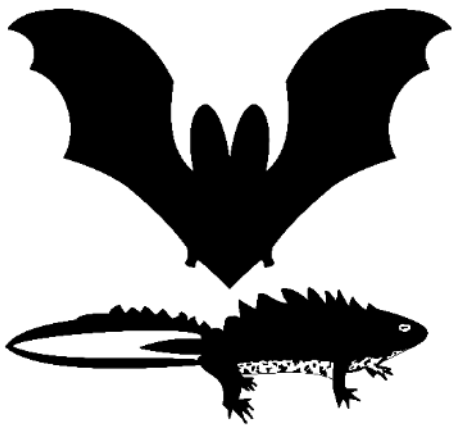




AEWC Ltd

Animal Ecology & Wildlife Consultants

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Land at Lake View Road

**Lake View Road
Furnace Wood
Felbridge
RH19 2QD**

Natalie Arscott & Lexie Hobbs

**25-139
April 2026**

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Summary

- AEWCLtd were commissioned by Batcheller Monkhouse on behalf of their client to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal at Land at Lake View Road, Furnace Wood, Felbridge, RH19 2QD at central grid reference TQ 34828 39299 to help inform the proposed development of the site.
- This report details the results of the survey, which was carried out on the 9th of April 2026 by qualified ecologists Natalie Arscott and Lexie Hobbs, to record and map the habitats present, assess the site for the potential presence of any protected species or species of conservation concern, and identify habitats of conservation importance.
- Additional information regarding the present and historical ecological interest of the site and within a 2km radius was provided by Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre. This helps to inform the likelihood of protected species occurring within the site boundary.
- The site is approximately 0.3ha in size and is a plot of predominantly modified grassland that had previously been used as parking for a fishing lake. Small areas of gravel hardstanding, ruderal vegetation, and tall forbs are present, as well as a low number of individual trees and an overgrown boundary non-native hedgerow.
- All the habitats on site are common and widespread with fairly low ecological value. The site borders ancient woodland to the west, which is a highly valuable habitat.
- **Further survey or district licencing is required for great crested newts. Further survey should include eDNA testing of the fishing pond to the south of the site.**
- **A reptile method statement will be required for the site, detailing the precautionary approach to site clearance that must be adopted and followed.**
- **A 30m buffer zone, within which there will be no construction or ground works, must be maintained around the potential badger sett that has been identified. If this is not possible, further survey for badgers will be required.**
- **Full recommendations to avoid ecological impacts are detailed in Section 6 of this report. These include, but are not limited to, buffering and protecting the adjacent ancient woodland, protective measures for the adjacent Local Wildlife Site, a pre-commencement site check for badgers, and minimising and controlling lighting.**

This report has been prepared by AEWCLtd, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client. We disclaim any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above. This report is confidential to the client, and we accept no responsibility whatsoever to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.

The information and data which has been prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the 'Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal' and 'Code of Professional Conduct' issued by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 AEWCLtd were commissioned by Batcheller Monkhouse on behalf of their client to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal at Land at Lake View Road, Furnace Wood to help inform the proposed development of the site.
- 1.2 There are no known previous ecological surveys that have been carried out at the site.
- 1.3 This survey comprised a desktop study of biological records within the vicinity of the site, an ecological walkover survey to record and map the habitats present, and an assessment for protected wildlife and species of conservation importance, including habitats, and was carried out by qualified ecologists Natalie Arscott and Lexie Hobbs on the 9th of April 2026.
- 1.4 This report presents the results of the following:
 - Desktop Biodiversity Report
 - UKHab Habitat Survey
 - Protected Species Walkover Survey
- 1.5 In addition, the report outlines any recommendations and further surveys that may be necessary. This will ensure that any protected species are not detrimentally impacted by the proposed development works on site, that there is no loss of ecological viability, and that the favourable conservation statuses of the species in the local area are not affected.

2 Background

- 2.1 The proposed development site is located at Land at Lake View Road, Furnace Wood, Felbridge, RH19 2QD at central grid reference TQ 34828 39299. The site is situated in a semi-rural part of West Sussex within the Furnace Wood private estate, approximately 550m south of the A264. The surrounding landscape comprises large residential properties and their associated amenity gardens to the east with a large woodland block and fishing pond immediately to the west. The wider landscape predominantly comprises a mosaic of tree and hedge-lined agricultural fields and woodland with residential properties interspersed throughout. See Figure 1.
- 2.2 The site is approximately 0.3ha and largely comprises a plot of grassland that has previously been used as parking for the adjacent fishing pond. See Figure 2.
- 2.3 The proposed development plan involves the construction of a single residential dwelling. This will involve the removal of small areas of modified grassland. The majority of the habitat area on site is unlikely to be negatively affected by these proposals. See Figure 3 for a draft layout plan.

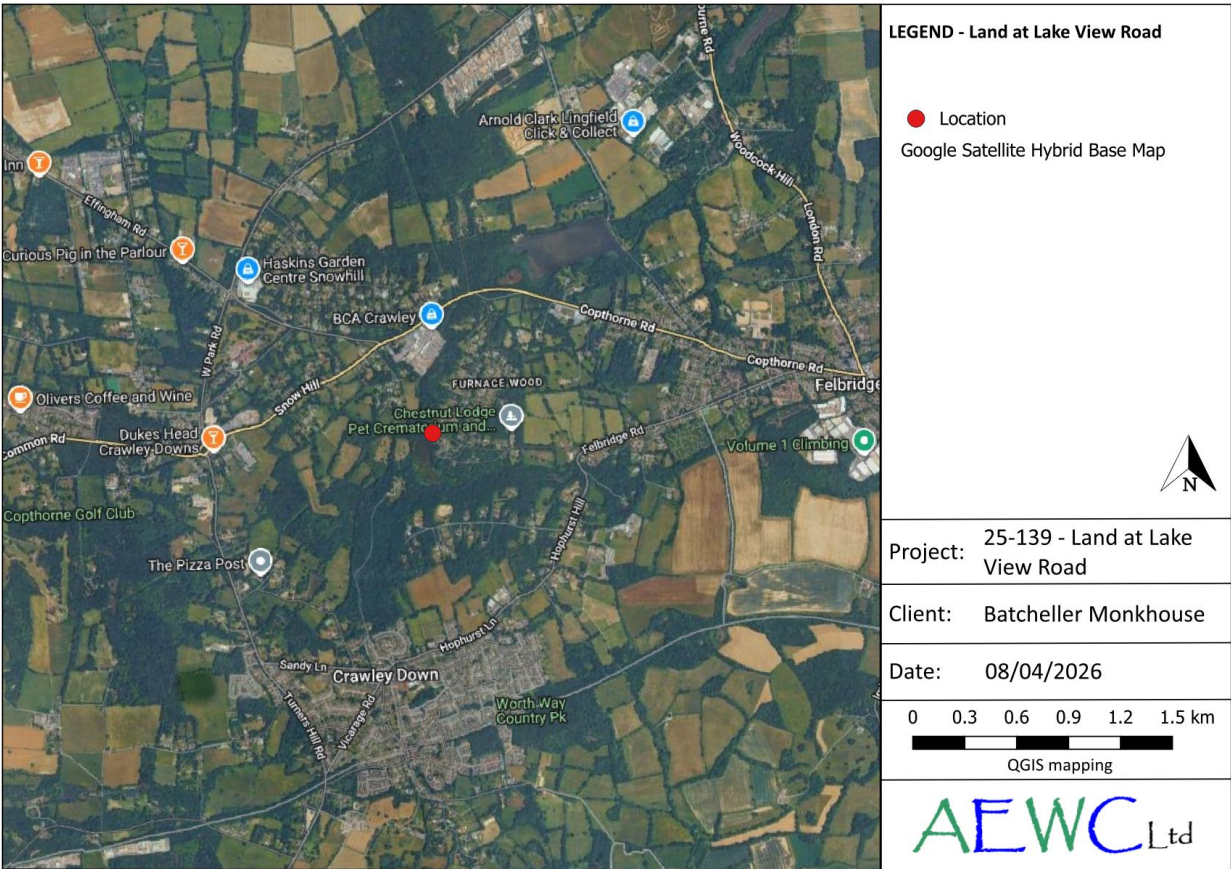


FIGURE 1: SHOWING THE SITE LOCATION



FIGURE 2: AERIAL VIEW OF THE SITE SHOWING THE SITE BOUNDARY



FIGURE 3: DRAFT PROPOSED PLANS

3 Methods

Desk Study

- 3.1 The Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website provided by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) was consulted to obtain information about any international or European level designated nature conservation sites within 2km of the site boundary, afforded protection either directly by the Conservation of Habitat and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (2019) or to the same level of protection through planning policy (the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Development Framework). Information regarding statutory designated sites, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within a 2km radius of the site, were also obtained from MAGIC.

- 3.2 Aerial photos of the site (Google Earth, 2025) were examined to determine habitats surrounding the site and hence species likely to be present to make appropriate recommendations in the wider landscape context.
- 3.3 Records of protected and notable species and non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site were requested from the local biological records centre (Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre). Approximately 1/3 of the 2km search area (to the north) falls under Surrey Biodiversity Information Centre. Records were not obtained from this records centre due to the small size of the site, small scale of the proposed works, and poor habitat connectivity to this area to the north due to a network of main roads. It was therefore considered highly unlikely that the results from these records would alter the conclusions and recommendations from this survey.
- 3.4 Records were screened for relevance and age with only those from the last 10 years and of species that could occur on site considered further.
- 3.5 A search for waterbodies within 500m of the site boundary was undertaken using MAGIC mapping to assess their connectivity to the site.

UKHab Habitat Survey

- 3.6 A daytime ecological walkover assessment was carried out on the 8th of April 2026 to record and map the habitats present.
- 3.7 The survey involved a UK Habitat Classification System Survey which was carried out based on the standard methodology produced by UKHab Ltd (2023) and included searches for signs of protected species, as described in the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Assessment (CIEEM, 2017). This involves the following elements:
 - Habitat mapping using a set of standard colour codes to indicate habitat types on a UK Habitat Classification Map.
 - Description of features of ecological or nature conservation interest in notes relating to numbered locations on the UK Habitat Classification Map, called Target Notes (for habitat and features of possible interest).
- 3.8 Plant nomenclature in this report follows Stace (2019) for native and naturalised species of vascular plant. Nomenclature for mosses and liverworts follow the Checklist for British and Irish Bryophytes (2021). Plant names in the text are given with the English name first, followed by the Latin name. Latin names for all species are given just once and not repeated.

Protected Species Walkover

- 3.9 An assessment was made of habitat suitability in and around the site for those protected species that occur in the region. Obvious signs and incidental sightings of

protected species are noted when encountered, but walkover surveys do not usually confirm species presence or absence.

3.10 Taking into consideration the geographical region and habitat type, species that could be encountered are:

- badgers;
- bats;
- breeding birds;
- great crested newts (GCN);
- hazel dormice;
- reptiles;
- otters;
- water voles; and
- other Species of Principal Importance (SPI) (e.g. hedgehog, stag beetle etc).

3.11 In addition, observations of any Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI), other mammals, invasive species, plant species of note, or other valuable ecological features will be recorded and detailed.

3.12 Details of the initial survey methods are given below.

3.13 **Habitats of Principal Importance** – Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) within or adjacent to the site (such as deciduous woodland, arable field margins, traditional orchards, ponds, rivers, wet woodlands, native hedgerows) are recorded.

3.14 **Badgers** – An initial assessment was carried out to identify areas that might be used by badgers (*Meles meles*). Signs of badgers including setts, incidental foraging signs, runs, hairs and latrines are recorded if encountered during the survey. Where possible the area within 30m of the site is also searched for badger setts.

3.15 **Bats** – The site and surrounding area were assessed for habitats with suitability for foraging and commuting bats, such as woodland, tree lines, hedgerows, scrub, waterbodies, watercourses, and semi-natural grassland.

3.16 **Breeding Birds** – Habitats were assessed for their suitability for nesting birds. This would centre on birds that favour hedgerows, areas of longer grassland, scrub, trees as well as buildings.

3.17 **Great Crested Newts (GCN)** - Initial surveys centre on identifying suitable habitat within the site. If breeding ponds are present within the locality, then great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) could potentially be using the terrestrial habitat on the site. Maps are used to identify any ponds (that are not isolated by unsuitable habitat or physical barriers) within 500m of the site. A Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) is used to quantifiably assess whether a pond is suitable, this is undertaken for any onsite ponds during the walkover survey.

- 3.18 **Hazel Dormice** – Hedgerows, scrub, and woodland are assessed for their suitability for foraging and nesting hazel dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*). Favoured berry and nut bearing species such as hawthorn, hazel and bramble were looked for in particular. Additionally, the connectivity of this habitat and to suitable habitat beyond the site is also assessed. If hazel nuts are present a brief search for nuts that have been chewed by hazel dormouse (i.e. displaying the characteristic smooth round hole) was conducted.
- 3.19 **Reptiles** – The site was assessed for suitable habitat for reptiles, such as long grassland and areas of scrub, with particular attention paid to those features that provide suitable basking areas (e.g. south-facing slopes and walls), hibernation sites (e.g. banks, log piles and piles of rotting vegetation) and opportunities for foraging (e.g. rough grassland and scrub).
- 3.20 **Other Species of Principal Importance (SPI)** – The habitats present on site were assessed for the likelihood of presence for species of regional and national importance, for example hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*), harvest mouse (*Micromys minutus*), common toad (*Bufo bufo*), and various notable beetles, moths and pollinators.
- 3.21 **Other Mammals** – Any signs of occupancy by other mammals (e.g. rabbit warrens) are recorded.
- 3.22 **Invasive Species** – Any invasive plant or animal species identified during the site walkover are recorded.
- 3.23 **Plant Species of Note** – Any plant species of conservation concern found on the site are recorded.
- 3.24 **Other Valuable Ecological Features** – Other ecological features such as veteran trees, bird feeding stations, habitat enhancements etc. within or adjacent to the site are recorded.

4 Constraints/Limitations

- 4.1 An initial site assessment such as this is only able to act as a snapshot to record any flora or fauna that is present at the time of the survey. It is therefore possible that some species may not have been present during the survey but may be evident at other times of the year. For this reason, habitats are assessed for their potential to support some species, even where no direct evidence (such as droppings) has been found.
- 4.2 Some protected species records are confidential and therefore not included within the data search results provided by the records centre. Absence of records does not automatically correspond to absence of species within the impact zone of the

development. It should also be noted that a small portion of the 2km data search area falls under Surrey, and records have not been requested from this records centre.

- 4.3 The survey was carried out early in the growing season and therefore some plant species may not have been visible above ground or readily identifiable.

5 Results and Evaluation

Desk Study

Sites and Habitats

Statutory Designated Sites

- 5.1 There are two statutory designated sites located within 2km of the proposed development site. The closest is Hedgecourt Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), which is located approximately 800m to the north.

Non-Statutory Designated Sites

- 5.2 There are two non-statutory designated sites located within 2km of the proposed development site. The nearest non-statutory designated site is Lobbs Wood and Furnace Pond Local Wildlife Site (LWS), located immediately southwest of the site.

Habitats of Principal Importance

- 5.3 Habitats data available via MAGIC was reviewed for the presence of Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI). There are HPI mapped immediately adjacent to the site. These consist of broadleaved deciduous woodland and ancient and semi-natural woodland. See Figure 4.

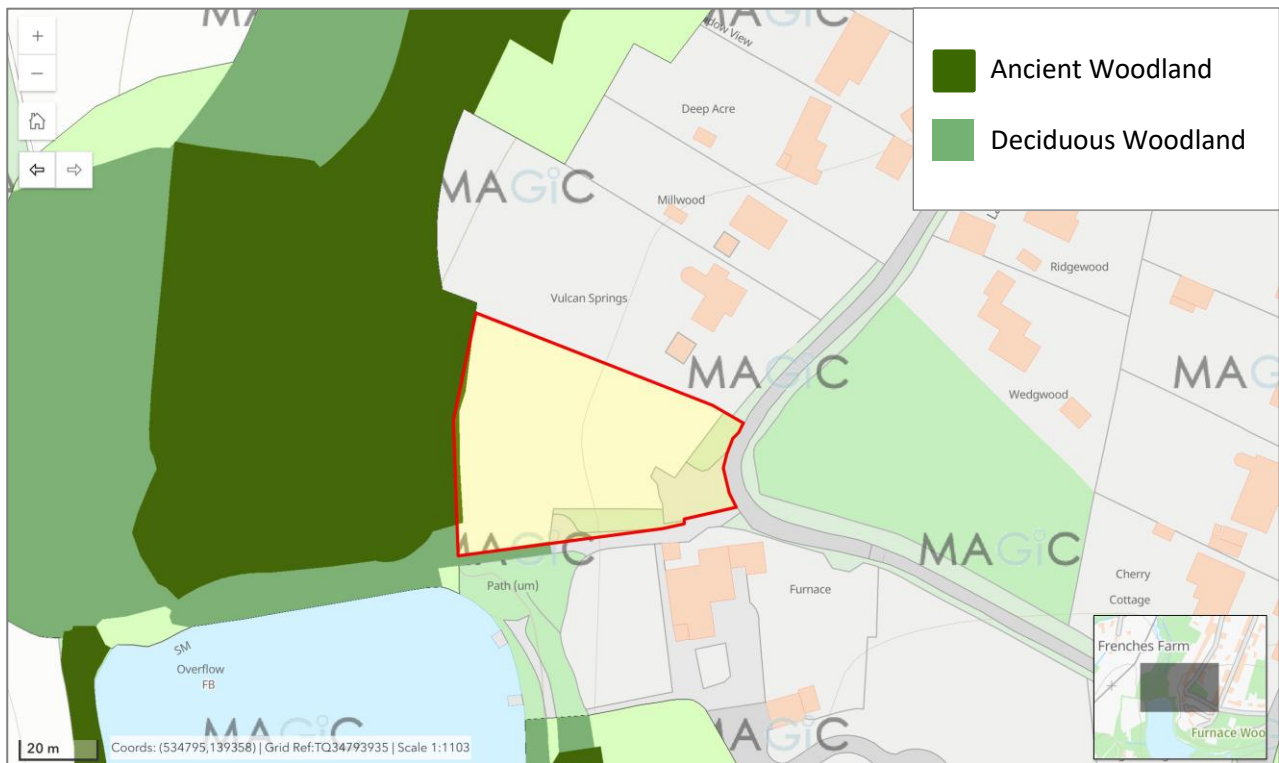


FIGURE 4: SHOWING HABITATS OF PRINCIPAL IMPORTANCE ADJACENT TO THE SITE

Waterbodies within 500m of the Site Boundary

5.4 The Ordnance Survey map available via MAGIC was reviewed for ponds within the accepted GCN dispersal distance of 500m that are not separated from the site by significant barriers to dispersal such as main roads. Seven ponds were found occurring to the north, south and west. These are shown in Figure 5 and listed below:

- Pond 1: 10m to the south
- Pond 2: 200m to the north
- Pond 3: 300m to the southeast
- Pond 4: 400m to the south
- Pond 5: 400m to the south
- Pond 6: 365m to the west
- Pond 7: 420m to the northwest

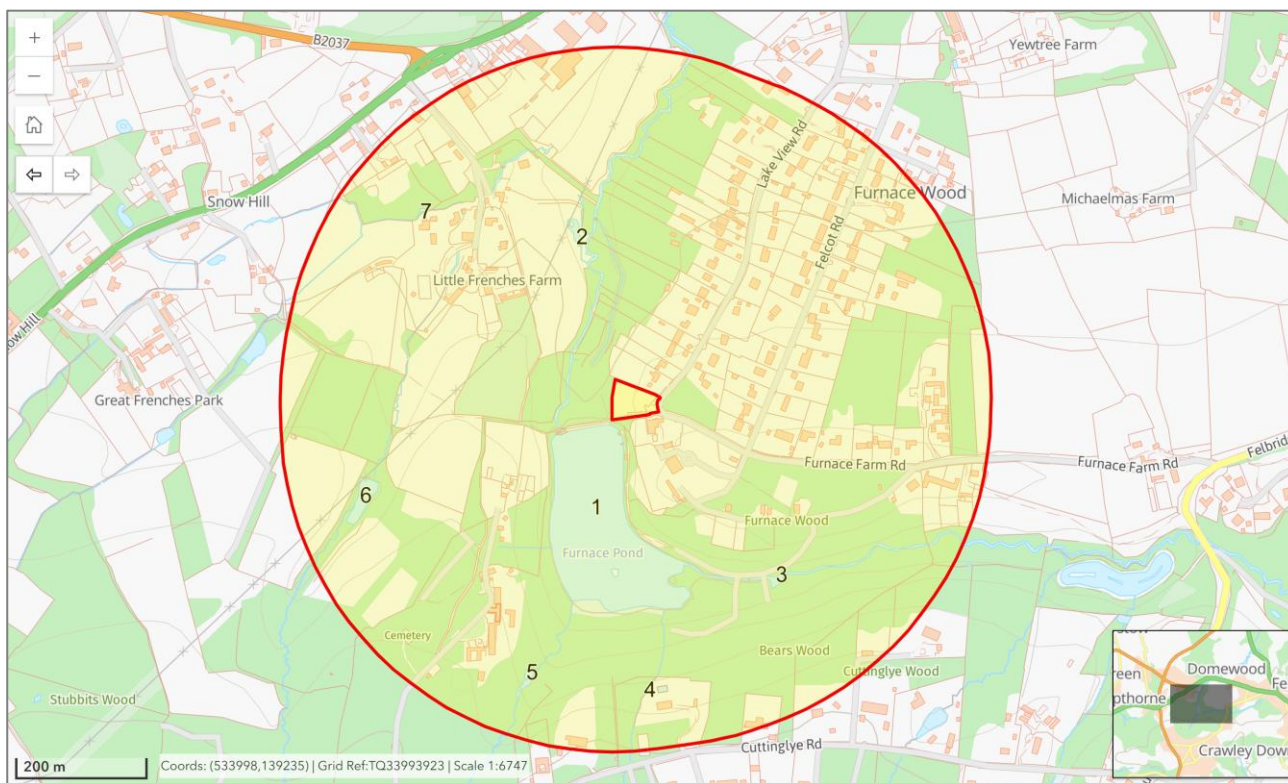


FIGURE 5: WATERBODIES WITHIN 500M

Protected and Notable Species

Badgers

5.5 Records of badger are kept confidentially by this Local Records Centre.

Bats

5.6 A minimum of four species of bat has been recorded within 2km of the site in the past ten years including common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) and brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*).

Birds

5.7 Twenty species of bird have been recorded within 2km of the site, including grey wagtail (*Motacilla cinerea*), kestrel (*Falco tinnuculus*), redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*), mistle thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*) and tawny owl (*Strix aluco*).

Great Crested Newts

5.8 There are 26 records of GCN within 2km of the site, the closest record is 1.1km north of the site within Hedgecourt SSSI.

Hazel Dormice

5.9 No records of hazel dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) were found within 2km of the site within the past ten years, however there is one historic record.

Reptiles

- 5.10 There are three records of grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*) within 2km of the site, with the closest record approximately 1.4km away. There are historic records of slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*), common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) and adder (*Vipera berus*).

Other Species of Principal Importance (SPI)

- 5.11 There are two records of hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) and common toad (*Bufo bufo*) within 2km of the site within the past ten years.

Other Mammals

- 5.12 There are two records of rabbit (*Oryctolagus cuniculus*) within 2km of the site in the past ten years.

Field Survey

Habitats

- 5.13 A UKHab habitat map and list of target notes are included in Figure 6 and Table 1 respectively. The habitats present on the site are described below.

Modified Grassland

- 5.14 The site is predominantly covered by modified grassland. The grassland structure and species composition is broadly the same across the whole site, being species-poor with a fairly short sward height. The field appears to be periodically mown.
- 5.15 The modified grassland predominantly comprises perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), with occasional dock (*Rumex* sp.), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), daffodil (*Narcissus* spp.), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), and creeping speedwell (*Veronica filiformis*). The species composition is typical of high nutrient, improved grassland, and there were typically less than six species per m² present.



Photograph 1 – Modified grassland covering the site.

Artificial Unvegetated, Unsealed Surface

- 5.16 In the southeast of the site, adjacent to the access gate, there is a small area of hardstanding surfaced with gravel.



Photograph 2 – Gravel surfacing in the southeast of site.

Ruderal/Ephemeral

- 5.17 In the northeast corner of the site, a small area of sparse, low-level vegetation has started developing within a shaded area beneath trees. Species composition includes small saplings of holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), and cotoneaster sp. The saplings are relatively sparsely distributed with areas of bare ground and leaf litter between.
- 5.18 Another small area of ruderal/ephemeral vegetation has formed around a series of old stumps and manholes, adjacent to the west of the gravel area. The species composition here primarily consists of bramble, nettles, dock and ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*).



Photograph 3 – Northeast corner ruderal vegetation.



Photograph 4 – Ruderal vegetation around stumps and manholes.

Tall Forbs

- 5.19 A fairly short section of the southern boundary comprises tall forbs surrounding an old tree stump and decaying logs. This area does not appear to be regularly mown. The species composition here consists of nettles, bramble, burdock (*Articum spp.*), cleavers, sedge (*Carex spp.*), dock, lords and ladies (*Arum maculatum*), primrose (*Primula vulgaris*), soft rush (*Juncus effusus*), and ragwort.



Photograph 5 – Area of tall forbs viewed from the west.



Photograph 6 – Area of tall forbs viewed from the east.

Non-Native and Ornamental Hedgerow

- 5.20 There is an overgrown Lawson's cypress (*Chamaecyparis lawsoniana*) hedgerow overhanging the northern boundary; however, the stems lay outside the site boundary within the adjacent property. The ground flora beneath the hedgerow comprises bigleaf periwinkle (*Vinca major*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), bramble, and common nettle.



Photograph 7 – Lawson's cypress overgrown hedge on the northern boundary.



Photograph 8 – Ground flora beneath the hedgerow.

Individual trees

5.21 In the northeast corner of the site there is a small cluster of semi-mature trees including English oak (*Quercus robur*) and sweet chestnut (*Castania sativa*).



Photograph 9 – Northeast corner cluster of trees.

Table 1 - Target Notes Shown on Figure 6 - Habitat Map

Target Note	Description	Photograph
1	Cherry laurel	
2	Cotoneaster spp.	

3	Tree stumps	
4	Evidence of mammals including a mammal path leading into the site at the northern boundary, mole hills, and deer droppings.	
5	Log/brash pile	
6	Possible badger hole adjacent to the site	



FIGURE 6: UKHAB HABITAT MAP

Habitat Evaluation

- 5.22 The habitats on-site are common and widespread with fairly low ecological value. The highest ecological value lies within the ancient woodland immediately west of the site.

Protected Species and Species of Conservation Concern

Badgers

- 5.30 The woodland adjacent to the west of the site was searched up to 30m from the site boundary for evidence of badger. A single mammal hole of a size and shape that is characteristic of badger was identified within the woodland approximately 2m from the western site boundary (see target note 6). No evidence of recent badger activity was identified and therefore it is unknown whether this hole is an actively used sett. Rabbit droppings were found near the hole indicating that it could be used by this species.
- 5.31 No evidence of badger activity was found anywhere within the site itself.

Bats

- 5.32 The individual trees on-site are understood to be proposed for retention and therefore were not individually assessed for roosting potential.
- 5.33 The central site area is of low suitability for foraging and commuting bats due to the low level of vegetation cover and lack of plant diversity or structural variation. However, the site borders highly suitable habitat for foraging and commuting bats, including ancient woodland and a large fishing pond. The woodland immediately to the west is also likely to support trees with roosting suitability. As such, it is likely that bats utilise the more sheltered site boundaries and edges.

Breeding Birds

- 5.34 There is some habitat suitable for breeding birds on the site within the individual trees and northern boundary hedgerow.

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

- 5.35 The site is considered to have some potential to support terrestrial GCN within the more sheltered boundary areas, tall forbs, and log piles which offer refugia and hibernacula opportunities. Due to the presence of ponds within 500m, GCN could be present in the vicinity of the site. The closest pond is 10m south of the site and is an approximately 3.57ha fishing pond, which scores a 'Good' after an estimated HSI calculation based on an assessment from the northern edge of the pond. See Table 2. The pond may be unsuitable for GCN if densely stocked with large fish, however the stocking density is currently unknown and suitable boundary vegetation is present for breeding GCN, therefore their presence cannot be definitively ruled out.

5.36 No ponds were recorded within the site boundary. The site is therefore unsuitable for breeding GCN.

Table 2 – HSI calculations

Pond ref	1
SI¹ - Location	1
SI² - Pond area	N/A due to large size
SI³ - Pond drying	0.9
SI⁴ - Water quality	0.67
SI⁵ - Shade	1
SI⁶ - Fowl	0.67
SI⁷ - Fish	0.33
SI⁸ - Ponds	1
SI⁹ - Terrestrial habitat	1
SI¹⁰ - Macrophytes	0.4
HSI Score	0.72
HSI Category	Good



Photograph 10: Fishing pond (pond 1) from north

Hazel Dormice

5.37 The site itself is considered to have negligible potential to support hazel dormice due to the lack of suitable habitat and edible plant species. The ancient woodland to the west has suitability to support hazel dormice.

Reptiles

5.38 The grassland on site is of poor suitability for reptiles due to its uniform and short sward with limited structural variation or sheltered areas. The more sheltered boundary habitats and tall forbs provide a small amount of suitable habitat for common reptiles such as slow worms, common lizards and grass snakes to shelter,

forage, and commute through. The log piles on site provide some appropriate refugia and hibernacula opportunities.

Other Species of Principal Importance

- 5.39 There is potential for the site to support SPI including hedgehogs, which may forage and commute across the site, common toads within denser and more sheltered vegetation, and stag beetles within the rotting tree stump in the tall forbs area.

Other Ecological Features of Note

Other Mammals

- 5.40 Deer droppings and mole hills were noted in the west of the site. There were also multiple small burrows and rabbit droppings within the woodland off site.



Plant Species of Note

- 5.23 No plant species of note were identified.

Invasive Species

- 5.41 Cotoneaster sp. was recorded on-site within the northeast corner ruderal/ephemeral vegetation (target note 2). This species is listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act.
- 5.42 Cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) was also recorded on-site within the northeast corner ruderal/ephemeral vegetation (target note 1). This non-native species is not listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act but does have invasive tendencies.

Other Valuable Ecological Features

- 5.43 No other valuable ecological features were recorded on-site.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

- 6.1 In line with Natural England's Standing Advice, where further survey for protected species is recommended these should be conducted prior to submitting a planning application and appropriate mitigation measures be incorporated into the development design.

Designated Sites

- 6.2 Lobbs Wood and Furnace Pond LWS is located immediately to the southwest of the site. **This non-statutory designated site must be protected from damage during the construction works. Precautionary construction measures will be required, including measures to prevent run-off to and pollution of the pond.** These could be secured through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) or similar.

Habitats of Principal Importance

- 6.3 The ancient woodland habitat immediately west of the survey area is an HPI. **A minimum 15m buffer zone must be implemented and maintained between the proposed development and the boundary of the adjacent ancient woodland.** This buffer is required to protect the woodland's root systems, soil structure, and ecological integrity. The buffer area should preferably be enhanced to create semi-natural woodland edge habitat.

Badgers

- 6.4 The survey has identified some potential evidence of badgers with a single hole identified just outside the site boundary to the west. Based on current plans, no development works are proposed for within 30m of this hole, and therefore no impacts would be likely, and no further surveys are considered necessary. However, **precautionary mitigation for badgers is recommended. A site check should be carried out immediately prior to works commencing by a suitably qualified ecologist to check for new setts. In addition, the following precautionary measures should be adopted:**
- Any trenches or other deep excavations are to be covered at night or have an escape ramp installed.
 - No food or waste materials are to be left out overnight.
 - All chemicals and hazardous materials are to be securely stored.
- 6.5 If the plans change to involve any construction or ground works taking place within 30m of this hole, further survey for badgers will be required to determine whether the hole is an active sett and whether licencing and/or more detailed mitigation is required. The required 30m buffer zone is illustrated in Figure 7 below.

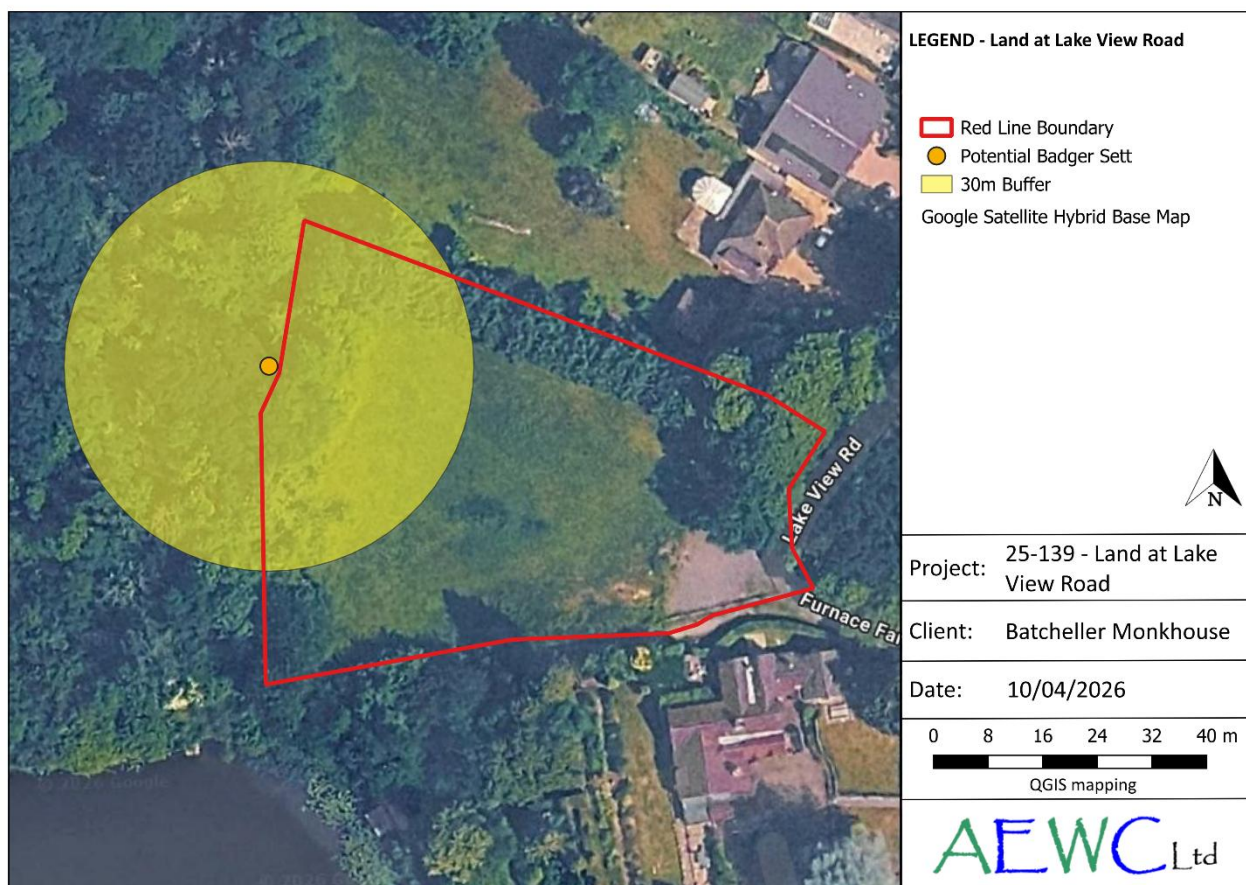


FIGURE 7: 30M BUFFER ZONE AROUND POTENTIAL BADGER SETT

Bats

- 6.6 Trees were not individually assessed for roosting potential as part of this survey. **Should any trees be proposed for removal or significant pruning or reduction, a Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) will be required in the first instance to determine whether any potential roosting features are present and whether further surveys or mitigation are required.**
- 6.7 Lighting can have notable negative impacts on commuting and foraging bats, that are known to be present locally. There is potential for lighting during and post-development to cause indirect disturbance. **New external lighting should be avoided or kept to the minimum necessary, and preferably downlit and on a motion sensor to reduce lighting time. No lighting should directly illuminate the ancient woodland to the west, the pond to the south, or the hedgerow along the north boundary.**

Breeding Birds

- 6.8 If plans change to involve tree or hedge removal, this should be undertaken outside of the breeding bird period which runs from March to August. **Should any vegetation clearance be scheduled to take place between the beginning of March and the end of August, this must be immediately preceded by a survey to check for nesting birds. No vegetation can be cleared whilst a nest is occupied,**

regardless of species. If active nests are found, a minimum buffer zone of 5m must be established until the chicks have fledged.

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

- 6.9 The site contains some suitable terrestrial habitat for GCN and waterbodies have been identified within 500m which could be used for breeding. A Rapid Risk Assessment has been carried out based on the area of habitat to be impacted and the location of the nearest waterbodies to the site. This shows that in the absence of mitigation, an offence is likely if there are breeding ponds within 100m of the site, but highly unlikely if all breeding ponds are over 100m from the site. See Figure 8.

Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	0.01 - 0.1 ha lost or damaged	0.3
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.01 - 0.1 ha lost or damaged	0.01
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.01 - 0.1 ha lost or damaged	0.001
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
Maximum:		0.3
Rapid risk assessment result: AMBER: OFFENCE LIKELY		
Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.01 - 0.1 ha lost or damaged	0.01
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.01 - 0.1 ha lost or damaged	0.001
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
Maximum:		0.01
Rapid risk assessment result: GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY		

FIGURE 8: RAPID RISK ASSESSMENTS OF THE SITE

- 6.10 The proposed development will impact on only a very small area of sub-optimal habitat, and as such the risk to terrestrial GCN is considered to be low. The Rapid Risk Assessment indicates that an offence is only likely if breeding GCN are present within 100m of the site. The only waterbody within 100m is the fishing pond to the south, with all other waterbodies being located at least 200m from the site. **It is recommended that the fishing pond to the south is subject to a single eDNA survey between mid-April and end of June. If presence of GCN is confirmed, further population surveys (to give a total of six surveys per pond) and a licence from Natural England may be required for works to proceed. If district licensing is preferred, this is offered by NatureSpace in this location and can be obtained without having undertaken surveys.**

Hazel Dormice

- 6.11 The site is considered highly unlikely to be used by hazel dormouse and therefore no further surveys or mitigation for this species are required. As recommended for

badgers above, lighting must not be directed at the woodland. This will avoid disturbance to any dormice that may be present.

Reptiles

6.12 **A reptile method statement will be required for the site, detailing the precautionary approach to site clearance that must be adopted and followed, this will include but not be limited to the following measures:**

- Vegetation must be gradually cut down prior to site clearance.
- During the active season (March to September) the site can then be cleared; the top 10cm or so of topsoil must be removed by a toothed excavator under the supervision on an ecologist.
- Log piles, rubble piles and compost heaps should be dismantled carefully (by hand if possible).
- Any animals caught should be relocated to a safe area of suitable habitat beyond the development boundary.

Other Species of Principal Importance

6.13 The west European hedgehog is an SPI, **therefore it is recommended that any potential refugia, such as the log piles, should be cleared sensitively and by hand. If close board fencing is to be fitted it should be raised above ground level to allow hedgehogs to pass underneath or have hedgehog gaps installed, and some habitat areas should be left un-landscaped to provide shelter and foraging opportunities.** Precautionary recommendations listed for badgers above will ensure that any hedgehogs traversing through the site do not become trapped or harmed during the works. Additional habitat for hedgehogs could be provided through relaxation of mowing and seeding with an appropriate wildflower meadow mix in some areas of the site.

6.14 Common toads will be protected from harm through measures recommended for reptiles above.

6.15 There is potential for the site to support stag beetle due to a tree stump in the southern corner. **The tree stump should preferably remain intact but if this is not possible, additional dead wood piles or log stacks should be installed on the site as compensation.**

Other Mammals

6.16 **Site clearance work should be undertaken carefully (by hand if necessary) to avoid crushing any small mammals within their burrows. Any temporary or permanent fencing should avoid the use of loose mesh or netting that may entangle mammals.**

Plant Species of Note

6.17 No plant species of note were recorded and therefore no further action is required.

Invasive Species

6.18 **Care must be taken to prevent the further spread of *Cotoneaster* sp. and cherry laurel. Ideally efforts should be made to remove these from the site.**

Other Valuable Ecological Features

6.19 No other valuable ecological features were recorded and therefore no further action is required.

Impact Assessment

6.20 Impacts to GCN cannot be determined until further surveys have been undertaken. Site-specific mitigation may be required.

6.21 Overall, it is considered that there are no likely significant impacts to the other fauna or flora populations within the local area from the proposed works provided the recommendations above are adhered to.

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Appendix 1 – Survey Timetable

Species	Survey	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Badger	Bait marking & sett search												
Bats	Roost assessments												
	Ground level tree assessments												
	Emergence & activity												
	Hibernation												
	Trapping												
Birds	Wintering												
	Breeding												
Great crested newt	HSI												
	eDNA												
	Presence/absence & population												
	Refugia												
Hazel dormouse	Tube												
	Nut search												
Otter	Field signs												
Reptiles	Refugia & search												
Water vole	Field signs												
Invertebrates	Presence & communities												
Vegetation	Phase 1 habitat & NVC												
	Optimal												
	Sub-optimal												
	Outside survey season												

Appendix 2 – Legal Protection

General

This section briefly describes the legal protection afforded to protected species and habitats. It is for information only and is not intended to be comprehensive or to replace specialised legal advice. It is not intended to replace the text of the legislation but summarises the salient points.

Badger

Badgers are protected under the *Protection of Badgers Act 1992*. Under this legislation it is an offence to kill or injure a badger, to damage, destroy or block access to a badger sett, or to disturb a badger in its sett. The Act also states the conditions for the protection of badger's licence requirements.

Barn Owl

Barn owls are listed on *Schedule 1* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* which makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
- take, damage or destroy the nest while that nest is in use or being built;
- take or destroy the egg;
- disturb them while they are in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young, or to disturb their dependent young;
- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.

The penalty for an offence involving a barn owl, its nest, or egg, includes a fine of up to £5,000, or up to six months imprisonment, or both, per bird, nest or egg.

Bats

All species of bats are listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. They are also protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. In combination, this makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
- possess;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and
- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.

A roost is defined as 'any structure or place which a bat uses for shelter or protection'. As bats tend to reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not bats are present.

Furthermore, seven bat species (barbastelle, bechstein's, noctule, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, lesser horseshoe and greater horseshoe) are also Species of Principal Importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

Breeding Birds

All species of wild bird are protected under Section 1 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*. Protection was extended by the *Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000*. Under the above legislation, it is an offence to intentionally:

- kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or
- take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

Certain species are listed on *Schedule 1* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* and receive protection under *Sections 1(4) and 1(5)*. There are special penalties where the offences listed above are committed for any *Schedule 1* species and it is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- disturb any such bird when it is building its nest or while it is in or near a nest containing dependant young; or
- disturb the dependant young of any such bird.

Amphibians

Natterjack toad, northern pool frog and great crested newt are listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. They are also protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. In combination, this makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
- possess;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and
- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.

Palmate newts and smooth newts are also afforded protection against sale only under *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*.

Natterjack toad, common toad, great crested newt and northern pool frog are also Species of Principal Importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

Hazel Dormouse

Hazel dormouse is listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. They are also protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. In combination, this makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
- possess;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and

- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.

Hazel dormouse is also a Species of Principal Importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

Otter

Otter is listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*, which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. They are also protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. In combination, this makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
- possess;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and
- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.

Otter is also a Species of Principal Importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

Reptiles

Common lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*), grass snake (*Natrix natrix*), slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*), and adder (*Vipera berus*) are listed under *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*, in respect of *Section 9(5)* and part of *Section 9(1)*. This protection was extended by the *Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000*. Under the legislation, it is an offence to:

- intentionally or deliberately kill or injure any individual of these species; or
- sell or attempt to sell any part of these species either alive or dead.

Smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*) and sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*) are listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*, which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. They are also protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. In combination, this makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
- possess;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and
- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.

All UK reptile species are Species of Principal Importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

Water Vole

Water vole (*Arvicola amphibious*) is listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*, which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. This makes it an offence to:

- capture, kill or injure;
- damage, destroy or block access to a place of shelter;
- disturb whilst in a place of shelter or possessing, and
- sell any part of a water vole, dead or alive.

Other Mammals

All mammals receive some protection under the *Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996*, which makes it an offence to crush or asphyxiate an animal (e.g. within its burrow).

Species and Habitats of Principal Importance

Section 41 of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) (2006)* requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The S41 list has 56 Habitats of Principal Importance and 943 species of principal importance listed and has been drawn up in consultation with Natural England.

The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under *Section 40* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.

Invasive Species

It is an offence to plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild non-native plant species listed under *Schedule 9* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*, for which *Section 14* of the Act applies. These include, but are not limited to:

- Himalayan balsam
- Cotoneaster sp.
- Japanese knotweed
- Giant hogweed.

Ancient Woodland

The *National Planning Policy Framework (2012)* states that ‘*Planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss*’. In addition, Natural England’s standing advice for ancient woodland states that *an appropriate buffer zone of semi-natural habitat [be in place] between the development and the ancient woodland (depending on the scale and impact of development), a minimum buffer should be at least 15 metres to avoid root damage and at least 50m for pollution or trampling*”. Ancient woodlands, and ancient and veteran trees, may also be protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

SSSI's are areas notified under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended*, as being of special interest for nature conservation. They are the finest sites for wildlife and natural features supporting many characteristic, rare and endangered species, habitats and natural features. LPAs have a duty to consult Natural England before granting planning permission on any development that is in or likely to affect a SSSI.

National Site Network: Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) & RAMSAR sites

Development proposals which will adversely affect these sites are not permitted (except where there are no alternative solutions and the proposal is necessary for imperative reasons of overriding public interest). If a development could possibly impact on a SPA or SAC, the applicant will need to submit an assessment of potential impacts and their significance with their planning application for the local authority to make an 'Appropriate Assessment'.

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)

These are a statutory designation made by local authorities. LNRs may be given protection against damaging operations and development on and around them via the local plan.

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)

This is a non-statutory designation for sites identified at a county level. They typically form a network of sites that are recognised of being of conservation importance locally and are often included in Local Authority development plans.