



Ecological Impact Assessment

Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) is “the process of identifying, quantifying and evaluating the potential impacts of defined actions on ecosystems or their components”.

EclA in the UK forms part of the Environmental Impact Assessment process devised to meet the requirements of the EIA Directive 85/337/EEC as amended by directive 97/11/EC. The statutory instruments that applied the directive to UK law are known as the EIA Regulations.

Production of Environmental Statements by MKA staff has been undertaken to specific guidelines. These include IEEM's 2006 *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK*.

Case study: Ely Business Park

MKA Ecology was commissioned to produce an EclA for a site on the outskirts of Ely, Cambridgeshire. MKA Ecology undertook a Phase 1 and Protected Species Scoping survey to make a basic assessment of the habitats at the site and their potential to support protected species.

A desk study was also carried out to support this survey with detail of historical protected species records and information about protected areas local to the site.

These surveys were designed to support an EclA.

The EclA was based upon the assessment method developed by IEEM which involved 4 key stages:

- 1) Base line studies
- 2) Identification of valued ecological receptors
- 3) Identification and characterisation of potential impacts
- 4) Assessment of impact significance

The survey identified a number of habitats which were all consistent with the local land use at the site; intensive arable farming. Habitats present on site did not support any populations of key conservation species such as bats, reptiles and amphibians.



The proposed site for the Ely Business Park

The assessment did outline a number of valued ecological receptors and these included breeding and wintering bird populations and Brown Hare. These features were not thought to be highly significant and were deemed to be of value at the Parish level or below.

The potential impacts of the construction period and the operation period were assessed together with the potential cumulative effects cause by this and neighbouring developments.

No significant impacts were predicted but best practice measures were recommended to enhance the biodiversity at the site during the operational phase including the provision of wetland areas, native planting and Barn Owl boxes.

The EclA was submitted and planning permission was subsequently granted.