



LIDDEL WATER ECOLOGY SURVEY: KEY POINTS

Habitats

- A habitat survey undertaken recording all habitats on site using both Phase 1 and UKHab classification. These are the recognised professional methodologies.
- Much of the site consisted of modified grassland, neutral grassland and marshy grassland. Habitat condition assessment recorded the majority of the site in 'moderate' condition, with areas of poor condition and good condition also present.
- No habitats are regarded to offer high habitat value although the collection of habitats does offer some intrinsic value at the 'site' level. Extensive grassland areas of this type are a locally and nationally common and widespread habitat.
- The proposed planting design respects these more interesting habitats with areas of open ground and broadleaf planting complementing the findings of the habitat survey.

Mammal Species

- A protected species survey assessing the site for mammal activity was undertaken alongside the habitat survey. These were carried out in accordance with the recognised methodologies.
- To pick out some key species, badgers, red squirrel and hare were recorded on site. No signs of otter or water vole were recorded.
- Proposed woodland will present a slight to moderate positive impact to badgers and a small negative impact to hare as only two individuals recorded onsite. This is relevant at the 'site' level.
- Woodland creation will present a major positive long-term impact to local red squirrel populations, and would likely offer new opportunities for otter. These present a slight positive effect at the 'site' level.
- Negative impacts are primarily associated to hare and are only relevant at the 'site' level. These are offset by the positive effects for other species. The benefits of woodland creation onsite can therefore be seen positively.

Bird species

- Breeding bird surveys were undertaken. These were carried out in accordance with the recognised methodologies.
- The range of bird species identified were entirely typical of the upland fringe and semi-improved grassland habitats.
- A total 70 of bird species were identified, 42 of which were confirmed as breeding on or adjacent to the site. These are typical findings.
- The assemblage of birds associated with woodland, scrub and hedgerows will benefit through the new woodland creation, whereas birds dependent on grassland habitat will see



declines. Based upon number of birds and the species present, these effects are classed at the 'local' level.

- On-site breeding curlew and lapwing populations were low and as such the woodland will result in a slight adverse impact, this at the 'site' level only. Impacts on a local or regional level will not arise.
- There are opportunities for the creation of new habitats of high local wildlife value which will benefit species such as willow warbler, wren and song thrush. The value of habitat created, and overall site biodiversity will be enhanced through the woodland creation proposals and as such the benefits created outweigh the impact to wader species as the site already sits within a 'predator shadow'.
- It is important to recognise that all species and habitats encountered were valued at the 'site level' which sits at the lowest tier of the biodiversity hierarchy. Consequently, in terms of overall site selection, this is a well-chosen site.
- Overall, the design of the woodland reflects and has drawn upon the findings of the habitat, mammal and ornithological records, thus enabling the creation of a well-balanced woodland. This recognises, and tries to offer minimum adverse impacts, whilst also seeking to maximise relevant ecological opportunities.