



Guidance Notes on Application of Site Selection Criteria

THE GREEN BOOK

Guidance for the Selection of Local Wildlife Sites in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull

Local Wildlife Sites Project

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SUMMARY

The original Guidance for the Selection of Non-Statutory Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation in Warwickshire was produced in May 1998. Since then the methodology for the selection and designation of Local Wildlife Sites has become a well established process as the Local Wildlife Sites Project within the Habitat Biodiversity Audit (HBA).

This document has been updated to reflect the changes in the designation of non-statutory wildlife areas formerly known as Non-Statutory Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs). The Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) recommended that the generic term “Local Site” be used in the Government’s new planning policy advice. Defra did recognize that this term could be sub-divided to describe an individual site as either a “Local Wildlife Site” or a “Local Geological Site”, or if necessary a “Local Wildlife/Geological Site” if both occurred at a single location.

“At the heart of this guidance is the principle that whilst Local Sites may also provide other benefits, they contain features of substantive nature conservation value and that the purpose of selection is to provide recognition of this value and to help conserve those features by affording the sites an appropriate degree of protection”. (Defra 2006)

Local Sites by definition are a network of defined areas that are selected and designated locally for their wildlife or geological importance. Together they form a network of our most valuable urban and rural areas for the natural environment. Local Sites are complimentary to statutory sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), and are afforded protection through the planning system, helping them to fulfil a crucial role in protecting our natural environment.

Adoption of standardised selection criteria and procedures by all local authorities in Warwickshire will enable currently recorded sites to be reviewed and evaluated to establish whether they are of substantive importance for nature conservation. The up-to-date information supplied by the Habitat Biodiversity Audit provides an important source of data to aid in site identification, selection and monitoring.

This document will outline the procedures necessary to bring the County’s local site systems in line with current planning guidance. A series of criteria for the evaluation of sites as well as guidelines for their implementation will be explained. The process of site selection and local authority notification will be described. This system must and will be a robust evaluation system for the designation of Warwickshire’s Local Wildlife Sites.



ACKNOWLEDGEMENTS

This document details a site selection system which meets the needs of a modern Town and Country Planning System. The process has been led by a working panel comprised of the Warwickshire Biological Records Centre, Natural England and the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust. This final published document is the result of consultation with County Council and District Council Planning Departments in Warwickshire.

The selection criteria and guidelines presented in this document are based very much on previous work carried out by various organisations. Notably much of the work has been modelled on the West Midlands Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) system and, importantly, from that done by the former Avon County Council. Work carried out by Derbyshire County Council in conjunction with Derbyshire Wildlife Trust and by Norfolk Wildlife Trust was also drawn upon. Much credit is therefore due to the members of these organisations involved for their original inspiration and hard work. The working group would therefore like to acknowledge the help and contributions it has received, from all individuals and organisations, which have made preparation of this document possible.



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**PART 1 THE SELECTION OF SITES OF IMPORTANCE FOR
NATURE CONSERVATION IN WARWICKSHIRE**

**PART I:
THE SELECTION OF SITES OF
IMPORTANCE FOR NATURE
CONSERVATION IN
WARWICKSHIRE, COVENTRY AND
SOLIHULL**



1. Local Sites in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull

1.1. Statutory and Non-statutory Sites for Nature Conservation

The primary objective of nature conservation is to ensure that the national heritage of wild flora and fauna and geological and physiographic features remains as large and as diverse as possible, so that society may use and appreciate its value to the fullest extent (NCC 1989). The protection and management of areas of importance for wild flora and fauna and their habitat is regarded as the cornerstone of British conservation policy. The principal statutory means of achieving this is by designation of sites for their conservation importance.

A very small number of sites of nature conservation importance in Warwickshire receive statutory protection. Statutory sites in Warwickshire comprise 13 LNRs and 57 SSSIs, with this figure including the part of the River Blythe SSSI which falls within the County. Of these, Ensor's Pool is also a SAC, reflecting its international importance. These sites cover a mere 0.7% of the County, as compared to the national figure of 6.8%.

The few sites which have statutory designations because of their international or national interest represent the top of the hierarchy of protection. These sites are selected according to standardised criteria and procedures. Second tier, non-statutory sites, covering local nature conservation importance, are more difficult to classify as they have no legislative basis or standardised definition.

Names for these sites, and site selection systems, vary across the country. System names include Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI), Sites of Biological Importance (SBI), Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) and Local Wildlife Sites (LWS); the last two being increasingly adopted by Local Authorities and Wildlife Trusts as initiatives are progressed to raise awareness of the importance of protecting sites of local nature conservation value, and to formalise non-statutory site systems in order to bring them into line with the requirements of Planning Policy Guidance Note 9.



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IMPORTANCE	SITE DESIGNATION AND EXPLANATION	UK STATUTORY DESIGNATION
Sites of International Importance	Ramsar Sites listed under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance	SSSI
	Special Protection Areas (SPAs) classified under the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds	SSSI; SPA
	Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) to be designated under the EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (the Habitats Directive)	SSSI; SAC
Sites of National Importance	National Nature Reserves (NNRs) declared under section 19 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 or section 35 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	SSSI
	Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) notified under section 28 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981	SSSI
Sites of Regional Local Importance	Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) declared by local authorities under section 21 of the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949	LNR
	Non-statutory Nature Reserves established and managed by a variety of public and private bodies e.g. county Wildlife Trusts, Royal Society for the Protection of Birds.	
	Sites of Nature Conservation Importance Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation or equivalent. These are usually adopted by local authorities for planning purposes. The name and status of this type of site varies considerably.	

TABLE 1 STATUTORY AND NON-STATUTORY SITE DESIGNATIONS

Note: *Biological SSSIs collectively form a national series of sites; those SSSIs identified under the Nature Conservation Review and Geological Conservation Review criteria are key sites of national importance.

Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9): Biodiversity and Geological Conservation provides a statement of national planning policy for biodiversity and geological conservation in England. It recognises that Local Sites have a fundamental role to play in helping to meet overall national biodiversity targets, contributing to the quality of life and the well-being of the community in supporting research and education. The guidance clearly states that nature conservation issues should (a) be taken into account in Development Plans, and (b) included in the relevant surveys to ensure that these are based on adequate ecological information and take account of local nature conservation strategies.

Planning Policy Guidance Note 17: Recreation sets out the Government's policies for the protection and creation of open spaces, sports and recreational facilities.



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Local authorities are expected to protect all open spaces required by communities and they should assess community needs for open space, sport and recreation and carry out audits of open space, sporting and recreational facilities. It recognizes that open space of high quality or of particular value to a local community should be identified and given protection by local authorities through appropriate policies in plans. Areas of particular quality may include open spaces that also benefit biodiversity and geodiversity. Local Authorities should take account of the various functions of open space, including that providing havens and habitats for flora and fauna, when deciding on the most appropriate way to treat such spaces.

The Government's announcements on the rationalization of local authority plans (ODPM November 2002), identifies Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) as one of the plans to be subsumed into Community Strategies. Local Authorities need to demonstrate that local biodiversity planning has been considered within their Community Strategy and that Community Strategies as a whole are informed by the purposes of biodiversity planning. The DETR circular on the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CROW) (04.01) makes clear that Local Sites are important components within LBAP plans. The Warwickshire LBAP has identified locally important species and habitats, along with actions needed to maintain and enhance them.

Section 74 CROW requires that every minister and Government department has a duty to have regard to the purpose of the conservation of biological diversity in the exercise of its functions; and to take, or promote the taking by others, of steps to further conservation of the habitats and species which together are of principal importance for the conservation of diversity. This includes a more consistent approach to the operation of Local Sites systems ('Working with the Grain of Nature' Defra 2002 pp.24 and 58)

1.2. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Communities and Local Government, 2012) launched in March 2012 replaced PPS9. It states that the distinction should continue to be made between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites, so that protection is commensurate with their status and gives appropriate weight to their importance. It advocates the same mechanisms for the protection of Local Sites as PPS9 and in addition requires protection of Local Sites to recognise the importance and the contribution that they make to wider ecological networks.

The NPPF states that Local Planning Authorities should:



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- Set out a strategic approach to their local plans, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure

To minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity, planning policies should:

- Plan for biodiversity at a landscape-scale across local planning policies
- Identify and map components of the local ecological networks including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by local Partnerships for habitat restoration and creation;
- Promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, linked to national and local targets, and identify suitable indicators for monitoring biodiversity in the plan;
- Where Nature Improvement Areas (NIAs) are identified in Local Plans, consider specifying the types of development that may be appropriate in these Areas.

1.3. Identifying Local Sites

The Government recognises that our natural heritage is not confined to the various statutory designated sites but is found throughout the countryside and in many urban areas. The Government also recognises that local authorities designate sites of local nature conservation value themselves and looks to them to take account of nature conservation interests in all their activities.

“Local planning authorities should have regard to the relative significance of international, national and local and informal designations in considering the weight to be attached to nature conservation interests. They should only apply local designations to sites of substantive nature conservation value, and take care to avoid unnecessary constraints on development”

In regard to what is substantive, Natural England (Nature’s Place February 1995) provide further guidance on what may be considered substantive and therefore a reasonable constraint. They state that paragraph 18 of PPG 9 is perfectly reasonable,

“...if a locally designated site has been selected by the application of strict criteria, has been accepted as such by the planning authority and is the subject of policies affording it protection and approved through the local plan process then the site is a necessary constraint on developments”



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Local Wildlife Sites help buffer and connect natural areas, providing ecological networks and increasing resilience of biodiversity to pressure of land use and climate change (Lawton L.H., 2010). They contribute to the quality of life and the health and well-being of communities and provide important open space in urban areas.

Making Space for Nature (Lawton L.H., 2010) delivered to government in September 2011, asserts that Local Sites are highly vulnerable to damage and loss, and recommended improving their protection and management, underlining that Local Sites are “*important to future ecological networks, because they not only provide wildlife refuges in their own right, but can act as stepping stones and corridors to link and protect nationally and internationally designated sites*”. Building on this, recommendation 12 of the Review was that Local Authorities should take responsibility for the identification and monitoring of Local Wildlife Sites, and that their management must be improved.

The Government response to *Making Space for Nature*, published alongside the Natural Environment White Paper (Defra, 2011), encouraged Local Site Partnerships to continue to implement Defra’s Local Sites guidance and play an increased role in identifying, protecting and managing Local Sites. The subsequent *England Biodiversity Strategy 2020* (Defra, 2011) restated that Government will encourage local authorities to take a more active and positive role in the management of Local Sites, including through reporting data on such sites in the Government’s new Single Data List.

1.4. Local Geological Sites

For many years, schemes to conserve wildlife sites not enjoying the statutory protection of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) have been operating successfully throughout Britain, but schemes to protect non-statutory geological and geomorphological sites are far less widespread. Those that do exist have much in common with their biological partners - sites are selected and managed by locally based groups, and safeguarded through local authority planning policies and the involvement of site owner(s).

LGSs are any geological or geomorphological sites, excluding SSSIs, in a county that are considered worthy of protection for their educational, research, historical or aesthetic importance. RIGS are broadly analogous to non-statutory wildlife sites and are often referred to locally by the same name. They can include important teaching sites, wildlife trust reserves, Local Nature Reserves and a wide range of other sites. LGSs are not regarded as ‘understudy’ SSSIs, but as sites of regional importance in their own right.



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1.5. The HBA Partnership.

The Habitat Biodiversity Audit (HBA) of Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull is a partnership project, between Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, the eight Local Authorities in the area, Natural England and the Environment Agency.

The HBA consists of the Phase 1 habitat survey of Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull, the results of which are recorded on a Geographic Information System (GIS). The digital mapping provides a record of the distribution and extent of all types of habitat across the Warwickshire sub-region. The HBA also provides up-to-date information on Local Wildlife Sites already on record and on the location of other sites which should be considered for selection.

The HBA also provides important information relating to the context for site review and selection, such as the abundance and distribution of semi-natural habitats and the location of prime biodiversity areas, wildlife corridors and areas deficient in semi-natural habitat. Early results suggest that semi-natural habitat is sparse and fragmented, underlining the value of what remains and the need for more effective protection of local sites.

Although target notes serve to highlight areas of nature conservation interest, the HBA is not selective in nature; rather it is a classification system for habitat types. Identification and selection of sites of substantive nature conservation importance requires a system of site evaluation.

1.6. The Local Wildlife Sites Partnership

The “Local Sites: Guidance on their identification, selection and management” document produced by Defra (Defra 2006 p.9), recommends the following partnership requirements:

1. Agree the basis for site selection
2. Co-ordinate site selection procedures including survey and identification of candidate sites
3. Actively promote and support site management
4. Co-ordinate funding provision and/or identify and promote the taking up of funding opportunities
5. Promote educational use where appropriate
6. Establish a process for monitoring the condition of selected sites
7. Review the operation of the Local Sites system at suitable intervals
8. Promote the role and importance of Local Sites at a strategic level e.g. delivering BAP targets, targeting of environmental schemes
9. Promote the enhancements of sites through buffering and increased connectivity



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The Local Wildlife Site Project was commenced in 1999 to develop and maintain a formalized Local Wildlife Sites system for Warwickshire, made up of Wildlife Sites and LGSs (RIGS) as part of a wider initiative also involving the LWS system already operating in Coventry and Solihull. The latter was originally developed for the West Midlands by Natural England and is now a part of the HBA partnership.



2. The Local Wildlife Sites Selection Panel: terms of reference

The Local Wildlife Sites selection panel is a standing task group of the Habitat Biodiversity Audit Partnership, Local Wildlife Sites Project, with membership approved by the Habitat Biodiversity Audit Steering Group. All planning authorities have formally delegated their authority to designate LWSs to the Local Wildlife Sites Panel. The Panel must report to the Partnership regarding decisions and LWS designations through the HBA management.

2.1. Panel membership

The individual panel members will be people who have a recognised ecological background, knowledge of the nature and habitats of Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull and who can commit time to attend the panel meetings. There should be a good combination of ecological knowledge across the panel.

Panel membership is open to anyone interested in supporting the Local Wildlife Site Project. Applicants must fulfil the requirements as outlined below. Application to join the panel will be advertised on the Warwickshire Wildlife Trust web site. Expressions of interest will be sent to the HBA management for recommendation to the Panel.

Candidates with good local knowledge and a proven ecological background should come from one of the following HBA partners; Warwickshire Wildlife Trust; Warwickshire County Council Ecology and Warwickshire Biological Records Centre; Natural England; Environment Agency. Other biodiversity specialists should also be considered including; Canals and Waterways Trust; Forestry Commission; independent ecological consultant(s); local authority ecologists; County Recorders/specialists. Any member of the panel can propose the inclusion of a new individual or organisation to the panel. Their inclusion must be agreed by a majority of the existing panel members.

In cases where there is more than one representative from an organisation, only one vote will be given per organisation.

2.1.1. Panel numbers:

- The number of panel members should be limited to seven in total
- The minimum number to be quorate is four



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Specialists may be invited to advise the panel group and bring specific expertise to the discussion if required.

Membership of the panel will be reviewed each year prior to the main panel programme at the beginning of each new survey season to ensure sufficient and appropriate members.

The chair person will be agreed by the panel. Members of the panel will impartially exercise their decisions.

2.2. Panel Procedure

The panel will follow the procedure as stated in *The Green Book: Guidance for the Selection of Local Wildlife Sites in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Part II Panel Guidance for the Evaluation and Selection of Wildlife Sites*.

The panel's role is to review and if agreed, approve the Local Wildlife Sites Project's recommendations for LWS site selection. If the site is a good fit with the criteria: the panel will approve potential Local Wildlife Sites (pLWSs) as fully designated LWSs. If the site does not fit with the criteria, the panel will agree to the rejection of the site as a LWS. Rejected sites are noted and reasons for rejection are stated for future reference.

The LWS panel is responsible for **all** additions, deletions and boundary changes to the fully designated LWS list. The panel will meet in person and only members who are present will be able to vote.

If a panel member is to be absent from the meeting, they may submit any comments regarding the sites to be considered prior to the meeting, which will be used in the discussions.

If the panel cannot unanimously agree a site designation then the majority view will be taken. In the event of a split vote then the Chair will have the casting vote. Points concerning differences of opinion regarding designation will be minuted and circulated to all panel members.

The panel may also collectively agree to postpone the site designation if additional information is required to complete the survey or final documenting is required in the event of this happening the decision on the site will be postponed and its status will be recorded as 'deferred' (see section 7.11 The site review and selection procedure).

A site may also be retained as a pLWS if the panel agrees that it needs more time to stabilise after restoration or habitat creation work, or if it is felt that the site has



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potential to meet the criteria if for example correct management is implemented. In this event the site status will be retained on the GIS as a potential LWS.

2.3. Panel Members Declarations of interest

Declarations of interest should be made at the start of discussions about a particular site. To ensure an objective approach any individuals stating an interest will stand down from the decision making process if they are subject to a conflict of interest that would affect their impartiality. This would include any commercial interest or benefit from the site being designated or not, and any conflict of interest due to contractual obligations. In this situation, the individual may give information about the site but not take part or attempt to influence the decision regarding designation.

2.4. Meeting process

The agenda, citations and site plans will be sent out to all members at least one week prior to the meeting.

The meeting will be carefully recorded with all agreed decisions minuted. The minutes of panel meetings are a formal record of the designation of sites and of points made regarding the sites. They must be a true and accurate record of the meeting's decisions.

The agenda and minutes of the LWS panel meetings will be circulated to the HBA Management Group. The list of LWS and pLWS sites will be reported to the HBA Management Group at each meeting.

On occasion there may be an urgent need for a site which has been surveyed and assessed to be considered between panel meetings. In this instance, it is possible for citations and full details to be circulated for comment, and the responses collated and checked with the chair. This should be the exception rather than usual procedure.

2.5. Signing of designation approval

Until 2013, it has been the practice to ensure that all panel members sign each approved site. As from autumn 2013, the chair will be delegated to sign the approval of sites. This is a pragmatic solution to the issue of time delays in ensuring that all members have signed the documents, which then delays the sending of information out to landowners. The minuted agreement to the designation is an important statement for each site and must be retained and dated, as this is the date of the site becoming a LWS.



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2.6. Third party submissions to the panel

Third party submissions to the panel can be done in writing to the HBA management who will present the information to the panel at the meeting. Submissions must be made at least one week prior to the panel meeting.

2.7. Informing the site owner of the panel's decision

A letter of notification will be sent to the land owner informing them of the panel's decision. A landowner pack will still be sent to the landowner following the standard letter of notification when all the site information has been prepared (see section 7.8 Site owner notification).

2.8. Amendments to sites

For minor and non-controversial boundary amendments (such as re-digitising sites so that they are correct with respect to the Ordinance Survey maps, or correcting mistakes in digitisation) the panel members have given Local Wildlife Sites staff the authority to take decisions on their behalf. These changes will be reported to the panel at the next meeting. All other changes must be taken to the panel.

The Terms of Reference will be reviewed by the Partnership every two years. The next review will take place in November 2015.



3. The development of criteria and procedures for Wildlife Site selection

The key functions of the HBA Partnership in the site selection process as outlined in the Local Sites (Defra 2006 p.10) are:

- To be responsible for site selection
- Possess adequate technical knowledge
- Develop and document site criteria
- Select sites against criteria
- Record reasons for the selection of each site
- Allow site owners an opportunity to comment
- De-select sites which no longer qualify

Identification of Local Wildlife Sites is carried out by means of the application of a set of criteria for the selection of sites, designed to reflect the local context. The application of selection criteria, in a standardised, objective manner, means that local authority planners can be confident that Wildlife Sites are of substantive nature conservation importance and are defensible constraints on development.

In drawing up selection criteria for Warwickshire, the original Local Wildlife Sites Project working group referred to a considerable body of work carried out, both nationally and locally, by local authorities, Wildlife Trusts and others, on the selection of sites of nature conservation importance. The criteria chosen (section 7.0) are widely used throughout the country and are designed to reflect not only the scientific value of Wildlife Sites, but also their importance for the community.

3.1. Site review and selection

Using HBA Phase 1 data, records held by Warwickshire Biological Records Centre, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and Natural England, and any further survey as required; the potential nature conservation sites identified by the HBA.

The HBA provides up-to-date information on habitats, with target notes identifying species interest for some sites. This can be used to assess whether sites have changed since previous surveys were carried out.

The HBA also provides a context, in terms of habitat abundance and distribution, for site evaluation, identifying which habitats are in need of protection due to their rarity. Geographic coverage means that a strategic element can be applied to site evaluation. Wildlife corridors and concentrations of sites, of value for the opportunity they allow for species movement and migration, are clearly shown. In



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terms of community value, areas where existing wildlife habitat is rare and thus likely to be particularly important to local people can be considered.

3.2. Site selection and site owner engagement

Once a site has been identified for surveying either as a new local wildlife site or for review, the site owner will be approached for consent. Site owner consent is an important requirement of the survey and the failure to grant permission or an informal agreement could invalidate the survey.

Recommendations:

- A clear written permission should be obtained from the site owner or their agents. A standard letter is used for this purpose.
- The site owner or their agent is notified of the date(s) the surveyor is visiting the site.
- The standard letter seeking permission to survey a site should also have an option for the site owner to be informed of the date the panel is due to meet to deliberate on the site. The site owner or their representatives will then be able to submit any information they think is relevant to the site selection.
- The site owner will be informed of the Panel's decision by letter including full citation, map and management guidance.
- The Wildlife Sites Project will offer guidance in the management of the site.



4. Wildlife Site Selection Criteria for Warwickshire

The criteria for selection of Wildlife Sites are based largely upon the NCC's national guidelines for the selection of biological SSSIs. These have been expanded to reflect a local authority's role in nature conservation and to that end also include a number of community characteristics. However, it should be stressed that the scientific criteria are primary and sites will not be selected on community characteristics alone.

4.1. Scientific Characteristics:

1. **Diversity:** This refers to the range and diversity of wildlife species, habitats and or geological features present on a site.
2. **Rarity:** This considers how common or uncommon are the species, habitats or geological features, present on a site.
3. **Size:** The importance of a site generally increases with size, though small areas of habitat may be of value as long as nature conservation interest is sustainable.
4. **Naturalness:** Areas of semi-natural habitat are often the most important for nature conservation because they support the highest numbers of native British species.
5. **Fragility:** All sites, habitats and species are affected by environmental change. Some are particularly vulnerable to damage caused by external factors or sensitive to changes in management.
6. **Typicalness:** It is desirable to safeguard a sequence and range of examples of habitat types and geological features. Particularly good examples of characteristic and locally distinctive habitats and features should be conserved, including those of a typically rural character (e.g. calcareous grassland) and of a typically urban character (e.g. disused railway sidings colonised by natural processes).
7. **Ecological Position:** The location of a site or habitat area may be important, for example where it is linked to other semi-natural habitat or forms part of a wildlife network.
8. **Significant Populations:** Some sites are important because they sustain a significant population of a particular species.



Guidance Notes on Application of Site Selection Criteria

9. **Potential Value:** There will be circumstances where a site meets, or almost meets, other criteria and there is potential for habitat improvement or recovery by natural change or appropriate management.

4.2. Cultural Characteristics

1. **Physical and Visual Access:** Access to a site is a valuable asset, especially where there is provision for disabled people. Visibility, including that of sites to which physical access is restricted, can also allow enjoyment of wildlife.
2. **Educational Value:** Some sites may be of particular value for formal and/or informal education by virtue of their proximity to educational establishments and/or having a range of robust habitats or facilities to aid study and interpretation.
3. **Community and Amenity Value:** This considers the importance of a site to local people due to use or cultural associations.
4. **Aesthetic Appeal and Landscape Character:** This considers the contribution a site makes to local landscape character and appeal.
5. **Geographical Position:** The location of a site within an ecological impoverished part of the county may enhance its value to people.
6. **Recorded History:** The availability of historical records gives added scientific and educational value to a site, due to understanding of past changes and/or ecological processes at work.
7. **Continuity of Land Use:** Some sites have valuable characteristics derived from their age and/or long continuity of land use.

4.3. Applying the Wildlife Site selection criteria

Whilst a desirable concept, it is not always appropriate or indeed possible to define thresholds or absolute cut off points for each criteria, and the process of site selection according to the criteria will in some instances constitute a subjective exercise. However, it is nonetheless important to remain as objective as possible and to evaluate a site in a standardised manner and against a background reference.

A site selected as a Wildlife Site need not qualify against all criteria, and different sites will meet different combinations of criteria. It is most likely that the majority



Guidance Notes on Application of Site Selection Criteria

of sites will qualify on the basis of more than one criterion and many sites will have multiple points of importance. Therefore, whilst all sites must satisfy a minimum level of importance, there will be variations in importance between sites. It is not proposed, however, that sites will be graded; selection in itself meaning a site is part of the minimum resource which should be maintained in order to sustain biodiversity.



5. Evaluating a Site against the Criteria

5.1. Scientific Criteria

These criteria are designed to evaluate the ecological importance of nature conservation sites. Some sites will also be of importance due to geological features which are present. In terms of ecological evaluation, these are considered in relation to the habitats and/or species which they support, rather than intrinsic geological importance. Criteria for the selection of geological/geomorphological sites are found in section 10.0.

In aiming to maintain overall local biodiversity, Wildlife Site system objectives coincide with the goal of Biodiversity Action Planning: “To conserve and enhance biological diversity within the UK” (DoE 1995). The presence of national and local BAP habitats and species will therefore be a consideration in site selection.

5.2. Diversity

A key principle of nature conservation is to sustain the diversity of wildlife, habitats, and both geological and geomorphological features. Some habitats are more species-rich than others, for example unimproved calcareous grassland is considerably richer in plant species than heathland. However, each habitat type is characterized by its own range of species and conserving the diversity that these habitats and the diversity of their respective floras and faunas, means conserving the integrity of these habitats.

Diversity should be assessed separately for habitats and for species. The total number of different species will usually be taken as an indication of species diversity, but more properly the relative abundance of each species should also be taken into account. This is because a site with one dominant and many uncommon species would be considered less diverse than a site with many frequently occurring species, even though the total number of species may be the same for the two sites. Whenever possible, abundance should therefore be taken into consideration.

Habitat diversity should be considered when a site consists of a mosaic of two or more habitats (e.g. woodland, tall scrub, grassland, heath, valley mire, pond and stream).



Guidance Notes on Application of Site Selection Criteria

5.3. Rarity

Rarity relates to both habitats and species and must be considered at international, national and county scales. Clearly the rarer the interest on any site, the greater is the site's importance for nature conservation.

Species rarity will be assessed with respect to the occurrence of rare, scarce and/or threatened fauna and flora. Lists of rare species, including national and county rarities have, or are being, compiled by the Warwickshire Biological Record Centre.

Habitat rarity will be considered with respect to the known distribution of semi-natural habitats at an international, national and county level. Where internationally and nationally rare habitats occur these will automatically be selected. County rarity will be considered with respect to the distribution of semi-natural habitats as revealed by the various surveys and data on Warwickshire held by the Wildlife Trust and the Warwickshire Biological Records Centre (this will also be rationalised over the next two years by the Habitat Biodiversity Audit). As is noted under the criteria concerning 'naturalness', semi-natural habitat in Warwickshire is rare.

5.4. Size or Extent

The largest examples of habitat types in the county will be selected. It is generally accepted that large sites are of greater value for nature conservation than small sites since they contain more habitats, more species, and larger populations of these species. It is also argued that larger sites are more ecologically stable. It must be taken into account, however, that size is a relative term and will vary in importance and critical dimension according to the habitat/species in question. Therefore it is impossible to generalise about size limits. It is generally accepted that, as a minimum, a site must be considered large enough to be a viable unit for the ecological interest defined.

Importantly for site selection, the following must also be taken into account. In the absence of larger sites, small sites or "constellations" of small sites increase in value and may qualify where the habitat is considered to be viable. Furthermore, small sites may assume particular importance where very specialised and/or threatened species, or rare habitats, are concerned. This indicates that size is a criterion to be used very much in conjunction with other criteria.



Guidance Notes on Application of Site Selection Criteria

5.5. Naturalness

In the British Isles very little truly natural habitat exists, almost all having been modified by human use over centuries. Naturalness will be assessed by considering the presence or absence of features which indicate recent human modification, and by the occurrence of features and species which indicate a lack of disturbance.

Habitats that have developed through natural processes, including those on post-industrial sites, are also a valuable resource for both historical and ecological study.

Whilst within Britain as a whole approximately 30% of habitat is considered to be semi-natural, within Warwickshire this applies to less than 9% (see Table 2 – A111 broad-leaved semi-natural woodland 3.12%, B22 natural and semi-natural grasslands 4%, and G1 wet-lands including standing water and rivers 1%). The semi-natural habitat that does remain in Warwickshire is thus of critical importance.

An important role of the non-statutory site selection system is to ensure that, in the form of the best examples, the total countywide range of variation in natural and semi-natural ecosystem types is maintained. Such habitats are dominated by native plant species and typically retain a rich species and structural diversity which contrasts strongly with highly modified agricultural habitats. Most of these semi-natural habitats are of importance as scientific, educational, aesthetic and recreational resources.



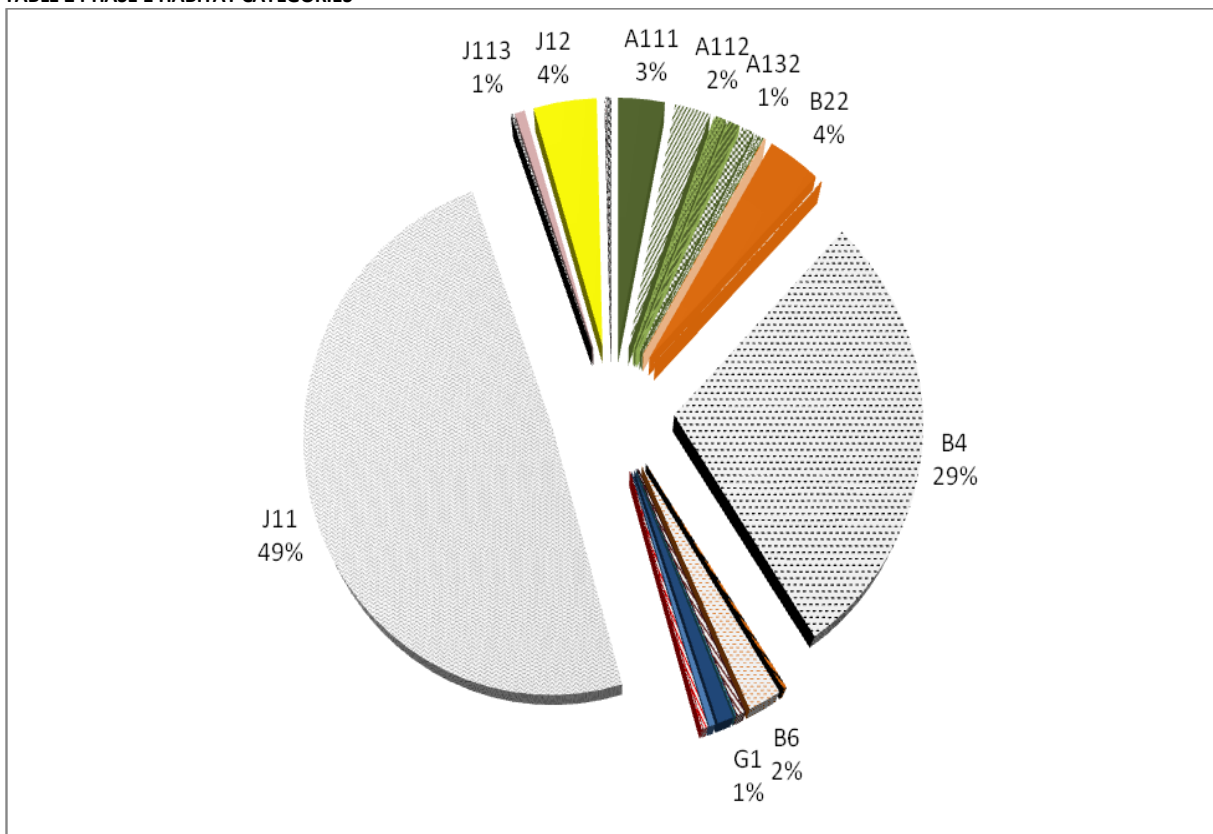
Guidance Notes on Application of Site Selection Criteria

5.6. Fragility

Some habitats, communities and species are particularly sensitive to environmental change and, as a result, tend to be rare. These are, therefore, in special need of protection. In some cases, fragile features may be vulnerable to change distant from the site itself. An example of a fragile site would be a marsh dependent on the continuation of particular water levels and quality.

Environmental change can be considered at the international, national or regional level, such as that resulting from new development, transport, agricultural, water

TABLE 2 PHASE 1 HABITAT CATEGORIES



management, landfill or mineral extraction policies. The implementation of these may threaten the sites of importance for nature conservation in Warwickshire.

Environmental change also can be considered at the local, or site, level. This involves on-site or off-site alteration to land or water management that may affect a specific site or species. The sensitivity of the habitats and species found on a site, to either internal or external change, will be considered under this criterion.



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5.7. Typicalness

Typicalness relates to whether the site represents a good example of a particular habitat type or geological feature. It is desirable to safeguard a sequence and range of good habitat types and features to ensure that a reservoir of the best and most characteristic features of Warwickshire is sustained. Thus particularly good examples of 'typical' or 'representative' features should be conserved. For example this might include a typical calcareous grassland or a typical disused railway siding colonized by nature.

The 'typicalness' of a particular site will be assessed against how well it matches, or how characteristic it is, of good examples of that type of habitat. Where appropriate, the National Vegetation Classification can provide useful information on vegetation characteristics typical of particular botanical community types.

5.8. Ecological Position

The geographical position of a site may enhance its importance because of its proximity to other sites of nature conservation value. Examples include linked or networked sites, linear features and sites representing a sequence of underlying geological features across the county or a "constellation" of similar habitats, such as a group of ponds.

Many mobile species utilize, or rely on, more than one site or habitat type. For example, bats may roost in woodland but utilize adjacent or nearby grassland for feeding. Therefore habitat mosaics can be of particular importance. The boundary zone, or 'ecozone', between habitat types is often also of high conservation value. Linked sites, linear features and proximal sites allow for species migration and buffer against random events which may cause a species to become extinct on a particular site. This is particularly important in the context of overall scarcity of semi-natural habitat in the county.

Sites will therefore be considered in the overall context of adjacent and nearby land-use and habitat types.

5.9. Significant Populations of Species

These criteria must be considered with respect to the importance or significance of a species' population in the international, national and county contexts. For example, a species population may be significant because:

- it represents a significant proportion of Warwickshire's known population of that species - e.g. a particular bat roost



Guidance Notes on Application of Site Selection Criteria

- the species is on the edge of its range
- the species is declining either nationally or regionally
- a national and/or local Biodiversity Action Plan has been drawn up for the species

5.10. Potential Value

This criterion will only be considered in circumstances where the site meets, or almost meets other criteria and has realistic potential for enhancement or recovery within a given timescale. It is not enough to warrant designation of the site on this criterion alone. It could be used where an existing site has been damaged or degraded by recent poor management and there is good evidence to suggest that biodiversity could recover either through natural processes or improvements in management. This would also refer to other sites where the scientific value could be significantly enhanced by improvements to diversity, size of habitat or populations of species. Assessment using this criterion should be limited to those things which can realistically be achieved within a given timescale.

In the case of some rare or specially protected species, e.g Barbastelle Bat, White-clawed Crayfish, Small Blue butterfly, it may be desirable to protect suitable unoccupied habitat in the proximity of existing inhabited sites, to facilitate species colonisation.

5.11. Cultural Criteria

Paragraph 15 of PPG 9 states that local sites are:

“... important to local communities, often affording people the only opportunity of direct contact with nature, especially in urban areas”.

While this quote refers to urban areas, these factors are equally of value in the context of rural settlements. Cultural value should always be assessed, through the application of community criteria, wherever the nature conservation value of a site is being assessed (Collis and Tyldesley 1993).

It is recognised that responsibility of site protection for community value lies largely with local authorities. The NCC (1989, p.12) concludes:

“Urban areas often contain a good deal of wildlife interest, both generally and within particular sites. Many of these sites, especially waste land, offer potential for the development of such interest, and this has high value by virtue of proximity



Guidance Notes on Application of Site Selection Criteria

to large numbers of people. There is thus a considerable need for developing appropriate measures for urban nature conservation”.

As with the use of scientific site characteristics, there are no hard and fast rules that can be adopted with cultural criteria which clearly define which sites will qualify on the grounds of their cultural value. Cultural factors have a much shorter history of use in site selection than scientific criteria and can be more difficult to quantify and evaluate. They are, however, an important and widely accepted means of assessing the importance to people, especially the local community, of a non-statutory nature conservation site.

5.12. Physical and Visual Access

Physical access will be assessed with respect to the incidence of formal and informal footpaths and availability of access for the disabled. Where only informal access is available, the ease and freedom of access should be noted.

Visual access to sites is also an important consideration in urban areas. For example, although there may be no physical access to a site, the local community may be able to observe and enjoy the wildlife present from outside the site's boundaries. Some sites can be seen by a large proportion of the urban population, e.g. on a prominent hillside. Visual access will therefore be assessed according to the visibility of the site to the local community.

5.13. Educational Value

A site that is regularly used by local and distant educational institutions for nature conservation will be highly valued. Informal educational use is also important but more difficult to define and positive evidence must exist if this parameter is used. Educational value will also be assessed according to the proximity of the site to educational establishments and the range of robust and varied habitats which occur, and/or the incidence of study facilities.

5.14. Community and Amenity Value

Sites are assessed in relation to their importance to local people. This can be considered in terms of their contribution to peoples physical and mental wellbeing. For example, some sites are valued by the local community on account of their attractive flowers or their rural atmosphere away from the hubbub of urban life. Others are of particular significance to the local community because of their links with community history, such as former colliery sites, canals, disused railway



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lines and old cemeteries. This is a difficult criterion to assess and should only be used when there is specific evidence to support its importance.

This criterion will be assessed against the following attributes:

- Evidence of use
- Evidence of fauna that is of local interest (e.g. foxes or visually spectacular birds, butterflies and so on)
- Attractive vegetation
- Seclusion/rural feel
- Links with community history
- Evidence of interest in the site for informal nature study or enjoyment

It is noted that this criterion has certain elements that overlap with other cultural criteria.

5.15. Aesthetic Appeal and Landscape Character

Aesthetic appeal is difficult to assess objectively. Elements include the contribution of the site to the local landscape, in terms of views into and out of the area; internal vistas within the site; and the presence of attractive vegetation, water features, or species with public appeal.

Where a site falls within one of the Warwickshire Landscape Areas, it will be assessed in terms of the degree to which characteristic features of the landscape, as defined by the Warwickshire Landscape Guidelines, are represented on the site and for its contribution to overall landscape unity.

5.16. Geographical Position

This criterion is of significance for sites close to where people live and work and will be considered with respect to the occurrence of semi-natural habitat within 0.5, 1.0 and 5.0 km radii of the site. An ecologically isolated site that is within walking distance of a population, or is visible, may be of high cultural value where it provides a rare opportunity for local people to come into contact with nature.

5.17. Recorded History

These criteria will be considered with respect to the type and extent of recorded site history. The educational and scientific value of a site is enhanced if the recorded history in terms of biological records, references in literature, management practices and land use is extensive. Some sites have been studied



Guidance Notes on Application of Site Selection Criteria

by amateurs and professionals for many years, or may be the location at which a specific discovery was made. These factors add to the conservation value of the site.

5.18. Continuity of Land-use

A site which has been occupied by a semi-natural habitat for a long time is usually more ecologically valuable than its equivalent which has only recently arisen. Time, and continuity of management, can allow the development and maintenance of rich assemblages of plants and animals. Ancient habitats, particularly those which have been subject to a uniform management regime, will often also have retained historic features, such as ridge and furrow, or those associated with traditional management practices, such as woodland coppicing. These give a site added cultural and educational value. The presence of these historic features and the existence of documentary, or map based evidence of historic uses or traditional management practices will be considered in site assessment.

Post-industrial sites will also be considered of importance where time and lack of disturbance have allowed natural processes of colonisation and succession to take place. This can result in the development of diverse, and sometimes unusual, ecological communities. These sites can be of scientific and educational value, in demonstrating ecological processes at work and the role of geology and soil type.



6. Guidance Notes on Application of the Site Selection Criteria

In order to establish clear guidance on application of the criteria, the partnership has chosen the approach of developing guidance notes for the application of the selection criteria specific to habitat types found in Warwickshire. It is envisaged that sites supporting rare or threatened species will generally qualify under habitat criteria. There are some circumstances, however, for example a bat roost within a building, where this may not be the case. Additional criteria have been developed to cover this eventuality.

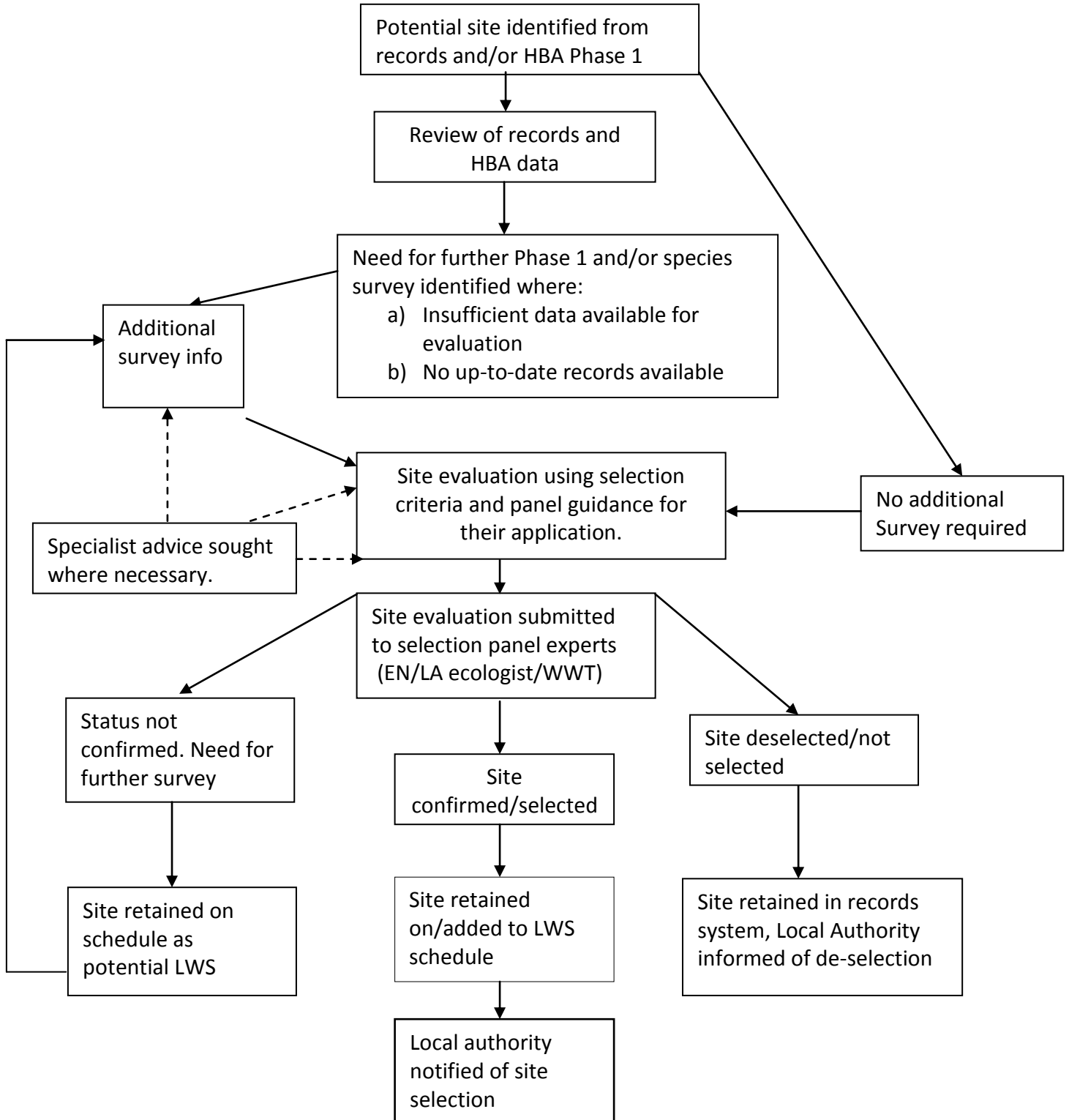
Guidance notes, found in Part II, have been prepared for the following:

-
1. Canals
 2. Heathland
 3. Hedgerows
 4. Mires and Wetlands
 5. Mosaic Sites
 6. Parkland and Orchards
 7. Post-Industrial Sites
 8. Semi-natural Grassland and Marsh
 9. Species Sites
 10. Tall Herb Communities
 11. Veteran Trees
 12. Water Bodies and Water Courses
 13. Woodland and Scrub
-



6.1. The Wildlife Site Selection Procedure

Figure 1 : Procedure for the selection of wildlife sites





Guidance Notes on Application of Site Selection Criteria

6.2. Identification of potential Local Wildlife Sites

Sites already on record but not previously subject to a standardised selection process:

- i. Warwickshire Museum 'Ecosites'
- ii. Warwickshire Wildlife Trust 'Wildlife Sites'
- iii. Nuneaton & Bedworth Borough Council 'Wildlife Sites' (Ecological Sites Schedule, 1992)

Potential sites not previously recorded: Habitat Biodiversity Audit maps and associated target notes indicate potential sites of nature conservation value.

6.3. Review of records and HBA data

Records: site and species records are held by the following organisations:

- Warwickshire Biological Records Centre
- Warwickshire Wildlife Trust
- Natural England

These records range in date from the 1970's or earlier, up to the present, and therefore vary in reliability. While some sites have relatively extensive species lists, little or no information may be held for others.

6.4. HBA Data

The HBA provides up-to-date Phase 1 habitat data for sites, with target notes giving additional species information for sites of potential importance. The HBA also shows the extent and location of the semi-natural habitat found in the county, and identifies such features as wildlife corridors and concentrations of semi-natural habitat. It thus provides both the context for identifying which sites are of substantive local nature conservation importance, and up-to-date information on the sites themselves. Where no recent site records are held, HBA data can be used to confirm, or otherwise, the continuing presence of semi-natural habitat and indicate whether past records remain representative of current status.

The information held on a site, for consideration to take place prior to a full Local Wildlife Sites evaluation form, includes Phase 1 habitat survey of the site, identification of the boundaries and any relevant species list.



Guidance Notes on Application of Site Selection Criteria

6.5. Information required for site evaluation

Habitat assessment should ideally include all plant and animal groups, in practice resource implications mean that, for many sites, assessment will be based on botanical information. There are several reasons for this:

Accepted, and nationally used, systems for the classification and definition of terrestrial habitats are based on botanical communities. These include the Phase I habitat classification as used by the Habitat Biodiversity Audit, and the National Vegetation Classification (NVC).

Plants are generally the most conspicuous and easily identifiable components of a habitat. They are always present, though more prominent at certain times of year than others.

Botanical communities are good indicators of overall habitat quality and type. A diverse botanical site, for example, will generally support a wide range of invertebrate species. Several important habitats, notably ancient woodlands, are identifiable from their flowering plant communities.

It is important, however, not to overlook sites which are of importance for other taxa. Examples might be: wet meadows which, though not botanically rich, support a wide range of insects or are important for birds or water bodies which support rare amphibians or diverse invertebrate communities.

For sites selected under the species criteria sufficient information will be needed to determine the significance of the population recorded on the site. This may entail specialist input, but a botanical species list will still be required.

In some cases there may be insufficient information to enable Local Wildlife Site evaluation to take place, or no recent records may be available. Further survey will therefore be required. In the meantime, sites will be retained on record as potential Local Wildlife Sites (pLWSS). Guidelines for site surveys are found in Part II.

6.6. Site evaluation

The selection criteria will be used to evaluate the potential Local Wildlife Sites identified by the HBA, and to confirm the importance of those already held on record. Evaluation will be carried out in line with the relevant guidance notes on application of the selection criteria. These are found in Part II. A Local Wildlife Site evaluation form (also found in Part II) will be completed for each site for submission to the site selection panel.



Guidance Notes on Application of Site Selection Criteria

6.7. Site selection

Site selection will be carried out by a panel including representatives from Natural England, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust, Warwickshire Museum, and where available, the District/Borough ecologist. Where necessary, specialist advice will be sought. On selection, a site will be added to the LWS schedule and the County and relevant District or Borough planning authorities notified. In some cases, the selection panel may conclude that insufficient information is held on a site to enable its status to be determined. These sites will be retained on the schedule as potential Local Wildlife Sites and further survey planned.

6.8. Local Authority notification

The agenda and minutes of each Panel meeting will be sent to the Management Group members. The agenda for each meeting will be circulated one week prior to the meeting in order that the Management Group will have time to submit any further information or attend the meeting.

The completed annual surveys will be sent out to all the Local Authority Partners as part of the agreed mapped data supply. Any completed surveys before the data update releases will be available to the Partners on request.

The formal endorsement of a Local Wildlife Site by the Panel is taken here to be the notification to the Local Authority of the new site. Observations on the granting of LWS status are between the Local Authority and the site owner. It is not within the remit of the Local Wildlife Sites Project to advise parties on the implications of granting Local Wildlife Sites status.

In extraordinary circumstances surveys may be conducted on behalf of Local Planning Authorities without prior site owner consent. In these cases notification of LWS status will be sent if the site owner can be identified by all reasonable effort within a reasonable time. If the site owner cannot be identified notice to this effect will be sent to the Local Authority.

6.9. Site owner notification

Site owners and/or their representatives are formally notified of the Panel's decision by letter. Where a site has been successful the site owner will also receive the Local Wildlife Site citation, site plan and management recommendations.



Guidance Notes on Application of Site Selection Criteria

6.10. Site deselection

Where a site is deselected, due to destruction or degradation of its habitat quality, local authorities will be advised of the change of status. Site information will continue to be available, with site records being retained in the records system.

6.11. The site review and selection procedure

Initial site review and selection will focus on sites already held on record and identified by the HBA. Local authorities will be notified of these in batches of several sites. As ecological knowledge improves in the county, it is envisaged that further sites will be identified and added. In order to ensure sites are only retained on the schedule where their quality is maintained, a monitoring and review programme will be instituted.

The Selection of Local Geological Sites

6.12. National Guidance on the Selection of LGS

The LGS scheme suggests four themes for locally determined criteria:

1. The value of a site for education fieldwork in primary and secondary schools (National Curriculum and 'GCSE' courses), at undergraduate level, and in adult education courses.
2. The value of a site for scientific study by both professional and amateur earth scientists. Such sites might demonstrate, alone or as part of a network, the geology or geomorphology of the area.
3. The historical value of a site in terms of important advances in geological or geomorphological knowledge.
4. The aesthetic value of a site in the landscape, particularly in relation to promoting public awareness and appreciation of geology and geomorphology, and of conservation.

The balance of importance between these themes will vary from county to county although there is great value in placing emphasis on selecting sites of educational interest particularly to meet the needs of the National Curriculum. The number of RIGS selected will also vary, this being a function of geological diversity and degree of exposure.



Guidance Notes on Application of Site Selection Criteria

6.13. The Selection of LGSs in Warwickshire

The Warwickshire Geological Conservation Group was established by Warwickshire Museum, Warwickshire Wildlife Trust and Natural England in 1990. The County is fortunate in having both a Keeper of Geology and an extensive collection of more than eighteen hundred geological site records at the Warwickshire Museum. These site records, part of the National Scheme for Geological Site Documentation, provided the candidates for LGS selection.

A LGS selection committee was set up for Warwickshire, comprising the Keeper of Geology, Natural England's Conservation Officer, and a range of geologists, amateur, professional and teachers. The principal criterion was to select the best example for each of the major lithological divisions spanning the nine periods of Geological time represented in the County, in one or more of the four major themes. The committee began with the oldest rocks, the Pre-Cambrian, and worked up to the Tertiary, but the final period, the Quaternary, has yet to be completed. To date some 40 LGSs have been selected under themes 1 - 3, either singly or in combination, but none as yet under theme 4, aesthetic value in the landscape.

The best example was selected as a deliberate strategy to counter the argument that "there are equivalent sites elsewhere in the County" when a RIGS comes under threat of destruction.

6.14. Evaluation of a LGS against the Criteria

The secondary criteria taken into account when selecting the best example for each theme are:

6.15. Educational Fieldwork Theme

For selection under this theme, all three of the following criteria need to be satisfied:

1. Educational Potential. The site has educational resources, preferably with opportunities for study at various levels, or the site is already so used.
2. Physical Access. It is possible to park a coach or minibus within 500 metres of the site.
3. Safety Issue. The site is safe for supervised groups.



Guidance Notes on Application of Site Selection Criteria

6.16. Scientific Study Theme

For selection under this theme, one of the following criteria needs to be satisfied:

1. Diversity of interest. A site showing a variety of interest features is selected in preference to similar sites with a single interest.
2. Rarity of the interest. Some features in Warwickshire are only visible in one or two locations, narrowing the choice for a candidate RIG Site. A site will be selected if it exhibits a geological feature which is rare in the County.
3. Size of the feature. A large rock exposure is selected in preference to a similar small one.
4. Typicalness of the feature. A particularly good example of a geological feature found in the County is selected in preference to atypical sites.

6.17. Geological Physiographic position.

An exposure which is part of a sequence with other nearby earth science features is selected in preference to sites in isolation.

6.18. Historical Value Theme

For selection under this theme, one of the following criteria needs to be satisfied:

1. Celebrity Link. The site is linked with a prominent geologist who lived or worked in the County.
2. Pioneering Research Link. The site is linked with the development of some important research in earth science concepts.

6.19. Aesthetic Value in the Landscape Theme

For selection under this theme, one of the following criteria needs to be satisfied:

1. Local importance in the landscape. The site has features which form a prominent part of the landscape and are well known in the local community.
2. Promotion of Earth Science. The site has features with the potential to raise the public awareness of earth science and conservation.



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PART II: PANEL GUIDANCE FOR THE EVALUATION AND SELECTION OF WILDLIFE SITES



8. The Wildlife Site Survey

8.1. Access

Surveys, unless carried out from public rights-of-way, will not take place without the consent of the site owner. When access is requested, the purpose of survey work will be explained. Should access permission not be obtained, and insufficient information is held to enable a site to be evaluated, the site will be entered on to the sites register as a potential Local Wildlife Site. This unconfirmed site should be treated in the same way as a confirmed Wildlife Site in respect to development control issues.

8.2. Habitat survey

Presence and relative abundance of vascular plants should be recorded to the Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull Local Wildlife Site survey standards.

8.3. Additional botanical survey

Where resources are available, classification of botanical communities, using National Vegetation Classification (NVC) methodology, provides valuable information for site evaluation, especially in the context of Biodiversity Action Planning.

8.4. Other taxa

Records held for most sites are likely to be confined to vascular plants and conspicuous animal groups such as birds, although invertebrates have been recorded for some sites due to the activities of a number of skilled and dedicated amateur recorders in the County. These are valuable for site assessment and there are likely to be some sites which are of low botanical interest but qualify as Wildlife Sites due to the habitat they provide for uncommon invertebrates or other taxa. In these cases, specialist advice should be sought, both for any survey required and for site evaluation.

8.5. Survey timing

The optimum survey timings for different taxa are shown in figures 4 and 5. With regards to grassland and marsh habitats, in most cases pasture sites can be assessed over much of the spring-summer growing season when the indicator species are evident, but in the case of meadows cut for



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They can only be surveyed accurately before the first crop is taken, which can often be as early as June (*Common Standards Monitoring Guidance for Lowland Grassland Habitats JNCC, 2004*). Some sites may also need to be visited two or three times during the year at different seasons to fully assess their wildlife value, for instance with many ancient woodland sites a visit is needed in May for the spring flowers and again in July-August for the ride flora.

		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Aquatic habitats	Freshwater												
Terrestrial habitats	Grassland & marsh												
	Tall herb & swamp												
	Woodland & scrub												
	Heathlands												
	Mires & Fens												
Lower plants	Mosses & liverworts												
	Fungi												

FIGURE 2 OPTIMUM TIMES FOR THE HABITAT SURVEYING

			F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Birds	Breeding												
	Overwintering												
Amphibians	Breeding												
Invertebrates	Overwintering & egg stages												
Bats	Breeding												
	Overwintering												

FIGURE 3 OPTIMUM TIMES FOR THE SURVEYING OF ANIMAL GROUPS

8.6. Additional information of value for site evaluation

- Woodland age and physical structure, e.g. presence of; glades and rides, veteran trees, dead wood and coppice management.
- Current and past management, including historical land-use records.
- Access provision and use, e.g. formal and informal footpaths.
- Proximity to residential areas and/or schools.
- Landscape assessment



8.7. Contextual data

Habitat data is provided by the HBA, giving both the County-wide context and information on the importance of the site in terms of its ecological position, for example its role in allowing the movement, dispersal or migration of species or its contribution to a wider habitat mosaic.

National and Local Biodiversity Action Plans are also sources of information on habitat, and also species, priorities for conservation. Red Data Books and distribution atlases indicate species rarity. Species records for the County are held by the WBRC at the Warwickshire Museum.

8.8. Wildlife Site Boundary Definition

Boundaries of Wildlife Sites will normally follow the limits of the area of nature conservation interest. However, there may be cases where aspects of the conservation interest are dependent on adjacent land of lower intrinsic wildlife value, for example zones of semi-natural vegetation adjacent to water-courses. Where this is the case, the boundary will be drawn around this wider area. In addition, where habitat boundaries are not clearly defined on the ground, it may be necessary, for practical reasons of site definition, to delineate boundaries according to clearly identifiable features such as hedges, fences or roads. These will often also define management or tenure units.

For some sites, small areas which do not appear to have great value in themselves, will be included where they are an integral part of the site or link other areas of greater importance, and so contributing to the overall wildlife value of the site. Examples could be: a grassland site where species-richness varies across a single management unit; or coniferous plantation areas present within an ancient deciduous woodland.

Local Wildlife Sites may include within their boundaries artificial habitats, such as ruined buildings, rubble and metalled roads or paths, where they have proven value for wildlife such as bats, reptiles, invertebrates, mosses and lichens, and contribute to the interest of the site.

In the case of linear sites, such as canals, road verges or railway embankments, boundaries will generally follow the limits of substantive conservation value. However, where continuous stretches are interrupted by relatively short lengths of lower value semi-natural habitat but ecological continuity is maintained, boundaries will be drawn to encompass these. Where areas of interest are more widely separated, or ecological continuity is interrupted by man-made structures, individual stretches will be regarded as separate but associated sites.



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Rivers and streams should be considered as a separate case. Due to water flow, ecological continuity is a fundamental feature of these features, activities upstream having a potential effect on downstream water chemistry, physical conditions and aquatic communities. Changes in river flows and water quality, due to abstraction or discharges, have widespread effects. There is, therefore, a strong case for the designation of whole river systems as a single site. This already occurs in the case of SSSIs, the River Blythe being the main example in Warwickshire.

Whole river designation need not represent an unnecessary constraint on development. As is the case for river SSSIs, any proposed activity or development can be assessed in terms of the specific river stretches affected.



9. GUIDANCE NOTES ON APPLICATION OF THE SITE SELECTION CRITERIA FOR HABITATS:

- 1. Canals**
- 2. Heathland**
- 3. Hedgerows**
- 4. Mires and Wetlands**
- 5. Mosaic Sites**
- 6. Parkland and Orchards**
- 7. Post-Industrial Sites**
- 8. Semi-natural Grassland and Marsh**
- 9. Species Sites**
- 10. Tall Herb Communities**
- 11. Veteran Trees**
- 12. Water Bodies & Water Courses**
- 13. Woodland and Scrub**



9.1. Linear Local Wildlife Sites - Canals

Canals are artificial corridors of standing water that date mainly from the late eighteenth century, when they acted as important transportation routes for industry. As with rivers and streams the water quality of canals has improved considerably in recent decades and greater effort is being made to conserve aquatic and marginal plant communities. Today most canals are primarily used for their amenity value.

1. **Diversity** will be considered as an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The canal has a high species diversity of vegetation characteristic of the habitat type, for example; liverworts and mosses, floating, marginal and submerged aquatic vegetation.
 - ii. The canal contains a variety of features typical of its type, for example; vegetated side pounds, overflows, locks, bridges and tunnels.
 - iii. The canal has a significant amount of surrounding semi-natural habitat.
 - iv. The canal contains frequent associated sub-habitats, including; marginal habitats, damp areas, open springs, flushes, marsh, exposed tree roots, overhanging branches and woody debris.
 - v. The canal has importance for invertebrates, fish, mammals and/or bird life.
2. **Rarity** will be considered as an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The canal contains one or more locally important or threatened species or habitat.
 - ii. The canal contains one or more nationally important or threatened species or habitat.
 - iii. The canal contains one or more internationally important or threatened species or habitat.



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3. **Size:** This is not applicable.
4. **Naturalness** will be considered as an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. Re-sectioning or reinforcement of the banks covers no more than half the length, i.e. sections of soft bank are present. NB Most canals have reinforced/piled banks, as all were originally created through human engineering work.
 - ii. There are areas of semi-natural habitat associated with the canal, for example, marginal swamp, marsh, grassland or woodland.
 - iii. The aquatic communities present have developed or are developing through natural processes post any alterations to the canal.
5. **Fragility** will be considered as an important criterion where one or more or both of the following applies:
 - i. The survival of the canal or its features, or important species it supports, is dependent on continued sensitive management.
 - ii. The canal or its features, or important species it supports, is relatively sensitive to human disturbance and/or the adverse effects of neighbouring land-use; for example, external hydrological change, agricultural pesticides, loss of adjacent semi-natural habitat or eutrophication.
6. **Typicalness** will be considered as an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
 - i. The canal has a good example of its water course habitat type. The national, regional or local context should be stated. Associated hedgerows, grass towpath and soft banks are present.
 - ii. The canal makes a valuable contribution to the range and sequence of canal habitats in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull.
7. **Ecological Position** will be considered as an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The ecological continuity is an intrinsic attribute of a canal but will be considered of particular importance where artificial modification does not significantly reduce this function.



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- ii. The canal is linked to other open water or wetland habitats or is one of a group of canals in the area, including associated reservoirs, which provide a stepping stone function.
 - iii. The canal is associated with other semi-natural habitat.
 - iv. The canal is close to, or part of, or itself forms, a wildlife corridor or other connecting linear habitat. It has at least one soft bank, one side without artificial lighting, and one side has a hedge or shrub corridor.
- 8. Significant Populations** will be considered as an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
- i. The canal is known to contain an important population, or high proportion, of a particular species occurring in Warwickshire (or nationally).
 - ii. The canal is known to contain a species on the edge of its range.
- 9. Potential Value** will be considered as an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. It can be demonstrated that diversity, or any other criterion, can be enhanced so as to improve the canal's substantive nature conservation value, and that the improvements can be realistically achieved.
 - ii. If the canal was of sufficient value to be selected, but has been damaged, it is considered to be recoverable
 - iii. The canal provides good habitat for an important species that has been recorded nearby.
 - iv. An associated reservoir still has a seasonal rise and fall of water in line with demand and water control.
- 10. Physical and Visual Access** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. There is formal access to a series of points along its length by means of a definitive public right of way or visual access from a crossing.
 - ii. On the non-towpath side, there is informal access to the canal e.g. through unrestricted entrance ways and casual footpaths which are obviously well used.



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- iii. There is disabled access to at least sections of the canal.
- 11. Educational Value** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The canal has existing use as an education resource.
 - ii. The canal includes a good range of different accessible educational features/types.
 - iii. The canal has at least some easy and safe access to the water's edge e.g. there is a defined, specifically designed, or suitably modified platform area.
 - iv. The canal is near to schools which could potentially use it.
- 12. Community and Amenity Value** will be considered as an important criterion where there is significant evidence of regular use of the canal by the public (e.g. signs of informal access, footpaths etc.) and where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The canal contains specific interests, for example; bird or mammal interest, invertebrate interest or attractive vegetation.
 - ii. The canal has general recreational appeal e.g. through its peacefulness, seclusion, inclusion of good picnic sites, fishing or general 'countryside appeal'.
 - iii. The canal has specific links with community history.
- 13. Aesthetic Appeal and Landscape Character** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The canal is characteristic of the canals in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull.
 - ii. The canal contributes to local landscape character and appeal.
 - iii. The canal has a varied channel with such features as locks, overflows, side pounds, inflowing feeder streams and tunnels.
- 14. Geographic Position** will be considered as an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
- i. The canal is isolated from other areas of semi-natural habitat or open water.



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- ii. The canal is situated within walking distance of residential communities.
- 15. Recorded History** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The recorded history is known for the canal.
 - ii. Records for the canal extend back to before World War II.
 - iii. Records for the canal extend back to before 1900.
- 16. Continuity of Land-use** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
- i. The canal is known to have been unaltered for a long established period since 1950, or since construction (of the canal).
 - ii. The canal includes archaeological features for example; side pounds, overflows, redundant locks, buildings, weirs, and tunnels.



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9.2. Heathland

Heathland is a special type of vegetation dominated by dwarf-shrubs (usually heathers) that typically forms on nutrient-poor, acidic mineral soils overlying sandstone or thick layers of glacial sands or gravels. Soil pH can be as low as 3.5. Although species diversity tends to be low, due to the specialised nature of the habitat, the plant community that is present contains a high proportion of county uncommon or notable species.

Warwickshire was once renowned for its “tractless heaths” and many place names still contain the word ‘Heath’ or a reference to heath. Only a few tiny scattered remnants remain and most of these are of modern origin, having re-colonised post-industrial habitats such as railway embankments and spoil tips in the north of Warwickshire. Indeed one of the best heaths in the county is on colliery spoil.

Typically in Warwickshire, heathlands are a mosaic of stands of heather, interspersed with acid grassland, gorse and birch scrub. Because of the relict nature and secondary establishment of heath in the county, many of the characteristic species (both in fauna and flora) are absent.

Heathland is a rare habitat in the county and all significant patches should be designated.

1. **Diversity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The site has a high species diversity of plants characteristic of its type (e.g. as defined by the National Vegetation Classification).
 - ii. The site contains a mosaic of three or more habitats.
 - iii. The site contains a wide range of associated sub-habitats e.g. young open scrub, tall herb, grassland, damp areas, open springs, flushes, ditches, streams, variable slope or aspect, bare soil.
 - iv. The heath has importance for invertebrates, mammals, reptiles and/or bird life.
2. **Rarity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The site contains one or more locally important or threatened species or habitat.



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- ii. The site contains one or more nationally important or threatened species or habitat.
 - iii. The site contains one or more internationally important or threatened species or habitat.
3. **Size** will be considered an important criterion where the following applies:

The area of the heath is large enough for its characteristic communities to be relatively unaffected by outside influences. Heathland is so rare in Warwickshire that even very small examples should be selected.

4. **Naturalness** will be considered an important criterion when the following applies:
- i. There are heath communities present on site (as defined by Phase I Habitat Survey (JNCC 1990)).
 - ii. The heath is long established.
 - iii. The heath communities present have developed by a natural process of colonisation or succession.

The largest area of heath in Warwickshire developed through natural colonisation of coal spoil. Due to the extreme rarity of long-established heathland in the county, all sites of this kind should be selected. Recently developed examples of this habitat will also be considered as important under this criterion.

5. **Fragility** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The survival of the heathland, or important species it supports, is dependent on continued sensitive management.
 - ii. The heathland, or important species it supports, is relatively sensitive to human disturbance and/or the adverse effects of neighbouring land-use (e.g. agricultural pesticides, loss/absence of boundary features, eutrophication).
 - iii. The heathland is vulnerable to the encroachment of scrub or Bracken.
6. **Typicalness** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:



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- i. The site has a good example of its heathland community type. The national, regional or local context should be stated.
 - ii. The site makes a valuable contribution to the range and sequence of heathland in Warwickshire.
- 7. Ecological Position** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The site is linked to other areas of heathland or is one of a group of sites in the area (e.g., has a stepping stone function).
 - ii. The heathland is associated with other semi-natural habitat.
 - iii. The site is close to or part of a wildlife corridor or other connecting linear habitats.
- 8. Significant Populations** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
- i. The site is known to contain an important population, or high proportion, of a particular species occurring in Warwickshire (or nationally).
 - ii. The site is known to contain a species on the edge of its range.
- 9. Potential Value** will be considered as an additional criterion where one or both of the following applies:
- i. It can be demonstrated that diversity, or any other criterion, can be enhanced so as to improve the site's substantive value, and that the improvements can be realistically achieved.
 - ii. If the site was of sufficient value to be selected, but has been damaged, it is considered to be recoverable.
- 10. Physical and Visual Access** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. There is formal access to the site, by means of a definitive public right of way.
 - ii. There is informal access to the site, e.g. through unrestricted entrance ways and casual footpaths which are obviously well used.
 - iii. There is disabled access to the site.



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- iv. Visual access is generally unrestricted e.g. the site is not hidden by local topography or built development, or the site is on a prominent hillside.
- 11. Educational Value** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The site has existing use as an educational resource.
 - ii. The site includes a mosaic of different habitat types.
 - iii. The site includes transitional habitats.
 - iv. The site includes aquatic features (and there is easy and safe access to the water's edge, e.g. there is a "dipping" platform).
 - v. The site is near to a school which could potentially use it.
- 12. Community and Amenity Value** will be considered as an important criterion where there is significant evidence of regular use of the site by the public, (e.g. signs of informal access, footpaths etc.) and where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The site contains specific interests, e.g. mammal interest, invertebrate interest or attractive vegetation.
 - ii. The site has general recreational appeal e.g. through its peacefulness, seclusion, inclusion of good picnic sites, or general 'countryside appeal'.
 - iii. The site has specific links with community history, e.g. it includes old canal structures or railway lines.
- 13. Aesthetic Appeal and Landscape Character** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The site is characteristic of the Warwickshire Landscape Area within which it is found.
 - ii. The site contributes to local landscape character and appeal.
 - iii. The site provides a variety of internal views.
 - iv. The site supports attractive vegetation, e.g. the seasonal appeal of heather in flower.
- 14. Geographical Position** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:



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- i. The site is isolated from other areas of semi-natural habitat.
- ii. The site is situated within walking distance of residential communities.

15. Recorded History will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The recorded history is known for the site.
- ii. Records for the site extend back to before World War II.
- iii. Records for the site extend back to before 1900.

16. Continuity of Land-use will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site is known to be or is probably a long established area of common land.
- ii. The heathland contains archaeological features (e.g. Mesolithic, Late Neolithic and Bronze Age settlement and Barrows).
- iii. The heathland is maintained under a regime of traditional management (e.g. grazing).



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9.3. Hedgerows

Hedgerows are a functional component of our landscape, created by farmers over the centuries to suit changing systems of agricultural ownership and management. The removal of hedgerows since World War II to meet the needs of modern farming systems has been a matter of environmental concern. Although removal continues, neglect and poor management are also significant factors in their decline. The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 will only protect a small percentage of remaining hedgerows.

The majority of surviving hedgerows in the county are straight enclosure hedges, dating to the long period of enclosure acts passed during the 18th and early 19th centuries, when almost all of the once numerous common fields, heaths and common lands were privatized by local landowners and enclosed with new hedgerows, principally composed of Hawthorn and Blackthorn. Older hedges are often sinuous in appearance and much more species diverse, and tend to mark ancient boundaries of estates and parishes. They may also preserve medieval or post-medieval boundary banks of long vanished woodlands or common lands; the former of which can often be identified by the presence of ancient woodland indicator plants.

The managed hedgerows of lowland Britain provide important visual elements of line and texture, bringing character and diversity to the landscape. This, with their historic associations, often makes them the cherished focus of amenity interests.

Over 600 species of plants have been recorded in hedgerows and their associated banks and ditches. Many of our woodland bird species nest in them and migrants feed in them. Also, over 20 species of butterfly commonly breed in hedgerows. The whole hedgerow structure is therefore of conservation value, including the vegetation in the ditch, the banks, the base of the hedgerow, the shrub component and associated climbing plants, and the hedgerow trees.

Surveying hedgerows is a major undertaking and it is accepted that the list of hedges selected under these criteria will inevitably be incomplete; however it is important that it is acknowledged that all hedges which meet these criteria are important wildlife features. For the purposes of these criteria only hedges of 20 metres or more in length will be considered.

1. **Diversity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The hedgerow contains five or more native woody species, on average, in a 30 metre length. (Species as listed in Schedule 3 of The Hedgerows Regulations 1997.



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- ii. The hedgerow has a diverse list of herbaceous plants, associated with woodland.
 - iii. The hedgerow supports a good range of other associated species, (e.g. birds, mammals, invertebrates and fungi).
 - iv. The hedgerow has associated with it at least one of the following features:
 - 1. a bank or wall supporting the hedge
 - 2. standard trees
 - 3. a ditch
- 2. Rarity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The site contains one or more locally important or threatened species or habitat.
 - ii. The site contains one or more nationally important or threatened species or habitat.
 - iii. The site contains one or more internationally important or threatened species or habitat.
- 3. Size** will be considered an important criterion where the following applies: The hedge is five metres or more wide.
- 4. Naturalness** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The hedgerow is known to be at least 300 years old or pre-dates parliamentary enclosures.
 - ii. There is no significant part of the hedgerow dominated by non-native species of tree or shrub, (e.g. Sycamore).
 - iii. There are substantial areas of semi-natural habitat associated with the hedgerow.
 - iv. The communities present have developed or are developing through natural processes.
- 5. Fragility** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
- i. The survival of the hedgerow, or important species it supports, is dependent on sensitive management.



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- ii. The hedgerow, or important species it supports is relatively sensitive to human disturbance and/or the adverse effects of neighbouring land-use, (for example agricultural herbicides and pesticides, close ploughing).

6. Typicalness will be considered an important criterion where the following applies:

The hedgerow is a good example of a hedge type in the county e.g. with standard trees or associated hedge bank.

7. Ecological Position will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The hedgerow is linked to woodland, scrub or other hedges.
- ii. The hedgerow is associated with areas of semi-natural habitat.
- iii. The hedgerow is close to, or part of a wildlife corridor or other connecting linear habitats.

8. Significant Populations will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The hedgerow is known to contain an important population of, or high proportion of, a particular species occurring in Warwickshire (or nationally).
- ii. The hedgerow is known to contain a species on the edge of its range.

9. Potential Value will be considered an additional criterion where the following applies:

The hedgerow has been damaged or fragmented but is considered to be recoverable.

10. Physical and Visual Access will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The hedgerow runs adjacent to a definitive public right of way.
- ii. There is informal access to the land adjacent to the hedgerow, (e.g. through unrestricted entrance ways and casual footpaths which are obviously well used).



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- iii. Visual access is generally unrestricted, (e.g. the hedgerow is not hidden by local topography or built development, or the hedgerow is on a prominent hillside).
- iv. The hedge forms part of a landscape where the overall pattern of hedges is an important feature.

11. Educational Value will be considered as an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The hedgerow has existing use as an educational resource.
- ii. The hedgerow is alongside an aquatic feature (and there is easy and safe access to the water's edge, e.g. a dipping platform).
- iii. The hedgerow is near to a school which could potentially use it.

12. Community and Amenity Value will be considered as an important criterion where there is significant evidence of regular use of the site by the public (e.g. signs of informal access, footpaths etc.) and where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The hedgerow contains specific interests, e.g. mammal interest, invertebrate interest or attractive vegetation.
- ii. The hedgerow has general recreational appeal, e.g. through its help towards seclusion, peacefulness or general 'countryside appeal'.
- iii. The hedgerow has specific links with community history, e.g. marks an old parish boundary.

13. Aesthetic Appeal and Landscape Character will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The hedgerow is characteristic of the Warwickshire Landscape Area within which it is found.
- ii. The hedgerow contributes to local landscape character and appeal.
- iii. The hedgerow supports attractive vegetation, e.g. spring blossom, autumn berries.

14. Geographical Position will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The hedgerow is isolated from others of comparable interest.



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- ii. The hedgerow is situated within walking distance of residential communities.

15. Recorded History will be considered as an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The recorded history is known for the hedgerow.
- ii. Records for the hedgerow extend back to before World War II.
- iii. Records for the hedgerow extend back to before 1900.

16. Continuity of Land-use will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The hedge is known to be or is probably long established, (i.e. before the general enclosure act relevant to the parish in question).
- ii. The hedgerow marks the boundary, or part of the boundary, of at least one historic parish.
- iii. The hedgerow includes an archaeological or historical feature, e.g. a medieval wood bank, or is situated within an archaeological site or on land associated with such a site.
- iv. The hedgerow marks the boundary of, or is visually related to any building or other feature within, an historic estate or manor.



9.4. Mires and Wetlands

Wetland communities are often difficult to separate into distinct types, i.e. fen, swamp, bog, flush, spring etc. Indeed the National Vegetation Classification recognises this within Volume 2 on Mires. Due to this difficulty, all such communities have been considered together. Marshy grassland is dealt with in the guidelines covering grasslands in general.

Mires (Bogs, Flushes, Springs and Fens)

Many of these vegetation types occur on soils which are organic in character (peat), but some are characteristic of mineral profiles. They support communities made up of bryophytes, herbaceous plants and sub-shrubs, sampled from a wide variety of bogs and wet heaths, fens, fen-meadow, rush pastures, flushes, springs and soak-aways, where the ground is kept permanently or periodically waterlogged by high atmospheric humidity, a high ground water table or lateral flow. Mires are often found in close association with other communities such as swamps, wet mesotrophic grasslands and open water aquatic communities.

Virtually no mires remain in Warwickshire, therefore virtually any habitat of this nature would be selected.

Wetland (Swamp, marginal and inundation vegetation).

This category is defined as emergent or frequently inundated vegetation over peat or mineral soils. These communities are distinct from mires in having a water table above the level of the substrate for most of the year. Swamp is tall emergent vegetation typical of the transitional zone between open water and exposed land, and is generally within standing water for a large part of the year. Marginal vegetation includes all narrow strips of emergent vegetation occurring on the margins of lowland water bodies. Inundation communities are very unstable, being associated with periodic inundation on sands and gravels and the draw-down zone around ponds, pools etc.

These communities are more widespread in Warwickshire than Mires. Relatively young stands of swamp can be of importance as they provide extremely valuable habitats for birds, as is often the case with flooded gravel pits.



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1. **Diversity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The site has a high species diversity of plants characteristic of the habitat type (e.g. as defined by the National Vegetation Classification).
 - ii. The site contains a mosaic of three or more habitats.
 - iii. The site contains a wide range of associated sub-habitats, e.g. young open scrub or carr, damp areas, open springs, flushes, ditches, streams, variable slope or aspect, bare soil.
 - iv. The mire or wetland has importance for invertebrates, mammals and bird life.

2. **Rarity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The site contains one or more locally important or threatened species or habitat
 - ii. The site contains one or more nationally important or threatened species or habitat.
 - iii. The site contains one or more internationally important or threatened species or habitat

3. **Size:** Large wetlands are rare in Warwickshire. Size will be considered an important criterion where the following applies:

The area of the mire/wetland is large enough for its characteristic communities to be relatively unaffected by outside influences.

4. **Naturalness** will be considered an important criterion where the following applies:

There are areas of true bog, fen or flush present on site (as defined by Phase I Habitat Survey (NCC 1990).

NB. Saline springs are rare naturally occurring phenomena and all examples should be selected.

5. **Fragility** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
 - i. The survival of the mire or wetland, and/or important species it supports, is dependent on continued sensitive management.



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- ii. The mire or wetland and/or important species it supports, is particularly sensitive to human disturbance and/or the adverse effects of neighbouring land-use (e.g. hydrological changes, agricultural pesticides, loss/absence of boundary features, eutrophication).
6. **Typicalness** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
 - i. The site has a good example of its community type. The national, regional or local context should be stated.
 - ii. The site makes a valuable contribution to the range and sequence of its habitat type in Warwickshire.
7. **Ecological Position** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The site is linked to other wetland areas or is one of a group of sites in the area (e.g., has a stepping stone function).
 - ii. The wetland or mire is associated with other semi-natural habitat.
 - iii. The site is close to or part of a wildlife corridor or other connecting linear habitats.
8. **Significant Populations** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
 - i. The site is known to contain an important population, or high proportion, of a particular species occurring in Warwickshire (or nationally).
 - ii. The site is known to contain a species on the edge of its range.
9. **Potential Value** will be considered as an additional criterion where one or both of the following applies:
 - i. It can be demonstrated that diversity, or any other criterion, can be enhanced so as to improve the site's substantive value, and that the improvements can be realistically achieved.
 - ii. If the site was of sufficient value to be selected, but has been damaged it is considered to be recoverable.



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10. Physical and Visual Access will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. There is formal access to the site, by means of a definitive public right of way.
- ii. There is informal access to the site, e.g. through unrestricted entrance ways and casual footpaths which are obviously well used.
- iii. There is disabled access to the site.
- iv. Visual access is generally unrestricted e.g. the site is not hidden by local topography or built development, or the site is on a prominent hillside.

11. Educational Value will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site has existing use as an educational resource.
- ii. The site includes a mosaic of different habitat types.
- iii. The site includes transitional habitats.
- iv. The site includes aquatic features (and there is easy and safe access to the water's edge, e.g. there is a "dipping" platform).
- v. The site is near to a school which could potentially use it.

12. Community and Amenity Value will be considered as an important criterion where there is significant evidence of regular use of the site by the public, (e.g. signs of informal access, footpaths etc.) and where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site contains specific interests, e.g. mammal interest, invertebrate interest or attractive vegetation.
- ii. The site has general recreational appeal e.g. through its peacefulness, seclusion, inclusion of good picnic sites, or general 'countryside appeal'.
- iii. The site has specific links with community history, e.g. it includes old canal structures.

13. Aesthetic Appeal and Landscape Character will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:



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- i. The site is characteristic of the Warwickshire Landscape Area within which it is found.
- ii. The site contributes to local landscape character and appeal.
- iii. The site provides a variety of internal views.
- iv. The site supports attractive vegetation, e.g. marsh flower communities.

14. Geographical Position will be considered as an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The site is isolated from other areas of semi-natural habitat.
- ii. The site is situated within walking distance of residential communities.

15. Recorded History will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The recorded history is known for the site.
- ii. Records for the site extend back to before World War II.
- iii. Records for the site extend back to before 1900.

16. Continuity of Land-use will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site is known to be or is probably long established (e.g., there are associated place names such as Fen End, Marsh Lane).
- ii. The mire/wetland contains archaeological features (e.g. evidence of peat cutting, fish or mill ponds, moats, preserved remains).
- iii. The site is maintained under a regime of traditional management (e.g. reed cutting).



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9.5. Mosaic sites

These guidelines are only appropriate where the mix of habitat is so intimate that distinct types are not easily discernible. This is only likely to occur on sites that have been left unmanaged and the resulting mix of grassland, tall herb, scrub, etc. is “knitted” into small-scale habitat mosaics.

This habitat category is unlikely to be extensively used in the site selection process. Where possible, the specific habitat guidelines should be used.

1. **Diversity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The site has a high species diversity of plants characteristic of various habitat types.
 - ii. The site contains a mosaic of three or more habitats and/or the site contains a wide range of associated sub-habitats e.g. variable slope or aspect, bare soil, woodland, grassland, scrub, edge habitat, fen, damp areas, open springs, flushes, ditches, streams.
 - iii. The habitat mosaic has significant importance for invertebrates, mammal and/or bird life.

2. **Rarity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The site contains one or more locally important or threatened species or habitat.
 - ii. The site contains one or more nationally important or threatened species or habitat.
 - iii. The site contains one or more internationally important or threatened species or habitat.

3. **Size** will be considered an important criterion where the following applies:

The mosaic area is large enough for its characteristic communities to be relatively unaffected by outside influences.



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4. **Naturalness** will be considered an important criterion when the following applies:

There are areas of semi-natural habitat present on site (as defined by Phase I Habitat Survey (NCC 1990)).

5. **Fragility** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The survival of the habitat mosaic, and/or species it supports, is dependent on continued sensitive management.
- ii. The habitat mosaic, and/or species it supports is relatively sensitive to human disturbance and/or the adverse effects of neighbouring land-use (e.g. agricultural pesticides, loss/absence of boundary features).

6. **Typicalness** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The site has a particularly good example of mosaic communities, e.g. a grassland/scrub mosaic. The local, regional or national context should be stated.
- ii. The site makes a valuable contribution to the range and sequence of designated sites in Warwickshire.

7. **Ecological Position** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site is linked to other areas of semi-natural habitat.
- ii. The site is a part of a group of other sites of nature conservation value in the area (e.g., has a stepping stone function).
- iii. The site is close to, or part of, a wildlife corridor or other connecting linear habitats.

8. **Significant Populations** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The site is known to contain an important population or high proportion of a particular species occurring in Warwickshire (or nationally).
- ii. The site is known to contain a species on the edge of its range.



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- 9. Potential Value** will be considered as an additional criterion where one or both of the following applies:
- i. It can be demonstrated that diversity, or any other criterion, can be enhanced so as to improve the site's substantive value, and that the improvements can be realistically achieved.
 - ii. If the site was of sufficient value to be selected, but has been damaged, it is considered to be recoverable.
- 10. Physical and Visual Access** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. There is formal access to the site, by means of a definitive public right of way.
 - ii. There is informal access to the site, e.g. through unrestricted entrance ways and casual footpaths which are obviously well used.
 - iii. There is disabled access to the site.
 - iv. Visual access is generally unrestricted e.g. the site is not hidden by local topography or built development, or the site is on a prominent hillside.
- 11. Educational Value** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The site has existing use as an educational resource.
 - ii. The site includes transitional habitats.
 - iii. The site includes aquatic features (and there is easy and safe access to the water's edge, e.g. there is a "dipping" platform).
 - iv. The site is near to a school which could potentially use it.
- 12. Community and Amenity Value** will be considered as an important criterion where there is significant evidence of regular use of the site by the public, (e.g. signs of informal access, footpaths etc.) and where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The site contains specific interests, e.g. mammal interest, invertebrate interest or attractive vegetation.



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- ii. The site has general recreational appeal e.g. through its peacefulness, seclusion, inclusion of good picnic sites, or general 'countryside appeal'.
- iii. The site has specific links with community history, e.g. it includes old canal structures or railway lines.

13. Aesthetic Appeal and Landscape Character will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site is characteristic of the Warwickshire Landscape Area within which it is found.
- ii. The site contributes to local landscape character and appeal.
- iii. The site provides a variety of internal views.
- iv. The site supports attractive vegetation.

14. Geographical Position will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The site is isolated from other areas of semi-natural habitat.
- ii. The site is situated within walking distance of residential communities.

15. Recorded History will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The recorded history is known for the site.
- ii. Records for the site extend back to before World War II.
- iii. Records for the site extend back to before 1900.

16. Continuity of Land-use will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site is known to be, or is probably, long established.
- ii. The site contains archaeological features (e.g. ridge-and-furrow marks, dry moats, deserted medieval settlement elements, strip lynchets, etc.).
- iii. The site is maintained under a regime of traditional management (e.g. grazing.)



9.6. Parkland and Orchards

9.6.1. Orchards

An Orchard is a collection of fruit trees, traditionally widely spaced over unimproved or semi-improved grassland. Old orchards with old trees are valuable, not only due to the trees themselves and the communities of plants and animals that live on and in them, but also due to the associated semi-natural habitats. Old orchard trees have many of the characteristics of veteran trees.

Orchards were once widespread in the county, but with concentrations in the fruit growing areas of the south-west. Most villages would have had at least one or two, often attached to the larger houses and farms, and in the 1930's still accounted for over 3% of all agricultural land in the county. Since the Second World War the majority of old orchards have been lost to intensive agriculture or housing development, and where still present have often been replaced by dwarf commercial trees which are heavily sprayed and pruned and therefore have a much reduced wildlife value. Fragments of traditional orchard containing old trees do still occur however, but are becoming increasingly scarce and all good examples (containing five or more trees) should be selected.

In the past, orchards have often played an important role in the local community; being a focal point for parish activities, festivals and so on. Many parishes would often concentrate on particular types of fruit, for instance cherries and perry pears in the lower Avon valley, and often had their own local varieties many of which are now nationally endangered.

1. **Diversity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The orchard trees are old and at least some of them are large enough to contain natural holes for nesting birds.
 - ii. The trees cover a semi-natural habitat, typically pasture or meadow.
 - iii. The tree cover or individual trees have a diverse associated flora and fauna. In particular these habitats are typified by mistletoe, lichens, fungi and dead wood invertebrates.
 - iv. The site contains a range of sub-habitats. (e.g. boundary hedges, scrub, tall herb, dead wood and associated ditches, small ponds and streams).



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- v. The site supports a good range of associated floral and/or faunal species.
2. **Rarity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The site contains one or more locally important or threatened species or habitat.
 - ii. The site contains one or more nationally important or threatened species or habitat.
 - iii. The site contains one or more internationally important or threatened species or habitat.
 3. **Size** will be considered an important criterion where the following applies:
 - i. The site is large enough for its characteristic communities to be relatively unaffected by outside influences. This would include all orchard sites over 1ha in size.
 - ii. The site has a fruit tree canopy cover exceeding 50% of the total orchard plot.
 4. **Naturalness** will be considered an important criterion where one of the following applies:
 - i. The fruit trees are old and consist of traditional varieties of apple, pear, plum or cherry.
 - ii. There are areas of semi-natural habitat present on site, e.g. tall herb or agriculturally semi-improved or unimproved grassland (as defined by the Phase I Habitat Survey (JNCC 1990)).
 - iii. The site contains a significant amount of old mature timber and/or dead wood.
 5. **Fragility** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
 - i. The survival of the site, or important species it supports, is dependent on sensitive management.
 - ii. The habitat, or important species it supports, is relatively sensitive to human disturbance and/or the adverse effects of neighbouring land-use (e.g. agricultural pesticides, loss/absence of boundary features).



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6. **Typicalness** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. This is a particularly good example of an orchard (stating national, regional or local context).
 - ii. The site makes a valuable contribution to the range and sequence of orchards in Warwickshire.
 - iii. The site contains features of past management (e.g. old pasture or hay meadow communities).
7. **Ecological Position** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The orchard is linked to woodland and/or scrub, or is one of a group of similar sites in the area (e.g., has a stepping stone function).
 - ii. The orchard is linked to other semi-natural habitat.
 - iii. The site is close to, or part of, a wildlife corridor or other connecting linear habitats.
8. **Significant Populations** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
 - i. The site is known to contain an important population of, or high proportion of, a particular species occurring in Warwickshire (or nationally). In particular the priority BAP species Noble Chafer (*Gnorimus nobillis*) or any other priority BAP species associated with traditional orchards.
 - ii. The site is known to contain a species on the edge of its range.
9. **Potential Value** will be considered as an additional criterion where one or both of the following applies:
 - i. It can be demonstrated that diversity, or any other criterion, can be enhanced so as to improve the site's substantive value, and that the improvements can be realistically achieved.
 - ii. If the site was of sufficient value to be selected, but has been damaged, it is considered to be recoverable.
10. **Physical and Visual Access** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:



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- i. There is formal access to the site, by means of a definitive public right of way.
- ii. There is informal access to the site, e.g. through unrestricted entrance ways and casual footpaths which are obviously well used.
- iii. There is disabled access to the site.
- iv. Visual access is generally unrestricted, e.g. the site is not hidden by local topography or the built environment, or the site is on a prominent hillside.

11. Educational Value will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site has existing use as an educational resource.
- ii. The site includes a mosaic of different habitat types.
- iii. The site includes transitional habitats.
- iv. The site is managed and/or used by the local community.
- v. The site is near to a school which could potentially use it.

12. Community and Amenity Value will be considered an important criterion where there is significant evidence of regular use of the site by the public, (e.g. signs of informal access, footpaths etc.) and one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site contains specific interests, e.g. mammal or bird interest, attractive vegetation.
- ii. The site has general recreational appeal, e.g. through its peacefulness, seclusion, inclusion of good picnic sites, or general rural atmosphere.
- iii. The orchard has specific links with community history.
- iv. The orchard contains local or rare tree varieties.
- v. There is physical public access to the trees and fruit for harvesting, such as in a Community Orchard.



- 13. Aesthetic Appeal and Landscape Character** will be considered an important criterion where the following applies:
- i. The site is characteristic of the Warwickshire Landscape Area within which it is found.
 - ii. The site contributes to local landscape character and appeal.
 - iii. The orchard provides a variety of internal views.
 - iv. The site supports attractive vegetation, e.g. seasonal fruit tree blossom.
- 14. Geographical Position** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
- i. The site is isolated from other orchards or semi-natural habitat.
 - ii. The site is situated within walking distance of residential communities.
- 15. Recorded History** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The recorded history is known for the site.
 - ii. Records for the site extend back to before World War II.
 - iii. Records for the site extend back to before 1900.
- 16. Continuity of Land-use** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The orchard, or part of it, is shown on the 1st edition of the six inch Ordnance Survey map (c1886) or otherwise known to have existed at or before that time.
 - ii. The site contains an archaeologically important feature (e.g. ridge-and-furrow, earthworks, etc.) or an historically important structure linked to its use as an orchard (e.g. a cider house).
 - iii. The trees and/or grassland are maintained under a regime of traditional management (e.g. pollarding or pruning, grazing or hay cropping).



9.6.2. Parkland and wood pasture

Tree cover must be less than 30% to warrant inclusion as “parkland”. True traditional parkland was usually associated with the manor houses and country seats of the old “gentry” and consisted of rough pasture containing scattered mature trees, often pollarded. Such habitats are important due to the presence of often large numbers of veteran trees and also for their landscape value and the historical association between scattered mature trees and the under-lying grassland communities, which are often direct descendants of medieval wood pasture. Such rough pasture also often contained traditional woodland plants such as Bracken and Bluebell, and was grazed by sheep, cattle or Fallow Deer. With the decline of the country estate, particularly during the first half of the 20th century, good quality parkland has become scarce, as the majority of examples have been sold off and turned over to more intensive grazing or arable farming, golf courses etc. This has led to the gradual loss of tree cover and the improvement of grassland, with many former parks now inseparable visually from the surrounding farmland.

NB. If the Parkland trees are over other habitats, these associated communities can also be assessed using the specific guidelines - grassland, heath etc.

1. **Diversity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The parkland tree cover is predominantly native or the trees are veteran.
 - ii. The trees cover a semi-natural habitat, typically pasture or meadow.
 - iii. The tree cover or individual trees have a diverse associated flora and fauna. In particular these habitats are typified by mistletoe, lichens, fungi and dead wood invertebrates.
 - iv. The site contains a range of sub-habitats. (e.g. young open scrub, damp areas, associated small ponds, streams, closed-canopy woodland, regenerating coppice, woodland edge, grassland, fen or mire, variable slope or aspect, bare soil).
 - v. The site supports a good range of associated floral and/or faunal species.



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2. **Rarity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The site contains one or more locally important or threatened species or habitat.
 - ii. The site contains one or more nationally important or threatened species or habitat.
 - iii. The site contains one or more internationally important or threatened species or habitat.

3. **Size** will be considered an important criterion where the following applies:

The site is large enough for its characteristic communities to be relatively unaffected by outside influences.

4. **Naturalness** will be considered as an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The trees within the parkland or wood pasture are predominantly native species.
 - ii. There are areas of semi-natural habitat present on site, e.g. semi-improved grassland or Bracken.
 - iii. The site contains a significant amount of old mature timber and/or dead wood.

5. **Fragility** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
 - i. The survival of the site, or important species it supports, is dependent on sensitive management.
 - ii. The habitat, or important species it supports, is relatively sensitive to human disturbance and/or the adverse effects of neighbouring land-use (e.g. agricultural pesticides, loss/absence of boundary features).

6. **Typicalness** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. This is a particularly good example of a parkland or wood pasture community (stating national, regional or local context).
 - ii. The site makes a valuable contribution to the range and sequence of its type in Warwickshire.



- iii. The site contains features of past management (e.g. old pollards).
- 7. Ecological Position** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The parkland or wood pasture is linked to woodland and/or scrub or is one of a group of sites in the area (e.g. it has a stepping stone function).
 - ii. The parkland or wood pasture is linked to other semi-natural habitats.
 - iii. The site is close to, or part of, a wildlife corridor or other connecting linear habitats.
- 8. Significant Populations** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
- i. The site is known to contain an important population of, or high proportion of, a particular species occurring in Warwickshire (or nationally).
 - ii. The site is known to contain a species on the edge of its range.
- 9. Potential Value** will be considered as an additional criterion where one or both of the following applies:
- i. It can be demonstrated that diversity, or any other criterion, can be enhanced so as to improve the site's substantive value, and that the improvements can be realistically achieved.
 - ii. If the site was of sufficient value to be selected, but has been damaged, it is considered to be recoverable.
- 10. Physical and Visual Access** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. There is formal access to the site, by means of a definitive public right of way.
 - ii. There is informal access to the site, e.g. through unrestricted entrance ways and casual footpaths which are obviously well used.
 - iii. There is disabled access to the site.



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- iv. Visual access is generally unrestricted e.g. the site is not hidden by local topography or the built environment, or the site is on a prominent hillside.

11. Educational Value will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site has existing use as an educational resource.
- ii. The site includes a mosaic of different habitat types.
- iii. The site includes transitional habitats.
- iv. The site includes aquatic features (and there is easy and safe access to the water's edge, e.g. there is a "dipping" platform).
- v. The site is near a school which could potentially use it.

12. Community and Amenity Value will be considered as an important criterion where there is significant evidence of regular use of the site by the public, (e.g. signs of informal access, footpaths etc.) and one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site contains specific interests, e.g. mammal interest, invertebrate interest or attractive vegetation.
- ii. The site has general recreational appeal e.g. through its peacefulness, seclusion, inclusion of good picnic sites, or general rural atmosphere.
- iii. The site has specific links with community history.
- iv. The park contains veteran trees of county importance as regards age and girth, e.g. they have been listed as "county champions" in the register of veteran trees.

13. Aesthetic Appeal and Landscape Character will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site is characteristic of the Warwickshire Landscape Area within which it is found.
- ii. The parkland or wood pasture contributes to local landscape character and appeal.
- iii. The parkland or wood pasture provides a variety of internal views.
- iv. The site supports attractive vegetation, e.g. spring flowers.



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14. Geographical Position will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The site is isolated from areas of similar or semi-natural habitat.
- ii. The site is situated within walking distance of residential communities.

15. Recorded History will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The recorded history is known for the site.
- ii. Records for the site extend back to before World War II.
- iii. Records for the site extend back to before 1900.

16. Continuity of Land-use will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The parkland or wood pasture, or part of it, is shown on the 1st edition of the six inch Ordnance Survey map (c1886) or otherwise known to have existed at or before that time.
- ii. The site contains an archaeologically important feature (e.g. ridge-and-furrow, old moat, earthworks, etc.).
- iii. The trees and/or grassland are maintained under a regime of traditional management (e.g. pollarding or pruning, grazing or hay cropping).



9.7. Post-industrial sites

Post-industrial Sites are those which have in the past been used for industrial purposes and have since been abandoned. The most common sites are disused railway lines and former quarries, but a range of other sites such as spoil heaps, filter beds and cleared factory sites are also included. These sites tend to have developed into areas of interest for three reasons:

- i. Disturbance during their period of use has either exposed geological strata which are not normally seen at the surface (e.g. railway cuttings and quarries), or has created unusual soils for the area (e.g. inland sand dunes or PFA deposits).
- ii. The sites have often been left to develop naturally without any management since the industrial use ceased.
- iii. The sites often have a mosaic of different habitats within a relatively small area.

1. **Diversity** will be considered as an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site contains a mosaic of at least three habitat types (e.g. woodland, scrub, wetland, grassland, marsh, bare ground, rock, open water, PFA communities, lichen heath or scree).
- ii. The site supports a diverse range of plants characteristic of the habitats present.
- iii. The site supports a good range of other species e.g. birds, mammals, invertebrates, lichens.

2. **Rarity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site contains one or more locally important or threatened species or habitat.
- ii. The site contains one or more nationally important or threatened species or habitat.
- iii. The site contains one or more internationally important or threatened species or habitat.
- iv. The site contains geological exposures, or soil types which are locally rare.



3. **Size** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
 - i. The overall size of the site is sufficient to sustain a mosaic of habitats.
 - ii. The area of one or more habitat type is sufficient to maintain its characteristic community.
4. **Naturalness** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. There are substantial areas of semi-natural habitat present on site.
 - ii. The communities present have developed or are developing through natural processes since the industrial use was terminated.
 - iii. The site forms a very good example of the process of succession.
5. **Fragility** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The survival of the mosaic of post-industrial habitats, or important species it supports is dependent on sensitive management.
 - ii. The communities and/or species present are relatively sensitive to human disturbance
 - iii. The site is not protected by some form of functional boundary.
6. **Typicalness** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
 - i. The site has a particularly good example of one of the habitats present. The national, regional or local context should be stated.
 - ii. The site makes a valuable contribution to the range and sequence of one or more of the habitats present in Warwickshire.
7. **Ecological Position** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The site is linked to other areas of semi-natural habitat, rather than being isolated to a considerable extent by other vegetation or land-use.



- ii. The site is part of a concentration of sites in the area.
 - iii. The site is close to or part of a wildlife corridor or other connecting linear habitats, or it forms a linear wildlife corridor which links to other habitats.
- 8. Significant Populations** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The site is known to contain an important population of, or a high proportion of, a species occurring in Warwickshire (or nationally).
 - ii. The site is known to contain a species on the edge of its range.
- 9. Potential Value** will be considered as an additional criterion where one or both of the following applies:
- i. It can be demonstrated that the diversity or any other criterion can be enhanced so as to improve the sites substantive value, and that the improvements can be realistically achieved.
 - ii. If the site was of sufficient value to be selected, but has been damaged, it is considered to be recoverable.
- 10. Physical and Visual Access** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. There is formal access to the site, by means of a definitive public right of way.
 - ii. There is existing informal access to the site, e.g. through unrestricted access points and casual footpaths which are obviously well used.
 - iii. There is disabled access to the site.
 - iv. Visual access is generally unrestricted e.g. the site is not hidden by local topography or built development, or the site is on a prominent hillside.
- 11. Educational Value** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The site has existing use as an educational resource.
 - ii. The site includes a mosaic of different habitat types.



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- iii. The site includes transitional habitats and can be used to demonstrate the process of succession.
- iv. The site includes aquatic features (and there is safe access to the water's edge e.g. there is a "dipping" platform).
- v. The site is close to an educational establishment and has the potential, and is safe, for use.

12. Community and Amenity Value will be considered as an important criterion where there is significant evidence of regular use of the site by the public, (e.g. signs of informal access, footpaths etc.) and where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site contains specific interests, e.g. mammal interest, invertebrate interest or attractive vegetation.
- ii. The site has general recreational appeal through its peacefulness, seclusion or general countryside appeal.
- iii. The site has specific links with community history.

13. Aesthetic Appeal and Landscape Character will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site contributes to local landscape character and appeal.
- ii. The site provides a variety of internal views.
- iii. The site supports an attractive floral community.

14. Geographical Position will be considered as an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The site is isolated from other semi-natural habitat.
- ii. The site is within walking distance of residential communities.

15. Recorded History will be considered an important criterion where the following applies:

The process of colonisation and succession since the site was used industrially has been recorded.

16. Continuity of Land-use will be considered an important criterion where the following applies:

The site has been allowed to develop, through processes of colonisation and succession, for more than 50 years.



9.8. Semi-natural Grassland and Marsh

This category covers those communities described in the Phase 1 habitat definitions as grassland and marsh. It includes areas of herbaceous vegetation dominated by grasses and also certain wet communities (**marsh**) dominated by marsh grasses, *Juncus* (rush), *Carex* (sedges), *Filipendula ulmaria* (meadowsweet), *Epilobium hirsutum* (Great Willowherb) or by other marshland herbs. As with the Phase 1 definitions, heathland and stands of tall reed grasses (swamp) are dealt with in other sections.

Truly natural grasslands - those not influenced by humans - are a rare habitat type not usually associated with the United Kingdom. Most grassland has been subjected to the influences of people, and probably all types of modern grassland community in the United Kingdom come into this category. Grassland which was originally created due to the activities of humans, but whose species composition has developed through natural processes, is referred to as semi-natural.

Grassland types form a continuum, from those with little or no agricultural improvement, to grassland which has been so improved that it has very low floristic diversity. The majority of grasslands have been subjected to some form or degree of agricultural improvement by changes to traditional grazing or mowing practices, fertilisation, drainage, or herbicide treatment. Agricultural improvement usually results in a decrease in floristic diversity and the dominance by just a few grass species. Under the umbrella term of semi-natural grassland it is therefore possible to identify further refinements to the categories of grassland habitat.

9.8.1. Unimproved Grassland

Agricultural improvement of the grassland is absent or historically minimal. Floristic diversity is likely to be high. This vegetation type is now very rare in Warwickshire. Unimproved grasslands are described as acidic, calcareous or neutral depending on the pH value of the soils which has a dramatic influence on species composition.

9.8.2. Semi-improved grassland

This category represents a continuum of grassland quality, and includes those which have been agriculturally improved but which still retain floristic diversity and species characteristic of their semi-natural grassland type. It is also still possible to further categorise these good quality semi-improved grassland as calcareous, acidic or neutral. This type of grassland is also considered to be now uncommon in Warwickshire and all good examples should be selected. At the lower end of the continuum



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it may be more difficult to easily categorise the grassland, which is then referred to as poor semi-improved.

9.8.3. Improved Grassland

This includes meadows and pastures which have been so altered by agricultural improvement that they have very low botanical diversity. This type of grassland would not normally be selected on its own but may be included within a site if integral to another more species-rich habitat.

1. **Diversity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site has a high species diversity of flowering plants characteristic of the habitat type (e.g. as defined by the National Vegetation Classification).
- ii. The site contains a mosaic of three or more habitats.
- iii. The site contains a range of associated sub-habitats e.g. tall herb vegetation, young open scrub or carr, damp areas, open springs, flushes, ditches, streams, ponds, variable slope or aspect, bare soil.
- iv. The grassland or marsh has importance for invertebrates, mammal and/or bird life.

2. **Rarity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site contains one or more locally important or threatened species or habitat.
- ii. The site contains one or more nationally important or threatened species or habitat.
- iii. The site contains one or more internationally important or threatened species or habitat.

NB All unimproved and good quality semi-improved grassland is rare and should be selected.

3. **Size** will be considered an important criterion where the following applies:

The area of the grassland/marsh is large enough for its characteristic communities to be relatively unaffected by outside influences.



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4. **Naturalness** will be considered an important criterion where the following applies:

There are areas of agriculturally unimproved and/or good quality semi-improved grassland/marsh present on site (as defined by Phase I Habitat Survey JNCC 1990).

5. **Fragility** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The survival of the grassland/marsh, and/or important species it supports, is dependent on continued sensitive management.
- ii. The grassland/marsh, and/or important species it supports, is relatively sensitive to human disturbance and/or the adverse effects of neighbouring land-use (e.g. agricultural pesticides, loss/absence of boundary features, eutrophication, hydrological change).
- iii. The grassland/marsh is vulnerable to the encroachment of scrub/carr.

6. **Typicalness** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The site has a good example of its grassland/marsh community type (neutral, acidic, calcareous or marshy grassland). The national, regional or local context should be stated.
- ii. The site makes a valuable contribution to the range and sequence of grassland/marsh in Warwickshire.

7. **Ecological Position** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site is linked to other areas of semi-natural grassland/marsh or is one of a group of sites in the area (e.g., has a stepping stone function).
- ii. The grassland or marsh is associated with other semi-natural habitat.
- iii. The site is close to or part of a wildlife corridor or other connecting linear habitats.

8. **Significant Populations** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:



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- i. The site is known to contain an important population, or high proportion, of a particular species occurring in Warwickshire (or nationally).
 - ii. The site is known to contain a species on the edge of its range.
- 9. Potential Value** will be considered as an additional criterion where one or both of the following applies:
- i. It can be demonstrated that diversity, or any other criterion, can be enhanced so as to improve the site's substantive value, and that the improvements can be realistically achieved.
 - ii. If the site was of sufficient value to be selected, but has been damaged, it is considered to be recoverable.
- 10. Physical and Visual Access** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. There is formal access to the site, by means of a definitive public right of way.
 - ii. There is informal access to the site, e.g. through unrestricted entrance ways and casual footpaths which are obviously well used.
 - iii. There is disabled access to the site.
 - iv. Visual access is generally unrestricted e.g. the site is not hidden by local topography or built development, or the site is on a prominent hillside.
- 11. Educational Value** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The site has existing use as an educational resource.
 - ii. The site includes a mosaic of different habitat types.
 - iii. The site includes transitional habitats.
 - iv. The site includes aquatic features (and there is easy and safe access to the water's edge, e.g. there is a "dipping" platform).
 - v. The site is near to a school which could potentially use it.
- 12. Community and Amenity Value** will be considered an important criterion where there is significant evidence of regular use of the site



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by the public, (e.g. signs of informal access, footpaths etc.) and where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site contains specific interests, e.g. mammal interest, invertebrate interest or attractive vegetation.
- ii. The site has general recreational appeal e.g. through its peacefulness, seclusion, inclusion of good picnic sites, or general 'countryside appeal'.
- iii. The site has specific links with community history, e.g. it includes old canal or railway lines.

13. Aesthetic Appeal and Landscape Character will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site is characteristic of the Warwickshire Landscape Area within which it is found.
- ii. The site contributes to local landscape character and appeal.
- iii. The site provides a variety of internal views.
- iv. The site supports attractive vegetation, e.g. a colourful meadow flower community.

14. Geographical Position will be considered as an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The site is isolated from other areas of semi-natural habitat.
- ii. The site is situated within walking distance of residential communities.

15. Recorded History will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The recorded history is known for the site.
- ii. Records for the site extend back to before World War II.
- iii. Records for the site extend back to before 1900.

16. Continuity of Land-use will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site is known to be or is probably a long established pasture, meadow or marsh.



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- ii. The site contains archaeological features (e.g. ridge-and-furrow marks, dry moats, deserted medieval settlement elements, strip lynchets etc.).
- iii. The grassland is maintained under a regime of traditional management (e.g., grazing or hay cropping).



9.9. Species sites

This category covers sites supporting significant populations of rare or scarce species where the location would not qualify under the habitat criteria. A flooded quarry, for example, with no qualifying habitat interest but holding a significant population of the internationally important native White-clawed Crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*, would qualify under the Species criteria.

Sites would be selected on the basis of any of the following criteria:

1. The site supports a significant population of a species which is scarce or rare in County, national, or international contexts.
2. The site supports a significant proportion of the Warwickshire population of the species.
3. The site supports a significant population of a species which is declining nationally or in the County.
4. The site supports a significant population of a species which is on the edge of its range in Warwickshire.
5. The site is a research location for a species currently under scientific study which has been running for a number of years.

In the context of the above criteria, support for a species could be a place for any of the following: breeding, feeding, roosting, resting, hibernating or aestivating.

What decides a significant population?

This will vary with each species and will be a matter of professional judgment by the Panel which will call on expert advice where necessary. Where a species is on the edge of its range in Warwickshire and may be surviving in very low numbers, e.g. Small Blue butterfly *Cupido minimus*, all sites would qualify. For very rare species such as the Barbastelle bat *Barbastella barbastellus* which is known only from a few individuals in two localities, all sites would qualify. For vagrant or incidental species, the panel would seek expert advice.

For a nationally rare or internationally rare species which happens to be well represented in the County, such as the Great Crested Newt, there is an obligation to safeguard the species and all breeding sites would be selected.



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In considering the significance of a species, the size of its population at the various localities in the County where it occurs needs to be taken into account, not merely the number of 10 km squares in which it has been recorded. Where information on population size is not available, the Panel will need to take a pragmatic view on how many localities to select, based on the best available current knowledge.

Defining boundaries

There is a need for professional judgment in defining the boundaries around a location where a species breeds or roosts and it may be necessary to include foraging areas adjacent to, or perhaps some distance away from, the location. Habitat mosaics can be particularly important for many mobile animals and insects, and boundaries would need to take this into account. As a general rule, where such requirements are known and can be defined around the location on a map, the site should encompass them.

Confidentiality of rare species records

Where species records are so rare as to be kept confidential, e.g. a Red Kite reintroduction site, the standard Warwickshire Museum procedures for storing such information will apply and only limited data will be held on open files and open IT networks. The site will appear on site schedules, but its justification will be for rare species, with further information available on request at the discretion of the Panel.

Mobile and ephemeral or irruption species

As the species site concept is based on a locality, species which are highly mobile or ephemeral do not readily fit. One of Warwickshire's rarer breeding birds is the Hobby, but whilst this has a number of favoured breeding areas, it would be difficult to select a specific site for this species as nest sites may move location from year to year. Species which are sufficiently rare are protected by legislation, but others of County significance may fall outside this and the site system.

Some examples of how the Panel would apply the criteria for species

Unlike the SSSI species criteria, it is not the intention to provide detailed criteria for species groups, as has been done for birds and some invertebrates. By way of illustration, it is envisaged the species sites would include:

- Rare mammal sites, e.g: Dormouse; Water Vole; Lesser Horseshoe-bat roosts and hibernacula.
- Large Pipistrelle bat roosts.



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- Great Crested Newt sites where evidence suggests a breeding population.
- All rare and scarce invertebrate sites, e.g. White-clawed Crayfish.
- All sites with important assemblages of rare or scarce insects.
- All rare plant sites, including lower plants, e.g. churchyard lichens.
- Significant colonial bird breeding sites, e.g. heronries, Sand Martin.
- Significant feeding, resting and roosting sites for passage birds.

The need to update the site schedule

There will be a continuing need to amend the list of sites as the state of knowledge about species distribution improves, but it is expected that sites selected purely for species interest will be relatively few, as most important species occur on qualifying habitats.



9.10. Tall Herb Communities

This is a collective term for a variety of habitats typified by tall, dense, but non-woody, vegetation. This generally includes stands of bracken and tall stands of perennial and biennial ruderal species such as nettle and rosebay willowherb. Stands of ferns and wood-rushes are also included in this category.

Tall herb is often found as an edge community, for instance in woods or grassland, or fringing marginal vegetation. These communities can often be very species-rich with umbellifers and nettles offering ideal conditions for the feeding requirements of many invertebrates.

Tall herb is found throughout Warwickshire and is not restricted to rural areas, often being a component of post-industrial sites or found in pockets of waste ground within towns.

1. **Diversity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The site has a high species diversity of plants characteristic of the habitat type or significantly contributes to the mosaic of habitats on the site.
 - ii. The site contains a mosaic of three or more habitats.
 - iii. The site contains a range of associated sub-habitats e.g., scattered trees or scrub, grassland, fen, damp areas, open springs, flushes, ditches, streams, variable slope or aspect, bare soil.
 - iv. The tall herb community has significant importance for the invertebrates, mammal and/or bird life on the site.
2. **Rarity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The site contains one or more locally important or threatened species or habitat.
 - ii. The site contains one or more nationally important or threatened species or habitat.
 - iii. The site contains one or more internationally important or threatened species or habitat.



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3. **Size** will be considered an important criterion where the following applies:

The area of tall herb vegetation is large enough for its characteristic communities to be relatively unaffected by outside influences.

4. **Naturalness** will be considered an important criterion where the following applies:

The tall herb communities are semi-natural (as defined by Phase I Habitat Survey JNCC 1990).

5. **Fragility** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The survival of the tall herb community, or important species it supports, is dependent on continued sensitive management.
- ii. The tall herb community, or important species it supports, is relatively sensitive to human disturbance and/or the adverse effects of neighbouring land-use (e.g. agricultural pesticides, loss/absence of boundary features).

6. **Typicalness** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The site has a good example of a tall herb community. The national, regional or local context should be stated.
- ii. The site makes a valuable contribution to the range and sequence of tall herb communities in Warwickshire.

7. **Ecological Position** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The tall herb community is linked to other major communities of this habitat, or is one of a group of this habitat type in the area (e.g., has a stepping stone function).
- ii. The tall herb community is associated with other semi-natural habitat.
- iii. The site is close to or part of a wildlife corridor or other connecting linear habitats.

8. **Significant Populations** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:



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- i. The site is known to contain an important population, or high proportion, of a particular species occurring in Warwickshire (or nationally).
- ii. The site is known to contain a species on the edge of its range.

9. Potential Value will be considered as an additional criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. It can be demonstrated that diversity, or any other criterion, can be enhanced so as to improve the site's substantive value, and that the improvements can be realistically achieved.
- ii. If the site was of sufficient value to be selected, but has been damaged, it is considered to be recoverable.

10. Physical and Visual Access will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. There is formal access to the site, by means of a definitive public right of way.
- ii. There is informal access to the site, e.g. through unrestricted entrance ways and casual footpaths which are obviously well used.
- iii. There is disabled access to the site.
- iv. Visual access is generally unrestricted e.g. the site is not hidden by local topography or built development, or the site is on a prominent hillside.

11. Educational Value will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site has existing use as an educational resource.
- ii. The site includes a mosaic of different habitat types.
- iii. The site includes transitional habitats.
- iv. The site includes aquatic features (and there is easy and safe access to the water's edge, e.g. there is a "dipping" platform).
- v. The site is near to a school which could potentially use it.



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12. Community and Amenity Value will be considered an important criterion where there is significant evidence of regular use of the site by the public, (e.g. signs of informal access, footpaths etc.) and where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site contains specific interests, e.g. mammal interest, invertebrate interest or attractive vegetation.
- ii. The site has general recreational appeal e.g. through its peacefulness, seclusion, inclusion of good picnic sites, or general 'countryside appeal'.
- iii. The site has specific links with community history, e.g. it includes old canal structures or railway lines.

13. Aesthetic Appeal and Landscape Character will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site is characteristic of the Warwickshire Landscape Area within which it is found.
- ii. The site contributes to local landscape character and appeal.
- iii. The site provides a variety of internal views.
- iv. The site supports attractive vegetation.

14. Geographical Position will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The site is isolated from other areas of semi-natural habitat.
- ii. The site is situated within walking distance of residential communities.

15. Recorded History will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The recorded history is known for the site.
- ii. Records for the site extend back to before World War II
- iii. Records for the site extend back to before 1900.

16. Continuity of Land-use will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The habitat on site is known to be or is probably long established.



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- ii. The site contains archaeological features (e.g. ridge-and-furrow marks, dry moats, deserted medieval settlement elements, strip lynchets etc.).
- iii. The site is maintained under a regime of traditional management (e.g. grazing or hay cropping).



9.11. Veteran Trees

Veteran trees are an internationally important feature in the English landscape. We have more of these noble giants in our parklands, hedgerows, ancient woodlands and village greens than any other country in Europe.

Veteran trees are important for a whole host of wildlife. The holes and hollows are important roosting sites for bats and nesting sites for birds. Hundreds of different fungi, lichens, insects and spiders depend utterly on very old trees. Some of our rarest and most special wildlife is found only on the most ancient trees. Of particular importance in these old trees is rotten wood both in limbs and in the heart wood, indeed dead wood is an extremely valuable habitat, especially when it is still standing.

1. **Diversity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The tree has at least some standing rotting wood.
 - ii. The tree is adjacent to other trees and adjacent to other semi-natural habitat.
 - iii. The tree has a diverse associated flora and fauna. In particular veteran trees are associated with lichens, fungi and dead wood invertebrates.
2. **Rarity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The tree supports one or more locally important or threatened species or habitat.
 - ii. The tree supports one or more nationally important or threatened species or habitat.
 - iii. The tree supports one or more internationally important or threatened species or habitat.
3. **Size:** This criterion is not applicable when used in the designation of an individual tree or trees.
4. **Naturalness** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:



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- i. The tree is a species native to Warwickshire. Veteran examples of such trees are rare in the context of widespread tree management practices.
 - ii. There are areas of semi-natural habitat present adjacent to the tree.
- 5. Fragility** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
- i. The survival of the tree, or important species it supports, depends on sensitive management.
 - ii. The tree is relatively sensitive to human disturbance and/or the adverse effects of neighbouring land-use (e.g. agricultural pesticides, loss/absence of boundary features).
- 6. Typicalness** will be considered an important criterion where the following applies:
- The tree is a particularly good example of a veteran tree with associated dead wood (stating national, regional or local context).
- 7. Ecological Position** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The tree is associated with other veteran trees or with other trees or woodland.
 - ii. The tree is associated with semi-natural habitat.
 - iii. The tree is within, or close to, a wildlife corridor or other linear habitat.
- 8. Significant Populations** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
- i. The tree is known to support an important population of, or high proportion of, a particular species occurring in Warwickshire (or nationally).
 - ii. The tree is known to support a species on the edge of its range.
- 9. Potential Value** will be considered an additional criterion where the following applies:

The tree has been damaged but is considered to be recoverable.



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10. Physical and Visual Access will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The tree is close to a definitive public right of way.
- ii. There is informal access to the tree, e.g. by means of casual footpaths which are obviously well used.
- iii. There is disabled access to the tree.
- iv. The tree is visible to the community, for example on a village green, or at the roadside.

11. Educational Value will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The tree has existing use as an educational resource.
- ii. The tree is associated with semi-natural habitat and/or aquatic features (and there is easy and safe access to the water's edge, e.g. there is a "dipping" platform).
- iii. The tree is near to a school.

12. Community and Amenity Value will be considered an important criterion where there is significant evidence of regular use of the site by the public, (e.g. signs of informal access, footpaths etc.) and where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The tree supports specific interests, e.g. mammal interest, invertebrate interest or attractive vegetation.
- ii. The tree has specific links with community history or folk-lore.

13. Aesthetic Appeal and Landscape Character will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The tree contributes to local landscape character.
- ii. The tree is a majestic example of its kind and/or dominant in the local landscape.

14. Geographical Position will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. There are no other veteran trees in the local area.



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- ii. The tree is situated within, or in walking distance of, residential communities.

15. Recorded History will be considered an important criterion where the following applies:

There are historical records for the tree stretching back many years.

16. Continuity of Land-use This is an intrinsic quality of veteran trees. Trees may be of added importance where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The tree is associated with an archaeologically important feature (e.g. wood bank, earthworks, etc.).
- ii. The tree shows evidence of historic management (e.g. pollarding).



9.12. Watercourses and Water- bodies

9.12.1. Water- bodies - Ponds and Lakes

Ponds and lakes of all sizes are potentially extremely rich areas for wildlife. The size of these water-bodies do not necessarily determine wildlife value, it simply changes the type of animal and plant communities for which the feature is important. For instance, small ponds are critical for Warwickshire's populations of amphibians but are disappearing at a rapid rate, while large lakes, including reservoirs and flooded gravel pits, are important for breeding and wintering waterfowl. Thus size is not a category which is necessarily important in the selection of water-bodies as Local Wildlife Sites.

1. **Diversity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The water-body has a high species diversity of plants characteristic of the habitat (with reference to the National Vegetation Classification), for instance marginal swamp and marsh, floating aquatic plants and submerged vegetation.
 - ii. There is a significant and diverse amount of surrounding semi-natural habitat.
 - iii. The water-body contains a wide range of associated sub-habitats, e.g. associated marginal habitats, areas of inundation vegetation, exposed muddy shorelines, silt fans, steep banks or cliffs, exposed tree roots, waterlogged carr and islands.
 - iv. The water-body has importance for other groups, such as mammals, birds, amphibians and invertebrates.
2. **Rarity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The site contains one or more locally important or threatened species or habitat.
 - ii. The site contains one or more nationally important or threatened species or habitat.
 - iii. The site contains one or more internationally important or threatened species or habitat.



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3. **Size:** This criterion is not readily applicable to water-bodies, as ecological interest, vulnerability to outside influences and viability are not dependent on size. For example, a very small pond may be of value where it supports a breeding colony of Great Crested Newt or a rare invertebrate.
4. **Naturalness** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The pond or lake has a largely natural shoreline and any artificially reinforced banks are localised and not of recent origin.
 - ii. There are areas of semi-natural habitat associated with the water-body, e.g. marginal swamp or marsh, semi-improved grassland or semi-natural woodland.
 - iii. The aquatic plant communities have developed or are developing through natural processes since the creation of the water-body.
 - iv. It does not contain potentially invasive alien aquatic vegetation, e.g. New Zealand Pigmyweed (*Crassula helmsii*).
5. **Fragility** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
 - i. The survival of the water-body, or important species it supports, is dependent on continued sensitive management.
 - ii. The water-body, or important species it supports, is relatively sensitive to human disturbance and/or the adverse effects of neighbouring land use (e.g. external hydrological change, agricultural pesticides, loss of associated semi-natural habitats, silting and eutrophication).
6. **Typicalness** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
 - i. The site is a good example of its type. The national, regional or local context should be stated.
 - ii. The site makes a valuable contribution to the range and sequence of ponds and lakes in Warwickshire.
7. **Ecological Position** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:



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- i. The water-body is linked directly to a watercourse or to a corridor of wetland habitats, or is part of a group or complex of similar ponds or lakes present in a localised area.
- ii. The water-body is associated with other semi-natural habitats.
- iii. The site is close to or part of a wildlife corridor or other connecting linear habitat.

8. Significant Populations will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The site is known to contain an important population, or high proportion, of a particular species occurring in Warwickshire (or nationally).
- ii. The site is known to contain a species on the edge of its range.

9. Potential Value will be considered as an additional criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. It can be demonstrated that diversity or other ecologically significant criteria can be enhanced so as to improve the site's substantive value, and that the improvements can be realistically achieved.
- ii. If the site was of sufficient value to be selected, but has been damaged, it is considered to be recoverable.
- iii. The water-body contains high quality suitable habitat that could potentially attract species of county importance, e.g. Otter, Water Vole, Bittern, Great Crested Newt or White-clawed Crayfish. This would be particularly significant if the site lies close to a known site for one of these species.

10. Physical and Visual Access will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. There is formal access to the site by means of a definitive public right of way or it is part of an officially designated public open space.
- ii. There is informal access to the site, e.g. through unrestricted entrance ways and casual footpaths, which are obviously well used.
- iii. There is disabled access to the site.



Guidance Note on Application of Site Selection Criteria

- iv. Visual access is generally unrestricted, e.g. the site is not hidden by local topography or development, or is part of a public open space.

11. Educational Value will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site has existing use as an educational resource.
- ii. The site includes a mosaic of different habitat types.
- iii. Transitional habitats are present.
- iv. There is easy and safe access to the water's edge, e.g. there is a "dipping" platform.
- v. The site is near to a school or college which could potentially use it.

12. Community and Amenity Value will be considered as an important criterion where there is significant evidence of regular use of the site by the public (e.g. signs of informal access, footpaths etc) and where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site contains specific wildlife interest, e.g. angling, congregating wildfowl, invertebrate or amphibian interest, or attractive vegetation.
- ii. The site has general recreational appeal, e.g. through its peacefulness, seclusion, inclusion of good picnic sites, or general "countryside appeal".
- iii. The site has specific links with community history.

13. Aesthetic Appeal and Landscape Character will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The site is characteristic of the Warwickshire Landscape Area within which it is found.
- ii. The site contributes to local landscape character and appeal.

14. Geographical Position will be considered as an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The site is isolated from other areas of semi-natural habitat or open water.



Guidance Note on Application of Site Selection Criteria

- ii. The site is situated within walking distance of residential communities.

15. Recorded History will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The recorded history is known for the site.
- ii. Records for the site extend back to before World War II.
- iii. Records for the site extend back to before 1900.

16. Continuity of Land Use will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The pond or lake is known to be or is probably long established.
- ii. The site includes archaeological features (e.g. of a mill pond, moat, historic fish pond, industrial reservoir or sheep wash).



Guidance Note on Application of Site Selection Criteria

9.12.2. Watercourses

Warwickshire's geography is dominated by its rivers, the Avon valley with its many terraces being the historical divide between the Feldon and the Arden. The Avon is an important fishery and of great importance to eels. The River Blythe is one of the finest lowland rivers in England and is designated a Site of Special Scientific Interest.

Rivers, their tributaries, and the entire catchment are important in maintaining the integrity and continuity of a truly linear habitat system. The smallest stream can have a large impact on the river system and, as such, the whole system could be considered as one integral site. The designation of such linear flowing features is problematic as even the most engineered section of a river can be of importance to its ecological continuity. Some of the criteria for site selection are therefore inappropriate in selecting such sites, for example size and in some cases, naturalness.

1. **Diversity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The watercourse has a high species diversity of vegetation characteristic of the habitat type, (for example liverworts and mosses, emergent reeds, floating and submerged vegetation, or as defined by the National Vegetation Classification).
 - ii. The watercourse contains a variety of features typical of its type (e.g., riffles, bars, cliffs, islands and glides).
 - iii. The watercourse contains a significant amount of surrounding semi-natural habitat.
 - iv. The watercourse contains frequent associated sub-habitats e.g. marginal habitats, damp grass, open springs, flushes, marsh, exposed tree roots, overhanging branches and woody debris.
 - v. The watercourse has importance for invertebrates, mammals and/or bird life.

2. **Rarity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The watercourse contains one or more locally important or threatened species or habitat.



Guidance Note on Application of Site Selection Criteria

- ii. The watercourse contains one or more nationally important or threatened species or habitat.
 - iii. The watercourse contains one or more internationally important or threatened species or habitat.
3. **Size:** This criterion is not readily applicable.
4. **Naturalness** will be considered an important criterion where the following applies:
 - i. Re-sectioning or reinforcement of the bed and banks is localised and not recent (very few watercourses have no artificial modification indeed some water features have been created due to human modification).
 - ii. There are areas of semi-natural habitat associated with the watercourse e.g. marginal swamp, marsh, grassland or woodland.
 - iii. The aquatic communities present have developed or are developing through natural processes post any alterations to the watercourse.
5. **Fragility** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
 - i. The survival of the watercourse or its features, or important species it supports, is dependent on continued sensitive management.
 - ii. The watercourse or its features, or important species it supports, is relatively sensitive to human disturbance and/or the adverse effects of neighbouring land-use (e.g. external hydrological change, agricultural pesticides, loss of adjacent semi-natural habitat, eutrophication).
6. **Typicalness** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
 - i. The watercourse contains a good example of its type. The national, regional or local context should be stated.
 - ii. The watercourse makes a valuable contribution to the range and sequence of this habitat in Warwickshire.



Guidance Note on Application of Site Selection Criteria

- 7. Ecological Position** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. Ecological continuity is an intrinsic attribute of a watercourse, but will be considered of particular importance where artificial modification does not significantly reduce this function.
 - ii. The watercourse is linked to other open water or wetland habitats, or is one of a group of water features in the area (e.g. a stepping stone function).
 - iii. The watercourse is associated with other semi-natural habitat.
 - iv. The watercourse is close to, or part of, or itself forms, a wildlife corridor or other connecting linear habitat.
- 8. Significant Populations** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
- i. The watercourse is known to contain an important population, or high proportion, of a particular species occurring in Warwickshire (or nationally).
 - ii. The watercourse is known to contain a species on the edge of its range.
- 9. Potential Value** will be considered as an additional criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. It can be demonstrated that diversity, or any other criterion, can be enhanced so as to improve the watercourse's substantive nature conservation value, and that the improvements can be realistically achieved.
 - ii. If the watercourse was of sufficient value to be selected but has been damaged, it is considered to be recoverable.
 - iii. The watercourse provides good potential habitat for a county important species e.g. Water Vole, Otter, that has been recorded nearby.
- 10. Physical and Visual Access** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. There is formal access to a series of points along its length by means of a definitive public right of way, or regular visual inspection is possible from crossing points.



Guidance Note on Application of Site Selection Criteria

- ii. There is informal access to the watercourse e.g. though unrestricted entrance ways and casual footpaths which are obviously well used.
- iii. There is disabled access to at least parts of the watercourse.
- iv. Visual access is generally unrestricted, e.g. the site is not hidden by local topography or built development, or it is within a public open space.

11. Educational Value will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The watercourse has existing use as an education resource.
- ii. The watercourse includes a good range of different accessible educational features/types.
- iii. The watercourse includes transitional habitats.

12. Community and Amenity Value will be considered as an important criterion where there is significant evidence of regular use of the watercourse by the public (e.g. signs of informal access, footpaths etc.) and where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The watercourse contains specific interests, e.g. mammal interest, invertebrate interest or attractive vegetation.
- ii. The watercourse has general recreational appeal, e.g. through its peacefulness, seclusion, inclusion of good picnic places, fishing or general 'countryside appeal'.
- iii. The watercourse has specific links with community history.

13. Aesthetic Appeal and Landscape Character will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The watercourse is characteristic of the Warwickshire Landscape Area within which it is found.
- ii. The watercourse contributes to local landscape character and appeal.
- iii. The watercourse has a varied channel with such features as meanders, riffles and pools or islands.



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14. Geographic Position will be considered as an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The watercourse is isolated from other areas of semi-natural habitat or open water.
- ii. The watercourse is situated within walking distance of residential communities.

15. Recorded History will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The recorded history is known for the watercourse.
- ii. Records for the watercourse extend back to before World War II.
- iii. Records for the watercourse extend back to before 1900.

16. Continuity of Land-use will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The watercourse is known to have been unaltered for a long established period, e.g. since 1950.
- ii. The watercourse includes archaeological features (e.g. mill ponds, fish ponds, wash ponds, mill races and leats).



9.13. Woodland and Scrub

Woodland

Warwickshire is one of the least wooded counties in England, with woodland covering only some 4% of the county. When combined with the innate diversity of most semi-natural woodland habitats, it means that most woodland areas will be of at least local importance in the county. Typically, Warwickshire woods are dominated by Oak, combined with Ash and Field Maple in the south, and by Holly and Birch in the north and west. All woodland in the county has been altered by man to some degree and in some cases this management dates back many hundreds of years. Woodlands can be described as Ancient Woods if the woodland has had a continuous cover of native trees and plants since at least 1600 AD, having not been cleared nor extensively replanted since then. Most of these old woods are designated as an Ancient Woodland in Natural England's Ancient Woodland Inventory. A wood present in 1600 AD is likely to have been in existence for centuries and some of these may constitute relics of the natural tree cover or Wildwood which developed after the retreat of the last glaciation 10,500 years ago.

Ancient woods are some of the most important in terms of nature conservation. Woodland that has been felled and replanted will have lost some of the interest of true ancient woodland. However, ground flora is still likely to be of high nature conservation value. Some secondary woodland, which is woodland that is re-growth on land deforested for some time, can also be of nature conservation value although not generally as important as Ancient Woodland.

Scrub

Scrub within Warwickshire is usually a serial vegetation type found on areas succeeding towards woodland. In certain circumstances, scrub becomes the local climax community, for instance on sites with harsh environmental conditions. Its conservation value can be variable, and is often seen as of low value due to sparse botanical species diversity. However, it is important to note that scrub can be of the highest importance in its own right as well as providing suitable habitat for some of the county's important species of invertebrates, mammals and birds.

Scrub is often associated with other semi-natural habitats, often as a mosaic with grassland or on post-industrial sites. Willow and Alder scrub also forms in association with marshy grassland, fen or mire vegetation. Thus scrub can sometimes be a component of these sites and communities, adding to a site's overall ecological interest or nature conservation value.



Guidance Note on Application of Site Selection Criteria

1. **Diversity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The woodland is an ancient semi-natural site.
 - ii. The woodland or scrub has a diverse list of tree, shrub and/or herbaceous plants characteristic of the habitat type (for example, as defined by The National Vegetation Classification).
 - iii. At least four plants from the list of ancient woodland indicator species are present (see attached list).
 - iv. The site contains a range of sub-habitats. (e.g. clearings, open rides, closed-canopy woodland, regenerating coppice, woodland edge, young open scrub, scattered trees, veteran trees, dead wood, variable slope or aspect, bare soil, damp areas, associated small ponds, streams, grassland, fen or mire).
 - v. The site supports a good range of other woodland/scrub associated species e.g., other plant species, birds, mammals, invertebrates and fungi.

2. **Rarity** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The site contains one or more locally important or threatened species or habitat.
 - ii. The site contains one or more nationally important or threatened species or habitat.
 - iii. The site contains one or more internationally important or threatened species or habitat.

3. **Size** will be considered an important criterion where the following applies:

The area of the wood or scrub is large enough for its characteristic communities to be relatively unaffected by outside influences (for woodlands this will not normally be below 2 hectares).

4. **Naturalness** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
 - i. The woodland or scrub, or a significant part, represents one or more of the semi-natural woodland or scrub types of Warwickshire.



Guidance Note on Application of Site Selection Criteria

- ii. The woodland or scrub contains significant amounts of old mature timber and/or dead wood.
 - iii. The woodland contains no signs of significant recent plantation (more than 50%) of either coniferous or deciduous species (i.e. recent enough to create an evidently organised environment).
 - iv. There is no significant part of the woodland or scrub which is dominated by non-native species of tree or shrub (e.g. Sycamore, Cherry Laurel or Rhododendron).
 - v. The ground flora contains at least some ancient woodland indicator species.
 - vi. Natural regeneration of native species is present.
- 5. Fragility** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
- i. The survival of the woodland or scrub, and/or important species it supports, depends on continued sensitive management.
 - ii. The woodland or scrub, and/or important species it supports, is relatively sensitive to human disturbance and/or the adverse effects of neighbouring land-use (e.g. agricultural pesticides, loss/absence of boundary features).
- 6. Typicalness** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. It is a particularly good example of a woodland or scrub community type (stating national, regional or local context).
 - ii. The site makes a valuable contribution to the range and sequence of woodland or scrub in Warwickshire.
 - iii. The woodland contains old features of woodland management (e.g. old pollards, ancient coppice stools, medieval wood banks).
- 7. Ecological Position** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The woodland or scrub is linked by similar habitat (e.g. hedgerow, wood pasture) to other areas of woodland and/or scrub or is one of a group of sites in the area (e.g., has a stepping stone function).
 - ii. The woodland or scrub is associated with other semi-natural habitat.



Guidance Note on Application of Site Selection Criteria

- iii. The site is close to, or part of, a wildlife corridor or other connecting linear habitat.
- 8. Significant Populations** will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:
- i. The site is known to contain an important population of, or a high proportion of, a species occurring in Warwickshire (or nationally).
 - ii. The site is known to contain a species on the edge of its range.
- 9. Potential Value** will be considered as an additional criterion where one or both of the following applies:
- i. It can be demonstrated that diversity, or any other criterion, can be enhanced so as to improve the site's substantive value, and that the improvements can be realistically achieved.
 - ii. If the site was of sufficient value to be selected, but has been damaged, it is considered to be recoverable
- 10. Physical and Visual Access** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. There is formal access to the site, by means of a definitive public right of way.
 - ii. There is informal access to the site, e.g. through unrestricted entrance ways and casual footpaths which are obviously well used.
 - iii. There is disabled access to the site.
 - iv. Visual access is generally unrestricted e.g. the site is not hidden by local topography or built development, or the site is on a prominent hillside.
- 11. Educational Value** will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:
- i. The site has existing use as an educational resource.
 - ii. The site includes a mosaic of different habitat types.
 - iii. The site includes transitional habitats.
 - iv. The site includes aquatic features (and there is easy and safe access to the water's edge. e.g. there is a "dipping" platform).



Guidance Note on Application of Site Selection Criteria

- v. The site is near a school which could potentially use it

12. Community and Amenity Value will be considered as an important criterion where there is significant evidence of regular use of the site by the public, (e.g. signs of informal access, footpaths etc.) and where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site contains specific interests, e.g. mammal interest, invertebrate interest or attractive vegetation.
- ii. The site has general recreational appeal e.g. through its peacefulness, seclusion, inclusion of good picnic sites, or general 'countryside appeal'.
- iii. The site has specific links with community history, e.g. it includes old canal structures or railway lines.

13. Aesthetic Appeal and Landscape Character will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The site is characteristic of the Warwickshire Landscape Area within which it is found.
- ii. The site contributes to local landscape character and appeal.
- iii. Woodland or scrub structure provides a variety of internal views.
- iv. The site supports attractive vegetation, e.g. a colourful woodland ground flora

14. Geographical Position will be considered an important criterion where one or both of the following applies:

- i. The site is isolated from other areas of semi-natural habitat.
- ii. The site is situated within walking distance of residential communities.

15. Recorded History will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The recorded history is known for the site.
- ii. Records for the site extend back to before World War II.
- iii. Records for the site extend back to before 1900.



Guidance Note on Application of Site Selection Criteria

16. Continuity of Land-use will be considered an important criterion where one or more of the following applies:

- i. The woodland/scrub, or part of it, is shown on the One Inch 1st ed. Ordnance Survey map (c.1830) or otherwise known to have existed at or before that time.
- ii. The woodland/scrub contains an archaeologically important feature (e.g. old moat, earthworks, etc.).
- iii. The woodland/scrub community is known to be long established.

FIGURE 4. ANCIENT WOODLAND INDICATOR SPECIES

<i>Adoxa moschatellina</i>	Moschatel
<i>Anemone nemorosa</i>	Wood Anemone
<i>Carex remota</i>	Remote Sedge
<i>Convallaria majalis</i>	Lily-of-the-Valley
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel ¹
<i>Euphorbia amygdaloides</i>	Wood Spurge
<i>Galium odoratum</i>	Sweet Woodruff
<i>Lamiasrum galeobdolon</i>	Yellow Archangel ²
<i>Lathyrus linifolius</i>	Bitter Vetchling
<i>Luzula multiflora</i>	Heath Wood-rush
<i>Luzula pilosa</i>	Hairy Wood-rush
<i>Luzula sylvatica</i>	Great Wood-rush
<i>Malus sylvestris</i>	Crab Apple ³
<i>Melampyrum pratense</i>	Common Cow-wheat
<i>Melica uniflora</i>	Wood Melick
<i>Milium effusum</i>	Wood Millet
<i>Orchis mascula</i>	Early Purple Orchid
<i>Oxalis acetosella</i>	Wood-sorrel
<i>Paris quadrifolia</i>	Herb Paris
<i>Poa nemoralis</i>	Wood Meadow-grass
<i>Sorbus torminalis</i>	Wild Service Tree
<i>Tilia cordata</i>	Small-leaved Lime
<i>Veronica montana</i>	Wood Speedwell

Adapted from: Warwickshire Inventory of Ancient Woodland (NCC 1989), Warwickshire's Wildflowers (Falk 2009).

Notes:

1. Only where long-established, e.g. old coppice stools present.
2. Native subspecies only.
3. Pure bred long-established examples only.



10. TECHNICAL APPENDIX

10.1. Wildlife Site Evaluation Form and Guidance for its Completion

Guidance Notes for completion of the Wildlife Site evaluation form

Site Name:	Site Ref:	Grid Ref:	
Local Authority Area:	Date Selected:		
Site description:		Area:	
Phase 1 Habitats present:			
Evaluation against the criteria			
Habitat criteria applied:			
SCIENTIFIC CRITERIA	Elements of the criteria applying to the site	COMMUNITY CRITERIA	Elements of the criteria applying to the site
	1 2 3 4 5 6		1 2 3 4 5
Diversity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Physical & Visual Access	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Rarity	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Educational Value	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Size	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Community & Amenity Value	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>
Naturalness	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>	Aesthetic Appeal & Landscape	<input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/> <input type="checkbox"/>



Guidance Note on Application of Site Selection Criteria

Fragility							Geographical Position							1
Typicalness							Recorded History							1
Ecological Position							Continuity of Land-use							1
Significant Populations														1
Potential Value														1
<p>Why this site qualifies as a Local Wildlife Site: summary of assessment.</p>														
Sources of Information :					Recorder Site No:					Ecosite No:				
Survey Details: Date:			Survey Type:				Surveyors:			Location of records: <i>(HBA / WWT / WBRC / EN / Other)</i>				
Any Other Information:														
Completed By: Date:							Map attached: list attached:			Species				
<p>Passed by Sites Selection Panel: Yes / No / Further survey required: <i>(circle as candidate Wildlife Site appropriate)</i> Signed: _____ Date: _____</p>														



Guidance Note on Application of Site Selection Criteria

Guidance Notes for completion of the Wildlife Site evaluation form

Site reference:

The unique site reference includes the Ordnance Survey 10km grid reference and unique site number. The site reference is obtained from the GIS local wildlife sites mapping layer.

Site name:

The existing name if already listed as a WBRC “Ecosite” or WWT or Nuneaton & Bedworth “Wildlife Site”.

Ordnance Survey Grid reference:

Use the existing grid reference where site is already on record. For newly recorded sites use central point.

Linear sites: record reference point for each end of the site.

Date selected:

To be entered on site selection by the panel.

Local Authority area:

This is the Local Authority district or borough in which the site is located.

Site ref:

The site reference number for records, OS 10km grid square, followed by unique site number assigned by the HBA.

Recorder No:

The number of the site on Recorder system.

Site description:

A description of the site, covering habitats and features present, notable species, species communities, landscape elements and use by the local community.

Phase 1 habitats present:

Enter Phase 1 habitat classifications.



Guidance Note on Application of Site Selection Criteria

Evaluation against the criteria:

Enter the habitat(s) for which criteria have been applied in evaluation. Where a site is important for more than one habitat type, evaluate against each appropriate set of criteria, using separate sheets. For most sites community criteria are likely to apply to the site as a whole and need not be applied to separate habitat types.

Refer to guidance notes on application of the site selection criteria, for the habitat type(s) in question.

For each criterion, tick elements which apply to the site.

If more boxes are available than there are numbered points under the criterion, strike through.

Where further survey is required to determine applicability, enter SR (survey required).

Why this site qualifies as a Local Wildlife Site:

Brief summary of why this site is of substantive importance, referring to the criteria e.g. due to habitat/species diversity, rare species supported, ecological position, value to the community.

Sources of information:

Record location(s) where information upon which assessment based is held. Record details of survey(s).

Any other information:

Any other information relevant to the site, for example historical records, current land-use, management, evidence of public use, community group involvement, and any previous survey data.

- Attach 1:10,000 map showing site boundaries
- Attach annotated map showing habitats and main features
- Attach a plant species list with dated entries and abundance



10.2. Surveying Potential Local Wildlife Sites Guidance notes for Planners

10.2.1. What to consider

Any planning application for a development that is likely to impact on a potential Local Wildlife Site should result in that pLWS being assessed for its eligibility to become a Local Wildlife Site.

Potential Local Wildlife Sites can be identified from the latest version of Local Wildlife Sites mapping database maintained by the HBA. Whilst every effort is made to maintain the accuracy of the mapping database, there will always be some discrepancies in the data due to the sheer number of potential Local Wildlife Sites involved. Currently there are some 1,300 sites originally identified from the first Phase 1 surveys in 1997-1999.

As a consequence any pLWS identified from the mapping should be verified in the first instance using any more recent survey information, including the latest HBA Phase 1, Warwickshire Biological Centre records and third party surveys.

In addition to the biological information currently available, a preliminary site visit and/or field survey can be undertaken before proceeding with a full Local Wildlife Site survey. This can be undertaken by a qualified ecological consultant on behalf of a client and/or by a member of the Local Wildlife Sites Project team. This will be at the discretion of the planning authority dealing with the application. The HBA will make a nominal charge for visiting and reporting back the preliminary assessment on whether or not the site should be taken forward to the next stage.

If a site does require a full local wildlife sites survey then this should be undertaken by a member of the Local Wildlife Sites Project team in agreement with the planning authority and the designated site landowner or their representatives.



10.2.2. Third Party Local Wildlife Sites Surveying

It is advisable not to recommend a third party Local Wildlife Sites survey for the following reasons:

1. Third party ecological consultants in general will not be familiar with or have any prior knowledge or experience of conducting a Local Wildlife Site survey in Warwickshire following the agreed procedures as laid down in The Green Book – Guidance for the Selection of Local Wildlife Sites in Warwickshire, Coventry and Solihull.
2. The Local Wildlife Site surveys for Warwickshire are specific to the sub-region requiring local knowledge of the natural, social and historical aspects of the area.
3. The Local Wildlife Site survey is **not** an extended Phase 1 or a sampled National Vegetation Classification (NVC) survey, with which consultants are most familiar with and will tend to use, instead of the methodology required for a Local Wildlife Site survey. Any surveys other than those undertaken following the LWSP survey procedure will not be accepted by the LWS panel.
4. The Local Wildlife Sites Project is not sufficiently funded to provide unpaid support to third party surveys, which includes providing guidance material, advice on dealing with the assessment criteria and taking a completed survey to the Local Wildlife Sites Panel.
5. The Local Wildlife Site survey is an objective survey carried out under a set of procedures. The surveyor is not required to give an assessment of the suitability or not for the site to be designated. Suitability is determined by the panel.

If the planning authority requires that the landowner undertake a Local Wildlife Site survey and the landowner and/or the authority is unwilling to fund the survey to be undertaken by a Local Wildlife Sites officer, then the planning officer must agree with the landowner to undertake a third party LWS survey under the direction of the HBA management. The HBA will make a charge for this service which will include supplying the necessary survey materials, including the guidance notes and recording sheets, checking that the survey results have been properly completed and arranging for the survey to be taken to the LWS panel. If required a Local Wildlife Sites surveyor can also arrange to visit the site.

The proposed standard charge will be £250.00 per site for administration and there will be additional expenses for a site visit by a LWSP officer.



10.2.3. Local Wildlife Sites Survey

The standard rate charge for a single LWS survey undertaken by a Local Wildlife Sites Project surveyor is £750.00 excl. VAT.

This charge includes:

- Arranging with the landowner a suitable time to visit the survey site
- Travel to the site
- Carrying out the survey. Typically this would be limited to one field day, but in some circumstances a repeat visit or visits may be necessary.
- Writing up the survey including:
 - Citation report
 - Site map
 - Full plant species list
- Arranging for the survey to be taken to panel
- Notifying the land owner of the panel's decision
- Supplying a landowner information pack