

Photos:



Looking east across playing field



Arable field and wide grass margins and species-rich hedge

Habitat type(s):

Arable field, short-mown, species-poor grassland, hedgerows

Subsidiary habitats:

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Site description:

The site is situated on the north-eastern edge of Ipswich, to the north of Humber Doucy Lane. There are two areas subdivided by a track leading to the pavilion of Ipswich Rugby Club. To the west of the track is an arable field and on the east is a playing field. A species-rich hedge is present along Humber Doucy Lane and this may be ancient in origin. Similarly the hedge along the east of the arable field (west of the track) has a ditch and bank, as does the hedge on the west of the arable field, so may also represent old field boundaries. A recent hawthorn hedge is present on the northern boundary of the playing field.

Protected species:

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Protected species potential:

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BAP habitats present:

Ancient species-rich hedgerow

BAP species seen:

-

BAP species known:

-

BAP species potential:

Hedgehog (1995)

Connectivity:

There is limited connectivity to the wider countryside through the hedgerow network.

Structural diversity:

Structural diversity is limited to the boundary hedgerows and trees and associated field margins in the arable field.

Flora:

The playing field represents short-mown, species-poor grassland. Species typical of this habitat are present such as ribwort and greater plantain, dandelion, red clover and creeping buttercup. Mallow and wall barley were present around edges which were not so close mown.

A thick, largely intact, diverse hedge was present along the full length of Humber Doucy Lane, with hawthorn, *Prunus* spp, wild rose, field maple, elm, ash, hazel, spindle and ash. This species-rich hedge was thought to be ancient, thus qualifying as a Biodiversity Action Plan habitat.

The hedge along the northern boundary of the playing field was young hawthorn, but there was no hedge to the east or west.

A ditch and bank with hedgerow trees marked the eastern boundary of the arable field. This included mature field maple, hawthorn, ash and *Prunus* species. Ivy formed the ground flora beneath the hedge,

with occasional nettle and arum.

The south-western boundary of the site abutted a domestic property with a fence and hornbeam hedge. The remainder of the hedge along the western boundary had a ditch and bank and was dominated by cherry plum shrubs, with ash, hawthorn, rose, sycamore and climbing white bryony. Three mature trees on the adjacent property (common lime, Scot's pine and beech) abut the hedge.

There was a broad field margin next to the arable field which included bristly ox-tongue, fat hen, knot grass, redshank, mayweed and wall speedwell and occasional dittander (nationally scarce). There was a narrow band of rank grassland between the hedge along Humber Doucy Lane and the field margin and this was dominated by false oat grass, cock's foot, hogweed and burdock.

Avifauna:

The survey took place at an unsuitable time of year for recording this group. Farmland species such as skylark may be present, as well as locally common species associated with the hedgerows.

Invertebrates:

The mature hedgerows may have subterranean dead wood suitable for supporting stag beetle larvae. Common butterflies such as small white and speckled wood were flying within the site. Bumblebees were foraging within the arable field margin.

Herpetofauna:

The site is unsuitable for this group.

Mammals:

There is a record of hedgehog on Humber Doucy Lane (1995), but as this is now a much scarcer species the likelihood of their presence is much reduced. Other common mammals such as fox and grey squirrel will be present.

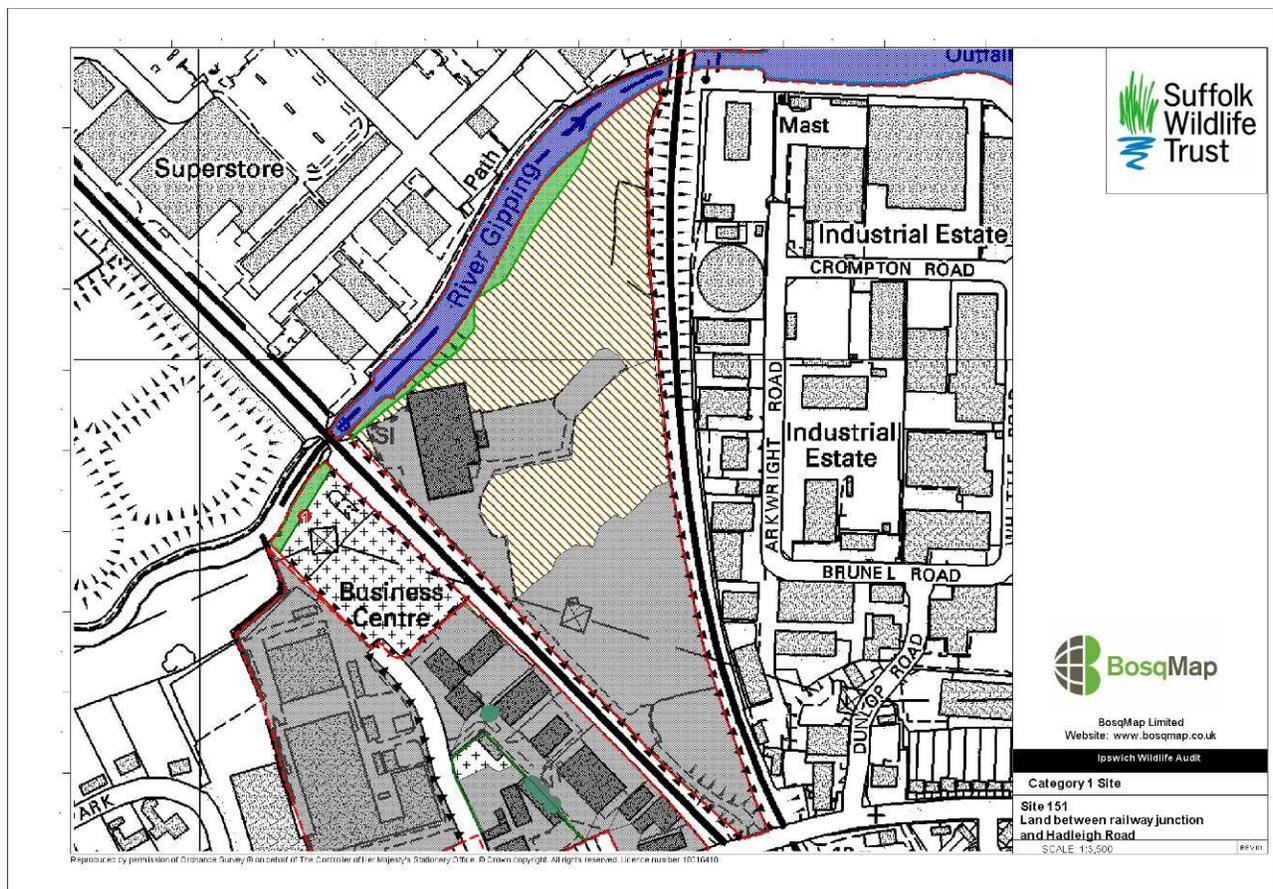
Comments and recommendations:

The hedgerows represent the features of greatest wildlife importance within this site.

Site name: **Site reference 151 - Land between Railway Junction and Hadleigh Road**

IBC ref: UC264
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TM 14295 44923
Area: 7.57 hectares
Date: 30 August 2012
Recorder: S Bullion
Weather conditions: 18°C, mild and showery
Ranking: 5
Biodiversity value: Low

Map:



Photos:



View north across site in area of future Ipswich Rail Chord



Ruderal habitat in centre of site, looking south

Habitat type(s):

Hedge with trees

Subsidiary habitats:

Ruderal vegetation, particularly adjacent to the railway line.

Site description:

This triangular site is unusual in that it is bounded on all sides by potential wildlife corridors. To the north is the River Gipping and west is the main Ipswich to Stowmarket rail line. On the eastern boundary is the rail spur off to Westerfield and Felixstowe. The northern section of the site is allocated for the Ipswich Rail Chord Project, to facilitate improved rail movements and at the time of the surveys ecological mitigation, primarily for reptiles, is being undertaken. The northern section of the site still contains semi-natural habitat (although this is in the process of being removed) with a large building present on the north-western corner. To the south is primarily hard standing and heavily disturbed areas, although there is a central area of ruderal vegetation which is developing.

Protected species:

Slow worm, common lizard and grass snake

Protected species potential:

-

BAP habitats present:

-

BAP species seen:

-

BAP species known:

Slow worm, common lizard and grass snake

BAP species potential:

-

Connectivity:

This triangular site has excellent ecological connectivity, being bounded by railway lines on two sides and the River Gipping on the third.

Structural diversity:

In the northern section, habitat reduction (strimming to ground level) is taking place to facilitate translocation of reptiles. To the south there is very little semi-natural habitat within the site. At the time of the survey structural diversity is poor.

Flora:

Most of the species recorded are part of a disturbed/ruderal assemblage. The following species were noted: dittander (Nationally Scarce), bristly ox-tongue, Canadian fleabane, nettle, greater mullein, smooth hawk's-beard, perforate St Johns-wort, dove's-foot cranesbill, common stork's bill, ribwort plantain, buckshorn plantain, ragwort, weld, creeping cinquefoil, hemlock, white deadnettle, black horehound, spear thistle, bird's foot trefoil, mugwort, burdock, yarrow, black medick, ox-eye daisy, red

bartsia, tansy, rosebay willowherb, pearlwort, hedge bindweed, hairy willowherb, false oat grass, Yorkshire fog, with some birch scrub and buddleia.

Trees and scrub associated with the river bank include alder, ash, hawthorn, bramble, elder, sycamore, willow and blackthorn. The scrubby vegetation associated with the railway lines are dominated by bramble, old man's beard and elder.

Avifauna:

The time of year was unsuitable for recording this group. There is little opportunity for this group although birds will nest in the trees and scrub adjoining the River Gipping. In particular, the river corridor will provide good habitat for migrant species such as the warblers.

Invertebrates:

There is little suitable habitat within the site, but the river corridor provides excellent habitat for this group. Hawker dragonflies were observed hunting over the river.

Herpetofauna:

Reptiles are known to occur along the railway corridors and within the site. Whilst on site we were advised by the ecologists that to date approximately 300 slow worms and small numbers of common lizard and grass snake had been translocated to Bramford Meadows, a site owned by Suffolk County Council which is in the process of being handed over to Bramford Parish Council. 0.4 hectares of habitat is being retained adjacent to the River Gipping and being enhanced for reptiles.

Mammals:

The site will support common mammals such as rabbit and fox.

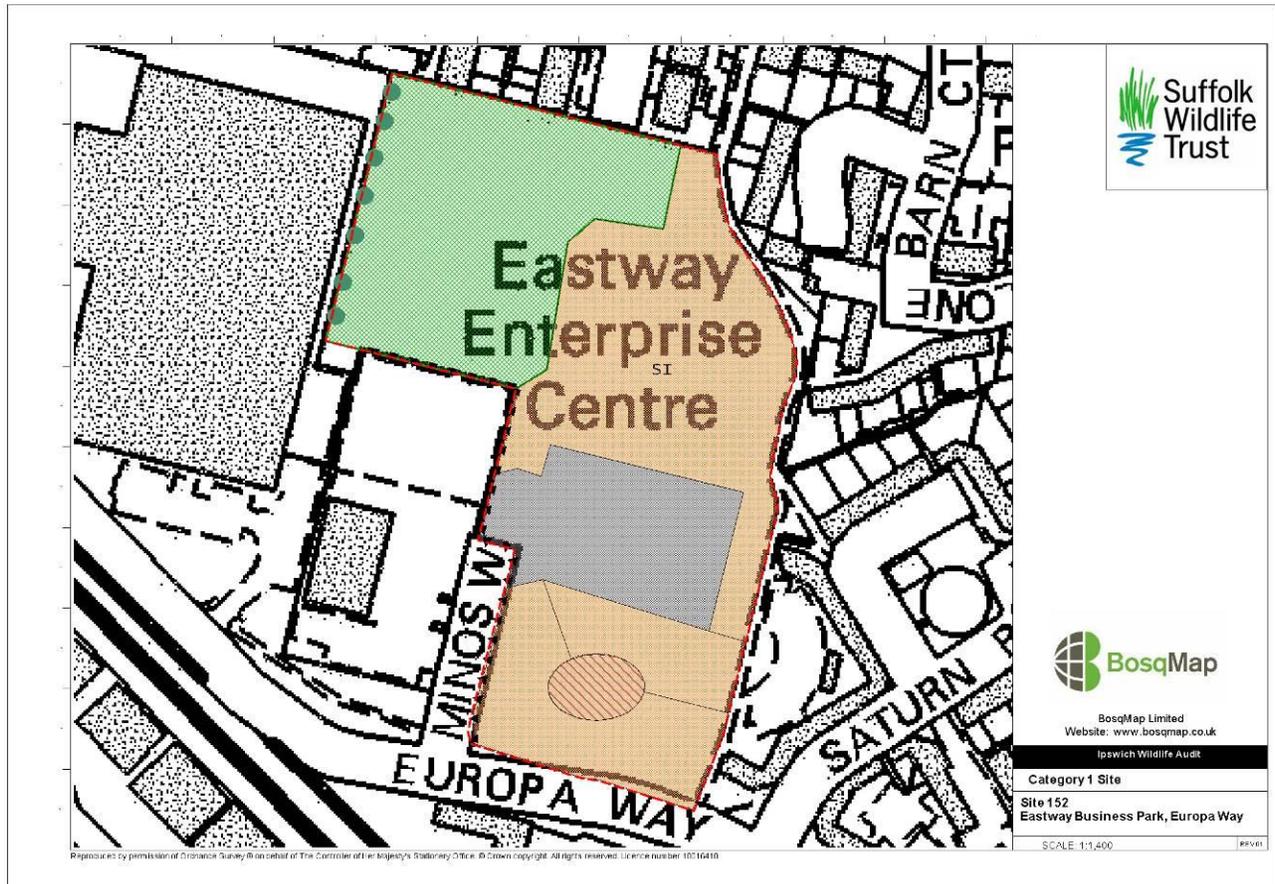
Comments and recommendations:

The river corridor must be buffered from any future development proposals. Semi-natural habitat should be retained adjacent to the river and managed appropriately. If any future development impacts upon the habitat adjacent to the railway line then mitigation for reptiles will be required. Similarly, if ruderal habitat is allowed to develop within the site then this too could be colonised by reptiles (from a reservoir associated with the railway lines) and future development must take account of this.

Site name: Site reference 152 - Eastway Business Park, Europa Way

IBC Ref: IP165
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TM 13670 45620
Area: 2.07 hectares
Date: 16 August 2012
Recorder: S Bullion
Weather conditions: Hot, sunshine with cloud, 22° C, slight breeze
Ranking: 4
Biodiversity value: Medium

Map:



Photos:



Looking west across site

Habitat type(s):

Rough grassland with bramble scrub

Subsidiary habitats:

-

Site description:

This site lies to the north of Europa Way and was once part of the former Local Wildlife Site known as Sroughton Road Pond and Wasteground (as described in the 1992 and 2000 Wildlife Audits). It is a large area of rough grassland with dense bramble scrub developing on the north-western margins. An area of concrete hardstanding is situated in the southern section, east of Minos Way, but this is becoming colonised by ruderal plants which are seeding into cracks. There is evidence that drainage is impeded in places and these have been colonised by common fleabane, common reed and wood small reed.

Protected species:

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Protected species potential:

Slow worm

BAP habitats present:

-

BAP species seen:

House sparrow

BAP species known:

-

BAP species potential:

Slow worm, hedgehog

Connectivity:

Although once connected to the wider countryside, the site is now surrounded by roads and housing.

Structural diversity:

Structural diversity is good, with a mixture of tall grasses, herbs and bramble scrub,

Flora:

A good assemblage of plant species was recorded, typical of rough grassland within an urban context:
Herbs: Hairy willowherb, black medick, black knapweed, common toadflax, creeping thistle, nettle, tansy, wild carrot, wild parsnip, teasel, prickly ox-tongue, mugwort, mouse-ear hawkweed, perforate St John's-wort, corn sow thistle, wild fennel, yarrow, creeping buttercup, white clover, common mallow common fleabane and the nationally scarce (but locally common) dittander.

Grasses: Cock's foot, false oat grass, couch grass, wood small-reed, common reed, rough meadow grass, creeping bent

Avifauna:

This was an unsuitable time of year for surveying this group. A small flock of house sparrows were recorded on the eastern boundary. The bramble thickets provide good nesting habitat for a wide range of garden species.

Invertebrates:

The mosaic of habitats on this site means it is good for invertebrates. Grasshoppers were abundant at the time of the visit. There are numerous ant hills consistent with this being undisturbed grassland. Large white and meadow brown butterflies was seen and further members of this group are highly likely to be present. Small Heath butterflies have been recorded in a garden off Bramford Road in 2003. The five-banded-tailed digger wasp *Cerceris quinquefasciata* was recorded on this site in 2001, however the lack of bare ground habitat means it is unlikely to be present now.

Herpetofauna:

The habitat on site is suitable for slow worms but any population will now be isolated from other areas of suitable habitat.

Mammals:

The site may support species such as hedgehog and various common small mammals.

Comments and recommendations:

Despite this being close to new housing development, there was little evidence that people are entering the site for dog walking or other activities. This site has a high potential to become high value natural green space for the local community, particularly as there little other semi-natural habitat available in the local area which could be accessed for recreational purposes.

Site name: **Site reference 153 - Europa Way**

IBC ref: IP090
Site status: No wildlife designation
Grid ref: TM 13750 45350
Area: 1.42 hectares
Date: 16 August 2012 and 8 November 2012
Recorder: S Bullion
Weather conditions: Hot, sunshine with cloud, 22° C, slight breeze
Ranking: 3
Biodiversity value: Medium

Map:



Photos:



Habitat type(s):

Rough grassland with scrub

Subsidiary habitats:

Vegetated banks subdividing the site

Site description:

This site lies to the south of Europa Way. Although not formally part of the former Local Wildlife Site known as Sproughton Road Pond Wasteground (as described in the 1992 and 2000 Wildlife Audits) it would have contributed to the overall larger habitat unit. The Ipswich to Norwich railway line lies on its south-western boundary. It is a complex area of rough grassland and developing scrub, with internal banks subdividing the site into loose compartments with slight different floristic components and features. The eastern section of the site represents a shallow basin and this was the most floristically diverse part of the site with a high abundance of herbaceous species. Further west the vegetation becomes more rank and slightly less species rich.

Protected species:

Slow worm

Protected species potential:

-

BAP habitats present:

-

BAP species seen:

-

BAP species known:

Slow worm

BAP species potential:

Hedgehog

Connectivity:

This site borders the railway line corridor and so has good connectivity.

Structural diversity:

Structural diversity is good, with a mixture of herbs, grasses and thorny scrub,

Flora:

This site had an interesting and diverse assemblage of plant species:

Herbs: Hop trefoil, bush vetch, smooth tare, bird's-foot trefoil, creeping cinquefoil, black medick, black knapweed, common toadflax, creeping thistle, nettle, tansy, wild carrot, wild parsnip, teasel, prickly ox-tongue, mugwort, perforate St John's-wort, wild fennel, yarrow, red clover, common mallow, blue fleabane, Canadian fleabane, hemlock, hogweed, ragwort, horseradish, poppy, rosebay willowherb, ribwort plantain, broad-leaved dock, small flowered crane's-bill, smooth hawk's-beard white campion, black horehound and the nationally scarce (but locally common) dittander.

Grasses: False oat grass, small timothy, rough meadow grass

Avifauna:

This was an unsuitable time of year for surveying this group. The bramble thickets and scrub provide good nesting habitat for a wide range of species.

Invertebrates:

The mosaic of habitats on this site means it is very good for invertebrates, particularly in this urban context. Grasshoppers were abundant at the time of the visit. There are numerous ant hills consistent with this being undisturbed grassland. Large white and meadow brown butterflies was seen and further members of this group are highly likely to be present. The five-banded-tailed digger wasp *Cerceris quinquefasciata* was recorded on this site in 2001, but the lack of bare ground habitat means it is unlikely to be present now. Further invertebrate surveys are advised.

Herpetofauna:

Slow worms have been recorded on this site in earlier surveys. The proximity of this site to the railway line means that slow worms will still be present on this site and because the habitat is highly suitable for them, there will be a high population density.

Mammals:

The site may support species such as hedgehog and various small mammals

Comments and recommendations:

Despite this being close to new housing development, there was little evidence that people are entering the site for dog walking or other activities.

We strongly recommend that a reptile survey should be undertaken at a suitable time of year, such as spring or late summer/early autumn. Surveys outside of these seasons are either unsuitable because reptiles are in hibernation or sub-optimal due to increased summer temperatures. Certainly, before any development is consented on this site a reptile survey must be carried out, due to the high likelihood that they will be present. No clearance of vegetation should take place until the presence of reptiles is properly assessed and mitigated, in order to ensure compliance with the Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) (as amended).

We strongly recommend that an invertebrate survey is carried out at the appropriate time of year. Urban sites such as these can be of very high value for this group.

Amendment 8/11/12

During the autumn of 2012, the south-eastern two thirds of the site were cleared as part of the Ipswich Rail Chord Project. Apart from the area immediately adjacent to the railway where an additional line is proposed, the bulk of this area is to be used for temporary storage of construction equipment and machinery. NLG Ecology, the consultants acting for the project, advised that in advance of site clearance, approximately 30 slow worms and a grass snake had been translocated to Bramford Meadows.

The remaining third of the site in the north-west remains unaffected by the above works. Given the proximity to the railway line and the presence of suitable habitat, it is therefore highly likely that a small slow worm population will remain within this area. Any future development proposals on this plot must therefore address the presence of reptiles prior to any site clearance.