

ENVIRONMENT

Wordsworth Property Developments Ltd
Long Lane, Earlsheaton
Dewsbury
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

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March 2024

DOCUMENT ISSUE RECORD

Document Number:	LLE-BWB-ZZ-XX-RP-LE-0001_PEA
BWB Reference:	243830

Revision	Date of Issue	Status	Author:	Checked:	Approved:
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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been undertaken on behalf of Wordsworth Property Developments in respect of the Site at Long Lane, Earlsheaton, Dewsbury.

The habitats on-site comprised grassland, hedgerows, individual trees, mixed scrub, bramble scrub and birch scrub. A watercourse located off-site was also assessed due to its proximity within 10m of the application boundary.

Further survey work for reptiles should be undertaken and appropriate mitigation provided if they are found to be present. An assessment for the presence of Himalayan balsam along the watercourse and into the Site itself should also be made during the main plant growing season and a management plan for this invasive plant designed, if necessary, to prevent further spread. Further surveys for bats may be required if any increase in light levels along the eastern boundary are predicted.

A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) should be produced to ensure that there is no impact to the watercourse, or the woodland and a Biodiversity Enhancement Management Plan (BEMP) should be produced to detail the proposed enhancements.

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CONTENTS

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY	III
1. INTRODUCTION.....	1
Instruction	1
Site Description	1
The Proposed Development	2
Objectives	2
Scope of Works	2
Legislation and Planning Policy	2
National Planning Policy Framework.....	3
Kirklees Adopted Local Plan Strategy	4
2. METHODS	7
Consultation	7
UK Hab Habitat Survey	7
Survey Comments	8
3. RESULTS	9
Statutory Designated Sites.....	9
Non-Statutory Designated Sites.....	9
Habitats and Botanical Species	9
Overview.....	9
Modified Grassland and Ruderal Herbs.....	10
Mixed Scrub.....	11
Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland	11
Hedgerow.....	11
Protected / Notable Species	12
Amphibians	12
Bats	13
Reptiles.....	15
Riparian Mammals.....	15
Hedgehogs.....	16
Invasive Species.....	16
Other Species.....	16

4. EVALUATION 17

 Designated Sites 17

 Habitats..... 17

 Species..... 17

 Amphibians 17

 Bats 18

 Reptiles..... 18

 Riparian Mammals..... 18

 Hedgehogs..... 18

 Invasive Species..... 19

 Other Species..... 19

5. RECOMMENDATIONS 20

 General..... 20

 Habitats..... 20

 Badgers..... 21

 Bats 21

 Birds 22

 Invertebrates 22

 Reptiles..... 23

 Hedgehogs..... 23

 Invasive Species..... 24

 Other Species..... 24

6. REFERENCES 25

FIGURES

Figure 1.1: Site Location Plan
Figure 3.1: Waterbodies Within 500m

TABLES

Table 3.1: DAFOR Scale
Table 3.2: DAFOR Botanical Species List
Table 3.3: Bat Records
Table 3.4: Bird Records

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Relevant Legislation

Appendix 2: UK Hab Habitat Plan

Appendix 3: Site Photographs

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1. INTRODUCTION

Instruction

- 1.1 This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been undertaken on behalf of Wordsworth Property Developments Ltd ('the Client') in respect of a site at Long Lane, Earlsheaton, Dewsbury ('the Site'). It has been produced to accompany a detailed planning application for a residential development comprising 26 dwellings.

Site Description

- 1.2 The Site is located at Long Lane, Dewsbury, WF12 8LL. The Site itself comprises grassland, hedgerows, individual trees, mixed scrub, bramble scrub and birch scrub, with a watercourse close to the eastern boundary. The Site is approximately 0.65 hectares (ha) in extent and is centred on grid reference SE 25752 20426. The land is heavily sloped towards the south-eastern corner of the Site and situated approximately between 45 and 52 metres above ordnance datum (m AOD).
- 1.3 The Site lies within the administrative area of Kirklees Council (KC).
- 1.4 The location of the Site is shown in **Figure 1.1**.



Figure 1.1: Site Location Plan

The Proposed Development

- 1.5 The Proposed Development is understood to involve a residential development comprising 26 dwellings with associated gardens, driveways, car parking facilities and access road.

Objectives

- 1.6 The primary purpose of this appraisal is to provide a baseline of all ecological considerations relating to any future development proposals. This will include the identification of any potential ecological constraints and opportunities.

Scope of Works

- 1.7 The ecological appraisal was informed by a desk-based study and a Site survey. The approach to this PEA follows best practice published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2019) and the British Standards Institution (BSI, 2013). Further details are provided later in this report.

Legislation and Planning Policy

- 1.8 The following legislation relates to species and habitats that could potentially occur in association with the Site:

- The Environment Act 2021;
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended);
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000;
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006;
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
- Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996; and
- The Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

1.9 Further information on the legislation relevant to this Site is provided in **Appendix 1**.

1.10 Consideration has also been given in this report to relevant National and Local Planning Policy as summarised below.

National Planning Policy Framework

1.11 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) guides Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) when developing their planning policies and considering planning applications affecting protected habitats, sites and species.

1.12 In respect of the natural environment, the NPPF states under Paragraph 180 that:

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) 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);*
- b) 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;*
- c) Maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- d) Minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- e) Preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*

- f) *Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate."*

1.13 The NPPF also states under Paragraph 185 that:

"To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- a) *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*
- b) *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."*

1.14 Through the NPPF and Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, LPAs have a duty to consider habitats and species listed as being of principal importance for nature conservation in England on Section 41 (S41) of the Act when considering a planning application. In addition, the biodiversity duty of local planning authorities also covers species and habitats listed in local biodiversity action plans.

Kirklees Adopted Local Plan Strategy

1.15 Additionally, Policy LP30 Biodiversity & Geodiversity of the Kirklees Adopted Local Plan Strategy provides the following guidelines with respect to open spaces and the natural environment:

"The council will seek to protect and enhance the biodiversity and geodiversity of Kirklees, including the range of international, national and locally designated wildlife and geological sites, Habitats and Species of Principal Importance and the Kirklees Wildlife Habitat Network.

Statutory Designated Sites

Statutory designated sites, including the South Pennine Moors Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area for Conservation (SAC) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest, are already highly protected through existing laws and legislation. In accordance with legislation, the Council will seek to ensure that harmful impacts to these areas as a result of development proposals are avoided. Development proposed within or outside a designated Site of Special Scientific Interest, likely to have an adverse effect on the site's special nature conservation features, will not normally be permitted. Exceptionally development will be allowed where the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the impacts on the site's special conservation features and measures are provided to mitigate harmful impacts.

Local Designated Sites & Important Local Ecological Features

Proposals having a direct or indirect adverse effect on a Local Wildlife Site or Local Geological Site, Ancient Woodland, Veteran Tree or other important tree, will not be permitted unless the benefits of the development can be clearly shown to outweigh the need to safeguard the local conservation value of the site or feature and there is no alternative means to deliver the proposal. In all cases, full compensatory measures would be required and secured in the long term.

Habitats and Species of Principal Importance

Proposals will be required to protect Habitats and Species of Principal Importance unless the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the importance of the biodiversity interest, in which case long term compensatory measures will need to be secured.

Biodiversity and Development

Development proposals will be required to:-

- i. result in no significant loss or harm to biodiversity in Kirklees through avoidance, adequate mitigation or, as a last resort, compensatory measures secured through the establishment of a legally binding agreement;
- ii. minimise impact on biodiversity and provide net biodiversity gains through good design by incorporating biodiversity enhancements and habitat creation where opportunities exist;
- iii. safeguard and enhance the function and connectivity of the Kirklees Wildlife Habitat Network at a local and wider landscape-scale unless the loss of the site and its functional role within the network can be fully maintained or compensated for in the long term;
- iv. establish additional ecological links to the Kirklees Wildlife Habitat Network where opportunities exist; and
- v. incorporate biodiversity enhancement measures to reflect the priority habitats and species identified for the relevant Kirklees Biodiversity Opportunity Zone."

- 1.16 In addition, policy LP29 of the Local Policy Kirklees Local Plan discusses water bodies within a proposed development as follows:

"Where it is proposed to develop a site already containing a water area, this should normally be retained as part of the proposal and include a future management plan for the maintenance of the water area to ensure the safety of residents for the lifetime of the development. This includes bodies of water associated with existing buildings, even where they are remote from the building, and also includes ancillary elements linked to the operation of the water body."

- 1.17 Further Policy LP31 Strategic Green Infrastructure Network within the Kirklees Local Plan it states:

"Within the Strategic Green Infrastructure Network identified on the Policies Map, priority will be given to safeguarding and enhancing green infrastructure networks, green infrastructure assets and the range of functions they provide."

Development proposals within and adjacent to the Strategic Green Infrastructure Network should ensure:-

- vi. the function and connectivity of green infrastructure networks and assets are retained or replaced;*
- vii. new or enhanced green infrastructure is designed and integrated into the development scheme where appropriate, including natural greenspace, woodland and street trees;*
- viii. the scheme integrates into existing and proposed cycling, bridleway and walking routes, particularly the Core Walking and Cycling Network, by providing new connecting links where opportunities exist;*
- ix. the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and ecological links, particularly within and connecting to the Kirklees Wildlife Habitat Network. The council will support proposals for the creation of new or enhanced green infrastructure /provided these do not conflict with other Local Plan policies."*

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2. METHODS

Consultation

- 2.1 West Yorkshire Joint Services was contacted to request records of any locally designated sites and/or protected species from the Site and land within a 2km radius. West Yorkshire Bat Group were also contacted to request bat records from within a 2km radius of the Site. Records more than ten years old have been largely disregarded.
- 2.2 In addition, the data sources listed below were also searched to gather additional ecological data of relevance to the Proposed Development, including the identification of non-designated ecologically sensitive habitats such as vegetation corridors, woodlands, watercourses and standing water.
- Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC);
 - Ordnance Survey 1:10000 mapping; and
 - Aerial imagery [Google – imagery dated 2023].

UK Hab Habitat Survey

- 2.3 A Site survey was undertaken on 13th March 2024 by Sarah Stone MSc BSc (Hons) MCIEEM and Clare Lusher MSc BSc (Hons) Qualifying CIEEM Member. Sarah has extensive experience in survey and site assessment for protected species and is appropriately qualified for the surveys based on the CIEEM competencies for species surveys (CIEEM, 2017). Sarah Stone is registered to use Natural England 2015-11997-CLS-CLS, 2015-17460-CLS-CLS and CL29/00380 class licences to survey for bats, great crested newts (GCN) and barn owl.
- 2.4 The visit was completed using UK Hab habitat survey techniques as defined in the standard methodology (UK Hab Ltd, 2023).
- 2.5 The aim of the visit was to gather sufficient baseline information on the habitats within the Site in order to allow an interpretation of the ecological value of the land.
- 2.6 In addition, the methodology was extended to include a search for incidental evidence of protected/notable fauna and an assessment of the Site's potential to support protected/notable fauna. Specific consideration was given to the following species:
- Bats;
 - Reptiles;
 - Riparian mammals, including otter *Lutra lutra* and water vole *Arvicola amphibius*; and
 - Priority Species, such as hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*.

- 2.7 Standard methodologies were used where applicable.
- 2.8 Habitats adjacent to the Site were viewed, where possible, from the Site boundaries in order to assess their potential to support protected species that could be utilising the survey Site.

Survey Comments

- 2.9 A PEA is not usually sufficient for submission with a planning application. The survey methodology highlights habitats and features with potential for protected/notable species but is not designed to provide a comprehensive presence/absence survey. The results of any species-specific surveys recommended as a result of this appraisal should be combined with the results of this appraisal in order to give a full understanding of potential ecological impacts resulting from the Proposed Development.
- 2.10 The survey was carried out on 13th March 2024 at approximately midday in fine weather with good visibility. All areas of the Site were accessed. Site clearance had been undertaken prior to the Site visit and survey which meant that the majority of the Site's vegetation had been removed. A precautionary approach to assessment of habitats on Site has therefore been taken with regard to quality and condition of habitats, including an assessment of the habitats based on backdated aerial mapping of the Site.
- 2.11 A survey at this time of year is outside of the optimal period for botanical survey. However, a survey in March is sufficient for an experienced surveyor to categorise the habitats and assess the potential for protected species to be present, in line with the aims of the PEA.
- 2.12 In line with standard guidance, the results and recommendations within this report are valid for up to two years from the date of survey, assuming there are no significant changes to the survey Site or its immediate surroundings. Updated survey work may be required to support any future planning applications outside of this time period.

3. RESULTS

Statutory Designated Sites

- 3.1 There are two statutory designated sites present within 2km of the Site boundary:
- Sparrow Wood Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located approximately 1.2km west of the Site boundary. The LNR is an urban fringe site of approximately 3 hectares on the southern fringes of Dewsbury. Habitats include mixed deciduous woodland and a small pond which supports a range of woodland wildflowers, butterflies and common birds such as bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*, tree sparrow *Passer montanus* and great spotted woodpecker *Dendrocopos major*; and
 - Caulms Wood Quarry is located approximately 1.9km north-west of the Site boundary. Caulms Wood quarry has a 50m long face of Upper Carboniferous sandstone.
- 3.2 The South Pennine Moors (Phase 1) Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation occurs approximately 20km from the Site and is considered outside of the Zone of Influence for this Proposed Development.
- 3.3 The Site is within a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) risk zone; but the development type is not included within a risk category.

Non-Statutory Designated Sites

- 3.4 There are two locally designated sites within 2km of the Site boundary. The closest is Sparrow Wood Local Wildlife Site (LWS) which is a 3.0 ha urban site on the edge of Dewsbury.
- 3.5 The nearest Priority Habitat was Deciduous Woodland located approximately 0.01km from the Site boundary and east of Chickenley Beck.

Habitats and Botanical Species

Overview

- 3.6 The UK Hab Habitat Survey Results Map with Target Notes (TNs) is provided in **Appendix 2** with accompanying habitat descriptions below. Relevant photographs are shown in **Appendix 3**. Botanical species nomenclature follows Stace (2019).
- 3.7 As the Site had been cleared of the majority of the vegetation prior to the Site visit, assessment of the scrub habitat which previously comprised the bulk of the Site has been based on aerial assessment of backdated mapping and taking a precautionary approach. Therefore, descriptions of habitats on-site include those which have now been removed.
- 3.8 Botanical species lists were recorded within approximate percentage cover using 1m by 1m square National Vegetation Classification squares as based on the DAFOR scale

as shown in **Table 3.1**. Floristic data was supplemented by notes on the structure of the vegetation and evidence of management or wild or domestic grazing pressure.

Table 3.1: DAFOR Scale

DAFOR	% Cover
D - Dominant	(>75%)
A - Abundant	(51-75%)
F - Frequent	(26-50%)
O - Occasional	(11-25%)
R - Rare	(1-10%)

- 3.9 The Site comprised modified grassland, scrub, hedgerow, an area of woodland, and a single watercourse (Chickenley Beck) which ran along the eastern boundary to the Site.
- 3.10 The Site boundaries comprised drystone wall to the western boundary, hedgerow to the southern boundary, and the woodland and Chickenley Beck to the eastern boundary. The northern boundary was adjacent to residential properties with fencing the primary boundary type.

Modified Grassland and Ruderal Herbs

- 3.11 Three areas of modified grassland were recorded on the Site. One of these was bounded by housing and associated vegetative gardens off-site further to the north, with the other two adjacent to the Site boundaries. Species recorded on-site are listed in **Table 3.2** below.

Table 3.2: DAFOR Botanical Species List

Common Name	Species	DAFOR	Approx. % Cover
Perennial ryegrass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	D	60%
Tufted hair-grass	<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	O	11%
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>	O	11%
Broad-leaved dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	O	11%
Common nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	O	10%

Common Name	Species	DAFOR	Approx. % Cover
Sheep's sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosella</i>	R	3%
Meadow thistle	<i>Cirsium dissectum</i>	R	1%
Heath bedstraw	<i>Gallium saxatile</i>	R	3%
English bluebell	<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	R	1%

Mixed Scrub

- 3.12 The majority of the Site comprised mixed scrub. These areas had been subject to vegetation clearance by the Client prior to BWB's Site survey. Assessment of the habitats has been based on arisings and plant clippings left in situ as well as backdated aerial mapping; and a precautionary approach has been taken in assessing the quality of the habitats cleared. The exact species composition could not be determined, although evidence of birch *Betula* sp. was seen in the south of the Site and bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. was abundant at the Site boundaries. It has been assumed that the entire Site comprised mixed scrub.
- 3.13 The mixed scrub on-site comprised bramble, young birch, bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, and elder *Sambucus nigra*.

Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

- 3.14 Woodland formed the eastern boundary of the Site, which occurred either side of Chickenley Beck, with a number of trees within the Site itself.
- 3.15 The tree species comprised ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, beech *Fagus sylvatica*, and oak *Quercus robur*; and a scrub understorey of ivy *Hedera helix* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus*.
- 3.16 Mature leylandii *Cupressus x leylandii* were recorded outside of the southern and south-eastern boundary line, located off-site.

Hedgerow

- 3.17 A line of hawthorn hedgerow *Crataegus monogyna* was located along the southern boundary. This was in good condition with no gaps or evidence of poaching or invasive species. The hedgerow tapered and became mixed scrub habitat approximately 40m from the south-east boundary corner.

Protected / Notable Species

Amphibians

- 3.18 There was one watercourse located on the eastern boundary. This was a flowing watercourse and unlikely therefore to be suitable for breeding amphibians.
- 3.19 The habitats on-site had some suitability for GCN *Triturus cristata* comprising scrub and grassland, with hedgerows to the southern boundary for commuting and cover from predation.
- 3.20 There were no desk study records of GCN located within 2km of the Site dated within the last ten years.
- 3.21 No standing waterbodies were identified within 500m of the Site. Two watercourses were identified within 500m of the Site, but these comprised flowing rivers (Chickenley Beck and River Calder), which would be extremely unlikely to offer potential for breeding amphibians. A map of all waterbodies within 500m of the Site is shown in **Figure 3.1** below.

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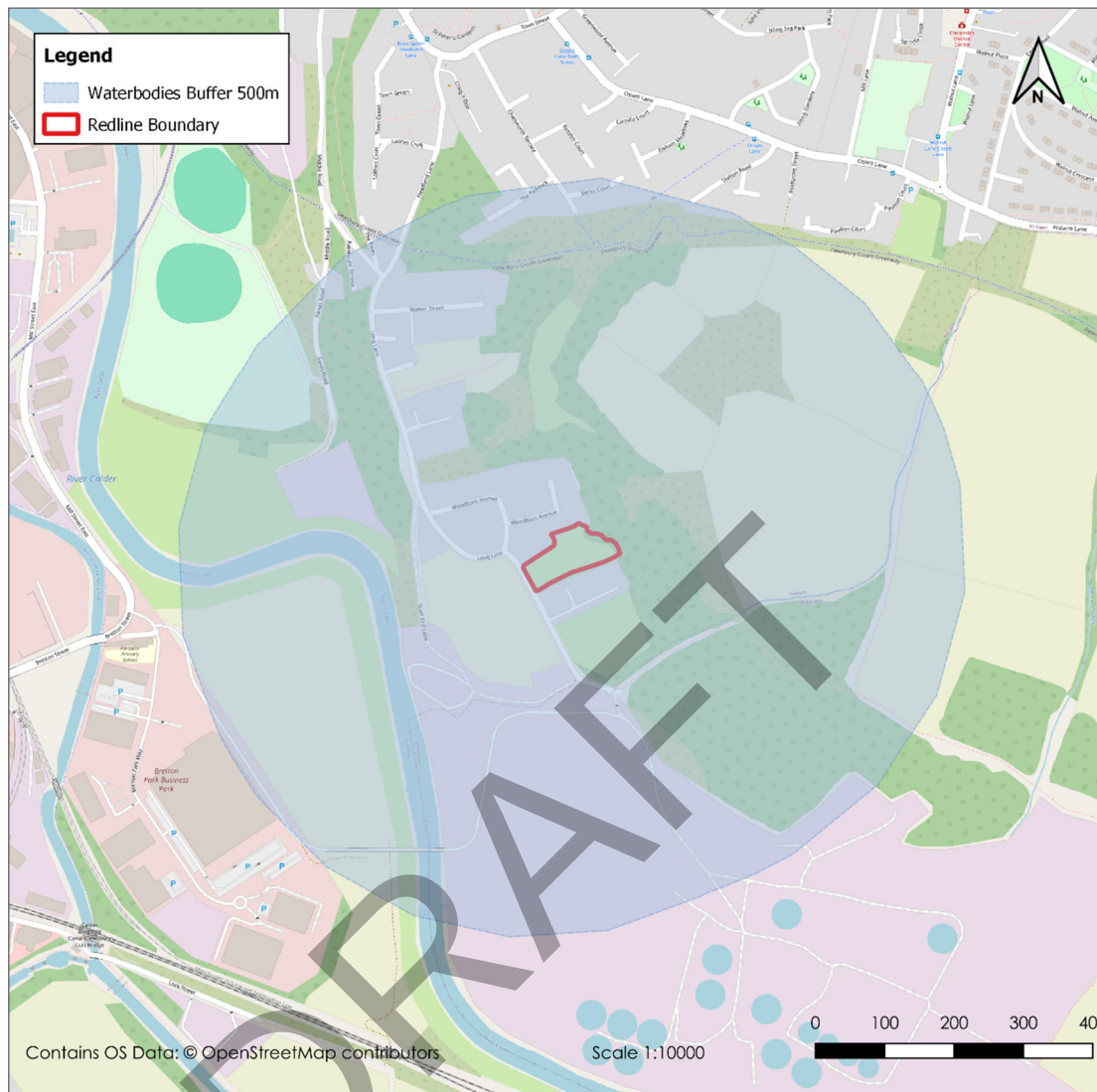


Figure 3.1: Waterbodies Within 500m

Bats

- 3.24 No roosting features were recorded on-site including man-made structures. The habitats on-site were unlikely to attract a large abundance of insect prey due to the small size of the Site and the lack of a mixture of botanical species and habitat types.

- 3.25 The southern and eastern boundary habitats including Chickenley Beck watercourse offered the best opportunities for foraging and commuting bats.
- 3.26 There were a total of 108 desk study records of bats located within 2km of the Site within the last ten years.

Table 3.3: Bat Records

Species Name	Number of Records	Location of Closest Record	Most Recent Record
Common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Roost	0.09km north-west of the Site	2015
Brown long-eared bat <i>Plecotus auritus</i>	1	0.6km north-west of the Site	2016
Leisler's bat <i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>	1	1.4km south-west of the Site	2014
Soprano pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	1	1.4km from the Site	2013
<i>Myotis</i> sp.	1	1.4km from the Site	2013
Noctule <i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	1	1.7km from the Site	2018

Birds

- 3.27 Bird species recorded during the Site visit included wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, blackbird *Turdus merula*, wood pigeon *Columba palumbus*, buzzard *Buteo buteo*, and great tit *Parus major*.
- 3.28 The Site offered some opportunities for foraging and breeding birds. An important assemblage was considered unlikely due to the small size of the habitat parcels and overall size of the Site. The hedgerow and scrub habitats offered the best opportunities for breeding birds.
- 3.29 There were a total of 395 desk study records of birds located within 2km of the Site. Key species are shown in **Table 3.4** below.

Table 3.4: Bird Records

Species	Location	Most Recent Record	Protection Status
Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	0.3km from the Site	2014	NERC_s41; RDBVU: Brd; BoCC-Red; WYBA
Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	0.3km from the Site	2017	RDB-NT: Non Brd;BoCC-Amber

Species	Location	Most Recent Record	Protection Status
Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	1.5km from the Site	2016	BoCC-Amber; WYBAP; Kirklees BAP
Swift <i>Apus apus</i>	1.6km from the Site	2014	RDB-EN: Brd; BoCC Red; WYBAP; Wakefield BAP
Bullfinch <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	1.7km from the Site	2016	BoCC-Amber; WYBAP; Kirklees BAP
Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	1.8km from the Site	2016	BoCC-Amber; WYBAP; Kirklees BAP
Greenfinch <i>Chloris chloris</i>	1.9km from the Site	2016	RDB-EN: Brd; BoCCRed
Collared dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	1.9km from the Site	2016	RDB-NT: Brd

Invertebrates

- 3.30 The presence of a mosaic of habitats on Site offered potential for use by invertebrates, primarily due to the extensive scrub habitat (subject to recent vegetation clearance), grassland and proximity to Chickenley Beck including shallow sediment beds and banks suitable for aquatic invertebrates and invertebrates in their aquatic larval stage.
- 3.31 Local species recorded in the area include small heath butterfly *Coenonympha pamphilus*.

Reptiles

- 3.32 The habitats on the Site were considered suitable to support low numbers of common reptile species. Bramble scrub and mixed scrub provided cover and protection from predators, and areas of south-facing grassland offered suitable basking habitats. The watercourse also offered opportunity for commuting grass snake *Natrix helvetica* to access the habitats within the Site.
- 3.33 There were no desk study records of reptiles within 2km of the Site.

Riparian Mammals

- 3.34 There were no records of water vole or otter located within 2km of the Site within the last ten years.
- 3.35 The Chickenley Beck bankside habitats offered suitability for water vole burrows and runs. However, no evidence of water vole was found during the condition assessment of the watercourse.

Hedgehogs

- 3.36 A deceased hedgehog was recorded on-site. This suggests that hedgehogs are present on the Site, and it is considered likely that they may use the Site's habitats for both foraging and hibernacula.
- 3.37 There were two desk study records of hedgehog located 1.7km from the Site.

Invasive Species

- 3.38 No evidence of invasive species was recorded on the Site. However, there were records of Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* located within 0.4km north-west of the Site; floating pennywort *Hydrocotyle ranunculoides* located 0.9km from the Site; giant hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum* located within 0.4km south-west of the Site; and Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica* located within 0.5km south-west of the Site. It was considered likely that Himalayan balsam may be present in late spring/early summer as the Chickenley Beck bank side was considered suitable habitat for proliferation of this species and given that there are nearby records of the Schedule 9 species.

Other Species

- 3.39 The Site provided opportunities for rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* and fox *Vulpes vulpes*. No records for these species were returned in the desk study.

4. EVALUATION

- 4.1 This section identifies the effects on habitats and species during different stages of the Proposed Development, prior to any mitigation measures.

Designated Sites

- 4.2 Impacts to designated sites are considered unlikely due to scope of the Proposed Development and lack of proximity to any designated sites.

Habitats

- 4.3 The predominant habitats on-site; scrub and grassland, were generally small in area and common in the wider area. No rare or notable botanical species were recorded. No significant impacts are envisaged as a result of their loss.
- 4.4 The woodland and watercourse on the eastern boundary would be considered of higher ecological value and the woodland would likely qualify as Priority Habitat Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland. The hedgerow, although not qualifying as important under the Hedgerow Regulations (1997) would be a Priority Habitat as it was comprised of native species. Consideration should be given to these habitats, as detailed in **Section 5**.

Species

Amphibians

- 4.5 Amphibians were considered unlikely to be present on the Site or via the adjacent waterbody. GCN may use a variety of waterbodies and habitats throughout their life cycles including in some cases slower moving and more sedentary waterbodies with low or no fish and wildfowl populations. However, they are primarily terrestrial and favour grassland and scrub habitat with connecting corridors to favoured breeding waterbodies. Chickenley Beck was relatively fast-flowing with steep banks and may occasionally contain established fish and wildfowl populations likely to heavily predate on GCN. As such, its suitability to support a breeding population of GCN was assessed as poor using the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI).
- 4.6 There were two waterbodies identified within 500m of the Site. The other waterbody was the River Calder which was considered to be a significant barrier to dispersal of amphibians.
- 4.7 The Site is therefore considered unlikely to support a local GCN population despite the suitability of some of the adjacent habitats to support GCN during their terrestrial phase. No further consideration is given to GCN.

Bats

- 4.11 A common pipistrelle roost had previously been recorded in close proximity to the Site. Habitats on-site may therefore function as foraging and commuting areas for local common species of bat. It is considered likely that bats may utilise the adjacent woodland for roosting, foraging and commuting.
- 4.12 Further consideration for bats is therefore provided in **Section 5**.

Birds

- 4.13 It is considered likely that low numbers of common passerine birds utilise the scrub and hedgerow habitats for breeding and foraging. Further consideration for birds is therefore provided in **Section 5**.

Invertebrates

- 4.14 Low numbers of common invertebrates likely utilise the Site for larval food plant resources. Mitigation for any loss of these habitats should include the provision of new invertebrate habitat as part of the final Landscaping Plan, as outlined in **Section 5**.

Reptiles

- 4.15 Low numbers of reptiles may utilise the grassland habitats for basking and the boundary habitats may be used as refuge from predators.
- 4.16 It is recommended that further survey for reptiles to assess the presence/absence of reptiles species on-site should be undertaken, as outlined in **Section 5**.

Riparian Mammals

- 4.17 The watercourse offered suitable habitat for water vole *Arvicola amphibius* and limited suitability for otter *Lutra lutra*. However, the Site survey recorded no signs of water vole or otter including burrows/holts, spraint/droppings or runs within the banksides, and the desk study showed no records of either species. As such, no further considerations are given to water vole or otter.

Hedgehogs

- 4.18 Low numbers of hedgehogs are considered likely present on the Site. A dead hedgehog was found on-site during the survey, suggesting hedgehogs may also utilise the Site for

hibernacula. Further consideration should be given to hedgehogs for the construction phase and within the final masterplan, as outlined in **Section 5**.

Invasive Species

- 4.19 If present, Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*, a Schedule 9 invasive non-native species, would require clearance under a suitable Method Statement as outlined in **Section 5**.

Other Species

- 4.20 Other species utilising the Site may become trapped or injured in open excavations. Further consideration is therefore required as detailed in **Section 5**

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5. RECOMMENDATIONS

General

- 5.1 A specific Biodiversity Enhancement and Mitigation Plan (BEMP) should be produced for the development. The BEMP should detail measures by which to protect retained habitats, enhance and create habitats, provide an overview of habitat management as well as details of species-specific enhancements provided below.
- 5.2 In line with National planning Policy Framework (NPPF) the application should demonstrate biodiversity enhancements.
- 5.3 Due to the size of the Site, applicable specific habitat enhancements could include:
- The planting of native tree and shrub species within landscaped areas and particularly along the boundaries;
 - Native species hedging to be notch planted within retained hedgerow in order to increase diversity within the stand;
 - Bat and bird boxes could be integrated into 20% of the scheme design to enhance roosting provision over the wider Site; and
 - Boundary treatments should be left open where feasible to allow passage for small mammals including hedgehog.

Habitats

- 5.4 It is understood that the off-site woodland and Chickenley Beck to the east of the Site, qualifies as Priority Habitat, will be protected during the proposed construction works. A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) should be produced to ensure that there is no impact to the watercourse or the woodland. This should include but not be limited to, pollution prevention and suitable fencing and warning signs.
- 5.5 The on-site trees within the woodland to the eastern boundary of the Site should be retained where possible to act as a green buffer to protect the habitats off-site, and to mitigate the impacts of the Proposed Development on the watercourse and woodland. Retained trees would provide a natural screen to reduce any disturbance or pollution effects. Suitable root protection fencing should be constructed around any retained trees prior to any clearance and construction works, which should be outlined within the CEMP.
- 5.6 The trees and hedgerows on-site should be retained and protected during the construction phase of the Proposed Development by fencing installed in line with BS5837:2012 Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction: Recommendations. Additional tree planting of native species should be undertaken within the final landscaping design for the Site in order to increase suitable habitats for wildlife.
- 5.7 Native hedgerow planting within the final scheme for the Site would be beneficial for the existing biodiversity on-site and would create further opportunities for species. Planting should include a range of native 'hedgerow' species which provide nuts,

berries, fruits and flowers which will attract a range of different species including invertebrates, birds and mammals. The following species are recommended (please note that this is not an exhaustive list and other native species can be used):

- Native honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*;
- Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*;
- Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*;
- Elder *Sambucus nigra*;
- Hazel *Corylus avellana*;
- Holly *Ilex aquifolium*;
- Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*;
- Field maple *Acer campestre*;
- Beech *Fagus sylvatica*;
- Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*;
- Crab apple *Malus sylvestris*; and
- Dog rose *Rosa canina*.



Bats

- 5.10 Any lighting utilised during the construction phase of the Proposed Development and any new lighting proposed as part of the final scheme for the Site should follow best practice guidelines outlined in *Bats and Artificial Light at Night (2023)* to maintain suitable foraging and commuting routes. The proposed final lighting scheme for the Proposed Development should be submitted for review by an ecologist prior to implementation.
- 5.11 The woodland along the eastern boundary offers the highest value to bats and if any light level increase is predicted onto this area then further survey for bats would be advised. This would comprise Night-time Bat Walkover and Static Monitoring surveys through spring, summer and autumn.
- 5.12 The addition of native hedgerows and trees as part of the final landscaping designs for the Site would enhance potential foraging and commuting opportunities for local bat populations and provide more substantial links to the wider environment.

- 5.13 Opportunities for roosting bats should be incorporated into the final masterplan across at least 10% of new buildings. These should be integrated into the new buildings. These should be positioned as close to the eaves as possible and they should be positioned in locations sheltered from strong winds and away from direct sunlight for a significant proportion of the day, usually south to south-west. In addition, bat boxes could be attached to any mature trees on-site.
- 5.14 Further details on the number, type and location of bat boxes would be specified within the BEMP.

Birds

- 5.15 Any clearance of scrub, trees or hedgerow should be timed to avoid the nesting bird season (March – August, inclusive). If work must take place during this period, a nesting bird survey must be undertaken by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist within 48 hours of the start of clearance. Any active nests would need to remain unaffected until all chicks had fledged.
- 5.16 Opportunities for nesting birds should be incorporated into the final masterplan. These should be integrated into new buildings. Bird boxes should be installed two to four metres above ground on the buildings and should offer unobstructed fly-in access. The boxes should face between north and east, thus avoiding full sun and prevailing wind.
- 5.17 Boxes for swift *Apus apus*, house sparrow *Passer domesticus* and house martin *Deichon urbicum* should be included, as these species are listed as Red on the latest list of Birds of Conservation Concern and have an affinity with the built environment, as well as a number of general purposes boxes.
- 5.18 Further details on the types and locations of boxes should be included within the BEMP.

Invertebrates

- 5.19 Mitigation measures for any loss of invertebrate habitat should include the provision of invertebrate housing and creation of wildflower areas which should be specified within the final landscaping plan for the Site. Further opportunities for invertebrates can be incorporated into the Proposed Development using both integrated and standalone invertebrate houses.
- 5.20 Invertebrate houses are recommended to be placed within 1m of ground level and be located within a south or south-west facing, open sunny position and not obscured by any vegetation. Green and Blue bee blocks, integrated brick bug boxes or similar are all considered to be appropriate integrated features for invertebrates. Insect towers or other similar boxes can be placed within areas of landscaping or attached to trees/posts. Further details on the types and locations of the invertebrate houses should be provided within the BEMP.

Reptiles

- 5.21 The grassland habitat parcels on Site were considered suitable basking habitat for low numbers of reptiles. A reptile survey is recommended for the Site to assess presence or likely absence of reptiles on the Site which would inform any mitigation measures for the development. Reptile surveys should be undertaken during April, May or September. The reptile survey would comprise an initial visit to deploy artificial refugia mats in suitable reptile habitat around the Site boundaries and within any tall sward grassland habitat. The refugia mats will be left to 'bed in'; and seven further survey visits will then be undertaken in suitable weather conditions (9-18°C, sunny or intermittent sunshine with no wind or rain) across the survey period in order to gain an accurate representation of any reptile assemblage at the Site.
- 5.22 Where reptiles are found to be present, further mitigation such as translocation or directional vegetation clearance will be required. Mitigation measures may also include provision of suitable refugia habitat including log and brash piles, as outlined for **Hedgehogs** below.

Hedgehogs

- 5.23 The removal of suitable habitat such as scrub should be conducted using hand tools, with the bases checked for hedgehogs prior to complete removal. This should be conducted in April prior to the main breeding season. Any hedgehogs found should be left in situ, all works should cease within the vicinity of the area and either a suitability qualified ecologist or the hedgehog preservation society should be contacted for further advice. In most cases the hedgehog can be moved by hand to a nearby off-site place of safety. However, dependant on the time of year, i.e. if temperatures are low (below 5°C) and the hedgehog was found within the hedgehog hibernation season (from November to March) then it may be necessary to take the hedgehog to a wildlife sanctuary. Moving a pregnant hedgehog or hedgehog with young can also result in mortality.
- 5.24 British Hedgehog Preservation Society Tel: **01584 890801** for advice.
- 5.26 During Site clearance works no brash or log piles should be allowed to develop or be left overnight. If a pile is left then this should be cleared by hand and the base of the pile checked for hedgehogs.
- 5.27 To provide new habitats for hedgehogs and other species, it is recommended that a hedgehog friendly layout is achieved through the following provisions:
- Native shrub planting along the boundaries of the development to provide connectivity for hedgehogs and other species through and around the Site to the wider habitats;
 - Creation of a hedgehog 'highway'. Any fencing to have 13cm by 13cm holes cut in strategic places to allow hedgehogs and other species to move in and out of

the Site. In addition, hedgerows or fencing with gaps at the bottom/railings could be used instead of close board fencing; and,

- Brash and log piles could be created in landscaped/planted areas to provide refuge and hibernation habitats for hedgehogs and other species.

5.28 It is recommended that further details of how the development will be hedgehog friendly is provided within the BEMP which should include details of suitable locations of the hedgehog highway holes and/or connectivity, brash/log piles, native shrub planting and dropped kerbs.

Invasive Species

5.29 An invasive species survey should be undertaken at the Site including of the Chickenley Beck banks within the botanical growing season, to determine if Schedule 9 invasive non-native species are present. If invasive species are present, then an Invasive Species Management Plan and control of the invasive species will be required which should be designed in consultation with an invasive weed specialist. Further details would be included within the CEMP for the Site.

Other Species

5.31 All wild mammals are protected from unnecessary suffering and asphyxiation under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996. Where any rabbit burrows are encountered on-site, these should be excavated slowly and directionally to allow any animals within to safely make their escape.

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APPENDICES

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Appendix 1: Relevant Legislation

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The following text provides information on the key legislation, which is applicable to this survey.

The main wildlife legislation relevant in the UK is as follows:

European Legislation

The relevant sections of the EC Directives and international conventions are summarised below:

- EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitat Directive 1992) as amended (92/43/EEC)

The Directive requires Member States to introduce a range of measures including the protection of species listed in the Annexes. The 189 habitats listed in Annex I of the Directive and the 788 species listed in Annex II, are to be protected by means of a network of sites. Once adopted, these are designated by Member States as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), and along with Special Protection Areas (SPAs) classified under the EC Birds Directive. The Habitats Directive introduces the precautionary principle; that disturbance to the designated sites can only be permitted having ascertained no adverse effect on the integrity of the Site.

- EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive 1979) as amended (79/409/EEC)

The main provisions of the Directive includes; the maintenance of the favorable conservation status of all wild bird species across their distributional range.

- Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979)

The Convention imposes legal obligations on contracting parties, protecting over 500 wild plant species and more than 1000 wild animal species.

UK Legislation

The sections of UK legislation considered to be of relevance include:

- The Environment Act 2021

This legislation was revised in response to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy consultation on 19 December 2023 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The Act mandates the requirement of 10% net gains for biodiversity and as such should be the aim of all new developments.

- The Conservation (Natural Habitats, and c.) Regulations 2017 (as amended)

This transposes the Habitats Directive into national law. The Regulations provide for the designation and protection of 'European sites', and the protection of 'European protected species'.

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA)

This consolidates and amends existing national legislation to implement the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive) in Great Britain.

- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW)

This act strengthens wildlife enforcement legislation.

- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992

This act affords protection to badgers and their setts including the destruction or obstructing access to a sett.

- Wild Mammals Protection Act 1996

This act provides protection to all wild species of mammal in the UK and is more related to mammal welfare but is directly applicable during any site clearance or other works to a site which could harm mammals.

- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act)

This act formed Natural England which places a duty on all public authorities, including local planning authorities to consider biodiversity. This Act also requires a list of species of habitats composed by the Secretary of State to help provide specific conservation targets. These species are known as Priority Species or Species of Principal Importance (SPI). These habitats are known as Priority habitats or Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI). Both SPI and HPI are listed under Section 41 of this Act. The NPPF also affords protection to these HPI's and SPI's.

- UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework

In addition, species and habitats listed on the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework (formally the UK BAP) are also considered. Details on these species and habitats can be found at: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5705>.

Species-Specific Legislation

Species specific legislation is provided in the Table below:

Species-Specific Wildlife Legislation

Plants	Sch. 8 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Some species are SPI - Section 41 NERC Act.	• Pick; • Uproot; • Trade; • Possess (for trade) any wild plant listed.
Breeding birds	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).	• Kill; • Injure; • Take; any wild bird, their eggs or nest (with the exception of those on Sch. 2).

Specially protected birds	Sch. 1 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).	As above but includes: Disturbing birds at their nest, or their dependent young.
Badgers	The Protection of Badgers Act 1992.	- Wilfully kill, injure, take, or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or attempt to do so; - Possess any dead badger or any part of, or anything derived from, a dead badger; - Intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett by disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, damaging or destroying a sett, causing a dog to enter a sett, or obstructing access to it. A badger sett is defined in the legislation as "any structure or place, which displays signs indicating current use by a badger".
Bats	Sch. 5 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) 2019 (as amended).	- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (or take) bats; - Deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost or not); - Recklessly disturb roosting bats or obstruct access to their roosts; - Damage or destroy bat roosts.
Common reptiles	Sch. 5 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.	Deliberate or reckless: - Killing; - Injuring - Sale.
Common amphibians	Sch. 5 and Sch. 9 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.	- Sell; - Transport; and - Advertise for sale.
Great crested newt	Sch. 5 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) 2019 (as amended).	- Kill; - Injure; - Disturb - Destroy or obstruct access to any place used for rest or shelter.
Hedgehogs	SPI – Section 41 NERC Act Wild Mammals Protection Act 1996.	Protection from harm, injury Intent to harm.
Other mammals	Wild Mammals Protection Act 1996.	Protection from harm, injury Intent to harm.

Invasive species (animal and plant)	Sch. 9 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).	Release of any animal, plant or microorganism not native to the UK. Sale. Cause or allow to spread.
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Protected Sites

A network of protected sites, at varying levels, have been put in place across the UK. Further details are provided below;

International Importance

- Natura 2000

Natura 2000 is the name of the European Union-wide network of nature conservation-sites established under the EC Habitats and Birds Directives. This network will comprise Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

SACs are designated under the EC Habitats Directive. The Directive applies to the UK and the overseas territory of Gibraltar. SACs are areas which have been identified as best representing the range and variety within the European Union of habitats and (non-bird) species listed on Annexes I and II to the Directive. SACs in terrestrial areas and territorial marine waters out to 12 nautical miles are designated under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended). New and/or amended Habitats Regulations are shortly to be introduced to provide a mechanism for the designation of SACs and SPAs in UK offshore waters (from 12-200 nm).

National Importance

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

The SSSI series has developed since 1949 as the national suite of sites providing statutory protection for the best examples of the UK's flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features. Most SSSIs are privately-owned or managed; others are owned or managed by public bodies or non-government organisations. The SSSIs designation may extend into intertidal areas out to the jurisdictional limit of local authorities, generally Mean Low Water in England and Northern Ireland; Mean Low Water of Spring tides in Scotland. In Wales, the limit is Mean Low Water for SSSIs notified before 2002, and, for more recent notifications, the limit of Lowest Astronomical Tides, where the features of interest extend down to LAT. There is no provision for marine SSSIs beyond low water mark. Originally notified under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, SSSIs have been renotified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Improved provisions for the protection and management of SSSIs were introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (in England and Wales) and the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.

Regional/Local Importance

- Wildlife Sites

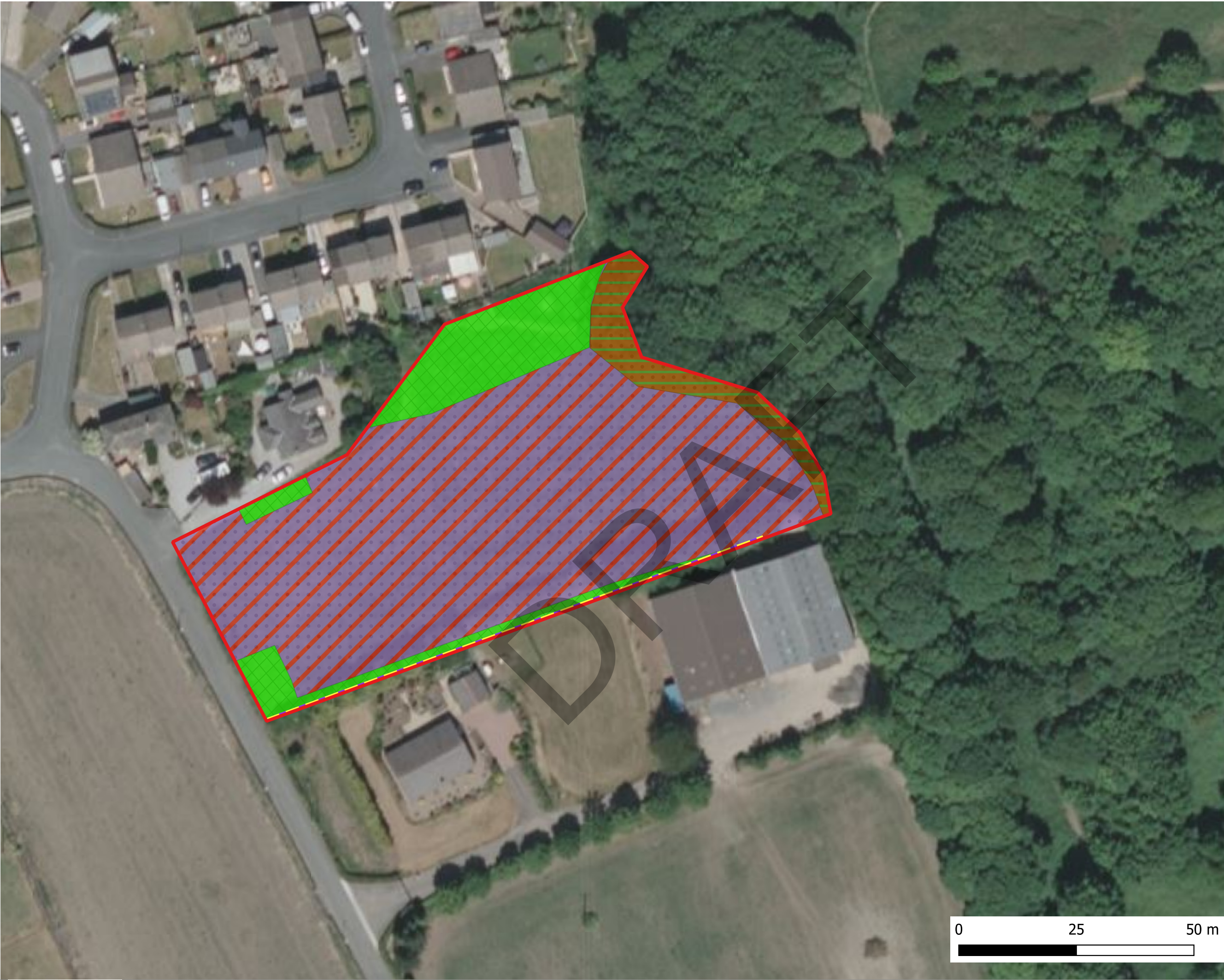
Local authorities for any given area may designate certain areas as being of local conservation interest. The criteria for inclusion, and the level of protection provided, if any, may vary between areas. Most individual counties have a similar scheme, although they do vary.

These sites, which may be given various titles such as 'Listed Wildlife Sites' (LWS), 'County Wildlife Sites' (CWS), 'Local Nature Conservation-sites' (LNCS), 'Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation' (SINCs), or Sites of Nature Conservation Importance' (SNClIs), together with statutory designations, are defined in local and structure plans under the Town and Country Planning system and are a material consideration when planning applications are being determined.

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Appendix 2: UK Hab Habitat Plan

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- Notes
1. Do not scale this drawing. All dimensions must be checked/ verified on site. If in doubt ask.
 2. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant architects, engineers and specialists drawings and specifications.
 3. All dimensions in millimetres unless noted otherwise. All levels in metres unless noted otherwise.
 4. Any discrepancies noted on site are to be reported to the engineer immediately.

- Key
-  Red Line Boundary
 -  Native hedgerow
 -  Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
 -  Mixed scrub
 -  Modified grassland

POV	27.03.2024	Habitat Map Final Issue	SS	AG
Rev	Date	Details of issues/ revision	Drw	Rev

Issues & Revisions



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Client

Wordsworth Property
Developments Ltd

Project Title

Long Lane, Earlsheaton

Drawing Title

Habitat Plan

Drawn:	SS	Reviewed:	AG
BWB Ref:	243830	Date:	27.03.2024
		Scale@A3:	1:4500

Drawing Status

Final

Project - Originator - Zone - Level - Type - Role - Number	Status	Rev
LLE-BWB-XX-ZZ-DR-EE-0001	S2	P01

Appendix 3: Site Photographs

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Photograph 1: Site Overview (subject to extensive vegetation clearance)



Photograph 2: Western boundary adjacent to Long Lane (subject to veg clearance)



Photograph 3: Western boundary adjacent to Long Lane



Photograph 4: Southern boundary mature hedgerow (*Crataegus monogyna*) on-Site; mature Leylandii trees adjacent off-Site outside of the Site boundary



Photograph 5: Southern boundary including areas of scrub vegetation cleared



Photograph 6: South-east corner subject to vegetation clearance including birch scrub habitat and mixed scrub



Photograph 7: South-eastern boundary corner trees outside of the application boundary



Photograph 8: Ivy and bramble scrub understorey on the eastern boundary adjacent to Chickenley Beck



Photograph 9: Line of trees on-Site adjacent to Chickenley Beck on the eastern boundary



Photograph 10: Mature ash tree on-Site adjacent to Chickenley Beck on the eastern boundary



Photograph 11: Chickenley Beck off-Site located on the eastern boundary



Photograph 12: Section of grassland habitat on-Site on the north-eastern boundary



Photograph 13: Large areas of birch and mixed scrub cleared centrally to the Site



Photograph 14: Section of grassland on-Site on the northern boundary



Photograph 15: Conifer trees off-Site to the northern boundary with a small section of grassland subject to prior clearance

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