

Revision Schedule

Badger Method Statement

Rev	Date	Details	Prepared By	Reviewed By	Authorised By
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1.1 Legislation Relating to Badgers

- 1.1.1 Badgers and their setts receive protection under the Protection of Badgers Act (1992) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation, relevant offences include to wilfully kill, injure or ill-treat a badger; to damage, destroy or obstruct access to a sett; or to disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett. A badger sett is defined in the legislation as any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger. If disturbance to an active sett is probable then a licence may need to be sought from Natural England before any works commence.
- 1.1.2 Guidance has been published by English Nature that enables developers to determine likely impacts on active badger setts and is based on distance from the sett entrance. Construction or preparation work should not be undertaken near an active sett that may cause disturbance to badgers, without a licence. Concentric distances have been produced, depending on the nature of the activity. Any heavy plant machinery (tracked vehicles) is required to maintain a distance of 30 m from any sett; any wheeled (digging) machinery is required to maintain a distance of 20 m from any sett; and hand digging or scrub clearance is required to maintain a distance of 10 m from any sett.

1.2 Desk Study

- 1.2.1 Desk study data obtained from the Devon Biodiversity Records Centre (DBRC) in October 2010 identified records for badger within 2km of the site. However, these records were all from the northern side of the A38 dual carriageway over 1km away to the north.

1.3 Field Survey

- 1.3.1 A general search was undertaken during the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey in June 2010 to identify the presence of badgers (*Meles meles*) on the site. This was achieved by systematically walking the site and looking for badger setts and associated signs (dung pits, latrines, bedding, footprints, foraging scrapes, paths or runs and hairs on fences and vegetation).
- 1.3.2 During the Phase 1 Habitat Survey no signs of badger activity or badger setts were found on the site.
- 1.3.3 During one of the subsequent Wintering Bird Survey visits in winter 2010/11 a badger sett was however recorded within Blackies Wood within the northwest of the site. Plymouth City Council as Local Planning Authority has been advised of the exact location of this badger sett. The sett consisted of an outlier sett with three entrance holes that appeared to be in use, i.e. fresh excavations and loose bedding around the entrance holes and occasional badger prints (see Appendix 1 for terminology).
- 1.3.4 The sett is restricted to Blackies Wood, which is surrounded by the urban environment of Barne Barton. The woodland presently experiences disturbance from general public with dog-walkers accessing the woodland. This will limit the potential for the woodland to support a large population of badgers.

1.4 Potential Implications and Recommendations

- 1.4.1 The main part of the site on which the EfW CHP facility Main Building will be constructed is currently surrounded by robust security fencing, allowing no potential access/egress points for badgers to gain access onto the main part of the site where construction will be taking place.
- 1.4.2 No significant woodland areas will be lost to the development and woodland management will be undertaken for the benefit of biodiversity.
- 1.4.3 A 1.4m high black galvanised metal fence with four cross rails , allowing access/egress to badgers, will be constructed around the northern side of Blackies Wood during the construction phase. The fence will be erected using hand tools at a distance greater than 10m from the sett. A licence from Natural England is therefore not required, but caution during construction is nevertheless required.
- 1.4.4 Therefore a method statement has been produced following best practice guidance with respect to badger sett protection during fencing installation. All works should be undertaken under ecological supervision. The method statement is presented below.

1.5 Method Statement

Ecological briefing ‘tool-box-talks’

- 1.5.1 A full ecological brief or tool-box-talk will be undertaken each day before any work begins.

Fencing

- 1.5.2 Fencing installation around the northern boundary of Blackies Wood will follow best practice guidance from Natural England and will take into consideration the location of the badger sett. Works will need to be undertaken under ecological supervision.

Appendix 1: Badger Sett Terminology

Badger sett classification and methodology was based on that by Harris et al., 1989, in which setts are assessed for level of use and the number of entrance holes and thus classified into four types: main, annexe, subsidiary and outlying. Occupancy to setts can also be identified by the condition of the entrance holes and can be classified as well used, partially used or disused. The entrance holes to setts can provide an indication as to the level of use of the sett.

Main Sett

A breeding sett usually has 5-20 entrances. These are large, well-established setts normally in continuous use. Each group will use only one main sett and it will form the most likely location for the raising of cubs.

Annexe Sett

These setts are usually found in close association with the main sett and will often be linked to it by a well-worn path. Where a second litter of cubs is born they will be raised in the annexe sett. Annexe setts can still have up to ten entrance holes.

Subsidiary Sett

Subsidiary setts will usually have five or more holes, although not all of these will be in continuous use.

Outlier Sett

These setts are used on an occasional basis and will usually consist of only one to three holes. Spoil heaps will generally be smaller than those associated with the other sett types, indicating a smaller underground structure.

Well Used

These holes are in regular use and are therefore free of debris. They may have been recently excavated.

Partially Used

Debris, including leaves, twigs and other vegetation clutter the entrance to these holes, indicating they are not in regular use. The holes can be used after minimum clearance.

Disused

A considerable amount of clearance is needed before these holes can be used. The holes may become so blocked that only a depression in the ground is visible where the hole used to be.