

Wildlife Sites A Guide for Landowners and Developers Adopted February 2003, updated November 2003

Summary

This SPG has been prepared to further develop and explain the application of wildlife protection policies within the Hertsmere Local Plan. The document introduces the concept and history of Wildlife Sites, explains their importance to the natural environment and the need within the planning process, to preserve and enhance them. The document goes on to update the schedule of Wildlife Sites within Hertsmere and identifies their location within Hertsmere on a set of maps. The document also provides further contact details where landowners and developers can seek further advice on managing Wildlife Sites.

Introduction

- 1.1** Whilst only policies in the development plan have the statutory status afforded by Section 54A of the 1990 Town and Country Planning Act, Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) may be taken into account as a material consideration in the determination of planning applications. The Secretary of State will give substantial weight to SPG in making decisions that come before him where that SPG derives out of and is consistent with any relevant national or regional guidance and the development plan, and has been prepared in a proper manner.
- 1.2** Planning Policy Guidance Note 12 (PPG12) advises that Supplementary Planning Guidance (SPG) should be reviewed on a regular basis alongside reviews of development plan policies to which it relates. SPG does not form part of a local plan but it may supplement specific policies in a Plan. SPG should be issued separately from the plan and made publicly available and its status should be made clear.
- 1.3** Para 2.6 (Page 151/152) of the Hertsmere Local Plan states that:

'The Wildlife Sites and Protected Species sites shown on the Proposals Maps represent those designated and known to the Council at the time the Local Plan was produced. Inevitably, changes will affect these during the lifespan of the Local Plan. In order to reflect these changes and maintain an up-to-date record of important ecological sites the Council will produce and regularly review Supplementary Planning Guidance to schedule and map the Wildlife Sites and Protected Species sites'.
- 1.4** This SPG, therefore, fulfils the above commitment in respect of Wildlife Sites within the Borough of Hertsmere.
- 1.5** Sections 1 and 3 of this SPG provide background information relating to Government guidance and the Development Plan, Sections 4 and 5 and the appendices provide the substance of the Supplementary Planning Guidance.

National Planning Policy Guidance

- 2.1** Planning Policy Guidance Note 9 (PPG9) sets out the Government's planning policy in respect of nature conservation. PPG9 advises that nature conservation may be a material consideration, which may properly be taken into account in formulating development plan policies and in determining planning applications.
- 2.2** The basis of national nature conservation policy is the protection and promotion of habitats for wildlife through a hierarchy of recognised designated sites. The designations and legislation span all levels from international, European and national through to the local level. Hertsmere has two designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI's). Redwell Wood SSSI (part of), near Ridge is an ancient woodland and Castle Lime Works Quarry SSSI, near South Mimms Castle is a geological site with chalk and soil features. There

are Local Nature Reserves (LNR's) at Furze Field Wood in Potters Bar, Fisher's Field in Bushey and Hilfield Park Reservoir, the latter of which appears to be of national importance for its birdlife.

- 2.3** This SPG focuses on the non-statutory designations which can be of significant value for nature conservation but may not have the legal protection afforded by the statutory designations such as SSSI's and National Nature Reserves (NNRs). There are a large number of sites of more local importance, which do not have legal protection although they contribute significantly to the biodiversity of the wider countryside, especially in urban areas. Green links or wildlife corridors between sites can greatly enhance the quality of individual sites as natural habitats. Sites and green links without the benefit of statutory or non-statutory designations should not be overlooked for their value as natural habitats.
- 2.4** PPG9 advises that Local Plan designations should only be applied to sites of 'substantive importance' for nature conservation. The Wildlife Site designation has been designed specifically with this requirement in mind. The Habitat Survey Report for Hertsmere clarifies that a Wildlife Site is a discrete area of land, which is considered to be of significance for its wildlife features in at least a District context.
- 2.5** The national definition is as follows:
- 'Wildlife Sites, identified by locally developed criteria, are the most important for wildlife outside legally protected land such as SSSI's'. The term 'Wildlife Site' is now the most commonly used for such sites across the country.
- 2.6** It should be noted that the Wildlife Site designation is not statutory and that these sites are of District/County importance.

The Development Plan

- 3.1** The statutory development plan for Hertsmere currently comprises the Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991 – 2011 and the Hertsmere Local Plan 2003.
- 3.2 Hertfordshire Structure Plan Review 1991-2011**
Policy 38 identifies Hertfordshire's Critical Capital and other important environmental assets, which will be given protection from development proposals, which would cause loss, permanent damage or significant and irreversible changes for the worse.
- 3.3** The use of the term environmental asset encompasses not only those things, which need to be strongly protected in their entirety ('critical capital'), but also those elements of the environment, which need to be protected or enhanced to avoid their degradation.
- 3.4** The County's environmental assets are afforded protection in accordance with their level of importance at an international, national or local level.
- 3.5 Hertsmere Local Plan 2003**
The Council's commitment to the protection of Wildlife Sites has been expressed in the Hertsmere Local Plan. The policies in the Nature Conservation section recognise the need to protect and enhance designated sites, and those of interest without any official designation. The policies aim is to resist development, which would adversely affect sites of ecological or geological importance. The policies aim to prevent as far as possible damaging developments. Where damage is unavoidable, the approach taken is to seek minimisation of any harm and re-creation or replacement as appropriate through the use of planning conditions attached to any planning permission granted or planning obligations. Policy E2 recognises the importance of the nature conservation interest of Wildlife Sites. Policy E3 applies to badgers and other species protected by Schedule 1, 5 or 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981,

as amended. In addition Policy E4 identifies features of major importance for Nature Conservation such as hedgerows, river corridors and green lanes. Sites and green links without the benefit of statutory or non-statutory designations should not be overlooked for their value as natural habitats. The real value of such areas is often their continuity, and they frequently need safeguarding to retain the benefit they provide for wildlife and for local people. Policy E5 recognises the wider community and educational benefits of nature conservation and the policy seeks to realise opportunities for habitat creation, retention and sensitive management.

The Wildlife Sites Project in Hertfordshire

- 4.1** The Wildlife Sites Project is a partnership of organisations (see contacts below) with the aim of protecting, maintaining and enhancing the existing wildlife resource in Hertfordshire. The Wildlife Sites project has enabled the provision of a framework for selecting and assessing Wildlife Sites, informing and advising landowners, protecting sites and monitoring sites and the effectiveness of the system.
- 4.2** A county-wide habitat survey was completed in 1998 by the local project partners Herts and Middlesex Wildlife Trust (HMWT) in conjunction with the Hertfordshire Biological Records Centre (HBRC) and The Countryside Management Service (CMS). The first stage of the project established baseline ecological information, which was crucial to the whole initiative. Stage two of the project has been concerned with identification and contact with all the owners, lessees, operators or others with an interest in the land. This stage aimed to relate information about the conservation value of the sites to these parties with a view to encouraging them to help protect or ideally foster that interest through sensitive use and management of the sites. Since the conservation value of a site will often stand or fall as a result of its use or management, this stage is absolutely vital to the whole project. Many of the most valuable habitats and sites in the county draw much of their interest through the sensitive management work regularly carried out on them. The Wildlife Sites in the Borough stand to gain through these positive efforts to ensure their sensitive use and management and under these conditions it is hoped that their value may be increased/ improved over time. To enable this, both the Wildlife Trust and Countryside Management Service provide advice on management and available grants to the owners and managers of wildlife sites.
- 4.3** The Wildlife Sites identified within Hertsmere have been identified as sites of substantive importance for nature conservation. This follows the advice in PPG9 that designations should only be applied to sites of substantive importance to nature conservation. Any site would have to satisfy carefully devised criteria in order to be afforded designation as a Wildlife Site. The criteria used are by necessity rather technical and it would venture beyond the scope of this SPG to deal with them here. However, information on the criteria can be obtained through the local project partners (HMWT), (HBRC) and (CMS) using the contact details set out at the end of this paper. The project is supported by English Nature.

The Sites in Hertsmere

- 5.1** Hertsmere has a varied landscape with a strong contrast between the urban areas to the south and northeast and the open landscape of arable land and grassland typifying the rural areas of the borough. The District's wildlife resources are many and varied reflecting the range of soil type, hydrology and past land use.
- 5.2** The following schedule identifies the 117 Wildlife Sites currently known to Hertsmere, and to which Policies E2, E3, E4 and E5 will be applied. The schedule provides a unique reference number, a tile reference, site details and a brief description of their wildlife value. It should be noted that not all Wildlife Sites may have been identified in this initial survey, and that new sites will continue to be identified as is considered appropriate. The Borough Council will seek to ensure that this document is kept up to date, if and when new sites are identified.

5.3 Any further information can be sourced by reference to the Hertfordshire Habitat Survey Project Report or by contacting the local project partners listed below. Maps are also provided to assist in identifying the location of all the sites, for more detailed maps of a particular site please contact any of the local project partners or Hertsmere Borough Council.

Further Information/Contacts

For further information and advice please contact the Planning, Transport and Building Control Unit, Hertsmere Borough Council, Telephone No. 020 8207 2277. Or e-mail planning@hertsmere.gov.uk.

Wildlife Sites project partners:

HMWT, Grebe House, St Michael's Street, ST ALBANS, Herts, AL3 4SN;
Tel. 01727 858901; Fax 01727 854542; Email info@hmwt.org
HMWT Wildlife Sites Officer: Heather Sohl.

HBRC, c/o Environment Department,

Hertfordshire County Council, County Hall, Pegs Lane, HERTFORD, Herts, SG13 8DN; Tel. 01992 555220,
Fax 01992 556152, Email biorec.info@hertscc.gov.uk

Countryside Management Service (CMS), Barnet Countryside Centre, Byng Road, Barnet, Herts, EN5 4NP;
Tel. 020 84475466, Fax 020 84475465, Email cms.south@hertscc.gov.uk

English Nature,

Essex Hertfordshire and London Team, Harbour House, Hythe Quay, Colchester, Essex, CO2 8JF;
Tel. 01206 796666; Fax. 01206 794466; Email essex.herts@english-nature.org.uk

References:

HMWT/HBRC. Habitat Survey For Hertsmere Borough.

A Nature Conservation Reference Guide, 1998.

A 50 Year Vision for the Wildlife and Natural Habitats of Hertfordshire - a Local Biodiversity Action Plan (published 1998)

Note On the 25th February 2003 the Council's Regulatory Committee resolved to adopt this guidance with immediate effect. The Council's Statement of Consultation and the Schedule of Responses to Public Consultation can be obtained separately from the Council.

The supplementary planning guidance was updated in November 2003 to delete reference to the emerging Local Plan which was adopted in May 2003.

Schedule of Wildlife Sites Within Hertsmere

February 2003

LEGEND

WS	-	Wildlife Site
PS	-	Protected Species Site
AW	-	Ancient Woodland
AWI	-	Ancient Woodland Inventory
HI	-	Heathland Inventory
SSSI	-	Site of Special Scientific Interest
CL	-	Common Land
GI	-	Grassland Inventory
RIGS	-	Regionally Important Geological Site
LNR	-	Local Nature Reserve
ISR	-	Invertebrate Site Register
WTNR	-	Wildlife Trust Nature Reserve

Wildlife Sites within the Potters Bar area

* Indicates sites which straddle the Borough boundary

REF. NO	NAME	HA	TILE REF.	STATUS					SSSI	CL	GI	RIGS	LNR	ISR	WTNR
				WS	PS	AW	AWI	HI							
68/022	Tythenhanger Gravel Pits	62.16	TL190050	v	v										
77/005	Coppice Wood*	7.99	TL184048	v			v								
77/043	The New Plantation	4.91	TL199047	v											
77/053	River Colne by Bowmansgreen Farm	0.88	TL186040	v											
78/003	Five Bells Farm Pond	0.08	TL232007	v											
78/009	Cobs Ash	18.69	TL213032	v			v								
78/011	Redwell, Hawkshead and Mymmshall Woods*	103.42	TL213025	v			v	v	v(Part of)						
78/012	Half Penny Bottom Field	1.56	TL240023	v											
78/013	Castle Quarry	4.33	TL230025	v					v(Geological)						
78/017	Round Wood	2.44	TL211031	v		v									
78/019	Wash Lane	3.62	TL231003	v	v					v	v				
78/022	Furzefield Wood	5.74	TL241022	v		v									
78/023	Meadow by St. Albans Road	1.25	TL226009	v											
78/043	Potwells*	20.51	TL216030	v											
78/046	Motte and Bailey next to Castle Quarry	1.18	TL230026	v											
78/047	Mimmshall Brook Pasture	2.46	TL230019	v											
78/049	Grassland W. of Greyhound Lane	1.66	TL223007	v											
78/057	Pilvage Wood	1.87	TL236027	v		v									
78/061	Meadows by Windmore Hall	8.18	TL232017	v											
78/069	Spring Wood near Hawkshead Bridge*	1.98	TL242028	v											
78/088	Dugdale Hill Road Meadows	3.3	TL239008	v											
78/092	Mill Cottage Pasture	1.48	TL212003	v											
78/095	Footpath N. of Cranborne Road	0.05	TL243025	v											
78/096	Mimmshall Brook by Mimms Hall	0.46	TL231021	v											
78/099	Oulton Crescent/Kimptons Mead Allotments	N/A	TL237012	v	v										
78/104	Coursers Farm Area	N/A	TL205047	v	v										
79/062	Mandeville Road Allotments	3.74	TL263009	v	v										
86/001	Bentley Heath Pond	0.15	TQ249995	v	v										
86/002	Dyrham Park	71.2	TQ226985	v	v										
86/009	Copse S. of Crossoaks Farm	0.45	TQ209995	v		v									
86/016	Elm Farm Pasture	N/A	TQ249999	v	v										
86/019	Pond by Bentley Heath Church	N/A	TQ249995	v	v										
86/020	Wash Lane Common	1.89	TQ234995	v						v					

