



**Preliminary Ecological Appraisal
Condition Assessment**

**Land at Bird in Eye Farm,
Framfield Road, TN22 5HA**

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LIABILITIES:

Whilst every effort has been made to guarantee the accuracy of this report, it should be noted that living animals and plants are capable of migration/establishing and whilst such species may not have been located during the survey duration, their presence may be found on a site at a later date.

This report provides a snapshot of the species that were present at the time of the survey only and does not consider seasonal variation. Furthermore, where access is limited, or the site supports habitats which are densely vegetated only dominant species may be recorded.

The recommendations contained within this document are based on a reasonable timeframe between the completion of the survey and the commencement of any works. If there is any delay between the commencement of works that may conflict with timeframes laid out within this document or have the potential to allow the ingress of protected species, a suitably qualified ecologist should be consulted.

It is the duty of care of the landowner/developer to act responsibly and comply with current environmental legislation if protected species are suspected or found prior to or during works.

1.0 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 The Ecology Partnership was commissioned by Croudace Homes to undertake a preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) and condition assessment of the land at Bird in Eye Farm, Bird in Eye Hill, Framfield Road, Uckfield TN22 5HA..
- 1.2 The key objectives of a PEA (CIEEM 2017) are to:
- Identify the likely ecological constraints associated with a project;
 - Identify any mitigation measures likely to be required, following the 'Mitigation Hierarchy' (CIEEM 2016; BSI 2013, Clause 5.2);
 - Identify any additional surveys that may be required to inform an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA); and
 - Identify the opportunities offered by a project to deliver ecological enhancement.
- 1.3 This report comprises the:
- Legislative and planning context (Section 1);
 - Assessment methodologies (Section 2);
 - Results (Section 3);
 - Implications for development, including an impact assessment (Section 4 & 5);
 - Conclusions (Section 6).

Site Context

- 1.4 The site is c20.08 ha with the central grid reference TQ48402075. The site is located to the east of Uckfield town centre, south of the B2102. The site is largely managed grassland habitats with the associated Bird in Eye Farm buildings at the centre of the site. Ancient woodland is located to the south and west of the site. Further west is Uckfield, with new development around Uckfield Hospital. To the north, east and south, arable landscape is present in the form of fields, woodlands and hedgerows. The approximately red line boundary is shown in Figure 1 below. Figure 2 shows the red line boundary and the proposed layout.



Figure 1: Approximate location of the site, indicated by the red-line boundary.



Figure 2: Current illustrative proposals for the site

Description of the Proposed Development

- 1.5 The proposals are for outline planning application for the erection of up to 190 dwellings, with associated works, parking, landscaping, publicly accessible open space and SANG provision, with access from the B2102.

Planning Policies

- 1.6 The site was surveyed to assess its ecological value and to ensure the proposals were compliant with relevant planning policy and legislation. Policy guidance is provided by the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023) as well as policies from the Adopted Wealden Local Plan (1998) and Wealden District Council Core Strategy Local Plan (1998). These policies included the following which are considered relevant to ecology, biodiversity and nature conservation;

Adopted Wealden Local Plan (1998):

- *Policy EN15*
- *Policy EN16*

Wealden District Core Strategy Local Plan (2013):

- *WCS12 Biodiversity*

- 1.7 The Environment Bill (Environment Act 2021) received Royal Assent on 9th November 2021 and is now enacted as the Environment Act 2021. Part 6 (Nature and Biodiversity) and Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021 insert a new section 90A and Schedule 7A into the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (TCPA), which contain the provisions requiring mandatory biodiversity net gain for development granted planning permission pursuant to the TCPA. These provisions require developments to provide a biodiversity value post-development that exceeds the predevelopment biodiversity value of the onsite habitats by at least 10%. This was adopted in February 2024 although there are a number of exemptions which may mean that biodiversity net gain is not required. These are listed under government guidance and are as follows:

- Development below a de minimis threshold;
- Householder applications;
- Small scale self-build and custom housebuilding;
- HS2; and
- Biodiversity net gain sites.

1.8 The site has therefore been surveyed to assess its ecological value and to ensure compliance with national and local plan policies and other relevant nature conservation legislation including; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, and the Conservation of Habitats and Species (EU Exit) Regulations 2019.

1.9 The report has been produced with reference to current guidelines for PEA (CIEEM 2017) and in accordance with BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.

2.0 Methodology

Desktop Study

2.1 A desktop study search was completed using an internet-based mapping service (www.magic.gov.uk) for statutory designated sites and an internet-based aerial mapping service (maps.google.co.uk) was used to understand the habitats present in and around the survey area and habitat linkages and features (ponds, woodlands, etc.) within the wider landscape. Data for non-statutory sites, and local protected and notable species within 2km and a review of the previous reports has been made.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

2.2 An extended preliminary ecological appraisal was undertaken on 24th June 2024 by Alexia Tamblyn MA (Oxon) MSc CEcol CEnv MCIEEM FRGS and Matt Pendry BSc (Hons) MCIEEM FISC level 4. The surveyor identified the habitats present, following the standard 'UK Hab' auditing method. The site was surveyed on foot and the existing habitats and land uses were recorded on an appropriately scaled map (JNCC 2010). In addition, the dominant plant species in each habitat were recorded. The potential for the site to support protected species was also assessed.

Protected Species Assessments

2.3 Any evidence of protected species was recorded. Standard methods of search and measures of presence or likely absence based on habitat suitability were used for bats in trees and buildings (Collins 2016), breeding birds¹, dormouse (Bright *et al.* 2006),

¹<https://www.bto.org/our-science/projects/birdatlas/methods/breeding-evidence>

great crested newt (ARG 2010), reptiles (Froglife 2015), badgers (Creswell *et al.* 1990) and water vole (Strachan *et al.* 2011).

Limitations

- 2.4 It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no single investigation could ensure the complete characterisation and prediction of the natural environment. The site was visited over the period of one site visit, as such seasonal variations cannot be observed and potentially only a selection of all species that potentially occur within the site have been recorded. Therefore, the survey provides a general assessment of potential nature conservation value of the site and does not include a definitive plant species list.
- 2.5 The protected species assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species occurring on-site, based on the suitability of the habitat and any direct evidence on site. It should not be taken as providing a full and definitive survey of any protected species group. The assessment is only valid for the time when the survey was carried out. Additional surveys may be recommended if, on the basis of this assessment it is considered reasonably likely that protected species may be present.

3.0 Results

Previous Survey Results

- 3.1 Biological records were acquired from Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SBRC), on April 2019. This information was requested for an area encompassing the proposed development area and adjacent land within c. 2km of its central grid reference.
- 3.2 CSA Environment undertook an extended Phase 1 Habitat survey of the proposed development Site was carried out in fine and dry weather conditions on 12 April 2019. The fields were considered to support species poor grassland, dominated by perennial rye grass and was assessed under the DEFRA metric 2.0 and the habitats were considered to be 'poor'.
- 3.3 The hedgerows were a range from 'moderate' and 'good' condition. All hedgerows are designated as the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) priority habitat (BRIG, 2008), and are therefore adopted as a Habitat of Principle Importance under the NERC Act 2006.

- 3.4 Within the survey area, two areas of ancient woodland were present on site; both of which form Bird in Eye Shaw. Other habitats included semi natural broad-leaved woodland and scrub habitats.
- 3.5 Additional areas were present in the 2019 survey assessment in the proposed SANGS area, These habitats included improved grassland, plantation broad leaved woodland, hedgerows and tree lines and scrub.
- 3.6 The habitat map from the previous application is shown in figure 3 below. The new application has been altered and as such a new red line and survey area is provided in this report.

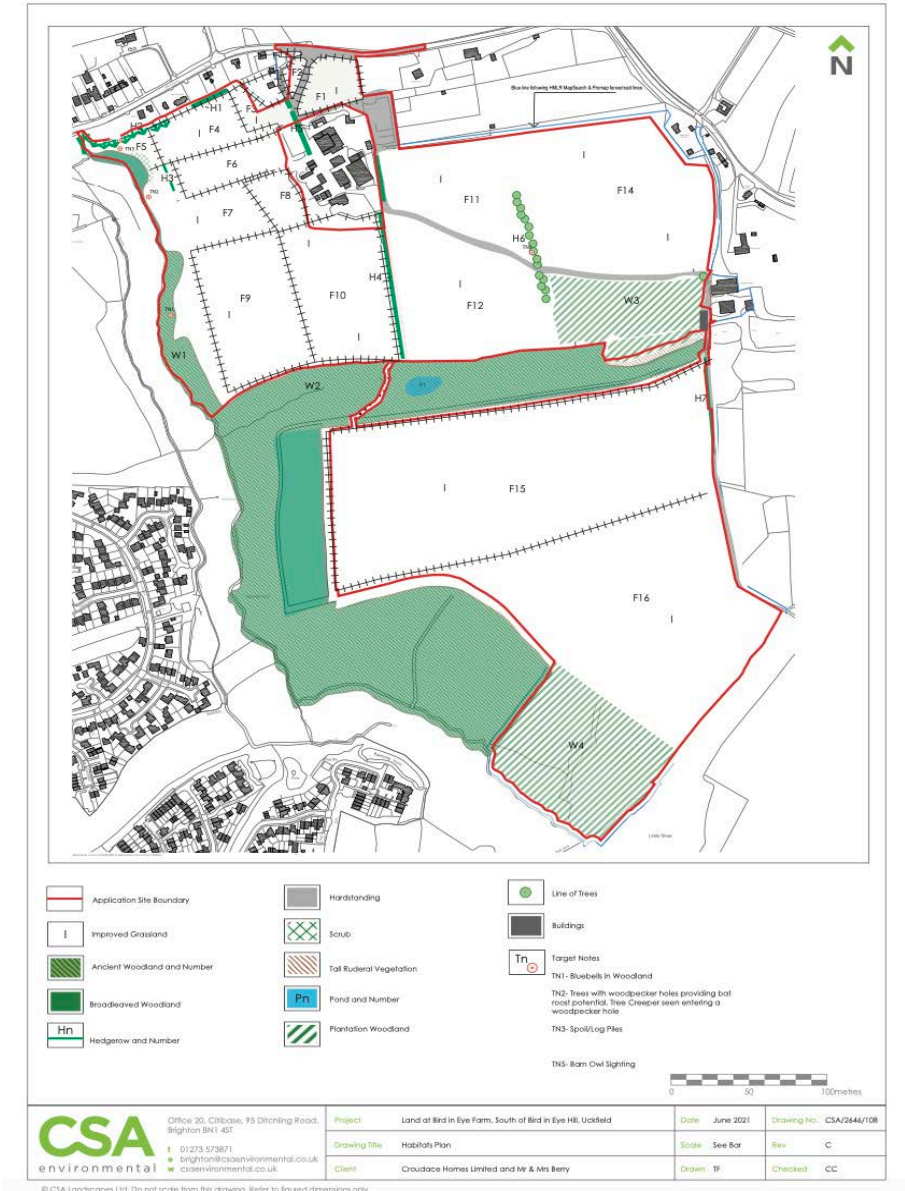


Figure 3: CSA Environment habitat map 2019

Reptile Surveys 2019

- 3.7 A total of 61 records of four reptile species were identified within the search area including slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, grass snake *Natrix natrix*, common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* and adder *Vipera berus*. The margins of the grassland fields along provided potential for foraging and sheltering opportunities for reptiles. A series of seven presence/absence surveys in relation to reptiles were undertaken between April and September 2019 across the proposed development area.
- 3.8 Two species of reptile, grass snake and common lizard, were recorded on-Site during the surveys. A peak count of two adult grass snakes were recorded on 12 July 2019 and one common lizard on 12 September 2019. Reptiles were mostly found close to the northern boundary of the Site and alongside Hedgerow 4, along the eastern boundary of the survey area. The Site was concluded to support low populations of both grass snake and common lizard.

Dormouse Surveys 2019

- 3.9 A total of seven records of dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* were identified within the search area, dating from 1990 to 2018. SxBRC returned records of dormouse from the woodland along the western boundary of the Site from 2013 and 2005.
- 3.10 The dormouse surveys were conducted monthly between May and September 2019, with a further check completed in November 2019. The September check, an adult female dormouse was found in a tube within the north-western corner of the Site along with four eyes-closed juveniles. An empty dormouse nest was also found during the November check within the south-western corner of the Site on the edge of woodland.
- 3.11 Further surveys were also undertaken across woodlands W2 and W3 within the proposed SANG area with checks undertaken in November 2019 and between April and September 2020. No evidence of dormice was recorded during these surveys.
- 3.12 The location of the dormouse nest and dormice, is shown in figure 4.

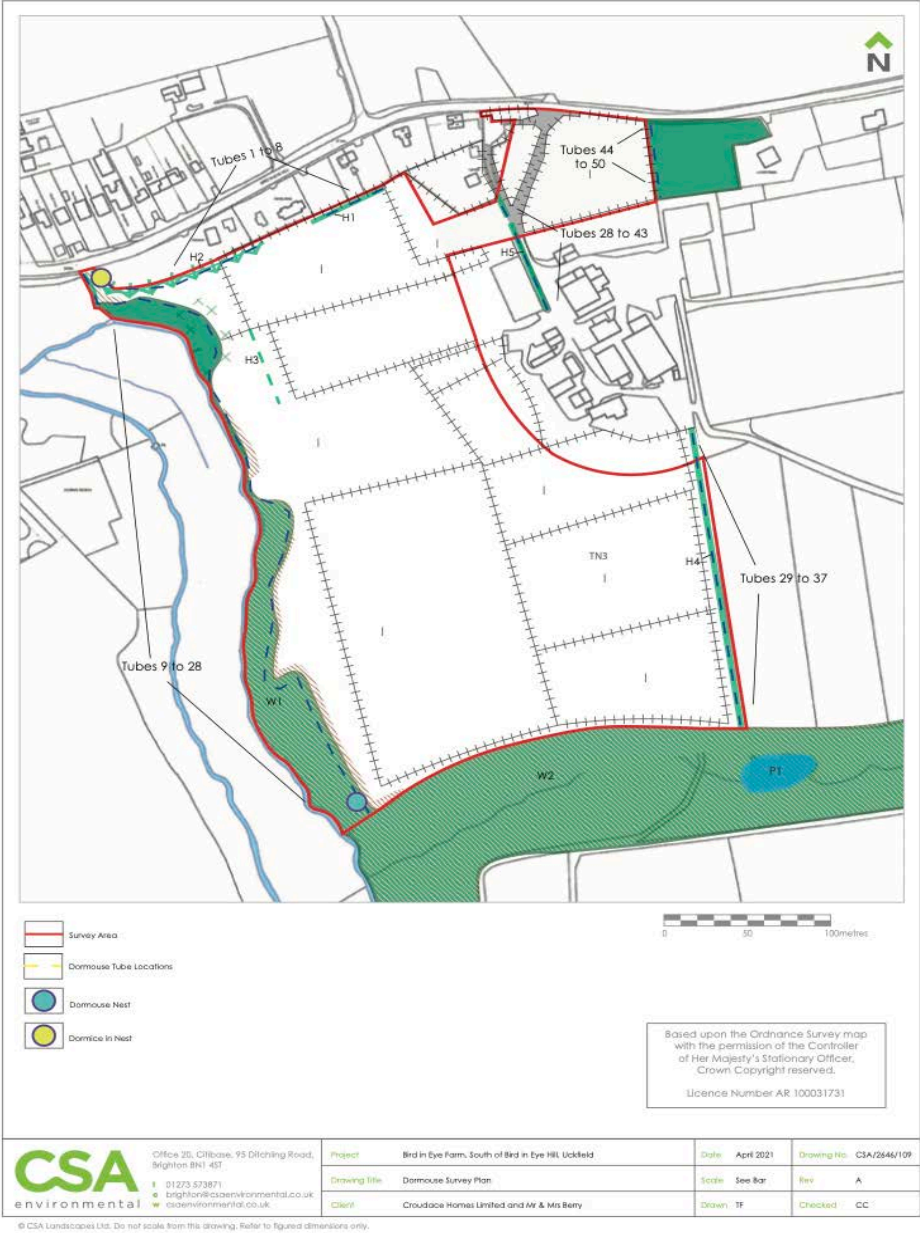


Figure 4: Location of the dormouse and nest location

Great Crested Newt Survey 2019

- 3.13 There is single pond on site, with additional ponds located within 500m of the site. The location of the ponds are shown in Figure 5 below.
- 3.14 Water samples were collected from Pond 1 on 24 April 2019 by great crested newt licensed surveyor following the recommended procedure. Appropriate biosecurity measures were taken to avoid cross contamination of great crested newt eDNA. Subsequently the samples were sent to ADAS for DNA analysis.

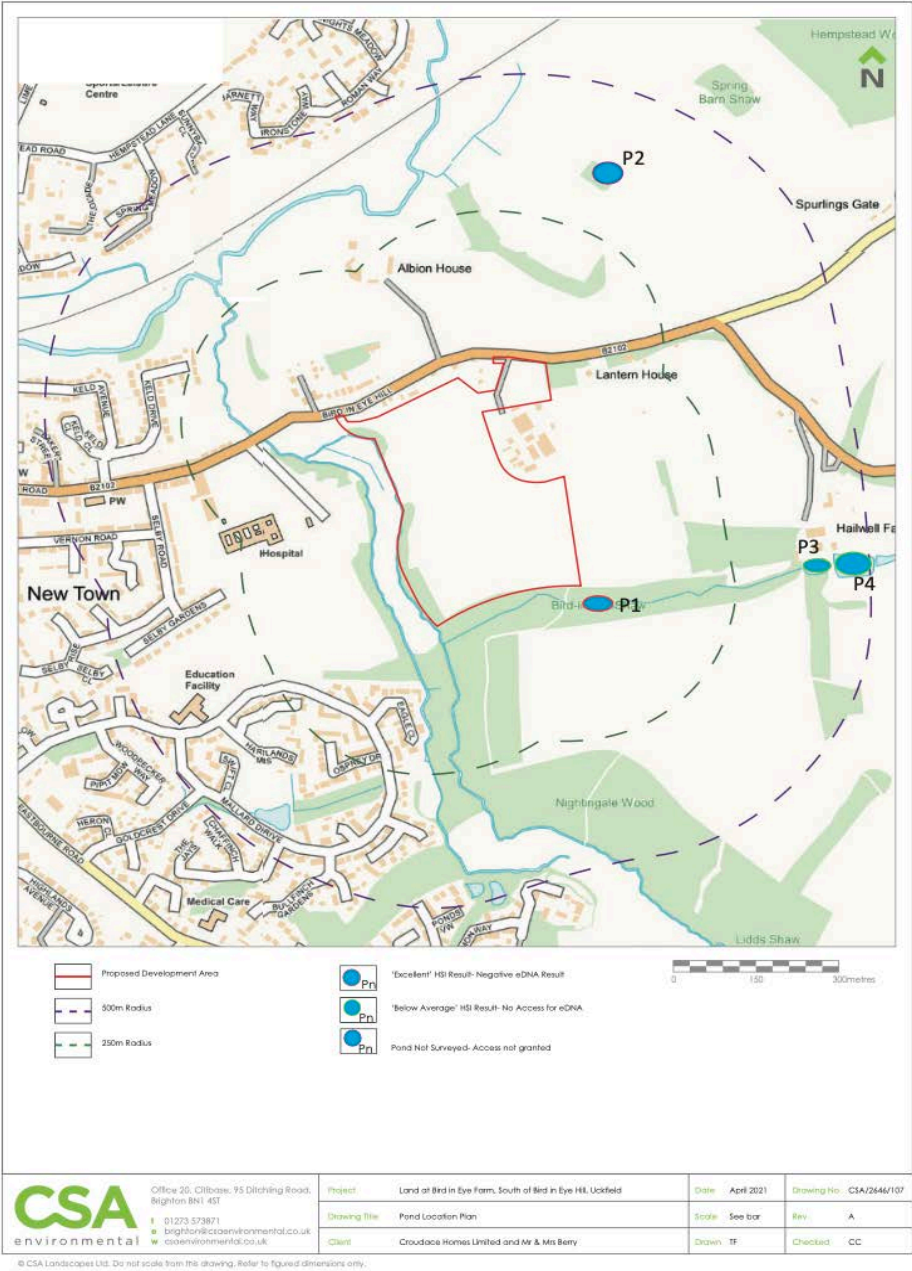


Figure 5: Waterbodies within a 250m and 500m radius of the proposed development and the location of the single pond surveyed for its suitability to support GCN (CSA Environmental)

- 3.15 Presence/absence pond surveys of Pond 1 were also undertaken alongside eDNA sampling. Two surveys were undertaken on 24 April 2019 and 08 May 2019.
- 3.16 No GCNs were recorded in Pond 1 (P1). Ponds P2, P3 and P4 were not granted access.

Breeding Birds 2019

- 3.17 The proposals for the site were considered unlikely to have a significant impact on breeding birds. The site was not considered suitable for ground nesting birds. The

woodland was considered to support buzzards and a tree creeper was recorded on site.

- 3.18 A barn owl box is present on a tree within the treeline on the western boundary of the site. An incidental sighting of a barn owl flying out of this box was noted during the initial habitat survey and anecdotal accounts from the landowner suggests that this box is being used for nesting.

Bat Activity Survey 2019

- 3.19 A total of 175 bat records were identified within the search area, dating from 1982 to 2018. These include the following species: common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*, long eared bat *Plecotus* sp., serotine *Eptesicus serotinus*, natterer's bat *Myotis nattereri*, Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*, whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus*. The closest records are of brown long-eared bat, (c. 100m from Site) and serotine, *Myotis* sp., common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and noctule (c. 180m from Site). These records were mostly of foraging bats within and around woodlands close to the Site.
- 3.20 Surveys for bats were undertaken by CSA Environmental on the 11th June 2019, 23rd July 2019 and 29th August 2019 and included three walked transect surveys and three static monitoring periods.
- 3.21 Recorded species included common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, *Pipistrellus* species, serotine, *Nyctalus/Serotinus* species, *Myotis* species, whiskered bat, brown long-eared and *Plecotus* species. The transect surveys were heavily dominated by common and soprano pipistrelle activity with occasional passes of brown long-eared bat, serotine and *Myotis* species were also recorded. Similarly, activity by common pipistrelle accounted for over 79% of passes across all static monitoring periods and locations.
- 3.22 CSA Environmental concluded that the site supported common and widespread bat species. Bats were recorded using the hedgerows and woodlands. The site was considered to be of up to local importance.
- 3.23 Recommendations for enhancements and retention of habitats and the use of low level lighting were made.

Badger Surveys

- 3.24 Badger surveys were conducted in 2019 and 2022. Setts identified were largely restricted to the ancient woodland to the south and west of the site. However, active holes and some partially active holes were located north west of the site and north east, with the woodland to the east of the redline boundary.

Other Species

- 3.25 All watercourses and water bodies within the Site and on the Site boundaries were surveyed for water vole and otter on 19 June and 26 August 2020. No evidence of water voles was recorded. A single scat was recorded on the stream, but this was not confirmed to be from otter. Remote camera monitoring along the stream did not confirm otter presence.
- 3.26 A total of 25 records of hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* were identified within the search area, dating from 2003 to 2018. The closest record is c. 600m from the Site. The site was considered suitable to support these species.
- 3.27 No records of harvest mouse *Micromys minutus* or brown hare *Lepus europaeus* were identified within the search area.
- 3.28 The site was not considered likely to support a significant assemblage of invertebrates given the grazed management of the grassland. The ancient woodland was considered to have value for invertebrates.

Other Considerations

- 3.29 Three rounds of consultation with Natural England through their Discretionary Advice Service (DAS) were undertaken in 2016 (*DAS Ref: 10886/189548*), 2018/ early 2019 (*DAS Ref: 10886/276420 and subsequent email correspondence*) and early 2020 (*DAS Ref: 10886/302767*). These consultations were in regards to the proposed SANG design.
- 3.30 Natural England confirmed that the SANGS provision and layout was acceptable. Additional measures, including SAMM payments were also confirmed.
- 3.31 The decision notice APP/C1435/W/22/3307820 listed a number of reasons for refusal. Several of the reasons included impacts associated with recreational pressure on the ancient woodland (Bird in Eye Shaw) due to the footpath through the woodland into

the SANGS. In addition the footpath was considered to impact directly on the ancient woodland resulting in the direct loss and degradation of ancient woodland.

Desktop Study

- 3.32 There is one internationally designated site, Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC which is located 5.29km north of the red line boundary. It is therefore noted that the site falls within the 400m-7km zone of influence of the Ashdown Forest. The location of the site in relation to the SPA and SAC is shown in Figure 6 below. Lewes Downs SAC is located over 10km to the south west of the site.
- 3.33 The site does not fall within or adjacent to any national statutory designations, with the nearest SSSI, Buxted Park SSSI is located 1.3km to the north of the site. Plashett Park Wood SSSI is located 4.7km south west of the site, Park Corner Heath SSSI located south 5.8km south, Waldon Cutting SSSI , 6.5km south east. The site lies within multiple SSSI impact zones. The location of the site in relation to these is shown in Figure 7.

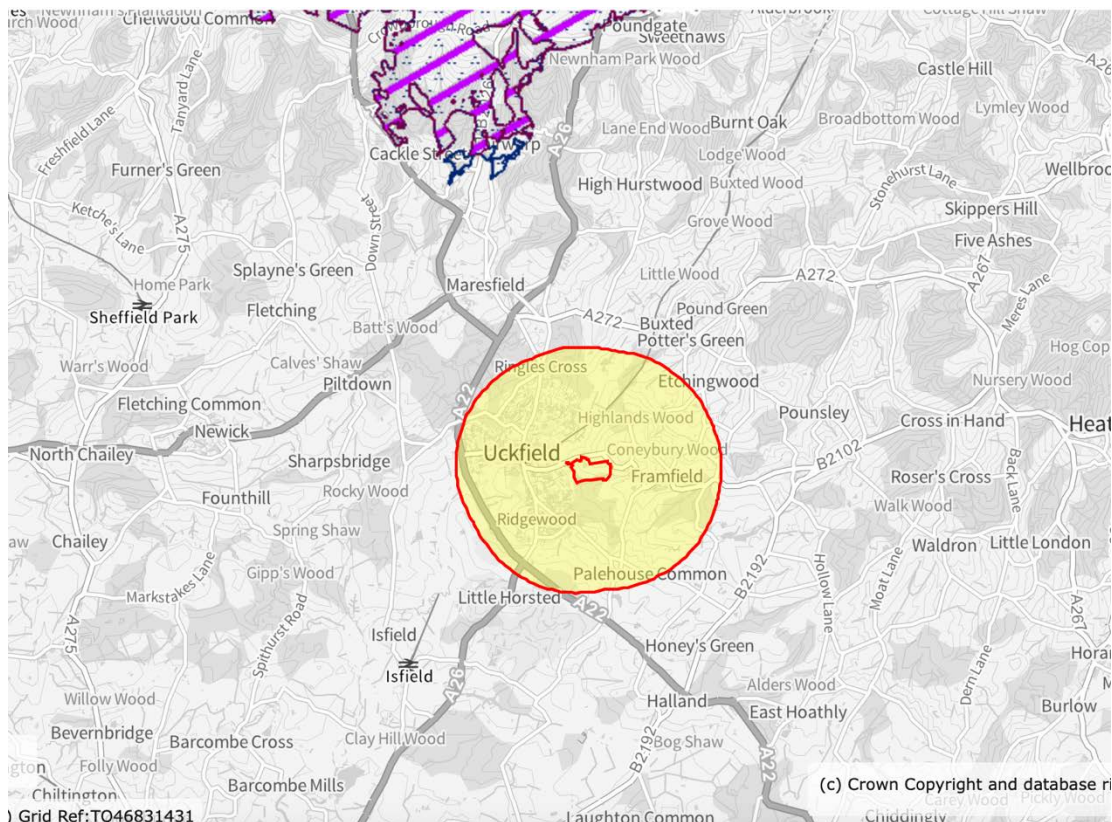


Figure 6: Location of the site and 2km buffer zone. Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC is located 5.2km north.

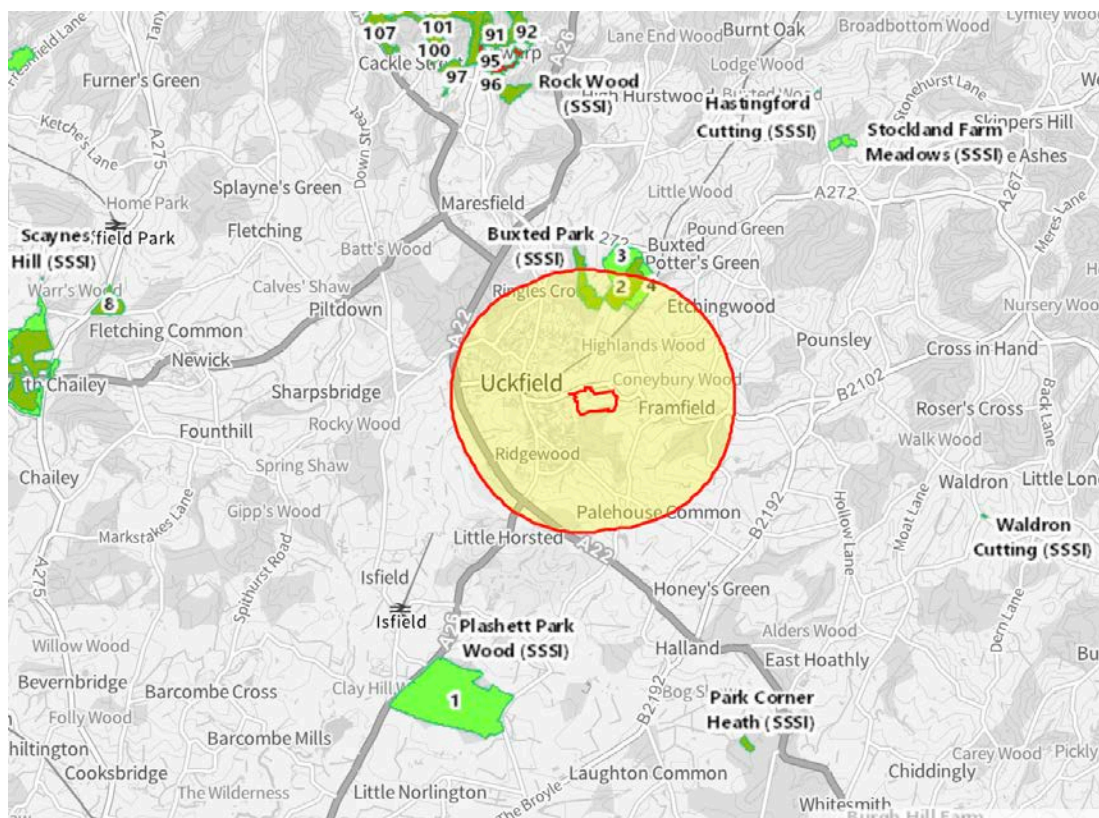


Figure 7: Location of the red line boundary in relation to SSSIs within 2km (yellow zone) and within the wider landscape

- 3.34 The site lies within multiple SSSI impact risk zones (Figure 6). These impact zones identify a range of developments which are considered likely to impact upon the integrity of the SSSI units within the landscape. Developments which have been identified as having the potential to impact the SSSI units include; airports, aviation developments, mineral permissions, discharge of water and liquid waste, and large scale infrastructural developments (pipelines, underground cables), general combustion process, landfill. The proposed development does not fall within any of these listed developments.
- 3.35 There are two local statutory designations were identified within 2km of the Site; Hempstead Meadows LNR (c. 460m north-west of the Site) and West Park LNR (c. 1.8km west of the Site).
- 3.36 There are three non statutory designated sites within 1km of the site;
- Harlands Farm Pond and Stream LWS;
 - Hempstead Wood LWS;
 - Ridgewood Clay Pit LW.S

3.37 Within the local area there are a number of priority habitats (Figure 8). Habitats include:

- Ancient woodland adjacent to the site line boundary on the southern and western aspect of the site. This woodland is Bird in Eye Shaw. Nightingale Wood, another area of ancient woodland is connected directly to Bird in Eye Shaw;
- There are other sections of ancient woodland are located north of the B2102;
- Woodpasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat is located to the east of the site.

3.34 There are numerous pockets of ancient woodland in the wider landscape, with significant areas of woodland and parkland to the north in Buxted Park SSSI.

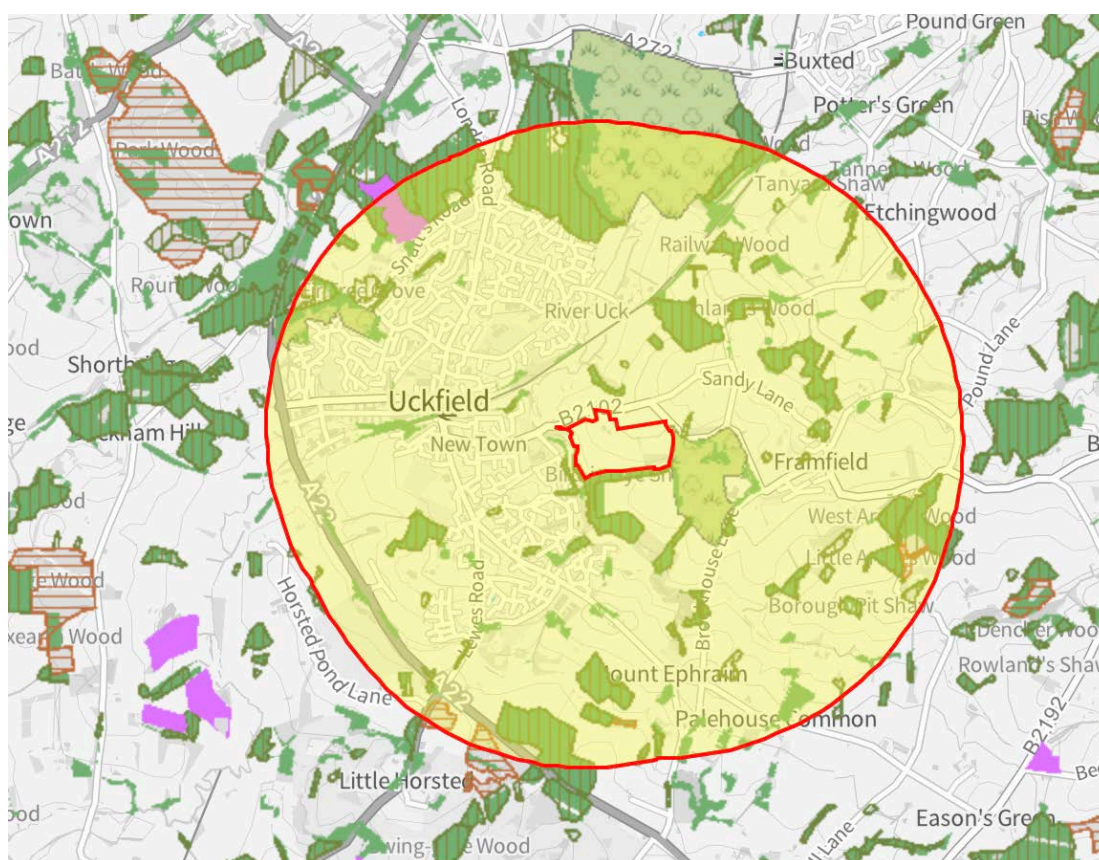


Figure 8: Location of the red line boundary in relation to priority habitats– ancient woodland hatched green, lowland deciduous woodland dark green, woodpasture green trees and good quality grassland pink

3.35 The desktop study revealed there were numerous European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licences issued within 2km of the site boundary and a number of GCN licence returns. These are listed below and shown in Figure 9 and Table 1 below. A large number of the licences and pond surveys cover the new development / Uckfield extension at Lewes Road / A22.

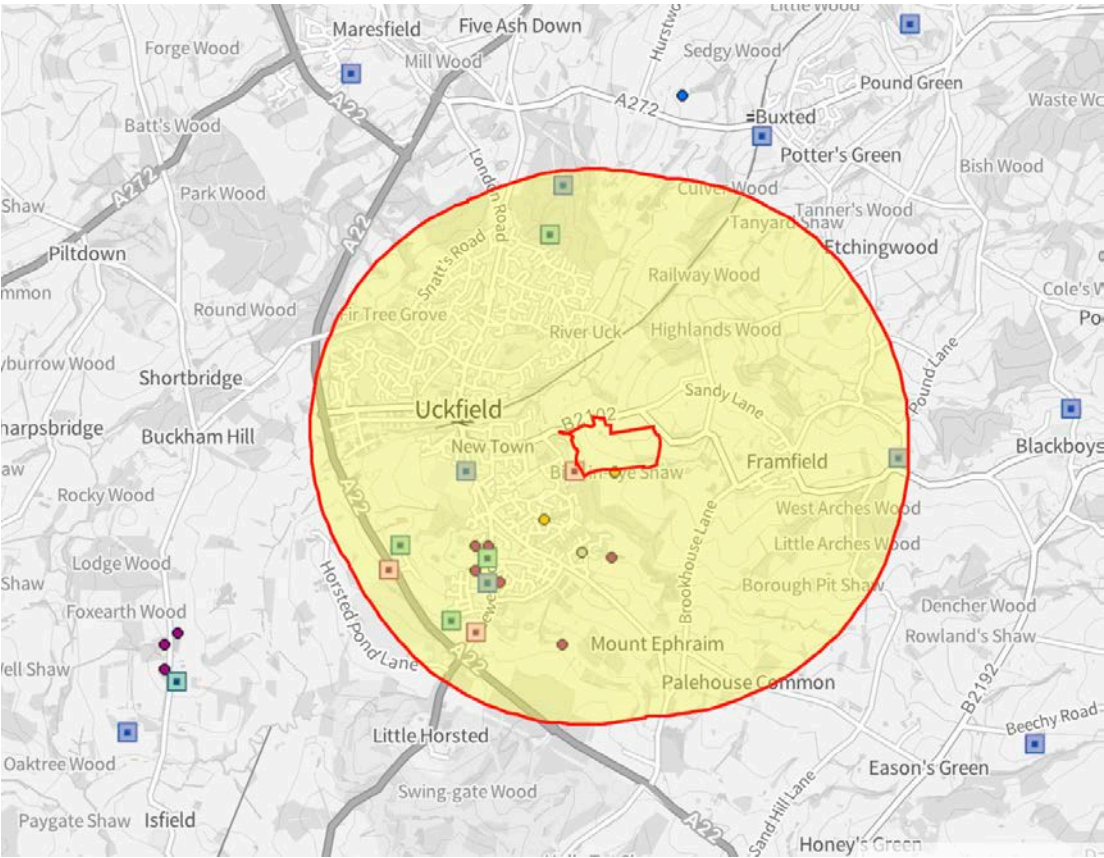


Figure 9: EPSM licences issued within 2km of the site boundary and confirmed GCN ponds.

Table 1: European Protected Species Licenses within a 2km radius

Species	Distance/Orientation from site	License type	License Duration/Date	Reference Number
Dormouse	Adjacent west	Destruction of resting and breeding site	09/11/2012-31/10/2015	EPSM2012-5024
Dormouse	1.7km west	Destruction of resting and breeding site	17/05/2021 - 31/12/2021	2019-39789-EPS-MIT
			12/08/2019-31/12/2023	2019-39789-EPS-MIT - 1
			24/07/2020-31/12/2023	2019-39789-EPS-MIT -2
Dormouse	1.5km south west	Destruction of a resting place	06/10/2017-30/09/2022	2017-31265-EPS-MIT-1
Common pipistrelle Brown long eared bat	875m west	Destruction of a resting place	01/08/2013	EPSM2010-2162
Common pipistrelle Brown long eared bat	1.15km south west	Destruction of a resting place	28/04/2011 31/08/2013	EPSM2009-1387

Common pipistrelles	1.87km east	Destruction of a resting place	01/12/2020 30/06/2026	2020-50106-EPS-MIT
Brown long eared bat	1.9km north	Destruction of a resting place	22/01/2019 31/01/2024	2019-38790-EPS-MIT
Great crested newts	1.5km north	Destruction of a resting place	09/12/2009 22/11/2011	EPSM2009-932
Great crested newts	987m south west	Destruction of a resting place	28/11/20212 01/07/2016	EPSM2009-829
Great crested newts	1.5km south west	Damage and destruction of a resting place	06/03/2018 31/12/2018	2018-33141-EPS-MIT
Great crested newts	1.57km west	Damage and destruction of a resting place	06/03/2018 31/12/2022	2018-33133-EPS-MIT
Great crested newts	TQ4851920490 (Pond 1)	Pond	2019	Absent
Great crested newts	TQ4795720110 482m south west	Pond	2019	Absent
Great crested newts	622 south TQ4826219837	Pond	2019	Inconclusive
Great crested newts	700m south TQ485198	Pond	11/05/2015	Presence confirmed
Great crested newts	1.4km south TQ481191	Pond	15/04/2015 06/05/2015	Presence confirmed
Great crested newts	952m west TQ475199	Pond	23/052017 29/03/2017 04/04/2017 27/04/2017 08/05/2017 21/04/2017	Presence confirmed
Great crested newts	1.05km west TQ474199	Pond	08/05/2017	Presence confirmed
Great crested newts	1.168km west TQ474197	Pond	08/05/2017 31/05/2017	Presence confirmed
Great crested newts	1.09km south west TQ476196	Pond	21/04/2017 08/05/2017 29/03/2017 27/04/2017 21/04/2017 04/04/2017 29/03/2017 23/05/2017 08/05/2017	Presence confirmed

3.36 OS mapping and aerial photography revealed numerous ponds within 250m of the redline boundary (Figure 10). Nature Space (www.naturespaceuk.com) identify the impact risk zone areas for GCNs within Uckfield. The site lies largely within an 'green' zone, with a section of the site potentially under the 'amber' zone, albeit it is likely this amber zone covers the area of ancient woodland. Overall the risk associated with the GCNs is considered to be low due to the location of the site. The location of the site in terms of the impact zones as shown in Figure 11.

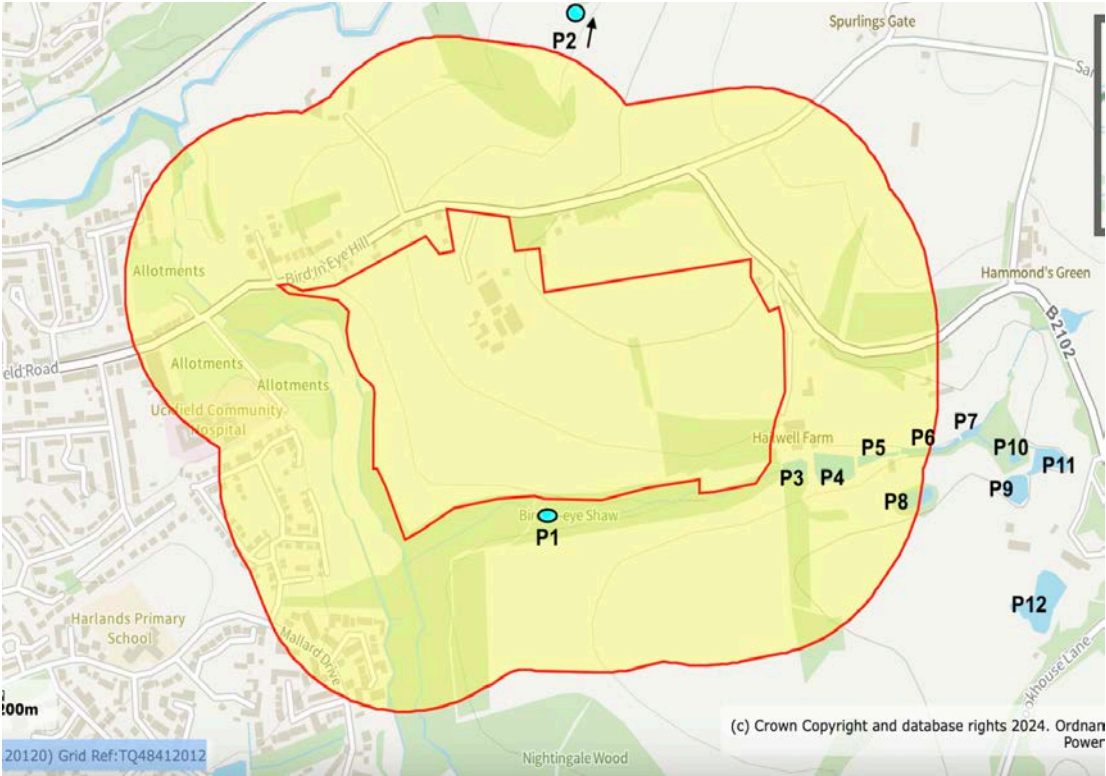


Figure 10: Waterbodies within a 250m radius of the proposed development and the location of the single pond surveyed for its suitability to support GCN (within the black circle)

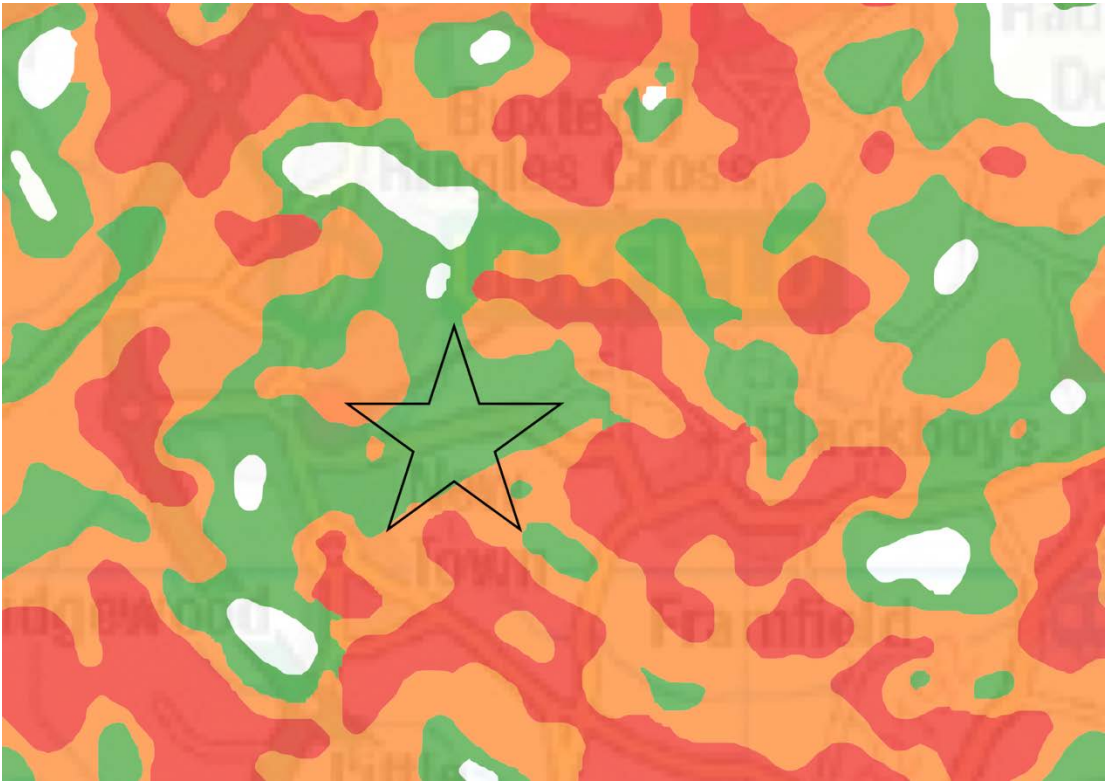


Figure 11: Location of the site within the Nature Space Impact Zone

Habitat Survey

3.37 The site comprises several fields of grassland habitats, the fields are identified below for ease of reference, Figure 12.



Figure 12: Numbered fields for reference

3.38 The fields are loosely divided into 4 main field types. Fields F1 supported several smaller compartments delineated by fence lines. Field 2 did not support any fence lines at the time of the survey, and was one large field compartment. Fields F3 were recently managed for silage. Field 4 at the time of the survey, supported cows.

3.39 The habitat map is presented in **Appendix 1** and the condition assessment tables are shown in **Appendix 2**.

Modified grassland

3.40 The Feld F1, was considered to be modified grassland, with Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and perennial rye grass (*Lolium perenne*) dominant. Other species included annual meadow grass (*Poa annua*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*) and cateasr (*Hypochaeris radicata*). This appeared to have been grazed.

- 3.41 Field 2 was of long sward height at the time of the survey. The dominant species was Yorkshire fog, which was dominant in all quadrants. This fast growing species with a thick thatch prevents other lower growing species from developing. This field supported limited species diversity.
- 3.42 Field 3 had been recently cut for silage. Species identified included perennial rye grass, Yorkshire fog with some common bent and catsear present. Other species on the edges of the hardstanding track included self heal (*Prunella vulgaris*), ribwort plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), white clover and creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*).
- 3.43 Field 4 supported cows at the time of the survey, and therefore a full range of quadrants could not be conducted. However, where access was possible species identified included Yorkshire fog, annual meadow grass, perennial rye grass, common bent with creeping and meadow buttercup. These species are typical fodder species.

Scrub

- 3.44 Two small pockets of scrub were located in Field 1. The scrub supports hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), and dense bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*). Other species present included common nettles (*Urtica dioica*).

Hedgerows and Treelines

- 3.45 A total of two tree lines and two hedgerow were recorded on site. The hedgerows in the gardens of the adjacent properties were not considered within the report. The locations are shown in Figure 13 below.
- 3.46 The hedgerow (H1) was dominated by hawthorn, with additional species including elder (*Sambucus nigra*), bramble, hops (*Humulus lupulus*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), dog rose (*Rosa canina*) and ivy (*Hedera helix*). Bracken and common nettles are associated with the base of the hedgerow.
- 3.47 The hedgerow (H2) was considered species rich and supported elm *Ulmus* sp., hazel (*Corylus avellana*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), honeysuckle (*Lonicera periclymenum*), dog-rose (*Rosa canina*), Oak (*Quercus* sp.), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) and hawthorn.



Figure 13: Location of hedgerows and tree lines

- 3.48 Tree line 1, TL1, supports some mature oak (*Quercus sp*), with Scots pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), and silver birch (*Betula pendula*). With T2 being Leylandii species.

Lowland Deciduous Woodland

- 3.49 An area of planted woodland lies to the south east corner of the site, adjacent to the ancient woodland. Species present included silver birch (*Betula pendula*), oak (*Quercus sp*), alder buckthorn (*Frangula alnus*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), wild service tree (*Sorbus torminalis*) and holly (*Ilex aquifolium*). The understorey was sparse due to the dense nature of the tree stands. Where there was an understorey species present included wood meadow grass (*Poa nemoralis*) and broad leaved dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), with occasional bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) and common nettle (*Urtica dioica*).

Additional Habitats

- 3.50 A section of the site support bare ground which was clear of vegetation in areas, with some areas supporting pockets of perennial rye and annual meadow grass. This area was to the east of tree line 1 (TL1). Here pockets of ruderals were also present around the stored silage and farm machinery.

Protected Species***Bats Roosting***

- 3.51 The buildings located within the farm yard are to be retained in situ.
- 3.52 The mature oaks which are located within the tree lines supported features which have the potential to support roosting bats, due to their age and complex growth forms. However, it is understood that all of the mature oak trees are being retained within the scheme and the tree lines will retain their integrity around the proposed development area.
- 3.53 The trees within the ancient woodland are located outside the redline boundary and are to be suitable buffered from any development. These trees are likely to support some species which would be suitable for roosting bats.

Bats Foraging and Commuting

- 3.54 The grassland fields are considered to have limited potential for foraging bats due to the limited species diversity. The edge habitats supported mature oaks and areas of woodland which have been shown to support foraging and commuting bats.
- 3.55 The boundary hedgerow, tree line and woodland habitats provide good connectivity and commuting opportunities to/from foraging and roosting sites in the surrounding area.
- 3.56 Throughout the survey period in 2019 conducted by CSA Environmental, common pipistrelles and soprano pipistrelles were most frequently recorded, accounting for the dominant species in all recordings. As the site had not materially changed since the original surveys, it is considered likely that the species composition has not materially changed, with the features suitable for foraging and commuting bats, still considered suitable for a range of the species previously recorded.

Great crested newt (GCN)

- 3.57 The pond on site, P1 in the previous application, now lies outside the red line boundary. Previous surveys in 2019 did not identify the presence of GCNs. Update surveys of this pond were conducted on the 23rd May 2024. All samples were analysed by SureScreen Scientifics and were submitted for eDNA analysis to the protocol stated

in DEFRA WC1067 (latest amendments). Full results and methods can be found in appendix 4.

- 3.58 The pond was identified as being negative for GCN DNA as per previous surveys.
- 3.59 The site lies within the green zone and therefore there is limited potential for GCNs to be present in the local landscape. As such, no further surveys for GCNs are recommended.

Dormice

- 3.60 The majority of the site was not considered suitable for dormice given the dominance of the fields and managed habitat. However, the boundary features, including native hedgerows, scrub and tree lines, were considered to offer potential to dormice as commuting features to suitable habitat within the surrounding landscape, notably the ancient woodland to the south and west of the site.
- 3.61 Previous surveys conducted across the site in 2019, identified low numbers of dormice in the ancient woodland located to the west of the site. Furthermore, the development to the south of Uckfield Hospital was undertaken under a dormouse licence for the clearance of some woodland and scrub to enable development. The surveys supporting this licence identified low numbers of dormice within the woodland block.
- 3.62 Considering the habitats and woodland on site have not materially changed since the 2019 surveys, it is considered that dormice are still present within the ancient woodland. Likely they utilise the new woodland within the red line boundary, and as this supports some suitable native species, their presence within this woodland can not be ruled out.

Reptiles

- 3.63 Previous surveys conducted in 2019 identified a peak count of one adult common lizard and two adult grass snake. Low numbers of common reptiles were therefore recorded using the site. The reptiles were identified along the northern boundary of the site and associated with the hedgerow (H1) within the site boundary.
- 3.64 The site had not materially changed, with the use of the site being the same, that being grazed and managed under rotation. It is expected therefore that reptiles would only be associated with the edge habitats where management is limited. It is considered

that common lizards are likely to persist on site edges. Grass snakes are often associated with water / ponds and more suitable habitat is present to the east of the site where there are a number of ponds.

Badgers

- 3.65 Numerous records of badger setts were identified in 2019 survey and the 2022 update survey conducted by CSA Environmental. The majority of the badger setts identified are set within the ancient woodland to the south and west of the site, and the small woodland to the north east of the site. These habitats are all off site due to the changes made to the red line boundary. Individual setts were identified near the hedgerow and within the north western corner of the site.
- 3.66 The update survey conducted in June 2024, did not identify the presence of badger setts within the red line, with no evidence of badger sett use along hedgerow H1, where previous holes were identified in 2019, but were not considered to be active. The previously identified holes in the north west of the site were overgrown and therefore new activity could have been missed. No surveys were conducted in adjacent woodland due to the alteration of the red line boundary.
- 3.67 It is known that badgers are present in the immediate area and likely to use the site for foraging and commuting purposes. Whilst no recent activity within the grassland fields was recorded, update surveys are always recommended due to the nature of badgers being highly mobile and their ability to create setts quickly.

Nesting birds

- 3.68 The scrub, native hedgerows and tree lines on site all provide suitable opportunities for nesting birds. The grassland areas provide some opportunities for ground nesting birds. However, no skylark were recorded on site during the PEA and no previous use of the site by this species was recorded. This is likely due to the rotational management of grazing and silage cutting.
- 3.69 During the PEA house sparrows and swifts were recorded using the buildings within the yard area.

Other Species

- 3.70 The site was considered unsuitable to support other protected species, such as water vole and otters due to lack of suitable habitat. The stream set within the ancient woodland to the west of the site, has some suitability for this species. However, previous surveys did not confirm the use of this area by either otters or water voles. Furthermore, the woodland associated with the stream edge is now located off site, with the stream buffered significantly from the development. No suitable on site habitat is recorded for these species.
- 3.71 Given the open nature of the site, and the presence of suitable foraging habitat, hedgehogs are considered likely to use the site for foraging and commuting purposes.
- 3.72 Common invertebrates are likely to be associated with the scrub edge habitats.

4.0 Discussion

- 4.1 The following paragraphs consider the effects of the development on designated sites, priority habitats and protected and priority species. Where the desk study and habitat survey provide sufficient evidence for an assessment of effects on any of these groups to be taken through planning, these are detailed below, the need for additional surveys and when and how these should be completed are summarised, if required.
- 4.2 Provisional recommendations are also given for means to enhance biodiversity net gain, following the principle (CIEEM et al. 2016) of following the mitigation hierarchy of; avoidance, minimisation of loss, compensation on site and biodiversity offset.

Effects on designated sites

- 4.3 The site does not fall within or adjacent to any designated sites. Ashdown Forest Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC), located approximately 5.29km north of site.
- 4.3 The Site lies within the 7km radii whereby proposed residential development is identified in Policy WCS12 of the Adopted Wealden Core Strategy (2013) as having the potential for likely significant effects on qualifying features.
- 4.4 Development of the Site is not predicted to have any impact on the designation as a result of direct loss of habitat or habitat fragmentation or habitat isolation due to the

distances between the development site and the Ashdown Forest. Furthermore, as the development site is located away from the Ashdown Forest there would be no impacts resulting from cat predation or noise, light or other impacts, resulting from development.

- 4.5 However, although the Ashdown Forest is of sufficient distance from the proposed area, consideration of traffic rates / movements and associated air pollution, must be considered. Furthermore, whilst the site is located at some distance, considering the size and scale of the development, the Ashdown Forest must be considered a potential receptor for recreation.
- 4.6 The protection of European Sites is transposed into UK legislation through the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017*. The control of activities is in relation to the sites' **conservation objectives**, which are phrased to avoid damage to the qualifying feature must be reviewed in terms of any development within the zone of influence.
- 4.7 Impacts resulting from residential development, can include, but are not limited to, impacts resulting from recreational impact (wear and tear) and pollution (including nitrogen levels).
- 4.8 It is considered that mitigation measures would include, but not be limited to:
- Provision of recreational space within the allocation site creating a space for dog walking, children and everyday recreation;
 - Increase linkages for cycling and walking within the site and provision of linkages through paths / cycle paths to off-site recreational areas;
 - The use of SUDs for water resource management;
 - The use of a construction environmental management plan (CEMP) to minimise noise, dust, pollution events (near water courses);
 - Provision of a travel plan to reduce, where possible, construction traffic to reduce dust and pollution;
 - Provision of cycle paths, links to train stations and walkways to reduce traffic use and reliance on cars and a sustainable transport plan.
- 4.9 The provision of SANG / equivalent is key in provision of alternative recreational land, reducing potential impacts on surrounding areas, and providing community

resources. SANGS / equivalent open space provision can be linked to not only health and well-being, but opportunities for on-site food production such as community orchards. Recreation can also take the form of formal and informal, and mixtures around and within the site can be created.

4.10 The use of SANGS does provide some more formal recommendations and sound principles on recreational requirements, certainly as a minimum developed as to be used by local populations. SANGS provides a good base line as it has been shown to be successful with uptake in response from development around the Thames Basin Heath Zones and around the Ashdown Forest. In summary the recreational opportunities / SANG land should;

- It should be possible to complete a circular walk of 2.3-2.5km around the SANGS.
- The accessibility of the site must include access points appropriate for the particular visitor use the SANGS is intended to cater for.
- SANGS must be designed so that they are perceived to be safe by users; they must not have tree and scrub covering parts of the walking routes.
- Paths must be easily used and well maintained but most should remain unsurfaced to avoid the site becoming too urban in feel.
- SANGS must be perceived as semi-natural spaces with little intrusion of artificial structures. Visually-sensitive way-markers and some benches are acceptable.
- Access within the SANGS must be largely unrestricted with plenty of space provided where it is possible for dogs to exercise freely and safely off lead.
- SANGS must be free from unpleasant intrusions (e.g. sewage treatment works smells etc).
- SANGS should be clearly sign-posted or advertised in some way.

4.11 It is therefore recommended, that to reduce impacts resulting from an increase in local population on surrounding designated sites (international and national and local), recreation (formal and informal), green space provision, and green routes (cycle and walking routes), should form the basis of any new planned development of this scale.

4.12 The previous submission included a large SANGS area to the south of the ancient woodland, Bird in Eye Shaw. This would have provided sufficient recreational space

and opportunities to mitigate any recreational impacts resulting from the development. The new application, with a reduction in housing, also results in the reduction of the SANGS area. A new SANGS design must therefore be developed to support the new submission.

- 4.13 With regards to impacts resulting from air pollution / traffic movement / NO_x, previous submissions by CSA Environmental provided within the Statement of Information to Inform Habitats Regulations Assessment (CSA/2646/12) concluded that increased nitrogen deposition as a result of traffic generated from the proposed development will not affect the integrity of the SAC.
- 4.14 It is considered that the changes to the design of the development and the red line boundary, may result in a decrease in units and therefore a decrease in likely traffic / NO_x. As such, considering a previous review of the site determined no likely significant effects resulting from air quality, this assessment is still considered to be valid.
- 4.15 With regards to impacts on other designated sites, notably Buxted Park SSSI located 1.3km to the north of the site, the proposals lie outside the listed developments which are considered likely to impact upon the integrity of the SSSI units. Considering this, and the provision of new recreation opportunities designed into scheme, impacts on Buxted Park and other designated sites are considered to be unlikely.

Effects on Priority Habitats

- 4.16 Hedgerows are habitats listed under S41 of the NERC Act 2006 and as such are considered to be Habitats of Principle Importance. As Habitats of Principle Importance, the council/decision maker has to have 'due regard' for these habitats and it is recommended that these features are considered within any masterplan. These habitats were present on Site.
- 4.17 It is recommended that the hedgerows are therefore maintained and adequately buffered on site where possible. It is considered that these features would be considered a key component of green infrastructure and will also retain ecological linkages within and across the landscape.

- 4.18 It is recommended that all hedgerows, are retained and enhanced post development where possible, with the planting of native species. It is important to keep connectivity across the Site post-development and to enhance existing sections of hedgerow where possible. The maintenance of hedgerows and landscape features will also help support 'net gain' assessments.
- 4.19 If sections of hedgerow are to be lost, compensation through the creation of new hedgerows will be required. It is considered that a like for like replacement would be the minimum requirement to counter any loss.
- 4.20 Enhancement of existing retained species poor hedgerows, planting up hedgerow gaps and planting of species rich hedgerows within suitable areas of the Site will provide important food resources for native wildlife. Species that may be planted include hazel, holly, elder, alder buckthorn, guelder rose, dog rose and dogwood. Planting at the bases and edges of hedgerows with herbaceous plants and bulbs attract bees, butterflies and other insects as well as providing ground cover for smaller animals. It is recommended that seeds that are tolerant of semi-shade and are suitable for sowing beneath established hedges be used.
- 4.21 The woodland on site which has been planted, is now considered to be deciduous woodland. This woodland is not considered to be priority, but does provide some value.
- 4.22 There are other priority habitats within the wider landscape. Impacts such as loss and isolation of these habitats resulting from the proposed development are deemed highly unlikely.

Ancient Woodland

- 4.23 Bird in Eye Shaw is an area of ancient woodland located to the south and west of the application area. This woodland lies outside the development boundary, albeit it lies adjacent to the red line boundary. The location of woodland, alongside the 15m minimum buffer requirement in relation to the red line boundary is shown in Figure 14 below.

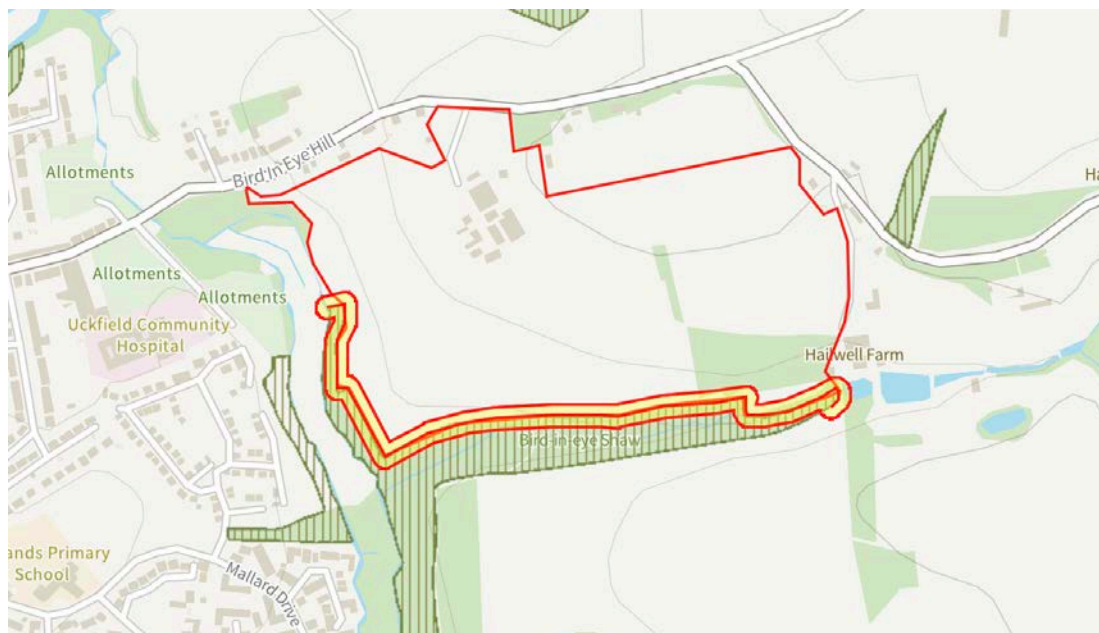


Figure 14: The red line boundary and location of ancient woodland with 15m buffer provided

4.24 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2023) is the key government policy document relating to planning decisions affecting ancient woodland. The importance of ancient woodlands as an irreplaceable habitat is set out in paragraph 186 b) of the NPPF, which states: *'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'*.

4.25 Whilst ancient woodland is not protected under statute, there is a presumption that ancient woodland should be maintained where possible. Benefits of development affecting ancient woodland must be significant in terms of social or economic drivers and mitigation measures and/or compensation must be provided to reduce where possible significant impacts.

4.26 Woodlands are considered to be ancient or semi natural even if they have been disturbed. The soil and the seed bank is considered to be of primary importance rather than the maturity or otherwise of the trees.

4.27 On 26 January, the Government introduced a new duty requiring local planning authorities to consult the Secretary of State regarding developments that impact ancient woodland.

4.28 This Direction is made under the Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 (Statutory Instrument 2015 No 595). It

requires local planning authorities in England to consult the Secretary of State before granting planning permission for certain types of development including planning applications which would “*result in the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland, where the local planning authority considers that potential adverse impacts cannot be mitigated*”. This means that from 26 January 2024, no English planning application for development which adversely impacts ancient woodland can be granted without first being referred to the SOS..

4.29 Impacts relating to ancient woodland which will require consideration are listed on the gov.uk (2022) and are reviewed in terms of both direct effects and indirect effects as a result of development practises.

4.30 Direct effects of development can cause the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland or ancient and veteran trees by:

- damaging or destroying all or part of them (including their soils, ground flora or fungi)
- damaging roots and understorey (all the vegetation under the taller trees)
- damaging or compacting soil
- damaging functional habitat connections, such as open habitats between the trees in wood pasture and parkland
- increasing levels of air and light pollution, noise and vibration
- changing the water table or drainage
- damaging archaeological features or heritage assets
- changing the woodland ecosystem by removing the woodland edge or thinning trees - causing greater wind damage and soil loss

4.21 Indirect effects of development can also cause the loss or deterioration of ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees by:

- breaking up or destroying working connections between woodlands, or ancient trees or veteran trees - affecting protected species, such as bats or wood-decay insects
- reducing the amount of semi-natural habitats next to ancient woodland that provide important dispersal and feeding habitat for woodland species

- reducing the resilience of the woodland or trees and making them more vulnerable to change
- increasing the amount of dust, light, water, air and soil pollution
- increasing disturbance to wildlife, such as noise from additional people and traffic
- increasing damage to habitat, for example trampling of plants and erosion of soil by people accessing the woodland or tree root protection areas
- increasing damaging activities like fly-tipping and the impact of domestic pets
- increasing the risk of damage to people and property by falling branches or trees requiring tree management that could cause habitat deterioration
- changing the landscape character of the area

4.31 The proposed development does not directly impact upon the ancient woodland habitats. A review of the direct impacts listed above all proposals lie well outside the ancient woodland buffer zone (a minimum of 15m, and within this development 50m). As such, no loss of ancient woodland habitat will occur. All development lies well outside the root protection zones of the woodland trees (see arboricultural report).

4.32 With the buffer zone implemented, there will be no conflict with regards to lighting, and with SuDS features located outside the 15m buffer, impacts resulting from the alteration to the water table and impacts relating to water run off, are not considered significant.

4.33 In terms of other impacts, the most significant is the fragmentation of landscape linkages and therefore the reduction of the movement of species across the landscape, as well as the potential impacts this would have on ancient woodland habitats, notably pollinators and seed dispersal agents.

4.34 In this proposal, the landscape linkages are retained, with the hedgerows and tree lines within the development largely retained. Furthermore, the southern and wester aspect of the development will be planted, ensuring a robust woodland edge habitat, creating a significant buffer and greater linear network.

4.35 New planting along within the development and new tree planting and habitat creation within the development itself will provide further ecological niches which are currently not present within the immediate landscape. Features such as traditional

orchards and species rich grassland, are to be created, expanding potential wildlife habitats.

- 4.36 The development does not sever linkages around the ancient woodland, or sever linkages between the ancient woodland areas within the local landscape. Ancient woodland is protected and retained. As such it is considered that the development will not impact upon the ecological functionality of the landscape.
- 4.37 With regards to removal or reduction of semi natural habitats as a result of development, the habitats surrounding Bird in Eye Shaw are dominated by managed modified grassland habitats, which has been well managed since the initial surveys conducted across the site. The loss or alteration of this habitat is not ecologically significant in terms of ancient woodland edge. The design of the development aims to enhance the edge habitats through the creation of a more naturalised landscape. Planting of native scrub and tree species and the creation of species rich grassland, will provide this transition between ancient woodland and development, creating a more naturalised ecotone.
- 4.38 With regards to impacts resulting from an increased in local population and potential impacts resulting from increased recreational pressure, wear and tear, fly tipping and pet impacts, a range of measures have been employed to minimise any associated risks.
- 4.39 There is no public access into Bird in Eye Shaw which limits the potential for increased recreational use of these areas. Measures to limit public access will be reviewed, but recommendations will include the planting of the ancient woodland edge with a native thorny scrub mixture, deterring ingress, the filling of gaps within the current woodland edge (again with thorny species) and, if required, fencing. However, the creation of better equipped footpaths and cycle path (surfaced paths) located away from the woodland edge, have been designed to move human traffic away from the woodland edge features, aiming to reduce potential impacts from recreational use. Open space provision, well connected habitats and paths within the development, and new opportunities for recreation, are all promoted within the development, providing alternatives for recreation and new walking routes.

- 4.40 Lighting levels can be conditioned as part of the permission. It is considered that a dark corridor will extend around the edges of the woodland .

Effect on on-site habitats

- 4.41 The habitats on site are common and widespread throughout the local area and the UK as a whole. The site was dominated by species poor modified grassland which has limited ecological value. The loss of this habitat is not ecologically significant and would not be considered within an EcIA.
- 4.42 The hedgerows and native tree line are of inherent ecological value and are recommended to be retained, protected and enhanced where possible. The tree line supported numerous mature oak trees, which supported features which are associated with maturity and interest for invertebrates. Where impacts are predicted, or small scale losses are required, then new planting within the site boundaries would be required as compensation.
- 4.43 The area of deciduous woodland within the site boundaries is of some value, however, this habitat could be enhanced through management.

Protected Species

Bats Roosting

- 4.44 The mature oak trees located within the tree lines around the edges of the site have roosting potential. However, no impacts on these trees are expected and therefore no reduction in roosting opportunities would occur. There are opportunities to increase the roosting potential within the new development.

Bats Foraging and Commuting

- 4.45 The grassland on site has limited species diversity, however, the woodland edges, hedgerows and tree lines provide robust linear features, which would support optimal foraging and commuting habitat.
- 4.46 According to Bat Conservation Trust guidelines, it is important that proportionality is employed when recommending further survey work for bat species on a proposed development site. As stated within section 2.2.19 of the latest survey guidelines (2023), the following points need to be taken into account with regard to planning bat surveys:
- Likelihood of bats being present;

- Type of proposed activities;
- Scale of proposed activities ;
- Size, nature and complexity of the site;
- Species concerned;
- Number of individuals.

4.47 Considering the above, the results of the previous surveys conducted in 2019, and the limited extent of suitable habitats on site, it is considered that the site is moderate in terms of its foraging suitability.

4.48 The proposed development must consider ecological networks and green infrastructure, in line with both national and local policies. Previous activity surveys undertaken by CSA Environmental, identified that usage of the site was largely around the woodland edges and the hedgerows. Considering the known usage of the site by bats and that the species using the site were dominated by common and widespread species, additional surveys are unlikely to result in significant further information with regards to the site's use by bats. However, in support of a new application and due to the age of the previous surveys, update surveys are recommended in line with CIEEM requirements.

4.49 As such activity transect surveys per season are recommended. Static recorders would also be used to establish the levels of bat activity present on site, with devices left on site once a month for five consecutive nights on the months of June, August and September.

4.50 It is always recommended that a sensitive lighting scheme is implemented as part of the scheme. All bat species are nocturnal, resting in dark conditions in the day and emerging at night to feed. Light at various levels can affect both their roosting and foraging behaviour. Recommendations for a sensitive lighting scheme include:

- Installing lighting only if there is a significant need;
- Using LED luminaries due to their lower intensity, sharp cut-off and good colour rendition – any lights with UV elements or metal halide lights should not be used;
- Lights with peak wavelengths higher than 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats (Stone 2012);
- Lights with an upward light ratio of 0% and good optical control;
- Careful consideration of column height to avoid light spill;

- Any external security lights should use motion-sensors and short (1-minute) timers;
- Avoid putting lighting near tree lines or hedgerows and angling light away from these linear features which are used by commuting and foraging bats;
- Planting a barrier or using man-made features required within the scheme to form a barrier.

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

- 4.51 There are no ponds on site however, there is a single pond located within the woodland, P1, which did not support GCNs in 2019 and update surveys in 2024 did not identify any GCN DNA. As such, this pond is not considered to support GCNs.
- 4.52 There are a number of ponds within the wider landscape, with a number located to the east of the site. However, these ponds are located approximately 200m to the east of the development edge, with the proposed SANGS located between the ponds and the development area.
- 4.53 The proposed development is largely contained on species poor grassland habitat, which provides little in terms of suitable habitat for GCNs. The hedgerows and woodland are to be retained in situ.
- 4.54 Considering the site lies within a 'green' impact zone, that the pond P1, does not support GCNs, and the other ponds are located away from any development areas, and that the proposed development does not isolate one pond from other ponds or reduce the optimal GCN habitat, further surveys are not considered to be a requirement.

Dormice

- 4.55 The woodland and boundary features, including native hedgerows, scrub and tree lines, were considered to offer potential to dormice due to the presence of favourable woody species including, hawthorn, hazel and oak.
- 4.56 Previous surveys undertaken within the ancient woodland on the south and western edge of the site identified low numbers of dormice within the woodland habitats, and it is therefore assumed that dormice would be present on connected and suitable habitat.

- 4.57 As the habitats on site have not materially changed since the initial dormouse surveys, and known populations are present within the ancient woodland, it is considered that dormice are still present on the suitable habitats on site and adjacent to the site.
- 4.58 The boundary features on site are due to be largely retained during development. However, the final extent of suitable dormouse habitat removal is not known. Small sections of sub optimal habitat would be able to be removed under Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) for dormouse, however, any significant areas of dormouse habitat removal will require a licence.
- 4.59 The retention of the woodland, hedgerows and treelines along the site boundaries ensure potential commuting routes for dormouse are maintained across the site. Ne planting, notably along the woodland edges, will provide additional resources for dormice, and will support dense scrub species which are optimal, including hazel, honeysuckle, spindle and other food sources. Impacts on landscape connectivity would be avoided.

Reptiles

- 4.60 Previous surveys identified low numbers of common lizards and grass snake on the edges of the site. The habitats have not materially changed, with the management of the grassland a mixture between grazing and silage, also being implemented across the site. It is considered that common lizards and grass snake are still likely to persist around the site, especially in areas where grassland management and grazing is reduced.
- 4.61 It is recommended that where possible, the edge habitats are retained. If this is not possible then measures for mitigation to ensure suitable habitat for reptiles is created and maintained on site will need to be made. This may include a reptile translocation if required.
- 4.62 It is considered that there is plenty of space and opportunity to ensure reptiles are maintained within the site boundaries and can persist within the boundaries.

Badgers

- 4.63 Previous surveys identified numerous badger setts within the landscape. A number of badger setts were located within the ancient woodland on both the southern and

western aspects. Additional holes were identified on site in 2019, but these were not considered to be active, or their activity had altered.

4.64 The update survey did not identify any setts within the grassland areas, however, the woodland habitats were not subject to a survey, and likely the badger setts are retained within the woodland. Any sett located within the woodland would be maintained and suitably buffered from any development. Furthermore, the development would not result in the isolation of badger setts from foraging habitat. As such impacts resulting from the development would be considered limited.

4.65 As badgers are mobile animals, it is recommended that prior to the commencement of ground works, an update check should be carried out for the presence of any new badger setts on site within 30m of the works area. Furthermore, as the site is likely used by badgers for foraging and commuting, best practice guidelines are recommended to be followed throughout any development, to ensure no individuals are harmed. These are listed below.

4.66 Best practice guidelines recommend that:

- Any excavations and/or trenches associated with construction are either covered at night or supplemented by means of escape for any badgers that may fall into the excavation whilst foraging;
- Any open pipes or conduits laid should be blocked off each night to prevent badgers from entering them;
- As far as possible, construction work should only take place between dawn and dusk with no late evening work to reduce possible disturbance.

4.67 If these methods are followed, no significant residual impacts are predicted on badgers on site or within the local area. These steps will also help to ensure no harm comes to other mammals such as rabbits.

Nesting Birds

4.68 The native hedgerows, woodland, and tree lines on site all have the potential to support nesting birds. These habitats are largely to be retained during development, however, where small sections of these habitats are to be removed during development it is recommended that these works should be undertaken outside the breeding bird season (March–September inclusive) or immediately after a nesting bird

check by a suitably qualified ecologist. If active nests are identified, works in the vicinity of the nest must cease until the birds have fledged the nest. The grassland fields are to be removed, and whilst no skylarks were recorded, it is always recommended clearance is conducted outside nesting season in line with the above recommendations.

Other Species

- 4.69 No suitable habitat for other protected species, such as otters or water voles was identified on site, and no further survey work is recommended.
- 4.70 The site has potential to support hedgehog. Whilst receiving no specific legal protection, they are protected from certain forms of harm under the wild mammals (Protection) Act 1996. As, such, it is recommended that best practice guidelines be followed throughout any development to ensure no individuals are harmed. This would likely be achieved through the sensitive clearance measures undertaken for species such as dormice and badgers.

Ecological Enhancements

- 4.71 A number of enhancements can be incorporated within the development scheme to help reduce potential ecological impacts and provide net gains to biodiversity in line with NPPF (2023) and the Environmental Act 2021. It is important to utilise native species of local provenance in landscaping schemes to enhance the ecological value of a development.
- 4.72 It is recommended that a detailed mitigation and enhancement strategy is drawn up for the site based on the findings of the Phase 2 protected species surveys and through the review of the proposals. This will potentially include but not be limited to the following:
- Creation of new high distinctiveness habitats such as ponds, green infrastructure such as swales and reed beds and enhancement of existing habitats of value including hedgerows, tree lines and pockets of scrub, to be managed in the long term for biodiversity;
 - The on site tree lines and hedgerows on site, should be retained and buffered and managed within the landscape, with landscape linkages provided;

- Creation of log piles and reptile hibernacula to provide safe refuge and hibernation sites for reptiles, amphibians, and hedgehog.

4.73 A detailed enhancement strategy will be dependent on the results of the further ecological surveys. This is likely to include the general recommendations above, but also more details recommendations such creation of high distinctiveness habitats.

5.0 Biodiversity Net Gain

5.1 The BNG strategy has been developed in order to adhere to good practice principles (CIEEM 2016), which references measures to review and support biodiversity initiatives during the design, building and maintenance of developments.

5.2 The initial principle is the application of the mitigation hierarchy, where measures to avoid impacts on biodiversity should be taken. With regards to this site, the PEA has been in 2024 and provides a detailed baseline assessment of the site. In this case, the ancient woodland is located off site, but adjacent to the development boundary. The ancient woodland will be buffered from development and a semi natural edge habitat created. The tree line will be retained within the site boundary. The development will be restricted to habitats which are common and widespread.

5.3 The separate BNG report provides a detailed assessment of the baseline and reviews the pre and post development habitats and plans. The proposed new habitats will be managed under a 30 year management plan as required under BNG obligations. A management plan for the site can be conditioned.

6.0 Impact Assessment

6.1 This section of the report forms an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) and is designed to quantify and evaluate the potential impacts of the development on habitats and species present on site or within the local area.

6.2 The approach to this assessment accords with guidance presented within the CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland (CIEEM 2018). In essence, an EcIA assesses the activities associated with a proposed scheme that are likely to generate changes within the identified zone of influences, on identified ecological features and receptors. The proposals are subsequently reviewed and

mitigation and compensation measures are outlined which help to reduce negative impacts.

6.3 Table 2 below summarises the impacts and required mitigation for each receptor as previously detailed in the discussion.

Table 2: Assessment of effects from the proposal after mitigation and compensation

Feature	Scale of Importance	Mitigation/Compensation Required	Residual Effect
Internationally designated sites (Ashdown Forest SAC SPA))	International	No land loss, fragmentation or isolation. NOx / air quality previously scoped out. Use of SANGS on site to ensure recreational impacts are avoided.	Not significant
Nationally designated sites (SSSI)	National	Location within SSSI impact zone but not a development as those listed as having potential to impact upon the integrity of wider SSSIs.	Not significant
Locally designated sites	County	The site is considered to be significant distance from locally designated sites. No impacts are predicted.	Not significant
Priority Habitats	County	Hedgerows present, are largely retained. Impacts to off site habitats are not predicted.	Not significant
Ancient woodland	Country	The ancient woodland is outside the application area but adjacent to the development site. Buffer of the woodland is provided, with dense native species planting to reduce impacts. Planting, low lighting scheme and recreational opportunities avoiding the woodland reduce impacts	Not significant
On-site habitats	Local	The grassland on site are common and widespread across the UK and have limited ecological value. The hedgerows, tree lines and woodland are considered to be of some value. Largely these features are to be retained as part of the scheme.	Not significant
Bats (commuting and foraging)	Local	The site supports large areas of species poor which are not suitable for foraging and commuting bats. Previous surveys identified that the site supported high numbers of common and soprano pipistrelles. Development limited largely to species poor grassland.. New tree lines, scrub and hedgerows, new wetland planting, all proposed will provide benefits for foraging and commuting bats. Sensitive lighting should be implemented to avoid impacts on habitat.	Not significant

Roosts (roosting)	Local	Mature oak trees are present around the edges of the site. These are likely to be retained in situ. Additional surveys required if trees are to be impacted.	Not significant
Nesting Birds	Site	Mitigating direct harm to nests by removal of any suitable nesting habitat outside of nesting bird season or after a check by a suitably qualified ecologist. New planting and enhancement measures should be included within the design	Not significant
Badgers	Legislative implications	Active badger setts within the woodland. These are to be maintained in situ with the woodland being buffered and the setts within protected. Construction safeguards should be implemented to avoid impacting badgers that might commute or forage within the site.	Not significant
Reptiles	Site	Low numbers of common lizards and grass snake located around the edges of the site. Likely to still persist. Avoidance of loss of suitable habitats or mitigation scheme including translocation	Not significant
GCNS	Site	Site lies in 'green' risk zone. No further surveys recommended. No ponds on site, pond in the woodland (P1) does not support GCNs.	Not significant
Dormice	Site	Previous surveys identified low numbers of dormice within the ancient woodland around the site. Limited suitable vegetation removal will occur. Sensitive clearance recommended where small sections are to be removed. If larger scale removal is recommended than a license will be required. Extensive new planting recommended.	Not significant
Hedgehogs	Site	Limited suitable vegetation removal will occur. Sensitive clearance recommended where small sections are to be removed. Extensive new planting recommended.	Not significant
Water voles, otters	Site	Potential for presence in adjacent stream habitat but not within site boundaries. Previous surveys did not identify water voles or otters, so potentially locally absent.	Not significant

7.0 Conclusions

- 7.1 There is one internationally designated site, Ashdown Forest SPA and SAC which is located 5.29km north of the red line boundary. Previous HRA assessment scoped out impacts from air pollution / air quality. Recreational pressure was also considered potential to impact upon the integrity of the SPA / SAC. However, the creation of the SANGS was considered suitable for removal of impacts resulting from recreational impacts.
- 7.2 The site lies within multiple SSSI impact zones. However, the proposed development is not one listed as one which would impact upon the integrity of the wider SSSI units.
- 7.3 Tree lines, scrub and native hedgerow habitat is present on site. These habitats should be largely to be retained and protected. Any small loss will be mitigated through the creation of sufficient new lengths of species-rich native hedgerow on site post development.
- 7.4 Ancient woodland is located to the south and west of the site. This woodland is outside the development area and will be buffered from development. No impacts on the structure and integrity of the ancient woodland is predicted as a result of the development.
- 7.5 The grassland habitats on site are common and widespread throughout the local area and the UK as a whole.
- 7.6 The mature oak trees set within the tree lines supported bat friendly features. It is considered that none of the mature trees are to be impacted by the proposals no further survey with regards to roosting bats is required. New opportunities for roosting bats are recommended to be included within the design of the site.
- 7.7 The habitats on site were considered suitable for foraging/commuting bats and survey carried out in 2019 confirmed common and soprano pipistrelles, As such, it is considered that the site still supports these species, and likely in a similar composition. A detailed sensitive lighting strategy will be required including a dark corridor across the site boundaries and new planting is proposed to provide new ecological networks.

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- 7.8 The pond within the woodland, P1, did not support GCNs in 2019 and did not support GCN DNA in 2024. As such this pond was not considered to support this species. Off site ponds have not been investigated. The site is located within the 'green' impact risk zone and as such, further surveys are not recommended.
- 7.9 The boundary hedgerow, tree lines and woodland were considered suitable to support dormice, and dormice have been recorded within the ancient woodland to the west of the site. It is considered unlikely that dormice are present on site. Dependent on the extent of site clearance, a licence may be required.
- 7.10 Surveys carried out in 2019 identified low numbers of common lizards and grass snakes on site. Suitable habitat may require removal. If this is required then mitigation measures may be required. There is sufficient space and opportunity within the red line boundary to support reptile species within the red line.
- 7.11 Badger setts were located in 2019 and 2022, with setts identified in the woodland off site and some setts on site which were not considered to be active, or some with limited activity. No evidence of badger activity was recorded during the update survey, however, dense scrub could not be fully access. Prior to the start of any developments, an update badger check should be carried out and it is recommended that best practice guidelines are to be followed throughout the proposed development to ensure that no individuals are harmed.
- 7.12 Birds may use the tree lines, hedgerows and scrub and opportunities for ground nesting birds. The linear features are due to be retained during development, however; if there are any works to these features this should be undertaken outside of bird nesting season (March – August inclusive) or after a nesting bird check by a qualified ecologist.
- 7.13 Recommendations for enhancements have been made within this report, aimed at improving the ecological value of the site post-development.

8.0 References

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Internet resources:

Google Maps: www.google.co.uk/maps

Magic Interactive Map: www.magic.gov.uk

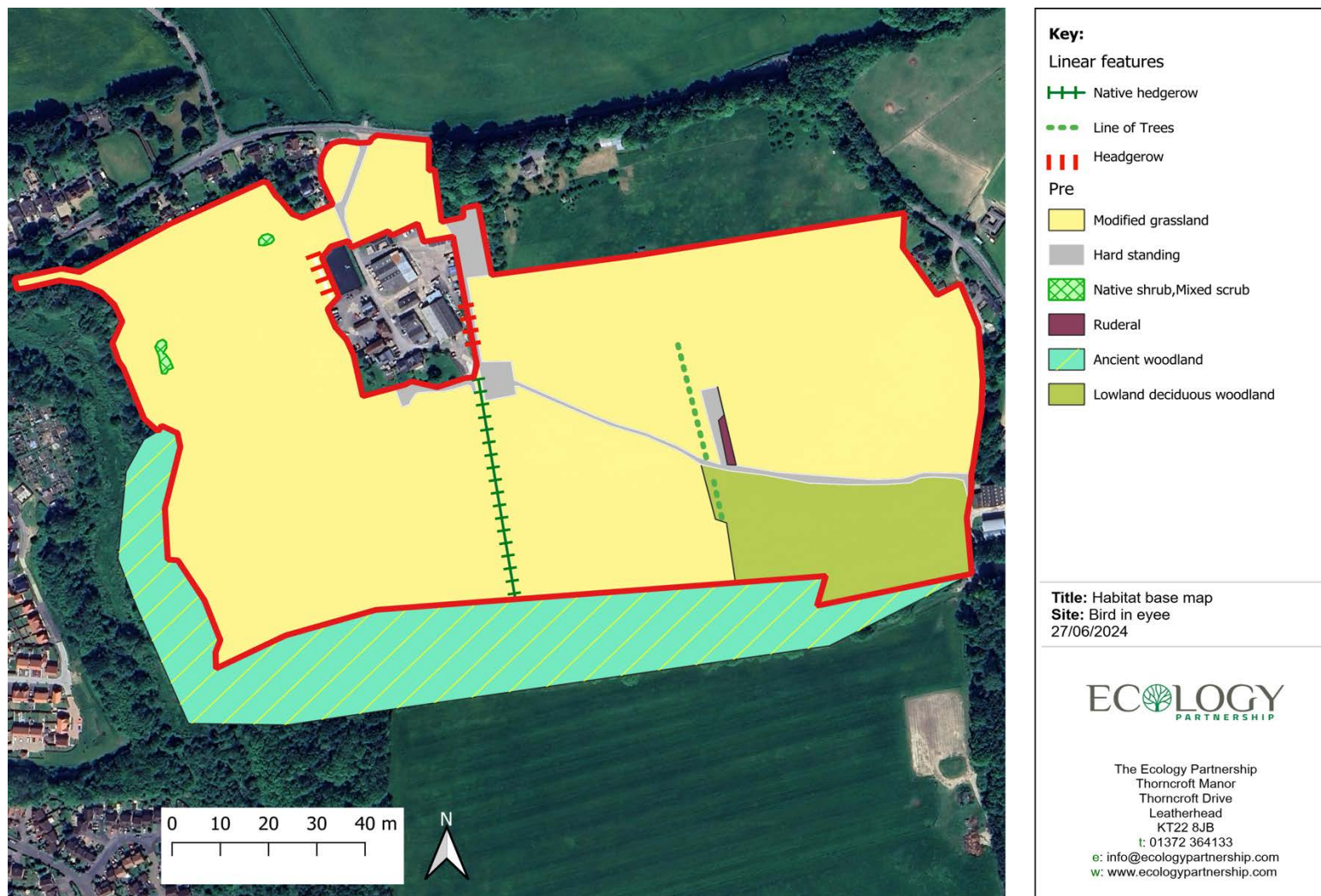
Appendix 1: Photos

Photograph 1: Field 1	 A wide-angle photograph of a lush green field, likely a meadow or pasture, under a bright blue sky with scattered white clouds. The field is filled with tall grass and some yellow wildflowers. In the background, there is a line of trees and a small building.
Photograph 2: Field 2	 A photograph of a field with tall, golden-brown grass, possibly a hayfield or a field of mature grass. The field is sloping upwards towards the right. In the background, there are trees and a small building under a blue sky with white clouds.
Photograph 3: Native hedgerow	 A photograph of a native hedgerow. The hedgerow is composed of various green shrubs and trees. To the left of the hedgerow, there is a gravel path or road. In the background, a small building with a sign that says "FOOD" is visible under a blue sky with white clouds.

Photograph 4: Field 3	
Photograph 5: Field 4	
Photograph 6: Track and woodland to the south	

Photograph 7: Young woodland	
Photograph 8: Tree line	
Photograph 9: Access track through site	

Appendix 2: Habitat Map



Appendix 3: Condition Assessment

-Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)					
UKHab Habitat Type(s): Grassland - Modified grassland					
Condition Assessment Criteria		Field 1	Field 2	Field 3	Field 4
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² present, including at least 2 forbs (this may include those listed in Footnote 1). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition. Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m ² (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.	Yes 6 species per meter squared on average	No average is 3 species per meter squared	No average is 5.4 species per meter squared	No average is 4 species per meter squared
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	No	No	No	Yes
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note – patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90% cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Yes	Yes	Yes	No
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens?).	No	No	No	Yes
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species? (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA*).	Yes	Yes	Yes	Yes
Condition		Moderate	Poor	Poor	Poor

Condition Assessment Result	
Good	Passes 6 or 7 of 7 criteria including essential criterion A
Moderate	Passes 4 or 5 of 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A
Poor	Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR 4-6 of criteria but failing criterion A
Footnote 1 – Creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i>, spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>, curled dock <i>Rumex crispus</i>, broad-leaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>, common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i>, creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i>, greater plantain <i>Plantago major</i>, white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> and cow parsley <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>. Footnote 2 – For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing establishment of new species, or localised patches where not exceeding 10% cover. Footnote 3 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying the buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, using professional judgement. Footnote 4 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)	

Condition Sheet: SCRUB Habitat Type		
UKHab Habitat Type(s): All forms of scrub		
Condition Assessment Criteria		Scrub Field 1
A	The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type - the appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches its UKHab description (where in its natural range). ¹ - At least 80% of scrub is native, - There are at least three native woody species ² , - No single species comprises more than 75% of the cover (except hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i> , common juniper <i>Juniperus communis</i> , sea buckthorn <i>Hippophae rhamnoides</i> or box <i>Buxus sempervirens</i> , which can be up to 100% cover).	Yes
B	Seedlings, saplings, young shrubs and mature (or ancient or veteran ³) shrubs are all present.	No
C	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ⁴ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁵) and species indicative of sub-optimal condition ⁸ make up less than 5% of ground cover.	Yes
D	The scrub has a well-developed edge with scattered scrub and tall grassland and or forbs present between the scrub and adjacent habitat.	No
E	There are clearings, glades or rides present within the scrub, providing sheltered edges.	No
Condition		Poor
Condition Assessment Result		
Good	Passes 5 of 5 criteria	
Moderate	Passes 3 or 4 of 5 criteria	
Poor	Passes 2 or fewer criteria	
Footnote 1 – Professional judgement should be used alongside the UKHab description.		
Footnote 2 – Native woody species as defined and listed in the Hedgerow Survey Handbook: DEFRA (2007) <i>Hedgerow Survey Handbook: A standard procedure for local surveys in the UK</i> . 2nd ed. [online]. Defra, London. PB1195. Available from: Hedgerow Survey Handbook (publishing.service.gov.uk).		
Footnote 3 – See gov.uk standing advice on ancient and veteran species. Available from: Keepers of time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy in England (publishing.service.gov.uk) and Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)		
Footnote 4 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, using professional judgement.		

Footnote 5 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Footnote 6 – Species indicative of suboptimal condition for this habitat type may include: non-native conifers, tree-of-heaven *Alnus altissima*, holm oak *Quercus ilex*, European turkey oak *Quercus cerris*, cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, snowberry *Symphoricarpos* spp., shallon *Gaultheria shallon*, American skunk cabbage *Lysichiton americanus*, buddleia *Buddleja* spp., cotoneaster *Cotoneaster* spp., Spanish bluebell *Hyacinthoides hispanica* and hybrid bluebells *Hyacinthoides x massartiana*. There may be additional relevant species local to the region and or site.

Condition Sheet: LINE OF TREES Habitat Type			
Condition Assessment Criteria		TL1	TL2
A	More than 70% of trees are native species.	Yes	No
B	Tree canopy is predominantly continuous with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide.	Yes	Yes
C	One or more trees has veteran features and or natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates, such as presence of standing and attached deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	Yes	No
D	There is an undisturbed naturally-vegetated strip of at least 6 m on both sides to protect the line of trees from farming and other human activities (excluding grazing). Where veteran trees are present, root protection areas should follow standing advice ²	No	No
E	At least 95% of the trees are in a healthy condition (deadwood or veteran features valuable for wildlife are excluded from this. There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity.	Yes	Yes
Condition		M	Poor
Condition Assessment Result			
Good	Passes 5 of 5 criteria		
Moderate	Passes 3 or 4 of 5 criteria		
Poor	Passes 0, 1 or 2 of 5 criteria		

Footnote 1 – DEFRA (2007) *Hedgerow Survey Handbook: A standard procedure for local surveys in the UK*. 2nd ed [online]. Defra, London. PB1195. Available from: Hedgerow Survey Handbook (publishing.service.gov.uk).

Footnote 2 – Where ancient and veteran trees are present, see gov.uk standing advice on ancient and veteran trees. Available from: [Keepers of time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy in England \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/671195/Keepers_of_time_-_ancient_and_native_woodland_and_trees_policy_in_England.pdf) and: [Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/671195/Ancient_woodland,_ancient_trees_and_veteran_trees_advice_for_making_planning_decisions.pdf)

Condition Assessment Criteria	Criteria achieved?	
Hedgerows	H1	H2
Height >1.5 m average along length	Yes	Yes
Width >1.5 m average along length	Yes	Yes
Gap – hedge base Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length	Yes	Yes
Gap – hedge canopy continuity Gaps make up <10% of total length and No canopy gaps >5 m	Yes	Yes
Undisturbed perennial vegetation >1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length (on one side of the hedge (at least))	Yes	Yes
Undesirable species Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground.	No	Yes
Invasive species >90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native plant species (including those listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ³) and recently introduced species.	Yes	Yes
Current Damage >90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities.	Yes	Yes
Tree Age (if hedgerow with trees)		

There is more than one age-class (or morphology) of tree present (for example: young, mature, veteran and or ancient), and there is on average at least one mature, ancient or veteran tree present per 20 - 50m of hedgerow.		
Tree health (if hedgerow with trees) At least 95% of hedgerow trees are in a healthy condition (excluding veteran features valuable for wildlife). There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity.		
Criteria failed		
Condition (G = good; M = moderate; P = poor)	Good	Good

Condition Assessment Result		
	Hedgerow without trees	Hedgerow with trees
Good	No more than 2 failures in total; AND No more than 1 in any functional group.	No more than 2 failures in total; AND No more than 1 failure in any functional group.
Moderate	No more than 4 failures in total; AND <u>Does not fail both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (e.g. fails attributes A1, A2, B1 & C2 = Moderate condition).	No more than 5 failures in total; AND <u>Does not fail both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (e.g. fails attributes A1, A2, B1, C2 & E1 = Moderate condition).
Poor	Fails a total of more than 4 attributes; OR <u>Fails both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (e.g. fails attributes A1, A2, B1 & B2 = Poor condition).	Fails a total of more than 5 attributes; OR <u>Fails both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (e.g. fails attributes A1, A2, B1 & B2 = Poor condition).
Footnote 1 – DEFRA (2007) <i>Hedgerow Survey Handbook. A standard procedure for local surveys in the UK.</i> [online] Available on: layout (hedgelink.org.uk) Footnote 2 – STALEY, J.T. ET AL. (2020) <i>Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Hedgerows.</i> [online] Available on: Definition of Favourable Conservation Status for Hedgerows - RP2943 (naturalengland.org.uk) Footnote 3 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Footnote 4 – CHEFFINGS, C. M. et al. (2005) <i>The Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain.</i> Species Status 7: 1-116. [online] Available on: The Vascular Plant Red Data List for Great Britain (Species Status No. 7) JNCC Resource Hub		

Footnote 5 – BOTANICAL SOCIETY OF BRITAIN AND IRELAND (BSBI). *Definitions: wild, native or alien?* [online] Available on: [Definitions: wild, native or alien? – Botanical Society of Britain & Ireland \(bsbi.org\)](https://www.bsbi.org/definitions/wild-native-or-alien/)

Footnote 6 – BSBI and Biological Records Centre (BRC) (2022) *Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora*. [online] Available on: [Acknowledgements | Online Atlas of the British and Irish Flora \(brc.ac.uk\)](https://www.brc.ac.uk/acknowledgements/)

Footnote 7 – GB NON-NATIVE SPECIES SECRETARIAT (GBNNSS) (2022) Available on: [Home » NNSS \(nonnativespecies.org\)](https://www.nonnativespecies.org/)

Footnote 8 – See gov.uk standing advice on ancient and veteran trees. Available from: [Keepers of time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy in England \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://www.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/68111/ancient-woodland-and-trees-policy-in-england.pdf) and [Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/ancient-woodland-ancient-trees-and-veteran-trees-advice-for-making-planning-decisions)

Condition Sheet: WOODLAND Habitat Type					
UKHab Habitat Type(s): All woodlands (except wood pasture)					
Condition Assessment Criteria					
Indicator		Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)	Score per indicator W1
A	Age distribution of trees Footnote 1	Three age-classes ¹ present	Two age-classes ¹ present	One age-class ¹ present	1
B	Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage Footnote 2	No significant browsing damage evident in woodland ²	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or less of whole woodland ²	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or more of whole woodland ²	3
C	Invasive plant species Footnote 3	No invasive species ³ present in woodland	<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> or cherry laurel <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> not present, other invasive species ³ < 10% cover	<i>Rhododendron</i> or cherry laurel present, or other invasive species ³ > 10% cover	3

D	Number of native tree species Footnote 4	Five or more native tree or shrub species ⁴ found across woodland parcel	Three to four native tree or shrub species ⁴ found across woodland parcel	None to two native tree or shrub species ⁴ across woodland parcel	2
E	Cover of native tree and shrub species Footnote 5	> 80% of canopy trees and > 80% of understory shrubs are native ⁵	50-80% of canopy trees and 50-80% of understory shrubs are native ⁵	< 50% of canopy trees and < 50% of understory shrubs are native ⁵	3
F	Open space within woodland Footnote 6 and 7	10 - 20% of woodland has areas of temporary open space ⁶ . Unless woodland is <10ha, in which case 0 - 20% temporary open space is permitted ⁷	21- 40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space ⁶	<10% or >40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space ⁶ . But if woodland <10ha has <10% temporary open space, please see Good category ⁷ .	1
G	Woodland regeneration Footnote 8	All three classes present in woodland ⁸ ; trees 4-7cm Diameter at Breast Height (DBH), saplings and seedlings or advanced coppice regrowth	One or two classes only present in woodland ⁸	No classes or coppice regrowth present in woodland ⁸	1
H	Tree health Footnote 9	Tree mortality less than 10%, no pests or diseases and no crown dieback ⁹	11% to 25% mortality and/or crown dieback or low risk pest or disease present ⁹	Greater than 25% tree mortality and or any high risk pest or disease present ⁹	3
I	Vegetation and ground flora Footnote 10	Recognisable NVC plant community ¹⁰ at ground layer present, strongly characterised by ancient woodland flora specialists.	Recognisable woodland NVC plant community ¹⁰ present at ground layer present	No recognisable woodland NVC plant community ¹⁰ at ground layer present	1
J	Woodland vertical structure Footnote 11	Three or more storeys across all survey plots or a complex woodland ¹¹	Two storeys across all survey plots ¹¹	One or less storey across all survey plots ¹¹	1

K	Veteran trees Footnote 12	Two or more veteran trees ¹² per hectare	One veteran tree ¹² per hectare	No veteran trees ¹² present in woodland	1
L	Amount of deadwood Footnote 13	50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, branch stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities ¹³ .	Between 25% and 50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities ¹³ .	Less than 25% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities ¹³ .	1
M	Woodland disturbance Footnote 14	No nutrient enrichment or damaged ground evident ¹⁴	Less than 1 hectare in total of nutrient enrichment across woodland area and/or less than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground ¹⁴	More than 1 hectare of nutrient enrichment and/or more than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground ¹⁴	3
Total score (out of a possible 39)					24 - POOR
Condition Assessment Score					
Good	Total score >32 (33 to 39)				
Moderate	Total score 26 to 32				
Poor	Total score <26 (13 to 25)				
Footnotes below refer to the EWBG woodland condition assessment details: EWBG (No date). <i>Assessing your Woodland's Condition</i> [online]. Available from: Woodland Wildlife Toolkit (sylva.org.uk)					
The woodland condition assessment survey methodology is outlined in the EWBG toolkit. However the criteria on this sheet are those specific to the Statutory Biodiversity Metric and must be used when assessing woodland condition.					
Footnote 1 - See EWBG method INDICATOR 1 for more information. If tree species is not a birch <i>Betula</i> sp., cherry <i>Prunus</i> sp. or <i>Sorbus</i> sp.: 0 - 20 years (Young); 21 - 150 years (Intermediate); and >150 years (Old). For birch, cherry or <i>Sorbus</i> species; 0 - 20 years = Young; 21 - 60 years =Intermediate; >60 years = Old. A recognisable age-class should be a consistent recognisable layer across the woodland or stand being assessed. Presence of a few saplings would not indicate that the woodland has an 'age-class' of young trees.					
Footnote 2 - See EWBG method INDICATOR 2 for more information. Browsing pressure is considered to be significant where >20% of vegetation visible within each survey plot shows damage from any type of browsing pressure listed.					

Footnote 3 - See EWBG method INDICATOR 3 for more information. Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly.

Check for the presence of all plant species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), particularly the following invasive non-native species: American skunk cabbage *Lysichiton americanus*; Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*; Japanese knotweed *Reynoutria japonica*; cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*; shallon *Gaultheria shallon*; snowberry *Symphoricarpos albus*; variegated yellow archangel *Lamiasstrum galeobdolon* subsp. *argentatum*; rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum*; and tree-of-heaven *Ailanthus altissima*.

Footnote 4 - See EWBG method INDICATOR 4 and Table 2 for more information. The number of different native tree or shrub species including young trees and shrubs. A list of commonly found native tree and shrub species is provided in Table 2. Not all species listed are native to all parts of the UK. Note a list of commonly found non-native tree species are also included and should be recorded if present.

Footnote 5 - See EWBG method INDICATOR 5 and for more information. The abundance of native tree species in upper (>5 m) and understorey (up to 5 m) layers including young trees and shrubs.

Footnote 6 - See EWBG method INDICATOR 6 for more information. Open space within woodland in this context is temporary open space in which trees can be expected to regenerate (for example, glades, rides, footpaths, areas of clear-fell). This differs from permanent open space where tree regeneration is not possible or desirable (for example, tarmac, buildings, rivers). Area is at least 10 m wide with less than 20% covered by shrubs or trees.

Footnote 7 – Given the increased ratio of edge habitat to woodland where the woodland is <10ha.

Footnote 8 - See EWBG method INDICATOR 8 for more information. This indicator measures regeneration potential of the woodland by considering three classes: seedlings; saplings; and young trees of 4-7 cm DBH. All three classes would fall in the 'young' category of the 'age distribution of trees' indicator, but the regeneration indicator gathers additional information by considering regeneration potential - if seedlings, saplings and young trees are all present that means natural regeneration processes are happening.

Footnote 9 - See EWBG method INDICATOR 9 for more information and Table 3 for a list of diseases and pests and their risk level.

Footnote 10 - See EWBG method INDICATOR 10 directing to NVC key for more information. The 'UKHab to NVC translation table' in the UK Habitat Classification resources may also be useful to assess this.

Footnote 11 – This criterion looks at structural diversity and is useful to understand in conjunction with the age of trees in a woodland. Vertical structure is defined as the number of canopy storeys present. Possible storey values are: 1) Upper; 2) Complex: recorded when the stand is composed of multiple tree heights that cannot easily be stratified into broad height bands (such as upper, middle or lower); 3) Middle; 4) Lower; and 5) Shrub layer. There might be no storeys where the woodland has been felled. See EWBG INDICATOR 11 for more information.

Footnote 12 - See gov.uk standing advice on ancient and veteran trees. Available from:

[Keepers of time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy in England \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

and:

[Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk)

EWBG INDICATOR 12 is the relevant indicator.

Footnote 13 – See EWBG method INDICATOR 13 for more information. This includes logs, large dead branches on the forest floor and stumps (<1 m tall) >20 cm diameter at narrowest point and >50 cm long. Also includes standing dead trees (>1 m tall) and also deadwood on standing live trees. Diameter is measured at the narrowest point on the stem. Minimum diameter of 20 cm.

Footnote 14 - See EWBG method INDICATOR 15 for more information. Examples of disturbance are: significant nutrient enrichment; soil compaction from trampling, machinery, animal poaching or litter.

Appendix 4: Grassland Quadrants

Field System Composition and Classification

Field Number	Species composition	Metric classification
Field F1	Q1 – 5 species per meter squared Yorkshire fog Perennial rye grass Annual meadow grass Creeping buttercup White clove Q2 – 6 species per meter squared Perennial rye grass White clover Annual meadow grass Meadow foxtail Catsear Common bent Q3 – 7 species per meter squared Perennial rye grass Yorkshire fog Catsear Common bent White clove Lesser hop trefoil Mousear Q4 6 species per meter squared Yorkshire fog White clover Mousear Creeping buttercup Meadow buttercup Common bent Q5 6 species per meter squared Yorkshire fog Perennial rye grass Creeping buttercup Common bent White clover Mousear	Average of 6 species per meter square Modified grassland - Species-poor vegetation (<9 species per m2) dominated by a few fast-growing grasses on fertile, neutral soils. In 'moderate' condition
Field F2	Q1 - 3 species per m2 Yorkshire fog Sweet vernal grass Meadow buttercup Q2 - 3 species per m2 Yorkshire fog Common bent Meadow buttercup Q3- 2 species per m2	Average of 3 species per meter square Modified grassland - Species-poor vegetation (<9 species per m2) dominated by a few fast-growing grasses on fertile, neutral soils. In 'poor' condition

	Yorkshire fog Broad leaved dock Q4 – 4 species per m2 Yorkshire Fog Perennial rye grass Cateaser Mouseear Q5 – 3 species per m2 Yorkshire fog Perennial rye grass Meadow buttercup	
Field F3	Q1 -5 species per m2 Yorkshire fog Perennial rye Catsear Lesser hop trefoil Common bent Q2 -5 species per m2 Yorkshire fog Perennial rye Catsear White clover Common bent Q3 – 6 species per m2 Yorkshire fog Perennial rye Catsear White clover Self heal Common bent Q4 -5 species per m2 Yorkshire fog Perennial rye Catsear White clover Common bent Q5 – 6 species per m2 Perennial rye grass Yorkshire fog White clover Common bent Ribwort plantain Cateasr	Average of 5.4 species per meter square Modified grassland - Species-poor vegetation (<9 species per m2) dominated by a few fast-growing grasses on fertile, neutral soils. In 'poor' condition
Field F4 (NB not all could be surveyed due to cow grazing)	Q1 – 4 species per m2 Yorkshire fog Annual meadow grass Creeping buttercup Meadow buttercup Q2 – 4 species per m2 Common bent	Average of 4 species per meter square Modified grassland - Species-poor vegetation (<9 species per m2) dominated by a few fast-growing grasses on fertile, neutral soils.

	Perennial rye grass Yorkshire fog Creeping buttercup Q3 – 4 species per m2 Common bent Perennial rye Yorkshire fog Creeping buttercup	In ‘poor’ condition
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Appendix 5: EDNA Report

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