

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

September 2025

**Kilnwood Apartments,
Rocky Lane,
Haywards Heath**

Prepared by
CSA Environmental

On behalf of
Cross Homes (Sussex) Ltd

This report may contain sensitive ecological information. It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to determine if this should be made publicly available.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Residential development is proposed at Kilnwood Apartments, Rocky Lane, Haywards Heath, comprising the erection of one apartment unit providing six dwellings, for which detailed planning permission is sought.

CSA Environmental was instructed by Cross Homes (Sussex) Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the Site to identify any ecological constraints to development, inform scheme design, highlight opportunities for ecological enhancement, and determine the need for any additional investigation/survey.

As part of this PEA, a desk study and field survey of the Site were undertaken in May 2025, including a UK Habitat Classification survey. Habitats identified on Site consisted primarily of grassland, scrub, developed land and broadleaved woodland.

The Site lies within the Adur (Burgess Hull) Water Body Catchment, and this tributary of the wider Adur Upper Operational Catchment lies c. 1km to the south of the Site. As such, the design of the proposed development should be informed by the submitted drainage strategy to ensure that diffuse and point-source pollution impact pathways are adequately assessed and mitigated, where necessary.

The PEA survey confirmed the Site supports reptiles, with viviparous lizard *Zootoca vivipara* and slow worm *Anguis fragilis* identified on-Site. Additionally, habitats on Site have the potential to support nesting birds and badger. Habitats at the Site boundaries and abutting the Site hold 'moderate' potential to support commuting or foraging bats, as determined by BCT guidance. There is limited habitat on site that could support dormice, but this habitat is expected to be retained and surveys are not considered proportionate considering the small habitat size. Presence of GCN is not considered likely, as determined by Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessments of suitable waterbodies within the vicinity of the Site, followed by an eDNA survey of one waterbody which did not confirm the presence of great crested newts.

It is recommended that further surveys for commuting and foraging bats are conducted to inform the planning application; these surveys have been completed at the time of writing. Additionally, it is recommended that the drainage strategy appended to the application details potential impacts of the development upon the Adur (Burgess Hill) Water Body Catchment.

No overriding constraints to development of the Site have been identified. Recommendations have been provided in Section 5 for ecological enhancement measures that could be delivered as part of the proposed development.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by CSA Environmental on behalf of Cross Homes (Sussex) Ltd. It sets out the findings of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of Kilnwood Apartments, Rocky Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'). Residential development is proposed at the Site for a new three-storey apartment block comprising of six dwellings, for which detailed planning permission will be sought.
- 1.2 The scope of this appraisal has been determined with due consideration for best-practice guidance provided by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2017), and to the *Biodiversity: Code of practice for planning and development* (BS 42020:2013) published by the British Standards Institution (2013).
- 1.3 The Site occupies an area of c. 0.17ha and is located around central grid reference TQ 32609 22373, on the southern edge of Haywards Heath, Sussex and within a suburban area. The Site predominantly consists of grassland, an access road and parking area and a small section of woodland (See Habitats Plan; Appendix A). A railway lies immediately west of the Site boundary, with vegetated embankments providing connectivity to wooded habitats further afield.
- 1.4 The Site was previously used as a receptor for a reptile translocation scheme for a residential development south-east of the Site, where 1,075 reptiles, including common lizard and slow worm, were translocated into the Site and the wider boundary of the Kilnwood Apartments development in 2013. The Site and wider boundary of Kilnwood Apartments was then subject to a translocation scheme in 2016, which translocated 236 slow worm and 131 common lizard out of the Site prior to development of the existing units at Kilnwood Apartments.
- 1.5 This PEA aims to:
 - Characterise baseline ecological conditions of the Site and its wider context
 - Identify any ecological constraints to development of the Site
 - Inform scheme design
 - Identify further ecological surveys and investigation necessary to inform a full planning application
 - Highlight opportunities for ecological enhancement
- 1.6 To achieve these aims, an ecological desk study and field survey were undertaken of the Site, the findings of which are presented herein.
- 1.7 As set out in best practice guidelines (CIEEM, 2017), a PEA is typically only suitable for planning submission where there are no ecological constraints relating to the project. Where ecological constraints are

identified, such as the presence of Important Ecological Features (IEFs), the effects of development on these features should be assessed within a separate EclA report, which would supersede the PEA.

- 1.8 However, as detailed herein, the scope for significant impacts on IEFs as a result of the limited proposals is low, and as such Protected Species Survey (PSS) Reports containing impact assessments should suffice in this case.

2.0 LEGISLATION, PLANNING POLICY & STANDING ADVICE

Legislation

- 2.1 Legislation relating to wildlife and biodiversity of particular relevance to this PEA includes:
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
 - The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
 - The Protection of Badgers Act 1992
 - The Environment Act 2021
- 2.2 This above legislation has been addressed, as appropriate, in the production of this report. Further information on the above legislation is provided in Appendix B.

National Planning Policy

- 2.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2024) sets out the government planning policies for England and how they should be applied. Chapter 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment, is of particular relevance to this report as it relates to ecology and biodiversity. Further details are provided in Appendix B.
- 2.4 The Government Circular 06/2005, which is referred to by the NPPF, provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their effects within the planning system.

Local Planning Policy

- 2.5 A number of local planning policies relate to ecology, biodiversity and/or nature conservation. These are summarised in Table 1 of Appendix B. These policies have been addressed, as appropriate, in the production of this report.

Standing Advice

- 2.6 Natural England and Defra's Standing Advice (Natural England & Defra, 2014) regarding habitats and protected species aims to support local authorities and forms a material consideration in determining applications in the same way as any individual response received from Natural England following consultation. Standing advice has therefore been given due consideration, alongside other detailed guidance documents, in the production of this report.

3.0 METHODS

Desk Study

- 3.1 An ecological desk study was undertaken in May 2025 comprising a review of online resources and biological records centre data as detailed below.
- 3.2 The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) online database was reviewed to identify nature conservation designations within the following search radii:
 - Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar sites within 10km of the Site (including possible/proposed sites)
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves (NNR), Local Nature Reserves (LNR) within 3km of the Site
 - Other relevant data e.g. Ancient Woodland Inventory within 1km of the Site
- 3.3 A review was undertaken of the location of any such designations, their distance from and connectivity with the Site, and the reasons for their designation. This information was used to determine whether they may be within the proposed development's Zone of Influence (Zol).
- 3.4 Sussex Biological Records Centre (SxBRC) was contacted for details of any non-statutory nature conservation designations and records of protected/notable habitats and species. This information was requested for an area encompassing the Site and adjacent land within c. 2km of its central grid reference. This search area was selected to include the likely zone of influence upon non-statutory designations and protected or notable habitats and species.
- 3.5 Further online resources were reviewed for information which may aid the identification of IEFs. The Woodland Trust's online Ancient Tree Inventory was reviewed for known ancient or veteran trees within the Site and adjacent land. Interactive online mapping provided by the charity 'Buglife' was used to determine whether the Site falls within an Important Invertebrate Area.
- 3.6 In accordance with Natural England's Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines (2001), a desktop search was undertaken to identify ponds within 500m of the Site which may have potential to support breeding great crested newts, using Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping, the MAGIC database, and aerial photography.
- 3.7 Where possible under the terms of the data provider, relevant desk study data are presented in Appendix C.

Field Survey

- 3.8 A UK Habitat Classification ('UKHab') survey was carried out in fine and dry weather conditions on 02 May 2025 by Sam Ashby ACIEEM and Corie Lee, encompassing the Site and immediately adjacent habitats that could be viewed.
- 3.9 UKHab is a unified and comprehensive system for mapping and classifying habitats, designed to provide a simple and robust approach to surveying and monitoring, and replaces Phase 1 Habitat survey methods. This method allows for identification of important habitat types, including habitats of Principal Importance under Section 41 (S41) of the NERC Act (2006) and Habitats Directive Annex I habitats. This method also allows for direct translation of habitats into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Defra, 2024).
- 3.10 The following parameters were adopted for the UKHab survey undertaken for this PEA:
- UKHab Professional edition (UKHab Ltd, 2023)
 - Minimum Mappable Unit (MMU):
 - 10m²/0.001ha (polygons)
 - 5m (linear)
 - Primary Habitats recorded to a minimum of Level 2 (see below) with UKHab codes provided
 - Mandatory secondary codes used
 - Base-mapping comprising a combination of aerial imagery and topographic information
- 3.11 Primary Habitats are recorded to a minimum of Level 2. Where the survey is conducted at an appropriate time of year (e.g. May to July for grassland) habitats may be recorded to Level 3, 4 or 5, only if conditions and the experience of the surveyor allow.
- 3.12 Identification of habitat stands were made by the surveyor based upon habitat structure, composition or other delineating feature (e.g. field or enclosure).
- 3.13 Alongside the UKHab survey, additional field survey information was collected, comprising:
- Detailed floral species lists recorded for each identified habitat/parcel
 - Evidence of, or potential for, European Protected Species (EPS) (including bats, great crested newt, hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* and otter *Lutra lutra*)
 - Evidence of, or potential for, other protected species (including birds, reptiles, water vole *Arvicola amphibius*, badger *Meles meles* and certain invertebrates)

- Evidence of, or potential for, other notable species (including S41 Species of Principal Importance as well as notable, rare, protected or controlled plants and invertebrates)
 - Any other survey information relevant to ecological matters
- 3.14 Results of the UKHab survey are presented on the Habitats Plan in Appendix A. Appendix D provides photographs of the habitats at the Site and Appendix E provides a list of floral species recorded in each habitat parcel. Nomenclature for higher plants within this report is consistent with the fourth edition of The New Flora of the British Isles (Stace, 2019).

Limitations

- 3.15 There were no specific limitations to the desk study or field survey, which was conducted at an optimum time of year and in good conditions.

Evaluation and Assessment

- 3.16 The evaluation and assessment of ecological features is beyond the scope of a PEA and has therefore not been undertaken here. Formal evaluation and assessment of any identified IEFs should be undertaken as part of either a full EclA, or receptor-specific survey and assessment in accordance with the published CIEEM method (CIEEM, 2018).
- 3.17 Due to the limited scope of the proposals and limited IEFs identified herein, a full EclA is not considered proportionate in this case and receptor specific survey and assessment in the form of PSS Reports will contain an appropriate level of impact assessment to inform the planning application.

4.0 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

Nature Conservation Designations

Statutory

- 4.1 There are no statutory designations covering any part of the Site.
- 4.2 No international statutory designations were identified within 10km of the Site.
- 4.3 There is one national statutory designation identified within 3km of the Site: Ditchling Common SSSI (c. 2.8km south of the Site).
- 4.4 Four local statutory designations were identified within 3km of the Site: Ashenground and Bolnore Woods LNR (c. 0.1km north-west of the Site), Bedelands Farm LNR (c. 1.1km south-west of the Site), Blunts and Paiges Wood LNR (c. 1.6km north-west of the Site), and Scarse Valley LNR (c. 2.5km north-east of the Site).
- 4.5 The Site lies within the Adur (Burgess Hill) Water Body Catchment, which is a tributary of the wider Adur Upper Operational Catchment (Environment Agency, 2022). The Environment Agency has declared the Adur (Burgess Hill) Water Body Catchment to be in poor ecological status and susceptible to ammonia deposition. This tributary lies c. 1km to the south of the Site.
- 4.6 These statutory designations are described in Table 1 below.

Non-Statutory

- 4.7 Five non-statutory designations were identified within 2km of the Site. These were the Catt's Wood Complex LWS (c. 80m north-west of the Site), Bedelands LWS (c. 1km south of the Site), Great Wood & Copyhold Hanger LWS (c. 1.3km east of the Site), and Western Road Cemetery LWS (c. 1.9km north-east of the Site). A designated road verge, situated on the B2272 to the north of the Princes Royal Hospital, lies c. 1.6km north-east of the Site. These non-statutory designations are described in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Statutory and Non-Statutory Designations within search radii

Site Name & Designation	Distance & Direction from Survey Area	Special Interests or Qualifying Features
National Designations within 3km		
Ditchling Common SSSI	C. 2.8km south	Comprises a range of grassland types which support a number of locally uncommon plants, including ribbed sedge <i>Carex binervis</i> , flea sedge <i>Carex pulicaris</i> , and pepper saxifrage <i>Silau silaus</i> . Supports an assemblage of butterfly and moths which includes

		several uncommon species including four moths associated with dryers greenweed <i>Genista tinctoria</i> , and two woodland butterflies. Areas of scrub and woodland are locally valuable for breeding birds which include willow warbler <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i> , blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i> , whitethroat <i>Sylvia communis</i> , linnet <i>Carduelis cannabina</i> and yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i> .
Local Designations within 3km		
Ashenground and Bolnore Woods LNR	c. 0.1km north-west	Comprises relic stands of hornbeam <i>Carpinus betulus</i> , ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> and hazel coppice, with woodland groundflora such as wood anemone <i>Anemone nemorosa</i> and lesser celandine <i>Ranunculus ficaria</i> .
Bedelands Farm LNR	c. 1.1km south-west	Comprises several areas of ancient woodland and wildflower meadows. Supports some locally rare sedges and other plants including ragged robin <i>Erithacus rubecula</i> and sneezewort <i>Achillea ptarmica</i> .
Blunts and Paiges Wood LNR	c. 1.6km north-west	Comprises a range of habitats including hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> coppice, birch <i>Betula</i> sp. woodland, bluebell <i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i> woodland, grassland and meadows which supports dormice, stoats <i>Mustela erminea</i> , weasels <i>Mustela nivalis</i> , bats, and glow worms <i>Lampyrus noctiluca</i> .
Scarse Valleys LNR	c. 2.5 north-east	Comprises 15 acres of woodland, marsh, scrub and flood meadows which supports several locally and nationally rare plants included marsh cinquefoil <i>Potentilla palustris</i> and purple toothwort <i>Lathraea clandestine</i> .
Non-Statutory Designations within 2km		
Catt's Wood Complex LWS	c. 80m north-west	Comprises a number of interconnected blocks of lowland mixed deciduous woodland, much of which is species-rich ancient woodland with groundflora including wood speedwell <i>Veronica montana</i> , wood anemone, and yellow archangel <i>Lamium galeobdolon</i> .
Bedelands LWS	c. 0.1km south	Comprises a number of woodland blocks surrounding fields of open grassland supporting common spotted orchid <i>Dactylorhiza fuchsia</i> and zigzag clover <i>Trifolium medium</i> . The Site also contains a number of aquatic habitats including woodland ponds and watercourses.
Great Wood & Copyhold Hanger LWS	c. 1.3km east	The site consists mostly of a wooded gill valley. The ground flora is generally species-rich and well-developed with good fern and bryophyte communities, including male fern <i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i> ,

		scaly male fern <i>D. affinis</i> , and narrow buckler fern <i>D. carthusiana</i> .
Lewes Road Designated Road Verge	c. 1.6km north-east	No further information on this designation was provided by SxBRC.
Western Road Cemetery LWS	c. 1.9km north-east	Comprises neutral grassland with scattered trees together with species-rich areas frequented by ivy-leaved bellflower <i>Wahlenbergia hederacea</i> , bristle club rush <i>Isolepis setacea</i> , and marsh pennywort <i>Hydrocotyle vulgaris</i> . Supports a regionally notable assemblage of 26 fungi species.

Habitats and Flora

- 4.8 Habitats recorded on-Site are illustrated in Appendix A with detailed species lists provided in Appendix E. Relevant UKHab codes are provided within parentheses for each habitat type recorded e.g. Other Neutral Grassland (g3c).

Irreplaceable Habitats

- 4.9 There is no ancient woodland, as shown on the ancient woodland inventory, covering any part of the Site or immediately adjacent land.
- 4.10 No trees on or immediately adjacent to the Site are listed on the Ancient Tree Inventory.
- 4.11 Two priority habitats, as listed on the Priority Habitat Inventory, exist within 1km of the Site, namely deciduous woodland and good quality semi-improved grassland. Lowland meadow and traditional orchard habitats exist further afield. No priority habitats exist within or immediately adjacent to the Site.

Notable Flora Records

- 4.12 The SxBRC provided 344 records of 40 notable plant species from within the search area. Those of potential relevance to the Site include bitter vetch *Lathyrus linifolius*, dryer's greenweed and green winged orchid *Anacamptis morio*. These species are typically found in unimproved grasslands with lower nutrient input.
- 4.13 No notable native plants were recorded on Site during the Site visit in May 2025.

Grasslands

Other neutral grassland (g3c), with tall sward (128) and active management (516)

- 4.14 Grassland G1 (see the Habitats Plan, Appendix A) was noted to be subject to some management, likely in the form of biannual cutting, but appeared tall and tussocky at the time of the survey with sward length often exceeding 30cm. Throughout this grassland area, grasses

including Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus*, soft brome *Bromus hordeaceus*, sweet vernal grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and cock's-foot *Dactylus glomerata* were abundant. Forb species recorded within the grassland included frequent occurrences of dock *Rumex* sp. and white clover *Trifolium repens* alongside meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, ground-ivy *Glechoma hederacea*, red dead-nettle *Lamium purpureum*, common vetch *Vicia sativa*, and cut-leaved crane's-bill *Geranium dissectum*.

Modified Grassland (g4), with ruderals (81) and young trees (202)

- 4.15 Grassland G2 was an area of modified grassland situated adjacent to the north of G1 and south of the hardstanding car park (see the Habitats Plan, Appendix A).
- 4.16 The parcel comprised abundant perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne* and frequent Yorkshire fog. The parcel appeared regularly mown and maintained as a short sward (<10cm), with few species flowering, and evidence of disturbance by trampling, presumably by residents of the existing dwellings.
- 4.17 Towards the northern extent of G2, species identified in parcel S1 were recorded occasionally, including common nettle, dock *Rumex* sp., bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., and cleavers *Galium aparine*. This area had infrequent patches of artificial, unvegetated substrate in the form of bark chippings.
- 4.18 Three small (diameter at breast height (DBH) c. 7.5 to 30cm), coppiced sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* exist within G2 (Appendix A), with oak *Quercus robur* saplings occurring infrequently.

Bramble scrub (h3h), with ruderals' (81), nutrient-enriched substrate (507)

- 4.19 A parcel of dense scrub (S1), dominated by bramble, was situated north of G2. The parcel appeared to be an extension of the scrub upon the railway embankment west of the Site boundary, with bramble evidently growing through the railway fencing into S1. A log pile was situated within the north-eastern corner of the parcel (Appendix A).

Woodland

Other broadleaved woodland (w1g), secondary woodland (31), nutrient-enriched substrate (507)

- 4.20 A parcel of other broadleaved woodland was situated within the north-west corner of the Site (W1; Appendix A). The canopy comprised mature field maple *Acer campestre*, sycamore, Norway maple *Acer platanoides*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, and blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*. Sycamore was most frequently recorded, with field maple occasional. Young and semi-mature sycamore, hawthorn, and field maple were present but rarely recorded in this parcel. Recorded ground

flora included common nettle, cleavers, wild garlic *Allium ursinum*, herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*, red campion *Silene dioica*, and stinking iris *Iris foetidissima*. Other species recorded included bramble and pendulous sedge *Carex pendula*. A log pile was present within the north-eastern corner of the parcel (see Target Note, Appendix A).

- 4.21 This woodland parcel fell within the criteria for the UKHabs secondary code 'secondary woodland'; the woodland appeared to have regrown from neglected land that was previously cleared to enable development adjacent. Nutrient-enriched substrate, in the form of bark chippings, was present within the parcel of woodland that falls within the Site.
- 4.22 The woodland parcel on-Site is an extension of a fragmented broadleaved woodland that lies north and south of the Site in the wider local landscape. Connectivity between the on-Site woodland and habitats further afield is somewhat interrupted by residential roads to the north and east, but remains continuously linked with the vegetated railway embankment to the north west.

Urban

Developed land; sealed surface (U1b); road (800) and car park (804)

- 4.23 An area of developed land; sealed surface (U1; Appendix A) formed the access to the Site, extending from Rocky Lane south into the Site, forming parking areas for the adjacent residential properties. A timber-clad bike store was situated within the southern extent of the hardstanding parking area.

Fauna

Bats

- 4.24 A total of 116 bat records were identified within the search area, dating from 1982 to 2024. These included six species: common pipistrelle *pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, serotine *Eptesicus serotinus*, Bechstein's *Myotis bechsteinii*, Daubenton's *Myotis daubentonii*, and brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*. The closest records were of brown long-eared bat which relate to an identified maternity roost situated c. 0.36km north-east of the Site.
- 4.25 The mature trees present within the woodland at the northern extent of the Site provide connectivity to the off-Site woodland which may be frequented by foraging and commuting bats. However, beyond this off-Site woodland, connectivity to habitats further afield is limited by residential areas. Neutral grassland to the southern extent of the Site may also act as a foraging resource for bats. The Site is therefore considered to hold 'moderate' potential for commuting and foraging bats, in line with the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidelines (Collins, 2023).

- 4.26 From initial inspection during the PEA, no potential roosting features were identified upon the mature trees within Woodland W1. However, a full ground-level tree assessment (GLTA) for potential roosting features was not carried out as this was not within the scope of the PEA survey.

Badger

- 4.27 The SxBRC have not returned records for badger due to the sensitive nature of these records. However, the surrounding landscape contains woodland, grassland and scrub, some of which is in association with a railway embankment, and as such badgers are assumed to be present in the local area.
- 4.28 A mammal path leading from the southwestern corner into the Site and exiting along the Site's western boundary was identified during the Site survey. Foxes *Vulpes vulpes* were seen using this path during the Site survey. No other mammalian evidence was identified on Site.
- 4.29 The habitats present on-Site, which include some areas of other neutral grassland, are thought to offer foraging, dispersal, and sett-building opportunities for badger, should they be present within the surrounding area.

Hazel Dormouse

- 4.30 A total of 77 records of hazel dormouse were identified within the search area, dating from 2000 to 2023. The closest record is c. 0.14km west of the Site and c. 0.05km west of Ashenground and Bolnore Woods LNR, which comprises suitable hazel dormouse in the form of coppiced woodland.
- 4.31 Habitats on-Site, namely dense scrub and woodland, provide suitability for hazel dormice. These habitats are further connected to the wooded habitat in the wider landscape, which includes Ashenground and Bolnore Woods LNR, which records suggest holds a hazel dormouse population.

Riparian Mammals

- 4.32 The SxBRC provided no records of otter or water vole within the search area. No watercourses or riparian habitats were present within, or in close proximity to, the Site. As a result, the habitats within the Site are not considered likely to provide suitable conditions to support otter or water vole.

Other Mammals

Hedgehog

- 4.33 The desk study provided 36 records of hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* from within the search area, dating from 2015 to 2022; the closest record was c. 0.26km from the Site.

- 4.34 The habitats present on Site are thought to offer suitable habitat for hedgehogs. The habitats on Site are likely to serve as dispersal corridors to the surrounding area and also as breeding and foraging habitat. It is also thought likely that hedgehogs are likely to use the residential gardens of the surrounding dwellings for foraging habitat.

Birds

- 4.35 A total of 942 records of 57 bird species were identified within the search area, dating from 1980 to 2024. Those of potential relevance to the Site include meadow pipit *Anthus pratensis*, dunnock *Prunella modularis*, song thrush *Turdus philomelos* and whitethroat.
- 4.36 The habitats present within the Site, most notably the woodland to the northern extent of the Site, offer suitable opportunities for nesting and foraging birds.

Reptiles

- 4.37 A total of 68 records of reptiles were identified within the search area including slow-worm, grass snake *Natrix helvetica*, adder *Vipera berus* and common lizard.
- 4.38 Grassland suitable for reptiles is present within the Site, with a tall sward height and tussocks in areas. Areas of tall forbs present throughout the remainder of the Site together with two log piles situated within parcels W1 and G2 (Appendix A) are also thought to offer foraging, sheltering, and dispersal opportunities for reptiles.
- 4.39 A common lizard was identified within the Site during the UK Habs survey and a slow worm identified during the Habitat Condition Assessment visit in June 2025. Reptiles are therefore confirmed as being present on-Site.

Amphibians

- 4.40 A total of 274 records of five amphibian species were identified within the search area, including common toad *Bufo bufo*, common frog *Rana temporaria*, smooth newt *Lissotriton vulgaris*, palmate newt *Lissotriton helveticus* and great crested newt.
- 4.41 Grassland with longer sward and tussocks offers suitability for amphibians. Additional features present within the Site including log piles are also considered to offer refuge opportunities for amphibian species.

Great Crested Newt

- 4.42 SxBRC hold a total of 68 records for great crested newt within the search area. The closest of which is situated c. 0.7km north-west of the Site.
- 4.43 Despite spending much of their annual lifecycle within the terrestrial environment, great crested newts are dependent upon the presence of suitable aquatic breeding habitat in order for a population to persist. No potential breeding ponds were identified on-Site during the Site survey.

However, the desk study revealed one waterbody within 250m of Site (Pond 5) and an additional 11 within 500m of Site, based on OS and aerial mapping. It should also be noted that there may be unmapped ponds within the residential gardens associated with the residential dwellings within the surrounding area.

- 4.44 Following the identification of waterbodies within the vicinity of the Site, a HSI assessment was conducted on 30 May 2025 to ascertain their potential to support GCN. Surveyors Sam Ashby (GCN Survey Licence No. 2024-12395-CL08-GCN) and Nat Scott conducted the HSI assessments of each waterbody within 500m of Site, where access allowed.
- 4.45 The HSI assessment found three ponds to hold 'average' suitability for great crested newt (Ponds 5, 6 and 11; Table 2; Appendix F). Of these, ponds 11 and 6 were not recommended for further survey as they lie beyond the A272 road south of the Site which acts as a major dispersal barrier to GCN. While Pond 5 is situated west of the railway, it was recommended that an eDNA analysis be undertaken considering the infrequently managed railway embankments could offer limited connectivity to the Site.
- 4.46 Ponds 4 and 8 were found to hold 'below average' suitability for GCN and were not subject to further survey. Pond 12 was found to hold 'poor' suitability and not subject to further survey. Access to Ponds 3, 7, 9, and 13 was not possible at the time of survey and ponds 10 and 14 were dry at the time of survey, hence a HSI assessment could not be conducted for these waterbodies. Ponds 7, 8, and 9 also lie south of the A272 and dispersal from these waterbodies to the Site is likely prevented.
- 4.47 Water samples collected from Pond 5 on 13 June 2025, by surveyors Lucy Moorhouse (GCN Survey Licence No. 2022-10511-CL08-GCN) and Will Campbell following best practice guidance (Biggs *et al.*, 2014), were subject to analysis for eDNA by ADAS. The results did not indicate the presence of GCN at the time of survey (Table 2; Appendix G).

Table 2. Results of the HSI and eDNA surveys

Pond No.	Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Score	eDNA Analysis Result
1	Not conducted; beyond 500m	N/A
2	Not conducted; beyond 500m	N/A
3	Not conducted; access not granted	Not conducted; no access
4	Below average	Not conducted; HSI score unsuitable
5	Average	GCN not present
6	Average	Not conducted; major dispersal barrier
7	Not conducted; access not granted	Not conducted; no access
8	Below average	Not conducted; HSI score unsuitable

9	Not conducted; access not granted	Not conducted; no access
10	Not conducted; pond dry	Not conducted; pond dry
11	Average	Not conducted; major dispersal barrier
12	Poor	Not conducted; HSI score unsuitable
13	Not conducted; access not granted	Not conducted; no access
14	Not conducted; pond dry	Not conducted; pond dry

- 4.48 Taking the above assessment into consideration, GCN are not considered likely to be present on Site and are scoped out of further assessment.

Invertebrates

- 4.49 A total of 970 records of 96 invertebrate species were identified within the search area. Those of potential relevance to the Site include small heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*, grizzled skipper *Pyrgus malvae* grass rivulet *Perizoma albulatai*, and ray spider *Theridiosoma gemmosum*. The Site does not lie within an 'Important Invertebrate Area' nor a 'B-line' (Buglife, 2024a, 2024b).
- 4.50 The habitats present within the Site including the grassland, mature trees and log piles are thought to offer suitable habitat for a range of commonly occurring invertebrate species. The Site is not thought likely to support an important invertebrate assemblage or particularly rare species due to the limited and commonly occurring habitats recorded.

5.0 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Nature Conservation Designations

Statutory

National Statutory

- 5.1 The proposal is not expected to significantly increase footfall within the statutory sites identified in the desk study, with only six residential dwellings proposed. As Scarse Valley, Blunts and Paiges Wood and Bedelands Farm are all in excess of 1km from the Site, it is considered self-evident that this potential impact pathway is not likely.
- 5.2 Ashenground and Bolnore Woods LNR is located c. 100m from the Site, and as such there is some limited potential for increased visitor numbers. However, the small uplift in local population anticipated from the proposed development is not likely to lead to a significant increase in recreational use.
- 5.3 The Site lies within the Adur (Burgess Hull) Water Body Catchment, and this tributary of the wider Adur Upper Operational Catchment lies c. 1km to the south of the Site and is in poor ecological status (Environment Agency, 2022). As such, the design of the proposed development should be informed by a drainage strategy to ensure that diffuse and point-source pollution impact pathways are adequately assessed and mitigated, where necessary. However, no fluvial connections exist between the tributary and the Site.

Non-Statutory

Local Wildlife Sites

- 5.4 There are four LWS within 2km of the Site (Great Wood & Copyhold Hanger, Western Road Cemetery, Bedelands, and Catt's Wood Complex). The closest of these, Catt's Wood Complex, is c. 0.08km north-west of the Site. Any housing provision on the Site may potentially increase footfall to these sites. However, as assessed above, the proposed development is considered unlikely to have a significant negative impact on the ecological value of the site, due to the limited increase in dwellings provided.

Habitats and Flora

Grassland

- 5.5 The grassland on Site is likely to have intrinsic ecological value to wildlife in the local area, including foraging bats, birds, amphibians, pollinating invertebrates and reptiles. The grassland is subject to ongoing management in the form of biannual cutting.

- 5.6 Further habitat condition assessment survey work has been undertaken to inform a Biodiversity Net Gain feasibility assessment. It is recommended that grassland is retained and enhanced wherever possible in order to meet statutory BNG requirements. Any losses of grassland, particularly 'other neutral grassland', would be costly to compensate for in terms of BNG units. Furthermore, any landscaping scheme to come forward could inadvertently cause further loss of existing other neutral grassland habitat, e.g. through large planting areas, and this would be counterproductive towards the best possible BNG score.

Woodland and Individual Trees

- 5.7 It is recommended that the on-Site woodland fragment and the individual trees are retained in full and incorporated into the scheme designs, since they may provide suitable commuting and foraging potential for bats and birds, as well as reptiles, amphibians and other species.
- 5.8 Protective buffers around retained individual trees and woodland are recommended, following Root Protection Area (RPA) specification to be detailed by arboricultural surveys. Protection measures should be in line with recommendations provided in BS 5837:2012 *Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction*.

Fauna

Bats

- 5.9 The Site holds 'moderate' potential for commuting and foraging bats; the woodland extending from beyond the Site to the north holds commuting and foraging potential but lies beyond the scope of the development. It was therefore recommended that bat activity surveys were conducted to record commuting or foraging activity on-Site. Due to the limited size of the Site, walked transect surveys were not considered appropriate or proportionate, and neither were monthly static detector deployments, which is the recommended survey effort for 'moderate' habitats (Collins, 2023). Instead, it was recommended that one static bat detector is deployed under suitable conditions on a seasonal basis up until the end of September. The results of the activity surveys are provided in a standalone report (CSA/7606/04). Additional survey effort was unlikely to yield further useful information, given the size of the Site and the scope of the proposals.
- 5.10 The PEA did not comprise an in-depth inspection of the mature trees to the northern extent of the Site for their suitability to support roosting bats. The proposed development is not likely to comprise the removal or pruning of mature trees but, if this is subject to change, it is recommended that a GLTA is undertaken in the first instance to assess for the presence of potential bat roost features within the canopy. Potential Roost Features (PRFs) may then need to be surveyed up to

three times either by a licenced bat surveyor trained in rope access, or through dusk emergence surveys. However, no removal of trees or pruning is anticipated as part of the proposed development.

- 5.11 Particular efforts should be made to avoid or minimise lighting of adjacent off-Site habitats, primarily the woodland north-east of the Site. It is advised that downward directional lighting be selected in order to minimise unnecessary light spill onto surrounding vegetation and that warm white LED lighting is used where possible.
- 5.12 Bats and their roost sites are afforded protection under the provisions of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, and as such should any impacts to roost sites be anticipated then implementation of any consented scheme would need to be subject to a European Protected Species (EPS) mitigation licence from Natural England.

Badger

- 5.13 Local badger populations could potentially make use of habitats at the Site to dig new setts in the future. Therefore, during a construction phase, badgers can be at risk of direct impacts such as falling into open excavations or entering open ended pipework (above 150mm diameter), risking killing/injury. A pre-start badger survey and precautionary measures are recommended to be included as part of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).
- 5.14 Badgers and their active setts are afforded protection under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Where retention of a sett is not possible, then active badger setts may be closed under licence from Natural England between July and November. Inactive setts (where lack of use by badger can be demonstrated over a prolonged period) can in certain circumstances be closed without the need for a licence.

Hazel Dormice

- 5.15 Connectivity between the Site and Ashenground and Bolnore Woods LNR is limited by the railway lying immediately west of the Site boundary, which likely acts as a major dispersal barrier to hazel dormice as they are primarily arboreal. However, the interconnected wooded habitat in the wider landscape which includes Ashenground and Bolnore Woods LNR and the wooded part of the Site crosses the railway c. 1.45km north of the Site, and as such the possible presence of dormice on Site cannot be ruled out at this stage.
- 5.16 However, the small size of the suitable habitats on Site means that any dormice that may be present would likely be in low numbers and would likely only use this habitat infrequently. The small size of the on-Site habitat also limits the ability to carry out presence/likely absence surveys in line with accepted guidelines, and these habitats are likely to largely

be retained. As such, it is recommended that these habitats are retained in full in the first instance. If the woodland/scrub on habitat is to be directly or indirectly impacted by the proposed development a precautionary working method statement (PWMS) should be prepared at the Reserved Matters Stage..

Other Mammals

- 5.17 Hedgehogs are a Species of Principal Importance in respect of Schedule 41 of the NERC Act 2006 (a 'S41 Species'). Although residential gardens are likely to provide suitable foraging habitat for hedgehogs, the erection of garden fences would prevent hedgehogs from accessing these areas. Therefore, it is recommended that hedgehog gates are installed in garden fences to allow them to continue to pass through and utilise habitats on-Site.

Nesting birds

- 5.18 All wild birds are protected from killing and injury, and their nests and eggs are protected from damage and destruction, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Therefore, any clearance of nesting habitat or features required to facilitate the development should avoid the period between March and August (inclusive) when nesting birds are most likely to be present. If this is not possible, habitats will need to be checked for nesting birds by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to clearance with works only proceeding if no nesting evidence or behaviour are observed. This approach should be incorporated into the CEMP.

Reptiles

- 5.19 Reptiles were confirmed as present within the Site with a common lizard and slow worm identified during Site visits. Opportunities for reptiles were also confirmed at the Site, comprising tall and tussocky grassland with areas of scrub/dense vegetation and log piles throughout the Site.
- 5.20 In light of the confirmed presence of reptiles on-Site, and historic translocation schemes comprising the Site and wider boundary, it is recommended that a Reptile Mitigation Strategy should be secured by way of a pre-commencement Condition. In light of previous survey findings, it is recommended that the Reptile Mitigation Strategy includes methodology for a translocation.
- 5.21 All British reptile species are listed within Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are afforded protection against killing and injury under parts of sub-section 9(1) of the Act. In addition, all British reptile species are species of principal importance under S41 of the NERC Act (2006) in England.

Summary of Recommendations

- 5.22 Based on the ecological constraints identified above, Table 3 summarises recommendations for further work necessary to determine the need for, and scope of, any avoidance, mitigation and/or compensation measures to address potential adverse effects of development. The outcome of this further work will inform the planning application.

Table 3. Recommendations for further investigation/survey and reporting

Ecological Feature	Further Work	Applicable Timescales
Adur (Burgess Hull) Water Body Catchment	Detailed drainage strategy to identify and propose mitigation for any potential impacts upon the wider Adur Upper Operational Catchment	Prior to detailed planning application
Baseline Habitats	Detailed botanical surveys of grassland/woodland etc. Habitat condition assessments to inform Statutory Biodiversity Metric for BNG	April - July subject to specific habitat types
Bats	Bat activity surveys, comprising the deployment of a single static bat detector on a seasonal basis	Five consecutive nights within summer and autumn with data collection concluding by end of October 2025
	Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA), should any revised proposals comprise the removal or pruning of mature trees	None, but optimal January-March, December
Badger	Standard precautionary measures within a CEMP	Reserved Matters and during construction
Hazel Dormouse	Precautionary Working Methods Statement (if necessary)	Reserved Matters
Nesting birds	Standard precautionary measures within a CEMP	Reserved Matters and during construction
Reptiles	Reptile Mitigation Strategy	Reserved Matters pre-commencement condition

- 5.23 At the time of writing, detailed botanical and Habitat Condition Assessment surveys have been undertaken with the results to be provided in a Biodiversity Net Gain feasibility report.

Opportunities for Ecological Enhancement

- 5.24 To promote adherence to the NPPF, the Mid Sussex District Plan and BNG requirements under the Environment Act 2021, the following opportunities for ecological enhancement have been identified:
- Incorporation of native plants and those of wildlife importance into the landscaping scheme to provide foraging opportunities for birds, bats, invertebrates, and reptiles

- Provision of bat roosting opportunities within the proposed building and retained mature trees
- Provision of bird nesting opportunities within the proposed building and retained mature trees
- Provision of hedgehog gaps in new fencing to promote habitat connectivity across and within the Site
- Provision of additional reptile habitat features, such as hibernacula
- Provision of aquatic habitats, in the form of a wildlife pond or drainage basin with biodiversity enhancements to be informed by a drainage strategy

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 The presence of reptiles on-Site is confirmed to be an ecological constraint to the proposed development. As above, it is recommended a reptile mitigation strategy is provided including a methodology for translocation.
- 6.2 The Site holds limited potential to support the following important ecological features:
- The woodland and neutral grassland provide 'moderate' potential to support commuting or foraging bats.
 - Badgers are assumed to be in the local area, and precautionary measures as part of a CEMP are recommended
 - Hazel dormice are known to be present in the local area, within habitat that shares connectivity with the Site. The proposals are unlikely to impact hazel dormouse habitat, and as such surveys for hazel dormouse are not recommended, but a PWMS to be produced at the Reserved Matters stage may be appropriate.
 - Nesting birds may be present in the scrub and woodland parcel, precautionary measures as part of a CEMP are recommended
- 6.3 Initial inspection did not identify any features which offer suitable habitat for roosting bats. It is understood the development will not comprise the removal or pruning of mature trees; should this be subject to change, a detailed Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) may be required.
- 6.4 The following additional investigation/survey work is recommended to inform an evidence-based impact assessment of the proposed development, such that suitable ecological impact avoidance, mitigation and/or compensation measures may be adopted:
- The drainage strategy submitted should clearly identify and propose mitigation for any potential impacts upon the wider Adur Upper Operational Catchment
 - All recorded habitats on-Site require further Habitat Condition Assessment Survey work to inform the Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements
 - Bat activity surveys, comprising the development of a single static bat detector, to be conducted on a seasonal basis until the end of October
 - Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA), should any revised proposals comprise the removal of existing mature trees
 - Reptile presence/absence surveys to inform an appropriate mitigation scheme
- 6.5 Recommendations for ecological enhancement measures that could be delivered as part of development at the Site have been provided here-in, which will aid accordance with the Mid Sussex District Plan.

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Appendix A

Habitats Plan & Habitat Summary Table



- Site boundary
- Other neutral grassland (g3c)
'Tall sward' (128)
'Active management' (516)
- Other woodland-broadleaved (w1g)
'Secondary woodland' (31)
'Nutrient-enriched substrate' (507)
- Bramble scrub (h3h) 'Ruderals' (81)
'Nutrient-enriched substrate' (507)
- Developed land, sealed surface (u1b)
'Road' (800) 'Car park' (804)
- Modified grassland (g4) 'Ruderals' (81)
'Young trees' (202)
- Individual tree
- Target note - Log pile
- Habitat parcel reference



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Table 1. UK Habitat Classification Summary Table

Habitat Parcel Number	Habitat Type	Habitat Code(s)	Description
G1	Other neutral grassland, 'Tall sward' (128), 'Active management' (516)	g3c 128 516	Grassland comprised of common grass species including Yorkshire fog <i>Holcus lanatus</i> , sweet vernal grass <i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i> , and cock's foot <i>Dactylis glomerata</i> . Other flora identified include white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> , creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i> , ground ivy <i>Glechoma hederacea</i> , common vetch <i>Vicia sativa</i> , creeping cinquefoil <i>Potentilla reptans</i> , and cut-leaved crane's-bill <i>Geranium dissectum</i> . G1 is subject to biannual cutting; at the time of the PEA survey, sward length was tussocky in areas, often exceeding 20cm. During a subsequent site visit, management was being undertaken and sward length was mown to <10cm. This grassland does not appear to have been subject to other forms of management, with a diversity of herbaceous species present and no evidence of bare ground or major disturbance. Newly-planted trees, including pedunculate oak <i>Quercus robur</i> , exist with protective sheathing.
G2	Modified grassland, 'Ruderals' (81), 'Young trees' (202)	g4 16 202	G2 was primarily comprised of few grasses, namely perennial rye grass <i>Lolium perenne</i> and Yorkshire fog. Ruderal species frequent in parcel S1 occur infrequently in G2, including bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg., common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i> and cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> . Young oak and sycamore <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> trees occur occasionally.
S1	Bramble scrub, 'Ruderals' (81), 'Nutrient-enriched substrate' (507)	h3h 81 507	Dense bramble scrub with occasional ruderal species, such as cleavers, common nettle, dock <i>Rumex</i> sp. The substrate appeared to have been laid with bark chippings, likely providing nutrient enrichment.
W1	Other broadleaved woodland, 'Secondary woodland' (31), 'Nutrient-enriched substrate' (507)	w1g 31 507	This habitat is an extension of woodland existing immediately northeast of the Site boundary, with field maple <i>Acer campestre</i> , sycamore, Norway maple <i>Acer platanoides</i> , and hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> providing a continuous canopy above a shrub layer of blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> alongside infrequent wild garlic <i>Allium ursinum</i> , red campion <i>Silene dioica</i> , pendulous sedge <i>Carex pendula</i> , and stinking iris <i>Iris foetidissima</i> . The woodland does not contain any deadwood, ancient or veteran trees, or features that would classify the parcel as an ancient woodland. The substrate of W1 is primarily a superficial bark mulch layer upon soil, indicating the area may have been modified for amenity purposes at some stage.
U1	Developed land; sealed surface, 'Road' (800), 'Car park' (804)	u1b 800 804	This parcel does not contain any vegetation and is comprised of a sealed, hardstanding surface use for car parking and residential access.

Appendix B

Legislation and Planning Policy

- 1.1. The **Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017** (as amended) make prescriptions for the designation and protection of Sites of Community Importance ('European sites', i.e. Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas) and European Protected Species (EPS). The latter include all native bats, great crested newts, dormice, otters and certain reptiles, listed under Annex II of the Regulations. Following the UK's departure from the European Union, the provisions of the Regulations have been retained through enactment of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, which came into force on 31 December 2020.
- 1.2. The **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981** (as amended, principally by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) forms the basis for protection of statutory designated sites of national importance (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest; SSSIs) and native species that are rare and vulnerable in a national context. Additionally, badgers are protected under the **Protection of Badgers Act 1992**.
- 1.3. The **Environment Act 2021** received Royal Assent in November 2021. Through an amendment to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the Environment Act introduced a mandatory requirement for all planning permissions to be conditional upon the submission of a Biodiversity Gain Plan for approval by the Local Planning Authority. The Plan will need to demonstrate a net gain of at least 10% in the biodiversity value of the development site.
- 1.4. Section 40(1) of the **Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006** (as amended) states that each public authority, "must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving and enhancing biodiversity." This legislation makes it clear that planning authorities should consider impacts to biodiversity when determining planning applications, with particular regard to the Section 41 (S41) lists of 56 habitats and 943 species of principal importance. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) has been superseded by the Biodiversity 2020 Strategy, however Local BAPs continue to influence biodiversity management and conservation effort, including through the spatial planning system, at the local scale.
- 1.5. The **National Planning Policy Framework (2024)** (NPPF) sets out government planning policies for England and how they should be applied. With regards to ecology and biodiversity, Chapter 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment, paragraph 187, states that the planning system and planning policies should minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

- 1.6. Paragraph 193 sets out the principles that local planning authorities should apply when determining planning applications:
- If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.
 - Development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
 - Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.
 - Development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.
- 1.7. Accompanying the NPPF, central government guidance on the implementation of planning policies is set out within online Planning Policy Guidance (PPG). The Natural Environment PPG addresses principles across a broad spectrum of topics targeting biodiversity conservation, from individual site and species protection through to the supporting of ecosystem services, and the use of local ecological networks to support the national Nature Recovery Network. In particular, the PPG promotes the delivery of measurable Biodiversity Net Gain through the creation and enhancement of habitats alongside development.
- 1.8. The **Government Circular 06/2005**, which is referred to within the NPPF, defines statutory nature conservation sites and protected species as a material consideration in the planning process.
- 1.9. Local planning policies of relevance to ecology, biodiversity and/or nature conservation have been set out in Table 1 below.

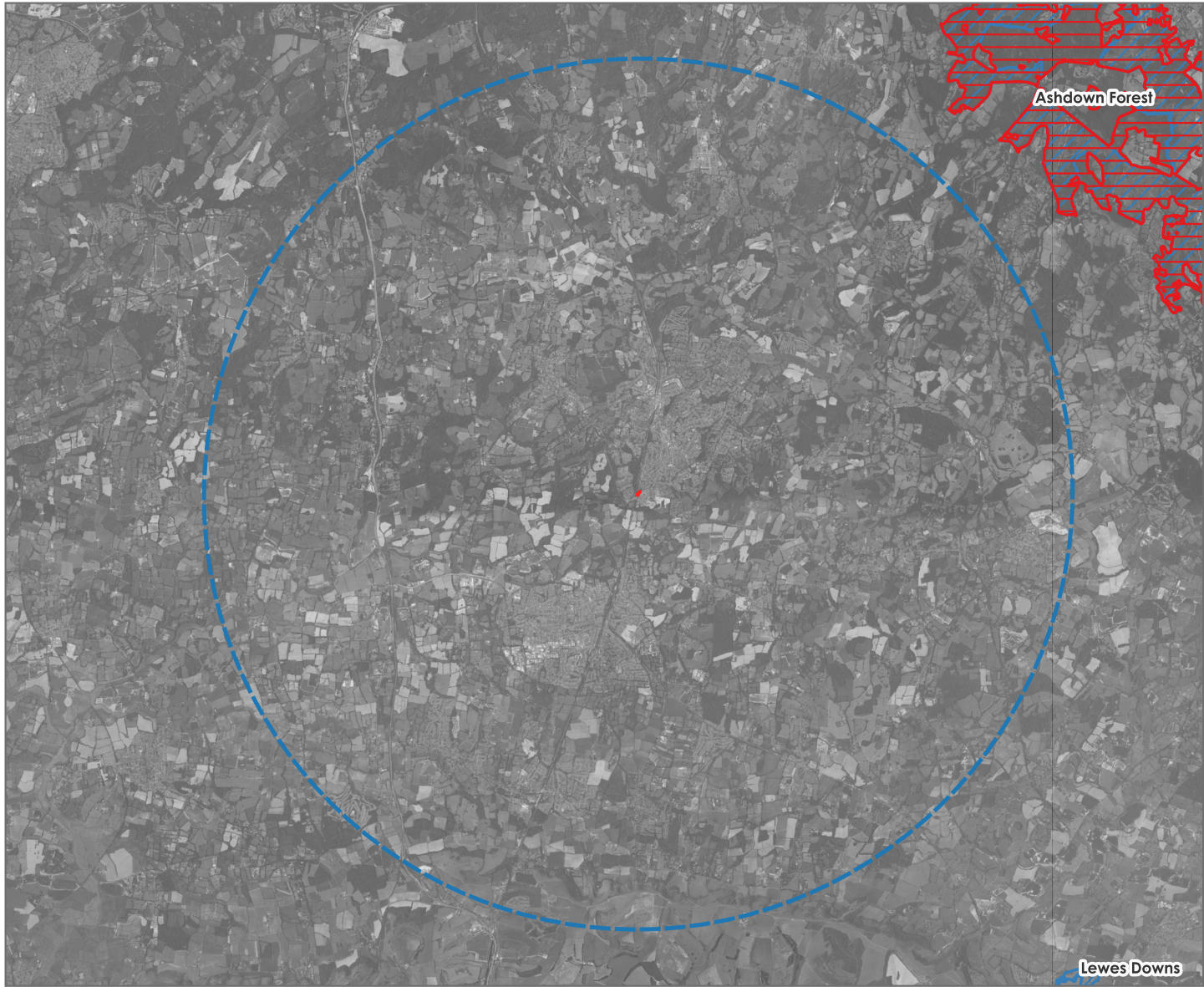
Table 1. Summary of regional and local planning policy relating to ecology

Policy	Summary
The Mid Sussex District Plan – Adopted March 28th 2018	
Policy DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows	The District Council will support the protection and enhancement of trees, woodland and hedgerows, and encourage new planting. In particular, ancient woodland and aged or veteran trees will be protected. Development that will damage or lead to the loss of trees, woodland or hedgerows that contribute, either individually or as part of a group, to the visual amenity value or character of an area, and/or that have landscape, historic or wildlife importance, will not normally be permitted. Proposals for new trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of suitable species, usually native, and where required for visual, noise or light screening purposes, trees, woodland and hedgerows should be of a size and species that will achieve this purpose. Trees, woodland and hedgerows will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development: • incorporates existing important trees, woodland and hedgerows into the design of new development and its landscape scheme; and • prevents damage to root systems and takes account of expected future growth; and • where possible, incorporates retained trees, woodland and hedgerows within public open space rather than private space to safeguard their long-term management; and • has appropriate protection measures throughout the development process; and • takes opportunities to plant new trees, woodland and hedgerows within the new development to enhance on-site green infrastructure and increase resilience to the effects of climate change; and • does not sever ecological corridors created by these assets. Proposals for works to trees will be considered taking into account: • the condition and health of the trees; and • the contribution of the trees to the character and visual amenity of the local area; and • the amenity and nature conservation value of the trees; and • the extent and impact of the works; and • any replanting proposals. The felling of protected trees will only be permitted if there is no appropriate alternative. Where a protected tree or group of trees is felled, a replacement tree or group of trees, on a minimum of a 1:1 basis and of an appropriate size and type, will normally be required. The replanting should take place as close to the felled tree or trees as possible having regard to the proximity of adjacent properties. Development should be positioned as far as possible from ancient woodland with a minimum buffer of 15 metres maintained between ancient woodland and the development boundary.
Policy DP38: Biodiversity	Biodiversity will be protected and enhanced by ensuring development: • Contributes and takes opportunities to improve, enhance,

Policy	Summary
	manage and restore biodiversity and green infrastructure, so that there is a net gain in biodiversity, including through creating new designated sites and locally relevant habitats, and incorporating biodiversity features within developments; and • Protects existing biodiversity, so that there is no net loss of biodiversity. Appropriate measures should be taken to avoid and reduce disturbance to sensitive habitats and species. Unavoidable damage to biodiversity must be offset through ecological enhancements and mitigation measures (or compensation measures in exceptional circumstances); and • Minimises habitat and species fragmentation and maximises opportunities to enhance and restore ecological corridors to connect natural habitats and increase coherence and resilience; and • Promotes the restoration, management and expansion of priority habitats in the District; and • Avoids damage to, protects and enhances the special characteristics of internationally designated Special Protection Areas, Special Areas of Conservation; nationally designated Sites of Special Scientific Interest, Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty; and locally designated Sites of Nature Conservation Importance, Local Nature Reserves and Ancient Woodland or to other areas identified as being of nature conservation or geological interest, including wildlife corridors, aged or veteran trees, Biodiversity Opportunity Areas, and Nature Improvement Areas. Designated sites will be given protection and appropriate weight according to their importance and the contribution they make to wider ecological networks. Valued soils will be protected and enhanced, including the best and most versatile agricultural land, and development should not contribute to unacceptable levels of soil pollution. Geodiversity will be protected by ensuring development prevents harm to geological conservation interests, and where possible, enhances such interests. Geological conservation interests include Regionally Important Geological and Geomorphological Sites.

Appendix C

Desk Study Information



- Site boundary
- 10km buffer
- Special Protection Areas (SPA)
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)



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	Drawing Title	10km International Designations	Scale	Refer to scale	Rev	-
	Client	Cross Homes (Sussex) Ltd.	Drawn	NS	Checked	SA



- Site boundary
- 3km buffer
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Local Nature Reserves (LNR)



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Project	Kilwood Apartments, Rocky Lane, Haywards Heath	Date	June 2025	Drawing No.	CSA/7606/101
Drawing Title	National Designations	Scale	Refer to scale	Rev	-
Client	Cross Homes (Sussex) Ltd.	Drawn	NS	Checked	SA



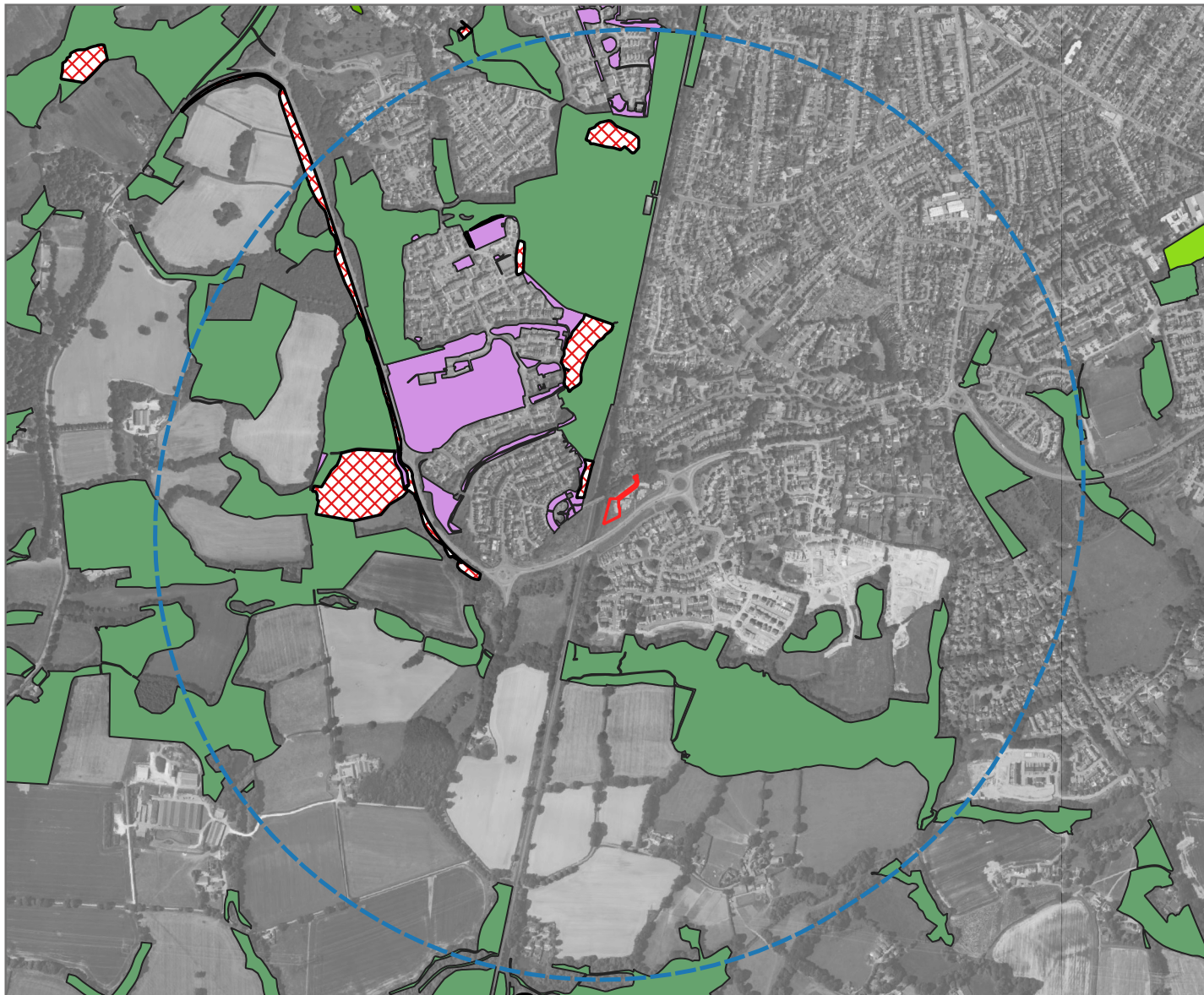
-  Site boundary
-  2km buffer
-  Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland
-  Ancient Replanted Woodland



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Project	Kilnwood Apartments, Rocky Lane, Haywards Heath	Date	June 2025	Drawing No.	CSA/7606/102
Drawing Title	Ancient Woodland	Scale	Refer to scale	Rev	-
Client	Cross Homes (Sussex) Ltd.	Drawn	NS	Checked	SA



- Site boundary
- 1km buffer
- Deciduous woodland
- Good quality semi improved grassland
- Lowland meadows
- No main habitat but additional habitats present
- Traditional orchard



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Project	Kilwood Apartments, Rocky Lane, Haywards Heath	Date	June 2025	Drawing No.	CSA/7606/103
Drawing Title	Priority Habitats	Scale	Refer to scale	Rev	-
Client	Cross Homes (Sussex) Ltd.	Drawn	NS	Checked	SA



- Site boundary
- 250m buffer
- 500m buffer
- Ponds



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Project	Kilnwood Apartments, Rocky Lane, Haywards Heath	Date	June 2025	Drawing No.	CSA/7606/104
Drawing Title	Ponds Plan	Scale	Refer to scale	Rev	-
Client	Cross Homes (Sussex) Ltd.	Drawn	NS	Checked	SA

Introduction & Summary of Results

An ecological data search was carried out for land at Rocky Lane, Haywards Heath on behalf of Nathaniel Scott (CSA Environmental) on 09/05/2025.

The following datasets were consulted for this report:

	Requested	Radius/buffer size
Designated sites, habitats & ownership maps	Yes	2km
Protected, designated and invasive species	Yes	2km

Summary of results

Sites and habitats

Statutory sites	3 LNRs
Non-statutory sites	4 LWS / 1 Designated Road Verge
Section 41 habitats	3 habitats
Ancient and/or ghyll woodland	Present

Protected and designated species

International designations	27 species	368 records
National designations	127 species	5,050 records
Other designations	289 species	9,178 records
Total	306 species	9,576 records
Invasive non-native species	34 species	355 records

Appendix D

Photographs



Photograph 1. Southern extent of broadleaved woodland (parcel W1) at the northern Site boundary.



Photograph 2. Grassland dominated by tall forbs and ruderals (parcel G2) along the western Site boundary.



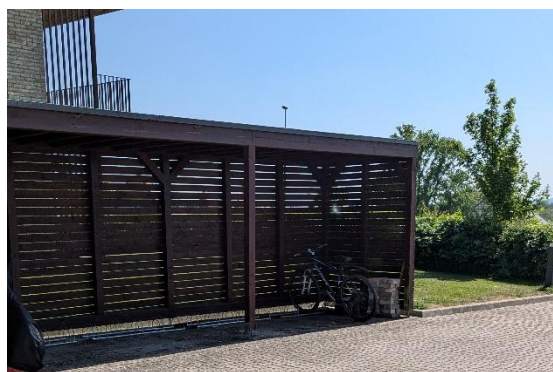
Photograph 3. Broadleaved woodland northeast of the Site boundary, with the tree canopy connected to parcel W1.



Photograph 4. View of parcel W1 from the northern Site boundary, viewing southwest.



Photograph 5. Viewing the southern Site boundary from the centre of Site, with neutral grassland (parcel G1) beyond mown modified grassland (parcel G3) and hardstanding (parcel U1).



Photograph 6. Timber-clad bicycle storage upon the eastern Site boundary.



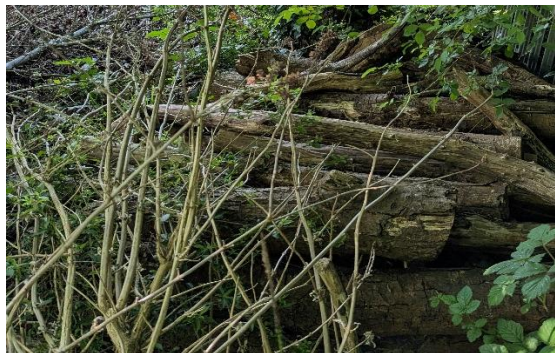
Photograph 7. Viewing the southwestern corner of the Site boundary from the centre of Site.



Photograph 8. View of the eastern Site boundary from the centre of the Site.



Photograph 9. Western extent of parcel W1, demarcated by railway fencing.



Photograph 10. Log pile in parcel W1 (Appendix A).

Appendix E

Habitats and Flora Species List

Table 1. Habitat Polygons						
Site Name	Kilnwood Apartments, Rocky Lane, Haywards Heath					
Survey Date and Surveyor(s)	02 May 2025 - Sam Ashby and Corie Lee					
Scientific Name	Common Name	Habitat Parcel Number/Habitat Type				
		G1	G2	S1	W1	U1
Herb Species						
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping thistle	x	x			
<i>Crepis</i> sp.	Hawk's-beard	x				
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers		x	x		
<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	Cut-leaved crane's-bill	x				
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb Robert	x	x			
<i>Geranium</i> sp.	Crane's-bill sp.	x				
<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>	Ground-ivy	x				
<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>	Bluebell		x		x	
<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	Cat's-ear	x				
<i>Iris foetidissima</i>	Stinking Iris				x	
<i>Lactuca serriola</i>	Prickly lettuce		x			
<i>Lamium</i> sp.	Dead-nettle sp.		x			
<i>Pentaglottis sempervirens</i>	Green alkanet		x		x	
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort plantain	x	x			
<i>Potentilla reptans</i>	Creeping cinquefoil	x				
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow buttercup	x	x			
<i>Rumex</i> sp.	Dock	x	x	x		
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Common ragwort	x				
<i>Silene dioica</i>	Red campion				x	
<i>Taraxacum</i> agg.	Dandelion	x	x			
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White clover	x		x		
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common nettle		x	x	x	
<i>Vicia sativa</i>	Common vetch	x				
<i>Euphorbia platyphyllos</i>	Broadleaved spurge		x			
Sedges and Rushes						
<i>Carex pendula</i>	Pendulous sedge				x	
Grasses						
<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	Sweet vernal-grass	x				
<i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i>	False brome	x				
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cock's-foot	x				
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire-fog	x	x			
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial rye-grass		x			
Woody Species						
Broadleaved						
<i>Acer campestre</i>	Field maple				x	
<i>Acer platanoides</i>	Norway maple				x	
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore				x	
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Hawthorn				x	
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash				x	
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly				x	
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn				x	
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate oak	x	x			
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Bramble		x	x	x	

Appendix F

Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Survey Results



- Site boundary
- 250m buffer
- 500m buffer

Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Score

- Average
- Below average
- Poor
- Not surveyed



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Project	Kilwood Apartments, Rocky Lane, Haywards Heath	Date	June 2025	Drawing No.	CSA/7606/106
Drawing Title	HSI Results	Scale	Refer to scale	Rev	-
Client	Cross Homes (Sussex) Ltd.	Drawn	NS	Checked	SA

Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Survey Results

Habitat Suitability Factors:		Pond Number and Grid Reference					
		12	4	5	11	6	8
		TQ3274522931	TQ3225422452	TQ3250622607	TQ3311022194	TQ3278722114	TQ3288622076
Map location	Category	Zone A	Zone A	Zone A	Zone A	Zone A	Zone A
	SI Value	1	1	1	1	1	1
Pond area in m ²	Category	<50m2	350m2	375m2	300m2	900m2	250m2
	SI Value	0.05	0.7	0.75	0.6	0.97	0.5
Permanence / Desiccation	Category	Never Dries	Dries Annually	Sometimes Dries	Sometimes Dries	Rarely Dries	Sometimes Dries
	SI Value	0.9	0.1	0.5	0.5	1	0.5
Water quality	Category	Poor	Poor	Poor	Poor	Moderate	Poor
	SI Value	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.33	0.67	0.33
Percentage perimeter shade to at least 1m from shore	Category	0-60%	91-95%	61-65%	0-60%	96-100%	96-100%
	SI Value	1	0.3	0.9	1	0.2	0.2
Waterfowl impact (excluding moorhen)	Category	Absent	Absent	Absent	Absent	Minor	Minor
	SI Value	1	1	1	1	0.67	0.67
Fish presence	Category	Major	Absent	Absent	Possible	Possible	Possible
	SI Value	0.01	1	1	0.67	0.67	0.67
Number of ponds within 1km not separated by barriers	Category	2	4	1	3	6	6
	SI Value	0.6	0.72	0.45	0.65	0.84	0.84
Terrestrial habitat	Category	None	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Good
	SI Value	0.01	0.67	0.67	0.67	0.67	1
Percentage of pond surface occupied by aquatic vegetation (March – May)	Category	81-85%	96-100%	96-100%	96-100%	21-25%	96-100%
	SI Value	0.95	0.8	0.8	0.8	0.55	0.8
Product		8.4645E-07	0.002674426	0.02686365	0.023109372	0.018061047	0.004977403
HSI Score		0.247035934	0.552997352	0.696492593	0.686086406	0.669382404	0.588437419
HSI Suitability		Poor	Below Average	Average	Average	Average	Below Average

Disclaimer: The HSI Calculator is a tool to provide a general assessment of great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* habitat suitability in accordance with Oldham et al., 2000 and Brady, 2010. It is the responsibility of the user to check the accuracy of the outputs. The copyright holder accepts no responsibility for repercussions (financial and/or legal) resulting from inaccurate or incorrect outputs.



- Site boundary
- 250m buffer
- 500m buffer

Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Score

- Average
- Below average
- Poor
- Not surveyed



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Drawing Title	HSI Results	Scale	Refer to scale	Rev	-
Client	Cross Homes (Sussex) Ltd.	Drawn	NS	Checked	SA

Appendix G

Great Crested Newt eDNA Analysis

Client:
7606, Will Campbell, CSA
1040079-BC-CSA, 7606, version 1



RSK ADAS Ltd
Spring Lodge
172 Chester Road
Helsby
WA6 0AR

Tel: 01159 229249
Email: Helen.Rees@adas.co.uk

www.adas.uk

Sample ID: ADAS-7199

Client Identifier: P5

Grid references/coordinates: Not Supplied

Description: pond water samples in preservative

Condition on Receipt: Low Sediment

Date of Receipt : 23/06/2025

Volume: Passed

Determinant	Result	Method	Date of Analysis
Inhibition Control [†]	2 of 2	Real Time PCR	25/06/2025
Degradation Control [§]	Within limits	Real Time PCR	25/06/2025
Great Crested Newt*	0 of 12 (negative)	Real Time PCR	25/06/2025
Negative PCR Control (Nuclease Free Water)	0 of 4	Real Time PCR	As above for GCN
Positive PCR Control (GCN DNA 10 ⁻⁴ ng/μL) [#]	4 of 4	Real Time PCR	As above for GCN
Report Prepared by:	Dr Helen Rees	Report Issued by:	Dr Ben Maddison

Signed:

Signed:

Position:

Director: Biotechnology

Position:

MD: Biotechnology

Date of preparation:

26/06/2025

Date of issue:

26/06/2025

eDNA analysis was carried out in accordance with the stipulated methodology found in the Technical Advice Note (WC1067 Appendix 5 Technical Advice Note) published by DEFRA and adopted by Natural England.

** If all PCR controls and extraction blanks give the expected results a sample is considered: negative for GCN if all of the replicates are negative; positive for GCN if one or more of the replicates are positive.*

[†] Recorded as the number of positive replicate reactions at expected C_t value. If the expected C_t value is not

[§] No degradation is expected within time frame of kit preparation, sample collection and analysis.

[#] Additional positive controls (10⁻¹, 10⁻², 10⁻³ ng/μL) are also routinely run, results not shown here.

Appendix 1: Interpretation of results

Sample Condition

Upon sample receipt we score your samples according to quality: good, low sediment, medium sediment, high sediment, white precipitate, and presence of algae.

There are three reasons as to why sediment should be avoided:

1. It is possible for DNA to persist within the sediment for longer than it would if it was floating in the water which could lead to a false positive result i.e. in this case GCN not recently present but present a long time ago
2. In some cases sediment can cause inhibition of the PCR analysis used to detect GCN eDNA within samples which could lead to an indeterminate result.
3. In some cases sediment can interfere with the DNA extraction procedure resulting in poor recovery of the eDNA which in turn can lead to an indeterminate result.

Algae can make the DNA extraction more difficult to perform so if it can be avoided then this is helpful.

Sometimes samples contain a white precipitate which we have found makes the recovery of eDNA very difficult. This precipitate can be present in such high amounts that it interferes with the eDNA extraction process meaning that we cannot recover the degradation control (nor most likely the eDNA itself) at sufficient levels for the control to be within the acceptable limits for the assay, therefore we have to classify these type of samples as indeterminate.

What do my results mean?

A positive result means that great crested newts are present in the water or have been present in the water in the recent past (eDNA degrades over around 7-21 days).

A negative result means that DNA from the great crested newt has not been detected in your sample.

On occasion an inconclusive result will be issued. This occurs where the DNA from the great crested newt has not been detected but the controls have indicated that either: the sample has been degraded and/or the eDNA was not fully extracted (poor recovery); or the PCR inhibited in some way. This may be due to the water chemistry or may be due to the presence of high levels of sediment in samples which can interfere with the DNA extraction process. A re-test could be performed but a fresh sample would need to be obtained. We have successfully performed re-tests on samples which have had high sediment content on the first collection and low sediment content (through improved sample collection) on the re-test. If water chemistry was the cause of the indeterminate then a re-test would most likely also return an inconclusive result.

The results will be recorded as indeterminate if the GCN result is negative and the degradation result is recorded as:

1. evidence of decay - meaning that the degradation control was outside of accepted limits
2. evidence of degradation or residual inhibition - meaning that the degradation control was outside of accepted limits but that this could have been due to inhibitors not being removed sufficiently by the dilution of inhibited samples (according to the technical advice note)



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