

Ecology Technical Note: EIA Screening Opinion Addendum

Project	10480 – Hallgates to Elms Farm Pipeline		Purpose	To provide an update on the progress of ecology surveys, and to provide an initial response to the Natural England consultee comments.		
Location	Leicestershire					
Client	Severn Trent Water					
Doc Ref	Version	Date	Authored	Checked	Approved	
10480.031	1.0	November 2025	CC	ACP	ACP	

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Environment Partnership (TEP) Ltd was commissioned in October 2024 by Severn Trent Water (STW) to provide an Ecological Technical Note to support an EIA screening opinion for the proposed Hallgates to Elms Farm water pipeline route in Leicestershire.
- 1.2 The Ecological Technical Note was prepared and issued in September 2025 (TEP Report Ref: 10480.016v2).
- 1.3 The purpose of this addendum technical note is to provide an update on the progress of ecology surveys undertaken on the current pipeline route, and to provide an initial response to the consultee comments received from Natural England (Appendix A).

2.0 Ecology Survey Status

- 2.1 Table 1 summarises the ecology surveys completed to date and the key results of these surveys. At the time of writing, technical reports detailing the results of these surveys are currently being prepared; indicative timescales for issue of these reports has also been provided.
- 2.2 Where additional surveys are required, these have also been listed along with details of what would trigger the need for these surveys and timescales for these surveys.
- 2.3 The proposed mitigation for the ecological constraints identified during these surveys will be detailed in full within the relevant technical report. However, this will broadly follow the proposed mitigation measures outlined within the original Ecological Technical Note.

Hallgates to Elms Farm Pipeline

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Table 1: Ecological survey status

Category	Survey type	Survey progress	Key findings	Report reference	Expected timescales for issue	Outstanding survey requirements
Habitats and Plants	UK Habitat Survey	Complete	▶ A variety of habitats are present across the pipeline route, including woodland, scrub, grassland, cropland, ponds, rivers or streams, hedgerows, sustainable urban drainage systems and developed land. ▶ Of these, areas of lowland mixed deciduous woodland and hedgerows qualify as priority habitat.	TBC	Mid November 2025	▶ No further surveys required
	Hedgerow Regulations Assessment	Complete	▶ 119 hedgerows have been identified across the pipeline route. ▶ 51 hedgerows have been identified as important under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.	10480.024	Early November 2025	▶ No further surveys required
	Bluebell Survey	Complete (except along Section 1 Alternative Route)	▶ Native bluebell have been identified along six hedgerows and two woodland parcels along the pipeline route	10480.030	Early November 2025	▶ Surveys of hedgerows along Section 1 Alternative Route will be required in Spring 2026 if this route option is used, to confirm the presence or absence of bluebell
	Waxcap Survey	Pending	▶ Following a review of Severn Trent Water's guidance on determining whether grassland parcels require further survey for waxcap, four parcels have been identified for survey.	TBC	December 2025	▶ A walkover to confirm the presence or absence of waxcaps on these grassland parcels is proposed for November 2025.

Category	Survey type	Survey progress	Key findings	Report reference	Expected timescales for issue	Outstanding survey requirements
Amphibians (Great Crested Newt (GCN))	Great Crested Newt survey	Complete	35 ponds have been identified within 250 m of the proposed pipeline route and proposed working area (taken to be 50 m for the purposes of the report). - Of these, 27 were subject to survey. - A positive eDNA result was returned for six ponds along the pipeline route (P5, P28, P29, P31, P48b and P55) - Traditional surveys on two of these ponds which returned a positive eDNA result in 2024 (P5 and P31) were undertaken in 2025.	10480.004v2	Early November 2025	- To be confirmed following submission of the initial District Level Licencing Enquiry to Natural England. - If there is not an opportunity to join the Natural England District Level Licencing (DLL) scheme, traditional surveys of the remaining four ponds which returned a positive eDNA result in 2025 (P28, P29, P31 and P48b) will be undertaken in Spring 2026.
Bats	Ground Level Tree Assessment (Bats)	Complete	25 trees along the pipeline route were identified as having suitability for supporting roosting bats 16 of these trees have PRF-M suitability.	10480.023	Mid November 2025	- To be confirmed following production of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment. - Aerial tree climbing surveys of impacted trees can be undertaken in Winter 2025/2026 to confirm the bat roost habitat suitability of trees. - Three PRF inspection surveys or nocturnal emergence surveys of trees with PRF-M suitability will be undertaken in May/June 2026.
	Seasonal Automated Static Bat Detector Surveys (Bats)	Summer and Autumn visits now complete. Spring visit to be undertaken.	- Automated static detectors have been deployed seasonally in 27 hedgerows across the pipeline route, to inform any mitigation measures that will be required for foraging and commuting bats. - Hedgerows for static deployment were chosen following a review of survey data from the Hedgerow Regulations Assessment	TBC	Early December 2025 (Interim report)	Requirement for spring survey visit to be confirmed following determination of EIA Screening Opinion. If required, surveys will be undertaken in April/May 2026.

Category	Survey type	Survey progress	Key findings	Report reference	Expected timescales for issue	Outstanding survey requirements
Badger	Badger	Complete	▶ Evidence of badger activity has been found within 80 m of the proposed pipeline route, including three main setts, one annexe sett, and seven outlier setts. Multiple badger field signs have also been recorded.	10480.026	Early November 2025	▶ Updated badger surveys and monitoring is proposed in November/December 2025, ahead of construction commencing
Aquatic Environment	Otter	Complete	▶ Five watercourses have been subject to survey; four of which are to be crossed by the pipeline route. ▶ Evidence of otter activity has been found along two of the surveyed watercourses, but no holts have been found.	10480.009v2	Mid November 2025	▶ No further surveys required
	Water vole	Complete (except along Section 1 Alternative Route)	▶ No definitive evidence of water vole has been found in any of the surveyed watercourses (several burrows identified but no other confirmatory evidence)			▶ Further survey of WC7 will be required in Spring 2026 if Section 1 Alternative Route option is chosen
	White-clawed crayfish	Complete	▶ White clawed crayfish have been confirmed as absent from the surveyed watercourses ▶ Signal crayfish have been recorded within one of the watercourse crossings	10480.014v2	Early November 2025	▶ No further surveys required
Birds	Winter Bird Survey	Complete	▶ Analysis of results is in progress, but no major concerns have been raised.	TBC	Early November 2025	▶ No further surveys required
	Breeding Bird Survey	Complete	▶ Analysis of results is in progress, but no major concerns have been raised	TBC	Mid November 2025	▶ No further surveys required

3.0 Natural England Consultation

- 3.1 TEP has a Discretionary Advice Service (DAS) agreement in place with Natural England. This service was utilised in November 2025 to discuss the consultation response received from Natural England with regard to the EIA Screening Opinion (Appendix A).
- 3.2 Natural England has acknowledged that the consultation response was sent by their planning casework hub and therefore does not make reference to any previous engagement Severn Trent Water and TEP have had with Natural England via the DAS agreement.
- 3.3 Natural England have confirmed that based on this prior engagement, they are satisfied that the potential impacts on the designated sites identified in the response letter (namely potential water quality changes/siltation during pressure testing of the pipelines (which will discharge to Buddon Wood and Swithland Reservoir SSSI), direct damage to sites where construction vehicles accidentally encroach into them, and dust deposition) can be mitigated through the production and implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).
- 3.4 As outlined in an email to Charnwood Borough Council on 5th November 2025, Natural England therefore advises that regardless of whether an EIA is assessed as being required, sufficient information on the potential impacts of this proposal upon designated sites is submitted with any subsequent planning application.
- 3.5 Severn Trent Water has confirmed that prior to commencement of works on-site, a CEMP will be prepared. The CEMP will identify measures to ensure potential impacts on these designated sites and their qualifying features are avoided. This will be followed by all personnel working on the project during the construction of the pipeline.

Appendix A – Natural England Consultation Response

Date: 08 October 2025
Our ref: 528923
Your ref: P/25/2026/2



Charnwood Borough Council

BY EMAIL ONLY

Hornbeam House
Crewe Business Park
Electra Way
Crewe
Cheshire
CW1 6GJ

T 0300 060 3900

Dear Sir or Madam,

Environmental Impact Assessment Screening consultation: Request for a Screening Opinion for the installation of a 9.4km below-ground water pipeline

Location: Hallgates to Elms Farm Hallgates to Elms Farm, Leicestershire

Thank you for your consultation on the above dated 02 October 2025 which was received by Natural England on 02 October 2025.

Natural England is a non-departmental public body. Our statutory purpose is to ensure that the natural environment is conserved, enhanced, and managed for the benefit of present and future generations, thereby contributing to sustainable development.

It is Natural England's advice, on the basis of the material supplied with the consultation, that the proposed development has potential likely significant effects on statutorily designated nature conservation sites or landscapes and further consideration is required.

Schedule 3(2) of the Town & Country Planning (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017 requires consideration of the selection criteria for Schedule 2 EIA development and identification of 'environmental sensitivity'.

The proposed development is located within/partly within or has the potential for adverse effects on the following designated nature conservation sites or designated landscapes:

- Bradgate Park & Cropston Reservoir Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Swithland Wood & The Brand Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Ulverscroft Valley Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Buddon Wood & Swithland Reservoir Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Swithland Wood & The Brand Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Sheet Hedges Wood Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Groby Pool & Woods Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Botcheston Bog Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

Natural England has not assessed the significance of any impacts on these designated sites or landscapes. The proposed development may therefore be likely to have significant effects on the interest features for which these sites are notified or the purposes of designation and

we advise you to consider further whether an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA) is required.

Should you decide that an EIA is not required, Natural England advises that sufficient information on the potential impacts of this proposal upon these designated sites/areas is submitted with any subsequent planning application. We would be pleased to discuss this further with the applicant through our [Discretionary Advice Service](#).

Natural England does not hold information on the location of significant populations of protected species, so is unable to advise whether this proposal is likely to affect protected species to such an extent as to require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The developer must provide sufficient information for your authority to assess whether protected species are likely to be affected and, if so, whether appropriate avoidance, mitigation or compensation measures can be put in place. Further information is included in Natural England's [standing advice](#) on protected species.

Furthermore, Natural England does not routinely maintain locally specific data on all environmental assets. This development proposal may have environmental impacts on priority species and/or habitats, local wildlife sites, soils and best and most versatile agricultural land or on local landscape character that may be sufficient to warrant an EIA. Information on ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees is set out in Natural England/Forestry Commission [standing advice](#).

We therefore recommend that advice is sought from your ecological, landscape and soils advisers, local record centre, recording society or wildlife body on the local soils, best and most versatile agricultural land, landscape, geodiversity and biodiversity receptors that may be affected by the proposed development before determining whether an EIA is necessary.

Should you determine that an EIA is not required in this case, you should ensure that the application is supported by sufficient biodiversity, landscape and other environmental information in order for you to assess the weight to give these material considerations when determining the planning application.

Should the proposal be amended in a way which significantly affects its impact on the natural environment then, in accordance with Section 4 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, Natural England should be consulted again.

Please note that this response relates only to the EIA screening consultation. Natural England may wish to provide advice should your authority consult us on any subsequent planning application and associated environmental assessments. Guidance on when to consult Natural England is [here](#).

Please send any new consultations, or any further information on this consultation to: consultations@naturalengland.org.uk.

Yours faithfully

Loz Burrige
Consultations Team