



Preliminary Ecological Assessment Report

Site: 42 The Larches, Hillingdon, London Borough of Hillingdon, UB10 0DR, United Kingdom

Commissioned by: Shoor Developments

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1 Executive Summary

A Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) was conducted at 42 The Larches, Hillingdon, UB10 0DR, in April 2024 to identify potential ecological constraints associated with the proposed demolition of an existing outbuilding and extension of an existing house to create a second dwelling.

Key Findings and Actions: The table below summarizes the ecological factors assessed, their potential, findings, and required actions. Detailed recommendations can be found in the Recommendations Table in Section 5

Ecological factor	Potential	Summary of Findings	Actions Required
Bat roosts	Low	Buildings 1 and 2 have low potential for contain roosting bats.	Further survey is required of buildings 1 and 2 between May-September. Details in recommendations section.

Please read the full recommendations in this report and follow all guidance carefully to comply with legislation on protected and invasive species.

This report remains valid for one year from the date of the survey visit. If works are delayed beyond one year, an updated survey will be required to account for changes in habitats and their potential to support protected species over time.

2 Introduction

2.1 Site description

- The site, located at 42 The Larches, Hillingdon, London Borough of Hillingdon, UB10 0DR, United Kingdom and covers approximately 0.1 hectares and is currently a residential property and garden
- Current habitats include buildings and vegetated private gardens.
- It is bordered by roads and housing and is located in an area of residential development. Photos below show site location and wider local area.



Figure 1: Aerial photo showing location of site within local area



Figure 2: Aerial photo showing site location

2.2 Survey Details

- **Purpose:** The Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) identifies potential ecological constraints to the proposed development. It assesses whether protected or notable species are likely to be present on-site and records any important invasive species. If no suitable habitat or evidence of species is found, further surveys are not required. However, if suitable habitat is identified, additional surveys may be recommended based on current guidelines. The PEA also evaluates potential impacts on protected sites and the impact of significant invasive species on-site.

The protected species most often found on potential development sites include:

- Bats
- Nesting birds
- Great crested newts
- Reptiles
- Terrestrial mammals (e.g., badgers, dormice, water voles)

Annex 3 of this report provides details of relevant legislation and policies concerning protected species, designated sites, and invasive species.

- **Scope:** The survey covered all areas within the site proposal boundary.
- **Surveyor:**
The surveyor and author of this report is Peter Howarth BSc (Hons), Ecologist. Peter currently holds survey licenses for Bats, Dormice and Great Crested Newts.

3 Methodology

3.1 Survey guidelines

- The PEA followed the guidelines published by CIEEM (2013) and the Phase 1 Survey methodology described in the JNCC Handbook for Phase 1 Survey (1990).
- A UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Survey was carried out using the UKHab User Manual (Version 2.0, 2023) to map and evaluate habitat types on-site. A habitat map showing types and locations on-site is included in Annex 2.

3.2 Survey details

- **Survey Date:** The survey was conducted on 11/04/2025
- **Weather Conditions**

Condition	Details
Precipitation	None
Temperature	16°C
Cloud Cover	50 %
Wind (Beaufort)	2

3.3 Survey Constraints

Access Constraints

All areas were accessible and visible.

Seasonal Constraints

The PEA was conducted during the optimal season, so no seasonal constraint impacted findings.

3.4 Biological records search

Data was requested from the local biodiversity records centre so as to gain an understanding of which protected and notable species and sites could be found within 1km of the site. This was commissioned from: GiGL (Greenspace Information for Greater London).

3.5 European Protected Species Mitigation Licence search

The MAGIC website (magic.defra.gov.uk) was reviewed to identify any European Protected Species Mitigation Licences granted within the search area.

3.6 Water body search

The Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 map was checked for water bodies within 250m of the site that could be potential great crested newt breeding sites.

4 Survey Results

4.1 Biological records search results

Species Records: The data search identified records of the following protected species within the search area:

- Bats – common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*)

Statutory Nature Conservation Sites:

No statutory nature conservation sites were recorded within the search area.

Non-Statutory Conservation Sites:

There are no non-statutory protected sites adjacent to or on the site.

4.2 European Protected Species Mitigation Licence search results

The MAGIC search identified four European Protected Species Mitigation Licences within 2 km of the site.

- Four licences were issued for Great Crested Newts
- Locations are shown in Figure 3 below.

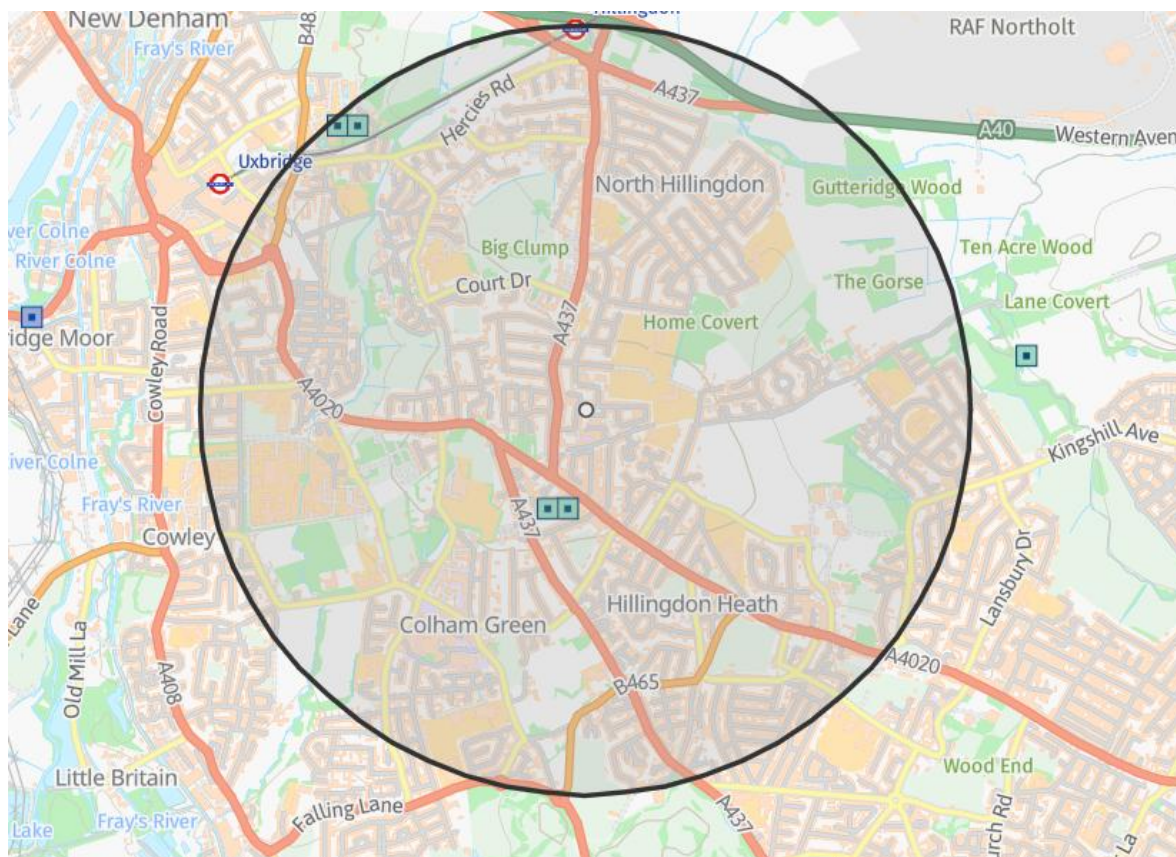


Figure 3: Map of sites within 2 km with issued European Protected Species Licences.

4.3 Water body search

The desk study identified no potential great crested newt breeding ponds within 250m of the site.

4.4 Habitats found on site

The survey area contained the following habitats. Their descriptions and locations are provided in the table below. Habitat map, species list and photos can be found in the report annexes.

Table 2: Habitats found on site

Habitat type	Description and Locations
Buildings	Building 1 is a two-storey residential dwelling. It was constructed of timber and brick, with ceramic tile roof, lined with bitumen felt. Building 2 is a single storey outhouse. This was constructed of brick with a bitumen lined flat roof, wooden soffits and barge boards
Vegetated garden	The site was an unmaintained vegetated garden, containing areas of lawn and overgrown flower beds. Species found included False Oat-grass, Cocksfoot, Perennial Rye-grass, Sterile Brome, Dandelion, Common Cleavers, Red Dead Nettle, Green Alkanet, Ground Elder, Prickly Sow thistle, Creeping Cinquefoil, Bramble, Broad-leaved Dock, Lemon Balm, Ribwort Plantain, Nettle and Daffodil.

4.5 Recommendations

Table 2: Terms used to indicate likelihood of species presence

Confirmed	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Species directly observed on site• Clear evidence of species presence observed (e.g. droppings, burrows, etc.)
High	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Important structures or features for breeding or shelter, such as ponds for newts or trees with roost features for bats are present.• Significant areas of high-quality foraging habitat.• Site is next to or connected to suitable surrounding habitats.• Site is near known populations of species off-site.
Moderate	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Some features provide breeding or shelter opportunities.• Some foraging habitat is available.• The site is connected to suitable offsite habitats.
Low	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• Limited low-quality areas for breeding or shelter.• Small areas suitable for foraging.• The site is not connected to suitable offsite habitats, and species are unlikely to enter.
Negligible	<ul style="list-style-type: none">• No suitable habitats are present on-site.• The site is not connected to any suitable offsite habitats.

The likelihood of species being present ranges from negligible to high. Surveyors determine this based on habitats present and habitat connectivity, field signs, sightings, biological records and experience.

Table 3: Discussion of results and recommendations

Feature	Potential	Rationale
Badger setts	Negligible	<p>Habitats on-site: The site does not contain any significant badger habitat, consisting only of a small garden.</p> <p>Surrounding habitats: Surrounding areas do not provide suitable habitats for badgers, as made up of small gardens</p> <p>Field Signs: No signs of badger activity or setts were found on-site or in visible areas within 30 m off-site.</p>
Bat roosts and foraging and commuting of bats	<p>Bat roosting potential-Low</p> <p>Likely importance of area for foraging and commuting bats – Negligible</p>	<p>Habitats on-site: Building 1 was found to be suitable for roosting due to the presence of features suitable for bats to use including a raised tile.</p> <p>Building 2 was found to be suitable for roosting due to the presence of features suitable for bats to use including holes to access the wooden soffit boxes</p> <p>No trees were present on site.</p> <p>The site is too small to be a significant foraging area for bats.</p> <p>Surrounding habitats: The surrounding areas are generally unfavourable for bats, containing mostly urban development, with bright lights during night time and few areas with trees, hedges or waterbodies where bats might forage.</p> <p>Field signs: No evidence of bat presence was found on the site.</p>
Nesting birds	Potential - Negligible	The site contained only buildings and hardstanding and no suitable nesting vegetation. Buildings were largely unsuitable for birds, lacking access points.
Dormice	Potential- Negligible	The site and immediate surroundings are unsuitable for dormice, containing dense urban development and busy roads.
Great crested newts	Potential – Negligible	<p>The site contains no suitable waterbodies on site for breeding newts.</p> <p>The site contains no areas of suitable terrestrial habitat for newts.</p> <p>There are no known suitable breeding ponds within 250 metres of the site.</p>
Reptiles	Potential – Negligible	<p>No habitats suitable for reptiles occur on site.</p> <p>The immediate surroundings are unsuitable for reptiles, containing urban development and busy roads.</p>
Other protected species	Potential – Negligible	No habitats suitable for water voles, otters, or other protected species not mentioned above.

Species of Principal Importance under NERC Section 41	Potential - Negligible	No habitats likely to support Species of Principal Importance (such as toads, hedgehogs, stag beetles, etc.).
Invasive species	None found on site	No important invasive species were found on site
Protected sites	None on site or adjacent	None on site or adjacent
Habitats of Principal Importance	None on site or adjacent	The site does not contain any NERC Section 41 Habitats of Principal Importance.

Biodiversity feature	Recommendations
Badger setts	The survey found a negligible probability of badgers being present on site. As a result, no further surveying or mitigation for badgers is recommended.
Bat roosts	To determine whether roosting bats are using the buildings described above, a further bat emergence/re-entry survey should be carried out. This would require 1 survey visit by 2 surveyors at dusk or dawn. The visit should be carried out between May and August inclusive, with at least half of visits needing to be between mid-May and end of August. Survey visits can only be carried out when temperature at sunset is 10 C or more and there are no strong winds or heavy rain. Should bats be found to be roosting in the buildings two further survey visits will be required and then a licence applied for from Natural England to allow demolition of the building.
Bat foraging and commuting routes	It is recommended that site lighting is designed to avoid increasing lightfall onto trees around the site which might be used by bats for foraging around. Lighting should be designed to avoid increased lightfall onto trees adjacent to the boundaries of the site, as additional lightfall may deter foraging bats and negatively impact other nocturnal wildlife. Guidance on bats and lighting can be found in this link - https://www.theilp.org.uk/documents/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/
Nesting birds	The survey found a negligible probability of birds nesting on site. As a result, no further surveying or mitigation for nesting birds is recommended.
Dormice	The survey found a negligible probability of dormice being present on site. As a result, no further surveying or mitigation for dormice is recommended.
Great crested newts	The survey found a negligible probability of great crested newts being present on site. As a result, no further surveying or mitigation for great crested newts is recommended.
Reptiles	The survey found a negligible probability of reptiles being present on site. No further surveying or mitigation for reptiles is recommended.
Other protected species	None required.
Species of Principal Importance under NERC Section 41	None required

Invasive species	As no important invasive species were found no precautions are required relating to these, however, should workers subsequently find species such as Japanese knotweed or giant hogweed on site works should stop within 7 m of the area until further advice can be sought from an ecologist or specialist knotweed or invasive species control contractor.
Protected sites	None required, as there are no non-statutory protected sites adjacent to the site and no statutory protected sites within 2 km of the site the works proposed are unlikely to have any negative impact on protected sites.
Habitats of Principal Importance	Although it is unlikely that any Habitats of Principal Importance could be added to the development, where possible other habitats of ecological value should be included in the development. These could include native shrubs, native trees and hedges and/or species rich grassland areas.

5 Impact Assessment and enhancement recommendations

5.1 Impact assessment

A separate report for the site gives details of a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculation for the site. As it is necessary to achieve a 10% net gain in biodiversity then the development will result in an overall benefit for biodiversity. To achieve this net gain habitats will be created on or offsite or biodiversity units will be purchased offsite. The BNG report should be consulted for details of exact planting measures, and offsite habitat creation,

Provided the recommendations in this report or any further reports produced are followed (should further surveys be necessary) then there will be no significant impact on protected species or protected sites.

5.2 Recommended Enhancements

Habitats will be created as described in the BNG report; however, this will not recommend other enhancements not relating to BNG. These include bird and bat boxes/log piles and similar, so these are mentioned here. To be compliant with planning policy regarding enhancement of biodiversity, it is recommended that bird and bat boxes/bricks should be added to the buildings, with one bird brick or box and one bat brick or box added to a suitable part of the site.

6 References

Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

English Nature (2001) Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines, English Nature, Peterborough

English Nature (2006) Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough

HMSO, 1981. The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The Stationery Office, Norwich.

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Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2023). National Planning Policy Framework. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2> (Accessed: 5 November 2024).

Joint Nature Conservation Committee (1990). Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey a technique for environmental audit.

MAGIC (www.defra.gov.uk)

UKHab Ltd (2023). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (at <https://www.ukhab.org>)

7 Annexes

Annex 1: Habitat Map (UKHab 2.0) showing habitats on-site on 11/04/2025

Annex 2: Habitat and Field Sign Photos


Annex 3: List of Plant Species Mentioned in Report (with Scientific Names)

Annex 4: Relevant Legislation and Planning Policies

Annex 1: Habitat Map (UKHab 2.0) showing habitats on-site on 11/04/2025



Annex 2: Habitat and Field Sign Photos:

Habitat type	Description and Locations
Buildings	<p data-bbox="371 376 512 405">Building 1:</p>  <p data-bbox="371 1608 654 1637">Front aspect of building</p>



Rear aspect of building



Close fitting soffit



Gap under roof tile at rear of building



Loft

Building 2:



Soffits showing access holes

Vegetated garden



Back garden



Front garden

Annex 3: List of plant species mentioned in report showing scientific names

Annual Meadow-grass	<i>Poa annua</i>
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>
Common Chickweed	<i>Stellaria media</i>
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>
Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>
Daffodil	<i>Narcissus pseudonarcissus</i>
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>
Dock	<i>Rumex</i> sp.
False Oat-grass	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>
Field Bindweed	<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>
Green Alkanet	<i>Pentaglottis sempervirens</i>
Ground-elder	<i>Aegopodium podagraria</i>
Ground-ivy	<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>
Groundsel	<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>
Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>
Lemon Balm	<i>Melissa officinalis</i>
Nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
Perennial Rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>
Prickly Sow-thistle	<i>Sonchus asper</i>
Red Dead Nettle	<i>Lamium purpureum</i>
Ribwort Plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>
Wood Avens	<i>Geum urbanum</i>
Yarrow	<i>Achillea millefolium</i>

Annex 4: Relevant Legislation and Planning Policies

Badgers

Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. All the following are criminal offences: to wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or to attempt to do so; to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett. Sett interference includes disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, as well as damaging or destroying a sett or obstructing access to it. A badger sett is defined in the legislation as 'any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger'. Badger setts can be disturbed by a multitude of operations which include excavation and coring. (English Nature, 2002).

Bats

All species of British bat are listed in Appendix II of the Berne Convention and various annexes of the Habitats Directive. They are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations 2017 (Regulation 43). It is therefore illegal to kill, injure or handle any bat or obstruct access to, destroy or disturb any site that they use. A £5000 fine and/or 6 months imprisonment per offence is the maximum penalty. Where a bat roost will be affected by development a licence to carry out the work will be required (issued by Natural England). This will be granted only if suitable mitigation for any adverse impacts on bats is to be carried out.

Nesting Birds

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) it is a criminal offence to disturb nesting birds. The breeding season for most species is generally considered to extend between 1st March and 31st August inclusive, although some species may breed slightly earlier in the year or later. Site operations should be phased where possible to occur outside the breeding season. Within this period, clearance of structures and vegetation can only take place if either:

- 1) Affected areas are first checked by an ecologist or other suitably qualified person and no nesting is found to be occurring.
- 2) All parts of the vegetation or structures are clearly visible, and no sign of nesting can be seen. If nests are found, work will have to be delayed in that area until chicks have left any nests.

For birds listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act the protection is increased and it is also an offence to disturb them whilst in the process of nest building or at a nest containing eggs or young. It is an offence also to disturb dependent young. Bird species included in Schedule 1 include kingfishers, black redstarts, barn owls and red kites among others.

Dormice

The hazel dormouse is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is also a European Protected Species and as has additional protection in the UK under Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take a hazel dormouse, possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a hazel dormouse, intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a hazel dormouse (including their habitat). It also an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a hazel dormouse while it is occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection. A £5000 fine or six months custodial sentence per offence applies.

Great crested newts

Great crested newts are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is also a European Protected Species and has additional protection under Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take a great crested newt, possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a great crested newt, intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any

structure or place used for shelter or protection by a great crested newt (in practice this means breeding sites and terrestrial habitat). It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a great crested newt while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection. A £5000 fine or six months custodial sentence per offence applies.

Otters

Otters are legally protected by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2017 (as amended) - "the Habitats Regulations". They are therefore classed as European Protected Species. Under these Regulations they are given the highest level of species protection. In summary it is illegal to:

- deliberately or recklessly kill, injure or take (capture) an otter;
- deliberately or recklessly disturb or harass an otter;
- damage, destroy or obstruct access to a breeding site or resting place of an otter (i.e. an otter shelter).

Otter shelters are legally protected whether or not an otter is present.

Reptiles

All native reptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They are protected against killing or injuring even during lawful development. A £5000 fine or six months custodial sentence per offence applies.

Water voles

Water voles are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Water voles are protected against intentional killing, capture or injury and intentional or reckless disturbance, obstruction, damage or destruction of their burrows. A £5000 fine or six months custodial sentence per offence applies.

Other protected species

There is a list of species of principle importance as set out in section 42 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC 2006). These species are regarded as a material consideration in planning applications and are usually protected by planning policies.

Invasive Plant Species

Some plants, such as Japanese knotweed are listed under Schedule 9, Part 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This states that it is an offence to "plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild" any plant listed in the schedule. "In the wild" is generally taken to mean any area outside the landowner's site. It is therefore an offence to allow it to spread onto neighbouring sites or to allow some listed plants to be removed offsite without proper disposal, as this could also allow them to spread offsite.

Hedgerows

The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 provide protection for some types of hedgerows. Under the regulations most hedges require submission of a 'hedgerow removal notice' and approval by the local authority before they can be removed. All 'important' hedgerows are to be retained and protected from destruction and damage. There are a number of rules determining how a hedgerow is classified as 'Important'. In most cases the hedgerow is required to be in excess of 30 years old and to contain specific indicator plants. An individual hedge, or more likely, the trees within a hedge can also be subject to a Tree Preservation Order, or TPO, under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

Protected/priority habitats

There is a list of habitats of principle importance as set on in section 41 of Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC 2006). These habitats are regarded a material consideration in planning applications and are usually protected by planning policies

National Planning Policy

he NPPF (2023) describes the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. The NPPF states that:

"When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a)** If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- b)** Development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- c)** Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d)** Development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.
- e)** The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites: potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation; listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

Under the NPPF, the Planning Authority has a responsibility to:

- a)** promote preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and to protect and aid recovery of populations of priority species;
- b)** identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.
- c)** contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and sites of biodiversity (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan)
- d)** minimise impacts on, and provide net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing a coherent ecological network that is more resilient to current and future pressures.

Local Planning Policy

Local councils also have various policies designed to protect and enhance local biodiversity.