DDP00720 RAD Pilots – Calder

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

Approved in line with SLP 4.09.108

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This document and its contents [redacted]e been prepared and are intended solely for Sellafield Limited's information and use in relation to the demolition of four Long Blower Houses and four Short Blower Houses located within the Calder Area of Sellafield.

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Abbreviations

IDS	Integrated Decommissioning Solutions
SL	Sellafield Limited
PEA	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
BS	British Standard
OSNGR	Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference
CIEEM	Chartered Institute of Ecologists and Environmental Managers
MAGIC	Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside
CBDC	Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre
PBRA	Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment
PRF	Potential Roost Feature
TN	Target Note
SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest Impact
IRZ	Impact Risk Zone
CWS	County Wildlife Site
INNS	Invasive Non-native Species
GPPs	Guidance for Pollution Prevention
CIRIA	Construction Industry Research and Information Association

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1. Introduction

1.1. Terms of Reference

Integrated Decommissioning Solutions (IDS) was commissioned by Sellafield Limited (SL) to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) in connection with the proposed demolition of eight Blower Houses (hereafter referred to as the Proposed Scheme). The Proposed Scheme is located within the Calder area of the Sellafield Site, near Seascale, Cumbria, as shown on Figure A.1 in Appendix A (hereafter referred to as the Site).

This report has been undertaken with reference to current good practice[1] and provides an initial appraisal of any likely ecological constraints upon designated site, protected species and other features of ecological interest.

Following the principles of the mitigation hierarchy and British Standard (BS) 42020:2013, this report also identifies the need for measures to avoid, mitigate or compensate for damage and disturbance to habitats and species. Opportunities to provide biodiversity enhancements in accordance with local, regional and national biodiversity planning strategies are also identified where relevant. Furthermore, it identifies recommendations for further ecological surveys that may be required to establish the presence or likely absence of ecological features within and adjoining the Proposed Scheme.

This report is intended to inform design development, Site layout and/ or Site investigations. In addition, it provides the indicative scope for further ecological surveys, ecological impact assessment and biodiversity net gain assessment required in connection with a planning application or to contribute to an Environmental Impact Assessment.

1.2. The Site

The Site is centred at Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (OSNGR) NY 03263 03700 within the Calder Area of the Sellafield Site. The Calder Area is located in the east of the Sellafield Site. The River Calder runs approximately 100 m to the west of the Site.

Sellafield is located on the West Cumbrian coast, approximately 1.25 km to the north-west of Seascale and approximately 1 km south-west of Calder Bridge village and the A595 Road.

The Site is approximately 3.02 ha and comprises the buildings, hardstanding, and nuclear infrastructure.

The Site is approximately 3.02 ha and comprises the buildings, hardstanding, and nuclear infrastructure across four distinct areas. Within each distinct area is a Reactor Building (as shown on Figure A.1 in Appendix A). Sellafield building references for the four reactor buildings are Buildings [redacted], and they will be referred to in this way hereafter.

Associated with each Reactor Building is one Long Blower House and one Short Blower House. These Blower Houses are built structures adjoined to the Reactor Buildings. Associated with each Blower House are two Pump Houses. An illustration of this is provided in Figure 1 below.

[1] Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management [CIEEM] (2017) *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Second Edition.* CIEEM, Winchester.

Figure 1. Illustration of Reactor Buildings, Blower Houses and Pump Houses

1.3. The Proposed Scheme

The Proposed Scheme comprises the demolition of eight Blower Houses (and associated Pump Houses) within the Calder Area of Sellafield.

At this stage, there is no detailed plan/ programme for the demolition, nor any facilitative works that may be required in the immediate area surrounding the Site. However, it is understood that the demolition footprint will include the Blower Houses and associated Pump Houses. The main Reactor Buildings will not be demolished at this stage.

Once finalised, any plans or programme should be reviewed in line with the findings of this report.

1.4. Scope of the Assessment

This report presents ecological information obtained during the following:

- A desk study undertaken on 6 December 2023; and
- A walkover survey of accessible land within and adjacent to the Site on 29 November 2023.

The walkover survey and identification of potential ecological constraints was based on the condition of the Site and its immediate surrounds encountered at the time of the walkover survey, and the information about the Proposed Scheme available at the time of producing this report. If information on the Proposed Scheme should change, the Site may need to be re-visited to establish if there are any further ecological constraints arising from changes to the proposals.

2. Methods

2.1. Desk Study

The geographical area for obtaining ecological data through desk studies has been determined using best practice guidance (as set out in internal AtkinsRéalis guidance) and professional judgement. Baseline data has been gathered from a range of sources through data requests and using online resources as outlined below. This included data gathering in relation to statutory and non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation and protected and priority habitats and species (as defined by Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management [CIEEM] guidance[2]), and an assessment of the likely importance of habitat features present for such species was also undertaken during the walkover survey.

The study areas used for the data gathering are detailed in Table 2-1. The desk study was undertaken on 6 December 2023. For species records collected, only those within 10 years of the data collection date (hereafter referred to as "recent records") have been considered within the assessment.

The following online resources were accessed:

- Defra's *Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)* website[3]; and
- The Woodland Trust's *Ancient Tree Inventory*[4].

Ordnance Survey maps and Grid Reference Finder[5] were used to identify the presence of waterbodies within 500 m of the Site boundary, in order to establish if the land within and immediately surrounding the Site could be used as terrestrial habitat for great crested newts. This species typically uses suitable terrestrial habitat up to 500 m from a breeding pond[6]. However, there is a notable decrease in great crested newt abundance beyond a distance of 250 m from a breeding pond[7].

Cumbria Biodiversity Data Centre (CBDC) was contacted to request records of protected and priority species and habitats and details of non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation.

Table 2-1 – Data search Areas

Data type	Search area – distance from Proposed Scheme boundary
Statutory designated sites for nature conservation	2 km
Non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation	1 km
Irreplaceable habitats	1 km
Veteran trees	1 km
Priority habitats	1 km
Protected and priority species	1 km (extended to 2 km for bats)

[2] As set out in Box 1 on page 4 of: CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Second Edition.* | Priority species include those listed as a national and/or local priority for conservation (i.e. a Habitat of Principal Importance or Species of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.
[3] Defra. *MAGIC* [Online]. Available at: https://magic.defra.gov.uk/ [Accessed: 06/12/2023]
[4] The Woodland Trust. *Ancient Tree Inventory* [Online]. Available at: https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/ [Accessed: 06/12/2023]
[5] Grid Reference Finder [Online]. Available at: https://gridreferencefinder.com/ [Accessed: 06/12/2023]
[6] English Nature (2001) *Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.
[7] English Nature (2004). *An assessment of the efficiency of capture techniques and the value of different habitats for the great crested newt (ENRR576)*. Available at: http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/134002 [Accessed: 06/12/2023].

A review of national and local planning policy relevant to the Proposed Scheme was undertaken as part of the data gathering. The following policy documents were subject to review (with further detail provided in Appendix B):

- National Planning Policy Framework (2023)[8]; and
- Cumberland Council's *Copeland Local Plan*[9].

2.2. Field Survey

The geographical area for undertaking ecological field surveys has been determined using the current survey guidance (as detailed in Section 2.2.2), professional judgement and the zones of influence, which have been determined based on likely effects arising from the Proposed Scheme.

Following CIEEM's Guidelines for PEA[2], a walkover survey was undertaken, focusing on protected and priority habitats and/ or species.

The walkover survey was undertaken on 29 November 2023. This included all land within the Site plus a buffer of up to 50 m from the Site boundary where access was allowed (the Survey Area).

2.2.1. Habitats

Habitats were mapped using the UK Habitat Classification[10] (UKHab) system. UKHab is a comprehensive and hierarchical habitat classification system for the UK that has been developed to benefit from recent changes in habitat categorisation, recording and analysis, and is suitable for digitally recording in the field using GIS. It is fully compatible with other major existing classifications, including Priority Habitat types (UKHab Level 4) and Habitats Directive Annex I habitat types[11] (UKHab Level 5)[12].

All habitats were recorded to at least Level 3 of the UKHab hierarchy, i.e. broad habitats such as neutral grassland or dense scrub. Any Level 4 habitats and Level 5 habitats have also been recorded. In addition, mandatory secondary codes have been recorded (up to secondary code number 49). All habitat features have been digitally mapped, using QGIS, as either polygons, lines or points and assigned to a UKHab Primary Habitat Code.

An assessment of the possible presence of priority habitats (as defined by CIEEM PEA guidance) was also undertaken during the walkover survey.

Vascular plant names recorded during this survey follow nomenclature utilised by Stace (2019)[13].

Target notes (TNs) were used to record specific details on the plant species composition of the habitats, current management and quality. TNs were also used to record features of ecological importance (e.g. ponds, complex habitat mosaics).

2.2.2. Protected and Priority Species

An assessment of the possible presence of protected or priority species, and an assessment of the likely importance of habitat features present that could support such species was also undertaken during the walkover survey. Surveyors used current guidance and methodologies, for preliminary assessment of species.

[8] Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2023) *National Planning Policy Framework.* Available at: https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework [Accessed: 06/12/2023]
[9] Cumberland Council. *Copeland Local Plan*. Available at: https://www.copeland.gov.uk/content/copeland-local-plan [Accessed: 13/12/2023]
[10] https://ukhab.org/
[11] Council Directive 92/43/EEC (1992) on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (known as the 'Habitats Directive').
[12] UKHab has been chosen as the classification system for the majority of terrestrial area habitat types used in Defra's Statutory Biodiversity Metric. It is, therefore, essential to use UKHab when undertaking a project where Biodiversity Net Gain will be required.
[13] Stace (2019) *New Flora of the British Isles. Fourth Edition.*

The survey comprised assessing the suitability of the habitats present for, and recording any activity of the following species:

- Badgers[14];
- Bats[15];
- Otters[16,17];
- Water voles[18];
- Red squirrels[19,20];
- Breeding, wintering and passage birds[21];
- Reptiles[22];
- Amphibians (terrestrial and aquatic habitats), including an assessment of aquatic habitat for its suitability to support great crested newts using the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment[23];
- Priority invertebrates[24]; and
- Priority plants.

Evidence of the presence of the following invasive species was recorded where seen:

- Evidence of animal species as listed on the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019: muntjac deer and grey squirrels; and
- Evidence of the presence of the following invasive plant species: Japanese knotweed, giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam, rhododendron[25], cotoneaster[26], Japanese rose, and three-cornered garlic. These are listed in Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and subject to strict legal control.

[14] Harris S., Cresswell P., Jefferies D. (1989) *Surveying badgers. Mammal Society – No9.* Mammal Society, London.
[15] Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition*). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.
[16] Chanin and Smith (2003) *Monitoring the otter Lutra lutra*. *Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers Monitoring Series No 10.* English Nature, Peterborough.
[17] Liles G. (2003) *Otter Breeding Sites. Conservation and Management*. *Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers Conservation Techniques Series No. 5*. English Nature, Peterborough.
[18] Dean, M. *et al.* (2016) *The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook*. Mammal Society, London.
[19] Birks J.D.S, Bullion S., Cresswell W.J., Dean M. (eds.) (2012) *UK BAP Mammals: Interim Guidance for Survey Methodologies, Impact Assessment and Mitigation.* Mammal Society, London.
[20] Gurnell J., Lurz P., McDonald R., Pepper H.W. (2009) *Practical techniques for surveying and monitoring squirrels*.
[21] Bird Survey & Assessment Steering Group (2022) *Bird Survey Guidelines for assessing ecological impacts, v.0.1.7*. Available at: https://birdsurveyguidelines.org [Accessed: 13/12/2023].
[22] Froglife (1999) *Reptile Survey: an introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation.* Froglife advice sheet 10.
[23] Oldham R.S., Keeble J., Swan M.J.S., Jeffcote M. (2000) *Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the Great Crested Newt (Triturus cristatus)*. Herpetological Journal 10: 143-155.
[24] At the present time there is no current survey guidance for priority invertebrates.
[25] Although there are approximately 1,200 species of rhododendron, just one species and one of its hybrids are listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended): *Rhododendron ponticum and Rhododendron ponticum* x *Rhododendron maximum.*
[26] There are approximately 100 species of cotoneaster found in the UK, but only five are listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended): *Cotoneaster horizontalis, Cotoneaster integrifolius, Cotoneaster simonsii, Cotoneaster bullatus* and *Cotoneaster microphyllus.*

While assessing the suitability of the Site for bats, a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment (PBRA) was undertaken on each structure. The PBRA were undertaken in accordance with best practice guidance[15] and CIEEM competencies for undertaking bat surveys[27].

The survey involved a ground-based daytime inspection to view the exteriors of all buildings, from all aspects where possible. To aid in the survey effort binoculars were used. The survey focused on identifying a range of characteristic signs which can indicate current/ recent use of a potential roost site by bats, known as Potential Roost Features (PRFs).

The external assessment of the Blower Houses was supplemented by an internal inspection of the [redacted] Blower Houses, to identify any signs of bat presence internally and assess the internal suitability (i.e., presence or otherwise of suitable voids or other internal features likely to support roosting bats).

An internal inspection of the Blower Houses for Buildings [redacted] was not undertaken due to access restrictions (see Limitations Section).

The following signs of bat presence were searched for during the external and internal inspections of the structures (as relevant): droppings, grease marks, urine stains, bats (dead or alive) and feeding remains.

The structures were categorised according to best practice guidance[15] based on the presence of PRFs offering suitability for roosting bats:

- Negligible: Habitat features on site unlikely to be used by roosting bats;
- Low: Structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/ or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats;
- Moderate: Structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status;
- High: Structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.

2.2.3. Surveyor Competencies

All the surveys were led by surveyors who have been assessed to be at least of capable experience following the CIEEM competency framework[28].

2.3. Limitations

This section identifies any limitations to the surveys or assessment and provides an explanation as to the effect of these on the appraisal.

Access was restricted in a number of locations within the Survey Area, due to the high level of activity within the Sellafield Site. Some distinct areas are subject to controlled access restrictions, where other works are taking place and therefore secure compounds have been set up. Locations that were inaccessible at the time of the survey are highlighted on Figure C.1 in Appendix C.

The field survey was undertaken in November, which is a sub-optimal time of year to undertake such surveys as many plant species (including some invasive non-native species) are often not readily identifiable or visible.

[27] CIEEM (2013) *Competencies for Species Survey: Bats.*
[28] CIEEM. *Competency Framework.* Available at: https://www.cieem.net/competency-framework [Accessed 06/12/2023]

However, due to the habitats identified on the Site being common and widespread, this is not considered to be a significant constraint.

The search for waterbodies within 500 m of the Site was undertaken by using Ordnance Survey plans and aerial photographs only. These sources may not show all waterbodies within 500 m of the Site boundary and therefore some waterbodies may not have been identified.

The list of invasive plant species included on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is extensive and these plants are found in a range of different habitats, including aquatic habitats. The field survey checked for the presence of Japanese knotweed, giant knotweed, hybrid knotweed, giant hogweed, Himalayan balsam, rhododendron, variegated yellow archangel, cotoneaster, montbretia, giant rhubarb, Japanese rose and three-cornered garlic. Other invasive species listed in Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) may not have been recorded.

Cryptic taxa such as some species of plant, invertebrates and fungi, could not be adequately surveyed at the time of the survey. These groups require specialist survey, and survey windows are generally highly restrictive. However, when taking into account the desk study results, the nature of the habitats present at the Site and in the surrounding landscape, this is not considered to be a significant limitation.

The desk study reviewed The Woodland Trust's Ancient Trees Inventory. This provides records of veteran trees, but is not an exhaustive list, and other veteran trees may be present in the area. The walkover survey aimed to identify such features and as such this is not considered a constraint.

CBDC records are not exhaustive, and the absence of records does not necessarily demonstrate the absence of a species.

Ecological surveys are limited by factors which affect the presence of plants and animals such as the time of year, migration patterns and behaviour. The ecological surveys undertaken to support this PEA have not therefore produced a complete list of plants and animals, and the absence of evidence of any particular species should not be taken as conclusive proof that the species is not present or that it will not be present in the future. The above limitation/s have been addressed through taking the precautionary approach within the appraisal.

No photographs could be taken, due to the security restrictions in place on Sellafield Site. There are therefore no photographs to accompany described features within this report.

The external PBRA of the Blower Houses was supplemented by an internal inspection of the [redacted] Blower Houses, to identify any signs of bat presence internally and assess the internal suitability (i.e., presence or otherwise of suitable voids or other internal features likely to support roosting bats). However, an internal inspection of the Blower Houses fo [redacted] was not undertaken due to access restrictions. However, given the uniform design of these structures, it was assumed there was an absence of any known loft voids or other internal features likely to support roosting bats.

3. Results

3.1. Statutory and Non-statutory Designated Sites

No statutory designated sites for nature conservation were identified within 2 km of the Site through the desk study. The Site falls within the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Low Church Moss SSSI. However, the Scheme does not fall into any of the relevant categories listed.

One non-statutory designated site for nature conservation, Sellafield Tarn County Wildlife Site (CWS), was identified within 1 km of the Site through the desk study. Sellafield Tarn CWS is located approximately 960 m west of the Site (as displayed on Figure A.2 in Appendix A). There are no hydrological pathways that connect the Site to the Sellafield Tarn CWS. Therefore, it is considered that the Proposed Scheme will not directly or indirectly impact upon this non-statutory designated Site.

Statutory and non-statutory designated sites are not discussed further within this report as they are not considered to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.

3.2. Irreplaceable Habitats

No irreplaceable habitats (including ancient or veteran trees) were identified through the desk study.

Irreplaceable habitats are not discussed further within this report as they are not considered to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.

3.3. Habitats and Priority Plants

The Site comprised buildings, sealed surface, and unsealed surface developed land. Smaller discrete areas of sparsely vegetated urban land were also present. No protected or priority habitats were present within the Site.

A search of MAGIC identified 28 parcels of priority habitat within 1 km of the Site, comprising 27 parcels of deciduous woodland, and one parcel of good quality semi-improved grassland. The closest parcel of priority habitat is deciduous woodland, located approximately 280 m north of the Site. The parcel of good quality semi-improved grassland is located approximately 950 m north west of the Site. There are no impact pathways from the Site to any areas of priority habitat (including hydrological connectivity).

The River Calder is located approximately 85 m west of the Site at its closest point.

Table 3-1 lists all of the habitats present within the Survey Area and the proportion[29] of the Site this makes up. Habitats are mapped on the Habitat Survey Plan (Figure C.1 in Appendix C).

A full list of plant species recorded is provided in Appendix D.

[29] Distances/ areas are measured in QGIS.

Table 3-1 – Habitat types within the Survey Area

Habitat type with UKHab code	Location of habitat	Area of habitat/ distance of linear feature within the Survey Area	
		Ha/ m^2	% of Site
Other developed land – **u1b**	Within the Site, and surrounding the Site	3.90 ha	61.3%
Buildings – **u1b5**	Within the Site	1.15 ha	38.1%
Sparsely vegetated urban land – **u1f**	Within the Site	169 m^2	0.6%
Modified grassland – **g4**	Outside of the Site, within the Survey Area	0.76 ha	N/A

3.3.1. Priority Plants

CBDC provided no priority plant records within 1 km of the Site.

The Site was largely unvegetated, with small areas of sparsely vegetated urban land present.

No priority plants were recorded in the Site, and it is considered unlikely the Site is suitable to support priority plants given it is primarily developed, sealed surface within an industrial setting. Species present within the Site were limited to creeping thistle, dandelion species, and buddleia.

Other habitats in the Survey Area include distinct parcels of modified grassland. The modified grassland was maintained at a short height and no priority plants were identified.

Aerial imagery displays an area of mixed scrub present to the east, however, this area was inaccessible at the time of survey (see Figure C.1 in Appendix C). The mixed scrub was part of an active construction site, whilst priority plants may occur here the habitat is approximately 35 m from the Site. Roads and security fencing are present between this habitat and the Site. Therefore, it is considered unlikely that this habitat or any species present will be impacted by the works.

As no suitable habitat for priority plants will be impacted by the works, they are not discussed further within this report as they are not considered to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.

3.4. Protected and Priority Animal Species

Evidence of protected and priority species, or habitats with the potential to support protected and priority species are indicated on the Habitat Survey Plan (Figure C.1 in Appendix C), with specific features highlighted by TNs on the map. TN descriptions are provided in Table C.1 in Appendix C. Details of legislation relating to protected species is summarised in Appendix E.

Protected and priority species are not discussed further within this report where the following applies:

- a species distribution range does not cover the Site location, and;
- no evidence of the species was recorded within the Survey Area and/or no potentially suitable habitat for the species has been recorded within the zone of influence of the species.

3.4.1. Badger

CBDC provided one recent record of badger within 1 km of the Site. This record was located approximately 680 m east of the Site.

The field survey assessed the Survey Area for evidence of badgers (setts, latrines, feeding signs and mammal track) and potential habitats to support badgers. No evidence of badger presence was identified.

The habitats within the Site are not suitable for badgers. The Site comprises developed land which is not suitable for badgers to dig a sett. Vegetation was largely absent from the Site, and therefore suitability for foraging and commuting badgers is limited. In addition, the Site is surrounded by security fencing which aims to limit access to wildlife.

An area of mixed scrub is located approximately 35 m east of the Site. This is currently separated from the Site by an active work site. Whilst this habitat is suitable for foraging, commuting and sett building and badgers using this habitat will not be impacted by the Scheme given the distance, high baseline levels of disturbance and presence of hardstanding roads separating the Site from these habitats. In addition, this scrub habitat is located within the security fencing, reducing the likelihood of badger presence within it.

Badger are not discussed further within this report as they are not considered to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.

3.4.2. Bats

CBDC provided 121 recent records of bat species within 2 km of the Site. These records comprise common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat, noctule, Daubenton's bat, and Myotis species.

The closest record was located approximately 50 m from the Site, located within Sellafield in Building [redacted] (Turbine Hall B). This record is of a bat roost, comprising two common pipistrelle bats. This record relates to a roost that was recorded in 2014 during nocturnal surveys undertaken on Buildings [redacted]. This roost was present under the roofing felt in the south-eastern corner of Building [redacted]3. Bat droppings were also recorded in Building [redacted].

The habitats within the Site itself offer negligible suitability for foraging and commuting bats. Vegetation within the Site is minimal, limited to a small area of sparsely vegetated urban land. The parcels of modified grassland are not considered to offer negligible suitability for foraging and commuting bat due to their short-mown structure and isolated nature within a surrounding well-lit industrial setting.

Mixed scrub located approximately 35 m east of the Application Site offers moderate suitability for roosting bats, given connectivity to the wider landscape, including the River Calder and woodland associated with the watercourse to the north.

Given the industrial nature of the Site and its immediate surrounds, and ongoing construction adjacent to the nearby scrub/ modified grassland habitats, impacts (through disturbance or habitat loss) as a result of the demolition works on foraging and commuting bats are considered unlikely. Therefore, foraging and commuting bats are not considered further in this assessment as they are unlikely to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.

No potential roosting features (PRFs) were identified within any of the structures during the walkover. The buildings were of brick and corrugated sheet metal construction, and open plan internally. No accessible cavity spaces were present within the structures that would offer roosting space for species of bats. The structures are considered to offer negligible suitability for roosting bats.

A gap was present on the southern face of the [redacted]Long Blower House (see TN 2), approximately 20 cm x 20 cm, in size. A gap was present on the northern face of the [redacted] Long Blower House (see TN 3), approximately 50 cm x 50 cm in size. These breaches in the exterior of the structures are of a size such that they are considered unsuitable as a PRF for bats, given that they allow ingress of light and adverse weather (i.e. wind and rain) into the building, at their locations. Additionally, given that no accessible cavity spaces or other roosting opportunities were observed within the building, these gaps are not considered further with regard to bats.

The scrub to the east of the Site contains some young trees, which may offer suitability to roosting bats. This area is approximately 35 m from the Site and separated by an area of active construction. Given the distance and high levels of baseline disturbance, the demolition works are unlikely to cause disturbance to bats roosting in this area, if present. Table 3-2 below presents the details of the PBRA of the structures within the Site.

Table 3-2 – Summary of PBRA of buildings within the Site

Structure reference	Summary of PRFs	Bat roosting Suitability
[redacted] Reactor Building	No PRFs recorded	**Negligible**
[redacted] Short Blower House	No PRFs recorded	**Negligible**
[redacted] Long Blower House	No PRFs recorded	**Negligible**
[redacted] Reactor Building	No PRFs recorded	**Negligible**
[redacted] Short Blower House	No PRFs recorded	**Negligible**
[redacted] Long Blower House	No PRFs recorded	**Negligible**
[redacted] Reactor Building	No PRFs recorded	**Negligible**
[redacted] Short Blower House	No PRFs recorded	**Negligible**
[redacted] Long Blower House	No PRFs recorded	**Negligible**
[redacted] Reactor Building	No PRFs recorded	**Negligible**
[redacted] Short Blower House	No PRFs recorded	**Negligible**
[redacted] Long Blower House	No PRFs recorded	**Negligible**

As no suitable roosting, foraging or commuting habitat for bats will be impacted by the works, they are not discussed further within this report as they are not considered to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.

3.4.3. Otter

CBDC provided no recent records of otter within 1 km of the Site.

The closest watercourse is the River Calder, located approximately 80 m west of the Site. This stretch of the River Calder runs through the Sellafield Site. There is built development either side of the watercourse for approximately 1.7 km of its length as it passes through the Sellafield Site, with the exception of a narrow strip of rock face and minimal vegetation of approximately 10 - 15 m width, along its length. Additionally, a secure perimeter fence prevents access from the river corridor habitat on to the Sellafield Site. There is also significant light, noise, and human activity overlooking this length of the River Calder at all times of the day.

It is unlikely that this section of river or surrounding habitats provides high value resting sites (including natal holts) for otter given the regular disturbance from passing traffic and works activities ongoing decommissioning within Sellafield. Temporary rest sites may be present, however, given the high baseline levels of disturbance, distance from the Site, presence of fencing, and number of buildings and roads between the Site and the river, disturbance of otters as a result of the Scheme is unlikely.

Given the distance of the Site from the river, and presence of barriers, there is no hydrological connection between the Site and the river.

The Site itself is unsuitable for otter. It is comprised of buildings, developed sealed and unsealed surface with some sparse vegetation. Food sources and adequate cover for foraging and commuting otters are absent from within the Site and Survey Area.

As no suitable habitat for otter has been recorded within the Survey Area, this species is not discussed further within this report as it is not considered to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.

3.4.4. Water Vole

CBDC provided no recent records of water vole within 1 km of the Site.

There is no suitable habitat for water vole within the Survey Area. The closest watercourse is the River Calder approximately 80 m west of the Site. This watercourse may be suitable for foraging, commuting and water vole burrows. No impacts on this watercourse are anticipated as a result of the works.

Given the distance of the Site from the river, and presence of barriers, there is no hydrological connection between the Site and the river.

As no suitable habitat for water vole has been recorded within the Survey Area, this species is not discussed further within this report as it is not considered to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.

3.4.5. Red Squirrel

CBDC provided four recent records of red squirrel within 1 km of the Site. The closest of these records, from 2021, is located approximately 605 m east of the Site.

The habitats within and surrounding the Site are unsuitable for red squirrels. They comprise hardstanding and built development, with minor areas of grassland and scrub, and opportunities for red squirrels to forage and commute are absent.

Given the absence of suitable habitat for red squirrels in the Survey Area, this species is not discussed further in this report as they are not considered.

3.4.6. Breeding and Non-Breeding Birds

CBDC provided no recent records of bird species within 1 km of the Site.

The Site is an urban site with no suitability for wintering and passage birds, considering the absence of habitat to support these species. Therefore, wintering and passage birds are not discussed further in this report as they are not considered to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.

The buildings within the Site are suitable for a range of nesting bird species. The roof of the Blower Houses and associated Reactor Buildings are suitable for nesting seabirds in particular (i.e. gulls, oystercatchers, etc.).

The Reactor Buildings are also suitable for nesting birds of prey, including peregrine, which is a Schedule 1 species. However, it is considered that peregrine (if present) would utilise the main Reactor Buildings, rather than the Blower Houses, given their greater height and prominence in the localised landscape, which provides a better vantage point for the species, with nothing overlooking them.

The small areas of sparsely vegetated urban land were not considered suitable to support ground nesting birds.

Within the [redacted] Short Blower House, pigeon feathers were recorded (see TN 1). However, no obvious access into the building was recorded during the survey. Access is considered to have likely occurred when a door was left open.

A gap was present in the cladding on the southern face of the [redacted] Long Blower House (see TN 2). This gap was approximately 20 cm x 20 cm, allowing access internally for bird species, such as pigeon.

A gap was present in the corrugated sheeting (surrounding existing piping) on the northern face of the [redacted] Long Blower House (see TN 3). This gap was approximately 50 cm x 50 cm, allowing access internally for bird species, such as pigeon.

As suitable nesting habitat for birds and evidence of breeding birds has been recorded within the Survey Area, then breeding may pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme and recommendations are provided in Section 4.

3.4.7. Reptiles

CBDC provided one recent record of reptile species within 1 km of the Site. This record was for a slow-worm, located approximately 955 m south-west of the Site.

Widespread species of reptiles are known to be present in the area surrounding the Sellafield Site. Adders are known to the south of the Sellafield Site, occupying habitats near to the Calder tip and the neighbouring golf course. However, there is no suitable habitat for this species within the Site, or within the Survey Area. The Site is at least 750 m from this area and built development/ hardstanding is present between the suitable habitats and the Site.

Suitable habitat for reptiles is not present within the Site. No refuges were present, and the habitats comprised sparsely vegetated urban land alongside sealed developed surface. These habitats do not provide suitable cover for reptiles to forage or take refuge. Suitable basking habitat is present for reptiles, however, in absence of refuge of foraging habitat, it is highly unlikely that reptiles would be present.

Whilst the scrub/ grassland habitat located approximately 35 m east of the Site and habitats surrounding the River Calder approximately 80 m west of the Application Site are suitable for widespread reptile species, it is considered unlikely that reptiles would enter the Site given the absence suitable connecting habitat and lack of suitable habitat present within the Site.

As no suitable habitat for reptiles has been recorded within the Survey Area, reptiles are not discussed further within this report as it is not considered to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.

3.4.8. Amphibians

CBDC provided 24 recent records of amphibian species within 1 km of the Site. All of these records were of natterjack toads, the closest of which was located approximately 950 m south-west of the Site.

Natterjack toads are known to be present along the Cumbrian Coast, in close proximity to Sellafield Site. However, there is no suitable habitat for this species within the Site, or within the Survey Area. The Site is at least 800 m from any habitats which may support natterjack toads and built development/ hardstanding is present between the suitable habitats and the Site. Therefore, this species is not considered to pose a constraint to the assessment and is not considered further in this report.

An effluent pit is located approximately 15 m south of the Site. This feature is not considered suitable for amphibians, including great crested newt. The pit was covered with a metal grate and had steep concrete sides. No vegetation was present, and the surrounding terrestrial habitat was not suitable for amphibians including great crested newt. Anecdotal information was provided during the walkover survey that common species of newt (assumed to be smooth newt or palmate newt) have been recorded within the effluent pit in the past, although no confirmed sightings have been provided.

As no suitable habitat for great crested newts or natterjack toads has been recorded within the Survey Area, this species is not considered further within this report as it is not considered to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.

Recommendations for dealing with common species of amphibians that utilise the effluent pit have been provided below.

3.4.9. Priority Invertebrates

CBDC provided no recent records of priority invertebrate species within 1 km of the Site.

The habitats within the Site are common, widespread and of limited value for invertebrates. Important habitat features for invertebrates, such as aquatic features, standing deadwood and fallen deadwood were absent. Floral diversity within the Site was low and limited to sparsely vegetated ground.

As no suitable habitat for priority invertebrates has been recorded within the Survey Area, they are not discussed further within this report as it is not considered to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.

3.5. Invasive Non-native Species

CBDC provided no recent records of invasive non-native species (INNS) within 1 km of the Site.

No INNS were recorded in the Survey Area. These species are considered absent from the Site, therefore they are not considered further in this report as they are not considered to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.

4. Constraints and Recommendations

4.1. Key Constraints

The Site and immediate surroundings are of limited biodiversity value.

No statutory or non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation, irreplaceable habitats, or priority habitats were identified during the desk study or walkover survey that may be impacted by the Proposed Scheme.

4.1.1. Nesting birds

All Blower Houses offer suitability for nesting birds across the roof space, including seabird species such as gull species and oystercatcher.

The main Reactor Buildings adjacent to the Blower Houses offer suitability across the roof space for peregrine, as well as seabird species such as gulls.

The [redacted] Long Blower House and [redacted] Long Blower House offer suitability for nesting birds internally, given the presence of holes on the external walls that allow access into the buildings.

4.2. Mitigation

Works should adhere to the Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPPs)[30] and Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) C762 Environmental good practice[31];

If additional lighting is required, this should be aimed away from vegetation in the surrounding area, particularly the area of scrub to the east of the Site;

Any excavations should be covered or backfilled overnight, in order to prevent the entrapment of crepuscular species. If this is not possible, they should be backfilled or graded in order to provide a means of escape;

The demolition structures within the Site should be undertaken outside the core bird nesting season (1 March to 31 August[32]) in order to avoid damage or destruction of occupied nests or harm to breeding birds. If this cannot be achieved, works within the core bird nesting season will require an inspection of structures to be demolished for breeding birds and their occupied nests by a suitably qualified ecologist, typically no more than 24 hours prior to any works being undertaken. If any nesting birds are identified during the survey they will be left in situ for their entire nesting period and alternative approaches to the work proposed. This may include leaving an exclusion zone around the nests to avoid disturbance.

Ahead of demolition works, a search for common amphibian species (that may have been utilising the nearby effluent pit) should be undertaken. Although unlikely, should any common amphibian species be encountered, these should be relocated out of the works area, using a gloved hand. If there is any doubt regarding whether or not the species is common or rare, seek advice from an ecologist.

[30] The GPPs provide environmental good practice guidance for the whole UK, and environmental regulatory guidance directly to Northern Ireland, Scotland and Wales only. For businesses in England, regulatory guidance is available from GOV.UK instead.
[31] CIRIA C762 Environmental good practice provides advice on the management of a range of environmental issues that may be encountered on site and presents good practice to reduce the environmental impacts due to construction.
[32] It should be noted that variation in dates is possible, for example from geographical variations in climate, or due to a particularly mild winter.

5. Conclusion

The Site and immediate surroundings are of limited biodiversity value. No statutory or non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation, irreplaceable habitats or priority habitats were identified during the field survey or desk study that may be impacted by the Proposed Scheme.

Habitats suitable for nesting birds were identified within the Site.

The demolition of structures within the Site should be undertaken outside the core bird nesting season, where possible. If this cannot be achieved, works within the core bird nesting season will require an inspection of structures to be demolished for breeding birds and their occupied nests by a suitably qualified ecologist, typically no more than 24 hours prior to any works being undertaken. If any nesting birds are identified during the survey they will be left in situ for their entire nesting period.

At this stage, there is no detailed plan/ programme for the demolition, nor any facilitative works that may be required in the immediate area surrounding the Site. Once finalised, any plans or programme should be reviewed in line with this report.

5.1. Report Validity

In the event of scope or programme changes or if works do not commence within 12 months of the date of this report then updates to the surveys may be required to ensure the validity of the data, as per CIEEM guidance[33].

[33] CIEEM (2019) *Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys*.

Appendix A. Site Location Plan and Designated Sites Location Plan

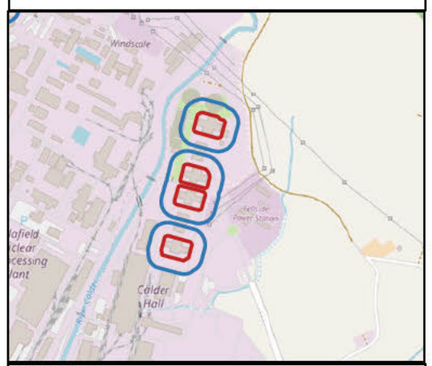
N

0 100 200 m

Legend

50 m Buffer

Red Line Boundary



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Project: DDP00720 RAD Pil t - Calder

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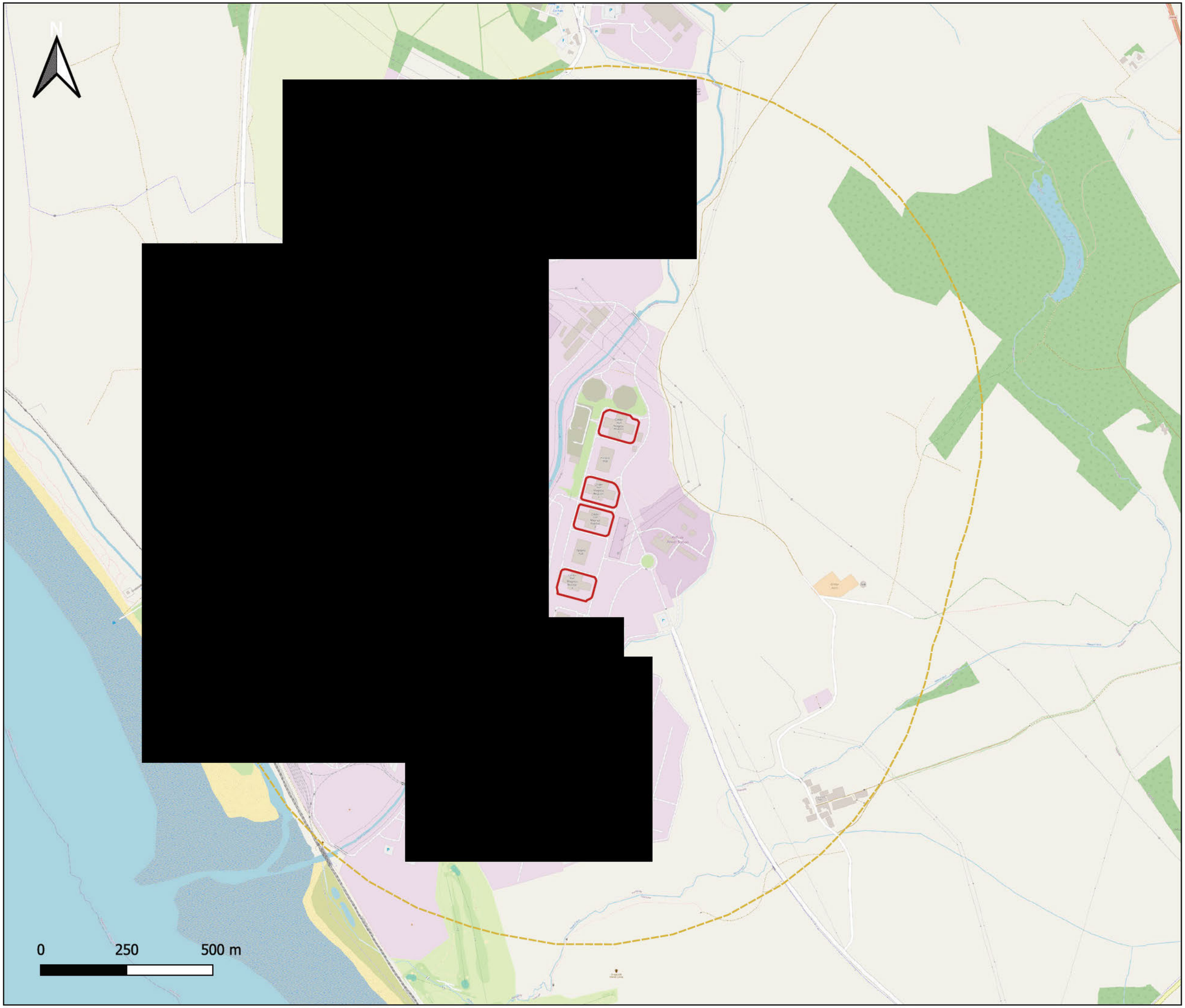

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INTEGRATED DECOMMISSIONING SOLUTIONS

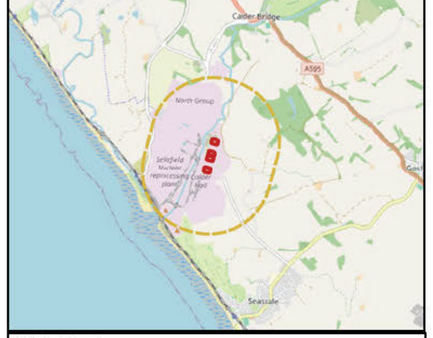
Legend

Boundaries/ Buffers

- 1 km Buffer
- Red Line Boundary

Non-statutory Designated Sites

- County Wi d ife Site



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Appendix B. Planning Policy Summary

B.1. National Planning Policy Framework, 2023

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Governments planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied by Local Authorities within their Local Development Frameworks (LDF). The revised National Planning Policy Framework was published in September 2023.

Chapter 15 of the NPPF 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment' sets out the requirements to consider biodiversity in planning decisions.

The paragraphs within Chapter 15 relevant to the Scheme, the key information from which is detailed below:

Para 174: Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;

e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

Para 175: Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework[34]; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

Para 176: Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads[35]. The scale and extent of development within these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.

Para 177: When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, permission should be refused for major development[36] other than in

[34] Where significant development of agricultural land is demonstrated to be necessary, areas of poorer quality land should be preferred to those of a high quality

[35] English National Parks and the Broads: UK Government Vision and Circular 2010 provides further guidance and information about their statutory purposes, management and other matters.

[36] For the purposes of paragraphs 172 and 173, whether a proposal is 'major development' is a matter for the decision maker, taking into account its nature, scale and setting, and whether it could have a significant adverse impact on the purposes for which the area has been designated or defined.

exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;

b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and

c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.

Para 178. Within areas defined as Heritage Coast (and that do not already fall within one of the designated areas mentioned in paragraph 172), planning policies and decisions should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Major development within a Heritage Coast is unlikely to be appropriate, unless it is compatible with its special character.

Para 179. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity[37]; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation[38]; and

b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Para 180. 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),

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[39] and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Para 181. The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;

b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites40; and

c) 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.

[37] Circular 06/2005 provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact within the planning system.
[38] Where areas that are part of the Nature Recovery Network are identified in plans, it may be appropriate to specify the types of development that may be suitable within them.
[39] For example, infrastructure projects (including nationally significant infrastructure projects, orders under the Transport and Works Act and hybrid bills), where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat.
[40] Potential Special Protection Areas, poss ble Special Areas of Conservation and proposed Ramsar sites are sites on which Government has initiated public consultation on the scientific case for designation as a Special Protection Area, candidate Special Area of Conservation or Ramsar site.

Para 182. The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

B.2. Copeland Local Plan 2013 – 2028

The Copeland Local Plan 2013 – 2028 was published In 2013. Chapter 7 of the Copeland Local Plan 'Environmental Protection and Enhancement' sets out the policies relating biodiversity.

Relevant policies to the Proposed Scheme are detailed below:

Policy DM25 – Protecting Nature Conservation Sites, Habitats and Species

All development proposals should:

- Protect the biodiversity value of land and buildings
- Minimise fragmentation of habitats
- Maximise opportunities for conservation, restoration, enhancement and connection of natural habitats and creation of habitats for species listed in UK and Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plans. Special consideration should also be given to those European habitats that lie outside the boundaries of European designated sites

Development proposals that would cause a direct or indirect adverse effect on locally recognised sites of biodiversity and geodiversity importance, including County Wildlife Sites, Local Nature Reserves and Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Sites or protected species will not be permitted unless:

- The benefits of the development clearly outweigh the impacts on the features of the site and the wider network of natural habitats, and;
- Prevention, mitigation and/or compensation measures are provided. An appropriate long-term management plan will be sought and arrangements to provide adequate funding will be made in accordance with a formal planning agreement or obligation

Where compensatory habitat is created, it should be of equal or greater size than the area lost as a result of the development. Development proposals where the principal objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity or geodiversity interests will be supported in principle

Where there is evidence to suspect the presence of protected species any planning application should be accompanied by a survey assessing their presence and, if present, the proposal must be sensitive to, and make provision for, their needs

All development proposals must take into account any likely significant effects on the internationally important sites both within the Borough and within a 20km radius of the Borough boundary as well as those that are hydrologically linked to the development plan area

Policy ENV3 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

The Council will contribute to the implementation of the UK and Cumbria Biodiversity Action Plan within the plan area by seeking to:

- Improve the condition of internationally, nationally and locally designated sites
- Ensure that development incorporates measures to protect and enhance any biodiversity interest
- Enhance, extend and restore priority habitats and look for opportunities to create new habitat
- Protect and strengthen populations of priority or other protected species
- Boost the biodiversity value of existing wildlife corridors and create new corridors, and stepping stones that connect them, to develop a functional Ecological Network
- Restrict access and usage where appropriate and necessary in order to conserve an area's biodiversity value

Appendix C. Habitat Survey Plan and Target Notes

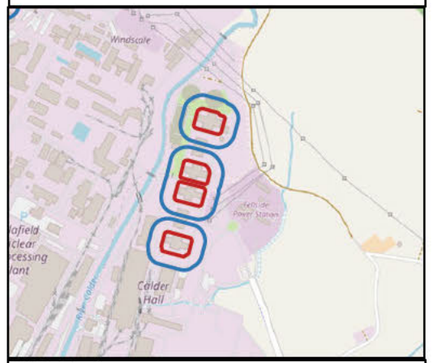
Legend

Boundaries/ Buffers

- 50 m Buffer
- Red Line Boundary

UKHab

- g4 - modified grass and
- u1b - deve oped and. sea ed surface
- u1b5 - bui dings
- u1f - sparse y vegeated urban and
- Fencing
- Target Notes
- No Access



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C.2. Target Notes

Table B-1 – Target Notes

Target Note	Description
TN 1	Bird feathers recorded within the Blower House
TN 2	A gap in the cladding on the southern face of the [redacted] Long Blower House. This gap was approximately 20 cm x 20 cm, allowing access internally for bird species, such as pigeon.
TN 3	A gap was present in the corrugated sheeting (surrounding existing piping) on the northern face of the [redacted] Long Blower House. This gap was approximately 50 cm x 50 cm, allowing access internally for bird species, such as pigeon
TN 4	Stand of buddleia

Appendix D. Site Plant Species List

Table D-1 – Plant species list for the Site

Species name	Scientific name	Protected or priority status
Creeping thistle	*Cirsium arvense*	No
Buddleia	*Buddleja davidii*	No
Dandelion	*Taraxacum* agg.	No

Appendix E. Summary Legislation Table

Species	Legislation	Relevant offences	Licensing procedures and guidance
Bats	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) Reg 43.	Deliberately[41] capture, injure or kill a bat; deliberate disturbance[42] of bats; or damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place used by a bat. [The protection of bat roosts is considered to apply regardless of whether bats are present.]	Mitigation licences issued for development by Natural England (NE). Guidance documents: European Protected Species: Mitigation Licensing - How to get a licence (NE 2013) Bat Mitigation Guidelines (English Nature 2004) Bat Workers Manual (JNCC 2004)
	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 5, Section 9.	Intentionally kill, injure or take a bat; intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection or disturb[43] a bat in such a place.	Licence from NE is required for surveys (scientific purposes) that would involve disturbance of bats or entering a known or suspected roost site.
Birds	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 1 (some species only).	Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird; intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; intentionally take or destroy the nest or eggs of any wild bird. Intentionally or recklessly disturb a Schedule 1 species while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; intentionally or recklessly disturb dependent young of such a species [e.g. most birds of prey, kingfisher, barn owl, black redstart, little ringed plover].	No licences are available to disturb any birds in regard to development. Licences are available in certain circumstances to damage or destroy nests, but these only apply to the list of licensable activities in the Act and do not cover development. General licences are available in respect of 'pest species' but only for certain very specific purposes, e.g. public health, public safety, air safety. Guidance document: NE Standing Advice for protected species (2022)

[41] Deliberate capture or killing is taken to include "accepting the poss bility" of such capture or killing.

[42] Deliberate disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely a) to impair their ability (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or (ii) in the case of animals of h bernating or migratory species, to h bernate or migrate; or b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

[43] Lower levels of disturbance not covered by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) remain an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) although a defence is available where such actions are the incidental result of a lawful activity that could not reasonably be avoided.