It is scattered throughout but forms more distinctive dense scrub in the north-eastern field where it will now exclude grazing. Scrub is dominated by hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna) but also includes bramble (Rubus fruticosus agg.), dog rose (Rosa canina) and blackthorn (Prunus spinosa).

Figure 12

Tall ruderal vegetation grading into scrub and wetland vegetation in the north east of the Site.

Figure 13

Large stand of knotweed at target note 2

Marshy grassland

31. Small parts of the Site hold a distinctive wetland vegetation suggestive of permanent flushing or terrestrialisation of former waterbodies. No standing water could be found

in these areas during the survey. In addition to the species listed above these areas also support greater birdsfoot trefoil (Lotus pedunculatus), soft rush (Juncus effusus), hard rush (Juncus inflexus), tufted hair grass (Deschampsia cespitosa), sharp flowered rush (Juncus acutifolius), glaucous sedge (Carex flacca) and meadowsweet (Filipendula ulmaria).

32. A small damp area is present in the far north eastern corner of the Site supporting yellow loosestrife (Lysimachia vulgaris) and a damp area in the far eastern corner of the southern field contains sharp flowered and compact rushes (Juncus conglomeratus).

33. Bordering the southern boundary of the northern field (see target not 4 on plan D-2667-01.1) are the remnants of a ditch or old footings, these are occasionally wet (holding c.200mm of water during August 2016) and support reedmace (Typha latifolia), hairy sedge (Carex hirta) and creeping bent (Agrostis stolonifera).

Figure 14

An area of marshy vegetation in the north of the Site.

Improved grassland

34. The southern field has been ploughed and seeded. It supports grassland dominated by perennial rye grass (Lolium perenne) with timothy (Phleum pratense), broad leaved dock (Rumex obustifolius), dandelion (Taraxacum vulgare agg.), nettle (Urtica dioica) and creeping buttercup (Ranunculus repens).

Hedgerows

35. The southern field has some defined hedgerow boundaries; the most substantial is the southwestern which is comprised of large stems of hawthorn (Crataegus monogyna) and field maple (Acer campestre) with poplar (Populus sp.) standards. This hedge continues in part as a gappy line of scrub along the southern boundary with the canal. A ditch accompanies the boundary at this point, at the time of survey it contained very shallow water.

36. The boundary between the southern and northern fields is defined by a gappy row of goat willow (Salix caprea), ash (Fraxinus excelsior) and hawthorn. A ditch also accompanies the boundary at this point, although at the time of survey it was largely dry.

37. This boundary extends to separate the southern field from land to the east, at this point it comprises a good mature hedgerow with hazel (Corylus avellana), holly (Ilex aquifolium) and elder (Sambucus nigra).

38. The northern fields are defined by post and wire fencing or their boundaries with adjacent housing.

39. None of the boundaries supports any distinctive hedgerow understorey.

Buildings

40. The only buildings on the Site are a series of sheds of sheet wood and corrugated metal construction. These are used as stabling for horses and being of simple construction with no enclosed cavities or crevices, do not have any Bat Roost Suitability.

Figure 15

The Site's buildings viewed from the east.

Off-site Habitats

Canal

41. This is the primary off-Site habitat with potential to be impacted by development of the Site; it is described above (see figures 6 & 7). It is notable that the canal is set above the lower part of the adjacent field and separated from it by a bank of scrub and ruderal vegetation.

Figure 16

Boundary of the southern field and the canal (to the right)

Habitats Summary

42. The Site comprises mainly of ubiquitous habitats which would not be considered to present a constraint to development.

43. There is some low-level interest in the presence of remnants of more floriferous neutral grassland and patches of wetland vegetation, under the site's current management these habitats are not likely to be sustainable and there is little prospect of their rehabilitation in the absence of development. The presence of these areas would not present any bar to development, but they should be retained if possible. Their loss, if required, should be mitigated elsewhere on Site. It is noted that the current layout makes provision for the retention or replacement of these habitats within the Site.

44. Hedgerow boundaries present minimal interest, but should wherever possible be protected and retained and brought into management in the Site's Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan (BEMP).

Fauna

Bats

46. There are no buildings or trees on the Site with any potential to support roosting by bats.

47. The Site is likely to be used for low levels of foraging, following the Site boundaries. This is likely to be by common species of bats such as pipistrelles or *Myotis* bats using the adjacent canal. The canal is likely to constitute the primary feature of value to bats locally, and they are likely to use it as a commuting corridor and a foraging resource. Care will need to be taken to avoid the potential impacts of lighting on the canal.

48. There are no roosts recorded in local housing and the proposed development does not intersect any potentially important commuting corridors between the canal and housing.

49. Bat surveys of the Site have been carried out by Whitcher Wildlife Ltd. during 2016, the results of these have been provided in their report Ref No: - 160588. Surveys found relatively low levels of activity by common species of bat, with bats arriving on Site from housing to the north and foraging activity being focused around the Site's boundaries.

Amphibians

50. There are records of common frog and common toad in the Study Area but not from the Site. There are no records of great crested newt (GCN) in the Study Area. Local waterbodies which could be used by amphibians for breeding have been discussed and described above.

51. Due to the presence of local waterbodies suitable for breeding, GCN surveys have been carried out and are reported in R-2667-04. Surveys have concluded the absence of GCN from the Site, and of its significant value to local amphibian populations. A population of common toad has been identified in association with pond 1 and recommendations are made in relation to providing enhancement for this population later in the report.

Birds

52. The Site will provide habitat for a range of bird species, and has the potential to support BAP farmland birds such as skylark, yellowhammer and song thrush. Records have been returned for a range of birds – most of which are wildfowl associated with the nearby wetland bird reserves. Those of potential relevance to the Site relate to skylark, tree sparrow, grey partridge and snipe (the latter seen on the Site during

survey). None of these records come from within the Site. The nature and scale of the Site, and the preponderance of higher value habitat for birds in the wider area make it very unlikely that local bird populations would have any dependency on it.

53. Local residents reported a barn owl in a barn just to the west of the southern part of the Site. A careful inspection of the barn in August found evidence of the use of the barn by this species and it is likely that the barn is used for nesting. Given the size and nature of the Site any barn owl nesting here is unlikely to have a dependency on the Site itself, but will make use of the good foraging grounds associated with the canal and the Dearne Valley beyond. Efforts should be made to retain connectivity and potential foraging for this species alongside the canal.

54. The Site is unlikely to be of value as a roosting or mustering site for wintering or passage birds due to the lie of land (poor sight lines) and proximity of footpaths, roads and disturbance by humans.

Water Vole

55. Water voles are recorded within the Study Area the nearest records being at Gypsy Marsh LWS in 2010 and the Elsecar Canal in 2012. The Site does not support suitable habitat for this species, although there is potential for them to occur within the stretch of the Elsecar Canal adjacent to the south of the Site, where there is some limited potential for them to establish burrows. A specific survey for water vole has been carried out ant reported in R-2667-02 -this has confirmed the likely asbsence of this species in habitat adjacent to the Site.

Otter

56. Otter are not recorded in the study area, although they continue to expand their range in the UK and there is some limited potential for them to forage in the Elsecar Canal. However, this habitat is not suitable for holting and there is no significant potential for the proposals to impact on this species. No evidence of otter was recorded during boat based survey of the canal for water vole.

Badger

57. No evidence of badger could be found within the Site during the survey and impacts on this species seem unlikely. Areas of dense scrub could however not be accessed and a precautionary approach to clearance of any such areas should be taken, with any large burrows reported to the ecologist immediately.

White Clawed Crayfish

58. There is the potential for this species to occur in the adjacent canal, and any outfall from the Site into the canal means potential for impacts on them. Specific survey for them has been carried out and reported in R-2667-02 – this confirmed their likely absence in this stretch of the canal.

Reptiles

59. The Site presents marginal habitat for this group – especially in contrast to the wetland habitats in the wider area. There are no records of reptiles from the study area and this group is not considered further.

Hedgehog

60. Of the other species of primary importance, hedgehog is the most likely to use the Site and to have any dependency on it. Given the surrounding habitats the temporary loss of the Site to this species (during construction) would not be expected to have any significant impact; however, steps should be taken to ensure that the developed Site is accessible to them.

Invasive Species

Japanese knotweed (Fallopia japonica)

61. Japanese knotweed (Fallopia japonica) is listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), making it an offence to cause or allow it to grow in the wild. It has been found in the areas marked indicatively on plan D-2667-01.1 as target note 2. This plant should be removed from the Site (prior to any works) by a suitably licensed contractor, which would involve spraying, stem injection or mechanical removal.

Horsetails

62. Horsetails are not listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) but can cause damage to roads and paving post development.

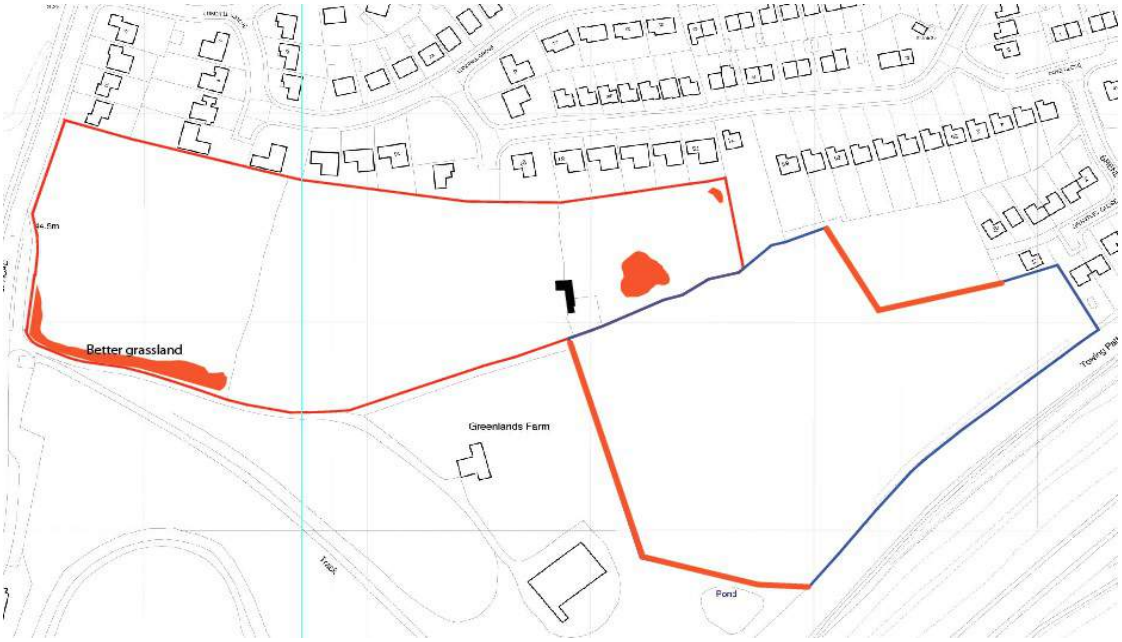
Some horsetail has been found on the Site and is marked indicatively on plan D-2667-01.1 as target note 3.

Key Findings

63. The Site is relatively un-constrained in relation to the habitats present here. Where possible areas of marshy grassland and areas of remnant meadow habitat should be retained. Where this is not possible the loss of these habitats should be mitigated elsewhere on the Site so that the extent of these habitats can be retained.

64. Potential constraints are highlighted in red on the plan below. This shades areas of wet vegetation, hedgerow and better grassland.

Figure 17 Constraints - orange



65. Proposals (see fig 2 above) show the loss of small areas of marshy grassland, but that this loss is mitigated by a more expansive area of this habitat in the south of the Site. This is likely to be a more sustainable location for this type of habitat, where it can be a more coherent part of the local habitat network. The use of suitable conditions will be able to secure this habitats management for the future.

66. The current layout also shows scope to retain the more floriferous areas of 'better' grassland identified in the south west of the Site.

67. Where they border the Site, hedgerows should be protected and retained. There is some good potential to extend the network of hedgerows around the Site boundary.

Ecological Enhancement

68. The requirement for development to make a positive contribution to biodiversity is clearly set out guidance such as the NPPF and BS:42020 - beyond mitigating or compensating any potential impacts and due to the Site's location within a NIA there will be a local policy requirement for enhancement.

69. The layout could incorporate the following themes, providing opportunities for the proposals to deliver such a contribution:

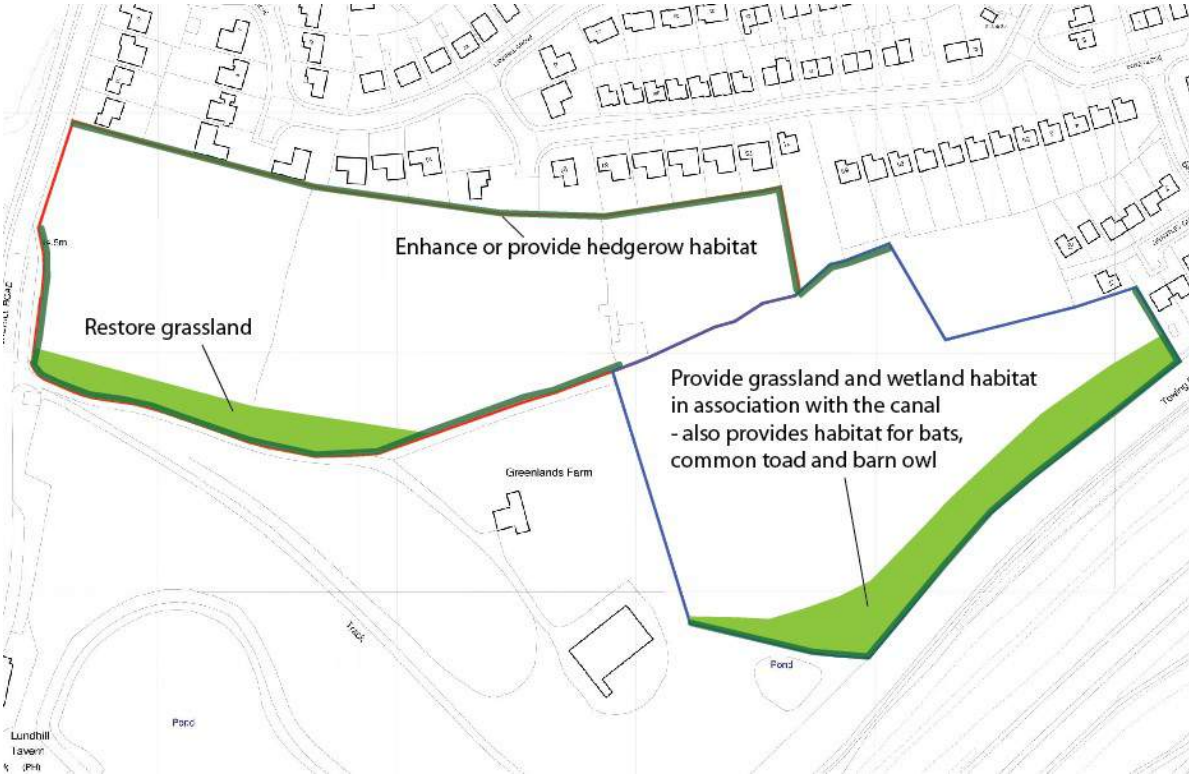
- Provision of good quality habitat in association with the canal. A mix of wetland and grassland is recommended in this area.
- Restoration of the better neutral grassland found on the Site. This is on a south facing bank and could be managed in the longer term for the benefit of invertebrates.
- The provision of additional native hedgerows around the Site boundary.

70. The layout currently provides space for, or shows explicitly these enhancements.

71. The Site could also be enhanced through the provision of a range of faunal habitat boxes integral to, or mounted on new buildings.

72. Ecological enhancement would be detailed and agreed in a Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP) produced as a standard condition of planning - see BS 42020 for example conditions.

Figure 18 Enhancement Opportunities



Further ecological input required

73. Given that additional surveys have been carried out for water vole, GCN and white clawed crayfish; further ecological assessment is not recommended to inform a planning decision.

74. Some further surveys will inform precautions taken during the Site's development, but will not impact on the layout or planning decisions. These are best carried out once timescales are known. They can be time constrained and information on those required at this Site is provided below to aid project planning.

Table 1 Additional survey required pre-commencement

Survey	Rationale	Timing
Pre-development checks for badgers, knotweed and horsetail.	Should these be required by the developer	Those for plants are restricted to the growing season April-October.
Nesting bird surveys	Destruction of active nests is prohibited by law* Survey will be needed prior to the Site clearance of only if carried out during the period March - August (inclusive). This would allow and active nests to be identified and protected.	Immediately prior to clearance

* Information on relevant legislation is provided in Appendix 5 of the report

Issues to be addressed in layout or project design

75. The following features should be incorporated into the project in relation to the protection of ecology and compliance with policy and best practice.

Table 2 Issues to be addressed in layout or project design

See Constraints and Opportunities plans above.	Loss of grassland types will require mitigation and is shown in current plans.
A Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) should be provided by the projects main contractor. This would include a chapter on biodiversity with specific input from and ecologist and would set out	Good practice requirement BS 42020:2013 (Clause 10).

(amongst other issues) the protection of hedgerows and the canal.	

Appendices

1. Extended Phase 1 Habitat Plan
2. Explanatory Notes and Resources
3. Bat Activity Survey Rationale
4. Information on legislation / protection

References

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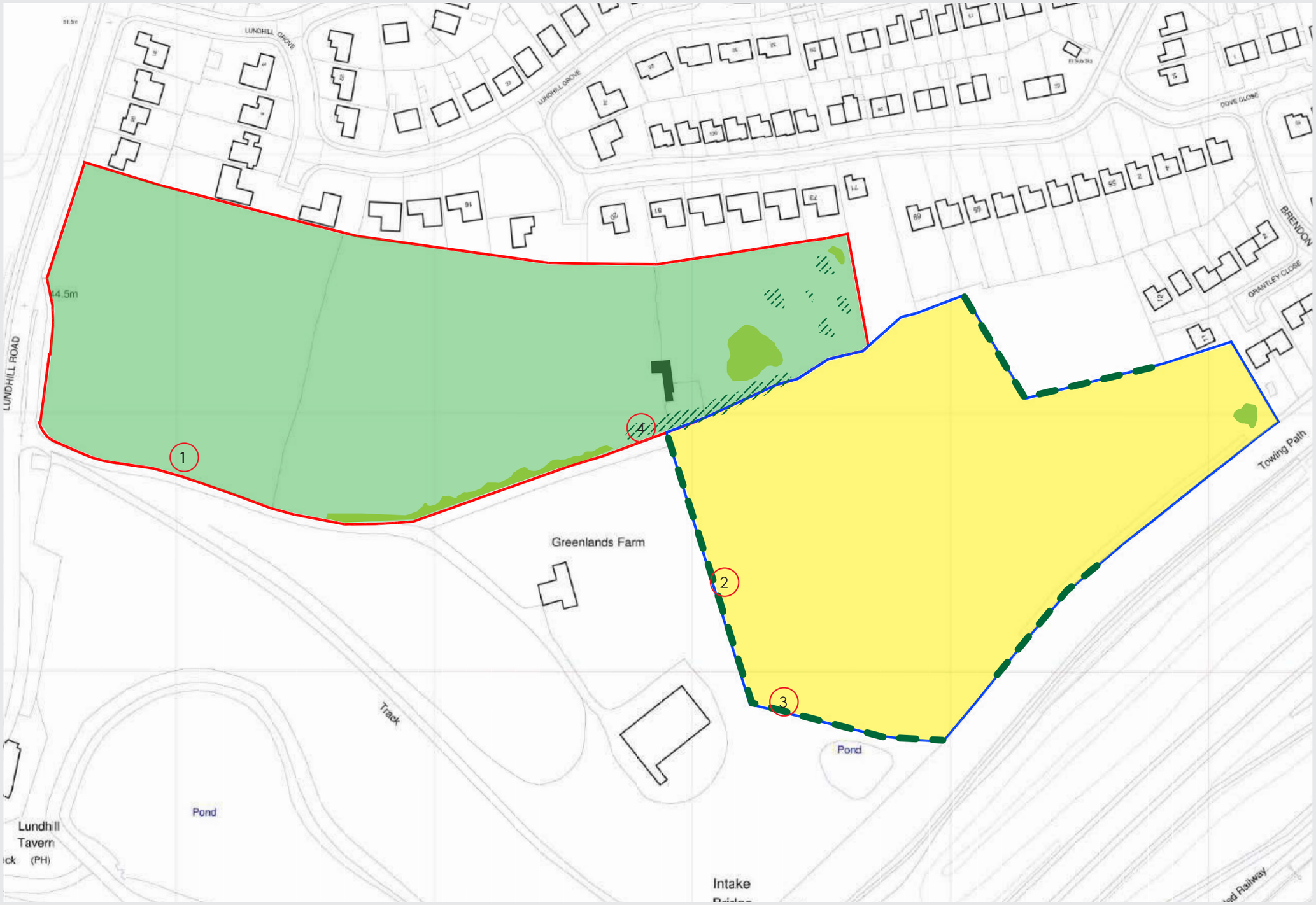
Appendix 1 – Extended Phase 1 Habitat Plan



Improved grassland

Semi improved neutral grassland

Buildings

Marshy grassland

Scrub

Hedgerow

Target notes:

1 Knapweed dominated grassland

2 Japanese knotweed

3 Field horsetail

4 Old footings holding water

Brooks Ecological
Grounded advice

Unit A, 1 Station Road
Guiseley
Leeds
LS20 8BX
www.brooks-ecological.co.uk

T: 01943 884451

Project: Land off Lundhill Road

Title: Ecological Features Plan

Drawing Number: D-2667-01.1

Scale: Do not scale Date: December 2015

Revision:

Appendix 2 – Explanatory Notes and Resources Used

Site context

76. 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. We use Promap Street + scale maps for this purpose.

Designated Sites

77. 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 [SSSI's]) 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

78. 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

79. 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 2012).

Faunal appraisal

80. 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').

81. Records of notable species supplied from a 2km area of search by West Yorkshire Ecology(WYE) are used to inform this appraisal.

82. 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.

Evaluation

83. 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.

84. 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.

85. 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

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

Species Action Plans _____ Habitat Action Plans

Species/group	**Habitat**
Hedgehog	Upland Oakwood
Bats	Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
Water Vole	Wet Woodland
Otter	Wood Pasture and Parkland
Grey Partridge	Hedgerows
Bittern	Arable Field Margins
Kestrel	Floodplain Grazing Marsh
Little Ringed Plover	Lowland Meadows
Lapwing	Lowland Dry Acidic Grassland

Barn Owl
Skylark
Tree Sparrow
Twite
Great Crested Newt
Salmon
Bullhead
White-clawed Crayfish

Glow Worm
Dingy Skipper
Bluebell

Lowland Heathland
Upland Heathland
Blanket Bog
Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pasture
Reedbeds
Ponds
Rivers
Open Mosaic Habitats on Previously Developed Land

Appendix 3 – Bat Activity Survey Rationale

87. The Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (BCTG) (Collins 2016) 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.

88. 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.

89. 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 of 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 behinethe judgement. '*

90. 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.

91. The site presents a large area of relatively poor bat foraging habitat, along small areas with more structure and more likelihood of use. It does not lie in any strategic location for commuting. The proposals present a limited risk of impact on foraging or commuting and seasonal (spring, summer and autumn surveys are likely to be sufficient in understanding the potential impacts and providing any mitigation required. This assessment was made by Surveys were directed by 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).

92. Objectives of recommended surveys should be:

- confirm levels of use and the assemblage of bats present on the site generally
- confirm patterns of activity and identify key features
- identify levels of use of the affected foraging or commuting features to be and inform levels of mitigation required (if any).

Appendix 4 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 1) 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 Sites

Statutory 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 Species

European 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, watervole 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 form certain activities only. All nesting bird species are protected from damage or destruction of their nests - whilst active.

Invasive species

Schedule 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 (*Fallopia japonica*) and giant hogweed *(Heracleum mantegazzianum*).

Planning Policy / Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework was published in 27 March 2012 replacing the majority of previous Planning Policy Guidance notes (PPGs) and Planning Policy Statements (PPSs). The most relevant paragraphs from the NPPF are set out below.

The general approach to assessing the natural environment is now embedded within the definition of what 'sustainable development' is. Paragraph 7 (P7) of the NPPF states that sustainable development should "contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural environment" and "help to improve biodiversity". There is also a need for positive inclusion of the natural environment in development design and "moving from a net loss of bio-diversity to achieving net gains for nature" (P9). P14 sets out the Frameworks presumption in favour of sustainable development.

The natural environment is stated within the NPPF core principles: development should "*recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside*" and contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should, "*prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework*" (P17).

Section 11 of the NPPF details the approach to the natural environment. The Framework states that development should "*minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity, where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures*" (P109).

The Framework sets out ways to minimise the impacts on biodiversity through "*promoting the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, linked to national and local targets*" (P117).

The NPPF requires the consideration of the impacts of development on the natural environment. The Framework also encourages "*opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments*" (P118). Importantly this paragraph (P118) sets out the hierarchy of avoiding, mitigating and compensating harm from development - plans should ensure that they can demonstrate engagement with this hierarchy when required.

Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's Wildlife and Ecosystem Services.

This strategy builds on the Natural Environment White Paper (June 2011) - The Natural Choice: securing the value of nature. 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.