Starling Ecology

High Level Ecological Appraisal

Great Place North Belfast

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Document control

Category	Details
Document number:	GNL/01/26
Version:	Issued01
Date issued:	30/06/2026
Version:	Issued02
Date issued:	08/07/2026
Author:	Conor McKinney BSc MSc MCIEEM
Signature	

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Executive Summary

Starling Ecology was commissioned by the Great Place North Belfast project to undertake a High Level Ecological Appraisal of the fourteen North Belfast Heritage Cluster buildings (Grid Reference J 33110 74932), establishing an ecological baseline to inform biodiversity-led landscaping and urban conservation interventions across the cluster.

The cluster occupies a dense urban setting and is dominated by buildings, amenity grassland and introduced shrub of generally low ecological value. While priority habitats and designated sites occur in the wider area, the distance and intervening urban landscape mean the site is not considered capable of supporting the qualifying interests of the European or nationally designated sites assessed.

Combining a desktop study with a field survey, the appraisal identifies a range of priority and notable species that interventions could realistically benefit — including Swift, House Sparrow, Starling, light-tolerant bats, West European Hedgehog, notable invertebrates and the lichen *Physcia caesia*. A menu of enhancement options is provided that aspires to create a green spine across all members, including:

- adoption of swifts and or notable pollinators as flagship species;
- integrated nesting and roosting features — Swift and House Sparrow bricks, bat boxes and hibernacula;
- standing water and a composite Open Mosaic Habitat system – possible to be included as part of a series of parklets;
- ecological enhancement of existing green spaces by improving habitat heterogeneity; and
- bat-sensitive lighting and improved habitat connectivity, so the cluster functions as a network rather than as isolated parcels.

The appraisal also outlines opportunities to extend the reach and impact beyond the green spine and threading new biodiverse green space into the wider community within which the cluster of organisations occur. For instance residential properties in the area offer urban gardens and alleyways that could be positively impacted by collaborating with initiatives such as Belfast City Councils Nature Towns and Cities and Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayors Challenge which is aiming to create 200+km of new green alleyways across the city.

Because many of the buildings are listed, measures affecting historic fabric will require Listed Building Consent and consultation with the Historic Environment Division. Proposals have therefore focused on unlisted parts of the site. Final proposals should be developed with landscape architects and in consultation with the relevant communities, using the area's combined heritage and wildlife to foster engagement and a stronger sense of place.

1.0 Introduction

1.1 Background Information

This document outlines the results of a High Level Ecological Appraisal that aims to inform urban conservation interventions throughout the North Belfast Heritage Cluster buildings. Starling Ecology were commissioned by the Great Place North Belfast project of the North Belfast Heritage Cluster to assist with the creation of an ecological baseline for the site that aims to inform proposals for Heritage Cluster buildings, hereafter known as “the site”.

The site that will be assessed in this appraisal occurs in a dense urban context. The north, south, east and west of the site are surrounded by urban residential properties, infrastructure, businesses and sports pitches.

The redline boundary (RLB) of the proposed site is set out in Figure 1 below.



Figure 1 Boundary used for the ecological appraisal of the North Belfast Heritage Cluster buildings.

1.2 Aims

The aims of this appraisal are to:

- identify any protected or notable habitats or species present within and adjacent to the proposed works;
- identify, if any, additional ecological surveys that are required to inform scheme design; and
- identify opportunities to enhance biodiversity on site and provide recommendations for landscaping on site.

It should be noted that only priority and protected species and habitats are considered on site, however where recommendations may have wider benefits for biodiversity more generally these are mentioned.

The scope of this assessment adheres to and has been defined by best practice guidance including Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)[1] and the British Standard BS42020 on Biodiversity (Code of Practice for planning and development)[2].

1.3 Statement of Competency

This survey and associated reporting was carried out by Conor McKinney who has 20 years of experience as an ecologist with the public, private and community sector. Conor has BSc in Environmental Science, a MSc in Ecological Management and Conservation Biology and is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM). Conor has undertaken various ecological appraisals ranging from Biodiversity Checklists and Preliminary Ecological Appraisals for smaller developments to Ecological Impact Assessments for larger projects (such as water pipelines and larger residential developments) to Biodiversity Chapters for Strategic Infrastructure Developments such as data centres and large wind farms.

[1] Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, 2017. Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. 2nd ed. Winchester: CIEEM.

[2] British Standards Institution, (2013) Biodiversity - Code of Practice for planning and development. BS 42020:2013, 31 Aug 2013.

2.0 Methodology

This assessment has been undertaken in accordance with guidance from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2017) which states that an ecological assessment should include:

- a desk study, an online data search utilising GIS datasets, Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR) and Biodiversity Ireland datasets and that covered an area of up to 2km from the site; and
- an assessment of the presence of protected or priority species and scoping of the site and its adjacent environs for protected and priority species

Plant nomenclature in this report follows Stace (2019)[3] for native and naturalised species of vascular plants. Plant names in the text are given with common names first, followed by the scientific name in brackets.

2.1 Survey Methodology

2.1.1 Desktop Study

A desktop survey was carried out on the 27th May 2026 using data from a range of different data sources. These are listed in Table 1 below.

2.1.1.1 Statutory and non-statutory designated sites

A search was made for European designated sites within 10km of the site boundary consisting of Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and within 5km of the site boundary for Areas of Special Scientific Interest (ASSIs)[4]. A search for non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the proposed site boundary was also undertaken and included a search of datasets on priority habitats.

2.1.1.2 Protected and noteworthy species

The desktop survey also included a search for records within 2km of the proposed site boundary from within the past fifteen years. The search was limited to 15 years on account of the changes

[3] Stace, C.A. (2019). A New Flora of the British Isles (4th Edition). C&M Floristics, Middlewich Green.
[4] SACs and SPAs were formerly called 'European Sites' and part of the Natura 2000 network; post-'Brexit', they are called European Designated Sites in this report. Ramsar sites are sites of international importance that are treated through policy as SPAs. Note that SPAs and SACs are underpinned by ASSI designations whose citations/boundaries may be slightly different.

in the landscape that might be expected in the intervening period resulting in records potentially becoming unreliable. Species included in the search were:

- nationally protected species under Schedule A1, 1, 5 & 8 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985[5] (as amended by the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act 2011);
- European Protected Species (as listed on Schedule 2 and 5 of the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995[6] (as amended by the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) (Amendment) (Northern Ireland) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019);
- species considered as "Near Threatened", "Vulnerable", "Endangered" and "Critically Endangered";
- any species listed on the Birdwatch Ireland / RSPB Birds of Conservation Concern Ireland assessment;
- rare, scarce, notable or priority species listed under the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (Northern Ireland) 2011 (WaNE Act) or by the local planning authority in the relevant Local Biodiversity Action Plan;
- Invasive non-native species; in particular those that are regulated by Schedule 9 of the Wildlife Order, the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019[7] or by the EU Invasive Alien Species Regulation 1143/2014[8].

This assessment also included a review of Biodiversity Ireland's National Bat Landscape database based on Lundy *et al* 2011[9] Maximum Entropy modelling which provides the likelihood of finding bat species in the landscape. The habitat suitability index generated ranges from 0 to 100, with 100 being most suitable for bats.

[5] Northern Ireland Statutory (1985), *The Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985* , Available on https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisi/1985/171/schedule/9.
[6] Northern Ireland Statutory, *The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995*. Available at http://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/1995/380/contents/made.
[7] Northern Ireland Statutory (2019), *The Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order (Northern Ireland) 2019* .Available at https://www.legislation.gov.uk/nisr/2019/159/contents/made.
[8] European Commission. (2016a). Invasive alien species. Available at http://ec.europa.eu/environment/nature/invasivealien/index_en.htm
[9] Lundy, M.G., Aughney, T., Montgomery, W.I., & Roche, N., (2011) Landscape conservation for Irish bats & species specific roosting characteristics. Bat Conservation Ireland.

Table 1 List of data sources used in desktop survey

Datasets	Available From
Protected and Noteworthy species-records	Centre for Environmental Data and Recording (CEDaR)
European and Internationally designated site locations and citations	https://www.daera-ni.gov.uk/landing-pages/protected-areas
Statutory designated site locations and citations Non-statutory designated site locations and citations	NIEA Natural Environment Map Viewer (Online GIS tool)
Designations and legal protection of noteworthy species	Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) website
Bat landscape suitability data	Available at National Biodiversity Data Centre available at https://maps.biodiversityireland.ie/Dataset/128 and based on research undertaken by Lundy et al (2011)[10]
Details of species and habitats listed on the LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
Aerial photography	As a viewer only, sources include: www.google.com; www.bing.com. Where reproduced as figures, sourced from OpenStreet Data and are licensed as stated.

2.2 Limitations

Two out of the fourteen buildings were not visited for habitat assessment of protected and / or priority habitats and species, however the exercise is predominantly a desktop based exercise and therefore shouldn't detract substantially from findings as reported.

The presence of flora and fauna is influenced by factors such as seasonality, mobility, migration patterns and behaviour; however, professional judgement and experience allow assessment as to the likely presence of flora and fauna with sufficient certainty as to not significantly limit the findings in this report.

[10] Lundy, M.G., Aughney, T., Montgomery, W.I., & Roche, N., (2011) Landscape conservation for Irish bats & species specific roosting characteristics. Bat Conservation Ireland

3.0 Results

3.1 Desktop Study

3.1.1 European Designated Sites

The study identified two European designated sites within 10km of the site. The name, Qualifying Interests (QI) and location of these European designated site in relation to the site are summarised in Table 2 and illustrated in Appendix B.

Table 2 European designated sites within 10km of the site

Site name	Size (ha)	Qualifying interests (QIs)	Approximate distance to site (km)
Belfast Lough SPA	432	**Species** Arctic tern (*Sterna paradisaea*), Bar-tailed godwit (*Limosa lapponica*), Black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa*), Common tern (*Sterna hirundo*) Redshank (*Tringa tetanus*)	2
Belfast Lough Open Water SPA	5593	**Species** Great crested grebe (*Podiceps cristatus*)	6.5

3.1.2 Nationally Designated Sites

There are three ASSIs within 5km of the proposed site. These sites are Belvoir ASSI which is designated for its priority veteran oak parkland habitat, Inner Belfast Lough ASSI which is designated for its wintering bird assemblages, and Bellevue ASSI which is designated for its geological interest in the Clay-with-Flints exposure. Given Bellevue ASSI is designated for geological features rather than ecological features and therefore beyond the remit of this report it has been scoped out of the remainder of this report. The name, Qualifying Interest (QI) and location of these ASSIs are outlined in Table 3 with their geographical context in relation to the site illustrated in Appendix C.

Table 3 Nationally designated sites within 5km of the site

Site name	Size (ha)	Qualifying interests (QIs) and Special Conservation Interests (SQIs)	Approximate distance to site (km)
Inner Belfast Lough ASSI	228	**Species** Black-tailed godwit, Cormorant (*Phalacrocorax carbo*), Curlew *(Numenius Arquata*), Dunlin (*Calidris alpina*), Eider (*Somateria mollissima*), Goldeneye (*Bucephala clangula*), Great crested grebe, Knot (*Calidris canutus*), Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*), Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), Oystercatcher (*Haematopus ostralegus*), Red-breasted merganser (*Mergus serrator*), Redshank (*Tringa tetanus*), Ringed plover (*Charadrius hiaticula*), Scaup (*Aythya marila*), Shelduck (*Tadorna tadorna*), Turnstone (*Arenaria interpres*).	2.5
Belvoir ASSI	23.5	**Habitat** Veteran oak parkland. **Species** Invertebrate assemblage.	4.4

3.1.3 Non Statutory Designated Sites

Five Sites of Local Nature Conservation Importance (SLNCIs) occur within 2km of the proposed site boundary. In addition, seven areas of priority woodland habitat occur within 2km of the site. The River Lagan, considered priority habitat, occurs c. 400m to the east of the most southern cluster building (Belfast Cathedral). All non-statutory designated sites are outlined in Table 4 and illustrated in Appendix D.

Table 4 Non-statutory sites within 2km of the site boundary.

Priority Habitat Type / SLNCI	Site Code / Name	Size (ha)	Approximate distance to site (km)
River	Lagan River	n/a	0.4
SLNCI	Alexandra Park	5	0.6
SLNCI	Waterworks Park	17.4	0.8
SLNCI	Upper Forth River	32.5	1.3
SLNCI	Ballygomartin River	10.4	1.3
SLNCI	Springfield Pond / Highfield Glen	7.8	1.2
Woodland	2917	0.6	1.4
Woodland	2916	0.5	1.4
Woodland	2915	2.4	0.7
Woodland	Comprises of two parcels - Site IDs - 2837 - 2838	 0.4 0.1	 1.8 1.8

Priority Habitat Type / SLNCI	Site Code / Name	Size (ha)	Approximate distance to site (km)
Woodland	Comprises of two parcels - Site IDs - 2835 - 2834	 1.5 5.5	1.9

3.1.4 Protected and Notable Species

3.1.4.1 Overview

Records of protected and noteworthy species within 2km of the site are included in Table 5. Any records over 15 years old have been omitted as these are not considered to reflect the current ecological situation within and adjacent to the site (due to land use changes etc). Records of species outlined reflect the designations outlined in section 3.1.1.2.

Table 5 CEDaR and field records of protected and noteworthy species within 2km of the site from the past 15 years.

Common name	Scientific name	Number of records	Most recent record	Designation
Bird				
Barn Owl	*Tyto alba*	1	06/03/2013	Northern Ireland Priority Species (NIPS), Birds of Conservation Concern (BOCC) Red Listed (Red), Wildlife (NI) Order Schedule 1 (Sch 1)
Black Guillemot	*Cepphus grylle*	17	27/03/2019	NIPS, Birds of Conservation Concern (BOCC) Amber Listed (Amber)
Black-headed Gull	*Chroicocephalus ridibundus*	10	26/05/2019	NIPS, BOCC Amber
Bullfinch	*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*	1	11/01/2012	NIPS, BOCC Amber
Cuckoo	*Cuculus canorus*	2	21/05/2013	NIPS, Sch 1
Fieldfare	*Turdus pilaris*	1	04/12/2012	NIPS
Golden Plover	*Pluvialis apricaria*	1	27/04/2013	NIPS
Grey Wagtail	*Motacilla cinerea*	3	26/05/2019	NIPS, BOCC Red
Hen Harrier	*Circus cyaneus*	1	09/02/2015	NIPS, BOCC Amber, Sch 1
Herring Gull	*Larus argentatus*	7	12/11/2019	NIPS, BOCC Amber

Common name	Scientific name	Number of records	Most recent record	Designation
House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*	2	26/05/2019	NIPS, BOCC Amber
Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*	1	16/09/2018	NIPS, BOCC Red, Sch 1
Kingfisher	*Alcedo atthis*	2	19/11/2011	NIPS, BOCC Amber, Sch 1
Long-tailed Duck	*Clangula hyemalis*	1	24/11/2011 - 29/12/2011	NIPS
Meadow Pipit	*Anthus pratensis*	2	14/06/2015	NIPS, BOCC Amber
Mediterranean Gull	*Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*	7	21/03/2016	NIPS, BOCC Amber, Sch 1
Merlin	*Falco columbarius*	2	22/05/2012	NIPS, BOCC Red, Sch 1
Mistle Thrush	*Turdus viscivorus*	2	28/02/2016	NIPS, BOCC Red
Pochard	*Aythya ferina*	1	07/01/2015	NIPS, BOCC Red, Sch 1
Red Kite	*Milvus milvus*	1	13/01/2015 - 14/01/2015	NIPS, Sch 1
Redwing	*Turdus iliacus*	6	12/10/2015	NIPS, BOCC Amber, Sch 1
Scaup	*Aythya marila*	1	05/04/2017 - 06/04/2017	NIPS, BOCC Red, Sch 1
Shag	*Gulosus aristotelis*	2	05/02/2016	NIPS, BOCC Red
Starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*	1	26/05/2019	NIPS, BOCC Red
Swift	*Apus apus*	5	27/05/2026 (recorded on field visit)	NIPS, BOCC Red
Tufted Duck	*Aythya fuligula*	3	26/05/2019	NIPS
Twite	*Linaria flavirostris*	1	13/02/2016	NIPS, BOCC Red, Sch 1
Whooper Swan	*Cygnus cygnus*	2	09/01/2014	NIPS, BOCC Amber, Sch 1
Woodcock	*Scolopax rusticola*	2	27/11/2015	NIPS, BOCC Red
Flowering Plant				
Cowslip	*Primula veris*	1	20/04/2014	Wildlife (NI) Order Schedule 8 (Sch 8)

Common name	Scientific name	Number of records	Most recent record	Designation
Hairy Whitlowgrass	*Erophila majuscula*	1	04/04/2012	NI Rare & Scarce Vascular Plants
Invertebrate				
Buff Ermine	*Spilarctia luteum*	1	27/05/2026 (recorded on field visit)	NIPS
Narrow Bordered Five-spot Burnet	*Zygaena lonicerae*	1	27/05/2026 (recorded on field visit)	NIPS
Red-tailed Bumblebee	*Bombus lapidarius*	2	27/05/2026 (both records recorded on field visit)	NIPS
Small Heath	*Coenonympha pamphilus*	1	10/06/2012	NIPS
White Ermine	*Spilosoma lubricipeda*	1	27/05/2026 (recorded on field visit)	NIPS
Lichen				
Physcia caesia	*Physcia caesia*	1	26/10/2014	Red Data Book
Terrestrial Mammal				
Common Pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	1	11/09/2016	NIPS
Eastern Grey Squirrel	*Sciurus carolinensis*	5	22/10/2019	Invasive Species, (Invasive)
Eurasian Badger	*Meles meles*	1	13/05/2016	Wildlife (NI) Order Schedule 5 (Sch 5)
Eurasian Otter	*Lutra lutra*	4	May-20	NIPS, Sch 5
Eurasian Red Squirrel	*Sciurus vulgaris*	1	05/07/2014	NIPS, Sch 5, Red List for Britain's Mammals (RLBM) - Endangered
Leisler's Bat	*Nyctalus leisleri*	1	11/09/2016	NIPS
Soprano Pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*	1	11/09/2016	NIPS
West European Hedgehog	*Erinaceus europaeus*	5	13/09/2021	NIPS, RLBM - Vulnerable
Marine Mammal				
Grey Seal	*Halichoerus grypus*	5	24/03/2019	NIPS, Sch 5
Harbour Seal	*Phoca vitulina*	2	12/01/2015	NIPS, Sch 5

3.1.4.2 Bats

Suitability of the area for species of bats (as described in Lundy, 2011[11]) is outlined below in Table 6 which summarises the published maps of a 'habitat suitability' index. The index ranges from 0 to 100 with 0 being least favourable and 100 most favourable for bats. Colour schemes and summary of the data are as follows:

Least Suitable	Less Suitable	Moderately Suitable	More suitable	Most Suitable

All bats	Brown Long-eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*)	Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*)	Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*)	Nathusius' Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*)
28	**31**	**44**	**36**	**21**
Leisler's Bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*)	**Lesser Horseshoe Bat *(Rhinolophus hipposideros)***	**Daubenton's Bat (*Myotis daubentonii*)**	**Whiskered Bat (*Myotis mystacinus*)**	**Natterer's Bat (*Myotis nattereri*)**
41	**0**	**20**	**19**	**31**

Table 6 Suitability of 6x6km area (where majority of cluster buildings are located) encompassing site for bats based on Lundy et al (2011).

The landscape suitability data suggests that the northern 6x6 km^2 area within which the majority of the cluster buildings occur can be considered:

- least suitable for Lesser Horseshoe bat;
- less suitable for Daubenton's Bat and Whiskered Bat;
- moderately suitable for Brown Long-eared Bat, Soprano Pipistrelle, Nathusius' Pipistrelle, and Natterer's Bat; and
- more suitable for Common Pipistrelle and Leisler's Bat.

In summary, the data suggests that the 6x6km^2 area across which the site occurs is considered to have moderate suitability for bats.

[11] Lundy, M.G., Aughney, T., Montgomery, W.I., & Roche, N., (2011) Landscape conservation for Irish bats & species specific roosting characteristics. Bat Conservation Ireland.

4.0 Assessment

4.1 Protected Sites

4.1.1 European Designated Sites

The site is not located within or immediately adjacent to any SPAs or SACs. The site is approximately *c.* 2km from Belfast Lough SPA and 6.5km from Belfast Lough Open Water SPA. No direct hydrological connectivity occurs between the site and these SPAs.

Given the distance of the site from these SPAs and the lack of relevant habitat on site it is not considered feasible for the site to support the QIs of these SPAs.

4.1.2 Nationally Designated Sites

The site is not located within or immediately adjacent to any ASSI. The site is c. 4.4km from Belvoir ASSI, 2.5km from the Inner Belfast Lough ASSI and 5km from Bellevue ASSI. Belvoir ASSI is designated for its veteran Oak parkland and associated invertebrate assemblage. In addition, Belvoir ASSI supports a range of priority species such as various bats, pine marten and hedgehog, as well as birds such as starlings, mistle thrush and song thrush. However, given the distance of the site from this ASSI, along with the dense urban landscape surrounding the majority of the cluster buildings, it is not considered feasible for the site to support the QIs of this ASSI.

The Inner Belfast Lough ASSI is designated for wintering birds. Given the distance of the site from this ASSI and the lack of relevant habitat on site it is not considered feasible for the site to support the QIs of this ASSI.

4.1.3 Non-statutory Designated Sites

The site is not located within any SLNCIs or priority habitats. The closest SLNCIs to the site are Waterworks Park and Alexandra Park which are approximately 0.6km north of the site. These sites are known for their water bird species such as Dipper (*Cinclus cinclus*), Greylag Geese (*Anser anser*), Mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*) and Tufted Duck. An aquatic priority habitat; the Lagan River, also occurs within 0.6km of the site. Considering the distance of the site from these SLNCIs and the River Lagan, the dense urban character of the site and its environs, and the absence of suitable aquatic habitat in the vicinity of and within the site, it is considered that there is little potential for interventions to extend the range of these species into the site.

The site is within 0.5km of an additional six parcels of terrestrial priority habitat, specifically to five parcels of Open Mosaic Habitat and one parcel of priority woodland habitat. Open Mosaic Habitat is valuable nutrient-poor habitat that offers important habitat to a range of notable plants and invertebrates such as Bee Orchid (*Ophrys apifera*) and Patchwork Leafcutter bee (*Megachile centuncularis)*. Larger parcels of these habitats can also be valuable for urban populations of ground-nesting birds such as Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*) and Skylark (*Alauda arvensis*).

4.2 Protected and Notable Species

4.2.1 Amphibians

No records of amphibians occur within 2km of the proposed development site. The environs of the site are considered to be unsuitable for foraging, commuting and breeding amphibians given the absence of semi-natural and aquatic habitat. In addition it is considered that the suitability of the site is further limited for the species on account of likely predation by cats and dogs and additional mortality from traffic associated with the urban environment and anthropogenic activity in the area.

4.2.2 Birds

Birds typically need habitat suitable for foraging and for breeding. The following species are considered to be associated with aquatic or maritime habitats and are therefore scoped out of the report: Black Guillemot, Black-headed Gull, Kingfisher, Long-tailed Duck, Mediterranean Gull, Pochard, Scaup, Shag and Whooper Swan.

The table below outlines results of the assessment of the remaining terrestrial species, the suitability of the site for these species and whether feasible actions are available to improve that suitability.

Table 7 Assessment of probability of benefiting priority birds on site.

Key	
Intervention is not considered practical or pragmatic **and / or** intervention is not considered to have any chance of resulting in benefit to the species.	
Intervention is possible but is considered difficult to orchestrate **or** intervention would have a very minor impact on the species	
Intervention is considered practical and pragmatic **and** would result in a real conservation impact for the species.	

Common Name	Designation	Intervention options and likelihood of success?
Barn Owl	Red NIPS	While Barn Owls will utilise nesting boxes they require extensive, heterogeneous semi-natural habitat which is not plausible in the environs of the site.
Bullfinch	NIPS Amber	Bullfinch require dense, shrubby semi-natural habitat which is not plausible given the environs of the site.
Cuckoo	NIPS	Species typically associated with the rough grassland pastures of its host species. These species unlikely to nest on site given limited size of the site and likelihood of predation and / or disturbance.
Fieldfare	Red NIPS	A species that occurs in habitats associated with berry-laden hedgerows. The site is not considered suitable for this species given its urban nature.
Golden Plover	NIPS	This species has seasonal requirements, open upland moorlands for breeding and lowland agricultural fields or coastal estuaries for wintering. The environs of the site are suitable for neither requirement.
Grey Wagtail	Amber NIPS	Species specialises in foraging in aquatic habitats. Will use boxes to nest but given distance of the site from the nearest suitable foraging habitat (typically shallow rivers and streams) is unlikely to utilise the option.
House Sparrow	Amber	This species will respond well to the provision of nesting boxes and incorporating native plants in landscaping. In addition they are tolerant of anthropogenic activity and nest in areas that are safe from roaming predators.
Kestrel	NIPS BOCC Red Sch 1	While Kestrels will utilise nesting boxes they require extensive, heterogeneous semi-natural habitat which is not plausible in the environs of the site.
Meadow Pipit	NIPS BOCC Amber	These ground nesting birds require extensive rough grassland habitat. Given that the environs of the site are devoid of this habitat and the free-roaming predators / potential for disturbance it is considered that the site is not suitable for this species.
Merlin	NIPS BOCC Red Sch 1	This species has seasonal requirements, open upland moorlands for breeding and lowland agricultural fields

Common Name	Designation	Intervention options and likelihood of success?
		or coastal estuaries for wintering. The environs of the site are suitable for neither requirement.
Mistle Thrush	NIPS BOCC Red	This species eats insects and fruits and can benefit from sensitive changes in hedgerow management and landscaping, however given the urban extent and proliferation of free roaming predators any additional interest is likely to be of peripheral interest to the species.
Red Kite	NIPS Sch 1	A species that occurs in extensive heterogeneous semi-natural habitats. The site is not considered suitable for this species given its heavily modified environs.
Redwing	Amber NIPS	Some changes could be made on site that would offer additional foraging habitat but interventions likely to result only in limited benefits given the species is a winter migrant.
Starling	Amber NIPS	This species will utilise urban green spaces and could benefit from interventions to the site that include nesting boxes, and landscaping that helps to create open, native species rich habitat of shrubs, trees and flowers.
Swift	Red NIPS	While this species primarily hunts over large aquatic habitats a primary factor in their decline is a loss of nest sites for which a variety of bricks and boxes are available and could be accommodated on site.
Woodcock	Red NIPS	This species is typically very cryptic and retiring and not likely to use the site due to human presence.

4.2.3 Invertebrates

Several notable invertebrates were recorded on the desktop and field survey, many of which are herbivorous. Herbivorous insects are often associated with specific foodplants which are critical for their larval stages. An assessment of the species and a list of their food plants is outlined below in Table 8 as well as the feasibility of intervention options.

Table 8 Assessment of probability of benefiting priority invertebrates on site

Invertebrates			
Name	**Designation**	**Associated food plants**	**Intervention options and likelihood of success?**
Buff Ermine	NIPS	Nettles, docks and Dandelions	Found in open habitats similar to the site including parks, gardens and hedgerows and within the area. Interventions such as rough areas would benefit this species.

Invertebrates			
Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet	NIPS	Meadow vetchling and red clover.	Food plants are typically widespread and common and therefore management of green space sensitively could feasibly result in expansion of the species distribution.
Red-tailed Bumblebee	NIPS	Daisies, thistles and clovers	Observed visiting Willowherb and Ragwort throughout the site. Would benefit directly from greater floral diversity and nest site creation.
Small Heath	NIPS	Fescues, meadow-grasses and bents.	Can be found in a wide range of habitats, in particular unimproved dry grassland with fine grasses. Interventions not likely to result in extensive habitat required.
White Ermine	NIPS	Docks and nettles	Found in open habitats similar to the site including parks, gardens and hedgerows and within the area. Interventions such as rough areas would benefit this species.

4.2.4 Plants

Three priority or protected plants; Cowslip, Hairywhitlowgrass and *Physcia caesia* were recorded within 2km of the site. Cowslip is primarily considered to be associated with species-rich meadows, ancient woodlands, hedgerows, roadside verges, and coastal dunes or cliffs. Hairywhitlowgrass is a species of open, dry, and well-drained environments with shallow, often calcareous (chalky or limestone) soils. *Physcia caesia* thrives on nutrient-rich, sunlit surfaces. Its primary habitats include calcareous rocks (such as limestone), concrete, asphalt, and asbestos-cement. It is also commonly found on man-made structures like tombstones and old walls, and occasionally on dust-impregnated wood or the bark of basic trees. It typically colonises rocky outcrops, coastal dunes, cliffs, old quarries, walls, and gravelly ground. Cowslip and Hairy Whitlowgrass aren't typically associated with building and artificial surfaces habitat within nutrient-enriched urban environments and therefore the potential to benefit these species is scoped out. The records of *Physcia caesia* could be associated with constituent parts of the site, for instance the cemetery and is scoped in.

4.2.5 Terrestrial mammals

4.2.5.1 Bats

The site occurs in the context of a 6 x 6km^2 area with moderate bat suitability. Though the site occurs within a heavily modified urban environment the presence of street trees along the road

are considered to offer “low” suitability for foraging and commuting bats. It is also considered that only one record of a bat has been recorded within 2km of the site. It is considered that on site interventions comprising of new semi-natural habitat such as flower rich habitat, trees, shrubs and standing water would improve habitat for foraging and commuting bats, and new integrated bricks and boxes would be suitable for roosting bats, in particular light tolerant species such as Common and Soprano Pipistrelle and Leisler’s bat.

4.2.5.2 Badgers

Badgers require extensive and heterogeneous natural habitat within which to commute, forage and build setts. This habitat does not occur in the wider environs of the site. Interventions are not considered to result in substantial positive gains for the species therefore the potential to benefit badgers is scoped out.

4.2.5.3 Otters

The site is not considered to offer opportunity suitable to create positive interventions for foraging otters and is considered to be too far away from the Lagan River, with too much intervening urban habitat, to offer potential for resting, foraging and commuting otters. The potential to benefit otters is therefore scoped out.

4.2.5.4 Pine Martens

While the site offers optimal foraging and commuting habitat for pine marten, given the anthropogenic disturbance that would be anticipated it is not considered likely that positive interventions would be used by the species. The potential to benefit pine marten is therefore scoped out.

4.2.5.5 West European Hedgehogs

Parcels of green space do exist immediately adjacent to the site (e.g. Peter’s Hill and Clifton House). No records of West European Hedgehog were retrieved from the desktop survey. The cemetery is considered suitable for the species therefore it is considered likely that they occur within 1km of the site. It is therefore considered that conservation interventions for West European Hedgehog could have a positive impact for the species.

5.0 Options for Enhancement and Recommendations

5.1 Flagship Species

Given the findings of the assessment it is considered that future conservation initiatives could be branded using flagship species that helps to encapsulate the recommendations, provide complementary threads of activity and help to secure buy-in from member organisations. An example of certain species / species groups are outlined below:

Swifts

Swifts are a migratory species that migrate between Africa and Europe each year. The species is red-listed given a marked decline of around 50-70% since the 1990s and is also considered a Northern Ireland Priority Species. This decline has been caused predominantly due to a loss of nest sites in crevices in buildings. The species is insectivorous and will forage over large areas, freshwater habitats such as Lough Neagh are particularly valuable for foraging swift whereas Belfast is considered vital to the recovery of the species given the prolificacy of swifts nesting in buildings across the city. Selection of the swift as a flagship species could help illustrate importance of buildings as nesting habitat for wildlife and also the need to encourage more invertebrates across the site and therefore the need for more sensitive landscaping. However it is noted that plausible interventions (e.g. installing new nesting boxes and bricks) may be problematic given the listed nature of many of the buildings.

Pollinators

A Near Threatened bumblebee, the Red-tailed Bumblebee, was recorded on the field study. It was part of an aggregation of five pollinators considered to be Northern Ireland Priority Species that were recorded in the assessment of the site. Site design with these pollinators in mind would create biodiverse, heterogeneous and climate resilient green space that could be designed with communities in mind.

5.2 Habitats

5.2.1 Priority Habitat

Parcels of Open Mosaic Habitat occur within 0.5km of the site. Options exist to introduce new areas of nutrient poor habitat that can be designed to introduce wildflower rich areas, bare substrate and open water that would complement the extent of this priority habitat in the vicinity of the area. An example would be the use of a Natira bare substrate matrix and suitable flora (see Appendix E). This system can be retrofitted to include a variety of plant species to reflect Open Mosaic Habitat types and are typically lower maintenance for the site owner. In addition the system can be designed to be flexible to the context of the site. For instance it can be designed with sand banks for mining bees and dew ponds for ephemeral freshwater or to address potential antisocial behaviour.

5.2.2 General habitat provision

Habitat heterogeneity is critical for biodiversity generally. For instance aquatic habitats are critical for the larval stages of hoverflies (observed in the field visit), damselflies and dragonflies and caddisflies. Flower rich habitats further complement these species groups. This complexity does not currently exist on site which consists predominantly of Buildings (J3.6), Amenity Grassland (J1.2) and Introduced Shrub (J1.4) habitat types which are typically considered to have “low” or “negligible” ecological value.

Connectivity across the site should be maximised so that the cluster functions as a network (or as a “green spine” as developed later in Section 5.4) rather than as isolated parcels. With this in mind habitat heterogeneity should be encouraged through the creation of new and complementary habitat types, in particular of standing water, species rich native hedging and shrub, species rich native trees and species rich grassland. Given the urban nature of the site and aspirations to encourage use of the site by communities ornamental habitat types consisting of non-native species can also be of some benefit to biodiversity and facilitate animation across the space. As well as complementing each other these habitat types will support volant species that are considered to be more likely to occupy urban spaces given they are less vulnerable to pressures such as disturbance, traffic mortality and domestic animal predation. Recommended species lists for these habitat types are included in Appendix F.

5.3 Protected and Notable Species

5.3.1 Birds

The main opportunities that exist to support priority birds are by catering for the following:

- **House Sparrows:** Provide integrated nesting bricks or boxes and incorporating native plants in landscaping, in particular those that create shelter (such as hawthorn) or produce large amounts of seeds and berries or encourage insects.
- **Starlings:** Provide integrated nesting bricks or boxes and incorporating native plants in landscaping, in particular those that produce large amounts of seeds and berries or encourage insects.
- **Swift:** Interventions are not considered to be likely for foraging swift, however swift bricks incorporated into the superstructure of buildings across the site or boxes erected would provide for nesting swift.

Appropriate plants have been considered and are outlined in Appendix F.

5.3.2 Lichen

The notable lichen *Physcia caesia* was recorded within 1km of the site boundary and could plausibly be associated with the Cemetery. It is recommended that a survey is undertaken and that this species is considered as part of the management regime of the cemetery (i.e. to allow colonisation of suitable substrate where appropriate).

5.3.3 Invertebrates

The assessment identified various species of hymenoptera and lepidoptera within 1km of the site which have preferred flora species for foraging. To cater for these notable invertebrates the following species are recommended for consideration:

- Dandelions – benefitting larval stage of **Buff Ermine;**
- Meadow Vetchling – benefitting larval stage of **Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet;**
- Nettles and docks– benefitting larval stage of **Buff Ermine and White Ermine;**
- Red Clover – benefitting larval stage of **Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet;**

The flora species are relatively widespread and common and are typically present in most grassland habitat. Reduced mowing regimes would typically produce the swards that would be of benefit to the larval stage of Buff Ermine, White Ermine and Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet. In addition species rich grassland creation to create greater wildflower richness would cater for the adult stages of these species and for the **Red-tailed Bumblebee.** Appropriate plants have been considered and are outlined in Appendix F.

5.3.4 Terrestrial Mammals

5.3.4.1 Bats

A variety of green space suitable for foraging bats occurs in the vicinity of the site, in addition commuting corridors also occur in the vicinity of the site given the extent of urban trees in the area. Measures to support both crevice and cavity roosting bats should be taken, in particular bat maternity sites should be provided and incorporated where possible into the fabric of the existing buildings. Where this is not possible then through the provision of woodcrete boxes especially selected for common and soprano pipistrelle and Leisler's bat. In addition the creation of new semi-natural habitat consisting of native plants and freshwater habitats will support bat populations by providing invertebrate rich habitat types. Appropriate plants have been considered and are outlined in Appendix F and appropriate boxes have been outlined in Appendix H. Finally suitability of the site is degraded by the extent of light pollution in the area, where possible best practice guidance[12] should be followed to reduce light pollution burden in the vicinity of all buildings within the cluster.

5.3.4.2 West European Hedgehog

Opportunities to remove non-native shrub and replace with native shrub should be utilised. Signage to slow traffic speed would help reduce traffic mortalities and campaigns within the community housing could help foster community spirit as well as provide opportunities to improve habitat contiguity across the site and food supply. Provision of hibernacula would also support the species. Appropriate plants have been considered and are outlined in Appendix F.

5.3.5 Summary of Recommendations

Receptor / target	Designation	Recommended measure(s)	See
Birds			
Swift	Red; NIPS	Integrated swift bricks within the building superstructure, or external swift boxes, on suitable / unlisted elevations; insect-rich planting to support aerial foraging.	5.1, 5.3.1; App. F, H
House Sparrow	Amber	Integrated nest bricks or boxes (colonial / terraced); native shelter (e.g. hawthorn) and seed-, berry- and insect-rich planting.	5.3.1; App. F.1–F.2, H
Starling	Amber; NIPS	Integrated nest bricks or boxes; open, native, species-rich shrub, tree and flower habitat for foraging.	5.3.1; App. F, H
Lichen			
Physcia caesia	Notable	Survey to confirm presence (particularly at the cemetery); protect and, where appropriate, encourage colonisation of suitable substrate (walls, tombstones) through sensitive management.	5.3.2; 5.4.2
Invertebrates / pollinators			

[12] Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals (2023) *Guidance Note GN08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night*. ILP, Rugby.

Receptor / target	Designation	Recommended measure(s)	See
Red-tailed Bumblebee	NT; NIPS	Greater floral diversity with nectar / pollen succession and single-flowered forms planted in drifts; undisturbed nesting features; reduced mowing.	5.1, 5.3.3; App. F.4, F.6
Buff Ermine & White Ermine (moths)	NIPS	Relaxed mowing to allow tall / rough swards; retain foodplants — nettles, docks and dandelions.	5.3.3; App. F.4
Narrow-bordered Five-spot Burnet (moth)	NIPS	Meadow vetchling and red clover within species-rich grassland; sensitive management could expand its distribution.	5.3.3; App. F.4
Bats			
Foraging / commuting habitat	All bats EPS	Native, insect-rich planting; flower-rich grassland; standing water and wetland margins; retain street / urban trees as commuting routes.	4.2.5.1, 5.3.4.1; App. F.4–F.5
Roosting features	All bats EPS	Integrated bricks and boxes for crevice- and cavity-roosting bats incorporated into building fabric where feasible; woodcrete boxes for light-tolerant species.	5.3.4.1; App. H
Lighting	—	Follow best-practice lighting guidance (BCT & ILP, 2023; GN08/23): warm spectrum ≤2700K, directional / cowled luminaires, part-night dimming or curfews, to reduce the light-pollution burden across the cluster.	5.3.4.1
Other mammals			
West European Hedgehog	NIPS	Replace non-native shrub with native; log-pile hibernacula; hedgehog gaps / “highways” for connectivity; traffic-calming signage; community engagement.	5.3.4.2; App. F.2
Underpinning habitat & cross-cutting			
Open Mosaic Habitat analogue	Priority habitat	Composite bare-substrate system (e.g. Natira) with wildflower, sand banks and dew ponds.	5.2.1; App. E
Habitat heterogeneity & connectivity	—	Standing water, species-rich native hedge / shrub, native trees and species-rich grassland; non-invasive ornamental for amenity; plan as a connected network of stepping stones.	5.2.2, §5.4.1; App. F
Delivery	—	Monitoring / recording (CEDaR, iNaturalist); confirm listing status and secure Listed Building Consent; works outside the bird breeding season (1 Mar–31 Aug) and around bat activity; stewardship / management plans; phasing.	5.4.1

Table 9 Summary of habitat and species recommendations

5.4 Cluster-wide Considerations

This section outlines some opportunities for site specific interventions, however it should be interpreted with a caveat that final proposals should be designed in collaboration with landscape architects with consultation with relevant communities.

5.4.1 General Considerations

Sections 5.1 to 5.3 considered opportunities species by species and receptor by receptor. The fourteen buildings that make up the North Belfast Heritage Cluster, however, do not exist as fourteen unconnected sites: they occupy a continuous stretch of inner North Belfast, running for roughly a mile from the Cathedral Quarter and Carlisle Circus, along Clifton Street and the Crumlin Road, to Girdwood at the cluster's northern extent. Considered individually, most cluster buildings can only offer modest, tightly constrained enhancement. Considered together, and delivered in combination rather than independently, the cluster has the potential to function as a single, connected "green spine" running through the heart of North Belfast, at a scale no individual member could achieve alone. This section sets out how that combined potential could be realised: as a green spine linking the cluster's own sites and its neighbours (5.4.1.1); through communal, entry-level actions any member can deliver immediately (5.4.1.2); through collaboration beyond the cluster's own membership (5.4.1.3); and through funding routes that could support delivery (5.4.1.4).

The delivery principles below, carried forward from the previous version of this section, continue to apply across the cluster as a whole and to the site-specific proposals at Section 5.4.2:

- **Consents and timing**: confirm listing status and secure any Listed Building Consent early, and programme works around the bird breeding season (1 March–31 August) and the bat activity period;
- **Stewardship**: agree who will maintain each feature from the outset — long-term management, not installation, determines whether biodiversity and community benefits persist. A single cluster-wide management note, rather than fourteen separate plans, would reduce duplication and help identify where funding bids should be directed; and
- **Phasing**: prioritise low-cost, quick-win measures (relaxed mowing, planters, boxes and bricks) to build momentum and visible success across the cluster, with larger, longer-lead features (ponds, species-rich grassland, the composite Open Mosaic Habitat system) following once stewardship arrangements are agreed.

5.4.1.1 A North Belfast Green Spine

The connectivity already identified in this appraisal, the value of green space at Peter's Hill, Clifton House, the cemetery and Girdwood functioning as a network of stepping stones rather than as isolated features, can be developed into a more deliberate concept: a **green spine** running the length of the cluster.

The cluster's own geography does much of the work already. Clifton Street Cemetery, Clifton House and Annesley Synagogue anchor the southern end around Carlisle Circus and Donegall Street; St Malachy's College and the Duncairn sit along the Antrim Road; and Girdwood

Community Hub, set within its 14-acre park, anchors the northern end at the Crumlin Road / Cliftonpark Avenue interface. A green spine linking these points, even where the connecting links are no more than street trees, verges and planters acting as a stepping stone corridor rather than continuous habitat, would let bats, birds and invertebrates move between the cluster's larger reservoirs (the cemetery, Girdwood) and its smaller stepping stones (individual curtilages, window boxes, planters), and would give the Cluster's community engagement work a single, mappable story to tell rather than fourteen separate ones.

Three adjoining assets would extend the green spine beyond the cluster's own boundary at little or no capital cost to the Cluster itself:

- **At the southern end**, Peter's Hill borders Lower Shankill Park, a £1.9 million public park delivered through the Department for Communities' Building Successful Communities programme and opened in 2023, running from Peter's Hill along Denmark Street to Regent Street. The park is now owned and maintained by Belfast City Council and includes its own community garden and raised beds — an immediate, ready-made partner for shared planting or recording days, without any need for new land or capital works by the Cluster.
- **At the northern end**, Waterworks Park and Alexandra Park — already identified at Table 4 as non-statutory sites within 1km of the site — are the subject of Reconnected Belfast, a live, £11.8 million PEACEPLUS-funded project led by Belfast City Council and the Department of Justice to deliver greenways, urban greenways and pocket parks between the two sites. Aligning the cluster's green spine with this existing, funded connectivity work, rather than treating it as a separate initiative, would be the most efficient route to extending the green spine north and east.
- **Across the "green spine"**, a number of properties offer garden space that offer potential for wildlife gardening initiatives and alleyways that could be included within the forthcoming Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayor's Challenge which aims to revitalise 200+km of alleyways across the city. In addition the Department of Infrastructure are currently looking at new sites in North Belfast that can host a new Sustainable Urban Drainage System (SuDS), potential partners to support these initiatives are outlined in Section 5.4.1.3.

At this stage the green spine is best treated as a strategic framework rather than a fixed route. The extent to which it can be delivered as continuous habitat, rather than a looser network of stepping stones, will depend on land ownership, access and further design work at street level, which falls outside the scope of this appraisal.

5.4.1.2 Communal, Entry-Level Opportunities

Not every member has the space, budget or listed-building freedom for larger interventions such as ponds or species-rich grassland. The opportunities below are deliberately low-cost and reversible, deliverable by every member regardless of site constraints, and work best delivered by the whole cluster at once rather than site by site:

- **Wildflower baskets and planters**: a shared, low-cost planting scheme — hanging baskets, window boxes, or wildflower cubes of the kind already piloted nearby (Figure 2; supplier contact at Appendix I) — installed at each member's frontage using a common palette (Appendix F.6) would give the cluster a single, recognisable identity when viewed as a whole, at a cost low enough to be met from each member's own small-grants budget.

- **A cluster nature trail**: pairing a simple, shared nature trail or set of interpretation points with the existing North Belfast Heritage Trail would let the Cluster tell its biodiversity story using interpretation infrastructure it has already built, rather than creating a new visitor offer from scratch.
- **Shared recording days**: a single, cluster-wide bioblitz or recording day — timed, for example, to coincide with the Cluster's existing participation in European Heritage Open Days — would generate CEDaR and iNaturalist records across all fourteen sites in one exercise, and gives each member a ready-made, low-effort community event.
- **Raising awareness through each member's own community base**: every cluster member already has a built-in audience — congregation, membership, pupils, library users, cemetery visitors — that a new outreach campaign would take years to replicate. A single, simple, shared message (for example, an explanation card beside a relaxed-mowing area or a bat box) delivered through each member's own noticeboards, newsletters, service sheets or assemblies would reach a cross-section of North Belfast that a conventional environmental campaign could not.

5.4.1.3 Collaboration Beyond the Cluster

The green spine concept above depends on relationships beyond the Cluster's own membership. Several are identified here as offering a particularly strong fit.

Belfast City Council:

Belfast City Council are landowners in the area and have a number of projects that are relevant to the aspirations set out in this document. It owns the Lower Shankhill Park which occurs immediately adjacent to Peter's Hill, this Belfast City Council-managed park includes its own community garden and raised beds and was itself delivered through cross-community regeneration funding. Its direct physical adjacency to green space already identified in this appraisal makes it the most straightforward of the three to draw into a shared management or recording arrangement. Belfast City Council has also been awarded funding under the Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayor's Challenge which seeks to encourage 200+km of new green alleys across the city which could complement to greening in the area and help thread the projects ambitions into the wider neighbourhood. In addition the Nature Towns and Cities project seeks to identify opportunities to bring nature into urban areas and make communities more climate resilient that could contribute further to proposals.

Department for Infrastructure: a scheme to identify new opportunities for Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) that could contribute to the aspirations of this initiative. SuDS would support the delivery of new flower rich habitat and standing water that would contribute to the delivery of core habitats outlined in section 5.2.2. An initiative is already underway in Lombard Street in partnership with Climate NI and Belfast Healthy Cities and could be consulted to investigate options in the vicinity of the cluster.

Girdwood: already identified at Section 5.4.2 as a partnership opportunity for the Duncairn, Girdwood's 14-acre park represents the largest single area of green space adjoining the cluster. Further development of the wider Girdwood site remains at masterplan stage. Early engagement, while this is still the case, offers a genuine opportunity to influence outcomes for biodiversity before the remaining green space is committed to other uses, rather than retrofitting habitat after the fact.

Translink: since 2024, Translink has installed Northern Ireland's first living-roof, wildflower bus shelters along the Shankill Road and Woodvale Road (the Metro 11 corridor), which runs close to the cluster's southern sites around Carlisle Circus and Peter's Hill. The shelters are planted with native wildflower and sedum species for pollinators, are supported by Translink's own Biodiversity Strategy, and are delivered in partnership with a local community garden. Several cluster buildings front directly onto bus routes serving North Belfast, and the existing Metro 11 scheme provides both a working template and a corporate biodiversity commitment that the Cluster could approach directly about extending living roofs, or shared interpretation, to stops serving the cluster itself — stitching the green spine together along the transport corridor between buildings, rather than relying solely on building curtilages.

Ulster Wildlife: an ongoing campaign called "Let Nature In" is targeting gardens across Northern Ireland to become more biodiverse. The charity also undertakes community workshops to support wildlife gardening that could complement the habitat provisions recommended (i.e. standing water, species rich native hedging and shrub, species rich native trees and species rich grassland). These habitats are all possible in an urban garden and would help create connectivity between the cluster and the wider community.

Wild Belfast: Wild Belfast in partnership with Queens University Belfast have an ongoing campaign to make Belfast National Park City. The aspirations outlined in this document directly connect with the aims and objectives with that campaign. The North Belfast workshop occurred in The Duncairn which means a consultation has already been conducted for this area and the campaign could be contacted for relevant outcomes.

5.4.1.4 Funding Opportunities

The routes below are the most directly relevant to delivering the green spine, communal actions and collaborations set out above. Funder priorities, deadlines and eligibility change frequently and should be checked against current guidance before any application is prepared.

Funder / programme	Relevance to the Cluster	Notes
National Lottery Heritage Fund — National Lottery Heritage Grants	The Cluster's existing funder, via Belfast Charitable Society. "Protecting the environment" is one of four investment principles under the Fund's current ten-year Heritage 2033 strategy.	Two tiers: £3,000–£10,000 (simplified form, suited to the communal, entry-level actions at 5.4.1.2) and £10,000–£250,000 (suited to a modest green-spine delivery and management programme). Partnership-funding requirements at the higher tier can be met partly through in-kind contributions and volunteer time.
PEACEPLUS (Special EU Programmes Body)	Directly precedented locally: Girdwood's original development was EU Peace III-funded, and the adjoining Waterworks / Alexandra Park greenway (Reconnected Belfast) is currently PEACEPLUS-funded. The Cluster's naturally cross-community membership is a strong fit for PEACEPLUS's shared-space objectives.	Competitive, and typically delivered through a lead partner such as a council; the Cluster would likely need to partner with Belfast City Council or another eligible lead applicant rather than apply directly.
Belfast City Council	Landowner and maintenance body for Lower Shankill Park, Waterworks Park and Alexandra Park, and lead or	Best approached as a delivery and estates partner in the first instance, alongside any grant relationship — the Council's continued ownership of

	delivery partner for Reconnected Belfast and the Girdwood masterplan.	Lower Shankill Park and the Girdwood site makes it the key gatekeeper for both.
	Offers potential future funding through the Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayor's Challenge to green alleyways across the city.	Goes beyond the cluster but would help spread the work of the cluster into the wider neighbourhood.

Table 10 Funding sources with relevance to outlined interventions

5.4.2 Site Specific Considerations

Annesley Synagogue

The former synagogue (1904) is a Grade B1 listed building, the oldest surviving synagogue in Northern Ireland, and retains the archaeological remains of a mikvah, or ritual bath. Its listed status means that any measures affecting the historic fabric will require Listed Building Consent and consultation with the Historic Environment Division, so external or fully reversible interventions should be prioritised. The building's proposed refurbishment and conversion presents a valuable opportunity to integrate biodiversity measures during works, including nest provision for swifts, house sparrows and starlings on suitable elevations, and climbers or planting against boundary walls. The mikvah also offers a distinctive cultural and ecological link: a small water feature or planter pond referencing this heritage (see Appendix G) could combine interpretation of the site's Jewish heritage with habitat for aquatic invertebrates and a foraging resource for the wider area.

Clifton House

This area offers a template that could be used as a case study for member organisations. The site is currently dominated by amenity grassland and introduced shrub that offers "negligible" ecological value. The site also has an adjacent residential community that design should consider.

Horticultural beds

This habitat could be rejuvenated with new planting that has ecological and ornamental value and move from a flower bed dominated habitat type to one with greater ecological value, for instance with flowering trees and shrubs, wildflower margins or ornamental planting with greater ecological value.

Amenity Grassland

Amenity grassland habitat offers a blank template with which an array of actions can be taken to improve ecological value. Example options include;

- the creation of a pond with communal seating for use by staff at Clifton House and the adjacent community;
- allowing the grassland to grow out to allow species valuable for notable invertebrates and birds to flower and seed;

- creation of new species-rich grassland with mown pathways and seating areas within to facilitate use and enjoyment of the site; and
- planting new woody vegetation across the site to allow for enhanced ecological value.

Clifton Street Cemetery

One of the more biodiverse sites within the cluster, the cemetery's mature trees, established vegetation, deadwood and relatively undisturbed ground already provide valuable foraging and shelter habitat, including the good quality foraging habitat for swifts and bats referenced elsewhere in this section. The emphasis here should therefore be on protecting and lightly enhancing the existing resource rather than wholesale creation. Opportunities include the retention of mature and veteran trees and of standing and fallen deadwood; relaxation of the mowing regime in selected areas to allow grassland and its associated invertebrates to flower and seed, while maintaining mown access routes and respecting graves and visitor movement; native, berry- and nectar-rich boundary planting; and the installation of bird and bat boxes within mature trees. The cemetery is well placed to function as a biodiversity reservoir to which interventions at neighbouring cluster sites can connect but will require careful consultation. A baseline bat and breeding-bird recording exercise would help target management, and removal of any invasive non-native species (for example self-seeded cherry laurel or sycamore) together with the creation of log-pile hibernacula would add further value. The site should also establish whether *Physcia caesia* occurs on site. If so the range of the species should be protected and where possible encouraged. The site also lends itself to a combined heritage-and-nature trail and education offer.

Jesuit Centre

Another constrained site that shares an alley that suffers from drug use. Depending on the objective of the site owners landscaping could attempt to animate the space or could be designed to provide a barrier to unwelcome use of the site. Animation of the site could lead to creation of a more pleasant environment with standing water and flower rich environments, whereas using landscaping to create a barrier could be to use thorny hedging to prevent access to parts of the site that suffers from antisocial behaviour, both of which would offer ecological value.

Redeemer Central

This site offers interesting opportunities to animate an enclosed alley and small courtyard that could be of interest to users, in particular given proposals for a new café. The site experiences partial shade which would need to be considered in any landscaping proposals. Shade-tolerant native planting (for example hart's-tongue and other ferns and woodland-edge species) and climbers or a green-wall treatment to the alley walls would suit the partial shade, and the proposed café is a ready opportunity to animate the courtyard with visible pollinator planting and outdoor planters.

Oldpark Library, Working Mans Club, Belfast Orange Hall and Indian Community Centre

These sites are the most constrained sites within the cluster with limitation on what can be done to the building habitat as well as limitations on the amount of space available to undertaken initiatives in the environs of the sites. Options still exist however, for instance the creation of small landscaped seating areas to improve ecological interest and accessibility of the area for members of the public with mobility issues. In addition there are a number of innovative solutions to improving ecological interest of small sites for instance pondlets, wildflower cubes and planter beds. Even on these constrained sites, vertical measures such as swift and house-sparrow bricks, window boxes, and climbers or green walls, need very little ground space and allow the buildings to act as stepping stones that maintain connectivity across the cluster.

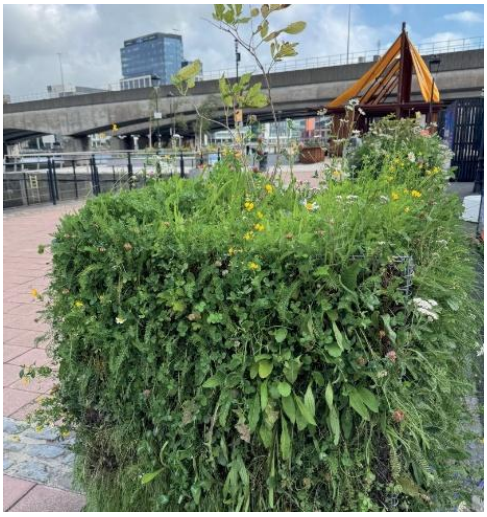


Figure 2 Wildflower Cubes at Native Coffee Designed by Sweeney Design

Quaker Meeting House

The Quaker ethos of simplicity, stewardship and care for the natural world makes this an especially appropriate site for a small, contemplative wildlife space, and the Religious Society of Friends is a natural partner for community-facing nature stewardship. Although a constrained urban site, opportunities exist to create a quiet reflective garden using pollinator-rich native and ornamental planting, climbers or green-wall treatment to boundary walls, and small-scale features such as planter ponds (see Appendix G) and wildflower planters. Where the building fabric allows, integrated or external nest provision for swifts and house sparrows could also be considered in unlisted parts of the building. A simple rainwater-fed planter pond or small SuDS feature would add habitat while helping to manage roof runoff, and the reflective garden could double as a shared quiet space for the wider community.

St Anne's Cathedral

A constrained site due to historic vandalism and listing, however space exists within circular staircases to the southwest of the site to create small parklets consisting of trees, shrubs, wildflowers and planter ponds (see Appendix G) with a southern aspect that could be of value to a range of invertebrates as well as provide accessible green space to animate the area for small congregations of people.

St Malachy's College

Access wasn't possible on the day of the field visit however it appears that there are some constraints to space given the extent of sporting facilities within the site. Not all of the building is listed which offers extensive opportunities for the inclusion of nesting bricks for swifts, house sparrows, starlings and even bats complementing the site's close proximity to the Clifton Street

Cemetery which offers good quality foraging habitat for these species groups. In addition the entrance to the school is treelined and this could be enhanced further by inclusion of appropriate species. Consultation with the school would help discern if there is room within the campus to allow for the creation of more nature rich areas. As a school, the site also offers a strong educational engagement opportunity, with pupil-led species recording and curriculum links.

St Patrick's Church

The site consists of intensely managed green space that could be managed less intensely to allow an array of plants important to notable invertebrates outlined in section 5.3.3. To take this concept further this grassland could be targeted for species rich grassland restoration. In addition an unlisted wall adjoins the listed part of the building that could incorporate integrated bricks for nesting swifts, starlings and house sparrow. This could form part of an artistic "living mural" that contributes public art to the realm.

The Duncairn

The Duncairn Centre for Culture and Arts is already a case study in enhancing biodiversity within constrained green spaces with evident sensitive horticultural, tree and shrub planting. The amenity grassland offers suitability for species rich grassland creation which could be framed and managed for aesthetic purposes or a new pond could be created that could be landscaped for informal community use. Solitary mining bees are typically a high conservation value species group and were observed on site, these could be catered for by creating bee banks with a southerly aspect. Suitability also occurs for a "living mural" on the site of the existing mural that could be designed to provide habitat for cavity nesting solitary bees. Subject to confirmation of the building's listing status, nest and roost provision for swifts, house sparrows, starlings and bats could be incorporated on suitable elevations. Its position on the Antrim Road also makes it a useful node for improving habitat connectivity across the northern part of the cluster. Complementing work here would be a partnership approach with the Girdwood Community Hub which has substantial green space in the vicinity of the site that already has biodiversity value. The venue's arts programming could itself be used to animate nature engagement through exhibitions, events and community planting days, and the Girdwood partnership could extend to a shared recording and management approach across the adjoining green space.

6.0 Conclusion

This appraisal set out to establish an ecological baseline for the fourteen buildings of the North Belfast Heritage Cluster and to identify opportunities to enhance biodiversity across them. The desktop study and field survey found a site of low intrinsic ecological value dominated by buildings, amenity grassland and introduced shrub. The cluster was considered too distant from, and too separated by intervening urban fabric from, the European and nationally designated sites in the wider area to support their qualifying interests. Despite this, a realistic and specific set of priority and notable species emerged from the assessment that identified interventions that could include Swift, House Sparrow, Starling, light-tolerant bats, West European Hedgehog, notable invertebrates and the lichen *Physcia caesia*, set within a wider network of options that could help to create meaningful new green space to make the area more porous for a range of species and make communities in the area more climate resililent.

From this baseline a menu of species and habitat-level measures deliverable at the level of an individual building are recommended: adoption of swifts and pollinators as flagship species; integrated nesting and roosting provision; a composite Open Mosaic Habitat system and standing water incorporated as parklets; species-rich and pollinator planting; and bat-sensitive lighting. These measures are tested against the realities of each of the fourteen sites in turn, from the archaeological and listed-building constraints at Annesley Synagogue and St Anne's Cathedral to the more open opportunities at Clifton House and Clifton Street Cemetery.

The appraisal's central recommendation, however, is that these measures are worth more delivered together than delivered site by site. A green spine running the length of the cluster's one-mile corridor, from Carlisle Circus and Peter's Hill to Girdwood, could be reinforced at either end by the new Lower Shankill Park and the PEACEPLUS-funded Waterworks / Alexandra Park greenway. Furthermore a set of low-cost, communal actions such as shared planting, engagement and awareness raising through each member's own existing community base would help bypasses site constraints and collaboration with partners and communities in the area that would extend the cluster's reach and funding options, well beyond what any one member could achieve alone.

None of this removes the need for site-specific care. Many of the cluster's buildings are listed, and works affecting historic fabric will require Listed Building Consent and consultation with the Historic Environment Division; proposals throughout this report have therefore focused on unlisted elements wherever possible. Final designs should be developed with landscape architects and in consultation with the relevant communities, sequenced so that low-cost, quick-win measures build momentum ahead of larger, longer-lead features, and supported by consistent monitoring and recording (CEDaR, iNaturalist) so that the evidence base, and the case for further funding, grows alongside the delivery of the work itself. Delivered in this way, the North Belfast Heritage Cluster has the opportunity to demonstrate what heritage-led regeneration and biodiversity recovery can achieve together, in one of Belfast's most historically significant and densely built-up corridors.

Appendix A – Red Line Boundary



Site Name

North Belfast Great Place Project

Legend

1km Buffer
Great North Belfast Sites

Location



Title

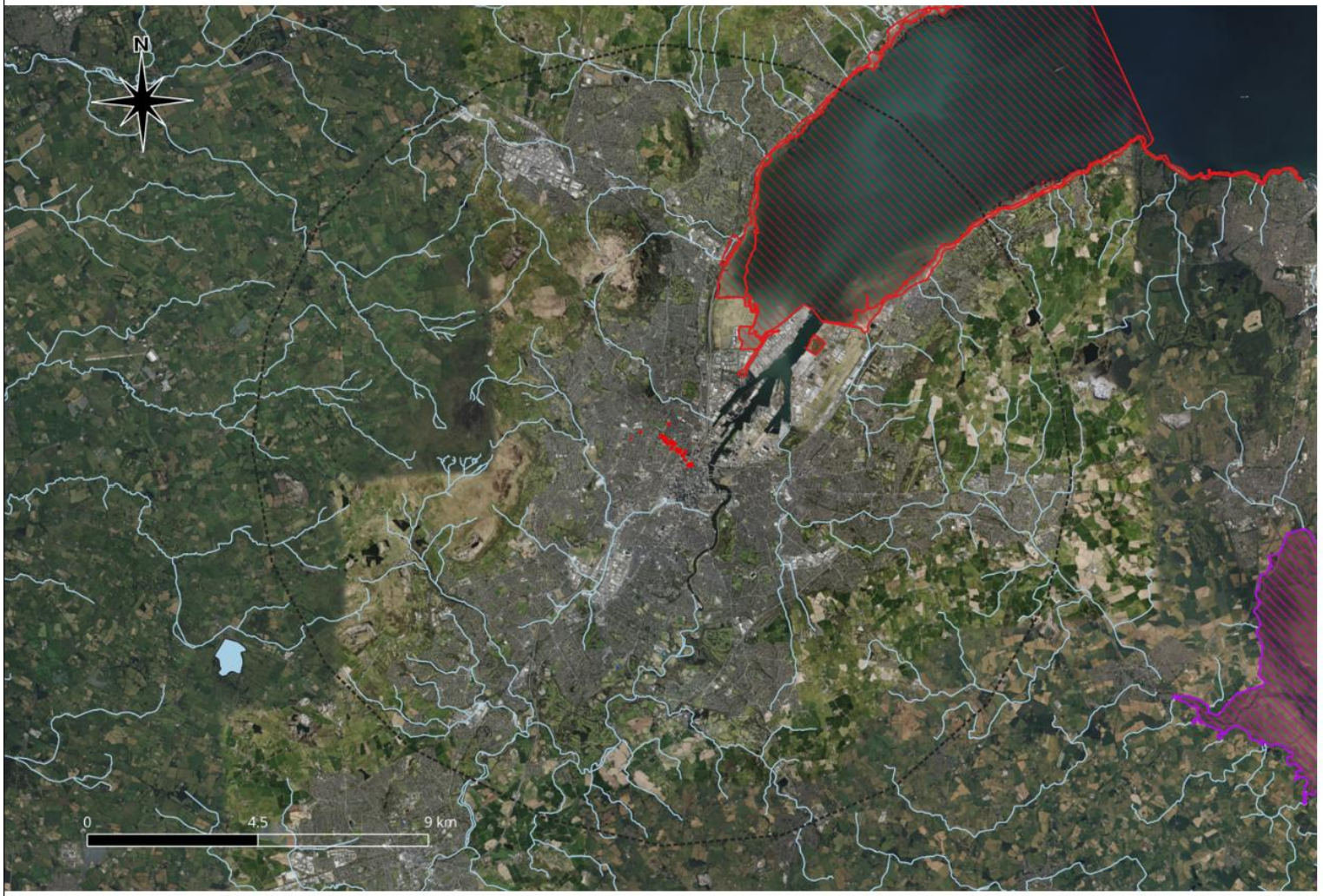
Cluster RLB of Great Places Cluster, North Belfast.

Starling Ecology

Drawn by	Date drawn	Scale
CMcK	29/06/2026	1:20514

Report Number	Page Number
GNB/01/26	Appendix A

Appendix B – Site in context of European protected sites



Base Map @GoogleMaps

Site Name

North Belfast Great Place Project

Legend

- RLB
- 10km Buffer
- SAC
- SPA
- Rivers
- Lakes

Location



Title

Site in context of European Protected Sites

Starling Ecology

Drawn by	Date drawn	Scale
RN	27/05/2026	1:182
Report Number		Page Number
		N/A

Appendix C – Site in context of nationally protected sites



Base Map @GoogleMaps

Site Name

North Belfast Great Place Project

Legend

RLB
5km Buffer
ASSI

Location



Title

Site in context of National Statutory Protected Sites

Starling Ecology

Drawn by	Date drawn	Scale
RN	27/05/2026	1:908
Report Number		Page Number
		N/A

Appendix D – Site in context of non-statutory protected sites



Site Name

North Belfast Great Place Project

Legend

- 1km Buffer
- Great North Belfast Sites
- SLNCI NI
- Open Mosaic Habitat
- Priority Woodland
- Green Space
- Belfast Trees

Location



Title

Ecological context of Great Places Cluster, North Belfast.

Starling Ecology

Drawn by	Date drawn	Scale
CMcK	29/06/2026	1:20514
Report Number		Page Number
GNB/01/26		Appendix D

Appendix E – Composite system that can be retrofitted to mimic Open Mosaic Habitat.



Appendix F – Recommended Species Lists for Recommended Habitat Types.

This appendix provides indicative planting recommendations for the habitat types proposed at Section 5, to encourage habitat heterogeneity across the site and benefit notable species. The lists are not exhaustive and should be refined in discussion with project partners to reflect ground conditions, soil fertility and pH, the established character of adjacent habitat, and the receptors identified in Section 4.

All species in the native lists (Sections F.1–F.5) are native to Ireland. Native status follows Irish floras (e.g. Parnell & Curtis, Webb's An Irish Flora; BSBI) rather than Stace (2019), which is used in the main report for nomenclature only and reflects the flora of Great Britain — a separate island with a different native assemblage. Several species commonly specified from GB planting lists are not native to Ireland and are listed at Section F.7(a).

In accordance with BS 42020:2013 and NIEA requirements, all native stock must be of local (Irish) provenance from a reputable native nursery; continental European stock should not be used.

F.1 Native Trees

Small and medium native trees suited to an urban setting are prioritised. Large-canopy species (oak, alder) should be used only where space and proximity to buildings and services allow.

Common name	Scientific name	Value and notes
Alder	*Alnus glutinosa*	For damp ground or near standing water; seed for finches.
Aspen	*Populus tremula*	Supports specialist invertebrates; note suckering habit — site with care.
Bird Cherry	*Prunus padus*	Blossom and fruit; tolerant of damper ground.
Crab Apple	*Malus sylvestris*	Small tree; blossom; fruit; pollination partner for any orchard planting.
Downy Birch	*Betula pubescens*	Pioneer; light canopy; tolerant of damp, acid soils; supports many invertebrates.
Goat Willow	*Salix caprea*	Very early pollen, critical for emerging queen bumblebees; small tree.
Hazel	*Corylus avellana*	Multi-stem; early catkin pollen; nuts; coppices well.
Holly	*Ilex aquifolium*	Evergreen structure and shelter; winter berries; Holly Blue larval foodplant.
Rowan	*Sorbus aucuparia*	Small tree; blossom for pollinators, berries for thrushes; urban-tolerant.
Sessile / Pedunculate Oak	*Quercus petraea / Q. robur*	Keystone species for invertebrates; long-lived. Large — standards only where space permits.
Silver Birch	*Betula pendula*	Pioneer, rich nectar source
Strawberry Tree	*Arbutus unedo*	Irish (Lusitanian) native; evergreen; autumn flowers and fruit together — outstanding late-season nectar with strong ornamental value.
Wild Cherry	*Prunus avium*	Early spring blossom (nectar); fruit for birds.

F.2 Native Shrubs and Species-Rich Hedgerow

Recommended where a managed linear feature can be established — the most valuable shrub habitat for connectivity, nesting birds (including House Sparrow) and foraging bats. Can be used for providing security and boundary delineation or covering walls prone to graffiti.

Common name	Scientific name	Indicative proportion / notes
Hawthorn	*Crataegus monogyna*	40–50% — backbone; nesting and invertebrate value; berries for winter thrushes.
Blackthorn	*Prunus spinosa*	15–20% — dense thorny growth; early nectar; sloes.
Hazel	*Corylus avellana*	10–15% — mid-layer; early pollen; nuts.
Dog Rose	*Rosa canina*	5–10% — invertebrates and nesting; hips into winter.
Spindle	*Euonymus europaeus*	5% — invertebrate value; autumn colour and fruit.
Elder	*Sambucus nigra*	5% (do not exceed 10%) — flowers and berries; fast-establishing.
Guelder Rose	*Viburnum opulus*	5% — moisture-tolerant; berries persist late.
Holly	*Ilex aquifolium*	5% — evergreen structure; winter food.

F.3 Native Climbers / Vertical Greening

Vertical greening makes productive use of the extensive wall area in the cluster and reinforces the “buildings as habitat” theme. Climbers should be trained on free-standing supports, frames or non-historic walls — not on living or heritage masonry where root or stem growth could damage the fabric; coordinate with the conservation design team. Can be used to cover areas prone to graffiti.

Common name	Scientific name	Value and notes
Field Rose	*Rosa arvensis*	Scrambling native rose for wilder areas (optional); flowers for pollinators, hips for birds.
Honeysuckle	*Lonicera periclymenum*	Night-scented; nectar for moths and long-tongued bees; berries; nesting cover.
Ivy (use Irish / Atlantic ivy)	*Hedera hibernica* (also *H. helix*)	Late-autumn nectar (Sept–Nov, when little else flowers); winter berries; dense evergreen nesting and roosting cover; high invertebrate and bat value.

F.4 Species-Rich Grassland

Species-rich grassland establishes most successfully on low-fertility substrate, and where site soils are enriched the preferred approach is nutrient depletion before sowing. Urban soils are, however, frequently nutrient-rich; where depletion is impractical the palette should favour species that tolerate higher fertility, accepting a more robust, lower-diversity sward. The two

groups are distinguished below. Even within the tolerant group, rank grasses will dominate at very high fertility (Phosphorus Index 2+) unless controlled by cutting and removal of arisings.

F.4.1 Species requiring low fertility (target condition)

Component	Species (scientific name)	Notes
Fine-leaved grasses	Common Bent (*Agrostis capillaris*), Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus*), Sweet Vernal-grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum*), Red Fescue (*Festuca rubra*)	40–50% by weight; characteristic of unimproved, low-fertility swards.
Wildflowers	Yellow Rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*), Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*), Lady's Bedstraw (*Galium verum*), Devil's-bit Scabious (*Succisa pratensis*), Cowslip (*Primula veris*)	Decline under enrichment. Yellow Rattle is the key grass-suppressant but performs best at low–moderate fertility. Cowslip recorded within 2 km (Table 5), Schedule 8 — cultivated Irish-provenance stock only; do not translocate wild material.

F.4.2 Species tolerant of nutrient-rich conditions

Component	Species (scientific name)	Notes
Grasses	Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*)	Productive grass of moist, fertile meadows; omit on dry sites.
Wildflowers	Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*), Ox-eye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Meadow Vetchling (*Lathyrus pratensis*), Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), Selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*), Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Wild Carrot (*Daucus carota*), Common Sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*)	Robust generalists that persist on moderate to high fertility and suit enriched urban soils. Red Clover and Meadow Vetchling are nitrogen-fixing legumes; Selfheal also requires a short sward.
Damp, moderately fertile areas	Ragged Robin (*Silene flos-cuculi*)	For seasonally moist ground.

F.5 Standing Water and Wetland Margins

All aquatic and marginal stock must be native and from verified disease-free sources — never from other ponds or unknown origin. Non-native oxygenators and the invasive aquatics listed at Section F.7(b) must never be introduced.

Zone	Species (scientific name)	Notes
Emergent / marginal (0–0.3 m)	Yellow Flag Iris (*Iris pseudacorus*), Marsh Marigold (*Caltha palustris*), Water Mint (*Mentha aquatica*), Soft Rush (*Juncus effusus*), Bogbean (*Menyanthes*	Use Lesser Reedmace, not T. latifolia, in small ponds; use Common

	trifoliata), Lesser Reedmace (*Typha angustifolia*), Common Reed (*Phragmites australis*)	Reed sparingly — vigorous.
Submerged / oxygenating	Water-starwort (*Callitriche stagnalis*), Rigid Hornwort (*Ceratophyllum demersum*), Water-crowfoot (*Ranunculus aquatilis*), Spiked Water-milfoil (*Myriophyllum spicatum*)	Native oxygenators only.
Floating-leaved	White Water-lily (*Nymphaea alba*), Yellow Water-lily (*Nuphar lutea*)	Larger features only (>50 m²).
Damp margin (above water)	Ragged Robin (*Silene flos-cuculi*), Purple Loosestrife (*Lythrum salicaria*), Meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), Watercress (*Nasturtium officinale*), Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*)	Purple Loosestrife is native here (invasive only in North America).

F.6 Ornamental Planting (Non-Native, Non-Invasive)

For high-amenity areas — building entrances, courtyards, planters and seating areas — where a more designed aesthetic is wanted. Non-native species are acceptable here provided they are not invasive (see Section F.7(b) for exclusions). Design principles: choose single, open flowers (not double cultivars, which offer little or no nectar and pollen); provide a continuous succession from late winter to late autumn, including early bulbs and late-season nectar; plant in drifts; and avoid pesticide use.

Season / group	Suggested species (single-flowered forms)	Notes
Late winter – spring	Crocus, Snowdrop (*Galanthus nivalis*), Grape Hyacinth (*Muscari armeniacum*), single Hellebore (*Helleborus*), winter-flowering heather (*Erica carnea*)	Critical early nectar for emerging queen bumblebees.
Summer	Lavender (*Lavandula angustifolia*), Catmint (*Nepeta*), perennial wallflower (*Erysimum* 'Bowles's Mauve'), *Salvia nemorosa*, Hyssop (*Hyssopus officinalis*), Globe Thistle (*Echinops*), single Dahlia, Cosmos	Long, open flowering season; very high bee value.
Late summer – autumn	Stonecrop / Ice Plant (*Hylotelephium spectabile*), Michaelmas Daisy (*Symphyotrichum*), Helenium, Rudbeckia, Coneflower (*Echinacea purpurea*)	Extends nectar supply into autumn; choose clump-forming asters.
Herbs (sensory / edible)	Marjoram (*Origanum vulgare*), Thyme (*Thymus*), Rosemary (*Salvia rosmarinus*), Chives (*Allium schoenoprasum*), Borage (*Borago officinalis*)	Strong community / sensory value. Marjoram and Chives are also native to Ireland.

Note: Verbena bonariensis is excellent for butterflies and is not listed as invasive in Ireland, but it self-seeds freely and should be managed if used.

F.7 Species to Avoid

The following must not be planted or permitted to establish. They are regulated under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife (Northern Ireland) Order 1985 (as amended by the Wildlife and Natural Environment Act (NI) 2011) and/or listed under EU Regulation No. 1143/2014 (as assimilated). This list is indicative, not exhaustive.

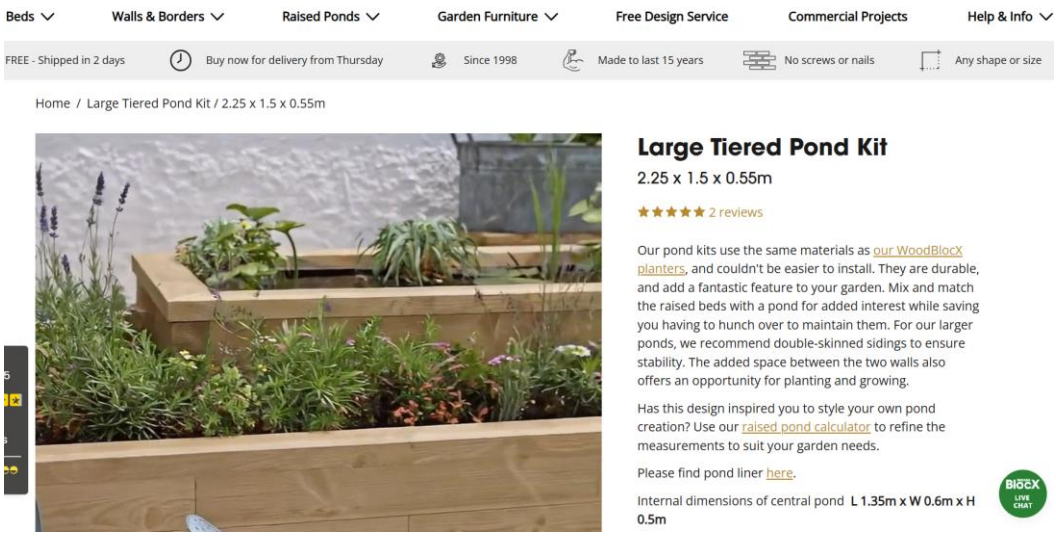
Common name	Scientific name	Type
Butterfly-bush	*Buddleja davidii*	Shrub

Cotoneaster spp. (e.g. Wall, Himalayan)	*Cotoneaster*	Shrub
Rhododendron	*Rhododendron ponticum*	Shrub
Cherry Laurel	*Prunus laurocerasus*	Shrub
Spanish Bluebell (hybridises with native)	*Hyacinthoides hispanica*	Bulb
Montbretia	*Crocosmia × crocosmiiflora*	Perennial
Snowberry	*Symphoricarpos albus*	Shrub
Russian-vine	*Fallopia baldschuanica*	Climber
Winter Heliotrope	*Petasites pyrenaicus*	Perennial
Three-cornered Garlic	*Allium triquetrum*	Bulb
New Zealand Pigmyweed	*Crassula helmsii*	Aquatic
Water Primrose	*Ludwigia grandiflora*	Aquatic
Parrot's-feather	*Myriophyllum aquaticum*	Aquatic
Floating Pennywort	*Hydrocotyle ranunculoides*	Aquatic

Appendix G – Planter Ponds

A number of options exist for creating ponds in urban areas, typically consisting of the use of containers, troughs and parklet set ups that can be incorporated into even the greyest urban environment. Contractors can also be found to create bespoke designs to meet the needs of different sites.

An example[13] can be found below:



[13] https://www.woodblocx.co.uk/large-tiered-pond-kit?gad_source=1&gad_campaignid=23257166568&gbraid=0AAAAAD-fVdB9a-7bO14RhG6QH8FuMERyR&gclid=Cj0KCQjwr4jSBhCSARIsAOX1E-I0oRpnSw33QnSaVWsQj0e2ezmBPQLvBcTsLqkKzk74qmzD7mIb8x8aApDkEALw_wcB

Appendix H – Example Roosting and Nesting Features

ECOSURV SWIFT BOX

Ecosurv Ltd

FAMILIAR MATERIAL	Yes
EASY TO INSTALL	Yes
DURABLE	Yes
LOW OR NO MAINTENANCE	Yes
FROST RESISTANT	Yes
THERMAL MASS	Medium
FITS UK CONSTRUCTION SIZES	Yes
UNFAMILIAR MATERIAL: UNSURE HOW TO PROTECT	N/A
THERMAL BRIDGES	N/A
EXPOSED WOOD PARTICLES ON CUT OR DAMAGED EDGES MAY ABSORB MOISTURE	N/A
MUST BE MAINTAINED WITH 'SPECIAL' UNFAMILIAR PAINT	N/A
EMBODIED ENERGY	Medium
EMBODIED CARBON	Depends on fuel used
DEGREE OF FIT TO UK CONSTRUCTION SIZES	Approximate fit all 3 dimensions Some cut bricks either side
PRODUCT UPTAKE	Unknown

OTHER

- Products can be faced or coloured to suit the building. Finishes include brick, stone, masonry or render
- Can be used in multiple arrangements with mortared perpend between (but lintel required)
- Fair-faced, no need for rendering
- The product can be supplied in different sizes and formats to suit design needs and relevant building regulations

TYPE OF PRODUCT:
Swift box

WEBSITE:
www.ecosurv.co.uk

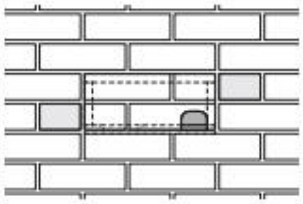
WHERE USED:
External elevations of buildings. Discreet nesting box for location near the eaves. Replaces two whole and two half bricks in single leaf of cavity wall construction

PRODUCT INFORMATION:
Facings can match any type of façade
Dimensions (external): 328 mm (w) x 140 mm (h) x 200 mm (d)

PRODUCT USE:
Nest contained within product
Swift nesting – ensure it is fitted with the entrance hole towards the bottom edge of the front panel

(see Drawings Nos 7, 8, 9 (below eaves), 10 and 11, pp. 70, 72, 74, 76 and 78, respectively)









ECOSURV SPARROW BOX

Ecosurv Ltd

FAMILIAR MATERIAL	Yes
EASY TO INSTALL	Yes
DURABLE	Yes
LOW OR NO MAINTENANCE	No way to access interior for cleaning
FROST RESISTANT	Yes
THERMAL MASS	Medium
FITS UK CONSTRUCTION SIZES	Yes
UNFAMILIAR MATERIAL UNSURE HOW TO PROTECT	N/A
THERMAL BRIDGES	Yes through cavity wall insulation; requires high-performance insulation on back and/or wider cavity; if it bridges cavity it will need cavity tray damp proof course
EXPOSED WOOD PARTICLES ON CUT OR DAMAGED EDGES MAY ABSORB MOISTURE	N/A
MUST BE MAINTAINED WITH 'SPECIAL' UNFAMILIAR PAINT	N/A
EMBODIED ENERGY	Medium
EMBODIED CARBON	Medium
DEGREE OF FIT TO UK CONSTRUCTION SIZES	Fits in 2 dimensions, with cut bricks at sides
PRODUCT UPTAKE	Unknown

OTHER

- This product can be supplied faced to suit the building. Finishes include brick, stone, masonry and render
- The product can be supplied in different sizes and formats to suit design needs
- Will need a cavity tray DPC over box

TYPE OF PRODUCT:
House sparrow box

WEBSITE:
www.ecosurv.co.uk

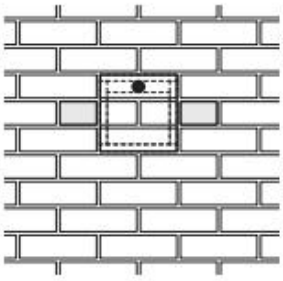
WHERE USED:
For incorporation into outer wall as appropriate

PRODUCT INFORMATION:
Outer facing can be changed to match any façade
Dimensions: 215 mm (w) x 210 mm (h) x 135 mm (d)

PRODUCT USE:
Can be used by sparrows

(see Drawings Nos 5 (inside face of wall) and 9 (in outer leaf), pp. 66 and 74, respectively)







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Appendix I – Relevant Contact Information

Organisation	Affiliation / Project	Name	Email
Starling Ecology / Wild Belfast	Ecologist	Conor McKinney	conor@starlingecology.co.uk
	Landscape Architect	Perla Mansour	contact@wildbelfast.org
		Siobhan Keogh	
Belfast City Council	Nature Towns and Cities	N/A	NTC@Belfastcity.gov.uk
	Bloomberg Philanthropies Mayors Green Alleyways Project	N/A	alleywaytransformation@belfastcity.gov.uk
Belfast Healthy Cities / Dfl	Lombard Street SuDS	Jacqueline O'Hagan	Jacqueline@belfasthealthycities.com
Living Roofs Ireland	Natira System Supplier	Ray Hanvey	info@natira.ie
Sweeney Landscape Design	Wildflower Cube Supplier	Noel Sweeney	noel@sweeneylandscapedesign.com
Translink	Green bus shelters	N/A	metroprojects@translink.co.uk
Ulster Wildlife	Let Nature In / Wildliife Gardening	Maureen Carvhill	maureen.carvill@ulsterwildlife.org
Wildcare	Nesting Box and Bricks Supplier	n/a	sales@wildcare.co.uk