
INTERIM ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT (EcIA) SUMMARY REPORT

LAND NORTH OF A47 NORMANDY WAY AND
WEST OF A447 ASHBY ROAD, HINCKLEY

ON BEHALF OF

RICHBOROUGH

REFERENCE: ZEL_477

DATE: March 2024

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Report Data	
Report Title	Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) Summary
Report Reference	ZEL_477
Client	Richborough
Site	Land north of A47 Normandy Way and west of A447 Ashby Road, Hinckley
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V1	Interim Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) Summary Report	E. Seaton BSc (Hons) MCIEEM	23 January 2024
V2	Interim Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) Summary Report	E. Seaton BSc (Hons) MCIEEM	04 March 2024

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The evidence gathered, and the opinions provided, have been prepared in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Code of Professional Conduct.

Where any appraisal is based upon information provided by third parties, it is assumed that this information is relevant, correct and complete; there has been no independent verification of information obtained from third parties unless otherwise stated. Where field investigations have been carried out these have been appropriate to the agreed scope of works and carried out to a level of detail required to achieve the stated objectives.

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

- The land north of A47 Normandy Way and west of A447 Ashby Road, Hinckley was subject to a suite of surveys completed by Zebra Ecology Ltd during 2023. The following surveys have informed this assessment:
 - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Zebra Ecology, 2023)
 - Great Crested Newt Survey (Zebra Ecology, 2023a)
 - Interim Breeding Bird Survey (Zebra Ecology, 2023b)
 - Interim Bat Activity Plans (Zebra Ecology, 2023c)
 - Riparian Mammal Survey (Zebra Ecology, 2023d)
 - Biodiversity Net Gain Plan (Zebra Ecology, 2023e)
- Further assessment for breeding birds and bats is to be completed during 2024 to afford a full suite of survey work to inform this assessment.
- The site is approximately 16ha in area and comprises species-poor modified grassland (cattle-grazed fields), developed land and associated vegetated gardens (farmhouse and associated outbuildings) with occasional scattered trees. The fields are bound by a combination of species-rich and native hedgerows. A tributary of Tweed River runs off-site along the western boundary.
- An interim Ecological Impact Assessment was undertaken in January 2024 by Zebra Ecology Ltd in accordance with the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (CIEEM, 2022 Version 1.2).
- Planning consent is being sought from Hinckley and Bosworth Council for an *'outline planning application with all matters reserved except for access, for the erection of up to 415 dwellings, associated open space, drainage, landscaping and infrastructure'*.
- No significant residual impacts have been identified on 'important' ecological features (subject to outstanding survey work) with appropriate mitigation, compensation and enhancement.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

Background to the Development

- 1.1 Zebra Ecology Ltd was commissioned by Richborough to undertake an interim Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) of the land north of A47 Normandy Way and west of A447 Ashby Road, Hinckley (centred on Ordnance Survey grid reference SP 427 959).
- 1.2 The site is approximately 16ha in area and comprises species-poor modified grassland (cattle-grazed fields), developed land and associated vegetated gardens (farmhouse and associated outbuildings) with occasional scattered trees. The fields are bound by a combination of species-rich and native hedgerows. A tributary of Tweed River runs off-site along the western boundary.



Figure 1: Application Site Boundary

- 1.3 Planning consent is being sought from Hinckley and Bosworth Council for an 'outline planning application with all matters reserved except for access, for the erection of up to 415 dwellings, associated open space, drainage, landscaping and infrastructure'.

Objectives

- 1.1 The objectives of the assessment are to:
 1. Identify all potential impacts associated with the development proposals and determine

- whether they would have a significant effect on any important ecological features;
2. Identify any mitigation measures likely to be required to ensure compliance with legislation and to address any significant effects, following the 'Mitigation Hierarchy';
 3. To provide an assessment of any residual effects following mitigation, and identify any necessary compensation measures;
 4. Identify opportunities to deliver ecological enhancement;

2.0 METHODOLOGY

Habitat Surveys

- 2.1 A field survey was undertaken in accordance with the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Guidelines (CIEEM, 2017 2nd Edition) and the UK Habitat Classification system (UK Hab Ltd., 2023). This involved walking over the site, mapping the main habitat types and compiling target notes to identify particular areas of interest or concern. Plant species lists were also compiled.

Desk Study

- 2.2 Existing ecological and nature conservation data relevant to the site was collated from various sources including the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) online database (<http://magic.defra.gov.uk>) and Leicestershire and Rutland Environment Records Centre (LRERC).
- 2.3 A third-party data search was undertaken to attain biological records from Leicestershire and Rutland Environment Records Centre (LRERC) during July 2023 to identify any designated sites and protected / notable species within a 2km radius of SP 42751 95935. It should be noted that the absence of biological records for an area does not imply that taxa are not present.
- 2.4 A search of European statutory designated sites such as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) or Special Protection Areas (SPA) within 10km of the site boundary was also undertaken.
- 2.5 A search of the planning portal of Hinckley and Bosworth Council was undertaken to identify any other planned projects that may occur over a similar timeframe and therefore may have a cumulative impact on ecological features.

Protected Species Survey

In conjunction with the habitat assessments, the following specialist surveys reports for protected species have been undertaken to identify important ecological features at the site:

- Great Crested Newt Survey (Zebra Ecology, 2023a)
- Interim Breeding Bird Survey (Zebra Ecology, 2023b)
- Interim Bat Transect Plans (Zebra Ecology, 2023c)
- Riparian Mammal Survey (Zebra Ecology, 2023d)

Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA)

- 2.6 CIEEM's best practice guidelines (CIEEM, 2022) state that:
- 2.7 *"...EclA is a process of identifying, quantifying and evaluating the effects of development-related or other proposed actions on habitats, species and ecosystems. EclA can be used for the appraisal of projects of any scale: it is a systematic, process applicable to a wide range of projects."* (see page 9 of CIEEM, 2022).
- 2.8 Following current guidelines on EclA this assessment identifies and focuses on 'important ecological features'. These are those species, habitats or ecosystems that are of importance in terms of their conservation value, importance for biodiversity or legal protection in the appropriate geological context and are potentially to be impacted upon by the development proposal. These features thus constitute a material consideration in the assessment of ecological impacts of a scheme. The identification of important ecological features has been derived from a variety of sources including:
- Designated sites (statutory and non-statutory);
 - Legal instruments. 'International legislation' (e.g. EC Habitats Directive, EC Birds Directive); National legislation (e.g. S.41 list of species and habitats '...of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity in England' under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006; The Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations, 2010; The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981; The Hedgerow Regulations 1997).
 - The Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework, which replaced the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP).
 - County (local) BAPs / Lists (where active).
 - The Red and Amber lists of 'Birds of Conservation Concern' (see Eaton et alii, 2015).
 - UK Red Data Book and Nationally/Regionally/locally notable species.
 - Planning Policy (local and National).
 - Ecosystem services and natural capital.
 - Other reasons including identified high-value unimproved or semi-natural habitats.
- 2.9 The geographical scale of significance for any important ecological feature has been determined following the guidelines of CIEEM (2018) as follows:
- International and European.
 - National.

- Regional.
- Metropolitan, County, vice-county or other local authority-wide area.
- River Basin District
- Estuarine system/Coastal cell
- Local.

2.10 The assessment focuses on ecological features that have been identified as ‘important’ and affected by the development proposals.

3.0 SUMMARY OF RESULTS

Great Crested Newts

- 3.1 No great crested newts were recorded within any of the ponds during the survey visits.

Breeding Birds

- 3.2 At the time of reporting, two of six surveys have been completed, with the remaining four to be undertaken during the 2024 breeding bird survey season (March-early July). The breeding bird surveys were conducted in June and July 2023, and comprised two dawn visits, (commencing half an hour prior to sunrise) as per the latest Bird Survey Guidelines (RSK Biocensus, 2021).
- 3.3 In total, 117 registrations for 23 species of bird have been recorded during the survey visits. The breeding bird assemblage utilising the site was typical of the on-site habitats, mainly comprising common and widespread bird species. Thus, the site has been deemed as holding 'Local' importance only with regards to birds (subject to outstanding survey work).

Bat Activity

- 3.4 Occasional bat activity was recorded during the walked transect surveys from at least five species: common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat and big bat. *Myotis* sp. was also detected during automated surveys. The majority of activity recorded was from common pipistrelle (>70% across automated surveys).

Riparian Mammals

- 3.5 No riparian mammals (i.e. water vole, otter) or evidence of these protected species has been recorded on-site.

Table 1: Ecological Impact Assessment Summary (EcIA) Table

Important Ecological Feature	Impact(s)	Significance of Impact(s) <u>without</u> Mitigation / Compensation / Enhancement	Mitigation/Compensation/Enhancement (proposed)	Significance of Residual Impact(s) <u>with</u> Mitigation / Compensation / Enhancement
Wild / breeding birds	Reduction in diversity of breeding bird species including five Leicestershire & Rutland Red Data Book Species (barn swallow, greater whitethroat, house sparrow, song thrush, yellowhammer and barn owl). Loss of bird nesting and foraging habitat through vegetation clearance (e.g. removal of hedgerows). Increased likelihood of disturbance (e.g. predation) due to anthropogenic impacts such as lighting.	Major Negative at Site / Local Level	Removal of potential bird nesting habitat (where required to facilitate development) to be undertaken outside the core bird nesting season (March – August inclusive) or otherwise under the direct supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist. Extensive new landscaping for the benefit of bird species includes: • Planting of 214 native trees • Species-rich wildflower areas to be created across the site providing a food source (e.g. invertebrates, small mammals) for some species. • Planting of 1070m of native, species-rich hedgerow with trees • Planting of 206m of native species-rich hedgerow. • Enhancement and bolstering of existing hedgerow (H20) from native hedgerow to native-species-rich hedgerow with trees (12 trees to be added).	Minor Negative moving to Minor Positive with 5-10 years at Local Level.

Important Ecological Feature	Impact(s)	Significance of Impact(s) <u>without</u> Mitigation / Compensation / Enhancement	Mitigation/Compensation/Enhancement (proposed)	Significance of Residual Impact(s) <u>with</u> Mitigation / Compensation / Enhancement
			Sensitive lighting strategy to be designed in collaboration with the ecologist to avoid short and long-term impacts through increased illumination. This will include unlit buffers along the brook and retained hedgerows. Provision of bird boxes to provide increased nesting opportunity for bird species: • 10 x Schwegler Sparrow Terraces • 10 x No.10 Schwegler Swallow Nest Cups • 10 x Swift Bricks integrated into new units. • 5 x 3S Schwegler Starling Nest Boxes • 15 x Schwegler General Nest Boxes Full details to be provided within a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) for the site.	

Important Ecological Feature	Impact(s)	Significance of Impact(s) <u>without</u> Mitigation / Compensation / Enhancement	Mitigation/Compensation/Enhancement (proposed)	Significance of Residual Impact(s) <u>with</u> Mitigation / Compensation / Enhancement
Foraging / commuting bat species	Loss, fragmentation or isolation of foraging habitat for local bat species. Fragmentation of commuting routes for local bat species. Potential for reduction in overall diversity of bat species using the site as a result of urbanisation and lighting impacts.	Major negative at Local level	Sensitive lighting strategy to be designed in collaboration with the ecologist to avoid short and long-term impacts through increased illumination. This will include unlit buffers along the brook and retained hedgerows. Restriction on working hours to be implemented and secured as part of a future Construction and Ecological Management Plan (CEMP) to reduce impacts on nocturnal wildlife. Extensive new landscaping for the benefit of bat species: • Planting of 214 native trees • Species-rich wildflower areas to be created across the site providing a food source (e.g. invertebrates) for some species. • Planting of 1070m of native, species-rich hedgerow with trees • Planting of 206m of native species-rich hedgerow. • Enhancement and bolstering of existing hedgerow (H20) from native hedgerow to native-species-rich hedgerow with trees (12 trees to be added).	Neutral moving to Minor Positive with 5-10 years at Local Level.

Important Ecological Feature	Impact(s)	Significance of Impact(s) <u>without</u> Mitigation / Compensation / Enhancement	Mitigation/Compensation/Enhancement (proposed)	Significance of Residual Impact(s) <u>with</u> Mitigation / Compensation / Enhancement
			Four attenuation basins proposed and to be planted with a wet tolerant grassland mix. All retained trees and hedgerows to be afforded adequate protection in line with 'BS5837: 2012 <i>Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction</i>'. New roosting provision in the form of crevice and hollow boxes to increase roosting opportunity post-development. Full details to be provided within a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP). Incorporation of bat ridge and slope access tiles within 20% of proposed units.	

4.0 REFERENCES

CIEEM (2017a). *Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environment Winchester.

CIEEM (2017b). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd edition*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environment Winchester.

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MAGIC (2021) Interactive Map. Available from: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/> [Accessed November 2022]

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Zebra Ecology (2023b). *Interim Breeding Bird Survey – Hinckley*. Zebra Ecology, Worcester, UK

Zebra Ecology (2023c). *Interim Bat Activity and Automated Survey – Hinckley*. Zebra Ecology, Worcester UK

Zebra Ecology (2023d). *Riparian Mammal Survey – Hinckley*. Zebra Ecology, Worcester, UK

Zebra Ecology (2023e). *Biodiversity Net Gain Plan – Hinckley North*. Zebra Ecology, Worcester, UK

APPENDIX A

Plans

- UK Habitat Classification / BNG Baseline Plan
- Illustrative Landscape Plan

APPENDIX A

Red Line Boundary

Species-poor
Semi-improved
Grassland

Arable

Ponds

Scrub

Rubble pile

Ditch

Target Notes

Trees

Species-poor
hedgerow

Species-rich
hedgerow

Richborough Estates
Land east of Stoke Road and north of
Normandy Way (A47), Hinckley

Leicestershire

Phase 1 Habitat Map

February 2022

APPENDIX B

Legislation and Planning Policy

Bats

All species of bat in Britain are 'European Protected Species' and are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000. These pieces of legislation combine to give substantial protection to bats and their habitats, making it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats;
- Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time);
- Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.

Great Crested Newt

The great crested newt is a 'European Protected Species' and is listed on both Annex II and IV of the EC Habitats Directive. The Directive is transposed into UK law through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. They are also protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. These pieces of legislation combine to give substantial protection to great crested newts and their breeding ponds and terrestrial habitat, making it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a great crested newt;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a great crested newt in a structure or place that they use for shelter or protection or deliberately disturb a group of a great crested newts;
- Damage or destroy a great crested newt resting place/shelter (even if they are not occupying it at the time);
- Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a great crested newt (dead or alive) or any part of a great crested newt (including eggs and all life-stages);
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a great crested newt resting place/shelter.

Nesting Birds

All wild bird nests are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), making it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or their eggs or nests (with certain exceptions) and disturb any bird species listed under Schedule 1 to the Act, or its dependent young while it is nesting.

Otters

The European otter is the only native UK otter species. It IS a European protected species (EPS) and is also fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to:

- Capture, kill, disturb or injure otters (on purpose or by not taking enough care); -
- Damage or destroy a breeding or resting place (deliberately or by not taking enough care);
- Obstruct access to their resting or sheltering places (deliberately or by not taking enough care);
- Possess, sell, control or transport live or dead otters, or parts of otters.

Water voles

Water voles are protected in the UK under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017 and Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This legislation makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, take or injure a water vole;
- Possess or control any live or dead water vole, or any part or derivative (not including water voles bred in captivity under licence);
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or block access to a water voles place of shelter or protection (on purpose or by not taking enough care);
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a water vole whilst it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection (on purpose or by not taking enough care).

APPENDIX C

Qualifications and Experience

Zebra Ecology Ltd is Registered Practice of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). A comprehensive range of ecological services are offered including Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA), Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA), Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) and European Protected Species (EPS) Surveys / Licensing.

The practice works closely work closely with clients to achieve their aspirations alongside securing the best outcomes for the environment. With wildlife legislation and policy as its basis; commercial awareness, pragmatism and defensible advice is combined to form Zebra Ecology's approach.

As well as offering a wide range of ecological services, Zebra Ecology forms part of Zebra Group offering an in-house collaborative approach in conjunction with Zebra Architects, Zebra Landscape Architects, Zebra Trees and Zebra Land and Development.

Emma Seaton BSc (Hons) MCIEEM

Emma holds a BSc (Hons) degree in Biology from the University of Sheffield and has since gained a postgraduate certificate in Ecological Consultancy. Her ecological experience includes Preliminary Ecological Appraisals, Ecological Impact Assessments (EclA), surveying for notable / European Protected Species, mitigation / licensing advice. She has held Natural England survey licences for bats (Class 2), great crested newts and white-clawed crayfish since 2015. She is also a Registered Consultant under the Bat Mitigation Class Licence (BMCL) and is an Earned Recognition consultant under the Natural England bat pilot project. Emma is a Full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.