

Dormouse Survey 2022

**Land South of Bolney Road,
Ansty, West Sussex**

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LIABILITIES:

Whilst every effort has been made to guarantee the accuracy of this report, it should be noted that living animals and plants are capable of migration/establishing. Whilst such species may not have been located during the survey duration, their presence may be found on a site at a later date. This report provides a snap shot of the species that were present at the time of the survey only and does not consider seasonal variation. Furthermore, where access is limited or the site supports habitats which are densely vegetated, only dominant species may be recorded.

The recommendations contained within this document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document, or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to or during works.

1.0 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 The Ecology Partnership was commissioned by Devine Homes to undertake an updated dormice survey at land south of Bolney Road, Ansty, West Sussex.
- 1.2 The Preliminary Ecological Assessment identified habitats onsite that had moderate potential to support dormice such as hedgerows and treelines which provide connectivity to woodland parcels to the south.

Site Context

- 1.3 The site comprises three fields of modified grassland bounded by treelines and a small block of woodland. There is also an area of private garden with a vegetable plot and a small, dilapidated building used for storage. The site is approximately 2.9ha and located on the southern edge of Ansty village, with Bolney Road to the north-west and Cuckfield Road to the east (TQ 29030 23109). The immediate surrounding area comprises residential areas to the north, east and west, with arable fields to the south. In the wider area there are numerous large blocks of woodland to north-west, south, and west with arable land and connecting hedgerows in between.
- 1.4 The approximate red line boundary of the survey area and the blue line boundary of the development area are shown in figure 1.



Figure 1: Survey boundary (red line) and development area (blue line).

Satellite imagery obtained from Google Earth Pro on 08/02/2022

Description of the Proposed Development

- 1.5 The masterplan for the site indicates development on the western half of the red line boundary. The plan includes 28 units and an access road on the northern boundary with the existing housing development.

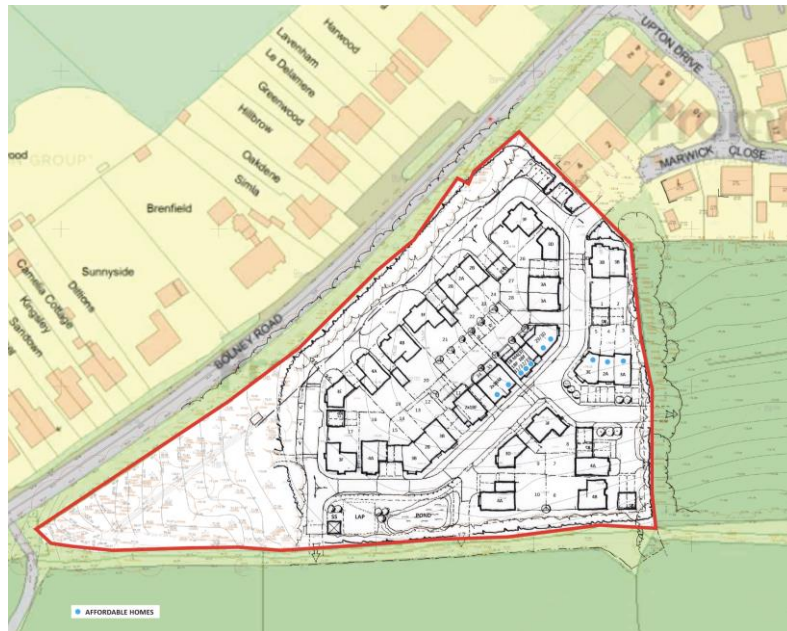


Figure 2: Development Masterplan for land at Ansty.

Legislation

- 1.6 Dormice are a European protected species (EPS) and as such protected from deliberate killing, injury or disturbance and their breeding sites and resting places are absolutely protected with no requirement to show that their destruction was deliberate or reckless. The aim of this law is to protect the Favourable Conservation Status (FCS) of the species. Dormice are further protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This law provides protection to individual animals as well as breeding and resting places, making the deliberate killing or injuring of individual dormice unlawful.
- 1.7 Due to the laws providing protection to dormice, any disturbance or destruction of their nests is unlawful unless done under a licence from Natural England.

2.0 Methodology

- 2.1 A total of 50 dormouse tubes were established in the woodland, woodland edge, and treelines within the site on 24th March 2022. Each dormouse tube was established as per Natural England guidelines and attached to the underside of a suitable branch. Some of the tubes were located less than 20m apart, due to the size of the site.
- 2.2 Checks were undertaken once a month between April and October 2022.
- 2.3 Surveys have been undertaken by Alexia Tamblyn (dormouse survey licence CLS 138) under the Natural England Class Survey Licence WML CL10A and accredited agents.
- 2.4 Using the Index of Probability in the Dormouse Conservation Handbook, a score of 23 had been achieved between April and October, therefore no further surveys are considered necessary.

3.0 Results

- 3.1 During the survey period of April till October 2022, there were no dormice or evidence of dormice (such as nests). There was no evidence of the species, such as wood mice or yellow necked mice, recorded during the survey period.

4.0 Discussion

4.1 Although dormice are not considered to be present within the site, an enhancement strategy for the retained and existing habitat for has been recommended. This will be aimed at improving on site habitat for dormice and other species present within the landscape is outlined in detail below. Enhancements will also support biodiversity net gain ambitions.

4.2 The treelines and scrub habitats are considered to have moderate potential to support dormice due to the presence of hazel trees and other favourable woody species. The understory of these treelines also contain shrubs which can provide commuting and foraging habitat. The commuting habitat provides connectivity between the site and other suitable habitats such as Pink's Wood and Birch Wood.

5.0 Mitigation

5.1 The initial proposals are for the western field and do not appear to impact any boundary habitat at this stage. No direct or indirect negative impacts are anticipated on dormouse populations, with no dormice recorded within the site boundaries. Furthermore, with the hedgerows and woodland will be retained, there will be no fragmentation of habitat or landscape linkages and therefore no indirect impacts are considered likely.

5.2 However, during clearance or development, if a dormouse or dormouse nest is recorded all works will stop, and an ecologist will determine if a licence is required for the remaining clearance.

Enhancement Strategy

5.3 There are opportunities for enhanced planting around the edges of the site to make the boundaries more robust and buffer existing habitats from development. In the north of the development area around the proposed access it is recommended to use native shrub planting to increase connectivity between the western treeline and eastern hedgerow. In

- addition, the woodland to the west of the development area can have an enhanced understory in the form of saplings and young trees to increase suitability for dormice.
- 5.4 Recommended species to be planted to enhance edge habitats (woodland edge and hedgerows) should include berry bearing species and species of value to local wildlife. Species that may be planted include;
- Hazel (*Corylus avellana*),
 - Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*),
 - Honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*),
 - Wayfaring tree (*Viburnum lantana*),
 - Sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*),
 - Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*),
 - Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*),
 - Yew (*Taxus bacata*),
 - Spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*),
 - Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*),
 - Dog rose (*Rosa canina*),
 - Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*).
- 5.5 These species provide a variety of food sources for dormice around the year. It is recommended that pockets of bramble are allowed to grow, but not dominate, and that ivy should also be allowed to grow on some of the mature trees within the woodland habitat.
- 5.6 These enhancements are also considered to be of value for a range of wildlife, including for foraging and nesting birds and small mammals.

6.0 Conclusions

- 6.1 A total of 50 dormice nest tubes were established within the hedgerows and habitat edges within the red line boundary, with surveys conducted in 2022. These surveys did not record any dormice or evidence of dormice within the site.
- 6.2 The proposed development is limited to the centre of the site, so the site boundaries are not considered likely to be affected by development works.
- 6.3 As dormice are not identified within the red line boundary the development is not considered to impact upon the favourable conservation status of dormice in the wider landscape. It is considered that the enhancements will provide a range of opportunities for wildlife in the site and create robust ecological networks within the landscape.

The Ecology Partnership Ltd
Thorncroft Manor
Thorncroft Drive
Leatherhead
KT22 8JB

Tel: 01372 364 133

www.ecologypartnership.com

Approved by: Alexia Tamblyn MA (Oxon) MSc CEcol CEnv MCIEEM FRGS,

Managing Director

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