



BJ Collins
PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEYORS

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL (EXTENDED) REPORT

PROPOSED REPLACEMENT ARTIFICIAL PITCH
LEAFY LANE PLAYING FIELDS
CORSHAM
WILTSHIRE

A report to:

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Report Title:	Extended Preliminary Ecological Appraisal - Proposed Replacement Artificial Pitch

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OS Grid Reference:	ST84296948

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RELIANCE - The report describes the conditions and ecological features on the site (and possibly its environs) at the time of survey and that this may (is likely to) change over time. Reliance upon the findings of this report should be determined in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management guidance on the longevity of ecological surveys, see Advice Note (April 2019) On the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys CIEEM.

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SUMMARY

This report provides the results of a preliminary ecological appraisal (extended) of a localised area of sports turf associated with the Leafy Lane playing fields, where a replacement artificial turf pitch with replacement sports turf floodlighting is proposed.

Designated Wildlife Sites

The site is immediately adjacent to the north-east boundary of the Bath & Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC), the Box Mine SSSI and sits within the Bath and BoA Bat SAC consultation zone. The landscapes of Box and Corsham are of conservation significance for bats.

There will be no direct physical impact upon any designated or non-designated wildlife site. However, the south boundary of the playing fields shares the boundary with the SAC. That boundary is currently impacted by light spillage from the existing sports facility. The new sports facility will be designed to remove this current impact.

Habitats

The main habitat to be affected by the development proposal is an existing artificial turf pitch which will be replaced along with an area of managed and heavily disturbed modified grassland, taken for the new larger artificial pitch. The grassland forms a small part of the Leafy Lane playing fields. There will be no significant biodiversity impact from the loss of habitats on site. There are no invasive plant species immediately adjacent to the proposal and therefore no impact from this constraint.

Faunal Species

Bats

The extent of research and the records of bats in the local area is extensive. In summary, the immediate locality supports the nationally significant Bechstein's (*Myotis bechsteinii*), greater horseshoe (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*) and lesser horseshoe (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) bats, all associated with the adjacent Special Area of Conservation. In total 17 of the 18 bat species recorded across the entire UK are located within 1km of the proposed pitch.

As a result a modern mitigated floodlighting scheme is recommended in accordance with best practice guidance. Overall, there is a current potential impact upon foraging and commuting bats that should be mitigated through a modern floodlighting scheme to replace the existing.

This is described within a separate stand-alone phase II bat survey report.

Badger and Hedgehog

There will be a minimal possible impact upon badger and hedgehog from the installation of the new artificial facility, the risk principally during the construction phase. To cover all eventualities precautionary actions are included within this document. Overall the impact to terrestrial mammals is negligible.

Amphibians and reptiles

There is a paucity of records of herptiles in the local area. The habitats affected by the proposal will not impact upon this group, recommendations are made with regards to storage of equipment away from the closest boundaries that have some value to these species. Overall, the risk to herptiles is negligible.

Breeding birds

There is no potential impact upon any trees or shrubs or hedgerow and therefore no potential constraints from breeding birds. Note that if there is a requirement to remove any tall vegetation, such as sections of shrub, tree or hedge, then this must be carried out outside of the breeding bird season, or advised by a breeding bird survey by a suitably qualified individual, if that is not possible. Overall, the evaluation of risk to breeding birds is negligible.

Further Survey Recommendations

There is no requirement for further ecological survey, beyond the extensive range of phase II bat surveys currently underway to inform the potential ecological impact on the adjacent SAC and bat populations.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by B J Collins Protected Species Surveyors Limited for Surfacing Standards Limited. It provides the results of a preliminary ecological appraisal, extended to include elements of an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA), for the proposal to install a replacement artificial grass sports pitch, with an associated floodlighting scheme on an area of the Leafy Lane Playing Fields.

The playing fields are located off of Leafy Lane in Corsham, Wiltshire, postcode SN13 0JY. The proposed pitch is to be placed upon the 8 figure Ordnance Survey grid reference of ST8429 6948.

The survey was carried out to inform the potential ecological impact from the replacement of the existing small artificial pitch and surrounding area of modified grassland with a new artificial sports surface. See figure 1 below.

The preliminary ecological appraisal, which involved a systematic walkover of the site, was undertaken in April 2025. The objective was to assess the habitats on site with regards to protected habitats and species to inform the proposal.

This report informs the associated Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain Metric, prepared for submission alongside this preliminary ecological appraisal and in support of a planning application.

The legislation with regard to relevant protected species can be found appended to this report (Appendix 1).



Figure 1: The survey area (yellow), courtesy of Google Earth.

The area for the proposed artificial pitch sits within an extensive area of modified grassland used for football pitches. This includes an existing floodlit artificial pitch in the south-east corner of the playing field which will be replaced with a new full-size artificial pitch.

The boundary of the wider area of playing fields includes for deciduous woodland and mature tree lines to the distant north and north-east boundaries of the overall area. The west boundary comprises of a managed hedgerow and the south boundary comprises of a treeline associated with Boxfields Road.

The proposed pitch area is immediately surrounded to the north and west by extensive areas of amenity grassland, to the south by the existing artificial pitch and beyond that Boxfields Road and to the east by the pavilion building and south of that the boundary of a covered reservoir, with mature overgrown shrub boundary.

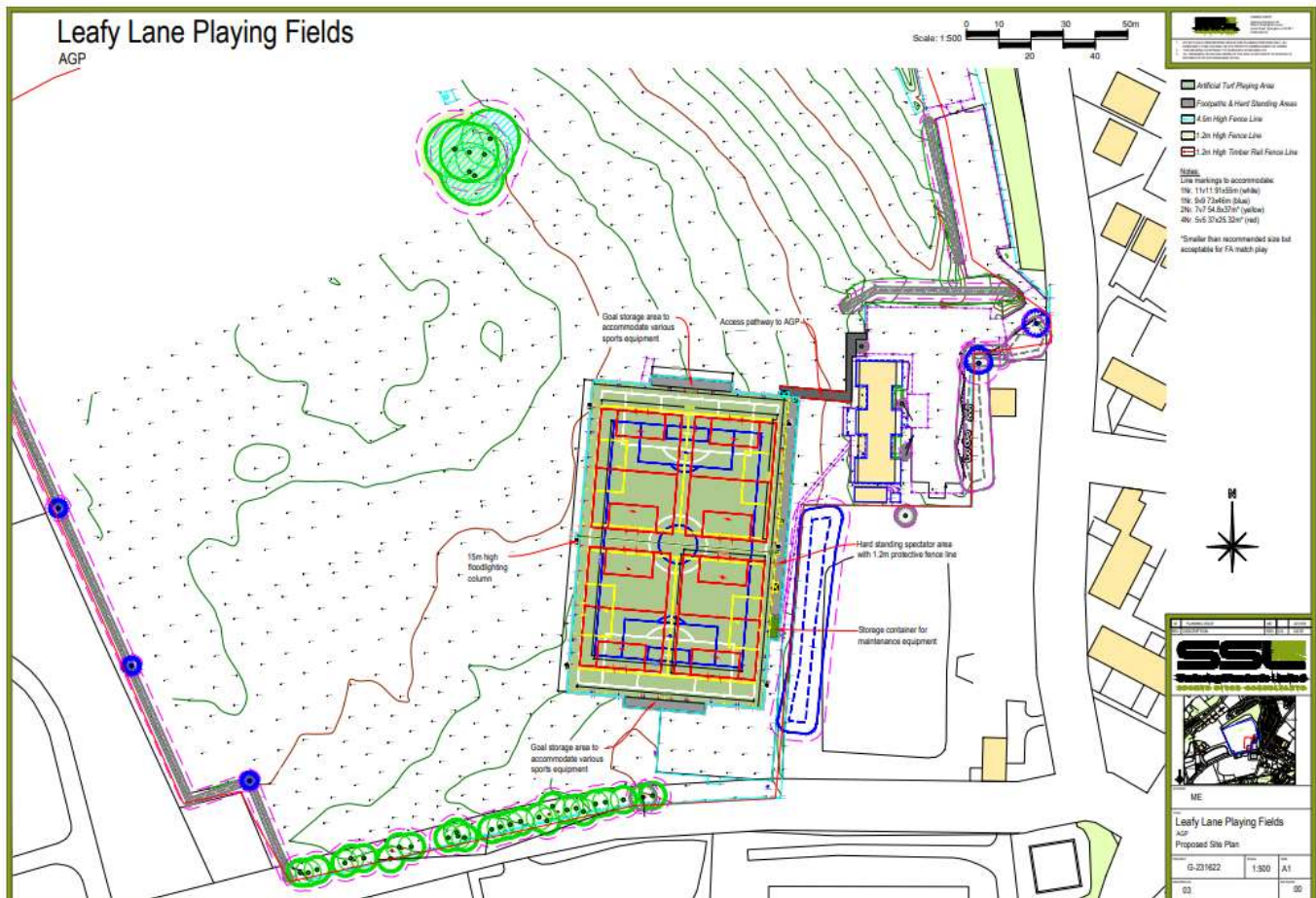


Figure 2 - showing the proposed artificial grass pitch layout.



Photograph 1: view from the north-east looking across the area for the proposed artificial pitch to the existing artificial surface



Photograph 2: the southern boundary of the area of sports field from the west with the existing artificial pitch visible to the left-hand side.



Photograph 3: showing the north boundary of the playing fields.



Photograph 4: showing the managed hedgerow forming the western boundary of the playing field.

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desktop Study

An ecological records search was commissioned from the Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Record Centre (WSBRC) on the 6th of June 2025. This comprised a request for records of wildlife species for a 1km circumference from the centre of the proposed sports pitch.

The desktop study also involved utilising the online government resource – MAGIC Map Application (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>) – to undertake a search for designated wildlife sites.

Supplementary to the two sources of information above the client provided a copy of the Corsham Batscape Strategy 2024 – 2038.

2.2 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

The site was subjected to a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (as per CIEEM, 2018) on 22 April 2025. This involved systematically walking over the site and classifying each parcel of land, utilising the UK Habitat Classification survey methodology (Butcher et al, 2020), on the basis of vegetation into one of approximately 47 habitat types (Level 4) alongside a list of secondary codes which give information on the environment and management (Butcher et al, 2020) of those habitats.

Notes were made on the structure and composition of habitats:

- Trees with potential to support features used by roosting bats were noted. Boundary features were assessed for their potential suitability for bat foraging and commuting.
- The suitability of habitats was assessed for nesting birds, including ground nesting birds.
- The suitability of habitats was assessed for terrestrial mammals, specifically badger (*Meles meles*) and hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*).
- The suitability of habitats was assessed for reptiles and amphibians, including specially protected great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*).

A search for any invasive non-native species such as Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and Indian balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) was also carried out.

The ideal time to carry out a habitat survey is during the plant growing season (i.e. April-September) and this is also when most animals are active.

2.3 Surveyor Details

The above survey was undertaken by Mr B J Collins MSc MCIEEM, FISC Level 3, (Natural England Class License: 2015-13152-CLS) and registered Low-Impact Class License Holder (RC110) and (B32RC002), an ecologist with over 25 years of experience.

2.4 Limitations to Survey

The surveyor was able to access all areas of the playing fields and there was no constraint to the survey results.

2.5 Ecological Evaluation Criteria

An ecological evaluation of the site was undertaken using a combination of evaluation criteria for habitats and species. The general framework follows that provided by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Where relevant the evaluation was made with reference to the statutory protection afforded to species and habitats. Legal protection does not always correspond to conservation value. Some species (e.g. badger) are protected for reasons of animal welfare rather than conservation. Others are of national conservation value but are not protected by law (e.g. some Red Data Book species and UK BAP species).

3. SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 Statutory and Non-statutory Sites

The site is immediately adjacent to the north-east boundary of the Bath & Bradford on Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation (SAC), the Box Mine SSSI and sits within the Bath and BoA Bat SAC consultation zone. The wider landscape surrounding Box and Corsham is therefore of international importance for bats¹. There are two local wildlife sites (SINCs) within the search area, both of these are associated with Box and will be unaffected by the proposal.

3.1.2 Records of protected species

3.1.2.1 Bats

The extent of research and the records of bats in the local area are extensive. The local area is studied by leading bat scientists annually and there are multiple reports produced detailing the findings. In summary, the immediate locality supports the nationally significant Bechstein's (*Myotis bechsteinii*), greater horseshoe (*Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*) and lesser horseshoe (*Rhinolophus hipposideros*) bats, all associated with the adjacent Special Area of Conservation.

17 of the 18 bat species recorded across the entire UK is located within 1km of the proposed pitch. This includes the Barbastelle, Serotine, Alcaholic Bat, Bechstein's Bat, Brandt's Bat, Daubenton's Bat, Whiskered Bat, Whiskered/Brandt's Bat, Natterer's Bat, Leisler's Bat, Noctule, Nathusius's Pipistrelle, Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared Bat, Greater Horseshoe Bat and Lesser Horseshoe Bat.

3.1.2.2 Common reptiles and amphibians

There are two records of reptiles, Slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*) and common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) on the database, the closest some 600 m from the site. Both records from the same location over 700 m to the west of the playing fields. There are two individual records for common amphibians recorded, common toad (*Bufo bufo*) and common frog (*Rana temporaria*), the most recent of these being from 1979.



Figure 3 - the location of reptile records in relation to the proposed pitch location

¹ Corsham Batscape Strategy 2024 - 2038

3.1.2.3 Great crested newt

There are three records of the specially protected great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) from the data search. None of those within 500 m of the site.

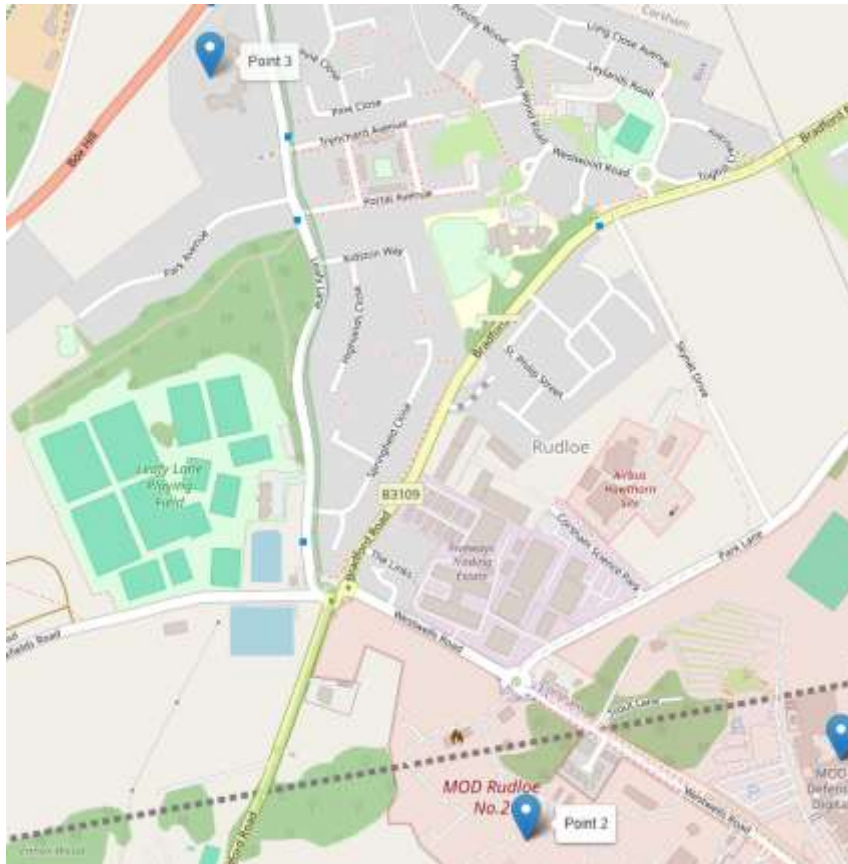


Figure 4 - location of records of the special protected great crested newt in relation to the development site

3.1.2.4 Hazel dormouse

There are no records of this species within 2 km of the survey area. There are no hedgerows or scrub affected by the development proposal and the controls designed with regards to bats will also protect against any detrimental impact if the species is present, but not recorded within the countryside within 2 km of the site.

3.1.2.5 Badger and hedgehog

There are records of badgers from the countryside surrounding Corsham. There were no badger setts identified associated with the playing fields but it is considered likely that this species forages and commutes across the playing field at least occasionally. As a result, some precautionary actions are required.

There are over 81 records of hedgehog from the local area and hedgehog is considered likely present, foraging across the playing field and potentially seeking refuge in the hedge bottoms or shrubberies to the boundaries. Precautionary actions will be required.

Potential impact upon protected species

With the exception of bats which are included under a separate report cover, there is a marginal potential impact upon the protected species listed above due to the nature of the footprint of the proposed artificial pitch.

Potential risks principally arise from the construction period and precautionary actions are included within this document.

3.2 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

3.2.1 Habitat Types

The following habitat types were recorded on the survey area, which is the footprint for the proposed artificial pitch and the immediate boundaries. The UKHab Alphanumeric codes have been provided in brackets beside each entry for reference:

On-site habitats

- Modified grassland (g4 (822, 108))
- Hardstanding - artificial unvegetated unsealed surface (u1c)
- Mixed shrubs (h3h).
- Line of trees (w1f 33)

The distribution and extent of the habitat types recorded on the site are described below and the location of any relevant target notes are shown within the habitat map.

3.2.2 Habitat Descriptions - within the development footprint

3.2.2.1 Modified grassland (g4 (823, 106)).

This is an area of heavily used amenity grassland supporting multiple football pitches. The modified grassland includes a typical flora, with a domination of Perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*) and occasional Annual meadow-grass (*Poa annua*), with Daisy (*Bellis perennis*), greater plantain (*Plantago major*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale* agg.) and mouse-ear (*Cerastium fontanum*).



Photograph 5: The intensively managed modified grassland habitat affected by the proposal

3.2.2.1 Hardstanding - artificial unvegetated unsealed surface

There is an existing artificial football pitch located in the south-east corner of the playing field. This is surrounded by a steel mesh fence and floodlit by six lighting columns.

This is an artificial turf surface, and therefore an unsealed free draining material.



Photograph 6 -the existing artificial football pitch from the south

3.2.3 Boundaries of the sports pitch.

There are two habitats of biodiversity significance on the boundary of the playing field that will be potentially affected by the new artificial pitch installation to the south-east corner. There will be no impact upon the established hedgerow to the west and the mature deciduous woodland and tree lines to the north.

3.2.3.1 Southern boundary

The southern boundary of the playing fields is formed by Boxfields Road. Between the road and the playing field is a low stone wall, approximately 1 m tall. Beyond this and planted on the edge of the playing field are a range of urban trees that now create a continuous tree canopy. This includes for Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), White Poplar (*Populus alba*), Mountain ash (*Sorbus aucuparia*), Cherry (*Prunus* sp.), lime (*Tilia x vulgaris*), Birch (*Betula pendula*) and Poplar (*Populus x canadensis*).

3.2.3.2 Eastern boundary

The eastern boundary to the northern end is dominated by the sports pavilion, car parking and area of shrub planting and to the far east boundary to the north, adjacent to Leafy Lane, a band of mature deciduous woodland.

Adjacent to the proposed pitch the boundary comprises of the sports pavilion and south of that a range of shrubs and grassland surrounding and over an underground reservoir. The reservoir is surrounded by a steel security fence and within it comprises of occasionally mown neutral grassland, stands of Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), copiers Hazel (*Corylus avellana*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*, suffering from dieback).



Photograph 7 - showing the tree line southern boundary of the playing field.



Photograph 8 - showing the habitat associated with the south-east corner of the playing field, adjacent to the proposal, courtesy of Google Earth.

3.2.3.3 The western boundary.

The western boundary of the playing field, and unaffected by the proposed installation, is formed by a managed Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Blackthorn hedgerow. The hedgerow is species poor, comprising approximately two woody species per 30 m length. It contains four semi-mature

Field maple (*Acer campestre*) as hedgerow trees. Other woody species within the hedgerow included for rose (*Rosa rugosa*), dogwood (*Cornus sanguineus*), field maple as a hedge species and elder (*Sambuca nigra*). The ground flora is limited due to the close mowing of the playing field but included for nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Ivy (*Hedera helix*), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), Lords and ladies (*Arum maculatum*), ground Ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) and shining cranesbill (*Geranium lucidum*).



Photograph 9 - the western boundary of the playing fields, a significant distance from the proposed artificial pitch

3.2.3.4 The northern boundary

The north boundary of the playing field is dominated by the adjacent woodland associated with the natural burial ground. The boundary of the playing field itself is formed between the woodland and the playing surfaces. It comprises timber post and rail fencing to the east side of the boundary and heras fencing to the west. To the eastern end of the boundary immediately adjacent to the site is a line of mature deciduous trees. This includes for Ash, overgrown Hawthorn, Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*), and Corsican pine (*Pinus nigra*). There has been a dead hedge installed to the edge of the fence and part of the fence is becoming overgrown with Ivy. Ground flora in areas is dominated by Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) patches, Nettle beds and cleavers (*Galium aparine*).

Inset within the playing field is a small woodland copse. This comprises of five mature deciduous trees including for Sycamore and two Beech trees (*Fagus sylvatica*). One of the beech trees supports a frost crack which could potentially lead to a potential bat roost feature and requires further investigation if there is to be any potential impact upon this copse from the artificial pitch installation.



Photograph 10 – showing the eastern end of the northern boundary.



Photograph 10 – showing the small copse of mature deciduous trees adjacent to the northern boundary

3.2.4 Faunal Species

3.2.4.1 *Amphibians and Reptiles*

There are no ponds identified within the desktop study site plan within 500m of the sports field and there are very few records of amphibians from the local dataset. The specially protected great crested newt is not present within 500 m of the site. There are limited records of slowworm and common lizard within the search area, these species are considered unlikely to be impacted by the proposal. Some precautionary actions are recommended.

3.2.4.2 *Badger and Hedgehog*

There is likely to be badger in the local countryside and this species may potentially forage or commute across the playing fields. The desktop study contains multiple records of Hedgehog from the local area and the big hedgehog map (<https://bighedgehogmap.org/>) has records on Leafy Lane. It is therefore considered highly likely that this is a constituent of the landscape surrounding the playing fields and may forage across the area, precautionary actions are required.

3.2.4.3 *Bats*

Bats are described in detail in a stand-alone phase II bat survey report, in particular dealing with the proposed floodlighting scheme for the new artificial pitch on the south-east boundary of the sports field, taking into account the conservation significance of the local area.

3.2.4.4 *Nesting Birds*

Habitat with good potential to provide for nesting birds is provided by the mature shrubs and scrub immediately adjacent to the south-east corner of the playing field, adjacent to the proposed artificial pitch, and by the tree canopy along the southern boundary.

Ideal breeding bird habitat is then provided by the shrubbery to the north of the pavilion, the woodland areas to the north of the pitch and the hedgerow on the western boundary.

3.2.4.5 *Hazel dormouse*

There are no records for Hazel dormouse within the search area on the desktop study. Potential habitat for this species, were it to be a constituent of the local area, is present on the boundaries of the site. The lack of records on the desktop study scopes this species out of this report.

3.2.4.6 *Floral Species*

No protected or notable plant species were noted on the development footprint or close to it during the survey. The survey found no invasive plant species.

3.3 Habitat Map – Aerial Image



Figure 5: Habitat map of Leafy Lane playing fields

4. ECOLOGICAL EVALUATION

4.1 Designated and Non-designated Nature Conservation Sites

There will be no direct physical impact upon any designated or non-designated wildlife site. However, the north east boundary of the Special Area of Conservation is currently impacted by light spillage from the existing sports facility. The new sports facility should be designed to remove this current impact which occurs up to 22:00 hours each night during the football season.



Photograph 11 - showing the extent of light spillage onto the south and east boundary from the existing football pitch.

Overall, the potential impact upon a small section of the north-east boundary of the SAC is significant whereas the overall impact from the existing sports facility is low.

4.2 Habitats

The main habitat to be affected by the development proposal is an area of managed and heavily disturbed modified grassland which forms part of the Leafy Lane playing fields. There will be no significant biodiversity impact from the loss of this feature to the new proposal.

Overall, the area of artificial pitch is to be placed upon an existing artificial pitch and a heavily modified amenity grassland, there is no significant impact to habitats.

4.3 Protected/ Notable Species

4.3.1 Floral Species

None of the plant species recorded from the site are listed on Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The site supported no evidence of invasive plant species, in particular the two most commonly encountered being Japanese knotweed and Himalayan balsam.

There is no potential impact from the proposal on either notable or invasive plant species.

4.3.2 Faunal Species

4.3.2.1 Amphibians and reptiles

The footprint for the proposal provides no suitable habitat for amphibians or reptiles. The boundaries have the potential to support common amphibians and reptiles but records of reptiles in the local area are sparse. Despite this some precautionary actions are recommended, specifically associated with storage of equipment and materials.

Overall, the evaluation of risk for amphibians and reptiles, with precautionary actions implemented, is considered to be negligible.

4.3.2.2 Badger and Hedgehog

The footprint of the proposed pitch offers limited habitat potential for terrestrial mammals. The playing fields offer possible commuting routes and foraging opportunities for both of these species. The habitat of the surrounding countryside offers potential refuge.

The evaluation of risk to badgers and hedgehogs it is considered to be a low risk in the absence of mitigation.

4.3.2.3 Bats

As a result of the proposal to floodlight the proposed artificial pitch, the greatest ecological impact falls upon animals reliant upon the linear boundary habitats for night-time commuting and foraging activities. As a result the principal impact is that to bats and this is described within a stand-alone survey report and mitigation strategy.

Overall, the evaluation of risk to bat foraging and commuting is described within a stand-alone survey report

4.3.2.4 Nesting Birds

A variety of birds are likely to nest in the shrubs associated with the underground reservoir, the treeline to the south of the playing field, the western boundary hedgerow and the woodland to the north. All of these areas are unaffected by the proposed installation.

Overall, the evaluation of risk to breeding birds is negligible taking into account the lack of breeding bird habitat provided.

4.3.2.5 Hazel dormouse

There are no records of hazel dormouse in the local area. Some marginal potential habitat exists and any significant impact would be from artificial lighting. The mitigation covering bats will also cover this species, were it to be present within immediately adjacent boundary habitats.

Overall, the evaluation of risk to dormouse is low taking into account the lack of records from 2 km of the site, the typical habitat affected, and the required floodlight mitigation plan.

4.4 Main Potential Ecological Issues/ Impacts

The main ecological impacts/constraints are as follows:

- Bats – there is a potential impact upon both commuting and foraging bat species, and upon the boundaries of the SAC from floodlighting.
- Hedgehog and badger - there are limited potential impacts on mammals which may forage across the playing fields. Mitigation actions are included within this document.
- Amphibians and reptiles - there is negligible potential impact due to the nature of the affected habitats. Despite this some precautionary actions are recommended with regards to the construction phase.

Mitigation (Section 5) is provided within this report to address any potential ecological issues and impacts.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND MITIGATION

5.1 Mitigation Recommendations

5.1.1 Habitats

The proposed pitch construction affects an area of wildlife poor habitat, an area subject to intensive use on a regular basis. The pitches show signs of intensive management along with regular mowing and selective herbicide applications.

The northern boundary is the habitat of greatest value to foraging and commuting bats, the area of mature broadleaved woodland, along with the western boundary hedgerow and tree canopies associated with the southern boundary combined, provide the next valuable linear habitat feature.

The south-eastern boundary of the playing field is currently adversely affected by the floodlights associated with the existing pitch. The sports turf floodlighting for the proposed replacement artificial pitch should be mitigated in accordance with best practice guidance.

Produced in tandem with this preliminary ecological appraisal is a statutory biodiversity net gain metric which sets out the extent of biodiversity loss and a mitigation strategy to deliver towards a 10% net gain from the installation.

5.1.2 Faunal Species

5.1.2.1 Bats

Recommendations with regards to the impact of the existing and proposed artificial turf pitches and the associated existing and proposed floodlighting schemes are included within a phase II bat survey report.

5.1.2.2 Badger and Hedgehog

There will be a minimal potential risk to badger and hedgehog from the installation of the new artificial facility, the risk principally during the construction phase.

To protect these species during the construction phase, and once development commences, any trenches dug during work activities that are to be left open overnight must be left with a sloping end or ramp to allow any animal that may fall in a route to escape.

Any pipes over 100mm in diameter must be capped off at night to prevent animals entering.

If any hedgehog is located in excavations during works, then it should be carefully placed into a clean receptacle, such as a bucket, and translocated to a safe environment outside of the area of works. This is the dense scrub behind the boundary fence of the covered reservoir. If any hedgehogs are found, they should be handled with gloved hands.

5.1.2.3 Amphibians and Reptiles

The following good practice will be adhered to at all times during the construction period. This will reduce the limited potential impact from the proposal upon amphibians and reptiles:

1. All construction materials will be stored 5 m away from the south-east boundary habitats of the site.
2. Ideally all materials should be stored on the regular mown amenity grassland, which should be kept mown until development commences, or the adjacent tarmac car parks.
3. All and any trenches or excavations left open overnight must be checked at the beginning of each working day for the presence of amphibians or reptiles.
4. If any amphibian or reptile is found during the works, then in the first instance photographs of the animal should be taken and submitted without delay to the ecologist to allow for identification,

(07957) 122217 or (07794) 617905. Following this they should be translocated to the long grassland of the adjacent covered reservoir. The animals should be released without delay.

5.1.2.4 Breeding birds

There is no potential impact upon any trees or shrubs, hedgerow or scrub and therefore potential constraints from breeding birds.

Note that if there is a requirement to remove any tall vegetation then this must be carried out outside of the breeding bird season (which runs from March to September annually) or advised by a breeding bird survey by a suitably qualified individual if this timing constraint cannot be adhered to.

Overall, the evaluation of risk to breeding birds is negligible taking into account the lack of breeding bird habitat provided by the area of sports field affected.

5.2 Further Survey Recommendations

There is no requirement for further ecological survey, beyond the range of Phase II Bat Surveys currently underway.

6. REFERENCES

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APPENDIX 1: PROTECTED SPECIES LEGISLATION

Plants

All wild plants are protected against unauthorised removal or uprooting under Section 13 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Plants listed on Schedule 8 of the Act (e.g. triangular club rush and Deptford Pink) are afforded additional protection against picking, uprooting, destruction and sale. Bluebell is protected against sale only.

Common Amphibians and Reptiles

Common amphibian and reptile species (i.e. common frog, common toad, smooth newt and palmate newt) are afforded partial legal protection under UK legislation, i.e. Schedule 5, Section 9 (5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This legislation prohibits sale, transportation and advertising for sale.

Badger

Badger is a widespread and generally common species. However, they are legally protected under The Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which is based primarily on the need to protect badgers from baiting and deliberate harm or injury. Under this legislation it is illegal to:

- Wilfully kill, injure, take, or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or attempt to do so
 - Possess any dead badger or any part of, or anything derived from, a dead badger
 - Intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett by disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, damaging or destroying a sett, causing a dog to enter a sett, or obstructing access to it
- A badger sett is defined in the legislation as “any structure or place, which displays signs indicating current use by a badger.”

Great crested newt

Great crested newts and their breeding sites or resting places are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (2019) which continue the same provision for European protected species, licensing requirements, and protected areas after Brexit.

This makes it an offence to intentionally to kill, injure or disturb a great crested newt. It is also an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by great crested newt for shelter. The legislation extends to both breeding ponds as well as terrestrial habitat.

Common amphibian species (i.e. common frog, common toad, smooth newt and palmate newt) are afforded partial legal protection under UK legislation, i.e. Schedule 5, Section 9 (5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This legislation prohibits sale, transportation and advertising for sale.

European Hedgehog

Hedgehogs are protected under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which prohibits killing or taking of individuals.

The hedgehog is also listed as a Priority Species for conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Under the NERC Act 2006, the hedgehog is categorised as a ‘Species of Principal Importance’ for biodiversity. Listing as a Biodiversity Action Plan priority and ‘Principal Importance’ species reflects concerns that hedgehog numbers are in decline and that some protection should be afforded to hedgehog habitat through the planning system.

Bats

All species of British bat and their roosts are protected under British law by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and bats are classified as European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (‘the 2017 Regulations’). This has recently been amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (2019) which continue the same provision for European protected species, licensing requirements, and protected areas after Brexit.

The legislation makes it an offence to kill, injure or disturb a bat and/or to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place for a bat.

With regard to artificial illumination of foraging and commuting habitats, it is also an offence to disturb the animals such that it impairs their ability to survive, or such that it impairs their ability to hibernate or migrate.

Birds

The bird breeding season generally lasts from early March to September for most species. All birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000. This legislation makes it illegal, both intentionally and recklessly to:

- Kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is being built or in use;

- Take or destroy the eggs of any wild bird; and
- Possess or control any wild bird or egg unless obtained legally.

Birds listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) (e.g. barn owl) are afforded additional protection, which additionally makes it an offence to disturb a bird while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

Hazel Dormouse

The hazel dormouse is legally protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and is a European Protected Species (EPS) under the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2019 (EU Exit) (as amended).

It is also a species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

In summary, it is an offence to intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture dormice; intentionally, deliberately or recklessly disturb dormice in such a way as to significantly affect their ability to survive, breed, rear/nurture their young or significantly affect their local distribution or abundance; intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to places used by dormice for shelter or protection (whether occupied or not); intentionally or recklessly disturb a dormouse whilst occupying a place of shelter or protection; damage or destroy a dormouse breeding site or resting place along with other exclusions.

Proposals which could lead to any of the above would require a derogation licence from Natural England alongside appropriate avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures.