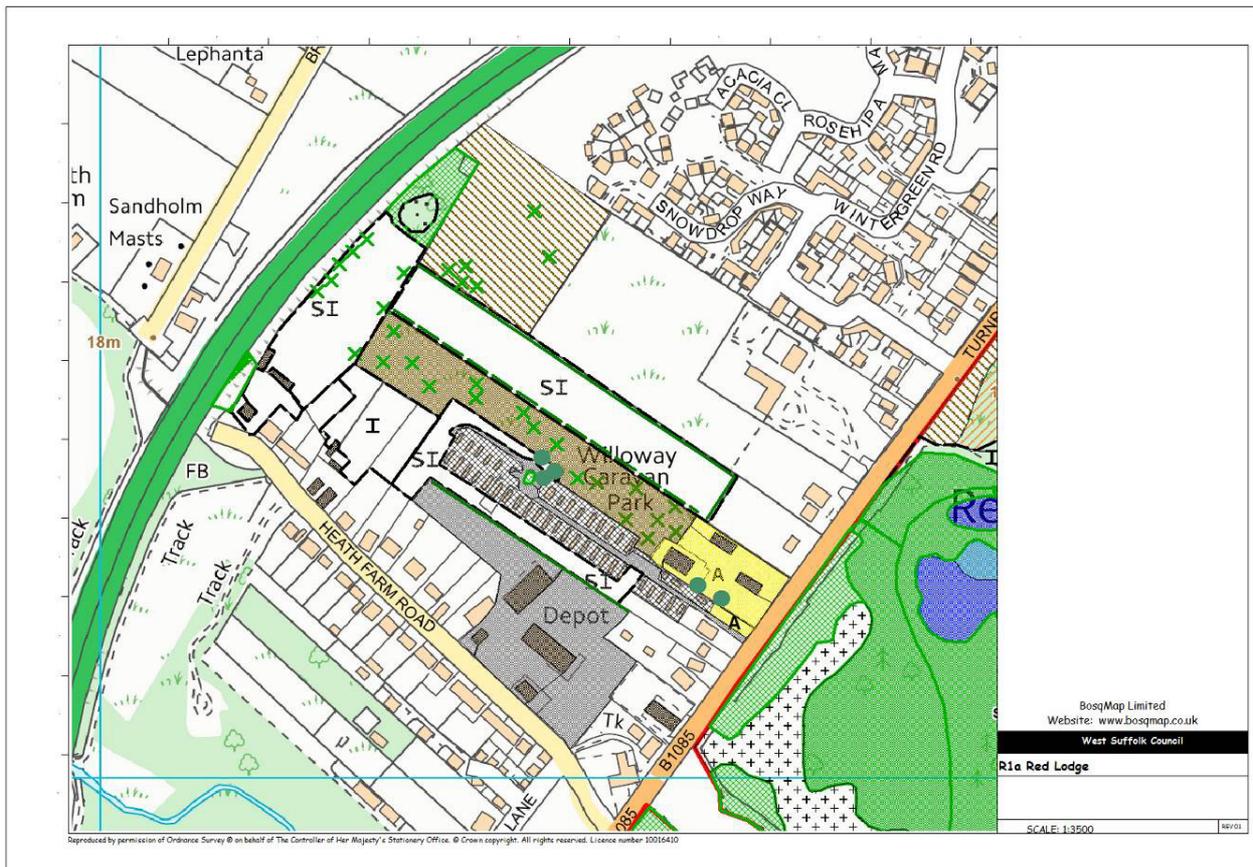


Site name **Red Lodge**

Site Ref: RL1 (a)
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TL 6933 7027
Area: 9.76 hectares
Date: 7 Sep 2016
Recorder: J Crighton and A Looser
Weather conditions: Overcast, hot and humid with no breeze
Ranking: 4
Biodiversity value: Medium

Map:



Photos:



Photo 1. Northern section of site adjacent to A11



Photo 2. Area of bracken with scattered scrub



Photo 3. Small heath butterfly

Habitat type(s):

Poor semi-improved grassland, bracken, scattered scrub

Subsidiary habitats:

Species-poor hedgerow, amenity grassland, dense/continuous scrub, planted broad-leaved woodland, hard standing

Site description:

This site lies between the A11 and the B1085 Turnpike Road. It includes the Willoway Caravan Park, a tanker haulage depot with associated large areas of hard standing and buildings and a large area of rough grassland, bracken and scrub between residential housing estates. Part of the site and the tanker haulage depot were assessed in 2015, but the remainder was not surveyed fully at that time due to lack of access.

Protected species seen or known:

-

Protected species potential:

Grass snake, common lizard, bats

Priority habitats present:

-

Priority species seen or known:

Directly east of the site, small heath and white letter hairstreak butterflies have been recorded in 2006 and a small heath was seen on site.

There is a record of a dead hedgehog on the A11 north of site in 2014.

Priority species potential:

Linnet

Connectivity:

The site borders the A11 corridor on the western boundary, so there will be some limited connectivity in this part of the site. Otherwise the site is bordered by housing (including under construction) on all other boundaries. However, Red Lodge Heath SSSI is situated on the opposite side of the B1085, which includes an excellent habitat mosaic.

Structural diversity:

This site has good structural diversity, with poor semi-improved grassland at different sward lengths, dense scrub, hedgerows and buildings providing a range of habitats for a number of taxonomic groups.

Flora:

Along the northern boundary of the site there is a short section of Leyland cypress hedge (*Cupressus x leylandii*) with bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.). Along the same boundary, there are some trees and scattered scrub including silver birch (*Betula pendula*), English oak (*Quercus robur*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), white poplar (*Populus alba*), field maple (*Acer campestre*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), dog rose (*Rosa canina*), gorse (*Ulex europaeus*) and alder (*Alnus glutinosa*).

The poor semi-improved grassland contains only a few plants typical of dry Breck soils, such as harebell and wild mignonette.

The full list is as follows: perennial rye grass (*Lolium perenne*), red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), cock's foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) with dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), common mallow (*Malva sylvestris*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), lady's bedstraw (*Galium verum*), dove's-foot crane's-bill (*Geranium molle*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), black horehound (*Ballota nigra*), Canadian fleabane (*Conyza canadensis*), smooth hawk's-beard (*Crepis capillaris*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*), knotgrass (*Polygonum aviculare*), creeping cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), sheep's sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*), common ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), ground ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*), great mullein (*Verbascum thapsus*), white campion (*Silene latifolia*), harebell (*Campanula rotundifolia*), lesser stitchwort (*Stellaria graminea*), wild mignonette (*Reseda lutea*), green alkanet (*Pentaglottis sempervirens*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), black nightshade (*Solanum nigrum*) and common centaury (*Centaureum erythraea*).

There is an area of scrub at the north eastern boundary which contains hawthorn, dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*) and blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) with ivy (*Hedera helix*), weld (*Reseda luteola*) and common comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*).

The southern section of the site is split into distinct areas. To the rear of the houses on Heath Road, there is an area of improved grassland which is used as a horse paddock, with a more overgrown area to the north which has been covered in woodchip, but left unattended for some time. Broom (*Cytisus scoparius*), Canadian fleabane, red fescue, meadow oat-grass (*Avenula pratensis*), sheep's sorrel,

common nettle, common cat's-ear, greater plantain and rosebay willowherb (*Chamerion augustifolium*) have grown in stands around this area. Further south of this is a tanker haulage depot which is hard standing with some industrial buildings.

Willoway Caravan Park lies within the next section, it is surrounded by poor semi-improved grassland and many of the caravans have small areas of planted gardens. Its western boundary is bordered by a Leyland Cypress hedge. The park has similar species to the rest of the poor semi-improved grassland with the addition of large-flowered evening primrose (*Oenothera glazioviana*), false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), sun spurge (*Euphorbia helioscopia*) and spotted medic (*Medicago arabica*). The hard standing to the rear of the Caravan Park is used as a car park and has dog rose, bramble, cotoneaster, dame's violet (*Hesperis matronalis*), perennial sow thistle (*Sonchus arvensis*) and goldenrod (*Solidago virgaurea*) in a large scrub patch in the middle and some mature grey poplars (*Populus x canescens*) to the east side. The eastern boundary has a species-poor hedge which is a mix of hawthorn, willow (*Salix cinerea*), privet (*Ligustrum* sp.), blackthorn and English oak.

Beside the Caravan Park is an area of bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) with a large amount of scattered scrub, including broom, hawthorn, gorse, elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and hawthorn. There are some areas of common nettle within the bracken. There are some buildings and an area of amenity grassland to the south of the bracken. This section has typical species such as perennial rye grass, white clover, daisy (*Bellis perennis*), dandelion, dove's-foot crane's-bill and some viper's bugloss (*Echium vulgare*).

East of the bracken and scrub is a large field with short mown poor semi-improved grassland with species similar to the rest of the site. A similar hedge to that found in Willoway Caravan Park surrounds this field.

The most easterly section is a smaller region in the north, which is heavily dominated by bracken with some scattered common nettle, hawthorn, elder and broom.

Avifauna:

The survey was undertaken at a sub-optimal time of year for this group. The areas of dense scrub provide good foraging, nesting and roosting opportunities for a range of common bird species. Wood pigeon and chaffinch were seen on site, but the gorse scrub would attract Priority species such as linnet.

Invertebrates:

This site is excellent for invertebrates with the scrub and long grassland providing a range of habitats. A number of spiders and crickets were seen on site, along with some butterflies, including small heath (Priority species), large white, small copper and small tortoiseshell.

Herpetofauna:

Although none were seen during the survey, the long grass provides a good habitat for reptiles such as common lizard and grass snake, and can provide a good hibernation site if left uncut through the winter. The areas of scrub offer shelter and hibernation opportunities also. Common Lizard and grass snake have been recorded on Red Lodge Warren County Wildlife Site to the north (Epcad, 2001), so these species are highly likely to be present on this site if the habitat is suitable. This site is sub-optimal for amphibians.

Mammals:

There are some mature trees on site with cracks and crevices which have potential to support roosting bats.

The large expanse of short mown grassland provides good foraging habitat for hedgehogs and the scrub provides excellent hibernation opportunities.

Evidence of fox, rabbit and hedgehog droppings seen during the survey. Molehills were also seen throughout the northern section of the site.

Common species of small mammal such as wood mice and bank voles will be present in the scrubby areas. Common deer such as muntjac may also be present.

Comments and recommendations:

Prior to any development proposals being submitted, including any vegetation clearance on this site, it is recommended that the following surveys are undertaken:

A reptile survey should be undertaken and a mitigation plan drawn up as appropriate.

Assessment of potential roost features for bats in mature trees and assessment of the value of the habitat to foraging bats.

Further surveys, such as for invertebrates and breeding birds are also recommended.

Potential impacts on hedgehogs must also be taken into consideration during any scrub removal. Notwithstanding the above, any scrub removal needs to take place outside 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:

Epcad: Ecology and Landscape Planning. (2001). Land at Red Lodge. Results of Further Survey Work and an Assessment of the Potential Mitigation Opportunities at Red Lodge and Red Lodge Warren County Wildlife Sites.