

LAND WEST OF EMSWORTH RECREATION GROUND, EMSWORTH

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Bird Habitat Suitability Assessment

Client: Genesis Town Planning

Reference: GENTOW-EMSREC-C5123

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

In July 2013, Ecosulis was commissioned by Genesis Town Planning to undertake an extended Phase 1 habitat survey and bird habitat suitability assessment for land at Emsworth. The purpose of this report is to inform a planning application for the site.

The site comprises species -poor semi-improved grassland, hedgerows, woodland and scrub habitats. No evidence of protected or notable species was recorded during the survey, however habitats on site provide some suitable opportunities to support badgers, bats, small mammals, reptiles, common amphibians and common nesting birds.

Site name, location, grid reference and size	Emsworth, Hampshire; SU 745 065; 1.8ha
Scope of Works	Extended Phase 1 habitat survey and web-based desktop study and bird Habitat Suitability Assessment (HSA)
Survey/evaluation methods	Extended Phase 1 habitat survey is carried out in accordance with JNCC (2010; Annex 1 gives full methodology). Bird Habitat Suitability Assessment also undertaken on site. Plant names follow the nomenclature of Stace (2010) The evaluation section refers to IEEM (2006) and Ratcliffe (1977)
Purpose of Works	To accompany and inform a planning application.
Dates of site visits and names of surveyors	19 August 2013; Ben Mitchell BSc
Overview	The site is divided up into five Habitats: Hedgerow Woodland - Broad-leaved - Semi-natural Scrub - Dense/continuous Poor semi-improved grassland Ditches No evidence of protected or notable species was recorded during the survey, however habitats on site provide some suitable opportunities to support badgers, bats, small mammals, reptiles and common amphibians. The site is considered unsuitable to support wader birds or Brent geese populations due to a lack of suitable habitats and high levels of disturbance from adjacent urban environments. Hedgerows, woodland and scrub habitats on site provides some suitable nesting opportunities for common bird species in combination with adjacent habitats.
Ecological receptors	Confirmed receptors: None Potential receptors: Badgers Bats Small mammals Nesting birds Reptiles Amphibians

Recommendations for further surveys	A badger survey (during winter months when vegetation has died back) For more information on survey periods, refer to Ecosulis online survey calendar http://www.ecosulis.co.uk/page/survey-calendar
Recommendations for protection of ecological receptors	A Precautionary Method of Working (PMW) document should be developed and implemented during vegetation clearance to cover a pre-check for common nesting birds (if clearance undertaken in nesting season) and a watching brief by an Ecological Clerk of Works during all vegetation clearance to ensure water vole, small mammals, reptiles and amphibians are protected. Retention and enhancement of trees, hedgerows and ditches on site.
Key recommendations and other recommendations for enhancement	Built-in bat roosts (bat bricks) on buildings Bird nesting features on buildings / trees Ecological input into the landscaping scheme Refuge creation (log/rubble piles) for reptiles and invertebrates Enhance ditches for amphibians

SITE AND HABITAT DESCRIPTIONS

General Site Description

1. The site comprises two arable fields bounded by hedgerows. The site is located immediately adjacent to a main road on the southern boundary, a commercial service station to the west, and residential housing to the east. Farmland extends north of the site. The site is centred on OS grid reference SU 745 065 and covers approximately 1.8ha.

Component Habitats

2. Species lists are provided in Annex 1. The location and extent of habitats is shown on Figure 1.

Hedgerow

3. Species-poor hedgerows are present on the boundaries of the site. These hedgerows appear to be unmanaged and support low species diversity, dominated by blackthorn and hawthorn.

Woodland - Broad-leaved - Semi-natural

4. Semi-natural broadleaved woodland is present on the eastern boundary of the site comprising ash trees with a scrubby understorey.

Scrub - Dense/continuous

5. Scrub habitats are present on the southern boundary of the site, and through the centre of the site along a dry ditch. Scrub habitats are dense and species poor, including blackthorn, hawthorn and gorse species.

Poor semi-improved grassland

6. Horse grazed semi-improved grassland dominates the site. As a result of horse grazing regimes, grassland habitats support a short sward and are species poor. Species include cock's-foot, Yorkshire-fog, perennial rye-grass, ragwort, creeping thistle, and dock species.

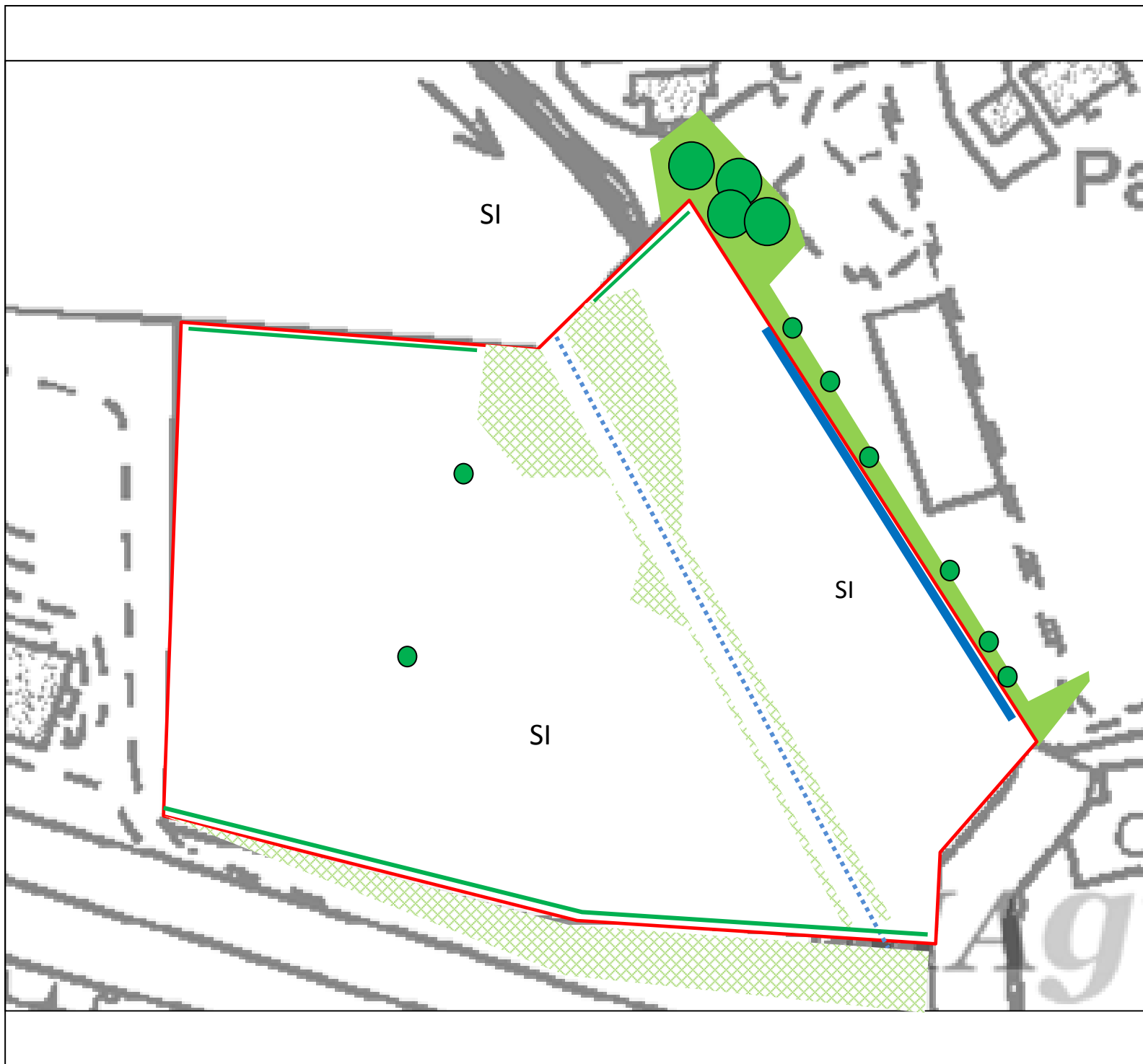
Ditches

7. A dry ditch is present through the centre of the site, overshadowed by dense scrub habitats. A wet ditch is present on the eastern boundary of the site.

Adjacent Habitats

8. The site is located within areas of high disturbance from the adjacent main road to the south, service station to the west and recreation ground to the north. Agricultural fields lie to the north and east of the site.

FIGURE 1



Key

- Site Boundary
- SI Semi-improved grassland
- Woodland
- Scrub and woodland
- Wet ditch
- Dry ditch
- Species poor hedgerow
- Standard tree

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Client	Genesis Town Planning	
Project	Emsworth	
Title	Phase I Habitat Plan	
Date	Scale	Figure
Aug 2013	SCHEMATIC ONLY	I

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CONSIDERATION TO RECEPTORS

Designated Sites

Feature	Desk Study	Field Observations	Recommendations (Annex 3 details legislation and planning policy)
Statutory sites on site	None	N/A	N/A
Statutory sites within 2km	Chichester and Langstone Harbours RAMSAR (wader bird populations) Chichester and Langstone Harbours SPA (wader bird populations) Warblington Meadow SSSI (unimproved grazing marsh)	The adjacent designated sites have been predominately designated for their wader bird populations. Warblington Meadows is designated for its unimproved grassland habitats.	A bird Habitat Suitability Assessment was undertaken on site to assess the suitability of habitats on site to support wader bird populations, including Brent geese. The survey recorded no suitable opportunities for wader birds on or immediately adjacent to the site. Disturbance levels are high on site from adjacent main roads, residential housing and commercial buildings, therefore reducing opportunities for bird species. It is therefore anticipated that there will be no direct impacts to the adjacent designated sites.
within 2.1km-4km	No designations within 4km of the site with relation to bats	N/A	N/A
Non-statutory sites within 2km of the site	Stream West of Emsworth Recreation Ground SINC (narrow-leaved water-plantain)	No narrow-leaved water-plantain was noted on site during the survey, however access to the ditches was restricted by dense scrub habitats.	It is recommended that ditches on site are retained within the scheme with an appropriate buffer and a suitable management plan is implemented on site to enhance opportunities for narrow-leaved water plantain.

Key to abbreviations

SPA - Special Protection Area

SSSI - Site of Special Scientific Interest

RAMSAR – wetland site of international importance

SINC – Site of Interest for Nature Conservation

Protected/Notable Species

Species/species groups	Evidence of/suitability for	Recommendations (Annex 3 details legislation and planning policy)
Flora	No notable flora was recorded on site during the survey. Due to the current management regimes on site it is considered unlikely that the site supports notable flora	It is recommended that standard trees and hedgerows are retained within the scheme where possible. Where not possible, it is recommended that consideration is given to replacement native planting within the scheme. Consideration should be given to implementing an appropriate management plan on site in the long-term to maximise ecological value within retained and newly created habitats
Badger	No evidence of badger activity was recorded on site during the survey. Suitable sett building habitat is present in the form of adjacent motorway embankments, however these were vegetated with dense vegetation therefore could not be fully accessed. Grassland habitats provide suitable foraging opportunities for badgers in combination with adjacent habitats.	It is recommended that a badger survey is undertaken on site over winter, when vegetation has died back, to fully assess the use of the site by badgers, particularly within areas of dense vegetation. Consideration should be given to enhancing the site for badgers through appropriate planting and a sensitive lighting scheme. Any excavations during construction works should be covered at the end of the day, or include a means of escape for badgers.
Bats	Trees on site are semi-mature and do not support suitable features for roosting bats. Hedgerows and scrub habitats provide suitable foraging and commuting opportunities for bats in combination with adjacent habitats.	It is recommended that linear green corridors, such as hedgerows on site, are retained and protected within the scheme where possible to maintain foraging and commuting opportunities for bats. Where not possible, consideration should be given to incorporating replacement linear green corridors within the landscape plans for the site. This should include hedgerow planting or tree lines. Consideration should be given to enhancing the site for bats in the long-term, including creation of new roosting features such as bat tubes, and use of native night-scented plant species such as honeysuckle.

Water vole and otter	Ditches on site provide limited opportunities for water voles. The ditches are heavily overshadowed by dense scrub habitats and have limited connectivity to adjacent ditches. It is considered unlikely that the ditches are currently used by otters due to a lack of suitable opportunities	It is recommended that ditches are retained on site where possible and enhanced through appropriate management to enhancing their ecological value. If not possible, it is recommended that vegetation clearance works follow a Precautionary Method of Working (PMW) to include supervision by an Ecological Clerk of Works to ensure that any water vole burrows are protected (although this is unlikely given the suitability of the ditches on site to support this species).
Other small mammals	Hedgerows and scrub habitats provide suitable foraging and refuge opportunities for small mammals, including hedgehogs, in combination with adjacent habitats.	It is recommended that vegetation clearance works are undertaken under a PMW to include sensitive timings of works and supervision by an Ecological Clerk of Works to protect any small mammals present on site during the works. Consideration should be given to enhancing opportunities on site for small mammals through appropriate planting, management of habitats, and consideration to the creation of deadwood piles.
Birds	The habitats on site do not provide suitable opportunities for wader birds or Brent geese. The site is currently grazed by horses and is subject to high levels of noise disturbance from the adjacent main road, commercial building and residential housing. Adjacent arable fields provide some suitable opportunities for birds. Adjacent cropped fields would provide suitable opportunities for overwintering Brent geese if stubble were retained over the winter. However, these opportunities are limited in the area from noise disturbance as a result of the site's location. The main road to the south, commercial buildings to the west and residential housing to the east limits opportunities on site for bird populations on site.	It is considered unlikely that the site is used by wader birds or Brent geese populations. Hedgerows and scrub habitats on site, however, provide suitable nesting habitats for common bird species. Where possible vegetation removal works should be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season (generally March to September). Where this is not possible these habitats should undergo a pre-works check by an Ecological Clerk of Works. Should any nests be present these would need to be retained with a suitable buffer until the chicks have fledged. Consideration should be given to enhancing the site for birds within any future proposals for the site, such provision of bird nesting features / boxes and native species within any landscaping scheme.
Reptiles	Scrub and hedgerows provide suitable refuge opportunities for reptiles. Grassland habitats provide	It is recommended that vegetation clearance works are undertaken under a PMW to include sensitive timings of

	suitable foraging opportunities for reptiles in combination with adjacent habitats.	works and supervision by an Ecological Clerk of Works to protect any reptiles present on site during the works. Consideration should be given to enhancing opportunities on site for reptiles through appropriate planting, management of habitats, and consideration to the creation of deadwood piles.
Amphibians	Hedgerow and scrub habitats provide suitable refuge opportunities for amphibians in combination with adjacent habitats. The ditches on site do not provide suitable breeding opportunities for amphibians. One ditch was dry at the time of survey, and the second ditch is a flowing drainage ditch. It is therefore considered unlikely that great crested newts are present on site.	It is considered unlikely that the site supports great crested newts; however habitats on site provide suitable opportunities for widespread species. It is therefore recommended that vegetation clearance works are undertaken under a PMW to include sensitive timings of works and supervision by an Ecological Clerk of Works to protect any amphibians present on site during the works. It is recommended that consideration is given to retaining and enhancing ditches on site to enhance opportunities for amphibians.
Invertebrates	Hedgerows, scrub and grassland habitats provide suitable opportunities for common invertebrates in combination with adjacent habitats.	Consideration should be given to enhancing the site for invertebrates through appropriate planting and the creation of deadwood piles.

EVALUATION

Component habitat	Ecological attributes (referring to Ratcliffe criteria, 1977; Annex 4 gives the criteria)	Status (UK BAP/LBAP, legal)	Associated receptors	Overall Value (IEEM, 2006; Annex 5 gives the criteria)
Hedgerow	Naturalness Diversity	UK BAP	Badgers, bats, small mammals, nesting birds, reptiles, amphibians	Site
Woodland - Broad-leaved - Semi-natural	Naturalness Diversity	None	Badgers, bats, small mammals, nesting birds, reptiles, amphibians	Site
Scrub - Dense/continuous	Naturalness Diversity	None	Badgers, bats, small mammals, nesting birds, reptiles, amphibians	Site
Poor semi-improved grassland	Naturalness Diversity	None	Badgers, bats, small mammals, reptiles, amphibians	Site
Ditches	Naturalness Diversity	None	Foraging bats, amphibians	Site

REFERENCES/BIBLIOGRAPHY

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- National Biodiversity Network (NBN) Website Accessed at www.nbn.org.uk
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- Ratcliffe, D. (1977) A Nature Conservation Review. Volume 1. CUP
- Stace, C. (2010) New Flora of the British Isles 3rd Edition. Cambridge University Press
- TSO (2006) Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act TSO
- TSO (2010) The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) TSO

ANNEX 1: EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Web-based Desktop Study

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Survey undertaken according to Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) (2010) Handbook for Phase I Habitat Survey – a Technique for Environmental Audit. JNCC Peterborough.

The site, as defined by the client, is systematically walked and all habitats present along with their dominant flora are recorded and mapped. Where appropriate, target notes are used to highlight potential features of interest, such as provisional signs of protected or notable species, or habitat features of note. The survey considers the suitability of the habitats on site and within the accessible surroundings to support such species. Habitats are mapped using standard colour codes allowing rapid visual assessment of the extent and distribution of different habitat types.

Limitations of the Phase 1 Habitat Survey:

The survey will not record any plants or animals that may appear at other times of the year and were therefore not evident at the time of visit. Some species that might use the site or be apparent at other times of year, or only in certain years, would not have been detected.

Web-based Desktop Study

The Bing Maps website was accessed for aerial views of the site and used as a visual aid to help put the site into context with its surroundings and to identify any potential features of interest in the surrounding land.

The Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was consulted for information on statutory site designations in the area.

The National Biodiversity Network (NBN) website was also consulted for information on records of protected and notable species in the area.

Limitations of desktop study:

The desktop study can only provide information on species already recorded and cannot be taken to represent a complete overview of all species present within the search area.

References:

Bing Maps website accessed at <http://www.bing.com/maps/>

MAGIC website accessed at www.magic.gov.uk

NBN Website. Accessed at www.nbn.org.uk

Bird Habitat Suitability Assessment

A bird habitat suitability assessment was also undertaken. This survey assessed the suitability of the site to support wader bird populations (including Brent Geese), the connectivity between the site and suitable adjacent habitats.

ANNEX 2: SPECIES LIST (SPECIES RECORDED ON SITE)

Nomenclature according to Stace, C. (2010) New Flora of the British Isles 3rd Edition. Cambridge University Press.

Flora	
<u>Common name</u>	<u>Scientific name</u>
Blackthorn	<i>Prunus spinosa</i>
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>
Creeping thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>
Dock	<i>Rumex species</i>
Gorse	<i>Ulex species</i>
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>
Perennial rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>
Ragwort	<i>Senecio sp</i>
Yorkshire-fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>

ANNEX 3: LEGISLATION AND NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

Bats

All British species of bat and their places of breeding and shelter are protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) from deliberate capture, injury and killing; intentional or reckless disturbance; intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection; and deliberate damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place. This includes buildings and trees and applies throughout the year whether bats are present or not at the time of survey or work being carried out.

Although foraging areas and commuting routes are not afforded direct legal protection, the effects of development proposals on these are a material consideration in planning (NPPF and TAN5) and should be considered when assessing the impact of the proposal on the maintenance of favourable conservation status of bat species.

As protected species, bats are covered by NPPF, which states that the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when considering a planning application.

All bat species (except *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) are listed on both the Habitats Directive 1992 (transposed by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended)) and The Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention). The principal aims of the Convention are to ensure conservation and protection of wild plant and animal species and their natural habitats, to increase cooperation between contracting parties, and to regulate the exploitation of those species (including migratory species). The Convention imposes legal obligations on contracting parties, protecting over 500 wild plant species and more than 1000 wild animal species.

There are 18 species of bat found in the UK (17 species are known to breed here) and all are included in the UK BAP. Seven species are listed as priority species; priority species are those that have been identified as being most threatened and in need of conservation. It should be noted that the identification of these seven bat species as priority species does not extend throughout Britain (seven are priority species in England and three are priority species in Wales).

Of the seven species identified as priority species, five also have specific SAPs, which aim to further encourage and help population numbers.

Abbreviations: BAP – Biodiversity Action Plan; SAP – Species Action Plan; NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework; TAN – Technical Advice Note.

Badgers

Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which makes it illegal to kill, injure or take badgers or to interfere with a badger sett in any way. The Act defines a sett as 'any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger'.

As a protected species the badger is covered by NPPF, which states that the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when considering a planning application.

Badgers are included in the UK BAP. They are not listed as a priority species and are not afforded any specific SAP.

Abbreviations: BAP – Biodiversity Action Plan; SAP – Species Action Plan; NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework.

Birds

In Britain all wild birds are granted legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This legislation protects birds, their eggs, dependant young, and nests while being built or whilst in use.

Schedule 1 Bird Species

Schedule 1(1) of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) affords full protection to certain bird species. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb at or near an active nest of species on this list.

Birds of Conservation Concern

The bird species found in the UK, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man are assigned a red, amber or green category based on their conservation status:

Red List Species

Red List species are those that are globally threatened according to IUCN criteria; those whose populations or range has declined or contracted rapidly in the last 25 years by 50% or more; and those that have declined historically (between 1800 and 1995) and not shown a substantial recent recovery.

Amber List Species

Amber List Species are those with an unfavourable conservation status in Europe; those whose breeding population or range has declined or contracted moderately (25 – 49%) in recent years, or whose non-breeding populations have declined to a similar degree; those whose population has declined historically but made a substantial recent recovery; and those which are rare breeders or have internationally important or localised populations.

Green List Species

Species that fulfil none of the above criteria are green-listed.

Abbreviations: IUCN - International Union for Conservation of Nature

Reptiles

All British reptiles are partially protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), under which it is an offence to intentionally kill or injure a reptile.

All six species of British reptiles are included in the UK BAP. All six of these species are included as priority species in England, though not necessarily throughout the UK. Just one of the six species, the sand lizard, is subject to a SAP.

Abbreviations: NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework; BAP – Biodiversity Action Plan; SAP – Species Action Plan.

Amphibians

There is no special protection afforded to the four commoner species of amphibian; common frog, smooth (or common) newt, palmate newt and common toad.

The natterjack toad and great crested newt and their breeding and resting places are fully protected by both the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). It is an offence to deliberately capture, injure or kill them or damage, destroy or obstruct their resting or breeding places. It is also an offence to disturb natterjack toad and great crested newt in their resting or breeding places. This applies throughout the year whether natterjack toad or great crested newt are present or not at the time of survey or work being carried out.

Four species of amphibian are included on the UK BAP: great crested newt, pool frog, natterjack toad and common toad. All are priority species but just three are subject to SAPs.

Abbreviations: BAP – Biodiversity Action Plan; SAP – Species Action Plan.

Great Crested Newt

The great crested newt is protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) from deliberate capture, injury and killing, intentional or reckless disturbance, intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection, and deliberate damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place. This applies throughout the year whether great crested newt are present or not at the time of survey or work being carried out.

As a protected species, the great crested newt is covered by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), which states that the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when considering a planning application.

The great crested newt is listed as a priority species in the UK BAP and has a SAP.

Abbreviations: NPPF – National Planning Policy Framework; BAP – Biodiversity Action Plan; SAP – Species Action Plan.

National Planning Policy References

Reference should be made to the following documents:

England

Department for Communities and Local Government (2012) National Planning Policy Framework Department for Communities and Local Government

ODPM (2005) Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation: A Guide to Good Practice. ODPM

ODPM (2005) Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and Their Impact within the Planning System TSO

ANNEX 4: OVERALL SITE EVALUATION – RATCLIFFE CRITERIA (1977)

Ratcliffe, D. (1977) A Nature Conservation Review. Volume 1. CUP.

The criteria for evaluation have been adopted from the widely used set developed by Ratcliffe (1977). These were originally conceived to provide a systematic framework for the selection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by the Nature Conservancy Council (NCC), but have since been adopted and adapted widely by ecologists, for example in Local Authorities and Wildlife Trusts.

These criteria provide a useful basis against which to evaluate the intrinsic ecological quality of a site, but in an urban area it is also important to consider the value of an area to the local people (GLC 1985). Thus the appeal of a site, its educational and amenity value, as well as its accessibility as a wildlife area, need to be included in the evaluation.

Survey results are assessed and evaluated using these criteria as a guide. They are:

Size

In general, larger sites are more highly valued than smaller ones, all else being equal. However, relative size to similar sites and other local sites should be considered. The area of a site is also important in management terms, i.e. whether short-term neglect/disturbance or any small changes would lead to the loss of a site's interest.

Diversity

One of the most important site attributes is the variety of communities and species which is largely dependent on diversity of habitats. Large numbers of species, particularly when represented by large populations, are to be valued. Diversity can also be related to habitat instability that may affect management prescriptions.

Naturalness

Ecosystems least modified by man tend to be rated more highly. However, most sites are influenced by man, the degree and nature of which is important.

Fragility

This reflects the degree of sensitivity of habitats, communities and species to environmental change. Fragile sites often represent ecosystems that are highly fragmented, dwindling or difficult to re-create.

Typicalness

Sites/habitats that are unusual within the wider ecological unit are may be of value, similarly sites/habitats that are typical and commonplace within a field of ecological variation may also be of value.

Recorded History

The existence of a scientific record of long-standing adds considerably to the value of a site.

Permanence

A site that has been occupied by a semi-natural habitat for a long time is usually more valuable than one that has only recently arisen. This is because they have had time to acquire rich assemblages of plants and animals.

Lack of Modification

Adverse influences from humans, such as inappropriate management regimes and pollution, will reduce the quality of an area.

Rarity

Rarity is concerned with communities and habitats as well as species. The presence of rare species adds to overall ecological value especially when a habitat also ranks highly on other criteria. The habitat type too may also be nationally or regionally rare.

Position in an Ecological Unit

In the event of two sites being of equivalent intrinsic value, the close proximity of one site to a highly rated example of another type increases the value of the site. The presence of other areas of semi-natural habitat adjacent or close to a site enhances the value of both habitats.

Potential Value

Certain sites could, through appropriate management or even natural change, eventually develop a nature conservation interest substantially greater than that existing at present.

Intrinsic Appeal

While science may view all creatures as equal, pragmatism dictates that in nature conservation it is realistic to give more weight to the more popular appeal of some species, groups or habitats than others.

ANNEX 5: DEFINING ECOLOGICAL VALUES FOR COMPONENT HABITATS – IEEM (2006)

The examples contained in the table below are only for general guidance and other considerations may apply, e.g. features of low value in isolation but which are subject to cumulative national decline may be afforded higher values in certain circumstances.

Level of Ecological Value	Examples of Criteria
International	• An internationally designated site or candidate site (SPA, pSPA, SAC, cSAC, Ramsar site, Biogenetic Reserve) • A sustainable area of a habitat listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive, or smaller areas of such habitat that are essential to maintain the viability of a larger whole • A sustainable population of an internationally important species, e.g. a UK Red Data Book species, species listed under categories 1 or 2 of the UK BAP, or listed under Annex IV of the Habitats Directive • Sites supporting a breeding population of internationally important species or supplying a critical element of their habitat requirements
National	• A nationally designated site (SSSI, ASSI, NNR, MNR) or a discrete area that meets the selection criteria for national designation (e.g. SSSI selection guidelines) • A sustainable area of a priority habitat identified in the UK BAP, or smaller areas of such habitat that are essential to maintain the viability of a larger whole • A sustainable population of a nationally important species or a site supporting such a species, i.e. a species listed on Schedules 5 and 8 of the W&CA (as amended) which is a UK Red Data Book species that is not listed as being of unfavourable conservation status in Europe, of uncertain conservation status or of global concern in the UK BAP • A non-Red Data Book species that is listed as occurring in 15 or fewer 10km squares in the UK (categories 1 and 2 of the UK BAP). Also sites supporting a breeding population of such a species or supplying a critical element of their habitat requirements
Regional	• Sustainable areas of key habitat identified in the relevant Regional BAP or smaller areas of such

Level of Ecological Value	Examples of Criteria
	habitat that are essential to maintain the viability of a larger whole • Sustainable areas of key habitat identified as being of Regional Value in the appropriate Natural Areas profile • A population of a species listed as being nationally scarce (i.e. occurring in 16 - 100 10km squares in the UK, or in a Regional BAP or relevant Natural Area on account of its regional rarity or localisation. Sites supporting a breeding population of such a species or supplying a critical element of their habitat requirements • Sites, which exceed the County-level designations but fall short of SSSI selection guidelines, where these occur
County/ Metropolitan	• Semi-natural ancient woodland greater than 0.25 ha • County/Metropolitan sites and other sites which meet the ecological selection criteria for designation • A sustainable area of habitat identified in a county BAP • A population of a species that is listed in a county/metropolitan 'red data book' or BAP on account of its regional rarity or localisation. Also sites supporting a breeding population of such a species or supplying a critical element of their habitat requirements
District	• Semi-natural ancient woodland smaller than 0.25 ha • Sustainable areas of habitat identified in a sub-county (district/borough) BAP or in the relevant Natural Area profile • Sites/features that are scarce within the district/borough or which appreciably enrich the district/borough habitat resource • A diverse and/or ecologically valuable hedgerow network • A population of a species that is listed in a district/borough BAP because of its rarity in the locality or in the relevant Natural Area profile because of its regional rarity or localisation. Also sites supporting a breeding population of such a species or supplying a critical element of their requirements
Local	• Areas of habitat considered to appreciably enrich the habitat resource within the context of the Parish

Level of Ecological Value	Examples of Criteria
	or local neighbourhood, e.g. isolated species-rich hedgerows
Site	• Small patches of poor semi-improved grassland, amenity grassland not used by badgers
Negligible	• Areas of little current or potential ecological value