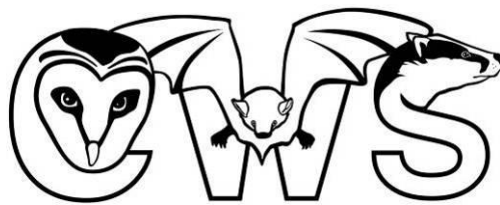


**Hazel Dormouse *Muscardinus
avellanarius* Mitigation Strategy
for Land off Southampton Road,
Alderbury, Salisbury, Wiltshire**



Cotswold Wildlife Surveys

July 2025

QUALITY CONTROL

Date	Version	Name
29.07.25	Report prepared	Andy Warren – BSc (Hons), MA (LM), Tech Cert (Arbor A), MCIEEM Director
29.07.25	Checked	Caroline Warren – BSc (Hons) Director
29.07.25 29.07.25	01 reviewed and issued 02 issued	Andy Warren – BSc (Hons), MA (LM), Tech Cert (Arbor A), MCIEEM Director

The information in this report has been prepared in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Code of Professional Conduct. The conclusions and recommendations expressed are reasoned judgements based on the evidence.

Every reasonable attempt has been made to comply with BS42020:2013 *Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development*, *CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing* (CIEEM, 2017). If there has been deviation from recognised practice, justification/explanation has been given.

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SUMMARY

On land off Southampton Road in Alderbury near Salisbury, planning permission is being sought for the development of the site.

In August 2022, Cotswold Wildlife Surveys was instructed to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site. The Phase 1 Habitat survey took place on 4th August 2022.

An ecological data search for the area revealed records of Hazel Dormice in several of the large woodland blocks around the area, with the closest observations concerning a juvenile in a garage on 1st September 2021, 112 m to the west of the application site, and an adult in a garden along Clarendon Road 190 m to the northwest on 18th May 2018. The records from the wider area lay beyond significant barriers to dormouse dispersal.

The application site itself was potentially suitable for dormice as there were mature, interconnecting hedgerows, an area of wet woodland, and a block of scrubby woodland on the west side of the site.

Given the above, a survey for Hazel Dormice was undertaken in 2023. A total of 75 dormouse tubes were set out around the site boundaries in May, and then checked once a month between June and October. No evidence of dormouse presence was recorded, and at the time the species was assumed to be absent on the site.

The tubes were retained on the site, as some were being used by roosting birds, and they had value as winter food caches by mice.

A check of a tube along the northern hedgerow/tree line by an ecologist from Cornwall Environmental Consultants on 6th May 2024 subsequently revealed two Hazel Dormice inside, thereby confirming the presence of the species on site.

As the scheme has the potential to impact Hazel Dormice and their habitat, the following mitigation strategy is proposed.

It should be noted that a licence from Natural England will be required for the removal of a section of hedgerow close to where the dormice were found.

1. INTRODUCTION

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The Hazel Dormouse is fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) hereafter referred to as ‘the Regulations’) or the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) making it a European Protected Species.

It is an offence to:

- ❑ Capture, kill or injure hazel dormice (intentionally or recklessly);
- ❑ Damage or destroy a breeding or resting place (intentionally or recklessly);

- ❑ Disturb a Hazel Dormouse while it's in a structure or place of shelter or protection (intentionally or recklessly);
- ❑ Obstruct access to their resting or sheltering places (intentionally or recklessly); and
- ❑ Possess, sell, control or transport live or dead dormice, or parts of dormice.

2. IMPACT ASSESSMENT

The Dormouse Conservation Handbook (2006) notes that; “the best conditions for dormice are to be found in extensive, ancient semi-natural woodland where there has been time for shrub species diversity to develop, and where coppicing of Hazel *Corylus avellana* is carried out on a long rotation.

However, this does not mean that dormice occur nowhere else, nor does it imply that other habitats are necessarily poor. Indeed, some types of scrub, young plantation and hedgerows offer excellent conditions”.

The handbook further notes that dormice can live permanently in some hedgerows if they provide a continuity of food throughout the active season.

Hedgerows are also important for dispersal, linking dormouse populations where they occur in small woodland areas.

It is well known that dormice live in low numbers, even in the best habitats, and in late spring/early summer there are typically three to five adult animals per hectare in deciduous woodland. In hedgerows there might only be 1.3 adults per hectare.

On the land off Southampton Road, two dormice were found in a tube along the northern hedgerow/tree line. This is a mature hedge of Crab Apple *Malus sylvestris*, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Holly *Ilex aquifolium*, Dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*, Butterfly Bush *Buddleia davidii*, Elder *Sambucus nigra* and Wild Privet *Ligustrum vulgare*, with trees including Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur*, Grey Willow *Salix cinerea*, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, and Silver Birch *Betula pendula*.

Off the hedgerow ran a small section of wet woodland. This consisted largely of Grey Willow, with a diverse ground flora of Hemp Agrimony *Eupatorium cannabinum*, Marsh Thistle *Cirsium palustre*, Pendulous Sedge *Carex pendula*, St John's Wort *Hypericum perforatum*, Water Figwort *Scrophularia auriculata*, Wood Dock *Rumex sanguineus*, Common Nettle *Urtica dioica*, Lords and Ladies *Arum maculatum*, Male Fern *Dryopteris filix-mas*, Common Fleabane, Broad-leaved Willowherb *Epilobium montanum* and Common Cleavers *Galium aparine*.

At the western side of the site there was a block of dense, scrubby woodland dominated by Grey Willow, with Silver Birch, Wild Cherry *Prunus avium*, Hazel, Holly and Hawthorn. The understorey included Common Nettles, Brambles *Rubus fruticosus*, Field Rose *Rosa arvensis*, Lords and Ladies, Male Fern, Wood Dock, Wood Avens *Geum urbanum*, Ivy *Hedera helix*, Pendulous Sedge, and Enchanter's Nightshade *Circaea lutetiana*.

The eastern end of the northern hedgerow connected to other mature hedgerows with trees, and these in turn linked to large blocks of woodland where there are dormouse records.

The northern hedgerow and woodland areas will not be impacted by the proposed scheme, so there will be no direct loss of places of rest and refuge. However, connectivity to a hedgerow that will be affected does exist, as there will be a footpath link through an existing gap. Furthermore, the construction zone will extend close to the boundaries where disturbance of hedgerows and woodland will also occur.

Construction of the footpath has the potential to lead to killing and injuring any dormice present and displacement of any dormice in the affected area.

Other potential impacts arise through indirect damage and disturbance to dormouse habitat during the construction and operation phases, including inappropriate management, accidental damage, deliberate or reckless damage, and pollution (dust, chemicals, light and noise).

Key potential effects on dormice resulting from these impacts are damage to and degradation of dormouse habitat, fragmentation of dormouse habitat and isolation of dormice populations in dissected hedgerows.

As a result of the proposed footpath creation, the impact is expected to be negligible/low impact, at site level.

3. MITIGATION STRATEGY

A 'landscape led' approach to master planning has resulted in the retention of a significant amount of existing linear habitat, suitable for dormice, within the green infrastructure of the scheme.

Construction of the footpath will require the removal of ground cover and a couple of small bushes, with none of the main hedgerow shrubs affected. Although minor, this works will be completed under a European Protect Species Licence (EPSL), whereby all works will be supervised by an appropriately experienced, licenced ecologist.

All retained and newly created habitats suitable for dormice will be managed under a comprehensive Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) or Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) to ensure their long-term protection. This plan can be conditioned.

The management plan will ensure that hedgerows are managed specifically for wildlife including sensitive trimming of hedgerows in an 'A' profile to promote wide hedge bases and planned management will take place between late September to February to avoid both the bird nesting season and the period when dormice are likely to have dependant young.

Management practice will ensure that fruiting bodies and nut provisions are optimised, providing a diverse range and food during the active seasons.

During the construction phase, 'Heras' type fencing will be installed adjacent to all retained hedgerows and woodland areas (broadly in-line with the root protection area requirements of BS5837:2012 *Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction*, and contractors will be briefed on the sensitivity of retained habitats.

Connectivity between the site and suitable dormouse habitat within the surroundings will be enhanced with additional planting, whilst native species planting across the wider site will also benefit dormice.

The EPSL will include a Method Statement, which will further seek to avoid any adverse impacts in respect of damage or destruction to breeding sites and resting places.

It is proposed that the hedgerow works for the footpath will use appropriate mitigation, depending on the season, as follows:

Two-stage removal seeks to manage the above ground canopy component within which individuals could potentially build breeding nests by coppicing to 1.0 m at a time when dormice would be hibernating (November to end of March) and subsequent removal of the basal habitats (root balls, herbage, etc.) at a time when dormice would not be utilising ground hibernation nests.

Single-stage removal where small amounts of canopy vegetation is removed each day, allows animals time to escape, before a period of at least 24 hours is allowed to pass before the associated basal vegetation is then removed from site.

At this site, clearance using the single-stage method will be undertaken within best practice timing of April-May (inclusive) and/or mid-September-October (inclusive).

The single-stage clearance will comprise:

- ❑ A search for dormouse nests undertaken by a suitably experienced/licensed ecologist in the above ground canopy portion of vegetation. All vegetation that is scheduled for removal will be checked for birds' nests prior to removal. The canopy vegetation will then be cut down to 150-300 mm in height using handheld tools e.g. chainsaws, handsaws and handheld loppers under close supervision of the ecologist;
- ❑ Following this, a 24-hour period will be allowed to pass before the remaining basal vegetation is then searched for dormouse nests by a suitable experienced ecologist. Once the area has been searched the vegetation may then be removed under close supervision of the ecologist;
- ❑ All canopy cutting will be undertaken using hand tools only i.e. brush cutter, hedge trimmer, lopper etc. and extreme care will be taken to limit potential damage and disturbance to the ground. Any, less woody shrub layer (Bramble, Dog Rose, etc.) will be reduced using hand tools to an appropriate height that can be advised by the attendant ecologist. This vegetation will be extensively searched for the presence of nests by the suitably experienced, licenced ecologist prior to commencement of works;
- ❑ All arisings will be removed from the working area and either chipped and left in appropriate locations on site; or removed from site;
- ❑ All vehicles except for a tracked or wheeled chipper will remain parked at a sensible distance from the hedgerow and working area or preferably on gravel/hardstanding near the entrance to the site to prevent unnecessary damage or disturbance to the ground;

- ❑ Extreme care will be taken to limit potential damage and disturbance to the ground, although both canopy and basal habitats will be extensively searched for the presence of nests by the suitably experienced, licenced ecologist prior to commencement of works;
- ❑ Vegetation clearance works will only be undertaken following receipt of permission from the site manager.

4. CONCLUSIONS

The proposed mitigation designed into the scheme is to:

- ❑ Retain, buffer and appropriately manage the majority of currently accessible dormouse habitat on site in the long-term (existing hedgerows and woodland areas);
- ❑ Protect retained, accessible dormouse habitat in the short-term with Heras type fencing and a minimum 2.0 m buffer during construction works;
- ❑ Increase the available dormouse habitat on-site through provision of new native tree species planting (0.75 ha), native scrub planting (0.1 ha), and new native hedgerow (0.5 km);
- ❑ Improve the connectivity through the site by enhancing retained hedgerows for dormice. In addition, any brash which is being removed will be retained and placed against nearby existing hedges/woodland to improve connectivity for dormice;
- ❑ Appropriate timings and methods of habitat clearance works;
- ❑ Increase the carrying capacity site-wide by installing dormouse nest boxes in retained and newly created habitats.

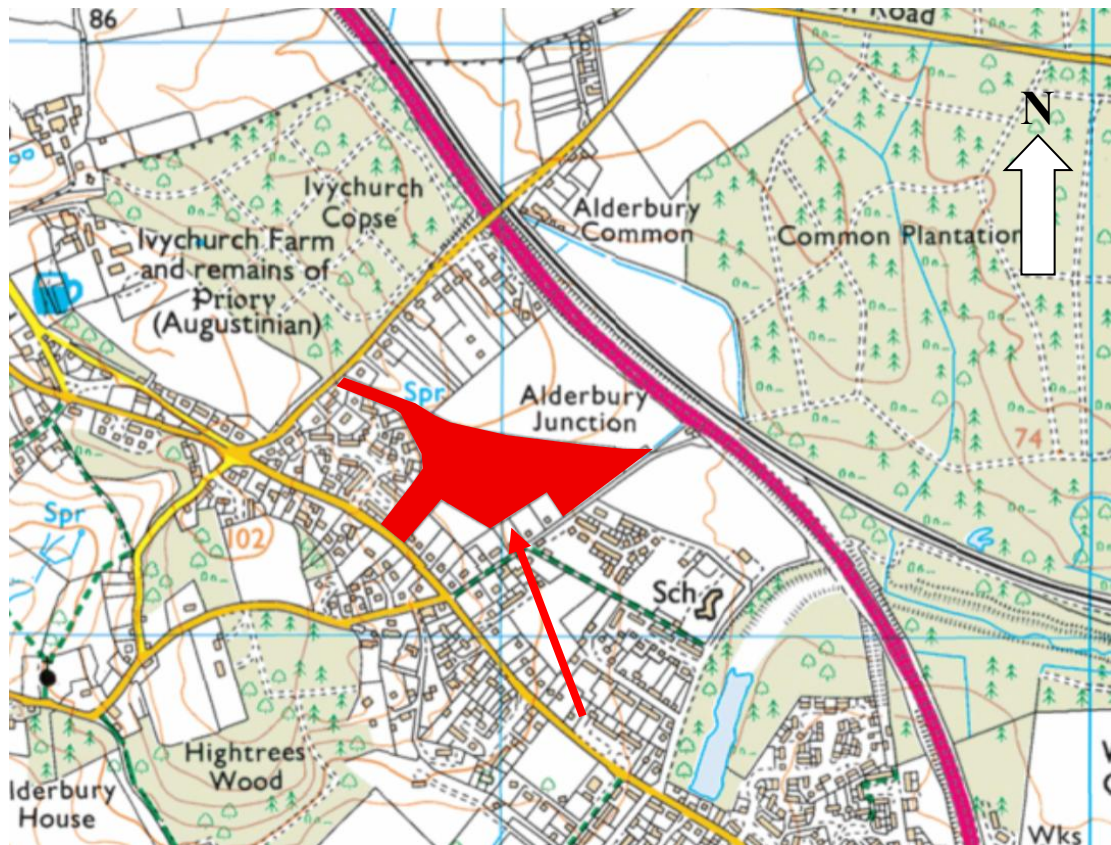
5. REFERENCES

Bright, P., Morris, P. and Mitchell-Jones, T, 2006. *The dormouse conservation handbook, 2nd edition.* English Nature, Peterborough.

APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Location plan

Appendix 2: Site plan

Appendix 1: Location plan**Land off Southampton Road, Alderbury**

Appendix 2: Site layout



Land off Southampton Road

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Land off Southampton Road, Alderbury – Hazel Dormouse Mitigation Strategy

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