

## **FILE NOTE – EMPLOYMENT LAND NORTH OF MAPLE CROSS LODGE RIPARIAN MAMMAL SCOPING SURVEY**

### **Introduction**

- 1.1 Greengage Environmental Ltd were commissioned by BCL (Maple Cross) LLP to undertake a riparian mammal survey for a watercourse adjacent Employment Land North of Maple Cross Lodge in Maple Cross.
- 1.2 This is a report of the survey, which sought to identify the potential for the site to support otter (*Lutra lutra*) and water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*), identify any nests/holts on site and outline mitigation recommendations in light of the proposed development of the site.
- 1.3 Water voles and otters are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), making it an offence to:
- intentionally capture, kill or injure water voles/otters;
  - damage, destroy or block access to their places of shelter or protection (on purpose or by not taking enough care);
  - disturb them in a place of shelter or protection (on purpose or by not taking enough care); and
  - possess, sell, control or transport live or dead water voles/otters or parts of them (not water voles bred in captivity).
- 1.4 Otters are also European Protected Species.
- 1.5 A riparian mammal survey was undertaken in August 2014 which concluded that water vole and otter are likely absent from the site.
- 1.6 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken for the site on 8<sup>th</sup> March 2019 identified the river as being sub-optimal habitat for riparian mammals, however biological records of otter exist within 2km of the site. The requirement for a detailed scoping survey was identified.

### **Methodology**

- 1.7 All accessible sections of the river on site were inspected for evidence of water voles and otters. Evidence of water voles includes holes and runs along the banks, latrines, footprints, vegetation chewed in a characteristic way or piles of food can also be noted. Evidence of otters includes holt sites, spraints, footprints or feeding remains.
- 1.8 All sections of the river on site, and 50m of the river downstream were surveyed. There was no access available to inspect the river upstream of the site.

- 1.9 The surveys were undertaken on 26<sup>th</sup> April 2019 and 4<sup>th</sup> July 2019. Both inspections were undertaken in clear, warm conditions.

### **Surveyors**

- 1.10 James Bumphrey, who led the surveys, has an undergraduate degree in Environmental Sciences (BSc Hons), a Master's degree in Environmental Consultancy, a Natural England Great Crested Newt Licence (2018-35160-CLS-CLS) and is a Graduate member of CIEEM. James has 8 years' experience surveying bats on sites like this.
- 1.11 Olivia Guindon, who conducted the site surveys, has a Bachelor's degree in Ecology and Wildlife Conservation (BSc Hons), a Master's degree in Species Identification and Survey Skills and is a Graduate member of CIEEM.
- 1.12 Laura Thomas, who undertook the site surveys, has an undergraduate degree in Biology (BSc Hons) and a Master's degree in Evolutionary and Behavioural Ecology and is a Graduate member of CIEEM. Laura has over 4 years' experience in the commercial sector.
- 1.13 Daniel Perlaki, who undertook prepared this report, has an undergraduate degree in Ecology (BSc Hons), a Master's degree in Conservation Science and Policy and is a Graduate member of CIEEM.

### **Limitations**

- 1.14 There was significantly reduced accessibility to the riverbank on the second survey visit undertaken in July owing to the presence of dense nettles (*Urtica dioica*), brambles (*Rubus fruticosus agg.*) and thistles (*Cirsium spp.*). As such, only 5% of the length of the stream within the site boundary was assessed.

### **Results**

- 1.15 No evidence of use of the site by water vole or otter was identified on either survey visit. This confirms the findings of previous riparian mammal surveys on site. As such, water voles and otter can be considered likely absent from the site.

**Figure 1.1 Waterbody on site on April site visit**



**Figure 1.2 Waterbody on April site visit**



**Figure 1.3 Limited access due to dense vegetation on July site visit**



- 1.16 There are no formal mitigation measures required, although it is understood that the proposals include full retention of the watercourse on site.

### **Discussion**

- 1.17 Measures have been put in place to ensure suitable protection of the watercourse despite the absence of riparian mammals. An 8m buffer from the closest unit and the watercourse will be implemented and landscaped. Detail on the buffer creation will be provided in a landscape and ecology management plan, which will be secured through planning condition.