

# **Charnwood Borough Council Local Plan 2021-37**

## **Ecological Assessment Report Addendum**

**Ecology Evidence Update**

**June 2021**

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## **1. Introduction and methodology**

- 1.1 This addendum has been prepared by the Senior Ecologist at Charnwood Borough Council (CBC) to supplement the Charnwood Borough Council Local Plan 2020-36 Ecological Assessment Report. This addendum should be read in conjunction with that report.
- 1.2 As a result of a consultation exercise on the Draft Local Plan, CBC was made aware of a number of additional potential development sites within the Borough. This report presents the results of the ecological assessments of those sites and one site reassessment.
- 1.3 The boundary of some newly proposed sites lay largely, or entirely, within sites that were surveyed as part of the 2019 Ecological Assessment. In these cases the 2019 Assessment was considered up to date and no further survey work was deemed necessary.
- 1.4 The methodology used to assess these additional sites follows that of the original Ecological Assessment Report. As such it is subject to the same limitations.
- 1.5 The assessments presented in this addendum are based upon site visits conducted during February and early March, outside the optimal period for Phase 1 habitat assessments. However in most cases it is considered that adequate information was gathered to reliably determine habitat types and that it is therefore unlikely that the grades awarded to sites would need to be revised as a result of a more suitably timed survey. In a small number of cases a precautionary approach was taken to grading. This information is recorded in the detailed site assessments where applicable.

## **2. Results**

- 2.1 A total of 48 new sites were assessed. Of these 8 included areas within previously assessed sites, 9 were assessed using aerial images and desktop study only. 31 were included in site visits (table 1).
- 2.2 All 48 sites were graded. The distribution of site grades is shown in table 2.
- 2.3 All 4 sites graded A were dominated by buildings and hard standing.
- 2.4 The vast majority of sites graded B were dominated by arable land or intensively managed grassland. The only exception was PSH480 Hawker Business Park, an industrial site to the east of Burton on the Wolds.

**TABLE 1: summary of assessment type for new potential development sites**

Assessment type	Previous Assessment	Desktop study only	Desktop study and site visit	
<b>Site references</b>	PSE450	PCS1	PSE285	PSH469
	PSE451	PSH474	PSH388	PSH470
	PSH189	PSH475	PSH400	PSH471
	PSH240	PSH487	PSE449	PSH472
	PSH261	PSH488	PSH460	PSH473
	PSH480	PSH489	PSH461	PSH478
	PSH484	SH48	PSH462	PSH476
	PSH477	SH091		
		PSH492	PSH463	PSH479
			PSH464	PSH481
			PSH465	PSH482
			PSH466	PSH483
			PSH467	PSH486
			PSH468	PSH493
			PSH494	PSH495
			PSH496	PSE268
		PSE452		
<b>Total</b>	8	9	31	

**TABLE 2: grade distribution for all new sites**

Grade awarded	Number of sites
A	4
B	24
C	8
D	4
E	0
Combined grade	8
<b>TOTAL</b>	<b>48</b>

2.5 Split grades are awarded where necessary, for further explanation see paragraphs 5.23 and 5.24 of the Charnwood Borough Council Local Plan 2020-36 Ecological Assessment Report. In two cases (PSH465, Land off Holly Tree Close and PSH46, Land off Willow Road) the split grading reflected uncertainty around the assessment of grassland habitats outside the optimal survey period.

2.6 In two cases (PSH486 Land Adjacent Six Hills and PSH467 Land off Watermead Way) the split grade reflected the proximity to a SSSI. In the case of PSH486 the SSSI, Twenty Acre Piece, lies within the site boundary.

- 2.7 PSH482 Fairhaven Farm was graded C/D. Whilst the predominant onsite habitat was arable land, the development potential was considered to be constrained by the requirement to buffer adjacent woodland and an ordinary watercourse.
- 2.8 In the case of PSE449 Land Adjacent Seven Trent Waterworks the D/E grade reflects both the presence of high value habitat within the site boundary and the proximity of Loughborough Big Meadow SSSI and Bishops Meadow LWS. Nevertheless it was considered that part of the site could be developed. Because this is a proposed employment site the assumptions in relation to gross to net developable area used for housing sites were not applied.
- 2.9 In the case of PSH452 the B/D grade reflected uncertainty about the detail of development proposals for this potential employment site. It was considered possible to introduce development within the footprint of previous development on site and avoid significant ecological impact, but also that the remaining habitat outside this area was valuable and locally distinctive.
- 2.10 PSH493 was graded B/C because of concerns about potential impacts of development on landscape connectivity, however the potential for this to be enhanced by development was also recognised.
- 2.11 A range of constraints were identified for those sites graded C, including:
- Loss of habitat,
  - Degradation of onsite habitat,
  - Impacts on adjacent LWS,
  - Impacts on trees subject to a Tree Preservation Order (TPO),
  - The distinctiveness of onsite habitats relative to the surrounding area,
  - Potential impact on protected species, including impacts on ponds, and
  - Cumulative impact.
- 2.12 All 4 sites graded D contained a significant proportion of grassland that displayed at least moderately high botanic diversity. In one case (PSH471 Land at 34 Brick Kiln Lane) this was subject to regular mowing, however this site also contains a pond known to support a population of Great Crested Newt.
- 2.13 For the three remaining “D” sites it is considered that development would present a significant risk of impact to an LWS:
- PSH478 Land at rear of Anstey Lane was dominated by semi-improved neutral grassland. Its western boundary is formed by Rothley Brook LWS (site ref; S.2.8).
  - PSH468 Land off Boonton Meadows Way is dominated by semi improved neutral grassland and lies approximately 100m of Mere Lane Field LWS (site ref: W6411/1).
  - PSH484 Land off Cotes Road contains 2 LWSs; Catsick Marsh (site ref; W5618/8) and Railway Fields (site ref: W5618/9). It also lies in close proximity to Elms Farm Field (site ref: W5618/7) and the River Soar (S.2.7).

2.14 In most cases the habitat types recorded during site visits accord with the 2011 phase 1 habitat survey update. However, there were some exceptions, for example:

- PSE449 Land Adjacent Severn Trent Waterworks was recorded as being within limits to development in 2011 and so was not assigned a Phase 1 habitat type.
- PSH460 Park View Nursery was not assessed in 2011.
- At PSE285 Land East of Junction 23 there appears to have been a conversion of permanent pasture to arable land since 2011.

### Site Reassessment

2.15 In addition to the work described above one site was reassessed following representations made on the Draft Local Plan. For PSH447 Leconfield Rd there was a reassessment of the original grade, from C/D to D. A follow up field survey identified an area within the site with acid grassland indicator species. This led to a revised understanding of the distinctiveness of the on-site habitats and their potential for ecological restoration. Other factors, notably the adjacent ancient woodland, had not changed since the original assessment.

## **3. Conclusion**

3.1 Notwithstanding the constraint associated with out of season surveys, it is considered that site surveys were sufficiently robust to reliably grade new sites using the same methodology as that for the 2019 Ecological Assessment Report. However, in some cases a precautionary approach was taken to evaluating grassland habitats. Consequently a survey within the optimum period would result in a slight adjustment to the grading of these sites.

3.2 12 of the 39 additional sites (approximately 30%) had recently been surveyed, either as part of the 2018 Evidence Update or in relation to planning applications. A number of other sites (such as those new sites within Loughborough Town Centre that are comprised of buildings and hardstanding) were assessed using aerial images alone.

3.3 In most cases information obtained from site visits was in accord with the 2011 Phase 1 Habitat Survey.

3.4 Given the above (paragraphs 3.2-3.3) it is considered that, whilst this addendum report contributes new information to the Ecological Assessment Report, it does not warrant any revision of the conclusions of the main report.

3.5 In a small number of cases site surveys contributed new information relating to the distribution of habitats and of habitat change. Although this is valuable information it is not sufficient to warrant any reconsideration of the natural character of Charnwood Borough.

SHLAA Site Ref	SHLAA Site Location	Date of Survey (where applicable)	Basis of alternative evidence (where applicable)	Landscape Comments	Site Description	Ecological Connectivity	Overview of ecological value/risks from development	Enhancement Opportunities	Rating
PSC1	Land off Anstey Lane		aerial images		Arable fields	southern site boundary adjacent to Rothley Brook and associated woodland. Significant bat roost potential in village of Thurcaston to the north.	loss of arable habitat, impacts on Rothley brook, impacts on flight lines	Enhancement of habitat adjacent to Rothley brook, enhanced linear connectivity	B
PSE285	Land East of Junction J23 M1	09/03/2020			Dominated by arable land with hedgerow and mature tree line. Mixed woodland area surrounding dwelling and small area of semi-improved grassland. Adjacent to LWS Longcliffe Golf Course. Borders with Shortcliffe Brook. Burleigh Brook east of site. Borders with broadleaf woodland corridor along M1 (east) and to the south containing badger sett. Deer tracks found throughout site.	Woodland corridor and hedgerow network	Loss of mature trees, hedgerow and arable land. Risk to LWS and Shortcliffe Brook. Isolation of woodland corridor running alongside M1.	Enhance Brook and woodland area	B
PSE449	Land adjacent Severn Trent Waterworks (1 Hockey Cl, Loughborough LE11 5GX)	24-Feb			Southern part of the site has been subject to tipping and includes soil mounds, bare ground and bramble scrub. The remainder of the site is dominated by semi improved grassland developing scattered scrub but includes a mosaic of marsh, temporary ponds and wet woodland. The site is bisected by a wet ditch. In addition to mallard and moorhen 2 waders (probably snipe) were flushed during the visit	Wood Brook	Proximity to SSSI, LNR and LWS may create disturbance. Buffer area for Wood Brook (which may contain PNS)	Site is well located and in a suitable location to provide a strategic ecological enhancement, potentially in combination with flood attenuation works	D/E
PSE268	Rearsby Business Park	26-Jun			Arable plus hedgerows	Lies with a predominantly arable landscape		creation of more highly distinctive habitat on site	B
PSE450	Land adjacent Charnwood Edge Business Park, Cossington (PSE450)		aerial image		Arable field.			Habitat creation through landscaping and SuDS	B
PSE451	Bull in the Hollow Farm (PSE451 Leics Rd Lbro)		aerial image and info from 2018 survey		Hard standing and buildings with some trees 50% - Some bat potential. Grassland area 50% Precise habitat type not established	proximity to LWSs and connected by suitable habitat	loss of grassland. Indirect impacts on LWSs	retention and enhancement of existing habitat	C

PSE452	Land south of Sileby Road, Barrow upon Soar	24/06/2020			1) Derelict building (NBP) plus hardstanding with early successional habitat. Areas of tall ruderal habitat 2) Good quality SNG approaching LWS standard. Split grade reflects differin constraints associated with components 1 & 2	Proximity and habitat connectivity to a number of grassland LWSs	Loss of 1) tall ruderal/ early successional habitat 2) loss of good quality grassland and supporting habitat for grassland LWSs	retention and positive management of grassland	B/D
PSH189	Land off Barkby Thorpe Lane		aerial image and info from 2018 survey		arable field	adjacent to railway corridor	loss of arable habitat	enhancement of linear habitat along railway corridor	B
PSH240	Leicester Rowena (Wyedale) Garden Centre		aerial images and previous site visits		commercial site comprised of warehouses and carparking	Proximity to Soar LWS and strategic wildlife corridor	Tree lines around margins and in association with car parking	landscaping and SuDS	B
PSH261	Land off Homefield Road (PSH261 Barow Rd Sileby)		aerial image and info from 2018 survey		Line of TPO trees (2 groups) Sheep grazed PSI and horse grazed (2019)	adjacent railway corridor	loss of permanent pasture and hedgerow. Need to retain TPO trees		c
PSH388	High Leys Farm / Manor Farm (PSH388 GrobyRdAnstey)	05/02/2020			Improved grassland and arable land with hedgerows and section of wooded brook and ephemeral ponds	Edge of existing settlement. Proximity to Bradgate Park	loss of arable and grassland, impacts on watercourse	enhnced buffer to brook. Cereation of connected and permanent ponds	B
PSH400	Land off Brookfield Road (PSH404 Rothley)	05/02/2020			Arable field with fringing mature TPO trees. Additional area is dominated by tall herb/ grassland community	Rothley Brook LWS forms northern boundary	loss of arable land, impact on protected trees and stream corridor, also consider cumulative effects in association with Hallfields lane development to immediate east (as well as Broadnook to south). The eastern extent of the site appears to lie within school playing fields and within the boundary of a previous application. Therefore target conditions for this habitat and cumulative impact will need to be considered.		C

PSH460	Park View Nursery Site off Gynsill Lane	04/02/2020			Buildings, hardstanding and domestic gardens with at least half the site dominated by (PSI?) grassland. Areas of scrub across the site a pond suitable for GCN in NW corner	Several ponds within vicinity connected by suitable habitat	loss of grassland. Loss of/impact on pond	Enhancement of retained habitats SuDS	C
PSH461	Land off Willow Road, Barrow upon Soar (Barrow-cotes)	27/02/2020			Improved and poor semi improved grassland with PSI fields recently grazed hard by sheep. Ridge and furrow in south west field. Native hedgerows dividing fields.	hedgerow network with connections to pond and brook to the north	Loss of grassland and hedgerows		B/C Precautionary grade due to seasonal constraints)
PSH462	Land at and rear of 83 and 87 Cotes Road, Barrow upon Soar (Barrow-cotes)	27/02/2020			dwelling with large domestic garden. TPO trees to front and south east side of dwelling 83. Field compartment comprised of semi-improved grassland. Scattered matures tree including <i>Populus Nigra</i> . Line of trees next to railway/LWS.	Railway Fields LWS	Loss of important and TPO trees and grassland habitat, loss of woodland connectivity/ corridor to LWS at end of land (SW).		C
PSH463	Land off Cliffe Road/Henson Close	22/02/2020			Arable land with PSI in northern corner. Temporary pond near centre of the site. Main badger sett in eastern boundary. Relict R&F in field margins	Adjacent to great Central Railway. Birstall Golf Course to south (within City)meets LWS criteria for onsite GCN population			B
PSH464	Land rear of Reservoir House, Ratcliffe Road	17-Feb			dominated by improved grassland. Row of Pines across main site access				B
PSH465	Land off Holly Tree Close (PSH465Hoton)	27/02/2020			semi-improved neutral grassland with tall herb communities; moderately diverse. Area of ridge and furrow and small field compartment size. Mature treeline boarder with established pines. Brook close to land (north)	Brook close to northern boundary	Loss of connectivity to woodlands just east of site and divides back garden corridors to the brook.		C/D
PSH466	Cricket Ground (Charnwood Old Boys CC), Ashby Road, Lbro	25/02/2020	aerial image		amenity grassland with 20% broadleaf woodland. Woodland margin/scrub. Borders TPO trees surrounding the Cube student accomodation	woodlan forms part of an extensive network on the west side of Loughborough that includes ASNWs	loss of woodland and grassland. Impacts on retained woodland		C

PSH467	Land off Watermead Lane, SW Loughborough (PSH467 Nanpantan)	25/02/2020			Wood Brook dissecting site. Arable fields with hedgerow/tree boarders. Pond (SE)	150m from SSSI Beacon Hill, Hangingstone & Outwoods at the nearest point and immediately adjacent to an area of ASNW that forms part of the Outwoods but which lies outside the SSSI area. Wood Brook runs through the northern part of the site	Maintain Wood Brook, pond and hedgerow corridors, which may also contain PNS		B/E
PSH468	Land off Boonton Meadows Way	17-Feb			Semi improved neutral grassland with moderate floral diversity (based on out of season survey). Mature mixed woodland tree belt along southern boundary	LWS approx 100m to SE. Permanent grassland to NE would be isolated by development on this site			D
PSH469	Land off Broome Lane	17/02/2020			mostly arable with some improved grassland	Large pond and tributary to R. Wreake immediately to north. Large (stocked) pond close to SE boundary. (species poor) grassland to east between site and village	Loss of farmland habitat, impact on nearby ponds, connectivity between ponds, isolation of off site grassland	pond creation,buffer to watercourse.	B
PSH470	Land between A46/Paudy Lane/Berrycott Lane	13/02/2020 and 27/02/2020			Arable and improved grassland with hedgerow network, Sibley Brook corridor and small area of BLW. Site includes several pond with at least one suitable for GCN. Both skylark and brown hare recorded on site. North east tip contains poor semi-improved grassland.	site lies between 4 areas of BLW including Twenty Acre Piece SSSI to the north and Thrussington Wolds Gorse LWS to the south.. BLW immediately adjacent to northern part of the site.	Loss of farmland and associated wildlife, impact on brook corridor, loss of ponds, woodland and connectivity between adjacent woodland	increased opportunity for GCN, increased woodland and woodland connectivity, enhancement of brook corridor	B
PSH471	Land at 34 Brick Kiln Lane (Ashby-Iveshead Rd shepshed)	27/02/2020			Dwelling to north with hardstanding. Predominantly semi-improved grassland/hedgelines borders. Broadleaf Woodland surrounding pond to south. Evidence of felling.	Green space connectivity set between residential housing. Pond to east of site providing pond connectivity with onsite pond.	Loss of grassland and habitat suitable for GCN if pond is lost.	Enhance pond area for wildlife	D
PSH472	Land West of Iveshead Road (Ashby-Iveshead Rd shepshed)	27/02/2020			Improved grassland	boundary hedgerows. Morely Quarry Grassland to west	Loss of grassland habitat and hedgerow connectivity	enhance retained grassland	B
PSH473	Land East of Iveshead Road (Ashby-Iveshead Rd shepshed)	27/02/2020			Improved grassland with linear feature hedgerow dividing fields	bondary hedgerow	Loss of grassland habitat and hedgerow connectivity	enhance retained grassland	B

PSH474	Land off Cossington Road (Sileby)		aerial image		Arable land. Wooded brook running adjacent to southern boundary	Cossington Meadows and River Soar to the west	loss of arable habitat. Impact on stream with connections to strategic GI	Increased riparian habitat	B
PSH475	Land east of Seagrave Road (Sileby)		aerial image		arable land with ditch/ hedgerow network	Close to Sileby brook. pLWS adjacent to NW boundary		creat grassland adjacent to pLWS to offset adjacent development	B
PSH476	Woodgate Nurseries, Barkby Lane	17/02/2020			mosaic of habitats formed from abandoned garden; predominantly rough grassland with plantation woodland, scrub, tall ruderal habitat with some derelict sheds and hardstanding.	1 of a group of similar sites adjacent to NELSUE but otherwise isolated in an intensively farmed landscape	Loss of habitat in depauperate area		C
PSH477	Rothley Meadow development	N/A	18/2194		greenfield site within existing development boundary	Flood plain and Rothley Brook	Cumulative impact leading to net loss across the wider site	none on site	B
PSH478	Land rear of 23 Anstey Lane (Thurcaston)	27/02/2020			Predominantly semi-improved neutral grassland with moderwte diversity but up to >50% herb coverin places. Varied topograpy with patches of bramble scrub. Active badger sett with 5 active holes and several latrines. Possible main sett.	Rothley Brook (LWS) borders to west	Impact on LWS brook and grassland habitat. Approx size of 0.6 hectares would make on-site biodiversity loss unavoidable. Need for buffer to both brook and badger sett.	Site is well located and in a suitable location to provide a strategic ecological enhancement, potentially in combination with flood attenuation works	D
PSH479	Land at Lovrin Equine Stables (Wymeswold North)	26-Feb			Improved grassland (horse gerazed) with stables and hardstanding. . Mature trees surrounding property that borders with the site		loss of grassland and impact on mature trees in boundaries		B
PSH480	Hawker Business Park off Melton Road		aerial image and previous site visit		predominantly hard standing with buildings habingh bat roosting potential. Grass verges managed ffor amenity with some species rich areas EG including be orchid Ophrys apifera. Mature tree lines and hedge surrounding site.		loss of tree line, loss of grassland	improved roosting habitat, net gain through careful design	B
PSH481	Land off Moor Lane	25/02/2020			Site has been cleared and recently regraded with mixed material. It is sparsely vegetated with early successional species. There is a distinct level change with an area of wet woodland in the lower portion. There is a narrow band of marsh along the northern boundary	Adjacent to the Grand unionn canal (west) and Hermitage Brook North	loss of woodland and damage to brook - buffer area to waterways	Reinforce wet woodland and Hermitage Brook corridor	B

PSH482	Fairhaven Farm, Site extension	04/02/2020	Decision Notice and documents relating to outline consent 14/0428 and RM 17/1898		Arable field forming buffer zone associated with previous application (see cond 12 P/14/0428/2)	woodland adjacent to western boundary, wet ditch to north	Impact on adjacent woodland and stream, habitat loss		C/D
PSH483	Land south of Ashby Road Central (Ashby-Iveshead Rd shepshed)	27/02/2020			Improved grassland with hedgerow boarder	boundary hedgerow. Acid grassland to north	Loss of grassland and hedgerow connectivity.	enhancement of retained grassland	B
PSH484	Land off Cotes Road		aerial and 2018 assessment		PSI and I with wet grassland LWS at SW end: Railway Fields W5618/9	One of several adjacent sites some of which include an LWS along the railway corridor to the west, adjacent to Soar corridor/LWS- boundaries unclear	Impact on LWS, loss of arable and lower value grassland		D
PSH486	Land adjacent Six Hills Garden Village	06/03/2020			Domiated by arable and improved grassland. SSSI Twenty Acre Piece comprised of broadleaf woodland semi-improved graasland and coniferous plantation in SE corner of site. LWSs - Lodge Farm Field, Wymeswold Lodge Ponds F & G. Hedgerow and ditch network containing mature trees. Some ridge and furrow, and semi-improved grassland area. Contains a number of ponds sutiable for GCN, evidence of badgers and large land mound suitable for reptiles. Large flocks of starling observed. Kingstone Brook runs through east of site. Number of farm dwellings.	Kingstone Brook, hedgerow, pond and woodland networks	Risk to LWSs and SSSI. Loss of habitat and ecological networks	Improve ponds and SSSI condition	Split B/E (SSSI)
PSH487	Devonshire Square		aerial		Hardstanding and buildings. Wood Brook boardering west of site		Provide buffer to any trees adjacent to site and Wood Brook	Green roofs. SuDS Landscaping	A
PSH488	Market Street		aerial		Hardstanding and buildings. Wood Brook close to site.		Provide buffer to any trees adjacent to site and Wood Brook	Green roofs. SuDS Landscaping	A
PSH489	Southfields Council Offices, Southfield Road		aerial		Predominantly buildings and hardstanding. A number of mature trees, shrubs and improved amenity grassland spread throughout the parking area, site borders and inner courtyards.	Trees connect to the streetline trees and parkland on the SE boundary	Loss of trees, shrubs and grass. Trees require a buffer area	Green roofs. SuDS Landscaping	A
PSH492	971 Loughborough Rd Rothley	N/A	aerial images		residential buildings garden and horse paddock (assumed SNG, not assessed)	Physically isolated but in closeproximity to Cossington meadows and other floodplain grassnad		Very Limited in association with development	C

PSH493	South of Ratcliffe Road Sileby	24-Jun			largely arable site with hedgerow/ditch network, pond and crossed by ordinary watercourse. Land around blossom Farm represents high value habitat in the local context	development in this area risks harming largescale ecological connectivity (IE between Soar Valley and Wolds	loss of arable habitat, hedgerows and ponds, loss of locally distinctive habitat	Establishment of wide semi-natural corridors	B/C
PSH494	Ingleberry Road	20-Oct			Arable fields with mature trees and hedgerows				B
PSH 495	Smaller Ingleberry Road	20-Oct			Improved grassland with hedgerows				B
PSH496	Syston/ Queniborough	20-Oct			Improved Grassland, arable, hedges	area of separation			B
SH48	Former Limehurst Depot		aerial		Hardstanding and buildings. Wood Brook on site with canal adjacent to SE. Floodzone 3.	Wood Brook	Impact on Wood Brook	Enhance Wood Brook, Green roofs. SuDS Landscaping	A
SH091	Retail Warehouse Car Park, Regent Place		aerial images		car park with tree line		tree line represents only feature with substantive value		B