

# Ecological Impact Assessment (non EIA)



Glebe House Stables

On behalf of Sworders

August 2025

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# 1 Executive Summary

|                                                                                      |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Report purpose</b>                                                                | This report identifies the potential ecological impacts, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures for development of Glebe House Stables, Hinxworth Road, Hinxworth, SG7 5HB,                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| <b>Date and methods of survey</b>                                                    | A baseline ecological survey of the site was conducted in May 2025 which included an extended UKHab habitat survey, daytime bat walkover and building assessment for roosting bats. A nocturnal bat survey of the building B1 was completed in July 2025.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
| <b>Key findings and potential impacts</b>                                            | <p>The site, situated south of Hinxworth, is 0.56ha in extent and includes an active stable yard with inside and outside riding school. There are no ponds within the site and four ponds within 500m of the site. In the absence of mitigation the proposals are likely to result in net loss of biodiversity within the site. Protected and priority species present or potentially present include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• No bats were recorded roosting in building B1;</li> <li>• Opportunities for foraging and commuting bats, badger, hedgehog and brown hare to make use of the site, with the proposals potentially impacting their use of the landscape</li> <li>• Opportunities for nesting birds within the buildings and mature elder shrubs which may result in destruction of nests during site clearance; and</li> <li>• Negligible opportunities for other protected or priority species.</li> </ul> <p>The Biodiversity Net Gain assessment indicates that the proposed development will result in a gain of 1.26 habitat units, equivalent to 218.68%, and 0.18 hedgerow units, equivalent to 150.35%.</p> |
| <b>Measures to avoid and/or reduce impacts and deliver biodiversity enhancements</b> | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• One integrated bat box or access tile and one integrated bird box per new residential dwelling.</li> <li>• Inclusion of hedgehog highways in new fencing between residential curtilages.</li> <li>• Safeguarding wild mammals.</li> <li>• Sensitive lighting across the site.</li> <li>• Clearance of vegetation outside of breeding bird season.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |

## 2 Introduction

### 2.1 Background

- 2.1.1 Ecology by Design was commissioned by Sworders, on behalf of a private client, to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of Glebe House Stables, Hinxworth Road, Hinxworth, Baldock, SG7 5HB, (TL 23333 39774). This included a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), Daytime Bat Walkover (DBW), Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) and a night time bat (emergence) survey.

### 2.2 Site Description

- 2.2.1 The 0.56ha site comprises an active stable yard with stables, menage, and inside school. The site lies to the south of the village of Hinxworth, which lies between Biggleswade to the north and Baldock to the south. The wider landscape comprises largely arable fields, hedgerows/tree lines and small pockets of woodland.

### 2.3 Proposed Works

- 2.3.1 The proposals for the site are for the construction of a new residential development, with associated soft and hard landscaping.

### 2.4 Aims of Report

- 2.4.1 This report is an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) which presents the approach and findings of the assessment of the potential ecological impacts of the proposed development works in accordance with industry standard guidance (CIEEM, 2024; BSI Standards Limited, 2013). It has been produced following a PEA and further surveys for roosting bats. The development does not require an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA), therefore EcIA has been included for clarity on the title page.
- 2.4.2 This report will be submitted to North Hertfordshire District Council to inform the planning application.

### 2.5 Personnel

- 2.5.1 This project is led by Senior Ecologist Jo Sykes BSc (Hons) MCIEEM who has eight years' experience in ecological consultancy; Jo is experienced in conducting habitat and protected species assessments. The preliminary ecological appraisal survey was completed by Jo Sykes, who holds a Natural England Level 2 class licence for surveying bats (Licence number 2024-12536-CL18-BAT). The report was written by Jo.

- 2.5.2 Project supervision and review of the report was provided by Principal Ecologist Jessica Stuart-Smith, BSc (Hons), MCIEEM, who has been an ecological consultant for over 10 years.

## 3 Methods

### 3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 A desk study was carried out to identify:

- Internationally protected sites within the potential zone of influence of the site (minimum of 7km);
- Nationally protected sites within 5km of the site; and
- Non-statutory designated sites and records of protected or priority species within 2km of the site (central OS national grid reference TL 23333 39774).

3.1.2 A 2km search radius for species and non-statutory designated sites is justified due to the small size of the site and small-scale development works being undertaken. It is thought highly unlikely that species or non-statutory sites outside this search zone would be affected by the project. A larger search radius is applied for internationally and nationally designated sites as these sites are protected to a higher level and can often be more sensitive to disturbance. These search distances are also based on industry standard guidance.

3.1.3 Sources consulted include:

- Herts Environmental Records Centre (HERC) and Bedfordshire and Luton Biodiversity Recording and Monitoring Centre (BLBRMC) (returned 4th April 2025 and 10<sup>th</sup> April 2025);
- MAGIC ([magic.defra.gov.uk](https://magic.defra.gov.uk)) (accessed 28<sup>th</sup> April 2025); and
- Local Planning Policy documents and the local planning portal.

### 3.2 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

3.2.1 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was conducted on 13<sup>th</sup> May 2025 by Ecology by Design Jo Sykes BSc (Hons) MCIEEM using standard techniques and methodologies (CIEEM, 2017) and the nomenclature of Stace (2019).

3.2.2 The PEA includes a survey of the habitats utilising the standard UK Habitat Classification system (UKHab Ltd, 2023). Weather conditions during the survey were warm (24°C), calm (wind 1 on Beaufort scale<sup>1</sup>) and sunny (cloud 0/8<sup>2</sup>).

3.2.3 Opportunities for or evidence of protected and priority species were also identified. Where potential impacts on features of ecological interest are identified, the PEA is extended to

<sup>1</sup> The Beaufort scale is an empirical measure from 0-12 which relates wind speed to observed conditions. 0- Calm, 1- Light air, 2- Light breeze, 3- Gentle breeze, 4- Moderate breeze, 5- Fresh breeze etc.

<sup>2</sup> Cloud cover is measured using the system called oktas. The visible sky is divided into eight and cloud presence is determined within each section. A value of one to eight is then assigned (1 okta being cloudless to 8 oktas being total cloud cover).

include an assessment of impact. Any further surveys required are outlined and recommendations are made for appropriate avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures.

### 3.3 Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA)

3.3.1 Wherever potential impacts as a result of the proposals were identified, an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) was undertaken. The function of the EclA was to identify, quantify and evaluate the potential effects of the proposed development on designated sites, notable/protected habitats and species. The EclA was informed by the desk study, PEA and survey work described in Sections 3.4 and 3.5 below and undertaken with reference to best practice guidelines (CIEEM, 2024) whereby:

- the scope of the EclA was informed by a desk study and initial site survey;
- importance of ecological features within the site was established and ecological importance identified with reference to known criteria and geographic context where appropriate and available;
- assessment of potential impacts of the proposed development was made with reference to their significance and geographic context; and
- avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures were identified and recommended as appropriate.

### 3.4 Bats

#### Daytime Bat Walkover (DBW) Survey

3.4.1 A DBW survey was conducted by Jo Sykes whilst conducting the PEA survey. During the DBW the surveyors noted any habitats suitable for roosting, foraging or commuting bats within or adjacent to the site. This includes recording structures, habitat features and trees which could be suitable for bats.

**Table 3.1:** *Categorisation of Potential Suitability of Sites for Bats (Collins, 2023)*

| Suitability | Description of Potential Flightpaths and Foraging Habitats                    |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| None        | No suitable features for flightpaths and foraging.                            |
| Negligible  | No obvious flightpath or foraging features but cannot be discounted.          |
| Low         | Habitats with limited connectivity suitable for use by low numbers of bats.   |
| Moderate    | High habitat connectivity including flightpath or foraging habitats features. |

| Suitability | Description of Potential Flightpaths and Foraging Habitats                                       |
|-------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| High        | Well-connected habitats high quality habitats for foraging which is likely to be in regular use. |

#### Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA)

- 3.4.2 An external and internal PRA was conducted during the PEA of the existing buildings on the site. The assessment was based on the guidance in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023) and government guidance (Gov.uk, 2015a).
- 3.4.3 The surveyors used a high-power torch and binoculars to inspect features of interest. All external areas of the building were inspected as well as internal areas, including all lofts.
- 3.4.4 Evidence searched for included the presence of free hanging bats and bats within gaps and crevices, bat droppings, urine stains, rub marks, scratch marks and feeding remains.

**Table 3.2:** Categorisation of Potential Suitability of Structures for Bats (Collins, 2023)

| Suitability | Description of potential roosting habitats in structures                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| None        | No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of year (i.e., a complete absence of crevices/suitable shelter).                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Negligible  | No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats but cannot be discounted.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Low         | A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of year. However, these do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e., maternity or classic hibernation site).                     |
| Moderate    | A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and suitable surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (i.e., maternity or classic hibernation site – roost type only, irrespective of species conservation status).                                   |
| High        | A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have potential to support high conservation status roosts (i.e., maternity or classic hibernation site). |

#### Night-time Bat Surveys

- 3.4.5 Dusk emergence surveys were conducted of building B1, which was recorded as having low suitability to support roosting bats. One night time bat surveys is required to confirm presence

or likely absence of roosting bats, and where present, enable characterisation of the roost(s). The survey undertaken within the site are detailed in Table 3.3.

**Table 3.3: Bat emergence survey details**

| Date       | Start and end times and time of sunset/sunrise | Buildings surveyed | Equipment used                                                 | Weather                                                            | Surveyors                                                             |
|------------|------------------------------------------------|--------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 30/07/2025 | Start: 20:38<br>End: 22:23<br>Sunset: 20:53    | B1                 | Batlogger M<br>Batlogger M2<br>TrackIR pro<br>Infra-red camera | Start: 20°C, Cloud 2/8, Wind 0<br><br>End: 17°C, Cloud 7/8, Wind 2 | Sofia Sanchez Piccone*, Paul Moon, Kaci Kellman-Birch, Dave Parsons** |

\* Natural England Class 1 Licence 2024-11923-CL17-BAT

\*\* Natural England Class 1 Licence 2023-11203-CL17-BAT

3.4.6 The surveys were based on the guidance included in the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023). Bat detectors utilized included Elekon Batlogger M / M2 detectors to record any bats emerging from or re-entering the buildings.

3.4.7 Night Vision Aids (NVAs i.e. thermal imaging cameras and infra-red video cameras) were used to observe and records bats during emergence surveys as follows:

- Canon XA40 and Canon SA60 infrared video camera technology recording at 3840x2160 (150 Mbps) and 25p video frame rate alongside a ZL-ZT T8X15-140 pair of InfraRed lamps / Nightfox XB5 Pro 850NM IR Torch; and
- Guide Sensmart TrackIR pro 19mm thermal imaging monoscopes recording at 1280x960 HD and 50Hz frame rate attached to an external HD Display to aid observations in the field.

3.4.8 The footage was recorded and analysed on a desktop computer to confirm emergences. The emergence surveys commenced approximately 15 minutes before sunset and lasted until 1.5 hours after sunset.

3.4.9 Surveyors were located on each aspect of the building, focused on features identified during the PRA as being suitable for roosting bats. During the survey emergence and/or re-entry points were mapped, species were identified (where possible) and flight lines were noted. The results of the survey are detailed in Figure 4 in Appendix 1.

### 3.5 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

3.5.1 To calculate the net impact on biodiversity as a result of the proposals, the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (DEFRA, 2025) was completed in accordance with the accompanying user guide and technical supplements (DEFRA, 2025). The Metric calculation was completed with baseline data from a site visit and proposals data from the proposed landscape scheme.

- 3.5.2 A site visit was undertaken to collect baseline data on the existing habitats and their condition within the site. In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric user guide (DEFRA, 2025) no specific minimum mappable unit was used; baseline data was collected on site on 13 May 2025 and digitised using Ordnance Survey mapping and google satellite imagery during May 2025 at a scale of 1:250 using professional judgement, site notes and experience in cases where feature boundaries were not readily apparent.
- 3.5.3 Proposed habitats were manually digitised using an image file of Proposed Site Layout Roof Plan (Appendix 1) georeferenced using QGIS version 3.40.5 'Georeferencer' plugin; the georeferenced raster file is available on request in various formats. Full details of the habitat classifications are outlined within the biodiversity metrics submitted alongside this report and accompanying GIS shapefiles available on request in various formats.
- 3.5.4 In order to avoid rounding errors, area and length values were entered into the statutory biodiversity metric to the level of accuracy calculated by the QGIS 3.40.5 function \$area/\$length as a decimal ('real') number attribute.
- 3.5.5 Existing and proposed habitats were categorised based on the UK Habitats Classification Scheme (UKHab Ltd., 2023) and conditions were assessed in accordance with the accompanying guidelines for the statutory metric (DEFRA, 2025).
- 3.5.6 The personnel were suitably qualified to conduct the assessment, as detailed in Section 2.5.

### 3.6 Limitations/Constraints

- 3.6.1 The wildlife and wider ecological interest of a site can change. The report presented here is a statement of the findings of surveys carried out in May 2025. For the purpose of this report the results of site visits are discussed in the present tense. Any appreciable delay in making reference to this report or changes to the proposed development boundary may necessitate a re-survey.
- 3.6.2 The species information gained from local record centres is largely derived from data submitted from members of the public and volunteers. For this reason, it should be understood that the desk study may not provide an exhaustive list of all protected species that could occur in the local area.
- 3.6.3 Industry standard principles were employed for the biodiversity net gain assessment where appropriate to the current project. Any deviation from best practice was circumstantial and minor and did not have a significant impact on the conclusions made which are considered valid and robust. A full break down of the industry standard principles involved and any justifiable deviation is available on request if required.

3.6.4 Weather conditions as detailed in section 3.2.2 were suitable to conduct the surveys.

## 4 Results and Interpretation

### 4.1 Designated Sites

4.1.1 The desk study identified no internationally designated sites for nature conservation within 7km of the site, one nationally designated site for nature conservation within 5km and three non-statutory sites within 2km of the site.

4.1.2 All nationally and non-statutory sites have been scoped out of further assessment due to their size, location, habitat types, lack of connectivity and/or absence of shared features of interest, therefore no potential impacts as a result of the proposals are anticipated. The LPA and Local Records Centre has access to the full list of sites. A full list can be provided upon request.

### 4.2 Habitats

4.2.1 At the time of the survey (May 2025), the following habitats were recorded on site. They are described in Table 4.1 below. Photographs are included in Appendix 1 and a habitat map is included in Figure 1, Appendix 2.

**Table 4.1:** *Habitat types identified during the UKHab survey*

| Habitat type & UKHab code                           | Parcel or Feature Reference and Description (Secondary codes are shown in square brackets where applicable)                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             |
|-----------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Modified grassland (Code g4)                        | <p>Several areas of modified grassland are present on site. Parcels PR1, PR4 and PR6 are dominated by grass species (Photograph 1), including abundant soft brome (<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i>) and annual meadow grass (<i>Poa annua</i>), occasional Yorkshire fog (<i>Holcus lanatus</i>) and rare instances of crested dogs tail (<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>) and cock's-foot (<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>). Forb species are present regularly within the sward, with species including creeping cinquefoil (<i>Potentilla reptans</i>), bird's-foot trefoil (<i>Lotus corniculatus</i>), broadleaved plantain (<i>Plantago major</i>) and common daisy (<i>Bellis perennis</i>). The swards in these parcels varied between 1cm and 20cm. Parcels PR2 are dominated by stands of common nettle (<i>Urtica dioica</i>), with bramble (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.) and elder (<i>Sambucus nigra</i>) (Photograph 2).</p> <p>Parcels PR3 and PR5 are both dominated by bare ground [510]. Parcel 3 (Photograph 3) has approximately 25% vegetation cover, with a stand of common nettle present in the south western corner. Parcel 5 (Photograph 4) has approximately 50% vegetation cover, which predominately comprises white clover (<i>Trifolium repens</i>), common nettle and broad-leaved dock (<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>).</p> |
| Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface (Code u1c) | <p>The access off Hinxworth Road, leading onto the yard, comprises bare ground [510] and gravel (Photograph 5). Some ephemeral vegetation (species listed in modified grassland above) have established around the edges of this habitat type.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |

|                                   |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
|-----------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                   | An outdoor horse area is present at the north of the site (Photograph 6), which has a rubber chippings surface.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Buildings (Code u1b5)             | Four buildings are present on site, which are used as part of the stables. See Section 4.3 below for building descriptions.                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
| Hardstanding (Code u1b6)          | An area of hardstanding is present to the south of building B2. Ephemeral vegetation has established between the concrete seams (Photograph 7).                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| Other native hedgerow (Code h2a6) | A privet ( <i>Ligustrum ovalifolium</i> ) hedgerow bounds a section of the access track, separating the site from the residential property to the north (Photograph 8). The hedgerow is approximately 2m high and 2.5m wide, with a lower section in the middle.                                                                                         |
| Mixed scrub (Code h3h)            | Two parcels of mixed scrub bound the north and south of the access point. Species present include frequent instances of hawthorn ( <i>Crataegus monogyna</i> ), elder and snowberry ( <i>Symphoricarpos albus</i> ) (Photograph 9).<br><br>A multi-stem mature sycamore ( <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> ) [32] is present within the northern scrub parcel. |

#### Adjacent habitats

- 4.2.2 The site is immediately bound by Glebe House and its residential curtilage, along with horse grazed fields, with arable fields beyond.

#### Conclusion

- 4.2.3 The valuation of habitat importance below is based on set criteria or professional judgement as appropriate within a fixed range of geographic contexts (CIEEM, 2017) as outlined in Appendix 3.
- 4.2.4 The habitats on site offer opportunities for a range of species. However, due to the context of these habitats within the wider landscape, they are assessed to be of negligible geographic importance in line with Appendix 3.

### 4.3 Bats

#### Desk Study

- 4.3.1 The desk study returned 28 records of at least five bat species have been recorded within 2km of the site including common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*), barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*) and Natterer's bat (*Myotis nattereri*). The majority of these records were returned prior to 2010, with the most recent record returned was for a soprano pipistrelle, 1.7km north west of the site in 2018.
- 4.3.2 No European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) for bats were returned within 2km of the site.

#### *Daytime Bat Walkover*

- 4.3.3 The grasslands and scrub offer some opportunities for foraging or commuting bats. The site is connected to the immediate wider landscape, where there are hedgerows and woodland blocks, which provides additional opportunities for bats. Overall, the site is identified as being of low suitability for bats.
- 4.3.4 Habitats with suitability for roosting bats are discussed within the Preliminary Roost Assessment and Ground Level Tree Assessment sections below.

#### *Preliminary Roost Assessment*

- 4.3.5 There are four buildings within the site, both of which were subject to external and internal building inspections. The findings of the PRA are detailed in Table 4.2 below.

**Table 4.2:** *Suitability of buildings for roosting bats and any of evidence of bats found*

| Building Reference | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | Assessment                                      |
|--------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------|
| B1                 | <p>A single storey building with wood cladding and a pitched asbestos roof (Photograph 10), with skylights and roof vents. The wooden cladding is lifted and warped across all aspects, with damage on the western aspect (Photograph 11).</p> <p>Internally the walls have a second plywood layer on the northern, eastern and western aspects (resulting in an internal cavity space) and is single skinned on the northern aspect. There is no loft space present, with exposed trusses and no membrane preset (Photograph 12).</p>                                                                                    | <b>Low suitability</b> for roosting bats        |
| B2                 | <p>A 1.5 storey building, partially wooden cladd and partially asbestos sheeting (Photograph 13), with a pitched asbestos roof supporting skylights. This building was in good condition at the time of the survey, with no crevices noted suitable to support roosting bats.</p> <p>The northern section of the building supports an inside school and is open on the western aspect. This section has no void space, with exposed concrete and metal framing (Photograph 14). The southern side of the building is a single storey enclosed stable block, of a similar construction to building B1, detailed above.</p> | <b>Negligible suitability</b> for roosting bats |
| B3 and B4          | <p>Both of these structures are single storey, single-skinned metal shed/stable with a pitched corrugated metal roof (Photograph 13 and 14). No internal void present.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | <b>Negligible suitability</b> for roosting bats |

#### *Bat emergence surveys*

#### Dusk emergence survey – 30<sup>th</sup> July 2025

4.3.6 No bat roosts were identified in the building during the emergence surveys. However, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, and noctule were recorded foraging or commuting around the site, with overall activity levels being low. In particular, foraging activity was noted along the main access road. Activity levels were consistent throughout the survey. See Appendix 1 for photographs from the darkest point of the survey.

#### 4.4 Other Species

4.4.1 The results of the preliminary ecological appraisal and desk study are presented together in Table 4.3 below. The species / species groups present or potentially present are presented in order of relevance to this development. Relevant legislation and policy are referred to as appropriate and further details are provided in Section 6.

4.4.2 There are no watercourses within the site or within 500m of the site therefore species associated with such habitats such as white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*), otter (*Lutra lutra*), water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*), fish and aquatic invertebrates will not be affected by the proposals. As such, they are not discussed further within this report.

**Table 4.3:** Presence of or potential for protected/notable/invasive species within the site and local area

| Species                                         | Protection or Status *                | Presence/ potential at the site                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
|-------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Birds                                           | W&CA 1981<br>Sch1 / Sch5              | The desk study returned 2,354 records of protected and notable bird species were returned by the desk study, comprising a mix of species typical of urban, arable, wetland and woodland habitats.<br><br>There are opportunities for foraging and nesting birds within the buildings, mature elder shrubs and mixed scrub on site. Barn swallows ( <i>Hirundo rustica</i> ) were noted in building B1 and are likely nesting within the building.                                                      |
| Dormouse<br>( <i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i> ) | EPS. SPI.<br>W&CA 1981<br>Sch5        | No records of dormouse were returned by the desk study.<br><br>The site does not contain any suitable habitat for dormice to nest or forage, and connectivity within the landscape is poor. Therefore, dormouse are considered likely absent from the site.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
| Badger<br>( <i>Meles meles</i> )                | Protection<br>of Badgers<br>Act 1992. | The desk study returned 32 records of badger within 2km of the site.<br><br>The habitats on site do not offer any opportunities for sett creation, additionally there is very little foraging opportunities within the site boundary. There are a large amount of open fields in the surrounding landscape, including horse grazed fields and arable land, as well as woodland parcels. As such, badger are highly likely to be present in the immediate landscape and may use the site for commuting. |

|                                                                                       |                                |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Reptiles                                                                              | W&CA 1981<br>Sch5              | <p>The desk study returned 12 records of reptiles within 2km of the site, comprising grass snake (<i>Natrix helvetica</i>) and adder (<i>Vipera berus</i>).</p> <p>There are no suitable habitats on site for reptiles due to the largely hardstanding nature of the site and lack of tussocks in the grasslands. Whilst there are suitable habitats in the adjacent areas, reptiles are unlikely to make use of the site for commuting purposes and are unlikely to be present on site.</p>          |
| Hedgehog<br>( <i>Erinaceus europaeus</i> )                                            | SPI                            | <p>Eight records of hedgehog were returned by the desk study.</p> <p>The grasslands on site offer some limited opportunities for hedgehog. The site is directly connected to the wider landscape, which includes large areas of open greenspace which is likely to support a variety of opportunities for hedgehog.</p>                                                                                                                                                                               |
| Brown hare<br>( <i>Lepus europaeus</i> )                                              | SPI                            | <p>The desk study returned 33 records of brown hare within 2km of the site.</p> <p>There are no suitable habitats for brown hare located on the site. However, the site is surrounded by arable fields and open greenspace, which offer a variety of habitats for brown hare. As such, this species may make use of the site for commuting around the wider landscape.</p>                                                                                                                            |
| Great crested newt ( <i>Triturus cristatus</i> ) and Common toad ( <i>Bufo bufo</i> ) | EPS. SPI.<br>W&CA 1981<br>Sch5 | <p>The desk study returned 18 records of common toad and one historic record for great crested newt within 2km of the site.</p> <p>There are no ponds on site and no habitats on site suitable to support terrestrial stage amphibians. There are four ponds within 500m of the site, with only one pond 250m. All of these ponds are separated from the site by arable fields or grassland with very short swards, making it highly unlikely that any newts present will disperse onto the site.</p> |
| Invertebrates                                                                         | SPIs.                          | <p>The desk study returned 413 records of protected and notable invertebrate species within 2km of the site.</p> <p>The site is unlikely to support an important assemblage and is of no elevated importance when compared with abundant similar opportunities within the immediate surrounds of the site.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| Protected plants                                                                      | W&CA 1981<br>Sch8              | <p>The desk study returned 107 records of protected and notable plant species within 2km of the.</p> <p>No protected species were recorded within the site. The majority of the site is unsuitable for protected species, as much of it is comprised of buildings and hardstanding. The remainder of the habitats are common in the wider landscape and are considered unlikely to support any specialist species.</p>                                                                                |
| Invasive species                                                                      | W&CA 1981<br>Sch9; IAS<br>Sch4 | <p>The desk study returned 34 records of four invasive faunal species and eight records of five invasive plant species within 2km of the site.</p> <p>No Schedule 9 plant species were identified on site during the survey. The site is not considered to provide elevated opportunities to notable invasive species beyond widespread and well-established ubiquitous invasive species.</p>                                                                                                         |

\* Where:

*EPS = European Protected Species under the provisions of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)*

*SPI = Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006*

*W&CA 1981 = Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*

*IAS = The Invasive Alien Species Regulation (Regulation (EU) 1143/2014)*

*Sch1 = Schedule 1 Birds which are Protected by Special Penalties (W&CA 1981)*

*Sch4 = Schedule 4 of the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019*

*Sch5 = Schedule 5 Animals which are Protected (W&CA 1981)*

*Sch8 = Schedule 8 Plants which are Protected (W&CA 1981)*

*Sch9 = Schedule 9 Animals and Plants to which Section 14 Applies (W&CA 1981)*

## **Conclusion**

- 4.4.3 The valuation of species importance below is based on set criteria or professional judgement as appropriate within a fixed range of geographic contexts (CIEEM, 2017) as outlined in Appendix 5.
- 4.4.4 No bats were recorded emerging from the building during the survey. Therefore, the building is considered to not support bat roosts and has negligible value in relation to roosting bats.
- 4.4.5 The site is also considered to provide opportunities to foraging and commuting bats, nesting birds, badger, hedgehog, brown hare, and other wild mammals. Establishing the precise value of the site to these species (if present) would require further survey work that is not proportionate or necessary for designing an effective avoidance and mitigation strategy (see Section 5 below). Given the extent, context and quality of the site to the above species, the site is considered likely to be of no more than limited local ecological importance for any of the above in accordance with the categories outlined in Appendix 5.
- 4.4.6 For the remainder of species, the site is considered to be of negligible ecological importance (Appendix 5). Regardless, some species may have implications to the proposed development at the site as a result of legislative protection (see Section 7).

## **4.5 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment**

### **Baseline Habitats**

- 4.5.1 The baseline habitats and their retention category (lost/retained/enhanced) are illustrated on Figures EBD\_4676\_DR001 and EBD\_4767\_DR002 at Appendix 2. Detailed condition assessment results are presented alongside justification in Appendix 4.
- 4.5.2 Overall, the site has a baseline habitat value of:
- 0.58 habitat units; and
  - 0.12 hedgerow units.

- 4.5.3 No river habitats are within or adjacent to the site so the metric does not include an assessment of river habitats.

## 5 Potential Impacts and Recommendations

### 5.1 Introduction

- 5.1.1 This section presents the potential impacts and subsequent recommendations for the proposed development at the site. Further detailed mitigation strategies or method statements, as required, can be secured through suitably worded planning conditions, Section 106 agreements or similar frameworks in accordance with best practice guidelines (BSI Standards Limited, 2013).

#### **Adoption of the Mitigation Hierarchy**

- 5.1.2 In accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (see Section 6) and British Standard 42020:2013 'Code of Practice for Planning and Development' (BSI Standards Limited, 2013), the 'Mitigation Hierarchy' has been adopted at the site with regards to the potential ecological impacts of the proposals. The mitigation hierarchy outlines a stepwise process as follows:

- **Avoidance** – as a first option, adverse impacts should be avoided through good design, such as retaining and safeguarding important ecological features wherever practicable;
- **Mitigation** – where unavoidable, adverse impacts should be reduced as much as possible, such as reducing land-take of important habitats;
- **Compensation** – where residual effects remain, compensation should be secured to offset adverse impacts, such as through compensatory habitats creation; and
- **Enhancement** – opportunities for net gains in biodiversity should be explored and included wherever appropriate.

### 5.2 Designated Sites

- 5.2.1 Natural England defines Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) around SSSI's, SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites and categories of development for local authorities to determine if they need to consult Natural England in regard to potential impacts upon them.
- 5.2.2 The IRZs for which the site lies within (Southill Lake and Woods SSSI) is not considered to apply to the category of planning application proposed at the site, as the proposal do not include infrastructure development. As such, the potential for impacts on nearby SACs and SSSIs are considered unlikely.

### 5.3 Habitats

- 5.3.1 The mixed scrub and sycamore tree at the entrance of the site are of value within the context of the site. It is recommended that these features are retained in any future design proposals.

*Recommendation R1: Native Planting*

- 5.3.2 Included in the proposals wherever appropriate, biodiversity gain should be maximised, for instance through the usage of Emorsgate Flowering Lawn Mixture EL1 in place of traditional monoculture turfs and native hedges in place of or in addition to fences. New planting to support biodiversity may comprise a mixture of native and formal landscaping species that simultaneously provide resources to local wildlife and remain appropriate to amenity or residential settings. Examples appropriate to formal and garden settings include the usage of native species such as dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*) and ornamental varieties of known value to wildlife such as plants for pollinators, for example lavender 'Gros Bleu'.

### 5.4 Bats

- 5.4.1 Increased levels of artificial light can cause disturbance to bats. Though several bat species can take advantage of artificial lighting systems for foraging, feeding off the insects they attract, other species avoid them as foraging within an illuminated area increases the risk of predation by nocturnal birds of prey or even domestic cats. If lighting is intensive and widespread, particularly lighting from lamps, which emit UV light (such as mercury vapour); it can deter some bats from utilising the site and in some instances can act as a barrier across commuting lines. Research has also shown that certain types of artificial lighting have been proven to disturb the emergence patterns of bats when they are placed within the vicinity of entrances to a bat roost.

*Recommendation R2: Lighting*

- 5.4.2 Any lighting for the development (if required) will need to be designed sensitively in accordance with industry standard guidance (BCT & ILP, 2023) and the following principles will need to be adopted:

- Maintaining dark corridors along the site boundaries;
- Where lighting is required, ensuring:
  - Light levels are less than 3 Lux;
  - LED luminaires with a warm white spectrum ideally <2700 Kelvin (to avoid blue / UV elements);
  - Bollard or low-level downward directional luminaires are used and mounted on the

horizontal (with no upward tilt); and

Security lighting, if required, is motion-activated with short (<1 minute) timers.

## 5.5 Birds

- 5.5.1 The proposals will result in the clearance of vegetation and buildings that are suitable for nesting birds. This would result in a contravention of relevant wildlife legislation if active nests are present. In the absence of mitigation measures, this would be considered to represent an adverse ecological impact of significance within a local context.

### *Recommendation R3: Safeguarding Nesting Birds*

- 5.5.2 Any wild birds' nests are protected whilst in use. If any active wild birds' nests are found prior to the vegetation clearance, or building demolition, then these must be left alone until they cease to be in use. Ideally, works to suitable nesting habitat/features should be scheduled to avoid the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive). Should such works take place during March-August inclusive, they must be immediately preceded by a check for any active nests by a suitably qualified ecologist. Any active nests identified during works (regardless of time of year) would need to be protected and left with a suitable buffer (to be defined by the ecologist) until the nest is no longer active.

## 5.6 Other Protected, Priority or Invasive Species

- 5.6.1 Site clearance and construction works could result in the killing / injury of wide-ranging wild mammals which make use of the site. This would be considered an offence as all wild mammals are protected from unnecessary harm (see Section 6).

### *Recommendation R4: Safeguarding Wildlife*

- 5.6.2 The following measures should be adopted to safeguard wild animals should they enter the site during construction works, and to discourage wild animals from entering the site. This can be achieved by implementing the following standard mitigation measures:
- the creation of temporary brash or log piles within the site should be avoided as these may be adopted by wildlife for shelter;
  - any newly discovered mammal entrances within the site should be safeguarded and left *in-situ* until reported to a suitably qualified ecologist, who will advise on appropriate steps if needed for works to resume;
  - pipes should be capped off overnight to prevent animals entering and becoming trapped;

- trenches or pits left overnight will be provided with a means of escape for wildlife should any enter such as a collapsed edge or a flat roughened stable plank (no steeper than 45°) acting as a ramp to the surface;
- all trenches and pits will be inspected each morning to ensure no wildlife has become trapped overnight. Should a badger become trapped in a trench it will likely dig itself into the side of the trench. Should a trapped badger be encountered, a suitably qualified ecologist will be contacted immediately for further advice;
- the prolonged storage of uncontained and uncovered topsoil in piles on site will be carefully considered and possibly fenced-off if needed as these are readily adopted by burrowing animals such as foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*) for dens;
- chemicals will be contained in such a way that wild animals cannot access or knock them over;
- fires should be avoided altogether within the site; and

loose litter and food will not be left in accessible areas of the site overnight.

## 5.7 Ecological Enhancements

5.7.1 In line with planning policy a number of enhancements, listed both below and within the recommended BNG report, will be included within the design plans (example specifications are included in Appendix 4).

### *Recommendation R5: Enhancements*

- In order to enhance the local area for wildlife ecological features and contribute towards biodiversity net gain, it is recommended that proposals include the following:
- One integrated bird box (Vivara Pro Build-In Half Open Nest Box or similar) per every new residential building will be included within the proposals.
- One integrated bat box (Integrated Eco Bat Box or similar) or bat access tile per every new residential building will be included within the proposals.
- Any fences or walls will include hedgehog friendly gravel boards with holes 13 cm x 13 cm in the base to prevent habitat fragmentation for hedgehog.

5.7.2 Once ecological enhancements have been delivered a 'statement of good practice' shall be signed by the competent ecologist, and be submitted to the LPA, confirming that the specified enhancement measures have been implemented in accordance with good practice upon which the planning consent was granted.

## 5.8 Biodiversity Impact Assessment

5.8.1 It has been identified that the proposed development is not exempt from the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) requirements of 10%. A BNG assessment has therefore been completed to identify the biodiversity losses and gains as a result of the proposals.

### **Compliance with Best Practice**

5.8.2 A BNG assessment was undertaken using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculator Tool (DEFRA, 2025) in accordance with all relevant best practice guidelines (CIEEM et al., 2019; BSI Standards Limited, 2021; DEFRA, 2025).

5.8.3 The 10 'Principles of Biodiversity Net Gain (CIEEM et al., 2019) were followed:

- Principle 1 – Apply the mitigation hierarchy
- Principle 2 – Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset by gains elsewhere
- Principle 3 – Be inclusive and equitable
- Principle 4 – Address risks
- Principle 5 – Make a measurable net gain
- Principle 6 – Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity
- Principle 7 – Be additional
- Principle 8 – Create a net gain legacy
- Principle 9 – Optimise sustainability
- Principle 10 – Be transparent

## 5.9 Proposed Habitats

5.9.1 Site layout proposals used to inform the proposals are provided at Appendix 1; our interpretation of these habitats for input into the metric is illustrated on drawing EBD\_4676\_DR003 at Appendix 2. Detailed condition assessments for the proposed habitats are provided at Appendix 5 alongside justification.

5.9.2 Completion of the statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool provides a baseline biodiversity value of 0.58 habitat units and a post development value of 1.84 habitat units indicating an increase of +1.26 habitat units, or the equivalent to +218.68% (see Figure 1). The site also has a baseline value of 0.12 hedgerow units and post development value of 0.30 hedgerow units indicating a loss of 0.18 units, equivalent to +150.35%. There are no river units within or adjacent to the site. The metric also indicates that rules relating to 'trading down' have been satisfied.

Screenshot 1: Biodiversity Metric Headline Calculator Summary

|                                                                                                          |                    |                        |         |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------|------------------------|---------|
| Glebe House Stables                                                                                      |                    | Return to results menu |         |
| Headline Results                                                                                         |                    |                        |         |
| Scroll down for final results ☳                                                                          |                    |                        |         |
| On-site baseline                                                                                         | Area habitat units | 0.58                   |         |
|                                                                                                          | Hedgerow units     | 0.12                   |         |
|                                                                                                          | Watercourse units  | 0.00                   |         |
| On-site post-intervention<br>(Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)                       | Area habitat units | 1.84                   |         |
|                                                                                                          | Hedgerow units     | 0.30                   |         |
|                                                                                                          | Watercourse units  | 0.00                   |         |
| On-site net change<br>(units & percentage)                                                               | Area habitat units | 1.26                   | 218.68% |
|                                                                                                          | Hedgerow units     | 0.18                   | 150.35% |
|                                                                                                          | Watercourse units  | 0.00                   | 0.00%   |
| Off-site baseline                                                                                        | Area habitat units | 0.00                   |         |
|                                                                                                          | Hedgerow units     | 0.00                   |         |
|                                                                                                          | Watercourse units  | 0.00                   |         |
| Off-site post-intervention<br>(Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)                      | Area habitat units | 0.00                   |         |
|                                                                                                          | Hedgerow units     | 0.00                   |         |
|                                                                                                          | Watercourse units  | 0.00                   |         |
| Off-site net change<br>(units & percentage)                                                              | Area habitat units | 0.00                   | 0.00%   |
|                                                                                                          | Hedgerow units     | 0.00                   | 0.00%   |
|                                                                                                          | Watercourse units  | 0.00                   | 0.00%   |
| Combined net unit change<br>(Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement) | Area habitat units | 1.26                   |         |
|                                                                                                          | Hedgerow units     | 0.18                   |         |
|                                                                                                          | Watercourse units  | 0.00                   |         |
| Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions                                                                 | Area habitat units | 0.00                   |         |
|                                                                                                          | Hedgerow units     | 0.00                   |         |
|                                                                                                          | Watercourse units  | 0.00                   |         |
| FINAL RESULTS                                                                                            |                    |                        |         |
| Total net unit change<br>(Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)    | Area habitat units | 1.26                   |         |
|                                                                                                          | Hedgerow units     | 0.18                   |         |
|                                                                                                          | Watercourse units  | 0.00                   |         |
| Total net % change<br>(Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)       | Area habitat units | 218.68%                |         |
|                                                                                                          | Hedgerow units     | 150.35%                |         |
|                                                                                                          | Watercourse units  | 0.00%                  |         |
| Trading rules satisfied?                                                                                 | Yes ✓              |                        |         |

## 6 Relevant Legislation and Policy

### 6.1 Local Planning Policy

6.1.1 The site falls within the jurisdiction of North Hertfordshire District Council, which has a Local Plan that sets out planning policies for development. The relevant policies are detailed below.

#### **Policy SP12: Green infrastructure, landscape and biodiversity**

6.1.2 *We will accommodate significant growth during the plan period whilst ensuring the natural environment is protected and enhanced. We will:*

- a) Protect, identify, manage and where possible enhance a strategic multi-functional network of green infrastructure;*
- b) Consider and respect landscape character, scenic beauty and locally sensitive features, particularly in relation to the Chilterns Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty;*
- c) Protect, enhance and manage designated sites in accordance with the following hierarchy of designations and features:*
  - *Internationally designated sites*
  - *Nationally designated sites*
  - *Locally designated sites;*
  - *Non-designated sites that include important habitats and species*
- d) Protect, enhance and manage biodiversity networks including wildlife corridors, ancient woodlands and hedgerows, wetland and riverine habitats, Local Geological Sites, protected species, priority species and habitats, and non-designated sites of ecological value and ensure measurable net gains for biodiversity; and e) Protect other open spaces and support provision of new and improved open space.*

### 6.2 Exit from European Union

6.2.1 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), referred to as the '2017 Regulations,' are one of the pieces of domestic law that transposed the land and marine aspects of the Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) and certain elements of the Wild Birds Directive (Directive 2009/147/EC) (known as the Nature Directives). Changes to the 2017 Regulations have been made by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (referred to as the '2019 Regulations') to transfer functions from the European Commission to the appropriate authorities in England and Wales.

- 6.2.2 The amendments prescribed by the 2019 Regulations allow existing protections afforded by current wildlife legislation and transposed EC Council Directives to be operable from 01 January 2021.
- 6.2.3 The 2019 Regulations protect rare and vulnerable birds and the habitats that they depend upon. This is achieved in part through the classification of Special Protection Areas (SPAs). The Habitats Directive aims to protect plants, habitats and animals other than birds. This is achieved in part through the creation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs). SPAs and SACs are collectively referred to as the 'National Site Network'.
- 6.2.4 Designated Wetlands of International Importance (known as Ramsar sites) do not form part of the National Site Network, however, all Ramsar sites remain protected in the same way as SACs and SPAs.

### 6.3 National Planning Policy Framework

- 6.3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in December 2024 (MHCLG, 2024) thereby replacing the older version of December 2023.
- 6.3.2 In relation to planning for climate change, para 162 states: Plans should take a proactive approach to mitigating and adapting to climate change, taking into account the long-term implications for flood risk, coastal change, water supply, biodiversity and landscapes, and the risk of overheating and drought from rising temperatures. Policies should support appropriate measures to ensure the future health and resilience of communities and infrastructure to climate change impacts, such as providing space for physical protection measures, or making provision for the possible future relocation of vulnerable development and infrastructure.
- 6.3.3 In relation to planning and flood risk, para 182 states 'Applications which could affect drainage on or around the site should incorporate sustainable drainage systems to control flow rates and reduce volumes of runoff, and which are proportionate to the nature and scale of the proposal. These should provide multifunctional benefits wherever possible, through facilitating improvements in water quality and biodiversity, as well as benefits for amenity. Sustainable drainage systems provided as part of proposals for major development should:
  - a) take account of advice from the Lead Local Flood Authority;
  - b) have appropriate proposed minimum operational standards; and
  - c) have maintenance arrangements in place to ensure an acceptable standard of operation for the lifetime of the development.'

- 6.3.4 The new framework sets out in section 15 that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by ... (d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs (Para 187).
- 6.3.5 To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity (Para 192), plans should:
- identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
  - promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.
- 6.3.6 When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles (Para 193):
- if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
  - development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
  - development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
  - development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.
- 6.3.7 The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites (Para 194):

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

6.3.8 The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site (Para 195).

## 6.4 European Protected Species

6.4.1 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) transpose the EC Habitats Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) into national law.

6.4.2 “European protected species” (EPS) of animal are those which are shown on Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). They are subject to the provisions of Regulation 43 of those Regulations. All EPS are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Taken together, these pieces of legislation make it an offence to:

- a) intentionally or deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal included amongst these species;
- b) possess or control any live or dead specimens or any part of, or anything derived from these species;
- c) deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species;
- d) deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal; or
- e) intentionally, deliberately or recklessly damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal, or obstruct access to such a place.

6.4.3 For the purposes of paragraph (c), disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely—

- a) to impair their ability—
  - i. to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or
  - ii. in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or

- b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

6.4.4 Although the law provides strict protection to these species, it also allows this protection to be set aside (derogated) through the issuing of licences. The licences in England are currently determined by Natural England (NE) for development works. In accordance with the requirements of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended), a licence can only be issued where the following requirements, known as the “Three Tests”, are satisfied:

1. The proposal is necessary ‘to preserve public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment’
2. ‘There is no satisfactory alternative’

6.4.5 The proposals ‘will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.

## 6.5 Bats

6.5.1 Bats and their roost sites are protected by UK legislation.

6.5.2 The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take a bat;
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a bat; and
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.

6.5.3 Additionally, The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture or kill a bat;
- Deliberately disturb a bat;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or a resting place of a bat; and
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange or offer for sale or exchange a live or dead bat or any part of a bat.

## 6.6 Birds

- 6.6.1 All nesting wild birds are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. In addition to this, for some rarer species (listed on Schedule 1 of the Act), it is an offence to disturb them whilst they are nest building or at or near a nest with eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young of such a bird.
- 6.6.2 The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) places duties on competent authorities (including Local Authorities and National Park Authorities) in relation to wild bird habitat. These provisions relate back to Articles 1, 2 and 3 of the EC Directive on the conservation of wild birds (2009/147/EC, 'Birds Directive') (Regulation 10 (3)) requires that the objective is the 'preservation, maintenance and re-establishment of a sufficient diversity and area of habitat for wild birds in the United Kingdom, including by means of the upkeep, management and creation of such habitat, as appropriate, having regard to the requirements of Article 2 of the new Wild Birds Directive...' Regulation 10 (7) states: 'In considering which measures may be appropriate for the purpose of security or contributing to the objective in [Regulation 10 (3)] Paragraph 3, appropriate account must be taken of economic and recreational requirements'.
- 6.6.3 In relation to the duties placed on competent authorities under the 2017 Regulations (as amended), Regulation 10 (8) states: 'So far as lies within their powers, a competent authority in exercising any function [including in relation to town and country planning] in or in relation to the United Kingdom must use all reasonable endeavours to avoid any pollution or deterioration of habitats of wild birds (except habitats beyond the outer limits of the area to which the new Wild Birds Directive applies).'

## 6.7 Badgers

- 6.7.1 Badger is protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. It is not permitted to wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or to attempt to do so; or to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett. Sett interference includes disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, as well as damaging or destroying a sett or obstructing access to it. A badger sett is defined in the legislation as "a structure or place, which displays signs indicating current use by a badger".
- 6.7.2 ODPM Circular 06/2005 (ODPM, 2005) provides further guidance on statutory obligations towards badger within the planning system. Of particular note is paragraph 124, which states

that “The likelihood of disturbing a badger sett, or adversely affecting badgers’ foraging territory, or links between them, or significantly increasing the likelihood of road or rail casualties amongst badger populations, are capable of being material considerations in planning decisions.”

- 6.7.3 Natural England provides Standing Advice (Gov.uk, 2015), which is capable of being a material consideration in planning decisions. Natural England recommends mitigation to avoid impacts on badger setts, which includes maintaining or creating new foraging areas and maintaining or creating access (commuting routes) between setts and foraging/watering areas.

## 6.8 Wild Mammals

- 6.8.1 The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 (as amended) makes provision for the protection of wild mammals from certain cruel acts, making it an offence for any person to intentionally cause suffering to any wild mammal. In the context of development sites, for example, this may apply to rabbits in their burrows.

## 6.9 Hedgerows

- 6.9.1 Article 10 of the Habitats Directive requires that ‘Member States shall endeavour...to encourage the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild fauna and flora. Such features are those which, by virtue of their linear and continuous structure...or their function as steppingstones...are essential for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species’. Examples given in the Directive include traditional field boundary systems (such as hedgerows).
- 6.9.2 The aim of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997, according to guidance produced by the Department of the Environment, is “to protect important hedgerows in the countryside by controlling their removal through a system of notification. In summary, the guidance states that the system is concerned with the removal of hedgerows, either in whole or in part, and covers any act which results in the destruction of a hedgerow. The procedure in the Regulations is triggered only when land managers or utility operators want to remove a hedgerow. The system is in favour of protecting and retaining ‘important’ hedgerows.
- 6.9.3 The Hedgerow Regulations set out criteria that must be used by the local planning authority in determining which hedgerows are ‘important’. The criteria relate to the value of hedgerows from an archaeological, historical, wildlife and landscape perspective.

## 7 References

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- UKHab Ltd. (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* at <https://ukhab.org>

## Appendix 1 - Photographs

**Photograph 1:** Example of grass dominated  
Modified grassland (PR1)



**Photograph 2:** Example of modified grassland  
with tall forbs – PR2



**Photograph 3:** Modified grassland – PR



**Photograph 4:** Modified grassland – PR5



**Photograph 5:** Example of artificial  
unvegetated unsealed surface



**Photograph 6:** Outdoor horse arena



**Photograph 7:** Example of hardstanding



**Photograph 8:** Privet hedgerow



**Photograph 9:** Mixed scrub



**Photograph 10:** Building B1



**Photograph 11:** Example of lifted wood cladding



**Photograph 12:** Internal of B1



**Photograph 13: B2**



**Photograph 14: Internal of B2**



**Photograph 13: B3**



**Photograph 14: B4**



**Photograph 15: Screenshot from darkest point survey**



## Appendix 2 - Figures

Next page:

- Figure 1: Habitats map
- Figure 2: Impacts map
- Figure 3: Proposed habitats map
- Figure 4: Surveyor locations

LEGEND

-  Site Boundary (0.57 ha)
-  g4 - modified grassland (0.1205 ha)
-  h3h - mixed scrub (0.0073 ha)
-  u1b5 - buildings (0.1334 ha)
-  u1b6 - hardstanding (0.0681 ha)
-  u1c - artificial unvegetated  
unsealed surface (0.2023 ha)
-  g4(16) - tall forbs (0.0343 ha)
-  h2a6 - Other native hedgerow (0.03 km)



Location (1:10,000):



Project:

**Glebe House Stables**

Client:

**Patrick Smyth**

Drawing Title:

**Habitats map**

Drawing No.:

EBD\_4676\_DR001

Central Eastings, Northings:

529351, 239772

Drawn by:

JS

Scale (@A3):

1:452

Date Drawn:

13/05/2025

Approved by:

BG

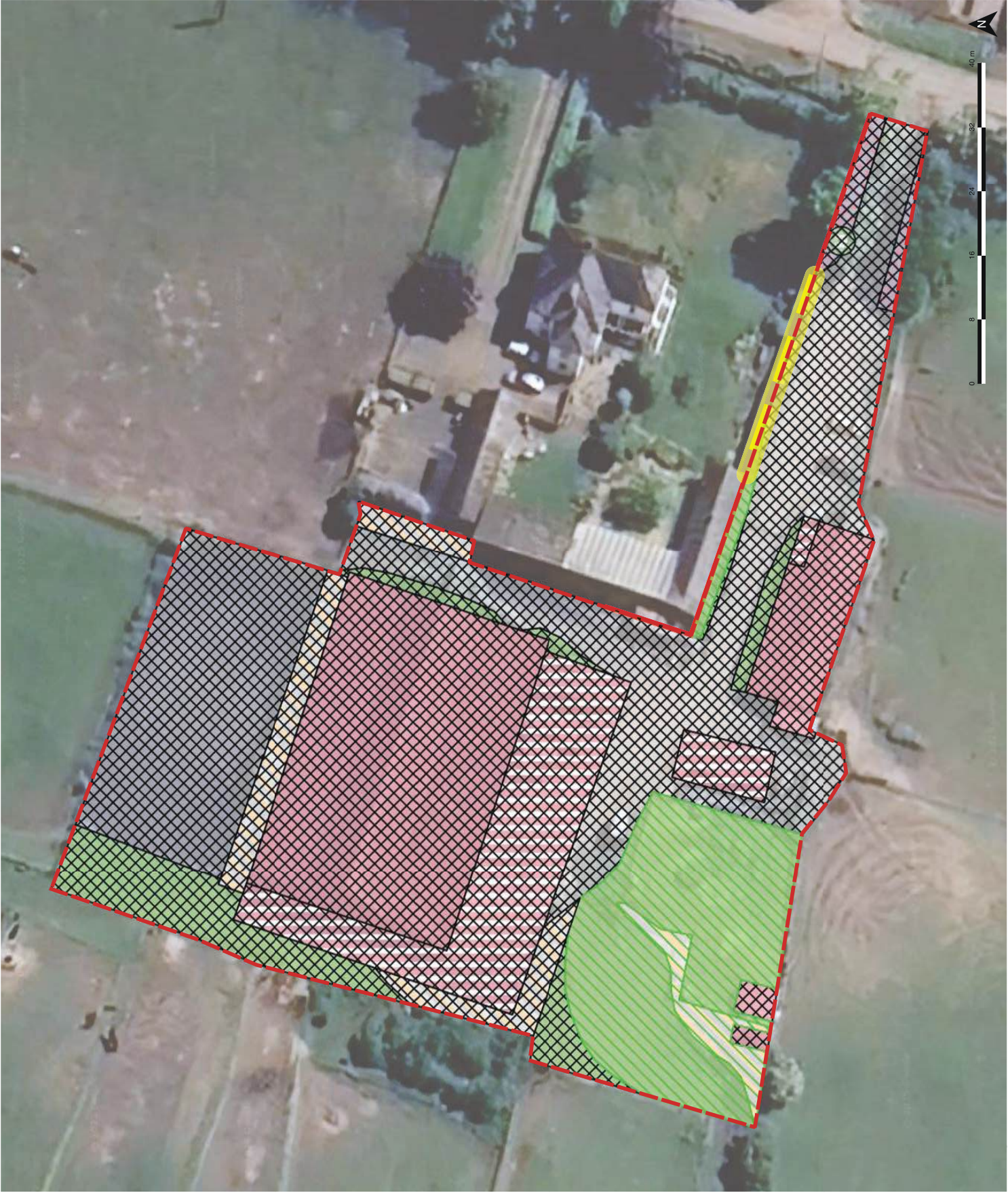
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LEGEND

- Site Boundary (0.57 ha)
- Retained and enhanced
- Modified grassland (0.0785 ha)
- Tall forbs (0.0087 ha)
- Lost
- Buildings (0.1323 ha)
- Developed land; sealed surface (0.0695 ha)
- Mixed scrub (0.0072 ha)
- Modified grassland (0.042 ha)
- Tall forbs (0.0256 ha)
- Retained
- h2a6 - Other native hedgerow (0.03 km)
- Lost
- Urban Tree, medium (1 trees)



Location (1:10,000):



Project:

Glebe House Stables

Client:

Patrick Smyth

Drawing Title:

Impacts map

Drawing No.:

EBD\_4676\_DR002

Central Eastings, Northings:

529351, 239772

Drawn by:

JS

Scale (@A3):

1:452

Date Drawn:

07/08/2025

Approved by:

BG

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LEGEND

- Site Boundary (0.57 ha)
- Developed land; sealed surface (0.0977 ha)
- Buildings (0.081 ha)
- Mixed scrub (0.0066 ha)
- Other neutral grassland (0.1699 ha)
- Vegetated garden (0.2107 ha)
- Urban Tree, Small (18 trees)
- Native hedgerow (0.08 km)

Location (1:10,000):



Project:

Glebe House Stables

Client:

Patrick Smyth

Drawing Title:

Proposed Habitats map

Drawing No.:

EBD\_4676\_DR003

Central Eastings, Northings:

523351, 239772

Drawn by:

JS

Approved by:

BG

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LEGEND



Site Boundary (0.57 ha)



Surveyor Locations



Location (1:10,000):



Project:

**Glebe House Stables**

Client:

**Patrick Smyth**

Drawing Title:

**Surveyor Locations**

Drawing No.:

EBD\_4676\_DR004

Scale (@A3):

1:181

Central Eastings, Northings:

523348, 239736

Date Drawn:

07/08/2025

Drawn by:

JS

Approved by:

BG

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## Appendix 3 - Definitions of the Geographic Context of Habitat Importance

| Geographic Context of Importance   | Examples                                                                                                                                                                                                     |
|------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| International value                | Ramsar Sites, Special Protection Areas, Biosphere Reserves, Special Areas of Conservation. Sites supporting populations of internationally important species.                                                |
| National value                     | SSSIs or non-designated Sites meeting SSSI selection criteria, NNRs, Marine Nature Reserves, NCR Grade 1 Sites. Sites containing viable areas of key habitats identified in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. |
| Regional value                     | Sites containing viable areas of threatened habitats listed in a Regional BAP (or some Natural Areas), comfortably exceeding SINC criteria, but not exceeding SSSI criteria.                                 |
| County / Metropolitan              | Sites meeting the criteria for county or metropolitan designation (SINC, CWS, etc.). Ancient semi-natural woodland, LNRs or viable areas of key habitat types listed in county BAPs/Natural Areas.           |
| District / Borough                 | Undesignated Sites or features considered to appreciably enrich the habitat resource in the District or Borough.                                                                                             |
| Local i.e., Parish / Neighbourhood | Undesignated Sites or features which appreciably enrich the habitat resource within the Parish or Neighbourhood.                                                                                             |
| Negligible value                   | Low grade and widespread habitats.                                                                                                                                                                           |

## Appendix 4 - Definitions of the Geographic Context of Species Importance

| Geographic Context of Importance   | Examples                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |
|------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| International                      | <p>Any regularly occurring population of an internationally important species, which is threatened or rare in the UK. i.e. it is a UK Red Data Book species or listed as occurring in 15 or fewer 10km squares in the UK (categories 1 and 2 in the UK BAP) or of uncertain conservation status or of global conservation concern in the UK BAP.</p> <p>A regularly occurring, nationally significant population/number of any internationally important species.</p> |
| National                           | <p>Any regularly occurring population of a nationally important species which is threatened or rare in the region or county (see local BAP).</p> <p>A regularly occurring, regionally or county significant population/number of any nationally important species.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                |
| Regional                           | <p>Any regularly occurring, locally significant population of a species listed as being nationally scarce which occurs in 16-100 10km squares in the UK or in a Regional BAP or relevant Natural Area on account of its regional rarity or localisation;</p> <p>A regularly occurring, locally significant number of a regionally important species.</p>                                                                                                              |
| County/ Metropolitan               | <p>Any regularly occurring, locally significant population of a species which is listed in a County/Metropolitan “red data book” or BAP on account of its regional rarity or localisation;</p> <p>A regularly occurring, locally significant number of a County/Metropolitan important species.</p>                                                                                                                                                                   |
| District / Borough                 | <p>A population of a species that is listed in a District/Borough BAP because of its rarity in the locality or in the relevant Natural Area profile because of its regional rarity or localisation;</p> <p>A regularly occurring, locally significant number of a District / Borough important species during a critical phase of its life cycle.</p>                                                                                                                 |
| Local i.e., Parish / Neighbourhood | <p>Species that are not threatened but are valued at a local level on intrinsic appeal.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| Negligible                         | <p>Common or widespread species.</p>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |

## Appendix 5 - Baseline Condition Assessment Tables

## Appendix 6 - Proposed Habitat Condition Assessment Tables

## Appendix 7 - Proposed Enhancements

| Products                                                                            | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    | <p><b>Vivara Pro Build-In Half Open Nest Box</b></p> <p>This half open nest box has been designed to suit the breeding environment of several bird species, including robins, wagtails, common and black redstarts, and wrens. It's location will influence which species is attracted.</p> <p><a href="https://www.nhbs.com/vivara-pro-build-in-half-open-nest-box">https://www.nhbs.com/vivara-pro-build-in-half-open-nest-box</a></p>                                                                                                                                          |
|   | <p><b>Integrated Eco Bat Box</b></p> <p>Designed to be built into a new build or renovation, these bat boxes will provide a permanent roost space for a range of species. Sized to replace six standard UK bricks, they can be built directly into the masonry where they will be held in place by the surrounding mortar.</p> <p><a href="https://www.nhbs.com/integrated-eco-bat-box">https://www.nhbs.com/integrated-eco-bat-box</a></p>                                                                                                                                       |
|  | <p><b>Bat access tile set</b></p> <p>A tile shaped to provide an access point for bats under roofing tiles. These are of most benefit to crevice dwelling species but can also provide access to the roof void for free-hanging species.</p> <p>Bitumen 1f type felt must be used in roofs fitted with these tiles and a hole should be cut into the felt beneath the tile to allow access to the roof cavity.</p> <p>Available in a range of materials and colours.</p> <p><a href="https://www.nhbs.com/bat-access-tile-set">https://www.nhbs.com/bat-access-tile-set</a></p>   |
|  | <p><b>Hedgehog gravel boards</b></p> <p>A gravel board for use with slotted posts to allow hedgehogs free passage between gardens. Holes 13cm x 13cm could be installed at the base of any gravel board.</p> <p><a href="https://www.jacksons-fencing.co.uk/product/sc_667610/hedgehog-gravel-board-for-use-with-slotted-posts-1.83m-x-150-x-28mm-incl.1-x-end-packer-1-x-length-packer-jakcured">https://www.jacksons-fencing.co.uk/product/sc_667610/hedgehog-gravel-board-for-use-with-slotted-posts-1.83m-x-150-x-28mm-incl.1-x-end-packer-1-x-length-packer-jakcured</a></p> |



### Hedgehog Highways

Number of signs/stencils: 112 (2 per hole)

Hedgehog highways are formed by a series of ground-level holes in boundary fences. The holes must be 150 mm x 150 mm and marked on both sides by either a sign (see left and link below) or a spray-painted stencil labelling them as:

“Hedgehog Highway

Please keep this hole open”.

<https://www.arkwildlife.co.uk/product/hedgehog-highway-sign/>