



BRADLEY MURPHY DESIGN LTD
Studio 3, Floor 18
Alpha Studios
Alpha Tower
Suffolk St Queensway
Birmingham
B1 1TT

e: info@bradleymurphydesign.co.uk
t: +44 (0)1926 676496
www.bradleymurphydesign.co.uk

PHASE 2: FURTHER ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT Land East of College Lane, Hurstpierpoint

September 2026

BMD.22.0022.RPE-P2.002

DOCUMENT HISTORY

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Declaration of compliance with professional code of ethics or conduct

The information which we have prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bonafide opinions.

All reasonable efforts have been made to comply with current legislation and best practice, including BS 42020:2013, the Environment Act 2021 (Schedule 7A: Biodiversity Gain), the National Planning Policy Framework (2026), CIEEM EcIA Guidelines (2018, updated 2022), and relevant Natural England guidance.

Bradley Murphy Design Ltd

Studio 3, Floor 18
Alpha Studios
Alpha Tower
Suffolk St Queensway
Birmingham
B1 1TT

Company No. 7788475

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Client	Thakeham Homes Ltd.
Consultant	Bradley Murphy Design Ltd.

SITE

Location	Land East of College Lane, Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex.
National Grid Reference	Approx. centre: TQ 29212 16026.
Over-view	The Site comprises grazed fields and associated plantation woodland, pond, and treelines with associated ditches. The Site is situated in the urban outskirts of the village of Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks and to the south of the village of Hurst Wickham in the county of West Sussex. Burgess Hill town centre lies approximately 3.5 km north east of the Site.
Landscape context.....	The Site is situated on the outskirts of the village of Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex. The Site can be found on the eastern fringes of the village, between College Lane and Belmont Lane. The immediate surroundings consist of development to the immediate south and west and pasture/arable to the north and east.

DEVELOPMENT & PLANNING BACKGROUND

Proposed works.....	Erection of 100 dwellings, with associated access, car parking, refuse/recycling storage, landscaping, infrastructure and works
Planning stage.....	Full Planning

ECOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

General.....	An ecological assessment of the Site was undertaken by BMD during August 2022 that refined the scope of Phase 2 surveys required to inform the planning application as reported in BMD.22.0022.RPE-P2.804. Eco Assessment. An updated Verification was undertaken in 2026 (BMD.22.0022.RPE.TN.001.Ecological Verification Report).
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SURVEY

Objectives.....	1. To provide further ecological baseline, including nature conservation value, of the Site with a focus on protected and notable species; 2. To guide the initial stages of master planning and indicative mitigation required to ensure net biodiversity gain is achieved and favourable conservation status of species utilising the Site as a result of the proposed development; and 3. To provide specialist advice and make appropriate recommendations to ensure compliance with wildlife law and recognised best practice.
Approach.....	Specific surveys, following current best practice, were undertaken for the following species/species groups: • Great crested newt • Reptiles.
Date.....	May/ June 2023 and September/ October 2025
Results	<u>Great crested newt</u> – HSI assessments of two waterbodies were undertaken in the initial assessment and updated in 2025. eDNA samples were then taken, with the results presented within this report. All results were negative in both 2023 and 2025.
Evaluation/Conclusions.....	<u>Reptile</u> – a 'low' population of grass snake and slow worm occur on site. The Site supports a range of protected and notable species and as such, appropriate mitigation and compensation will be required to facilitate the Proposed Development.

RECOMMENDATIONS

Appropriate mitigation strategies will be required to ensure protected and notable species are protected from harm during the construction works and that the conservation status of all protected and notable species currently using the Site is maintained post development through habitat creation and enhancement.

Opportunities for enhancement include the use of appropriate native trees and shrubs in the planting schemes, provision of bat roosting features (range of boxes), hedgerow enhancements and replanting, management of scrub, creation of hibernacula and refugia and enhancement of grassland areas.

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background Information

- 1.1.1 Bradley Murphy Design Ltd. (BMD) was commissioned by Thakeham Homes Limited in February 2023 to undertake an Ecological Assessment of: Land east of College Lane, Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex —hereafter referred to as ‘the Site’. The Site is approximately centred on national grid reference: TQ 29212 16026. A plan depicting the Site’s location is provided in the Appendix.
- 1.1.2 Species specific surveys which have been undertaken at the Site are detailed in section 2.
- 1.1.3 This report presents the approach, results and evaluation of assessments and surveys undertaken at the Site to provide the species-specific ecological baseline. The data will:
- Further guide the detailed master planning to ensure that favourable conservation status of the species/species groups assessed (where confirmed on Site) is at least maintained and, where appropriate, enhanced through the design and mitigation hierarchy (avoid, mitigate, compensate);
 - Further inform the detailed planning applications and level of mitigation required to ensure, as a result of the proposed development:
 - Current European and domestic wildlife legislation is not breached.
 - Ensure favourable conservation status of protected and notable species at the Site

1.2 Proposed Development

- 1.2.1 Erection of 100 dwellings, with associated access, car parking, refuse/recycling storage, landscaping, infrastructure and works.

1.3 Site Context

Historic Context

- 1.3.1 A review of readily available historical maps and aerial imagery indicate that the Site’s location formed part of an agricultural complex comprising two field parcels and associated marginal features such as treelines and hedgerows from at least the late 18th century onwards. The eastern boundary of the Site consisted of a treeline adjacent Belmont Lane in the late 18th century, this area was subject to new woodland planting and scrubland in 2015 which extended the treeline further into the Site. The northwest/northeast hedgerow and on site waterbodies, sourced from a tributary of Herring Stream at the northern boundary of the Site, appear to have been present in the landscape since at least the late 18th century.
- 1.3.2 With regard to the local context change throughout the centuries, the residential block connected to College Lane adjacent the west of the Site was originally arable land within the 18th century until the mid-19th century. At this time period this area alongside adjacent blocks to the south of the Site became part of a residential development that transformed the majority of the land to built form.

- 1.3.3 Further urban expansion has occurred within the surrounding areas within the 19th century, in particular the expansions of the village of Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks have led to many residential blocks being constructed to the south, west and east of the greater landscape near to the Site. Aside from boundary features, the main habitats within the Site, as well as the dominant landscape features within the vicinity of the Site – dominant agricultural field complexes and scattered woodland blocks primarily to the south have changed little in composition over the last 100 years.

Present Context

- 1.3.4 The Site is an approximately 5.4 ha parcel of land comprising a large grazed field, scrub and plantation woodland, pond, a stream and peripheral hedgerows and trees. The elevation above sea level on the Site approximately ranges from 40-70 m.
- 1.3.5 An area of scrub and new woodland planting was established in approximately 2015 along the eastern boundary of the Site.
- 1.3.6 The Site is situated in the urban outskirts of the village of Hurstpierpoint and Hassocks and to the south of the village of Hurst Wickham in the county of West Sussex. Burgess Hill town centre lies approximately 3.5 km north east of the Site. The urbanised areas, including residential developments, industrial complexes, and transport infrastructure associated with Burgess Hill and its suburban fringe, are present to the north east of the Site. This landscape sits in juxtaposition to the south of the Site which is dominated by agricultural fields (chiefly arable, but with significant tracts of land set to pasture). Thus, it is considered that the Site occupies a rural-urban transitional zone that defines its local ecology.
- 1.3.7 A ditch is present in the northern boundary of the Site which in areas culminate in two separate historic pond features on Site. There are further waterbodies and watercourses which continue into the wider landscape particularly to the east of the Site.
- 1.3.8 Considering the contextual features outlined above regarding the Site and its surrounding landscape, while there is some overland connectivity of the Site to its adjacent habitats, particularly to the east and south, the presence of numerous significant dispersal barriers within the vicinity, including roadways and rail lines, is deemed to leave dispersal capacity of terrestrial fauna to/from the Site relatively moderate. Aquatic and semi-aquatic species may potentially have access to onsite habitats via the watercourse corridor along the north of the Site and associated off site waterbodies. It is further estimated that more mobile, flying species, such as bats, birds, and insects, would be more readily able to commute to the Site from surrounding habitats.

1.4 Ecological Context

- 1.4.1 A previous ecological report was undertaken by PJC Ecology in 2012. The report concluded that;
- “The site largely consists of semi-improved grassland with a short sward height due to regular grazing with rough grassland edges. There are several different habitat types on site including: semi-improved grassland; scrub; tree lines; hardstanding in the form of a small road; a stream and a pond.*

The semi-improved grassland on site is grazed throughout the year by horses. Regular grazing means that the grassland has a relatively low ecological value for protected species.”

- 1.4.2 Five ponds were previously identified to be on Site or within 500 metres of the site. One pond is located on Site and four within 500m of the redline boundary. No great crested newts or signs of great crested newts were found during the four survey visits to the ponds previously assessed (PJC Ecology, 2012).
- 1.4.3 Furthermore, there were several trees identified on Site as well as peripheral features which were recorded as having suitability to support bats and breeding birds.
- 1.4.4 A PEA was undertaken by BMD in July 2022. The results and conclusions of this report are found in BMD.22.0022.RPE/P1.801.-.Ecology.
- 1.4.5 The PEA recommended further surveys for:
- Reptiles; and
 - Great crested newt, including:
 - Habitat suitability index (HSI); and
 - eDNA sampling.

2. APPROACH

2.1 Introduction

- 2.1.1 This report has been prepared with reference to current best practice guidance, including the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (2018, updated 2022/2024) and Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2017, updated 2023). Reference was also made to BS42020:2013: Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.
- 2.1.2 The assessments at the Site have comprised the following:
- Reptile survey (May/June 2023 and September/ October 2025);
 - Great crested newt:
 - Habitat suitability index (HSI) (April 2023/ April 2025)
 - eDNA sampling (April 2023/ April 2025).
- 2.1.3 With the exception of great crested newts which extended beyond the Site boundary, the extent of all surveys was the Site boundary.
- 2.1.4 Full survey methodologies are provided below. Details of dates, weather conditions and a review of survey limitations are provided in the results sections below.
- 2.1.5 Definitions of technical terms used in this report are provided in the Glossary in Section 7. Common names of species are used throughout the report with scientific names provided in Section 7.2

2.2 Great Crested Newt Assessments

- 2.2.1 Pond locations are presented on the waterbodies plan (provided in the Appendix; Ref BMD.22.022.DRE.903).

Habitat Suitability Index

- 2.2.2 All ponds within the Site boundary and in close proximity were assessed following the standard methodology for Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) (Oldham *et al.* 2000).

eDNA sampling

- 2.2.3 Sample collection and laboratory work was conducted in accordance with the Technical Advice Note for field and laboratory sampling for great crested newts (Biggs *et al.* 2014).
- 2.2.4 Water sample collection was undertaken by Jonathan Wood; a Level 1 great crested newt licensed ecologist trained in eDNA sampling. eDNA analysis was undertaken by a Natural England approved laboratory: Sure Scientific. Samples were analysed using a Real Time qPCR.

Limitations

- 2.2.5 No limitations were encountered on Site. All eDNA samples were taken accordingly.

Evaluation and Review

2.2.6 Following the desk study and field surveys:

- The value of the site was assessed in terms of supporting great crested newts during their terrestrial and aquatic life stages;
- The use of ponds within the Site by great crested newts;
- Where present the estimated size class and possible meta-populations within the Site; and
- A review of likely impacts resulting from the proposed development on individual and populations of great crested newts.

2.3 Reptile Survey

2.3.1 During the initial ecological assessment suitable reptile habitat was identified within the Site and as such detailed Phase 2 survey work was undertaken between May and June 2023 with updated surveys undertaken in September and October 2025 (i.e. during one of the optimal survey periods for reptile surveys) to determine presence /absence of common reptiles (and to provide an initial assessment of population size, where present).

2.3.2 A total of 20 1x1 m and 1x1 m sheets of thick roofing felt and tin were placed within areas of suitable reptile habitat across the Site to act as artificial refugia, as presented on the Reptile Survey Plan (Appendix: Ref BMD.22.0022.DRE.904). These refugia provide shelter and heat up more quickly than their surroundings in the morning and can remain warmer than their surroundings in the evening. As such, reptiles being ectothermic (cold blooded), use them to bask under and raise their body temperature which allows them to forage earlier and later in the day. Therefore, checking the refugia in the morning and/or late afternoon should reveal reptiles, if they are present at a site.

2.3.3 The refugia were left in place for 7 days in order to 'bed-in' and enable any reptiles present to find them. Subsequent to this the refugia were checked over 7 survey visits during suitable weather conditions, as recommended in Herpetofauna Groups of Britain and Ireland (HGBI) Best Practice and Lawful Guidance. In addition, careful visual observations were made during each survey visit to search for any basking or foraging reptiles within key habitat areas on the Site.

2.3.4 Furthermore, care was taken to arrive at the Site early in the evening when appropriate to ensure the reptile refugia had not become too hot, which would potentially result in reptiles dispersing from underneath the refugia into adjacent areas of suitable habitat. Moreover, days with optimal weather conditions were targeted where possible, (i.e. cloudy days with sunny spells or days forecast to have short periods of heavy rain with sunny intervals). Therefore, it is considered that an accurate and robust assessment of reptile activity at the Site has been made.

2.4 Other Species – Incidental Observations

2.4.1 The general faunal activity was recorded during the course of the survey work, including incidental sightings of birds, mammals and invertebrates, with particular attention paid to any potential use of the Site by protected, rare, notable, or Priority-listed faunal species.

3. RESULTS

3.1 Great Crested Newt Assessments

Habitat Suitability Index and eDNA

3.1.1 The HSI scores for the ponds surveyed within 500m of the site are as follows:

- Pond 1 within the Site= good habitat suitability (0.79); and
- Pond 2 Off site to the north = good habitat suitability (0.74).

3.1.2 In summary, the HSI scores for ponds in the study area are:

- Good Score: P1 (0.79) and P2 (0.74)

3.1.3 eDNA samples were taken at both P1 and P2 within the Site where conditions (at the time, April 2023 and updated samples taken in April 2025) permitted with the following results confirmed:

- P1 – GCN Negative
- P2 – GCN Negative

3.1.4 Some off-site ponds were not surveyed due to access constraints; however, based on desk study information, habitat characteristics and separation from the Site by dispersal barriers (including roads), these waterbodies are considered unlikely to functionally contribute to a breeding population associated with the Site

3.1.5 Notwithstanding the moderate suitability of terrestrial habitats within the Site, the combination of repeated negative eDNA results across two survey seasons, absence of incidental records during extensive survey effort, and limited functional connectivity to higher-quality aquatic habitats provides a robust evidence base to conclude that great crested newts are likely to be absent from the Site.

3.2 Reptile Survey

3.2.1 Table 3.1 provides a summary of the reptile survey undertaken at the Site during May and June 2023 including dates of visits, weather and observations during each visit. Tiles were placed out on the 20th of April 2023 allowing them to bed in ahead of the survey.

3.2.2 The location of reptile tiles and key findings is presented on the Reptile Survey Plan (Drawing Ref BMD.22.0022.DRE.904, Appendix).

Table 3.1 Summary of 2023 reptile transects

Survey Visit	Weather Conditions	Air Temp	Reptile Refugia	Transect Number	Slow worm	Grass Snake	Other Species
1 04/05	Sunny, some cloud	17-18	Warm.	0	0	0	0
2 04/05	Sunny, some cloud	14-15	Warm.	2	1 male, 1 juvenile	0	0
3 17/05	Sunny intervals / light breeze	18-19	Majority hot.	1	0	1 male	0
				2	1 male, 1 juvenile	0	0
4 24/05	Sunny intervals	21	Some hot, eastern boundary shaded and cool	2	4 male, 2 juvenile	2 male	0
5 06/06	Sunny intervals	22	Mostly warm.	1	1 female, 1 male	0	0
				2	4 male	2 male	0
6 15/06	Sunny/ patchy sun	22-25	Majority warm / some hot at finish	1	0	1 adult	0
7 20/06	Sunny/ patchy sun	21-22		2	3 females, 3 males	0	0
			Majority warm	2	2 female, 5 male	0	0
Peak Count (Adults)				1	7	2	0

- 3.2.3 Grass snake was recorded during four out of seven visits to the Site. Only adults were found and no juveniles. See Reptile Survey Results Plan BMD.22.0022.DRE.904
- 3.2.4 The distribution of grass snake was throughout the Site, however associated with the boundaries and peripheral edge habitat which provided more optimal habitat. It is likely that the grass snake on Site do not utilise all the grassland parcels on Site, particularly in the centre of the Site where the grassland is managed and lacks diversity and is more open. Key main areas for reptile recordings included the grassland/woodland/scrub mosaic field margins along the northern and eastern boundaries of the Site.
- 3.2.5 Slow worm was also recorded during six out of seven visits to the Site. Both adult males, females and juveniles were recorded. See Reptile Survey Results Plan BMD.22.0078.DRE.904
- 3.2.6 Both slow worm and grass snake were recorded on both transects which were placed out.
- 3.2.7 It is likely that the slow worm on Site utilise all peripheral areas within the Site. Key main areas for slow worm recordings included the grassland/scrub mosaic field margins along the northern and eastern boundaries.
- 3.2.8 To ensure up to date survey data the reptile surveys were repeated in 2025. Table 3.2 provides a summary of the reptile survey undertaken at the Site during September and October 2025

including dates of visits, weather and observations during each visit. Tiles were placed out on the 5th of September allowing them to bed in ahead of the survey.

- 3.2.9 The location of reptile tiles and key findings is presented on the Reptile Survey Plan (Drawing Ref BMD.22.0022.DRE.001, Appendix).

Table 3.2 Summary of 2025 reptile transects

Survey Visit	Weather Conditions	Air Temp	Reptile Refugia	Transect Number	Slow worm	Grass Snake	Other Species
1 12/09	Sunny, some cloud	16	Warm.	0	0	0	0
2 22/09	Sunny, some cloud	16	Warm.	0	0	0	0
3 26/09	Sunny	15	Majority warm	0	0	0	0
				0	0	0	0
4 29/09	Sunny intervals	19	Some hot, eastern boundary shaded and cool	0	0	0	0
5 06/10	Sunny intervals	17	Mostly warm.	0	0	0	0
				0	0	0	0
6 13/10	Sunny/ patchy sun	18	Majority warm / some hot at finish	0	0	0	0
7 16/10	Sunny/ patchy sun	19		0	0	0	0
			Majority warm	2	0	0	0
Peak Count (Adults)					0	0	0

- 3.2.10 No reptiles were recorded within the 2025 surveys. It was noted some of the reptile refugia were disturbed and broken by cows grazing in the fields.

- 3.2.11 No reptiles were recorded during the 2025 surveys. This is considered likely to reflect a decline or localised absence following the low population recorded in 2023; however, given the presence of suitable retained habitats, a precautionary approach to mitigation remains appropriate

3.3 Other Species – Incidental Observations

- 3.3.1 During the extensive survey visits undertaken at the Application Site, the following protected and notable species were also recorded:

- Birds:
- Red kite - recorded above the grassland fields.

- 3.3.2 Other species recorded included rabbit, fox, blackbird, buzzard, carrion crow, chaffinch, coal tit, collared dove, goldcrest, goldfinch, great tit, long-tailed tit, magpie, robin, common shrew and field vole.

- 3.3.3 The bird assemblages recorded is typical of semi-rural farmland and edge habitats and is considered to be of Local ecological value

4. EVALUATION & CONCLUSIONS

4.1 Great Crested Newt

- 4.1.1 Numerous waterbodies were identified during the previous ecological appraisal. However, only two waterbodies were in close proximity of the Site.
- 4.1.2 There is one waterbody on Site and an offsite pond ~35 m north of the Site north eastern boundary. Both waterbodies have breeding potential for amphibians and optimal surrounding terrestrial habitat. The eastern boundary of the Site was considered to be of high quality for great crested newt and amphibians in general, due to dominance of other neutral grassland and woodland with scrub in close proximity to the two ponds.
- 4.1.3 Both ponds were subject to eDNA sampling in April 2023 and April 2025, the results of this were negative. The other waterbodies in the wider landscape were not granted access so eDNA sample could not be taken. However, these ponds within the locality were considered too large to support a breeding population of newts given the presence of waterfowl, as well as being disconnected from the Site via main roads.
- 4.1.4 From a desk study perspective 42 records of GCN, all with some connectivity to the Site via woodland edges, residential gardens, grassland, ditches and waterbodies were recorded within 1km of the Site. The closest record was approximately 220 m southeast of the Site. It is considered that GCN are within the locality of the Site, but the Site does not support a breeding population, albeit that terrestrial habitat is present and hibernating newts may utilise the Site.
- 4.1.5 From a desk study perspective, 42 records of GCN, all with some connectivity to the Site via woodland edges, residential gardens, grassland, ditches and waterbodies, were recorded within 1 km of the Site. The closest record was approximately 220 m southeast of the Site. It is therefore considered that GCN are present within the wider locality; however, the Site itself does not support a breeding population owing to the absence of suitable breeding ponds. No positive ponds are present within the Site, and no nearby ponds considered suitable to support breeding populations were identified. As such, the potential for GCN is limited to the use of terrestrial habitats for foraging, dispersal, shelter and hibernation. Although suitable terrestrial habitat is present and hibernating or commuting individuals may occasionally utilise the Site, the absence of suitable breeding habitat means that regular use by GCN is considered unlikely.
- 4.1.6 Furthermore, previous ecological surveys (PJC Ecology, 2012) indicate that no Great Crested Newts or signs of great crested newts were found during the four survey visits to ponds within 500 m of the Site and within the Site itself.
- 4.1.7 Additionally, the Site lies within the district licencing area for Mid Sussex. NatureSpace Partnership risk maps the area which shows the Site lies within a red risk mapped area (NatureSpace Partnership, 2025). Red risk areas indicate highly suitable habitat – the most important areas for great crested newts; however, findings from Site indicate that great crested newts are unlikely to be present in this case.
- 4.1.8 Overall, while the Site is considered to provide moderate suitability for great crested newt in terms of terrestrial habitat, the absence of positive eDNA results across two survey seasons, together

with the lack of field evidence, indicates that the Site does not support a breeding population. A precautionary approach is, however, maintained in recognition of the presence of records within the wider landscape and the risk mapping.

4.2 Reptiles

- 4.2.1 All seven reptile surveys were conducted between May and June in 2023. Grass snake was recorded in four of seven visits, including only adults which were mostly male and one was not identified. Slow worms were also recorded in six of the seven visits, including both adult females and males, and juveniles.
- 4.2.2 The overall Site result for grass snake (a maximum count of two adults during a single visit) indicates a 'low' population.
- 4.2.3 The overall Site result for slow worm (a maximum count of seven adults during a single visit) indicates a 'low' population.
- 4.2.4 The population classifications are based on peak counts recorded during survey visits and are consistent with accepted good practice guidance (e.g. Froglife, 1999; HGBI, 2016), indicating a 'low' population.
- 4.2.5 The eastern boundary within the Site, within the scrub and grassland bordering the road were where most reptiles were recorded (27 out of 31 individuals). This area had good botanical and invertebrate diversity. The remaining four individuals (two slow worm and two grass snake) were recorded within the scrub and grassland bordering the northern boundary bordering further scrub and grassland areas.
- 4.2.6 Further reptile surveys in 2025 recorded no reptiles and reptiles indicating likely absence of reptiles at the time.
- 4.2.7 Generally large areas of the Site were considered sub optimal habitat for reptiles given they were open areas of modified grassland. However, the peripheries of the Site provided better suitability and included areas to bask, feed, forage, commute and shelter and previous surveys had confirmed low level presence.
- 4.2.8 As such, to ensure compliance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (As Amended), reptile mitigation strategies will be developed in detail for the proposed scheme and presented in a construction and environmental management plan. In line with HGBI (2016) guidance, the aims of the mitigation strategies will be to:
- Protect reptiles from any harm that might arise during the construction of the Scheme;
 - Ensure that sufficient quality, quantity and connectivity of habitat is provided to accommodate the existing reptile population during construction and once completed; and
 - Ensure no net loss of local reptile conservation status.

4.3 Other Species – Incidental Observations

- 4.3.1 A number of common, notable and protected bird species were identified incidentally utilising the Site during the numerous survey visits. This includes robin, collared dove, great tit, goldfinch, chaffinch, wood pigeon, blackbird, magpie, carrion crow, jay, wren, goldcrest, long tailed tit, coal tit, red kite, and buzzard. Mammals such as fox, deer and rabbit were also recorded on Site during the survey visits.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 All recommendations have been developed in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy (avoid, mitigate, compensate and enhance), in line with CIEEM guidance and national planning policy.
- 5.1.2 The presence of protected and notable species has been confirmed on Site and as such the following mitigation and compensation/enhancement requirements have been identified:

5.2 Great crested newt

- 5.2.1 It is considered breeding GCN are absent from the Site, however areas of proposed development could support great crested newt within their terrestrial phase. It is assumed that suitable habitat for GCN are largely to be retained within the proposed development.
- 5.2.2 On the basis of the available survey evidence, the risk of an offence under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) is considered low, and a precautionary method statement approach is appropriate in lieu of a mitigation licence.
- 5.2.3 There are great crested newt records in the locality but given the distance from ponds, dispersal barriers and small unsuitable areas of habitat to be impacted it is considered that an appropriate non-licensed method statement could be implemented to minimise impacts to great crested newt and also other species.
- 5.2.4 Dependant on timing of works but likely to involve the following supervised by a suitably qualified ecologist:
- Toolbox talk to site contractors;
 - Check for presence of mobile fauna. Any animals present to be removed or encouraged to move to a place of safety following best practice at the time;
 - Vegetation to be cut to a height of 150 mm, in a continuous direction allowing any fauna to disperse. All cut material to be removed immediately off-site/to an area that will not be affected by the proposed works;
 - Work areas to remain clear of vegetation and debris piles; and
 - Check for potential refugia sites and dismantle with care and in a controlled manner. This typically needs to be completed using handheld tools.
- 5.2.5 Specific habitat creation/enhancement works for amphibians would include scrub management, creation of SuDS, provision of wetland features, hibernacula features and provision for log piles.

5.3 Reptiles

- 5.3.1 The proposed development areas avoid elevated areas for reptiles and thus through the mitigation hierarchy impacts will be minimised. Consequently, main method will be habitat manipulation/displacement.

- 5.3.2 Specific habitat creation/enhancement works for reptiles would include scrub management, creation of log and stone piles and provision for grass heaps (for grass snake & slow worm) in other areas of the Site where there is some suitable habitat for reptile.
- 5.3.3 Reptiles should be safeguarded to ensure wildlife legislation (notably the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as amended) is not breached.
- 5.3.4 Mitigation should be implemented to protect reptiles from harm during site clearance and construction works and to ensure that sufficient quality, quantity and connectivity of habitat is provided to accommodate reptiles on the Site with no net loss of the local reptile conservation status.
- 5.3.5 High risk areas for reptiles include scrub and grassland field parcels within the Site which are proposed to be retained.
- 5.3.6 Mitigation measures in relation to loss of habitat areas known to support reptiles will include:
- Risk area mapping: As part of the assignment of risk areas, reptile risk areas will also be taken into consideration to ensure the appropriate level of mitigation is implemented as set out below.
 - The following works to be undertaken during the reptile active period – March to October inclusive.
- 5.3.7 At present, displacement works is considered to be the most appropriate method given the retention of large areas of habitat that reptiles can be moved into and the areas of suitable habitat which are proposed to be retained. These areas would be subject to enhancements including scrub/grass management and creation of log piles and hibernacula features.
- 5.3.8 Where only small areas of habitat on the periphery of retained core habitat areas are being affected, mitigation works will include displacement of reptiles from work areas into adjacent retained habitats through gradual reduction of vegetation in a phased/directional manner.
- 5.3.9 This approach also relates to low-risk areas. Such works would be conducted during the reptile active period (March to October inclusive). The works are described in detail below and will include directional clearance of vegetation and phased height reduction which will encourage displacement of reptiles (and other species) toward retained habitat features. Dependent of timing of work, such works should involve and be overseen by a suitably qualified ecologist.
- Check for presence of mobile fauna. Any animals present to be removed or encouraged to move to a place of safety following best practice at the time;
 - Vegetation to be cut to a height of 150 mm, in a continuous direction allowing any fauna to disperse. All cut material to be removed immediately off-site/to an area that will not be affected by the proposed works; and
 - Check for potential refugia sites and dismantle with care and in a controlled manner. This typically needs to be completed using handheld tools

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7. GLOSSARY

7.1 Scientific Terms and Acronyms

BoCC Birds of Conservation Concern, the UK Red-list for birds, produced by the British Trust for Ornithology and last updated in December 2015.

BTO British Trust for Ornithology

CIEEM Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, the professional organisation and provider of professional codes of conduct for ecological consultancy.

EPS European Protected Species For the purposes of this report EPS are species that require particular licences to allow certain works to go ahead. Species falling within the following situations are not considered as EPS within this report:

Birds listed on Appendix 2 of the Bern Convention (European legislation). The protection requirements of this Appendix are fully integrated in UK law, notably through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Birds listed on Annex 1 of the Birds Directive (European legislation). The protection of such species survival and reproduction within their geographic distribution is ensured through special conservation measures in relation to their habitats. Such measures are implemented through the establishment of Special Protection Areas. Therefore, any implications are considered at regional habitat and country level rather than individual bird/species level.

LBAP Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

Level of protection – ‘EU’ Protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) as amended.

Level of protection – ‘UK’ Protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

LNR Local Nature Reserve. Statutory designation.

LWS Local Wildlife Site. Non-statutory designation.

NNR National Nature Reserve. Statutory designation.

Non-native invasive species For the purposes of this report: species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Widely naturalised species, such as grey squirrel, are excluded.

Notable species A species which is listed as a UK Priority Species, carries an unfavourable conservation status (e.g. scarce, rare, threatened, Red-listed), is invasive or is otherwise worthy of note from an ecological perspective.

Protected species A species protected under specific UK or European legislation, including Habitats Directive, Wildlife and Countryside Act.

PTES People's Trust for Endangered Species.

SAC Special Area of Conservation. Designated under European Union Habitat Directive (92/43/EEC) to protect species and habitat of European interest.

SPA Special Protection Area. A site designated under the European Union Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds.

SSSI Site of Species Scientific Interest. Statutory designation of biological or geological importance.

UK Priority Habitat and species A habitat or species identified as a priority for conservation in accordance with Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006). Section 40 of the Act places a duty on public authorities to have regard for the conservation objectives of these habitats and species. (Also known as Section 41 (S41) habitats/species).

7.2 Scientific Names

7.2.1 Scientific names of species mentioned in this report are outlined in Table 7.1.

Table 7.1 Scientific names of species mentioned within this report

English Name	Scientific Name
Amphibians	
Great crested newt	<i>Triturus cristatus</i>
Birds	
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Carrion crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>
Coal tit	<i>Parus ater</i>
Collared dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>
Long-tailed tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>
robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>
Mammals	
Common shrew	<i>Sorex araneus</i>
Field vole	<i>Microtus agrestis</i>
Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>
Fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>
Reptiles & Amphibians	
Grass snake	<i>Natrix helvetica</i>
Slow worm	<i>Anguis fragilis</i>

APPENDICES

PLANS

GREAT CRESTED NEWTS

Drawing BMD.22.0022.DRE.002: Waterbodies

REPTILES

Drawing BMD.22.0078.DRE.003: Reptile survey plan



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 Application boundary

 Ponds

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Rev	Description	--

Purpose of Issue

PLANNING

Bradley Murphy Design Ltd
6 The Courtyard
Hatton Technology Park
Dark Lane
Hatton
Warwickshire
CV35 6XB

t: 01926 676496
e: info@bradleymurphydesign.co.uk
www.bradleymurphydesign.co.uk

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Client

THAKEHAM HOMES LIMITED

Project

COLLEGE LANE, HURSTPIERPOINT, WEST SUSSEX

Drawing Title

WATERBODIES

Drawn MP	Checked JW	Approved JW	Date 17/10/2023
Job No. 23.0078	Scale 1:1,250	Sheet Size A3	Revision A
Drawing Number BMD.22.0022.DRE.002			



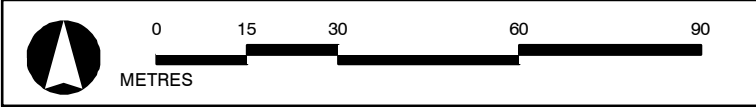
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 Reptile transect

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Rev	Description	--	
Purpose of Issue			
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Bradley Murphy Design Ltd 6 The Courtyard Hatton Technology Park Dark Lane Hatton Warwickshire CV35 8XB t: 01926 676496 e: info@bradleymurphydesign.co.uk www.bradleymurphydesign.co.uk			
Client			
THAKEHAM HOMES LIMITED			
Project			
COLLEGE LANE, HURSTPIERPOINT, WEST SUSSEX			
Drawing Title			
REPTILE SURVEY PLAN			
Drawn	Checked	Approved	Date
MP	JW	JW	17/10/2023
Job No.	Scale	Sheet Size	Revision
23.0078	1:1,250	A3	A
Drawing Number			
BMD.22.0022.DRE.003			



POLICY AND LEGISLATION

B.1.1 Tables B.1 and B.2 provide a summary of wildlife legislation and policy of relevance to development at the Site.

Table B.1 Overview of species/species groups relevant to the current proposals and associated legislation and policy

Species/Species group	European	UK ¹	Priority species ²
Amphibians	GCN	Various	Incl. common toad
Reptiles (excluding sand lizard and smooth snake)		Partial – incl. killing and injury	☐
Notes ¹ Principally the Wildlife and Countryside Act: Full = full protection, either from the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) alone or in combination between this act and European legislation; partial = partially protected. ☐ = covered by other specific legislation. ² Includes over 900 species listed in accordance with section 41 of the NERC Act (2006). Species known or most likely to utilise the Site are indicated where appropriate.			

Table B.2 Relevant species legislation for development at the Site

Species / group	Legislation ^{see notes}													
	1	2	3	4	5	6	7	8	9	10	11	12	13	14
Amphibians											☐			
Reptiles						☐					☐			
Notes ¹ Protection of Badgers Act 1992 ² Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) – Part 1 ³ Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) – Schedule 1 (some species, none recorded within the Site) ⁴ Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) – Schedule 5, Section 9 ⁵ Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) – Schedule 5, Section 9 (4b, 4c) and (5) ⁶ Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) – Schedule 5, Section 9 (1, in respect of killing and injuring) and (5) ⁷ Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) – Schedule 6, Section 11 ⁸ Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) – Schedule 8, Section 13 ⁹ Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) – Schedule 9, Section 14 ¹⁰ Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 – Schedule 2 (European protected species) ¹¹ Natural England and Rural Communities Act (2006) – Various species listed in accordance with Section 41 ¹² Invasive Species regulations: EU Regulation (1143/2014) on invasive alien (non-native) species ¹³ Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 ¹⁴ Environmental Protection Act 1990 ¹⁵ Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996														

B.1.2 The key national planning policies and documents are:

- The Environment Act (2021);
- The National Planning Policy Framework (2026); and
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006).

METADATA, SURVEY CONDITIONS AND LIMITATIONS

C.1 Metadata.

Factor	Detail
Data	eDNA of waterbodies
Reason for collection	To provide baseline data pertaining to great crested newts. To inform scheme design and appropriate mitigation in relation to the proposed development.
Location	Land east of College Lane, Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex. Approx. centre: TQ 29212 16026.
Date	21/04/2023 & 11/06/2025
Method of collection	See section 2.2
Who collected	Jonathan Wood MCIEEM – Level 1 GCN Licence
Factor	Detail
Data	Reptile report: Landscape review, presence/ likely absence survey.
Reason for collection	To provide baseline data at the Site to inform appropriate mitigation in relation to proposed development.
Location	Land east of College Lane, Hurstpierpoint, West Sussex. Approx. centre: TQ 29212 16026.
Date	04/05/2023-20/06/2023 & 12/09/2025-16/10/2025
Method of collection	Reptile: habitat assessments and presence/likely absence surveys. See section 2.3
Who collected	Jonathan Wood MCIEEM Katie Dalton BSc (Hons) MRSB ACIEEM Jasmine Whitmore BSc (Hons) ACIEEM Liliana Timms BSc MSc Bethany Jenner BSc (Hons) Aoife Gilmore BSc

C.2 Survey Conditions

eDNA pond sampling

Date	Start Time	Preceding days	Cloud (%)	Sun	Temp. (°C)	Precipitation	Wind (Beaufort scale & direction)
21/04/2023	11:00-13:00	Cloudy	70	Sunny spells	11	Rain	1 SSW
11/06/2025	12:00-13:00	Partly sunny, dry	60	Partly sunny	18	None	3 NW

Reptile surveys

Date	Time	Preceding days	Cloud (%)	Temp. (°C)	Wind (Beaufort)	Precipitation
04/05/2023	11:00-12:00	Cloudy	30	17-18	1 W	None
11/05/2023	17:45-18:00	Sunny	40-10	14-15	1 W	None
17/05/2023	17:00-17:30	Sunny	40	18-19	1-2 WSW	None
24/05/2023	16:00-17:00	Sunny	20-30	21	2 S	None
06/06/2023	14:00-15:00	Sunny	20	22	1 S	None
16/06/2022	16:00-17:00	Sunny	10-30	22-25	1-2 WSW	None
20/06/2022	15:00-16:30	Cloudy	20	21-22	2 SSW	None
12/09/2025	09:30-10:00	Rain, sunny	60-80	15	4 WSW	None
22/09/2025	12:30-13:00	Sunny, light rain	50-60	17	4 S	None
26/09/2025	09:00-09:30	Sunny	80	11	2 NE	None
29/09/2025	13:00-13:30	Sunny, light rain	30	19	2 S	None
06/10/2025	10:15-10:45	Sunny	60	14	3 W	None
13/10/2025	14:00-14:30	Cloudy, partly sunny	90	16	3 NE	None
16/10/2025	10:30-11:15	Partly sunny	60	12-13	2 Ne	None

METHODOLOGY FOR HABITAT SUITABILITY INDEX

D.1 Habitat Suitability Index (HSI Assessment)

- D.1.1 Following the desk study, a decision was made as to whether to undertake HSI assessment of all ponds within 250 m of the survey Site following current guidance and professional judgement. The HSI assessment was undertaken in line with best practice guidelines by a suitably experienced ecologist
- D.1.2 The HSI assessment is a standardised methodology (developed by Oldham *et al.* (2000) and subsequently adapted by Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the UK (2010)). It is used for assessing the potential for waterbodies to support great crested newts based upon various characteristics of the waterbody, see Table B4.1.

Table D.1 Waterbody characteristics used during HSI assessment

Characteristic	Description
SI1 Location	The location of the waterbody within Great Britain
SI2 Pond area	The area of the waterbody supporting water
SI3 Permanence	How often the waterbody appears to dry out
SI4 Water quality	The water quality, indicated largely by invertebrate assemblages
SI5 Shade	The percentage of shade along the waterbody's perimeter
SI6 Fowl	The presence / absence and intensity of waterfowl impacts
SI7 Fish	The presence / absence and intensity of fish impacts
SI8 Pond count	The number of water bodies within 1 km excluding those separated from the surveyed waterbody by dispersal barriers such as large roads
SI9 Terrestrial	The suitability of terrestrial habitat surrounding the waterbody for great crested newt
SI10 Macrophytes	The estimated percentage cover of the waterbody by macrophytes between May and end of September

- D.1.3 The overall suitability of the waterbody is then calculated by entering scores for each category into an equation provided within the standardised methodology. The outcome of the calculation determines the suitability of a waterbody as either 'poor', 'below average', 'average', 'good', or 'excellent'.
- D.1.4 Table D1.2 shows waterbody features within the Site which is comprised of three ponds. Table D1.2 also provides a habitat suitability index (HSI) assessment.

Table D1.1 Waterbody features within and adjacent to the Site

Pond Ref.	Description/Photo	Condition	HSI Score	HSI Status achieved
P1	Pond 1 was located on site on the north boundary. The suitability of the pond was scored as good. 	Moderate	0.76	Good
P2	Pond 2 was located just off site, on the northern boundary to the northeast of the site. The suitability of the pond was scored as good. 	Moderate	0.74	Good

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E: info@bradleymurphydesign.co.uk
W: www.bradleymurphydesign.co.uk
T: 01926 676496

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