

# REPORT UNDERTAKEN BY KESTREL WILDLIFE CONSULTANTS LTD

## GREATER HORSESHOE BATS – SOUTH HAMS SPECIAL AREA OF CONSERVATION

### Site Screening in Respect of Sites with Potential for Development in Chudleigh

March 2011

#### Background

1. The following report, commissioned by Teignbridge District Council (TDC), provides results on site screening undertaken at a number of SHLAA sites in and around Chudleigh.
2. These sites have been identified by TDC as having potential for future development and are shown on Map 1 in Appendix 1 of this report. The specific areas are listed below and a corresponding number shows their location on the maps. The sites shown are indicative and the boundaries should not be seen as definitive.
3. There is potential that these sites will fall within or close to the strategic flyways and sustenance zones for Greater Horseshoe Bats (GHBs) identified by Natural England in its planning guidance relating to the South Hams Special Area of Conservation (SAC)<sup>1</sup>. Consequently, any future development on these sites could have implications for integrity of the SAC and the bats using it.
4. This report will form a part of the Local Development Framework evidence base prepared by the TDC. This evidence base will provide the necessary information to consider sites that may have potential for future development.

#### *Sites within under consideration within Chudleigh*

- 1 – Land adjoining Oldway
- 2 – Land west of Oldway
- 3 – Land adjacent to Rocklands Vale
- 4 – Land at Rocklands Vale
- 5 – Land at Station Hill (Part of South Oldway)
- 6 – Land at Coburg Fields
- 7 – Land at Palace Mill
- 8 – Land at Inner Bell Field
- 9 – Land at Bottle Bridge Hill
- 10 – Land around James House
- 11 – Land at Colway Lane
- 12 – Land adjacent to Grovelands
- 13 – Land at Chudleigh Sports Ground
- 14 – Land at Old Chapel, Exeter Road
- 15 – Land at Church Hill Meadow

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<sup>1</sup> South Hams SAC – Greater Horseshoe Consultation Zone Planning Guidance - Natural [England](#) June 2010

## Sites Visits

4. The following report was informed by sites visits undertaken on the 27<sup>th</sup> July 2010 by M. Oxford and L. Duverge. Access for these visits was obtained from public rights of way or from views obtained from adjacent roads.

## Structure of This Report

5. A brief report is presented below for each site and provides the following information:
  - a. Key physical characteristics of the site;
  - b. Whether the future development of the site may have the potential to impact the integrity of the South Hams SAC;
  - c. Whether the degree of impact is likely to require Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) should the site be considered suitable for allocation for development within the plan;
  - d. Whether the degree of impact –
    - may be such as to significantly question the suitability of the site for development;
    - may be such as to require mitigation, or compensatory measures upon any development of the site;
  - e. Any specific recommendations or advice relating to the site (for example specific constraints or mitigation such as hedgerows and landscaping, lighting, watercourses, existing buildings etc.).

Appendix 1 then provides a brief description of statutory powers and mechanisms that may be used to secure appropriate biodiversity enhancements for Greater Horseshoe Bats across the network of landscape features upon which they are dependent. And finally Appendix 2 provides a map showing the location of each site.

6. A colour code is provided alongside the title of each site report to give an 'at-a-glance' impression of the site's suitability for development.



Green indicates that the integrity of the SAC is unlikely to be affected and proposals could be taken forward that would not require HRA.



Amber indicates that the issue of whether or not the integrity of the SAC is likely to be affected by development depends on the details of the proposal and the form of mitigation provided. HRA would be required.



Red indicates that initial screening suggests that this site should not be brought forward for development because the site is considered key to the integrity of the SAC and it is unlikely that effective mitigation or compensation would be possible. HRA would be required.



## **1 – Land adjoining Oldway**

### **Key Characteristics**

7. This site lies to the west of Oldway lane and is comprised of open pastureland that is approximately rectangular in shape. It lies on sloping ground dropping away to the A38 to the northwest.
8. The site is bounded on three sides by mature tall hedgerows, with the hedges on the northern and southern boundary being the most substantial and thereby providing the best shelter and foraging opportunities for Greater Horseshoe Bats. In contrast, the hedgerow alongside Oldway is more intensively managed, is consequently a less significant landscape feature and therefore unlikely to be attractive to commuting bats.

### **Does future development of the site have the potential to impact the integrity of the South Hams SAC?**

9. Because of its open character, it is unlikely that this site is of critical importance to GHBs and consequently development, especially on the upper slopes, would be unlikely to have a significant affect on the integrity of the SAC. However, it is possible that the hedgerow along the bottom of the site could form part of a strategic flyway for GHBs moving in a south to north (and back) direction. Therefore, before any development proposals are considered it is recommended that an appropriate bat survey be carried out along the southern, western and northern boundaries to establish what, if any, use is made of them by GHBs.
  - If used by GHBs, then development on site could impact the integrity of the SAC by:
  - Causing disturbance (e.g. from increased light levels) so that the bats are no longer able to make use of the valley on this side of Chudleigh;
  - Development would also result in the loss of pasture land which would reduce the extent of potential foraging habitat used by any bats moving up and down the valley.

### **Is it likely that potential impacts will require Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)?**

10. If the results of the above survey show that there is substantial use of a flyway through the valley and that it forms an important link in the landscape for GHBs then the effect of development on the integrity of the SAC should be assessed formally through HRA.

### **Is it likely that impacts can be mitigated effectively?**

11. Any detailed proposals for development of this site should first be informed by appropriate bat surveys undertaken during a suitable time of year. Such information is required to inform how, if at all, the site may be used by GHBs and to then assess what possible impacts may require mitigation or compensation and the likely effectiveness of such measures.



## **2 – Land west of Oldway**

### **Key Characteristics**

12. This site lies between the southern end of Oldway lane and the A38 to the west and is comprised of two fields that appear to be under permanent pasture. The northern field is the largest and its northern boundary is adjacent to the small lane that runs from Oldway downhill and under the A38. The underpass under the dual carriageway is recorded by radio-tracking as an important flyway for Greater Horseshoe Bats moving from their roost at Chudleigh Caves towards one of their known foraging areas on the western side of the A38.

### **Does future development of the site have the potential to impact the integrity of the South Hams SAC?**

13. It is very likely that the tree-lined corridor formed by the sunken lane on the northern boundary of the site provides a very important flyway for GHBs. Therefore, before any development proposals are considered it is recommended that an appropriate bat survey be carried out along the length of the lane and on adjacent land to establish how the corridor is used by GHBs and to what extent, if any, the adjacent pasture supports foraging activity.
  - If used by GHBs, then development on site could impact the integrity of the SAC by:
    - Causing disturbance (e.g. from increased light levels) so that the bats are no longer able to make use of the corridor along the lane;
    - Development would also result in the loss of pasture land which would reduce the extent of potential foraging habitat used by any bats foraging either side of their important flyway.

### **Is it likely that potential impacts will require Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)?**

14. If the results of the above survey show that there is substantial use of the lane and adjacent land, as seems very likely from historic records, then the effect of development on the integrity of the SAC should be assessed formally through HRA.

### **Is it likely that impacts can be mitigated effectively?**

15. Any detailed proposals for development of this site should first be informed by appropriate bat surveys undertaken during a suitable time of year. Such information is required to inform how, if at all, the site may be used by GHBs and to then assess what possible impacts may require mitigation or compensation and the likely effectiveness of such measures. As a minimum though, a substantial buffer is likely to be required between any new development and the sunken lane, so as to ensure it remains dark and attractive to commuting bats.



### **3 – Land adjacent to Rocklands Vale**

#### **Key Characteristics**

16. This site lies to the east of Oldway and slopes up towards Chudleigh and appears to be under pasture. A tree-lined hedgerow and brook along the northern boundary form the strongest features on site and from these the land rises steeply to the south. It is very likely that at least part of this hedgerow corridor forms an important flyway for Greater Horseshoe Bats commuting from the roost at the caves and their known foraging areas to the west of the A38.

#### **Does future development of the site have the potential to impact the integrity of the South Hams SAC?**

17. It is very likely that the tree-lined corridor along the brook provides a very important flyway for GHBs. Therefore, before any development proposals are considered it is recommended that an appropriate bat survey be carried out establish how the corridor is used by GHBs and to what extent, if any, the adjacent pasture supports foraging activity.
  - If used by GHBs, then development on site could impact the integrity of the SAC by:
    - Causing disturbance (e.g. from increased light levels) so that the bats are no longer able to make use of the corridor along the hedgerow/brook;
    - Development would also result in the loss of pasture land which would reduce the extent of potential foraging habitat used by any bats foraging either side of their important flyway.

#### **Is it likely that potential impacts will require Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)?**

18. If the results of the above survey show that there is substantial use of the hedge corridor and adjacent land then the effect of development on the integrity of the SAC should be assessed formally through HRA. In particular, this is one of several sites on the southern side of Chudleigh that may require HRA because of their in combination effects. For instance, in combination with the the following sites: Rocklands Vale (site number 4), Station Hill (site number 5) and Coburg Fields (site number 6).

#### **Is it likely that impacts can be mitigated effectively?**

19. Any detailed proposals for development of this site should first be informed by appropriate bat surveys undertaken during a suitable time of year. Such information is required to inform how, if at all, the site may be used by GHBs and to then assess what possible impacts may require mitigation or compensation and the likely effectiveness of such measures. As a minimum though, a substantial buffer is likely to be required between any new development and the hedgerow and brook along the northern boundary, so as to ensure it remains dark and attractive to commuting bats.



## **4 – Land at Rocklands Vale**

### **Key Characteristics**

20. The northern boundary of this site is marked by the tree-lined hedgerow and brook that continues westward along the boundary of site 3. The ground rises away from the brook towards the B3344. The northern part of this site is known, from radio-tracking, to form an important flyway for Greater Horseshoe Bats commuting from the roost at the caves and their known foraging areas to the west of the A38. The north-eastern corner of the site is particularly important because it provides a sheltered tree-lined route through the valley bottom for the bats to follow and for this reason is particularly sensitive to the effects of disturbance from development. And the eastern boundary is adjacent to land that is known, from the results of radio-tracking, to be a preferred route across the B3344 as the bats commute westward towards preferred foraging habitats on the other side of the A38.

### **Does future development of the site have the potential to impact the integrity of the South Hams SAC?**

21. The tree-lined corridor along the brook provides a very important flyway for GHBs. Therefore, before any development proposals are considered it is recommended that an appropriate bat survey be carried out establish how the corridor is used by GHBs and to what extent, if any, the adjacent pasture supports foraging activity.
22. If used by GHBs, then development on site could impact the integrity of the SAC by:
- Causing disturbance (e.g. from increased light levels) so that the bats are no longer able to make use of the corridor along the hedgerow/brook;
  - Development would also result loss of pasture which would reduce the extent of potential foraging habitat used by any bats foraging either side of their important flyway.

### **Is it likely that potential impacts will require Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)?**

23. If the results of the above survey show that there is substantial use of the lane and adjacent land, as seems likely from historic records, then the effect of development on the integrity of the SAC should be assessed formally through HRA. In particular, this is one of several sites on the southern side of Chudleigh that may require HRA because of their in combination effects. For instance, in combination with the following sites: Land Adjacent to Rocklands Vale (site number 3), Station Hill (site number 5) and Coburg Fields (site number 6).

### **Is it likely that impacts can be mitigated effectively?**

24. Any detailed proposals for development of this site should first be informed by appropriate bat surveys undertaken during a suitable time of year. Such information is required to inform how, if at all, the site may be used by GHBs and to then assess what possible impacts may require mitigation or compensation and the likely effectiveness of such measures. As a minimum though, a substantial buffer is likely to be required between any new development and the hedgerow and brook corridor along the northern boundary of the site, so as to ensure it remains dark and attractive to commuting bats.

### **Specific recommendations**

25. Development of this site would require very careful design of both layout and footprint and would necessitate retention of a wide buffer between new development and the land to the north and east. Such proposals would need to ensure that light levels within the buffer did not exceed 0.5 Lux.



## **5 – Land at Station Hill (Part of South Oldway)**

### **Key Characteristics**

26. This is a level site and is comprised of two fields that are under arable cultivation. Its southern boundary is marked by the B3344 and the remaining boundaries are a combination of post and wire and well clipped hedgerows – and as such are of little intrinsic value for Greater Horseshoe Bats. However, the eastern boundary is adjacent to land that is known, from the results of radio-tracking, to be a preferred route across the B3344 as the bats commute westward towards preferred foraging habitats on the other side of the A38.

### **Does future development of the site have the potential to impact the integrity of the South Hams SAC?**

27. Dues to its lack of ideal boundary habitat features, it is unlikely that this site is of critical importance to foraging Greater Horseshoe Bats, although any cattle grazed pasture this close to a maternity roost must have some potential value GHBs.

28. However, because the land immediately to the east of the site provides a very important flyway for GHBs across this southern part of Chudleigh, it is recommended that a detailed bat survey be carried out to establish how the 'corridor' is used by GHBs and to what extent, if any, the adjacent pasture on Coburg Fields supports foraging activity. If used by GHBs, then development on site could impact the integrity of the SAC by:

- Causing disturbance (e.g. from increased light levels) so that the bats are no longer able to make use of the corridor to the south;
- Development would also result in the loss of pasture land which would reduce the extent of potential foraging habitat used by any bats foraging either side of their important flyway.

### **Is it likely that potential impacts will require Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)?**

29. Any development proposals on this site are likely to generate potential impacts arising from new and/or improved lighting provision and from loss of green field land to new buildings and associated vehicle access etc. The site is considered to be in a very sensitive location for the GHBs and consequently any development proposals should be fully informed by a comprehensive Habitat Regulations Assessment. The conclusions of the HRA must demonstrate that there will be no adverse affect on the integrity of the SAC before any site allocation can be made or planning permission can be granted. In particular, this is one of several sites on the southern side of Chudleigh that may require HRA because of their in combination effects. For instance, in combination with the following sites: Land adjacent to Rocklands Vale (site number 3), Rocklands Vale (site number 4) and Coburg Fields (site number 6).

### **Is it likely that impacts can be mitigated effectively?**

30. Depending on the type and layout of development, it is possible that mitigation could be designed to ensure that the integrity of the SAC will not be affected significantly.

### **Specific recommendations**

31. Development of this site would require very careful design of both layout and footprint and would necessitate retention of a wide buffer between new development and the land to the north-east. Such proposals would need to ensure that light levels within the buffer did not exceed 0.5 Lux.



## **6 – Land at Coburg Fields**

### **Key Characteristics**

32. This site is surrounded on three sides by built development, although the margins of the site are marked by hedgerows, mature trees and scub and – on the western boundary – by a small stream. The southern boundary lies adjacent to more open land which contains just a few individual properties set in large grounds. This land to the south of Coburg Fields is recorded through radio-tracking as being one of the key flyways westward from the roost at Chudleigh caves and is therefore very important to the continued access to and use of foraging areas to the west. Coburg Fields themselves are currently ungrazed and somewhat overgrown which reduces their current value as foraging habitat to Greater Horseshoe Bats. However, reinstatement of grazing would be likely to significantly improve this value and would provide sheltered foraging habitat close to the roost.

### **Does future development of the site have the potential to impact the integrity of the South Hams SAC?**

33. It is known that the land immediately to the south of Coburg provides a very important flyway for GHBs across this southern part of Chudleigh. Therefore, before any development proposals are considered it is recommended that a detailed bat survey be carried out in this area to establish how the 'corridor' is used by GHBs and to what extent, if any, the adjacent pasture on Coburg Fields supports foraging activity. If used by GHBs, then development on site could impact the integrity of the SAC by:
- Causing disturbance (e.g. from increased light levels) so that the bats are no longer able to make use of the corridor to the south;
  - Development would also result in the loss of pasture land which would reduce the extent of potential foraging habitat used by any bats foraging either side of their important flyway.

### **Is it likely that potential impacts will require Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)?**

34. Any development proposals on this site are likely to generate potential impacts arising from new and/or improved lighting provision close to the river and from loss of green field land to new buildings and associated vehicle access etc. The site is considered to be in a very sensitive location for the GHBs and consequently any development proposals should be fully informed by a comprehensive Habitat Regulations Assessment. The conclusions of the HRA must demonstrate that there will be no adverse effect on the integrity of the SAC before any site allocation can be made or planning permission can be granted.
35. In particular, this is one of several sites on the southern side of Chudleigh that may require HRA because of their in combination effects. For instance, in combination with the following sites: Land Adjacent to Rocklands Vale (site number 3), Rocklands Vale (site number 4), Station Hill (site number 5).

### **Is it likely that impacts can be mitigated effectively?**

36. Depending on the type and layout of development, it is possible that mitigation could be designed to ensure that the integrity of the SAC will not be affected significantly.

### **Specific recommendations**

37. Development of this site would require careful design of both layout and footprint and would necessitate retention of a wide buffer between new development and land to the south. Such proposals would need to ensure that light levels within the buffer did not exceed 0.5 Lux.



## **7 – Land at Palace Mill**

### **Key Characteristics**

38. This is a relatively small site but is one of the nearest referred to in this report to the roost at Chudleigh Caves. The southern boundary is marked by a mature hedgerow and the eastern boundary by tall trees and Kate Brook. It is very likely that the brook is one of the main flyways that run north from the roost, and for that reason this site is in a critical position in the landscape. There is one large agricultural/industrial building in the middle of the site.

### **Does future development of the site have the potential to impact the integrity of the South Hams SAC?**

39. Development on this site could therefore impact the integrity of the SAC by:

- Causing physical loss of or breaks in linear habitat features likely to provide important flyways for GHBs - thus resulting in reduced habitat connectivity between the SAC and key foraging areas to the north.
- Causing disturbance (e.g. from increased light levels) so that the bats are deterred from using the existing network of hedgerows as flyways;

### **Is it likely that potential impacts will require Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)?**

40. Any development proposal on this site should only be considered only after a full Habitat Regulations Assessment has been undertaken and been able to demonstrate that the integrity of the SAC will not be affected adversely.

### **Is it likely that impacts can be mitigated effectively?**

41. Due to its close proximity to the SAC roost itself, and its position in the landscape as a key flyway, it is difficult to envisage how such a small site might be developed while at the same time delivering adequate mitigation or compensation. If the site is to be developed, then something with a footprint limited to the western half of the site, and with an effective buffer between it and the brook, might be acceptable.



## **8 – Land at Inner Bell Field**

### **Key Characteristics**

42. This site is rectangular in shape and is marked on the northern and southern boundaries by well developed tree lined hedgerows. While the site is appears under permanent pasture, and therefore has some potential as foraging habitat for Greater Horseshoe Bats, it is believed that its position away from other key strategic flyways probably means that the site if of more limited use by the bats.

### **Does future development of the site have the potential to impact the integrity of the South Hams SAC?**

43. Due to its location in the landscape it is unlikely that this site is of critical importance to GHBs and therefore development would be unlikely to have a significant affect on the integrity of the SAC.

### **Is it likely that potential impacts will require Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)?**

44. Since it is unlikely that development will affect significantly the integrity of the SAC, it follows that HRA is unlikely to be required.

### **Is it likely that impacts can be mitigated effectively?**

45. It is unlikely that development of this site would require mitigation. However, development could provide valuable habitat enhancements by incorporating new hedgerow and tree planting along the western boundary and the northern and southern boundary hedges should be retained and buffered. This could strengthen the habitat connectivity on the site and could improves linkages across the northern end of Chudleigh.



## **9 – Land at Bottle Bridge Hill**

### **Key Characteristics**

46. This site is comprised of a two irregularly shaped field on sloping ground that are surrounded on all sides by well developed mature hedgerows and tall trees.
47. The site appears to be grazed and is likely to represent high quality habitat for GHBs because it provides excellent foraging habitat and well connected local flyways. As such, in combination with the adjacent plot on Land Around James House (on the other side of the lane) the area provides some of the most attractive bat habitat on the northern edge of Chudleigh.

### **Does future development of the site have the potential to impact the integrity of the South Hams SAC?**

48. Development on this site could therefore impact the integrity of the SAC by:
  - Causing physical loss of or breaks in linear habitat features likely to provide important flyways for GHBs - thus resulting in reduced habitat connectivity between the SAC and other roosts and foraging areas to the north and west of the town.
  - Causing disturbance (e.g. from increased light levels) so that the bats are deterred from using the existing network of hedgerows as flyways;
  - Reducing (as a result of land-take) the area and/or quality of excellent GHB foraging habitat available on site.

### **Is it likely that potential impacts will require Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)?**

49. Any development proposal on this site should only be considered only after a full Habitat Regulations Assessment has been undertaken and been able to demonstrate that the integrity of the SAC will not be affected adversely.

### **Is it likely that impacts can be mitigated effectively?**

50. Due to the excellent GHB habitat features present on site and its position in the landscape as a key flyway, it is difficult to envisage how any development might effectively mitigate or compensate for the predicted combination of impacts likely to arise from development in this location.



## **10 – Land around James House**

### **Key Characteristics**

51. This site is comprised of a large irregularly shaped field on sloping ground that is surrounded on all sides by well developed mature hedgerows and tall trees.
52. The site appears to be grazed and is likely to represent high quality habitat for GHBs because it provides excellent foraging habitat and well connected local flyways. As such, in combination with the adjacent plot at Bottle Bridge Hill (on the other side of the lane) the area provides some of the most attractive bat habitat on the northern edge of Chudleigh.

### **Does future development of the site have the potential to impact the integrity of the South Hams SAC?**

53. Development on this site could therefore impact the integrity of the SAC by:
  - Causing physical loss of or breaks in linear habitat features likely to provide important flyways for GHBs - thus resulting in reduced habitat connectivity between the SAC and other roosts and foraging areas to the north and west of the town.
  - Causing disturbance (e.g. from increased light levels) so that the bats are deterred from using the existing network of hedgerows as flyways;
  - Reducing (as a result of land-take) the area and/or quality of excellent GHB foraging habitat available on site.

### **Is it likely that potential impacts will require Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)?**

54. Any development proposal on this site should only be considered only after a full Habitat Regulations Assessment has been undertaken and been able to demonstrate that the integrity of the SAC will not be affected adversely.

### **Is it likely that impacts can be mitigated effectively?**

55. Due to the excellent GHB habitat features present on site and its position in the landscape as a key flyway, it is difficult to envisage how any development might effectively mitigate or compensate for the predicted combination of impacts likely to arise from development in this location.



## **11 – Land at Colway Lane**

### **Key Characteristics**

56. This relatively small level site lies on the northern edge of Chudleigh and is bounded on three sides by built development and roads. The fourth boundary along the eastern edge of the site is marked by a mature well developed hedgerow and this may provide some foraging opportunities for Greater Horseshoe Bats. However, at its southern end this hedgerow terminates with the B3344 and there are no strong connections flyway connects for the bats on the other side of the road, so the hedge may have only limited value or use by the bats.

### **Does future development of the site have the potential to impact the integrity of the South Hams SAC?**

57. Dues to its current habitat characteristics and location away from obvious flyways, it is unlikely that this site is of critical importance to GHBs - either for foraging or as a main flyway through the landscape. With current information (e.g. identification of sub-optimal habitat and no knowledge of a GHB roost nearby) it is therefore considered that development would be unlikely to have a significant affect on the integrity of the SAC.

### **Is it likely that potential impacts will require Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)?**

58. Since it is unlikely that development will affect significantly the integrity of the SAC, it follows that HRA is unlikely to be required - unless detailed survey reveals the site is of importance to GHBs (see below).

### **Is it likely that impacts can be mitigated effectively?**

59. It is unlikely that development of this site would require mitigation. However, development could provide valuable habitat enhancements by incorporating new hedgerow and tree planting along the northern boundary where it is adjacent to site 10. This could strengthen the habitat connectivity across these sites and could improves linkages across the northern end of Chudleigh.



## **12 – Land adjacent to Grovelands**

### **Key Characteristics**

60. This site is comprised of a large open field surrounded on all sides by built development. The site provides limited foraging opportunities for GHBs and, due to the poor quality of boundary features, does not provide a strong flyway in the landscape for commuting bats.

### **Does future development of the site have the potential to impact the integrity of the South Hams SAC?**

61. Due to its current habitat characteristics it is unlikely that this site is of critical importance to GHBs and therefore development would be unlikely to have a significant affect on the integrity of the SAC.

### **Is it likely that potential impacts will require Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)?**

62. Since it is unlikely that development will affect significantly the integrity of the SAC, it follows that HRA is unlikely to be required.

### **Is it likely that impacts can be mitigated effectively?**

63. It is unlikely that development of this site would require mitigation.



## **13 – Land at Chudleigh Sports Ground**

### **Key Characteristics**

64. This sports ground is comprised of a large open site that offers very limited foraging opportunities for Greater Horseshoe Bats. However, the eastern and western boundaries are marked by very well established hedgerows with tall trees, and as such, these represent ideal features for bats moving in a north-south direction. The eastern boundary in particular is known from radio-tracking to act as an important flyway.

### **Does future development of the site have the potential to impact the integrity of the South Hams SAC?**

65. Due to its current open characteristics, it is unlikely that the bulk of this site is of critical importance to GHBs - either for foraging or as a main flyway through the landscape. With current information (e.g. identification of sub-optimal) it is therefore considered that development would be unlikely to have a significant affect on the integrity of the SAC. However, any development towards the western margins of the site could significantly affect the hedgerow and brook and thereby the bats' flyway through increased disturbance e.g. increased light levels.

### **Is it likely that potential impacts will require Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)?**

66. As long as development provides a wide buffer for the western boundary features (flyway), it is unlikely that it would affect significantly the integrity of the SAC. However, development should be informed by detailed bat surveys and a final judgement as to whether or not HRA is required or not should be made once more firm proposals are known.
67. In particular, this is one of several sites on the northern and eastern side of Chudleigh that may require HRA because of their in combination effects. For instance, in combination with the potential development site to the east of the sports ground on fields on the other side of Brimley Corner lane (site number 19) and Land East of Kate Brook (site number 18).

### **Is it likely that impacts can be mitigated effectively?**

68. Any detailed development proposals should be informed by appropriate bat surveys. With careful design, it is envisaged that mitigation and compensation measures could be incorporated into future development – such as the provision of new, and enhancement of existing boundary features to safeguard and improve potential flyways and habitat connectivity for GHBs moving through the landscape.



## **14 – Land at Old Chapel, Exeter Road**

### **Key Characteristics**

69. This is a relatively small site with very limited views from adjacent roads or public rights of way. However, from study of aerial photographic images it appears that the most important feature on site for Greater Horseshoe Bats is likely to be the mature hedgerow that forms that eastern boundary. This may form part of a much longer flyway that runs north-south from Chudleigh.

### **Does future development of the site have the potential to impact the integrity of the South Hams SAC?**

70. Due to its current habitat characteristics it is unlikely that this site is of critical importance to GHBs and therefore development would be unlikely to have a significant affect on the integrity of the SAC.

### **Is it likely that potential impacts will require Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)?**

71. Since it is unlikely that development will affect significantly the integrity of the SAC, it follows that HRA is unlikely to be required.

### **Is it likely that impacts can be mitigated effectively?**

72. It is unlikely that development of this site would require mitigation. However, development should be designed to retain and strengthen the eastern boundary and should ensure that this is buffered from any potential disturbance e.g. from the effects of lighting.



## **15 – Land at Church Hill Meadow**

### **Key Characteristics**

73. This site is comprised of a large irregularly shaped field, with a smaller more intensively managed plot in the middle that is surrounded on two sides by a very tall conifer hedge. The eastern boundary is marked by a mature hedgerow and this is likely to function as a valuable north-south flyway for Greater Horseshoe Bats.
74. However, it is unlikely that the site itself provides much in the way of foraging opportunities for GHBs and, except for the eastern hedgerow, does not generally provide a strong flyway in the landscape for commuting bats.

### **Does future development of the site have the potential to impact the integrity of the South Hams SAC?**

75. Due to its current habitat characteristics it is unlikely that this site is of critical importance to GHBs and therefore development would be unlikely to have a significant affect on the integrity of the SAC.

### **Is it likely that potential impacts will require Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)?**

76. Since it is unlikely that development will affect significantly the integrity of the SAC, it follows that HRA is unlikely to be required.

### **Is it likely that impacts can be mitigated effectively?**

77. It is unlikely that development of this site would require mitigation. However, development should be designed to retain and strengthen the eastern boundary and should ensure that this is buffered from any potential disturbance e.g. from the effects of lighting.



## **16 – Land between ‘The Gardens’ and the A38**

### **Key Characteristics**

78. This site is adjacent to the current western side of Chudleigh and is comprised of the level land spanning across the upper part of several fields. The western half of these fields then dip down towards the A38.

### **Does future development of the site have the potential to impact the integrity of the South Hams SAC?**

79. It is unlikely that this site is of critical importance to GHBs - either for foraging or as a main flyway through the landscape and therefore it is considered that development would be unlikely to have a significant affect on the integrity of the SAC.

### **Is it likely that potential impacts will require Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)?**

80. Since it is unlikely that development will affect significantly the integrity of the SAC, it follows that HRA is unlikely to be required - unless detailed survey reveals the site is of importance to GHBs (see below).

### **Is it likely that impacts can be mitigated effectively?**

81. Any detailed development proposals should be informed by appropriate bat surveys. Unless these reveal that the site is well used and of therefore importance for GHBs, it is envisaged that mitigation measures could be easily incorporated into any future development – such as the provision of substantial new boundary features to improve potential flyways and habitat connectivity for GHBs moving through the landscape in a north-south direction between the site and the A38. Such measures could if carefully designed represent a significant improvement to the existing features and might provide a much more sheltered and attractive corridor for bats commuting in a northward direction.



## **17 – Land between Kate Brook and Garden Spot Lane**

### **Key Characteristics**

82. This site is comprised of a large gently sloping field under arable cultivation. As such it does not provide in its current use very much potential for foraging bats. However, the western boundary of the site runs along the edge of Kate Brook, which is known from radio-tracking to be a very important flyway for Greater Horseshoe Bats moving in an north-south direction along this side of Chudleigh.

### **Does future development of the site have the potential to impact the integrity of the South Hams SAC?**

83. It is unlikely that this site is of critical importance for foraging and therefore development set back from the Kate Brook corridor would be unlikely to affect the integrity of the SAC. However, it is crucial that the integrity of the Kate Brook flyway is maintained and enhanced, and provided with a substantial buffer between it and any new development. Such proposals therefore need to be assessed to establish what, if any, impact they might have on the SAC.

### **Is it likely that potential impacts will require Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)?**

84. Any development proposal on this site should only be considered only after a full Habitat Regulations Assessment has been undertaken and been able to demonstrate that the integrity of the SAC will not be affected adversely. In particular, this is one of several sites on the northern and eastern side of Chudleigh that may require HRA because of their in combination effects. For instance, in combination with the potential development site to the east of the sports ground on fields on the other side of Brimley Corner lane (site number 19) and Land East of Kate Brook (site number 18).

### **Is it likely that impacts can be mitigated effectively?**

85. Any detailed proposals for development of this site should first be informed by appropriate bat surveys undertaken during a suitable time of year. Such information is required to inform how, if at all, the site may be used by GHBs and to then assess what possible impacts may require mitigation or compensation and the likely effectiveness of such measures. As a minimum though, a substantial buffer is likely to be required between any new development and the Kate Brook corridor and flyway, so as to ensure it remains dark and attractive to commuting bats.



## **18 – Land East of Kate Brook**

### **Key Characteristics**

86. This site is comprised of two large open fields on gently sloping ground. The western boundary is adjacent to the Kate Brook which is known from radio-tracking to be an important flyway for Greater Horseshoe Bats moving in a north-south direction. The northern boundary is also potentially important in the landscape as a more local flyway, although it would benefit from being enhanced with additional planting to widen and strengthen it.

### **Does future development of the site have the potential to impact the integrity of the South Hams SAC?**

87. Development of the site itself might not pose any significant threat to the integrity of the SAC because it is unlikely that the fields offer optimum foraging opportunities. However, road access onto the site could create a significant impact by severing the strategic flyway used by the bats along Kate Brook. Vehicle access could therefore represent a major issue for development of this site.

### **Is it likely that potential impacts will require Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)?**

88. Any development proposal on this site should only be considered only after a full Habitat Regulations Assessment has been undertaken and been able to demonstrate that the integrity of the SAC will not be affected adversely. In particular, this is one of several sites on the northern and eastern side of Chudleigh that may require HRA because of their in combination effects. For instance, in combination with the potential development site to the east of the sports ground on fields on the other side of Brimley Corner lane (site number 19) and Land East of Kate Brook (site number 18).

### **Is it likely that impacts can be mitigated effectively?**

89. Any detailed development proposals should be informed by appropriate bat surveys and comprehensive assessment of potential impacts and only after these have been completed will it be possible to establish if effective mitigation or compensation measures could be designed to overcome potential impacts on the integrity of the SAC.



## **19 – Land East of the Sports Ground and Brimley Corner Lane**

### **Key Characteristics**

90. This site is formed from three fields on sloping ground that rises away from the lane. There are mature internal hedges across the site and also along the northern and southern boundaries. The hedgerow on the southern boundary is known from radio-tracking to be used as a flyway by Greater Horseshoe Bats. The hedges along the eastern boundary are the least well developed and would benefit from enhancement.

### **Does future development of the site have the potential to impact the integrity of the South Hams SAC?**

91. Development of the site itself might not pose any significant threat to the integrity of the SAC because it is unlikely that the fields offer optimum foraging opportunities (although this needs to be established by detailed bat surveys). However, road access onto the site could create a very significant impact by severing the strategic flyway used by the bats along Kate Brook and/or the flyway along the double hedgerow that runs in an eastward direction along the southern boundary of the site. Vehicle access could therefore represent a major issue for development of this plot.

### **Is it likely that potential impacts will require Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA)?**

92. Any development proposal on this site should only be considered only after a full Habitat Regulations Assessment has been undertaken and been able to demonstrate that the integrity of the SAC will not be affected adversely. In particular, this is one of several sites on the northern and eastern side of Chudleigh that may require HRA because of their in combination effects. For instance, in combination with the potential development site to the east of the sports ground on fields on the other side of a Land between Kate Brook and Garden Spot Lane (site number 17) and Land East of Kate Brook (site number 18).

### **Is it likely that impacts can be mitigated effectively?**

93. Any detailed development proposals should be informed by appropriate bat surveys and comprehensive assessment of potential impacts and only after these have been completed will it be possible to establish if effective mitigation or compensation measures could be designed to overcome potential impacts on the integrity of the SAC.

## Appendix 1 Protection and Enhancement of Ecological Networks

- A1.1 Across Europe, all of the Special Areas for Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) together contribute to the European Natura 2000 network. The protection, management, and enhancement of such ecological networks, and especially those relating to the *Natura 2000* network, are identified as being particularly important in the *EU Habitats Directive*.
- A1.2 Article 3 of the Directive states:  
*Where they consider it necessary, Member States shall endeavour to improve the ecological coherence of Natura 2000 by maintaining, and where appropriate developing, features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora, as referred to in Article 10.*
- A1.3 Article 10 then goes on to explain:  
*Member States shall endeavor, where they consider it necessary, in their land use planning and development policies and, in particular, with a view to improving the ecological coherence of The Natura 2000 network, to encourage the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora. Such features are those which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure (such as rivers with their banks or the traditional systems of marking field boundaries) or their function as stepping stones (such as ponds or small woods), are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.*
- A1.4 *The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010)* transpose the above EU Directive into English legislation. Regulation 39 requires development plan policies to include policies that implement at the local level the requirements of Article 10 so as to encourage the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna.
- A1.5 In relation to the potential development sites discussed in this report, Regulation 39 provides Teignbridge District Council with an opportunity to link conservation objectives to the allocation of some or all of the sites finally adopted. In particular, the LPA has both a justification and a statutory mechanism by which they can seek through their development plan policies the management and enhancement of landscape features in and around Chudleigh which are of major importance for Greater Horseshoe Bats.
- A1.6 For instance, planning for Green Infrastructure in and around Chudleigh could also lead to significant biodiversity gains and substantial improvement of GHB commuting and foraging habitat providing the bats with a very much enhanced flyways around the town. Such measures could also contribute to wider Green Infrastructure objectives and achieve benefits that could then also be enjoyed by the local community.
- A1.7 Also, the Government intends to introduce an additional new mechanism: *Biodiversity Offsetting*. This is a market-based conservation tool that measures negative impacts on biodiversity, replacing the loss through improvements usually nearby. Offsets aim to compensate for residual biodiversity loss incurred by development projects by maintaining an equivalent amount of biodiversity elsewhere that would otherwise be lost, or by enhancing biodiversity at an alternate location. Used in conjunction with policies and objectives introduced under Regulation 39, Biodiversity Offsetting may therefore offer further opportunities to secure appropriate compensation and enhancements outside of the boundaries of any actual development sites.

## Appendix 2



Scale: 1:8,433  
Date: 00/00/00

 **Teignbridge**  
DISTRICT COUNCIL  
South Devon

### Site Screening in Relation to the Greater Horseshoe Bat SAC and Sites with Potential for Development in Chudleigh



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