



West Durrington Community Building.

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL (PEA)

**Taylor
Wimpey**



Vistry Group

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QUALITY ASSURANCE

This report has been prepared in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing (2nd Edition, December 2017).

The facts stated in this report are true to the best of our knowledge and belief, and any opinions expressed are held genuinely and in accordance with the accepted standards of the profession. ACD Environmental Ltd is a CIEEM Registered Practice.

Client:	Vistry, Taylor Wimpey, Persimmon.
Site/job:	West Durrington Community Building
Author:	Daisy Irons-Small
Technical review:	John Constable

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1 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Purpose of report	To assess the potential ecological impacts of a proposed development Land to the North of Celandine Road, West Durrington, hereafter referred to as 'the Application Site', clearly identifying any potential effects on important ecological features (including designated sites or protected species), making design recommendations, and detailing any mitigation and/or compensation measures that would be required and how these could be secured. The report also details the baseline value of the Application Site for the purposes of the Biodiversity Metric.
Description of proposed development	Full planning permission is being sought for the construction of a single community building with associated parking and landscaping.
Brief description of the Site	The Application Site is a parcel of land comprising bare ground and modified grassland around the perimeter. The Application Site is situated within a new development that is residential and associated landscaping. Extending on from the west of New West Durrington Development is the South Downs National Park, comprising of grass fields and woodland.
Designated nature conservation sites	The Application Site is situated within the Impact Risk Zones of Cissbury Ring SSSI and Chanctonbury Hill SSSI. Consultation with Natural England is not considered necessary given the nature and scale of the proposed development. The South Downs National Park is located 0.4km to the northwest of the Application Site, there is also several Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI) within 2km of the Application Site. Impacts are considered unlikely given the scale of the proposed development.
Key habitats	The two habitats present on site are bare ground and modified grassland.
Key species	The Application Site has the potential to support reptiles, commuting bats, commuting badgers, amphibians and great crested newts.
Potential impacts & mitigation/compensation measures	No further surveys will be required to determine specific mitigation requirements. A sensitive lighting scheme will be required to avoid impacts on commuting and foraging bats. Best practice guidelines will be followed during the development to ensure there is no harm to badgers or other small mammals using the Application Site for foraging/commuting.
Enhancements	The baseline habitat units are 0.42. The post development units are 0.59 and 0.09 hedgerow units. with a 39.03% total net change. Habitat creation and enhancement measures and long-term management and monitoring will be outlined in a LEMP report. Specific enhancements for protected species should include incorporating bat and bird boxes into the structure of the new building, incorporating bat and bird boxes within the Application Site.

Conclusions	Provided the measures outlined within this report are followed, the proposals will be in accordance with the Worthing Borough Council and the NPPF.
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2 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1. This report provides an assessment of the ecological effects of the proposed development of an area of land at West Durrington, Worthing (see **Image 1**). The principal author of this report is Daisy Irons-Small. The client is Vistry, Taylor Wimpey and Persimmon.



Image 1: Application Site location and approximate site boundary denoted in red. Map data: Qgis (2026).

Background

The Application Site (OS Grid Reference: TQ 11042 05097) comprises of a parcel of land made up of bare ground with modified grassland around the edges. The site is located to the north of Celandine Road, from which two access points have been implemented. It is situated within an established urban area, with a Multi-Use Games Area, community park and allotments to the north, vacant fields to the east and west, and residential development with associated landscaping to the south.

Competence

- 2.2. This report has been written by Daisy Irons-Small, an Assistant Ecologist at ACD Environmental Ltd, and a Qualifying Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) additionally holding a Natural England Class Level 1

licence for Great Crested Newts *Triturus cristatus*. Daisy has undertaken various surveys, including habitat and Phase 2 surveys for protected species, including bats, badgers, great crested newts and dormice, and is working towards obtaining Natural England Class Licences for bats and hazel dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius*.

- 2.3. A Technical Review of this report has been undertaken in line with ACD Environmental Ltd's Quality Assurance procedures. The Technical Review was undertaken by John Constable who is the Managing Director at ACD Environmental Ltd.

Purpose of the report.

- 2.4. The purpose of this Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) is as follows:

- To identify and describe all potentially significant ecological effects associated with the proposed development.
- To set out the mitigation measures required to ensure compliance with nature conservation legislation and relevant planning policy, and to address any potentially significant ecological effects.
- To identify how mitigation measures will/could be secured.
- To identify any significant residual ecological effects and set out any compensation measures proposed to address these.
- To identify appropriate enhancement measures in order to achieve Biodiversity Net Gain.
- To set out the requirements for post-construction monitoring.

3 PLANNING POLICY AND LEGISLATION

Legislation

3.1. The following pieces of legislation are of specific relevance to this assessment:

- The Environment Act 2021. This piece of legislation is of relevance because all planning permissions granted in England are mandated to deliver at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain as of 12th February 2024.
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019¹. This piece of legislation is of relevance because the Application Site has potential to support commuting bats.
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981² (as amended, including by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000).
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006³. Section 41 includes lists of habitats and species recognised as of 'principal importance' for the conservation of biodiversity. Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 requires all public bodies to have regard for biodiversity conservation when carrying out their function. This is commonly referred to as the 'biodiversity duty'.

3.2. The following pieces of legislation have been considered, but are not considered to be of specific relevance in this case:

- Water Framework Directive 2000 (there are no water features onsite).

Environment Act 2021

3.3. In accordance with the Environment Act 2021⁴, mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) came into effect from 12th February 2024 for all developments in the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, unless exempt. It also applies to small sites as of 2nd April 2024.

3.4. Schedule 7A of the Act makes provision for grants of planning permission in England to be

¹ Great Britain. *The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019* No.579 [online]. Available from: <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2019/9780111179512/contents>

² Great Britain. *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* [online]. Available from: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69/contents>

³ Great Britain. *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006* [online]. Available from: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>

⁴ <https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2021/30/contents/enacted>

subject to a condition, to secure that the 'biodiversity gain objective' is met.

- 3.5. The 'biodiversity gain objective' is met in relation to development for which planning permission is granted if the biodiversity value attributable to the development exceeds the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat by at least the relevant percentage.
- 3.6. The biodiversity value attributable to the development is the total of:
- a) the post-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat.
 - b) the biodiversity value, in relation to the development, of any registered offsite biodiversity gain allocated to the development.
 - c) the biodiversity value of any biodiversity credits purchased for the development.
- 3.7. The relevant percentage is 10%, but the Secretary of State may by regulations amend this paragraph so as to change the relevant percentage.
- 3.8. The biodiversity value of any habitat or habitat enhancement are to its value as calculated in accordance with the 'Biodiversity Metric'.
- 3.9. Every planning permission granted for the development of land in England shall be deemed to have been granted subject to the condition in sub-paragraph (2), which states that the development may not be begun unless:
- a) a biodiversity gain plan has been submitted to the planning authority.
 - b) the planning authority has approved the plan.
- 3.10. Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) will have to approve a biodiversity net gain plan for development work before it can start.

Planning policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2026⁵

- 3.11. Paragraphs N1-N4 and N6 of the NPPF relate to 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment'.
- 3.12. Paragraph N1 of the NPPF states the following:

⁵ HM Government. *National Planning Policy Framework August 2026*. Available at:
https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/media/6a8334c03bd75b81e2329ac4/National_Planning_Policy_Framework.pdf

1. *“Development plans should safeguard and enhance the natural environment, and reflect the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services, by using Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Protected Landscape Management Plans, River Basin Management Plans, National Forest Strategies, Community Forest Plans and other relevant evidence at the most appropriate level to:*
 - a. *Set out the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites and areas of importance for their landscape, geodiversity or biodiversity value in the plan area, and identify other features which require particular consideration in managing development due to their environmental value such as chalk streams;*
 - b. *Identify opportunities for the conservation, enhancement and recovery of landscapes, sensitive waterbodies, habitats and priority or threatened species, including through habitat restoration, the use of nature-based solutions, and the creation and strengthening of ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures (including opportunities which exist at a catchment or landscape scale across plan boundaries);*
 - c. *Steer the location of development, including through site allocations, in ways which utilise land of least environmental value where that would be consistent with other policies in this Framework. This should include limiting the scale and extent of development within Protected Landscapes, avoiding the use of higher quality agricultural land where land of poorer quality is available and avoiding and minimising harm to designated sites of importance for nature. Areas which could become of particular importance for nature identified in Local Nature Recovery Strategies should be taken into account as opportunities to integrate development with environmental restoration, but should not necessarily preclude the allocation of land for development; and*
 - d. *Set out standards for green infrastructure provision, in a way which complements and/or incorporates those for recreational land (as set out in policy HC1). These should draw upon Natural England’s Green Infrastructure Standards for England, tailored as necessary to local circumstances.*
2. *Development plans should only set local standards for biodiversity net gain which are in excess of the statutory net gain requirement where this is for specific site allocations, and is fully justified and deliverable. Local standards should not extend to categories of development which are exempt from statutory biodiversity net gain.”*

3.13. Paragraph N2 of the NPPF states the following:

1. *“To contribute positively to the natural environment, and support nature’s recovery,*

development proposals should:

- a. Consider the environmental qualities of land proposed for development, including habitats, landscape character and the natural beauty of the countryside, and identify opportunities for those qualities to be conserved or enhanced (including through requirements for biodiversity net gain where these apply);*
 - b. Take into account the quality of agricultural land (including that classified as best and most versatile agricultural land, and its grade), and if significant development of agricultural land is necessary, use areas of poorer quality land where possible;*
 - c. Take suitable opportunities to connect to and strengthen ecological networks that extend beyond the site, drawing on the measures proposed by Local Nature Recovery Strategies, National Forest Strategies and Community Forest Plans, where present, and other relevant assessments;*
 - d. Conserve and enhance existing natural features of visual, historic or nature conservation value (such as established trees and hedgerows) where possible; and use appropriate landscaping to help create a well-designed place and integrate the development into its surroundings;*
 - e. Use green infrastructure provided as part of the scheme and nature-based solutions to secure multiple benefits: such as for biodiversity; surface water and pollution management (including maintaining flow rates and water quality); climate change mitigation and adaptation, and recreation;*
 - f. Minimise any adverse impacts on biodiversity and include features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs. Development proposals should incorporate integrated nest boxes (commonly known as swift bricks) into their construction unless there are compelling technical reasons which prevent their use, or would make them ineffective; and*
 - g. Ensure that green infrastructure and other features to support nature are located and designed to minimise risk of future failure, and that appropriate measures are in place for any necessary long-term management.*
- 2. 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 the development should be refused.*

3. *Development proposals may incorporate biodiversity enhancements which exceed the statutory objective for biodiversity net gain, but this should only be a requirement where it is set out in up-to-date development plan policies for specific site allocations. Decisionmakers should not give weight to other development plan policies which require biodiversity gains which go beyond the statutory framework, including where a policy requires gains for development proposals which are exempt."*

3.14. Paragraph N3 of the NPPF states the following:

1. *"In recognition of the benefits which trees can provide for biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the character and quality of the built environment, development proposals should:*
 - a. *Make new streets tree-lined (unless there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate in specific streets), and incorporate trees in other suitable locations, such as in parks and through the provision of community orchards;*
 - b. *Ensure that the selection of species and their placement is compatible with highways and other infrastructure requirements and the needs of different users of public spaces; and will be effective in helping to adapt to the effects of climate change and delivering other environmental benefits. Suitable arboricultural advice should be sought, and proposals discussed with highways and trees officers where necessary, so that the right trees are planted in the right places; and*
 - c. *Make provision for the long-term maintenance of both existing and newly-planted trees which form part of the development."*

3.15. Paragraph N4 of the NPPF states the following:

1. *"Development proposals within Protected Landscapes should be limited in scale and extent and sensitively located and designed to avoid harm to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the Protected Landscape. Substantial weight should be placed on the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of these areas, and to conserving and enhancing wildlife and cultural heritage in National Parks and the Broads.*
2. *Proposals for major development within Protected Landscapes should be refused other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public interest. To inform a decision about whether exceptional circumstances exist, consideration of such proposals should include an assessment of:*

- a. *The need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations such as maintaining a sufficient supply of minerals, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;*
 - b. *The cost of, and scope for, developing outside the Protected Landscape, or meeting the need for the development in some other way; and*
 - c. *Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which it could be moderated.*
3. *Where, exceptionally, proposals for major development are approved within Protected Landscapes, steps should be taken to mitigate potential adverse impacts on their special qualities and statutory purposes⁶⁰, including on features such as tranquillity and dark skies.*
4. *Development proposals within the setting of Protected Landscapes should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the Protected Landscape.”*

3.16. Paragraph N6 of the NPPF states the following:

1. *To support the conservation of important habitats, species and sites of geodiversity value, development proposals affecting:*
 - a. *A site of international importance, which for the purpose of this policy is a habitats site, should be refused unless:*
 - i. *An appropriate assessment has concluded that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the site (either individually or in combination with other developments), or the proposal can satisfy the derogation tests⁶¹; and/or*
 - ii. *The impact of development on the relevant protected features of the protected site is being addressed through an Environmental Delivery Plan which has been made and the developer has committed to paying the nature restoration levy.*
 - b. *A site of national importance, which for the purpose of this policy is one designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, should only be supported if:*
 - i. *There would be no adverse effect (either individually or in combination with other developments) on the site’s features of special scientific interest; or*
 - ii. *The benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both the likely impact on the features of special scientific interest, and any broader impact*

on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest; or

- iii. The impact of development on the relevant protected feature of the protected site is being addressed through an Environmental Delivery Plan which has been made and the developer has committed to paying the nature restoration levy.*
- c. A site of local importance, which for the purpose of this policy is one designated as a Local Nature Reserve or identified as a local wildlife site, local geological site or equivalent in the development plan, should only be supported if:*
 - i. There would not be a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the site; or*
 - ii. The benefits of development in the location proposed clearly outweigh the likely impact on the features which make the site valuable for nature conservation.*
- 2. Irrespective of a site's status in nature conservation terms, development proposals which would entail 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.*
- 3. This policy applies to development on land inside or outside a designated area, if it would have an impact on the identified biodiversity or geodiversity value of the area concerned."*

Worthing Borough Council⁶

3.17. Policy DM18 pertaining to Biodiversity states;

"a) Planning applications should be supported by relevant environmental information, which is informed by appropriate up-to-date ecological information, prior to determination.

b) All development should ensure the protection, conservation, and enhancement of biodiversity. If significant harm cannot be avoided (by locating development on an alternative site with less harmful impacts or through design), then such harm should be adequately mitigated. Where it cannot be adequately mitigated then as a last resort such harm must be compensated for. Where it cannot be compensated for, then planning permission should be refused. This process is known as the mitigation hierarchy.

c) Developments which would adversely affect a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (individually or cumulatively) will not normally be permitted. Exceptions will only be made where the benefits of the development on the particular site clearly outweigh both the impacts that it

⁶ Worthing Borough Council (2023). *Worthing Borough Council Local Plan 2020 - 2036*. Adopted 28th March 2023.

is likely to have on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest and any broader impacts. Where an exception is considered the mitigation hierarchy will apply.

d) Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) will be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

Proposals for development in, or likely to have an adverse effect (directly or indirectly) on a Local Wildlife Site, wildlife corridors, stepping stones or Local Geological Site will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated the benefits of the proposal outweigh the need to safeguard the nature conservation value of the site/feature. Where an exception is considered the mitigation hierarchy will apply.

f) Development that is likely to have an adverse effect on notable and priority habitat or species will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated the benefits of the proposal outweigh the need to safeguard the nature conservation value of the site/feature. Where an exception is considered the mitigation hierarchy will apply.

g) Where relevant, new development adjacent to the coast will have to demonstrate how it is reducing the impacts of coastal squeeze.

h) New developments (excluding change of use and householder) should provide a minimum of 10% net gain for biodiversity - where possible this should be onsite. Where it is required/necessary to deliver biodiversity net gain offsite this should be part of a strategic ecological network having regard to Green Infrastructure and Local Nature Recovery strategies. Where it is achievable, a 20%+ onsite net gain is encouraged and is required for development on previously developed sites. Major developments will be expected to demonstrate this at the planning application stage using biodiversity metrics. This should be accompanied by a long-term management plan.

i) Where appropriate, the Council will use planning conditions or obligations to provide appropriate enhancement and site management measures, and where impacts are unavoidable, mitigation or compensatory measures.”

3.18. DM22 - POLLUTION states the following:

“a) Development should not contribute to, be put at risk from, or be adversely affected by unacceptable levels of soil, air, water, artificial light or noise pollution or land instability. Where possible development should help to improve local environmental conditions.

- b) New development in Worthing will be located in areas most suitable to the use of that development to avoid unacceptable risks from all sources of pollution.*
- c) Mitigation measures will need to be implemented for developments that could increase levels of pollution, taking into account any cumulative impact. Mitigation should avoid, minimise and offset the impact of development and take opportunities to improve local environmental conditions. Where there are significant levels of increased pollution that cannot be mitigated development will be refused.*
- d) Where appropriate, air quality and/or noise assessments and lighting assessments will be required to support planning applications. These should be undertaken in accordance with the most up to date guidance and have regard to any relevant action plans. Any new development in the Worthing Air Quality Management Area must be consistent with the Air Quality Action Plan. Where any identified harm to any of these factors cannot be adequately mitigated, planning permission will be refused.*
- e) Where there is potential risk of contaminated land, proportionate investigations and assessments will be required in relation to relevant development proposals. These should assess the nature and extent of contamination and the potential risks to human health, adjacent land uses and the local environment. Where identified risks of contamination cannot be adequately mitigated, planning permission will be refused.”*

4 METHODOLOGY

Scope of assessment

- 4.1. This report focuses on 'important ecological features', i.e. those which are considered to be of relevance to the decision-making process and could be affected by the proposed development. Important ecological features include protected species, habitats/species of 'principal importance' for biodiversity conservation (i.e. Section 41 habitats/species⁷), birds of conservation concern⁸, invasive non-native plant species⁹, and habitats and species identified as priorities for conservation in the local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).

Zone of influence

- 4.2. The 'zone of influence' (ZOI) is the area over which important ecological features (onsite or offsite) may be affected as a result of the proposed development and associated activities. The ZOI can vary for different ecological features, depending on their sensitivity to environmental change.
- 4.3. The ZOI for statutory designated sites has been informed by Natural England's Sites of Special Scientific Interest Impact Risk Zones¹⁰ (SSSI IRZs). IRZs define zones around each SSSI which reflect the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified and indicate the types of development proposal which could potentially have adverse impacts. This has been determined as part of the desk study, as discussed below.

Desk Study

- 4.4. The following information was requested from Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SBRC) for a search area of 2km around the Application Site boundary.
- Legally protected and notable species records;
 - Statutory designated sites; and

⁷ Section 41 (41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, which came into force on 1st October 2006, requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principle importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

⁸ Red list species are those that are globally threatened, whose population or range has declined rapidly in recent years (i.e. by more than 50% in 25 years), or which have declined historically and not recovered. Amber list species are those whose population or range has declined moderately in recent years (by more than 25% but less than 50% in 25 years), those whose population has declined historically but recovered recently, rare species (<300 breeding pairs or <900 wintering individuals), those with internationally important populations in the UK, those with localised populations, and those with an unfavourable conservation status in Europe. Species that meet none of these criteria are Green-listed.

⁹ Invasive non-native plants (Section 14) on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

¹⁰ Natural England (June 2019). Natural England's Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (For use by Local Planning Authorities to assess planning applications for likely impacts on SSSIs/SACs/SPAs & Ramsar sites and determine when to consult Natural England).

- Non-statutory designated sites.

- 4.5. The data search was requested on the 14th of May 2026 and received on 27th of May 2026.
- 4.6. The MAGIC website¹¹ was used to carry out a 5km data search for SSSIs, Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) with an IRZ that falls within the Application Site, in May 2026.

Field surveys

- 4.7. A summary of ecological field surveys is provided in **Table 1**. Descriptions of full survey methods are provided in **Appendix 3**.

Table 1: Field surveys

Survey	Surveyor/s	Survey date/s	Study Area	Relevant guidelines
UK Hab Survey	Jessica Haskell Daisy Irons-Small	12.05.2026	Red line boundary	UKHab Ltd (2023) ¹²

Limitations

- 4.8. There were no limitations to the survey.

Assessment methodology

- 4.9. The habitats and species evaluations and likely effects are made with reference to the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment¹³.
- 4.10. The importance of ecological features has been assessed to determine whether protected species/habitats, and/or species/habitats of conservation concern are present in the Application Site or its ZOI, by comparing their status at the international/ national/ county/

¹¹ Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside [online]. Available at: <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

¹² UKHab Ltd (2023). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (at <http://www.ukhab.org>)

¹³ CIEEM (2019). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland. Terrestrial, Freshwater and Coastal, Version 1.1. updated September 2019. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

regional/ local scale, through the use of available contextual information, to establish the importance of those features in a geographical context.

- 4.11. The overall effect of the proposed development on a given feature has been predicted, considering the baseline data collected through desk study and field survey, and the various impacts expected to occur. An assessment has then been made as to whether the effect on each important ecological feature is likely to be significant or not.
- 4.12. Significance is the weight that should be attached to effects when decisions are made. For the purpose of the EcIA, a likely significant effect is an effect that either supports or undermines biodiversity conservation objectives for important ecological features (which could be species populations/groups of species, habitats, or a designated site), or for biodiversity in general. Effects have been considered significant at a wide range of scales, from national to local.
- 4.13. A sequential process has been adopted to avoid/mitigate, and if required, compensate for significant negative ecological effects. This is referred to as the 'Mitigation Hierarchy'. Avoidance includes measures to change the design of the proposed development to avoid an impact occurring. Mitigation includes measures to avoid or reduce the negative impacts of the proposed development. Compensation addresses significant negative residual effects (those likely to occur after avoidance and mitigation have been considered). It is this objective of compensation, and not its location, that distinguishes compensation from 'mitigation'.
- 4.14. In the EcIA, it is only essential to assess and report significant residual effects that remain after mitigation measures have been taken into account. However, the potential significant effects without mitigation as well as the residual significant effects following mitigation have been presented where the mitigation proposed is experimental, unproven or controversial and/or to demonstrate the importance of securing the measures proposed through planning conditions or obligations.

Valuation

- 4.15. The value of important ecological features (sites, habitats and species) is assigned according to their scale of importance using the following terms:
- International importance – ecological features of international importance such as SPAs and SACs, and/or sites that support internationally-important populations of species.
 - National importance – ecological features of national importance such as

SSSIs, features which meet the criteria for designation as a SSSI, and/or sites that support nationally-important populations of certain species.

- Regional importance – ecological features of regional importance, such as a species population that is of importance at a scale greater than the County, but does not meet the criteria for National Importance
- County importance – ecological features of county-scale importance, including features that have been designated as local wildlife sites, or meet the criteria for designation as a local wildlife site, and/or county-important populations of species
- Local importance – ecological features of local importance, including habitats or species populations listed as being of nature conservation importance (e.g. S41, local BAP, or listed in local planning policy) which are not considered to be of County importance by virtue of the quality, size/number, rarity, the extent to which they are threatened throughout their range, or to their rate of decline.

Precautionary principle

- 4.16. The evaluation of significant effects is based on the results of the ecological surveys carried out in the Application Site and other available evidence. In cases of reasonable doubt, where it is not possible to robustly justify a conclusion of no significant effect, a significant effect is assumed. Where uncertainty exists, it has been duly acknowledged.

5 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

Context

- 5.1. The Application Site comprises of a parcel of land in Durrington Worthing, West Sussex, beyond the A27, comprising of bare ground and modified grassland, and building materials, there is also a swale to the west of the site which is not within the red line boundary. The Application Site is isolated and bordered by urban development, largely residential in nature; the wider landscape see's arable fields and woodland to the northwest.

Designated Sites

- 5.2. The desk study identified several statutory designated sites with a zone of influence (ZOI) which includes the Application Site, the nearest being Cissbury Ring SSSI which is located 3.67km Northeast of the Application Site. All SSSIs, SACs and SPAs with IRZs within 5km of the boundary of Application Site are shown in **Table 2**.

Table 2: Statutory designated sites with an IRZ within the Application Site

Name of statutory designated sites	Approximate distance and direction from Application Site	Reason for designation	Scale of importance
Cissbury Ring SSSI	3.67km Northeast	Ancient Hillfort Site situated on chalk, with areas of unimproved chalk grassland. Seven types of Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) and over 1,070 Sussex BAP priority species have been recorded. Assemblages of breeding birds, Population of nationally scarce butterfly species - Adonis Blue <i>Polyommatus bellargus</i> . This is located within the South Downs National Park, see below.	National

South Downs National Park	415m Northwest	Designated to protect 1,600km ² of iconic chalk hills, ancient woodland and heathlands. The National Park is also noted for rare chalk grasslands.	International
Chanctonbury Hill SSSI	7.3km Northeast	Falling into the IRZ, The Site Lies on steep chalk escarpment, dominated by nationally uncommon woodland type, as well as chalk grassland. There is also a large assemblage of breeding birds, including downland species such as corn bunting and meadow pipit.	International

- 5.3. The Application Site lies within the Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) of the Cissbury Ring SSSI and the Chanctonbury Hill SSSI.
- 5.4. The proposed works do not meet the specified criteria for consultation with Natural England (infrastructure; minerals, oil and gas; air pollution; combustion; discharge. Therefore, it is not considered likely that the proposed development will impact any of the surrounding statutory designated sites due to the scale. Consequently, Natural England does not need to be consulted specifically on this matter.
- 5.5. Local (non-statutory) Wildlife Sites within 2km of the Application Site are shown in **Table 3**.

Table 3: LWS within 2km of the Application Site

Name of LWS & SNCI	Approximate distance and direction from the Application Site (km)	Nature Conservation Interest	Scale of importance
Ar08/W09 - Clapham Wood	0.7km northeast	A mix of ancient and semi-natural woodland and chalk downland.	County
Ar16/W02 - Highdown Hill & the Miller's Tomb	1.6km southeast	Rare chalk grassland flora including pyramidal orchids <i>Anacamptis pyramidalis</i> , notable invertebrates and rare birds.	County
W01 - The Gallops & No Man's Land (SNCI)	1.1km north	Unimproved and semi-improved chalk grassland, supporting an assemblage of notable plant species.	County
W03 - The Sanctuary, High Salvington	1.4 south	A chalk grassland, mature scrubland and semi-natural woodland.	County (regionally geological site of importance)
W04 - Titnore & Goring Woods Complex	130m south	One of only two large ancient woodland tracts on the Sussex coast, featuring protected trees, lowland calcareous grassland, known to support bats, hazel dormice <i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i> and great crested newts.	County
W05 - Ham Farm Wood	0.4km west	The Ham Farm site is one of two proposed site allocations in the Proposed Submission Draft JMLP. Once adopted, site allocations in the JMLP will identify sites for specific mineral uses.	County
W06 - Offington Cemetery	0.7km southeast	Undeveloped margins and mature trees and cemetery.	County
TQ10/62 - Cote Bottom, High Salvington	0.8km north	Bird sanctuary featuring a mosaic of habitats including chalk grasslands. Species supported	County

Name of LWS & SNCI	Approximate distance and direction from the Application Site (km)	Nature Conservation Interest	Scale of importance
		include nightingales <i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i> and lapwings <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> .	

- 5.6. Although there are seven non statutory designations within 1km of the Application Site the Application site is encompassed within West Durrington development. Therefore, local wildlife sites have been scoped out of this report.

Habitats

- 5.7. Habitats are listed in order of importance. All the features described are shown on the Baseline Habitat Plan in **Appendix 1**.

Modified Grassland

Bounding the bare ground which makes up the majority of the site, modified grassland is around the edges, with species including soft brome *Bromus hordeaceus*, curled dock *Rumex crispus*, common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, bristly ox tongue *Helminthotheca echinoides*, vetch, black mustard *Brassica Nigra* bramble and common poppy *Papaver rhoeas*.

Bare ground

Bare ground covered the majority of the Application Site, with it being used as a compound through the previous developments.

Fauna

Badger

- 5.8. The data search returned no records of badgers within 2km of the Application Site.
- 5.9. No setts or holes were identified during the UK Habitat Classification Survey, badger field signs such as snuffle holes and commuting pathways were not seen within the Application Site, or within the immediate vicinity. The Application Site has little to offer badgers foraging, with more suitable areas to the west, given the urban context of the site, it is considered unlikely the Application Site is used by badgers for foraging purposes but may be used for commuting.

Bats

- 5.10. The data search returned numerous bat records within 2km. The nearest record was for a brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus* record located approximately 0.1km to the south-east of the Application Site. The most recent record is from 2025 for common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, which is 941m southeast of the Application Site.
- 5.11. Other species recorded within the surrounding area include serotine *Eptesicus serotinus*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, Leisler's *Nyctalus leisleri*, Nathusius's pipistrelle *Pipistrellus nathusii*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, common pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* Daubenton's Bat, *myotis daubentonii*, natterers *Myotis nattereri*, whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus* and brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*. Whiskered, barbastrelle
- 5.12. MAGIC returned no European Protected Species Mitigation licences for bats present within 2km of the Application Site.
- 5.13. There are no buildings or trees within the Application Site, therefore bats roosting in buildings and trees has been scoped out of this assessment.
- 5.14. The Site may offer commuting for bats, and directly adjacent to the western boundary there is an area of grassland and swale, which would offer foraging for bats.

Birds

- 5.15. The data search returned records for various bird species within 2km of the Application Site including the following.

Common name	Taxon name
Swift	<i>Apus apus</i>
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>
Hawfinch	<i>Coccothraustes coccothraustes</i>
Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>
Tundra swan	<i>Cygnus columbianus</i>
Bewick's swan	<i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i>
	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>
Lesser Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dryobates minor</i>
Yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>
Herring gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>
Common gull	<i>Larus canus</i>

Common name	Taxon name
Great Black-backed gull	<i>Larus marinus</i>
Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>
Nightingale	<i>Luscinia megarhynchos</i>
Yellow wagtail	<i>Motacilla flava</i>
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>
House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
Cuckoo	<i>Cuculus canorus</i>
Spotted flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>
Curlew	<i>Numenius arquata</i>
Tree Sparrow	<i>Passer montanus</i>
Grey partridge	<i>Perdix perdix</i>
Willow tit	<i>Poecile montanus</i>
Marsh tit	<i>Poecile palustris</i>
Woodcock	<i>Scolopax rusticola</i>
Turtle dove	<i>Streptopelia turtur</i>
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>
Fieldfare	<i>Turdus pilaris</i>
Ring Ouzel	<i>Turdus torquatus</i>
Mistle thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>
Lapwing	<i>Vanellus vanellus</i>
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>
Teal	<i>Anas crecca</i>
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>
Greylag goose	<i>Anser anser</i>
Pink-footed goose	<i>Anser brachyrhynchus</i>
Meadow Pipet	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>
Stone Curlew	<i>Burhinus oedicephalus</i>
Black-headed gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>
Lesser black-backed gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>
Common tern	<i>Sterna hirundo</i>
Green sandpiper	<i>Tringa ochropus</i>
Great white egret	<i>Ardea alba</i>
Stock dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>
Sedge warbler	<i>Acrocephalus schoenobaenus</i>
Meadow pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>
Dipper	<i>Cinclus cinclus</i>
Whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>
Grey wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>
Wheatear	<i>Oenanthe oenanthe</i>
Black redstart	<i>Phoenicurus ochruros</i>
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>
Song thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>

Common name	Taxon name
Tawny owl	<i>Strix aluco</i>
White tailed eagle	<i>Haliaeetus albicilla</i>
Grey heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>
Little egret	<i>Egretta garzetta</i>
Collared dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>
Kingfisher	<i>Alcedo atthis</i>
Waxwing	<i>Bombycilla garrulus</i>
Coot	<i>Fulica atra</i>
Cetti's warbler	<i>Cettia cetti</i>
Brambling	<i>Fringilla montifringilla</i>
Common crossbill	<i>Loxia curvirostra</i>
Firecrest	<i>Regulus ignicapilla</i>
Cormorant	<i>Phalacrocorax carbo</i>
Great crested grebe	<i>Podiceps cristatus</i>
Barn owl	<i>Tyto alba</i>
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>
White stork	<i>Ciconia ciconia</i>

Barn owl

- 5.16. The data search contained 11 records of barn owl *Tyto alba* within 2km of the Application Site, with the most recent being from 2024, 2.2km northwest.
- 5.17. Potential to the west and extending landscape, however the Application site itself has little value to barn owl.

Great crested newts

- 5.18. SxBRC returned 34 records of great crested newts, the most recent was from March 2025 located approximately 1.3km southeast of the Application Site, the nearest is 388m northwest of the application site from 2010.
- 5.19. MAGIC returned three records of great crested newts within 2km of the Application Site, the closest, 2016-24528-EPS-MIT-1, being 398m to the northwest of the Application Site from 2022, the second, 2020-49134-EPS-MIT, 435m to the northwest. The positive great crested newt pond survey results, being 590m northwest of the Application Site.
- 5.20. There is 14 ponds within 500m of the Application Site, which is located approximately 93m to the southwest. This pond is separated from the site by a small road, which is a minor dispersal barrier.
- 5.21. The Application Site is considered to have some suitability for great crested newts in their terrestrial phase given the refugia on site which offers some shelter for commuting great

crested newts. Therefore there is potential for great crested newts to be onsite.

Other amphibians

- 5.22. SxBRC returned 40 records for common frog *Rana temporaria*, five records for common toad *Bufo bufo*, two records for palmate newt *Lissotriton helveticus* and 32 for smooth newt the closest being 1km northwest of the Application Site from 2010.
- 5.23. There are no ponds on-site, which are of value for amphibians in their terrestrial phase. It is therefore considered that other amphibians may be present on-site for foraging and refuge purposes.

Hazel dormouse

- 5.24. SxBRC returned seven records for hazel dormouse within 2km. The closest being 584m west of the Application Site from 2010 located in a Goring wood ancient woodland.
- 5.25. No EPS licences were returned by MAGIC within 2km of the Application Site.
- 5.26. The Application site offers no habitats or species of value to hazel dormouse. Additionally, there is limited connectivity to offsite habitats and the urban context, hazel dormouse is scoped out of further assessment.

Invertebrates

- 5.27. The data search returned records of the following invertebrate species, 2km of the Application Site; stag beetle *Lucanus cervus*, Adonis blue *Polyommatus bellargus*, Chalk hill blue *Polyommatus coridon*.
- 5.28. Species likely to be present are considered to be common and widespread in the local area and the invertebrate assemblage onsite is therefore considered to be of importance within the zone of influence, which in this case is the Application Site boundary.

Reptiles

- 5.29. The following reptile records were returned from SxBRC. There were 23 records returned for slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, the most recent being from 2025 located 1.6km to the south. Sand lizard *Lacerta agilis* 1.3km northeast, grass snake *Natrix helvetica*, 23 records, most recent 2012 1.4km northeast, whereas the closest 433m northwest.

- 5.30. The habitats within the Application Site offer some opportunities for basking reptiles, and the building materials/refuse offer shelter. There is no clear barrier between the Site and swale, which leads onto a series of small ponds which would offer opportunities to grass snake. As such, it is considered likely that reptiles may be present within the Application Site boundary.

Riparian mammals

- 5.31. Three records were present within the 2km data search from SxBRC for water vole *Arvicola amphibius*. The closest record is 1.9km southeast of the Application Site from 2025. This record was from the lake located at Ferring rife which has various dispersal barriers such as roads and urban areas. Additionally, there is a lack of suitable habitat for water voles on-site, therefore, water vole *Arvicola amphibius* has been scoped out of this assessment.
- 5.32. The data search returned no other records for riparian mammals such as otter *Lutra lutra*. Due to the lack of suitable watercourses on-site or in the surrounding area, otter has been scoped out of this report.

Other mammals

- 5.33. SxBRC returned 109 records for hedgehogs *Erinaceus europaeus* the most recent being 2023 located 680m northeast.
- 5.34. Although small mammals such as hedgehogs are not subject to legal protection in terms of their conservation status, they are subject to protection from cruelty under the Wild Mammals Protection Act and the Animal Welfare Act 2006¹⁴. Therefore, due diligence must be exercised during clearance/groundworks to ensure mammals that may be present are not harmed.

¹⁴ Great Britain. *Wild Mammals Protection Act and the Animal Welfare Act 2006* [online]. Available from: [Wild Mammals \(Protection\) Act 1996 \(legislation.gov.uk\)](https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1996/37/contents)

6 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

- 6.1. In accordance with CIEEM guidelines, the following important ecological features have been identified with the potential to be affected by the proposed development and carried forward for further assessment:

Table 4: Important ecological features brought forward for impact assessment

Statutory sites	Cissbury Ring SSSI, South Downs National Park, Chanctonbury Hill SSSI.
Non-statutory sites	Cote bottom, High Salvington. Titnore & Goring Woods Complex.
Habitats	Modified Grassland.
Species and species groups	Great crested newt, reptile, foraging and commuting bats, badger, other mammals.

- 6.2. The following ecological features have been scoped out of the ecological impact assessment, owing to the conclusion that no significant effects are predicted:

Table 5: Ecological features scoped out of the impact assessment

Statutory sites	N/A
Non-statutory sites	Clapham Wood, Highdown Hill & the Miller's Tomb, The Gallops & No Man's Land (SNCI), The Sanctuary, High Salvington, Ham Farm Wood, Offington Cemetery.
Habitats	N/A
Species and species groups	Hazel Dormouse, Riparian mammals.

Statutory and non-statutory sites

- 6.3. The Application Site lies within the IRZs of Cissbury Ring SSSI and Chanctonbury Hill SSSI, however, the proposed development is not considered to fall under any of the categories that would require consultation with Natural England.
- 6.4. No other direct impacts are predicted on statutory and non-statutory sites due to the distance

from the Application Site and the nature of the proposed development. It is understood that the proposed development will be a community building; as such, it is likely there will not be an increase in recreational pressure on several designated sites in the surrounding area.

Habitats

- 6.5. Modified grassland is the most ecologically valuable ecological features within the Application Site. The proposed development will see this removed, and replaced with hardstanding, soft landscaping and a building with car park, which will incorporate other neutral grassland, and tree planting.
- 6.6. Additionally, due to the Application Site's proximity to the swale to the west, it is important machinery or fuelled tools are stored away from this part of the Application Site where possible and spill mats are deployed where necessary.

Fauna

Badger and other mammals

- 6.7. Due to the potential presence of badger on adjacent land, and likely presence of other mammals such as hedgehog, it is recommended that during construction, the development area should be fenced off to discourage badgers from entering the construction site itself.
- 6.8. The following reasonable avoidance measures should be adopted during the construction period:
- 6.9. The proposed scheme maintains the suitable badger commuting habitat around the boundaries of the Application Site. This commuting corridor must not be any more lit and must be managed for the benefit of wildlife. This will allow badger to continue utilising the Application Site for commuting purposes.
- Chemicals should be stored away safely;
 - Trenches must be covered at the end of each working day, or include a means of escape for any animal that may fall in; and
 - Any temporarily exposed open pipe system should be capped in such a way as to prevent badgers gaining access as may happen when contractors are off site.
- 6.10. A proposed scheme that maintains a suitable badger commuting habitat around the boundaries of the Application Site would be advisable. This commuting corridor must not be lit and must be managed for the benefit of wildlife. This will allow badger to continue utilising the Application Site for commuting purposes.

- 6.11. An updated walkover of the Application Site which will be required at least 3 months prior to the commencement of works.

Foraging and commuting bats

The assessment of the Application Site identified features of potential value to commuting bats, and it directly adjacent to swale and fields which offer foraging opportunities. It is therefore recommended that construction and the development do not impact this, and a lighting strategy is in place.

Artificial Lighting

- 6.12. New artificial lighting during the construction and operational phases of development has the potential to disturb bats that use the currently unlit boundaries for foraging and commuting. Which is detrimental for bat species and could disrupt dispersal corridors. Therefore, a lighting scheme sympathetic to bats will be implemented.
- 6.13. The following mitigation strategies have been taken from the institution of Lighting professionals and Bat Conservation Trust's Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK (2023) and other referenced sources. Light pollution is detrimental to bats, as well as other wildlife and therefore, is to be avoided where feasible. A bat sensitive lighting scheme following the Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK guidance note¹⁵ and the Guidelines for consideration of bats in lighting projects¹⁶. Where lighting is required, there are mitigation options for both external and internal luminaires to reduce luminance (brightness) and illuminance (light spill), as follows:
- Careful aiming, positioning and selection of luminaires. LEDs with no UV component are to be installed and it's preferable to distance lights from 'dark zones/wildlife corridors' than to have the lights installed immediately behind, as the brightness of a luminaire is a deterrent even where there is no light spill and directional lights can still result in a small amount of light spill behind;
 - Luminaires are to be directed away from ecological receptors e.g. broadleaved woodland;
 - Avoid white light and warm colour recommended. Preferable colours are less than 2700°k (where feasible) with peak wavelengths greater than 550nm;
 - 0% upward light output and no tilting of the light head.
 - Change luminaire to one with more suitable luminous intensity distribution.

- Use vegetation, fencing and walls as a light buffer. Climbers can also be planted on the fences and walls to provide a biodiversity enhancement.
- Consideration of column heights to reduce light spill.
- Where bollards are a consideration within the design opt for specialist bollards designed to avoid sky pollution only.
- Motion sensors for security lighting;
- For street lighting consider part night lighting and dimming, the latter viable with LED's only;
- As a last resort, the incorporation of shields, baffles and cowls fitted to the luminaires;
- Early liaison between Ecologist and Lighting Engineer; and Local Planning Authorities (LPA) can deviate from lighting standards and therefore, where Ecologists and Lighting Engineers design requirements are conflicting Worthing Borough Council should be consulted.

Great crested newt

- 6.14. During late summer, autumn and winter great crested newts are largely terrestrial, undertaking in foraging and hibernating activities. During the summer and autumn period, when animals are more active, works should be undertaken during daylight hours, as great crested newts are most active at night. If a great crested newt is discovered, works must cease immediately, and an ecologist should be contacted.
- 6.15. The following general measures can be implemented during the proposed development which are sympathetic to great crested newts:
- A brief site walkover and check of excavations will be undertaken by construction personnel every morning to ensure no protected species have fallen in.
 - Trenches and other excavations should be covered before nightfall. If this is not possible, ramps must be left to allow all wildlife to exit easily.
 - All debris, rubble, etc., collected during site clearance should be placed directly into skips or removed from the site immediately to prevent it from becoming a refugia for amphibians and reptiles.

- All new building materials should be stored on pallets or in bags to prevent them from becoming used by terrestrial newts, amphibians and reptiles.
- Impact of vehicles/machinery on the ground must be minimised by undertaking work from hardstanding or agreed areas only.

Nesting Birds

- 6.16. Given the protection afforded to all nesting birds, any works impacting hedgerows/ scrub should ideally be undertaken during September to February (inclusive) outside of the main bird breeding season.
- 6.17. In the event that vegetation must be removed during the nesting season it must first be thoroughly checked by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to any work starting. If any active bird's nests are found then works should stop in the area and an appropriate buffer zone (as determined by the ecologist, usually approximately 5m) must be established around the nest and the nest left until the young have fledged. The buffer must remain intact until it has been confirmed that the young have fledged and the nest is no longer in use.
- 6.18. In the short term, nesting habitat will be enhanced with nesting boxes within the boundary hedgerows and mature trees. Planting within retained areas can include suitable seed mixes and native trees to benefit a range of bird species.
- 6.19. The lighting strategy put in place to ensure no significant adverse effects in relation to bats will also be beneficial to birds including barn owls.

Reptiles

- 6.20. The Application Site, is adjacent with no barriers to a swale with a varied sward height which offers commuting to the beyond ponds to the south which support which included areas of longer sward grassland and scrub, were considered to provide suitable opportunities for reptiles and provide greater connectivity for the site to areas of suitable reptile habitat in the surrounding area.
- 6.21. As such, it is recommended that work follows a Precautionary method of works. Prior to the commencement of site clearance, a precautionary working method will be implemented, to include the following measures:
- There will be appropriate fencing and signage to delineate clear boundaries of movement for vehicles/people and working/storage zones.

- Any excavations (e.g. trenches/pits) would be covered when works are not taking place to ensure that they do not fill with water and prevent the potential for reptiles (and other wildlife) to become trapped.
- Any excavations that must be left open overnight will be provided with a means of escape should reptiles (and other wildlife) enter. This would simply be in the form of a roughened plank of wood placed in the excavation as a ramp to the surface. This is particularly important if the excavation fills with water.
- Any excavations would be inspected each morning to ensure no reptiles (or other wildlife) have become trapped overnight.
- All temporarily exposed pipes must be capped overnight to prevent reptiles (and other wildlife) gaining access and later becoming trapped.
- Mounds and piles of materials (e.g. bark mulch) would be kept to a minimum and any essential piles kept off the ground and subject to daily inspections.
- Machinery and building tools/materials must not be stored within or in close proximity to the site boundaries. Where possible, machinery and building tools/materials should be stored in containers.
- The storage of any chemicals within the construction site will be contained in such a way that they cannot be consumed or knocked over by any wildlife.
- The construction site must be left clean and tidy at the end of each working day and food and litter must not be left out overnight.

7 BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

Biodiversity metric

- 7.1. A Biodiversity Metric assessment has been undertaken utilising the Statutory Biodiversity Metric in accordance with NPPF guidelines to demonstrate how a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain will be achieved.
- 7.2. This has been calculated using the baseline habitat information collected during the UK Habitat Classification Survey and eventually will use the latest post-development drawings once available. A full methodology is provided in **Appendix 4**. A completed version of the Metric has been submitted in full as a separate Excel document.

Table 6: A summary of the results of the Biodiversity Metric.

On-site baseline	Habitat units	0.42
Post-Development Units	Habitat units	0.59
Total net unit change	Habitat units	0.17
	Hedgerow units	0.09
Total net % change	Habitats	39.03%

- 7.3. The results of the Biodiversity Metric indicate that the baseline value of the Application Site is 0.42 units. The post-development value is 0.59 units, and 0.09 hedgerow units, giving a total net change of 39.03%.
- 7.4. The Soft landscaping plans set out an evergreen hedge that will be planted, surrounding the new community building, species include Field maple *Acer campestre*, Hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* and Portuguese Laurel *Prunus lusitanica*. This will be kept at a height of 1.4m.
- 7.5. There will also be 14 trees planted within the scheme, species included, but not limited to, Field Maple *Acer campestre*, Crab apple *Malus sylvestris*, and Rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, around the new car park, located on areas of introduced shrub planting.
- 7.6. Other neutral grassland will be incorporated underneath the proposed hedgerow, trees and area to the west which provides opportunities for invertebrates, reptiles and foraging small mammals. A mix such as WFG8 Hedgerows and Shaded Areas¹⁵; or similar such as the Emorsgate EM1, is a basic general-purpose meadow mixture used to diversify and enhance, is a mixture of species which tolerate semi shade conditions, which is a 80:20 mix of grasses, annuals, and perennial wildflowers including Garlic Mustard *Alliaria petiolata*, Red Campion *Silene dioica*, Squared Stemmed St John's Wort *Hypericum tetrapterum* and Hedge Parsley *Torilis arvensis*.

¹⁵ Germinal Amenity. *WFG8 Hedgerows and shaded areas*. September 2026. Available: <https://germinalamenity.com/wfg8-hedgerows-and-shaded-areas>

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- 7.7. A scope of general ecological enhancements can be incorporated into the proposed development, including integrating bat and bird boxes into the new community building to provide opportunities for these respective species.
- 7.8. Integrated bat boxes such as the Ibstock bat brick/Schwegler 1FE bat access with back panel can be installed within the walls of the completed building. These should be installed at least 5m above the ground and away from artificial light sources. Boxes should be installed facing a south, south-west or south-east direction, to expose them to the sun for parts of the day and should be placed in an area that is sheltered from strong winds.
- 7.9. Bird boxes such as the Schwegler 1SP sparrow box/Vivara Pro WoodStone terrace are designed for colony nesting species, and each box contains two or three brood chambers respectively. These can be installed on/within the walls of completed buildings. These should be installed at least 5m above the ground in areas that are sheltered from heavy rain and wind and should be north or east-facing to avoid being exposed to excessive sunlight.
- 7.10. There are opportunities within a potential scheme to increase the biodiversity of the local area. New native tree, and shrub planting throughout the Application Site will increase the diversity of species present on-site and provide new opportunities for wildlife.

8 CONCLUSIONS

- 8.1. The Application Site comprises a parcel of land with bare ground and modified grassland. The proposed development has satisfied the trading rules for the loss of modified grassland on site and has a net change of 0.17 habitat units, and 0.09 hedgerow units (39.03%).
- 8.2. Precautionary measures are required to protect identified species above, namely great crested newts, and the possibility of nesting birds. Ensuring works take place in the daytime, and any grass cutting be done under the precautionary working method.
- 8.3. A sensitive lighting strategy will be implemented to protect suitable foraging and commuting features for bats on-site and maintain dark corridors for bats during the construction and operational phases of the development.
- 8.4. The Application Site has potential to support commuting and foraging mammals such as badgers and hedgehogs. Measures will be implemented to protect mammals from harm during the construction phase of the proposed development, as well as a pre-commencement walkover.
- 8.5. Assuming the implementation of the mitigation and enhancement measure set out in this report, the proposed development would conform to relevant Local Planning Policies and will have potential to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain in accordance with the NPPF and local planning policies.

APPENDIX 1: BASELINE HABITAT PLAN



APPENDIX 2: HABITAT CREATION PLAN



APPENDIX 3: SITE PHOTOGRAPHS



Bare ground facing towards the north at the entrance of the Application Site.



Modified grassland, facing towards the north of the Application Site.



Heap of spoil located to the west of the Application Site.



Bare ground near the entrance of the site.



Building material piles (comprising of metal parts).



Breezeblocks which could support shelter.



Area of modified grassland.



Viewing the Application Site facing east.



Swale located to the west of the Application Site.

APPENDIX 4: FIELD SURVEY METHODOLOGY

UKHab Survey

The Baseline Habitat Plan is shown in Appendix 1.

The UKHab methodology¹⁶ was used to classify the Application Site into habitat types, as listed in the UKHab User Guide. Secondary codes have been applied where appropriate.

Incidental records of fauna were made during the UKHab survey and the habitats identified were evaluated for their potential to support legally protected species and species of Principal Importance.

Limitations

There were no limitations associated with the UKHab Survey.

Badger field signs survey

A badger field signs survey was carried out by ACD Environmental Ltd. Badger field signs surveys comprised walking the perimeter and interior boundaries of the Site, searching for evidence of badgers, in accordance with Harris et al¹⁷ (1989) and Scottish Natural Heritage¹⁸ (2018).

Where badger setts were found, they were described using the following criteria:

- Number of well-used holes - one or more of the features: well-worn entrance; freshly excavated soil; bedding material
- Number of partially-used holes - leaves or twigs in entrance and/or mosses and other plants growing in or around entrance)
- Number of disused holes - partially or completely blocked, with considerable amount of excavation required for reoccupation

Where feasible, badger setts were classified into the following:

- Main sett - continuously used, breeding and over-wintering sett for a social group of badgers. Only one main sett will exist in each social groups territory, and will be relatively centrally located within the group's range
- Annex sett - annex of the main sett, linked by well-used paths to the main sett (but not connected underground). Not continuously used

¹⁶ UKHab Ltd (2023). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (at <http://www.ukhab.org>)

¹⁷ Harris, S., Cresswell, P., and Jefferies, D. (1989). *Surveying Badgers*. Mammal Society.

¹⁸ Scottish Badgers (2018). *Surveying for Badgers: Good Practice Guidelines*. Version 1.

- Subsidiary sett - distant from the main sett. Several entrances, but with no well-used paths connecting to the main sett, and only used seasonally
- Outlier sett - distant from the main sett. Small, with only one of two entrances only. Used for short periods sporadically, with no obvious, well-used paths connecting to other setts

Limitations

No limitations.

APPENDIX 5: BIODIVERSITY METRIC METHODOLOGY

Assessment Framework

For the purposes of this assessment, the Biodiversity Metric has been utilised.

The Biodiversity Metric is accompanied by a 'Calculation Tool'. This was used to calculate the biodiversity units for the Application Site before (baseline) and after development. The User Guide¹⁹ has been followed.

Habitat Measurements

Baseline habitat measurements were carried out in line with the results of the UK Hab Survey. Measurements were made using QGIS.

Proposed habitat measurements were taken from the Latest Proposal Drawings.

Measurements were entered to the nearest 0.01ha.

Distinction Assessments

Habitats are assigned to distinctiveness bands automatically within the Metric. These are based on an assessment of the distinguishing features of a habitat or linear feature, including the consideration of species richness, rarity (at local, regional, national and international scales), and the degree to which a habitat supports species rarely found in other habitats.

The distinctiveness band of each habitat is preassigned in the Biodiversity Metric. The bands are based upon the UK habitat classification system. A combination of simple rules and professional judgement have been used to assign each habitat type to the appropriate distinctiveness band. The distinctiveness categories used are tailored to habitat type.

Distinctiveness Assessments are assigned according to **Table 6**.

Table 6: Distinctiveness Assessment

Category	Scores	Multiplier
Very High	8	Priority habitats as defined in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural

¹⁹ STEPHEN PANKS A, NICK WHITE A, AMANDA NEWSOME A, JACK POTTER A, MATT HEYDON A, EDWARD MAYHEW A, MARIA ALVAREZ A, TRUDY RUSSELL A, SARAH J. SCOTT B, MAX HEAVER C, SARAH H. SCOTT C, JO TREWEEK D, BILL BUTCHER E and DAVE STONE A (2024). *Statutory Biodiversity metric: User Guide. Natural England*. Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>

Category	Scores	Multiplier
		Communities (NERC) Act that are highly threatened, internationally scarce and require conservation action e.g. blanket bog
High	6	Priority habitats as defined in Section 41 of the NERC Act requiring conservation action e.g. lowland fens
Medium	4	Semi-natural habitats not classed as a Priority Habitat
Low	2	Habitat of low biodiversity value. Temporary grass and clover ley; intensive orchard; rhododendron scrub
Very Low	0	Little or no biodiversity value e.g. hard standing or sealed surface

Condition Assessments

Condition assessments for existing habitats can be found in a separate excel document.

Strategic significance

The spatial location of a habitat is treated as a component of the quality of a habitat parcel in the same way as distinctiveness or condition. Strategic significance is used to determine whether the habitat is of increased importance due to its location.

Risk Factors

As part of any proposed habitat creation and restoration, risk factors must be taken into account to correct for disparity, delay or risk. These values are preassigned within the Statutory Biodiversity Small Sites Metric and take into consideration the following factors:

- Temporal risk; and
- Difficulty of creation and restoration.

Advance/delay in habitat creation takes into account any significant time difference in the creation of a habitat type. This time is measured in full years and is entered by the assessor.

Habitat creation in advance is rewarded by reducing the difficulty and temporal risk multipliers applied. This reflects the lower delivery risk - there is less risk of failure when a habitat is already making progress towards its target condition.

Limitations

Although the Statutory Biodiversity Metric is a valuable tool underpinned by ecological evidence, there are certain limitations that must be considered when applying the metric. The key principles and rules for the use of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric have been followed at all times, in line with these limitations. Further detail is available within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide.



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