

Ecological Impact Assessment

July 2026

**Land North of Rectory
Lane, Ashington**

Prepared by
CSA Environmental

On behalf of
Taylor Wimpey

Report No: CSA/4705/05

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

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Outline planning permission is sought for residential development of up to 125 dwellings, access, public open space and associated landscaping, drainage and highways infrastructure, with all matters reserved except access, at Land North of Rectory Lane, Ashington. The c. 7.39ha Site comprises a large arable field separated into three sections by established treelines and bounded on all sides by mature hedgerows, with Lancing Brook immediately to the west and north.

CSA Environmental was instructed by Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land, a division of Taylor Wimpey UK Ltd (TW), to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment informed by desk study, UKHab survey and targeted surveys for bats, [REDACTED] dormouse, birds, reptiles, water vole and great crested newt.

While the Site is dominated by arable habitat of limited ecological value, its hedgerows, treelines and adjacent watercourse form locally important ecological corridors. Key receptors include hedgerows and trees, an off-Site watercourse (Lancing Brook), bats, dormouse, breeding and wintering birds, reptiles [REDACTED] together with consideration of The Mens SAC and barbastelle bat activity.

Potential effects arise principally from habitat loss, including a short section of hedgerow, loss of one tree with low bat roost potential (T24, PRF-I), construction disturbance, lighting effects on retained corridors, and risks to protected species during site clearance and construction.

Mitigation is embedded within the design through retention of most boundary vegetation and tree lines, provision of a northern green corridor with SuDS, and scope for habitat creation within public open space. Additional measures include a sensitive lighting strategy, precautionary construction controls and long-term ecological management.

The scheme also provides opportunities for habitat creation and biodiversity enhancement, including new grassland, scrub, tree and hedgerow planting, wetland habitat associated with SuDS, and provision of wildlife features for bats, birds, dormice and invertebrates.

Overall, the EclA concludes that, with the proposed avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures in place, the development is not expected to result in any significant residual negative ecological effects. A positive effect is anticipated in relation to watercourse habitat, and the scheme is capable of complying with relevant legislation and Policies 25 and 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework 2015.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by CSA Environmental on behalf of Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land. It sets out the findings of an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) of proposed development at Land North of Rectory Lane, Ashington (hereafter 'the Site'). Residential development of up to 125 dwellings along with access, public open space and associated landscaping, drainage and highways infrastructure is proposed at the Site, for which outline planning permission is sought with all matters reserved except for access.
- 1.2 The scope of this assessment has been determined with consideration of best-practice guidance provided by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2024) and the Biodiversity: Code of practice for planning and development published by the British Standards Institute (BS 42020:2013).
- 1.3 The Site occupies an area of c. 7.39ha and consists of a large arable field separated into three sections by established treelines and bounded on all sides by mature hedgerows (see Habitats Plan in Appendix A).
- 1.4 The Site is located around central grid reference TQ 12626 16547, to the north-west of Ashington. The Site is located within an area of mixed farmland with scattered parcels of semi-natural woodland connected by a network of field boundary hedgerows and mature treelines.
- 1.5 An initial desk study and field survey, including a Phase 1 habitat survey were undertaken in March 2020 as part of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA). The findings of the Phase 1 survey were reconfirmed in January 2024 as part of an updated UK Habitat Classification survey, and the desk study was updated in December 2024. A further Site walkover in January 2026 reconfirmed the habitats present. The findings of the 2026 walkover are presented herein along with the desk study results from February 2026.
- 1.6 The following further survey work was undertaken between February and December 2024:
 - Detailed habitat and botanical surveys (April - August 2024)
 - Breeding bird surveys (April - June 2024)
 - Bat surveys (February - October 2024)
 - [REDACTED]
 - Hazel dormouse surveys (May – October 2024)
 - Water vole (April 2024; visit 1 of 2)
 - Reptile surveys (April – July 2024)
 - Great crested newt eDNA and HSI surveys (April – June 2024)
- 1.7 The following survey work was carried out in 2026:

- 'BNG Veteran Tree' Assessment
- Water vole (April 2026; visit 2 of 2)
- Dormouse Habitat Quality Assessment (HQA; May 2026)

1.8 This EclA aims to:

- Establish baseline ecological conditions at the Site.
- Determine the importance of ecological features which could be affected by the proposed scheme.
- Identify any likely significant impacts or effects of the proposed development on important ecological features, in the absence of mitigation, including cumulative impacts.
- Set out any measures necessary to effectively avoid or mitigate likely significant effects, and identify residual impacts.
- Identify any compensation measures required to offset residual impacts.
- Set out potential ecological enhancement measures that may be secured by the proposed scheme
- Confirm how proposed mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures could be secured.
- Provide sufficient information to determine whether the project accords with relevant nature conservation policies and legislation, and where appropriate, to allow conditions or obligations to be imposed by the relevant authority.

1.9 An EclA can be used for the appraisal of projects of any scale. This is a best practice evaluation process, recommended by CIEEM (2024). It is intended that the evaluation of findings presented here-in will aid Horsham District Council in their review of the planning application.

1.10 This report should be read in conjunction with the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment: Design Stage report (CSA/4705/15) which details further ecological assessment undertaken for the purpose of assessing Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), and the predicted net effect of the proposed development on biodiversity.

1.11 A report collating Information to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment (CSA/4705/04) has also been provided, and should be read in conjunction with this report.

2.0 LEGISLATION, PLANNING POLICY & STANDING ADVICE

Legislation

- 2.1 Legislation relating to wildlife and biodiversity of particular relevance to this EclA includes:
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
 - The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
 - The Protection of Badgers Act 1992
 - The Environment Act 2021
- 2.2 This legislation has been addressed, as appropriate, in the production of this report with further information provided in Appendix B.

National Planning Policy

- 2.3 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ministry of Housing, Communities & Local Government, 2024) sets out the government planning policies for England and how they should be applied. Chapter 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment, is of particular relevance to this report as it relates to ecology and biodiversity. Further details are provided in Appendix B.
- 2.4 Accompanying the NPPF, central government guidance on the implementation of planning policies is set out within online Planning Policy Guidance (PPG). The Natural Environment PPG addresses biodiversity conservation, from individual site and species protection through to the supporting of ecosystem services. Further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity conservation within the planning system is provided by Government Circular 06/2005.

Local Planning Policy

- 2.5 A number of local planning policies relate to ecology, biodiversity and/or nature conservation. These are summarised in Appendix B.

Standing Advice

- 2.6 Natural England Standing Advice regarding protected species aims to support local authorities and forms a material consideration in determining applications in the same way as any individual response received from Natural England following consultation. Standing advice has therefore been given due consideration, alongside other detailed guidance documents, in the scoping of ecological surveys and production of this report.

3.0 METHODS

Desk Study

- 3.1 An ecological desk study was undertaken in February 2026 comprising a review of online resources and biological records centre data as detailed below.
- 3.2 The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) online database was reviewed to identify the following ecological features (based on the Site's likely 'zone of influence' in respect of such features):
 - Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar sites within 10km of the Site (including possible/proposed sites)
 - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), National Nature Reserves (NNR), Local Nature Reserves (LNR) within 3km of the Site
 - Other relevant data e.g. Ancient Woodland Inventory within 1km of the Site
- 3.3 A review was undertaken of the location of any such designations, their distance from and connectivity with the Site, and the reasons for their designation. This information was used to determine whether they may be within the proposed development's Zone of Influence (Zol).
- 3.4 Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC) was contacted for details of any non-statutory nature conservation designations and records of protected/notable habitats and species. This information was requested for an area encompassing the Site and adjacent land within c. 2km of its central grid reference. This search area was selected to include the likely zone of influence of effects upon non-statutory designations and protected or notable habitats and species.
- 3.5 Further online resources were reviewed for information which may aid the identification of important ecological features. The Woodland Trust's online Ancient Tree Inventory was reviewed for known ancient or veteran trees within the Site and adjacent land. Interactive online mapping provided by the charity 'Buglife' was used to determine whether the Site falls within an Important Invertebrate Area.
- 3.6 In accordance with Natural England's Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines (2001), a desktop search was undertaken to identify ponds within 500m of the Site which may have potential to support breeding great crested newts *Triturus cristatus*, using Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping, the MAGIC database and aerial photography.
- 3.7 Where possible under the terms of the data provider, relevant desk study data are presented in Appendix C.

Field Surveys

- 3.8 A UK Habitat Classification ('UKHab') survey was carried out across the Site in fine and dry weather conditions on 31 January 2024 by Jeff Turton ACIEEM, FISC Level 3, and Lydia Galbraith ACIEEM, FISC Level 3 encompassing the Site and immediately adjacent habitats that could be viewed. Findings were reconfirmed during a Site walkover on 09 January 2026 by Jeff Turton ACIEEM and Nathaniel Scott, in wet and overcast conditions.
- 3.9 UKHab is a unified and comprehensive system for mapping and classifying habitats, designed to provide a simple and robust approach to surveying and monitoring, and replaces Phase 1 Habitat survey methods. The method allows for identification of important habitat types, including habitats of Principal Importance under Section 41 (S41) of the NERC Act (2006) and Habitats Directive Annex I habitats. This method also allows for direct translation of habitats into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Defra, 2025).
- 3.10 The following parameters were adopted for the UKHab survey undertaken for this EclA:
- UKHab Professional edition (Butcher *et al.*, 2020, commercial End User Licence Agreement (EULA))
 - Minimum Mappable Unit (MMU):
 - 10m²/0.001ha (polygons)
 - 5m (linear)
 - Primary Habitats recorded to a minimum of Level 2 (see below) with UKHab codes provided
 - Mandatory secondary codes used
 - Base-mapping comprising a combination of aerial imagery and topographic information
- 3.11 Primary Habitats are recorded to a minimum of Level 2. Where the survey is conducted at an appropriate time of year (e.g. May to July for grassland) habitats may be recorded to Level 3, 4 or 5, only if conditions and the experience of the surveyor allow.
- 3.12 Professional judgement was used by the surveyors in identification and mapping of habitat stands based upon obvious habitat structure, composition or other delineating feature (e.g. field or enclosure).
- 3.13 Alongside the UKHab survey, additional field survey information was collected, comprising:
- Detailed floral species lists recorded for each identified habitat/parcel
 - Evidence of, or potential for, European Protected Species (EPS) (including bats, great crested newt, dormouse and otter)

- Evidence of, or potential for, other protected species (including birds, reptiles, water vole, [REDACTED] and certain invertebrates)
 - Evidence of, or potential for, other notable species (including S41 Species of Principal Importance as well as notable, rare, protected or controlled plants and invertebrates)
 - Any other survey information relevant to ecological matters
- 3.14 Results of the UKHab survey are presented on the Habitats Plan in Appendix A. Appendix D provides photographs of the habitats at the Site and Appendix E provides a list of floral species recorded in each habitat parcel. Nomenclature for higher plants within this report is consistent with the fourth edition of The New Flora of the British Isles (Stace, 2019).

Further Survey Work

- 3.15 The following detailed field survey work was carried out across the Site between February and December 2024, with full methods and results provided in the relevant Appendices:
- Bat Surveys (Appendix G) including:
 - Preliminary Roost Assessment - Trees
 - Bat Activity Surveys
 - [REDACTED]
 - Dormouse Survey (Appendix I)
 - Breeding Bird Survey (Appendix J)
 - Wintering Bird Survey (Appendix J)
 - Reptile Survey (Appendix K)
 - Great Crested Newt Habitat Suitability Index (Appendix L)
 - Otter and Water (Appendix N)
- 3.16 The following detailed field survey work was carried out in May 2026, with full methods and results provided in the relevant Appendices:
- Dormouse Habitat Quality Assessment (Appendix I)
- 3.17 Further to the above, habitat condition assessments were carried out on all habitats between April and August 2024 to inform the associated BNG Assessment, and these are detailed in the BNG report (CSA/4705/15). An assessment of the trees on Site against veteran tree criteria as set out in BNG guidance was also carried out in the January 2026 Site walkover, with results referenced within both this EclA and within the BNG report, where necessary.

Limitations

- 3.18 There were no specific limitations to the desk study.
- 3.19 The field surveys were conducted across multiple months/seasons and in good conditions. Habitat classification and assessment of Important

Ecological Features provided herein is conveyed with a high degree of certainty. Any limitations specific to further targeted species surveys are addressed in the relevant appendices.

Evaluation and Assessment

- 3.20 Ecological features are identified, evaluated and assessed in accordance with the CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (2018), with detailed methods provided in Appendix F.
- 3.21 It is an established principle (CIEEM, 2024) that EcIA is an iterative process. Specialist advice on the avoidance and mitigation of the potential negative effects of the proposed development has been input from an early design stage.

4.0 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

Nature Conservation Designations

Statutory

- 4.1 There are no statutory designations covering any part of the Site.
- 4.2 A total of four international statutory designations were identified within 10km of the Site. These are Arun Valley SAC, Arun Valley SPA and Arun Valley Ramsar site. These designations geographically overlap the same land, and so all are located c. 6.2km west, at their closest point. The Site also lies within the 12km "Bat Sustenance Zone" (Horsham District Council, 2014) or "Wider Conservation Zone" (SDNPA & NE, 2018) for the Mens SAC, located c. 11.6km north-west of Site, at its closest point. Given the legislative frameworks underpinning international designations, these are considered to be important at the International level.
- 4.3 One national statutory designation was identified within 3km of the Site. This was the Sullington Warren SSSI (c. 3.0km south-west of the Site). As SSSIs are administered and designated under national legislation, these sites are considered to be important at the National level. These statutory designations are described in Table 1 below.
- 4.4 No local statutory designations were identified within 3km of the Site.
- 4.5 The Site falls within the fluvial catchment of the Adur (Lancing Brook) Water Body, an operational catchment of the Upper Adur. It shares no hydrological connectivity with any statutory river, wetland, estuary or coastal designation which has been identified in advice from Natural England as being vulnerable to increases in nutrient loading from new development. The Site is not within the fluvial catchment zone of the Arun designations.
- 4.6 The above statutory designations are described in Table 1 below.

Non-Statutory

- 4.7 Four non-statutory designations were identified within 2km of the Site. These were the America & Gratwicke's Wood LWS (c. 0.5km east of the Site), Hooklands Farm Meadow LWS (c. 1.3km north-east of the Site), Capite Wood LWS (c. 1.8km north-east of the Site), Rock Road Designated Road Verge (DRV) (c. 1.9km south-east). These non-statutory designations are described in Table 1 below.
- 4.8 As LWSs are designated according to criteria applied in a county context, these sites are considered to be ecologically important at the County level. Rock Road DRV is not expected to be impacted by development proposals due its distance from the Site and is therefore scoped out of further assessment.

Table 1. Statutory and non-statutory designations within search radii

Site Name & Designation	Distance & Direction from Site	Special Interests or Qualifying Features
International Designations within 10km		
Arun Valley SAC	c. 6.2km west	The site is designated for the ramshorn snail <i>Anisus vorticulus</i> which is a species listed under Annex II of Directive 92/43/EEC. This species across a range of sites in southern and eastern England. The Arun Valley is one of the three main population centra for this species in the UK.
Arun Valley SPA	c. 6.2km west	The site qualifies under article 4.1 of the Birds Directive 79/409/EEC for regularly supporting 1% or more of the Great Britain population of a species listed on Annex I in any season: Bewick's swan <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i> (115 individuals - 5 year mean peak for 1992/3 to 1996/7). The site also qualifies under 4.2 of the Directive (79/409/EEC) by regularly supporting over 20,000 waterfowl (27,241 individual wintering birds - 5 year mean peak for 1992/3 to 1996/7).
Arun Valley Ramsar	c. 6.2km west	The site qualifies under Ramsar criterion 2 holds seven wetland invertebrate species listed in the British Red Data Book as being threatened, alongside one endangered freshwater snail <i>Pseudamnicola confusa</i> . Additionally, the Site supports four nationally rare and four nationally scarce plant species. The Site also qualifies under Ramsar criterion 3 for its ditches containing diverse and rich flora. All five British Lemna species, all five <i>Rorippa</i> species and all three British water milfoils (<i>Myriophyllum</i> spp.) can be found on-site, alongside all but one of the seven British water dropworts (<i>Oenanthe</i> spp.), and two-thirds of the British pondweeds (<i>Potamogeton</i> spp.). Finally, the Site qualifies under Ramsar criterion 5 for supporting an internationally important waterfowl assemblage (greater than 20,000 birds). 27,241 waterfowl in winter (5 year mean peak for 1992/3 to 1996/7).
The Mens SAC	c. 11.6km north-west	The Site is designated for supporting the Annex I habitat; Atlantic acidophilous beech forests with <i>Ilex</i> and also <i>Taxus</i> in the shrub layer (<i>Quercion robur-petraeae</i> or <i>Ilici-Fagenion</i>), as well as for supporting important populations of the Annex II species barbastelle, as listed in Directive 92/43/EEC. The Site is within the outer limit of the 12km "Bat Sustenance Zone" or "Wider Conservation Area" of the SAC for which significant impacts and severance to flight lines, or impacts to foraging habitat (including river valleys, hedgerows and scrub land) or access to these foraging areas should be considered; it may be necessary for compensatory measures such as hedgerow enhancement to be undertaken prior to any development.

Site Name & Designation	Distance & Direction from Site	Special Interests or Qualifying Features
National Designations within 3km		
Sullington Warren SSSI	c. 3.0km south-west	The site is designated for its botanically rich heathland habitats, supporting wet and dry heath, and for its woodland habitat which supports nightingale <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i> and tree creeper <i>Certhia familiaris</i> .
Non-statutory Designations within 2km		
America & Gratwicke's Wood LWS	c. 0.5km east	Semi-natural coppice-with-standard woodland comprising mostly oak <i>Quercus robur</i> , ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> , hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> , alder <i>Alnus glutiosa</i> and aspen <i>Populus tremula</i> . The site has a rich ground flora and is good habitat for birds and insects.
Hooklands Farm Meadow LWS	c. 1.3km north-east	Unimproved species-rich damp grassland with scrub and stream.
Capite Wood LWS	c. 1.8km north-east	Ancient semi-natural and re-planted woodland with a diverse arboriculture interest and rich ground flora, including bryophytes.
Rock Road Designated Road Verge	c. 1.9km south-east	Good example of sandy grassland with some notable flora.

Habitats and Flora

- 4.9 Habitats recorded on-site are illustrated in Appendix A and D with detailed species lists provided in Appendix E. Relevant UKHab codes are provided within parentheses for each habitat type recorded e.g. Other Neutral Grassland (g3c).

Irreplaceable Habitats

- 4.10 There is no ancient woodland, as shown on the ancient woodland inventory, covering any part of the Site or immediately adjacent land.
- 4.11 No trees on or adjacent to Site are listed on the Ancient Tree Inventory. However, the AIA identifies one veteran tree (A-category oak tree T25) which meets the NPPF definition of a veteran and multiple trees meet the definition of a veteran tree under BNG guidance, but do not meet the NPPF standard. These trees are recorded as irreplaceable habitat on within the associated BNG metric and are discussed further herein.

Notable Flora Records

- 4.12 A total of 190 records of 51 notable plant species were identified within the search area. Notable species of potential relevance to the Site include red-listed species associated with disturbed ground, such as stinking chamomile *Anthemis cotula*, rye brome *Bromus secalinus* and common cudweed *Filago germanica*. No records of these species originate from within the Site.

- 4.13 No invasive non-native plant species were identified during the extended UKHab survey or subsequent visits to the Site.

Arable and Horticulture (c1)

Cereal crop (c1c) with 'hedgerows with trees' (11) and 'scattered trees' (32)

- 4.14 The Site comprises a large arable field (F1 on the Habitats Plan, Appendix A) bound by hedgerows with trees. Wheat *Triticum* sp. was dominant, with occasional individual oak *Quercus* sp. trees scattered across the field and scattered scrub parcels comprising bramble and willow *Salix* sp. towards the eastern extent of the field.
- 4.15 Grass margins were present along the boundaries of the arable field and were c. 1m wide or less, and as such were recorded as secondary features of the arable habitat. Forbs at the margins included common nettle, cleavers *Galium aparine*, greater stitchwort *Stellaria holostea*, thistles *Cirsium* spp., docks *Rumex* spp., cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, hogweed and white dead-nettle *Lamium album*. Grasses present included abundant perennial ryegrass, frequent cock's-foot and occasional false oat-grass.
- 4.16 The arable field and its grassland margins, which contained common and widespread species and were of limited size and structure, were considered to be of importance at less than Local level only and were scoped out of further assessment.

Dense Scrub (h3)

Mixed scrub (h3h) with 'Young trees – self-set' (202) and 'Mature trees' (203)

- 4.17 A parcel of mixed dense scrub was recorded to the central-eastern extent of the Site. Bramble, hawthorn, and blackthorn made up the scrub parcel; none of these species were notably dominant or more frequent than the others, hence this parcel was recorded as a mixed species scrub. Mature oak trees occur immediately east and west of the scrub parcel, and immature willow trees were recorded infrequently within the scrub.
- 4.18 Dense scrub is a widespread habitat that provides foraging and nesting potential for wildlife. However, the parcel on the Site is small and isolated, so considered important at less than Local level and scoped out of further assessment.

Linear Habitats

- 4.19 The Site contains multiple linear habitats, most of which lack gaps and are continuous. These habitats are connected to surrounding habitats in the local area, forming corridors wildlife can use. As such, all are considered to be important at the Local level.

Table 3. Linear Habitat Descriptions

Boundary Number	Habitat type and UKHab codes	Description
Hedgerows		
H1	Species-rich native Hedgerow (h2a5) with trees (11), neglected (518)	Native hedgerow running along the eastern boundary of the Site, comprised of: hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, elder, English elm, bramble and dog rose, with five mature oak trees and a dead multi-stemmed ash tree (T1).
H2	Native hedgerows (h2a), neglected (518)	A native hedgerow that consists predominantly of blackthorn and hazel but with some English elm and hawthorn also.
H3	Species-rich native Hedgerow (h2a5) with trees (11)	Species-rich native hedgerow running along the southern boundary of the Site, comprised of abundant blackthorn, frequent English elm, field maple and holly, occasional hawthorn, dogwood, common ash, dog rose and hazel, plus rare instances of sycamore and English oak. ivy <i>Hedera helix</i> and cleavers were recorded in the undergrowth. Notable mature trees along this length include T2 (English oak), T5 (aspen), T6 and T7 (English oaks), and G5 – G8 which are all mature oak trees.
H4	Species-rich native hedgerow (h2a5) with trees (11) associated with freshwater – natural (47)	Hedgerow H4 runs along the western boundary of the Site and is comprised of field maple, common ash, hazel, goat willow, English elm, blackthorn, crab apple, holly, English oak and dog rose. Notable mature trees along this hedgerow include T8, T9 and T10 (English oaks) and G9 which comprises mature English oak, common ash and holly.
H5	Species-rich native Hedgerow (h2a5) with trees (11) associated with ditch (50), neglected (518)	Hedgerow running along the northern boundary of the Site and comprised of hazel, field maple, hawthorn, blackthorn, English oak and aspen of varying sizes. Tree T15 is the largest/most notable mature tree along this length. This hedgerow did not appear to have been cut or flailed recently at the time of survey. H5 runs adjacent to two ditches (D1 and D2), which under UKHabs do not warrant subdivision into a separate habitat classification. Instead, they are captured as a secondary code in association with H5 (secondary code 50). • Ditch 1 is a dry and shallow drainage channel completely overshadowed by vegetated growth in association with H5. • Ditch 2 is a shallow but wet ditch within H5 and adjacent to the north-east of the site. It is slightly less crowded by vegetation, but mostly overshadowed.

Boundary Number	Habitat type and UKHab codes	Description
Treelines		
LT1	Ecologically valuable line of Trees (34)	Two lines of mature oak trees running from the northern boundary of the Site towards, but not adjoining to, the southern boundary. A dense bramble understorey was present in places, and several gaps were noted across these linear features. Tree T25 at the northern end of LT1 has been determined to be a veteran tree, as determined under the NPPF.
LT2	Ecologically valuable line of Trees (34)	

Rivers and streams (r2)

'Other Rivers and Streams' (r2b)

- 4.20 A stream which is part of Lancing Brook lies adjacent to the Site to the north. Lancing brook is a tributary of the River Adur and as such this habitat has intrinsic ecological value within the local landscape. As such, this habitat is considered to be important at the Local level.

Fauna

Bats

Bat Activity

- 4.21 A total of 55 bat records were identified within the search area, dating from 1983 to 2023. These include the following species: common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *P. pygmaeus*, Nathusius' pipistrelle *P. nathusii*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, serotine bat *Eptesicus serotinus*, Brandt's bat *Myotis brandtii*. The closest records are of a common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) in 2009 0.024 km south-east of the site, and a brown long-eared bat in 2020 0.141 km south of the site.
- 4.22 The on-site habitats are likely to offer suitable foraging opportunities for an array of species which utilise woodland edge habitats. Mature oak and other tree species are known to support a wide range of invertebrate prey. Likewise, commuting bats are likely to use well-established treelines and ditches. Full results can be found in Appendix G but are summarised below.
- 4.23 A series of three night-time bat walkover surveys at the Site were conducted in May, July and September 2024, with seven static monitoring periods conducted monthly from April to October 2024. Overall, the bat activity recorded at the Site was largely dominated by common species such as common pipistrelle (83% of calls during static monitoring), with a total of 10 species recorded during the walkover transect surveys and 11 during the static monitoring surveys.

- 4.24 It should be noted that it is not possible to identify to species level all bats utilising the Site through call analysis alone. This is particularly the case regarding species within the *Myotis* genus, however, is also relevant within the *Plecotus* and *Nyctalus* genera. Based upon their known ranges, the data returned from the desk study and with regard to the habitats present on-site, it is assumed that up to five *Myotis* species could be utilising the Site for foraging and commuting: Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*, Natterer's bat *Myotis nattereri*, whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus*, Alcahloe bat *Myotis alcathoe*, and Brandt's bat *Myotis brandtii*. On the same basis, it is also assumed that brown long-eared bat and grey long-eared bat *Plecotus austriacus* could be present on-site, in addition to both noctule *Nyctalus noctula* and Leisler's bat, despite the latter of each genera not being specifically identified through call analysis.
- 4.25 Of note is the confirmed presence of the Annex II species, barbastelle, as the Mens SAC is designated for barbastelle and the Site exists within the 12km radius of the Mens SAC known as the "Bat Sustenance Zone" or "Wider Conservation Area". A total of 141 barbastelle calls were recorded across the 2024 survey period, with the number of calls being fairly evenly between the two monitoring points (ML1 - located on the southern boundary (84 calls), and ML2 - north end of one of the north-south tree lines through the Site (59 calls)). Barbastelle calls were distributed at variable times during the night; with a very low number of calls / night compared to other bat species recorded. Barbastelle calls recorded during the night-time walkover surveys were limited to single calls during the May and September surveys, close to the southern end of the tree line which runs south-north through the Site. It is considered that barbastelle use of the Site is likely limited to individual bats foraging across the wider landscape..

Table 4. Categorising Bats by Geographic Distribution and Rarity (adapted from Reason and Wray, 2023)

Rarity in Southern England (score assigned per species present)	Species known to occur in the same region as the Site	Species recorded on-site	Importance in geographical context
Widespread in all geographies (1)	Common pipistrelle Soprano pipistrelle Brown long-eared	Common pipistrelle Soprano pipistrelle Brown long-eared	3 / Local
Widespread in many geographies, but not as abundant in all (2)	<i>Myotis</i> sp. Bats including: Whiskered, Brandt's, Daubenton's, Natterer's Noctule	<i>Myotis</i> sp.* Noctule	4 / Local

Rarer or restricted distribution (3)	Serotine Leisler's Nathusius' Pipistrelle Alcathoe	Serotine Nathusius' pipistrelle	6 / Local
Rarest Annex II species and very rare (4)	Lesser horseshoe Greater horseshoe Bechstein's Barbastelle Grey long-eared	Barbastelle	4 / Local
Total assemblage score/importance**	45	17	Local

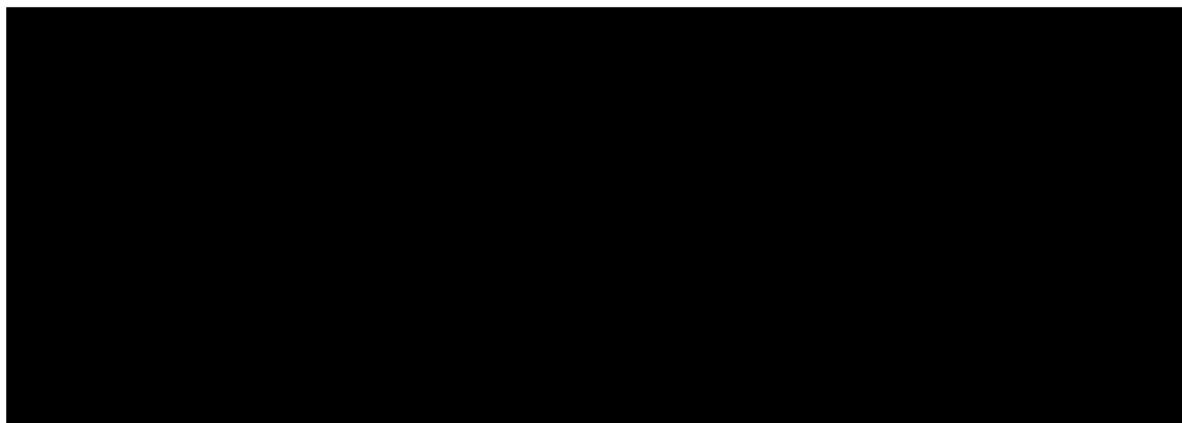
*Note that many *Myotis* sp. Bats cannot be told apart through call analysis alone.

** The threshold for 'County' importance is a score of 20/45.

- 4.26 Based on the survey data, the Site is anticipated to score up to 17 out of a maximum 45 (equating to 38%), resulting in an assemblage importance of Local Importance.

Bat Roosts

- 4.27 No bat roosts have been confirmed present on-Site. A Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTAs) was conducted in February and April 2024 on all trees on Site, which found 18 trees that would require further aerial inspection if they were to become subject to direct impacts as a result of the proposed development. These are trees T2, T6, T17, T19, T21, T22, T25, T27, T28, T29, T30 and individual trees found within groups G5, G6, G7, G8, G13, G14 and G15. All trees with roosting potential are mature English oaks. Of these trees, only trees T2, T6, G7, G8 and G13 were assessed as PRF-I, while the remaining assessed trees were PRF-M. A full description of PRF-I/PRF-M terminology is provided in Appendix G, along with full results of the GLTA.



[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]
[REDACTED]

Water Vole

- 4.31 One record of water vole was identified within the search area, dating from 2014. The record is from Ashington Church school pond, located c. 0.373 km south of the Site. This pond is connected to the Site directly via Lancing Brook, which flows around the Site.
- 4.32 A water vole survey of all suitable watercourses within the Site was conducted in April 2024 and April 2026. Possible water vole evidence recorded included potential burrows and footprints, although it is concluded more likely that these field signs were that of bank vole or rat (see Appendix M). Presence of water voles cannot be ruled out, and any population potentially present would be of Local level importance. Water voles are considered further on a precautionary basis.

Dormouse

- 4.33 A total of 27 records of dormouse were identified within the search area, dating from 2014 to 2024. The closest record is c. 0.054km from the site boundary, dating from 2021, with a single individual recorded. The closest granted EPSL record is c. 160m east of the Site, as per records provided by MAGIC, and was granted in 2019.
- 4.34 A series of dormouse surveys were conducted at the Site with monthly checks carried out between May and November 2024, with the exception of July which was skipped due to high heat. Dormice were recorded on two of the five total survey visits, during the first and fifth surveys, with a peak count of three adult dormice recorded. Five dormouse nests were also recorded across all five surveys.
- 4.35 Dormice sightings were concentrated to the south-east corner of the Site. No evidence of dormice was recorded within the central lines of trees (LT1 and LT2).
- 4.36 As suitable habitat is limited to the boundary hedgerows, overall, the population of dormice on Site is considered to be of Local level importance. Full methods and current results are provided in Appendix I.

Other mammals

Hedgehog

- 4.37 A total of 17 records of hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* were identified within the search area, dating from 1997 to 2023. The closest record is from within the Site from 2006, where a single individual was recorded.

- 4.38 The Site offers suitable habitat to support foraging, commuting and nest building. It is likely that hedgehog utilise on-Site habitats, in particular the hedgerows and grassland margins.
- 4.39 Hedgehogs are listed as a species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) and are listed as protected fauna under Appendix III of the Bern Convention. Populations of these species are considered to be important at less than Local level and are therefore scoped out from further assessment.

Birds

- 4.40 A total of 616 records of 50 bird species were identified within the search area, dating from 1980 to 2024. Those of potential relevance to the Site include ground nesting species associated with open fields (nightingale *Luscinia megarhynchos*, skylark *Alauda arvensis*, swift *Apus apus*, and corn bunting *Miliaria calandra*), as well as breeding farmland species associated with hedgerows and treelines (lesser spotted woodpecker *Dryobates minor*, green woodpecker *Picus viridis*, yellowhammer *Emberiza citronella*, dunnock *Prunella modularis*, turtle dove *Streptoplia turtur*, whitethroat *Curruca communis*, tree sparrow *Passer montanus*, linnet *Carduelis cannabina*, hobby *Falco Subbuteo*, mistle thrush *Turdus viscivorus* and song thrush *Turdus philomelos*), and wintering species (bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* and starling *Sturnus vulgaris*). Records of raptors such as red kite *Milvus milvus*, barn owl *Tyto alba*, kestrel *Falco tinnunculus* and tawny owl *Strix aluco* were returned for these species by SxBRC. Nightingales (*Luscinia megarhynchos*) were recorded from 1980 to 2024 within the search area, with the closest record c. 0.334 km south of the site.
- 4.41 Records were returned for Bewick's Swan *Cygnus columbianus subsp. bewickii*, which are species designated under the Arun Valley SPA and Ramsar designations. However, the Site offers very limited potential to support this species.
- 4.42 The 2024 survey found the Site supported confirmed breeding of 14 species, with a further 12 as likely to be breeding, and six possible breeding. This gives a total of 33 breeding species and a total of 16 species of conservation significance recorded, including the Schedule 1-listed hobby.
- 4.43 The wintering bird surveys recorded a total of 22 bird species within the Site, including 15 species of conservation significance.
- 4.44 With reference to the Fuller (1980) criteria for assessing the importance of breeding and wintering bird assemblages, the breeding and wintering bird assemblages on-Site are considered to be important at the Local level. Full survey results are provided in Appendix J.

Reptiles

- 4.45 A total of 47 records of 3 reptile species were identified within the search area dating from 1995 to 2022. This included common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, slow worm *Anguis fragilis* and grass snake *Natrix helvetica*. The closest record was of three slow worm c. 20m south of the Site in 2011. Field margins and scrub offer suitable edge habitat to support reptiles.
- 4.46 A series of seven reptile surveys were conducted on Site between April and July 2024. These surveys recorded and a 'low' population of both slow worm and grass snake with a peak count of four adult slow worm and one adult grass snake. All reptiles were recorded in field boundary habitat around the Site, with no reptiles recorded beneath the central treelines or around the scrub parcel. Full methods and results can be found in Appendix K.
- 4.47 All native British reptile species are listed within Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and are afforded protection against killing and injury. In addition, all native British reptile species are Section 41 Species of Principal Importance in England. Populations of reptile species using the Site are considered important at the Local level.

Amphibians

- 4.48 SxBRC returned 21 records dating from 1987 to 2022 including common toad *Bufo bufo*, common frog *Rana temporaria*, palmate newt *Lissotriton helveticus*, smooth newt *L. vulgaris*, and great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*. The closest record was of 65 common frogs in a pond c. 25m south of the Site in 2009.
- 4.49 Amphibians are likely to utilise ponds and ditches in the area for breeding, as well as treelines and pasture within their terrestrial phases. The Site holds no suitable aquatic habitat for amphibians, but the field margins offer some limited terrestrial habitat suitability. Lancing Brook could present a dispersal barrier for smaller amphibians less capable of independent movement in faster flowing water.

Great Crested Newt

- 4.50 A total of 5 records great crested newts (GCN), were returned from the data search, dating from 2010 to 2021. The nearest record lies c. 550m east of the Site.
- 4.51 Despite spending much of their annual lifecycle within the terrestrial environment, great crested newts are dependent upon the presence of suitable aquatic breeding habitat in order for a population to persist. The Site provides varied habitats suitable for dispersing, foraging, and sheltering amphibians, such as scrub, grassland, boundary hedgerows, woodland, treelines and ditches. While no potential breeding ponds are on Site, a further eight appear to be present within a dispersible range of the Site, based on OS mapping (see Appendix L).

- 4.52 A HSI assessment was conducted by CSA in April 2024 for ponds where which access permission could be obtained, i.e. ponds P1-P4. Access was sought but not granted for all other ponds identified. Of the ponds identified around the Site, P1 and P2 were assigned 'good' and 'excellent' suitability (respectively) for supporting GCN. Whereas P3 and P4 were found to be 'poor' and 'below average'.
- 4.53 Environmental DNA (eDNA) sampling was undertaken on Ponds P1, P2 and P4, as access to P3 was not granted at the time of sampling. All three ponds returned negative eDNA results, indicating likely GCN absence from the ponds sampled.
- 4.54 Taking the above records into consideration and acknowledging that there is a high density of ponds in the local area, it is considered likely great crested newts are present on Site for at least part of the year.
- 4.55 No presence/likely absence surveys for GCN have been carried out, but their presence on-Site is possible. Great crested newts are not considered likely to be breeding on Site and would likely be limited to the terrestrial habitat for foraging/commuting purposes. A GCN population on Site in any capacity would be considered important at the Local level as GCN form meta-populations that can be wide ranging across interconnected habitats in the local area. As such, GCN are considered further.

Invertebrates

- 4.56 A total of 80 records of 27 invertebrate species were identified within the search area. Those of potential relevance to the Site include brown hairstreak *Thecla betulae* (S41, UK BAP Priority Species and Schedule 5), stag beetle *Lucanus cervus* (Schedule 5) and mole cricket *Gryllotalpa gryllotalpa* (Schedule 5).
- 4.57 Many treelines the Site include standing deadwood or dead limbs, which could support a range of saproxylic invertebrates such as stag beetle. However, the Site is not located in an 'Important Invertebrate Area' as defined by Buglife and is under intensive agricultural management. Overall, it is considered unlikely the site supports a notable species assemblage. As such, invertebrate communities at the Site are scoped out of further assessment.

White-clawed Crayfish

- 4.58 No records for white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* were returned in the desk study.
- 4.59 The stream was not deemed to hold suitability for white-clawed crayfish and further surveys were considered necessary. This species is scoped out of further assessment.

Future Baseline

- 4.60 The Site is presently under active arable management including grazing. Notwithstanding the potential rotation of crop-type, these management interventions maintain the on-Site conditions in a relatively stable state. There is no known intention to cease this management, other than to accommodate the proposed development should planning permission be granted. As this report serves to provide a summary of baseline features only, it cannot currently be determined whether the future baseline status of important ecological features is anticipated to vary from that at present.

Summary of Ecological Features

- 4.61 Table 5 below summarises all important ecological features identified within the respective zones of influence, together with the geographic context of their importance:

Table 5. Summary of important ecological features and their geographic context

Ecological Feature	Geographic Context of Importance and/or Protection Status
Arun Valley SAC	International
Arun Valley SPA	International
Arun Valley Ramsar	International
The Mens SAC	International
Sullington Warren SSSI	National
America & Gratwicke's Wood LWS	County
Hooklands Farm Meadow LWS	County
Capite Wood LWS	County
Hedgerows and treelines	Local
Stream (Lancing Brook)	Local
Bats	Local
Water Vole	Local
Badger	Protected (Badger Act)
Dormouse	Local
Breeding birds	Local
Wintering birds	Local
Reptiles	Local
Great Crested Newt	Local

5.0 ASSESSMENT OF EFFECTS

The Proposed Development

- 5.1 Outline planning permission is sought for residential development of up to 125 dwellings, access, public open space and associated landscaping, drainage and highways infrastructure, with all matters reserved except access at the Site, with all matters reserved except for access. The following impact assessment is based on the Framework Masterplan prepared by Urban Place Lab (Drawing ref: 26001_03_B) on behalf of Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land.
- 5.2 The construction phase of the proposed development will comprise the following:
- Cessation of arable cultivation
 - Removal of sections of hedgerow from hedgerow H3 (c. 100m cumulative) for vehicular access
 - Removal of T24 in order to install a sewer easement
 - Construction of SuDS attenuation basins
 - Construction of c. 121 residential dwellings
 - Construction of associated gardens, parking, access infrastructure, and sub-station
 - The establishment of Public Open Space (POS) totalling c. 3.82ha
 - Establishment of Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) including three attenuation basins set within green space to the north of the developed area
- 5.3 The operational phase of the proposed development will comprise the following:
- Occupation of new residential dwellings
 - Increase in human activity, including use of vehicles and presence of domestic pets
 - Increased artificial lighting and anthropogenic noise

Assumptions

- 5.4 The following assumptions have been made during the assessment of potential effects of the proposed development on important ecological features. Although 'assumed' and therefore taken as part of the pre-mitigation scenario, these measures are referenced in the proceeding sections where integral to the mitigation strategy.
- 5.5 In accordance with BS42020:2013, it is assumed that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be secured by planning condition and prepared at the detailed design stage. In addition to the construction phase impact avoidance and mitigation measures identified in the following sections, the CEMP will detail standard

environmental control measures, including though not limited to the following:

- Implementation of strict protection measures for the root protection areas of retained trees and hedgerows, in accordance with BS5837:2012
- Standard best practice construction phase pollution prevention and control measures
- Sensitive working methods and timing to avoid direct impacts to nesting birds (generally vegetation removal outside nesting season of March through August)
- All working measures needed to comply with the terms of EPS derogation licencing specific to the development phase or works activity
- Updated ecological surveys, where necessary, to identify shifts in the baseline ecological condition (such as to support EPS derogation licence applications) in order that revised impact avoidance and mitigation measures can be adopted as required

- 5.6 In accordance with BS42020:2013, it is assumed that a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) will be secured by planning condition and prepared at the detailed design stage. The LEMP will set out measures for the establishment and long-term management of newly created and retained habitats to maximise benefits for biodiversity.

Potential Impacts and Ecological Effects

Statutory sites

- 5.7 A document providing information to inform a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the proposed development has been produced and should be read alongside this report (CSA/4705/04). However, key findings have been summarised below.

Arun Valley SAC / SPA / Ramsar

- 5.8 Upon review of the characteristics of this SAC, including known vulnerabilities, and of the spatial relationship with the Site, no potential impact pathways have been identified.

The Mens SAC

- 5.9 The proposed development is located c. 11.3km from The Mens SAC, and therefore within the 12km 'wider conservation area' which covers the full extent of the foraging area utilised by the population. This is the area within which significant impacts or severance to barbastelle flightlines and foraging grounds must be considered. This has been identified by HDC and set out within the draft Sussex Bat Special Area of Conservation Planning and Landscape Scale Enhancement Protocol (SDNPA and NE 2018).

- 5.10 Proposed development therefore has the potential to represent land take from functionally-linked habitat of the SAC, which could undermine the barbastelle population for which the site is designated. Greenfield development within this area could have an adverse effect if it led to the net loss of suitable boundary vegetation and linear habitats, or an inadequate physical buffer zone against construction and operational lighting.
- 5.11 Increased traffic flows resulting from the proposed development in combination with wider projected housing growth in the District may give rise to localised air quality impacts. Areas of The Mens SAC exist within 200m of a major road (A-road or motorway) and could therefore experience localised increases in atmospheric and deposited pollutants. The woodland of The Mens SAC is sensitive to nitrogen deposition which could affect the ground flora and epiphytic communities of the Annex I beech *Fagus sylvatica* forest for which it is designated, through effects such as eutrophication of soils. The effects of increased traffic resulting from the proposed development in isolation are unlikely to be appreciable, given the diffusion of traffic across the intervening distance, but projected traffic increase associated with wider housing delivery across the district could theoretically contribute toward a likely significant effect on the SAC. However, it was determined that the Horsham Local Plan is not likely to result in an adverse effect on the integrity of The Mens SAC, either alone or in combination, as impact pathways have been traced back to agricultural practices, while changes in road traffic were found to be immaterial.
- 5.12 Overall, in the absence of mitigation, it is assessed that the proposed development could result in a likely significant effect on The Mens SAC alone or in combination, significant at the International Level (see the HRA report CSA/4705/04).

Sullington Warren SSSI

- 5.13 Sullington Warren SSSI is located c. 3.0km south-west of the Site, and is designated for its botanically-rich heathland habitats, supporting wet and dry heath, and for its woodland habitat which supports nightingale and tree creeper. Sullington Warren SSSI has also historically supported breeding nightjar, which are ground-nesting and vulnerable to recreational disturbance.
- 5.14 The proposed development will increase population size locally, which could result in an increase in recreational pressure on the SSSI, causing deterioration of habitats and disturbance of wildlife

Non-statutory sites

- 5.15 As for Sullington Warren SSSI, the proposed development could result in an increase in recreational pressure on the three nearby LWSs, causing deterioration of habitats.

Habitats

Hedgerows, Treelines and Individual Trees

- 5.16 The proposed development will result in minor losses to hedgerow H3 (c. 100m cumulative) to facilitate access, resulting in a minor loss of hedgerow habitat but the severing of a green link.
- 5.17 Tree 24 will be removed in order to construct a proposed foul water sewer easement, resulting in a minor loss of tree cover on Site. This tree is situated away from surrounding habitat with unconnected habitat so effects are considered insignificant.

Watercourse

- 5.18 As mentioned above, it is assumed that standard best practice construction phase pollution prevention and control measures will be implemented under a CEMP, avoiding these potential impacts during the construction phase.
- 5.19 A small headwall (c. 3m) will need to be created along the watercourse bank to provide an outfall from the westernmost SuDS basin. This will require removal of a small area of bank-side vegetation. Additional flow may enter the ditch during periods of high rainfall, but this may have a positive effect on the ditch, aiding water retention.

Fauna

Bats

- 5.20 All species of British bats are legally protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and are adopted as S41 Species in respect of the NERC Act 2006.
- 5.21 The proposed development would result in the loss of predominantly arable land of limited value for bats, with only a minor loss (c. 100m cumulative) of hedgerow along the southern boundary (H3) to facilitate access. Whilst a number of trees have features suitable to support roosting bats, only T24 with potential to support individual/small numbers of roosting bats (PRF-I status) will be felled to facilitate the development of the easement for the proposed foul water sewer.
- 5.22 However, the proposed development could result in an increase in artificial light spill onto retained habitats, making them unsuitable for use by bats and therefore lost as usable habitat. This could include trees found in all boundaries of the Site except H5, which is set back from the development edge by c. 20m minimum, c. 80m maximum. Flightlines along the southern and eastern boundaries and central tree lines will be in close proximity to the proposed development. This could result in a minor loss of available foraging habitat, and a potentially more significant loss in connectivity and flightlines around the Site. This is

particularly the case for light-averse species such as *Myotis* sp., *Plecotus* sp., and barbastelle bat.

5.23

5.24

5.25

Water Vole

5.26 Water voles are protected from intentional killing/injury and intentional/reckless damage or destruction or obstruction to their places of shelter/protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. In addition, they are a Section 41 Species of Principal Importance under the NERC Act 2006.

5.27 Drainage infrastructure at the Site will require the construction of a headwall into the adjacent watercourse from the westernmost SuDS attenuation basin. This has limited potential to kill/injure water voles and/or damage, destroy or obstruct their places of shelter.

Dormouse

5.28 Dormice are legally protected as a European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and species Regulations 2017 (as amended), as are the habitats they inhabit.

5.29 As for bats, the proposed development will require the loss of short lengths of hedgerow H3 for access. This will result in a small loss of habitat resource and a reduction in connectivity for dormice. An increase in artificial light levels could also make retained habitats less suitable for dormice. Habitat clearance could result in the killing/injury of individual dormice.

Birds

5.30 All wild birds, their active nests and eggs are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Habitats within the Site including hedgerows, scrub and trees provide suitable nesting opportunities for generally common and widespread bird species.

5.31 As for bats, the proposed development will require the loss of short lengths of hedgerow and lines of trees, a small scrub parcel, and arable

land within the field. This will result in a small loss of habitat resource for passerine species and farmland bird species.

- 5.32 An increase in artificial light levels could also make retained habitats less suitable for birds, and pet predation could result in lower survival rates for birds. Habitat clearance could result in the killing/injury of nesting birds, or disturbance/abandonment of nests.

Reptiles

- 5.33 Common lizard, slow-worm and grass snake are listed within Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are afforded protection against killing and injury. In addition, all native British reptile species are adopted as S41 species of the NERC Act 2006.
- 5.34 The proposed development will result in a minor loss of field margins, scrub and hedgerow habitat to facilitate access, and pet predation may decrease survival rates.

Great Crested Newt

- 5.35 Great crested newts and their resting places are protected under Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The species is also of Principal Importance as listed in the NERC Act, 2006. Great crested newts are legally protected from deliberate capture, killing and injury and intentional or reckless disturbance, damage or destruction of a resting or breeding site.
- 5.36 Whilst the hedgerows, scrub and field margins at the site boundaries will be retained and protected (except where access requires), development at the Site has the potential to result in incidental mortality of individuals and fragmentation or disruption of their dispersal routes, causing adverse impacts to the local population and their distribution.

Mitigation by Design

- 5.37 It is an established principle (CIEEM, 2024) that, wherever possible, potential negative effects should be avoided through 'Mitigation by Design', as this gives greater certainty over deliverability, demonstrates a well-designed scheme and ensures the correct application of the 'Mitigation Hierarchy' (as advocated by BS42020:2013, Defra 2019 and CIEEM, CIRIA & IEMA 2016).
- 5.38 The watercourse and boundary vegetation along the northern boundary will provide a generous buffer and a green corridor c. 20-80m wide between the watercourse and proposed residential development. This green corridor will include new SuDS attenuation basins and habitat creation/enhancement to provide good quality habitat for a range of species in the form of wet grassland, scrub, and tree planting.

Watercourses

- 5.39 Although SuDS features will discharge into the existing ditch, their design will incorporate appropriate treatment stages to ensure that surface water entering downstream habitats does not introduce pollutants, sediment, or invasive species. The strategic use of rain gardens, attenuation basins and controlled flow routes will regulate discharge rates and provide natural filtration, helping to safeguard the chemical and ecological integrity of the receiving watercourse.
- 5.40 The green corridor to be created along the northern extent of the Site will also provide a wider buffer strip of grassland vegetation to the ditch in comparison to the intensively managed arable field which is currently adjacent; this should provide a significant enhancement to the quality of run-off entering the ditch.
- 5.41 Full details shall be secured through an appropriate Surface Water Drainage Strategy.

Bats

- 5.42 The Proposed Development has sought to minimise effects on foraging and dispersing bat species through sensitive design, maintaining many of the green corridors currently present at the Site by utilising existing canopy breaks, to allow dispersal routes and foraging habitats to be maintained.
- 5.43 Whilst the proposed development will necessitate the removal of c. 100m (cumulative) of hedgerow H3 for access creation, creation of a wide corridor of greenspace and SuDS basins along the northern boundary will maintain a key flightline and create an area of more valuable foraging habitat for bats. Furthermore, the illustrative proposals include a total of c. 0.354ha of new tree planting (c. 87 trees).
- 5.44 The three attenuation basins (totalling c. 0.694ha and representing a significant net gain in aquatic habitats at the site level) and c. 2.067ha of meadow grassland establishment are further likely to encourage communities of invertebrates, which will in turn support foraging activity by bats.
- 5.45 Further detail of the establishment and long to management of these habitats, to maximise benefits for biodiversity, will be set out in a LEMP at the detailed design stage.

Water Vole

- 5.46 The construction of the SuDS attenuation basins will increase the availability of suitable habitat for water voles in the vicinity of the watercourse, should they be present.

Dormouse

- 5.47 The proposed development will necessitate the removal of c. 100m (cumulative) of hedgerow H3 for access creation but will create an area of more valuable foraging habitat for dormice around the periphery, through strengthening of boundary vegetation. Furthermore, the illustrative proposals include a total of c. 0.354ha of new tree planting (c. 87 trees, exact number is to be determined at Reserved Matters).
- 5.48 Further detail of the establishment and long to management of these habitats, to maximise benefits for biodiversity, will be set out in a LEMP/HMMP at the detailed design stage.

Birds

- 5.49 The proposed scheme delivers a substantial improvement in bird habitat quality across the Site. The green corridor along the northern Site boundary and planting within public open space and residential gardens will provide valuable habitat for a range of bird species.
- 5.50 The new SuDS attenuation basins will new opportunities in the form of wet grassland and marginal habitats, which may attract new species to the Site.

Reptiles

- 5.51 The proposed scheme delivers a substantial improvement in reptile habitat quality across the Site. The wide swathe of grassland and SuDS attenuation basins along the northern extent of the Site will provide suitable habitat for reptiles. The damp grassland and marginal habitats could support invertebrates and amphibians, which will provide prey for reptiles, particularly grass snake.

Great Crested Newt

- 5.52 The grassland creation outlined herein will provide suitable terrestrial habitat for GCN, as well as the new hedgerow creation. In addition, large SUDS attenuation basins are proposed along the northern extent of the Site, and it is anticipated that this new aquatic habitat could provide a new breeding pond for the local GCN metapopulation, particularly in the central basin that will hold a permanently wet core. These elements of the scheme design will mitigate for the small loss of suitable terrestrial habitat caused by parts of the proposed access points. This will be secured through the approved scheme design, a LEMP as part of a condition of planning and through onsite BNG efforts to be secured in a HMMP.

Additional Mitigation

The Mens SAC (Barbastelle) / Bats

- 5.53 The Framework Masterplan demonstrates that development can be set back from site boundaries, and the majority of existing internal

hedgerows can be retained within formal and informal open space. Access breaks have been designed to utilise existing canopy gaps in LT1 and LT2 to minimise losses. A significant area of new semi-natural habitat creation shall be provided within the northern part of the Site, comprising new SUDs attenuation basins, neutral grassland, scrub and tree planting. This will provide new foraging resources for bats, including Barbastelle.

5.54 In order to further minimise the development edge effect of artificial lighting on foraging and dispersing bats, a sensitive lighting strategy will be designed. This will ensure that dark corridors are maintained, minimising light spill to retained and newly created semi-natural habitats. Lighting strategies will be developed at the detailed design stage, and could be secured by an appropriately worded planning condition.

5.55 Luminaire products should be selected in line with current guidance provided by the Bat Conservation Trust and the Institution of Lighting Professionals Guidance Note on Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night (2023). The lighting strategy, which will be secured by way of a suitably worded planning condition (see Table 3 below), will aim to meet the following parameters:

- Construction phase:
 - Illumination of retained boundary vegetation and mature trees will be avoided, wherever practicable, during low light conditions.
 - In instances where illumination is necessary the intensity and duration will be kept to a minimum.
 - Down lighting will be used where possible.
- Operational Phase:
 - Lighting throughout the Site will be kept to a minimum and installed on motion sensors or timers where practicable.
 - Lighting is to be switched off when not required, or dimmed to lower intensity (75 lux) when not required for competitive use;
 - All lighting to be switched off at 22:30.
 - Direct and indirect illumination of the boundary vegetation and mature trees will be avoided where possible.
 - Down lighting will be used throughout to minimise light spill and sky glow.
 - Lighting to be installed on the Site will conform with the following spectral specifications, in accordance with BCT (2018):
 - LED luminaires used where possible.
 - No metal halide fluorescent sources.
 - Minimal emission of ultra-violet light.
 - Warm white spectrum (ideally <2700Kelvin where possible) with peak higher than 550nm.

- Luminaires with 0% upward light ratio and good optical control.
- Careful consideration of column heights to minimise light spill.
- Bollard/low level downward directional luminaires where required.
- As a last resort, accessories such as baffles, hoods or louvres to minimise light spill.

5.56 Taking a precautionary approach, tree T24 (PRF-I) will be felled under a non-licensed Methods Statement. The tree shall be inspected using an endoscope prior to felling, and sectionally soft-felled to minimise the risk of killing/injury of roosting bats. Any soft-felled sections containing potential roost features will be left on the ground for 24hrs prior to being removed (or used to create log pile features) to allow bats a chance to escape (in the unlikely event that they are present and have not been detected during inspection surveys). Should inspection surveys identify the presence of any bats, then all works would need to cease until the licensing arrangements are in place.

5.57 In accordance with the prevailing guidelines, precautionary impact avoidance measures will further be adopted with respect to the removal of the tree exhibiting low bat roost potential (T24). These measures will be detailed within a CEMP at the detailed design stage.

Other designated sites

5.58 The on-Site POS includes open space/footpaths that will provide for the day-to-day recreation needs of most new residents (i.e. dog walking) and will act to absorb some recreational pressure on the remaining designated sites. Furthermore, these areas are already managed for public access.

5.59 [REDACTED]

5.60 [REDACTED]

- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]
- [REDACTED]

- [illegible]

- 5.61 The presence of water voles within the adjacent watercourse cannot be ruled out, but surveys did not record definitive evidence of their presence. Direct impacts to the watercourse will largely be avoided; with the exception of construction of a headwall from one of the SuDs basins. Prior to construction works commencing an update water vole survey will be undertaken; should the presence of water vole within proximity to the working area be identified then a displacement exercise would need to be take place under licence from Natural England. The scheme provides good scope for appropriate mitigation/compensation to be provided (if necessary).
- 5.62 The potential for indirect impacts includes disturbance (likely to be limited by the large green buffer / existing hedgerow on the northern boundary of the Site), and pollution / contamination of the watercourse (to be controlled by measures set out within a CEMP/Drainage Strategy).
- 5.63 The above measures can be secured by way of a suitably worded planning condition.

- 5.64 As dormice are present on-site, a Natural England EPSL will be required prior to the removal of any hedgerows/scrub; and suitable working methods put in place to avoid direct impacts; as well as ensuring suitable compensatory habitat provision is secured as part of any detailed planting scheme (e.g. suitable mix of native species as part of any hedgerow / scrub planting; plus provision of dormouse boxes to increase nesting opportunities).
- 5.65 In order to avoid potential killing and injury of individual dormice during clearance and construction works, precautionary measures will be undertaken during any vegetation clearance in order to encourage dispersal from any habitat to be lost to retained/compensatory habitat.
- 5.66 Habitat removal works will be undertaken sensitively using hand-held tools (i.e. brushcutters/chainsaw to reduce to ground level) followed by careful removal of roots using an excavator, once a fingertip search has

been undertaken, to minimise any potential impacts to dormice. Works shall be completed under a close watching brief provided by a suitably qualified ecologist. It is envisaged that given the limited amount of habitat clearance required, that this can be undertaken as a single stage exercise; targeted to avoid sensitive hibernation or breeding periods (i.e. clearance works between April/ May and/or mid-Sept-Oct).

- 5.67 The works shall encourage the displacement of dormice to adjacent areas of retained habitat, present within 50m (the typical home range size for dormice) of the working area. Should any dormouse nests be found during these works they will carefully be removed and placed within areas of habitat to be protected during the construction phase.

Reptiles

- 5.68 In order to avoid the potential direct killing/injury of reptiles and amphibians during construction, Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) should be adhered to, to reduce the risk of harming any reptiles and amphibians present on the Site and causing an offence. This will be secured within the CEMP and implemented during construction.
- 5.69 Such measures will include sensitive habitat degradation during the appropriate season, to encourage reptiles to disperse away from working areas prior to construction. This will include grassland and scrub to be gradually cut back with hand tools only (e.g. strimmer) to c. 200mm above ground level under ecological supervision. The cutting would be in a systematic manner, working from a central point of the construction working area to encourage dispersal of any reptiles or amphibians present to the boundaries. All refugia found will be removed by hand and any animals present moved to the boundaries. A second cut to ground level will be undertaken 24 hours after the first cut, again under ecological supervision. Semi-permanent reptile fencing will then be installed along the perimeter of the construction area (where necessary) to prevent reptiles recolonising these areas. The vegetated habitats on the Site will need to be maintained at c. 200mm until construction begins. The exclusion fencing will remain in place for the duration of the construction phase and only removed under ecological supervision. All habitat removal works, and fencing installation/removal will be supervised by a suitably experienced ecologist.
- 5.70 All RAMs (vegetation clearance, refugia removal and exclusion fencing installation/removal) will only be undertaken during the active season for reptiles and amphibians (April-September inclusive).
- 5.71 The adoption of a precautionary method of working, such as sensitive vegetation clearance, staged habitat removal, toolbox talks, and maintenance of refuge opportunities will appropriately minimise this risk. These measures are proportionate to the low likelihood of reptile

presence and are expected to reduce the potential for harm to a negligible level.

Great Crested Newt

- 5.72 The minor loss in suitable habitat at the Site for access creation will be carried out through a non-licenced method statement. This can be secured by way of an appropriately worded planning condition. If GCN are found during the works, a EPSL will be secured through Natural England. Furthermore, it is considered that Policy 1 of the EPS Policies applies (Natural England, 2022) due to the creation of new habitat suitable to GCN above and beyond the anticipated level of impact.

Residual Effects

- 5.73 Table 3 below summarises the assessment of potential impacts on each important ecological feature, proposed mitigation and the assessed residual effects.

Table 3. Summary of effects

Important Ecological Feature	Potential Impacts and Effects	Avoidance & Mitigation Measures	Mechanism by which Measures are Secured	Residual Effects
The Mens SAC	Loss of supporting habitat	On-site provision of compensation habitat, sensitive lighting design	LEMP and Lighting Strategy through Planning Condition	No significant effect
Sullington Warren SSSI, Non-statutory sites	Increased recreational pressure	On-site provision of public greenspace	LEMP through Planning Condition	No significant effect
Watercourses	Cessation of intensive arable farming practices leading to reduced nutrient input to watercourse. Creation of one headwall and an outfall from the westernmost SuDS leading to slight loss of bankside habitat.	Provision of buffer strip / green corridor to north. Sensitive drainage strategy to ensure outfall into ditch (and ultimately Lancing Brook) is sufficiently filtered and flow is regulated.	CEMP & Drainage Strategy through Planning Condition	Positive significant effect at Local level
Hedgerows and trees	Removal of hedgerow sections for vehicular (c.100m) and pedestrian access and tree T24	Strengthening of boundary vegetation Management of POS for biodiversity gain	LEMP/HMMP secured through Planning Condition	No significant effect
Bats	Removal of hedgerow sections for vehicular and pedestrian access, PRF-I tree and scrub parcel, and potential development edge effects from artificial lighting. Increased predation risk.	New habitat creation, management of POS for biodiversity gain, sensitive lighting strategy, sensitive clearance methods for T24.	CEMP, LEMP/ HMMP and Lighting Strategy secured through Planning Condition	No significant effect
Badger	Potential damage or destruction of setts	Precautionary badger survey; impact avoidance measures under CEMP	CEMP secured through Planning Condition	No significant effect
Dormouse	Removal of hedgerow sections for vehicular and pedestrian access, scrub parcel, and potential development edge effects from artificial lighting. Increased predation risk.	New habitat creation, management of POS for biodiversity gain, sensitive lighting strategy	LEMP/HMMP and Lighting Strategy secured through Planning Condition	No significant effect
Water vole	Potential killing / injury / disturbance or destruction of burrows during construction of headwalls.	Pre-commencement water vole survey; impact avoidance measures under CEMP	CEMP secured through Planning Condition	No significant effect
Birds	Potential damage or destruction of nests and eggs. Increased predation risk.	Sensitive timing of works / nest checks by ecologist	CEMP secured through Planning Condition	No significant effect
Reptiles	Removal of hedgerow sections and scrub parcel. Potential killing / injury during construction. Increased predation risk.	New habitat creation, management of POS for biodiversity gain, sensitive clearance methods.	CEMP and LEMP secured through Planning Condition	No significant effect
GCN	Removal of small areas of field margins and hedgerow for access.	Significant habitat creation. Clearance of suitable habitat under non-licenced method statement.	Method statement secured through Planning Condition	No significant effect

- 5.74 It has been determined that the proposed development will result in a positive residual effect on watercourses significant at the Local level, as a result of improvements to water quality and regulation of flows entering the ditch, and ultimately Lancing Brook.
- 5.75 The proposed development will result in the loss of tree T24, which has features with potential for use by individual / small numbers of roosting bats. Whilst this is not a significant adverse effect, compensation will be provided as a matter of best practice.

Cumulative Effects

- 5.76 Table 4 below identifies the plans/projects that have been scoped in for assessment of potential additive or synergistic effects on the ecological features identified in Table 3 above.

Table 4. Summary of potential cumulative effects

Reference, distance from Site and materials reviewed	Potential impact/effect of plan or project in isolation	Potential for significant cumulative effect?
DC/25/1327 Land East of Mousdell Close, Rectory Lane, Ashington, c. 20m South Ecological Impact Assessment. Lizard. 18/08/2025 Landscape Design Strategy. Lizard. 18/08/2025 Biodiversity Net Gain Statement. Lizard. 18/08/2025 Consultation document. Place Services. 2/10/2025	International designations (SPA, SAC and Ramsar site) –Impacts to supporting habitat (foraging areas / flightlines) for barbastelle population of The Mens SAC. Avoidance and mitigation proposed to avoid adverse effects on barbastelle.	No – Mitigation and compensatory measures proposed to avoid adverse effects on the integrity of interest features relating to designated sites.
	America and Gratwicke's Wood LWS, and Capite Wood LWS – The site is comprised of distinctly different habitat to both LWS and provides no supporting habitat.	No – Lack of supporting or connecting habitat between site and both LWS. Designated sites benefit from PROW network.
	Hedgerows – Loss of short length of hedgerow with trees, which is of moderate ecological value. Creation of new hedgerow as well as species rich scrub habitat and enhancement of existing hedgerow proposed.	No – Mitigation proposed including creation of new individual tree and species-rich native hedgerow.
	Ditch – All existing watercourses on site to be retained in current condition. Sustainable drainage strategy including bioswales outlined in operational phase. Woody shrub and herbaceous perennial planting to recreate the margins of a wet woodland habitat. Re-wetting of existing dry ditch on site.	No – Drainage strategy to be secured through planning condition. Enhancement of habitat margins and re-wetting of existing dry ditch.
	Bats – Disruption of commuting and foraging/ roosting habitat through inappropriate lighting. Sensitive lighting plan proposed throughout construction. Removal of one tree to be soft felled in the presence of an ecologist. Exclusion fencing to buffer existing trees with potential roosting value during construction. Alternative roosting opportunity provided by compensatory bat boxes.	No – Sensitive lighting scheme during construction to avoid artificial light spill. Mitigation outlined and compensatory measures proposed for loss of suitable roosting feature.
	Badger – Reasonable avoidance measures to be incorporated into the construction phase.	No – Precautionary measures outlined.
	Dormouse – Site assessed as offering low suitability for dormice within boundary vegetation and negligible suitability across the main site area. Boundary vegetation to the north of the site noted as being limited in extent and gappy.	No – Mitigation strategy not deemed necessary
	Birds – Any scrub or tree removal to take place outside of the nesting season or under ecological supervision. Foraging resource to be provided through planting of seed and fruit bearing shrub and tree species.	No – Precautionary measures in place and creation of suitable habitat.
	Reptiles – Proposed construction zone unlikely to support reptiles. Sward to be kept short as possible to prevent emergence of suitable reptile habitat. Boundary vegetation to be cut using hand tools. In the unlikely event a reptile is detected, all work will cease and an ecologist will be contacted. Compensatory habitat to be included in scheme design.	No – Precautionary measures outlined. Compensatory grassland and scrub habitat to be included in final design of scheme.
	Great crested newt – Precautionary Working Methods Statement advised in consultation. In the unlikely event a great crested newt is detected, all work will cease and an ecologist will be contacted. Sustainable drainage strategy outlined including planting to recreate the margins of a wet woodland habitat.	No – Precautionary Working Methods Statement advised and to be secured through planning condition.

Reference, distance from Site and materials reviewed	Potential impact/effect of plan or project in isolation	Potential for significant cumulative effect?
DC/22/0372 Land at Chanctonbury Nursery, Rectory Lane, Ashington, C. 0.4km south Ecological Impact Assessment, The Ecology Co-op., 13/12/2021 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) Screening Matrix and Appropriate Assessment. Horsham District Council. 11/ 2021. Consultation Response, Natural England. 15/12/2022. Design & Access Statement. Bellway. 02/2023	International designations (SPA, SAC and Ramsar site) – On-Site water efficiency mitigation plan secured in condition of approval to avoid adverse effects on the integrity of interest features. Impacts to supporting habitat (foraging areas / flightlines) for barbastelle population of The Mens SAC. Sensitive lighting scheme and creation of new hedgerow habitat proposed to avoid and mitigate impact. Increased recreational pressure to public mitigated through incorporation of open space into design. Access will be created to the existing footpath to encourage residents to explore local area.	No – Mitigation measures outlined for interest features and creation of accessible public space to minimise increased recreational measures.
	America and Gratwicke's Wood LWS, and Capite Wood LWS – Increase in recreational pressure. Creation of public open space to be incorporated into design and access to existing footpath will encourage residents to explore immediate surroundings.	No – Creation of public open space and connectivity with existing footpaths to mitigate increased recreational pressure.
	Hedgerows – Small section of hedgerow removed to provide access, remaining boundary hedgerows to be retained and enhanced, some removal of scrub habitat. New species-rich hedgerow creation.	No – Mitigation proposed including creation of new individual tree and species-rich native hedgerow.
	Ditch – Sustainable drainage strategy outlined including SuDS Pond will create new habitat.	No – Implementation of sustainable drainage strategy including new SuDS basins.
	Bats – Destruction of confirmed brown long-eared bat roost and potential loss of roosting features through removal of semi-mature trees. Loss of foraging habitat through scrub removal. Majority of boundary habitats to be retained and dark corridors along the retained boundaries to be protected through sensitive lighting scheme. Creation of species rich scrub and hedgerow habitat and wildflower habitat as well as SuDS Pond to provide foraging opportunities. Artificial bat boxes to be erected onto new dwellings and remaining semi-mature trees in boundary habitat.	No – Mitigation outlined and compensatory measures proposed for loss of roosting and foraging opportunities.
	Badger – Precautionary measures outlined. On-site population expected to be retained.	No – Precautionary measures outlined.
	Dormouse – Loss of scrub will lead to fragmentation of potential habitat. Any vegetation clearance where dormice are present to follow a two-stage removal strategy under ecological supervision. Vegetation removal to be strategically carried out to retain or encourage connectivity within the canopy of the tree line over the new footpath. Compensation measures outlined including erection of dormouse bridge if canopy does not naturally regain connectivity. Spiny or thorny species to be planted along the periphery of adjacent woodland and creation of species rich scrub and hedgerow habitat outlined.	No – Precautionary measures outlined and compensation of habitat loss to be conditioned through European Protected Species License.
	Birds – Loss of scrub habitat will result in permanent loss of nesting habitat. Any scrub or tree removal to take place outside of the nesting season or under ecological supervision. Species rich scrub and hedgerow habitat to be created. Erection of artificial nest boxes onto external walls of new dwellings and onto trees within the retained boundary.	No – Precautionary measures in place and mitigation outlined including creation of suitable habitat and erection of nest boxes.
	Reptiles – Loss of semi-improved grassland habitat. Mitigation proposed through translocation of on-site reptiles to suitable off-site receptor.	No – Mitigation measures proposed.

Reference, distance from Site and materials reviewed	Potential impact/effect of plan or project in isolation	Potential for significant cumulative effect?
DC/23/0406 Land West of Ashington, Pulborough, c. 0.5km south Ecological Appraisal, Aspect Ecology, 23/02/2023. Ecology Consultation, Aspect Ecology., 27/09/2024 Shadow Habitats Regulations Assessment, Aspect Ecology., 02/2023 Ecological Consultation, Place Services., 13/02/2025 Ecological Consultation, Place Services., 06/08/2024	International designations (SPA, SAC and Ramsar site) – On-site water efficiency mitigation measures proposed to ensure water neutrality and mitigate water stress on integrity of interest features. Impacts to supporting habitat (foraging areas / flightlines) for barbastelle population of The Mens SAC. Precautionary working methods statement for mobile protected species to be secured by a condition of any consent. Retained linear features to be enhanced and new hedgerow habitat created may support foraging barbastelles. Increased recreational pressure to be mitigated through upgrading of public rights of way and provision of appropriate pedestrian access, including connection to existing footpaths to encourage pedestrian use of surrounding area.	No – Mitigation measures outlined for qualifying features and enhancement of existing pedestrian access connections to local area to minimise increased recreational pressure.
	America and Gratwicke's Wood LWS, and Capite Wood LWS – Increased recreational pressure. Upgrading public rights of way and provision of appropriate pedestrian access proposed, including connection to existing footpaths to encourage pedestrian use of surrounding area.	No – Creation of public open space and connectivity with existing footpaths to mitigate increased recreational pressure.
	Hedgerows – Small amount of hedgerow removal. All retained hedgerows to be protected with fencing during construction and infilling to provide enhancement. New species-rich hedgerow creation proposed.	No – Mitigation proposed and retained hedgerow to be enhanced and infilled.
	Ditch – No significant effects identified. Creation of attenuation basin including new ditches to create opportunities for permanently wet areas and new habitat.	No – Existing ditch to be retained in current condition and new ditch habitat to be incorporated into attenuation basin.
	Bats – Precautionary measures outlined including sensitive lighting strategy and soft-felling of any trees scheduled for removal. Some loss of trees, hedgerow and scrub. Planting of new trees, wildflower grassland and scrub. Enhancement of retained linear features including hedgerow.	No – Mitigation measures outlined and new planting proposed to compensate lost habitat.
	Badger – All works to take place in line with current legislation. Enhancement of retained linear features and planting of new trees and scrub to provide additional habitat opportunity.	No – Precautionary measures outlined.
	Dormouse – Scrub removal and removal of small number of mature trees. Implementation of precautionary measures under EPSL including two-stage clearance of any vegetation to be removed. Site design to include connectivity for dormice with the wider landscape. Compensation to include new tree and shrub planting and hedgerow infilling to provide additional connected habitat.	No – Precautionary measures to be followed in line with EPSL and compensation planting scheme proposed.
	Birds – Loss of arable fields will remove forage and nesting opportunities for farmland birds. Financial contribution to Horsham District Council strategic mitigation scheme for farmland birds within the local area. Removal of any hedgerows to follow suitable precautionary measures. Provision of new wildflower grassland and scrub habitat. Enhancement of retained linear features.	No – Mitigation outlined and financial compensation proposed for loss of arable habitat
	Reptiles – Some loss of scrub and hedgerow. Precautionary measures outlined including destructive and fingertip search undertaken by an ecologist. Provision of new scrub and hedgerow habitat and enhancement of retained linear features. Further mitigation measures outlined in the event reptiles are identified during operational phase.	No – Precautionary measures outlined and creation of new scrub and hedgerow habitat outlined.

- 5.77 As summarised in Table 4, no significant cumulative effects on important ecological features are anticipated to result from the proposed development in combination with the above plans/projects.

Compensation

- 5.78 To compensate for the bat roosting opportunities lost through the felling of T24, two bat boxes will be installed on retained mature trees to provide alternative opportunities. Boxes will be 'woodcrete' as it is hard-wearing, and placed in pairs at least 4m from the ground. At least one box per tree will be sited with the front facing SW to SE, providing a choice of roost sites with different environmental conditions.
- 5.79 As detailed above in 'Mitigation by Design' the proposed development will, however, provide an opportunity to secure the following elements of habitat creation. Although designs are at this stage illustrative, the Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan (CSA/4705/140) demonstrates that alongside development the Site can accommodate:
- New vegetated gardens (c. 0.995ha equating to 1.92 Biodiversity Units (BU))
 - SuDS attenuation basins (c. 0.739ha equating to c. 2.49 BU)
 - New aquatic habitat in the form of a wet core to the central SuDS basin (c. 0.02ha, approximately 10% of the basin size, recorded as non-priority pond and equating to 0.14 BU)
 - SuDS rain gardens (c. 0.113 equating to 0.22 BU)
 - Modified grassland (c. 0.831ha equating to 1.60 BU)
 - Traditional orchard (c. 0.02ha equating to 0.10 BU)
 - Other Neutral Grassland (c. 2.179ha equating to 14.73 BU)
 - New 'urban' tree planting (c. 0.4275ha equating to 1.31 BU)
- 5.80 The above measures will compensate those losses which cannot be avoided, and result in an overall net gain of 44.11% Habitat, 11.87% Linear Biodiversity Units/Hedgerow Units and 16.22% watercourse units. Full details on the establishment and long-term management of these habitats will be set out in the HMMP at the detailed design stage. Such details will include a description of the proposed habitats, their target condition, timescales over which condition will be achieved, management prescriptions, implementation responsibilities and funding mechanisms.

Enhancement

- 5.81 The Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan (CSA/4705/140) includes landscape planting enhancements which will make positive contributions to on-site biodiversity.
- 5.82 New habitat creation will provide opportunities for species confirmed to be present on-site at baseline, such as bats, dormice, nesting birds and reptiles. In addition to these enhancements which are embedded into

development proposals, a range of additional ecological enhancement measures will be delivered as part of the proposed development, as identified below. Further details will be set out in a LEMP at the detailed design stage, however as an indicative guide:

- Inclusion of plant species of known wildlife value within the landscaping scheme, including night-scented varieties to benefit bats, and flowering / fruiting species with staggered flowering periods of known benefit to dormice and pollinators.
- Provision of new bat roosting opportunities: At least 5% of new dwellings will contain new bat roosting opportunities, i.e. at least 6 bat boxes will be erected on new builds. These will be a purpose-built, durable and long-lasting variety such as available from Schwegler or Habibat. Where possible, these will be incorporated into the fabric of new builds. Additional bat boxes could be installed onto the mature trees around the Site.
- Provision of new dormouse nesting opportunities: At least 10 no. dormouse boxes will be erected on mature trees around the boundaries. These will be a purpose-built, durable and long-lasting variety such as available from NHBS or Wildcare.
- Provision of new bird nesting opportunities: At least 121 no. bird nesting boxes (i.e. one per dwelling) will be provided on new dwellings, or in new/retained planting to benefit generalist bird species.
- Creation of log piles: Timber generated from tree clearance works at the Site will be used to make at least 4 log piles for wildlife benefit. These will be sited within boundary vegetation where they will be least disturbed. New material can be added as required following any future management works.
- Provision of hedgehog gaps: Hedgehogs have been scoped out of detailed assessment and no specific mitigation is proposed, however it is important that opportunities for hedgehogs to move through the landscape are preserved. Although not strictly an 'enhancement' measure, provision of hedgehog-friendly gravel boards or equivalent, providing a minimum 5 x 5 inch gap, will be used to maintain permeability for hedgehogs across the development and associated gardens. The number and location of hedgehog gaps will be determined at the detailed design stage and set out within the LEMP.
- Provision of new invertebrate habitats: including at least 24 'bug hotels', 'bee hotels' and other insect boxes/structures. These purpose-built structures / wildlife boxes (20% of homes) would be provided additionally to any suitable deadwood material salvaged and retained onsite during site clearance activities.
- As per British Standard BS 42021:2022, all new dwellings should incorporate at least one wildlife box, and this has been accounted

for in the minimum number of boxes required at the Site, detailed above.

- 5.83 The proposed ecological enhancement measures therefore promote adherence to the NPPF, as well as with the provisions of both Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity of the adopted Horsham District Planning Framework (2015) and Policy 17: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity of the emerging Horsham District Local Plan 2023-2040 (2024).

Monitoring

- 5.84 Post development monitoring of habitats to be retained and enhanced, and new habitats to be created, should be set out within a Management Plan. This commitment will be made, and further detail provided, within the LEMP / HMMP to be prepared at the detailed design stage, with a draft HMMP prepared at the outline stage for consideration.
- 5.85 Following the installation of dormouse boxes in retained boundary vegetation, monitoring visits will be made in line with EPSL requirements.

6.0 CONCLUSIONS

- 6.1 In the absence of any mitigation measures, the proposed development would have the potential to result in negative effects significant at up to the Local level. However, with the implementation of some straightforward mitigation and precautionary measures as proposed here, the development is not anticipated to result in any significant residual negative effects on important ecological features.
- 6.2 The Illustrative Landscape Strategy Plan (CSA/4705/140) demonstrates the potential to deliver net benefits for wildlife in the form of additional habitats, with the opportunity to provide additional biodiversity enhancement measures alongside the new housing.
- 6.3 The measures set out herein can be secured through appropriate conditions attached to any planning consent, and the development may therefore be delivered without harm to nature conservation interests. Specifically, it is anticipated that planning conditions would be used to secure:
- Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP): In addition to wider environmental controls and best practice construction management, the CEMP will set out construction-phase impact avoidance measures with respect to nesting birds [REDACTED] and reptiles.
 - Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP)/ Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP): The LEMP/HMMP will detail the establishment and long term management of retained and newly created habitats to maximise benefits for wildlife. It will include a graphical Ecological Enhancement Plan, setting out the number, type and position of enhancement features.
 - Lighting Strategy: A sensitive lighting strategy will accompany the detailed layout, ensuring that dark corridors are maintained, and minimising light spill to retained and newly created habitats.
 - Dormouse Methods Statement and EPS Licence: an EPS statutory derogation licence from Natural England will be required. This will be accompanied by a Dormouse Methods Statement which will detail proposed working methods, timing of works and proposed enhancement measures.
- 6.4 Based on the successful implementation of avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures set out herein, the scheme is considered to accord with all relevant nature conservation legislation, as well as with the provisions of Policies 25 and 31 of the Horsham District Planning Framework.

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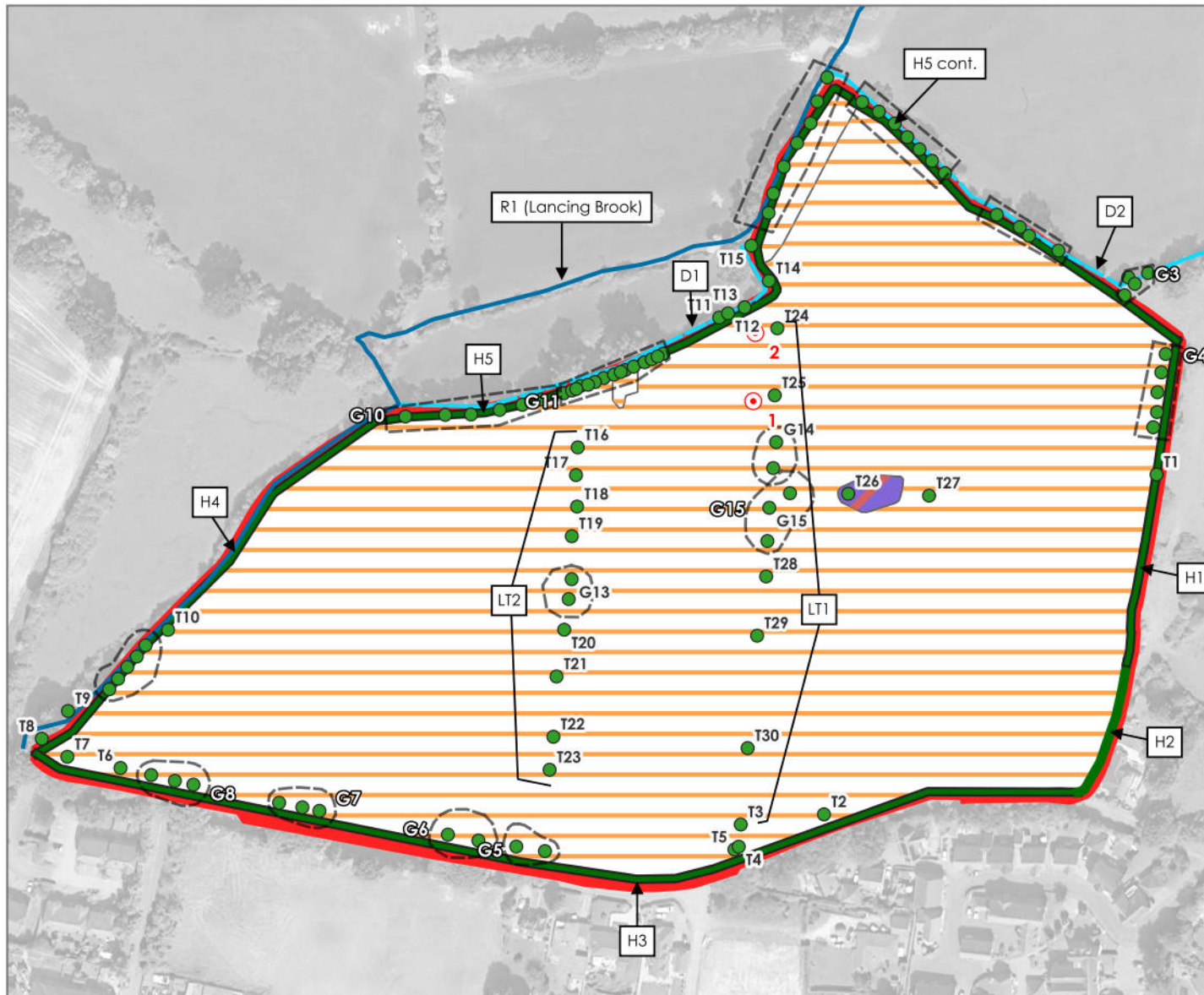
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Appendix A

Habitats Plan & Habitat Summary Table



- Cereal crops (c1c)
- Dense scrub (h3)
- Individual trees (plotted via Tree Survey & Constraints Plan BHA_5948_01)
- Ditch (50)
- Stream (r2b)
- Species-rich hedgerow (Priority Habitat) (h2a5)
- Native hedgerows (h2)
- Other rivers and streams (r2b)
- Canal or ditch (r1e)
- Tree groups (placement of trees within is indicative)
- Target notes
 - 1. NPPF veteran tree (T25)
 - 2. Tree to be removed (T24)

Reference should be made to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and associated Tree Schedule for a full account of tree/tree group numbering. Only those referred to within the EclA are detailed here.

0 50 100 m

Table 1. UK Habitat Classification Summary Table

Habitat Parcel Number	Habitat Type and Code(s)	Habitat Code(s) Description
Area Habitats		
F1	<i>Cereal crop (c1c) with hedgerows with trees (11) and scattered trees (32)</i>	The Site comprised a large arable field bounded by hedgerows with trees. Wheat was dominant, with occasional individual oak trees scattered across the field and scattered scrub parcels comprising bramble and willow towards the eastern extent of the field. Grass margins were present along the boundaries and were c. 1m wide or less. Forbs at the margins included common nettle, cleavers, greater stitchwort, thistles, docks amongst other common species. Grasses present included perennial ryegrass, cock's-foot and false oat-grass.
N/A	<i>Mixed scrub (h3h) with 'Young Trees – self-set (202) and mature trees (203)</i>	A parcel of mixed dense scrub was recorded to the central-eastern extent of F1. Bramble, hawthorn, and blackthorn made up the scrub parcel. Immature willow trees were recorded infrequently within the scrub.
Linear Habitats		
H1	<i>Species-rich native hedgerow (h2a5) with trees (11), neglected (518)</i>	Native hedgerow running along the eastern boundary of the Site, comprised of: hawthorn, blackthorn, hazel, elder, English elm, bramble and dog rose, with five mature oak trees and a dead multi-stemmed ash tree.
H2	<i>Native hedgerows (h2a), neglected (518)</i>	A native hedgerow that consists predominantly of blackthorn and hazel but with some English elm and hawthorn also.
H3	<i>Species-rich native hedgerow (h2a5) with trees (11)</i>	Species-rich native hedgerow running along the southern boundary of the Site, comprised of blackthorn, English elm, field maple and holly, hawthorn, dogwood, common ash, dog rose and hazel, plus rare instances of sycamore and English oak. ivy <i>Hedera helix</i> and cleavers were recorded in the undergrowth. Notable mature trees along this length include T2 (English oak), T5 (aspen), T6 and T7 (English oaks), and G5 – G8 which are all mature oak trees.
H4	<i>Species-rich native hedgerow (h2a5) with trees (11) associated with freshwater – natural (47)</i>	Hedgerow H4 runs along the western boundary of the Site and is comprised of field maple, common ash, hazel, goat willow, English elm, blackthorn, crab apple, holly, English oak and dog rose. Notable mature trees along this hedgerow include T8, T9 and T10 (English oaks) and G9 which comprises mature English oak, common ash and holly.
H5	<i>Species-rich native hedgerow (h2a5) with trees (11) associated with ditch (50), neglected (518)</i>	Hedgerow running along the northern boundary of the Site and comprised of hazel, field maple, hawthorn, blackthorn, English oak and aspen of varying sizes. Tree T15 is the

Habitat Parcel Number	Habitat Type and Code(s)	Habitat Code(s) Description
		largest/most notable mature tree along this length. This hedgerow did not appear to have been cut or flailed recently at the time of survey.
LT1	<i>Ecologically valuable line of trees (34)</i>	Two lines of mature oak trees running from the northern boundary of the Site towards, but not adjoining to, the southern boundary. A dense bramble understorey was present in places, and several gaps were noted across these linear features.
LT2	<i>Ecologically valuable line of trees (34)</i>	
N/A	<i>Other rivers and streams (r2b)</i>	A stream which is part of Lancing Brook lies adjacent to the Site to the north. Lancing brook is a tributary of the River Adur.

Appendix B

Legislation and Planning Policy

- 1.1. The **Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017** (as amended) make prescriptions for the designation and protection of Sites of Community Importance ('European sites', i.e. Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas) and European Protected Species (EPS). The latter include all native bats, great crested newts, dormice, otters and certain reptiles, listed under Annex II of the Regulations. Following the UK's departure from the European Union, the provisions of the Regulations have been retained through enactment of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019, which came into force on 31 December 2020.
- 1.2. The **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981** (as amended, principally by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000) forms the basis for protection of statutory designated sites of national importance (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest; SSSIs) and native species that are rare and vulnerable in a national context. Additionally, badgers are protected under the **Protection of Badgers Act 1992**.
- 1.3. The **Environment Act 2021** received Royal Assent in November 2021. Through an amendment to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 the Environment Act introduced a mandatory requirement for all planning permissions to be conditional upon the submission of a Biodiversity Gain Plan for approval by the Local Planning Authority. The Plan will need to demonstrate a net gain of at least 10% in the biodiversity value of the development site.
- 1.4. Section 40(1) of the **Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006** (as amended) states that each public authority, "must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving and enhancing biodiversity." This legislation makes it clear that planning authorities should consider impacts to biodiversity when determining planning applications, with particular regard to the Section 41 (S41) lists of 56 habitats and 943 species of principal importance. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) has been superseded by the Biodiversity 2020 Strategy, however Local BAPs continue to influence biodiversity management and conservation effort, including through the spatial planning system, at the local scale.
- 1.5. The **National Planning Policy Framework (2024)** (NPPF) sets out the government planning policies for England and how they should be applied. With regards to ecology and biodiversity, Chapter 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment, paragraph 187, states that the planning system and planning policies should minimise impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

- 1.6. Paragraph 193 sets out the principles that local planning authorities should apply when determining planning applications:
- 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
 - 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.
- 1.7. Accompanying the NPPF, central government guidance on the implementation of planning policies is set out within online Planning Policy Guidance (PPG). The Natural Environment PPG addresses principles across a broad spectrum of topics targeting biodiversity conservation, from individual site and species protection through to the supporting of ecosystem services, and the use of local ecological networks to support the national Nature Recovery Network. In particular, the PPG promotes the delivery of measurable Biodiversity Net Gain through the creation and enhancement of habitats alongside development.
- 1.8. The **Government Circular 06/2005**, which is referred to within the NPPF, defines statutory nature conservation sites and protected species as a material consideration in the planning process.
- 1.9. Local planning policies of relevance to ecology, biodiversity and/or nature conservation have been set out in Table 1 below.

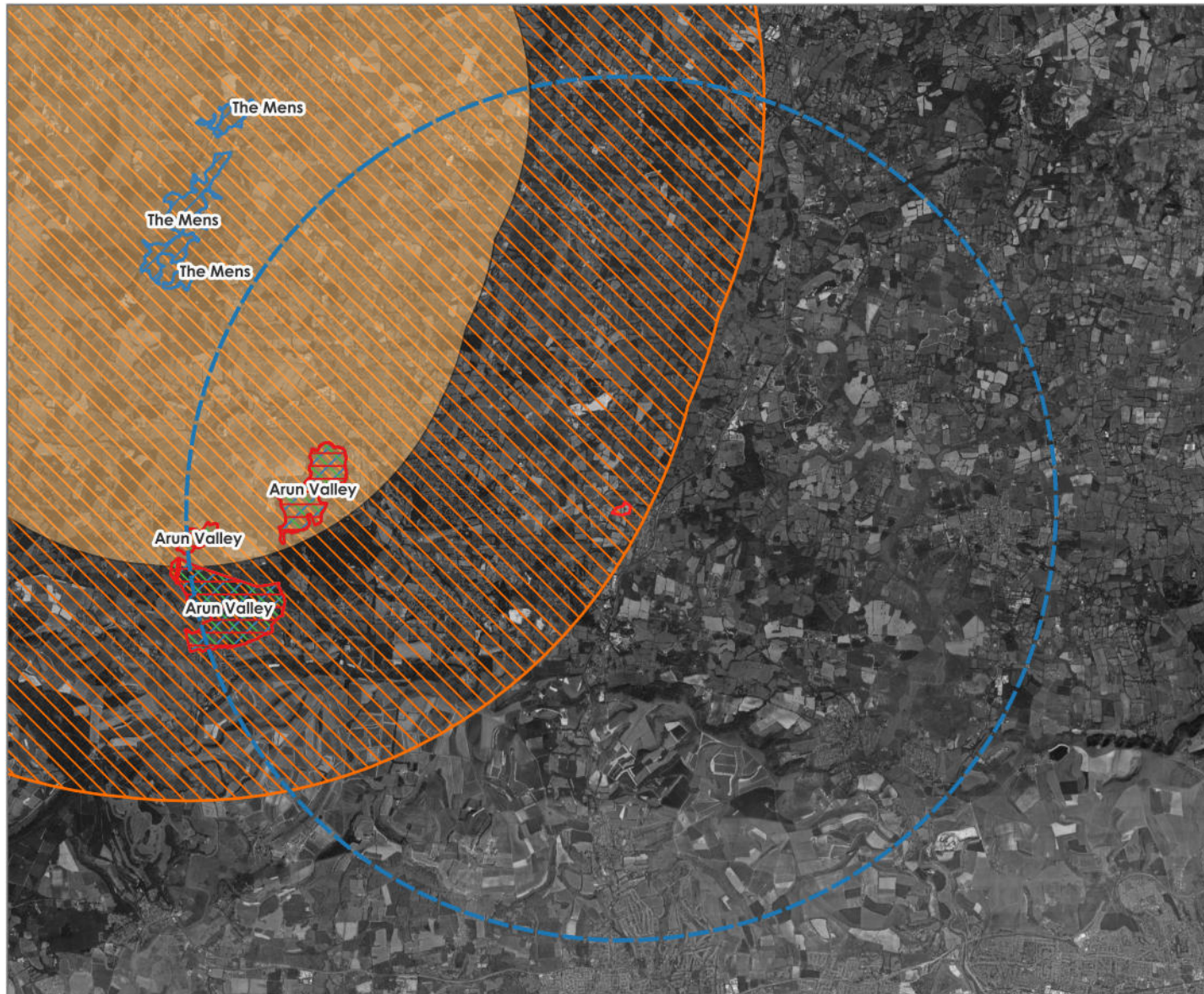
Table 1. Summary of regional and local planning policy relating to ecology

Policy	Summary
Horsham District Planning Framework (excluding South Downs National Park) 2015	
Policy 25: The Natural Environmental and Landscape Character	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: • 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. • Maintain and enhances the Green Infrastructure Network and addresses any identified deficiencies in the District. • 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. • Conserve and where possible enhance the setting of the South Downs National Park.
Policy 31: Green Infrastructure and Biodiversity	1. Development will be supported where it can demonstrate that it maintains or enhances the existing network of green infrastructure. Proposals that would result in the loss of existing green infrastructure will be resisted unless it can be demonstrated that new opportunities will be provided that mitigates or compensates for this loss, and ensures that the ecosystem services of the area are retained. 2. Development proposals will be required to contribute to the enhancement of existing biodiversity, and should create and manage new habitats where appropriate. The Council will support new development which retains and /or enhances significant features of nature conservation on development sites. The Council will also support development which makes a positive contribution to biodiversity through the creation of green spaces, and linkages between habitats to create local and regional ecological networks. 3. Where felling of protected trees is necessary, replacement planting with a suitable species will be required. 4. a) Particular consideration will be given to the hierarchy of sites and habitats in the district as follows: i. Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) ii. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs) iii. Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs), Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) and any areas of Ancient woodland, local geodiversity or other irreplaceable habitats not already identified in i & ii above. b) Where development is anticipated to have a direct or indirect adverse impact on sites or features for biodiversity, development will be refused unless it can be demonstrated that: i. The reason for the development clearly outweighs the need to protect the value of the site; and,

	ii. That appropriate mitigation and compensation measures are provided. 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.
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Appendix C

Desk Study Information



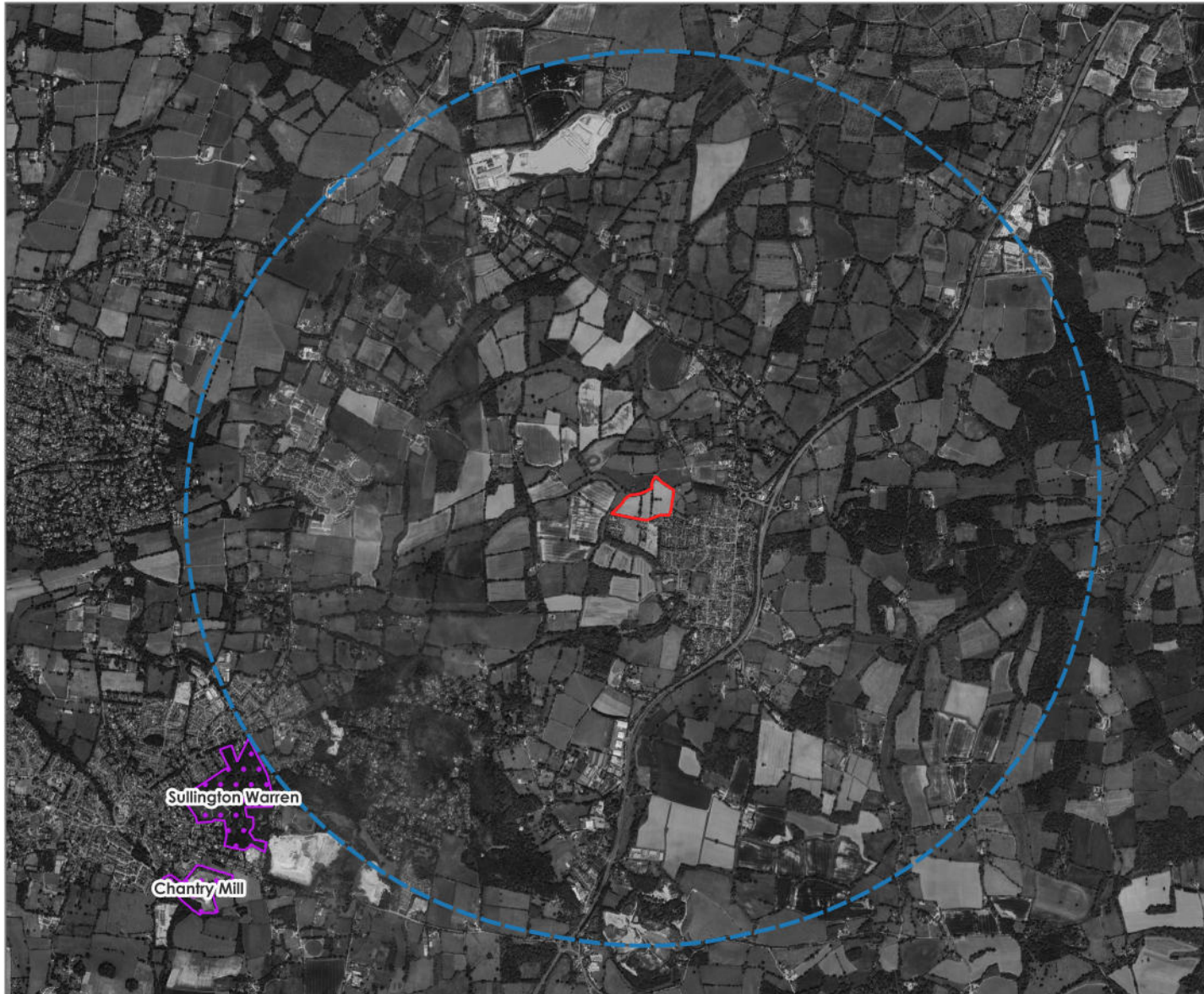
- Site Boundary
- 10km buffer
- Special Protection Area (SPA)
- Ramsar Site
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC)

- The Mens 'Core Sustenance Zone'
- Key Conservation Area (6.5km buffer)
 - Wider Conservation Area (12km buffer)



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 Office 20, Citibase, 95 Ditchling Road, Brighton BN1 4ST t 01273 927399 e brighton@csaenvironmental.co.uk w csaenvironmental.co.uk	Project	Land at Rectory Lane, Ashington, West Sussex	Date	March 2026	Drawing No.	CSA/4705/121
	Drawing Title	International Statutory Designations within 10km	Scale	1:150,000	Rev	-
	Client	Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land	Drawn	NS	Checked	JT



-  Site Boundary
-  3km buffer
-  Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

0 0.5 1 km



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Project	Land at Rectory Lane, Ashington, West Sussex	Date	March 2026	Drawing No.	CSA/4705/122
Drawing Title	National and Local Statutory Designations within 3km	Scale	1:45,000	Rev	-
Client	Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land	Drawn	NS	Checked	JT



- Site Boundary
- 2km buffer
- Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)
- Designated Road Verge (DRV)

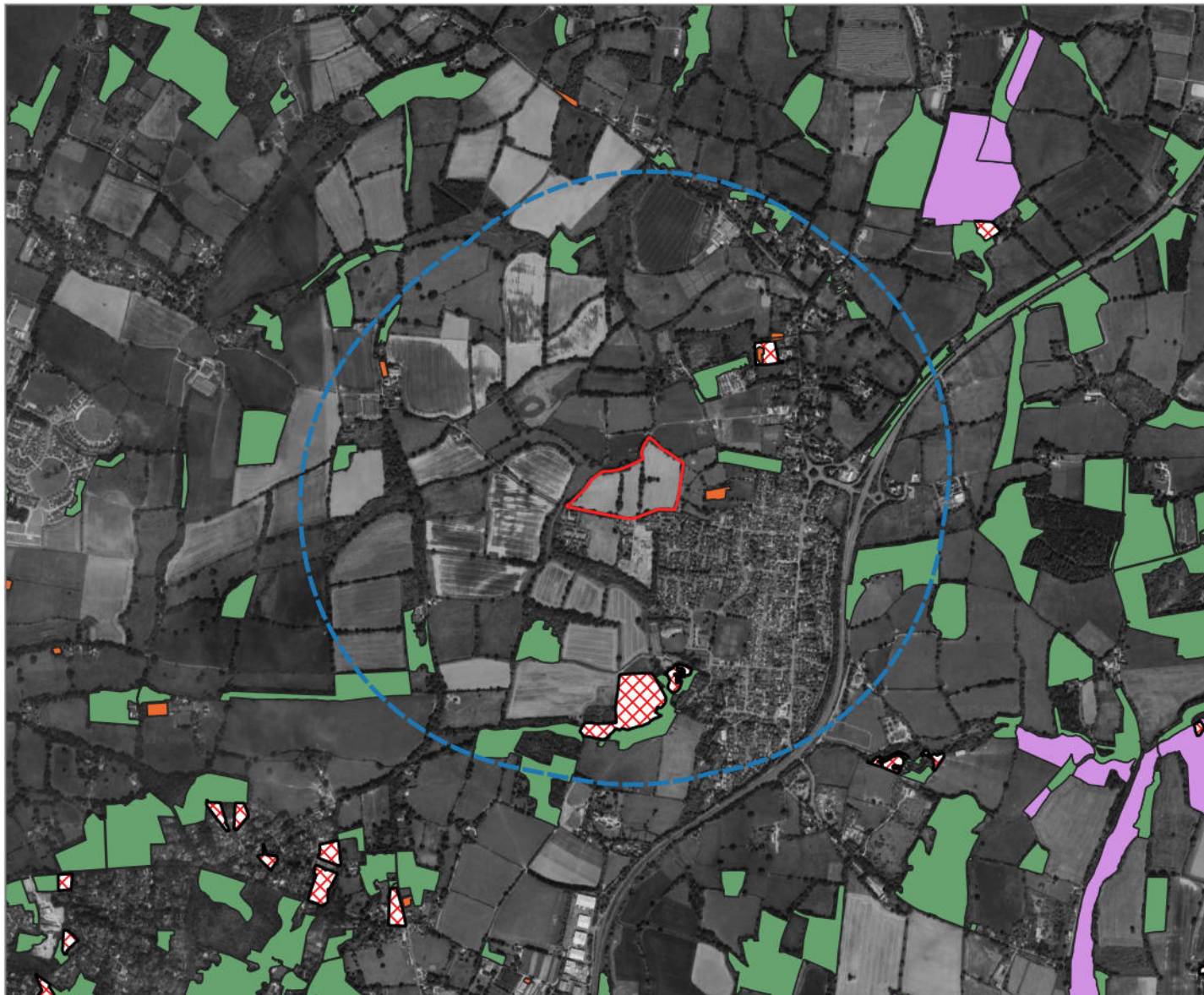
0 0.5 1 km



*Contains information from Sussex Biological Records Centre. Exact boundaries of designations may differ. For reference purpose only. No further copies may be made.

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Project	Land at Rectory Lane, Ashington, West Sussex	Date	May 2026	Drawing No.	CSA/4705/123
Drawing Title	Non-Statutory Designations	Scale	1:30,000	Rev	-
Client	Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land	Drawn	NS	Checked	JT

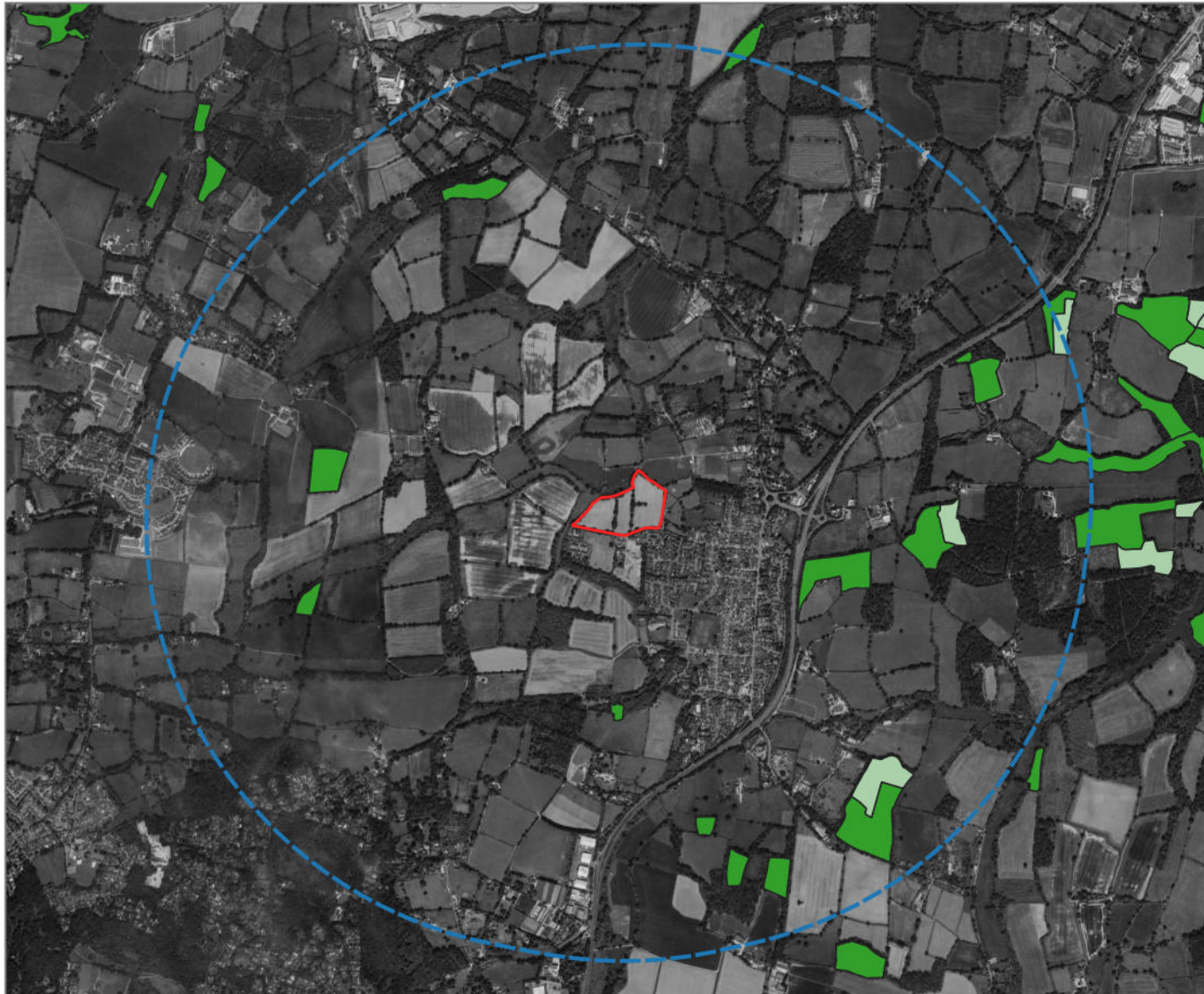


-  Site boundary
-  1km buffer
-  Deciduous woodland
-  Good quality semi improved grassland
-  No main habitat but additional habitats present
-  Traditional orchard



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Project	Land at Rectory Lane, Ashington, West Sussex	Date	March 2026	Drawing No.	CSA/4705/124
Drawing Title	Priority Habitats within 1km	Scale	1:24,000	Rev	-
Client	Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land	Drawn	NS	Checked	JT

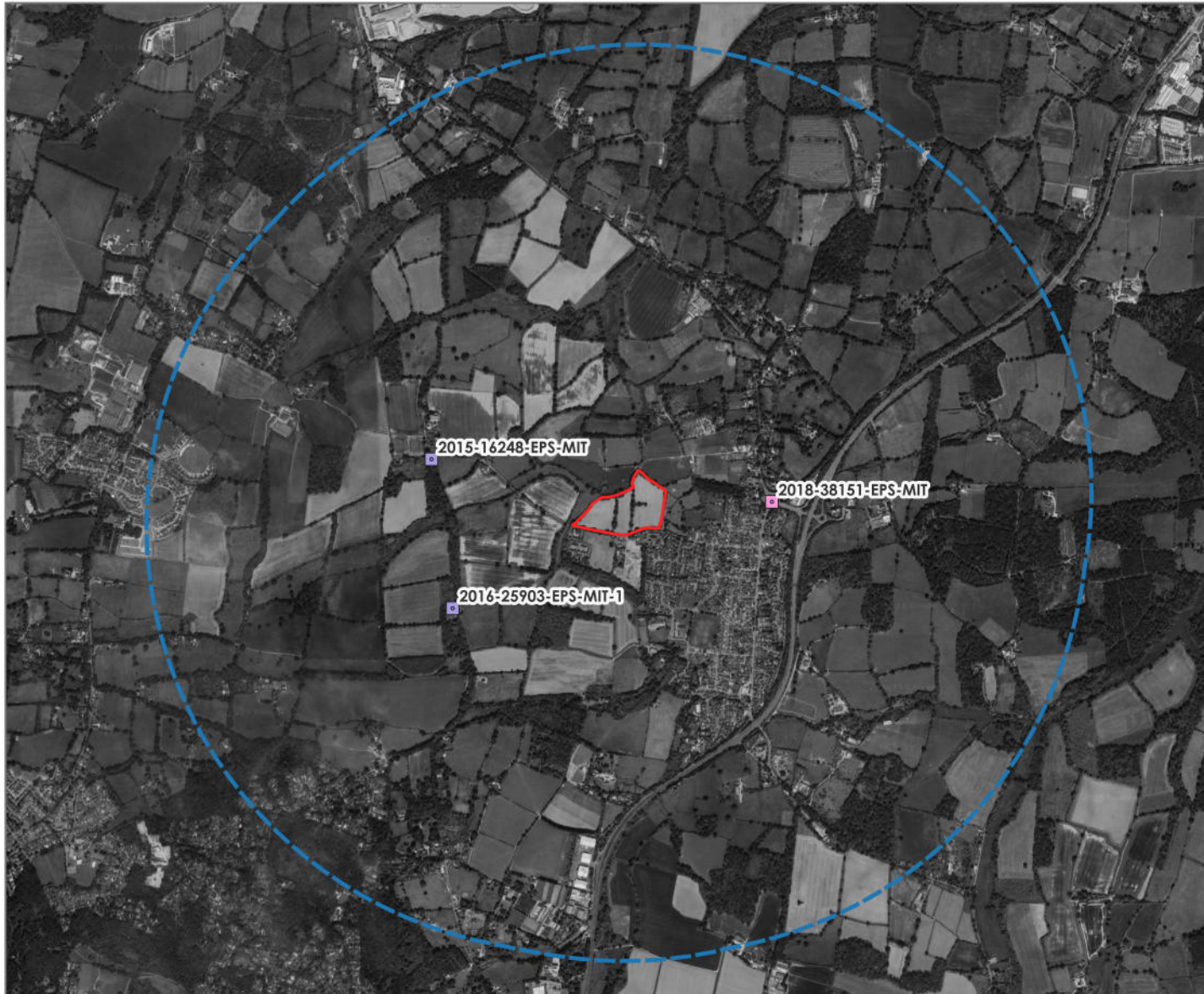


-  2km buffer
-  Site Boundary
-  Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland
-  Ancient Replanted Woodland



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Project	Land at Rectory Lane, Ashington, West Sussex	Date	March 2026	Drawing No.	CSA/4705/125
Drawing Title	Ancient Woodland within 2km	Scale	1:30,000	Rev	-
Client	Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land	Drawn	NS	Checked	JT



2km buffer



Site Boundary

Granted European Protected Species
Licences (with references)



Bat



Other mammal (dormouse)

0 0.5 1 km



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Ecological Data Search SxBRC/25/897 - Summary Report

An ecological data search was carried out for land at Rectory Lane, Ashington on behalf of Nathaniel Scott (CSA Environmental Ltd) on 25/02/2026.

The following datasets were consulted for this report:

	Requested	Radius/buffer size
Designated sites, habitats & ownership maps	Yes	2km
Protected, designated and invasive species	Yes	2km

Summary of results

Sites and habitats

Statutory sites	None present
Non-statutory sites	2 LWS / 1 LGS
Section 41 habitats	2 habitats
Ancient and/or ghyll woodland	Present

Protected and designated species

International designations	25 species	132 records
National designations	78 species	1,173 records
Other designations	149 species	2,375 records
Total	165 species	2,480 records
Invasive non-native	25 species	91 records

The report is compiled using data held by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) at the time of the request. SxBRC does not hold comprehensive species data for all areas. Even where data are held, a lack of records for a species in a defined geographical area does not necessarily mean that the species does not occur there – the area may simply not have been surveyed.

**This summary page may be published.
The full report and maps may not be published or otherwise shared.**

The data search report is valid until 25/02/2027 for the site named above.