

FOREST HEATH WILDLIFE AUDIT

Proposed site allocations

2015

<i>Project no.</i>	<i>Report</i>	<i>Date</i>
26/15	Final	23/02/2016
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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 as 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
	Land south of Mildenhall to River Lark (including Jubilee Field and site M44)	4	Medium
M22			
M23	Land east of Mildenhall to A1065 and Fiveways Roundabout	1	High
	Land north of Mildenhall, east of the A1101 (including Airfield landing lights)	1	High
M24			
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
	Land south of Worlington Road and adjacent to former dairy site.	5	Low
M29			
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
	Land adjoining Public House, Turnpike Road and Turnpike Lane	4	Medium
RL05			
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

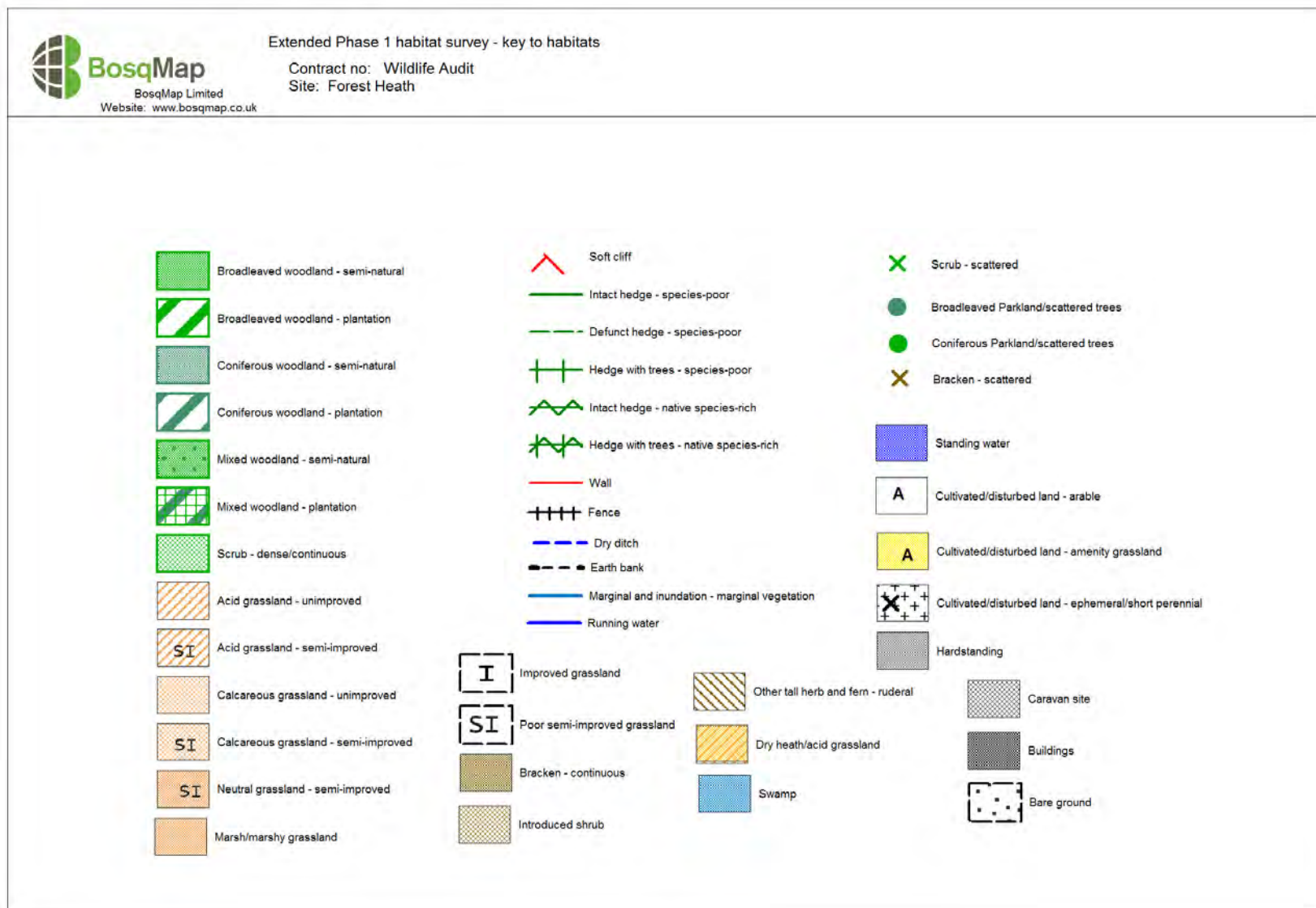
Kentford: K10

Mildenhall: M/43

Newmarket: N/32

Red Lodge: RL/03

Key to phase 1 Maps



Sensitive ecological data may have been removed from these audit reports

Site name **L/04 Land North of Station Road**

FHDC Ref: L/04
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL 7130 8351
Area: 0.48 hectares
Date: 2nd September 2015
Recorder: S Bullion
Weather conditions: Cool, showery
Ranking: 5
Biodiversity value: Low

Map:



Photos:



Farmyard with Cromwell Farmhouse to rear



Paddock with scrub to rear

Habitat type(s):

Poor semi-improved grassland, scrub, coniferous tree belt

Subsidiary habitats:

Tall ruderal

Site description:

This site lies to the north of Station Road within a residential area. The site incorporates the farmhouse of Cromwell Farm, as well as various outbuildings, stables and paddocks. It also includes part of the garden of the property to the south (39 Station Road).

Protected species seen or known:

-

Protected species potential:

Bats

Priority habitats present:

-

Priority species seen or known:

Priority species potential:

Hedgehog, swift

Connectivity:

The site is surrounded by roads and housing, so connectivity is poor.

Structural diversity:

With the exception of the bramble scrub on the northern bank, structural diversity is poor.

Flora:

The main paddock was being grazed by a pony at the time of the visit. It includes common species:

perennial ryegrass, Yorkshire fog, wall barley, yarrow, dandelion, common nettle, smooth sow-thistle, creeping thistle, greater plantain, broad-leaved dock and shepherd's-purse. The smaller paddock close to the road was dominated by greater plantain, with occasional perennial rye-grass, spotted medick and white clover. This area became more ruderal closer to the road, with Canadian fleabane, broad-leaved dock, yarrow, dandelion, white deadnettle and creeping cinquefoil. Elsewhere on the site there was also prickly lettuce and black horehound growing amongst discarded farmyard implements.

The north of the site included eucalyptus trees, seeding ash trees, buddleia, walnut, hawthorn and bramble scrub. A line of leylandii forms the eastern boundary.

Avifauna:

The outbuildings may be suitable for nesting barn swallow. The pantiled roof of the farmhouse could have access points which swifts may utilise for nesting. The bramble on the bank may support common nesting birds.

Invertebrates:

Common species will be present but this is a poor site for this group.

Herpetofauna:

The site is largely unsuitable for this group.

Mammals:

The site is largely sub-optimal for this group, although the flint-walled, pantiled farmhouse may be suitable for roosting bats. The bramble on the bank will provide limited habitat for mammals and as in 2014 hedgehog have been recorded to the south (Delph Road) and further east along Station Road, they may utilise this area for hibernation.

Comments and recommendations:

If development is to proceed on this site then a bat survey should be undertaken for the farmhouse. The likely presence of swifts should also be considered and alternative nesting sites provided in any new development. Clearance of the bramble on the bank should avoid the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive). In addition, care should be taken during clearance to avoid any impact upon hedgehog.

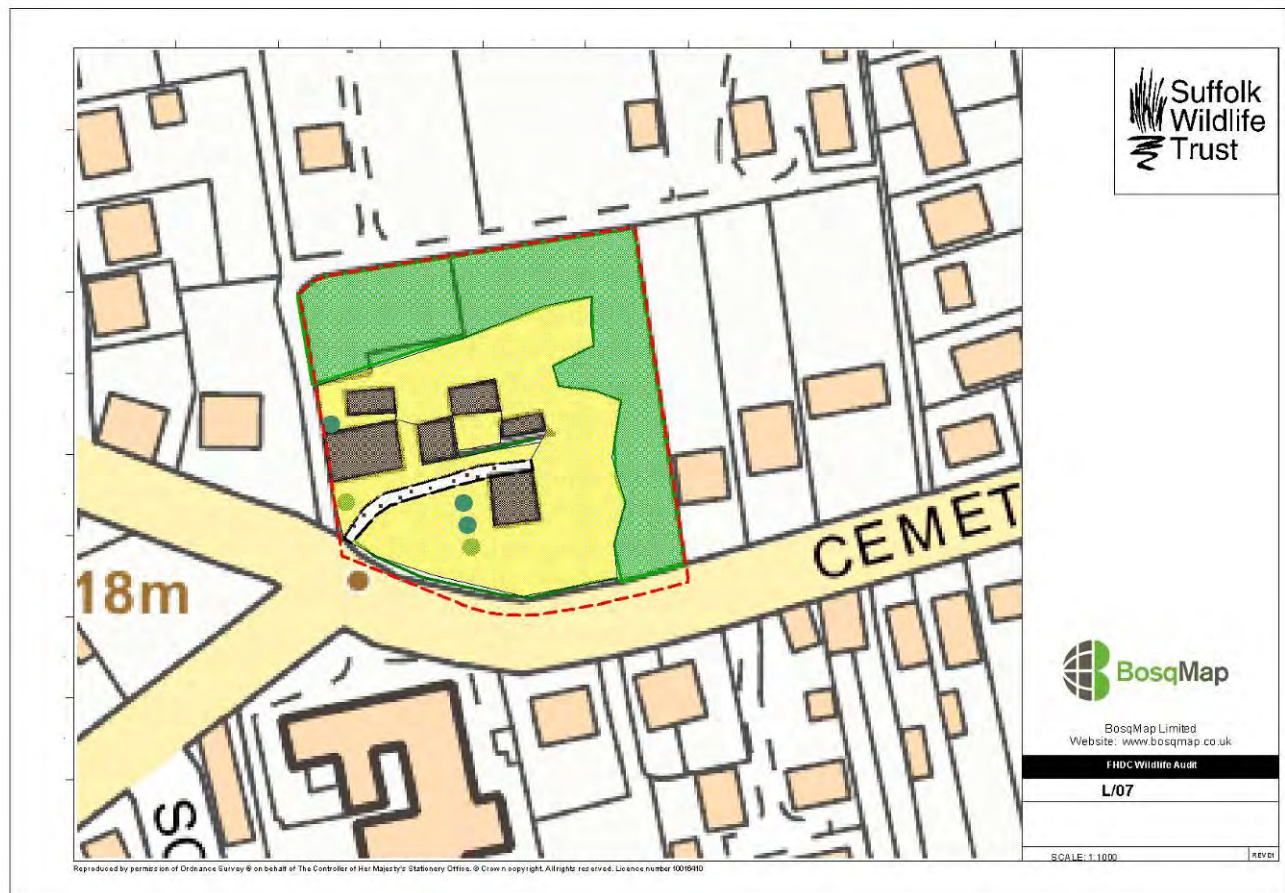
For sites within 7.5km of the Breckland SPA

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 **L/07 Number 3 Cemetery Road**

FHDC Ref: L/07
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL 71862 82888
Area: 0.58 hectares
Date: 2nd September 2015
Recorder: S Bullion
Weather conditions: Cool, showery
Ranking: 4
Biodiversity value: Medium

Map:



Photos:



Front garden



Woodland and lawns to rear

Habitat type(s):

Amenity grassland, broadleaf woodland

Subsidiary habitats:

Small orchard, bramble scrub, pine trees

Site description:

This is a large garden with areas of short mown grass, broadleaf woodland and orchard trees. A row of large pines is present on the northern boundary. The southern lawns contain a more interesting mix of species typical of drier, free-draining soils. There are a series of outbuildings and the house itself is situated on the site of the former Lakenheath windmill.

Protected species seen or known:

-

Protected species potential:

Bats

Priority habitats present:

-

Priority species seen or known:

Hedgehog

Priority species potential:

Common toad

Connectivity:

Although this is a large garden within a residential area, the site is bordered by other large gardens to the east and north, which in turn are adjacent to Lakenheath Cemetery County Wildlife Site. Collectively, connectivity is relatively good in this part of Lakenheath.

Structural diversity:

Structural diversity is good for this type of habitat, with its mix of grassland, woodland, orchard trees

and bramble scrub.

Flora:

The mown grassland to the south of the site had drier, free-draining soils and whilst perennial rye-grass was present (typical for a lawn) there was an abundance of finer grasses (*Festuca* species) and also a large amount of lady's bedstraw and common cat's-ear. Other common species were present including creeping buttercup, yarrow, ribwort plantain, common ragwort, daisy, and dandelion.

There is a varied mix of trees within the site, with large pines, ash of various sizes and white poplar. Walnut, hazel, holly, cherry, walnut and cherry plum are also present. Mature apple trees of a former orchard are now largely incorporated into areas of broad-leaf woodland. There are some patches of bramble which have been allowed to form pockets of scrub.

Avifauna:

The survey took place at a sub-optimal time for surveying this group, but common garden bird species will be present.

Invertebrates:

Common invertebrates will be present and a number of butterflies were noted, although it was a cold day for recording this group.

Herpetofauna:

The site is unlikely to support reptiles but toad and other amphibians may be present.

Mammals:

The owner reported seeing hedgehog and there is a 2014 record of this species 250m to the north, on Wingfield Road. Large gardens with a mosaic of grassland, woodland and bramble scrub provide excellent habitat for hedgehogs and this importance is further increased where several large gardens are situated together and there is the opportunity for hedgehogs to move from one to another.

Large trees within the site may provide roosting opportunities for bats. In particular, the large pines to the north and the larger ash trees may contain such features.

Mole hills were noted.

Comments and recommendations:

The mosaic of habitats within this large garden, combined with its location next to other large gardens makes this likely to be a locally important area for wildlife in this part of Lakenheath.

Any removal of large trees should be preceded by an assessment for the likelihood of roosting bats. In addition, clearance of any woodland or large bramble areas could have a high impact upon hedgehog. Suitable hibernation sites can represent a key resource for this species, supporting a high proportion of the population through the winter months. 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. This timing of any such work should also avoid the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive).

For sites within 7.5km of the Breckland SPA

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Site name **L/11 East of The Mallards**

FHDC Ref: L/11
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL 71680 82272
Area: 0.29 hectares
Date: 2 September 2015
Recorder: S Bullion
Weather conditions: Cool, showery
Ranking: 5
Biodiversity value: Low

Map:



Photos:



View of central section of site



View westwards of watercourse



Wooded area in south-east corner

Habitat type(s):

Poor semi-improved grassland, broadleaf woodland, stream

Subsidiary habitats:

Tall ruderal

Site description:

This small site lies on the western edge of Lakenheath in a largely residential area. The site consists of three separate areas: To the north is an area of hard standing used for car parking, with a stream issuing from a culvert flowing south-westwards along the northern boundary. There was no marginal vegetation growing along the stream as the hard standing extended almost to the water edge. The centre of the site was largely short mown, poor, semi-improved grassland, although in the south there was an area of nettles and brambles that had recently been cleared and a very small area of broadleaf woodland inside a fence. The remainder of the site in the south was not accessed as it appeared to be garden.

Protected species seen or known:

-

Protected species potential:

-

Priority habitats present:

-

Priority species seen or known:

-

Priority species potential:

Hedgehog

Connectivity:

Connectivity is very poor.

Structural diversity:

The small area of woodland on the western boundary adds some structural diversity, otherwise this is low.

Flora:

Common species are present in the central section, including common nettle, common mallow, dandelion, hemlock, broad-leaved dock, ribwort plantain, greater plantain and yarrow. The small area of broadleaf woodland contains a large ash, with other small ash, a silver birch and hawthorn. There are patches of bramble, an area of which had been recently cleared. The central boundary alongside the garden is largely lilac, with *Prunus* species to the west.

Avifauna:

The small area of woodland will provide limited habitat for common species.

Invertebrates:

Common species will be present, but the habitats for this group are limited.

Herpetofauna:

The isolation of the site from other areas of suitable habitat means there is only a low possibility that the small woodland area may support amphibians. There is a pile of rubble adjacent to the woodland which may also be suitable for hibernation. The site is unsuitable for reptiles.

Mammals:

It is possible that hedgehog may use the small woodland area for hibernation. There are records for the Eriswell Road in 2014, 250 metres to the south.

The larger trees on site did not appear to have features suitable for supporting roosting bats. However, this situation can change if there is branch fall or damage to the tree creating splits and crevices.

Comments and recommendations:

If any of the woodland habitat on the western edge of the site is to be felled, cut back or cleared then the trees should be reassessed for their bat potential. In addition, clearance of the woodland and any areas of bramble should be undertaken in a way to avoid any injury to hedgehogs. The timing of this work should also avoid the bird nesting season of March to August inclusive.

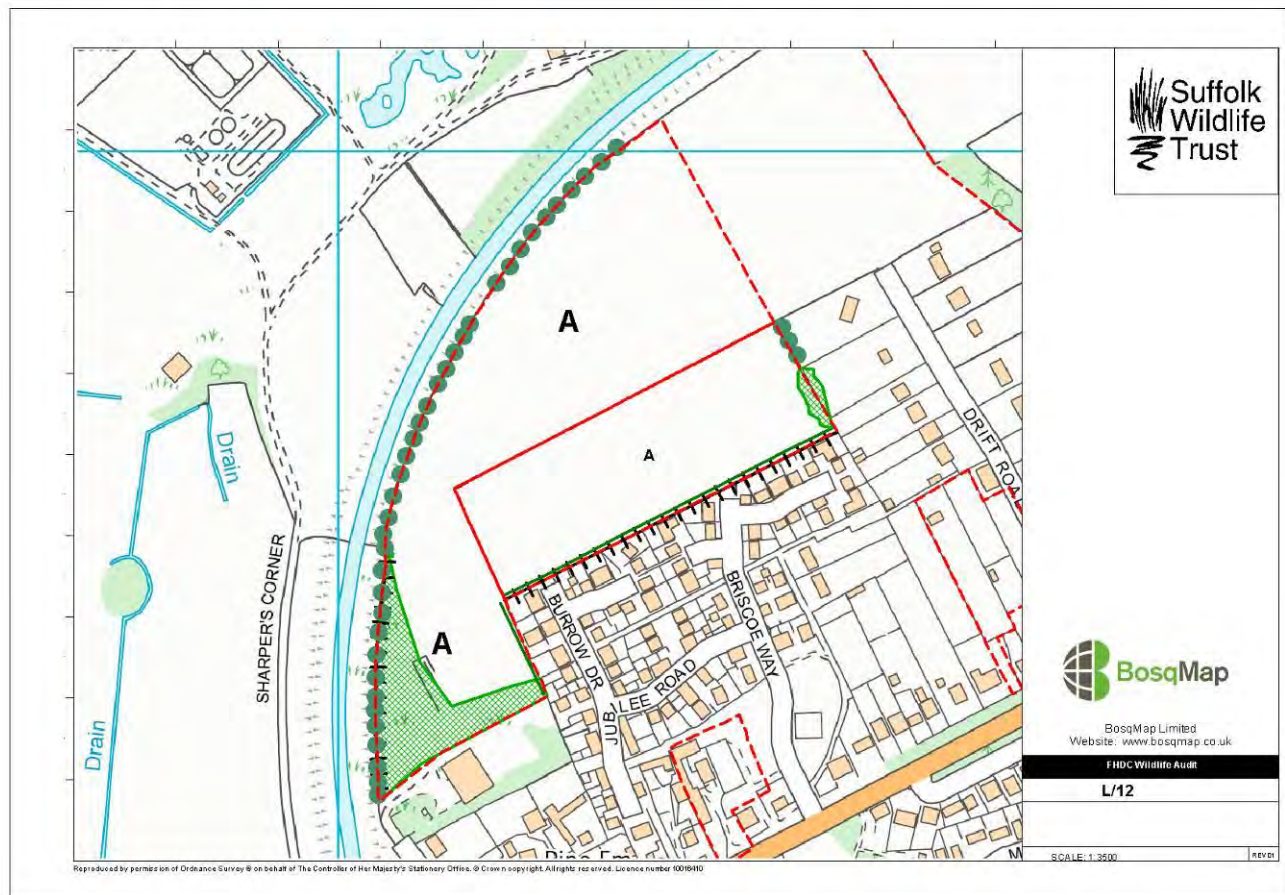
For sites within 7.5km of the Breckland SPA

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Site name L/12 Land North of Burrow Drive and Briscoe Way

FHDC Ref: L/12
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL 71264 83848
Area: 6.1 hectares
Date: 7 August 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, hot, overcast
Ranking: 5
Biodiversity value: Low

Map:



Photos:



View looking south-west from north-west corner of site adjacent to Cut off Channel



Cut Off Channel and poor semi-improved grassland margin off site looking south-west.



Dense scrub in south-west corner of the site looking north.



Southern boundary looking north-east towards residential area off Burrow Drive.



Arable land looking north from southern boundary.

Habitat type(s):

Arable

Subsidiary habitats:

Species-poor intact hedgerow, dense scrub and poor semi-improved grassland, scattered trees.
Open water off site.

Site description:

The site lies to north-west of Lakenheath and is bounded by habitats associated with the Cut Off Channel, which borders the site's north-west boundary. The site lies to the north of site L/35 and the absence of field boundaries between the two sites gives the impression the area is all one site, albeit farmed by different occupants. The site is currently under arable cultivation and was cropped with parsnips.

It was not clear where the site survey boundary ended and whether the adjacent grassland along the north-west boundary was intended to be included, but it was included in this survey.

In the south-west corner is an area of dense scrub, which borders farm buildings (Pine Farm) with the scrub extending along the southern boundary to the residential development off Burrow Drive. Access to the site is either via the existing farm buildings from Sharpes Corner off the High Street or via existing residential development off Briscoe Way (off B1112).

Protected species seen or known:

Otter (2004 and 2010 records on Cut Off Channel)

Protected species potential:

Common lizard, grass snake, bats

Priority habitats present:

-

Priority species seen or known:

-

Priority species potential:

Brown hare, skylark

Connectivity:

The site has good connectivity, being close to the Cut Off Channel. Trees along the drain provide excellent commuting routes for bats.

Structural diversity:

The majority of the site has poor structural diversity, being regularly cultivated arable land. Habitats alongside the cultivated land, such as semi-improved grassland, species-poor hedgerow and dense scrub, provide structural diversity.

Flora:

The semi-improved grassland adjacent to the cultivated land comprised false oat-grass, common couch, creeping bent, timothy, cock's-foot, red fescue, ribwort plantain, black medick, wild carrot, creeping cinquefoil, great willowherb and common ragwort. Species associated with the watercourse were also present in the margin and included reed canary-grass and hemp agrimony. Large patches of a campanula species was recorded along the top of the bank. Marsh woundwort was recorded along the track adjacent to the dense scrub.

The ruderal flora along the uncapped edges of the site comprised field speedwell, sun spurge, common mugwort, dove's-foot crane's-bill, barren brome, redshank, common fumitory, knotgrass, pale persicaria, smooth and perennial sow-thistle, wild oat, and groundsel.

The watercourse was wide and dominated by duckweed species (possibly greater duckweed) with small numbers of branched bur-reed and common reed in the water. Trees and scrub had been recently removed from some sections of the bank.

The dense scrub at the south-west corner of the site comprised bramble and was inaccessible. There is a line of young trees, mainly ash, along the boundary of the scrub along the edge of the site at this location.

The species-poor hedgerow along the eastern boundary adjacent to the residential development was dominated by hawthorn and was probably planted during the construction of the development.

Avifauna:

No birds of note were recorded during the survey.

As with site L/35 bird species that were noted included blackbird. Buzzards were also heard overhead. The dense scrub provides excellent habitat for nesting and feeding and a number of different common bird species are expected to utilise this habitat. Skylark may nest on the ground within the site.

Invertebrates:

The areas of dense scrub and semi-improved grassland are likely to support a wide range of invertebrates. Dragonflies were noted during the survey. The arable land has limited potential to support invertebrate species of conservation interest.

Herpetofauna:

The grassland habitat along the Cut Off Channel is likely to support common reptiles such as common lizard and grass snake. The presence of scrub provides suitable sheltering habitat and the grassland provides foraging opportunities for them.

Great crested newts are considered highly unlikely to be present on site. The only waterbody close to the site is Cut Off Channel. This large waterbody is unlikely to support breeding great crested newt due to its large size. Waterbodies identified within 500m of this site are likely to overlap those for site L35. An assessment was made in a previous survey report undertaken by JBA Consultancy Services Ltd in 2013. Although three ponds were identified within 500m, all are separated from the site by significant barriers to movement and it was concluded that great crested newts are unlikely to be present on site.

Mammals:

Brown hares could utilise the site. Common small mammal species may be associated with the hedgerow along the eastern boundary and the scrub and grassland along the northwest boundary.

The Cut Off Channel lies adjacent to the site and this watercourse supports otter. Bats are likely to forage along the Channel and use it as a commuting route.

Comments and recommendations:

Most of the site is of low ecological value. The scrub and grassland in the south-west corner of the site boundary has moderate ecological value. The grass margin that lies adjacent to the Cut Off Channel is of moderate ecological value but it is not clear if this is within the site boundary. However, any development within this site should allow for a substantial buffer next to the Channel, providing semi-natural habitat adjacent to the water course. In addition, this feature should be protected from light spillage.

Trees, scrub and other suitable nesting habitat should be removed outside the main bird nesting season of March to August inclusive. This is particularly relevant to the area of dense scrub at the south-western end of the site that is highly likely to attract nesting birds.

For sites within 7.5km of the Breckland SPA

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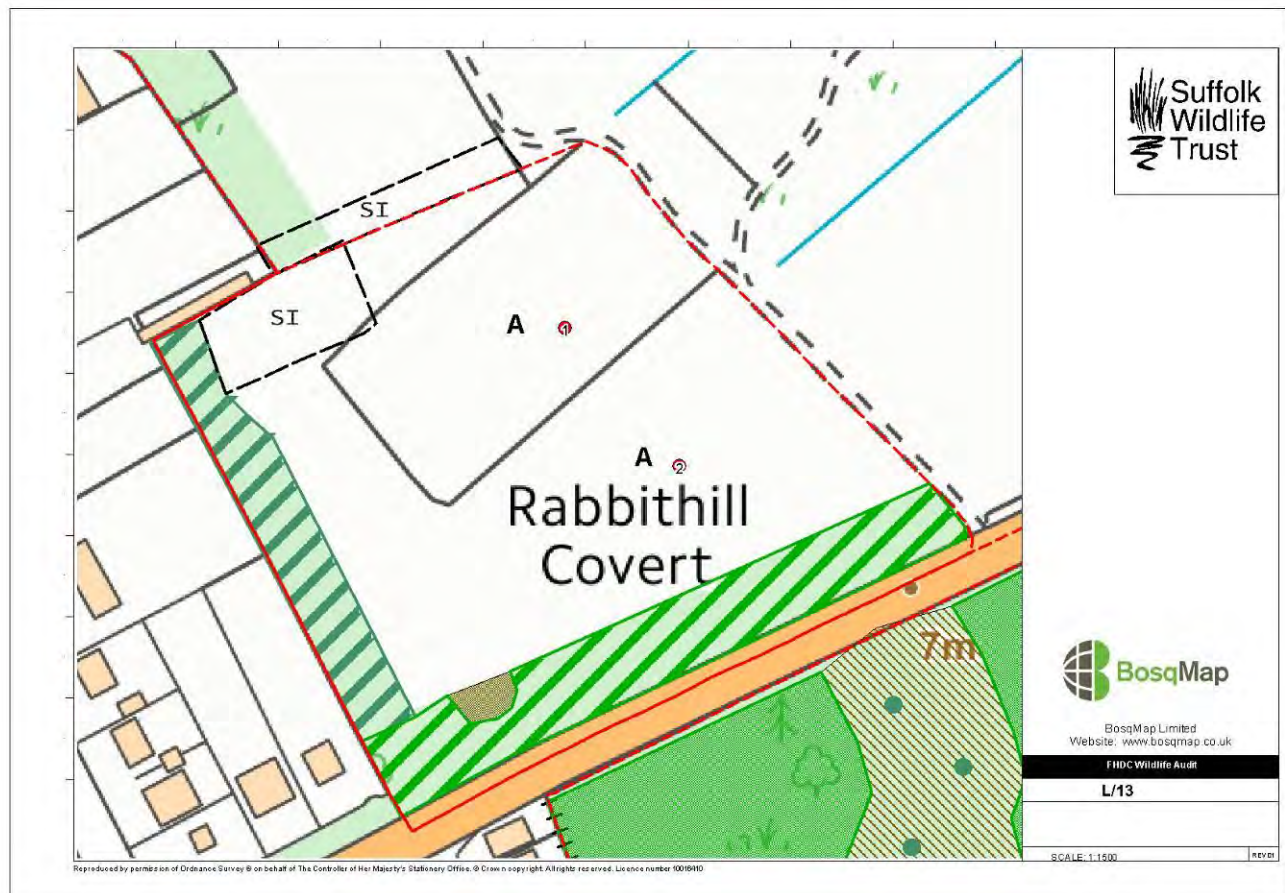
References:

JBA Consultancy Services Ltd (March 2013) Phase 1 Habitat Survey of Land off Station Road, Lakenheath (relating to adjacent site L/35).

Site name **L/13 Rabbithill Covert, Station Road**

FHDC Ref: L/13
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL 71730 83786
Area: 3.3 hectares
Date: 6 August 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Hot, dry, sunny
Ranking: 5
Biodiversity value: Low

Map:



Photos:



Southern boundary looking east



Track between L/13 and L/36 looking south to Station Road (B1112) and access.



Tall ruderal vegetation and re-colonising grassland across site.



Western boundary looking south



Patches of ground dominated by grass (bent species).

Habitat type(s):

Arable and tall ruderal

Subsidiary habitats:

Plantation mixed woodland, poor semi-improved grassland

Site description:

The site is located and accessed off Station Road (B1112), Lakenheath. The site currently comprises a mixture of tall ruderal vegetation with areas dominated by species-poor grassland. The southern boundary comprises a belt of broad-leaved plantation woodland with a small area of more semi-natural broad-leaved woodland and belt of plantation coniferous woodland along the western boundary. The access track abuts the eastern boundary of the site. The northern boundary comprises a thin strip of poor semi-improved grassland with a small group of aspen trees and occasional bracken that divides this site from L/36 to the north and east.

The site has been previously surveyed by James Blake Associates (October 2013). The site comprised two fields at that time, one of poor semi-improved grassland and one arable field with a crop of carrots. The poor semi-improved grassland recorded in October 2013 was cultivated in November 2013.

By 2015 the site had begun to re-colonise with grasses and tall ruderal vegetation. A small area of poor semi-improved grassland remains in the north-west corner of the site.

Protected species seen or known:

Common lizard and grass snake (Applied Ecology 2015)

Protected species potential:

Bats

Priority habitats present:

-

Priority species seen or known:

Hedgehog (Station Road, 2014), cinnabar moth

Priority species potential:

Skylark, brown hare, bats

Connectivity:

The site has woodland with restricted linear connections along the B1112 to the east and to the north via a block of plantation woodland. Otherwise connectivity is limited due to the presence of large arable fields to the north and east with no hedgerows or ditches.

Structural diversity:

Limited due to former arable cultivations.

Flora:

The site comprises a mosaic of weedy, tall ruderal vegetation (Target Note 1) and typical arable weed flora (Target Note 2). Grasses have also started to re-colonise the site, of which false oat-grass was frequent with occasional cock's-foot. The site was dominated by common ragwort in the northern and western sections with Canadian Fleabane frequent and with rectangular areas dominated by bent species of grasses in the southern section. Stubble was present in the southern section suggesting recent cropping. The last crop was reported to be spring wheat in 2014. Arable weeds included small nettle, pineappleweed, scentless mayweed, black-bindweed, knotgrass, field pansy, barren brome, red dead-nettle and common fiddleneck. Of interest was the presence of hare's-foot clover that was frequent in the southern section. Black medick was also recorded. Common nettle was present along the western boundary and under the trees.

The plantation woodland areas comprised predominantly Scot's Pine along the western boundary with bramble underneath. The southern boundary tree belt comprised sycamore, beech and ash. There was a small patch of bracken in the western end of this woodland boundary. Snowberry was also occasional under the trees.

Avifauna:

The survey took place at a sub-optimal time of year for this group and no birds of note were recorded across the site on this occasion. A previous nesting bird study conducted by Applied Ecology Ltd (May 2014) concluded that stone curlew could potentially use the site in the spring but a subsequent survey in spring 2015 found no evidence of this species. Only low numbers of common woodland and garden birds were recorded during this survey. The only ground nesting bird recorded was a pair of red-legged partridge, although skylark could potentially be present.

Invertebrates:

Due to the presence of flowering species such as common ragwort there was reasonable invertebrate activity across the site. Cinnabar moth, a Suffolk Priority BAP species, was present. This species has suffered recent decline and is listed under this BAP for research purposes.

Herpetofauna:

Due to its recent cultivation history, the site is unlikely to support large populations of common reptiles. However, a detailed survey for the adjacent Site L/36 by Applied Ecology (2015) found a medium sized population of common lizard across this site and a small population of grass snake. This means that any suitable habitat such as rough grassland is likely to support common lizard and grass snake may also be present in low numbers.

According to a previous study by James Blake Associates Ltd (2013), there are three ponds located to the north-east of the site. All are greater than 300m away. They concluded that there are no linear terrestrial habitats linking the ponds to the site and that regularly disturbed arable land is a significant barrier to movement. Therefore it is considered highly unlikely that great crested newts would be present on this site. A detailed survey of these ponds by Applied Ecology (2015) for Site L/36 was negative for great crested newts.

Mammals:

Mature trees in the woodland belts could support roosting bats. A number of trees were identified in the previous survey conducted by James Blake Associates (2013) that possessed features of potential value to roosting bats. They concluded that some of the trees had low to moderate bat roost potential. These included several Scot's pine trees and a large beech tree to the south-west due to the presence of dead wood in the trunk and canopy and ivy growth. The tree belts may also provide foraging habitat and are likely to support small mammals.

Hedgehog has been recorded along Station Road on the southern boundary of the site in 2014 so it is highly likely they will be foraging on site.

Brown hare has been recorded in the vicinity and the arable fields and field margins will provide good habitat for them.

Comments and recommendations:

The site has recently been under arable cultivation and therefore recently disturbed. An area of semi-improved grassland that was previously present was cultivated in late 2013. No crops appear to have been grown in the 2015 season and this has allowed a weedy mosaic of tall ruderal plants and annual weeds to become established.

It is possible, given the sandy soil conditions of this site, that dry lowland acid grassland could become established and along with L/36 form a reasonable area of this habitat subject to the right management and control of species such as common ragwort. It would contribute to the remaining acid grassland resource of the district.

Should the site be developed there are the following ecological constraints:

Reptiles: Given the medium population of common lizard on the adjacent L/36, the presence of this species is highly likely in areas of suitable habitat, such as uncultivated areas dominated by grass species or field margins. Prior to any development such areas should be re-assessed for their potential

to support reptiles and mitigation for this group should be undertaken as appropriate.

Bats: Some of the trees within the woodland belts have the potential to support roosting bats. From previous reports, it has been suggested that the woodland belts would be retained; however a sensitive lighting plan will be required in order to maintain dark unlit woodland belts where practicable. If any of the trees are to be removed then further bat surveys will be required.

Nesting birds: Vegetation (trees, shrubs, scrub) clearance should be undertaken outside the main bird nesting season (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.

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References:

JBA Consultancy Services Ltd (2013). Rabbithill Covert.

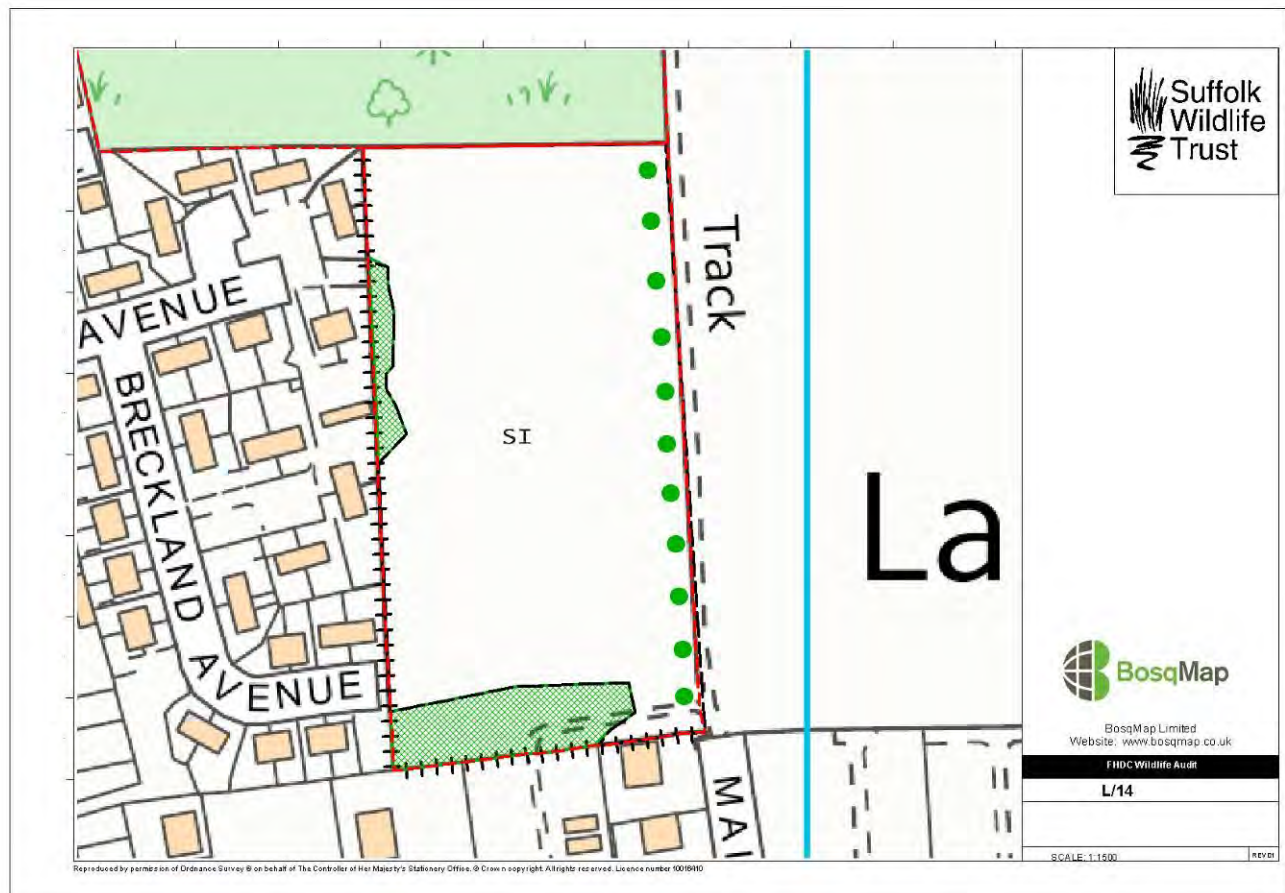
Applied Ecology Ltd. (October 2014) Land at Lakenheath North, Suffolk. Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey.

Applied Ecology Ltd. (September 2015) Land at Lakenheath North, Suffolk. Phase 2 Ecology Report.

Site name **L/14 Land off Maids Cross Way**

FHDC Ref: L/14
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL71905 83170 (to centre of site)
Area: 2.1ha
Date: 7 August 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, hot, overcast with sunny intervals
Ranking: 5
Biodiversity value: Low

Map:



Photos:



View looking south along eastern boundary.



Track leading to residential property along southern boundary.



View looking north-east across site.



View along western boundary adjacent to existing residential development.



Footpath across the site at the northern end.

Habitat type(s):

Poor semi-improved grassland

Subsidiary habitats:

Row of Scot's pine, dense scrub

Site description:

The site is located on the eastern edge of Lakenheath and adjacent to Breckland and Wingfield Avenues. There is an access track adjacent to the eastern boundary and an access from the south off Maids Cross Way.

The western and southern boundaries abut existing residential development, which are fenced off from the site. The eastern boundary comprises a line of Scot's pine and the northern boundary lies adjacent to site L/28, which at this point is an area of dense bramble scrub.

The south east corner of the site almost links to the Lakenheath Cemetery which is designated as a County Wildlife Site.

Two well-worn pathways have been created by pedestrians crossing the site north to south and also east to west off Wingfield Avenue.

The site was probably formerly arable land, but is now set-aside and currently uncultivated.

Protected species seen or known:

-

Protected species potential:

Common lizard

Priority habitats present:

-

Priority species seen or known:

Hedgehog (Wingfield Avenue 2014), Starling

Priority species potential:

Brown hare

Connectivity:

The site lies adjacent to an area of dense scrub and woodland to the north with arable land to the east. Other than the line of Scot's pines there are no other good habitat features linking this site to the wider countryside.

Structural diversity:

The developing sward was uniform in height with small areas of scrub along the southern and western boundaries. Bare ground is also present.

Flora:

The site is formerly an arable field but now abandoned and comprises common ragwort, false oat-grass, Yorkshire fog, common cat's-ear, wild carrot, cock's-foot, ribwort plantain, dandelion, perforated St John's-wort, red bartsia, wild majoram, vervain, common toadflax and black horehound. Wild clematis was also present sprawling over the top of the sward in places. The species composition suggests a calcareous influence. Hound's-tongue was recorded on the site, which is listed as Near Threatened. Buddleia and everlasting pea were also recorded on site and are presumed to be garden escapes.

The eastern boundary comprises a Scot's Pine line, a characteristic feature of Breckland.

Dense bramble scrub has developed along the southern boundary by the track that leads to the back of properties.

Avifauna:

A flock of starlings was recorded using the bramble scrub at the southern end of the site. Starling is a UK Priority species and is listed on the Birds of Conservation Concern red list. Collared doves were also noted. The site is highly likely to support nesting birds in spring and summer in the dense scrub on site. Ground nesting birds are considered unlikely due to high disturbance levels.

Invertebrates:

The site is likely to support a wide range of invertebrate species although these are likely to be common due to the young age of the sward. Common species of butterfly including common blue, gatekeeper, peacock and large white were noted during the survey. Grasshoppers were heard and were present in the sward.

Herpetofauna:

The site could support common lizard, although it is not known how long the site has out of cultivation. However, the scrub associated with L/28 may support reptiles, which could then move into the site. Another nearby site (L/36) has a medium population of common lizard, so they are in the locality. The dry nature of the site is unlikely to attract amphibians.

Mammals:

The site has limited habitat for mammals and is regularly disturbed by pedestrians and dog walker. Mole hills were recorded on site and brown hares could utilise the site although the disturbance might discourage them.

Hedgehog was recorded on Wingfield Avenue on the eastern boundary in 2014, so it is highly likely that this species is nesting and foraging within the site as part of its home range.

The only features on site that have potential to support roosting bats are the Scot's pines along the eastern boundary. No obvious holes were recorded during the survey and the trees were assessed as category 2 trees with no obvious potential but elevated inspections may reveal potential roosting features (Hundt, 2012). The site provides opportunities for foraging bats.

Comments and recommendations:

The site, a former arable field, has now developed a sparse grassland sward with a good range of botanical species. Some of these suggest that the soil is calcareous in nature. Without management, the site would eventually be colonised by scrub, as appears to have happened in part of L/28 north of this site.

The site is likely to support common lizard and it is strongly recommended that a reptile survey is undertaken. In order to comply with the legislation protecting reptiles, no clearance of vegetation should be undertaken on this site until the survey has been completed along with any mitigation as appropriate.

Trees, scrub and other suitable nesting habitat should be removed outside the main bird nesting season of March to August inclusive. This is particularly relevant to the area of dense scrub at the southern end of the site that is highly likely to attract nesting birds.

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.

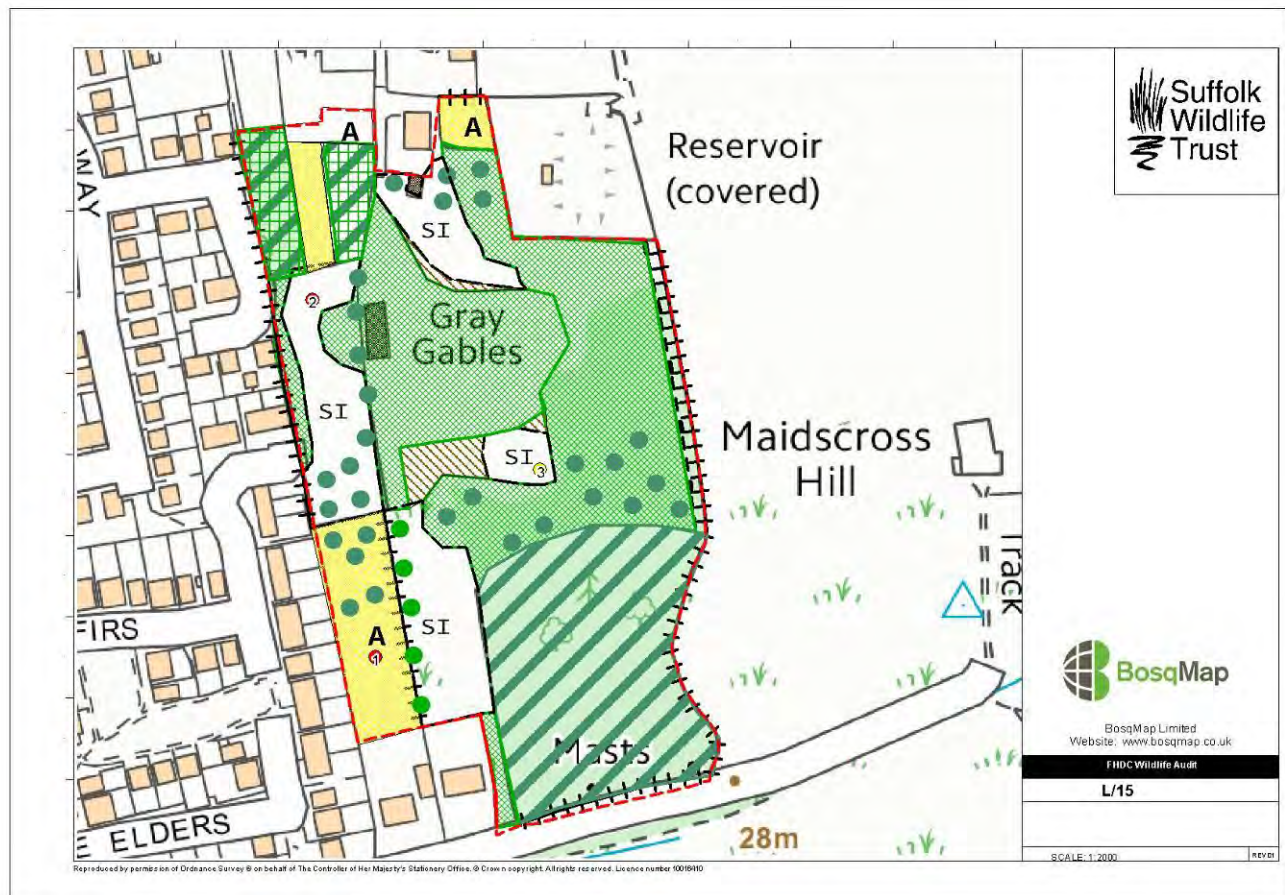
References:

Hundt, L. (2012) Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines, 2nd edition, Bat Conservation Trust

Site name L/15 Land off Covey Way and Maids Cross Hill

FHDC Ref: L15
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL 71840 83346
Area: 4.61 hectares
Date: 7 August 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, hot, overcast
Ranking: 3
Biodiversity value: Medium

Map:



Photos:



Access track from Broom Road along the southern boundary of the site.



Plantation of coniferous woodland on the site.



Poor semi-improved grassland and scattered trees adjacent to residential properties off Covey Way.



Amenity grassland at northern end of site behind residential properties off Maids Cross Hill looking south. Plantation mixed woodland is present on both sides of the grassland.



Redundant buildings on site, storage barn and an old pig sty.



Tall ruderal vegetation and poor semi-improved grassland developing on bare ground with dense scrub on embankment looking east.



Eastern boundary of the site looking north from Maidscross Hill



Allotment gardens, part of which lie within the site boundary.

Habitat type(s):

Dense scrub, poor semi-improved grassland, plantation coniferous woodland

Subsidiary habitats:

Amenity grassland, ephemeral short perennial grassland, tall ruderal grassland, allotments

Site description:

The site is located on the eastern edge of Lakenheath with the access to the site off Broom Road. Maids Cross Hill SSSI lies adjacent to the south-eastern corner of the site and also the north-eastern corner (adjacent to the reservoir part of the SSSI). Open areas of grassland are present on the eastern side of the site and the whole eastern boundary abuts Maids Cross Hill Local Nature Reserve (LNR).

The site was a former pig farm and has been used as an allotment in the past, according to a previous survey report by Southern Ecological Solutions (2014). Much of the site in the centre and to the east has been left unmanaged and is now colonised by dense scrub. Some of the land to the north and east of the residential properties are managed regularly and appear to have been extended as part of the gardens.

There is a block of plantation coniferous woodland in the southern section of the site, along with two radio masts at the edge of the track leading from Broom Road. There is a public footpath that skirts along the eastern boundary leading to the open grassland area of Maids Cross Hill.

These activities have created a mosaic of habitats across the site contrasting with the wider habitat to the east of the site that incorporates open acid and more calcareous grasslands, associated with Maids Cross Hill and the urban development to the west.

Much of the site was inaccessible due to the presence of dense scrub.

Protected species seen or known:

Common lizard, grass snake, bats (foraging only) - Southern Ecology Solutions 2014

Protected species potential:

Priority habitats present:

-

Priority species seen or known:

Linnet, dunnock, house sparrow, song thrush, bullfinch (Southern Ecology Solutions 2014), hedgehog

Priority species potential:

-

Connectivity:

The site borders the open grasslands of Maids Cross Hill SSSI and has excellent connectivity.

Structural diversity:

Structural diversity across the site is excellent with trees, scrub, tall ruderal species, short grassland, bare ground and gardens all providing a range of habitats for wildlife.

Flora:

The majority of the site in the middle and western sections comprises dense scrub dominated by bramble and with broom, gorse, dogwood and elder all on higher ground /embankments. The lower areas comprised a mixture of tall ruderal species largely comprising common nettle and ephemeral short perennial species, with areas of bare ground (Target Note 3).

These areas comprised great mullein, hares's-foot clover, common ragwort, Yorkshire fog, common mugwort, red bartsia, cotton thistle, viper's-bugloss, fennel, ground ivy, mignonette and dove's-foot crane's-bill.

There was no ground flora under the coniferous woodland other than occasional common nettle and ground ivy near the edges of the woodland where light could penetrate.

Poor semi-improved grassland was present in a strip between the woodland and the residential properties along the western boundary. Immediately adjacent to the woodland edge this area of grassland comprised false oat-grass, Yorkshire-fog, wild carrot, great mullein, viper's-bugloss, rough chervil, and spear thistle.

Land behind number 63 Broom Road was mown regularly to create a lawn and there were no boundaries between this and the property itself. The lawn was dominated by mouse-ear-hawkweed and moss with biting stonecrop and smooth hawk's-beard (Target Note 1). Scattered silver birch trees were present in the lawn area. The western boundary comprised a managed leylandii hedge adjacent to residential properties. The northern and eastern boundaries comprised tall leylandii trees.

Northwards along the western section of the site was an area of poor semi-improved grassland with scattered trees. The grassland comprised false oat-grass, wild carrot, red fescue, lady's bedstraw, mignonette, hop trefoil and great mullein. Lichens such as *Cladonia* sp are present in this area. There was a large patch of grassland dominated by wood small-reed (Target Note 2).

The land south of the residential properties adjacent to Maids Cross Hill appear to have been managed by the residents with areas of mown amenity grassland and allotments. It was difficult to determine exactly where the boundary of the site actually was in relation to this, as there are no defined boundaries on the ground.

Scattered trees and shrubs comprise cherry, cherry laurel, silver birch, beech, and larch. Around the edges of the woodland areas were aspen, dog-rose, hawthorn and Lombardy poplar.

Avifauna:

The site is highly likely to support a wide range of bird species including Suffolk Priority Species and Red and Amber birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC).

The survey was carried out at a sub-optimal time to record birds. Those recorded on site during the survey include linnet, magpie, wood pigeon, green woodpecker and long-tailed tits. Linnet, although widespread, is nationally declining and is a Suffolk Priority Species. Green woodpecker is Amber listed on the Birds of Conservation Concern.

A breeding bird survey conducted by Southern Ecological Solutions Ltd (2014) identified thirty species of breeding birds on this site with a total of forty-two species altogether. Most were mostly common and widespread species. Nine species were recorded of notable conservation status and twenty-one species were Green listed (or introduced). Priority species included Dunnock, House Sparrow, linnet,

song thrush and Bullfinch (all Red List apart from bullfinch which is Amber) and other Amber List species: green woodpecker, whitethroat, willow warbler and nightingale. This single nightingale territory recorded on the site was considered to contribute to a local population that is likely to be of District or even County importance. This species is dependent on the presence of dense scrub.

Invertebrates:

The site is highly likely to support a wide range of invertebrates across this site. Butterflies that were noted during the survey included common species such as brimstone, peacock, meadow brown and gatekeeper.

The site was the subject of an invertebrate survey by Southern Ecological Solutions Ltd (2014). The results concluded that the site supports relatively few species of conservation concern and the overall abundance of invertebrates was generally low. Species of conservation concern included cinnabar moth, a bee *Osmia bicolor* and the hoverfly *Pipizella virens*. The latter two species are also Nationally Notable.

Herpetofauna:

The site is highly suitable for reptiles and was the subject of a reptile survey undertaken by Southern Ecological Solutions Ltd (2014). A small population of common lizard was recorded on site in the areas of poor semi-improved grassland. A single juvenile grass snake was also recorded both on site and off site on Maidscross Hill, suggesting a small population of grass snake could also be present.

Some of the old artificial reptile refugia were still present on site and where these were encountered during the survey they were checked for reptiles. None were recorded.

Mammals:

Muntjac deer are present and one was noted during the survey.

Bats are likely to use the site for foraging purposes along the woodland edge and across the site. There are a large number of trees on the site. The previous survey by Southern Ecological Services Ltd (2014) stated that none of the trees on site displayed any features potentially suitable for roosting bats observed from ground level. Neither of the redundant buildings on site have features that could support roosting bats. Both buildings are exposed to prevailing weather conditions. This concurs with the previous survey.

Bat activity surveys were undertaken during May, June, July, August and September by Southern Ecological Solutions Ltd (2014). They concluded that overall the site and immediate adjacent habitats offer low value to local bat populations. Although seven species were recorded using the site, the majority of the bat records were attributable to pipistrelle species, both of which are common and widespread. It was concluded that both common and soprano pipistrelle bats could roost nearby in the housing or trees to the west.

Comments and recommendations:

The site has an interesting and varied range of habitats and although its history suggests that these habitats (other than the woodlands and scattered mature trees) are relatively new, the site is developing a diverse range of wildlife. There is evidence of acid grassland developing, particularly where the grassland has been managed regularly. The site also currently acts as a physical buffer between

existing residential development and Maidscross Hill SSSI. Any future development should retain suitably wide buffering habitat along the boundary with the SSSI and LNR.

Should the site be developed, mitigation for reptiles will be required and no site clearance can take place until this has been fully implemented. A receptor site, ideally within the site boundary will need to be created well in advance of any clearance, to ensure that sufficient time is allowed to develop suitable habitat structure and an invertebrate assemblage to support reptiles. This is likely to take two years or more to create and considerably longer if arable land is used.

Should the site be developed, then vegetation clearance (trees, scrub, shrubs) must be undertaken outside the main bird nesting season (March to August inclusive) but see comments regarding reptiles above. However, loss of large areas of scrub would impact upon nightingale, whose presence is evaluated to be of District/County importance in this location.

Three species of invertebrate were identified from the list of species of conservation concern.

The woodland edges on the eastern and southern boundaries and also the hedgerow on the western boundary are used by bats for commuting and a limited amount of foraging. Such connecting habitat should be retained. Bats could be adversely affected as a result of increased lighting as a result of development. If development proceeds it is recommended that lighting levels are kept as low as possible. Orientation of lighting columns should take account of the presence of the adjacent SSSI and LNR.

It is also 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.

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 any 1km grid square which has supported 5 or more stone curlew nesting attempts since 1995 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:

Southern Ecological Solutions Ltd. (December 2013). Extended Phase1 Habitat Survey. L21 and L15 Land North of Broom Road, Lakenheath, Suffolk.

Southern Ecological Solutions Ltd. (October 2014). Reptile Survey. L21 and L15 Land North of Broom Road, Lakenheath, Suffolk.

Southern Ecological Solutions Ltd. (October 2014). Bat Activity Survey. L21 and L15 Land North of Broom Road, Lakenheath, Suffolk.

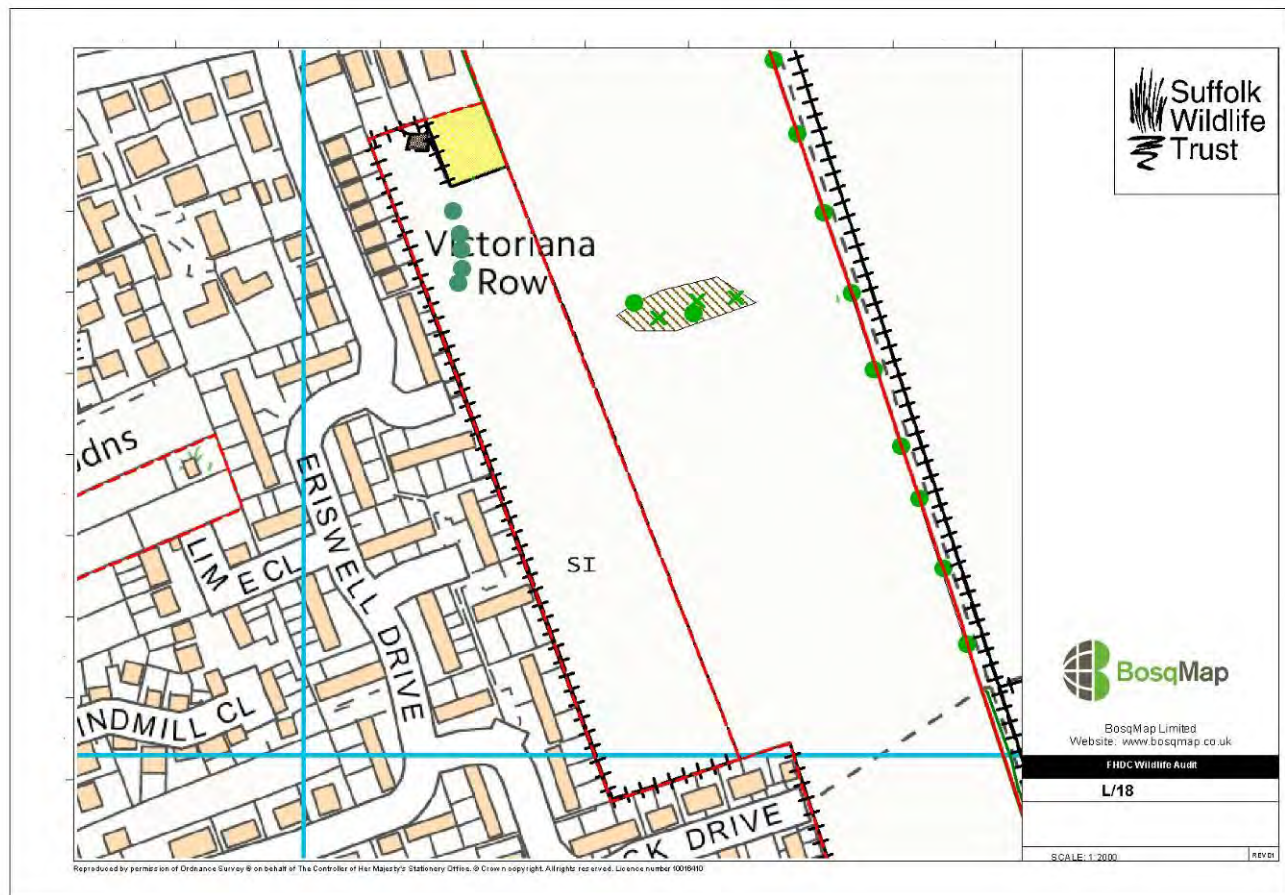
Southern Ecological Solutions Ltd. (October 2014). Breeding Bird Survey. L21 and L15 Land North of Broom Road, Lakenheath, Suffolk.

Southern Ecological Solutions Ltd. (October 2014). Invertebrate Assessment. L21 and L15 Land North of Broom Road, Lakenheath, Suffolk.

Site name L/18 Near Broom Road, Off Eriswell Drive

FHDC Ref: L/18
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL 72108 82138
Area: 1.78 hectares
Date: 22 May 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, warm, sunny 18°C
Ranking: 4 and 5
Biodiversity value: Low

Map:



Photos:



Poor semi-improved grassland looking north towards Broom Road.



Group of aspen trees in northern section of the site, looking north



Area behind housing at north end of site with scattered scrub.

Habitat type(s):

Poor semi-improved grassland

Subsidiary habitats:

Group of young aspen trees and a sycamore, scattered scrub

Site description:

The site is bounded on three sides by existing residential development. On the eastern boundary is an ex-arable field currently fallow (L/22). This area is part of a cluster of sites including L/18, L/22, L/27, L/19 and L/25.

The site comprises species-poor grassland with occasional broad-leaved species and a group of aspen trees in the northern section.

Protected species seen or known:

-

Protected species potential:

Common pipistrelle bat, noctule bat, common lizard

Priority habitats present:

-

Priority species seen or known:

-

Priority species potential:

-

Connectivity:

The site is connected to the wider countryside on its eastern boundary, but the presence of residential development around three sides is limiting.

Structural diversity:

This site has poor structural diversity

Flora:

The site comprises poor semi-improved grassland dominated by a mix of bent grasses, sterile brome and rough and smooth meadow-grasses. Red fescue was recorded rarely in the sward. Typical broad-leaved species included creeping thistle, spear thistle, horseradish, mignonette, goat's-beard, common mugwort, common ragwort and hemlock. Smaller species such as early flowering forget-me-not, dove's-foot crane's-bill, common stork's-bill, ribwort plantain, common vetch, wild carrot and common hawk's beard were also recorded sparsely distributed throughout the sward.

In the northern section of the site was a small group of young aspen trees close to a residential property.

Avifauna:

No birds of note were recorded during the survey.

Invertebrates:

The grassland is likely to support a range of common and widespread species of invertebrate. Cinnabar moth was recorded during the survey.

Herpetofauna:

It is possible that common lizard could utilise the grassland, especially in the area to the north behind the houses. There are records of common lizard recorded along the public footpath from previous studies undertaken by The Landscape Partnership (2013) for L/19, L/25, L27.

Mammals:

No mammals were recorded during the survey. However, previous surveys have shown that low numbers of common pipistrelle bats use the adjacent area for foraging and it seems highly likely that bats will also use this site for this purpose. Arum Ecology identified the presence of a noctule bat roost in a woodpecker hole in a Scot's pine along the eastern boundary of the adjacent site (L/22). This occasional roost supports a single bat and is not a maternity roost. It was also considered unlikely that that this roost is used for hibernation purposes due to unstable temperature and humidity levels.

Comments and recommendations:

The site comprises habitats, which are generally common and widespread, possibly regenerating from

abandoned cultivated land. There is a well-used footpath that leads from the residential development to the public footpath to the east.

It is recommended that the potential for reptiles being present on site is investigated through a specific survey prior to any vegetation clearance relating to a development proposal.

The bat roost identified in a Scot's pine tree on the eastern boundary of the adjacent site is unlikely to be negatively affected by any development works on this site, although light spillage should be avoided.

It is recommended that the site is cleared of vegetation outside the main bird nesting season of March to August (inclusive).

If the site is not developed and received appropriate management, the site could potentially develop into a dry grassland site.

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:

The Landscape Partnership. (2013). Lakenheath Village Extension. Environmental Statement, Chapter 1 Ecology.

Arum Ecology. (July 2014). Land at Broom Road Lakenheath. A Biodiversity and European Protected Species Survey.

Site name **L/19 Land North-East of South Road**

FHDC Ref: L/19
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL 72108 82138
Area: 3.84 hectares
Date: 22 May 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, warm, sunny 18°C
Ranking: 5 (2 for any portion of CWS within site)
Biodiversity value: Low (High for any portion of CWS within the site)

Map:



Photos:



View looking west towards residential housing on Albert Rolph Drive from the public footpath.



View looking north towards the broad-leaved tree belt and public footpath to the east.

Habitat type(s):

Poor semi-improved grassland

Subsidiary habitats:

Line of Scot's Pine, broad-leaved woodland, species-poor intact hedgerow, dense scrub

Site description:

This site is located to the east of a residential area of Lakenheath behind South Road and Albert Rolph Drive. The southern boundary comprises a line of Scot's Pine, a characteristic feature of Breckland, and an access track adjacent to L/25. The western boundary abuts a residential development; the north is separated from a residential development by a narrow band of broad-leaved trees with a well-worn pathway leading from Albert Rolph Drive to the public footpath network. In the south-eastern corner is Caudle Farm and Broom Fields CWS and it is unclear whether the site boundary overlaps with that of the CWS.

The whole site is fenced with intermediate temporary electric fencing and stabling for horses but appeared to be un-grazed.

Protected species seen or known:

-

Protected species potential:

Common pipistrelle bat, common lizard

Priority habitats present:

-

Priority species seen or known:

-

Priority species potential:

-

Connectivity:

The site is connected to the wider countryside from its eastern and southern boundaries, which form links to RAF Lakenheath Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Maidscroft Hill SSSI and Caudle Farm and Broom Road Fields County Wildlife Site (CWS).

Structural diversity:

The site has limited structural diversity.

Flora:

The sward was dominated by a mix of red fescue, sheep's fescue, cock's-foot and sterile brome with frequent dandelion. Other herbaceous species were rare in the sward and included hound's-tongue, toadflax, common ragwort, common cat's-ear, Canadian fleabane and goat's-beard. Overall the sward was uniform across the site.

The narrow belt of trees along the northern boundary comprised pedunculate oak, sycamore and Scot's

pine with shrubs including hawthorn, elder and privet. Some of these were ivy-covered. Open areas, where these occurred, comprised rank grassland with coarse grasses such as cock's-foot.

Avifauna:

The survey was undertaken at the optimal time for this group but none were noted.

Invertebrates:

The site is likely to support a limited number of common invertebrate species.

Herpetofauna:

There is limited potential for herpetofauna as there is no suitable breeding habitat on site. However, its closeness to a number of sites, tracks and field margins, which are considered highly likely to support species such as common lizard, mean it is possible that this group might utilise the site.

There are records of common lizard and grass snake along the public footpath from previous surveys undertaken by The Landscape Partnership (2013) for L/19, L/25, L27, although L/19 itself was not included within the reptile survey.

Mammals:

The trees along the northern boundary and the grassland itself in its current state provide habitat for foraging bats. A previous survey reported a foraging common pipistrelle bat.

No other mammals were recorded during this survey but small mammals are likely to use the site in its current un-grazed state.

Comments and recommendations:

The site has been grazed in the past by horses. No management appears to be taking place at this time and the vegetation has been allowed to grow, possibly for a hay crop. Although the site is currently species-poor grassland, with suitable management on this light sandy soil type the site could revert to acid grassland relatively easily over time.

Given its connectivity to species-rich habitats in designated sites, colonisation by a range of species characteristic of acid, and to some extent, calcareous grassland could be achieved.

If the site were to be developed, further survey work would be required to determine if any of the trees on the site boundaries have potential to support roosting bats. Previous surveys suggest that detailed surveys of trees have been undertaken and this information should be referred and updated as required. It is recommended that the potential for reptiles being present on site is investigated through a specific survey prior to any vegetation clearance relating to a development proposal.

Vegetation should be cleared 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 200m of the Breckland Special Area of Conservation (SAC) 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.

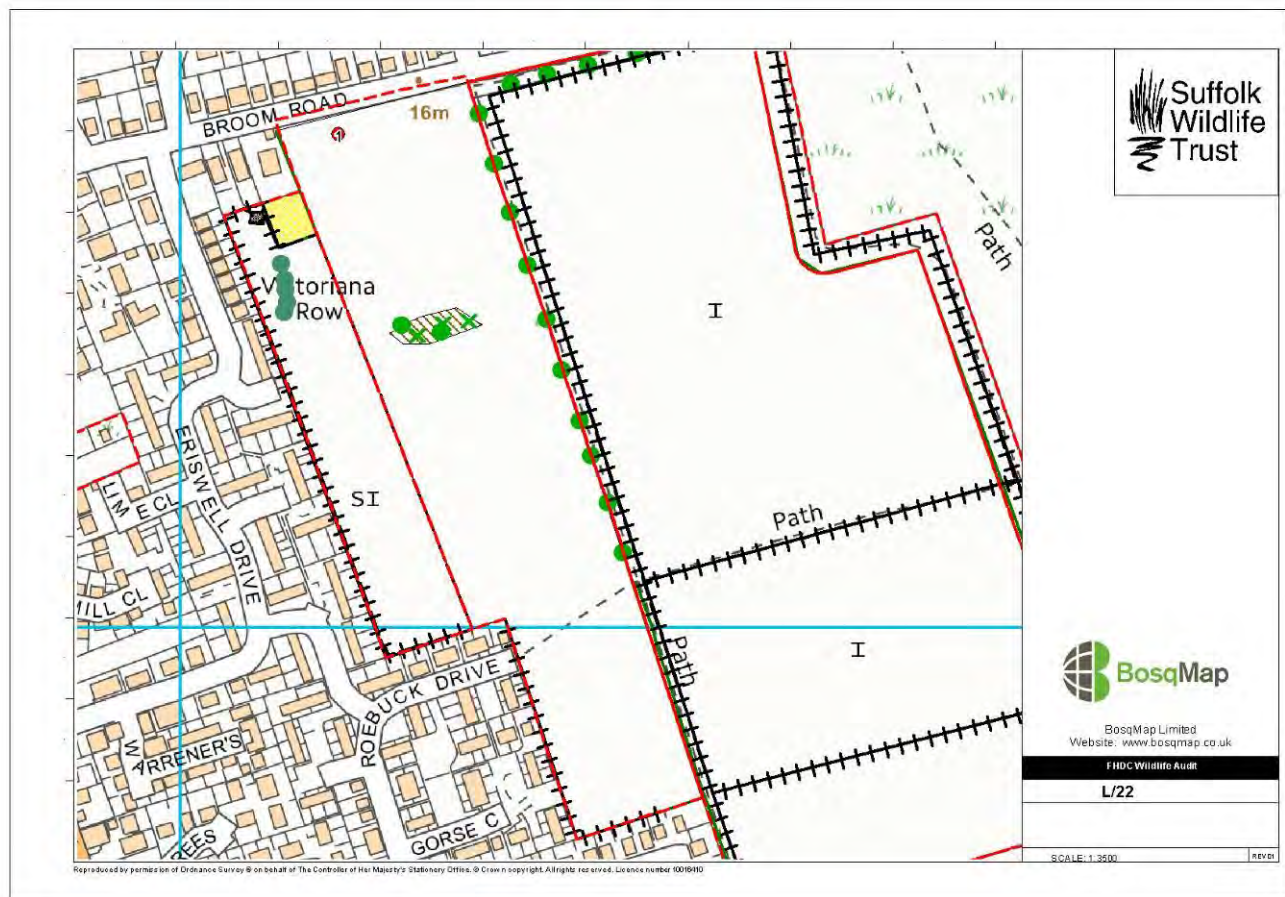
References:

The Landscape Partnership. (2013). Lakenheath Village Extension. Environmental Statement, Chapter 1 Ecology.

Site name L/22 Land South of Broom Road

FHDC Ref: L22
Site status: Caudle Farm CWS lies within the site along the southern and eastern boundaries as a narrow strip.
Grid ref: TL 72182 82191
Area: 5.69 hectares
Date: 22 May 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, warm, sunny 18°C
Ranking: 4 (2 for CWS)
Biodiversity value: Medium (High for CWS)

Map:



Photos:



Arable weed flora in ex-arable field looking south from Broom Road



View south towards an area of dead trees/scrub and tall ruderal

Habitat type(s):

Arable with arable 'weed' flora.

Subsidiary habitats:

Scot's Pine line, species-poor intact hedgerow, tall ruderal, scrub and dead trees.

Site description:

The site comprises an ex-arable field which was subject of an ecological survey conducted by Aurum Ecology (2014). At that time the field was cropped with barley and no arable weed flora was noted.

The field is currently fallow and had developed an arable flora typical of dry, sandy soil.

The eastern boundary comprises a line of Scot's pine, a characteristic feature in Breckland and a species-poor hedgerow dominated by hawthorn. Broom Road lies adjacent to the northern boundary with residential development to the south. There is no feature along the western boundary and the adjacent area comprises species-poor grassland.

There is a well-worn path leading from the residential houses across the site to the footpath along the eastern boundary.

Protected species seen or known:

Noctule bat

Protected species potential:

Common lizard, common pipistrelle bat,

Priority habitats present:

-

Priority species seen or known:

Grape hyacinth

Priority species potential:

Common lizard,

Connectivity:

The site is connected to open countryside to the east but otherwise the site is almost completely enveloped by existing residential development.

Structural diversity:

Structural diversity is limited.

Flora:

The site currently comprises a good range of arable 'weeds' and flora typical of dry sandy soils, including common poppy, long-headed poppy, viper's-bugloss, common stork's-bill, thyme-leaved sandwort, parsley-piert, hound's-tongue, black medick, field pansy, Canadian fleabane, dove's-foot cranes-bill, toadflax, mignonette, weld, red, white and henbit dead-nettles, flixweed, rue-leaved saxifrage, bur chervil, cudweeds, scarlet pimpernel, mayweeds, charlock, dwarf mallow, common

cornsalad, common, field and wall speedwells and thale cress.

Grasses included common couch and sterile brome, which were more prominent along Broom Road.

Bare ground was still visible in the sward and crop volunteers such as oilseed rape and barley were also evident.

A small area of dead trees, scrub and tall ruderal vegetation is present in the northern half of the site.

On 28th April 2015, 70 flowering spikes of grape hyacinth *Muscari neglectum* were counted on the northern boundary of Broom Road.

Avifauna:

No birds of particular note were recorded during the survey. The survey conducted by Arum Ecology (2014) did not identify any protected bird species, although they noted that there were records of stone curlew within 2km within the security fence of Lakenheath airfield and two pairs of nightjar within 1km on Maidcross Hill SSSI. Otherwise there were no Schedule 1 species on site.

Invertebrates:

The previous history of the site and its current rapidly developing habitat is only likely to attract transient species of invertebrates. No rare species are considered likely.

Herpetofauna:

The site is sub-optimal for reptiles and amphibians, although common lizard may forage and bask in the barer areas on the site. They have been recorded along the eastern boundary track at low numbers from previous studies conducted by The Landscape Partnership (2013).

Mammals:

No mammals were recorded during the survey. However, previous surveys have shown that low numbers of common pipistrelle bats use the site for foraging. Foraging activity may increase as a result of the habitat change from the arable crop in 2013 to a weedy arable flora now. Arum Ecology identified the presence of a noctule bat roost in a woodpecker hole in one of the Scot's pines along the eastern boundary. This occasional roost supports a single bat and is not a maternity roost. It was also considered unlikely that this roost is used for hibernation purposes due to unstable temperature and humidity levels.

Comments and recommendations:

The recording of grape hyacinth on the northern boundary is a notable discovery as this is the first year that the species has been recorded outside of the CWS boundary. This species was also recorded on the northern roadside margin of the adjacent site (L27), as well as within the CWS itself. Any future development should protect this Priority Species and Red Data Book Plant (Vulnerable).

The developing arable weed flora, while of interest, does not currently support any rare species. In time, without management, the sward will eventually develop into grassland. Arable weed flora requires regular cultivation to thrive and no herbicide applications.

Further surveys will be required to update the current status of the noctule bat roost in one of the Scot's pines along the eastern boundary. In addition sensitive lighting design must be implemented in any future development proposals.

It is recommended that the potential for reptiles being present on site is investigated through a specific survey prior to any vegetation clearance relating to a development proposal.

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:

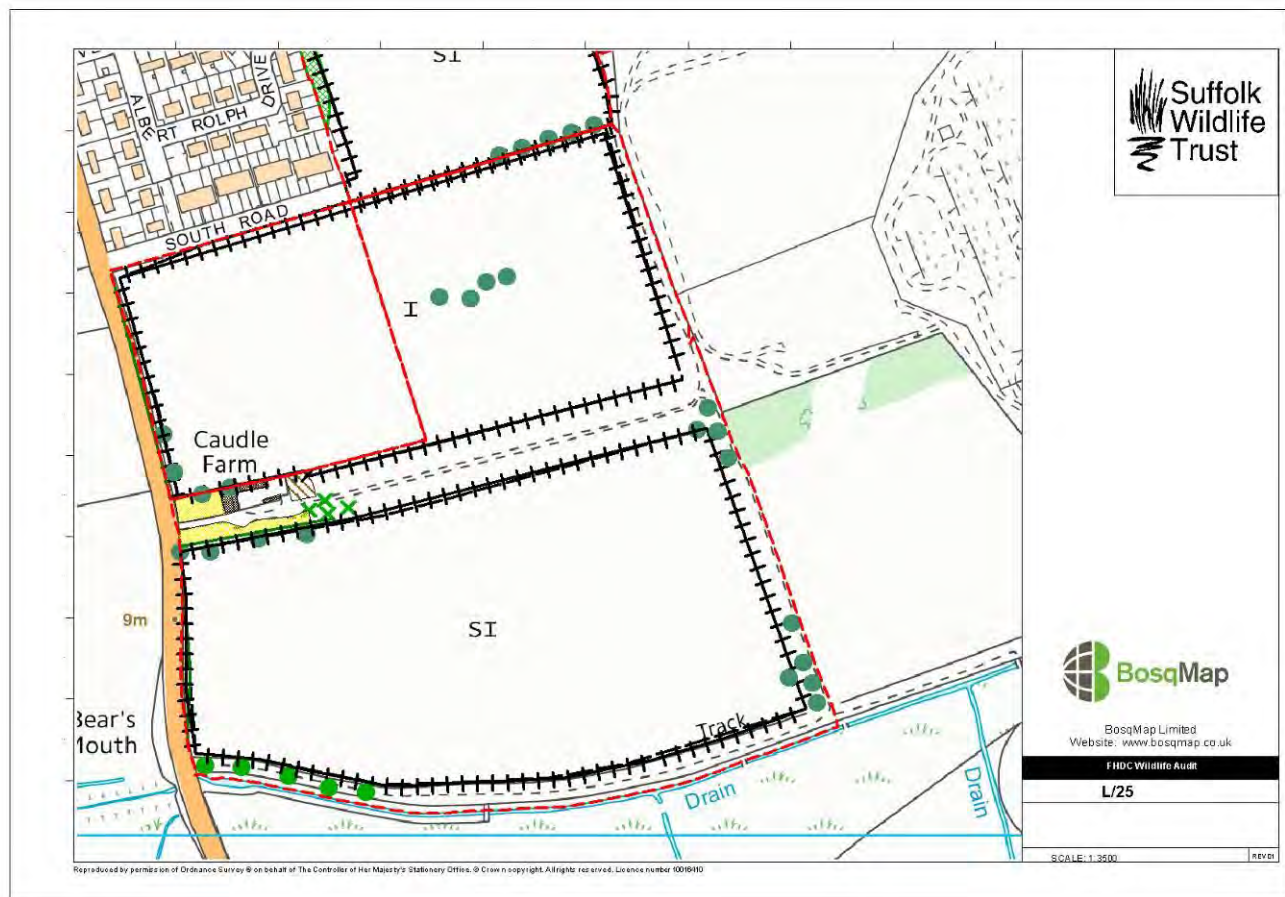
Arum Ecology. (July 2014). Land at Broom Road Lakenheath. A Biodiversity and European Protected Species Survey.

The Landscape Partnership. (2013). Lakenheath Village Extension. Environmental Statement, Chapter 1 Ecology.

Site name **L/25 Land East of Eriswell Road and South of South Road**

FHDC Ref: L/25
Site status: Eastern, southern and central track is CWS (Caudal Farm and Broom Road Fields)
Grid ref: TM 72343 81294
Area: 21.3 hectares
Date: 22 May 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, sunny, warm 18°C
Ranking: 4 (except for CWS which is 2)
Biodiversity value: Medium (except for CWS which is High)

Map:



Photos:



Improved grassland in northern compartment looking south-west



Track through the centre of the site (part of the CWS) where typical sandy arable weed flora was recorded.



View across the southern compartment of the site looking towards Caudle Common and line of Scot's Pine.



View looking across the northern compartment to the Caudle farmstead.



Track along eastern boundary looking north, part of Caudle Farm CWS.

Habitat type(s):

Poor semi-improved grassland (potentially acid); improved grassland

Subsidiary habitats:

Hedgerows and trees on the site boundaries, open water

Site description:

The site is bounded to the west by Eriswell Road (B1112), by South Road to the north. Caudle Farm and Broom Roads Fields County Wildlife Site (CWS) lies just inside the eastern boundary, along the track inside the southern boundary and also along the track through the middle of the site. RAF Lakenheath Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Breckland SAC is situated adjacent to the eastern boundary.

The site is heavily grazed by sheep resulting in a very short sward. The compartments either side of the main access track through the farm and the other boundaries are fenced off with electric fencing. The boundary adjacent to Eriswell Road comprises a species-poor intact hedgerow. There is a line of Scot's Pines along the southern boundary abutting the CWS track, most of which are covered in ivy.

Protected species seen or known:

Common lizard and grass snake (The Landscape Partnership 2013).

Protected species potential:

-

Priority habitats present:

-

Priority species seen or known:

Skylark, lapwing, common toad (The Landscape Partnership 2013).

Rare plants known to be present within the CWS include hound's tongue, bur medick, purple fescue, fingered speedwell, Breckland speedwell, small Alison, common cudweed, grape hyacinth and night-flowering catchfly. Some of these and other species associated with the adjacent RAF Lakenheath SSSI include perennial knawel which is protected under Section 13 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and eight other nationally rare plants species including drooping brome, smooth rupturewort, spring speedwell, Spanish catchfly, sand catchfly, grey fescue and others.

The designated sites adjacent to this site also support a diverse range of invertebrates including ground beetles, bees and wasps including 11 nationally rare species and 47 nationally scarce species.

Lapwing, dunnoek, linnet, starling, soprano pipistrelle bat, noctule bat and brown long-eared bat (The Landscape Partnership 2013),

Priority species potential:

Brown hare

Connectivity:

The site has excellent connectivity linking to the CWS and SSSI and Caudle Common.

Structural diversity:

Limited structural diversity within the fenced areas.

Flora:

The site is currently heavily grazed with sheep. Previous studies by The Landscape Partnership (2013) show that cattle have also been used to graze this site. The site was apparently sown with ryegrass (and other grasses) and white clover approximately two years ago according to previous survey information. The grassland in the north parcel is still largely improved but the southern compartment has begun to revert back to dry acid grassland in places.

The site currently comprises perennial ryegrass, white clover and sterile brome with ribwort plantain and moss dominating the sward. However, there are species within the sward, particularly in the southern compartment, that are more characteristic of dry grasslands with thyme-leaved sandwort, black medick, common stork's-bill, red fescue, little mouse-ear, dove's-foot crane's-bill, biting

stonecrop, common vetch, viper's-bugloss, crested hair-grass, hare's foot clover, common cat's-ear and yarrow all present but rare in the sward. Cotton thistle was also recorded.

The hedgerows are dominated by hawthorn with occasional elm, elder and blackthorn and are regularly managed.

There are a number of trees around the farmstead and these include sycamore, walnut and ash. Lilac is present in the hedgerow around the south side of the farmstead. Along the eastern boundary adjacent to the CWS are a number of scattered young oak trees.

The boundary abutting South Road and the residential properties are also a number of trees and shrubs and include elder, lilac, spindle, ash and ash. Further along this boundary is a line of Scot's Pine, some of which are ivy-covered.

The un-grazed areas along the tracks support bulbous buttercup, dove's-foot cranesbill, false oat-grass, common vetch, perennial ryegrass, cock's-foot, common nettle, white and bladder campion, mignonette, bugloss, white clover, flixweed (a breckland speciality), hound's-tongue, yarrow, common couch, common cat's-ear, crested hair-grass, smooth meadow grass, meadow brome and toadflax.

In one corner along the track through the middle of the farm where the ground was more disturbed a number of characteristic arable 'weed' flora were recorded including common poppy, bugloss, rue-leaved saxifrage, thyme-leaved sandwort, flixweed, smooth meadow-grass, ox-eye daisy, sterile brome, thale cress and common whitlowgrass. The track forms part of the CWS and is managed specifically for species that prefer regularly disturbed ground.

The CWS track on the eastern boundary comprised perennial ryegrass along the central section, which was dominant in places with the verges either side comprising coarse vegetation dominated by false oat-grass and sterile brome in the southern section. The vegetation improved further northwards where more typical species were encountered such as lady's bedstraw, red fescue, soft brome, hairy sedge, toadflax, thyme-leaved sandwort, yarrow, ribwort plantain and germander speedwell. On 17th April 2015, 273 flowering plants of grape hyacinth *Muscari neglectum* were counted on the southern boundary (Caudle Bottom Piece) and 267 flowering plants on the eastern boundary (Grassy Bank adjacent to RAF Lakenheath).

Coarse vegetation was recorded along the northern side of the site, outside the grazed areas, where species such as cow parsley and lucerne were abundant. Field scabious and lesser meadow-rue were also recorded here.

Adjacent to the track along the eastern boundary was a watercourse, which supported reed canary-grass, water dock and branched bur-reed.

Avifauna:

A cuckoo was heard during the survey but this did not appear to be associated with the site. A number of skylarks were heard and seen on this site. One pair appeared to be nesting on the southern compartment of the site not far from the track. Other species heard and/or seen were common species and included blackbirds and house sparrows around the farmstead.

A number of bird species were recorded using the site during surveys undertaken by The Landscape Partnership (2013), including additionally lapwing, starling, linnet and dunnoek, all of which are

considered to be species of principal Importance (the 'Red List').

It is considered unlikely that stone curlew, a Schedule 1 species, would use this site due to the intensive grazing pressure and high disturbance on the site, although previous desk studies undertaken by Aurum Ecology (2014) for a nearby site, reported the presence of this species on RAF Lakenheath airfield.

Invertebrates:

The heavily grazed nature of the site and regularly managed hedgerows are unlikely to support a wide range of invertebrate species but some common species will be present. The tracks and un-grazed areas provide additional diversity, which may support a wider range of invertebrates.

Herpetofauna:

There were no ponds within the site boundary although a previous survey by The Landscape Partnership (2013) suggested that there was a pond on site. The pond appeared to be in within the curtilage of the farmstead according to previous records. The pond was surveyed for great crested newt but none were recorded. However, a small population of smooth newts was found to be present. In addition, both frogs and toads were also recorded.

The watercourse adjacent to the eastern boundary track may support amphibians.

The site was also surveyed for reptiles by The Landscape Partnership (2013) and records of common lizard were recorded along the northern, eastern and southern boundaries. Several records of grass snakes were also found along the boundary with South Road and another on the southern boundary of the site.

Mammals:

Bats are the only likely mammal to reside on the site and the farm buildings could provide suitable roosting opportunities under the pantiles. The main house does not appear to provide suitable bat roost potential being in relatively good order. However, a previous survey undertaken in by the Landscape Partnership (2013) indicated that common pipistrelle bat was seen emerging from the west roof slope of the main house and also one of the outhouses. Soprano pipistrelles, brown long-eared bats and noctule bats were also recorded during bat activity surveys and static recording.

The watercourse along the eastern boundary may support water voles and possibly could be used by otter for commuting purposes since it is linked to the large drain west of the site.

Brown hares could commute across the site but are unlikely to breed on the site due to lack of shelter.

Small mammals are likely to be confined to the field boundaries and tracks.

Comments and recommendations:

The site is clearly showing signs of reverting back to dry acid grassland, across the southern compartment, although there is still abundant perennial ryegrass on the site. None of the rare species noted in the SSSI and CWS citations were recorded in the grazed areas or along the tracks.

Much of the site currently has low wildlife interest but it forms a buffer with RAF Lakenheath SSSI and Breckland SAC and part of the CWS site is located within the site. It also forms a buffer with the northern boundary of Caudle Common. With less intensive management the site would revert back to dry acid grassland and form an important buffer and extension to the sites mentioned above.

If the site is developed and the farm buildings demolished, further surveys to establish the usage by bats of the farm buildings at that time will be required.

The Red Data Book species, grape hyacinth, is classed as vulnerable and good numbers of flowering spikes have been recorded within two areas of the CWS in 2015. The CWS should be protected and buffered from any development proposals.

Should the site be developed, mitigation for reptiles will be required and no site clearance can take place until this has been fully implemented. A receptor site, ideally within the site boundary will need to be created well in advance of any clearance, to ensure that sufficient time is allowed to develop suitable habitat structure and an invertebrate assemblage to support reptiles. This is likely to take two years or more to create and considerably longer if arable land is used. In addition, if the site's grazing regime changes in future and a taller sward develops, it is likely that populations will increase across the whole site.

Vegetation clearance should only be undertaken 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 200m of the Breckland Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and 1,500m of any 1km grid square which has supported 5 or more stone curlew nesting attempts since 1995 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:

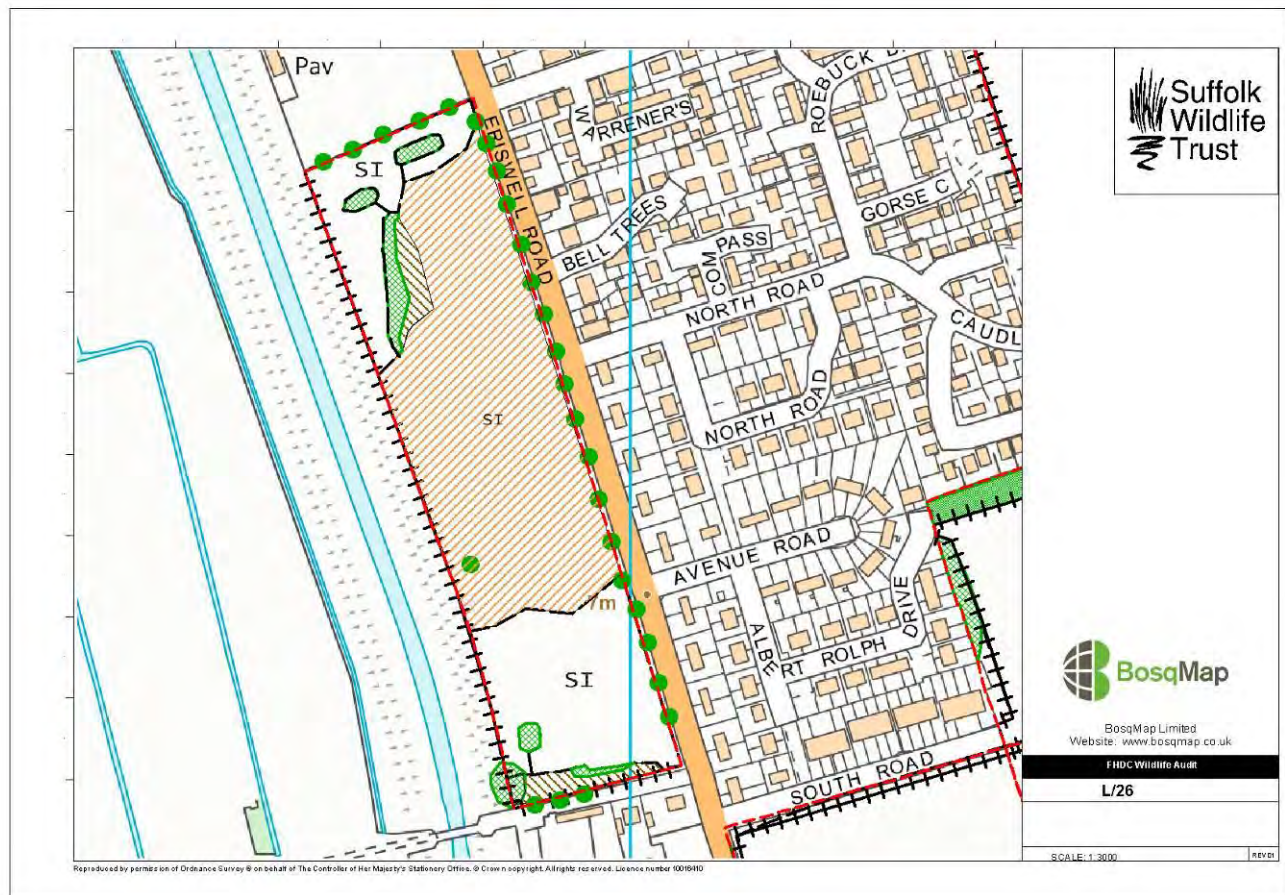
The Landscape Partnership. (2013). Lakenheath Village Extension. Environmental Statement, Chapter 1 Ecology.

Aurum Ecology. (July 2014). Land at Broom Road Lakenheath. A Biodiversity and European Protected Species Survey.

Site name **L/26 Land West of Eriswell Road**

FHDC Ref: L/26
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL 71895 81711
Area: 5.35 hectares
Date: 22 May 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, warm, sunny, 18°C
Ranking: 3
Biodiversity value: Medium

Map:



Photos:



Species-poor semi-improved grassland looking north from an access opposite Avenue Road. Note Scot's Pine line.



Shorter acid grassland sward looking south from the playing fields.



Close up of sward showing a mix of bulbous buttercup and field mouse-ear

Habitat type(s):

Dry acid/neutral semi-improved grassland and species-poor semi-improved grassland.

Subsidiary habitats:

Scrub and tall ruderal

Site description:

The site is bounded to the east by Eriswell Road (B1112); to the west by a flood embankment adjacent to a watercourse; to the north by Lakenheath Playing Fields and to the south by Smeeth Drove. Broken fences form the main boundary features around the site with a line of Scot's pine along Eriswell Road, a characteristic feature of Breckland.

With sufficient time the site could revert to heathland and there are plant species on site suggesting a characteristic acid heathland community in places, particularly in the northern section of the site.

Protected species seen or known:

Grass snake and common lizard. Common pipistrelle. (Landscape Partnership 2013)

Protected species potential:

Bats

Priority habitats present:

Lowland acid grassland

Priority species seen or known:

Hedgehog (Eriswell Road, 2014), toad, house sparrow and starling (Landscape Partnership 2013)

Priority species potential:

Skylark, brown hare, soprano pipistelle bat

Connectivity:

The site has good connectivity to land to the south of the site via the Cut Off Channel embankment to what appears to be grassland/heathland around Eriswell barns.

Structural diversity:

The site has a varied structure with some scrub, mainly associated with the field boundaries. Taller, rank species-poor semi-improved grassland and tall ruderal species are also present as well as the short sward interspersed between.

Flora:

The majority of site comprises acid grassland with the best example seen towards the northern boundary. Species include yarrow, ribwort plantain, hare's-foot clover, early-flowering forget-me-not, red clover, germander speedwell, thyme-leaved sandwort, hop trefoil, lesser hop trefoil, biting stonecrop, lady's bedstraw, viper's-bugloss, mignonette, bur chervil, cudweed sp, hound's-tongue, thyme-leaved speedwell, black horehound, common cat's-ear, common stork's-bill, bulbous buttercup, toadflax, beaked hawk's-beard, smooth hawk's-beard, field mouse-ear, little mouse-ear, hoary whitlowgrass and sheep's sorrel.

Grasses include sweet vernal grass, crested hair-grass, perennial ryegrass, red fescue, silvery hair-grass and sterile brome.

In the more rank areas, the grassland was dominated by species such as common couch, cock's-foot and common nettle with some dock. Hemlock was also present on the site as was periwinkle, presumably a garden escape.

Avifauna:

The only birds recorded during the walk-over survey were starlings singing within the Scot's pines. However, a number of birds could utilise the scrub for nesting purposes during the spring and summer.

Skylarks could nest on the ground although the site is disturbed. It is considered highly unlikely that stone curlew, a Schedule 1 species, would utilise this site due to the proximity of an urban road, playing fields and public access, all of which are known to cause disturbance to this species.

21 species were recorded by the Landscape Partnership (2013) with house sparrow and starling being Red list and Priority species.

Invertebrates:

The site is highly likely to support a wide range of invertebrate species and it is possible that a number of rare or UK BAP species could be present.

Herpetofauna:

A survey by The Landscape Partnership in 2013 recorded low populations of common lizard and grass snake. Toad was also recorded under the reptile refugia.

There is a pond within 500m of the site located at Caudle Farm (Site L/25) but this was surveyed in 2013 by The Landscape Partnership and no great crested newts were found. However, smooth newts were present along with frogs and toads.

Mammals:

The watercourse adjacent to the site could support water vole and otter has been recorded along its length.

Small mammals are likely to utilise the coarser grassland areas and species such as brown hare may use the site.

There were no obvious features that could support roosting bats although the trees along the site boundaries have suitable holes, cracks or crevices that could provide roosting opportunities. Bats may forage over the site as the site is likely to support a rich invertebrate assemblage and its proximity to a watercourse provides additional foraging habitat. Surveys by The Landscape Partnership identified 16 pine trees with definite bat potential along the Eriswell Road. Activity surveys recorded common pipistrelles and also few recordings of serotine and noctule bats.

There are several hedgehog records from Eriswell Road in 2014 on the eastern edge of the site. This suggests it is highly likely that this is an important site for them, mainly for foraging but the scrub may provide some hibernation opportunities for them.

Comments and recommendations:

The site is of wildlife interest and has a good range of characteristic plant species that are typical of dry acid grasslands and acid heaths. It is therefore a valuable ecological resource in the area, particularly as it is associated with a flood bank and watercourse which provide connectivity to grassland in the south.

Should the site be developed, mitigation for reptiles will be required and no site clearance can take place until this has been fully implemented. A receptor site, ideally within the site boundary will need to be created well in advance of any clearance, to ensure that sufficient time is allowed to develop suitable habitat structure and an invertebrate assemblage to support reptiles. This is likely to take two years or more to create and considerably longer if arable land is used.

Trees which have the potential to support bat roosts should be protected in any future development proposals. Further surveys will be required if any such trees are to be impacted upon.

Similarly nesting birds are highly likely to use the scrub and the ground for nesting purposes and must be considered. Any vegetation clearance should only be undertaken outside of the main bird-nesting season of March to August inclusive.

The contribution that the Cut Off Channel and its flood embankment makes to habitat connectivity should also be taken into consideration in any future development proposals, so that any retained habitat should remain connected to this feature. Light spillage must be prevented into areas associated with the Cut Off Channel.

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.

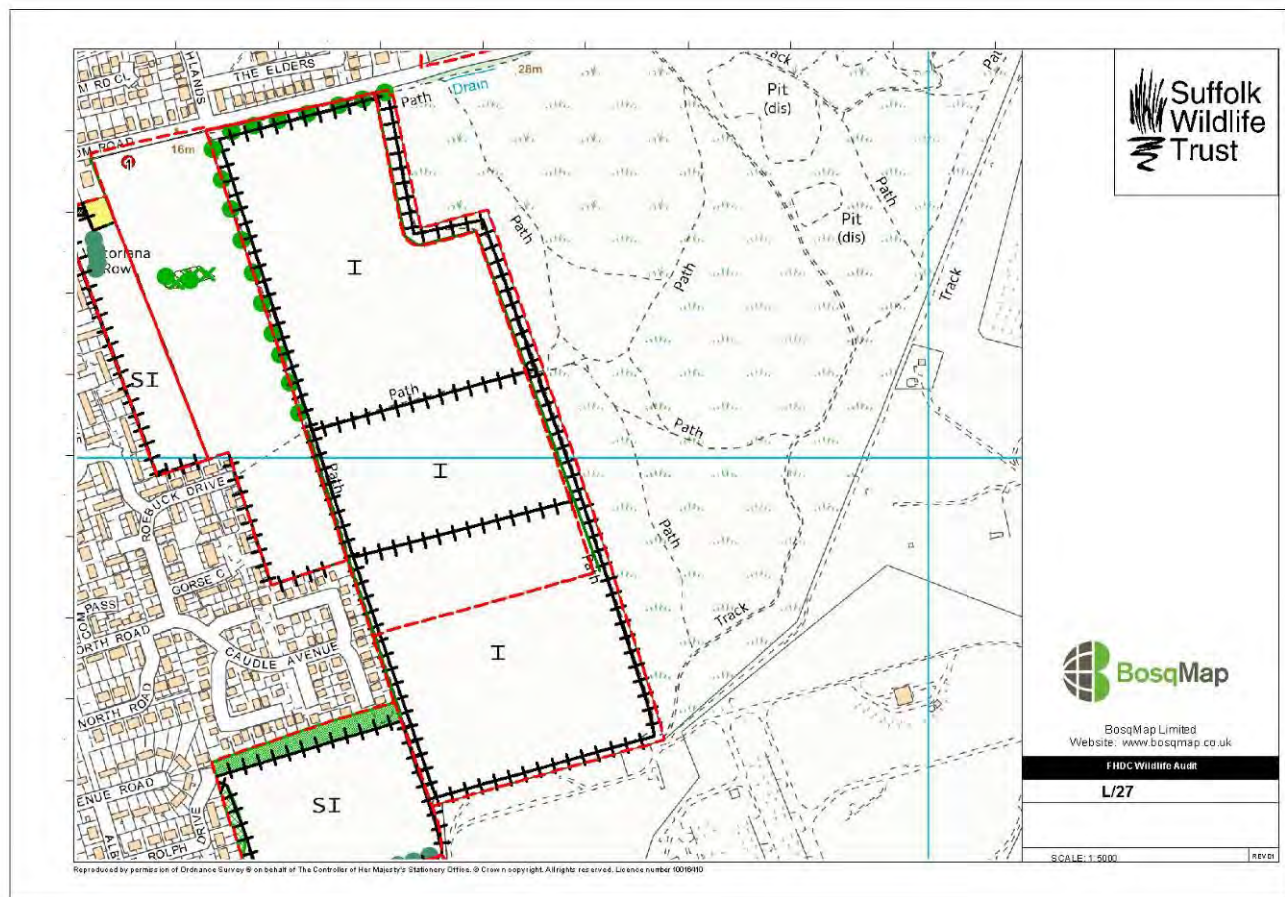
References:

The Landscape Partnership (July 2013) Ecological Appraisal for Site L/26, land West of Eriswell Road, Lakenheath

Site name L/27 Land South of Broom Road

FHDC Ref: L/27
Site status: The eastern boundary is included in the Broom Road Fields County Wildlife Site (CWS)
Grid ref: TL 72453 82023
Area: 20.4 hectares
Date: 22 May 2015
Recorder: Ann Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, warm, sunny 18°C
Ranking: 5 (2 for CWS and northern boundary)
Biodiversity value: Low (But High for CWS and northern boundary)

Map:



Photos:



Rare breed cattle grazing improved grassland looking north east towards Maidscross Hill SSSI.



West side of site looking north along track.



Short sward with occasional thistle looking south



Cattle feeding area with bare ground adjacent to Maidscross Hill SSSI.

Habitat type(s):

Improved grassland, bare ground.

Subsidiary habitats:

None

Site description:

The site is bounded to the north by Broom Road, to the west by a green track public right of way, to the east by Maidscross Hill Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and to the south by a green track and RAF Lakenheath SSSI. The site is currently heavily grazed by rare breed cattle and divided into three sections by wooden fences. The tracks along the eastern and southern boundaries are designated as Caudle Farm and Broom Road Fields CWS.

Only two sections could be surveyed as advised by the stockman, who recommended that the southernmost section should not be surveyed as one of the cows was unpredictable.

Protected species seen or known:

Common lizard (The Landscape Partnership 2013)

Protected species potential:

-

Priority habitats present:

-

Priority species seen or known:

-

Priority species potential:

-

Connectivity:

The site lies adjacent to Maidscross Hill SSSI and LNR to the east and the southern boundary abuts RAF Lakenheath SSSI and Breckland SAC. This, along with green tracks (CWS) along the eastern boundary and along the southern boundary, all provide excellent connectivity to open countryside and important designated sites.

Structural diversity:

Limited, since the sward was heavily grazed and very short.

Flora:

The grassland was dominated by perennial rye-grass and had clearly been re-seeded at some time. Despite this, there was a limited range of other species present in the sward including dandelion, red clover, common ragwort, hound's-tongue, little mouse-ear, germander speedwell, storks-bill, early-flowering forget-me-not, cock's-foot, red fescue, white campion, annual nettle, chickweed, dove's-foot cranes-bill, ribwort plantain and common vetch.

A large bare area created by the cattle around a feeding station on the east side of the field was partially

dominated by annual nettle with occasional fat hen. Creeping thistle was also locally frequent and generally associated with the poached areas of ground.

On 17th April 2015, 37 flowering plants of grape hyacinth *Muscari neglectum* were recorded in the central and eastern parts of the pine belt on the northern boundary of the site, adjacent to Broom Road. This Red Data Book plant is classified as Vulnerable.

Avifauna:

Rooks were recorded on the site feeding on the ground. Previous desk studies conducted by Aurum Ecology (2013) for an adjacent site, identified the presence of stone curlew within 2km on RAF Lakenheath SSSI and two pairs of nightjars on Maids Cross Hill SSSI.

Invertebrates:

The high disturbance and short sward does not provide suitable habitat for a wide range of invertebrates, although dung does provide a habitat for dung beetles and flies etc. Bare ground can support burrowing bee and wasp species, but the disturbance by livestock may limit their presence.

Herpetofauna:

This site does not provide suitable habitat for amphibians apart from possibly toad. The Landscape Partnership (2013) recorded common lizard at two locations on the western boundary.

The adjacent habitat to the east of the site, part of Maids Cross Hill SSSI, has highly suitable habitat for common reptiles such as common lizard. A local dog walker also stated that he had seen adders on the SSSI and it is possible that these species may use the bare ground and short sward for basking purposes or be present beyond the fenced areas.

Mammals:

No wild mammals were recorded during this survey. Surveys by the Landscape Partnership (2013) did not reveal any bat activity at this site.

Comments and recommendations:

The recording of grape hyacinth on the northern boundary is a notable discovery as this is the first year that the species has been recorded outside of the CWS boundary. This species was also recorded on the northern roadside margin of the adjacent site (L22), as well as within the CWS itself. Any future development should protect this Priority Species and Red Data Book Plant (Vulnerable).

The presence of reptiles, albeit currently low, should be taken into consideration in any future development proposals. A receptor site, ideally within or close to the site boundary will need to be created well in advance of any clearance, to ensure that sufficient time is allowed to develop suitable habitat structure and an invertebrate assemblage to support reptiles. This is likely to take two years or more to create and considerably longer if arable land is used. In addition, if the site's grazing regime changes in future and a taller sward develops, it is likely that populations will increase across the whole site.

Unless the current grazing regime on this site is changed, then there is no likelihood of the site developing medium or high biodiversity potential. However the CWS and northern margin (see above) are of high ecological value and should be protected from any development proposals.

With less intensive management the site would revert back to dry acid grassland and form an important

buffer and extension to the sites mentioned above and would contribute to the remaining heathland resource of the area.

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 200m of the Breckland Special Area of Conservation (SAC) 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:

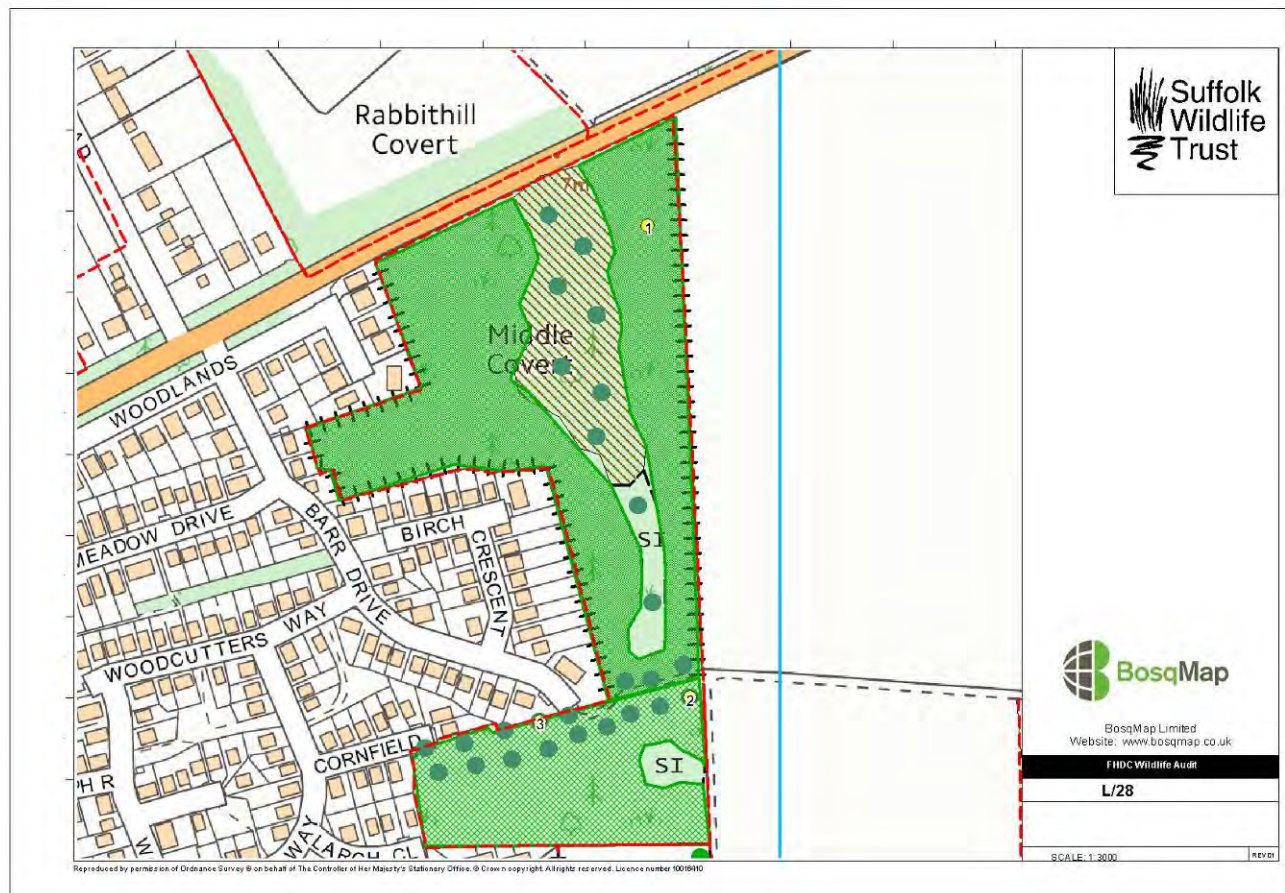
Aurum Ecology. (July 2014). Land at Broom Road Lakenheath. A Biodiversity and European Protected Species Survey.

The Landscape Partnership. (2013). Lakenheath Village Extension. Environmental Statement, Chapter 1 Ecology.

Site name L/28 Middle Covert, Land South of Station Road

FHDC Ref: L/28
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL 71877 83517
Area: 6.98 hectares
Date: 7 August 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, hot, overcast with sunny intervals
Ranking: 4
Biodiversity value: Medium

Map:



Photos:



View from B1112 looking south along old access track.



Open areas of tall ruderal vegetation in woodland.



Fence line adjacent to residential properties off Birch Crescent.



Avenue of mature trees adjacent to residential properties off Barr Drive and Cornfield.



Potential for roosting bats (Target Note 2 & Target Note 3)

Habitat type(s):

Broadleaved woodland

Subsidiary habitats:

Tall ruderal

Site description:

The site lies adjacent to the B1112 along its northern boundary and the site is accessed via a track into the woodland from this road. The site is known as Middle Covert. The western boundary abuts arable land, the southern boundary, site L/14 (poor semi-improved grassland) and the western boundary abuts existing residential development.

The site comprises largely broadleaved woodland with large areas of open space dominated by tall ruderal vegetation with some areas of poor semi-improved grassland. A large section at the south of the site is dominated by dense scrub.

The woodland appears to have been thinned out compared to aerial photographs

Protected species seen or known:

Protected species potential:

Bats, common lizard

Priority habitats present:

-

Priority species seen or known:

-

Priority species potential:

Hedgehog

Connectivity:

The woodland is abutted by residential development to the west and the B1112 to the north. Connectivity to other habitats is limited to the farm tracks running south and east. The eastern track has an adjacent hedgerow that provides connections to open, intensively managed arable land and other linear features.

Structural diversity:

There is a range of structural diversity within the woodland from the canopy to the shrub layer (although this is sparse), to the ground flora. An area of dense scrub in the southern part of the site provides a good range of structural diversity across the site.

Flora:

The woodland comprises a number of tall thin trees in the main body of the woodland. Species include horse chestnut, sycamore, ash, pedunculate oak, walnut, beech, cherry, Scot's pine and silver birch. Many have a layer of ivy covering them. The sparse shrub layer included snowberry and an evergreen non-native species along the fence line by the residential properties. It is possible that this species may have been planted as game cover originally along with snowberry.

Towards the southern end of the wooded area is an avenue of more mature ivy-covered trees following a well-worn pathway leading to Barr Drive and Cornfield. Species include ash, pedunculate oak and horse chestnut.

Ground flora comprises tall ruderal vegetation dominated by common nettle with patches of bramble. In addition, there are some areas of species-poor grassland with false oat-grass, dark mullein, ground ivy, common ragwort, wood reed-grass, common mugwort, creeping thistle, broad-leaved dock, hedge woundwort, self-heal and square-stalked St John's-wort.

Avifauna:

Common bird species were recorded during the survey and included blackbird, wood pigeon, collared dove and green woodpecker. Buzzards were heard in the woodland and it is possible that they could nest here.

Birds are highly likely to nest in the trees and dense bramble scrub at the south of the site in the spring and summer.

Invertebrates:

The open areas of grassland are attractive to a range of invertebrate species. Most are likely to be common species. Grasshoppers were heard and seen in this habitat and a number of common butterfly species were noted including small white, ringlet, gatekeeper and meadow brown. Two species of large dragonfly were also noted in the grassland, both were hawk species.

Herpetofauna:

The site is probably unlikely to support a population of common reptiles as it is largely shaded except for the open grassy areas that may attract common lizard. However, the area at the southern end of the site has some potential for common lizard in the open grassy areas within the dense scrub. The scrub also provides good habitat for them. This section of the site appeared to have been the subject of a previous reptile survey as there were old artificial reptile mats *in situ*. The dense bramble was largely inaccessible. No reptiles were recorded beneath the small number of mats found.

Mammals:

The trees on site have the potential to support roosting bats. There were too many trees to undertake an initial assessment at this time but features (holes and splits) that could attract roosting bats were noted on two trees along the avenue of trees towards the south of the site. These were recorded in an oak (TL 71949 83373) and horse chestnut (TL 71840 83346) (Target Notes 2 & 3). As a result these two trees have been classified as Category 1 – trees with definite features with potential to support roosting bats or a single bat (Hundt, 2012).

The site appears to have been the subject of a dormouse presence survey as a number of dormouse tubes were recorded attached to trees and shrubs throughout the woodland area. Dormice are not known to occur in this part of Suffolk. The woodland is also considered unlikely to support this species as the structure within the woodland is not ideal for them and there is a lack of berry/nut producing shrubs that would provide food for them.

Grey squirrel is present in the woodland.

Hedgehogs have been recorded along Station Road at the northern boundary of the site in 2014 so there is likely to be a population in the area. The dense bramble scrub in the southern half of the site is likely to provide excellent hibernation opportunities for hedgehog and a large proportion of the local population could overwinter on this site.

Comments and recommendations:

Middle Covert provides an established mature green space on the edge of Lakenheath and is the only significant woodland block within the curtilage of Lakenheath. However, the woodland is in poor condition and appears to have been thinned out. Middle Covert is listed on the National Inventory of Woodland and Trees (England).

Should development be proposed at the site, then a number of ecological surveys are recommended including a full tree assessment for bats. Dusk emergence, dawn entry and activity surveys may be required.

An assessment for reptiles should be undertaken in suitable areas of habitat.

Clearance of any woodland or large bramble areas could have a high impact upon hedgehog. Suitable hibernation sites can represent a key resource for this species, supporting a high proportion of the population through the winter months. 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.

Trees should not be felled or other vegetation cleared during the main bird nesting season of March to August inclusive.

It is recommended that snowberry, although not listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended), should be removed to prevent it spreading as it is highly invasive.

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.

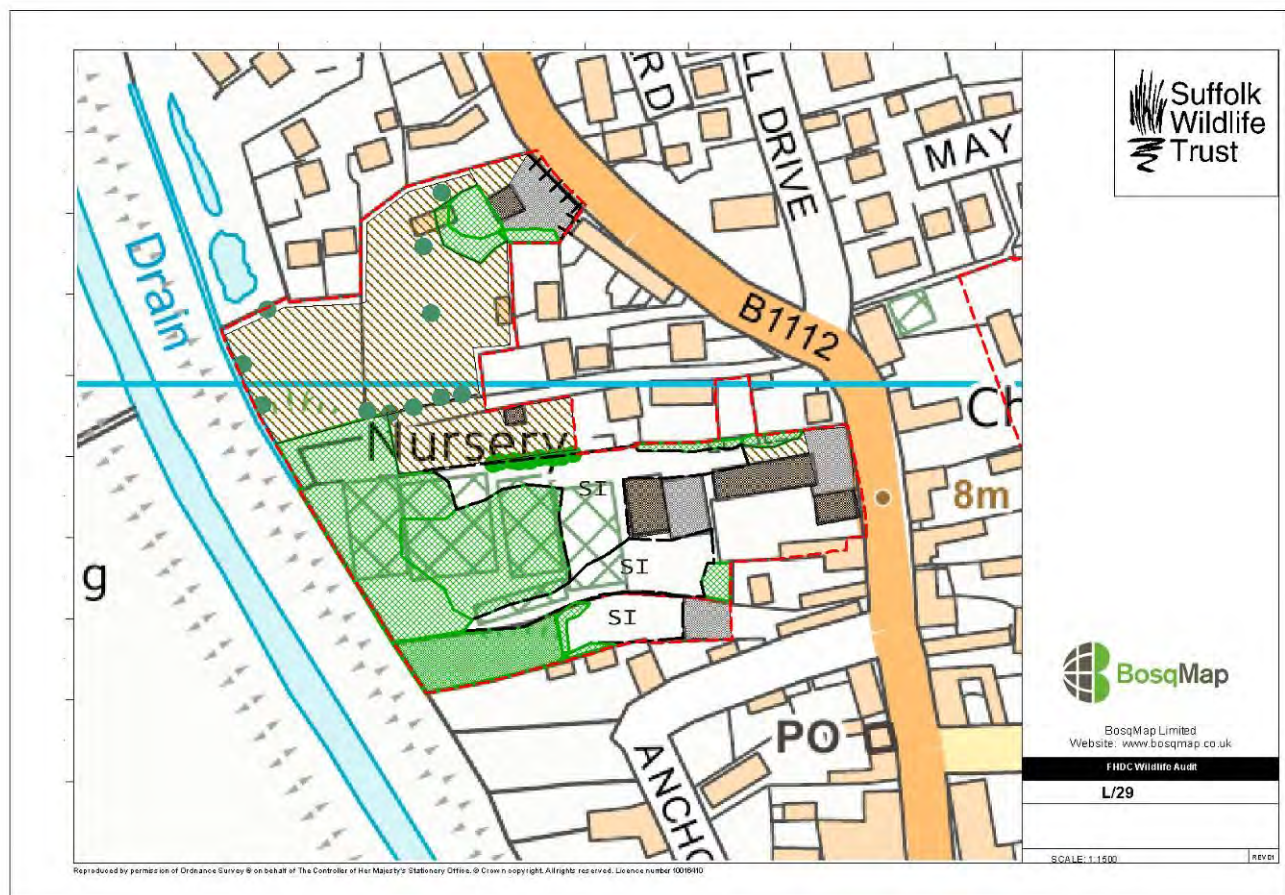
References:

Hundt. L. (2012) Bat Surveys: Good Practice Guidelines, 2nd edition, Bat Conservation Trust
National Inventory of Woodland and Trees (England)

Site name L/29 Matthews Nursery

FHDC Ref: L/29
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL 71200 82958
Area: 1.86 hectares
Date: 3 September 2015
Recorder: S Bullion
Weather conditions: cold (13°C), overcast
Ranking: 4
Biodiversity value: Medium

Map:



Photos:



View of former nursery building



View of 'The Poplars'



Bramble scrub within former nursery



Tall ruderal vegetation and scrub in centre of site.



Tall ruderal vegetation in northern section



Grassland and woodland in southern section

Habitat type(s):

Poor semi-improved grassland, tall ruderal, continuous scrub, broadleaved woodland

Subsidiary habitats:

Hard standing becoming colonised by vegetation, ornamental shrubs and trees.

Site description:

This site lies within a largely residential area on the western edge of Lakenheath, adjacent to the banks of the Cut-Off Channel and west of the B1112. A series of land parcels make up the whole site. A large area of land in the southern section of the site represents a former nursery. This area is now overgrown, with species-poor grassland and extensive patches of bramble scrub and ornamental shrubs. To the south of this is a linear section containing hard standing, species-poor grassland, scrub and broadleaved woodland to the west. Land to the north of the former nursery, beyond Dumpling Bridge Lane, is dominated by tall ruderal habitats with scrub and mature broadleaved woodland. Areas of the far western part of the site were impenetrable in places, so could not be fully surveyed.

Protected species seen or known:

-

Protected species potential:

Bats, otter, grass snake

Priority habitats present:

-

Priority species seen or known:

Common toad

Priority species potential:

Hedgehog, swift

Connectivity:

The location of the site, on the western edge of Lakenheath, adjacent to the banks of the Cut-Off Channel, means that it has excellent connectivity to the wider ecological network.

Structural diversity:

The habitat mosaic of tall grassland, tall ruderal, extensive areas of scrub and woodland provides good structural diversity.

Flora:

The flora contained numerous common species. Tall ruderals included creeping thistle, mugwort, Canadian fleabane, common nettle, common ragwort, willowherb species, yarrow and perforate St John's-wort. Poor semi-improved grassland contained many of the above species but with a greater dominance of false oat-grass, cock's-foot, Yorkshire fog, red fescue and occasional creeping bent and common couch. There were areas of continuous bramble within the former nursery and other areas of the overall site which were dominated by common nettle. Buddleja was abundant in the former nursery, with elder and *Prunus* species.

Ash trees were dominating the woodland to the west. There is a large *Robinia* tree within the former nursery, with horse chestnut and a line of leylandii trees. In the centre of the site are apple trees forming an overgrown orchard.

Himalayan Balsam was noted in the north-east of the site.

Avifauna:

The site visit took place at a sub-optimal time of year for recording this group. However, the scrub/grassland mosaic is likely to support a range of species. It is possible that migrant species of warbler such as blackcap, whitethroat and lesser whitethroat may be present. Aspect Ecology advised that swift may nest in the building at the entrance to the nursery.

Invertebrates:

The habitat mosaic across this site will support a range of invertebrate species. The area of former nursery included large stands of bramble and abundant buddleja, so there is an excellent nectar source for butterflies. Relatively high numbers of common species were noted (red admiral, peacock, small tortoiseshell, painted lady, meadow brown, large white and small white). A large yellow underwing moth was seen and other species of moth are highly likely to be present given the habitat mosaic. Grasshoppers were also abundant in areas of tall grassland.

Herpetofauna:

The site appears highly suitable for reptile species and amphibian species such as toad. However, a reptile survey undertaken by Aspect Ecology (April - June 2010) did not record any reptiles but a search of refugia revealed a single common toad. The proximity of the site east of the Cut-Off Channel means that there is a reasonable likelihood of grass snake being present. This is a highly mobile species and when the population is at low numbers they can be difficult to detect during a reptile survey.

Mammals:

Various common mammals are likely to be present on this site, including wood mouse, bank vole, common shrew and muntjac. Signs of fox were seen on site. Otter may enter the site from the Cut-Off Channel to the west and use the site as a holt or for lying up. Hedgehog is also likely to be present as the habitat is highly suitable for them. The wooded western edge of the site is likely to provide good habitat for foraging bats and both pipistrelle and serotine bats have been recorded locally.

Comments and recommendations:

Himalayan Balsam was recorded on the section of the site north of Dumpling Bridge Lane, close to the B1112. This species is listed under Schedule 9 as an invasive plant species, for which steps should be taken to prevent its further spread into the wild.

The site was surveyed by Aspect Ecology (2010) to accompany planning application F/2010/0338/FUL. However, there appears to have been no site management in the ensuing time and consequently the site is developing a semi-natural habitat mosaic. If any new planning application is to be submitted on this site it is recommended that the existing ecological assessment is updated following further survey work. An Extended Phase 1 survey should also evaluate the use of the site by bats, otter and hedgehog. It is recommended that the reptile survey is repeated.

Notwithstanding the above, no clearance of vegetation should take place during the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive).

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:

Aspect Ecology. (April 2010). Ecological Assessment. Matthews Nursery.

Aspect Ecology. (April 2010). Herpetofauna Survey Results. Matthews Nursery.

Site name **L/35 Land off Briscoe Way**

FHDC Ref: L/35
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL 71216 83752
Area: 2.78 hectares
Date: 7 August 2015
Recorder: Ann Sherwood
Weather conditions: Hot, dry, overcast
Ranking: 5
Biodiversity value: Low conservation value

Map:



Photos:



Southern boundary hedgerow adjacent to residential gardens looking east.



Eastern boundary with dense scrub and trees adjacent looking north.



View looking west through site along the northern boundary, which abuts L/12.



Southern boundary hedgerow looking north east.

Habitat type(s):

Arable

Subsidiary habitats:

Species-poor intact hedgerow

Site description:

The site lies off Station Road (B1112) and Briscoe Way (a recently developed residential area). The site is currently in arable production with a crop of carrots. The southern boundary comprises a species-poor intact hedgerow adjacent to residential gardens and houses which have been built in the last two years. The eastern boundary abuts an overgrown area which appears to be part of adjacent residential gardens.

Protected species seen or known:

-

Protected species potential:

A survey, undertaken by James Blake Associates (2013) identified a number of ivy-clad trees along the eastern boundary associated with adjacent residential gardens. These had moderate potential to support roosting bats (Category 2b). No suitable trees or features were present within the site.

Priority habitats present:

None recorded.

Priority species seen or known:

House sparrow (James Blake Associates 2013)

Priority species potential:

Bats, brown hare, skylark

Connectivity:

The site has low connectivity with only one hedgerow, although this extends beyond the site boundary south and then west along L/12 to the Cut Off Channel.

Structural diversity:

The site has limited structural diversity.

Flora:

The hedgerow along the southern boundary was dominated by hawthorn with occasional honeysuckle, buddleja and ash. The hedgerow was regularly managed with some sections lower than others, presumably as a result of residential interference. There was a fence behind the hedgerow that denotes the residential boundaries. The hedgerow was identified in a previous report by John Blake Associates (2013) as being a recently planted hedgerow (within 10 years), probably associated with the residential development.

The uncultivated areas around the field edges comprised a mix of characteristic arable flora including fat-hen, common fumitory, redshank, wild oat, common mugwort, pale persicaria, groundsel and a species of interest; henbane (Declining Nationally and classed as Vulnerable).

The grassy permanent field edges were dominated by false oat-grass and common couch with cock's-foot also present. The adjacent habitat along the eastern boundary comprised a mixture of ivy-clad trees including horse chestnut, aspen, sycamore and shrubs such as privet.

Dense bramble scrub was present along a part of this boundary and was encroaching from the adjacent gardens.

Avifauna:

A number of common species were recorded during the survey of the site and included blackbird, robin and wren, which were all associated with the hedgerow and adjacent residential gardens. Buzzards were heard calling overhead in the general area.

A previous survey by John Blake Associates (2013) identified the presence of house sparrow which is a UK BAP and Suffolk local BAP species.

Invertebrates:

The site is likely to support common and widespread species with most associated with the boundary hedgerow and the ephemeral weed flora in the uncropped areas of the site. Three common butterfly species were recorded and included peacock, brimstone and large white.

Herpetofauna:

Reptiles are considered highly unlikely to use the site, due to its regular disturbance. However, the unmanaged scrub habitat along the eastern boundary could support reptiles if present in the adjacent large residential gardens to the east. Reptiles could therefore bask on sunny field edges and utilise the narrow permanent grass margins.

Mammals:

None recorded although the site and adjacent fields is suitable for brown hare. Common small mammal species may be associated with the hedgerow along the southern boundary. Hedgehog may utilise the hedgerow and overgrown features.

There are no suitable features that could support roosting bats within the site, although there are trees that were assessed with moderate potential to support roosting bats on adjacent land along the eastern boundary. The nearby Cut Off Channel represents an important commuting and foraging corridor for bats.

The Cut Off Channel supports otter, with records along its length. There were no water bodies on the site itself and none adjacent to the site.

Comments and recommendations:

The site currently has low ecological value, although the field boundary hedgerow, trees and scrub to the south and east do have higher value and could support nesting birds. The trees off-site could support roosting bats.

The site has not changed significantly since the survey undertaken in 2012 and the findings of this survey concur with that described in the report by John Blake Associates (2013).

If development proceeds on this site, consideration must be given to the potential for nesting birds in the adjacent field boundaries and ground nesting birds such as skylark within the main body of the site.

Vegetation clearance, if required, must therefore be undertaken outside the bird-nesting season of March to August inclusive.

Site and lighting design should take into consideration the moderate potential of the trees along the eastern boundary to support roosting bats. Further advice should be sought on design methods for reducing potential impacts on roosting bats (if present).

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.

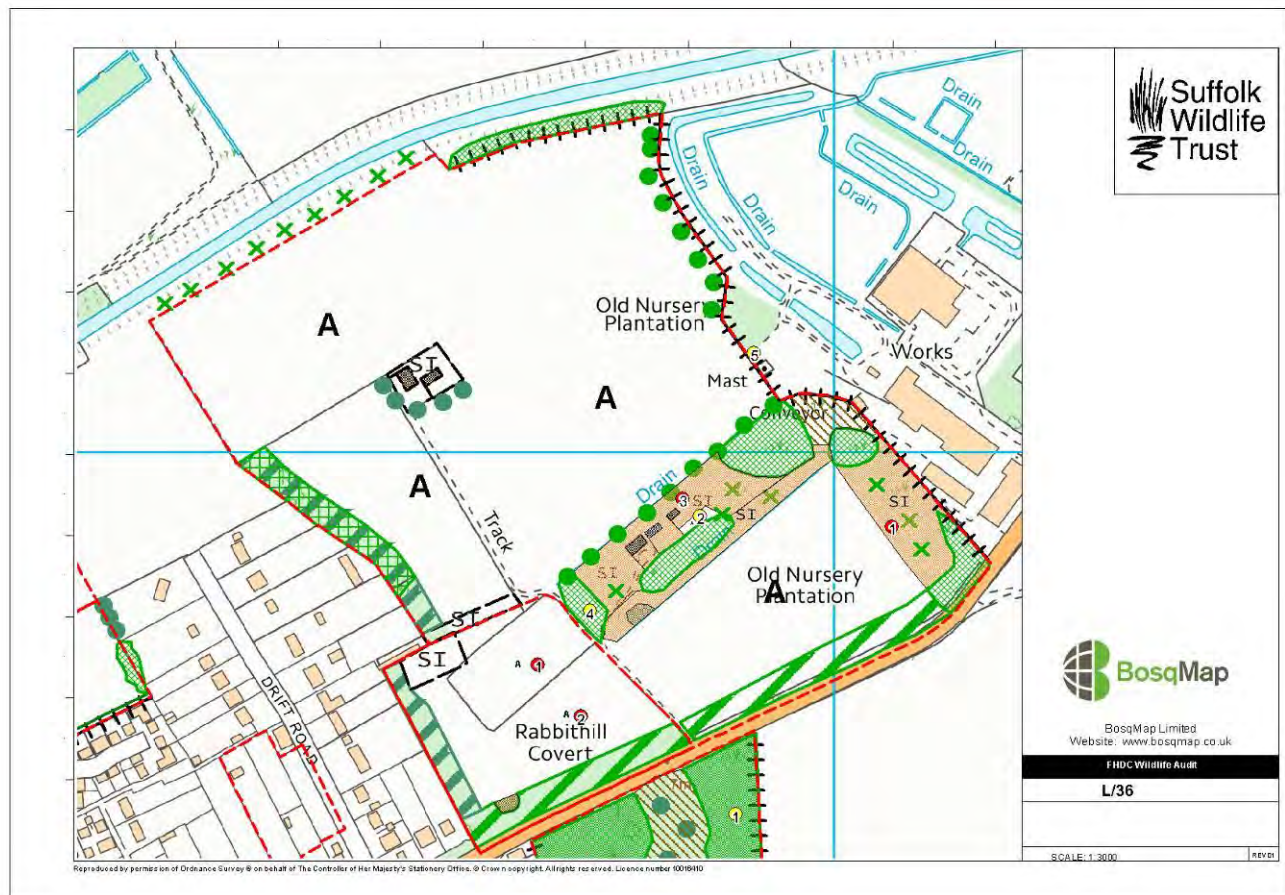
References:

JBA Consultancy Services Ltd. (March 2013). Phase 1 Habitat Survey of Land off Station Road, Lakenheath.

Site name L/36 North Lakenheath

FHDC Ref: L/36
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL71713 84076
Area: 22.4 hectares
Date: 6 August 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, hot, sunny
Ranking: 4
Biodiversity value: Medium

Map:



Photos:



View looking east along the southern boundary adjacent to Station Road B1112.



Neutral semi-improved grassland along the eastern boundary looking north (Target Note 1)



Semi-improved grassland with scattered scrub and small groups of spindle. Note mammal pathway.



Neutral semi-improved grassland through the centre of the site



Storage area with barns and sheds looking northeast with an allotment at the eastern end



Track through the site looking northwest towards farm buildings.



Farm buildings at top of track.



Dense scrub and poor semi-improved grassland along northern boundary adjacent to Cut Off Channel



Mixed plantation woodland and coniferous plantation woodland with poor semi-improved grassland along western boundary looking south.



Dead tree with features that could support roosting bats (off site but adjacent- Target Note 5).

Habitat type(s):

Arable

Subsidiary habitats:

Poor semi-improved grassland

Tall ruderal

Plantation mixed, broad-leaved and coniferous woodland

Dense and scattered scrub

Site description:

The site is located off Station Road (B1112) on the north side and is bounded by a woodland belt of trees along this boundary. There are no boundaries either side of the main track running north towards the farm buildings or the uncultivated area in the middle of the site, with exception of a Scot's pine line along the northern boundary of this feature. This area comprises a mixture of sheds, farm machinery, dense and scattered scrub, two allotments and a small area with bee hives (Target Notes 2 & 4). Within the same area was a small linear deep depression/scrape colonised with similar vegetation described above (Target Note 3).

The eastern boundary comprises a wide margin of semi-improved acid grassland with scrub and tall ruderal vegetation. This is fenced off from the adjacent industrial site. North of this, the eastern boundary comprises leylandii trees and Scot's pine in a double row.

The northern boundary is largely dominated by dense scrub along its length with a narrow strip of poor, semi-improved grassland beside this. The Cut Off Channel embankment abuts the scrub along this boundary.

On the western side, the northern part is contiguous with arable land to the west. Further south is an area of mixed plantation woodland and plantation coniferous woodland which abuts gardens. Horse paddocks associated with residential properties lie to the west. Beyond the south-west is Site L/12 (Rabbithill Covert).

Protected species seen or known:

Common lizard, grass snake (Applied Ecology 2015)

Protected species potential:

Bats

Priority habitats present:

-

Priority species seen or known:

Hedgehog (Station Road, 2014)

Priority species potential:

Skylark, linnet

Connectivity:

The site is bounded along its northern boundary by a wide grass margin and dense scrub adjacent to Cut Off Channel that provides connectivity to the wider environment west and eastwards. The neutral grassland strip through the middle of the site and along the eastern boundary provide connectivity to habitats to the east. The tree belt along the southern boundary adjacent to Station Road provides good connectivity west and eastwards.

Structural diversity:

The majority of the site is under arable cultivation and therefore of limited structural diversity. The acid grassland margin and the strip through the middle of the site, the tree belts and scrub all provide good structural diversity albeit limited to the site boundaries with the exception of the acid grassland strip through the middle of the site.

Flora:

The site comprises large arable fields with few field boundaries and those present tended to be associated with the external boundaries of the site. In uncultivated areas along the field edges characteristic weed flora was present and included white campion, flixweed, bur chervil, common mugwort, common poppy, barren brome, fat-hen, viper's-bugloss, common field speedwell, thyme-leaved sandwort, shepherd's-purse, prickly sow-thistle, mignonette, common toadflax, Canadian fleabane, wild radish and green nightshade.

Henbane was recorded along the arable field boundary on the western side of the site abutting another arable plot.

The neutral, free-draining semi-improved grassland (Target Note 1) comprised red fescue, which was dominant in places, with common bent, yarrow, ribwort plantain, viper's-bugloss, mouse-ear hawkweed, dark mullein, common stork's-bill, germander speedwell, lady's bedstraw and lesser stitchwort. Ant hills are also present suggesting that this grassland has been a permanent feature for some time.

Poor semi-improved grassland comprised abundant false oat-grass with common couch, Yorkshire fog, creeping bent with a few common broad-leaved species such as creeping thistle and common mugwort,

The survey conducted by Applied Ecology (2014) also found field mouse-ear, biting stonecrop, common whitlowgrass and thale cress in areas of semi-improved grassland, the latter two more likely in disturbed areas.

Dense scrub comprised gorse and spindle bushes with occasional hawthorn. An occasional young pedunculate oak was also present. Bracken was present in the scrub near the track.

The broad-leaved tree belts along the road comprised sycamore, ash and pedunculate oak with occasional Scot's pine.

The western boundary tree belt comprised mixed woodland with beech, ash, wych elm, sycamore and larch with occasional mature pedunculate oaks. Snowberry was the main component of the shrub layer with hazel grading into a pure stand of coniferous Scot's pine trees at the southern end of the belt. Underneath the pine trees was an area of poor semi-improved grassland. Many of these trees were ivy-covered. Oregon grape and spindle were also present.

The scrub along the northern boundary comprised willow sp, ash, pedunculate oak, hawthorn, dogwood, dog-rose and goat willow.

Tall ruderal vegetation comprised dense stands of common nettle and hemlock in patches in the grassland on the eastern boundary.

Avifauna:

A survey to establish the presence of breeding birds on the site was conducted by Applied Ecology (2014). No evidence of stone curlew was noted and only low numbers of common woodland and garden bird species were recorded. A pair of red-legged partridge was seen during their survey, the only record of ground-nesting birds, although the habitat is suitable for skylark. A subsequent detailed survey for stone curlew undertaken by Applied Ecology (2015) was negative.

Swallows were recorded foraging across the site during the current survey and a local resident reported seeing sparrowhawk and hobby using the site. During this survey, buzzards were heard calling overhead.

Invertebrates:

The area in the middle of the site is likely to support a range of invertebrate species but otherwise across the main arable area, invertebrate diversity is expected to be low.

Grasshoppers, hawk dragonflies and numerous bees were recorded in the semi-natural habitat in the middle of the site. Butterflies noted included common species such as large white and gatekeeper.

There are records of two Priority (Research Only) moth species within the site dating from 2004 (Powdered Quaker and Brindled Beauty).

Herpetofauna:

The site is known support a medium population of common reptiles across the site (Aspect Ecology 2015), but the density is likely to be highest in the grassland areas. A low population of grass snake was also recorded.

There are three ponds within 500m, two of which are ponds within 250m of this site to the northeast at Willow Grove Farm. A detailed great crested newt survey in 2015 by Aspect Ecology was negative so the likelihood of this species on site is very low.

Mammals:

Mole hills and rabbit burrows were present in the grassland and scrub areas.

Bats are highly likely to forage along the linear features around the boundaries of the site. One dead tree that was off the site boundary has potential to support roosting bats (Target Note 5). Not all trees could be accessed to assess them for their suitability to support roosting bats. The Applied Ecology report of 2014 indicates that the woodland belt the borders the proposed development site is to be retained, so no additional bat surveys were undertaken.

The farm buildings offer no potential for roosting bats. They consisted of modern corrugated metal skins and used for storage of farm machinery or were open fronted. Previous studies also came to this conclusion.

There were no waterbodies on site that could support otter or water vole but otters are known to use the Cut Off Channel adjacent to the northern boundary. Much of this waterbody is covered with a thick layer of duckweed at the time of the survey and there was no evidence of mammal movements through the weed.

Comments and recommendations:

The site is largely an area of intensively managed arable land with few field boundaries within the site. These areas are of low ecological value. The greatest area of interest lies within the grassland and scrub areas on the eastern boundary and middle of the site and the woodland areas.

The grassland and scrub is of moderate ecological value and if possible should be maintained.

Should the site be developed, mitigation for reptiles will be required and no site clearance can take place until this has been fully implemented. A receptor site, ideally within the site boundary will need to be created well in advance of any clearance, to ensure that sufficient time is allowed to develop suitable habitat structure and an invertebrate assemblage to support reptiles. This is likely to take two years or more to create and considerably longer if arable land is used.

Trees, scrub and other suitable nesting habitat within the site should be removed outside the main bird nesting season during March to August inclusive (but see constraints regarding reptiles above). If any large trees are to be removed these should be subject to further assessment for bats.

For sites within 7.5km of the Breckland SPA

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References:

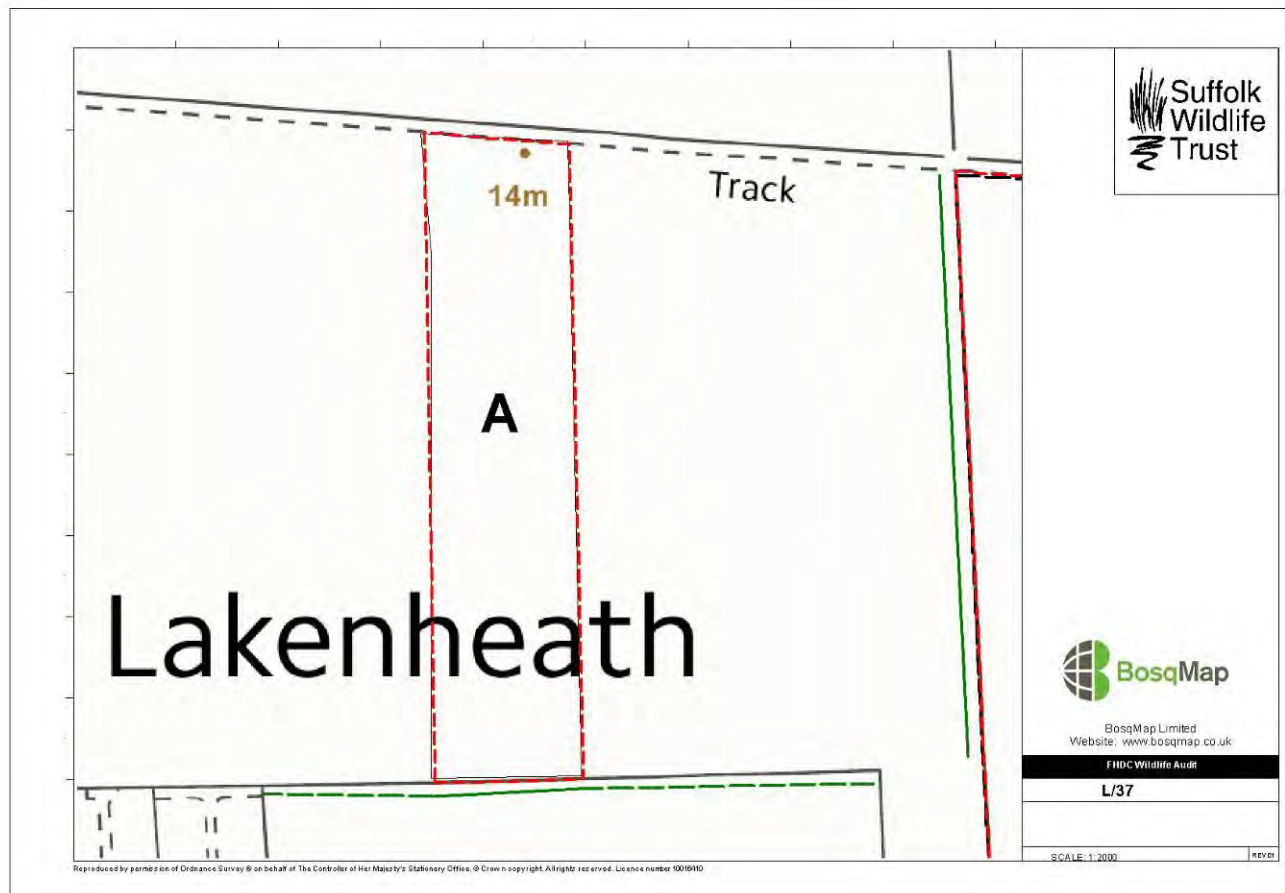
Applied Ecology Ltd. (October 2014) Land at Lakenheath North, Suffolk. Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey.

Applied Ecology Ltd. (September 2015). Land at Lakenheath North, Suffolk, Phase 2 Ecology Report

Site name L/37 Land North of Cemetery

FHDC Ref: L/37
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL 72192 83223
Area: 1.88 hectares
Date: 7 August 2015
Recorder: Ann Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, hot, overcast
Ranking: 6
Biodiversity value: Low conservation value

Map:



Photos:



Southern boundary hedgerow



View looking north towards 'green track' and hedgerow adjacent to track. No field boundaries are present to the west, east or the north, which is adjacent to a farm track.

Habitat type(s):

Arable

Subsidiary habitats:

Species-poor intact hedgerows

Site description:

The site is currently under arable production with a crop of potatoes and is located within a larger parcel of arable land. There are no field boundaries to the west or east of the site. To the south is a 'green' track and a tall overgrown species-poor hedgerow. To the north is a managed species-poor intact hedgerow.

Protected species seen or known:

-

Protected species potential:

-

Priority habitats present:

-

Priority species seen or known:

-

Priority species potential:

Skylark, brown hare

Connectivity:

The site has poor connectivity, although the hedgerow along the southern boundary extends west to residential areas in Lakenheath and joins another hedgerow to the east, which then runs south to Maids Cross Hill Road.

Structural diversity:

Limited structural diversity, being regularly cultivated arable land with a managed hedgerow along the southern boundary.

Flora:

The hedgerow along the southern boundary was dominated by hawthorn. Field maple was also recorded.

Avifauna:

None recorded. Common species may utilise the hedgerow along the southern boundary for nesting purposes. Skylark may nest within the field when the crop is suitable.

Invertebrates:

Limited to common species associated with the hedgerow along the southern boundary.

Herpetofauna:

None considered likely due to the high disturbance levels on the site and its arable nature.

Mammals:

Brown hares could utilise the site. Common small mammal species may be associated with the hedgerow along the southern boundary.

Comments and recommendations:

The site is of low ecological value being regularly cultivated arable land. The hedgerow along the southern boundary is of higher ecological value.

The site is isolated and not located adjacent to existing residential development or to existing suitable infrastructure. The only access to the site is via the farm track along the northern boundary, although this potentially links to existing residential road networks.

Vegetation clearance, such as the hedgerow if required, must be conducted outside the main bird-nesting season of March to August inclusive.

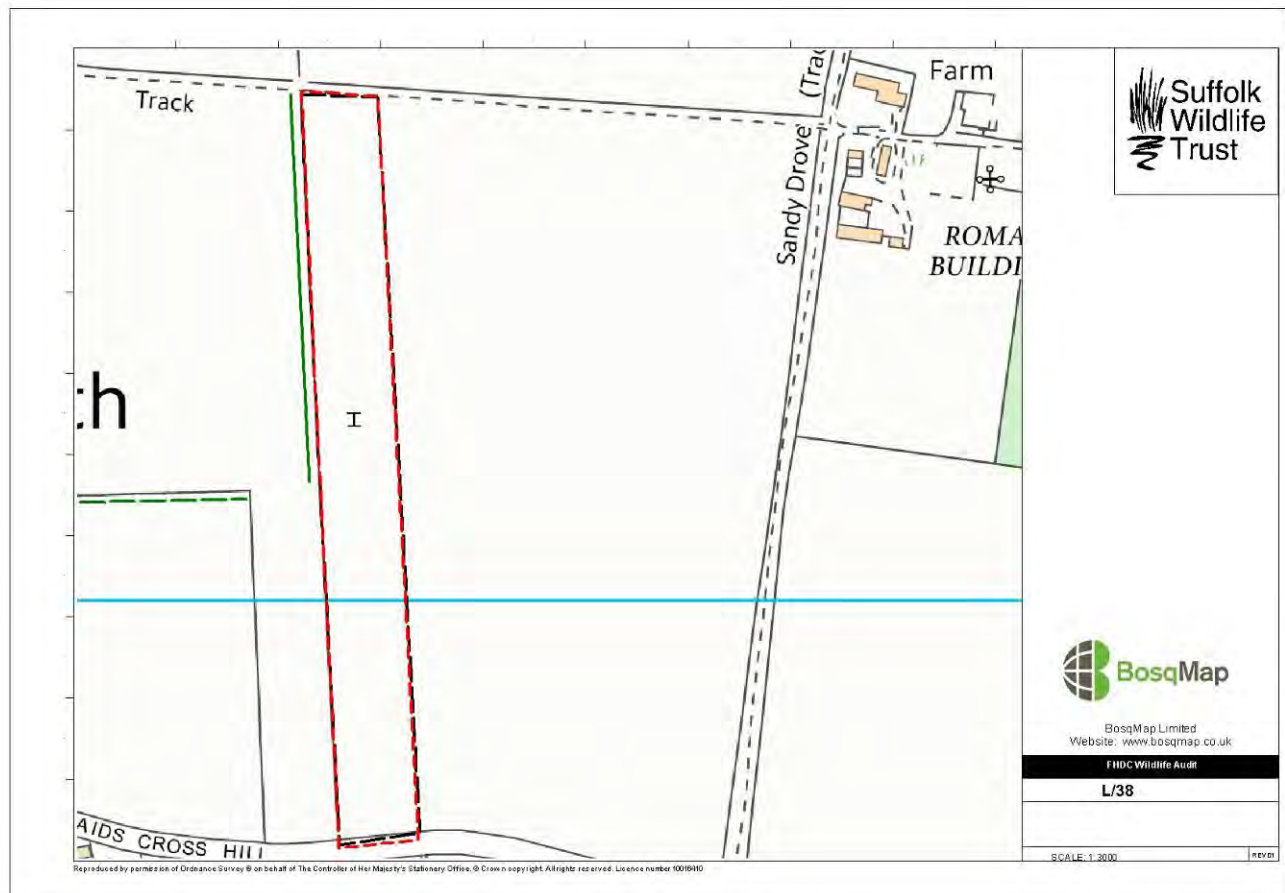
For sites within 7.5km of the Breckland SPA

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 L/38 Land to North of Maids Cross Hill

FHDC Ref: L/38
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL 72433 83104
Area: 2.5 hectares
Date: 7 August 2015
Recorder: A Sherwood
Weather conditions: Dry, hot, overcast
Ranking: 6
Biodiversity value: Low

Map:



Photos:



Improved grassland, looking south from track.



Arable land to east of site. No field boundary.



Hedgerow along part of western boundary looking north.

Habitat type(s):

Arable

Subsidiary habitats:

Species-poor intact hedgerow.

Site description:

The site comprises a narrow strip of improved grassland surrounded to the east and west by arable fields. There is a species-poor, intact, overgrown hedgerow along part of the western boundary and a species-poor hedgerow along the northern boundary but separated from the site by a track outside of the site boundary. The track is regularly used by dog walkers. The southern boundary abuts Maids Cross Hill road.

Protected species seen or known:

-

Protected species potential:

-

Priority habitats present:

-

Priority species seen or known:

-

Priority species potential:

Skylark, bullfinch, brown hare

Connectivity:

The site has limited connectivity due to the lack of field boundaries and links to other vegetated field boundaries, other than the species-poor overgrown hedgerow along the western boundary. The southern boundary is separated from the site by a green track and overgrown hedgerow.

Structural diversity:

Structural diversity is limited, with the exception of the hedgerow.

Flora:

The site is sown with an improved grass mix dominated by perennial rye-grass. A thin strip of uncultivated land between the adjacent fields supports fat-hen, flixweed, common poppy, sun spurge and common fumitory. Otherwise the site was species-poor.

The hedgerows on the western and southern boundaries are dominated by cherry plum and wild plum, which forms a line of small trees.

Mahonia/Oregon grape was also recorded in the western hedgerow.

Avifauna:

A small flock of partridge flew off whilst surveying but the species could not be identified. Common bird species will utilise the species-poor hedgerow on the western boundary of the site. Skylark may nest where the sward/crop structure is suitable.

Invertebrates:

The site has limited potential for invertebrates other than common species.

Herpetofauna:

None recorded and none considered likely to be present, due to the arable nature of the surrounding landscape and lack of suitable habitat.

Mammals:

None recorded. Brown hare could utilize the fields and 'green' track. Common small mammal species may be associated with the hedgerow along the western boundary.

Comments and recommendations:

The site has low ecological value comprising improved grassland formerly presumed to be arable land. The tall hedgerow, although dominated by a single species, has a higher ecological value.

The site is isolated and not located adjacent to existing residential development or to existing suitable infrastructure with the narrow Maid's Cross Hill road the only existing access route to site.

Should vegetation (trees, shrubs, scrub) clearance be required, this must be undertaken 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 any 1km grid square which has supported 5 or more stone curlew nesting attempts since 1995 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.