



# **Proposed Housing Development on Land Adjacent to Crowtrees Industrial Estate, Leek Road, Waterhouses**

## **Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey**

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This report has been prepared in good faith, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence, based on information provided or known available at the time of its preparation and within the scope of work agreement with the client.

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## SUMMARY




The Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey detailed in this report was carried out as requested by Resource UK, on behalf of W.G Tanker Services Ltd ('**the Client**') to support an outline planning application for construction of 29 houses at the Site (with associated vegetation clearance).

The Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey identified that the habitats at the Site were of **low ecological value**. Improved Grassland is the dominant habitat at the Site. Other habitats present include Scattered Scrub, Scattered Trees, Tall Ruderal and Wall (Dry Stone).







The tables below outline the results of the survey, potential impacts, and any recommendations. They also assign a level of urgency to address the overall situation arising from the results.

Cont'd...

**Table 1 Situation Rating Summary Definitions**

Code	Situation Rating
	Requires urgent attention / action
	Requires attention / action, but not urgently
	Currently no further action required – future action may be required

**Table 2 Summary Table of Survey Results and Recommendations**

Protected Species	Survey Results	Potential Implications of Impact	Recommendation	Situation Rating
<b>Badgers</b>	<b>Suitable foraging habitat at the Site.</b> <b>No evidence of Badgers or Badger setts</b> at or within 30m of the Site.	Loss of suitable foraging habitat – <b>negligible negative effect.</b>	No further surveys required.	
<b>Bats</b>	<b>No suitable foraging or roosting habitat</b> at the Site.  Dry Stone Wall may be used as a navigational linear feature in the landscape.	Loss of dry stone wall – <b>negligible negative effect.</b>	No further surveys required.  Consider retaining and enhancing dry stone wall.	
<b>Breeding Birds</b>	The Site has some habitat with <b>limited suitability for Breeding Birds</b> with the exception of <b>unmanaged grassland which has limited suitability.</b>	Loss of habitat - <b>Negligible negative effect</b> Direct loss of active nests - <b>Potential breach of the law</b>	<b>Time vegetation removal outside of the Bird Breeding Season</b> (Generally, March-September).  If vegetation removal is carried out during breeding bird season – <b>ecologist to check before vegetation removal commences.</b>	
<b>Great Crested Newt</b>	Unmanaged grassland at the Site is of <b>low suitability</b> for Great Crested Newts.  The remainder of the Site has <b>limited suitability</b> for Great Crested Newts.	Loss of habitat of low suitability – <b>Negligible negative effect.</b>	No further surveys required.	
<b>Reptiles</b>	The Site has <b>limited to low suitability</b> for reptiles.	<b>No important negative effects.</b>	No further surveys required.	
<b>Terrestrial Inverts.</b>	The Site has <b>limited to moderate suitability</b> for terrestrial invertebrates.	<b>No important negative effects.</b>	No further surveys required.  Retention of the dry stone wall would be beneficial to terrestrial invertebrates.	

# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 Crestwood Environmental Ltd. has been appointed by Resource UK on behalf of W.G Tanker Services Ltd (**'the Client'**) to undertake an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey at the Site and 30m outside of the Site - primarily for signs of Badger (*Meles meles*) setts (see Appendix E1 for 30m radius from Site boundary).
- 1.1.2 It is understood that the Client is applying for planning permission for construction of 29 houses (**'the Proposed Development'**) at land adjacent to Crowtrees Industrial Estate, Leek Road, Waterhouses, which is centred at National Grid Reference SK 0765 5054); also referred to as **'the Site'**.
- 1.1.3 The survey was undertaken by Matthew Wall GradCIEEM (Assistant Ecologist) of Crestwood Environmental Ltd.

## 1.2 PURPOSE AND SCOPE

- 1.2.1 The purpose of the survey, assessment and report is to provide ecological advice in respect of the design and construction of the Proposed Development.
- 1.2.2 The scope of the survey is to record the presence and extent of habitats and the likelihood of protected species being present within the Site and any adjacent areas which could potentially be affected by the Proposed Development.
- 1.2.3 The description of the Site and the results of the survey relate to the findings at the time of the field survey only, 28<sup>th</sup> January 2015.

## 1.3 THE SITE

- 1.3.1 The Site comprises an open area of Improved Grassland with surrounding dry stone walls, Introduced Shrub, Scattered Trees, Tall Ruderal Vegetation and Scattered Scrub.
- 1.3.2 The red line shown on Drawing Number CE-LK-0838-DW01 (Appendix E1) indicates the extent of the boundary of the Site.
- 1.3.3 The Site boundary relates to plans of the Proposed Development provided by the Client at the time of the survey. Any subsequent amendments to the boundary may alter recommendations made in this report.
- 1.3.4 In the local area, the main habitat wildlife corridors present are the River Hamps and Shirley Brook, as well as field boundary hedgerows and some well-connected areas of woodland such as Little Wood and Old Soles Wood. Fragmented areas of woodland within the local area are likely to act as ecological 'stepping stones' between habitats for certain species.

## **2 METHODOLOGY AND METHODS OF ASSESSMENT**

### **2.1 DESK STUDY**

- 2.1.1 Prior to the field survey visit, a desktop data-gathering exercise was undertaken.
- 2.1.2 The National Biodiversity Network website (NBN, 2014) was searched for records of protected species within 2km of the Site. The only exception to this search radius was with regard to bats, for which records within 5km of the Site were obtained as per the recommendations within the Good Practice Guidelines (2<sup>nd</sup> Edition) (Hundt, 2012).
- 2.1.3 The MAGIC website (DEFRA, 2014) was also used to determine whether any statutory, non-statutory sites and notable habitats were present within 2km of the Site. Non-Statutory sites were also searched for through the use of Local Planning Authority Policy Maps (Staffordshire Moorlands District Council, n.d)(specifically those within the Staffordshire Moorlands Local Plan and Peak District National Park Authority Local Plan.
- 2.1.4 Biological records were not obtained from the Local Records Centre (Staffordshire Ecological Record) due to the relatively small size of the Site and surrounding land use.

### **2.2 FIELD SURVEY**

- 2.2.1 The method used for the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey is based on guidelines provided by JNCC (JNCC, 2010) and CIEEM (CIEEM, 2013). During the survey visit, any vegetation types or signs of protected species or fauna were recorded and mapped using specific standard mapping colours, where possible.

### **2.3 IMPACTS AND EFFECTS METHOD OF ASSESSMENT**

- 2.3.1 The impacts and effects identified in sections 6 and 7 respectively take into account the following impacts in line with relevant guidance (CIEEM, 2013), (IEEM, 2006):
- Positive/Negative;
  - Direct/Indirect;
  - Cumulative; and
  - Temporary/Permanent.

## **3 LIMITATIONS**

- 3.1.1 Areas within 30m of the Site to the south of Leek Road were checked from the field boundaries as access was not specifically arranged to those areas. This is not considered to be a significant limitation as there was good visibility into the fields from the field boundaries.
- 3.1.2 Other applications or non-implemented consents within the local area have not been considered, and therefore the assessment of impacts and effects pertains solely to those associated with the Proposed Development and not cumulative effects arising from impacts arising from other

developments in the local area.

- 3.1.3 January is a sub-optimal time of year to observe field signs of reptiles and terrestrial invertebrates. As such, this report will assess the suitability of the habitat to support the aforementioned species and unless otherwise stated, it can be assumed that no evidence was found of protected species of reptiles and/or terrestrial invertebrates.
- 3.1.4 January is a sub-optimal time of year to assess vegetation as some more inconspicuous species may be missed. However, taking into consideration the classification of the habitats at the Site, it is unlikely that this has any significant bearing on the conclusions in this report.
- 3.1.5 Specific details of non-statutory sites could not be obtained from the Local Plan and identification of Local Sites is carried out by the method outlined in section 2.1.3; impacts and effects in sections 6 and 7 respectively have taken this into consideration.

## **4 RESULTS**

### **4.1 DESK STUDY RESULTS**

#### **POLICY**

##### **National Planning Policy Context**

- 4.1.1 National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Section 11 - Conserving and enhancing the Natural Environment, contains relevant policy in Paragraphs 109-125.
- 4.1.2 The Government's objective, as stated in the NPPF is that planning should help to deliver a healthy natural environment for the benefit of everyone and safe places which promote wellbeing. To achieve this objective, the NPPF states that the planning system should aim to conserve and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting valued landscapes, minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains where possible. The NPPF also makes the statement that planning permission should be refused if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated for.
- 4.1.3 The NPPF goes on to support the Lawton Review and the White Paper with its goals to minimise impacts on biodiversity by stating that planning policy should take into account the need to plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale as well as identify and map components of the local ecological networks, including international, national and local sites. In line with EU targets, the NPPF states that planning will promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the recovery of priority species populations.

##### **Local Planning Policy Context**

- 4.1.4 The Site lies within the Staffordshire Moorlands District.
- 4.1.5 Staffordshire Moorlands District Council has adopted the Peak District National Park Authority's Local Plan which is in the process of being replaced by the Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan (Peak District National Park Authority, 2011). Policy L2 of this document



relates specifically to biodiversity and is outlined below.

## Policy L2

4.1.6 This Policy states:

- *“Development must conserve and enhance any sites, features or species of biodiversity importance and where appropriate their setting; and*
- *Other than in exceptional circumstances development will not be permitted where it is likely to have an adverse impact on any sites, features or species of biodiversity importance or their setting that have statutory designation or are of international or national importance for their biodiversity”.*

## Protected Species

4.1.7 Records of protected species from the NBN Gateway (NBN, 2014) within 2km of the Site are: Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*), Polecat (*Mustela putorius*) and White Clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*).

4.1.8 The NBN Gateway (NBN, 2014) provided several records of bats within 5km of the Site; these were Daubenton’s Bat (*Myotis daubentonii*), Natterer’s Bat (*Myotis nattereri*), Brandt’s Bat (*Myotis brandtii*), Whiskered Bat (*Myotis mystacinus*), Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), Nathusius’ Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*) and Brown Long-Eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*).

## Statutory Wildlife Sites

4.1.9 There are three statutory wildlife sites within 2km of the Site; these are:

- Caldon Dales SSSI;
- Hamps and Manifold Valleys (Biological and Geological SSSI); and
- Peak District Dales SAC.

4.1.10 Citations for biological SSSIs as well as further information on the Peak District Dales can be found in Appendix E2.

## Non-Statutory Wildlife Sites

4.1.11 There are several local wildlife/non-statutory sites, within 2km of the Site; the closest non-statutory site is approximately 575m north-northwest of the centre of the Site.

## 4.2 FIELD SURVEY RESULTS

4.2.1 The weather conditions at the time of survey are shown in Table 3.

**Table 3 Weather Conditions during the Survey (28.01.15)**

Parameter	Recorded Figure
Temperature (°C)	2.4
Cloud Cover (in Octas)	6
Precipitation	Heavy rain and hail prior to survey
Wind Speed (Beaufort Scale)	Fresh to Strong Breeze (5-6)

### General Description of Habitats within the Site

- 4.2.2 The habitat types identified at the Site, as listed below, relate to the guideline habitats listed within the Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey (JNCC, 2010). These habitats are recorded on Drawing No. CE-LK-0838-DW01 (see Appendix E1) and are described in more detail below.

### Habitats and Flora

- 4.2.3 The Site comprises the following habitat and vegetation types:

- Improved Grassland;
- Introduced Shrub;
- Scattered Scrub;
- Scattered Trees;
- Tall Ruderal; and
- Wall (Dry Stone Wall).

### Improved Grassland

- 4.2.4 Improved Grassland is the dominant habitat at the Site. The Improved Grassland had been mown to a uniform short sward throughout with the exception of a circa 0.5m buffer away from the Site boundary where it is unmanaged. In these areas, scrub species have started to establish.
- 4.2.5 Species found within the Improved Grassland were Perennial Rye Grass (*Lolium perenne*), Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), a Fescue grass (*Festuca* sp.), Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), Broad Leaved Plantain (*Plantago major*), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*) and Dandelion (*Taraxacum* agg.).