Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA)

Renvyle Farm
Okehurst Lane
Billingshurst
West Sussex
RH14 9HR

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Declaration of Compliance

British Standards relating to biodiversity

This study has been undertaken in accordance with British Standard 42020:2013 *Biodiversity - Code of practice for planning and development* and British Standard 8683:2021 *Process for designing and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain – Specification*, unless specifically stated otherwise.

The *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine*, produced by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) have also been followed (CIEEM, 2018); the *Biodiversity - Code of practice for planning and development* cites these guidelines as the acknowledged reference on ecological impact assessment.

Code of Professional Conduct

The information which we have prepared is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

Validity of Survey Data and Report

Ecological report validity is not fixed and is dependent on each individual site habitats and potential for protected species to be present. CIEEM suggest that 12 months is reasonable in most, if not all circumstances and up to 18 months in the vast majority, unless features could be occupied by mobile species such as bats, or if the site is not maintained as it previously was, (permitting opportunities for reptiles) and / or some incident has altered the baseline i.e. a storm damaging a structure or ripping branches off a tree, creating opportunities for bats.

It is likely that the Local Planning Authority (LPA) will request an update report for surveys between 18 months and 3 years old. Reports older than 3 years without an accompanying update survey, may be rejected by the LPA. A report for a site within an urban area is considered less likely to need short-term updating than a site within a rural or semi-rural area.

The findings of this particular report are considered valid for 12 months from the date of survey, however, if the site is maintained in exactly the same condition (as at the time of surveying), the report can be considered valid for 24 months. Updated surveys will be required after this time.

Legal and Moral Constraints and Responsibilities Summary

An overview of relevant legislation and responsibility is given within the Appendix C. Constraints exist for development where specific habitats or species are, or potentially are, within or adjoining a site proposed for development. Therefore, avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement for a site will apply. In all instances where mitigation is given, also refer to:

- General good practice during construction stage.
- Law and legislation pertaining to specific species (plants and animals)
- Prevention of the spread of native and non-native invasive plants and animals.
- Avoidance of wildlife crime http://www.nwcu.police.uk/

Further advice if species are found onsite during development may be sought from Ecological Surveys Ltd (Tel: 0800 888 6846 or 07474 681276) or Natural England: 0300 060 3900 / enquiries@naturalengland.org.uk.

What is an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA)?

Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) is the term used to describe the 'process of identifying, quantifying and evaluating potential effects of development-related or other proposed actions on habitats, species and ecosystems. The findings of an assessment can help competent authorities understand ecological issues when determining applications for consent. EcIA can be used for the appraisal of projects of any scale including the ecological component of Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA).' (CIEEM, 2018: 8).

The key objectives of an EcIA are:

- To identify and describe all potentially Important Ecological Features, including designated sites, priority habitats and legally protected and notable species.
- To identify and assess all potentially significant ecological effects associated with the proposed development.
- To provide advice and recommendations to avoid or minimise any adverse effects and consider compensation measures if required.
- To identify mitigation measures required to ensure compliance with nature conservation legislation and to address any potentially significant ecological effects.
- To identify and assess the significance of any residual effects.
- To identify appropriate biodiversity enhancement measures and opportunities to increase the diversity if habitats and species on site and to achieve biodiversity gain.
- To identify the requirements for monitoring.

Non-technical Summary

Proposed development	The construction of one warehouse and associated access track.
Purpose of the report	To present the results of the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey undertaken at Renvyle Farm, Okehurst Lane, Billingshurst, West Sussex, RH14 9HR, hereafter referred to as 'the Site'; assess the impacts of the proposed development on the important ecological features identified; and detail applicable compensation, mitigation measures and biodiversity enhancements as appropriate.
Site description	The site comprises modified grassland, with a small area of ruderal/ephemeral vegetation where a barn previously stood; artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface in the form of a track/storage area, and a small amount of developed land sealed surface in the form of a tarmac area used for parking. A short section of blackthorn and hawthorn hedgerow is sited along the north-east boundary of the site, and three trees are located onsite.

Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) likely?	It is considered **unlikely** that a shadow HRA will be requested by the local planning authority (LPA) – albeit this is not our decision to make. [The information contained within this EcIA is without prejudice to the assessment of impacts on the SPA / SAC as set out in any shadow HRA.]

Important Ecological Features (IEFs)	The presence of an IEF on site, or in a location which could potentially be impacted by the development or post development activities will need to be mitigated for.
IEF Designated sites	**Onsite:** - None **Offsite:** - None
IEF Habitats	**Onsite:** - Oak trees and horse chestnut tree: potential for supporting nesting birds and foraging and commuting bats - Willow shrub: potential for supporting nesting birds - Other native hedgerow: potential for supporting nesting birds and foraging and commuting bats **Offsite:** - Black locust tree: potential for supporting nesting birds and foraging and commuting bats
IEF Species	**Onsite:** - Bats: potential for foraging and commuting

	- Birds: potential for nesting **Offsite:** - Bats - Birds
Invasive Non-native Species (Schedule 9 species) **If present, you have a legal obligation to avoid spreading these plants into the wider environment**	**Onsite:** - None **In the immediate vicinity:** - Not known
Potential Impacts of Proposed Development on IEFs	- Degradation/damage/modification of habitats - Incidental mortality or injury of species - Disturbance of species
Avoidance and Mitigation Measures	- Retention of trees and native hedgerow - Construction Exclusion Zones: 7m minimum from the trunk of the horse chestnut tree (root protection area), and along the retained grassland, which will also protect the roots of the oak trees, black locust tree and native hedgerow - No-dig method to create sections of the new access track to protect tree roots - Artificial Lighting Strategy: no external artificial light falling on the trees or hedgerow - Appropriate timing of woody species removal, if the willow shrub is to be removed - Control of disturbance levels
Compensation Measures	- None required
Enhancement Measures	- Management of existing grassland to the east of the new access track for the benefit of wildlife - Hedgerow creation - Tree planting Landscaping to benefit wildlife
Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)	- Habitat Biodiversity Units net change: +0.17 (representing a gain of 12.51%) - Hedgerow Biodiversity Units net change: +0.02 (representing a gain of 57.53%) Trading rules have been satisfied. A Biodiversity Gain Plan and possibly a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan will be required pre-commencement of the proposed development.
Monitoring Measures	- Monitoring of all avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures set out above during the

	construction phase of the proposed development by an Ecological Clerk of Works / suitably experienced ecologist. - Monitoring of newly created habitats by a suitably qualified ecologist post-construction (during the operational phase).
Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP)	A CEMP is not considered necessary for the proposed development at this site.
Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) / Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP)	A HMMP may be necessary for the proposed development at this site.
Important Advisory	Ensure all onsite contractors/personnel are familiar with this report and are able to act upon the law and legislation governing protection of species and habitats onsite, and the avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures specifically pertaining to this development. Should protected species be discovered on site, all works in the vicinity must cease immediately and ecological advice sought urgently.

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

Ecological Surveys Ltd has been commissioned to complete an Ecological Impact Assessment in relation to a proposed agricultural development at Renvyle Farm.

Ecological Surveys Ltd has not been informed of any previous surveys undertaken on this site that need to inform this report.

1.2. Purpose of this Report

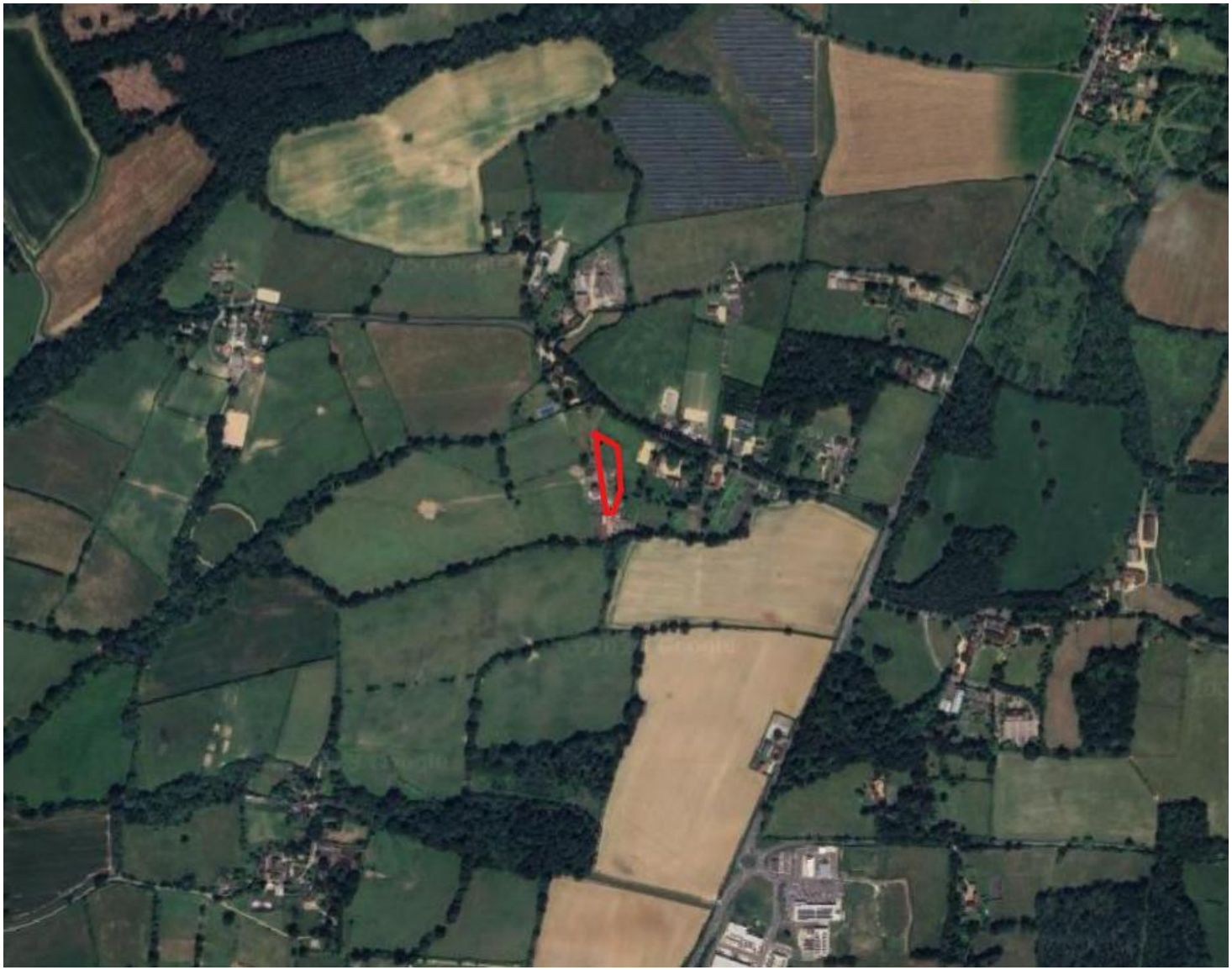
This report presents information concerning the ecological conditions on site, and in the vicinity, obtained during the ecology survey undertaken on 13/10/2025 and the desk-study. It identifies the Important Ecological Features (IEFs) with respect to the proposed development and assesses all potentially significant impacts of the development on these IEFs. The report then sets out proposed avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures, as well as enhancements for biodiversity, following both the Mitigation Hierarchy and the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy. It also outlines any required monitoring.

1.3. Site Location and Description

The site occupies 0.4ha of agricultural land in a rural location to the north of the village of Brislington Billingshurst in West Sussex.

The site itself comprises modified grassland, with a small area of ruderal/ephemeral vegetation where a barn previously stood; artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface in the form of a track/storage area, and a small amount of developed land sealed surface in the form of a tarmac area used for parking. A short section of blackthorn and hawthorn hedgerow is sited along the north-east boundary of the site, and three medium trees are located onsite.

Figure 1.1. Site Location Map



Overview of site

2. Assessment Methodology

2.1. Study Area and Zones of Influence

The study area has been defined as the application site and a 2km radius around it (the 'zone of influences'). The zone of influence is the 'area over which ecological features may be affected by biophysical changes as a result of the proposed project and associated activities' (CIEEM, 2018: 22). A 2km radius around an application site is generally accepted as the industry standard. Baseline information for this area was collated to determine ecological features that could potentially be affected by the development of the site, including designated sites, habitats and species. However, it is recognised that the zone of influence will vary for different ecological features depending on their sensitivity to an environmental change. Therefore, the radius was increased to 5km from the site for bat species.

2.2. Establishing the Ecological Baseline

The ecological baseline for the proposed development site takes account of site-specific surveys, as well as existing ecological information relating to the site and its vicinity. Ecological baseline conditions are those 'which exist in the absence of proposed activities' (CIEEM, 2018: 26).

Desk-based Study

Baseline information for the application site and the study area was collated on the basis of readily available data from www.magic.defra.gov.uk (accessed on 25/11/2025), including internationally and nationally designated wildlife and earth science sites; priority habitats/habitats of principal importance (HPIs) and granted European Protected Species (EPS) Licence applications. Sites within the UK's National Site Network (Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and known in Europe as Natura 2000 sites) were considered for distances up to 10km from the Site or within the same watershed. These distances reflect the zone of influence over which ecological features may be subject to significant effects as a result of the proposed development and associated activities.

Only records of legally protected/notable species made since 1999 were used in the evaluation unless more recent records for relevant species had not been made.

Data from Local Environmental Records Centres and on websites are reliant on the information input into the system. The absence of a record of a species in a particular area is not evidence that the particular species does not exist but may simply be due to a lack of survey effort, or a failure to record its presence. Therefore, an absence of evidence (records) should not be interpreted as evidence of absence. In compliance with the terms and conditions relation to its commercial use, the complete desk study data as received from the Local Environmental Records Centre has not been provided within this report.

Field Survey

A habitat survey of the application site (and adjacent land, where appropriate) was undertaken by Paul Diamond RHS Cert (Hort), BSc (Hons), MSc, MCIEEM, MArborA, Associate Member of the Landscape Institute on 13th October 2025. This consisted of a walkover assessment of the site using the UK Habitat Classification methodology (UKHab Ltd, 2023), with the addition of target noting

indicators of ecological value, including the presence or signs of any legally protected or rare species (plant or animal).

The UK Habitat Classification involves the mapping of different habitats in accordance with standard habitat definitions. Each primary habitat present onsite is recorded, using a hierarchical system which includes all habitats found in the UK, including all UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats and all Habitats Directive Annex I habitats.

Where appropriate, each habitat type was also defined in accordance with the habitat type used by the Statutory Biodiversity Metric and its condition assessed, using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric condition assessment sheets for habitats and hedgerows, and the River Condition Assessment methodology for watercourses.

The main plant species were recorded (identified according to Stace (2019)) and broad habitat types mapped.

Any buildings onsite were examined both externally and internally to consider the potential and actual use by bat species, as well as by nesting birds. The methodology for the preliminary roost assessment of structures as set out in the guidelines produced by the Bat Conservation Trust were followed (Collins (ed), 2023: 49). Any trees with potential bat roost features were also recorded, in line with the Bat Conservation Trust guidelines mentioned above.

A search was also made to identify the presence of any invasive non-native species (particularly those listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)), including Japanese knotweed *Reynoutria japonica* and Himalyan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*.
Areas outside of the development site boundary were assessed where possible, if evidence from the site indicated that legally protected/rare species may be present in the vicinity of the site. Examples include badger trails, potential nesting or roosting habitat adjoining the site.

As a result of the findings of the initial habitat survey, no further, species-specific survey work was required.

All the surveys undertaken on Site (including any species-specific Phase 2 surveys) are given in Table 2.1 below.

2.3. Survey Limitations / Constraints

All areas of the site were readily accessible to enable the habitat survey to be undertaken, and the time spent on site was considered appropriate to obtain all the details required for each habitat and species to enable an assessment to be made. The survey was carried out by a suitable-skilled and experienced surveyor and the weather conditions were dry and sunny. Although some plant species would not have been visible during the survey period, the botanical diversity was considered sufficient to be able to classify and assess the habitats present, as well as their potential for supporting legally protected and notable species.

Table 2.1. Surveys Undertaken

Survey type	Date(s)	Weather conditions	Surveyor(s)	Equipment used
Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey	13/10/2025	Overcast and damp ground	Paul Diamond RHS Cert (Hort), BSc (Hons), MSc, MCIEEM, MArborA. Associate Member of the Landscape Institute	Samsung camera, drone

However, it is important to note that any single survey can only give a snapshot of species and habitats present on site on a particular day. The presence or absence of species recorded on site that day, particularly mobile species with larger home ranges, will vary and does not therefore necessarily represent the total species using the site over time. It should be noted that habitats, and the species they may support, change over time due to natural processes and because of human influence.

2.4. Impact Assessment Methodology

The assessment of impacts has been carried out in accordance with the principles described in the guidelines produced by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2018).

All ecological data and information gained through both the desk-based study and the field survey work were evaluated. The Important Ecological Features (IEFs) were identified and evaluated against the potential impacts of the proposed development, with the significant effects resulting from these impacts on the IEFs identified. The impact assessment determines how the conditions, focusing on the Important Ecological Features identified, will change in relation to the baseline conditions to allow a clear understanding of the effects of the proposed development. Impacts are considered in terms of the value of the ecological feature in the context of nature conservation, and the character of the impact. A significant effect is an effect that is 'sufficiently important to require assessment and reporting so that the decision maker is adequately informed of the environmental consequences of permitting a project' (CIEEM, 2018: 11).

Various characteristics contribute to the importance of ecological features. These include recognised and published criteria (e.g. Ratcliffe, 1977; CIEEM, 2018) where the ecological features are assessed in relation to their size, diversity, naturalness, rarity, fragility, typicality, connectivity with surroundings, intrinsic value, recorded history and potential value.

The ecological importance of existing habitats and species on the application site has been determined using the evaluation scale below, whereby ecological features are assessed for their importance in a geographical context:

- International importance (e.g. internationally designated sites such as Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, Ramsar sites);
- National importance (e.g. nationally designated sites such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest or species populations of importance in the UK context);
- County importance (e.g. Site of Nature Conservation Importance, habitats and species populations of importance in the context of the county);
- Local importance (e.g. old hedges, woodlands, ponds);
- Negligible importance. Usually applied to areas such as built development or areas of intensive agricultural land.

When assessing the impact of the development and changes to the baseline conditions on site, predictions have been made which focus solely on the zone of influence whilst taking into consideration the lifespan of the development and the significant impacts as identified from the proposed work operations throughout the lifespan of the development.

Impacts likely to result from the construction and operation (and decommissioning, where appropriate) of the proposed development on IEFs were identified through liaison with the client and a review of layout options for the development. As well as considering on-site impacts (i.e. within the footprint of the works), the assessment of potential impacts also considers those that may occur to adjacent and more distant IEFs.

The effects of these impacts were then assessed, taking account of the following:

- Direction (positive, adverse, or neutral)
- Magnitude of impact
- Spatial extent over which the impact would occur
- The temporal duration of the impact
- Permanence
- Frequency and timing
- Potential for cumulative effects

As part of the impact assessment the available means to avoid, minimise or mitigate for any significant effects are incorporated into the design of the proposed development, so that the final stage of the impact assessment is to identify the residual (net) impacts that are predicted on the IEFs. The consequences for development control, policy guidance and legislative compliance can then be identified.

2.5. Mitigation Hierarchy

The proposed development aims to firstly avoid and then mitigate against any potential effects/impacts on the Important Ecological Features (IEFs), ensuring compliance with nature conservation legislation. It aims to achieve this by applying the mitigation hierarchy (as mentioned in the National Planning Policy Framework and detailed in Paragraph: 018 Reference ID: 8-018-20140306 of National Planning Practice Guidance), delivering measures for:

- Avoidance – significant harm to species and habitats should be avoided through design of the proposed development.
- Mitigation – where significant harm cannot be wholly or partially avoided, it should be minimised by design, or by the use of effective mitigation measures that can be secured by, for example, conditions or planning obligations.
- Compensation – where, despite whatever mitigation would be effective, there would still be significant residual harm, as a last resort, this should be properly compensated for by measures to provide for an equivalent value of biodiversity.

Appropriate measures to avoid and/or minimise the significant negative effects on the IEFs have been identified. These mitigation measures aim firstly to avoid the overall effect/impact, or for those that cannot be avoided, reduce their overall effect value. It is not always possible to fully mitigate an adverse effect to neutral levels and so an assessment is made of residual effects following the proposed mitigation measures to enable compensation.

2.6. Biodiversity Enhancement

Biodiversity enhancement (measures that improve the biodiversity/ecological condition) of all sites post-development is a planning requirement. The law, central government planning policy and local planning policy point towards the enhancement of a site's biodiversity as part of the development process. Ecological enhancement measures must be over and above any avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures required to neutralise the impacts of the development on wildlife.

Using the information gained during the desk-based study and the field survey, along with the ecological requirements of habitats, species and local environmental conditions, biodiversity enhancements for the site have been considered, providing opportunities to increase the diversity of habitats and species on site.

Enhancements for biodiversity have referred to the combined habitat networks map for England resulting from the work undertaken by Natural England regarding the mapping of national habitat networks (Natural England, 2020), as well as Local Nature Recovery Strategies.

2.7. Biodiversity Net Gain

As of 12 February 2024, all planning applications are required to meet the mandatory minimum 10% biodiversity net gain as set out by the Environment Act 2021, excepting some exemptions. The biodiversity net gain calculations, to determine the biodiversity losses and gains associated with the proposed development, have been undertaken using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric/Small Sites Metric and are set out in section 7. The statutory metrics use habitat to describe biodiversity, which is converted into measurable 'biodiversity units' according to the area of each type of habitat. The metric scores different habitat types (e.g. broadleaved woodland, modified grassland) according to their relative biodiversity value and adjusts this according to the condition and location of the habitat. Where new habitat is created or existing habitat is enhanced then the associated risks of doing so are factored into the metric.

It should be noted that the metric for biodiversity offsetting only considers habitats, both those currently present on site and those proposed as mitigation, compensation and enhancement for the proposed development. The metric does not take account of species onsite, or enhancements proposed to delivery biodiversity gain for species (except where they equate to gain in habitats).

3. Legislation and Policy used to assess Important Ecological Features

3.1. Legislation

European Habitats and Species Directive (CEC, 1992)

The main aim of the Habitats Directive is to promote the maintenance of biodiversity by requiring Member States to take measures to maintain or restore natural habitats and wild species listed on the Annexes to the Directive at a favourable conservation status, introducing robust protection for those habitats and species of European importance.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended)

This Act is the primary legislation that protects animals, plants and certain habitats in the UK. This includes the designation and protection of some of the best areas of natural environmental as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

All wild birds in the UK are protected under the WCA 1981. This makes it illegal to:

i. Kill, injure or take any wild bird;
ii. Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is being built or in use;
iii. Take or destroy the eggs of any wild bird; and
iv. Possess or control any wild bird or egg unless obtained legally

The widespread UK reptile species are protected under the WCA 1981 against intentional killing or injury.

The schedules list particular species receiving a higher level of protection, including birds in Schedule 1, other animals in Schedule 5 and plant species in Schedule 8. Schedule 9 lists plant and animal species that are prohibited from introducing into the wild as they may cause ecological/environmental harm or pose a threat to native habitats and species.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) consolidate all the various amendments made to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 in respect of England and Wales. The 1994 Regulations transposed Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (EC Habitats Directive) into national law.

The objective of the Regulations is to protect biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora. The Regulations set out the rules for the protection, management and exploitation of such habitats and species. They place a duty on the Secretary of State to propose a list of sites which are important for either habitats or species. These sites are known generally as 'European sites' and in the UK form the national sites network (known in Europe as Natura 2000 sites). They include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

All European Protected Species (EPS) are protected under the WCA 1981 and the Habitat Regulations. Under this legislation it is illegal to:

i. Intentionally or deliberately capture, kill or injure listed species;

ii. Intentionally deliberately or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used for shelter or protection including resting and breeding places, whether occupied or not; and
iii. Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb listed species when in a place of shelter (and elsewhere for EPS).

All the UK bat species are protected under this legislation.

Protection of Badgers Act 1992

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 consolidated and improved previous legislation. Under the Act it is an offence to kill, injure or take a Badger, or to damage or interfere with a sett used by a Badger unless a licence is obtained from a statutory authority.

The Hedgerow Regulations 1997

The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 protect certain hedgerows from being removed (uprooted or destroyed) if they meet certain criteria.

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000

This Act increases measures for the management and protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and strengthens wildlife enforcement legislation.

Circular 06/2005 Biodiversity and geological conservation – statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system

This circular provides administrative guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation as it applies in England. It complements the national planning policy in the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

The Act made amendments to the both the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. For example, it extended the CROW biodiversity duty to public bodies and statutory undertakers. It includes a list of species of principal importance and a list of habitats of principal importance. The presence of these species and habitats of principal importance is a material consideration for decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in determining planning applications and carrying out other functions.

Environment Act 2021

This Act has a number of key elements, three of which directly concern species and habitats:

- All new developments to deliver 10% increase in biodiversity (biodiversity net gains), to be managed for at least 30 years (reviewable by the Secretary of State), with a Biodiversity Gain Site Register to be implemented and maintained for at least 30 years after the site scheme has completed.
- Introduction of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) – new spatial strategies led by a "responsible authority" in each area. Statutory guidance to be given to Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) explaining how they should take account of the LNRSs.

- Introduction of a new Species Conservation Strategy which places a duty on LPAs to cooperate with Natural England and other LPAs etc. to safeguard the future of 'at risk' species.

Further details concerning wildlife legislation are given in Appendix C.

3.2. National Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2024 sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It states that there is a presumption in favour of sustainable development and contains a number of policies relating to ecology including minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

Section 15, Conserving and enhancing the natural environment, includes the following:

- 187. 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.
- 188. Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.
- 193. 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.

National Planning Practice Guidance is an online resource providing guidance on the natural environment and its place with the planning process, including:

- The statutory basis through which planning should seek to minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible.
- How local planning authorities should set about planning for biodiversity and geodiversity.
- Information on ecological networks.
- Evidence based ecology.
- The legal obligations on local planning authorities and developers regarding European sites designated under the Birds or Habitats Directives, protected species and Sites of Special Scientific Interest.
- Why Local Sites are important.
- Taking ecosystems services into account in planning.
- Nature Improvement Areas.
- Taking biodiversity into account in preparing a planning application.
- How development can protect and enhance biodiversity.
- What questions should be considered in applying policy to avoid, mitigate or compensate for significant harm to biodiversity.
- Ensuring mitigation or compensation measures cab be delivered where significant harm to biodiversity is unavoidable.

3.3. Local Policy

Policies in the *Horsham District Planning Framework* relating to the natural environment (including European protected sites) have been consulted, namely policies 31, 33 and 35 as set out below (Horsham District Council, 2015).

Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity

1. Development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Proposals that would result in the loss of existing green infrastructure

will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that new opportunities will be provided that mitigates or compensates for this loss, and ensures that the ecosystem services of the area are retained.
2. Development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity, and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate. The Council will support new development which retains and /or enhances significant features of nature conservation on development sites. The Council will also support development which makes a positive contribution to biodiversity through the creation of green spaces, and linkages between habitats to create local and regional ecological networks.
3. Where felling of protected trees is necessary, replacement planting with a suitable species will be required.
4. a) Particular consideration will be given to the hierarchy of sites and habitats in the district as follows: i. Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) ii. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs) iii. Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and any areas of Ancient woodland, local geodiversity or other irreplaceable habitats not already identified in i & ii above. b) Where development is anticipated to have a direct or indirect adverse impact on sites or features for biodiversity, development will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that: i. The reason for the development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site; and, ii. That appropriate mitigation and compensation measures are provided.
5. Any development with the potential to impact Arun Valley SPA or The Mens SAC will be subject to a HRA to determine the need for an Appropriate Assessment. In addition, development will be required to be in accordance with the necessary mitigation measures for development set out in the HRA of this plan.

Policy 33: Development Principles
In order to conserve and enhance the natural and built environment developments shall be required to:
1. Make efficient use of land, and prioritise the use of previously developed land and buildings whilst respecting any constraints that exist;
2. Ensure that it is designed to avoid unacceptable harm to the amenity of occupiers/users of nearby property and land, for example through overlooking or noise, whilst having regard to the sensitivities of surrounding development;
3. Ensure that the scale, massing and appearance of the development is of a high standard of design and layout and where relevant relates sympathetically with the built surroundings, landscape, open spaces and routes within and adjoining the site, including any impact on the skyline and important views;
4. Are locally distinctive in character, respect the character of the surrounding area (including its overall setting, townscape features, views and green corridors) and, where available and applicable, take account of the recommendations/policies of the relevant Design Statements and Character Assessments;
5. Use high standards of building materials, finishes and landscaping; and includes the provision of street furniture and public art where appropriate;
6. Presume in favour of the retention of existing important landscape and natural features, for example trees, hedges, banks and watercourses. Development must relate sympathetically to the

local landscape and justify and mitigate against any losses that may occur through the development; and,
7. Ensure buildings and spaces are orientated to gain maximum benefit from sunlight and passive solar energy, unless this conflicts with the character of the surrounding townscape, landscape or topography where it is of good quality.
8. Incorporate where appropriate convenient, safe and visually attractive areas for the parking of vehicles and cycles, and the storage of bins/recycling facilities without dominating the development or its surroundings;
9. Incorporate measures to reduce any actual or perceived opportunities for crime or antisocial behaviour on the site and in the surrounding area; and create visually attractive frontages where adjoining streets and public spaces, including appropriate windows and doors to assist in the informal surveillance of public areas by occupants of the site;
10. Contribute to the removal of physical barriers; and,
11. Make a clear distinction between the public and private spaces within the site

Policy 35 Strategic Policy:
Climate Change Development will be supported where it makes a clear contribution to mitigating and adapting to the impacts of climate change and to meeting the district's carbon reduction targets as set out in the Council's Acting Together on Climate Change Strategy, 2009. Measures which should be used to mitigate the effects of climate change include;
1. Reduced energy use in construction;
2. Improved energy efficiency in new developments, including influencing the behaviour of occupants to reduce energy use;
3. The use of decentralised, renewable and low carbon energy supply systems;
4. The use of patterns of development which reduce the need to travel, encourage walking and cycling and include good accessibility to public transport and other forms of sustainable transport; and
5. Measures which reduce the amount of biodegradable waste sent to landfill.
Development must be designed so that it can adapt to the impacts of climate change, reducing vulnerability, particularly in terms of flood risk, water supply and changes to the district's landscape. Developments should adapt to climate change using the following measures:
1. Provision of appropriate flood storage capacity in new building development;
2. Use of green infrastructure and dual use SuDS to help absorb heat, reduce surface water runoff, provide flood storage capacity and assist habitat migration;
3. Use of measures which promote the conservation of water and/or grey water recycling; and
4. Use of site layout, design measures and construction techniques that provide resilience to climate change (opportunities for natural ventilation and solar gain). If it is not possible to incorporate the adaption and mitigation measures proposed, an explanation should be provided as to why this is the case

Policy 37: Sustainable Construction
Proposals must seek to improve the sustainability of development. To deliver sustainable design, development should incorporate the following measures where appropriate according to the type of development and location:
1. Maximise energy efficiency and integrate the use of decentralised, renewable and low carbon energy;

2. Limit water use to 110 litres/person/day;
3. Use design measures to minimise vulnerability to flooding and heatwave events;
4. Be designed to encourage the use of natural lighting and ventilation;
5. Be designed to encourage walking, cycling, cycle storage and accessibility to sustainable forms of transport;
6. Minimise construction and demolition waste and utilise recycled and low-impact materials;
7. Be flexible to allow future modification of use or layout, facilitating future adaptation, refurbishment and retrofitting;
8. Incorporate measures which enhance the biodiversity value of development. All new development will be required to provide satisfactory arrangements for the storage of refuse and recyclable materials as an integral part of design. New homes and workplaces should include the provision of high-speed broadband access and enable provision of future technologies where available

4. Ecological Baseline

4.1. Designated Sites of Nature Conservation

Statutory Nature Conservation Sites

The site does not lie within or immediately adjacent to a statutory designated nature conservation site.

There is one statutory nature conservation sites within the study area as listed in Table 4.1.

The site, and surrounding area, lies within a Core Sustenance Zone for bats. The Mens Special Area of Conservation is located 5km to the south-west of the site at its closest point, and Ebernoe SAC 10km to the west at its closest point. The presence of barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus* bats and Bechstein bats *Myotis bechsteinii* are a feature of these SACs, with locations within the Core Sustenance Zone being potentially important foraging grounds. As stated in local plan Policy 31, any development with the potential to impact Arun Valley SPA or the Mens SAC will be subject to a HRA to determine the need for an Appropriate Assessment. However, the Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI IRZs) indicate that the proposed development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on terrestrial Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and the SACs, Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites that they underpin.

The information contained within this EcIA is without prejudice to the assessment of impacts on the SPA / SAC as set out in any shadow HRA.

No statutory nature conservation sites are considered to be Important Ecological Features (IEFs) with respect to the proposed development.

Non-Statutory Nature Conservation Sites

The site does not lie within or immediately adjacent to a non-statutory designated nature conservation site. The closest Site of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCI) is located approximately 1.9km to the south-east of the site (Sussex Wildlife Trust, 2024).

No non-statutory nature conservation sites are considered to be Important Ecological Features (IEFs) with respect to the proposed development.

Table 4.1. Statutory Nature Conservation Sites within the Study Area

Designation	Site name	Key ecological/geological features	Distance and direction from application site (km)	Importance in relation to proposal
Special Area of Conservation (SAC)	None within 2km	-	-	-
Special Protection Area (SPA)	None within 2km	-	-	-
RAMSAR	None within 2km	-	-	-
Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	Coppedhall Hanger SSSI	The site is important for the detailed evidence it yields on palaeoclimate, depositional environments and origins of the detritus.	0.9km to the west	Of Negligible importance
National Nature Reserve (NNR)	None within 2km	-	-	-
Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	None within 2km	-	-	-

4.2. Habitats

This section details the habitats recorded onsite during the field survey undertaken on 13th October 2025, along with important habitats within the vicinity of the site. Figure 4.1 presents the findings of the field survey.

Figure 4.1. Map showing Results of the Field Survey

Onsite Habitats

4.2.1. Modified grassland (g4 108)

Modified grassland is the dominant habitat across the site. The sward has been mown short and contains less than nine species per m^2.

- Modified grassland - of Negligible importance

4.2.2. Ruderal or ephemeral (u1c 81)

Sparse ruderal and ephemeral vegetation is growing through the artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface where a barn previously stood. Agricultural machinery is scattered across this habitat.

- Ruderal or ephemeral (onsite) - of Negligible importance

4.2.3. Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface (u1c)

A gravel track leads to the site, with a section being onsite, as well as a gravelled area used for car parking and storage.

- Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface (onsite) - of Negligible importance

4.2.4. Other developed land (u1b6)

An area of tarmac covers the ground to the west of the ruderal or ephemeral vegetation.

- Other developed land - of Negligible importance

4.2.5. Trees (g4 200)

One horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum* with a trunk diameter of 420mm stands at the north end of the site within the modified grassland. Two pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* trees, the northern oak with a 480mm trunk diameter and oak to its south 550mm in diameter, are located along the east boundary of the site. Small patches of bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. are found underneath the oak tree canopies. A black locust *Robinia pseudoacacia* tree is situated at the north-east corner of the site, adjacent offsite. The trees offer potential habitat for nesting birds and foraging and commuting bats.

A goat willow *Salix caprea* shrub exists at the southern end of the site. This shrub offers potential habitat for nesting birds.



Oak trees onsite


Black locust tree offsite

- Trees - of Local importance for protected species (nesting birds and foraging and commuting bats)

4.2.6. Other native hedgerow (h2a6)

A short section with the hedgerow comprising hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* with bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. grows along the east boundary of the site. The hedgerow is greater than 1.5m in height and in width.

- Other native hedgerows (onsite) – of Local importance for protected species (nesting birds and foraging and commuting bats)

Offsite Habitats

4.2.7. Other rivers and streams

The River Arun is found 1.7km to the west of the site. This flows into the Arun Valley Special Protection Area.

- River Arun (offsite) - of Negligible importance

There are a number of habitats of principal importance / priority habitats within the study area. These are listed in Table 4.2, along with the distance to the closest land parcel of each one.

Table 4.2. Habitats of Principal Importance / Priority Habitats within the study area

Habitat	Distance from proposed development site to closest area of habitat	Comments
Deciduous woodland	0.3km to north-east	Of Negligible importance.
Ancient woodland	0.4km to west	Of Negligible importance.
Traditional orchard	0.7km to south-east	Of Negligible importance.
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	1.6km to west	Of Negligible importance.

4.3. Species

Any evidence indicating use of the site by legally protected/notable species was noted during the field survey and is presented in this section. Habitats have also been assessed from the results of the field survey for their potential to support the following protected species. Where there is no potential for a species or species group to be present within the site, or where habitats with the potential to support this species or species group will not be impacted by the proposals, they may be scoped out at this stage.

4.3.1. Bats

The entire proposed development site and surrounding area lies within a Core Sustenance Zone for bats. The Mens Special Area of Conservation is located 5km to the south-west of the site at its closest point, and Ebernoe SAC 10km to the west at its closest point. The presence of barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus* bats and Bechstein bats *Myotis bechsteinii* are a feature of these SACs, with locations within the Core Sustenance Zone being potentially important foraging grounds.

The fields of modified grassland contained within the site provide very little value for foraging and commuting bats. However, the other native hedgerow and trees onsite, and offsite tree, do provide such habitat.

The area immediately surrounding the site is bisected with hedgerows and watercourses, providing commuting routes for bats across the landscape. There are also numerous woodlands connected by the hedgerow network, making the surrounding area suitable for commuting, foraging and roosting bats.

All bat species are legally protected; the following bat species have been recorded within a 2km radius of the site since the year 1999: common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus,* brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus* and serotine *Cnephaeus serotinus* (Bat Conservation Trust, obtained via nbnatlas.org [accessed 25/11/2025]).

- Bat species – of Local importance

4.3.2. European badger *Meles meles*

No evidence of badger was recorded onsite during the field survey. The modified grassland that is the dominant habitat on the site is of limited value to badger.

Badger has been recorded within a 2km radius of the site since the year 1999 (Mammal Society, obtained via nbnatlas.org [accessed 25/11/2025]).

- European badger - of Negligible importance

4.3.3. Hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius*

Potentially suitable habitats are limited to hedgerows and woodland habitats. The hedgerow onsite is suboptimal due to lacking sufficient structure and diversity of woody, fruiting shrubs to support hazel dormouse.

- Hazel dormouse - of Negligible importance

4.3.4. Eurasian otter *Lutra lutra*

There are no suitable water bodies/courses associated with the site and therefore it is unlikely that otter use the site.

- Eurasian otter - of Negligible importance

4.3.5. European water vole *Arvicola amphibius*

There are no suitable water bodies/courses associated with the site and therefore the site is unsuitable for supporting water vole.

- European water vole - of Negligible importance

4.3.6. Eurasian beaver *Castor fiber*

There are no suitable water bodies/courses associated with the site and therefore the site is unsuitable for supporting beaver.

- Eurasian beaver - of Negligible importance

4.3.7. Brown hare *Lepus europaeus*

Habitats onsite are unsuitable for supporting brown hare.

- Brown hare - of Negligible importance

4.3.8. West European hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*

The mown modified grassland onsite provides limited potential to support West European hedgehog.

Hedgehog has been recorded within a 2km radius of the site since the year 1999 (Bat Conservation Trust, obtained via nbnatlas.org [accessed 25/11/2025]).

- West European hedgehog - of Negligible importance

4.3.9. Birds

The oak trees, horse chestnut tree, willow shrub and other native hedgerow onsite, as well as the black locust tree offsite, provide potential habitat for nesting birds.

- Nesting birds - of Local importance

4.3.10. Reptiles

The habitats onsite provide negligible potential for reptiles.

Slow worm *Anguis fragilis* has been recorded within a 2km radius of the site since the year 1999 (Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, obtained via nbnatlas.org [accessed 25/11/2025]).

- Reptiles - of Negligible importance

4.3.11. Amphibians

There are no habitats present onsite that have the potential to support amphibian species.

Great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* has been recorded within a 2km radius of the site since the year 1999 (Amphibian and Reptile Conservation, obtained via nbnatlas.org [accessed 25/11/2025]).

- Amphibians - of Negligible importance

4.3.12. Invertebrates

Habitats at this site are likely to support common and widespread invertebrates.

No legally protected and/or notable invertebrates were recorded during the field survey, and the habitats onsite are unsuitable for supporting such species.

- Invertebrate species - of Negligible importance

4.3.13. Vascular plants

The site has a low floral diversity, focused within the modified grassland, trees and other native hedgerow. A list of plants recorded on site during the habitat survey is set out in Appendix A.

No legally protected and/or notable vascular plant species were recorded on site during the field survey and there are unlikely to be any present as the habitats present are common, have been agriculturally improved and therefore are unlikely to support such plant species.

- Vascular plants – of Negligible importance

4.3.14. Invasive non-native plants

No invasive non-native invasive species were recorded on site during the survey.

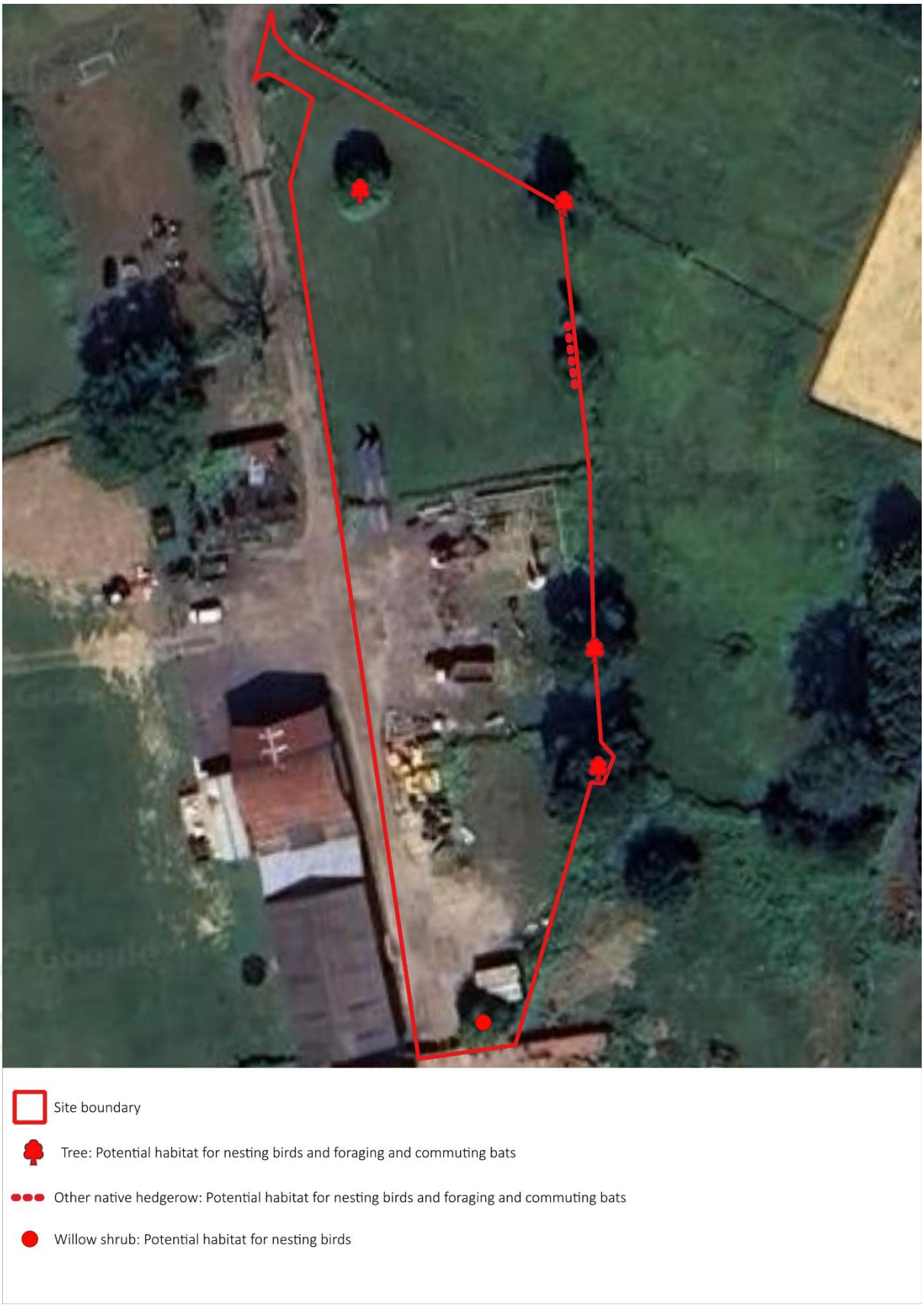
4.4. Summary of Important Ecological Features

Table 4.3 summarises the Important Ecological Features as identified from the baseline conditions, with respect to the proposed development of construction of a warehouse at Renvyle Farm, excluding those of Negligible importance. These are mapped in Figure 4.2, the Ecological Constraints Plan.

Table 4.3. Summary of Important Ecological Features (IEFs)

Important Ecological Feature (IEF)	Level of importance	Rationale
Habitats		
Trees and willow shrub	Local	Potential habitat for nesting birds and foraging and commuting bats
Other native hedgerow	Local	Potential habitat for nesting birds and foraging and commuting bats
Species		
Bats	Local	Potentially supported by the trees and other native hedgerows onsite and tree offsite
Birds (nesting)	Local	Potentially supported by the trees, willow shrub and other native hedgerow onsite and tree offsite

Figure 4.2. Ecological Constraints Plan, including Important Ecological Features



5. Assessment of Effects, Mitigation Measures and Compensation

This section considers the potential impacts resulting from the proposed development, with the potential significant effects on each of the Important Ecological Features identified (from the existing baseline conditions summarised in section 4.4 above). The potential impacts are considered for each stage of the development, namely the pre-construction, construction (including groundworks) and operational phases, with the potential significant effects on the ecological features identified. The mitigation hierarchy is then applied, with the aim of firstly avoiding any loss or damage/degradation to any of the Important Ecological Features (IEFs). If avoidance is not possible then the impacts of development will be minimised and reduced as much as possible, with mitigation measures set out for each IEF. The scale of any mitigation should be proportional to the proposed development with a guiding principle of minimising intervention to any given habitat. Any residual effects on each IEF are then identified and set out in section 5.6. Compensation measures for any losses are the identified.

All avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures are summarised in Table 5.2 in section 5.7 and mapped in Figure 5.2, the Ecological Protection Plan.

5.1. The Proposed Development

The proposed development on site comprises the construction of one warehouse and a new access track; the proposed site layout provided by the client is presented in Figure 5.1. All trees, willow shrub and other native hedgerow are being retained; some of the modified grassland is also being retained as part of the proposed development.

The construction of the new warehouse, access track and associated works during the construction phase, all have the potential to lead to both direct and indirect impacts on the ecology of the site and its immediate environs. Many of these impacts are short term and can be minimised as part of the construction management process, but some have the potential for more lasting significant effect. These impacts and effects are listed in Table 5.1 below.

Figure 5.1. Proposed Site Layout

Table 5.1. Potential Effects on the Ecology during the Various Phases of Development

Phase of development	Impacts	Potential effects on ecology
Construction (including groundworks)	• Access and travel on/off site, including temporary access routes for construction vehicles • Areas for plant maintenance and for storage of oils, fuels and chemicals • Acoustic disturbance and vibration from construction activities • Environmental incidents and accidents e.g. spillage, noise and emissions • Burning of waste • Lighting • Structural works for new building and engineering • Vegetation/habitat clearance	• Degradation/damage/modification of habitats • Incidental mortality or injury of species • Disturbance of species
Operational	• Access to site (both route and means) • Lighting	• Degradation/damage/modification of habitats • Disturbance of species

5.2. Designated Sites of Nature Conservation (IEFs)

Statutory Nature Conservation Sites

No statutory nature conservation sites have been identified as Important Ecological Features (IEFs) with respect to the proposed development.

5.3. Non-statutory Nature Conservation Sites

No non-statutory nature conservation sites have been identified as Important Ecological Features (IEFs) with respect to the proposed development.

5.4. Habitats (IEFs)

The following habitats have been identified as Important Ecological Features (IEFs) with respect to the proposed development:

- Oak trees and horse chestnut tree (onsite)
- Other native hedgerow (onsite)
- Black locust tree (offsite)

These habitats have been assessed as IEFs due to their potential to support legally protected/notable species and therefore have been assessed in the next section, *5.5 Species (IEFs).*

5.5. Species (IEFs)

The following species have been identified as Important Ecological Features (IEFs) with respect to the proposed development:

- Nesting birds (potentially onsite)
- Foraging and commuting bats (potentially onsite)

The likely significant effects of the impacts of the proposed development are now assessed for each IEF.

Nesting birds	
Potential effects	• Degradation/damage/modification of habitat – hedgerow and trees (construction phase and operational phase) • Incidental mortality or injury of species (construction phase) • Disturbance of species (construction phase)
Explanation of potential effects	• Due to the construction of the new access track and warehouse, there is potential of causing damage to the trees and hedgerow, which can result in incidental injury or mortality and disturbance of nesting birds.
Avoidance measures	• Retention of habitat – hedgerow and trees
Mitigation measures	• Construction Exclusion Zone (CEZ) at a minimum distance of 7m from the trunk of the onsite trees (reflecting the root protection areas (RPAs)) • The sections of track alongside the trees must be no-dig tracks using ground reinforcement to permit the trees to continue growing into the future

	• Construction Exclusion Zone (CEZ) at a minimum distance of 2m from the edge of the other native hedgerow • Construction Exclusion Zone of a minimum distance of 3m from the trunk of the offsite black locust tree (reflecting the RPA) • Control of disturbance levels (restricted working to hours) • Appropriate timing of willow removal (outside of bird nesting season, which runs from March to September inclusive), if the willow is to be removed
Significance of residual effects	• There are likely to be no residual effects if the avoidance/mitigation measures listed above are put in place.

Foraging and commuting bats	
Potential effects	• Degradation/damage/modification of habitat – hedgerow and trees (construction and operational phases) • Disturbance of species (construction and operational phases)
Explanation of potential effects	• Due to any additional lighting introduced to the site which could cause disturbance to bats, and the construction of the new access track and warehouse presents a risk of causing damage to the trees and hedgerow which may support foraging and commuting bats
Avoidance measures	• Retention of habitat – hedgerow and trees
Mitigation measures	• Construction Exclusion Zone (CEZ) at a minimum distance of 7m from the trunk of each tree (reflecting the root protection areas (RPAs)) • The sections of track alongside the trees must be no-dig tracks using ground reinforcement to permit the trees to continue growing into the future • Construction Exclusion Zone (CEZ) at a minimum distance of 2m from the edge of the other native hedgerow • Construction Exclusion Zone of a minimum distance of 3m from the trunk of the offsite black locust tree (reflecting the RPA) • Control of disturbance levels (restricted working hours) • Artificial lighting strategy: no external artificial light falling on the trees or hedgerow
Significance of residual effects	• There are likely to be no residual effects if the avoidance/mitigation measures listed above are put in place.

5.6. Summary of Residual Effects and Compensation

The mitigation measures set out above seek to address the potential impacts of the development and the likely significant effects on the IEFs. There are no residual effects on any IEFs once these mitigation measures have been carried out.

5.7. Summary of Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation Measures

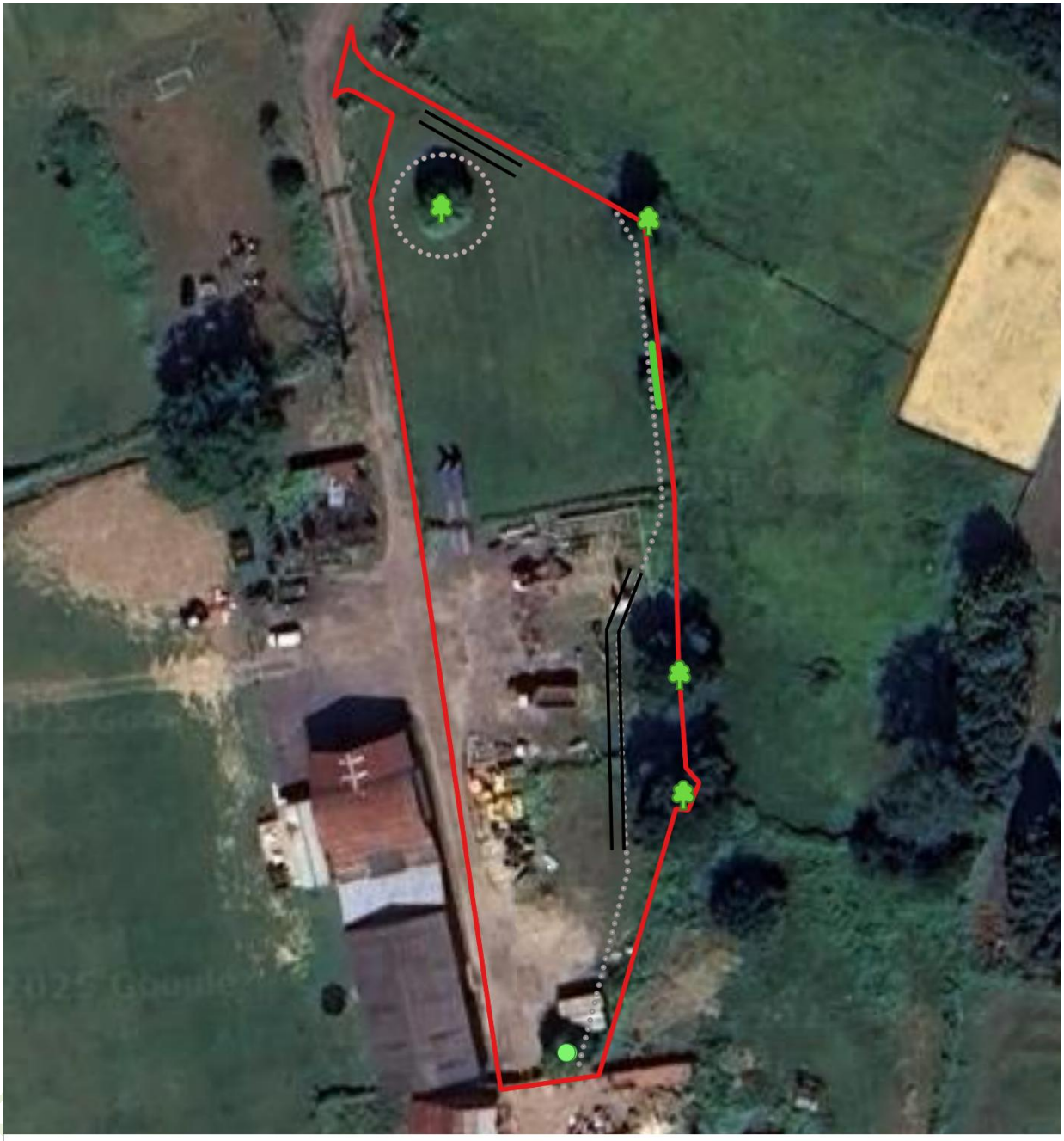
Table 5.2 summarises the avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures required for the proposed development of this site, with Figure 5.2 presenting the Ecological Protection Plan.

It is recommended that all avoidance and mitigation measures associated with the construction phase of the proposed development be included in a Construction Ecological Management Plan.

Table 5.2. Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation Measures

Avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures	Development Phase	IEF initially impacted upon / effected	Avoidance / reduction in effect
Retention of habitats	All	Trees, other native hedgerow, nesting birds, foraging and commuting bats	Avoidance
Control of disturbance levels	Construction	Nesting birds and foraging and commuting bats	Reduction
Construction Exclusion Zones of a minimum distance of 7m from the trunk of each onsite tree	Construction	Trees, nesting birds, foraging and commuting bats	Avoidance
No-dig sections of track alongside the trees	Construction	Trees, nesting birds, foraging and commuting bats	Avoidance / Reduction
Construction Exclusion Zone of a minimum distance of 3m from the trunk of the offsite black locust tree	Construction	Trees, nesting birds	Avoidance
Construction Exclusion Zone of a minimum distance of 2m from the edge of the other native hedgerow	Construction	Other native hedgerow, nesting birds, foraging and commuting bats	Avoidance
Artificial Lighting Strategy: no external artificial light falling on the trees or hedgerow	All	Bats	Avoidance / Reduction
Appropriate timing of woody species removal (if the willow is to be removed) – outside bird nesting season	Construction	Willow ~~shrub~~ tree, nesting birds	Avoidance / Reduction

Figure 5.2. Ecological Protection Plan, showing Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation Measures



Tree: Potential habitat for nesting birds and foraging and commuting bats

Other native hedgerow: Potential habitat for nesting birds and foraging and commuting bats

Construction Exclusion Zones: - At least 7m from the trunk of the horse chestnut tree
- Along retained grassland to the east of the new access track. This will also protect the Root Protection Areas for the two oak trees

No-dig tracks for this section of the new access track to protect the tree roots as they grow in the future

Appropriate timing of willow removal (outside of bird nesting season, which runs from March to September inclusive), if the willow is to be removed

Other mitigation:- Control of disturbance levels
- Artificial Lighting Strategy: no lighting to be directed towards the oak trees

6. Enhancement for Biodiversity

There is an opportunity within the proposed development to increase biodiversity on the site through pro-active enhancement measures. These enhancement measures are set out below and are taken into account in the following section concerning Biodiversity Net Gain.

6.1. Management of Existing Habitats

Grassland management

Grassland areas will be managed for wildlife, with some areas of long grass being left where possible. Grass cuttings will either be removed from the site and disposed of responsibly or be left in a pile on site, in an appropriate location, and not left where they fall. Having areas of different length grass produces a mosaic of different habitats within the site, thus benefiting invertebrates, birds and small mammals.

These grassland areas will be left to re-colonise naturally; native wildflower seeds may still exist in the seedbank. If seed does need to be brought in then this seed should be of local provenance, ideally collected from a local site of unimproved grassland (with the owners' permission). Seed is unlikely to come in naturally, as there does not seem to be any fields of unimproved grassland in the immediate vicinity of the site.

No artificial inputs, such as artificial pesticides and fertilisers, will be applied on site. This helps to maintain and improve the floristic diversity.

6.2 Planting of new trees

Nine new trees will be planted onsite. These should be native species, ideally of local provenance, giving the equivalent or greater biodiversity, high in yields of fruit, nectar or nut. Tree species suitable for planting on site include pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*; sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*; beech *Fagus sylvatica*; rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*; silver birch *Betula pendula*; downy birch *Betula pubescens*; grey willow *Salix cinerea* agg.; goat willow *Salix capraea*; bird cherry *Prunus padius* and wild cherry *Prunus avium.*

6.2. Habitat Creation

Hedgerow creation

New hedgerow will be planted onsite along the east boundary, connecting with the existing other native hedgerows. Native woody species suitable for creating new hedges on this site include hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, crab apple *Malus sylvestris*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, wild privet *Ligustrum vulgare*, dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*, guelder-rose *Viburnum opulus*, wayfaring-tree *Viburnum lantana*, grey willow *Salix cinerea* agg. and goat willow *Salix capraea*.

- The hedgerow will be created from planting native species ideally of local provenance.
- Use shrubs (whips) planted in a double, staggered row at a rate of at least four plants per metre.
- Apply a layer mulch to a depth of 75mm around shrub base to supress weeds.

- Spiral guards will be used to protect new shrubs from rabbits (removed after the first five years of growth).
- Plan a monitoring programme during first year of growth. Any saplings which fail to thrive will be re-planted in order to prevent the development of gaps.
- Trim lightly during the first three years.
- Approximately three years following planting, an appropriate management scheme will be established to ensure that it develops into a dense hedgerow which is optimal for protected species.

6.3. Landscaping for the Benefit of Wildlife

Landscaping in sympathy with the needs of native wildlife is relevant to all important wildlife species. It helps to support birds by providing plant species which carry seeds, fruits, nuts, and/or support insects (nectar and pollen) upon which birds feed and supports bats by attracting insects to the garden.

The list below is not exhaustive, neither is it prescriptive, and recommendations can be applied with discretion. The implementation of a combination of recommendations here fulfils the obligation of the client/agent to leave the site in an enhanced state.

- ✓ The landscape architect/or appointed person should plant a variety of flowering plants, biased towards native and near-native species. Exotics are not required; however, a selection of exotics to extend the flowering season and potentially provide resources for specialist groups now and in the future, is becoming increasingly important owing to climatic changes, and should be given serious consideration by any with a view to protecting and sustaining present and future biodiversity. Plant holistically for biodiversity value: nectar rich plants/shrubs which yield fruits /nuts of benefit to a multitude of species.
- ✓ Where grass is planted, use a grass mix other than low amenity lawn grass. Plant mixes with diverse grass species support a wealth of insects when allowed to seed and flower before being cut back.
- ✓ Provide green corridors (hedges/trees/water features/lawns or mixed diversity species and beds) with attention to other neighbouring green spaces. The garden itself, when taken as one of many within the neighbourhood, will become part of a wider green corridor.
- ✓ Leave rough areas of vegetation and native trees and shrubs around the vicinity of the new building will also maintain nesting opportunities.
- ✓ Avoid pesticide and insecticide use.

7. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

The biodiversity impact assessment calculations to determine the biodiversity net gain associated with the proposed development have been undertaken using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments Excel spreadsheet being completed for all baseline habitats.

The ecological information regarding the habitats present on site prior to development commencing has been obtained from the results of the field survey (Figure 4.1), with the habitats shown as per the habitat type used by the Statutory Biodiversity Metric set out in Figure 7.1. The proposed habitats present on site post-development have been obtained from the proposed site layout produced by Architectural Design Computer Services (drawing reference 1369/P031), as shown in Figure 5.1. Figure 7.2 presents the post-development habitats as per the habitat type used in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.

Both the Mitigation Hierarchy and the Biodiversity Gain Hierarchy have been followed, seeking to firstly avoid, minimise, restore and enhance existing habitats onsite, and then compensate for those habitats lost. There are no irreplaceable habitats onsite or adjacent to the site and therefore there is no loss or impact on any such habitats.

The greatest extent of onsite baseline habitat is modified grassland in poor condition, with a small area of ruderal/ephemeral vegetation in moderate condition; artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface in the form of a track/storage area; and a small amount of developed land sealed surface in the form of a tarmac area used for parking. A short section of native hedgerow in moderate condition is found along the north-east boundary of the site, and three medium trees in good condition are onsite.

Measures to avoid and minimise biodiversity loss and to rehabilitate/restore biodiversity affected by the project are presented in sections 5 and 6 above. The loss of modified grassland and ruderal/ephemeral onsite has been compensated for by retaining and enhancing the modified grassland in poor condition to the east of the new access track to other neutral grassland in moderate condition. A five-metre section of native hedgerow will be created onsite, along with the planting of nine small trees. The existing section of native hedgerow and the three trees will be retained. New areas of other neutral grassland and modified grassland will be created.

Strategic Significance for habitats has been determined using Wilder Horsham District's Nature Recovery Network (NRN) report, in line with guidelines from Horsham District Council. As stated in this report, the site lies within an area deemed to have "high habitat potential". The report goes on to mention that areas of high habitat potential should have their Strategic Significance set as Location ecological desirable but not in local strategy within the Biodiversity Metric.

Figure 7.1. Onsite Habitat Baseline, as per the Statutory Biodiversity Metric

Site boundary

Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface (condition n/a)
0.057ha

Developed land; sealed surface (condition n/a)
0.043ha

Modified grassland (poor condition)
0.234ha

Ruderal/ephemeral (moderate condition)
0.054ha

Individual medium tree (good condition)

Native hedgerow (moderate condition)
0.008km

0 5 10 m

Site name	Proposed Warehouse Renvyle Farm
Scale	600@A4
Date	November 2025

Figure 7.2. Post-development habitats, as per the Statutory Biodiversity Metric

New artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface (condition n/a)
0.060ha

New developed land; sealed surface (condition n/a)
0.064ha

New modified grassland (poor condition)
0.053ha

New other neutral grassland (moderate condition)
0.014ha

Retained developed land; sealed surface (condition n/a)
0.008ha

Retained modified grassland (poor condition)
0.159ha

Retained modified grassland (poor condition) enhanced to other neutral grassland in moderate condition
0.035ha

New native hedgerow (moderate condition)
0.005km

Retained native hedgerow (moderate condition)
0.008km

New individual medium tree (moderate condition)

Retained individual medium tree (good condition)

0 5 10 m

Site name	Proposed Warehouse Renvyle Farm
Scale	600@A4
Date	December 2025

The Headline Results from the Statutory Biodiversity Metric are given in Figure 7.3 below.

The onsite baseline score for habitat units is 1.40, with the score increasing to 1.57 following the development (a total net unit change of +0.17). This post-development score takes into the habitats retained, enhanced and created onsite. This equates to a **gain of 12.51% in habitat units**.

The onsite baseline score for hedgerow units is 0.03, with the score increasing to 0.05 following the development (a total net unit change of +0.02). This post-development score takes into the hedgerows retained, enhanced and created onsite. This equates to a **gain of 57.53% in hedgerow units**.

All trading rules have been satisfied.

Therefore, the proposed development is likely to result in a biodiversity net gain greater than 10% in habitat and hedgerow units.

A Biodiversity Gain Plan and possibly a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan will be required pre-commencement of the proposed development.

Figure 7.3. Headline Results taken from the Statutory Biodiversity Metric

Proposed Warehouse Renvyle Farm			
Headline Results			
Scroll down for final results ⚠			
On-site baseline	*Area habitat units*	1.40	
	Hedgerow units	0.03	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	1.57	
	Hedgerow units	0.05	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site net change (units & percentage)	*Area habitat units*	0.17	12.51%
	Hedgerow units	0.02	57.53%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
Off-site baseline	*Area habitat units*	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	*Area habitat units*	0.00	0.00%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	0.17	
	Hedgerow units	0.02	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	*Area habitat units*	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	

Return to results menu

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	0.17
	Hedgerow units	0.02
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	12.51%
	Hedgerow units	57.53%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit	
Area habitat units	10.00%	1.40	1.54	0.00	No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.03	0.04	0.00	No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

8. Monitoring

The monitoring of both the avoidance/mitigation measures and the biodiversity enhancements will be undertaken to ensure they are put in place and carried out correctly. The monitoring will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist / Ecological Clerk of Works. Table 8.1 below outlines the monitoring required.

Table 8.1. Monitoring Requirements for Avoidance, Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

Mitigation/ enhancement measure	Monitoring requirement	
	Construction phase	**Operational phase**
Creation of Construction Exclusion Zones around the trees (reflecting RPAs) and along the other native hedgerow	ECoW[1] to check CEZ fencing.	N/a
No-dig tracks for sections of the new access track	ECoW[1] to check.	N/a
Control of disturbance levels.	ECoW[1] to check.	N/a
Appropriate timing of woody species removal.	ECoW[1] to check.	ECoW[1] to check.
Artificial Lighting Strategy.	ECoW[1] to check.	ECoW[1] to check.
Hedgerow creation.	Landscape architect / ECoW[1] to oversee, including the sourcing of plants.	Landscape architect / ECoW[1] to check.
Planting of native trees	Landscape architect / ECoW[1] to oversee, including the sourcing of plants.	Landscape architect / ECoW[1] to check.
Enhancement of modified grassland to other neutral grassland	Landscape architect / ECoW[1] to oversee, including the sourcing of seed.	Landscape architect / ECoW[1] to check, including survey work.
Management of grassland areas for wildlife.	N/a	ECoW[1] to check.

[ECoW[1] = Ecological Clerk of Works]

9. Conclusion

The proposed development site is considered to be of low ecological value due to the dominant habitat being mown modified grassland in poor condition.

The field survey that was undertaken on 13/10/2025, along with the desk-based study, are considered to have collected enough information about the ecological condition of the site to have been able to adequately assess the impact of the proposed development. Further survey work is therefore not required.

The Important Ecological Features were identified and evaluated against the potential impacts/effects that the proposed development may have on the ecology of the site and surrounding area. The impact assessment determined how the conditions, focusing on the Important Ecological Features identified, are likely to change in relation to the baseline conditions, allowing a clear understanding of the effects of the proposed development.

Avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures have been set out to avoid and reduce the effects/impacts of the development on the Important Ecological Features and the local environment as a whole. These include Construction Exclusion Zones, no-dig sections of the new access track, control of disturbance levels and an artificial lighting strategy. All measures should be included as a planning condition for the proposed development.

Enhancement measures for biodiversity have also been set out, including the management of the grassland to the east of the new access track for the benefit of wildlife, hedgerow creation and tree planting. These enhancements should be included as a planning condition for the proposed development.

The biodiversity net gain calculations show an overall net gain in biodiversity units onsite as per the current proposals (as calculated using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric). It is envisaged that there will be an overall net gain in habitat biodiversity units of 12.51% and a net gain in hedgerow biodiversity units of 57.53%. Therefore, the minimum 10% biodiversity net gain in both habitat and hedgerow biodiversity units has been achieved. All trading rules have been satisfied. A Biodiversity Gain Plan and possibly a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan will be required pre-commencement of the proposed development.

All the avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures require monitoring; this has been outlined in tabular format and should also be included as a planning condition for the proposed development.

Providing the recommendations within this Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) are adhered to, with the mitigation measures and enhancements agreed, there would appear to be no ecological constraints to prevent this development. The local planning authority (LPA) should ensure that the mitigation measures, together with enhancement recommendations, are either conditioned where appropriate, or that full permission is withheld pending the agreement of mitigation, compensation (where necessary) and enhancement measures.

It is the responsibility of all those involved with the proposed development to ensure that wildlife protection and nature conservation legislation is complied with throughout the lifespan of the development, at every stage. Although no current evidence of protected species was found on site it cannot be assumed that they are not present when the development work commences. Care should therefore be taken during all stages of the development and if any protected are discovered they must not be handled; works must stop immediately, and advice sought from a licensed ecologist.

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Appendices

Appendix A. Flora Species Recorded Onsite During Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Common Name	Scientific Name
Blackthorn	*Prunus spinosa*
Bramble	*Rubus fruticosus* agg.
Hawthorn	*Crataegus monogyna*
Horse chestnut	*Aesculus hippocastanum*
Oak	*Quercus robur*
Goat willow	*Salix caprea*

Appendix B. Summary of the Legislation and Policy relating to Habitats and Species

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended)

This Act is the primary legislation that protects animals, plants and certain habitats in the UK. It is the means by which the Bern Convention and the Birds Directive and Habitats Directive are implemented in Britain. Protected birds, animals and plants are listed in Schedules 1, 5 and 8 respectively of the Wildlife and Countryside Act.

Schedule 1 Part 1 – Birds which are protected by special penalties at all times from being intentionally killed, injured, or taken and whose eggs, nests or dependent young are also protected from being disturbed.

Schedule 5 Section 9 Part 1 (killing/injuring) – Animals which are protected from being intentionally killed or injured.

Schedule 5 Section 9 Part 1 (taking) – Animals which are protected from being taken.

Schedule 5 Section 9 Part 4a – Animals which are protected from intentional damage to, destruction of, or obstruction of access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection.

Schedule 5 Section 9 Part 4b – Animals which are protected from intentional disturbance while occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection.

Schedule 5 Section 9 Part 4c – Animals which are protected from their access to any structure or place which they use for shelter or protection being obstructed.

Schedule 6 - Animals which are protected from being killed or taken by certain methods under Section 11(1). The methods listed are: self-locking snares, bows, crossbows, explosives (other than ammunition for a firearm), or live decoys.

Schedule 8 – Plants and fungi which, subject to exceptions, are protected from: intentional picking, uprooting or destruction; selling, offering for sale, possessing or transporting for the purpose of sale; advertising for buying or selling.

Schedule 9 – Plant and animal species that are prohibited from introducing into the wild as they may cause ecological or environmental harm or where they pose a threat to the native habitats and species. Under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is a criminal offence to cause any of 48 non-native plant species (6/4/2010) and (non-native animals) to spread into the wild where they cause damage to the environment/ economy/health/lifestyle.

The site owner has a responsibility to:

- Prevent invasive, non-native plants on their land spreading into the wild and causing a nuisance.
- Prevent harmful weeds on their land spreading onto a neighbour's property

The owner of the site must not plant in the wild or cause certain invasive and non-native plants to grow in the wild. This can include moving contaminated soil or plant cuttings. If this occurs there is a fine or prison term for up to 2 years. The site owner is not legally obliged to remove these plants or to control them on site. However, at the point of change**: development, mulching, earth moving operations**: it is important that they are identified, and their spread controlled in the most appropriate way.

Environmental Protection Act 1990

Environmental Protection Act 1990 allows for the potential classification of soil and other waste containing viable propagules of invasive non-native plant species as controlled waste. This has been applied to Japanese Knotweed with the result that waste containing this species must be disposed of

in accordance with the duty of care set out in section 34 of the Act. The Environment Agency have issued guidance which will be of use in complying with the duty of care.
In addition:

- Any Schedule 9 plant material, or soil containing root or rhizome fragments, may be classified as 'controlled waste' under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 (EPA).
- In addition to a criminal prosecution under the Wildlife & Countryside Act, infringement of the EPA can result in an *unlimited fine*.
- The owner may also be held liable for costs incurred from the spread into adjacent properties and for disposal of contaminated soil off site during development, which later leads to the spread on another site.

Protection of Badgers Act 1992
Both badgers and their setts are protected, making it illegal to kill, injure or take, possess or cruelly ill-treat badgers or to interfere with a badger sett (including blocking tunnels or damaging the sett in any way).

The Hedgerow Regulations 1997
Any hedgerows classified as 'important' under the 1997 Hedgerows Regulations cannot be removed without a Hedgerow Removal Notice issued by the relevant Local Authority unless previously approved as part of a planning permission. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) now classifies any native hedge over 20m in length as a priority habitat feature. Priority hedgerows should be those comprising 80% or more cover of any native tree/shrub species. The Local Authority is the arbiter as to classification of hedgerows.

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000
This Act increases measures for the management and protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and strengthens wildlife enforcement legislation.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
The Act made amendments to the both the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. For example, it extended the CROW biodiversity duty to public bodies and statutory undertakers. The Act also makes provisions in respect of pesticides harmful to wildlife, the protection of birds, and in respect of invasive non-native species, and also alters enforcement powers in connection with wildlife protection, and extends time limits for prosecuting certain wildlife offences.

Section 41 of the Act requires that the Secretary of State publishes a list of species of flora and fauna considered to be of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity in England. The list is intended to be used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 'to have regard' to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions. The list of species of principal importance was first published in 2002 by DEFRA under Section 74 of the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000, and was identical to the UK BAP list at that time. The CRoW Act Section 74 list has now been replaced by the Section 41 list. Sixty-five (65) habitats are listed as being of principal importance, in the Secretary of State's opinion, for the purposes of conserving biodiversity.

Under section 41 (England) of the NERC Act (2006) there is a need for these habitats to be taken into consideration by a public body when performing any of its functions with a view to conserving biodiversity. These habitats are the subject of National and Local Biodiversity Action Plans.

The Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014

Anti-social Behaviour, Crime and Policing Act 2014 enables community protection notices to be served by local authorities or the Police against individuals who are acting unreasonably and who persistently or continually act in a way that has a detrimental effect on the quality of life of those in the locality. These powers are designed to be flexible and could be used to address specific problems caused by widespread species such as Japanese knotweed.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (and as amended by The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019)) originally transposed the Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora ("the Habitats Directive") and elements of Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds ("the Birds Directive") in England, Wales, and to limited extent, Scotland and Northern Ireland. The objective of the Regulations is to protect biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora. The Regulations set out the rules for the protection, management and exploitation of such habitats and species. They place a duty on the Secretary of State to propose a list of sites which are important for either habitats or species. These sites are known generally as 'European sites' and in the UK form the national sites network (known in Europe as Natura 2000 sites). They include Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

Environment Act 2021

The Environment Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 9 November 2021. It only applies to England. Key elements of the Act include:

- All new developments to deliver 10% increase in biodiversity (biodiversity net gains), to be managed for at least 30 years (reviewable by the Secretary of State), with a Biodiversity Gain Site Register to be implemented and maintained for at least 30 years after the site scheme has completed.
- Introduction of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) – new spatial strategies led by a "responsible authority" in each area. Statutory guidance to be given to Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) explaining how they should take account of the LNRSs.
- Introduction of a new Species Conservation Strategy which places a duty on LPAs to cooperate with Natural England and other LPAs etc. to safeguard the future of 'at risk' species.
- LPAs to produce Biodiversity Reports every five years, describing action taken and the impact it has had on local biodiversity.
- Establishment of the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP), a green 'watchdog' to ensure the enforcement of the environmental legislation in England and Northern Ireland.
- Introduction of the five Principles to which organisations must have regard:
    - (i) Integration (environmental protection should be integrated into the making of policies);
    - (ii) Prevention (preventative action should be taken to avert environmental damage);

(iii) Precautionary (a precautionary approach should be taken to the possibility of environmental harm);

(iv) Rectification At Source (where possible any environmental harm should be rectified at source);

(v) Polluter Pays (the person(s) who causes the harm must suffer the financial penalty both in terms of mitigation and compensation)

- Long-term (at least 15 years, starting in 2022) legally binding targets on air quality, biodiversity, water, resource efficiency and waste reduction.

Circular 06/2005 Biodiversity and geological conservation – statutory obligations and their impact within the planning system

This circular provides administrative guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation as it applies in England. It complements the national planning policy in the National Planning Policy Framework and the Planning Practice Guidance.

National Planning Policy Framework, 2024

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. It contains a number of policies relating to ecology including "minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures". Under NPPF, local planning authorities have an obligation to promote the preservation, restoration and recreation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species as identified under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006). Local Planning Authorities will seek to produce a net gain in biodiversity, by requiring developers to design wildlife into their plans and to ensure that any unavoidable impacts are appropriately mitigated for. The NPPF 2024 version replaces the first NPPF published in March 2012 and includes minor clarifications to the revised version published in 2018, 2019, 2021 and 2023.

European Red Data lists (IUCN, 2000)

International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN and the European Commission have been working together on an initiative to assess around 6,000 European species according to IUCN regional Red Listing Guidelines. Through this process they have produced a European Red List identifying those species which are threatened with extinction at the European level so that appropriate conservation action can be taken to improve their status.