Longleat Center Parcs: Hot Tubs

Soft Landscaping Scheme
April 2023

For:
Center Parcs
One Edison Rise
New Ollerton
Newark
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Control sheet

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Client:	Center Parcs
Job reference:	#1133
Title:	Longleat Center Parcs: Hot Tubs - Soft Landscaping Scheme April 2023
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Date of Issue	25th April 2023

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Summary

A Soft Landscaping Scheme has been produced for four clusters of lodges at Longleat Center Parcs, Wiltshire (NGR: ST8304342359), where the installation of 14 hot tubs and associated plant rooms and paving is proposed. This document, comprising a soft landscaping scheme, was completed during April 2023 to satisfy Condition 4 of the planning approval granted by Wiltshire Council (ref: PL/2022/02971).

Table 1 below summarises the mitigation measures, biodiversity enhancements and proposed landscaping, and management detailed within this document.

Table 1. Summary of Soft Landscaping Measures and Management.

Measures	Management and Timing
Flowering Lawn Creation on Site	Sow lawn August to October. Mow regularly with an eight-week suspension in June.
Scrub Enhancement	Shrub planting over winter. Weeding during first two springs, rotational pruning between September and February, every three years.
Creation of Habitat Piles	Cleared Vegetation can be utilised to form habitat piles made from grass cuttings, logs and scrub species during removal of habitat for hot tub installation.
Native Tree Planting	Tree Planting over winter to replace any native, broad-leaf woodland trees if removed during the hot-tub installation (removal of low value of one or few coniferous woodland trees will not require replacement planting).

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Scope of the Report

1.1.1. EMEC Ecology was commissioned by Center Parcs (via Jackson Design Associates) to produce a soft landscaping scheme for four clusters of lodges at Longleat Center Parcs, Wiltshire (NGR: ST8304342359), hereafter referred to as 'the Site'. The Site (Appendix A) was subject to proposals for the installation of 14 hot tubs and associated plant rooms and paving, and this BES and soft landscaping scheme is required to satisfy Condition 4 of the planning approval (ref: PL/2022/02971):

1.1.2. The aim of the BES and soft landscaping scheme is to address the following condition detailed within Condition 04 of the planning application:

"The patios and hot tubs shall not be first used on until a scheme of soft landscaping has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the details of which shall include:-

• a detailed planting specification showing all plant species, supply and planting sizes and planting densities;

• 1 replacement tree (or as many replacement trees as required to replace trees that are felled during construction), of a size and species and in a location to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority, shall be planted in accordance with BS3936 (Parts 1 and 4), BS4043 and BS4428"

1.2 Site Location and Context

1.2.1. The lodges subject to the proposals of hot tub installation were located in the southern portion of Center Parcs Longleat within the 'Fir' area. The habitat surrounding the lodges comprised plantation coniferous woodland which extends within the Center Parcs Village to the north, with sporadic understory of scrub, and small areas of amenity grassland surrounding the lodges alongside bare ground. To the south arable land dominated and is connected to the Site via hedgerows and small areas of woodland.

2. Soft Landscaping Scheme

2.1.1. The soft landscaping recommended within the proposed development comprises:

- Creation of 'flowering lawn' areas to replace the loss of amenity grassland and enhance habitat value of the Site and provide foraging opportunities for pollinators.
- Planting of scrub/shrub species to enhance foraging and nesting opportunities for birds within the sporadic scattered scrub on Site.
- Creation of Habitat Piles using logs, removed scrub, grass cuttings / amenity grassland removal and rocks to provide terrestrial habitat for amphibious and reptile species.
- Tree planting within the surrounding woodland to replace any broadleaf trees if felling required at a ratio of 2:1. If the anticipated '1 tree' is Coniferous then replacement is not required.

Flowering Lawn

2.1.2. A flowering lawn (modified grassland) will be established in the remaining amenity grassland habitat surrounding lodges 724 and 725 to add seasonal interest and attract pollinators. The grassland will be sown using a flowering lawn mix containing at least six to eight species per metre squared, which can withstand close, regular mowing, such as Naturescape's N14 Flowering Lawn Mixture, a mix of 12 native wildflower species and six grass species. The seed mix will be sown between August and October; please refer to the provider's information regarding the recommended sowing rate.

2.1.3. A flowering lawn can tolerate regular close mowing. During the first year the grassland will be cut to a height of 3-4 cm, approximately every 7 – 10 days, to suppress the growth of dominant grasses and weeds. After the first year of establishment, the regularity of mowing can be relaxed and sward should be cut to a height between 2.5 cm and 4 cm. The mowing regime should be suspended at the end of June for up to eight weeks, to allow the grassland to flower.

2.1.4. Regular mowing will prevent adjacent scrub from encroaching into the grassland and will prevent the establishment of bracken. The grassland will be monitored for invasive, non-native species, and if present these will be removed appropriately, using any necessary biosecurity protocols.

Scrub Enhancement

2.1.5. The sporadic scattered scrub that is currently situated on hardstanding to the south-west of lodge 728 and north-west of lodge 731 will be enhanced through planting of native shrub species to improve the scrub structure. Appropriate locally sourced, native shrub species include dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), guelder rose (*Viburnum opulus*), holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), rowan (*Sorbus aucuparia*), and spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*). A range of ages will be planted to include seedlings, young shrubs and mature shrubs. Such species and age-groups can be sourced from NatureScapes.com.

2.1.6. Shrubs will be planted during the dormant season, between November and March, to increase the survival rate, although very cold, windy conditions and frozen or waterlogged soil conditions will be avoided to prevent root damage before the plants have established.

2.1.7. Shrubs will be planted between 0.5 m and 1.2 m apart and the soil covered with grass clippings or wood chips to suppress weed growth. During the first two years of growth the beds will be weeded lightly. After five years of growth the scrub will be pruned every three years on a rotational basis to encourage dense growth. Rotational pruning will ensure maintenance of all tree age groups (seedlings, young shrubs, and mature shrubs). Pruning will be undertaken between January and February to avoid disturbance to nesting birds.

Habitat Piles/Hibernacula

2.1.8. A minimum of two habitat piles will be created within the areas of scrub planting, and/or near to the woodland borders, and/or within the flowering lawn habitat to provide refuge opportunities for common amphibians, reptiles, and invertebrates. These can be created by piling up any inert materials, such as brash, rubble, grass cuttings and logs, and loosely covering the piles with topsoil. The soil should not be compacted, to maintain spaces within the habitat pile for wildlife to use. Please refer to Appendix C for more details relating to the habitat pile design.

2.1.9. Tree Planting/Replacement

2.1.10. Condition 4 states "1 replacement tree (or as many replacement trees as required to replace trees that are felled during construction), of a size and species and in a location to be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority, shall be planted in accordance with BS3936 (Parts 1 and 4), BS4043 and BS4428". Due to the trees within the Site mainly consisting of large Redwood species, replacement of the felled tree/s may provide limited ecological enhancement to the Site; however, any replacement planted trees should be native understory species such as Elder (*Sambucus nigra*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) or Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and these should be planted in gaps created by the felling of any trees within the Site.

3. Soft Landscaping Enhancement and Management Schedule

3.1.1. This section provides information regarding planting specifications, species, sizes, and planting densities, along with planting and management methods. A plan showing the location of recommended landscaping is shown in Appendix B.

3.1.2. Table 2 below summarises the timings of enhancements and management practices to be implemented within the proposed development.

Table 2. Timing of soft landscaping enhancement and management tasks.

Task	Timing
Flowering lawn	
Grassland sowing	August – October
First year of establishment	Regular mowing every 7 – 10 days to a height of 3-4 cm
Subsequent years	Regular mowing to a height between 2.5 cm and 4 cm, with eight-week suspension in mowing regime from the end of June
Scattered scrub	
Shrub planting	November – March
First two years of shrub growth – weeding	March – June
After five years of shrub growth – rotational pruning every three years	January – February
Trees*	
Tree planting	November – March
After first three years of tree growth – pruning	November – March
Wildlife enhancements	
Creation of habitat piles	Any time of year
Monitoring	
Monitoring conducted by scheme ecologist	12 months after completion of the development

3.1.3. It is the responsibility of Center Parcs to implement the landscaping scheme and maintain the enhancements appropriately.

3.1.4. The scheme ecologist will undertake a monitoring visit 12 months after the completion of the development to assess the biodiversity enhancements and to recommend additional improvements / management if required.

3.1.5. *Only required following any felling of broad-leaf tree species, however native tree planting is recommended to further enhance the site's biodiversity.

References

British Standards Institution (2013). *BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity: Code of practice for planning and development*. British Standards Institution, London.

Wiltshire Council (2022). *Approval of Full Planning Permission with Conditions_PL/2022/02971*. Wiltshire Council, Wiltshire.

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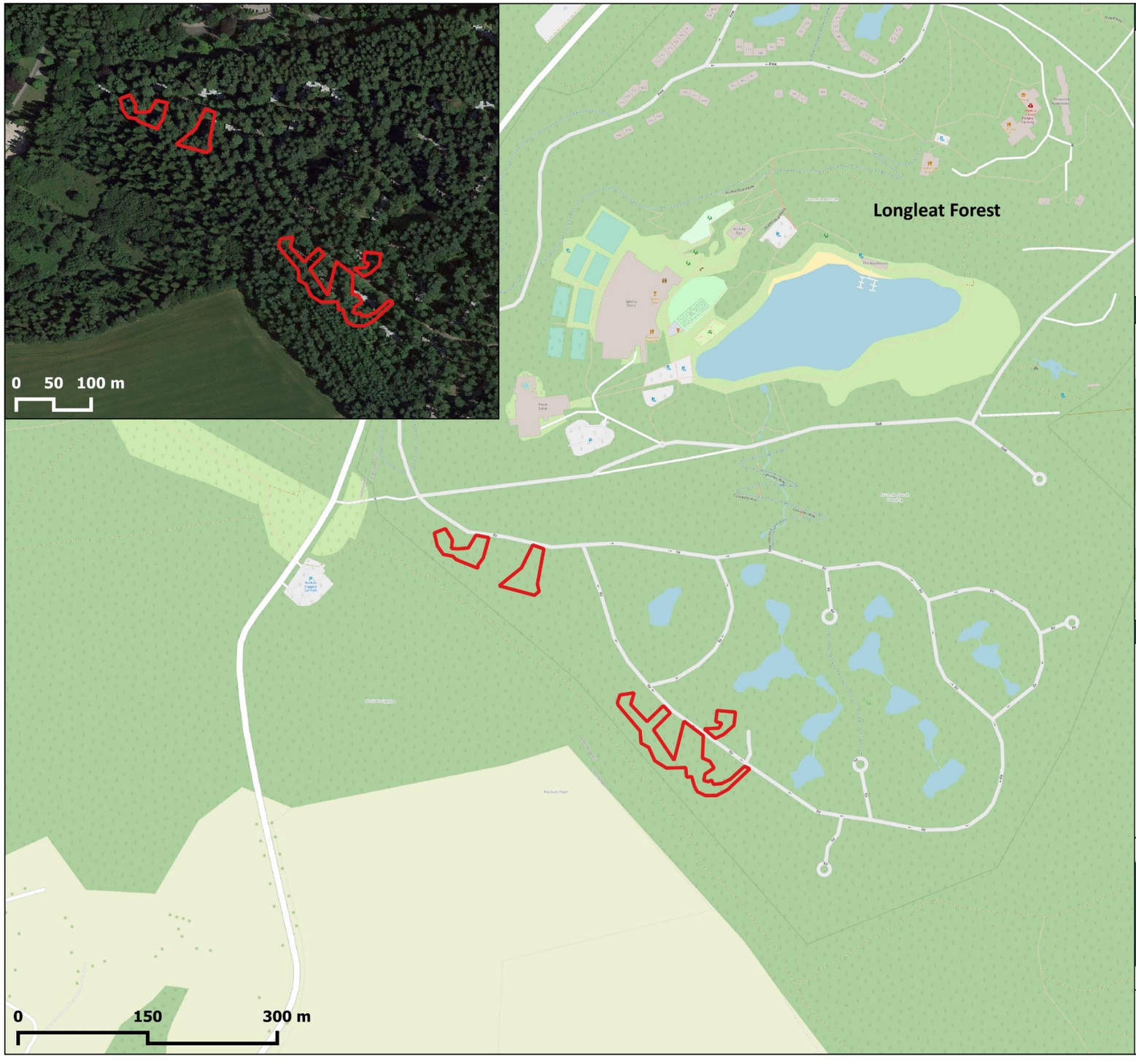
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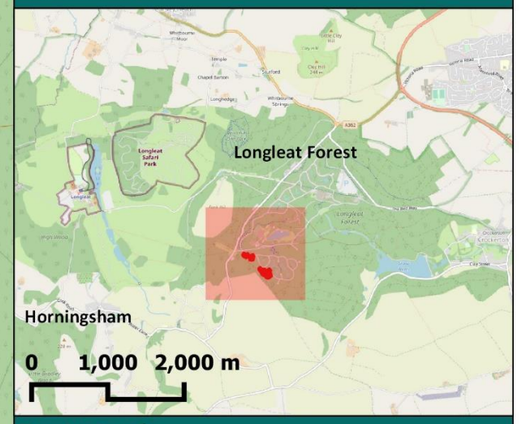
Appendix A: Site Location Plan



Legend

Site boundary

Wider Site Context



Drawing Details

Project:
Longleat Centre Parks: Hot Tubs

Client:
Centre Parks

Drawing:
#1133_Appendix A_Site Location Plan

Drawn by:
Sam Geldard

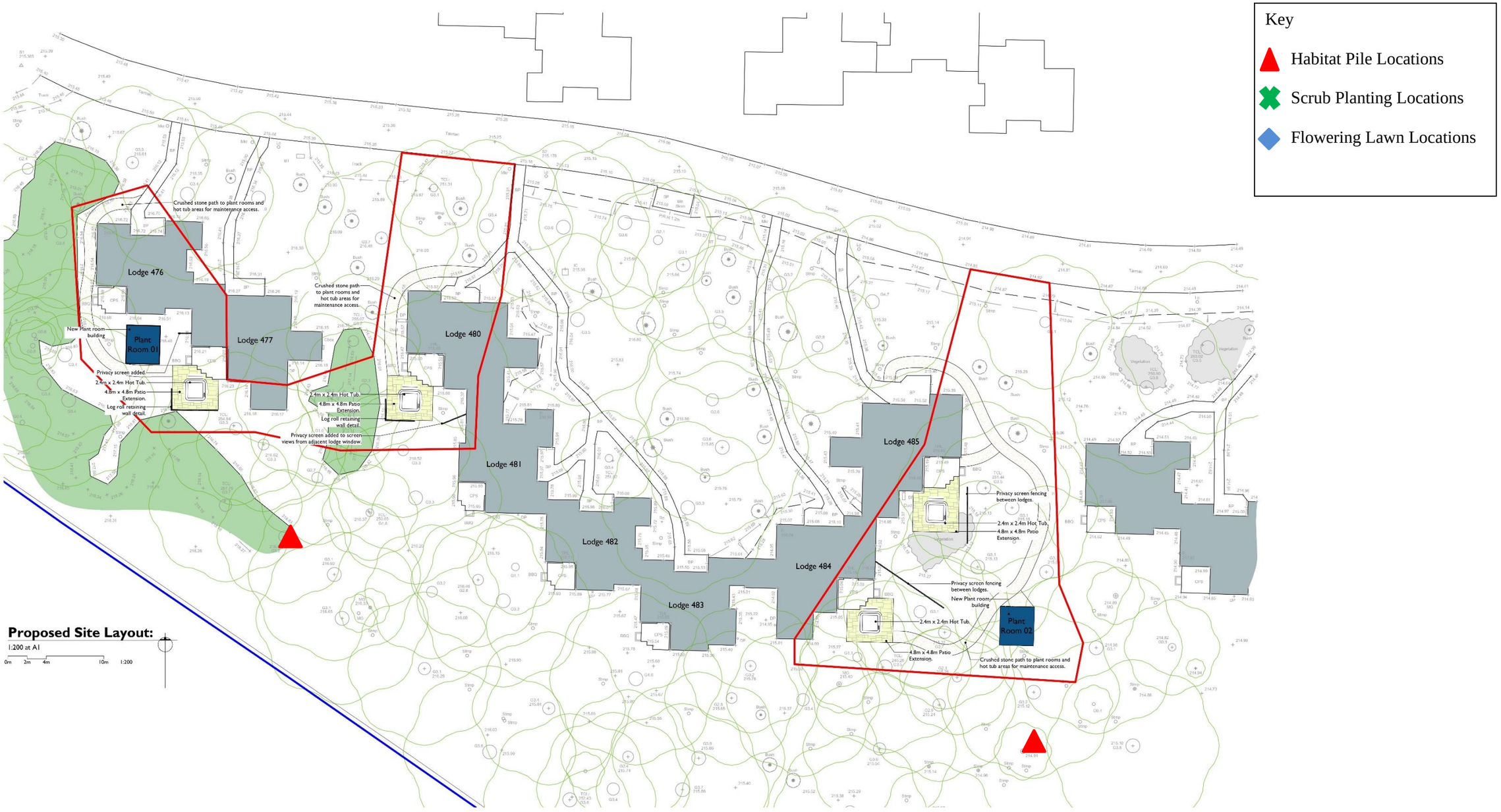
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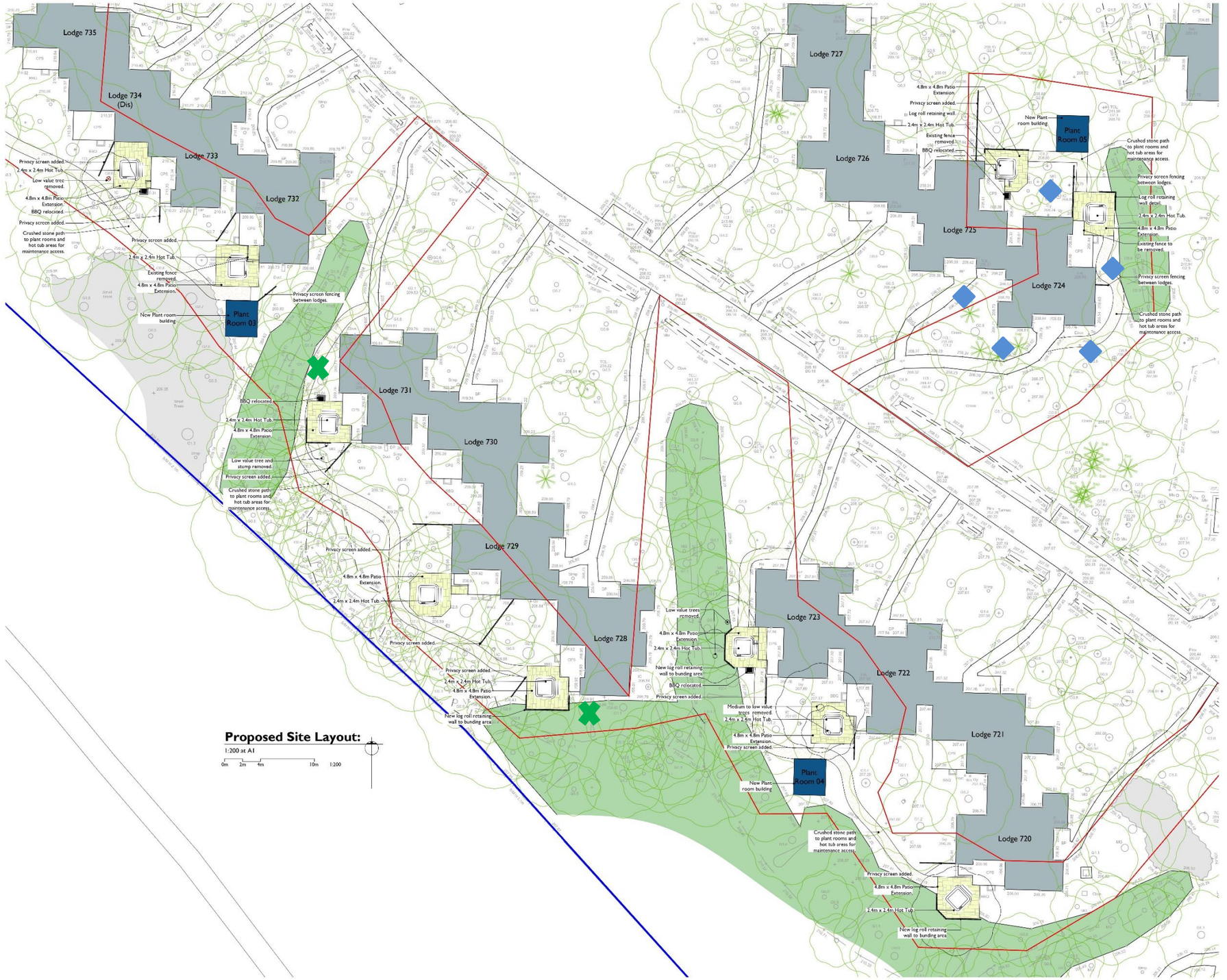
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Contains Google satellite imagery data © Google n,d.

Appendix B: Soft Landscaping Plans
Lodges 476 to 485



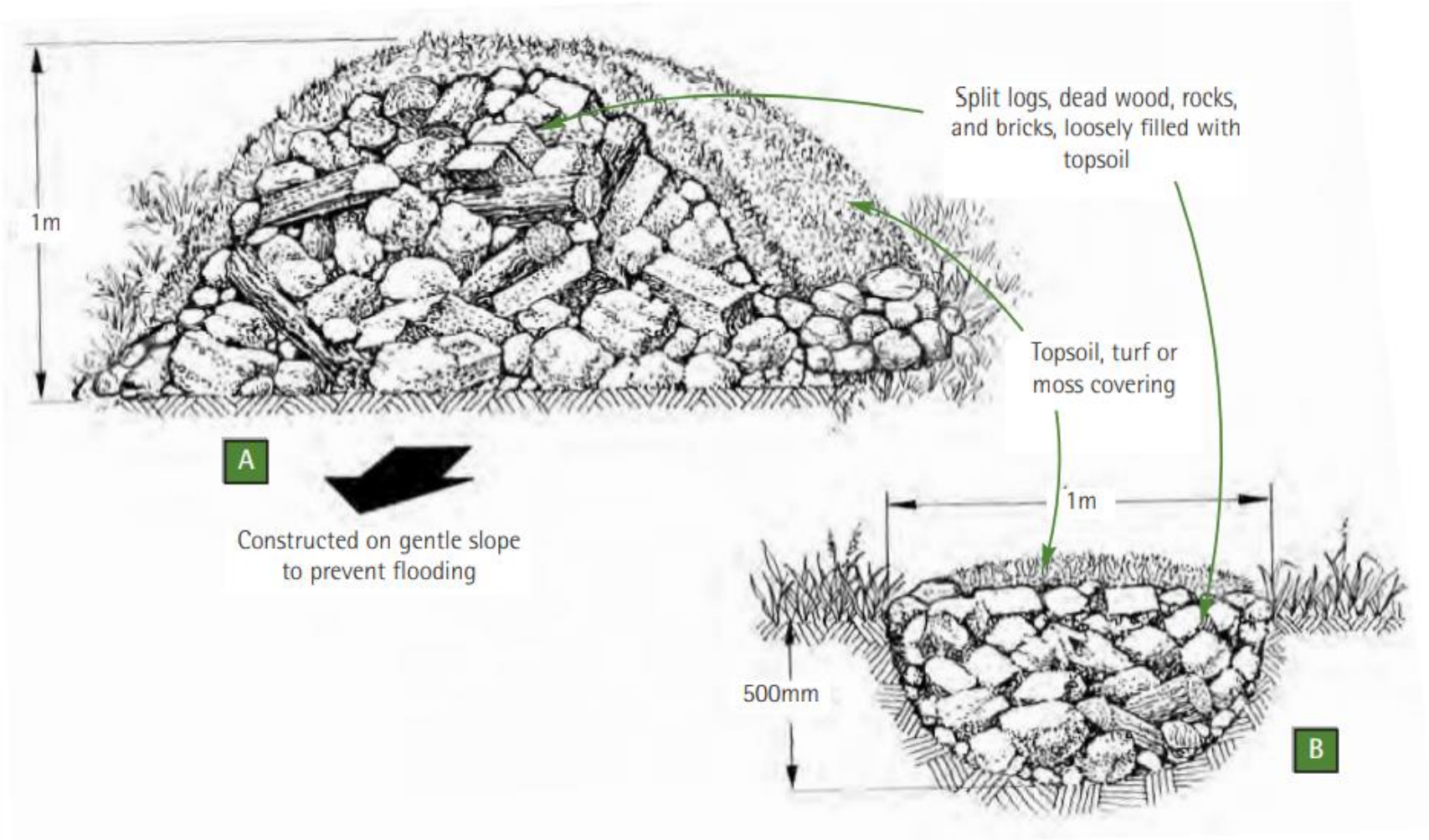
Lodges 720 - 735



Key

- Habitat Pile Locations
- Scrub Planting Locations
- Flowering Lawn Locations

Appendix C: Habitat Piles / Hibernacula



Appendix C – Refugia design for impermeable soils (A) and free-draining soils (B) (Langton et al. (2001) *Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook*. Froglife, Halesworth)

Appendix D: Legislative Information

Species	Legislation	Offences
Badger	Protection of Badgers Act 1992	Wilfully kill, injure or take a badger; Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a badger sett; Disturb a badger in its sett. It is not illegal to carry out disturbance activities in the vicinity of setts that are not occupied.
Bats	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2020 (as amended)	Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat; Deliberate disturbance of bats; Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place used by a bat. The protection of bat roosts is considered to apply regardless of whether bats are present.
	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)[4] S.9	Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection or disturb a bat in such a place.
Birds	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)[4]	Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird; Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; Intentionally take or destroy the nest or eggs of any wild bird. **Schedule 1 species** Special penalties are liable for these offences involving birds on Schedule 1 (e.g. most birds of prey, kingfisher, barn owl, black redstart, little ringed plover). Intentionally or recklessly disturb a Schedule 1 species while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; intentionally or recklessly disturb dependent young of such a species.
Great Crested Newt	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)	Deliberately capture, injure or kill a great crested newt; Deliberate disturbance of a great crested newt; Deliberately take or destroy its eggs; Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place used by a great crested newt.
	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)[4]	Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection or disturb a great crested newt in such a place.
Reptiles	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)[4]	Intentionally kill or injure any common reptile species.
Other Species	Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996	Intentionally inflict unnecessary suffering to any wild mammal.