Ecological Impact Assessment

Hoyland, Barnsley

30th January 2023

Tyler Grange

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Plan Title 14296/P01a: Habitat Features Plan

Summary

S.1. This report has been prepared by Tyler Grange Group Ltd on behalf of LIDL GB. It sets out the findings of an Ecological impact Assessment (EcIA) of a parcel of land off Cross Keys Lane, Barnsley (Ordnance survey Grid reference SE 35208 00473) hereinafter referred to as the 'site'. This report has been produced to accompany a planning application for a new retail unit at the site.

S.2. The site is located off Cross Keys Lane, surrounded by roads, urban development and an extension of similar habitat to the north. The site measures approximately 0.9 ha and comprises mainly improved grassland with a strip of dense scrub in the centre of the site and scattered trees in the east.

S.3. The findings of an extended phase I habitat survey and protected species surveys were used to assess the following:

- Potential effected to statutory and non-statutory conservation designations

    a. None – all nature conservation sites within the Zone of Influence around the site are considered to be sufficiently distant to avoid any adverse impacts as a result of the proposed works. The site is not considered important in maintaining the population of Willow Tits present within Dearne valley Westlands Site of Special Scientific Interest, located 0.67km north of the site.

- Potential effects on protected and priority species:

    b. Amphibians: Likelihood of amphibian presence within development area considered to be exceptionally low – works undertaken under Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs);

    c. Badger: No badger signs including setts found onsite and very low potential;

    d. Bats: Likely absence of roosting bats within site but possible loss of foraging/commuting corridors;

    e. Birds: Potential for birds to nest within areas of vegetation within the site;

    f. Hedgehog: low potential for hedgehog presence;

    g. Reptiles: Negligible potential onsite; and

    h. Water vole and otter: Negligible potential onsite.

S.4. The Defra 3.0 Metric has calculated that without including off-site habitat creation, the proposed development at this stage as illustrated on the attached illustrative landscape strategy plan would amount to a relatively minor measurable net loss in biodiversity value of **4.26** biodiversity units.

Section 1: Introduction and Site Context

Purpose

1.1. This report has been prepared by Tyler Grange Group Ltd on behalf of LIDL GB. It sets out the findings of an Ecological impact Assessment (EcIA) for a parcel of land off Cross Keys Lane, Barnsley (Ordnance survey Grid reference SE 35208 00473) hereinafter referred to as the 'site'. **See Figure 1** below for the site context.

Figure 1: Site Context and Boundary (Arial imagery © google 2022)

1.2. This report has been prepared to accompany an planning application for a new retail unit with associated access, parking, landscaping and infrastructure, as shown in **Appendix 1**.

1.3. This report:

- Uses available background data, results of field surveys and consultation, to describe and evaluate the ecological features present within the likely 'zone of influence' (ZoI)[1] of the proposed development;
- Describes the actual or potential ecological issues and opportunities that might arise as a result of the site's development;
- Where appropriate, makes recommendations for mitigation of adverse effects and ecological enhancement, to ensure conformity with policy and legislation listed in Appendix 2; and
- Identifies whether any further work is required to inform the planning application.

1.4. This assessment and the terminology used are consistent with the 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland' (CIEEM, 2019) and 'Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisals' (CIEEM, 2019).

[1] Defined as the area over which ecological features may be subject to significant effects as a result of activities associated with a project and associated activities (CIEEM 2019).

Section 2: Methodology

Scope of works

2.1 The following surveys were undertaken at the site following standard methodologies set out in JNCC (2010).

- Desk Study – acquiring records of European Protected Sites within 10km of the site and Nationally Protected Sites within 2km of the site. Records of protected/notable species licence applications within 2km of the site were also collated.
- Extended Phase 1 habitat survey - classifying the site into habitat types to assess their importance and potential presence of protected species; and
- Willow tit *Parus montanus* over-wintering and breeding bird surveys- to assess their potential presence onsite.

Desk Study

2.2 The aim of the desk study was to collate existing ecological records for the site and adjacent areas. Obtaining existing records is an important part of the assessment process as it provides information on issues that may not be apparent during a singly survey, which by its nature provides only a 'snapshot' of the ecology of a given site.

2.3 The data search was undertaken for a 10km radius around the site for European statutory sites, a 2km radius for national statutory and non-statutory sites and a 2km radius for protected and priority[2] species records.

2.4 The following organisations and individuals have been contacted and, where relevant, the information provided has been incorporated with acknowledgement within this report:

- Sheffield Biological Records Centre (SBRC) was contacted for protected and priority species and non-statutory sites from the past 20 years within a 2km search radius from the site.
- South Yorkshire bat group was contacted for bat records from the past 20 years within 2km of the site.
- South Yorkshire badger group was contacted for badger records from the past 20 years within 2km of the site.
- Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)[2] website was accessed for information on the location of European designated sites within 10km of the site and 2km for nationally designated sites, as well as any European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) granted within 2km of site;
- Barnsley Council's[3] website was consulted for details of relevant local planning policies and supplementary planning guidance; and
- Sheffield Biodiversity Action Plan was consulted for priority habitats and species subject to conservation action, to assist with the evaluation of ecological features and to inform site enhancement strategies.

[2] UK priority species and habitats are those subject to conservation action and referred to as Species of Principal Importance (SoPI) or Habitats of Principal Importance (HoPI). They are listed in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Section 40 of the NERC Act states that local planning authorities must have regard for the conservation of both SoPI and HoPI.
[3] https://www.barnsley.gov.uk/media/17249/local-plan-adopted.pdf

Extended Phase I Habitat Survey

2.5 An 'extended' Phase I habitat survey was undertaken on 1st September 2021 by Amy Sherwin, a Qualifying member of CIEEM and an experienced ecologist. The technique was based upon Phase I survey methodology (JNCC, 2010). The weather conditions for the survey were 100% cloud cover, no rain, gentle breeze and a temperature of 13°C.

2.6 An updated phase 1 survey was also undertaken by Jeff Clark who is a member of CIEEM and an experienced ecologist during the first breeding bird survey on 4th April 2022. Details of the weather are listed in table 2.2 below.

2.7 Using the above method, the site was classified into areas of similar botanical community types with a representative sample of those species present at the time of the survey being described. Additionally, incidental records of fauna were also made during the survey and the habitats identified were evaluated for their potential to support legally protected and priority species.

Willow Tit Survey

2.8 The site is 0.67km south of Dearne valley Westlands Site of Special Scientific Interest, which is designated for its important willow tit population. To inform an impact assessment of development on site, non-breeding (wintering and passage) bird surveys were carried out between October and December 2021 and breeding bird surveys were also carried out in April 2022

2.9 The scope of the survey included the area subject to proposed development shown in drawing **14296/P01a. For the non-breeding bird survey** three separate survey visits were undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist (SQE) experienced in undertaking bird surveys. The methods used were walking around the site for 1-2 hours recording all bird activity and carrying out some playback for willow tit to assess if willow tits were foraging onsite. The survey dates, times and weather conditions are presented in **Table 2.1** below.

Visit	Date	Time	Weather	Surveyor
1	22/10/21	08:15-09:30	Wind: Beaufort Scale (BFS) 3, cloud cover: 8/8, precipitation: 1, temperature 9°C	Amy Sherwin
2	16/11/21	08:20-09:30	Wind: BFS 2, cloud cover: 6/8, precipitation: 0, temperature 9°C	Amy Sherwin
3	10/12/21	09:10-11:10	Wind: BFS 3 , cloud cover: 0/8, precipitation:0 , temperature 5°C	Jeff Clarke

2.10 For the breeding bird surveys two separate survey visits were undertaken by an SQE following the survey methods as set out in the Willow tit conservation handbook[4]. The survey dates, times and weather conditions are presented in **Table 2.2** below.

[4] https://naturebftb.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2021/09/25221_BftB_Willow_Tit_Handbook_V6.pdf

Visit	Date	Time	Weather	Surveyor
1	04/04/21	7:05-8:45	Wind: Beaufort Scale (BFS) 4, cloud cover: 8/8, precipitation: 0, temperature 9°C	Jeff Clarke
2	14/04/21	06:35-08:05	Wind: BFS 1 , cloud cover: 4/8, precipitation: 0 , temperature 7°C	Jeff Clarke

Evaluation

2.11 The evaluation of habitats and species is defined in accordance with published guidance (CIEEM, 2018). The level of importance of specific ecological receptors is assigned using a geographic frame of reference, with international importance being highest, then national, regional, county, local and lastly, within the site boundary only.

2.12 Judgements are based on various characteristics that can be used to identify ecological resources or features likely to be important in terms of biodiversity. These include site designations (such as SSSIs), or for undesignated features, the size, conservation status (locally, nationally or internationally), and the quality of the ecological resource. In terms of the latter, quality can refer to habitats (for instance if they are particularly diverse, or a good example of a specific habitat type), other features (such as wildlife corridors or mosaics of habitats) or species populations or assemblages.

Limitations

2.13 This report is based on 3rd party data from the local ecological record centre and Tyler Grange group Ltd cannot vouch for the accuracy of this data.

2.14 Breeding willow tit surveys were 10 days apart which is slightly less than the recommended 2 weeks. However, due to the unsuitable habitat present onsite for breeding willow tit this is not considered to be a constraint and has been agreed upon with planning ecologist Katie Lawrence at Barnsley council.

Quality Control

2.15 The contents of this report have been prepared by ecologists at Tyler Grange Group Limited, all of whom are members or are working toward membership of CIEEM and act under the direction of members, and abide by the Institute's Code of Professional Conduct.

Section 3: Ecological Features and Evaluation

Context

3.1. The site measures approximately 0.9 hectares and is located in off Cross keys lane, Hoyland, Barnsley. The site is bounded by the A6135 to the west and south, urban and industrial areas to the east and an extension of the dense scrub and grassland to the north.

3.2. The site is dominated by improved grassland with a small area of semi-improved grassland, a strip of dense scrub and tall ruderals and scattered trees along the eastern boundary. The surrounding land is heavily urbanised with an extension of the onsite habitat to the north. The extent of onsite habitats is shown in drawing **14296/P01a** appended to this report.

3.3. An ecological report containing the site was written by Wildscapes on behalf of the council in 2013 and was used for background context and reference for this ecological assessment. Since then a new road has been built directly adjacent to the site and some of the habitats recorded in 2013 have changed in character as a result of disturbance by the road construction.

Ecological Features

Protected Sites

3.4. The desk study found no sites of international importance within 10km of the site and one site of national designation within 2km of the site boundary.

3.5. This is Dearne valley Westland's[5] Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) and is located 0.67km north and is designated for its nationally important bird species, including willow tit along with wetland birds.

Non-Statutory Sites

3.6. SBRC returned six records of non-statutory sites within 2km of the site boundary, as set out in **Table 3.1.**

Sites within the study area	Designation	Distance and Direction from Site	Ecological Importance
Short Wood and Hay Green	Barnsley LWS, Ancient Woodland	0.9km north	County
Potter Holes	Barnsley Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and LWS (Local Wildlife Site)	0.95km south west	County
Rockley Woods	Barnsley LWS, Ancient Woodland	1.2km north west	County
Sowell Pond	Barnsley LWS, Ancient Woodland	1.8km south west	County
Skiers Spring Wood	Barnsley LWS	1.8km south east	County
Barrow Colliery Site	Barnsley LWS	1.9km north	County

[5] https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/SiteLNRDetail.aspx?SiteCode=L1009078

Habitats and Flora

3.7. For ease of reference, habitat types have been described alphabetically, below. All features described are shown on the **Habitat Features Plan 14296/P01a**.

3.8. None of the habitats within the site boundary were identified as habitats of principal importance on MAGIC website and none qualify as such under UK Priority Habitat criteria.

Improved Grassland

3.9. Most of the site consisted of improved grassland dominated by perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne with other species such as* cock's foot *Dactylus golomerata*, red clover *Trifolium pratense,* ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata,* common dock *Rumex acetosa,* cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris,* dandelion *Taraxacum sp, and occasional species including;* yarrow *Achilliea milliefolium,* creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera,* ragwort *Senecio jacobaea* birds foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus,* , creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense,* and pigweed *Amaranthus.*

3.10. This habitat type is considered to have low ecological value due to being managed and was considered to be of **negligible** ecological importance. See Figure 3.1. below.

Figure 3.1. Improved grassland onsite.

Semi-Improved Grassland

3.11. An area of grassland west of the site contained a wider variety of species conducive to semi-improved grassland including species such as; ribwort plantain, common vetch *Vicia sativa*, mayweed sp *Tripleurospermum*, tussock grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, broadleaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, curly dock *Rumex crispus*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, timothy grass *Phleum pratense*, ragwort, doves foot cranesbill *Geranium molle*, false oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, fescue sp *Festuca sp*, dandelion sp, flatweed *Hypochaeris radicata*, tufted vetch *Vicia caracca*, cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, agrimony *Agrimonia*, smooth-sow thistle *Sonchus oleraceus*, cocksfoot grass *Dactylis glomerata*, common sorrel *Rumex acetosa* and weld *Reseda luteola*.

3.12. This habitat type is considered to have low ecological value due to being managed and small in size therefore is considered to be of **negligible** ecological importance.

Dense Scrub

3.13. The site had a band of dense scrub running through the centre. The species present included willow *Salix sp,* hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna,* Oak *Quercus sp,* blackthorn *Prunus spinosa,* Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia,* Silver birch *Betula pendula,* Alder *Alnus glutinosa,* ash *Fraxinus excelsior,* maple *Acer sp,* dog rose *Rosa canina,* holly *Iiex aquifolium,* and poplar *Populus sp.* This habitat type was considered to be of **local ecological importance** and has value to protected and notable species. See figure 3.2 below.

Figure 3.2. Dense Scrub running through the centre of the site.

Scattered Trees

3.14. There were several immature trees scattered across the site including; alder, holly, cherry *Prunus avium* and silver bitch. Trees provide a foraging resource for a range of invertebrates and birds, as well as opportunities for nesting birds and bats. Individual trees are not considered important due to being immature and therefore onsite trees are considered to be of **negligible ecological importance** See Figure 3.3. below.

Figure 3.3. scattered trees onsite

Tall ruderal

3.15. During the breeding bird surveys in April 2022, an area of tall ruderal vegetation had established on the eastern side of the site. Species included; broad-leaved dock, cow parsley, hogweed

Heracleum and common nettle. This habitat is considered to be of **negligible** ecological importance.

Habitats Adjacent to the Site

3.16. The site is located within a largely urban setting with Sheffield road running along the west and south boundaries, cross keys lane to the east, a residential dwelling to the north along with an extension to the onsite habitats.

Fauna

Amphibians

3.17. No ponds were recorded on-site, and three waterbodies were recorded within the extended range for Great crested newts (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* (using online resource Magic) with the closest being 150m west of the site. However, the likelihood of any GCN being present in these ponds being able to disperse to the site is considered to be negligible due to the main roads (A6135) and extensive built form creating a dispersal barrier.

3.18. SBRC returned 63 records of GCN within 2km of the site, but only three were within the extended range of GCN at 495m from the site.

3.19. The likelihood of amphibian presence within the site is considered to be exceptionally low due to the absence of suitable aquatic and terrestrial habitat for this species group, abundance of suitable terrestrial habitat off-site and lack of connectivity and distance with ponds nearby which could support breeding populations of amphibians. Therefore, this site is considered to be of **negligible importance.**

Badgers

3.20. SBRC returned six records of badgers within 2km of the site, one of which was for a badger sett and South Yorkshire badger group returned nine records all of which are for badger setts. The closest records of setts are west of the site and across the M1 motorway.

3.21. No evidence of the species was recorded during the Phase 1 survey and habitat present was considered sub-optimal for sett excavation. The area is also highly urbanised, and the site is bound by roads to the west, east and south therefore the site is considered to be unlikely to be used for dispersal. Additional local badger records are all sufficiently distant from the site or major road for a barrier to dispersal to the site.

3.22. There are therefore no constraints regarding the legal protection of badgers, and they will not be discussed further in this report.

Bats

3.23. SBRC returned records of 76 bats including common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus,* soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus,* brown long-eared *Plecotus auratus,* noctule *Nyctalus noctule,* whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus* and unidentified bat species within the study area, with the closest being for common pipistrelle 0.36km from the site. Three bat roost records were recorded with the closest being a whiskered bat roost 0.8km southwest from the site in 2016, MAGIC gave

details of one licence from 2013-2015 that was in place for destruction of a common pipistrelle/ Natterer's bat *Myotis nattereri* resting place. However, the site provided no potential roost features associated with trees within the site.

3.24. South Yorkshire bat group returned records of 94 bats including the species listed above and additional of, Daubenton's *Myotis daubentonii,* leisler's bat *Nyctalus leisleri and* natterer's bat *Myotis nattereri*. Records of roosts returned were the same as above.

3.25. The site itself was considered to provide **negligible** quality foraging/commuting habitat for bats due to its small size, its location in an urban and sub-optimal environment. Bats may use the centre of the site for foraging and commuting as it does provide good connectivity for bats directly adjacent to the north of the site but is unlikely to be important in maintaining populations of bats locally.

Birds

3.26. 726 bird records in total were returned by SBRC, of those records there were 35 or species which are of Conservation Concern (BoCC) or listed as a priority species in the national Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) that are relevant to the site.

3.27. These species were; Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*, Dunnock *Prunella modularis*, House Sparrow *Passer domesticus,* linnet *Linaria cannabina,* Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*, mistle thrush *Turdus viscivorus*, red wing *Turdus iliacus*, fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*, willow tit, and willow warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus* (full details available on request).

3.28. The majority of the site does not provide suitable habitat for nesting or foraging birds due to it being baren of suitable vegetation. The scrubby centre, however, does offer some potential nesting, shelter and foraging opportunities, which could support populations of nesting birds, including those of conservation concern identified by desk study.

3.29. The site is considered unsuitable for ground-nesting birds due to its small size, enclosed nature, urban surroundings, and presence of structures obscuring sightlines restricting site suitability. Additionally, no other habitats were recorded on site or adjacent to the site with the potential to support any Schedule 1 species, and no such relevant species were recorded during surveys or returned from SBRC.

3.30. The site does not have suitable nesting habitat for willow tits. Suitable habitat would consist of 'damp woods, corpses and open scrub with small rotten boughs or stumps'[6]. The scrub that was present onsite consisted of immature planted trees on fairly dry ground with no deadwood and is located directly adjacent to the busy A6135 road. Additionally, no willow tits were recorded foraging or wintering within the site during the three bird surveys carried out in 2021/22. And no willow tits were recorded during the two breeding bird surveys carried out in 2022.

3.31. Bird species recorded within the site included species which are common and widespread along with two species which are amber listed species of Conservation Concern (BoCC): wood pigeon *Columba palumbus* and wren *Troglodytes troglodytes.* Species recorded were noted within the scattered trees and dense scrub in the centre of the site however, due to the small amount of scrub

[6] BTO, A Field Guide to Monitoring Nests by James Ferguson-Lees, Richard Castell and Dave Leech (2011)

within the site it is unlikely that the site is important in maintaining populations of these birds locally and is therefore of **Negligible Ecological importance.**

Hedgehog

3.32. SBRC returned 14 records of West European Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus with the closest record being* 0.9km east of the site. The grassland and scrub in the centre of the site would offer some suitable habitat for hedgehog.

Reptiles

3.33. SBRC reported five records of reptiles within 2km of the site. All records were of grass snake, *Nartrix natrix* with the closest being 1.1km north of the site

3.34. The majority of the site was considered to be unsuitable for reptiles owing to its urban nature. The areas of loose vegetation that were present were considered sub-optimal habitat for reptiles as they were largely bare earth within the wooded area and very shaded which would not provide the range of ecotones required by reptiles. Additionally, the site is located within a busy urban area isolated from habitats in the wider landscape and the amount of suitable habitat on site is small and limited.

3.35. The likelihood of reptile presence within the site is considered to be of **negligible ecological importance**, and they will not be discussed any further in this report.

Water Vole and Otter

3.36. SBRC returned no records of European Otter *Lutra lutra* and no records of water vole.

3.37. The likely presence of either species in the site is considered negligible due to the lack of suitable habitat in the form of water features on-site and off-site. Therefore the site is considered to be of **negligible ecological** importance for water vole and otter, and they will not be discussed any further in this report.

Section 4: Considerations in Respect of Proposed Development

Proposed Development

4.1. The proposed development would require the loss of the dense scrub, scattered trees, semi-improved grassland, tall ruderal and improved grassland.

4.2. The potential consequences with respect to development of the site are set out below, with reference to relevant legislation and planning policy, which is summarised in **Appendix 2**.

Protected Sites

4.3. All listed national and non-statutory sites within 2km of the site would not be impacted either directly or indirectly by the proposal due to it being a retail scheme rather than residential, therefore not initiating an increase in recreational activity. The sites are also sufficiently distant to avoid any impacts through the construction phase (i.e. dust pollution/surface water run-off).

4.4. The site is not considered to have suitable nesting habitat for willow tit and following on from the findings of no willow tits onsite during bird surveys carried out in 2021, the site is not considered to be important for maintaining the willow tit populations for foraging or over wintering birds present within Dearne valley Westlands SSSI. No adverse impacts are therefore expected on this SSSI.

Habitats and Flora

4.5. The current proposals would result in the loss of areas of the areas dense scrub, scattered trees, improved grassland, semi-improved grassland and tall ruderal. For full details regarding habitat loss see **section 5** below.

4.6. Additionally no impacts are anticipated in habitat adjacent to the site if mitigation measures outlined below are put into place.

Fauna

Amphibians

4.7. The likelihood of amphibians presence within the site is considered to be exceptionally low but there still remains a small residual risk that GCN could be present in areas of dense scrub.

4.8. To avoid the killing or injuring of unexpected animals it is recommended that works should therefore be undertaken under Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs). These measures will also apply to the protection of common amphibians within the site.

Bats

4.9. The majority of the site was considered unlikely to support foraging or commuting bats. However, the scrub patch could support low numbers, but it is unlikely to be vital to maintain their local distribution therefore detailed bat surveys were not considered necessary.

4.10. To ensure continued use of this area by bats, native tree, shrub and scrub planting have been be included in the landscape design around the boundaries of this area to create linear habitat features.

4.11. In addition, a sensitive lighting scheme should be created that avoids light spill onto these boundary features and into the adjacent land parcels.

4.12. Enhancements for bat species could be provided at the site in the form of a bat box scheme. Recommendations to this regard are made in **Section 6** of this report.

Birds

4.13. The proposals would require the loss of habitat of value to nesting and foraging birds through the loss of scrub. The loss of this habitat will be compensated for through the provision of a suitable landscaping scheme to incorporate favourable habitat for nesting birds i.e. native shrub and scrub planting.

4.14. In line with NPPF, the proposals also provide an opportunity to enhance the site for nesting birds, in particular those of conservation concern nationally. Recommendations to this regard are made in Section 5 of this report.

4.15. The proposals will also need to consider the presence of nesting birds during the clearance of shrub and trees. Works should be timetabled for the winter period to avoid the 'core' nesting bird season (i.e. March to August inclusive). If works are necessary between March and August, it is recommended that all vegetation clearance or site activity is preceded by a check for active nests by a suitably experienced ecologist. If an active nest is found, works will need to cease in that area and a 'no-work' buffer implemented around the nest until all chicks have fledged and it is considered 'inactive' by a suitably experienced ecologist. The size of buffer will need to be commensurate with the species concerned and stage of nesting. Additionally, due diligence should be shown over winter months as some species i.e. doves/pigeons can nest all year round.

4.16. The site is not considered to have suitable nesting habitat for willow tit and following on from the findings of bird surveys carried out in 2021 and 2022 the site is not considered to be important for maintaining the willow tit population present within Dearne valley Westlands SSSI.

Hedgehogs

4.17. Habitats to be lost on site include dense scrub, which provides limited suitable habitat for hedgehog. Hedgehogs are a local Biodiversity action plan species, and the proposals could provide opportunity to enhance the site for hedgehogs through provision of hedgehog houses.

4.18. Fences to ground level around the boundary of the site should be avoided, or be designed to include regularly spaced gaps at ground level (approximately 10cm^2), to maintain access through the site for hedgehogs, colloquially known as 'hedgehog highways'.

Section 5: Biodiversity Net Gain

5.1. Section 170 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published July 2021, states that planning and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by, amongst others, "identifying and pursuing opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity".

5.2. The DEFRA Biodiversity Metric 3.0 (JP029) was published on the 7th July 2021. This calculator is used to "measure and account for biodiversity losses and gains resulting from development". The calculator requires baseline data as well as information on habitats lost and created to calculate the total number of biodiversity units on site.

5.3. This section of the report provides the summary of the baseline biodiversity value of the site assessed against the proposed post-development biodiversity value.

5.4. As detailed in Sections 2 and 3 of this report, an extended Phase I habitat survey of the site was undertaken by Tyler Grange in September 2021. This data was used to determine the area and value of habitats currently on site (the 'baseline'). This data was then transposed into classification of UK Habitats[7] to utilise within the Defra 3.0 metric.

5.5. The landscape plan (see Appendix 1) was used in combination with the baseline data, to calculate the areas of retained and replacement habitats on site.

5.6. The calculator automatically assigns distinctiveness scores to each habitat, and the user inputs scores for condition, strategic significance and total area (in hectares); as per the guidance.

5.7. For these calculations, it is assumed that all existing/new habitats are of high strategic significance because the site is within the Dearne Valley Green Heart 'Nature improvement area' as recognised in policy GI1/ figure 17.1 of the local plan.

5.8. The information above was then inputted into the metric, to determine the number of biodiversity units at baseline and at post-intervention (i.e. habitat creation + retention + enhancement). The metric then uses all these data to produce the total net unit and percentage change. The Defra metric is provided separate to this report.

5.9. **Table 5.1** details the baseline habitat along with the Defra 3.0 Habitat classification that is used in the BNG metric, the area, the baseline biodiversity value. Further detail is provided in the accompanying spreadsheet for the site and **14296/P01a**

7 UK Habitat Classification Working Group (2018) UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions V1.0

Table 5.1 – Habitat baseline (taken from approved landscape detail for R-2566, area and biodiversity value)

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Type	DEFRA 3.0 Habitat Type	Condition and Criteria	Area (ha)	Biodiversity Value (Units)	Post-development outcome
Improved grassland	Grassland-Modified grassland	Moderate ✓ Physical damage evident in less than 5% of total grassland area ✓ Cover of bracken less than 20% ✓ 6-8 species per m^2 × Sward height is varied × Cover of bare ground between 1-5% ✓ Scrub accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area ✓ Absence of invasive non-native species, undesirables make up less than 5% of ground cover	0.55	2.53	All Lost
Semi-improved grassland	Grassland-other neutral grassland	Moderate ✓ Appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches characteristics of the specific grassland habitat type. Wildflowers, sedges and indicator species for the specific grassland habitat type are very clearly and easily visible throughout the sward × Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed. ✓ Cover of bare ground between 1% and 5%, including localised areas ✓ Cover of bracken less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble) less than 5% ✓ There is an absence of invasive non-native species (as listed on schedule 9 of WCA, 1981). Combined cover of undesirable species and physical damage accounts for less than 5% of total area.	**0.11**	**1.01**	All Lost
Tall ruderal	Sparsely vegetated land Urban-Ruderal/ Ephemeral	Poor × Vegetation structure is varied, providing opportunities for insects, birds and bats to live and breed. × There is a diverse range of flowing plant species, providing nectar sources for insects ✓ Invasive non-native species cover less than 5% of the total vegetated area.	**0.11**	**0.25**	All lost

Scattered/ dense scrub	Mixed Scrub	Poor ✓ Habitat is representative of UKHab description with at least 3 woody species × There are clearings, glades or rides present × There is a good age range ✓ There is an absence of invasive non-native species × Scrub has well-developed edge	**0.12**	**0.55**	All Lost
Scattered trees	Urban trees	Moderate ✓ More than 70% of trees are native species ✓ Little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health ✓ Trees are immediately adjacent to other vegetation × Tree canopy is predominantly continuous (NA) × More than 50% of trees are mature of veteran × Management regime has encouraged micro habitat sites for fauna	N/A	1.47	All lost
Total					**5.82 lost**

5.10. The proposals within the site would require the loss of all habitats onsite, in the absence of additional habitat creation the development would result in the loss of 5.82 biodiversity units. **Table 5.2** below provides a summary of the on-site habitat creation measures proposed as part of the scheme.

Table 5.2 – Habitat creation area and biodiversity value (taken from landscaping proposals provided at **Appendix 1)**

Extended Phase One Habitat Type	Defra 3.0 Habitat	Condition and criteria	Area (ha)	Baseline Biodiversity Value (Units)
Native scrub	Scrub-Mixed Scrub	Moderate ✓ Habitat is representative of UKHab description with at least 3 woody species ✓ There is an absence of invasive non-native species ✓ There is a good age range × There are clearings, glades or rides present × Scrub has well-developed edge	0.01	0.08
Ornamental shrub	Urban – Introduced shrub	Poor – Automatically assigned in the metric	0.11	0.24
Woodland Mix Planting	Scrub-Mixed Scrub	Moderate ✓ Habitat is representative of UKHab description with at least 3 woody species ✓ There is an absence of invasive non-native species ✓ There is a good age range × There are clearings, glades or rides present × Scrub has well-developed edge	0.04	0.31
Scattered trees	Urban trees	Moderate ✓ More than 70% of trees are native species ✓ Little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health ✓ Trees are immediately adjacent to other vegetation × Tree canopy is predominantly continuous (NA) × More than 50% of trees are mature of veteran × Management regime has encouraged micro habitat sites for fauna	0.22 (not accounted for in area total)	0.77

Proposed species rich grass seed mix	Grassland-Neutral grassland	Moderate ✓ Physical damage evident in less than 5% of total grassland area ✓ Cover of bracken less than 20% × 6-8 species per m^2 × Sward height is varied × Cover of bare ground between 1-5% ✓ Scrub accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area ✓ Absence of invasive non-native species, undesirables make up less than 5% of ground cover	0.02	0.15
Hardstanding (buildings and associated paths/roads)	Urban – Developed land; sealed surface	N/A - Other	0.71	0.00
Total			0.89	1.56

5.11. The landscape strategy (Appendix 1) proposes to have ornamental scrub planting, native woodland mix, native scrub planting, tree planting and hardstanding features.

- The herbaceous ornamental planting area will comprise *Bergenia cordifolia Geranium endressii* and *Perovskia atriplicifolia.* Whereas the ornamental shrub planting area will consist of *Choisya, Cornus sanguinea, Euonymus fortunei, Hebe pinguifolia, Lavandula angustifolia, Mahonia aquifolium, Pachysandra terminalis, Philadelphus, Photinia X fraserii, Prunus laurocerasus, Rosa, Santolina chamaecyparissus nana, Spiraea japonica, Vibrium da*vidii and *Vinca minor.*

- Low native scrub mix will comprise *Cornus sanguinea, Hedera helix, Lonicera periclymenum, Rosa arvensis, Rosa canina and Rubus fruticose.*

- Woodland planting mix will comprise *Acer campestre, Betula pendula, Cornus sanguinea, Corylus avellana, Hedera helix, Lonicera periclymenum, Prunus spinosa, Sambucus nigra and Sorbus aucuparia.*

- Tree composition will comprise *Acer campestre, Acer campestre', Acer platanoides 'deborah', Betula pendula, Sorbus aria, Sorbus aucuparia and Tilia cordata.*

- Emorsgate EM2F general purpose seed mix[8] is recommended for the proposed species rich grass seed habitat.

5.12. With these habitat creation measures, the proposals overall would result in the overall loss in biodiversity value. **Table 5.3** below summarises the 'headline' results of the BNG assessment, taking account of the additional habitat creation on-site.

[8] https://wildseed.co.uk/product/mixtures/wild-flower-only-mixtures/standard-general-purpose-wild-flowers/

Table 5.3 – Headline results from Biodiversity Metric

On-site baseline	**Habitat Units**	**5.82**
On-site post-intervention	Habitat Units	1.56
Total net unit change	Habitat Units	-4.26
Total net % gain	**Percentage**	**-73.25%**

Section 6: Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1. The proposed scheme is not considered to result in any residual adverse ecological impacts if the recommended procedures outlined below are followed in relation to protected species, habitats and designated sites.

6.2. The site is not considered to support a willow tit population or linked to the Dearne Valley SSSI due to no suitable nesting habitat being present on site and that none were recorded during the five survey visits from October 2021- to April 2022.

6.3. Timing of works will ensure that legislation relating to the protection of nesting birds will timetabled outside of the bird breeding season (generally accepted to be March - August inclusive) to avoid conflicts with active bird nests. Where this is not possible, all tree/building/vegetation clearance should be preceded by a check for active bird nests by a suitably experienced ecologist. It should be noted, however, that some species of bird can nest year-round and due diligence to observe for active bird nests must be shown during any demolition/tree felling outside of the bird nesting season, to protect nesting birds as far as is reasonably practicable.

6.4. The following landscaping features should be incorporated in the landscaping scheme that will also contribute to enhancing the biodiversity value of the site.

- Installation of bird boxes within development;
- Installation of bat boxes within development; and
- Instillation of hedgehog highways to provide access through the site and hedgehog houses to increase opportunity for this LBAP species.

6.5. Along with these features, it is recommended that vegetation clearance is conducted under a RAMs to protect amphibians that may be present on site- this is provided in **Appendix 3.**

6.6. The Defra 3.0 Metric has calculated that without including off-site habitat creation, the proposed development at this stage as illustrated on the attached illustrative landscape strategy plan would amount to a relatively minor measurable net loss in biodiversity value of **4.26** biodiversity units, equating to a **73.25%** net loss in biodiversity value.

6.7. It will, therefore, be necessary for off-site contributions to be made to the Local Planning Authority or 3rd-party land owner to create the required deficit of units off-site.

6.8. Providing the above recommendations are implemented, there are no ecological reasons why redevelopment of the site should not proceed in accordance with relevant wildlife legislation and planning policy 'BIO1' biodiversity and geology.

Appendix 1: Landscape Strategy Plan

KEY

- Existing tree to be removed
- Existing vegetation to be retained
- Proposed extra-heavy standard (16-18cm girth) planting into car park with tree guard and grille - blue dashed line shows extent of underground soil cells (See pit detail SD/T/57)
- Proposed extra-heavy standard (16-18cm girth)
- Proposed selected standard (10-12cm girth) trees
- Proposed native species light woodland mix planting
- Proposed mixed native species shrub planting
- Proposed ornamental shrub planting
- Proposed species rich grass seed
- Proposed retaining wall detailed by others
- Proposed flagpole detailed by others
- Proposed 2000mm high close boarded timber fence detailed by others
- Proposed 2000mm high paladin fence detailed by others
- Proposed 1100mm high pedestrian guard rail detailed by others

NOTES

All trees to be planted and procured in accordance with BS 8545:2014. The providing nursery shall demonstrate Plant Healthy Certification and/or an adopted biosecurity policy.
Aftercare shall be in accordance with the approved Landscape Management Document.

SOILS

Soils must conform to British Standards:
BS 8601 2013 Subsoil
BS 3882 2015 Topsoil

DEPTHS
The depth of the topsoil spread should not normally exceed 300mm with the following depths of subsoil making up the overall rooting depth:
Grass: 450mm
Shrubs: 600mm
Trees: 900mm

Prior to receiving topsoil the areas should be decompacted.
Care must be taken not to over compact the topsoil during spreading. Where there are groups of trees the 900mm depth of soil should extend to the full area of tree planting and not just the individual tree pits.

PREPARATION AND PLANTING

Organic matter to be proprietary shrub planting compost, or approved compost derived from recycled organic matter.
Slow release fertiliser to be 'Enmag' or similar.

AFTERCARE

TREES AND SHRUBS
1 Provide 30 litres of water per tree during prolonged dry periods and as instructed by the Landscape Architect on site.
2 Keep areas free from weed growth.
3 Annually apply a slow release fertiliser in Spring.
4 Replace all failures.
5 Prune all damaged or broken branches.
6 Top- up mulch as required.
7 Check tree ties and stakes.

PLANTING SCHEDULES

ORNAMENTAL PLANTING SCHEDULE

Nr	Name	Ht in cm	Pot(L)	Density
Herbaceous				
103	Bergenia cordifolia 'Purpurea'		3L	5.00
323	Festuca glauca 'Elijah Blue'		2L	10.00
Shrub				
145	Choisya ternata 'Sundance'	30-40cm	3L	5.00
332	Cornus sanguinea 'Mid-Winter Fire'	40-60cm	3L	5.00
439	Euonymus fortunei 'Emerald Gaiety'	20-30cm(D)	3L	5.00
122	Euonymus fortunei 'Emerald n Gold'	20-30cm(D)	3L	5.00
191	Hebe pinguifolia 'Pagei'	20-30cm(D)	3L	5.00
280	Hebe pinguifolia 'Sutherlandii'	20-25cm	3L	5.00
171	Lavandula angustifolia 'Hidcote'	20-25cm	3L	5.00
318	Lonicera nitida 'Lemon Beauty'	30-40cm		5.00
151	Mahonia aquifolium 'Apollo'	30-40cm	3L	5.00
195	Pachysandra terminalis	20-30cm(D)	3L	5.00
182	Philadelphus 'Manteau d'Hermine'	30-40cm	3L	5.00
94	Photinia x fraserii 'Red Robin'	40-50cm	3L	5.00
361	Prunus laurocerasus 'Otto Luyken'	30-40cm	3L	5.00
170	Rosa 'Swany'		3L	5.00
243	Santolina chamaecyparissus nana	20-25cm	3L	5.00
96	Skimmia japonica 'Rubella'	30-40cm	3L	5.00

All shrub material shall be first quality, sturdy, well rooted non-refrigerated stock with well branched heads and fibrous root systems. Shrubs shall be planted into 450mm depth good quality fibrous topsoil, that complies with BS 3882. Incorporate organic compost and slow release fertiliser in the planting mixture in accordance with all good horticultural practice.
A proprietary geotextile membrane (such as plantex weed control membrane) is to be installed between the soil and mulch of the planted areas, cut with T or X slits to fit around the plants required. All plant material shall be a minimum of 3L pot size unless otherwise specified and conform to BS3936 Part 1 and BS4428. Finished beds shall be lightly forked over and dressed with 50mm depth blue slate mulch.

TREE SCHEDULE

SPECIES	Ht in m	3.0-3.5	4.5-6.25	Min.soil volume requ per pit /m3
	Girth in cm	10-12	16-18	
		NUMBERS REQUIRED		
Acer campestre (Ac)		5	-	15
Acer platanoides 'Deborah' (ApD)		-	5	
Betula albosinensis 'Fascination' (BaF)		-	5	
Betula pendula (Bp)		5	-	
Carpinus betulus 'Frans Fontaine' (CbFF)		-	8	
Prunus padus 'Albertii' (PpA)		-	4	
Sorbus aria 'Majestica' (SaM)		-	5	
Sorbus aucuparia (Sau)		6	-	
Tilia cordata 'Greenspire' (TcG)		-	10	

All standard trees to have clear stems to 2.0m minimum above ground level with well developed branching heads with a single, central leader and healthy, fibrous root systems.
Trees shall be planted into pits of an appropriate size to accommodate the root system without restriction, backfilled with a 3:1 topsoil: compost mixture and shall be secured to 75mm diameter machine rounded stakes using a double stake and cross bar with tree tie and spacer. Finished height of stakes shall not exceed one third height of staked tree above ground.
Extra heavy standard trees in hard landscape within tree grilles and guards to be underground guyed. Any trees in or partially within hard surfacing to be planted within tree pits containing the volumes of tree soil denoted in the schedule above.
Underneath hard surfacing a crate system such as StrataCell by GreenBlue Urban, is to be installed. The extent of the pit to be fitted with a tree pit crate system is shown by the blue dashed line. All pits are to be 1m deep.

NATIVE SPECIES PLANTING

LOW NATIVE SHRUB MIX SCHEDULE

Nr	Name	Height/cm	Age	Root	Pot/L
68	Cornus sanguinea	40-60cm	1/1	B	
23	Cytisus scoparius	40-60cm	1/1	B	
23	Hedera helix	40-60cm		C	2L
23	Lonicera periclymenum	60-80cm		C	3L
45	Rosa arvensis	40-50cm	1/1	B	
23	Rosa canina	30-40cm	1/1	B	
23	Rubus fruticosa	40-50cm	1/1	C	2L

NATIVE TREE AND SHRUB MIX SCHEDULE

Nr	Name	Height/cm	Age	Root	Pot/L
49	Acer campestre (Feathered)	150-175cm		B	
32	Betula pendula	60-80cm	1/1	B	
65	Cornus sanguinea	40-60cm	1/1	B	
49	Corylus avellana	40-60cm		B	
16	Hedera helix	40-60cm		C	2L
16	Lonicera periclymenum	60-80cm		C	3L
32	Prunus spinosa	40-60cm		B	
14	Sambucus nigra	60-80cm	1/1	B	
32	Sorbus aucuparia	60-80cm	1/1	B	

All plant material shall conform to BS3936 Parts 1and 4 and BS 4428. Transplants to be planted into prepared ground, containing a minimum depth of 450mm depth topsoil complying with BS3882, 1994 and incorporating organic matter and slow release fertiliser.
Organic matter to be proprietary shrub planting compost, or approved compost derived from recycled organic matter. Slow release fertiliser to be 'Enmag' or similar.

Rev.F: Updated to site layout S4 - P2 + 5 additional trees (SF)	Jan 23
Rev.E: Updated to site layout S3- P4 (SF)	Jan 23
Rev.D: Updated to site layout S3- P2 (SF)	Sept 22
Rev.C: Further trees added (SF)	August 22
Rev.B: Updated to site layout 7579-00-2003-A3-C2 (SF)	July 22
Rev.A: Minor amends to annotation (SF)	February 22

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client
Lidl GB Ltd

project
Proposed Retail Store

CROSS KEYS LANE,
HOYLAND

drawing title
LANDSCAPE DETAILS

scale	date	drawn by	drawing no
1:250 @A0	Jan 22	CS	R/2566/1F

Appendix 2: Legislation and planning policy

Legislation

A2.1 Specific habitats and species receive legal protection in the UK under various pieces of legislation, including:

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended);
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species 2017 (as amended).
- The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000;
- The Hedgerows Regulations 1997;
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992; and
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006.

A2.2 The European Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna, 1992, often referred to as the 'Habitats Directive', provides for the protection of key habitats and species considered of European importance. Annexes II and IV of the Directive list all species considered of community interest. The legal framework to protect the species covered by the Habitats Directive has been enacted under UK law through The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

A2.3 In Britain, the WCA 1981 (as amended) is the primary legislation protecting habitats and species. SSSIs, representing the best examples of our natural heritage, are notified under the WCA 1981 (as amended) by reason of their flora, fauna, geology or other features. All breeding birds, their nests, eggs and young are protected under the Act, which makes it illegal to knowingly destroy or disturb the nest site during nesting season. Schedules 1, 5 and 8 afford protection to individual birds, other animals and plants.

A2.4 The CRoW Act 2000 strengthens the species enforcement provisions of the WCA 1981 (as amended) and makes it an offence to 'recklessly' disturb a protected animal whilst it is using a place of rest or shelter or breeding/nest site.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), July 2021

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in July 2021 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It replaces the National Planning Policy Framework published in July 2019.

A2.5 Paragraph 11 states that:

"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development."

A2.6 Section 15 of the NPPF (paragraphs 174 to 182) considers the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment including habitats and biodiversity (paragraphs 179-182)

A2.7 Paragraph 174 states that planning and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- "protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

- recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; and

- minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures"

A2.8 Paragraph 175 states that plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

A2.9 Paragraph 179 states that in order to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- "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; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; 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."

A2.10 When determining planning applications, Paragraph 1780 states that local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles:

- "if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

- development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

- development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and

- development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while 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 or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate."

A2.11 As stated in paragraph 181 the following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- "potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;

- listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and

- sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites."

A2.12 Paragraph 182 states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the planned project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitat site (alone or in combination with other plans or projects) unless an appropriate assessment has concluded the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System

A2.13 ODPM Circular 06/05 was prepared to accompany PPS9, however continues to be valid, and material in the consideration of planning applications since PPS9's replacement by the NPPF.

A2.14 ODPM Circular 06/05 provides guidance on applying legislation in relation to nature conservation and planning in England. Part I considers the legal protection and conservation of internationally designated sites (namely candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs), SACs, potential Special Protection Areas (pSPAs), SPAs and Ramsar sites) and Part II considers the legal protection and conservation of nationally designated sites, namely Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

A2.15 Part III considers the protection of habitats and species outside of designated areas (particularly UK Biodiversity Action Plan species and habitats), which it states are capable of being a material consideration in the preparation of local development documents and the making of planning decisions.

A2.16 Part IV considers species protected by law and states that the presence of a protected species is a material consideration in the consideration of a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat and that it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted.

Local Planning Policy

A2.17 The Barnsley Local Plan was adopted in 2019. The following policies in the Core Strategy are relevant to ecology:

Policy GD1: General Development

- Any adverse impact on the environment is minimised and mitigated.

Policy BIO1: Biodiversity and Geology

- Development will be expected to conserve and enhance the biodiversity and geological features of the borough by:
    - Protecting and improving habitats, species, sites of ecological value and sites of geological value with particular regard to designated wildlife and geological sites of international, national and local significance, ancient woodland and species and habitats of principal importance identified via Section 41 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 (for list of the species and habitats of principal importance) and in the Barnsley Biodiversity Action Plan.
    - Maximising biodiversity and geodiversity opportunities in and around new developments.
    - Conserving and enhancing the form, local character and distinctiveness of the boroughs natural assets such as the river corridors of the Don, the Dearne and Dove as natural floodplains and important strategic wildlife corridors.
    - Proposals will be expected to have followed the national mitigation hierarchy (avoid, mitigate, compensate) which is used to evaluate the impacts of a development on biodiversity interest.
    - Protecting ancient and veteran trees where identified.
    - Encouraging provision of biodiversity enhancements.
- Development which may harm a biodiversity or geological feature or habitat, including ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, will not be permitted unless effective mitigation and/or compensatory measures can be ensured.
- Development which adversely effects a European Site will not be permitted unless there is no alternative option and there are imperative reasons of overriding public interest (IROPI).

Policy GI1: Green infrastructure

- We will protect, maintain, enhance and create an integrated network of connected and multi functional Green Infrastructure assets that:
    - Provides attractive environments where people want to live, work, learn, play, visit and invest;

- Meets the environmental, social and economic needs of communities across the borough and the wider City Regions;
- Enhances the quality of life for present and future residents and visitors;
- Helps to meet the challenge of climate change;
- Enhances biodiversity and landscape character;
- Improves opportunities for recreation and tourism; Respects local distinctiveness and historical and cultural heritage;
- Maximises potential economic and social benefits;
- and Secures and improves linkages between green and blue spaces;

- At a strategic level Barnsley's Green Infrastructure network includes the following corridors which are shown on the Green Infrastructure Diagram: River Dearne Valley Corridor. River Dove Valley Corridor. River Don Valley Corridor. Dearne Valley Green Heart Corridor. Historic Landscape Corridor.
- The network of Green Infrastructure will be secured by protecting open space, creating new open spaces as part of new development, and by using developer contributions to create and improve Green Infrastructure.
- We have produced a Green Infrastructure Strategy for Barnsley which is informed by the Leeds City Region and South Yorkshire Green Infrastructure Strategies.

Biodiversity Action Plans

A2.18 The UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework succeeded the UK BAP partnership in 2011 and covers the period 2011 to 2020. However, the lists of Priority Species and Habitats agreed under the UKBAP still form the basis of much biodiversity work in the UK. The current strategy for England is 'Biodiversity 2020: A Strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services' published under the UK Post-2010 UK Biodiversity Framework. Although the UK BAP has been succeeded, Species Action Plans (SAPs) developed for the UK BAP remain valuable resources for background information on priority species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.

A2.19 Priority Species and Habitats identified under the UKBAP are also referred to as Species and Habitats of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England and Wales within Sections 41 (England) and 42 (Wales) of the NER) Act 2006. The commitment to preserving, restoring or enhancing biodiversity is further emphasised for England and Wales in Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006.

Local Biodiversity Action Plans

A2.20 The Barnsley Biodiversity Action plan[9] includes plans for a number of habitat and species.

A2.21 Relevant species plans are published for hedgehog, bats, swift, house martin, bull finch, dunnock, green finch, mistle thrush, song thrush, willow tit starling and house sparrow and relevant habitat plans are published for mixed deciduous woodland and Neutral grassland.

[9] http://www.barnsleybiodiversity.org.uk/biodiversityplan.html#:~:text=Barnsley%20Biodiversity%20Action%20Plan%20(BAP,how%20this%20can%20be%20achieved.&text=Wildlife%20species%20in%20Barnsley%20that,decline%20and%20increase%20their%20numbers.

Appendix 3: Reasonable Avoidance Measures for Herptiles

A3.1. Prior to commencing development at the site, a suitably experienced ecologist should be appointed to ensure that the herptiles RAMs is successfully implemented.

A3.2. Prior to any development related works commencing at the site, a tool box talk should be given to all contractors working within the site to ensure they are able to recognise Great Crested Newt (GCN) and other herptiles; are aware of the very small possibility that herptiles could be present within the site; the implications involved if they are found within the site; and the need to implement herptiles RAMs. Details of the RAMs should be kept on site for reference during development.

A3.3. Prior to any site clearance and/or ground disturbance works commencing at the site, the extent of works should be agreed by the appointed ecologist and the developer/contractors.

A3.4. Following the site induction/toolbox talk, a search of potential places of refuge within the development site should be carried out by the appointed ecologist to check for sheltering amphibians and any items of potential refuge should be removed from the development site immediately following the search to prevent herptiles from seeking shelter either beneath or within them.

A3.5. Due to the unlikely presence of herptiles within the site, there is no constraint regarding timing of works. In the unlikely event herptiles are encountered during the winter hibernation period, works would need to stop until the active season and/or a licence from Natural England acquired.

A3.6. Tree/woody vegetation clearance will comprise an initial check for active bird nests (if conducted between March and August inclusive) by the appointed ecologist, followed by an initial cut to stump level once it has been confirmed there are no active nests. Following this, the base/root balls of the scrub will be hand searched by the appointed ecologist to check for herptiles. Once confirmed that there are no herptiles present the remaining scrub can be removed entirely. All arisings will then be removed from site immediately.

A3.7. The development area should be kept clear of any debris, rubble or other arisings and stored materials should be kept off the ground on pallets to prevent herptiles from potentially using them as refuges.

A3.8. Any rubble or other debris resulting from ground clearance should be removed from the development site; it should be taken off-site at the earliest opportunity for appropriate disposal.

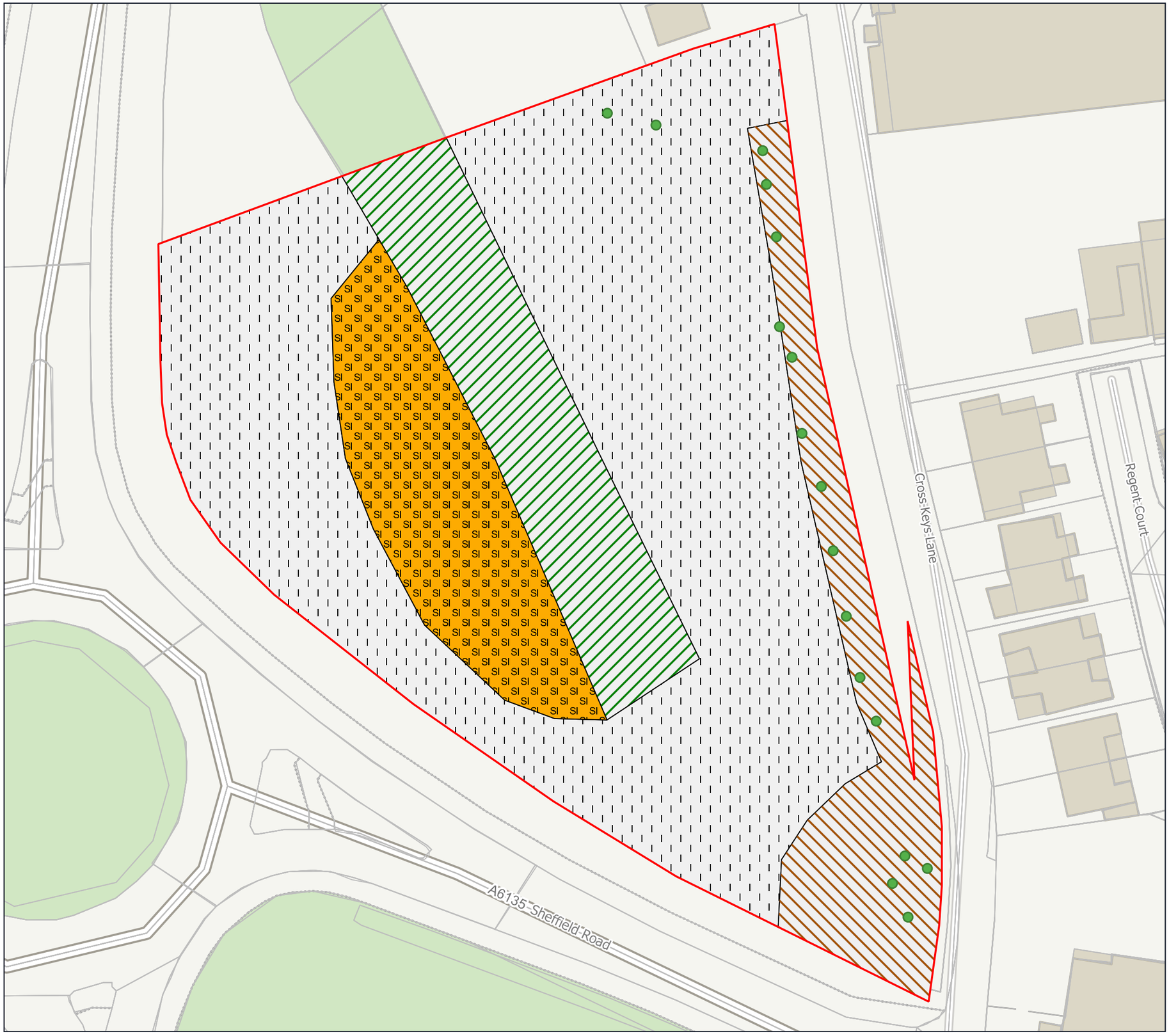
A3.9. Any excavations should not be left open where possible. Where they are to be left open overnight for any reason, the excavation should be searched / checked for sheltering herptiles before works recommence. Ideally open excavations should incorporate 'ramps' at either end to allow any herptiles and small mammals falling into them to escape.

A3.10. Wherever practicable, excavations should be in-filled and made good to ground level at the earliest opportunity, to remove any hazard to herptiles. If spoil/materials are left on the ground overnight, they may require searching for sheltering herptiles before they are moved.

A3.11. This RAMs does not allow for the capture of herptiles or their removal from the site. In the unlikely event any herptiles are found within the development site at any point work should stop and the appointed ecologist and/or Natural England immediately contacted for advice on how to proceed. This is likely to include the need for surveys and a full mitigation/compensation plan to be put in to place.

Plans:

Plan 1: Plan Title 14296/P01a: Habitat Features Plan



Redline Boundary

C3.1 - Other tall herb and fern - ruderal

B4 - Improved grassland

B2.2 - Neutral grassland - semi-improved

A2.1 - Scrub - dense/continuous

Scattered Tree

N

0 10 20 m

Project	Site Name
Drawing Title	Hoyland, Barnsley
Scale	As Shown (Approximate)
Drawing No.	14296/P01a
Date	April2022
Checked	AS/JD

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