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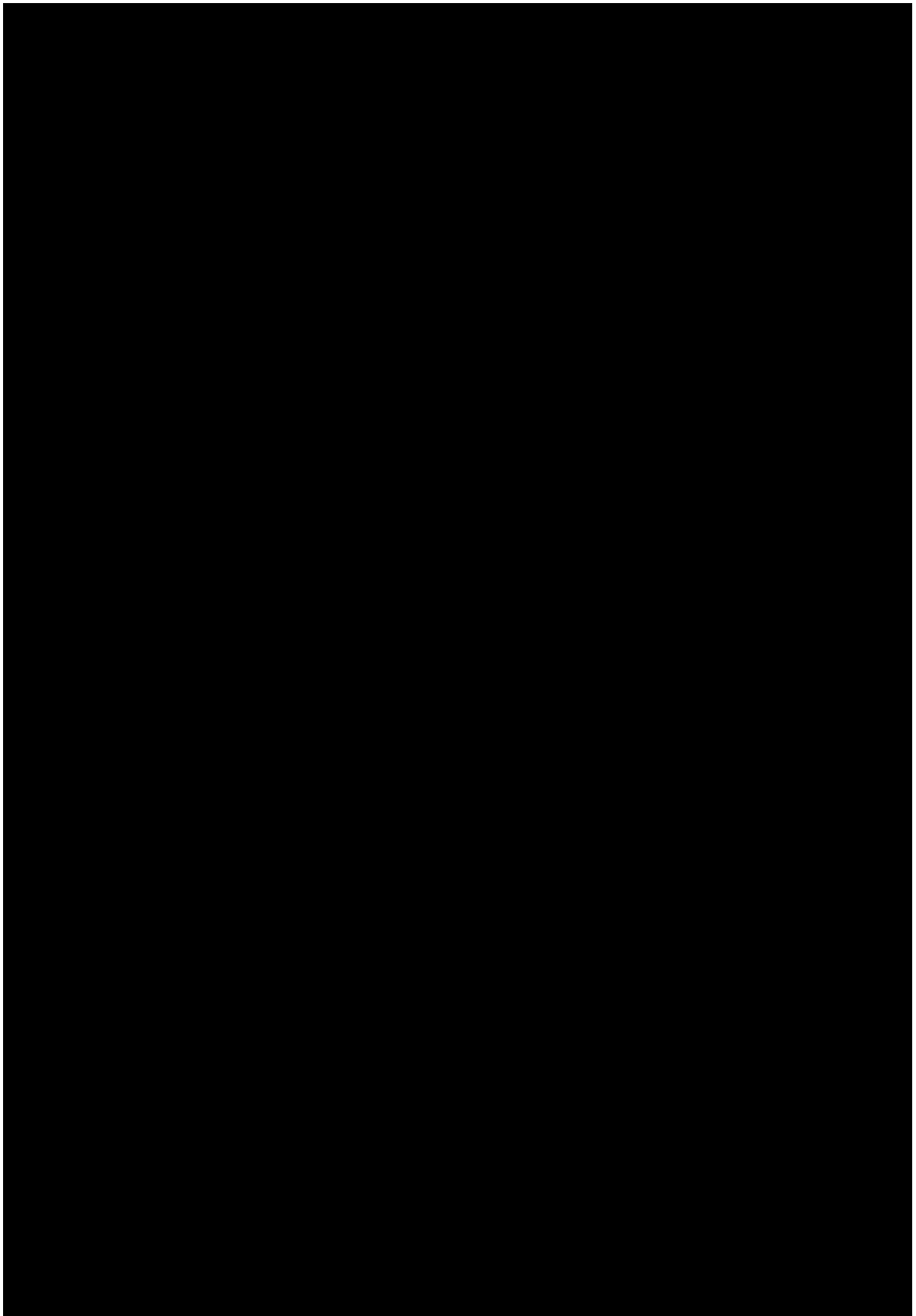


Table 1. Sett categorisation guidance.

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Appendix I

Dormouse Survey Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land to provide information relating to dormouse survey work undertaken at Land North of Rectory Lane, Ashington, West Sussex (hereafter 'the Site'). It is intended to inform an evidence-based Ecological Impact Assessment of proposed residential development at the Site.

2.0 Legislation

- 2.1 The dormouse is legally protected through inclusion under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and is afforded further protection as a European Protected Species (EPS) under Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and species Regulations 2017 (as amended).
- 2.2 Collectively and in summary, this legislation makes it an offence to:
- Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture dormice
 - Intentionally, deliberately or recklessly disturb dormice in such a way as to be likely to significantly affect the ability of any significant group of dormice to survive, breed, or rear or nurture their young or the local distribution of or abundance of the species
 - Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to places used by dormice for shelter or protection (whether occupied or not) or intentionally or recklessly disturb a dormouse whilst it is occupying such a place
 - Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a dormouse.
- 2.3 Where development is proposed that would result in an offence under the Regulations, an EPS statutory derogation licence (often termed 'EPS Mitigation Licence') will need to be secured from Natural England to permit an act that would otherwise be unlawful. Such a licence can only be granted following receipt of planning permission with all relevant conditions discharged, and where it has been demonstrated that specific statutory derogation tests have been met.

3.0 Methods

- 3.1 Dormouse nest tubes were installed within the Site on 05 April 2024 by Jeff Turton ACIEEM, Charlie Vaughan Jones ACIEEM, Will Campbell and Corie Lee. A total of 48 nest tubes were distributed across the Site within the boundary vegetation. The location of these nest tubes is shown on the Dormouse Survey Plan at the end of this report (CSA/4705/112).
- 3.2 Nest tubes are made from stiff, double-walled black plastic sheets or similar material, 25cm long with a 5cm x 5cm cross-section. A thin plywood tray is inserted into the tube with a short projection at one end and an end block at the other which seals the tube. The tubes are then

tied in a suitable location along a horizontal branch in vegetation. Dormice are known to readily use these tubes to build their nests (Bright *et al.*, 2006).

- 3.3 Monthly checks were carried out from May to June and August to October 2024 in accordance with the Dormouse Conservation Handbook 2nd ed. (Bright *et al.* 2006) and intended to demonstrate a minimum combined 'search effort' score of 20, as based upon the indices of probability within Table 1 below. A search effort score of 20 is taken to be the minimum to adequately determine presence or likely absence of dormice within a survey area.

Table 1. Index of probability of finding dormice present in nest tubes in any one month

Month	Index of probability	Cumulative search effort score
April	1	1
May	4	5
June	2	7
July	2	9
August	5	14
September	7	21
October	2	23
November	2	25

- 3.4 Checks were undertaken by Kate Wolstenholme ACIEEM (Natural England Class Licence WML-CL10a – Registration Number 2022-10953-CL10A-DOR), and Charlie Vaughan-Jones ACIEEM (Natural England Class Licence WML-CL10a – Registration Number 2024-12002-CL10A-DOR) with assistance from Jeff Turton ACIEEM, Lydia Galbraith ACIEEM, Nancy Inman ACIEEM and Corie Lee. Bird droppings and other such debris were cleaned out if found, to maintain the potential of each tube to be used by dormice.

Habitat Quality Assessment

- 3.5 The Hazel Dormouse Mitigation Handbook (Wells *et al.*, 2025) published in March 2025 provided updated guidance in regards to dormouse surveys, including nest tube survey effort, however nest tubes surveys were undertaken in line with the pre-existing guidance due to the timing of instruction. In an effort to acknowledge and partially align with the updated guidance, a Habitat Quality Assessment (HQA) of any on-site woodland, hedgerows and scrub was undertaken in line with the protocol set out within the Hazel Dormouse Mitigation Handbook, as described below. Under this guidance, a HQA is used to calculate survey effort as well as estimated population densities within a site based upon the overall quality of on-site habitat. In this case, the HQA has only been used for the latter purpose.
- 3.6 A HQA assesses the overall quality of a habitat for dormice through a combination of the richness of plant species of benefit to dormice within a stand of habitat and that habitat's structural complexity against pre-

defined criteria. Stands of relatively homogenous and contiguous habitat can be grouped for assessment. Species richness is determined by the average count of plant species of benefit to dormice across transects of a defined parcel or length of habitat. In line with guidance, between four and five transects of 100m should be aimed for to gain a representative sample, however where smaller or shorter habitats are present, the length and number of these transects is adjusted proportionately.

- 3.7 Structural complexity for woodland and scrub is assessed based upon the extent of the canopy versus the understorey using the criteria set out in Table 2 below to generate a result of 'High', 'Medium' or 'Low' structural complexity.

Table 2. Structural complexity assessment criteria for woodland and scrub habitats (adapted from Wells et al., 2025).

Suitability	Character or habitat present
High	Canopy and understorey layers present and well-connected, with or without scrub layer (e.g. bramble) beneath. OR Understorey and scrub generally present and well-connected with canopy sparse or absent.
Medium	Understorey layer generally present, with sparse or absent canopy and scrub layers. OR Scrub with developing understorey and/or canopy trees.
Low	Canopy present with sparse or absent understorey with or without scrub layer. OR Scrub present, with sparse or absent canopy and understorey above.

- 3.8 Hedgerow structural complexity is assessed based upon the presence of 'core' and 'additional' characteristics. Each stand/group of hedgerows must pass both core criteria for either 'high' or 'medium' categories as well as at least two additional characteristic features from the same categories to fall into that category. If not, it falls into the next lower category. These criteria are set out in Table 3 below.

Table 3. Structural complexity assessment criteria for hedgerow habitats (adapted from Wells et al., 2025).

Suitability	Characteristic features	
High	Features typically present (core criteria)	No gaps or very few small gaps (up to 10% length) AND Width of hedge >3m
	Additional characteristic features (minimum 2 passes)	Dense growth to ground level along >50% hedge length Dense outgrowths along >25% hedge length Height >3m Mature standards <40m spacings Marginal permanent herbaceous cover >2m wide
Medium	Features typically present (core criteria)	10-25% of total length consists of gaps and/or some gaps large (>5m) AND Width of hedge 2-3m
	Additional characteristic features (minimum 2 passes)	Dense growth to ground level along 25-50% hedge length Dense outgrowths along 5-25% hedge length Height 2-3m Mature standards at 40-100m spacings Marginal permanent herbaceous cover 1-2m wide
Low	Features typically present (core criteria)	>25% of total length gaps and/or frequent large gaps (>5m) AND Width of hedge <2m
	Additional characteristic features	Dense growth to ground level along <25% hedge length Dense outgrowths along <5% hedge length Height <2m Mature standards >100m spacings or absent

		Marginal permanent herbaceous cover <1m wide
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- 3.9 Suitable on-site habitats, comprising the boundary hedgerows and central tree lines were assessed for species diversity and structural complexity, assigned as “low”, “medium” or “high” for the respective characteristic. The on-site mixed scrub was not assessed due to its isolation from further tracts of suitable habitat, and therefore overall unsuitability to be colonised by dormice. The overall quality of each habitat parcel was then assigned using the matrix provided in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Habitat Quality Assessment matrix showing the relationship between species diversity, structural complexity and habitat quality (adapted from Hazel Dormouse Mitigation Handbook, 2025).

	Habitat Diversity		
Habitat Complexity	High	Medium	Low
High	Excellent	Good	Fair
Medium	Good	Good	Poor
Low	Fair	Poor	Poor

- 3.10 The results of the HQA correspond to an estimated dormouse carrying capacity for both hedgerows and woodland/scrub habitats, as shown in Table 5 below. In order to calculate the estimates total dormouse population supported by a site, the area/length of habitat parcel must be multiplied by the relevant dormouse carrying capacity.

Table 5. Habitat Quality Assessment Index showing estimated density of breeding adult dormice depending on habitat quality and type (adapted from Hazel Dormouse Mitigation Handbook, 2025).

Habitat quality	Capacity for dormouse population density	
	Habitat type	
	Hedgerow	Woodland/Scrub
Excellent	8	10
High	5	6
Medium	3	4
Poor	1	2

Limitations

- 3.11 All dormouse surveys were conducted at an optimum time of year and in good conditions. The majority of tubes within the Site were easily accessible, with only a small number of tubes and inserts found to be missing throughout the surveys.

4.0 Results

Nest Tube Survey

- 4.1 Dormice were confirmed to be present within the boundary vegetation, recorded on two of the five total survey visits. A peak count of three adult dormice was recorded on the first survey visit, all of which were encountered alongside a nest. Numerous vacant dormouse nests were also encountered, with a total of five confirmed dormouse nests recorded across the survey period. The majority of these nests were present from the first survey visit, demonstrating typical grass-like vegetation tightly woven into a round structure with a central chamber characteristic of dormice. A further grass nest which appeared to have some form of structure was recorded on the third survey visit and while likely to be attributed to dormice, it could not definitively be categorised as such.
- 4.2 Evidence of dormouse activity was widespread across the Site boundaries, with nests recorded in on all aspects of the Site boundary. To note, an individual deceased newborn dormouse was recorded on the final survey visit within the eastern boundary hedgerow. Full survey results are provided at the end of this report, alongside a Dormouse Survey Plan showing the indicative locations of dormouse nests within the Site.

Habitat Quality Assessment

- 4.3 Boundaries H1-5 were assessed to be of 'Excellent' habitat quality, in turn suggesting they have the strongest potential to support dormice. The two central lines of trees were assessed to be of 'Poor' quality, predominantly due to their low species diversity. This produced an overall dormouse population estimate for the Site of 10 individuals, which is largely attributed to the abundance of 'Excellent' quality on-site habitat. Full results of the HQA are provided in Table 6 below.

	Hedgerows H1-5	Central lines of trees	Total
Habitat complexity	High	Moderate	-
Habitat diversity	High	Low	-
Habitat quality	Excellent	Poor	-
Dormouse density	8	1	-
Length (km)	1.2	0.315	1.515
Population estimate	9.6	0.315	9.915

5.0 Summary

- 5.1 The nest tube surveys confirmed the presence of dormouse within the on-site habitats, with a peak count of three individuals. Evidence of dormouse activity was widespread across the Site, with a total of five confirmed dormouse nests recorded across the Site.

- 5.2 The results of the HQA estimates that the Site supports a population of up to 10 individuals, with consideration of the quality and extent of on-site suitable habitats.



- Site Boundary
- Nest tube location and number
- Individual dormouse within nest
- Individual dormouse without nest
- Vacant dormouse nest

*Nest tube reference numbers correspond to the results table provided at the end of the Dormouse Survey Report

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Appendix J

Bird Survey Report

1.0 Legislation

- 1.1 All wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected under subsection 1(1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to kill or injure any wild bird, to take or destroy their eggs, or to take, damage or destroy their nests while in use or being built.
- 1.2 In addition, certain species of wild bird, listed within Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, receive additional protection under subsection 1(5) of the Act. This makes it an offence to disturb any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young. It is also an offence to disturb the dependent young of such a bird.
- 1.3 Consideration is also taken of Birds of Conservation Concern ('BoCC 5') (Stanbury *et al.*, 2021) which assigns bird species to a Red, Amber or Green list depending on factors such as their rarity, importance in an international context and severity of declines in population or range. Species on the Red list are of greatest conservation concern whilst those on the Green list do not fulfil any of the BoCC assessment criteria and are not currently of conservation interest. Full details can be found in Stanbury *et al.* (2021).

2.0 Methods

Breeding Birds

- 2.1 Breeding bird surveys were carried out by experienced bird surveyors Nancy Inman ACIEEM, Robin Bassett (an ornithologist with over 20 years' experience), and Christian Gunn MCIEEM over six visits between 18 April 2024 and 18 July 2024 to gain an understanding of the breeding bird assemblage at the site. Surveys were conducted with the following aims:
 - To determine the potential for breeding species of birds across the survey area;
 - To review the rarity and conservation status of each species found;
 - To review the likely breeding potential within the habitats present;
 - To assess the impacts of the proposed developments with regards to the species/ likely species determined; and
 - To recommend appropriate mitigation and protection measures where necessary.
- 2.2 The Survey Area included all accessible areas of the Site and immediately adjacent land visible from the Site. On each survey, the surveyor walked a slow route across the Survey Area which ensured that both species of open and boundary habitats would be detected. Alternative versions of the route were taken on each visit so that different parts of the Survey Area would be surveyed at different parts of the morning, thus avoiding temporal bias associated with bird activity. Each survey commenced shortly after dawn, when birds are most active, and

continued for approximately two to three hours during suitable weather conditions. Birds were detected by sound or sight, using a pair of 10 x 42 binoculars.

- 2.3 The survey methodology used considers the recommended mapping conventions given within the Bird Survey Guidelines published by the Bird Steering and Assessment Group (Heywood *et al.*, 2022). All birds detected within the Survey Area were recorded using standardised codes to map their distribution and behaviour, and to differentiate between individuals for the purposes of territory mapping (adapted from the standard Common Birds Census method). A full map of all species is created for each survey visit, with a consolidated map of priority species created for all survey visits combined.
- 2.4 Priority species are classified using the following hierarchy:
- 1) Species listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
 - 2) Species listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006;
 - 3) Red & Amber listed by the 5th Birds of Conservation Concern Review (Stanbury *et al.*, 2021).
 - 4) Localised or highly specialised species regardless of inclusion above (e.g. crossbill in coniferous woodland);
 - 5) Nationally- or locally-declining species regardless of inclusion above
 - 6) Colonial nests or roost sites containing more than one individual of any species; or,
 - 7) Exceptional counts or aggregations of any species.
- 2.5 On each survey visit the following objectives were met:
- Identification of potential breeding species within the habitats present;
 - Identification of all birds seen and heard;
 - Breeding status of each bird seen and heard;
 - Total numbers of birds, including juveniles recorded.
- 2.6 The criteria used during the 'Bird Atlas' surveys of 2007-2011 were used to ascertain the breeding status of birds within the Survey Area and the Site (as given in Table 1 below).

Table 1. Categories of Breeding Bird Evidence

Breeding Status Categories	Evidence Criteria
Confirmed breeding:	• Distraction display or injury feigning • Used nests or eggshells found (occupied or laid within the survey period) • Recently fledged young or downy young • Adults entering or leaving a nest site in circumstances indicating occupied • Nest or an adult sitting on nest • Adults carrying food for young or faecal sacs • Nest containing eggs • Nest with young seen or heard
Probable breeding:	• Pairs observed in suitable nesting habitat in breeding season • Permanent territory presumed through registration or territorial behaviour (song etc.) on at least two different days, a week apart, at the same place • Display and courtship • Visiting probable nest site • Agitated behaviour or anxiety calls from adults • Building nest or excavating nest hole
Possible breeding:	• Species observed in breeding season in possible nesting habitat • Singing male(s) present or breeding calls heard in breeding season

Limitations

- 2.7 Only a proportion of individuals of each species will be detected on each visit, and some particularly secretive or low-density species, can be elusive and require several visits to detect. Furthermore, the importance of a site for birds can change depending on factors such as food availability, presence of roosting/nesting features and weather conditions.

Evaluation

- 2.8 The importance of the breeding bird assemblage within the Survey Area was assessed using the criteria suggested by Fuller (1980) (see Table 2 below).

Table 2. Assessment criteria for breeding bird assemblage within the Survey Area

Importance	Number of Breeding Species
Local	25-49
County	50-69
Regional	70-84
National	85+

Wintering Birds

- 2.9 Four wintering bird survey visits were carried out within the Survey Area between 02 February 2024 and 19 December 2024 to provide an assessment of the Survey Areas importance for birds during the winter. During this time there is reduced territoriality and the formation of wide-ranging, mixed-species flocks that can cause significant variation in

species diversity and bird numbers on a daily basis. In addition, weather factors, such as snow cover, can also result in the movement of birds to or from an area.

- 2.10 The surveys were completed by Nancy Inman ACIEEM, Fleur Dober, Robin Bassett and Christian Gunn MCIEEM, and the conduct of the fieldwork was commensurate with good ornithological practice. The purpose of the survey was to assess the composition of the wintering bird community within the Survey Area, the population size of each species present and the species distribution within the survey areas.
- 2.11 Survey work also focused on determining the presence/likely absence of any protected or notable species of National, Regional or Local conservation importance, and to determine whether any populations of such species are significant at a local or wider level. Data provided on the distribution of species within the Survey Area indicates the importance of parts of the site to each bird species and to birds in general.
- 2.12 The survey methodology adopted follows the standard Common Birds Census (CBC) method and comprised:
 - Identification of all birds seen and heard with locations of Red and Amber Listed species mapped on a largescale plan; and
 - Records of the total numbers of birds seen
- 2.13 On each survey the surveyor walked a slow route across the Survey Area which ensured that both species of open and boundary habitats would be detected. Alternative versions of the route were taken on each visit so that different parts of the Survey Area would be surveyed at different times of the morning, thus avoiding temporal bias associated with bird activity or other factors such as increasing traffic noise. Surveys commenced in early to mid-morning and continued for approximately two to three hours. Birds were detected by sound or sight, using a pair of 10 x 42 binoculars.
- 2.14 All birds detected within the Survey Area were recorded using standardised codes to map their distribution and behaviour, and to differentiate between individuals for the purposes of mapping. Records were made of any bird species observed on land adjacent to the Survey Area or flying over the Survey Area. However, these fly-over species were not included when assessing the importance of the Survey Area.
- 2.15 Particular consideration is given to priority species which are established using the following hierarchy:
 - 1) Species listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
 - 2) Species listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006;

- 3) Red & Amber listed by the Birds of Conservation Concern (Stabury *et al.*, 2021).
- 4) Localised or highly specialised species regardless of inclusion above (e.g. crossbill in coniferous woodland);
- 5) Nationally- or locally-declining species regardless of inclusion above
- 6) Colonial roost sites containing more than one individual of any species; or,
- 7) Exceptional counts or aggregations of any species.

Limitations

- 2.16 Only a proportion of individuals of each species will be detected on each visit, and some particularly secretive or low-density species, can be elusive and require several visits to detect. Furthermore, the importance of a site for birds can change depending on factors such as food availability, presence of roosting/nesting features and weather conditions.

Evaluation

- 2.17 The importance of the wintering bird assemblage on the Survey Area was assessed using the criteria suggested by Fuller (1980) (see Table 3 below).

Table 3. Assessment criteria for the wintering bird assemblage within the Survey Area

Importance	Number of Wintering Bird Species
Local	25-54
County	55-84
Regional	85-114
National	115+

3.0 Results

Breeding Birds

- 3.1 The weather conditions during the breeding bird surveys are summarised in Table 4 below.

Table 4. Weather conditions for breeding bird surveys

Date	Start time	End time	Temp (°C)		Cloud (Oktas)		Wind (Beaufort scale)		Precipitation
			Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	
18/04/24	06:30	08:45	3	5	0	0	0	1	None
30/05/24	05:20	08:35	11	14	8	8	0	2	None
06/06/24	05:10	07:55	8	11	7	0	1	2	None
12/06/24	05:20	08:20	9	11	7	8	0	1	None
25/06/24	05:40	07:45	8	10	0	0	0	0	None
18/07/24	19:40	22:40	23	18	2	6	2	1	None

- 3.2 A total of 34 species were recorded on or adjacent to the Survey Area during the surveys. The full results of the breeding bird survey are

presented at the end of this report. The Breeding Bird Survey Plan (CSA/4705/127) shows a consolidated map from the six survey visits, highlighting suspected territories for priority species and other notable sightings.

- 3.3 Of these, 29 species were recorded to have a breeding status of either 'confirmed', 'probable' or 'possible' and are thus considered as breeding species. The remaining two species were either recorded flying over the Survey Area only, or there is no suitable breeding habitat to support these species.
- 3.4 A total of 16 priority species as summarised in Table 5 below.

Table 5. Priority bird species recorded within the Survey Area during the breeding bird surveys

Species	BoCC 2021 Red/Amber	Section 41	Sch1	Other Reason	Breeding Status
Chaffinch	Green			Species undergone significant regional declines [BTO, 2021]	Probable
Common Whitethroat	Amber				Probable
Dunnock	Amber	•			Confirmed
Garden warbler	Green			Species undergone significant regional declines [BTO, 2021]	Probable
Greenfinch	Red				Probable
Hobby	Green		•		Possible
House sparrow	Red,	•			Confirmed
Mistle thrush	Red				Possible
Rook	Amber				Confirmed
Song thrush	Amber	•			Confirmed
Starling	Red	•			Confirmed
Tawny owl	Amber				Possible
Willow warbler	Amber				Possible
Wood pigeon	Amber				Confirmed
Wren	Amber	•			Confirmed

Abbreviations:

BOCC Red List: Red List of Birds of Conservation Concern 5

Section 41: Listed as a priority species under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

Sch1: Schedule 1 (Part 1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

- 3.5 The Survey Area supports a relatively high diversity of species associated with farmland, treelines and small parcels of scrub. Boundaries are formed of a number of species-rich mature hedgerows and treelines. Additional breeding opportunities are provided in the adjacent stables, barns and housing.

- 3.6 The vast majority of activity was associated with the boundary habitats and patches of scrub across the Survey Area, with only limited amounts of foraging from within the arable fields.
- 3.7 The widespread and abundant notable species include wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, wood pigeon *Columba palumbus*, song thrush *Turdus philomelos*, and dunnock *Prunella modularis*. These were largely recorded distributed amongst boundary vegetation and parcels of scrub, as well as foraging in the field margins. Other species recorded less frequently in these habitats include chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*, garden warbler *Sylvia borin*, greenfinch *Chloris chloris*, mistle thrush *Turdus viscivorus*, and willow warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*. Suitable foraging and nesting habitat for these species is abundant across the Survey Area.
- 3.8 The dusk survey recorded one nocturnal species, tawny owl *Strix aluco*, recorded, in the western boundary of the Site. Suitable nesting and hunting habitat is present for this species.
- 3.9 Foraging within the Survey Area was largely by low numbers of corvids, including rook *Corvus frugilegus*, jackdaw *Coloeus monedula*, and crow *Corvus corone*, which were otherwise recorded scattered throughout boundaries. A rookery was noted in the woodland off-site to the east outside the Survey Area. Other species noted foraging in the arable field include small flocks of up to 25 woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*.
- 3.10 One Schedule 1 species was recorded onsite; a hobby *Falco Subbuteo* was seen on one survey flying twice across the Survey Area. This species may have been utilising the Survey Area for hunting as part of a wider resource, with both nesting and hunting habitat present within the Survey Area.
- 3.11 At least one house sparrow *Passer domesticus* territory was recorded across the Survey Area, in addition to records of individuals calling and singing from boundaries, and a family group. This species was largely recorded in boundaries adjacent to residential gardens to the south of the survey area.

Wintering Birds

- 3.12 The full results of the wintering bird survey are presented at the end of this report with a summary of survey conditions in Table 6 below. The Wintering Bird Survey Plan (CSA/4705/128) shows the location of notable sightings and activity observed.

Table 6. Weather conditions for wintering bird surveys

Date	Start time	End time	Temp (°C)		Cloud (Oktas)		Wind (Beaufort scale)		Precipitation
			Start	End	Start	End	Start	End	
02/02/24	10:00	12:30	9	10	8	8	3	3	None
23/02/24	16:00	18:00	8	7	6	3	4	0	None
14/11/24	09:15	11:45	10.5	10	8	8	2	2	None
19/12/24	09:00	10:40	8	6	0	0	2	2	None

- 3.13 A total of 22 species were recorded on or adjacent to the Survey Area during the surveys, 15 of these are priority species including one species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), as summarised in Table 7.

Table 7. Priority bird species recorded within the Survey Area during the wintering bird surveys

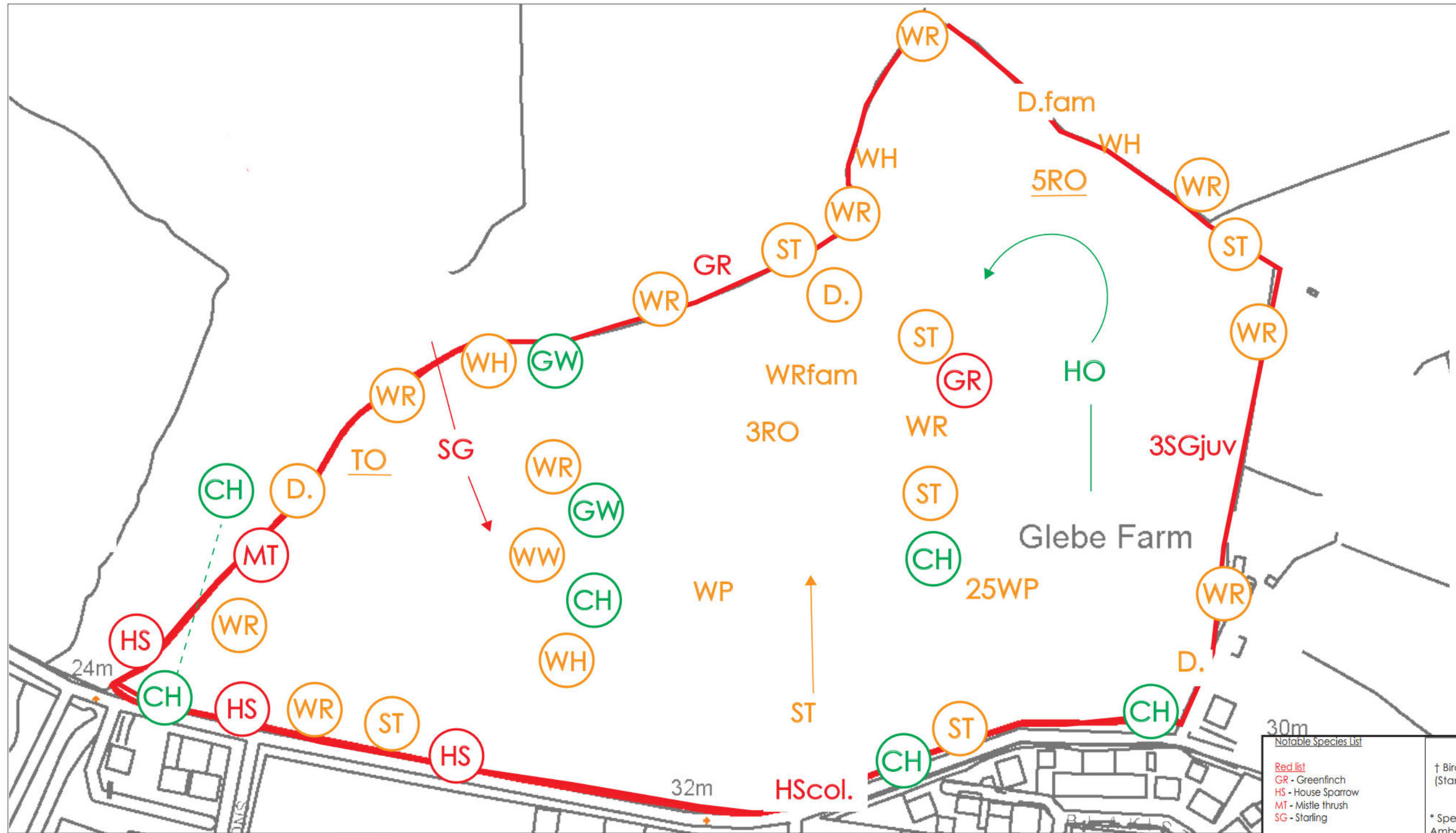
Species	BoCC 2021 Red/Amber	Section 41	Sch1	Other Reason
Chaffinch	Green			Species undergone significant regional declines [BTO, 2021]
Dunnock	Amber	•		
Greenfinch	Red			
Herring gull	Red			
House sparrow	Red,	•		
Mistle thrush	Red			
Redwing	Amber		•	
Rook	Amber			
Song thrush	Amber	•		
Sparrowhawk	Amber			
Stock dove	Amber			
Tawny owl	Amber			
Wood pigeon	Amber			
Wren	Amber	•		
Yellowhammer	Red	•		

- 3.14 The Survey Area was found to support a diverse range of wintering species, utilizing both the hedgerow and treeline boundaries for foraging. Much lower levels of activity were associated with the arable field.
- 3.15 Flocks of migratory thrushes were noted in abundance, particularly during the first survey. These primarily consisted of redwing (up to 15 individuals). Though mistle thrush and song thrush were recorded during wintering bird surveys, distributed throughout boundary vegetation, they were not found to form part of the flocks of thrushes.

- 3.16 A number of bird of prey species were recorded, passing over or actively hunting within the Survey Area, notable bird of prey species noted include tawny owl and sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus*.
- 3.17 An assemblage of declining farmland species, included in the farmland bird indicator list (Eaton and Noble 2025), were recorded within the Survey Area. These include goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*, greenfinch, stock dove, yellowhammer, jackdaw, rook, and woodpigeon. No significant aggregations of these species were noted during diurnal surveys, with low numbers noted flying between boundary habitats and calling/singing in boundary vegetation. During the dusk survey, higher numbers of rook and woodpigeon were noted, with flocks of 30 and 50 respectively, noted roosting in the lines of trees on-site.
- 3.18 A colony of house sparrows was primarily recorded in association with the bounding properties adjacent south east of the Site. this territory appears to be occupied throughout the year, as breeding bird surveys recorded a colony within the same location. The site and its surrounding habitat is therefore considered to be a key part of this species foraging habitat year-round.
- 3.19 The remaining notable species; chaffinch, dunnock and wren are all woodland bird indicator species. These were recorded distributed across the Survey Area within boundary vegetation. Dunnock and wren were the most abundant and widespread, with lower numbers of chaffinch recorded during the survey effort,

4.0 Summary

- 4.1 The Survey results concluded that the Site has confirmed breeding of 14 species. A further 12 species are likely breeding, and six are 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 noted above.
- 4.2 In total 22 bird species were recorded within the Site boundary during the wintering bird surveys, including 15 species of conservation significance.



	Survey area		Perched bird flying away		Family of birds (adults and juveniles)
	Singing bird		Bird in flight		Juvenile bird
	Calling bird		Likely same bird moving between perches		Colony of birds
	Number of birds (more than one)		Bird aerial foraging		

Notable Species List

Red list

GR - Greenfinch
HS - House Sparrow
MT - Mistle thrush
SG - Starling

Amber list

WH - Common whitethroat
D. - Dunnock
RO - Rook
ST - Song thrush
TO - Tawny owl
WW - Willow warbler
WP - Woodpigeon
WR - Wren

Green list

CH - Chaffinch*
GW - Garden warbler*
HO - Hobby**

† Birds of Conservation Concern 5 (Stanbury et al., 2021)

* Species not currently Red or Amber-listed but have undergone significant local declines

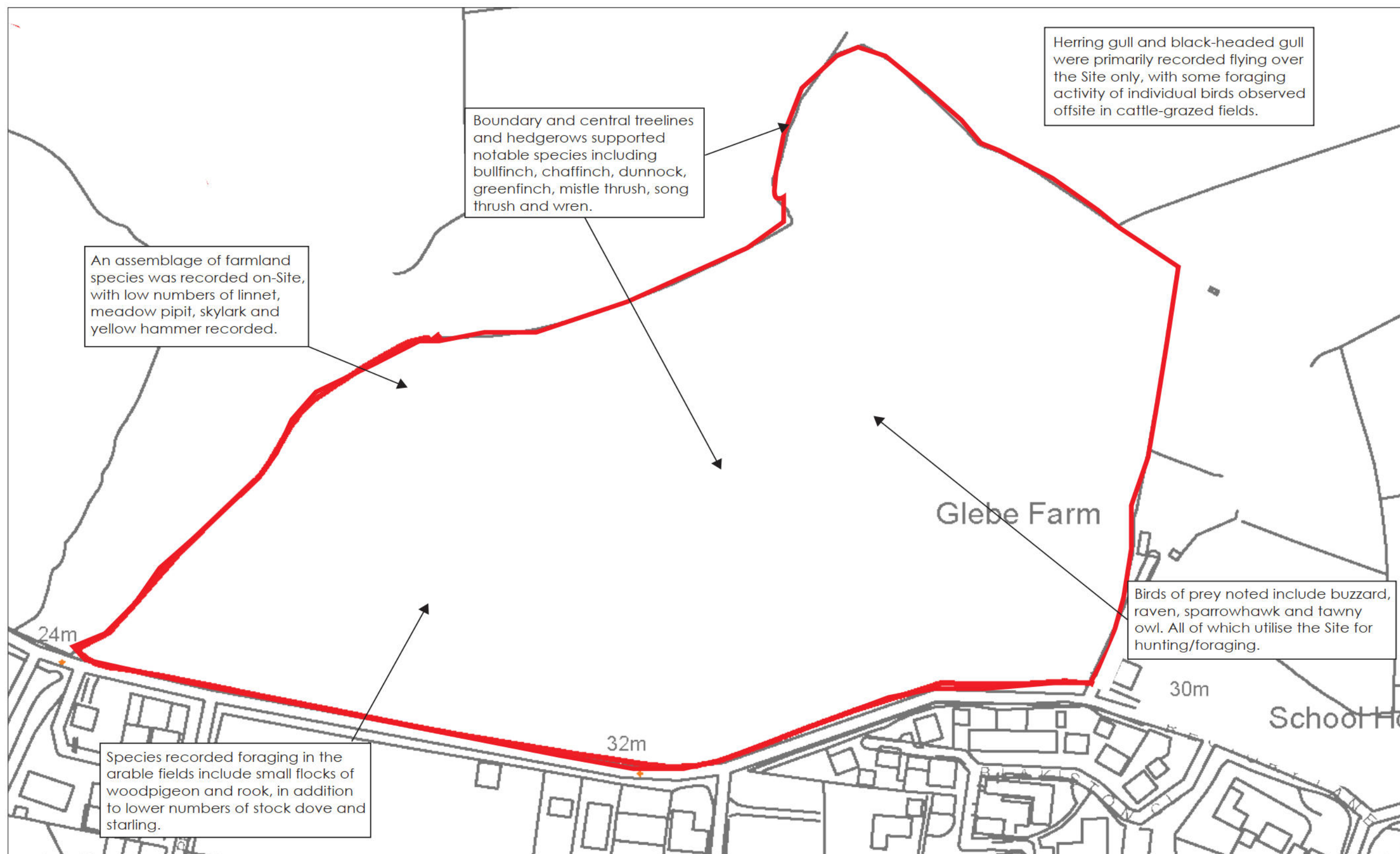
** Schedule 1 species (Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981)

NB - only notable bird species shown for clarity.

Common name	Latin name	Conservation Status	Breeding Status	Survey Date						Notes
				18/04/2024	30/05/2024	06/06/2024	06/12/2024	25/06/2024	18/07/2024	
Blackbird	Turdus merula	Green	Confirmed	x	x	x	x	x	x	Widespread in suitable woodland and hedgerow habitat surrounding field edges, confirmed breeding through presence of juveniles and family groups. Other behaviour includes singing, calling, alarm calling and two birds in territorial interactions
Blue tit	Cyanistes caeruleus	Green	Confirmed	x	x	x	x	x	x	Very abundant and widespread across Site boundaries, with three nests noted in rot holes, in addition to multiple family groups across the Site
Carion crow	Corvus corone corone	Green	Confirmed	x	x	x	x	x	x	One individual was seen flying westwards across the site, carrying nesting material. Largely restricted to woodland and hedgerow boundaries, occasionally recorded individually foraging in field habitats. Generally less numerous than other corvids (jackdawn and rook)
Chaffinch	Fringilla coelebs	Green	Probable	x	x	x	x	x		Recorded on all diurnal surveys, with multiple singing birds scattered throughout hedgerow, treeline and woodland boundaries
Chiffchaff	Phylloscopus collybita	Green	Probable	x	x	x	x	x	x	Widespread across boundary vegetation throughout all field parcels, singing and calling birds recorded and two birds carrying nesting material
Coal tit	Parus ater	Green	Possible				x			One recorded in the southern boundary at the east of the Site on one occasion only, suitable breeding habitat for this species is present across the Site
Common whitethroat	Curruca communis	Amber	Probable		x	x		x	x	One recorded singing in the south-western corner of the Site on one occasion and in the central treeline within the same field on another survey, suitable nesting habitat is present in scrub and hedgerows throughout the Site
Dunnock	Prunella modularis	Amber, S41	Confirmed	x	x	x	x	x		Recorded on all surveys, singing and calling, apart from the dusk survey, distributed throughout boundaries. Likely the same family group of four individuals recorded on two surveys
Garden warbler	Sylvia borin	Green	Probable			x		x		Recorded on two surveys in boundary vegetation at the west of the site, singing and in flight
Goldfinch	Carduelis carduelis	Green	Probable	x	x	x	x	x	x	Widespread across Site boundaries, and recorded on all surveys in low numbers, with individual singing birds and individuals/pairs in flight noted
Great tit	Parus major	Green	Confirmed	x	x	x	x	x	x	Singing/calling individuals and pairs noted frequently throughout the Site, confirmed breeder due to presence of family groups, a confirmed nest and individuals carrying nesting material
Great Spotted Woodpecker	Dendrocopus major	Green	Probable	x	x	x	x	x	x	Not recorded 'drumming' but recorded calling/alarm calling whilst in flight and from trees. Recorded on each survey in the treelines where mature trees are present, and also in the woodland just off-Site to the east
Greenfinch	Carduelis chloris	Red	Probable		x	x		x	x	Recorded on four surveys, calling and singing. Mostly in the west of the Site near the farm buildings.
Green Woodpecker	Pica pica	Green	Confirmed	x	x	x	x	x	x	Individuals noted in flight frequently on-site. A family group noted in the south-east of the Site.

Common name	Latin name	Conservation Status	Breeding Status	Survey Date						Notes
				18/04/2024	30/05/2024	06/06/2024	06/12/2024	25/06/2024	18/07/2024	
Grey Heron	Ardea cinerea	Green	Non-breeding	x		x		x		Recorded only as a flyover only on three surveys, no suitable breeding habitat on-Site, however may opportunistically forage on-Site as part of wider foraging resource
Hobby	Falco subbuteo	Green, Sch 1	Possible				x			One hobby flew across the Site twice, first north to south, and then from south to north (assumed same individual).
House Sparrow	Passer domesticus	Red, S41	Confirmed	x	x	x	x	x	x	Noted on all surveys, with individuals calling from boundary vegetation, and colonies/family groups recorded around the farm buildings and associated scrub, near the stables in the south of the Site, and in residential gardens bordering the eastern and southern boundaries
Jay	Garrulus glandarius	Green	Probable	x	x	x	x	x		Two birds frequently encountered calling and flying between vegetation in the west of the site
Jackdaw	Corvus monedula	Green	Probable	x	x	x	x	x	x	Recorded in particularly high numbers during the dusk survey, where two groups of 40 and one group of 30+ birds settled in trees in the south-east of the Site, before then flying off to roost in the woodland with the rooks just offSite to the east when it got dark. Widespread and abundant across Site boundaries, birds also noted carrying
Long tailed tit	Aegithalos caudatus	Green	Confirmed	x	x	x	x	x		Individuals and pairs scattered around treeline and hedgerow boundaries across the Site, in addition to a family group of six birds
Lesser whitethroat	Sylvia curruca	Green	Possible			x		x		Two recorded singing from opposite ends of the southern half of the Site on the third survey, on the fifth survey several birds were noted in the southern half of the Site, distributed throughout boundary vegetation and singing
Magpie	Pica pica	Green	Probable	x	x	x	x	x	x	Recorded in all surveys, widespread across Site boundaries, including pairs and calling birds
Mistle thrush	Turdus viscivorus	Red	Possible		x					One recorded singing in the hedgerow along the arable southern field's western boundary on one occasion only. Not recorded on subsequent surveys
Nuthatch	Sitta europaea	Green	Confirmed	x	x	x	x	x		Recorded on all diurnal surveys, quite widespread and abundant across particularly the southern half of the Site, with calling birds distributed amongst treelines and hedgerows. A family group also recorded along the most southern boundary
Robin	Erithacus rubecula	Green	Probable	x	x	x	x	x	x	Recorded on all surveys, widespread throughout vegetation, with behaviour including calling, singing, alarm calling birds and two individuals in an aggressive encounter
Rook	Corvus frugilegus	Amber	Confirmed	x	x	x	x	x	x	Distributed across boundary vegetation and occasionally foraging in low numbers in field habitats, rookery confirmed (60+ birds) within woodland just off-site to the east, with juveniles noted feeding with adults in fields.
Song thrush	Turdus philomelos	Amber, S41	Confirmed	x	x	x	x	x	x	Numerous territories distributed throughout Site boundaries and adjacent woodland, records including singing birds, defensiveness between two birds and juveniles
Starling	Sturnus vulgaris	Red	Confirmed	x	x	x	x	x	x	Juvenile noted flying south-east across the site carrying nesting material and alarm calling. Likely breeding in close proximity to the site
Tawny owl	Strix aluco	Amber	Possible							Recorded calling during a night-time bat walkover survey only, not recorded during the dusk breeding bird survey. Potential nesting and hunting habitat available for this species

Common name	Latin name	Conservation Status	Breeding Status	Survey Date						Notes
				18/04/2024	30/05/2024	06/06/2024	06/12/2024	25/06/2024	18/07/2024	
Treecreeper	Certhia familiaris	Green	Probable	x	x	x	x			Primarily recorded in the southern half of the Site. Records include a number of individuals calling and singing from boundaries and foraging on trees
Willow warbler	Phylloscopus trochilus	Amber	Possible	x						Recorded on the first survey only, with a singing bird present in the treeline intersecting on-site. Not recorded subsequently, however suitable nesting and foraging habitat is present for this species throughout the Site
Woodpigeon	Columba palumbus	Amber	Confirmed	x	x	x	x	x	x	Largely recorded as individuals, pairs and in small groups of up to 25 birds, flushed from boundary vegetation. Distributed across all boundaries, juvenile also recorded
Wren	Troglodytes troglodytes	Amber	Confirmed	x	x	x	x	x	x	Very abundant and widespread across the majority of Site boundaries and in adjacent woodland, singing and calling birds noted. A family group with juveniles recorded on the fifth survey in the south of the Site



 Survey area

Common name	Latin name	Conservation Status	Survey Dates				Notes
			02/02/2024	23/02/2024 DUSK	14/11/2024	19/12/2024	
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>	Green	x	x	x	x	At least one individual observed on each visit, with peak counts of two birds, often sharing air currents and circling the Site. Also observed in territorial disputes with crows and possible territorial behaviour
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>	Green	x	x	x	x	Thinly encountered from suitable areas of hedgerow and woodland across the site on all visits
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	Amber, S41	x	x	x	x	Widespread across most survey areas in boundary vegetation, individually singing and in small groups of up to three birds
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	Green		x	x	x	Thinly encountered from suitable areas of hedgerow across the site on both visits, no flocks noted, only individuals
Greenfinch	<i>Carduelis chloris</i>	Red	x	x	x	x	Recorded fairly abundantly in the southern half of the Site. Individuals, pairs and small flocks of up to eight birds recorded in suitable vegetated boundaries and near adjacent residential gardens
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	Red	x	x	x	x	Mostly only recorded as occasional flyovers but low flying birds recorded on the third survey indicate that this species may have been foraging in the arable fields on-Site
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	Red	x	x	x	x	Recorded across the Site on all surveys, with individuals scattered throughout boundaries and colony present near the school at the southern boundary
Jackdaw	<i>Corvus monedula</i>	Green	x	x	x	x	Distributed amongst boundary vegetation in relatively low numbers
Long tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	Green	x	x	x	x	Encountered frequently across the Site in suitable boundary vegetation, as individuals, pairs and small flocks
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Red			x		Recorded on the third survey, one individual was observed only not calling, . A third bird was observed perched in vegetation near on-site scrub
Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	Green	x	x	x		Recorded on three surveys in boundary vegetation, only one individual on each occasion
Pheasant	<i>Phasianus colchicus</i>	n/a			x	x	on individual recorded along the southern hedgerow of the Site
Raven	<i>Corvus corax</i>	Green			x		Four recorded on-Site on the third survey, three involved in a dispute with crows and rooks in the fields at the south-east of the Site, and another calling from boundary vegetation slightly further west
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Amber, Sch 1	x	x	x	x	Frequently encountered scattered throughout boundary vegetation in low numbers, no large groups encountered on any of the subsequent surveys
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	Green	x	x	x	x	Abundant and widespread, distributed throughout the Site boundary vegetation as individuals and also in small groups
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Amber		x	x	x	Recorded across the Site on the final three surveys, occasionally foraging in the arable field and in boundaries. Small groups of up to 30 present but no dusk roost noted where the breeding roost is. Also involved in dispute with ravens and crows

Common name	Latin name	Conservation Status	Survey Dates				Notes
			02/02/2024	23/02/2024 DUSK	14/11/2024	19/12/2024	
Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Amber	x			x	One recorded on the last survey flying low northwards over the southern arable field
Tawny owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>	Amber		x			Flushed from perch in the boundary bordering the north of the arable field on the dusk survey, was also heard to call.
Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	Green			x		One recorded calling from the northern boundary of the arable field on one survey only
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	Amber	x	x	x	x	Widely seen singly and in small flocks on both visits singly, or in small groups. Peak group sizes of 40 during diurnal visits but over 50 birds recorded roosting in the southern treelines on the dusk survey. Some foraging in arable field on occasion but largely flushed from Site boundaries
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Amber	x	x	x	x	Widely encountered singly and in small groups in suitable areas of hedgerow and woodland
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Red		x	x	x	Recorded on final three surveys, including birds heard but not seen just off-Site to the east and of two males seen perched and in flight south-west of the Site
TOTAL SPECIES: 22							

Appendix K

Reptile Survey Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared on behalf of Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land to provide information relating to reptile survey work undertaken at Land North of Rectory Lane, Ashington, West Sussex (hereafter 'the Site'). It is intended to inform an evidence-based Ecological Impact Assessment of proposed residential development at the Site.

2.0 Legislation

- 2.1 All native British reptile species are listed within Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are afforded protection against killing and injury under parts of sub-section 9(1) of the Act. In addition, all native British reptile species are adopted as Species of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity in England in respect of Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

3.0 Methods

- 3.1 A total of 44 reptile refugia, comprising rectangles of roofing felt measuring approximately 1.0 x 0.5m, were installed in areas of suitable habitat present across the Site on 10 April 2024 by Jeff Turton ACIEEM, Will Campbell, and Corie Lee. The location of these refugia is shown on the Reptile Survey Setup Plan (CSA/4705/130A)
- 3.2 Following an initial 2-week 'bedding-in' period for refugia, surveys were carried out on seven occasions during favourable weather conditions (e.g. intermittent or hazy sunshine, not too windy, sunny spells following wet or cloudy weather) between April and July 2024. The surveys were undertaken by Jeff Turton ACIEEM, Charlie Vaughan Jones ACIEEM, Will Campbell, Jude Potter, and Corie Lee. Each survey visit comprised a slow walk of the Site to visually and physically check refugia for the presence of reptiles. On each occasion a visual search was also carried out within areas of suitable habitat whilst walking between refugia locations.
- 3.3 The primary aim of the reptile survey was to establish the presence or likely absence of widespread reptile species within the Site, rather than to estimate abundance or population size. To this end, seven survey checks, an effort generally considered 'reasonable effort' in establishing the presence or likely absence of reptiles at a Site, were carried out.
- 3.4 Given the inherent problems in detecting reptiles, greater survey effort and/or identification or marking of individuals would be required to establish the actual or relative abundance of reptile populations. However, as reptiles are confirmed to be present and mitigation action is required, an approximation of population size is useful in guiding reptile mitigation strategies and has therefore been reported below.

- 3.5 There are several published methods for broadly 'categorising' reptile population sizes in the UK, with the most commonly employed by ecological consultants being HGBI (1998), Froglife (1999) and/or Natural England (2011 [now rescinded]). These three approaches vary in their application, assumptions and limitations, and therefore outputs have been reported for all three methods for comparison below.

Limitations

- 3.6 The three metrics referenced below, HGBI (1998), Froglife (1999) and/or Natural England (2011; now rescinded), rely on varying proxies to calculate/estimate reptile populations. The HGBI categories are based on adult population densities, as opposed to peak counts. Moreover, the categorisation by HGBI is intended to inform capture effort for translocation exercises and, therefore, is not directly applicable to providing a population size class estimate, though it is widely applied within the industry for this purpose.
- 3.7 The Froglife method is based on peak adult counts where surveys have used refugia densities of 10 per hectare. Surveys carried out by CSA used densities of c. 275 per ha of suitable reptile habitat to maximise site coverage and opportunities to confirm the presence or likely absence of reptiles. Therefore, to enable comparison with the Froglife categories, peak counts have been divided by a factor of 27.5 so that they are proportionate to the Froglife survey effort of 10 refugia per ha.
- 3.8 Finally, the Natural England methods provide population class size estimates based upon a refugia density of 100 per ha and, in addition, goes on to consider habitat suitability. As with the Froglife method, survey results have been scaled to be proportionate to a survey effort of 100 refugia per ha. The consideration of peak counts and habitat suitability may be the most ecologically sound, or holistic, of the three indices. However, in light of the guidance having been rescinded, this metric cannot be exclusively relied upon.
- 3.9 The third survey visit was undertaken during temperatures of up to 21°C, and furthermore very light / light rain was experienced during the fourth and seventh survey visit. However, reptile counts on these checks remain consistent with that of the other visits, with no significant impact to the overall conclusions of this report anticipated.

4.0 Results

- 4.1 The surveys confirmed the presence of slow worm *Anguis fragilis* and grass snake *Natrix helvetica* supported by the on-site habitats. Slow worm were recorded on all survey visits, with the exception of the first visit on which no reptiles were recorded. A single sub-adult grass snake was recorded on the final survey visit. No reptiles of any other species were recorded.

- 4.2 A peak count of four adult slow worm was recorded on the final two survey visits, with a peak count of five sub-adult slow worms recorded on the third visit. As above, only a single sub-adult grass snake was recorded across all refugia checks. All reptiles were recorded within the unmanaged field margins around the peripheries of the Site, with no reptiles recorded under the refugia deployed centrally.
- 4.3 It should be noted that although the survey area is c. 7.34ha, suitable reptile habitat, comprising the scrub and woodland edge and unmanaged field margins, account for c. 0.16ha within the Site. Within this area 44 artificial refugia were used to provide a survey refugia density of 275 refugia per ha.

Table 1b. Reptile population size category estimates

Method	Species	
	Slow worm	Grass snake
Peak adult count between April and July (2024)	4	0
HGBI (1998)	Low	Low
Froglife (1999)	Low	Low
Natural England (2011)*	Small	Small

- 4.4 It is acknowledged that the above metrics have their limitations. However, in consideration of this information, balanced against an ecological understanding of the Site and survey findings, it is estimated that the Site supports up to a 'low' population of slow worm and grass snake.



- Site boundary
- Refugia location and number



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Project	Land North of Rectory Lane, Ashington, West Sussex	Date	July 2026	Drawing No.	CSA/4705/130
Drawing Title	Reptile Survey Setup Plan	Scale	Refer to scale	Rev	B
Client	Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land	Drawn	MB	Checked	JT

Appendix L

GCN Survey Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by CSA Environmental on behalf of Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land and details the methods and results of great crested newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* survey work undertaken at Land North of Rectory Lane, Ashington, West Sussex (hereafter referred to as 'the Site'). It is intended to inform an evidence-based Ecological Impact Assessment of proposed residential development at the Site.

2.0 Legislation

- 2.1 Great crested newts are legally protected as a European Protected Species (EPS) under Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. These Regulations make it an offence to:
- Deliberately capture, injure, kill or capture a great crested newt
 - Deliberately disturb great crested newts, impairing their ability to survive, breed, reproduce or rear/nurture their young
 - Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place used by a great crested newt
- 2.2 Great crested newts are also fully protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), making it an offence to:
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a great crested newt while it is occupying a structure or place of shelter or protection
 - Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place of shelter or protection
- 2.3 Disturbance of great crested newts is covered by both the 2017 Regulations and the 1981 Act. Disturbance that impairs survival or successful reproduction would be covered by the Regulations, while less significant acts of disturbance may only be covered by the Act.
- 2.4 It is important to note that great crested newts and their habitats (such as breeding ponds) are protected throughout the year, regardless of whether or not newts are present at the time.
- 2.5 Great crested newts are also listed as a species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England, under Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. The S41 species list is used to guide decision-makers, including planning authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the NERC Act to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.

Licensing

- 2.6 Where development is proposed that would result in an offence under the Habitats and Species Regulations, a statutory derogation licence may be granted by Natural England to permit an act that would

otherwise be unlawful. To obtain an EPS licence for development, it must be demonstrated that the purpose of the act to be licensed is for:

- “preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment” (Regulation 55(2)(e))

2.7 In addition, Natural England will not grant an EPS licence unless they are satisfied that:

- “There is no satisfactory alternative” (Regulation 55(9)(a))
- “The action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range” (Regulation 55(9)(b))

2.8 Natural England's District Level Licensing (DLL) Scheme is an alternative approach to mitigation licensing for planning applications which could affect great crested newt. The aim of district level licensing is to increase the number of great crested newts by providing new or improved habitats in targeted areas.

2.9 There are 3 risk zones included in the licensing scheme:

- Red zones are those in which great crested newt have regional, national or international importance. Developers are unable to apply for a DLL if their site is in a red zone.
- Amber zones have great crested newt populations, habitat and dispersal routes. Developers can apply for a DLL if their site is in an amber zone.
- Green zones have fewer areas where great crested newt are present. Developers are able to apply for a DLL if their site is within a green zone.

2.10 NatureSpace's District Level Licensing Scheme is an alternative approach to mitigation licensing for planning applications which could affect great crested newt. The aim of district level licensing is to increase the number of great crested newts by providing new or improved habitats in targeted areas.

2.11 There are 5 risk zones included in the licensing scheme:

- Black zones are those in which great crested newt have national or regional importance. Developers are unable to apply for a district level license (DLL) if their site is in a black zone.
- Red zones contain highly suitable great crested newt habitat. Developers can apply for a DLL if their site is in a red zone.
- Amber zones contain suitable habitat, with great crested newt likely to be present. Developers can apply for a DLL if their site is in an amber zone.

- Green zones contain moderate suitability habitat where great crested newt may be present. Developers can apply for DLL if their site is in a green zone.
- White zones are those with low habitat suitability for great crested newt. Developers are able to apply for a DLL if their site is within a white zone

3.0 Methods

Desk Study

- 3.1 In accordance with Natural England's Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines (2001), a desktop search was undertaken in March 2024 to identify ponds within 500m of the Site which may have potential to support breeding great crested newts, using Ordnance Survey (OS) mapping, the MAGIC database, and aerial photography. It is generally considered that 500m is the typical maximum dispersal range of GCN, which most likely to use terrestrial habitat within 250m of breeding ponds. An update to the desktop search was undertaken in February 2026.

Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Assessment

- 3.2 Where ponds were situated within a 500m radius and connected to the Site by traversable terrestrial habitats, access permission was requested to undertake a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment, using the standard approach set out by Oldham *et al.* (2000).
- 3.3 HSI assessments were undertaken on 23 and 24 April 2024 by Jeff Turton ACIEEM (Natural England Class Licence WML-CL08 – Registration Number 2018-36205-CLS-CLS), Charlie Vaughan-Jones MCIEEM (Natural England Class Licence WML-CL08 – Registration Number 2022-10651-CL08-GCN), and William Campbell. These assessments were undertaken of Ponds P1-4, with access not permitted to the remaining ponds.

Environmental DNA (eDNA) Sampling

- 3.4 Environmental DNA (eDNA) sampling was used to determine the presence/likely absence of great crested newts from Ponds P1-2 and P4, with access not permitted to Pond P3. This method has been shown to be a highly effective in detecting the presence of great crested newts (Biggs *et al.*, 2014).
- 3.5 Water samples were collected from the above ponds on 12 June 2024 by Jeff Turton ACIEEM and William Campbell following the recommended procedure. Appropriate biosecurity measures were taken to avoid cross contamination of great crested newt eDNA. Subsequently the samples were sent to ADAS for DNA analysis.

4.0 Results

Desk Study

- 4.1 No ponds are present on-site, whilst eight were identified within a dispersible range of the Site (CSA/4705/115).

Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Assessment

- 4.2 Results of the HSI assessment are summarised in Table 1 below, provided in full at the end of this report.

Table 1. HSI Results of ponds surveyed.

Pond	HSI Score	Pond Suitability
P1	0.745	Good
P2	0.815	Excellent
P3	0.376	Poor
P4	0.520	Below Average

Environmental DNA (eDNA) Sampling

- 4.3 Ponds P1-2 and P4 returned a negative result for the presence of GCN.



- Site Boundary
- 250m core dispersal range
- 500m wider dispersal range
- Pond with negative eDNA result
- Pond not surveyed

Pond ref	HSI score	eDNA result
P1	Good	Negative
P2	Excellent	Negative
P3	Poor	-
P4	Below average	Negative
P5	-	-
P6	-	-
P7	-	-
P8	-	-



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Appendix M

Water Vole Report

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by CSA Environmental, on behalf of Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land and details the methods and results of two water vole *Arvicola amphibius* surveys undertaken at Land North of Rectory Lane, Ashington, West Sussex (hereafter referred to as 'the Site').
- 1.2 The Site occupies an area of c. 7.34ha and consists of an arable field bounded and bisected by lines of mature trees and hedgerows (see Habitats Plan in Appendix A).

2.0 Legislation

Water Vole

- 2.1 Water voles have full legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Countryside Rights of Way Act 2000. These regulations make it an offence to:
 - Intentionally kill, injure or take water voles
 - Possess or control live or dead water voles or derivatives
 - Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection
 - Intentionally or recklessly disturb water voles whilst occupying a structure or place used for that purpose
 - Sell water voles or offer or expose for sale or transport for sale
 - Publish or cause to be published any advertisement which conveys the buying or selling of water voles
- 2.2 Water voles are also a species of principal importance under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, and local authorities and other public bodies therefore have a legal duty to take their conservation into account.

3.0 Methods

- 3.1 The following survey methods, design, data analysis and interpretation have been undertaken with due consideration of the Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (Dean *et al.*, 2016).

Desk Study

- 3.2 An ecological desk study was undertaken in March 2020, with online information re-examined in April 2026, comprising a review of online resources and biological records centre data.
- 3.3 Sussex Biological Records Centre (SxBRC) was contacted in 2026 for records of protected/notable habitats and species. This information was requested for an area encompassing the Site 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. For full details see the Ecological Impact Assessment (CSA/4705/05).

Field Survey

- 3.4 All suitable watercourses and waterbodies within the Site boundary and waterbodies connected to the watercourses onsite, were surveyed for water vole, where accessible, on 26 April 2024 and 29 April 2026. The scope of the survey was informed by guidance from the Water Vole Mitigation Handbook that states survey effort must encompass all suitable habitat that will be affected directly or indirectly by proposals and that the impact on the species must be considered in the context of the wider habitat network (Dean *et al.*, 2016).
- 3.5 The 2024 survey was undertaken by Nancy Inman ACIEEM and Charlie Vaughan Jones ACIEEM, and the 2026 survey was undertaken by Jeff Turton MCIEEM and Jasmine Cacioppo.
- 3.6 Water vole field signs include droppings and latrines, feeding stations, footprints, runways, lawns, burrows, and nests. The optimal period for water vole surveys is late April to early October, with peak activity typically in May and August. In-line with guidance in the Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (Dean *et al.*, 2016) two survey visits for water vole are required account for variability in habitat suitability.

Limitations

- 3.7 During the 2026 water vole survey, small sections of Lancing Brook (R1), all of ditch D1 and most of ditch D2 were inaccessible due to being overgrown by bramble *Rubus fruticosus* and blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*. Ditch D1 consisted of a heavily shaded dry ditch and D2 consisted of a wet, very shallow ditch to the north-east of the Site that was completely shaded by hedgerow. Inaccessible sections were surveyed from the bank where possible.

4.0 Results

Desk Study

- 4.1 A single record of water vole *Arvicola amphibius* was identified within the search area, dating from 2014. The record is from Ashington Church of England School pond, located c. 400m south of the Site. This pond is connected to the Site directly via a tributary of Lancing Brook (R1).

Field Survey

- 4.2 No conclusive field signs for water vole were recorded during the survey; as per the Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (Dean *et al.*, 2016) “the presence of water vole droppings is the only field sign that can be used reliably on its own”. However, some potential water vole field signs were observed, but these were not definitively characteristic of the species.

- 4.3 Lancing Brook (R1) had steep banks and riparian vegetation suitable for water vole. Bank substrate was comprised of soft soil. The northern section of R1 had shallow water (c. 0.1m deep) with lots of suitable feeding ledges observed. To the north of the Site, water depth increased to c. 0.5m with plenty of foraging resources growing in the channel including water mint *Mentha aquatica* and yellow iris *Iris pseudacorus*. The section of R1 where water was bordering the western boundary of the Site was shallow (c. 0.4m) with some evidence of nibbled vegetation present at suitable feeding ledges. A few patches of nibbled vegetation included ivy *Hedera sp.* with near 45-degree angles characteristic of water vole feeding, however no conclusive feeding remains were noted.
- 4.4 Multiple droppings were identified on the banks of R1, however these were noted to be more consistent in colour and shape with brown rat *Rattus norvegicus* droppings rather than water vole. A patch of nibbled ivy overlain with squashed droppings was observed along a northern bank to the south-west of R1 (See Photograph 13 in Appendix B). Water voles may flatten their droppings with their back feet at latrine sites, however the colouration of these droppings was noted to be likely too dark for water vole and more consistent with brown rat.
- 4.5 A cluster of four and a cluster of two holes consistent with the size and shape of water vole burrows (approximately 10cm in diameter and circular) were recorded in the banks of R1 along the western boundary of the Site. All burrows were located on a vertical section of the bank face less than 1m above the water surface. Two burrows were near suitable feeding ledges with nibbled vegetation. One burrow had a well-used run leading to the entrance (See Photograph 11 in Appendix B). A further fist-sized hole was noted on the banks of R1 to the northern edge of the Site. These burrows are not definitively characteristic of water vole and certain features such as a run and acorn feeding remains associated with some of the burrows could be more indicative of brown rat or bank vole *Myodes glareolus* as opposed to water vole.
- 4.6 A “plop” noise characteristic of water vole entering the water was heard within an off-site field on approach from the northern bank of R1 by surveyors conducting a River Condition Assessment Survey on 25 October 2024, although this noise is not considered to be a conclusive field sign of water vole. Additionally, suspected water vole footprints were recorded on a bank face of R1 c. 0.1km north of the Site in a woodland parcel. However, these prints more closely resemble those of brown rat *Rattus norvegicus* rather than water vole.
- 4.7 During the 2026 survey, a vole was briefly spotted on the bank entering the vegetation, with a size and colouration consistent with bank vole *Myodes glareolus* rather than water vole.

- 4.8 Ditch D1 was dry at the time of both surveys and heavily shaded, it was therefore considered to be unsuitable water vole habitat.
- 4.9 Ditch D2 had steep banks of approximately c. 0.8m, with shallow water approximately c. 0.06m deep. The southern end of the ditch was found to be densely shaded with bank tops colonised by ruderal vegetation offering limited foraging resources for water vole. Further north, foraging opportunities improved with marginal vegetation including rushes *Juncus* sp. and in particular hemlock *Conium maculatum* and water dropwort *Oenanthe crocata*. A cluster of four fist-sized holes on the banks of the ditch were recorded during the 2024 survey, one hole on the south-west bank had a well-trodden run leading to the entrance. Another, on the north-east bank of the ditch, had a pile of acorns at the entrance. These burrows are not definitively characteristic of water vole and certain features such as a run and acorn feeding remains could be more indicative of rat or bank vole as opposed to water vole. During the 2026 survey, no burrows were noted within ditch D2, and the entire length was completely shaded.
- 4.10 Ditches D1 and D2 had to be surveyed from the bank due to bramble making them inaccessible. The shading caused by bramble will likely make these ditches unsuitable for water vole.
- 4.11 Some field signs (feeding remains, burrows) were not definitively characteristic of water vole and could be from bank vole or rat. As other field signs for bank vole and rat were recorded (droppings, prints) and a bank vole was spotted during the 2026 survey, it is likely that the feeding remains and droppings are from these two species, as opposed to water vole.
- 4.12 A Water Vole Survey Plan and photographs taken during the survey are included at the end of this report.

Table 1. Summary of possible water vole field signs.

Section reference	Water vole evidence	Water vole presence
R1	"Plop" noise heard on approach to bank. Possible water vole prints. Eight possible water vole burrows. Possible water vole feeding remains.	Possible
D2	Four possible water vole burrows. Bank vole or rat feeding remains.	Possible

5.0 Summary

- 5.1 There was no definitive evidence of water vole in any of the surveyed waterbodies. Four possible water vole burrows were identified in Ditch D2, however most of this waterbody was deemed to provide very limited suitable habitat for water vole due to shading. Lancing Brook (R1) was

found to provide some suitable habitat for water vole. Eight holes recorded along both sides of the banks were consistent with the size and shape of water vole burrows, and some possible water vole feeding remains were also identified. Other possible water vole evidence included potential burrows, footprints, possible feeding remains and a characteristic “plop” noise. However no definitive water vole field signs, including droppings, were recorded and it is likely that some of the burrows relate to other small mammals given the evidence of brown rat and bank vole across all surveyed waterbodies.

- 5.2 As suitable water vole habitat is present on Site, with good connectivity to the wider landscape, their presence cannot be ruled out. They are therefore considered possibly present within all suitable waterbodies surveyed.



Photograph 1. Possible water vole footprints along the bank of R1.



Photograph 2. Possible water vole footprints along the bank of R1.



Photograph 3. Possible water vole burrow on the bank of D2.



Photograph 4. Possible water vole burrow on the bank of D2.



Photograph 5. Possible water vole burrow on the bank of D2.



Photograph 6. Possible water vole burrow on the bank of D2.



Photograph 7. Possible water vole burrow on the bank of R1.



Photograph 8. Possible water vole burrow on the bank of R1.



Photograph 9. Possible water vole burrow on the bank of R1.



Photograph 10. Possible water vole burrow on the bank of R1.



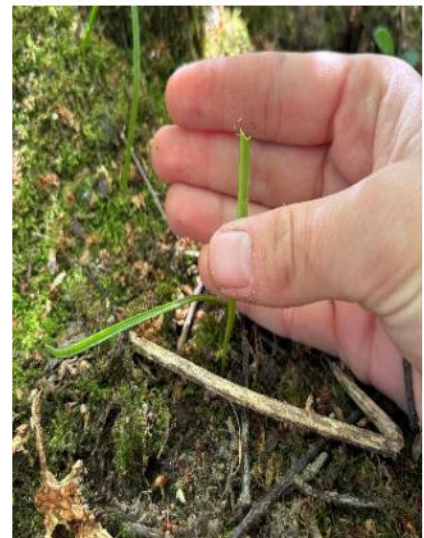
Photograph 11. Possible water vole burrow on the bank of R1.



Photograph 12. Possible water vole burrow on the bank of R1.



Photograph 13. Possible water vole droppings and feeding remains on the bank of R1.



Photograph 14. Possible water vole feeding remains on the bank of R1.



- Site Boundary
- Watercourse Reference
- Ditch (r1e)
- Stream (r2b)
- Possible water vole burrow
- Cluster of possible water vole burrows
- Possible water vole feeding remains
- Possible water vole plop
- Possible water vole prints
- Inaccessible during survey

N.B ditch (D1) was dry during both water vole surveys.

Other linear habitats such as treelines and hedgerows have been removed from this plan for clarity.



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Project	Land North of Rectory Lane, Ashington, West Sussex	Date	July 2026	Drawing No.	CSA/4705/120
Drawing Title	Water Vole Survey Plan	Scale	Refer to scale	Rev	A
Client	Taylor Wimpey Strategic Land	Drawn	JC	Checked	JT



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