



NEXUS
PLANNING

St Helens Local Plan Examination

Matter 4 Allocations, Safeguarded
Land and Green Belt Boundaries

On behalf of Eccleston Homes

May 2021

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1 Introduction

- 1.1 This hearing statement is submitted on behalf of Eccleston Homes in relation to Matter 4, Allocations, Safeguarded Land and Green Belt Boundaries of the St Helens Local Plan Examination.
- 1.2 This statement follows on from Nexus's Planning representations to the Submission Draft consultation in March 2019 (document ref. RO1957). Additionally, this Hearing Statement also builds on the Site specific representations in relation to Station Road, Haydock, prepared by McAteer Associates on behalf of Eccleston Homes (document ref. RO0565).
- 1.3 This statement responds to the following questions posed by the Inspectors in relation to Matter 4 (Allocations) of the examination and hearing sessions:

30. Are the Green Belt boundaries elsewhere in Rainford, Garswood, Bilinge and Haydock justified?

- 1.4 Our principal concern is that the St Helens Local Plan as currently drafted does not meet the National Planning Policy Framework ('NPPF') test of 'soundness'. Most particularly, in respect of the four criteria identified at paragraph 35 of the NPPF, we do not believe that the proposed St Helens Local Plan is either 'positively prepared' (as it does not seek to meet the area's objectively assessed needs) or 'justified' (as it does not represent the most appropriate strategy when considered against reasonable alternatives) or 'consistent with national policy' (as it fails to accord with the requirements of the NPPF) or 'effective' (as the strategy proposed is not considered to be deliverable over the plan period).

2 Response to Matter 4 Questions

Question 30: Are the Green Belt boundaries elsewhere in Rainford, Garswood, Bilinge and Haydock justified?

- 2.1 Nexus have demonstrated in the Matter 2 statement that the housing requirement of 486dpa set out in the Submission LP is inadequate and there is a need to increase the housing requirement to 547dpa. In the submissions to Matter 3 it has been demonstrated that the Council is over-reliant on SHLAA sites within the built up area which is not justified nor effective plan-making.
- 2.2 It is therefore considered the Council should seek to positively increase the amount of Safeguarded Land designated in the Local Plan to a similar level to that proposed in the Preferred Options Draft Local Plan (December 2016). The Plan proposed to designate a total of 7,895 dwellings as safeguarded land, including land at Station Road, Haydock.
- 2.3 The Council considers that exceptional circumstances have been met to revise Green Belt boundaries as per Paragraph 135 of the Framework. It has been established by Nexus Planning's Matter 3 submission that the Council has fully evidenced and justified the exceptional circumstances required. Green Belt land is required to be released for allocation and safeguarding for housing, to meet the needs for the proposed plan period and beyond.
- 2.4 The Council undertook a Green Belt Review to identify which parcels were suitable to be released from the Green Belt, taking into account Paragraph 134 of the Framework. National policy states that the Green Belt serves five purposes as follows:
 - Purpose 1 is to check the unrestricted sprawl of large built-up areas;
 - Purpose 2 is to prevent neighbouring towns from merging into one another;
 - Purpose 3 is to assist in safeguarding the countryside from encroachment;
 - Purpose 4 is 'to preserve the setting and special character of historic towns; and
 - Purpose 5 is to assist in urban regeneration, by encouraging the recycling of derelict and other urban land.
- 2.5 The Council had previously safeguarded the site at Station Road, Haydock, to be removed from the Green Belt by the Preferred Options Draft LP, supported by the draft Green Belt Review. The site assessment at Stage 3 concluded that the parcel was of low significance to the Green Belt; that

- development would have a low impact; mature woodland would be protected and there was an opportunity to create an improved entrance to Sankey Valley Park. Stage 4 recommended that the site be safeguarded.
- 2.6 The Council's own Green Belt Review which forms part of the evidence base to the Submission Draft LP confirms that the parcel scored low against its contribution to Purpose 1, 2 and 3 of the Green Belt (document ref. SD021 Green Belt Review). Individual parcels' contribution to Purposes 4 and 5 were not quantified by the Review. Subsequently, the parcel's overall significance to the Green Belt was found to be low.
- 2.7 However, the site was removed as a safeguarded site in the Submission Draft LP (January 2019). Nexus consider this approach is not justified or necessary and detrimental to the overall spatial strategy.
- 2.8 As confirmed previously, additional housing land through the release of Green Belt land is required to meet a higher housing requirement number throughout the Plan period and after. Therefore, the site at Station Road should be released from the Green Belt and safeguarded in line with paragraph 139 of the NPPF.
- 2.9 National policy requires the promotion of sustainable patterns of development when reviewing Green Belt boundaries (paragraph 138). Plans should give first consideration to land which is previously developed or well-served by public transport.
- 2.10 Haydock has good sustainable transport links and the site at Station Road is within 500m walking distance of a bus stop with regular services on Ireland Road.
- 2.11 As previously demonstrated by the Development Statement prepared by McAteer Associates, the site is well related via walking to local services and facilities (document ref. RO0565). Clipsley Lane local centre is located approximately 400m to the north of the site which includes local services and facilities such as convenience shops, Haydock High School and a community leisure centre. Approximately 250m to the east of the site is Grange Valley Primary School. Two foodstores are located approximately 700m walking distance to the north-east of the site. Therefore, the site is well served by sustainable transport links.
- 2.12 NPPF paragraph 139 requires Green Belt boundaries to ensure consistency with the development plan strategy for meeting identified requirements for sustainable development. Nexus Planning's response to Matter 3 identifies that Haydock is not proposed to receive any safeguarded sites, despite

Haydock belonging to a “Key Settlement Area” in the Borough’s settlement hierarchy proposed by the Publication Draft Local Plan. Furthermore, Haydock is proposed to accommodate significant employment allocations totalling 78.21 ha, and therefore new development should be focused to take advantage of this (Paragraph 103).

2.13 Paragraph 139 of the Framework states that when defining Green Belt boundaries, plans should at (c) where necessary, identify areas of safeguarded land between the urban area and the Green Belt, in order to meet longer-term development needs stretching well beyond the plan period.

2.14 The site at Station Road is adjacent to the built up area of Haydock – one of the key settlements proposed in the Submission Draft LP - and the wider area of Green Belt. It is considered that the site is ideally located to be safeguarded, located between the urban area and a larger parcel of Green Belt land to the south which contributes to retaining a settlement gap between Haydock and Sankey Brook (ref. GBP_059).

2.15 The Council’s Green Belt review to inform the Submission Draft LP identified the parcel once again as scoring low against Purpose 1-3. However, at Stage 2B the site is considered to have limited development potential due to the following constraints:

- significant amount of protected woodland and protected trees;
- multiple ownership;
- historic mineshafts;
- and extension of the parcel into the countryside further than the established urban settlement boundary.

2.16 The assessment concluded that the number of constraints would have a significant impact on its overall net developable area and the deliverability of development. In light of the reduced housing requirement the Council discounted the site.

2.17 The Site specific representations in relation to Station Road, Haydock, prepared by McAteer Associates on behalf of Eccleston Homes confirmed that the site is available (document ref. RO0565).

2.18 In order to demonstrate that the site could be safeguarded for residential development after the plan period, SCP have provided a potential access strategy plan at Appendix A. Access could be achieved from Grange Road with minor amendments to the alignment of the road and adjustments to the Lyme House care home access and Grange Lodge access. It would be possible to provide a 5.5m wide

carriageway with 2m pedestrian footways either side, to serve up to 200 dwellings. A separate emergency link and cycleway/footway could be created to Oakthorn Grove which would ensure good pedestrian and cycle connectivity into Haydock.

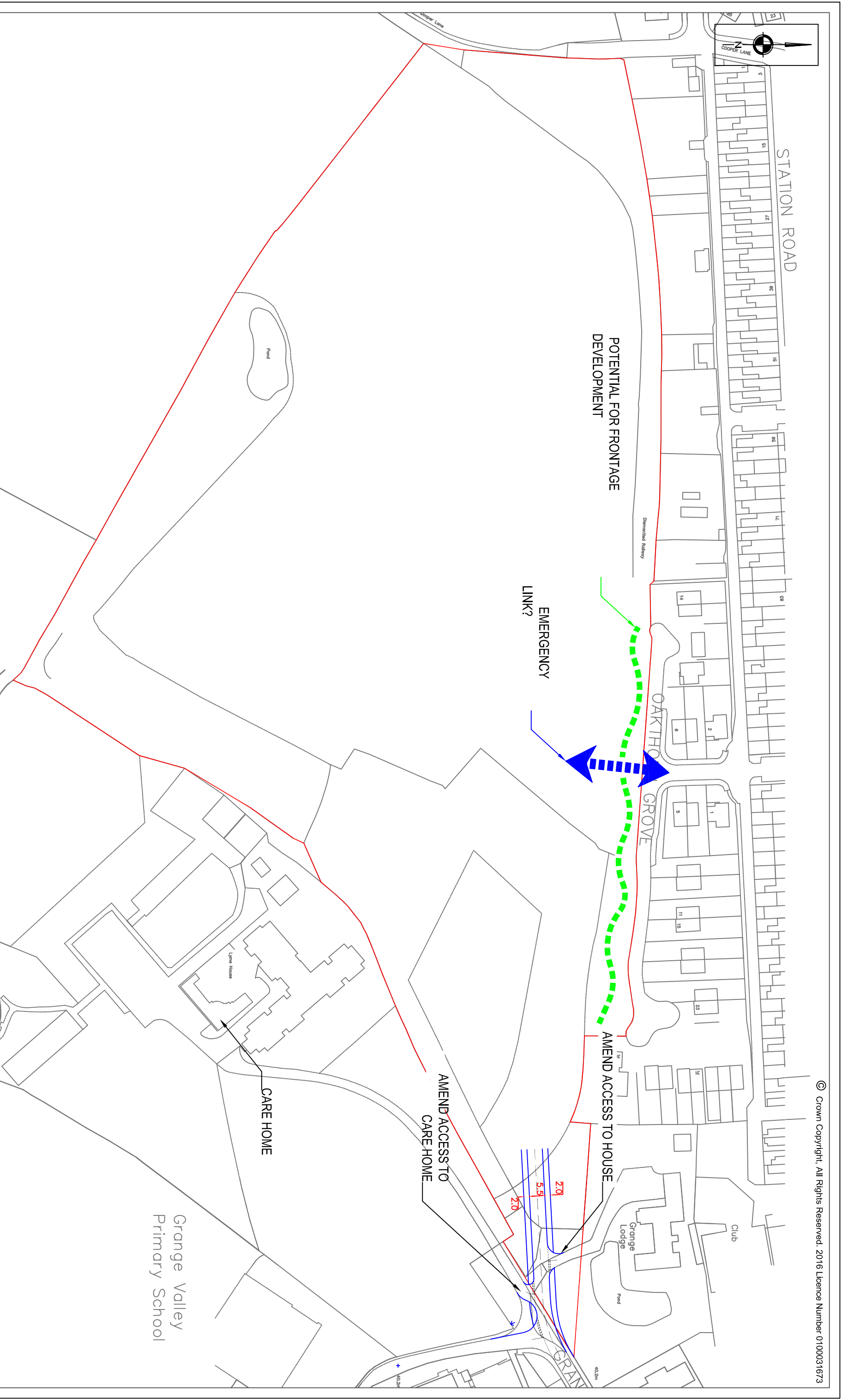
- 2.19 The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal prepared by Ascerta in 2016 confirmed in respect of the habitats on site, that the pond could be retained or replaced and that some woodland, scrub and grassland habitat would need to be retained to ensure no net loss of biodiversity. This could be mitigated via development management and requiring net gain for biodiversity.
- 2.20 There are areas of protected woodland to the west and south of the site, and a number of individual protected trees scattered across the site. In assessing the site and establishing an illustrative layout, it is anticipated that the protected woodland could be retained which would ensure a relatively impermeable barrier to the south. The net developable area of the site would be reduced to take account of this, however, this does not impact on the viability of the potential developable area. This is not considered to override the site's suitability for release from the Green Belt.
- 2.21 Further surveys were recommended for protected species including Great Crested Newts, bats, and birds, which will be carried out at the appropriate time. It is anticipated that the development of the site could incorporate mitigation and compensation measures to ensure no adverse impact on protected species.

3 Summary and Conclusions

3.1 In order for development plan policy to be found 'sound', it should conform to the criteria specified at paragraph 35 of the NPPF. As this Hearing Statement has identified, we do not believe that the Green Belt release and safeguarded land proposed by the Council meets the tests of soundness in the NPPF. Principally, the Plan is not:

- **Positively prepared:** In order to stabilise and increase the boroughs population, allow for more housing choice and competition; support planned economic growth; and reflect the higher levels of housebuilding achieved in years before and after the 2008-2009 recession, the housing requirement in the Local Plan should be increased.
- **Justified:** Green Belt land which is assessed in the evidence base as performing poorly against the purposes of including land within the Green Belt should be released. The proposed distribution of homes will lead to a clear imbalance in housing distribution across the borough, by over-relying on SHLAA sites within the core urban area. The Submission LP therefore does not provide a balanced spatial distribution of growth to support the key settlements.
- **Effective:** The release of Green Belt land is not considered sufficient to meet the boroughs housing requirement for the plan period and after.
- **Consistent with national policy:** The plan as currently proposed fails to accord with the requirements of the NPPF with respect of promoting sustainable patterns of development when reviewing Green Belt boundaries; directing Green Belt release to land which is well-served by public transport; and where necessary, identify areas of safeguarded land between the urban area and the Green Belt to meet development needs.

Appendix A: Access Strategy Plan by SCP



SCP		SCP		P	
Transportation Planning : Infrastructure Design Colwyn Chambers, 19 York Street, Manchester, M2 3BA, Tel 0161 832 4400, www.scptransport.co.uk, Email info@scptransport.co.uk					
Project Title		Drawing Title		Scale	By
STATION ROAD, HAYDOCK		POTENTIAL ACCESS		1:1250 @ A3	BA
Date	10.10.2016	Checked	WB	Approved/ Unapproved	-
Approved/ Unapproved	-	Status	PLANNING	Rev	Description
-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-
-	-	-	-	-	-
Drawing No.		Revision			
SCP/16410/F01		-			

Appendix B: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal by Ascerta

Ascerta

Landscape, Arboricultural & Ecological Solutions
for the Built Environment

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Site

October 2016

Revision	Date	Description

Ascerta
Mere One, Mere Grange, Elton Head Road, St Helens, Merseyside WA9 5GG
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P.775.16

**Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
Of
Land off Cooper Lane
Haydock**

For

Eccleston Homes Limited

13 October 2016

Field Work by	Neil Everett Grad CIEEM and Tom Kenwright MSc,
Document Author	Neil Everett Grad CIEEM
Technical Review	Dr Rosalind King MCIEEM
QA Review & Approval	Susan O'Connor, B.A. (Law/CJ) Dist.

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Appendix 1 Drawing P.775.16.03 *Phase One Habitat Survey*

Appendix 2 Species List and Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index

Appendix 3 Data Search Report

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been carried out of land off Cooper Lane, Haydock on 6th October, 2016 by Neil Everett BSc (Hons) Grad CIEEM and Tom Kenwright MSc. The assessment comprised a desk study and biological records search, as well as a site walkover survey in order to map habitat types. The survey was extended to assess the potential for protected species to use the site. The assessment provides baseline data as to current site conditions and, where appropriate, allows recommendations to be made in respect of further potential work in order to satisfy current wildlife legislation.

The survey area comprises an area of semi-improved grassland that is rapidly succumbing to succession by scrub. Woodland and a pond also occur on the site. One boundary is formed by a dry ditch and arable field margin.

As assessed against the '*Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland*' 2nd edition (2016), the habitats range in ecological value from **Negligible** to **County**. Further surveys at a more appropriate time of year would be required to determine the extent and quality of the more valuable habitats and to inform appropriate mitigation or compensation measures.

The site provides habitat for great crested newts, breeding birds and bats. Further surveys, as detailed below, are required to ensure these species will not be adversely affected by the proposals.

The above recommendations, if fully implemented, will enable the proposals to meet the requirements of national and local guidance and legislation including the NPPF, Policy CQL 3 of St. Helens Local Plan Core Strategy and The Biodiversity SPD (Supplementary Planning Document).

Recommendations

It is considered that measures would need to be taken to ensure no adverse impact on the local ecology as a result of the proposals. The recommendations made above would need to be taken on board in order to achieve this. In summary these include:

1. Suitable areas for recreational activity be included within any proposals to ensure no harm to nearby Local Wildlife Sites;
2. Measures included within the proposals to retain or replace the pond. It is also likely that some scrub, woodland and grassland habitat would need to be retained within the proposals to ensure no net loss of biodiversity. Further surveys to map and determine the quality of these habitats would be required to inform mitigation and compensation proposals if loss of these habitats is proposed;
3. Undertaking an eDNA tests for great crested newts on ponds within 250m site with an HSI score of average or above; lost to the development;
4. Two nocturnal surveys to confirm bat use of the site and detailed inspection for bat roost potential of any trees proposed to be lost;
5. Nesting bird survey to determine appropriate mitigation for loss of habitat;

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

6. Reptile surveys may be required, following consultation with the council. The site provides suitable reptile habitat, however they are uncommon in the area and there are no records within 2km of the site;
7. Measure to be taken to ensure suitable areas of habitat remain for brown hare and hedgehog following development;
8. An Invasive Species Management Plan is likely to be conditioned as part of any planning approval for the site to ensure no spread of invasive species in the wild during works; and
9. Enhancement measures are likely to include provision of bird and bat boxes; suitable landscaping within the residential zone incorporating species that provide a food or shelter resource to wildlife; and preparation of an Ecological Enhancement and Management Plan to cover the retained habitats. Enhancement measures could include control of invasive species, encouragement of semi-improved grassland with planting of additional wildflower species in appropriate areas, management of retained pond and creation of hedgehog hibernacula and amphibian hibernacula.

1.0 Introduction

Ascerta has been instructed by Eccleston Homes Limited to carry out a preliminary ecological appraisal of land off Cooper Lane, Haydock (hereafter referred to as the site). The site OS grid reference is SJ553965.

Our client seeks to determine the ecological constraints and opportunities on the site.

The site was visited on 6th October, 2016 by Neil Everett BSc (Hons) Grad CIEEM and Tom Kenwright MSc when a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, which includes an assessment of the potential for protected species to be using the site or surroundings, was carried out in accordance with the *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: a Technique for Environmental Audit* (JNCC, 2010). The report was prepared following methods detailed in the CIEEM 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland' 2nd edition (2016) and 'Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing' (2015). This report presents the results of the survey including evaluation of habitats on site and potential for protected species to be using the site. The report includes recommendations for further actions where applicable in order to satisfy current wildlife legislation and to achieve our client's objectives.

2.0 Objectives

Our client's objectives are to determine the ecological constraints and opportunities in relation to the site.

Our objectives are as follows:

- Identify and evaluate any features of ecological value and the potential of the site to support protected species based on the walkover survey and biological records search;
- Identify designated sites within 2km of the site;
- Review protected species records within 2km of the site;
- Map the habitats within the site using JNCC (2010) methods;
- Provide recommendations for further species-specific surveys and mitigation measures where current legislation requires;
- Provide recommendations that seek to enhance the ecological value of the site where possible; and
- Provide recommendations to assist our clients in achieving their objectives whilst satisfying current wildlife legislation.

3.0 Relevant Legislation

3.1 European Legislation

The following Directives have been adopted by the European Union and provide protection for fauna and flora species of European importance and the habitats which support them:

- Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive);
- Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (Habitats Directive).

3.2 UK Legislation

The Habitats Directive has been transposed into national legislation through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (updated 2012) (The Habitats Regulations). This provides for the designation and protection of 'European Sites' (SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites, including proposed or potential European Sites) and the protection of 'European Protected Species'.

The key UK legislation relating to nature conservation is the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (W&C Act). This Act is supplemented, *inter alia*, by provision in the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000, and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act). Additional species and habitat specific UK legislation includes the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

Species and Habitats of Principal Importance

Species and Habitats of Principal Importance are listed under section 41 of the NERC Act and are a material consideration in planning decisions. Planners require relevant, up to date information from ecological surveys in order to assess the effects of a proposed development on biodiversity as Councils have a statutory obligation under section 40 of the NERC Act to consider biodiversity conservation in the determination of planning applications.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2012 has been published to provide further planning guidance. Wildlife, biodiversity and ecological networks are referred to in Section 11 '*Conserving and enhancing the natural environment*'. The NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services, minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures. Further guidance is provided within Government Circular 06/05: *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within The Planning System*.

3.0 Relevant Legislation (continued)

Background information about the lists of priority habitats and species (Species and Habitats of Principal Importance) can be found within the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). Although this has been succeeded by The 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework', many of UK BAP tools are still relevant. BAPs identify habitats and species of nature conservation priority on a UK (UK BAP) and Local (LBAP) scale. Most BAP priority habitats and species have Habitat Action Plans (HAP) and Species Action Plans (SAP) and there are also "grouped action plans" for groups of related species with similar conservation requirements. The LBAP relating to this Site is the North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan.

Badgers

The legislation protecting badgers in England and Wales is the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

Under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 it is an offence *inter alia* to:

- *Wilfully kill, injure or take a badger, or to attempt to do so;*
- *Cruelly ill-treat a badger; or*
- *Intentionally or recklessly interfere with a badger sett by (a) damaging a sett or any part of one; (b) destroying a sett; (c) obstructing access to or any entrance of a sett; (d) causing a dog to enter a sett; or (e) disturbing a badger when it is occupying a sett.*

The Badger Act 1992 defines a badger's sett as "*any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger*"

Natural England can issue licences to enable works to continue that may affect a protected species. In relation to disturbance of badgers, Natural England (2009) gives guidelines on disturbance which will require a licence. These includes: "*using very heavy machinery (generally tracked vehicles) within 30 metres of any entrance to an active sett; using lighter machinery (generally wheeled vehicles), particularly for any digging operation, within 20 metres; light work such as hand digging or scrub clearance within 10 metres. There are some activities which may cause disturbance at greater distances (such as using explosives or pile driving) and these should be given individual consideration.*"

Bats

In England, all bats and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Several species of bat are also highlighted as Priority Species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and within the North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan.

3.0 Relevant Legislation (continued)

Under the current legislation as summarised on pages 8 and 9 of the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines – 3rd Edition (2016) it is a criminal offence to:

“To kill, capture, injure or take a wild bat;

- To damage or destroy a place used by a bat for breeding or resting. All offences of this nature are identified within the Habitats Regulations. This offence is unique in that it can be committed accidentally. No element of intentional, reckless or deliberate action needs to be evidenced;*
- To disturb bats anywhere (roosts, flight lines or foraging areas) if levels of disturbance can be shown to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, to rear or nurture their young, to hibernate or migrate or to affect significantly local distribution or abundance;*
- To intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat, whilst it is occupying a place of shelter or protection;*
- To intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place used by a bat for shelter or protection; and*
- To be in possession or control of a bat alive or dead (or any part of a bat or anything derived from a bat, although bat droppings are generally considered to be acceptable), or to transport a bat, to sell or exchange a bat or to offer to sell or exchange a bat taken from the wild.”*

Breeding Birds

Breeding Birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act which make it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built;*
- intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird;*
- have in one's possession or control any wild bird, dead or alive, or any part of a wild bird (including eggs), which has been taken in contravention of the Act or the Protection of Birds Act 1954;*
- intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.*

Great Crested Newt

The great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) and the Habitats Regulations, 2010. It is also a Species of Principal Importance. The legislation makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately (or intentionally) kill, injure or capture (or take) a great crested newt, or great crested newt egg or eft;*
- Deliberately (intentionally) damage or destroy any breeding site or resting place (i.e. pond, refuge, hibernaculum);*
- Deliberately or recklessly obstruct access to any breeding site or resting place;*

3.0 Relevant Legislation (continued)

- *Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a great crested newt, in particular disturbance which is likely to:*
 - *impair the ability of the great crested newt to survive, breed, reproduce, or to rear or nurture young;*
 - *impair the ability of the great crested newt to hibernate or migrate; or significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of great crested newts*

Invasive Species

It is an offence under Section 14(2) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to ‘*plant or otherwise cause to grow*’ in the wild any plant in Schedule 9 Part II.

3.3 Local Legislation

The site lies within St. Helens Borough Council and St. Helens Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted October 2012) is the relevant plan. Policy CQL 3 deals with Biodiversity and Geological Conservation and is the policy of relevance here. In addition The Biodiversity SPD (Supplementary Planning Document), adopted June 2011, has also been taken into account when preparing this report.

The following table provides a summary of the main species within the UK that could be encountered within or within proximity of this development site, together with the legislation that affords them protection.

Table 3.1 Protected Species and the Associated Legislation.

	Species	Legislation
Amphibians	Great crested newt (<i>Triturus cristatus</i>)	Schedule 5, W&C Act 1981 (as amended); Schedule 2, The Habitats Regulations 2010; and Section 41, NERC.
Mammals	Badger (<i>Meles meles</i>)	Protection of Badgers Act 1992.
	All species of bat	Schedule 5, W&C Act 1981 (as amended); Schedule 2, The Habitats Regulations 2010; and Section 41, NERC.
Birds	All wild birds	Schedule 5, W&C Act 1981 (as amended) and Section 41, NERC.
Reptiles	Adder (<i>Vipera berus</i>) Common lizard (<i>Zootoca vivipara</i>) Grass snake (<i>Natrix natrix</i>) Slow worm (<i>Anguis fragilis</i>)	Schedule 5, W&C Act 1981 (as amended) and Section 41, NERC.

It is a criminal offence to intentionally, wilfully kill, injure or take any of the aforementioned protected species or to destroy or disturb its habitat.

4.0 Survey Methods

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal involved the collection and review of data from a desk study and field survey along with assessment of the value of the habitats following CIEEM guidelines.

4.1 Desk Study

A review of the designated sites and habitats within 2km of the site has been undertaken using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) and the Natural England websites.

A review of UK and Local priority species and habitats known to occur in the region of the site has been undertaken; using the Joint Nature Conservation Committee website and local records from Merseyside BioBank (Appendix 3).

4.2 Field Survey

A walkover survey of the site was conducted on 6th October 2016 when the habitat types and features of ecological interest were identified and mapped in compliance with the Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: a Technique for Environmental Audit (*JNCC, 2010*). The survey methods involve the recording and mapping of all habitat types and ecological features present on site, including the identification of the main species present and examination of the potential for any protected species. Habitats were mapped and target notes made for any interesting features.

When conducting the surveys particular focus was concentrated on the following species and habitat features:

- Mammals (badgers, bats);
- Birds;
- Amphibians and reptiles;
- Invertebrates;
- Hedgerows and boundaries;
- Invasive plant species; and
- Plant communities and trees.

4.0 Survey Methods (continued)

4.3 Bat Survey Methods

The survey methods followed the guidelines set out by the Bat Conservation Trust Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines – 3rd Edition (2016). Habitats, Buildings and Trees were assessed for suitability for use by bats and categorised independently using table 4.1 page 35 within the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (Collins, 2016).

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for Bats

Habitats on site were assessed for their suitability for bats to use them for roosting, commuting and foraging both on the site and surrounding area. Commuting and foraging habitat suitability was categorised **low** to **high**. Commuting and foraging habitat valued as Moderate or above may need further survey effort if lost to the proposals.

Preliminary Roost Assessment Trees

All trees were inspected for Potential Roost Features (PFRs). Features searched for included: Natural or woodpecker holes, cracks/splits in major limbs, loose bark, hollows/cavities, dense epicormic growth, bird and bat boxes. Where such features were found they were investigated for scratches or staining, bat droppings and smoothing of surfaces around entry points. Trees assigned a suitability of **moderate** or above may require further inspection if they are to be lost to the development.

4.0 Survey Methods (continued)

Table 4.1: Guidelines for assessing Potential Roost Features (PRFs), commuting and foraging habitat within a proposed development site. Guidelines taken from table 4.1 page 35 of the Bat Conservation Trust Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines – 3rd Edition (2016).

Suitability	Roosting Habitats	Commuting and Foraging Habitats
Negligible	<i>Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.</i>	<i>Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats.</i>
Low	<p><i>A 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 ^a and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation ^b).</i></p> <p><i>A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential. ^c</i></p>	<p><i>Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as a gappy hedgerow or un vegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat.</i></p> <p><i>Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.</i></p>
Moderate	<i>A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions^a and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).</i>	<p><i>Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens.</i></p> <p><i>Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.</i></p>
High	<i>A structure or tree 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 ^a and surrounding habitat.</i>	<p><i>Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge.</i></p> <p><i>High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland.</i></p> <p><i>Site is close to and connected to known roosts.</i></p>

^a For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels of disturbance.

^b Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten et al., 2015). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in large buildings in highly urbanised environments.

^c This system of categorisation aligns with BS 8596:2015 Surveying for bats in trees and woodland (BSI,2015).

4.0 Survey Methods (continued)

4.4 Badger Survey Methods

The site was searched for setts and badger field signs including foraging areas, latrines and tracks. Attention was paid to the presence of the following field signs:

- Setts: single holes or a series of holes likely to be interconnected underground;
- Latrines: badgers usually deposit faeces in excavated pits;
- Paths and footprints;
- Scratching posts: at the base of trees;
- Snuffle holes: areas where badgers have searched for insects;
- Day nest: bundles of vegetation where badgers may sleep above ground; and
- Traces of hair.

4.5 Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index (HSI)

The onsite pond was assessed for suitability as great crested newt breeding habitat. The HSI assessment followed the method described by Oldham *et al.* (2000) as updated by ARG UK (2010), involving an assessment of each water body against ten suitability indices:

- Location of the pond within the context of Britain;
- Total surface area of the pond;
- Pond drying (based on both local knowledge and field evidence);
- Water quality;
- Percentage perimeter shaded;
- Presence or absence of waterfowl;
- Presence or absence of fish;
- Number of water bodies situated within 1km;
- Suitability of terrestrial habitat; and
- Percentage macrophyte cover.

The HSI is calculated using an equation producing a single number between 0 and 1. The value provides an indication of whether the water body is likely to support a population of great crested newts. The lower the Index the less likely the location is to support a breeding population. Ponds are classed as Poor, Below Average, Average, Good or Excellent habitat suitability based on this value.

4.0 Survey Methods (continued)

4.6 Evaluation

Habitats and species on the site were evaluated following the '*Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland*' 2nd edition (2016). A geographical frame of reference is assigned to each habitat and species, with International Value being most important, then National, Regional, County, District, Local and lastly, within the immediate Zone of Influence (ZoI) of the proposals only

Value judgements are based on characteristics that can be used to identify ecological resources or features likely to be important in terms of biodiversity. These include site designations such as SSSIs. For undesignated features, the size, conservation status (locally, nationally or internationally), and the quality of the ecological resource are considered. Ecological resource quality can refer to habitats (for instance if they are particularly diverse, or a good example of a specific habitat type), other features (such as wildlife corridors or mosaics of habitats) or species populations or assemblages.

4.7 Limitations

The site visit was undertaken in early October. Although this is outside the most appropriate time of year for phase 1 habitat surveys, sufficient vegetation was present to enable habitat identification. It is not considered a limit to the conclusions of the report based on the habitats found within the site and the scope of the report.

5.0 Survey Results

5.1 Desk Study

Two statutory sites were identified within a 2km radius of the proposed development site and six non-statutory Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) were identified within a 1km radius the proposed development site.

The following statutory sites were identified within the vicinity of the proposals (with distance and direction from the site):

- Stanley Bank Local Nature Reserve (LNR), (1.4km north west); and
- Stanley Bank Meadow Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (1.4km north west).

5.0 Survey Results (continued)

The following non-statutory sites were identified within the vicinity of the proposals (with distance and direction from the site):

- Cloghe Wood and Grassland LWS (349m south east);
- Grassland, west of Wagon Lane LWS (593m south west);
- Havannah Flash LWS (781m south)
- Lyme Pit Tip LWS (810m south east);
- Sankey Brook, Sankey Valley LWS (914m south west); and
- Ashton's Green Tip (open space) LWS (945m south west).

The site falls within a Natural England SSSI Impact Risk Zone.

Following a review of records held by the Merseyside BioBank several priority species that have the potential to occur within the vicinity of the proposed development have been identified. These include: common toad, great crested newt, dunnock, song thrush, yellowhammer, brown long-eared bat, noctule, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown hare and western European hedgehog.

A list of key habitats is shown in table 5.1 below and a summary description of key habitats within the survey area is provided in Section 5.2. Notes on the presence or potential presence of protected species are provided in Section 5.3. The Phase 1 Habitat map can be found in Appendix 1. Lists of species recorded during survey are presented in Appendix 2.

5.2 Habitat Survey

The site is situated within an area designated as green belt on the southern urban fringe of Haydock. The site is currently being used as a public open area. Arable fields form the south west boundary of the site. A disused railway line, residential housing and an area of rank grassland forms the northern boundary. A recreation field is adjacent to the western boundary of the site. The boundary wall of Lyme House forms the eastern boundary of the site.

The wider landscape comprises residential dwellings, industrial premises, sports fields, woodland, hedgerows, disused railway line, arable fields. Sankey Brook lies to the south and Lyme and Wood Landfill lies to the east.

Habitats within the site include: Semi improved grassland, tall ruderal, dense scrub, broadleaved semi-natural woodland, species poor hedgerow, scattered trees, dry ditch/arable field boundary and standing water. These habitats are presented on plan P.775.16.03 (Appendix 1).

5.0 Survey Results (continued)



The majority of the site is comprised of semi-improved grassland with scattered trees. However the semi improved grassland is being encroached by scrub and tall ruderal vegetation which are becoming the dominant habitats on site. Broadleaved semi-natural woodland runs along part of the south western boundary and eastern end of the site. There are scattered early mature trees throughout the site. The broadleaved semi-natural woodland is encroaching into the grassland area in the south east corner of the site. A disused railway line runs along the northern edge of the site. The disused railway line has been colonised by bramble scrub and early mature trees. A dry ditch runs along the south western boundary of the site and the adjacent arable fields. A pond is located within the area of broadleaved semi-natural woodland on the south western boundary of the site. An area of compacted stone hard standing is situated on the western end of the site this is being colonised by bramble and tall ruderal vegetation.

Japanese knotweed was noted along the eastern and a section of the northern boundary of the site. Himalayan balsam was also noted to be growing on the northern boundary (as marked on plan P.775.16.03).




Weather conditions during the survey were warm (14°C), sunny (5/8 cloud cover) with an F3 (Beaufort scale) gentle breeze, therefore appropriate for this type of survey.

Table 5.1 details the habitat types recorded on the site,




Table 5.1 Habitat Types on the Proposed Development Site.

Description	Photograph
<p>Tall Ruderal: Tall ruderal is found encroaching into grassland area, along the periphery of the site and within the scrub. Tall ruderal species include: cow parsley, creeping thistle, willowherb sp, common nettle and hogweed. Tall ruderal vegetation can provide habitat and forage resource for birds, small mammals, amphibians and invertebrates. It is common in the wider landscape and the species present are common species.</p>	
<p>Ecological Value</p>	<p>Within the Zone of Influence</p>
<p>Hard Standing: An area in the west of the site used for parking is being colonised by tall ruderal vegetation and bramble scrub. The re-colonised areas of hard standing can provide limited foraging habitat for birds and small mammals. It can also provide basking habitat for reptiles. This is discussed further in section 5.3.</p>	
<p>Ecological Value</p>	<p>Negligible</p>


5.0 Survey Results (continued)

Description	Photograph
<p>Broadleaved semi-natural woodland: This has developed within the southern and eastern side of the site. Saplings are encroaching from these areas of woodland into the grassland area. The woodland has a bramble understory. Species include: oak, beech, ash, horse chestnut and sycamore. The trees can support a wide range of invertebrate species and can provide roosting, commuting and foraging habitat for bats (this is discussed in section 5.3) and nesting habitat for birds. Scattered trees are common in the wider landscape. Broadleaved semi-natural woodland is a local BAP habitat.</p>	
Ecological Value	County
<p>Species poor hedgerow: This runs along the eastern side of the area of hard standing. Species include: hawthorn, ash and sycamore. Species poor hedge can provide nesting sites for birds and forage for birds, amphibians, small mammals and invertebrates. Hedgerows can provide commuting and foraging habitat for bats (see section 5.3).</p>	
Ecological Value	County
<p>Dense Scrub: Throughout the site there are areas which have become over grown with bramble scrub. This habitat can provide nesting sites for birds and forage for birds, amphibians, small mammals and invertebrates. It is common in the wider landscape and easily recreated.</p>	
Ecological Value	Within the Zone of Influence

5.0 Survey Results (continued)

Description	Photograph
<p>Semi-Improved Grassland: This is found in patches throughout the site. However this is being colonised by dense bramble scrub and tall ruderal vegetation. Species include cock's-foot, false oat-grass, <i>Poa</i> sp, common knapweed, creeping buttercup and meadow buttercup. Semi-improved grassland can provide nesting habitat and forage resource for birds and forage resource small mammals, amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates. Semi-improved grassland is a local BAP habitat.</p>	
Ecological Value	County
<p>Standing Water: There is a pond on site within the woodland. The pond appears to hold water all year round. Goat willow is growing from within the pond and no aquatic vegetation was noted. Ponds can provide foraging habitat for bats (this is discussed in section 5.3), breeding habitat for amphibians and nesting habitat for birds. Ponds are UK and local BAP habitats.</p>	
Ecological Value	County
<p>Scattered trees: These run along the western boundary and throughout the site. Species include: ash, hawthorn, oak goat willow and sycamore. The trees can support a wide range of invertebrate species and can provide roosting, commuting and foraging habitat for bats (this is discussed in section 5.3) and nesting habitat for birds. Scattered trees are common in the wider landscape.</p>	
Ecological Value	Within the Zone of Influence

5.0 Survey Results (continued)


Description	Photograph
<p>Arable Field Boundary/Dry Ditch: A dry ditch runs along a section of the south west boundary of the site within the wooded area. This forms part of the arable field boundary on the south west boundary of the site. Ivy is growing within sections of the ditch. This habitat can provide nesting sites for birds and forage for birds, amphibians, small mammals and invertebrates. It is common in the wider landscape and easily recreated.</p> <p>Arable field boundaries are a UK and local BAP habitat depending on the species present or management type.</p>	
<p>Ecological Value</p>	<p>Within the Zone of Influence to County</p>

5.0 Survey Results (continued)

5.3 Protected and Invasive Species

Species Results	Evaluation and Recommendations
<p>Amphibians: The records search returned one record for common toad (26m north) and 11 records for smooth newt (20m north) of the site. The records search returned 56 records for great crested newts within 2km of the site. The closest records are 1.1km south east of the site. Thirty two of the records lie to the north of the site and are separated from the site by a major road and the urban area of Haydock. The pond onsite was assessed for great crested newt using the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI). The HSI returned a suitability of good. A pond with good category has an increase likelihood of supporting populations of GCN. The site provides habitat for amphibians in the form of breeding, refugia, basking and foraging habitat.</p>	<p>Due to the potential for loss of suitable great crested newt habitat onsite, it advised that eDNA testing is carried out on ponds with an HSI score of average or above within 250m of the site is carried out.</p> <p>If results are positive, full surveys for great crested newts would be required to support a valid planning application and determine appropriate mitigation for habitat loss. These works are likely to require a licence from Natural England as significant areas of great crested newt habitat are likely to be lost to the proposals.</p>
<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>It is advised that eDNA testing for great crested newts is carried out on ponds within 250m site with an HSI score of average or above.</p>
<p>Badger: The records search returned no records for badger. No evidence of badger use of the site was noted during survey and the majority site is flat and provides limited sett building habitat. However the low embankment of the disused railway line could be used by badger to build a sett.</p>	<p>It is considered that badgers are not using the site for foraging or commuting and the site provides low quality sett building habitat the majority site is flat. As badgers were not noted during the survey and are uncommon in the area, badgers are unlikely to be influenced by the proposals and need no further consideration within the current planning application.</p>
<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>N/A as unlikely present</p>

5.0 Survey Results and Evaluation (continued)

Species Results	Evaluation and Recommendations
<p>Bats: The records search returned 91 records of bats within 2km of the site. There are 26 records for bats within 250m of the site. Species include: brown long-eared bat and common pipistrelle There is a record from 2015 for pipistrelle sp. 25m south of the site. The closest recorded roost to the site is approximately 284m east. This record is for common pipistrelle and dates from 2013.</p> <p><u>Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for Bats</u> The habitats on site, including the scattered trees, hedgerows and ditches provide suitable bat roost, foraging and commuting habitat.</p> <p><u>Preliminary Roost Assessment Trees</u> A detailed assessment of all trees was not undertaken. However, there are a number of trees within the wooded area at the eastern end and south west boundary of the site that may provide potential for roosting bats.</p>  <p>One of the mature trees within the woodland that have bat roost features.</p>	<p><u>Habitat</u> The habitats on the site are considered to provide high bat commuting and foraging suitability. It is likely that some of these features will be retained within the proposals, including the mature trees and the ditches along the site boundary.</p> <p>It is recommended that bat activity surveys are carried on the site to ascertain how bats may be using the site. The activity surveys can be carried out April to October in suitable weather conditions.</p> <p><u>Trees</u> The trees on site have not been assessed in detail. If any trees are to be lost to the proposals a daytime inspection should be undertaken to check these trees for potential bat roost features. If any features are found a climbing inspection or further night time surveys should be undertaken to assess if the trees are being used by bats as a roost. The surveys would need to be undertaken prior to submission of the planning application as per Council advice. If night time surveys are required these would need to be undertaken between April and September when bats are active.</p> <p>To enable bats continued use of retained commuting and foraging habitats on the site it is advised that lighting is kept to a minimum and designed to avoid spill into the foraging habitat i.e. linear features of trees. Lighting design should follow advice set out in <i>Bats and lighting in the UK- bats and the built environment series</i>, (Bat Conservation Trust, 2009).</p>
<p>Evaluation and Recommendation</p>	<p>High bat commuting and foraging habitat - Two nocturnal surveys to confirm bat use of the site. Bat Roost Potential in trees - Detailed inspection for bat roost potential of any trees proposed to be lost to the development.</p>

5.0 Survey Results and Evaluation (continued)

Species Results	Evaluation and Recommendations
<p>Breeding Birds: No records of protected or notable birds were returned for the site. The nearest record was for a willow tit from 2006, approximately 117m north of the site.</p> <p>Other bird records including kingfisher, dunnock, bullfinch, reed bunting and grasshopper warbler were returned. Full details are included within Appendix 3. The site provides nesting and foraging habitat for these species, although the site does not provide nesting habitat for kingfisher.</p> <p>The habitats on site also offer nesting opportunities for other, more common bird species within trees and scrub. Birds were not recorded calling during survey, most likely due to the timing of the survey (early October).</p>	<p>There will be habitat loss for breeding and foraging birds as a result of the proposals. However, some nesting habitat will be retained and can be enhanced with bird box provision.</p> <p>As significant habitat loss may occur it is recommended that nesting bird surveys be undertaken to determine appropriate mitigation.</p> <p>In order to avoid harm to nesting birds, vegetation should not be cleared during the bird breeding season (between 1 March and 31 August). If vegetation needs to be cleared during this period, a nesting bird survey will be required, conducted by a suitably qualified ecologist, before works begin. If any active nests are observed during the survey, exclusion zones will be set up and works will not occur in these areas until nesting is complete.</p>
<p>Evaluation and Recommendation</p>	<p>Nesting bird survey to determine appropriate mitigation</p>
<p>Reptiles: The records searches returned no records for reptiles. No evidence of reptile use of the site was noted during survey. The site provides habitat for reptiles in the form of refugia, basking and foraging habitat.</p>	<p>No records for reptiles were returned for the site. No evidence was of reptiles were noted during the survey. However this is likely to be due to time of year the survey was carried out (October). Reptile surveys may be required following consultation with the council, due to the loss of suitable reptile on site.</p>
<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>Reptile surveys may be required, following consultation with the council.</p>
<p>Other species: There are records of water vole, hedgehog and brown hare within 2km of the site. There are also no streams on site or within the vicinity of the site that would provide suitable water vole habitat and the pond was shaded, with little bank side vegetation suitable for use by water vole.</p> <p>There are suitable habitats for brown hare and hedgehog on the site but no evidence of these species was noted during survey.</p>	<p>It is considered that water vole would not be using the site and need no further consideration within any future planning application.</p> <p>Brown hare and hedgehog may use habitats on the site and would need to be considered within any future planning application in terms of ensuring suitable access for these species to appropriate habitat following development.</p>
<p>Evaluation</p>	<p>Local</p>

5.0 Survey Results and Evaluation (continued)

Species Results	Evaluation and Recommendations
<p>Invasive species Stands of Japanese knotweed occur along the eastern and northern boundary of the site, a small stands of cotoneaster, montbretia and a stand of Himalayan balsam also occur on the northern boundary these are marked on plan P.775.16.03 (Appendix 1).</p>	<p>Measure would need to be taken to ensure these species aren't spread in the wild during works. It is likely an Invasive Species Management Plan would be conditions as a result of any planning permission for the site.</p>
Evaluation	N/A

6.0 Assessment & Recommendations

6.1 Designated Sites and Habitats

Two statutory sites were identified. The nearest statutory designated sites are Stanley Bank LNR, (1.4km north west) and Stanley Bank Meadow SSSI (1.4km north west).

The nearest non-statutory designated site is Cloghe Wood and Grassland LWS (349m south east).

The site is separated from the LWS by arable fields and existing residential buildings and farm and Grange Road which lie to south east of the site. It is recommended that standard practices be employed during construction to ensure litter and air- or water-borne pollutants do not enter the wider environment. However, the LWS may be subject to increased recreational activity if access is available between the site and the LWS. Although the majority of residents are more likely to use the open land east of the site for activities such as dog walking so these effects are considered to be minimal. It is advised that suitable areas for recreational activity be included within any proposals for the site to ensure no harm to nearby Local Wildlife Sites.

The site falls within a Natural England SSSI Impact Risk Zone but the proposed development is unlikely to meet the criteria that trigger consultation with Natural England so this needs no further consideration within the current application. If the proposals are to include Airports, helipads and other aviation proposals, industrial/agricultural development that could cause air pollution, General combustion processes >20MW energy input, landfill or composting then consultation with Natural England may be required.

The habitats on site comprise semi-improved grassland, tall ruderal, dense scrub, broadleaved semi-natural woodland, species poor hedgerow, scattered trees, dry ditch/arable field boundary and standing water.

6.0 Assessment & Recommendations (continued)

These habitats are considered to have an ecological value **county** or lower. Four of the habitats (ponds, hedgerows, arable field boundary and broadleaved semi-natural woodland) may be UK biodiversity action plan priority (BAP) habitats. Five of the habitats found on the site may be local biodiversity action plan habitats. These are ponds, semi-improved, hedgerows, arable field boundary and broadleaved semi-natural woodland. In addition the semi-improved grassland may be of value. However the quality of the ponds and arable field margins would need to be confirmed at a more appropriate time of year to determine if these meet BAP definitions. The semi-improved grassland could be resurveyed in June or July to determine species richness.

It is advised that measures are included within the proposals to retain or replace the pond. It is likely that some scrub, woodland and grassland habitat would need to be retained within the proposals to ensure no net loss of biodiversity.

6.2 Protected and Invasive Species

Amphibians: It is advised that eDNA testing for great crested newts is carried out on ponds within 250m site with an HSI score of average or above.

Badger: No further works

Bats: Two nocturnal surveys to confirm bat use of the site. Detailed inspection for bat roost potential of any trees proposed to be lost to the development.

Breeding Birds: Nesting bird survey to determine appropriate mitigation for loss of habitat.

Reptiles: Reptile surveys may be required, following consultation with the council.

Brown Hare and Hedgehog: Measure to ensure suitable access for these species to appropriate habitat following development.

Invasive Species: These species should not be spread in the wild during works. An Invasive Species Management Plan is likely to be conditioned as part of any planning approval for the site.

Enhancements

In order to meet requirements for biodiversity protection and enhancement outlined within the NPPF, it is recommended that ecological enhancements are included where possible. These could include:

1. Provision of bird boxes affixed to residential dwellings or retained trees;
2. Provision of bat boxes affixed to residential dwellings or retained trees;
3. Suitable landscaping within the residential zone incorporating species that provide a food or shelter resource to wildlife;
4. Preparation of an Ecological Enhancement and Management Plan to cover the retained habitats. Enhancement measures could include control of invasive species, encouragement of semi-improved grassland with planting of additional wildflower species in appropriate areas, management of retained pond and creation of hedgehog hibernacula and amphibian hibernacula.

7.0 Conclusions

It is considered that measures would need to be taken to ensure no adverse impact on the local ecology as a result of the proposals. The recommendations made above would need to be taken on board in order to achieve this. In summary these include:

1. Suitable areas for recreational activity be included within any proposals to ensure no harm to nearby Local Wildlife Sites;
2. Measures included within the proposals to retain or replace the pond. It is also likely that some scrub, woodland and grassland habitat would need to be retained within the proposals to ensure no net loss of biodiversity. Further surveys to map and determine the quality of these habitats would be required to inform mitigation and compensation proposals if loss of these habitats is proposed;
3. Undertaking an eDNA tests for great crested newts on ponds within 250m site with an HSI score of average or above; lost to the development;
4. Two nocturnal surveys to confirm bat use of the site and detailed inspection for bat roost potential of any trees proposed to be lost;
5. Nesting bird survey to determine appropriate mitigation for loss of habitat.
6. Reptile surveys may be required, following consultation with the council. The site provides suitable reptile habitat, however they are uncommon in the area and there are no records within 2km of the site;
7. Measure to be taken to ensure suitable areas of habitat remain for brown hare and hedgehog following development;
8. An Invasive Species Management Plan is likely to be conditioned as part of any planning approval for the site to ensure no spread of invasive species in the wild during works; and
9. Enhancement measures are likely to include provision of bird and bat boxes; suitable landscaping within the residential zone incorporating species that provide a food or shelter resource to wildlife; and preparation of an Ecological Enhancement and Management Plan to cover the retained habitats. Enhancement measures could include control of invasive species, encouragement of semi-improved grassland with planting of additional wildflower species in appropriate areas, management of retained pond and creation of hedgehog hibernacula and amphibian hibernacula.

The above recommendations, if fully implemented, will enable the proposals to meet the requirements of national and local guidance and legislation including the NPPF, Policy CQL 3 of St. Helens Local Plan Core Strategy and The Biodiversity SPD (Supplementary Planning Document).

8.0 References

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Landscape, Arboricultural & Ecological Solutions
for the Built Environment

Appendix 1

ALL COORDINATES RELATED TO LOCAL GRID LOCATED TO OS NG BY BEST FIT TO DETAIL, EXTRACTED FROM OS DIGITAL DATA.
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- KEY**
- Survey boundary
 - Semi-improved grassland
 - Standing water
 - Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland
 - Dense continuous scrub
 - Species poor intact hedge
 - Scattered trees
 - Tall ruderal vegetation
 - Bare ground
 - Dry ditch
 - Monbretia
 - Himalayan Balsam
 - Japanese Knotweed

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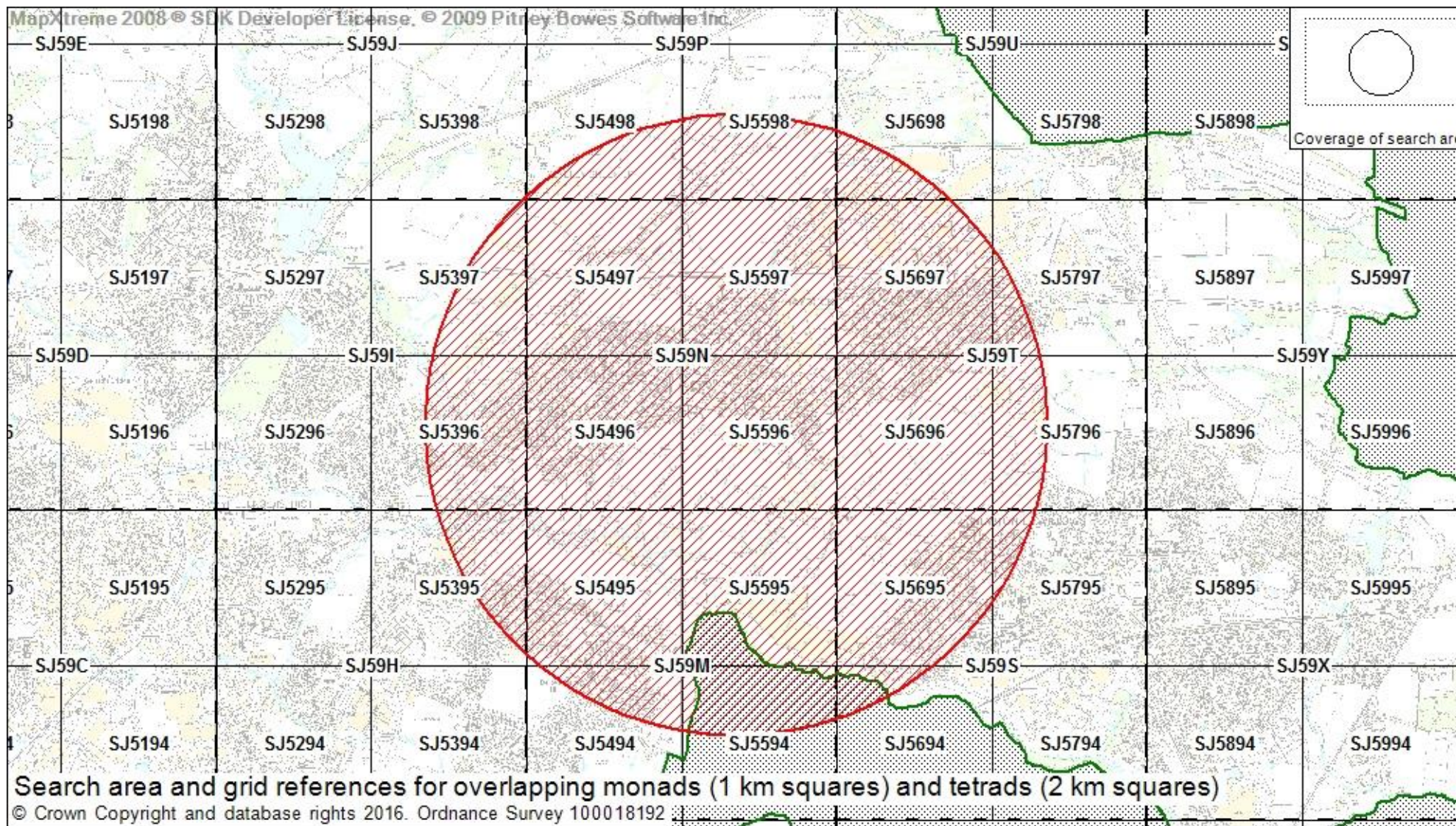
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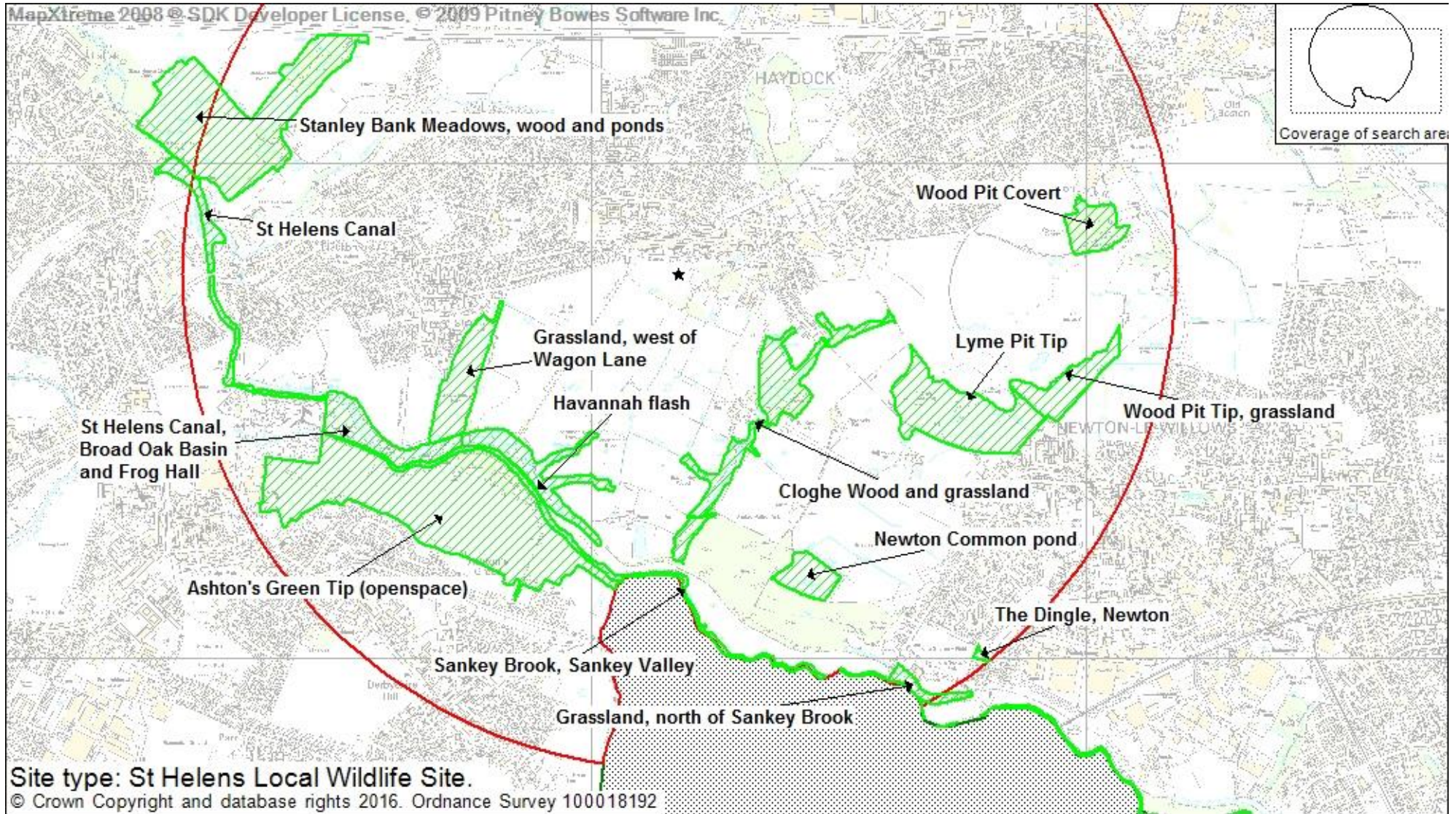
CLIENT: Eccleston Homes Ltd			
PROJECT: Cooper Lane, Haydock			
DRAWING TITLE: Phase One Habitat Survey			
SCALE: 1:1250@A3	DRAWN BY: CP	DRAWING No: P.775.16.03	REV: -
DATE: 06/10/2016	CHKD BY: RK		

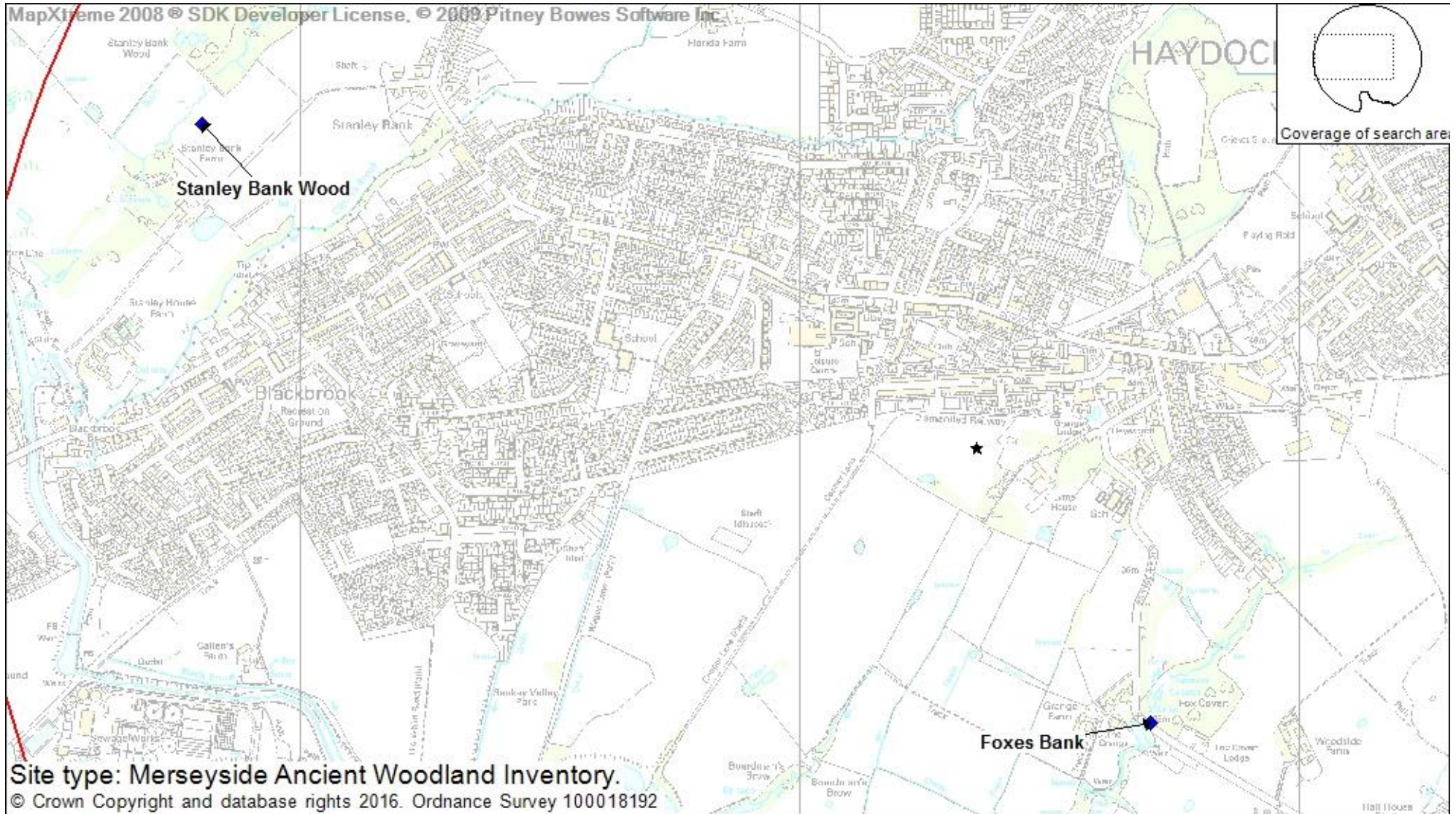
Appendix 3: Maps

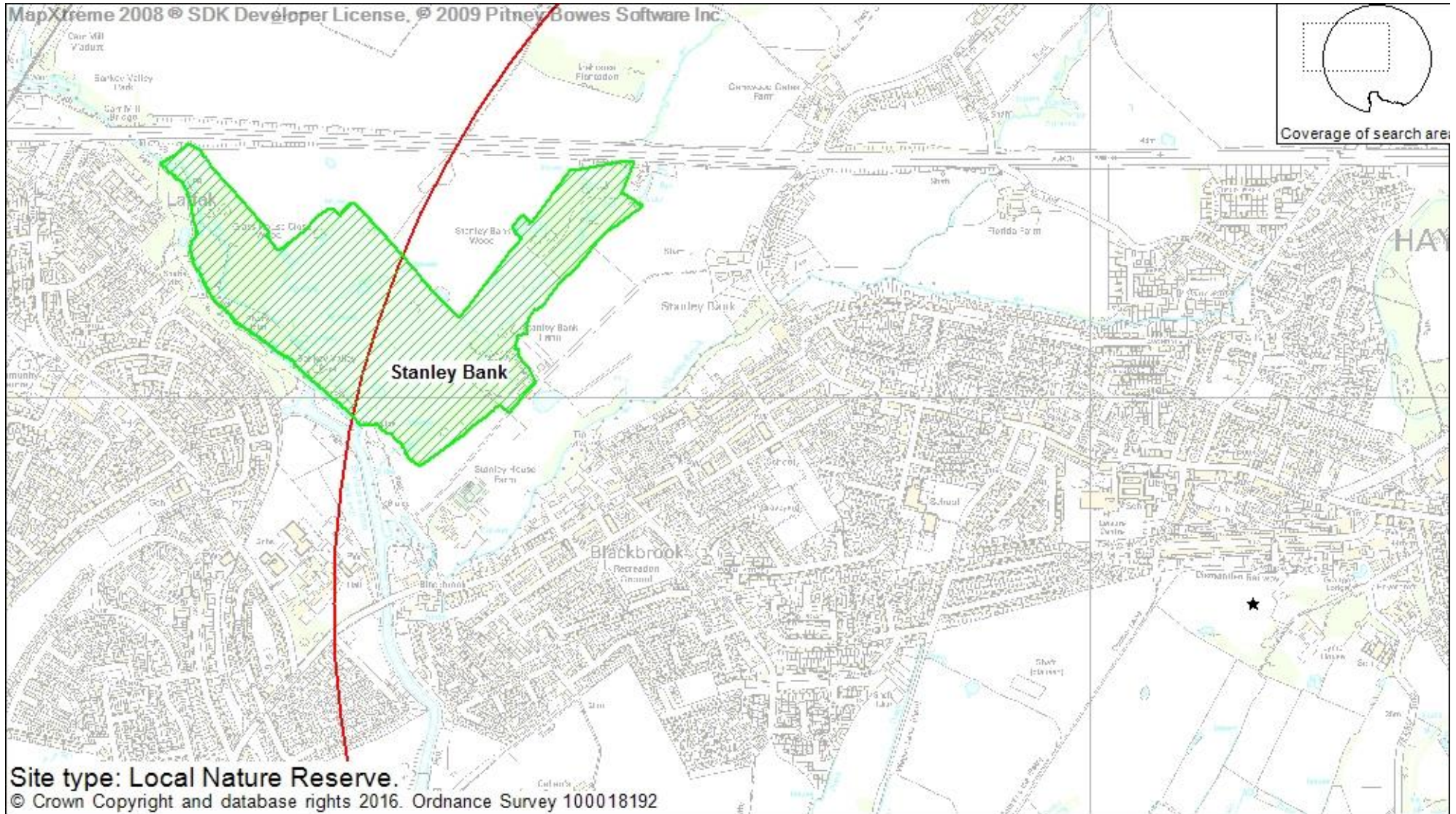
The following page(s) include maps to illustrate some of the results of your data request. They should be viewed in the context of the results supplied in the main body of the report.

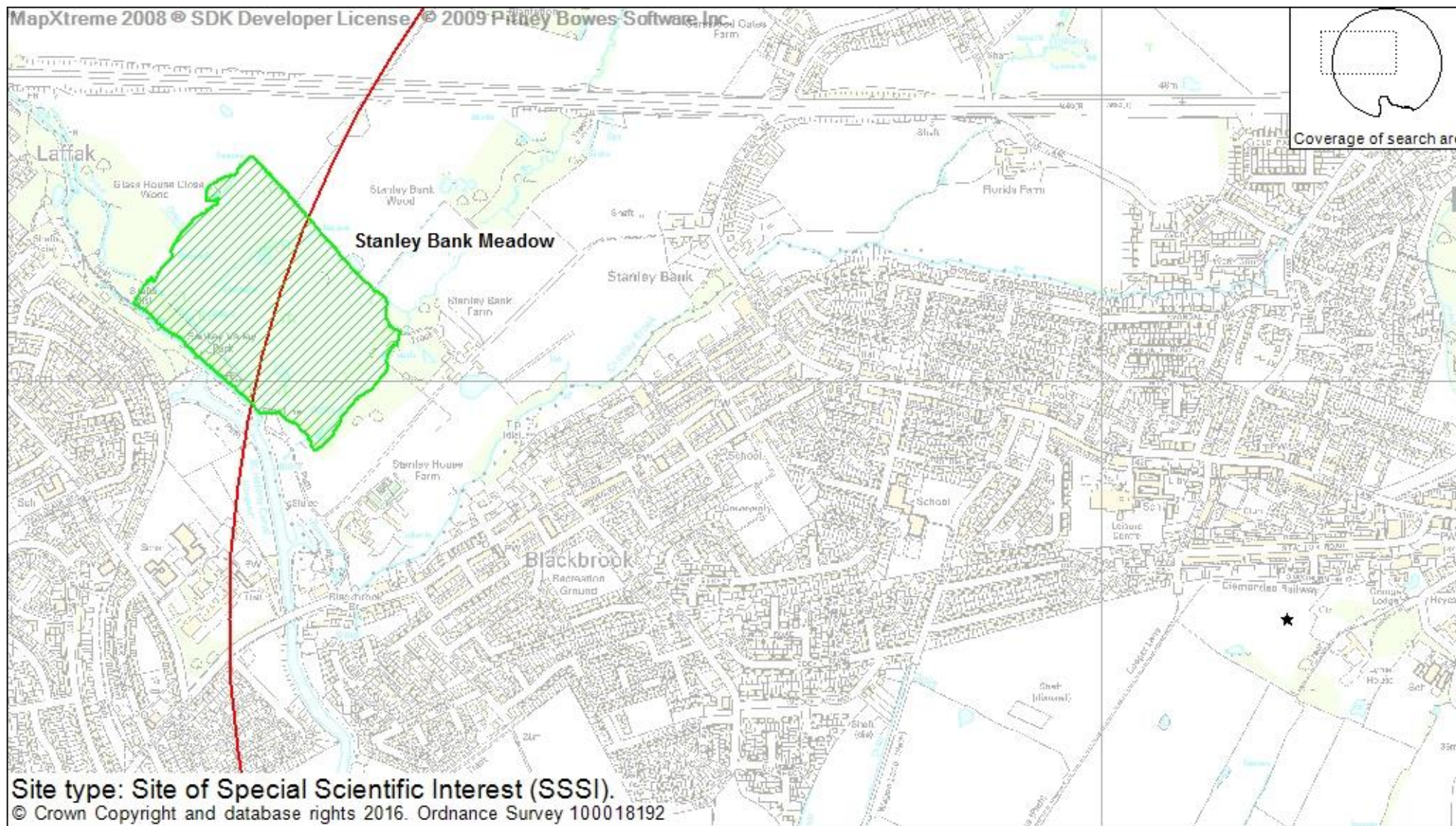
The Ordnance Survey mapping included in the maps provided by Merseyside BioBank under Sefton Council's licence from Ordnance Survey. These maps are provided to assist decision-makers in the effective and sustainable management of land, species and habitats. Ordnance Survey should be contacted directly if any of these maps are to be used in another document.

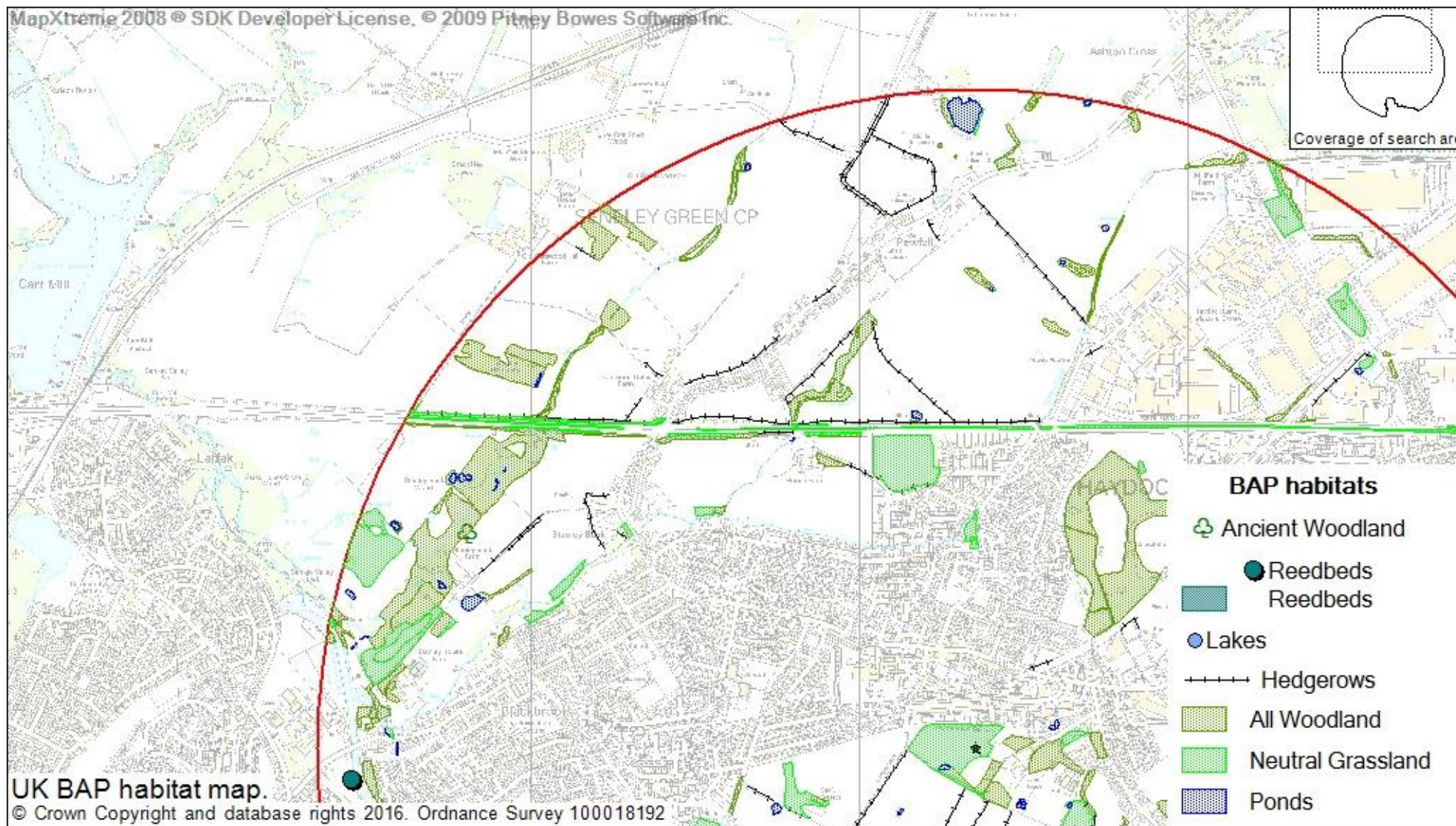


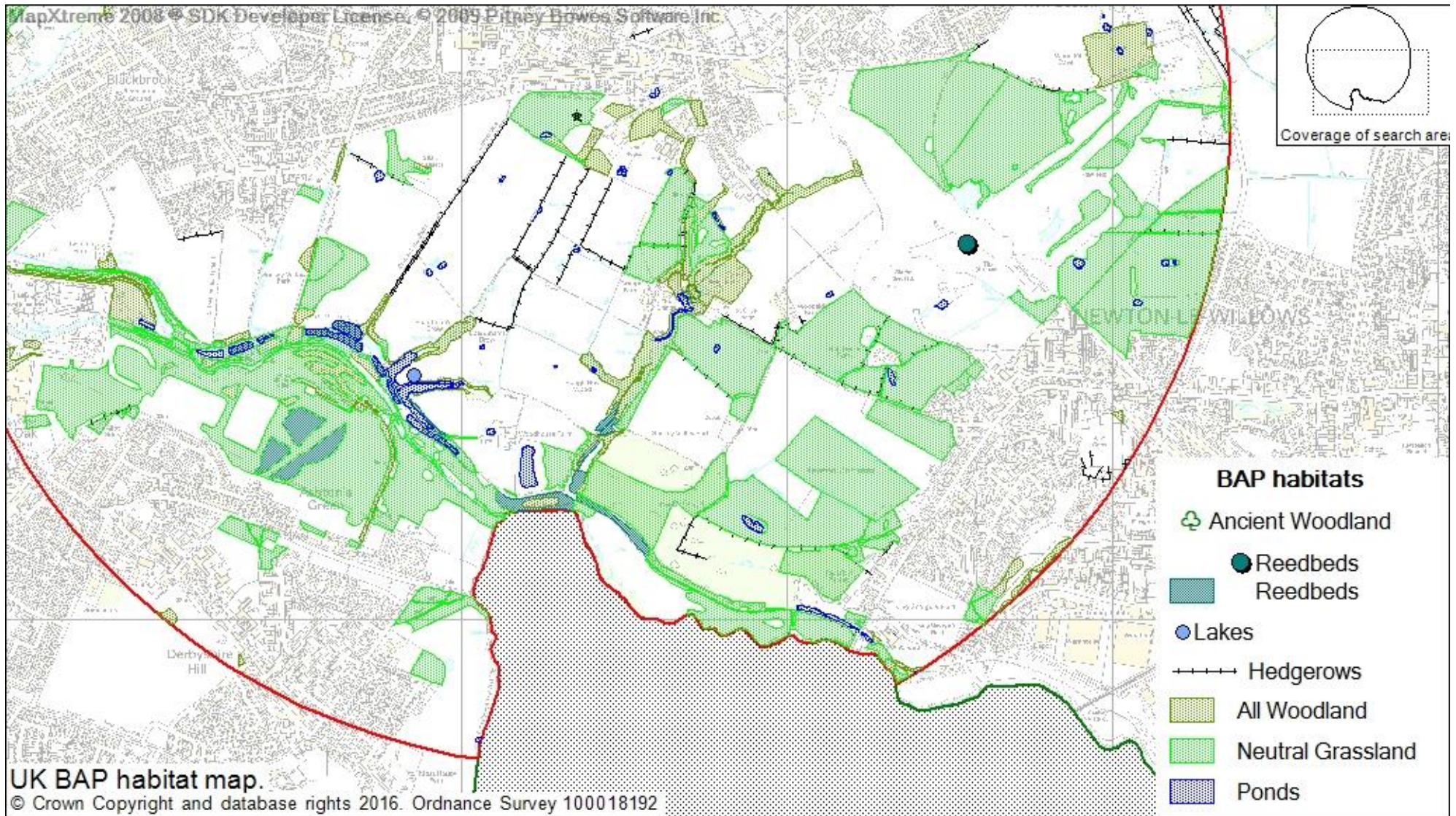


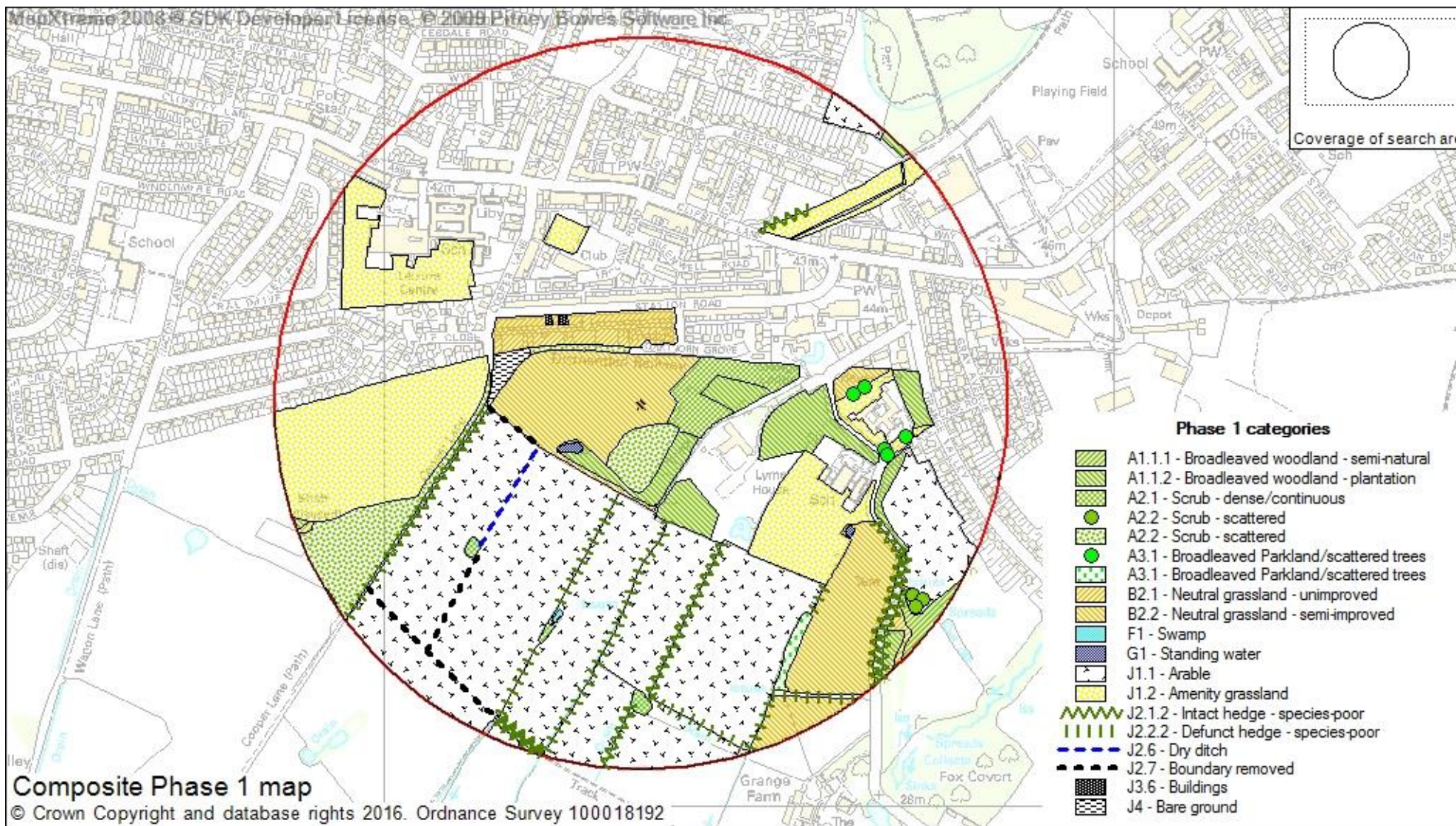


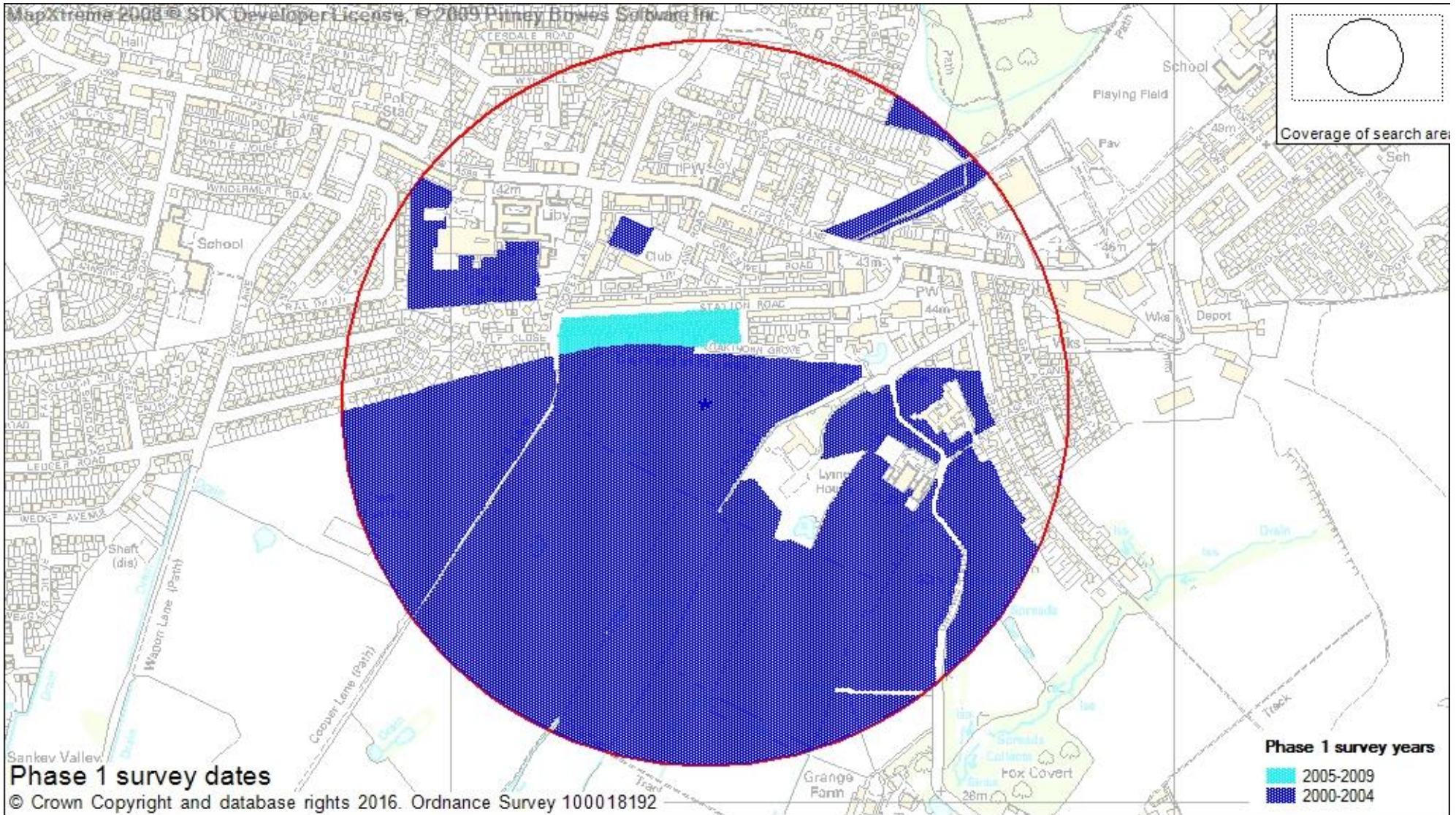












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