

West Berkshire Sites Assessments

Name of LERC	Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC)
Contact for enquiries	www.tverc.org
Case Study	Assessing Local Plan strategic housing sites for biodiversity value
Summary	TVERC carried out a desktop biodiversity assessment for each of the Local Plan strategic housing sites to determine which would need to have ecological surveys and the suitability of each site as a development location.
Issue/project to be addressed	<p>Local Planning Authorities are required to identify strategic housing sites in their Local Plans. They need to know whether the sites are suitable for development, and how significant the impact on biodiversity is likely to be.</p> <p>TVERC produced a report for each site which summarised:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The presence of priority habitats on or adjacent to each site; • The presence of ancient woodland on or adjacent to each site; • The presence of European protected species on or near to each site; • The presence of priority species on or near to each site; • The presence of any statutorily protected sites (e.g. SSSI, SPA, SAC) for wildlife on or immediately adjacent to each site; • Whether the site is within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone and what the risks are; • And the presence of any non-statutorily protected Local Wildlife Sites or Local Geological sites on or immediately adjacent to each site. <p>Each site was evaluated against several criteria relating to the potential development impacts and potential opportunities in relation to biodiversity conservation.</p>
Action taken	GIS was used to extract data, produce maps ..\Active contract work\P18-07 Site assessments for West

	<p>Berkshire\Outputs\Site maps Non-Statutory Sites\nSS_ALD1.pdf ..\Active contract work\P18-07 Site assessments for West Berkshire\Outputs\Site maps Priority Habitats\PH_ALD1.pdf</p> <p>and provide summaries of these data for each site (please see Biodiversity Assessment ALD1.pdf)</p> <p>TVERC used a 500-meter buffer of each site to select appropriate habitats and sites.</p> <p>TVERC has conducted a preliminary assessment for each site to determine the potential impacts of development. This used a scoring system for each site. A score was also assigned to each site summarizing its potential to contribute to improved habitat connectivity, or habitat or species conservation. TVERC also provided a Red Amber Green (RAG) alert system for each site. (table 1, 2 and 3)</p> <p>This assessment helped to determine and prioritise the ecological surveys to be carried out.</p>
Results/The change that has been made	<p>TVERC found that of the 248 HELAA sites, 209 (84.3%) sites were classified as Amber with the remaining 39 (15.7%) classified as Red due to the presence of ancient woodland or statutory sites within the proposed development area.</p> <p>Impact score ranged between -3 and -9 with an average score of -5.7. The conservation opportunities score ranged between 0 and 3 with an average of 2.1.</p>
Sharing best Practice	
Any other information	

TABLE 1: SCORING CRITERIA FOR DEVELOPMENT IMPACT

Criteria	Score	Alert (Red or Amber)
Statutory wildlife site (e.g. SSSI, SAC, SPA) on development site	-2	Red
Ancient Woodland on site	-2	Red
Statutory site adjacent to site	-1	Amber
Ancient woodland adjacent to site	-1	Amber
Site in SSSI Impact Risk Zone	-1	Amber
LWS or LGS on or adjacent to site	-1	Amber
Priority habitat on or adjacent to site	-1	Amber
European protected species on or near site	-1	Amber
Priority species on or near site	-1	Amber

TABLE 2: SCORING CRITERIA FOR CONSERVATION OPPORTUNITIES SCORE

Criteria	Score
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Within a Biodiversity Opportunity Area	+1
Within a Habitat Network	+1
LWS on or adjacent to site	+1

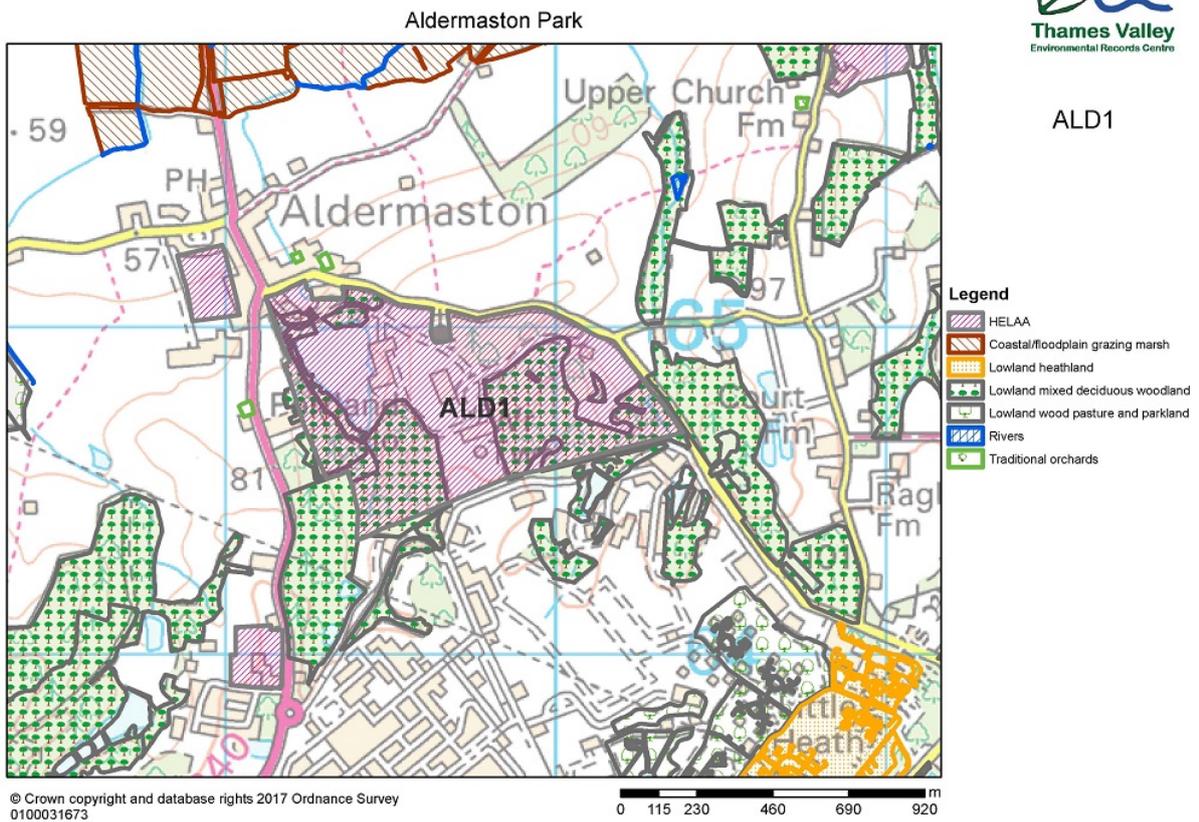
TABLE 3: RED, AMBER AND GREEN ALERT SYSTEM

Description	
Red	Site would have adverse impacts incapable of avoidance or mitigation measures. This would include sites where there is a statutorily designated site (e.g. SSSI), ancient woodland, habitat that is of national importance for the county, or populations of species that are of national importance (e.g. horseshoe bat maternity roost).
Amber	Site would have adverse impacts but may be capable of avoidance or mitigation measures. This would include any site adjacent to a statutorily designated site, within a SSSI impact risk zone, on or adjacent to a LWS or LGS, supporting priority habitat, or supporting European protected or priority species.
Green	Sites where none of the above criteria are met.

Map 1



ALD1



Map 2

