

Job Name: Land at Sandgate Nursery, Henfield
Date: 2nd August 2024
Prepared By: Matt Pendry BSc (Hons) MCIEEM - Principal Ecologist
Subject: Memorandum relating to an update walkover of the Land at Sandgate Nursery, Henfield to catalog any changes since the original ecology surveys in 2022

In June 2024, the Ecology Partnership were commissioned to complete an update walkover at the application site at Sandgate Nursery, Henfield. This was to determine if any material changes to the site had occurred and if any update would be required to any protected species surveys or the Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) to support the application.

In support of the previous application the Ecology Partnership produced the following ecology reports:

- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2022a)
- Bat Activity Survey (2022b)
- Reptile Survey Survey (2022c)
- Great Crested Newt eDNA Survey (2023a)
- Ecological Impact Assessment (2023b)

The site was resurveyed by The Ecology Partnership on 22nd July 2024 by Principal ecologist Matt Pendry BSc (Hons) MCIEEM. The habitats and plant species present were compared to those recorded in 2022, by the same surveyor, and any new evidence of badgers was searched for. The results of these comparisons and recommendations are detailed below:

Walkover

The habitats on site had not materially changed since the last habitat survey undertaken in 2022. The bramble scrub had encroached in certain areas, but, not enough to change that broad habitats on site mapped during the 2022 PEA. One or two trees have been removed, with stumps retained on the northern boundary where the access is proposed (See photos in Appendix 1). This was undertaken on 3rd April 2023 and was proceeded by a nesting bird check by the ecology partnership in accordance with the recommendations of the PEA. No active nests were found. The only other change of note was a single new mammal hole of a size and shape indicative of a badger outlier sett, recorded in the north-west of the site (See Figure 1 overleaf).



Figure 1. Location of potential badger outlier setts identified on 2024 update site walkover.

Implications for previous reports

As the new potential badger outlier sett falls within the proposed works area, the recommendations within the previous PEA for monitoring of the previously identified potential badger outlier sett in the west of the site, would now extend to apply to this hole also: As such, it is recommended that prior to the use of any heavy machinery within 30m of either sett, the entrance must be monitored for a period of at least four weeks. If no evidence of use by badger is noted, then the sett should be subject to a sensitive excavation, supervised by a suitably qualified ecologist. If badgers are found to be using the sett within the monitoring period, then a licence will be required from Natural England to close the site. This would be done between July and November, in order to avoid the pregnancy and cub-rearing seasons and will require one-way badger gates to exclude them from the sett, prior to closure. Full details of mitigation will be informed by the monitoring surveys.

Given the habitats on site and within the local areas have not materially changed since these surveys, it is unlikely that update surveys for reptiles, GCN and bats would record a significantly different result. The previous recommendations for sensitive lighting strategy, and retention of majority of boundary vegetation for bats and, creation of receptor site and careful translocation of the reptiles out of the works area is still considered appropriate.

Since the original survey work, Nature Space in their capacity of a consultee, have recommended that Reasonable Avoidance Measure for Great Crested Newt are undertaken on site to be documented in a Precautionary Working Method Statement. We are in agreement with this recommendation, and this overrides our original recommendations regarding GCN in the EcIA and GCN report.

Natural England issued a Position Statement to Sussex County Council stating that it cannot conclude that the existing water abstraction within the area is not having an adverse impact on the Arun Valley SPA, SAC, and Ramsar Statutory designated site. It was therefore advised in the PEA and EcIA that the development, which falls within the water extraction zone must not add to this impact. Stonegate Homes have since found a solution that demonstrates that the development will result in net water neutrality. As such, impacts on this internationally designated site are now considered negligible.

This memorandum should be read in conjunction with all the previous ecology reports for the site.

Kind regards

Matt Pendry BSc (Hons) MCIEEM
Principal Ecologist

Photograph 1:

Neutral grassland in the north-east of the site



Photograph 2:

Neutral grassland in the south of the site



Photograph 3:

New mammal hole and suspected badger outlier sett in the north-west of the site.



Photograph 4:

Gap in the northern treeline
where one/two small trees were
removed

