

Phase 1 Habitat Survey in support of the Main Gate Improvement Works.

The Main Gate application site is to the Southwest of the Sellafield site, outside and adjacent to the Nuclear Licensed site boundary. The area is used as a bus drop off and pick up area for people accessing the Sellafield site and is made up almost entirely of hardstanding. The works proposed as part of this planning application are to improve access arrangements and safety of the area. The Planning Application for the Main Gate Bus Lane project consists of the installation of a 16m lighting column, two security kiosks and three bus shelters. Please refer to the Planning, Design and Access Statement for full details of the works.

A number of works have been agreed with the Planning Officer as permitted development, including additional lighting improvements, resurfacing and drainage and cable rerouting works. As part of the resurfacing works the area of hard standing will be increased, in-turn removing a small area (approx. 110m²) of grass adjacent to the existing bus lane. The works will involve digging trenches adjacent to the existing bus lane on the grassed area.

Area of the proposed works is majority existing hard standing, with a small area of amenity grassland on the eastern side of the area, some of which is the proposed area to be removed to straighten the bus lane. This grassland has minimal ecological value.

The area surrounding the existing security lodge adjacent to the vehicle checking area is surrounded by gravel, which has the potential to be used by oyster catchers for nesting, but the area is heavily trafficked by people and vehicles 24/7 so chances of wildlife being in the area are unlikely.

The proposed laydown area is adjacent to a large section of dense scrub and trees, which will not be altered, but is known to contain reptiles.

A desktop study was conducted on 06/02/2024 by an Environmental Advisor. A subsequent site survey was carried out on 28/02/2024 by an Environmental Advisor and an Environmental Manager. The details of their findings are set out in the rest of this report.

Designated Sites

Designated statutory sites within 5km of the Sellafield Site (Ref. Magic Map application <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>)

	Nearest Site boundary (km)	Designations
Hallsenna Moor	3.6	NNR, SSSI
Low Church Moss	1.3	SSSI
Drigg Coast	2.5	SSSI, SAC
Silver Tarn, Hollas and Harnsey Mosses	3.2	SSSI
Cumbria Coast	<0.1	MCZ
Lake District	1.2	National Park

There are no sites with the following designations within 5km:

- Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB)

- Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
- Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Biosphere Reserves
- Marine Nature Reserves
- Ramsar

The proposed development will not impact on any designated sites.

Target Notes

- Area of amenity grassland which will be removed as part of the resurfacing. (Figure 2)
- Large area of dense scrub and trees which is known to contain reptiles adjacent to resurfacing works. (Figure 3)

Ecological Constraints

- **Nesting Birds** - Likely to affect any areas on the site. Potential for nesting birds to use the gravelled area on site, though unlikely due to it being a heavily trafficked area. In any instance in which a nest is found, it will be barriered off to prevent any harm.
- **Reptiles** - As the scrubland area adjacent to the proposed laydown area is known to contain reptiles, this will be a focus area for Sellafield Ltd briefings. Any operatives working in the laydown area will be advised of protocol for any situation in which a reptile is found.
- **Bats** - There is a potential that bats use the surrounding area for foraging and/or commuting. The project is increasing the local lighting level of the area, replacing lighting with LED units, and placing a new lighting pole in the vehicle check area. This area is already light 24/7 due to the interaction of pedestrians and heavy goods vehicles and busses.
- **Badgers** - No known badger sets within 30 meters of the proposed works, and no evidence of current undermining of the bus lane. The bus lane is used by HGV's and buses every day and there is no evidence of subsidence.

Relevant Legislation

Nesting Birds

Wild birds are protected in England and Wales under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). All birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law and it is an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird.
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built.
- Intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building or is in, on or near a nest with eggs or young; or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

The nesting season is officially 1st March to 31st July, however it may extend beyond those dates.

Reptiles

Reptiles, including grass snakes, adders, slow worm and common lizards, are protected from killing and injury under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Bats

Bats and their roosts are protected in England and Wales under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010). It is an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly capture, injure or kill a bat.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats.
- Intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time).
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.

Badgers

Badgers are protected and so are the setts (burrows) they live in under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. It is an offence to:

- Wilfully kill, injure or take a badger (or attempt to do so).
- Cruelly ill-treat a badger.
- Dig for a badger.
- Intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy a badger sett, or obstruct access to it.
- Cause a dog to enter a badger sett.
- Disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett.

Wildlife and Countryside Act Penalties

Penalties that can be imposed for criminal offences contrary to the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) are an unlimited fine, up to six months imprisonment or both. Similar penalties are set out under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017).

Recommendations

It is recommended the following mitigations are employed to ensure the risk of impacts on wildlife is as low as reasonably practicable:

- Operatives working on the project will be provided with relevant Sellafeld Ltd briefings on identifying wildlife and actions to be taken on discovery of wildlife on the site during works. The Sellafeld Ltd briefings will be delivered at relevant points through the project e.g. before works with the potential to impact on wildlife commence. As well as general wildlife issues the Sellafeld Ltd briefings will focus on
 - Reptiles
 - Nesting birds
- Consider beginning the ground works between 1st August and 28th February (outside the bird nesting season). If work is planned to begin during the nesting season an ecologically competent person should be contacted to inspect the site immediately prior to works commencing.

Note: Regardless of the time of year, if a nest is found on site an ecologically competent person should be contacted to assess the situation. Works will be delayed in the vicinity of any occupied nest until the young birds have fledged.

- As far as practicable restrict work, and laydown of materials and waste, to areas with hard surfaces (e.g. paving, poured concrete and tarmac).
- In order to reduce the potential habitat for nesting birds and reptiles, areas of amenity grassland should be maintained with regular mowing/strimming until the works are due to commence. The areas of gravel/no-fines concrete should also be treated to prevent habitat forming.

- When removing piles/stacks of materials and waste, particularly those immediately adjacent to vegetated areas, care must be taken to avoid injuring any reptiles which may be sheltering.
- To minimise the impact of light, new lighting should be directed towards the vehicle check area and not to the surrounding green areas.
- Once the project has confirmed a start date an ecologically competent person should be contacted to determine if the site needs to be re-inspected prior to works commencing.

Figure 1: Phase One Survey Map

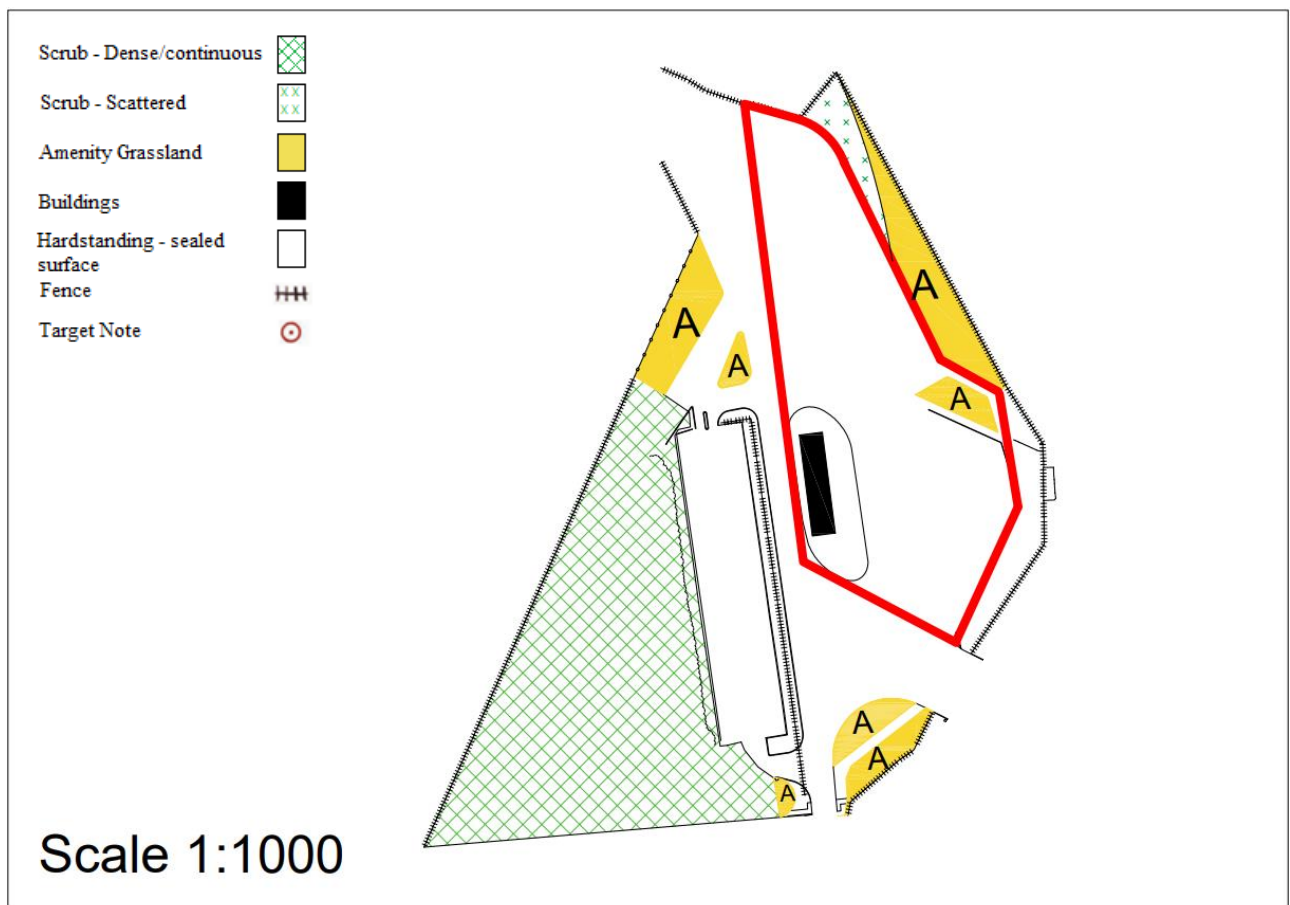


Figure 2: Amenity grassland to be removed



Figure 3: Scrub opposite road adjacent to works area.

