HEYFORD DEVELOPMENTS LTD

LAND OFF FOXLYDIATE LANE, REDDITCH

Ecological Appraisal: Constraints and Opportunities

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1. Introduction

1.1. **Background.** Aspect Ecology has been commissioned by Heyford Developments Ltd to identify any potential ecological constraints or opportunities in respect of future development within a study area at Foxlydiate Lane, Redditch (see Plan 3086/EA1), in order to fully inform representations currently being prepared to promote the study area for residential development through the Redditch Borough Council Planning Framework.

1.2. Accordingly, this report provides a summary of the key ecological issues identified with recommendations for any further ecological work required to provide a fully robust detailed assessment, should a future planning application be pursued. A brief appraisal and comparison is also provided in regard to other areas to the north-west of Redditch being promoted for residential development.

1.3. **Study Area Characteristics.** The study area is dominated by improved grassland and arable land, with woodland, ponds, hedgerows and lines of trees. Stables and residential properties, with associated gardens, are also present within the study area.

2. Methodology

2.1. The methodology utilised for the survey work can be split into 3 main areas: a desktop study, habitat survey, and faunal survey. These are described in more detail below.

2.2. Desktop Study

2.2.1. In order to compile background information on the study area and its immediate surroundings, the following organisation was contacted:

- Worcestershire Biological Records Centre (WBRC)

2.2.2. Information from the above organisation has been received and reviewed, and relevant information is presented on Plan 3086/ECO2 and incorporated within a table at Appendix 1.

2.2.3. Information on statutory designated sites was obtained from the online Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) database, which utilises data provided by Natural England, and Natural England's online resource, 'Nature on the Map'. This information is reproduced at Appendix 2, and where appropriate on Plan 3086/ECO2.

2.3. Habitat Survey

2.3.1. The study area was surveyed in September 2012 in order to obtain a general overview of the principle habitat types present, with several additional areas (Areas A, B, C and D; See Plan 3086/ECO1) also subject to a brief walkover survey.

2.4. Faunal Surveys

2.4.1. General faunal activity, such as mammals or birds observed visually or by call during the course of the surveys was recorded. Specific attention was also paid to the potential presence of any protected, rare or notable species.

3. Policy Framework

3.1. The planning policy framework that relates to nature conservation issues in Redditch, Worcestershire, is issued at two main administrative levels – nationally through the National Planning Policy Framework and locally through Redditch Borough Council Local Plan No.3 and the Revised Preferred Draft Core Strategy. Any proposed development will be judged in relation to the policies contained in these planning documents.

3.2. National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

3.2.1. Guidance on National Policy for biodiversity and geological conservation is provided within the National Planning Policy Framework, published by the Department for Communities and Local Government in March 2012. The National Planning Policy Framework confirms the Government's commitment to conserving and enhancing the natural and local environment through the planning system, and in particular states:

"Minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;"

3.2.2. The National Planning Policy Framework requires Local Authorities to fully consider the effect of planning decisions on biodiversity and geodiversity, and ensure that appropriate weight is attached to statutory nature conservation designations, protected species, priority habitats and species, and biodiversity and geological interests within the wider environment.

3.3. Local Planning Policy

3.3.1. Planning policy in Redditch at the local level in respect of Ecology and Nature Conservation is currently under transformation due to the implementation of the Local Development Scheme (LDS) which is a three-year project plan for the production and review of the planning policy

documents which will eventually form the Development Plan for Redditch Borough. The LDS is scheduled to be completed in late 2015 and in the meantime planning policy at the local level will be guided by `saved` policies from the Local Plan No.3 and the Revised Preferred Draft Core Strategy.

Local Plan No. 3

3.3.2. The Local Plan incorporates four `saved` policies (**B(NE).1a, B(NE).3, B(NE).10a** and **B(NE).10b**) concerned with nature conservation in Redditch.

3.3.3. **Policy B(NE).1a** states:

"Existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows of nature conservation, amenity or landscape value should be retained and their appropriate management encouraged. The importance of ancient semi-natural woodlands is recognised and particular emphasis should be placed on their conservation. Proposals to conserve and increase the indigenous broadleaved cover in both urban and rural areas are to be encouraged providing these do not cause damage or lead to the deterioration of existing habitats and features of biodiversity importance, are in keeping with the landscape character of the area and achieve successful integration with the landform. Proposals will be particularly encouraged where these would lead to:

i. the establishment of native woodlands in appropriate places, that expand and link ancient semi-natural woodland remnants;
ii. the restoration to native woodland of non-native plantations on ancient woodland sites in priority locations;
iii. the introduction of management proposals to conserve and enhance trees and woodlands in urban areas and on the urban fringe;
iv. multi-purpose tree planting for nature conservation, amenity, landscape improvement, and timber production; and
v. the conservation of veteran trees."

3.3.4. **Policy B(NE).3** states:

"The Borough Council will seek to protect and enhance those 'countryside features' which act as wildlife corridors, such as hedgerows and watercourses and also other biodiversity features of importance that act as 'stepping stones' from one habitat to another. Development which would be materially detrimental to the most important of these 'countryside features' will not normally be permitted. However, where it can be demonstrated that the benefits of development clearly outweigh the resultant detriment to local wildlife and to the value of that feature as a wildlife corridor, development may be permitted. In such cases, conditions and/or planning obligations will be used to minimise damage and to ensure habitat enhancement and/or creation is carried out on or close to the site wherever appropriate to maintain a corridor."

3.3.5. **Policy B(NE).10a** states:

"Proposals for development, or land use change, in or likely to affect, Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) will be subject to the most rigorous examination. Where such development may have an adverse effect, directly or indirectly on the SSSI, it will not be allowed unless there are no reasonable alternative means of meeting that development need and the reasons for the development clearly outweigh the value of the site itself and the national policy to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the national network of such sites. Where the site concerned is a National Nature Reserve (NNR) or a site identified under the Nature Conservation Review (NCR) or Geological Conservation Review (GCR) particular regard will be paid to the individual site's national importance. In all cases where development or land-use change is permitted:

i. any damage to the nature conservation and/or geological value of the site will be kept to a minimum; and
ii. adequate and appropriate protection and enhancement of the site's nature conservation and/or geological interest will be secured, and where necessary, appropriate and adequate compensatory measures will be provided, using conditions and/or planning obligations where necessary."

3.3.6. **Policy B(NE).10b** states:

"The nature conservation value of Local Nature Reserves (LNRs), Special Wildlife Sites (SWSs), Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites and Sites of Wildlife Importance subject to a Section 39 Agreement under the Wildlife and Countryside Act found within the Borough, ranges from that of local to national significance. Development or land-use change, likely to have an adverse effect on such sites will not be allowed unless there are no reasonable alternative means of meeting the development need and it can be clearly demonstrated that the reasons for the development or land-use change outweigh the intrinsic nature conservation and/or geological value of the site which may be affected by the development. In all cases where development or land-use change is permitted:

i. any damage to the nature conservation and/or geological value of the site will be kept to a minimum; and
ii. adequate and appropriate protection and enhancement of the site's nature conservation and/or geological interest will be secured, and here necessary, appropriate and adequate compensatory measures will be provided, using conditions and/or planning obligations where necessary."

Revised Preferred Draft Core Strategy: Development Plan Document for the Borough of Redditch (2011)

3.3.7. The Revised Preferred Draft Core Strategy incorporates two policies (**2** and **5**) concerned with nature conservation in Redditch.

3.3.8. **Policy 2** states:

"The need for a high quality natural environment is integral to deliver the Vision of the Core Strategy. In order to achieve this all proposals will be expected to:

i. incorporate water efficiency measures and appropriate SUDS techniques that utilize detention/ retention methods. For Redditch suitable methods include greywater recycling, rainwater harvesting, green roofs, permeable

surfaces, swales and ponds, which are all features of the natural environment;

ii. protect and enhance the quality of natural resources and Green Infrastructure including water, air, land, wildlife corridors, species, habitats and biodiversity;

iii. integrate with biodiversity and geodiversity through enhancing, linking and extending natural habitats;

iv. remediate contaminated land, where necessary;

v. demonstrate the Borough's distinctive natural landscape is protected, enhanced or restored, as appropriate and proposals are informed by, and sympathetic to, the surrounding landscape character;

vi. existing trees, woodlands and hedgerows (including ancient hedgerows) have been retained and their appropriate management encouraged. Particular emphasis should be placed on the expanding and linking of ancient semi-natural woodlands; and

vii. where appropriate, contributions towards the maintenance and/or management of woodland, which would be negotiated on a site-by-site basis"

3.3.9. **Policy 5** states:

"The Green Infrastructure (GI) Network and Open Space provision make an important and valued contribution to the Borough of Redditch and its distinctiveness.

The existing GI Network will be safeguarded and new development will be required to contribute positively to the GI network, in line with the findings of the Redditch Borough GI Strategy and to support the Worcestershire Sub-Regional GI Framework. Opportunities will be sought to improve the network for the benefit of people, wildlife and the character and appearance of the Borough.

Open Space will be protected and, where appropriate, enhanced to improve quality, value, multi-functionality and accessibility. New development will be required to provide open space in accordance with the Council's Open Space Provision Supplementary Planning Document.

The Borough Council will, where appropriate, produce Green Infrastructure Concept Statements to guide masterplanning and development of Strategic Sites."

4. Ecological Constraints and Opportunities

4.1. Ecological Designations

Statutory and Non-Statutory Designations

4.1.1. The study area itself is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designation. The nearest nature conservation designation to the study area is Foxlydiate Wood which lies approximately 100m to the east of the study area (see Plan 3086/ECO2) and is separated from the study area by an existing road and residential development. Foxlydiate Wood is classified as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR; statutory) and Local Wildlife Site (LWS; non-statutory), and incorporates areas of Ancient and Semi-natural Woodland.

Ancient Woodland

4.1.2. Ancient woodland does not occur within the study area, although is present in the local area. The nearest area of ancient woodland is associated with Foxlydiate Wood, as stated above, and the next nearest is Bartles Wood located approximately 300m to the north-west of the study area.

4.1.3. **Constraints:** The study area itself is not subject to any statutory designation or non-statutory nature conservation designation or ancient woodland status. All known ecological designations in the local area are separated from the study area and therefore, in accordance with the NPPF and Local Plan policies B(NE).10a and B(NE).10b, do not represent a constraint to future development of the study area.

4.2. Habitats and Ecological Features

4.2.1. The following main habitat/vegetation types were identified within/adjacent to the study area and are represented on Plan 3086/ECO3:

- Improved Grassland / Pasture
- Arable

- Woodland
- Watercourse
- Ponds
- Hedgerows
- Lines of Trees / Wooded Belt
- Buildings / Structures and Hard-surfacing

Improved Grassland / Pasture

4.2.2. The study area is dominated by grassland which largely exhibits a limited species composition predominately composed of Perennial Rye-grass. The grassland fields appear, at least in part, to be divided into paddocks grazed by horses, cattle and sheep, such that the grassland had a short sward height at the time of survey. The exception to this is a field of rough grass in the west of the study area and a pocket of rough grassland in the south of the study area which have developed a relatively tall sward height.

Arable

4.2.3. Two fields with a monoculture of Maize are present within the study area. Due to the intensive management received, few if any other plant species are present amongst the crop. At the edges of the arable fields are narrow field margins which exhibit limited species diversity largely composed of species encroached from the adjacent grassland; in addition, ruderal species and Bramble are present in varying abundance.

Woodland

4.2.4. A band of woodland, named Hawthorn Pit Woodland, lies centrally within the study area, and appears to be poorly-structured with an open canopy and little understorey. A number of semi-mature to mature trees are present, although no signs are present to indicate the woodland is of ancient status.

Watercourse

4.2.5. A section of the watercourse `Spring Brook` flows through the study area from west to east. The flow rate of the watercourse varies depending on the topography of the land and width of the channel; nonetheless the water flow was largely minimal at the time of survey and aquatic/marginal vegetation was generally absent.

Ponds

4.2.6. A number of ponds are present within, as well as in close vicinity of, the study area. The context and condition of the ponds within the study area varies, although the ponds generally appeared to be dry or held little in the way of standing water at the time of survey. The ponds appear to largely be encroached by species from the adjacent habitats, with little aquatic/marginal vegetation, and are largely overshadowed by adjacent tree and shrub vegetation.

Hedgerows

4.2.7. The fields within the study area are typically bound by hedgerows. The height, structure, species composition and management of the hedgerows varies, although generally the hedgerows are dominated by native shrub species with occasional standard trees.

Lines of Trees / Wooded Belt

4.2.8. Occasional lines of trees, and a wooded belt, are associated with the boundaries to the study area. The lines of trees and wooded belt incorporate a mixture of native and ornamental/non-native species of varying age.

Buildings / structures and hard-surfacing

4.2.9. The study area incorporates two farm building-complexes, an industrial/commercial yard, stables and a dilapidated brick-built structure.

Associated with the structures are areas of hard-surfacing formed from concrete.

4.2.10. **Constraints**: The habitats of relatively greatest ecological interest within the study area include woodland, hedgerows, trees, ponds and a watercourse, which could be identified as priority habitats within the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and Worcestershire BAP. However, these on-site habitats/features are unlikely to represent good examples of these habitat types or be of greater interest than similar habitats in the wider countryside and accordingly do not represent a significant constraint to development. The remainder of the habitats within the study area are of limited ecological interest and represent little in the way of a constraint to development. Overall, subject to a sensitive design to incorporate a proportion of the priority habitats, potentially as wildlife corridors within Green Infrastructure proposals, any future development of the study area would be in accordance with the NPPF and, more specifically, Local Plan policies B(NE).1 and B(NE).3, and Revised Draft Core Strategy policies 2 and 5.

4.2.11. *Recommendation* - it is recommended that a Phase 1 habitat survey, and Hedgerows Regulations 1997 survey, of the study area be undertaken at the detailed planning stage and any habitats/ecological features evaluated to be of significant ecological value be retained and incorporated within any development layout.

4.2.12. **Opportunities**: Primarily a change in land use due to development would benefit the ponds, watercourse and off-site habitats through which the watercourse flows, as these habitats/features would no longer be subject to run-off from agricultural fertilisers/chemicals. In addition a significant opportunity is available to retain, protect and enhance the habitats/features of relatively greatest ecological value and incorporate them within any development as Green Infrastructure, which could be managed for the benefit of biodiversity and recreation in accordance with the NPPF and, more specifically, Local Plan policies B(NE).1 and B(NE).3, and Revised Draft Core Strategy policies 2 and 5. Development of the study area also provides the opportunity to introduce/create habitats of greater ecological value, e.g. wildflower grassland, in accordance with the aims and objectives of the UK and Worcestershire Biodiversity Action Plans.

4.3. Faunal Species

4.3.1. The study area provides opportunities for a small number of faunal species. A discussion of these species and likely further survey and mitigation requirements is set out below.

Badgers

Setts

4.3.2. A single Badger sett, which features 4 entrances, is present within a grassland field in the north-west of the study area, close to which was another mammal hole at the base of a hedgerow which appeared to be the entrance of a former Badger sett.

Other evidence of Badger

4.3.3. Mammal paths are present throughout the study area and the occasional push-through was recorded in association with vegetation at the study area boundaries. These signs of activity can not be conclusively attributed to Badger, however, in consideration that Badger footprints were recorded within wet mud close to the woodland, latrines were recorded throughout the study area and given the known presence of a Badger sett within the study area, Badgers are presumed to use the study area for foraging and commuting, in particular the woodland, hedgerows and to a lesser extent areas of grassland.

Background Information

4.3.4. Information returned from WBRC includes numerous records for Badger with the closest record located approximately 0.1km north of the study area associated with an adjacent agricultural field (see Appendix 1).

4.3.5. **Constraints:** A Badger Sett has been recorded within the study area, which in consideration of the number of entrances and low level of activity recorded in the study area, is at most likely an `Annex Sett`. Annex Setts are not necessarily in use all the time and are therefore not considered as

important as `Main Setts` which are normally used for breeding and are in continual use all year round. Nonetheless, Badgers receive legislative protection under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which aims to protect Badgers themselves as well as their setts and are therefore a consideration in the planning process. However, encountering Badger setts during development is not uncommon and therefore a licensing system is available to close a sett, if it can not be retained under any future proposals. Accordingly, the presence of an Annex Sett within the study area does not represent an over-riding constraint to development and an appropriate mitigation strategy could be devised to ensure no net loss in local population status.

4.3.6. **Opportunities:** The proposals represent an opportunity to provide an increased foraging resource for Badgers through the provision of more diverse grassland habitats, and the planting of nut and fruit bearing species along the hedgerows and watercourse corridors through the study area.

Bats

Roosts

4.3.7. A number of semi-mature/mature Oak trees within the study area exhibit features, such as rot holes and split limbs, etc., which have potential to support roosting bats. In addition, the buildings within the study area, particularly the farm buildings, have potential to afford opportunities to roosting bats.

Foraging/commuting

4.3.8. The majority of the habitats within the study area represent negligible foraging habitats for bats, being dominated by cultivated/arable land and intensively managed grassland. However, the woodland, lines of trees and hedgerows and watercourse present within the study area offer some opportunities for commuting and foraging bats.

Background Information

4.3.9. No records of Bats from within or adjacent to the study area were returned from the desktop exercise. However records of five species of bat were returned from the wider search area including Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, Brown Long-eared *Plecotus auritus*, Daubenton's *Myotis daubentonii* and Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*. The closest records are for Daubenton's bat, Soprano Pipistrelle and Noctule, all located approximately 0.4km north of the study area (see Appendix 1). A search for records using the NBN provided records of Whiskered Bat *Myotis mystacinus* located approximately 3km south of the study area.

4.3.10. **Constraints:** A number of trees within the study area, as well as some buildings/structures, have potential to support roosting bats. Bats and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended), and are therefore a material consideration within the planning system. In addition, a number of bat species are also considered Priority Species within the context of the NPPF, e.g. Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared bat and Noctule. However, roosting opportunities within the study area appear limited and the habitats within the study area for bats are not unique in the local context, and in consideration that no records of bats originate from within the study area, the study area is considered unlikely to support significant populations of bats. Accordingly, based on current information bats do not represent a significant constraint to development and an appropriate mitigation strategy could be devised to ensure no net loss in local population status.

4.3.11. *Recommendation* - it is recommended that survey work be undertaken at the detailed planning stage to establish the presence/absence of any roosts and general levels of bat activity within the study area. The results from which will be used to devise an appropriate, proportional mitigation strategy, if necessary.

4.3.12. **Opportunities:** The opportunity is present under any proposals to enhance the study area for roosting bats. This could take the form of the provision of artificial roosting structures such as bat boxes or bricks being mounted onto

trees or buildings. The enhancement of the on-site hedgerows and watercourse will also be likely to improve foraging resources for bats.

Other Mammals

4.3.13. No evidence to indicate the actual or potential presence of any other protected, rare or notable mammal species was recorded within the study area.

Background Information

4.3.14. A number of records of Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* were returned from the desktop exercise, with the closest record located approximately 0.1km east of the study area and associated with a small area of land separated from the study area by Birchfield Road. Records for Brown Hare *Lepus europaeus,* Polecat *Mustela putorius* and Otter *Lutra lutra* were returned from the wider search area (see Appendix 1). Records for Harvest Mouse *Micromys minutus* from within the same 10x10km grid-square as the study area were returned from a search of the NBN.

4.3.15. **Constraints:** In consideration of the habitats within the study area and their current management regime, significant populations of other protected mammals species are considered unlikely to be present within the study area. In addition, in consideration that the habitats within the study area are mirrored in the surrounding countryside the study area is not considered to be of significant interest in regards to other protected mammals and therefore based on current information, `other protected mammals` do not represent a significant constraint to development

4.3.16. **Opportunities:** The proposals represent an opportunity to provide an increased foraging resource for other mammals, such as Hedgehog (a UK BAP species), through the provision of more diverse grassland habitats, and the planting of nut and fruit bearing species along the hedgerows and watercourse corridors through the study area.

Amphibians

Breeding Sites

4.3.17. A number of ponds are present within, and in close vicinity to, the study area. None of the on-site ponds held standing water of a depth greater than 10cm at the time of survey or exhibited a diverse aquatic/marginal floral community which could support an abundant and diverse invertebrate assemblage. Accordingly, the on-site ponds are at most considered to be of `average` suitability to support Great Crested Newts. The off-site nearby ponds appear to be more suitable.

Shelter/Foraging Habitat

4.3.18. The majority of the habitats within the study area represent negligible foraging habitats for Great Crested Newts, being dominated by cultivated/arable land and intensively managed grassland. However, the woodland, as well as the bases of the hedgerows and trees, present within the study area afford opportunities for shelter/refuge, whilst the hedgerows also provide connectivity between the study area and the wider countryside. The areas of rough grassland also afford some foraging opportunity for Great Crested Newts, although any potential is limited due to the low botanical diversity of the grassland, such that any associated invertebrate community assemblage is unlikely to be abundant or diverse, thereby limiting foraging potential.

Background Information

4.3.19. Information returned from WBRC includes records for Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus*, with the closest record located approximately 0.1km south of the study area and associated with a pond (see Appendix 1).

4.3.20. **Constraints:** Potential breeding habitat, in the form of ponds, as well as opportunities for shelter and foraging for Great Crested Newt are present within the study area. Great Crested Newts and their places of breeding/shelter are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) and therefore Great Crested

Newts are a material consideration within the planning system. In addition, Great Crested Newt is also considered a Priority Species within the context of the NPPF. However, the on-site breeding habitats are not considered to be above average in terms of suitability, the terrestrial habitats are considered sub-optimal, and given that no records of Great Crested Newt originate from within the study area, the study area is considered unlikely to support a significant population of Great Crested Newts. Accordingly, based on current information Great Crested Newts do not represent a significant constraint to development and an appropriate mitigation strategy could be devised to ensure no net loss in local conservation status.

4.3.21. *Recommendation* - it is recommended that at the detailed planning stage specific survey work be undertaken, during the appropriate season (mid-March to mid-June), to determine the presence/absence of Great Crested Newts within the on-site ponds and off-site ponds within 250m of the study area. The results from which will be used to devise an appropriate, proportional mitigation strategy, if necessary.

4.3.22. **Opportunities:** The opportunity is present to enhance retained on-site ponds to increase their suitability for Great Crested Newts and also their potential value for other wildlife.

Reptiles

4.3.23. The areas of rough grassland provide some potential to common reptiles species, however, the foraging value of this habitat is limited due to the low botanical diversity of the grassland, such that any associated invertebrate community assemblage is unlikely to be abundant or diverse. Nonetheless, the arable field margins and hedgerows provide connectivity across the study area and to off-site suitable habitats assisting the migration of reptiles.

Background Information

4.3.24. No records of reptiles from within or adjacent to the study area were returned from the desktop exercise. Records for Grass Snake *Natrix natrix* and Slow Worm *Anguis fragilis* were returned from the wider search area, with the closest records located approximately 1.1km and 1.2km,

respectively, south-west of the study area (see Appendix 1). Records for Adder *Vipera berus* and Common Lizard *Zootoca vivipara* from within the same 10x10km grid-square as the study area were returned from a search of the NBN.

4.3.25. **Constraints:** The study area affords some potential to support common reptiles. Widespread reptile species, such as Slow-worms, Common Lizard, Grass Snake and Adder, receive partial protection (in the form of the animals themselves) under domestic legislation, i.e. the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are therefore a consideration in the planning system. In addition, the species mentioned above are also considered Priority Species within the context of the NPPF. However, in consideration of the limited extent and intensively managed nature of the on-site and adjacent habitats, as well as the limited foraging potential afforded by the improved-grassland, and lack of records originating from within the study area, the study area is considered unlikely to support any specially-protected reptiles (i.e. Sand Lizard and Smooth Snake) or significant populations of more common reptiles. Accordingly, based on current information reptiles do not represent a significant constraint to development and an appropriate mitigation strategy could be devised to ensure no net loss in favourable conservation status.

4.3.26. *Recommendation* – it is recommended that at the detailed planning stage, a formal reptile survey be undertaken during the appropriate season (March/April to September/October) to determine the presence/absence of reptiles within the study area and, if required, determine population size. The results from which will be used to devise an appropriate, proportional mitigation strategy, if necessary.

4.3.27. **Opportunities**: The opportunity is present to create areas of long-sward wildflower grassland enhancing opportunities for reptiles within the study area. Retention of the hedgerows and the introduction of log piles would provide areas for basking and shelter whilst hibernacula would provide over-wintering opportunities.

Birds

4.3.28. The woodland, trees and hedgerows, as well as the areas of rough grassland, provide potential for nesting birds. A number of common bird species including, Blue Tit, Blackbird, and Robin were heard calling from, and were observed flying from, the hedgerows bordering the arable and grassland fields. In addition, House Sparrow and Buzzard were recorded flying over the study area.

Background Information

4.3.29. The desktop exercise returned twelve bird species from the search area including Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*, Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*, Lesser Spotted Woodpecker *Dendrocopos minor,* Yellow Hammer *Emberiza citrinella*, Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*, Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos* (a Worcestershire BAP species), Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*, Osprey *Pandion haliaetus*, Willow Tit *Parus montanus*, Marsh Tit *Parus palustris*, House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* and Barn *Owl Tyto alba* (see Appendix 1). Records for Marsh Tit and Barn Owl both occur within the same 10x10km grid-square as the study area. It is not possible to determine from the data whether these records fall within the study area itself.

4.3.30. **Constraints:** Given the types of habitats present, the study area is expected to support a range of common and potentially several declining farmland/BAP/Priority species. However, the habitats within the study area, such as the woodland, trees and hedgerows, are mirrored in the surrounding countryside and likely afford equivalent or greater foraging and nesting opportunities for birds. Accordingly, the study area is therefore not considered to be of significant ornithological value within the local context and therefore based on current information, birds do not represent a significant constraint to development

4.3.31. *Informative* – should any future development of the study area require an Environmental Impact Assessment, a breeding bird survey of the development area may be required to inform the assessment.

4.3.32. **Opportunities**: The opportunity is present to enhance the study area for birds through the introduction of artificial nesting opportunities in the form of bird boxes or bricks mounted on trees or buildings. These enhancements may attract additional species to the study area to breed while the enhancement of the hedgerows, grassland and the watercourse may also provide increased opportunities for foraging birds. Winter-feeding of garden birds by new residents of any development would also provide an increased foraging resource for this species group.

4.4. Summary and Recommendations

4.4.1. In summary, no over-riding ecological constraints have been identified within the study area from the initial survey work and evidence reviewed to date. In particular, there are no ecological designations that are likely to be significantly affected, relatively few areas of significant habitat value (with the exception of woodland, hedgerows and watercourse which are priority habitats but could be readily incorporated within a suitable development layout), and no records of protected species within the study area. A more focused ecological study will need to be undertaken once the likely development boundary has been confirmed, and this will potentially need to include the following elements:

i. Phase 1 habitat survey
ii. Hedgerows Regulations 1997 survey if any hedgerows are to be affected by development
iii. Bat survey work to establish the presence/absence of any roosts and general levels of bat activity
iv. Great Crested Newt survey of any suitable ponds within the study area and within 250m of the development boundary
v. Reptile survey of any suitable habitat (e.g. rough grassland, scrub, etc.) within the development boundary
vi. Breeding bird survey (if an EIA is required)
vii. Production of an Ecological Assessment report to inform any future planning submissions

5. BRIEF APPRAISAL OF ADDITIONAL AREAS PROMOTED FOR DEVELOPMENT IN NORTH REDDITCH

5.1. A number of other areas to the north-west of Redditch are proposed for promotion for residential development. These areas fall within two options:

- **Option Foxlydiate/Webheath** - incorporates the study area, an ecological appraisal of which is provided above in section 4, as well as two further areas labelled A and B as shown on Plan 3086/ECO1.

- **Option West of A441** - incorporates the areas C and D as shown on Plan 3086/ECO1.

Option Foxlydiate/Webheath

5.1.1. **Area A –** There are no statutory/non-statutory nature conservation designations located within/adjacent to Area A, although Bartles Wood which is classified as ancient woodland lies approximately 20m to the west of the Area.

5.1.2. Area A is dominated by a large arable field, and two further sections of arable fields, bordered by hedgerows. In addition, a watercourse bisects the study area and a relatively small grassland field lies in the south-west of the study area. A residential dwelling with a garden, as well as farm/industrial buildings are also present within the Area. Furthermore, a number of ponds lie in close vicinity of Area A.

5.1.3. Based on the habitats present there is potential for a number of protected species to be present within Area A, such as bats, Badger, Dormice, Great Crested Newts, reptiles and nesting birds.

5.1.4. **Area B –** No statutory nature conservation designations lies within or immediately adjacent to the area. However, Brockhill Wood Local Wildlife Site (LWS), which is also ancient woodland, slightly encroaches into the east of Area B. In addition, Foxlyidate Wood Local Nature Reserve (LNR) lies approximately 50m to the south of the area and Hewell Park Lake Site

of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies approximately 0.5km to the north of the area, the later of which could be sensitive to any increase in recreational impact.

5.1.5. Area B lies to the east of the A448 dual carriageway and is composed of fields used as sheep/cattle pasture, cultivation and as hay meadows. The fields are bordered by hedgerows, some of which appear to feature standard trees, and a small wooded copse/plantation lies in the north of the Area. Ponds are present within Area B and are located off-site nearby, and Batchley Brook flows through Area B. Dwellings and farm buildings are also present within the Area.

5.1.6. Based on the habitats present there is potential for a number of protected species to be present within Area B, such as bats, Badger, Dormice, Great Crested Newts, reptiles and nesting birds.

Option West of A441

5.1.7. **Area C –** No statutory nature conservation designations lie within or immediately adjacent to the area, however, Brockhill Wood and Butler's Hill Wood, both of which are LWS and incorporate ancient woodland, partially lie within the area.

5.1.8. Area C incorporates a number of arable and grassland fields bordered by hedgerows with standard trees. Sections of Butler's Hill Woodland and Brockhill Wood are present within the Area, as are smaller pockets of woodland and copses. Ponds are present within Area C and are located off-site nearby, and a watercourse appears to flow from the Area to merge with Red Ditch located off-site to the south. Dwellings, an industrial estate and car storage/scrap yard are also present within the Area.

5.1.9. Based on the habitats present there is potential for a number of protected species to be present within Area C, such as bats, Badger, Dormice, Great Crested Newts, reptiles and nesting birds.

5.1.10. **Area D –** There are no statutory/non-statutory nature conservation designations located within/adjacent to Area D, although Butler's Hill Wood LWS lies approximately 50m to the west of the area.

5.1.11. Area D lies between a railway line at its eastern boundary and the A441 at its western boundary and is dominated by arable fields and sheep pasture, occasionally bordered by hedgerows. The River Arrow flows southerly, centrally through the Area, the banks to which are lined with trees and scrub. A single pond lies within Area D and a number of additional ponds lie off-site nearby.

5.1.12. Based on the habitats present there is potential for a number of protected species to be present within Area D, such as bats, Badger, Dormice, Otter, Water Vole, Great Crested Newts, reptiles and nesting birds.

6. Comparison of Potential Ecological Constraints Between the Areas Proposed for Development in North Redditch

6.1. The potential for noteworthy habitat/ecological features and protected species to occur within the study area and each of the other areas within the development options is shown in the table below.

			Option Foxlydiate/Webheath			Option West of A441	
			Study Area	Area A	Area B	Area C	Area D
Ecological Designations	Present within or close to the Area	Statutory Designations	None. Foxlydiate Wood lies approx. 100m East	None	None. Hewell Park Lake approx. 0.5km North. Foxlydiate Wood lies approx. 50m South	None	None
		Non-Statutory Designations	None. Foxlydiate Wood lies approx. 100m East	None	Part of Brockhill Wood lies in East. Foxlydiate Wood lies approx. 50m South	Large sections of Brockhill Wood and Butler's Hill Wood are present	None. Butler's Hill Wood lies approx. 50m West
		Ancient Woodland	None. Foxlydiate Wood lies approx. 100m East	None. Bartles Wood lies approx. 20 West	Part of Brockhill Wood lies in East	Large sections of Brockhill Wood and Butler's Hill Wood are present	None
Habitats	Potential to comprise...	UK and/or Local BAP Habitats	UK BAP Broad Habitat: `Rivers and Streams` Priority UK BAP Habitats: `Hedgerows`, `Arable Field Margins`, `Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland`	UK BAP Broad Habitat: `Rivers and Streams` Priority UK BAP Habitats: `Hedgerows`, `Arable Field Margins`	UK BAP Broad Habitat: `Rivers and Streams` Priority UK BAP Habitats: `Hedgerows`, `Arable Field Margins`, `Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland`	UK BAP Broad Habitat: `Rivers and Streams` Priority UK BAP Habitats: `Hedgerows`, `Arable Field Margins`, `Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland`	Priority UK BAP Habitats: `Rivers` and `Hedgerows`
Protected Species	Potential to support significant populations of...	Bats	Dwellings/Farm Buildings. Occassional mature Oak trees within hedgerows	Dwellings/Farm Buildings. Occassional mature Oak trees within hedgerows	Dwellings/Farm Buildings. Two sections of woodland fall within the site. Occassional mature trees within hedgerows	Dwellings/Farm Buildings. Copses and pocket of woodland. Occassional mature trees within hedgerows	Occassional mature trees associated with the River Arrow and hedgerows
		Badger	Annex Badger Sett and former Badger Sett recorded	Hedgerows provide potential lcoations for Badgers setts	Area called `Badger Pit` and two sections of woodland present	Woodland and hedgerows provide potential lcoations for Badgers setts	Hedgerows provide potential lcoations for Badgers setts
		Other Mammals	No evidence recorded to indicate potential or actual presence of any other protected mammals	Potential presence of Dormice, Brown Hare and Water Vole	Potential presence of Dormice, Brown Hare and Water Vole	Potential presence of Dormice, Brown Hare and Water Vole	Potential presence of Dormice, Brown Hare, Otter and Water Vole
		Great Crested Newts	Ponds are present on-site and off-site within 250m. On-site ponds are not considered to be above average suitability.	Ponds are present off-site within 250m	Ponds are present on-site and off-site within 250m	Ponds are present on-site and off-site within 250m	Ponds are present on-site and off-site within 250m
		Reptiles	Pockets of suitable habitat present: Grassland, arable field margins and scrub. The habitats is intensively managed	Suitable habitat present: Grassland, arable field margins and scrub	Suitable habitat present: Grassland, arable field margins and scrub	Suitable habitat present: Grassland, arable field margins and scrub	Suitable habitat present: Grassland and scrub
		Protected/Noteworthy Birds	Declining farmland/BAP/Priority species	Declining farmland/BAP/Priority species	Declining farmland/BAP/Priority species	Declining farmland/BAP/Priority species	Declining farmland/BAP/Priority species

Key:

High Potential/Interest
Medium Potential/Interest
Low Potential/Interest

6.2. The magnitude and significance of ecological constraints can only be determined after detailed survey work, however, the table above provides a

quick comparison between the study area and other areas promoted for development in terms of potential ecological constraints.

6.3. In summary, based on current information, this initial comparative analysis indicates that the study area has the fewest potential ecological constraints to development, whilst Areas B and C have potentially the most.

7. Summary and Conclusions

7.1. Aspect Ecology has been commissioned by Heyford Developments Ltd to identify any potential ecological constraints or opportunities in respect of future development within a study area at Foxlydiate Lane, Redditch, in order to fully inform representations currently being prepared to promote the study area for residential development through the Redditch Borough Council Planning Framework.

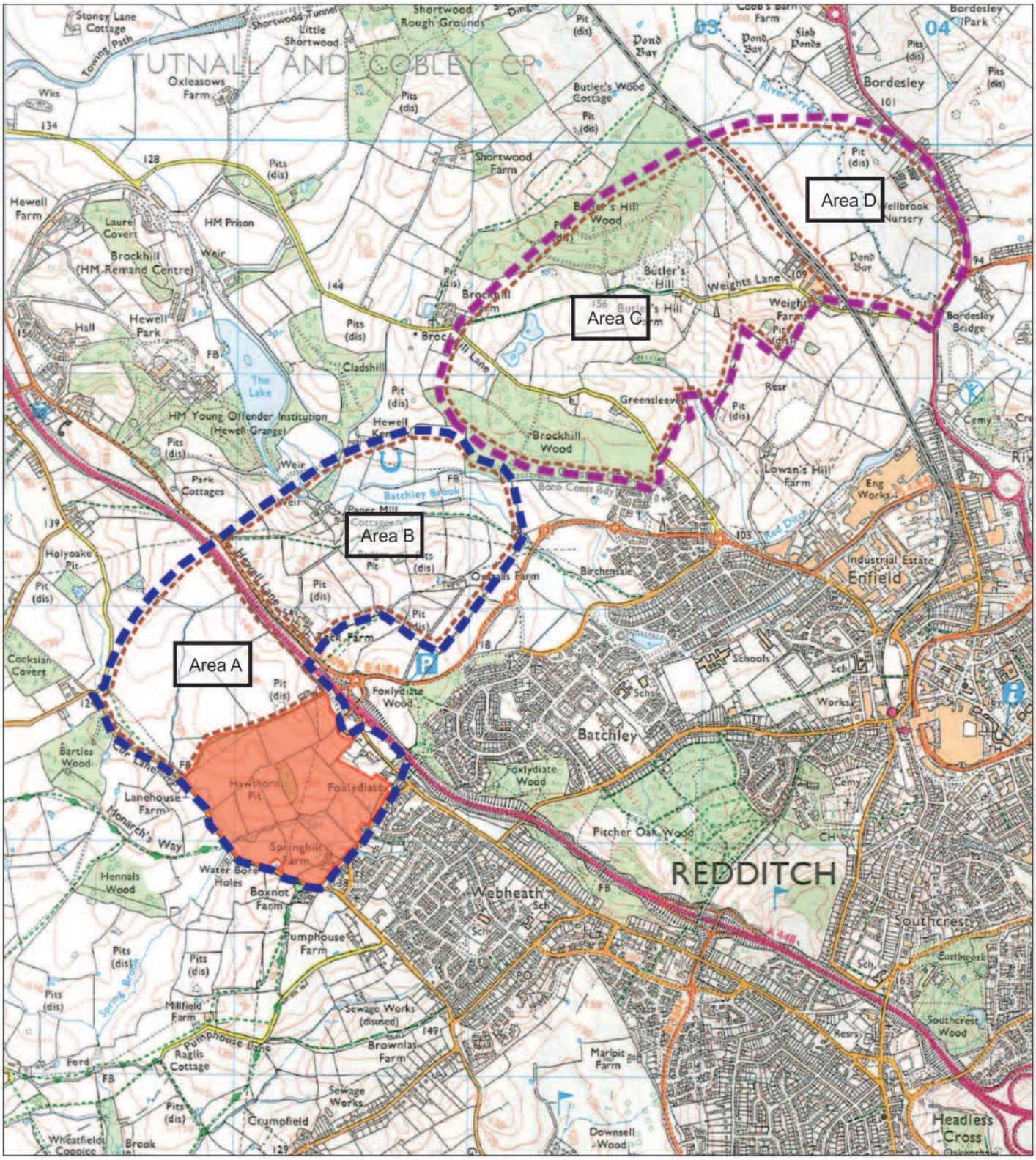
7.2. In regard to the Study Area, no over-riding ecological constraints have been identified from the initial survey work and evidence reviewed to date. In addition, development of the study area affords significant opportunities for improving biodiversity, both through change of land use and the incorporation of ecological enhancements, which will accord with national and local planning objectives and the aims of the UK and Worcestershire BAPs.

7.3. The other Areas (A, B, C and D) within Option Foxlydiate/Webheath and Option Wet of A441 comprise similar habitats and afford similar opportunities to protected species. However, due to the characteristics of each habitat and the context of each area, the magnitude and significance of ecological constraints varies. However, based on current information, the study area appears to have the fewest potential ecological constraints to development, compared to the other Areas (A, B, C and D) within the options.

PLANS

PLAN 3086/ECO1

Study Area Location



KEY:

- STUDY AREA
- OPTION - FOXLYDIATE/WEBHEATH
- OPTION - WEST OF A441

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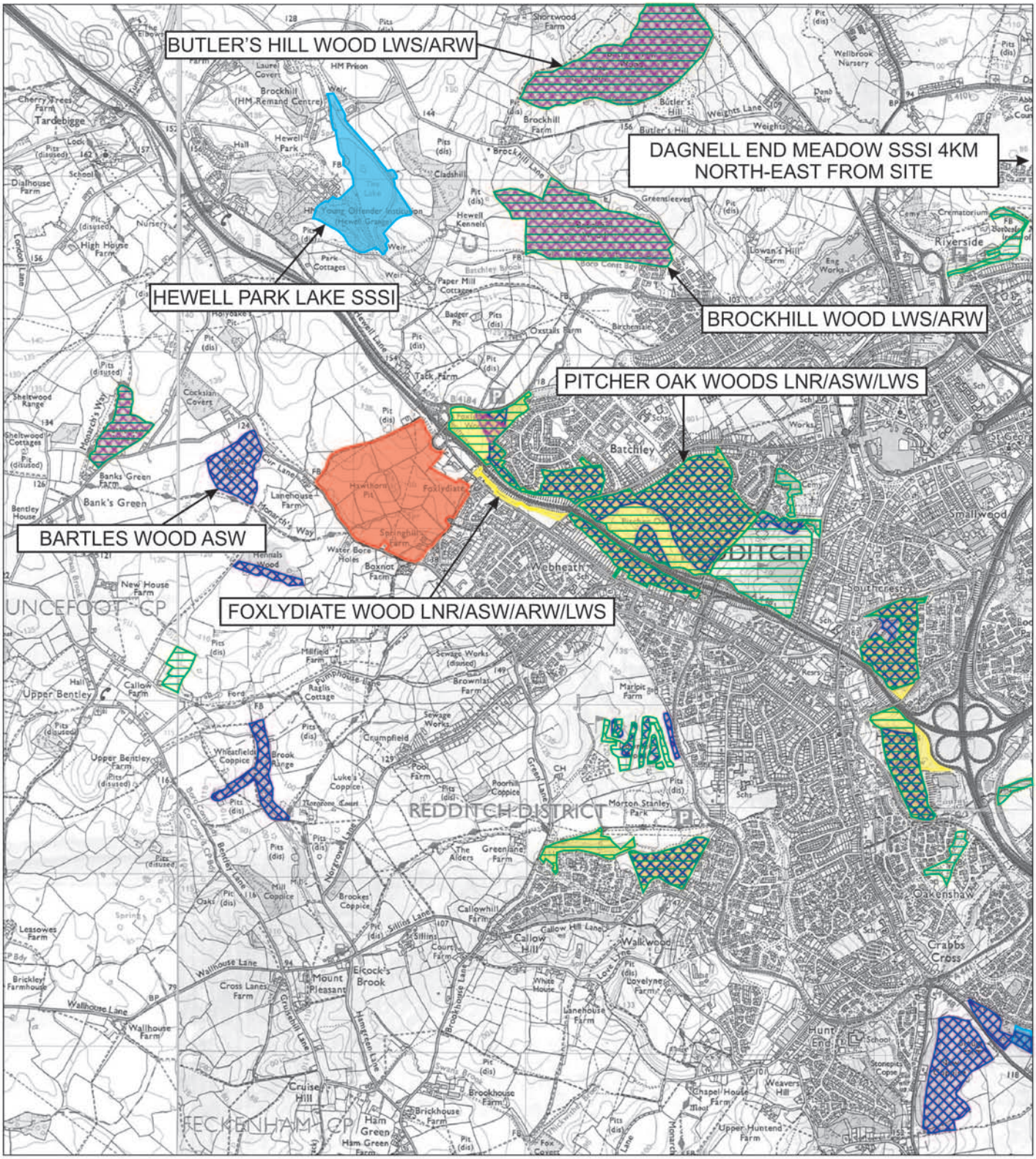
FOXLYDIATE LANE, REDDITCH	PROJECT
STUDY AREA LOCATION	TITLE
3086/ECO1	DRAWING NO.
	REV.
OCTOBER 2012	DATE

PLAN 3086/ECO2

Ecological Designations



KEY:

- STUDY AREA
- SITE OF SPECIAL SCIENTIFIC INTEREST (SSSI)
- LOCAL NATURE RESERVE (LNR)
- ANCIENT & SEMI-NATURAL WOODLAND (ASW)
- ANCIENT REPLANTED WOODLAND (ARW)
- LOCAL WILDLIFE SITE (LWS)

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FOXLYDIATE LANE, REDDITCH	PROJECT
ECOLOGICAL DESIGNATIONS	TITLE
3086/ECO2	DRAWING NO.
	REV.
OCTOBER 2012	DATE

PLAN 3086/ECO3

Habitats & Ecological Features

KEY:

- STUDY AREA
- IMPROVED GRASSLAND
- MAIZE/ARABLE
- ROUGH GRASS
- TALL RUDERAL
- SCRUB
- BUILDINGS, HARDSURFACING & ASSOCIATED GARDENS
- OTHER STRUCTURE
- WOODLAND
- WOODED BEALT
- HEDGEROW
- AMENITY HEDGEROW
- TREE
- TREE WITH BAT POTENTIAL
- STREAM
- POND
- FENCE
- MAMMAL PATH
- PUSH THROUGH
- LATRINE

FOXLYDIATE LANE, REDDITCH — PROJECT

HABITATS AND ECOLOGICAL FEATURES — TITLE

3086/ECO3 — DRAWING NO.

REV.

OCTOBER 2012 — DATE

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APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Extract of information received from Worcestershire Biological Records Centre (WBRC)

Records Returned From Worcestershire Biological Records Centre

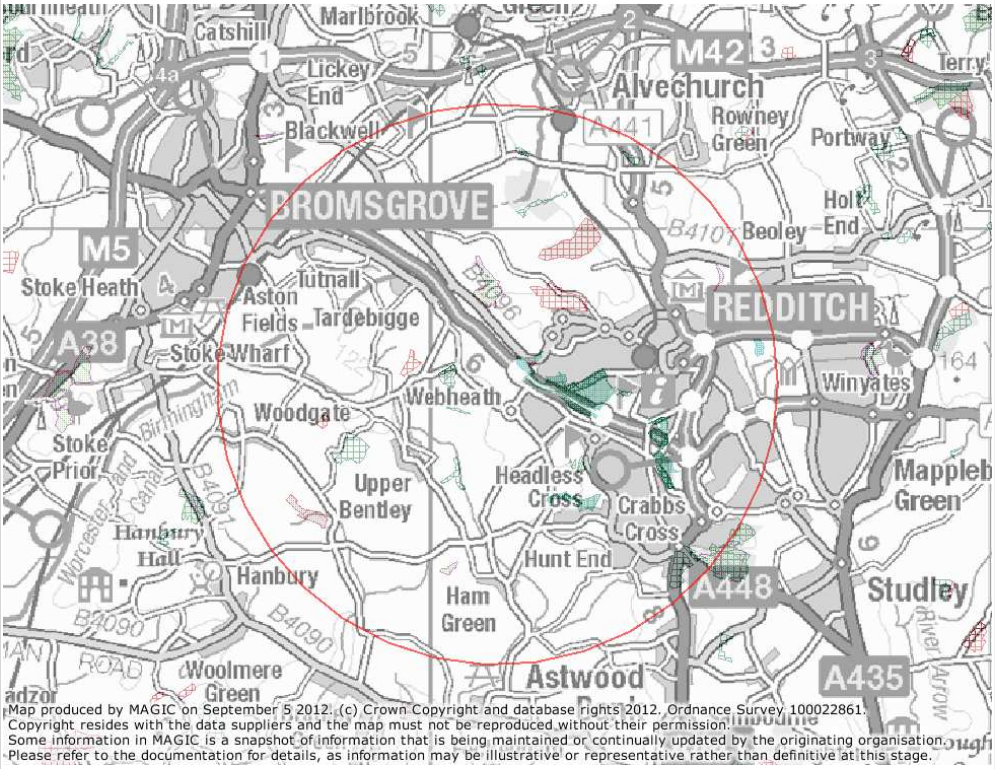
Scientific Name	Common Name	Number of Records	Distance (km)	Bearing	Date
Bufo bufo	Common Toad	20	1.2	NE	2001
Rana temporaria	Common Frog	15	0.1	S	2002
Triturus cristatus	Great Crested Newt	27	0.1	S	2003
Triturus helveticus	Palmate Newt	2	2.4	N	2000
Triturus vulgaris	Smooth Newt	26	0.1	S	2002
Alcedo atthis	Kingfisher	1	1.4	N	2001-2005
Cuculus canorus	Cuckoo	1	1.4	N	2001-2005
Dendrocopos minor	Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	1	1.4	N	2001-2005
Emberiza citrinella	Yellowhammer	2	1.2	SW	2006
Emberiza schoeniclus	Reed Bunting	4	1.4	N	2001-2005
Luscinia megarhynchos	Nightingale	1	5.1	NE	2004
Muscicapa striata	Spotted Flycatcher	3	1.4	N	2001-2005
Pandion haliaetus	Osprey	1	1.4	N	2006
Parus montanus	Willow Tit	1	5.1	NE	1999
Parus palustris	Marsh Tit	1	In same 10x10km gridsquare as site		2001
Passer domesticus	House Sparrow	4	1.4	N	2001-2005
Tyto alba	Barn Owl	1	In same 10x10km gridsquare as site		2010
Austropotamobius pallipes	Freshwater Crayfish	1	4.9	NE	1993
Anguilla anguilla	Eel	1	1.4	N	2002
Carex binervis	Green-Ribbed Sedge	1	1.4	SE	1997
Carex laevigata	Smooth-Stalked Sedge	3	4.4	NE	1998
Carpinus betulus	Hornbeam	9	1.3	NW	1997
Ceratophyllum submersum	Soft Hornwort	3	0.9	SW	1994
Chrysanthemum segetum	Corn Marigold	1	3.8	E	1998
Filago vulgaris	Common Cudweed	1	3.2	N	1999
Juncus squarrosus	Heath Rush	1	2.1	E	1996
Myosotis secunda	Creeping Forget-Me-Not	1	4.9	NE	2005
Orchis morio	Green-Winged Orchid	1	1.1	SW	2003

Papaver argemone	Prickly Poppy	1	1.7	SW	2000
Pinus sylvestris	Scots Pine	2	5.1	NE	2002
Populus x canadensis	Hybrid Black Poplar	1	1.4	N	2002
Puccinellia distans	Reflexed Saltmarsh-Grass	9	0.3	E	1998
Ranunculus lingua	Greater Spearwort	2	2.4	N	2001
Rosa pimpinellifolia	Burnet Rose	1	3.7	E	2000
Rumex maritimus	Golden Dock	1	1.9	SW	1997
Sorbus aria	Whitebeam	1	1.8	SE	1993
Spergularia marina	Lesser Sea-Spurrey	1	3.0	NE	2000
Symphytum tuberosum	Tuberous Comfrey	1	1.2	N	2002
Tilia platyphyllos	Large-Leaved Lime	7	Within Site		1998
Tilia x vulgaris	Tilia x vulgaris	1	1.4	N	2002
Acidota cruentata	Acidota cruentata	1	2.4	N	1998
Acronicta psi	Grey Dagger	1	In same 10x10km gridsquare as site		1996
Agrilus laticornis	Agrilus laticornis	1	2.0	SE	2010
Anaglyptus mysticus	Anaglyptus mysticus	1	2.2	SE	2011
Aphrodes albifrons	Aphrodes albifrons	1	3.9	SE	2010
Arctia caja	Garden Tiger	1	2.4	N	1998
Atethmia centrago	Centre-Barred Sallow	1	2.4	N	1999
Bolitobius analis	Bolitobius analis	1	3.7	NE	2006
Boloria selene	Small Pearl-bordered Fritillary	1	1.3	E	1995
Bombus ruderarius	Red-tailed Carder Bee	1	2.9	SE	2001
Caradrina morpheus	Mottled Rustic	1	In same 10x10km gridsquare as site		1996
Coenonympha pamphilus	Small Heath	3	0.6	E	1997
Didea fasciata	Didea fasciata	2	3.0	SE	2002
Dolichovespula media	Dolichovespula media	1	2.9	SE	2003
Ectemnius sexcinctus	Ectemnius sexcinctus	1	2.9	SE	2001
Ennomos fuscantaria	Dusky Thorn	1	2.4	N	1999
Ennomos quercinaria	August Thorn	1	2.4	N	1999
Eurhadina kirschbaumi	Eurhadina kirschbaumi	1	3.0	SE	2007
Euxoa nigricans	Garden Dart	1	2.8	SE	2007

Hemistola chrysoprasaria	Small Emerald	2	In same 10x10km gridsquare as site		1996
Ladoga camilla	White Admiral	6	0.9	E	2006
Lasiosomus enervis	Lasiosomus enervis	1	3.1	SE	2008
Malacosoma neustria	Lackey	1	In same 10x10km gridsquare as site		1996
Mythimna comma	Shoulder-Striped Wainscot	1	In same 10x10km gridsquare as site		1996
Orchesia minor	Orchesia minor	1	4.9	NE	1999
Phytodecta decemnotata	Phytodecta rufipes	1	1.0	E	2005
Psithyrus rupestris	Hill Cuckoo Bee	2	1.6	NW	2012
Ptinus sexpunctatus	Ptinus sexpunctatus	1	2.9	SE	2006
Satyrium w-album	White Letter Hairstreak	1	0.8	S	1996
Scotopteryx chenopodiata	Shaded Broad-Bar	1	In same 10x10km gridsquare as site		1996
Semiothisa clathrata	Latticed Heath	2	In same 10x10km gridsquare as site		1997
Stratiomys potamida	Banded General	1	3.4	NE	2009
Tholera decimalis	Feathered Gothic	1	3.6	NE	1999
Tyria jacobaeae	Cinnabar	13	0.3	NE	2006
Volucella inanis	Volucella inanis	3	1.4	E	2008
Rhizomnium magnifolium	Large-leaf Thyme-moss	1	0.4	N	2002
Anguis fragilis	Slow-worm	4	1.2	SW	2003
Natrix natrix	Grass Snake	10	1.1	SW	2002
Arvicola terrestris	Water Vole	6	1.1	SW	2002
Chiroptera	Bats	2	0.8	E	2003
Erinaceus europaeus	Hedgehog	27	0.1	E	2006
Lepus europaeus	Brown Hare	8	0.6	NW	2000
Lutra lutra	Otter	3	1.6	SW	2011
Meles meles	Badger	46	0.1	N	2002
Mustela putorius	Polecat	2	1.3	NW	1994
Myotis daubentoni	Daubenton's Bat	3	0.4	N	2006
Nyctalus noctula	Noctule	5	0.4	N	2006
Pipistrellus pipistrellus	Common Pipistrelle	15	0.5	E	2002
Pipistrellus pygmaeus	Soprano Pipistrelle	4	0.4	N	2006
Plecotus auritus	Brown Long-Eared Bat	5	1.7	N	2004

APPENDIX 2

Information obtained from Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) and Nature on the Map (Natural England) online databases



MAGIC

ECO 3086 Designated Sites

Ancient Woodland (England)

- Ancient & Semi-Natural
- Ancient Replanted

Local Nature Reserves (England)

National Nature Reserves (England)

Ramsar Sites (England)

Special Protection Areas (England)

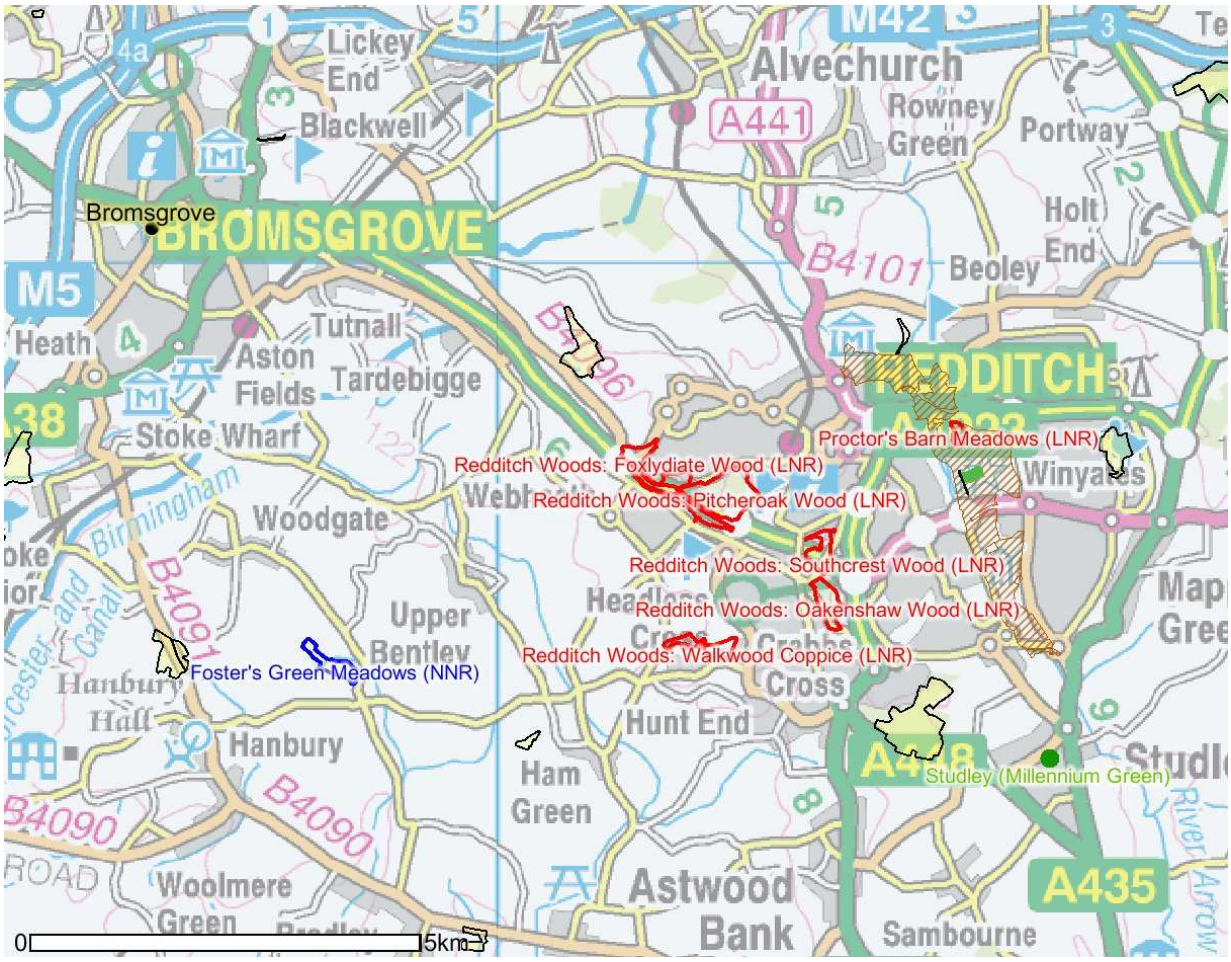
Special Areas of Conservation (England)

Sites of Special Scientific Interest Units (England)

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England)

Nature on the Map

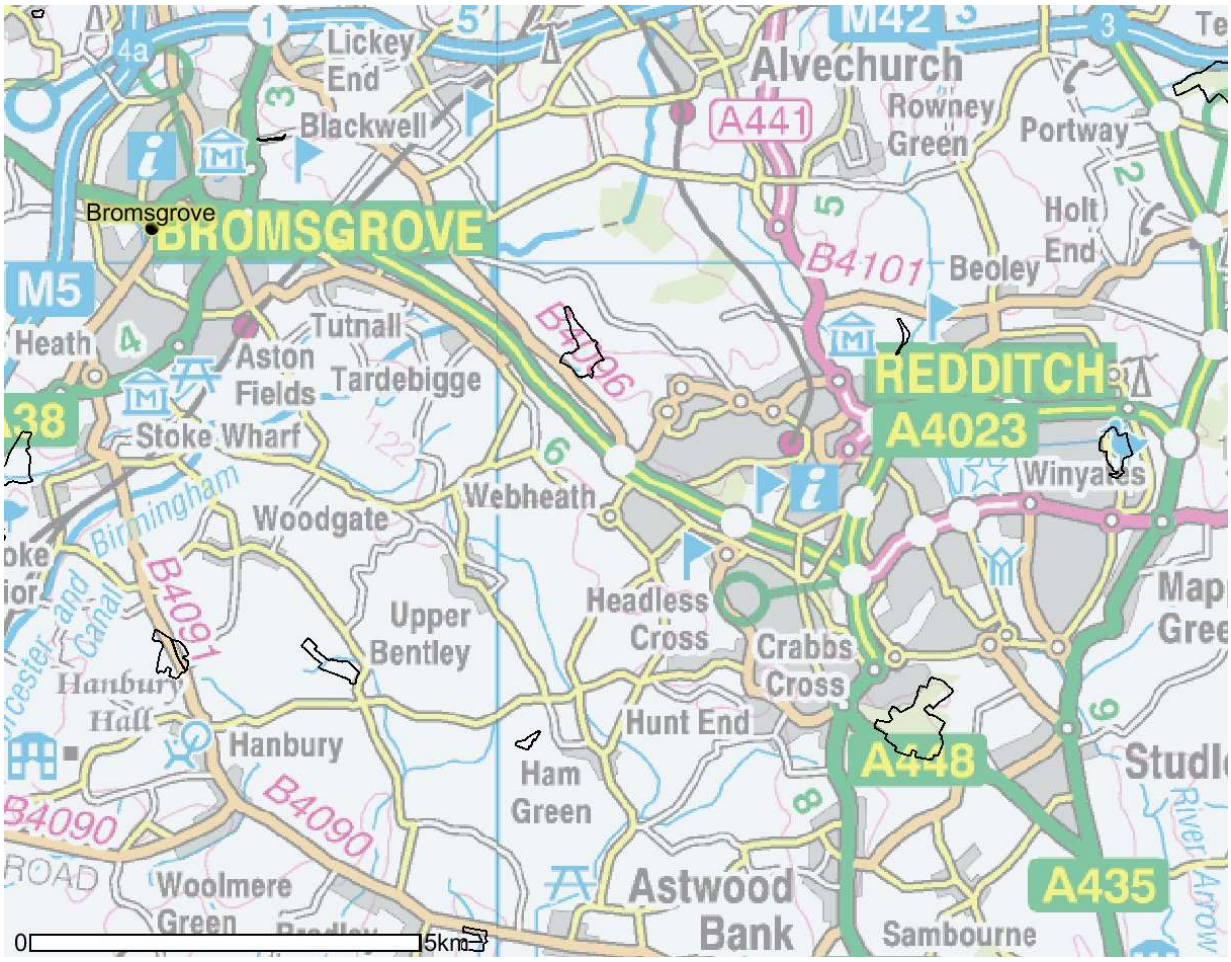
ECO 3086 Statutory Designations.



- Natural England Offices
- National Nature Reserves
- Local Nature Reserves
- Country Parks
- Green Flag Country Park
- Non Green Flag Country Park
- Millennium Greens
- Doorstep Greens
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Natural England Regions
- Natural England Area Teams
- Scotland, Wales and Ireland
- Ordnance Survey background mapping
- England

Nature on the Map

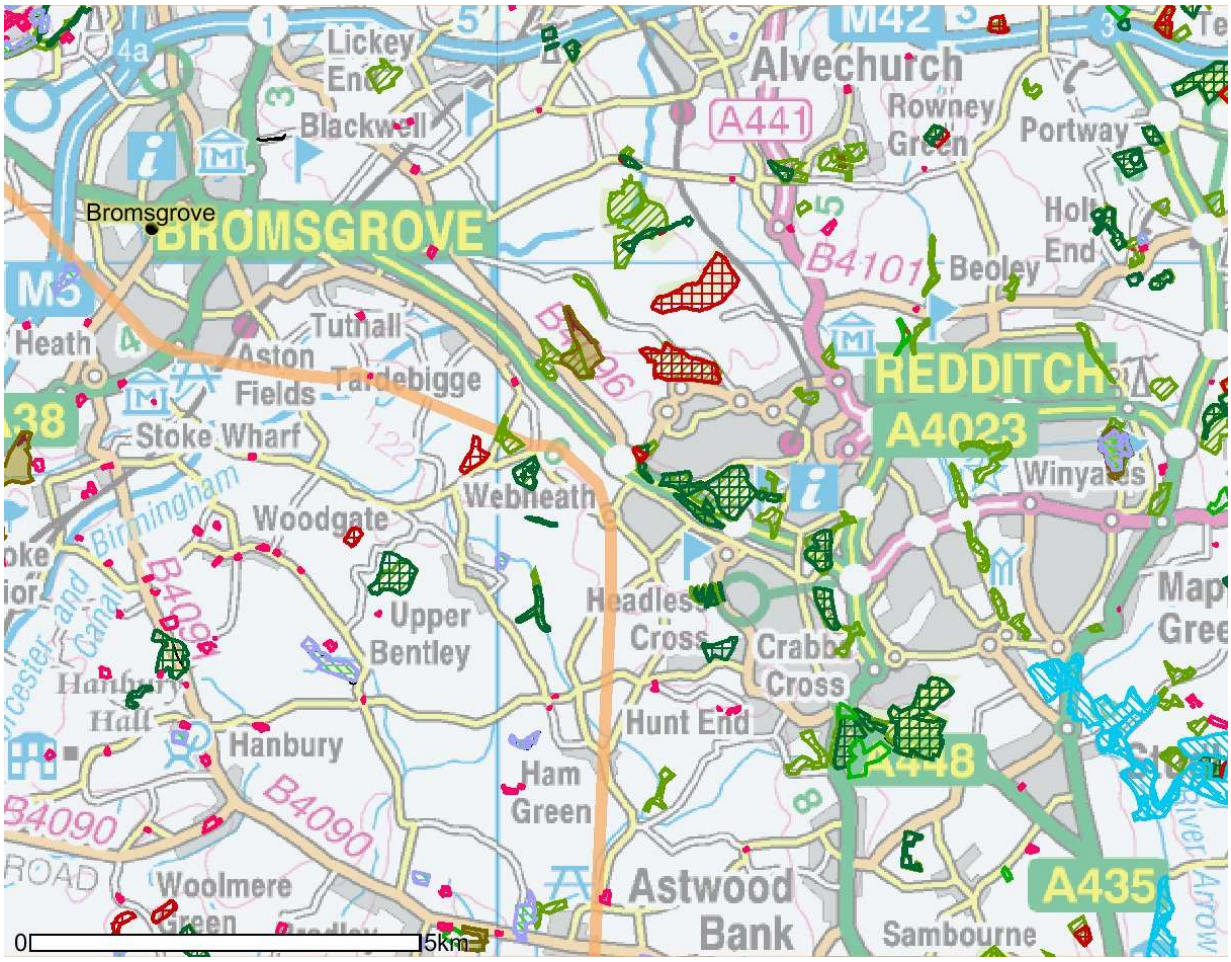
ECO 3086 International Sites.



- Natural England Offices
- Special Areas of Conservation
- SAC Water Framework Unit Condition
  - Favourable Condition
  - Unfavourable Condition
- Special Protection Areas
- SPA Water Framework Unit Condition
  - Favourable Condition
  - Unfavourable Condition
- Ramsar Sites
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Natural England Regions
- Natural England Area Teams
- Scotland, Wales and Ireland
- Ordnance Survey background mapping
- England

Nature on the Map

ECO 3086 Priority Habitats.



- Natural England Offices
- Mudflat
- Coastal Vegetated Shingle
- Coastal, Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Maritime Cliffs and Slopes
- Saline Lagoons
- Coastal Sand Dunes
- Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pasture
- Lowland Meadow
- Lowland Dry Acid Grassland
- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Lowland Heathland
- Fen
- Reedbeds
- Lowland Raised Bog
- Upland Calcareous Grassland
- Blanket Bog
- Upland Heathland
- Upland Hay Meadow
- Traditional Orchard Inventory for England
- Undetermined Grassland
- Ancient Woodland Inventory
- Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland
- Ancient Replanted Woodland
- Deciduous Woodland v2.0
- Limestone Pavements
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Natural England Regions
- Natural Areas
- Scotland, Wales and Ireland
- Ordnance Survey background mapping
- England

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