

Ecology Survey Scoping Report

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**Land North of Horsham,
Mowbray – Phase 2**

Prepared by
CSA Environmental

On behalf of
Legal and General

Report No: CSA/7937/02

This report may contain sensitive ecological information. It is the responsibility of the Local Authority to determine if this should be made publicly available.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by CSA Environmental on behalf of Legal and General and provides ecological recommendations regarding Reserved Matters Applications pertaining to Phase 2 of a mixed-use development (excluding RMA 20; which will be addressed separately). The entire development, comprising Phase 1, 2, and 3 (See Appendix A for Site Wide Phasing Plan) aims to provide up to 2,750 dwellings alongside retail and business areas, leisure and education facilities, Public Open Space, and associating landscaping and infrastructure at land at Mowbray, North Horsham (hereafter referred to as 'the Site').
- 1.2 This Ecology Survey Scoping Report is provided to inform Horsham District Council of further ecological surveys proposed to support Ecological Mitigation and Management Plans (EMMPs) specific to Phase 2 as per Condition 14 of Outline Planning Permission DC/16/1677 (Non-Material Amendment ref: DC/19/0984):

Condition 14

- 1.3 *Pre-Commencement Condition: Prior to the submission of an Ecological Mitigation and Management Plan (EMMP) with an application seeking approval of Reserved Matters pursuant to the planning permission, up to date ecological surveys shall be carried out to provide up to date information regarding the potential of the area covered by the Reserved Matters application to support protected and notable species and inform the future design of measures that will be required to avoid, mitigate or compensate for impacts and to inform the Ecological Mitigation and Management Plan for that Reserved Matters application. These surveys shall be completed by suitably qualified ecologist(s), recognised by a relevant professional body such as CIEEM, and in accordance with current survey guidelines. The scope of these surveys shall be agreed in advance with the LPA, and may include advanced surveys for rare bat species. The surveys shall be completed in accordance with the agreed scope prior to the submission of the EMMP for that Reserved Matters area and the results and associated reports appended to the Ecological Mitigation and Management Plan for the Reserved Matters area.*
- 1.4 Specifically, the surveys detailed herein are proposed to inform the EMMPs specific to Reserved Matters Areas (RMAs) 14, 15, 16, 17, 18, 19, an infrastructure access road (RMA3), and strategic landscape buffers (2A and 2C). An overarching Phase-wide EMMP for Phase 2 has been provided by Derek Finnie Associates (2026); pursuant to Condition 13 of the outline consent. EMMPs for RMAs 3, 12 and 13 will be prepared and informed by existing ecological data.

2.0 ECOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

Previous Surveys

- 2.1 Appendix B summarises previous ecological surveys conducted onsite, including those specific to Phase 2 and those conducted across the entire Site boundary comprising Phases 1, 2, and 3. Full survey reports have previously been submitted to Horsham District Council and are available on the Planning Portal.

Baseline Conditions

- 2.2 In light of previous ecological survey data as per Appendix B, an update ecological walkover survey of Phase 2 was conducted by CSA Environmental on 19 February 2026 to inform the requirement for additional surveys. Reserved Matters Area 20 was omitted from this walkover survey. The walkover survey comprised a UK Habitat classification survey (UKHab Ltd, 2023) and an assessment of each Reserved Matters Area's potential to support protected species.
- 2.3 The survey was undertaken using UKHabs methodology, by Clare Marlow-Caudwell CEcol CIEEM, Sam Ashby ACIEEM, Theresa Stewart MCIEEM and Nathaniel Scott.
- 2.4 Results of the UK Habitat classification survey are illustrated in Appendix C. A summary of the update walkover survey's findings is provided below.
- 2.5 To inform this report, records of protected species were provided by Sussex Biological Record Centre (SxBRC) and referenced herein (see Appendix G).

Habitats

- 2.6 Habitat types recorded in February 2026 were generally consistent with those described during the site-wide Phase 1 survey in 2020 (Bioscan, 2020), though Phase 1 habitat types (JNCC, 2010) were translated to UKHab classification (UKHab Ltd, 2023) following the 2026 walkover.
- 2.7 Priority Habitats, as listed on the Priority Habitats Inventory (Natural England, 2024), and Ancient Woodland were identified within 2km of the Phase 2 boundary (see Appendix G).

Reserved Matters Area 12

- 2.8 In line with the 2020 Phase 1 survey results, RMA 12 predominantly consisted of arable land dominated by winter wheat *Triticum aestivum*. Arable field margins consisted of grassland species consistent with those observed in RMA 13, but largely unmanaged and with long (c. +15cm) sward. A single parcel dominated by bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* was

observed to the north-eastern extent of RMA 13 (Target Note 1, Appendix C).

- 2.9 The south-western extent of RMA 12 comprised other neutral grassland, with both short-mown areas and parcels of longer tussocky swards. Several species were recorded in this parcel, including Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, cocksfoot *Dactylis glomerata*, and dock *Rumex* sp. Some areas of the grassland were waterlogged, supporting species such as soft rush *Juncus effusus*. Modified grassland exists to the eastern extent of RMA 12, with perennial rye grass *Lolium perenne* abundant.

Reserved Matters Area 13

- 2.10 Modified grassland dominates RMA 13, which has been improved through regular sheep/horse grazing. Species diversity was lower than that of the neutral grassland to the south-western extent of RMA 12, with perennial rye grass abundant similar to the eastern extent of RMA 12. A pond lies within the strategic landscape buffer along the western boundary of RMA 13, overshadowed by scrub dominated by ash *Fraxinus excelsior*. A species-rich native hedgerow (H3) demarcates the southern boundary of RMA 13. Cleavers *Galium aparine* were abundant to the southern RMA boundary, indicating previous enrichment.

Reserved Matters Area 14

- 2.11 Phase 1 habitat surveys in 2020 considered RMA 14 to consist of deciduous plantation woodland upon semi-improved grassland. However, this area was identified as a traditional orchard upon modified grassland during the 2026 habitat survey. Species identified include holm oak *Quercus ilex*, sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa*, apple *Malus x domestica*, walnut *Juglans regia*, and Japanese yew *Taxus cuspidata*. A hazel *Corylus avellana* coppice occupies the eastern boundary of RMA 14, with dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. also present.

Reserved Matters Area 15

- 2.12 In line with the findings of the Phase 1 habitat surveys in 2020, RMA 15 was dominated by modified grassland which has been improved through sheep grazing. Species diversity of the grassland was low with perennial rye grass being dominant. The grassland is managed up to the boundary of an area of broadleaved deciduous woodland which is discussed below.
- 2.13 A species-rich native hedgerow with trees was located on the western boundary with RMA 20 (Clarion Land). A c. 70m section of this hedgerow lies within RMA15 with the remaining c. 170m being situated within the RMA 3. The hedgerow consisted of a mixture of hazel, oak *Quercus* sp., hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, elder *Sambucus nigra*, bramble, and honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenu* and was associated with a dry ditch within the centre of the hedgerow.

- 2.14 Broadleaved deciduous woodland lies within the south of RMA 15 on the southern boundary with RMA 16/17 and RMA 18. The canopy comprised a mixture of oak *Quercus* sp., ash and common hornbeam *Carpinus betulus*. The understorey comprised hazel, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, hawthorn with rare bramble and bracken situated on the edges of the woodland.
- 2.15 Ground flora comprised several ancient woodland indicator species including native bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, pignut *Conopodium majus*, dog's mercury *Mercurialis perennis*, lesser celandine *Ficaria verna* with other species including lords-and-ladies *Arum maculatum*, cleavers, ground-ivy *Glechoma hederacea* and foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*. A watercourse comprising a shallow stream which is a tributary of Chennells Brook, ran through the centre of the woodland.

Reserved Matters Area 16/17

- 2.16 Reserved matters areas 16 and 17 comprised two distinct areas which comprised arable land within the eastern extent and modified grassland associated with two residential properties (including Owlcastle Farm) within the western extent of the defined RMA. A native hedgerow which consisted of hawthorn, hazel, bramble and rose *Rosa* sp. forms the areas eastern boundary with the adjacent RMA 3 and 18.
- 2.17 Access could not be obtained to the areas of grassland to the north (rear) of the residential properties. Therefore, the findings of the Phase 1 habitat surveys have been applied in this case which also indicate the presence of a defunct species-poor hedgerow within the centre of this area. Similarly, a native hedgerow forms the western boundary of RMA16/17 with RMA 20.

Reserved Matters Area 18

- 2.18 Area 18 was divided between sheep grazed modified grassland within the north and arable land to the south. The northern grassland area is divided into separate field parcels by post and wire fencing with an area of hardstanding and an agricultural storage building. The agricultural field which lies in RMA 18 is bounded by a section of hedgerow to the east and borders an area of broadleaved deciduous woodland to the south, however, both these features fall outside the area of RMA 18.

Reserved Matters Area 19

- 2.19 Reserved Matters Area 19 wholly comprised a section of a larger area of arable land.

Protected Species

Bats

- 2.20 A total of 29 bat records were identified within the search area, dating from 2014 to 2025. These included records for serotine *Eptesicus serotinus*, Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*, Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, and brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*. The closest record is from 2014 and is for a foraging noctule bat over the pond which lies within the residential curtilage associated with Owlcastle Farm which lies within RMA 16/17. The SxBRC also returned records which relate to historic bat roosts. The closest historic roost record is from 2006 and related to an unspecified pipistrelle *Pipistrellus* sp. roost. This record is situated c. 0.15km to the east of Phase 2.
- 2.21 The Site falls beyond the Core Sustenance Zones (CSZs) for The Mens and Ebernoe Common SACs (see Appendix G), as defined by South Downs National Park Authority and Natural England (2018).
- 2.22 Suitability for commuting and foraging bats exists in the form of hedgerows that demarcate field and RMA boundaries, in addition to woodland that lies adjacent to RMA 12, 14 and 18 and within RMA 15. Waterbodies on and adjacent to Phase 2, in addition to parcels of neutral grassland, may also provide suitable foraging resources for a number of species.
- 2.23 The update habitat walkover survey conducted in February 2026 did not comprise a detailed Ground-level Tree Assessment (GLTA) for bat roost potential. However, trees with identifiable features that may provide roost potential were recorded for further assessment, where required.

- 2.24 [REDACTED]
- 2.25 [REDACTED]
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Hazel Dormice

- 2.27 The SxBRC have returned a total of five records for hazel dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius* from within the identified 2km search area. These records range from 2019 to 2024, with the closest record being situated c. 0.18km to the south-west Phase 2. This record is from 2024 and related to an identified dormouse nest, within an area of deciduous woodland which is connected to phase 2 via well-established treelines, hedgerows and areas of woodland. Dormouse nests were identified during licenced habitat clearance southwest of RMA 14 in February and September 2024.
- 2.28 Suitability for hazel dormice exists in the form of ancient woodland abutting the Phase 2 boundary to the east of RMA 13 and 12 and south of RMA 14, numerous hedgerows and scrub parcels, and hazel coppice identified within RMA 14 and deciduous woodland within RMA 15. Connectivity to suitable habitats further afield, such as Ancient Woodland at Ten Acre Gill abutting RMA 13 to the east, exists via boundary hedgerows and onsite woodland. Licenced works (2025-72928-EPS-MIT) are currently underway within RMA 1. These works include the two-stage habitat removal of 0.257ha of scrub and 82m of hedgerow to allow for the construction of a road.

Birds

- 2.29 A total of 1231 records of 60 bird species were identified within the search area, dating from 2015 to 2025. Those of potential relevance to the site include those commonly associated with farmland such as skylark *Alauda arvensis*, yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*, corn bunting *Emberiza calandra*, and lapwing *Vanellus Vanellus*. Both skylark and fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* were recorded within the arable field associated with RMA 16/17 and 18 during the update walkover survey.
- 2.30 Suitability for ground-nesting and wintering birds exists within Phase 2 in the form of open arable fields, such as that of RMA 12, 16/17 and 18, in addition to parcels of neutral grassland throughout Phase 2. Boundary hedgerows, individual mature trees, scrub, deciduous woodland situated throughout Phase 2, and the traditional orchard within RMA 14 may provide nesting opportunities for common species.

Great Crested Newt

- 2.31 A total of 21 records for great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* dating from 2015 to 2025 were returned by the SxBRC. There are five records of great crested newt from 2019 from within RMA 14. Information provided with the record indicate that these records are from a period of traditional surveying for great crested newts utilising bottle trapping and torching.
- 2.32 Potential great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* breeding waterbodies have been identified within 500m of the Phase 2 boundary. Suitable terrestrial habitat onsite includes hedgerows, scrub, woodland, and

neutral grassland, particularly where these habitats offer connectivity and commuting routes between parcels of Ancient Woodland adjacent to Phase 2.

- 2.33 Previous surveying within Phase 1 has recorded great crested newt within Ponds P2, P18, P27, and P30 in 2014 and 2019. Additional eDNA surveys conducted in 2015, 2016 and 2018 found great crested newts to be present in P2, P18, P20, P27, and P20. Ponds P1 and P6 were also subject to eDNA surveys in 2015, with the results indicating the likely absence of great crested newt at the time of surveying. These waterbodies lie within 250m of the Phase 2 boundary.
- 2.34 Update surveys in 2023 confirmed great crested newt presence in P2, P30, P18, and P31. Additional surveys in 2025 found presence in P2, but eDNA analyses did not confirm presence in P1, P25, nor P29.
- 2.35 Following the aforementioned surveys conducted to inform the development of Phase 1, great crested newt mitigation licences were sought from Natural England. Licence 2019-44385-EPS-MIT encompassed areas of Phase 1 adjacent to RMA 13 and RMA 12 to the west, while an application for a licence to encompass Pond P2, RMA 14, and adjacent parcels within RMA 2C was prepared in December 2025 (Derek Finnie Associates, 2025).
- 2.36 Additional works to facilitate the Bailey Road Extension include the removal of Ponds P2 and P30, both of which have previously been shown to hold great crested newts. As such, the ponds and surrounding land is subject to a newt translocation under a Natural England licence (Ref: 2025-72835-EPS-MIT). Any amphibians encountered during these works are to be transferred to the dedicated receptor site located at Hillside.

Reptiles

- 2.37 A total of 174 records of four species of reptile were identified within the search area dating from 2015 to 2025. These records include those for slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, grass snake *Natrix helvetica*, adder *Vipera berus*, and common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*. The closest record is a field observation of a single grass snake from 2017 which is situated c. 0.15km to the east of Phase 2.
- 2.38 Suitability for reptiles within Phase 2 is limited to grassland to the southern and eastern boundaries of RMA 12 and RMA 13, neutral grassland towards the western extent of RMA 12 and RMA 14, grassland within RMA 14, and arable field margins in RMA 18. The central regions of each RMA are largely unsuitable for reptiles, with either cropland or short mown grassland habitats dominant. A hibernaculum which consisted of a soil and hardcore mound was situated within an area of RMA 3 within the south-western corner of RMA 15. This is suspected to have been

deposited following historic dredging of Channells Brook, an adjacent stream running through woodland south of RMA 14.

Invertebrates

- 2.39 A total 774 records of 102 species were returned by SxBRC, dating from 2015 to 2025. The nearest of these records to Phase 2 was of cinnabar moth *Tyria jacobaeae* recorded in 2020 c. 50m west of RMA 13.
- 2.40 Suitability for invertebrates and notable species assemblages was identified in the form of neutral grassland to the south-western extent of RMA 12, in addition to arable field margins and species-rich hedgerows such as H48 to the south-eastern extent of Phase 2. Pond P1, in addition to a network of streams and ditches across Phase 2, may support aquatic invertebrates.

Invasive Species

- 2.41 The SxBRC returned a total of 971 records from within the identified 2km search dating from 2015 to 2025.
- 2.42 Giant hogweed *Heracleum montegazzianum* was identified within a wet flush to the east of the Pond P1 within the southeast of Phase 2, to the south-east of Owlcastle Farm.
- 2.43 Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* was recorded within the south of RMA 18 along the RMA's boundary with the adjacent woodland.

3.0 PROPOSED SURVEYS

- 3.1 The following further surveys are recommended in light of previous survey information (Appendix B), protected species recorded obtained in March 2026, and protected species suitability identified during February 2026 (see Section 2.0).

Bats

Ground-level Tree Assessment

- 3.2 Draft site proposals indicate the removal of hedgerows or individual trees to enable at least six access routes between RMAs. Losses are anticipated in Hedgerow H1 to the south of RMA 13, H4 at the south-western extent of RMA 12, deciduous woodland north of RMA 14, and H35 and H46 to enable RMA 3 construction. Further surveys to ascertain the potential of trees subject to removal to support bat roosts are therefore recommended. A Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) will be conducted across Phase 2 in April 2026, in line with the latest survey guidance (Collins, 2023). Should any trees be categorised as 'FAR' (Further Assessment Required) or 'PRF' (Potential Roost Feature), additional aerial inspection or dusk emergence surveys may be required.

Roost Surveys

- 3.3 Eight buildings were identified within the Phase 2 boundary, including four at Owlcastle Farm (OF1-4) and two at Owlcastle Barn (OB1, OB2). Three buildings were found at Benson Farm Cottages (BF1-3), but with building BF2 situated beyond the Phase 2 boundary to the east. As detailed in Appendix B, bat roost surveys conducted in 2014 confirmed buildings OB1, OB2, OF2, OF3, OF4, and BF2 to support bat roosts (Bioscan, 2016b). An update Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) survey will be undertaken to ascertain the required survey effort for dusk emergence and roost characterisation surveys. The PRA will be conducted in March/April 2026 in line with Collins (2023) guidance.
- 3.4 The scope of dusk emergence and roost characterisation surveys will be informed by the PRA survey; however, buildings previously identified as confirmed roosts will be subject to three dusk emergence surveys during optimal conditions, with at least three weeks between each survey (surveys to be targeted between May and August 2026).

Activity Surveys

- 3.5 In line with Collins (2023) guidance, bat activity surveys comprising both static detector deployment and seasonal walked transects will be conducted between April and October 2026.

- 3.6 Transect surveys, or Night-time Bat Walkovers (NBWs), will be conducted in Spring (April/May), Summer (June-August), and Autumn (September/October) to record commuting and foraging activity across Phase 2, with the exception of RMA 20. Due to the size of the survey area, at least two transects will be followed (one on the eastern side of Phase 2; and one of the western side of Phase 2). Each NBW will consist of stationary vantage point surveys, occupied for at least 30 minutes following sunset to record activity near expected emergence times.
- 3.7 Static bat detectors will be deployed upon a monthly basis, April to October inclusive. Six devices will be deployed across Phase 2, with the exception of RMA 20, in an attempt to sample bat activity per habitat type. Indicative static device locations are shown in Appendix D.

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Hazel Dormice

- 3.10 With reference to Section 3.5 of latest survey guidance (Wells *et al.*, 2025), survey data collected in 2022 (see Appendix B) are considered applicable at the time of writing and still applicable for areas currently covered by mitigation licences (see *Figure B2.2 Nearby EPS Licences* in Appendix B). Additional dormouse presence/absence surveys of these areas are not recommended at this stage as 2026 EPSL monitoring data should provide a picture of current dormouse presence / absence and distribution (*Note: extend of EPSL monitoring still TBC by DFA*), but a Habitat Quality Assessment (HQA) will be conducted to enable a population estimate and extent of potential impacts under licence.
- 3.11 For all remaining RMAs within Phase 2, with the exception of RMA 20, a HQA survey is recommended to inform the scope of additional nest tube surveys.

Birds

- 3.12 Breeding bird surveys will be conducted in accordance with the latest survey guidance and Common Birds Census (Bird Steering and Assessment Group, 2025). Six visits will be conducted between March and early July 2026, to ascertain the composition and distribution of breeding bird assemblages and the presence of notable species.

Great Crested Newt

- 3.13 Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) and eDNA surveys will be carried out on potential breeding ponds within 250m of the Phase 2 boundary (see Appendix E), to be conducted between April and mid-June 2026 in line with best practice guidance (Oldham *et al.*, 2000; ARG, 2010; Biggs *et al.*, 2014). Should eDNA surveys reveal the presence of great crested newt, further population estimate surveys may be required to inform a licence application prior to commencement.

Reptiles

- 3.14 Reptile presence/absence surveys will be conducted across Phase 2 (omitting RMA 20 and the Bailey Road Extension where translocation work is already underway), during optimal survey conditions March to October 2026. Up to 250 refugia, formed of roofing felt c. 0.5 x 1m², will be deployed in suitable habitats and left to bed in for two weeks. The survey set-up and the seven subsequent surveys. Surveys will be conducted in accordance with Froglife (1999) and HGBI (1998) guidelines, with indicative survey areas shown in Appendix F.

Invertebrates

- 3.15 Invertebrate surveys will be conducted across Phase 2 during optimal survey conditions, generally May to August inclusive, and in accordance with Natural England (2007) guidance.

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