



## **ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT**

**SALCOMBE AVENUE  
JARROW  
TYNE AND WEAR  
NE32 3SN**

**GRID REFERENCE:  
NZ336643**

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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Naturally Wild were instructed to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) at Salcombe Avenue, Jarrow. The survey area is comprised of an area of semi-improved grassland with nearby deciduous woodland. The proposed development comprises a residential development of 20 dwellings.

The EclA comprised two parts: a desktop study and a site visit. The desktop study collated available public information regarding the biodiversity of the area, including the habitat structure of the site and surrounding area and the presence of any statutory or non-statutory designated sites. In addition, biological records within 1 km of the development site were requested from Environmental Records Information Centre (ERIC) Northeast.

The site visit consisted of an assessment of all habitats on site and in the surrounding area to determine their ecological importance to protected species and was conducted on 27/03/2017 by ecologist Phil Askew BSc.

The surveyed area was found to be of low ecological value. The site is made up of semi-improved grassland, part of which is mown. There are surrounding areas of woodland that hold value for wildlife but are considered to have negligible value for protected species including bats, reptiles and amphibians.

A low-level lighting scheme should be implemented to reduce the impact upon the nearby areas of woodland that are suitable for foraging bats.

Providing the recommendations of this report are implemented in full, Naturally Wild would conclude that there will not be a significant impact to protected species or habitats as a result of development.

## ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT: SALCOMBE AVENUE, JARROW

### 1 INTRODUCTION

Naturally Wild were instructed to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) at Salcombe Avenue, Jarrow. The survey area is comprised of 0.4ha of semi-improved grassland.

The surveyed area is located in the town of Jarrow, and is accessed directly from Salcombe Avenue. The development area is located at National Grid Reference Point NZ 336 643, with the site boundary shown in Figure 1.

The proposals are the construction of 20 dwellings/ plots on the area of grassland. As part of the planning process an ecological survey is required to determine if any European, UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) or other important protected species/habitats are likely to be affected by the proposed works, and to show how any negative ecological impacts would be mitigated and compensated.

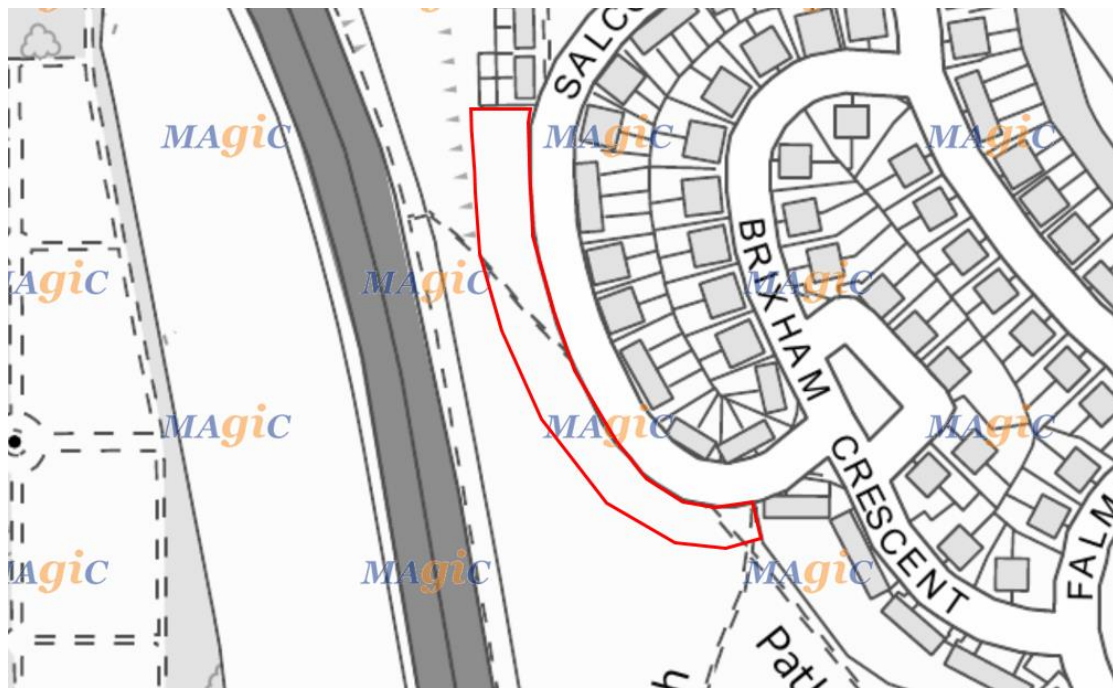


Figure 1. Red line shows the application site proposed for development. Exact boundaries can be found in the development plan in Appendix 9.2.

(© Crown Copyright and MAGIC database rights 2017. Ordnance Survey 100022861).

## 2 RELEVANT LEGISLATION

British wildlife is protected by a range of legislation, the most important being the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994 and the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000. The Wildlife and Countryside Act as amended mainly by the Countryside Rights of Way Act protects species listed in Schedules 5 and 8 of the Act (animals and plants respectively) from being killed, injured, and used for trade. For some species, such as Great Crested Newts and all bat species, the provisions of this act go further to protect animals from being disturbed or taken from the wild and protects aspects of their habitats. The act also stipulates that offences occur regardless of whether they were committed intentionally or recklessly. The parts of this legislation that apply to most reptile species are in regard to killing, injury and trade only and do not protect their habitat, nor are they protected from disturbance or from being taken from their habitat.

The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations is the English enactment of European legislation and provides similar but subtly different protection for species listed on Schedules 2 and 4 of those regulations. A recent change in this legislation means that the provisions of this act now complement those of the Wildlife and Countryside Act more. Species to which these provisions apply are the European Protected Species. Activities that might cause offences to be committed can be legitimised by obtaining a licence from the relevant statutory body.

Further details on the legislation protecting species of British wildlife relevant to this assessment can be found in section 9.1 of this report.

### 3 ECOLOGICAL SURVEY

#### 3.1 Objective of Survey

The objective of the survey was to ascertain if any protected species may be using the site, document the habitats present and determine any potential ecological risks posed by the development during and post construction. The overall assessment would include a desktop study using a range of available resources. The site survey would be completed under suitable weather conditions and by an experienced ecologist. Further to this, the results of the desktop study and site survey would be assessed to determine the ecological risks posed by the work, and how such impacts should be mitigated and compensated for.

The survey work and the preparation of this report has been conducted by ecologist Phil Askew, who is experienced in protected species survey work and risk assessments. The report will detail the results of the field and desk surveys and note any potential risks associated with the development. The requirement for any further survey work will be detailed within the report, as will any recommendations for ecological mitigation and compensation input as part of the development.

#### 3.2 Survey Area

The application site is located at Grid Reference NZ 336 643 and can be accessed via Salcombe Avenue. The assessment focused on the application site, as well as all habitats in the immediate surrounding area (where access was available). The full National Grid Reference Point for the centre of the site is 433686, 564373.



*Figure 2. Location of the surveyed area. Application site boundary is shown by the red line.  
(Image taken from Google Earth Pro: ©2017 Data SIO, NOAA, U.S Navy, NGA, GEBCO, Landsat / Copernicus).*

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### 3.3 Survey Constraints

There were no constraints with regards to site access or completion of the survey objectives across the development site.

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## 4 METHODOLOGY

### 4.1 Ecological Impact Assessment

The EclA comprised of a desktop study and a site visit. The desktop study collated available public information regarding the biodiversity of the area, including the habitat structure of the site and surrounding area and the presence of any statutory or non-statutory designated sites, using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) resource. In addition, biological records within 1 km of the development site were requested from Ecological Records Information Centre (ERIC) Northeast, which included records of protected and notable species and any nearby non-statutory designated sites not available through MAGIC.

The field survey consisted initially of an assessment of the habitats on site, carried out on 27<sup>th</sup> March 2017. The dominant vegetation structure was identified, allowing the habitats on site to be classified. Following this, the site was searched using visual encounter survey techniques, checking under any refugia present for sheltering animals. Any thick vegetation bordering the site was assessed in detail for commuting tracks used by species such as badger and fox. All bird species of interest were recorded. A detailed examination was undertaken to ascertain if the site was suitable for ground-nesting birds. The vegetation on site was assessed for presence of invasive species. An initial assessment of any trees was completed. The assessment confirmed species, age, size, ecological importance and the requirement for any protection measures during the construction phase. These activities were not limited solely to the site and the surrounding area was also investigated.

All survey and assessment work was completed in line with official assessment guidelines produced by Natural England and the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and British Standard document BS 42020: 2013 '*Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development.*'

### 4.2 Protected Species Risk Assessment

The habitats on site were assessed for the following species:

- Great crested newts: Terrestrial and aquatic habitat assessment, on site and in surrounding area.
- Bats: identify potential roosting points, foraging habitat and commuting pathways.
- Badgers: identify any setts or evidence of foraging or presence on site or in the surrounding area.
- Reptiles: habitat assessment. Check potential refugia on site and in the surrounding area.
- Birds: evidence of roosting and nesting. Assessment of potential bird habitat on site.
- Any other species of note identified during the desktop assessment.



### 4.3 Preliminary Roosting Assessment (PRA) for bats

A preliminary ground level roost assessment of any trees on and around the site was carried out in order to identify the presence of any potential roost features (PRFs), such as split bark, woodpecker holes and other cavities, with each tree then categorised in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidelines (Collins, 2016), detailed in Table 1. Features that are suitable for roosting bats include: naturally occurring holes in the trunk; large woodpecker holes; cracks/splits in major branches; loose or peeling bark; hollows/cavities; bird and bat boxes.

Features that are symptomatic of bat use include: bat droppings in, around or below an entrance hole; staining around an entrance hole; small scratches around an entrance hole; audible squeaking at dusk or in warm weather; smoothening of surfaces around cavity or an entrance hole; distinctive smell of bats. The bat risk assessment was completed using binoculars. Ladders, an endoscope and a powerful torch were also available to check any small gaps/cracks for evidence of bats.

**Table 1. Guidelines for assessing bat roosting potential of structure and trees.**

Suitability	Habitat description	Further action required?
<b>Negligible</b>	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.	No further bat risk assessment effort or bat activity surveys are required.
<b>Low</b>	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 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>Structures:</b> One bat activity survey is required to determine whether the structure is being utilised by roosting bats; this may be a dusk or dawn survey. This survey must occur between May and August. The discovery of a roosting bat during this single bat activity survey will require further survey effort.
	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.	<b>Trees:</b> No further bat risk assessment effort or bat activity surveys are required.
<b>Moderate</b>	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection conditions and surrounding habitat, but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.	Two bat activity surveys are required to determine whether the structure or tree is being utilised by roosting bats; this should be comprised of one dusk and one dawn survey. One survey must occur between May and August.
<b>High</b>	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 and surrounding habitat.	Three bat activity surveys are required to determine whether the structure or tree is being utilised by roosting bats; this should be comprised of one dusk and one dawn survey, with an additional survey (either dusk or dawn). Two surveys must occur between May and August.

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## 5 RESULTS

### 5.1 Desktop Study

#### 5.1.1 Environmental Records Information Centre (ERIC) Northeast Data

Biological records were obtained from ERIC Northeast for a 1 km radius surrounding the application site. A total of 163 records were returned, that can be separated into the following groups: 3 amphibian records (smooth newt *Lissotriton vulgaris* and common frog *Rana temporaria*); 10 bird records, 38 bony fish records, 5 invertebrate records (butterfly and moth), 6 reptile records, 4 floral records (invasive species) and 97 terrestrial mammal records. The importance of individual species records in the context of this development are discussed in Section 5.3 – Protected Species, where and if appropriate. A full list of received records is available on request with the permission of the records centre, excluding records of sensitive species.

#### 5.1.2 Statutory and Non-Statutory Protected Sites

The application site is not located on or directly adjacent to any statutory protected sites, with the nearest being Primrose Local Nature Reserve (LNR) located 560m to the southwest (this area is also designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS), as discussed later). Primrose LNR includes existing established pathways (largely tarmacked) open to visitors and therefore the potential increased footfall from the application site, which is considered to be relatively small, could be accommodated by this area and therefore no significant impacts are considered. There were no other LNR within 1.5km of the application site and no National Nature Reserves (NNR) within at least 10km. There are two Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within a 10km radius of the site: West Farm Meadow Boldon SSSI, located 2.8km southeast and Durham Coast SSSI, located 5km northeast, which shares a similar boundary to the Durham Coast Special Area of Conservation (SAC) – same distance at its closest point. The Northumbria Coast also holds Ramsar and Special Protection Area (SPA) designations covering the same boundary, at the nearest distance of 5.1km from the application site.

Due to the distance between the application site (5km) and SPA/ SAC/ Ramsar, there will be no direct impacts to habitats within the boundaries of the designations. In addition, the application site does not contain habitats of value to those designation species of the SPA (including little tern *Sterna albifrons*, Purple Sandpiper *Calidris maritima* and turnstone *Arenaria interpres*) and therefore no likely direct impacts are considered in relation to designated species.

Due to the distance, most indirect impacts can be screened out; however, the only potential route of impact identified would be increased recreational bird disturbance. Of greatest concern are those walking dogs. The application site is located within close proximity to areas of open space that are likely to accommodate the majority of daily dog walking activity; including Primrose LNR and designated walking routes along the River Don. Travel to the coast would need to be undertaken by motorvehicle and would be an 8 mile/ 30 minute round trip and therefore is unlikely to be suitable as a daily recreational location for most people. Therefore, increase in recreational visits to the beaches of the SPA is likely to be low. It is estimated that the potential impact to the SPA habitats and species is likely to be low, however, Natural England should be consulted to determine any requirements with regards to a Habitat Regulations Assessment.

There are several South Tyneside LWS within a 1km radius area surrounding the application site (Figure 3), the closest being Cemetery Road, 270m to the northeast. This LWS links to others extending both south (Primrose LWS/ LNR) and north (Straker Street LWS and River Don Salt Marsh LWS) forming a designated corridor of sites along the River Don. Established pathways, either installed or well-used, exist alongside and within these sites, suggesting that these areas are already used by recreational visitors/commuters and encouraged to do so. Given the distance between the LWS areas and the application site, no direct impacts are envisaged. As established paths are already provided it is likely that the small increase in footfall associated with recreational activities, which is expected, can be accommodated by existing infrastructure. Appropriate management, including provision of waste and dog foul bins, of these areas will reduce impacts long-term.

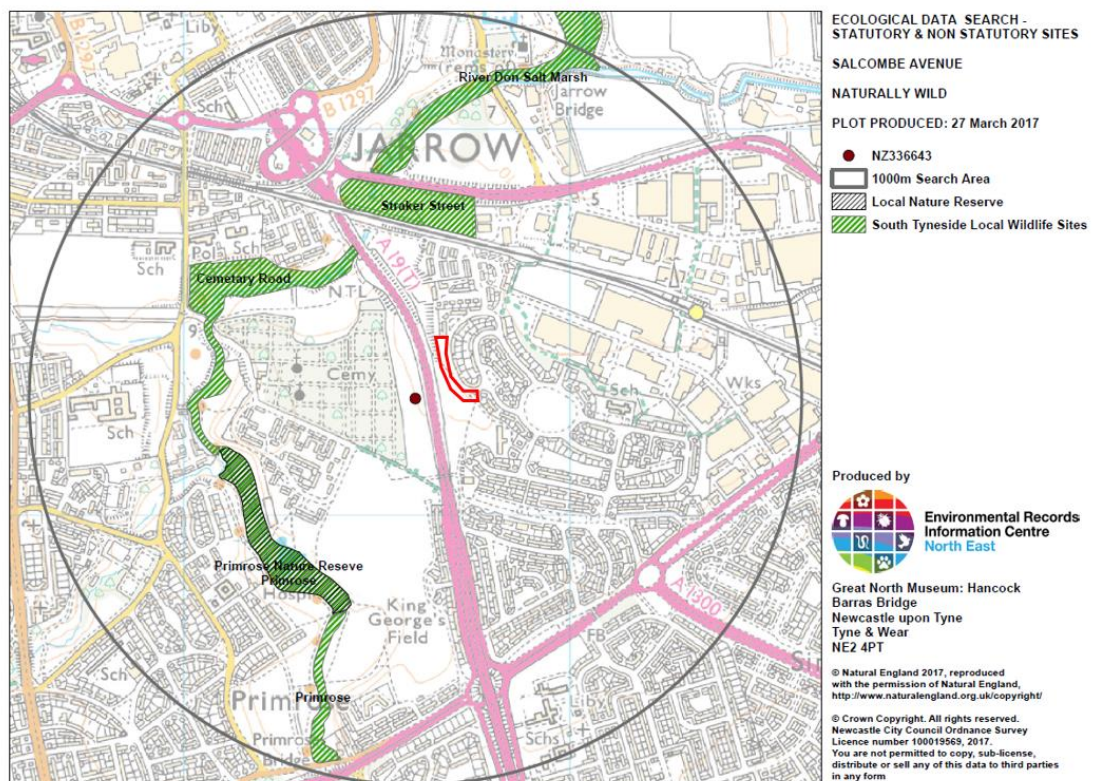


Figure 3. Location of surrounding non-statutory designations in proximity to the application site (red line).

Map provided by the Environmental Records Information Centre North East, © Crown Copyright, All rights reserved. As referenced within the figure.

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## 5.2 Site Assessment

Naturally Wild staff whom have been fully trained in ecological surveying, assessment and mitigation techniques, completed a day-time site assessment on 27/03/2017, following the desktop survey which used satellite images and data resources. The assessment determined the overall characteristics of the site and its potential value of all habitats for protected species.

### 5.2.1 On-Site Ecological Features

The site is a 0.4ha area of semi-improved grassland, part of which had been recently mown and part that appears to have been left to grow to encourage biodiversity, although at the time of the survey the grassland was short and did not appear to be species-rich. There is also a strip of the grass that appears to have been treated with a pesticide that has killed the grass. The site has value for foraging animals but there is negligible value for any protected species to be present on site, due to an absence of suitable sheltering opportunities. Due to the heavily managed nature of the site, only a small number of plant species present had identifying features. This includes ground-ivy *Glechoma hederacea* and white clover *Trifolium repens*, along with some grass species. There is a small area on the northern fringe of the site where the grass is longer and has value for small mammals. This area is connected to good habitat that is outside the site boundary (discussed in section 5.2.2, below).

### 5.2.2 Off-Site Ecological Features

Immediately bordering the north-eastern edge of the site is a small area of longer grass and ruderal species including bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. and cleavers *Galium aparine*. This area, in turn, is on the outskirts of an area of mixed species deciduous woodland. The trees present in this woodland are mostly semi-mature and have no PRFs for bats. A short distance to the west is a line of mostly semi-mature trees that border the nearby A19 dual carriageway. These too have no PRFs and have negligible value for roosting bats. There is a single mature willow *Salix sp.* that has been pollarded. It has no PRFs present and has negligible value for roosting bats. Bordering part of this strip is an area of grassland that has been left unmanaged for longer than other areas and has a more mature sward. The species present in this area did not appear to be different to those present in the more managed areas, however.

In the wider area around the site, to the east is a large housing estate within Jarrow which has limited value for protected species and will not be significantly impacted upon by the development. There is good habitat to the west of site, including several statutory and non-statutory sites along the River Don and Jarrow Cemetery, which has a large number of mature deciduous trees that are likely to have multiple PRFs, but connectivity between these areas and the site is limited by the busy A19 dual carriageway that is within 30m to the west of the site, as well as a large wall around the cemetery.

## 5.3 Protected Species

**Great crested newts:** There are no ponds on or within 500m of the site and the habitat on site is not suitable for GCN. There are no records of GCN in the surrounding 1km. Therefore, the proposed development is considered likely to have a negligible impact on GCN.

**Badgers:** There is habitat suitable on site for foraging badgers but the site is not suitable for creation of a

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badger sett. The adjacent woodland is suitable for a badger sett; however, no evidence of badger activity was observed on site. There is a nearby heavily used footpath and busy dual carriageway that will limit the suitability for badgers on site due to the associated disturbance. There are no records of badger in the area. For these reasons, it is considered likely that the proposed development will have a negligible impact on badgers.

**Birds:** The nearby woodland is suitable for nesting birds but there was no suitable nesting habitat present on the site itself. The site is likely to be used by birds for foraging and the proposed development will remove the area for this purpose. However, there is a large amount of alternative habitat around the site that will still be suitable for foraging; therefore, the loss of the on-site foraging habitat is not considered to be significant.

**Bats:** The surveyed site was not suitable for roosting bats as there are no trees or buildings. The adjacent woodland may be used as a commuting corridor and as a foraging site but no trees were observed close to site that were suitable for roosting bats, i.e. with gaps or holes that could be used for roosting. It is considered risk to bats as a result of the development will be negligible.

**Reptiles:** The site is not suitable for reptiles as the grassland is quite short and appears to be regularly managed, resulting in high disturbance and a lack of suitable cover and foraging habitat. The connectivity to other sites is also poor as it is surrounded on all sides by roads, including a very heavily used dual carriageway. The only records of reptiles in the area are of the invasive red-eared terrapin *Trachemys scripta subsp. Elegans*.

**Other species:** There are records for water vole *Arvicola amphibius* and otter *Lutra lutra* in the 1km but the habitats on site are not suitable for either species. There are several records for west European hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* in the area. The habitat on site is suitable for use by hedgehog for foraging.

## 5.5 Invasive Species

No invasive species – including non-native invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) – were recorded within the site extent at the time of the site survey, or within habitats adjacent to the site.

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## 6 RECOMMENDATIONS

The site was considered to be of overall low ecological value as it lacked any significant habitat suitable for protected species and did not appear to have any significant floristic value. Following the site assessment and in review of the findings, Naturally Wild would recommend the following:

- A low-level lighting scheme should be implemented during and after construction to avoid indirect disturbance to foraging and commuting bats, birds and small mammals that may be using the woodland to the north-west of the site.
- Lighting around the boundary of the completed development site should be limited to low wattage and/or sensor lighting to minimise the impacts of light spill on the woodland to the northwest as quality foraging sites for bats (low level lighting scheme). The lighting scheme should take into account the following factors:
  - Position of lighting and proximity to buffer zone and surrounding woodland;
  - Angle of lighting: avoidance of direct lighting and light spill onto buffer zone and areas of habitat that are of importance as commuting pathways (linear features such as the woodland). Use of shields on lamps to reduce light spill on to key areas (including surrounding woodland);
  - Type of lighting: studies have shown that light sources emitting higher amounts of UV light have a greater impact to wildlife. Use of narrow-spectrum bulbs that avoid white and blue wavelengths are likely to reduce the number of species impacted by the lighting. A maximum of 1 lux on any vegetation to reduce impacts (equivalent to strong moonlight); and
  - Reduce the height of lighting columns to avoid unnecessary light spill.
- Any landscaping planting should use native plant species or species of known wildlife value that will enhance the ecological value of the site for local populations of invertebrates, birds, bats and small mammals.
- To increase habitat connectivity within the completed development, mammal movement (specifically hedgehog) should be considered during development design. Small gaps in boundary fences should be afforded for the movement of urban wildlife through the built environment.

Providing that the recommendations listed above are adhered to, Naturally Wild would conclude that the proposed development will not impact upon any protected species or habitats.

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7 SITE IMAGES



*Image 1. Northern part of the site with strip of dead grass.*



*Image 2. Southern area of site. This area has been mown.*



*Image 3. Strip of mixed species woodland to west of site.*



*Image 4. Slope away from site to west with strip of woodland and dual carriageway. Mature trees in distance in cemetery.*





*Image 5. Woodland adjacent to northeast of site.*



*Image 6. Ruderal species on northern edge of site.*

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Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

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## 9 APPENDICES

### 9.1 Additional Information for the Legislation of Other Protected Species

#### Badger

The badger, *Meles meles*, is geographically widespread across the UK (NE, 2007); however, they are still vulnerable to baiting, hunting and detrimental impacts of development to their habitat.

Both the badger and its habitat are protected under The Protection of Badgers Act (1992), Schedule Six of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) an Appendix Three of the Bern Convention. Therefore, badgers have legal protection against deliberate harm or injury and it is an offence to:

- Interfere with a badger sett by damaging or destroying it
- Kill, injure, take or possess a badger
- Cruelly ill-treat a badger
- Obstruct access to a badger sett
- Disturb a badger whilst it is in a badger sett

#### Bats

All British bat species are listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are therefore afforded protection under Section 9 of this Act. In addition, all bat species are listed in Schedule 2 of The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (SI 1994 No. 2716) (as amended) (known as the Habitats Regulations) and are therefore protected under Regulation 39 of the Regulations. These Regulations make provision for the purpose of implementing European Union Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora 1992, under which bats are included on Annex IV. The Act and Regulations makes it an offence, *inter alia*, to:

- Intentionally kill, injure, take (handle) or capture a bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (this is taken to mean all bat roosts whether bats are present or not) - under the Habitats Regulations it is an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any bat; or
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection - under the Habitats Regulations it is an offence to deliberately disturb a bat (this applies anywhere, not just at its roost) in such a way as to be likely to affect its ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear or nurture their young or hibernate.

Further details of the above legislation, and of the roles and responsibilities of developers and planners in relation to bats, can be found in Natural England's Bat Mitigation Guidelines, which can be downloaded from the NE website:

<http://naturalengland.communisis.com/naturalenglandshop/docs/IN13.6.pdf>

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### Nesting Birds

Birds receive protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act also. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild bird; take, damage or destroy a nest of a wild bird whilst it is in use or being built; or to take, damage or destroy an egg of a wild bird. The bird-nesting season is defined as being from 1<sup>st</sup> March until 31<sup>st</sup> August with exceptions and alterations for some species.

### Great Crested Newt

Great crested newts are a European Protected Species, listed on Annex II and IV of the EEC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora, receiving protection under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. This species is also afforded full protection under the Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA 1981) and Schedule 2 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994 (Regulation 38). Under such legislation it is an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture a great crested newt;
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a great crested newt;
- Intentionally or recklessly\* damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a great crested newt; and
- Intentionally or recklessly\* disturb a great crested newt while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place.
- Sell, barter, exchange or transport or offer for sale great crested newts or parts of them.

*\*Reckless offences were added by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which applies only to England and Wales.*

To undertake surveys for great crested newt it is necessary to hold an appropriate licence issued by Natural England.

### Reptiles

All native British species of reptile (of which there are 6) are listed in Schedule Five of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and as such are protected from deliberate killing, injury or trade. Therefore, where development is permitted and there will be a significant change in land use, a reasonable effort must be undertaken to remove reptiles off site to avoid committing an offence. The same act makes the trading of native reptile species a criminal offence without an appropriate licence.

## 9.2 Development Plan

CEAD, Proposed Site Plan, South Tyneside Homes Salcombe Avenue, Drawing No. SA SP02, Revision B Dec 2016

