

**Ecological
Assessment**
Mildenhall Road



www.parkerplanningservices.co.uk

Prepared for Client:
Anglia Developments Ltd

Site Address
37 Mildenhall Road
Fordham
Ely
East Cambridgeshire
CB7 5NP

PREPARED BY: David Watts BSc (Hons) MCIEEM

APPROVED BY: Jemima Dean MSc MRTPI

Our Offices:

NORFOLK	T: 01603 516319	Norwich	NR1 1LU
SUFFOLK	T: 01284 336348	Bury St Edmunds	IP33 1HQ
CAMBRIDGESHIRE:	T: 01223 637283	Cambridge	CB24 6WZ
LINCOLNSHIRE	T: 01780 437333	Stamford	PE9 2AE
ESSEX	T: 01245 934184	Chelmsford	CM2 7PX

REPORT INFORMATION

© Copyright Parker Planning Services Ltd.

No part of this report is to be copied or reproduced, either physically and/or electronically in any way without prior written consent of Parker Planning Services Ltd.

Every reasonable effort has been made to provide accurate and detailed information to the relevant professional standards at the time of writing of this report. However, Parker Planning Services Ltd. cannot be held responsible for errors, inaccuracies or omissions held within this report where 3rd party information has been used. Nor can the information in this report be used for works outside the remit of a planning statement or report.

Date	30 th November 2021
Applicant	Anglia Developments Ltd
Site Address	37 Mildenhall Road, Fordham, Ely, East Cambridgeshire, CB7 5NP
Grid reference	TL 63535 70814
Our Reference	3382
Report Revision	V1

1. INTRODUCTION	3
1.1. BACKGROUND	3
1.2. SITE DETAILS	3
1.3. DEVELOPMENT PROPOSALS	3
1.4. LEGISLATION	3
1.5. QUALIFICATIONS OF THE AUTHOR.....	3
2. METHODS.....	4
2.1. DESK-BASED STUDY.....	4
2.2. SURVEY TIMING	4
2.3. HABITAT SURVEY METHODS.....	4
2.4. PROTECTED AND NOTABLE SPECIES.....	4
2.5. INVASIVE SPECIES.....	5
2.6. CONSTRAINTS.....	5
3. RESULTS	6
3.1. DESIGNATED SITES	6
3.2. HABITATS WITHIN THE SURROUNDING AREA.....	6
3.3. HABITATS WITHIN THE SITE	6
3.4. INVASIVE SPECIES	6
3.5. BATS	6
3.6. OTHER MAMMALS	7
3.7. HERPETOFAUNA.....	7
3.8. BIRD SPECIES.....	7
3.9. INVERTEBRATES	7
4. IMPACT ASSESSMENT	8
4.1. DESIGNATED SITES	8
4.2. HABITATS	8
4.3. BATS	8
4.4. OTHER MAMMALS	8
4.5. HERPETOFAUNA.....	8
4.6. BIRD SPECIES.....	8
4.7. INVERTEBRATES	8
5. CONCLUSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	9
5.1. AVOIDANCE OF ECOLOGICAL IMPACT	9
5.2. INVASIVE SPECIES.....	9
5.3. ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT	9
6. REFERENCES	10

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Parker Planning Services have been instructed by Anglia Developments Ltd to produce an Ecological Assessment of the land at 37 Mildenhall Road, Fordham, Ely, East Cambridgeshire, CB7 5NP (hereafter referred to as 'the site').

The purpose of the report is to identify the habitat types on the site, along with the presence or absence of any protected or notable species. The impacts of the proposed development are assessed, and recommendations are made regarding mitigation, compensation and ecological enhancement.

1.2. Site Details

The site is 323m² in size and consists of a commercial property and its associated parking area.

1.3. Development Proposals

The development proposals to convert the existing building into a residential dwelling, in addition to construction of a new building on the site.

1.4. Legislation

A summary of relevant legislation and policy can be viewed in **Appendix 3: Legislation and Policy**.

1.5. Qualifications of the Author

David Watts is a suitably qualified ecologist who is a full member of CIEEM, holds a BSc (Hons) Ecology, a PGCert Biological Recording, and holds Natural England class licences to survey bats, great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) and barn owls (*Tyto alba*).

2. Methods

2.1. Desk-Based Study

The Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs' (DEFRA) Magic Maps and Natural England websites were consulted as to any land-based designations and priority habitats within a 2km radius of the site.

Aerial imagery was assessed using OS maps and Google Earth Pro to give an appraisal of the surrounding land use.

Due to the low ecological value of the habitats on the site, in accordance with best practice guidelines (CIEEM, 2018), a full consultation with the local biological record centre was not undertaken.

2.2. Survey Timing

The site survey was carried out in suitable weather conditions by David Watts on 26th November 2021.

2.3. Habitat Survey Methods

The study area was surveyed in accordance with UK Habitat Classification (UKHab, 2018) guidelines. Habitat types were assigned a primary code to a hierarchical level of at least two, and secondary codes to further clarify the habitat.

Habitats and species present on or adjacent to the site were assessed using CIEEM's (2018) guidelines. Ecological features were classed as being of either international, national, regional, district, local or low importance (see Table 2.1).

Table 2.1 Importance of ecological features

Value of feature	Key examples
International	Internationally designated sites (e.g. SPA, SAC); internationally significant habitat listed in Annex 1 of the Habitats Directive; a regularly occurring globally threatened species
National	A nationally designated site (SSSI, NNR, LNR), a regularly occurring significant number/population of a nationally important species; a feature identified as being of critical importance.
Regional/County	Viable areas of key habitat identified in the regional or county BAP; a regularly occurring significant population/number of any species important at regional/county level; sites of conservation importance which exceed the district selection.
District	Areas of habitat identified in District/City/Borough BAP; sites/features which are scarce within the District/City/Borough; a regularly occurring significant population/number of any species important at District/City/Borough level.
Local	Areas identified in a Local BAP; sites/features which are scarce in the locality or which are considered to enrich the habitat resource within the local context (e.g. species-rich hedgerows); any populations, species or habitats of local importance.
Low	Habitats of moderate to low diversity which support a range of locally and nationally common species, the loss of which can be easily mitigated.

2.4. Protected and Notable Species

A survey of the site was undertaken for signs of and suitable habitat for any protected and notable species.

Buildings and trees were assessed for their potential for roosting bats using methods prescribed by the Bat Conservation Trust (Collins, 2016). A walkover inspection was made for any other notable mammal species, including badgers (*Meles meles*), otters (*Lutra lutra*) and water voles (*Arvicola amphibius*).

The site was assessed for its suitability for reptiles and amphibians. Any ponds within 500m of the site were identified through an assessment of Ordnance Survey maps and aerial imagery.

The site was assessed for its suitability for nesting birds. Any bird species identified during the survey were recorded.

The habitats on the site were assessed for their suitability for invertebrates, although a detailed invertebrate survey was not undertaken.

2.5. Invasive Species

Any invasive species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) on or immediately adjacent to the site were recorded.

2.6. Constraints

The site survey was constrained by the season in which it took place. The survey was undertaken outside of the optimum period for habitat surveys, although due to the nature of the habitats on the site this is not considered to be a major constraint to the survey findings.

3. Results

3.1. Designated Sites

DEFRA (2021) and Natural England (2021) hold records of designated sites within 2km of the site. These include:

- Brackland Rough, a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located 655m southwest of the site, consists of an alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) carr woodland.
- Chippenham Fen, a Ramsar site, SSSI, National Nature Reserve (NNR) and Local Nature Reserve (LNR) which is located 1.3km southeast of the site. The site consists of a diverse wetland with a diverse plant flora.
- Isleham LNR, located 1.5km north of the site, consists of a disused railway with species rich chalk grassland and hedgerows.

3.2. Habitats within the Surrounding Area

The immediate surrounding land use consists of a mixture of residential housing and arable land.

DEFRA hold records of a number of notable habitats within 2km of the site, including coastal and floodplain grazing marsh, lowland calcareous grassland, lowland fens, traditional orchards and deciduous woodland.

3.3. Habitats within the Site

The site consists predominantly of buildings and hardstanding surfaces (**u1b developed land, sealed surfaces**).

There was a hedgerow (**h2b hedgerow: other**) adjacent to the south boundary of the site, which consists predominantly of hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and creeping cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*), with field maple (*Acer campestre*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and ivy (*Hedera helix*).

Adjacent to the east boundary were several scattered trees (**11 scattered trees**) and shrubs, including ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), field maple, ornamental rose (*Rosa* sp.), firethorn (*Pyracantha coccinea*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Scot's pine (*Pinus sylvestris*) and lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*). The majority of the trees were semi-mature and were in poor condition, having been pruned heavily.

3.4. Invasive Species

Creeping cotoneaster, present within and adjacent to the hedgerow, is an invasive species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

3.5. Bats

DEFRA (2021) hold no records of granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) for bats within 2km of the site.

There was a single building on the site, which was divided into two sections. The north section consisted of a warehouse constructed of breezeblock with a double pitched metal roof. The interior consisted of a single room with no separate roof void, and which was well-lit by windows on the north and east aspects.

The south section of the building consisted of a two storey brick-built building with a pitched concrete tile roof and single storey half-pitched roofs on the east and west aspects. The roof was in good condition, with no visible gaps. The fascias were flush with the building and were well-sealed. No gaps were observed within the brickwork, which was painted.

An interior inspection of the building found the ground and first floors to be well-lit and sealed, with no access points suitable for bats. The roof void consisted of a converted attic which was well-lit by windows on the east and south aspects. The interior of the roof was lined with bituminous roofing felt, which was in good condition. No signs of bats or suitable access points for bats were identified within the building.

No potential roost features were identified within any of the trees on the site.

3.6. Other Mammals

No signs of any other protected or notable mammal species were identified on the site.

3.7. Herpetofauna

DEFRA hold no records of granted EPSLs within 2km of the site. A search on aerial imagery did not identify any ponds within 2km of the site.

The habitats on the site are highly modified and unsuitable for reptile and amphibian species.

3.8. Bird Species

No birds were identified on or flying over the site during the survey.

The hedgerow at the site boundary offers suitable habitat for nesting birds.

3.9. Invertebrates

The habitats on the site are highly modified and are unsuitable for notable invertebrate species.

4. Impact Assessment

4.1. Designated Sites

The closest designated site to the site is Breckland Rough, a SSSI 655m from the site. Due to the scale of the proposed development and its distance from the nearest designated site, there are no foreseeable impacts of the development upon designated sites.

4.2. Habitats

The habitats on the site are highly modified and are of low ecological value. The majority of the hedgerow at the south boundary is to be retained, with the exception of a small portion which is to be removed to facilitate access. There are therefore no significant negative impacts upon habitats resulting from the proposals.

4.3. Bats

No signs of bats were identified within the building, the interior was well-lit and no features suitable for roosting bats were identified on the exterior of the building. The building is therefore considered to have negligible potential for roosting bats.

The trees on the site have no potential roosting features and are all considered to have negligible potential for roosting bats.

The habitats on the site provide suboptimal conditions for foraging and commuting bats. There are therefore no foreseeable impacts of the development upon bat species.

4.4. Other Mammals

There are no foreseeable impacts of the development upon other protected or notable mammal species.

4.5. Herpetofauna

There are no foreseeable impacts of the development proposals upon reptiles or amphibians.

4.6. Bird Species

In the absence of further mitigation, the removal of any trees and part of the hedgerow may impact upon nesting birds.

4.7. Invertebrates

There are no foreseeable impacts of the development proposals upon notable invertebrate species. The development will not impact upon pollination resources within the surrounding area.

5. Conclusion and Recommendations

5.1. Avoidance of Ecological Impact

It is recommended that vegetation removal either avoids the bird nesting season (1st March – 31st August), or only commences within this period if a further survey conducted by a suitably qualified ecologist has confirmed nesting birds to be absent.

In the unlikely event that any other protected or notable species are identified during development works, works must cease, and a suitably qualified ecologist must be consulted immediately.

5.2. Invasive Species

It is recommended that cotoneaster is removed from the site.

5.3. Ecological Enhancement

It is recommended that the ecological value of the site is enhanced through the incorporation of further planting into the development proposals. Plant species should be either native, or of known benefit to local wildlife. As the majority of the site is currently covered in hardstanding surfaces, any planting as part of the proposals is likely to result in an ecological enhancement.

6. References

CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd edition*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

CIEEM (2018). *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and marine*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

Collins, J. (ed) (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd Edition)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

DEFRA (2021). *Magic Maps* [online]. Available at: >www.magic.defra.gov.uk< [accessed 30th November 2021]

Google Earth Pro (2021). *Google Earth* [online]. Available at: >www.earth.google.com< [accessed 30th November 2021]

Natural England (2021). *Designated Sites View* [online]. Available at: >www.designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk< [accessed 30th November 2021]

UKHab (2018). *The UK Habitat Classification User Manual*. The UK Habitat Classification Working Group

Appendix 1: Photographs



Plate 1: The site, showing north and east aspects of building



Plate 2: Hedgerow



Plate 3: Scattered trees and shrubs



Plate 4: East aspect of building



Plate 5: North aspect of building



Plate 6: West aspect of building

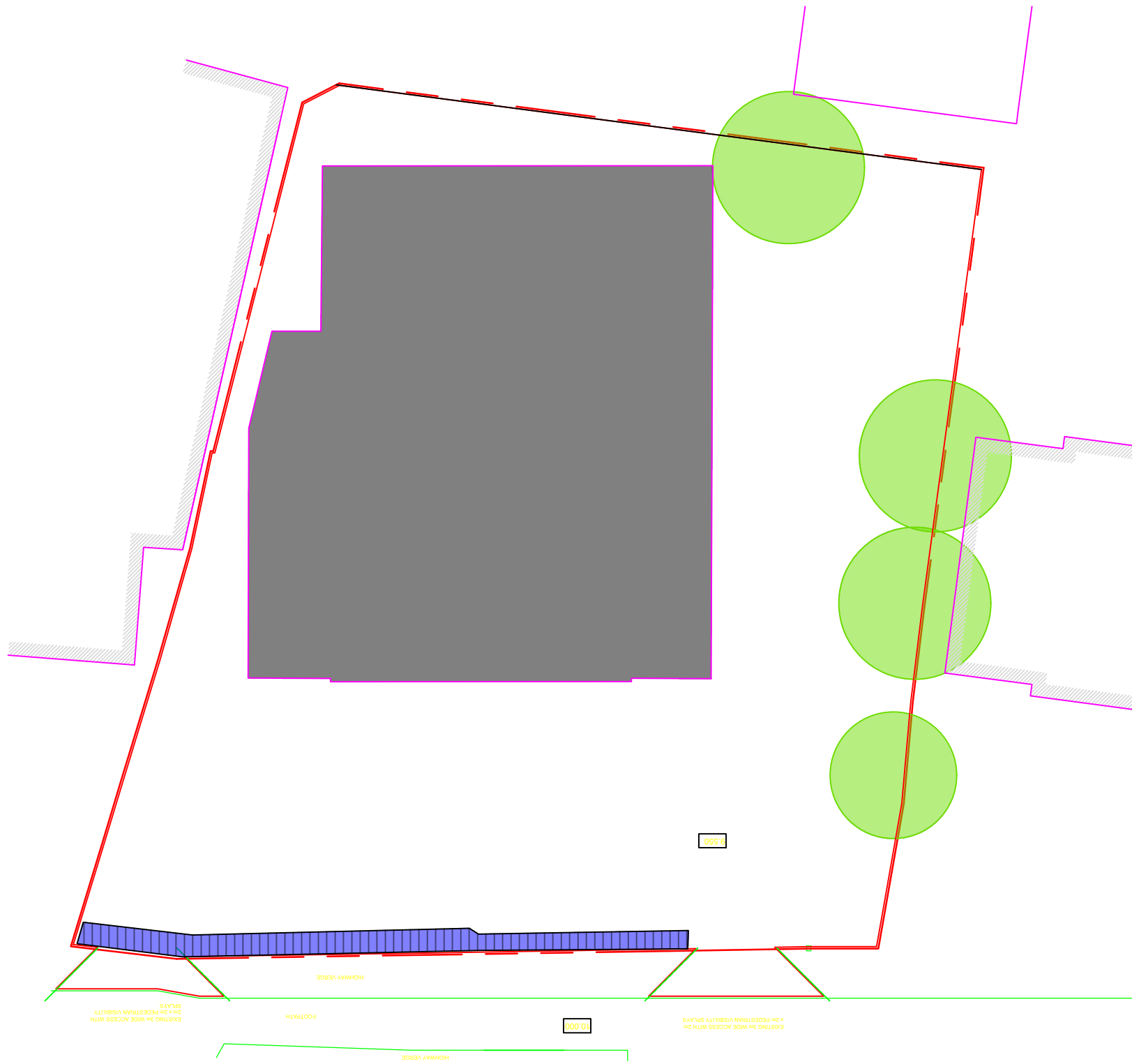


Plate 7: Interior of north of building



Plate 8: Interior of roof void to south

Appendix 2: Habitat Plan



Key:

	h2a hedgerow
	11 Scattered trees
	u1b buildings



Drawing title:	Habitat Plan
Project:	37 Mildenhall Road
Drawing number:	PIH-1505-01
Drawn by:	David Watts
Date:	30/11/2021
Scale:	1:200 @ A4

To be reproduced in colour only.



Appendix 3: Legislation and Policy

Statutory Designated Sites

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) are first-tier sites for conservation. They are identified by JNCC/Natural England as being of interest by reason of their flora, fauna, geological or physiological features. The legal framework for SSSI is within the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They are of national importance and have statutory protection.

Ramsar Sites are wetlands of international importance that have been designated under the criteria of the Ramsar Convention of Wetlands for containing representative, rare or unique wetland types or for their importance in conserving biological diversity.

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are statutory sites of at least local importance. They are declared under section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and amended by Schedule 11 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. All district and county councils have powers to acquire, declare and manage LNRs. Parish and town councils can also declare LNRs but they must have the powers to do so delegated to them by the principal local authority. To qualify for LNR status, a site must be of importance for wildlife, geology, education or public enjoyment. Some are also nationally important Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Hedgerow Regulations 1997

The Hedgerow Regulations set out criteria that must be used by the local planning authority to determine whether hedgerows are important. These relate to the values of hedgerows from an archaeological, historical, landscape and ecological perspective. They exclude hedgerows that are less than 30 years old. Removal of a hedgerow in contravention of the regulations is a criminal offence.

Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2017 makes it an offence to deliberately capture, kill or disturb any animal protected under Schedule 2 of the regulations. It is also an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of an animal, even if the animal is not present at the time.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (As Amended), makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately or recklessly injure, kill or capture any animal protected under Schedule 5 of the act.
- Deliberately or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild bird; to take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while occupied or being built, or to take or destroy the egg of a wild bird. Additional protection is afforded to bird species listed under Schedule 1 of the Act.
- Intentionally pick, uproot or destroy any wild plant included in Schedule 8 of the Act.

Badger Protection Act 1992

Badgers (*Meles meles*) benefit from specific protection under the provisions of the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Under the Act, it is an offence to wilfully kill, injure or take a badger (or attempt to do so), to cruelly ill-treat a badger, to interfere with a sett, cause a dog to enter a sett, and to disturb a badger while it is occupying a sett.

Biodiversity Action Plan

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) includes a list of 943 national priority species and 56 habitats of principal importance, with all species and habitats having specific action plans defining the measures required to ensure their conservation. Although the UKBAP has since been superseded by the UK-Post 2010 Biodiversity Framework and a focus on County Biodiversity Plans, it remains a useful point of reference.

Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006 required that any public bodies take into consideration any species and habitats listed in the UKBAP when implementing their duty and exercising any normal functions.

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) states that planning decisions should aim to protect or enhance biodiversity and conservation interests, and where possible any development should aim to increase net gains in biodiversity.

