Ecological Impact Assessment

Nailstone Substation, Leicestershire

26 February 2025

Ecology
Arboriculture
Land Management

Report Details

Report Title	Ecological Impact Assessment
Report Reference	2646-ECIA-VB.R2

Quality Assurance & Revision Record

Revision	Date	Author	Checked By	Approver	Summary of Changes
Rev 2	26 February 2025	Vicki Baldwin BSc MSc ACIEEM	Lindsay Taylor BSc MSC ACIEEM	Richard Pash BSc MCIEEM	

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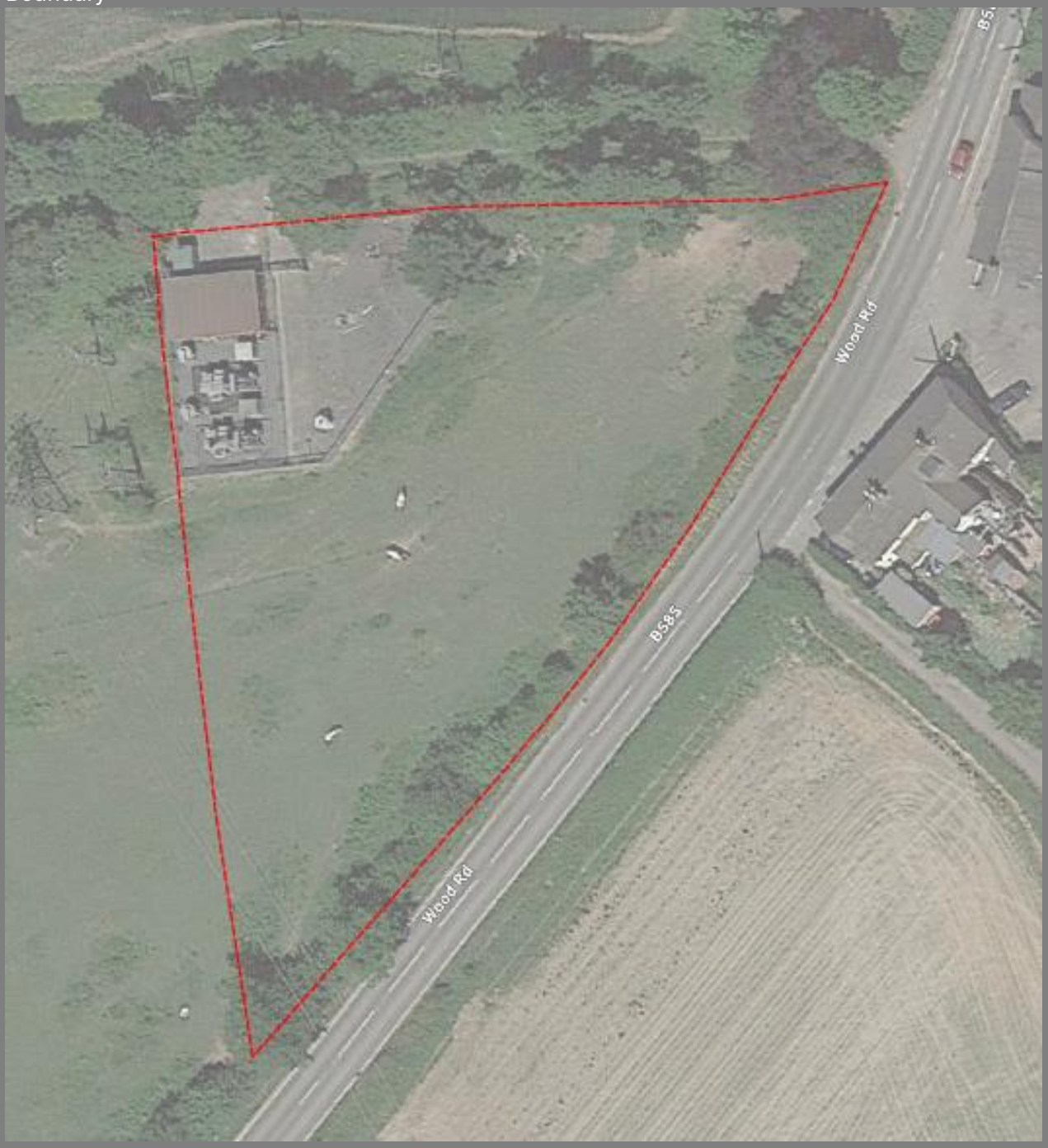
Site Details

Site Name and Location	Nailstone Substation, Leicestershire
Central OS Grid Reference	SK 43259 08914
Client	National Grid

Boundary



Executive Summary

Site Location	The Site comprises an existing National Grid substation and adjacent pony grazed modified grassland bound by native species poor hedgerows with trees and post and rail fence. The surrounding landscape is primarily rural and arable farmland.
Proposals	Detailed application for an extension of the existing substation into the eastern section of the grassland field, with associated hardstanding tracks and access.
Survey Work	Desk-based study, UK Habitat Classification survey, BNG assessment.
Designated Sites with Potential Impacts	There are no potential impacts to Designated Sites in the area.
Baseline Habitats	The Site comprises a single modified grassland field bound by native species hedgerows with trees, post and rail fences, and the existing substation compound.
Protected/ notable Species	There are records of great crested newt (GCN) mitigation licence returns and GCN mitigation licences within 1km of the Site, the closest being 500m southwest. There is some suitable habitat on Site for this species, primarily within the hedgerow bases. The site lies within the Green GCN Risk Zone for Leicestershire, Rutland, Rushcliffe and South Kesteven. A precautionary approach should be taken with regards to this species. The Site would also be suitable for foraging bats including Annex II species, nesting birds and hedgehogs. The site is not suitable for roosing bats.
Mitigation and Compensation	• As a small number of bats may commute/ forage around the existing Site, lighting will be kept to a minimum during both construction and operation. • To compensate for loss of bird nesting opportunities, primarily within the hedgerows and trees, externally mounted/ integrated general purpose bird boxes will be provided. • Existing trees and hedgerows will be retained and protected during construction by fencing in accordance with BS5837:2012. • Any works to remove vegetation suitable for amphibian or reptiles should be checked by a licenced ecologist prior to removal and a precautionary approach taken. • Any works to involve vegetation clearance should be timed to avoid the bird nesting season (March to August, inclusive) or a check by an ecologist will be required immediately prior to these works being undertaken. • Any new planting within the Site should include native shrub planting or species on the RHS Plants for Pollinators List of benefit to wildlife.
Biodiversity Net Gain	A separate BNG Statement and Assessment Report is provided (Ref: 2646-BNG-VB).
Enhancements	2no. tree mounted bird boxes to be installed on the retained trees. 2no. tree mounted bat boxes to be installed on the retained trees.

Contents

Figures

Appendices

1 Introduction

This report presents the results of an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) at Nailstone Substation, Leicestershire in relation to detailed planning application to extend the existing substation. The surveys were commissioned by National Grid.

The area within the application boundary is hereafter referred to as the 'Site'.

1.1 Site Context

The Site is located directly north of Wood Road. Surrounding land use includes arable land to the north, east and south, a small block of priority habitat deciduous woodland to the west and a new commercial development to the southwest.

1.2 Description of Proposed Development

Proposals consist of an extension to the existing substation, a hardstanding access to the substation and a main access point onto Wood Road.

1.3 Aims

The aims of this report are to:

- Identify and describe the habitats and species likely to be affected by the proposed development and assess the ecological value of these features;
- Identify key ecological constraints to the proposed development and evaluate the significance of any potential effects; and,
- Provide recommendations for mitigation and enhancement opportunities in accordance with relevant planning policy, legislation and other published guidance (see **Appendix 2**).

2 Methods

2.1 Desk Study

Leicestershire and Rutland Environment Records Centre (LRERC) was contacted for records of Protected and Prioirty species within 2km of the Site boundary. An internet search was undertaken to identify statutory sites designated for nature conservation value within a 2km radius of the Site boundary (10km for international sites), using the Government's mapping website MAGIC (www.magic.gov.uk). A search was made of MAGIC for EPS Mitigation licences issued by Natural England within 2km of the Site boundary since 2008 and Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) within 50m of the Site boundaries. Aerial photography of the wider area was reviewed to assess connectivity and landscape features which may be important to local biodiversity.

2.2 Extended UK Habitat Classification Survey

A site walkover was undertaken on 16 October 2024 by Vicki Baldwin BSc MSc ACIEEM when weather conditions were foggy but with sufficient visibility.

All habitats within the Site were identified, described and mapped during the field survey in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) UKHab Ltd. 2023 (V2.0) and Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Defra 2024) classifications for hedgerows, with other linear and point features mapped using Phase 1 Habitat Survey symbology (JNCC 2010). Primary habitats have been mapped to a minimum mapping unit (MMU) of 25m^2, although where features of note of a smaller scale are present, these have also been recorded and mapped. Any habitats (e.g. traditional orchard) with no appropriate primary habitat label were assigned a secondary habitat code. Other secondary UKHab codes were recorded where relevant, although they are described qualitatively within this report for ease of reading. A non-exhaustive botanical species list was compiled, with plant names following Stace (2019).

The survey was extended to highlight the potential presence of protected and notable species in accordance with CIEEM's Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2017). This involved a search to identify the presence or potential presence of species such as breeding birds, bats, badger, dormouse, reptiles and amphibians. Target Notes (TNs) were used to record any features or habitats of ecological interest. Where access allowed, adjacent habitats were also considered in order to assess possible impacts of the proposal in a wider context.

A digital map was produced using QGIS (QGIS.org, 2024. *QGIS Geographic Information System*. QGIS Association. Available from: www.qgis.org). The habitat map is shown in **Figure 1**.

2.3 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

A baseline BNG assessment was undertaken using the statutory biodiversity metric (released in July 2024) to assess the pre-development and indicative post-development value of the habitats on Site following current guidance (Defra 2024). Further details are provided in the BNG Statement and Assessment Report (Ref:2646-BNG-VB).

2.4 Survey Limitations

Care has been taken to ensure that balanced advice is provided on the information available and collected during the study period (s), and within the resources available for the project. However, the possibility of important ecological features being missed due to survey timings, absence during surveys

or the year of survey cannot be ruled out. In addition, the lack of evidence or records of protected species on Site does not preclude their presence from Site.

3 Baseline Conditions

3.1 Designated Sites

The only Statutory designated site within 10km of the Site is the River Mease Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which lies 7.7km to the northwest. There are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within 2km of the Site and it does not lie within any consultation zone for designated sites within the wider area.

3.2 Habitats and Flora

The distribution of habitats is shown on **Figure 1** and full details with photographs are provided in **Appendix 3**.

The Site comprises the existing substation compound and surrounding field of modified grassland, grazed by horses at the time of the survey. The field is low in botanical diversity, primarily dominated by clover and buttercup. It is therefore considered to be of no more than **Local** importance. The field is bound by species-poor native hedgerows (HPI), with occasional semi-mature broadleaved trees. Given their low diversity in the context of the surrounding area, hedgerows are of no more than **Local** importance.

3.3 Fauna

Table 1 lists the fauna considered as part of the assessment.

Table 1: Assessment of Fauna on Site

Species/ Group	Location & Rationale
Amphibians	There are numerous records of great crested newt in the wider area, primarily to the southwest. The closest of these records lies 460m to the southwest but is a record for 9 years ago. The closest most recent record is from 2019 and lies 830m to the north west. There are no ponds on Site but two within 500m of the Site boundaries, to the east, however these are separated from the Site by Wood Road to the east which is considered likely to be a barrier to dispersal for amphibians. The site lies within the Green GCN Risk Zone for Leicestershire, Rutland, Rushcliffe and South Kesteven. There is suitable terrestrial habitat for amphibians within the hedgerow bases on site and within the off-site woodland to the southwest. The site itself is of no more than **Local** importance for these species but its likely they are using resources of the nearby woodland during their terrestrial phase
Badger	No evidence of badger was identified on Site however the offsite woodland to the south west would be suitable for this species. LRERC returned several records of badger within 2km but most from over 10 years ago. The closest most recent record is from 2022 760m to the north. Considering the suitability of the adjacent habitats, it is possible that any clan present may utilise the grassland on Site for foraging and the boundary habitats for commuting. Badgers are not listed as a species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England and have therefore not been assigned a scale of importance in this case but will be considered further in this assessment in relation to their legal protection only.

Species/ Group	Location & Rationale
Bats	There are no suitable roosting features on Site or within the trees along the boundaries. The tree due to be removed had no features suitable for roosting bats at the time of survey. The Site is therefore of **Negligible** importance for roosting bats. LRERC returned very few bat records within 2km of the site. The closest record being 1.5km southwest of the Site, for common pipistrelle. The boundary hedgerows are however connected to suitable habitats offsite within the wider landscape and as such may be used as part of a wider commuting and foraging network. Given the abundance of similar habitats within the wider area, the Site is of no more than **Local** importance for these species.
Birds	LRERC returned numerous records of notable bird species within 2km of the Site, including barn owl, house sparrow, redwing, yellowhammer and black redstart. The hedgerows and trees on Site would be suitable for a small number of common bird species, but these habitats are commonplace in the wider landscape and therefore unlikely to be a sole resource for these species. There is no suitable habitat for ground nesting birds. The site is therefore of no more than **Local** importance for these species.
Dormouse	LRERC returned no records of hazel dormouse within 2km of the Site boundary. Whilst there is some suitable habitat on site within the hedgerows, there is better quality habitat in the wider landscape and blocks of woodland which would be more suitable for this species. The connectivity to large blocks of woodland in the wider landscape is segregated by road networks to the east and streams and water courses to the west, as well as residential and commercial developments. The Site has no more than **Site** level importance for this species.
Hedgehog	LRERC returned several records of hedgehog within 2km of the Site, the closest and most recent being 700m to the northwest from 2021. Hedgehog are likely to be using the Site to forage and the hedgerow bases provide corridors to commute further afield. However, given the abundance of similar habitats in the area, the Site is of no more than **Local** importance for this species.
Invertebrates	LRERC returned a small number of invertebrate records from within 2km of the Site. these only included records of Harlequin ladybird and Jenkins Spire Snail. The Site is not suitable to support a wide or significant assemblage of invertebrates. Common species are likely to use flowering hedgerows species during the summer months. However, given the abundance of similar habitats in the area, the Site is of no more than **Site** level importance for this species.
Reptiles	LRERC only returned one record of reptiles within 2km of the Site. This record was of a grass snake from 1.7km to the southeast. The Site is very closely grazed with a short sward length and no features, such as a thatch layer or tussocks, that would provide suitable habitat for reptiles. The boundary along the western edge of the Site may be more suitable for reptiles as it runs adjacent to the woodland block and longer marginal vegetation however given that more suitable habitats are present outside of the Site boundary, the Site is likely to be of no more than **Site** level importance for this species.

4 Impacts And Mitigation

4.1 Designated Sites

Given their distance from the Site and the small scale of the proposed development, no impacts are predicted to affect designated sites.

4.2 Habitats and Flora

The proposals will result primarily in the loss of modified grassland, though a small section of hedgerow will also be removed to allow for access from Wood Road as well as the removal of a semi mature broadleaved tree currently overshadowing the existing compound.

To mitigate these losses the remaining grassland will be enhanced to other neutral grassland by overseeding with a suitable diverse species mix such as Emorsgate EM1 Basic General Purpose Meadow Mixture or similar. It is recommended that the seed mix used contains yellow rattle, a semi-parasitic species which reduces the dominance of competitive grass species, allowing wildflowers space to grow.

The hedgerows along the northern and eastern boundaries should be enhanced and reinforced to establish a more robust linear feature. An additional section of species rich native hedgerow will be planted along the existing western boundary of the compound to mitigate the loss of the short section to make way for access.

In addition, six trees will be planted around the boundary of the new development.

All retained hedgerows and trees will be safeguarded in line with best arboricultural practice during construction (in line with BS5837:2012) and all existing and newly created habitats will be managed to maximise biodiversity. This could be secured via a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).

Measures to restore and enhance existing habitats, to ensure successful establishment of new habitats, and to maintain the value of all ecological features in the long-term will be detailed within the Habitat Maintenance and Monitoring Plan (HMMP). A separate BNG Statement and Assessment Report is provided (Ref: 2646-BNG-VB) with the application along with the statutory metric (Ref: 2646-SBM-VB).

Some of the habitats present within the Site require further consideration in relation to supporting protected and notable species as further discussed below.

4.3 Fauna

4.3.1 Amphibians

Whilst there are no ponds on site, there is suitable terrestrial habitats on site to support a small number of common amphibians. In addition, the site lies within the Green Risk Zone for GCN for Leicestershire, Rutland, Rushcliffe and South Kesteven and given the records of GCN in the wider landscape, a precautionary approach should be taken towards amphibians during construction. Should any vegetation need to be cleared this should be carried out within the active season (April and November inclusive) when weather conditions are suitable and temperatures over 10°C and checked by a licenced ecologist prior to removal. Cleared vegetation should be removed from site to as to avoid creating habitat for amphibians to shelter in, until construction is completed.

4.3.2 Badger

Badgers and their setts receive protection under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which protects them from deliberate harm and injury.

No badger setts or evidence of badger were found on Site during the survey. Habitats on Site do however provide suitable foraging habitat within the grassland.

Due to the lack of evidence of setts, it is considered that badgers do not currently pose a constraint to the development. However, mindful that badgers are highly mobile and frequently establish new setts, suitable habitats which are to be affected by development, such as hedgerows, could support badger setts in the future.

The following precautionary measures are therefore recommended:

- Exclusion of badgers under a Natural England badger licence should any active setts be discovered that require removal/ disturbance during works; and
- Good practice construction measures to ensure badgers are either unable to access the construction site or cannot become trapped in excavations (e.g. through covering up at night or inserting an 'escape ramp').

The habitat creation and enhancement measures propose above would maintain foraging opportunities for badgers post-development.

4.3.3 Bats

All habitat considered suitable for commuting bats, namely the northern boundary hedgerow, will be retained within the development ensuring existing flyways and corridors continue to provide commuting and foraging habitat for any populations that may be utilising the Site. At the time of survey, no features suitable for roosting bats were identified on the site or within the tree proposed for removal, therefore no roosting locations are to be impacted.

Lighting during construction and operation has the potential to prevent/reduce bat numbers commuting and foraging within the Site during the active bat season, and as such avoiding the use of construction lighting and designing lighting to avoid illumination of boundaries should be undertaken. Lighting will be designed in conjunction with the ecologist to ensure that flyways are retained.

Sensitive lighting will be implemented allowing for bats to continue using the Site. Any proposed lighting should follow the following principles in line with the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) and Institute of Lighting Professional (ILP) guidance (BCT/ILP, 2023):

- Minimise the number of luminaires required;
- Set passive infrared motion sensors on a short duration timer (e.g. 1-2 minutes);
- Warm coloured bulbs that do not emit light from the UV end of the spectrum – equal to or less than 2700 kelvin;
- Light sources with peak wave lengths higher than 550nm;
- Lighting must be directional and pointing downwards; and

Between 1st April and the 31st October, works during the construction phase should be undertaken starting no earlier than 30 minutes after sunrise and finishing no later than 30 minutes prior to sunset with no Site lighting left on overnight.

4.3.4 Birds

All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), with certain species afforded additional protection measures.

There is a risk of disturbing breeding birds and their nests with tree and hedgerow removal during construction. As such, any removal of or disturbance to any vegetation on Site that is considered to offer potential nesting habitat for breeding birds should be undertaken between September and February inclusive or following an inspection for active nests by a suitably qualified ecologist. If nesting birds are found to be present then a 5m buffer will be implemented around the nest, in which no works can take place until all birds have fledged.

4.3.5 Dormouse

There are no records of dormice within 2km of the Site and there are minimal resources within the Site boundary to support this species, as well as there being more suitable habitat in the wider landscape. However, as a precautionary approach will be taken for other species, such as nesting birds and amphibians, a check of vegetation can be conducted by a licenced ecologist prior to removal to ensure this species is also safeguarded during construction.

4.3.6 Hedgehog

A precautionary approach should be taken towards hedgehog who may be using the site to forage and commute to areas further afield. All excavations should be fitted with a ramp or covered overnight to allow means of escape. This will also help safeguard badger, as stated in 4.3.2.

The layout of the proposals provides continuity of commuting habitat with additional cover and potential opportunities provided by new hedgerows. As such it is considered that this species will continue to traverse freely through the Site and will not be significantly affected during operation. No additional mitigation is considered necessary.

4.3.7 Reptiles

A precautionary approach should be taken towards reptiles, in line with the recommended mitigation for amphibians. Should any vegetation need to be cleared this should be carried out within the active reptile season (April and November inclusive) when weather conditions are suitable and temperatures over 10°C. Cleared vegetation should be removed from site to as to avoid creating habitat for reptiles to shelter in, until construction is completed.

5 Biodiversity Net Gain

The baseline units for the Site comprise 0.75 habitat units, 1.42 hedgerow units and 0 watercourse units. An indicative BNG assessment suggests that the Site is likely to be capable of delivering 10% onsite. Further details are provided in the BNG Statement and Assessment Report (Ref 2646-BNG-VB), which provides the BNG information required to support the planning application under Article 7 of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 as well as local information required by Northwest Leicestershire LPA, and in the submitted statutory biodiversity metric (2646-SBM-VB).

6 Enhancements

In addition, the enhancements detailed in **Table 2** are recommended/required in line with national guidance and local planning policy**.**

Table 2: Enhancement Features

Quantity & Type	Illustrations	Description & Installation
2 Tree mounted bird boxes		• Tree mounted. • Schwegler Nest Box 1B (or acceptable equivalent). • The boxes should be positioned a minimum of 1.2 - 2m above ground, so they can be checked and cleaned if necessary, or higher if feasible. • Can easily be hung from a branch of a mature tree or a single nail if necessary.
2 Tree mounted bat boxes		• Tree mounted. • Schwegler 2F Bat Box (or acceptable equivalent). • The box should be positioned on the trunk a minimum of 3m above ground, so it can be checked and cleaned if necessary, or higher if feasible. • As two boxes are being installed, they should vary in their height and direction (1 eastern/ 1 western or southern) to provide a range of conditions that bats can utilise.

7 Conclusions

In summary the Site was considered to be of relatively low ecological interest, with very small adverse impacts predicted on important ecological features but mitigated for appropriately.

Avoidance measures and careful timing of works have been incorporated into the design to minimise impacts to protected and notable species; and habitat creation has been included to compensate for habitat loss.

Provided the avoidance and mitigation measures are carried out, the proposal is considered unlikely to have significant adverse effects on ecological features.

Enhancement features have been described with the aim of providing an increase in wildlife opportunities on Site post-development, contributing to the aims of National Planning Policy Framework and local policy. An indicative Biodiversity Metric has been supplied which shows a gain of

+10% is achievable on site. The assessment will be updated based on final plans for the development, as part of the pre-commencement BNG condition.

8 References

Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals (2023) *Guidance Note 08/23, Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night.* Available from: https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting/

Bat Conservation Trust (2022) *Interim Guidance Note: Use of night vision aids for bat emergence surveys and further comment on dawn surveys*. Available at: https://cdn.bats.org.uk/uploads/pdf/Interim-guidance-note-on-NVAs-May-2022-FINAL.pdf?v=1653399882

BSI (2013) *BS42020: 2013 Biodiversity. Code of practice for planning and development*. British Standards Institution, London, UK.

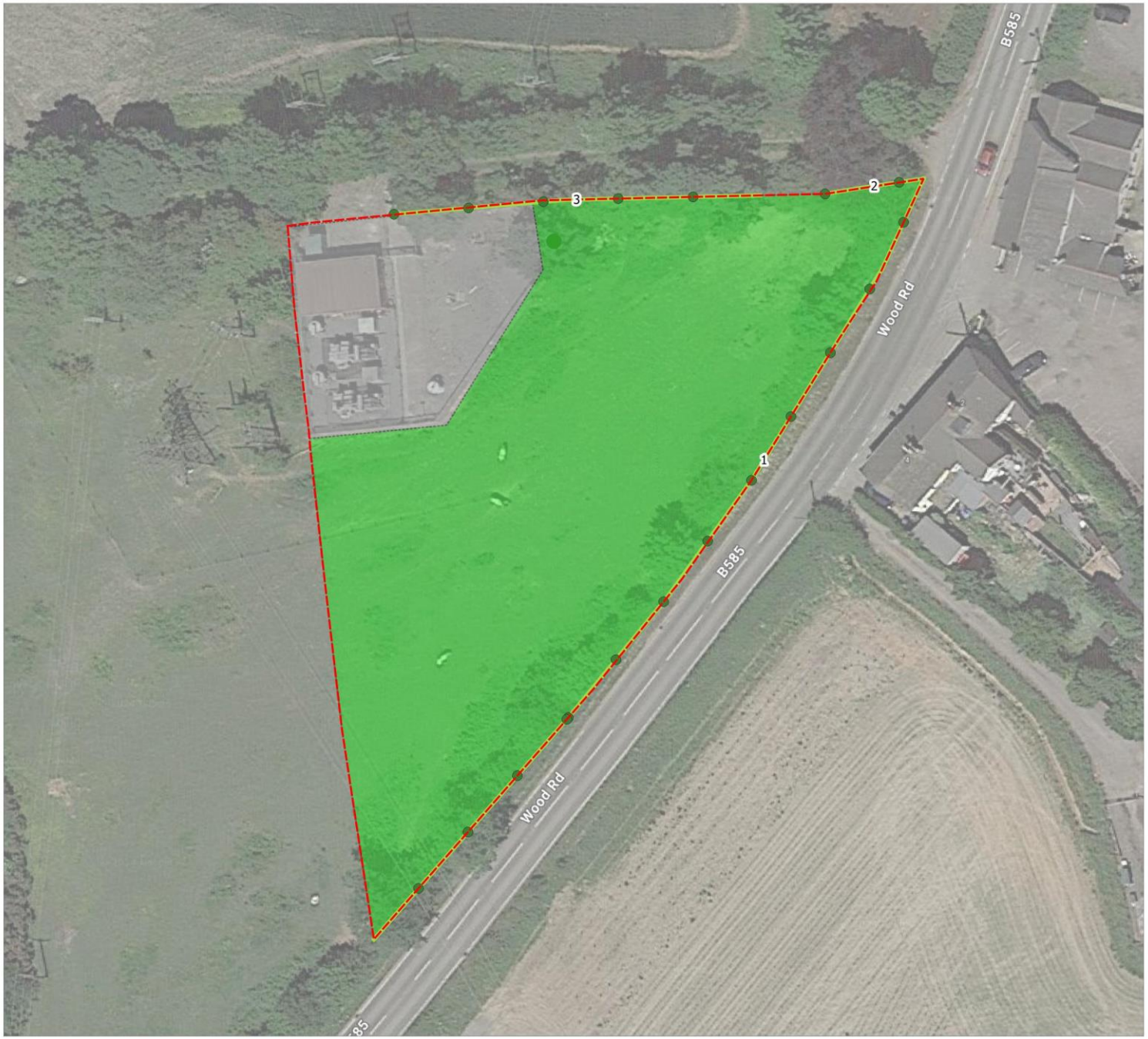
CIEEM (2018) *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

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

Reason, P.F. and Wray, S. (2023). *UK Bat Mitigation Guidelines: a guide to impact assessment, mitigation, and compensation for developments affecting bats.* Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Ampfield.

Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) *Bat Survey for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition)*. The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Mitchell-Jones A.J. (2004) *Bat Mitigation Guidelines*. English Nature, Peterborough.



Key:

- Site Boundary
- g4 - Modified grassland
- u1b - Developed land. sealed surface
- Native Hedgerow with trees
- Rural Tree (Broadleaved)

Plan is to Scale
Scale at A3: **1:638.759**

0 7 14 21 28 m

Figure 1:
Baseline Biodiversity Net Gain Plan

Project:
Nailstone Substation

Client:
National Grid

Date:
9/1/2025

Drawn:
VB

Ref:
2646-EcIA-F1

Revision:
-

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Appendix 1 – General Glossary of Terms

Annex I	Threatened bird listed on Annex I of the EC Birds Directive/ Habitats listed on Annex I of the EC Habitats Directive
Annex II	Species of community interest whose conservation requires the designation of SACs
BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
BMCL	Bat Mitigation Class Licence
BNG	Biodiversity Net Gain
BoCC	Bird of Conservation Concern
CEMP	Construction Environmental Management Plan
CWS	County Wildlife Site
EPS	European Protected Species
GLTA	Ground Level Tree Assessment
HPI	Habitat of Principal Importance required under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006
IRZ	Impact Risk Zone
GCN	Great crested newt
JNCC	Joint Nature Conservation Committee
LBAP	Local Biodiversity Action Plan
LEMP	Landscape and Ecology Management Plan
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
NE	Natural England
NERC Act	Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
NPPF	National Planning Policy Framework
NVC	National Vegetation Classification Survey
OSWI	Other Site of Wildlife Interest
pCWS	Potential County Wildlife Site
PRA	Preliminary Roost Assessment
PRF	Potential Roost Feature
Ramsar	A wetland site designated to be of international importance under the Ramsar Convention
SAC	Special Area of Conservation
SPA	Special Protection Area
SPI	Species of Principal Importance required under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006

SSSI	Site of Special Scientific Interest
UWS	Unconfirmed Wildlife Site
WCA	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981(as amended)
ZOI	Zone of Influence

Appendix 2 – Planning Policy and Legislation

Species and habitats receive legal protection in the UK under various legislation, including:

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended);
- The Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended);
- The Countryside Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000;
- The Hedgerows Regulations 1997;
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992; and
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Where relevant, this report takes into account the legislative protection afforded to specific habitats and species.

Environment Act 2021

The Environment Act 2021 operates as the UK's legal framework for environmental protection and provides legislation on environmental governance, principles, targets and improvement plans, waste and resource efficiency, nature protection, and water and air quality.

Part 6 of the Environment Act 2021 requires a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain for all new developments (with specified exemptions), and amends Schedule 7a (Biodiversity Gain in England) of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (inserted by the Environment Act 2021) to mandate this in England. This will apply to most major developments from 12th February 2024 and to small sites from April 2024.

The biodiversity net gain regulations most directly relevant to planning are:

- The Environment Act 2021 (Commencement No. 8 and Transitional Provisions) Regulations (2024)
- The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations (2024)
- The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) (Modifications and Amendments) (England) Regulations (2024)
- The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations (2024).

In addition, there are regulations for the Biodiversity Gain Site register established under section 100 of the Environment Act 2021 for registered off-site biodiversity gains.

National Planning Policy Framework 2023

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Governments planning policies for England and how local planning authorities should incorporate them into their own policies and plans. Section 15 of the NPPF contains several policies targeted at enhancing the natural environment and requires local authorities to consider how impacts on biodiversity can be minimised and provide net gains in biodiversity. Paragraph 180 (a-f) states that:

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

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

- maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
- minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
- remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate."

In addition, paragraph 185 (b) ensures that to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

"b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity."

Additional Planning Practice Guidance (PPGs) supports the NPPF and includes guidance on:

- Agricultural land, soil and brownfield land of environmental value;
- Green infrastructure;
- Biodiversity, geodiversity and ecosystems; and
- Landscape.

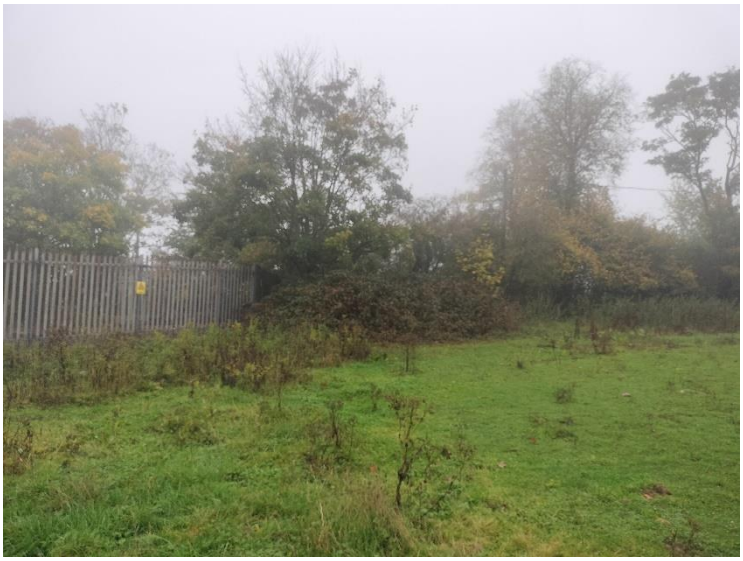
Habitat and Species Legislation

Species and habitats receive legal protection in the UK under various legislation, including:

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended);
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulation 2017 (as amended) (also known as the Habitat Regulations, it implements the EU Habitats Directive in England and Wales);
- The Countryside Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000;
- The Hedgerows Regulations 1997;
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992; and
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

Where relevant, this report takes into account the legislative protection afforded to specific habitats and species.

Appendix 3 – Site Photographs

Description	Photograph
Hedgerow and grassland towards the northern boundary showing the substation compound fence. Grassland dominated by white clover with some perennial rye, daisy and creeping buttercup.	
The grassland on Site looking south west towards the offsite woodland.	

Description	Photograph
Hedgerow with trees along the eastern boundary alongside Wood Road. Species include holly, hawthorn, hazel and bramble.	
Small patch of ruderal vegetation near to northern boundary. Not exceeding 25m^2. Dominated by nettle and broadleaved dock.	

Appendix 4 – Flora and Fauna species list

Common name	Scientific name (Stace 2019)
Ash	*Fraxinus excelsior*
Birch species	*Betula sp.*
Blackthorn	*Prunus spinosa*
Bramble	*Rubus fruticosus agg.*
Broad-leaved Dock	*Rumex obtusifolius*
Cock's-foot	*Dactylis glomerata*
Common Ivy	*Hedera helix*
Common Nettle	*Urtica dioica*
Common Ragwort	*Jacobaea vulgaris*
Cow Parsley	*Anthriscus sylvestris*
Creeping Buttercup	*Ranunculus repens*
Daisy	*Bellis perennis*
Dandelion	*Taraxacum agg.*
Field Maple	*Acer campestre*
Ground-ivy	*Glechoma hederacea*
Hazel	*Corylus avellana*
Hawthorn	*Crataegus monogyna*
Horse-chestnut	*Aesculus hippocastanum*
Oak sp.	*Quercus sp.*
Pedunculate Oak	*Quercus robur*
Perennial Rye-grass	*Lolium perenne*
White Clover	*Trifolium repens*

Common name	Scientific name (Stace 2019)
Badger	*Meles meles*
Barn owl	*Tyto alba*
Black redstart	*Phoenicurus ochruros*
Common Frog	*Rana temporaria*
Common pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*
Common toad	*Bufo Bufo*
Dormouse	*Muscardinus avellanarius*
Grass snake	*Natrix helvetica*
Great crested newt	*Triturus cristatus*
Harlequin ladybird	*Harmonia axyridis*
Hedgehog	*Erinaceus europaeus*
House sparrow	*Passer domesticus*
Jenkins Spire Snail	*Potamopyrgus antipodarum*
Redwing	*Turdus iliacus*
Swift	*Apus apus*
Yellowhammer	*Emberiza citrinella*

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