



10 Walnut Close, Chelmsley Wood, B37 7PU

Prepared for: Ms Claire Dunkley

Bat & Bird Survey - Preliminary Roost Assessment

20th April 2022

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Executive Summary

Midland Ecology Ltd undertook a Preliminary Roost Assessment of terrace house at 10 Walnut Close, Chelmsley Wood, B37 7PU on the 20th of April 2022. The aim of the assessment was to consider the presence or likely-absence¹ of roosting bats, and the value/suitability of the building(s) for roosting bats. The development proposals briefly comprise demolition of the garage block, and its replacement with a residential property.

Potential for roosting bats	Recommendations for further survey and assessment
Negligible	No further surveys required.

The assessment concludes that the building shows negligible suitability for use by roosting bats and that the site is unlikely to play a significant role in connecting the wider landscape. The proposals are therefore unlikely to result in disturbance and/or harm to bats. The likely absence of roosting bats from this building has been established. No further surveys or site supervision are recommended.

¹ It is not currently scientifically possible to prove an absence, so an assessed absence is usually referred to as a “likely-absence”.

1.0 Introduction and Context

1.1 Background

Midland Ecology Ltd were commissioned by Ms Claire Dunkley to undertake a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at 10 Walnut Close, Chelmsley Wood, B37 7PU. The assessment is informed by the Bat Conservation Trust publication *Bat Surveys – Good Practice Guidelines* (Collins, 2016).

No previous reports have been produced for this site by Midland Ecology Ltd. The author is not aware of any previous ecological surveys at this site.

1.2 Scope of the Report

This report provides a description of all structural features suitable for roosting bats and evaluates those features in the context of the site and wider environment. It further documents any physical evidence collected or recorded during the site survey that establishes the presence of roosting bats. It provides information on constraints to the proposals as a result of roosting bats, and summarises the requirements for any further surveys, to inform subsequent mitigation proposals, achieve Planning or other statutory consent, and to comply with wildlife legislation.

The aim of the assessment was to determine the presence or evaluate the likelihood of presence of roosting bats, and to gain an understanding of how they could use the building or structure. To achieve this, the following steps have been taken:

- A desk study has been carried out.
- In line with CIEEM guidance, biological records data is not routinely requested for surveys relating to a single residential building (particularly if relatively modern).
- A field survey has been undertaken, including an external and internal inspection of the building
- An outline of likely impacts on any known roosts has been provided, based on current development proposals
- Recommendations for further survey and assessment have been made, along with advice on European Protected Species Mitigation Licensing if appropriate

A survey plan is presented in Appendix 1, and the proposed Project Plan is included in Appendix 2. Photographs taken during the site survey can be found in Appendix 3. A summary of relevant legislation is included in Appendix 4, and further desk study information in Appendix 5.

1.3 Site Context

The site is located at National Grid Reference SP178861 and comprises an area of approximately 0.01ha. There is one building within the site boundary, with houses adjacent. The site is situated in the Chelmsley Wood area, Birmingham. This is a suburban location, with residential properties and gardens on all sides, and playing fields and woodland nearby.

1.4 Project Description

This report is prepared in relation to a planning application for the site.

It is proposed that the existing garage at this property be demolished, and replaced with a residential property. All works areas, storage and haul routes will be included within the site boundaries; access will be provided by existing driveway and as such, no additional working footprints are anticipated. It is not considered likely that the proposal would have any impact on the surrounding land, habitat blocks, mature trees etc.

2.0 Methods

2.1 Desk Study

A review of the following information sources has also been undertaken to inform the assessment:

- Landscape structure using aerial images from Google Earth
- Designated sites, habitat and species data held on Magic.defra.gov.uk.
- Designated sites information found on Natureonthemap.naturalengland.org.uk
- Information on the surrounding area using OS Opendata 2010

In line with CIEEM guidance, biological records data is not routinely requested for surveys relating to a single residential building (particularly if relatively modern).

2.2 Site Survey

The survey was undertaken by James Porter, BSc (Hons), MSc, MCIEEM, English bat licence number: 2015-13455-CLS-CLS; and Chloe King, BSc (Hons); on the 10th of February 2022.

All buildings that will be impacted by the project proposals (the survey area) were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats. The surveyor systematically searched for features suitable for roosting bats and signs of bat activity, by conducting a non-intrusive visual appraisal from the ground using binoculars, inspecting the external features of the buildings for potential access/egress points, and for signs of bat use. An internal inspection of the building was also made, including the living areas of derelict or abandoned buildings and the roof spaces of all buildings, using an endoscope, torch and ladders. The surveyor paid particular attention to the floor and flat surfaces, window shutters and frames, lintels above doors and windows, and carried out a detailed search of numerous features within the roof space.

2.2.1 Breeding birds and other incidental observations

The surveyor also made note of any other ecological constraints observed during the survey, notably the likelihood of presence or signs of breeding birds, and the suitability of the site for breeding barn owls *Tyto alba*.

2.3 Suitability Assessment

The buildings were categorised according to the likelihood of bats being present, in line with best practice guidelines (Collins, 2016); the features of the building that dictate the likelihood of roosting bats are summarised in Table 1. Roost suitability is classified as high, moderate, low and negligible and dictates any further surveys required before works can proceed.

Table 1: Features of a building that are correlated with use by bats during the summer

Likelihood of bats being present	Feature of building and its context
Higher	Buildings/structures with features of particular significance for roosting bats e.g. mines, caves, tunnels, icehouses and cellars. Habitat on site and surrounding landscape of high quality for foraging bats e.g. broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is connected with the wider landscape by strong linear features that would be used by commuting bats e.g. river and or stream valleys and hedgerows. Site is proximate to known or likely roosts (based on historical data).
Lower	A small number of possible roost sites/features used sporadically by more widespread species. Habitat suitable for foraging in close proximity but isolated in the landscape. Or an isolated site not connected by prominent linear features. Few features suitable for roosting, minor foraging or commuting.

2.3 Limitations

It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to describe the features on site in the context of their suitability for roosting bats, this does not provide a complete characterisation of the site.

Where only four figure grid references are provided for bat records, it is not possible to determine their precise location as they could be present anywhere within the given 1km x 1km National Grid square.

This survey provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of bats being present. This is based on suitability of the habitats on the site and in the local area, the ecology and biology of bats as currently understood, and the known distribution of bats as recovered during the desk study.

3.0 Results and Evaluation

3.1 Desk Study Results

A summary of desk study results is provided below; further details are included in Appendix 5.

3.1.1 Designated sites

Table 2: Designated Nature Conservation sites within the study area

Designated site name	Designation	Location and direction from site	Citation
Alcott Wood	LNR	0.4km west	A natural example of oak woodland with ground flora containing several ancient species including wood anemone, remote sedge, and wood sorrel. Very few non-native trees. Scrub can also be found.
Marston Green Park	LNR	0.5km west	Contains a wildflower meadow, ponds, fruit orchards, and a brook through it. This site contains various fauna and flora important to the wider ecosystem.
Marston Green Millennium Wood	LNR	1.2km south	Millennium Wood has fine, sandy soil, providing plenty of value including lots of maturing silver birch trees, open pathways, numerous rabbit and mole hills. Other tree species include oak, birch, rowan, goat willow, hawthorn, blackthorn, holly and elder.
Chelmsley Wood	LNR	0.8km north	The site contains a man-made pool and wetland area. The site is valuable to birds and invertebrates. It contains plant species such as bluebells, oak and willow. It is connected to Cole Bank LNR.
Cole Bank	LNR	1.1km north	Cole Bank Park LNR in Chelmsley Wood benefitted from a significant habitat improvement project. The project included de-silting ponds and re-profiling a 250m section of riverbank on the River Cole to facilitate an increase in the natural river processes of erosion and deposition. This will encourage the development of river features such as gravel beaches, riffles and pools which will themselves support a greater diversity of wildlife.
Babbs Mill	LNR	1.7km north	This site contains a lake, the river Cole, wildflower grasslands and woodland. A natural habitat for owls and a protected area for bats, it is a diverse habitat.

Designated site name	Designation	Location and direction from site	Citation
			Along the river, kingfishers and herons are a common, feeding on fish in the river. Water voles and mink are both associated with the river and, more recently, otters have been recorded at the lower reaches of the Cole.
Coleshill and Bannerly Pools	SSSI	1.7km east	The pools have developed to become havens for pond invertebrates and amphibians. Common toads, frogs and smooth newts can be found alongside dragonflies and damselflies, beetles, water boatmen and water scorpions, all of which live in and around the ponds. In winter, teals have become regular visitors to the ponds, and widgeons have also been recorded.

The site also falls within the Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) of two Sites of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI); Coleshill and Bannerly Pools SSSI (as above) and River Blythe SSSI (approx. 3.5km to the east). The proposals are of a type that do not require further consultation with Natural England.

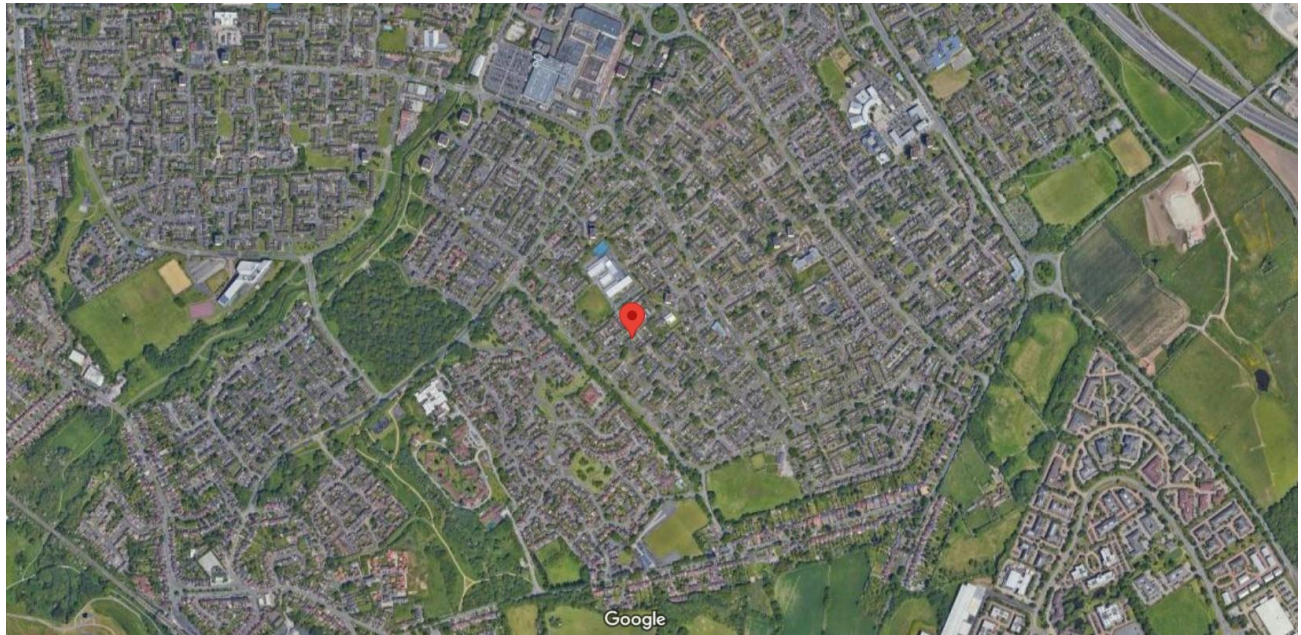
3.1.2 Landscape

A search of the Magic.defra.gov.uk database shows numerous areas of deciduous woodland present throughout the study area (the closest lying approx. 0.5km to the east of site), some of which are ancient and semi-natural woodland (closest of which is located approx. 0.5km to the east of the site). There are also areas of broadleaved woodland (approx. 0.4km east), assumed woodland (approx. 0.5km south-west), young trees woodland (approx. 0.6km west) and conifer woodland (approx. 1.4km south-east). There are also areas of good quality semi-improved grassland (approx. 0.5km west) and coastal and floodplain marsh (approx. 1.2km west from the site)

These habitats are likely to be classified as Priority habitats of principle importance, and of particular value to bats.

A review of aerial photographs (Figure 1) and OS maps shows the site is unlikely to be important in the context of the surrounding landscape. It shows no clear role in connecting blocks of woodland to the wider hedgerow network, or otherwise providing suitable habitat corridors for bats.

Figure 1: Aerial photo of site, showing landscape structure © Google 2022



3.1.3 Historical records

A search of the Magic.defra.gov.uk database shows two European Protected Species Mitigation Licences (EPSML) that have been granted for bats within 2km of site. One was issued in 2013 for a project impacting common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, allowing the destruction of a resting place at a location approx. 1.1km to the north of site. The other was issued in 2020 for a project impacting brown long-eared *Plecotus auratus*, common pipistrelle, common noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* allowing for the damage of a resting place and destruction of a breeding site and resting place at a location approx. 1.9km south-east of the site.

3.2 Survey Results

The building within the survey area comprised a detached cement block garage. Potential roosting features (PRF) described below are illustrated on the map in Appendix 1.

B1 – House/Garage

Building description:

- Flat roof with cladded bitumen felt and UPVC fascia boards
- Fascia boards mostly tightly fitted to the wall
- Bitumen felt roof is tightly fitted and intact
- Rendered cement block walls all around with render intact
- Roll top garage door
- Concrete floor
- Inner timber work of flat roof is intact with no gaps and no daylight entering

PRF observed:

- No potential roosting features observed

Evidence of bats:

- No bat droppings, feeding detritus or urine staining seen
- A 1cm gap on the wall on the roadside but heavily clogged with cobwebs suggesting no bat use
- Dense coatings of cobwebs around roof timbers
- Trailing cobwebs to approx. 1.7m suggesting no bats have been flying/foraging within the garage space
- Cobwebs are particularly dense around the roll top garage door suggesting bats have not been entering the building through this gap.

3.2.1 Breeding birds and other incidental observations

No evidence of nesting birds was observed within, on or adjacent to the building.

3.3 Evaluation – Likelihood of bats being present

Taking the desk-based assessment and site survey results into account, the following value for roosting bats has been placed on each building.

Table 3: Evaluation of buildings/structures on site

Likelihood of bats using the building for roosting	Brief summary of justification
Negligible	Entry point at roll top garage door but dense cobwebs in the area suggests no bats have been entering the building via this entry point.

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

4.1 Conclusions and Impact Assessment

The PRA concludes that the building shows negligible suitability of supporting roosting bats. It is considered that the likely-absence of roosting bats has been established.

Please note: It is not currently scientifically possible to prove an absence, so an assessed absence is usually referred to as a “likely-absence”.

4.1.1 Breeding birds and other incidental observations

Legislation protects all wild birds whilst they are breeding, and prohibits the killing, injuring or taking of any wild bird or their nests and eggs. It is an offence to disturb any bird or their young during the breeding season.

Nesting birds are unlikely to be present within the building, and so such impacts are considered unlikely.

4.2 Recommendations

4.2.1 Survey and assessment

Best practice survey guidelines (Collins, 2016) recommend additional surveys for all buildings assessed as having low to high suitability for roosting bats. Buildings assessed as comprising negligible suitability for roosting bats do not normally require further surveys. Appropriate justification for this assessment is provided in Section 3.0 and Table 3 of this report. Those found to support roosting bats may require further survey to inform an EPSML application, depending on the proposed works and assessment of impacts, and the species present/likely to be present.

However, if unexpected bats are found during any stage of the development (regardless of survey findings), work must stop immediately and a suitably qualified ecologist should be contacted to seek further advice.

Recommendations for further survey/assessment associated with each building are provided in Table 4.

Table 4: Survey recommendations

Building Ref	Likelihood of supporting roosting bats	Recommendations
B1	Negligible	No further surveys

5.0 Bibliography

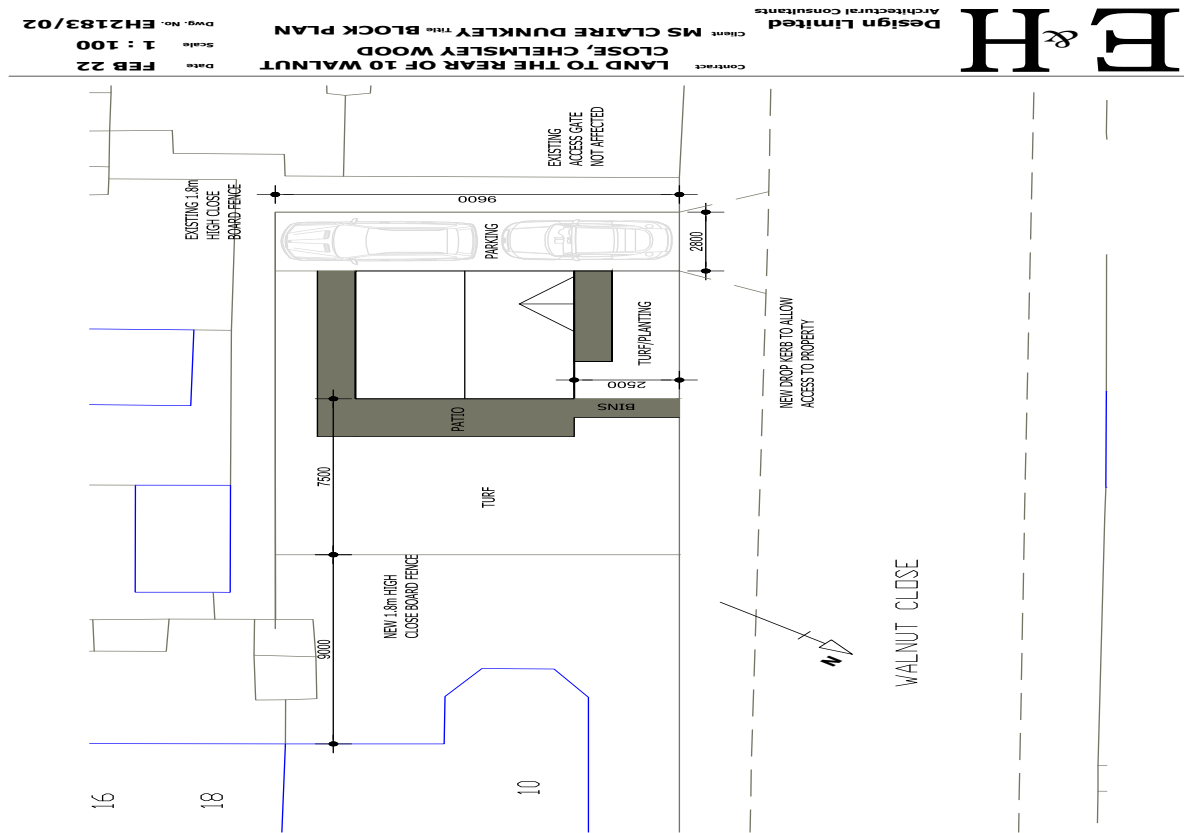
- Collins, J. (ed), (2016), Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition, BCT
- Mitchell-Jones, A.J. (2004). Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough.
- Garland & Markham (2008) Is important bat foraging and commuting habitat legally protected?
- CIEEM (2016) Guidelines for Accessing and Using Biodiversity Data

Appendices

Appendix 1: Survey Plan



Appendix 2: Proposed Site Plan



Appendix 3: Photographs



Image 1: Building viewed from North



Image 2: Building interior



Image 3: Dense coating of cobwebs

Appendix 4: Legislation and Planning Policy related to bats

LEGAL PROTECTION

All species of bat are fully protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 2.

Regulation 41 prohibits:

- Deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species (e.g. all bats)
- Deliberate disturbance of bat species as:
 - a) to impair their ability:
 - (i) to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young
 - (ii) to hibernate or migrate
 - b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place

Bats are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) through their inclusion on Schedule 5. Under this Act, they are additionally protected from:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)
- Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection
- Selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale

Effect on development works:

A European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licence issued by the relevant statutory authority (e.g. Natural England) will be required for works likely to affect a bat roost or for operations likely to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake those activities mentioned above (e.g. survive, breed, rear young and hibernate). The licence is to allow derogation from the relevant legislation but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and their efficiency/success to be monitored.

The legislation may also be interpreted such that, in certain circumstances, important foraging areas and/or commuting routes can be regarded as being afforded *de facto* protection, for example, where it can be proven that the continued usage of such areas is crucial to maintaining the integrity and long-term viability of a bat roost (Garland & Markham, 2008)

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY (ENGLAND)

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework promotes sustainable development. The Framework specifies the need for protection of designated sites and priority habitats and species. An emphasis is also made on the need for ecological infrastructure through protection, restoration and re-creation. The protection and recovery of priority species (considered likely to be those listed as UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species) is also listed as a requirement of planning policy.

In determining a planning application, planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by ensuring that: designated sites are protected from harm; there is appropriate mitigation or compensation where significant harm cannot be avoided; opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments are encouraged; and planning permission is refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including aged or veteran trees and also ancient woodland.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and The Biodiversity Duty

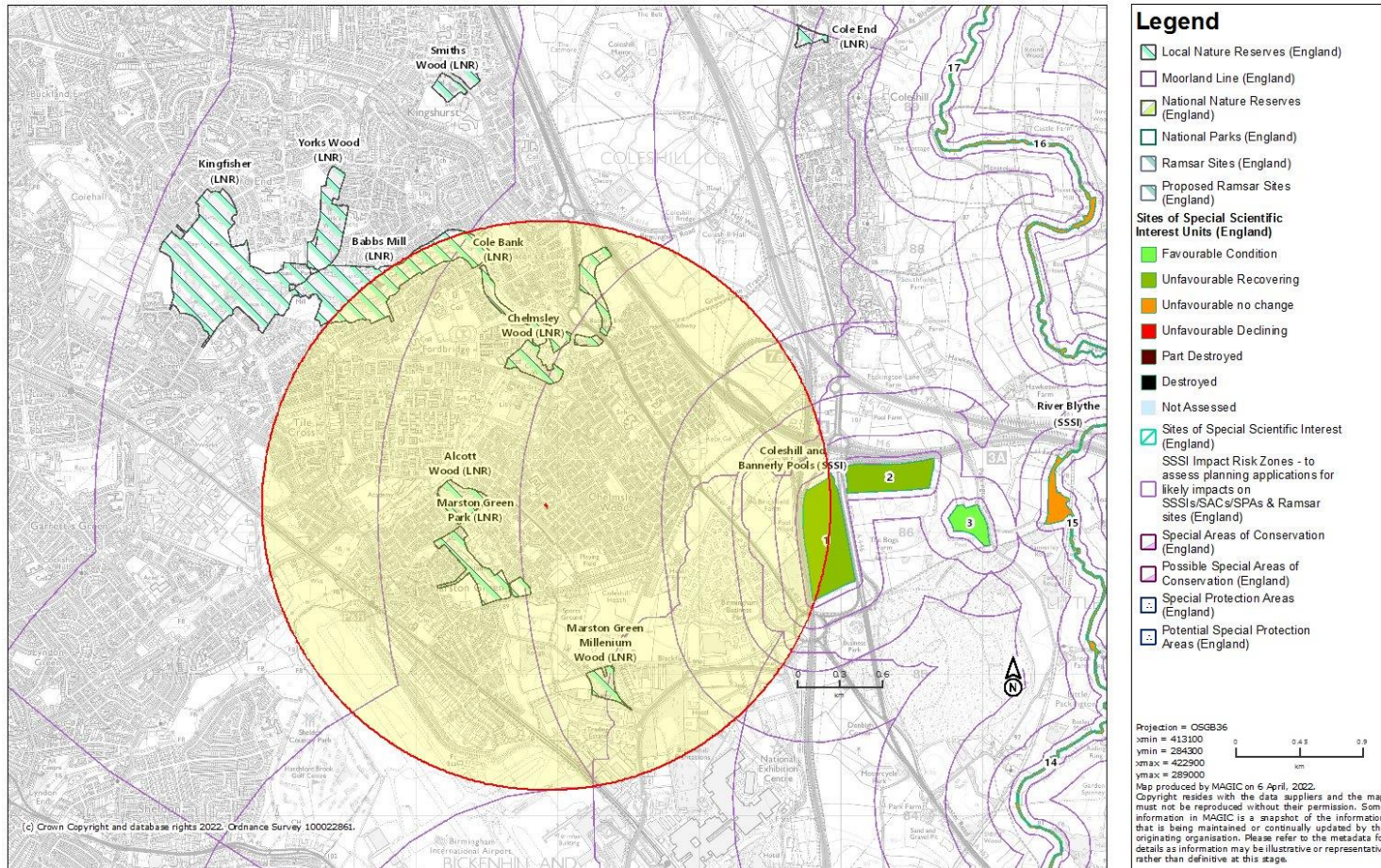
Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006, requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the 'biodiversity duty'.

Section 41 of the Act (Section 42 in Wales) requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of 'principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.' This list is intended to assist decision makers such as public bodies in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act. Under the Act these habitats and species are regarded as a material consideration in determining planning applications. A developer must show that their protection has been adequately addressed within a development proposal.

Appendix 5: Desk Study Information

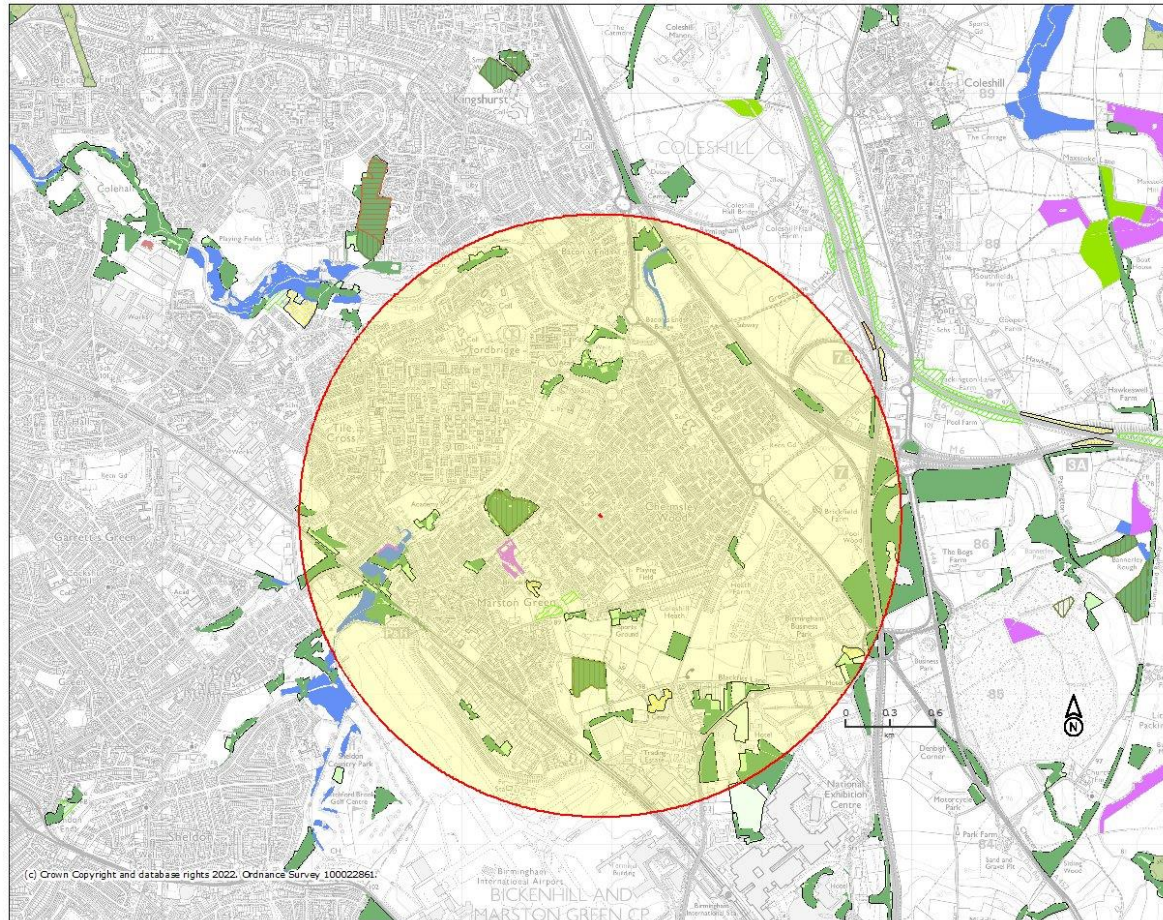


Statutory Designations Within 2km of the Site





Priority Habitat Within 2km of the Site



Legend

- Priority H habitat inventory - Calaminarian Grassland (England)
- Priority H habitat inventory - Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh (England)
- Priority H habitat inventory - Good quality semi-improved grassland (Non Priority) (England)
- Priority H habitat inventory - Lowland Calcareous Grassland (England)
- Priority H habitat inventory - Lowland Dry Acid Grassland (England)
- Priority H habitat inventory - Lowland Meadows (England)
- Priority H habitat inventory - Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pasture (England)
- Priority H habitat inventory - Upland Calcareous Grassland (England)
- Priority H habitat inventory - Upland Hay Meadows (England)
- Priority H habitat inventory - Lowland Heathland (England)
- Priority H habitat inventory - Mountain Heaths and Willow Scrub (England)
- Priority H habitat inventory - Upland Heathland (England)
- Priority H habitat inventory - Blanket Bog (England)
- Priority H habitat inventory - Lowland Fens (England)
- Priority H habitat inventory - Lowland Raised Bog (England)
- Priority H habitat inventory - Reedbeds (England)
- Priority H habitat inventory - Upland Flushes, Fens and Swamps (England)

Ancient Woodland (England)

- Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland
- Ancient Replanted Woodland
- Priority H habitat inventory - Deciduous Woodland (England)
- Forestry Commission Legal Boundary (England)

Projection = OSGB36
 xmin = 413000
 ymin = 284200
 xmax = 422800
 ymax = 289900

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