



BJ Collins
PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEYORS

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL (EXTENDED) REPORT

PROPOSED ARTIFICIAL PITCH
MILLENNIUM HALL
BRITANNIA ROAD
BURBAGE
LEICESTERSHIRE

A report to:

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Report Title:	Extended Preliminary Ecological Appraisal - Proposed Artificial Pitch

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OS Grid Reference:	SP43929204

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RELIANCE - The report describes the conditions and ecological features on the site (and possibly its environs) at the time of survey and that this may (is likely to) change over time. Reliance upon the findings of this report should be determined in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management guidance on the longevity of ecological surveys, see Advice Note (April 2019) On the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys CIEEM.

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SUMMARY

This report provides the results of a preliminary ecological appraisal (extended) of a localised area of sports turf associated with a rugby pitch on the Millennium Hall, Britannia Road Sports Ground, where a new artificial turf pitch with sports turf floodlighting is proposed.

Designated and Non-designated Wildlife Sites

There are no designated or non-designated wildlife sites adjacent to the section of playing field where the proposed artificial pitch is to be located.

There is a “potential local wildlife site” which forms the western boundary of the proposal. This is a native hedgerow with sufficient species and attributes to be categorised as “important” under the Hedgerow regulations. There is no potential impact upon this hedgerow and it will be left unaffected.

Habitats

The main habitat to be affected by the development proposal is an area of intensively managed modified grassland, currently used as a rugby pitch and therefore heavily poached seasonally. There will be no significant biodiversity impact from the loss of habitats on site. There are no invasive plant species immediately adjacent to the proposal and therefore no impact from this constraint.

Faunal Species

Bats

There are a range of records of bat species from the vicinity such as to trigger the requirement for a phase II bat survey to inform the proposed sports turf floodlighting. This is described under separate cover.

Badger and Hedgehog

There are no records of the species on site or immediately adjacent, but there is a potential but minimal impact upon badger and hedgehog from the installation of the new artificial facility, the risk principally during the construction phase. To cover all eventualities precautionary actions are included within this document. Overall the impact to terrestrial mammals is negligible.

Amphibians and reptiles

There is a paucity of records of amphibians and no records of reptiles in the local area. The habitats affected by the proposal will not impact upon this group. Overall, the risk to herptiles is negligible.

Breeding birds

There is no potential impact upon the valuable hedgerows to the south and west of the proposal and these areas will be left unaffected. There is no proposal to remove any trees or areas of shrubbery, and therefore no potential constraints from breeding birds. Note that if there is a requirement to remove any tall vegetation, such as sections of hedgerow, then this must be carried out outside of the breeding bird season, or advised by a breeding bird survey by a suitably qualified individual, if that is not possible. Overall, the evaluation of risk to breeding birds is negligible.

Further Survey Recommendations

There is no requirement for further ecological survey, beyond there is a requirement for phase II bat surveys to inform the potential impact of sports turf floodlighting.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by B J Collins Protected Species Surveyors Limited for Surfacing Standards Limited. It provides the results of a preliminary ecological appraisal, extended to include elements of an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA), for the proposal to install a new artificial grass sports pitch on the playing fields associated with Millennium Hall, Britannia Road, Burbage, Leicestershire. LE10 2HF.

The sports facility is located to the south of the town of Burbage at the 8 figure Ordnance Survey grid reference of SP43929204.

The survey was carried out to inform the potential ecological impact from the new artificial turf pitch and its associated floodlighting on an area of existing grass sports pitch. See figure 1 below.

The preliminary ecological appraisal, which involved a systematic walkover of the site, was undertaken in July 2025. The objective was to assess the habitats on site with regards to protected habitats and species, to inform the potential impact from the proposal.

This report informs the associated Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain Metric, prepared for submission alongside this preliminary ecological appraisal and in support of a planning application.

The legislation with regard to relevant protected species can be found appended to this report (Appendix 1).



Figure 1: The survey area (yellow), courtesy of Google Earth.

The area for the proposed artificial pitch sits within an area of modified grassland used for rugby. To the immediate south of the proposal is a further area of grass pitches extending onto open countryside to the south, southeast and southwest of that.

The pitch is bounded to the west and south by unmanaged native hedgerows with occasional

trees. To the north by fences associated with residential properties and the council depot, to the east by a tarmac access road, with a play park and tarmac car parking beyond.

The pitch is proposed for the northern section of playing field over the existing rugby pitch.



Photograph 1: view looking west across the area for the proposed artificial pitch, the southern hedgerow to the right and the west hedge in the distance.



Photograph 2: the eastern boundary of the affected area of sports field.

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desktop Study

An ecological records search was commissioned from the Leicestershire and Rutland environmental resources centre (LRERC) on 11 October 2025. This comprised a request for records of wildlife species for a 1km circumference from the centre of the proposed sports pitch.

The desktop study also involved utilising the online government resource – MAGIC Map Application (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>) – to undertake a search for designated wildlife sites.

2.2 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

The site was subjected to a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (as per CIEEM, 2018) on 18 July 2025. This involved systematically walking over the site and classifying each parcel of land, utilising the UK Habitat Classification survey methodology (Butcher et al, 2020), on the basis of vegetation into one of approximately 47 habitat types (Level 4) alongside a list of secondary codes which give information on the environment and management (Butcher et al, 2020) of those habitats.

Notes were made on the structure and composition of habitats:

- Trees with potential to support features used by roosting bats were noted. Boundary features were assessed for their potential suitability for bat foraging and commuting.
- The suitability of habitats was assessed for nesting birds, including ground nesting birds.
- The suitability of habitats was assessed for terrestrial mammals, specifically badger (*Meles meles*) and hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*).
- The suitability of habitats was assessed for reptiles and amphibians, including specially protected great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*).
- A search for any invasive non-native species such as Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and Indian balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) was also carried out.

The ideal time to carry out a habitat survey is during the plant growing season (i.e. April-September) and this is also when most animals are active.

2.3 Surveyor Details

The above survey was undertaken by Mr B J Collins MSc MCIEEM, FISC Level 3, (Natural England Class License: 2015-13152-CLS) and registered Low-Impact Class License Holder (RC110) and (B32RC002), an ecologist with over 25 years of experience. The survey was carried out on the 18th of July 2025.

2.4 Limitations to Survey

The surveyor was able to access all areas of the playing fields and there was no constraint to the survey results.

2.5 Ecological Evaluation Criteria

An ecological evaluation of the site was undertaken using a combination of evaluation criteria for habitats and species. The general framework follows that provided by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Where relevant the evaluation was made with reference to the statutory protection afforded to species and habitats. Legal protection does not always correspond to conservation value. Some species (e.g. badger) are protected for reasons of animal welfare rather than conservation. Others are of national conservation value but are not protected by law (e.g. some Red Data Book species and UK BAP species).

3. SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 Statutory and Non-statutory Sites

There are no sites of statutory significance within a 1km circumference of the site.

The biological record centre search recorded 21 potential Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) within 1 km circumference. The only one relevant is the hedge to the west of the proposal which is a potential local wildlife site, due to the status of the hedge, ranked as of 'Important' under the Hedgerow Regulations.

3.1.2 Records of protected species

3.1.2.1 Bats

There are 74 records of bats from the 1km search area of the centre of the proposed artificial pitch. This includes for the Brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), a *Myotis* bat, Nathusius pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*), Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), and Soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*).

Of those records only 4 relate to bat roosts, 1 a day roost site for a brown long-eared bat and three unidentified bat species, where droppings only have been recorded from a building.

The distribution of the 74 records is below:



Figure 3 - distribution of bat records within 1 km of the proposed pitch

3.1.2.2 Reptiles and amphibians

There are only 3 records of amphibians including, Common toad (*Bufo bufo*), Common frog (*Rana temporaria*), and Smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*) all from the same site, presumably a residential garden pond, some 300 metres to the southeast of the site. There are no records of the specially protected great crested newt within 1000 m of the proposed pitch.

There are no records of reptiles from the search area.

3.1.2.3 Badger and hedgehog

There are records of badgers from the countryside surrounding Burbage, none of these are associated with the boundaries of the playing field and there was no evidence of badger setts or badger activity on the boundary of the playing field. Despite this, with good connectivity provided across the open countryside by the hedgerows it is considered possible that this species forages and commutes across the playing field, at least occasionally. As a result, some precautionary actions are required.

There are no hedgehog records in the data search. However, the big hedgehog map (<https://bighedgehogmap.org/>) has multiple records from the residential properties north, east and west of the playing fields. As a result, hedgehog is considered likely present, foraging across the playing field and potentially seeking refuge in the hedge bottoms to the boundaries. Precautionary actions will be required.

Potential impact upon protected species

With the exception of bats which are included under a separate report cover, there is a marginal potential impact upon the protected species listed above due to the nature of the footprint of the proposed artificial pitch.

Potential risks principally arise during the construction period and precautionary actions are included within this document.

3.2 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

3.2.1 Habitat Types

The following habitat types were recorded on the survey area, which is the footprint for the proposed artificial pitch and the immediate boundaries. The UKHab Alphanumeric codes have been provided in brackets beside each entry for reference:

3.2.1.1 On-site habitats

- Modified grassland (g4 (822, 108))

3.2.1.2 Boundary habitats

- Other native hedgerow (h2a5) - pLWS
- Other native hedgerow (h2a6)

The distribution and extent of the habitat types recorded on the site are described below and the location of any relevant target notes are shown within the habitat map.

3.2.2 Habitat Descriptions - within the development footprint

3.2.2.1 Modified grassland (g4 (822, 108)).

This is the only area of habitat which will be impacted by the construction of the artificial pitch. It comprises of a limited range of grasses and herbs dominated by Perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*) and occasional Annual meadow-grass (*Poa annua*), with white clover (*Trifolium repens*), Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg.) and greater plantain (*Plantago major*).

The 1m sample areas from a transect walk diagonally across the affected area of amenity grassland provided no greater than between two and three species per sample plot. Bare ground varying from 0% to 30%.



Photograph 5: typical view of the affected grassland, from the southeast corner of the pitch

3.2.3 Boundaries of the sports pitch.

The south and west boundary habitats are formed by unmanaged and overgrown hedgerows, with occasional hedgerow trees. The north and east boundaries of the affected section of playing field have few if no natural features.

3.2.3.1 Southern boundary

The southern boundary of the section of playing field, separating the north and south sides of the overall playing fields, is a native unmanaged and gappy Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) hedgerow. In one area a single gap extends to 10 m in length. Other species within the hedge include for Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), Field maple (*Acer campestre*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*). The ground flora of the hedge is largely located on the southern side of the hedgerow away from the development. Here it comprised of an area of Bramble bank, Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Cocksfoot grass (*Dactylis glomerata*), Ivy (*Hedera helix*), false oat grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), common bent (*Agrostis canina*), Spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), hedge woundwort (*Stachys sylvatica*), Black knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*) and Spear thistle. This strip of unmanaged grassland has developed into other neutral grassland. This is outside of the redline area.

The hedgerow contains two mature ash trees.



Photograph 6 - view of the eastern half of the south side of the southern hedgerow from the west

3.2.3.2 Western boundary

The western boundary of the affected playing field is formed by an overgrown and unmanaged hawthorn and blackthorn hedgerow. The hedgerow was previously surveyed by an ecological consultancy who categorised it as of “important” under the Hedgerow regulations 1997. This has resulted in the designation of the hedgerow as a potential local wildlife site (site reference 92275).

As well as the Hawthorn and Blackthorn it contains Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Bramble, Cherry (*Prunus* sp.), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Sycamore and Elm (*Ulmus glabra*).

Ground flora was limited within this hedgerow to the dense growth of Ivy and Bramble at ground level. The grassland was mown up to the edge of the hedgerow.



Photograph 7 - view of the western hedgerow (categorised as a pLWS) looking north from the southern end of the hedge

3.2.3.3 The northern boundary

The north boundary of the playing field comprises garden fences of the adjacent residential properties, an area of open ground with development currently occurring behind and the grounds compound. There is a short range of hedgerow comprising of hawthorn and blackthorn with Bramble Rose species and elder with trees planted to the front comprising of Hornbeam (*Carpinus betula*), Haze, Field maple, oak (*Quercus robur*) and Birch (*Betula pendula*). The areas of unmanaged vegetation are dominated by raspberry (*Rubus idaeus*), Nettle, hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), Hazel, cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) and Ivy.



Photograph 8 - view of the northern boundary looking east from the west

3.2.3.4 The Eastern boundary

The eastern boundary of the playing field comprises a tarmac access road and beyond that a boundary with the residential gardens to the south and the playpark and car parking areas to the north.



Photograph 9 - the eastern boundary the playing field

3.2.4 Faunal Species

3.2.4.1 *Amphibians and Reptiles*

There are no ponds identified within 500m of the affected area of sports field. The special protected great crested newt is not present within 1000m of the site. There are records of three common amphibian species from one location 300m to the south-east of the playing field. This highlights the potential for common amphibians to be utilising the hedgerows in the vicinity and as a result precautionary actions are recommended. There are no records of reptiles from the data search.

3.2.4.2 *Badger and Hedgehog*

There are records of badger in the local countryside and, whilst there was no direct evidence of badgers on the site or its boundaries, this species may potentially forage or commute across the playing fields. The big hedgehog map (<https://bighedgehogmap.org/>) has records from the adjacent residential area of hedgehog. It is therefore considered highly likely that this is a constituent of the landscape surrounding the playing fields and may forage across the area, precautionary actions are required.

There was no evidence of these species from the site walk over.

3.2.4.3 *Bats*

Bats are described in detail in a stand-alone phase II bat survey report, in particular dealing with the proposed floodlighting scheme for the new artificial pitch, the west and south boundaries were considered to be suitable for foraging and commuting bats.

3.2.4.4 *Nesting Birds*

Habitat with good potential to provide for nesting birds is provided by the mature hedgerows to the south and west of the playing field.

3.2.4.5 *Floral Species*

No protected or notable plant species were noted on the development footprint or close to it during the survey. The survey found no invasive plant species.

3.3 Habitat Map – Aerial Image

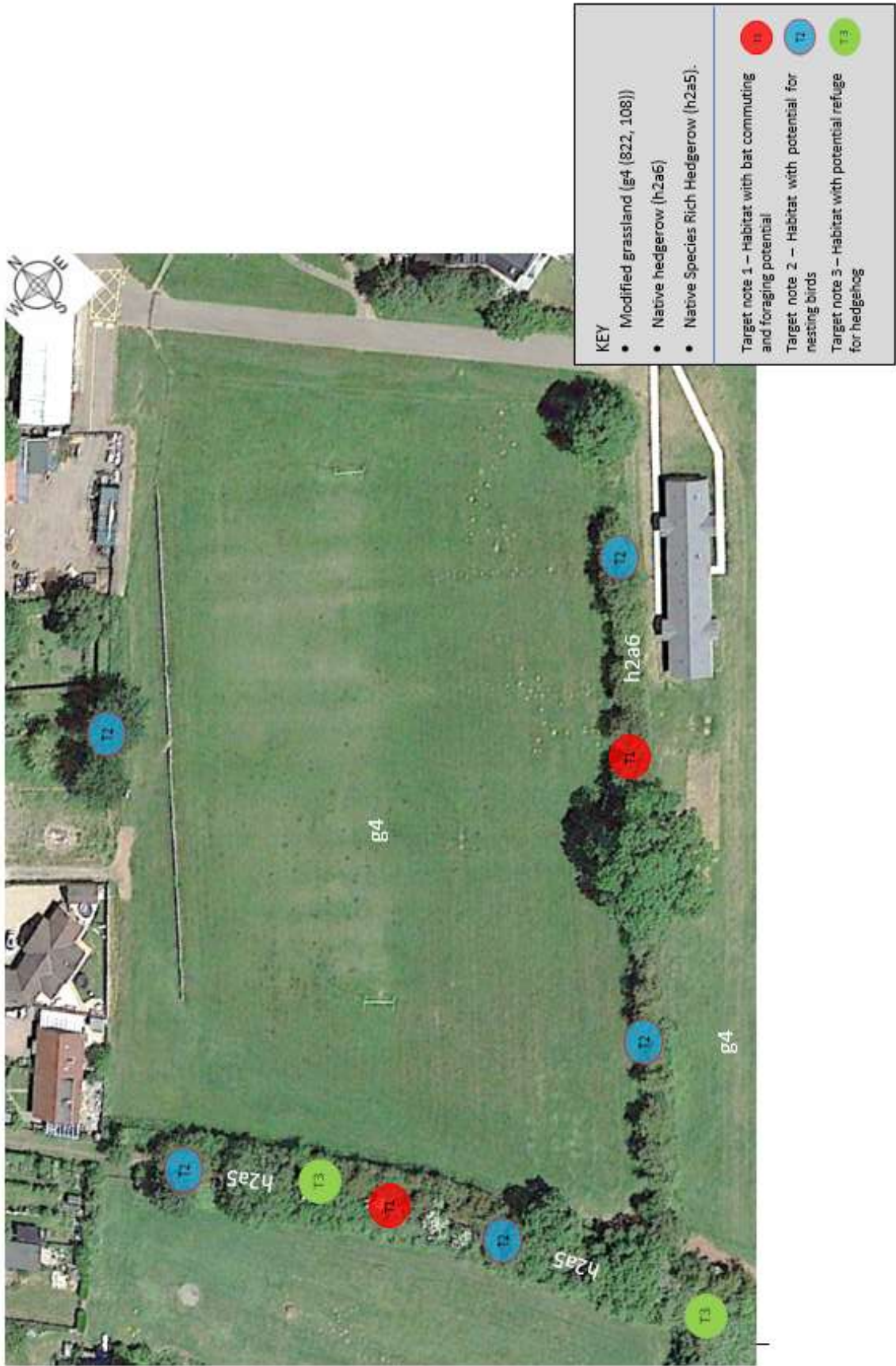


Figure 5: Habitat map

3.4 Proposed Development Plan

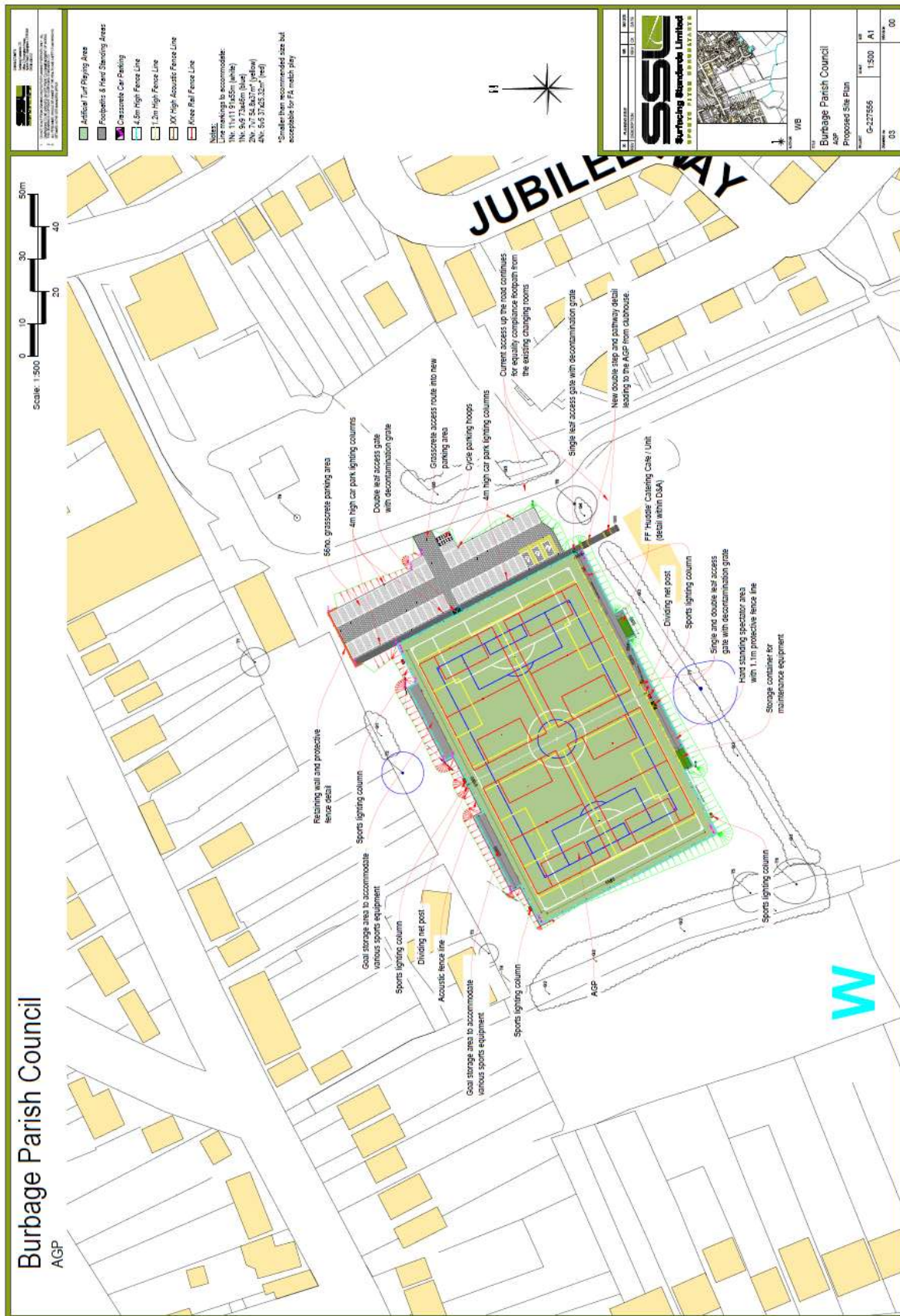


Figure 6: development proposal

4. ECOLOGICAL EVALUATION

4.1 Designated and Non-designated Nature Conservation Sites

There will be no direct physical impact upon any designated or non-designated wildlife site. The hedgerow to the west is categorised as a “potential local wildlife site” due to the number of native woody species reaching the category as an “important” hedge under the Hedgerow regulations. The only impact on this boundary is a potential for light spillage, and this will not affect its important status.

Overall, the potential impact upon designated or non-designated sites is negligible.

4.2 Habitats

The main habitat to be affected by the development proposal is an area of managed and heavily disturbed modified grassland. There will be no significant biodiversity impact from the loss of this feature to the new proposal.

Overall, the area of artificial pitch is to be placed upon modified amenity grassland, there will be no significant impact to habitats.

4.3 Protected/ Notable Species

4.3.1 Floral Species

None of the plant species recorded from the site are listed on Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The site supported no evidence of invasive plant species, in particular the two most commonly encountered being Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam.

There is no potential impact from the proposal on either notable or invasive plant species.

4.3.2 Faunal Species

4.3.2.1 Amphibians and reptiles

The footprint for the proposal provides no suitable breeding habitat for amphibians or reptiles. The boundaries have the potential to support common amphibians but records in the local area are sparse.

Overall, the evaluation of risk for amphibians and reptiles is considered to be negligible.

4.3.2.2 Badger and Hedgehog

The footprint of the proposed pitch offers limited habitat potential for terrestrial mammals. The playing field offers possible commuting routes and foraging opportunities for both of these species. The habitat of the surrounding countryside offers potential refuge.

The evaluation of risk to badgers and hedgehogs is considered to be low, in the absence of mitigation.

4.3.2.3 Bats

As a result of the proposal to floodlight the new artificial pitch, the greatest ecological impact falls upon animals reliant upon the southern and western linear boundary hedgerows for night-time commuting and foraging. As a result the principal impact is that to bats and this is described within a stand-alone survey report and mitigation strategy.

Overall, the evaluation of risk to bat foraging and commuting is described within a stand-alone survey report

4.3.2.4 Nesting Birds

A variety of birds are likely to nest in the hedgerows associated with the south and west boundaries in particular. All of these areas are unaffected by the proposed installation. **Overall, the evaluation of risk to breeding birds is negligible taking into account the lack of breeding bird habitat affected.**

4.4 Main Potential Ecological Issues/ Impacts

The main ecological impacts/constraints are as follows:

- Bats – there is a potential impact upon both commuting and foraging bat species, from the proposed floodlight scheme and a potential impact upon the south and west hedgerows.
- Hedgehog and badger - there are limited potential impacts on mammals which may forage across the playing fields. Mitigation actions are included within this document.

Mitigation (Section 5) is provided within this report to address any potential ecological issues and impacts.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND MITIGATION

5.1 Mitigation Recommendations

5.1.1 Habitats

The proposed pitch construction affects an area of wildlife poor habitat, an area subject to intensive use on a regular basis. The pitches show signs of intensive use along with regular mowing.

The western boundary is the habitat of greatest value to foraging and commuting bats, along with the southern boundary hedgerow which provides the next valuable linear habitat feature.

Produced in tandem with this preliminary ecological appraisal is a statutory biodiversity net gain metric which sets out the extent of biodiversity loss and a mitigation strategy to deliver towards a 10% net gain from the installation.

5.1.2 Faunal Species

5.1.2.1 Bats

Recommendations with regards to the impact of the proposed artificial turf pitch and the associated proposed floodlighting scheme is included within a phase II bat survey report.

5.1.2.2 Badger and Hedgehog

There will be a minimal potential risk to badger and hedgehog from the installation of the new artificial pitch, the risk principally during the construction phase.

To protect these species during the construction phase, and once development commences, any trenches dug during work activities that are to be left open overnight must be left with a sloping end or ramp to allow any animal that may fall in a route to escape.

Any pipes over 100mm in diameter must be capped off at night to prevent animals entering.

If any hedgehog is located in excavations during works, then it should be carefully placed into a clean receptacle, such as a bucket, and translocated to a safe environment outside of the area of works. This is the hedge bottom to the south-west corner of the affected area of playing field. If any hedgehogs are found, they should be handled with gloved hands.

5.1.2.3 Breeding birds

There is no potential impact upon any trees or shrubs, hedgerow or scrub and therefore potential constraints from breeding birds.

However, note that if there is a requirement to remove any tall vegetation then this must be carried out outside of the breeding bird season (which runs from March to September annually) or advised by a breeding bird survey by a suitably qualified individual if this timing constraint cannot be adhered to.

5.2 Further Survey Recommendations

There is no requirement for further ecological survey recommendations, beyond the Phase II Bat Surveys reported under separate cover.

6. REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Butcher, B., Carey, P., Edmonds, R., Norton, L. and Treweek, J. (2020). *The UK Habitat Classification User Manual Version 1.1* at <http://www.ukhab.org/>

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Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, 2013. *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. CIEEM.

Institution of Lighting Professionals & Bat Conservation Trust (2023) **Guidance Note GN08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night**, Institution of Lighting Professionals, Rugby.

LRERC (2025) **Data Search Report for a 1km circumference of Millennium Hall, Britannia Road, Burbage**, Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Resources Centre

APPENDIX 1: PROTECTED SPECIES LEGISLATION

Plants

All wild plants are protected against unauthorised removal or uprooting under Section 13 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Plants listed on Schedule 8 of the Act (e.g. triangular club rush and Deptford Pink) are afforded additional protection against picking, uprooting, destruction and sale. Bluebell is protected against sale only.

Common Amphibians and Reptiles

Common amphibian and reptile 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 and Rights of Way Act 2000. This legislation prohibits sale, transportation and advertising for sale.

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 it is illegal to:

- Wilfully 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
 - 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 current use by a badger.”

European Hedgehog

Hedgehogs are protected under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which prohibits killing or taking of individuals.

The hedgehog is also listed as a Priority Species for conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Under the NERC Act 2006, the hedgehog is categorised as a ‘Species of Principal Importance’ for biodiversity. Listing as a Biodiversity Action Plan priority and ‘Principal Importance’ species reflects concerns that hedgehog numbers are in decline and that some protection should be afforded to hedgehog habitat through the planning system.

Bats

All species of British bat and their roosts are protected under British law by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and bats are classified as European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (‘the 2017 Regulations’). This has recently been amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (2019) which continue the same provision for European protected species, licensing requirements, and protected areas after Brexit.

The legislation makes it an offence to kill, injure or disturb a bat and/or to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place for a bat.

With regard to artificial illumination of foraging and commuting habitats, it is also an offence to disturb the animals such that it impairs their ability to survive, or such that it impairs their ability to hibernate or migrate.

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) and the Countryside & Rights of Way 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 any wild bird or egg unless obtained legally.

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