



Construction Ecology Management Plan

Studley Solar Farm, Atworth, Melksham

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PREPARED FOR
Melksham Calne Green Limited

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[anteagroup.uk](https://www.anteagroup.uk)

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Antea Group UK Contact	Jennifer Britt
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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 CONTEXT AND PURPOSE

Antea Group UK ('Antea') was instructed by Melksham Calne Green Ltd (the 'Client') to prepare a Construction Ecology Management Plan (CEMP) in accordance with Condition 7 of the planning consent (reference: PL/2021/08690) and associated amendments, for the installation of a solar farm and battery storage facility with associated infrastructure ('the Development') at land at Studley Farm, Atworth, Melksham, Wiltshire (the 'Site').

The CEMP aims to ensure that impacts on ecological receptors are adequately mitigated. This document describes measures to avoid, reduce and mitigate likely adverse effects on ecological receptors resulting from the construction phase of the Development. Ecological receptors include designated sites, habitats and floral and faunal species, which are the subject of international or national protection, or are recognised as being of local rarity and sensitivity. This biodiversity-focused CEMP has been prepared to accompany an overarching Construction Management Plan (CMP) to be submitted in association with Condition 12 and should be read together with the Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) to be submitted to support the discharge of Condition 15.

For the purpose of this document the working area is defined as any area where there will be a requirement for temporary or permanent works to facilitate construction of the Development, including areas required for access, temporary and permanent construction and temporary storage areas.

This document has been informed by the following ecological and arboricultural surveys/reports:

- Ecological Assessment Report, Studley Solar Farm and Battery Storage (August 2021) Avian Ecology
- Bat Activity Report 2021, Studley Solar Farm (December 2021) Avian Ecology.
- Water Vole and Otter Survey Report, Studley Solar Farm (September 2021) Avian Ecology.
- Ecological Constraints Report, Studley Solar Farm (July 2024) Antea Group UK.
- Badger Walkover Survey Report, Studley Solar Farm (July 2024) Antea Group UK.
- Water Vole Survey Report, Studley Solar Farm (July 2024) Antea Group UK.

This CEMP follows the guidelines set out within the Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development, British Standard 42020:2013.

A separate Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) will be prepared to detail compensation and enhancement measures, and to cover the continued maintenance of the ecological features associated with the Site during operation.

1.2 SCHEME OVERVIEW

The Development received conditional planning consent from Wiltshire Council in June 2022 (reference PL/2021/08690) for a photovoltaic solar park and associated infrastructure.

2.0 KEY ROLES, RESPONSIBILITIES AND LINES OF COMMUNICATION

The table below summarises the key roles and responsibilities. The term ‘contractor’ applies to all phases of the Development, including enabling works, demolition/Site clearance, earthworks and construction activities. Where this represents different individuals/organisations throughout the process, a suitable handover must be undertaken.

Role	Responsibility
Ecologist	- To provide ecological support and advice to the Contractor’s Site Manager (CSM) in their adherence to the requirements of this CEMP. - To implement control measures and ecological mitigation requiring ecological expertise and take the role of an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW). - To deliver Toolbox Talk training and work with Site Managers and Foremen to ensure implementation of best practice methodologies. - Undertake actions as required to ensure animal welfare.
Arboriculturist	- To provide arboricultural support and advice to the CSM in their adherence to the arboricultural requirements of this CEMP. - To monitor and report on adherence to the Arboricultural Method Statement.
Contractor’s Site Manager (CSM)	- Oversight of weekly Site audits. - Responsibility for review of Site Environmental Manager appointments, ensuring that the individual or individuals have sufficient time, resources and training to discharge responsibilities. - Review implementation of corrective actions. - Track progress of CEMP against internal targets and report back to both staff on the ground and to the Contractor.
Contractor’s Environmental Manager (CEM)	- Secure ecological support as required. - Overall responsibility for implementation of the CEMP. - Responsibility for ensuring compliance with ecological legislation. - Carry out weekly site audits and assist CSM in preparation of detailed monthly audit report.

Prior to the commencement of construction/enabling activities on the Site, and at the point of any change of lead contractor, the following must be made known to all Site personnel:

- Contractor responsibilities, procedures, and requirements.
- Details of measures to ensure protection and suitable mitigation to all notable and legally protected habitats and species during construction. Such measures will include consideration and avoidance of sensitive stages of species life cycles, such as the bird breeding season, the use of protective barriers and phasing of works to ensure the provision of enhanced habitat areas and to minimise disturbance of existing features.
- Where relevant to an individual’s role, a summary work schedule table, confirming the relevant dates and/or periods by which the prescriptions and protection measures shall be implemented.
- Details of suitably qualified personnel responsible for overseeing implementation of the CEMP commitments, such as an Ecological Clerk of Works/Arboricultural Clerk of Works.

3.0 ECOLOGICAL RISK ASSESSMENT

The following ecological features (as identified from the baseline surveys for the Site) will be safeguarded through implementation of Biodiversity Protection Zones (BPZs) or through adoption of precautionary working methods to prevent / minimise adverse impacts during the construction phase.

Habitats:

- Trees and hedgerows
- Boundary ditches and ponds

Species:

- Birds
- Amphibians
- Reptiles
- Bats
- Water voles
- Otter
- Hazel dormice
- Brown hare
- Hedgehog
- Badger

A risk assessment of the construction-phase impacts upon the identified ecological features is provided in the table below, along with reference to the relevant BPZs (detailed in Section 4.0) and method statements (detailed in Section 5). This excludes impacts that have been mitigated through the layout design and any compensation or enhancement measures which are covered by the LEMP.

Ecological Risk Assessment				
Ecological Feature	Baseline Summary	Potential Adverse Impacts	Risk Avoidance Measures	Timing of Implementation
Habitats				
Retained hedgerow and trees	Field boundary hedgerows and trees.	Physical damage to trees (both above and below ground), including soil compaction.	Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS) provided under separate report.	Install Root Protection Area (RPA) barriers prior to construction and maintain for duration of construction.
		Damage from dust deposition, resulting in habitat degradation.	Refer to overarching CMP for environmental best practice regarding dust management.	Throughout construction.
Boundary ditches and ponds	Field boundary ditches and five ponds occurring on/immediately adjacent to the Site.	Pollution of watercourse/waterbody through dust deposition, siltation or chemical spillage, resulting in adverse impact on associated habitats and species both on-Site and downstream.	BPZ in conjunction with AMS	Install protective barriers prior to construction and maintain for duration of construction.
			Refer to overarching CMP for environmental best practice regarding dust, silt and chemical management.	Control measures be adhered to throughout construction.
Species				
Birds	Vegetated habitats across the Site provide opportunities for arboreal and ground nesting birds, as well as foraging opportunities.	Destruction of an active nest and potential injury/mortality of individual birds/eggs/chicks from vegetation clearance and construction activities	Nesting Bird Mitigation (MS1)	Control measures adhered to throughout construction, where vegetation is to be removed March-August inclusive.
	Both arboreal and ground nesting bird species were recorded on-Site, with the breeding bird assemblage recorded to be typical of farmland habitats.	Indirect disturbance or degradation of active nests due to proximity of construction activities and/or dust deposition.	BPZ in conjunction with AMS Refer to overarching CMP for environmental best practice regarding dust, silt and chemical management.	BPZ established prior to and maintained throughout construction. Control measures adhered to throughout construction.

Reptiles	The Site overall offers limited suitable habitat and connectivity for reptile species, being dominated by arable and modified grassland. However, the boundary hedgerows and ditch network offer limited resources, if present in the local area. No previous evidence of reptiles recorded on-Site.	Injury/ mortality from habitat clearance	Precautionary Avoidance Measures for Reptiles (MS2)	Control measures adhered to during works within suitable habitat.
Amphibians	Previous surveys concluded great crested newts are likely to be absent from the Site and given the suitability of the ponds on-Site and immediately adjacent to the Site boundary in 2024, this is likely to remain so. Given the limited water, heavy overshadowing, and lack of aquatic and marginal vegetation, the ponds and field boundary ditches are not considered optimal to support other species of amphibian, however, the hedgerow bases and bankside vegetation provide suitable terrestrial habitat, and their presence cannot be ruled out.	Injury/ mortality from habitat clearance	Precautionary Avoidance Measures for Amphibians (MS3)	Control measures adhered to during works within suitable habitat.
Bats	Several mature trees occur within the field boundary hedgerows, containing features suitable to support roosting bats such as deadwood, limb breakouts and ivy cover. None of the trees identified as containing features suitable to support roosting bats	Adverse impact on commuting and foraging behaviour due to increased light.	Sensitive Lighting Strategy (MS4)	Control measures adhered to throughout construction
		Destruction of a bat roost and potential injury/mortality of individual bats present.	Precautionary Avoidance Measures for Roosting Bats (MS5)	Control measures adhered to during tree removal/ management.

	are anticipated to be directly impacted by the development proposals. The ditch network, hedgerows and trees across the Site provide suitable foraging and commuting corridors for bats. Previous bat activity surveys recorded low levels of activity of at least 11 species of bat, including barbastelle and horseshoe bats which are considered to be nationally uncommon or rare.			
Water vole	No conclusive evidence of water vole presence was recorded in 2024 such that the population has either suffered an extinction event since positive field signs were recorded in June 2021, or the population occurs in very low numbers such that detectability is reduced, or the Site forms part of a wider resource for the population and is used only during periods of population expansion.	Destruction of burrow (resting place) and potential injury/mortality of individual water vole during installation of drainage outfall, if present.	Precautionary Avoidance Measures for Water Voles (MS6) Control measures adhered to throughout construction	Control measures adhered to during installation of the drainage outfall.
		Pollution of watercourse through dust deposition, siltation or chemical spillage, resulting in adverse impact on associated habitats and species both on-Site and downstream.	BPZ in conjunction with AMS Refer to overarching CMP for environmental best practice regarding dust, silt and chemical management.	Install tree protection barriers prior to construction and maintain for duration of construction, creating buffer to the watercourse and associated bank. Control measures be adhered to throughout construction.
Otter	No evidence of otter has been recorded. The Site offers sub-optimal aquatic habitat but has connectivity and suitable terrestrial habitat in the form of	Injury/ mortality from falling and becoming trapped in open excavations or pipework	Precautionary Site Maintenance Measures (MS8)	Control measures adhered to throughout construction
		Adverse impact on commuting behaviour due to increased light.	Sensitive Lighting Strategy (MS4)	Control measures adhered to throughout construction

	woodland copses, dense scrub and hedgerows. The presence of otter is considered unlikely but cannot be ruled out.	Destruction of a holt/resting place and potential injury/mortality of individual otter should new activity occur prior to commencement	Precautionary Avoidance Measures for Badgers and Otter (MS9)	Pre-commencement
Hazel dormice	Whilst the Site offers a network of hedgerows, overall habitat suitability is considered to be limited. No evidence of dormice previously recorded.	Destruction of an active nest and potential injury/mortality of individual dormouse from hedgerow clearance	Precautionary Avoidance Measures for Hazel Dormice (MS7)	Control measures adhered to during hedgerow removal works
Brown hare and hedgehog	Whilst no evidence was recorded, the Site provides suitable habitat for brown hare and hedgehog.	Injury/ mortality from falling and becoming trapped in open excavations or pipework	Precautionary Site Maintenance Measures (MS8)	Control measures adhered to throughout construction
Unexpected Species	Whilst no other protected or otherwise notable habitats or species have been identified during the baseline assessments, the movement and behaviour of animals cannot be guaranteed.	Impact on individuals and/or habitats due to unexpected presence, resulting in a potential breach of legislation.	Unexpected Species Plan	Enacted whenever suspected protected or rare species are encountered during enabling or construction in situations in which they are not expected (based on the existing understanding of the baseline conditions) and which are not covered by any other MS in this document. The plan shall

				be enacted on all occasions, whatever the source of sighting/information.
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4.0 BIODIVERSITY PROTECTION ZONES

Application of BPZs will prevent construction activities causing direct damage to areas of habitat and associated faunal species. BPZs will be defined by appropriate fencing, as indicated in the table below, and signage used to identify the restricted areas. All BPZs are shown in Figure 1.

The retained trees and hedgerows are to be protected in accordance with BS 5837: 2012 (refer to AMS). This will also act to provide physical protection to boundary drainage ditches and retained ponds.

BPZs will be established where active bird nests are identified (Refer to MS2).

No Site personnel or machinery shall enter the BPZs and no equipment will be stored therein for the duration of construction. The maintenance of the BPZs and condition of barriers will be inspected by an ECoW on installation to ensure it complies with the correct specification and is installed in the correct locations. Thereafter the fencing will be subject to regular checks by the CEM to ensure the fence is appropriately maintained throughout the construction phase.

Feature	BPZ Specification	Fencing Specification
Trees	Root Protection Zone (RPZ) as defined in the AMS	Permanent security fencing installed at the outset, and temporary barriers as detailed in the AMS
Hedgerows	RPZ as defined in the AMS	Permanent security fencing installed at the outset, and temporary barriers as detailed in the AMS
Boundary ditches and retained ponds	In conjunction with RPZ identified in the AMS.	Permanent security fencing installed at the outset, and temporary barriers as detailed in the AMS
Ground-nesting bird nest	Buffer to be advised by the ECoWs, depending on species, habitat and location.	Temporary barrier to be advised by the ECoW depending on species, habitat and location
Other bird nest	Buffer to be advised by the ECoWs, depending on species, habitat and location.	Temporary barriers to be advised by the ECoW depending on species, habitat and location
Amphibians, Reptiles, and Hazel Dormice	Hedgerow and hedgerow bases	n/a – Defined working footprint and exclusion zones to be included in Site induction

5.0 BIODIVERSITY WORKING METHOD STATEMENTS

The following pages provide working method statements relating to the ecological features identified in Section 3.0. Adherence with these Method Statements will ensure compliance with environmental legislation and best practice relating to biodiversity.

Method Statement 1: Nesting Bird Mitigation

Description of Works	Open habitats within the construction zone will be maintained as unsuitable for nesting birds prior to construction commencing. Thereafter, any open or hedgerow/tree habitat which remains suitable for nesting birds will first be inspected by an ECoWs, if these habitats are to be impacted during the nesting season.
Purpose	To prevent harm to nesting birds in accordance with Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Subsection 1(1) makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure, or take any wild bird; take, damage or destroy the nest of any such bird whilst it is in use or being built; or take or destroy an egg of any such wild bird. It is, furthermore, an offence to either intentionally, or recklessly, disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird. The law covers all species of wild birds including common, pest or opportunistic species.
Working Methods	Avoidance Where possible commencement of works within the arable/grassland and any required removal of hedgerow will be undertaken outside of the main nesting bird season (i.e., clearance carried out between September and February inclusive). Where this is not possible, the following measures will be applied: Maintenance of Agricultural Land After the last harvest of crops prior to construction commencing, open habitats will be cut to ground level after 31st August and before 1st March to discourage nesting the following nesting season. From February to the commencement of works, habitats will be regularly disturbed (ideally ploughed/ dragged and flattened at least weekly) to maintain them as unsuitable for nesting. Should this not be maintained, there is an increased risk of ground nesting birds and a potential delay to the programme of works. Nesting Bird Inspections Prior to works commencing, the ECoW will undertake an inspection of all suitable nesting habitats that are to be removed/managed, as well as a suitable buffer zone that could be subject to disturbance. Evidence of bird's nests will be sought including nests, eggs and/or eggshells, feathers and fresh droppings. Evidence of bird nesting activity will also be sought, such as calling chicks, feeding and/or roosting parents and nest building activity. Where a nest cannot be readily inspected, it will be observed, from a suitable distance to avoid disturbance, for a minimum of 20 minutes to watch for nesting activity and determine whether the nest is active. Where no active nests are identified removal/management of vegetation will proceed as planned within 24 hours of the check being completed.

	Feedback would be provided to the CSM on Site and confirmed by email after the visit. Where active nests are identified, the identified representatives on Site will be informed by the ECoW at the time of the inspection and the nest(s) must be protected by a no-works buffer determined by the ECoW based on species, location and potential for disturbance. A suitable exclusion zone will be installed and maintained using appropriate barriers and signage indicating the Biodiversity Protection Zone. The exclusion zone should remain in place until such a time as the ECoW has confirmed (via repeat visits) that the nest is no longer active. In the event that the ECoW cannot confidently rule out the presence of active nests (for example due to dense scrubby vegetation and/or, significant bird activity), a precautionary approach will be applied. Clearance of such habitats may not be possible during the nesting season.
Completion	All habitats with potential to support nesting birds (or potential to develop suitability during construction) have been removed and/or required management completed.
Reporting Requirements	The ECoW to prepare a Site Note following each Site inspection.
Monitoring/Aftercare	Active nests to be protected and monitored until completion of nesting. Contractor's Environmental Manager to carry out weekly site audits throughout the construction phase to ensure compliance.

Method Statement 2:

Precautionary Avoidance Measures for Reptiles

Description of Works	A precautionary approach is to be applied during works to suitable habitats along field boundary ditches and hedgerow bases, which have the potential to support reptiles.
Purpose	To avoid injury or mortality of widespread reptiles in accordance with Section 9(1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Widespread reptiles are protected via part of Section 9(1) of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) against intentional killing and injuring.
Working Methods	The field boundary drains and their associated banks, and hedgerows are to be largely retained and protected (refer to BPZs), with work anticipated to be limited to a proposed drainage outfall, and minor removal of hedgerow to facilitate access and fence installation. Works to these suitable habitats will be restricted to the months of April-October, inclusive, and be conducted under an ecological watching brief. Prior to the commencement of any works within the BPZs, the ECoW will provide a toolbox talk to site operatives involved in vegetation clearance works. The briefing will include details of the legal protection afforded to all reptiles, the precautionary methods of working (outlined in this document), tips on the identification of reptiles, and the procedures to follow should individuals be discovered during the works. Reptile Care In the event that any reptiles are discovered during the works, they will be placed in a suitable container or cloth bag for subsequent release into suitable adjoining habitat away from the working footprint. Release should be undertaken as soon as possible, and in most cases immediately after capture. In the event release is delayed, the container/bag will be kept in the shade until the ECoW is able to release the reptile(s). Grassland/Ruderals Grassland/ruderal vegetation will be strimmed to a height of 150 mm and left for 24 hours to reduce shelter and encourage reptiles to leave of their own accord. Thereafter the ECoW will note areas which require a targeted destructive search. The destructive search will entail removal of the remaining vegetation and top layer of soil to search for any remaining animals under an ecological watching brief. Dense Scrub Clearance of dense scrub is to be undertaken in phases. Initial cut will remove the upper part of the vegetation to 300 mm (subject to method statements for nesting birds and dormice). Secondary clearance below 300 mm is to be undertaken April-October, inclusive when reptiles are not hibernating. Clearance will be undertaken with a toothed bucket under an ecological watching brief. Refugia

	Any feature which offers sheltering opportunities for reptiles, such as root balls, logs, rubble and other debris will be lifted by hand, or where necessary aided by a toothed excavator bucket, under an ecological watching brief.
Completion	All habitats with potential to support reptiles within the working footprint have been removed and the area is determined by the ECoW to be unsuitable for reptiles to be present.
Reporting Requirements	The ECoW to prepare a Site Note following each Site attendance.
Monitoring/Aftercare	None.

Method Statement 3:

Precautionary Avoidance Measures for Amphibians (Non-Licensed)

Description of Works	The precautionary method of work set out below will be enacted in suitable habitats (hedgerow, scrub, rough grassland) for works within 100 m of a pond or ditch, at the discretion of the ECoW.
Purpose	To avoid injury or mortality of widespread amphibians in accordance with Section 9(1) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This Method Statement does not cover works where Great Crested Newt (GCN) are discovered. GCN receive additional protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).
Working Methods	Boundary hedgerows, scrub, ponds, ditches and their associated banks are to be largely retained and protected (refer to BPZs), with work anticipated to be limited to a proposed drainage outfall, and minor clearance of hedgerow for access and fence installation. Works to these suitable habitats will be restricted to the months of March - October, inclusive, when overnight temperatures are consistently above 5 °C, and be conducted under an ecological watching brief. Prior to the commencement of any works within the BPZs, the ECoW will provide a toolbox talk to site operatives involved in vegetation clearance works. The briefing will include details of the legal protection afforded to all amphibians, the precautionary methods of working (outlined in this document), tips on the identification of amphibians, and the procedures to follow should individuals be discovered during the works. A suitably experienced ECoW will inspect potential amphibian habitat prior to the commencement of habitat removal works (e.g., scrub, grassland, ruderal habitat and rubble and brash piles) and highlight to the Contractor any potentially sensitive areas that are considered to provide potential amphibian habitat. Any obvious refugia will be searched by hand. Amphibian species (other than GCN) encountered will be placed in secure refuge habitats outside the working area of the Site. In the unlikely event that GCN are found during works at this, or any other stage, work would stop, and advice sought from an ecologist on how to proceed. Following initial hand search, the removal of habitats which cannot be searched by hand will proceed under ecological supervision in a phased approach. An initial cut will be made under an ecological watching brief to 150 mm above ground. The area would then be searched by hand, before vegetation is completely uprooted using a large excavator with a toothed bucket under the supervision of an ECoW; this will reduce vegetation to below ground level and create bare earth. Cut vegetation or brash will be removed from the working area in order to avoid creating additional habitat suitable for use by amphibians and other wildlife

Completion	All habitats with potential to support amphibians (within 100 m of a pond or ditch) within the working footprint have been removed and the area is determined by the ECoWs to be unsuitable for amphibians to be present.
Reporting Requirements	The ECoW to prepare a Site Note following each Site attendance.
Monitoring/Aftercare	None.

Method Statement 4: Sensitive Lighting Strategy

Description of Works	Anticipated construction working hours are 07:30 to 18:30 Monday to Friday, and between the hours of 8:30 and 14:30 on Saturdays. It is anticipated that during the main active bat season (April-October, inclusive), construction works will generally cease, or be winding down before dusk when bats emerge and will not begin before dawn when bats return to roost. Therefore, artificial lighting will not generally be required. In certain circumstances, for example, in late autumn or early spring when daylight hours are limited but weather conditions may be suitable for bats to be active, there may be a brief overlap between bat activity and on-Site construction works. During this period lighting may be required to enable the construction works to progress. In these circumstances, a sensitive lighting strategy is required. Furthermore, any lighting required to the Site compound for security/health and safety must be appropriate.
Purpose	To prevent adverse impacts on nocturnal wildlife including bats.
Working Methods	Lighting should be kept to the minimum required, with no upward directed lighting and should be directed away from features suitable for bats. In particular ditch corridors and hedgerows should be avoided. The location and associated lighting of any required Site compound should be advised by a suitably experienced ECoW. This should be kept to the minimum required for safety and security and avoid light spill onto sensitive habitat corridors.
Completion	Implementation of measures/procedure to the end of construction
Reporting Requirements	Lighting strategy to be agreed in writing with the ECoW before use.
Monitoring/Aftercare	Contractor's Environmental Manager to carry out weekly site audits throughout the construction phase to ensure compliance.

Method Statement 5:

Precautionary Avoidance Measures for Roosting Bats

Description of Works	A precautionary approach is to be applied during tree removal/management works, due to the potential to develop features suitable to support roosting bats.
Purpose	To prevent adverse impacts upon roosting bats and any associated breach of legislation. In the UK all bat species and their roosts are legally protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017, as amended). This makes it a criminal offence to¹: • Deliberately take, injure or kill a wild bat; • Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats; • Damage or destroy a place used by bats for breeding or resting (roosts) (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time); and • Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.
Working Methods	Prior to the commencement of works to any tree identified for removal/management, a suitably experienced ecologist will undertake a Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) for potential features suitable to support roosting bats. Where no suitability is identified, the works will continue (subject to other method statements as appropriate). Where potential features are identified, further survey will be required. The ecologist will advise on the appropriate level of survey effort, timings and scope, depending on the results of the GLTA. This could include a suitably qualified and licenced ECoW undertaking an aerial inspection. Features would be accessed using either tree-climbing equipment or Mobile Elevated Working Platform (MEWP) and inspected using an endoscope to provide a more detailed assessment of their likely suitability to support roosting bats and evidence of any bat activity. In the event that aerial access is not available, the ecologist may consider a nocturnal survey/s appropriate. In the event that evidence of a roost is recorded, works would not proceed until the appropriate licence is in place from Natural England.
Completion	All trees removal and/or required management completed.
Reporting Requirements	The ECoW to prepare a Site Note following each Site attendance.
Monitoring/Aftercare	None.

¹ Please refer to the legislation for the precise wording - the above is a brief summary only

Method Statement 6:

Precautionary Avoidance Measures for Water Voles

Description of Works	A precautionary approach is to be applied during works to, or within 5 m of the banks of the field boundary drains with regards to water vole. It is anticipated this is limited to installation of a drainage outfall.
Purpose	To prevent adverse impacts upon water voles any associated breach of legislation. Water voles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take them. It is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly: • damage or destroy a structure or place used for shelter or protection • disturb them in a place used for shelter or protection • obstruct access to a place used for shelter or protection.
Working Methods	Pre-commencement Survey As a precautionary approach, a pre-commencement inspection of the working footprint and appropriate buffer will be undertaken for any works to, or within 5 m of the bank top. Where no evidence is identified, habitats will be managed to render them unsuitable to support this species, following the advice of the ECoW, and subject to other method statements as appropriate. In the unlikely event that a water vole burrow is identified to be impacted by the works, appropriate mitigation will be applied. Where necessary this will include additional survey and an appropriate licence from Natural England to ensure the works can proceed lawfully.
Completion	Works within the watercourse BPZ completed.
Reporting Requirements	The ECoW to prepare a Site Note following each Site attendance.
Monitoring/Aftercare	None.

Method Statement 7:

Precautionary Avoidance Measures for Hazel Dormice

Description of Works	A precautionary approach is to be applied during works to suitable habitats (hedgerows), which have the potential to support hazel dormouse.
Purpose	To prevent adverse impacts upon hazel dormice in accordance with Schedules 5 & 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Under the current legislation it is illegal to intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture dormice, deliberately disturb dormice (whether in a nest or not), or to damage or destroy dormouse breeding sites or resting places.
Working Methods	Avoidance Retained hedgerow is to be protected in accordance with BS 5837: 2012, with the use of appropriate barriers. This will protect the habitats from damage as well as provide a buffer to the works and therefore minimise potential disturbance from noise and vibration. Vegetation Clearance A suitably experienced ECoW will provide a toolbox talk to all contractors prior to the commencement of clearance works to field boundary hedgerows. <i>Summer Clearance</i> Summer clearance is suitable for small areas of dormouse habitat, for example short lengths of hedgerow as is the case for this development. Small amounts of vegetation are removed on successive days (if necessary) at a time of year when dormice are active (May – October, inclusive, depending on weather condition). Such clearance will also need to consider other ecological constraints such as nesting birds. Immediately prior to clearance works, all suitable habitat within the working area, and an appropriate buffer determined by the ECoW, will be fingertip searched by an experienced ecologist for the presence, or evidence of hazel dormice. In the unlikely event that evidence of dormice is identified, works will immediately stop in that area and the ecologist will advise on the most appropriate way forward, which may require further surveys and/or mitigation (including a licence application, where nesting is observed). Where no evidence is identified, removal/management of vegetation will proceed as planned immediately. Feedback would be provided to the Client and identified representatives on Site and confirmed by email after the visit. <i>Winter Clearance</i> Winter clearance should remove sufficient vegetation to persuade dormice emerging from hibernation in April or May to move to more suitable habitat

	nearby. Once emergence is complete (end May) full clearance of the area can continue. Winter clearance is, therefore, a two-staged approach. Immediately prior to clearance works, all suitable habitat within the working area, and an appropriate buffer determined by the ECoW, will be fingertip searched by an experienced ecologist for the presence of dormouse nests. In the unlikely event that evidence of dormice nesting is identified, works will immediately stop in that area and the ecologist will advise on the most appropriate way forward, which may require further surveys and/or mitigation (including a licence application, where nesting is observed). Where no evidence of a nest is identified, vegetation is to be cut and brash removed without disturbing the base of the hedgerow and ground vegetation, where dormice may be hibernating. Vegetation is to be cut and removed by hand or using a long reach mechanic arm and grab. The base of the hedgerow and associated ground vegetation is to be retained and protected until dormice have emerged from hibernation (end May), when full clearance can continue following an inspection by a suitably experienced ecologist. Excavations During construction works all excavations are to be left covered or with a means of escape for mammals, comprising either a 45-degree angle or a ramp (see Method Statement 8).
Completion	All habitats with potential to support hazel dormice have been removed and/or required management completed.
Reporting Requirements	The ECoW to prepare a Site Note following each Site inspection.
Monitoring/Aftercare	Contractor's Environmental Manager to carry out weekly site audits throughout the construction phase to ensure compliance.

Method Statement 8:

Precautionary Site Maintenance Measures

Purpose	To allow mammals continued access through the construction site and to prevent injury or mortality to wildlife as a result of general construction activities.
Working Methods	The following measures will be applied during the enabling and construction phase of the works: Excavations Where possible during the development works, excavations will be left at the end of each day in a condition where no mammal can fall in. This will be achieved by securing a cover over all excavations with a 1-2 m overlap around the edges to prevent mammals digging beneath. Where this is not possible the excavations will be left such that mammals can easily escape. Should excavations be left uncovered, ramps will be installed in the form of wooden planks, or the banks will be profiled to no steeper than 45°. Where appropriate open excavations will be fenced with Heras or similar temporary fencing with minimal gap at the bottom to deter species such as badgers from entering the area of excavation. A visual inspection of the excavations for the presence of mammals will be undertaken at the commencement of each working day by one of the Site contractors, who will be nominated by the Site Manager. If any mammal is discovered within the excavations, a safe exit will be created, and the animal encouraged to disperse away from the construction activities. Workers on site are advised not to handle badgers. The ECoW will be contacted should the animal not disperse. The reason for the entrapment will be assessed, and the mitigation plan updated appropriately. In the event that a mammal cannot be released from the excavation or appears injured, the ECoW will be contacted for advice. Open Pipe Work Any pipes greater than 150 mm diameter installed in a trench must not be left open-ended overnight. Should the pipe not be connected up at both ends before the end of the day, the exposed ends will be sealed off to prevent mammals becoming trapped within them. The seals must be tight, made of a rigid material and cover the whole end of the pipe. Materials Storage During any groundwork the creation of large spoil heaps should be avoided since they could be dug into overnight by burrowing mammals. Where unavoidable, any spoil heaps over 5 x 5 m left overnight must be inspected by a member of the Site contractors for signs of fresh digging each morning. Should any significant digging be identified, the ECoW will be contacted for advice. Access Following the advice of the ECoW, gaps of 100-150 mm will be maintained in/beneath fencing to allow mammals to access the construction site.
Completion	Implementation of measures/procedure to the end of construction

Reporting Requirements	Contractor’s Environmental Manager to maintain site records of measures implemented, any incidents and remedial measures taken.
Monitoring/Aftercare	Contractor’s Environmental Manager to carry out weekly site audits throughout the construction phase to ensure compliance.

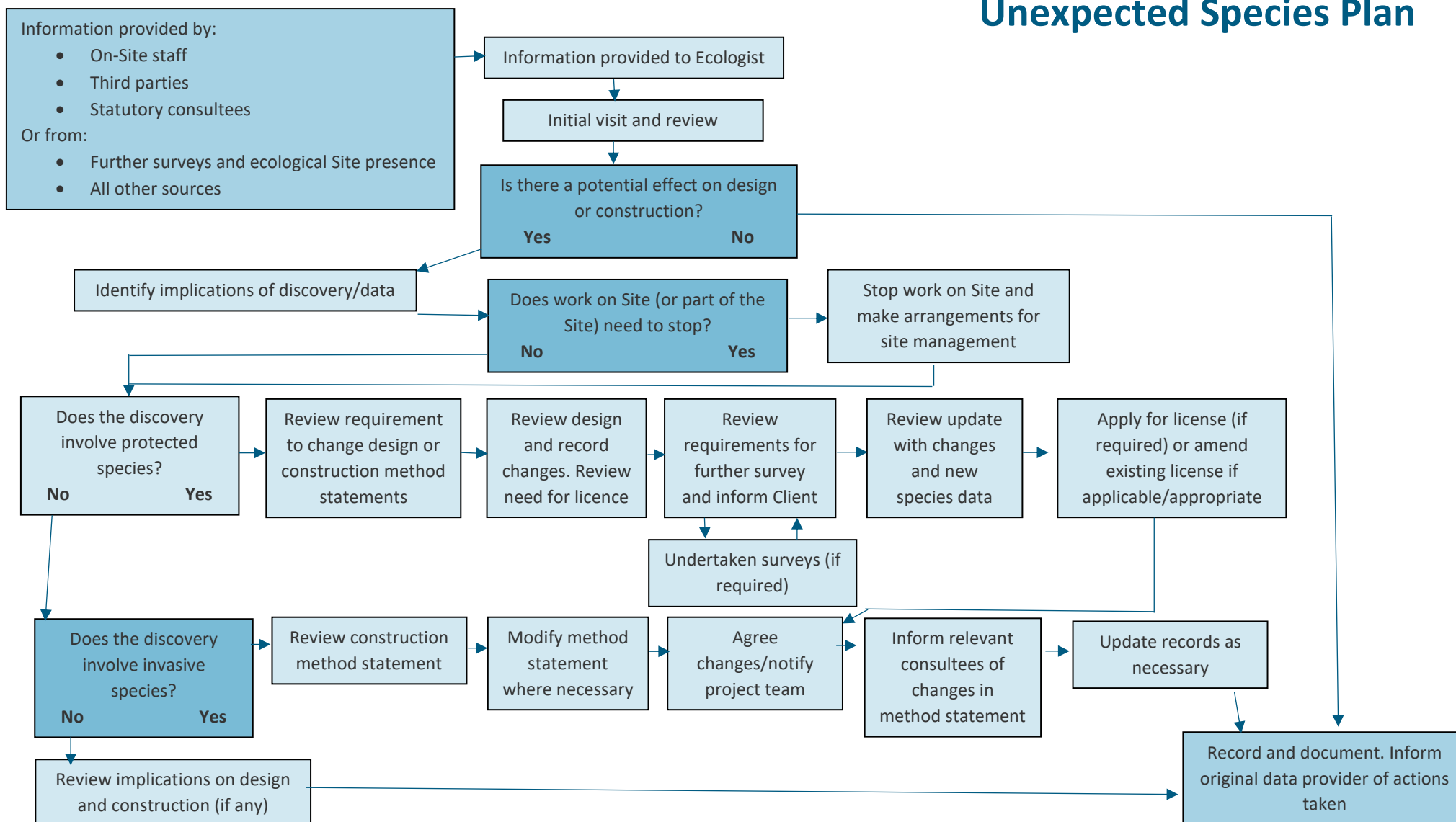
Method Statement 9:

Precautionary Avoidance Measures for Badgers and Otter

Purpose	To prevent adverse impacts upon badger and otter any associated breach of legislation. Badgers and their setts are protected under the 1992 Protection of Badgers Act. Under this Act it is an offence to willfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat badgers, or to attempt to do so. It is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, or obstruct access to any part of a sett, or to disturb an occupied sett, either by intent or negligence. When interpreting the Act, Natural England defines a sett as any structure within an area used by badgers that shows signs of having been occupied by badgers within the last 12 months. Otter are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Under the current legislation it is illegal to intentionally or deliberately kill, injure, capture otter, deliberately disturb otter while they are sheltering, or to damage, destroy or stop them from accessing their breeding sites or shelters, even if they aren't currently using them.
Working Methods	Pre-commencement Survey Badgers Prior to the commencement of works, a suitably experienced ECoW will undertake a precautionary check for new badger setts within the working boundary and land within 30 m of the boundary, and an assessment for activity at the two existing setts. In the event that an active badger sett is identified, appropriate surveys and monitoring will be undertaken in order to establish the status of the sett and potential impacts from the works. Appropriate mitigation will be applied. Where an active sett entrance occurs, the following restrictions are to be applied: • 30m Zone- No use of very heavy machinery (generally tracked vehicles) within 30 metres of any active sett entrance. • 20m Zone -No use of lighter machinery (generally wheeled vehicles), particularly for any digging operations, within 20 metres of any active sett entrance; and • 10m Zone - No excavations (including hand digging) within 10 metres of any active sett entrance. The application of these zones can to some extent be at the discretion of the ECoW, where it is deemed no disturbance/risk of damage to the sett may occur. Any works required outside the above measures may require a licence from Natural England to first exclude badgers from the sett. It should be noted that exclusion of badgers under licence can only be undertaken July-November, inclusive.

	Pre-commencement Survey Otters Prior to the commencement of works, a suitably experienced ECoW will undertake a precautionary check for signs of otter, otter holts, or resting places. In the event that evidence is identified, appropriate surveys and monitoring will be undertaken in order to establish the status and potential impacts from the works. Appropriate mitigation will be applied Where impacts cannot be avoided a licence may be required from Natural England.
Completion	Confirmation by the ECoW following pre-commencement inspection.
Reporting Requirements	The ECoW to prepare a Site Note following each Site attendance.
Monitoring/Aftercare	Contractors to maintain awareness throughout construction for any fresh signs of badger activity. Contractor's Environmental Manager to contact the ECoW for further advice.

Unexpected Species Plan



6.0 REPORT AUTHORISATION

Prepared by:



9th June 2025

Jennifer Britt
Associate Director (Ecology)

Reviewed by:



9th June 2025

Charlotte Sanderson-Lewis
Service Line Director (Ecology)

CONTACT INFORMATION

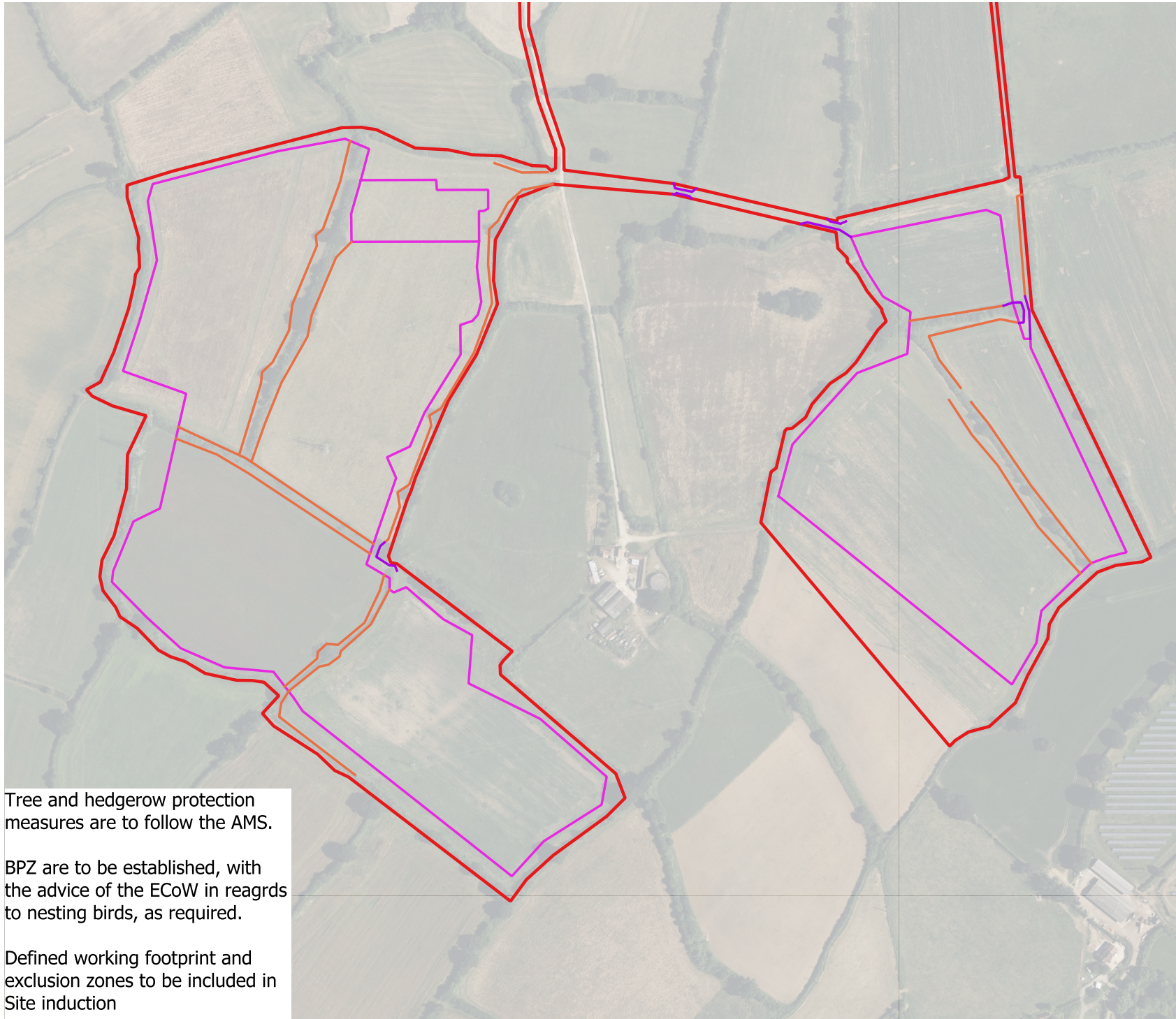
UK Headquarters

Kingfisher House, 1 Guilders Way
Norwich, Norfolk, NR3 1UB

UK	+44 2045 7032 93
International	+1 651 639 9449

FIGURES

Figure 1 – Biodiversity Protection Zones



Tree and hedgerow protection measures are to follow the AMS.

BPZ are to be established, with the advice of the ECoW in reagrds to nesting birds, as required.

Defined working footprint and exclusion zones to be included in Site induction

- Legend**
- Site Boundary
 - Security Fence
 - Protection Fencing to AMS Specification
 - Internal Protection Fencing to AMS specification

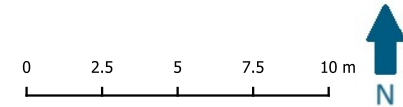


Figure Biodiversity Protection Zones

Project Studley Solar Farm

Figure No	Revision	Date
1	A	30/05/2025
Drawn	Checked	Project Number
JB	CSL	2024-07-546400

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