



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

**Cherry Tree Cottage, Pickhurst Lane,
Pulborough, West Sussex, RH20 1DA**

July 2026



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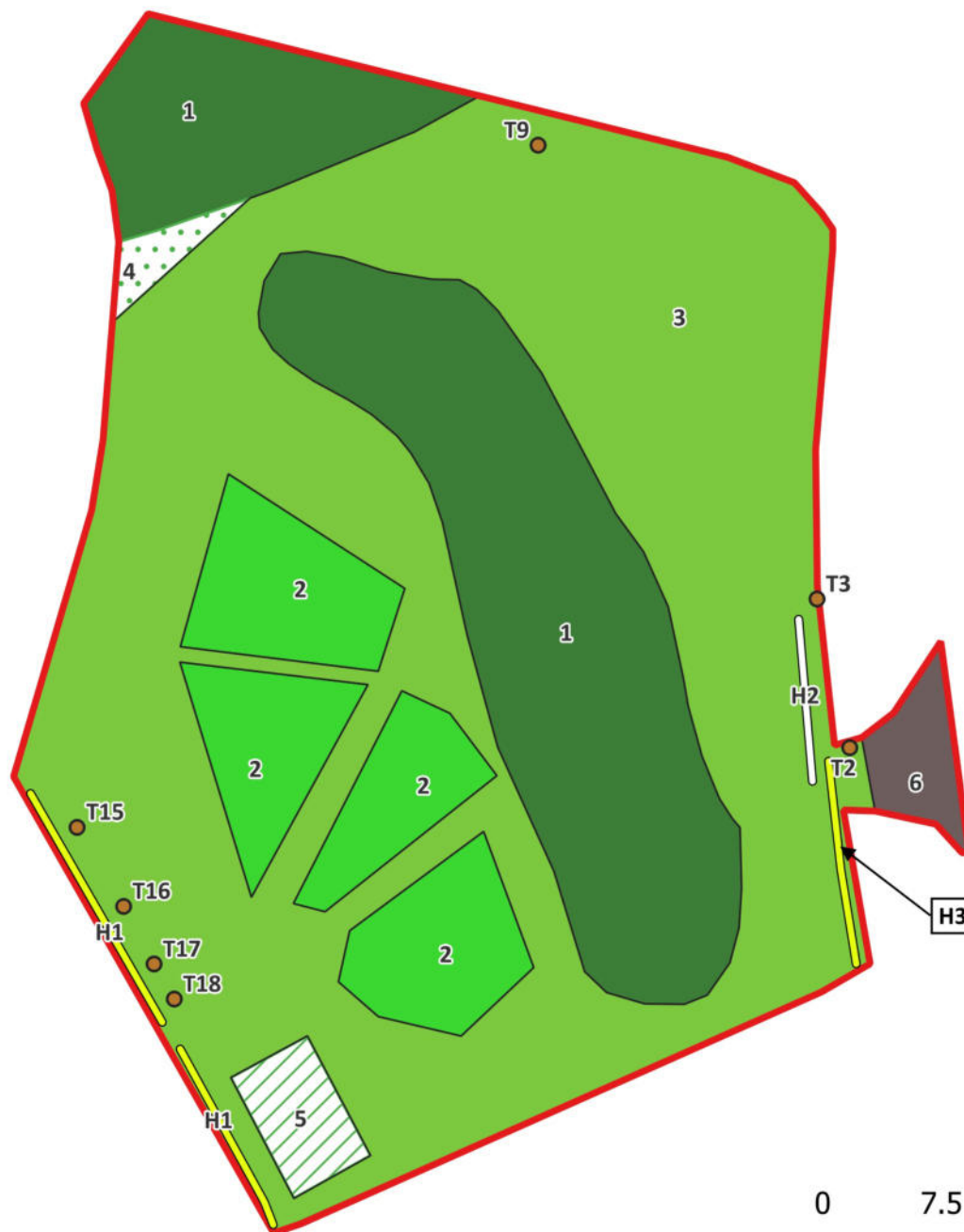
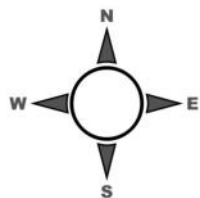
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Legend

-  Development boundary
- UKHab Baseline**
-  g3c - Other neutral grassland
-  g4 - Modified grassland
-  u1 - 828 - Vegetated garden
-  w1g - Other broadleaved woodland
-  u1 - 827 - Garden
-  u1b - Developed land; sealed surface
-  h2a - Native hedgerow
-  h2b - Non-native and ornamental hedgerow
-  32 - Scattered trees

Figure Title:
UK Habitat Classification Survey Results

Client/ Project Reference:
Christine Wells
C-NJA-116

Figure number:	Revision:	Scale at A4:
2	1	1:450
Cartographer:	Date drawn:	Approver:
AM	24/07/2026	HB

Photo 1: Displaying a parcel of other broadleaved woodland habitat, within the development boundary.

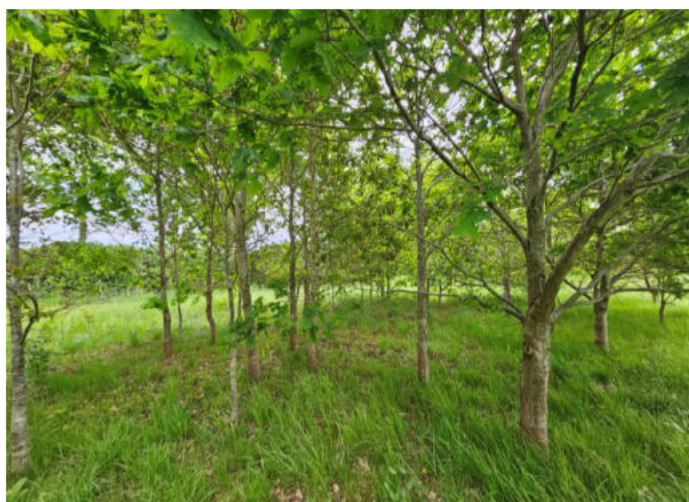


Photo 2: Displaying the other neutral grassland parcels, within the development boundary.

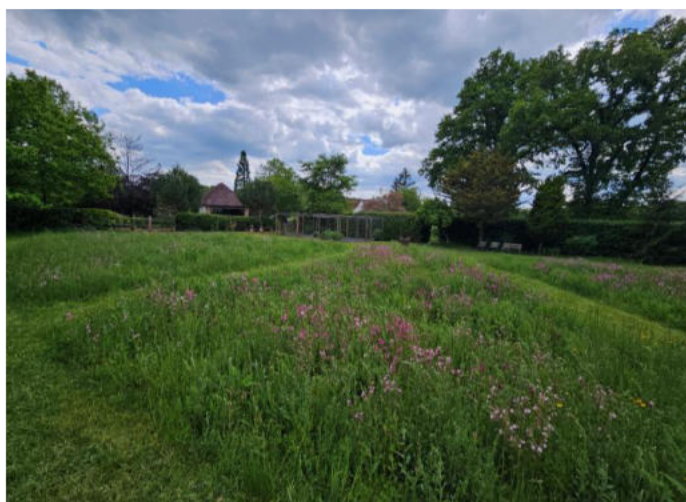


Photo 3: Displaying an area of modified grassland habitat, within the development boundary.



Photo 4: Displaying a parcel of vegetated garden habitat, within the northwestern corner of the development boundary.



Photo 5: Displaying the garden urban habitat, within the development boundary.



Photo 6: Displaying both H2 and H3 hedgerows, along the northeastern development boundary, where the new site access is proposed.



Figure Title: UK Habitat Classification Survey – Photographs			Client: Christine Wells
Site Location: Cherry Tree Cottage, Pickhurst Lane, Pulborough, West Sussex, RH20 1DA			Project Ref: C-NJA-116
Figure No: 3	Revision No: 1	Scale: n/a	
Cartographer: AM	Date Drawn: 24/07/2026	Reviewed By: HB	



1. Summary and Recommendations

Proposals	• Arun Ecology Ltd was appointed by Christine Wells ('the Client') to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) for a proposed development at Cherry Tree Cottage, Pickhurst Lane, Pulborough, West Sussex, RH20 1DA (see Figure 1). • The proposals include the construction of a new residential dwelling, garage and driveway and associated landscaping within the development boundary.
Surveys	• A desk study was conducted that included the purchase of records from the Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre. • A site visit was conducted on the 12th of May 2026, that included a UK Habitat Classification Survey and an appraisal of the habitats within the development boundary to act as ecological receptors.
Impact Assessment	• Mitigation will be required within the design of the development to ensure there are no adverse impacts that arise from light pollution on bat flightlines, that fall within the 6.5 km key conservation zone of The Mens SAC and 12 wider conservation zone of the Ebernoe Common SAC. • No ancient woodland, any other irreplaceable habitats were recorded within the development boundary or will be adversely impacted as part of the development proposals. • Mitigation will be required within the design and construction phase of the development to ensure the long-term safeguarding and promote the conservation of the retained native hedgerows H1 and H3, that fall within the development boundary, and which are likely to qualify as Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI). Compensatory planting will also be necessary to compensate for the loss of a small section of hedgerow H3. • Based upon the desk study results, the habitats recorded within the development boundary and the development proposals, [REDACTED] mammal burrows, bats, nesting birds, great crested newts, hazel dormice, hedgehogs and reptiles are identified as material ecological considerations. • No structures or trees suitable for roosting bats will be adversely impacted by the development. • It is not anticipated that the development will generate significant levels of pollution due to its small scale, however, mitigation will be required during the construction phase of the development to ensure there is no on-site or off-site pollution to habitats or water sources. • In line with national and local policy, the development will be required to incorporate ecological enhancements into the design. It is our understanding, however, that mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) as defined under The Environment Act, 2021 will not be required.



Recommendations	The recommendations below represent a summary only. The full recommendations of this report are outlined in section 6. Further Assessments, Surveys and Consultations • In line with Natural England’s standing advice for GCN, presence or probable absence surveys for GCN at the pond within the development boundary and ponds within 250 m of the development boundary should be undertaken, to determine if any adverse impacts will arise on GCN as a result of the development. Alternatively, the applicant may opt-in to join the HDC GCN DLL scheme. • Reptile surveys within the development boundary should be undertaken to determine the presence/ absence of reptiles and to provide an indicative estimate of reptile population density and characterise the use of the site by reptiles (if present). Mitigation • The mitigation measures outlined in this report native hedgerow HPI, [REDACTED] mammal burrows, bats, hazel dormice, hedgehogs, nesting birds, and pollution prevention should be followed during the design and construction phase of the development. Ecological Enhancements • The ecological enhancements outlined within this report should be incorporated into the design of the development.
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2. Introduction

2.1.1 Arun Ecology Ltd was appointed by Christine Wells ('the Client') to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) at Cherry Tree Cottage, Pickhurst Lane, Pulborough, West Sussex, RH20 1DA (grid reference: TQ 05667 21046). The above address is hereafter referred to as 'the site' (see Figure 1).

2.2 Development Proposals

2.2.1 Planning consent is sought for a development (as shown on Scandia Hus Ltd, Drawing No. SP02a, Rev F, dated 25/03/2026), which comprises:

- The construction of a new residential dwelling, garage and driveway; and
- Associated landscaping within the development boundary.

2.2.2 The proposals above are hereafter referred to collectively as 'the development' in this report. The defined red line planning boundary (as shown in Figure 2) is hereafter referred to as the 'development boundary'.

2.2.3 The local planning authority for the site's location is Horsham District Council (HDC).

2.3 Ecology Background

2.3.1 It is our understanding that no previous ecology reports have been completed for the proposed development.

2.4 Brief and Objectives

2.4.1 The key objectives of a PEA, as per CIEEM guidance (CIEEM, 2017) are as follows:

- Identify the likely ecological constraints associated with the development;
- Identify any mitigation measures likely to be required, following the 'mitigation hierarchy', as per BS42020:2013 Clause 5:2 (BSI, 2013);
- Identify any additional surveys that may be required to inform an Ecological Impact Assessment (ECiA); and
- Identify the opportunities offered by the development to deliver ecological enhancements and net gains for biodiversity.

2.4.2 The brief agreed with the client included:



- The undertaking of a desk study search obtaining records of designated sites, Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) and ancient woodland as well as purchasing records of protected species and species of conservation concern;
- Undertake a UK Habitat Classification Survey (hereafter UKHab Survey) to record the habitats within the development boundary, assess their conservation value and suitability to act as ecological receptors for protected species and species of conservation concern, including a detailed assessment of the suitability of structures and trees to support roosting bats; and
- Provide a PEA report supported by digitised mapping that presents the methods and results of the desk study and the UKHab Survey within the development boundary. The report will also include an initial impact assessment of the development and any recommendations, including opportunities for ecological enhancement.



3. Method

3.1 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

General Approach

- 3.1.1 The PEA was carried out in accordance with the CIEEM Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017) and the CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (CIEEM, 2018).

3.2 Desk Study

- 3.2.1 The study area for the desk study at this stage of the development is based upon a provisional 'zone of influence'. The 'zone of influence' is defined as per CIEEM guidance as *'the area over which ecological features may be affected by biophysical changes as a result of the proposed project and associated activities'* (CIEEM, 2018).

- 3.2.2 The provisional zone of influence for the development where data was sought is set as the following:

- RAMSAR, Special Conservation Areas (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs), (including potentially designated sites), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and locally designated sites – 2 km;
- All other non-statutory designated sites – 1 km;
- Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI), Ancient woodland and Main Rivers – 2 km;
- Ponds – 0.5 km; and
- Protected Species, Species of Principal Importance (SPI) and other species of conservation concern – 1 km (from the last 20 years).

- 3.2.3 Sources of information within the study area for the desk study were as follows;

- The Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside (MAGIC);
- Government open-source GIS datasets;
- Horsham District Council Adopted Local Plan (2015);
- Satellite images (powered by Google via QGIS 3.44); and
- Purchased records from Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC).



3.3 Field Habitat Survey

UK Habitat Classification Survey

- 3.3.1 The field survey was undertaken using the UKHab Survey methodology (UKHab, 2023a) to record the habitat types within the development boundary. The study area for the UKHab Survey was defined as all of the land within the development boundary (see Figure 2).
- 3.3.2 The UKHab Survey has 5 hierarchical levels of habitat classification that aligns with those outlined under national legislation and planning policy. Habitats were mapped in the field using the primary habitat codes described in the UKHab Survey Professional Edition to levels 3, 4 or 5 (UKHab, 2023b).
- 3.3.3 Secondary habitat codes and target notes were used where necessary to describe features deviating from the primary habitat classification.
- 3.3.4 To identify each habitat, the dominant plant and other readily identified species were recorded and their abundance within the development boundary was measured using the DAFOR scale (Stace, 2019).

3.4 Site Habitat Suitability Assessment

General Approach

- 3.4.1 The habitat within the development boundary was appraised for its suitability to support protected species and species of conservation concern at the time of the field habitat survey with regard to the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017) and BS42020:2013 Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development (BSI, 2013). The species-specific guidance and references used in the appraisal are outlined in Table 1 below.



Table 1 – References used to assess the suitability of habitat within the development boundary to support protected species and species of conservation concern.

Group/ taxa	Habitat Appraisal References
Amphibians/ GCN	- GCN Habitat Suitability Index (Oldham et al. 2010 and ARG UK 2010);and - Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook (Langton et al, 2001).
Bats	Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023).
Birds	- A Field Guide to Monitoring Nests (Ferguson-Lees et al, 2011); and - Barn Owl Tyto alba Survey Methodology and Techniques for use in Ecological Assessment (Shawyer, 2011).
Mammals	- Surveying Badgers (Harris et al, 1989) and Badger Trust Best Practice Guidelines (Badger Trust, 2023); - The Dormouse Conservation Handbook (Bullion, S., Wolton, R. & White, I. 2025); - UK BAP Mammals Interim Guidance for Survey Methodologies, Impact Assessment and Mitigation (Cresswell, et al, 2012); - Otter (Woodroffe, 2007), Hedgehog (Morris, 2011); Water shrew (Carter, 2006) - Mammal Society Species Series; and - Water Vole Field Signs and Habitat assessment (Dean, 2022) and Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (Dean et al, 2016).
Reptiles	- Herpetofauna Workers' Manual (Gent & Gibson, 2003); and - Reptile Habitat Management Handbook (Edgar, 2010).
Invertebrates	- Good Planning Practice for Invertebrates (Buglife, 2015); and - Organising Surveys to Determine Site Quality for Invertebrates (English Nature, 2005).

Bats – Preliminary Roost Assessment

- 3.4.2 A bat preliminary roost assessment (PRA) of structures and trees as well as an assessment of the habitat within the development boundary for bats was carried out in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines for Ecologists (Collins, 2023).
- 3.4.3 A ground level inspection of the exterior of any structures within the development boundary, and any trees that will be adversely impacted by the development, was undertaken with the aid of torchlight and binoculars to search for bat PRFs that might provide suitable crevices or access/egress points to voids or cavities for roosting bats.
- 3.4.4 Where accessible and safe to do so, a search for signs of bats such as bat specimens, droppings, urine staining and audible sound (such as social calls) was also undertaken at each structure or tree. This included an internal inspection of roof voids at structures and the use of an endoscope to inspect any accessible bat PRFs.
- 3.4.5 A classification based upon the roosting suitability for bats was assigned for each structure and tree that was inspected within the development boundary as well as



the overall suitability of habitat. The classification descriptions are detailed below in Table 2 for structures and Table 3 for trees.

Table 2 – Suitability assessment for a proposed development site for bats, as adapted from BCT Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023).

Potential Suitability	Definition	
	Roosting Habitat	Potential Flight Paths and Foraging Habitat
None	No habitat features on-site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices/ suitable shelter at all ground/ underground levels).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/ protection for flight lines or that generates shelter for insect populations that is available to foraging bats).
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats, however, small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roosting sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site but could be used by individual hibernating bats).	Habitat that can be used by a small number of bats as flightpaths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream but isolated i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitats. Suitable, but isolated habitat that can be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status, with respect to roost type only, such as maternity or hibernation roosts.	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight paths such as lines of trees, scrub and linked back gardens and for foraging such as trees, scrub grassland and water.
High	A structure with one or more potential roosting sites that are obviously suitable for use by a larger number of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation sites.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined water courses and grazed parkland. The site is close to and connected to known bat roosts.



Table 3 – Guidelines for assessing the suitability of trees for bats, adapted from BCT Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023).

Suitability	Definition
None	Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any present.
FAR	Further assessment required to establish if PRFs are present in the tree.
PRF	A tree with at least one PRF present.

3.5 Survey Dates and Conditions

3.5.1 Details on the date, timing and weather conditions recorded during the survey are provided below in Table 4.

Table 4 – Field Survey Information.

Date	Survey Type	Survey Timings		Temperature (°C)		Rain	Wind (Beaufort scale)
		Start	Finish	Start	Finish		
12/05/2026	UK Hab Survey and bat PRA.	14:00	15:30	16	17	None	3

3.6 Surveyors

3.6.1 The field survey was undertaken by Alice Motola BSc, MSc (Hons). Alice Motola has over 2 years of professional consultancy experience and is adequately trained to carry out UKHab Surveys. Alice Motola is also registered to use the Level 1 Class Licence to survey Great Crested Newts and a MoRPh River accredited surveyor.

3.7 Limitations

3.7.1 No survey limitations were recorded during the UKHab Survey that are considered likely to have materially affected the survey findings.



4. Results

4.1 Desk Study

Designated Sites

4.1.1 The results of the desk study search for statutory and non-statutory designated sites are detailed below in Table 5 (see Figure 1).

Table 5 - Statutory and non-statutory designated sites returned from the desk study search.

Designation Level	Site Name	Distance & Direction	Summary
Statutory Designated Sites			
SAC/SSSI	The Mens	The Mens designation is located 3.5 km northwest of the development boundary. The site falls within the SACs 6.5 km 'key conservation area'.	Designated due to its lowland broadleaved, mixed and yew woodland, and its assemblages of invertebrates and breeding birds. Barbastelle bat (<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>) is also another qualifying feature of this designation.
SAC, SSSI, NNR	Ebernoe Common	Ebernoe Common designation is located 8.6 km northwest of the development boundary. The site falls within the SACs 12 km 'wider conservation area'.	Ebernoe Common SAC, SSSI and NNR covers approximately 233 ha. Ebernoe Common is designated for its beech forests, maternity colonies of Barbastelle, (<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>) and Bechstein's bat (<i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>).
SSSI	Upper Arun	The designation is located 1.41 km northwest of the development boundary. The site falls within the SSSI impact risk zone.	Designated as it features a diverse and healthy riverine flora, which is dominated by marginal and emergent vegetation such as common club-rush (<i>Schoenoplectus lacustris</i>) and reed canary-grass (<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>). In addition, this site hosts notable Odonata species like the clubtail (<i>Gomphus vulgatissimus</i>), hairy dragonfly (<i>Brachytron pratense</i>), brilliant emerald (<i>Somatochlora metallica</i>), and the nationally rare scarce chaser (<i>Libellula fulva</i>).



Non-Statutory Designated Sites			
LWS	H31 - Toat Wood	This designation is located 0.68 km northwest of the development boundary.	Designated as a Local Wildlife Site (LWS) primarily for its valuable broadleaved woodland habitat and its ecological contribution to local nature networks.

Ancient Woodland

- 4.1.2 There were thirteen ancient woodland parcels returned within 2 km of the development boundary (see Figure 1). The nearest ancient woodland parcel was located 0.11 km northwest of the development boundary.

Habitats of Principal Importance

- 4.1.3 Details on the number of HPI, the habitat type and the distance from the development boundary to the closest HPI parcel are detailed in Table 6 and displayed in Figure 1.
- 4.1.4 Table 6 - Habitats of Principal Importance returned from the desk study search within 2 km of the development boundary.

Habitat of Principal Importance		
Habitat Type	Number of HPI parcels within 2 km	Distance and direction of nearest HPI parcel and other notable parcels
Deciduous woodland	67	The nearest deciduous woodland parcel is located 0.11 km northwest of the development boundary.
Coastal and floodplain grazing marsh	8	The nearest coastal and floodplain grazing marsh is 1.45 km northwest of the development boundary.
Lowland fens	1	The nearest lowland fens parcel is 1.83 km north of the development boundary.
Traditional orchard	8	The nearest traditional orchard is 1.27 km northwest of the development boundary.
Good quality semi-improved grassland	2	The nearest good quality semi-improved grassland is located 0.36 km southwest of the development boundary.
No main habitat but additional habitats present	7	- These parcels include traditional orchard and lowland meadows; and - The nearest parcel of this category is located 1.33 km northwest of the development



		boundary and corresponds to lowland meadows.
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4.1.5 Nine ponds were recorded within 0.5 km of the development boundary, of which three were located within 250 m (see Figure 1). The nearest pond is located approximately 45 m southwest of the development boundary, within the wider land owned by the client. There were no surveyed priority ponds within 2 km of the development boundary.

4.1.6 Twenty main river parcels were returned within 2 km of the development boundary (see Figure 1). None of the parcels were listed as priority river habitats under the national inventory. The nearest main river parcel is located 1.40 km northwest of the development boundary.

Protected Species and Other Species of Conservation Concern

4.1.7 No European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) has been granted within 1 km of the site.



4.2 UK Habitat Classification Survey Results

4.2.1 The habitats recorded during the UKHab Survey within the development boundary are described below in Table 7 (see Figure 2 and Figure 3).

Table 7 – Habitats recorded within the development boundary during the UK Habitat Classification Survey.

Habitat Reference (Figure 2)	UK Hab Survey Classification Code	Approx. Area sqm /length m	Summary and Species List
Woodland			
1	Primary: Other broadleaved woodland Secondary: Young trees – self-set Code: w1g 202	760 m ² (areas combined)	A parcel of young broadleaved woodland was recorded in the northwestern and central sections of the development boundary. The woodland comprised predominantly native broadleaved trees of a broadly even age class, with a developing, largely continuous canopy. The understorey was very sparse, with little shrub development, resulting in an open woodland structure. The ground flora was dominated by a species-poor tall grass sward, approximately 40 cm in height, with very limited woodland-associated ground flora. Overall, the woodland exhibited a simple structure typical of recent natural regeneration and lacked the structural and botanical diversity generally associated with more established semi-natural woodland. Species recorded: Canopy layer: pedunculate oak (D), <i>Pinus</i> sp. (R), cherry (R), birch (R). Shrub layer: N/A Ground layer: cock's foot (O), Yorkshire fog (O), oak saplings (R), sorrel (R), cleavers (R), meadow buttercup.
Grassland			
2	Primary: Other neutral grassland Code: g3c	360 m ² (areas combined)	Four parcels of other neutral grassland were recorded within the southwestern section of the development boundary. The grassland was seeded and actively managed by the current landowner and had a variable sward height ranging between 5 cm and 100 cm. The grassland typically had 7 species per metre squared. The species composition was mixed and non-homogeneous, with different assemblages occurring in the distinct patches across the site. This habitat parcel was classified as other neutral grassland due to perennial ryegrass and white clover cover being <30 %, there being at least one grass species that is generally not sown for intensive agricultural production and given that forbs covered > 20 % of the grassland sward.



			<u>Species recorded:</u> Grasses: Yorkshire fog (F), cock's foot (O), common bent (O), sweet vernal grass (O), false oatgrass (O), timothy (R), perennial ryegrass (R), foxtail grass (R). Forbs and other plants: meadow buttercup (O), ox-eye daisy (O), red & white campion (O), field bindweed (F), common vetch (R), nipplewort (R), sorrel (R), cleavers (R), wild carrot (O), common knapweed (O), salad burnet (R), dandelion (R), cats ears (R), yarrow (R), creeping buttercup (R).
3	Primary: Modified grassland Secondary: active management, scattered trees Codes: g4 – 516, 32	1830 m ²	A parcel of modified grassland was recorded which covered the majority of the area within development boundary. The grassland was characterised by a uniformly short sward height (~7cm), that appeared to be managed regularly as amenity grassland at the time of the UKHab survey, with only marginal taller (~15 cm) grassland strips along the development boundaries. The modified grassland was dominated by grasses (85% cover), with low forbs coverage (15%). The grassland was characterised by very small, scattered areas of disturbed bare ground. The grassland was classified as modified grassland due to it being dominated by perennial ryegrass, its species composition indicative of nutrient improvement (including white clover) and the low number of species recorded per meter square (5 on average). In addition, the grassland comprised a few scattered trees. No invasive non-native species were recorded within the grassland. <u>Species recorded:</u> Grasses: perennial ryegrass (D), Yorkshire fog (F), annual meadowgrass (O), red fescue (R). Forbs and other plants: white clover (F), dandelion (O), common daisy (O), creeping buttercup (O), sticky mouse-ear (R), <i>Geranium</i> sp. (R), nettle (R), oak saplings (R), meadow buttercup (R), germander speedwell (R), sorrel (R), groundsel (R), bracken (R), greater stitchwort (R), self-heal (R), wood avens (R). Scattered trees: Monterey cypress (R), pedunculate oak (R), Norway spruce (R), apple (R).
Heathland and scrub			
H1	Primary: Native hedgerow Secondary: active management Code: h2a – 516	30 m	A native hedgerow (H1) was recorded along the southwestern development boundary (see Figure 2). The hedgerow was approximately 1.8 m in height and 1.5 m in width, with no gaps observed along its full length. <u>Species recorded:</u> field maple (D), hornbeam (O), beech (O), bramble (R), nettle (R), ivy (R).



H2	Primary: Non-native and ornamental hedgerow Secondary: active management Code: h2b – 516	10 m	A non-native and ornamental hedgerow (H2) was recorded along the eastern development boundary (see Figure 2). The hedgerow was approximately 1.8 m in height and 1 m in width, with no gaps observed along its full length. <u>Species recorded:</u> Cypress (D).
H3	Primary: Native hedgerow Secondary: active management Code: h2a – 11, 516	13 m	Another native hedgerow (H3) was recorded along the southeastern development boundary (see Figure 2). The hedgerow was approximately 1.8 m in height and 2 m in width, with no gaps observed along its full length. <u>Species recorded:</u> Hawthorn (D), blackthorn (O), field maple (R), oak (R), honeysuckle (R), bramble (R), nettle (R), ivy (R).
Urban			
4	Primary: Built-up areas and gardens Secondary: Vegetated garden, tree Code: u1 – 828, 200	20 m ²	A very small, vegetated garden parcel was recorded within the northwestern section of the development boundary, which comprised a flower bed with a mix of small plants, a shrub and two small trees. <u>Species recorded:</u> nipplewort (R), hoary mock orange (R), orpine (R), spindle (R), Japanese cedar (R), orange ball buddleia (R). Trees: horse chestnut.
5	Primary: Built-up areas and gardens Secondary: Garden Code: u1 - 827	50 m ²	A fruit enclosure, comprising a wooden structure, was classified as garden habitat and was recorded within the southwestern corner of the development boundary.
6	Primary: Developed land; sealed surface Code: u1b	50 m ²	There is an area of developed land; sealed surface comprising asphalted hardstanding, situated along the southeastern development boundary, where the new proposed site access will be created. This parcel has no vegetation associated with it.



4.3 Site Habitat Suitability Assessment

4.3.1 An assessment of habitat within the development boundary to act as an ecological receptor for protected species and species of conservation concern, based upon the desk study results and the habitats recorded during the UKHab Survey is provided below in Table 8. The bat PRA results are also summarised below.

Table 8 – Site habitat assessment for protected species and species of conservation concern.

Species/Group	Site Assessment and Rationale
GCN and Other Amphibians	• Nine ponds were recorded within 0.5 km of the development boundary, of which three were located within 250 m and the nearest pond is located approximately 45 m southwest of the development boundary, within the wider land owned by the client. No GCN records were returned from the desk study search within 1 km of the development boundary; however, records of other common amphibians were returned, including smooth newt, common toad and common frog. • No suitable breeding habitat for GCN was recorded within the development boundary. The deciduous woodland parcels and hedgerows within the development boundary provide suitable resting places for GCN. The other neutral grassland parcels provide suitable foraging habitat for GCN, whereas the modified grassland within the development boundary at the time of the UKHab Survey provided unsuitable structure to be used as a permanent resting place or as foraging habitat for GCN with a sward height of ~7 cm. The habitat within the main footprint of the development comprised for the majority of deciduous woodland, modified grassland, a small section of H2 and a small section of H3 where the new site access will be created. Furthermore, the habitat within the development boundary also connects well to the nearest pond and other ponds within 500 m, via ditches, line of trees, hedgerows and wooded areas. • Based on the above points it is possible that GCN could be encountered within the development boundary and that the habitats present have the potential to form part of the terrestrial habitat of any nearby GCN population, given the presence of nine ponds within 500 m of the development boundary.
Bats	• Records of bats (including SPI) were returned from the desk study search within 1 km of the development boundary. • No buildings or other structures with suitability for roosting bats were recorded within the development boundary. • No trees with suitability for roosting bats were recorded within the footprint of the development.



	The habitat within the development boundary was assessed as having suitability for foraging and commuting bats, with the deciduous woodland, scattered trees, hedgerows, other neutral grassland, modified grassland and vegetated garden, within the development boundary providing suitable foraging and commuting habitat (flightlines) for bats. This habitat connects well to the wider rural landscape, including local parcels of deciduous and ancient woodland. As such, commuting and foraging bats could be encountered within the development boundary.
Birds	- Records of common bird species, as well as species of conservation concern, were returned from the desk study within 1 km of the development boundary. - The habitat within the development boundary includes deciduous woodland, scattered trees, hedgerows H1, H2 and H3 that provide suitable habitat for nesting and foraging birds. - No buildings or other structures were recorded, with suitability for nesting birds within the development boundary. - The other neutral grassland parcels despite having a longer sward height, the latter was not uniform, and the parcels were isolated given that they were surrounded by shorter modified grassland, as such is reasonably unlikely to provide suitable habitat for ground nesting birds. - The modified grassland habitat within the development boundary had a short sward height at the time of the UKHab survey and is reasonably unlikely to provide suitable habitat for ground nesting birds. - The overall quantity and quality of available habitat for nesting birds within the footprint of the development is insufficient to support important bird assemblages and populations of conservation concern.
Terrestrial mammals (non-bats)	[REDACTED] Hazel dormice: No records of hazel dormice were returned from the desk study search within 1 km of the development boundary. The development boundary includes deciduous woodland and native hedgerow, both of which are broadly recognised as potential dormouse habitats. These woodland parcels connect to nearby potentially suitable dormice habitat, including ancient woodland. These habitats are also connected to adjacent areas of potentially suitable habitat, including ancient woodland. However, the woodland parcel directly affected by the proposed development comprises young, even-aged woodland with a poorly developed structure. The understorey is



	very sparse and lacks the diverse shrub layer, including hazel, that is typically associated with suitable dormouse habitat, while the ground flora is dominated by species-poor grassland. Hedgerow H3 which will also be directly impacted by the development, was not species rich, appeared heavily managed and lacked plant species typically preferred as a food source by dormice such as hazel. • Hedgehogs: Records of hedgehog were returned from the desk study search within 1 km of the development boundary. The deciduous woodland and hedgerows within the development boundary all reasonably likely provide foraging and resting places for hedgehogs. The other neutral grassland, modified grassland and vegetated garden parcels within the development boundary also provide suitable foraging habitat for hedgehogs. As such, it is reasonably likely that hedgehog could be encountered within the development boundary and the immediate footprint of the development. • Otters and water voles: No records of otter or water vole were returned from the desk study search within 1 km of the development boundary. The nearest lotic water body was located 1.40 km northwest of the development boundary. Based on the habitats recorded within the development boundary and the connectivity and distance of these habitats to the nearest lotic waterbody, it is reasonably unlikely otter or water vole will be encountered within the development boundary or that the habitat will be associated with any population of these species. • Other mammals: No mammal burrows such as those of rabbit or fox were recorded within the development boundary at the time of the UKHab Survey. Habitats recorded within the development boundary such as deciduous woodland, hedgerow H1, H2 and H3, the vegetated garden area and the other neutral grassland, could conceal such burrows. As such, it is possible the above species could be found in or near to the main footprint of the development prior to its commencement.
Reptiles	• Records of common reptiles including grass snake, were returned from the desk study search within 1 km of the development boundary. No records of rare reptiles were recorded from the desk study search within 1 km of the development boundary. • The deciduous woodland habitat that falls within the main footprint of the development, comprised within its understorey a grassland with a tall sward height suitable for both resting and foraging reptiles. The other neutral grassland parcels located within the southwestern section of the development were characterised by a varied sward height ranging between 5 cm and 100 cm, that had suitable structure to support common reptiles. Furthermore, there is a compost pile within the northwestern section of the development boundary which could provide a resting place for reptiles. The modified grassland habitat within the development boundary however, is primarily characterised by a short well cropped structure (~7 cm in height) that is subject to regular mowing, and that provides insufficient cover to support a permanent reptile population, with only small marginal areas with suitable structure for reptiles being present along the development boundaries.



	Based upon the above points it is likely that reptiles could be encountered within the development boundary and immediate footprint of the development.
Invertebrates	- Records of invertebrates including species of conservation concern were returned from the desk study search within 1 km of the development boundary. - The habitats within the development boundary included deciduous woodland, other neutral grassland and the native hedgerows H1 and H3, which are habitats, that, broadly, can be of value to invertebrates and can be associated with species of conservation concern. - The modified grassland, non-native and ornamental hedgerow H2 and the small area of vegetated garden provided habitats of limited value for invertebrates due to the small scale and lack of overall botanical diversity in these parcels.
Plants, Lichens and Fungi	All habitats recorded within the development boundary including the deciduous woodland, hedgerows, vegetated garden, other neutral and modified grasslands and all hedgerows were typically species poor. The habitat within the main footprint of the development consisted of deciduous woodland and modified grassland of limited botanical value. No European or nationally protected plants or SPI were recorded within the development boundary at the time of the UKHab Survey. Based upon the habitats present, it is reasonably unlikely any such species or any fungi or lichens species of conservation concern will be present within the development boundary.
Non-native and Invasive Species	No invasive non-native species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 or the Invasive Alien Species Order, 2019 were recorded within the development boundary at the time of the UKHab Survey.



5. Legislation, Planning Policy and Impact Assessment

5.1.1 Table 9 below summarises the legislation and planning policy relevant to the proposed development and provides an assessment of the potential ecological impacts of the proposals. Further details of the UK legislation and planning policy relevant to the qualifying features considered in this section are provided in Appendix I.

Table 9 – Legislation and planning policy evaluation of the development.

Ecological Feature	Relevant Legislation & Planning Policy	Assessment Outcome	Impact Assessment and Justification
Designated sites			
The Mens SAC/SSSI	• Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); • National Planning Policy Framework, 2024; and • HDC Adopted Local Plan, 2015 – Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity.	Mitigation required	• The development boundary falls within the 6.5 km key conservation zone for The Mens SAC. The development, however: ○ Will not result in the loss of any area of habitat within the SAC as it is located outside of the SAC boundary; and ○ Includes the removal of 570 m² of young deciduous woodland and of approximately 2 m of non-native and ornamental hedgerow H2 and 3 m of native hedgerow H3 along the southeastern development boundary to facilitate the creation of the proposed new site access. ○ Given that the remaining habitats suitable for bats will be retained in their entirety, the loss of a small area of young woodland and very short sections of hedgerow is reasonably unlikely to affect the function of these habitats as bat commuting routes when considered within the wider landscape context. • Although the habitat loss alone is reasonably unlikely to adversely impact the qualifying features of the designation, inappropriate artificial lighting of retained bat commuting routes within the Key Conservation Zone could



			contribute to cumulative adverse effects on the availability and functionality of commuting habitat for barbastelle bats. The recommendations outlined in section 6 should be followed to ensure the development proceeds lawfully.
Ebernoe Common SAC/SSSI/NNR	- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); - National Planning Policy Framework, 2024; and - HDC Adopted Local Plan, 2015 – Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity.	Mitigation required	- The development boundary falls within the 12 km wider conservation zone for Ebernoe Common SAC. - The qualifying features of Ebernoe Common SAC include Barbastelle, (<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>) and Bechstein's bat (<i>Myotis bechsteinii</i>). - For the reasons outlined above for The Mens SAC it is reasonably unlikely that the development will result in any adverse impacts on Ebernoe Common SAC.
Upper Arun SSSI	- Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981; - National Planning Policy Framework, 2024; and - HDC Adopted Local Plan, 2015 – Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity.	No further assessment or mitigation required	- The development will not result in any adverse impacts to the qualifying features of the SSSI designation due to: - The development being retained within the development boundary and not resulting in any direct loss of area within the designation; and - The development being small in scale, extent and magnitude as well as there being sufficient distance between each SSSI and the development boundary, to avoid any adverse impacts that may arise from degradation as a result of increased recreational pressure or pollution.



H31 - Toat Wood LWS	HDC Adopted Local Plan, 2015 – Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity.	No further assessment or mitigation required	- The development will not result in any adverse impacts to the qualifying features of the LWS due to: - The development being retained within the development boundary and not resulting in any direct loss of area within the designation; and - The development being small in scale, extent and magnitude as well as there being sufficient distance between the LWS and the development boundary, to avoid any adverse impacts that may arise from degradation as a result of increased recreational pressure or pollution.
Habitats			
Irreplaceable habitat	- National Planning Policy Framework, 2024; and - HDC Adopted Local Plan, 2015 – Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity.	No further assessment or mitigation required	- No ancient woodland parcels or any other type of irreplaceable habitats are located within the development boundary or will be directly lost as part of the development. - Due to the small scale, extent and magnitude of the development and its distance to any ancient woodland parcels, it is reasonably unlikely that there will be any adverse impacts resulting from degradation through increased recreational pressure or pollution to ancient woodland outside of the development boundary.
Habitats of Principal Importance	- Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 – Section 41; and - National Planning Policy Framework, 2024.	Mitigation required	- The native hedgerow (H3), located along the southeastern development boundary, which is likely to qualify as a HPI, will be directly impacted by the development as approximately 3 m of its length will be removed to facilitate the creation of the new proposed site access, therefore compensatory hedgerow planting will be required. - Due to the proximity of the retained hedgerow H3 section to the main footprint of the development, mitigation will be required to safeguard the hedgerow from accidental damage during the construction phase of the development.



			The recommendations outlined in section 6 of this report should be followed to ensure the development is compliant with local planning policy.
Pollution Prevention	- Environmental Protection Act, 1990; - National Planning Policy Framework, 2024; and - HDC Adopted Local Plan, 2015 – Policy 24: Environmental Protection.	Mitigation required	- Pollution prevention measures should be incorporated into the construction phase of the development to avoid onsite and offsite pollution to habitats and the nearby waterbodies. - Mitigation measures will be required within the design of the development to ensure that there are no significant increases in the levels of light pollution as a result of the installation of artificial lighting as part of the development. - The recommendations outlined in section 6 should be followed to ensure the development proceeds lawfully.
Biodiversity Net Gain and Ecological Enhancements			
Biodiversity Net Gain	- The Environment Act, 2021; and - National Planning Policy Framework, 2024.	Exempt development	The development will be exempt from the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements under the Environment Act 2021, provided that the planning application is submitted before 6th August 2026. Accordingly, no further assessment or recommendations relating to BNG are included within this report. If the planning application is submitted on or after 6th August 2026, the development will be subject to the mandatory BNG requirements, as the red line boundary exceeds the new exemption threshold of 0.2 ha, covering an area of 0.307 ha.
Ecological Enhancement	National Planning Policy Framework, 2024.	Further action required.	- The development will be required to implement ecological enhancements into the design of the development to ensure it is compliant with national and local planning policy. - The recommendations outlined in section 6 of this report should be followed to ensure the development is compliant with national and local planning policy.
Protected Species and Species of Conservation Concern			



Bats	• Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); • Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 – schedule 5; • Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 – Section 40/41; and • HDC Local Plan – Policy 25 and 31.	Mitigation required		• No buildings or other structures with suitability for roosting bats within the development boundary will be adversely impacted by the development based on the current development layout. • No trees with suitability for roosting bats will be impacted by the current development proposals. Trees T2, T11 and T12 proposed for removal, together with all trees within the deciduous woodland parcel in the centre of the development boundary, were assessed as having negligible suitability for bats during the PRA. • Trees T2, T11 and T12 (all Category U) are likely to be removed to facilitate the proposed development. In addition, approximately 2 m of non-native and ornamental hedgerow (H2), 3 m of native hedgerow (H3) along the south-eastern development boundary, and approximately 570 m² of young deciduous woodland within the main development footprint will be removed to facilitate the construction of the proposed dwelling, driveway and new site access. However, given the retention of all other habitats suitable for bats within the development boundary and the surrounding landscape, the loss of this relatively small area of woodland and short sections of hedgerow is not considered likely to materially affect the function of the retained vegetation as bat commuting routes within the local landscape. • For the reasons outlined above for The Mens SAC, Ebernoe Common SAC and pollution prevention section, the development will be required to mitigate the level of new light pollution from the installation of artificial lighting to ensure it



			does not adversely impact potential bat flightlines within the development boundary. The recommendations outlined in section 6 should be followed to ensure the development proceeds lawfully.
Birds	- Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 – Section 1 and Schedule 1; and - Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 – Section 40/41.	Mitigation required	- The development includes the likely removal of trees T2, T11 & T12, with class U, and the removal of approximately 2 m of non-native and ornamental hedgerow H2 and 3 m of native hedgerow H3 along the southeastern development boundary, as well as approximately 570 m² of deciduous woodland habitat to facilitate the development. - As such, nesting birds could be adversely impacted without appropriate mitigation during the construction phase of the development. - It is reasonably unlikely that significant assemblages or populations of birds, including SPI, will be adversely impacted by the development. - The recommendations outlined in section 6 of this report should be followed to ensure the development proceeds lawfully.
Great crested newts	- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); - Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 – schedule 5; and - Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 – Section 40/41.	Further assessment required	- No potential GCN breeding habitat will be directly impacted as part of the development. - Approximately 2 m of non-native and ornamental hedgerow H2 and 3 m of native hedgerow H3, as well as approximately 570 m² of deciduous woodland habitat that could provide suitable refugia for GCN, will be removed as part of the current proposals. - Nine ponds were identified within 500 m of the development boundary, including three within 250 m. These ponds are well connected to the development footprint via ditches, grassland, tree lines and areas of woodland. In addition, the development falls within a Nature Space Amber Risk Zone for GCN. Therefore, it is possible that GCN could be encountered within the main



			footprint of the development, during the enabling and construction phases of the development and could be inadvertently harmed. To ensure the development proceeds lawfully the recommendations outlined in section 6. should be followed.
Hazel dormice	- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); - Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 – schedule 5; and - Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 – Section 40/41.	Mitigation required	- Approximately 3 m of native hedgerow H3, along the southeastern development boundary, will be removed to facilitate the development. - In our professional opinion the development presents a low risk of adverse impacts to hazel dormice, based on the following considerations: - H3 appeared to be heavily managed at the time of the UKHab survey, is located along the road access track and did not present the structurally diverse vegetation typically associated with optimal dormouse habitat; - Vegetation loss is limited to the removal of 3 m of H3, representing a small proportion of the available linear habitat; - The retained sections of hedgerow will continue to provide habitat connectivity within the wider landscape, and the proposals will not result in significant habitat fragmentation. - The works are small in scale and will be delivered over a short timescale, reducing the potential for significant disturbance or fragmentation; and - While the risk is considered low, a Precautionary Method of Working (PMoW) will be followed to ensure that any residual risk to hazel dormice is appropriately managed. - The recommendations outlined in section 6 of this report should be followed to ensure the development proceeds lawfully.
Hedgehogs	Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 - Section 40/41; and	Mitigation required	It is reasonably likely that individual hedgehogs could be encountered within the development boundary, and as such, it is possible that they could be



	Wild Mammals (Protection) Act, 1996.		inadvertently killed with methods prohibited under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act, 1996 without appropriate mitigation. The recommendations outlined in section 6 should be followed to ensure the development proceeds lawfully.
Reptiles	- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); (Sand Lizard & Smooth Snake only); - Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 – schedule 5; and - Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 – Section 40/41.	Further assessment required	- Approximately 2 m of non-native and ornamental hedgerow H2 and 3 m of native hedgerow H3, as well as approximately 570 m² of deciduous woodland habitat that could provide suitable resting places and foraging habitat for reptiles, will be removed as part of the current proposals. The development also includes works directly adjacent to suitable reptile habitat that will be retained and will result in the removal of sub-optimal marginal modified grassland. As such, it is possible that individual reptiles could be encountered and inadvertently harmed during the enabling of the works, and that the proposals could result in adverse impacts to reptile populations. - The recommendations outlined in section 6 should be followed to ensure the development proceeds lawfully.
Other Mammal Burrows	Wild Mammals (Protection) Act, 1996.	Mitigation required	- It is possible that mammals could be inadvertently harmed with methods prohibited under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act, 1996 whilst inhabiting their burrows without appropriate mitigation. - To ensure the development proceeds lawfully the mitigation outlined in section 6 should be followed.
Otters	- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); - Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 – schedule 5; and - Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 – Section 40/41.	No further assessment or mitigation required	The development is reasonably unlikely to result in harm to individual otters or adversely impact their habitat (including resting and breeding places), and therefore, will not adversely impact the favourable conservation status of this species.



Water Voles	- Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 – schedule 5; and - Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 – Section 40/41.	No further assessment or mitigation required	The development is reasonably unlikely to result in harm to individual water vole or adversely impact their burrows or habitat, and therefore, will not adversely impact the conservation status of this species.
Invertebrates	- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) – Schedule 2; - Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 – Schedule 5; and - Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 – Section 40/41.	No further assessment or mitigation required	- The majority of habitats of value for invertebrates within the development boundary, including the majority of native hedgerows and the other neutral grassland, will be retained as part of the development. An area of deciduous woodland, that could provide habitats of value to invertebrates will be removed as part of the development. - Based on the above point and the small scale of the development, the development is reasonably unlikely to result in any adverse impacts to any European protected invertebrate species, nationally protected species, important populations of SPI or nationally or locally important assemblages of conservation value.
Invasive non-native species	- Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 – Schedule 9; and - Invasive Alien Species Order, 2019.	No further assessment or mitigation required	The development is reasonably unlikely to result in an act that would constitute an offence for a species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 or Invasive Alien Species Order, 2019 (i.e. intentional release or spreading).
Protected Plants, Fungi and Lichens	- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) – Schedule 5; - Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 - Schedule 8; and - Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006 – Section 40/41.	No further assessment or mitigation required	The development is reasonably unlikely to result in intentional picking, uprooting, destruction, or intentional clearance of any wild plant, fungi or lichen, including, European protected species, nationally protected species, SPI or those of national or local conservation concern.



6. Requirements and Recommendations

6.1 Background

6.1.1 The recommendations included in this section are based upon the mitigation hierarchy (avoidance, mitigation, and compensation; BSI, 2013) and takes consideration of government circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation Circular 06/2005.

6.1.2 Mitigation is not discussed where further surveys are required to inform such mitigation or compensation, unless in our professional judgement it would not be proportionate to request further surveys as the risk of a legal offence being committed as a result of the development is acceptably low.

6.2 Designated sites

The Mens SAC and Ebernoe Common SAC

6.2.1 To ensure the development avoids adverse impacts on bat foraging and commuting habitats that are located within the development boundary, immediately adjacent to the site and that fall within The Mens SAC's 6.5 km zone of influence and/or Ebernoe Common SAC's 12 km zone of influence, any lighting as part of the proposed development should be installed in line with current guidance issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals: Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial lighting in the UK (BCT & ILP 2023).

6.2.2 The lighting strategy for the site as a minimum should aim to:

- Avoid illumination of the retained deciduous woodland parcel, scattered trees and native hedgerows H1 and H3, within the development boundary; and
- Minimise the overall levels of light pollution within the site as a result of the development by:
 - Selecting appropriate lighting sources such as LED lighting that lack UV components, have peak wavelengths higher than 550 nm and that have a warm white light (2,700 kelvin or lower);
 - Appropriate fitting of lighting to include horizontal mounting with no light output above 90° and/or no upward tilt, or as a last resort the use of baffles, hoods or louvres to reduce light spill and direct lighting to only where it is needed;



- Using light only when necessary, within the site, by using timers and motion sensors; and
- Providing natural screens in landscaping plans to break up artificial light where light spill cannot be avoided.

6.3 Ecological Enhancements

Ecological Enhancements

6.3.1 The following ecological enhancements relevant to the development are recommended:

- Installation of artificial habitat provisions to include:
 - One integrated bat tube to be installed as part of the new proposed residential dwelling, on its southern aspect;
 - One integrated bird box to be installed as part of the new proposed residential dwelling.
 - One solitary bee box to be installed within one of the retained other neutral grassland parcels within the development boundary;
 - One hedgehog box to be placed within the retained native hedgerow H3, along the southeastern development boundary.
 - The incorporation of two 13 cm x 13 cm gaps into any close board fencing to allow the movement of small animals including hedgehogs; and
- The creation of one small refugia/hibernacula log pile to be located within the retained deciduous woodland habitat parcel situated within the northwestern corner of the development boundary, for the benefit of amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates.

6.4 Habitat Mitigation

Scattered Trees and Deciduous Woodland

6.4.1 To safeguard the retained scattered trees and deciduous woodland (non-priority habitat) within the development boundary from damage or degradation during the construction phase of the development, the recommendations outlined in the submitted arboricultural report (Barry Holdsworth, 2026) should be followed, which broadly includes specification for the installation of temporary tree protection barriers.

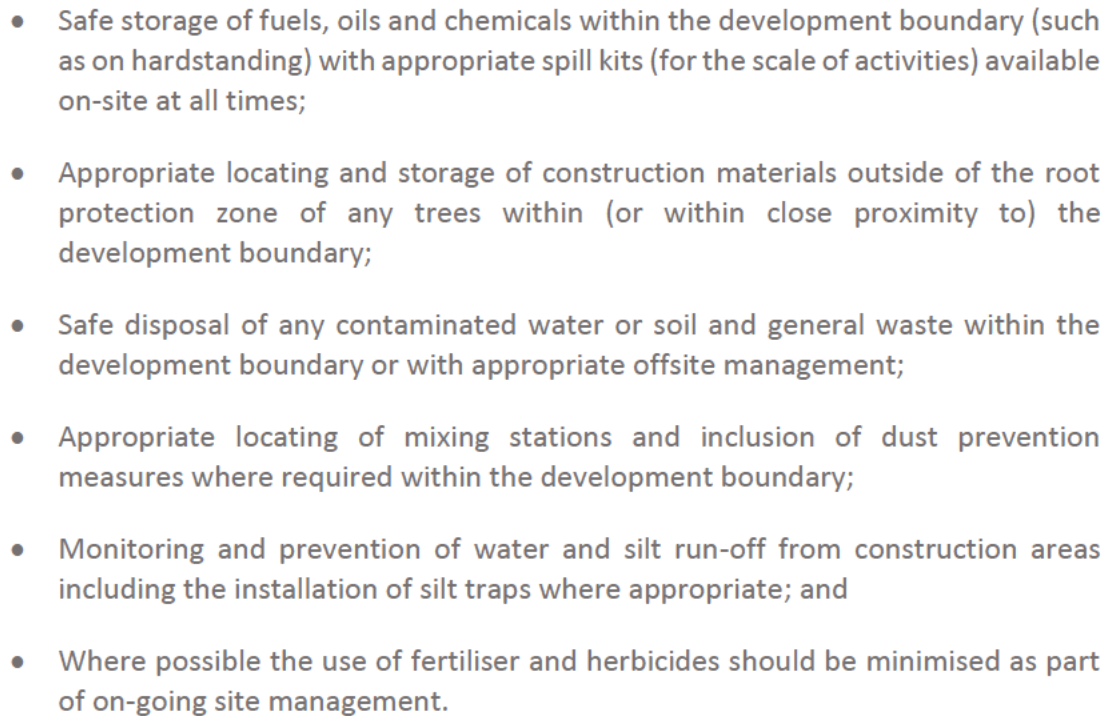


Habitats of Principal Importance

- 6.4.2 To ensure that the native hedgerow H1 and the retained native hedgerow H3 (likely HPis) along the southwestern and southeastern development boundaries, respectively, are not adversely affected during construction, the appropriate protective measures and the recommendations outlined in the arboricultural report (Barry Holdsworth Ltd, 2026), will be implemented.
- 6.4.3 Notably, temporary protective fencing will be installed along the sections of H1 and H3 where works are proposed within close proximity, in accordance with root protection area (RPA) requirements (e.g. BS 5837:2012 principles). The fencing will be erected prior to the commencement of construction works and retained for the duration of the construction phase.
- 6.4.4 Within these protection zones, there will be no storage of materials, plant movement, ground disturbance, or changes in soil levels. Where works are required within 3 m of the retained hedgerows, these will be undertaken using hand tools or under ecological supervision, as appropriate, to avoid damage to roots and the hedgerow structure.
- 6.4.5 Mitigation will be also required to compensate for the loss of approximately 3 m of native hedgerow H3. Compensatory native hedgerow planting should be provided to offset this loss and maintain the extent and function of hedgerow habitat within the local area.
- 6.4.6 The compensatory hedgerow planting should comprise native woody species of local provenance that are appropriate to the local soil and site conditions. The species composition should reflect the character of the retained hedgerows within the local landscape.
- 6.4.7 The compensatory hedgerow planting should be located within the development boundary where practicable and designed to maintain ecological connectivity with the retained hedgerow network. The replacement hedgerow should be planted at a minimum ratio of 2:1, equating to a minimum of 6 m of new native hedgerow.
- 6.4.8 The planted hedgerow should be subject to appropriate establishment and aftercare, including weed control, replacement of any failed plants and protection from grazing where necessary, to ensure successful establishment.

Pollution Prevention Measures

- 6.4.9 The following pollution prevention measures should be followed during the construction phase of the development to ensure that there is no onsite or offsite pollution to nearby habitats (including deciduous woodland parcels) and watercourses:

[illegible]

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Bats

- 6.5.3 To ensure the development avoids adverse impacts on flightlines for bats, the recommendations outlined for The Mens SAC and Ebernoe Common SAC in section 6.2 should be followed.

Birds

- 6.5.4 To ensure that the development is compliant with the legislation and planning policy relating to nesting birds, the removal of approximately 2 m of non-native and ornamental hedgerow H2 and 3 m of native hedgerow H3, as well as approximately 570 m² of deciduous woodland habitat and of any suitable vegetation within the development boundary should ideally be completed outside of the breeding bird season (typically March – September). If it is not possible to avoid the breeding bird season to complete these works, a pre-works inspection by an appropriately qualified ecologist should be undertaken.
- 6.5.5 If an active bird nest or nesting activity is recorded within the development boundary during the pre-works inspection or at any other time during the development (such as the storage of building materials) the nest should be protected from damage and destruction (including disturbance that may cause the nest to be abandoned). A protective buffer should be implemented around any active nests (the size to be determined based on the professional judgement of an ecologist or environmental manager) and works in and around these areas should be controlled or delayed until the chicks have fledged.

Hazel dormice

- 6.5.6 Although the likelihood of dormouse presence in the deciduous woodland and small section of hedgerow H3 proposed for removal is considered to be low, a precautionary method of works for hazel dormice should be followed during the construction phase of the development. The following mitigation measures should be followed:
- A toolbox-talk should be given by an appropriately qualified ecologist to all contractors at the commencement of the construction-based activities to include the protection of hazel dormice, the reason for the toolbox talk, and the necessary actions to take, including a stop works policy;
 - Prior to felling, the trees, hedgerow and surrounding ground vegetation should be inspected for signs of dormouse presence (e.g. nests, gnawed hazelnuts, woven structures in bramble/hedgerow), by a suitably qualified ecologist;



- Tree works should proceed in two stages. The first stage should include the removal of branches and foliage first (from the top down), followed by dismantling of the trunk to ground level. Cutting should be carried out with chainsaws or hand tools, avoiding mechanical grabs or rapid felling, to minimise the risk of harm;
- If a dormouse or suspected dormouse nest is encountered, work must stop immediately, and advice sought from Natural England. A European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) may be required before works can continue;

Hedgehogs

- 6.5.7 Any brush piles, compost and debris piles within the immediate footprint of the development which could provide shelter areas and hibernation potential for hedgehogs must be removed, by means of soft demolition, outside of the hibernation period (mid-October to mid-March inclusive).
- 6.5.8 Where reasonably practical, measures should be taken to avoid the unnecessary killing or injury of hedgehog during construction activities. Stakeholders and contractors should remain vigilant for the presence of hedgehogs around any vegetation, debris piles or stored materials. If a hedgehog is encountered, it should be carefully moved to a safe location within suitable retained habitat either on-site or immediately adjacent to the site. During the construction phase of the development, any excavations on site should be covered nightly or fitted with a suitable escape ramp to prevent nocturnal mammals (including hedgehog) from becoming trapped.

6.6 Further Surveys

Great Crested Newts

- 6.6.1 In line with Natural England's standing advice, further surveys to establish the presence/ probable absence (and class population size, where appropriate) of GCN at ponds within the development boundary and up to 500 m from the development boundary should be undertaken to inform any mitigation and licensing requirements for GCN (if applicable). The further surveys for GCN, should be undertaken at an appropriate time of year and follow industry best practice guidelines.
- 6.6.2 Natural England's standing advice states 'surveys up to 250 metres are usually sufficient' for GCN from the development boundary. As such, the professional judgment of an ecologist should be used to determine the required level of survey effort for GCN.



- 6.6.3 Alternatively, the applicant may opt-in to join the HDC GCN DLL scheme. Registration under the GCN DLL can be undertaken at any time and would not require any further surveys to determine the planning application.

Reptiles

- 6.6.4 To fully inform the impacts of the development on reptiles, further surveys will be required to determine the presence/ absence of reptiles and to provide an indicative estimate of reptile population density and characterise the use of the site by reptiles (if present).
- 6.6.5 Reptile presence/absence surveys should include the placement of artificial refugia within the site and include a minimum of seven survey visits. Surveys should take place between April – October in suitable weather conditions for reptiles. Artificial refugia should be deployed and left on site for a minimum of 14 days prior to the commencement of the first survey visit.



7. Conclusion

- 7.1.1 Further assessment will be required to inform the ecological impacts of the development. Mitigation will be required during both the design and the construction phases of the development to ensure it proceeds lawfully. Furthermore, the development will be required to incorporate ecological enhancements into the development.
- 7.1.2 The recommendations within this report outline how the above can be achieved to inform the development and ensure it proceeds lawfully.



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Appendix I – Legislation & Planning Policy

8.2 Background

- 8.2.1 This section provides a summary of the legislation and planning policy that could be relevant to the development. Where possible we have limited this section to the areas relevant to this report. This means the legislation and planning policy outlined below is not included in its entirety.
- 8.2.2 This section does not constitute legal advice, and only, represents the interpretation and professional judgement of the ecologists named in this report, on the legislation and planning policy deemed relevant to the development.

8.3 RAMSAR Convention

- 8.3.1 RAMSAR sites are wetlands of international importance that have been designated under the criteria of the RAMSAR Convention on Wetlands for containing representative, rare or unique wetland types or for their importance in conserving biological biodiversity (JNCC, 2019).
- 8.3.2 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) outlines the level of consideration that should be given to RAMSAR sites in Planning. Paragraph 187 states that RAMSAR and potential RAMSAR sites should be given the same protection as 'habitat sites' defined as those afforded protection under the Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations (2017), such as Special Protection Areas or Special Areas of Conservation.

8.4 Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations, 2017

- 8.4.1 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017 transposes the EC Habitats Directive and some elements of the EC Bird Directive into national law in England and Wales. The objective of the Habitats Directive is to protect biodiversity through the conservation of natural habitats and species of wild fauna and flora. The directive lays down rules for the protection, management and exploitation of such habitats and species.

Protected Species

- 8.4.2 The regulations include provisions that prohibit certain actions from the protection of species listed under Annex II of the Habitat Directive. It is a criminal offence for a person to 'intentionally or recklessly' take the following action:
- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European Protected Species (EPS);



- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species in such a way as to be likely to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they are likely to belong;
- Deliberately take or destroy eggs of any such wild animal;
- Deliberately pick, collect, uproot or destroy a wild plant of an EPS; and
- Keep transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange, any live or dead wild animal or plant of an EPS, or any part of or anything derived from such an animal or plant.

8.4.3 The disturbance of such animals includes in particular; any disturbance that is likely to impact their ability;

- To survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young;
- In case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or
- To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Protected Sites

8.4.4 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2017 puts an obligation on the appointed appropriate authority for England & Wales to establish priorities for a network of nationally important sites.

8.4.5 The aforementioned sites, often referred to as European protected sites are formed of two types of sites, Special Protection Areas (sites specifically designated for birds) and Special Areas of Conservation (specifically designated for fauna and flora). The objective is for all species and habitats covered by these sites to contribute towards the maintenance and restoration of their favourable conservation status.

8.4.6 Designation can include but is not limited to the following reasons:

- A natural habitat type specified in Annex I of the Habitat Directive;
- A species specified in Annex II of the Habitats Directive;
- For the coherence of the national network of protected sites; and
- For threats of degradation or destruction to which the sites are exposed.



8.5 Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended)

- 8.5.1 The Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) primarily transposes the UK Governments obligations under the Bird Directive and Bern Convention into law. The act outlines provisions for the protection of nationally important sites for nature conservation and provides protection at different levels for certain animals and plants, including certain prohibitions.

Protection of Birds

- 8.5.2 Part 1 – Section 1 includes certain prohibitions for the protection of birds which make it a criminal offence for a person to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- Intentionally take, damage, or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built;
- Intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird;
- Have in any one's possession or control any egg or part of an egg which has been taken in contravention of the Act or the Protection of Birds Act, 1954;
- Use traps or similar items to kill, injure or take wild birds;
- Have in one's possession or control any bird of a species occurring on schedule 4 of the Act unless registered, and in most cases ringed, in accordance with the secretary of state's regulations; and
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the independent young of such a bird.

Protection of Animals

- 8.5.3 Part 1 – Section 9 of the act includes certain prohibitions for the protection of certain animals named in schedule 5. In summary offences include:

- If any person intentionally or recklessly kills, injures or takes any wild animal included in schedule 5;
- If any person has in his possession or control any live or dead wild animal included in schedule 5, or any part of, or anything derived from, such an animal;



- If any person intentionally or recklessly damages or destroys, or obstructs access to, any structure or place which any wild animal included in schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection; or
- Disturb any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose; and
- Sells, offers or exposes for sale, or has in their possession or transports for the purpose of sale, any live or dead wild animal included in schedule 5, or any part of, or anything derived from, such an animal, or publishes or causes to be published any advertisement likely to be understood as conveying that they buy or sell, or intends to buy or sell, any of those things.

Protection of Plants

8.5.4 Part 1 – Section 13 includes certain prohibitions for the protection of certain wild plants named in schedule 8. In summary offences include if any person:

- Intentionally picks, uproots or destroys any wild plant included in schedule 8, or not being an authorised person, intentionally uproots any wild plants not included in that schedule;
- Sells, offers or exposes for sale, or has in their possession or transports for the purpose of sale, any live or dead wild plant included in schedule 8, or any part of, or anything derived from, such a plant; or
- Publishes or causes to be published any advertisement likely to be understood as conveying that they buy or sell, or intends to buy or sell, any of those things.

Invasive Species

8.5.5 Part 1 – Section 14 includes certain prohibitions for the introduction of certain invasive species named in schedule 9 of the act. In summary offences include if any person:

- Subject to the provisions of this part, (a) if any person releases or allows to escape into the wild any animal which is of a kind which is not ordinarily resident in and is not a regular visitor to Great Britain in a wild state; or (b) is included in Part of Schedule 9; and/ or
- Subject to the provisions of this part, any person who plants, or otherwise causes to grow, any plant in the wild at a place out with its native range is guilty of an offence.



Sites of Special Scientific Interest

- 8.5.6 Part 2 – Sections 28-33 of the act set out the law regarding Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) by the conservation bodies in England (Natural England) and Wales (Natural Resource Wales) and outlines the offences with respect to SSSI.
- 8.5.7 The offences outlined in the act apply to any person(s), public body, landowner or occupier as well as statutory undertakers or permitted developments. Examples of offences include (but are not limited to):
- Any person intentionally or recklessly damaging or destroying any of the features of special interest of an SSSI, or disturbing wildlife for which the site was notified;
 - Public bodies are not allowed to carry out damaging operations on an SSSI, except where they notified the relevant conservation agency. It is also an offence for a public body to fail to minimise damage on an SSSI or – if damage occurs – to fail to restore a SSSI to its former state; and
 - Statutory bodies have a general duty to take reasonable steps to further to conservation and enhancement of the special feature of SSSI's;
 - Where statutory bodies propose to undertake or permit activities that could affect a SSSI they must consult the relevant statutory nature conservation agency. If the activity cannot be avoided it must be undertaken in a way least damaging to the SSSI; and
 - If you are the owner or occupier of a SSSI, it is an offence to carry out any activity that may likely damage the SSSI without consent from the relevant conservation agency. The law requires that you inform the conservation agency of any changes in the ownership or occupancy.

Other Protected Areas

- 8.5.8 Part 2 – Section 34 to 52 of the act deals with other protected areas within the UK such as limestone pavements, national nature reserves and marine nature reserves. The act allows designation of these sites by the appropriate authority for the purpose of conserving flora and fauna or geological or physiological features of specific interest in an area to protect the site. Furthermore, the act prohibits certain actions in National Parks for certain habitats without consent from local authorities.

8.6 Countryside Rights of Way Act, 2000

- 8.6.1 The Countryside Rights of Way Act, 2000 (CRoW Act, 2000) makes provisions for public access, amends the law for public rights of way and amends existing law on



nature conservation and the protection of wildlife as well as makes further provisions for National Landscapes (formerly Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, AONBs).

Wildlife Legislation

- 8.6.2 Part III of the CRoW Act, 2000 includes provisions for wildlife protection and nature conservation and includes amendments to the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981.
- 8.6.3 Schedule 9 of the CRoW Act, 2000 increases powers for the protection and management of SSSI. There are increased powers for appropriate authorities to secure management agreements for SSSI. A duty is placed on public bodies to have regard for the continued conservation and enhancement of SSSI. Furthermore, there are increased penalties for the prosecution of wildlife crime, including for third parties that damage SSSI.
- 8.6.4 Schedule 12 of the CRoW Act, 2000 makes certain offences under the provision of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 arrestable. Greater powers are given to police and appointed wildlife inspectors under the CRoW Act, 2000 and enables heavier penalties for the prosecution of wildlife crime.

8.7 National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act, 1949

- 8.7.1 This act makes provisions for National Parks and the establishment of a National Parks Commission; to confer on the Nature Conservancy and local authorities' powers for the establishment and maintenance of nature reserves. Part III of the act specifically outlines provisions for the designation of nature reserves.

8.8 Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act, 2006

- 8.8.1 The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC), 2006 is primarily intended to implement key aspects of the governments rural strategy published in July 2004. It also addresses a wider range of issues relating broadly to the natural environment.

Section 40

- 8.8.2 Section 40 of the NERC Act, 2006, places a duty on any public authority and statutory undertaker to have due regard for the conservation and enhancement of biodiversity when delivering their functions, extending the provisions outlined under section 74 of the CRoW Act, 2000.
- 8.8.3 The policy goes on to state that conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population of that habitat.



Section 41

8.8.4 Section 41 of the NERC Act, 2006 requires the secretary of state in consultation with Natural England to outline Species of Principal Importance (SPI) and Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) that in their opinion are important for the conservation of biodiversity.

8.8.5 The secretary of state is required to:

- Take such steps as appear to the secretary of state to be reasonably practicable to further the conservation of the living organisms and types of habitat included in any list published under this section; or
- Promote the taking by other of such steps.

8.8.6 The NERC Act, 2006 also provides some amendments to the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) and includes provisions for enforcement powers and the protection of SSSI.

8.9 Protection of Badgers Act, 1992

8.9.1 The Protection of Badgers Act, 1992 makes it a criminal offence to wilfully kill, injure or take any badger, or attempt to do so. It also makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any part of a badger sett.

8.10 Wild Mammals (Protection) Act, 1996.

8.10.1 The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act, 1996 makes provision for the protection of wild mammals from certain cruel acts, and for connected purposes. It would be an offence for any person that mutilates, kicks, beats, nails or otherwise impales, stabs, burns, stones, crushes, drowns, drags or asphyxiates any wild animal with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering.

8.11 The Environment Act, 2021

8.11.1 The Environment Act, 2021 gained royal ascent on the 9th November, 2021. The act is wide ranging and broadly has the following aim:

‘a bill to make provision about targets, plans and policies for improving the natural environment, for statements and reports about environmental protection; for the office of environmental protection; about waste and resource efficiency; about air quality; for the recall of products that fail to meet environmental standards, about water, about nature and biodiversity; for conservation covenants; about the regulation of chemicals, and for connected purposes’.



Nature and Biodiversity

- 8.11.2 Part 6 – Sections 98 - 101 of the act outlines provisions for biodiversity gain in planning.
- 8.11.3 Schedule 14 makes provision for biodiversity gain to be a condition of planning permission in England.
- 8.11.4 Schedule 14 states that, the biodiversity gain objective is met in relation to development for which planning permission is granted if the biodiversity value attributable to the development exceeds the pre-development biodiversity value of the on-site habitat by at least the relevant percentage.
- 8.11.5 It goes on to state that the biodiversity value attributable to the development is the total of:
- The post development biodiversity value of the on-site habitat;
 - The biodiversity value, in relation to the development, of any registered offsite biodiversity gain allocated to the development; and
 - The biodiversity value of any biodiversity credits purchased for the development.
- 8.11.6 The relevant percentage is set at 10% for biodiversity gain.
- 8.11.7 Part 6 – Section 100 of the act outlines provisions by regulation for the secretary of a register of biodiversity gain sites (known as the biodiversity gain site register).
- 8.11.8 A biodiversity gain site is land where:
- A person is required under the conservation covenant or planning obligation to carry out works for the purpose of habitat enhancement;
 - That or another person is required to maintain the enhancement for at least 30 years after the completion of the works; and
 - For the purpose of schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 the enhancement is made available to be allocated (conditionally or unconditionally, and whether for consideration or otherwise) in accordance with the terms of the covenant or obligation to one or more developments for which planning permission is granted.
- 8.11.9 Part 6 – Section 101 states that the secretary of state may make arrangements under which a person who is entitled to carry out the development of any land may purchase a credit from the secretary of state for the purpose of meeting the



biodiversity gain objective referred to in schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act, 1990 and Schedule 2A of the Planning Act, 2008.

8.11.10 A credit is to be regarded for the purpose of that schedule as having such biodiversity value as is determined under the arrangements.

8.11.11 The arrangements may in particular include arrangements relating to:

- Applications to purchase credits;
- The amount payable in respect of a credit of a given value;
- Proof of purchase; and
- Reimbursement for credits purchased for development which is not carried out.

8.12 National Planning Policy Framework (2024)

8.12.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, Ministry of Housing Communities and Local Government, 2024) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework which locally prepared plans for housing and other developments can be produced.

8.12.2 The NPPF supplements Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation 06/2005 (Office of the Deputy Prime Minister, 2005).

Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment

8.12.3 Paragraph 187 states: Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened



species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;

- 8.12.4 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
- 8.12.5 f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
- 8.12.6 Paragraph 188 states: 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.
- 8.12.7 Paragraph 189 states that: Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight in National Parks and the Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their setting should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated areas.
- 8.12.8 Paragraph 190 states that: When considering applications for development within National Parks, the Broads and National Landscapes, permission should be refused for major development other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. Consideration of such applications should include an assessment of:
- a) the need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;
 - b) the cost of, and scope for, developing outside the designated area, or meeting the need for it in some other way; and
 - c) any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which that could be moderated.



- 8.12.9 Within areas defined as Heritage Coast (and that do not already fall within one of the designated areas mentioned in paragraph 189), planning policies and decisions should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Major development within a Heritage Coast is unlikely to be appropriate, unless it is compatible with its special character.

Habitats and Biodiversity

- 8.12.10 Paragraph 192 states that: To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

- 8.12.11 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.

8.12.12 The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
- b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and
- c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

8.12.13 The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

Ground Conditions and Pollution

8.12.14 Planning policies and decisions should also ensure that new development is appropriate for its location taking into account the likely effects (including cumulative effects) of pollution on health, living conditions and the natural environment, as well as the potential sensitivity of the site or the wider area to impacts that could arise from the development. In doing so they should:

- a) mitigate and reduce to a minimum potential adverse impacts resulting from noise from new development – and avoid noise giving rise to significant adverse impacts on health and the quality of life;
- b) identify and protect tranquil areas which have remained relatively undisturbed by noise and are prized for their recreational and amenity value for this reason; and
- c) limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

8.13 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation Circular 06/2005

8.13.1 Biodiversity and geological conservation circular 06/2005 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 NPPF, 2024 and the Planning Practice Guidance. Broadly the guidance covers designated



sites, the conservation of habitats and species, including outside of designated sites, protected species by law and the duties and powers used by planning authorities.

- 8.13.2 Paragraph 82 of the guidance states that ‘in determining the application for development that is covered by up-to-date standing advice, a planning authority must take into account this standing advice’.

Protected Species and Planning

- 8.13.3 Paragraph 98 of the guidance states ‘the presence of a protected species is a material planning consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat’.
- 8.13.4 Paragraph 98 also states that ‘they (the planning authority) should consider attaching appropriate planning conditions or entering into planning obligations under which the developer would take steps to secure the long-term protection of the species’.
- 8.13.5 Paragraph 99 of the guidance goes on to state: ‘it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted, otherwise all relevant material considerations may not have been addressed in making the decision’. Paragraph 99 also states that ‘this is justified only, where there is a reasonable likelihood of the species being present and affected by the development.’

8.14 Horsham District Council Adopted Local Plan (2015)

Policy 25

- 8.14.1 Policy 25 states ‘The Natural Environment and landscape character of the district, including the landscape, landform and development pattern, together with protected landscapes and habitats will be protected against inappropriate development. The Council will support development proposals which’:
1. Protects, conserves, and enhances the landscape and townscape character, taking into account areas identified as being of landscape importance, the individual settlement characteristics, and maintains settlement separation;
 2. Maintain and enhances the Green Infrastructure Network and addresses any identified deficiencies in the district;



3. Maintains and enhances the existing network of geological sites and biodiversity, including safeguarding existing designated sites and species, and ensures no net loss of wider biodiversity and provides net gains in biodiversity where possible; and

4. Conserve and where possible enhance the setting of the South Downs National Park.

Policy 31

- 8.14.2 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.
- 8.14.3 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.
- 8.14.4 3) Where felling of protected trees is necessary, replacement planting with a suitable species will be required.
- 8.14.5 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); and
 - 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.
- 8.14.6 4) 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.



- 8.14.7 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.

8.15 Birds of Conservation Concern

- 8.15.1 Birds of Conservation Concern is a report compiled by a coalition of the UK's leading bird conservation and monitoring organisations and reviews the conservation status of all regularly occurring birds in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. The report was first released in 1996 and is currently in its 5th edition, released in 2021.
- 8.15.2 The bird species that breed and overwinter in the UK are assessed against a set of objective criteria and placed on the Green, Amber or Red lists that indicate the levels of conservation concern. The quantitative criteria collected is assessed against the historical decline, recent trends in population and range, population size, localisation, and the level of international importance of each species, as well as its global and European threat status.

8.16 IUCN Red List

- 8.16.1 The international Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Red List of Threatened Species (also known as the IUCN Red List or Red Data Book) is an inventory of the global conservation status of biological species. The inventory is based upon internationally accepted criteria that evaluates the extinction risk of species in all regions of the world. There are two types of red list, the global and national lists. In the UK the IUCN Red List is overseen by an interagency working group that is coordinated by the Joint Nature Conservation Commission.

8.17 Bibliography – Appendix III

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