

# Nature Supplementary Planning Document (SPD)

June 2026

## Contents

1. Purpose of the Nature SPD .....	3
2. Provision of nature information with your application – overview of ecological survey requirements .....	5
The need for specialist ecological advice .....	5
The benefits of early discussions with the Council .....	5
Ecological Appraisals and UK Habitats Surveys.....	6
Nature requirements in relation to Permitted Development Rights .....	9
Tree Preservation Orders.....	11
Ancient woodland and veteran trees .....	11
Listed Building Consents.....	11
3. Protection of existing natural assets: following the mitigation hierarchy .....	12
4. Net gain for biodiversity – ecological enhancement.....	13
5. The process for designating additional Local Wildlife Sites.....	16
The role of North Merseyside Local Sites Partnership.....	16
The role of Sefton Council.....	18
6. Monitoring .....	20
7. References.....	21
Appendix 1 Sefton’s natural assets.....	24
Appendix 2 LCR Ecological Network’s Nature Improvement Area .....	26
Appendix 3 Red Squirrel Refuge Area and Buffer Zone.....	27
Appendix 4 Ecological enhancement.....	29
Appendix 5 Invasive species .....	31

**Note:** Throughout this document the **National Planning Policy Framework** is referred to as ‘the **Framework**’. Where relevant a distinction is made between the December 2024 [Framework](#) and the government’s [proposed changes to the Framework](#), published in December 2025 and the subject of consultation until 10<sup>th</sup> March 2026. References to the Framework will also include the final Framework, which it is currently anticipated will be published later in 2026. The SPD will be updated after adoption where relevant to reflect correct Framework references once the final Framework has been published.

## 1. Purpose of the Nature SPD

1.1 The main purpose of this Nature SPD is to provide additional guidance to applicants, developers and other stakeholders in relation to nature policies in the 2017 Sefton Local Plan, 2026 Bootle Area Action Plan, the National Planning Policy Framework and relevant legislation. These policies are:

Local Plan:

- NH1 'Natural Assets', which sets the strategic context for the maintenance, restoration, enhancement and long-term management of natural assets and green infrastructure
- NH2 'Nature', which protects designated sites, Priority Habitats, Priority and Protected Species and sets out the requirements for development on these sites
- NH3 'Development in the Nature Improvement Area'

Bootle Area Action Plan

- BAAP9 Nature

1.2 The SPD focusses on:

- a) The benefits of early advice from the Council
- b) Ecological survey requirements – information which must be submitted as part of any planning application which would have an impact on a designated nature site, Priority Habitat or Priority or Protected Species
- c) Ecological requirements in relation to applications for Prior Notification, Prior Approval for demolition and Permitted Development Rights and in relation to Tree Preservation Orders (TPOs), Ancient Woodland and Veteran Trees
- d) Policy requirements for ecological enhancement as part of development proposals. This is separate to national requirements for 10% mandatory biodiversity net gain (BNG)
- e) How the Council will designate additional Local Wildlife Sites, outside of the Local Plan preparation process. Such sites will then count as existing natural assets and be subject to Local Plan policy NH2 'Natural Assets'.

Invasive species are referred to in Appendix 5<sup>1</sup>.

1.3 Once adopted, this updated Nature SPD will replace the 2017 Nature Conservation SPD. It will be a material consideration in the determination of relevant planning and other applications and appeals.

1.4 The SPD does not provide detailed guidance or information about mandatory (10%) biodiversity net gain (BNG), except that [section 3](#) about UK Habitat Surveys may also be relevant when such surveys are required for the Statutory Biodiversity Metric to be completed. Local sources for information about BNG include:

- The [overview of BNG](#) and the [Validation Checklist](#) on the Council's Planning website
- The [Information Note on Biodiversity Net Gain and its implementation in the Liverpool City Region](#) prepared by Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service in March 2024; or any future LCR or Sefton updates to this.

1.5 Nor does this SPD deal with mitigation for recreation pressure on the Sefton Coast arising from housing development. Information about this is set out in Sefton's 2023 [Information](#)

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<sup>1</sup> This Appendix may subsequently form a separate Information Note and not be part of this SPD.

[Note: Managing and mitigating the impact of recreation pressure on the Sefton Coast - Sefton's Interim Approach for housing development](#). The emerging Recreation Mitigation Strategy SPD being prepared jointly by the LCR local authorities and West Lancashire, with the support of Natural England. Once adopted, this strategic approach will replace Sefton's Interim Approach.

- 1.6 Also, this SPD is not a nature conservation strategy or action plan for biodiversity in Sefton. There are a range of other such documents, such as the [Nature Conservation Strategy for the Sefton Coast](#) being prepared by the [Sefton Coast Landscape Partnership](#), the 2015 Liverpool City Region (LCR) [Ecological Network](#), the Combined Authority's LCR [Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) which help provide this function and [The Mersey Forest Plan](#). The [North Merseyside Local Sites Partnership](#) is responsible for advising Sefton Council on sites eligible to be designated as Local Wildlife Sites. [Merseyside BioBank](#) is the Local Environmental Record Centre for North Merseyside maintaining a local repository of biological records.
- 1.7 Sefton's natural assets include the internationally important Sefton Coast; Local Wildlife Sites and Priority Habitats which include woodland, grassland, heathland, farmland and river-based features. 'Irreplaceable habitat' includes some coastal habitats and ancient woodlands. Key species include red squirrels, Natterjack toads, reptiles, bats and farmland birds. More information is set out in the above documents, Appendix 1 of this SPD and Appendix 2 of the Local Plan.

## **2. Provision of nature information with your application – overview of ecological survey requirements**

### *The need for specialist ecological advice*

- 2.1 We highly recommend that developers seek the advice of a suitably experienced ecologist at an early stage of development design in respect of ecology, and mandatory biodiversity net gain. Ecological appraisals and surveys are likely to be required. This early and on-going specialist ecological advice is especially important for sites or proposals set out in Figure 2.1 below, to help developers meet the requirements of legislation and national and local planning policies for nature.
- 2.2 It is essential that the potential benefits and negative impacts of a proposal on biodiversity and natural assets are carefully considered from the earliest stage of design of a development scheme and that all local and national planning policy and Habitats Regulations requirements are met.

**Figure 2.1 Proposals where early and on-going specialist ecological advice and ecological appraisals are likely to be needed**

- a) Proposals which are likely to affect existing ecological/ natural assets such as designated sites, Priority Habitats or Species, legally protected species, irreplaceable habitats<sup>2</sup>, or sites and habitats identified within the [LCR Ecological Network](#)'s Core Biodiversity Area; or other natural assets such as habitats, trees or hedges; either within the site, nearby or elsewhere. This includes such natural assets on the site, next to the site or elsewhere
- b) Proposals on sites which are identified in the [LCR Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) Statement of Biodiversity Principles and/or Local Habitat Map.
- c) Proposals on sites within the Nature Improvement Area (NIA) identified in the [LCR Ecological Network](#)
- d) Proposals which are not exempt from mandatory biodiversity net gain (BNG), where completion of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric or Small Sites Metric is needed
- e) Proposals where a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) is required before the planning application can be determined.

### *The benefits of early discussions with the Council*

- 2.3 Sefton Council offers a [pre-application service](#) where developers can obtain ecological advice from Planning Officers (including technical non-planning advice) before a planning application is submitted; this is inclusive of ecological advice provided by MEAS. Pre-application discussions are encouraged and can provide an opportunity to address potential issues before submitting applications, thereby reducing the chances of refusal or delay. There is a charge for this service.

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<sup>2</sup> Irreplaceable habitats as defined by the Framework's Glossary.

- 2.4 Additionally, MEAS provides wider discretionary services (see [Services and Fees – Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service](#)) which can include species or habitat specific advice or a steer on the scope of ecological survey required for a proposal. There is a charge for these discretionary services which also include Local Environmental Record Centre data products including searches of species and habitat data as well as LCR Ecological Network and Nature Improvement Areas.

### ***Ecological Appraisals and UK Habitats Surveys***

- 2.5 For development proposals which are likely to affect natural assets, as set out in [Figure 2.1](#) above, the following information is required to be submitted as part of the planning application:
- a) A Preliminary Ecological Assessment, including UKHAB survey
  - b) Other ecological surveys, including those focusing on specific Protected or Priority species such as bats, reptiles, barn owl, red squirrel, reptiles, great crested newt, water vole or farmland birds.

These must include details of avoidance, mitigation and / or compensation and management, where appropriate, in line with national and local planning policy and practice. Ecological surveys should be informed by a Local Environmental Record Centre search with Merseyside Biobank.

### ***What is the aim of the UK Habitats Survey and other ecological appraisals and surveys?***

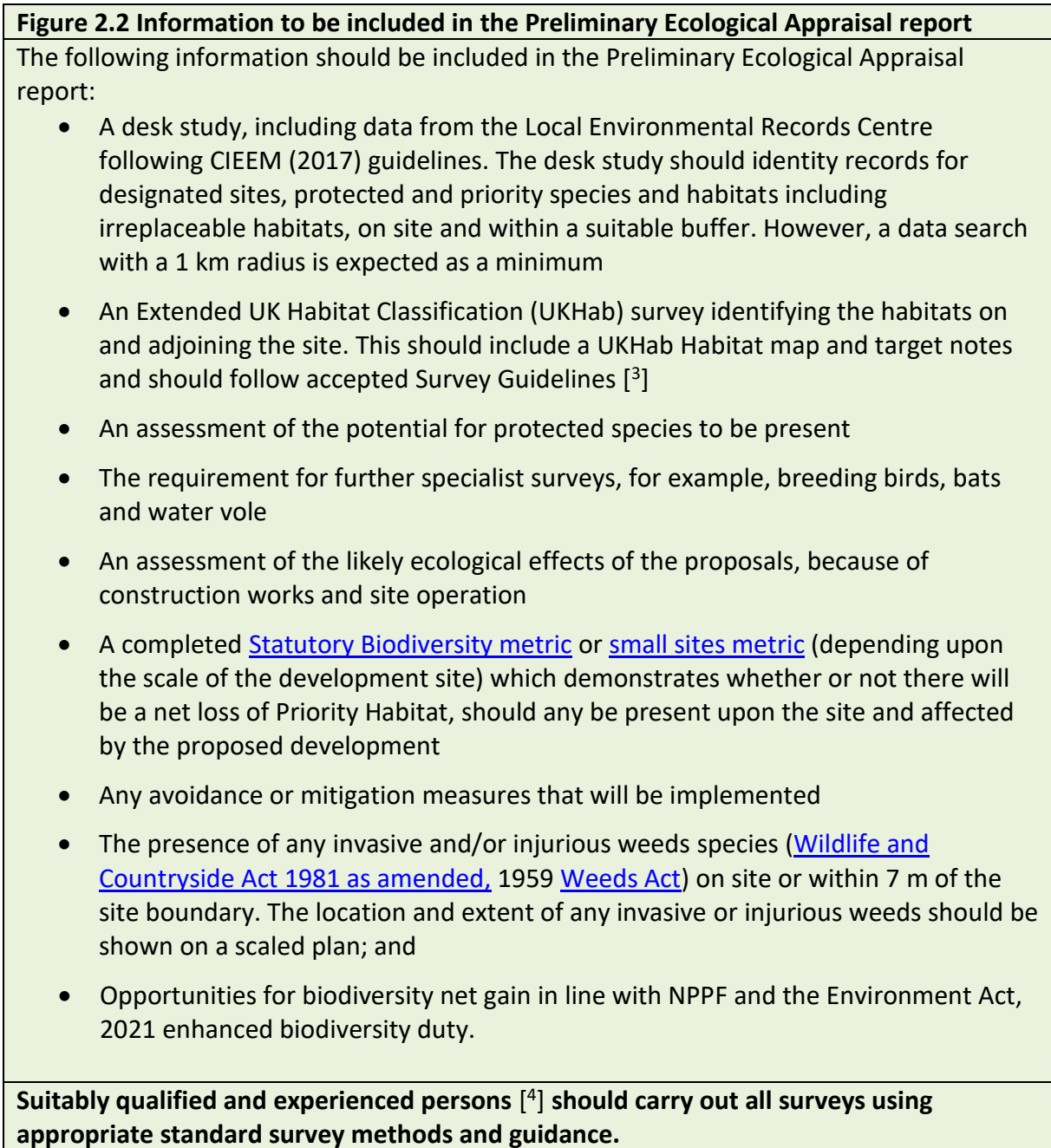
- 2.6 The UKHAB survey and/ or other Ecological Appraisals submitted in support of planning applications in Sefton should:
- Identify and describe the ecological baseline of the potential development site and surrounding area.
  - Identify and describe potential development impacts likely to harm or affect one or more of the situations set out in [Figure 2.1](#) above.
  - Include consideration of direct and indirect effects both during construction and operation phases of development, and
  - Identify how the development proposal avoids, mitigates and / or compensates for significant harm in line with mitigation hierarchy.
- 2.7 The UKHAB survey and/ or other Ecological Appraisal should make sure that the Local Planning Authority has sufficient information to make an informed judgement about whether biodiversity can be protected during development and therefore result in no harm or no adverse impact on biodiversity occurring from development.

### ***How will the Council assess the UKHAB survey and/ or other Ecological Appraisals and surveys?***

- 2.8 UKHAB survey and/ or other Ecological Appraisals and surveys will be reviewed by the Local Planning Authority in consultation with any ecological advisors. Where further information is required to support a development proposal, this will be clearly set out in writing from Sefton to the developer. Assessment and advice will be based on relevant legislation, best practice and British Standard BS 42020:2013 as well as national planning policy and best practice guidelines for habitats and species.

What information should the UKHAB survey and/ or other Ecological Appraisals and surveys contain and who should prepare them?

2.9 The scope of the UKHAB survey and/ or other Ecological Appraisals and surveys depends on the biodiversity interests on and surrounding a development site. However, there are general requirements about what information an Ecological Appraisal should contain and who should carry them out. Figure 2.2 below sets out the Information to be included in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report.



<sup>3</sup> UK Habitat Classification Working Group (2020) UK Habitat Classification System (UKHab) Methodology

<sup>4</sup> Competencies for Species Survey (CSS) – Publications – CIEEM – Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (see <https://www.cieem.net/competencies-for-species-survey-css->)

**Figure 2.3 Ecological Survey Calendar**



**Green** [vertical line pattern] is the optimum time. **Amber** [dots pattern] means that survey may be possible and acceptable. **Red** [diagonal lines pattern] means that survey is unlikely to be acceptable. **Survey timings must accord with best practice survey guidelines and take account of local weather conditions.**

2.10 Information used to support planning applications should be up-to-date. Habitat and ecological survey information have a time-limited lifespan which varies depending on the species or habitat and site characteristics. **Survey information which is considered no longer valid may result in delays to taking decisions on planning applications.** Guidance on the lifespan of ecological surveys can be found in the CIEEM’s April 2019 [Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys](#).

*What time of year should Ecological Appraisals be carried out?*

2.11 For some species and habitats, surveys and assessments can be carried out at any time of year (provided the survey area is not flooded, in drought or covered with snow). For other species, particular times of year are required to provide reliable results that can be used in taking decisions. Surveys must be carried out at an appropriate time and month of year, in suitable weather conditions and using nationally recognised survey guidelines and methods where available. The Ecological Survey Calendar in [Figure 2.3](#) above shows when surveys to support planning applications can take place. It should be noted that the Ecological Survey calendar is guidance only and professional ecological judgement should inform survey timing. However, where this deviates from best practice guidance clear justification should be presented.

*Additional requirements where Habitats Regulations Assessment is needed*

2.12 Development which may result in a likely significant effect on an internationally important nature site or functionally linked habitat (see Figure 2.4 below) must be accompanied by sufficient evidence to enable the Council to make a Habitats Regulations Assessment. This may include bird surveys, data searches with the county bird recorder, noise or lighting assessments or other evidence. This does not apply to mitigation of recreation pressure on the Sefton Coast in relation to housing development where the developer ‘opts in’ to the approach set out in the Council’s 2023 [Information Note: Managing and mitigating the impact of recreation pressure on the Sefton Coast - Sefton’s Interim Approach for housing development](#).

2.13 A developer may wish to undertake their own ‘Shadow HRA’. This is not essential but will be used by the Council to inform assessment of likely significant effects and may be adopted if the findings and proposed additional mitigation are accepted.

<p><b>Figure 2.4 Functionally linked habitat for internationally important sites</b></p> <p>Functionally linked habitat for internationally important sites refers to sites and habitats outside the designated site boundaries that regularly support significant numbers of species listed as being qualifying features of the designations of the internationally important sites. In Sefton this includes farmland, other open land and water bodies.</p>
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*Nature requirements in relation to Permitted Development Rights*

2.14 ‘Permitted development’ is granted permission by a general (national) development planning order or local development order, instead of needing an application to be made to Sefton Council for planning permission. However, in many cases permitted development is granted subject to the prior notification/prior approval by the local planning authority of

certain 'matters'<sup>5</sup>. For some of these matters and for demolition which is permitted development, Local Plan nature policies and this SPD apply. Also, permitted development must still comply with the Habitat Regulations as set out below.

*The need for permitted development to comply with the Habitats Regulations*

- 2.15 Permitted development rights do not override the need to comply with the [Habitats Regulations](#); even if the Council grants Prior Approval or confirms that Prior Approval is not necessary. The Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015 (GDPO)<sup>6</sup> grants permission for the specified permitted development subject to Regulations 75 to 78 of the Habitats Regulations. Therefore, to be lawful, permitted development must comply with the Habitats Regulations and the GPDO.
- 2.16 In Sefton this applies especially to any permitted development for change of use/ conversion to 10 homes or more. Such proposals must show that recreation pressure on the internationally important nature sites on the Sefton Coast has been mitigated to less than significant. The [HRA Recreation Pressure Interim Approach Information Note](#) sets out how developers can 'opt in' to achieve this. This relies on the developer signing a legal agreement and providing a specific commuted sum per dwelling to the Council to achieve this mitigation.
- 2.17 For other permitted development likely to have a significant adverse impact on the internationally important nature sites on the Sefton Coast and functionally linked habitat, the developer should contact the Council before submitting a Prior notification. This may include for example port development, highways drainage or other highways works.

*Prior Notification and/or Prior Approval: Demolition*

- 2.18 For demolition which is permitted development, the method of demolition and any proposed restoration of the site are matters for prior notification /approval. An ecological appraisal will be required to inform the method of demolition and any site restoration. The scope of the ecological appraisal is likely to be limited to survey for bats and breeding birds.
- 2.19 The scope of a bat survey is dependent on the type of building, location, use, structural condition and surrounding vegetation, particularly trees and hedgerows. Initially, a Preliminary Roost Assessment will be required. Such Assessments must be undertaken by a licenced bat ecologist. Dependent on the outcome of the Preliminary Roost Assessment, further bat surveys may be required. These should follow best practice guidance<sup>7</sup> and any deviation from the guidance must be explained fully in the survey report in accordance with BS 42020:2013. When the ecological surveyor is on site undertaking the bat survey, evidence of use of the buildings for breeding birds such as barn swallow, house martin, house sparrow, barn owl or swift should also be recorded.
- 2.20 The developer must set out a Demolition Method Statement. This must take into account the information from the bat and breeding bird surveys, including any mitigation

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<sup>5</sup> As set out in the Town and Country Planning (General Permitted Development) (England) Order 2015; (Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 596), <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/596/article/3> . For a general explanation see <https://www.planningportal.co.uk/wales/applications/consent-types/prior-approval-notification>.

<sup>6</sup> Article 3 of the above Order.

<sup>7</sup> Collins. J.(ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3<sup>rd</sup> edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London. ISBN-13 978-1-872745-96-1

requirements, in scheduling the timing of demolition work, and the method of demolition. For example, work may need to be restricted to a winter period or certain building features may need to be the subject to of a 'soft-strip'<sup>8</sup> by hand.

#### *Other Prior Notification and/or Prior Approvals*

- 2.21 For other permitted development, notably where 'siting' is a matter for Prior Approval, an ecological appraisal may be required, and other provisions of Local Plan nature policies and this SPD may apply. This is the case especially if the proposed permitted development could affect a nature asset such as a designated site, Priority Habitat or a Priority or Protected Species. The scope of the ecological survey will largely depend on the type, significance and extent of the nature asset.

#### ***Tree Preservation Orders***

- 2.22 When submitting applications for consent for works to trees covered by Tree Preservation Orders, developers must provide sufficient information on species likely to be affected by works by submitting an ecological appraisal (see [Figures 2.2](#) and [2.3](#) above). In Sefton, the species most likely to be affected are bats, red squirrels and breeding birds. Appropriate timing of works outside the bird breeding season (1<sup>st</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> August inclusive) to trees may be a sufficient reasonable avoidance measure for Schedule 1 birds<sup>9</sup>.

#### ***Ancient woodland and veteran trees***

- 2.23 Ancient woodland and veteran trees<sup>10</sup> are considered nationally irreplaceable habitats. Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees (or any other nationally irreplaceable habitat) should be refused, unless there are both wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

#### ***Listed Building Consents***

- 2.24 When submitting applications for Listed Building Consent, Sefton will consider the proposal against the relevant development plan policies. Developers are advised to undertake an ecological appraisal (see [Figures 2.2](#) and [2.3](#) above) where there are any internal or external works to roofs, walls and trees. The species most likely to be affected are bats, red squirrels and breeding birds (for example: owls, raptors, herons, swifts, house martins, barn swallows). Appropriate timing of works outside the bird breeding season (1<sup>st</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> August inclusive) to buildings and trees may be a sufficient reasonable avoidance measure for breeding birds.

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<sup>8</sup> 'Soft strip' includes removal by hand of those features identified with bat roost potential; this can be external features such as roofs, tiles, soffits, fascia, porches and internal features such as insulation, timbers, frames.

<sup>9</sup> Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended lists 'birds which are protected by special penalties'. The birds receive full protection while at, on or near an active nest.

<sup>10</sup> Ancient woodland is defined as, "An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS)". A veteran or ancient tree is "a tree which, because of its age, size and condition, is of exceptional biodiversity, cultural or heritage value. All ancient trees are veteran trees. Not all veteran trees are old enough to be ancient but are old relative to other trees of the same species. Very few trees of any species reach the ancient life-stage" (National Planning Policy Framework).

### 3. Protection of existing natural assets: following the mitigation hierarchy

3.1 Local Plan policies NH1 ‘Natural assets’ and NH2 ‘Nature’, which also apply in Bootle Area Action Plan area, set out the requirements for protecting Sefton’s existing natural assets. Any mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) is additional to this.

3.2 Part 5 of policy NH2 states that:

*“Where significant harm resulting from development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated or, as a last resort, compensated, then planning permission will be refused”.*

This is known as the ‘mitigation hierarchy’ (see [Figure 3.1](#) below, the National Planning Policy Framework and [Planning Practice Guidance](#)). The developer must make as many measures as possible at each stage before going on to the next stage in the hierarchy.

#### Figure 3.1 The mitigation hierarchy for nature

- **Avoid** – for example through choice of site
- **Minimise** – for example through site design and layout, management
- **Mitigate** - for example by measures secured by planning conditions or obligations
- **Compensation** – as a last resort, provide an equivalent value of biodiversity elsewhere

3.3 Part 4 of Local Plan policy NH2 ‘Nature’ sets out a sequential approach to sites where mitigation should be delivered. This relates mostly to the Nature Improvement Area (NIA) Focus Areas in Sefton identified in the 2015 [LCR Ecological Network](#), shown in Appendix 2. With the adoption of the [LCR Local Nature Recovery Strategy \(LNRS\)](#), the Council will also accept appropriate mitigation in mapped measures identified in the LNRS Local Habitat Map and Statement of Biodiversity Priorities. The revised sequence is shown in Figure 3.2 below.

#### Figure 3.2 Location of delivery of mitigation – updated policy NH2 hierarchical approach

The sequential approach to where mitigation should be delivered (part 4 of Local Plan policy NH2 ‘Natural Assets’) is now considered to be:

- i. Within the development site
- ii. In the “Immediate locality” of the development site, preferably within:
  - the LCR Ecological Network Core Biodiversity Area and Nature Improvement Focus Areas; or
  - Mapped measures identified on the LCR Local Nature Recovery Strategy Local Habitat Map
- iii. Within a LCR Ecological Network Core Biodiversity Areas and Nature Improvement Area Focus Areas; or
- iv. Within an area identified on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy Local Habitat Map in West Lancashire.

3.4 The developer is responsible for making sure that suitable arrangements are in place for funding, access, operation, maintenance and management (including monitoring and review) for any compensatory provision. These arrangements must be for a minimum period of 30 years. This will be secured through legal agreements or other mechanisms. The developer is also responsible for on-going provision of relevant contact details.

#### **4. Net gain for biodiversity – ecological enhancement**

4.1 The Council expects all development proposals in Sefton to include ecological enhancement, so there is a net gain for nature<sup>11</sup>. This applies both to proposals which are nationally exempt from BNG **and** proposals which provide mandatory 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG) where it should be provided as well as mandatory BNG. The only exceptions to the need for ecological enhancement are proposals which do not involve external groundworks (such as changes of use of buildings or new shopfronts. This may be provided within individual plots or within the wider green and blue infrastructure provision on the site.

4.2 This requirement is in line with:

- **Local plan policy NH1 ‘Natural Assets’** which states that where possible development should maintain, restore, enhance, extend or create natural assets and secure their long-term management
- The National Planning Policy Framework<sup>12</sup>, notably in relation to:
  - **Improving the natural environment**, including strengthening ecological networks, drawing on measures in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy, conserving and enhancing existing natural features such as trees and hedgerows, use of green infrastructure and nature-based solutions to secure multiple benefits including for biodiversity and features for priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs, such as swift bricks
  - **Trees in new development**, including in streets and other locations such as parks (subject to ‘the right tree in the right place’ and suitability)
  - **Mitigation of climate change**, notably creation or restoration of habitats which can act as carbon stores, such as woodland planting and peatland restoration
  - **The Golden Rules** where relevant, to contribute to nature recover and habitat creation, including in line with the Liverpool (LCR) Local Nature Recovery Strategy
- **Additionally, for sites within the Bootle Area Action Plan area, where part 2 of policy BAAP9 Nature** emphasises creation and improvement of wildlife corridors and ‘stepping stones’ to connect existing and new areas of biodiversity value
- **Additionally, where** Local Plan policy NH3 ‘Development in the Nature Improvement Area’ applies.

4.3 The sections below set out the requirements for different types of development. More information including weblinks is set out in Appendix 4. For all development types, suitable species must be used in landscaping schemes, such as native species, and only specific species in the Red Squirrel Refuse or Buffer Zone (see Appendix 3). Invasive species should be avoided (see Appendix 5). Species should be suitable for their location including characteristics such as soil type, drainage, aspect, shade, space available and function within the landscaping scheme. Any planting on sites at or near the coast must not have adverse impacts on sand dune habitats or designated sites and in these locations specialist ecological advice should be sought. Nature enhancements on peat soils should contribute to the creation or restoration of peatland.

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<sup>11</sup> Net gain would not occur if newly introduced species were to pose a challenge or threat to rare or specialised species or their specialised, preferred habitats.

<sup>12</sup> Paragraphs 156, 158, 159, 187 and 192 and to a lesser extent paragraph 125, of the December 2024 Framework, and December 2025 Proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework draft development management policies N2: Improving the natural environment parts 1c, 1d, 1e, 1f, N3: Trees in new development, CC2: Mitigation of climate change part f and GB8: The Golden Rules parts 1 c ii and 1 c iii (where relevant).

***House extensions, other householder development and other non-residential extensions***

- 4.4 Proposals should include at least one measure set out below to provide wildlife-friendly landscaping or features (see Appendix 4 for more information); such as:
- Using or adding in hedgehog-friendly fencing or hedges to your site boundaries
  - Integrating bird bricks or bat box or attaching a bird box or bat box to an external wall
  - Planting a suitable tree in a suitable place, in line with Appendix 3 of this SPD if you live in the Red Squirrel Refuge or Buffer Zone
  - Growing a hedge of a suitable species, to provide berries or nesting sites for birds
  - Planting pollinator-friendly plants to help support bees
  - Creating a pond, which may help support frogs or toads or birds or plants, *or*
  - Building a log pile or include a bee brick to provide homes for insects.
- Measures should be shown on the site plan and layout plan. They would usually be subject to an 'Informative' or a planning condition attached to any permission that development should take place in accordance with the approved plans.

***Housing development of 1 or more homes (minor, 'medium' and major housing schemes)***

- 4.5 All proposals should meet 1), 2) and 3) below and relevant proposals should also meet 4) and 5) below.
- 1) Use or add in hedgehog-friendly fencing or hedges to individual property boundaries (except where they are adjacent to employment uses in the urban area)  
**AND**
  - 2) Integrated bird bricks and bat boxes, or attaching a bird box or bat box to an external wall (if appropriate), on each property;  
**AND**
  - 3) Include at least one other measure (medium development proposals should include at least two measures, major development at least three) providing wildlife-friendly landscaping or feature, such as:
    - Planting suitable native / fruit or berry bearing tree(s) in a suitable place(s) as part of the landscaping scheme, in line with Appendix 3 of this SPD if the site is in the Red Squirrel Refuge or Buffer Zone,
    - Planting a native-species hedge, to provide berries or nesting sites for birds, along the site boundary or front property boundaries
    - Use of pollinator-friendly plants within landscaping schemes to help support bees, or
    - Creating a pond, which may help support frogs or toads or birds or plants,
    - Creating or improving wildlife corridors and 'stepping stones' to connect existing and new areas of biodiversity value,
    - Incorporating nature features on utilitarian features such as sub-stations, bin stores and cycle stores, or**AND**
  - 4) If the site is identified on the Local Habitat Map of the Liverpool City Region (LCR) [LCR Local Nature Recovery Strategy](#) (LNRS), to carry out nature enhancement to help fulfil the priorities and measures of the LNRS (unless this is already achieved by the above). If the site is within the LCR Nature Improvement Area (NIA), to carry out enhancement measures which helps to achieve the priorities set out in the relevant [NIA Focus Area Profile](#) or LNRS  
**AND (if relevant)**

- 5) For housing development sites and proposals with the Green Belt to which the National Planning Policy Framework's **Golden Rules** apply<sup>13</sup>, nature enhancement must be provided as part of improvements to open space provisions. If the site is identified on the LNRS Local Habitat Map, the nature enhancement should help fulfil the priorities and measures of the LNRS.

4.6 Each of these measures should be referred to in the Planning Statement or Design and Access Statement and should be shown on the site layout plan and any landscaping plans. The ecological enhancements would be subject to a planning condition, legal agreement and/or other mechanism to secure implementation.

#### ***Other development not referred to above***

4.7 Ecological enhancements should be appropriate the type and scale of development, existing site ecology and ecology of the surrounding and local area and other relevant factors. The Council would expect requirements 1), 2) and 3) under 'Housing development of 1 or more homes (minor, 'medium' and major housing schemes)' above to be met, unless the applicant demonstrates to the satisfaction of the Council that this is not appropriate. Requirements 4) and 5) in the same section should be met if relevant.

4.8 Applicants are encouraged to incorporate features such as 'green walls' or 'green roofs' where relevant.

4.9 Each of these measures should be referred to in the Planning Statement or Design and Access Statement and should be shown on the site layout plan and any landscaping plans. The ecological enhancements would be subject to a planning condition, legal agreement and/or other mechanism to secure implementation.

#### ***Where should nature enhancement take place?***

4.10 Generally, nature enhancement should take place within the development site.

4.11 In some cases, especially for large scale development, the Council would accept off-site nature improvements where on site delivery is sub-optimal ecologically or has been exhausted, on appropriate other open spaces in Sefton owned by the applicant, or to Council-owned open space, highway verges or other publicly accessible open space such as that owned or managed by parish councils, town councils, or third parties such as schools or other landowners or community groups. These should be within the local area of the development, preferably within its immediate locality. Such off-site enhancements may include new tree planting, wildflower grasslands, dune or peatland restoration or enhancement or other nature-based improvements or site management as well as species enhancements such as bat and bird boxes.

4.12 Off-site nature enhancement would be secured by planning condition, s106 planning obligation or other legal agreement or mechanism, and may include a commuted sum payment.

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<sup>13</sup> Paragraphs 156, 158 and 159 of the December 2024 National Planning Policy Framework and December 2025 Proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework draft policy GB8: The Golden Rules.

## **5. The process for designating additional Local Wildlife Sites**

- 5.1 Currently Sefton has more than 50 Local Wildlife Sites, designated in accordance with the North Merseyside Local Sites Partnership criteria in the Local Plan. There are also 12 Local Geological Sites. Existing Local Wildlife Site and Local Geological Sites are listed in Appendix 2 of the Local Plan. Designated nature sites are shown on the Local Plan Policies Map.
- 5.2 While Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites are usually designated in the Local Plan, this section sets out a process for designating such sites outside the Local Plan review process, in addition to designation within the process. This allows for a more flexible and responsive designation system allowing for designation of Local Sites when identified as ecologically important and reflecting that ecology is not static, habitats change and species are mobile.

### ***The role of North Merseyside Local Sites Partnership***

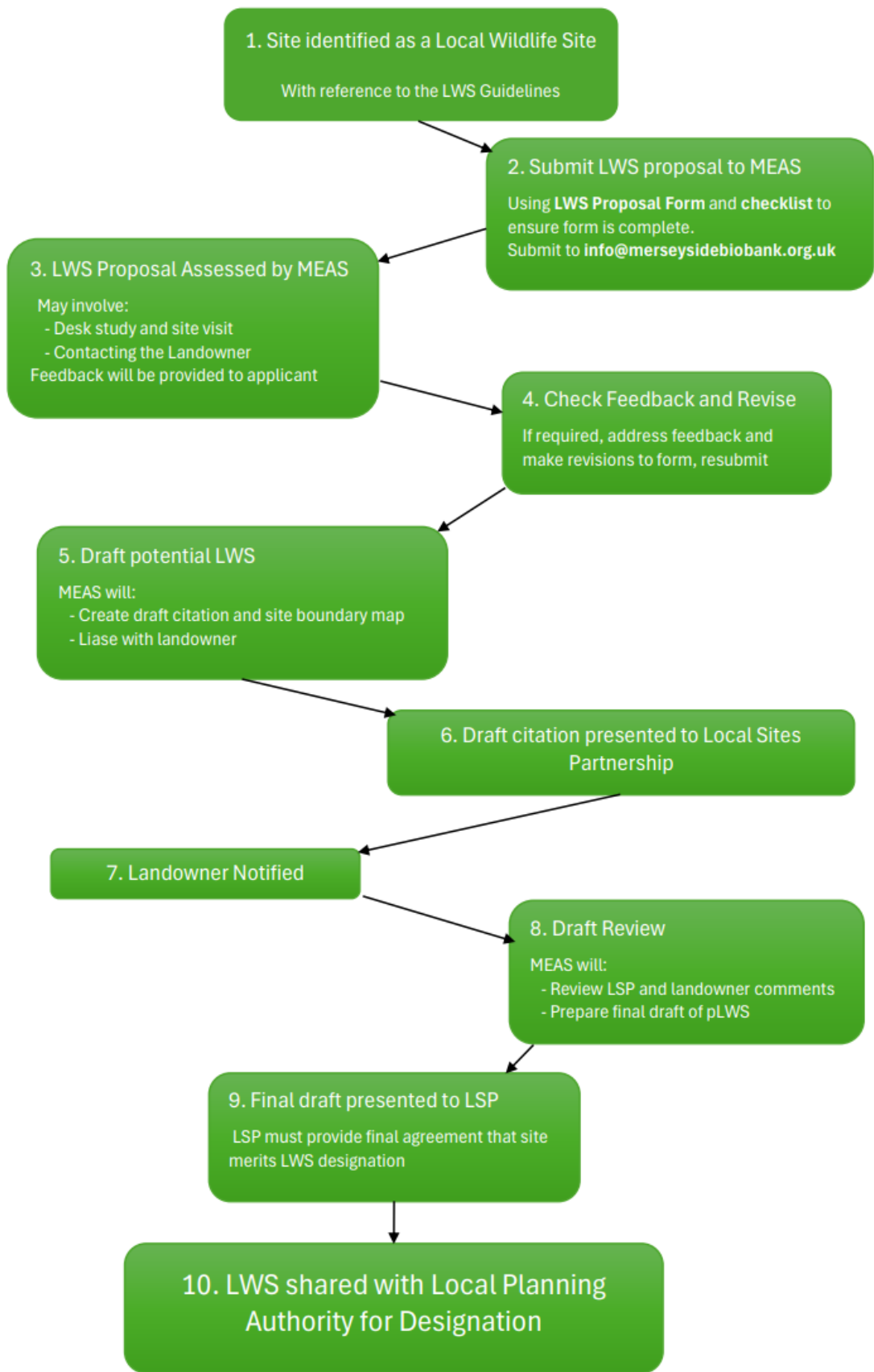
- 5.3 The National Planning Policy Framework recognises the role of Local Wildlife Sites and Local Geological Sites as local natura assets<sup>14</sup>. Both [Circular 6/2005](#) and Defra's 2006 '[Local Sites Guidance on their Identification, Selection & Management](#)' emphasise the role of Local Sites Partnerships in agreeing the basis/criteria for site selection, co-ordinating site selection procedures including survey and identification of candidate sites, establishing a process for monitoring the condition of the selected sites and reviewing the operation of the Local Sites system at suitable intervals. That is, Local Sites Partnerships provide specialist assessment and advice regarding potential or actual Local Wildlife Sites, and local authorities take forward these sites for approval and adoption. For Sefton the Local Sites Partnership is the [North Merseyside Local Sites Partnership](#) (LSP) which has been in existence for many years. Sefton Council are part of the North Merseyside LSP.
- 5.4 The LSP's Site Selection Criteria for Local Wildlife Sites are in line with national guidance<sup>15</sup> and are subject to periodic review, with the most recent version dating from 2008 with more recent updates to individual guidelines. The guidelines are currently under review and being updated. North Merseyside LSP's process for assessing and bringing forward Local Wildlife Sites to Sefton Council is set out in Figure 5.1 overleaf. This is an 11 step process which is 'nature led', reflecting the ecological expertise of the North Merseyside LSP. The final Step 11 is "*Local Wildlife Site shared with Local Planning Authority for designation*". This process is also relevant to Local Geological Sites.
- 5.5 Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRS) give a heightened weight to Local Wildlife Sites which are recognised as being part of 'Areas of Particular Importance for Biodiversity'. Paragraph 27 of the LNRS statutory guidance states:
- "If the responsible authority believes that additional areas require protection due to their particular importance, they should discuss making those areas local wildlife sites with the relevant local planning authority (if this is not the responsible authority)"*

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<sup>14</sup> For example paragraphs 187, 188, 192 and 193 of the December 2024 National Planning Policy Framework and policy N6: Areas of particular importance for biodiversity in the December 2025 Proposed changes to the National Planning Policy Framework.

<sup>15</sup> See for example Planning Practice Guidance - <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment#biodiversity-geodiversity-and-ecosystems>

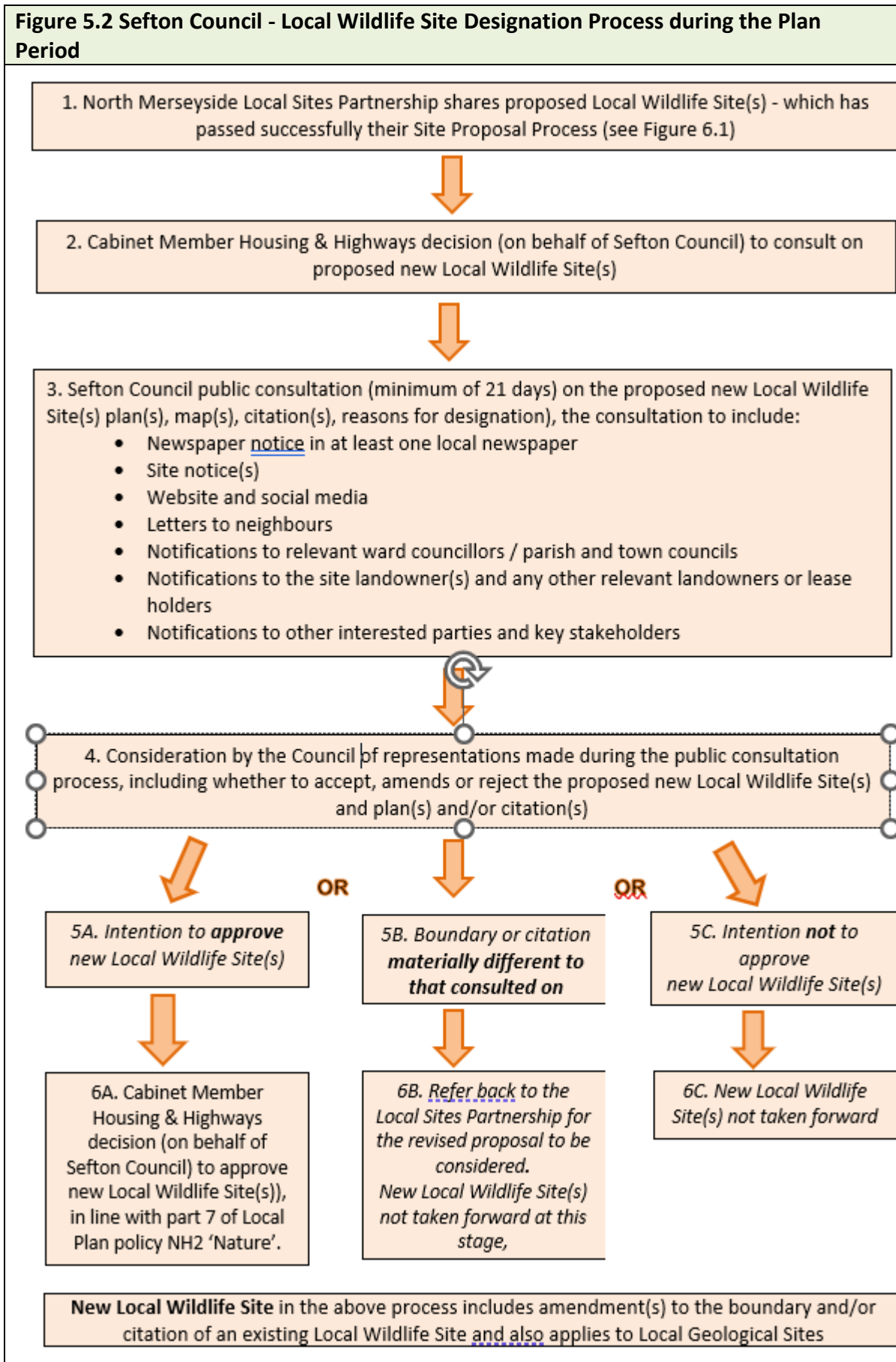
**Figure 5.1 North Merseyside Local Sites Partnership - Local Wildlife Site Proposal Process**



<b>LPA</b> = Local Planning Authority (Sefton Council)	<b>LSP</b> = Local Sites Partnership
<b>LWS</b> = Local Wildlife Site	<b>MEAS</b> = Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service

### *The role of Sefton Council*

- 5.6 Historically Local Wildlife Sites have been designated in Sefton’s successive development plans, and this has meant that long periods have elapsed where it has not been possible to designate new Local Wildlife Sites. Sefton’s current Local Plan was adopted in 2017, the previous Unitary Development Plans in 2006, and before that, in 1995. It is considered to be a more responsive and a more effective means of protecting locally-important nature assets for additional new or amended-boundary Local Wildlife Site(s) to be designated in each interim period, that is, prior to or during the Local Plan preparation process.
- 5.7 This SPD clarifies a process for additional new or amended-boundary Local Wildlife Site(s) to be designated outside the Local Plan preparation process. This would take place once the North Merseyside Local Sites Partnership (LSP) has taken potential Local Wildlife Site or changes to existing sites through its 11 step process shown in Figure 5.1, and shared them with the Council for designation.
- 5.8 This is in line with Local Plan policy NH2 ‘Nature’. Policy NH2 aims to protect existing nature assets, including designated sites. Part 7 of policy NH2 also allows for the recognition of additional nature sites during the Plan period (which runs until 2030):  
*“7. Designated nature sites are shown on the Policies Map. Plan policies apply to other sites recognised during the Plan period as being of nature conservation Importance, including land provided as compensation”.*
- 5.9 This process for the Council to designate additional Local Wildlife Site(s) during the Plan period or prior to the preparation of a new Local Plan is set out in Figure 5.2 below. This includes amendments to the boundary or citation of an existing Local Wildlife Site if this is more appropriate than designating a new adjoining site. This process is also relevant to Local Geological Sites. The decision to designate a Local Wildlife Sites is the responsibility of Sefton Council as Local Planning Authority.
- 5.10 It is important that there are opportunities for public consultation during this designation process, and for any representations made to be considered before a decision is made to designate or amend (or otherwise) the new Local Wildlife Site. This is in line with the opportunities for public comment about proposed new or amended Local Wildlife Sites during any Local Plan preparation process. This is stage 3 of the process set out in Figure 5.2 below. The arrangements for public consultation are similar to those for planning applications in Conservation Areas, for example.
- 5.11 In line with national guidance, the decision whether to designate a new Local Wildlife Site is ‘nature-led’, that is, based almost exclusively on specialist ecological advice and ecological considerations. The Council anticipates that the weight given to representations from the public which relate to other matters will reflect this.
- 5.12 Once a proposed Local Wildlife Site has gone through the process set out in Figure 5.2, including Stage 6A the decision by the Cabinet Member for Housing and Highways (on behalf of Sefton Council), it will become a Local Wildlife Site and be given due weight as such in accordance with part 7 of Local Plan policy NH2 ‘Nature’. This means that development likely to affect a new or amended Local Wildlife Site will be subject to all the relevant requirements set out in relevant Local Plan policies, and to the guidance in this SPD. It will also be subject to periodic monitoring of its condition (see section 6).



5.13 The Council will refer to these additional sites on its [Local Plan website](#), and any other appropriate Council websites.

## 6. Monitoring

6.1 The main monitoring framework for nature policies, and hence for this SPD, is set out in Appendix 3 of the Local Plan, with the key monitoring indicators being:

### *Direct impact indicators*

- 49. Approvals [planning permissions granted] in International, National and Local nature sites and % inappropriate [contrary to nature policies]
- 50. Approvals in Nature Improvements Areas and % inappropriate [contrary to policy NH3]

### *Indirect impact indicators*

- Biodiversity: 72. [Number of] Local sites, and [number/ %] sites in positive conservation management

6.2 The Local Plan monitoring framework (Appendix 3 of the Local Plan) includes an indicator for Local Sites in active conservation management as Single Data List Indicator 160-00. General information on performance against indicator 72 is measured locally and reported nationally<sup>16</sup>. Other designated sites are monitored nationally<sup>17</sup>.

6.3 Local Plan Policy PIM1 'Planning Enforcement' sets out the Council's approach to enforcing planning conditions, obligations and breaches of planning control. This policy also applies to planning conditions, obligations and other mechanisms that deliver avoidance, mitigation and compensatory provision for natural assets.

6.4 It is the applicant's responsibility to ensure that reports are submitted on a timely basis where planning conditions, legal agreements and / or Section 106 Planning Obligations and / or Community Infrastructure Levy (if relevant) related to a grant of planning permission requires the submission, monitoring and review of detailed management plans.

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<sup>16</sup> See <https://www.gov.uk/government/statistical-data-sets/env10-local-sites-in-positive-conservation-management>

<sup>17</sup> See <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/>.

## 7. References

### *EU and national legislation, regulations and policy*

**EU Habitats Directive European Council Directive 92/43/EEC** – see [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/habitats-directive\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/habitats-directive_en)

**EU Conservation of Wild Birds Directive 79/409/EEC** – see [https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/birds-directive\\_en](https://environment.ec.europa.eu/topics/nature-and-biodiversity/birds-directive_en)

**EU Guidance document on assessment of plans and projects in relation to Natura 2000 sites (EU, 2013)** – see [CURIA - Documents \(europa.eu\)](https://eur-lex.europa.eu/uri/uri?uri=CELEX:32013G0001)

**Water Framework Directive** – see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukxi/2017/407/contents/made>

**Bathing Water Directive** – see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/eudr/2006/7/contents>

**Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) (the Habitats Regulations)**, HM Government – see [The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukreg/2010/16/contents/made)

**Environment Act 2021** – see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>

**Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended)**– see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>

**Weeds Act 1959** – see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/Eliz2/7-8/54/contents>

**Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981** – see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69>

**Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement & Permitting) Order 2019** – see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2019/527>

**Statutory Instrument 2015 No. 595, the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015** – see <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2015/595/contents/made>

**National Planning Policy Framework December 2024** – see [National Planning Policy Framework](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/131222/nppf-2024.pdf)

**National Planning Practice Guidance** – see especially <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment> and <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/biodiversity-net-gain>

**Government Guidance on Habitats regulations assessments: protecting a European site (2021)** - see [Habitats regulations assessments: protecting a European site - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/100000/habitats-regulations-assessments-protecting-a-european-site-2021.pdf)

**Government Guidance on how to stop invasive non-native plants from spreading** – see <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prevent-the-spread-of-harmful-invasive-and-non-native-plants>

**Government’s Notice of designation of sensitive catchment areas 2024** – see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/notice-of-designation-of-sensitive-catchment-areas-2024/notice-of-designation-of-sensitive-catchment-areas-2024>

**Natural England Green Infrastructure Framework** – see <https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/Home.aspx>

**Natural England Green infrastructure Planning and Design Guide** – see

<https://designatedsites.naturalengland.org.uk/GreenInfrastructure/downloads/Design%20Guide%20-%20Green%20Infrastructure%20Framework.pdf>

**Natural England open data sources mapping** - see <https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/>

**National Design Guide 2019** - see <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-design-guide>

**Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys April 2019** – see <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Advice-Note.pdf>

### *LCR and sub-regional evidence and strategies*

**North Merseyside Biodiversity Group and Biodiversity Action Plans** – see

<https://www.merseysidebiodiversity.org.uk/>

**Liverpool City Region Ecological Network** – see <https://lcreconet.uk/>

**Nature Connected: Local Nature Partnership for Liverpool City Region** – see

<https://www.natureconnected.org/>

**Merseyside Biobank (Local Environmental Records Centre)** – see [Merseyside BioBank – Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service](#)

**North Merseyside Local Sites Partnership** -see <https://northmerseysidensp.org.uk/>

**Emerging Liverpool City Region Spatial Development Strategy**, Liverpool City Region Combined Authority – see <https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/sds>

**LCR Local Nature Recovery Strategy** - see <https://www.liverpoolcityregion-ca.gov.uk/local-nature-recovery-strategy>

**Emerging LCR Recreation Mitigation Strategy Joint SPD** – see <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/planning-building-control/planning-policy-including-local-plan-and-neighbourhood-planning/recreation-mitigation-strategy/>

- **Evidence Base – Draft Evidence Report** – see [https://eas.merseysidebiobank.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/LCR\\_RMS\\_EvidenceReport\\_v24\\_Optv2.pdf](https://eas.merseysidebiobank.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2023/10/LCR_RMS_EvidenceReport_v24_Optv2.pdf)

**Information Note on Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain and its implementation in the Liverpool City Region**, prepared by Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service – see

[https://eas.merseysidebiobank.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/LCR\\_Mandatory\\_BNG\\_Guidance\\_Note\\_FINAL.pdf](https://eas.merseysidebiobank.org.uk/wp-content/uploads/2024/03/LCR_Mandatory_BNG_Guidance_Note_FINAL.pdf)

**Other ecology and biodiversity net gain information on Merseyside Environmental Advisory Service (MEAS) website** – see <https://eas.merseysidebiobank.org.uk/ecology-and-planning-2/> and links from this page

### **The Mersey Forest:**

- The Mersey Forest Plan: <https://merseyforest.org.uk/our-plan/>
- The Mersey Forest Tree Atlas: <https://merseyforest.org.uk/tree-atlas/>

***Sefton strategies, plans and associated information***

**Sefton Local Development Scheme (2025)** – see [https://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/tqbp05ap/local-development-scheme2025\\_28-february2025.pdf](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/tqbp05ap/local-development-scheme2025_28-february2025.pdf)

**Bootle Area Action Plan 2026** – see <https://www.sefton.gov.yk/bootleaap>

**Sefton Local Plan 2017** – see [www.sefton.gov.uk/localplan](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/localplan)

- **HRA Report on Publication Draft Sefton Local Plan 2015** (URS now AECOM) – see [Microsoft Word - Sefton HRA Local Plan 210115ih.docx](#)
- **HRA Report on Proposed Modifications Draft Sefton Local Plan 2016** (AECOM) - see [Habitats Regulations Assessment of the Proposed Modifications to Sefton Local Plan](#)

**Sefton 'Information Note: Managing and mitigating the impact of recreation pressure on the Sefton Coast - Sefton's Interim Approach for housing development'** (May 2023) – see [www.sefton.gov.uk/spd](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/spd) or [https://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/pcuot4fe/recpressureinforote\\_25-26rates\\_rev.pdf](https://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/pcuot4fe/recpressureinforote_25-26rates_rev.pdf)

**Sefton Supplementary Planning Documents, Supplementary Planning Guidance and Information Notes** (various) including associated HRA/SEA screening reports, including the Open Space SPD – see [www.sefton.gov.uk/spd](http://www.sefton.gov.uk/spd)

**Biodiversity net gain pages on Sefton's website** - see <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/planning-building-control/apply-for-permission/biodiversity-net-gain-bng/>

**Pre-application advice pages on Sefton's website** – see <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/planning-building-control/apply-for-permission/pre-application-advice-on-development-proposals/>

**Sefton's Validation Checklist for planning applications** – see <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/planning-building-control/apply-for-permission/getting-your-application-right-first-time/>

**2019 Formby and Little Altcar Neighbourhood Plan** – see <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/media/3719/neighbourhoodplan-19.pdf>

**2017 Sefton Coast Plan** - see <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/around-sefton/coast-and-countryside/how-we-manage-our-coastline/partnership-work/sefton-coast-landscape-partnership/>

**Emerging Nature Conservation Strategy for the Sefton Coast** – see <https://www.sefton.gov.uk/around-sefton/coast-and-countryside/how-we-manage-our-coastline/partnership-work/nature-conservation-strategy/>

**Appendix 1 Sefton’s natural assets**

A1.1 Figure A1.1 provides an overview of Sefton’s designated sites, Priority Habitats, Priority and Protected Species and other natural assets such as ‘irreplaceable habitats’. Appendix 2 of the Sefton Local Plan (2017 baseline) also provides a summary about sites and the LCR Nature Improvement Area. Many of the boundaries of the designated sites overlap, particularly along the coast, but they differ because the reasons for designation differ. Each type of designated site is assessed against different selection criteria.

**Figure A2.1 Key statistics about designated and protected sites, habitats and species in Sefton**



A2.2 Irreplaceable habitats are defined in the Glossary of the National Planning Policy Framework as “ *Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. They include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen*”. Sefton’s irreplaceable habitats include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, sand dunes, salt marsh, lowland fen. Sefton has a number of Ancient Woodlands, as set out by Defra. Irreplaceable habitats are referenced in the LCR Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

A2.3 Priority habitats and species which have specific legal or policy protection are identified in 3 distinct ways. Each type is assessed against a set of selection criteria for international, national and local importance. The levels of importance may overlap where the habitats or species are present. These priority habitats and species are:

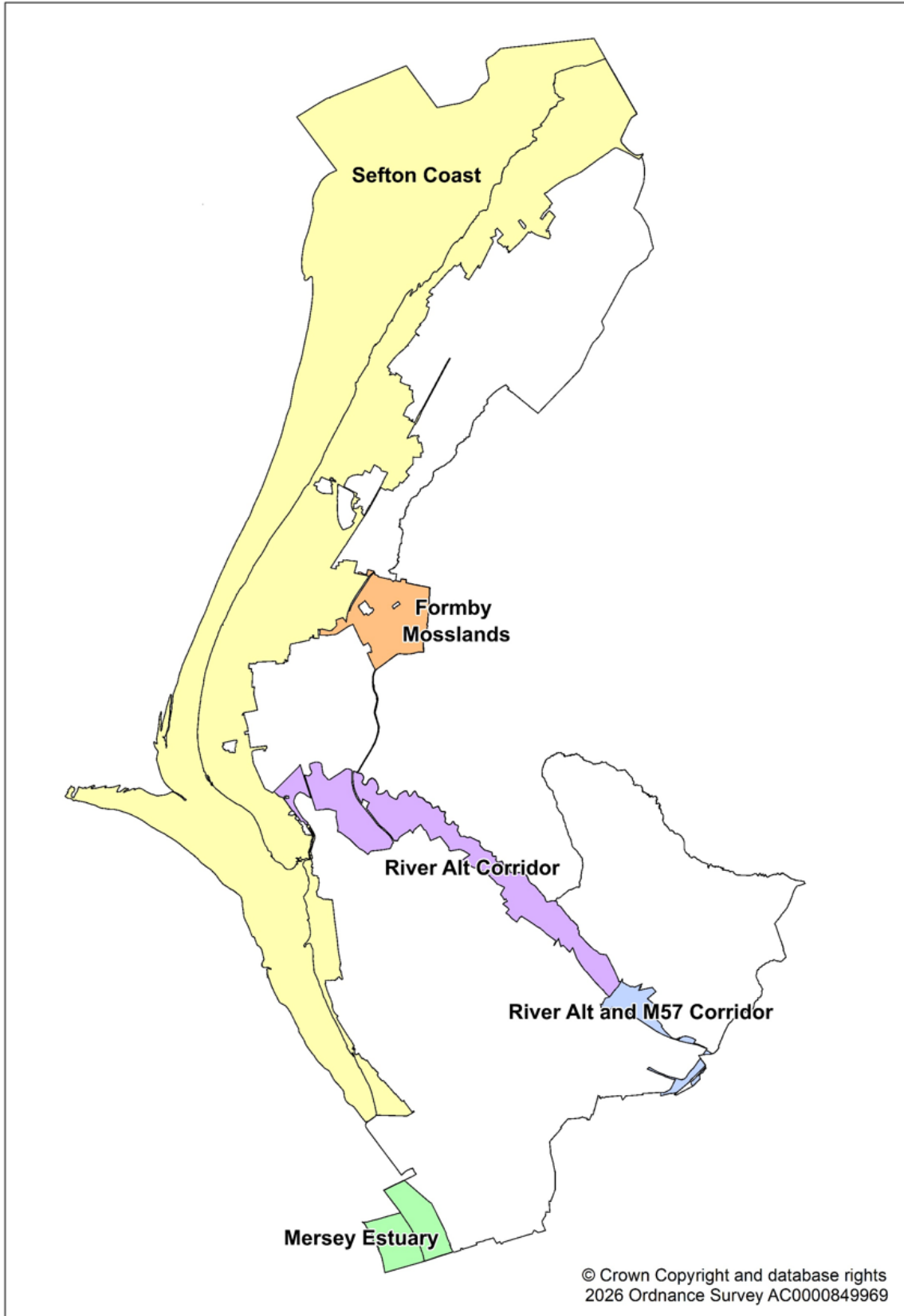
- i. Internationally important habitats and species: Habitats listed under the [EU Habitats Directive](#) as Annex 1 Priority Habitats (5 Annex 1 Priority Habitats in Sefton), Priority Species listed in Annex II and Annex IV of the Habitats Directive (16 of these Priority Species in Sefton).
- ii. Nationally important Priority Habitats and Priority Species: ‘habitats of principal importance’ and ‘species of principal importance’ under section 41 of the 2006 [Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act](#). These may be within or outside designated sites. The list of Priority Habitats is maintained by Natural England and is agreed with the Secretary of State. There are 155 Priority Species in Sefton.
- iii. Locally important habitats and species: Priority habitats and species set out in the [North Merseyside Biodiversity Action Plan](#) prepared, historically, by the Merseyside Biodiversity Group. There are 14 such priority habitats and 28 such priority species in Sefton. These Biodiversity Action Plans are expected to be superseded by the priorities and actions set out in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

A2.4 Legally protected species receive special protection for a variety of reasons such as rarity, persecution and habitat destruction. Many of these are also Priority Species. The protected and/or Priority Species most commonly found within or near to development sites in Sefton include:

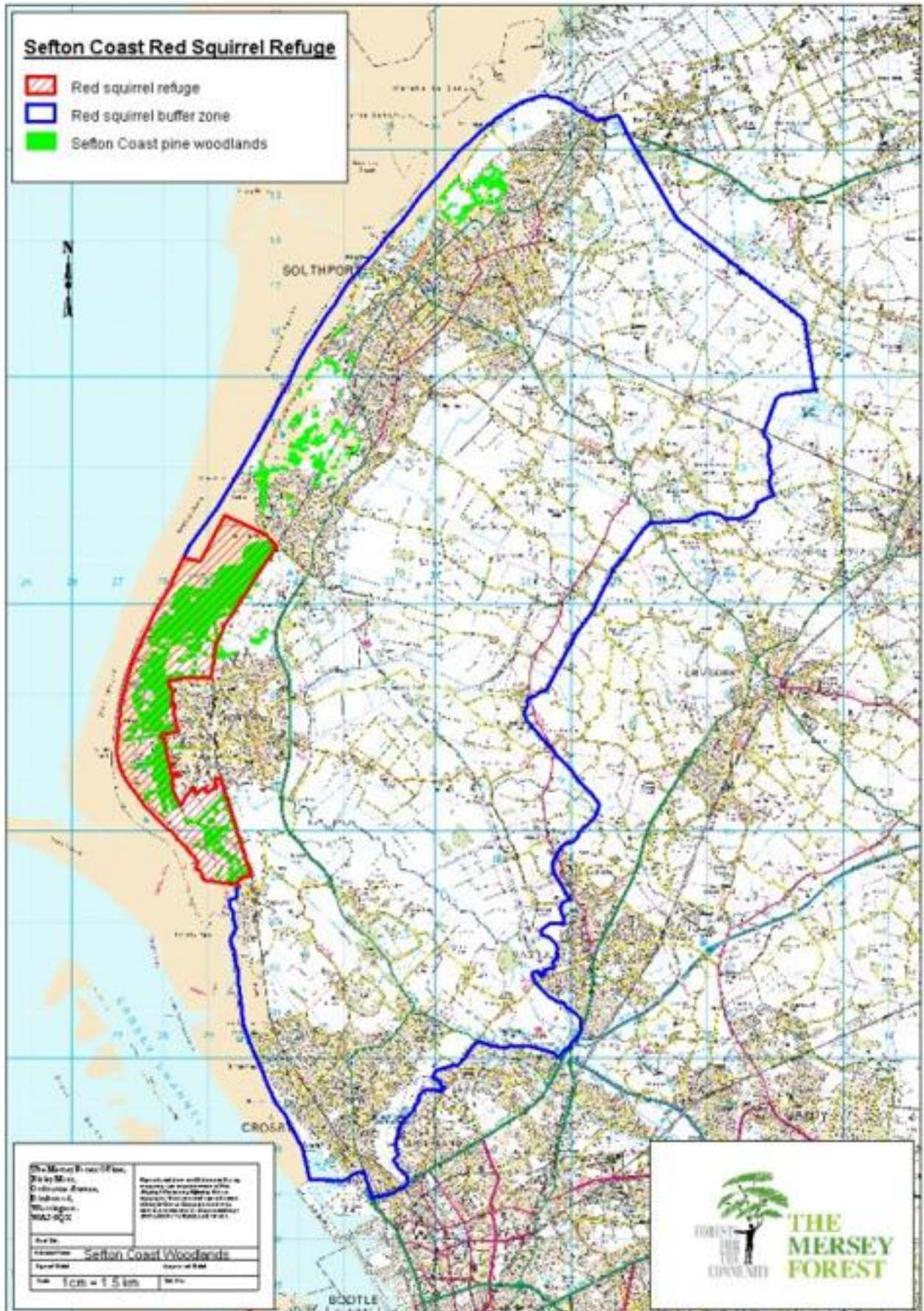
- Amphibians (including Great crested newt and Natterjack toad)
- Barn owl
- Bats
- Breeding birds
- Common lizard
- Eel
- English Bluebell
- Little Owl
- Red squirrel
- Sand lizard
- Water vole.

## **Appendix 2 LCR Ecological Network's Nature Improvement Area**

A2.1 The Nature Improvement Area Focus Areas within or partly within Sefton are shown below. More information is available at <https://lcreconet.uk/>.



### Appendix 3 Red Squirrel Refuge Area and Buffer Zone



A3.1 For sites within these Red Squirrel Refuge and Buffer Zone areas, the proposed landscaping scheme on the site should include only tree and shrub species that provide a food resource for red squirrel in the long-term. This includes proposals for single dwellings. These species include:

- Willow (*Salix spp.*)
- Rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*)
- Birch (*Betula pendula* or *Betula pubescens*)
- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
- Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*)
- Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)

A3.2 The following additional species are also suitable for residential, commercial and industrial settings but not within areas of semi-natural habitat:

- Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*)
- Larch (*Larix decidua*)
- Yew (*Taxus baccata*).

A3.3 Deployment of grey squirrel control measures in these areas may also be suitable mitigation.

## Appendix 4 Ecological enhancement

A4.1 Further information and links about measures for ecological enhancement are set out below.

Enhancement measure	Example websites:
<b>Hedgehog friendly fencing or hedges</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Fencing which has a 150 mm gap between the fence and the ground or a 13 cm-by-13 cm gap in the fence at ground level</li> <li>Hedges of native species to allow hedgehog movement</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Hedgehogs and development: guide for developers, Hedgehog Street</a>
<b>Bat bricks and bat boxes</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Bat bricks should be integrated into the structure of the building or roof space. Bat bricks are made by a range of manufacturers</li> <li>Where this is not feasible, bat roost boxes should be attached to the external walls of new buildings/extensions</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Bat Boxes, Bat Conservation Trust</a>
<b>Bird bricks and bird boxes</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>A number of bird species commonly nest in or on buildings e.g. house sparrow, starling, swift, house martins, swallows. Bird boxes specific to these species should be integrated into the structure of the building or where not feasible attached to external walls.</li> <li>Swift bricks should be integrated into the structure of the building or roof space. Where this is not feasible, swift boxes should be attached to the external walls of new buildings/extensions. These are suitable for other birds including sparrows.</li> <li>Subject to the agreement of the Council, where a number of swift bricks or boxes are to be provided, house martin cups may be provided instead of some of the swift bricks/boxes</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Fitting Swift Nest Places, Swift conservation</a>
<b>Bee bricks</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These are made by a range of manufacturers</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Bee Brick Guidance, Green &amp; Blue, Building for Bees, Buglife</a>
<b>Pollinator friendly plants</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These include trees, shrubs, flowers, flowering lawns, grasses.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">RHS Perfect for Pollinators.</a>
<b>Ponds and amphibians and reptiles</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Garden ponds or larger scale features such as above ground, naturalistic sustainable drainage systems (SuDS) can enhance nature, including for frogs, toads and other amphibians and reptiles</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Freshwater Habitats Trust: Pond Creation Toolkit</a> <a href="#">Susdrain - delivering SuDS</a>
<b>Nature enhancements on utilitarian features</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>These may include vegetated roofs or walls, 'bug hotels', or nesting boxes</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Green infrastructure Planning and Design Guide</a>
<b>Green Roofs and Living Roofs</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>For example, on new roofs of more than 25 m<sup>2</sup>, which are flat or have a pitch of less than 25 degrees. They can provide significant benefits for wildlife (e.g. invertebrates and birds), as well as reducing water runoff and insulating buildings.</li> <li>An option on buildings, especially on otherwise unacceptably blank and/or architecturally unrelieved façades. Living walls help protect buildings from weathering and temperature fluctuations and can also benefit wildlife, such as, invertebrates and birds. Most useful in an urban setting.</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Green Roofs, Living Roofs.</a>

Enhancement measure	<i>Example websites:</i>
<b>Other</b>	
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• There is a range of other good practice and other information on a number of websites, including Natural England and various charities and other organisations</li> <li>• This refers to habitat and species protection, conservation, creation and enhancement</li> </ul>	<a href="#">Green infrastructure Planning &amp; Design Guide</a> <a href="#">Susdrain - delivering SuDS</a> <a href="#">The Rain Garden Guide</a> <a href="#">Guidance on bats and lighting, Bat Conservation Trust</a> <a href="#">Woodland Trust: Tree Planting Advice</a> <a href="#">Hedgelinek</a>

## **Appendix 5 Invasive species**

A5.1 Invasive non-native species are listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended) and Schedule 2 of the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement & Permitting) Order 2019. Also, there are a number of invasive problem species and garden escapes within the borough, with some species being a nature conservation management issue on the Sefton Coast.

A5.2 Invasive species most likely to be found on or near development sites in Sefton include:

- Australian swamp stonecrop
- Cotoneaster – many varieties
- Curly waterweed
- Floating pennywort
- Giant hogweed
- Grey squirrel
- Indian balsam
- Japanese knotweed and hybrids
- Japanese rose
- Montbretia
- Parrot’s feather
- Rhododendron
- Shallon
- Variegated Yellow Archangel
- Water fern
- Virginia creeper

A5.3 Additional invasive problem species and garden escapes within the borough which are a nature conservation management issue on the Sefton Coast include:

- Sea buckthorn
- Japanese rose
- Clematis species
- Pampas grass
- Bamboo species
- Broadleaved everlasting pea
- Yucca.

A5.4 Any of the above invasive species present on a development site this must be identified through the UK Habitats Survey and/or Ecological Appraisal or survey.

A 5.5 When determining a planning application, Sefton Council will require details of how invasive species will be eradicated from a development site. This will be through a planning condition requiring an Invasive Species Method Statement which should include:

- A plan showing the extent of the plant(s)
- What method(s) will be used to prevent the plant spreading further, including demarcation, and
- What method(s) of control will be used, including details of monitoring.

A5.6 For Japanese knotweed and Giant Hogweed, a separate, additional Validation Report will be required by planning condition. This must confirm the actions taken and that the site has been free from invasive species for a period of at least 12 months. To enable discharge of this part of the planning condition the Validation Report should include:

- Location plan of invasive species pre-development
- Treatment record including inspection dates, herbicide application dates (if applicable), copy of waste transfer notes (if applicable)
- Photographs
- Plan showing location of geotextile membrane (where applicable) and details of its installation including dates and who undertook the work; and
- Confirmation that the site has been free of invasive species for at least 12 months.

A5.7 Eradication work for all invasive species should be undertaken by suitably experienced invasive species specialist contractors or under the supervision of specialist contractors. More information is available in [government guidance on how to prevent the spread of harmful, invasive and non-native plants](#).