Whitcher Wildlife Ltd.
Ecological Consultants.

BURNTWOOD SPORTS COMPLEX.

MAP REF: SE 42323 10948

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT.

Ref No: **260148/EcIA/Rev1.**

Date: **11th May 2026.**

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1. INTRODUCTION.

1.1. There are plans to develop an area of land at Burntwood Sports Complex with a new padel board club, padel board courts and football pitch.

1.2. Whitcher Wildlife Ltd has been commissioned to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site to establish whether there are any issues that may affect the proposed works.

1.3. That survey was carried out on 26th January 2026.

1.4. This report outlines the findings of that survey and converts the PEA into an Ecological Impact Assessment. Revision 1 includes modifications resultant in a response from the Local Authority.

1.5. Appendices I and II of this report provides additional information on specific species and are designed to assist the reader in understanding the contents of this report.

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2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY.

2.1. Prior to visiting the site, the survey area was cross referenced to maps and aerial photographs to give a general idea of the habitats and potential issues within the area and to identify potential access and walking routes.

2.2. The survey area was walked where access was agreed and public rights of way were used where no access was agreed. All habitats within and immediately around the survey area were documented and the dominant species within that habitat listed in line with the UK Habitat Classification methodology to identify the broad habitat types throughout the survey area.

2.3. The survey area and immediate surrounding area was thoroughly searched for evidence of badger (*Meles meles*) activity by looking for the following signs in line with Harris S, Cresswell P and Jefferies D (1989). *Surveying Badgers*. Mammal Society: -

* Badger setts.
* Badger latrines or dung pits.
* Badger snuffle holes and evidence of foraging.
* Badger paths.
* Badger prints in areas of soft mud.
* Badger hairs caught on fencing.

2.4. The survey area was searched for watercourses and where found all watercourses within the survey area and for approximately 50m in each direction were thoroughly searched for evidence of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) activity by looking for the following signs, in line with Rob Strachan, Tom Moorhouse and Merryl Gelling (2011). *Water Vole Handbook: Third Edition*: -

* Water vole burrows.
* Water vole faeces and latrines.
* Water vole feeding stations.
* Water vole runs.
* Water vole prints in areas of soft mud.
* Water vole lawns.
* Predator field signs.

2.5. The survey area was searched for watercourses and where found all watercourses within the survey area and for approximately 50m in each direction were thoroughly searched for evidence of otter (*Lutra lutra*) activity by looking for the following signs

in line with the P Chanin (2003). *Monitoring the Otter* and *Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers: Monitoring Series No10 Guidelines: -*

* Otter prints in soft mud.
* Otter spraints.
* Otter Holts.

2.6. The survey area was searched for watercourses and waterbodies. Where found, and where safe to enter the water, all were thoroughly searched for the presence of crayfish, for approximately 50m in each direction of the site, by searching under rocks and logs. Where stated, crayfish traps were also deployed into the watercourse. All survey work was carried out in accordance with the *Conserving Natural 2000 Rivers Monitoring Series No 1, Protocol for Monitoring the White Clawed Crayfish*.

2.7. The survey area was searched for mature trees and derelict buildings and where found these were checked for potential bat roosting sites in line with Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition)* by looking for the following signs: -

* Holes, cracks or crevices.
* Bat Droppings.

2.8. The land immediately adjacent to the survey area was assessed for bat roosting potential and bat foraging potential. Connective routes and flight lines were also assessed whilst on site and using maps of the area.

2.9. The area within 500m of the survey site was cross referenced to maps to highlight all ponds close to the site. Where possible, all ponds identified were accessed using agreed access or public rights of way to assess the potential for great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) to be present.

2.10. The survey area was assessed for the potential for reptiles and suitable reptile habitats. Where applicable the area was also searched for the presence of reptiles.

2.11. Where appropriate, the habitat within and surrounding the survey area was searched for species such as hazel, oak, honeysuckle, bramble and other species which may provide potential habitat for hazel dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*). Field signs such as feeding remains and nests were also searched for where possible, in line with P Bright, P Morris and T Mitchell-Jones *the Dormouse Conservation Handbook 2nd Edition*.

2.12. Where appropriate, the area within and surrounding the survey area was assessed for its potential to house habitat for red squirrels. Field signs of red squirrels were searched for at least every 50m, looking for any dreys, feeding signs or sightings of red squirrels.

2.13. All surveys were carried out in line with the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM) survey standards and advice.

2.14. This document is prepared in line with The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). This sets out the government policy on biodiversity and nature conservation and places a duty on Planning Authorities to give material consideration to the effect of a development on legally protected species when considering planning applications. The NPPF and the Planning Practice Guidance on "Natural Environment" also promote sustainable development by ensuring that developments take account of the role and value of biodiversity and that it is conserved and enhanced within the development.

2.15. This report is prepared in line with the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act that came into force on 1st Oct 2006. Section 41 (S41) of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.

2.16. This survey was carried out by Derek Whitcher who has over twenty years' experience of surveying for wildlife and has run his own wildlife consultancy since 1998. He has extensive experience of a wide variety of survey techniques for a variety of species of protected wildlife supplemented by attendance on a wide range of training courses through CIEEM, FSC and BCT. As a member of CIEEM he is committed to continuous professional development, a continual process of learning and career development, a condition of CIEEM membership. He holds current Natural England survey licences for barn owl, bat, great crested newt and white clawed crayfish.

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3. ECOLOGICAL BASELINE.

3.1. Data Search Results.

3.1.1. A data search request was submitted to Barnsley Biological Records Centre for existing records of designated sites and protected species within 2km of the survey area.

3.1.2. There are no national or international designated sites in the search area.

3.1.3. There are no Local Wildlife Sites within the search area.

3.1.4. All of the species records provided are records of individual birds or plants with one historic water vole record.

3.1.5. One hundred and eleven bird records were provided, all common bird species and all with only four figure map references.

3.1.6. Eight flowering plant records were provided, two at Brierley Meadows, 960m west of the survey area and the rest with four figure grid references.

3.1.7. One, thirteen year old water vole record, 960m west of the survey area.

3.1.5. The data search results are available to the client on request but must not be placed in the public domain.

3.2. The Surveyed Area.

3.2.1. The aerial photograph below shows the location of Burntwood Court Hotel marked with a red arrow and the surrounding area. The site is located in a rural location surrounded by arable farmland.

3.2.2. The survey area is shown below shaded in red.

3.3. Description of Habitats.

3.3.1. Appendix III of this report contains an annotated map marked up with the varying habitats that are on the site. The primary habitats on and adjacent to the site are: -

- g4 – Modified grassland.
- u1 – Vegetated garden
- h2b – Non-native hedgerow
- u1b – Developed land, sealed surface.
- u1b5 – Building.
- u1e – Built linear feature.

3.3.2. Biodiversity calculations have been calculated using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, the current version at this time.

3.3.3. g4 – Modified grassland.

3.3.3.1. The site comprises a large area of closely mown lawn.

3.3.3.2. Species present include red fescue (*Festuca rubra*), perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale),* white clover *(Trifolium repens*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), thistle (*Cirsium* sp.), chickweed (*Stellaria media*) and sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*).

3.3.3.3. The condition assessment for this habitat is within the Statutory BNG condition assessment document that accompanies this report. The condition of the grassland is poor, passing five criteria but failing the essential criteria.

3.3.4. u1 – Vegetated garden.

Secondary code 847 – Introduced shrubs.

3.3.4.1. Within the grassland there is a shaped shrubbery planted with a variety of garden shrubs.

3.3.4.2. Species present include rose, shrubby cinquefoil (*Dasiphora fruticosa*), elaeagnus *(Elaeagnus ebbingei*), pampas grass (*Cortaderia selloana*), dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), hydrangea (*Hydrangea macrophylla*), evergreen spindle (*Euonymus japonica*) and weigela (*Weigela florida*).

3.3.4.3. There is no condition assessment for this habitat.

3.3.5. h2b – Non-native hedgerow.

3.3.5.1. Across the top of the site there is a short length of hedgerow. The species is coralberry (*Symphoricarpos orbiculatus*), a non-native species.

3.3.5.2. The condition assessment for this habitat is automatically poor.

3.3.6. u1b – Developed land, sealed surface.

3.3.6.1. There is a car park adjacent to the existing Sports Club and a patio around the front. These are both developed land with a sealed surface.

3.3.6.2. There is no condition assessment for this habitat.

3.3.7. u1b5 – Building.

3.3.7.1. There is one building on the site, an electrical substation, as shown below.

3.3.7.2. There is no condition assessment for this habitat.

3.3.8. u1e – Built linear feature.

Secondary code 612 – fence.

3.3.8.1. There is a coated mesh fence around the entire site.

3.3.8.2. There is no condition assessment for this habitat.

3.3.9. Secondary code 200 – Urban tree.

3.3.9.1. There are thirteen conifer trees and twenty-three deciduous trees on the site. Species include Mugo pine (*Pinus mugo*), Norway spruce (*Picea abies*), wild cherry (*Prunus avium),* sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*).

3.3.9.2. The condition assessment for the trees is within the Statutory BNG condition assessment document that accompanies this report. The condition of the deciduous trees is good, passing five of the criteria. The condition assessment for the conifer trees is moderate, passing three of the criteria.

3.4. Description of Fauna.

3.4.1. There were no badger setts or badger field signs present anywhere within the survey area.

3.4.2. There is no watercourse on or close to the site and therefore no habitat for water voles, otters or white clawed crayfish.

3.4.3. The nearest ponds on the OS maps are 500m away from the survey area and these are two fishing ponds with a small pond close by. All three of these ponds were created between 2009 and 2013 according to historic mapping. Additional ponds are 2km from the survey area. The MAGIC map also shows an additional pond 350m west of the survey area. This is an area of rank and disused grassland with no open water shown on any other maps. Any amphibians present in this pond would be likely to remain in that area of grassland.

3.4.3.1. There are no amphibian records in the data search results.
3.4.4. The only building on the site is an electricity sub-station and this does not provide opportunities for roosting bats.

3.4.5. The trees present on the site are not mature enough to provide potential roost features for bats.

3.4.6. The area around the site is very open and exposed and is assessed to be low value habitat for foraging and commuting bats.

3.4.7. There are limited opportunities for nesting birds in the shrubs and hedgerow within the survey area.

3.4.8. The site is assessed to have no potential for reptiles. The site is surrounded by open arable farmland and there are no opportunities for shelter in the survey area.

3.4.9. The site is assessed as an unsuitable habitat for hazel dormouse as it lies well outside of their natural range and the habitat is totally unsuitable.

3.4.10. The site is assessed to be totally unsuitable habitat for red squirrels, located outside the natural range for the species.

3.4.11. There are no alien, invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act present on the site.

3.4.12. The site has low suitability for hedgehogs as the site is surrounded by open arable farmland and there are no opportunities for shelter in the survey area.

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4. ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS, MITIGATION AND RESIDUAL EFFECTS.

4.1. Designated Sites.

4.1.1. Assessment.

There are no international or nationally designated sites or Local Wildlife Sites within the data search area.

4.1.2. Mitigation.

There is no requirement for any mitigation measures.

4.1.3. Residual Effects.

There will be No Negative Residual Impact on designated sites.

4.2. Habitats.

4.2.1. Assessment.

4.2.1.1. Baseline biodiversity calculations have been carried out using the Statutory Metric tool, the current metric at the time of writing this report. The calculations have been completed for baseline area habitats. The condition assessments for each habitat are shown in the attached condition assessment document and the baseline biodiversity values are shown in the attached metric calculation tool as well as being listed below.

4.2.1.2. The predominant habitats present on the site pre development are modified grassland with flower beds and scattered trees.

4.2.1.3. On-site Area Habitats – Pre Development.

Habitat Type	Area in Ha	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units (BU).
Modified grassland	0.864	Low	Poor	1.73
Developed land, sealed surface.	0.076	V.Low	N/A	0
Vegetated garden	0.044	Low	N/A	0.09
Developed land - building	0.001	V.Low	N/A	0
Urban tree deciduous	0.3746	Medium	Good	3.00
Urban tree conifers	0.0529	Medium	Moderate	0.42
Total	**0.985 (Excl tree)**			**5.24**

4.2.1.4. There are 5.24BU of area habitat on the site pre-development.

4.2.1.5. On site Linear Habitats – Pre Development.

Habitat Type	Length in km.	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units (BU).
Non-native hedgerow	0.013	V.Low	Poor	0.01
Total	**0.013**			**0.01**

4.2.1.6. There are 0.01BU of linear habitat on the site pre-development.

4.2.2. Mitigation.

4.2.2.1. The grassland at the north-western end of the site will be retained and enhanced into other neutral grassland with a moderate condition assessment and this area will be managed accordingly. In order to achieve this, the soil will be tested and a suitable grass seed mix planted that will achieve the required condition.

4.2.2.2. All existing trees will be retained except for those that are directly within the footprint on the new clubhouse. In addition, thirty new trees are to be planted across the development site.

4.2.2.3. Four new beds will be created within the modified grassland area. Each of these will be planted with a good quality grass and wild flower mix and these will be managed to form other neutral grassland areas with a moderate condition assessment.

4.2.2.4. Three new sections of native species hedgerows will be planted down the western site boundary to fill in the gaps in the vegetation where it hangs over from adjacent land.

4.2.2.5. This still leaves a shortage of area habitat Biodiversity Units on the site. Therefore, an area of 0.1ha of the adjacent field, in the same ownership, is to be allocated for off-site biodiversity, as shown below.

4.2.2.6. Off-site Area Habitats – Pre Development.

Habitat Type	Area in Ha	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units (BU).
Modified grassland	0.1	Low	Poor	0.40
Total	**0.1**			**0.40**

4.2.3. Residual Effects.

4.2.3.1. The following tables show the post development biodiversity values.

4.2.3.2. On-site Area Habitats – Post Development.

Habitat Type	Area in Ha	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units (BU).
Modified grassland	0.272	Low	Poor	0.52
Developed land, sealed surface.	0.474	V.Low	N/A	0
Other neutral grassland	0.0207	Medium	Moderate	0.14
Other neutral grassland	0.212	Medium	Moderate	1.42
Urban deciduous trees retained	0.0163	Medium	Moderate	2.48
Urban conifers retained	0.0407	Medium	Moderate	0.39
Urban trees – 30	0.1221	Medium	Moderate	0.37
Total	**0.985 (Excl tree)**			**5.33**

4.2.3.3. There are 5.33BU of area habitat on the site post-development.

4.2.3.4. On-site Linear Habitats – Pre Development.

Habitat Type	Length in km.	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units (BU).
Non-native hedgerow retained	0.013	V.Low	Poor	0.01
Native hedgerow	0.026	Low	Moderate	0.09
Total	**0.039**			**0.10**

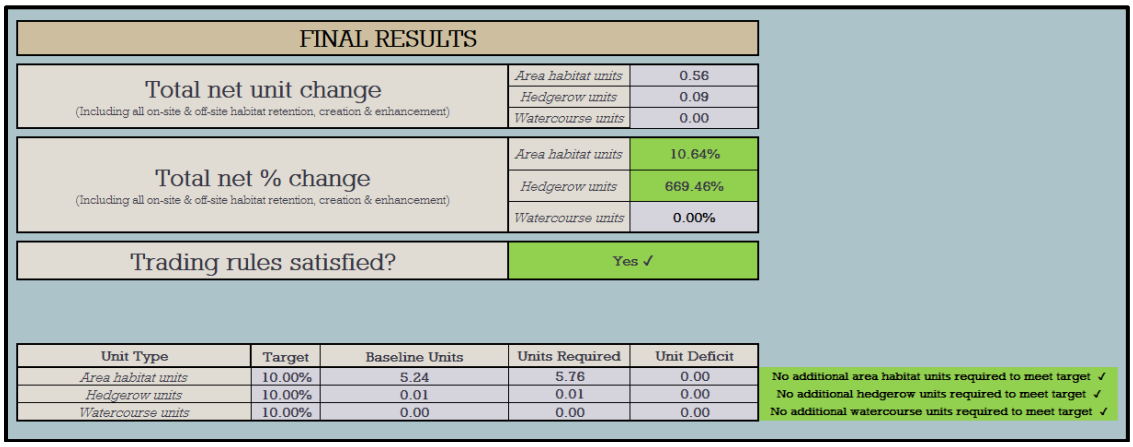
4.2.3.5. There are 0.10BU of linear habitat on the site pre-development.

4.2.3.6. Off-site Area Habitats – Post Development.

Forty additional trees will be planted in the off-site biodiversity area. This will give the post development results as shown below.

Habitat Type	Area in Ha	Distinctiveness	Condition Assessment	Biodiversity Units (BU).
Modified grassland	0.1	Low	Poor	0.37
Rural deciduous trees	0.0629	Medium	Moderate	0.50
Total	**0.1 (excl trees)**			**0.87**

4.2.3.7. The following table shows the overall BNG results.



FINAL RESULTS

Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	0.56
	Hedgerow units	0.09
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	10.64%
	Hedgerow units	669.46%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit	
Area habitat units	10.00%	5.24	5.76	0.00	No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.01	0.01	0.00	No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

4.2.1.8. These figures exceed the requirements for 10% Biodiversity Net Gain in both area and linear habitats and satisfy all trading rules.

4.2.1.9. There will be No Negative Residual Impact on habitats as a result of the proposed development.

4.3. Species- Amphibians.

4.3.1. Assessment.

4.3.1.1. The nearest ponds on the OS maps are 500m away from the survey area and these are two fishing ponds with a small pond close by. All three of these ponds were created between 2009 and 2013 according to historic mapping.

4.3.1.2. The MAGIC map also shows an additional pond 350m west of the survey area. This is an area of rank and disused grassland with no open water shown on any other maps. Any amphibians present in this pond would be likely to remain in that area of grassland.
4.3.1.3. Additional ponds are present 2km from the survey area.

4.3.1.4. The data search results include no amphibian records.

4.3.1.5. No amphibian issues have been raised in connection with any other planning consents granted for this site.

4.3.2. Mitigation.

All works will be undertaken with due care and diligence. In the unlikely event any amphibians are found on the site during the works, they will be safely moved to a position of safety.

4.3.3. Residual Effects.

There will be No Negative Residual Impact on amphibians.

4.4. Species- Nesting Birds.

4.4.1. Assessment.

There are limited opportunities for nesting birds in the trees, shrubs and hedgerow within the survey area and therefore, the proposed development may impact nesting birds if site clearance is carried out between March and August, during the nesting bird season.

4.4.2. Mitigation.

All site clearance works will be undertaken outside the nesting bird season, which extends from March to August each year. Any vegetation clearance undertaken during the nesting season will be preceded by a nesting bird survey from an experienced ecologist and in the unlikely event an active nest is found, the nest plus a suitable buffer zone around will be left undisturbed until the young have fledged.

4.3.3. Residual Effects.

There will be No Negative Residual Impact on nesting birds.

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5. COMPENSATION AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES.

5.1. It will not be appropriate to incorporate biodiversity enhancements in the new buildings on the site in line with the NPPF because of the design of the buildings on site.

5.2. Nesting bird opportunities will be provided in the new trees and hedgerows to be planted on the site.

5.3. In addition, two hedgehog homes will be placed close to the western site boundary.

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Prepared by:	
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Checked by:	
Mitch Greenhalgh BSc ACIEEM	Date: 11th May 2026.

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Appendix I. NESTING BIRD INFORMATION.

Ecology

The nesting season will vary according to the weather each year but generally commences in March, peaks during May and June and continues until September. It is also worth remembering that some birds nest in trees and scrub, but others are ground nesting or prefer man- made structures or buildings.

Surveys

Nesting bird surveys search for potential nest sites in vegetation, buildings etc. Potential nesting sites are observed over a suitable period of time for bird movements or calling male birds that would indicate the presence of a nest. The presence of a nest can be identified from the field signs without the necessity to see the nest itself, thereby avoiding any disturbance of the nests. The best way to avoid this issue is to plan for vegetation clearance to be carried out outside the bird-nesting season.

Legislation

Nesting birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981.

Part 1. -(1) Of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - kills, injures or takes any wild bird; takes, damages or destroys the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or takes or destroys an egg of any wild bird, he shall be guilty of an offence.

Part 1. -(5) of the Act states that: - If any person intentionally: - disturbs any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or is in, on, or near a nest containing eggs or young; or disturbs young of such a bird, he shall be guilty of an offence and liable to a special penalty.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 amends the above by inserting after “intentionally” the words “or recklessly”.

Appendix II. GREAT CRESTED NEWT/AMPHIBIAN INFORMATION.

Ecology

Great Crested Newts breed in ponds and other water bodies. They can begin to migrate to their breeding ponds as early as the first frost-free days in late January with the majority reaching their breeding ponds by mid-March. Timing will be influenced by several factors, primarily evening temperatures above 5^{o}C and rainfall.

The peak egg-laying period is from mid-March to mid-May. The newts will lay their eggs individually, mainly on the leaves of submerged plants. The larva hatch after three weeks and then take another 2-3 months to complete larval development. Adult newts generally leave their breeding ponds from late May onwards.

Once the larvae have completed metamorphosis (the transition from aquatic larvae, efts, to land-adapted juveniles), they emerge from the pond. This emergence begins in late August and generally continues until late October. It takes 2-4 years to reach sexual maturity, during which time the newts will be land based.

Adults and immature newts spend the winter in places that afford protection from frost and flooding. This will generally be underground amongst tree roots, in mammal burrows, or under suitable refuges above ground like deadwood or rubble piles. Hibernation may last from October to February.

Whilst on land, outside the hibernation period, great crested newts will forage at night, taking a wide range of invertebrate prey.

Great Crested Newts therefore spend the majority of their time on land and only visit the ponds for breeding purposes.

Great Crested Newts will travel large distances between ponds and terrestrial refuges. It is recommended that anywhere within 500m of a pond should be treated as potential Great Crested Newt habitat.

Surveys

Walkover surveys will identify the suitability of any ponds within the area for Great Crested Newts by using an HSI assessment. The terrestrial habitat and their links will also be assessed.

Aquatic surveys of newts can be carried out through the trapping of ponds in suitable weather conditions during the breeding season, although these surveys do not provide accurate population estimates.

Terrestrial surveys and exclusions can be conducted between March and September when newts are moving out of breeding ponds.

An experienced surveyor must carry out the surveys and must be in possession of an appropriate Natural England Great Crested Newt survey licence.

It is essential that Great Crested Newt surveys are planned well in advance of any development and ideally before Planning Consent is sought. Surveys can only be carried out at the appropriate time of year and repeat surveys are essential.

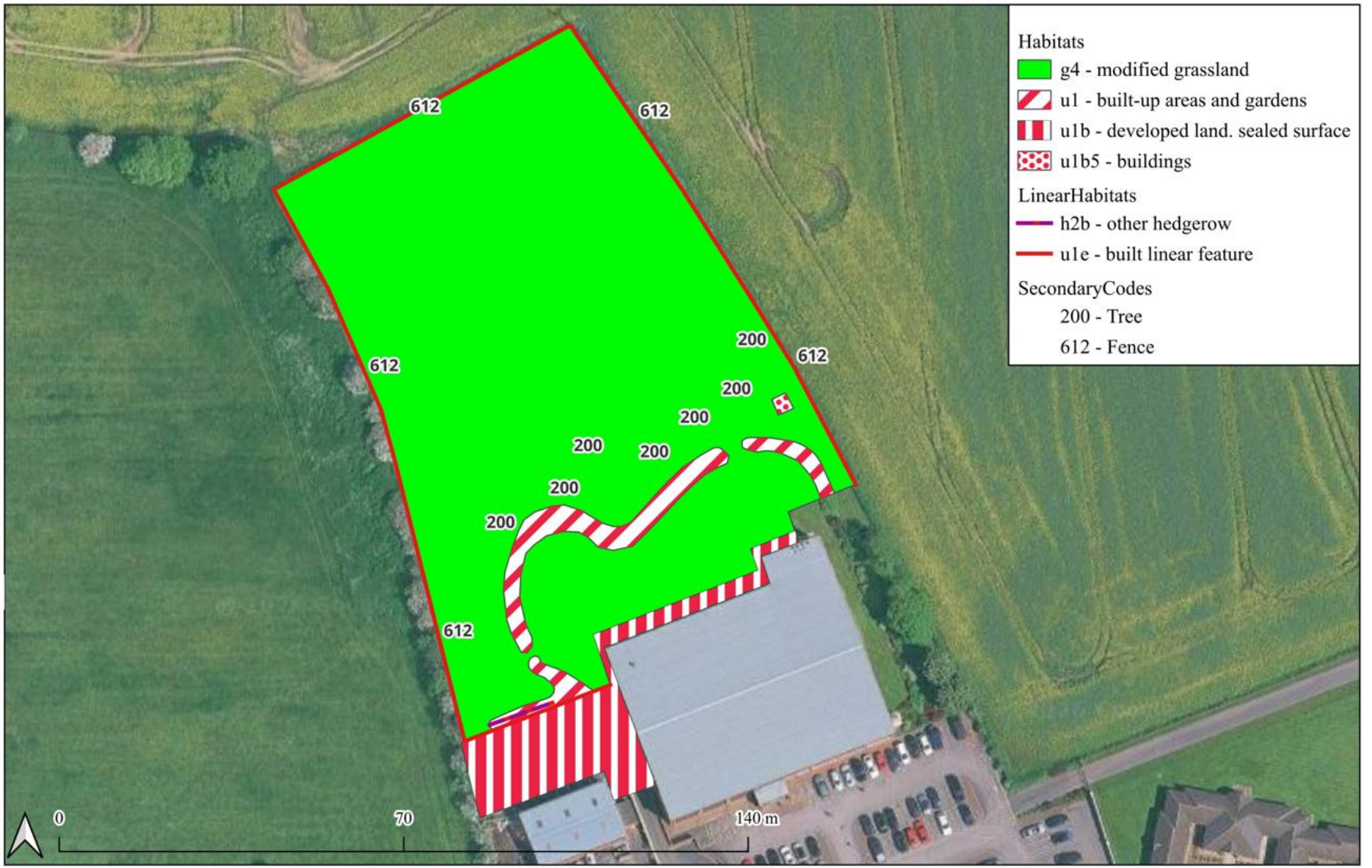
Legislation

Great Crested Newts are protected under Appendix II of the BERN Convention (1982), Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), Annex II and IV of the Habitats Directive, Annex II of the Conservation and Wildlife Regulations (2010) and are listed under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Communities Act (2006) making them a species of principal importance.

This makes it an offence to kill, injure or take any Great Crested Newt, to interfere with any place used for shelter or protection, or to intentionally disturb any animal occupying such a place.

If Great Crested Newts are to be affected by any development, a thorough assessment of the population is essential followed by the design of a comprehensive mitigation package. Only when this has been done can a licence application be submitted to Natural England for approval. It takes 30 working days for a licence application to be determined and the period that mitigation measures take can be measured in months. It is therefore essential to plan well in advance of development commencing.

Appendix III. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA PRE DEVELOPMENT.



Site: Burntwood Sports Complex

Reference: 260148

Date: 29.01.2026

Produced by: Samuel Bentley

Appendix IV. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE SURVEY AREA POST DEVELOPMENT.

Site: Burntwood Sports Complex

Reference: 260148

Date: 05.02.2026

Produced by: Samuel Bentley

Appendix V. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE OFF-SITE AREA PRE DEVELOPMENT.

Site: Burntwood Sports Complex off-site

Reference: 260148

Date: 06.02.2026

Produced by: samuel

Appendix VI. ANNOTATED MAP OF THE OFF-SITE AREA POST DEVELOPMENT.

Site: Burntwood Sports Complex off-site

Reference: 260148

Date: 06.02.2026

Produced by: samuel