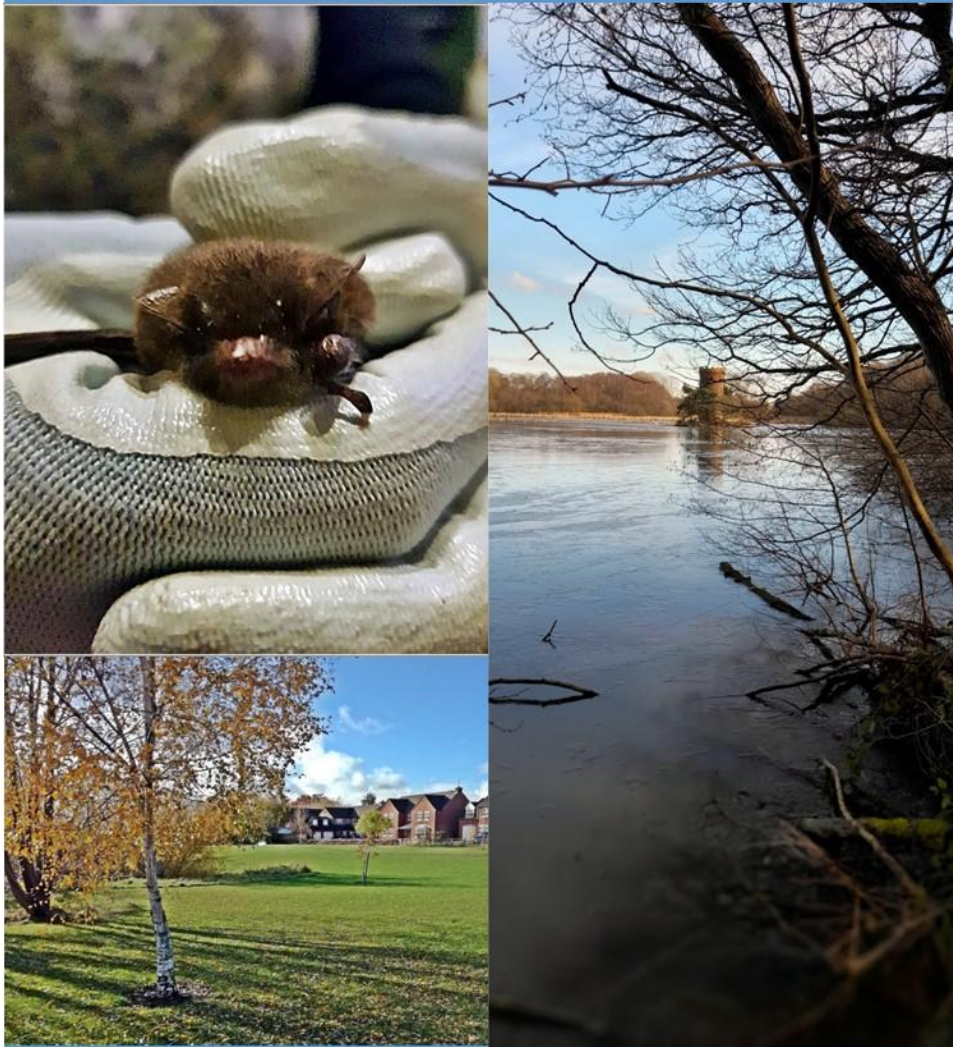




Land at Station Road, Bagworth,
Leicestershire

Updated Preliminary Ecological
Appraisal with
a Biodiversity Statement

Prepared by
Griffin Ecology Ltd.

On behalf of
A.R.Cartwright Ltd.

Project: GE 0768 Rev A

We assist our clients to deliver a measurable net gain in biodiversity.

Quality Management		
Client	A.R.Cartwright Ltd.	
Project	Land at Station Road, Bagworth, Leicestershire	
Report Title	Updated Preliminary Ecological Appraisal with a Biodiversity Statement	
Project No	GE0768	
Status	FINAL	Revision A
Date	29 th August 2025	25 th November 2025
Date of survey	11 th July 2025	
Author	Casey-Ruth Griffin BSc (hons) MCIEEM, Principal Ecologist	
Review	Daniel Bardey BSc (hons) MRes, Consultant Ecologist	
Approved by	Ian Griffin, Commercial Director	

Copyright
The copyright of this document remains with Griffin Ecology Limited. All rights reserved. The contents of this document therefore must not be copied or reproduced in whole or in part for any purpose without the written consent of Griffin Ecology Limited.

Legal Guidance
The information set out within this report in no way constitutes a legal opinion on the relevant legislation (refer to the relevant Appendix for the main provisions of the legislation). The opinion of a legal professional should be sought if further advice is required.

Liability
This report has been prepared for the exclusive use of the commissioning client and unless otherwise agreed in writing by Griffin Ecology Limited no other party may use, or rely on the contents of the report. No liability is accepted by Griffin Ecology Limited for any use of this report, other than for the purposes for which it was originally prepared and provided. No warranty, expressed or implied, is made as to the advice in this report. The content of this report is partly based on information provided by third parties; Griffin Ecology Limited accepts no liability for any reliance placed on such information. This report is subject to the restrictions and limitations referenced in Griffin Ecology Limited's standard Terms of Business.

Contact Details
Griffin Ecology Ltd. Bloxham Mill Business Centre, Barford Road, Bloxham, Oxfordshire, OX15 4FF, United Kingdom Tel: 01295 982022

Table of Contents

1.	Introduction	4
1.1	Background.....	4
1.2	Site description	4
1.3	Survey Purpose	5
1.4	Proposed Plans	6
1.5	Relevant Planning Policies	6
2.	Methodology.....	8
2.1	Desk Study.....	8
2.2	Site Visit.....	9
2.2.1	UK Habitats Classification Survey.....	9
2.2.2	Habitat Condition Assessment.....	9
2.2.3	Protected Species Survey.....	10
2.3	Survey limitation	12
3.	Results	13
3.1	Desk Study.....	13
3.2	UK Habitats Survey and Protected Species Survey	15
4.	Biodiversity Statement.....	26
5.	Assessment of Potential Ecological Impacts	27
6.	References	34

1. Introduction

1.1 Background

Griffin Ecology Ltd. has been commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of land and buildings located off Station Road in Bagworth, Leicestershire. This appraisal has been prepared in support of a planning application for residential development at the site.

An earlier PEA was undertaken by Griffin Ecology Ltd. in August 2022 (report ref. GE0384) to inform early design options and assess baseline ecological conditions. That assessment identified habitats of local ecological value and moderate potential for protected and notable species, alongside recommendations for mitigation and further survey.

Since that time, development proposals have been revised to reflect site constraints and stakeholder feedback—including input from the Local Highway Authority and feasibility findings. The current layout (drawing ref. 24/19 05d, July 2025) proposes 46 dwellings with associated infrastructure, green space, and an attenuation pond.

This updated PEA provides a refreshed ecological baseline to support the formal planning application, ensuring that all ecological considerations are appropriately addressed in light of the revised proposals.

This updated PEA therefore draws upon and revises the 2022 findings to reflect the current ecological conditions, providing updated advice on any further survey requirements, constraints, and opportunities for ecological enhancement.

For the purposes of this report the “site” refers to the land within the red line boundary as illustrated by Figure 1.

1.2 Site description

The site (central grid reference: SK 43993 09382) measures approximately 2.1 hectares and is located on the northern edge of the village of Bagworth, Leicestershire. It comprises a series of existing buildings, grazed pasture, and hardstanding, and is accessed from Station Road to the east. The site is bounded by residential properties and private garden plots to the immediate north and east.

To the south, west and parts of the northern boundary, the site is enclosed by plantation woodland established under the National Forest grant scheme. Within this woodland are three man-made waterbodies, two of which are situated within 250 metres of the site boundary. The surrounding landscape, comprising woodland, grassland, and aquatic habitats, provides a well-connected ecological network and is considered likely to support a range of species by offering valuable opportunities for foraging, shelter, and dispersal.



Figure 1: Site boundary and surrounding habitats (Google 2025).

1.3 Survey Purpose

The purpose of this Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) is to provide an up-to-date assessment of the baseline ecological conditions within the site boundary, and to identify any potential ecological constraints or opportunities that may inform the proposed development of the land at Station Road, Bagworth.

This assessment is based on the updating ecological survey and takes into account the findings of the earlier PEA completed in August 2022 by Griffin Ecology Ltd. The updated PEA includes repeated observations on habitats, species potential, and additional ecological features.

Specifically, the objectives of the survey are to:

- Identify and classify the broad habitat types present within the site using UKHab and Phase 1 methodologies;
- Evaluate the suitability of habitats for protected or notable species;
- Assess the value of the site in a local and landscape-scale ecological context;
- Determine whether additional species-specific surveys (e.g. for bats) are required to inform further assessment;
- Identify potential ecological constraints and risks to inform site layout, timing, and mitigation strategies;
- Highlight opportunities for ecological enhancement in line with the aims of Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG);
- Provide initial recommendations for mitigation, precautionary measures, and management as appropriate.

This PEA is intended to support the planning process by providing early-stage ecological advice in line with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2017) and best practice standards.

1.4 Proposed Plans

The following plans have been provided by the client for consideration as part of this Preliminary Ecological Appraisal:

- **Block Plan** – Drawing ref. 24/19 05d, prepared by Hayward Architects Ltd. and dated July 2025.
- This layout proposes the construction of 46 residential dwellings, including a mix of affordable and market housing, associated access roads, parking areas, and landscaping. The scheme includes areas of public open space, an attenuation pond, and dedicated Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) planting areas, with proposed tree planting and hedgerow creation primarily focused along the western and southern site boundaries.

The ecological appraisal presented in this report is based on the layout and assumptions outlined in the above plan. Any significant changes to the proposed layout may necessitate a review of the ecological assessment and recommendations.

1.5 Relevant Planning Policies

The ODPM Circular 06/05 makes the presence of a protected species a material consideration within the planning process and therefore it is essential for the presence of protected species and the extent they may be affected by proposed development be established through appropriate surveys. These are required prior to the planning permission being granted. The ODPM Circular 06/05 also encourages the use of planning conditions to secure the long term protection of such species.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (updated 2024) section 15 sets out applications to conserve and enhance the natural environment.

Paragraph 187 states:

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

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

Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states:

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

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

Environment Act 2021

Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of at least 10% will apply to most developments under the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 from January 2024. This appraisal is consistent with emerging requirements under the Act.

Local Policy:

The site falls within the administrative area of **Hinckley and Bosworth Borough Council (HBBC)**, which forms the relevant Local Planning Authority (LPA). The following local policies are particularly relevant:

Hinckley and Bosworth Core Strategy (Adopted 2009)

While an older document, this still contains applicable ecological policies:

- **Policy 20: Green Infrastructure**
Requires development proposals to retain, protect and enhance the existing green infrastructure network and contribute to its improvement.
- **Policy 21: Biodiversity and Geodiversity**
Requires that development proposals:
 - Avoid negative impacts on biodiversity;
 - Protect and enhance sites of biodiversity value;
 - Deliver enhancements in line with local Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs);
 - Achieve a measurable net gain in biodiversity.

Site Allocations and Development Management Policies DPD (Adopted 2016)

- **Policy DM6: Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geological Interest**
Requires ecological assessments for proposals likely to impact designated or priority habitats/species. It supports habitat connectivity and local biodiversity initiatives.

- **Policy DM7: Preventing Environmental Pollution**

Although broader in scope, this policy encourages the protection of watercourses and soil resources, relevant to your site due to the presence of a partially culverted ditch.

2. Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

A desk-based data review has been undertaken to inform the baseline ecological assessment and to identify any known ecological receptors or designations that may influence the proposed development.

Biological Records Search

Ecological data for the site and surrounding area have been obtained from the Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC). The data search covers a 2km radius from the central site grid reference (SK 43993 09382) and includes records of:

- Statutory and non-statutory designated sites (e.g., SSSIs, LNRs, Local Wildlife Sites);
- Records of legally protected and notable species, including those listed under:
 - Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended),
 - Section 41 species of principal importance under the NERC Act 2006,
 - UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs);
- Habitats of principal importance and local habitat networks.

These records have been used to identify known ecological sensitivities, inform species constraints, and assess ecological connectivity in the wider landscape.

MAGIC Map Review

In addition to the records search, publicly available datasets have been consulted via the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) online resource, maintained by Natural England. This includes a review of:

- Statutory designated nature conservation sites within a 2km radius, including:
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs),
 - National Nature Reserves (NNRs),
 - Local Nature Reserves (LNRs);
- Habitats of Principal Importance (e.g., deciduous woodland, traditional orchard, lowland meadow) and their spatial relationship to the site;
- Historic records of European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) granted within a 2km radius,

The information obtained from these sources has been used to supplement field observations, assess likely species presence, and determine the requirement for further surveys or mitigation.

2.2 Site Visit

The site has been visited by a suitably experienced and licensed surveyor, Casey Griffin (Principal Ecologist) on 11th July 2025. Casey is a member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management and holds Natural England class licences for bats class 2 (CL18), great crested newt class 1 (CL08) and hazel dormouse. Weather conditions at the time of survey have been recorded. An informing walkover survey has been undertaken to cover the extent of the site and the adjoining habitats, where accessible.

2.2.1 UK Habitats Classification Survey

A updating walkover survey of the site has been carried out in accordance with the standard methodology published in the UK Habitat Classification User Manual and the CIEEM's guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisals. The survey covered all areas of the site as well as surrounding habitats, where accessible. This survey sought to identify, describe and map habitats present within the site up to level 3 within the habitat key. The principal aim of UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) is to provide a rapid system for recording and classifying habitats. The system comprises a principal hierarchy (the Primary Habitats) - which include ecosystems, broad habitats, priority habitats and Annex 1 habitats - and non-hierarchical Secondary Codes. All habitats present on-site have been recorded on a UKHab map (Appendix 2). Any Habitats of Principal Importance, or habitats that may support rare or scarce plant communities and/or invertebrate assemblages, have been recorded during this site visit. Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 has been used to identify habitats that are considered a national conservation priority. The value of these habitats is recognised in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (MHCLG, 2019).

The habitats identified during the walkover survey have then been evaluated against the CIEEM EIA evaluating habitats and species guidelines (2018) in order to give them a scale of importance from low to high value in the context of the site (unless otherwise stated). Such criteria include size, species diversity, and presence of species or habitats.

The method for this assessment is based on the guidelines published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2018). These guidelines provide a robust framework for ecological assessment.

2.2.2 Habitat Condition Assessment

During the walkover survey undertaken in July 2025, all habitats and linear features present within the site have been subject to a condition assessment in accordance with the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 (Statutory Version) methodology, as set out by Natural England.

The assessment considered:

- **Habitat type and distinctiveness** (based on UKHab classification);
- **Extent** (area or length), determined using QGIS mapping software and GPS field data;
- **Condition**, assessed against the published habitat condition criteria tables accompanying the Biodiversity Metric Technical Supplement and User Guide.

Habitats have been mapped in the field using a combination of aerial imagery, base mapping layers, and real-time GPS tracking. Each habitat parcel and linear feature (e.g. hedgerows and ditches) has been digitised within a GIS environment, enabling the calculation of baseline habitat units and watercourse/hedgerow units as appropriate.

Condition assessments have been undertaken with reference to the relevant habitat condition sheets, with each feature assessed against its required number of 'Pass' criteria to be classified as Poor, Moderate, or Good condition.

These data form the baseline for any future Biodiversity Net Gain calculations and support the identification of potential enhancement opportunities and mitigation measures to be incorporated into the site's ecological design.

2.2.3 Protected Species Survey

The informing walkover survey has also sought to enable the surveying ecologist to search for any evidence of protected species activity or the potential for the site to support protected and/or notable species.

Bats

The buildings have been subject to an updated Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) in accordance with guidance set out in the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition, BCT, 2023).

The assessment involved a thorough internal and external inspection of the buildings to identify any Potential Roost Features (PRFs) and to search for signs of current or historic bat activity. The survey has been undertaken using appropriate equipment to maximise detection, including:

- A one million candlepower torch for detailed crevice inspection;
- Binoculars for inspection of high and inaccessible features;
- Extendable ladders to access lower roof elevations;
- A rigid endoscope, used where appropriate for probing accessible crevices and gaps.

Search for Evidence

The external and internal fabric of the building has been examined for signs of bats, including:

- Live or dead bats;
- Bat droppings;
- Staining or urine marks around potential access points;
- Feeding remains such as insect wings.

Areas of interest included lifted tiles, soffits, eaves, ridge tiles, bargeboards, hanging tiles, and any structural gaps or crevices in brickwork or timber.

In line with BCT guidance, the building has been assessed in relation to:

- The type and number of PRFs;
- The suitability of construction materials (e.g. hanging tiles, gaps beneath lead flashing);
- The aspect, shelter and access to features;
- The building's position in the landscape context (i.e. proximity to foraging and commuting habitats);
- The likelihood of different roost types (e.g. day roosts, transitional roosts, maternity or hibernation sites);
- The potential species likely to use the building based on structure and location.

Following this assessment, the buildings have been assigned a suitability category (Negligible, Low, Moderate or High) in accordance with the BCT Guidelines (2023). This categorisation informs the need for and scope of any follow-up emergence/re-entry surveys and ensures that appropriate mitigation measures are developed in line with current best practice and legislation.

The wider site has been assessed for suitability to support foraging and commuting bats, in accordance with the BCT guidelines (BCT, 2023).

Nesting birds – the site and buildings have been searched for areas of habitat that could be used for constructing a nest or for foraging, as well as any evidence of current or historic nesting.

Reptiles – the site has been searched for areas that could be used for sheltering, hibernating, basking, foraging and breeding (Froglife, 1999).

Amphibians – A review of aerial imagery and Ordnance Surveys maps for ponds within a 500m radius of the site has been undertaken. It is also possible that smaller ponds may exist locally and not be recorded on aerial imagery or map resources.

Badger (*Meles meles*) – the site has been searched for areas that might be used for foraging and sett building. Incidental foraging signs, tree scratching, paths, dung pits, latrines and setts have been recorded if found (Harris *et al.*, 1989). The site itself and land immediately adjacent (30m radius where accessible) to the site and visible from the site boundaries have been included within the survey.

Western European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) – the site has been searched for evidence of this species including droppings, foraging signs and footprints. The habitats on site have also been assessed for their suitability to support this species.

Notable mammals – the site has been searched for evidence and suitable habitat for BAP/Priority Species mammals (Cresswell *et al.*, 2012).

Invertebrates – the site has been searched for areas of habitat that may be used for shelter, basking and egg laying. An assessment of food plants present and species suitable for egg-laying has been undertaken.

Invasive species – the site has been searched for evidence of species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Other protected and notable species have been scoped out of this assessment due to an absence of records and lack of suitable habitat within the surrounding area.

The potential of the site to support protected or notable species has been assessed through field observations and desk study information. The likely presence of a species is ranked as follows:

Negligible – while presence cannot be absolutely discounted, the site supports very limited or poor-quality habitat for a species or species group.

Low – habitats within the site are of poor to moderate quality for a given species or species group, but presence cannot be discounted based on the national distribution, opportunities within the surrounding landscape and the results of the desk study.

Moderate – habitats within the site are of moderate quality and provide opportunities for a given species or species group. The desk study has returned historic records and suitability is identified within the surrounding landscape.

High – habitats within the site are of high quality for a given species or species group. The desk study returns historic records of local occurrence.

2.3 Survey limitation

The desk study is an important tool for identifying ecological constraints and opportunities but is subject to the following limitations:

Data Availability and Coverage

- Biological records are provided voluntarily and may not reflect all species present in the local area.
- Absence of records does not confirm absence of a species or habitat; it may simply indicate a lack of survey effort in that location.

Spatial Accuracy

- Some records may have imprecise or outdated grid references (e.g., 1 km or 10 km square), limiting their usefulness for site-specific assessments.
- Records are typically filtered to within 2 km of the site, which may exclude some wider ecological connections or mobile species.

Temporal Relevance

- Records may be up to 10–15 years old or more. While still valuable, these do not always reflect current species distributions, particularly for ephemeral or rapidly changing populations.

Confidentiality and Redaction

- Certain sensitive species (e.g. badger, barn owl, rare bat species) may be redacted or given coarse location references to prevent disturbance, limiting spatial interpretation.

Habitat Datasets

- GIS-based habitat maps (e.g., Priority Habitat Inventory) are indicative and do not always reflect current ground conditions. In some cases, habitat boundaries are generalised or under-mapped.
- Features like veteran trees, hedgerows, and smaller waterbodies are often omitted from national datasets unless independently mapped.

Field survey limitations:

- Many species of bat in the UK are crevice-dwelling, therefore signs of bat occupation may be obscured from view. As such a precautionary view has been adopted. The external inspection of the buildings have been undertaken from ground level, however, a camera mounted on a light weight drone was used to aid inspection of the buildings and trees at height.
- As is the nature of ecological surveys, the observations made during this assessment represent a snapshot in time and may not reflect seasonal changes in species presence, behaviour, or habitat condition. Mobile and transient species (e.g. badgers, birds, bats) may use the site intermittently and were not necessarily present or detectable at the time of survey.

Despite these limitations, the findings provide a robust baseline suitable for preliminary assessment and determining the need for further survey work.

3. Results

3.1 Desk Study

A data search has been undertaken through the Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC) and publicly available mapping resources (e.g. MAGIC Map), to identify designated sites and records of protected or notable species within the vicinity of the site.

There are no statutory designated nature conservation sites within the site boundary or the 2km search radius. The nearest statutory designation is Cliffe Hill Quarry SSSI, located approximately 3.4km to the north-east of the site, designated for its geological interest. However, a number of non-statutory designations are present within a 1km radius of the site, as detailed in Table 1 below. These primarily relate to woodland and aquatic habitats that contribute to the ecological connectivity and habitat diversity in the wider landscape.

Table 1: designated sites within 1km of the site:

Site Name	Status	Reason for designation	Distance from site
Maynard Park Nature Reserve	Local Wildlife Site	Deciduous woodland habitat	50m to the east of site
Bagworth, Clay Quarry Wood and Pond	Local Wildlife Site	Woodland pond, used for fishing.	102m to the north west of site
Bagworth Wood small stream and ponds	Potential Local Wildlife Site	Deciduous woodland	415m to east of site
Ellistown, the Battram Turn	Potential Local Wildlife Site	Woodland	468m to the west of site
Battram, former mineral line	Potential Local Wildlife Site	Historic mineral extraction route	591m to the west of site

These non-statutory sites enhance ecological connectivity across the landscape, functioning as stepping stones, or corridors for local wildlife. Several supporting features of value to bats, amphibians, birds, and botanical interest, and should be considered in relation to potential indirect impacts and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) design opportunities.

Protected species

A desk study has been undertaken using data obtained from the Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC) and online resources such as MAGIC Map and NatureSpace Partnership. The aim has been to identify any records of protected or notable species within a 1km radius of the site, and to assess whether any strategic licensing schemes may apply.

Bats:

Multiple records of bat species have been returned, confirming the presence of several species known to roost sites and forage habitat in the wider landscape. Species recorded include:

- *Common pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pipistrellus)*
- *Soprano pipistrelle (Pipistrellus pygmaeus)*
- *Brown long-eared bat (Plecotus auritus)*
- *Noctule (Nyctalus noctule)*
- *Lesser noctule (Nyctalus leisleri)*
- *Serotine (Eptesicus serotinus)*

A search of the **MAGIC** interactive map database identified no historic **European Protected Species Licence (EPSL)** relating to bats granted within 2 km of the site.

Reptiles

No records of reptiles have been returned within the search area, though this is likely due to under-recording. The surrounding landscape, which includes pond margins, woodland edges and rough grassland, could support occasional use by grass snake or other widespread reptiles.

Notable birds:

The LRERC data search returned a number of records for notable bird species within the 1km radius of the site. These records are primarily associated with nearby woodland, farmland, and hedgerow networks.

Although specific species names have not been listed in the original PEA, species typically recorded in similar rural Leicestershire contexts include song thrush, starling, house sparrow, bullfinch, and dunnock—all of which are Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) and/or listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Within the site, nesting and foraging opportunities for birds are mainly associated with hedgerows, buildings and mature trees along site boundaries, as well as areas of bramble scrub. These features are suitable for common and generalist nesting species, and may also provide seasonal foraging opportunities (e.g., berries and invertebrate prey).

The previous field survey did not record evidence of active or historic bird nests within the buildings or boundary vegetation. However, due to the potential for nesting activity, particularly during the spring and summer months, any site clearance or vegetation removal should be timed to avoid the main bird nesting season (March–August inclusive), or be preceded by a nesting bird check by a suitably qualified ecologist.

Amphibians:

Records for common frog (*Rana temporaria*) and smooth newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*) have been returned locally.

While no desk study records for great crested newt (GCN) (*Triturus cristatus*) have been identified directly within the 1km radius, a review of MAGIC Map confirms that two EPS licences for GCN have been granted within a 2km radius of the site. These are all located outside of a 500m radius to the site. These licences relate to disturbance of both terrestrial and aquatic habitat, indicating confirmed local GCN presence.

Three man-made waterbodies, associated with adjacent fishing lakes, are located within 250m of the site.

Notable Plants

The desk study undertaken via Leicestershire and Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC) did not identify any rare, threatened, or legally protected plant species within a 1km radius of the site.

The previous site survey confirmed that the grassland habitat comprised species-poor, semi-improved grassland, functioning primarily as horse-grazed pasture. The botanical diversity of this grassland was assessed as low, consistent with past seeding and herbicide spot-spraying.

Tall ruderal margins around field edges featured species such as creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), and hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*). These are common in disturbed sites and do not indicate botanical importance.

The hedgerows, particularly H2, have been found to be species-rich, comprising a diverse range of native woody plants. Despite this diversity, none of the hedgerows qualified as “important” under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997, based on their age and historic mapping.

Overall, while structural diversity has been present in boundary features, no notable or conservation-priority plant species have been recorded during the site walkover in 2022. Botanical interest is considered low, limited to common native species.

3.2 UK Habitats Survey and Protected Species Survey

The site has been visited by suitably experienced surveyor Casey Griffin BSc (Hons) MCIEEM on 11th July 2025.

An annotated UK Habs map is provided in appendix 2 of this report. This illustrates the location of all habitat types recorded at the site together with target notes depicting features of ecological interest.

3.2.1 Weather Conditions

The weather conditions recorded during the site visit are as follows:

Table 2: Weather conditions at the time of the survey – 11th July 2025

Parameter	Recorded Figure
Temperature	26°C
Cloud cover	0%
Precipitation	None
Wind speed (Beaufort scale)	1 / 2

3.2.2 Habitats

g4 modified grassland

An updated habitat survey has been undertaken using the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) v2.0, replacing the previous Phase 1 methodology applied in 2022. The site has been walked in full and habitat mapping has been supported by ten 1m² quadrats, sampled across representative areas of the grassland sward.

The majority of the site is best classified as Modified Grassland (g4) under UKHab v2.0. The grassland had previously been subject to horse grazing, resulting in a heavily disturbed and low-diversity sward. Since the removal of grazing pressures, the site has been managed with a regular hay cut, and this change has begun to improve sward structure and botanical interest.

Across the ten 1m² quadrats, species richness remained low, with fewer than eight species per quadrat recorded on average.

More than 30% of the sward remains dominated by perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*) and white clover (*Trifolium repens*), consistent with agricultural reseeding and previous grazing use.

However, in areas on sloping ground—notably where the larger land parcel slopes upwards and towards the adjacent residential dwellings—botanical diversity is increasing, with locally occasional species of greater ecological interest recorded, including:

- Salad burnet (*Sanguisorba minor*)
- Bird's-foot trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus*)
- Oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*)
- Common knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*)

These species indicate the beginnings of a more species-rich, neutral to calcareous grassland community, particularly on sloping areas where past quarrying or brickworks activity is believed to have created heterogeneous soil conditions with varying nutrient levels.

Other grasses recorded include false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), cocksfoot (*Dactylis glomerata*), and timothy (*Phleum pratense*) all of which are typical of agricultural grassland mixes. Their dominance reinforces the site's classification as g4 Modified Grassland under UKHab v2.01, rather than as unimproved or semi-improved neutral grassland types. These species indicate a history of agricultural improvement, likely through reseeded and fertilisation.

The overall composition is indicative of modified grassland, representing a low distinctiveness habitat under the Biodiversity Metric. The dominance of competitive grasses and low herbaceous cover suggests suboptimal condition, as further indicated within Table 3 below.

Table 3: Habitat Condition Assessment – g4 grassland

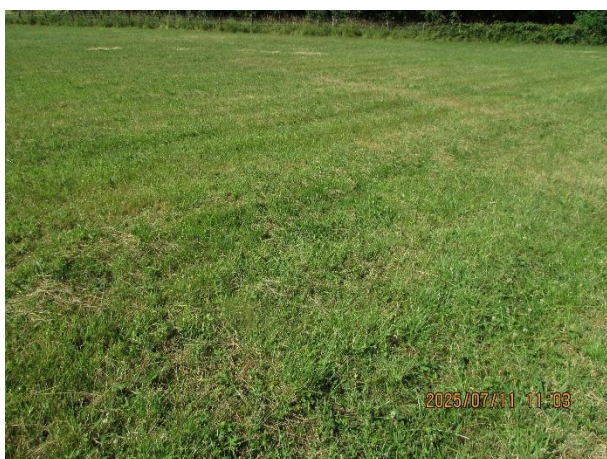
Number	Criteria	Result
1 essential criteria	There must be 6-8 species per m ² . NB - this criterion is essential for achieving moderate condition.	Fail – 4/5 species recorded on average within each quadrat sample
2	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7cm and at least 20% more than 7cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.	Fail – cut for hay
3	Some scattered scrub (including bramble) may be present, but scrub accounts for less than 20% of total grassland area. Note - patches of shrubs with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Fail – blackthorn and bramble encroachment from boundary hedgerows
4	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 – damaged to sward including exposed bare earth as a result of machinery used in hay cut
5	Cover of bare ground is between 1 – 10%, including localised areas, e.g. rabbit warrens	Fail – damage and areas near to buildings frequently disturbed
6	Cover of bracken is less than 20%	Pass
5	There is an absence of invasive non-native species (as listed in Schedule 9 of WCA, 1981).	Pass
Number of criteria passed		Condition score = 1 – failing essential criteria A results in poor condition



g4 grassland



g4 grassland



grass dominated sward



quadrat

The modified grassland (UKHab code: g4) present on site is of low ecological distinctiveness, characterised by a species-poor sward dominated by coarse, fast-growing grasses. This competitive growth regime suppresses the establishment and diversity of forbs, resulting in a homogenous and structurally limited habitat. In accordance with the Biodiversity Metric v4.0 condition assessment, the grassland is considered to be of low ecological value and is assessed as being in 'Poor' condition.

h2a: native hedgerow

Three hedgerows are present on site, originally recorded and assessed in 2022, and confirmed as **unchanged** in structure and extent during the 2025 update. Under UKHab v2.0, all three features are mapped and classified as linear habitats with the relevant codes and attributes applied.

Table 4: Hedgerows

Hedgerow	UKHab Code	Description
H1	<i>h2a – native hedgerow</i>	Species-poor, managed hedgerow – northern edge forms part of the adjacent woodland habitat
H2	<i>h2a5 – species rich – native hedgerow</i>	Species-rich hedgerow with good woody diversity – planted hedgerow – tree guards still in place.

H3	<i>h2a - Line of trees/hedgerow with trees</i>	Mature roadside hedgerow with semi-mature standards
-----------	--	---

H1: A species-poor, managed hedgerow, primarily hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) with some blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and elder (*Sambucus nigra*). It is regularly flailed, shows signs of previous reduction. The northern edge of this linear feature is associated with the adjacent woodland habitat and it functions as woodland edge habitat across the majority of its length. This hedgerow does not qualify as “important” under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. Average height: ~2.5m; width: ~1.5m.



H1

H2: A species-rich planted hedgerow along a track in the northern part of the site, likely established alongside woodland creation. Contains hawthorn, oak (*Quercus robur*), dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*), field maple (*Acer campestre*), dog rose (*Rosa canina*), and occasional ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and willow (*Salix* spp.). Though relatively young, it meets the species-rich threshold for hedgerows under UKHab v2.0.



H2

H3: A mature roadside hedgerow with intermittent semi-mature trees, including sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and silver birch (*Betula pendula*). Structurally intact with good height and width (~2.5m x 1.5m) but contains frequent gaps, and species composition is limited.

The Hedgerow Condition Assessment (Biodiversity Metric v4.0), included within Table 5 below, determines the baseline condition of these features:

Table 5: Hedgerow Condition Assessment

Number	Criteria	H1	H2	H3
A1	Height >1.5m average along length	Pass	Pass	Pass
A2	Width >1.5m average along length	Pass	Pass	Pass
B1	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5m for >90% of length	Pass	Pass	Pass
B2	Gaps make up <10% of the total length, no gaps >5m	Pass	Pass	Pass
C1	>1m width of undisturbed ground with perennial vegetation for 90% of length	Fail – grazed	Fail – track	Fail – road and managed verge
C2	Plant species indicative of enrichment of soils dominate <20% of the area of undisturbed ground	Fail – nettles, cleavers and creeping thistle	Fail – nettles, cleavers and creeping thistle	Fail – nettles cleavers and creeping thistle
D1	>90% of hedgerow and undisturbed ground free from invasive, non-native species	Pass	Pass	Pass
D2	>90% of hedgerow and undisturbed ground free from damage caused by human activities	Fail – flailed	Fail – flailed	Fail – managed to road side
E1	There is more than one age class of tree present	Fail – ash in failing health	n/a	Fail
E2	At least 95% of trees in healthy condition	Fail – ash in failing health	n/a	Pass
Number of criteria passed		Condition score = 1 – failing 5 or more results in poor condition	Condition score = 2 – failing 3 but failed 2 in same criteria results in moderate condition	Condition score = 2 – failing 4 but fail both criteria results in moderate condition

All three hedgerows are considered **Priority Habitats** under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006), and are therefore of **local ecological value**. While none qualify as “important” under the Hedgerow Regulations, they contribute to **landscape connectivity, nesting habitat**, and foraging for small mammals, birds, and invertebrates.

h3d: Bramble scrub

A small stretch of linear bramble scrub is present along the western fence line of the site. This habitat falls under the UKHab v2.0 classification h3d – Bramble scrub, defined as scrub dominated by *Rubus fruticosus* agg. or similar *Rubus* species.

The scrub is:

- Scattered and linear in form, associated with the site boundary
- Dominated by bramble (*Rubus* sp.) with low species diversity
- Of limited extent, but forms part of the wider habitat mosaic on site

While bramble scrub is common and easily recreated, it offers ecological functionality by providing:

- Sheltering and nesting opportunities for birds and small mammals
- Cover and foraging resources for amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates

Condition Assessment (BNG Metric):

- Condition: *Poor*
- Justification: Single-species dominance, limited structural diversity, and low overall species richness. However, its functional value is enhanced when considered as part of the broader habitat network on site, particularly near hedgerows and woodland edge.

While not of significance beyond the site, the bramble scrub contributes to local-scale ecological value, particularly as a transitional zone and corridor for wildlife movement and shelter.

u1b5 buildings, u1b developed land sealed surfaces and u1c artificial, unvegetated unsealed surface

Buildings, in relation to their potential for roosting bats and nesting birds, are further discussed in more detail in section 3.2.3 Buildings. The southern portion of the site comprises the existing agricultural yard and its associated buildings. This is accessed via a surfaced road leading from Station Road. These areas have been classified using the UKHab Classification v2.0 as follows:

- u1b5 – Buildings
- u1b – Developed land, sealed surface
- u1c – Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface

u1b5 – buildings

Several structures are present within the southern portion of the site, originally associated with equestrian and agricultural use. These include stables, machinery stores, and workshops. Their ecological value is discussed in greater detail in Section 3.2.3 – Buildings, with specific reference to its potential to support roosting bats and nesting birds. Aside from these features, the built fabric is considered to offer negligible ecological value in its current condition.

u1b – developed land sealed surface

The access drive leading into the yard from Station Road is predominantly surfaced with hardstanding, including tarmac and paving. These areas provide no meaningful habitat for wildlife and are of low ecological distinctiveness, as defined under the Biodiversity Metric v4.0.

u1c – artificial unvegetated and unsealed surface

Yard areas exist around and between buildings, comprising compacted bare ground, aggregates, and informal trackways.

Classification:

- UKHab v2.0 code: u1c – Artificial unvegetated unsealed surface
- Description: Includes gravel, bare compacted soil, and some vehicle-poached ground previously associated with horse movement and equipment storage.

Ecological Characteristics:

- These areas support very sparse vegetation, including occasional ruderal species such as common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), broad-leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), and ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*).
- These surfaces offer negligible botanical value and only minor functional value for terrestrial invertebrates or as commuting zones for mobile species.

Condition: *Not applicable* (artificial surface – not condition assessed under BNG)

3.2.3 Preliminary Roost Assessment

The Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of all buildings on site was originally conducted in July 2022 and has been reviewed and confirmed as unchanged during the 2025 update. The buildings remain in active agricultural use, and no changes in structure, condition, or potential for roosting bats have occurred since the original assessment.

Summary of Buildings Assessed:

- B1: A single-storey open-sided workshop with timber framing and a corrugated metal roof. The block walls are intact and well-sealed. No crevices, gaps, or features suitable for roosting bats were identified.
- B2: A large barn with shallow depth interlocking concrete panel walls and a shallow pitched roof clad in corrugated sheeting. An endoscopic inspection of the roof-sheet overlaps in 2022 revealed foam insulation and shallow crevice unsuitable for roosting. The internal roof structure is exposed and offers no suitable roosting crevices.
- B3: A machinery and stable block comprising a mixture of blockwork and metal sheeting. The interior is well-lit, with a shallow timber frame offering no enclosed voids or access features for bats.
- B4: A small, open-fronted stable building supported by timber poles and corrugated metal sheeting. The structure is highly exposed and lacks enclosed spaces or suitable microhabitats for bats.



Drone view of buildings



Drone view of yard



B3



B1

Assessment Conclusion:

All buildings on site have been assessed in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Good Practice Guidelines (3rd ed., 2016). Each structure is considered to have **negligible** suitability for roosting bats, based on the absence of potential roost features (PRFs), sealed construction, and ongoing disturbance associated with agricultural activity.

No evidence of bats (e.g., droppings, staining, feeding remains) has been observed in or around any structure during either the 2022 survey or the 2025 review. The buildings do not require further bat survey effort unless they are substantially altered or demolition is delayed beyond the 2026 bat survey season, in which case an updated PRA would be recommended.

Bats in Trees

A ground-level assessment has been undertaken of the standard trees located within the hedgerows across the site. These trees have been assessed for features commonly associated with roosting bats, including:

- **Rot holes**
- **Cracks or fissures**
- **Loose bark**
- **Canopy dieback**
- **Deadwood features**

No such Potential Roost Features (PRFs) have been observed during the survey. The trees present have been noted to support a sound structure and intact bark, showing no clear signs of decay or damage that would provide suitable access points for roosting bats.

When assessed in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Good Practice Guidelines (3rd Edition, 2016), all trees on site are considered to have negligible suitability for roosting bats. As such, no further survey effort is required in relation to tree roost assessment, provided that tree condition remains unchanged prior to any works.

Should any trees deteriorate or be damaged prior to felling or pruning, a repeat assessment is recommended to confirm the continued absence of roosting potential.

3.2.4 Other Protected Species

Foraging and Dispersing Bats

The data search by LRERC reveals the surrounding habitat to offer valuable foraging opportunities for a range of bat species present locally. The site as well as the surrounding landscape is likely to sustain densities of invertebrates and therefore bats would be provided with good foraging opportunities within a local context. Furthermore, nearby established roosts are likely to be heavily dependent on foraging opportunities within their Core Sustainance Zones (CSZs) (BCT; Core Sustainance Zones: Determining zone size; 2016).

Nesting birds

No evidence of active or historic nesting by birds has been recorded during the 2025 walkover survey. However, the site offers suitable habitat features for nesting birds, including vegetation and structures commonly used by a variety of common and generalist species.

Suitable nesting opportunities include:

- Hedgerows (particularly H2 and H3), which provide sufficient structure and species diversity to support nesting activity
- Bramble scrub along the western boundary, offering low-level cover and shelter
- Agricultural buildings, particularly the open-fronted stables and sheds, which provide structural features such as internal beams and ledges that are suitable for species such as swallow (*Hirundo rustica*)

Although no direct evidence of nesting has been recorded, the range and quality of nesting habitat features contribute to the site's ecological value to nesting birds being assessed as **moderate** at a local scale.

Amphibians

Three waterbodies lie within 250 m of the site boundary, all located within adjacent plantation woodland and associated with nearby fishing lakes. These were subject to Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment during the 2022 PEA:

- **Pond 1:** Assessed as offering *below average* suitability for great crested newt (GCN), due to regular drying and low aquatic vegetation diversity.
- **Pond 2:** Assessed as having *good* suitability for breeding GCN, with permanent water, good terrestrial connectivity and absence of fish.
- **Pond 3:** Assessed as having *poor* suitability as a result of fish presence and intensive angling activity.

Terrestrial habitats within the site, primarily modified grassland and boundary hedgerows, offer limited but present sheltering and dispersal opportunities for amphibians. These habitats could support widespread species such as common frog, common toad and smooth newt.

No direct records of GCN were returned during the desk study; however, two European Protected Species (EPS) licences for GCN have been issued within 2 km of the site (MAGIC). Both are located beyond 500 m from the site and are separated by significant dispersal barriers.

Taking account of the presence of a pond of good suitability (Pond 2) within 250 m, alongside the availability of limited terrestrial habitat, the site is assessed as having **moderate value for amphibians**. This reflects the potential for occasional dispersal onto the site while recognising the reduced likelihood of GCN presence due to distance, existing barriers and lack of records.

Reptiles

Although the data search does not identify reptile records locally, the site contains habitat features with potential to support widespread reptile species, particularly grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*). These features include:

- Grassland fringes and bramble scrub that provide cover and basking opportunities
- Edge habitat and open sunny areas associated with sloped ground
- Connectivity to off-site habitats including plantation woodland and nearby waterbodies

While the site is unlikely to support a resident population, it may be used opportunistically for foraging or commuting by reptiles in the wider landscape. Grass snake in particular is known to exploit such sites when dispersing between wetland or pond habitats.

The site is assessed to have **low to moderate** value to reptiles at a local scale, primarily due to its connectivity, limited extent of suitable habitat, and current disturbance levels.

Badger

No evidence of badger activity (e.g. setts, foraging signs, latrines or paths) has been recorded on site during the 2025 survey, consistent with previous findings. However, the wider landscape includes:

- Woodland blocks and plantation habitats adjacent to the site
- Unmanaged boundary zones and pasture areas which offer potential for foraging
- Low levels of disturbance beyond the active yard area

While no setts are present within the red line boundary or adjacent to it, it is considered likely that badgers may be present within this landscape and as such may pass through the site occasionally as part of wider territorial movements.

The site is considered to offer **low to moderate** value to badgers at a local scale, functioning primarily as a foraging or dispersal route, rather than as a core resource.

Invertebrates

The site supports a range of common and widespread plant species typical of modified grassland, ruderal edges, and hedgerows. These habitats provide a general resource for common invertebrate species, including pollinators and detritivores.

It is important to note that no notable or rare invertebrate records have been returned in the desk study and no specialist host plants or structurally diverse habitat mosaics (e.g. bare ground, wet flushes, flower-rich swards) have been recorded during survey. Furthermore, no evidence of deadwood or dung-associated microhabitats has been observed.

The botanical diversity is increasing, particularly on sloping land, and this may enhance the site's value to invertebrates over time. However, at present, the site does not support the conditions required for an important assemblage.

The site is assessed to have **low** value to invertebrates at present.

Notable mammals

The desk study did not return specific records for hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) or brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*) within 2 km of the site. However, both species are widespread across the county and are listed as Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 due to national population declines.

Hedgehog

The site offers limited but potential suitability for hedgehog, particularly in association with:

- The boundary hedgerows, which provide shelter, cover, and potential movement corridors;
- Limited foraging potential in the improved grassland.

No signs of hedgehog activity (e.g. droppings, tracks, nests) have been recorded during the walkover survey. However, due to their nocturnal and mobile nature, presence cannot be ruled out.

Brown Hare

The grassland does not offer the open, arable or lightly grazed pasture typically favoured by brown hare. The site is also bounded by housing and fencing, with limited landscape connectivity to the north and east but further suitable habitat is present to the west. As such, it is considered to be of **low** value for this species.

While no further survey work is required, precautionary working practices during vegetation clearance and groundworks are recommended to safeguard any unexpected individuals of widespread notable species.

Invasive Species

No species as listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) have been recorded during this site survey.

4. Biodiversity Statement

Schedule 7A of the *Town and Country Planning Act 1990* (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) requires all development proposals in England—unless explicitly exempt—to deliver a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG). This requirement applies to all habitats within the redline boundary of a proposed development site, regardless of whether those habitats are directly impacted.

Site Context and Habitat Value

In line with the BNG Good Practice Principles and the mitigation hierarchy, the avoidance of high-value habitats should be prioritised during site selection and design. In this case, the application site does not support any irreplaceable or high distinctiveness habitats (e.g. ancient woodland, priority grassland, or veteran trees), and it is unlikely that habitats of high ecological value would be impacted as a result of the proposed development.

The site consists of low distinctiveness grassland (UKHab g4), native hedgerows (h2a), and urban habitats, none of which is classified as irreplaceable or designated. These habitats, while ecologically functional, are not of notable conservation concern in isolation and are suitable for enhancement or replacement within the development scheme.

Applicability of the BNG Condition

Planning permission is being sought for the construction of 46 residential units with associated infrastructure access and car parking.

Given the scale, nature, and land take of the proposed development, this application is subject to the Biodiversity Net Gain Condition under the Environment Act 2021.

Under the statutory framework, this condition:

- Requires the submission and formal approval of a Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) following the grant of planning permission;
- Ensures that the development delivers a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity units, as calculated using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric;
- Prohibits commencement of development until the Biodiversity Gain Plan is approved by the Local Planning Authority;
- Requires that biodiversity gains are secured for a minimum of 30 years, either on-site or through registered off-site units or statutory biodiversity credits.

A statutory metric displaying only baseline value of habitats assessed during the walkover surveys of the site is provided within the Biodiversity Net Gain Feasibility Study (GE0768 bfs). This metric demonstrates a baseline habitat unit value of 4.08 habitat units, 1.08 hedgerow units.

5. Assessment of Potential Ecological Impacts

Summary of the Proposed Development

The proposed development comprises the construction of 46 residential dwellings on land off Station Road, Bagworth, Leicestershire. The scheme includes:

- A mix of market and affordable housing
- Internal access roads, footpaths, and associated parking
- A SuDS attenuation basin located in the western part of the site
- Public open space and areas of green infrastructure, including habitat enhancement and tree planting
- The removal of existing buildings and infrastructure associated with previous agricultural/equestrian use

The layout has been informed by earlier feasibility assessments and reflects constraints raised by statutory consultees including the Local Highway Authority. A block plan (drawing ref. 24/19 05d) has been provided to illustrate the development footprint and green infrastructure network

Designations:

Statutory Designated Sites

- There are no statutory designated sites (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Nature Reserves) within the site boundary or the 2km search radius.
- The nearest statutory site is Cliffe Hill Quarry SSSI, located approximately 3.4km to the north-east of the site. This site is designated for its geological interest and has no ecological connectivity with the application site.
- Given the distance, absence of hydrological connection, and non-ecological designation, the proposed development is considered to pose no risk of direct or indirect impacts to statutory designated sites.

Non-Statutory Designated Sites

Five non-statutory designated sites lie within 1km of the site, as identified in the LRERC data search.

The development is not hydrologically linked to any of the nearby LWSs, and no watercourses traverse the site. No direct encroachment on any designated site will occur.

Dust, noise, and light spill during construction could have temporary indirect effects, particularly on Maynard Park LWS, located ~50m east. These risks are considered to be minor and can be mitigated through standard construction good practice measures (e.g. buffer zones, shielding, pollution controls).

Post-development impacts will be negligible, provided green infrastructure buffers and appropriate lighting design (e.g. bat-sensitive lighting) are implemented to protect site boundaries.

Conclusion

The proposed development is not expected to result in significant direct or indirect effects on any statutory or non-statutory designated sites. Minor risks to adjacent LWSs can be effectively mitigated through standard construction environmental management practices and sensitive site design. Such details should be included within a supporting CEMP.

Habitats:

Modified Grassland (UKHab: g4)

The majority of the site comprises g4 – Modified Grassland. This habitat is:

- Low in botanical diversity, dominated by competitive grasses with limited herbaceous content;
- Subject to long-term equine grazing, with poaching and nutrient enrichment evident;
- Assessed to be in poor condition and of low distinctiveness under the Biodiversity Metric v4.0.

Impact:

The grassland will be largely lost to facilitate development. However, given its low ecological value, this is considered a minor ecological impact, and no specific mitigation is required beyond standard BNG offsetting and habitat replacement.

Conclusion

The proposed scheme is considered to result in minor negative impacts on habitats of low to moderate ecological value, all of which can be appropriately mitigated or compensated through the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) strategy, site layout, and ecological enhancement measures.

Native Hedgerows (UKHab: h2a)

The site supports three hedgerows, comprising both species-poor and species-rich native linear features. These form historic and planted field boundaries and are structurally intact, offering moderate ecological value. In combination with the surrounding plantation woodland, established under the National Forest scheme, these features provide a connected habitat network of importance at the local scale.

Ecological Function and Connectivity

These hedgerows function as:

- Wildlife corridors, linking the site to woodland habitat to the north, west, and south
- Nesting and foraging habitat for birds and small mammals
- Potential commuting routes for amphibians, reptiles, and bats
- Foraging habitat for pollinators and other invertebrates
- Potential sheltering cover for species such as hedgehog and grass snake

Furthermore, the adjacent plantation woodland—while not within the red line boundary—forms a contiguous buffer to the site and supports a diverse structure including deciduous trees, understorey shrubs, and ponds. This area significantly enhances the ecological context of the site, increasing its value to mobile species by providing accessible foraging and dispersal habitat.

Potential Impacts

Direct impacts to hedgerows may include:

- Removal or severance for access or infrastructure (e.g. drainage)
- Disturbance during construction, such as soil compaction or root damage
- Loss of structural diversity through unmanaged cutting

While the adjacent woodland will not be directly impacted, there is potential for indirect effects, including:

- Light spill from new residential units and street lighting reducing the functional value of edge habitats used by bats and birds
- Dust and noise during construction potentially affecting woodland-edge nesting or roosting species

- Hydrological changes or pollution risk from surface runoff impacting woodland ground flora or ponds, especially if drainage is not carefully managed

Avoidance and Design-Led Mitigation

To maintain habitat function and reduce impacts:

- Retain and buffer all boundary hedgerows, especially those adjoining woodland edges. Currently, the proposed layout (24/19 04d) indicates that proposed vegetated garden space will directly abut these linear features. Any proposed layout design changes should seek to secure a minimum 5m buffer to retained hedgerows, this buffer should be increased to 10m where possible to further mitigate the anticipated indirect impacts to the adjacent woodland habitat.
- Use low-spill, wildlife-friendly lighting designs, especially near woodland and hedgerows
- Align access and drainage infrastructure to use existing field gaps and avoid new severance

Mitigation and Compensation Measures

Where unavoidable loss occurs:

- The proposals will require the partial removal of H1 to facilitate access. As such the proposed landscaping plan should seek to ensure compensatory native hedgerow planting, targeting key linkages between retained features and adjacent woodland.
- Proposed hedgerow planting should seek to select species appropriate to the local ecological network, including hawthorn, blackthorn, dogwood, field maple, and hazel.
- Reinforce habitat corridors by planting dense, structurally diverse boundary vegetation. Such planting should further seek to support the suggested buffers to existing habitat.
- Install hedgehog highways and other wildlife permeability features in boundary treatments.

Construction Phase Protection – CEMP

A Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) must be secured and implemented to:

- Include root protection zones and tree protection fencing (BS 5837:2012).
- Control lighting, dust, and noise near retained hedgerows and adjacent woodland.
- Avoid vegetation clearance during the bird nesting season (March–August).
- Set protocols for toolbox talks, ecological watching briefs, and pollution prevention measures.

The CEMP should be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval prior to commencement, to ensure that both hedgerows and adjacent woodland edge habitat are adequately protected throughout the construction phase.

Built Habitats (UKHab: u1b5, u1b) and unvegetated unsealed artificial surface (UKHab: u1c)

The existing buildings and artificial surface will be lost during site preparation and redevelopment.

- These urban habitats are of low ecological value, supporting limited floral or faunal interest.

Impact:

Loss of these features is not ecologically significant. Opportunities exist to deliver biodiversity gain through the integration of wildlife-friendly landscaping, street trees, and garden enhancements within the new development.

Protected species:

Based on the results of the updated 2025 walkover survey, desk study, and previous ecological assessments, the application site has confirmed or potential suitability for a range of protected and notable species. The following section outlines potential impacts, along with suggested avoidance, mitigation, and enhancement measures.

Bats

No roosting features were identified in on-site buildings or trees, and the site is assessed as having negligible roost suitability. However, boundary hedgerows and adjacent woodland are likely used for commuting and foraging by local bat species. The introduction of external lighting and removal of hedgerow sections could reduce habitat quality or disrupt movement corridors.

Given the presence of suitable habitat within the immediate landscape, a bat friendly lighting scheme should be considered. Such measures should include:

- careful placement of luminaires so that they illuminate only the required areas,
- minimise light spill on suitable foraging habitat nearby;
- installation of directional lighting, specialist bollard or low-level downward directional luminaires;
- use of appropriate luminaires, with no UV component, warmer colours (i.e. more yellow/orange, ideally <2700Kelvin and a peak wavelength higher than 550nm;
- LED luminaires with an upward light ratio of 0% and with good optical control;
- Use of security lighting with motion sensors and short (1minute) timers; and/or use of dimming or part night lighting.

Where any tree removal or heavy pruning is proposed, a pre-commencement check by a suitably qualified ecologist should be undertaken to confirm that roost suitability has not changed (e.g. due to storm damage or disease opening new cavities).

Enhancement Opportunities

- Install integrated bat roost units (e.g. Ibstock or Habibat) into suitable new dwellings near green corridors.
- Mount woodcrete bat boxes on retained boundary trees in dark, sheltered locations.
- Enhance foraging habitat through native shrub and tree planting, focusing on hedgerow margins and open space planting to increase nocturnal insect biomass.
- Maintain dark corridors through the site by designing a low-light landscape strategy.

Great Crested Newt (GCN) and Herpetofauna

Opportunities for amphibians and reptiles are present within the surrounding landscape, and given the site's proximity to a network of waterbodies associated with the nearby fishing ponds, there remains a residual risk of herpetofauna dispersing onto the site.

The proposed development footprint is largely confined to the central and eastern parts of the site, with an approximately 40m buffer of land along the western boundary set aside for Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) delivery. This western portion will incorporate a SuDS attenuation feature, designed and landscaped to maximise biodiversity value through wetland planting and terrestrial habitat enhancements.

By locating the majority of construction activity and habitat loss away from the nearby pond network, the scheme incorporates embedded mitigation to minimise both direct and indirect impacts on herpetofauna. In addition, all boundary features (hedgerows and woodland edges) will be retained and buffered wherever possible, meaning that habitat loss is restricted primarily to areas of g4 modified grassland and artificial surfaces already subject to frequent human disturbance.

Although the site contains some moderate suitability habitat for species such as grass snake, smooth newt, and common frog, the risk of direct impacts to amphibians and reptiles is considered low, due to:

- The retention and buffering of boundary features
- The absence of optimal aquatic or breeding habitat within the red line
- The desk study returning no records of GCN within a 1km or 2km radius
- The lack of any known local GCN populations

Nonetheless, construction activities, particularly vegetation clearance and ground preparation, retain the potential to harm individual reptiles or amphibians if undertaken without appropriate precautions.

To ensure a proportionate and appropriate approach to addressing the residual impacts, we recommend preparing and implementing a Risk Avoidance Method Statement (RAMS). This should outline phased vegetation clearance, working methods, and ecological supervision where appropriate, to ensure all reasonable measures are taken to avoid harm.

These Risk Avoidance Measures such include:

Pre-clearance hand searching and supervised vegetation removal

Prior to any formal site clearance works, all areas of bramble scrub and other potential refugia will be hand-searched and dismantled under the supervision of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW). Any herpetofauna or hedgehogs found sheltering will be carefully translocated by the ECoW to suitable retained habitat outside the protective fencing. Handling will be kept to a minimum and latex gloves will be avoided; vinyl, nitrile or other non-latex gloves are acceptable.

Ecological induction for contractors

Following the pre-commencement checks and prior to any vegetation clearance or groundworks, all contractors will receive an ecological induction delivered by the ECoW or a suitably trained individual appointed by the ECoW. The induction will cover:

- Key ecological receptors present on or adjacent to the site (e.g. badgers, reptiles, nesting birds, bats, hedgehogs and amphibians).
- Required protection measures and appropriate working methodologies.
- Procedures and contact details should works need to stop due to an ecological constraint or should additional ecological advice be required.

Prevention of fauna entrapment in excavations

Any excavations or trenches greater than 1 m in depth will be backfilled at the end of each working day to prevent animals becoming trapped. Where backfilling is not possible, sloping escape boards will be installed. The ECoW will undertake daily checks to ensure all escape measures remain securely positioned and fit for purpose.

Commencement of works following habitat manipulation

Construction activities may commence only once the destructive search and habitat manipulation have been completed to the satisfaction of the ECoW.

Handling of non-protected species

If any non-protected species are encountered during works, they will be moved by hand by the on-site ecologist to suitable nearby retained vegetation. Handling will be minimised and non-latex gloves used.

Enhancement Opportunities

The proposed BNG area located along the western site boundary will provide significant opportunities for herpetofauna enhancement. This area will incorporate a large SuDS feature engineered and landscaped specifically to maximise biodiversity value. Additional habitat features beneficial to amphibians and reptiles will also be included, such as areas of rough grassland, scrub mosaics and purpose-built artificial hibernacula. Together, these measures will increase the availability of suitable breeding, foraging and refuge opportunities within the site and contribute to wider landscape-scale ecological resilience.

Badger

Badgers are capricious animals that move between setts in response to changes in environmental factors and the activity level on site may fluctuate during the year. Therefore it is important to regularly monitor badger activity on site, both prior to and during the construction phase. As such, a pre-commencement badger check, by a suitably qualified ecologist, should be undertaken prior to development and any recommendations following this check should be followed.

During the works any holes, trenches, and/or ditches should be supplied with an inclined mammal ladder to provide a means of escape. These risk avoidance measures should be detailed within a supporting CEMP.

Enhancement Opportunities

While no badger population is currently using the site, the following measures could support wider ecological connectivity:

- Planting of fruit- or berry-bearing native shrubs (e.g. hawthorn, blackthorn, dog rose) along retained and proposed hedgerows to support occasional foraging.
- Retained green corridors (e.g. hedgerows) could be buffered and managed to allow continued movement of badgers or other terrestrial mammals.
- Mammal gates or drop kerbs could be incorporated at key fence lines or boundaries to prevent severance of potential future movement routes.

Nesting birds

Construction and preparation activities on-site have the potential to disturb nesting birds. This could have a significant adverse effect on local breeding bird populations and would constitute an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Compliance with this legislation will be a key consideration during the operational phase of the works.

As a precaution, works should be scheduled outside of the typical bird nesting season (March–August). If this is not possible, a suitably qualified ecologist must conduct a nest survey no more than 24 hours before clearance works begin.

If an active nest is found within the proposed clearance zone, appropriate avoidance measures must be implemented. These may include establishing a buffer zone marked with barrier tape to prevent disturbance. The nest must then be monitored until all chicks have fledged, and a qualified ecologist has confirmed the nest is no longer active before works can proceed. Such measures should be detailed within the supporting CEMP.

Enhancement Opportunities

Installation of Integrated Nest Boxes

Install a variety of bird boxes across the development, targeting both common and declining species:

- House sparrow terrace boxes on gable ends of new dwellings.
- Swift bricks integrated into new builds (ideally at ≥5 m height on north or east elevations).

Landscaping proposals should seek to use native shrubs and trees that provide nesting structure and winter food, including: Dog rose (*Rosa canina*), guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), and rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*). Proposals should also seek to incorporate grasses and wildflowers that support insect prey species, benefitting invertebrate-feeding birds.

Hedgehog and Brown Hare

Hedgehog and Brown Hare are likely to be present within the wider landscape and as such, it is possible that these species may cross the site whilst naturally dispersing in search of forage or commuting. Should these species be using habitats on site, effects may include death / injury, habitat loss and fragmentation. It is considered unlikely that proposals will have any significant effect on the favourable conservation status of these species. During the works any holes, trenches, and/or ditches be supplied with an inclined mammal ladder to provide a means of escape. Future fencing on the site must ensure use of mammal gates/gravel boards to allow for movement. Such measures should be detailed within the supporting CEMP.

Enhancement Opportunities

The European hedgehog is a UK Priority Species and a Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006, experiencing significant national declines due to habitat fragmentation, road mortality, and loss of nesting and foraging opportunities in suburban areas.

To support this species within the development, the following **enhancement measures** are recommended:

- **Hedgehog Highways**
 - Incorporate **13 cm × 13 cm holes** (minimum) at the base of **fencing panels** between gardens to allow movement through the development.
 - Ensure at least **one hedgehog gap per plot**, ideally aligned with other linear features such as hedgerows, the ditch corridor, or open space.
- **Permeable Boundaries**
 - Encourage use of hedgerows, post-and-rail fencing, or planting buffers instead of close-boarded fencing to improve landscape permeability.
- **Wildlife-Friendly Landscaping**
 - Include hedgehog-friendly planting within gardens and communal greenspaces:
 - Native hedgerow shrubs (e.g. hawthorn, dog rose)
 - Low-intensity managed lawns and undisturbed refugia (leaf litter, log piles)

6. Reference

- Bat Conservation Trust (2023). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines* (4th ed.). London: BCT.
- CIEEM (2018). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Second Edition*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- CIEEM (2017). *Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing, Second Edition*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- DEFRA (2024). *Biodiversity Metric 4.0 – Technical Supplement and Calculation Tool*. Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.
- DEFRA (2024). *MAGIC Map Application*. [Online] Available at: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk>
- Environment Act 2021 (c.30). *An Act to make provision about targets, plans and policies for improving the natural environment*.
- GOV.UK (2024). *Planning Practice Guidance – Natural Environment*. [Online] Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/natural-environment>
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) (2023). *UK Habitats Classification – UKHab v2.0*. [Online] Available at: <https://ukhab.org>
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023). *Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities*.
- Schedule 7A of the *Town and Country Planning Act 1990*, as inserted by Schedule 14 of the *Environment Act 2021*.
- Leicestershire & Rutland Environmental Records Centre (LRERC) (2025). *Ecological Data Search Results for Stoke Golding [Unpublished Dataset]*.
- UK Government (1992). *The Protection of Badgers Act 1992*. London: HMSO.
- UK Government (1981). *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*. London: HMSO.
- UK Government (2006). *Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 – Section 41 Priority Species and Habitats*. London: HMSO.

Appendix 1 – Legislation

Legislation & Planning Policies

A number of UK and European policies and legislation deal with the conservation of biodiversity.

Protected habitats & species

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000) Section 9 protects great crested newt and all UK species of bat and their resting places from disturbance, damage and destruction. The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 additionally lists great crested newt and all UK species of bat as European Protected Species, and additionally prohibits killing or injury of individuals, as well as protecting their resting places from disturbance and destruction.

Common reptiles (grass snake, adder, common lizard and slow worm) are listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended) and are protected from killing and injury.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) provides protection to all species of wild bird and their nests. Under Section 1 it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly take, damage, destroy, or otherwise interfere with nests or eggs, or to obstruct or prevent any wild bird from using its nest.

Under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 it is an offence to disturb, kill, injure or take a badger or to disturb, damage, obstruct access to, allow a dog to access or destroy a sett.

Priority habitats & species

The NERC Act 2006 places a duty on public authorities to conserve biodiversity. Additionally, this Act states that a list of priority species and actions must be drawn up and published, to contain species and habitats of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. These lists of Priority Species and Priority Habitats, which encompass the previous UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) habitats and species, are those identified as being the most threatened and requiring conservation action. Priority habitats and species were chosen based on international importance, rapid decline and high risk. The list contains over 1000 habitats and species in total.

Invasive species

Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) contains introduced species which have been identified as having a severe economic and ecological impact through their introduction. It is an offence to release or allow to escape into the wild any species which is listed under Part I or Part II of Schedule 9, or any species which is not native.

Appendix 2 – UK Habitat Map

