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Ref no: E1909 230426

RE: Land at Bolney Grange Industrial Park (DM/23/3208) – Ecology Update Walkover Report in respect of Condition 21.

Hone Ecology Ltd was commissioned by London Town Property Holdings Ltd to undertake an update walkover survey for the proposed development at Land at Bolney Grange Industrial Park, Jobs Lane, Haywards Heath, West Sussex. The update is required for fulfil Condition 21 of the planning approval (DM/23/3208) due to outline application not having commenced within one year of the planning consent which was granted on 9th June 2025.

Condition 21 requires *a review of the approved ecological mitigation measures secured through condition, with amendments and updates where necessary. The review is to be informed by further ecological surveys commissioned to:*

- i. Establish if there have been any changes in the presence and/or abundance of protected species and*
- ii. Identify any likely new ecological impacts that might arise from any changes.*

Where survey results indicate changes have occurred that will result in ecological impacted not previously addressed in the approved scheme, the original approved ecological measures will be revised and new or amended measures, and timetable of their implementation, will be submitted to and approved in writing by the LPA prior to the commencement of the planned works. Works will then be carried out in accordance with the proposed new approved ecological measures and timetable.

Surveys previously undertaken by Hone Ecology Ltd in 2022 were a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal¹, and Reptile Presence/Likely Absence Survey Report². In addition, a Hazel Dormouse Addendum³, was produced in 2025 in response to concerns raised by Place Services' ecological advice service on behalf of the LPA. These reports have been reviewed as part of the Condition 21 review. The current update walkover survey was undertaken by experienced ecologist Julie Merrett of Hone Ecology Ltd on 16th April 2026, and the following report provides an update on the site principally in respect of great crested newt (GCN), reptiles, nesting birds, badger, hazel dormice, and bat potential.

Method

The walkover consisted of a re-survey of the site, surveying for any changes in the habitats on site, and suitable habitat and field signs for protected species, in particular:

- Potential for GCN
- Potential for reptiles,
- Potential for nesting birds,
- Field signs for badger, including potential setts, latrines, snuffle holes, well-worn paths,
- Review of trees from ground level for bat roost potential, where feasible,
- Potential for hazel dormice.

¹E1909 Bolney Grange Industrial Park, Haywards Heath, West Sussex TH17 5PB Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) Report. August 2022. Hone Ecology Ltd.

²E1909 Bolney Grange Industrial Park, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 5PB Reptile Presence/Likely Absence Survey Report. November 2022. Hone Ecology Ltd.

³E1909. Land at Bolney Grange Business Park, Stairbridge Lane, Bolney – Hazel dormouse addendum 220225. February 2025. Hone Ecology Ltd.

Limitations

The western scrub boundary prevented access to the trees for ground level assessment. The oak at the southeast of the site and immature trees within the site were fully accessible to assess from ground level.

Walkover results

Habitats

Grassland

The grassland area across the site has been managed with periodic cutting to prevent the spread of scrub on the site and compensate for previous grazing activities (Plates 1 – 6), with no significant change to the grassland area observed.



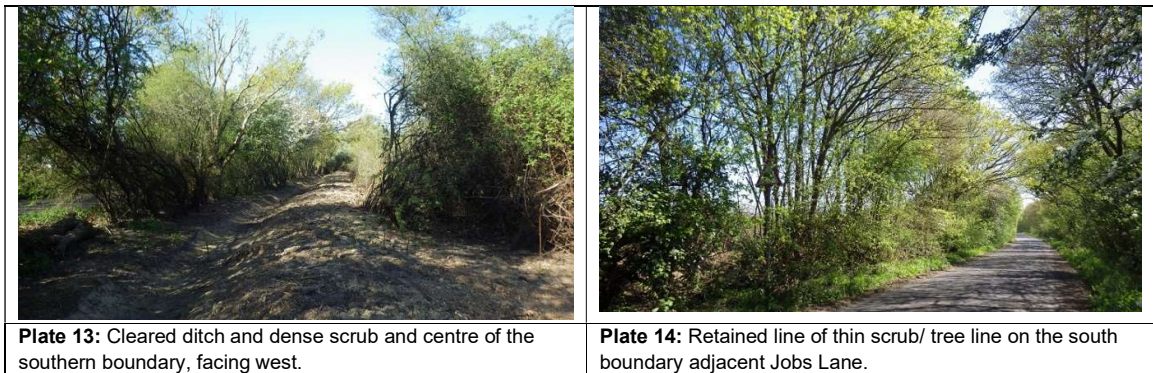
Boundary scrub

The scrub boundaries on the west side of the site have been retained (Plates 7-9), with some cutting of bramble growth (Plate 8) to prevent extension further into the site. The semi-mature oak at the southeast of the site is also retained (Plate 10).

	
Plate 7: Retained scrub on southwest of site.	Plate 8: Area of managed bramble scrub on west side of site.
	
Plate 9: Scrub and tree boundary on west side.	Plate 10: Semi-mature oak at southeast of site.

There has been extensive clearance works at the south of the site which is understood to be in relation to the clearance of the ditch running along the south boundary. It is understood that this was undertaken due to the ditch not having been cleared for some time and to prevent potential flooding issues. It is understood the works were undertaken in March 2026. During these works approximately 1-3m width of the boundary scrub/overgrown hedgerow and understorey was also cleared, degrading the potential habitat for nesting birds, dormice, and GCN during their terrestrial phase. The adjacent pond was not directly impacted during these works, but direct connectivity of habitat from the site boundary has been lost. A single line of thin scrub/ immature trees has been retained on the south boundary.

	
Plate 11: Cleared ditch and dense scrub at the southeast of the southern boundary, facing west.	Plate 12: Cleared ditch and dense scrub at southern boundary adjacent the pond on site.



Pond

The pond on site has not been directly impacted by the clearance works undertaken on the southern boundary of the site. It's general condition was unchanged from previous site visits with bank boundary vegetation intact, although habitat connectivity with the southern boundary scrub has been broken. The extent of emergent vegetation and water quality was unchanged since the previous survey.



Protected species

Great Crested Newts

The quality of the pond on site is not significantly changed from the previous surveys in relation to GCN, although the connectivity of habitat from the south boundary has been reduced. The other terrestrial boundary habitats remain suitable for this species.

The PEA report confirmed a GCN survey undertaken on the pond in 2019 found it to have a moderate population of GCN, and the site was assessed with a high potential to support both breeding and foraging GCN and other amphibians. Despite the degradation of the southern boundary habitat, the site remains assessed with high potential to support GCN and other amphibians. The site was also confirmed to be within a Red Zone (high risk) for GCN by NatureSpace.

Reptiles

The habitats on the site are not significantly changed from the previous surveys in relation to reptiles, with the exception the grassland is now being managed through cutting instead of grazing. With the exception of the southern boundary, the boundary vegetation and also the pond habitat remains the same.

No reptiles were identified on the site during the reptile survey in 2022. Given the current management of the habitats on site, the potential for reptiles has been assessed as unchanged.

Nesting birds

As confirmed within the PEA, there is suitable habitat on the site for nesting birds in the form of trees and scrub, primarily on the boundaries of the site. The majority of this habitat remains on the site, although an area on the southern boundary has been cleared as part of the ditch clearance works. The current management of the site is also maintaining the grassland habitat which is suboptimal for ground nesting birds due to lack of cover.

As per the PEA, no further bird surveys are required, however all species of bird whilst actively nesting are afforded level protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and precautionary measures are required during the vegetation clearance works.

Badger

No signs of badger in the form of sett entrances, snuffle holes, mammal paths or latrines were identified during the current walkover. Rabbit burrows were identified on the southern boundary of the site. The site continues to be considered to have a low potential to support badgers.

Bat roosting potential

During the PEA walkover, the oak on the southeast of the site (Plate 10) was assessed from ground level with low potential for roosting bats in areas of loose bark, callus rolls and cracks on dead limbs. The status of this tree remains the same, and it is understood that this tree is not impacted by the planned works.

A row of sycamores along the roadside to the west of site were also assessed as having low potential for roosting bats. These trees are not included within the planned works, and not impacted by this development.

The trees within the grassland area of the site were all immature or semi-mature and during the current walkover were assessed from ground level with negligible potential for roosting bats.

Hazel dormouse

The site contains suitable habitat for this species on the east, south and north boundaries, although the habitat on the southern boundary has been greatly reduced due to scrub clearance during the recent ditch clearance works. Within the PEA, records of dormice within 2km were recorded, but due to isolation from these records the site was assessed with low potential for this species, with no further surveys recommended. Following concerns raised by Place Services' ecological advice service on behalf of the LPA, the recommendations for this species were revised to include precautionary measures during vegetation clearance.

In 2025 a dormouse survey was undertaken in Plot 931 of Bolney Grange Business Park⁴, approximately 250m to the northeast of the site, which identified a single dormouse nest on that site. Whilst not well connected with the current site, due to the proximity to the planned works the current site has been reassessed with **moderate potential** for dormice.

⁴E1909 Bolney Grange Industrial Park, Plot 931, Haywards Heath, West Sussex RH17 5PB Dormouse Presence/Likely Absence Survey Report. December 2025. Hone Ecology Ltd.

Conclusions and recommendations

Great crested newt

The habitat quality on the southern boundary has been reduced due to the ditch clearance works, but the pond and remainder of boundary habitat remains suitable to support GCN and other amphibians. The precautionary method recommended within the PEA was not feasible within the planned development.

No further surveys are recommended, but given the site is within a Red Zone for GCN a District Level Licence (DLL) is to be acquired prior to the start of any vegetation clearance or development works, with clearance works to be undertaken under supervision of the GCN class licence holder following the method given within the licence.

Reptiles

A reptile survey was undertaken on the site in 2023 with no reptiles identified on the site, confirming likely absence. Due to the current management of the site, it has been assessed that there are no changes in potential since the reptile survey was undertaken.

Therefore, no further surveys are recommended, and the precautionary method detailed in the reptile survey report of a three stage clearance under ecological supervision is recommended. The method is:

- Stage 1: Cut back and remove scattered trees
- Stage 2: Strim vegetation with a tractor flail during warm dry weather to a height of 50mm above ground.
- Stage 3: After a minimum of 48 hours during warm dry weather the vegetation should be trimmed to ground level.

In the unlikely event a reptile is found after clearance works, then works should cease in that area and an ecologist should be contacted for advice.

Nesting Birds

The boundary scrub and trees on the boundaries, and scattered trees within site provide suitable nesting potential for birds. The current management of the site maintains as sub-optimal grassland habitat for ground nesting birds.

The suitability of the habitats on site remain unchanged, and no further surveys are recommended. However, as all nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), any works such as tree and scrub clearance should be undertaken outside the core breeding period for birds of March-August inclusive (although it should be noted that species such as pigeon can breed all year round and remain protected).

If this timing is not possible, a nesting bird check of the area to be cleared should be undertaken by an ecologist within 24 hours of the planned works starting to confirm no nesting birds will be impacted. In the event nesting is observed, works in that area will stop immediately, and a 5m buffer placed around the nest until the eggs have hatched and young fledged, or else the nest has been deemed by a suitably experienced ecologist to have been abandoned.

Badger and hedgehog

The current walkover indicated no activity by badger on the site, with no signs observed. Therefore, no further surveys are required for this species, but given that an inactive burrow entrance was previous identified on the site it is recommended that a minimum of three months prior to the start of works, a

walkover be undertaken to confirm any change in badger activity which may require a full survey and potentially licence for the works.

During the clearance works, hedgehogs will also be searched for and moved to a safe area of the site boundary which is being retained. As a precautionary measure any holes or trenches on the site should be either covered over night to prevent badger or other animals falling in and getting stuck, or alternatively ramps should be placed in the trench to enable animals to escape in the unlikely event they access the site.

Bat roosting potential

No further signs of bat roosting potential was identified on the trees on the site which are impacted by the planned works. For the low potential trees identified on the site, it is understood that these are not impacted by the planned works. If this changes and these trees (oak at the southeast and line of sycamore adjacent the road on the west boundary) will need to be removed it is recommended that a pre-works check is undertaken immediately before any works on these trees. If bats or evidence of bats are found during this check, works on the tree must stop and further surveys will be required to inform a Natural England licence.

The remainder of the immature and semi-mature trees which are impacted by the planned works were with negligible potential for roosting bats, and no further surveys or precautionary measures for felling are required.

Hazel dormouse

A precautionary method under supervision by a dormouse Class licenced ecologist for the clearance/reduction of boundary vegetation and scrub has been agreed within the Addendum in respect of Protected Species Hazel dormouse.

However, given the single dormouse nest identified during the dormouse survey at Parcel 931 approximately 250m to the northeast in 2025, the potential for dormice on the current site has been increased to moderate. Due to the recent confirmed record and suitable habitat on the site, under the latest best practice guidelines⁵ further surveys for dormice are not required and the recent record can be used to inform a Natural England mitigation licence application.

Given the proximity of the recent dormouse record and suitable habitat on site, a Natural England Dormouse Mitigation licence is required to undertake scrub and boundary, including method statement and suitable timings for the clearance works. These clearance works will be undertaken under supervision of the Named Ecologist on the licence, or a suitably qualified Accredited Agent.

Should at any point during the site clearance and development a protected or notable species be identified within the site, then all works should stop, and the appointed ecologist consulted on the appropriate manner in which to proceed.

Re-instatement of cleared south boundary scrub

The landscape plans for the site show the scrub on the southern boundary was to be retained as part of the landscaping. This was a requirement for habitat for breeding birds and commuting, foraging and nesting dormice, and also commuting habitat for GCN and other amphibians and reptiles in the area.

This habitat **must** therefore be re-instated. It is recommended that the lost scrub be replaced with more species richness, to include native species such as hawthorn, hazel, bramble, honeysuckle, and dogwood

⁵Wells, D., Chanin, P. & Gubert, L. (2025) *Hazel Dormouse Mitigation Handbook*. The Mammal Society.



which will provide foraging and nesting potential for protected species such as dormice and birds, and foraging potential for bats locally.

Please do not hesitate to contact me if you have any queries concerning the above.

Kind regards

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