WEDDLES

LANDSCAPE ARCHITECTURE
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SHILTON ROAD, EARL SHILTON

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL (PEA) REPORT

November 2025

February 2026 – Revision A

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1 SUMMARY

This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) included a desk study of designated sites and ecological data, and a detailed walkover survey of the site considering habitats and species.

The proposed development of the application site has the potential to have significant negative impacts on receptors including Foraging and Commuting Bats and Breeding Birds. As such, additional Phase 2 species surveys have been recommended, and the results and subsequent mitigation strategies, recommendations or enhancements will be incorporated into an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA), which will be submitted as part of a Reserved Matters Application.

Furthermore, the site has the potential to hold habitats for other ecological features such as Amphibians, Badgers, Invertebrates, Small Mammals and Reptiles and a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been recommended. A Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) / Ecological Management Plan (EEP) should also be submitted to ensure the design of the site remains supportive of protected and notable species in the long-term.

A Biodiversity Net Gain Biodiversity (BNG) Summary Report should be submitted to ensure an adequate habitat compensation strategy is produced which allows for 10% net gain as per the Environmental Act 2021.

An executive summary of recommendations is provided overleaf within Table 1.

Ecological Receptor / Constraint	Timescales
Amphibians Reasonable Avoidance Methods (RAMs) to be undertaken. Enclosed within CEMP. Enhancements to be secured within LEMP.	During construction Secured through appropriately worded condition of planning / Reserved Matters application.
Biodiversity Net Gain Biodiversity Net Gain Summary Report should be submitted to support the planning application.	Submitted as part of planning application
Breeding Birds Six breeding bird surveys to be undertaken. Ecological Impact Assessment	Typically, one a month from March – August – ornithological and ecological discretion may advise a different pattern within this period. Submitted as part of planning application
Badgers Pre-commencement Survey and Reasonable Avoidance Methods (RAMs) to be undertaken. Enclosed within CEMP.	March (optimal period). Secured through appropriately worded condition of planning / Reserved Matters application.
Trees Existing mature trees should be protected in line with BS5837:2012.	Prior to and during construction.
Foraging and Commuting Bats Night Bat Walking and Static Bat Detector Surveys to be undertaken. Ecological Impact Assessment	One visit per season for a full year. Static deployment for five consecutive nights per month (April - October inclusive). Submitted as part of planning application.
Other Terrestrial Mammals Reasonable Avoidance Methods (RAMs) to be undertaken. Enclosed within CEMP. Enhancements to be secured within LEMP.	Prior to and during construction. Secured through appropriately worded condition of planning / Reserved Matters application.
Reptiles Reasonable Avoidance Methods (RAMs) to be undertaken. Enclosed within CEMP. Enhancements to be secured within LEMP.	Prior to and during construction. Secured through appropriately worded condition of planning / Reserved Matters application.

Table 1: Executive Summary of Ecological recommendations

2 INTRODUCTION

2.1 Background

Weddles were instructed by Giles Stanley Ltd. to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) for the site at Land West of Shilton Road, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire.

This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal aims to:

- Identify any likely ecological constraints;
- Propose any necessary design changes;
- Identify any further ecological surveys required to enable an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) to be carried out;
- Propose any ecological enhancements.

This report has been prepared in line with BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity: Code of practice for planning and development and the CIEEM Guidance for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2017), Ecological Report Writing (2017) and Ecological Impact Assessment (2022).

Revision A

A Revision of this document was created on 05/02/2026. This Revision comprises the addition of Section 4.5.3 – Structures and the consequential update to Table and Page numbering thereafter.

2.2 Site Description

The redline application area (herein referred to as the 'site') is approximately 5.6ha in extent, and lies within Leicestershire Vales National Character Area (NCA),west of Shilton Road, Earl Shilton, Leicestershire. Earl Shilton is a market town in Leicestershire, about 5 miles from Hinckley and approximately 10 miles from the City of Leicester.

The western half of the application area is primarily used for the keeping of horses, featuring access tracks, a ménage, a small stable block and a series of smaller fields for grazing. An area had been fenced for the keeping of a recently introduced herd of sheep. The eastern field is sheep-grazed.

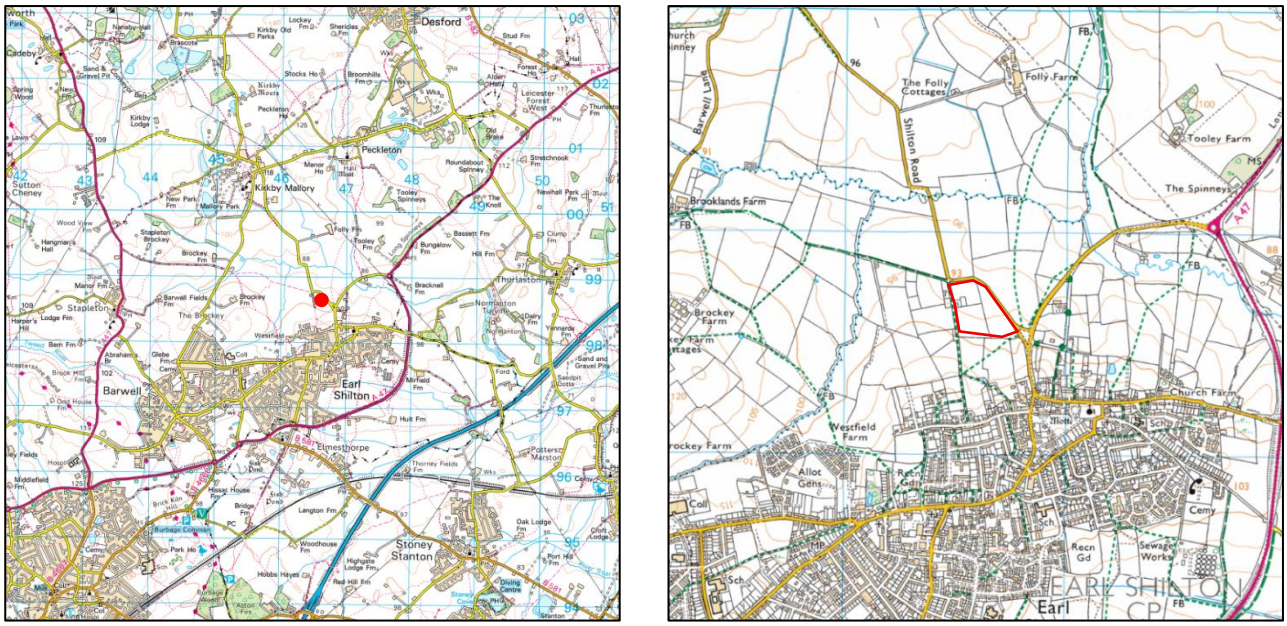

Figure 1: Ordnance Survey Map showing approximate site location within the wider landscape context (Crown Copyright, 2025).

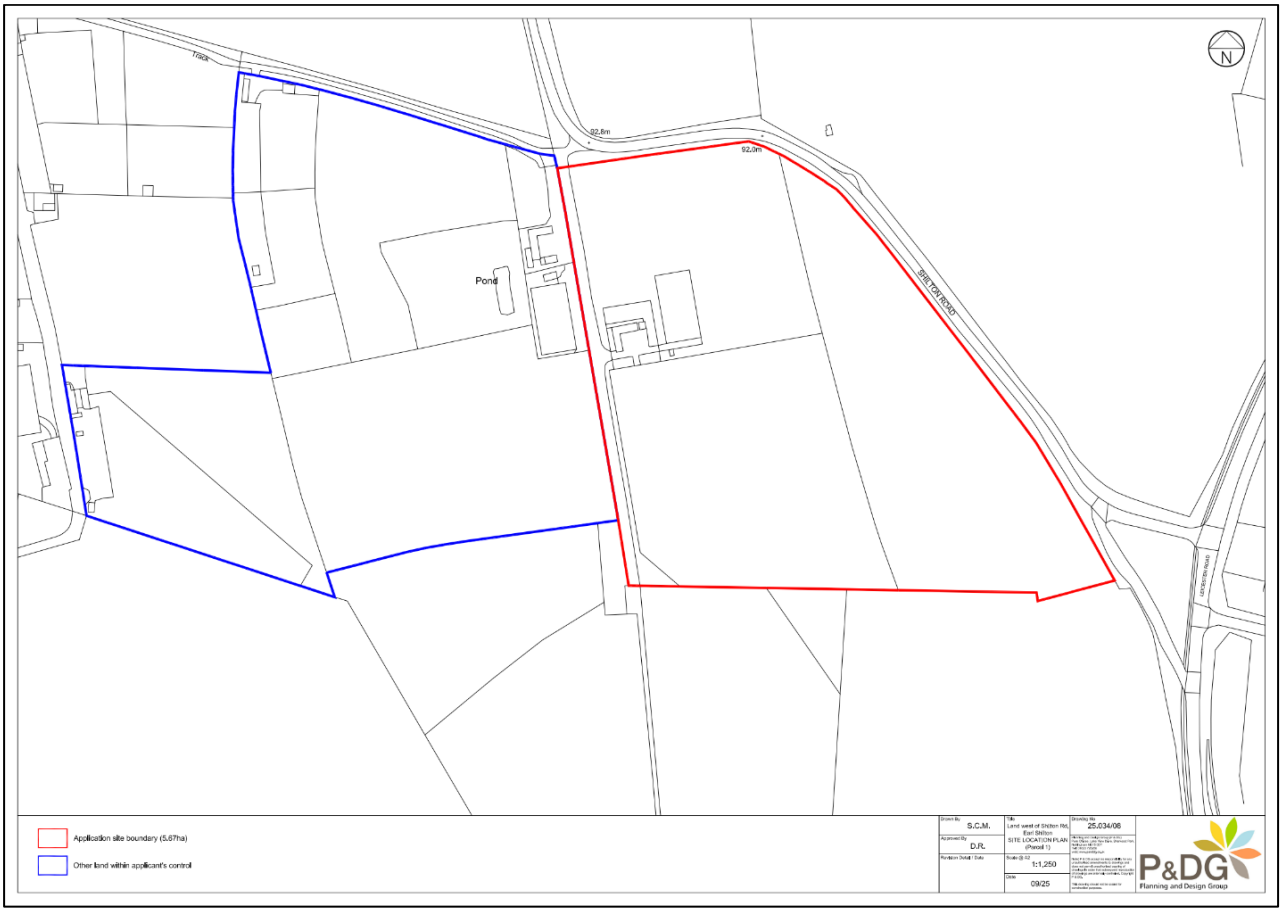

Figure 2: Redline - development site boundary and wider blueline boundary extent. The blueline was not assessed as part of this preliminary assessment.

2.3 The Proposals

Outline planning permission for the development of up to 120 dwellings including affordable housing, enhanced public right of way, public amenity space and habitat creation.

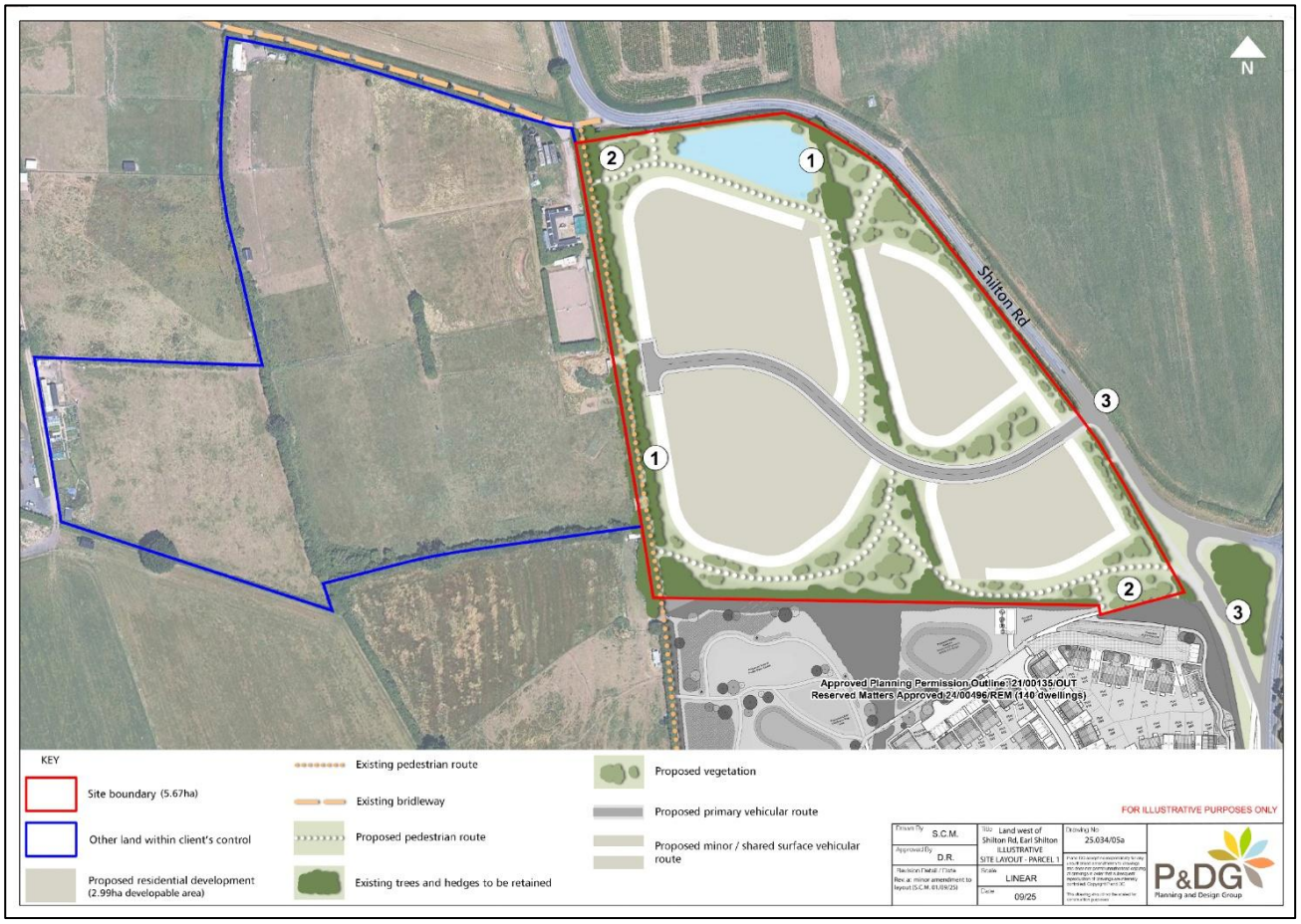

Figure 3: Outline Planning Proposals, September 2025

2.4 Planning Status

The site is in Earl Shilton, under the administrative control of Hinckley & Bosworth Borough Council and Leicestershire County Council.

2.5 Report Validity

The information provided within this PEA report is considered to be valid for a period of 18 months from the date the survey was undertaken.

3 METHODOLOGY

3.1 Desk Study

A desk study was undertaken to collate any existing ecological data for the site and its surroundings. As part of the desk study process, the following sources of record have been considered:

- Natural England Magic website for geographic information on key environmental schemes and designations. www.magic.gov.uk, October 2025 (see Appendix C).
- Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Records Centre's data at OS grid reference SP466986. Received July 2025 (see Appendix D – full data set available on request).
- Adjacent habitats on land off Leicester Road, Earl Shilton, were surveyed by CSA Environmental. Documents referenced within this report include CSA/4519/15, CSA/4519/14, CSA/4519/13 (Badger Mitigation Strategy, Reptile Mitigation Strategy, and Landscape and Ecology Management Plan – 2024).

3.2 Field Surveys

3.2.1 Habitat Survey

Habitat surveys were carried out in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification[1] (Professional Edition) at a minimum of Level 4 and at a Minimum Mapping Unit of 25m^2/5 linear m. The survey was undertaken within the optimum period for Habitat Field Surveys, between March and October.

Information regarding the assessment is provided in the table below:

Survey date / time	Surveyors present	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%RH)	Windspeed (Beaufort)	Cloud cover (Okta)
22/07/2025 11.45am	AW	18	81	2	6

Table 2: Survey Details

This appraisal includes a:

- Description of each habitat including a general list of species and assessment of general management. The relative abundance of each plant species in the total species composition is notated using the **DAFOR** scale: Dominant, Abundant, Frequent, Occasional or Rare[2].
- Condition assessment for each habitat, carried out following the condition criteria of The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Sheets[3].
- Identification of UK BAP Priority Habitats under S41 of NERC Act and Habitats Directive Annex I habitat types.

A UK Habitats Plan of the site showing the various identified habitats is provided in Appendix E.

[1] UKHabs (2023) *The UK Habitat Classification User Manual*, Version 2.01
[2] Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (2011). BSBI Recording the British and Irish flora 2010-2020 Annex 1: Guidance on sampling approaches.
https://bsbi.org/wp-content/uploads/dlm_uploads/Sampling_Guidance_-_Annex_1_v4_April_2011.pdf
[3] DEFRA (2024). The Statutory Biodiversity Metric– Metric Condition Assessments.
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/65c60f00cc433b000ca90b33/Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_Condition_Assessments-_Feb24.xlsx

3.2.2 Biodiversity Net Gain – Baseline Assessment

A study of the baseline BNG score was carried out using the Statutory DEFRA Biodiversity Metric providing a summary of the onsite habitat types their relevant Distinctiveness, Condition and Strategic Significance. These are multiplied along with other factors to produce an Ecological Baseline Score, presented in Biodiversity Units (BU). The Baseline Score can then be used by the applicant to inform an appropriate mitigation strategy to reach 10% Biodiversity Net Gain in accordance with the Environment Act, 2021.

3.2.3 Badger Surveys

The site and immediate surroundings (where access was possible), was searched for any evidence of Badger *(Meles meles)* in accordance with Surveying Badgers[4] as part of the walkover survey.
During the walkover the site was searched for evidence of badger including setts, paths and prints, latrines, dung pits, snuffle holes, foraging signs, and hairs caught on wire fencing.

3.2.4 Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA)

Trees within the site were inspected from ground level using binoculars and elevated survey by ladder if safe to search for any field signs of bats or potential roost features (PRF's). The survey was undertaken as part of the walkover survey for all accessible trees.

Each tree was searched for features including; hollows, woodpecker holes, occlusions. ‘Damage’ features including; lightning strikes, hazard beams, subsidence cracks, shearing cracks, transverse snaps and splits, welds, lifting bark, desiccation features and frost cracks. ‘Association’ bat roosting features including fluting and ivy.

Each tree was then assigned a suitability, as detailed in the table below:

Suitability	Description
None	No PRFs identified and no further action required.
PRF-I	PRF is only suitably for individual bats or very small numbers of bats due to size of lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
PRF-M	PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

Table 3: Categorisation of trees with PRFs for bats

3.2.5 Bat Preliminary Roost Assessment of Buildings

A thorough internal and external inspection of the building to look for evidence of bats and assess bat roosting potential was undertaken as part of the walkover survey. Evidence of bats may take the form of droppings, urine stains, feeding remains, live bats, dead bats, grease mark stains, fur and claw marks made by bats regularly roosting in the same location.

During the external survey any roof and walls were inspected from ground level (using binoculars to aid visibility where required) and elevated survey by ladder if safe to search for gaps and voids that would allow bats access to suitable roost sites.

Each building was assigned a roost suitability as defined BCT Good Practice Guidelines, as detailed in the table below:

[4] Cresswell, Harris & Jefferies (1989) Surveying Badgers, The Mammal Society.

Potential Suitability	Description of Roosting Habitats
High suitability	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.
Moderate suitability	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
Low suitability	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation).
Negligible suitability	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosing bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels

Table 4: Classification of building suitability for bats

3.2.6 Day Bat Walking (DBW)

Habitat features on site are assessed for their suitability to support foraging and commuting bat activity. This assessment is independent from the suitability of the site to support roosting bats and provides information on the likeliness of bat foraging activity within the local environment, and the dependence of individuals on these features for commuting to alternative roosting sites, foraging and migration.

The site was assigned a habitat suitability as defined BCT Good Practice Guidelines, as detailed in the table below:

Potential Suitability	Description of Habitat
High suitability	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site that is close to and connected to known roosts.
Moderate suitability	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as treelines and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
Low suitability	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Negligible suitability	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour

None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting of foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provoke continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate /shelter insect populations

Table 5: Suitability Assessment Criteria for foraging and commuting bats

3.2.7 Breeding Birds

Assessment of the site's overall suitability to support breeding and nesting birds was undertaken. Habitat composition, geographic locality and association with designated sites are all relevant considerations. Where habitats are suitable to support locally or nationally protected species, breeding individuals or populations of birds further breeding or wintering bird surveys may be required to understand the impact from a proposed scheme.

3.2.8 Pond Scoping Assessment

A pond scoping exercise was undertaken to identify any ponds or watercourses located 250m of the site using ordnance survey maps and aerial photography. The zone of influence may be amended based upon the scale of impact at the discretion of the ecologist.

3.2.9 Reptiles

An assessment of the onsite habitats was undertaken in order to evaluate the suitability of the habitats to support either episodically occurring or resident populations of reptiles. Habitats such as grasslands, heathland, dunes, brownfields, golf courses are all considered suitable – as are sites featuring a mosaic of habitats with south-facing slopes or decreased levels of disturbance. Reptiles can be highly dispersive, so an assessment is also made of the suitability of the connective habitat to additional optimal habitats.

3.2.10 Invasive Species

As part of the walkover survey the site and immediate surroundings were searched for any evidence of invasive non-native plant species (INNS) listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

The species which are often encountered are Japanese Knotweed *(Fallopia japonica),* Himalayan balsam *(Impatiens glandulifera)*, Giant Hogweed *(Heracleum mantegazzianum), Cotoneaster sp., Rhododendron sp.,* and Variegated Yellow Archangel *(Lamiastrum galeobdolon subsp. argentatum).*

3.3 Limitations

It should be noted that due to the electric fence keeping sheep within an enclosure onsite, the assessment of habitats in the southwestern corner of the application area was limited, in some places, to a survey with binoculars rather than with a hand lens (particularly true of the woodland parcel). Due to both good visibility and management processes limiting habitat complexity however, this constraint is not considered a limitation.

No other limitations were identified during the assessment and the results of this survey are considered suitable to reflect the existing ecological baseline of the development as true at the time of survey.

4 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITION

4.1 Designations

Within the 2km search area, there are 24 non-statutory designation, including 13 Local Wildlife Site (LWS) designations and 11 designations of Historic Local Wildlife Sites.

MAGIC returned no record of statutory designations within the 2km search radius. The site does lie within five Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zones of SSSIs that lie beyond the 2km search area, however due to the type of application proposal, Natural England do not need to be consulted or notified.

Further details of the LWSs found within the 2km search radius are tabulated below:

Name of LWS	Distance	Description
Thurlaston Brook, Earl Shilton	0.59km	Small stream/river
Thurlaston Brook hedgerow	0.74km	Species-rich hedgerow
Peckleton, hedgerows	0.81km	Two species-rich hedgerows
Earl Shilton meadows, stream and hedges	1.17km	Mesotrophic grassland, stream, hedge, and three mature trees
Peckleton, grassland and tree	1.35km	Mesotrophic grassland and mature tree
Kirkby Road hedgerows	1.46km	Three species-rich hedgerows
Shilton Road hedgerow, Kirkby Mallory	1.58km	Species-rich hedgerow
Barwell, New Barn Farm hedge	1.61km	Hedge
Normanton Wood Hedgerow	1.67km	Species-rich hedgerow
Earl Shilton, mature oak near sewage works	1.67km	Mature tree
Mallory Park grassland & churchyard trees, Kirkby Mallory	1.72km	Mesotrophic grassland and two mature trees
Ashby Rd/Kirkby Rd track hedgerows & trees	1.92km	Eight species-rich hedgerows and five mature trees
Earl Shilton, Wentworth Avenue Oak	1.94km	Mature tree

Table 6: Summary of designated sites within 2km of the site boundary

Natural England Magic website indicates that within a 2km radius there are three types of Priority Habitat Inventory (PHI) allocations, comprising several areas allocated as ‘Deciduous Woodland’ PHI, two areas allocated as ‘Coastal and Floodplain Grazing Marsh’ PHI, and one small area allocated as ‘Ancient and Semi-natural Woodland’ PHI.

On the basis that the application site located at least 600m from the nearest LWS, and the application site will see the retention of connective habitats within the site, the impacts are considered negligible. As such, this ecological receptor is not considered further within this report.

4.2 Habitats and Flora

4.2.1 Flora Records

Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC) returned 87 records for notable plant species within the 2km search radius. The nearest of these records refers to Hoary Plantain (*Plantago media*), located approximately 424m south of the site in 2024.

All higher plant species present were recorded during the site walkover and are provided within the description of each habitat. No rare or notable plants were recorded during the site walkover.

4.2.2 Invasive Non-Native Species

LRERC provided 31 records of invasive non-native species (INNS) within the 2km search radius. The INNS recorded are Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*), Japanese Rose (*Rosa rugosa*), Variegated Yellow Archangel (*Lamiastrum galeobdolon subsp. argentatum*), Wall Cotoneaster (*Cotoneaster horizontalis*), Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Three-cornered garlic (*Allium triquetrum*) and Nuttall's Waterweed (*Elodea nuttallii*). The nearest INNS record is for Japanese Rose, located approximately 0.35km southeast of the application site in 2021.

No invasive species were noted during the site walk over.

4.3 Field Survey

The table below summarises the habitats present within and immediately adjacent to the site, and their relevant inclusion as a National Habitat of Principal Importance and / or within the Local Biodiversity Action Plan[5].

Primary Habitat Code	Secondary Code (Where required)	UKHab	NHPI	LBAP	N/A
g3	102 (sheep-grazed) 103 (horse-grazed) 115 (enclosure)	Neutral Grassland		*Site does not meet LBAP criteria*	✓
g3c		Other Neutral Grassland		*Site does not meet LBAP criteria*	✓
g4	102 (sheep-grazed)	Modified Grassland			✓
w1g		Other Woodland; Broadleaved			✓
h2a	190 (with trees) 191 (associated with bank/ditch)	Native Hedgerow	✓	*Species-rich listed only*	
u1b		Developed land – sealed surface			✓
u1c		Artificial unvegetated unsealed surface			✓
u1	828 (vegetated garden)	Built up areas & gardens			✓
u1f		Sparsely Vegetated urban land			✓
-		Individual Trees (Rural)			✓

Table 7: UKHabs Habitat Types and their relevant inclusion in NHPI or LBAP

4.3.1 g3 – Neutral Grassland

There are two neutral grassland parcels present within the redline application area. These are both present within the westernmost fields associated with the stables. Their species composition and condition relate to their degree of grazing; the western half of the application area has been predominantly used by and grazed by horses for several years and recently a herd of sheep has been introduced to an enclosed western area. While there is >20% cover of broadleaved herbs and sedges and generally >8 species per m^2 across these parcels, at the time of the survey other criteria essential for meeting the conditions of the more specific habitat type 'Other Neutral Grassland' were not met due to the grazing regime.

[5] Leicester, Leicestershire & Rutland BAP 2016 – 2026. Appendix 1: Priority Habitat Summaries and Registers, p.37.

UKHabitat / reference	Description
g3, 103 (1)	Horse-grazed enclosure. with a limited thatch layer (below 7cm). Some areas have been grazed short, while areas where there is more fertility, less palatable flowers have been left by the horses. Species observed included: Ryegrass sp. (*Lolium* sp.) (A), Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) (F), Cock's-foot Grass (*Dactylis glomerata*) (F), Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*) (O), Meadow Foxtail (*Alopecurus pratensis*) (R), Hawkbit sp. (*Leontodon* sp.) (F), Sheep Sorrel (*Rumex acetosella*) (O), Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense*) (O), White Clover (*Trifolium repens*) (F), Meadow Buttercup (*Ranunculus acris*) (R), Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) (F), Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*) (O), Spear Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) (R), Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) (O).
g3, 102, 115 (2)	The sheep-grazed electric-fenced enclosure has a very limited thatch layer (below 7cm). Observable species noted included Ryegrass sp. (A), Common Nettle (*Urtica dioica*) (R), Creeping Buttercup (O), Creeping Thistle (F), Ribwort Plantain (R), Broadleaved Plantain (*Plantago major*) (R) and Broadleaved Dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*) (O).

Table 8: Other Neutral Grassland parcel descriptions and conditions

Parcel	**g3 (1)**	**g3 (3)**
Grassland Condition Assessment (Medium/ High distinctiveness)	**Pass / Fail**	**Pass / Fail**
A. The grassland is a good representation of the habitat type it has been identified as, based on its UKHab description - the appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches the characteristics of the specific grassland habitat type. Indicator species listed by UKHab for the specific grassland habitat type are consistently present. Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	Pass	Pass
B. Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.	Pass	Fail
C. Cover of bare ground between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens.	Pass	Pass
D. Cover of bracken less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble) less than 5%	Pass	Pass
E. Combined cover of species indicative of sub-optimal condition and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area. If any invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA4) are present, this criterion is automatically failed.	Fail	Fail
F. There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m2 present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type. Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	Fail	Fail
Condition Score	**Moderate**	**Moderate**

Table 9: Other Neutral Grassland Condition Assessment (Medium / High distinctiveness)

Figure 4: g3 (1) southern-most area of the horse-grazed grassland.

Figure 5: Close-up of the shorter sward within g3 (1).

Figure 6: View east across g3 (2), actively sheep-grazed.

Figure 7: View southwest towards woodland. The electric enclosure keeps the sheep grazing within the g3c (1) sward.

4.3.2 g3c – Other Neutral Grassland

There are two other neutral grassland parcels present within the redline application area. They differ from the other parcels in their lack of active grazing regime and therefore g3c (1) passed criteria 1, 2, and 4 and g3c (2) passed 1, 2 and 3 of the UKHabs classification criteria. Characteristic species outlined in Appendix 1 of the Leicestershire & Rutland BAP were not recorded within the grassland. None of the parcels of Other Neutral Grassland met the requirements for LWS selection criteria. It should be noted, however, that the northern parcel (g3c (2)) supported populations of invertebrates including those noted in the LBAP and this has been discussed in Section 4.5.5.

UKHabitat / reference	Description
g3c (1)	An area between the sheep enclosure and horse-grazing area that has grown taller than the adjacent habitat types. There is a limited thatch layer (below 7cm), but some thatch is present. Species include Yorkshire Fog (O), Cock's-foot grass (F), Ryegrass sp. (O-F), Meadow Foxtail (R), False Oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) (O), Hawkbit sp. (F), Sheep Sorrel (O), Ribwort Plantain (F), Red Clover (O), White Clover (O), Creeping Buttercup (F), Creeping Thistle (O) and Hogweed (O).
g3c (2)	An area of bare ground has been exposed between the stable block and H32. Otherwise, due to rotational grazing between the fields, species in this sward have been permitted to grow to a fuller height through spring and summer. There is a limited thatch layer (below 7cm). Species observed included: Yorkshire Fog (A), Cock's-foot grass (A), False Oat-grass (O), Ryegrass sp. (O), Ribwort Plantain (F), Hawkbit (A), Hogweed (O), (R), Meadow Buttercup (O), Hedge Bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*) (O), Greater Plantain (O), Spear Thistle (R), Great Willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*) (R), Common Mouse-ear (*Cerastium fontanum*) and Vetch sp. (*Viscia* sp.) (R).

Table 10: Other Neutral Grassland parcel descriptions and conditions

Parcel	g3c (1)	g3c (2)
Grassland Condition Assessment (Medium/ High distinctiveness)	**Pass / Fail**	**Pass / Fail**
A. The grassland is a good representation of the habitat type it has been identified as, based on its UKHab description - the appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches the characteristics of the specific grassland habitat type. Indicator species listed by UKHab for the specific grassland habitat type are consistently present. Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	Pass	Pass
B. Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.	Pass	Pass
C. Cover of bare ground between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens.	Pass	Fail
D. Cover of bracken less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble) less than 5%	Pass	Pass
E. Combined cover of species indicative of sub-optimal condition and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area. If any invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA4) are present, this criterion is automatically failed.	Fail	Fail
F. There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m2 present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type. Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	Fail	Fail
Condition Score	**Moderate**	**Moderate**

Table 11: Other Neutral Grassland Condition Assessment (Medium / High distinctiveness)

Figure 8: View west across g3c (1), longer sward and ungrazed.

Figure 9: Close-up of g3c (1).

Figure 10: Close-up of sward; note the Yorkshire Fog and Hawkbit within g3c (2).

Figure 11: View south across the ungrazed parcel of g3c (2). Note the occasional Hedge Bindweed.

Figure 12: There were numerous Common Blue (Polyommatus icarus) butterflies within g3c (2), as well as Meadow Brown (Maniola jurtina), Cockchafers (Melolontha melolontha) and Grasshopper (Caelifera sp.).

4.3.3 g4 - Modified Grassland

The large eastern field was under long-term management as a field grazed by a large mixed herd of sheep. As such, it was dominated by abundant palatable grasses, including both Cock's-foot and Ryegrasses; Yorkshire Fog was occasional. The abundance of flora associated with high-fertility varied across the site with the movement and habits of the sheep (see Figure 13 and 14, below). Wildflower species identified included frequent Dandelion *(Taraxacum officinale* agg.*)*, frequent to locally abundant Creeping Thistle, and frequent Nettle, Broadleaved Dock and White Clover. Oak (*Quercus sp.*) saplings were occasional to rare adjacent to H4. Ridge and Furrow was noted within in the field.

Grassland Condition Assessment	**Pass/Fail**
A. There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m^2 present, including at least 2 forbs. Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition.	Fail
B. Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	Fail
C. Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scrub such as bramble Rubus fruticosus agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Pass
D. Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	Fail
E. Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens)2.	Pass

F. Cover of bracken Pteridium aquilinum is less than 20%.	Pass
G. There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA4).	Pass
Condition Score	**Poor**

Table 12: Low Distinctiveness Grassland Condition Assessment

Figure 13: Sheep grazing within the g4 (1). Palatable grasses and species indicative of nutrient enrichment were the most abundant. The eastern side of H4 can be seen on the right side of the photo. The adjacent development can be seen in the background (left).

Figure 14: Creeping Thistle more abundant in the southern area.

Figure 15: View south towards the adjacent development. The large mixed flock are grazing in the foreground.

4.3.4 w1g – Other Woodland, Broadleaved

A small parcel within the southwestern corner of the application area comprises an area of planted trees that have grown into a small, predominantly broadleaved woodland area. This area is fenced off from the grazing animals present in the wider site area by an electric fence. As such, survey was undertaken from outside the electric fence using binoculars. Tree species present included Apple (*Malus* sp.), Oak, Field Maple (*Acer campestre*) and Scot's Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*). No trees are more than 300mm in diameter. No veteran features could be observed from ground level during the walkover. No signs of pests and disease were observed. The condition of the woodland was assessed as '**Moderate**'.

Woodland Condition Assessment	**W1**
A. Age distribution of trees	1
B. Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage	3
C. Invasive plant species	3
D. Number of native species	2
E. Cover of native tree and shrub species	3
F. Open space within woodland	3
G. Woodland regeneration	1
H. Tree health	3
I. Vegetation and ground flora	1
J. Woodland vertical structure	1
K. Veteran trees	1
L. Amount of deadwood	1
M. Woodland disturbance	3
Total	**26**

Table 13: Woodland Condition Assessment

Figure 16: View south, towards planted woodland. Trees associated with H43 can be seen to the right.

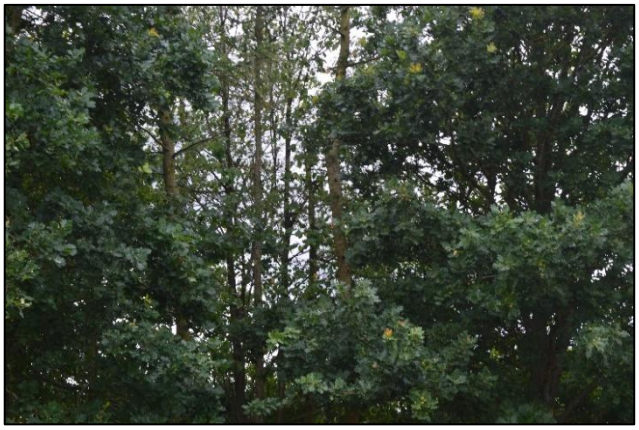

Figure 17: Canopy of w1g.

Figure 18: Ground flora below w1g; an assemblage predominantly continuous with the neighbouring grassland sward. The perimeter fence prevents grazing animals from entering.

4.3.5 h2a – Native Hedgerows

Six hedgerows were assessed as 'Native hedgerows'. As per the Weddles Tree Survey (*"2042-001 Shilton Road, Earl Shilton - Tree Survey"*), these have been referred to as: H28, H37, H38, H46, H47, and H48. Details regarding their management and species composition are detailed in the table below.

Hedgerow Description				**UKBAP Priority Habitat** >20m Long and <5m wide. >80% of at least 1 UK native woody species
ID	**Length/ Width**	**Management**	**Species Composition**	
H28	119m x 2m	Unmanaged and grown out	Hawthorn (*Crateagus monogyna*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*).	Yes
H37	26m x 2m	Unmanaged and grown out	Hawthorn	Yes
H38	26m x 2m	Unmanaged and grown out	Hawthorn	Yes
H46	80m x 4m	Unmanaged and grown out. Sheep rest at base.	Hawthorn	Yes
H47	74m x 4m	Unmanaged	Hawthorn, Holly, Dog-rose (*Rosa canina*)	Yes
H48	240m x 2m	Unmanaged	Hawthorn, Field Maple, Dog-rose	Yes

Table 14: Native Hedgerow Descriptions

Of the native hedgerows surveyed, one (H28) passed all condition assessment criteria. The remainder failed at least one functional group (C1 and C2) and D2, with the exception of H46, which also failed B1. This resulted in a condition score of '**Moderate'** for the remaining five native hedgerows.

Hedgerow Condition Assessment			**H28**	**H37**	**H38**	**H46**	**H47**	**H48**
A1	Height	>1.5m average along length	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
A2	Width	>1.5m average along length	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
B1	Gap – Hedge base	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5m for >90% length	Pass	Pass	Pass	**Fail**	Pass	Pass
B2	Gap - Hedge Canopy Continuity	Gaps make up <10% of total length and no canopy gaps >5m	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass
C1	Undisturbed Ground and perennial vegetation	>1m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation, measured from outer edge of hedgerow, for >90% of length and is present on at least one side of hedge.	Pass	**Fail**	**Fail**	**Fail**	**Fail**	**Fail**
C2	Undesirable perennial vegetation	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of area of undisturbed ground	Pass	**Fail**	**Fail**	**Fail**	**Fail**	**Fail**
D1	Invasive and neophyte species	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass	Pass

		on Schedule 9 of WCA3) and recently introduced species.						
D2	Current Damage	>90% of hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities	Pass	**Fail**	**Fail**	**Fail**	**Fail**	**Fail**
Condition Score			**Good**	**Mod**	**Mod**	**Mod**	**Mod**	**Mod**

Table 15: Native Hedgerow Condition Assessment table.

Figure 19: View east, at H47.

Figure 20: View west, along the base of H46 where sheep have worn away vegetation while sheltering.

Figure 21: View north, at H28.

Figure 22: View north along H48, along the side of the road, outside of the site boundary.

4.3.6 Native Hedgerow with trees

Two native hedgerows onsite were associated with trees as per the UKHab definition (secondary code 190). These hedgerows are referred to as H32 and H43 and run the length of the western boundary parallel to the Public Right of Way. H32 is associated with T29, G30, G31, G33, G34 and G35 trees as per the Weddles Tree Survey (*"2042-001 Shilton Road, Earl Shilton - Tree Survey"*). H32 predominantly comprises Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), prominent tree species including Oak, Field Maple and Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). H43 comprises a more diverse hedgerow composition of Hawthorn, Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) but only one prominent tree species is planted - G50 and G51 Field Maple. As these hedgerows have no more than 5 failures in total and do not fail both attributes in more than one functional group, they have been assessed as '**Moderate'** condition.

Hedgerow Description				UKBAP Priority Habitat >20m Long and <5m wide. >80% of at least 1 UK native woody species
ID	Length/ Width	Management	Species Composition	
H32	109m x 3m	Outside of a management cycle; outgrown, and leggy – particularly in the southern half.	Hawthorn with trees including Oak, Field Maple and Sycamore.	No
H43	133m x 4m	Outside of a management cycle; outgrown.	Hawthorn, Blackthorn and Hazel with Field Maple trees.	No

Table 16: Hedgerow with trees descriptions

Hedgerow Condition Assessment			H32	H43
A1	Height	>1.5m average along length	Pass	Pass
A2	Width	>1.5m average along length	Pass	Pass
B1	Gap – Hedge base	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5m for >90% length	**Fail**	Pass
B2	Gap - Hedge Canopy Continuity	Gaps make up <10% of total length and no canopy gaps >5m	Pass	Pass
C1	Undisturbed Ground and perennial vegetation	>1m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation, measured from outer edge of hedgerow, for >90% of length and is present on at least one side of hedge.	**Fail**	**Fail**
C2	Undesirable perennial vegetation	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of area of undisturbed ground.	**Fail**	**Fail**
D1	Invasive and neophyte species	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA3) and recently introduced species.	Pass	Pass
D2	Current Damage	>90% of hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities.	**Fail**	**Fail**
E1	Tree Class	There is more than one age-class (or morphology) of tree present (for example: young, mature, veteran and or ancient), and there is on average at least one mature, ancient or veteran tree present per 20 - 50m of hedgerow.	**Fail**	**Fail**
E2	Tree health	At least 95% of hedgerow trees are in a healthy condition (excluding veteran features valuable for wildlife). There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity.	Pass	Pass
Condition Score			**Moderate**	**Moderate**

Table 17: Hedgerow with trees Condition Assessment

Figure 23: Trees within the southernmost part of the H32; condition here of both grassland and hedgerow is much reduced and bare ground is present.

Figure 24: By comparison, the majority (middle and north) of the H32 is in better condition, along with the adjacent grassland parcel.

4.3.7 Native Hedgerow – associated with bank or ditch (191)

Two native hedgerows (H3, H45) onsite were associated with low banked earth/very narrow drainage ditches (approximately less than 0.5m wide). They were very shallow, less than 0.5m deep. These were completely, or very nearly, dry at the time of the site survey. No submergent or emergent vegetation was present; all factors, including botanical and geographical, indicated that these drainage ditches only carry water in periods of severe flood. They are not marked on any satellite imagery or mapping. Ground flora along the very base of these hedgerows (not extending into its margins or adjacent grassland) predominantly comprised species associated with shading and high fertility: frequent Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus agg.*), Nettle, Field Bindweed (*Convolvulus arvensis*) and occasional Bittersweet (*Solanum dulcamara*). Holly was also present within parts of H45 adjacent to an offsite woodland block (associated with adjacent land). Bare earth was frequent due to shading and grazing pressure onsite.

Hedgerow Description				**UKBAP Priority Habitat** >20m Long and <5m wide. >80% of at least 1 UK native woody species
ID	**Length/ Width**	**Management**	**Species Composition**	
H3	19m x 4m	Previous pruning work only / outside of a hedge laying management cycle.	Blackthorn	No
H45	126m x 5m	Outside of a management cycle; outgrown. A woodland block is present on the southern side of the hedgerow in adjacent land.	Blackthorn	No

Table 18: Native hedgerow associated with bank/ditch Description

Hedgerow Condition Assessment			H3	H45
A1	Height	>1.5m average along length	Pass	Pass
A2	Width	>1.5m average along length	Pass	Pass
B1	Gap – Hedge base	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5m for >90% length	Pass	Pass
B2	Gap - Hedge Canopy Continuity	Gaps make up <10% of total length and no canopy gaps >5m	Pass	Pass
C1	Undisturbed Ground and perennial vegetation	>1m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation, measured from outer edge of hedgerow, for >90% of length and is present on at least one side of hedge.	**Fail**	**Fail**
C2	Undesirable perennial vegetation	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of area of undisturbed ground	**Fail**	**Fail**
D1	Invasive and neophyte species	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA3) and recently introduced species.	Pass	Pass
D2	Current Damage	>90% of hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities.	**Fail**	**Fail**
Condition Score			**Mod**	**Mod**

Table 19: Native hedgerow associated with bank/ditch Condition Assessment

Figure 25: View southeast, at H45. A woodland block is visible, present behind the hedgerow.

Figure 26: View southeast at H3.

4.3.8 Native Hedgerow with trees – associated with bank/ditch (190) (191)

One native hedgerow onsite was associated with trees and a dry, narrow bank/ditch as per the UKHab definition (secondary code 190 and 191). While some trees are more than 20m apart, some are less than 20m apart, and overall, the function of the prominent trees across the entire hedgerow length are functioning as a hedgerow with trees. The species include Oak, Ash and Willow (*Salix* sp.). Due to the presence of Ash dieback in specimens onsite, high risk disease is therefore present in the hedgerow (criteria E2). Similarly to the other two hedgerows associated with a bank/ditch, ground flora is associated with shade and high fertility and includes frequent Ivy, and occasional Bramble, Nettle and Bittersweet. Adjacent to the northwestern parcel (g3c (4)), the flora is somewhat more diverse and occasional Willowherb and Ryegrasses are present.

This hedgerow fails no more than 5 attributes and does not fail more both attributes in more than one functioning group and therefore is ‘**Moderate’** condition.

Hedgerow Description				**UKBAP Priority Habitat** >20m Long and <5m wide. >80% of at least 1 UK native woody species
ID	**Length/ Width**	**Management**	**Species Composition**	
H4	241m x 4m	Previous pruning work only / outside of a hedge laying management cycle.	Hawthorn, Dog Rose. Trees include Oak, Ash and Willow.	Yes

Table 20: Hedgerow associated with bank/ditch with trees description

Hedgerow Condition Assessment			**H4**
A1	Height	>1.5m average along length	Pass
A2	Width	>1.5m average along length	Pass
B1	Gap – Hedge base	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5m for >90% length	**Fail**
B2	Gap - Hedge Canopy Continuity	Gaps make up <10% of total length and no canopy gaps >5m	Pass
C1	Undisturbed Ground and perennial vegetation	>1m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation, measured from outer edge of hedgerow, for >90% of length and is present on at least one side of hedge.	**Fail**
C2	Undesirable perennial vegetation	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of area of undisturbed ground.	**Fail**
D1	Invasive and neophyte species	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA3) and recently introduced species.	Pass
D2	Current Damage	>90% of hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities.	**Fail**
E1	Tree Class	There is more than one age-class (or morphology) of tree present (for example: young, mature, veteran and or ancient8), and there is on average at least one mature, ancient or veteran tree present per 20 - 50m of hedgerow.	**Fail**
E2	Tree health	At least 95% of hedgerow trees are in a healthy condition (excluding veteran features valuable for wildlife). There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity.	Fail
Condition Score			**Moderate**

Table 21: Native hedgerow associated with bank/ditch with trees Condition Assessment

Figure 27: View southeast at T22 within H4.

Figure 28: View east at G5 within H4.

Figure 29: View northeast at H4, between G5 and G12.The ditch/bank can be seen in the foreground.

Figure 30: View from T22 towards G26 Ash within H4.

4.3.9 u1b – Developed land; sealed surface

Hard-standing area with timber, well-maintained, in-use stable block. There is no condition assessment for this habitat type.

Figure 31: Small timber and corrugated roofed stable - well maintained and in-use.

Figure 32: View north from the southwestern corner of the menage.

4.3.10 u1c – Artificial unvegetated unsealed surface

Gravel and earth access track, parking (see Figure 31 above) and menage (Figure 32) associated with the stable. There is no condition assessment for this habitat type.

4.3.11 u1 – Built up areas and gardens (828)

Vegetated garden areas associated with the stable block and parking area. There are small vegetable and flower plots and small planted trees. There is no condition assessment for this broad habitat type.

Figure 33: Vegetated gardened area associated with the built-up stable block and parking.

4.3.12 u1f – Sparsely vegetated urban land

A Public Right of Way access track with vegetation including but not limited to abundant, short Ryegrass and occasional Dandelion, White Clover and Dock.

Condition Assessment Core Criteria: Urban		**Criterion Passed? (Y/N)**
A	Vegetation structure is varied, providing opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live, eat and breed. A single structural habitat component or vegetation type does not account for more than 80% of the total habitat area.	Fail
B	The habitat parcel contains different plant species that are beneficial for wildlife, for example flowering species providing nectar sources for a range of invertebrates at different times of year.	Fail
C	Invasive non-native plant species (listed on Schedule 9 of WCA[1]) and others which are to the detriment of native wildlife (using professional judgement)[2] cover less than 5% of the total vegetated area[3]. **Note - to achieve Good condition, this criterion must be satisfied by a complete absence of invasive non-native species (rather than <5% cover).**	Pass
Condition		**Poor**

4.3.13 Individual Trees (Rural)

Forty-nine trees were recorded within the application site boundary – not including those in woodland blocks or within hedgerows – which were assessed in combination with adjacent habitats. Species within the site assessment area included Field Maple, Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Oak (*Quercus robur*), Silver Birch (*Petula pubescens*), Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), Lawson's Cypress (*Chamaecyparis* sp.), Willow, Scot's Pine, Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*), and two genus of fruit trees: Cherry (*Prunus* sp.), and Apple. The trees displayed varying qualities and conditions: 44 trees were '**Good**' condition small trees; 3 trees were '**Good**' condition medium trees; and, 2 trees were '**Moderate**' condition small trees (both referred to as G36). The criteria each tree passed are detailed in the table below.

Individual Tree Condition Assessment	**Each criterion is assessed as Pass / Fail to generate the Score.**
A. The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	
B. The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	
C. The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).	
D. There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	
E. Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	
F. More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	

Table 22: Individual Tree Condition Assessment criteria.

Tree Number	**T25**	**T23**	**T21**	**T20**	**T19**	**T18**	**T16**	**T14**	**T13**	**T11**	**T10**	**T9**	**T8**
A	✓		✓	✓		✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
B	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
C	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
D	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
E	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
F	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Condition Score	**Good**	**Good**	**Good**	**Good**	**Good**	**Good**	**Good**	**Good**	**Good**	**Good**	**Good**	**Good**	**Good**
Tree Number	**T7**	**T6**	**T2**	**T15**	**G1**	**G42**	**G41**	**G39**	**T40**	**G36**	**G30**	**G31**	**G33**
A	✓	✓		✓		✓	✓	✓			✓	✓	✓
B	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
C	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
D	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓		✓	✓	✓
E	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
F	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓	✓
Condition Score	**Good**	**Good**	**Good**	**Good**	**Good**	**Good**	**Good**	**Good**	**Good**	**Mod**	**Good**	**Good**	**Good**
Tree Number	**G34**												
A	✓												
B	✓												
C	✓												
D													
E	✓												
F	✓												
Condition Score	**Good**												

Table 23: Individual Rural Tree Schedule.

Figure 34: T7 within horse-grazed grassland parcel.

Figure 35: T23 within the ungrazed grassland sward.

Figure 36: View east towards T10 - T6. The grazed and ungrazed grassland parcels can be seen.

Figure 37: View northwards from T10 towards the northern ungrazed grassland parcel.

4.4 Biodiversity Net Gain – Baseline Assessment

The habitats recorded within the application site were calculated to provide a total of **33.37 Biodiversity Units and 8.51 Hedgerow Units.**

	Existing area habitats				Distinctiveness		Condition		Strategic significance			Required Action to Meet Trading Rules	Ecological baseline
Ref	Broad Habitat	Habitat Type	Irreplaceable habitat	Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness	Score	Condition	Score	Strategic significance	Strategic significance	Strategic significance multiplier		Total habitat units
1	Grassland	Other neutral grassland	No	0.7689	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required (≥)	6.15
2	Grassland	Other neutral grassland	No	0.311	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required (≥)	2.49
3	Grassland	Other neutral grassland	No	0.8552	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required (≥)	6.84
4	Grassland	Other neutral grassland	No	1.3136	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required (≥)	10.51
5	Grassland	Modified grassland	No	2.0266	Low	2	Poor	1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required ≥	4.05
6	Urban	Vegetated garden	No	0.0341	Low	2	Condition Assessment N/A	1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required ≥	0.07
7	Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	No	0.0204	V.Low	0	N/A - Other	0	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Compensation Not Required	0.00
8	Urban	Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	No	0.1238	V.Low	0	N/A - Other	0	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Compensation Not Required	0.00
9	Sparsely vegetated land	Ruderal/Ephemeral	No	0.0729	Low	2	Poor	1	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same distinctiveness or better habitat required ≥	0.15
10	Woodland and forest	Other woodland; mixed	No	0.0395	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required (≥)	0.32
11	Individual trees	Rural tree	No	0.228	Medium	4	Good	3	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required (≥)	2.74
12	Individual trees	Rural tree	No	0.0081	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same broad habitat or a higher distinctiveness habitat required (≥)	0.06

Figure 38: Habitat Baseline Scores

Existing hedgerow habitats			Distinctiveness		Condition		Strategic significance			Required Action to Meet Trading Rules	Ecological baseline
Hedge number	Habitat type	Length (km)	Distinctiveness	Score	Condition	Score	Strategic significance	Strategic significance	Strategic significance multiplier		Total hedgerow units
H28	Native hedgerow	0.1191	Low	2	Good	3	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same distinctiveness band or better	0.71
H48	Native hedgerow	0.2408	Low	2	Moderate	2	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same distinctiveness band or better	0.96
H47	Native hedgerow	0.074	Low	2	Moderate	2	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same distinctiveness band or better	0.30
H46	Native hedgerow	0.0804	Low	2	Moderate	2	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same distinctiveness band or better	0.32
H3	Native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch	0.019	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same distinctiveness band or better	0.15
H4	Native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch	0.2412	High	6	Moderate	2	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Like for like or better	2.89
H43	Native hedgerow with trees	0.1332	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same distinctiveness band or better	1.07
H45	Native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch	0.1267	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same distinctiveness band or better	1.01
H38	Native hedgerow	0.0268	Low	2	Moderate	2	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same distinctiveness band or better	0.11
H37	Native hedgerow	0.0265	Low	2	Moderate	2	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same distinctiveness band or better	0.11
H32	Native hedgerow with trees	0.1096	Medium	4	Moderate	2	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy	Low Strategic Significance	1	Same distinctiveness band or better	0.88

Figure 39: Hedgerow Baseline Scores

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4.5 Fauna

Species legislation is provided in **Appendix B**.

4.5.1 Amphibians

LRERC provided 142 records of Reptiles within the 2km search radius. Of these records, 74 were records of Great Crested Newt (GCN) (*Triturus cristatus*). The nearest GCN record was located approximately 0.57km south of the application site in 2017. There are a further 43 records of GCN within 0.20km of this record. The nearest non-GCN amphibian record referred to Smooth Newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*), also located in proximity to the nearest GCN record, approximately 0.68km south of the application site in 2018. All records noted are located within close proximity to the pond found in Wood Street Park, Barwell. The remaining amphibian records refer to Smooth Newt, GCN, Palmate Newt (*Triturus helveticus*), Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*) and Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*).

MAGIC provided seven records of GCN Class Survey Licence Returns**,** the nearest of which being located 0.78km south of the application site, in the Wood Street Park pond, in 2014. MAGIC also returned three records of granted EPS licences for the damage and destruction of a GCN resting place in 2022. All three EPS licence records are located 0.69km south west of the application site.

The CSA Environmental Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (2024) describes a pond present onsite in adjacent land, however this pond was not accessible at the time of survey due to ongoing construction works.

There were no waterbodies within the redline application area. While ephemeral floodwater may arise in the narrow ditches associated with the hedgerows on occasion, this does not constitute GCN or amphibian-supporting habitat, especially during the breeding season. As there was no water present, no HSI of these channels was undertaken. Therefore, the likelihood of GCN/amphibians being present onsite during the breeding is negligible to none.

Habitats in the wider area may support amphibians including GCN, and therefore amphibians could use habitats onsite during their terrestrial phase as part of their natural dispersal. Satellite imagery indicates that a waterbody in a horse-grazing field outside of site ownership on land west of the site boundary is out of use and dry. The likelihood of amphibians, including GCN, using habitats on site as refugia/hibernacula in their terrestrial phase is reduced by barriers to dispersal such as agricultural practises, development and construction sites directly adjacent, and an A-road along the eastern boundary (Shilton Road). The likelihood of encountering any individuals is negligible.

Amphibians should therefore be considered as part of the proposals, and are considered further in **Section 5**.

4.5.2 Badger

Information on Badger (*Meles meles*) is provided in **Confidential Appendix F**.

4.5.3 Bats

LRERC provided 99 records of Bats within the 2km search radius. Of these records, 19 referred to Bat roosts. The nearest roost record to the site was for two roosts, one a Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) Day Roost and one undetermined Bat species (*Chiroptera sp.*) Day Roost, located approximately 0.43km south of the application site in 2019. The remaining roost records referred to Common Pipistrelle and Brown Long Eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*). The nearest non-roost record pertains to eight instances of bat activity, located approximately 0.06km south of the application site in 2021. The species identified in these eight instances were Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle

(*Pipistrelllus pygmaeus*), Serotine Bat (*Cnephaeus serotinus*), Noctule Bat (*Nyctalus noctula*), Brown long Eared Bat and undetermined Myotis Species (*Myotis sp.*).

MAGIC provided no record of granted EPS development licences within the 2km search radius.

Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA)

All trees accessible within the application site and located along the site's boundaries were assessed from ground level for their suitability to support roosting bats during the walkover.

No features were noted from ground level during the GLTA assessment. This receptor is not considered further within the scope of this report.

Structures

There were two timber single-storey structures used in relation to the keeping of horses and management/husbandry (see Figures 40 - 43, below). Their composition and assessment of their use by bats is detailed in Table 24, below.

Description	Potential Roosting Features, Evidence and Suitability	Suitability
Stable The onsite stable block comprised a main timber unit and a small shed immediately adjacent on the eastern aspect. All walls were painted, intact and well-sealed; the stable doors were open to the elements for the horses. There was an intact plastic rain gutter. The roof was intact corrugated sheeting; gaps in corrugations were open to the elements and therefore space below the sheeting was not considered typically thermally suitable. Horses were present within the stable and therefore internal spaces were observed from the stable door; from this vantage point, internal spaces were well-sealed and intact.	There were no external gaps evident during the site survey. Internal spaces were secure and intact. No evidence was recorded during the survey.	**None**
Shed An intact and well-sealed timber shed was present and locked. The roof was gable-ended and lined with intact roof felt. There were no gaps. Where the roof over-hung the wallop, slightly, was a wide feature that was very poorly thermally regulated.	There were no external gaps evident during the site survey. Internal spaces were secure and intact. No evidence was recorded during the survey.	**None**

Table 24: Roosting Bat Suitability Assessment – Structures

Both timber farm structures were assessed to hold **Negligible** roosting potential. No obvious habitat features onsite were considered likely to be used by roosting bats; negligible potential is not 'none', however, and as per the BCT Guidelines (2023), this result indicates that a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use apparently unsuitable features on occasion.

Figure 40: Stable block - northern aspect

Figure 41: Stable block - western aspect

Figure 42: Stable block - eastern aspect

Figure 43: Shed – eastern aspect

Day Bat Walk

The horse-grazed grassland areas onsite, whilst not optimal mosaics of habitats to support invertebrates, do have the capacity to support populations and potentially provide a relatively good resource for invertebrates within a wider arable and developing suburban landscape. The taller swards, particularly g3c (4) evidently supported invertebrates noted anecdotally during the field survey; therefore, there is a likelihood that night-flying invertebrates (such as moths) would also be present within the sward, providing valuable forage for locally present bats.

The site also featured a planted woodland and was bounded by hedgerows with a complex structure – some of which featured mature native trees. These habitats were considered suitable to support both foraging and commuting bats. In particular, deciduous tree canopies in flower and woodland edges may provide a valuable resource for foraging bats, whilst the network of hedgerows between trees and the woodland edge connects any foraging bats to other habitats within the local surroundings, thereby creating a continuous commuting corridor to and from roosting sites (as provided by LRERC, above).

As such, the application area is considered to hold **‘Moderate’** suitability to support foraging and commuting bats.

4.5.4 Birds

LRERC provided 156 records for notable[6] bird species within the 2km search radius. The nearest of these records pertains to two instances of Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*) located approximately 0.16km north of the application site in 2025.

The majority of the site provides cover and nesting for small and widespread bird species, with some limited foraging opportunities – particularly for invertebrates during the nesting season. The lack of arable crops and wide, complex hedgerow margins does reduce the likelihood of threatened arable birds, perhaps present in the wider landscape, from making use of habitats onsite all year round. There is a suitable woody/soft stem ecotone adjacent to hedgerows onsite, however – particularly to the north and south. This provides a suitable nesting habitat for Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) Red/Amber and Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) Section 41 passerines such as Yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*), Linnet (*Linaria cannabina*) or Song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*).

The lack of a suitable thatch layer within the grassland swards (minimum 7cm) does reduce the likelihood of Barn Owl relying on onsite habitats to hunt their favoured Field Vole (*Microtus agrestis*); other small mammals may, however, be present onsite (such as Wood Mouse (*Apodemus sylvaticus*)) and it is likely that the site may be part of local Barn Owl territory (as noted in the desk study). No habitats suitable to function as a nest site were noted onsite, as trees lacked veteran features and there were no suitable artificial structures.

While no nests were observed during the field survey, the nests of small passerines are known to be difficult to identify, particularly in the breeding season. As the walkover continued, alarm calls could be heard close to the boundary of H45, extending into the woodland block. This area was inaccessible due to the electric fence, and closer inspection would have potentially risked disturbance. It is very likely that this area is used in the nesting season, particularly as birds have likely dispersed away from the construction works adjacent to the southeastern boundary.

During the site walkover, the following species were observed flying along hedgerows or close to the grassland parcels, overhead: Blackbird (*Turdus merula*), Carrion Crow (*Corvus corone*), Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) and Dunnock *(Prunella modularis).*

4.5.5 Invertebrates

LRERC provided 39 records of Invertebrates within the 2km search radius. The nearest record pertains to Cinnabar Moth (*Tyria jacobaeae*), located 0.71km north of the application site in 2021.

As noted in **Section 4.3.1**, anecdotal evidence whilst onsite indicated that – as a minimum – a small population of both Common Blue and Meadow Brown butterflies are present within the northwesternmost grassland parcel (g3c (4)). Cockchafers were also noted, and Grasshoppers were heard.

Both Meadow Brown and Common Blue are noted in the description of Other Neutral Grassland within Appendix 1 of the Leicestershire & Rutland BAP 2016 – 2026. Therefore, while lacking characteristic species noted within the same BAP, the grassland swards do hold value for these invertebrates.

[6] Rare or notable species in this instance include any bird listed under the following:
Wildlife and Countryside Act Schedule 1 species - https://www.rspb.org.uk/birds-and-wildlife/schedules
UK Biodiversity Action Plan species - https://data.jncc.gov.uk/data/98fb6dab-13ae-470d-884b-7816afce42d4/UKBAP-priority-birds.pdf
BoCC Red & Amber List species - https://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/publications/bocc-5-a5-4pp-single-pages.pdf

No Ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*) was observed onsite, which reduces the likelihood of Cinnabar Moth occurring. While notable populations of invertebrates and/or protected invertebrates associated with rarer foodplants (such as Elm (*Ulmus* sp.)) are unlikely to be present onsite due to the management processes, the matrix of woodland, hedgerow and grassland of varying swards across the entirety of the site does provide invertebrate interest. While further survey is not considered proportionate, it is suitable to make further recommendations in relation to the invertebrates noted at the time of survey, in particular those highlighted in the LBAP (Common Blue and Meadow Brown).

4.5.6 Other Terrestrial Mammals

LRERC provided 59 records of terrestrial mammals within the 2km search radius. The nearest of these records refers to European Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), located approximately 0.06km south of the application site in 2018. The remaining terrestrial mammal records refer to either European Hedgehog, Hare (*Lepus europaeus*), Harvest Mouse (*Micromys minutus*), Muntjac (*Muntiacus reevesi*) or American Mink (*Neovison vison*).

No incidental sightings were made and no specific field signs of small mammals were noted during the site walkover.

However the site provides extensive cover and some foraging within the scrub for Hedgehog, which likely occur onsite as they are present in the local area.

4.5.7 Reptiles

LRERC returned four records of Reptiles within the 2km search radius, all of which pertain to Grass Snake (*Natrix helvetica*). The nearest of these records refers to a field observation made in 2021, located approximately 0.28km south of the application site.

The surveys undertaken to inform the Reptile Mitigation Strategy and Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (2024) produced by CSA Environmental for the neighbouring land at Leicester Road, Earl Shilton, recorded the occurrence of a single adult grass snake along the western edge of the central field. It was therefore likely that a low population of grass snake occurred, at the time, onsite and therefore in the locality of this application area.

No reptiles, or evidence of reptiles, was found within the application area during the walkover survey. There is a gentle southern slope onsite which has the possibility to provide some suitable basking habitats. Suitable refugia/hibernacula and dispersal corridors are limited onsite to hedgerows, taller grassland swards and shady ground flora below areas of tree planting. As sheep and horses graze the vegetation to a short sward, the likelihood of reptiles using onsite habitats is reduced. Refugia was limited to bricks and a pile of brash associated with the garden at the stable and the sheep enclosure respectively (see Figure 44 and 45).

Figure 44: Rubble and bricks. These were investigated and no sign of reptiles was observed.

Figure 45: Brash within the electrified fence of the sheep enclosure.

5 ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

5.1 Ecological Constraints

Avoidance, mitigation and/or compensation measures are required for the following constraints:

5.1.1 Amphibians

No evidence of amphibians was recorded during the assessment and the impacts to amphibians, including GCN, are considered to be negligible due to a lack of suitable breeding habitats within the site and wider zone of influence. There remains a possibility, however, that widespread amphibians may be intermittently encountered within the application area during the initial site clearance due to the quality of onsite habitats. Therefore, it is recommended that Reasonable Avoidance Methods (RAMs) are undertaken during the ground preparation phase of the development and secured within a Construction Environment Management Plan - Biodiversity (CEMP-B). The RAMS will include the following as a minimum:

- An Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) will be available during the ground preparation phase of the development to undertake a fingertip search of the grassland or any other suitable terrestrial habitats which will be disturbed as part of the construction phase. Any amphibians detected (except from GCN) will be safely relocated to an identified receptor site within the red line application boundary.
- Vegetation clearance will be undertaken in a phased approach (from the northeast, moving towards retained habitat and away from the road), strimming vegetation to a height of 15cm, allowing any amphibians present within the sward the time to disperse before strimming short. This will need to be considered as part of the site clearance methodology and a similar approach is detailed for both Reptiles (**Section 5.1.7**) and Other Terrestrial Mammals (**Section 5.1.8**).
- Any suitable habitat such as brash, log piles, and grass cuttings will be carefully searched by hand. Any amphibians found during the search will be relocated to an area of retained habitat.
- Trenches or excavations left uncovered overnight will have a suitable means of escape (such as wooden plank).

If Great Crested newts are recorded at any stage during the proposed works, all construction activities must cease and the advice of Natural England, or a GCN licenced ecologist sought.

5.1.2 Badger

Please see **Confidential Appendix F**.

5.1.3 Bats

Day Bat Walking

The application area is considered to hold '**Moderate**' suitability to support foraging and commuting bats due the onsite grassland swards, hedgerow corridor and woodland edge habitats providing suitable foraging and commuting pathways that are connected to other suitable habitats and roosts in the wider area.

Therefore, as per the BCT Good Practice Guidelines (2023)[7], the site will require three Nighttime Bat Walkover (NBW) surveys undertaken during spring (April – May), summer (June – August) and autumn (September - October) alongside monthly static detector surveys for a minimum of five consecutive

[7] Bat Conservation Trust (2023), *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines*.

nights per month. These surveys will assess the usage of the site by bat species within the local area and the results will inform the impact assessment and appropriate mitigation strategy for the site.

Further recommendations will be required, which will be incorporated into a standalone Protected Species Survey Report to inform a planning decision.

5.1.4 Breeding Birds

Due to the suitability of the onsite habitats to support breeding populations of rare and/or notable birds, and the abundance of local records relating to rare and/or notable birds, a minimum of six breeding bird surveys are recommended prior to the commencement of any onsite works. These surveys must be undertaken by a suitably qualified and trained ornithologist; BTO Breeding Bird Survey methodologies are recommended. Two of the six breeding bird surveys should be undertaken at dusk to account for the nocturnal habits of Barn Owl, which have been recorded locally. Further targeted surveys may be deemed necessary by the ecologist/ornithologist following survey visit outcomes.

Therefore further Phase 2 survey work is recommended to be undertaken comprising a minimum of six breeding bird surveys. These surveys must be undertaken by a suitably qualified and trained ornithologist utilising BTO Breeding Bird Survey methodologies. Two of the six breeding bird surveys should be undertaken at dusk [only if nocturnal species are considered]. Further targeted surveys may be deemed necessary by the ecologist/ornithologist following survey visit outcomes.

Further recommendations will be required, which will be incorporated into an Ecological Impact Assessment to inform the Reserved Matters application.

5.1.5 Trees and Hedgerows

Mature trees and hedgerows should be retained, where possible, as part of the development.

Retained trees and hedegrows should be protected in line with BS5837:2012 *'Trees in relation to Design, Construction and Demolition -recommendations'.*

5.1.6 Reptiles

The assessment found no evidence of Reptiles onsite, including beneath refugia searched.

It is deemed disproportionate to recommend further survey for Reptiles. Desk study data does however confirm that a small local population was present within recent years. Therefore, it cannot be discounted that individuals may intermittently enter the site.

Therefore, it is recommended that Reasonable Avoidance Methods (RAMs) are undertaken during the ground preparation phase of the development and secured within a Construction Environment Management Plan - Biodiversity (CEMP-B). The RAMS will include the following as a minimum:

- Vegetation clearance should only take place in weather conditions exceeding 9°C to allow individuals to warm up sufficiently to become mobile.
- Vegetation clearance will be undertaken in a phased approach (from the northeast, moving towards retained habitat and away from the road), strimming vegetation to a height of 15cm, allowing any individuals present within the sward the time to disperse naturally before strimming short in the same direction as previously described. Grassland and vegetation may then be removed from the application with any arisings removed as soon as possible.
- Any suitable habitat such as brash or log piles will be carefully searched by hand. Any individuals found during the search will be relocated to an area of retained habitat.

- Trenches or excavations left uncovered overnight will have a suitable means of escape (such as wooden plank), at an angle of no more than 45°.

5.1.7 Other Terrestrial Mammals

To minimise the risk of killing or injury to small mammals, including Hedgehog, a precautionary site clearance method will be implemented. The following will be undertaken and summarised within a CEMP-B to be discharged as a condition of planning / Reserved Matters application:

- Vegetation clearance will be undertaken in a phased approach (from the northeast, moving towards retained habitat and away from the road), strimming vegetation to a height of 15cm, allowing any individuals present within the sward the time to disperse naturally before strimming short in the same direction as previously described. Grassland and vegetation may then be removed from the application with any arisings removed as soon as possible.
- Any small mammals which are discovered during the site clearance should be relocated by hand to an identified receptor area within the application site. This will be identified within condition documents.
- Any suitable habitat such as brash or log piles will be carefully searched by hand. Any hedgehogs found during the search will be relocated to an area of retained habitat.
- Trenches or excavations left uncovered overnight will have a suitable means of escape (such as wooden plank).
- Pesticides should not be used during construction or in-use.

5.1.8 Biodiversity Net Gain

The site application site was assessed as having **33.37 Biodiversity Units** and **8.51 Hedgerow Units.** The development proposals will see site clearance to allow for the development and has the potential to result in a biodiversity loss, or less than a 10% gain.

A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment should be submitted to support the planning application.

5.2 Summary of Recommendations

The below information will be required, either to support the planning application or form part of a planning condition / Reserved Matters application. The information from Phase 2 protected species surveys will be collated and an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) will be produced and submitted to support the planning application.

Ecological Receptor / Constraint	Timescales
Amphibians Reasonable Avoidance Methods (RAMs) to be undertaken. Enclosed within CEMP. Enhancements to be secured within LEMP.	During construction Secured through appropriately worded condition of planning / Reserved Matters application.
Biodiversity Net Gain Biodiversity Net Gain Summary Report should be submitted to support the planning application.	Submitted as part of planning application
Breeding Birds Six breeding bird surveys to be undertaken. Ecological Impact Assessment	Typically, one a month from March – August – ornithological and ecological discretion may advise a different pattern within this period. Submitted as part of planning application
Badgers Pre-commencement Survey and Reasonable Avoidance Methods (RAMs) to be undertaken. Enclosed within CEMP.	March (optimal period). Secured through appropriately worded condition of planning / Reserved Matters application.
Trees Existing mature trees should be protected in line with BS5837:2012.	Prior to and during construction.
Foraging and Commuting Bats Night Bat Walking and Static Bat Detector Surveys to be undertaken. Ecological Impact Assessment	One visit per season for a full year. Static deployment for five consecutive nights per month (April - October inclusive). Submitted as part of planning application.
Other Terrestrial Mammals Reasonable Avoidance Methods (RAMs) to be undertaken. Enclosed within CEMP. Enhancements to be secured within LEMP.	Prior to and during construction. Secured through appropriately worded condition of planning / Reserved Matters application.
Reptiles Reasonable Avoidance Methods (RAMs) to be undertaken. Enclosed within CEMP. Enhancements to be secured within LEMP.	Prior to and during construction. Secured through appropriately worded condition of planning / Reserved Matters application.

Table 25: Summary of Ecological recommendations

5.3 Ecological Enhancement Opportunities

The following ecological enhancements should be incorporated into the proposed development. A Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP), or Ecological Enhancements Plan (EEP) should be provided as a condition of planning / Reserved Matters application.

5.3.1 Invertebrates

As noted in the LBAP, Leicestershire and Rutland were once renowned for their large area of species-rich 'unimproved' neutral grassland habitats.

Swards of Other Neutral Grassland within areas of public open space should promote and support a range of invertebrate species, particularly those named within the LBAP.

The following enhancement measures should therefore be incorporated:

- Planting of species from the following: Common Knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), Cowslip (*Primula veris*), Pepper-saxifrage (*Silaum silaus*), Yellow-rattle (*Rhinanthus minor*), Adder's-tongue Fern (*Ophioglossum vulgatum*) and Green-winged Orchid (*Orchis morio*), Common Bird's-foot-trefoil *(Lotus corniculatus),* Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil *(L. pedunculatus),* Black Medick *(Medicago lupulina),* Common Restharrow *(Ononis repens),* White Clover *(Trifolium repens),* Lesser Trefoil *(T. dubium),* Fescues *(Festuca spp.),* Bents *(Agrostis spp.)* and Meadow-grasses *(Poa spp.),* Cock's-foot *(Dactylis glomerata),* Downy Oat-grass *(Helictotrichon pubescens),* and False Brome *(Brachypodium sylvaticum).*
- Follow good meadow management principles such as those set out by Plantlife - see: https://www.plantlife.org.uk/learning-resource/managing-meadows/).
- Pesticides should not be used during construction or in-use.

5.3.2 Terrestrial Mammals

To ensure that rear gardens provide suitable connective habitats, sheltering habitat and forage for terrestrial mammals, the following features should be incorporated into design plans:

- 'Hedgehog highways' between vegetated gardens
- Woodpile and leafpile habitats, adjacent to and below retained and created hedgerows, away from vehicular traffic and disturbance. Onsite management processes will provide suitable materials for these features.
- Pesticides should not be used during construction or in-use.

5.3.3 Herptiles

To ensure that proposed habitats within the application site remain supportive of amphibians and reptiles, the following will be incorporated into design plans:

- A diverse mosaic of habitats within the green and blue habitat areas (such as scrub parcels, wetland areas and grassland planting). The grassland sward itself will comprise species that allow for a diversity in the height of the sward.
- Timing of management works to habitat areas to avoid disturbance during the summer months (such as scrub cutting).
- Habitat connectivity will be preserved via the retention of hedgerows and preservation of tall, vegetated buffers to hedgerows and edge habitats.
- Woodpile and/or small stonepile habitats adjacent to connective features, in open, sunny spots away from disturbance (e.g. vehicular traffic) to provide basking and sheltering habitat.

6 CONCLUSION

This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has identified a number of ecological constraints as defined within **Section 5**, and specific avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures have been provided.

Avoidance is required for the following ecological constraints and will need to be included in the development of the site layout:

- Retention of woodland (w1g) and suitable buffer zone established (in line with Tree Protection Plan);
- Mature trees;
- Hedgerows.

Further surveys are required to fully understand the ecological baseline of the site and allow Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) to be carried out. Further habitats and species-specific surveys are required for:

- Foraging and Commuting Bats;
- Birds.

Once completed this will allow an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) to be carried out which can then be used to support the planning application. This will also include any recommended enhancements.

It is anticipated that planning conditions / Reserved Matters would be used to secure:

- A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) covering species and habitat reasonable avoidance measures, to be submitted and approved prior to construction commencing;
- Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) / Ecological Enhancements Plan;
- Additional recommendations may be required as a result of further survey work, which will be detailed within the subsequent EcIA Report.

APPENDIX A – SPECIES LIST

Common Name	Scientific Name
Apple	*Malus sp.*
Ash	*Fraxinus excelsior*
Bittersweet	*Solanum dulcamara*
Blackthorn	*Prunus spinosa*
Bramble	*Rubus fruticosus agg*
Broadleaved Dock	*Rumex obtusifolius*
Broadleaved Plantain	*Plantago major*
Cock's-foot Grass	*Dactylis glomerata*
Common Mouse-ear	*Cerastium fontanum*
Creeping Buttercup	*Ranunculus repens*
Creeping Thistle	*Cirsium arvense*
Dandelion	*Taraxacum officinale agg*
Elder	*Sambucus nigra*
False Oat-grass	*Arrhenatherum elatius*
Field Bindweed	*Convolvulus arvensis*
Field Maple	*Acer campestre*
Great Willowherb	*Epilobium hirsutum*
Hawkbit species	*Leontodon sp*
Hawthorn	*Crataegus monogyna*
Hedge Bindweed	*Calystegia sepium*
Hogweed	*Heracleum sphondylium*
Ivy	*Hedera helix*
Meadow Buttercup	*Ranunculus acris*
Meadow Foxtail	*Alopecurus pratensis*
Nettle	*Urtica dioica*
Oak species	*Quercus sp.*
Red Clover	*Trifolium pratense*
Ribwort Plantain	*Plantago lanceolata*
Ryegrass species	*Lolium sp*
Scot's Pine	*Pinus sylvestris*
Sheep Sorrel	*Rumex acetosella*
Silver Birch	*Petula pubescens*
Spear Thistle	*Cirsium vulgare*
Vetch species	*Viscia sp*
White Clover	*Trifolium repens*
Whitebeam	*Sorbus aria*
Yorkshire Fog	*Holcus lanatus*

APPENDIX B – KEY SPECIES LEGISLATION

Bats
Bats are European Protected Species (EPS) listed on Annex IV of the Habitats Directive 1992 which is transposed into UK law by the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c) Regulations 1994 or "Habitats Regulations" and consolidated within The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Bats are also protected through Schedules 5 and 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended). Certain species are also listed in Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006, as species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. A number of Bat species are listed as a Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority species on the UK BAP.

Eurasian Badger *(Meles meles)*
Badgers are protected in the UK under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 which protects both the individual animals and their setts. However, habitats used for any other purpose are not afforded any form of protection under this or other legislation. This species is also listed on Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which outlaws certain methods of taking and killing when this is necessary.

Hazel Dormouse *(Muscardinus avellenarius)*
Hazel Dormouse is an EPS included on schedule 2 of the Habitats Regulations**,** and on Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981 (as amended). Dormouse is listed as a species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 and is also listed as a UK BAP priority species.

Polecat *(Mustela putorius)*
Polecats are protected under Schedule 4 of the Habitats Regulations and Schedule 6 of the WCA 1981 (as amended). Polecat are also listed as a UK BAP priority species.

Harvest Mouse *(Micromys minutus)*
Harvest mouse is listed as a species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 and is also listed as a UK BAP priority species.

European Hedgehog *(Erinaceus europaeus)*
Hedgehog are listed as a species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 and is also listed as a UK BAP priority species.

Birds
All bird species including their eggs and nests, are protected from harm during the breeding season under the WCA 1981 to varying degrees. Some bird species are also included on Schedule 1 of the WCA 1981 (as amended) and inclusion on this schedule makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb these birds at, on or near an 'active' nest. A number of birds are listed as species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Reptiles
Widespread reptiles; Adder *(Vipera berus),* Grass snake *(Natrix natrix),* Common lizard *(Lacerta vivipara)* and Slow-worm *(Anguis fragilis)* are protected against killing, injuring and sale under UK legislation through their inclusion in Appendix III of the Bern Convention (1979), Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981 (as amended).

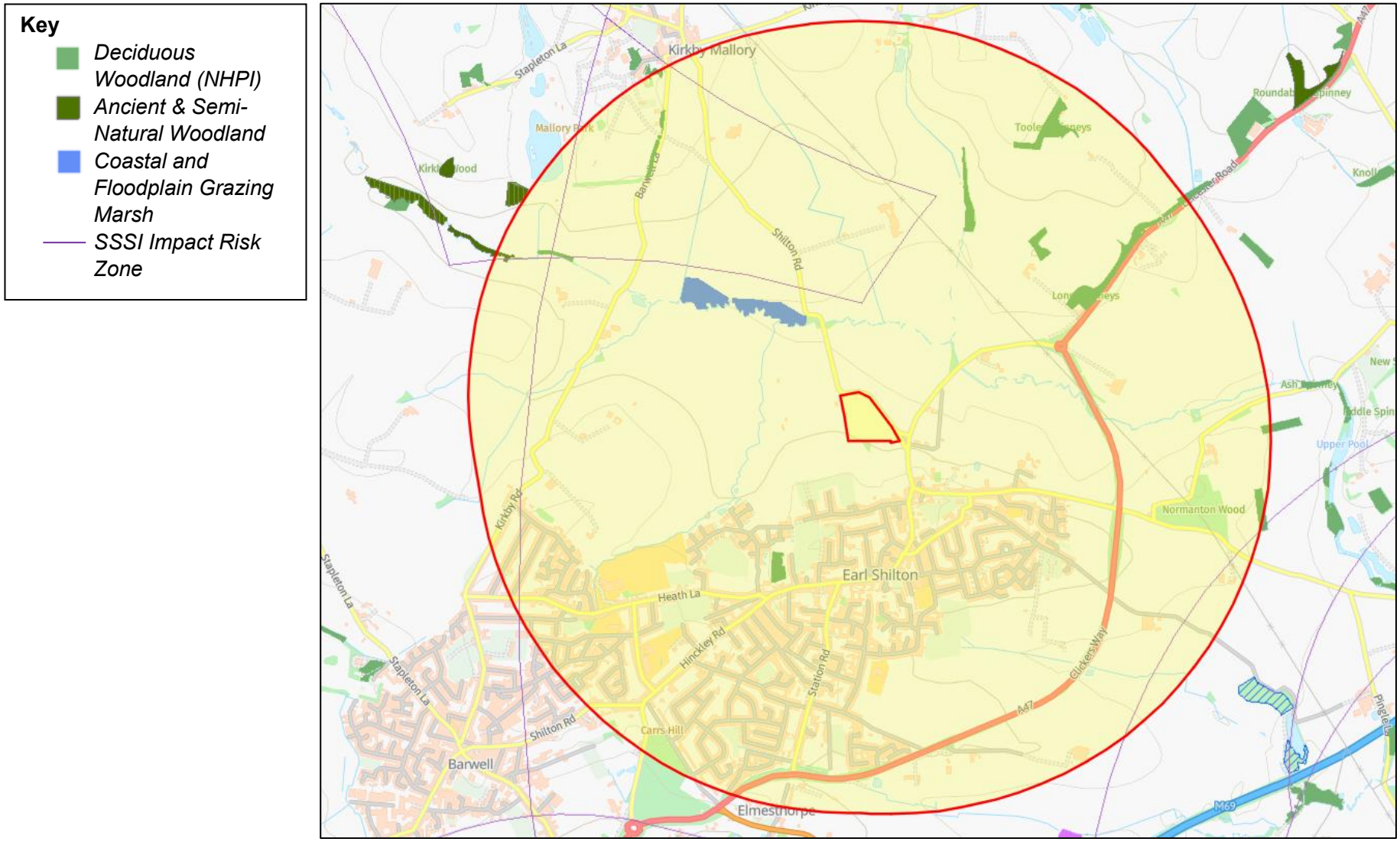
Sand Lizard *(Lacerta agilis)* and Smooth snake *(Coronella austriaca)* are also EPS listed on Annex IV of the Habitats Directive 1992 which is transposed into UK law by the Habitats Regulations**,** and on Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981 (as amended).
All reptiles are listed as UK BAP Priority species and are also listed as a species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Amphibians
Widespread amphibians; Smooth newt *(Triturus vulgaris),* Palmate newt *(Triturus helveticus),* Common frog *(Rana temporaria)* and Common toad *(Bufo bufo)* are only protected from sale under Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981 (as amended). Common toad is also listed as a UK BAP Priority species.

Great crested newt *(Triturus cristatus)* and Natterjack toad *(Bufo calamita*) are also EPS listed on Annex II and IV and Annex IV respectively of the Habitats Directive 1992 which is transposed into U.K law by the Habitats Regulations, and on Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981 (as amended). Both are also listed as a UK BAP Priority species and GCN are also listed as a species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

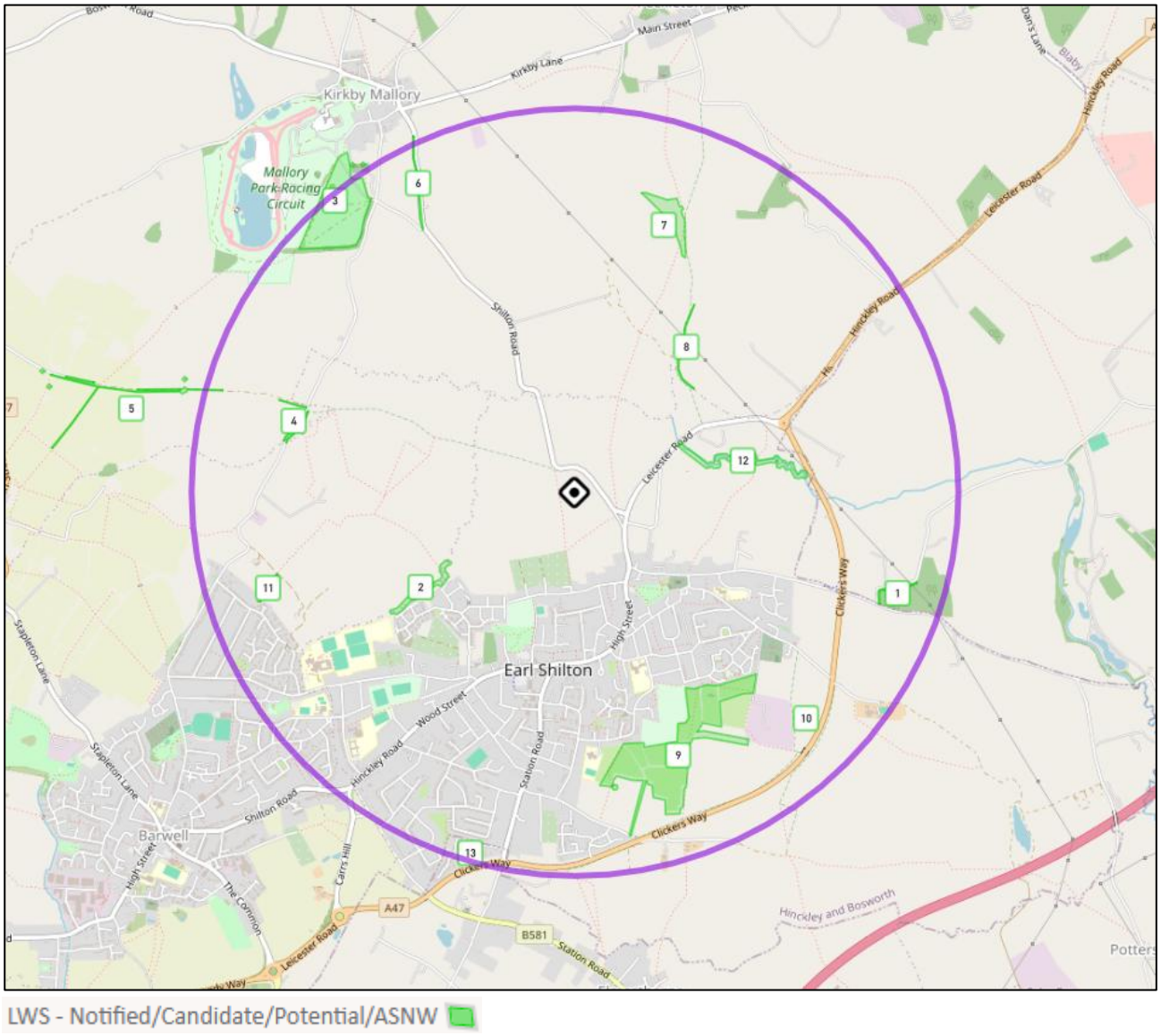
Invertebrates
A large number of British invertebrates are protected under Schedule 5 of the WCA 1981 (as amended). Different species are protected under one, some or all of the parts of Section 9. Hundreds of invertebrate species are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. Similarly, several hundred are also listed as a UK BAP priority species.

APPENDIX C – MAGIC MAP



APPENDIX D – LWS SITES

eMapper – Land off Shilton Road, Earl Shilton



LWS - Notified/Candidate/Potential/ASNW

APPENDIX E - UKHABS MAP

Key

Boundary

- Red Line Boundary
- Blue Line Boundary
- Small Tree
- Medium Tree
- h2a - Native Hedgerow
- g3 - neutral grassland
- g3c - other neutral grassland
- g4 - modified grassland
- w1g - other woodland-broadleaved
- u1 - built-up areas and gardens
- u1b - developed land; sealed surface
- u1c - artificial unvegetated unsealed surface
- u1f - sparsely vegetated land

Google Satellite

H28
H32, 190
H43, 190
H38
H44, 190, 191
H48
H47
H46
H45, 191
H3, 191
g3c (2)
u1, 828
u1b
u1c
u1f
g3, 102, 115 (2)
g3, 103 (1)
g3c (1)
g4, 102 (1)
w1g
T25
T23
T21
T20
T19
T18
T16
T15
T14
T13
T11
T10
T9
T8
T7
T6
T2
G1
G36
G40
G39
G41
G42
0
25
50 m

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LANDSCAPE
ARBORICULTURE
GARDEN DESIGN
ECOLOGY

Job:
SHILTON ROAD, EARL SHILTON

Title:
UKHABS BASELINE PLAN

Scale@A3:	Drawn:	Date:	Drawing no.
1200:1	BS	07/11/25	2042-001

APPENDIX F – CONFIDENTIAL BADGER APPENDIX

Desk Study

LRERC provided 42 records of badgers within the 2km search radius. Of these records, 33 referred to badger setts. The nearest sett record referred to two setts, one inactive and one closed, both were located approximately 0.26km south of the application site in 2024. A further four sett records are located within 0.15km of these records. The nearest badger record not referring to a sett was of an individual identified approximately 0.10km south of the application site in 2020.

The Badger Mitigation Strategy (May 2024) produced by CSA Environmental (CSA/4519/15) summarises the relevant recent history of setts in the locality in relation to planning. During CSA Environmental' s survey effort for land off 'Leicester Road, Earl Shilton' in 2020, mammal paths were recorded and a latrine was found. An updated survey in 2024 found no definitive evidence of current / active use. However, several mammal paths were recorded in and around the site; where one such pathway ran through mud, a footprint was noted but too poorly-defined to conclude definitively if it was made by a badger. South of this application area, a sett exclusion (under licence from Natural England) had taken place in relation to another development. No details are available due to confidentiality. It was therefore concluded that evidence in 2024 likely related to foraging badgers from the excluded sett further south. The CSA Environmental Badger Mitigation Strategy concluded that a pre-commencement survey would be proportionate followed by routine monitoring of the Site for badger activity throughout the construction phase with a contingency plan in place for any digging activity found. Generic construction-phase safety measures were also set out, as well as measures for the site in-use.

Results

No evidence of badgers was noted onsite during the survey. Areas below hedgerows were searched where access permitted and binoculars used to examine the woodland in the southwestern corner. While one area below H3, when viewed from the eastern grassland parcel, looked like a mammal corridor, the size more closely resembled rabbit paths.

Nonetheless, the banked earth below hedgerows is relatively suitable for sett-building (where dry), and there is good foraging resource provision within the vegetated garden, grassland swards and areas of bare ground under the shade of canopies and in the grassland adjacent to the stable. There is good connectivity between the site and adjacent fields; the major barriers to badger dispersal are neighbouring construction sites and the A-road. In conclusion, while the evidence indicates badgers are not currently using the site to build setts or latrines, the site was considered relatively free from disturbance at the time of the survey, features good foraging resources, and the construction and disturbance of land to the south of the site (as discussed above) may lead the local population to disperse.

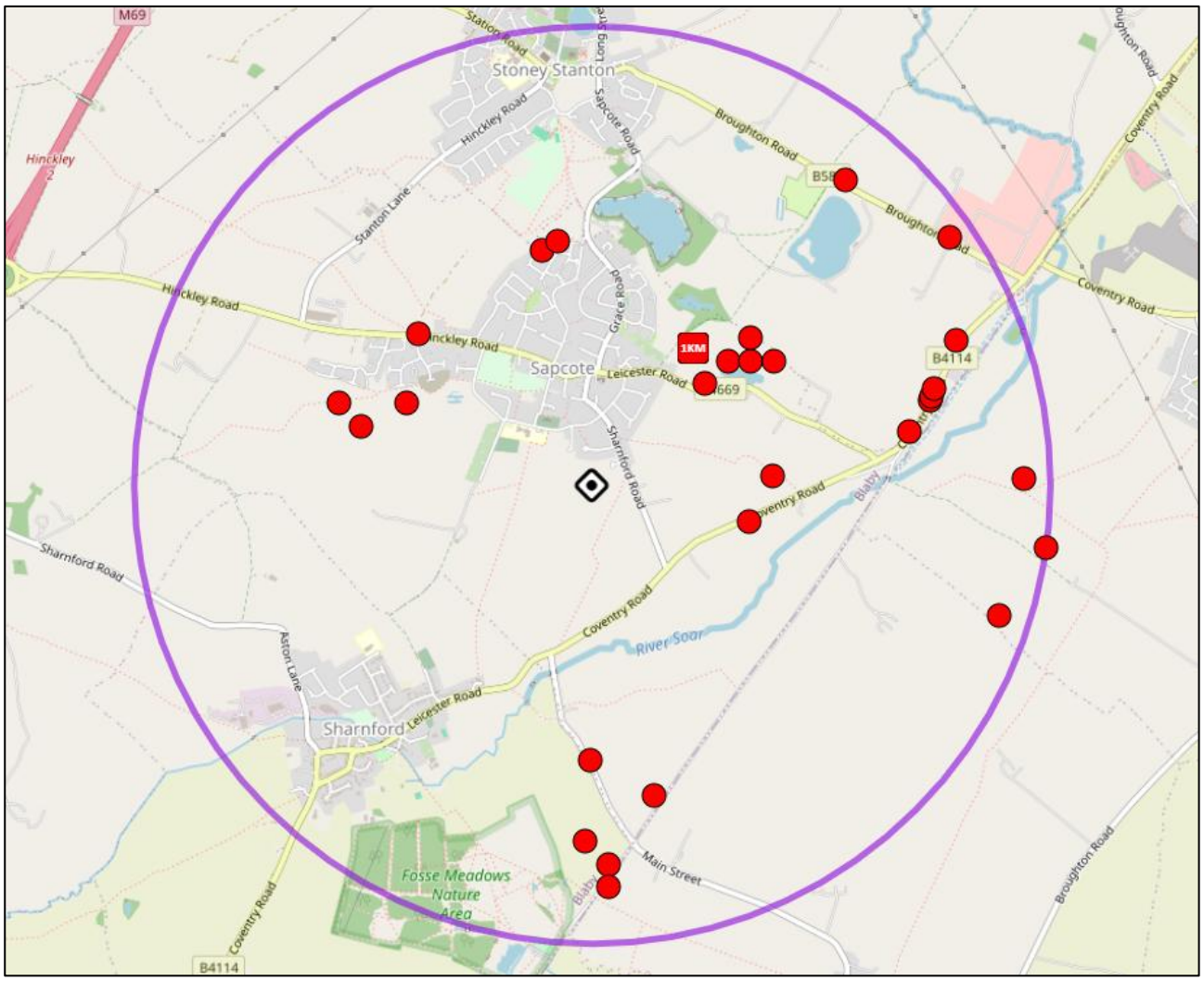

Figure 46: Badger records within 2km of the application site centroid.

Constraints and Recommendations

Due to the optimal foraging resources provided by the site and an understanding of badgers in the wider area, is recommended that as a minimum, a pre-commencement survey for badger should be undertaken. This should be undertaken prior to any groundworks onsite and, optimally, within early spring – before vegetation is too dense, but when badgers are becoming more active after the cold season.

In order to maintain habitat connectivity and reduce badger casualties, a strategy should be incorporated into design plans to include traffic calming measures such as rumble strips to be installed where the spine road intersects retained and created green corridors through the development.

If no further evidence of badgers is found at the pre-commencement survey, the following precautionary approach should be implemented[8]:

- Ensure excavations or trenches left overnight are covered or have an escape route such as a shallow gradient at one or both ends.
- Ensure excavations or trenches are inspected each morning and evening to ensure no badgers have become trapped.

[8] *Badger Protection*: Best Practice Guidance for Developers, Ecologists and Planners (England) August 2023, Section 6 – Measures for protecting badgers during works (p.14).

- Open pipework with a diameter of more than 120mm should be properly covered or capped at the end of the working day to prevent badgers from entering and becoming trapped.
- During the work, the storage of any chemicals should be contained in such a way that they cannot be accessed or knocked over by any roaming badgers.
- The storage of topsoil or other “soft” building materials within the site should be given careful consideration. Badgers will readily adopt such mounds and dig setts which would then be afforded the same protection as established setts. To avoid the adoption of such mounds, they should be subject to daily inspections before work commences or alternative measures put in place, such as being fenced off (for higher-risk areas).
- Litter, tools and potentially dangerous materials on site should be cleared at the end of the working day. Care should be taken that there are no sharp metal objects or pointed protrusions on the ground which could seriously injure a badger due to their poor eyesight.
- Adherence to these measures should be confirmed to planners at regular intervals by the project ecologist.