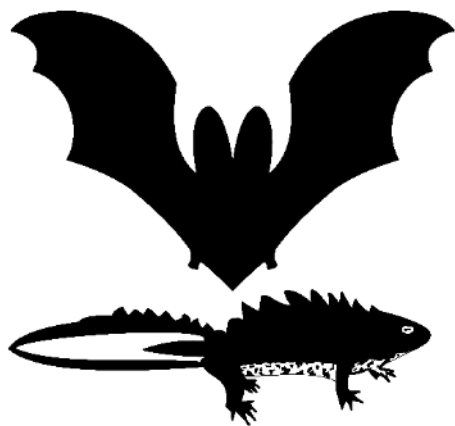




AEWC Ltd

Animal Ecology & Wildlife Consultants

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Amiesmill Farm

**Kerves Lane
Horsham
West Sussex
RH13 6RL**

Natalie Arscott & Lexie Hobbs

**25-132
March 2026**

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Summary

- AEWCLtd were commissioned by Batcheller Monkhouse on behalf of their client to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal at Amiesmill Farm, Kerves Lane, Horsham, RH13 6RL at central grid reference TQ 18398 29104 to help inform the proposed development of the site.
- This report details the results of the survey, which was carried out on the 13th March 2026 by qualified ecologists Natalie Arscott and Lexie Hobbs, to record and map the habitats present, assess the site for the potential presence of any protected species or species of conservation concern, and identify habitats of conservation importance.
- Additional information regarding the present and historical ecological interest of the site and within a 2km radius was provided by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre. This helps to inform the likelihood of protected species occurring within the site boundary.
- The site is approximately 0.5ha in size and largely comprises an access track leading to a yard with a large, metal agricultural shed and stable block with a small section of horse-grazed field and small areas of grassland.
- Habitats identified on-site include artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface, developed land; sealed surface, modified grassland, ruderal/ephemeral, bare ground, and one individual tree. The habitats are common and widespread and considered to be of low ecological value, with limited opportunities for wildlife.
- The buildings on-site have negligible potential to support bats but were found to support nesting birds.
- **No further surveys have been recommended.**
- **Full recommendations to avoid ecological impacts are detailed in Section 6 of this report. These include, but are not limited to, protective measures for the River Arun to be secured through a CEMP or similar, minimising and controlling lighting, undertaken tree removal or building demolition outside of the breeding bird period or immediately after a survey, maintaining the proposed working area as a short sward in the interim before works commence, and dismantling rubble piles by hand.**

This report has been prepared by AEWCLtd, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client. We disclaim any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above. This report is confidential to the client, and we accept no responsibility whatsoever to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.

The information and data which has been prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the 'Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal' and 'Code of Professional Conduct' issued by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

1 Introduction

- 1.1 AEWCLtd were commissioned by Batcheller Monkhouse on behalf of their client to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal at Amiesmill Farm, Horsham to help inform the proposed development of the site.
- 1.2 There have been no known previous ecological surveys carried out at the site.
- 1.3 This survey comprised a desktop study of biological records within the vicinity of the site, an ecological walkover survey to record and map the habitats present, and an assessment for protected wildlife and species of conservation importance, including habitats, and was carried out by qualified ecologists Natalie Arscott and Lexie Hobbs on the 13th March 2026.
- 1.4 This report presents the results of the following:
 - Desktop Biodiversity Report
 - UKHab Habitat Survey
 - Protected Species Walkover Survey
- 1.5 In addition, the report outlines any recommendations and further surveys that may be necessary. This will ensure that any protected species are not detrimentally impacted by the proposed development works on site, that there is no loss of ecological viability, and that the favourable conservation statuses of the species in the local area are not affected.

2 Background

- 2.1 The proposed development site is located at Amiesmill Farm, Kerves Lane, Horsham, RH13 6RL at central grid reference TQ 18398 29104. The site is situated in a rural part of West Sussex, just south of Horsham and 620m south of the A281, with the River Arun flowing beneath the access track to the site. The surrounding landscape predominantly comprises tree and hedge-lined fields of arable and pasture, leading to small woodland blocks with more built-up residential areas located from 375m to the north of the site. See Figure 1.
- 2.2 The site is approximately 0.5ha and largely comprises an access track leading to a yard with a large, metal agricultural shed and stable block with a small section of horse-grazed field and small areas of grassland. See Figure 2.
- 2.3 Detailed plans are not yet available; however, the proposals will involve the construction of a residential dwelling in place of the existing agricultural barn and the creation of an amenity garden within the existing field. Only small areas of low-level vegetation are to be impacted.



FIGURE 1: SHOWING THE SITE LOCATION



FIGURE 2: AERIAL VIEW OF THE SITE SHOWING THE SITE BOUNDARY AND BUILDINGS SUBJECT TO BAT ASSESSMENT

3 Methods

Desk Study

- 3.1 The Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website provided by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) was consulted to obtain information about any international or European level designated nature conservation sites within 2km of the site boundary, afforded protection either directly by the Conservation of Habitat and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (2019) or to the same level of protection through planning policy (the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Development Framework). Information regarding statutory designated sites, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within a 2km radius of the site, were also obtained from MAGIC.
- 3.2 Aerial photos of the site (Google Earth, 2026) were examined to determine habitats surrounding the site and hence species likely to be present to make appropriate recommendations in the wider landscape context.
- 3.3 Records of protected and notable species and non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site were requested from the local biological records centre (Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre).
- 3.4 Records were screened for relevance and age with only those from the last 10 years and of species that could occur on site considered further.
- 3.5 A search for waterbodies within 500m of the site boundary was undertaken using MAGIC mapping to assess their connectivity to the site.

UKHab Habitat Survey

- 3.6 A daytime ecological walkover assessment was carried out on the 13th March 2026 to record and map the habitats present.
- 3.7 The survey involved a UK Habitat Classification System Survey which was carried out based on the standard methodology produced by UKHab Ltd (2023) and included searches for signs of protected species, as described in the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Assessment (CIEEM, 2017). This involves the following elements:
 - Habitat mapping using a set of standard colour codes to indicate habitat types on a UK Habitat Classification Map.
 - Description of features of ecological or nature conservation interest in notes relating to numbered locations on the UK Habitat Classification Map, called Target Notes (for habitat and features of possible interest).
- 3.8 Plant nomenclature in this report follows Stace (2019) for native and naturalised species of vascular plant. Nomenclature for mosses and liverworts follow the

Checklist for British and Irish Bryophytes (2021). Plant names in the text are given with the English name first, followed by the Latin name. Latin names for all species are given just once and not repeated.

Protected Species Walkover

- 3.9 An assessment was made of habitat suitability in and around the site for those protected species that occur in the region. Obvious signs and incidental sightings of protected species are noted when encountered, but walkover surveys do not usually confirm species presence or absence.
- 3.10 Taking into consideration the geographical region and habitat type, species that could be encountered are:
- badgers;
 - bats;
 - breeding birds;
 - barn owls;
 - great crested newts (GCN);
 - hazel dormice;
 - reptiles;
 - otters;
 - water voles; and
 - other Species of Principal Importance (SPI) (e.g. hedgehog, stag beetle etc).
- 3.11 In addition, observations of any Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI), other mammals, invasive species, plant species of note, or other valuable ecological features will be recorded and detailed.
- 3.12 Details of the initial survey methods are given below.
- 3.13 **Habitats of Principal Importance** – Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) within or adjacent to the site (such as deciduous woodland, arable field margins, traditional orchards, ponds, rivers, wet woodlands, native hedgerows) are recorded.
- 3.14 **Badgers** – An initial assessment was carried out to identify areas that might be used by badgers (*Meles meles*). Signs of badgers including setts, incidental foraging signs, runs, hairs and latrines are recorded if encountered during the survey. Where possible the area within 30m of the site is also searched for badger setts.
- 3.15 **Bats** – The site and surrounding area were assessed for habitats with suitability for foraging and commuting bats, such as woodland, tree lines, hedgerows, scrub, waterbodies, watercourses, and semi-natural grassland. Any buildings were examined and assessed for evidence of bats, such as rub marks, staining or droppings or for features that have good potential to be used by bats, such as loft voids, raised tiles, hanging tiles, gaps in soffits and lead flashing cracks, crevices and

mortise joints. Trees were assessed for their potential to be used by bats such as woodpecker holes, splits, cracks and crevices or loose bark plates which can be used as roost features by bats. Such features are noted and examined by using equipment such as a high-powered torch, endoscope and binoculars, to determine their suitability for bats.

- 3.16 **Breeding Birds** – Habitats were assessed for their suitability for nesting birds. This would centre on birds that favour hedgerows, areas of longer grassland, scrub, trees as well as buildings.
- 3.17 **Barn Owls** – The buildings were subject to a full external and internal inspection for evidence of use by barn owl (*Tyto alba*), namely live/dead owls, pellets, droppings, feathers, nest debris, nestling fluff, and eggs or eggshells.
- 3.18 **Great Crested Newts (GCN)** - Initial surveys centre on identifying suitable habitat within the site. If breeding ponds are present within the locality, then great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) could potentially be using the terrestrial habitat on the site. Maps are used to identify any ponds (that are not isolated by unsuitable habitat or physical barriers) within 500m of the site. A Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) is used to quantifiably assess whether a pond is suitable, this is undertaken for any onsite ponds during the walkover survey.
- 3.19 **Hazel Dormice** – Hedgerows, scrub, and woodland are assessed for their suitability for foraging and nesting hazel dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*). Favoured berry and nut bearing species such as hawthorn, hazel and bramble were looked for in particular. Additionally, the connectivity of this habitat and to suitable habitat beyond the site is also assessed. If hazel nuts are present a brief search for nuts that have been chewed by hazel dormouse (i.e. displaying the characteristic smooth round hole) was conducted.
- 3.20 **Reptiles** – The site was assessed for suitable habitat for reptiles, such as long grassland and areas of scrub, with particular attention paid to those features that provide suitable basking areas (e.g. south-facing slopes and walls), hibernation sites (e.g. banks, log piles and piles of rotting vegetation) and opportunities for foraging (e.g. rough grassland and scrub).
- 3.21 **Otters** – Initial surveys aim to assess the site for watercourses suitable for otters (*Lutra lutra*). If suitable watercourses are present on or adjacent to the site, evidence of otters is searched for. Signs of otters includes spraints, feeding remains and sightings are recorded if encountered during the survey.
- 3.22 **Water Voles** – Initial survey aims to assess the site for watercourses that may be suitable for water voles (*Arvicola amphibious*). If suitable watercourses are present on site, evidence of water voles is searched for. Signs of water voles includes faeces,

latrines, feeding stations, burrows, footprints, runs or pathways and sightings which are recorded if encountered during the survey.

- 3.23 **Other Species of Principal Importance (SPI)** – The habitats present on site were assessed for the likelihood of presence for species of regional and national importance, for example hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*), harvest mouse (*Micromys minutus*), common toad (*Bufo bufo*), and various notable beetles, moths and pollinators.
- 3.24 **Other Mammals** – Any signs of occupancy by other mammals (e.g. rabbit warrens) are recorded.
- 3.25 **Invasive Species** – Any invasive plant or animal species identified during the site walkover are recorded.
- 3.26 **Plant Species of Note** – Any plant species of conservation concern found on the site are recorded.
- 3.27 **Other Valuable Ecological Features** – Other ecological features such as veteran trees, bird feeding stations, habitat enhancements etc. within or adjacent to the site are recorded.

4 Constraints/Limitations

- 4.1 An initial site assessment such as this is only able to act as a snapshot to record any flora or fauna that is present at the time of the survey. It is therefore possible that some species may not have been present during the survey but may be evident at other times of the year. For this reason, habitats are assessed for their potential to support some species, even where no direct evidence (such as droppings) has been found.
- 4.2 Some protected species records are confidential and therefore not included within the data search results provided by the records centre. Absence of records does not automatically correspond to absence of species within the impact zone of the development.
- 4.3 The survey took place in March, which is very early in the growing season, therefore some plant species may not be visible or readily identifiable.

5 Results and Evaluation

Desk Study

Sites and Habitats

Statutory Designated Sites

- 5.1 There are two statutory designated sites located within 2km of the proposed development site. The nearest statutory designated site is High Weald Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB) which is located 750m to the northeast. The other is St. Leonard's Park Ponds Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is located 1.85km to the northeast.

Non-Statutory Designated Sites

- 5.2 There are four non-statutory designated sites located within 2km of the proposed development site. The closest is Chesworth Farm Local Wildlife Site (LWS), located immediately west of Kerves Lane where the site boundary joins it, but 280m west of the main development area.

Habitats of Principal Importance

- 5.3 Habitats data available via MAGIC was reviewed for the presence of Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI). There are no HPI mapped within the site, however there is good-quality semi-improved grassland (non-priority habitat) and lowland meadows to the west of Kerves Lane. Additionally, although not displayed on MAGIC, the river Arun is a chalk river and runs beneath and parallel to the access track. There are also small blocks of ancient and semi-natural woodland and deciduous woodland in the wider area. See Figure 3.

Waterbodies within 500m of the Site Boundary

- 5.4 The Ordnance Survey map available via MAGIC was reviewed for ponds within the accepted GCN dispersal distance of 500m that are not separated from the site by significant barriers to dispersal such as main roads. Eight ponds were found occurring in all directions of the site. These are shown in Figure 4 and listed below:

- Pond 1: 115m to the southeast
- Pond 2: 180m to the northeast
- Pond 3: 145m to the north
- Pond 4: 250 to the northwest
- Pond 5: 440m to the northwest
- Pond 6: 270m to the west
- Pond 7: 265m to the west
- Pond 8: 450m to the southwest

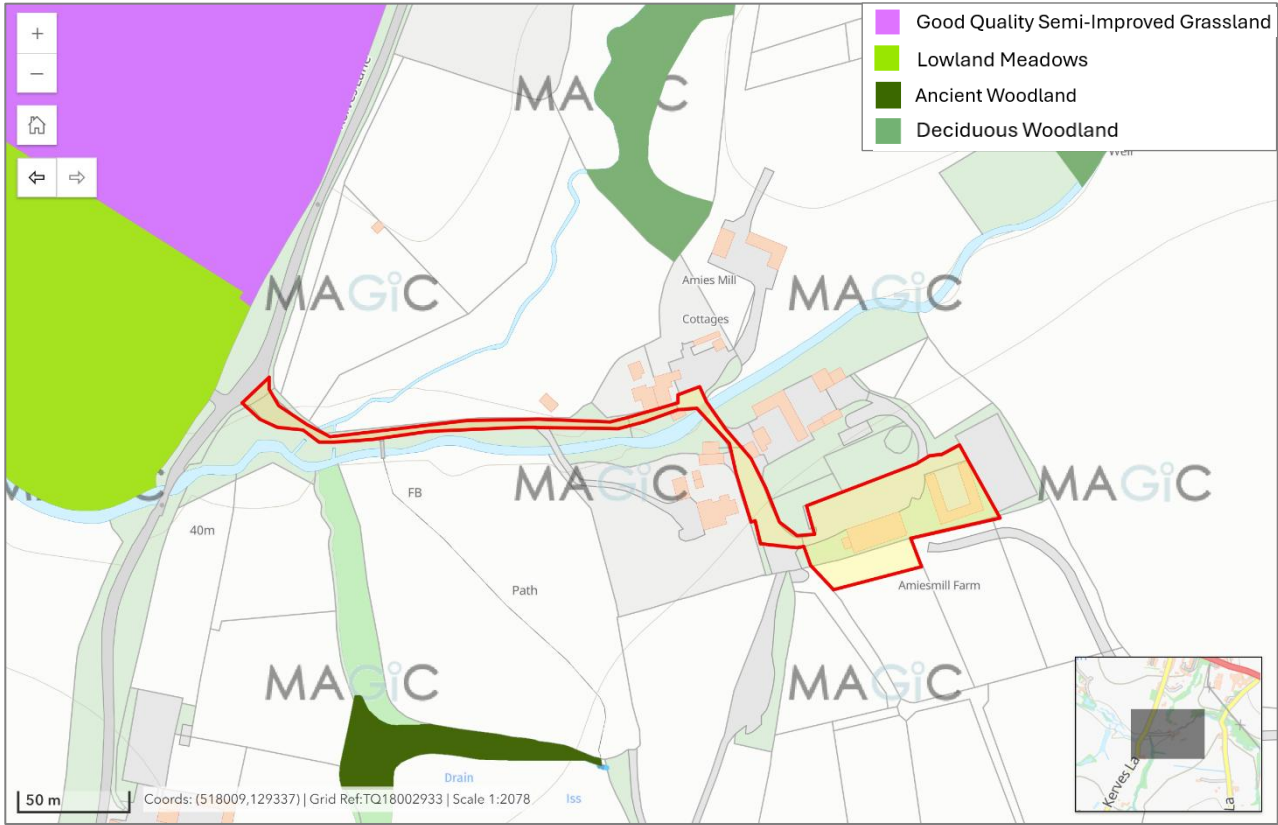


FIGURE 3: SHOWING HABITATS OF PRINCIPAL IMPORTANCE IN PROXIMITY TO THE SITE

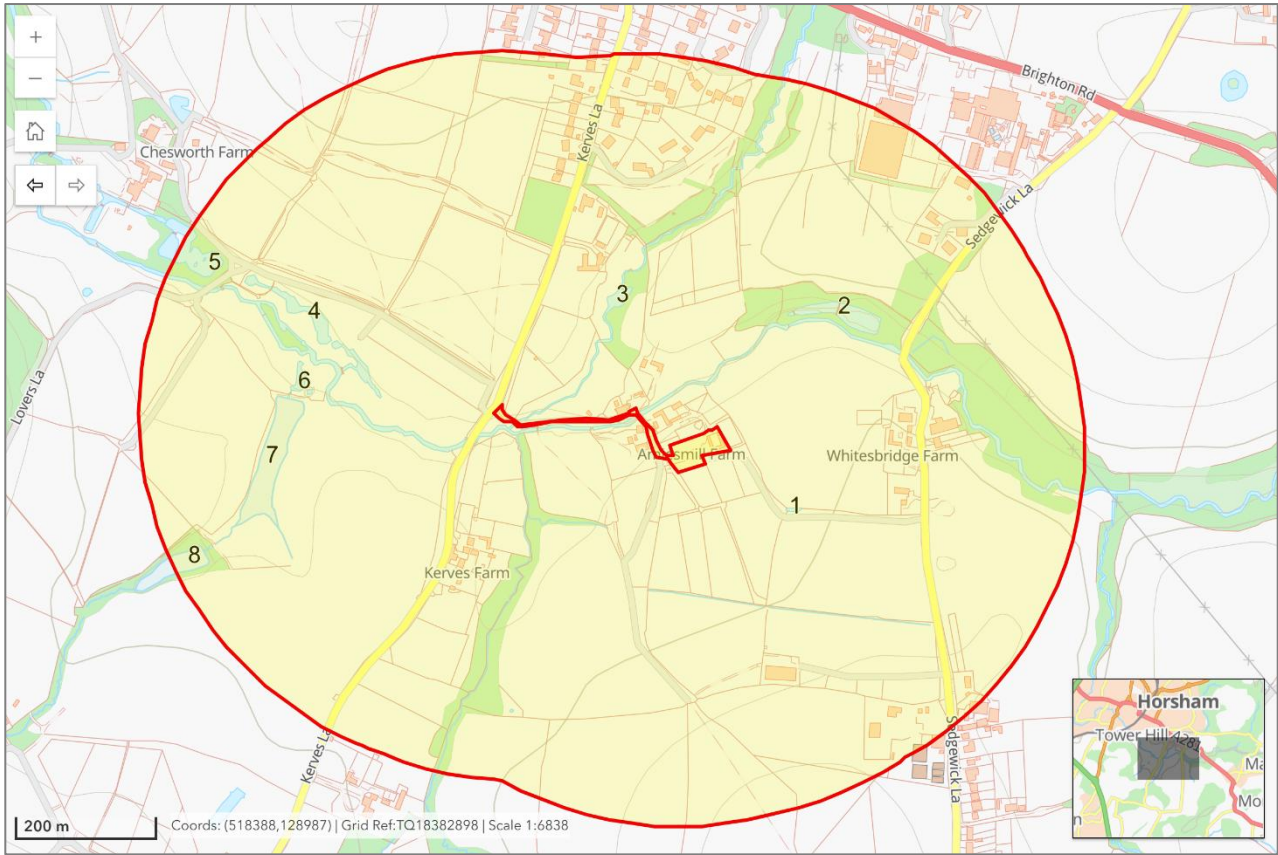


FIGURE 4: WATERBODIES WITHIN 500M

Protected and Notable Species

Badgers

- 5.5 Records of badger are kept confidentially by this Local Records Centre.

Bats

- 5.6 A minimum of five species of bat has been recorded within 2km of the site, including common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*), brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), and Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*).

Birds

- 5.7 39 species of bird have been recorded within 2km of the site in the past ten years, including nightjar (*Apus apus*), hobby, (*Falco subbuteo*), sky lark (*Alauda arvensis*), hawfinch (*coccothraustes coccothraustes*), yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*) and redstart (*Phoenicurus phoenicurus*).

Barn Owls

- 5.8 There are 87 records of barn owls within 2km of the site in the past ten years.

Great Crested Newts

- 5.9 There are 18 records of GCN within 2km of the site in the past ten years, the closest record is approximately 700m to the northwest of the site.

Hazel Dormice

- 5.10 There are four records of hazel dormice within 2km of the site in the past ten years.

Reptiles

- 5.11 There are 84 records of slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*), 72 records of grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*), three records of adder (*Vipera berus*), and three records of common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) within 2km of the site.

Otters

- 5.12 No records of otter were found within 2km of the site.

Water Voles

- 5.13 No records of water vole were found within 2km of the site in the past 10 years, but there are two historic records.

Other Species of Principal Importance (SPI)

- 5.14 There are 23 records of hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) and six records of harvest mouse (*Micromys minutus*) within 2km of the site in the past ten years.

Other Mammals

5.15 There are records of rabbit within 2km of the site.

Field Survey

Habitats

5.16 UKHab habitat maps are shown in Figures 5 and 6. The habitats present on the site are described below.

Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface

5.17 Much of the site is covered by a compacted gravel surface. This includes most of the access track and the central yard area, between the agricultural shed, stables, and marginal grass areas. A narrow gravel path also leads out of stables to the south.



Developed land; sealed surface

5.18 There is sealed hardstanding along the section of the access track that crosses a bridge over the river Arun and to the south of this. There are three buildings on the site – an agricultural shed, U-shaped stable block, and small timber shed. The buildings are described in further detail in the 'Bat' section below. Within the U-shaped stable block in the east of the site is a central concrete-surfaced courtyard.



Photograph 3 – Concrete courtyard between the stables.

Modified Grassland

- 5.19 Surrounding the yard and stable block there are small parcels of fairly species-poor modified grassland. The northern areas are mown and have a very short sward height, whilst the grassland to the south and east of the stable block has a thicker, slightly taller sward. Species noted include perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), dock (*Rumex spp.*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), common daisy (*Bellis perennis*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*) and common hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) present throughout all.
- 5.20 To the south of the agricultural shed is a horse-grazed field of extremely short sward and species-poor modified grassland, with considerable damage from movement of the horses on wet ground. Species noted here include dock, creeping buttercup, and common nettle (*Urtica dioica*).



Photograph 4 – Mown modified grassland in the northeastern corner.



Photograph 5 – Thicker grassland to the east of the stables.



Photograph 6 – Thicker grassland to the south of the stables.



Photograph 7 – Horse-grazed field to the south of the agricultural shed.

Ruderal/Ephemeral

- 5.21 The largest parcel of ruderal vegetation is to the west of the agricultural shed and has started establishing around rubble piles and partially over former hardstanding. The vegetation is fairly sparse and low-level. Frequent species include common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), red dead-nettle (*Lamium purpureum*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.), dandelion (*Taraxacum* sp.), burdock (*Arctium* spp.), cleavers (*Galium aparine*), comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*), bristly oxtongue (*Helminthotheca echioides*), and groundsel (*Senecio vulgaris*).
- 5.22 There is a small area of sparse and less diverse ruderal vegetation on the eastern side of the agricultural shed consisting mostly of common nettle, blue comfrey (*Symphytum officinale*), dock and cleavers. Additionally, a thin strip of ruderal vegetation is present along the western edge of the stable block establishing through previously laid unsealed surface and further rubble piles, with cleavers, dandelion, creeping buttercup, common daisy, square-stalked willowherb (*Epilobium tetragonum*), garlic mustard (*Alliaria petiolata*), bramble, and common hogweed recorded.



Photograph 8 – Ruderal to the west of the agricultural shed.



Photograph 9 – Ruderal to the east of the agricultural shed.



Photograph 10 – Strip of ruderal to the west of the stable block.

Bare Ground

- 5.23 Immediately south of the agricultural shed there is a narrow strip of bare ground from recent clearance. Based on satellite imagery and the evidence that remains, this appears to have previously been bramble scrub and a single small tree.



Photograph 11 – Bare ground.

Individual Tree

- 5.24 There is a single tree on the site, this being a small willow (*Salix* sp.) in the southwestern corner of the yard.



Photograph 12 – Willow tree on-site.



FIGURE 5: UKHAB HABITAT MAP (WHOLE SITE)



FIGURE 6: UKHAB HABITAT MAP (DEVELOPMENT AREA)

Habitat Evaluation

- 5.25 All of the habitats on site are common and widespread and considered to be of low ecological value, with limited opportunities for wildlife.

Protected Species and Species of Conservation Concern

Badgers

- 5.26 No badger setts were identified present on site. No evidence of badger activity, such as latrines, tracks, guard hairs or snuffle holes, was observed on or directly adjacent to the site. It is considered unlikely that any badger setts are present within 30m of the site boundary as no evidence of badger activity was identified during the survey and the habitats do not seem to be those favoured by badgers.

Bats

Roosting

- 5.27 The stable block on site is a U-shaped building of simple construction, formed of single-skin timber weatherboarding beneath a pitched, unlined roof of corrugated fibre cement sheeting and a ridge cap of similar material, with no enclosed roof void present. There are no features suitable for roosting within the roof due to there being no batten space or other crevices, and the corrugated nature of the sheets meaning any gaps created between the sheeting and ridge cap are too large to roost within. Whilst there is open access to the interior, internally the stables are very open with no crevice spaces, light and draughty conditions, and frequent disturbance due to the stables being in active use. No evidence of bats was identified, and the rafters were heavily cobwebbed throughout. The stables are considered to have negligible potential to support roosting bats.



Photograph 9: Exterior of stable block.



Photograph 10: Interior of stables.

- 5.28 The agricultural shed is used for the storage of agricultural equipment and is constructed of a metal frame with single-skin corrugated sheets forming the roof and

walls. It is open fronted to the north. There are no areas or features suitable for roosting, and it is considered to have negligible potential to support roosting bats.



Photograph 11: Exterior of agricultural shed.



Photograph 12: Interior of agricultural shed.

5.29 The timber shed is a very small structure of single-skin wooden construction with a tight-fitting bitumen felt pitched roof. The door is kept shut where internally it is used for storage and there are no potential roosting features internally or externally. It is considered to have negligible potential to support roosting bats.



Photograph 13: Exterior of timber shed.



Photograph 14: Interior of timber shed.

5.30 The willow tree in the southeast corner of the site is small, slender, and multi-stemmed, with no features suitable for roosting bats.

Foraging and Commuting

5.31 The modified grassland is species poor and mostly maintained at a short-sward, and the ruderal vegetation is in its early stages of establishment meaning there is a lack of structure and diversity within these habitats to provide sufficient ecological niches to support abundant populations of invertebrates. There is no dense vegetation cover anywhere in the site to provide flightlines for commuting bats. Whilst bats moving

through the wider landscape could forage opportunistically within the site, it is overall considered to be of very low value for foraging and commuting bats.

Breeding Birds

- 5.32 There is habitat suitable for breeding birds on the site within the individual willow tree, the stable block, and the agricultural shed. An old swallow's (*Hirundo rustica*) nest was identified within one of the stables. At the time of the visit, there were multiple pigeons (*Columba spp.*) roosting within the agricultural shed, and one old nest was identified above the open northern side on top of a security light.



Photograph 15: Swallow's nest within stable.



Photograph 16: Nest within agricultural shed.

Barn Owls

- 5.33 The stables and the metal barn both provide fly-in access for barn owls and the stable dividers could potentially be used for perching, however this is unlikely whilst the stables are in active use. Neither building contains any ledges wide enough for roosting or nesting. No evidence of barn owls was identified in either building.

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

- 5.34 The site is considered to have very limited potential to support terrestrial GCN. The only suitable vegetated habitat is the thicker grassland to the south and east of the stable block, however this area is small and is fairly isolated from other suitable habitat in the surrounding area, making it unlikely to be used by this species. Rubble piles on-site (see Figures 5 and 6) provide suitable refugia, however these are also fairly isolated from suitable habitat, reducing their likelihood of being used. Due to the presence of two ponds within 250m and further ponds within 500m, GCN could be present in the vicinity of the site.
- 5.35 No ponds were recorded within the site boundary. The site is therefore unsuitable for breeding GCN.

Hazel Dormice

- 5.36 The site is considered to have negligible potential to support hazel dormice due to an absence of any suitable habitat.

Reptiles

- 5.37 The site is considered to have very limited potential to support common reptiles such as slow worms, common lizards and grass snakes. The only suitable vegetated habitat is the thicker grassland to the south and east of the stable block, however this area is small and is fairly isolated from other suitable habitat in the surrounding area, making it unlikely to be used by these species. Rubble piles on-site (see Figures 5 and 6) provide suitable refugia, however these are also fairly isolated from suitable habitat, reducing their likelihood of being used.

Otters

- 5.38 The River Arun that the access track passes over has some potential to support otters. However, there is no suitable terrestrial habitat between the river and the development area, or on the development area itself, with these areas comprising mostly hardstanding and mown grass. As such, the likelihood of this species being present within the development area is negligible.



Photograph 17: River Arun looking east off the access track.

Water Voles

- 5.39 The River Arun that the access track passes over has some potential to support water voles. However, there is no suitable terrestrial habitat between the river and the development area, or on the development area itself, with these areas comprising mostly hardstanding and mown grass. As such, the likelihood of this species being present within the development area is negligible.

Other Species of Principal Importance

- 5.40 There is potential for the site to support SPI such as hedgehog, however there are only limited opportunities for this species to forage.

Other Ecological Features of Note

Other Mammals

5.41 Mole hills were noted within the site, south of the metal barn (see Figures 5 and 6).

Plant Species of Note

5.26 No plant species of note were identified.

Invasive Species

5.42 No invasive species of note were identified. However, a cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) hedge is located immediately adjacent to the site, where the access track meets the main development area.

Other Valuable Ecological Features

5.43 No other valuable ecological features were recorded.

6 Conclusions and Recommendations

6.1 In line with Natural England's Standing Advice, where further survey for protected species is recommended these should be conducted prior to submitting a planning application and appropriate mitigation measures be incorporated into the development design.

Designated Sites

6.2 No direct impacts are likely on any statutory or non-statutory designated sites due to none being in very close proximity to the development area. However, the access track from the site crosses the River Arun which hydrologically connects to Chesworth Farm LWS. This presents a potential pathway for pollutants (e.g. sediments, oils, and debris) generated during construction to enter the watercourse and be transported downstream into the LWS. Without appropriate controls, there is potential for indirect adverse effects on the LWS via contamination of the watercourse during construction activities. **Protective measures to prevent pollution are recommended, which could be secured through a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) or similar.** These may include:

- Installation of a designated wheel washing / tyre cleaning facility before the river crossing.
- All vehicles to have tyres cleaned prior to leaving the site.
- Regular inspection and maintenance of the access track to prevent sediment build-up.
- Appropriate storage and handling of fuels and materials away from the watercourse.
- Implementation of silt control measures where necessary.

Habitats of Principal Importance

- 6.3 No HPI habitat was recorded within the site, however the access track crosses over and runs adjacent to the River Arun, which is a chalk river. Whilst no development works are proposed here, construction vehicles will use the access track, and **measures must be taken to ensure this does not result in pollution to the river. These can be secured through a CEMP or similar document, as recommended above.**

Badgers

- 6.4 The survey did not identify any evidence of badgers on the site, and it is considered unlikely that there is a sett present within 30m. No further surveys for badgers are considered necessary. **As badgers could potentially pass through the site, the following precautionary measures should be adopted:**
- Any trenches or other deep excavations are to be covered at night or have an escape ramp installed.
 - No food or waste materials are to be left out overnight.
 - All chemicals and hazardous materials are to be securely stored.

Bats

- 6.5 The buildings were considered to have negligible potential to support roosting bats and, as such, there are no known constraints regarding these species any proposed works and demolitions of these buildings.
- 6.6 The small willow tree on site was found to have no suitability for roosting bats, therefore no further surveys or mitigation for bats will be required if plans involve the removal of this tree.
- 6.7 Lighting can have notable negative impacts on commuting and foraging bats, that are known to be present locally. There is potential for lighting during and post-development to cause indirect disturbance. **New external lighting should be avoided or kept to the minimum necessary, and preferably downlit and on a motion sensor to reduce lighting time.**

Breeding Birds

- 6.8 **Tree removal or building demolition should preferably be undertaken outside of the breeding bird period which runs from March to August. Should any clearance or demolition be scheduled to take place between the beginning of March and the end of August, this must be immediately preceded by a survey to check for nesting birds.** No vegetation can be cleared or building demolished whilst a nest is occupied, regardless of species. If active nests are found, a minimum buffer zone of 5m must be established until the chicks have fledged.

Barn Owls

- 6.9 There are no features suitable for roosting or nesting within the buildings, and a thorough search of the buildings did not identify any evidence of barn owl activity. As such barn owls are not considered to be a constraint to the proposed works.

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

- 6.10 There is only a very small area of suitable, but sub-optimal, terrestrial habitat for GCN on-site. The closest pond is over 100m from the site. A Rapid Risk Assessment has been carried out based on the area of suitable habitat onsite and the location of the nearest waterbodies to the site. This shows that in the absence of mitigation, an offence is highly unlikely. See Figure 7.

Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.01 - 0.1 ha lost or damaged	0.01
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.01 - 0.1 ha lost or damaged	0.001
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
Maximum:		0.01
Rapid risk assessment result:	GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY	

FIGURE 7: RAPID RISK ASSESSMENT OF THE SITE

- 6.11 Given that an offence is highly unlikely due to the small area of land being impacted, no further surveys for this species is required. **To minimise risk, it is recommended that vegetation within the proposed working area is maintained as a short sward in the interim before works commence, to prevent this area from becoming more suitable for GCN. Rubble piles must also be carefully dismantled by hand.**

Hazel Dormice

- 6.12 The site is considered to be unsuitable for hazel dormice due to the lack of appropriate habitat and therefore no further surveys or mitigation for this species are required.

Reptiles

- 6.13 It is considered unlikely that reptiles are present using the site regularly and, given the small scale and low-impact nature of the proposed development, no further surveys are considered necessary.
- 6.14 As recommended for GCN, **vegetation within the proposed working area should be maintained as a short sward in the interim before works commence, to prevent this area from becoming more suitable for reptiles. Rubble piles must also be carefully dismantled by hand.**

Otters

- 6.15 There is considered to be a negligible likelihood of otters being present within the working area and therefore no further surveys or mitigation for this species are required. Protective measures for the River Arun as recommended for designated sites and HPIs above will ensure the works do not impact any potential otters using this river.

Water Voles

- 6.16 There is considered to be a negligible likelihood of water voles being present within the working area and therefore no further surveys or mitigation for this species are required. Protective measures for the River Arun as recommended for designated sites and HPIs above will ensure the works do not impact any potential water voles using this river.

Other Species of Principal Importance

- 6.17 The west European hedgehog is an SPI, **therefore it is recommended that any rubble piles should be cleared sensitively by hand. If close board fencing is to be fitted it should be raised above ground level to allow hedgehogs to pass underneath or have hedgehog gaps installed, and some habitat areas should be left un-landscaped to provide shelter and foraging opportunities.** Precautionary recommendations listed for badgers above will ensure that any hedgehogs traversing through the site do not become trapped or harmed during the works. Additional habitat for hedgehogs could be provided through relaxation of mowing and seeding with an appropriate wildflower meadow mix in some areas of the site.

Other Mammals

- 6.18 **Site clearance work should be undertaken carefully (by hand if necessary) to avoid crushing any small mammals within their burrows. Any temporary or permanent fencing should avoid the use of loose mesh or netting that may entangle mammals.**

Plant Species of Note

- 6.19 No plant species of note were recorded and therefore no further action is required.

Invasive Species

- 6.20 **Care must be taken to prevent the spread of cherry laurel onto site.**

Other Valuable Ecological Features

- 6.21 No other valuable ecological features were recorded and therefore no further action is required.

Impact Assessment

6.22 Overall, it is considered that there are no likely significant impacts to the fauna or flora populations within the local area from the proposed works provided the recommendations above are adhered to.

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Appendix 1 – Survey Timetable

Species	Survey	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Badger	Bait marking & sett search												
Bats	Roost assessments												
	Ground level tree assessments												
	Emergence & activity												
	Hibernation												
	Trapping												
Birds	Wintering												
	Breeding												
Great crested newt	HSI												
	eDNA												
	Presence/absence & population												
	Refugia												
Hazel dormouse	Tube												
	Nut search												
Otter	Field signs												
Reptiles	Refugia & search												
Water vole	Field signs												
Invertebrates	Presence & communities												
Vegetation	Phase 1 habitat & NVC												
	Optimal												
	Sub-optimal												
	Outside survey season												

Appendix 2 – Legal Protection

General

This section briefly describes the legal protection afforded to protected species and habitats. It is for information only and is not intended to be comprehensive or to replace specialised legal advice. It is not intended to replace the text of the legislation but summarises the salient points.

Badger

Badgers are protected under the *Protection of Badgers Act 1992*. Under this legislation it is an offence to kill or injure a badger, to damage, destroy or block access to a badger sett, or to disturb a badger in its sett. The Act also states the conditions for the protection of badger's licence requirements.

Barn Owl

Barn owls are listed on *Schedule 1* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* which makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
- take, damage or destroy the nest while that nest is in use or being built;
- take or destroy the egg;
- disturb them while they are in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young, or to disturb their dependent young;
- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.

The penalty for an offence involving a barn owl, its nest, or egg, includes a fine of up to £5,000, or up to six months imprisonment, or both, per bird, nest or egg.

Bats

All species of bats are listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. They are also protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. In combination, this makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
- possess;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and
- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.

A roost is defined as 'any structure or place which a bat uses for shelter or protection'. As bats tend to reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not bats are present.

Furthermore, seven bat species (barbastelle, bechstein's, noctule, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, lesser horseshoe and greater horseshoe) are also Species of Principal Importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

Breeding Birds

All species of wild bird are protected under Section 1 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*. Protection was extended by the *Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000*. Under the above legislation, it is an offence to intentionally:

- kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or
- take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

Certain species are listed on *Schedule 1* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* and receive protection under *Sections 1(4) and 1(5)*. There are special penalties where the offences listed above are committed for any *Schedule 1* species and it is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- disturb any such bird when it is building its nest or while it is in or near a nest containing dependant young; or
- disturb the dependant young of any such bird.

Amphibians

Natterjack toad, northern pool frog and great crested newt are listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. They are also protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. In combination, this makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
- possess;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and
- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.

Palmate newts and smooth newts are also afforded protection against sale only under *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*.

Natterjack toad, common toad, great crested newt and northern pool frog are also Species of Principal Importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

Hazel Dormouse

Hazel dormouse is listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. They are also protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. In combination, this makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
- possess;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and

- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.

Hazel dormouse is also a Species of Principal Importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

Otter

Otter is listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*, which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. They are also protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. In combination, this makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
- possess;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and
- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.

Otter is also a Species of Principal Importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

Reptiles

Common lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*), grass snake (*Natrix natrix*), slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*), and adder (*Vipera berus*) are listed under *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*, in respect of *Section 9(5)* and part of *Section 9(1)*. This protection was extended by the *Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000*. Under the legislation, it is an offence to:

- intentionally or deliberately kill or injure any individual of these species; or
- sell or attempt to sell any part of these species either alive or dead.

Smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*) and sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*) are listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*, which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. They are also protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. In combination, this makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
- possess;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and
- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.

All UK reptile species are Species of Principal Importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

Water Vole

Water vole (*Arvicola amphibious*) is listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*, which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. This makes it an offence to:

- capture, kill or injure;
- damage, destroy or block access to a place of shelter;
- disturb whilst in a place of shelter or possessing, and
- sell any part of a water vole, dead or alive.

Other Mammals

All mammals receive some protection under the *Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996*, which makes it an offence to crush or asphyxiate an animal (e.g. within its burrow).

Species and Habitats of Principal Importance

Section 41 of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) (2006)* requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The S41 list has 56 Habitats of Principal Importance and 943 species of principal importance listed and has been drawn up in consultation with Natural England.

The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under *Section 40* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.

Invasive Species

It is an offence to plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild non-native plant species listed under *Schedule 9* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*, for which *Section 14* of the Act applies. These include, but are not limited to:

- Himalayan balsam
- Cotoneaster sp.
- Japanese knotweed
- Giant hogweed.

Ancient Woodland

The *National Planning Policy Framework (2012)* states that ‘*Planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss*’. In addition, Natural England’s standing advice for ancient woodland states that *an appropriate buffer zone of semi-natural habitat [be in place] between the development and the ancient woodland (depending on the scale and impact of development), a minimum buffer should be at least 15 metres to avoid root damage and at least 50m for pollution or trampling*’. Ancient woodlands, and ancient and veteran trees, may also be protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

SSSI's are areas notified under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended*, as being of special interest for nature conservation. They are the finest sites for wildlife and natural features supporting many characteristic, rare and endangered species, habitats and natural features. LPAs have a duty to consult Natural England before granting planning permission on any development that is in or likely to affect a SSSI.

National Site Network: Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) & RAMSAR sites

Development proposals which will adversely affect these sites are not permitted (except where there are no alternative solutions and the proposal is necessary for imperative reasons of overriding public interest). If a development could possibly impact on a SPA or SAC, the applicant will need to submit an assessment of potential impacts and their significance with their planning application for the local authority to make an 'Appropriate Assessment'.

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)

These are a statutory designation made by local authorities. LNRs may be given protection against damaging operations and development on and around them via the local plan.

Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)

This is a non-statutory designation for sites identified at a county level. They typically form a network of sites that are recognised of being of conservation importance locally and are often included in Local Authority development plans.