

## Matter 15, Action 62

The Site Profiles document (Local Plan Publication Draft Appendix F), Ecology Issues section for Site HCM2 notes the following:

*“Site is within an area designated by Natural England as Network Enhancement Zone Category 1.”*

In their document, National Habitat Network Maps<sup>1</sup>, Natural England define such zones as:

*“Land connecting existing patches of primary and associated habitats which is likely to be suitable for creation of the primary habitat. Factors affecting suitability include: proximity to primary habitat, land use (urban/rural), soil type, slope and proximity to coast. Action in this zone to expand and join up existing habitat patches and improve the connections between them can be targeted here.”*

The aim of the maps is to help identify possible locations for actions to improve ecological resilience of the current habitat network in line with Lawton principles ‘more, bigger, better and joined’. The document states that:

*“We believe that the primary aim should be to deliver more priority habitat within Network Enhancement Zone 1 particularly to create bigger and better joined habitat patches but also that creating other semi-natural habitats or improving land management to increase landscape permeability would also be beneficial within both Network Enhancement Zones.”*

The extent of the Network Enhancement Zone can be seen on DEFRA’s Magic Maps at the following link (using the layers: Habitats and Species-Habitats-Other-National Habitat Network All):

<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/magicmap.aspx>

This particular section of the NEZ1 is shown in Figure 1 overleaf.

The maps show that the closest areas of Priority Habitat are to the north of the site, approximately 0.1 miles away. These comprise areas of purple moor grass and rush pasture and deciduous woodland. Both habitats can be seen on Figure 2 on page 2 of this document.

Site HCM2 is currently grazed agricultural land surrounded by housing development on two sides and a main road on the third. Additional agricultural land sits between the allocation site and the Priority Habitats.

It is not known whether the allocation site would be suitable for the creation of the two particular types of Primary Habitat listed above. Development of the site does however provide an opportunity to explore this further and habitat could be provided as part of the required 10% biodiversity net gain. As the site profiles document forms part of the Local Plan developers will be asked to consider the site’s location within the Network Enhancement zone as part of any planning application.

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<sup>1</sup> [https://magic.defra.gov.uk/Metadata\\_for\\_magic/Habitat%20Network%20Mapping%20Guidance.pdf](https://magic.defra.gov.uk/Metadata_for_magic/Habitat%20Network%20Mapping%20Guidance.pdf)

Figure 1: Extent of Network Enhancement Zone 1, NE Cleator Moor

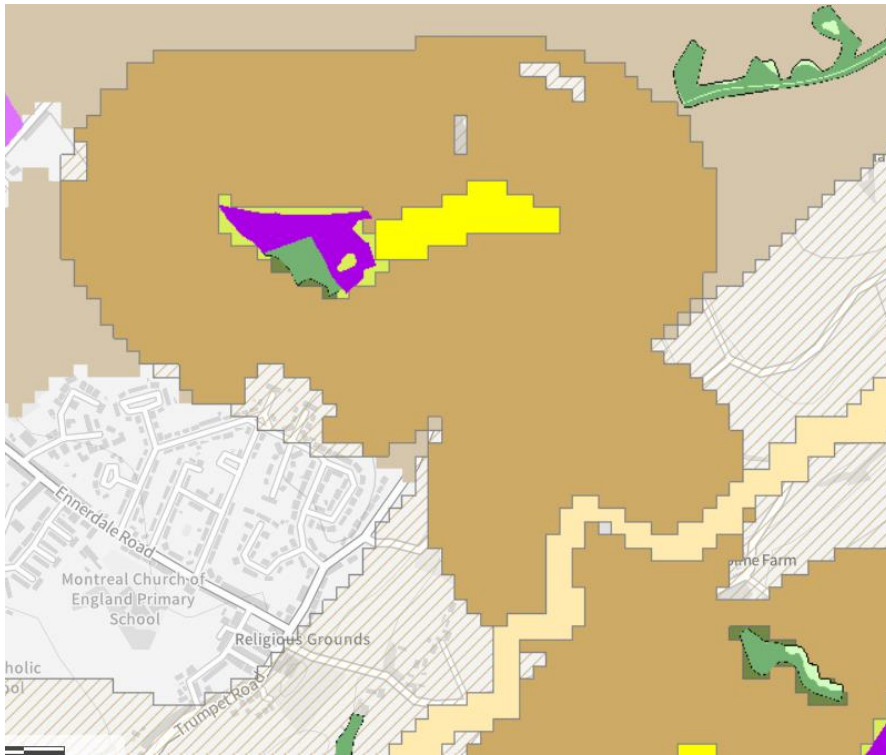


Figure 2: Priority Habitats to the north of HCM2

