

4<sup>th</sup> June 2015

Received 10/06/15

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Enterprise Manager  
East Staffordshire Borough Council

**RE: Ecological Assessment of Land at Dove Way, Uttoxeter**

The above site was re-visited on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015 following the submission of a revised development boundary to the site which has reduced the area for development whilst retaining the north western and north eastern areas of the site as open land scheduled for future infrastructure development (A50 junction improvements and a waste recycling plant).

The site was re-assessed by Dave Haslam MSc MCIEEM the Principal Ecologist for Staffordshire Ecological Services with the aims of the assessment as follows:

- Walk over survey to assess any changes in habitat extent and quality from the original survey carried out by SES in April 2011 (*Phase 1 Habitat Survey & Protected Species Scoping Report, Dove Way, Uttoxeter, Staffordshire: P36.T46.11 April 2011*).
- Additional recommendations that may be required following the habitat assessment.

The site was visited on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015 in good weather conditions (16<sup>o</sup>C, 5/8 cloud cover, no wind, no rain).

**Habitats.**

The habitat plan from the 2011 report remains valid for the revised boundary area (Figure 2.4 P36.T46.11).

The dominant habitat of species poor semi-improved grassland has not been managed since the 2011 survey and has developed into tall rank grassland dominated by coarse grass species of false oat-grass, cock's-foot, Yorkshire fog, and creeping soft-grass with bulky ruderal plants of hogweed, nettle, cow parsley and bramble amongst others.

The areas of scrub are confined to the site boundaries and have not colonised the grassland areas to date.

The area of Japanese Knotweed as identified on the habitat plan in the southern point of the site adjacent to Dove Way remains. The knotweed appears to have been treated with herbicide as the patch has not expanded from the 2011 limits and no new growth from root tubers was evident during this current assessment (see attached photograph). The dead stems of previous years growth have been retained within the original area.

**Nesting Birds.**

The grassland area is too rank to support ground nesting birds, but the perimeter scrub and trees will support nesting birds.

**Recommendations.**

The area of Japanese Knotweed at the southern point of the site should be treated as a controlled waste area with any excavated soils to be disposed of according to the guidelines for controlled waste disposal.

Protected species  
including bats

Ecological Impact  
Assessment (EcIA)

Quarry restoration  
design

Barn conversion  
surveys

Habitat surveys

Management plans

Conservation advice

Species surveys

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If boundary scrub areas are to be removed during the bird breeding season (March-August), a check for active nests by a suitably qualified ecologist will be required prior to scrub/tree removal. During site clearance works and excavation works, a precautionary approach to protect badgers should be followed. This should take the form of:

- Any badger activity (fresh excavation of setts, dung pits etc.) close to working areas should be immediately reported to consultants or the local badger group and their advice implemented.
- Any trenches or other excavations left open for more than 12 hours should be provided with an escape ramp (simply a plank of wood with no step at the base, reaching up to ground level or slightly above) for any wildlife to be able to escape.

To maintain barn owl hunting areas, a strip of vegetation at a minimum width of 3m should be retained along the northern boundary (A50).

### **Summary.**

The site has not significantly altered in terms of ecology and nature conservation value since the original survey in 2011. The grassland areas have become ranker and unsuitable for ground nesting birds due to the site not being managed.

The area of Japanese Knotweed should be classed as a controlled waste area with excavated material disposed of according to the current regulations for handling controlled waste.

*D Haslam.*

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### **Site Photographs (all taken on 3<sup>rd</sup> June 2015)**

View of Site



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Rank Grassland



Japanese Knotweed Area



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