FOREST HEATH WILDLIFE AUDIT
Proposed site allocations
2015

Project no.	*Report*	*Date*
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Prepared by		
Simone Bullion MCIEEM James Meyer Alison Looser		

Suffolk Wildlife Trust

Prepared by:
SWT Trading Ltd
Brooke House
Ashbocking,
Ipswich
IP6 9JY

Prepared for:
Forest Heath District Council
West Suffolk House
Western Way
Bury St Edmunds
IP33 3YU

Sensitive ecological data may has been removed from these audit reports

1.0 INTRODUCTION

SWT Trading Ltd: Ecological Consultants, the wholly owned company of Suffolk Wildlife Trust (SWT), was commissioned by Forest Heath District Council in 2015 to carry out a Wildlife Audit of proposed development sites within the District. An initial list of 202 sites was drawn up by the Council which was subsequently amended.

Surveys commenced in May 2015 and continued until autumn 2015. The survey protocol conformed to Extended Phase 1 and the information was presented as individual site reports using a standardised reporting form including a Phase 1 map and photographs. The presence, or likely presence, of Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and species and also protected species was recorded. Information was also provided under various broad taxonomic groups, including flora, avifauna, invertebrates, herpetofauna and mammals. In addition, the structural diversity each habitat and the connectivity of sites within the overall ecological network across the Borough was assessed. Recommendations were provided for further survey work.

2.0 OBJECTIVES

The aim of the surveys was:

- To undertake an Extended Phase 1 habitat survey for all the identified sites during the 2012 or 2013 survey seasons;
- To provide information and a description of the wildlife interest for each site;
- To map specified habitat types, using standard colour codes for each site including a breakdown of habitat types within it;
- To list species including protected species or evidence of their presence, BAP species and habitats, remark on biodiversity and appraise the nature conservation value;
- For those sites with previous survey data available, to take these findings into account;
- To rank sites in terms of wildlife value with which to evaluate sites;
- To provide an electronic photographic record of the sites;
- To provide a written report of results and recommendations for any necessary compliance or requirements for further survey.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

In order to achieve the overall aims of the project the following tasks were undertaken:

- Existing digital information for each site was collated using data provided by Suffolk Biological Records Centre and from 1:10,000 maps and aerial photographs.
- Each site was surveyed and a record made of its conservation value, with the exception of those sites identified as small gardens or where no access could be obtained.

- Photographs were taken of relevant features within the sites, both geotagged and digital high quality images.
- Criteria and a ranking system were used to evaluate sites.
- Comments were made on habitats/species of wildlife interest.
- Ecological issues were highlighted.
- Recommendations for further surveys were provided as appropriate.
- The sites were mapped with Phase 1 colour codes using BosqMap software.

3.1 Criteria for site evaluation

At each site the following was recorded:

- **Location:** Site name, number and grid reference;
- **Size:** the size was noted in hectares (ha);
- **Survey details:** Date, surveyor, weather conditions;
- **Phase 1 map and photos;**
- **Status**: Designation, ranking and overall wildlife value;
- **Habitat type:** distinct, dominant habitat types were briefly detailed;
- **Subsidiary habitat:** this included additional habitats of particular note such as dead wood;
- **Site description:** a detailed account of the site;
- **Connectivity:** if a site linked to other green corridors, this was noted and described in detail where relevant. The juxtaposition of other proposed sites was also considered;
- **Structural diversity:** the differing vegetation structure (height) providing a variation in niche potential for a wide range of taxa was described for each site if relevant;
- **Protected species:** these were noted if recorded, or if previously recorded;
- **Protected species potential:** this was noted if the habitat was deemed suitable for named protected species;
- **Priority species:** these were noted if seen, or if previously recorded. NB: if the species is a 'protected species' and a 'priority species', then it was only listed under protected species;
- **Priority species potential**: this was noted if the habitat was deemed suitable for priority species;
- **Priority habitats:** these were noted if present;
- **Flora, avifauna, herpetofauna, mammals, invertebrates etc:** species seen or recorded were noted and habitat which offered potential for specific taxa was noted;
- **Comments and recommendations:** overall impressions of each site were noted and further survey work was recommended where relevant;
- **References:** these were included when it was appropriate to reference other surveys.

Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) species and habitats: In 2012 the 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework' succeeded the UK BAP and 'Conserving Biodiversity – the UK Approach'. This was the result of a change in strategic thinking following the publication of the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD's) 'Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011–2020' and its 20 'Aichi

targets', at Nagoya, Japan in October 2010 and the launch of the new EU Biodiversity Strategy (EUBS) in May 2011. Much of the work previously carried out under the UK BAP is now focussed at a country level via the creation of biodiversity strategies. However, the UK BAP lists of priority species and habitats remain important and valuable reference sources. Notably, they have been used to help draw up statutory lists of priorities which in turn inform the local plans which have been produced for those priority species and habitats occurring in Suffolk (Suffolk Local Biodiversity Action Plans). In addition, several other habitats and species that are important with a Suffolk context have been identified and termed 'Suffolk Character Plans'.

Protected species: species protected by law under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended), The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) (as amended) and the Protection of Badgers Act (1992).

3.2 System of site ranking

A system of ranking each site from the information gathered during surveys was established, using a simple numbering method. Numbers 1-6 were used (1 = high, 6 = low).

1 Statutory designation e.g. SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest) scheduled under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended).
2 Non-statutory designation e.g. County Wildlife Site (CWS). CWSs are sites regarded as important in a county/regional context.
3 Non-statutory designation e.g. Local Wildlife Site (LWS), priority species and habitats (except those that are locally common e.g. song thrush) and/or species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended).
4 No designation but clearly of value due to size, connectivity, species diversity, potential for priority and protected species and locally common priority and protected species.
5 No designation but has some natural capital: is in character with the area (e.g. woodland), provides limited connectivity.
6 No designation and of no conservation value.

Site Ranking 1: Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs): the most important sites for wildlife within a national context. The criteria used to assess such sites have been developed by English Nature (now Natural England).

Site Ranking 2: County Wildlife Sites (CWSs): these sites have a high priority for protection. Although there is currently no statutory protection, all of Suffolk's local authorities have included a policy in their local plans to protect CWSs from development. The criteria used to assess CWSs have been developed by Suffolk Wildlife Trust, Suffolk County Council, Natural England and Suffolk Biological Records Centre (SBRC) (The County Wildlife Site panel). The information is available on the Suffolk Biodiversity Partnership website: http://www.suffolkbiodiversity.org/wildlife-sites.aspx accessed 23/02/16.

Site Ranking 3: sites which do not fulfil the criteria for SSSI or CWS status but have a high conservation value. In some districts these are designated as 'Local Wildlife Sites' when they

are situated within urban areas. These sites comprise the best examples of different habitats or are important for a particular species and are assessed of the following criteria:

- Non-recreatability. The sites must have some degree of naturalness.
- Diversity and presence of indicator species. Sites that are less diverse than CWSs will be included. For example, grassland that is not a remnant of old meadow but has a good number of grass and herb species. Areas dominated by amenity grassland will not be included.
- Rarity. Sites that contain habitats, plants and animals that are rare within the town but may be common throughout the county are included here.
- Potential value. These sites may have greater value once appropriate conservation management work is carried out. Some sites that could benefit from habitat creation are included, but only those that already have some conservation value.
- Size. There is no minimum size but sites that do not have a great diversity of species or habitats and contain no rare species are unlikely to be included if they are less than 0.25 hectares.
- Woodland. Normally such sites are secondary woodland as all ancient woods are designated as CWSs. The exceptions are small sites that may contain remnants of ancient woodland within woods of more recent origin. All secondary woodlands with a reasonably diverse ground flora or containing some old woodland indicator species are included. Woodland strips and shelter belts are not usually included unless they fulfil the criteria of having a reasonably diverse ground flora. Any sites containing exceptionally old trees are included because of their wildlife value.
- Scrub. Scrub is particularly important for breeding birds and invertebrates, particularly when it is adjacent to grassland and mature trees.
- Grassland. Areas of grassland of some diversity that do not qualify as CWSs are included. These may represent recently established grasslands and areas of amenity grassland where soil type and management favour a more species-rich sward. Freshwater. Freshwater sites can include rivers, streams, ditches and ponds. Sites which contain a reasonable variety of aquatic or marginal plants are included, as are those with good populations of amphibians.
- Created habitats. Some sites which have developed from former arable or industrial use have a high diversity of species or are important for a particular species.
- Species. Sites are included if they provide important habitat for one or more of the following groups: invertebrates, amphibians and reptiles, birds and mammals. This includes priority species and habitats (except those that are locally common e.g. song thrush) and/or species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended). Note: where species are of sufficient rarity or where there are exceptional populations, sites may be designated as CWSs or SSSIs.

Site Ranking 4 Other Sites of Nature Conservation Interest: sites which are less important for wildlife but still retain a degree of naturalness. Locally common priority species such as song thrush may be present and also locally common protected species such as reptiles. However, this ranking applies only in cases of low numbers of a single species and not significant populations of one or more species (see LWS and CWSs). In addition, these sites often provide valuable stepping stones and wildlife corridors along which species can travel between sites.

Site Ranking 5: Areas that have limited value for wildlife:
These may include arable fields or regularly mown amenity grassland with some features of wildlife value, such as some boundary hedgerows or rough grass margins.

Site Ranking 6: Areas that have no or very limited value for wildlife: These may include built areas, large arable fields, other disturbed ground or regularly mown amenity grassland with no other semi-natural features.

3.3 Biodiversity value

Linked to the ranking system is a broad approach to describing whether a site was of high, medium or low biodiversity value:

1-2 High conservation value: These sites include designated sites such as SSSIs and CWSs. It may also include undesignated sites where it is recommended that they should be assessed by the CWS Panel as to whether they meet the criteria for designation.

3-4 Medium conservation value: These are undesignated sites which have a known wildlife value and contribute to the overall ecological network.

5-6 Low conservation value: These sites have limited wildlife value. However, a change in future management or additional enhancement may result in an increase in ecological value and a change in site ranking.

4 SUPPLEMENTARY INFORMATION

4.1 Site coverage and distribution

Although the original site list included 202 sites, a number of sites were subsequently removed from the list by FHDC. The list was subsequently modified to exclude sites which represented small gardens or groups of small gardens combined together. Access was obtained to most sites.

The final numbers of sites visited are as follows:

Beck Row	23
Brandon	18
Exning	5
Kentford	11
Lakenheath	19
Mildenhall	27
Newmarket	19
Red Lodge	18
West Row	21

4.2 Gardens proposed as potential site allocations (not surveyed)

Where small gardens or groups of small were proposed as potential development sites, these were not surveyed. Instead, a statement has been prepared below to encompass the range of ecological features likely to be found in gardens within the Forest Heath district. The sub-headings broadly relate to those used within the site surveys.

The following sites fall into this category of unsurveyed garden(s):
Beck Row: BR/04
Brandon B/02, B/03, B,04, B/05, B/07, B/16, B/25
Exning: E/07, E/09
Lakenheath: L/03, L/06, L/10
Mildenhall: M/03, M/04, M/05, M/06, M/07, M31
Newmarket: N/07
Red Lodge: RL/01, partial RL/02, RL03
West Row: partial WR/17, WR/20, WR/32

4.2.1 Site description for gardens:

This statement relates to a range of gardens of varying size and composition associated with residential buildings within the audit area. Whilst each site is different, some of these gardens are likely to contain remnants or small areas of valuable habitat which have intrinsic wildlife value and others may be managed to encourage wildlife. Mature or established sites provide nesting, feeding, breeding, over-wintering and refuge opportunities for a wide range of species. Some will contain features which enhance the wildlife value of the garden further such as ponds, or incorporate specific micro-habitats such as insect 'homes' for bees or ladybirds, bird boxes or log piles which have been installed to encourage wildlife. Others contain features of which certain species or groups will utilize, such as raised paving slabs, compost heaps or grass piles, which, although not specifically installed for wildlife, will provide refuges.

4.2.2 Habitat type(s) in gardens:

Residential gardens may contain elements or remnants of a number of habitats including grassland (many of which are of sandy or chalky soil and of Breckland character), scrub, hedgerow, ponds, secondary woodland and orchard.

4.2.3 Subsidiary habitats in gardens:

Residential gardens may contain numerous features of this type: Deadwood, individual mature trees, native herbs and grasses and additional features found in species-rich wildlife gardens such as compost areas, grass heaps, and insect-attracting plants.

4.2.4 Protected species seen or known:

The garden sites within the remit of this audit have not been surveyed individually. However, a number of protected species have been recorded within the survey area of the audit and therefore have the potential for being present in the gardens highlighted, as detailed below.

4.2.5 Protected species potential:
Slow-worm
Grass snake
Common lizard
Great crested newt

Water vole

4.2.6 Priority habitats present:
Features of small remnants of the following priority habitats may potentially be present:
Lowland Heathland & Acid Grassland
Hedgerows
Ponds
Traditional orchards

4.2.7 Priority species seen or known:
Whilst the garden sites within the remit of this audit have not been surveyed individually, some of the species recorded within the parishes covered will have been present within the garden sites and others will have the potential for being present, as detailed below.

4.2.8 Priority species potential:
The species with potential to be found within or associated with the garden sites include the following, although this list is not exhaustive:

Birds: Swift, Song thrush, Starling, Dunnock, House sparrow, Bullfinch, Spotted flycatcher.

Mammals: Hedgehog, Soprano pipistrelle bat, Brown long-eared bat.

Herpetofauna: Common toad, Common frog, Smooth newt, great crested newt, common lizard, slow worm and grass snake.

Invertebrates: Garden tiger butterfly, Wall butterfly, Small emerald moth, White ermine moth, Large garden bumblebee, Red-shanked carder bee.

Scarce or uncommon plants (not priority species but of interest): Common cudweed

4.2.9 Connectivity:
Whilst each of the garden sites may be individually quite isolated from each other, the potential wildlife value of a garden increases significantly if it is adjacent to a wildlife-rich site or habitat functioning as a corridor connecting it to other areas of semi-natural habitat. Similarly, the close proximity of a wildlife-rich garden can increase the likelihood of a site maintaining viable populations, particularly of the more mobile species.

4.2.10 Structural diversity:
A range in structural diversity across garden sites is provided by grasses, herbs, shrubs, climbing plants and trees, offering opportunities for members of all species group. Further diversity is provided on a smaller, topographical scale by other features and micro-habitats,

such as deadwood, long grass, ant hills, paving slabs, compost heaps and grass piles.

4.2.11 Flora:
A wide diversity of flora can be found in gardens, from mosses, lichens and fungi to fully mature native trees. These offer feeding, breeding and over-wintering opportunities for a large number of species, particularly in gardens which are adjacent to wildlife-rich sites. Many native grasses and herbaceous species, such as ox-eye daisy, germander speedwell, common knapweed, field scabious, white campion, common cat's ear and meadow buttercup will spread easily from adjacent sites and thrive in a garden setting. On garden sites on Breckland soil, these could also include more specialized native species such as viper's-bugloss and common cudweed. Other common non-native garden species present in gardens will also attract invertebrates such as bees and butterflies and add to the overall wildlife value of these sites.

Many native species of shrub and tree are commonly present in gardens and will provide additional wildlife value. The light soil present in many parts of the audit area will be particularly suitable for species that are common to Breckland such as silver birch and gorse but will also include other common native species such as blackthorn, holly, hawthorn, ivy, oak, hazel, elder, field maple and bramble.

4.2.12 Avifauna:
Mature trees and dense native shrubs, particularly in the form of a mixed native hedge, can provide good roosting and nesting sites for this group. Species such as holly, ivy, bramble and hawthorn provide a valuable source of food for fruit-eating species, longer areas of grass and lawn provide opportunities for ground feeders and a good invertebrate population, encouraged through features such as those discussed below, will be beneficial for insect-eating birds.

4.2.13 Invertebrates:
Mature trees, dense scrub, deadwood, herbs and grasses can all provide opportunities for this group. Many species of invertebrate may over-winter in a garden, making particular use of compost heaps, grass heaps, log piles, dense grassland and dead stems/flower heads. The addition of man-made features for invertebrates will increase the potential for this group.

4.2.14 Herpetofauna:

A wildlife-friendly garden can provide good feeding, breeding and over-wintering opportunities for this group and their presence is increased if the garden has good connectivity to other areas of suitable semi-natural habitat.

Garden ponds or damp areas can provide breeding and feeding sites for amphibians, whilst long vegetation on pond edges, log piles, paving slabs and undisturbed areas, beneath sheds or water butts for example, will be valuable terrestrial or over-wintering sites.

Reptiles will also benefit from these refuge or hibernation sites. Garden features such as grass piles or compost heaps can also be important refuge or breeding sites. Stone features

such as paving slabs and brick walls, or log piles and compost heaps in a sunny site, can be used as basking areas.

4.2.15 Mammals:
Nesting opportunities for bats can be present in gardens in the form of dense scrub (mature ivy on trees, for example), in holes or fissures in trees and in potential nesting sites in the buildings themselves.

Gardens can be valuable feeding, shelter and over-wintering habitats for hedgehogs and overgrown gardens can provide an important overwintering resource in the form of suitable habitat for hibernation (which can be a limiting factor). Permeability of boundary features is very important for retaining the local hedgehog population.

Small mammals such as common species of mouse, vole and shrew may be present and larger mammals such rabbit, fox, and deer will also visit gardens to feed, particularly if connected to other natural habitat. .

4.2.16 Comments and recommendations:
Garden sites can be a valuable resource for a wide range of species. They can contain a good diversity of common species as well as providing opportunities for some less common species, particularly those that require the characteristics of Breckland habitat.

Gardens can provide an essential link between valuable open spaces or wildlife-rich habitat, reducing the risk of fragmentation of habitat on a wider countryside scale and providing opportunities for species, particularly mobile species, to maintain viable populations.

4.3 Constraints to the surveys undertaken for the Wildlife Audit

This survey represents a snapshot in time and should be considered as an initial assessment of the habitats and the potential species which they may support. Every effort has been made to date to provide an accurate assessment of the current situation but no liability can be assumed for omissions or changes after the survey has taken place. In particular, no detailed surveys have been made for invasive or protected species, or specific botanical or faunal groups.

Appendix 1 Catalogue of surveyed sites

Beck Row

Code	Site Name	Ranking	Biodiversity Value
BR01	Lamble Close	3	Medium
BR02	Land adjacent to RAF Mildenhall	5	Low
BR03	Land adjacent to Smoke House Inn, Skeltons Drove	3	Medium
BR05	Land off The Grove	4	Medium
BR06	Land south of Rookery Drove	4	Medium
BR08	Land to the north of Wilde Street	4	Medium
BR09	Land at corner of Wilde Street/Aspal Lane	4	Medium
BR10	Land adjacent to and south of caravan park on Aspal Lane	3	Medium
BR11	Land between Aspal Lane and Wildmere Lane	3	Medium
BR12	Land adjacent to Beck Lodge Farm, St Johns Street	4	Medium
BR13	Land West of Aspal Hall Road	2	High
BR15	Land south of St John's Street	6	Low
BR17	Land East of Skeltons Drove	5	Low
BR18	Former coal yard, Wilde Street	5	Low
BR19	Land adjacent to Moss Edge Farm and west of the A1101	4	Medium
BR21	Aspal Nursery, Aspal Lane	4	Medium
BR23	Land at White Gables, Stocks Corner	4	Medium
BR24	Land between Wildmere Lane and Holmsey Green	4	Medium
BR25	Land adjacent to Wilde Street Farm	4	Medium
BR26	Land East of Aspal Lane	5	Low
BR27	Land adjacent to Beck Lodge Farm	5	Low
BR28	Land at junction of Aspal Lane and Johns Street	4	Medium
BR29	Scrap Yard, Skeltons Drove	6	Low

Brandon

Code	Site Name	Ranking	Biodiversity Value
B01	Land off Fengate Drove	6	Low
B06	Land off School Lane	5	Low
B09	Land at Station Way	6	Low
B10	Land south-west of Station Way	4	Medium
B11	Land north of Gas House Drove	4	Medium
B12	Land off Manor Road	2	High
B13	Omar Homes	6	Low
B14	Land off Green Road	2	High
B15	Riverside Lodge off High Street	4	Medium
B18	Land south River Little Ouse and west of High Street	4	Medium
B19	Land south Railway line including Lignacite Site	3	Medium
B20	Land at Brandon Cottage, Bury Road	4	Medium
B21	Land north of Gas House Drove (small block)	5	Low
B23	Land off Bury Road	1	High
B24	Land west of Bury Road	1	High
B27	Land off London Road	1	High
B28	Land at Abbotts Court, North of Victoria Avenue	4	Medium
B17/B12 combined	Land to the west of Brandon	2	High

Exning

Code	Site Name	Ranking	Biodiversity Value
E02	Land off The Drift/Burwell Road	5	Low
E03	Land to the rear of Laceys Lane (includes Frogmore)	5	Low
E05	Land south of Burwell Road	6	Low
E06	South of Burwell Road	5	Low
E08	Land to rear of York Villas, North End Road	5	Low

Kentford

Code	Site Name	Ranking	Biodiversity Value
K01	Land east of Moulton Road	5	Low
K02	Meddler Stud	4	Medium/low
K03	Land north of A14	6	Low
K04	Land north of Bury Road	5	Low
K05	South and east of Flint House, Bury Road (near Village Hall)	4	Medium
K06	Site opposite 1 to 4 Bury Road	4	Medium
K09	Fothergills, Gazeley Road	5	Low
K13	Land to rear of Flint House	6	Low
K14	Land east of Gazeley Road	6	Low
K16	Land to the rear of Cock Public House	4	Medium
K17	Land between Bury Road and A14	5	Low

Lakenheath

Code	Site Name	Ranking	Biodiversity Value
L04	Land north of Station Road	5	Low
L07	3 Cemetery Road	4	Medium
L11	East of The Mallards	5	Low
L12	Land north of Burrow Drive and Briscoe Way	5	Low
L13	Rabbithill Covert, Station Road	5	Low
L14	Land off Maids Cross Way	5	Low
L15	Land off Covey Way and Maids Cross Hill	3	Medium
L18	Near Broom Road, off Eriswell Drive	5	Low
L19	Land north-east of South Road	5	Low (CWS)
L22	Land south of Broom Road	4	Medium (CWS)
L25	Land east of Eriswell Road and south of South Road	4	Medium (CWS)
L26	Land west of Eriswell Road	4	Medium
L27	Land south of Broom Road	5	Low (CWS)
L28	Middle Covert, land south of Station Road	4	Medium
L29	Matthews Nursery	4	Medium
L35	Land off Briscoe Way	5	Low
L36	North Lakenheath	4	Medium
L37	Land north of Cemetery	6	Low
L38	Land to north of Maids Cross Hill	6	Low

Mildenhall

Code	Site Name	Ranking	Biodiversity Value
M01	South of Gonville Close	2	High
M09	Land South of College Heath Road	5	Low
M10	Land off Finchley Avenue	5	Low
M11	Land adjacent to College Heath Road	2	High

M12	Woodlands Park off Brandon Road	4	Medium
M13	Land between the River Lark and Worlington Road	5	Low (Lark)
M14	Former builders yard north of Worlington Road	6	Low
M15	Land south of Lark Road/Raven Close	5	Low
M16	Land north of Brandon Road	1	High
M17	Land north of Thetford Road	1	High
M18	Land south of Lark Road	4	Medium
M19	Land west of Mildenhall, south of West Row Road	4	Medium
M20	Land south of Pine Trees Avenue	5	Low
M21	Land west of Miles Hawk Way	6	Low
M22	Land south of Mildenhall to River Lark (including Jubilee Field and site M44)	4	Medium
M23	Land east of Mildenhall to A1065 and Fiveways Roundabout	1	High
M24	Land north of Mildenhall, east of the A1101 (including Airfield landing lights)	1	High
M25	Precinct	6	Low
M26	Land south of Bury Road and east of A11	3	Medium
M27	Site adjacent to Parkers Mill	5	Low
M28	Land at 54 Kingsway	5	Low
M29	Land south of Worlington Road and adjacent to former dairy site.	5	Low
M30	The old railway station site	4	Medium
M33	Land to west of Folly Road	4	Medium
M40	Land west of Industrial Estate	6	Low
M41	Land at Meadow View Cottage	5	Low
M42	Rose Forge, south of Worlington Road	4	Medium

Newmarket

Code	Site Name	Ranking	Biodiversity Value
N03	Former Gas Works, Exning Road	6	Low
N05	Land West of Fordham Road (A12)	5	Low
N08	Allotments Studlands Park	4	Medium
N09	Brickfield Stud, Exning Road	5 (4)	Low (Tree Belt)
N10	Land at Balaton Stables, Snailwell Road	5	Low
N11	Land at Black Bear Lane and Rowley Drive Junction	4	Medium
N12	Coronation Stables, Station Approach	6	Low
N13	Land off Brickfields Avenue	4	Medium
N14	Land east of Newmarket, south of A14 (Hatchfield Farm)	4	Medium
N15	Old Newmarket Station site car park	6	Low
N18	George Lambton playing fields	5	Low
N20	Grassland off Leaders Way and Sefton Way	5	Low
N21	Land south of Exning Road and adjacent to Hamilton Road	5	Low
N24	Site off Wellington Street	6	Low
N26	East of Palace Street	6	Low
N27	Market Place	6	Low
N29	North of the High Street	6	Low
N30	Site on Depot Road	6	Low
N31	Former Scaltback Middle School Site	6	Low

Red Lodge

Code	Site Name	Ranking	Biodiversity Value
RL02	Land to rear 14 – 16 Turnpike Road	-	
RL03	Land off Turnpike Road Phase 2 (Red Lodge Masterplan)	-	
RL04	Coopers Yard and Cafe	5	Low
RL05	Land adjoining Public House, Turnpike Road and Turnpike Lane	4	Medium
RL06	Land adjoining Twins Belt, land east of Red Lodge	4/5	Medium/Low
RL07	The White Star Stables, Warren Road	5	Low
RL08	Land to rear 4 to14B Turnpike Lane	4	Medium
RL09	Land at Greenhays Farm	4	Medium
RL10	Land west of Elderberry Road, Kings Warren	5	Low
RL11	Land east of Turnpike Road	1 (6)	High/low
RL12	Land east of Warren Road	5	Low
RL13	Land west of Newmarket Road	6	Low
RL15	Land north and east of Red Lodge, either side of A11	Variable	
RL16	Employment land north of Hundred Acre Way	5	Low
RL18	Land south of The Carrops	4	Medium
RL19	Land south of Green Lane	3	Medium
RL20	Land north of Elderberry Road	5	Low
RL21	Land north-east of Bilberry Close	4	Medium

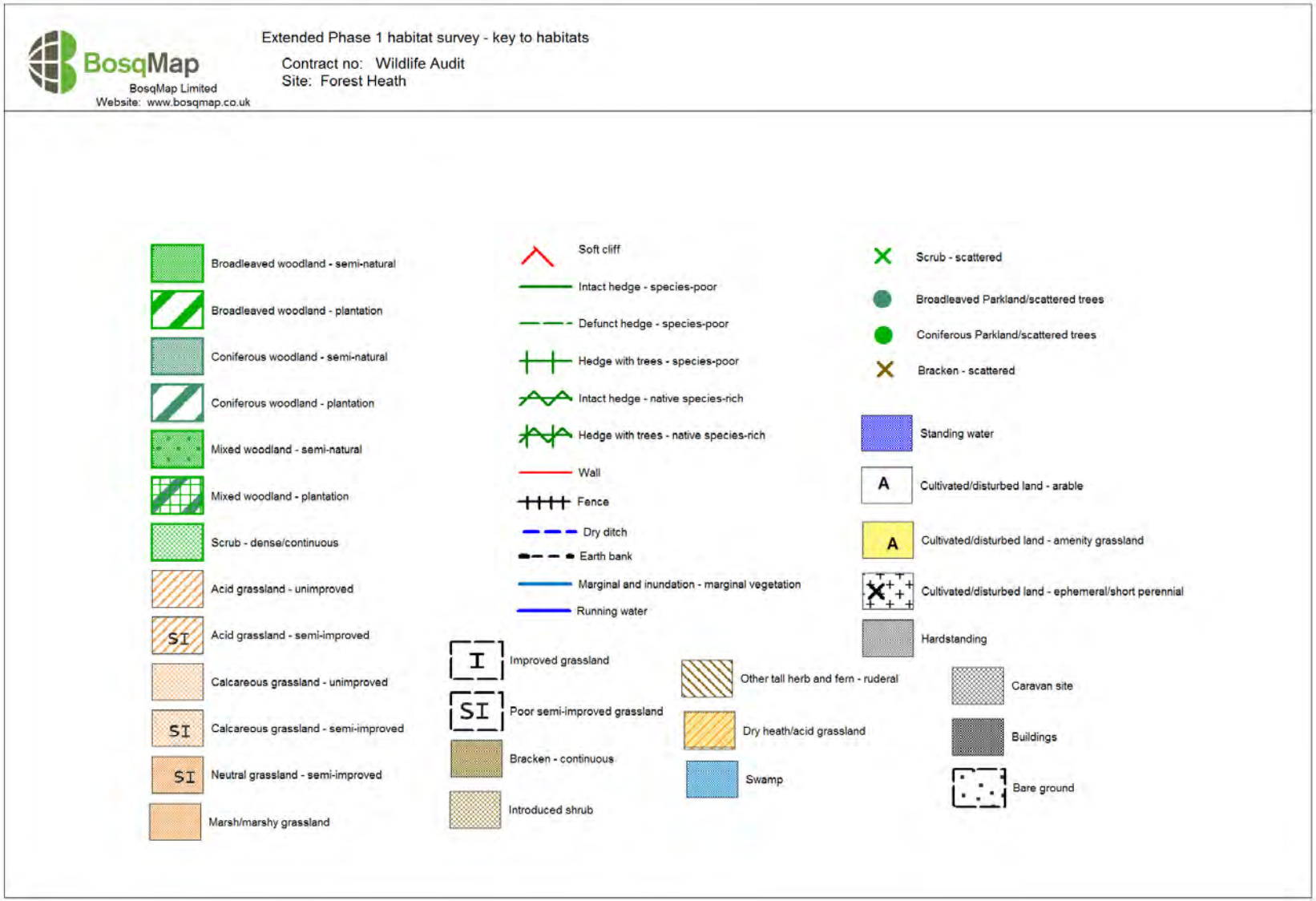
West Row

Code	Site Name	Ranking	Biodiversity Value
WR01	Land south of Chapel Road	5	Low
WR02	Land off Pott Hall Lane	4	Medium
WR03	Land north of The Green	6	Low
WR04	Land at the junction of Jarman's Lane and Beeches Road	4	Medium
WR06	Land north of Mildenhall Road	5	Low
WR07	Land east of Beeches Road	6	Low
WR09	Land south of Manor Farm Road	6	Low
WR10	Land off Chapel Road	6	Low
WR11	Land off Parker's Drove	5	Low
WR12	Land adjacent to Park Garden, Friday Street	5	Low
WR13	Land behind St Peter's Church, Church Lane	5	Low
WR14	Off Friday Street, behind Williams Way	5	Low
WR15	Popes Farm, Church Lane	5	Low
WR16	Land to north of Ferry Lane	6	Low
WR19	Land at junction of Mildenhall Road and Jarman's Lane	5	Low
WR21	Land east of Pott Hall Road	6	Low
WR23	Land off Friday Street	6	Low
WR25	Land off Pott Hall Road	4	Medium
WR26	Land off Parkers Drove	5	Low
WR27	Land south-west of Jarman's Lane	5	Low
WR33	Land at Popes Farm	5	Low

Unsurveyed sites due to lack of access:

Brandon: B/08 (under construction)
Beck Row: BR/20
Kentford: K10
Mildenhall: M/43
Newmarket: N/32
Red Lodge: RL/03

Key to phase 1 Maps



Sensitive ecological data may has been removed from these audit reports

Site name Kentford K/01

FHDC Ref: K/01
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL70372 66310
Area: 5.86 hectares
Date: 15 September 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Drizzle, cool, overcast
Ranking: 5 (but subject to further surveys)
Biodiversity value: Low

Map:

Photos:

Poor semi-improved grassland looking north.

Western boundary adjacent to River Kennet.

Northern boundary adjacent to residential properties looking east.

Roadside hedgerow looking north.

Habitat type(s):
Poor semi-improved and improved grassland
Broad-leaved woodland

Subsidiary habitats:
Tall ruderal
Poor semi-improved grassland

Site description:
The site is located off Moulton Road (B1085) and is bounded by a roadside hedge along the western boundary, a woodland belt adjacent to residential properties along the northern boundary, a woodland belt and the River Kennet along the eastern boundary and residential properties along the southern boundary. The site is a grassland paddock with a central block of broad-leaved woodland. All the boundaries are fenced.

Protected species seen or known:
Otter (2008) River Kennet

Protected species potential:
Water vole, bats, grass snake

Priority habitats present:
Hedgerows
Rivers and streams (part of eastern boundary)

Priority species seen or known:
-

Priority species potential:
Hedgehog, white letter hairstreak, toad, song thrush

Connectivity:
The site is well connected via the River Kennet that lies adjacent to part of the eastern boundary. There are good links both west and east via the tall trees and woodland belts to open countryside.

Structural diversity:
Structural diversity is limited with a uniform grassland sward over the majority of the site. However, the peripheral habitats with the hedgerow and woodland belts provide some structural diversity.

Flora:
The grassland had been improved in places where perennial rye grass was locally dominant particularly along the southern edge of the field. Otherwise the sward was species-poor and included frequent creeping bent and Yorkshire fog with yarrow false oat-grass and cock's-foot. The grassland becomes more species rich towards the western side of the central tree block where species such as lesser stitchwort, germander speedwell, red fescue, Timothy, daisy, creeping thistle and sweet vernal grass were all recorded.

The roadside hedgerow was dominated by blackthorn with hawthorn, dog-rose, and elder. The hedgerow alongside the trees and the River Kennet on the eastern boundary was also dominated by

blackthorn with hawthorn, elder and dog-rose also present.

The trees along the northern boundary were sparsely distributed allowing poor semi-improved grassland to exist beneath. The owners of the neighbouring residences had mown sections of this grassland. Tree species included sycamore, cherry, Scot's pine, *Cupressus* sp, beech and horse chestnut. At the western and eastern ends the trees are more densely planted, forming woodland.

Trees alongside the River Kennet included ash, English elm, field maple and sycamore. Horse chestnut and beech were additional species in the woodland areas.

The woodland block in the middle of the field comprised sycamore trees with occasional beech, horse chestnut, cherry and ash. The shrub layer comprised privet and the ground flora comprised tall ruderal vegetation dominated by common nettle.

Avifauna:
The survey took place at a sub-optimal time of year for this group. Long-tailed tits were recorded during the survey but no notable bird species were seen. However, it is likely that a range of bird species will be present including those classed as Priority species, such as song thrush. Swallows and other hirundines may forage over the grassland.

Invertebrates:
The site is likely to support common and widespread invertebrate species. White letter hairstreak is recorded approximately 800m to the west and the presence of elm on site means this species could be present.

Herpetofauna:
The site is unlikely to support reptiles due to its current management regime, although grass snake may occasionally utilise the site. An exceptional population of toad was reported from the River Kennet on 20 March 2012 (URS 2014) and the woodland belts and rougher parts of the grassland will provide habitat for this species during the terrestrial phase of their lives.

Mammals:
It was not possible to view the River Kennet, other than to report that it was narrow and shaded along this stretch. Much of the River Kennet is dry during the summer months as observed on other sites surveyed. Otter is highly likely to use this watercourse for commuting purposes and there are a number of records along the river corridor within the parish, with the most recent being 2008. There is also a record of water vole to the south (2004) and although this section of riverbank is shaded and therefore less attractive to water voles, it will still provide an important dispersal corridor for this species at certain times of the year.

Many of the trees within the site, although mature, did not appear to offer suitable features for roosting bats. However, none of them have been assessed fully. Brown long eared bat is recorded in a roost 100m to the north (1999) and this species as a 'gleaner' forages close to the tree canopy. Six species of bats were recorded on K/02 to the north-west, so additional species are likely to be present.

Hedgehog has been recorded in 2014 on the Kennet Road 500 metres to the south and is highly likely to forage and nest within this site.

Comments and recommendations:
Should development be proposed for this site, the trees should be assessed for their potential to support roosting bats. In addition, it is recommended that dawn/dusk bat surveys are undertaken to assess how this group may be using the site.

It is recommended that more detailed surveys are undertaken to assess the presence of reptiles and amphibians, as well as a breeding birds survey. The river bank should also be assessed in detail for riparian mammal species (otter and water vole). In addition the potential for hedgehog should also be assessed.

Any future development proposals should seek to buffer the river corridor.

Notwithstanding the above, any removal of trees or scrub should be undertaken outside the main bird nesting season of March to August inclusive or preceded by a nesting bird check.

For sites within 7.5km of the Breckland SPA

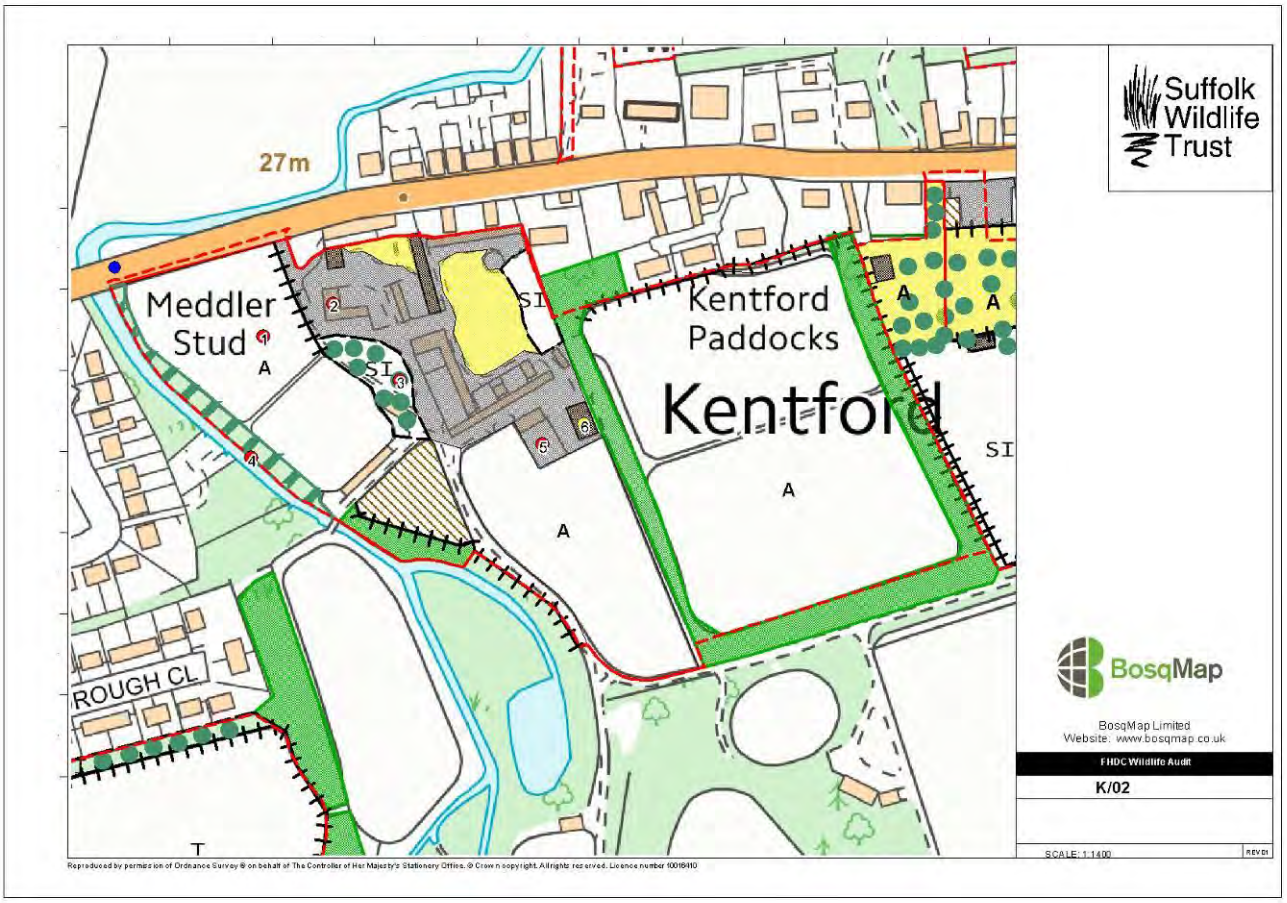
A study undertaken by Footprint Ecology on behalf of Forest Heath DC and St Edmundsbury BC identified that over half of visitors to Breckland SPA locations within the districts lived within 7.5km of the SPA. It is therefore considered that new residential development within 7.5km of the SPA will result in increased numbers of visitors accessing the SPA; this could in turn result in significant impacts on the features for which the SPA is designated. Prior to granting planning consent for residential development at this site the proposed development should be assessed under the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) (as amended) to determine whether it is likely to result in a likely significant effect on the SPA, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

References:
URS (March 2014) Ecological Risk Appraisal & Protected Species Survey, meddler Stud, Kentford, Suffolk.

Site name K/02 Meddler Stud

FHDC Ref: K/02
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL 70618 66611
Area: 6.90 hectares
Date: 9 September 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, warm, overcast with sunny periods
Ranking: 4/5
Biodiversity value: Low conservation value (disturbed areas) medium value (tree belts)

Map:



Sensitive ecological data may has been removed from these audit reports

Photos:

Buildings within the development site boundary looking east from the access road.

Recently shallow cultivated land (formerly grassland) with leylandii belt in the distance looking southwest.

Dry bed of the River Kennet bordering the western boundary of the site looking southeast (Target Note 4).

Former orchard with apple, plum, medlar trees and ornamental red Prunus sp. Poor semi-improved grassland beneath (Target Note 3).

Former stable blocks and access roadways.

Amenity grassland and coniferous trees looking south.

Old base of previous buildings and modern farm barn looking south (Target Note 6).

Broad-leaved woodland with patches of common nettle.

Recently shallow ploughed grassland looking north to Kentford village.

Habitat type(s):
Recently shallow-cultivated land (formerly improved grassland), broad-leaved woodland

Subsidiary habitats:
Scattered trees, small orchard, amenity grassland, tall ruderal, ephemeral short perennial

Site description:
The site, known as Meddler Stud, is located south of the Bury Road (B1506) and to the west of K/16. Residential development borders the remainder of the northern boundary eastwards. There is a belt of coniferous plantation woodland along part of the western boundary and strip of broad-leaved woodland to the south. The River Kennet abuts the coniferous woodland for part of its length until splitting into two watercourses in the broadleaved woodland to the south of this boundary. Broadleaved woodland also abuts the southern and eastern boundaries of the site.

The majority of the site represents recently disturbed land which represents the former improved grassland grazing paddocks of the stud. Parts of these cultivated areas are now developing a tall ruderal vegetation. Consequently, it was difficult to assign these areas to a single Phase 1 category, other than 'disturbed land'. These areas have been mapped as 'arable' to reflect their recently cultivated nature.

Within the site are the bases where buildings once stood, access roads and pathways. Only three buildings remain standing and include a single storey garage/kennel/store; an abandoned residential section of a former stable block and a more modern metal roofed, breeze block large farm building. A small orchard lies to the south-east of the area of former buildings.

The site has been the subject of previous surveys and studies between 2012 and 2014 conducted by URS. A planning application DC/14/0585/OUT was refused on 23 January 2015 and an appeal against this decision was submitted in June 2015 (pending decision).

Protected species seen or known:
Otter (2008), common pipistrelle (URS 2014)

Protected species potential:

Priority habitats present:
Traditional orchards
Rivers and streams (western boundary)

Priority species seen or known:
Turtle dove, spotted flycatcher, bullfinch, song thrush, dunnock, common toad (URS 2014)

Priority species potential:
Hedgehog

Connectivity:
The site has excellent connectivity via the tall tree belts around the boundaries and through the centre of the site and through the woodlands to the south. The River Kennet along the western boundary also provides connectivity.

Structural diversity:
The site had limited structural diversity prior to the grass pastures being recently ploughed. Since management has ceased on site, structural diversity has increased with areas of grassland re-growing and tall ruderal vegetation and weedy ephemeral short perennial vegetation colonising the site.

Flora:
The recently shallow-cultivated grassland (Target Note 1) was largely bare ground but a weedy arable flora was beginning to colonise the overturned grassland. These included abundant ribwort plantain, frequent white dead-nettle, yarrow, perennial sow-thistle and creeping thistle with occasional red fescue, prickly sow-thistle and dove's-foot crane's-bill. Patches dominated by common nettle were also present. Other species recorded included broad-leaved dock, scarlet pimpernel, small nettle, dandelion, fat-hen, scentless mayweed, smooth hawk's-beard, shepherd's purse and spear thistle. All are common and widespread species typical of disturbed ground with elements of the previous grassland flora also present.

The hard bases of the demolished buildings were colonised by ephemeral short perennial vegetation and tall ruderal vegetation (Target Note 2). Species included typical disturbed ground species as described above, along with weld, Canadian fleabane, black medick, white clover, pineappleweed, common poppy, field forget-me-not, common mouse-ear, knotgrass, common ragwort, bristly ox-tongue, common cudweed, common stork's-bill, common toadflax, green nightshade, ivy-leaved toadflax, prickly lettuce, dwarf spurge, rosebay willow-herb, buddleia, and red goosefoot. Grasses were also present and included creeping bent, annual meadow-grass and cock's-foot.

There was a small orchard in the grounds with apples, plums and medlar trees present (Target Note 3). The grassland beneath was species-poor (probably previously mown amenity grassland) dominated by false-oat grass and creeping bent with frequent creeping cinquefoil, germander speedwell and occasional ground-ivy and red fescue and smaller cat's-tail.

The River Kennet (Target Note 4) along the western boundary was dry and heavily shaded. The only species recorded were pendulous sedge, pink water-speedwell and reed canary-grass but these were rare throughout.

An area of hard-standing next to a manure heap was dominated by red goosefoot (Target Note 5).

The broad-leaved woodland and tree belts comprised pedunculate oak, ash, beech, horse chestnut, yew, wych elm, grey poplar, walnut and sycamore. The shrub layer was generally sparse under the trees and comprised elder with locally abundant snowberry with *Mahonia*, holly and hawthorn. The ground flora comprised common nettle in the tree belts. The broad-leaved woodland in the southwest corner of the site also had occasional dogs-mercury and false brome.

There were ornamental trees in the grounds where the main buildings used to be and these included coniferous trees, red-leaved maples, ornamental chestnut sp. and cherry.

The remains of narrow shrubberies were also present and these contained species such as laurel, *Viburnum* sp. and flowering currant.

Avifauna:

The survey took place at a sub-optimal tile of year for this group. Rook, wood pigeon, long-tailed tit, pheasant, robin and green woodpecker were recorded during the survey. However, there were also other bird species present in the numerous scattered trees on the site. Wood pigeon nests were noted in the modern farm building (Target Note 6) on site during this survey.

The previous surveys in 2012 included a breeding bird survey and this confirmed the presence of 18 species of bird breeding on the site at that time. Three of these were red-listed species (turtle dove, spotted flycatcher and song thrush) plus four amber listed species (bullfinch, dunnock, green woodpecker and swallow). In addition, other non-breeding species included hobby, sparrowhawk, common buzzard, rook and wood pigeon. 10 pairs of swallows were reported as breeding within the stables (now demolished). Hobby is a Schedule 1 bird species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

The recording of both turtle dove and spotted flycatcher as breeding birds on this site is exceptional as both these Priority species are declining severely. Bullfinch, song thrush and Dunnock are also Priority species.

Invertebrates:

The site has limited opportunities for notable invertebrate species and only common and widespread species are expected to be present on the site. Common butterfly species were observed such as large white and small tortoiseshell. The recent works (demolishment of buildings and ploughed grassland) have further reduced the suitability of this site for this group, although the re-colonisation of the hard standing by weedy flora area may attract a greater range of species.

Herpetofauna:

URS (2014) conducted a reptile survey in autumn 2011 /spring 2012. No reptiles were found. The site is now generally unsuitable for reptiles and the ploughed areas are sub-optimal for them. Grass snake may occasionally visit the site via the river corridor.

The site offers suitable terrestrial habitat for great crested newts in the tree belts and woodland. There are two waterbodies within 50m of the site, a lake and the River Kennet. The River Kennet, where water was present, was surveyed for great crested newts by URS in 2012 but no great crested newts were found. However, an exceptional population of common toads were recorded in shallow pools along the River Kennet on 20 March 2012 (approximately 2200 individuals). A few common frogs and smooth newt was also recorded. The lake remained dry between June 2011 and spring 2012 during these surveys.

Mammals:

The site was surveyed in 2011 by URS for the presence of bats in the buildings on site. Two common pipistrelle bat summer roosts were confirmed in one of the stable blocks (now demolished) and in the modern barn that is still present on site (Target Note 6). These were described by URS to be small summer roosts used by one or two male or female bats. The only other buildings still on site are a flint garage/store/kennels with a slate pitched roof with no roof void that has low potential for roosting bats and the remaining section of a stable block. It is assumed that these buildings were surveyed at the same time as the others and no bat roosts were confirmed.

Bat activity surveys by URS confirmed the site was used for foraging by six species of bats (serotine, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule, brown long-eared bat and natterer's bat). Many of the mature trees have features such as cracks, holes or crevices which might support roosting bats.

There is a 2008 record of otter on the River Kennett where it passes beneath the road bridge on the B1506 Bury Road. No sign of otter was recorded during this survey or in the earlier surveys by URS (2014). The woodland bordering the river may provide suitable lying up areas for this species when commuting along the river corridor. The site is suboptimal for water vole.

There is a record of hedgehog on the Bury Road (2014) 280 metres to the east. Now that the site has been disturbed by cultivation of the grassland, it is less suitable for this species, but its presence on site cannot be completely ruled out.

Comments and recommendations:

The main areas of the site are of low ecological value, although the woodland belts and mature trees add local value and are of medium ecological value.

Surveys in 2011 (URS) identified roosting bats in two of the buildings on the site. The stable block appears to have been subsequently demolished but it is unknown if there was any mitigation for bats. The consultants recommended that a European Protected Species is likely to be required as they would be affected by the development proposals.

As a significant period of time has elapsed since the URS surveys, it is recommended that any future development proposals will require further bat surveys. This should include the remaining buildings and also an assessment of the potential of the mature trees to support a bat roost.

The URS 2012 breeding bird surveys indicated that there was an interesting bird assemblage including red and amber list species. Further breeding bird surveys should therefore be undertaken as part of any future development proposals. Any consented development should include mitigation for the loss of the swallow roosts in the stables (now demolished).

Any future development proposals should buffer the river corridor and also, if possible, seek to retain the orchard within the layout.

Notwithstanding the above, any trees, shrubs and scrub should be removed outside the main bird-nesting season of March to August inclusive.

For sites within zones defined in Core Strategy Policy CS2 (Natural Environment)

Forest Heath District Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document Policy CS2 (Natural Environment) requires that development proposals on sites within 1,500m of parts of the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for supporting stone curlew; sites within 1,500m of any 1km grid square which has supported 5 or more stone curlew nesting attempts since 1995 and sites within 400m of parts of the Breckland SPA designated for supporting woodlark and nightjar are subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application. Development proposals involving new or upgraded roads within 200m of the Breckland Special Area of Conservation (SAC) must also be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application. This is to assess whether the proposal would result in a likely significant effect on sites designated for their European nature conservation importance, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

This site is within 1,500m of parts of the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for supporting stone curlew and therefore requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application.

For sites within 7.5km of the Breckland SPA

A study undertaken by Footprint Ecology on behalf of Forest Heath DC and St Edmundsbury BC identified that over half of visitors to Breckland SPA locations within the districts lived within 7.5km of the SPA. It is therefore considered that new residential development within 7.5km of the SPA will result in increased numbers of visitors accessing the SPA; this could in turn result in significant impacts on the features for which the SPA is designated. Prior to granting planning consent for residential development at this site the proposed development should be assessed under the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) (as amended) to determine whether it is likely to result in a likely significant effect on the SPA, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

References:

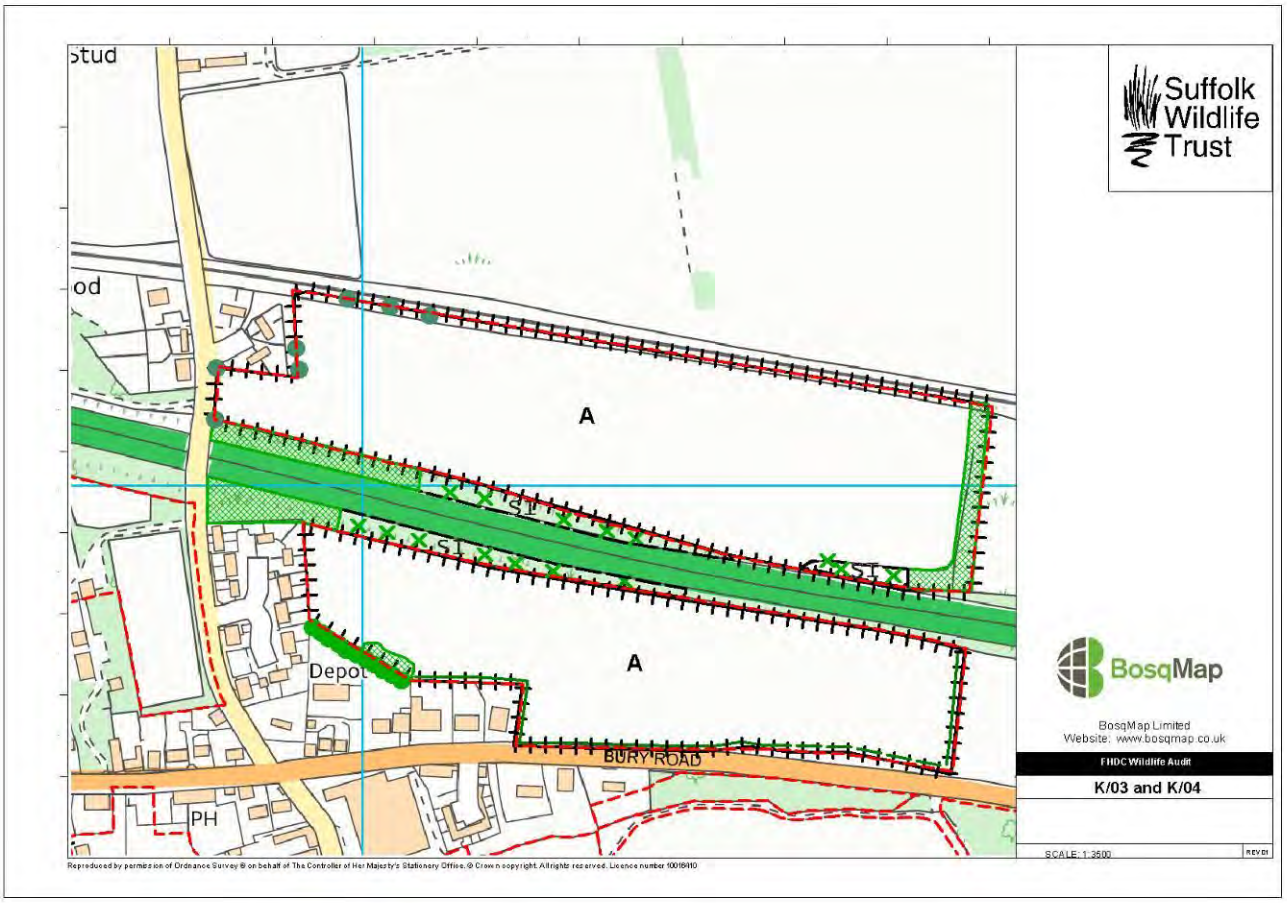
URS (March 2014) Ecological Risk Appraisal and Protected Species Survey. Meddler Stud, Kenford.

Chris Vine. (September 2015). Protected Species Scoping Survey. Land to the rear of The Cock Inn, Kentford.

Site name K/03 Land North of the A14

FHDC Ref: K/03
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL 71170 67048
Area: 11.7 hectares
Date: 15 September 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, warm, overcast with sunny periods
Ranking: 6
Biodiversity value: Low

Map:



Photos:

Arable crop adjacent to Herringswell Road, looking north

Scrub along A14, looking east

Looking west along A14 embankment

Scrub along eastern and southern boundaries, looking south

Northern boundary adjacent to the railway line, looking east

Typical vegetation on the A14 embankment including semi-improved grassland with areas of scattered scrub and dense scrub

Habitat type(s):
Arable

Subsidiary habitats:
Dense scrub, tall ruderal, ephemeral short perennial, scrub, species-poor semi-improved grassland

Site description:
The site is located in Kentford and is accessed off Herringswell Road. The site is currently in arable production and there was a crop of maize in the field at the time of the survey. The site is bounded to the west by Herringswell Road, to the north by the railway line embankment and to the south by the A14 embankments. The land to the east comprised dense scrub on an embankment.

The site was fenced and in places double fenced with rabbit fencing located inside the wooden post and rail fencing.

Protected species seen or known:
-

Protected species potential:
Common lizard

Priority habitats present:
-

Priority species seen or known:
-

Priority species potential:
Stone curlew (seen within 1km of the site), skylark, brown hare

Connectivity:
The site it connected to the wider environment east and west via the A14 and railway embankments. Otherwise the A14 and railway are significant barriers to movement north and south.

Structural diversity:
The majority of the site is arable and therefore of limited structural diversity. There were areas of scattered scrub along the southern boundary in the eastern corner of the site and along the eastern boundary, although this was fenced off from the cultivated areas. These areas offer some structural diversity but their small size reduces the potential for wildlife.

Flora:
The site was cropped with tall maize at the time of the survey with only a narrow fringe of vegetation (tall ruderal and ephemeral short perennial species) along the fence lines. These comprised a mix of typical arable weed species including prickly lettuce, annual mercury, black horehound, scentless mayweed, Canadian fleabane, white dead-nettle, white campion and fat-hen. Common mugwort was abundant in places. Some of the field margins were dominated by grasses such as common couch.

The tall ruderal vegetation was dominated by common nettle.

The small area of poor semi-improved grassland amongst the scrub comprised abundant false oat-grass and frequent Yorkshire-fog. Other species were generally either occasional or rare in the sward and included mignonette, field scabious, common knapweed, perforate St John's-wort, ox-eye daisy, blue fleabane, hogweed, bristly ox-tongue, common ragwort, teasel and wild parsnip.

The scrub on the railway and A14 embankments comprised a mix of bramble, dog-rose, hawthorn, privet and spindle, with occasional sycamore, ash and pedunculate oak trees. In places the scrub was very dense.

Avifauna:
The survey took place at a sub-optimal time of year for this group and there were no birds of note recorded within the site during the survey. However, the site is likely to attract ground nesting farmland birds such as partridge and pheasant. A number of birds were noted using the dense scrub along the railway embankment and included robin, blue tit, blackbird, dunnock (a Priority species) and wood pigeon. Depending on the cropping, skylark may also be attracted to the site. The site is located within 650m of the Breckland SPA at its closest point, a site designated for its populations of stone curlew. Stone curlews are known to nest on arable land in spring and summer and could potentially nest on this site.

Invertebrates:
Only the habitats adjacent and outside the site boundary are likely to support populations of invertebrates. There are limited opportunities for this group within the site itself due to the transitory nature of the flora, although common and widespread species may be supported in the spring and summer.

Herpetofauna:
Although the site is regularly cultivated, common reptiles are potentially present on the embankments of the A14 and railway and could bask on the edges of the site and the scrub/grassland mosaic habitat in the southeast corner of the site.

Mammals:
This site is sub-optimal for most mammal species, although brown hare (which is a highly mobile species) could be present on site.

Rabbits were present on the embankments.

Comments and recommendations:
The site is of low ecological value, although the habitats along the embankments of the A14 and the railway line are immediately adjacent and are of medium ecological value.

Clearance of habitat suitable for nesting birds (including ground nesting species) should be undertaken outside the main bird breeding season (March to August inclusive).

<u>For sites within zones defined in Core Strategy Policy CS2 (Natural Environment)</u>

Forest Heath District Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document Policy CS2 (Natural Environment) requires that development proposals on sites within 1,500m of parts of the Breckland

Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for supporting stone curlew; sites within 1,500m of any 1km grid square which has supported 5 or more stone curlew nesting attempts since 1995 and sites within 400m of parts of the Breckland SPA designated for supporting woodlark and nightjar are subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application. Development proposals involving new or upgraded roads within 200m of the Breckland Special Area of Conservation (SAC) must also be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application. This is to assess whether the proposal would result in a likely significant effect on sites designated for their European nature conservation importance, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

This site is within1,500m of parts of the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for supporting stone curlew and therefore requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application.

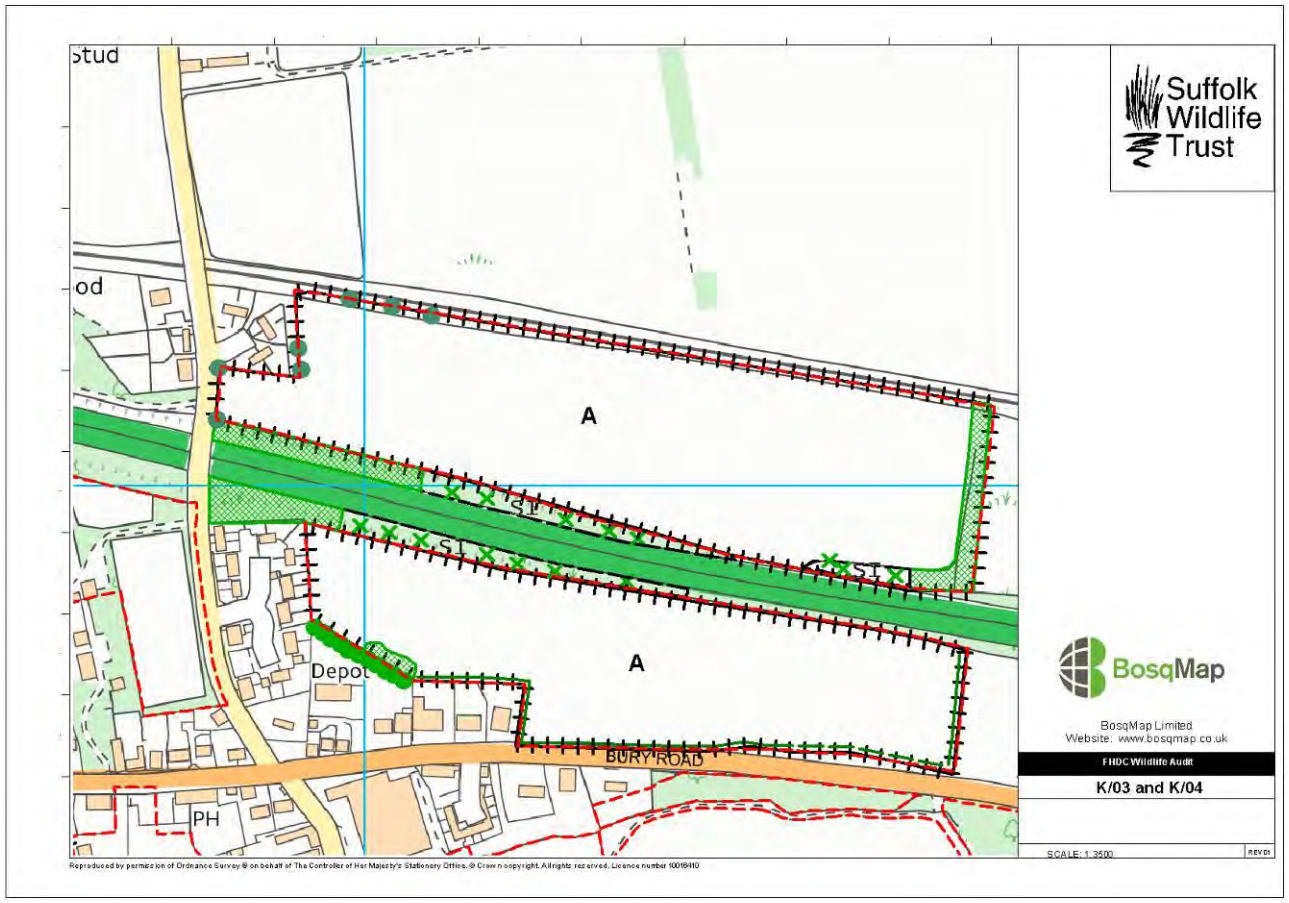
<u>For sites within 7.5km of the Breckland SPA</u>

A study undertaken by Footprint Ecology on behalf of Forest Heath DC and St Edmundsbury BC identified that over half of visitors to Breckland SPA locations within the districts lived within 7.5km of the SPA. It is therefore considered that new residential development within 7.5km of the SPA will result in increased numbers of visitors accessing the SPA; this could in turn result in significant impacts on the features for which the SPA is designated. Prior to granting planning consent for residential development at this site the proposed development should be assessed under the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) (as amended) to determine whether it is likely to result in a likely significant effect on the SPA, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

Site name K/04 Land North of Bury road

FHDC Ref: K/04
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL 71230 66869
Area: 5.44 hectares
Date: 18 September 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, warm, overcast
Ranking: 5
Biodiversity value: Low conservation value

Map:



Sensitive ecological data may has been removed from these audit reports

Photos:

Species-poor hedgerow alongside the Bury Road (B1506) looking east along the southern boundary.

Dense scrub and occasional trees on the A14 embankment along the northern boundary.

Northern boundary adjacent to the A14 with tall ruderal vegetation looking east.

Bury Road (B1506) looking west.

Habitat type(s):
Arable, species-poor hedgerows

Subsidiary habitats:
Tall ruderal, ephemeral short perennial

Site description:
The site is located north of the Bury Road (B1506) on the outskirts of Kentford and a hedgerow borders this boundary. The site is currently in arable production with a crop of maize at the time of the survey. The site is bounded by the A14 to the north with areas of tall ruderal and scrub vegetation along this boundary. The western boundary and part of the southern boundary abuts residential development and industrial use and the eastern boundary abuts species-poor grassland.

Protected species seen or known:
-

Protected species potential:
Common lizard

Priority habitats present:
Hedgerows

Priority species seen or known:
Stone curlew 1km north of the site.

Priority species potential:
Stone curlew, skylark, hedgehog

Connectivity:
The site is bounded by the busy A14 and B1506 roads. There is connectivity to the wider environment along the A14 embankments west and eastwards and to the south across the Bury Road.

Structural diversity:
The site has limited structural diversity since it is regularly cultivated, although the hedgerows provide some limited diversity along the field boundaries.

Flora:
The site was cropped with a tall maize crop at the time of the survey. The botanical interest lies along the narrow field margins and the A14 embankment. The margins comprise typical arable weed flora and included abundant common mugwort and frequent annual mercury. Other species were occasional or rare throughout and included green nightshade, stork's-bill, weld, white dead-nettle, field speedwell, groundsel, red dead-nettle, black horehound, vipers-bugloss, bugloss, common mallow, sun spurge, hound's-tongue, fat-hen, field scabious and field pansy. In places some of the field margins were dominated by grasses such as common couch.

Tall ruderal vegetation comprised common nettle and hemlock.

The A14 embankment comprised a mosaic of scattered scrub and poor semi-improved grassland with species such as perforated St John's-wort, agrimony, common knapweed, mignonette, rosebay willowherb and teasel along with coarse grasses such as false oat-grass.

The scrub comprised dog-rose, hawthorn, field maple, privet, gorse with sycamore, ash and goat willow trees.

The species-poor hedgerows comprised a mix of hawthorn, blackthorn, *Prunus* sp, elm, elder with occasional sycamore trees. White bryony and hedge bindweed was also recorded in the hedgerows.

Avifauna:
No birds of note were recorded during the survey but the site is likely to attract ground nesting farmland birds such as partridge, pheasant and skylark. Depending on the cropping patterns, the site could also attract nesting stone curlew in the spring and summer. Birds such as migrant warblers could nest in the scrub adjacent to the site and in the hedgerows along the southern and eastern boundaries.

Invertebrates:
The site is unlikely to attract a wide range of invertebrate species and only common and widespread species are considered likely.

Herpetofauna:
The site is sub-optimal for this group. It is possible that reptiles could be present on adjacent habitats and species such as common lizard could potentially bask along the field edges.

Mammals:
This site is sub-optimal for mammals. Small mammals such as mice, shrews and voles may utilise the hedgerows. There is a 2014 record of hedgehog on the Bury Road less than 50 metres from this site.

Comments and recommendations:
The site is of low ecological value with the majority of the site regularly cultivated for arable use. The hedgerows are species-poor but do offer some potential for nesting birds. Habitats adjacent to the site along the A14 are of greater value.

It is recommended that any future development proposals include a reptile survey within areas of suitable habitat. It is also recommended that there is a breeding bird survey to include all areas of the site.

Notwithstanding the above, any vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside the main bird nesting season of March to August inclusive. This includes the arable field which may support ground nesting birds.

<u>For sites within zones defined in Core Strategy Policy CS2 (Natural Environment)</u>

Forest Heath District Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document Policy CS2 (Natural Environment) requires that development proposals on sites within 1,500m of parts of the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for supporting stone curlew; sites within 1,500m of any 1km grid square which has supported 5 or more stone curlew nesting attempts since 1995 and sites within 400m of parts of the Breckland SPA designated for supporting woodlark and nightjar are subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application.

Development proposals involving new or upgraded roads within 200m of the Breckland Special Area of Conservation (SAC) must also be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application. This is to assess whether the proposal would result in a likely significant effect on sites designated for their European nature conservation importance, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

This site is within 1,500m of parts of the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for supporting stone curlew and therefore requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application.

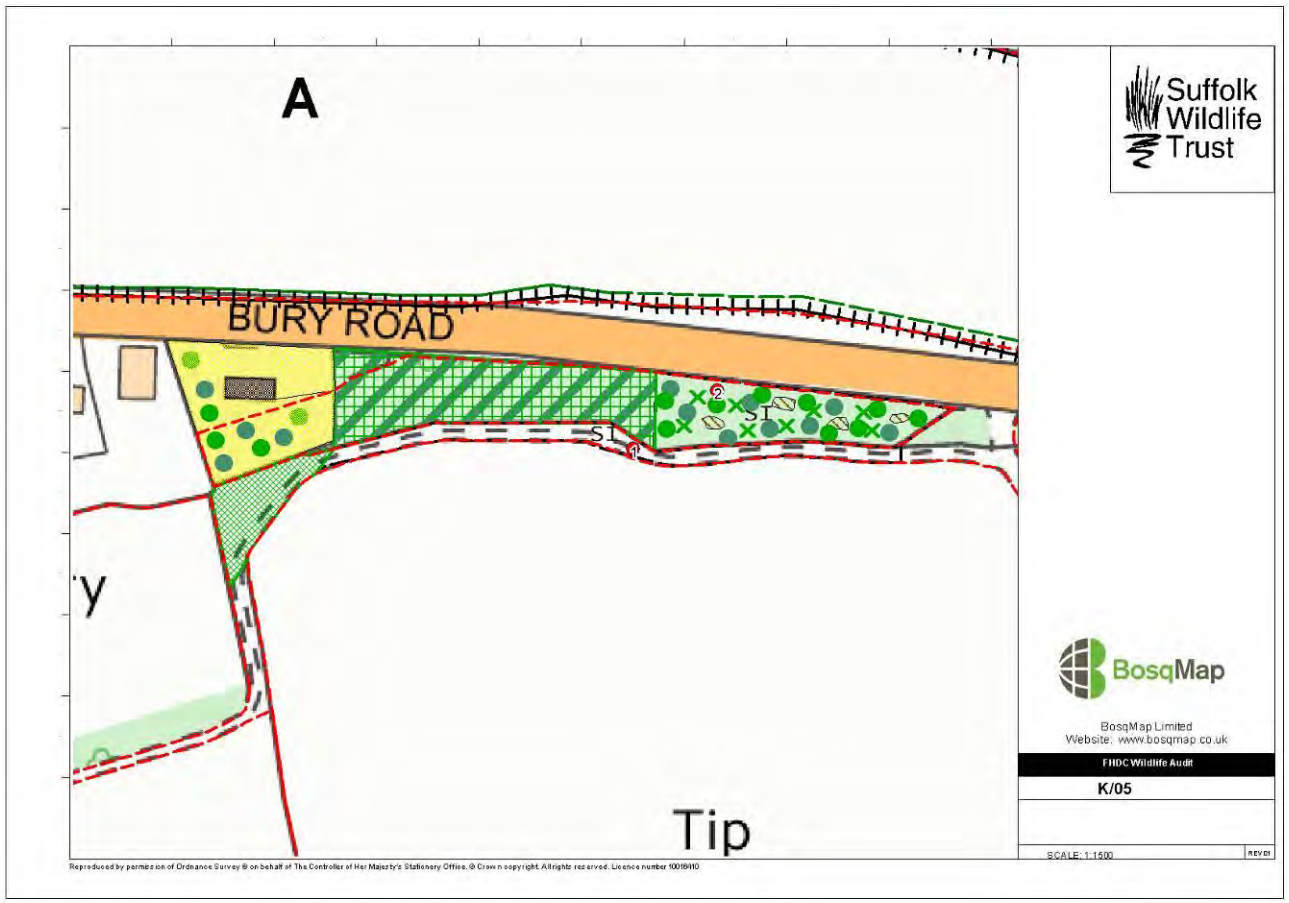
For sites within 7.5km of the Breckland SPA

A study undertaken by Footprint Ecology on behalf of Forest Heath DC and St Edmundsbury BC identified that over half of visitors to Breckland SPA locations within the districts lived within 7.5km of the SPA. It is therefore considered that new residential development within 7.5km of the SPA will result in increased numbers of visitors accessing the SPA; this could in turn result in significant impacts on the features for which the SPA is designated. Prior to granting planning consent for residential development at this site the proposed development should be assessed under the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) (as amended) to determine whether it is likely to result in a likely significant effect on the SPA, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

Site name K/05 South and East of Flint House, Bury Road (Near Village Hall)

FHDC Ref: K/05
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL71309 66765
Area: 0.48 hectares
Date: 9 September 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, warm, overcast with sunny periods
Ranking: 4
Biodiversity value: Medium

Map:



Sensitive ecological data may has been removed from these audit reports

Photos:

Looking east species-rich track between K/05 and K/13 (Target Note 1)

Scattered mixed trees adjacent to Bury Road (B1506)

Scattered trees and poor semi-improved grassland with tall ruderal vegetation.

Lawn (amenity grassland) and scattered trees within the garden at the western end of the site.

Habitat type(s):

Plantation coniferous woodland

Subsidiary habitats:
Poor semi-improved grassland, tall ruderal, amenity grassland, scrub

Site description:
The site lies adjacent to the Bury Road (B1506) on the outskirts of Kentford. The site comprises a narrow strip of plantation mixed woodland with some thinner areas of scattered trees to the east, with a mosaic of poor semi-improved grassland beneath the canopy, patches of tall ruderal vegetation and scattered scrub. The southern boundary abuts a well-used footpath. To the west is a residential property with mown lawns and scattered trees. It is unknown whether the site was planted to screen off the adjacent closed landfill site (site K/13). This site is part of a cluster of sites including K/09, K/14, K/13 and K/06.

This site has been subject to an outline planning application F/2013/0176/OUT. However this has now been withdrawn.

Protected species seen or known:
-

Protected species potential:
Common lizard, bats,

Priority habitats present:
-

Priority species seen or known:
-

Priority species potential:
Hedgehog, common toad

Connectivity:
The site is connected to other open areas of countryside to the south and east. The road limits connectivity northwards.

Structural diversity:
There is a range of habitats within this site providing some structural diversity but its value is limited due to its small size.

Flora:
The site was generally species poor with Scot's pine and ash the dominant trees species in the canopy. Underneath the trees were areas of poor semi-improved grassland dominated by Yorkshire-fog with species such as ground ivy, common ragwort, black horehound and broad-leaved dock present. The tall ruderal vegetation comprised common nettle and hemlock in dense patches. The areas of scrub comprised bramble, *Mahonia*, snowberry and blackthorn (Target Note 2).

The adjacent footpath (outside the site boundary) is more species-rich (Target Note 1) and comprised a mix of grasses such as perennial ryegrass, cock's-foot, red fescue and common bent with forbs such as abundant creeping cinquefoil, frequent black medick, occasional ribwort plantain and self-heal and a

number of species that were rare in the sward including common centuary, vervain, soapwort, smooth hawk's-beard, perforated St John's-wort, yarrow, hard rush, blue fleabane, common mouse-ear and rough chervil.

Avifauna:
The survey took place at a suboptimal time of year for this group. No birds of note were recorded on this site during the survey although buzzards were heard nearby. Scrub habitats on site have the potential to support nesting birds.

However, the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) is sited within 900m of the site boundary. Breckland SPA is designated for breeding stone curlew in particular and this species can nest on arable land and heath grassland almost anywhere. Although this site is unsuitable habitat for stone curlew, adjacent sites such as the adjacent landfill site (site K/13) and the arable land to the north (site K/04) and site K/14 to the southwest could potentially attract nesting birds in spring and summer.

Invertebrates:
The site is small and comprises species-poor habitats, therefore it is unlikely to support a wide range of invertebrate species or any that are notable. Grasshoppers were present in the more open grassy areas.

Herpetofauna:
The site is small but could offer some potential habitat for common reptiles such as common lizard considering the adjacent site K/13 and the vegetation along the footpath and adjacent dry ditch also offer suitable habitats.

Although a reptile survey by JBA (2013) revealed no evidence of reptiles they concluded they could be present in the immediate area and so could colonise the site if it is not developed. JBA also carried out a great crested newt survey for the ditch (wet at the time of their survey) along the south of the site but no newts were detected. However an unspecified frog or toad was recorded.

Mammals:
Although most of the trees were mature specimens, most were relatively thin trunked with no obvious holes or crevices. A full climb and inspect bat survey by JBA 2013 revealed most of the trees had none or low bat potential, although one ash tree was recommended for 'soft felling' due to a cavity which reached further than the length of the endoscope. The house in the grounds at the western end of the site (off-site) comprised a two-storey brick building with a pitched tiled roof. Ivy was growing up the gable end. The house may offer bat roost potential if there are places where bats can enter the roof void or soffits/barge boards.

A water vole survey undertaken by JBA in 2013 revealed three possible water vole burrows in the ditch. However they found no other evidence of water vole and concluded that there was low risk of them being present. The ditch was dry at the time of the survey so unsuitable for water vole.

A hedgehog has been recorded within 200m to the west of the site along the Bury Road in 2014. The grassland and scrub on site could provide foraging and potential nesting and hibernation opportunities for hedgehogs. Rabbit burrows were present in the eastern end of the woodland.

Comments and recommendations:
Although this site is small in size, it provides structural diversity and also has a function of screening

the Bury Road from the south.

Due to the length of time which has elapsed since the initial bat assessment was undertaken (JBA 2013) it is recommended that a further bat assessment is undertaken prior to any works. The adjacent house should also be assessed for its potential to support roosting bats. Similarly, due to the length of time which has elapsed since the initial reptile survey (JBA 2013) a further reptile assessment should be undertaken. As another site to the west (K/02) had an interesting bird assemblage, it is recommended that breeding bird surveys are undertaken.

Clearance of any woodland could have an impact upon hedgehog. Prior to any large scale clearance of such habitat, the likely impact upon the local hedgehog population should be assessed and consideration given to providing suitably constructed artificial hibernation sites.

Notwithstanding the above, vegetation (trees, shrubs, scrub) clearance should be undertaken outside the main bird nesting season of March to August inclusive.

It is recommended that snowberry, although not listed under Schedule 9 of the WCA 1981, should be removed to prevent it spreading as it is highly invasive and care taken not to spread this plant during any site clearance.

<u>For sites within zones defined in Core Strategy Policy CS2 (Natural Environment)</u>

Forest Heath District Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document Policy CS2 (Natural Environment) requires that development proposals on sites within 1,500m of parts of the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for supporting stone curlew; sites within 1,500m of any 1km grid square which has supported 5 or more stone curlew nesting attempts since 1995 and sites within 400m of parts of the Breckland SPA designated for supporting woodlark and nightjar are subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application. Development proposals involving new or upgraded roads within 200m of the Breckland Special Area of Conservation (SAC) must also be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application. This is to assess whether the proposal would result in a likely significant effect on sites designated for their European nature conservation importance, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

This site is within 1,500m of parts of the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for supporting stone curlew and therefore requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application.

<u>For sites within 7.5km of the Breckland SPA</u>

A study undertaken by Footprint Ecology on behalf of Forest Heath DC and St Edmundsbury BC identified that over half of visitors to Breckland SPA locations within the districts lived within 7.5km of the SPA. It is therefore considered that new residential development within 7.5km of the SPA will result in increased numbers of visitors accessing the SPA; this could in turn result in significant impacts on the features for which the SPA is designated. Prior to granting planning consent for residential development at this site the proposed development should be assessed under the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) (as amended) to determine whether it is likely to result in a likely significant effect on the SPA, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

References:

JBA James Blake Associates (2013) Phase 1 Habitat Survey of Land at Bury Road, Kentford.

JBA Consultancy Services Ltd (2013) Climb and inspect bat survey – Land off Bury Road, Kentford, Suffolk

JBA Consultancy Services Ltd (2013) Great Crested Newt Survey of land at Bury Road, Kentford

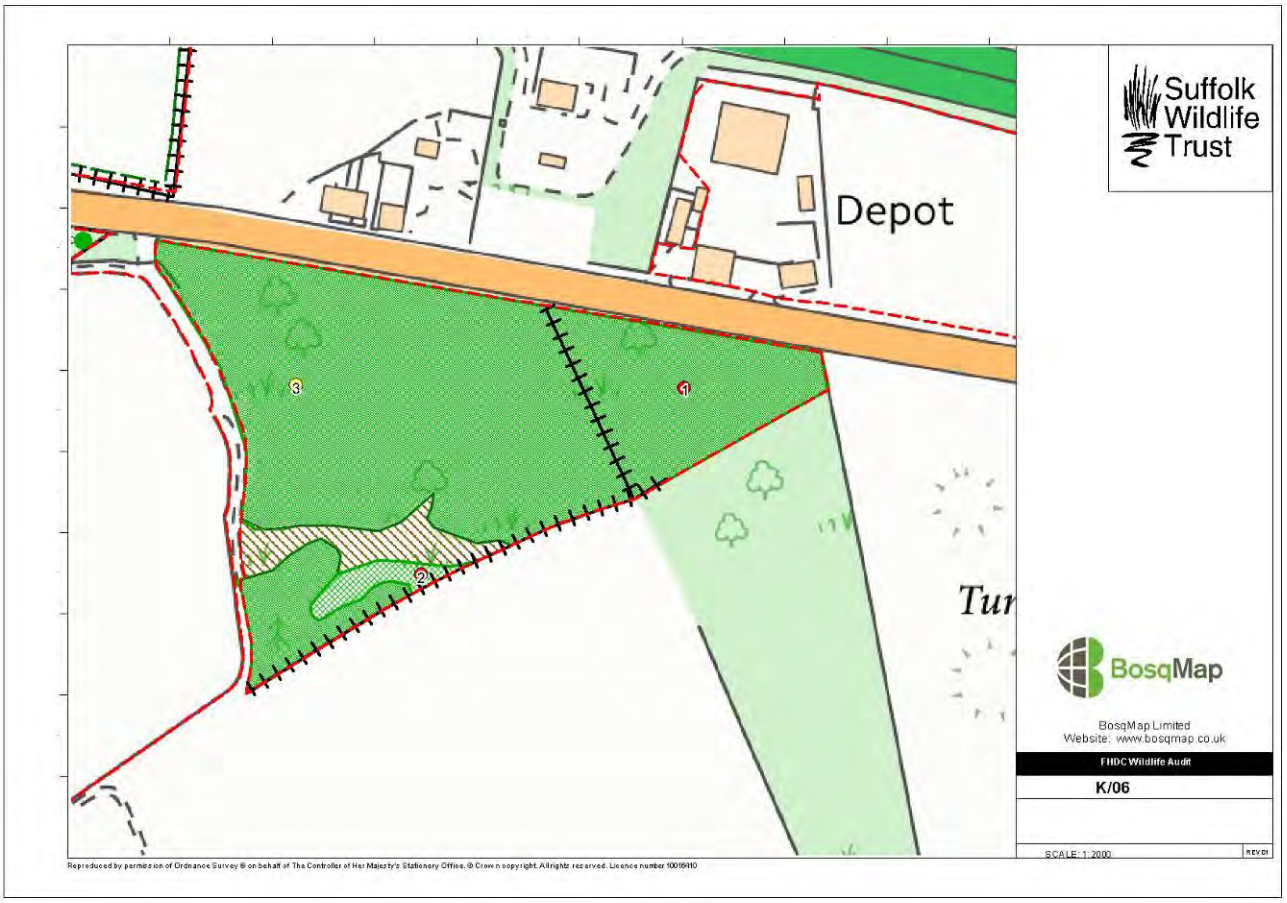
JBA Consultancy Services Ltd (2013) Reptile Survey for Land at Bury Road, Kentford

Chris Vine. (September 2015). Protected Species Scoping Survey – Land to the rear of The Cock Inn, Kentford.

Site name K/06 Site opposite 1 to 4 Bury Road

FHDC Ref: K/06
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL71590 66670
Area: 2.88 hectares
Date: 9 September 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, warm, sunny periods
Ranking: 4
Biodiversity value: Medium

Map:



Sensitive ecological data may has been removed from these audit reports

Photos:

Broad-leaved secondary woodland looking east.

Woodland edge along the Bury Road (B1506) looking west.

Woodland edge along the eastern boundary looking south.

Woodland clearing along the southern boundary looking west (Target Note 2).


Coppiced hazel at eastern of the woodland (Target Note 1) and a dead tree with bat roost potential (Target Note 3).

Habitat type(s):
Broad-leaved woodland

Subsidiary habitats:
Tall ruderal

Site description:
The site lies adjacent to the Bury Road (B1506) on the outskirts of Kentford. The road forms the northern boundary of the site, with the eastern and majority of the southern boundary abutting arable land. The western boundary abuts a track that leads to a closed landfill site to the west (Site K/13). This woodland site forms part of a much larger woodland block and although probably plantation woodland originally, has now become more semi-natural. Some standing deadwood is present. This site is part of a cluster of sites including K/09, K/14, K/05 and K/13.

Protected species seen or known:
-

Protected species potential:
Bats,

Priority habitats present:
Deciduous woodland

Priority species seen or known:
-

Priority species potential:
Hedgehog, toad

Connectivity:
The site is connected to other woodland blocks and field boundaries to the south, east and west that provide connectivity to the wider environment.

Structural diversity:
There is limited structural diversity within the woodland as the trees are even-aged with only a sparse shrub layer beneath the canopy and tall ruderal vegetation. Hazel coppice and bramble growth provides some structural diversity.

Flora:
Autumn is a sub-optimal time to survey woodland and some species that might be present in the spring could have been missed, although the composition of the woodland suggests that it is unlikely to support ancient woodland indicator species. The woodland comprises an even-aged stand of mature beech, sycamore and silver birch. Larch is also present but only an occasional tree was recorded. Only a few shrub species were recorded including hazel and elder. Common nettle dominated the ground flora with scattered bramble scrub and occasional hemlock and rarely male shield fern and red campion.

Some of the trees were multi-stemmed along with some coppiced hazel stools (Target Note 1) located in a small area in the eastern end of the woodland.

Some recent woodland and bramble scrub clearance had been undertaken recently (Target Note 2). Bramble was re-growing in the cleared areas along with common nettle.

Lilac was present along the woodland edge to the east and snowberry was also present within the woodland.

Avifauna:
The survey took place at a sub-optimal time of year for this group. No birds of note were recorded, but the woodland is highly likely to attract a range of bird species, for foraging, nesting and roosting.

Invertebrates:
The woodland is likely to support common and widespread invertebrate species. Large white and red admiral butterflies and dragonflies were observed in the more open areas of the woodland.

Herpetofauna:
The site is sub-optimal habitat for reptiles, but provides good hibernation habitat for toad. A very large toad population was recorded in pools in the River Kennett during surveys in 2012 for K/02 (URS 2014) so they are known within this settlement.

Mammals:
Most of the trees were thin, tall mature specimens with limited potential for roosting bats. There was one dead tree with a hole that could potentially support roosting bats (Target Note 3). Bats are likely to forage within the woodland.

There is a 2014 record of hedgehog 430 metres to the west on the Bury Road. The woodland provides good foraging and nesting opportunities for them with the bramble providing potential hibernation sites for them.

Other common species of mammal such as deer, fox, grey squirrel and rabbit as well as small mammal species such as mice, voles and shrews are likely to be present.

Comments and recommendations:

The site is predominantly broad-leaved woodland, probably originally plantation woodland or secondary woodland and its size and connectivity to other woodland increases its value for biodiversity and landscape.

If development is proposed on this site, the trees should be subjected to a full assessment to determine the potential for roosting bats. Further surveys may then be required to determine presence/absence and also whether bats are using the site for foraging.

A breeding bird survey should be undertaken, due to the likelihood of this habitat supporting a range of species within this group.

Clearance of any woodland could have an impact upon hedgehog. Prior to any large scale clearance of such habitat, the likely impact upon the local hedgehog population should be assessed and consideration given to providing suitably constructed artificial hibernation sites.

Consideration should also be given to the likely presence of toad using the site for hibernation.

Notwithstanding the above, any tree or scrub clearance should be undertaken outside the main bird nesting season (March to August inclusive).

<u>For sites within zones defined in Core Strategy Policy CS2 (Natural Environment)</u>

Forest Heath District Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document Policy CS2 (Natural Environment) requires that development proposals on sites within 1,500m of parts of the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for supporting stone curlew; sites within 1,500m of any 1km grid square which has supported 5 or more stone curlew nesting attempts since 1995 and sites within 400m of parts of the Breckland SPA designated for supporting woodlark and nightjar are subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application. Development proposals involving new or upgraded roads within 200m of the Breckland Special Area of Conservation (SAC) must also be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application. This is to assess whether the proposal would result in a likely significant effect on sites designated for their European nature conservation importance, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

This site is within 1,500m of parts of the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for supporting stone curlew and therefore requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application.

<u>For sites within 7.5km of the Breckland SPA</u>

A study undertaken by Footprint Ecology on behalf of Forest Heath DC and St Edmundsbury BC identified that over half of visitors to Breckland SPA locations within the districts lived within 7.5km of the SPA. It is therefore considered that new residential development within 7.5km of the SPA will result in increased numbers of visitors accessing the SPA; this could in turn result in significant impacts

on the features for which the SPA is designated. Prior to granting planning consent for residential development at this site the proposed development should be assessed under the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) (as amended) to determine whether it is likely to result in a likely significant effect on the SPA, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

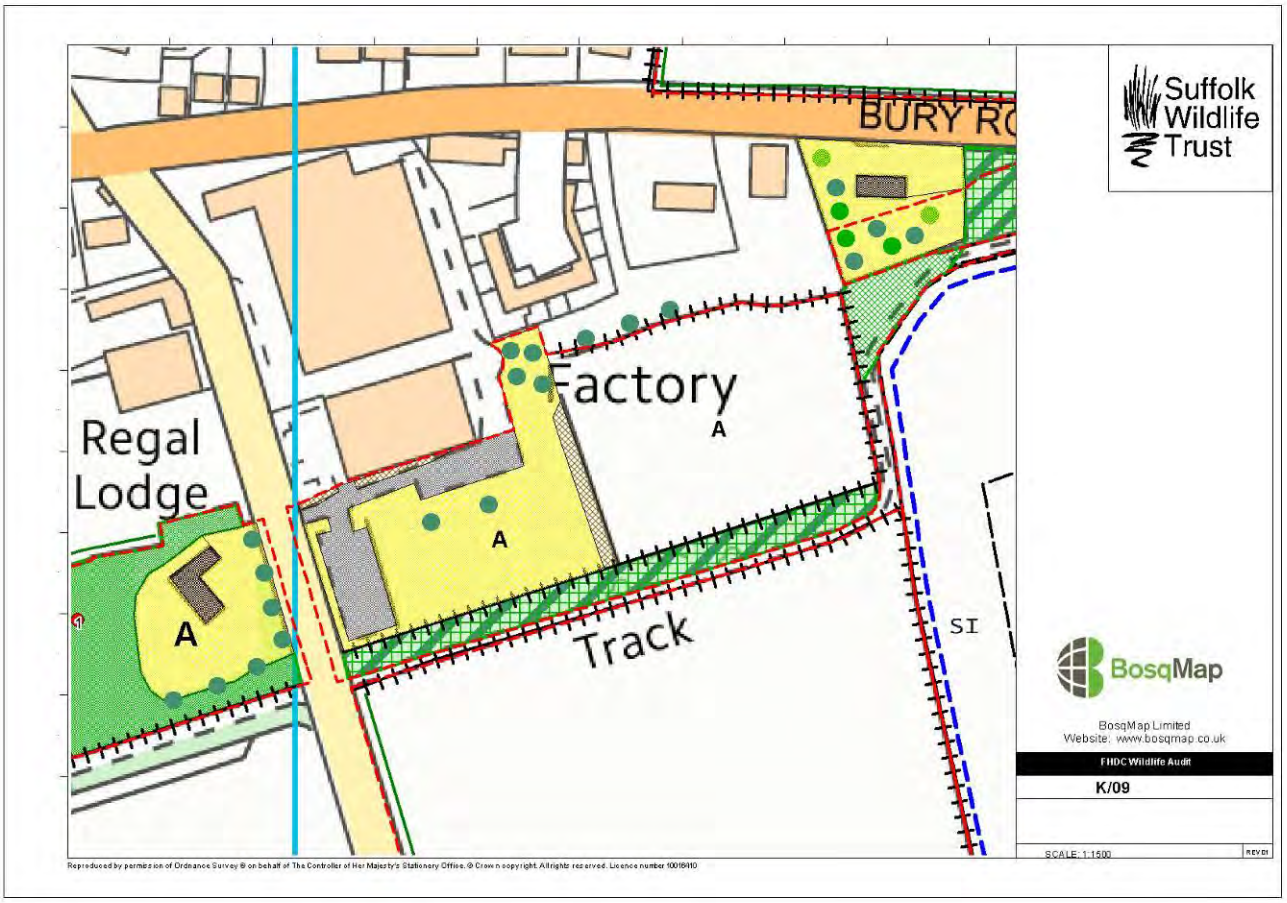
References:

URS (March 2014) Ecological Risk Appraisal and Protected Species Survey. Meddler Stud, Kenford.

Site name K/09 Fothergills, Gazeley Road

FHDC Ref: K/09
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL 71097 66663
Area: 1.5 hectares
Date: 10 September 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, warm, overcast with sunny periods
Ranking: 5
Biodiversity value: Low

Map:



Sensitive ecological data may has been removed from these audit reports

Photos:

Roadside hedgerow along the western boundary of the site along Gazeley Road (with Russian vine)

Car parking area with mown amenity grassland looking south towards poplar trees

Mown amenity grassland at Fothergills Seeds, looking east

Horticultural land with displays of flowers, looking west

Habitat type(s):
Amenity grassland, arable

Subsidiary habitats:
Scattered trees, plantation mixed woodland

Site description:
The site is located off Gazeley Road and is the site of Fothergill's Seeds. The western boundary comprised a species-poor hedgerow alongside the road. Along the southern boundary was a belt of mixed trees and adjacent to this was a well-used footpath. The northern boundary comprised the factory with its associated industrial buildings. There are also car parking areas with landscape planting and large areas of mown amenity grassland. The remaining land is cultivated and sown with a variety of flowers for seed production. This site is part of a cluster of sites including K/05; K/06; K/13 and K/14.

Protected species seen or known:
-

Protected species potential:

Priority habitats present:
-

Priority species seen or known:
-

Priority species potential:
Hedgehogs

Connectivity:
The site is connected to the wider environment along the western, southern and eastern boundaries.

Structural diversity:
The site has limited structural diversity, comprising mown grassland and regularly cultivated land. Occasional scattered trees and the woodland belt (to the south) provide some diversity.

Flora:
The site comprises mostly non-native horticultural flowers and species-poor amenity grassland. The species-poor hedgerow alongside the road is dominated by hawthorn with spindle. Russian vine is scrambling through the hedgerow.

The tree belt along the southern boundary comprises poplar with Scot's pine, sycamore, cherry, field maple, lilac and *Prunus* sp. Some of the trees have ivy covering them. The ground flora comprises mostly common nettle and ivy. Cotoneaster sp. is also present along this woodland edge.

There are a few scattered trees on the site mostly located in the mown grassland areas. These comprise ash, Scot's pine, field maple, beech and sycamore.

Avifauna:
The survey took place at a sub-optimal time of year for this group and no birds of note recorded during the survey. The site does not have habitat that would support nesting birds other than the trees in the woodland belt, the hedgerow along the road and scattered trees on site.

Invertebrates:
The site is intensively managed but the presence of varied flowering horticultural flowers is attractive to a number of invertebrates such as bumble bees, bees and common butterfly species such as painted lady, small tortoiseshell, peacock and small white, which were all recorded in the grounds feeding on the flowers and shrubs.

Herpetofauna:
The site is intensively managed and therefore it is considered highly unlikely that reptiles would utilise the site. The site is also sub-optimal for amphibians.

Mammals:
Some of the trees in the woodland had ivy covering them and there are a number of more mature trees within the site. There were no obvious holes in the trees that could support roosting bats but the ivy may obscure cracks and crevices. The trees were not fully assessed for bat potential during this survey.

The site has good foraging habitat for hedgehogs and they have been recorded within 120m to the north of the site in 2014.

Comments and recommendations:
The site is of low ecological value, being intensively managed grassland and cultivated land.

If any mature trees are proposed for removal these should be assessed for their potential to support roosting bats.

Impacts on hedgehog should be assessed prior to the clearance of any habitat suitable for this species.

Notwithstanding the above, vegetation (hedgerows, scrub, trees) clearance should be undertaken outside the main bird nesting season (March to August inclusive).

Russian vine is a non-native, very fast-growing species and can spread quickly. It can cover native trees and shrubs and reduce biodiversity by shading out other species.

<u>For sites within zones defined in Core Strategy Policy CS2 (Natural Environment)</u>

Forest Heath District Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document Policy CS2 (Natural Environment) requires that development proposals on sites within 1,500m of parts of the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for supporting stone curlew; sites within 1,500m of any 1km grid square which has supported 5 or more stone curlew nesting attempts since 1995 and sites within 400m of parts of the Breckland SPA designated for supporting woodlark and nightjar are subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application. Development proposals involving new or upgraded roads within 200m of the Breckland Special Area of Conservation (SAC) must also be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the

determination of any planning application. This is to assess whether the proposal would result in a likely significant effect on sites designated for their European nature conservation importance, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

This site is within 1,500m of parts of the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for supporting stone curlew and therefore requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application.

For sites within 7.5km of the Breckland SPA

A study undertaken by Footprint Ecology on behalf of Forest Heath DC and St Edmundsbury BC identified that over half of visitors to Breckland SPA locations within the districts lived within 7.5km of the SPA. It is therefore considered that new residential development within 7.5km of the SPA will result in increased numbers of visitors accessing the SPA; this could in turn result in significant impacts on the features for which the SPA is designated. Prior to granting planning consent for residential development at this site the proposed development should be assessed under the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) (as amended) to determine whether it is likely to result in a likely significant effect on the SPA, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

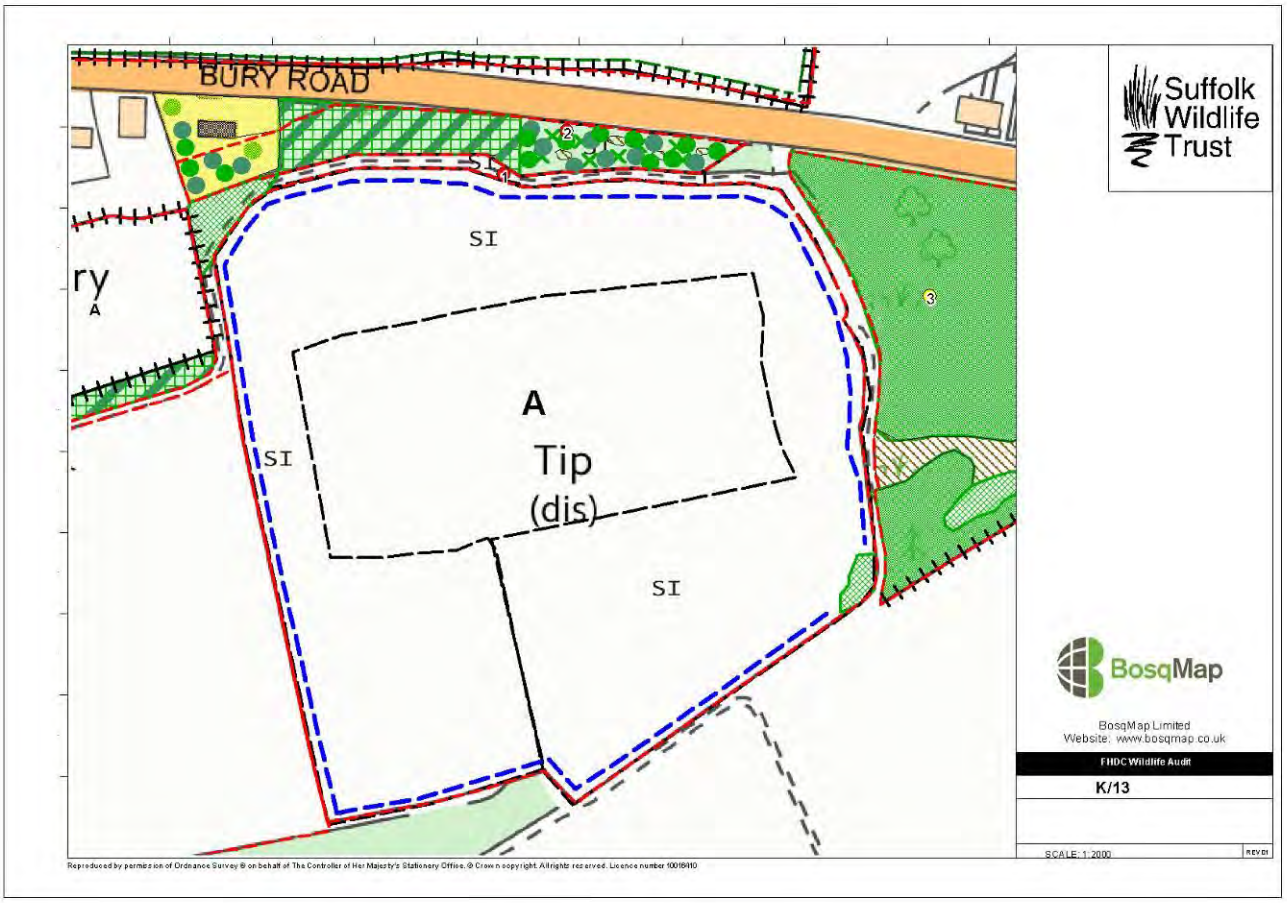
References

Chris Vine. (September 2014). Protected Species Scoping Survey – Land to the rear of The Cock Inn, Kentford.

Site name K/13 Land to rear Flint House

FHDC Ref: K/13
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL71345 66622
Area: 6.8 hectares
Date: 9 September 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, warm, overcast with sunny periods
Ranking: 6
Biodiversity value: Low

Map:



Photos:

Closed landfill site, looking south east

Poor semi-improved grassland on closed landfill, site looking west

Track around southern boundary with scattered scrub and poor semi-improved grassland, looking east

Dry ditch along the western boundary, looking north

Habitat type(s):
Poor semi-improved grassland

Subsidiary habitats:
Arable, scattered scrub

Site description:
The site is located in the west of Kentford with access off the Bury Road (B1506). It is part of a cluster of sites which also includes K/05; K/09 and K/14. The site comprises a closed former landfill site with sown grassland that is regularly managed. In the middle of the site is a wide strip of maize. Gas vents are also present. There is a dry ditch around the whole site.

Protected species seen or known:
-

Protected species potential:
Common lizard,

Priority habitats present:
-

Priority species seen or known:
-

Priority species potential:
Stone curlew, skylark, brown hare

Connectivity:
The site is open to the wider countryside on all boundaries with plantation woodland along the northern, eastern and part of the southern boundaries. Arable land abuts the other boundaries of the site.

Structural diversity:
The site has limited structural diversity as it is managed regularly, although there are areas of taller grassland and scattered scrub around the periphery of the site, along the ditch banks. Some scrub had recently been cleared from the south-east corner.

Flora:
The majority of the site comprises poor semi-improved grassland that was probably sown when the landfill site was capped. The sward is dominated by grass with frequent red fescue, common bent and couch and occasional Yorkshire-fog and cock's-foot. The forbs included abundant creeping cinquefoil, frequent ribwort plantain and perforated St John's-wort with black medick, yarrow, smooth hawk's-beard, wild carrot, blue fleabane and common ragwort.

Avifauna:
The survey took place at a sub-optimal time of year for this group and no birds of note recorded during the survey. However, the site is considered suitable for ground nesting birds such as skylark. Both skylark and stone curlew have been recorded on neighbouring sites (MKA Ecology, 2013). The maize strip may have been planted as bird cover and many common farmland bird species could use this area.

Invertebrates:
The site is only likely to support common and widespread species as the habitats are regularly managed.

Herpetofauna:
The site could attract common lizard if there is a local population, although the regularly managed sward may deter them from using the site. The longer grass and scattered scrub around the site boundaries is probably more suitable for the species.

Mammals:
This site is sub-optimal for most mammal species, although it could support brown hare.

Comments and recommendations:
The site is currently of low ecological value, being managed grassland with some cultivated strips across the site.

Surveys should also be undertaken for reptiles as the site is potentially suitable for them.

Clearance of habitat suitable for nesting birds (including ground nesting species) should be undertaken outside the main bird breeding season (March to August inclusive).

For sites within zones defined in Core Strategy Policy CS2 (Natural Environment)

Forest Heath District Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document Policy CS2 (Natural Environment) requires that development proposals on sites within 1,500m of parts of the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for supporting stone curlew; sites within 1,500m of any 1km grid square which has supported 5 or more stone curlew nesting attempts since 1995 and sites within 400m of parts of the Breckland SPA designated for supporting woodlark and nightjar are subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application. Development proposals involving new or upgraded roads within 200m of the Breckland Special Area of Conservation (SAC) must also be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application. This is to assess whether the proposal would result in a likely significant effect on sites designated for their European nature conservation importance, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

This site is within 1,500m of parts of the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for supporting stone curlew and therefore requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application.

For sites within 7.5km of the Breckland SPA

A study undertaken by Footprint Ecology on behalf of Forest Heath DC and St Edmundsbury BC identified that over half of visitors to Breckland SPA locations within the districts lived within 7.5km of the SPA. It is therefore considered that new residential development within 7.5km of the SPA will result in increased numbers of visitors accessing the SPA; this could in turn result in significant impacts on the features for which the SPA is designated. Prior to granting planning consent for residential development at this site the proposed development should be assessed under the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) (as amended) to determine whether it is likely to result in a likely significant effect on the SPA, either alone or in-combination with other plans or

projects.

References

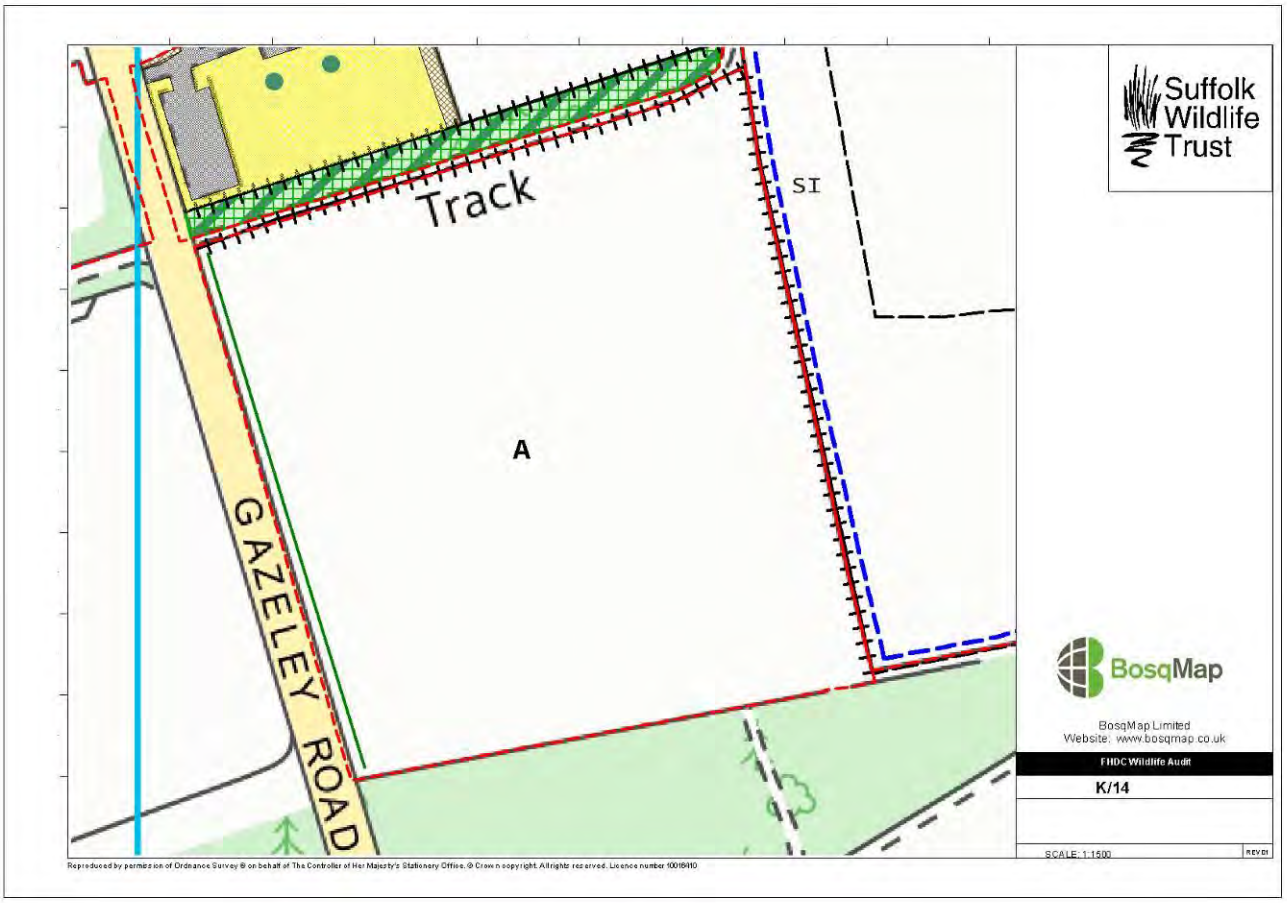
MKA Ecology. (July 2013). Ornithology Interim Report – Gazeley Road, Kentford

MKA Ecology. (August 2013). Results of the final stone curlew (*Burrhinus oedicnemus*) surveys – Land East of Gazeley Road, Kentford

Site name K/14 Land East of Gazeley Road

FHDC Ref: K/14
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL 71130 66535
Area: 3.6 hectares
Date: 9 September 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, warm, overcast with sunny periods
Ranking: 6
Biodiversity value: Low

Map:



Photos:

Roadside hedgerow along the western boundary of the site along Gazeley Road.

Footpath adjacent to northern boundary, looking east.

Dry ditch along eastern boundary, looking south.

Southern boundary looking west alongside broadleaved woodland and grass field boundary.

Habitat type(s):
Arable

Subsidiary habitats:
Poor semi-improved grassland, species-poor intact hedgerow

Site description:
The site is located off Gazeley Road in Kentford and is part of a cluster of sites including K/05; K/06; K/13 and K/09.

. There is a species-poor hedgerow along the roadside along the western boundary, plantation mixed woodland along the southern boundary, a grass footpath along the northern boundary and a dry ditch along the eastern boundary. The site is in arable production with sugar beet on one half and cultivated land on the other. The footpath and ditch were fenced off.

The site has been the subject of previous ecological studies as part of refused planning application F/2013/0221/FUL (MKA Ecology, April; July and August 2013).

Protected species seen or known:
-

Protected species potential:

Priority habitats present:
-

Priority species seen or known:
Dunnock, song thrush, skylark, stone curlew (MKA 2013)

Priority species potential:
Brown hare

Connectivity:
The site is well connected to the wider countryside via the roadside hedgerow, ditch and woodland.

Structural diversity:
The site has limited structural diversity as it is in arable production and regularly disturbed.

Flora:
The site comprises arable land of low botanical value. The floristic value is restricted to the hedgerow and the grass margin alongside the woodland edge. The grass margin comprises poor semi-improved grassland dominated by false oat-grass with patches of common nettle, occasional hogweed and more rarely red fescue and field scabious.

The species–poor hedgerow comprises frequent hawthorn and spindle with locally dominant privet and ivy patches and more rarely elder and dog-rose.

The banks of the dry ditch are more species-rich with abundant hedge bedstraw, occasional common centaury and patches of Cladonia lichen. There is also a blue form of fescue on the bank that could be blue fescue (*Festuca longifolia*), although this could not be confirmed. There were no aquatic or emergent plants in the ditch.

The plantation mixed woodland along the southern boundary off-site comprises ash, oak, cherry, Scot's pine, lime and field maple. The ground flora is largely dominated by tall ruderal vegetation comprising common nettle. The shrub layer is largely dominated by hawthorn.

Smooth rupturewort (a RDB plant) has been recorded in the area and the ecological consultants for planning application F/2013/0221/FUL considered that there was suitable habitat on site for this species (MKA Ecology, April 2013).

Avifauna:
The survey took place at a suboptimal time of year for this group and no species of note were recorded. However an ecological survey undertaken in 2013 recorded the presence of 27 bird species, 18 of which were considered to be breeding. Six of the species recorded as breeding were of conservation concern, these were stock dove; skylark; whitethroat; song thrush; dunnock and meadow pipit. Three of these are Priority species (skylark; song thrush and dunnock). A stone curlew survey was also undertaken at the site. Although no breeding stone curlew were recorded a bird was seen resting on the site on several occasions (MKA Ecology, April 2013).

Invertebrates:
The site is unlikely to support a notable assemblage of invertebrates since the site is regularly cultivated land. The hedgerow will support common and widespread species.

Herpetofauna:
The site is generally unsuitable for reptiles and amphibians.

Mammals:

Brown hare is considered likely to utilise the site. Deer dropping were recorded in the adjacent woodland and some tracks and pathways may be attributable to them.

Comments and recommendations:
The site is of low ecological value being regularly cultivated land.

Clearance of habitat suitable for nesting birds (including ground nesting species) should be undertaken outside the main bird breeding season (March to August inclusive).

<u>For sites within zones defined in Core Strategy Policy CS2 (Natural Environment)</u>

Forest Heath District Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document Policy CS2 (Natural Environment) requires that development proposals on sites within 1,500m of parts of the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for supporting stone curlew; sites within 1,500m of any 1km grid square which has supported 5 or more stone curlew nesting attempts since 1995 and sites within 400m of parts of the Breckland SPA designated for supporting woodlark and nightjar are subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application.

Development proposals involving new or upgraded roads within 200m of the Breckland Special Area of Conservation (SAC) must also be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application. This is to assess whether the proposal would result in a likely significant effect on sites designated for their European nature conservation importance, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

This site is within 1,500m of parts of the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for supporting stone curlew and therefore requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application.

For sites within 7.5km of the Breckland SPA

A study undertaken by Footprint Ecology on behalf of Forest Heath DC and St Edmundsbury BC identified that over half of visitors to Breckland SPA locations within the districts lived within 7.5km of the SPA. It is therefore considered that new residential development within 7.5km of the SPA will result in increased numbers of visitors accessing the SPA; this could in turn result in significant impacts on the features for which the SPA is designated. Prior to granting planning consent for residential development at this site the proposed development should be assessed under the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) (as amended) to determine whether it is likely to result in a likely significant effect on the SPA, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

References:

MKA Ecology. (April 2013). Ecology Report – Gazeley Road, Kentford

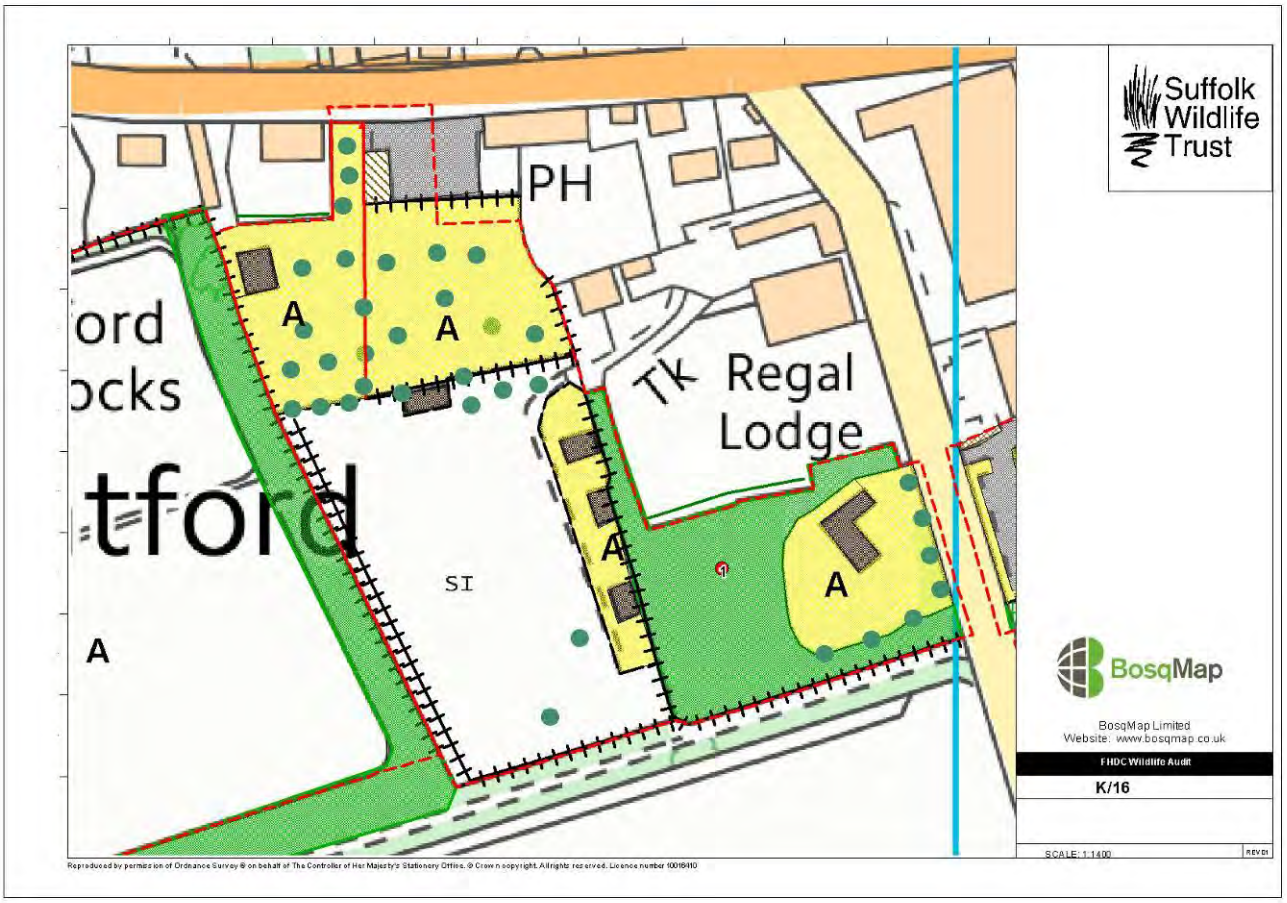
MKA Ecology. (July 2013). Ornithology Interim Report – Gazeley Road, Kentford

MKA Ecology. (August 2013). Results of the final stone curlew (*Burrhinus oedicnemus*) surveys – Land East of Gazeley Road, Kentford

Site name K/16 Land to the rear Cock public house

FHDC Ref: K/16
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL 70899 66628
Area: 2.3 hectares
Date: 10 September 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, warm, overcast with sunny periods
Ranking: 4
Biodiversity value: Medium

Map:



Photos:

Poor semi-improved grassland looking north.

Amenity grassland and orchard trees behind the Kentford Cock public house.

Car park of Kentford Cock public House looking towards Bury Road (B1506).


Bungalows within site boundary with amenity grassland, scattered trees and small orchard.


Bungalows within site boundary with amenity grassland looking south.


Open sided barn and bungalow off Gazeley Road.

Habitat type(s):

Poor semi-improved grassland, broadleaved woodland, amenity grassland

Subsidiary habitats:
Tall ruderal, scattered trees, species-poor hedgerows

Site description:
The site is located in Kentford with part of the site accessible off the Bury Road (B1506) behind the Kentford Cock public house and part of the site accessible from Gazeley Road. Site K/02 lies to the west. Five occupied bungalows are present within the site boundary. The site comprises a mixture of mown amenity grassland and scattered fruit trees behind the public house and gardens of the residential properties plus a field of poor semi-improved grassland. There is a small area of broadleaved woodland behind the bungalow off Gazeley Road and the western boundary comprises a broadleaved woodland belt. A narrow footpath is present along the southern boundary but was blocked off at the southwest corner of the site. This site is subject to outline planning permission for 34 dwellings DC/14/2203/OUT which is not yet determined.

Protected species seen or known:
Bats (pipistrelle and brown long-eared roosting on site, 2015),

Protected species potential:
Common lizard, grass snake

Priority habitats present:
Mixed deciduous woodland

Priority species seen or known:
-

Priority species potential:
Turtle dove, song thrush, spotted flycatcher, bullfinch and dunnock (on adjacent site), common toad, hedgehog

Connectivity:
The site is well connected via the tall trees linked to woodland belts and open countryside to the south.

Structural diversity:
The site has limited structural diversity since much of the land is mown amenity grassland and tended gardens. The tall trees, woodland and poor, semi-improved, long grassland add to the structural diversity.

Flora:
The poor semi-improved grassland was dominated by false oat-grass with frequent red fescue, creeping bent and Yorkshire-fog. Common nettle was locally dominant in patches with other species such as dandelion, white clover, common ragwort, broad-leaved dock, dark mullein, cock's-foot and smooth hawk's-beard occasional or rare in the sward.

The lines of trees comprised sycamore and occasional walnut. Several old orchard trees (apple trees, some dead) were present in the amenity grassland behind the public house.

The broadleaved woodland forms part of the garden of one of the bungalows off Gazeley Road and comprised sycamore, walnut, beech, poplar and Scot's pine with spindle and occasional lilac and

Mahonia beneath. The ground flora comprised common nettle, false brome, herb-Robert, and ground ivy. False acacia and magnolia was also present.

Avifauna:
Previous ecological studies on an adjacent site between 2011 and 2014 (URS, 2014) recorded a number of breeding territories for 18 species of bird. Three were red listed (turtle dove, song thrush and spotted flycatcher) and four were amber listed (bullfinch, dunnock, green woodpecker and swallow). Surveys of this site in 2014 recorded house martins nesting in some of the buildings on site (Chris Vine, September 2014).

During this survey, green woodpecker was recorded along with long-tailed tits. The owner of one of the bungalows on the western boundary of the site reported observing tree creeper, buzzard, sparrowhawk, magpies and goldfinches in their garden.

Invertebrates:
The site has limited opportunities for notable species but is likely to support common and widespread invertebrates. Grasshoppers were heard in the poor semi-improved grassland.

Herpetofauna:
The poor semi-improved grassland has the potential to support common lizard but this will depend on how long the grassland had been unmanaged. Reptile surveys were undertaken on land adjacent to this site in 2011 to 2014 and none were found (URS, 2014).

The site has suitable terrestrial habitat for great crested newts. A small man-made pond (Target Note 1) is present in the broadleaved woodland but it was considered to be too small and shaded to support breeding great crested newts. Surveys conducted in the River Kennett 'pools' by URS (2014) did not find any great crested newts and a nearby lake was dry. The River Kennett is dry during dry summers and does not provide suitable breeding habitat, it was totally dry in 2015. There are no other known ponds within 500m of the site. It is therefore considered unlikely that great crested newts are currently present on this site.

A significant population of breeding common toad was recorded in the River Kennett in 2012 by URS when undertaking great crested newt surveys and this site has habitat which could support them during their terrestrial phase of their lives. Smooth newts and common frogs were also recorded and these species could be present in the terrestrial woodland habitats on this site.

Mammals:
There are five occupied brick buildings on site and an open-fronted barn. Survey in 2014 and 2015 (Chris Vine) recorded evidence of pipistrelle bats in two of the bungalows and in 2015 a male brown long-eared bat was recorded roosting in one of the bungalows. A further five species of bat (soprano pipistrelle; noctule; barbastelle; serotine and myotis sp.) were also recorded foraging or commuting across the site in 2015. There are numerous trees on the site and some of the more mature specimens could have features such as cracks, crevices and holes that could potentially support roosting bats, although no evidence of roosting bats was found during surveys in 2015.

The site also provides some suitable habitat for hedgehog.

Rabbits are active on the site and the site is also likely to support common species of small mammal such as mice, voles and shrews. There is a 2014 record of hedgehog within 170 metres to the north east

on the Bury Road and the habitat is highly suitable for this species.

Comments and recommendations:
The main areas of the site are of relatively low ecological value, although the woodland belts and mature trees add local importance and are of medium ecological value.

Surveys in 2014 and 2015 (Chris Vine) identified roosting bats in two of the buildings on the site and mitigation measures are recommended as part of planning application DC/14/2203/OUT. These surveys should be repeated if a significant period of time elapses before development is undertaken or if the proposed development significantly changes. A European protected species licence will be required is for any proposals which impact on a bat roost. Further tree assessments should be carried out to determine the potential to support roosting bats prior to any works commencing.

Clearance of any woodland could have an impact upon hedgehog. Prior to any large scale clearance of such habitat, the likely impact upon the local hedgehog population should be assessed and consideration given to providing suitably constructed artificial hibernation sites.

Notwithstanding the above, any trees, shrubs and scrub should be removed outside the main bird nesting season (March to August inclusive). As house martins were recorded nesting in a building on the site (2014) any demolition should be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season. The new development should make provision for compensation nesting habitat for this species.

For sites within zones defined in Core Strategy Policy CS2 (Natural Environment)

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This site is within 1,500m of parts of the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for supporting stone curlew and therefore requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application.

For sites within 7.5km of the Breckland SPA

A study undertaken by Footprint Ecology on behalf of Forest Heath DC and St Edmundsbury BC identified that over half of visitors to Breckland SPA locations within the districts lived within 7.5km of the SPA. It is therefore considered that new residential development within 7.5km of the SPA will result in increased numbers of visitors accessing the SPA; this could in turn result in significant impacts on the features for which the SPA is designated. Prior to granting planning consent for residential development at this site the proposed development should be assessed under the requirements of the

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) (as amended) to determine whether it is likely to result in a likely significant effect on the SPA, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

References:

Chris Vine. (August 2015). Bat Survey – Land to the rear of The Cock Inn, Kentford.

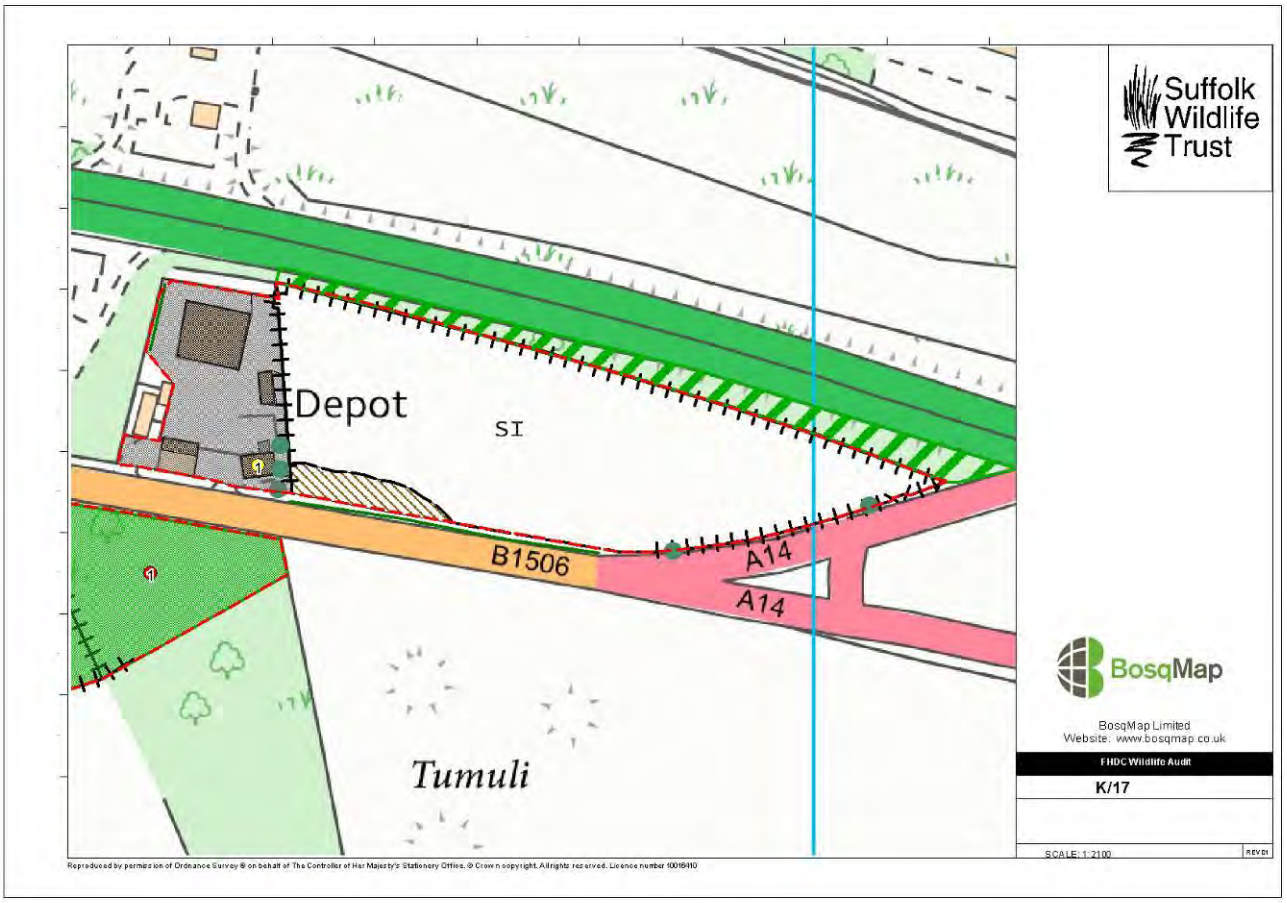
Chris Vine. (September 2014). Protected Species Scoping Survey – Land to the rear of The Cock Inn, Kentford.

URS. (March 2014). Ecological Risk Appraisal and Protected Species Survey – Meddler Stud, Kentford.

Site name K/17 Land between Bury Road and A14

FHDC Ref: K/17
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL71867 66754
Area: 2.72 hectares
Date: 9 September 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, warm, overcast with sunny periods
Ranking: 5
Biodiversity value: Low

Map:



Photos:

Petrol station within site boundary and flat roofed shop looking east.

Pitched roof building (Target Note 1).

Poor semi-improved grassland adjacent to the industrial area looking east.

Roadside hedgerow looking east- Note site K/06 woodland beyond the Bury Road.

View looking west towards industrial site and pathway.

Other buildings on site.

Habitat type(s):

Poor semi-improved grassland, tall ruderal, species poor hedgerow

Subsidiary habitats:

-

Site description:

The site is located along the Bury Road (B1506) in Kentford. Part of the site is currently in industrial use with a petrol station, car sales and car/lorry repair businesses on the site with associated buildings

and hard standing. To the east of this is an abandoned arable field that has now been colonised by a species-poor, semi-improved grassland with tall ruderal species. There is a species-poor hedgerow along the southern boundary adjacent to the road. The northern boundary comprises the A14 embankment that comprises plantation broadleaved woodland. The western boundary comprises scattered trees and grassland and further industrial units.

Protected species seen or known:
-

Protected species potential:
Common lizard

Priority habitats present:
-

Priority species seen or known:
-

Priority species potential:
Skylark, hedgehog, cinnabar moth

Connectivity:
The site has poor connectivity and is enclosed by two busy roads: the A14 to the north and the B1506 to the south. Industrial units lie to the west. The A14 embankment and verges do provide a linear corridor east and west but the A14 is a significant barrier northwards.

Structural diversity:
The area of semi-natural habitat currently on site does provide some structural diversity and if left undisturbed, this may become more established in the future, especially if scrub develops.

Flora:
The site was formerly an arable field that has now been abandoned and has become colonised by poor semi-improved grassland and tall ruderal vegetation. The grassland is dominated by false oat-grass with locally abundant Yorkshire fog. In places common ragwort is dominant with abundant teasel and frequent creeping thistle. Other species recorded include common nettle, cock's-foot, mignonette and ground ivy.

The hedgerow was dominated by hawthorn with occasional elder. An occasional beech tree was present along the southern boundary roadside verge.

The A14 embankment comprised a mix of trees and shrubs probably planted as part of a landscaping scheme when the A14 was built. Species include occasional ash and sycamore with abundant spindle, frequent field maple plus dog-rose, hawthorn, bramble and privet.

Avifauna:
The survey took place at a sub-optimal time of year for this group and no notable bird species were observed during the survey. The teasels could attract flocks of goldfinches. Ground nesting birds such as pheasant, partridge and skylark may utilise the habitats on site. Long tailed tits were seen in the trees along the A14 embankment and this habitat is likely to attract a range of common bird species.

Buzzards were heard overhead and may nest locally, although highly unlikely to nest on this site.

Invertebrates:
The sward is attractive to a range of common and widespread invertebrate species. Numerous bees were seen and a small tortoiseshell butterfly was observed on the ragwort. Cinnabar moth larvae may feed on the abundant ragwort.

Herpetofauna:
The grassland on the former arable land may support common lizard if there are populations nearby to colonise the site.

Mammals:
One small building (Target Note 1) had a pitched tiled roof that looked initially suitable for bats but the owner confirmed that no bats are present since they had a fire and smoke damaged the buildings and roof.

Hedgehogs have been recorded in the area in 2014 and parts of the site provide good foraging habitat for them.

Rabbit burrows are present in the A14 embankment and several pathways indicate their presence on site. A well-worn pathway was recorded but on inspection this led to a gate in the corner of the industrial site and it was concluded that this may be used by pedestrians although the pathway did not extend beyond the site boundaries.

Common species of small mammal such as mice, shrews and voles are likely to utilise the site.

Comments and recommendations:
The abandoned arable field is currently of low ecological value although it has some benefits to bees, butterflies and grasshoppers. There is little ecological value in the industrial section of the site.

If development is proposed on this site then the possible presence of reptiles should be considered and it is recommended that a survey should be undertaken, particularly if there is a significant delay in obtaining planning permission. No vegetation clearance should take place until the findings of the survey are complete and mitigation for reptiles is implemented as appropriate.

Similarly, if habitats are allowed to develop due a time lapse prior to any development proposal, then the ecological interest will increase for other groups such as invertebrates and breeding birds. In this case surveys should also include these groups.

Consideration should be given to the presence of hedgehog on this site. Prior to any large scale clearance of such habitat, the likely impact upon the local hedgehog population should be assessed.

Notwithstanding the above, any clearance of trees, shrubs or scrub should be undertaken outside the main bird nesting season of March to August inclusive.

<u>For sites within zones defined in Core Strategy Policy CS2 (Natural Environment)</u>

Forest Heath District Council Core Strategy Development Plan Document Policy CS2 (Natural Environment) requires that development proposals on sites within 1,500m of parts of the Breckland

Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for supporting stone curlew; sites within 1,500m of any 1km grid square which has supported 5 or more stone curlew nesting attempts since 1995 and sites within 400m of parts of the Breckland SPA designated for supporting woodlark and nightjar are subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application. Development proposals involving new or upgraded roads within 200m of the Breckland Special Area of Conservation (SAC) must also be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application. This is to assess whether the proposal would result in a likely significant effect on sites designated for their European nature conservation importance, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.

This site is within1,500m of parts of the Breckland Special Protection Area (SPA) designated for supporting stone curlew and therefore requires a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) prior to the determination of any planning application.

<u>For sites within 7.5km of the Breckland SPA</u>

A study undertaken by Footprint Ecology on behalf of Forest Heath DC and St Edmundsbury BC identified that over half of visitors to Breckland SPA locations within the districts lived within 7.5km of the SPA. It is therefore considered that new residential development within 7.5km of the SPA will result in increased numbers of visitors accessing the SPA; this could in turn result in significant impacts on the features for which the SPA is designated. Prior to granting planning consent for residential development at this site the proposed development should be assessed under the requirements of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) (as amended) to determine whether it is likely to result in a likely significant effect on the SPA, either alone or in-combination with other plans or projects.