



ECOLOGYSOLUTIONS

Part of the ES Group

HINCKLEY WEST
PHASE 4

Ecological Assessment

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Background & Proposals

- 1.1.1. Ecology Solutions was commissioned in May 2022 by Bloor Homes to undertake an Ecological Assessment of the site at the land west of Hinckley (see Plan ECO1).
- 1.1.2. The proposals for the application site are for 153 residential dwellings with associated infrastructure and areas of open space (see Appendix 1).

1.2. Site Characteristics

- 1.2.1. The application site (hereafter referred to as 'the site') is located in Hinckley, Leicestershire. The north of the site is bordered by the wider Hinckley West site, comprising newly constructed residential development. To the east, the site is bordered by the A47 (Normandy Way) road, with existing residential development beyond. To the south lies existing commercial development and the west of the site is bordered by arable fields and Ashby de la Zouch canal beyond.
- 1.2.2. The site itself comprises species-poor semi-improved grassland, amenity grassland, hedgerows, a tree line, standing trees and scattered scrub.

1.3. Ecological Assessment

- 1.3.1. This document assesses the ecological interest of the site at Land west of Hinckley, Leicestershire. The importance of the habitats within the site are evaluated with due consideration given to the current guidance published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)¹.
- 1.3.2. Where necessary mitigation measures are recommended so as to safeguard any significant existing ecological interest within the site. Specific enhancement opportunities that are available for habitats and wildlife within the site are detailed where appropriate, with reference to the 'UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework'². Finally, conclusions are drawn.

¹CIEEM (2017) *Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

² JNCC and Defra (on behalf of the Four Countries' Biodiversity Group) (2012) *UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework*. July 2012. <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-6189>

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

- 2.1. The methodology utilised for the survey work can be split into three areas, namely desk study, habitat survey and faunal survey. These are discussed in more detail below.

2.2. Desk Study

- 2.2.1. In order to compile background information on the site and the surrounding area, Ecology Solutions contacted the Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC).
- 2.2.2. Further information on designated sites from a wider search area was obtained from the online Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)³ database. This information is reproduced at Appendix 2 and where appropriate on Plan ECO1.

2.3. Habitat Survey Methodology

- 2.3.1. Habitat surveys were carried out in August 2022 and May 2023 in order to ascertain the general ecological value of the site and to identify the main habitats and associated plant species.
- 2.3.2. The site was surveyed based around extended Phase 1 survey methodology⁴, as recommended by Natural England whereby the habitat types present are identified and mapped, together with an assessment of the species composition of each habitat. This technique provides an inventory of the basic habitat types present and allows identification of areas of greater potential which require further survey. Any such areas identified can then be examined in more detail.
- 2.3.3. Using the above method, the site was classified into areas of similar botanical community types, with a representative species list compiled for each habitat identified.
- 2.3.4. All the species that occur in each habitat would not necessarily be detectable during survey work carried out at any given time of the year, since different species are apparent at different seasons. However, the survey work was undertaken within the optimal period for Phase 1 surveys, and as such it is considered that an accurate and robust assessment has been made.

2.4. Faunal Survey

- 2.4.1. Obvious faunal activity, such as birds or mammals observed visually or by call during the course of the surveys, was recorded. Specific attention was paid to any potential use of the site by protected species, species of principal importance (Priority Species), or other notable species.
- 2.4.2. In addition, specific surveys were undertaken in relation to bats, Badgers *Meles meles*, and reptiles.

³ magic.defra.gov.uk

⁴ Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2010). *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey – a Technique for Environmental Audit*. England Field Unit, Nature Conservancy Council, reprinted JNCC, Peterborough.

- 2.4.3. Experienced ecologists undertook the faunal surveys with regard to established best practice and guidance issued by Natural England. Details of the methodologies employed are given below.

Bats

- 2.4.4. Field surveys were undertaken within the site with regard to best practice guidelines issued by the Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2004⁵) and the Bat Conservation Trust (2016⁶).

External Building Assessments

- 2.4.5. The buildings within the site were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats and were subject to internal and external surveys. Surveyors made use of equipment such as ladders, torches, mirrors, binoculars and endoscopes where necessary.
- 2.4.6. Evidence of the presence of bats was searched for, with particular attention paid to any roof areas and gaps between rafters and beams. Specific searches were made for bat droppings, which can indicate present or past use and extent of use, as well as other signs to indicate the possible presence of bats e.g. presence of stained areas, or areas that are conspicuously cobweb-free.
- 2.4.7. The probability of a building being used by bats as a summer roost site increases if it:

- is largely undisturbed;
- dates from pre-20th Century;
- has a large roof void with unobstructed flying spaces;
- has access points for bats (though not too draughty);
- has wooden cladding or hanging tiles; and/or
- is in a rural setting and close to woodland or water.

- 2.4.8. Conversely, the probability decreases if a building is of a modern or pre-fabricated design/construction, is in an urban setting, has small or cluttered roof voids, has few gaps at the eaves or is a heavily disturbed premises.
- 2.4.9. The main requirements for a winter/hibernation roost site are that it maintains a stable (cool) temperature and humidity. Sites commonly utilised by bats as winter roosts include cavities/holes in trees, underground sites and parts of buildings. Whilst different species may show a preference for one of these types of roost site, none are solely dependent on a single type.

Tree Assessments

- 2.4.10. All trees within and adjacent to the site were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats. Features typically favoured by bats were searched for, including:

⁵ Mitchell-Jones, A.J. & McLeish, A.P. (Eds.) (2004). *Bat Workers' Manual*. 3rd edition. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

⁶ Bat Conservation Trust (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines 3rd Edition*. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

- Obvious holes, e.g. rot holes and old Woodpecker holes;
- Dark staining on the tree, below the hole;
- Tiny scratch marks around a hole from bat claws;
- Cavities, splits and or loose bark from broken or fallen branches, lightning strikes etc; and
- Very dense covering of mature Ivy over trunk.

2.4.11. In addition, the habitats within the site were assessed for their suitability to support foraging bats.

Badgers

2.4.12. Specific surveys for Badgers were carried out in August 2022.

2.4.13. The surveys comprised two main elements. Firstly searching thoroughly for evidence of Badger setts. For any setts that were encountered standard survey practice would record the location of each sett entrance, even if the entrance appeared disused. The following specific information was recorded where appropriate:

- i) The number and location of well used or very active entrances; these are clear of any debris or vegetation and are obviously in regular use and may, or may not, have been excavated recently.
- ii) The number and location of inactive entrances; these are not in regular use and have debris such as leaves and twigs in the entrance or have plants growing in or around the edge of the entrance.
- iii) The number of disused entrances; these have not been in use for some time, are partly or completely blocked and cannot be used without considerable clearance. If the entrance has been disused for some time all that may be visible is a depression in the ground where the hole used to be together with the remains of the spoil heap.

2.4.14. Secondly, any evidence of Badger activity such as well-worn paths, run-throughs, snagged hair, footprints, latrines and foraging signs was recorded so as to build up a picture of the use of the site by this species.

Reptiles

2.4.15. The site comprises mainly of infrequently managed semi-improved grassland and hedgerows which provide potentially suitable habitat for reptiles (including hibernation/refuge).

2.4.16. As such, specific surveys for reptiles were carried out between September and early October 2022 within the site. The methodology utilised principally derived from guidance given in the Herpetofauna Workers Manual⁷. Areas of suitable habitat were surveyed for the presence of reptiles using artificial refugia ("tins"). In total 75 0.5m x 0.5m roofing felt tins were placed within suitable habitat within the site.

⁷ Gent, T and Gibson, S. JNCC. (2003). Herpetofauna Workers Manual. Peterborough

- 2.4.17. The tins provide shelter and heat up quicker than the surroundings in the morning and can remain warmer than the surroundings in the late afternoon. Being ectothermic (cold-blooded), reptiles use them to bask under and raise their body temperature which allows them to forage earlier and later in the day.
- 2.4.18. To determine presence / absence the tins were checked for reptile activity over seven visits at appropriate times of the day (avoiding the middle of the day when the ambient air temperature is at its highest) in accordance with Natural England guidance. Optimum weather conditions for reptile surveying are temperatures between 10°C and 17°C, intermittent or hazy sunshine and little or no wind.

3. ECOLOGICAL FEATURES

3.1. Habitat surveys were initially undertaken within the site in August 2022. Another habitat survey was undertaken within the new extension of the site boundary in May 2022.

3.2. The following main habitat / vegetation types were identified within the site:

- Species-poor Semi-improved Grassland;
- Amenity Grassland;
- Hardstanding and a Building;
- Standing Trees;
- Scattered Scrub;
- A Tree Line; and
- Hedgerows.

3.3. The locations of these habitats are shown on Plan ECO2.

Species-poor Semi-improved Grassland

3.4. The majority of the site comprises species-poor semi-improved grassland that appears to have been recently unmanaged. Species present within the sward include False Oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus* and Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata* with herbaceous species including Spear Thistle *Cirsium vulgare*, Broad-leaved Dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense*, Hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*, Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., Dove's-foot Crane's-bill *Geranium molle*, Field Horsetail *Equisetum arvense*, Bristly Ox-tongue *Helminthotheca echioides*, Greater Willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum*, Hoary Ragwort *Jacobaea erucifolia*, Canadian Fleabane *Erigeron canadensis*, Prickly Lettuce *Lactuca serriola*, Cow Parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, Blue Fleabane *Erigeron acer* and Common Teasel *Dipsacus fullonum*,

3.5. Linear strips of long, lush vegetation are present along the roadside and adjacent to hedgerow H3. Species within the sward include frequent Yorkshire-Fog, Cock's-foot and Perennial Ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, and herbaceous species including frequently-found Cow Parsley, Common Daisy *Bellis perennis* and Creeping Buttercup, with common occurrences of Cut-leaved Crane's-bill *Geranium dissectum*, Dandelion, Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata* and the occasional Tufted Vetch *Vicia cracca* and Field Forget-me-not *Myosotis arvensis*.

3.6. Two small patches of semi-improved grassland are present to the east of the roundabout and along the west of the tree line. These areas of grassland are mostly of a short-sward and include the following species: Cock's foot, Yorkshire-fog, Red Fescue *Festuca rubra*, and Perennial Ryegrass, and herbaceous species including Dove's-foot Crane's-bill, Lesser Trefoil *Trifolium dubium*, Shepherd's Purse *Capsella bursa-pastoris*, Creeping Buttercup, Tufted Vetch, Sun Spurge *Euphorbia helioscopia*, Ribwort Plantain, Common Mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum*, Common Daisy, White Clover *Trifolium repens*, Cut-leaf Crane's-bill, Hoary Cress *Lepidium draba*, Dandelion and occasional Daffodil.

Amenity Grassland

- 3.7. Other areas of roadside vegetation consist of frequently cut amenity grassland, consisting of Annual Meadow Grass *Poa annua*, Perennial Ryegrass, Cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata*, Common Mouse-ear, Dandelion, Common Daisy, Creeping Buttercup and Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense*.

Hedgerows and Tree Line

- 3.8. There are three species-poor native hedgerows present within the site (H1-H3) and a tree line (TL1) each of which is described individually below.
- 3.9. Hedgerow **H1** lies along the eastern boundary of the site. This hedgerow is managed through box-cutting and comprises Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, with Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* found trailing through.
- 3.10. Hedgerow **H2** forms part of the northern boundary of the site, is gappy in nature and appears to have recently been left unmanaged. The majority of this hedgerow is outside of the site boundary. This hedgerow comprises Hawthorn and Blackthorn, with Bramble found trailing through.
- 3.11. Hedgerow **H3** is located within the south east corner of the site, adjacent to a cycle / footpath. This hedgerow is unmanaged, approximately 3-4m in height and consists of Hawthorn with dense Bramble scrub at the base.
- 3.12. Tree line **TL1** is located between the main road and cycle / footpath. The tree line is a mix of native and non-native trees, with species including Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, Wild Cherry *Prunus avium*, Snowberry *Symphoricarpos albus*, Cherry Laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, Swedish Whitebeam *Sorbus intermedia* agg. and Spiny Oleaster *Elaeagnus pungens*. Other species present include patches of Bramble and occurrences of Broad-leaved Dock, Cleavers *Galium aparine*, Red Dead-nettle *Lamium purpureum* and Tufted Vetch.

Scattered Scrub

- 3.13. Scattered scrub consisting of Bramble is present within the southeastern corner of the site and along hedgerow H3, with a stand of Hawthorn located in the southwest.

Standing Trees

- 3.14. A cluster of mature Wild Cherry trees are located within the centre of the roundabout.

Hardstanding and a Building

- 3.15. An area of hardstanding is present at the northern section of the site, which comprises a site compound and associated car parking for the development under construction to the north. The site also includes a section of the A47 and the roundabout, and a part of the access road to the Triumph factory, which is located outside of the south-western boundary of the site.

- 3.16. A small gas building made of brick with a flat plastic roof is located within the site, between the tree line TL1 and the cycle / footpath.

Background Records

- 3.17. The LRERC returned no records of any notable plant species from within the site itself. The nearest record of Bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* (a Schedule 8 species protected from sale only) was returned from approximately 0.5km west of the site in 2015. This species was not recorded within the site during surveys.

4. WILDLIFE USE OF THE SITE

- 4.1. General observations were made during the surveys of any faunal use of the site, with specific attention paid to the potential presence of protected species. Specific surveys were undertaken with regard to bats, Badgers and reptiles.

Bats

- 4.2. It is considered that the hedgerows offer some foraging and navigational opportunities for bats albeit, existing street lighting along Normandy Way is considered to reduce the suitability of hedgerows H1, H3 and the tree line TL1.

Tree Surveys

- 4.3. No trees within the site displayed features that would provide roosting potential for bats.

Building Survey

- 4.4. The gas building could not be accessed internally; however no signs of roosting suitability was observed from the exterior. It is understood that the building is to be retained and as such, no impacts are anticipated.

- 4.5. **Background Records.** The LRERC returned records of *Myotis* sp., Brown Long-eared *Plecotus auritus*, Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* and Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* within a 1km grid square overlapping the site in 2014. The next closest record returned was a record of an unidentified bat located approximately 0.7km north of the site in 2014.

Badgers

- 4.6. A specific survey for Badgers was undertaken in August 2022. During this survey, a dead badger was found along the eastern boundary near to a mammal-push through within the adjacent hedgerow (H1). A latrine was also recorded approximately 80m north of the deceased animal. The Badger evidence recorded within the site can be seen on Plan ECO2.

- 4.7. **Background Records.** The LRERC returned no records of Badgers from within the site itself. The nearest record for a Badger sett was returned from approximately 50m northwest of the site in 2004. A more recent record of a Badger sett was recorded in 2014, approximately 0.1km northeast of the site. Existing usage by Badgers is also known from the development to the north and a known main sett is located to the northeast of the site boundary within Wykin Community Park, located approximately 50m northeast of the site.

- 4.8. Given that evidence of Badgers has been recorded on site and the known presence of this species within the local area, it is recommended that a precautionary approach is taken with regards to Badger during construction.

Other Mammals

- 4.9. No evidence of other mammals was recorded within the site, although it is considered the habitats within the site offer limited suitable opportunities for a range of small mammals.

- 4.10. **Background Records.** The LRERC returned no records of other notable mammals from within the site itself. The closest record of other mammals returned by the LRERC was of Water Vole *Arvicola amphibius* (a Priority Species) droppings, feeding stations and possible burrows recorded approximately 40m northwest of the site in 2014. In addition, the LRERC returned a record of an Otter *Lutra lutra* located approximately 1.3km northwest of the site in 2000.
- 4.11. Given the lack of aquatic habitat on site, the site is not considered to provide suitable habitat for Water Vole or Otter, therefore no further consideration is given to these species within this document.

Birds

- 4.12. It is considered that the species-poor semi-improved grasslands and scattered scrub within the site offer limited foraging opportunities for a range of common bird species, while the hedgerows, trees and tree line offer some suitable foraging and nesting opportunities for common bird species.
- 4.13. **Background Records.** The LRERC returned no records of any notable bird species from within the site itself. The nearest records of notable bird species were recorded approximately 0.4km south of the site and include Red Listed and Schedule 1 species Fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* in 2010, Redwing *Turdus iliacus* in 2011 and Merlin *Falco columbarius* in 2014. Other notable birds that were recorded in the same location include the Schedule 1 species Kingfisher *Alcedo atthis* in 2009, Green Sandpiper *Tringa ochropus* in 2013, Hobby *Falco Subbuteo* in 2013, Red Kite *Milvus milvus* in 2017 and Barn Owl *Tyto alba* in 2017.
- 4.14. It is considered that the semi-improved grassland, scattered scrub, trees, hedgerows and tree lines within the site offer limited suitable foraging opportunities for Merlin, Hobby, Red Kite and Barn Owl. It is also considered that the trees and semi-improved grassland offer limited seasonal foraging opportunities for Fieldfare and Redwing. However, it is not considered these species would be reliant upon the habitats within the site.
- 4.15. It is not considered the site offers any suitable opportunities for Green Sandpiper.

Reptiles

- 4.16. It is considered that the species-poor semi-improved grassland offers potentially suitable habitat for reptiles, given its recent lack of management, while the hedgerows are considered to offer some sheltering/hibernation opportunities for reptiles. The roadside grassland areas are not considered to offer much in terms of refuge for reptiles as they are isolated habitats that surrounded by a high risk of mortality from vehicles using the main road.
- 4.17. A Grass Snake *Natrix helvetica* was recorded during the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey in August 2022.
- 4.18. In addition, specific surveys for reptiles were undertaken within the site between September and October 2022. The results from these surveys can be seen in Table 1 below.

Table 1. Reptile survey results September and October 2022.

Survey no.	Date	Weather conditions	Temp °C	Reptiles recorded
1	06/09/2022	Overcast, dry	18	0
2	12/09/2022	Partly cloudy, dry	20	0
3	16/09/2022	Scattered clouds, dry	14	0
4	20/09/2022	Overcast, dry	16	0
5	23/09/2022	Scattered clouds, dry	17	0
6	27/09/2022	Overcast, light rain	12	0
7	30/09/2022	Overcast, dry	12	0
8	05/10/2022	Overcast, dry	16	0

- 4.19. **Background Information.** The LRERC returned no records of reptiles within the site itself. The nearest record of reptiles was of two Grass Snakes recorded approximately 25m north of the site in 2014. The next closest record of Grass Snake was recorded approximately 0.2km north of the site also in 2014.
- 4.20. In light of the above, it is considered that a low population of Grass Snake is present within the site.

Great Crested Newts

- 4.21. There are no ponds present within the site itself, although one pond was identified using OS Maps which lies within 250m of the site boundary (P1 on Plan ECO1). Access was sought to undertake specific surveys for Great Crested Newts *Triturus cristatus* of this pond in 2022, however access was not granted. Pond P1 is separated from the site by a large tarmac carpark and minor road. Specific surveys of pond P1 undertaken by RSK in 2016 did not record any presence of Great Crested Newts.
- 4.22. A further four ponds (P2-P5 on Plan ECO1) lie within 500m of the site.
- 4.23. Although it is known that Great Crested Newts can disperse up to 500 metres through suitable terrestrial habitat from their breeding pond, it is widely accepted that they tend to utilise suitable terrestrial habitat within a much closer distance. Activity is usually concentrated within 100 metres of breeding ponds and key habitat is located within 50 metres (termed by Natural England as core habitat).
- 4.24. Indeed, English Nature Research Report Number 576 (An assessment of the efficiency of capture techniques and the value of different habitats for the great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* by Warren Cresswell and Rhiannon Whitworth) states:
- 4.25. *“The most comprehensive mitigation, in relation to avoiding disturbance, killing or injury is appropriate within 50m of a breeding pond. It will also almost always be necessary to actively capture newts 50-100m away. However, at distances greater than 100m, there should be careful consideration as to whether attempts to capture newts are necessary or the most effective option to avoid incidental mortality. At distances greater than 200-250m, capture operations will hardly ever be appropriate.”*
- 4.26. **Previous Surveys.** RSK Environment conducted full aquatic surveys in 2016 and recorded Great Crested Newts as absent from pond P1. Pond P2, which is approximately 30m west of P1, was recorded to have a small Great Crested Newt

population, however pond P2 is located in excess of 250m from the site and is separated from the site by an extensive area of hardstanding.

- 4.27. **Background Records.** LRERC returned no records of Great Crested Newts from within the site itself. The closest record of Great Crested Newt was returned from approximately 0.3km southwest of the site 2014, which is considered to be associated with pond P2.
- 4.28. In light of the above, it is considered highly unlikely that Great Crested Newts would be present within the site. However, given the known presence of this species within the local area, a precautionary approach with regard to Great Crested Newts is recommended during construction.

Invertebrates

- 4.29. The Priority Species Small Heath *Coenonympha pamphilu* was recorded during the extended Phase 1 survey conducted in August 2022. The larval foodplants for Small Heath include Bents, Fescues and Meadow-grasses and as such, the species-poor semi-improved grassland is considered represent some breeding opportunities for this species, however given the habitats present in the surrounding area it is not considered that this species would be reliant on any habitats present within the site. Opportunities for this species would be present within the site post-development in any event.
- 4.30. Given the habitats present it is likely an assemblage of common invertebrate species would also be present within the site.
- 4.31. **Background Records.** The LRERC returned no records of any notable invertebrates from within the site itself or within the search radius.

Other Species

- 4.32. Given the habitats present and records from the local area, there is no evidence from site surveys or desk studies to suggest that any other protected or notable species would be present within the site or affected by the proposed development.

5. ECOLOGICAL EVALUATION

5.1. The Principles of Ecological Evaluation

- 5.1.1. The latest guidelines for ecological evaluation produced by CIEEM propose an approach that involves professional judgement, but makes use of available guidance and information, such as the distribution and status of the species or features within the locality of the project.
- 5.1.2. The methods and standards for site evaluation within the British Isles have remained those defined by Ratcliffe⁸. These are broadly used across the United Kingdom to rank sites so priorities for nature conservation can be attained. For example, current sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) designation maintains a system of data analysis that is roughly tested against Ratcliffe's criteria.
- 5.1.3. In general terms, these criteria are size, diversity, naturalness, rarity and fragility, while additional secondary criteria of typicalness, potential value, intrinsic appeal, recorded history and the position within the ecological / geographical units are also incorporated into the ranking procedure.
- 5.1.4. Any assessment should not judge sites in isolation from others, since several habitats may combine to make it worthy of importance to nature conservation.
- 5.1.5. Further, relying on the national criteria would undoubtedly distort the local variation in assessment and therefore additional factors need to be taken into account, e.g. a woodland type with a comparatively poor species diversity, common in the south of England, may be of importance at its northern limits, say in the border country.
- 5.1.6. In addition, habitats of local importance are often highlighted within a local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). The Leicester, Leicestershire and Rutland BAP⁹ currently lists a number of BAP habitats and species.
- 5.1.7. Levels of importance can be determined within a defined geographical context from the immediate site or locality through to the International level.
- 5.1.8. The legislative and planning policy context are also important considerations and have been given due regard throughout this assessment.

5.2. Habitat Evaluation

Designated Sites

- 5.2.1. **Statutory Sites:** There are no statutory designated sites of nature conservation value within or immediately adjacent to the site. The nearest statutory designated site is Burbage Common & Woods Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and is located approximately 3.5km east of the site. This LNR is designated for its grassland, significant scrub habitat, and semi-

⁸ Ratcliffe, D A (1977). *A Nature Conservation Review: the Selection of Study areas of Biological National Importance to Nature Conservation in Britain*. Two Volumes. Cambridge University Press, Cambridge.

⁹ https://www.lrwt.org.uk/sites/default/files/2020-01/space_for_wildlife__llrbap_2016-26_part_1.pdf

natural ancient Oak *Quercus robur*, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and Field Maple *Acer campestre* woodland. This LNR is well-separated from the site by major and minor roads and extensive urban development. As such, it is not considered there will be any direct or indirect adverse effects on this statutory designated site as a result of the development proposals.

- 5.2.2. The nearest Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) is Kendall's Meadow SSSI, located approximately 3.6km north of the site and is designated for its traditionally managed hay meadow with high plant diversity. This SSSI is well separated from the site by major and minor roads and urban development, and as such it is not considered there will be any direct or indirect adverse effects on this statutory designated site as a result of the development proposals.
- 5.2.3. **Non-statutory Sites:** There are no non-statutory designations of conservation value within or immediately adjacent to the site. The nearest non-statutory designated site is the Hinckley Hedgerow 1 potential Local Wildlife Site (pLWS) which lies approximately 0.2km northwest of the site and is designated for its hedgerow habitat, while the closest designated LWS Brodick Road Flood Retention Area LWS which lies approximately 0.3km south of the site at its closest point and is designated for its wet grassland and Red Data Book species. The pLWS is separated by the wider Hinckley West site, comprising newly constructed residential development and also by arable fields. The LWS is separated from the site by a major road and existing residential development and is not hydrologically linked to the site. As such, it is not considered there will be any direct or indirect adverse effects on either of these non-statutory designated sites as a result of the development proposals.
- 5.2.4. A number of additional statutory and non-statutory sites are located in the wider area, but no significant effects are anticipated.

Habitats

Species-poor Semi-Improved Grasslands and Amenity Grassland

- 5.2.5. The species-poor semi-improved grassland within the site is of relatively low ecological value in terms of its species content, comprising only common and widespread species. The semi-improved grassland is to be lost as part of the proposed development. The patches of semi-improved and amenity grasslands located adjacent to the main road are largely to be retained as part of the development, with small section to be used as a trim trail.
- 5.2.6. **Mitigation and Enhancements.** Losses to the species-poor semi-improved grassland could be mitigated for through the creation of new areas of species-rich grassland as part of the development proposals. It is recommended that new areas of grassland be sown / oversown using a native species-rich grassland seed mixture (such Standard General Purpose Meadow Mixture EM2) and be subject to a suitable management regime to increase the floristic diversity of the site.
- 5.2.7. It is recommended that the any new areas of amenity grassland are oversown with a native species-rich seed mixture (such as Emorsgate's Flowering Lawn Mixture EL1) that is tolerant of regular mowing, in order to increase the floristic diversity of the site.

Hedgerows and Tree Line

- 5.2.8. The hedgerows and tree line within the site are of relatively greater ecological value in the context of the site. The hedgerows offer suitable foraging and nesting opportunities for birds and foraging and dispersal/navigational opportunities for wildlife. The majority of the hedgerows and the tree line are to be retained as part of the proposed development. A small section of hedgerow H1 will be removed to facilitate a footpath connection to the site, and a small section of hedgerow H2 that lies within the site boundary will be removed to facilitate the development.
- 5.2.9. **Mitigation and Enhancements.** It is recommended that all retained hedgerows within the site be fenced at canopy width (as required) according to the current British Standards before construction work commences, to protect roots from compaction. Fences should remain in place until construction work is complete within the vicinity of these hedgerows.
- 5.2.10. As an enhancement, it is recommended that the hedgerows and tree line are subject to bolster planting comprising native species and subject to an appropriate management regime to improve their structure and diversify the species content.

Scattered Scrub

- 5.2.11. The scattered scrub is considered to be of relatively low ecological value and is dominated by Bramble. Most areas of scattered scrub are to be lost as part of the proposals, excluding the area of scrub adjacent to hedgerow H3.
- 5.2.12. **Mitigation and Enhancements.** It is recommended that new tree/shrub planting should comprise native species or those of benefit to wildlife. If possible, the new planting should include fruit-bearing trees / shrubs which will provide seasonal foraging opportunities for a range of wildlife including birds and other small mammals.

Hardstanding and Building

- 5.2.13. The hardstanding within the site is of negligible ecological value and is to be lost as part of the proposed development. The gas building is to be retained.
- 5.2.14. **Mitigation and Enhancements.** None required.

5.3. Faunal Evaluation

Bats

- 5.3.1. **Legislation.** All bats are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and included on Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (“the Habitats Regulations”), as amended. These include provisions making it an offence:
- Deliberately to kill, injure or take (capture) bats;
 - Deliberately to disturb bats in such a way as to: -
 - (i) be likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or to hibernate or migrate; or
 - (ii) affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong;
 - To damage or destroy any breeding or resting place used by bats;
 - Intentionally or recklessly to obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter or protection.
- 5.3.2. While the legislation is deemed to apply even when bats are not in residence, Natural England guidance suggests that certain activities such as re-roofing can be completed outside sensitive periods when bats are not in residence provided these do not damage or destroy the roost.
- 5.3.3. The words deliberately and intentionally include actions where a court can infer that the defendant knew that the action taken would almost inevitably result in an offence, even if that was not the primary purpose of the act.
- 5.3.4. The offence of damaging or destroying a breeding site or resting place (which can be interpreted as making it worse for the bat) is an absolute offence. Such actions do not have to be deliberate for an offence to be committed.
- 5.3.5. European Protected Species licences are available from Natural England in certain circumstances, and permit activities that would otherwise be considered an offence.
- 5.3.6. Licences can usually only be granted if the development is in receipt of full planning permission and it is considered that:
- (i) The activity to be licensed must be for imperative reasons of overriding public interest or for public health and safety;
 - (ii) There is no satisfactory alternative; and
 - (ii) 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.
- 5.3.7. Seven species of bat are Priority Species, these are Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, Bechstein’s *Myotis bechsteinii*, Noctule, Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared, Greater Horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*, and Lesser Horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*.

- 5.3.8. **Site Usage.** No roosting opportunities for bats within trees or the gas building was recorded on site. The hedgerows are considered to offer some navigational and foraging opportunities for bats, albeit the suitability of hedgerows H1, H3 and tree line TL1 are limited due to the presence of existing street lighting along Normandy Way.
- 5.3.9. **Mitigation and Enhancements.** The retention of existing hedgerows and tree line will maintain navigational/foraging opportunities for bats. The planting of new native trees/shrubs throughout the site and the provision of any new areas of species-rich grassland would provide enhanced foraging and navigational opportunities for bats.
- 5.3.10. If deemed necessary, a sympathetic lighting regime associated with the new proposals would minimise light spillage into key areas, such as the retained trees, which would maintain foraging and navigational opportunities in these areas in the form of 'dark corridors'. Such a strategy can involve the use of warm white LED lights, which produce less light spillage than other types of lighting and have low / no UV content, or UV-filtered lights. In addition, the spillage of the light can be reduced further through use of low-level lights and the employment of lighting 'hoods' which will direct light below the horizontal plane, preferably at an angle less than 70 degrees.
- 5.3.11. As an enhancement, it is recommended that bat boxes (see Appendix 3 for suitable examples), are erected on new buildings and positioned out of reach of opportunistic predators such as cats. These models of bat box are known to be attractive to a number of the smaller bat species, including Pipistrelle (known from the local area). This measure will provide enhanced roosting opportunities within the site.

Badgers

- 5.3.12. **Legislation.** The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 consolidates the previous Badgers Acts of 1973 and 1991. The legislation aims to protect the species from persecution, rather than being a response to an unfavourable conservation status, as the species is in fact common over most of Britain, with particularly high populations in the southwest.
- 5.3.13. As well as protecting the animal itself, the 1992 Act also makes the intentional or reckless destruction, damage or obstruction of a Badger sett an offence. A sett is defined as "any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a Badger"¹⁰. "Current use" of a Badger sett is defined by Natural England as "how long it takes the signs to disappear", or more precisely, to appear so old as to not indicate "current use".
- 5.3.14. In addition, the intentional elimination of sufficient foraging area to support a known social group of Badgers may, in certain circumstances, be construed as an offence by constituting 'cruel ill treatment' of a Badger.
- 5.3.15. 'Interim guidance' issued by Natural England in September 2007 specifically states "it is not illegal, and therefore a licence is not required, to carry out disturbing activities in the vicinity of a sett if no badger is disturbed and the sett is not damaged or obstructed."

¹⁰ Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (as amended). Guidance on 'Current Use' in the definition of a Badger Sett
<http://www.naturalengland.org.uk/ourwork/regulation/wildlife>

- 5.3.16. However, more recent guidance produced by Natural England in 2009 states that Badgers are relatively tolerant of moderate levels of disturbance and that low levels of disturbance at or near to Badger setts do not necessarily disturb the Badgers occupying those setts. However, Natural England's guidance continues by stating that any activity that will, or is likely to cause one of the interferences defined in Section 3 (such as damaging a sett tunnel or chamber or obstructing access to a sett entrance) will continue to be licensed.
- 5.3.17. In addition, this latest guidance no longer makes reference to any 30m/20m/10m radius as a threshold for whether a licence would be required. Nonetheless, it is stated that tunnels may extend for 20m so care needs to be taken when implementing excavating operations within the vicinity of a sett and to take appropriate precautions with vibrations and noise, etc. Fires / chemicals within 20m of a sett should specifically be avoided.
- 5.3.18. This interim guidance allows greater professional judgement as to whether an offence is likely to be committed by a particular development activity and therefore whether a licence is required or not. For example, if a sett clearly orientates southwards into an embankment it may be somewhat redundant to have a 30m-exclusion zone to the north.
- 5.3.19. It should be noted that a licence cannot be issued until the site is in receipt of a full and valid planning permission and that generally licences are not granted for work between December and June inclusive to avoid disruption to the Badger breeding cycle.
- 5.3.20. Local authorities are obliged to consult Natural England over any work which is considered likely to adversely affect Badgers.
- 5.3.21. **Site usage.** A dead Badger and a mammal push-through was recorded within close proximity of each other along hedgerow H1, while a Badger latrine was also noted approximately 80m north of the deceased animal. Given the evidence of Badgers within the site and known presence in the local area, it is recommended that a precautionary approach is undertaken with regard to Badgers during construction.
- 5.3.22. **Mitigation and Enhancements.** During the construction phase of development, it is often necessary to undertake a number of measures to safeguard any Badgers that may be present on a site, particularly in regard to disturbance, loss of foraging and other related issues.
- 5.3.23. All contractors working on site will be briefed regarding the presence of Badgers and of the types of activities that would not be permissible on site. Any licensing requirements would be particularly highlighted.
- 5.3.24. Any trenches or deep pits that are to be left open overnight will be provided with a means of escape should a Badger enter. This could simply be in the form of a roughened plank of wood placed in the trench as a ramp to the surface. This is particularly important if the trench fills with water.
- 5.3.25. Any trenches/pits will be inspected each morning to ensure no Badgers have become trapped overnight. Should a Badger get stuck in a trench it

will likely attempt to dig itself into the side of the trench, by forming a temporary sett. Should a trapped Badger be encountered, the project ecologists should be contacted immediately for further advice.

- 5.3.26. The storage of topsoil or other 'soft' building materials within the assessment site will be given careful consideration. Badgers will readily adopt such mounds as setts, which would then be afforded the same protection as established setts. So as to avoid the adoption of any mounds, they would be subject to appropriate inspections or consideration given to fencing them with Badger proof fencing.
- 5.3.27. During the development, the storage of any chemicals required for the building construction will be well away from any Badger activity and contained in such a way that they cannot be accessed or knocked over by any roaming Badgers.

Birds

- 5.3.28. **Legislation.** Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is concerned with the protection of wild birds, whilst Schedule 1 lists species that are protected by special penalties. All species of birds receive general protection whilst nesting.
- 5.3.29. **Site Usage.** It is considered that the hedgerows, trees and tree line within the site offer suitable foraging and nesting opportunities for birds, while the species-poor semi-improved grassland may offer suitable foraging opportunities for a range of common bird species.
- 5.3.30. **Mitigation and Enhancements.** The provision of new native trees and shrubs will provide new suitable nesting and foraging opportunities for birds. The inclusion of berry/fruit-bearing species would also provide new seasonal foraging resources for birds. The creation / enhancement of areas of species-rich grassland would also provide suitable new foraging opportunities for a range of bird species.
- 5.3.31. It is recommended that clearance of any suitable nesting vegetation, such as the small sections of hedgerows, be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive) to avoid any potential offence. Should the above timing constraints conflict with any timetabled works, it is recommended that works commence only after a suitably qualified ecologist has undertaken checks to ensure no nesting birds are present. If nesting birds are found to be present during checks then clearance would need to be delayed until young have fledged.
- 5.3.32. Simple enhancement measures could ensure the ornithological interest at the site is increased. For example, the erection of nest boxes on new buildings. Using nest boxes of varying designs would maximise the species complement attracted to the site (see Appendix 4 for suitable examples).

Reptiles

- 5.3.33. **Legislation.** All six British reptile species receive a degree of legislative protection that varies depending on their conservation importance.

- 5.3.34. Smooth Snake *Coronella austriaca* and Sand Lizard *Lacerta agilis* receive 'full protection' under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 as well as protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ("the Habitats Regulations"). These receive protection from:
- Killing, injuring, taking;
 - Possession or control (of live or dead animals, their parts or derivatives);
 - Damage to, destruction of, obstruction of access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection;
 - Disturbance of any animal occupying such a structure or place;
 - Selling, offering for sale, possession or transport for purposes of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative).
- 5.3.35. Common Lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, Grass Snake, Slow Worm *Anguis fragilis* and Adder *Vipera berus* are only 'partially protected' under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and as such only receive protection from:
- Deliberate killing and injuring;
 - Being sold or other forms of trading.
- 5.3.36. The legislation relevant to common reptiles therefore protects the species, but not their habitat and any works that avoid killing or injuring any of these species, should ensure that an offence is avoided.
- 5.3.37. **Site Usage.** During the Extended Phase 1 survey in August 2022, a Grass Snake was recorded within the species-poor semi-improved grassland. However, specific surveys for reptiles undertaken between September and October 2022 did not record any presence of reptiles. As such, it is considered that a low population of Grass Snake is likely present within the site.
- 5.3.38. **Mitigation and Enhancements.** The species-poor semi-improved grassland is to be lost as part of the proposed development. As a precaution, it is recommended that a habitat manipulation exercise is undertaken prior to any removal of suitable reptile habitat within the site, overseen by a suitably qualified ecologist, which can only be carried out during the active season (April-September but extended to March and October depending upon prevailing weather).
- 5.3.39. Habitat manipulation involves controlled cutting in a directional manner to persuade reptiles present to move towards suitable retained habitat or suitable off-site habitats. This would ensure no reptiles (if present in working areas) are injured or killed during works.
- 5.3.40. As a precaution, it is recommended that the removal of any scattered scrub or hedgerows within the site is undertaken outside of the reptile hibernation period (October to March inclusive) and the roots should be pulled slowly from the ground and overseen by a suitably qualified ecologist, to ensure reptiles resting within the hedgerows are not impacted.
- 5.3.41. It is recommended that areas of tussocky wildflower grassland area be created within the areas of open spaces within site to provide enhanced opportunities for reptiles post-development. The tussocky grassland should

be left uncut or only cut infrequently on a rotational basis (with one third cut in any one year) to prevent dominance of scrub, and the grassland should be cut early or late in the season when reptiles would be in hibernation.

- 5.3.42. It is also recommended that refuges, such as log piles are created to provide additional shelter and hibernation opportunities for reptiles. Log piles should be included along the boundary hedgerows to enhance these areas for reptiles. In addition, the provision of grass mounds from cuttings within areas of open space, would provide enhanced breeding habitat for Grass Snake. The above would represent significant enhancements from this group and allow potential recolonisation post-development.
- 5.3.43. An appropriate management regime would ensure that optimum foraging, basking, shelter and hibernation opportunities would be available post-development.

Great Crested Newt

- 5.3.44. **Legislation.** The legislative protection afforded to Great Crested Newts and the licensing provisions associated are the same as outlined above with regard to bats.
- 5.3.45. Great Crested Newts are also a Priority Species.
- 5.3.46. **Site usage.** Given that RSK Environment recorded Great Crested Newts as absent from pond P1 in 2016, and that a small population of Great Crested Newts was recorded in pond P2 (that lies in excess of 250m from the site and is separated from the site by a large area of hardstanding), it is considered highly unlikely that Great Crested Newts would be present within the site.
- 5.3.47. **Mitigation and Enhancements.** As this species is known from the local area, it is recommended that precautionary Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) are implemented during construction which would avoid any potential impacts to Great Crested Newts.
- 5.3.48. Removal of habitat present within 250m of pond P1 will be carried out under a RAMs method statement to ensure Great Crested Newts are not impacted. If necessary, the habitat to be cleared will be subject to a thorough fingertip search by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to removal, to ensure Great Crested Newts are not present. If a Great Crested Newt is recorded during the search, all works will stop within suitable habitat and a licence will be obtained from Natural England before works can continue.
- 5.3.49. The creation of new areas of wildflower grassland within the site would provide new enhanced suitable terrestrial habitat for amphibians, while the creation of log piles / hibernacula within the Application Site will provide further suitable hibernation opportunities for amphibians.

Invertebrates

- 5.3.50. **Site Usage.** A Small Heath was recorded within the site. Given the habitats present it is likely an assemblage of common invertebrate species would also be present within the site.

- 5.3.51. **Mitigation and Enhancements.** The planting of new native trees / shrubs and the creation of new areas of species-rich grassland would retain opportunities for Small Heath and provide new opportunities for a range of invertebrates and would be seen as an enhancement over the existing situation. The incorporation of any log piles would be beneficial to saproxylic species and will diversify the habitats present within the site.

6. PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

- 6.1.1. The planning policy framework that relates to nature conservation in Hinckley, Leicestershire, is issued at two main administrative levels: nationally through the National Planning Policy framework (NPPF), and locally through the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Core Strategy, associated documents and also the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies Development Plan Document (DPD). The proposed development will be judged in relation to the policies contained within these documents.

6.2. National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (July 2021)

- 6.2.1. Guidance on national policy for biodiversity and geological conservation is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), published in March 2012, revised on 24 July 2018, 19 February 2019 and again on 20 July 2021. It is noted that the NPPF continues to refer to further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact within the planning system provided by Circular 06/05 (DEFRA / ODPM, 2005) accompanying the now-defunct Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9).
- 6.2.2. The key element of the NPPF is that there should be “a presumption in favour of sustainable development” (paragraphs 10 to 11). It is important to note that this presumption “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” (paragraph 182). ‘Habitats site’ has the same meaning as the term ‘European site’ as used in the Habitats Regulations 2017.
- 6.2.3. Hence, the direction of Government policy is clear. That is, the presumption in favour of sustainable development is to apply in circumstances where there is potential for an effect on a European site, if it has been shown that there will be no adverse effect on that designated site as a result of the development in prospect.
- 6.2.4. A number of policies in the NPPF are comparable to those in PPS9, including reference to minimisation of impacts to biodiversity and provision of net gains to biodiversity where possible (paragraph 174).
- 6.2.5. The NPPF also considers the strategic approach that Local Authorities should adopt with regard to the protection, maintenance and enhancement of green infrastructure, priority habitats and ecological networks, and the recovery of priority species.
- 6.2.6. Paragraphs 179 to 181 of the NPPF comprise a number of principles that Local Authorities should apply, including encouraging opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments; provision for refusal of planning applications if significant harm cannot be avoided, mitigated or compensated for; applying the protection given to European sites to potential Special Protected Areas (SPA), possible Special Areas of

Conservation (SAC), listed or proposed Ramsar sites and sites identified (or required) as compensatory measures for adverse effects on European sites; and the provision for the refusal for developments resulting in the loss or deterioration of 'irreplaceable' habitats – unless there are 'wholly exceptional reasons' (for instance, infrastructure projects where the public benefit would clearly outweigh the loss or deterioration of habitat) and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

- 6.2.7. National policy therefore implicitly recognises the importance of biodiversity and that with sensitive planning and design, development and conservation of the natural heritage can co-exist and benefits can, in certain circumstances, be obtained.

6.3. Local Policy

The Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Core Strategy

- 6.3.1. The Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Core Strategy was adopted in December 2009 and is the current document in use for planning control purposes.
- 6.3.2. There is one policy that relates in part to nature conservation, **Policy 20**. This policy relates to maintaining, enhancing and connecting biodiversity across existing green infrastructure within the borough.

Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD

- 6.3.3. The Site Allocations and Development Policies Document was adopted in July 2016 and is in place to allocate land in order to deliver development requirements outlined in the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Core Strategy.
- 6.3.4. There are two policies that relate in part to nature conservation within this document. **Policy DM6** relates to the enhancement of biodiversity and geological interest, and **Policy DM9** is in place to ensure safeguarding of natural and semi-natural open spaces.

6.4. Discussion

- 6.4.1. It is considered that the proposals will not adversely impact upon any statutory or non-statutory designated sites and will not adversely affect any protected species within the site. Recommendations have been made to mitigate for the losses of species-poor semi-improved grassland through new species-rich grassland and planting comprising native species. In addition, the majority of hedgerows within the site are also to be retained and as such, it is considered the proposals will accord with Policy 20 of the Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council Core Strategy, and Policy DM6 and DM9 within the Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD.
- 6.4.2. In conclusion, implementation of the measures set out in this report would enable development of the site to accord with national, regional and local planning policy for ecology and nature conservation.

7. SUMMARY AND CONCLUSIONS

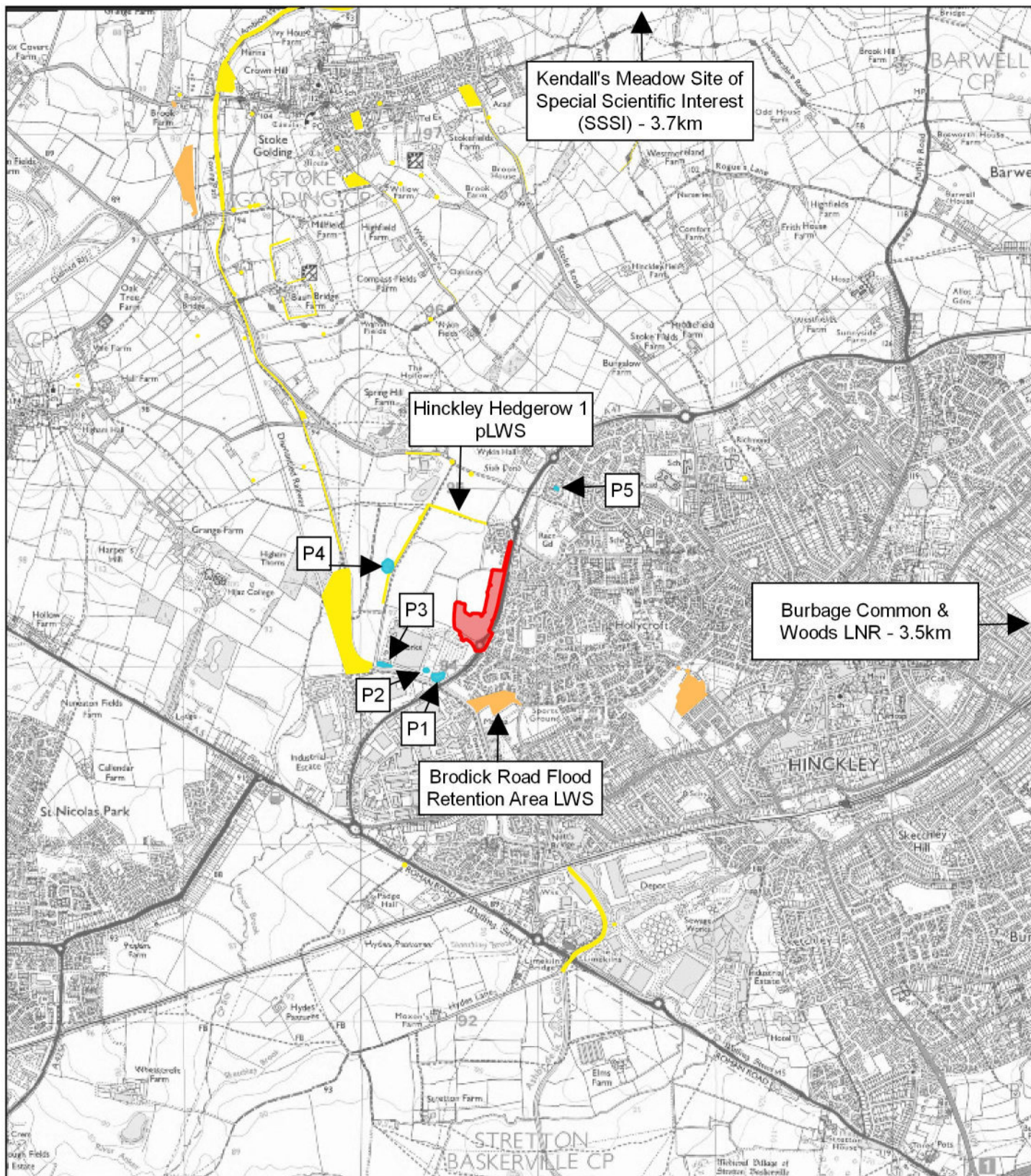
- 7.1. Ecology Solutions was commissioned in May 2022 by Bloor Homes Ltd to undertake an Ecological Assessment of the Land West of Hinckley, Leicestershire.
- 7.2. The proposals for the application site are for 153 residential dwellings with associated infrastructure and areas of open space.
- 7.3. The site was surveyed based around extended Phase 1 survey methodology, as recommended by Natural England, in August 2022. In addition, specific surveys were undertaken in respect of bats, Badgers and reptiles.
- 7.4. There are not considered to be any significant adverse effects on any statutory or non-statutory sites of nature conservation interest from any development proposals.
- 7.5. No trees or buildings within or adjacent to the site were recorded as having the potential to support roosting bats. The planting of new trees and shrubs and the creation /enhancement of species-rich grassland would provide new and enhanced foraging opportunities for bats, while the erection of new bat boxes will provide new roosting opportunities for this group.
- 7.6. No Badger setts were recorded within the site during surveys, however evidence of Badger presence was identified within the site. As such, precautionary measures are recommended with regard to this species during construction.
- 7.7. The retention and enhancement of existing hedgerows, tree line and trees, as well as the provision of new trees and landscape planting, will maintain nesting/foraging opportunities for birds, while the erection of bird boxes within the site will provide new nesting opportunities. Safeguards for nesting birds during vegetation clearance are recommended.
- 7.8. It is considered a small population of Grass Snake is present within the site and precautionary measures are recommended during construction, while enhancements such as the provision of species-rich grassland, maintained as 'tussocky' in nature would provide enhanced opportunities for Grass Snake and other reptiles over the existing situation.
- 7.9. The creation of new areas of species-rich grassland as well as the planting of new native trees and shrubs will more than offset losses of small areas of semi-improved grassland and scattered scrub and will diversify the habitats present within the site.
- 7.10. Pond P1 is located within 250m of the site and RSK Environment recorded Great Crested Newts as absent from this pond in June 2016. RSK Environment recorded pond P2 as having a small population of Great Crested Newts in 2016, however is located beyond 250m from the site. As such, it is considered highly unlikely that Great Crested Newts would be present within the site. As a precaution, the implementation of Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) during construction would avoid any potential impacts to Great Crested Newts.
- 7.11. In conclusion, through the implementation of the safeguards and recommendations set out within this report it is considered that any development

proposals will accord with planning policy with regard to nature conservation at all administrative levels.

PLANS

PLAN ECO1

Site Location, Ecological Designations and Offsite
Pond Locations



KEY:

- SITE BOUNDARY
- LOCAL WILDLIFE SITE (LWS)
- POTENTIAL LOCAL WILDLIFE SITE (pLWS)
- ONSITE AND OFFSITE PONDS WITHIN 500m



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**7341: HINCKLEY WEST PHASE 4 -
RESERVED MATTERS APPLICATION**

**PLAN ECO1: SITE LOCATION,
ECOLOGICAL DESIGNATIONS, ONSITE
AND OFFSITE POND LOCATIONS**

Rev: A
May 2023

PLAN ECO2

Ecological Features and Protected Species



KEY:

-  SITE BOUNDARY - SURVEYED IN AUGUST 2022
-  ADDITIONAL AREA - SURVEYED IN MAY 2023
-  SPECIES-POOR SEMI-IMPROVED GRASSLAND
-  AMENITY GRASSLAND
-  HARDSTANDING
-  GAS BUILDING
-  NATIVE HEDGEROW
-  TREE LINE
-  STANDING TREE
-  SCATTERED SCRUB
-  FENCE
-  MAMMAL PUSH-THROUGH RECORDED IN AUGUST 2022
-  DEAD BADGER RECORDED IN AUGUST 2022
-  BADGER LATRINE RECORDED IN AUGUST 2022
-  GRASS SNAKE RECORDED IN AUGUST 2022



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7341: HINCKLEY WEST PHASE 4

PLAN ECO2: ECOLOGICAL
FEATURES AND PROTECTED
SPECIES

Rev: A
Jun 2023

APPENDICES

APPENDIX 1

Proposed Site Plan

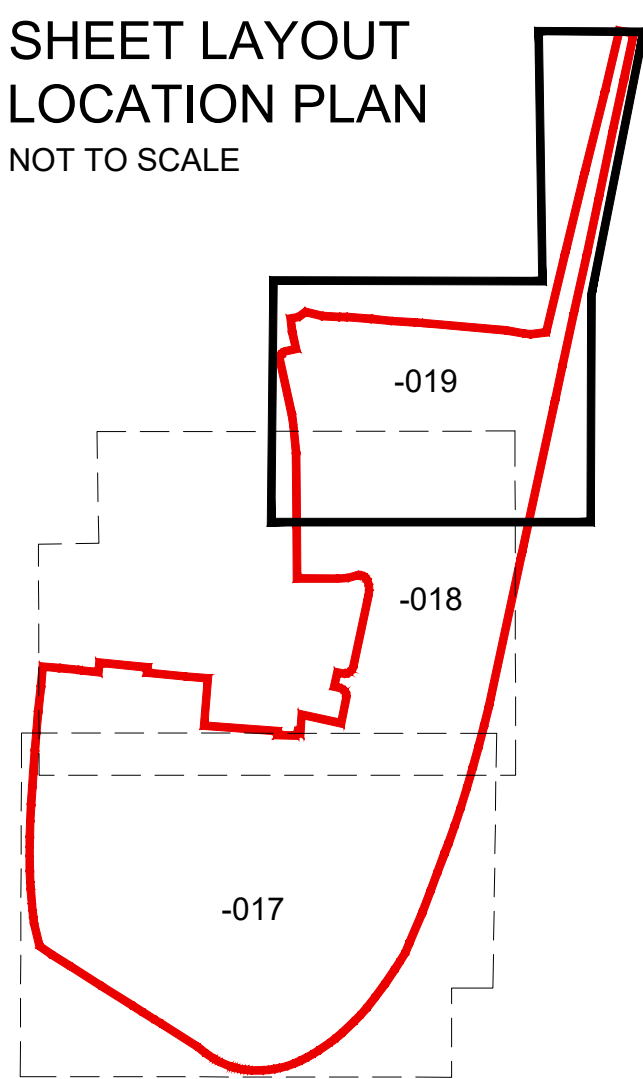
- LEGEND**
- EXISTING TREES/HEDGES
To be retained
- PROPOSED TREES
Heavy/Selected/Standard
See Schedule
- ORNAMENTAL HEDGE
See Schedule
- NATIVE HEDGE MIX
See Schedule
- PROPOSED PLANTING
Shrubs/Herbaceous/Grasses
See Schedule
- TURF
with area (m²)
- AMENITY GRASS AREAS
Wear Tolerant Turfgrass Mixture
Emorsgate EG22 sown at 25g/m²
Kept mown short to 40mm
- WILDFLOWER MEADOW
Special General Purpose Meadow Mixture
Emorsgate EM3 sown at 4 g/m²
(Existing grassland to be retained and managed. Where
remediation is required see as above)
- GRAVEL
40mm of Golden Gravel
Laid over Geotextile
- GRAVEL PATH
REGIONAL SPECIFICATION

DRAWING NOTES

All tree and shrub locations and species must be taken into consideration by the project Structural Engineer to ensure that foundation design accords with the specifications set out in Chapter 4 of the NHBC Standards. The landscape Contractor must ensure that plant material is planted in the locations shown and with NO SUBSTITUTIONS made without consulting the Group Landscape Design Department. It is the Landscape Contractor's responsibility to ensure that all underground services have been located and identified in advance of tree pit excavation so that no services are damaged or compromised by tree planting. Any changes to tree positions, species or specifications must be approved by the Group Landscape Design Department. Underground service strips are to be kept free of all plant material. Contractors must comply with all Health and Safety regulations and be aware of project/site specific information including referring to the information set out in the CDM drawings.

**SHEET LAYOUT
LOCATION PLAN**

NOT TO SCALE



Trim Trail Equipment

1. CLIMBING TRUNKS x3
As Supplied by Ashwells Timber Ltd
3-4m in Length
Or similar approved
2. PARALLEL BARS
As Supplied by Playtale
Ref: PA45
Or similar approved
3. CLIMBING BOULDERS x8
Caledonian Glacial Boulders
Mixture of Sizes, Well-rounded
Partly Embedded in the Soil
4. LEAP FROG
As Supplied by Proludic
Ref: JPS16-J
Or similar approved
5. DOUBLE TURBO CHALLENGE
As Supplied by Kompan
Ref: FR0212
Or similar approved
6. JUMP RAMP
As Supplied by Proludic
Ref: JPS23
Or similar approved
7. BALANCE WEAWE
As Supplied by Miracle Design & Play
Ref: TBR7140
Or similar approved
8. HURDLES
As Supplied by Miracle Design & Play
Ref: TBR7142
Or similar approved

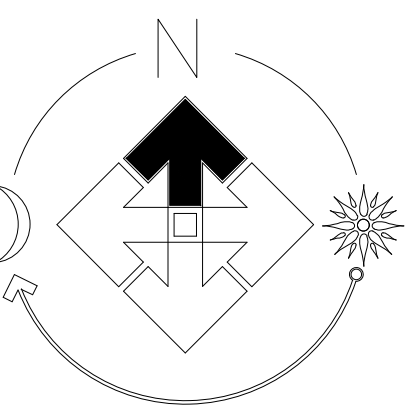
THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH SEPARATE GROUP / SITE SPECIFIC CONSTRUCTION NOTES AND MATERIALS SPECIFICATION.



CDM LEGEND

- | Symbol | Brief description of risk. |
|--------|--|
| | Caution overhead / underground services. |
| | Sewer easement. |
| | Trees have protection order in place, guarding required. |

NOTES:
Principal contractor to ensure all health and safety provisions are being correctly followed in relation to all temporary works.



**PLOT NUMBER
SHEET REF.**

SHEET 017 (78-137,139-146,149-167,171-173)
SHEET 018 (40-77,138,147-148,168-170,174-180)
SHEET 019 (1-39)

**FOR SPECIFICATION,
PLANTING DETAILS &
SCHEDULE SEE DRAWING
EM100-LS-020**

Revision	Date
a	Updated to latest layout and boundary
b	Updated following comments
c	Updated following comments
d	Updated following comments
e	Updated boundary, changed trim trail and ecological features added
f	Play equipment added to SE of site

Job: Hinckley West Ph4

Title: Site Landscaping

Scale: 1:250 @A0
Date: Jan 2023
Drawn: LP
Checked: PmJ

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BLOOR HOMES

J S BLOOR (SERVICES) LIMITED
ASHBY ROAD, MEASHAM, SWADLINCOTE,
DERBYSHIRE DE12 7JP
TELEPHONE 01530 270100 FACSIMILE 01530 272006

Drawing No. EM100-LS-019f

HINCKLEY WEST PH4

LEGEND

- EXISTING TREES/HEDGES
To be retained
- PROPOSED TREES
Heavy/Selected/Standard
See Schedule
- ORNAMENTAL HEDGE
See Schedule
- NATIVE HEDGE MIX
See Schedule
- PROPOSED PLANTING
Shrub/Herbaceous/Grasses
See Schedule
- TURF
with area (m²)
- AMENITY GRASS AREAS
Wear Tolerant Turfgrass Mixture
Emorgate EG22 sown at 25g/m²
Kept mown short to 40mm
- WILDFLOWER MEADOW
Special General Purpose Meadow Mixture
Emorgate EG22 sown at 4 g/m²
(Existing grassland to be retained and managed. Where
remediation is required see above)
- GRAVEL
40mm of Golden Gravel
Laid over Geotextile
- GRAVEL PATH
REGIONAL SPECIFICATION
- DEADWOOD PILES (5 no.)
Deadwood piles made from
hardwood. Layer of 10cm woodchip
to base and logs to be partially
buried to 50cm.

Trim Trail Equipment

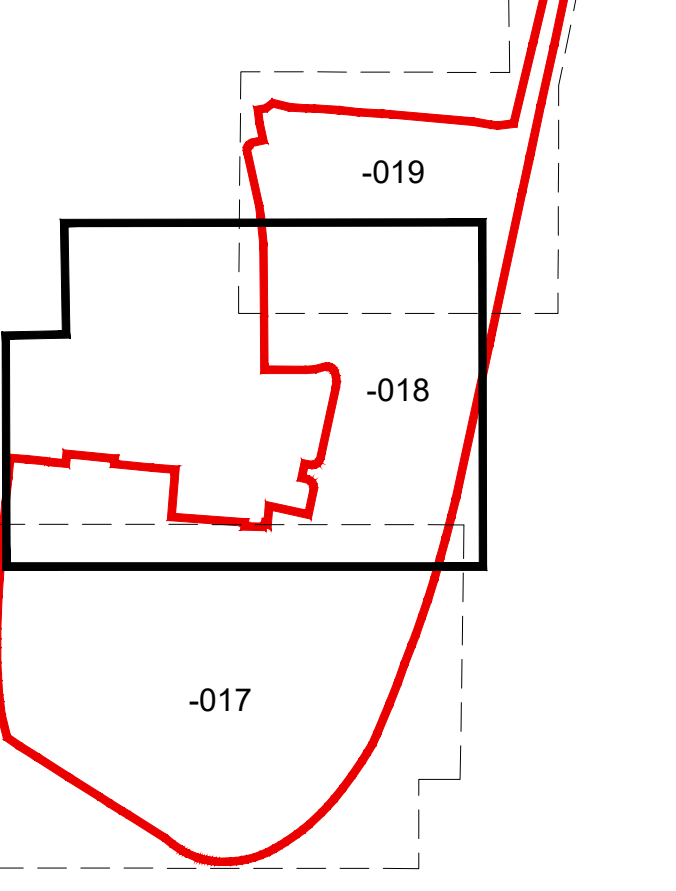
1. CLIMBING TRUNKS x3
As Supplied by Ashwells Timber Ltd
3.4m in Length
Or Similar Approved
2. PARALLEL BARS
As Supplied by Playdale
Ref: P45
Or similar approved
3. CLIMBING BOULDERS x8
Calculation: Glacial Boulders
Mixture of Sizes, Well-rounded
Partly Embedded in the Soil
4. LEAP FROG
As Supplied by Proludic
Ref: JP516-J
Or similar approved
5. DOUBLE TURBO CHALLENGE
As Supplied by Kompan
Ref: FR0212
Or similar approved
6. JUMP RAMP
As Supplied by Proludic
Ref: JP523
Or similar approved
7. BALANCE WEAVE
As Supplied by Miracle Design & Play
Ref: TBR140
Or similar approved
8. HURDLES
As Supplied by Miracle Design & Play
Ref: TBR142
Or similar approved



THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH
SEPARATE GROUP / SITE SPECIFIC CONSTRUCTION
NOTES AND MATERIALS SPECIFICATION.

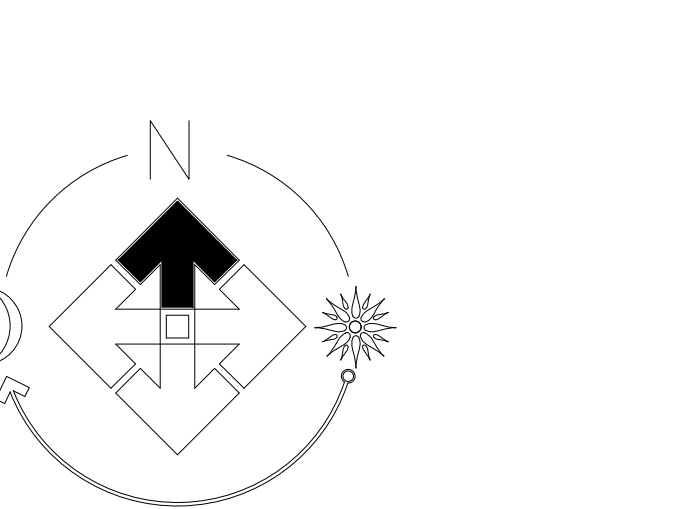
DRAWING NOTES
All tree and shrub locations and species must
be taken into consideration by the project
Structural Engineer to ensure that foundation
design accords with the specifications set out
in Chapter 4 of the NHBC Standards.
The Landscape Contractor must ensure that
plant material is planted in the locations
shown and with NO SUBSTITUTIONS made
without consulting the Group Landscape
Design Department. It is the Landscape
Contractor's responsibility to ensure that all
underground services have been located and
identified in advance of tree pit excavation so
that no services are damaged or compromised
by tree planting. Any changes to tree
positions, species or specifications must be
approved by the Group Landscape Design
Department. Underground service strips are
to be kept free of all plant material.
Contractors must comply with all Health and
Safety regulations and be aware of
project/site specific information including
referring to the information set out in the
CDM drawings.

SHEET LAYOUT
LOCATION PLAN
NOT TO SCALE



CDM LEGEND

- Symbol Brief description of risk.
- Caution overhead /
underground services.
- Sewer assessment.
- Trees have protection order in
place, guarding required.
- NOTES:
Principal contractor to ensure all health and safety
procedures are being correctly followed in relation
to all temporary works.



PLOT NUMBER
SHEET REF.

SHEET 017 (78-137,139-146,149-167,171-173)

SHEET 018 (40-77,138,147-148,168-170,

174-180)

SHEET 019 (1-39)

FOR SPECIFICATION,
PLANTING DETAILS &
SCHEDULE SEE DRAWING
EM100-LS-020

Revision	Date
a	Updated to latest layout and boundary
b	Updated following comments
c	Updated following comments
d	Updated following comments
e	Updated boundary, changed trim trail and ecological
f	Play equipment added to SE of site

24.01.23	07.02.23
02.05.23	08.05.23
23.05.23	26.05.23

Job: Hinckley West Ph4

Title: Site Landscaping

Scale: 1:250 @A0

Drawn: LP

Date: Jan 2023

Checked: PmJ

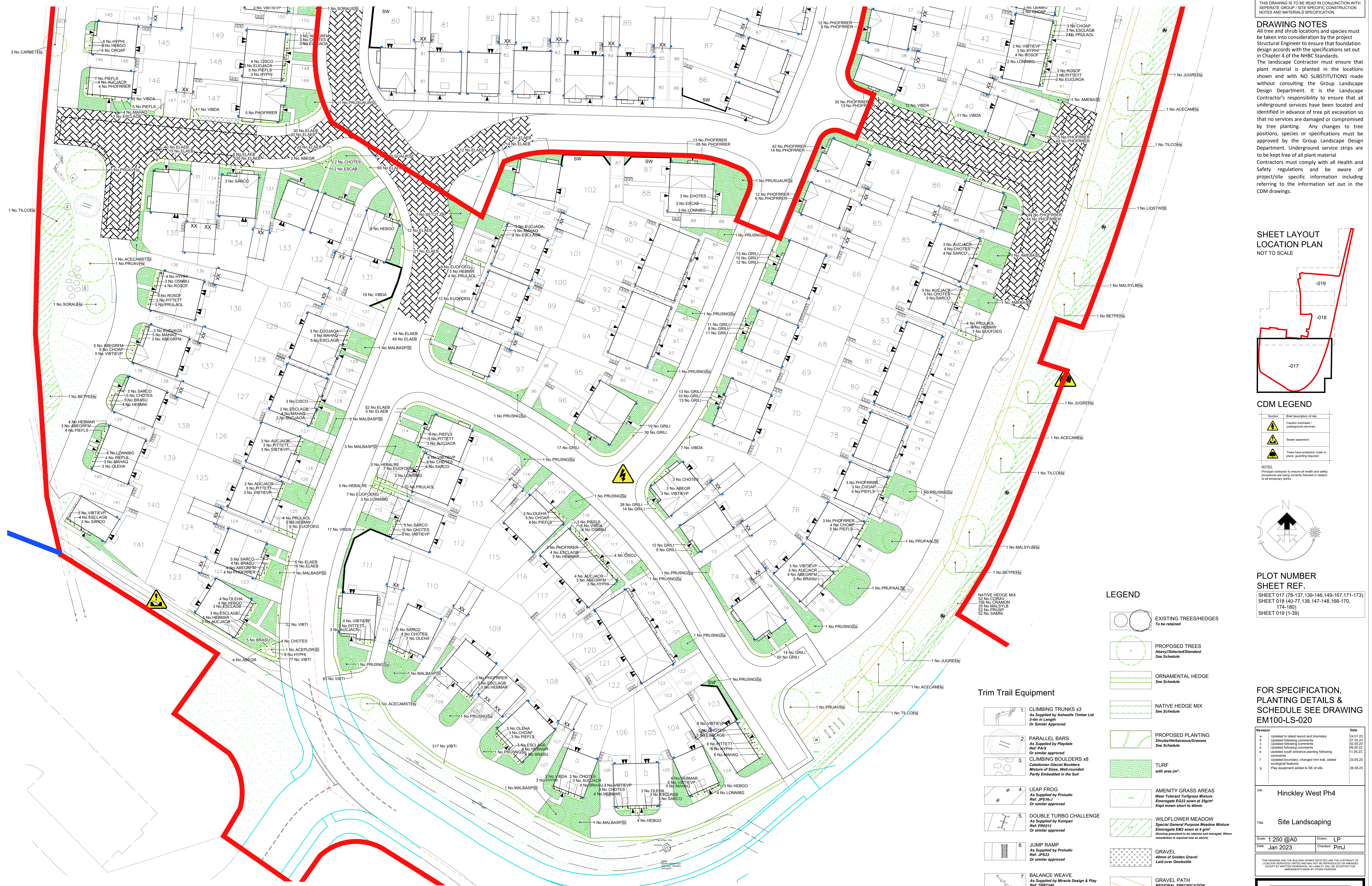
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Drawing No: EM100-LS-018f

HINCKLEY WEST PH4

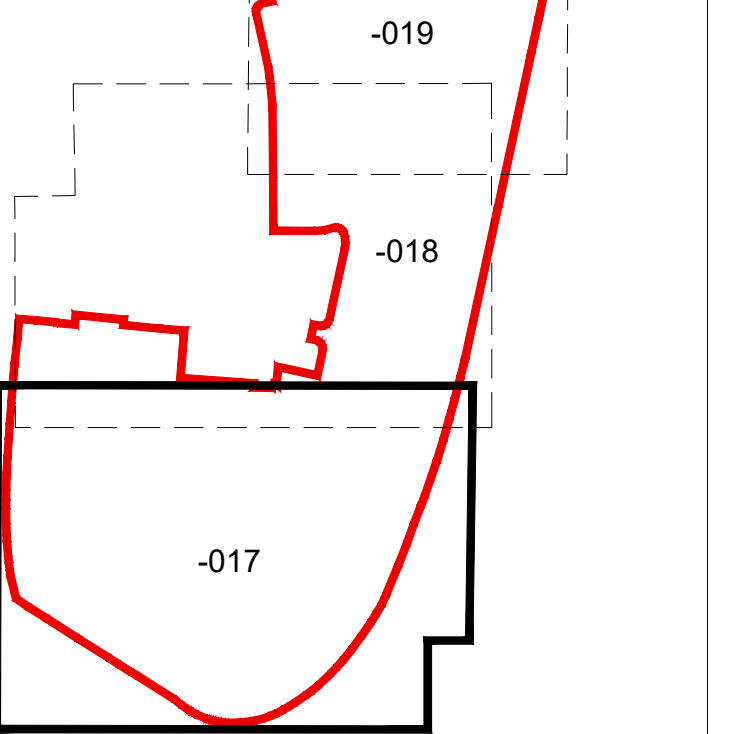
HINCKLEY WEST PH4



THIS DRAWING IS TO BE READ IN CONJUNCTION WITH SEPARATE GROUP / SITE SPECIFIC CONSTRUCTION NOTES AND MATERIALS SPECIFICATION.

DRAWING NOTES
All tree and shrub locations and species must be taken into consideration by the project Structural Engineer to ensure that foundation design accords with the specifications set out in Chapter 4 of the NHBC Standards.
The Landscape Contractor must ensure that plant material is planted in the locations shown and with NO SUBSTITUTIONS made without consulting the Group Landscape Design Department. It is the Landscape Contractor's responsibility to ensure that all underground services have been located and identified in advance of tree pit excavation so that no services are damaged or compromised by tree planting. Any changes to tree positions, species or specifications must be approved by the Group Landscape Design Department. Underground service strips are to be kept free of all plant material. Contractors must comply with all Health and Safety regulations and be aware of project/site specific information including referring to the information set out in the CDM drawings.

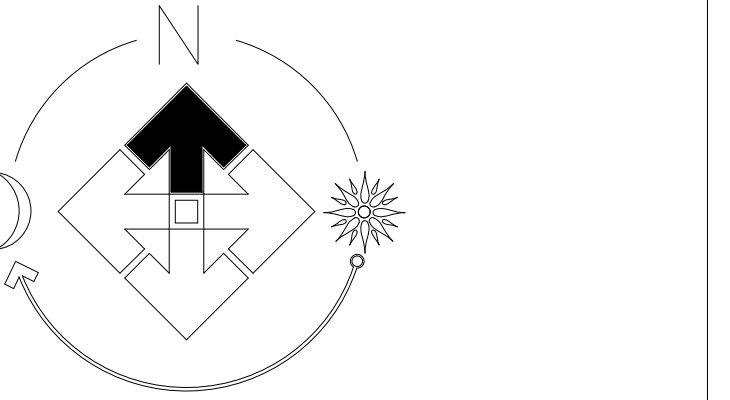
SHEET LAYOUT LOCATION PLAN
NOT TO SCALE



CDM LEGEND

Symbol	Brief description of risk.
	Caution overhead / underground services.
	Sewer assessment.
	Trees have protection order in place, guarding required.

NOTES
Principal contractor to ensure all health and safety procedures are being correctly followed in relation to all temporary works.



PLOT NUMBER SHEET REF.
SHEET 017 (78-137,139-146,149-167,171-173)
SHEET 018 (40-77,138,147-148,168-170,
SHEET 019 (1-39)

FOR SPECIFICATION, PLANTING DETAILS & SCHEDULE SEE DRAWING EM100-LS-020

Revision	Description	Date
a	Updated to latest layout and boundary	24.01.23
b	Updated following comments	07.02.23
c	Updated following comments	02.02.23
d	Updated following comments	09.05.23
e	Updated south entrance planting following comments	11.05.23
f	Updated boundary, changed trim trail, added ecological features	23.05.23
g	Play equipment added to SIE of site	26.05.23

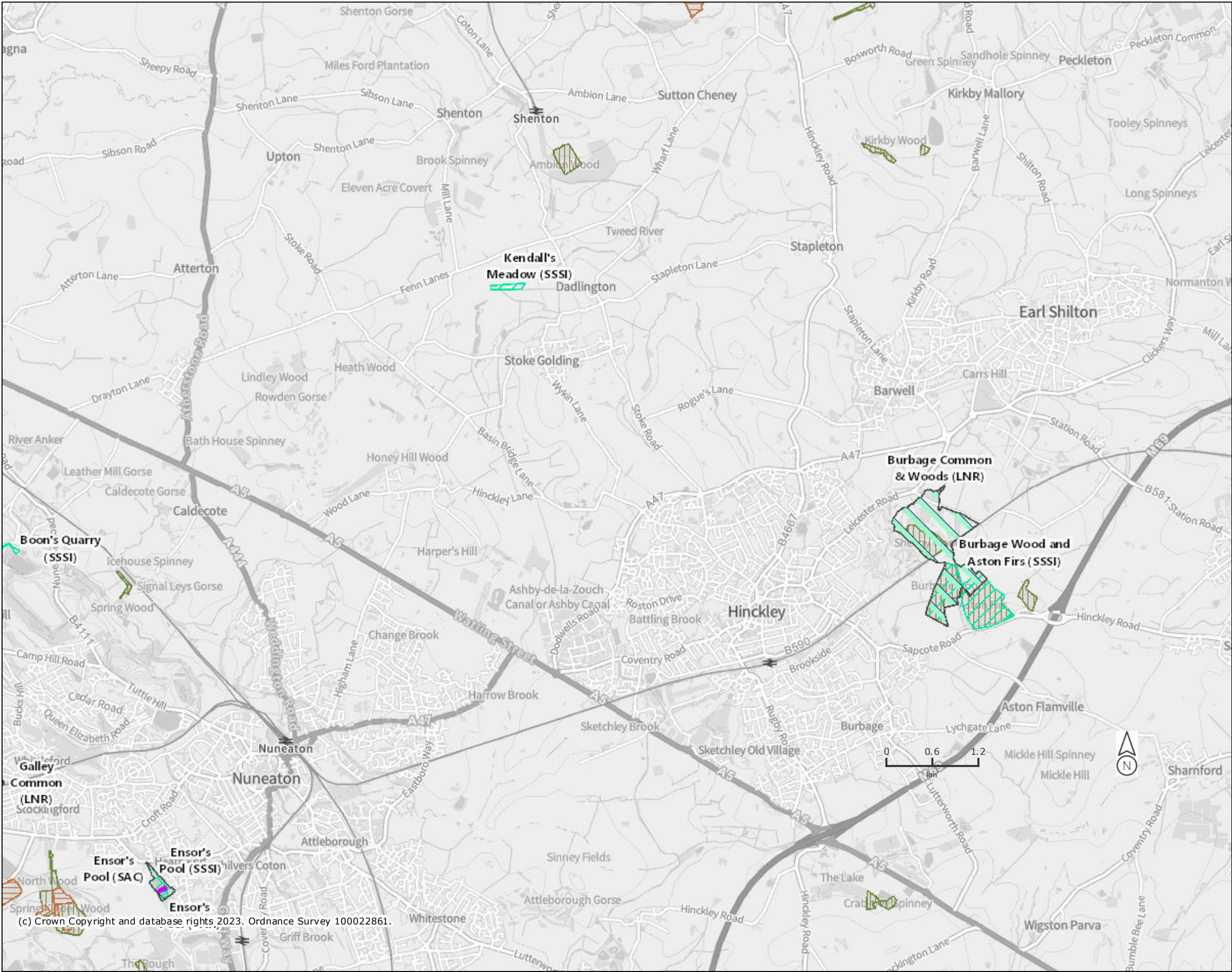
Job:	Hinckley West Ph4
Title:	Site Landscaping
Scale:	1:250 @A0
Date:	Jan 2023
Drawn:	LP
Checked:	PmJ

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BLOOR HOMES
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DERBYSHIRE DE12 2JP
TELEPHONE 01530 270100 FACSIMILE 01530 272006
Drawing No: EM100-LS-017g

APPENDIX 2

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Legend

- Local Nature Reserves (England)
- National Nature Reserves (England)
- Ramsar Sites (England)
- Proposed Ramsar Sites (England)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England)
- Special Areas of Conservation (England)
- Possible Special Areas of Conservation (England)
- Special Protection Areas (England)
- Potential Special Protection Areas (England)

Ancient Woodland (England)

- Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland
- Ancient Replanted Woodland

Projection = OSGB36
xmin = 426600
ymin = 288900
xmax = 454900
ymax = 302100

Map produced by MAGIC on 12 January, 2023.
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APPENDIX 3

Suitable Examples of Bat Boxes

Bat Boxes

Schwegler bat boxes are made from 'woodcrete' and have the highest rates of occupation of all types of box. The 75% wood sawdust, clay and concrete mixture is ideal, being durable whilst allowing natural respiration and temperature stability. These boxes are rot and predator proof and extremely long lasting. Boxes can be hung from existing external walls at a height of 5-6 metres.



1FF Bat Box

The rectangular shape makes the 1FF suitable for attaching to the sides of buildings or in sites such as bridges, though it may also be used on trees. It has a narrow crevice-like internal space to attract Pipistrelle and Noctule bats.

Woodcrete (75% wood sawdust, concrete and clay mixture)
Width: 27cm
Height: 43cm
Weight: 8.3kg



1FQ Bat Box

Designed to be installed onto buildings and can be painted to match the house design.

Woodcrete (75% wood sawdust, concrete and clay mixture)
Width: 35cm
Height: 60cm
Weight: 15.8kg



1FD Bat Box

Suitable for attaching to the sides of buildings and trees. It has a narrow crevice-like internal space to attract Pipistrelle species.

Woodcrete (75% wood sawdust, concrete and clay mixture)
Width: 16cm
Height: 36cm
Weight: 4.8kg



APPENDIX 4

Suitable Examples of Bird Boxes

Bird Boxes

Schwegler bird boxes have the highest rates of occupation of all types of box.

They are designed to mimic natural nest sites and provide a stable environment with the right thermal properties for chick rearing and winter roosting.

Boxes are made from 'Woodcrete'. This 75% wood sawdust, clay and concrete mixture is breathable and very durable making these bird boxes extremely long lasting.



1MR Schwegler Bird Box

This box attracts a number of garden birds. The box can should be secured onto a building.

External dimensions:

Height: 27cm, Width: 19cm, Depth: 23cm

1SP Schwegler Sparrow Terrace

A Woodcrete bird box which allows for several Sparrow pairs to nest in a single location. The box can either be integrated within the fabric of a building or otherwise fitted to the exterior of the building walls.

Brood chamber dimensions:

Height: 16cm, Width: 10.5cm, Depth: 15cm

External dimensions:

Height: 24.5cm, Width: 43cm, Depth: 20cm





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Part of the ES Group

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