

Land at Foxhole Farm, Bolney

## Ecological Appraisal

April 2025

Quality Management	
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## Executive Summary

- i) **Introduction.** Aspect Ecology has been commissioned by Wates Development to undertake an Ecological Appraisal in respect of proposed development of land at Foxhole Farm, Bolney.
- ii) **Proposals.** The site is proposed for development of up to 200 residential dwellings, together with a community building, access, open space, sustainable drainage systems and landscape buffers.
- iii) **Survey.** The site was surveyed in April 2022, September 2022 and July 2024 with mapping of habitats based on the UK Habitat Classification system. In addition, a general appraisal of fauna was undertaken to record the potential presence of any protected, rare or notable species, with specific surveys conducted in respect of bats, Badger, Dormouse, breeding birds, Great Crested Newt and reptiles. Desk study information has also been gathered from the local records centre and online resources.
- iv) **Ecological Designations.** The site itself is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory ecological designations. The nearest statutory designation is Blunts and Paige's Wood Local Nature Reserve (LNR), which is located approximately 5.6km to the north-east of the site. The nearest non-statutory designation is Seven Acre Hanger Local Wildlife Site (LWS), which is located approximately 1.7km to the north-east of the site. All of the ecological designations in the surrounding area are physically well separated from the site and are therefore unlikely to be adversely affected by the proposals.
- v) **Habitats.** The site is dominated by species-poor modified grassland not forming an important ecological feature. Features of ecological importance include the native hedgerows and lowland mixed deciduous woodland. Aside from short lengths of hedgerow to be removed for access, these important features are fully retained under the proposals and will be protected during construction. Hedgerow losses will be compensated for by new planting.
- vi) **Protected Species.** Habitats within the site are suitable to support protected and notable fauna with foraging and commuting bats, Badger, Dormouse, Slow-worm, Grass Snake and birds recorded during surveys, together with Great Crested Newt in offsite ponds. Appropriate mitigation measures are proposed to safeguard such species during construction and maintain the suitability of habitats in the long-term.
- vii) **Enhancements.** Ecological enhancements proposed to secure a biodiversity net gain will be set out further in the BNG strategy as a separate submission. Faunal enhancements are also proposed, to be detailed as part of a faunal enhancement plan which can be secured via a suitably-worded planning condition.
- viii) **Summary.** In summary, the proposals have sought to minimise impacts on biodiversity and subject to the implementation of appropriate avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures, the proposals would not result in significant harm to biodiversity.

# 1 Introduction

## 1.1 Background and Proposals

1.1.1 Aspect Ecology has been commissioned by Wates Development to undertake an Ecological Appraisal in respect of proposed development of land at Foxhole Farm, Bolney, centred at grid reference TQ 2594 2281 (see Plan 6481/ECO1), hereafter referred to as 'the site'.

1.1.2 The site is proposed for residential development, with the description of development as follows:

*“Outline planning application (appearance, landscaping, layout and scale reserved), for the erection of up to 200 dwellings; a community building (use class F1) encompassing land for education provision, together with associated access, ancillary parking and landscaping; the creation of a vehicular access point from the A272 Cowfold Road, and pedestrian and cycle only access to The Street; and creation of a network of roads, footways, and cycleways through the site; together with the provision of countryside open space, children's play areas, community orchard, and allotments; sustainable drainage systems and landscape buffers)”*

1.1.3 The development proposals are shown at Appendix 6481/1.

## 1.2 Site Overview

1.2.1 The site is located to the south-west of Bolney in West Sussex and comprises a number of grassland fields, which are bound by the A272 (Cowfold Road) to the south and Foxhole Lane to the west. Established woodland bounds the site to the north, with further agricultural and residential land bounding the site to the north-east and east.

1.2.2 The site itself comprises five main grassland fields bounded by established hedgerows, woodland and residential dwellings. Additionally, the northern boundary is adjacent to a public footpath. A number of other habitats are present within the site including a single pond, woodland, scrub, tall ruderal vegetation, Bracken, bare ground, hardstanding and buildings. An area of farm buildings is enclosed by the central western part of the site. This was included as part of the survey area although is excluded from the application boundary.

## 1.3 Purpose of the Report

1.3.1 This report documents the methods and findings of the baseline ecology surveys and desktop study carried out in order to establish the existing ecological interest of the site, informing an appraisal of the likely ecological effects of the proposals. The importance of the habitats and species present is evaluated. Where necessary, avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures are proposed so as to safeguard any significant existing ecological interest within the site. Where appropriate, opportunities for ecological enhancement are identified with reference to national conservation priorities and local Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs). Habitats are also assessed under Statutory Biodiversity Metric Guidance to inform the pre-development biodiversity value of the site in regard to Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG).

## 2 Methodology

### 2.1 Desktop Study

2.1.1 In order to compile background information on the site and its immediate surroundings, Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) was contacted in April 2022. Data was requested from within a search area extending 2km from the boundary of the site:

1.1.1 Information on statutory designations was obtained from the online Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) database<sup>1</sup>, which uses data provided by Natural England, from within a search area extending to 25km from the site. The MAGIC database was also searched to identify the known presence of any Priority Habitats within or adjacent to the site.

1.1.2 In addition, the Woodland Trust database<sup>2</sup> was searched for any records of ancient, veteran or notable trees within or adjacent to the site.

2.1.2 The information received from these organisations is discussed in the text and reproduced where appropriate at Appendix 6481/2 and on Plan 6481/ECO2.

### 2.2 Habitat Surveys

2.2.1 The site was surveyed in April 2022, September 2022 and July 2024 in order to ascertain the general ecological value of the land contained within the boundaries of the site and to identify the main habitats and ecological features present.

2.2.2 The survey was informed by Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology<sup>3</sup>, with habitat types identified and mapped in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification system (version 2.0)<sup>4</sup>, together with an assessment of the species composition of each habitat. This technique provides an inventory of the habitat types present and allows identification of areas of greater potential for botanical interest which require further survey. Any such areas identified can then be examined in more detail through Phase 2 surveys. This method was extended, in line with the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal<sup>5</sup> to record details on the actual or potential presence of notable or protected species.

2.2.3 In line with guidance<sup>6</sup>, the fine scale minimum mapping unit of 25sqm or 5m in length has been used where appropriate.

2.2.4 The nomenclature used for plant species is based on the Botanical Society for the British Isles (BSBI) taxon list<sup>7</sup>.

#### Habitat Condition Assessment

2.2.5 To determine the pre-development biodiversity value of the site for the BNG calculation, the condition of habitats has been assessed in accordance with the methodology set out in

<sup>1</sup> Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC), at <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

<sup>2</sup> Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory, at <https://ati.woodlandtrust.org.uk/>

<sup>3</sup> Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2010, as amended) *Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey: A technique for environmental audit*.

<sup>4</sup> UKHab Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (at <https://www.ukhab.org>)

<sup>5</sup> Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) (2013) *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*.

<sup>6</sup> *The UK Habitat classification User Manual*. Version 1.1. 2020

<sup>7</sup> <https://bsbi.org/taxon-lists>

the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex<sup>8</sup> and using professional judgement. Condition assessment data was collected during the September 2022 and July 2024 surveys.

2.2.6 Grasslands have been surveyed based on the approach set out within the Farm Environment Plan (FEP) Manual<sup>9</sup>, allowing an assessment of species per m<sup>2</sup> and frequency of indicator species. A transect was walked through each grassland area, with five stopping points within each grassland parcel to record species within a 1x1m quadrat. An assessment of frequency can then be made based on occurrence at each 1x1m quadrat, with frequent species occurring in three or more quadrats out of five, occasional species occurring in two quadrats, and rare species occurring in one quadrat (modified from the FEP approach which is based on ten quadrats).

2.2.7 The grassland survey was undertaken by an experienced botanist, certified as Level 4 under the BSBI's Field Identification Skills Certificate (assessed July 2021).

## 2.3 Faunal Surveys

2.3.1 General faunal activity, such as mammals or birds observed visually or by call during the course of the surveys was recorded. Particular attention was also paid to the potential presence of protected, rare or notable species, with specific survey work undertaken for bats, Badger *Meles meles*, Dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*, breeding birds, Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* and reptiles as described below.

### Bats<sup>10</sup>

#### *Preliminary Appraisal*

2.3.2 A review was undertaken of the desk study information obtained to identify any known constraints in relation to bats, the bat species recorded and habitats likely to be used by bats within the site and the surrounding area. This included a review of background records, known designations including SACs or SSSIs relevant to bats and an appraisal of OS mapping and aerial photography to identify habitats likely to be of value to bats.

2.3.3 During the initial habitat survey, the potential suitability of the site for bats in relation to roosting habitats, potential flight-paths and foraging habitats (termed a 'daytime bat walkover') was investigated. Features were assessed as of negligible, low, moderate or high potential suitability for roosting, foraging and commuting, based on the framework set out under BCT guidance. This appraisal has informed the scope of the survey work undertaken as set out below.

#### *Buildings and Built Structures*

2.3.4 **Visual Inspection Surveys.** A single built structure is present within the site, comprising a derelict open sided barn. This was subject to visual inspection in July 2023.

2.3.5 During the visual inspection, particular attention was given to potential roost features or access points, such as broken or lifted roof tiles, lifted lead flashing, soffit boxes, weatherboarding, hanging tiles, and similar, and for any indications of use by bats such as

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<sup>8</sup> Statutory Biodiversity Metric - Technical Annex 1 - Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology

<sup>9</sup> Natural England (2010) Higher Level Stewardship – Farm Environment Plan (FEP) Manual, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

<sup>10</sup> Surveys initially based on: Collins, J. (2016) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3<sup>rd</sup> edn)* and informed by subsequent review of Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023) *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats*. CIEEM; and Bat Conservation Trust (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn)*.

accumulations of bat droppings or staining. Binoculars were used to inspect inaccessible areas more closely.

### Trees

**2.3.6 Initial Assessment.** Trees were initially assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats during the habitat survey visits in April and September 2022 based on the presence of features such as holes, cracks, splits or loose bark. Trees were categorised as supporting Potential Roost Features (PRFs), Further Assessment Required (FAR) or supporting no suitable features.

**2.3.7 Ground Level Tree Assessment.** Trees that may be impacted by the development proposals together with individual trees outside of woodlands and tree groups were subject to a Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) based on relevant guidance<sup>11</sup> with PRFs categorised as PRF-I (only suitable for individual or small numbers of bats) or PRF-M (suitable for multiple bats). Any PRFs identified were inspected using binoculars from ground level for any signs indicating possible use by bats, such as staining, scratch marks or bat droppings. Where accessible from ground level, PRFs were subject to close inspection using a torch.

### Activity Surveys

**2.3.8 Night-time Bat Walkover Surveys.** Walked transect surveys (now termed night-time bat walkovers (NBWs)) were undertaken in August and September 2022 and April to July 2023 to investigate foraging or commuting bat activity at the site. This survey method comprises walking transect routes around the site, specifically covering habitats and features which have been identified as potentially suitable for use by commuting or foraging bats. Anabat Scout handheld bat detectors were employed to aid identification of any bats observed. Dusk surveys began at sunset within the surrounds of the adjacent farm buildings (now located outside of the site itself), with surveyors remaining in place for around 30 minutes before commencing the walked transect, continuing until at least 2 hours after sunset. A single dawn survey was undertaken in May 2023, commencing around 2 hours before sunset. The transect route followed is shown at Plan 6481/ECO4.

**2.3.9** This survey work was carried out during suitable weather conditions, as set out in Table 2.1 below.

**Table 2.1.** Dusk/dawn walked transect survey details.

Date	Start & end times & time of sunset/sunrise	Equipment used	Weather
02/08/2022	Start time: 20:45 End time: 22:48 Sunset: 20:45	Anabat Scout	Dry, 0% cloud, BF3, 14-16°C
15/09/2022	Start time: 19:15 End time: 21:22 Sunset: 19:15	Anabat Scout	Dry, 50% cloud, BF1, 16°C
25/04/2023	Start time: 20:13 End time: 22:31 Sunset: 20:13	Anabat Scout	Dry, 10% cloud, BF1, 9-5°C
11/05/2023	Start time: 20:38 End time: 22:54 Sunset: 20:38	Anabat Scout	Dry, 75% cloud, BF1, 13-9°C
12/05/2023	Start time: 03:16 End time: 05:07 Sunrise: 05:15	Anabat Scout	Misty, 20% cloud, BF3, 8°C

<sup>11</sup> Bat Conservation Trust (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edn).

Date	Start & end times & time of sunset/sunrise	Equipment used	Weather
13/06/2023	Start time: 21:15 End time: 23:16 Sunset: 21:15	Anabat Scout	Dry, 0% cloud, BF1, 19°C
10/07/2023	Start time: 21:05 End time: 23:31 Sunset: 21:14	Anabat Scout	Dry, 100% cloud, BF1, 18-17°C
<b>Comments:</b> All surveys were undertaken by 2 surveyors under direction of licence holder 2014-5763-CLS-CLS.			

BF0 = calm, BF12 = hurricane force

**2.3.10 Automated Surveys.** Automated static bat detector surveys were also carried out involving placement of Song Meter SM4BAT detectors at two locations within the site to record bat data over weekly periods during each month between July and September 2022 and April to July 2023.

**2.3.11** Detector SD1 was deployed on the northern boundary of the site, on a tree overhanging the boundary fence and detector SD2 was positioned in the centre of hedgerow H7 in the southern parcel of the site (see Plan 6481/ECO4).

**2.3.12** Static bat detectors were set to switch on approximately 30 minutes before sunset and switch off approximately 30 minutes after sunrise. The specific timings and weather conditions during the static detector surveys are set out at Appendix 6481/3.

#### *Analysis of Bat Survey Recordings*

**2.3.13** All bat calls were analysed using Anabat Insight version 2.0 to identify the species recorded during the survey work. Where recordings could not be reliably attributed to species (such as for *Myotis* species) or where overlaps between otherwise distinguishable species occur (such as in *Pipistrelle* sp. bat calls around 40kHz or 50kHz) calls were identified to genus; in the case of calls which could not be distinguished between *Nyctalus* sp. and *Serotine*, these have been labelled as 'unidentified big bat' species.

#### Badger (*Meles meles*)<sup>12</sup>

**2.3.14** A full Badger survey was carried out in April and September 2022, with any additional observations of Badger made during subsequent visits to the site. The survey comprised two main elements. The first element involved searching for evidence of Badger setts. For any setts that were encountered, each sett entrance was noted and mapped. The following information was recorded:

- Number and location of well used and active entrances; these are clear from any debris or vegetation and are obviously in regular use and may, or may not, have been excavated recently;
- Number and location of inactive entrances; these are not in regular use and have debris such as leaves and twigs in the entrance or have plants growing in or around the edge of the entrance; and
- Number of disused entrances; these have not been in use for some time, are partly or completely blocked and cannot be used without considerable clearance. If the

<sup>12</sup> Based on: Mammal Society (1989) Occasional Publication No. 9 – Surveying Badgers

entrance has been disused for some time all that may be visible is a depression in the ground where the hole used to be and the remains of the spoil heap.

- 2.3.15 The second element involved searching for signs of Badger activity such as well-worn paths and push-throughs, snagged hair, footprints, latrines and foraging signs, so as to build up a picture of any use of the site by Badger.

#### Dormouse<sup>13</sup>

- 2.3.16 Surveys were undertaken between August and November 2022, with a follow up survey in July 2023 to establish the presence/absence of Dormouse within the site. Survey work followed the methodology set out within best practice guidance<sup>13</sup>, whereby nesting tubes are attached to branches of trees and shrubs and checked on a regular basis for signs of use by Dormouse.
- 2.3.17 The guidance employs an indexation system to calculate survey effort, which is based on the number of tubes deployed and the months during which these are in place and checked for signs of use. Months in which use of nest tubes by Dormouse is more likely are afforded a higher number of survey effort points than months when there is a lower likelihood of use. The guidance recommends that determination of absence of Dormouse from a site should be based on a survey effort score of at least 20 points.
- 2.3.18 Accordingly, a total of 75 Dormouse nest tubes were deployed within the site at the start of August 2022, positioned within hedgerows and woodland edges (see Plan 6481/ECO5). Nest tubes were checked in September and November 2022, and again in July 2023. Based on tubes being in place between August 2022 and July 2023, this gives a total survey effort score of 23 points (34.5 based on the 75 tubes deployed).

#### Reptiles<sup>14</sup>

- 2.3.19 Given the presence of potentially suitable reptile habitat within the site, a survey was undertaken between April and May 2023 to establish the presence/absence of common reptile species.
- 2.3.20 A total of 100 50x50cm sheets of thick roofing felt were placed within suitable areas across the site to act as artificial refugia (see Plan 6481/ECO6). The refugia, which provide shelter for reptiles, heat up more quickly than their surroundings in the morning and can remain warmer than their surroundings in the late afternoon. Being ectothermic (cold blooded), reptiles will readily use these refugia to bask upon or beneath so as to raise their body temperature, which allows them to forage earlier and later in the day. Checking the refugia at appropriate times of the day (morning and evening) for the presence of reptiles provides an effective measures of assessing the presence/absence of common reptiles at a site to be determined.
- 2.3.21 The refugia were left in place undisturbed for approximately 1-2 weeks to allow reptiles to find and start using them. Following this initial bedding-in period, refugia were checked at

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<sup>13</sup> Based on: English Nature (2003) Surveying dormice using nest tubes: Results and experiences from the South West Dormouse Project, English Nature Research Report No. 524; English Nature (2006) The Dormouse Conservation Handbook, 2<sup>nd</sup> Edition; and Natural England (2011) Interim Natural England Advice Note – Dormouse surveys for mitigation licensing – best practice and common misconceptions, WML-537 (12/11)

<sup>14</sup> Surveys based on: Froglife Advice Sheet 10 (1999) Reptile Survey - an introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation.

appropriate times of the day on seven occasions during suitable weather conditions as set out below in Table 2.2.

**Table 2.2.** Reptile survey dates and weather conditions

Survey Date	Weather Conditions			
	Wind (BF)	Temp(°C)	Cloud Cover (%)	Precipitation
17/04/2023	1	13-16	10	dry
20/04/2023	2-3	11-13	<1	dry
25/04/2023	1	9-11	10	dry
05/05/2023	3	14-16	100	Light rain
11/05/2023	1	15-16	60	dry
18/05/2023	1	14-17	90	dry
22/05/2023	4	16-17	10	dry

BF0 = calm, BF12 = hurricane force

- 2.3.22 Any reptiles that were observed basking in the open or within partial cover were also recorded. Searches were also made of existing natural objects (such as logs and rocks) and other artificial refugia (such as debris or discarded tyres), where present, for reptiles or evidence of reptiles (such as sloughed skin).

#### Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*)

- 2.3.23 As a first step in assessing the possible presence of Great Crested Newt at the site, Ordnance Survey mapping and satellite imagery were examined to identify water bodies within 500m of the site boundary.
- 2.3.24 Guidance set out within Natural England’s Method Statement template, to be used when applying for a Great Crested Newt development licence, states that surveys of ponds within 500m of the site boundary are only required “when all of the following conditions are met: (a) maps, aerial photos, walk-over surveys or other data indicate that the pond(s) has potential to support a large great crested newt population, (b) the footprint contains particularly favourable habitat, especially if it constitutes the majority available locally, (c) the development would have a substantial negative effect on that habitat, and (d) there is an absence of dispersal barriers.”
- 2.3.25 Ponds within 250-500m of the site have been reviewed on this basis, and given these are separated by roads and residential development to the north, east and south, or a watercourse to the west, and typically with more favourable habitat in the immediate surrounds, it is considered that survey of ponds within 500m of the survey area boundary is not required, and that survey of ponds within 250m<sup>15</sup> represents adequate survey effort. Accordingly, ponds within 250m were subject to specific survey (where accessible) as detailed below.

#### *Environmental DNA (eDNA)*

- 2.3.26 Water samples were taken for eDNA analysis to investigate the presence/absence of Great Crested Newt within one on-site pond (P1) and four off-site ponds (P2, P3, P6 and P7) (see Plan 6481/ECO7). Access was sought to a further two off-site ponds (P4 and P5) although no response was received. Water samples were collected on 18 June 2024 following the

<sup>15</sup> 250m is the typical maximum migratory range of this species, see English Nature (2004) ‘An assessment of the efficiency of capture techniques and the value of different habitats for the great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*’. English Nature Research Report 576

procedure outlined in the methods manual prepared for DEFRA by Biggs *et al.* (2014)<sup>16</sup>. The survey fell within the acceptable seasonal window set out by Natural England (15 April to 30 June inclusive)<sup>17</sup>. Samples were collected by suitably trained Aspect Ecology staff. The water samples were sent for laboratory analysis which was conducted by Cellmark in accordance with the procedure set out by Biggs *et al.* (2014)<sup>14</sup>.

### Breeding Birds<sup>18</sup>

- 2.3.27 The use of the site by breeding birds was assessed over three survey visits, each undertaken on a separate day in April, May and June 2023. Birds observed or heard within the site were recorded in accordance with a method modified from the British Trust for Ornithology's (BTO's) Common Bird Census technique<sup>19</sup>.
- 2.3.28 On each survey occasion a route through the site was walked by an experienced ornithologist. Note was made of all birds either seen or heard. These 'registrations' were annotated on a site plan using standard BTO codes for each bird species and appropriate abbreviations.
- 2.3.29 This survey methodology has the advantage over other survey methods of mapping each registration to a specific point within the site and is therefore able to identify those areas containing the highest density and diversity of bird species.
- 2.3.30 The dates of each survey, together with a summary of the weather conditions are shown in Table 2.3 below.

**Table 2.3.** Breeding bird survey dates and weather conditions.

Survey Date	Weather Conditions			
	Wind (BF)	Temp(°C)	Cloud Cover (%)	Precipitation (0-5)
22/04/2023	0	3	100	0
24/05/2023	2	19	75	0
21/06/2023	2	20	38	0

## 2.4 Survey Constraints and Limitations

- 2.4.1 Not all of the species that occur in each habitat will necessarily be present or detectable during survey work carried out at any given time of the year, since different species are apparent during different seasons. However, habitat surveys were carried out during the optimum survey period, allowing a robust assessment of habitats and botanical interest within the survey area to be made.

<sup>16</sup> Biggs J., Ewald N., Valentini A., Gaboriaud C., Griffiths R.A., Foster J., Wilkinson J., Arnett A., Williams P. and Dunn F. (2014). *Analytical and methodological development for improved surveillance of the Great Crested Newt. Appendix 5. Technical advice note for field and laboratory sampling of great crested newt (Triturus cristatus) environmental DNA.* Freshwater Habitats Trust, Oxford.

<sup>17</sup> Natural England (2015) Great crested newts: surveys and mitigation for development projects. Standing advice for local planning authorities who need to assess the impacts of development on great crested newts. Viewed at [www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk) on 24/12/2015.

<sup>18</sup> Surveys based on methodology within: Baille *et al.* RA (2010) *Breeding Birds in the Wider Countryside: their conservation status*, BTO Research Report No. 385, BTO, Thetford.

<sup>19</sup> Marchant (1983) Common Birds Census Instructions. Available at: <https://www.bto.org/our-science/publications/birdtrends/2020/methods/common-birds-census>

2.4.2 Note was made of any invasive species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) that were observed during surveys. However, because the detectability of such species varies according to factors such as the time of year or site management regime, the absence of invasive species should not be assumed even if no such species were recorded during the surveys undertaken.

2.4.3 A recognised limitation of bat activity surveys is that bat detectors can only provide an index of activity rather than determine absolute numbers of bats. The results of bat activity surveys should therefore only be considered indicative of the amount of use bats make of an area rather than a measure of the abundance of bats. In addition, some bat species that are more difficult to detect because of their quiet echolocation calls, such as Brown Long-eared Bat, may be under-recorded.

## 2.5 Ecological Evaluation Methodology

2.5.1 The evaluation of ecological features and resources is based on professional judgement whilst also drawing on the latest available industry guidance and research. The approach taken in this report is based on that described by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2018)<sup>20</sup>, which identifies ‘important ecological features’ within a defined geographical context (i.e. international, national, regional, county, district, local or site importance). Further details are provided at Appendix 6481/4.

## 2.6 Relevant Planning Policy

### National Policy Approach to Biodiversity in the Planning System

2.6.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)<sup>21</sup> describes the Government’s national policies on ‘conserving and enhancing the natural environment’ (Chapter 15). NPPF is accompanied by Planning Practice Guidance on ‘Biodiversity, ecosystems and green infrastructure’ and ODPM Circular 06/2005<sup>22</sup>.

2.6.2 NPPF takes forward the Government’s strategic objective to halt overall biodiversity loss<sup>23</sup>, as set out at Paragraph 187, which states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

*‘minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs’*

2.6.3 The approach to dealing with biodiversity in the context of planning applications is set out at Paragraph 193:

*‘When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:*

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<sup>20</sup> CIEEM (2018) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine, ver. 1.2, Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester

<sup>21</sup> Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (December 2024) *National Planning Policy Framework*

<sup>22</sup> ODPM (2006) Circular 06/2005: Planning for Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – A Guide to Good Practice

<sup>23</sup> DEFRA (2011) Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England’s wildlife and ecosystem services

- a) *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;*
- b) *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;*
- c) *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; and*
- d) *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.'*

2.6.4 The above approach encapsulates the 'mitigation hierarchy' described in British Standard BS 42020:2019<sup>24</sup>, which sets out the following step-wise process:

- **Avoidance** – avoiding adverse effects through good design;
- **Mitigation** – where it is unavoidable, mitigation measures should be employed to minimise adverse effects;
- **Compensation** – where residual effects remain after mitigation it may be necessary to provide compensation to offset any harm; and
- **Enhancement** – planning decisions often present the opportunity to deliver benefits for biodiversity, which can also be explored alongside the above measures to resolve potential adverse effects.

2.6.5 The measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the type and scale of the proposed development (BS 42020:2019, section 5.5).

#### Local Policy

2.6.6 Mid Sussex District Council adopted its District Plan (2014-2031) in March 2018. This outlines the Council's current vision and strategy for the District. A Regulation 19 version of a new District Plan (2021-2039) has been submitted and is currently at examination.

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<sup>24</sup> British Standards Institution (2013) Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development, BS 42020:2019

*Adopted District Plan (2014-2031)*

2.6.7 The current District Plan (adopted March 2018) contains the following policies which are relevant to biodiversity and ecology:

- DP17: Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC (sets out mitigation requirements in relation to Ashdown Forest including provision of SANG and SAMM within a 7km zone of influence)
- DP37: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows (sets out the protection and enhancement of trees, woodland and hedgerows)
- DP38: Biodiversity (sets out how biodiversity will be protected and enhanced)

*Draft District Plan (2021-2039)*

2.6.8 The submission draft (Regulation 19) version of the new District Plan (dated December 2023) includes a number of policies relevant to ecology and biodiversity:

- DPN1: Biodiversity, Geodiversity and Nature Recovery (sets out the protection and enhancement of biodiversity, soil, geodiversity, water and nature recovery)
- DPN2: Biodiversity Net Gain (requires that good practice principles for biodiversity net gain are followed, sets out a minimum percentage of 10% biodiversity net gain and preference for on-site provision)
- DPN3: Green and Blue Infrastructure (sets out the protection and enhancement of green and blue infrastructure and how this should be incorporated within development)
- DPN4: Trees, Woodland and Hedgerows (sets out the protection and enhancement of trees, woodland and hedgerows)
- DPC6: Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC (sets out mitigation requirements in relation to Ashdown Forest including provision of SANG and SAMM within a 7km zone of influence)

2.6.9 The site itself is proposed for allocation for residential development within the emerging District Plan under Policy DPA14 (Land at Foxhole Farm, Bolney).

*Bolney Neighbourhood Plan 2015-2031*

2.6.10 The Bolney Neighbourhood Plan (dated September 2016) includes a single policy relevant to ecology and biodiversity:

- BOLE1: Protect and Enhance Biodiversity

## 3 Ecological Designations

### 3.1 Statutory Designations

- 3.1.1 The statutory designations of ecological importance that occur within the local area around the site are shown on Plan 6481/ECO2.
- 3.1.2 The nearest statutory designation is Blunts Wood and Paige's Meadow LNR located approximately 5.6km to the north-east of the site. The LNR comprises a mixture of deciduous woodland and meadows which supports a diverse range of species, including Black Poplar and Dormice.
- 3.1.3 The next nearest statutory designation is Ashenground and Bolnore Woods LNR, located approximately 5.8km to the east of the site. Ashenground and Bolnore Woods LNR comprises ancient woodland habitat supporting a moderate assemblage of Oak and Hornbeam trees. It also contains several meadow and pond habitats.
- 3.1.4 The nearest European designation is Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area Conservation (SAC) located approximately 16km to the north-east of the site. Ashdown Forest is designated for its wet and dry heaths that support wide assemblages of rare and notable species including nationally important numbers of breeding Nightjar and Dartford Warbler.
- 3.1.5 Natural England has developed Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) as an initial tool to help assess the risk of developments adversely affecting SSSIs, taking into account the type and scale of developments. The site is located within a number of IRZs, however these do not relate to residential development.

#### Assessment of Proposals

- 3.1.6 The site itself is not subject to any statutory nature conservation designations. All statutory ecological designations in the surrounding area are well separated from the site by existing development and given the type and scale of the proposals, these designations are unlikely to be affected.

### 3.2 Non-statutory Designations

- 3.2.1 The nearest non-statutory nature conservation designation to the site is Colwood Lane Designated Road Verge, which is located approximately 0.85km north-west of the site.
- 3.2.2 The next nearest non-statutory nature conservation designation to the site is Seven Acre Hanger Local Wildlife Site (LWS), which is located approximately 1.65km north-east of the site.

#### Assessment of Proposals

- 3.2.3 The site itself is not subject to any non-statutory nature conservation designations. All non-statutory designations in the surrounding area are well separated from the site by existing development and given the type and scale of the proposals, these designations are unlikely to be affected.

### 3.3 Priority Habitats, Ancient Woodland and Notable Trees

- 3.3.1 A search of the MAGIC database shows several habitats within the immediate surrounds of the site which are included under the priority habitat inventory. This includes an area of Deciduous Woodland adjacent to the northern boundary, and an area of Traditional Orchard associated with the area of farm buildings enclosed by the site to the west.
- 3.3.2 No Ancient Woodland is located within or adjacent to the site, with the nearest areas including Nailards Wood Ancient Replanted Woodland (ARW) 180m north-west of the site and Hanger Wood Ancient and Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW) 190m west of the site.
- 3.3.3 There are no records of any notable or veteran trees within or adjacent to the site.

#### Assessment of Proposals

- 3.3.4 Based on the desktop study, Ancient Woodland and notable and veteran trees are well separated from the site and are therefore unlikely to be affected by the proposals. Discussion of the priority habitat woodland adjacent to the site is set out at Chapter 4.

### 3.4 Summary

- 3.4.1 The site itself is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory ecological designations and it is unlikely that any such designations in the surrounding area will be significantly affected by the proposals. Similarly Ancient Woodland and notable and veteran trees are unlikely to be affected by the proposals. Discussion of the priority habitat woodland adjacent to the site is set out at Chapter 4.

## 4 Habitats and Ecological Features

### 4.1 Background Records

4.1.1 No specific records of any protected, rare, or notable plant species from within or immediately adjacent to the site are included within the information returned from SxBRC. Records were returned for a single Section 41 (S41) Priority Species, namely Pennyroyal *Mentha pulegium* located approximately 800m to the east of the site dated 2005. Records were also returned for a number of rare and Red Listed plant species, although none relate to the site or its immediate surrounds. No evidence for the presence of any of these species within the site was recorded during the survey work undertaken.

### 4.2 Overview

4.2.1 The locations of habitat types and features within the site are indicated on Plan 6481/ECO3.

4.2.2 The site itself comprises five main grassland fields bounded by established hedgerows, woodland and residential dwellings. A number of other habitats are present within the site including a single pond, woodland, scrub, tall ruderal vegetation, Bracken, bare ground, hardstanding and buildings.

### 4.3 Priority Habitats

4.3.1 Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 places duties on public bodies to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in the exercise of their normal functions. In particular, Section 41 of the NERC Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats which are of principal importance for conservation in England. This list is largely derived from the 'Priority Habitats' listed under the former UK BAP, which continue to be regarded as priority habitats under the subsequent country-level biodiversity strategies.

4.3.2 Of the habitats within the site, woodlands and hedgerows are considered to qualify as Priority Habitats and therefore constitute important ecological features. This is discussed further in the relevant habitat sections below.

### 4.4 Irreplaceable Habitats

4.4.1 Irreplaceable habitats are now defined under The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024 and include blanket bog, lowland fens, limestone pavements, coastal sand dunes, ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees, spartina saltmarsh swards and mediterranean saltmarsh scrub.

4.4.2 No irreplaceable habitats are present within the site.

### 4.5 Habitat Descriptions and Evaluation

4.5.1 The habitats and ecological features present within the site are described in Table 4.1 below. This table sets out their UK Habitat Classification Primary Habitats and Secondary Codes, and the corresponding habitat type and condition according to the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. The table also indicates whether these habitats constitute an important ecological feature and sets out their level of importance, taking into account the status of habitat types and the presence of rare plant communities or individual plant species of

elevated interest. The value of habitats for the fauna they may support is considered separately in Chapter 5 below.

- 4.5.2 More detailed survey results of grassland habitats and hedgerows are provided at Appendix 6481/6, and details of habitat condition assessments are provided at Appendix 6481/7.

**Table 4.1a.** Habitat Descriptions and Evaluation – Area Habitats

Ref	UK Hab Primary Habitat/ Secondary Codes*	Statutory Biodiversity Metric Habitat Type and Condition	Description	Evaluation
G1, G2, G3	g4 modified grassland 100	Grassland: modified grassland (poor condition)	Grasslands G1, G2 and G3 form the southern fields within the site (corresponding to fields F1, F2 and F3). These are used for grazing by sheep and horses, maintaining a low sward height. The sward is grass dominated with a low species diversity, averaging 5.8, 4 and 5.8 species per m <sup>2</sup> within the three fields respectively. Typical grass and herb species include Common Bent <i>Agrostis capillaris</i> , Perennial Rye-Grass <i>Lolium perenne</i> , Yorkshire-fog <i>Holcus lanatus</i> , Common Sorrel <i>Rumex acetosa subsp. acetosa</i> , Creeping Buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i> , Dandelion <i>Taraxacum officinale</i> and White Clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> . As set out in the grassland habitat sheet at Appendix 6481/6, the grasslands do not meet sufficient criteria for other neutral grassland, and as such are classified as modified grassland.	Does not form important ecological feature
G4, G5	g4 modified grassland 106	Grassland: modified grassland (poor condition)	Grasslands G4 and G5 form the northern fields within the site (corresponding to fields F4 and F5). These are maintained by periodic mowing, maintaining a uniform sward height within the main field which varied between c.10cm and 30cm during survey visits. The fields are also species-poor and heavily grass dominated, with an average species count of 4.7 and 4 per m <sup>2</sup> respectively. Typical species include Common Bent, Perennial Rye-grass, Yorkshire Fog and Creeping Buttercup, with other species only occurring rarely. As set out in the grassland habitat sheet at Appendix 6481/6, the grasslands do not meet sufficient criteria for other neutral grassland, and as such are classified as modified grassland.	Does not form important ecological feature
G6	g4 modified grassland 106	Grassland: modified grassland (moderate condition)	Small areas of road verge are included within the southern part of site (G6). These support a typical range of grass and herb species and are maintained a short height (c.5cm) by regular mowing.	Does not form important ecological feature
-	g1c Bracken	Grassland: Bracken (condition assessment N/A)	Small areas of Bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> dominated vegetation are present at the margins of grasslands G1 and G2.	Does not form important ecological feature
-	h3d Bramble scrub	Heathland and shrub: Bramble scrub (condition assessment N/A)	Small areas of scrub are present around the margins of the grassland fields in places, dominated by Bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Does not form important ecological feature

Ref	UK Hab Primary Habitat/ Secondary Codes*	Statutory Biodiversity Metric Habitat Type and Condition	Description	Evaluation
MS1	h3h mixed scrub	Heathland and shrub: mixed scrub (poor condition)	Narrow strips of mixed scrub are present along the northern boundary of grassland G4, largely dominated by Bramble scrub but with some Hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> and Blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> .	Does not form important ecological feature
P1	(pond) r1g other standing water 41	Lakes: ponds (non- priority habitat) (moderate condition)	Pond P1 comprises a small ephemerally wet hollow within the wooded boundary at the western edge of grassland G5. The hollow measures approximately 4m in width and 10m in length, but was recorded to be entirely dry in September 2022 and mostly dry in July 2024. The hollow is heavily shaded by adjacent trees.	Does not form important ecological feature
TF1, TF2, TF3, TF4	(tall forbs) 16	Sparsely vegetated land: tall forbs (poor to moderate condition)	Small areas of tall forb vegetation are present within the grassland fields, typically dominated by Common Nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i> with other species including Bramble, Creeping Thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i> and Great Willowherb <i>Epilobium hirsutum</i> .	Does not form important ecological feature
W1	w1f lowland mixed deciduous woodland 30	Woodland and forest: lowland mixed deciduous woodland (moderate condition)	Woodland W1 is largely offsite, however the woodland canopy does encroach onto the site at the northwest boundary by approximately 5m. The main woodland is dominated by English Oak <i>Quercus robur</i> and Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> trees, forming a canopy c.15m in height. The overhanging canopy is dominated by Oak and Ash, with some Bramble and Rose <i>Rosa sp.</i> scrub and occasional Beech <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> , Hawthorn and Spindle <i>Euonymus europaeus</i> . A number of log piles are present at the woodland edge.	<b>Priority habitat, forms important ecological feature (local value)</b>
W2	w1f lowland mixed deciduous woodland 30	Woodland and forest: lowland mixed deciduous woodland (poor condition)	W2 and W3 form an extension of the hedgerow/treeline at the western edge of grassland G5 (adjacent to Foxhole Lane), forming small shrubby, wooded areas. Larger Oaks are present at the roadside, with other trees and shrubs including Hawthorn, Grey Willow <i>Salix cinerea</i> , Field Maple <i>Acer campestre</i> and Hazel. Ground flora includes Dog's Mercury <i>Mercurialis perennis</i> , Wood False-Brome <i>Brachypodium sylvaticum</i> , Male Fern <i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i> and Hart's-tongue Fern <i>Asplenium scolopendrium</i> .	<b>Priority habitat, forms important ecological feature (local value)</b>
W3	w1f lowland mixed deciduous woodland 30	Woodland and forest: lowland mixed deciduous woodland (moderate condition)		<b>Priority habitat, forms important ecological feature (local value)</b>
-	u1c artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface 510	Urban – artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface (N/A – other)	A horse menage area is present within grassland G5, formed by unvegetated bare ground enclosed by fencing.	Does not form important ecological feature

Ref	UK Hab Primary Habitat/ Secondary Codes*	Statutory Biodiversity Metric Habitat Type and Condition	Description	Evaluation
B1	(buildings) u1b developed land – sealed surface	Urban: developed land; sealed surface (N/A – other)	A derelict open sided agricultural barn (B1) is present at the western edge of grassland G5.	Does not form important ecological feature
-	(hardstanding) u1b developed land – sealed surface	Urban: developed land; sealed surface (N/A – other)	Small areas of tarmac hardstanding are present within the southernmost part of the site, forming footpaths adjacent to Cowfold Road.	Does not form important ecological feature
-	(trees) 200, 203	Rural tree (moderate condition**)	Several standard trees are located throughout the site, mostly associated with the boundary hedgerows. A small number of small trees are present along fenced field boundaries.	Does not form important ecological feature

\* Habitat types not listed as a primary habitat are indicated in brackets

\*\* Trees forming part of woodlands or hedgerows are not individually assessed in terms of habitat condition

UK Hab Secondary Codes:

16 – tall forbs

30 – semi-natural woodland

41 – pond (non-priority)

100 – grazed

106 – mown

200 – tree

203 – mature tree

510 – bare ground

**Table 4.1b.** Habitat Descriptions and Evaluation – Hedgerows/Line of Trees

Ref	UK Hab Primary Habitat/ Secondary Codes*	Statutory Biodiversity Metric Habitat Type and Condition	Description	Evaluation
H1	h2a native hedgerow	Native hedgerow (good condition)	A network of hedgerows is present across the site, forming the majority of field boundaries. These vary in terms of species richness, structure and management, although the majority appear to be substantial and outgrown. Hedgerows H6, H10, H12 and H14 are considered to be species-rich and with the exception of H14 (forming a residential curtilage) are likely to qualify as ecologically 'important' under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997, based on the number of woody species and associated features. H13, adjacent to a public footpath, is also likely to qualify as ecologically 'important' under the Regulations.	<b>Priority habitat, forms important ecological feature (local value)</b>
H2	h2a native hedgerow	Native hedgerow (good condition)		
H3	h2a native hedgerow 11	Native hedgerow with trees (good condition)		
H4	h2a native hedgerow 11	Native hedgerow with trees (good condition)		
H5	h2a native hedgerow	Native hedgerow (good condition)		
H6	h2a5 species-rich native hedgerow 111	Species-rich native hedgerow – associated with bank or ditch (good condition)		
H7	h2a native hedgerow 50	Native hedgerow – associated with bank or ditch (good condition)		
H8	h2a native hedgerow 11	Native hedgerow with trees (good condition)		
H9	h2a native hedgerow 11	Native hedgerow with trees (good condition)		
H10	h2a5 species-rich native hedgerow 50	Species-rich native hedgerow – associated with bank or ditch (good condition)		
H11	h2a native hedgerow 11	Native hedgerow with trees (good condition)		
H12	h2a5 species-rich native hedgerow 11, 50	Species-rich native hedgerow with trees – associated with bank		

Ref	UK Hab Primary Habitat/ Secondary Codes*	Statutory Biodiversity Metric Habitat Type and Condition	Description	Evaluation
		or ditch (good condition)		
H13	h2a native hedgerow 11	Native hedgerow with trees (good condition)		
H14	h2a5 species-rich native hedgerow	Species-rich native hedgerow (good condition)		
H16	h2a native hedgerow 11	Native hedgerow with trees (good condition)		
H15	h2b non-native and ornamental hedgerow	Non-native and ornamental hedgerow (poor condition)	Ornamental Privet hedgerow forming residential boundary.	Does not form important ecological feature
TL1	(line of trees) 33	Line of trees (moderate condition)	Line of young Ash trees	<b>Priority habitat, forms important ecological feature (local value)</b>

\* Habitat types not listed as a primary habitat are indicated in brackets

UK Hab Secondary Codes:

11 – hedgerow with trees

33 – line of trees

50 – ditch

111 - hedgebank

## 4.6 Summary

- 4.6.1 On the basis of the above, the following habitats within and adjacent to the site are considered to form important ecological features:

**Table 4.2.** Evaluation summary of habitats forming important ecological features.

Habitat	Level of Importance
Lowland mixed deciduous woodland (W1-W3)	Local
Native hedgerows/treelines	Local

- 4.6.2 Other habitats present within the site include modified grassland, Bracken, scrub, pond, tall forbs, bare ground, buildings, hardstanding and individual trees. These habitats do not form important ecological features.

## 4.7 Assessment of Proposals

- 4.7.1 The proposed development has followed the mitigation hierarchy approach as set out under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), with consideration given first to avoidance, followed by mitigation and compensation.

- 4.7.2 In line with this hierarchy, habitats forming important ecological features (namely woodland and hedgerows/treelines) are largely retained under the proposals avoiding significant habitat losses, with built development focused within areas of lower value habitat, predominantly formed by modified grassland. Losses of these habitats, not forming important ecological features, will be addressed as part of the overall balance of biodiversity net gain.

- 4.7.3 A discussion of effects and any requirements for mitigation or compensation in relation to individual habitats of ecological importance is set out below.

### Woodland

- 4.7.4 Woodlands W1, W2 and W3 are unaffected under the proposals, being retained in full within open space surrounding the northern development parcel. These will be supplemented with new tree and shrub planting.

### Hedgerows/Treelines

- 4.7.5 Hedgerows and lines of trees have formed a key consideration in the development layout, with these to be largely retained under the proposals. Hedgerow losses are limited to short sections of H1, H7 and H9 for road and pedestrian access (likely around 10m each, although additional lengths of H9 may be affected for visibility splays), whilst H5 (comprising a short length of outgrown scrubby vegetation) is lost to accommodate the northern development parcel. New hedgerow planting will be provided under the landscaping scheme to compensate for any hedgerow losses.

- 4.7.6 Retained hedgerows will be protected during construction works in line with standard practice, as detailed further at Chapter 6.

### Other Development Impacts

- 4.7.7 Standard measures will be implemented to minimise construction effects such as dust deposition and surface run-off of contaminants or silt, whilst implementation of a drainage

strategy as part of the completed development will safeguard water quality in the long-term. Ongoing management of retained habitats and open spaces will allow for management of recreational activity to minimise disturbance to sensitive habitats and wildlife. Further detail is set out at Chapter 6 below.

## 5 Faunal Use of the Site

### 5.1 Overview

5.1.1 During the survey work, general observations were made of any faunal use of the site with particular attention paid to the potential presence of protected or notable species. Specific survey work was undertaken in respect of Badger, bats, Dormouse, breeding birds, reptiles and Great Crested Newt, the results of which are set out below.

### 5.2 Priority Species

5.2.1 Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 places duties on public bodies to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in the exercise of their normal functions. In particular, Section 41 of the NERC Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of species which are of principal importance for conservation in England. This list is largely derived from the 'Priority Species' listed under the former UK BAP, which continue to be regarded as Priority Species under the subsequent country-level biodiversity strategies.

5.2.2 During the survey work undertaken, the Priority Species Dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*, Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus*, Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, Noctule *Nyctalus nyctalus*, Slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*, Grass Snake *Natrix natrix* and several bird species were recorded within the site. This is discussed further below.

### 5.3 Bats

5.3.1 **Legislation.** All British bats are classed as European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and are also listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). As such, both bats and their roosts (breeding sites and resting places) receive full protection under the legislation (see Appendix 6481/5). If proposed development work is likely to result in an offence a licence may need to be obtained from Natural England which would be subject to appropriate measures to safeguard bats. Given all bats are protected species, they are considered to represent important ecological features. Several bat species are also S41 Priority Species.

5.3.2 **Background Records.** Desktop study returned specific records of bats from within and adjacent to the site. Information received from SBRC includes records of Brown Long-eared *Plecotus auritus*, Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, Daubenton's *Myotis daubentonii*, Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, Serotine *Eptesicus serotinus*, Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, Western Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, and Whiskered *Myotis mystacinus* species of bat. Additionally, non-specific records of *Plecotus*, *Myotis*, *Pipistrellus*, and unknown bat individuals were returned. All records returned were from within 2km of the site. The closest records are for Brown Long-eared *Plecotus auritus* and Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus* bat roosts within the site boundary.

#### Survey Results and Evaluation

##### Preliminary Appraisal

5.3.3 As detailed above, records of eight bat species/species groups have been returned from within the surroundings of the site. These species are largely typical given the region and

the types of habitats present in the wider area of the site, although Serotine is considered to have a more restricted distribution within Southern England, whilst Barbastelle is identified as very rare. The desk study does not indicate any ecological designations within 10km of the site which are specifically identified for their bat interest.

- 5.3.4 Habitats within the wider area of the site largely comprise open farmland, with numerous areas of established woodland and strong hedgerow networks likely to be of elevated interest for bats. Notably, an extensive area of woodland and lakes extends to the north-west of the site, whilst further large areas of woodland occur to the east of the site, beyond the A23.
- 5.3.5 Within the site, several trees and buildings have been identified as potentially suitable to support roosting bats, detailed further below. A preliminary assessment of habitats in terms of their likely value for foraging and commuting bats is set out in Table 5.1 below.

**Table 5.1.** Assessment of value of habitats within the site for foraging and commuting bats

Commuting (potential flight-paths)	Foraging habitats
Woodland edge and associated hedgerow network forms continuous habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape – high potential suitability.	Woodland edge and associated hedgerow network – high potential suitability.
Hedgerows across the remainder of the site more fragmented – moderate potential suitability.	Internal grassland pasture is species-poor and unlikely to support foraging activity away from boundaries – low potential suitability.

### Roosting – Buildings and Built Structures

#### *Visual Inspection*

- 5.3.6 A single building is present within the site (B1), subject to a visual inspection in July 2023. The building comprises a derelict agricultural barn. The barn is of modern construction, with concrete supports and corrugated sheeting forming the roof and upper part of the western elevation, the remaining elevations being open sided. Sheeting is missing from around half of the roof and given the open sides, the building is exposed and open to the elements. Given this and a lack of suitable enclosed features, the building is assessed as providing negligible bat roosting potential. No evidence of bat occupation, such as droppings, staining or feeding remains, was recorded during the inspection survey.

### Roosting – Trees

#### *Assessment of Roosting Potential*

- 5.3.7 Trees within the survey area were subject to an initial assessment for their suitability to support roosting bats, with trees that may be impacted by the development proposals together with individual trees outside of woodlands and tree groups subject to a ground level tree assessment (GLTA). Trees identified as supporting PRFs or identified as FAR are indicated on Plan 6481/ECO3. The results of this assessment are summarised in Table 5.2 below.

**Table 5.2.** Tree assessment results

Tree Ref.	Species	Assessment and potential roosting features	Summary	Affected under proposals?
T1	Wild Cherry	Lifted bark present on trunk.	PRF-I	Retained – located within retained hedgerow corridor
T2	Horse Chestnut	Knot holes and dead wood present.	PRF-M	Retained – located at site boundary
T3	Oak	Dense Ivy cover on branches.	PRF-I	Retained – located at site boundary
T4	Oak	Dead limbs and tree collars with potential roost features	PRF-M	Retained – located within retained hedgerow corridor
T5	Holly	Tree is dead with cracked and peeling bark.	PRF-I	Removal may be required to accommodate road access
T6	Ash	Young tree lacking potential roosting features.	Negligible potential	Retained – located adjacent to site boundary
T7	Oak	Several fallen and dead branches providing splits and cracks around the collar.	PRF	Retained – located at site boundary
T8	Oak	Dying limbs and dead wood present on this tree, with cracks and holes around the base.	PRF-M	Retained – located at site boundary
T9	Oak	Dying limbs and dead wood present on this tree, with cracks and holes around the base.	PRF-M	Retained – located at site boundary
T10	Poplar	Hollowed out trunk at the base with extensive cavities.	PRF-M	Retained – located at site boundary
T11	Poplar	Two woodpecker holes present on the northern elevation at 5-6m height.	PRF-M	Retained – located at site boundary
T12-T16	Various	Young/semi-mature trees lacking potential roosting features.	Negligible potential	Removed
Other woodland and tree groups	Various	Woodlands and tree groups not directly affected by development proposals and not subject to detailed survey, albeit potential features may be present.	FAR	Retained

### Evaluation

5.3.8 Overall, the site supports a moderate number of trees with bat roosting potential and is considered to be of local importance as a potential roosting resource.

### 5.3.9 Foraging and Commuting

#### Night-time Bat Walkover Surveys

5.3.10 A summary of the species recorded and numbers of registrations during the NBW surveys is set out in Tables 5.3 to 5.9 below.

**Table 5.3.** Results of the dusk walked transect on 2nd August 2022.

Species	Number of Passes Recorded	Approximate % of Total Passes Recorded	Overview of Recorded Activity
Common Pipistrelle	44	78.6	Areas of elevated bat registrations were recorded at listening points LP4, between
Soprano Pipistrelle	5	8.9	
'Big Bat' sp.	6	10.7	
Myotis sp.	1	1.8	

<b>Total</b>	<b>56</b>	<b>100</b>	LP4 and LP5 and at LP5, as well as at the finishing point.
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**Table 5.4.** Results of the dusk walked transect on 15th September 2022.

Species	Number of Passes Recorded	Approximate % of Total Passes Recorded	Overview of Recorded Activity
Common Pipistrelle	84	72.4	Areas of elevated bat registrations were recorded at listening points LP7 and the finishing point.
Soprano Pipistrelle	25	21.6	
Myotis sp.	4	3.4	
Plecotus sp.	2	1.7	
Barbastelle	1	0.9	
<b>Total</b>	<b>116</b>	<b>100</b>	

**Table 5.5.** Results of the dusk walked transect on 25th April 2023.

Species	Number of Passes Recorded	Approximate % of Total Passes Recorded	Overview of Recorded Activity
Common Pipistrelle	22	91.7	Lower level of activity than previous surveys.
Soprano Pipistrelle	2	8.3	
<b>Total</b>	<b>24</b>	<b>100</b>	

**Table 5.6.** Results of the dusk walked transect on 11th May 2023 (dusk).

Species	Number of Passes Recorded	Approximate % of Total Passes Recorded	Overview of Recorded Activity
Common Pipistrelle	69	79.3	High levels of activity between points LP1 and LP2, as well as at points LP5, LP9 and at the finish.
Soprano Pipistrelle	11	12.6	
'Big Bat' sp.	6	6.9	
Myotis sp.	1	1.1	
<b>Total</b>	<b>87</b>	<b>100</b>	

**Table 5.7.** Results of the dusk walked transect on 12th May 2023 (dawn).

Species	Number of Passes Recorded	Approximate % of Total Passes Recorded	Overview of Recorded Activity
Common Pipistrelle	16	94.1	Elevated level of activity at LP9 associated with a hedgerow and near a pond.
Soprano Pipistrelle	1	5.9	
<b>Total</b>	<b>17</b>	<b>100</b>	

**Table 5.8.** Results of the dusk walked transect on 13th June 2023.

Species	Number of Passes Recorded	Approximate % of Total Passes Recorded	Overview of Recorded Activity
Common Pipistrelle	55	51.9	High levels of activity at LP6, LP7 and at the finish, although moderate to low levels of activity throughout the entire survey area.
Soprano Pipistrelle	23	21.7	
'Big bat' sp.	27	25.5	
Plecotus sp.	1	0.9	
<b>Total</b>	<b>106</b>	<b>100</b>	

**Table 5.9.** Results of the dusk walked transect on 10th July 2023.

Species	Number of Passes Recorded	Approximate % of Total Passes Recorded	Overview of Recorded Activity
Common Pipistrelle	145	70.7	High levels of bat registrations at LP7 and between LP8 to the finish.
Soprano Pipistrelle	49	23.9	
'Big Bat' sp.	10	4.9	
Myotis sp.	1	0.5	
<b>Total</b>	<b>205</b>	<b>100</b>	

5.3.11 Activity was recorded throughout the site, with concentrations of activity along the western and northern boundaries, associated with the woodland and more established hedgerows.

*Automated Surveys*

5.3.12 The results of the automated static bat surveys are summarised in Tables 5.10 and 5.11 below.

**Table 5.10.** Automated static bat survey summary for location SD1 (woodland W1 at northern site boundary)

Species	No. registrations							Average registrations per night							% of total registrations
	2022		2023				Total	2022		2023					
	Aug	Sept	Apr	May	Jun	Jul		Aug	Sep	Apr	May	Jun	Jul		
Common Pipistrelle	1151	309	160	663	1086	617	<b>3986</b>	164.4	44.1	22.9	94.7	155.1	102.8	<b>47.3</b>	
Soprano Pipistrelle	231	270	109	1186	102	419	<b>2317</b>	33.0	38.6	15.6	169.4	14.6	69.8	<b>27.5</b>	
Big Bat sp.	19	13	0	52	145	32	<b>261</b>	2.7	1.9	0.0	7.4	20.7	5.3	<b>3.1</b>	
Long-eared sp.	0	34	1	9	29	6	<b>79</b>	0.0	4.9	0.1	1.3	4.1	1.0	<b>0.9</b>	
Myotis sp.	95	247	17	760	130	116	<b>1365</b>	13.6	35.3	2.4	108.6	18.6	19.3	<b>16.2</b>	
Barbastelle	0	363	18	2	12	21	<b>416</b>	164.4	51.9	2.6	0.3	1.7	3.5	<b>4.9</b>	
Nathusius' Pipistrelle	0	1	0	0	2	1	<b>4</b>	33.0	0.1	0.0	0.0	0.3	0.2	<b>0.0</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>1496</b>	<b>1237</b>	<b>305</b>	<b>2672</b>	<b>1506</b>	<b>1212</b>	<b>8428</b>	<b>213.7</b>	<b>176.7</b>	<b>43.6</b>	<b>381.7</b>	<b>215.1</b>	<b>202.0</b>	<b>100</b>	

**Table 5.11.** Automated static bat survey summary for location SD2 (hedgerow H7 in south of site)

Species	No. registrations							Average registrations per night							% of total registrations
	2022		2023				Total	2022		2023					
	Aug	Sept	Apr	May	Jun	Jul		Aug	Sep	Apr	May	Jun	Jul		
Common Pipistrelle	351	140	31	456	287	430	<b>1695</b>	58.5	20.0	4.4	65.1	41.0	71.7	<b>66.2</b>	
Soprano Pipistrelle	141	136	23	84	48	41	<b>473</b>	23.5	19.4	3.3	12.0	6.9	6.8	<b>18.5</b>	
Big Bat sp.	11	3	0	36	12	7	<b>69</b>	1.8	0.4	0.0	5.1	1.7	1.2	<b>2.7</b>	
Long-eared sp.	3	21	0	3	11	3	<b>41</b>	0.5	3.0	0.0	0.4	1.6	0.5	<b>1.6</b>	
Myotis sp.	34	107	22	32	33	20	<b>248</b>	5.7	15.3	3.1	4.6	4.7	3.3	<b>9.7</b>	
Barbastelle	1	11	0	14	0	0	<b>26</b>	0.2	1.6	0.0	2.0	0.0	0.0	<b>1.0</b>	
Nathusius' Pipistrelle	0	3	0	0	7	0	<b>10</b>	0.0	0.4	0.0	0.0	1.0	0.0	<b>0.4</b>	
<b>Total</b>	<b>541</b>	<b>421</b>	<b>76</b>	<b>625</b>	<b>398</b>	<b>501</b>	<b>2562</b>	<b>90.2</b>	<b>60.1</b>	<b>10.9</b>	<b>89.3</b>	<b>56.9</b>	<b>83.5</b>	<b>100</b>	

5.3.13 **Summary.** At location SD1 (at the northern boundary of the site) 47.3% of all registrations were attributed to Common Pipistrelle, 27.5% to Soprano Pipistrelle, 3.1% to ‘Big Bats’, 16.2% to *Myotis* species 4.9% to Barbastelle and the remainder attributed to Long-eared species and Nathusius’ Pipistrelle. The relatively high proportion of *Myotis* and good number of Barbastelle recorded at this location is of particular interest, albeit not unexpected given the woodland edge location and good connectivity to surrounding wooded areas. Activity was relatively consistent between months, albeit a peak of Barbastelle activity was recorded in September, whilst *Myotis* activity peaked in May.

5.3.14 At location SD2 (in the southern part of the site), 66.2% of registrations were attributed to Common Pipistrelle, 18.5% to Soprano Pipistrelle, 2.7% to Big bat species, 1.6% to Long-eared species, 9.7% to *Myotis* species, and the remainder to Barbastelle and Nathusius’ Pipistrelle. Again, the relatively high proportion of *Myotis* species is of note, with activity peaking in September.

### Evaluation

5.3.15 An evaluation of the importance of the bat assemblage, based on the methodology set out within the Bat Mitigation Guidelines<sup>25</sup>, is set out in Table 5.12 below. The site is located within Southern England, with a score of 51% relative to the potential assemblage score. This just exceeds the threshold for county importance. Accordingly, the site is assessed as being of county importance for its bat assemblage.

**Table 5.12.** Evaluation of bat assemblage recorded within the site

Rarity category	Potentially occurring species (Southern England)		Species recorded within site	
	Species	Score	Species	Score
Widespread all geographies (score 1)	Common Pipistrelle Soprano Pipistrelle Brown long-eared Bat	3	Common Pipistrelle Soprano Pipistrelle Brown long-eared Bat <sup>26</sup>	3
Widespread in many geographies but not as abundant in all (score 2)	Whiskered Bat Brandt’s Bat Daubenton’s Bat Natterer’s Bat Noctule	10	<i>Myotis</i> sp. (est. 4 species <sup>27</sup> ) Noctule <sup>28</sup>	10
Rarer or restricted distribution (score 3)	Alcathoe Bat Serotine Leisler’s Bat Nathusius’ Pipistrelle	12	Serotine <sup>29</sup> Nathusius’ Pipistrelle	6
Rarest Annex II species and very rare (score 4)	Greater Horseshoe Bat Lesser Horseshoe Bat Bechstein’s Bat Barbastelle Grey Long-eared Bat	20	Barbastelle	4
<b>Total</b>		<b>45</b>		<b>23 (51% of potential score)</b>

<sup>25</sup> Based on the methodology for assessing the importance of the bat assemblage within Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023) *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation and compensation for developments affecting bats*. CIEEM.

<sup>26</sup> The *Plecotus* species that were recorded are likely to be the widespread and common Brown Long-eared Bat, rather than the very rare and localised Grey Long-eared Bat *Plecotus austriacus*.

<sup>27</sup> Given the difficulties associated with confidently identifying *Myotis* species based on call analysis alone, an indicative score for the number of widespread species (out of those occurring within the region) has been determined using professional judgement to inform the assessment of site assemblage. This is based on level of *Myotis* activity recorded, diversity of habitats present (providing habitat for different *Myotis* species) and records of species returned by the desktop study.

<sup>28</sup> Given the difficulties associated with confidently distinguishing between the ‘big bat’ species Noctule, Serotine and Leisler’s Bat, professional judgement has been applied to assume presence of Noctule and Serotine.

<sup>29</sup> Given the difficulties associated with confidently distinguishing between the ‘big bat’ species Noctule, Serotine and Leisler’s Bat, professional judgement has been applied to assume presence of Noctule and Serotine.

- 5.3.16 In terms of individual species, Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle are considered to form ecologically important features at the local level, whilst Myotis species and Barbastelle are considered to be of importance at the district level, given the relatively high frequency of activity recorded within the site. Other species occurred only infrequently and are not considered to be of particular importance outside of a site context.

## **Assessment of Proposals**

### Roosting

#### *Buildings and Built Structures*

- 5.3.17 Building B1 provides negligible suitability for roosting bats and no evidence of roosting bats was recorded during the survey work undertaken. Accordingly, no mitigation is required.

#### *Trees*

- 5.3.18 It is understood that the majority of trees within the site are to be retained within the proposals. Of those with potential bat roost features, all are retained with the possible exception of T5, which supports PRF-I due to cracked and peeling bark. Accordingly, precautionary safeguards will be implemented during removal of this tree.
- 5.3.19 As set out at Chapter 6, a sensitive lighting scheme will be implemented with particular regard given to trees with bat roosting potential where these lie adjacent to residential areas to minimise disturbance to any roosting bats that may be present.
- 5.3.20 Subject to the implementation of the recommendations set out at Chapter 6 below in regard to tree inspections and lighting, it is considered that roosting bats will be safeguarded under the proposals.

### Foraging and Commuting

- 5.3.21 The woodland margins and hedgerows within the site are largely retained under the proposals, with the exception of short sections of H1, H7 and H9 affected by road and pedestrian accesses. These short breaks are unlikely to affect connectivity along these features.
- 5.3.22 Substantial buffers of open space are maintained under the proposals along the northern and north-western boundaries of the site associated with woodland edges and treelined hedgerows where the highest levels of Myotis and Barbastelle activity was recorded. This includes a c.15-20m buffer along the northern edge, extending to over 50m at the western edge to be supplemented with new woodland planting and drainage features. Accordingly, appropriate dark corridors can be maintained along these features whilst habitat creation and enhancement should enhance the value of these features as commuting and foraging corridors.
- 5.3.23 A sensitive lighting scheme will be implemented within the development areas as detailed further at Chapter 6. This will include particular consideration of the hedgerows and woodland edges bordering the areas of residential development, and points where road and pedestrian accesses are proposed across hedgerows, to ensure that these areas remain suitable for more light sensitive bat species.

5.3.24 Accordingly, subject to the implementation of the recommendations outlined at Chapter 6 below, along with other ecological enhancements, it is considered that the conservation status of local bat populations will be fully safeguarded under the scheme.

## 5.4 Badger

5.4.1 **Legislation.** Badger receives legislative protection under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (see Appendix 6481/5), and as such should be assessed as an important ecological feature. The legislation aims to protect this species from persecution, rather than being a response to an unfavourable conservation status, as the species is in fact common over most of Britain.

5.4.2 Licences can be obtained from Natural England for development activities that would otherwise be unlawful under the legislation. The types of activity that should be licensed are described in the relevant best practice guidance.<sup>30, 31</sup>

5.4.3 **Background Records.** Information returned from SBRC included no records of Eurasian badger *Meles meles* within 2km of the site.

5.4.4 **Survey Results and Evaluation.** A Badger latrine was recorded offsite to the west of the site, associated with the adjacent area of farm buildings. A possible disused Badger sett was also recorded offsite to the south of hedgerow H4, with a mounded area indicative of former spoil mounds, although no entrances were evident. No confirmed evidence of Badger was recorded from within the site itself. As such, Badger does not form a particular constraint to the proposals, although precautionary safeguards are proposed in relation to this species as set out at Chapter 6.

## 5.5 Dormouse

5.5.1 **Legislation.** Dormouse is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and is a European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Such legislation affords protection to individuals of the species and their breeding sites and places of rest (see Appendix 6481/5). Dormouse is also a S41 Priority Species. On this basis, Dormouse is considered to form an important ecological feature.

5.5.2 **Background Records** The desktop study returned no specific records of Hazel Dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* from within or immediately adjacent to the site. Information received from the SxBRC includes two records of Dormouse, with the closest approximately 740m north of the site and dated from 2015. The second record is located approximately 800m north-east of the site also dated from 2015.

5.5.3 **Survey Results and Evaluation.** The site provides good opportunities for Dormice, associated with the hedgerow, woodland and scrub habitats. Accordingly, a nest tube survey was undertaken at the site between August 2022 and July 2023.

5.5.4 During the November 2022 check, two likely Dormouse nests and an occupied nest with four individuals were recorded, associated with hedgerows H4 and H10 in the southern part of the site (see Plan 6481/ECO5). These hedgerows are well connected to other wooded vegetation within the site, such that Dormouse is likely to be present throughout the site.

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<sup>30</sup> English Nature (2002) *Badgers and Development*

<sup>31</sup> Natural England (2011) *Badgers and Development: A Guide to Best Practice and Licensing, Interim Guidance Document*

- 5.5.5 Sussex is located within the core distribution area for Dormouse, and the species is relatively widespread across the county<sup>32</sup>. As such, the population supported by the site is considered to be of importance at the local level.
- 5.5.6 **Assessment of Proposals.** Hedgerows and wooded vegetation are largely retained under the proposals, with the exceptions of short lengths of hedgerows H1, H7 and H9 for road and pedestrian accesses. These sections, accounting for less than 0.05ha, would make up only a small proportion of the habitat resource for a single Dormouse (based on typical population densities supported by hedgerows of 1.3 adults per ha, as set out in the Dormouse Conservation Handbook).
- 5.5.7 Dormouse are known to cross gaps of up to 12m in width without any evidence of a barrier effect<sup>33</sup>, such that creation of these gaps is unlikely to impact on connectivity across the site, whilst the remainder of the hedgerow network is fully retained. New woodland and shrub planting within areas of open space will provide new habitat for Dormouse, compensating for minor habitat losses and providing an overall increase in the area of suitable habitat.
- 5.5.8 Given the legal protection afforded to Dormice, consideration will be given to licensing and implementation of appropriate safeguarding measures during vegetation clearance. Further details of these measures are set out at Section 6.

## 5.6 Water Vole and Otter

- 5.6.1 **Legislation.** Water Vole is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The legislation affords protection to individuals of the species and their breeding sites and places of shelter (see Appendix 6481/5). Water Vole is also a S41 Priority Species. As such, this species is considered to represent an important ecological feature.
- 5.6.2 If, despite all reasonable efforts, properly authorised development will adversely affect Water Vole and there are no alternative habitats nearby, Natural England may issue a licence to displace or trap and translocate Water Vole for the purpose of development. To issue such a licence, Natural England would need to be assured there is no reasonable alternative to the development and that there are no other practical solutions that would allow Water Vole to be retained at the same location. Natural England would also require there to be no net loss of Water Vole habitat as a result of the works.
- 5.6.3 Otter is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and is a European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This legislation affords protection to individuals of the species and their breeding sites and places of rest (see Appendix 6481/5). Otter is also a S41 Priority Species. On this basis, Otter is considered to represent an important ecological feature.
- 5.6.4 **Background Records.** Information returned from SBRC included no records of Water Vole *Arvicola amphibius* or Otter *Lutra lutra* within 2km of the site.
- 5.6.5 **Survey Results and Evaluation.** The habitats within the site are unsuitable for Water Vole and Otter, mostly comprising grassland. Pond P1 present on site is ephemeral and lacks aquatic vegetation, making it unsuitable habitat for Water Vole or Otter, whilst no watercourses are present within the site or its nearby surrounds. Accordingly, due to the

<sup>32</sup> Mammal Watch South East (2015) South East Mammal Atlas: covering Hampshire, Surrey, Sussex, Kent and the Isle of Wight

<sup>33</sup> Chanin, P. and Gubert, L. (2012); 'Common Dormouse movements in a landscape fragmented by roads'; *Lutra*. 55(1): p3-15

lack of suitable habitat within or adjacent to the site, it is unlikely these species will be affected by the proposals.

## 5.7 Other Mammals

- 5.7.1 **Legislation.** Other UK mammal species do not receive direct legislative protection relevant to development activities but may receive protection against acts of cruelty (for example, under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996). Some other mammal species, such as Hedgehog, Brown Hare and Harvest Mouse are S41 Priority Species and should be assessed as important ecological features.
- 5.7.2 **Background Records.** Specific records of other notable mammals were returned from immediately adjacent to the site from SxBRC, comprising four records of Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*, a S41 Priority Species. The closest Hedgehog record is 60m to the north-east of the site from 2003.
- 5.7.3 **Survey Results and Evaluation.** No evidence of any other protected, rare or notable mammal species was recorded from within the site. Other mammal species likely to use the site, such as Fox *Vulpes vulpes*, remain common in both a local and national context, and do not receive specific legislative protection in a development context. Such species are not a material planning consideration and the loss of habitats used by these species to the proposals is of negligible significance.
- 5.7.4 The desktop study returned records of Hedgehog, listed as a Priority Species despite being relatively common and widespread in England. The site contains habitats that may be used by this species, although these are typical of the surrounding area, such that Hedgehog is assessed as being of potential importance at a site level only.
- 5.7.5 **Assessment of Proposals.** Habitat losses arising from the proposals are not considered likely to have significant effects on Hedgehog, with the hedgerow network largely retained, whilst residential gardens would provide new opportunities for this species. Precautionary safeguards are recommended to minimise the risk of harm to other mammals that may be present. Enhancement measures to maintain habitat connectivity for Hedgehog are recommended, as set out in Chapter 6 below.

## 5.8 Reptiles

- 5.8.1 **Legislation.** All six species of British reptile are listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which protects individuals against intentional killing or injury. Sand Lizard *Lacerta agilis* and Smooth Snake *Coronella austriaca* receive additional protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), as set out at Appendix 6481/5. All six reptile species are also S41 Priority Species. As such, all reptile species should be assessed as important ecological features.
- 5.8.2 **Background Records.** No records of reptiles were returned from within or immediately adjacent to the site. Information from the SBRC returned records for Adder *Vipera berus*, Grass Snake *Natrix natrix*, and Slow-worm *Anguis fragilis* from within the 2km surrounding the site. The closest record is of Slow-worm approximately 220m SE of the site from 1996.
- 5.8.3 **Survey Results and Evaluation.** Specific survey work for reptiles was undertaken at the site, as shown on Plan 6481/ECO6 and summarised in **Error! Reference source not found.** below.

**Table 5.13.** Reptile survey results summary.

Visit	Date	Common Lizard		Slow-worm		Grass Snake		Other Species
		Adult	Juv.	Adult	Juv.	Adult	Juv.	
1	17/04/2023	0	0	3 (3)	0 (1)	0	0	0
2	20/04/2023	0	0	6 (3)	1 (0)	0	1 (0)	0
3	25/04/2023	0	0	6 (0)	1 (1)	0	1 (0)	0
4	05/05/2023	0	0	16 (7)	4 (1)	0	2 (0)	0
5	11/05/2023	0	0	10 (3)	7 (1)	0	1 (0)	0
6	18/05/2023	0	0	8 (3)	9 (1)	0	0	0
7	23/05/2023	0	0	0 (1)	4 (2)	0	0	0
8	26/05/2023	0	0	1 (5)	1 (0)	0 (1)	0	0
<b>Peak Adult Count</b>		<b>0</b>		<b>23</b>		<b>1</b>		

Reptiles recorded offsite along transects F, G, H and I within the area associated with the adjacent farm buildings are shown in brackets

5.8.4 A peak adult count of 23 Slow-worm and one Grass Snake was recorded during the survey work at the site, with a peak adult count of 16 Slow-worm within the site (the Grass Snake being recorded within the adjacent farm building area). Most reptiles within the site were recorded in the two northern grassland fields from transects A and B, with smaller numbers from transects C, E and J. It is likely that suitable reptile habitat is mostly associated with the field margins in the northern fields which were noted to be less frequently mown, supporting a longer sward length.

5.8.5 A count of 16 Slow-worm equates to a good population under Froglife guidance, whilst only a low population of Grass Snake is present. Accordingly, given the widespread nature of reptiles within southern England, the population of reptiles supported by the site is considered to be of local importance.

5.8.6 **Assessment of Proposals.** Under the proposals, suitable areas of reptile habitat are to be retained along field margins, including where transects A and B are located. These will be located within an open space buffer to be established with a mixture of grassland, scrub, woodland and wetland habitats, forming enhanced habitat for reptiles.

5.8.7 However, areas where reptiles have been recorded will be affected by construction works (particularly the internal field boundary where transect C was located) posing the potential risk of injury or disturbance to reptile species. On the basis of the survey results and the reptile populations recorded, it is considered that these species can be appropriately safeguarded by a translocation exercise with new receptor habitat provided onsite as detailed at Chapter 6.

## 5.9 Amphibians

5.9.1 **Legislation.** All British amphibians receive a degree of protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Great Crested Newt is protected under the Act and is also listed as a European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). As such, both Great Crested Newt and habitats used by this species are afforded protection (see Appendix 6481/5). Great Crested Newt is also a S41 Priority Species, as are Common Toad *Bufo bufo*, Natterjack Toad *Epidalea calamita*, and Pool Frog *Pelophylax lessonae*. As such, these species should be assessed as important ecological features.

5.9.2 **Background Records.** No specific records of amphibians were returned from within the site. Information from SxBRC returned records of Common Frog *Rana temporaria*, Common

Toad, Great Crested Newt, Palmate Newt *Lissotriton helveticus* and Smooth Newt *Lissotriton vulgaris* from within 2km of the site boundary. The nearest of these related to records of Common Frog approximately 120m south-east of the site from 2015. The closest record of Great Crested Newt is approximately 1km west of the site from 2015.

**5.9.3 Survey Results and Evaluation.** One pond (P1) is present within the site, whilst based on a review of OS mapping, six ponds have been identified within 250m of the site (see Plan 6481/ECO7). Access was obtained to four of these offsite ponds (P2, P3, P6 and P7). Accordingly, these ponds were subject to eDNA surveys during June 2024 to confirm presence or absence of Great Crested Newt.

**5.9.4** Pond P7 recorded a positive result from the eDNA testing, indicating presence of Great Crested Newt. This pond is located approximately 80m to the north of the site. The results were negative from the remaining ponds.

**5.9.5** During the survey work completed at the survey area, Common Toad have been confirmed present (recorded under refugia during the reptile survey).

**5.9.6 Assessment of Proposals.** Pond P7 supporting Great Crested Newt lies offsite and will not be directly affected by the proposals. However, given the presence of suitable terrestrial habitat within the site and within 250m of this pond it is possible that Great Crested Newt could be present within the site outside of the breeding season. P7 is bordered by offsite woodland, whilst habitats to be lost within the site (dominated by modified grassland) form low value terrestrial habitat. This species is also likely to benefit from new habitat creation including wildflower grassland establishment, tree and shrub planting and wetland habitats as part of the drainage strategy. Accordingly, subject to appropriate protection of higher value terrestrial habitats including woodlands and hedgerows and long-term favourable management it is considered that the conservation status of the Great Crested Newt population will be maintained. Nevertheless, given the site is located within 250m of ponds supporting this species, there is a risk that Great Crested Newt could be impacted during the proposed development, and consideration will need to be given to mitigation and licensing, as set out at Chapter 6 below.

## 5.10 Birds

**5.10.1 Legislation.** All wild birds and their nests receive protection under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) in respect of killing and injury, and their nests, whilst being built or in use, cannot be taken, damaged or destroyed. Species included on Schedule 1 of the Act receive greater protection and special penalties apply to legal offences (see Appendix 6481/5).

**5.10.2 Conservation Status.** The conservation importance of British bird species is categorised based on a number of criteria including the level of threat to a species' population status<sup>34</sup>. Species are listed as Green, Amber or Red. Red Listed species are considered to be of the highest conservation concern, being either globally threatened and/or experiencing a high level or rapid rate of population decline (>50% over the past 25 years). Numerous birds are also S41 Priority Species. Red and Amber listed species and Priority Species should be assessed as important ecological features.

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<sup>34</sup> Stanbury, A., Eaton, M., Aebischer, N., Balmer, D., Brown, A., Douse, A., Lindley, P., McCulloch, N., Noble, D. and Win I. (2021). 'The status of our bird populations: the fifth Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man and second IUCN Red List assessment of extinction risk for Great Britain. *British Birds* 114, p.p. 723-747.

- 5.10.3 Background Records.** Information received from SxBRC returned a number of records for notable bird species within the 2km surrounding the site. A number of records of S41 Priority Bird Species were returned: Bittern *Botaurus stellaris*, Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula*, Dunnock *Prunella modularis*, Reed Bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*, Ring Ouzel *Turdus torquatus*, Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus*, Grey Partridge *Perdix perdix*, Herring Gull *Larus argentatus*, House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*, Lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, Lesser Redpoll *Acanthis cabaret*, Linnet *Linaria cannabina*, Marsh Tit *Poecile palustris*, Skylark *Alauda arvensis*, Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*, Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*, Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, Tree Pipit *Anthus trivialis*, Turtle Dove *Streptopelia turtur*, Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix*, Yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*, and Woodlark *Lullula arborea*.
- 5.10.4** Of these, 15 are also Red Listed Species, namely: Herring Gull, Grey Partridge, Turtle Dove, Cuckoo, Lapwing, Marsh Tit, Skylark, Wood Warbler, Starling, Ring Ouzel, Spotted Flycatcher, House Sparrow, Tree Pipit, Linnet, and Yellowhammer. An additional six Red Listed Species had records returned from within 2km of the site: House Martin *Delichon urbicum*, Swift *Apus apus*, Grey Wagtail *Motacilla cinerea*, Mistle Thrush *Turdus viscivorus*, Nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*, and Woodcock *Scolopax rusticola*. None of these records originate from within the site, however records were returned from each of the 1km x 1km OS grid squares containing the site.
- 5.10.5 Survey Results and Evaluation.** Specific breeding bird surveys were undertaken within the site in April to June 2023. A total of 34 species of birds were recorded during the three surveys, of which 19 were considered to be breeding and one possibly breeding. The remaining 14 species were recorded either in adjacent habitats, as migrants or flying over, or were represented only by non-breeding individuals.
- 5.10.6** A list of species during the 2023 surveys is set out in Table 5.14 below and on Plan 6481/ECO8.

**Table 5.14** Bird species recorded during the breeding bird surveys

Systematic List of species (and BTO species code)	RSPB listed	Est. no. pairs	Notes
Greylag goose (GJ) <i>Anser anser</i>	Feral	0	Two flew over in April.
Egyptian goose (EG) <i>A. aegyptiacus</i>	Feral	0	Five flew over in April.
Mallard (MA) <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Amber	0	Four present in April.
Pheasant (PH) <i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	Feral	1	
Stock dove (SD) <i>Columba oenas</i>	Amber	1	
Woodpigeon (WP) <i>C. palumbus</i>	Amber	1 (1)	
Sparrowhawk (SH) <i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Amber	0	One flew over in May.
Red kite (KT) <i>Milvus milvus</i>	Sch.1	0	One flew over in June.
Green woodpecker (G.) <i>Picus viridis</i>		0 (1)	
Great spotted woodpecker (GS) <i>D. major</i>		0 (1)	
Kestrel (K.) <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Amber	0	Singles in April and June.
Jackdaw (JD) <i>Corvus monedula</i>		0	Up to 7 foraging in fields.
Carrion crow (C.) <i>C. corone</i>		0	One or two foraging in fields.
Blue tit (BT) <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		5 (1)	
Great tit (GT) <i>Parus major</i>		1 (1)	
Swallow (SL) <i>Hirundo rustica</i>	Amber	0 (1)	
House martin (HM) <i>Delichon urbicum</i>	Amber	0	Foraging over the fields.
Chiffchaff (CC) <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>		0 (1)	
Blackcap (BC) <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		1	
Whitethroat (WH) <i>Curruca communis</i>	Amber	0	A migrant in April.
Firecrest (FC) <i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>	Sch.1	0	A juvenile on the east side in June.
Goldcrest (GC) <i>R. regulus</i>		0	Singles in boundary habitat.
Nuthatch (NH) <i>Sitta europaea</i>		0-1	

Systematic List of species (and BTO species code)	RSPB listed	Est. no. pairs	Notes
Wren (WR) <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Amber	2 (3)	
Starling (SG) <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Red	0	Up to 80 foraging in fields.
Blackbird (B.) <i>Turdus merula</i>		1 (2)	
Song thrush (ST) <i>T. philomelos</i>	Amber	5	
Mistle thrush (M.) <i>T. viscivorus</i>	Red	0	Scattered ones and twos recorded.
Robin (R.) <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		6 (2)	
House sparrow (HS) <i>Passer domesticus</i>	Red	2+	
Dunnock (D.) <i>Prunella modularis</i>	Amber	3 (1)	
Chaffinch (CH) <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		1	
Greenfinch (GR) <i>Chloris chloris</i>	Red	1	
Goldfinch (GO) <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		3	

Birds recorded offsite within the area associated with the adjacent farm buildings are shown in brackets

- 5.10.7 Based on the survey results, the site supports a modest assemblage of breeding birds which is typical of the farmland habitats on the edge of urban development, with almost all breeding activity being associated with peripheral trees and shrubs, and a notable concentration of activity around the offsite farm buildings. No Red List declining farmland species were recorded.
- 5.10.8 The most significant species recorded was Firecrest, which is protected under Schedule 1 of the 1981 Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended). A single juvenile was recorded on the east side of the site in June indicating breeding in the area, although there was no sign of any holding territory at the site itself.
- 5.10.9 Notable species that are breeding at the site include small numbers of Stock Dove, Woodpigeon, Wren, Song Thrush, House Sparrow, Dunnock and Greenfinch. All these species are included on the RSPB Red or Amber Lists having undergone major or moderate declines in their UK populations, although they all remain common and widespread, both locally and nationally, as indeed are all the remaining species that are breeding at the site. The habitats present are common in the surrounding area and there is no evidence to suggest the site is of elevated value at a local level for present species, which remains common throughout Great Britain<sup>35</sup>. On this basis, the assemblage of birds supported by the survey area is considered to be of importance at the local level.
- 5.10.10 **Assessment of Proposals.** Overall, the survey area is considered to support a reasonably diverse bird assemblage, although species are largely associated with the hedgerows and woodland areas, with almost no breeding activity in the open fields that would be directly impacted under the proposals. On this basis, the bird assemblage is unlikely to be significantly impacted by the proposed development.
- 5.10.11 Where small areas of hedgerow are to be lost under the proposals, this could potentially affect any nesting birds that may be present at the time of works. Accordingly, a number of safeguards in respect of nesting birds are proposed, as detailed in Chapter 6 below. In the long-term, new nesting opportunities will be available for birds as described in Chapter 6 below.

## 5.11 Invertebrates

- 5.11.1 **Legislation.** Various invertebrate species are listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). In addition, Large Blue Butterfly *Maculinea arion*,

<sup>35</sup> Population estimates of birds in Great Britain and the United Kingdom. Musgrove et al., British Birds, 2013

Fisher’s Estuarine Moth *Gortyna borelii lunata* and Lesser Whirlpool Ram’s-horn Snail *Anisus vorticulus* receive protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), as set out at Appendix 6481/5. Some invertebrates are also S41 Priority Species. Where such species are present, they should be assessed as important ecological features.

**5.11.2 Background Records.** No specific records of invertebrates were returned from within the site. Information from SxBRC returned a number of records of S41 Priority Species: Autumnal Rustic *Eugnorisma glareosa*, Blood-vein *Timandra comae*, Brown Hairstreak *Thecla betulae*, Buff Ermine *Spilosoma lutea*, Centre-barred Sallow *Atethmia centrago*, Cinnabar *Tyria jacobaeae*, Dusky Thorn *Ennomos fuscantaria*, Feathered Gothic *Tholera decimalis*, Figure of Eight *Diloba caeruleocephala*, Flounced Chestnut *Agrochola helvola*, Green-brindled Crescent *Allophyes oxyacanthae*, Grizzled Skipper *Pyrgus malvae*, Knot Grass *Acronicta rumicis*, Lackey *Malacosoma neustria*, Mouse Moth *Amphipyra tragopoginis*, Minor Shoulder-knot *Brachylochia viminalis*, Oak Hook-tip *Watsonella binaria*, Oak Lutestring *Cymatophorina diluta*, Pale Eggar *Trichiura crataegi*, Picture-winged Fly *Dorycera graminum*, Rosy Minor *Litoligia literosa*, Rosy Rustic *Hydraecia micacea*, Sallow *Cirrhia icteritia*, Shaded Broad-bar *Scotopteryx chenopodiata*, Shoulder-striped Wainscot *Leucania comma*, Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilus*, Small Phoenix *Ecliptopera silaceata*, Small Square-spot *Diarsia rubi*, Sprawler *Asteroscopus sphinx*, White Admiral *Limenitis camilla*, White Ermine *Spilosoma lubricipeda*, and White-letter Hairstreak *Satyrrium w-album*. Of these Priority Species, two are also WCA Schedule 5 species, namely: Brown Hairstreak and White-letter Hairstreak butterflies. A number of records were returned from the 1km x 1km OS grid squares encompassing the site, with the closest being for Rosy Rustic *Hydraecia micacea* approximately 350m Northeast.

**5.11.3 Survey Results and Evaluation.** No evidence of the presence of any protected, rare or notable invertebrate species was recorded from within the site. The native hedgerows present provide suitable habitat for invertebrates, although the site is dominated by parcels of species-poor modified grassland that are regularly mown or grazed by livestock. These grasslands are likely to only support a limited diversity of invertebrates. The site contains occasional patches of scrub but otherwise supports relatively few micro-habitats that would indicate possible elevated value for invertebrates<sup>36</sup>. Accordingly, the site is likely to support only a limited diversity of invertebrates.

**5.11.4 Assessment of Proposals.** Habitats within the site are unlikely to support an important invertebrate assemblage and therefore the proposals are unlikely to result in harm to protected, rare or notable invertebrate populations.

## 5.12 Summary

**5.12.1** On the basis of the above, a summary of the evaluation of fauna is provided below:

**Table 5.15.** Evaluation summary of fauna forming important ecological features

Species / Group	Summary	Level of Importance
Bats – Roosting	Potential habitat in the form of trees	Local
Bats – Foraging / Commuting (assemblage)	Confirmed presence on site	County
Bats – Foraging / Commuting (Common and Soprano Pipistrelle)	Moderate levels of activity recorded	Local

<sup>36</sup> Natural England (2010) Higher Level Stewardship – Farm Environment Plan (FEP) Manual, 3<sup>rd</sup> Edition

Species / Group	Summary	Level of Importance
Bats – Foraging / Commuting (Myotis sp. and Barbastelle)	Elevated activity recorded along northern boundary	District
Badger	Latrine recorded adjacent to site	Site
Dormouse	Confirmed presence on site	Local
Hedgehog	Potential habitat present	Site
Great Crested Newt	Confirmed presence within offsite ponds	Local
Reptiles	Confirmed presence of Slow-worm and Grass Snake on site	Local
Birds	Confirmed presence with moderate assemblage of farmland birds	Local

5.12.2 Other fauna supported by the site include non-priority species of mammals, amphibians and invertebrates. These species do not form important ecological features.

## 6 Mitigation, Compensation and Enhancement

### 6.1 Mitigation and Compensation

6.1.1 As set out in the previous chapters, the proposed development has followed the mitigation hierarchy approach as set out under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), with consideration given first to avoidance, followed by mitigation and compensation.

6.1.2 Based on the assessment of the proposals and ecological designations, habitats and associated fauna identified within or adjacent to the site, it is proposed that the following mitigation and compensation measures (**MC1-MC13**) are implemented under the proposals. Further detailed mitigation strategies or method statements can be secured via suitably-worded planning conditions, as recommended by relevant best practice guidance (BS 42020:2019).

#### Ecological Designations

6.1.3 The site is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory ecological designations and it is unlikely that any such designations in the surrounding area will be significantly affected by the proposals. Accordingly, no specific mitigation or compensation measures are required.

#### Habitats

6.1.4 The proposed development would require the loss of three small sections of native hedgerow H2, H7 and H9 (Priority Habitat) for road and pedestrian access. Other important habitats including woodland and other native hedgerows and associated trees are retained under the proposals. Compensation for hedgerow losses is set out below, together with standard safeguarding measures. Losses of non-important features will be addressed as part of the BNG strategy.

6.1.5 **MC1 – Hedgerow and Tree Protection.** All hedgerows, trees and woodland to be retained within the proposed development should/would/will be protected during construction in line with standard arboricultural best practice (BS5837:2012) or as otherwise directed by a suitably competent arboriculturalist. This may require the use of protective fencing or other methods appropriate to safeguard the root protection areas of retained trees and hedgerows.

6.1.6 **MC2 – New Hedgerow Planting.** To compensate for the loss of short sections of H2, H7 and H9, new native hedgerow planting will be provided. This will also ensure a minimum 10% gain in hedgerow biodiversity value and will be secured as part of the BNG strategy.

#### Bats

6.1.7 Potential roosting habitat provided by trees is retained within open space and at the boundaries of the site, with the possible exception of T5 supporting PRF-I. A precautionary approach will be taken during any works to this tree. Impacts on foraging and commuting bats will be minimised by implementation of a sensitive lighting design, as detailed further below.

6.1.8 **MC3 – Bat Potential Trees.** To safeguard bats during removal of tree T5 a further inspection will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist immediately prior to felling, with use of an endoscope and climbing inspections (if required) to examine any cavities to ensure that bats are absent and that no evidence of a roost (e.g. droppings) is present. Felling of tree T5 will then be carried out using a 'soft-felling' technique, whereby sections of the tree will

be cut and lowered to the ground, followed by leaving the felled sections on the ground for a period of at least 24 hours to allow any bats, should these be present, to escape.

6.1.9 If any evidence for the presence of roosting bats is recorded, works on that tree will be suspended and consideration will be given to the need to undertake works under a European Protected Species (EPS) development licence, and a licence application will be made to Natural England as required.

6.1.10 To compensate for the loss of potential roosting resource, a woodcrete bat box will be erected for each affected PRF, placed on retained trees within the nearby vicinity of the affected feature.

6.1.11 **MC4 – Sensitive Lighting.** Light-spill onto retained and newly created habitat, in particular the retained hedgerows (especially along the northern boundary), and areas of open space to be established as semi-natural habitat will be minimised in accordance with good practice guidance<sup>37</sup> to reduce potential impacts on light-sensitive bats (and other nocturnal fauna). This will be achieved through the implementation of a sensitively designed lighting strategy, with consideration given to the following key factors:

- **Light exclusion zones** – lighting should be controlled in areas likely to be used by bats, notably along the northern and north-western boundaries, and within the larger area of open space between the two main residential areas. Light exclusion zones or ‘dark buffers’ may be used to provide interconnected areas free of artificial illumination to allow bats to move around the site;
- **Appropriate luminaire specifications** – consideration should be given to the type of luminaires used, in particular luminaries should lack UV elements and metal halide and fluorescent sources should be avoided in preference for LED luminaries. A warm white spectrum (ideally <2,700K) should be adopted to reduce the blue light component;
- **Light barriers / screening** – new planting (e.g. hedgerows and trees) or fences, walls and buildings can be strategically positioned to reduce light spill;
- **Spacing and height of lighting units** – increasing spacing between lighting units will minimise the area illuminated and allow bats to fly in the dark refuges between lights. Reducing the height of lighting will also help decrease the volume of illuminated space and give bats a chance to fly over lighting units (providing the light does not spill above the vertical plane). Low level lighting options should be considered for any parking areas and pedestrian / cycle routes, e.g. bollard lighting, handrail lighting or LED footpath lighting;
- **Light intensity** – light intensity (i.e. lux levels) should be kept as low as possible to reduce the overall amount and spread of illumination;
- **Directionality** – to avoid light spill lighting should be directed only to where it is needed. Particular attention should be paid to avoid the upward spread of light so as to minimise trespass and sky glow;
- **Dimming and part-night lighting** – lighting control management systems can be used, which involves switching off/dimming lights for periods during the night, for example when human activity is generally low (e.g. 12.30 – 5.30am). The use of

<sup>37</sup> Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals (2018) Guidance Note 08/18: Bats and artificial lighting in the UK; Stone, E.L. (2013) Bats and lighting: Overview of current evidence and mitigation guidance; ILP (2011) Guidance notes for the reduction of obtrusive light. Institution of Lighting Professionals, GN01:2011.

such control systems may be particularly beneficial during the active bat season (April to October). Motion sensors can also be used to limit the time lighting is operational.

#### Badger

6.1.12 No Badger setts have been recorded within or adjacent to the site, albeit a Badger latrine was recorded within the adjacent farm building area. Accordingly, a precautionary approach will be adopted in relation to this species, with an update survey as detailed below, together with general mammal safeguarding measures (see MC11 below).

6.1.13 **MC5 – Badger Update Survey.** Badgers are dynamic animals and levels of Badger activity can rapidly change at a site, with new setts being created at any time. Given the known presence of Badger setts in the area it is recommended that an update survey is carried out prior to commencement of site works in order to confirm the current status of Badgers at the site.

#### Dormouse

6.1.14 Dormouse has been recorded at the site, and will be affected by habitat loss with small sections of hedgerows H2, H7 and H9 to be removed for road and pedestrian accesses. Accordingly, mitigation and licensing will be required as set out below.

6.1.15 **MC6 – Dormouse Licensing.** To avoid an offence under the relevant legislation, it will be necessary for the small sections of vegetation clearance along hedgerows H2, H7 and H9 to be carried out under a European Protected Species (EPS) development licence, obtained from Natural England. When determining whether to grant a licence, Natural England will need to give consideration to the three derogation tests under Article 16 of the Habitats Directive (1992), namely whether the development is for imperative reasons of overriding public interest, no satisfactory alternative, and maintenance of favourable conservation status.

6.1.16 The need for the development is set out by the planning documents associated with the application. In summary, the scheme will meet a local need for new housing, whilst it would not be possible to develop the site without creating small breaks within hedgerows for road access.

6.1.17 In terms of maintenance of favourable conservation status, this would be achieved through implementation of safeguarding measures and provision of replacement habitat opportunities within the proposed development as set out below.

6.1.18 On this basis, it is therefore considered that, subject to full planning permission being granted and confirmation of the detailed mitigation measures in line with those set out below, there is no reason to suggest that any associated licence would be unlikely to be granted by Natural England.

6.1.19 **MC7 – Safeguarding measures during vegetation clearance.** In order to minimise the risk to Dormice during vegetation clearance works, a number of safeguarding measures will need to be implemented. This will include sensitive timing of works, involving clearance outside of the peak hibernation or breeding periods, or as a two-stage process (removal of above ground vegetation during the winter months, followed by removal of stumps and ground works the following late spring once Dormice have emerged from hibernation). Works will also be carried out under ecological supervision, with progressive clearance of vegetation by hand, and will be preceded by check surveys of habitats for nests. These

measures will be detailed in the method statement accompanying the EPS licence application.

- 6.1.20 **MC8 – Replacement habitat provision.** To compensate for losses of habitat under the proposals, new tree and shrub planting will be provided at the margins of the site. Over 0.4ha of new planting is proposed under the scheme, greatly exceeding the area of wooded vegetation to be lost (under 0.05ha). Nest boxes will also be provided in retained habitat areas to increase breeding opportunities for this species.

#### Great Crested Newt

- 6.1.21 Offsite pond P7 has been recorded to support Great Crested Newt. The most suitable terrestrial habitat within the application boundary will largely be retained, although there is a risk that Great Crested Newt could be impacted during the proposed development. Accordingly, consideration will be given to mitigation and licensing as set out below.

- 6.1.22 **MC9 – District Licensing.** Given Great Crested Newt has been recorded within the surrounds of the site and is likely to be affected by the proposed development, it will be necessary for the works to be carried out under licence. A Naturespace led district licensing scheme is in place for Mid Sussex, and as such it is proposed that the proposed development joins this scheme. District licensing is intended to focus conservation effort where it will create maximum benefit for the species, with management of Great Crested Newt populations at a landscape scale rather than a site-specific mitigation approach. Accordingly, an application will be made to join the district licensing scheme, with a Conservation Payment to be made to Naturespace towards offsite habitat creation to secure a licence and allow works to proceed once consent is granted. Through this mechanism, the long-term favourable conservation status of the local Great Crested Newt population will be maintained.

#### Reptiles

- 6.1.23 The site has been recorded to support a good population of Slow-worm and low population of Grass Snake. Some areas of suitable reptile habitat including field margins are to be impacted under the proposals, such that a translocation exercise is proposed to safeguard this species group.

- 6.1.24 **MC10 – Reptile Translocation Exercise.** A reptile translocation exercise would involve the following stages:

- 6.1.25 *Erection of reptile exclusion fencing around the perimeter of the construction area.* This will be of a semi-permanent design, with an overhang or curl along the outside edge to prevent reptiles climbing the fence.

- 6.1.26 *Placement of refugia.* Refugia will be placed across suitable areas of reptile habitat within the development area at a density of 100 refugia per ha (in accordance with HGBI Best Practice Guidelines<sup>38</sup>). Refugia will comprise coroline or tiles of roofing felt, measuring at least 50 x 50cm. The refugia will be distributed across the development area, although focusing on the best areas of reptile habitat, such as the open mosaic habitat, rank grassland and scrub margins.

- 6.1.27 *Capture of reptiles.* A series of visits will then be undertaken at the site between April and September/October to capture reptiles present within the development area. On each visit, a check of all refugia for presence of reptiles will be carried out, in addition to visual searches of habitat. These visits will be carried out during suitable weather conditions (generally

<sup>38</sup> Herpetofauna Groups of Britain and Ireland (HGBI) (1998) *Evaluating Local Mitigation/Translocation Programmes: Maintaining Best Practice and Lawful Standards*

between 9-18°C, and avoiding windy or rainy conditions), and generally during the morning and late afternoon when reptiles are most likely to be basking. Any reptiles captured will be moved to suitable areas of habitat within the receptor area (see below). Standard recording forms will be used to keep detailed records of the data collected throughout the exercise. The duration of this exercise would be determined by trapping rates, continuing until results indicate that reasonable trapping effort has been expended (likely to take at least 30 days).

- 6.1.28 *Destructive search.* Once it has been demonstrated that the majority of reptiles have been removed from the development area and that reasonable effort has been undertaken in accordance with the HGBI guidelines, a destructive search will be undertaken. A destructive search is a further capture method that can be used to locate and capture the few reptiles that remain on the site after the trapping exercise has been completed. A destructive search, essentially a carefully controlled and ecologically supervised vegetation strip of reptile habitat, creates controlled and directed disturbance which causes reptiles to endeavour to escape, which are then captured by the supervising ecologist. Once the vegetation has been physically removed, no suitable reptile habitat would remain on the site and development may safely commence.
- 6.1.29 *Maintenance and removal of exclusion fencing.* The exclusion fencing will be maintained for the duration of the construction works to prevent reptiles re-entering the site. This will include maintenance of habitats either side of the fence through cutting or herbicide treatment to prevent tall vegetation developing which could assist reptiles in climbing the fence. Once construction works are complete, the fence will be removed, allowing for dispersal of reptiles into areas of open space within the completed development.
- 6.1.30 *Receptor Habitat.* Large areas of habitat are to be maintained along the northern and north-western boundaries of the site and within the central area. These form suitable areas for establishment of a receptor site for any translocated reptiles. This receptor area would be established with a mosaic of grassland sward heights and scattered scrub, with further enhancements to be provided in the form of hibernacula and other habitat piles.

#### Nesting Birds

- 6.1.31 Removal of short sections of H2, H7 and H9 may result in effects on nesting birds. Accordingly, the following approach will be adopted.
- 6.1.32 **MC11 – Nesting Bird Restrictions.** To avoid a potential offence under the relevant legislation, no clearance of suitable vegetation should be undertaken during the bird-nesting season (1<sup>st</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> August inclusive). If this is not practicable, any potential nesting habitat to be removed should first be checked by a competent ecologist in order to determine the location of any active nests. Any active nests identified would then need to be cordoned off (minimum 5m buffer) and protected until the end of the nesting season or until the birds have fledged. These checking surveys would need to be carried out no more than three days in advance of vegetation clearance.

#### Other Fauna

- 6.1.33 The site has been identified as offering potential for other mammal species including Badger and Hedgehog. Accordingly, the following approach will be adopted during site clearance and construction works.
- 6.1.34 **MC12 – Mammal and General Wildlife Safeguards.** In order to safeguard Badger, Hedgehog and other wildlife should they enter the site during construction works, the following measures will be implemented:

- A watching brief should be maintained for Badger, Hedgehog and other wildlife throughout any clearance works;
- Any trenches left open overnight should be provided with a means of escape, e.g. gently graded ramp or a roughened plank, in order to allow animals to escape should they enter the trench. This is particularly important if the trench fills with water;
- Any temporarily exposed open pipes or open drains should be blanked off at the end of each working day so as to prevent animals gaining access as may happen when contractors are off-site;
- Any trenches/pits should be inspected each morning to ensure no animals have become trapped overnight;
- The storage of any chemicals at the site will be contained in such a way that they cannot be accessed or knocked over by any roaming animals;
- Fires will only be lit in secure compounds away from wooded habitats and will not be allowed to remain lit during the night;
- Unsecured food and litter will not be left within the working area overnight;
- Any piles of material already present on site, particularly vegetation/leaves, etc. and any areas of dense scrub or hedgerows, shall be dismantled/removed by hand and checked for Hedgehog prior to the use of any machinery/disposal;
- Any material to be disposed of by burning, particularly waste from vegetation clearance and tree works, should not be left piled on site for more than 24 hours in order to minimise the risk of Hedgehogs or other animals occupying the pile. If this cannot be avoided, material should be stored within a container such as a skip to prevent animals from gaining access. Any material which has been stored on the ground overnight should be moved prior to burning to allow a thorough check for any animals which may have been occupying the pile;
- In the event that an injured mammal is found, the animal should be wrapped carefully in a towel and taken to a local vet immediately. If an injured Hedgehog is found the British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS) can be phoned (01584 890 801).

6.1.35 **MC13 – Faunal Habitat Connectivity.** To maintain connectivity throughout the site for Hedgehog and other small mammals and to allow access to suitable foraging habitat contained within residential gardens, small holes (13cmx13cm) should be created within garden fences or under gates.

## 6.2 Ecological Enhancements

6.2.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages new developments to maximise the opportunities for biodiversity through incorporation of enhancement measures. The proposals present the opportunity to deliver ecological enhancements at the site for the benefit of local biodiversity, thereby making a positive contribution towards the broad objectives of national conservation priorities and the local BAP.

## Habitats

- 6.2.2 Habitat enhancements will be delivered as part of the BNG strategy, forming a separate submission. This will be informed by the following principles, according with national and local conservation priorities.
- 6.2.3 **New Planting.** Where practicable, new planting within the site should be comprised of native species of local provenance, including trees and shrubs appropriate to the local area. Suitable species for inclusion within the planting could include native trees such as Oak, Birch *Betula pendula* and Field Maple, whilst native shrub species of particular benefit would likely include fruit and nut bearing species which would provide additional food for wildlife, such as Blackthorn, Hawthorn, Crab Apple *Malus sylvestris*, Hazel *Corylus avellana* and Elder. Where non-native species are proposed, these should include species of value to wildlife, such as varieties listed on the RHS' 'Plants for Pollinators' database, providing a nectar source for bees and other pollinating insects.
- 6.2.4 **Wildflower Grassland and Flowering Lawn.** Within areas of open space, wildflower grassland can be created. These should be subject to a varied management regime to provide a range of sward types. Most areas should be managed as hay meadow, subject to cutting 2-3 times a year to promote a flower rich sward, whilst areas of rough, tussocky grassland can be established along woodland and hedgerow margins. As such, grassland areas will provide a rich habitat resource for invertebrate species, in turn providing increased foraging opportunities for wildlife including birds and bats. Consideration can also be given to the laying of wildflower turfs, comprising locally appropriate native species, to establish wildflower grassland. This would ensure rapid establishment of these habitats and reduce the timeframe for delivering the range of ecological benefits that are proposed. Within parks and other recreation and amenity areas, consideration can be given to seeding of flowering lawn, containing a range of herb species which respond well to frequent mowing. This will provide a further flowering and pollen resource for invertebrates.
- 6.2.5 **Scrub Planting.** Scrub habitat should be established along woodland margins, hedgerows and within grassland areas creating scrub mosaics and forming valuable ecotone habitats for a range of wildlife, including reptiles, small mammals and invertebrates.
- 6.2.6 **Wetland Features.** The opportunity exists under the proposals to create new wetland habitats as part of the Sustainable Drainage System (SUDS). Where practical these should be designed in accordance with ecological principles, incorporating measures such as shallow, sinuous margins, areas of permanent water and planting with native vegetation. Such measures will benefit a range of wetland species including birds, aquatic invertebrates and amphibians whilst also helping to attenuate surface water run-off.
- 6.2.7 **Hedgerows.** New lengths of hedgerow planting can be provided along the boundaries of green space areas and around areas of built development. Existing hedgerows should also be subject to supplementary planting where necessary to fill gaps and strengthen the integrity of the hedgerow.

## Fauna

- 6.2.8 To provide additional opportunities for fauna, it is proposed that a range of new features are incorporated within the proposed development. This should include the following features, with specific measures to be detailed as part of a faunal enhancement plan which can be secured via a suitably-worded planning condition.

- 6.2.9 **Bat Boxes.** Bat boxes should be incorporated within the proposed development. The provision of bat boxes will provide new roosting opportunities for bats in the area, such as Soprano Pipistrelle, a national Priority Species. So as to maximise their potential use, the bat boxes should ideally be situated on suitable retained trees, erected as high up as possible and sited in sheltered wind-free areas that are exposed to the sun for part of the day, facing a south-east, south or south-westerly direction. In addition, where architectural design allows, a number of integrated bat boxes / roost features should be incorporated into a proportion of the new build. The precise number and locations of boxes / roost features should be determined by a competent ecologist, post-planning once the relevant final development design details have been approved.
- 6.2.10 **Bird Boxes.** Bird nesting boxes should be incorporated within the proposed development, thereby increasing nesting opportunities for birds at the site. This should include integrated nest boxes on new buildings targeting species including Swift and House Sparrow, whilst boxes can be erected on retained trees. The precise number and locations of boxes should be determined by a competent ecologist, post-planning once the relevant final development design details have been approved.
- 6.2.11 **Habitat Piles and Refugia.** A proportion of any deadwood arising from vegetation clearance works should be retained within the site in a number of wood piles located within areas of new planting, new wetland habitats or areas of wildflower grassland in order to provide potential habitat opportunities for invertebrate species, which in turn could provide a prey source for a range of other wildlife. Dedicated hibernacula and refugia can also be provided for reptile and amphibian species, comprising log or rubble piles either left open or covered in soil and turfs. Loggeries can also be provided, comprising buried logs to form dead wood habitat for invertebrates such as Stag Beetle.
- 6.2.12 **Bee Bricks and Insect Boxes.** It is recommended that bee bricks be incorporated within the proposed development thereby increasing nesting opportunities for declining populations of non-swarming solitary bee populations. Ideally, bee bricks should be located within suitable south-facing walls (where architectural design allows), located at least 1m off the ground. The bricks should be unobstructed by vegetation, though within close vicinity of nectar and pollen sources. Insect boxes can also be provided within the areas of wildlife habitat in order to enhance the nesting and over-wintering locations available for a range of invertebrates, particularly solitary wasps and bees.

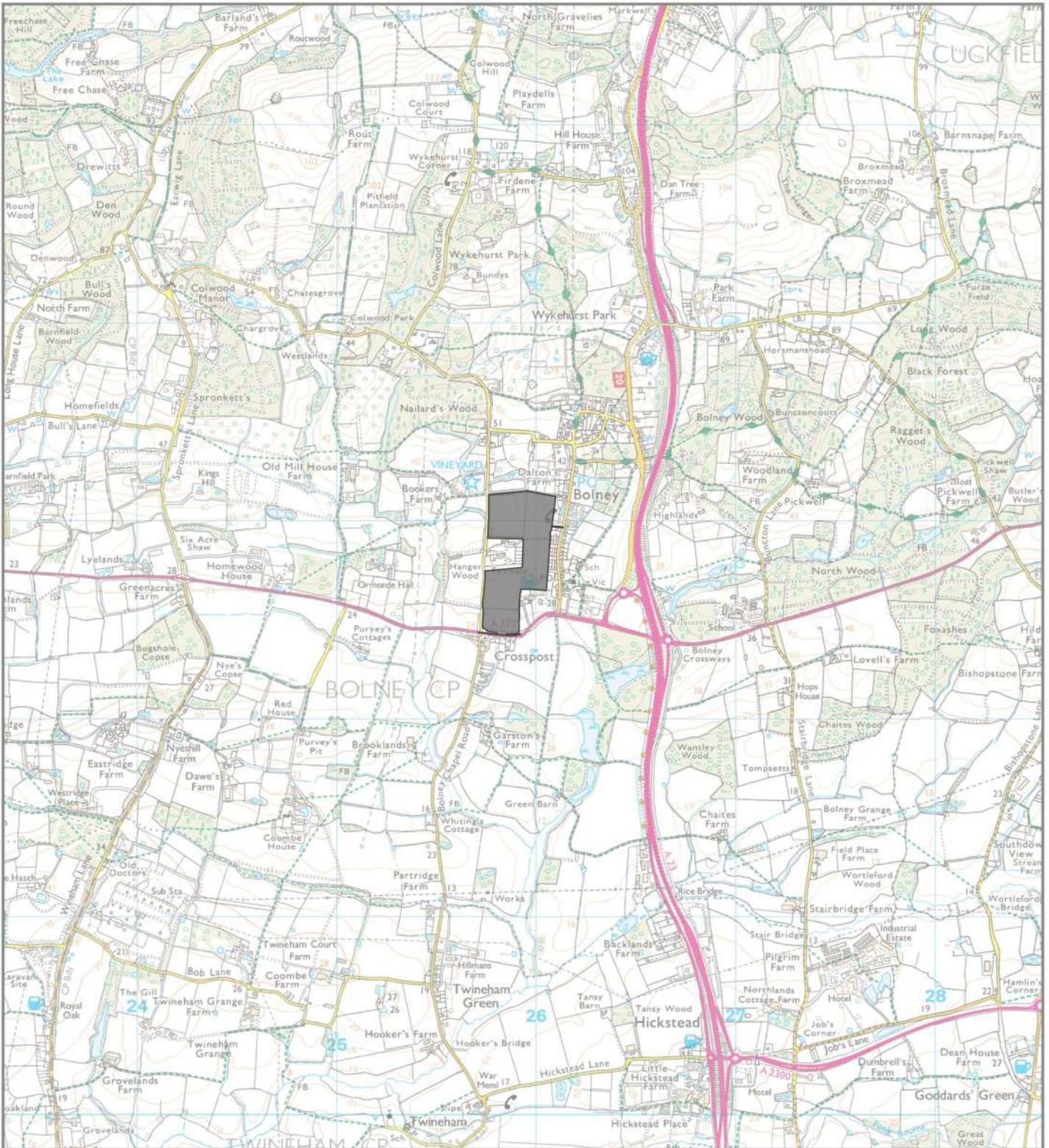
## 7 Conclusions

- 7.1 Aspect Ecology has carried out an Ecological Appraisal of the proposed development, based on the results of a desktop study, habitat survey and a number of detailed protected species surveys.
- 7.2 The available information confirms that no statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations are present within or adjacent to the site, and none of the designations within the surrounding area are likely to be adversely affected by the proposals.
- 7.3 The habitat survey has established that the site is dominated by habitats not considered to be of ecological importance, whilst the proposals retain the vast majority of those features identified to be of value. Where it has not been practicable to avoid loss of habitats, new habitat creation is proposed to offset losses, in conjunction with the landscape proposals.
- 7.4 The habitats within the site support several protected species, including species protected under both national and European legislation. Accordingly, a number of mitigation measures have been proposed to minimise the risk of harm to protected species, with compensatory measures proposed, where appropriate, in order to maintain the conservation status of local populations.
- 7.5 In conclusion, the proposals have sought to minimise impacts and subject to the implementation of appropriate avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures, the proposals will not result in significant harm to biodiversity.
- 7.6 Ecological enhancements are proposed to achieve a biodiversity net gain, to be set out further as part of the BNG strategy in a separate submission.

## Plan 6481/ECO1:

Site Location

---



**Key:**

 Site Location

**aspect** ecology  
**APEM** Group

Aspect Ecology Limited West Court Hardwick Business Park  
 Noral Way Banbury Oxfordshire OX16 2AF  
 01295 279721 info@aspect.ecology.com www.aspect.ecology.com

**Land at Foxhole Farm, Bolney**

Site Location

6481/ECO1

C/LS

April 2025

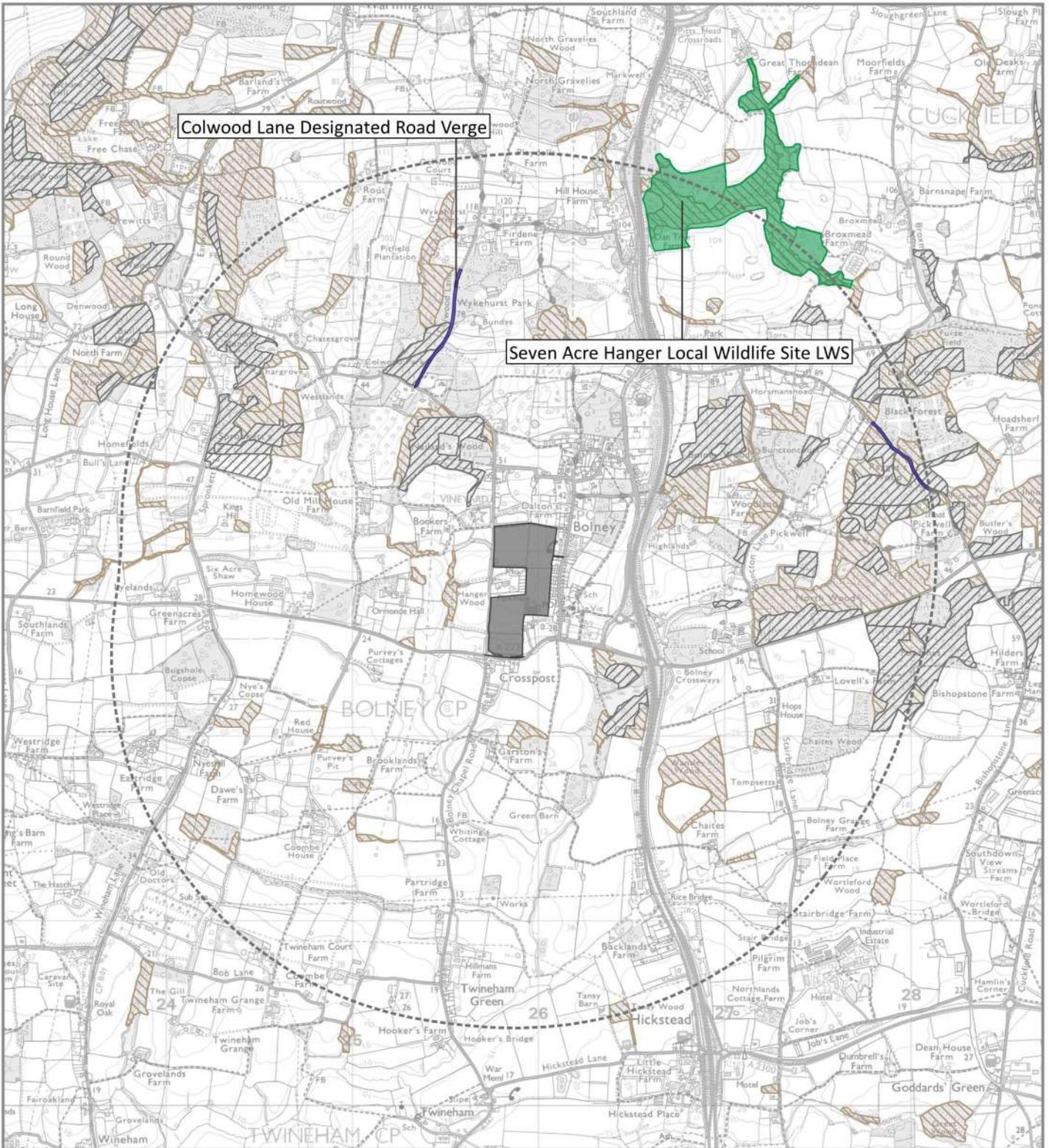
PROJECT  
 TITLE  
 DRAWING NO.  
 REV  
 DATE



## **Plan 6481/ECO2:**

Ecological Designations

---



Colwood Lane Designated Road Verge

Seven Acre Hanger Local Wildlife Site LWS

**Key:**

-  Site Location
-  2km Local Records Centre Search Area
-  Designated Road Verge
-  Local Wildlife Site
-  Ancient Replanted Woodland (ARW)
-  Ancient Semi Natural Woodland (ASNW)



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Ecological Designations

6481/ECO2

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 TITLE  
 DRAWING NO.  
 REV  
 DATE



## **Plan 6481/ECO3:**

Habitats and Ecological Features

---

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**Key:**

-  Site Boundary
-  Developed land; sealed surface: Hardstanding
-  Developed land; sealed surface: Building
-  Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
-  Modified grassland
-  Bramble scrub
-  Mixed scrub
-  Tall forbs
-  Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
-  Ponds (non-priority habitat)
-  Hedgerow
-  Hedgerow with trees
-  Line of trees
-  Tree
-  Tree with bat potential roosting features



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Land at Foxhole Farm, Bolney PROJECT

Habitats and Ecological Features TITLE

6481/ECO3 DRAWING NO.

J/DO REV

April 2025 DATE



## **Plan 6481/ECO4:**

Bat Survey Transect and Static Locations

---



Key:

-  Site Boundary
-  Survey Start Area
-  Bat Activity Transect
-  Static Detector Locations
-  Listening Points

**aspect ecology**  
**APEM Group**

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Bat Activity Transect

6481/ECO4

F/CC

April 2025



PROJECT	
TITLE	
DRAWING NO.	
REV	
DATE	

## **Plan 6481/ECO5:**

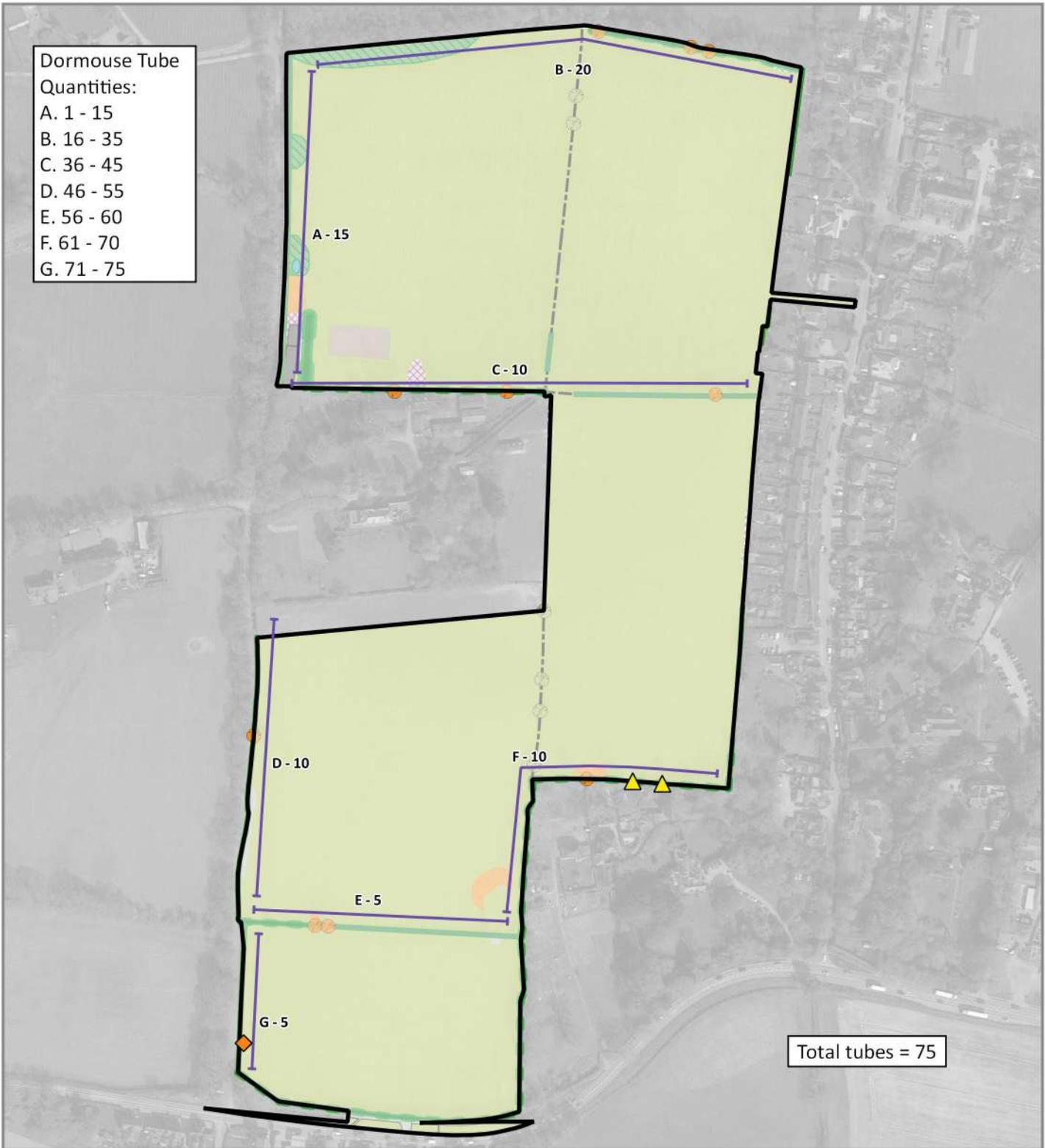
Dormouse Survey Plan

---

**Dormouse Tube**

**Quantities:**

- A. 1 - 15
- B. 16 - 35
- C. 36 - 45
- D. 46 - 55
- E. 56 - 60
- F. 61 - 70
- G. 71 - 75



Total tubes = 75

**Key:**

-  Site Boundary
-  Dormouse Transects
-  Occupied Dormouse Nest
-  Likely Dormouse Nest



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Land at Foxhole Farm, Bolney

Dormouse Transects

6481/EC05

D/CC

April 2025

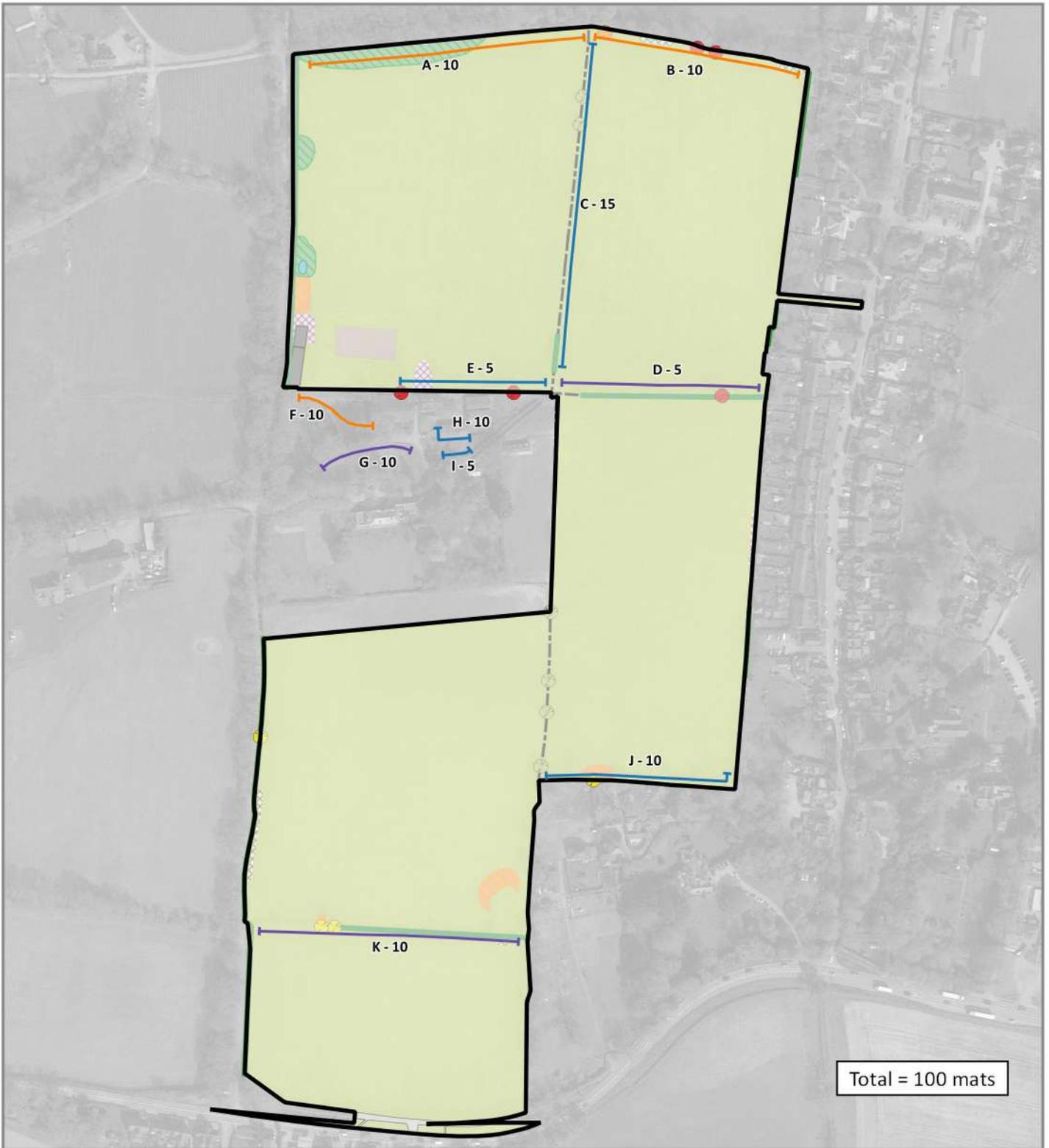


PROJECT	
TITLE	
DRAWING NO.	
REV	
DATE	

## **Plan 6481/ECO6:**

Reptile Survey Plan

---



**Key:**

-  Site Boundary
-  Transects recorded to support Slow-worm
-  Transects recorded to support Slow-worm and Grass Snake
-  Transects not recorded to support reptiles



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Land at Foxhole Farm, Bolney

Reptile Transects

6481/ECO6

C/CC

April 2025

PROJECT

TITLE

DRAWING NO.

REV

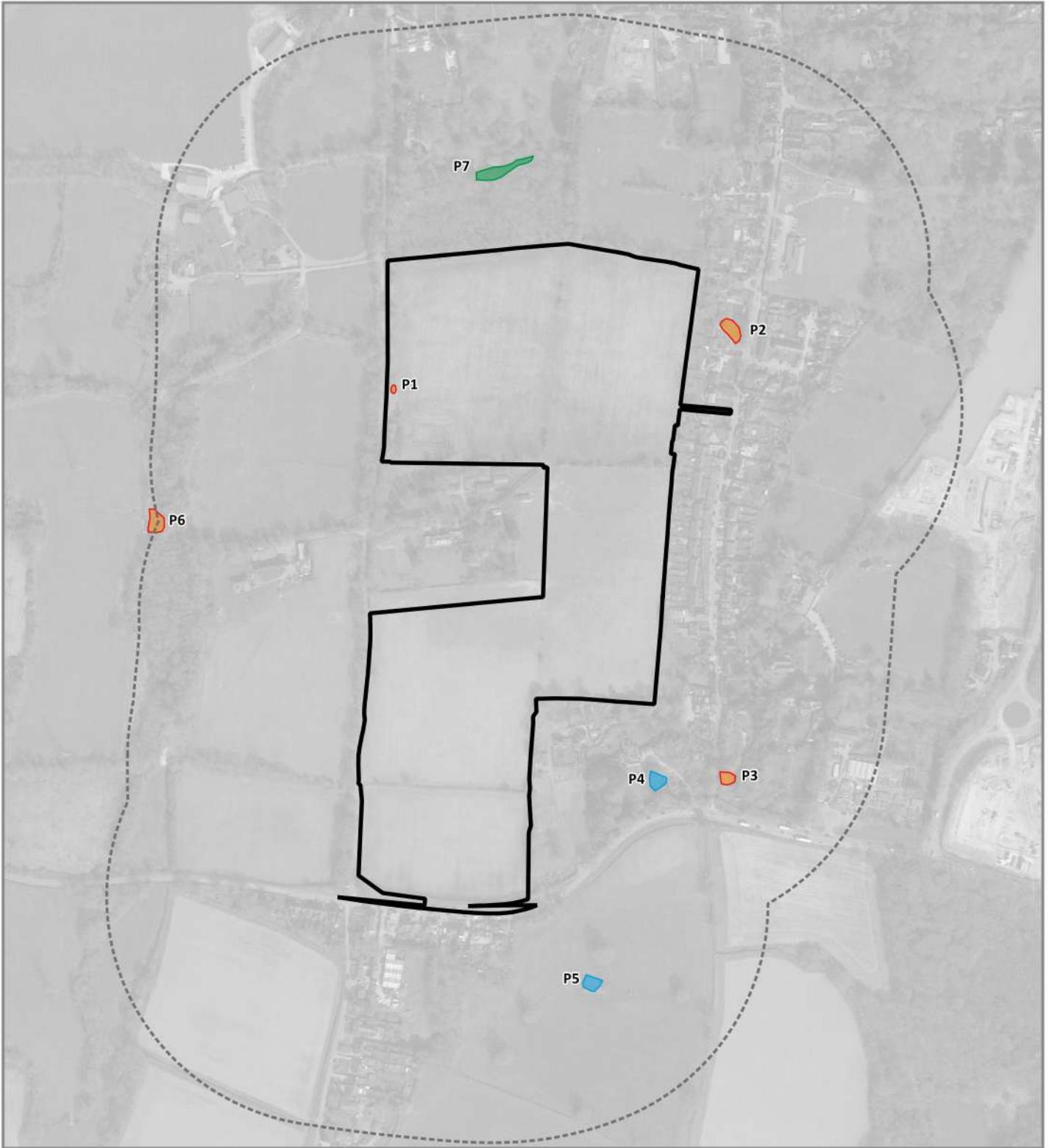
DATE



## **Plan 6481/ECO7:**

Great Crested Newt Survey Plan

---



**Key:**

-  Site Boundary
-  250m Buffer
-  Ponds recorded to support Great Crested Newts
-  Ponds that do not support Great Crested Newts
-  Ponds not surveyed due to access restrictions



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Land at Foxhole Farm, Bolney

Ponds within 250m

6481/EC07

C/CC

April 2025



PROJECT	
TITLE	
DRAWING NO.	
REV	
DATE	

## **Plan 6481/ECO8:**

Breeding Bird Survey Plan

---



- Bird Species:**
- B. Blackbird Green
  - BC Blackcap Green
  - BT Blue Tit Green
  - CH Chaffinch Green
  - CC Chiffchaff Green
  - GO Goldfinch Green
  - GS Great Spotted Woodpecker Green
  - GT Great Tit Green
  - G. Green Woodpecker Green
  - PH Pheasant Green
  - R. Robin Green
  - NH Nuthatch Green - White
  - D. Dunnock Amber
  - ST Song Thrush Amber
  - SD Stock Dove Amber
  - WP Woodpigeon Amber
  - WR Wren Amber
  - SL Swallow Amber
  - GR Greenfinch Red
  - HS House Sparrow Red

- Key:**
- Site Boundary
  - Breeding / Probable Breeding (BOCC Red List)
  - Breeding / Probable Breeding (BOCC Amber List Species)
  - Breeding / Probable Breeding (BOCC Green List - Not Threatened)
  - Possible Breeding (BOCC Green List - Not Threatened)



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Land at Foxhole Farm, Bolney	PROJECT
Breeding Bird Survey Results	TITLE
6481/EC08	DRAWING NO.
A/LS	REV
April 2025	DATE
MC/LS	QC



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## **Appendix 6481/1:**

Illustrative Masterplan

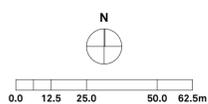
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**KEY**

- |   |   |  |
|---|---|--|
| 1. New vehicular access from Cowfold Road         | 7. Viewpoint with seating area and interpretation | 13. Outdoor educational space                          |
| 2. New pedestrian / cycle links to The Street     | 8. Community orchard                              | 14. SuDS basins  |
| 3. New pedestrian link to existing PRow           | 9. Community hub building                         | 15. Foul water pumping station                         |
| 4. Primary tree-lined access roads                | 10. Children's play areas (LEAPs and LAPs)        | 16. Electricity Substation                             |
| 5. Secondary informal 'rural' lanes / mews        | 11. Outdoor gym                                   | 17. New woodland planting                              |
| 6. New publicly accessible countryside open space | 12. Community allotments                          | 18. Country estate road through countryside open space |

rev.	date	changes description	status	issued by
P07	10/04/2025	Drawing updated to incorporate comments from pre-app	S4	DM
P06	07/01/2025	Drawing updated for planning; annotation added	S4	DM



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drawn by  
**DM**  
checked by  
**MS**

date created  
**Aug 2024**  
scale at A1  
**1:1250**

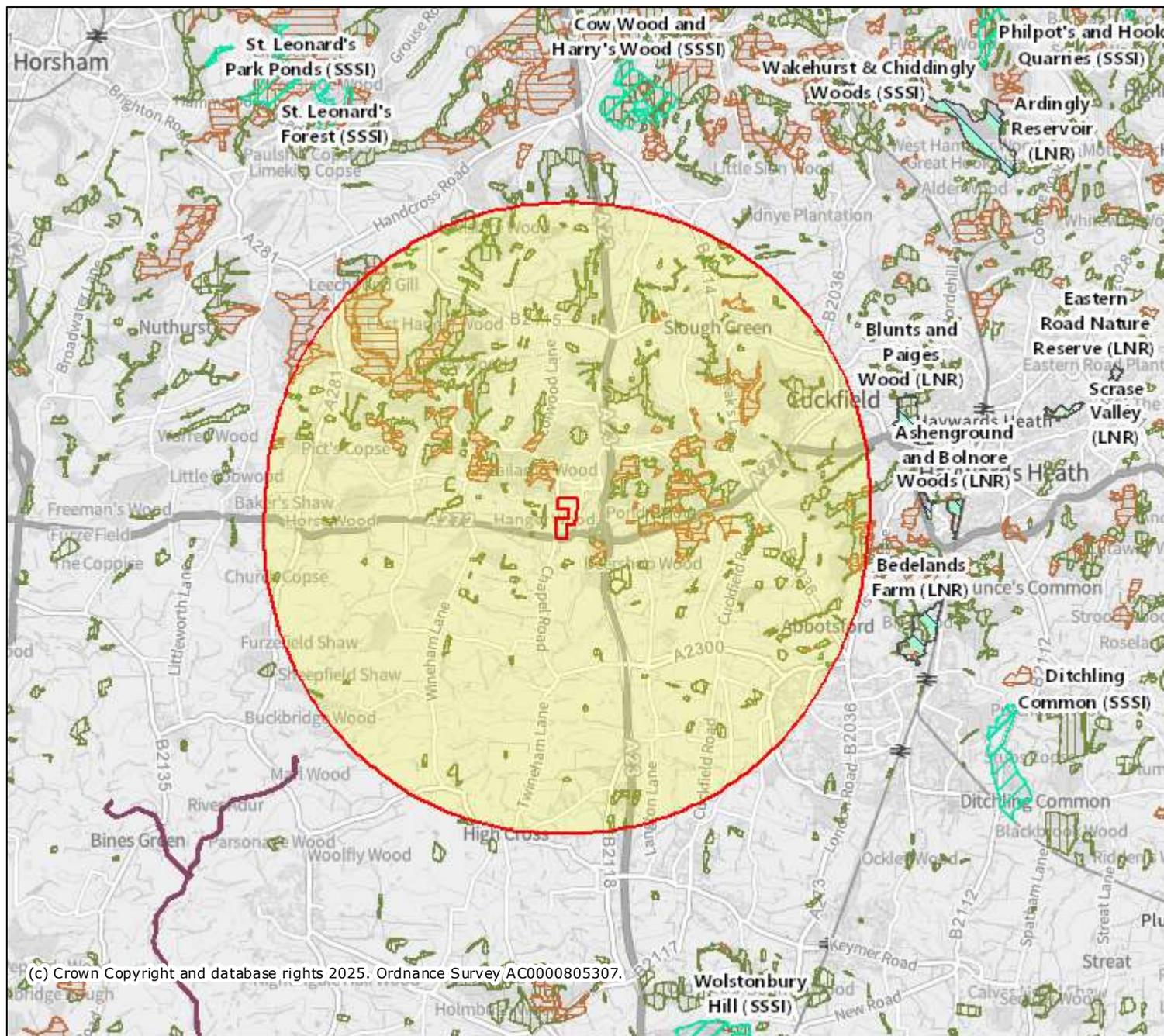
project title  
**Foxhole Farm, Bolney**  
document title  
**Illustrative Masterplan**

project	originator	volume	level	type	role	number
P20074	RFT	XX	XX	DR	A	0101
status	S4	suitability description	For Planning	revision	P07	

## Appendix 6481/2:

Desktop Study Data

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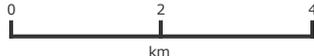
### Legend

-  Local Nature Reserves (England)
-  National Nature Reserves (England)
-  Ramsar Sites (England)
-  Proposed Ramsar Sites (England)
-  Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England)
-  Special Areas of Conservation (England)
-  Possible Special Areas of Conservation (England)
-  Special Protection Areas (England)
-  Potential Special Protection Areas (England)

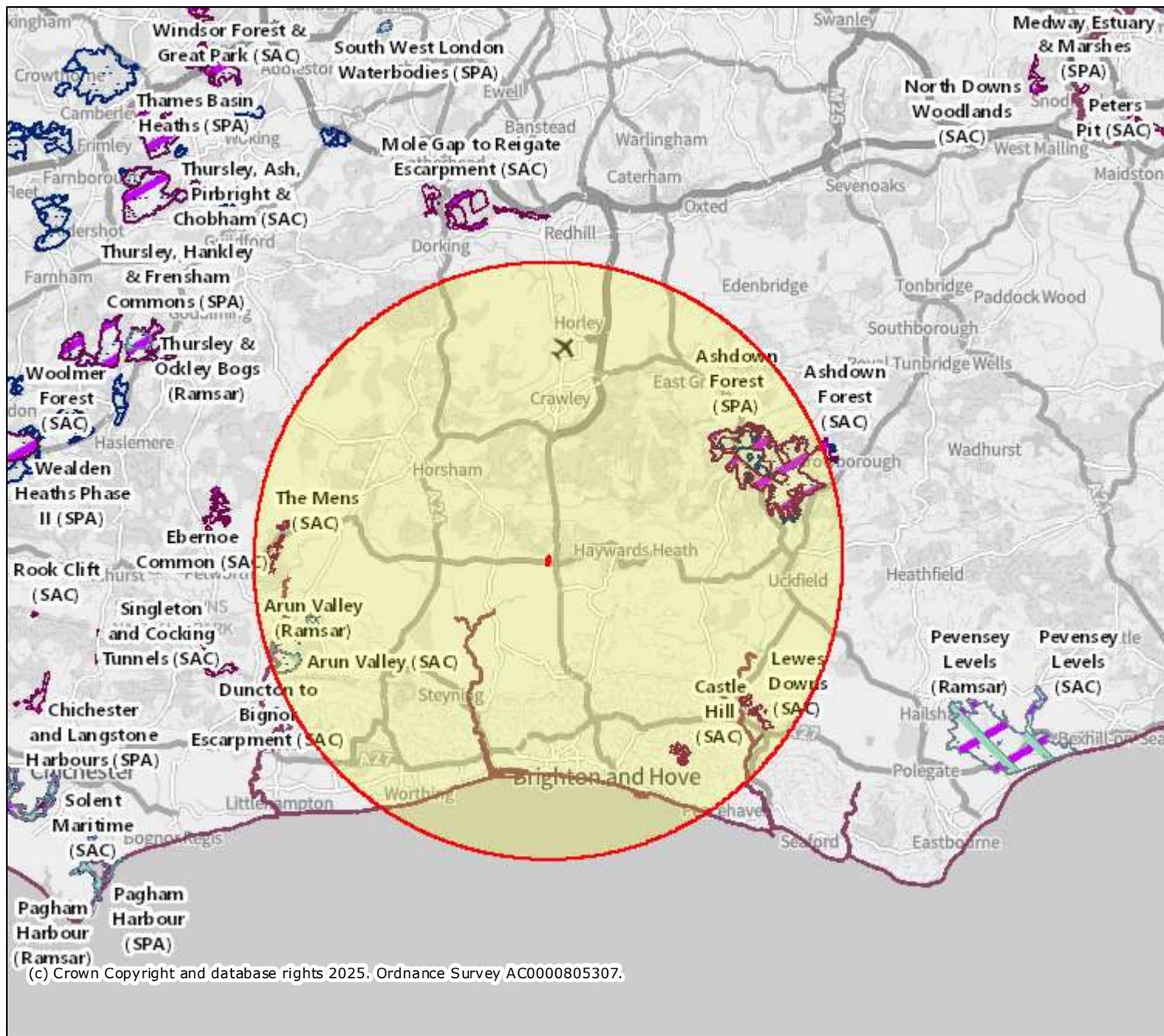
### Ancient Woodland (England)

-  Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland
-  Ancient Replanted Woodland

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 ymin = 112600  
 xmax = 547500  
 ymax = 132800



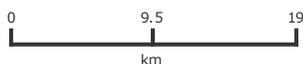
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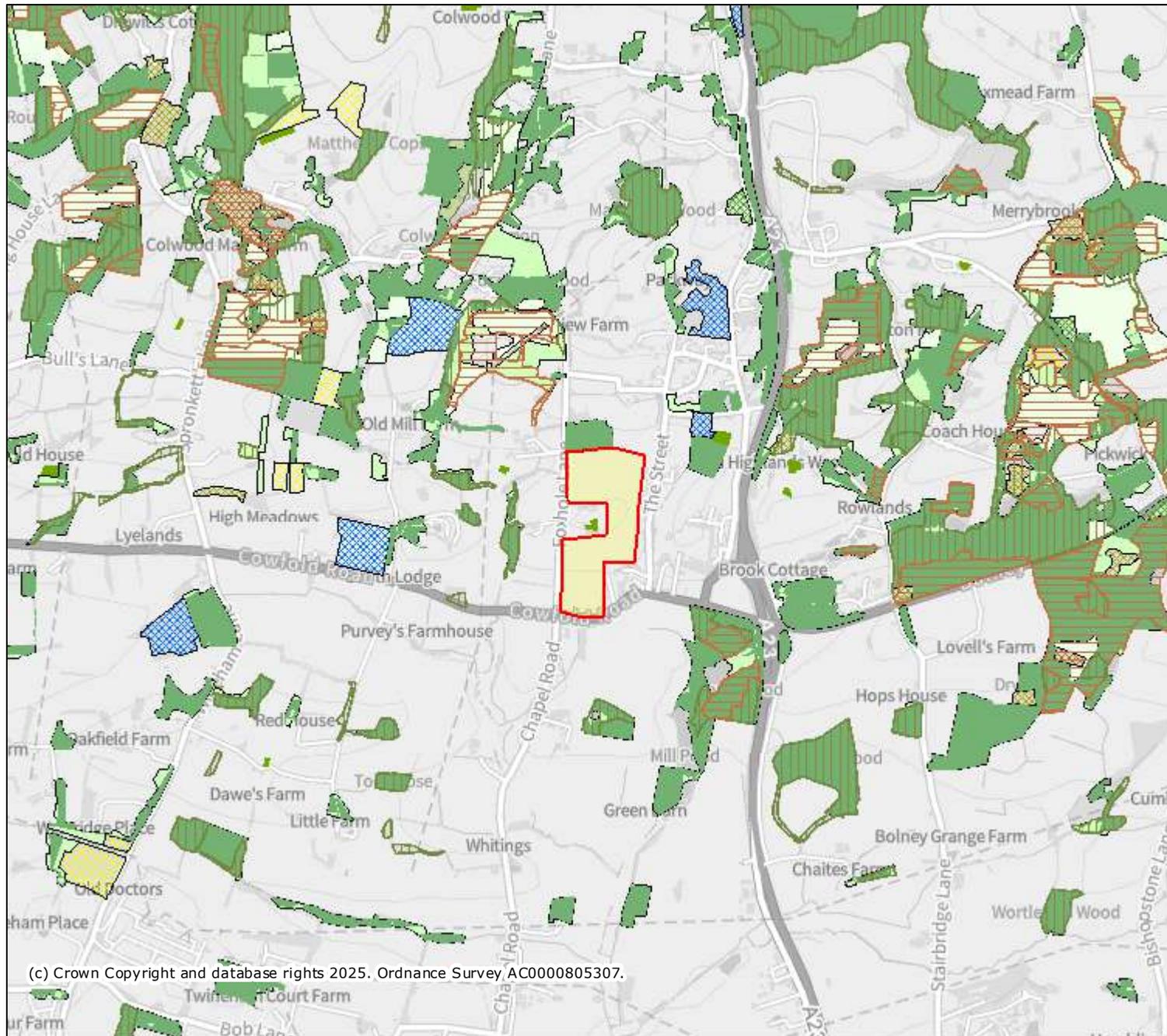
### Legend

-  Ramsar Sites (England)
-  Proposed Ramsar Sites (England)
-  Special Areas of Conservation (England)
-  Possible Special Areas of Conservation (England)
-  Special Protection Areas (England)
-  Potential Special Protection Areas (England)

Projection = OSGB36  
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 xmax = 635200  
 ymax = 176700



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**Legend**

- Priority Habitat Inventory - Calaminarian Grassland (England)
  - Priority Habitat Inventory - Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh (England)
  - Priority Habitat Inventory - Good quality semi-improved grassland (Non Priority) (England)
  - Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Calcareous Grassland (England)
  - Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Dry Acid Grassland (England)
  - Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Meadows (England)
  - Priority Habitat Inventory - Purple Moor Grass and Rush Pasture (England)
  - Priority Habitat Inventory - Upland Calcareous Grassland (England)
  - Priority Habitat Inventory - Upland Hay Meadows (England)
  - Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Heathland (England)
  - Priority Habitat Inventory - Mountain Heaths and Willow Scrub (England)
  - Priority Habitat Inventory - Upland Heathland (England)
  - Priority Habitat Inventory - Limestone Pavements (England)
  - Priority Habitat Inventory - Blanket Bog (England)
  - Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Fens (England)
  - Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Raised Bog (England)
  - Priority Habitat Inventory - Reedbeds (England)
  - Priority Habitat Inventory - Upland Flushes, Fens and Swamps (England)
- Ancient Woodland (England)**
- Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland
  - Ancient Replanted Woodland
  - Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland (England)
  - Forestry Commission Legal Boundary (England)

Projection = OSGB36  
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 xmax = 531200  
 ymax = 125400



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## **Appendix 6481/3:**

Details of Automated Static Detector Surveys

---

## Automated detector survey details.

Survey Date	Weather Conditions			
	Wind (BF)	Temp(°)	Cloud Cover (%)	Precipitation (mm)
26/07/2022	2-3	14-20	25-100	0.0-0.2
27/07/2022	3	15-20	14-46	0.0
28/07/2022	3	15-22	47-79	0.0
29/07/2022	2	15-22	14-25	0.0
30/07/2022	2-4	17-23	47-56	0.0
31/07/2022	2-3	17-22	25-96	0.0-0.1
01/08/2022	2-3	17-24	30-52	0.0
15/09/2022	2-3	11-15	45-60	0.0
16/09/2022	3-4	6-14	0-78	0.0
17/09/2022	2-3	7-13	4-25	0.0
18/09/2022	2	8-14	0-83	0.0
19/09/2022	1-2	10-15	4-90	0.0
20/09/2022	1	11-16	18-63	0.0
21/09/2022	1-3	11-15	14-48	0.0
18/04/2023	4	7-9	48-100	0.0-0.1
19/04/2023	3-4	5-10	24-94	0.0
20/04/2023	3-4	5-8	82-100	0.0-0.1
21/04/2023	1-2	3-9	12-88	0.0-1.8
22/04/2023	3	9-7	81-100	0.0-1.8
23/04/2023	2-4	11-7	52-100	0.0-1.1
24/04/2023	2-3	2-9	71-100	0.0-2.1
25/04/2023	2-3	4-9	11-100	0.0
11/05/2023	1-3	8-14	33-77	0.0-1.3
12/05/2023	3-4	8-12	40-100	0.0
13/05/2023	2-3	7-16	0-3	0.0
14/05/2023	2-4	9-17	40-100	0.0-0.4
15/05/2023	2-3	6-12	2-86	0.0
16/05/2023	3-4	6-13	12-100	0.0
17/05/2023	1-2	9-15	65-100	0.0
13/06/2023	3-4	12-24	2-17	0.0
14/06/2023	2-3	13-22	8-100	0.0
15/06/2023	2-3	13-22	5-8	0.0
16/06/2023	2	13-22	4-14	0.0
17/06/2023	1-2	16-22	20-83	0.0-0.2
18/06/2023	2-3	13-18	70-100	0.0-1.8
19/06/2023	2	15-20	73-100	0.0
04/07/2023	3	10-18	25-100	0.0-1.4
05/07/2023	1-4	11-19	4-88	0.0
06/07/2023	1-2	11-20	5-19	0.0
07/07/2023	3	18-27	8-75	0.0
08/07/2023	1-3	14-23	20-42	0.0
09/07/2023	2-3	13-23	7-41	0.0

BF0 = calm, BF12 = hurricane force

## **Appendix 6481/4:**

Principles of Ecological Evaluation

---

## Evaluation Methodology

1. The evaluation of ecological features and resources is based on professional judgement whilst also drawing on the latest available industry guidance and research. The approach taken in this report is based on that described by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland' (2018)<sup>1</sup>.

### Importance of Ecological Features

2. Ecological features within the site/study area have been evaluated in terms of whether they qualify as 'important ecological features'. In this regard, CIEEM guidance states that *"it is not necessary to carry out detailed assessment of features that are sufficiently widespread, unthreatened and resilient to project impacts and will remain viable and sustainable"*.
3. Various characteristics contribute to the importance of ecological features, including:
  - Naturalness;
  - Animal or plant species, sub-species or varieties that are rare or uncommon, either internationally, nationally or more locally, including those that may be seasonally transient;
  - Ecosystems and their component parts, which provide the habitats required by important species, populations and/or assemblages;
  - Endemic species or locally distinct sub-populations of a species;
  - Habitat diversity;
  - Habitat connectivity and/or synergistic associations;
  - Habitats and species in decline;
  - Rich assemblages of plants and animals;
  - Large populations of species or concentrations of species considered uncommon or threatened in a wider context;
  - Plant communities (and their associated animals) that are considered to be typical of valued natural/semi-natural vegetation types, including examples of naturally species-poor communities; and
  - Species on the edge of their range, particularly where their distribution is changing as a result of global trends and climate change.
4. As an objective starting point for identifying important ecological features, European, national and local governments have identified sites, habitats and species which form a key focus for biodiversity conservation in the UK, supported by policy and legislation. These are summarised by CIEEM guidance as follows:

### *Designated Sites*

- Statutory sites designated or classified under international conventions or European legislation, for example World Heritage Sites, Biosphere Reserves, Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA);

<sup>1</sup> CIEEM (2018) 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine', Version 1.3, Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester (updated September 2024)

- Statutory sites designated under national legislation, for example Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves (NNR) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR);
- Locally designated wildlife sites, e.g. Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).

#### *Biodiversity Lists*

- Habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England and Wales (largely drawn from UK BAP priority habitats and priority species), often referred to simply as Priority Habitats / Species;
- Local BAP priority species and habitats.

#### *Red Listed, Rare, Legally Protected Species*

- Species of conservation concern, Red Data Book (RDB) species;
- Birds of Conservation Concern;
- Nationally rare and nationally scarce species;
- Legally protected species.

5. In addition to this list, other features may be considered to be of importance on the basis of local rarity, where they enable effective conservation of other important features, or play a key functional role in the landscape.

#### Assigning Level of Importance

6. The importance of an ecological feature should then be considered within a defined geographical context. Based on CIEEM guidance, the following frame of reference is used:
  - International (European);
  - National;
  - Regional;
  - County;
  - District;
  - Local (e.g. Parish or Neighbourhood);
  - Site (not of importance beyond the immediate context of the site).
7. Features of 'local' importance are those considered to be below a district level of importance, but are considered to appreciably enrich the nature conservation resource or are of elevated importance beyond the context of the site.
8. Where features are identified as 'important' based on the list of key sites, habitats and species set out above, but are very limited in extent or quality (in terms of habitat resource or species population) and do not appreciably contribute to the biodiversity interest beyond the context of the site, they are considered to be of 'site' importance.
9. In terms of assigning the level of importance, the following considerations are relevant:

### *Designated Sites*

10. For designated sites, importance should reflect the geographical context of the designation (e.g. SAC/SPA/Ramsar sites are designated at the international level whereas SSSIs are designated at the national level). Consideration should be given to multiple designations as appropriate (where an area is subject to differing levels of nature conservation designations).

### *Habitats*

11. In certain cases, the value of a habitat can be measured against known selection criteria, e.g. SAC selection criteria, 'Guidelines for the selection of biological SSSIs' and the Hedgerows Regulations 1997. However, for the majority of commonly encountered sites, the most relevant habitat evaluation will be at a more localised level and based on relevant factors such as antiquity, size, species-diversity, potential, naturalness, rarity, fragility and typicalness (Ratcliffe, 1977). The ability to restore or re-create the habitat is also an important consideration, for example in the case of ancient woodland.
12. Whether habitats are listed as priorities for conservation at a national level in accordance with Sections 41 and 42 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006, so called 'Habitats of Principal Importance' or 'Priority Habitats', or within regional or local Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) is also relevant, albeit the listing of a particular habitat under a BAP does not in itself imply any specific level of importance.
13. Habitat inventories (such as habitat mapping on the MAGIC database) or information relating to the status of particular habitats within a district, county or region can also assist in determining the appropriate scale at which a habitat is of importance.

### *Species*

14. Deciding the importance of species populations should make use of existing criteria where available. For example, there are established criteria for defining nationally and internationally important populations of waterfowl. The scale within which importance is determined could also relate to a particular population, e.g. the breeding population of common toads within a suite of ponds or an otter population within a catchment.
15. When determining the importance of a species population, contextual information about distribution and abundance is fundamental, including trends based on historical records. For example, a species could be considered particularly important if it is rare and its population is in decline. With respect to rarity, this can apply across the geographic frame of reference and particular regard is given to populations where the UK holds a large or significant proportion of the international population of a species.
16. Whether species are listed as priorities for conservation at a national level in accordance with Sections 41 and 42 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006, so called 'Species of Principal Importance' or 'Priority Species', or within regional or local Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) is also relevant, albeit the listing of a particular species under a BAP does not in itself imply any specific level of importance.
17. Species populations should also be considered in terms of the potential zone of influence of the proposals, i.e. if the entire species population within the site and surrounding area were to be affected by the proposed development, would this be of significance at a local, district, county or wider scale? This should also consider the foraging and territory ranges of individual species (e.g. bats roosting some distance from site may forage within site whereas other species such as invertebrates may be more sedentary).

## **Appendix 6481/5:**

### Legislation Summary

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## LEGISLATION SUMMARY

1. In England and Wales primary legislation is made by the UK Parliament, and in Scotland by the Scottish Parliament, in the form of Acts. The main piece of legislation relating to nature conservation in the UK is the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
2. Acts of Parliament confer powers on Ministers to make more detailed orders, rules or regulations by means of secondary legislation in the form of statutory instruments. Statutory instruments are used to provide the necessary detail that would be too complex to include in an Act itself<sup>1</sup>. The provisions of an Act of Parliament can also be enforced, amended or updated by secondary legislation.
3. In summary, the key pieces of legislation relating to nature conservation in the UK are:
  - Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
  - Protection of Badgers Act 1992
  - Hedgerows Regulations 1997
  - Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act for England and Wales 2000
  - Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
  - Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
4. A brief summary of the relevant legislation is provided below. The original Acts and instruments should be referred to for the full and most up to date text of the legislation.
5. **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)**. The WCA Act provides for the notification and confirmation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) identified for their flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features. The Act contains strict measures for the protection and management of SSSIs.
6. The Act also refers to the treatment of UK wildlife including protected species listed under Schedules 1 (birds), 5 (mammals, herpetofauna, fish, invertebrates) and 8 (plants).
7. Under Section 1(1) of the Act, all wild birds are protected such that it is an offence to intentionally:
  - Kill, injure or take any wild bird;
  - Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst in use\* or being built;
  - Take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

\* The nests of birds that re-use their nests as listed under Schedule ZA1, e.g. Golden Eagle, are protected against taking, damage or destruction irrespective of whether they are in use or not.
8. Offences in respect of Schedule 1 birds are subject to special, i.e. higher, penalties. Schedule 1 birds also receive greater protection such that it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly:
  - Disturb any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or while it is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young;
  - Disturb dependent young of such a bird.

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<sup>1</sup> <http://www.parliament.uk/business/bills-and-legislation/secondary-legislation/statutory-instruments/>

9. Under Section 9(1) of the Act, it is an offence to:
  - Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animal included in Schedule 5.
10. In addition, under Section 9(4) it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly:
  - Obstruct access to, any structure or place which any wild animal included in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection; or
  - Disturb any wild animal included in Schedule 5 while occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.
11. Under Section 13(1) it is an offence:
  - To intentionally pick, uproot or destroy any wild plant listed in Schedule 8; or
  - Unless the authorised person, to intentionally uproot any wild plant not included in Schedule 8.
12. The Act also contains measures (S.14) for preventing the establishment of non-native species that may be detrimental to native wildlife, prohibiting the introduction into the wild of animals (releases or allows to escape) and plants (plants or causes to grow) listed under Schedule 9.
13. **Protection of Badgers Act 1992.** The Act aims to protect the species from persecution, rather than being a response to an unfavourable conservation status, as the species is in fact common over most of Britain. It should be noted that the legislation is not intended to prevent properly authorised development. Under the Act it is an offence to:
  - Wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat\* a Badger, or attempt to do so;
  - To intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett# (this includes disturbing Badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, as well as damaging or destroying a sett or obstructing access to it).

\* the intentional elimination of sufficient foraging area to support a known social group of Badgers may, in certain circumstances, be construed as an offence

# A sett is defined as “any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a Badger”. Natural England advice (June 2009) is that a sett is protected so long as such signs remain present, which in practice could potentially be for some time after the last actual occupation by Badger. Interference with a sett includes blocking tunnels or damaging the sett in any way
14. Licences can be obtained from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (SNCO) for development activities that would otherwise be unlawful under the legislation, provided there is suitable justification. The SNCO for England is Natural England.
15. **Hedgerows Regulations 1997.** ‘Important’ hedgerows (as defined by the Regulations) are protected from removal (up-rooting or otherwise destroying). Various criteria specified in the Regulations are employed to identify ‘important’ hedgerows for wildlife, landscape or historical reasons.
16. **Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act for England and Wales 2000.** The CRoW Act provides increased measures for the management and protection of SSSIs and strengthens wildlife enforcement legislation. Schedule 12 of the Act amends the species provisions of the WCA 1981, strengthening the legal protection for threatened species. The Act also introduced a duty on Government to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity and maintain lists of species and habitats for which conservation steps should be taken or promoted, in accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity.

17. **Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.** Section 41 of the NERC Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as local planning authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when exercising their normal functions. 56 habitats and 943 species of principal importance are included on the S41 list. These are all the habitats and species in England that were identified as requiring action in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).
18. **Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).** The Regulations enact the European Union's Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) in the UK. The Habitats Directive was designed to contribute to the maintenance of biodiversity within member states through the conservation of sites, known in the UK as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), containing habitats and species selected as being of EC importance (as listed in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive respectively). Member states are required to take measures to maintain or restore these natural and semi-natural habitats and wild species at a favourable conservation status.
19. The Regulations also require the compilation and maintenance of a register of European sites, to include SACs and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)<sup>2</sup> classified under Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (the Birds Directive). These sites constitute the Natura 2000 network. The Regulations impose restrictions on planning decisions likely to significantly affect SPAs or SACs.
20. The Regulations also provide protection to European Protected Species of animals that largely overlaps with the WCA 1981, albeit the provisions are generally stricter. Under Regulation 43 it is an offence, *inter alia*, to:
  - Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European Protected Species;
  - Deliberately disturb any wild animals of any such species, including in particular any disturbance likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, to rear or nurture their young, to hibernate or migrate, or which is likely to affect significantly their local distribution or abundance;
  - Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal;
  - Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.
21. Similar protection is afforded to European Protected Species of plants, as detailed under Regulation 47.
22. The Regulations do provide a licensing system that permits otherwise illegal activities in relation to European Protected Species, subject to certain tests being fulfilled.

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<sup>2</sup> Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) (aka the Birds Directive), which came into force in April 1979. SPAs are classified for rare and vulnerable birds (as listed on Annex I of the Directive), and for regularly occurring migratory species.

## **Appendix 6481/6:**

Habitat Survey Results: Grasslands and Hedgerows

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Habitat Survey Results: Grasslands

	Management	Cover of Rye-grass and White Clover	Herb content	Herb content excluding sub-optimal species	Sward description	Sward height - 20% less than 7cm and 20% more than 7cm	Bare ground cover	Bracken cover	Scrub cover	Cover of sub-optimal species	Physical damage	Invasive Schedule 9 plant species	Other features	Are grasses other than Rye-grass, Timothy, Cock's-foot and Meadow Fescue at least abundant within sward	Average species per m <sup>2</sup>	Date of survey	Grassland habitat type
<b>G1</b>	Grazed by horses.	30%+	10-20%	<10%	Low, closely grazed sward, typically 5-10cm in height. Thatch and occasional tussocky areas present. Light poaching from horses.	Yes	<1%	<1%	<1%	10-15% (White Clover and Creeping Buttercup)	<5%	None evident		Yes (Common Bent)	5.8	27/09/2022	Modified grassland (g4)
<b>G2</b>	Grazed by horses and sheep.	30%+	10-20%	<10%	Low, closely grazed sward, typically 5-10cm in height. Light poaching from horses.	Yes	<1%	<1%	<1%	10-15% (White Clover and Creeping Buttercup)	<5%	None evident		Yes (Common Bent)	4	27/09/2022	Modified grassland (g4)
<b>G3</b>	Grazed by horses and sheep.	30%+	10-20%	<10%	Low, closely grazed sward, typically 5-10cm in height. Light poaching from horses.	Yes	<1%	<1%	<1%	10-15% (White Clover and Creeping Buttercup)	<5%	None evident		Yes (Common Bent)	5.8	27/09/2022	Modified grassland (g4)
<b>G4</b>	Subject to periodic mowing.	30%+	<10%	<10%	Main field is maintained at uniform sward height by mowing, approximately 10cm height at time of September 2022 survey, although longer sward of c.30cm in July 2024. Longer sward noted at field margins during September 2022 survey.	No	<1%	<1%	<1%	<5%	<5%	None evident		Yes (Common Bent)	4.7	27/09/2022	Modified grassland (g4)
<b>G5</b>	Subject to periodic mowing.	30%+	<10%	<10%	Main field is maintained at uniform sward height by mowing, approximately 10cm height at time of September 2022 survey, although longer sward of c.30cm in July 2024. Longer sward noted at field margins during September 2022 survey.	No	<1%	<1%	<1%	<5%	<5%	None evident		Yes (Common Bent)	4	27/09/2022	Modified grassland (g4)
<b>G6</b>	Road verge maintained at low sward height by regular mowing.	10-30%	10-20%	10-20%	Maintained at a low sward height (c.5cm) by regular mowing.	No	<1%	<1%	<1%	<5%	<5%	None evident		Yes	6-8	27/09/2022	Modified grassland (g4)

Grey shaded columns indicate criteria for medium and above distinctiveness grasslands, with cells shaded in green indicating qualifying criteria

**Habitat Survey Results: Grasslands (Quadrats)**

Common Name	Latin Name	Indicator Species	G1							G2							G3							G4							G5										
			1	2	3	4	5	P	Freq	1	2	3	4	5	P	Freq	1	2	3	4	5	P	Freq	1	2	3	4	5	6	P	Freq	1	2	3	4	5	6	P	Freq		
Common Bent	<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>		x	x	x	x	x		F				x	x	x		F	x	x	x	x	x		F	x	x	x	x	x	x		F	x	x	x	x	x	x		F	
Common Bird's-foot Trefoil	<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>	C A LM																																							
Common Sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosa subsp. acetosa</i>	SI		x	x	x	x		F												x																				
Creeping Bent	<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>			x		x			O					x																											
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	U	x	x	x	x	x		F									x			x	x		F	x	x	x	x	x	x		F	x	x	x	x				O	
Creeping Cinquefoil	<i>Potentilla reptans</i>																								x																
Cuckooflower	<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	SI																																							
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale agg.</i>										x	x									x																				
Dock sp.	<i>Rumex sp.</i>																	x	x																						
Field Bindweed	<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>																																								
Greater Plantain	<i>Plantago major</i>	U																x																							
Knot grass	<i>Polygonum aviculare</i>										x																														
Lesser Trefoil	<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	SI																x																							
Perennial Rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>		x	x	x		x		F	x	x	x	x	x				F	x	x	x	x	x		F	x	x	x	x	x	x		F	x	x	x	x	x	x		F
Sweet Vernal Grass	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>				x		x		O																																
Timothy	<i>Phleum pratense</i>		x						R																																
White Clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	U	x		x	x			F	x	x	x	x	x				F	x	x	x	x	x		F																
Yorkshire Fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>			x		x	x		F				x	x	x			F			x	x	x		F	x	x	x	x	x	x		F	x	x	x	x	x	x		F

Additional unidentified grasses

<b>Total species</b>			5	6	6	6	6		9	4	3	4	4	5		7	7	5	6	5	6		10	5	6	5	4	4	4		8	4	5	4	4	4	3		6
Frequent									6							4							5							4								3	
Occasional									2							1							2							0								1	
Rare									1							2							3							4								2	
Present									0							0							0							0								0	
<b>Average species per m2</b>									<b>5.8</b>							<b>4</b>							<b>5.8</b>							<b>4.7</b>								<b>4</b>	

**Key**

- P:** Present - occurring within habitat area outside of quadrats
- F:** Frequent - occurring in at least 5 out of 10 quadrats (or at least 3 out of 5 quadrats)
- O:** Occasional - occurring in 3 or 4 out of 10 quadrats (or 2 out of 5 quadrats)
- R:** Rare - occurring in 1 or 2 out of 10 quadrats (or 1 out of 5 quadrats)

**Indicator Species:** Indicator species set out under UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (2023) for lowland dry acid (A), lowland calcareous (C) and lowland meadow (LM) grassland; Farm Environment Plan Manual (Natural England, 2010) for semi-improved (SI) grassland; and undesirable/sub-optimal species under Statutory Biodiversity Metric Guidance

Habitat Survey Results: Hedgerows

Hedgerow number	Hedgerow type	Associated with bank/ditch	Height (more than 1.5m*)	Width (more than 1.5m*)	Woody species (species listed under Schedule 3 of the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 underlined)	Average woody species per 30m (as listed under Schedule 3 of the Hedgerows Regulations 1997)	Percentage of native species:**	Ground flora and climbers (species listed under Schedule 2 of the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 underlined)	Other associated features (footpath, parallel hedge)	Other comments	Gap at hedgerow base less than 0.5m for >90% of length*	Less than 10% gaps and no canopy gaps more than 5m*	More than 1m width of undisturbed ground present for more than 90% of length*	Nettles, Cleavers and Docks dominate less than 20% cover of area of undisturbed ground*	More than 90% of hedgerow and undisturbed ground free of invasive non-native plants*	More than 90% of hedgerow and undisturbed ground free of damage*	Hedgerow with trees only - more than one age class of trees present and at least one mature/ancient/veteran tree per 50m*	Hedgerow with trees only - at least 95% of hedgerow trees are in a healthy condition (excluding veteran features valuable for wildlife)*	Likely to qualify as important hedgerow under the wildlife and landscape criteria of the Hedgerows Regulations 1997	Tree canopy is predominantly continuous with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide**	One or more trees has veteran features and or natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates, such as presence of standing and attached deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark**	There is an undisturbed naturally-vegetated strip of at least 6 m on both sides to protect the line of trees from farming and other human activities (excluding grazing). Where veteran trees are present, root protection areas should follow standing advice**	At least 95% of the trees are in a healthy condition (deadwood or veteran features valuable for wildlife are excluded from this). There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity.**	Habitat condition
H1	Native hedgerow	None	5m/8-10m	4m	<u>Hawthorn (D)</u> , <u>Blackthorn (D)</u> , <u>Elder</u> , <u>Rose sp.</u> , <u>Bramble</u> , <u>Oak (sm)</u>	3	More than 80%	Common nettle		Internal hedgerow. Outgrown, forming more of a treeline in eastern section, lacking understorey. Generally continuous other than some gates and fences.	Pass	Pass	Pass	Fail	Pass	Pass			No				Good	
H2	Native hedgerow	None	8-10m	1.5m	<u>Blackthorn (D)</u> , <u>Ash</u> , <u>Cherry sp.</u>	2	More than 80%			Small section of vegetated residential boundary.	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass			No (Forms Residential Curtilage)				Good	
H3	Native hedgerow with trees	None	3-5m	1-2m	<u>Hazel</u> , <u>Oak (v)</u> , <u>Holly</u> , <u>Hawthorn</u> , <u>Snowberry</u>	3-4	More than 80%			Established hedgerow with ornamental species, adjacent to residential properties. Bramble scrub at southern extent.	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	No (Forms Residential Curtilage)				Good	
H4	Native hedgerow with trees	None	8m	4-5m	<u>Sycamore</u> , <u>Hazel</u> , <u>Yew</u> , <u>Holly</u> , <u>Hawthorn</u> , <u>Bramble</u> , <u>Ash (m)</u> , <u>Conifer sp. (m)</u>	4	More than 80%	Cow parsley, Lords-and-ladies, Dock sp., Cleavers, Common nettle, Hogweed, Ground ivy, Garlic mustard.		Woodland edge slightly grown out with bramble and hawthorn thickets. Variable in character along its length.	Pass	Pass	Pass	Fail	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	No				Good	
H5	Native hedgerow	None	8m	2m	<u>Hawthorn</u> , <u>Elder</u>	2	More than 80%	Dense Bramble, Thistle, Nettle		Unmanaged.	Pass	Pass	Pass	Fail	Pass	Pass			No				Good	
H6	Species-rich native hedgerow	Bank	2m	2m	<u>Blackthorn</u> , <u>Rose sp.</u> , <u>Field Maple</u> , <u>Hazel</u> , <u>Ivy</u> , <u>Hawthorn</u> , <u>Oak (sm)</u>	5	More than 80%	<u>Bluebell</u> , <u>Lords-and-ladies</u> , <u>Dog's mercury</u> , <u>Cleavers</u> , <u>Common nettle</u> , <u>Ground ivy</u> , <u>Lesser celandine</u>	Bounded by Foxhole Lane to the west with parallel hedgerow/treeline. Located on a roadside bank of 1.5m.	Recently flailed and box-cut. Patches of nettle and bracken (8-10m wide). Species rich.	Pass	Pass	Pass	Fail	Pass	Pass			Yes				Good	
H7	Native hedgerow	Ditch	3-4m	2m	<u>Hazel (D)</u> , <u>Holly</u> , <u>Hawthorn</u> , <u>Blackthorn</u> , <u>Oak (sm)</u>	3-4	More than 80%	<u>Lords-and-ladies</u> , <u>Common nettle</u> , <u>Dock sp.</u> , <u>Common sorrel</u> , <u>Bluebell</u> , <u>Common dog violet</u> , <u>Bracken</u>	Raised bank to the south of the hedgerow and a dry ditch to the north.	Ground flora mainly poached by livestock. Rabbit activity.	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	No				Good	
H8	Native hedgerow with trees	None	2m	2m	<u>Hawthorn (D)</u> , <u>Holly</u> , <u>Rose sp.</u> , <u>Blackthorn</u>	3	More than 80%	Common nettle, Lesser celandine, <u>Lords-and-ladies</u>		Box-cut hedge	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	No				Good	
H9	Native hedgerow with trees	None	8m	2m	<u>Hornbeam (D)</u> , <u>Hawthorn</u> , <u>Rose sp.</u>	2	More than 80%	<u>Lords-and-ladies</u> , <u>Common nettle</u>		Growth has been previously cut back to around 3-4m, forming pollarded character. Trimmed on both sides. Poached at base.	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	No				Good	
H10	Species-rich native hedgerow	Ditch	2m	2m	<u>Field Maple</u> , <u>Hawthorn</u> , <u>Dogwood</u> , <u>Blackthorn</u> , <u>Hazel</u>	5	More than 80%	<u>Primrose</u> , <u>Honeysuckle</u> , <u>Lords-and-ladies</u> , <u>Bluebells</u> , <u>Bracken</u> , <u>Cuckooflower</u> , <u>Barren strawberry</u>	Bounded by Foxhole Lane to the west with parallel hedgerow/treeline. Ditch present to west of hedgerow.	Continuation of H6. Heavily flailed and box-cut.	Pass	Pass	Pass	Fail	Pass	Pass			Yes				Good	
H11	Native hedgerow with trees	None	5-8m	2-3m	<u>Blackthorn</u> , <u>Bramble</u> , <u>Elder</u> , <u>Ivy</u> , <u>Ash (sm)</u> , <u>Sycamore (sm)</u>	2-3	More than 80%	Common nettle, <u>Lords-and-ladies</u>		Varied character: standard trees to the north, scrubby to the south. Dilapidated building just offsite to the east of the hedgerow.	Pass	Pass	Pass	Fail	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	No				Good	

Habitat Survey Results: Hedgerows

Hedgerow number	Hedgerow type	Associated with bank/ditch	Height (more than 1.5m*)	Width (more than 1.5m*)	Woody species (species listed under Schedule 3 of the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 underlined)	Average woody species per 30m (as listed under Schedule 3 of the Hedgerows Regulations 1997)	Percentage of native species:**	Ground flora and climbers (species listed under Schedule 2 of the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 underlined)	Other associated features (footpath, parallel hedge)	Other comments	Gap at hedgerow base less than 0.5m for >90% of length*	Less than 10% gaps and no canopy gaps more than 5m*	More than 1m width of undisturbed ground present for more than 90% of length*	Nettles, Cleavers and Docks dominate less than 20% cover of area of undisturbed ground*	More than 90% of hedgerow and undisturbed ground free of invasive non-native plants*	More than 90% of hedgerow and undisturbed ground free of damage*	Hedgerow with trees only - more than one age class of trees present and at least one mature/ancient/veteran tree per 50m*	Hedgerow with trees only - at least 95% of hedgerow trees are in a healthy condition (excluding veteran features valuable for wildlife)*	Likely to qualify as important hedgerow under the wildlife and landscape criteria of the Hedgerows Regulations 1997	Tree canopy is predominantly continuous with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide**	One or more trees has veteran features and or natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates, such as presence of standing and attached deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark**	There is an undisturbed naturally-vegetated strip of at least 6 m on both sides to protect the line of trees from farming and other human activities (excluding grazing). Where veteran trees are present, root protection areas should follow standing advice**	At least 95% of the trees are in a healthy condition (deadwood or veteran features valuable for wildlife are excluded from this). There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity.**	Habitat condition
H12	Species-rich native hedgerow with trees	Ditch	10-12m	3-4m	<u>Oak</u> (m), <u>Ash</u> (sm), <u>Field Maple</u> , <u>Hazel</u> , <u>Dog Wood</u> , <u>Blackthorn</u> , <u>Spindle</u> , <u>Conifer sp.</u> (sm), <u>Willow</u>	5-6	More than 80%	<u>Wood false-brome</u> , <u>Male fern</u> , <u>Ivy</u> , <u>Dog's mercury</u> , <u>Holly</u> , <u>Hart's-tongue</u>	Adjacent to Foxhole Lane and extends into a wooded strip to the south and connects to woodland W1 in the north-west of the site. Contains pond P1, which is bordered on both sides by outgrowing strips of hedgerow.	Wooded strip/treeline character with numerous mature Oaks.	Pass	Pass	Pass	Fail	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Yes				Good	
H13	Native hedgerow with trees	None	6-8m	4m	<u>Hawthorn</u> , <u>Blackthorn</u> , <u>Oak</u> (m), <u>Hazel</u> , <u>Holly</u> , <u>Grey Willow</u>	4-5	More than 80%		This hedgerow borders woodland W1 to the west. Borders the northern site boundary with a public footpath running directly parallel to the south.	Bounded by a barbed wire fence along the edge of the field. This fence is generally scrubbed up with Blackthorn and Hawthorn.	Pass	Pass	Fail	Pass	Pass	Fail	Pass	Pass	Yes				Good	
H14	Species-rich native hedgerow	None	3m	2m	<u>Blackthorn</u> , <u>Field Maple</u> , <u>Hawthorn</u> , <u>Oak</u> , <u>Silver birch</u> (y), <u>Hornbeam</u> , <u>Wild privet</u> , <u>Dogwood</u>	5	More than 80%		Bushy and dense		Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass		No (Forms Residential Curtilage)					Good	
H15	Non-native and ornamental hedgerow	None	1.5m	1.5m	Ornamental privet	0	Less than 80%		Box-cut hedgerow, with ornamental planting along the residential boundaries.		Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass		No					Poor (non-native/ornamental)	
H16	Native hedgerow with trees	None	5-6m	3-4m	<u>Poplar</u> (sm), <u>Ash</u> , <u>Hawthorn</u> , <u>Elder</u> , <u>Bramble</u> , <u>Rose sp.</u>	3	More than 80%	Common nettle, Creeping thistle	More of a young treeline to the east, with sections of more substantial hedgerow to the west.		Pass	Fail	Pass	Fail	Pass	Pass		No					Good	
TL1	Line of trees	None	10m	1.5m	<u>Ash</u> (y).	1	More than 70%		Line of young Ash trees.									No	Pass	Fail	Pass	Pass	Moderate	

\* Indicates hedgerow habitat condition assessment criteria

\*\* Indicates line of trees habitat condition assessment criteria

## **Appendix 6481/7:**

Habitat Condition Assessment Matrix for Statutory Biodiversity  
Metric

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HABITAT CONDITION ASSESSMENT MATRIX FOR STATUTORY BIODIVERSITY METRIC

Habitat type/criteria		Feature Reference					
Grassland (low distinctiveness)		G1	G2	G3	G4	G5	G6
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m <sup>2</sup> present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote 1). <b>Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition.</b> Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m <sup>2</sup> (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.	Fail	Fail	Fail	Fail	Fail	Pass
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	Pass	Pass	Pass	Fail	Fail	Fail
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) <sup>2</sup> .	Fail	Fail	Fail	Fail	Fail	Fail
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA4).	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
<b>Condition (6+ criteria including A = good; 4-5 criteria including A = moderate; 3 criteria or fewer or fails A = poor)</b>		<b>Poor</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Poor</b>	<b>Moderate</b>
Pond		P1					
A	The pond is of good water quality, with clear water (low turbidity) indicating no obvious signs of pollution. Turbidity is acceptable if the pond is grazed by livestock.	Pass					
B	There is semi-natural habitat (moderate distinctiveness or above) completely surrounding the pond, for at least 10 m from the pond edge for its entire perimeter.	Fail					
C	Less than 10% of the water surface is covered with duckweed <i>Lemna</i> spp. or filamentous algae.	Pass					
D	The pond is not artificially connected to other waterbodies, such as agricultural ditches or artificial pipework.	Pass					
E	Pond water levels can fluctuate naturally throughout the year. No obvious artificial dams, pumps or pipework.	Pass					
F	Absence of non-native plant and animal species	Pass					
G	Pond is not artificially stocked with fish. If the pond naturally contains fish, it is a native fish assemblage at low densities.	Pass					
H	<b>Non-woodland ponds only:</b> Emergent, submerged or floating plants (excluding duckweed) cover at least 50% of the pond area which is less than 3 m deep.	N/A					
I	<b>Non-woodland ponds only:</b> The pond surface is no more than 50% shaded by adjacent trees and scrub.	N/A					
<b>Condition (Woodland pond: 7 criteria = good; 5-6 criteria = moderate; 4 or less = poor. Non-woodland pond: 9 criteria = good; 6-8 criteria = moderate; 5 or less = poor)</b>		<b>Moderate</b>					



Urban		TF1	TF2	TF3	TF4					
A	Vegetation structure is varied, providing opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live, eat and breed. A single structural habitat component or vegetation type does not account for more than 80% of the total habitat area.	Fail	Fail	Fail	Fail					
B	The habitat parcel contains different plant species that are beneficial for wildlife, for example flowering species providing nectar sources for a range of invertebrates at different times of year.	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass					
C	Invasive non-native plant species (listed on Schedule 9 of WCA1) and others which are to the detriment of native wildlife (using professional judgement) cover less than 5% of the total vegetated area.	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass					
	Note - to achieve Good condition, this criterion must be satisfied by a complete absence of invasive non-native species (rather than <5% cover).	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass					
D	<b>Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land only:</b> The parcel shows spatial variation and forms a mosaic of bare substrate PLUS: At least four early successional communities (a) to (i); Communities: (a) annuals; (b) mosses/liverworts; (c) lichens; (d) ruderals; (e) inundation species; (f) open grassland; (g) flower-rich grassland; (h) heathland, (i) pools.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A					
E1	<b>Bioswale and SUDS only:</b> Plant species are mostly native. If non-native species are present these are not detrimental to the habitat or native wildlife.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A					
E2	<b>Bioswale and SUDS only:</b> Vegetation comprised of plant species suited to wetland or riparian situations.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A					
F	<b>Intensive green roofs:</b> The roof has a minimum of 50% native and non-native wildflowers. 70% of the roof area is soil and vegetation (including water features).	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A					
G	<b>Biodiverse green roofs only:</b> The roof has a varied depth of 80 – 150 mm; at least 50% is at 150 mm and is planted and seeded with wildflowers and sedums or is pre-prepared with sedums and wildflowers.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A					
	Note – to achieve Good condition some additional habitat, such as sand piles, stones, logs etc. are present.	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A					
<b>Condition (Green roofs and Open Mosaic: 3 core criteria AND good condition in criterion C AND passes additional criterion for specific hab type (D, F or G) = good; passes 2-3 criteria OR 4 criteria without good condition in criterion C = moderate; 0-1 criteria = poor. Bioswale or SuDS: 3 core criteria AND good condition in criterion C AND all criteria for specific hab type = good; 3-4 criteria OR 5 criteria without good condition in criterion C = moderate; 2-0 criteria = poor. All other habitats: all 3 criteria AND good condition in criterion C = good; 2-3 criteria OR all 3 criteria but without good condition in criterion C = moderate; 0-1 criteria = poor)</b>		Moderate	Moderate	Moderate	Moderate					





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