



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Report Release Sheet

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Provided no significant changes are made to the proposals or on the site (e.g. significant changes to management practices or habitats present) subsequent to the report's issue; this report can be considered valid for 12 months from the date of issue.

As part of membership of our professional body (CIEEM) we are required to provide our biological results to applicable biological record centres. As such, it is our intention to supply biological data collected as part of this assessment to the relevant centre unless directly instructed in writing not to do so by the client.

The evidence which we have prepared and provided is in accordance with the guidance of The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Code of Professional Conduct and follows all relevant legislation. The content of this report is, at least in part, based upon information provided by others, on the assumption that all relevant information has been provided by those parties from whom it has been requested. Information obtained from any third party has not been independently verified by Midnorth Ecology Ltd unless otherwise stated in the report.

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Executive Summary

Midnorth Ecology Ltd were appointed to conduct a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), comprising a UK Habs site survey, protected species assessment and ecological evaluation of a parcel of land as shown in appendix one.

Following the assessment, it has been concluded that:

- The site comprised of a section of a structure that is in use as livery stables, two areas of modified grassland / bare ground and other developed land.
- The current proposals include the change of existing use of the structure, from livery stables to commercial use and the installation of an hardstanding area for vehicle and plant movement and storage.
- The site was not subject to any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations. There was one statutory designated site within a 2km radius of the site.
- The habitat within the site comprises of developed land (existing structure, drive and track), individual trees, modified grassland (enhancement area) and modified grassland / bare ground. However, potential Habitats of Principal Importance were also present within and adjacent to the site and are considered to hold conservation value nationally.
- A BNG assessment will be required for the loss of any habitats due to the proposals; this will be a loss of modified grassland to accommodate the installation of the hardstanding area.
- Recommendations to conserve existing species and enhance the biodiversity value of the site in accordance with national and local planning policies comprise the potential to include bird nesting opportunities and bat roosting features.

Habitats on site or adjacent to the site are suitable for a range of protected or notable species and/or habitats which are shown in table 1.1 below, further ecological considerations and completion times are also provided.

Table 1.1 -Further ecological considerations and completion times

Ecological Requirements	Timings
Habitats A full BNG assessment will be required to compensate for the loss of modified grassland / bare ground which be lost to facilitate the installation of an hardstanding area. Any on-site habitat creation or enhancement will require a Habitat Maintenance and Monitoring Plan (HMMP). Habitats adjacent to the site – no alterations are proposed to the structure and therefore no impacts are envisaged. However, if additional lighting is required then a lighting strategy must be produced.	Before works
Bats - A Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) must be completed on the structure within the red line boundary prior to the planning application and before works.	Before works

Further survey and/or licensing may be required dependent on the results of the PRA.	
Nesting birds – An inspection must be completed by an SQE prior to change of use to ensure no active nests are present during the proposed change of use. If additional lighting is proposed a lighting strategy must be produced to safeguard any species using the adjacent and surrounding habitats.	Before works

1. Introduction

Midnorth Ecology Ltd were commissioned by the client to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of a parcel of land at Holly Lodge Farm Ltd, Sheepy Magna, Atherstone, Leicestershire (SK 32543 01857). This appraisal considers the baseline ecology conditions within the site boundary (hereafter referred to as 'the site') to support a planning application for the development plans on site.

Site Location and Surrounding Habitats

The site is located approximately 5km north of Atherstone town centre, in a rural setting, surrounded on all aspects by agricultural and semi natural habitats. Considering this, connectivity within the wider landscape is good for a range of notable and protected species.

Work Proposals

The proposals for the site are for the change of use of a section of a stable, the change of use would be from livery stables to storage and distribution use (class B8) and formation of an hardstanding area which is to be installed to the west of the structure. Only a part of the existing structure is within the red line boundary for the full planning application. For the full proposals please see Appendix 3.

Scope of Works

The report is designed to inform the client and any stakeholders as to any ecological constraints to the proposed works and to ensure that biodiversity is not impacted by the works. The report outlines recommendations to avoid, mitigate, compensate and enhance the site.

The aim of this appraisal is to provide baseline ecological information about the site. This will be used to identify any potential ecological constraints associated with the proposed development and/or to identify the need for additional survey work to further evaluate any impact that may risk contravention of legislation or policy relating to protected species and nature conservation.

The appraisal is based on the following information sources:

- A desk study of the site and land within a 2km radius;
- A protected species assessment of the site to identify habitats and where possible features with potential to support legally protected species;
- The conservation value of the site, cion regards to site, local, regional, and national importance; and
- Information provided by the client, such as site plans, work proposals, architectural designs/drawings and any further associated documents.

The assessment was conducted by William Parkinson BSc, an ecologist with six years' experience, carrying out phase 1 habitat surveys, UK Habitat surveys (UK Habs) and protected species assessment.

Local Planning Policy

Planning policies which are relevant to this site include the Sheepy Parish Neighbourhood Plan, particularly Policy S5 covered in Chapter 2 - Rural Character

This chapter states that;

Ecology and Biodiversity Development should have appropriate regard for the network of local ecological features and habitats which include:

1. *Sheepy Fields SSSI*
2. *River Sence and its tributaries*
3. *Manor Farm Meadows, Sheepy Parva*
4. *Tinsel Lane Roadside Verge, Wellsborough*
5. *Sheepy Magna Churchyard*
6. *Marsh near Harris Bridge, River Sence*

New development which impacts on existing ecological corridors and landscape features (such as watercourses, hedgerows and tree-lines) will be expected to maintain and extend them for reasons of biodiversity thus, wherever possible, demonstrating overall net-gain.

2. Methodology

This PEA has been prepared with reference to best practice guidance published by the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2017), and as detailed in British Standard 42020:2013 *Biodiversity- Code of Practice for Biodiversity and Development* (BSI, 2013).

Desk Study

Data sources such as those in table 2.1 below were reviewed to provide information on the location of;

- Statutory designated sites such as - Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPA), Ramsar sites, National Nature Reserves (NNR), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Local Nature Reserves (LNR)
- Non-statutory designated sites – these are sites designated by local authorities such as - Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SNC) or Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)
- Legally protected species which include – species listed in the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981, Schedules 1, 5 and 8; Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Hab regs) 2017, particularly Schedule 2; or in the Protection of Badgers Act (PBA) 1992 (as amended).
- Species of Principal Importance (SPI) - are species which are defined in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006.
- Habitats of Principal Importance are habitats which are defined in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006..
- Other notable species such as Hedgehog and notable habitats such as Ancient Woodland Inventory sites and Important Hedgerows as defined by the Hedgerow Regulations 1997

The desk study was conducted using publicly available resources as shown in table 2.1 below.

Table 2.1 – desk study resources and reason

Resource	Reasoning
Google Earth	Google Earth was used to obtain aerial imagery of the site and to measure distances to surrounding ecological receptors.
Sheepy Parish Neighbourhood Plan 2018-2036	The local plan was used to identify and inform descriptions on statutory designated sites.
Magic	MAGIC was used to locate non statutory designated sites and other information regarding important sites such as Ramsar, Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Special Protection Area (SPA), as well as Locations of European Protected Species Licenses.
OS mapping	OS mapping was used to distinguish any features such as woodlands, standing water, running water and surrounding landscape.

Site Survey

A habitat survey of the site was conducted on 22/04/2025 and updated on 10/12/2025 by William

Parkinson BSc, in warm, dry weather conditions with good visibility. The survey covered the entire site including the boundary features and up to 30m beyond wherever possible.

Habitats were described following the UK Habitat Classification Field Key (Carey & Butcher, 2018). Habitats were also assessed against descriptions of Habitats of Principal Importance as set out by the JNCC (BRIG, 2008).

Latin names will be provided on first mention of any common name for plant species, thereafter, the common name will be used.

Site Evaluation

The site's ecological value has been evaluated following guidance issued by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2017) which categorises the nature conservation value of a site according to its level of value such as: international, national, regional, county, district, local only or of value at the site scale.

To evaluate the conservation value of the site, the following factors were taken into account: nature conservation designations of the specific site and sites in the locality; how rare the species and/or habitats on site are whether the site is isolated or has good connectivity to other habitats.

Recommendations for the contribution to green infrastructure (GI) as recommended by BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity Code of practice for planning and development, are also included if practical.

Protected Species Assessment

The habitats and possible ecological receptors were assessed for potential to support protected species, using the assessment categories in Table 2.2 below. Although efforts will be made to ascertain presence or likely absence of protected and/or notable species within this assessment, further surveys may be required for determination of this and to gain further information such as but not limited to presence/likely absence (if not ascertained) and population estimates.

However, in some cases there may be opportunities to comply with legislation, without further survey, through precautionary measures prior to and during construction. This will require a Precautionary Working Method Statement (PWMS) document.

Table 2.2: Protected species assessment categories

Category	Description
Present	Presence confirmed from the current survey or by recent, confirmed records.
High	Habitat within the site is highly suitable for a particular or number of protected and/or notable species. Records from the desk study provide evidence of records within the site or surrounding locality. Records from the desk study provide evidence of a national or regional stronghold for protected and or notable species. There is good suitable habitat with good connectivity in the wider landscape.
Moderate	Habitat within the site is moderately suitable for a particular or number of protected and/or notable species. Records from the desk study provide evidence of several records within the site or surrounding locality. Records from the desk study provide evidence of a regional or county stronghold for protected and or notable species. There is moderate suitable habitat with some but limited connectivity in the wider landscape.

Low	Habitat within the site is considered poor for most protected and/or notable species. Records from the desk study evidence only limited records of protected species within the surrounding locality. There is a lack of suitable habitat with connectivity in the wider landscape. However, species cannot be ruled out due to records in the area or the transient nature of wildlife.
Negligible	Habitat within the site is either absent or considered very poor for most protected and/or notable species. Records from the desk study lack evidence of records within the site or surrounding locality. There is a lack of suitable habitat with connectivity in the wider landscape.

Bats – Ground Level Tree Assessment

The suitability of the trees for roosting bats was categorised with reference to best practice industry guidelines (BCT, 2023) (Table 2.2) as either PRF I or PRF M which informs the need for further survey effort to establish the presence/ likely absence of roosting bats.

Table 2.2: Guidelines for Assessing the Potential Bat Roosting Suitability of PRFs of Trees (BCT, 2023).

Bat Conservation Trust

Table 6.2. Guidelines for categorising the potential suitability of PRFs on a proposed development site for bats, to be applied using professional judgement.

Suitability	Description
PRF-I	PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
PRF-M	PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

Bats – Commuting and foraging

With reference to Table 2.1, an assessment of the habitats at the site to support commuting and foraging bats was made, within the context of habitat connectivity to features in the wider landscape. The site was assessed as either negligible, low, moderate, or high suitability for commuting and foraging bats.

Great Crested Newt

An assessment was made of the suitability of the habitats at the site for Great Crested Newts (GCN) *Triturus cristatus*. Optimal habitat for GCN includes wetlands, rough grassland, moorland, heathland, hedgerows, woodland edge and scrub and also sub-urban areas such as railway embankments, golf courses and allotments, and sympathetically managed farmland. Favourable features for GCN include wetlands, ecotones such as the transition between grassland and scrub, and hibernacula such as stone, log, and brash piles.

Nesting Birds

An assessment of the suitability of the site to support breeding, migrating, and wintering birds was made, and the site was searched where accessible and practical for active or previous historic bird nests.

Common Reptiles

An assessment was made of the suitability of the habitats at the site for reptiles. Optimal habitat for reptiles includes rough grassland, moorland, heathland, woodland edge and scrub, sub-urban areas such as railway embankments, golf courses and allotments, and sympathetically managed farmland. Favourable features for reptiles include sunny south facing banks for basking, ecotones such as the transition between grassland and scrub, and hibernacula such as stone, log, and brash piles.

Barn owl

An initial habitat assessment of the trees within the site which could provide potential for nesting and/or roosting barn owl (BO) was completed. Whereby the trees were inspected for the presence of large cavities and signs of moulted feathers, whitewash and/or regurgitated pellets. Favourable habitats for BO include trees and buildings for roosting and nesting and grasslands for hunting.

Water Vole and Otter

An initial habitat assessment of the pond within the site was completed to ascertain if the habitat could potentially support water vole and/or otter. The banks were checked for the presence of evidence such as burrows, bank profiles, bank substrate and vegetation structure.

Badger

The assessment for badger included a search for evidence of badger at the site, such as sett entrances (normally 25 to 35cm wide and shaped like a 'D' on its flat edge), large spoil heaps outside sett entrances, bedding, footprints, mammal paths, latrines, hairs, scratching posts, and signs of digging for food or 'snuffle holes'. The survey included a search of the site and 30m radius (access permitting) for badger setts.

Other mammals

An assessment of the site to support other mammals including brown hare, harvest mouse, and hedgehog was also made including any dropping inspections and other physical evidence such as hairs.

Invasive Species

Invasive plant species such as those listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (As Amended) were recorded if encountered during the assessment.

Limitations

Every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site; however, the following limitations apply to this assessment.

- The protected species assessment is not a full survey or suite of surveys for a particular protected species or group of species and is based on professional judgement on whether any protected species or habitats are likely to be present at the site.
- Additional surveys may therefore be required for a particular species or habitat.
- This appraisal is preliminary and may need to be updated once further survey work has been completed for any protected species and/or habitats, if required.
- Ecological data can sometimes lack evidence of protected species, but this does not necessarily mean that protected species are absent as other factors such as lack of recorders in the area can affect results.
- Habitats are noted and described as seen on the day of survey. The UK Habitat survey does not constitute a full botanical survey.
- Mapping will be as accurate as possible, but it is to be noted that any locations stated were taken in the field and may differ slightly from actual location.
- All locations and distances provided are approximate.
- Ecological survey data is usually valid for 12 months, if no changes to plans are proposed this appraisal will therefore be valid for 12 months. After this further survey and assessments may be required.

Despite the above limitations, it is considered that this report accurately reflects the habitats present, their biodiversity values and the potential of the site to support protected and notable species.

3. Results

Desk Study

Statutory designated nature conservation sites

The site is not subject to any statutory nature designations; however, the site is within 5km of two SSSI sites and within the outer Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) of one SSSI site. Further details on the designated sites are provided in table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Statutory designated sites

Site	Designation	Distance and location	Reason for designation
Sheepy Fields	SSSI	0.75 km NE	<i>Sheepy Fields comprise two hay meadows developed on soils derived from post-glacial river terrace deposits. It contains some of the best remaining examples of neutral grassland in Leicestershire. It is representative of hay meadow plant communities developed on neutral soils in the East Midlands.</i>
Birches Barn Meadows	SSSI	4.5 km W	<i>Birches Barn Meadows comprises two unimproved fields adjacent to the south bank of the River Anker. They have been managed as hay meadows since 1913. The meadows are on alluvium and overlie Keuper sandstone with ridge and furrow topography in part. Birches Barn Meadows are now the last remaining flood meadows in the Anker valley. The sward associated with the meadow foxtail-great burnet community characteristic of the site, is species-rich with a great diversity of herbs. Eighteen species of grass have been recorded. Two species of bird that breed in the meadows, the quail and curlew are restricted to few other localities in Warwickshire.</i>

The site is located within the outer rings of Sheepy Field SSSI IRZ. Therefore, this will be considered further in section 4 of this report.

Habitats

Habitats of Principal Importance

There was an area of broadleaved woodland adjacent to the site that is mapped on MAGIC maps as a Habitat of Principal Importance (HPI) (as defined by Natural England, 2013).

Habitat descriptions

u1b5 - Buildings

The existing structure present within the red line boundary was mainly used as a livery stable. The section of structure is constructed of steel framework and corrugated tin sheeting panels which make up the majority of the walls. The roof is pitched and again constructed of tin metal sheets which are mostly tightly joint. There are areas where the building is half built with concrete blocks which extend internally which appeared to separate stock.

u1b6 – other developed land

An area to the east of the stable consisted of existing hardstanding which formed part of the driveway and surrounding the stable. Trees adjacent to this hardstanding will be retained during the works, the hardstanding continued and provided access into the field at the west, the hardstanding to the south of the stable comprised of MOT type hardcore.

Modified Grassland

An area to the west of the existing structures comprised of an area of modified grassland / bare ground. This area appeared to be used for plant and vehicle movement and other farming operations. The grassland present within the bare ground was consistent with descriptions for modified grassland. Degradation of the modified grassland has occurred outside of the planning application and prior to this assessment as shown on satellite imagery.

There were a variety of grasses present within the habitat, with perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*) dominating the sward locally. Common thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), Curled dock (*Rumex crispus*) and Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg.), white clover (*Trifolium repens*) were also present occasionally. Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), and young self-set ash whips and other ruderal vegetation was also present rarely.

An area to the east of the track on the eastern side of the site also comprised of modified grassland which appeared to have previously been used for arable farming based on historic aerial imagery. This area had now become grassland. Bramble scrub was present to the west of this grassland where it adjoins the woodland surrounding the pond. However, bramble scrub did not make up more than 20% of the grassland.

Three quadrats were used to assess species richness and the mean number of species for each grassland was 4; the grasslands were therefore classified as modified grassland, as they contained less than 9 species per m², and broadleaved herbs and sedges did not make up more than 20% cover.

Habitat degradation prior to assessment

The modified grassland area within the west of the site was degraded prior to this assessment by the movement and storage of vehicles and farming equipment as informed by the client. From meetings with the client, the degradation took place from January 2025 and has occurred because of storage and movement of vehicles and equipment. The grassland has therefore become bare ground in places.

The grassland condition assessment has been revised to reflect the condition prior to the degradation; therefore, the grassland changed from poor condition to moderate condition due to the assumption that the habitat would have passed criterion D and E within the condition assessment.

Habitat summary

The habitat within the site boundary consisted of existing developed land and modified grassland / bare ground. The structure described above will be modified in no way including any additional external lighting however areas of the mentioned habitat will be lost to facilitate the hardstanding area. A separate Preliminary Roost Assessment has been completed on this structure which concluded there would be no likely impact on roosting bats.

Areas of HPI were identified adjacent to the site which will need retaining and protecting as they are considered nationally important habitats. However, most of the habitats adjacent to the site were common and widespread and due to the heavily managed nature of the site and low species diversity most were classed as of low local value.

Habitats such as hedgerows, broadleaved woodland, ponds, wet ditches, lines of trees, modified grassland, further developed land (buildings and hardstanding and bare ground) was identified within the wider landscape.

The potential for the site to support protected species has been assessed using criteria provided in Table 3.2, based on the results of the desk study and observations made during the site survey of habitats at the site.

Other legally protected species are not referred to as it is considered that the site does not contain habitats that would be suitable to support them.

The following species/species groups are potentially present at the site, and results of the observations are provided in table 3.2 below:

- Bats;
- Nesting birds;

The table also summarises relevant legislation and policies relating to protected and invasive species. Key statutes are summarised in Section 1 and set out in greater detail in Appendix 4.

Table 3.2: Protected and Invasive Species Assessment

Habitat/ species	Status	Likelihood of occurrence
Habitats	HPI	Confirmed – Habitat on site modified grassland/bare ground will be lost due to the installation of the hardstanding area to the west of the site. A BNG assessment is therefore required before planning can be approved. Confirmed present (only within the wider landscape) – several habitats adjacent to the site could qualify for HPI such as ponds, hedgerows and broadleaved woodland. The site is within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone, however, due to the nature of the proposal no impacts are envisaged on the SSSI. Adjacent habitats should be retained and protected throughout the works and precautionary methods must be taken which must be outlined within an ePWMS. Considering the above, habitats are considered further in Section 4 of this report.
Bats	HR WCA S5	Likely present - The existing structure on site has been categorised as holding low potential to support roosting bats. The habitats adjacent to the site such as hedgerows, treelines and woodland could provide suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bats. Bats must be safeguarded throughout the works from light, noise and dust pollution – this must be detailed within an ePWMS. Considering the above, it is possible that bats could occur at the site and as such they are considered further in Section 4 of this report.
Nesting Birds	WCA S1-8	Likely present: The existing structure on site has the potential to support nesting birds additionally habitats adjacent to the site such as individual trees, hedgerows, broadleaved woodland and further existing structures could potentially support nesting birds. Nesting birds must be safeguarded throughout the works from light, noise and dust pollution – this must be detailed within an ePWMS if works are to take place in the birds nesting season (March – September). Considering the above, it is likely that nesting birds will occur at the site and as such they are considered further in Section 4 of this report.

NATURE CONSERVATION EVALUATION

The proposed development site is not subject to any nature conservation designations. The site falls within the impact risk zone of the nearby SSSIs, however urban residential development proposed is unlikely to have a harmful effect on terrestrial SSSIs and the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites that they underpin.

The closest designated site was approximately 3.5km away and therefore there will be no direct impact, furthermore the site is isolated by surrounding residential infrastructure. A sensitive lighting scheme will also protect the adjacent habitats from any indirect effects such as light spill. It is highly unlikely that any statutory or non-statutory designated sites will be impacted by the proposal.

The habitats on site were suitable for a range of noteworthy species, including species as reported in the desk study or recorded during the survey, as follows:

- Habitats;
- Bats; and
- Nesting birds;

The habitats at the site and populations of the above species are likely to be of value at site level only. It is unlikely that the site could support diverse assemblages or large populations of noteworthy species. Further protected species are not included hereafter as the habitats within the site are not considered optimal to support these species.

4. Potential Impacts and Recommendations

This section summarises the potential impacts on habitats and notable species that may be present at this site. The impact assessment is preliminary and further detailed assessment and surveys may be required to assess impacts and design suitable mitigation, where appropriate.

The following key ecological issues have been identified:

- Habitats within the site will be lost to facilitate the installation of a new hardstanding area, a BNG assessment must therefore be completed.
- Habitats adjacent to the site could qualify as HPI, these habitats must be retained and protected during the works.
- Habitat suitable for roosting, commuting and foraging bats were present – measures must be taken to avoid disturbing, injuring and killing bats and/or destroying their roosts;
- Habitat suitable for nesting birds was present – measures must be taken to avoid killing birds and/or destroying their nests;

CONSTRAINTS AND MITIGATION/COMPENSATION

Designated Nature Conservation Sites

No impacts are envisaged on statutory designated sites due to the low-impact nature of the proposals. Therefore, there are no constraints to the proposed development in this regard.

Habitats

The site comprises a section of an existing structure and hardstanding which leads to an area of modified grassland/bare ground. This habitat will be lost due to the installation of a hardstanding area which will accommodate vehicle and plant movement within the site. Therefore, a BNG assessment is required for the loss of habitat.

Bats

The existing structure had low potential to support roosting bats; therefore, a full Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) will need to be conducted, and any subsequent nocturnal bat surveys should be completed to ascertain if bats are currently using the buildings for roosting. This must be completed in the bats active season May – Sept inclusive. If bats are found to be present, then further survey and licensing may be required.

There are no current proposals for additional lighting but if this is required a lighting strategy is recommended whereby existing internal or external lighting will be regulated to have off-periods and use wildlife friendly lighting in accordance with the lighting guidance note (BCT, 2018).

During the construction of the hardstanding area bats may be affected indirectly from the effects of light, noise and dust pollution from the construction processes. To reduce the risk of disturbance to foraging and commuting bats, precautionary working methods are required which must be detailed within an ePWMS.

Nesting birds

All birds and their nests are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Several species of bird use structures for nesting. The existing structure on site has the potential to support nesting birds.

There are no current proposals for additional lighting but if this is required a lighting strategy is recommended whereby existing internal or external lighting will be regulated to have off-periods and use wildlife friendly lighting in accordance with the lighting guidance note (BCT, 2018).

During the construction of the hardstanding area nesting birds may be affected indirectly from the effects of light, noise and dust pollution from the construction processes. To reduce the risk of disturbance to nesting birds works should be completed between October and February which is outside of the main nesting season for birds, if works need to be completed within the main nesting season (March –

September) precautionary working methods are required which must be detailed within an ePWMS.

Environmental best practice

Retained trees and adjacent habitats identified on site should be protected in accordance with British Standards Institution (2012) guidelines, BS 5837:2012.

FURTHER SURVEY REQUIREMENTS

Table 4.1 lists further requirements as recommended in the constraints section.

Table 4.1: Further requirements/recommendations

Species/ Habitat	Ecological Requirements	Construction phase/seasonal considerations and recommendations
Habitats	Protection of adjacent habitats	A lighting strategy and ecological precautionary working method statement (ePWMS) will ensure the favourable conservation status of habitats surrounding the site (if required).
Bats	PRA and subsequent nocturnal surveys	A PRA and subsequent nocturnal surveys (if required) must be completed between the months of May-Sept. This will ascertain if bats are currently using the structure for roosting. ePWMS – to safeguard commuting and foraging bats
Nesting birds	Precautionary nesting bird inspection Lighting strategy	A precautionary nesting bird check must be completed if the change of use is to occur within the nesting bird season. ePWMS if works to be completed within the main nesting season (March – September) A lighting strategy will ensure the favourable conservation status of nesting birds within and adjacent to the structure.

OPPORTUNITIES FOR ECOLOGICAL ENHANCEMENT

Planning policy at the national and local level and strategic biodiversity partnerships encourages inclusion of ecological enhancements in development projects. Due to the nature of the proposals and the works involved enhancement measures are considered necessary.

If the client would like to offer further biodiversity enhancements as part of the project, the following would be suitable:

Provision of bat roosting opportunities

The installation of bat boxes on trees adjacent to the site be used to enhance opportunities for roosting bats. All access to bat boxes should be situated as far away from disturbance such as noise and light. Woodcrete bat boxes (Schwegler, 2011) are recommended as they are long lasting compared to wooden boxes, insulate occupants from extremes of temperature and condensation and are available in a range of designs.

Provision of bird nesting opportunities

The provision of bird boxes would be appropriate at this site. Many different designs are available including boxes to support species such as house sparrow, blue tit, long tailed tit, sparrow, swift and many more. Woodcrete bird boxes (Schwegler, 2011) are recommended as they are long lasting compared to wooden boxes, insulate occupants from extremes of temperature and condensation and are available in a broad range of designs.

5. References

Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals (2018) Guidance Note 08/18 Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK. Bats and the built environment series.

British Standards Institution (BSI) (2012) BS 5837:2012- Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction. BSI, London.

British Standards Institution (2013) Biodiversity. Code of practice for planning and development: 42020. BSI, London.

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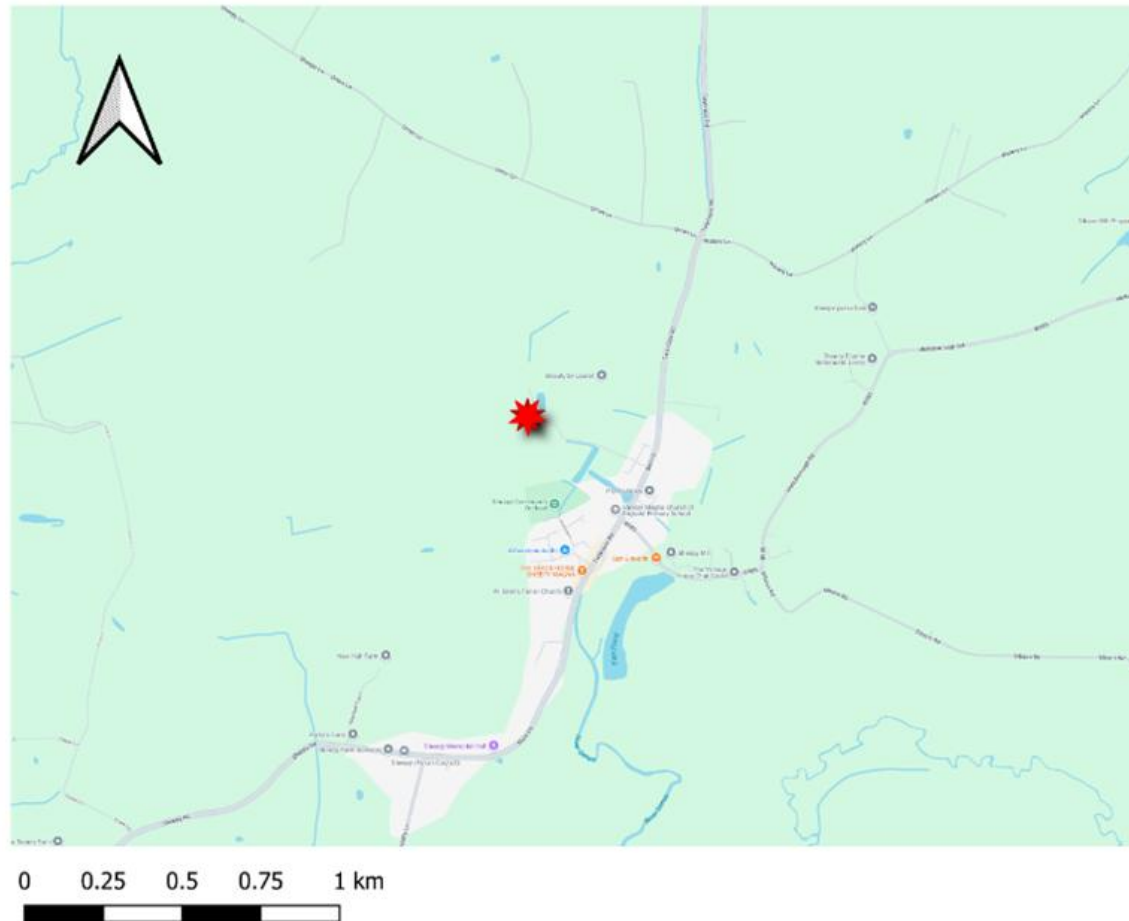
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Appendix 1 – Site Location

Holly Lodge Farm Site Location Plan



Legend

 Site location

Date: 17/02/2025

Author: Ashley
Martin MSc
ACIEEM

Description: Site
location plan as
adapted from
Google Maps
2025.

Appendix 2 – Baseline Habitat map

MNE_3476.1_Holly Lodge Farm_Baseline habitats



0 25 50 75 100 m



Key

-  u1b5 - buildings
-  g4 - modified grassland
-  u1b6 - other developed land
-  RLB

Bing Satellite

Author: Ashley Martin MSc
ACIEEM

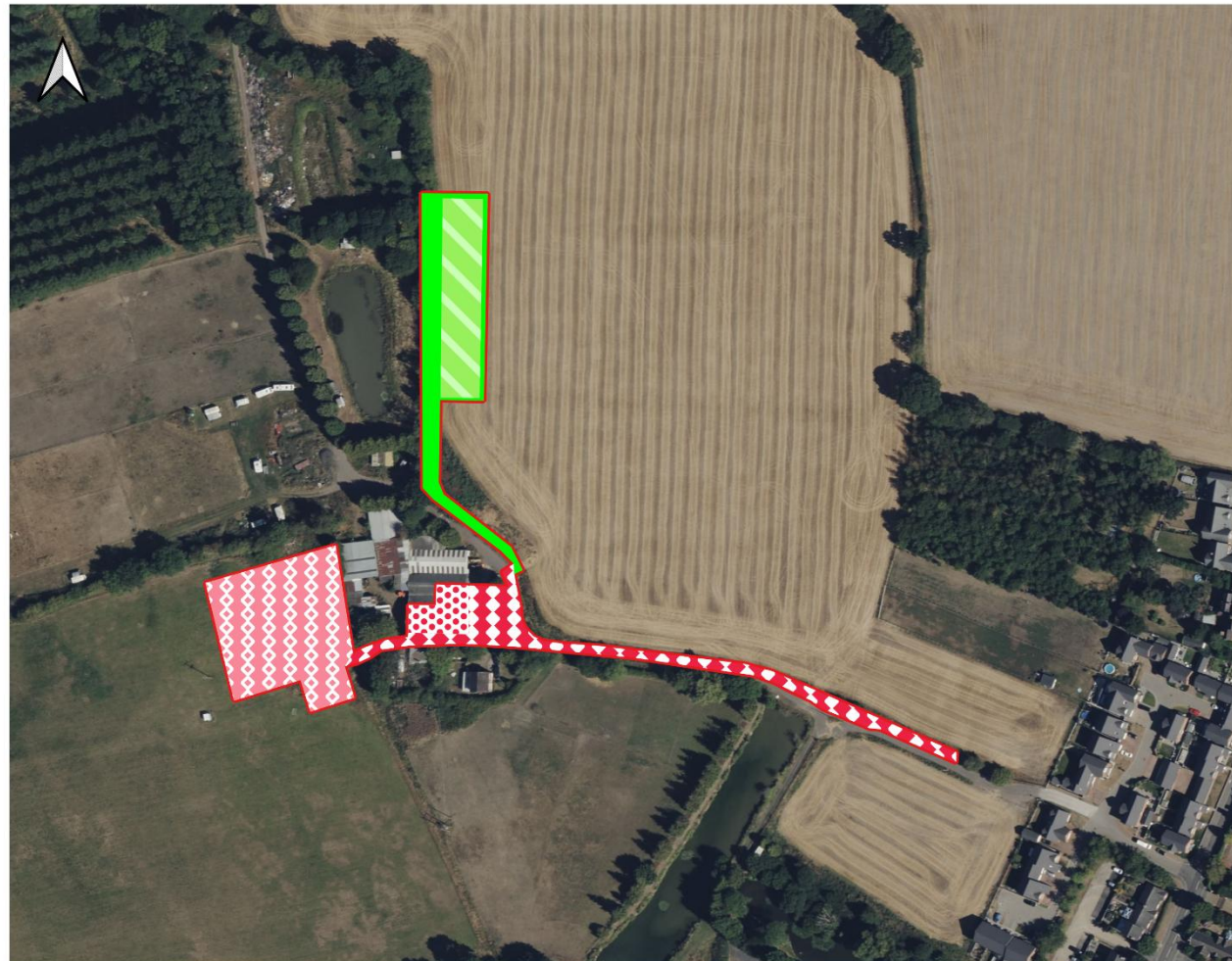
Date: 07/02/2026

Project: Holly Lodge Farm

Description: Baseline habitats existing within the red line boundary of the site. Please note additional area added to RLB to encompass on site enhancement/creation

Appendix 3 – Proposed Habitats

MNE_3476.1_Holly Lodge Farm_Proposed habitats



0 25 50 75 100 m



Key

-  u1b6 - proposed other developed land
-  u1b5 - buildings
-  g3a - proposed lowland meadow
-  g4 - modified grassland
-  u1b6 - other developed land
-  RLB

Bing Satellite

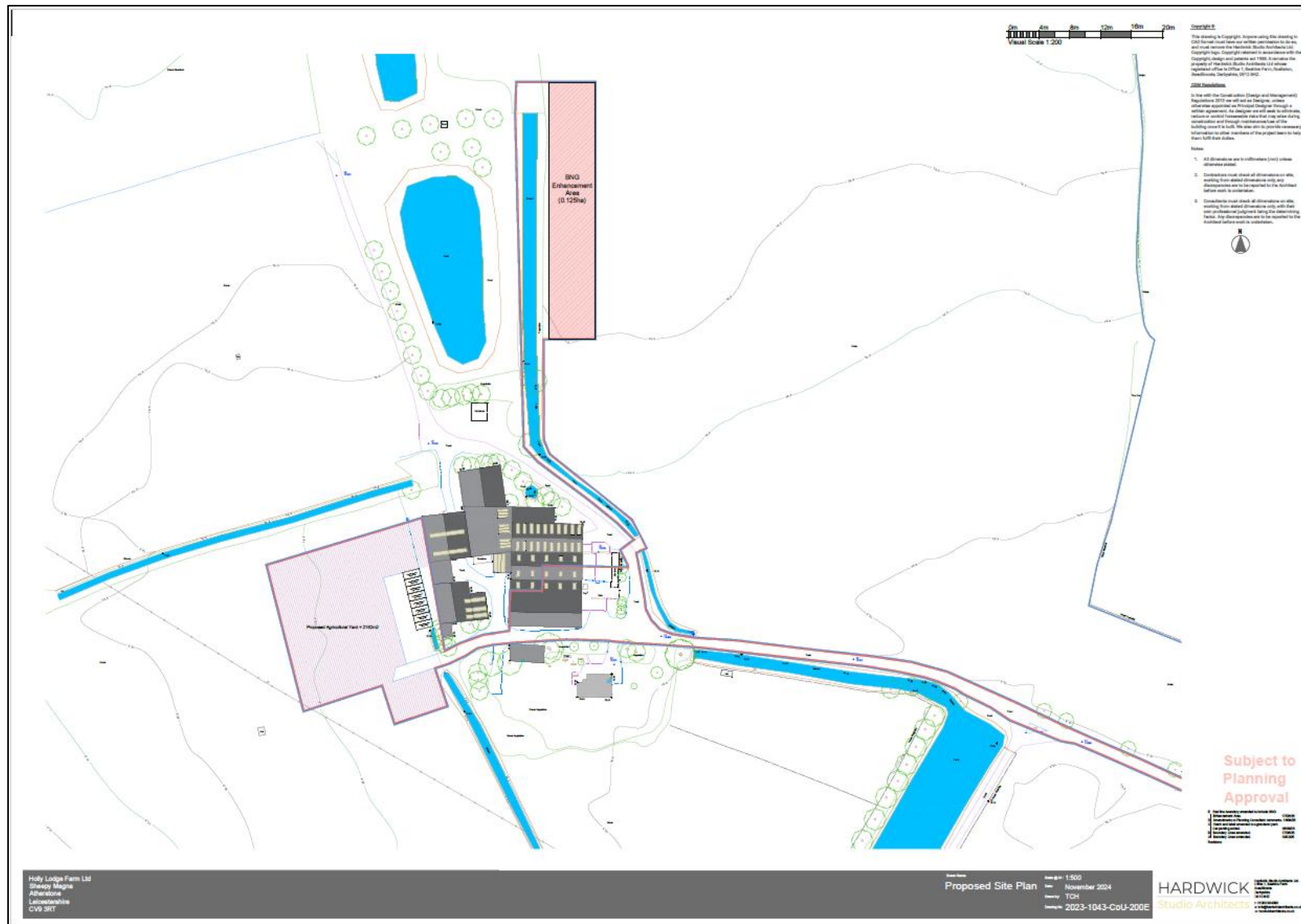
Author: Ashley Martin MSc
ACIEM

Date: 07/02/2026

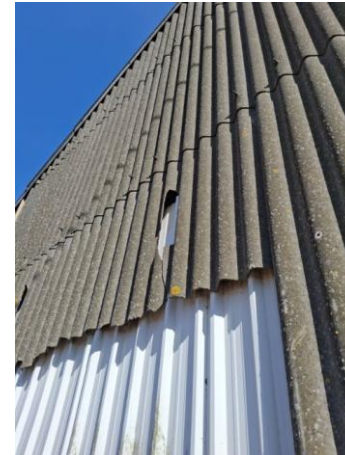
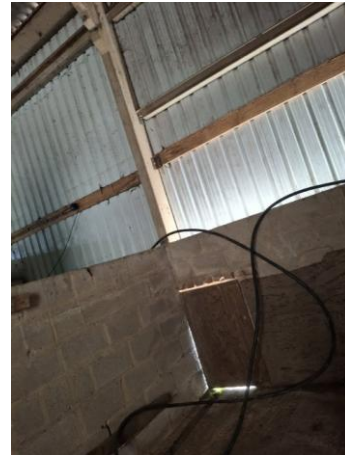
Project: Holly Lodge Farm

Description: Proposed habitats within the red line boundary of the site. Please note additional area added to RLB to encompass on site enhancement/creation.

Appendix 4: Work Proposals (third party)



Appendix 5 - Photographs





6



Appendix 6: Legislation

Important notice: the following summary is provided for general guidance only and is not a definitive statement of law. It summarises legislation and planning policy relevant to ecological assessment and development in England at the time of writing. Project-specific legal advice should be sought where necessary.

Legislation and planning policy context

Ecological constraints and opportunities should be considered in accordance with current legislation, national planning policy and local planning policy. The principal legislation and policy relevant to this appraisal includes:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended, which protect European Protected Species and provide for the protection of habitats sites.
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, which protects wild birds, certain animals and plants, and includes controls relating to invasive non-native species.
- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which strengthens protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest and certain species.
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, including the duty on public authorities to conserve and enhance biodiversity and the identification of Species and Habitats of Principal Importance in England.
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which protects badgers and their setts.
- The Hedgerows Regulations 1997, which protect certain important countryside hedgerows.
- The Environment Act 2021, including provisions for biodiversity net gain, Local Nature Recovery Strategies and strengthened biodiversity duties.
- The National Planning Policy Framework, which requires planning policies and decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment, apply the mitigation hierarchy and secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- In England, biodiversity net gain is mandatory for most development requiring planning permission under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as inserted by the Environment Act 2021.
- The statutory objective is to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat, unless an exemption or transitional provision applies.
- Biodiversity value must be calculated using the statutory biodiversity metric. Gains may be delivered through onsite habitat creation or enhancement, registered offsite biodiversity gains or, as a last resort, statutory biodiversity credits.
- A Biodiversity Gain Plan must normally be approved before development commences, and secured habitats are generally required to be managed and monitored for at least 30 years.

What this means for development. Future proposals should follow the biodiversity gain hierarchy, prioritising avoidance of impacts to higher-value and distinctive habitats, followed by mitigation, onsite compensation, registered offsite gains and, only where necessary, statutory credits. BNG does not replace separate legal duties relating to protected species, designated sites, irreplaceable habitats or pollution prevention.

Bats

All bat species in England are protected as European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended. Bats also receive protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended.

- It is an offence to deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat.
- It is an offence to deliberately disturb bats where that disturbance is likely to impair their ability to survive, breed, rear young, hibernate or migrate, or to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species.
- It is an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place, including a bat roost, whether or not bats are present at the time.
- It is also an offence to obstruct access to places used by bats for shelter or protection, or to possess, transport, sell or exchange bats, or parts of bats, except in limited lawful circumstances.

What this means for development. Works affecting buildings, roof structures, trees, hedgerows, woodland edges, watercourses, lighting schemes or commuting and foraging habitat may require survey, avoidance, mitigation and/or a Natural England mitigation licence before works proceed.

Great Crested Newt

- Great crested newts are protected as European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended, and receive additional protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended.
- It is an offence to deliberately capture, injure, kill or disturb a great crested newt, or deliberately take or destroy its eggs.
- It is an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place, whether or not great crested newts are present at the time.
- Great crested newt is also a Species of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

What this means for development. Works affecting ponds, terrestrial habitat, refuges, vegetation, ground conditions or habitat connectivity may require survey, avoidance, mitigation and/or a Natural England mitigation licence. District-level licensing may also be available in some areas, subject to Natural England requirements.

Badger

Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. The legislation is principally concerned with preventing cruelty and protecting setts from damage, destruction and disturbance.

- It is an offence to wilfully kill, injure or take a badger, or attempt to do so.
- It is an offence to cruelly ill-treat a badger.
- It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a badger sett.
- It is an offence to disturb a badger while it is occupying a sett, except where authorised under licence or another lawful provision.

What this means for development. Works near known or suspected setts, including groundworks, vegetation clearance, heavy plant movements, excavation, piling, lighting or vibration, may require a pre-works badger survey, avoidance measures, exclusion zones and/or a licence from Natural England.

Reptiles

In England, all native reptile species receive legal protection. Smooth snake and sand lizard are protected as European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended. The more widespread native reptiles, comprising adder, grass snake, common lizard and slow-worm, are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended.

What this means for development. Works affecting suitable reptile habitat may require ecological survey, avoidance and mitigation. Suitable habitat can include rough grassland, scrub, hedgerow bases, woodland edges, rubble, log piles, compost heaps, south-facing banks and other refuges. Where reptiles may be present, works should avoid killing or injuring individuals and should retain or enhance suitable habitat where possible. If smooth snake or sand lizard could be affected, specialist survey and a Natural England mitigation licence may be required before works proceed.

Birds

All wild birds, their active nests and eggs are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. Certain species listed on Schedule 1 receive additional protection from disturbance while nesting or while dependent young are present.

In general, it is an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird.
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built.
- Intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.
- Possess, control or transport live or dead wild birds, or parts of birds or eggs, except where lawfully held.
- Use prohibited methods to kill or take wild birds.

For Schedule 1 species, it is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb the bird while it is building a nest, or while it is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young, or to disturb dependent young.

What this means for development. Works affecting trees, hedgerows, scrub, grassland, buildings, roof spaces, ledges or other nesting opportunities should be timed to avoid the main nesting bird season, which generally runs from March to August inclusive. If works cannot avoid this period, a suitably qualified ecologist should check suitable habitat before works begin. If an active nest is present, works must not proceed in a way that would damage, destroy or disturb the

nest or dependent young until the nest is no longer active. Additional survey and safeguards may be required where Schedule 1 species could be affected.

Hazel Dormouse

Hazel dormouse is protected as a European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended, and under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. It is also a Species of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

- It is an offence to deliberately capture, injure, kill or disturb a hazel dormouse.
- It is an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place, whether or not dormice are present at the time.
- It is also an offence to obstruct access to places used for shelter or protection, or to possess, transport, sell or exchange dormice, or parts of dormice, except in limited lawful circumstances.

What this means for development. Works affecting woodland, scrub, hedgerows, species-rich field boundaries or connected woody habitat may require survey, avoidance, mitigation and/or a Natural England mitigation licence before works proceed. Proposals should retain habitat connectivity and avoid fragmentation of suitable dormouse habitat wherever possible.

Otter

Otter is protected as a European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended, and under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. Otter is also a Species of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

- It is an offence to deliberately capture, injure, kill or disturb an otter.
- It is an offence to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place, including a holt or couch, whether or not otters are present at the time.
- It is also an offence to obstruct access to places used for shelter or protection, or to possess, transport, sell or exchange otters, or parts of otters, except in limited lawful circumstances.

What this means for development. Works affecting rivers, streams, ditches, wetlands, riparian corridors, culverts, bridges or bankside vegetation may require survey, avoidance, mitigation and/or a Natural England mitigation licence. Lighting, noise, pollution risk, bank disturbance and barriers to movement should be carefully considered.

Water Vole

Water vole is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. It is also a Species of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

- It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take a water vole.
- It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a structure or place used for shelter or protection.
- It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a water vole while it is occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection.
- It is also an offence to possess, transport, sell or advertise water voles, or parts of water voles, except in limited lawful circumstances.

What this means for development. Works affecting rivers, streams, ditches, ponds, reedbeds, wetlands, banks or marginal vegetation may require survey, avoidance, mitigation and, where displacement or other licensable works are proposed, an appropriate licence. Proposals should avoid bank damage, maintain riparian habitat and prevent pollution, siltation and hydrological changes.

White-clawed Crayfish

White-clawed crayfish is protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. Some populations are also qualifying features of Special Areas of Conservation and are therefore relevant to the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended. White-clawed crayfish is a Species of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

- It is an offence to intentionally take white-clawed crayfish.
- It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly possess or transport white-clawed crayfish, or parts of white-clawed crayfish, except where lawfully authorised.
- It is also an offence to sell, offer for sale or advertise white-clawed crayfish, or parts of white-clawed crayfish, except

in limited lawful circumstances.

What this means for development. Works affecting rivers, streams, culverts, channel beds, banks, water quality or hydrology may require survey, avoidance, mitigation and permissions or licences. Biosecurity is essential to prevent the spread of crayfish plague and invasive non-native crayfish.

Barn Owl

Barn owl is protected as a wild bird under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, and receives additional protection as a Schedule 1 species.

- It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take a barn owl.
- It is an offence to intentionally take, damage or destroy an active nest or egg.
- As a Schedule 1 species, it is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb barn owls while nesting, or to disturb dependent young.

What this means for development. Works affecting barns, roof voids, lofts, outbuildings, mature trees, cavities, ledges or rough grassland foraging habitat may require survey and safeguards. If a nesting or roosting barn owl is present, works may need to be timed, buffered or redesigned to avoid disturbance or nest damage.

Other Protected Mammals and Priority Mammals

A range of other mammals may be relevant to ecological assessment depending on site location and habitat, including hedgehog, brown hare, harvest mouse, polecat, pine marten and red squirrel. Legal protection varies by species. Some are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, and many are Species of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

What this means for development. Works affecting hedgerows, scrub, grassland, woodland edges, log piles, compost heaps, brash piles or other sheltering habitat should consider the potential for priority mammals. Precautionary working methods, habitat retention, permeability for wildlife and appropriate enhancement measures should be incorporated where relevant.

Protected Plants and Invasive Non-native Species

Certain wild plants are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. The same Act also controls the release or spread of certain invasive non-native species listed on Schedule 9.

- It is an offence to intentionally pick, uproot or destroy certain protected wild plants, or to possess, sell or advertise them, except in limited lawful circumstances.
- It is an offence to plant or otherwise cause certain invasive non-native species to grow in the wild, or to release certain invasive animals into the wild.

What this means for development. Works should identify protected plants and invasive non-native species during ecological survey where relevant. If invasive non-native species such as Japanese knotweed, Himalayan balsam, giant hogweed or rhododendron are present, specialist management, biosecurity and waste controls may be required to prevent spread.

