

# SP MANWEB



## **Reinforcement to the North Shropshire Electricity Distribution Network**

Agreed Statement of Common Ground between SP Manweb and  
the Environment Agency

Application Reference: EN020021

**Deadline 1 Submission**

**SP MANWEB**

**Reinforcement to the North Shropshire  
Electricity Distribution Network**

**Statement of Common Ground  
Between SP Manweb PLC and Environment  
Agency (Midlands Region)**

**November 2018  
PINS Reference EN020021**

## QA Box here

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<b>Planning Inspectorate Application Reference</b>			
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**CONTENTS**

1 INTRODUCTION..... 4

1.1 PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT ..... 4

1.2 PARTIES TO THIS SOCG ..... 5

1.3 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ..... 6

1.4 CONSULTATION ..... 7

1.5 DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED WITHIN THIS SOCG ..... 9

2 MATTERS AGREED AND MATTERS NOT AGREED..... 11

2.1 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT ..... 11

2.2 CONTENT OF THE ES ..... 11

2.3 CONTENT OF THE HABITAT REGULATIONS ASSESSMENT NO  
SIGNIFICANT EFFECTS REPORT ..... 13

2.4 LAND INTEREST ..... 13

2.5 OTHER CONSENTS..... 13

2.6 CONTENTS FOR THE DRAFT DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ORDER ..... 14

3 RECORD OF MATTERS STILL UNDER DISCUSSION ..... 16

4 AGREEMENT ON THIS SOCG ..... 16

## 1 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 PURPOSE OF DOCUMENT

- 1.1.1 This document is submitted to the Secretary of State through the Planning Inspectorate (as responsible agency) in relation to the application by SP Manweb Plc ("SP Manweb") for a Development Consent Order ("DCO") for the Reinforcement to the North Shropshire Electricity Distribution Network ("Application"). The DCO would grant powers to construct, operate and maintain a new 22.5 kilometre 132,000 volt (132kV) connection between the existing Oswestry Substation and Wem Substation within the administrative boundary of Shropshire County.
- 1.1.2 This statement of common ground ("SOCG") has been prepared in respect of the Proposed Development. Guidance about the purpose and possible content of SOCGs is given in paragraphs 58-65 of the Department for Communities and Local Government's "Planning Act 2008: Guidance for the examination of applications for development consent" (March 2015). Paragraph 58, confirms the basic function of SOCGs:
- "A statement of common ground is a written statement prepared jointly by the applicant and another party or parties, setting out any matters on which they agree. As well as identifying matters which are not in real dispute, it is also useful if a statement identifies those areas where agreement has not been reached. The statement should include references to show where those matters are dealt with in the written representations or other documentary evidence."
- 1.1.3 SOCGs are a useful and established means of ensuring that the evidence at the examination focuses on the material differences between the main parties, and so aims to help facilitate a more efficient examination process.
- 1.1.4 Section 2 provides an overview of consultation to date between SP Manweb and the Environment Agency. Section 3 provides a summary of the relevant documents that relate to the information considered in this SOCG. Section 4 provides a summary of areas that have been agreed and areas that have not been agreed. Section 5 provides a record of areas still under discussion.

## **1.2 Parties to this SOCG**

1.2.1 This SOCG has been developed in respect of the Proposed Development, by SP Manweb, as the applicant, and the Environment Agency (“EA”).

1.2.2 EA is an executive non-departmental public body, sponsored by the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs, with responsibilities relating to the protection and enhancement of the environment in England .

1.2.3 This SOCG has been structured to reflect matters and topics of interest to EA in relation to the Proposed Development. EA is a party to this SOCG as a Statutory and Interested Party for the purposes of the Application.

1.2.4 This SOCG relates to the following topics:

- The Proposed Development
- Content of the Environmental Statement (ES) being within EA’s remit:
  - Approach and methodology
  - Ecology and Biodiversity
  - Flood Risk and Water Quality
- Land Interest
- Other Consents
- Content of the draft Development Consent Order
- Draft Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)
- Outline Habitats Improvement Scheme Feb 2019

1.2.5 This SOCG sets out the matters agreed between the Parties and those that are still outstanding.



1.2.6 Throughout this SOCG:

1.2.7 The “Parties” for the purposes of this SOCG means SP Manweb and EA.

1.2.8 Where a sentence begins “It is agreed”, this signifies a matter that has been specifically stated as agreed by SP Manweb and EA.

1.2.9 Where a sentence begins “It is not agreed”, this signifies a matter that has been specifically stated as not agreed by SP Manweb and EA.

1.2.10 Where a sentence begins “It is under discussion”, this signifies a matter is not yet agreed however is still under discussion by SP Manweb and EA.

1.2.11 It is agreed that any matters not specifically mentioned in Sections 2 and Sections 3 of this SOCG are not of material interest or relevance to the Parties, and therefore have not been the subject of any discussions between the Parties.

1.2.12 Reference in this SOCG to DCO means the draft DCO.

### **1.3 THE PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT**

1.3.1 The Proposed Development comprises a new 22.5 km 132kV electrical circuit between the existing SP Manweb Substations at Oswestry and Wem in North Shropshire, together with associated temporary construction works. The circuit would be a combination of underground cables and overhead line. Works are also required at the existing Oswestry and Wem Substations to accommodate the new circuit.

1.3.2 The Proposed Development includes the following elements:

- Works within the boundary of the existing SP Manweb Substation at Oswestry including underground cable and the installation of electrical switchgear and associated equipment;
- Approx. 1.2km of 132kV underground cable between Oswestry Substation and a 132kV terminal structure at Long Wood (SJ 31132 29877);

- Approx. 21.3km of 132kV of overhead line supported by Trident wood poles from the terminal structure at Long Wood (SJ 31132 29877) to the existing SP Manweb Substation at Wem; and
- Works within the existing SP Manweb Substation at Wem including the installation of a new 132kV to 33kV transformer.

1.3.3 The Proposed Development also includes work to facilitate the new electrical circuit including:

- Undergrounding six short sections of existing SP Manweb lower voltage overhead lines in order to ensure safe electrical clearance for the new overhead line; and
- Temporary works required for the construction of the new overhead line including seven temporary laydown areas, welfare unit, security cabin, access tracks, vegetation clearance and reinstatement planting.

**1.4 CONSULTATION**

1.4.1 The Environment Agency (“EA”) has provided feedback in response to both the non-statutory and statutory stages of consultation and how SP Manweb (“SPM”) has had regard to these responses is set out in the Consultation Report (DCO Document 7.2). SP Manweb’s response to the EAs comments raised at the statutory consultation stage have been informed by further discussions that it has had with the EA following the close of the consultation.

1.4.2 A summary of these further discussions, following the statutory consultation in relation to the Proposed Development, is outlined in the table below and copies of any correspondence are attached to this SOCG as appendices:

<b>Ref</b>	<b>Date</b>	<b>Form of contact or type of correspondence</b>	<b>Summary of that contact and key outcomes and points of discussion</b>
1.	23/04/18	EA Email	EA confirms that it accepts the repositioning of Pole 164 as shown in the Revised Draft Works Plans April 2018 avoids



			flood bank across the River Roden
2.	31/07/18	SPM/EA Meeting	Meeting Note confirms areas of interest to the EA not affected and EAs interest in Water Vole Survey and FRA
3.	06/09/18	SPM Email	SPM providing draft reports on Water Vole Survey and FRA.
4.	26/09/2018	EA Email and letter	EA Response to draft Water Vole Survey and FRA raising no concerns for crossings over the River Perry subject to FRA exemptions and require a Bespoke Permit for River Roden crossing
5.	31/10/18	EA Email and letter	EA response to SPM draft SOCG referring to need to include reference to need for bespoke permit and agree with other matters however scope to extend the habitat improvement strategy to include betterment for water voles.
6.	28/11/18	EA Email and letter	EA response to draft CEMP
7.	12/03/19	SPM Email	Requesting EA confirmation to Schedule 2 (8) in draft DCO as referred to in ExA's comments in Annex G in the Rule 6 letter dated 20 Feb 2019

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8.	19/03/2019	SPM Email	Requesting EA confirmation to Article 37 in draft DCO as referred to in ExA's comments in Annex G in the Rule 6 letter dated 20 Feb 2019
9.	25/03/19	EA Email and letter	Confirming Refs 6 and 7 as above

- 1.4.3 There is ongoing discussion between the parties in relation to land agreements.
- 1.4.4 It is agreed that this is an accurate record of the key correspondence between SP Manweb and the Environment Agency in relation to the matters recorded in Section 4.
- 1.4.5 As noted above, this consultation has included discussion regarding SP Manweb's proposed Habitat Improvement Strategy. The Scheme outlines a targeted enhancement project to be delivered in partnership with Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) and recognises that in order to halt biodiversity loss and introduce more people to experiences with nature, it is vital to work with a broad range of partners on a variety of initiatives. The Scheme allies with national initiatives on biodiversity in delivering net biodiversity gain.

## 1.5 DOCUMENTS CONSIDERED WITHIN THIS SOCG

1.5.1 The following documents have been considered with this SOCG:

- **ES (DCO Volume 6)**
  - ES Chapter 4 Approach and Methodology
  - ES Chapter 7 Ecology and Biodiversity (**DCO Document 6.7**)
  - ES Appendix 7.8 Otter and Water Vole Surveys (**DCO Document 6.7.8**);
  - ES Chapter 9 Flood Risk, Water Quality and Water Resources (**DCO Document 6.9**);

- Flood Risk Assessment (**DCO Document 5.2**);
- Construction Report (**DCO Document 7.2**); and
- Draft Construction Environmental Management Plan (**DCO Document 6.3.2**)

## 2 MATTERS AGREED AND MATTERS NOT AGREED

### 2.1 The Proposed Development

#### 2.1.1 Matters agreed

Ref	Matters agreed
1	SP Manweb and EA AGREE that the Proposed Development is accurately described in Chapter 3 of the ES ( <b>DCO Document 6.2</b> ), Chapter 2 of the Planning Statement ( <b>DCO Document 7.1</b> ) and sections 1.1 of the Statement of Reasons ( <b>DCO Document 4.1</b> ).

#### 2.1.2 Matters not agreed

- a. None to report

### 2.2 Content of the ES

#### Approach and methodology

#### 2.2.1 Matters agreed

Ref	Matters agreed
4	SP Manweb and EA AGREE the following in respect of SP Manweb's approach and methodology: <ol style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) approach to the assessment methodology (see ES Chapter 4 (<b>DCO Document 6.4</b>));</li> <li>b) data collection, baseline data, statistical modelling (see section 4.5 of the ES (<b>DCO document 6.4</b>))</li> <li>c) approach to deliverable mitigation (see section 4.6 of the ES (<b>DCO document 6.4</b>)); and</li> <li>d) no outstanding issues that need to be addressed at any issue specific hearing.</li> </ol>

#### Ecology and Biodiversity

#### 2.2.2 Matters agreed

Ref	Matters agreed
1	SP Manweb and EA AGREE with SP Manweb's approach and outcomes to the assessment of habitats and protected species, in particular, otter and water voles.
2	SP Manweb and EA AGREE with SP Manweb's approach and outcomes to the preparation of a draft environmental improvement strategy in conjunction with the Shropshire Wildlife Trust (as

	attached.
3	<p>SP Manweb and EA AGREE the following in respect of ecology and biodiversity:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) approach to the assessment methodology and significance criteria for ecology and biodiversity impacts (see ES Chapter 4 (<b>DCO Document 6.4</b>) and Chapter 7 (<b>DCO Document 6.7</b>));</li> <li>b) data collection, baseline data, statistical modelling (see section 7.5 of the ES (<b>DCO document 6.7</b>))</li> <li>c) identification and sensitivity of relevant features and conclusion on assessment of significance (alone and cumulatively) (see sections 7.6 (<b>DCO document 6.7</b>) and 7.7(<b>DCO document 6.7</b>) of the ES);</li> <li>d) deliverable mitigation (see section 7.8 of the ES (<b>DCO document 6.7</b>)); and</li> <li>e) no outstanding issues that need to be addressed at any issue specific hearing.</li> </ul>
4	<p>SP Manweb and EA AGREE that no part of the Proposed Development will be within the boundaries of a SSSI and granting development consent is unlikely to damage the features of any SSSI</p>

2.2.3 Matters not agreed

- a. None to report

**Flood Risk and Water Quality**

2.2.4 Matters agreed

Ref	Matters agreed
9	<p>SP Manweb and EA AGREE with SP Manweb’s approach and outcomes to the requirement for a flood risk environmental permit in relation to the crossing of the River Roden.</p>
10	<p>SP Manweb and EA AGREE with SP Manweb’s approach and outcomes to managing pollution prevention in water resources and flood risk through appropriate consenting requirements and construction management measures.</p>
11	<p>SP Manweb and EA AGREE the following in respect of flood risk and water quality:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) approach to the assessment methodology and significance criteria for flood risk and water quality (see ES Chapter 4 (<b>DCO Document 6.4</b>) and Chapter 9 (<b>DCO Document 6.9</b>));</li> </ul>

	<p>b) data collection, baseline data, statistical modelling (see section 9.5 of the ES (<b>DCO document 6.9</b>))</p> <p>c) identification and sensitivity of relevant features and conclusion on assessment of significance (alone and cumulatively) (see sections 9.6 (<b>DCO document 6.9</b>) and 9.7(<b>DCO document 6.9</b>) of the ES);</p> <p>d) deliverable mitigation (see section 9.8 of the ES (<b>DCO document 6.9</b>)); and</p> <p>e) no outstanding issues that need to be addressed at any issue specific hearing.</p>
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2.2.5 Matters not agreed

- a. None to report

**2.3 Land Interest**

2.3.1 Matters agreed

Ref	Matters agreed
1	SP Manweb and EA are AGREED that EA's land agency function relates to land management issues and is separate to and independent of EA's role as Statutory and Interested party for the purpose of the Application.

2.4.2 Matters not agreed

- a. None to report

**2.4 Other Consents**

2.4.1 Matters agreed

Ref	Matters agreed
1	Need to include reference to need for bespoke permit for River Roden crossing

2.4.2 Matters not agreed

- a. None to report

**2.5 Contents for the Draft Development Consent Order**

2.5.1 Matters agreed

Ref	Matters agreed
1	<p>SP Manweb and EA are AGREED on the wording of the requirements contained in Schedule 2 of the draft DCO (<b>DCO Document 3.1</b>) and any future iteration of the draft DCO provided requirement 9 (CEMP) requires SP Manweb to consult with EA in relation to the CEMP and Ecological Management Plan prior to submission and to submit the final CEMP and final Ecological Management Plan to EA for approval at the same time as submitting it to the relevant planning authority.</p> <p>The parties are also agreed on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) That EA would defer to the relevant local authorities on the outline Landscape Management Plan</li> <li>b) the outline CEMP and its relevant appendices; outline Hedgerow Management Plan, outline Ecological Management Plan and outline Traffic Management Plan</li> <li>c) the treatment of public rights of way and how they are to be managed during construction, as set out in the CEMP</li> </ul>
2	<p>SP Manweb and EA are AGREED on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the wording in Schedule 2 (Requirements) that where SPM encounter any contaminated land and groundwater during construction, then the investigation and assessment and remediation scheme of any such contamination can be agreed with the relevant planning authority in consultation with the EA.</li> </ul>
3	<p>SP Manweb and EA are AGREED on:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) the wording in Article 37(1) of the draft DCO (<b>DCO Document 3.1</b>)</li> </ul>

2.5.2 Matters not agreed

- a. None to report



**2.6 Draft Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)**

2.6.1 Matters agreed

Ref	Matters agreed
1	<p>SP Manweb and EA AGREED on amendments to the draft CEMP (version 3) as attached to this SoCG and include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>a) Following EA comments received in October 2018, reference to pollution prevention measures, impacts on ground water, and then protection of water voles;</li> </ul> <p>And, following EA comments received on 25 March 2019, include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>b) Reference to specific water vole and otter section and Otter and Water Vole Management Plan</li> <li>c) Reference to potential to disturb and remove vegetation and brash along watercourses and banks</li> <li>d) Reference to biosecurity measures for invasive species</li> </ul>

2.6.2 Matters not agreed

- a. None to report

**2.7 Outline Habitat Improvement Scheme Feb 2019**

2.7.1 Matters agreed

Ref	Matters agreed
1	<p>SP Manweb and EA AGREED on the wording of the Outline Habitat Improvement Scheme (February 2019) and support the commitment to keeping net gain to biodiversity.</p>

2.7.2 Matters not agreed

- a. None to report

**3 RECORD OF MATTERS STILL UNDER DISCUSSION**

3.1.1 None to report.

**4 AGREEMENT ON THIS SOCG**

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**This Statement of Common Ground has been jointly prepared and agreed by:**

**Name:** Steven Edwards

**Signature:** [Redacted]

**Position:** Senior Environmental Planner

**On behalf of:** SP Manweb Plc

**Date:** 27/03/19

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**Name:** Graeme Irwin

**Signature:** [Redacted]

**Position:** Senior Planning Officer

**On behalf of:** [The Environment Agency](#)

**Date:** 27/03/2019

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Reinforcement to the North Shropshire Electricity Distribution Network



**Shropshire**  
Wildlife Trust

Habitat Improvement Scheme

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# Reinforcement to the North Shropshire Electricity Distribution Network

## Outline Habitat Improvement Scheme

February 2019

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# 1 INTRODUCTION

## 1.1 BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1 This Outline Habitat Improvement Scheme relates to SP Manweb's proposals to install a new 22.5 kilometre 132,000 Volt (132kV) circuit from the existing Oswestry Substation to Wem Substation within the administrative boundary of Shropshire County. This is referred to as the Proposed Development.
- 1.1.2 The Scheme outlines a targeted enhancement project to be delivered in partnership with Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) and builds on SP Manweb working with Shropshire Wildlife Trust (SWT) as corporate partners for more than 30 years. The partnership recognises that in order to halt biodiversity loss and introduce more people to experiences with nature, it is vital to work with a broad range of partners on a variety of initiatives. This strategy will be further refined by SWT in collaboration with SP Manweb as part of a detailed implementation plan.
- 1.1.3 The Scheme allies with national initiatives on biodiversity and the environment, including the National Planning Policy Framework 2018, (NPPF2)<sup>1</sup>, the National Pollinator Strategy<sup>2</sup> and the Government's 25 Year Environment Plan 'Our Green Future'<sup>3</sup>, delivering net biodiversity gain.
- 1.1.4 The Scheme builds on similar improvement schemes brought forward by SP Manweb. In 2014, SP Manweb funded SWT to deliver a 15 month survey and monitoring project linked to the nationally-important Meres & Mosses Nature Improvement Area programme and their Legacy-Oswestry line upgrade.

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<sup>1</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/collections/revised-national-planning-policy-framework>

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-pollinator-strategy-2014-to-2024-implementation-plan>

<sup>3</sup> <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/25-year-environment-plan>

Following progress to the next stage of infrastructure development in this area, the reinforcement to the North Shropshire electricity distribution network, SP Manweb has once again approached Shropshire Wildlife Trust to deliver associated environmentally-beneficial works. SP Manweb and SWT, along with other partners as appropriate, will work together as part of this Habitat Improvement Scheme to deliver a variety of biodiversity initiatives allied with the Proposed Development; including targeting key invertebrate and mammal species in Shropshire through data gathering and practical habitat enhancements.

- 1.1.5 The Proposed Development has made the retention and protection of hedgerows one of the key elements of the evolving design, recognising their importance for biodiversity and habitat connectivity, and as key features in the landscape. During the construction phase, a number of accesses are required across agricultural land. These have been specifically routed (and extended in places) to avoid the need to cross or remove sections of hedgerow, instead utilising existing gaps or field entrances. As a result of this strategic approach to the design, hedgerow losses along the 22.5 km proposed route are negligible.

## **1.2 PRIORITIES FOR HABITAT IMPROVEMENT – MAKING CONNECTIONS**

- 1.2.1 Habitat loss and, importantly, the loss of connectivity between remaining habitats and populations of threatened species is a key biodiversity concern. SP Manweb believes that significant infrastructure projects such as this provide an opportunity to deliver real biodiversity benefits through strengthening habitat and species connection.

- 1.2.2 In addition to the measures taken to protect habitats and species during construction of the power line, SP Manweb and SWT in March 2018 agreed to develop a habitat connectivity project focusing on the obvious links between improving the connectivity of the power supply and the benefits of enhancing ecological networks and connectivity. This has been refined in consultation with the Environment Agency's Biodiversity Advisor.
- 1.2.3 Habitat connectivity in the landscape has been gradually lost with the intensification of agriculture and, to some extent, commercial development, such that many habitats of value to threatened, rare or notable species become increasingly isolated from one another, thereby endangering the future viability of local populations of such species. Good links between habitats (both aquatic and terrestrial) allows species to disperse more easily between locations, making them more resilient to localised (e.g. flash flooding) and landscape-scale (e.g. climate change) disturbance.
- 1.2.4 In addition to the above, individual species can also benefit from more 'macro-level' connectivity interventions. The habitat improvement scheme to be delivered by the collaborative partnership between SP Energy Networks and SWT in consultation with the Environment Agency will deliver habitat connectivity improvements for Nationally Significant Invertebrates and enhanced water vole and otter habitat, while also helping to support biodiversity research and educational initiatives.
- 1.2.5 The proposed project area is generally focused on a 2.5km buffer area around the route of the Proposed Development, however enhancement works may extend beyond this where opportunities arise to collaborate with landowners in the wider area.

## 2 SP MANWEB'S OUTLINE HABITAT IMPROVEMENT SCHEME

### 2.1 THE NATIONALLY SIGNIFICANT INVERTEBRATES PROJECT – A NEW 'NSIP FROM NSIP' INITIATIVE

- 2.1.1 The UK and its diverse habitats support nearly 40,000 invertebrate species. They are vital to our lives, underpinning the ecosystem services which provide us with food, fertile soils and clean water, and the wildlife-rich habitats which we all enjoy. However, invertebrates are declining in response to widespread habitat loss and fragmentation, urbanisation, changing agricultural and land management practices, environmental pollution, non-native invasive species and many other factors. SP Manweb in collaboration with SWT has identified opportunities for implementing the Nationally Significant Invertebrate Project, including significant places for the conservation of invertebrates and the habitats upon which they rely. This simple and collaborative approach is one that has potential to be incorporated into other Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects right across the UK; effectively combining NSIPs with NSIPs.
- 2.1.2 SP Manweb's Nationally Significant Invertebrates Project has used the important invertebrate list and Important Invertebrate Areas map developed by Buglife as a focus. These Areas have been selected where they support a nationally significant assemblage of species or support an endangered species. The North Shropshire Reinforcement Project lies adjacent to the '*North East Wales Important Invertebrate Area*<sup>4</sup>' and hence the Habitat Improvement Scheme will gather important additional information and help deliver habitat gains best suited to target threatened and endangered invertebrate species.

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<sup>4</sup> <https://www.buglife.org.uk/important-invertebrate-areas-0>



2.1.3 Analysis of existing species records produced a list of 13 nationally significant invertebrate species that have been recorded in that area within the last 15 years. This was refined to a shortlist of 6 species which could benefit from increased survey attention and also from practical interventions in the landscape. These species are:

- the water beetle *Acilius canaliculatus*
- beetle species *Anaglyptus mysticus*
- bee species *Andrena apicata*
- bee species *Bombus rupestris*
- moth species *Stathmopoda pedella*
- crane fly *Tipula peliostigma*



*Acilius canaliculatus*



*Anaglyptus mysticus*



*Andrena apicata*



*Bombus rupestris*

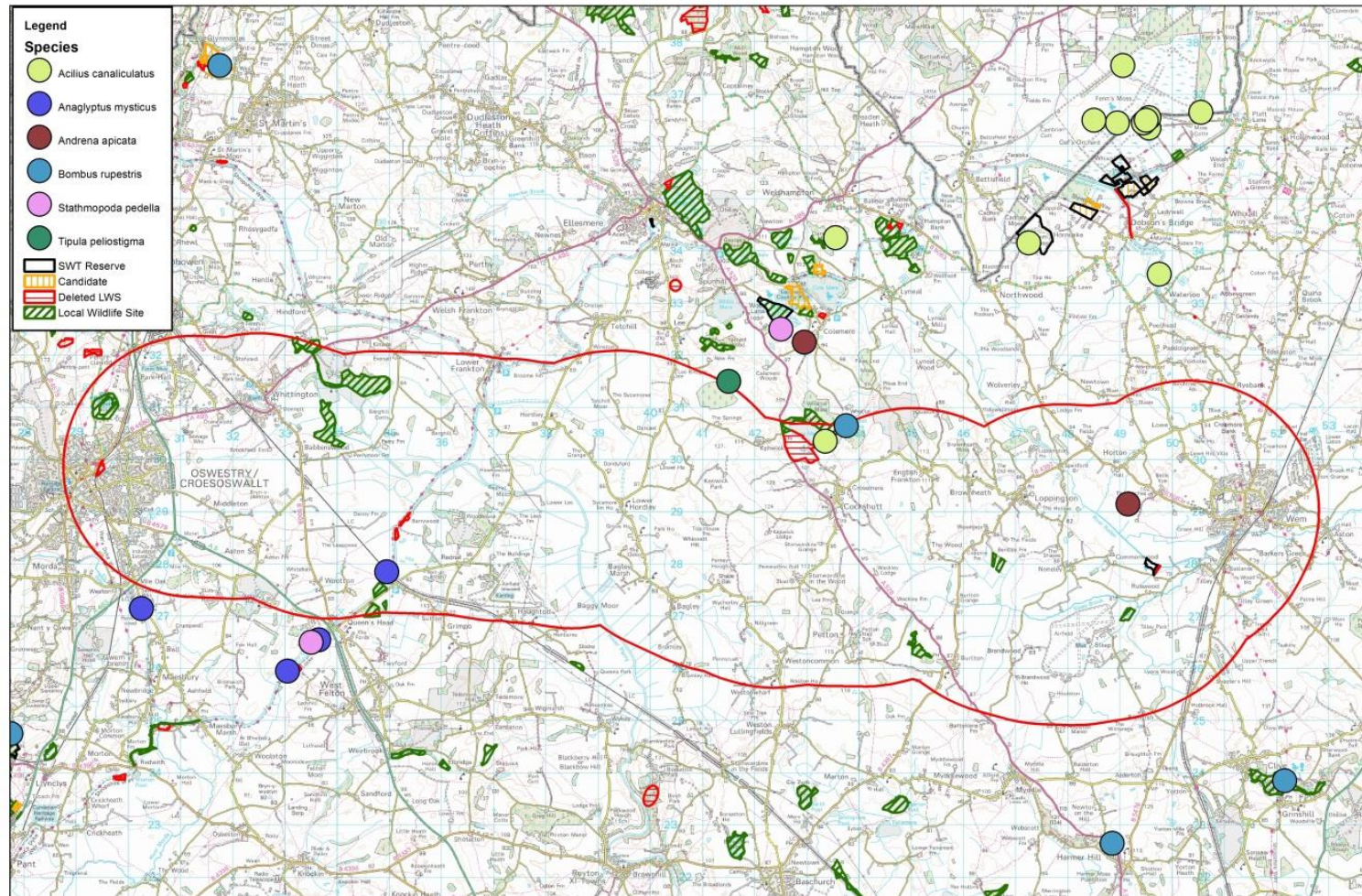


*Stathmopoda pedella*



*Tipula peliostigma*





 **Shropshire Wildlife Trust**  
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Top 6 Species, LWS and SWT Reserves

Date: 27/03/2018

- 2.1.4 One of the proposed target species, the beetle *Anaglyptus mysticus* requires deadwood (ideally in hedgerow bottoms) to complete its life cycle, whilst the larvae of the moth *Stathmopoda pedella* feed exclusively on alder. ‘Macro-level’ interventions through this project could therefore include management plans for landowners that allow for the retention of deadwood and/or planting of alder where appropriate to benefit both of these target species whilst also looking at generally improving the habitat along and adjacent to hedgerows (e.g. the retention of grass buffer strips) to simultaneously benefit a wider range of species.
- 2.1.5 The project will focus on education and research alongside practical habitat management and enhancement measures designed to benefit these target invertebrate species, while also delivering wider biodiversity benefits in this part of Shropshire.
- 2.1.6 The key measures will include (but are not limited to):

*Hedgerow planting and restoration*

Hedgerow restoration (e.g. hedgelaying), hedgerow planting (including complete reinstatement and ‘gapping’ up) and hedgerow management plans (e.g. retention of deadwood) will be beneficial to link habitats and species populations with strengthened connectivity in the landscape. These interventions will benefit both the target beetle species *Anaglyptus mysticus* as well as the two target bee species *Andrena apicata* and *Bombus rupestris* where flowering shrubs such as hawthorn and fruit trees are included in hedgerow planting. These measures complement the approach to the construction of the Proposed Development, which has actively sought to avoid habitat loss or fragmentation by extending accesses to pass around rather than through hedgerows.

### *Pond and ditch creation and restoration*

Through a review of existing information, further field survey and consultation with landowners, locations where pond restoration and management or new pond creation could benefit the water beetle *Acilius canaliculatus*, will be identified. This will also benefit water voles, amphibians and aquatic plant diversity for the area.

### *Wetland creation*

Works aimed at increasing the amount of wetland (e.g. wet grassland) in the project area will create more breeding areas for the target crane fly *Tipula peliostigma*. These will be especially targeted at parts of the project area close to where this species has previously been recorded. Wetland creation will also benefit wading birds.

### *Wildflower meadow creation*

The project will encourage wildflower meadow creation, including pollinator options for agri-environment schemes. Increasing the amount of wildflower-rich habitat in the project area will create more foraging habitat for invertebrates in general and specifically for the two target bee species *Andrena apicata* and *Bombus rupestris*, also encouraging pollinator species.

### *Target food plant reintroduction*

With the support of landowners, locations with appropriate ground conditions will be identified where alder *Alnus glutinosa* can be planted. This native tree species benefits the target moth species *Stathmopoda pedella*.

## **2.2 WATER VOLE AND OTTER HABITAT IMPROVEMENTS**

2.2.1 North Shropshire is recognised as a stronghold for water voles which, like otter, rely upon suitable connected habitat to disperse and thrive. The key measures involved in this Scheme, namely gathering baseline survey data and targeted works to enhance habitat connectivity and create and restore ponds and ditches will also be employed to benefit water voles and otters.



2.2.2 Work will be undertaken to gather valuable data to better understand the distribution of otters and water voles in the area, and to identify the local barriers to successful breeding and dispersal in collaboration with the Environment Agency who hold valuable species data. This information will be used to guide practical watercourse and wetland habitat improvements by SWT in collaboration with landowners and the Environment Agency, such as:

- installing coir rolls on 'engineered' watercourse banks where habitat suitability is low;
- creating artificial holts and installing fencing to provide undisturbed bankside areas for otters, and other wildlife;
- carrying out selective scrub removal to open up overgrown and heavily shaded banks, enhancing habitat connectivity along watercourses and removing obstacles to water vole dispersal;
- fencing banks and providing substitute water supplies to keep stock away from the watercourse and protect bank stability; and
- creation of new ponds designed for water vole and linking them to watercourses via ditches and hedgerows, thereby diversifying the network of connected habitats.

### 3 DELIVERY PLAN

3.1.1 Delivery of this strategy will be via funding from the North Shropshire Reinforcement project to SWT. SP Manweb and SWT are currently working together to develop the outline strategy into a deliverable management plan with funding and programme details. Working with landowners in the project area, SWT will design and deliver a targeted programme to establish an accurate baseline for these target species, using the highly experienced network of recorders in Shropshire (with whom SWT have a strong relationship), the existing data framework provided by the Shropshire

Ecological Data Network (SEDN)<sup>5</sup>, along with additional field surveys where required. This baseline will help to inform the habitat management and enhancement initiatives described above.

- 3.1.2 This baseline will contribute to wider understanding of these species in this part of Shropshire and contribute to ongoing research and educational work. It will also help direct habitat management and enhancement measures to those locations where they will have the greatest benefits.
- 3.1.3 Results and learning points from the Scheme will be shared with key partners including Natural England, Environment Agency and Shropshire Council to help ensure that benefits derived can be sustained through mechanisms, such as agri-environment scheme and Water Framework Directive targeted funding. SWT will also present the results of this project to the Local Nature Partnership and a written report will be produced and circulated. Wider opportunities for other Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects seeking to deliver strategic net biodiversity gain for nationally significant invertebrates will also be shared by SP Manweb.

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<sup>5</sup> <http://www.shropshireecology.co.uk>