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ARCHITECTURAL TECHNICIAN AND ECOLOGY

**INDUSTRIAL DEVELOPMENT AT
LAND NORTH WEST OF
LEICESTER ROAD
EARL SHILTON
LE9 7TJ**

HABITATS AND PROTECTED SPECIES REPORT

(3rd December 2025)

REPORT REF: 2582 - PHA



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Paul Hicking Associates were commissioned by Mr. R. Harrison & Mr R. Finch to conduct a Habitat and Protected Species Assessment at Land North West of Leicester Road, Earl Shilton, LE97TJ, in order to assess the potential impact by the construction of the new industrial development.

Site Description

1.2 Location

The survey site is located to the north of the market town of Earl Shilton, within the Borough of Hinkley & Bosworth. This c0.78ha triangular-shaped site comprises of an area of former grazing pasture and arable field containing modified grassland enclosed by hedgerow boundaries. The survey site is accessed off Leicester Road.

- 1.3 The proposals comprise of the construction of new industrial units with associated hard and soft landscaping.

- 1.4 Aerial and context photograph of the survey site.



Previous Survey History for Protected Species and Habitats

- 1.5 There is no previous survey history for the site.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 This section describes how the essential evidence supporting this report was gathered and what equipment and techniques were used.

Desk Top Study

- 2.2 A desktop study was carried out to determine the presence of any protected or notable species records or designated statutory or non-statutory sites of nature conservation value (such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or Local Wildlife Sites) within a 1km radius of the site. This included the study of ordinance survey maps and aerial photographs including Google Earth and 'Where's the Path V3' maps.
- 2.3 The MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk) and the NBN Gateway (www.nbn.org.uk) were visited to identify records of protected species within a 0.5-1km radius of the site along with records obtained from Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC).
- 2.4 The OS grid reference is SP 46901 98760 and the site can be found on: -
- OS Explorer – 233 – Leicester & Hinkley
 - OS Landranger – 140– Leicester, Coventry & Rugby.

Topographical Survey

- 2.5 A topographical survey was made available for the site (see Appendix 1). This survey was provided in an AutoCAD format and includes the position of all significant trees and hedgerows on or immediately adjacent to the site. The survey also includes all other landscape features such as the position of existing buildings and structures, pathways and access roads. Changes in ground levels were also recorded on the survey and are related back to known ordinance survey levels and co-ordinates.

Habitat Survey

- 2.6 The terrestrial Habitat survey was carried out on the 2nd December 2025 by experience surveyor and practical habitat manager Mr. P Hicking to determine the general ecological value of the habitats within the site. The surrounding area was also extensively walked to determine the sites connectivity to other adjacent habitats. A list of plant species was catalogued in accordance with habitat type and tested against Ratcliffe's Criteria. Habitats were mapped and classified in accordance with the Phase 1 Habitat Survey Methodology. UK Habitat Classification (ukhab, 2021 V2), version V2 was introduced in July 2023 and the survey data was referenced against this method of habitat classification. The data was then checked against the data obtained from the desktop study to determine how the study site sits within the local network of habitats and its potential contribution.

2.7 **Biodiversity Net Gain.**

2.8 In order to assess the potential impact of the proposals the DEFRA statutory biodiversity metric auditing and accounting for biodiversity calculation tool 1.0.4 (published 10.07.2025), has been used to calculate the value of the habitats within the site pre and post-development. The outcome of the proposals should aim to achieve a minimum of a 10% gain as required by the assessment within the development site.

2.9 Habitat condition assessment - condition assessments using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments July 2025 sheets were completed for each habitat type where this is required and the outcome has been recorded either poor, moderate or good condition within this report. Moderate or good condition can only be assigned to a habitat where it meets the essential criteria for the habitat type.

2.10 Irreplaceable habitats – there are no irreplaceable habitats within the survey site.

2.11 Water courses – there are no water courses within the boundary of the survey site.

2.12 Strategic significance – the habitats recorded within the site are of low strategic significance and is not located within the LPA local strategy or strategy planning and therefore Area/compensation not in local strategy/no local strategy has been used.

2.13 **Weather Conditions.**

Table 1:

Date	Weather Conditions
02/12/2025	9°C Dry and sunny with light breeze 0-1, 25% cloud cover.

2.14 Hedgerow habitats were assessed using the Hedgerow Evaluation and Grading System (HEGS) Clements and Toft 1993 and were graded on the following 1-4 scale:

- 1 = high to very high value
- 2 = moderately high to high value
- 3 = moderate value
- 4 = low value

2.15 Invasive species – The site was thoroughly search for the presence of invasive species such as Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) or Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).

Fauna Survey

2.16 A protected species survey was conducted. Sightings or signs of protected species were recorded along with the suitability and connectivity of the habitats present to support protected species and are detailed as follows:

2.17 Badger (*Meles meles*): - are nocturnal animals and the survey therefore involved searching for evidence of this species.

Specific signs which were searched for as follows:

- Setts and day nests (bundles of grass and other vegetation where badgers may sleep above ground);
- Dung pits and latrines (i.e. concentration of dung pits);
- Paw prints and paths;
- Hairs (which may be found at the sett or caught on fences and vegetation);
- Scratching posts (found at the base of trees);
- Feeding signs (i.e. 'snuffle holes' or small scrapes on the woodland floor and/or grassland where badgers have looked for earthworms and plant tubers etc.)

2.18 Mammals – There is potential for the presence of small mammals such as Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) along with signs were looked for including runways and droppings along with an assessment of available food source and habitat structure. The surrounding area was extensively walked to assess the nearby stream and water courses for the potential presence of European otter (*Lutra lutra*) and water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*).

2.19 Birds – The site was fully assessed for its potential suitability to support breeding birds along with an assessment of resident bird populations. All site records for birds were taken from site visual observations or by call. Leica 8 x 42 binoculars were used to observe and identify bird species. All birds could be observed without the aid of additional optical equipment i.e. a telescope.

Using the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Common Bird Census survey techniques species were recorded to note their abundance along with particular attention to the presence of any protected or Local Biodiversity Plan (LBAP) species which would be likely to use these habitats. This data was compared with data obtained from the desktop study. Existing trees and ground vegetation were also inspected for their potential to support breeding birds.

2.20 Great Crested Newt – The surrounding area, where possible, was extensively walked to determine the presence of ponds and networks which may support this species. Data obtained within the desktop study was also reviewed to determine if this species had been recorded within the vicinity of the study site.

2.21 Amphibians Generally – The site and surrounding vicinity, where possible, was extensively walked to determine the potential for the presence of other amphibians such as Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*),

Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*), Smooth (*Lissotriton vulgaris*) and Palmate Newt (*Lissotriton helveticus*). Data obtained within the desktop study was also reviewed to determine if any of these species had been recorded within the vicinity of the study site.

- 2.22 Reptiles – A reptile survey is currently being undertaken within the survey site. Please see separate survey for the results and mitigation for reptiles.
- 2.23 Invertebrates – are most effectively surveyed in May-August at the height of the flight period for most invertebrates. However, some invertebrates are active during the winter months including winter moth species. The study site was therefore assessed for its potential for the presence of invertebrates such as butterflies, bees, moths and Odonata (dragonflies and damselflies). Recommendation for the protection of habitats or introduction of enhancement features for invertebrates are based on this site assessment.
- 2.24 Bats - there is a corrugated sheet clad storage shed and open shelter within the site and trees along the boundary and at the site entrance of the survey site and these were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Guidelines (Collins J. (ed.) 2023) 4th edition March 2024 as set out within table 2 below. The site was also assessed for its potential to support foraging and commuting bats.

Table 2:

Roost Potential.	Description.	Potential flight-paths and foraging habitats.
None.	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).
Negligible ^a .	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low.	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions ^b and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats ^c).	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.

Moderate.	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^b and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions ^b and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

a Negligible is defined as 'so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering, insignificant'. This category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage (due to one attribute) but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute).

b For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance.

c Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten et al., 2016 and Jansen et al., 2022). Common pipistrelle swarming has been observed in the UK (Bell, 2022 and Tomlinson, 2020) and winter hibernation of numbers of this species has been detected at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland (National Trust, 2018). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK, but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in prominent buildings in the landscape, urban or otherwise.

2.25 Survey Limitations.

The information obtained from within the desk-top data search (i.e. biological data records) is not an exhaustive source of information and is depended upon any local or focused survey activity undertaken within the data search area. The absence or a negative result of a species does not indicate the absence of a protected species from the survey site or surrounding search area.

All areas and/or linear dimensions provided within this report are approximate taken from survey mapping or data provided. The survey appraisal is limited to the boundaries of the client ownership and where permitted public access routes and footpaths.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 The section states the findings of the survey effort.

Habitats.

3.2 Maps published by the Ordnance Survey were consulted to ascertain the potential ecological connectivity of the area. Aerial photographs were also studied to detect possible navigable routes for between the study site and locations that might provide suitable foraging areas or potential alternative sites for roosting, nesting and hibernation. There are no UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) habitats within the study site. Habitats outside the development site comprise of the following:

Outside the development site.

- Arable and grazing pasture farmland
- Broadleaved woodland and stream watercourse
- Public footpaths and access roads.

3.3 There are no statutory or non-statutory designated sites of nature conservation within the survey site however, the study site is within the 5km zone of influence of a SSSI;

Table 3: Statutory Designated sites within 5km of the survey site:

Name	Designation	Distance
Burbage Woods & Aston Firs	SSSI	4.6km SW
Croft Hill	SSSI	4.6km SE
Croft & Huncote Quarry	SSSI	4.6km SE
Croft Pasture	SSSI	4.89 SW
Burbage Common Woods	LNR	3.3km SW

3.4 Abbreviations – Local Nature Reserve (LNR), Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

3.5 The survey site comprises of the following habitats and their location are shown within Appendix 1:

3.6 Modified grassland

The majority of the survey site contains a varying sward of dense tussock rye grass with short which was once a horse grazed pasture. The undisturbed areas of grassland comprise of more than 30% of rye-grass (*Poa annua*), and extensive cover of Broad-leaved Dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) and Spear Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*). There is some surface damage to the grassland exposing bare earth.



3.7 Blackthorn scrub.

Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) forms a dense area of native scrub within the north-eastern corner of the site.

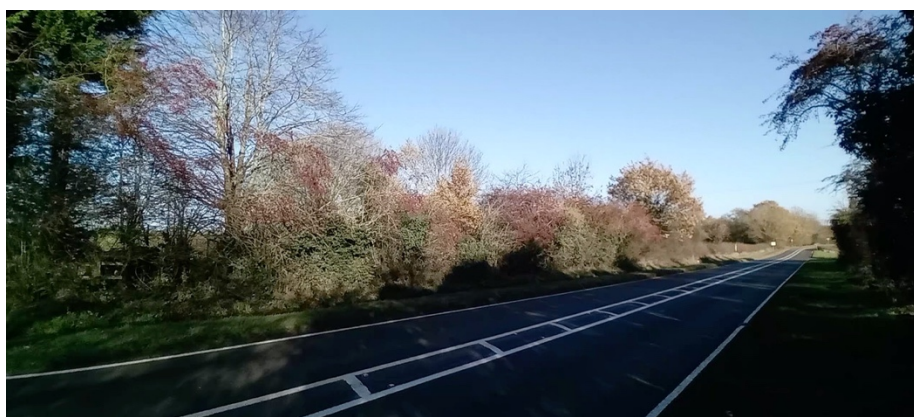
3.8 Native hedgerow with trees.

Hedgerows form the boundary enclosure to the site and comprise of native species of local provenance. Of note; the Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), are heavily fruit bearing this season.

Hedgerow H1 – is a 2-3m high defunct (no longer stock proof), species rich native hedgerow containing predominantly Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), with occasional Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Oak (*Quercus robur*), Willow (*Salix caprea*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*). There are large mature standards of Oak, Hawthorn and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) each side of the hedgerow boundary. The hedgerow forms the south-eastern roadside boundary enclosure to the survey site.

Table 4: HEGS grade assessment:

Hedge No.	Length (m)	Canopy species	Species per 30m	HEGS score	Important under HEGS?	Species rich
H1	52	Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Oak, Willow, Elder.	5	2	Yes.	Yes.



Hedgerow H2 – is a 1.5-2m high species poor native intact hedgerow along the northern boundary separating the site from the adjacent farm field.

Table 5: HEGS grade assessment:

Hedge No.	Length (m)	Canopy species	Species per 30m	HEGS score	Important under HEGS?	Species rich
H2	121	Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Ash.	3	2	Yes.	No.



Hedgerow H3 – is a 1.5-2m high intact native species hedgerow containing Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*). The hedgerow forms the north-western boundary enclosure to the site against the adjacent farm field.

Table 6: HEGS grade assessment:

Hedge No.	Length (m)	Canopy species	Species per 30m	HEGS score	Important under HEGS?	Species rich
H3	148	Hawthorn, Blackthorn, Oak	3	2	Yes.	No.



Hedgerow H4 – is a 2-3m high defunct native species rich hedgerow (no-longer stock proof), containing Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Oak (*Quercus robur*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and contains young specimens of Oak and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), tree standards. The hedgerow forms the south eastern boundary enclosure to the site against the roadside.

Table 7: HEGS grade assessment:

Hedge No.	Length (m)	Canopy species	Species per 30m	HEGS score	Important under HEGS?	Species rich
H3	95	Hawthorn, Blackthorn,	2	3	Yes.	No.



3.9 Rural tree.

There are large tree standards within the north eastern corner of the site comprising of coppice Willow (*Salix caprea*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*). The site entrance is framed by large standards of non-native.



3.10 Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface.

There is an area of compacted stone hard landscaping at the entrance to the site and in front of the former barn, open shelter and storage unit. The surface extends to form the floor of the open shelter.

3.11 Developed land sealed surface.

This habitat comprises of an existing corrugated asbestos store.

Fauna.

3.12 Badger.

Potential Use of Site.

The grassland habitats within the site provide optimal habitats for foraging badger. There are no badger setts with the survey site or within 30m radius of the site. The site is relatively open to a badger to access with good connectivity to the wider ecological network including nearby woodland and open pasture grassland with suitability for foraging Badger. The grassland was carefully inspected and the grassland surface is intact. There are biological records for badger within 1km of the survey site however, in the interest of the protection of this species these records will not be published within this report.

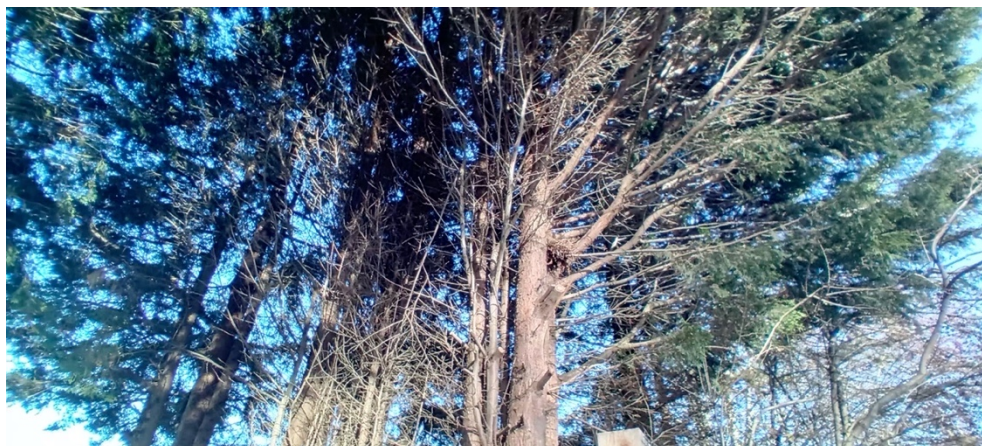
- 3.13 **Mammals Generally** – The site has good connectivity to the wider ecological network. The short cut grassland is sub-optimum habitat for the presence of small mammals such as field vole (*Microtus agrestis*), which are prey species for barn owl (*Tyto alba*) lacking density for foraging and safe refuge. The surrounding area has good connectivity for hedgehog and the hedgerow and scrub habitats within the site provide suitable density for shelter and hibernation and the presence of hedgehog is supported by biological records as shown in table 8 below;

Table 8: The following species have been recorded within 1km of the study site:

English Name	Scientific Name	No. of Records/Most recent Date
Mammals		
West European hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	Latest recorded 2023
Brown Hare	<i>Lepus europaeus</i>	Latest recorded 2020
Rabbit	<i>Oryctolagus cuniculus</i>	Latest recorded 2019
Red fox	<i>Vulpes vulpes</i>	Latest recorded 2019

3.14 Birds.

A total of 13 species were recorded during the survey including three red listed species and two amber listed species of conservation concern. Ground nesting birds are not present within the survey site however, the enclosing hedgerows and surrounding farmland provide potential habitat to support ground and hedgerow nesting birds and this is supported by the presence of the remains of a bird's nest above the entrance to the site.



The survey site is considered sub-optimal for nesting barn owl (*Tyto alba*), due to the absence of structures, habitats or buildings to support breeding and the habitats within the site lack the tall grassland sward and structure to support the presence of prey species such as Field Vole however, mature trees within the site provide optimum habitat for a single Barn or Tawny Owl to roost. There are biological records for Barn Owl along with Common Swift (*Apus apus*), within 1km of the survey site. No Barn Owls or evidence for the presence of Barn Owls were found within the site.

The total list of species recorded species relative to the study site are included within table 9 below.

Table 9: The following species were recorded within the study site and surrounding area.

English Name	Scientific Name	No.	Details
Birds			
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	1	
Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>	1	
Blue tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	1	
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	1	RED LISTED
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	1	
Carrion crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	4	
Wood Pigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	2	AMBER LISTED
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	20	RED LISTED
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	2	
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	1	
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	1	AMBER LISTED
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	2	
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	1	RED LISTED

- 3.15 **Great Crested Newt** (*Triturus cristatus*) – There are no suitable breeding habitats (i.e. ponds), present within the survey site however, there are 4 ponds within 0.5km of the survey site however, the ponds are within private land and at this time are not accessible. The grassland habitats and nearby woodland and stream habitats provide optimum habitat for the dispersal of amphibians during their terrestrial phase however, the connectivity to the identified ponds is fragmented by a network of roads which may be seen as a barrier for the safe passage of GCN however, there is

connectivity with the habitats associated with the stream and the survey site for both amphibians and reptiles as shown within the photograph below. There are biological records for newts with licence returns dating back to 2018.



- 3.16 **Amphibians** – The grassland and boundary habitats provide optimum habitat for the dispersal of amphibians such as common frog and toad. There are biological records for common frog or toad within 0.5km of the survey site but there is a single record of smooth newt within 0.5km of the site. No amphibians were found within the survey site.

Table 10: The following species have been recorded within 1km of the study site:

English Name	Scientific Name	No. of Records/Most recent Date
Amphibians		
Common frog	<i>Rana temporaria</i>	Latest recorded 2023
Common toad	<i>Bufo bufo</i>	Latest recorded 2021

- 3.17 **Reptiles** – The grassland habitat and hedgerow provide optimal habitat for the dispersal reptiles such as Grass Snake (*Natrix natrix*) and this is supported by a single record for Grass Snake within the opposite field across the carriageway in 2022. No reptiles were found within the site.
- 3.18 **Invertebrates** – The habitats present within the site offer potential for range of common invertebrates including butterflies, dragonflies and bees and a range of damselfly and dragonfly.
- 3.19 **Invasive species** – There are no invasive non-native species within or adjacent to the survey site.
- 3.20 **Bats** – Young and semi-mature trees are present within the site, along the hedgerows and at the site entrance. All trees could be visually assessed from ground level and some of the conifers each-side of the site entrance have recently been sided-up allowing a visual inspection within the canopy structure. No features with the potential to support were identified.

- 3.21 The former barn structure within the site has been lost due to a recent fire also damaging the conifer trees within the hedgerow. An open timber shelter and corrugated asbestos sheet storage shed remain in the site. These could be visually inspected externally. The shelter has open sides and open-jointed timber cladding and without recesses to allow a bat to roost. The corrugated sheet is well sealed and any over-lapping flashing is well sealed and covered with spider webbing. No features were identified with potential to support roosting bats.



- 3.22 **Lighting** - With the exception of overspill from existing street lighting the majority of the site is unlit and is therefore optimum habitat for the presence of foraging and commuting bats.
- 3.23 **Connectivity** – The site is located within a network of farm fields and is therefore connected to a wider ecological network with a direct flight-path to and from farmland and woodland habitats surrounding the site.
- 3.24 There are biological records for a wide range of bat species bats within 1km of the site to support the local presence of Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Brown Long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), Serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*), Leisler's Bat (*Nyctalus leisleri*), Noctule (*Nyctalus noctule*), Nathusius' Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus nathusii*) and Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*).

4.0 PLANNING AND NATURE CONSERVATION POLICY

4.1 This section provides an overview of National Planning Policy adopted by Hinkley & Bosworth Borough Council for policies in relation to nature conservation and biodiversity.

4.2 *“Ecological issues need to be considered for all planning applications under the following legislation, regulations and guidance:*

The conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017) (as amended);

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (as amended);

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);

Environment Act 2021.”

Hinkley & Bosworth Borough Council Nature Conservation Strategy.

4.3 The Borough of Hinkley & Bosworth contains a range of habitats each supporting its own characteristic species. The district also has a number of sites which receive specific protection because of their national or county/ regional importance for nature conservation.

4.4 The United Kingdom Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP) and Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP), list a series of Priority Habitats of conservation concern that are considered to be priorities for nature conservation. **The following UKBAP and LBAP habitats and species of concern are present within or adjacent to the study site;**

Common and birds of conservation concern i.e., swift (*Apus apus*).

Biodiversity Net Gain.

4.5 *“Biodiversity Net Gain requires developments to leave the natural environment in a measurably better condition”.*

4.6 *“Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is a way of creating and improving natural habitats. BNG makes sure development has a measurably positive impact (‘net gain’) on biodiversity, compared to what was there before development”.*

4.7 All development should aim to achieve a minimum of a 10% net gain within the confines of the development through such means as the protection, retention and enhancement of existing habitats along with the provision of new additional habitats. Where this cannot be achieved the proposals may be required to seek an off-site contribution using a recognised credits scheme.

5.0 ASSESSMENT

Constraints on the Survey Information.

- 5.1 Many species, including some which are protected by law, are highly mobile and may colonise or utilise a site at any time. Also, habitats may change over time in terms of their ecological value and the survey results reported here will therefore become less reliable as time progresses.
- 5.2 The site was assessed during the visit to establish the potential presence or absence of protected species. No continual survey monitoring has been undertaken therefore a lack of evidence of a protected species at this time does not necessarily indicate an absence of the species.

Potential impacts.

- 5.3 **Designated sites** – there are no designated sites or habitats associated with the designated sites identified within this report within the survey site.
- 5.4 The survey site is physically separated from the designated SSSI sites identified within this report by distance residential and commercial development and farmland.

The designated sites are accessible to the public however, the change of use to commercial development would not generate additional public interest or footfall and would not give rise to the introduction of predators such as domestic pets within the designated sites.

Proposed traffic flow levels to and from the site are not available for the previous site use however, predicted the change of use to commercial units proposes a daily movement of approximately 78 (parking spaces) x 6 (vehicle movement per day) = AADT 468 and below the AADT threshold of 1000 AADT. Over time many commercial vehicles will become electric powered and therefore further reducing vehicle emissions.

Litter - At a site level the development contains recyclable waste storage and collection and therefore these are self-contained.

Noise pollution – The site is located within an existing area of rural countryside. New development is required by design to achieve levels of sound reduction however, how each commercial unit will be occupied and the activities associated is at this time unknown and therefore noise levels at even a local level are not yet determined.

Disease – the proposals comprise of a new residential development and amenity landscaping which will be required to achieve a minimum of 10% biodiversity net gain. Therefore, all new landscaping and habitat creation will be created using species of local provenance which have been sourced from locally grown stock and therefore the impact of disease is considered to be low-negligible.

Spray drift (pesticides / herbicides) – The development proposes the introduction of new native species habitats. All new habitat planting is to comprise of native species of local provenance. The use of pesticides/herbicides is not recommended or permitted for use with these habitats. Spray drift is therefore more likely to be from existing farmland located directly adjacent to a designated site where organic methods may not be used.

Light pollution – the survey site comprises of grassland former arable and grazing pasture which is unlit but impacted by some light overspill from adjacent roadside lighting along Leicester Road. The proposals will contain new external lighting and this will be designed by the requirement for sensitive lighting for the presence of bats.

- 5.5 **Control of dust** – all contractors have a duty of care to control dust as part of their health and safety under the Control of Substances Hazardous to Health (COSHH). The localised sandy soils will be of particular concern during the initial site-strip phase of any approved development.

Habitats.

- 5.6 **Modified grassland** – Whilst species poor this habitat is considered to be **Poor** in condition passing 5/7 criteria of the assessment criteria (10.07.2025) but failing the essential criteria A. This habitat will be lost to accommodate the new development.
- 5.7 **Blackthorn scrub** – This habitat is located in small areas along the northern boundary and behind hedgerow. A condition assessment is not required for this habitat and is a fixed condition within the metric.
- 5.8 **Native species hedgerow** – All existing trees within the hedgerow habitats will be retained and therefore their ecological value will also be retained. Established trees within hedgerows are important and declining features within the countryside because as they mature they hold potential to support species of breeding birds and roosting bats and therefore it is important to retain trees for this level of future importance. It is further important to ensure that a buffer zone of at least 1.5-2m is offset from the face of the hedgerow into the site to protect both the hedgerow and trees set within the hedgerow. An assessment of each hedgerow has been undertaken recording a score of poor to moderate condition. A section of H1 and H4 will be lost to accommodate the new assess road. The remaining hedgerows will be enhanced to improve their condition and species richness. Hedgerows were assessed in accordance with BS 5837 : 2012.
- 5.9 **Rural tree** – some individual trees within the main grassland will be lost and where possible these should be replaced with new tree planting. At this time the development is showing restricted availability for new tree planting and is limited to any buffer zone associated with retained hedgerows. Trees were assessed in accordance with BS 5837 : 2012.

- 5.10 **Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface** – this is located at the current site entrance and will be replaced with a new road access surface into the site. An assessment of this habitat type is not required.
- 5.11 **Developed land sealed surface** – the existing storage shed and shelter will be removed. New buildings will be introduced within the site.

Fauna.

- 5.12 **Badger** – There are no setts present within the site or 30m of the survey site however, signs of activity were recorded within the habitats present within the site. The site has open connectivity to the wider ecological network and therefore, precautions for badgers during the construction works are to be undertaken as outlined in section 6.2 and 6.4 of this report.
- 5.13 **Mammals Generally** – The site has the potential for the presence of small mammals and therefore precautionary works for the removal of grassland vegetation are to be undertaken as outlined within the recommendations section 6.2 and 6.4 of this report.
- 5.14 **Birds** – A community of common and migrant birds were recorded present within the vicinity of the survey site. The grassland also has potential to support ground nesting birds and therefore to avoid conflict with the legislation for breeding bird's habitat removal must be undertaken outside the bird breeding season (March-September). If habitat clearance is unavoidable during the breeding season then the following action should be undertaken:

Prior to the commencement of works, the area including any affected vegetation, should be thoroughly searched for nesting birds. If a bird's nest is found then it should remain undisturbed and a 5m buffer zone should be created around the nest including above and below it. The zone around the nest site is to remain free of construction activities and disturbance until the young have fledged and left. This will be secured by the use of a CEMP for the management of habitat clearance.

All existing retained habitats are to be managed and where possible enhanced including the formation of new hedgerows. New habitat planting is to be carefully designed to provide a food source for birds and density for the provision of nest and roost sites to replace those lost or are currently absent. due to the development.

- 5.15 **Great Crested Newt (GCN)** – habitat fragmentation between the ponds identified and the habitats within the site and therefore may restrict the presence of GCN. In the avoidance of doubt and where no access to ponds is made available then a walk-over survey will therefore be required immediately prior to the establishment of construction works. This will be undertaken by a suitably qualified, experienced and licenced clerk of the works. Immediately prior to any works commencing a Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP), will be submitted and approved in writing the

local planning authority which sets out the procedures, methods of protection and recording and any licencing procedures which may be required should great crested newt be found.

- 5.16 **Reptiles** – there is a single record for grass snake within the same field system and therefore it should be considered that this species is likely to be present and therefore, precautionary works are to be undertaken as outlined within the recommendations section 6.2 and 6.4 of this report. A Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP), will be submitted and approved in writing the local planning authority which sets out the procedures, methods of protection and recording and any trans-location procedures which may be required should reptiles be found.
- 5.17 **Amphibians** – common amphibians such as frog and toad are likely to be present and therefore, precautionary works are to be undertaken as outlined within the recommendations section 6.2 and 6.4 of this report. A Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP), will be submitted and approved in writing the local planning authority which sets out the procedures, methods of protection and recording and any trans-location procedures which may be required should amphibians be found.
- 5.18 **Invertebrates** – Overly underestimated in most mitigation work, invertebrates are vital to the health of habitats and provide a means of food source to a variety of species and for some there has been a decline in their number, most notably bee populations. Based on the survey work carried out so far, and the data records obtained, existing habitats have a capacity to support a range of invertebrate populations. Existing habitats with this potential will be retained and enhanced improving the sites potential to support invertebrate populations.
- 5.19 **Invasive species** – There are no invasive non-native species within the site and no further survey work is required.
- 5.20 **Bats** – no features at this time were found with potential to support roosting bats however, the site does have potential to support foraging and commuting bats. No further survey work for bats is required at this time.
- 5.21 **General note for standing good practice** – The survey site has potential to support commuting and foraging bats and therefore the design of external lighting should be carefully considered to avoid impact on existing trees and potential flight zones and is to be designed in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines for external lighting.
- 5.22 **DATA RECORDS** – The information gathered from the various sources available mainly focused on known local wildlife sites. These sites are well visited and are common areas of study. The study site is a private site and not commonly available for study. The absence of data for this site does not preclude the assumption of the absence of species and every effort has been made to provide a thorough understanding of the site's availability for species. The data obtained has therefore been used to provide an indication of species present within the surrounding area, however this has

limitations due to date of submission and should therefore be used to guide the direction of the area of study and potential update and reconfirm presence or absence.

Legislation.

5.23 Amphibians (Common Species) – Common amphibian species (i.e. common frog, common toad, smooth newt and palmate newt) are afforded partial legal protection under UK legislation, i.e. Schedule 5, Section 9 (5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. This legislation prohibits:

- Sale;
- Transportation; and
- Advertising for sale.

5.24 Badger – Badger is a widespread and generally common species. However, they are legally protected under The Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which is based primarily on the need to protect badgers from baiting and deliberate harm or injury. Under this legislation to:

- Willfully kill, injure, take, or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or attempt to do so;
- Possess any dead badger or any part of, or anything derived from, a dead badger; and
- Intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett by disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, damaging or destroying a sett, causing a dog to enter a sett or obstructing access to it.

A badger sett is defined in the legislation as “any structure or place, which displays signs indicating the presence of badger”

5.25 Birds – The bird breeding season generally lasts from early March to September for most species. All birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Countryside Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. This legislation makes it illegal, both intentionally and recklessly to:

- Kill, injure or take any wild bird.
- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is being built or in use.
- Take or destroy the eggs of any wild bird; and
- Possess or control and wild bird or egg unless obtained legally.

5.26 Birds listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) are afforded additional protection, which makes it an offense to disturb a bird while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such bird.

5.27 Great Crested Newt – Great Crested Newt and their habitat are afforded full protection under UK and European legislation, including the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended),

Countryside Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 and The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended). This makes it an offence to kill, injure or disturb great crested newts and destroy any place used for rest or shelter by a newt. The great crested newt is also listed on Annexes II and IV of the EC Habitats Directive and Appendix II of the Bern Convention. If a development activity is likely to result in disturbance or killing of a great crested newt, damage to its habitat etc, then a licence will usually be required from Natural England.

- 5.28 Reptiles – There are six native species of reptiles in the UK, including slow-worm, common lizard, grass snake and adder, smooth snake and sand lizard, which are afforded varying degrees of protection under UK and European Legislation. Slow-worm, viviparous/common lizard, adder and grass snake are protected under Schedule 5, Section 9 (1 and 5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Countryside Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 against deliberate or reckless killing, injuring and sale.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Habitats and Protected Species.

- 6.1 The development site is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designation. No designated sites will be directly or indirectly impacted by the proposed development.
- 6.2 The survey site contains a large area of modified grassland enclosed by hedgerow boundaries with the potential to support small mammals such as hedgehog, along with breeding birds, amphibians, reptiles, foraging and commuting bats and invertebrates therefore, precautionary measures must be in place prior to and throughout the construction phase for their protection. This may be secured by a suitably worded planning condition for the implementation of a Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP) and Reasonable Avoidance Measures Statement (RAMs).
- 6.3 All retained habitats are to be protected by the installation of Heras fencing throughout the duration of the construction works and a subsequent management plan is to be put in place to enhance and maintain the health, structure and density of this habitat. All retained trees are to be protected in accordance with BS 5837 : 2012.
- 6.4 The following is a guide is also recommended for the protection of mammals, amphibians and reptiles during the construction works.
- No foundation work should be left uncovered, overnight or for any length of time to avoid mammals becoming trapped in foundation or services trenches. Where this is unavoidable then trenches should be left with a sloping end or ramp to allow any animal that may fall in to escape.
 - Pipes over 150mm in diameter should be capped off at night to prevent animals entering.
 - The site is to be recheck for the presence of hedgehog if the project is delayed at any time.
- 6.5 Where habitats are to be lost the development should seek to include new species rich habitats (including new hedgerow planting), even if they are on a small and restricted level, which vary in structure and density and to comprise of native species of local provenance (using recorded habitats and species within this report as a base-line guide). The development should aim to maximise the retention of existing habitats and their enhancement that will aim to achieve a biodiversity net gain (minimum 10%), proven and supported by the DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation method. The development should also aim to include permanent features for nesting birds, and roosting bats. This may be secured by a planning condition for the implementation of a Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) detailing the type, quantity and location of each feature and habitat type.

7.0 BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN – STATUTORY CALCULATION

7.1 Existing Habitats.

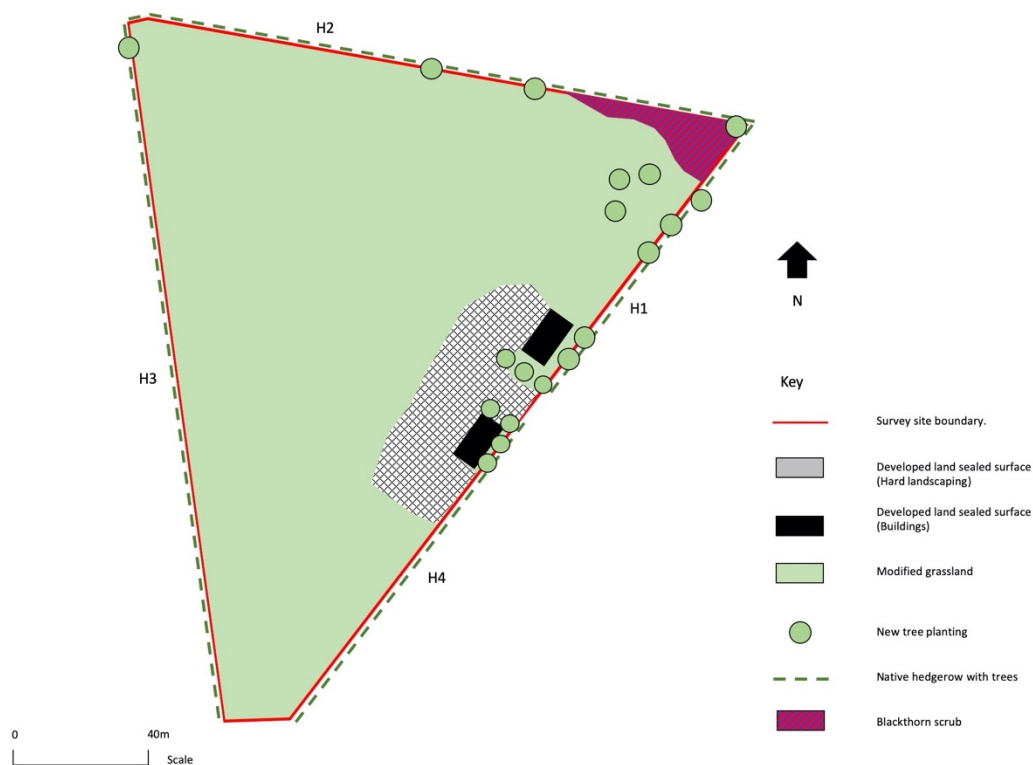
7.2 Table 11: The development site comprises of the following habitats;

On-Site Habitat Type	Size ha.	Condition	Retained and Enhanced
Modified grassland	0.6743	Poor	0
Developed land sealed surface	0.0052	N/A - other	0
Rural tree	0.0651	Moderate	0
Blackthorn scrub	0.0888	Poor	0
On-site Hedgerow Type	Length km.	Condition	Retained and Enhanced
H1 Native with trees	0.052	Moderate	0.047 Retained
H2 Native hedgerow	0.121	Moderate	0.121 Retained
H3 Native hedgerow	0.148	Moderate	0.148 Retained
H4 Native hedgerow with trees	0.095	Poor	0.090 Retained

7.3 Total site area of 0.78ha (without trees), with a biodiversity unit value of 2.22 habitat units.

7.4 All areas have been calculated using the current topographical survey of the site to establish a base-line area for each habitat type present.

7.5 Fig. 1 – On-site baseline habitats plan.



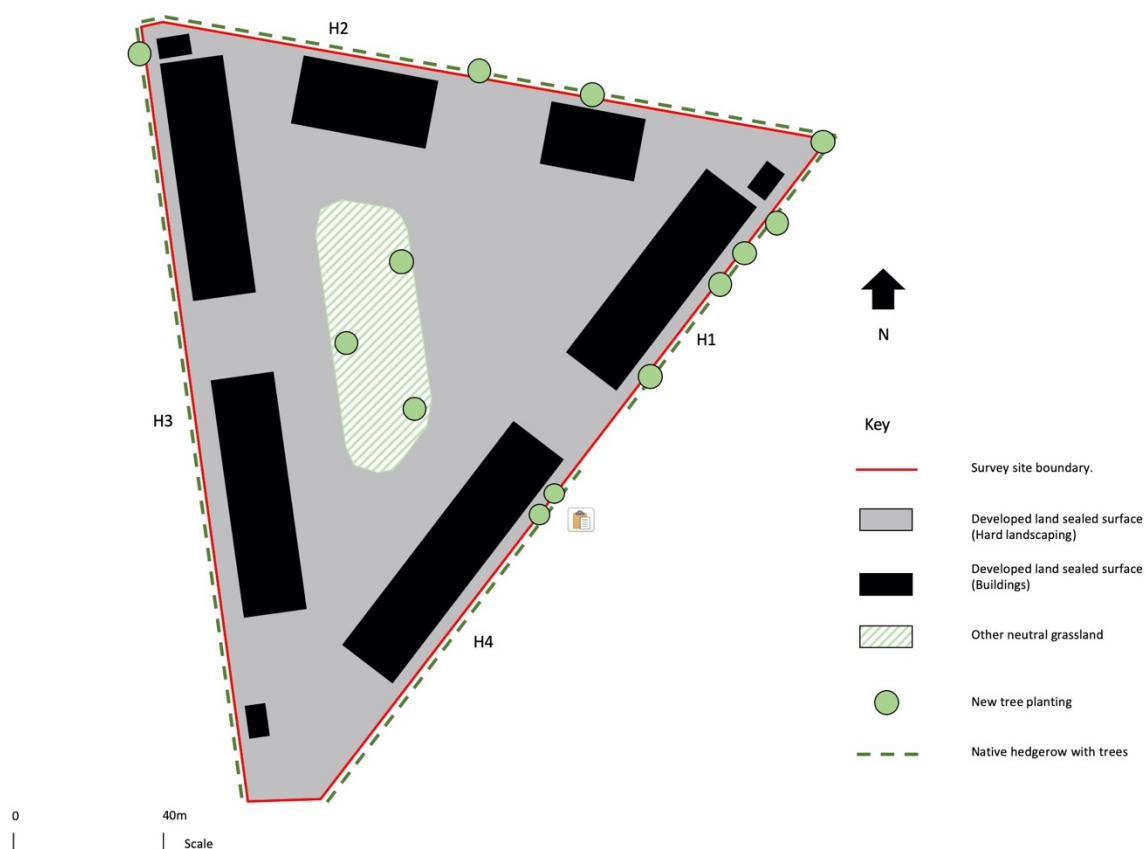
7.6 On-site habitat baseline and creation.

7.7 Table 12: Predicted habitats in-line with the current development proposals

Habitat Type	Size ha.	Condition	Comments
Developed land sealed surface	0.2136	N/A - Other	New buildings
Developed land sealed surface	0.4439	N/A - Other	New hard landscaping
Other neutral grassland	0.0395	Moderate	New soft landscaping
Other, green roof	0.0073	Assessment n/a	Cycle store roofs
Urban tree (3 trees)	0.1629	Moderate	New tree planting

7.8 Details of the proposed landscaping are to be provided to confirm landscape design/habitat creation proposals are achievable.

7.9 Fig. 2 – On-site Post-intervention habitats map.



7.10 Results.

7.11 This section states the results of the Biodiversity Metric Calculation.

Table 13: Headline results of Biodiversity Metric Calculation;

On-site baseline	<i>Habitats Units</i>	3.56
	<i>Hedgerow Units</i>	2.95
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
On-site post-intervention (including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitats Units</i>	0.32
	<i>Hedgerow Units</i>	2.73
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
On-site net %change (including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitats Units</i>	-91.13%
	<i>Hedgerow Units</i>	-7.46%
	<i>River units</i>	0.00
Trading rules Satisfied?		No.

7.12 Conclusion.

7.13 The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation indicates at this time a potential net loss of -91.13% (-3.24) habitat units. The proposals also fail to meet the required trading rules.

7.14 The proposals outlined so far indicate a net biodiversity loss against the new proposals and therefore an off-site contribution will be required to offset the loss of both terrestrial and hedgerow habitats and trading rules if the development is seen to be acceptable by the Local Planning Authority at this location.

7.15 Climate match - It is important that the sourcing of plants and trees for planting within the site are to be sourced from nurseries with climatic suitability in line with predicted climate change. The climate matching tool that uses UK climate projections from the Met Office Hadley centre has been used for the location of the development with a predicted Climate difference baseline score of 0.532 for the period of 2021-2030 and 0.678 for the period of 2031-2040.

7.16 Naturescape Wildflower Farm Langar Nottingham have been chosen as an example of a dedicated provider of UK native stock of plants and seed mixes suitable to local conditions. Naturescape can provide species suitable for site specific soil conditions and will form a 'seed-bank' for the site's location.

The predicted Climate Difference Score for the location of Naturescape for the period 2021-2030 is 1.039 and 1.053 in 2031-2040. The outcome shows a much higher scoring indicating that species

could be selected from this nursery as they are likely to be resistant to climate change were conditions are predicted to be more severe.

APPENDIX 1 - SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

Site record photographs taken during the site survey 2nd December 2025.



