

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Primrose Nature Reserve Proposed Footpath

Clitheroe, Lancashire

April 2026

Prepared for: Primrose Community Nature Trust

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- On 26th February 2026 and 17th April 2026 site visits were undertaken to inform a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal on land within Primrose Nature Reserve, Clitheroe.
- The survey site comprises a stretch of land on the northwest side of Mealey Brook as it passes through Primrose Nature Reserve and into school grounds. The footprint of the proposed footpath encompasses a small section of artificially unvegetated unsealed surface and modified grassland within the school grounds, passes through a wall and then runs through an open area of dense bramble scrub and a small portion of lowland mixed deciduous woodland to meet the existing footpath.

Habitat – Primrose Lodge Biological Heritage Site

- Primrose Nature Reserve is designated Primrose Lodge Biological Heritage Site (BHS). The proposals will impact an area of bramble scrub within the BHS, avoiding direct impact upon the woodland or plant species of conservation interest. The proposals are not expected to have any negative impact upon the conservation status and integrity of the BHS.
- The proposals will include enhancement of the scrub and the planting of trees as part of Biodiversity Net Gain requirements.

Ecological constraints relate to the following:

Primrose Lodge Woodland and Flora

- Reasonable avoidance measures will be employed to reduce the impact upon flora of interest during works.

Mearley Brook

- Mearley Brook runs through Primrose Nature Reserve. The proposed works will run through approximately 10m of the riparian zone of the watercourse. Suitable precautions must be undertaken to prevent run-off, siltation or accidental pollutant of the watercourse.

Otter and Water Vole

- Otter and water vole are known to be present in the locality and may pass along Mearley Brook. Reasonable avoidance measures are recommended to take into consideration this species.

Bats

- The possibility that itinerant bats may roost in wider stone wall between the school and nature reserve cannot be ruled out. Reasonable avoidance measures during works are proposed to reduce the potential impact upon bats to negligible.

Birds

- Bird will nest in scrub and trees on site in the summer months. Avoidance measures are proposed to minimise the risk of disturbance during works.

Avoidance mitigation for other species

- Reasonable avoidance measures are recommended to take into consideration the potential presence in



the locality of common toad, common reptiles and hedgehog.

Non-native invasive species

- Measures during works must be undertaken to minimise the risk of spread of invasive non-native species Himalayan balsam. Enhancement of Mearley Brook will be undertaken as part of the Biodiversity Net Gain requirements through management of the Himalayan balsam.

Enhancement

- The proposals provide the opportunity to enhance the bramble scrub for wildlife as part of Biodiversity Net Gain by increasing structural and species heterogeneity.

Verity Welster

Ecology and Protected Species Consultancy



1 Introduction

1.1 Application Site

- 1.1.1. This report details a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of land within Primrose Nature Reserve, Clitheroe. Ordnance Survey grid reference (centre of site): SD74094123.
- 1.1.2. Primrose Community Nature Trust commissioned Verity Webster Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal to inform the planning application.

1.2 Objectives

- 1.2.1 The objectives of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal are to determine:
 - The potential for protected species and/or habitats of importance within and surrounding the site.
 - The presence of any designated sites within the surrounding area, or if the site is designated.
 - How the proposed works might impact protected species and/or habitats of importance.
 - How the proposed works might impact designated sites within the surrounding area.
 - How any impacts might be avoided, mitigated and/or ameliorated, including recommendations for further survey work if required.
 - Potential for enhancement of the site for protected species, habitats of conservation interest and overall biodiversity.

1.3 Proposals

- 1.3.1 The proposals comprise the construction of a footpath running from St James' Church of England Primary School to an existing footpath within Primrose Nature Reserve.

1.4 Ecologist

- 1.4.1 The Ecological Assessment was undertaken by Verity Webster. Verity is a Chartered Ecologist and a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.
- 1.4.2 Verity has worked as an ecological consultant for over 19 years. She has undertaken Ecological Assessments and protected species surveys for a large variety of projects and schemes, producing the required impact assessment and subsequent mitigation schemes and method statements when necessary. Verity has a Class 2 bat licence, Class 1 great crested newt licence and Botanical Skills FISC Level 4, suitable for NVC survey.



2 Site Location and Description

2.1 Site Location

- 2.1.1 The survey site is located within Primrose Nature Reserve, which is situated in the centre of Clitheroe, and a small portion of St James' Church of England Primary School.
- 2.1.2 Mearley Brook runs north to south through the reserve, which is predominantly semi-natural and wet woodland, stalling in lodge lake to the south before running down a weir and out into the countryside to the south of the town.
- 2.1.3 The nature reserve is surrounded by residential housing to the east and west. Woone Lane runs along the northwest boundary. St James' Church of England Primary School lies at the northern end. Mearley Brook runs south through the school grounds to the north of the reserve. See Figures 1, 2 and 3.

2.2 Site Description

- 2.2.1 The survey site comprises a stretch of land on the northwest side of Mealey Brook as it passes through Primrose Nature Reserve. The footpath footprint encompasses a small section of artificially unvegetated unsealed surface and modified grassland within the school grounds, passes through a wall and then runs through an open area of dense bramble scrub and a small portion of lowland mixed deciduous woodland to meet the existing footpath. The footpath length is approximately 95m.
- 2.2.2 For the full habitat description, refer to Section 6.1.



Figure 1: Ordnance survey map showing the location of the proposed development site.





Figure 2: Aerial image showing the proposed development site and immediate surroundings





Figure 3: The Survey Site in relation to the nearby Primrose Lodge Biological Heritage Site





3 Legislation

Relevant legislation is listed here. For full details, refer to Appendix A.

3.1 Bats

3.1.1 All UK bats receive full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and are also protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the Habitats Regs).

3.1.2 This makes it an offence to:

- Capture, injure or kill any bat,
- Disturb a bat of any species,
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a bat (ie. The roost)
- Possess any bat, or part of a bat
- Offer for sale or trade any bat, or part of a bat

3.2 Badger

3.2.1 Under the Badger Act 1992, it is an offence to:

- Take, injure or kill a badger, or attempt to do so
- Cruelly ill-treat a badger
- Interfere with a badger sett including:
 - Damaging a badger sett or any part of it
 - Destroying a sett
 - Obstructing access to, or entry to a sett
 - Causing a dog to enter a sett; or
 - Disturbing a badger whilst it is occupying a sett.

3.3 Reptiles

3.3.1 Smooth snake and sand lizard receive full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and are also protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the Habitats Regs).

3.3.2 This makes it an offence to:

- Capture, injure or kill one of these species,
- Disturb these species,
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of these species.
- Possess one of these species, or part of one
- Offer for sale or trade one of these species, or part of one

3.3.3 Common lizard, adder, grass snake and slow-worm are partially protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This makes it an offence to:

- Kill or injure one of these species.
- Offer for sale or trade one of these species, or part of these animals.

3.4 Amphibians

3.4.1 Great crested newts receive full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and are also protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (the Habitats Regs).

3.4.2 This makes it an offence to:

- Capture, injure or kill one of these species,
- Disturb these species,



- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of these species.
- Possess a great crested newt, or part of this animal
- Offer for sale or trade a great crested newt, or part of this animal.

3.4.3 Common lizard, adder, grass snake and slow-worm are partially protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This makes it an offence to:

- Kill or injure one of these species.
- Offer for sale or trade one of these species, or part of these animals.

3.4.4 Common toad, common frog, palmate newt and smooth newt are protected from sale or trade only.

3.5 Barn Owl

3.5.1 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 consolidates and amends existing national legislation to implement the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds (Birds Directive) in Great Britain (NB Council Directive 79/409/EEC has now been replaced by Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (codified version)).

3.5.2 The Act makes it an offence (with exception to species listed in Schedule 2) to intentionally:

- kill, injure, or take any wild bird,
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built (also [take, damage or destroy the nest of a wild bird included in Schedule ZA1] under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006), or
- take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

Schedule 1 Birds

3.5.3 In addition to the above, special penalties are available for offences related to birds listed on Schedule 1. Barn owl is included on this schedule.

3.5.4 It is an offence to disturb any Schedule 1 bird at the nest, or to disturb their dependent young.

3.6 Section 41 Habitats and Species of Principal Importance

3.6.1 Section 41 Habitats and Species of Principal Importance (NERC Act 2006) are a material consideration for planners. The list is derived from the UK Biodiversity Action Plan list and supports species and habitats of conservation concern.

3.6.2 Species relevant to this report include hedgehog and common toad.

3.7 Designated Sites

3.7.1 Sites of conservation interest can be designated on a statutory or non-statutory basis.

3.7.2 Statutory sites can be designated under UK legislation (the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981), European Law (the Habitats Regulations 2017) or International law (Ramsar Convention).

3.7.3 Non-statutory sites can be designated by the Local Planning Authority, and different counties have different ways of designating local wildlife sites. Examples are Local Wildlife Sites and Biological Heritage Sites.



3.8 Planning Policy and Legislation

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 3.8.1 In England, biodiversity net gain is required under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021). This is referred to as biodiversity net gain in Planning Practice Guidance to distinguish it from other or more general biodiversity gains.
- 3.8.2 Under the statutory framework for biodiversity net gain, every grant of planning permission is deemed to have been granted subject to a general biodiversity gain condition to secure the biodiversity gain objective. This objective is to deliver at least a 10% increase in relation to the pre-development biodiversity value of the development granted permission. This increase can be achieved through onsite biodiversity gains, registered offsite biodiversity gains or statutory biodiversity credits (Gov.Uk Biodiversity Net Gain, 2023).

The NERC Act, 2006

- 3.8.3 Under the NERC Act 2006, planning authorities are obliged to make sure that they have all the information on the presence of protected species on site before they make a decision on the planning permission.
- 3.8.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021) encourages Local Planning Authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity. This was updated in December 2023.

Chapter 15, Para 180 of NPPF states: *"The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- a) **protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils...**
- d) **minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures".**

Para 181 states: *"Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries."*

Para 185 identifies that plans should do the following to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity:

- a) **"Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and**
- b) **Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and peruse opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity."**

Para 186 states that *"when determining planning applications, local authorities should apply the following principles:*

- a) **if significant harm to biodiversity from a development cannot be avoided...,adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort compensated for, then planning permission should be refused"**

- 3.8.5 The local planning authority has a responsibility, therefore, to obtain all information regarding the potential for protected species on a site prior to making a decision about a proposal.



4 Survey Methodology

4.1 Desk Study

4.1.1 The following data sources used to establish background information about protected species and their likely presence in the locality:

- Magic Map, Natural England (2018)
- Bing Maps (2019)
- Biological Records Data from Lancashire Environment Records Network (LERN) (2026)
- Botanical data from Primrose Community Nature Trust (2021)

4.1.2 Online mapping facilities, including MAGIC (Defra 2015), Google earth (for aerial mapping) and Ordnance Survey maps for the area were consulted to assess the site in relation to the surrounding landscape and any statutory and non-statutory designated sites.

4.1.3 Records data from LERN includes records of protected species and habitats of conservation interest within 2km of the survey site.

4.1.4 Botanical data from the Primrose Community Nature Trust include records of plant species recorded on site from 1992, 1995, 2003, 2004, 2006, 2008, 2011, 2012 and 2021.

4.2 Site Survey

4.2.1 The initial survey site visit was undertaken in daylight on 26th February 2026, and during the visits the habitat was assessed for potential for protected species. The surveyor searched for signs of the presence of protected species where appropriate, including pathways, burrows / nests / resting places, scratch markings, footprints and droppings etc. The presence of all animals and birds, if seen or heard, was recorded.

4.2.2 Habitats on site were assessed and described in accordance with UK Hab Classification (UK Hab Ltd, 2023) and a list of conspicuous species recorded. Given that the survey was undertaken in late-February, species habitat data available from the Primrose Community Nature Trust and Biological Heritage Site assessments from 2021 was also used to inform the assessment.

4.2.3 Consideration is also given to the surrounding landscape with respect to protected species including badger, bats, birds, amphibians and reptiles.

4.2.4 A subsequent visit was undertaken on 17th April 2026, specifically to assess the off-site area of the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment and a walk-over of the whole site was undertaken.

Ground Level Tree Assessment (bats)

4.0.1 As part of the daytime bat walkover a ground level assessment of the trees to record Potential Roost Features (PRFs) was undertaken if the trees have been identified as likely to be impacted by the proposals. This work was undertaken following the latest good practice guidance (Collins, 2023).



4.0.2 On 26th February 2026 trees within the site and around the site boundary were inspected to determine the presence of Potential Roost Features (PRFs) for bats.

4.0.3 Potential Roost Features (PRFs) include features created as a result of disease and decay, damage or association:

Damage PRFs:

- Branch scars and rips
- Lightening strikes
- Subsidence
- Cracks
- Shearing cracks
- Horizontal cracks and splits such as hazard beams
- Welds
- Desiccation
- Fissures
- Frost cracks
- Flaking or partially-detached bark

Disease and Decay PRFs

- Rot holes, including butt-rot
- Woodpecker holes
- Cankers with cavities
- Knot holes
- Squirrel holes
- Wounds
- Compression forks

Association PRFs

- Holes between double-leaders
- Fluting
- Dense ivy

Other:

- Bird, bat or dormouse boxes.

Suitability of trees for bats

4.0.4 Trees were assessed as having suitability for bats as follows:

- **None:** Lack any Potential Roost Features (PRFs) in tree or highly unlikely to be any. Precautionary methods of work may be required prior to felling / tree works.
- **FAR (Further Assessment Required):** Further assessment required to establish if



PRFs are present in the tree.

- **PRF (Potential Roost Feature):** A tree with at least one PRF present.

Initial categorisation of Potential Roost Features

4.0.5 Potential Roost Features may be categorised as follows, although, on the basis of a ground level tree assessment, this may be an estimate only:

- **PRF-I:** PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
- **PRF-M:** PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

Potential Roost Feature Survey

4.0.6 If considered subject to direct or indirect impact by the proposals, PRFs present, further survey work may be necessary to inspect the PRFs with the use of an endoscope (Ridgid SeeSnake Inspection Camera CA-150). The inspection would assess the following factors:

- Presence of bats
- Presence of droppings or odour
- The dust / debris present
- Whether the interior is smooth or rough, damp, wet etc.
- Presence of association species (woodlice and dusky slug)

4.0.7 As a result of the inspection, the PRFs are categorised as to whether or not the features were likely to be, or are confirmed bat roosts or not.

4.0.8 Further survey is recommended depending upon the findings.

Categorisation of Potential Roost Features

4.0.9 Potential Roost Features were assessed as follows:

- **Unsuitable** – feature is not suitable for roosting bats.
- **Unlikely to be a roost** – features does not provide factors often favoured by bats. Very unlikely to be a roost. Precautionary method of work during felling may be required
- **Possible roost** – Conditions of the PRF suggest that it may be suitable, but there are no signs to confirm this. Further survey work may be required to determine whether the site is a roost. Precautionary method of work during felling will be necessary, including a pre-check of any features for bats and signs of bats
- **Confirmed roost** – Condition of the PRF or signs present confirm or strongly suggest



the feature is a roost. Further survey work will be necessary. It would be a requirement to obtain an European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licence from Natural England prior to works being undertaken. Appropriate mitigation will be necessary.

4.3 Survey Limitations

- 4.3.1 The initial survey work was undertaken in late-February 2026. At this time of year bats will be occupying winter hibernation sites. Evidence of bats using external features of structures is unlikely to be present, but inside structures evidence is more likely to be found if bats are using the interior of the structure with regularity and evidence is protected from the weather.
- 4.3.2 Species such as reptiles and amphibians will not be active, although an assessment of the likelihood of presence is based upon the habitat present and not sightings of animals.
- 4.3.3 A proportion of higher plants are visible in late-February, and the woodland flora was emerging. A subsequent visit was undertaken in mid-April 2026, specifically to assess the off-site area for Biodiversity Net Gain. However, because species are more conspicuous or only present at some times of the year, some species are likely to have been missed. The species list constructed is not comprehensive. Data from a survey work previously undertaken at the site from the Primrose Community Nature Trust was used to further inform the categorisation of habitats present. Where categorisation is not certain this is indicated and taken into consideration. The data is considered sufficient to inform the appropriate habitat categorisation and recommendations for mitigation in this case given the potential impacts and scope of works.

5 Findings: Surrounding Designated Sites

- 5.0.1 Sites of conservation interest can be designated on a statutory or non-statutory basis.
- 5.0.2 The protection over European designated sites (or Natura 2000) sites and Ramsar sites require any potential direct and indirect impacts are assessed within at least a 5km radius of the survey site.
- 5.0.3 The protection over UK statutory sites (Sites of Special Scientific Interest and Local Nature Reserves) requires that any potential direct and indirect impacts from a development are



assessed within at least a 2km radius of the survey site.

- 5.0.4 Any potential direct or indirect impacts upon non-statutory sites are assessed within 1km of the survey site.

5.1 Statutory Sites

- 5.1.1 There are no EU statutory designated sites within 5km. There are two UK statutory designated site within 2km:

- **Salthill Quarry Local Nature Reserve (LNR).** This site lies approximately 1.5km to the northeast and comprises calcareous grassland. Mearley Brook runs close to the south boundary of the site. The site is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for geological reasons.
- **Cross Hill Quarry LNR.** This site is located approximately 1.8km to the north of the survey site. The site supports grassland, scrub and woodland.

5.2 Non-Statutory Designated Sites

- 5.2.1 There are two Biological Heritage Sites within 1km;

- **Clitheroe Castle Knoll BHS** located approximately 300m to the north of the site. This site comprises limestone grassland and scrub.
- **Primrose Lodge BHS, within which lies the survey site.**

Primrose Lodge Biological Heritage site

- 5.2.2 Primrose Lodge comprises an area of semi-natural broadleaved woodland through which Mearley Brook runs to a lodge, before travelling south. The site is the lodge of the former Primrose Print Works.
- 5.2.3 The northern portion of the site comprises semi-natural woodland and a side channel aside the brook with an old sluice system.
- 5.2.4 Further south in the reserve, whilst the valley sides are dryer, there is an extensive area of wet woodland dominated by alder and willow.

5.3 Assessment of Impact

- 5.3.1 The survey site is significantly distanced from Salthill Quarry LNR, Cross Hill Quarry LNR and Clitheroe Castle Knoll BHS that any direct or indirect impacts are considered negligible. In addition, the habitat within the survey site is dissimilar to that found within these designated areas and no functional biological link is considered likely.
- 5.3.2 With regard to Primrose Lodge BHS, potential impacts are considered in relation to the associated interest features (habitats). Impacts that could result in a potential significant impact



upon interest features are alterations in hydrology, water pollution and siltation. These impacts are unlikely, however, given the low impact of the proposals. The pathway will avoid in a large part the riparian zone (10m buffer) aside Mearley Brook. However, there will be some minor loss of woodland ground flora and scrub. Impacts to the flora and associated fauna are considered within the appropriate sections below.

- 5.3.3 Avoidance mitigation will be necessary to minimise the risk of accidental pollution or siltation of Mearley Brook.
- 5.3.4 Biodiversity Net Gain requires compensation for the impact of the works within the riparian zone of the brook, which will be undertaken as part of the proposals.

Statutory Site Designations

Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) A Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is the land notified as an SSSI under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), as amended. SSSI are designated for wildlife and natural features (including geological features) in England. They support characteristic, rare and endangered species, habitats and natural features.

Local Nature Reserve (LNR) Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are a statutory designation made under Section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 by principal local authorities. LNRs are areas of natural space for people and wildlife. They can be designated on the basis of wildlife and biodiversity, or for geological reasons.

Non-statutory Site Designations

Biological Heritage Sites (BHS) Biological Heritage Sites in Lancashire are identified within the county using a set of published guidelines. Their selection is based on the most important, distinctive and threatened species and habitats within a national, regional and local context. Local Wildlife Sites are locally valuable areas and are often corridors for wildlife forming key components of ecological networks. They are non-statutory designations, but are a material consideration within the planning process.



6 Findings: Habitat Survey

6.1 Habitat Assessment

Data Search

- 6.1.2 The data from LERN include records of a single plant species listed on Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, bluebell (*Hyacinthoides non-scripta*). The data include records of two Species of Principal Importance under the NERC Act, 2006; cornflower (*Centaurea cyanus*) and darnel (*Lolium temulentum*).
- 6.1.3 Bluebell is present within Primrose Nature Reserve. Cornflower is not expected as it is a cornfield annual. Darnel, a species of waste ground, has not previously. Been recorded onsite.
- 6.1.4 The data also include 23 species on the Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan, 14 of which are also Biological Heritage Site Species. The majority of these records are over 1km from the survey site, with just one species recorded within 500m; deadly nightshade (*Atropa belladonna*). This species has not been recorded within Primrose Nature Reserve.
- 6.1.5 Of the species previously recorded in Primrose Nature Reserve, one Green figwort (*Scrophularia umbrosa*), is a nationally scarce species in the Ribble Valley. This species has been in the south of the site.

Survey Site

- 6.1.6 The survey site supports artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface and modified grassland within the school grounds. There are rural trees located along the boundary wall. Across the wall to the south there is lowland mixed deciduous woodland that transitions into wet woodland on the banks of Mearley Brook. To the southwest there is an extensive area of bramble scrub with some tall forb. Refer to Figure 4.
- 6.1.7 The UK Habitat classifications are as follows:
- **w1f7 Other lowland mixed deciduous woodland – Priority Habitat**
 - **w1d 524 Wet woodland; ; non-native invasive species – Priority Habitat**
 - **h3d 16 Bramble scrub with tall forb**
 - **g4 108 Modified grassland; regularly mown**
 - **r2b 47 Other rivers and streams; natural**
 - **g4 200 Rural trees**



- **u1f Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface**
- **u1b6 Developed land; sealed surface**
- **u1e 853 Built liner feature; mortared wall**
- **g4 16 Tall forb**

Habitat descriptions

w1f7 Other lowland mixed deciduous woodland – Priority Habitat

- 6.1.8 The woodland within the survey are to the north of Primrose Lodge BHS supports ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) with an understorey of hazel (*Corylus avellana*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*).
- 6.1.9 The ground flora comprises emergent common bistort (*Persicaria bistorta*), ransoms (*Allium ursinum*), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), lesser celandine (*Ranunculus ficaria*), in areas forming dense ground cover, dandelion (*Taraxacum* agg.), woodruff (*Galium odoratum*) and wood avens (*Geum urbanum*) with occasional lords and ladies (*Arum maculatum*). The mosses *Eurhynchium praelongum* and *Hypnum cupressiforme* agg. are present on the woodland floor. Grasses comprise Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and cock's-foot grass (*Dactylus glomerata*), which are more abundant at the woodland edge and where there are glades.
- 6.1.10 Although the woodland supports sycamore, a species considered non-native within the Biodiversity Net Gain guidance, the woodland has good structure and variety in the species composition of the canopy layer and ground flora, which suggests it is classified as lowland broadleaved woodland, a priority habitat.
- 6.1.11 The strip along the brook bank can be classified as w1a wet woodland to ensure the transition between the mixed deciduous woodland and the brook.
- 6.1.12 This habitat supports alder transition with pendulous sedge, brook bank bryophytes and more permanently mesic ground. Pendulous sedge (*Carex pendula*) is conspicuous in large tufts along the banks of the brook. Shining cranesbill (*Geranium lucidum*) was also present at the water edge near the weir. The moss *Thamnobryum alopecurum* forms tufts on the banks of the brook. At the time of survey seedlings of the non-native invasive species Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens*



Wet woodland and other lowland mixed deciduous woodland along Mearley Brook



grandulifera) were starting to emerge.

- 6.1.13 There is a small stand of reed canary (*Phalaris arundinacea*) grass on the edge of the bank where the ground is wetter (w1d 16).

h3d Bramble scrub

- 6.1.14 The western boundary of the site is composed of dense bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) scrub.

g4 108 Modified grassland; regularly mown

- 6.1.15 This stand of grassland is present in the school grounds. It is composed of sparse rye grass (*Lolium perenne*) and cock's-foot grass with dandelion (*Taraxacum* agg.), dock (*Rumex* sp.) and daisy (*Bellis perennis*).



Bramble scrub

g4 200 Rural trees

- 6.1.16 Individual rural trees are present in the school grounds along the east and south school boundary. These comprise ash along the western boundary and hazel along the southern boundary. There is a single field maple (*Acer campestre*) in the corner. All these trees are immature or semi-mature.

u1f Artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface

- 6.1.17 This comprises bare ground and woodchip present in the school grounds.

g4 16 Tall forb

- 6.1.18 The Off-Site habitat comprises an approx. 5m wide 79m length of riparian bankside habitat which is composed of tall forb with some grasses and bramble.



Small trees in the school grounds; also showing artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface, mown modified grassland and the mortared stone wall.



u1b6 Developed land; sealed surface

6.1.19 This comprises the existing footpath and bridge.

u1e 853 Built linear feature; mortared wall

6.1.20 The wall is a high stone wall. Maidenhair spleenwort (*Asplenium trichomanes*) is present in the cracks and crevices.

Invasive non-native species

6.1.21 Himalayan balsam is present along Mearley Brook and in the adjacent woodland.

6.1.22 Measures to control and prevent the spread of these non-native species must be undertaken during works.



The tall forb habitat in the Off-Site area

Assessment

6.1.23 Within the survey area, the other lowland mixed deciduous woodland and wet woodland are classified as Priority Habitats.

6.1.24 There will be no direct impacts on these areas of woodland. The 10m stretch in the riparian zone of Mearley Brook that will be impacted comprises bramble scrub with tall forb. The small portion of habitat close to the wall of the school classified as lowland mixed deciduous woodland comprises an open area grassland within the canopy of the woodland.

6.1.25 The majority of the work will be undertaken in an area of bramble scrub.

6.1.26 Of the individual plant species, bluebell is present within the BHS and individuals of this species may be impacted by the proposals. However, the loss of a small number of individual plants is considered very unlikely to impact the long-term viability of the population in the area.

6.1.27 The highest density of green figwort is known to exist to the south of the reserve. The location of the pathway within the area of dense bramble scrub, will minimise the risk of impact upon green figwort, including and potential future colonisation.

6.1.28 Reasonable avoidance measures are proposed during works to minimise the impact upon individual plants and habitat.

6.1.29 The loss of bramble scrub is not considered significant to flora in the locality. The proposals provide the opportunity to enhance this area of homogenous habitat adjacent to the woodland long-term to create a more varied mosaic of mixed scrub with glades and standard trees.



The area of grassland adjacent to the bramble scrub under the tree canopy close to the stone wall dividing the school from the nature reserve

Figure 4: The Survey Site – UK Habitat Classification Plan



7 Findings: Protected Species

Mammals

7.1 Bats

Potential for Bats

- 7.1.1 At a landscape level, the survey site including mixed deciduous woodland, wet woodland and waterway is very good for bats. The wider landscape offers opportunities for roosting bats in housing and extensive countryside beyond Clitheroe town. Refer to Figure 2.
- 7.1.2 A mix of habitat types will support a variety of bat species including widespread species such as common and soprano pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* respectively). Species that favour open habitats such as Leisler's (*Nyctalus leisleri*) and noctule bat (*Nyctalus noctula*) would also be expected, especially as these bats travel some distance to forage. Species that favour wooded habitat, such as brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*), whiskered bat (*Myotis mystacinus*) and Brandt's bat (*Myotis brandtii*) may also be present.
- 7.1.3 Water sources in particular are of high value to bats, especially for females when giving birth. The waterways, as linear features in the landscape will also act as habitat corridors, facilitating the movement of bats through the landscape.

Data Search

- 7.1.4 Data from LERN includes records of four bat species within 2km of the survey site:
- Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)
 - Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)
 - *Myotis* bat species
 - Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*)
- 7.1.5 There are records for eight bat roosts within 2km and three bat roosts (all pipistrelle species) within 1km of the survey site. There are no records of a roost within the survey site.



The Conservation Status of Bats in the Area

7.1.6 The conservation status of bats in the area is shown in Table 1.

Table 1: The Conservation Status of Bats in the area at a Local, County and Regional Level

Species	Local	County	Regional
<i>Common pipistrelle</i>	Likely to be common in the area. There are records of this species in the area (10km).	Common and widespread Frequently recorded.	Common and widespread Frequently recorded across the Northwest
<i>Soprano pipistrelle</i>	Likely to be present due to the presence of riparian habitat.	Widespread. Frequently recorded.	Common and widespread Frequently recorded across the Northwest
<i>Nathusius's pipistrelle</i>	Likely to be rare in the area.	Infrequently recorded, but this may be due to low survey effort. Not yet recorded breeding in the county.	Rare across the northwest. A migratory species.
<i>Brown long-eared bat</i>	Likely to be in the area. There is a recent record of this species within 10km of the site.	Common and widespread Frequently recorded.	Common and widespread Frequently recorded across the Northwest.
<i>Natterer's bat</i>	Likely to be in the area, although this species favours woodland habitat, which is infrequent in the landscape.	Frequently recorded	Widespread and scattered across the Northwest.
<i>Noctule</i>	Present	Widespread and frequently recorded.	Common and widespread. Frequently recorded in the Northwest.
<i>Whiskered bat</i>	Present but likely rare	Present	Widespread.
<i>Brandt's bat</i>	Rare / absent	Present	Widespread.
<i>Alcathoe's bat</i>	Unknown	Unknown	Widespread. Likely under-recorded.
<i>Daubenton's</i>	Presence is likely due to the riparian habitat present.	Widespread, frequently recorded near water.	Widespread
<i>Serotine</i>	Rare / absent	Unknown	Restricted to south and southwest Britain, rarely recorded in the northwest.
<i>Leislars</i>	Rare	Unknown	Rare, but widespread in Britain. Present in the northwest.
<i>Barbastelle</i>	Unlikely to be present in the area. This species is a woodland-specialist and there is a lack of this habitat present.	Unknown	Present south of a line from North Wales to the Wash.



Preliminary Roost Assessment

The Bridge

- 7.1.7 The stone wall dividing Primrose Nature Reserve from the school has negligible suitability for roosting bats.
- 7.1.8 Constructed of block stone, there are several small crevices in the wider structure which may provide limited potential roosting opportunities, but these are unlikely to offer favourable roost sites due to the limited internal space and the shaded location.
- 7.1.9 Only a small section of the stone wall will be removed where there are no potentially suitable crevices. The majority of the wall will not be directly impacted by the proposals.
- 7.1.10 Reasonable avoidance measures are proposed to reduce to negligible the risk of harm to itinerant bats within the wall.

Ground Level Tree Assessment

- 7.1.11 The trees on site identified for removal were inspected from the ground for potential roost features.
- 7.1.12 The trees required for removal are immature or semi-mature and lack features such as split limbs, woodpecker holes, knot holes, crevices and rot holes that might provide potential roost features.
- 7.1.13 For this reason, they are considered to have no suitability for bats.



Habitat for foraging and commuting bats.

- 7.1.14 The woodland, scrub trees and brook on site provide very good habitat for foraging bats, which are expected to be present. The woodland edge, tree line and brook may also act as a favourable habitat corridor for commuting bats.
- 7.1.15 The proposals to remove some bramble scrub is considered unlikely to be of significance to foraging bats in the locality. As part of the proposals the scrub on site will be enhanced by increasing species richness and structural heterogeneity which will be of benefit to bats among other wildlife long-term.
- 7.1.16 The loss of the trees in the school grounds will result in the loss of a short stretch of linear habitat, but the continuity of the boundary wall ensures that structurally the linear feature will remain. This alteration is considered unlikely to be of significance to commuting bats in the locality.
- 7.1.17 **No further survey work or mitigation is considered necessary.**

7.2 Badger

Data Search

- 7.2.1 Data from LERN includes a single record of badger (*Meles meles*) within 2km of the survey site.

Survey and Assessment

- 7.2.2 Primrose Nature Reserve has potential for badger, but there have been no records of this species. The landscape beyond Clitheroe town centre encompassing arable land, pasture, tree lines and small copses of trees has high suitability for badger, but this is isolated from the nature reserve by housing and roads.
- 7.2.3 No evidence of the presence of badger (setts, latrines, pathways, hairs) was found on site during the survey.
- 7.2.4 This species is not expected on site and no further survey work or mitigation is recommended.



7.3 Otter

Data Search

- 7.3.1 Data from LERN includes records of otter (*Lutra lutra*) within 500m of the survey site.

Survey and Assessment

- 7.3.2 The banks of Mearley Brook within the survey area are low, but provide opportunities below tree roots and within dense bank cover for holts or couches (otter resting places). The lodge to the south of the reservoir is also a good place for otter to forage. Otter may occupy the banks in this area as well as using the brook as a habitat corridor.
- 7.3.3 The proposed works will not directly impact the banks of the brook and will only impact the riparian zone in an approx. 10m stretch.
- 7.3.4 Although no otter holts or couches are expected, otter may pass through the site during works and so precautions must be undertaken to ensure no harm, including safe storage of materials and machinery and putting planks in deep holes overnight.

7.4 Water vole

Data Search

- 7.4.1 Data from LERN include any records of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) within Primrose Nature Reserve.

Survey and Assessment

- 7.4.2 The banks of the brook within the survey site are low and, at the time of survey, support relatively little cover such as grasses and rushes. Water vole favour watercourses with dense bank-side vegetation of reeds, rushes and grasses upon which to feed and provide cover. The brook banks within the wooded area may not provide sufficient cover, although of course it will be more dense in the spring and summer months.
- 7.4.3 The lodge, with areas of rush and reed, provides ideal habitat for water vole, which are likely of course to move up and downstream.
- 7.4.4 The proposed works will not directly impact the banks of the brook and will only impact the riparian zone in an approx. 10m stretch. The works in this area are temporary. No evidence of water vole, including droppings or burrows were found during the survey. For this reason, any impact upon water vole is considered likely to be negligible.
- 7.4.5 However, reasonable avoidance measures are proposed to avoid unnecessary negative impacts upon any small mammals utilising the banks of the brook



7.5 Hedgehog

Data Search

- 7.5.1 Data from LERN include numerous records of hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) within 500m of the survey site.

Survey and Assessment

- 7.5.2 Hedgehog are a Species of Principal Importance under the NERC Act, 2006 (also known as UK Biodiversity Action Plan species).
- 7.5.3 The survey site, supporting areas of scrub and woodland is very likely to support hedgehog.
- 7.5.4 **The proposals are unlikely to have a significant negative impact upon populations of this species, but since this species is expected in the area, precautionary measures to ensure the protection of hedgehog during works are proposed.**

7.6 Reptiles

Data Search

- 7.6.1 The data from LERN do not include any recent (within the last 100 years) records of reptiles within 2km of the survey site.

Survey and Assessment

- 7.6.2 The records for reptiles in the northwest are generally low. Reptiles are of very low distribution and found at low density even in ideal habitats such as rough grassland with scrub.
- 7.6.3 The habitat within Primrose Nature Reserve and immediately adjacent to the west of the site, comprising dense scrub with tall forb, has some limited suitability for grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*), which is a mobile species that favour waterbodies in which to feed.
- 7.6.4 The proposed works are unlikely to have any significant negative impact upon reptiles, but there is potential for individuals to be harmed as a result.
- 7.6.5 **Reasonable avoidance measures are recommended to minimise the risk of harm to common reptiles.**



7.7 Amphibians

Great crested newt

Data Search

- 7.7.1 The data from LERN does not include any records of amphibians including great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) within 2km of the survey site.

Survey and Assessment

- 7.7.2 Great crested newt, which have the highest protection of all amphibians under UK and EU law, favour still water bodies, such as ponds with good vegetation. They breed in ponds, but spend much of the year terrestrially, within habitat such as rough grassland and woodland, which provides good foraging and hibernacula. Great crested newts are known to travel, usually, within a 250m radius of breeding ponds, but can travel up to 500m.
- 7.7.3 Flowing watercourses are unfavourable for great crested newt. Although the lodge provides an area of still water, the density of waterfowl and fish present render the waterbody to be unsuitable for this species.
- 7.7.4 The terrestrial habitat within and surrounding the survey site is potentially suitable for this species, but given the absence of suitable potential waterbodies, and the movement barriers created by Mearley Brook, great crested newt is not expected in the locality.
- 7.7.5 **The proposals are considered unlikely to impact this species and no further survey work no mitigation is recommended.**

Common Toad

Data Search

- 7.7.6 Data from LERN includes any records of common toad (*Bufo bufo*) within 1km of the survey site.

Survey and Assessment

- 7.7.7 Common toad are a Species of Principal Importance under the NERC Act, 2006 (also known as UK BAP species).
- 7.7.8 The scrub, woodland, brook and tall forb on site provides very good potential foraging and sheltering habitat for common toad, which are likely to be present.
- 7.7.9 **The proposals for the site are not expected to impact upon populations of this species, but precautionary measures are proposed during works to avoid unnecessary harm to individual animals.**



7.8 Fish

Data Search

- 7.1.1 Data from LERN includes records of two Species of Principal Importance within 1km of the survey site; sea/brown trout (*Salmo trutta* subsp. *trutta/fario*) and Atlantic salmon (*Salmo salar*).
- 7.1.2 Bullhead (*Cottus gobio*), a Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan species and Biological Heritage Site Species has also been previously recorded.
- 7.1.3 Other species expected include brook lamprey (*Lampetra planeri*) and eel (*Anguilla anguilla*).

Survey and Assessment

- 7.1.4 The proposals will not directly impact the brook and as a result no negative impacts upon fish are expected.
- 7.1.5 Precautions will be undertaken to minimise the risk of damage/pollution of the brook during works.

7.9 Nesting Birds

Data Search

- 7.1.6 Data from LERN include numerous records of 32 bird species within 2km of the survey site.
- 7.1.7 The citation for Primrose Lodge BHS includes reference to Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), a species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. Other species recorded, associated with the brook and lodge include grey heron (*Ardea cinerea*), teal (*Anas crecca*) and pochard (*Aythya ferina*), which are Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) species and Biological Heritage Site species. Black-headed gull (*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*), also mentioned, is on the LBAP whilst wigeon (*Mareca penelope*), grey wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*) are on the Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) (Eaton *et al*, 2015).
- 7.1.8 Other species present associated primarily with the woodland include blackcap (*Sylvia atricapilla*), chiffchaff (*Phylloscopus collybita*), dunnock (*Prunella modularis*), whitethroat (*Curruca communis*) and wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*).
- 7.1.9 Dunnock, whitethroat and wren are on the Amber list of BoCC.
- 7.1.10 These latter species are more likely to nest in the scrub and small trees on site.

Survey and Assessment

- 7.1.11 Impacts upon the breeding success of birds associated with the watercourse and lodge, including



kingfisher, are unlikely since the proposals will only be in close proximity to the brook in a 10m stretch.

7.1.12 However, passerine birds including species of conservation concern such as dunnock and wren are likely to nest in scrub and trees on site in the summer month.

7.1.13 Avoidance mitigation will be necessary to reduce any potential impact to negligible.

Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC): These lists indicate the population status of birds in the uK, Channel Islands and the Isle of Man..

- BoCC Red list: Includes species globally threatened, a historical population decline in the UK, a severe 9at least 50% decline in the UK breeding population over the last 25 years or long-term period. A severe (at least 50%) contraction of the UK breeding range over the last 25 years or the longer term.
- Amber list: Includes species with unfavourable conservation status in Europe, a historical population decline, moderate (25-50%) decline in the UK breeding population over the last 25 years, moderate (25-50%) contraction in UK breeding or non-breeding range, rare breeders (1-300 breeding pairs in UK), rare non breeders, localised rare breeders or non-breeders, internationally important breeders or non-breeders.

7.10 White Clawed Crayfish

Data Search

7.10.1 Data from LERN do not include any records of white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) within 2km of the survey site.

Survey and Assessment

7.10.2 White-clawed crayfish are listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. They are associated with hard, mineral-rich waters on calcareous rocks, but including canals, streams, rivers, lakes and reservoirs. They occur in watercourses 0.75-1.25m deep but can occur in very shallow waters. They occupy space under rocks, submerged rocks, tree roots and under bank overhangs.

7.10.3 The presence of this species in the catchment including Mearley Brook is possible. The substrage in Mearley Brook is somewhat suitable for this species.

7.1.14 However, the proposals will not directly impact the brook and as a result no negative impacts upon white-clawed crayfish, if present, are expected.

7.1.15 Precautions will be undertaken to minimise the risk of damage/pollution of the brook during works.



7.11 Other Invertebrates

Data Search

7.11.1 Data from LERN include numerous records of moths, butterflies and beetles from within 2km of the survey site. Five species of Principal Importance under the NERC Act, 2006 have been recorded within 1km; knot grass moth (*Acronicta rumicis*), dusky brocade moth (*Apamea remissa*), ghost moth (*Hepialus humuli*), wall butterfly (*Lasiommata megera*) and buff ermine moth (*Spilosoma lutea*).

7.11.2 These species are likely to be present within Primrose Nature Reserve.

Survey and Assessment

7.11.3 The proposals will result in the loss of some bramble scrub and trees, which are favourable to a variety of invertebrates, but the habitats are common and widespread and are considered unlikely to result in negative impacts to populations of species of conservation concern.

7.11.4 The proposals will ensure the long-term enhancement of the remaining scrub habitat, including diversification of species and structural heterogeneity.

7.11.5 **No further survey work or mitigation is recommended.**

7.12 Other protected species.

7.12.1 Other protected species, including red squirrel (*Sciurus vulgaris*) are not expected on or near the site as the site is outside their current range.



8 Conclusion

- 8.0.1 The survey site comprises an area of other lowland mixed deciduous woodland, wet woodland, a watercourse (Mearley Brook), bramble scrub with tall forb, individual trees, modified grassland and artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface.
- 8.0.2 The habitats on site that will be directly impacted by the proposals comprise bramble scrub with tall forb, individual trees within the school grounds and an area of artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface.
- 8.0.3 The loss of this habitat is not considered likely to be of significance to local flora. Reasonable avoidance measures will be employed during works in the nature reserve due to the presence of plants of conservation interest; bluebell and green figwort.
- 8.0.4 Reasonable avoidance measures are recommended during works to the wall, which has limited potential for roosting bats, and during vegetation works with regard to otter, water vole, common reptiles, common toad, nesting birds, and hedgehog.
- 8.0.5 Precautions are also required to prevent accidental pollution and run-off into Mearley Brook.
- 8.0.6 The proposals provide the opportunity to further enhance the site for wildlife as part of Biodiversity Net Gain. The proposals are not expected to have any negative impact upon the conservation status and integrity of the BHS.



9 Recommendations

9.1 Mearley Brook

9.1.1 Measures must be put in place to prevent accidental pollution or damage of the Mearley Brook during works. These must include the following:

- Machinery must not be left running on site without attendance.
- Precautions to prevent accidental pollution including run off must be undertaken, including retention of plant nappies on site for spills.
- Any works that might result in high levels of dust must be undertaken on damp days to minimise the risk of spread, otherwise materials dampened on site during the works process.

9.2 Primrose Lodge Biological Heritage Site and Species of Conservation Interest

9.2.1 Measures must be put in place to minimise the impact upon habitats and plant species of conservation interest, in particular bluebell and green figwort. These must include the following:

- Fencing will be used to ensure no accidental damage to areas of woodland or other habitat outside the necessary works area.
- Access will take place on single tracks and vehicles will use minimum number of trips to cross, reducing impact to the vegetation.
- Spoil spreading of removed materials must be localised or removed off site to minimise smothering of vegetation.

9.3 Bats

9.3.1 The wall between Primrose Nature Reserve and the school contains crevices beyond the area that requires work that are may support small numbers of itinerant bats. In order to avoid the risk of harm to individual itinerant bats to negligible, the following is recommended:

- When undertaking works to the wall inspection of any crevices is undertaken with a strong torch to check for wildlife prior to demolition.
- Any crevices in the wall are retained as existing unless it is absolutely necessary to repair them.

9.3.2 If bats or evidence of bats is found further survey work and application of a European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) license may be required.



9.4 Reptiles, common toad, and hedgehog

9.1.1 In order to reduce the risk of harm to individual reptiles, common toad and hedgehog, the following Reasonable Avoidance Measures are recommended.

- Scrub and other vegetation is cut short at least three days prior to removal to discourage any animals present from the working area and to allow them to move of their own volition.
- Materials on site are stored on pallets where possible to prevent reptiles and amphibians hiding in them.
- The area of working/stored materials is minimised.
- Topsoil and watercourse bank removal must be undertaken with care in the presence of an Ecological Clerk of Works or similar to check for wildlife.
- If any wildlife is found, for example common toad or hedgehog, they can be moved to a safe place away from the area of works where there is vegetative cover.

9.5 Otter and water vole

9.5.1 No evidence of otter or water vole was found within the survey site. However, there is potential for these species to cross the site, or disperse down the waterway and for this reason, the following is recommended to prevent harm to individual animals during works:

- No machinery is left running within 10m of Mearley Brook.
- No materials are stored within 10m of Mearley Brook.
- If it is necessary to dig ditches or holes, a plank or similar is placed in them to enable animals to climb out during works.

9.6 Nesting Birds

9.6.1 Birds of conservation value may nest on site in the spring and summer months. In order to prevent disturbance and/or harm to breeding birds, is recommended that:

- Initial works on site are timed to avoid the bird breeding season (breeding season: March – September).
- If this is not possible, a suitably qualified ecologist should check the vegetation on site to determine the presence / absence of nesting birds prior to the start of any works.
- If birds are found actively nesting on site, the nest and surrounding vegetation: 5-10m for passerine birds must be left undisturbed until the young have fledged. If there is any concern, an ecologist must be contacted for advice about the area to avoid. If a number



of ground nesting birds are present, depending upon the machinery required on site, it may be that works are delayed until all have finished breeding.

- Works are undertaken in a short a time period as possible to minimise noise and visual disturbance.

9.7 Non-native invasive plant species

9.7.1 Himalayan balsam is present along Mearley Brook.

9.7.2 Measures to control and prevent the spread of these species must be taken into consideration during works. These measures must include:

- A toolbox talk on non-native invasive plant species delivered to site operatives prior to the start of works to ensure they are aware of what the species look like and what to do if it is found (see Appendix B).
- No soil or debris containing parts or seeds of non-native species will be removed from site unless treated as contaminated waste.
- Biocontrol must be employed, including washing boots and machinery and disinfecting them prior to leaving site.

9.8 Enhancement for Biodiversity

9.8.1 The proposals provide the opportunity to enhance the site for biodiversity as part of Biodiversity Net Gain.

9.8.2 This will include enhancement of scrub and planting of small native trees.



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• APPENDIX A: Wildlife Legislation and Planning Policy

1.0 UK AND EU LEGISLATION

KEY LEGISLATION

In the UK, the following legislation relates to wildlife and habitats:

- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (CROW), 2000
- The Badger Act 1992
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC, 2006)
- Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations (2017)
- The Hedgerow Regulations (1997)

1.1 WILDLIFE AND COUNTRYSIDE ACT 1981 (AS AMENDED)

1.1.1 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 consolidates and amends existing national legislation to implement the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds (Birds Directive) in Great Britain (NB Council Directive 79/409/EEC has now been replaced by Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds (codified version)).

BIRDS

1.1.2 The Act makes it an offence (with exception to species listed in Schedule 2) to intentionally:

- kill, injure, or take any wild bird,
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built (also [take, damage or destroy the nest of a wild bird included in Schedule ZA1] under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006), or
- take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

Schedule 1 birds

1.1.3 Special penalties are available for offences related to birds listed on Schedule 1, for which there are additional offences of disturbing these birds at their nests, or their dependent young, for example Barn Owl and Red Kite.

Areas of Special Protection for Birds

1.1.4 The Secretary of State may also designate Areas of Special Protection (subject to exceptions) to provide further protection to birds.

Other offences

1.1.5 The Act also prohibits certain methods of killing, injuring, or taking birds, restricts the sale and possession of captive bred birds, and sets standards for keeping birds in captivity.

OTHER ANIMALS

1.1.6 The Act makes it an offence (subject to exceptions) to intentionally ([or recklessly] - only under the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004) kill, injure or take any wild animal listed on Schedule 5, and prohibits interference with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturbing animals occupying such places. The Act also prohibits certain methods of killing, injuring, or taking wild animals.

1.1.7 For animals listed in Schedule 5 of the act, it is an offence under:

- Section 9(1) to kill, injure or take the animal by any method
- Section 9(2) to possess or control a dead or live animal (or part of derivative).
- Section 9(4)(a) to cause damage to, destruction of, obstruction of access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection.
- Section 9(4)(b) to disturb any animal on the schedule occupying such as structure or place.
- Section 9(4)(c) to obstruct access to any structure or place which any such animal uses for shelter or protection.
- Section 9(5)(a) to sell, offer or expose for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale, any live or dead wild animal, or part or derivative of an animal included in Schedule 5.



- Section 9(5)(b) to publish or cause to be published any advertisement likely to be understood as conveying that he buys or sells, or intends to buy or sell, any of those things.

Species that receive FULL PROTECTION under the act:

- All UK bats
- Otter
- Water vole
- Dormouse
- Red squirrel
- Wildcat
- Reptiles – Smooth snake and sand lizard
- Amphibians – Great crested newt, Natterjack toad, Pool frog
- Invertebrates – some including, but not restricted to Swallowtail butterfly, Marsh fritillary butterfly, Large copper butterfly, Heath fritillary butterfly, Large blue butterfly, Barberry carpet moth, Rainbow leaf beetle, Violet click beetle, Medicinal leech.

Species that protected from intentional KILLING, INJURY and SALE only:

- Reptiles – widespread species; Common lizard, Slow-worm, Grass snake and Adder.

Species protected from TAKING and SALE only:

- Atlantic stream (white-clawed) crayfish

Species protected from SALE only:

- Common toad
- Common frog
- Palmate newt
- Smooth newt
- Invertebrates – Some including 18 butterflies such as Chalk hill blue butterfly, Adonis blue butterfly, Large tortoiseshell butterfly.

Vascular Plants, Bryophytes, Lichens and Fungi (PLANTS)

1.1.8 For any vascular plant, bryophyte, lichen or fungi listed in Schedule 8 of the Act, it makes it an offence under:

- Section 13(1)(a) to intentionally pick, uproot or destroy plants in Schedule 8.
- Section 13(1)(b) to undertake unauthorised intentional uprooting of any wild plant not included in Schedule 8.
- Section 13(2)(a) to sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale any plant (live or dead, part or derivatives) on Schedule 8.
- Section 13(2)(b) to publish or causes to be published any advertisement likely to be understood as conveying that he buys or sells, or intends to buy or sell, any of those things.

1.1.9 Species with protection under Schedule 8 include, but are not restricted to:

1.1.10 Bluebell, Wood calamint, Rock cinquefoil, Early spider orchid, Spring gentian, Stinking goosefoot, Small hare's-ear, Alpine copper moss (*Mielichhoferia mielichoferi*), Goblin lights lichen (*Catolechia wahlenbergii*).

Non-Native Species

1.1.11 Species listed in Schedule 9 of the Act are non-native species, which the establishment of in the wild may be detrimental to native wildlife. Species listed in Schedule 9 include Japanese knotweed, Himalayan Balsam and Giant hogweed.

1.1.12 For species listed in Schedule 9 of the act it is an offence:

- Under Section 14(1) if any person releases or allows to escape into the wild any animal which—
 - (a) is of a kind which is not ordinarily resident in and is not a regular visitor to Great Britain in a wild state; or
 - (b) is included in Part I of Schedule 9,
- Under Section 14ZA (1) to sell, offers or exposes for sale, or has in his possession or transports for the purposes of sale an animal or plant to which this section 14 applies, or anything from which such an animal or plant can be reproduced or propagated.



- Under Section 14ZA (2) to publish or cause to be published any advertisement likely to be understood as conveying that he buys or sells, or intends to buy or sell an animal or plant to which this section applies, or anything from which such an animal or plant can be reproduced or propagated.

1.1.13 Section 14ZB gives the Secretary of State the power to issue codes of practice, or approve a code of practice issued by others, relating to non-native animal and plant species. It is intended that the codes will be used to provide recommendations, advice and information on how to stop the damage caused by non-native animals and plants.

1.2 SITES OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSIs) AND OTHER PROTECTED AREAS

1.2.1 Sections 28 to 33 of Part 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act detail the law regarding SSSIs. Sections 34 to 53 deal with other protected areas within Great Britain.

- The Act provides for the notification and confirmation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) – these sites are identified for their flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features – by the country conservation bodies in England (Natural England) and Wales (Natural Resources Wales).
- The Act also contains measures for the protection and management of SSSIs.
- The Act provides for the making of Limestone Pavement Orders, which prohibit the disturbance and removal of limestone from such designated areas
- The Act provides means for the designation of Marine Nature Reserves.
- The Act prohibits the undertaking of agricultural or forestry operations on land within National Parks which has been either moor or heath for 20 years, without consent from the relevant planning authority.

1.3 THE COUNTRYSIDE AND RIGHTS OF WAY (CROW) ACT 2000

1.3.1 The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 strengthened the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 in the following ways:

Schedule 12

1.3.2 Schedule 12 of the Act amends the species provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and strengthens the legal protection of species by:

- Providing provisions to make certain offences 'arrestable'
- Changing the term 'intentional' to 'reckless' with regard to disturbance offences, such that ignorance of the law is no longer a defence.
- Conferring greater powers to police and wildlife inspectors for entering premises and obtaining wildlife tissue samples for DNA analysis, and;
- Enabling heavier penalties on conviction of wildlife offences.

Schedule 9

1.3.3 Schedule 9 of the Act amends SSSI provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, including provision to change SSSIs and providing increased powers for their protection and management, placement of a duty on public bodies to further the conservation and enhancement of SSSIs and increases in penalties on convictions where the provisions are breached.

1.4 THE BADGER ACT 1992

1.4.1 Under the Badger Act 1992, it is an offence to:

- Section 1 – Take, injure or kill a badger, or attempt to do so
- Section 2 – Cruelly ill-treat a badger, inclusive of digging for a badger
- Section 3 – Interfere with a badger sett. A person is guilty of an offence if, except as permitted by or under this Act, he interferes with a badger sett by doing any of the following things—

(a)damaging a badger sett or any part of it;

(b)destroying a badger sett;

(c)obstructing access to, or any entrance of, a badger sett;



(d) causing a dog to enter a badger sett; or

(e) disturbing a badger when it is occupying a badger sett,

- o Section 4 – To sell or possess a live badger.
- o Section 5 – To mark or ring a badger unless under licence to do so.

1.5 THE HEDGEROWS REGULATIONS, 1997

1.5.1 The Hedgerows Regulations, 1997 ensure the protection from damage or destruction of 'important' hedgerows. Criteria within the regulations determine the importance.

1.6 THE CONSERVATION OF HABITATS AND SPECIES AND PLANNING (VARIOUS AMENDMENTS) (ENGLAND AND WALES) REGULATIONS 2017

1.6.1 In addition to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1984, certain species have additional protection under European Law.

1.6.2 The Conservation of Habitats and Species and Planning (Various Amendments) (England and Wales) Regulations 2018 (the Habitats Regs) consolidate the amendments made to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 in England and Wales. The Regulations transpose the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and wild fauna and flora (EC Habitats Directive) into UK law.

1.6.3 The Habitats Regulations 2010 provide protection for 'European Protected Species' and protection and designation for 'European Protected Sites'.

Schedule 2: European Protected Species of Animals

- All UK bats
- Dormice
- Otter
- Large blue butterfly
- Wild cat
- Sand lizard
- Smooth snake
- Great crested newt
- Natterjack toad
- Fishers estuarine moth
- Lesser whirlpool ram's-horn snail
- Sturgeon
- Marine turtles
- All dolphins, porpoises and whales.

1.6.4 For species listed in Schedule 2, Under Part 3 Regulation 41(1) it is an offence to

- (a) deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European protected species,
- (b) deliberately disturb a wild animal of any such species,
- (c) deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal, or
- (d) damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal,

1.6.5 Under Part 3 Regulation 41 (2) For the purposes of paragraph (1)(b), disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely—

- (a) to impair their ability—
 - (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or
 - (ii) in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or
- (b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Under Part 3 Regulation 41.(3) It is an offence for any person—

- (a) to be in possession of, or to control,
- (b) to transport,
- (c) to sell or exchange, or
- (d) to offer for sale or exchange any animal in Schedule 2.

Schedule 5: European Protected Species of Plants

- Shore dock
- Killarney Fern



- Early Gentian
- Lady's-slipper
- Creeping marshwort
- Slender naiad
- Fen orchid
- Floating-leaved water plantain
- Yellow-marsh saxifrage.

1.6.6 For species listed in Schedule 2, Under Part 3 Regulation 45(1) It is an offence deliberately to pick, collect, cut, uproot or destroy a wild plant of a European protected species.

1.6.7 Under Part 3 Regulation 45(1) (2) It is an offence for any person

- (a) to be in possession of, or to control,
- (b) to transport,
- (c) to sell or exchange, or
- (d) to offer for sale or exchange any plant in Schedule 5

European Designated Sites

1.6.8 These include:

- Special Protection Areas – SPAs are classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Birds Directive for rare and vulnerable birds (as listed on Annex I of the Directive), and for regularly occurring migratory species
- Special Areas of Conservation – SACs are classified in accordance with Article 3 of the EC Habitats Directive. SACs are designated to establish a European network of important high-quality conservation sites that will make a significant contribution to conserving the 189 habitat types and 788 species identified in Annexes I and II of the Directive (as amended).

1.6.9 Natura 2000 is the name of the European Union-wide network of nature conservation sites established under the EC Habitats and Birds Directives. This network will comprise Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs). Marine Natura 2000 sites contribute to our ecologically coherent network of marine protected areas.

1.7 NATURAL ENVIRONMENT AND RURAL COMMUNITIES (NERC) ACT 2006

Planning Authorities: A Duty to Conserve Biodiversity

1.7.1 Under this legislation, planning authorities are obliged to make sure that they have all the information on the presence of protected species on site *before* they make a decision on the planning permission.

1.7.2 Part 2, Section 40 confers on the planning authorities a duty to conserve biodiversity and states:

"Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of biodiversity"

Species of Principal Importance

1.7.3 Part 3, Section 41 requires the Secretary of State to "*publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which in the Secretary of State's opinion are of **principal importance** for the purpose of conserving biodiversity*".

1.7.4 This requirement lead to production of a list of species and habitats of Principal Importance, which should be a material consideration during the planning process.

1.8 DESIGNATED SITES OF CONSERVATION INTEREST

1.8.1 Sites of conservation interest can be designated on a statutory or non-statutory basis.

Statutory Sites

1.8.2 Statutory sites can be designated under UK legislation (the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981), European Law (the Habitats Regulations 2010) or International law (Ramsar Convention).

1.8.3 The designated sites are referred to under the relevant legislation above.

1.8.4 UK designated sites include Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

1.8.5 European designated sites include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).



1.8.6 Ramsar sites are wetlands of international importance designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, agreed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971.

1.8.7 Local Nature Reserves (LNRs): Under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 LNRs may be declared by local authorities after consultation with the relevant statutory nature conservation agency. LNRs are declared and managed for nature conservation, and provide opportunities for research and education, or simply enjoying and having contact with nature.

1.8.8 National Nature Reserves (NNRs): are declared by the statutory country conservation agencies under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Non-Statutory Sites

1.8.9 Local authorities for any given area may designate certain areas as being of local conservation interest. The criteria for inclusion, and the level of protection provided, if any, may vary between areas. Most individual counties have a similar scheme, although they do vary.

1.8.10 These sites, which may be given various titles such as 'Listed Wildlife Sites' (LWS), 'Local Nature Conservation Sites' (LNCS), 'Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation' (SINCs), 'Biological Heritage Sites' (BHS) or 'Sites of Nature Conservation Importance' (SNCIs), together with statutory designations, are defined in local and structure plans under the Town and Country Planning system and are a material consideration when planning applications are being determined.

2.0 Plans and Policies

In the UK, the following plans and policies relate to wildlife and habitats:

- o National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2021)
- o The Natural Environment White Paper 'The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature'
- o Biodiversity – The UK Action Plan (1994, and subsequent revisions)
- o Local Biodiversity Action Plans where applicable
- o Neighbourhood plans where applicable

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK

2.1.1 In March 2012 the Government introduced the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This was revised in December 2023.

Chapter 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

Chapter 15, Para 180 of NPPF states: *"The planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- b) **protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils...**
- e) **minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures".**

Para 181 states: *"Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries."*

Para 185 identifies that plans should do the following to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity:

- c) **"Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and**
- d) **Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and peruse opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity."**

Para 186 states that *"when determining planning applications, local authorities should apply the following principles:*

- b) **if significant harm to biodiversity from a development cannot be avoided...,adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort compensated for, then planning permission should be refused"**



- c) **Development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted.** *The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;*
- d) **Development result in the loss of deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland or ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensatory strategy exists; and**
- e) **Development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.**

Para 188 states *"the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment because of its potential impact on a habitats site is being planned or determined."*

2.2 ODPM CIRCULAR 06/2005: BIODIVERSITY AND GEOLOGICAL CONSERVATION

- 2.2.1 This document, to be read in conjunction with NPPF provides administrative guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation as it applies in England. It makes it clear that it is the intention of the government that local authorities and developers consider protected species at the earliest possible stage in the planning process. Any planning application that is likely to affect protected species should come with details of the surveys which have been undertaken and should include, if necessary, recommendations for mitigation. Applications which do not include sufficient data should be rejected.

2.3 The Natural Environment White paper

- 2.3.1 The Natural Environment White Paper 'The Natural Choice: Securing the Value of Nature' states that 'We want to create a resilient and coherent ecological network at national and local levels across England... To make this happen the government will put in place a clear institutional framework to support nature restoration. This means: establishing Local Nature Partnerships... Creating new Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) and strengthening support through the planning system.'

Biodiversity Offsetting

- 2.3.2 Biodiversity offsetting is described in the Natural Environment White Paper as 'conservation activities designed to deliver biodiversity benefits in compensation for losses in a measurable way. Good developments incorporate biodiversity considerations in their design but are still likely to result in some biodiversity loss. One way to compensate for this loss is by offsetting: the developer secures compensatory habitats elsewhere.'
- 2.3.3 The level of biodiversity offsetting required could be determined by means of assessments undertaken in accordance with the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) metric contained in Biodiversity Offsetting Pilots published in March 2012 as applied in the Defra offsetting pilot projects. Biodiversity offsetting could be delivered by developers in partnership with various partners including conservation organisations, local landowners and the borough council.

2.4 Biodiversity Action Plan (Local or UK)

UK Biodiversity Action Plan

- 2.4.1 Biodiversity: The UK Action Plan outlines how the UK plans to address biodiversity conservation in response to the Rio Convention on Biological Diversity (1992). In 2004 a UK Biodiversity Steering Group was formed and discussions resulted in the publication of 'Biodiversity: the UK Steering Group Report – meeting the Rio challenge', which established a framework and criteria for identifying species and habitats of conservation concern. From this list, action plans for 391 species and 45 broad habitat types were prepared. In 2007, the UK List of Priority Species and Habitats was reviewed and the revised list identifies 1149 species and 65 habitats requiring conservation action.
- 2.4.2 These species are now listed in Section 41 of the NERC Act, 2006 and referred to as Habitats and Species of Principal Importance (HPI or SPI).



- 2.4.3 Outcome 3 of the Government's Biodiversity 2020 strategy (DEFRA, 2011) contains an ambition to ensure that *"By 2020, we will see an overall improvement in the status of our wildlife and will have prevented further human-induced extinctions of known threatened species"*. Protecting and enhancing England's Species and Habitats of Principal Importance is key to delivering this outcome.

Local Biodiversity Action Plans

- 2.4.4 Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) are a means for delivering UK Biodiversity Action Plan targets at a local level. LBAPs were launched in 1997 by a partnership of conservation groups, government agencies and local authorities. They set out a framework for nature conservation in the specified area. This framework includes priority species and habitats and sets targets to maintain and enhance their conservation status.

2.5 Other Species Lists of Species of Conservation Concern

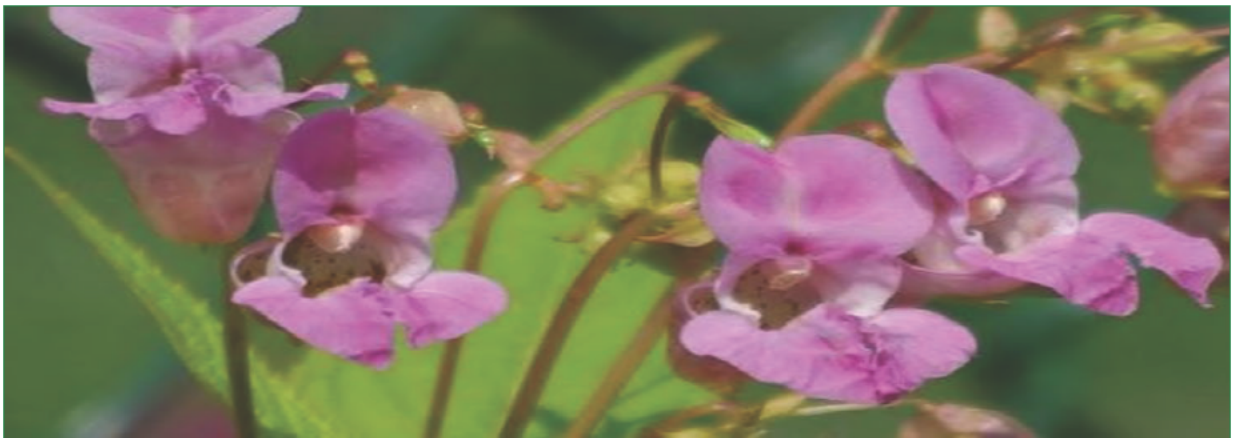
- 2.5.1 Species lists of Species of Conservation Concern also considered within this assessment are as follows:
- Birds of Conservation Concern: Based on an assessment of the conservation status of British birds. Following an assessment of data on population and trends against established criteria, there are red, amber and green lists of BoCC. The latest review was BOCC 4 (Eaton et al, 2015).
 - Red Data Book Species: In 1999 the Species Status Assessment project (JNCC) assigned conservation status to the UK flora and fauna using the internationally approved IUCN Red Data Book criteria and categories. The reviews were published in a series of data sheets and assigned a conservation status to each species.



- **APPENDIX B:**

Himalayan Balsam Toolbox Talk

Himalayan balsam is listed on the Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) making it an offence to spread it, or to cause it to grow in the wild.



About (Ecology)

Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens grandiflora*) is a non-native plant now regularly seen along watercourses across the UK. It often forms continuous stands along streams and rivers. Due to its rapid growth, it shades out most of our native species, resulting in damage to natural habitats.

Himalayan balsam is pretty, and produces big, pink-purple flowers. Each plant produces about 2,500 seeds, which fall to the ground.

The soil within at least 7m of a stand of this plant is likely to contain seeds.



Where you might find it

Widespread throughout the UK, this plant is most commonly found along waterways (streams and rivers) and in damp areas, such as wet woodlands, marshes and mires.

Identification

Individual plants reach 2m in height, have translucent fleshy stems, pink-purple slipper-shaped flowers and large oval pointed leaves with obvious teeth around their edges. The midrib of the leaves can be tinged with red, which can help with identification early in the growing season.



Showing the pink flowers and seed pods of Himalayan balsam

The plant produces seed pods in late-summer that explode when touched, releasing 100s of seeds.



Showing the leaves of Himalayan balsam

Biosecurity

If working in an area supporting Himalayan balsam, you should either avoid disturbing it and create a 7m buffer around the stand, or employ appropriate methods of treatment and biosecurity to prevent spread off site. This will include washing down equipment, machinery and clothing prior to leaving the site in case the seeds are transferred.

Any soil that may be contaminated by Himalayan balsam seeds must be treated as contaminated waste.