

Reptile presence/absence surveys

Survey site:

Workhouse Lane, Burbage, Hinckley, LE10 2JW

Client:

Cameron Homes

Survey date:

April-May 2026

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council. The proposal is described as: The residential development of the site.

The survey is informed by the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report completed by Arbtech Consulting Ltd (October, 2025).

Survey legislation can be found in Appendix 4.

Ecological Survey Factor Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations	Detailed using desk study and site survey (carried out under good weather conditions). Any specific limitations noted within relevant section. This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.
See Proposed Plan in Appendix 1, Location plan in Appendix 2, Refugia Plan in Appendix 3, and Legislation in Appendix 4.	
Limitations	This survey aims to follow best practice guidance to confirm presence or likely-absence of reptiles and where present, characterise the site in terms of species and distribution, habitat suitability and context with the wider landscape. However, this information is collected at finite dates and times and provides an indication of the conditions on site only. This survey cannot provide an indication of population. There were no other specific limitations regarding access, weather, safety or equipment during the survey.
<i>Scope of report</i>	This report describes the suitability of the habitats on the site for reptiles and identifies the presence or likely absence of reptiles within the site. It identifies possible constraints in relation to reptiles as a result of the proposed development and summarises the requirements for further surveys and mitigation measures to inform subsequent mitigation proposals, achieve planning or other statutory consent and to comply with wildlife legislation. To achieve this, the following steps have been taken: • A field survey has been undertaken, including an assessment of habitat suitability and the deployment of artificial refugia and subsequent inspections to identify presence or likely absence of reptiles within the site. • An outline of potential impacts on reptiles has been provided, based on the proposed development. • Recommendations for further surveys and mitigation have been made. • Opportunities for the enhancement of the site for reptiles have been set out.
<i>Background and site context</i>	The reptile survey has been informed by a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) which was completed by Arbtech Consulting Ltd in October 2025 (Arbtech, 2025). The PEA report concluded the site comprised rough grassland and hedgerows provide suitable

	habitat for reptiles. The proposed development would result in the loss of this habitat which could lead to the killing or injury to reptiles. The survey was required to inform a planning application for the conversion of agricultural barns to residential development of the site (hereafter referred to as “the proposed development”). The survey site is centred on National Grid Reference SP 44243 91857 and has an area of approximately 2.5ha. The site comprises an area of grassland, currently utilised for haylage purposes, whilst being encapsulated by hedgerows, that run around the boundary of the site. The site is bound by Workhouse Road to the east, dwellings to the north and south, and further agricultural fields to the west and south. It is located within the village of Burbage, on the fringe of the town of Hinckley, south-west Leicestershire. The wider landscape comprises a mosaic of agricultural fields and residential development.
<i>Methodology</i>	The survey was undertaken by Consultant Ecologist, Nicholas Smith who holds a FISC Level 3, a GCN Level 1 Licence and is an Accredited Agent on a Natural England Bat Licence. The survey methodology is based on the Froglife Advice Sheet 10: Reptile Survey, an introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation (Froglife, 1999), Herpetofauna Workers' Manual (Gent, T. and Gibson, S., 2003) and the Reptile Habitat Management Handbook (Edgar, P., Foster, J. and Baker, J. 2010). Refugia was placed around the site in suitable reptile habitat with each refuge numbered and the locations recorded using a GPS unit for monitoring, reporting and mapping. The refugia were steel ‘tins’ (corrugated steel sheets of approximately 50cm x 50cm square) and sheets of bitumen felt (approximately 100cm x 50cm square). The steel tins are regarded to have better habitat value for certain species (particularly snakes) due to their superior thermal retention. For this site, there is assessed to be 2ha of potentially suitable reptile habitat on site, comprising tussocky grass, scrub and woodland. Therefore, a total of 5 tins and 45 felts were used. Locations of refugia are illustrated in Appendix 3.

	The refugia were deployed on 9th April 2026 and left to ‘bed in’ for a minimum of two weeks. Seven separate site visits were completed to search for reptiles between 23rd April and 14th May 2026. The surveyor walked slowly and carefully checked the top and underneath of each felt, as well as looking for reptiles between the felts. The surveys were undertaken during the optimal period (typically in April, May and September) and in suitable weather conditions, when temperatures between 10°C and 18°C with intermittent or hazy sunshine and little or no wind, before 11am and after 3pm.																				
Population size assessment and key reptile site characterisation	A population size assessment was completed in accordance with current guidance detailed within Froglife Advice sheet 10 (Froglife 1999). The population size assessment was determined as per the parameters outlined in Table 1. Table 1: Example results of Reptile Surveys <table><tr><th>Species</th><th>Low Population (Score 1) (Max count)</th><th>Good Population (Score 2) (Max count)</th><th>Exceptional Population (Score 3) (Max count)</th></tr><tr><td>Adder <i>Vipera berus</i></td><td><5</td><td>5 -10</td><td>>10</td></tr><tr><td>Grass snake <i>Natrix natrix</i></td><td><5</td><td>5 -10</td><td>>10</td></tr><tr><td>Common lizard <i>Zootoca vivipara</i></td><td><5</td><td>5 -20</td><td>>20</td></tr><tr><td>Slow worm <i>Anguis fragilis</i></td><td><5</td><td>5 -20</td><td>>20</td></tr></table> In accordance with current guidance detailed within Froglife Advice sheet 10 (Froglife 1999), to qualify as a “<i>key reptile site</i>”, the surveyed site must meet at least one of the following criteria: a. Supports three or more reptile species. b. Supports two snake species. c. Supports an exceptional population of one species. d. Supports an assemblage of species scoring at least 4 (see Table 2). e. Does not satisfy criteria a-d but is of regional importance due to local rarity.	Species	Low Population (Score 1) (Max count)	Good Population (Score 2) (Max count)	Exceptional Population (Score 3) (Max count)	Adder <i>Vipera berus</i>	<5	5 -10	>10	Grass snake <i>Natrix natrix</i>	<5	5 -10	>10	Common lizard <i>Zootoca vivipara</i>	<5	5 -20	>20	Slow worm <i>Anguis fragilis</i>	<5	5 -20	>20
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Field survey results	Survey dates and weather conditions are described in the table below:																				

	Visit No.	Date and Time	Weather Conditions
	1	Thursday 23 rd April 2026 9:00am	Temp: 14°C Humidity: 85% Cloud Cover: 40% Wind Speed: 5mph Precipitation: None
	2	Monday 27 th April 2026 9:30am	Temp: 14°C Humidity: 48% Cloud Cover: 80% Wind Speed: 6mph Precipitation: None
	3	Thursday 30 th April 2026 4:00pm	Temp: 16°C Humidity: 37% Cloud Cover: 50% Wind Speed: 3mph Precipitation: None
	4	Monday 6 th May 2026 9:00am	Temp: 13°C Humidity: 74% Cloud Cover: 60% Wind Speed: 4mph Precipitation: None
	5	Friday 8 th May 2026 8:30am	Temp: 18°C Humidity: 56% Cloud Cover: 10% Wind Speed: 4mph Precipitation: None
	6	Tuesday 12 th May 2026 4:00pm	Temp: 13°C Humidity: 58% Cloud Cover: 25% Wind Speed: 3mph Precipitation: None
	7	Thursday 14 th May 2026 9:00am	Temp: 16°C Humidity: 59%

			Cloud Cover: 40% Wind Speed: 3mph Precipitation: None	
	No reptiles were identified during the surveys.			
<i>Survey results summary and Impact Assessment</i>	No reptiles were identified on the site. The proposed development will result in the loss of unmanaged grassland, scrub and woodland. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local reptile populations owing to the recorded likely absence of reptiles and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, site clearance could result in the death or injury of transient reptiles, if present.			
<i>Recommendations</i>	A precautionary working method will be implemented for widespread reptiles during construction, including the following measures: • Site clearance will be undertaken outside of the reptile hibernation season (November to February) insofar as is possible. • A staged approach will be adopted for vegetation clearance, whereby the vegetation will be strimmed to 15cm and left overnight to allow any reptiles to disperse. The vegetation can then be cleared to ground level and must be maintained at this level for the duration of construction to deter reptiles from the working area. • Any debris and brash will be stored on pallets or removed from the site to prevent reptiles from utilising these areas. • Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. • Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby habitats. • Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. If any reptiles are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.			
<i>Enhancement measures</i>	The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for reptiles: • Creation of reptile refugia and hibernacula using debris and brash from site clearance. • Planting of native scrub and grassland along site edges to increase foraging opportunities.			

	• The creation of basking areas such as rock piles or areas of cleared ground with shelter nearby.
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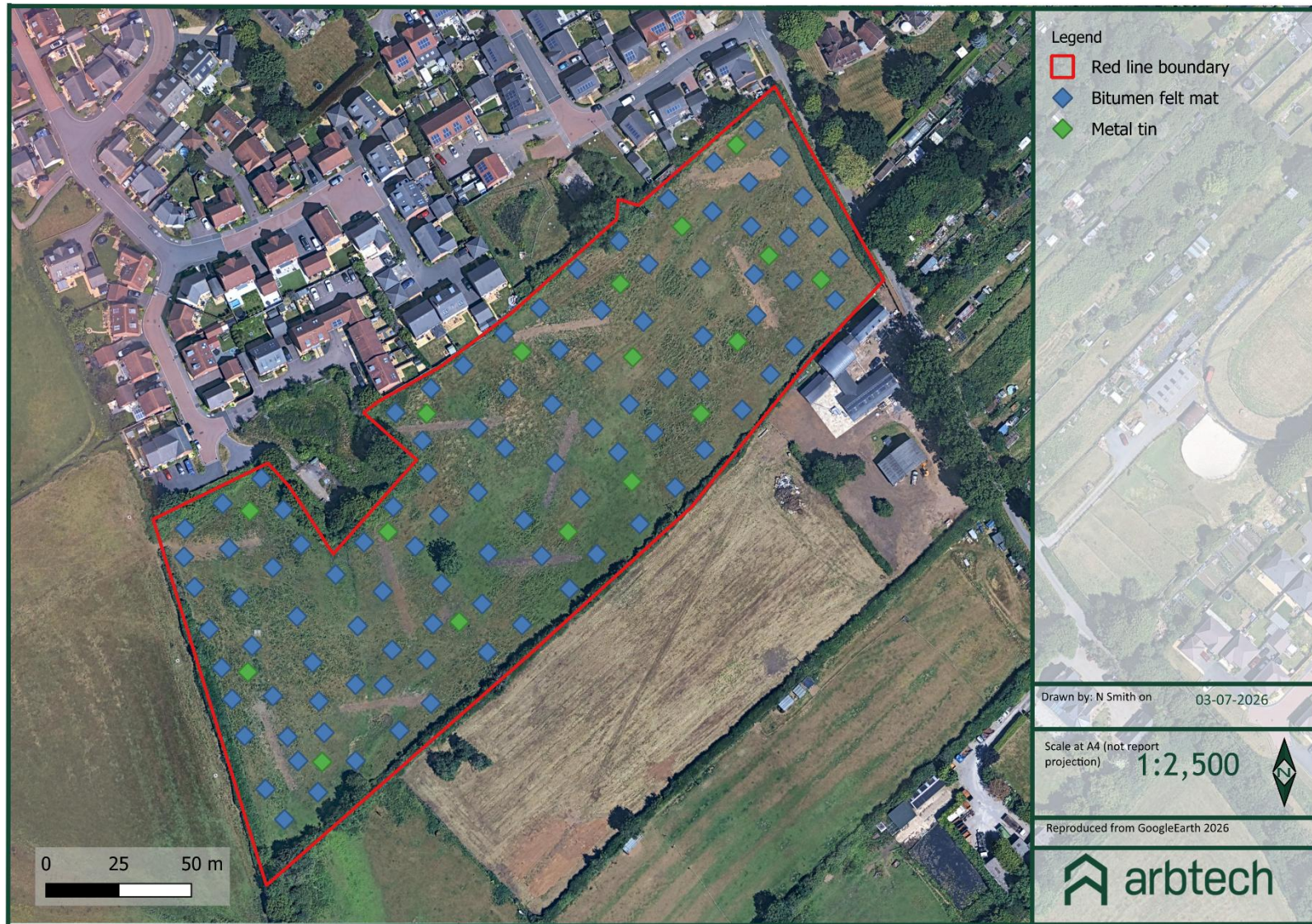
Appendix 1: Proposed Development Plan

Not available at time of writing report.

Appendix 2: Site location



Appendix 3: Reptile Survey Plan



Appendix 4: Legislation and planning policy

LEGAL PROTECTION

The sand lizard *Lacerta agilis* and smooth snake *Coronella austriaca* receive full protection under Habitats Regulations through their inclusion on Schedule 2. Regulation 41 prohibits:

- Deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species
- Deliberate disturbance of species in such a way as:
 - i. To impair their ability to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young;
 - ii. To impair their ability to hibernate or migrate
 - iii. To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place

These species are also listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended) and they are additionally protected from:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)
- Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection
- Selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale.

Other native species of reptiles are protected solely under Schedule 5, Section 9(1) & (5) of the WCA, i.e. the adder *Vipera berus*, grass snake *Natrix natrix*, common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* and slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*. It is prohibited to:

- Intentionally or recklessly kill or injure these species.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

National Planning Policy Framework 2024

The National Planning Policy Framework promotes sustainable development. The Framework specifies the need for protection of designated sites and priority habitats and species. An emphasis is also made on the need for ecological infrastructure through protection, restoration and re-creation. The protection and recovery of priority species (considered likely to be those listed as UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species) is also listed as a requirement of planning policy.

In determining a planning application, planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by ensuring that: designated sites are protected from harm; there is appropriate mitigation or compensation where significant harm cannot be avoided; opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments are encouraged; and planning permission is refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including aged or veteran trees and also ancient woodland.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Biodiversity Duty

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the 'biodiversity duty'.

Section 41 of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of 'principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity'. This list is intended to assist decision makers such as public bodies in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act. Under the Act these habitats and species are regarded as a material consideration in determining planning applications. A developer must show that their protection has been adequately addressed within a development proposal.

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

A European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) issued by the relevant countryside agency (i.e. Natural England, Natural Resources Wales, Scottish Natural Heritage) will be required for works likely to affect the breeding sites or resting places of reptile species protected under Habitats Regulations. A licence will also be required for operations liable to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake those activities mentioned above (e.g. survive, breed, rear young and hibernate). The licences are to allow derogation from the relevant legislation, but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and their efficacy to be monitored.

Although not licensable, appropriate mitigation measures may also be required to prevent the intentional killing or injury of adder, grass snake, common lizard and slow worm, thus avoiding contravention of the WCA.

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Version control			
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