

ADVISORY

Homes by Honey
Lee Lane, Royston
South Yorkshire
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been undertaken on behalf of Homes by Honey (the Client) in respect of a proposed residential development off Lee Lane, Royston, in South Yorkshire. It has been produced to inform the Client of potential ecological constraints in relation to a future planning application for the Site.

The Site is located at land south of Lee Lane, on the outskirts of Royston, in South Yorkshire, and comprised a single grassland field which was formerly arable, with scattered trees within, and bounded by hedgerows and trees. The Site is approximately 8.68 hectares (ha) in extent and is centred on grid reference SE 34860 11040.

Impacts to statutory and non-statutory designated sites are considered unlikely due to their distance from the Site, and lack of corresponding habitat types or species likelihood on-Site. However, due to the proximity of Notton Woods LNR/LWS, 0.3km north-west of the Site boundary, best practice measures relating to construction impacts including noise, dust, and light pollution, in addition to run off from construction, will be required to ensure no impacts on the site.

The habitats on-Site are common and widespread in the local area, and generally of low quality, with the grassland recently developing from arable in 2019, however the mature trees and hedgerows offer good value habitat in the wider area. The hedgerows and trees should be retained and enhanced where possible, and any new landscaping should complement the retained on-Site and off-Site habitats and utilise native species where possible. It is recommended that a landscaping buffer along the western boundary of the Site is created in order to provide a functional green corridor through the Site.

The Site has suitability for badgers, bats, nesting birds, GCN, and other terrestrial mammals; with further surveys required for bats and GCN.

Further recommendations for mitigation are found in Section 5.0 of this Report.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Instruction

- 1.1 This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been undertaken on behalf of Homes by Honey (the Client) in respect of a proposed residential development off Lee Lane, Royston, in South Yorkshire. It has been produced to inform the Client of potential ecological constraints in relation to a future planning application for the Site.

Site Description

- 1.2 The Site is located at land south of Lee Lane, on the outskirts of Royston, in South Yorkshire, and comprised a single grassland field which was formerly arable, with scattered trees within, and bounded by hedgerows and trees. The Site is approximately 8.68 hectares (ha) in extent and is centred on grid reference SE 34860 11040. The land is relatively flat and was situated approximately between 109 m and 115 m above ordnance datum (m AOD). The location of the Site is shown below in **Figure 1.1**.



Figure 1.1: Site Location Plan

The Project

- 1.3 It is understood that the proposed development will include a residential development with associated access roads, in addition to hard and soft landscaping. No fixed plans have been provided at the time of writing this report.

Objectives

- 1.4 The primary purpose of this appraisal is to provide a baseline of all ecological considerations relating to any future development proposals. This will include the identification of any potential ecological constraints and opportunities.

Scope of Works

- 1.5 The ecological appraisal was informed by a desk-based study and a Site survey. The approach to this PEA follows best practice published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2019) and the British Standards Institution (BSI, 2013). Further details are provided later in this report.

Legislation and Planning Policy

- 1.6 The following legislation relates to species and habitats that could potentially occur in association with the Site:
- The Environment Act 2021;
 - The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended);
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
 - The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000;
 - Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006;
 - The Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
 - Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996; and
 - The Hedgerow Regulations 1997.
- 1.7 Further information on the legislation above is provided in **Appendix 1**.
- 1.8 Consideration has also been given in this report to relevant National and Local Planning Policy as summarised below.
- 1.9 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) guides Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) when developing their planning policies and considering planning applications affecting protected habitats, sites and species.
- 1.10 In respect of the natural environment, the NPPF states under Paragraph 187 that:

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) Protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) Recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

c) Maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

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;

e) Preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

f) Remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”

1.11 The NPPF Paragraph 192 states that:

“To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

a) 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

b) 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.”

1.12 The NPPF Paragraph 193 also states that:

“When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) 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;

b) 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;

c) 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

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate."

1.13 Through the NPPF and Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, LPAs have a duty to consider habitats and species listed as being of principal importance for nature conservation in England on Section 41 (S41) of the Act when considering a planning application. In addition, the biodiversity duty of local planning authorities also covers species and habitats listed in local biodiversity action plans.

1.14 Additionally, the Barnsley Local Plan 2019 outlines several policies relating to biodiversity and greenspace, including the following which should be considered pertinent to the Site and proposed development:

- *Policy GI1: Green Infrastructure;*
- *Policy BIO1: Biodiversity and Geodiversity*
- *Policy GB1: Protection of Green Belt*
- *Policy GS1: Greenspace*
- *Policy GS2: Green Ways and Public Rights of Way*

2. METHODS

Consultation

- 2.1 The Barnsley Biological Records Centre (BBRC), which is currently run by Sheffield County Council Ecology Service, in addition to West Yorkshire Joint Services (WYJS) were contacted to request records of any locally designated sites and/or protected species from the Site and land within a 2km radius.
- 2.2 In addition, the data sources listed below were also searched to gather additional ecological data of relevance to the project, including the identification of non-designated ecologically sensitive habitats such as vegetation corridors, woodlands, watercourses and standing water.
- Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC);
 - Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 mapping; and
 - Aerial imagery (Google Imagery – imagery dated 2025).

UK Hab Survey

- 2.3 A Site survey was undertaken on 4th December 2025 by Craig Dickson MSc BSc (Hons). Craig has extensive experience in survey and site assessment for protected species and through holding a FISC Level 3 Accreditation is appropriately qualified for the surveys based on the CIEEM competencies for species surveys (CIEEM, 2017).
- 2.4 The visit was completed using UK Hab survey techniques as defined in the standard methodology (UKHab Ltd, 2023).
- 2.5 The aim of the visit was to gather sufficient baseline information on the habitats within the Site in order to allow an interpretation of the ecological value of the land.
- 2.6 In addition, the methodology was extended to include a search for incidental evidence of protected/notable fauna and an assessment of the Site's potential to support protected/notable fauna. Specific consideration was given to the following species:
- Amphibians, including great crested newts (GCN);
 - Badgers *Meles meles*;
 - Bats;
 - Birds;
 - Reptiles; and
 - Priority Species, such as hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*.
- 2.7 Standard methodologies were used where applicable.
- 2.8 Habitats adjacent to the Site were viewed, where possible, from the Site boundaries in order to assess their potential to support protected species that could be utilising the survey Site.

Survey Comments

- 2.9 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal is not usually sufficient for submission with a planning application. The survey methodology highlights habitats and features with potential for protected/notable species but is not designed to provide a comprehensive presence/absence survey. The results of any species-specific surveys recommended as a result of this appraisal should be combined with the results of this appraisal in order to give a full understanding of potential ecological impacts resulting from the development.
- 2.10 The survey was carried out in December 2025, in good weather conditions with sun and scattered clouds. A survey at this time of year is sub-optimal for identifying botanical species as they start to die off, however is sufficient for an experienced surveyor to categorise the habitats and assess the potential for protected species to be present, in line with the aims of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.
- 2.11 In line with standard guidance, the results and recommendations within this report are valid for up to two years from the date of survey, assuming there are no significant changes to the survey Site or its immediate surroundings. Updated survey work may be required to support any future planning applications outside of this time period.

3. RESULTS

Statutory Designated Sites

- 3.1 There were no international statutory designated sites within 6 km of the Site boundary.
- 3.2 Notton Wood Local Nature Reserve (LNR) was the only designated wildlife site within 2km of the Site. The LNR is an area of ancient semi-natural woodland attracting a varied amount of wildlife located approximately 0.3km northwest of the Site.
- 3.3 The Site is also within a Special Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) Risk Zone, but the development type is not included within a risk category, which lists the following criteria:
- Infrastructure: Airports, helipads and other aviation proposals.
 - Minerals, Oil and Gas: Planning applications for quarries, including new proposals, Review of Minerals Permissions (ROMP), extensions, variations to conditions etc. Oil & gas exploration/extraction.
 - Air Pollution: Livestock & poultry units with a floorspace > 500m², slurry lagoons > 750m² & manure stores > 3500 tonnes.
 - Combustion: General combustion processes >50MW energy input. Including: energy from waste incineration, other incineration, landfill gas generation plant, pyrolysis/gasification, anaerobic digestion, sewage treatment works, other incineration/combustion.
 - Discharge: Any discharge of water or liquid waste of more than 5m³/day that is discharged to ground (ie to seep away) or to surface water, such as a beck or stream.
- 3.4 As the development is likely to be residential, none of the above criteria are likely to be triggered, such that further assessment is not considered necessary.
- 3.5 Notton Wood is also designated as a Local Wildlife Site, a non-statutory designation, again designated for its ancient semi-natural woodland.

Review of Previous Surveys

- 3.6 RSK Surveyed the Site in 2012, as part of a larger proposal which included additional land to the north and east, by RSK in 2012 (RSK, 2012). The report outlined arable habitats with scattered trees and hedgerows within the confines of the Site, with recommendations for further surveys in relation to bats, GCN and badgers. It is understood that the planning application did not gain approval and the proposed development was abandoned.
- 3.7 BWB surveyed the Site in 2019 as part of former planning application (LLR-BWB-00-XX-RP-YE-0001_EcIA), with planning undetermined upon appeal for a range of reasons.
- 3.8 During the 2019 surveys, the Site was largely the same as in 2012, however, the field was arable and contained cereal crops at the time of the survey, with arable field margins and areas of tall ruderals. The habitats were assessed using JNCC habitat categories.

The Site was found to offer suitable habitat for amphibians, including GCN, badgers, bats, nesting birds and hedgehogs, with further surveys undertaken for GCN and bats.

- 3.9 Six ponds were identified within 500 m of the Site boundary and were subsequently assessed for their potential to support GCN. The ponds were subject to eDNA assessments, in addition to being surveyed by RSK in 2012, with no evidence of GCN in any of the ponds noted in either suite of surveys.
- 3.10 Several of the mature trees on-site contained features potentially suitable to support roosting bats including cracks and rot holes and were subsequently categorised as low-moderate potential to support roosting bats following Aerial Tree Assessments (ATA).

Habitats and Botanical Species

Overview

- 3.11 The UK Hab Survey Results Map with Target Notes (TNs) is provided in **Appendix 2** with accompanying habitat descriptions below. Relevant photographs are shown in **Appendix 3**. Botanical species nomenclature follows Stace (2019).
- 3.12 Habitats recorded comprised a single grassland field with scattered trees, bounded by hedgerows with trees to the north, south, east and west.

g4 Modified grassland

- 3.13 The majority of the Site was a modified grassland field, which was previously arable but has developed beyond being fallow, with grasses now dominating. Perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne* was dominant, with abundant common nettle *Urtica dioica*, and broadleaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, frequent tall fescue *Schedonorus arundinaceus*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, and spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*. Wild radish *Raphanus raphanistrum*, hairy tare *Vicia hirsuta*, hedge mustard *Sisymbrium officinale*, and cleavers *Galium aparine* were all recorded occasionally, in addition to oak *Quercus robur* seedlings throughout the field.
- 3.14 The sward height varied across the field, with taller, denser patches dominated by nettles and dock, in addition to lower areas which were dominated by grasses. The field was inundated at the time of the survey, with mosses *Bryophyte* sp., throughout, suggesting the Site drains poorly.

h2a6 Other native hedgerow

- 3.15 Native hedgerows defined the boundaries of the Site. Some hedgerows had trees (Secondary code 11).
- 3.16 Hedgerow 1 was located on the northern boundary comprising of willow *Salix* sp., oak, dog rose *Rosa canina*, silver birch *Betula pendula* and hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*. A dry ditch was present within the hedgerow. The hedgerow measured up to 4m tall and 3m wide and was unmanaged. Hedge bindweed *Calystegia sepium* was prevalent within the hedgerow, in addition to bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg.

- 3.17 Hedgerow 2 was located on the eastern boundary of the Site, comprising of blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, willow, bramble, hawthorn and elder *Sambucus nigra*. A ditch was present within the hedgerow, which was dry to the south but flooded in the north to an off-Site area. The hedgerow measured up to 4m tall and 3m wide and was unmanaged.
- 3.18 Hedgerow 3 was a short section of hedgerow located on the northern boundary of the eastern extent of the Site, connecting H2 and H4, comprising of predominantly blackthorn with abundant bramble. The hedgerow measured 4 m wide and 3 m high, and was unmanaged
- 3.19 Hedgerow 4 was located on the eastern boundary of the Site comprising of oak, blackthorn, hawthorn, holly *Ilex aquifolium* and bramble, measuring up to 4m tall and 3m wide and was unmanaged.
- 3.20 Hedgerow 5 defined the southern boundary comprising of oak, dog rose, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, elder, field maple *Acer campestre* and holly, measuring up to 4m tall and 3m wide and was unmanaged.
- 3.21 Hedgerow 6 was located on the western boundary, comprising ash, silver birch, snowberry *Symphoricarpos* sp., hawthorn, elder, oak, hazel, dog rose and beech *Fagus sylvatica*. Associated ground flora included rosebay willowherb *Epilobium angustifolium*, mugwort *Artemisia vulgaris*, common nettle and bracken *Pteridium* sp. This hedgerow continued on the opposite side of a track towards the northeast corner of the site. The track itself comprised bare earth with ephemeral/short perennial vegetation including white clover *Trifolium repens*, plantain, vetch *Vicia* sp. and meadow grass *Poa* sp., The hedgerow measured up to 4m tall and 3m wide and was unmanaged.
- 3.22 Under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997, Hedgerow 6 qualifies as an important hedgerow under both Criterion 7 and Criterion 8. Criterion 7 is satisfied as there are over 7 woody species within the hedgerow under Sub-paragraph (1)(a), under sub-paragraph (3)(d) for the presence of woody species, whilst also possessing features under sub-paragraph (4), notably (b), (e), (h), and (i). The hedge also qualifies under Criterion 8 sub-paragraph (a), and (b), for both being a Public Right of Way (PRoW) and containing at least 4 woody species in accordance with paragraph 7(3) and at least 2 of the features specified in paragraph 7(4)(a) to (g).

Rural Trees

- 3.23 Numerous mature trees were present within the hedgerows including ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, oak *Quercus* sp. and willow *Salix* sp. Additionally, three stand-alone mature oak and a single ash tree were present within the field.

Off-Site Habitats

- 3.24 Off-Site habitats adjacent to the boundary included further arable land to the north, beyond Oldcoates Road, and east of the Site. Immediately south of the Site was Leys Lane, with Dinnington beyond, whilst the west were playing fields associated with a nearby school, in addition to a recent residential development to the north-west.

Protected / Notable Species

Badgers

- 3.25 A badger latrine and snuffle hole were noted on-Site during the Survey (TN1), with mammal runs noted through hedgerows on all aspects of the Site. No setts were observed and sett building opportunities would be limited to the boundaries of the Site. The Site has suitable foraging habitat in the grassland, with good connectivity to the wider area.
- 3.26 No records of badgers in the past ten years were provided in the data search, and the Site did not fit into a WYES area of increased badger probability.

Bats

- 3.27 There were two recent records of bats within 2 km of the Site in the past ten years, both of which related to noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, approximately 1.25 km south of the Site boundary in 2018 and 2021.
- 3.28 The Site has suitable foraging habitat, with the Site functionally connected to the wider area with the hedgerows extending away from the Site. The Site is unlit; however, it is anticipated that there would be some light spill from adjacent residential properties.
- 3.29 A total of 17 trees on-Site had features suitable to support roosting bats (TN2), 13 of which were located within hedgerows, with four trees within the centre of the Site presenting minor features. The trees were predominantly oak, with ash and willow also noted. There were no structures on-Site which could support roosting bats. **Table 3.1** below details the trees assessed for roosting features, photographs are included within **Appendix 3**.

Table 3.1: Bat Roost Assessment (Trees)

Tree Reference	Description	Assessment
T1	Mature oak tree with large trunk cavity	PRF-I
T2	Mature oak tree with minor rot holes higher in canopy	PRF-I
T3	Several canker holes and large cavity at base, suggestive of internal rot	PRF-I
T4	Mature ash tree with minor gaps and lots of bracket fungus, suggestive of internal rot	PRF-I
T5	Located in H1, large trunk hollow	PRF-I
T6	Possible obscured features, multi-stem or multiple trees with ivy coverage	PRF-I
T7	Oak in H1 with minor gaps in main trunk	PRF-I
T8	Willow in H2, with broken limb, lifted bark and rot holes	PRF-I

Tree Reference	Description	Assessment
T9	Dead tree with rot holes in main trunk	PRF-I
T10	Partially fallen oak tree in H5 with trunk split and tear outs	PRF-I
T11	Oak in H5 with minor gaps and some lifted bark	PRF-I
T12	Oak in H5, partially fallen with a huge tear out and exposed features	PRF-I
T13	Also, within H5, recent limb split and dead limb with lifted bark	PRF-I
T14	Western extent of H5, large tear on main trunk with exposed gaps	PRF-I
T15	Within H6, rot holes and trunk cavity	PRF-I
T16	North of T15 in H6, minor lifted bark	PRF-I
T17	Ash tree at northern extent of H6, canker holes and minor Ivy	PRF-I

Birds

- 3.30 The data search identified four species of birds currently listed on Schedule 1 of the WCA 1981, as amended, including hobby *Falco subbuteo*, brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*, fieldfare *Turdus pilaris* and redwing *Turdus iliacus* were recorded. Five species currently listed on BoCC5 Red List were provided, including yellowhammer *Emberiza citrinella*, house sparrow *Passer domesticus*, willow tit *Poecile montana*, skylark *Alauda arvensis* and linnet *Linaria cannabina*. Of the aforementioned species, house sparrow and yellowhammer are also listed on the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)
- 3.31 The grassland provides suitable foraging and nesting habitat for ground nesting birds, whilst the hedgerows, and trees provide nesting opportunities for passerine species, and perches for raptors, with evidence of historic nesting noted within the hedgerows and trees. The Site is likely subject to routine disturbance from dog walkers, owing to the Public Right of Way (PRoW) on the western boundary.
- 3.32 Bird species recorded on-Site during the survey included common pheasant *Phasianus colchicus* and buzzard *Buteo buteo*.

Reptiles & Amphibians

- 3.33 There were no records of reptiles and some records of amphibians within 2 km of the Site in the past ten years. The amphibian records were all from 2018, at two locations 1.1 km south-west and 1.2 km south of the Site boundary, including common frog *Rana temporaria*, common toad *Bufo bufo*, and smooth newt *Lissotriton vulgaris*. There were no records of GCN provided.

- 3.34 The Site does not fall within a GCN Strategic Opportunity Area. However, it is within an Amber risk zone for the species, falling under the GCN District Level Licencing (DLL) scheme for Yorkshire.
- 3.35 The Site provided suitable terrestrial habitat for amphibians including great crested newts (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* providing suitable vegetative cover and foraging areas, particularly within the boundaries. A search of aerial photography and OS maps highlighted the presence of five ponds within 500m of the Site as indicated on **Figure 3.1**, below.



Figure 3.1: Ponds within 500m of the Site

- 3.36 Ponds 2, 3, and 4 were all located immediately off-Site, with Pond 4 dry at the time of the survey, despite recent rainfall, and no access to Pond 2, however Pond 3 was holding some water with its presence likely attributed to overflowing and blocked ditches within the hedgerow. Pond 1 and Pond 5 were not assessed during the PEA; however, all ponds were assessed by BWB in 2019, and prior to this in 2012, with no GCN ever being recorded. As such, it is considered unlikely that the species would have come to inhabit the ponds in the intervening time.

Other Species

- 3.37 There were limited records of west European hedgehogs within 2 km of the Site in the past ten years, associated with residential areas, however, the grassland and hedgerows at the Site could offer suitable foraging and commuting habitat with good connectivity to the wider area.
- 3.38 No records of brown hare *Lepus europaeus* were provided in the data search, however, the habitats on-Site are considered suitable to support resting and commuting brown hare.

Invasive Species

- 3.39 No invasive species were noted on-Site at the time of the survey, and whilst there were records of some species, they were not associated with the Site or functionally connected to the Site, being located primarily within the confines of Wetherby town. As such invasive species are not considered a constraint and are not mentioned further in this report.

4. EVALUATION

- 4.1 This section identifies the effects on habitats and species during different stages of the development, prior to any mitigation measures.

Designated Sites

- 4.2 Direct impacts to statutory designated sites are considered unlikely due to their distance from the Site, and lack of corresponding habitat types or species likelihood on-Site. However, due to the proximity of Notton Woods LNR/LWS, 0.3km north-west of the Site boundary, best practice measures relating to construction impacts including noise, dust, and light pollution, in addition to run off from construction, will be required to ensure no impacts on the site.

Habitats

- 4.3 The habitats on-Site are common and widespread in the local area, and generally of low quality, with the grassland recently developing from arable in 2019, however the mature trees and hedgerows offer good value habitat in the wider area. The hedgerows and trees should be retained and enhanced where possible, and any new landscaping should complement the retained on-Site and off-Site habitats and utilise native species where possible.
- 4.4 It is recommended that a landscaping buffer along the western boundary of the Site is created in order to provide a functional green corridor through the Site.

Species

Badgers

- 4.5 There is a chance that badgers may utilise the Site for foraging / commuting, if present in the wider area. Mitigation will be required during construction works to ensure no badgers are harmed.

Bats

- 4.6 Seventeen trees on-Site were considered suitable to support roosting bats and will require surveys if being removed or impacted by the works. However, if retained as part of the development, no further surveys are required.
- 4.7 The Site is largely unlit, though some light spill is anticipated from adjacent residential properties. The hedgerows and trees provide a commuting corridor across the Site, and the western boundary, may be utilised by foraging / commuting bats in the local area.
- 4.8 It is recommended that bat activity surveys be undertaken to determine the usage of the Site by local species of bats; the results of which will inform further mitigation and design aspects in relation to commutability for foraging and commuting bats around the development.

Birds

- 4.9 The grassland, trees and hedgerows on-Site could support a range a nesting bird species, including ground nesting birds, and the loss of this habitat would have a detrimental impact on local populations of birds. There is chance that nesting birds could be impacted during the proposed works

Reptiles & Amphibians

- 4.10 There were no recent records of reptiles within 2 km of the Site boundary in the past ten years, with some records of common species of amphibians. However, previous assessments of the nearby ponds between 2012 and 2019 found no evidence of GCN or other amphibians.
- 4.11 However, the Site does fall within an Amber Risk Zone for the GCN DLL for Yorkshire, such that further assessment should be undertaken to determine the presence or likely absence of the species.

Other Species

- 4.12 The Site is suitable to support hedgehogs, and brown hare which may utilise the grassland and hedgerow for foraging, commuting and resting. A precautionary approach to vegetation clearance will be required to ensure no mammals are harmed during the works.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Further surveys will be required to inform a future planning application, details of which and their seasonal constraints are provided in **Table 5.1** below.

Table 5.1: Further Survey Requirement

Species	Rationale	Timing
Bats (Roosting)	<p>Seventeen PRF-I trees identified across the Site.</p> <p>Presence / absence surveys will inform the requirement for further surveys, mitigation or licencing.</p>	<p>One Aerial Tree Assessments (ATA) of trees assessed as having PRF-I, if impacted by the proposed works. Or alternatively the tree can be soft felled under supervision if bat boxes are installed as compensation.</p> <p>If the trees are not able to be safely climbed, bat emergence surveys must be undertaken instead.</p> <p>All surveys must be within the main bat season (May – August, inclusive) to inform a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL), if required.</p>
Bats (Activity)	<p>Seasonal activity surveys to determine the usage of the Site for foraging and commuting bats.</p> <p>Surveys should include remote detector monitoring.</p>	<p>Spring (March – May, inclusive), summer (June – August, inclusive), and autumn (September – October)</p> <p>Surveys to be spaced at least three weeks apart, with static detector deployed for a week in each season.</p>
GCN	<p>Five ponds within 500 m of the Site boundary, not assessed for some time.</p> <p>eDNA assessments of the ponds, where access allows, will help to discount the requirement for licencing</p>	<p>Mid-April – June, inclusive, as long as the ponds are holding a sufficient volume of water.</p>

5.2 Further to the above protected species surveying, the following reports are also recommended to accompany a future planning application for the Site.

5.3 It is recommended that the hedgerows and mature trees are retained and incorporated into any future development proposals wherever possible. Where any mature trees or hedgerows are lost these should be replaced on a least 2:1 ratio. Furthermore, if H6 assessed as being important under the Hedgerow Regs is removed,

further approval be required by the LPA and a “Hedgerow Removal Notice” will have to be submitted, with bespoke compensation agreed.

- 5.4 A full Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment of the Site, once fixed plans are available in addition to landscaping. Landscaping at the Site should seek to retain as many of the mature trees as possible, with additional enhancement and new landscaping provision.
- 5.5 An Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) should be undertaken to determine the impacts of the proposed development on the habitats, and protected species in line with current guidance and legislation.
- 5.6 An Ecological Design Strategy (EDS) or similar document should be developed to ensure that retained ecological features are protected and any new features added are managed accordingly to ensure long-term success and an improvement to biodiversity.
- 5.7 General mitigation measures and good practice principals during the construction phase are recommended and should be included within a Construction Ecological Management Plan (CEMP: Biodiversity).
- 5.8 Finally, the following pre-commencement surveys are recommended and should be factored into the timetables of works. See **Table 5.2** below.

Table 5.2: Pre-commencement Survey Requirement

Species	Rationale	Timing
Nesting birds	Survey will be required prior to the Site clearance only if carried out during the period March - August (inclusive). This would allow any active nests to be identified and protected.	Pre-clearance.
Pre-commencement checks for mammals	Species of terrestrial mammals may utilise the hedgerows for refuge, and any clearance of these habitats could potentially injure / kill them without mitigation in place.	Pre-clearance. Should any evidence of protected species be found, all works must cease, and further assessment be undertaken.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Site has suitability for badgers, bats, nesting birds, GCN, and other terrestrial mammals; with further surveys required for bats and GCN.

- 6.2 Any future development of the Site should be done so in accordance with the above recommendations, and changes to the boundary will require additional assessment to ensure that no habitats or species of importance are harmed during the works.

7. REFERENCES

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- Institute of Lighting Professionals and Bat Conservation Trust (2023) Bats and Artificial Light at Night – Guidance Note 08/23.
- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024) National Planning Policy Framework. ISBN: 978-1-4098-5302-2.
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Relevant Legislation

The following text provides information on the key legislation, which is applicable to this survey.

The main wildlife legislation relevant in the UK is as follows:

European Legislation

The relevant sections of the EC Directives and international conventions are summarised below:

- EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitat Directive 1992) as amended (92/43/EEC)

The Directive requires Member States to introduce a range of measures including the protection of species listed in the Annexes. The 189 habitats listed in Annex I of the Directive and the 788 species listed in Annex II, are to be protected by means of a network of sites. Once adopted, these are designated by Member States as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), and along with Special Protection Areas (SPAs) classified under the EC Birds Directive. The Habitats Directive introduces the precautionary principle; that disturbance to the designated sites can only be permitted having ascertained no adverse effect on the integrity of the Site.

- EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive 1979) as amended (79/409/EEC)

The main provisions of the Directive includes; the maintenance of the favorable conservation status of all wild bird species across their distributional range.

- Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979)

The Convention imposes legal obligations on contracting parties, protecting over 500 wild plant species and more than 1000 wild animal species.

UK Legislation

The sections of UK legislation considered to be of relevance include:

- The Environment Act 2021

This legislation was revised in response to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy consultation on 19 December 2023 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The Act mandates the requirement of 10% net gains for biodiversity and as such should be the aim of all new developments.

- The Conservation (Natural Habitats, and c.) Regulations 2017 (as amended)

This transposes the Habitats Directive into national law. The Regulations provide for the designation and protection of 'European sites', and the protection of 'European protected species.

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA)

This consolidates and amends existing national legislation to implement the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive) in Great Britain.

- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW)

This act strengthens wildlife enforcement legislation.

- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act)

This act formed Natural England which places a duty on all public authorities, including local planning authorities to consider biodiversity. This Act also requires a list of species of habitats composed by the Secretary of State to help provide specific conservation targets. These species are known as Priority Species or Species of Principal Importance (SPI). These habitats are known as Priority habitats or Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI). Both SPI and HPI are listed under Section 41 of this Act. The NPPF also affords protection to these HPI's and SPI's.

- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992

This act affords protection to badgers and their setts including the destruction or obstructing access to a sett.

- Wild Mammals Protection Act 1996

This act provides protection to all wild species of mammal in the UK and is more related to mammal welfare but is directly applicable during any site clearance or other works to a site which could harm mammals.

- The Hedgerow Regulations 1997

The regulations require landowners to notify local planning authorities if they want to remove a hedgerow that is over 20 metres long or that joins another hedgerow. The authorities can prohibit the removal of a hedgerow if it is important from archaeological, historical, landscape or wildlife perspectives.

Species-Specific Legislation

Species specific legislation is provided in the following Table:

Species Groups	Legislation	Restrictions
Amphibians, including Great Crested Newt (GCN)	Sch. 5 and Sch. 9 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.	It is an offence to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Sell; • Transport; • Advertise for sale. For GCN, as above but includes: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kill; • Injure; • Disturb; • Destroy or obstruct access to any place used for rest or shelter.

Badgers	The Protection of Badgers Act 1992.	<p>It is an offence to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Wilfully kill, injure, take, or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or attempt to do so; • Possess any dead badger or any part of, or anything derived from, a dead badger; • Intentionally interfere with a sett by disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, damaging or destroying a sett, causing a dog to enter a sett, or obstructing access to it. <p>A badger sett is defined in the legislation as “any structure or place, which displays signs indicating current use by a badger”.</p>
Bats	<p>Sch. 5 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).</p> <p>Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).</p>	<p>It is an offence to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (or take) bats; • Deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost or not); • Disturb roosting bats or obstruct access to their roosts; • Damage or destroy bat roosts.
Birds	<p>Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).</p> <p>Sch. 1 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).</p>	<p>It is an offence to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kill; • Injure; • Take any wild bird, their eggs or nest (with the exception of those on Sch. 2). <p>As above but includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disturbing birds at their nest, or their dependent young.
Reptiles	<p>Sch. 5 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).</p> <p>Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.</p>	<p>It is an offence to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kill; • Injure; • Sell. <p>For Smooth Snake and Sand Lizard, as above but includes:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Disturb; • Damage; • Destroy or obstruct access to any place used for rest or shelter.
Hedgehogs and Other Mammals	<p>SPI – Section 41 NERC Act.</p> <p>Wild Mammals Protection Act 1996.</p>	Protection from harm, injury intent to harm.

Otter	Sch. 5 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).	It is an offence to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (or take); • Deliberately disturb; • Disturb or obstruct access to their place of rest or shelter; • Damage or destroy place of rest or shelter; • Possess, control or transport alive or dead.
Water Vole	Sch. 5 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).	It is an offence to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Kill; • Injure; • Take; • Possess or control alive or dead; • Disturb or obstruct access to their place of rest or shelter; • Damage or destroy place of rest or shelter.
Plants	Sch. 8 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Some species are SPI - Section 41 NERC Act.	It is an offence to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Pick; • Uproot; • Trade; • Possess (for trade) any wild plant listed.
Invasive Species (Animal and Plant)	Sch. 9 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).	It is an offence to: <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Release of any animal, plant or microorganism not native to the UK; • Sell; • Cause or allow to spread.

Protected Sites

A network of protected sites, at varying levels, have been put in place across the UK. Further details are provided below;

International Importance

- Natura 2000

Natura 2000 is the name of the European Union-wide network of nature conservation-sites established under the EC Habitats and Birds Directives. This network will comprise Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

SACs are designated under the EC Habitats Directive. The Directive applies to the UK and the overseas territory of Gibraltar. SACs are areas which have been identified as best representing the range and variety within the European Union of habitats and (non-bird) species listed on Annexes I and II to the Directive. SACs in terrestrial areas and territorial marine waters out to 12 nautical miles are designated under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended).

New and/or amended Habitats Regulations are shortly to be introduced to provide a mechanism for the designation of SACs and SPAs in UK offshore waters (from 12-200 nm).

National Importance

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

The SSSI series has developed since 1949 as the national suite of sites providing statutory protection for the best examples of the UK's flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features. Most SSSIs are privately-owned or managed; others are owned or managed by public bodies or non-government organisations. The SSSIs designation may extend into intertidal areas out to the jurisdictional limit of local authorities, generally Mean Low Water in England and Northern Ireland; Mean Low Water of Spring tides in Scotland. In Wales, the limit is Mean Low Water for SSSIs notified before 2002, and, for more recent notifications, the limit is Lowest Astronomical Tides, where the features of interest extend down to LAT. There is no provision for marine SSSIs beyond low water mark. Originally notified under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, SSSIs have been renotified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Improved provisions for the protection and management of SSSIs were introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (in England and Wales) and the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.

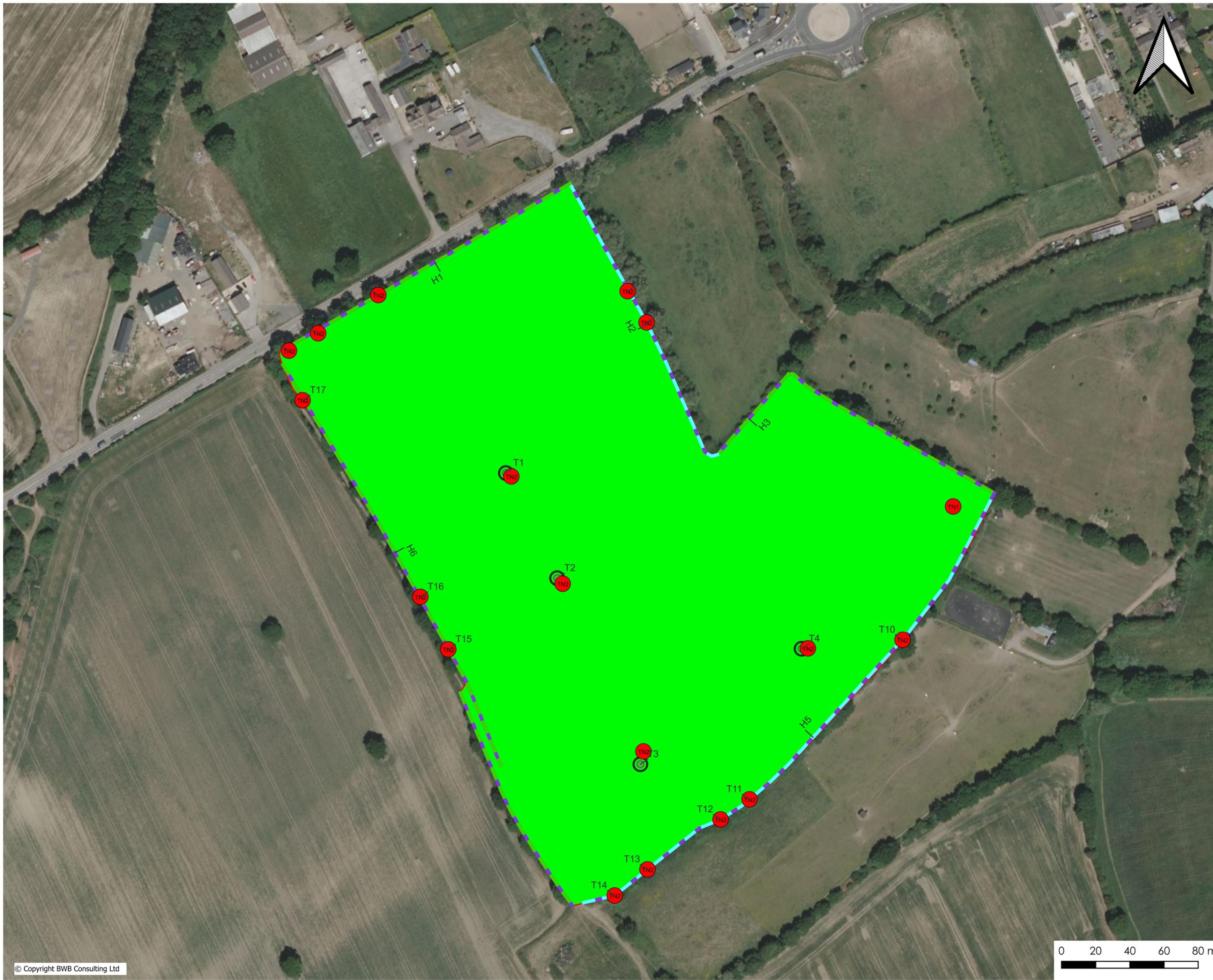
Regional/Local Importance

- Wildlife Sites

Local authorities for any given area may designate certain areas as being of local conservation interest. The criteria for inclusion, and the level of protection provided, if any, may vary between areas. Most individual counties have a similar scheme, although they do vary.

These sites, which may be given various titles such as 'Listed Wildlife Sites' (LWS), 'County Wildlife Sites' (CWS), 'Local Nature Conservation-sites' (LNCS), 'Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation' (SINCs), or 'Sites of Nature Conservation Importance' (SNICIs), together with statutory designations, are defined in local and structure plans under the Town and Country Planning system and are a material consideration when planning applications are being determined.

Appendix 2: UK Hab Plan



Notes

1. Do not scale this drawing. All dimensions must be checked/ verified on site. If in doubt ask.
2. This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant architects, engineers and specialists drawings and specifications.
3. All dimensions in millimetres unless noted otherwise. All levels in metres unless noted otherwise.
4. Any discrepancies noted on site are to be reported to the engineer immediately.

- Key**
- Site Boundary
 - Modified grassland
 - Native hedgerow with trees
 - Native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch
 - Large tree
 - Target Notes

Rev	Date	Details of issues/ revision	CD	SS
P01	12.12.25	PRELIMINARY ISSUE		

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Client

Homes by Honey

Project Title

Lee Lane, Royston

Drawing Title

Baseline Habitat Plan

Drawn:	CD	Reviewed:	SS
BWB Ref:	255953	19/01/2026	Scale@A3: 1:2000

Drawing Status

Final

Project - Originator - Zone - Level - Type - Role - Number	Status	Rev
CSN-BWB-ZZ-XX-D-EE-0001	S2	P01



Appendix 3: Site Photographs



Photograph 1: Modified grassland field



Photograph 2: Hedgerow 1



Photograph 3: Hedgerow 2



Photograph 4: Hedgerow 3



Photograph 5: Hedgerow 4



Photograph 6: Hedgerow 5



Photograph 7: Hedgerow 6



Photograph 8: Tree 1



Photograph 9: Tree 2



Photograph 10: Tree 3



Photograph 11: Tree 4



Photograph 12: Badger latrine and snuffle hole



Photograph 13: Pond 3 within H2 holding water

