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Ecological Impact Assessment

Client

Gladman Developments Limited

Project

**Land off Cunnery Close,
Barlestone**

Date

March 2026

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY**Report Scope and Methodology**

The following report has been prepared by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd. on behalf of Gladman Developments Ltd. for a proposed residential development at Land off Cunnery Close, Barlestone (OS Grid reference SK 42196 05423), herein referred to as the 'Site'. This document should be read in conjunction with the Biodiversity Net Gain Report (FPCR, 2026).

Ecological Baseline

River Mease Special Area of Conservation (SAC) was located 8.8km from the Site. The Site was within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Newton Bugoland Marshes Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), located approximately 4.8km from the Site. There were two Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), nine candidate LWS (cLWS), six potential LWS (pLWS), and 12 historical pLWS within 1km of the Site, two of which were adjacent to the Site boundary.

The majority of the habitat on Site was arable habitat of limited conservation value. The Site contained four hedgerows, all of which were priority habitats and one of which constituted an Important Hedgerow. There was one individual tree the Site boundary and a small portion of other neutral grassland was present to the north.

The Site was suitable for a range of protected species including badger, bats, breeding and winter birds, great crested newt (GCN), otter and water vole. Other species assessed for habitat suitability on-site included reptiles. Rhododendron, an invasive species under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, was present in small amounts on Site.

Assessment of Impacts

No impacts are expected to occur at River Meade SAC or Newton Burgoland Marsh SSSI as a result of the development. Impacts to adjacent non-statutory sites are considered unlikely as a result of the development following the implementation of mitigation.

A small section of other neutral grassland will be lost as a result of the development. The ditch to the south of the Site, hedgerows and mature trees, are to be retained, protected and buffered from the development.

Mitigation and compensation measures are recommended to ensure that the development does not impact the protected and notable species assemblage which the site provides potential suitable habitat for, including badger, roosting, commuting and foraging bats, breeding and wintering birds, GCN, water vole, otter and hedgehog. Measures to prevent the spread of rhododendron are also included.

Recommended Mitigation, Compensation and Enhancement

Further surveys are underway for bats, breeding birds, otter and water vole, for which species-specific reports will be issued upon completion of the surveys. Based on the survey results to date, the assessment provided within this report and recommendations therein are considered unlikely to change following completion of these surveys. Further surveys are scheduled for bats, breeding birds, and otter and water vole between April and September 2026 in order to meet relevant guidelines for survey of protected species.

A Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is recommended to ensure that local wildlife sites, priority habitats and protected species such as badger, bats, birds, GCN,

hedgehog, otter and water vole are not impacted during ground clearance, earthworks and during construction.

An appropriate lighting scheme is recommended with reference to the Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance to reduce spill and be downwardly directional.

The Site falls within an Amber Zone for Natural England District Level License (DLL). The development will join the DLL unless GCN are shown to be likely absent through eDNA survey.

Under the indicative proposals, the scheme will achieve a gain of 10.30% in habitat units, 37.81% in hedgerow units and 15.60% in watercourse units. Full details of the BNG assessment prepared for the Site are provided in a separate Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report (FPCR 2026). Recommendations for the Site have been made for any new planting of trees and hedgerows to focus on native species, particularly fruit and nut-bearing varieties. All newly created habitats should be managed appropriately to maximise biodiversity.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 The following Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) has been prepared by FPCR Environment and Design Ltd. on behalf of the Gladman Developments Ltd. for an Outline Planning Application for the development of Land off Cunnery Close, Barlestone (Central OS Grid Ref: SK 42196 05423) herein referred to as 'the Site'.
- 2.2 To inform this assessment, ecological surveys are ongoing at the site. The results of surveys completed to date are included within this report. The survey data obtained to date indicates that the assessment of impacts are unlikely to change, however updated reports will be provided on completion of surveys.

Site Context

- 2.3 The Site is 6.53ha in extent and comprised one field of intensively managed arable land, with two hedgerows and a ditch on the southern boundary, and two hedgerows on the north-east boundaries. One individual tree was present on the northern boundary of the Site.
- 2.4 The landscape beyond the Site to the east, south and west was predominantly rural, consisting of arable and pasture, with a small area of woodland/scrub immediately to the west. Residential areas associated with Barlestone were located immediately north and north-east, and the A447 was approximately 250m south-east of the Site.

Site Proposals

- 2.5 The proposals for the Site are for the erection of up to 158 dwellings (including affordable housing) with public open space, landscaping and sustainable drainage system (SuDS) and vehicular access point. All matters reserved except for means of access.
- 2.6 Public Open Space is to comprise species-rich neutral grassland, mixed scrub and tree planting, in addition to the retention of boundary habitats. Proposals also included public open space in the form of LEAP and LAP areas, and footpaths along the west, south and eastern boundaries.

Report Aims and Objectives

- 2.7 This report has been prepared to achieve the following objectives:
- Provide a summary of the methods and results of survey work to establish an ecological baseline;
 - Identify and describe all potentially significant ecological effects associated with the proposed development on important ecological features;
 - Set out the mitigation measures required to ensure compliance with nature conservation legislation and to address any potentially significant ecological effects;
 - Provide an assessment of the significance of residual effects;
 - Identify appropriate enhancement measures and consider biodiversity net gain; and
 - Set out the requirements for post-construction monitoring.

3.0 LEGISLATION AND POLICY

3.1 This report has been prepared to establish an Ecological Baseline and to conduct an Ecological Impact Assessment on Important Ecological Features as informed by relevant international, national and local legislation and policy. Detail on the relevant national and local policy and legislation for ecology in relation to development sites are provided in Appendix A. The national policy and legislation most relevant to this assessment include:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (CHSR) (as amended) in relation to the European Protected Species (EPS) great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* (GCN) and bats (all species); and European protected sites i.e. Special Areas of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Internationally protected "Ramsar Sites" (collectively known as "National Site Network site" following the UK's exit from the EU). Annex II bat species of particular relevance in relation to SACs designated for bats.
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended) in relation to all wild birds (including Schedule 1 species), other animals (notably Schedule 5 species), flora (those listed in Schedules 8 and 9) and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- The Environment Act 2021 which covers a range of environmental protections and enhancements including requiring developments to demonstrate a mandatory biodiversity net gain following publication of secondary legislation;
- Protection of Badgers Act (PBA) 1992 which protects badgers from killing or harm;
- Natural Environmental and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 in relation to various priority species and habitats listed under Section 41 (S41);
- Hedgerow Regulations 1997 made under Section 97 of the Environment Act 1995;
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 which sets out the Government's planning policy for England including measures to conserve and enhance the natural environment by protecting and enhancing value landscapes, recognising the value and wider benefits of natural capital and minimising impacts/providing net gains for biodiversity;
- Local Nature Reserves (LNR) as designated most recently by the NERC Act 2006;
- Non-statutory protected local sites including County Wildlife Sites (CWS), Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and Ancient Woodland Inventory (AWI) sites;
- Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP), such as the Leicestershire County Council Biodiversity Action Plan for Woodland, Hedgerows and Mature Trees Habitats (2016);
- British Trust for Ornithology's (BTO) Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC);
- ODPM Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within the Planning System Circular 06/05; and
- NPPF Good Practice Guidance (2016).

4.0 METHODOLOGY

Desktop Study

- 4.1 In order to compile existing baseline information, relevant ecological information was requested from both statutory and non-statutory nature conservation organisations including:
- Leicester & Rutland Environmental Records Centre;
 - Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website (www.magic.defra.gov.uk); and
- 4.2 Inspection of colour 1:25,000 OS base maps (www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk) and aerial photographs from Google Earth (www.maps.google.co.uk) was also undertaken in order to provide additional context and identify any features of potential importance for nature conservation in the wider countryside.
- 4.3 The search area for biodiversity information was related to the significance of sites and species and potential zones of influence, as follows:
- 15km around the application area for sites of International Importance e.g. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Ramsar sites.
 - 2km around the application area for sites of National or Regional Importance e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and species records e.g. protected, Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) or notable species.
 - 1km around the application-site for sites of County Importance e.g. Biological Heritage Sites or Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).
- 4.4 When reporting consultation data, records were filtered to include only those from the previous 20 years, however, professional judgement has also been used and older records included where deemed appropriate to the overall assessment.

Previous Ecological Survey Work

- 4.5 As part of the Desktop Study, survey results included within an Ecological Appraisal produced for the Site in 2019 were reviewed. Previous surveys undertaken included, a badger survey, ground level tree assessment for bats, activity surveys including nighttime bat walkover surveys in May and June 2019, static detector surveys in May and June 2019, and a breeding bird survey in June 2017.

UKHab Survey

- 4.6 A field survey was conducted on 15th October, 2025. Survey methods broadly followed the UK Habitat Classification System¹ (UKHab) to map habitats present on-Site. This involved a systematic walk over of the Site to classify the broad habitat types and identify any Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) for the conservation of biodiversity as listed within Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006². Habitats were broadly

¹ Butcher, B., Edmonds, B., Norton, L., & Treweek, J. (n.d.) The UK Habitats Classification System V2. UKHab. Available at: <https://ukhab.org/>

² Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. London:HMSO. [Online]. Available at: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>

mapped in the field using a detailed topography map produced for the scheme using pens or pencils as appropriate.

- 4.7 Where feasible, target notes and species lists were compiled for individual areas and assessments of abundance were made using the DAFOR scale. Vascular plant nomenclature follows the latest edition of Stace (4th edition, 2019)³. Whilst the species lists collected should not be regarded as exhaustive, sufficient information was gained during the survey to enable classification and assessment of broad habitat types and identify features likely to be of interest.

Hedgerow Survey

- 4.8 The hedgerows were assessed against the Wildlife and Landscape criteria of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997⁴ to ascertain whether any qualified as 'Important' for nature conservation. All hedgerows were also assessed as to whether they qualified as Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC)², i.e. they consisted of 80% or more native woody species. An assessment of archaeological importance as defined under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997 was beyond the scope of this assessment.

Invasive Plants, Notifiable Weed Species and Other Notable Flora

- 4.9 Consideration has been given as to the presence of invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA 1981) and the presence of any notable weeds including those covered under the Weed Act 1959 (where population is significant enough to be considered injurious). Plant species on the Rare Plant Register for Vice County 55 (Leicestershire and Rutland) have also been considered.

Preliminary Protected Species Assessment

- 4.10 During the walkover survey, observations, signs of, or suitable habitat for, any species protected under Part I of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA), the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (CHSR) and the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 were recorded. Consideration was also given to the existence and use of the Site by other notable fauna such as WCA Schedule 1 bird species, Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) or Red Data Book (RDB) species.
- 4.11 Following this, a range of surveys were recommended for protected species that formed the baseline for the assessment, of which those completed to date include:
- Badger Survey;
 - Bat surveys including a Habitat Assessment, Ground Level Tree Assessment, October Static Monitoring Survey and Autumn Nighttime Bat Walkover Survey;
 - Wintering Bird Survey;
 - Otter and water vole Survey.

³ Stace, C.A. (2019) New Flora of the British Isles (4th Ed.). Cambridge: Cambridge University Press

⁴ The Hedgerow Regulations 1997. (SI 1160). London:HMSO. [Online]. Available at: [http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1997/1160/ contents/made](http://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/1997/1160/contents/made)

- 4.12 Surveys recommended and to be undertaken in 2026 include:
- Bat surveys including April – September Static Monitoring Surveys and Spring and Summer Nighttime Bat Walkover Survey;
 - Breeding bird Survey(s);
 - eDNA Survey for great crested newt;
 - Otter and water vole survey.
- 4.13 This report should also be read in conjunction with the Biodiversity Net Gain Report (FPCR, 2026).

Badger Survey

- 4.14 All suitable habitats within the Site, and accessible land within 30m were assessed for their ability to support badgers *Meles meles*. The standard methodology as recommended by Harris, Creswell and Jefferies (1989)⁶ was followed to identify any evidence to suggest the presence of the species, this evidence included;
- Setts: including earth mounds, evidence of bedding and runways between setts;
 - Latrines: often located close to setts, at territory boundaries or adjacent to favoured feeding areas;
 - Prints and paths or trackways;
 - Hairs caught on rough wood or fencing;
 - Other evidence: including snuffle holes, feeding and playing areas and scratching posts.
 - Evidence of the latter signs on their own cannot be used to confirm the presence of badgers. A collection of signs would need to be identified to confirm the presence of the species.
- 4.15 The status and activity level of any setts identified is categorised as follows:
- Main sett: usually continuously used with significant signs of activity, including a large number of holes and conspicuous spoil mounds;
 - Annexe sett: usually found close to a main sett and connected to it by well used paths. Such setts may not be continuously occupied;
 - Subsidiary sett: lesser-used setts usually comprising a few holes and without associated well-used paths. Such setts are not continuously occupied;
 - Outlier sett: one or two holes without obvious paths, with a very sporadic use.
- 4.16 With the level of activity described as:
- Active: clear of debris, trampled spoil mounds and obviously active e.g. presence of prints, dislodged guard hairs;
 - Partially active: some associated debris/moss/plants in the entrance. Could be used with minimal amount of excavation usually with signs in the vicinity of the sett e.g. badger paths etc.

⁶ Stephan Harris, Penny Cresswell and Jefferies (1989) Surveying Badgers The Mammal Society

- Disused: partially or completely blocked/collapsed.

Bat Survey

Habitat Assessment

- 4.17 An initial assessment of the Site's suitability for foraging and commuting bats was made on Site on 15th October 2025.
- 4.18 The habitat suitability was assessed using guidance from 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines'⁷. Table 4.1 of those guidelines provides an outline for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development Sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape.

Ground Level Tree Assessment

- 4.19 Ground level tree assessments (GLTA) were undertaken with the aid of binoculars on 15th October 2025 by suitably experienced ecologists from FPCR. Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) (based on p.16, British Standard 8596:2015 Surveying for bats in trees and woodland, October 2015) which were sought included:
- Natural holes (e.g. knot holes) arising from naturally shed branches or branches previously pruned back to a branch collar;
 - Man-made holes (e.g. cavities that have developed from flush cuts or cavities created by branches tearing out from parent stems;
 - Woodpecker holes;
 - Cracks/splits in stems or branches (horizontal and vertical);
 - Partially detached, loose or platy bark;
 - Cankers (caused by localised bark death) in which cavities have developed;
 - Other hollows or cavities, including butt rots;
 - Compression of forks with occluded bark, forming potential cavities;
 - Crossing stems or branches with suitable roosting space between;
 - Ivy stems with diameters in excess of 50mm with suitable roosting space behind (or where roosting space can be seen where a mat of thinner stems has left a gap between the mat and the trunk); and
 - Bat or bird boxes.
- 4.20 Certain factors such as orientation of the feature, its height from the ground, the direct surroundings, and its location in respect to other features may enhance or reduce the potential value.
- 4.21 Using professional judgement, the ground-based PRA assessment classified any trees identified based upon the presence of suitable features (Collins, 2023) in which the general bat

⁷ Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

roost potential groups are defined (refer Table 4.2 of the guidelines) and provided in Table 1 below.

Table 1: Suitability of Trees for Bats

Suitability	Description
NONE	Either no potential roost features or highly unlikely to be any.
FAR	F urther A ssessment R equired to establish if Potential Roost Features are present.
PRF	A tree with at least one P otential R oost F eature.

Bat Activity Surveys

Nighttime Bat Walkover

- 4.22 The primary objective of the nighttime bat walkover (NBW) was to identify foraging areas, commuting routes and to gain understanding of species utilisation of the Site.
- 4.23 A survey was completed in October 2025 (the autumn period) with further surveys scheduled for spring and summer in accordance with the survey guidelines (Collins, 2023).
- 4.24 In line with current guidance, nighttime bat walkovers are undertaken in two parts. The first part is undertaken by stationary surveyors positioned on habitat features most likely to be utilised as commuting routes by bats. Once conditions become too dark to see or once commuting activity has been observed and has largely ended, surveyors begin a walked transect sampling all areas and habitats within the Site noting any bat activity that is heard or observed along the way. Whilst this includes two elements it is one survey designed to record information to provide further context to elements that static detectors cannot always identify such as bat behaviour or abundance of bats.
- 4.25 The first part of the survey to observe flightpaths involved two surveyors being positioned at predetermined locations as shown on *Figure 4*. The survey started just before sunset and lasted for between 30 minutes and one hour after sunset. After this the walked transect was started and continued until two to three hours after sunset. The route followed during each transect will be repeated on each survey occasion, however, the starting point will be varied throughout the seasons. *Figure 4* shows the route of the transect and the start/ end points of each survey.
- 4.26 Surveyors were equipped with Wildlife Acoustics Inc. Echo Meter Touch® bat detectors in conjunction with Echo Meter Touch® app and Samsung Galaxy Tab Active 3® during the transect surveys to detect bats and aid species identification. Any bat activity observed during the survey was noted.

NBW Survey Timings

- 4.27 The timings for the NBW survey are summarised in Table 2.

Table 2: Nighttime Bat Walkover Timings

Survey Date	Sunset Time	Start Time (Flightline)	Start Transect	End Transect
21.10.2025	17:57	17:57	19:00	20:00

- 4.28 The data from the NBW survey was analysed as soon as possible after the survey using Kaleidoscope© (Wildlife Acoustics) software package, by taking measurements of the peak

frequency, inter-pulse interval, call duration and end frequency. From this, the level of bat activity across the Site in relation to the abundance of individual species foraging and commuting along habitats was assessed.

- 4.29 The NBW survey was undertaken during suitable conditions when the ambient air temperature exceeded 10°C and the wind was no more than a gentle breeze (Beaufort 3 or 5m/s) and little or no rain.

Weather Conditions

- 4.30 The weather conditions during the NBW survey are summarised in Table 3.

Table 3: Nighttime Bat Walkover Conditions

Survey Date	Start Temp (°C)	Wind Beaufort Scale	Rain	Cloud cover (%)
21.10.2025	12	2	Dry	70

Static Monitoring

- 4.31 In tandem with the NBW surveys, static (passive) monitoring was undertaken using an automated logging system (Wildlife Acoustics Inc. Song Meter® SM4BAT FS bat detectors with SMM-U2 microphones). During the survey period, two static recording devices were positioned within the Site to record bat registrations for at least five consecutive nights.
- 4.32 This was used to supplement NBW survey data and derive information on the activity and species composition on the Site. The number of static detectors to be used and location of deployment was determined so that a representative sample of all habitats within the Site could be monitored. The locations were subjectively predetermined using professional judgment to be positioned at least 15m away from any known or likely roosts and also in consideration of likely impacts. In order to provide rigorous analysis, static detectors were placed in the same location during each survey and these are shown on *Figure 4*.
- 4.33 The survey was completed in October 2025, with the remainder to be undertaken monthly from April to September 2026. The automated detectors were deployed during the following dates:
- 15th – 20th October 2025
- 4.34 Passive recording was undertaken using automated logging system Wildlife Acoustics Inc. SM4Bat FS bat detectors and outputs saved to an internal storage device. Detectors used SSM U2 microphones and were placed in each location for five consecutive nights of suitable conditions appropriate for the time of year. The conditions over each of the survey period were however representative for the timing of the survey. Detectors were programmed to activate 30 minutes before dusk and recorded continuously until 30 minutes following sunrise.
- 4.35 The data was analysed as soon as possible after retrieval of the static units using the Sonobat™ 30.1 (SonoBat™ Inc.) software package to assess the amount of bat activity on site by recording the number of bat registrations. Data was run through the auto-analysis function of the software with manual vetting taking place for a percentage of Annex II or other notable bat species (where recorded). Measurements including peak frequency, inter-pulse interval, call duration and end frequency were taken to aid in species identification. This analysis was completed by a suitably experienced ecologist (analysts are audited internally for quality control purposes and to maintain consistent results).

Limitations

- 4.36 Where calls could not be identified to species level, for example due to the lower quality of those recordings or where there are similarities between species echolocation calls (particularly for *Myotis* and *Nyctalus* bats) making a definite identification difficult, contacts were identified to family only.

Bird Survey

- 4.37 Best practice guidelines consider six survey (breeding)/ four survey (wintering) visits to be sufficiently robust to identify, estimate populations of, and understand the distributions of the majority of bird species using complex habitats (e.g. lowland deciduous woodland or wetland) supporting a wide range of bird species and that require heavy reliance on vocal encounters.
- 4.38 Habitats within the Site are significantly less complex, which permits greater emphasis to be afforded to visual encounters, and lack any seasonally constrained features that may require additional consideration. Thus, a reduced survey effort may be considered proportionate due to the law of diminishing returns where species detection is more efficacious.

Winter birds

- 4.39 A single survey was conducted in November 2025 and was considered to provide a robust level of accuracy for determining the population status of wintering birds in the survey area due to the small size and limited suitability of on-Site habitats.
- 4.40 The survey methodology employed was in accordance with the protocol specified within current best practice guidelines. All birds encountered (seen or heard) were recorded on a field survey plan using standard BTO species codes and symbols for bird activities and to denote activity, sex, and age where appropriate.
- 4.41 The route around the survey area was mapped out prior to the surveys being undertaken, paying particular attention to linear features, such as hedgerows and tree lines, and natural features such as ponds and areas of scrub. Information was recorded on bird behaviour, paying particular attention to any behavioural changes and their potential cause.
- 4.42 Bird surveys were not conducted in unfavourable conditions such as heavy rain or strong wind, (conditions which can negatively affect the results). Table 4 below provides details of the survey dates and weather conditions for the survey.

Table 4: Bird Survey Dates and Conditions

Survey	Date	Cloud Cover (%)	Rain	Wind	Visibility
Wintering Bird Surveys					
1	18.11.25	80	0	1 – Light air	Good

Otter & Water Vole Survey

Water Vole

- 4.43 The first presence/likely absence survey took place on September 29th 2025, with a second survey to take place in April 2026 in accordance with The Water Vole Conservation Handbook (3rd ed, 2011)⁸ and the Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (2016)⁹.

Habitat Assessment

- 4.44 An initial habitat assessment was made by an experienced surveyor to determine the suitability of habitats within the Site to support water voles. Habitat requirements were based on those detailed in para 3.3.2 of the Water Vole Mitigation Handbook and Water Vole Field Signs and Habitat Assessment¹⁰ and include:
- Dry areas above water level for nesting, either in burrows or above-ground woven nests;
 - Steep bank profiles;
 - Suitable bank substrate for burrowing;
 - Daily water level fluctuations;
 - Herbaceous marginal and bankside vegetation; and
 - Suitable water depth.
- 4.45 The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook outlines that water voles have the following three habitat requirements:
- Dry areas above water level for nesting (either in burrows or occasionally in woven nest balls);
 - Herbaceous vegetation to provide food and cover; and
 - Water (as a means of escape from predators).
- 4.46 This criterion is rationalised in a recently published matrix¹⁰ which can be used to assess the potential value of habitat for water vole (Table 5).

⁸ Strachan, R, Moorhouse, T, & Gelling, M. (2011). *Water Vole Conservation Handbook – Third Edition*. Oxford: WCRU, University of Oxford.

⁹ Dean, M., Strachan, R., Gow, D & Andrews, (2016) *The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook*. The Mammal Society Guidance Series. Eds F. Matthews & P. Chanin. The Mammal Society, London.

¹⁰ Dean, M, (2021), *Water Vole Field Signs and Habitat Assessment: A Practical Guide to Water vole Surveys*, Pelagic Publishing

Table 5: Assessing the value of habitat for water voles (Deans, 2021 – Table 21).

Habitat category	Bank Profile	Bank substrate	Variation in water level	Herbaceous vegetation	Water
	Dry areas for burrows or nests				
Optimal (all criteria need to be met)	Steep (approaching 1:1) on at least one side of a watercourse. Steep or shallow banks on static waterbodies or fen-type habitat, where water levels do not fluctuate significantly	Earth or peat	No noticeable variation during the summer months; banks are not overtopped regularly ^a	Continuous swathe of tall and luxurious riparian vegetation providing 90-100% cover on the banks (tall tussocky grassland) and marginal/in-channel vegetation is present (emergent species)	Permanent water
Good (all criteria need to be met)	Steep (approaching 1:1) on at least one side of a watercourse. Steep or shallow banks on static waterbodies or fen-type habitat, where water levels do not fluctuate significantly	Earth or peat bank, or stony/reinforced bank with gaps allowing access to the earth behind	No noticeable variation during the summer months; banks are not overtopped regularly	Continuous swathe of bankside or in-channel (emergent) vegetation providing at least 60% ground cover. May be dominated by grasses and weeds, rather than luxurious riparian vegetation. The vegetation should generally be tall, except in urban or suburban areas, where shorted bankside vegetation may also qualify	Permanent water. Or routinely wet for at least 2-3 months during the summer, and where other 'good' habitat is present in immediately adjacent areas with permanent water
Suitable but poor ^b	Any habitat that falls short of the criteria to qualify as 'good' but does not meet the criteria of 'negligible value' could reasonably be considered to be suitable but 'poor'				
Negligible value (will generally need to meet the criteria for herbaceous vegetation and at least one other)	Shallow profile on both banks	Rocky or gravel, unsuitable for burrowing	Considerable variation in water level – the bank toe can move by more than 1m horizontally over the breeding season	No or limited bankside and marginal vegetation (due to shading or other 'permanent' factors – note that management can change and is often a 'temporary' factor)	n/a
	Vertical bank face with no burrowing opportunities behind it	Reinforced banks with no gaps	n/a		n/a

a. overtopping once every 5-10 years is likely to be too frequent in most cases; overtopping less frequently than this may also be problematic for water voles.

b. the term 'suitable but poor' is used to avoid the possible misinterpretation of this habitat category opposed to the term 'poor', which some would dismiss as 'unsuitable'.

Field Survey

- 4.47 Survey involved the identification of evidence of water vole activity within 5m of the banks of ditch D1 on Site. The survey of ditch D1 extended beyond the boundaries of the site. The

combined surveys will be undertaken by experienced ecologists during suitable timings to account for fluctuations in water vole activity throughout the season.

4.48 Where possible the survey was conducted by walking within the channel of the watercourse, otherwise it was surveyed by walking along the bank and inspecting with binoculars. Evidence of signs to confirm presence was searched for especially on exposed natural berms, tree roots, and accumulated debris. This included:

- Water voles – live sightings;
- Latrines – distinct piles of water vole droppings found near nest sites, at the ranges of territorial boundaries and where the animals enter and leave the water. The presence of droppings is the only field sign which can be used reliably on its own;
- Burrows – burrow entrances are typically wider than high with a diameter between 4 and 8cm. Generally, these burrow entrances are located at the water's edge;
- Feeding stations – areas with distinct neat piles of chewed lengths of vegetation along pathways or haul out platforms along the water's edge;
- Footprints – identifiable prints in soft margins of the watercourse;
- Runways – low tunnels that are pushed through the vegetation and often leading to burrows or feeding stations; and
- Nest balls – woven vegetation of approximately the size and shape of a rugby ball, usually found within a tuft of vegetation above the water line.

Otter

4.49 A late season survey took place on 29th September 2025, with another survey due to take place in April 2026.

4.50 In order to determine presence/likely absence and status of otters which may be using the Site, signs of otter activity were searched for following the methodologies detailed within the New Rivers and Wildlife Handbook¹¹. Potential signs include:

- Spraints – characteristic sweet-smelling, black tar-like (where fresh/relatively recent i.e. within a few weeks) or grey crumbly (when old) faecal deposits usually containing fish scales, bones and occasionally invertebrate exoskeleton and bird feathers;
- Footprints – In good substrate typically asymmetrical and showing five toes arched around a large pad and, depending on substrate, webbing and claw marks. Poorer, generally coarser substrates do not often enable the identification of otter footprints.

4.51 Additional signs of otter presence may occur, although without additional evidence these signs are usually inconclusive proof of current otter presence:

- Feeding remains – Remains of fish;
- Slides/haul-outs – Routes into and out of the water, which are usually associated with terrestrial routes such as short cuts around meanders or along traditionally, used otter paths/routes;

¹¹Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB), National Rivers Authority (NRA) and Royal Society for Nature Conservation (RSNC). (1994) The New Rivers and Wildlife Handbook. Eds. Ward D., Holmes N., Jose P. RSPB, Sandy, Bedfordshire

- Couches/hovers – above ground resting place. Usually associated with cover such as dense scrub, rushes or reed, flood debris or fallen trees. Many couches are rarely used whilst others more so. Difficult to prove use without radio or camera tracking;
- Holts – below ground resting site usually associated with sprinting. Sometimes used with greater frequency than couches and can be important for breeding (natal holts) where other signs are usually absent. Notoriously difficult to find or prove without radio or camera tracking.

Impact Assessment

4.52 The assessment of significant ecological effects has been undertaken in accordance with CIEEM EclA guidelines. In summary, the process involves:

- **Establish Baseline** – this is based on desk study and field surveys which describes the existing and potential Important Ecological Features (IEFs) within the zones of influence specified.
- **Determine the Scale of Importance of Ecological Features** – importance is determined using geographical frames of reference: Local, Country, Regional, National and International. This assessment is based on a variety of factors, including statutory protection, statutory designation, conservation status, abundance and rarity.
- **Assess Significant Ecological Effects** – based on the importance of the ecological feature, magnitude of the effect and sensitivity of the features considered. This is description-based rather than applying a matrix which considers construction and operation effects only where relevant. The assessment assumes the proposed layout, intrinsic mitigation and routine ecological mitigation normally conditioned, and these are outlined clearly.
- **Mitigation** – This will be based on the mitigation hierarchy – avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement. Any further mitigation measures required will be outlined to ensure residual effects are lowered to a level considered acceptable. Enhancements will seek biodiversity net gain in line with the NPPF and the Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan¹² Policy NAT07: Protecting Biodiversity and Policy NAT08: Enhancing Biodiversity and habitat connectivity. Monitoring will be considered where applicable.
- **Future Baseline and Residual Effects** – final conclusionary statements for the short, medium and long term.

Limitations

4.53 This assessment aims to provide baseline ecological data for the site and as such presents an overview of the habitats and features present. Due to the transient and complex nature of ecosystems, no investigation can provide a complete representation of prediction of the natural environment present, however, every effort has been made to ensure an accurate description of the Site is presented following best practice guidance, experience and professional judgement.

¹² Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council (2021) Consultation Draft Plan Regulation 18 – Hinckley & Bosworth Local Plan 2020-2039. Available at: [Local Plan 2020 - 2041 | Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council](#)

- 4.54 The UKHab survey was completed just outside of the recommended survey season, however results are considered to be representative of the Site, and habitats found on Site were of low ecological value and considered unlikely to change.
- 4.55 The UKHab survey took into consideration the presence of invasive non-native species, however this survey did not constitute a full survey for the presence of this group which would come with its own survey requirements.
- 4.56 No other limitations specific to this survey influenced this assessment.

5.0 RESULTS

Desktop Study

Statutory Designated Sites

- 5.1 The locations of designated Sites identified within the desktop study search area have been presented on *Figure 1*.
- 5.2 The Site does not fall within the designation boundary of any site of international, national or regional nature conservation importance. A single site of international importance is present within 15km and no sites of national importance are present within 2km of the application site.
- 5.3 The River Mease SAC is located approximately 8.8km to the north-west at its closest point. Annex II species that are a primary reason for the designation of this SAC are spined loach *Cobitis taenia* and bullhead *Cottus gobio*, both internationally notable species that occur as nationally significant populations within the river. Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not primary reasons for site selection are white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* and otter *Lutra lutra*. Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature but not a primary reason for site selection are Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculus fluitantis* and *Callitriche-Batrachion* vegetation.
- 5.4 Given the distance from the site to the SAC and its location outside of the River Mease catchment area¹³, any significant effects as a result of the proposals are considered unlikely. The River Mease SAC has therefore been scoped out of further assessment.

SSSI Risk Impact Zones

- 5.5 There were no nationally significant designated sites within 2km of the Site boundary, however a review of the MAGIC on-line database confirmed that the site is located on the outer limit of the SSSI Impact Risk Zones for Newton Burgoland Marshes SSSI located approximately 4.8km north-west of the Site. Residential development is not listed as a development type that Natural England would consider as a potential impact risk to the SSSI given the intervening distance. The Site is isolated from the SSSI by a network of roads; therefore, no direct impact is anticipated to the conservation value of this site. Indirect impacts are unlikely given the relatively small scale of the development, the intervening distance and availability of public footpaths in the surrounding countryside. Newton Burgoland Marshes SSSI has therefore been scoped out of further assessment.

Non-Statutory Designated Sites

- 5.6 Two Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), nine Candidate LWS (cLWS), six Potential LWS (pLWS) and 12 historic pLWS were located within 1km of the Site (*Figure 1*).
- 5.7 Three sites were immediately adjacent to the Site: A historic pLWS to the west and east of the Site and Barlestone Bosworth Rd Hedge (east side) is a cLWS to the east.
- 5.8 Given the nature of the development and the proximity the non-statutory sites, all are scoped into further assessment and considered to be of up to County importance.

¹³ http://www.south-derbys.gov.uk/Images/River%20Mease%20Catchment%20Area%20Map_tcm21-209510.pdf

Protected/Notable Species

- 5.9 The locations of protected species records provided by LRERC are shown on *Figure 2a* and *Figure 3b*. Species records were returned from the record centre from a 1km radius (*Figure 2a*), though bat records were provided at a 2km radius (*Figure 2b*).

Mammals

- 5.10 Many of the bat records returned from within 2km of the Site are centred around Barlestone Wet Woodland and Marsh cLWS, which is located 244m to the east of the Site. The closest record was one on-Site record of common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and several species were recorded to the east of the Site along Bosworth Road, including serotine *Eptesicus serotinus*, Whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus*, noctule *Nyctalus noctule*, Nathusius' pipistrelle *Pipistrellus nathusii* common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*. Several roost records were also returned, the closest of which was a non-maternity summer roost of common pipistrelle located around Bosworth Road, c. 65m east of the Site.
- 5.11 Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* and badger *Meles meles* have been recorded within 1km of the Site, the closest of which for hedgehog was 47m north of the Site within Cunnery Close and for badger was 148m east within Goatham Plantations. Badger, polecat and hare were recorded 427m south-west of the Site in Osbaston Meadow LWS.
- 5.12 Records of otter *Lutra lutra* and water vole approximately 500m south-east of the Site were returned within areas that are potentially connected to the Site via ditch D1.

Birds

- 5.13 21 species of bird were recorded within 1km of the Site, several of which were recorded in May Meadow and adjacent sites, a cLWS, approximately 140m north-east of the Site. Most notable records within this area include Schedule 1 species redwing *Turdus iliacus*, fieldfare *Turdus philomelos* and peregrine falcon *Falco peregrinus*.

Herpetofauna

- 5.14 The closest record of Great Crested Newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* was 837m of the Site, within a historical pLWS (Fig 1; 26). Common toad *Bufo bufo* were recorded 175m south-east of the Site within a cLWS stream (Fig 1; 5). Records confirming breeding for common toad were also returned from Fulford Pond, approximately 130m south-east of the Site.

Invasive Non-Native Species

- 5.15 Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* has been recorded 260m from the Site, in a stream to the south-east of the Site potentially connected to ditch D1.

Notable Invertebrates

- 5.16 Several notable invertebrate species records were returned from within 1km of the Site, the closest of which being the beaded chestnut *Agrochola lychnidis*, mouse moth *Amphipyra tragopoginis*, and rosy rustic *Hydraecia micacea*, all recorded 105m north-west of the Site within residential development.

Notable Plants

- 5.17 Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* has been recorded along Bosworth Road, east of Barlestone Community Centre, 84m east of the Site.

Field Survey

UKHab Survey

- 5.18 The locations of the habitats described below are illustrated in *Figure 3: Baseline Habitats Plan*.

Arable

- 5.19 Much of the Site consisted of a field of arable land, present as winter stubble, at the time of survey with no field margins of higher quality habitat. The land is under a rotation system of maize: winter wheat: winter wheat, and herbicides and insecticides were spread onto the stubble in preparation for the second season of winter wheat at the time of survey.
- 5.20 This species poor and highly managed habitat was considered to be typical of arable environments and was a common and widespread habitat with limited ecological value. This habitat was therefore considered not to be an important ecological feature within the context of this assessment.



Photograph 1. Winter stubble comprising majority of Site habitat

Other Neutral Grassland

- 5.21 A small, fenced off and unmanaged section of other neutral grassland was present on the northern edge of the Site. It consisted of grass species such as false oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, cocksfoot *Dactylis glomerata*, red fescue *Festuca rubra* and herbaceous species such as field bindweed *Convolvulus arvensis* and broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolia*.
- 5.22 This grassland habitat was a species-poor example with minimal connections to the wider landscape. It is a common and widespread habitat typical of arable environments with limited

ecological value. This habitat was therefore considered not to be an important ecological feature within the context of this assessment.



Photograph 2. Other neutral grassland to north of Site.

Trees

- 5.23 30 trees were present on and immediately adjacent to the Site¹⁴, of which only one (T27) was located outside of a hedgerow. T27 was a mature pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* tree located along the northern edge of the Site.
- 5.24 The tree resource comprised native species, the majority of which were classified as being of moderate quality within the Arboricultural Assessment, and provide habitat for wildlife within the Site. Therefore, trees are considered to be of importance at a Local scale.

Hedgerows

- 5.25 A total of four hedgerows were present onsite. Table 6 provides a summary description of each hedgerow and an assessment of their importance and priority habitat status.

Table 6: Onsite Hedgerow Descriptions

Ref	Canopy Species	Length Height Width	Description	Priority Habitat?	Important under REGS?
H1	Cm, Rc, Sn, Fe, Ca, Ug, Sc, Qr, Ps	85m 4m 3m	H1 was a c. 85m long species-rich hedgerow located along the north-east side of ditch D1. It comprised abundant blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i> with frequent wych elm <i>Ulmus glabra</i> , and occasional hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> , dog rose <i>Rosa canina</i> , elder <i>Sambucus nigra</i> , ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> , hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> , and pedunculate oak. It's ground flora consisted of the commonly occurring common ivy <i>Hedera helix</i> , common	✓	X

¹⁴ FPCR (2026) Arboricultural Assessment – Land off Cunners Close, Barlestone

			nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i>, bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> and field horsetail <i>Equisetum arvense</i>. The hedgerow supported an average of 5 species per 30m sample section. It had <10% gaps, connections scoring 3 points, and a ditch for over 50% of its length however it did not meet the definition of an important hedgerow.		
H2	Ac, Fe, Cm, Rc, Qr, Ca, Ia, Sc, Ah, Up, Ps	210m 5m 2m	H2 was a continuation east of H1 of the boundary features along the southern edge of the Site. However, it was different in structure and management. It was approximately 210m in length and was made up mostly of field maple <i>Acer campestre</i> with locally frequent goat willow <i>Salix caprea</i> and blackthorn, occasional hawthorn, dog rose, pedunculate oak, and hazel. English elm <i>Ulmus procera</i> and horse chestnut <i>Aesculus hippocastanum</i> were found at rare frequencies. Ground flora consisted primarily of common ivy. There were a number of trees within the length of the hedgerow including mature ash and oak, and young ash, field maple, oak and goat willow. Hedgerow H2 was considered an important hedgerow under the Hedgerow Regulations due to its average of >6 woody species per 30m survey length, the presence of >1 tree per 50m length, <10% gaps, and the presence of a ditch along at least 50% of its length.	✓	✓
H3	Ac, Rc, Qr, Cm, Pa, Ca	180m 13 3	Hedgerow H3 was located on the Site's eastern boundary and was approximately 180m in length. It was dominated by field maple, with occasional hawthorn, and rare instances of wild cherry <i>Prunus avium</i>, hazel, dog rose, and pedunculate oak. It was overgrown but managed heavily up to 1.5m of its height. Owing to its species-poor nature, and lack of sufficient associated features, it did not meet the definition of an important hedgerow.	✓	X
H4	Ac, Cm, Fe, Rc	175m 13 3	Hedgerow H4 was located along the Site's eastern boundary and was approximately 175m in length. It was dominated by field maple, with occasional hawthorn and rare instances of ash and dog rose. The hedgerow was overgrown at the canopy but heavily pruned up until approximately 2m of its height. Ground flora was largely made up of common ivy. Owing to its species poor nature, and lack of sufficient associated features, it did not meet the definition of an important hedgerow.	✓	X

Key: Ac: Field maple *Acer campestre*; Ah: Horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum*; Ca: Hazel *Corylus avellana*; Cm: Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*; Fe: Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*; Ia: Holly *Ilex aquifolium*; Pa: Wild cherry *Prunus avium*; Ps: Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*; Qr: Pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*; Rc: Dog rose *Rosa canina*; Sc: Goat willow *Salix caprea*; Sn: Elder *Sambucus nigra*; Ug: Wych elm *Ulmus glabra*; Um: Elm *Ulmus minor*; Up: English elm *Ulmus procera*.

- 5.26 As the hedgerows were all priority habitats and H2 an important hedgerow, they were considered to be of importance at a Local scale.

Wet ditch

- 5.27 A 315m long ditch was located along the south of the Site, running west to east with a sluggish flow. The ditch was between 0.5-1m wide and the banks were flat-to-shallow throughout with minimal vegetation. Water depth was >0.5m with little aquatic vegetation and the ditch was shaded throughout. Substrate changed from gravel to more silt/mud as it moved east.

- 5.28 The ditch was considered to be of importance at a Local scale.

Other

- 5.29 *Rhododendron ponticum* was present as a small section of shrubbery in the north-eastern corner of the Site. *Rhododendron* is listed on Schedule 9 of the WCA 1981 (as amended) and due to the legislative considerations, this is included as an important ecological feature in a legislative context.

Protected Species

The Site is considered to have the potential to support the following species/groups:

- Bats;
 - Badgers;
 - Birds;
 - Herpetofauna;
 - Invasive Non-Native Species; and
 - Otter & water vole.
- 5.30 *Table 7* summarises the key findings during the surveys undertaken to date. Full details of the further surveys will be provided upon completion.

Table 7: Summary of Protected / Notable Species Assessments

Species/Group	Survey Results Summary and / or Site Suitability Assessment
Badger	No setts were recorded on Site or in suitable habitat within a 30m buffer of the Site. Suitable habitat for foraging badger was present on Site in the form of a small portion of other neutral grassland and arable habitat (which may provide a seasonal foraging resource depending on crop type) with well-formed boundary features and there was evidence of site use including droppings, hair, and scavenged hedgehog remains. No badger setts were recorded during previous surveys of the Site in 2019. Badger are common and widespread in England and the Site is therefore considered to be of no more than Local value for this species. The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 however requires development proposal to have regard for this species.

Bats	T12, a mature ash tree within hedgerow H2, was assessed from ground level and recorded to contain Potential Roost Features (PRFs), with Further Assessment Required (FAR) if impacted by the proposals. The rest of the trees on Site were also assessed and were of negligible suitability for roosting bats (NONE). The perimeter hedgerows, treelines and ditch corridor were of value to bats for foraging and commuting, providing links around the site and into the wider area. The arable land was considered to be of limited value due to its homogenous nature and lack of diversity and is unlikely to provide a rich source of invertebrates as a foraging resource. Six bat species were recorded during activity surveys in October 2025, including common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, noctule, <i>Nyctalus sp.</i>, brown long-eared bat, and <i>Myotis spp.</i> Common pipistrelle provided the highest percentage of registrations across the survey period to date with 73.35% of total registrations recorded during the static survey. Results of activity surveys in 2025 are so far consistent with findings in 2019, which both found unremarkable use of the Site that is consistent with a locally important bat population. The Site provides moderate quality foraging and commuting habitat for an assemblage of common and widespread bat species and is therefore considered to be of Local importance. Further activity surveys are to be undertaken in 2026 in line with the Bat Survey Guidelines.
Birds	A single Winter Bird Survey was undertaken on 18th November 2025. Details of which can be found in Appendix C. A total of 21 species have been recorded within the survey area, including nine 'notable' species – i.e. those that appear on WCA Sch.1, NERC S.41 species of principle importance or the BTO BoCC red/amber lists. Species recorded are typical of the habitat present onsite and all are considered to be common and widespread species, typical of the farmland and boundary habitats. Arable habitats onsite were of limited suitability for the majority of species recorded, with only woodpigeon and kestrel, both amber listed species, recorded foraging. The Site provides some foraging habitat for the winter bird assemblage, particularly boundary hedges and woodland to the east of the Site. However, with the limited assemblage of common and widespread species and low numbers recorded, the Site is considered to be of no more than Local importance for its winter bird assemblage. Breeding bird survey(s) are to be completed in 2026. Previous survey undertaken in 2019 found Site to be generally of limited value for bird species due to the limited botanical and structural diversity, with the majority of bird species recorded common and widespread and typical of the habitats present.
Herpetofauna	The pond P1, located approximately 130m to the south-east of the Site may have the potential to support GCN. The 2019 Ecological Appraisal indicates that historic surveys (2013) undertaken for GCN did not record this species. The Site provided some limited suitable terrestrial for GCN at the boundaries, however the arable land dominating the Site was of negligible value.

	An eDNA survey is to be completed in 2026, if access can be obtained to the off-Site pond P1. The Site was therefore considered to be of potentially no more than Local Importance for GCN. The small portion of other neutral grassland to the north of the Site was isolated due to the surrounding unsuitable habitat which comprised of residential development, roads and arable fields. The arable field margins were narrow and not connected to off-site suitable habitat in the wider area. Given these factors and the small size of the study area it was deemed to be unsuitable to support a viable reptile population and this species group has been scoped out of the assessment. No further survey is therefore required for reptiles.
Invasive Non-Native Species	Mink <i>Neogale vison</i> footprints were identified within the ditch D1 to the Site's west during the otter & water vole surveys. Due to the legislative considerations, this species is included as an important ecological feature in a legislative context.
Notable Invertebrates	The intensively managed arable habitat and low diversity neutral grassland found on Site was deemed to be unlikely to support any meaningful notable invertebrate assemblages. Invertebrates have therefore been scoped out of the assessment.
Otter & water vole	One watercourse (D1) was present on Site, located along the southern perimeter. The channel contained very little vegetation suitable for water voles to feed upon, and the flat, over-shaded banks were considered unsuitable for water voles to establish burrows in. No evidence to indicate the presence of otter or water vole was recorded in association with the site at the time of the first otter and water vole survey. There were suitable foraging and commuting habitats for otter but there were no exposed tree root systems along the banks of the stream considered suitable for holt or laying up sites and the stream was considered too shallow to support a high density of suitable prey species. The lack of aquatic vegetation meant that the habitat, though suitable, was poor for water voles. No evidence of either species was recorded on-site in 2019. A further survey is to be completed in 2026. The Site was considered to be of potentially no more than Local Importance for these species.
Other notable species	A hedgehog carcass was found within the access grassland to the north of the Site, suggesting the use of the area by this species for refuge, foraging and commuting. The Site was considered to be of potentially no more than Local Importance for these species.

Summary of Important Ecological Features

- 5.31 The suite of surveys has thus far demonstrated that the proposals have the potential to affect a range of important ecological features. These are summarised in *Table 8* and assigned a geographic context based on survey results, relevant legislation and policy.

Table 8: Summary of Important Ecological Features

Important Ecological Feature	Relevant Legislation/Policy	Geographic Scale	Rationale
Habitats	BAP, LBAP, S41, HRegs	Local	Hedgerow H2 was deemed to be an Important Hedgerow in accordance with The Hedgerow Regulations (1997) and the all hedgerows are considered to be a priority habitat^{2,15} Three mature trees on Site are deemed Habitats of Local Importance as per the LBAP¹⁶.
Badger	Bern3, PBA	Local	Suitable habitat for foraging badger is present on Site, with evidence of site-use found to be present. No Setts were identified on Site or within suitable adjacent habitat.
Bats	BAP, Bern2, Bonn2, CHS2, HDir2, HDir4, LBAP, S41, WCA5	Local	Potential roosting habitat in the form of T12 was found on Site. Low levels of common bat species activity have been recorded onsite and there are commuting and foraging opportunities provided by boundary habitats.
Birds - Breeding	WCA1, NERC S41, UKBR/UKBA	Local	Breeding bird surveys yet to be undertaken, however, on-site habitats are considered to provide suitable habitat for an assemblage of common and widespread urban edge/generalist species and woodland edge species.
Birds - Wintering	WCA1, S41, UKBR/UKBA	Local	On-site arable habitats provided limited foraging suitability for the assemblage recorded, with only woodpigeon and hunting kestrel recorded utilising the field. The boundary features to the west, which included woodland continuing off-site, held the most importance and much of the assemblage.
Herpetofauna	WCA5, HDir4, BAP, S41	Local	On-site habitat would provide suitable terrestrial hibernacula for GCN and other amphibians, with connections to suitable breeding habitat within 250m of the Site (Fulford Pond to the east).

¹⁵ Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) Section 41. Species and Habitats of Principal Importance.

¹⁶ LERC (2016) Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland Biodiversity Action Plan.

Invasive Non-Native Species	WCA9, INNS	Local	A small stand of Rhododendron was identified within the north-eastern corner of the Site. Mink footprints were identified adjacent to the Site within ditch D1.
Otter and water vole	BAP, Bern2, CHS2, CITES-A, HDir2, HDir4, LBAP, S41, WCA5	Local	Suitable, albeit poor, habitat for otter and water vole was found on Site in the ditch D1 on the southern boundary of the Site.
Other species	BAP, Bern3, S41	Local	Hedgehog were found to use the Site for foraging and commuting, with suitable habitat found in the other neutral grassland on the north and in the boundary features to the west, south and east.

Key: BAP: UK Biodiversity Action Plan; Bern2: Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, Appendix 2; Bern 3: Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats, Appendix 3; Bonn2: Bonn Convention on the Conservation of Migratory Species of Wild Animals, Appendix 2; CHS2: The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, Schedule 2; CHS4: The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010, Schedule 4; CITES-A: Convention on International Trade in Endangered Species, Annex A; HDir2: Habitats Directive, Annex II; HDir4: Habitats Directive, Annex IV; INNS: Invasive Non-Native Species; LBAP: Leicestershire & Rutland Local Biodiversity Action Plan; LRPR (2022): VC55 Rare Plant Register 2022; PBA: Protection of Badgers Act; S41: Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 Section 41; UKBA: RSPB/BTO Birds of Conservation Concern – Amber List (not based on IUCN criteria); UKBR: RSPB/BTO Birds of Conservation Concern – Red List (not based on IUCN criteria); WCA1.1: Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 1.1; WCA5: Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 5; WCA9: Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 9.

6.0 DISCUSSION

Development Proposals and Intrinsic Mitigation

- 6.1 The proposals are for an Outline Planning Application for the development of the site for new homes along with the creation of access, landscaping and associated works to facilitate the development.
- 6.2 The proposals have sought ecological input during an early phase of the design process to ensure that the impacts on ecological receptors will be kept to a minimum. The results of faunal surveys have been used to design the scheme to keep negative impacts to a minimum. The proposed scheme includes the following intrinsic ecological avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures:
- Green infrastructure (GI) proposals will provide opportunities for habitat creation, including species-rich meadow grassland, mixed scrub, and SuDS habitats.
 - Mature trees will be retained where possible, with root protection areas (RPA) adequately buffered. Tree loss does not occur within the proposed scheme.
 - Hedgerows will be retained where possible and adequately buffered within the development.
 - Development platforms have been sited on areas which are currently subject to intensive management and which are dominated by arable that are common and widespread habitats.
 - SuDS basins and swales will provide a green/blue corridor through the scheme. These offer opportunities for habitat creation and increased habitat diversity.
 - Proposals include additional tree planting within the development area, with them included along streets and within GI areas to create groups of individual urban trees.

Biodiversity Net Gain and Habitat Enhancements

- 6.3 A Statutory Biodiversity Metric has been completed for the application. This metric demonstrates that the proposals are capable of achieving a biodiversity net gain in excess of the minimum 10% requirement of the Environment Act for habitat and watercourse units, but not for hedgerow units. Under the indicative proposals, the scheme will achieve a gain of 10.30% in habitat units, 37.81% in hedgerow units and 15.60% in watercourse units. Full details of the BNG assessment prepared for the Site are provided in a separate BNG Report (FPCR 2026)¹⁷.

¹⁷ Biodiversity Net Gain Report – Land off Cunners Close (FPCR, 2026).

Standard Mitigation - Core Documents

6.4 The following lists the core documents that will secure the mitigation and enhancement measures described in this report. They can be secured through appropriately worded pre-commencement planning conditions, attached to the application to be submitted and discharged prior to the commencement of works.

- **Construction and Environmental Management Plan for Ecology (CEMP: Ecology):** This pre-commencement document contains the necessary Method Statements to ensure protected species are not unlawfully harmed during ground clearance, earthworks and during construction. The document will include an Ecological Constraints and Mitigation Plan drawing that clearly shows the location of constraints and details mitigation required, where necessary. This will also provide measures for removal WCA Sch9 Invasive Non-native plant species from the Site.
- **Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP):** this provides planting/landscape information that includes both the landscape and ecology features and their management for an appropriate period. In accordance with the planning practice guidance (PPG) for BNG, this document can be submitted as part of a Biodiversity Gain Plan once full planning permission has been received. This document can also include ecological enhancement and management information as appropriate to demonstrate how the biodiversity net gain measures will be delivered and can also include the final Ecological Mitigation and Enhancement Plan that shows location of wildlife boxes and other proposed features.

Assessment of Likely Significant Effects on Important Ecological Features

6.5 The status of the important ecological features (IEFs) identified within the survey area have been reviewed against the proposals and intrinsic mitigation to determine whether there are any impact pathways and whether any of these will lead to a likely significant effect. These are assessed in *Table 9*. The requirement for additional mitigation measures above the intrinsic mitigation has been considered for each of the IEFs where they can reduce the scale of negative effects or encourage a positive effect.

Table 9. Assessment of Likely Significant Effects on Important Ecological Features

IEF: Non-Statutory Sites	
Assessment of Impacts	Two LWS, nine candidate LWS, six potential LWS, and 12 historic potential LWS were located within 1km of the site, with two historic pLWS (Rough Grassland and Tall Herbs to the west, and Marsh to the east) and one cLWS (Barlestone, Bosworth Rd Hedge (east side)) adjacent. There will be no loss of habitat from non-statutory sites as a result of the proposals. Increased visitor pressure and recreational footfall as a result of the proposed development is not anticipated due to either a lack of public access or their proximity to the Site. The Rough Grassland and Tall Herbs historic pLWS is publicly accessible and previously appeared to have been regularly used for recreation. However, scrub succession has resulted in the site being less accessible to the public. An abundance of other public footpaths and bridleways are expected to

	provide adequate release of the increase in recreational pressure from the Local Wildlife Sites as a result of the proposed development. Given the close proximity of the three adjacent non-statutory sites, there is potential for impacts from pollution incidents and dust deposition.
Predicted Effect	In the absence of mitigation, there is potential for a not-significant negative effect at a county scale.
Mitigation	A Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be developed to ensure that there are no impacts on adjacent Local Wildlife Sites during the construction phase of the development.
Compensation	N/A
Enhancement	N/A
Residual Effects	The successful implementation of the mitigation measures outlined above would ensure that residual effects related to pollution impacts to Neutral.
IEF: Habitats (hedgerows, trees and watercourse)	
Assessment of Impacts	Several habitats present within and adjacent to the site including trees, native hedgerows H1-H4 (including hedgerow H2, which qualified as 'Important' under the Hedgerow Regulations) and the watercourse (D1). All these features are to be retained by current proposals. During the construction phase, there will be the potential for disturbed soil to enter the ditch, and/or accidental fuel and other pollutant spillages to enter the ditch resulting in a potential negative effect on flora and fauna. During the operational phase there remains a risk of negative impacts from silt laden surface water entering the ditch through the Site's drainage system, together with surface water contamination from, for example petrochemicals, which are toxic to aquatic life. The retained trees and hedgerows have the potential to be impacted during construction by accidental damage and via dust deposition. In the absence of mitigation, this could result in habitat loss or degradation.
Predicted Effect	In the absence of mitigation, there is potential for a not significant negative effect at a local scale.
Mitigation	Retained trees and hedgerows should be suitably protected throughout the construction works i.e. working methods will adhere to standard best practice guidance including BS5837 Trees in Relation to Construction – Recommendations: 2012 for trees and hedgerows. The proposed scheme includes a riparian buffer zone along the southern boundaries of at least 10m width, and new planting to reduce informal encroachment of the existing banks, and a sustainable urban drainage basin to reduce the intensity of water run-off.

	All site preparation and construction work on Site will be undertaken in accordance with all relevant "good practice guidance" to be set out in the CEMP, including the Control of Pollution (Oil Storage) (England) Regulations 2001 and the Guidance for Pollution Prevention - Works and maintenance in or near water: GPP5 ¹⁸ in order to minimise the risk of disturbance or pollution of the ditch.
Compensation	Approximately 108 small, urban trees will be planted as part of the proposed scheme. It is recommended that locally occurring native tree species and/or flower/fruit/seed bearing species of known wildlife value are used to enhance the value of the Site for foraging wildlife. Approximately 370m of species-rich native hedgerow will be created as part of the proposed scheme.
Enhancement	Ditch D1 will be informally enhanced through the reduction of encroachment on its north side as part of the proposals through creation of neutral and modified grasslands in place of arable land.
Residual Effects	The BNG condition will ensure that proposals will result in an overall gain. Following compensation therefore it is predicted there will be a not-significant positive effect at a Local Scale .
IEF: Badger	
Assessment of Impacts	There are no badger setts within the Site or within 30m of the Site boundary, however evidence of Site use for foraging and commuting was recorded at the time of the survey. The proposals will result in a temporary loss of foraging habitat available for badgers through the loss of arable (a potential seasonal foraging resource) and the small areas of grassland and field margins. These effects are not considered to be significant as badgers are common and widespread in England. The proposals include extensive habitat creation and enhancement measures which will enhance the existing foraging habitats for badgers. This includes the creation of species-rich native grassland habitats. During construction, there is a risk of badgers becoming trapped and killed or injured within open trenches.
Predicted Effect	In the absence of mitigation, there is potential for a not significant negative effect at a local scale.
Mitigation	The CEMP produced for the Site will include measures to protect badgers from harm during construction. This can include measures such as any excavations and piping (>200mm in diameter) are to be fenced/capped overnight to deter badgers from entering. Excavations that cannot be covered should have a means of escape for animals

¹⁸ Natural Resources Wales, the Northern Ireland Environment Agency and the Scottish Environment Protection Agency. January 2017. *Guidance for Pollution Prevention - Works and maintenance in or near water: GPP 5*.

	that may fall in, such as sloping sides or ramps (i.e. scaffold boards) with a maximum of 1:2 gradient.
Compensation	To offset losses of foraging habitat for badger, the grassland species-mix selected will include a range of seed-rich species to provide additional foraging opportunities.
Enhancement	Additional enhancements will include fruit bearing tree planting within the green infrastructure (GI) to provide an additional foraging resource. The western and southern boundaries of the Site will be buffered by proposed grassland and tree planting, providing a commuting corridor.
Residual Effects	Following compensation therefore it is predicted there will be a not-significant positive effect at a Local Scale .
IEF: Bats	
Assessment of Impacts	One tree on-Site (T12) was determined to require further assessment should impacts be anticipated as a result of the development. Whilst the tree is to be retained and there is a suitable buffer of GI within the development proposals, the lighting regime and potential disturbance during the construction phase of the development has potential to impact roosting bats. The Site is of a moderate suitability for foraging and commuting bats. As such, further activity surveys have been recommended and began in October 2025, to be completed in 2026.
Predicted Effect	In the absence of mitigation, there is potential for a significant negative effect at a local scale (to be confirmed second survey)
Mitigation	During construction, appropriate precautions will be incorporated into a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which will be implemented to control the works. To include details of protection of retained habitats during construction. The CEMP should include a lighting strategy in line with current best practice to ensure that retained and new habitat features that are suitable roosting bats are not degraded by new lighting. To minimise potential effects to the local bat population artificial lighting should be carefully designed adjacent to existing and new potential bat foraging areas including tree groups, hedgerows and commuting lines. Where artificial lighting cannot be avoided the lighting scheme will be designed with reference to the Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance^{19,20,21} and will be designed to reduce spill and be downwardly directional.
Compensation	Hedgerows to the south are to be enhanced as a bat commuting and foraging habitat through the replacement of poor-quality arable habitat with higher quality species-rich neutral grassland habitat, improving the foraging capacity of the hedgerows. New tree planting

¹⁹ Bat Conservation Trust. 2011. *Statement on the Impact and Design of Artificial Light on Bats*.

²⁰ Bat Conservation Trust. 2018. *Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK. Guidance Note 08/18. Bats and the Built Environment Series*.

²¹ Institute of Lighting Professionals. 2018. *Guidance note 08/18 Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK*

	and the creation of a SuDS will also improve the area for foraging bats.
Enhancement	Bat boxes should be installed on trees where appropriate to provide a higher quality roosting habitat for bats.
Residual Effects	Following compensation therefore it is predicted there will be a not-significant positive effect at a Local Scale (to be confirmed following second survey) .
IEF: Birds	
Assessment of Impacts	Construction operations have the potential to disturb birds using the development area for breeding, roosting, and foraging. Operations likely to disturb breeding birds include noise and displacement during vegetation clearance, initial ground works and some construction activities. If work is carried out during the breeding season, disturbance may lead to nest desertion or the avoidance of the area, thus reducing the suitability of retained nesting areas, such as the woodland and hedgerows. On-site arable habitats provided limited foraging suitability for the winter bird assemblage recorded, with only woodpigeon and hunting kestrel recorded utilising the field. The boundary features to the west, which included woodland continuing off-site, held the most importance and much of the assemblage. Breeding bird surveys are yet to be undertaken, however, on-site habitats are considered to provide suitable habitat for an assemblage of common and widespread urban edge/generalist species and woodland edge species.
Predicted Effect	In the absence of mitigation, there is potential for a not significant negative effect at a local scale (to be confirmed following breeding bird survey) .
Mitigation	Scheme proposals include the creation of SuDS, grassland areas and newly planted scattered trees. These measures are considered appropriate intrinsic mitigation for the loss of arable foraging habitat for the limited winter bird assemblage recorded utilising this habitat. Following final breeding bird surveys planned in 2026, the below mitigation measures will be reviewed to confirm suitability. To avoid disturbance to breeding birds, ground and vegetation clearance works will be undertaken prior to the bird-breeding season (March to August, inclusive). If this is not possible, the area will be checked prior to removal of vegetation or ground works by an experienced ecologist. If active nests are found, vegetation will be left untouched and suitably buffered from works until all birds have fledged. Specific advice will be provided prior to undertaking the clearance. This would be a statutory requirement due to the protection of all nesting birds and their nests under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. A suitably qualified ecologist would supervise this.

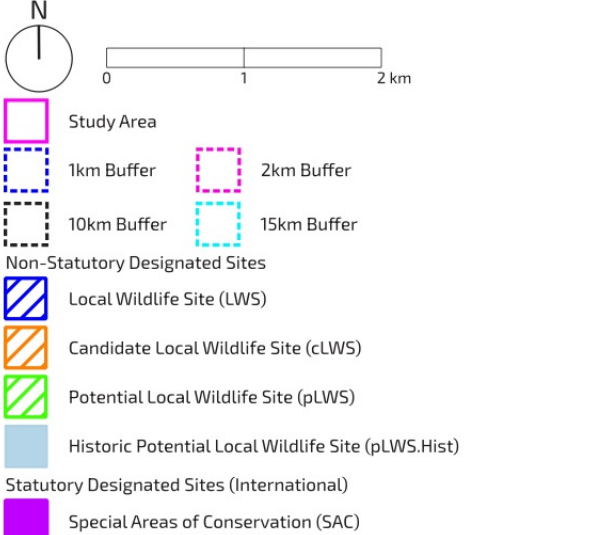
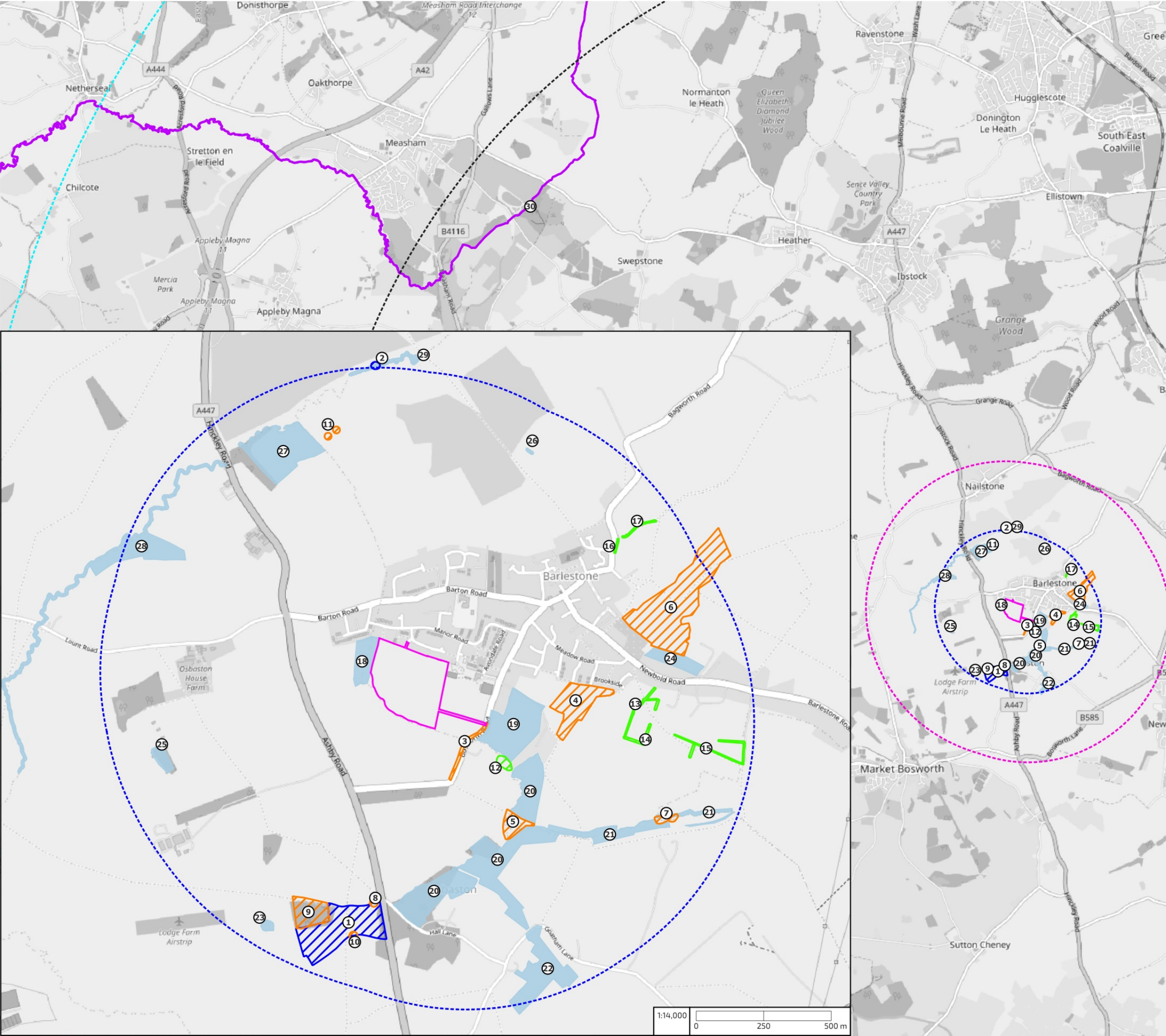
Compensation	None required for winter bird assemblage. Compensation measures to be determined for breeding bird assemblage following surveys.
Enhancement	A number of bird boxes would be incorporated within the scheme where appropriate.
Residual Effects	Following compensation therefore it is predicted there will be a not-significant positive effect at a Local Scale for winter birds.
IEF: GCN	
Assessment of Impacts	The proposed works will result in approximately 0.14ha of arable habitat within 50-250m of P1 being impacted. An eDNA survey is to be undertaken to determine whether this species is present in the local area.
Predicted Effect	In the absence of mitigation, there is potential for a significant negative effect (to be confirmed following survey) .
Mitigation / Compensation	The Site is located within the Amber Zone for the Natural England District Level Licensing Scheme for Great Crested Newts. Payment may be made into this scheme, to be determined by Natural England. Alternatively, should eDNA survey determine that the pond is not used by GCN, no compensation would be necessary.
Enhancement	Arable habitat to the north of D1 will be made more suitable for GCN through the creation of other neutral grassland with sections of mixed scrub. There will also be a new Sustainable Drainage System (SuDS) to be designed in a way as to promote biodiversity within the habitat.
Residual Effects	To be determined following eDNA survey, however considered likely to be neutral or positive effect at a Local Scale (to be confirmed following survey) .
IEF: Invasive Speies	
Assessment of Impacts	Rhododendron was present on Site. If left untreated the invasive species will spread and have a negative impact on biodiversity within the Site, and potentially the local area. It is therefore recommended that a specialist invasive weed contractor is contacted prior to commencement of works to treat or remove invasive plant stock and dispose of contaminated soil in appropriate manner as per EA guidelines. Mink may be present on Site.
Predicted Effect	In the absence of mitigation, there is potential for a not significant negative effect at a local scale.
Mitigation	Under the Environmental Protection, (Duty of Care) Regulations 1991 and Environmental Protection Act 1990 Section 34, soil contaminated with these plants is classed as 'controlled waste' and can only be disposed of in a registered landfill site, unless appropriate on-site treatment and disposal is undertaken.
Compensation	No compensation required.

Enhancement	Removal of invasive rhododendron will enhance the small amount of low-quality vegetation currently on Site, as well as prevent the reduction in condition of other habitats on Site through the spread of the species.
Residual Effects	Neutral
IEF: Otter & Water Vole	
Assessment of Impacts	No evidence to indicate the presence of otter or water vole was recorded in association with the site at the time of the first otter and water vole survey. Though suitable for commuting and foraging otters, there were no exposed tree root systems along the banks of the stream considered suitable for holt or laying up sites and the stream was considered too shallow to support a high density of suitable prey species. Water vole habitat, though suitable, was poor quality due to lack of aquatic vegetation. A second survey is to be undertaken in April 2026.
Predicted Effect	No Effect (to be confirmed following second survey)
Mitigation	The stream will be retained within the proposals and buffered from the development footprint by a 10m+ wide green corridor which will avoid direct impacts to the watercourse during works and will provide a corridor of suitable habitat to minimise potential affects to these species should they be present locally.
Compensation	No compensation required, no suitable habitat will not be lost as a result of the development.
Enhancement	Ditch D1 will be enhanced through the reduction of encroachment on its northern edge, bringing a higher quality foraging habitat for otters and water vole as well as enhancing the Site as a commuting corridor towards higher quality habitat downstream.
Residual Effects	Neutral (to be confirmed following second survey)
IEF: Other Species - Hedgehogs	
Assessment of Impacts	A deceased hedgehog was found during the survey, providing evidence of site use for foraging and/or commuting, however Site supports only limited suitable habitat for this species. Several records were returned from the nearby blocks of urban areas, including many associated with road fatalities. During construction, there is a risk of hedgehogs becoming trapped or killed.
Predicted Effect	In the absence of mitigation, there is potential for a not significant negative effect at a local scale.
Mitigation	During the construction phase, it is recommended that materials should not be stored near areas of retained habitat and/or should be hand searched prior to removal, in order to avoid impacts to hedgehog during construction.
Compensation	It is recommended that a 'hedgehog highway' is implemented across proposed gardens whereby a small hole measuring 13x13cm is cut

	into the base of garden fences to provide an escape route to prevent hedgehogs becoming trapped in gardens.
Enhancement	The habitat enhancement to be delivered by the proposals will improve the Site for this species, particularly the area of other neutral grassland proposed at the south of the Site.
Residual Effects	Neutral

7.0 CONCLUSION

- 7.1 The suite of ecology surveys identified a range of important ecological features on Site and within its zone of influence. The impacts on these were assessed against the proposals for a development of residential housing.
- 7.2 The assessment has demonstrated that in the absence of mitigation, proposals would lead to, at most, a Not Significant Effect at a Local Scale.
- 7.3 Proposals have been landscape and ecology led from an early stage in the process, ensuring that the scheme can be designed to mitigate for negative effects associated with the construction proposals and anticipated habitat losses.
- 7.4 Biodiversity net gain calculations have been considered early in the design process to ensure that losses of higher distinctiveness habitats could be minimised and that sufficient opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement could be incorporated into the proposals. This has led to the proposals including significant green infrastructure areas being enhanced with ecology as a focus. This will comprise new species-rich grasslands, hedgerow habitats, trees, SuDS, and scrub. This has allowed the scheme to demonstrate a biodiversity net gain in excess of 10% (the minimum requirements of the Environment Act 2021) for habitat, hedgerows and watercourses on Site.
- 7.5 Through the combination of intrinsic mitigation, targeted mitigation, compensation and enhancement detailed within this EclA, the proposals will lead to not significant positive effects for the majority of important ecological features.



Ref.	Name	Designation
1	Osbaston Meadow	LWS
2	Black Poplar	LWS
3	Barlestone, Bosworth Rd hedge (east side)	cLWS
4	Barlestone wet woodland and marsh	cLWS
5	Barlestone, marshland along stream towards Osbaston	cLWS
6	May Meadow and adjacent sites	cLWS
7	Barlestone, Field Farm pond	cLWS
8	Osbaston, Ash on path to Dogkennel Spinney	cLWS
9	Osbaston, Dog Kennel Spinney	cLWS
10	Osbaston, Alder by stile S of wet meadow	cLWS
11	Nailstone Ash trees	cLWS
12	Barlestone, The Fulford pond	pLWS
13	Barlestone, hedgerow 1 S of Newbold Rd	pLWS
14	Barlestone hedgerows 3	pLWS
15	Barlestone, hedgerow 2	pLWS
16	Barlestone, Main St hedgerow	pLWS
17	Barlestone, Garden Farm track hedge	pLWS
18	Rough grassland and tall herbs	pLWS.Hist
19	Marsh	pLWS.Hist
20	Goatham plantations, lake and grasslands	pLWS.Hist
21	Hedgerow and grassland	pLWS.Hist
22	Goatham spinneys and marshy grassland	pLWS.Hist
23	Osbaston, 2 Ponds near Dog Kennel Spinney	pLWS.Hist
24	Semi-improved neutral grassland	pLWS.Hist
25	Osbaston, woodland S of Osbaston House Farm	pLWS.Hist
26	Barlestone, pond	pLWS.Hist
27	Osbaston Hollow marsh	pLWS.Hist
28	Osbaston, woodland and marsh along stream N of Lount Rd	pLWS.Hist
29	Stream	pLWS.Hist
30	River Mease	SAC

date 06/03/26 drwn/chkd LG / SP

client Gladman Developments Ltd

project Land off Cunners Close, Barlestone

title STUDY AREA AND CONSULTATION RESULTS PLAN - DESIGNATED SITES scale 1:55,000 @ A3

number FIGURE 1 rev A

FPCR | environment & design



N

0250500m

Study Area

1km Buffer

2km Buffer

Bats

Brown Long-eared

Common Pipistrelle

Leisler's

Myotis sp.

Nathusius's Pipistrelle

Noctule

Nyctalus sp.

Pipistrelle sp.

Serotine

Soprano Pipistrelle

Unidentified bat sp.

Whiskered

Bat Records of 1km Accuracy

Species within SK4205: Brown long-eared; Common-pipistrelle; Myotis sp.; Noctule; Soprano pipistrelle

Species within SK4305: Barbastelle; Brown long-eared; Common pipistrelle; Daubenton's; Leisler's; Myotis sp.; Nathusius's pipistrelle; Natterer's; Noctule; Serotine; Soprano pipistrelle

date	06/03/26	drwn/chkd	LG / SP
client	Gladman Developments Ltd		
project	Land off Cunners Close, Barlestone		
title	STUDY AREA AND CONSULTATION RESULTS PLAN - BAT RECORDS	scale	1:17,000 @ A3
number	FIGURE 2a	rev	A

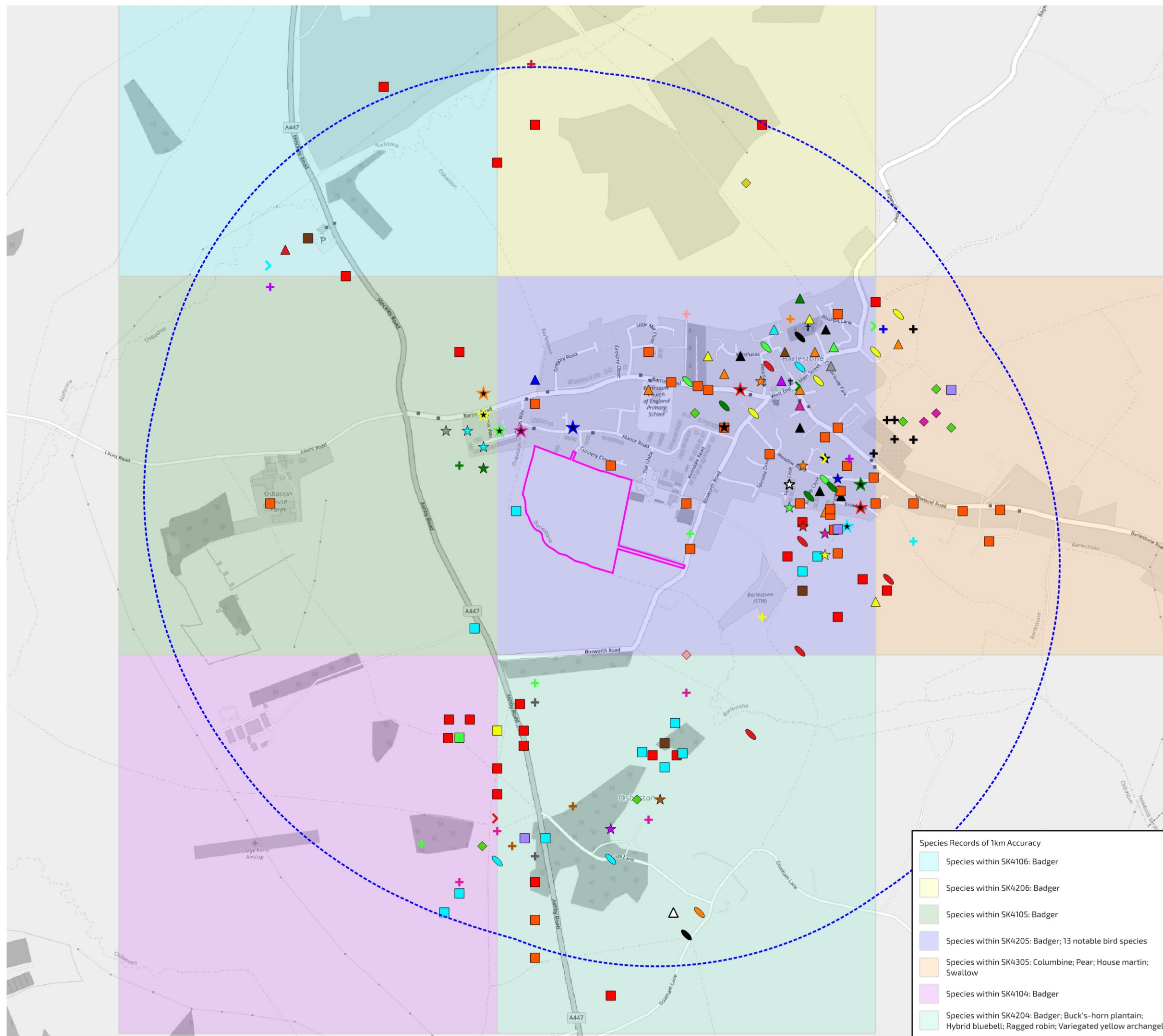
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\\fpcr-fs-01\EarlyWork\8800\8867\GIS\G - Consultations\Species Records Template\8867-E-02 Site Location and Consultation Results Plan - Species Records.qgs

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- N
- 0 250 500 m
- Study Area 1km Buffer
- Birds**
- | | | |
|---------------|--------------|--------------|
| Bullfinch | Lapwing | Song Thrush |
| Cuckoo | Linnet | Starling |
| Curlew | Peregrine | Swallow |
| Duncock | Red Kite | Swift |
| Firecrest | Reed Bunting | Tree Sparrow |
| House Martin | Ring Ouzel | Yellowhammer |
| House Sparrow | Skylark | |
- Herpetofauna**
- | | | |
|-------------|--------------------|-------------|
| Common Frog | Great Crested Newt | Smooth Newt |
| Common Toad | | |
- Invasive and Non-Native Species (INNS)**
- | | | |
|---------------------|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Canadian Water-weed | Himalayan Balsam | Variegated Yellow Archangel |
| Cherry Laurel | Hybrid Bluebell | White Stonecrop |
| Giant Hogweed | Jenkins' Spire Snail | |
| Harlequin Ladybird | Muntjac | |
- Mammals**
- | | | |
|------------|----------|------------|
| Badger | Hedgehog | Polecat |
| Brown Hare | Otter | Water Vole |
- Notable Invertebrates**
- | | | |
|----------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|
| Beaded Chestnut | Ghost Moth | Mouse Moth |
| Blood-vein | Grass Rivulet | Rosy Rustic |
| Buff Ermine | Green-brindled Crescent | Small Phoenix |
| Centre-barred Sallow | Grey Dagger | Small Square-spot |
| Cinnabar | Jumping Weevil | Sprawler |
| Deep-brown Dart | Large Nutmeg | Wall |
| Dot Moth | Mottled Rustic | |
- Notable Plants**
- | | | |
|-----------------|-------------------|-----------------|
| Alder Buckthorn | Pear | Spear Mint |
| Black-poplar | Ragged Robin | Wild Strawberry |
| Bluebell | Scarlet Pimpernel | |
| Columbine | Small-leaved Lime | |

date 06/03/26 drwn/chkd LG / SP

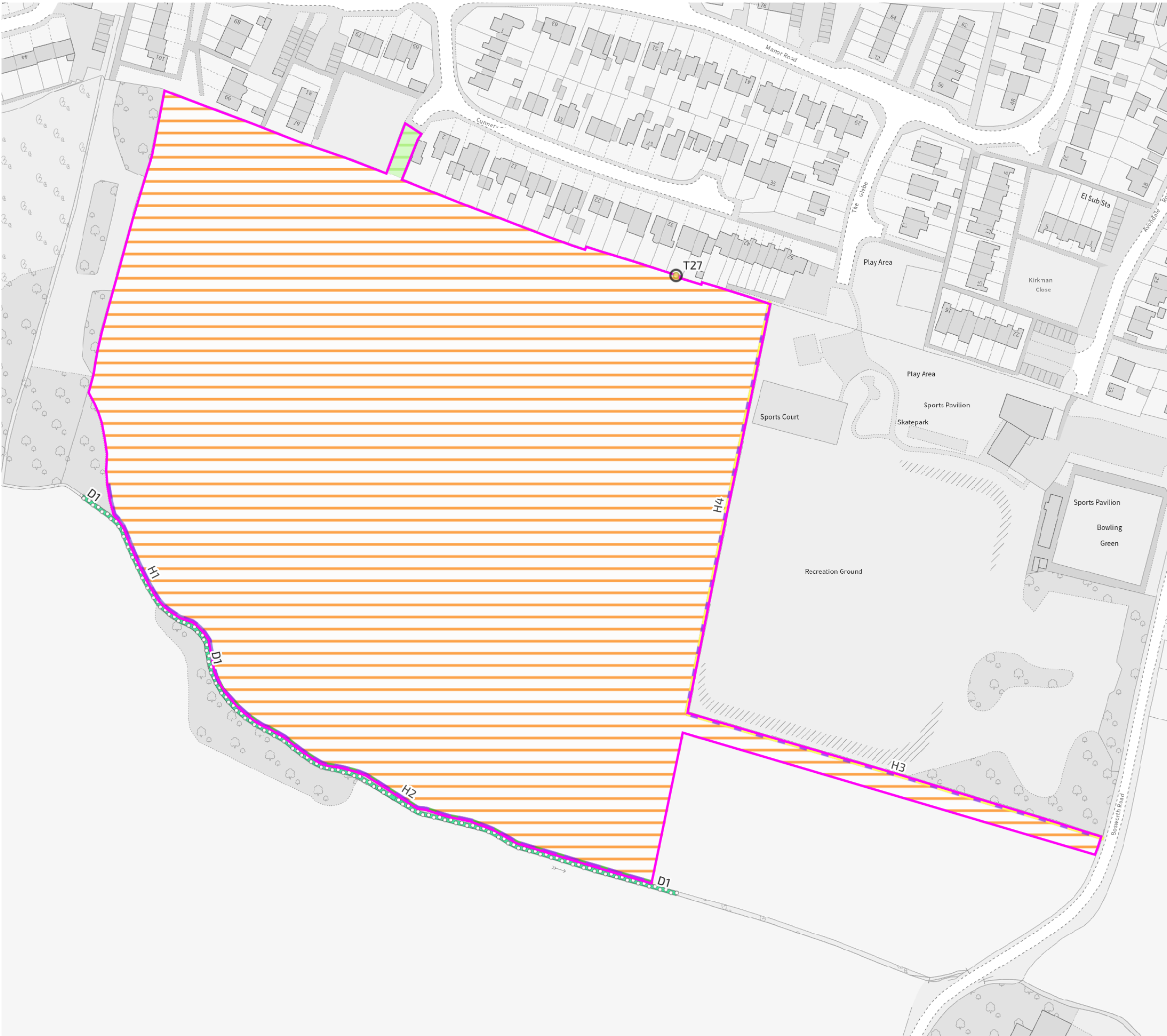
client Gladman Developments Ltd

project Land off Cunners Close, Barlestone

title STUDY AREA AND CONSULTATION RESULTS PLAN - SPECIES RECORDS scale 1:10,000 @ A3

number FIGURE 2b rev A

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- Study Area
- Baseline Habitats
 - Winter stubble
 - Other neutral grassland
- Baseline Hedgerow
 - Native hedgerow
 - Species-rich native hedgerow
 - Species-rich native hedgerow with trees
- Baseline Watercourses
 - Other rivers and streams
- Baseline Trees
 - Existing Large Rural Tree

date 05/03/26 drwn/chkd SAP/RCO

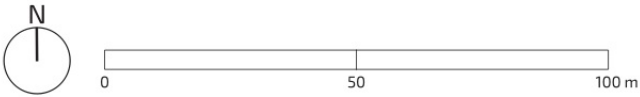
client Gladman Developments Ltd.
project

Land off Cunnery Close

title BASELINE HABITAT PLAN scale 1:1,600 @ A3

number FIGURE 3 rev A

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- Study Area
- Static Bat Detector Locations
- Walked Transect Survey - Bat Contacts
 - Autumn
- Walked Transect Survey - Start & Finish Points
 - Autumn
- Walked Transect Survey - Transect Route
- Flightline Survey - Surveyor Locations
- Flightline Survey - Bat Contacts
 - Autumn
- Tree with Bat Potential (with reference)
 - FAR
- Species
 - Ppi Common pipistrelle
 - Ppy Soprano pipistrelle

Non-visual Bat Contacts - SP1

Species	Aut
Noctule	+
Common Pipistrelle	+

Non-visual Bat Contacts - SP2

Species	Aut
Noctule	+
Soprano Pipistrelle	+

date 05/03/26 drwn/chkd LH / SP

client Gladman Developments
project Land off Cunners Close,
Barlestone

title BAT RESULTS PLAN scale 1:1,500 @ A3

number FIGURE 4 rev -

APPENDIX A: RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICY AND GUIDANCE

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (CHSR) 2017 (as amended)

- 1.1 The CHSR ratifies into UK law the "Habitats Directive" (92/43/EEC) and the "Birds Directive" (79/409/EEC).

European Protected Sites

- 1.2 The CHSR places a duty on the Secretary of State to propose a list of sites which are important for species listed in Annex I and II of the Habitats Directive respectively to the European Commission. Once the Commission and EU Member States have agreed that the sites submitted are worthy of designation, they are identified as Sites of Community Importance (SCIs). The EU Member States must then designate these sites as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) within six years.
- 1.3 The CHSR requires the compilation and maintenance of a register of European sites to include SACs as well as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated for birds. The SACs and SPAs under the CHSR are referred to as national site networks, Ramsar sites are of international importance and do not form part of the national site networks; but boundaries might overlap SAC and SPA designations.

European Protected Species

- 1.4 The CHSR includes a list of animals and plant species taken from the Annex IV of the Habitats Directive that have a natural range in Great Britain. These are collectively known as European Protected Species (EPS) and are listed in *Table 1*. The regulations make it an offence to deliberately capture, kill, disturb, take or destroy eggs of, or damage or destroy a breeding or resting place of animals listed in Schedule 2 of the Regulations, and to pick, collect, cut, uproot or destroy wild plants listed in Schedule 5 of the Regulations. They also protect these species alive or dead and parts thereof from various forms of possession and trade.
- 1.5 These actions may be made lawful in certain circumstances through the granting of licences by the appropriate authority (Natural England). Licences must only be granted after the appropriate authority is satisfied that no satisfactory alternatives are available. In most circumstances, licences are only applied for and granted following full planning permission.
- 1.6 In determining whether or not to grant a licence, Natural England must apply the requirements of the CHSR and, in particular, the three derogation tests:
- Test 1: A licence can be granted for the purposes of "preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment".
 - Test 2: The appropriate authority shall not grant a licence unless they are satisfied "that there is no satisfactory alternative".
 - Test 3: The appropriate authority shall not grant a licence unless they are satisfied "that the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range."

Table 1: The Habitats Regulations Schedule 2 and Schedule 5 species

	Common Name	Scientific Name
Schedule 2 – European Protected Animal Species	Horseshoe bats – all species	<i>Rhinolophidae</i>
	Bats – all species	<i>Vespertilionidae</i>
	Large blue butterfly	<i>Maculinea arion</i>
	Wild cat	<i>Felis silvestris</i>
	Dolphins, porpoises & whales – all species	<i>Cetacea</i>
	Hazel dormouse	<i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i>
	Pool frog	<i>Rana lessonae</i>
	Sand lizard	<i>Lacerta agilis</i>
	Fisher's estuarine moth	<i>Gortyna borelii lunata</i>
	Great crested newt	<i>Triturus cristatus</i>
	Otter	<i>Lutra lutra</i>
	Lesser Whirlpool Ram's-horn snail	<i>Anisus vorticulus</i>
	Smooth snake	<i>Coronella austriaca</i>
	Sturgeon	<i>Acipenser sturio</i>
	Natterjack toad	<i>Bufo calamita</i>
	Marine turtles	Caretta caretta Chelonia mydas Lepidochelys kempi Eretmochelys imbricata Dermochelys coriacea
Schedule 5 – European Protected Plant Species	Shore dock	<i>Rumex rupestris</i>
	Killarney fern	<i>Trichomanes speciosum</i>
	Early gentian	<i>Gentianella anglica</i>
	Lady's-slipper	<i>Cypripedium calceolus</i>
	Creeping marshwort	<i>Apium repens</i>
	Slender naiad	<i>Najas flexilis</i>
	Fen orchid	<i>Liparis loeselii</i>
	Floating-leaved water plantain	<i>Luronium natans</i>
	Yellow marsh saxifrage	<i>Saxifraga hirculus</i>

Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended)

- 1.7 The WCA 1981 (as amended) is the principal legislation providing protection for wildlife in the UK. It prescribes legislation for wild birds, other animals, wild plants and non-native species. In addition, it provides for the designation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) in England.

Wild birds

- 1.8 The WCA as amended by Schedule 12 of the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 makes it an offence (with exception to species listed in Schedule 2) to intentionally or recklessly:

- kill, injure, or take any wild bird;
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built (also [take, damage or destroy the nest of a wild bird included in Schedule ZA1] under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006); or
- take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

- 1.9 For birds listed on Schedule 1 of the WCA, protection extends to offences relating to the intentional or reckless disturbance of these birds while at their nests or their dependent young.

Other animals

- 1.10 The WCA (as amended) makes it an offence to (subject to exceptions) intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take wild animals listed on Schedule 5 of the Act. For some species, the protection extends to interference with places used for shelter or protection, or disturbing animals occupying or obstructing access to such places. These species are regarded as “fully protected” and as well as the EPS species listed above include the mammal species water vole *Arvicola terrestris*, pine marten *Martes martes* and red squirrel *Sciurus vulgaris* as well as selected others from a range of species groups including, fish, butterflies, hemipteran bugs, beetles, crickets, dragonflies, moths, spiders, crustaceans, sea-mats, molluscs, Annelid worms and sea anemones (and allies).
- 1.11 There are seven species on Schedule 5 of the Act that not fully protected but are still protected against killing and injuring these include the common reptile species slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, viviparous lizard *Lacerta vivipara*, grass snake *Natrix natrix* and adder *Vipera berus*.
- 1.12 The Act prohibits certain methods of killing, injuring, or taking wild animals, and numerous species are protected against sale only as well as other variations for example Atlantic stream (white-clawed) crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* are protected against taking and sale.

Vascular plants, bryophytes, lichens and fungi

- 1.13 With regards to native flora the Act makes it an offence to (subject to exceptions) intentionally or recklessly pick, uproot or destroy any wild plant listed in Schedule 8. Similarly, the Act prevents the sale, offer or expose for sale, or possess (for the purposes of trade), any live or dead wild plant included in Schedule 8, or any part of, or anything derived from, such a plant.

Non-native species

- 1.14 The Act contains measures for preventing the establishment of non-native species which may be detrimental to native wildlife, prohibiting the release of animals and planting of plants listed in Schedule 9 in England and Wales.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest

- 1.15 The Act provides for the notification and confirmation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). These sites can be identified for their flora, fauna, geological or physiological interest. In England, the power to confirm an SSSI lies with Natural England.
- 1.16 Laws protecting areas designated as SSSIs are described in Sections 28 to 33 of Part 2 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). SSSIs are the principle statutory designation of sites in the UK and offences are enforced through Natural England. Offences include the following:

SSSI owners and occupiers

- carrying out, causing or allowing operations likely to damage an SSSI without Natural England consent.
- failing to keep to a management notice.
- failing to let us know about a change in ownership or occupation of land in an SSSI.

Public bodies

- carrying out or authorising operations likely to damage an SSSI without meeting the requirements to notify Natural England.

- failing to minimise any damage to an SSSI and if there is any damage, failing to restore it to its former state so far as is reasonably practical and possible.

Any person

- intentionally or recklessly damaging, destroying or disturbing any of the habitats or features of an SSSI.
- intentionally or recklessly damaging, destroying, obscuring or taking down a site notice put up on land within an SSSI.
- preventing a Natural England officer lawfully accessing an SSSI.

Environment Act 2021

- 1.17 The act was passed on 10th November 2021 and covers a range of environmental protections and enhancements. It is enforced by an independent Office for Environmental Protection (OEP). In relation to nature and biodiversity, the act will deliver:

- Strengthened biodiversity duty
- A requirement for developments to deliver at least 10% biodiversity net gain
- Local Nature Recovery Strategies
- Protected Site Strategies and Species Conservation Strategies
- Conservation Covenants
- Strengthened woodland protection enforcement measures

Protection of Badgers Act 1992

- 1.18 Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. This act is based on the need to protect badgers from persecution by baiting and deliberate harm or injury. The act makes it an offence to:

- intentionally capture, kill or injure a badger;
- damage, destroy or block access to their setts;
- disturb badgers in setts;
- treat a badger cruelly;
- deliberately send or intentionally allow a dog into a sett; and
- bait or dig for badgers.

- 1.19 A sett is defined as: *“Any structure or place that displays signs indicating current use by a badger”*.

Natural Environmental and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

- 1.20 Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 imposes a duty on every public authority to conserve biodiversity in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity. Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat.

- 1.21 Section 41 (S41) of the NERC Act 2006 requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The list (including 56 habitats and 943 species) has been drawn up in consultation with Natural England and draws upon the UK BAP List of Priority Species and Habitats. The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2025

- 1.22 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policy for England. As such, the NPPF must be a material consideration for local authorities when considering planning decisions. The following relate to ecology/biodiversity:

Policy 15 – Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

187. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where possible;*
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;*
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.*

188. Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

189. Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife

and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise impacts on the designated areas.

190. When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:

- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
- b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and*
- c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.*

191. Within areas defined as Heritage Coast (and that do not already fall within one of the designated areas mentioned in paragraph 189), planning policies and decisions should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Major development within a Heritage Coast is unlikely to be appropriate, unless it is compatible with its special character.

192. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration and creation; and*
- b) Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.*

193. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;*
- b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;*
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and*

- d) *development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.*

194. *The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:*

- a) *potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;*
- b) *listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and*
- c) *sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Area of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.*

195. *The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.*

APPENDIX B: WINTER BIRD SURVEY RESULTS

Species: Common Name	Species: Scientific Name	Survey 1 18.11.25	Conservation Status & Protection
Feral Pigeon	<i>Columba livia f. domestica</i>	12 flyovers	Green List
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	13	Amber List
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	1	Green List
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>	1	Green List
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	1	Amber List
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	1	Green List
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	7	Green List
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	3	Green List
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	10	Green List
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>	2	Green List
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	3	Amber List
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	6	Red List NERC S.41
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	3	Red List
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	6	Amber List WCA Sch.1
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	2	Green List
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>	6	Red List WCA Sch.1
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	1	Green List
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	6	Red List NERC S.41
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	1	Amber List NERC S.41
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	2	Green List
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	4 + 4 flyovers	Green List
Total Species	21		

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