



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

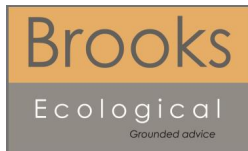
Land off Cobblers Lane, Pontefract

Report reference: R-3738-01

October 2018

Report Title:	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report Land off Cobblers Lane, Pontefract
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Non-technical Summary

This report is produced to inform the client (Mr N Dando) of potential ecological constraints associated with the Proposed Development Site.

Methodology

The report is based on a Desk Study of designated wildlife sites and records of protected or notable species, and an extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey carried out in October 2018.

Findings Key-Points

The site is of low conservation value.

The railway line to the north is likely to be of importance to the movement of wildlife and standard precaution is recommended to minimise indirect impacts from lighting.

Mammal holes along the northern boundary should be subject to remote monitoring to assess whether or not they are used by badgers. If badgers are present it may have a design impact.

Introduction

1. Brooks Ecological Ltd was commissioned by Mr N Dando carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of land off Cobblers Lane in Pontefract, Wakefield, Grid Ref. SE 470 226.
2. This report is produced with reference to British Standard BS42020 'Biodiversity Code of Practice for Planning and Development' and the CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

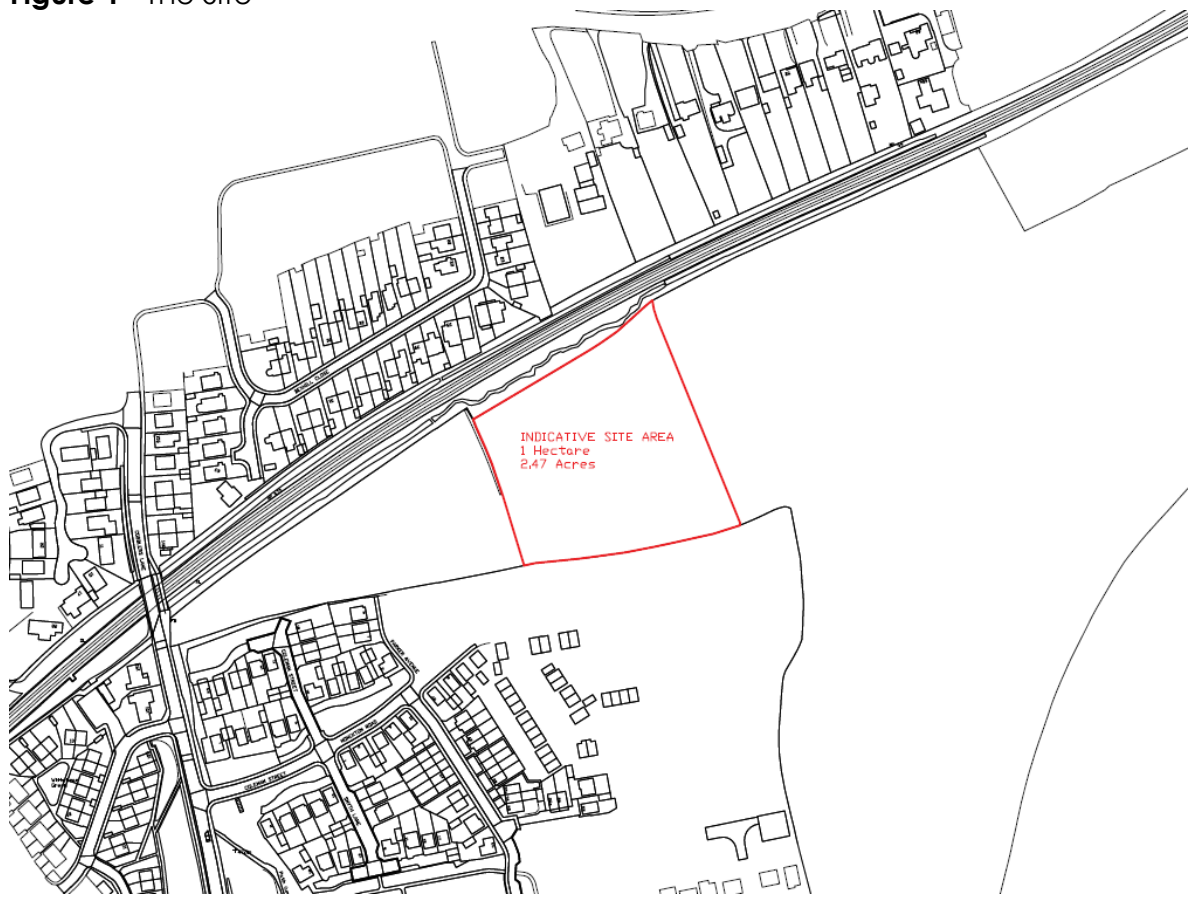
Purpose of a PEA

3. A PEA is an *initial assessment* of the baseline for a proposed development site and establishes whether the Site is likely to be constrained by ecology, and whether more information is needed to identify the ecological baseline.
4. The subsequent Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (PEAR) is intended to give early guidance to a developer and assist with the early stages of project planning and design. Where a site is not complex or constrained, and no additional ecological input is necessary the PEAR may be sufficient and suitable to support a planning application.

Scope

5. The proposed development site 'the Site' encompasses a single small arable field, positioned along the eastern edge of Pontefract. It is defined in figure 1 overleaf.
6. The assessment uses a 2km area of search around the Site for records of protected and notable species and locally or nationally designated wildlife sites.

Figure 1 The Site



Site Context

7. The Site is located along the eastern edge of Pontefract, with immediate boundaries including an active railway line to the north, an active (residential) construction site to the south and similar arable land to the east and west.
8. At a wider scale, the Site is surrounded predominately by built development to the north and west, which becomes progressively denser as the centre of Pontefract is approached, and arable farmland to the east and south. To the east, the farmland soon gives way to the M62 and A1(M), and further development beyond (Knottingley).

Wildlife corridors

9. The steep vegetated embankments of the adjacent railway line represent the only potential wildlife corridor that shares any functional linkage with the Site. This abuts the northern boundary and passes roughly southwest-northeast through Pontefract and beneath the nearby M62/A1(M). Several other railway lines pass through the area, with most of these converging c.1.3km to the northeast.

Figure 2 Analysis of wildlife corridors (white line) in relation to the Site (red line)



Water bodies

10. There are no ponds on Site or none are shown on mapping within a 500m radius of the boundaries.

Designated Sites

Statutory Designations

11. A search has been made to identify any nationally designated sites within a 2km radius of the Site, and for internationally designated sites within a 10km radius.
12. There are no statutory designated sites within these search parameters.

SSSI Impact Risk Zones (IRZs)

13. The Site lies within the 3-5km IRZ for Fairburn and Newton Ings SSSI but does not fall into one of the highlighted categories which requires consultation between the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and Natural England (NE). The development is of a scale and nature which is unlikely to impact on this SSSI.

Non-Statutory Designations

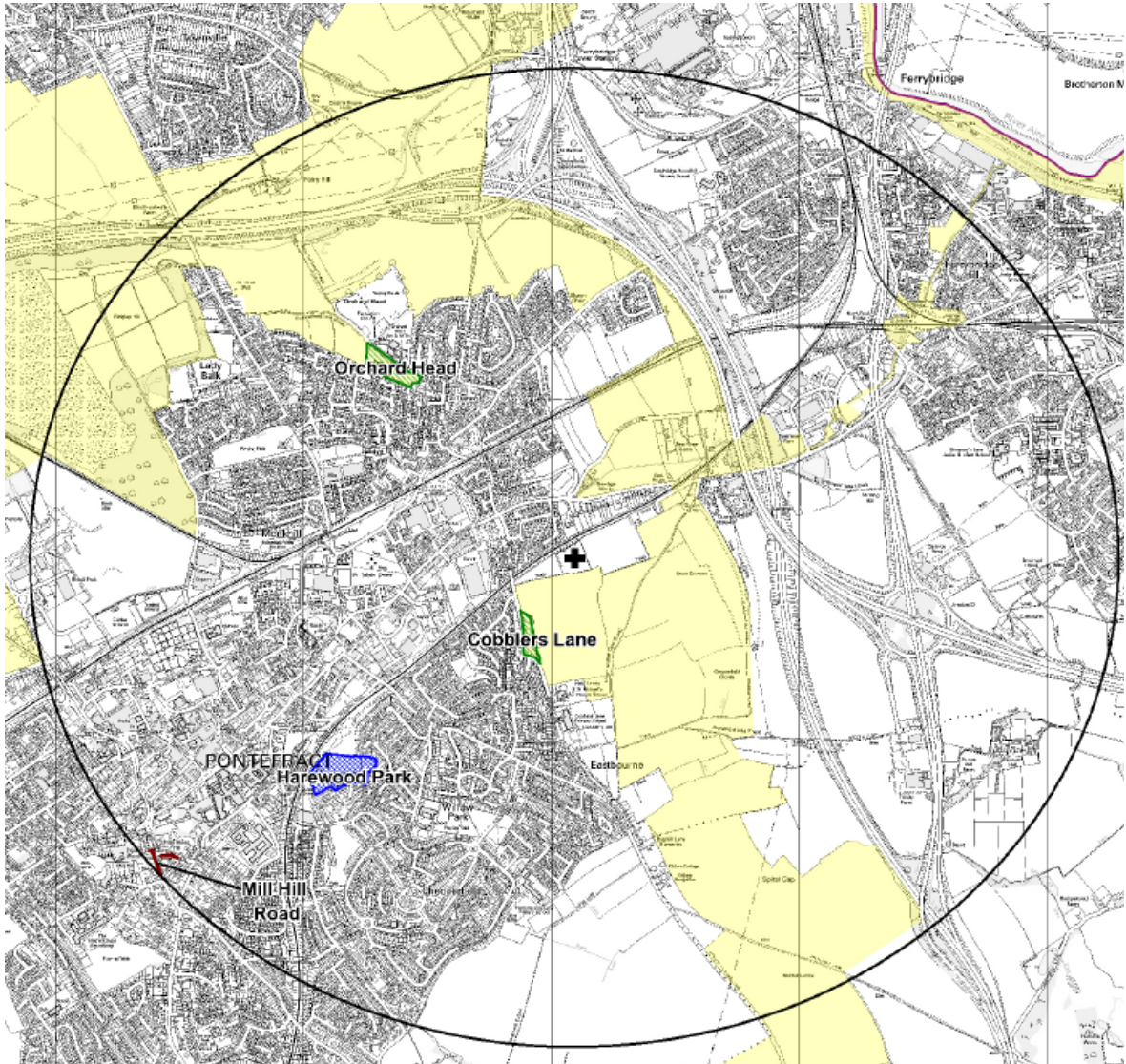
14. There are four locally designated sites within a 2km radius, although only three of these are designated due to ecological interest. These are:
 - Harewood Park Local Wildlife Site (LWS) Wakefield LWS (WLWS), c.1.1km SW
 - Cobblers Lane WLWS, c.220m SW
 - Orchard Head WLWS, c.880m NW
15. All these locally designated Site's are sufficiently distant and separate to remain unaffected by the Site's development.
16. The closest site – Cobblers Lane WLWS – is designated on the grounds of it supporting a community of tussocky unimproved magnesian limestone grassland and scattered scrub. Impacts of this WLWS will have been fully considered in granting planning permission for the large new housing estate currently under construction between the Site and Cobblers Lane.
17. It is assumed that long term ecological management of this area will have been agreed as part of the planning permission, to minimise indirect impacts from increased footfall/ dog fouling.

Wakefield Wildlife Habitat Network (WWHN)

18. As can be seen in Figure 3 overleaf, the Site does not fall within the area marked by the WWHN, but is bound by part of it to the south. However, this land to the south is now currently under construction, with the strip of public open green space (which will now act as the closest section of the WWHN to the Site) being positioned within the centre of the development, isolated from the Site by new housing.

19. Proposals to development the Site would therefore not be expected to impact on the integrity of the WWHN; and similarly, the Site is now sufficiently disconnected from the WWHN that there are no meaningful opportunities to enhance the networks connective function.

Figure 3 Locally designated sites provided by WYE. The WWHN is marked in yellow.



Habitats

Method

20. The survey was carried out during October 2018¹ and followed Phase 1 habitat survey methodology (JNCC, 2010).

Limitations

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

Results

22. The following habitats were identified within the Site and on its immediate boundaries:
 - Arable land
 - Railway embankments

Arable land

23. The Site is occupied entirely by arable land, which continues seamlessly offsite to the east and west. Thin field margins, less than 0.5m wide, run along both the north and south boundaries, vegetated with a typical mix of coarse grasses and tall ruderal herbs. Species noted include false oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), common hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) and white dead-nettle (*Lamium album*), with bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and dog rose (*Rosa* sp.) scrub being fairly abundant along the northern boundary.
24. Temporary Herras fencing demarcates the southern boundary, beyond which is an active building site. To the north, the boundary is marked by more robust metal security fencing, with the steep rocky embankments of the railway line just beyond.

¹ This Report has been prepared during October 2018 following a visit to the site in October 2018 and our findings are based on the conditions of the site that were reasonably visible and accessible at that date. We accept no liability for any areas that were not reasonably visible or accessible, nor for any subsequent alteration, variation or deviation from the site conditions which affect the conclusions set out in this report.

**Figure 4**

Looking northeast across the Site from the southwest corner.

Railway embankment

25. Growing along the top of the embankment, to the north of the Site, is a typical community of self-set scrubby vegetation. This is dominated by a mix of sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), goat willow (*Salix caprea*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), elder (*Sambucus nigra*), dog rose (*Rosa* sp.) and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*).
26. Further along the embankments, the vegetation fluctuates between rough neutral grassland, tall ruderal herbs and similar woody scrub.

**Figure 5**

Looking east along the northern boundary.



Figure 6

View along the railway line showing the tall steep embankments.

Photo taken from the bridge on Cobbler Lane.

Invasive Non-Native Species

27. No species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) were noted at the Site during the survey².

Fauna

Badgers

28. During the walkover survey, approximately 7 or 8 medium-sized mammal holes were identified along the northern boundary, dotted within the arable field margin and extending onto the adjoining railway embankment (see figure 7 overleaf).
29. Many of these entrances were of a size and shape that could be attributed to badger, and several clear trackways lead under the fencing; however, no hairs, footprints or other field signs could be detected anywhere along this boundary or within the wider Site. All the holes had begun to accumulate leaf litter, clearly indicating that none had not been in recent use and it is possible that these holes represent a partially used outlier sett.
30. West Yorkshire Ecology has returned a number of confidential badger records, which show that several badger setts are known to be present within a kilometre of the Site – although none relate to the Site or railway embankment.

² Note while our ecologists are trained in the identification of invasive species this report is not a dedicated invasive species survey. Detectability of invasive plant species is seasonally variable so, whilst every effort is made, conclusive determination of presence or absence is not always possible through preliminary survey. As the presence of invasive species can generate significant costs to development the client may wish to instruct a dedicated invasive species survey prior to entering into contracts.

Figure 7 Example mammal hole (left) and trackway under fencing (right)



Bats

31. No buildings or trees are present on Site, and none of the trees growing along the railway embankment were found to contain any potential roost features.
32. The Site is occupied entirely by habitat of negligible value to foraging bats and development is very unlikely to impact significantly on any local bat populations. The adjacent railway line could be of importance for commuting bats and standard precaution is recommended to minimise impacts on this feature.

Amphibians

33. A small number of great crested newt records have been returned for the search area, all relating to sites over 1.5km west and 1.7km northwest. These populations are well outside the range GCN would be expected to disperse and are separated by major barriers to movement.
34. No ponds are present on Site and none are shown on mapping as being present within a 500m radius. Based on an absence of potential breeding habitat, the likely absence of GCN from Site can be reasonably concluded and no further survey is considered necessary.

Birds

35. Given its small size, proximity to housing and poor habitat structure, the Site is unlikely to be of any significant value to any local bird populations.
36. The Site could support very low numbers of nesting birds during the main breeding season, and standard precaution is recommended during initial Site preparation.

Key Findings

37. The Site is occupied entirely by habitat of low conservation significance, which would not represent a constraint to development.
38. Scrubby vegetation growing along the embankments of the adjacent railway line could be of importance to the movement of local wildlife, especially for nocturnal groups such as bats. Direct impacts on this feature would not be expected, however, indirect impacts from increased light pollution could degrade this feature's connective function. A sensitive lighting strategy should therefore be produced which directs all artificial lighting away from the northern boundary and demonstrates how light spill can be kept to a minimum.
39. Several holes have been identified along the northern boundary, which could be attributed to badger. Further survey will be required prior to works commencing to confirm whether these are used by badgers.

Early Design Considerations

40. The NPPF makes it imperative that sites are designed according to the 'mitigation hierarchy'; Avoid - Mitigate - Compensate. Avoidance is the key first stage and designs must show that they have avoided important receptors if possible. Mitigation, and as a last resort, Compensation will only be appropriate where there are clearly no alternatives and a strong planning argument will be needed in these cases.
41. The Site is of very low conservation value with no significant design constraints. However, to strengthen the railway's function as a wildlife corridor and minimise any indirect impacts from development, it is recommended that a strip of greenspace be retained along the northern boundary and planted up with a mix of native trees and shrubs. This will also allow room to manage the risk of disturbance offences to badgers should they be found to be present.

Standard Precautions

42. To prevent the proposed works impacting on nesting birds, any clearance of vegetation will need to be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season which is 1st March – 31st August inclusive. Any clearance that is required during the breeding bird season should be preceded by a nesting bird survey to ensure that the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) is not contravened through the destruction of nests and that any active nests are identified and adequately protected during the construction phase of the development.

Further Surveys

43. Additional surveys considered necessary to support planning, or to help produce a layout are set out in table 2. The results of these surveys may have an implication on layout and should be carried out as early in the project as possible.

Table 2 Additional survey recommended

Guidance provided by Clause 8 BS:42020 and ODPM circular 06/05 (2005) makes it clear that proposals and planning decisions should be informed by sufficient information - this is particularly the case in respect of European Protected Species (EPS).		
Survey	Rationale	Timing
Badger monitoring	A remote camera trap should be deployed in a strategic location along the northern boundary to confirm whether or not the mammal holes are used by badgers.	Prior to fixing a layout.

* Information on relevant legislation is provided in Appendix 3 of the report

BS42020 Further Ecological Output

45. We have made no substantive recommendations and as such no other reports are considered necessary.

Ecological Enhancement

46. The requirement for development to make a positive contribution to biodiversity is clearly set out guidance such as the NPPF and BS:42020 - beyond mitigating or compensating any potential impacts.
47. A BS:42020 Ecological Design Strategy should be produced which in this case will detail:
- the provision of native planting and buffer habitat along the northern boundary
 - the provision of bird and bat boxes to provides new nest/roost opportunities.

Protected Species Method Statement

48. Should badgers be proven to be active here, the Site's development is likely to require a protected species method statement to show how the risks of offences under the Protection of Badgers Act can be managed.

Appendices

1. Explanatory Notes and Resources
2. Information on legislation / protection

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Appendix 1 Explanatory Notes and Resources Used

Site Context

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

Designated Sites

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

Functional linkage with off-Site habitats

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

- Hydrological links - is the Site upstream downstream, or could ground water issues affect it?
- Physical links - is the site in close proximity and could it be directly or indirectly affected by construction and operational effects? Conversely it may be that despite proximity major barriers separate the two.
- Recreational links - Do footpaths and roads make it likely that increased recreational pressure could be felt?
- Habitat links - Is the site part of a network of similar habitat types in the wider area? These could be joined by linear corridors or could simply be 'stepping stones of habitat of similar form or function.

Wakefield Wildlife Habitat Network

The Wakefield Habitat Network is referred to in Development Policies – Adopted, Policy D6 – so is afforded a level of protection - but this should be in relation to being able to maintain physical linkages for wildlife.

Policy D 6

Wildlife Habitat Network

Development that would adversely affect the integrity and value of the Wildlife Habitat Network across the district or the movement of flora and/or fauna species will only be permitted if it can be demonstrated that reasons of public interest for the development clearly outweigh any significant harm. Proposals for development shall make provision for the retention of the network and protection of its wildlife links and ecological conservation value. Where development is permitted the Council will require developers to:

- a. minimise disturbance;
- b. protect and enhance the site's ecological conservation value;
- c. contribute towards the objectives of the Wakefield District Biodiversity Action Plan;
- d. ensure appropriate management; and
- e. create new or replacement habitats equal to or above the current ecological value of the site if damage or loss is unavoidable.

Method

Phase 1 habitat survey methodology (JNCC, 2010). This involves walking the site, mapping and describing different habitats (for example: woodland, grassland, scrub). The survey method was "Extended" in that evidence of fauna and faunal habitat was also recorded (for example droppings, tracks or specialist habitat such as ponds for breeding amphibians). This modified approach to the Phase 1 survey is in accordance with the approach recommended by the Guidelines for Baseline Ecological Assessment (IEA, 1995) and Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM 2012).

Faunal appraisal

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

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

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

Bat roosting potential is classified according to the following criteria set out below, taken from the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines (2016).

Bat Roosting Suitability of Buildings and Trees

Suitability	Criteria
<i>Negligible</i>	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.
<i>Low</i>	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions, and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by a larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.
<i>Moderate</i>	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only - the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
<i>High</i>	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protections, conditions and surrounding habitats.

Evaluation

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

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

There are a number of tools available to aid this consideration, including established frameworks such as Ratcliffe Criteria or concepts such as Favourable Conservation Status. Also of help is reference to

Biodiversity Action Plans in the form of the Local BAP and Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) to determine if the site supports any Priority habitats or presents any opportunities in this respect.

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

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

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

Species/group

Bats
Harvest Mouse
Water Vole
Brown Hare
Water Shrew
Otter
Badger
Bittern
Grey Heron
Teal
Shoveler
Pochard
Grey Partridge
Water Rail
Kestrel
Sparrowhawk
Little Ringed Plover
Lapwing
Snipe
Curlew
Common Tern
Turtle Dove
Barn Owl

Long Eared Owl

Kingfisher
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker
Swift
Skylark
Sand Martin
Swallow
Yellow Wagtail
Song Thrush
Grasshopper Warbler
Reed Warbler
Spotted Flycatcher
Tree sparrow
Hawfinch
Reed bunting
Corn bunting
Yellowhammer
Willow Tit

Cetti's warbler
Grass snake
Common lizard
Common frog
Common toad
Great crested newt
Palmate newt
Invertebrates
White clawed crayfish
Wild service tree
Needle spike-rush
Large flowered/round leaved wintergreen
Wood small-reed
Purple milk vetch
Pendulous flowered helleborine
Pyramidal orchid
Fly orchid
Spindle tree
Field garlic
Wild privet
Bluebell

Habitat

Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
Rivers
Lakes
Ponds
Canals
Reedbeds
Marsh
Wet woodland
Lowland calcareous grassland
Lowland meadows
Low land dry acidic grassland
Lowland heathland
Hedgerows
Brownfield sites and disused railways
Urban, suburban and other built up areas including gardens
Walls and quarry faces
Scrub

Appendix 2 Wildlife Legislation, Policy and Guidance

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

Legislation

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

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

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

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

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010)

This transposes 1) into UK law and provides the basis on which all EPS are protected and impacts on them can be licensed in the UK.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended

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

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW)

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

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC)

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

Hedgerows Regulations (1997)

Define and provide protection for Important Hedgerows.

Protection of Badgers Act (1992)

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

Protected Sites

Statutory EU / International Protected Sites

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

Statutory UK Protected Sites

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

Locally Protected Sites

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

Protected Species

European Protected Species

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

UK Protected Species

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

Invasive species

Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended, lists these species and makes it an offence to cause or allow their spread in the wild. This often has impacts on development and planning in relation to the presence of invasive plant species such as: himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*).

Planning Policy / Guidance

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework was updated in July 2018. The most relevant paragraphs from the NPPF are set out below.

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

Section 11 of the NPPF details making effective use of land. The Framework states that planning policies and decisions should "*take opportunities to achieve net environmental gains – such as developments that would enable new habitat creation*" and should "*recognise that some undeveloped land can perform functions for wildlife*" (P118).

Section 15 details conserving and enhancing the natural environment; policies and decisions should be "*protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity value*", "*recognise the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside*" and contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution (P170). Allocations of land for development should, "*prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework and take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats*" (P171).

The Framework sets out ways to minimise the impacts on biodiversity through "*identifying, mapping and safeguarding components of local wildlife rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity*" and the "*conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and (the need to) identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity*" (P174).

It is made clear in P175 that local planning authorities should apply principles when determining planning applications. Planning permission should be refused "*if significant harm to biodiversity resulting in development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for*". Development should not normally be permitted where an adverse effect on a SSSI is likely and "*opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity*".

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

This strategy builds on the Natural Environment White Paper (June 2011) - Setting out the current UK Government's approach to nature conservation. It promotes a more coherent and inclusive approach to conservation and the valuing in economic and social terms of economic resources.

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

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

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

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

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