

Project	Worcestershire County Council Major Scheme Bid	Date	30 June 2009
Note	Park and Ride Site & City Centre Bridge, Phase 1 Habitat Survey	Ref	CEWAKA101/05
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1 *Introduction*

1.1 This progress note is the Stage 2 deliverable for the Worcester Transport Strategy Major Scheme Bid (WTS MSB) Phase 1 Habitat Survey fieldwork for the Park and Ride sites (P&R) and City Centre Bridge.

2 *Access and Survey Period*

2.1 Extended Phase 1 Habitat Surveys were undertaken for the P&R sites and City Centre Bridge during May and June 2009 once access permissions to the majority of the land had been secured. The survey commenced at Worcester Parkway P&R site on 21st May, with Claines P&R site being the final one to be surveyed in the 24th June. City Centre Bridge was surveyed on 25th June.

2.2 The surveys were undertaken to a recognised methodology¹. Where access to land had not been agreed with the landowner or land ownership is uncertain, efforts have been made to ascertain ownership and gain access for surveys. Where access to land could not be agreed the survey has been undertaken from public rights of way.

3 *Findings*

3.1 Worcester Parkway – predominantly improved grassland with adjacent arable land and grassland. Of particular note is a bricked-up tunnel under the railway south of the site boundary with good potential as a bat roost.

3.2 New College – an arable field with a mature oak tree, with adjacent fields of improved grassland. There is a pond present to the south of the site which feeds into a ditch network running westerly.

3.3 Ketch – habitats comprise grassland, orchard and arable, with a network of hedgerows. The site also includes a number of mature hedgerow trees such

¹ Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2007) *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey - a Technique for Environmental Audit*. Reprinted 2007, Nature Conservancy Council, reprinted JNCC, Peterborough.

as oak and willow (including pollards), some of which provide potential bat roosting habitat. Within the hedgerows the potential for badgers was noted.

3.4 Crown East – The site comprises plantation woodland and arable land. The borders with highways comprise shelterbelts of plantation woodland and hedgerows.

3.5 Claines – lack of ownership information and access but most areas were accessible through public rights of way, however, some land was not accessible for survey. Habitats are predominantly semi-improved grassland, improved grassland and arable with a network of hedgerows.

3.6 City Centre Bridge – either side of the proposed bridge location the habitat is amenity grassland with planted lime trees, with willow trees along the banks of the River Severn. Swan ‘sanctuary’ on southern side of river. Beyond the amenity areas the habitats are urban development.

3.7 Potential species issues to date include:

- Badgers –sett-making habitat opportunities hedgerows and foraging opportunities within grassland;
- Bats – roosting within mature trees and bricked-up tunnel (Parkway) and foraging/commuting over linear landscape features (hedgerows and watercourses);
- Birds – breeding opportunities for farmland bird species and within mature trees and hedgerows;
- Great crested newts – ponds present in an area known to support populations of the species. Habitat Suitability Indices (HSI) assessments are being undertaken;
- Invertebrates – potential for valued species within dead wood on trees and for club-tailed dragonfly on the River Severn (City Centre Bridge);
- Otters – potential on the River Severn (City Centre Bridge), but no holt-making habitat opportunities;
- Reptiles – potential habitat within grassland and scrub areas;

4 ***Recommendations***

4.1 Detailed analysis of the extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey information has not yet been undertaken to inform the need for detailed protected species surveys over and above the breeding birds and great crested newt habitat suitability assessments which are currently on-going. However, it has been

possible to identify at this stage that some additional species surveys will be necessary to provide sufficiently robust information to inform an assessment of the scheme's potential impacts for completion of the WebTAG appraisal summary tables and major scheme business case. These are:

- Badgers – badger activity surveys required in areas with potential habitat opportunities for badgers setts (can be undertaken any time of year with autumn/winter and spring the optimal periods);
- Bat – bat activity surveys of linear features within and possibly adjacent to the study areas (survey period May to September inclusive). Features with potential as bat roosts should be surveyed prior to the bat activity surveys and where necessary emergence surveys undertaken;
- Invertebrates – impacts to significant invertebrate habitat likely to be limited, therefore, no detailed survey is considered as necessary at this stage, but highly likely for detailed design stage;
- Otters – unlikely to be required as no potential for holts but known presence along the River Severn (City Centre Bridge);
- Reptiles – survey of targeted areas required (survey can be undertaken in September);

4.2 The surveys recommended above are considered as those required to support a robust assessment of the likely impacts of the proposed schemes. It is important therefore to try and minimise the possibility of 'doubling-up' on survey work. Therefore, where possible, survey work relating to P&R sites can be included with those for SLR or NWLR.

4.3 Due to the large area to be covered methodologies will be adapted to be appropriate for the study area, appropriate for the likely impacts from the scheme and for the level of information required at this stage (based upon guidance with the Design Manual for Roads and Bridges Volume 10) in order to keep these inputs as 'lean' as possible.