



Land to the rear of 1 Pye Corner, Box, SN13 8ED. Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)

DOCUMENT PRODUCTION RECORD

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Non-technical Executive Summary

Background and Proposals

In November 2025, BN Ecology was commissioned by David Diclaudio (hereon referred to as 'the client') to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) to support the proposals comprising a poly tunnel and wooden shed on Land to the rear of 1 Pye Corner, Box, SN13 8ED (delineated as the redline boundary, totalling 0.1259 ha). The key objective of this Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was to record and highlight key habitats onsite and assess the potential the Site has to support or bolster the ecological network for protected species & species of conservation concern. Where necessary, any material ecological considerations for the Site have been noted, and in turn support the results and recommendations. A previous PEA, undertaken in April 2021 by All Ecology¹ in addition to a Bat Activity Survey² and a Reptile Survey³ (the latter two also undertaken by All Ecology) have been considered and any material changes noted. These respective reports supported a historical planning application for the Site, REF:

'PL/2021/06688 – Erection of a single self-build dwelling resurfacing of Pye Lane and associated works. Land to the rear of Devizes Road, Box.' This was refused on the 10th of February 2022 and subsequently dismissed at Planning Appeal Stage AP-36538.

One of the reasons for planning refusal related to ecological matters, worded as follows:

'The proposed development is contrary to CP50, the NPPF and Habitat Regulations due to the degradation and fragmentation of Priority Habitat, adverse impacts on Natura 2000 site Bath and Bradford on Avon Bat SAC and lack of evidence demonstrating no net loss in biodiversity. In addition, the submitted surveys indicate the woodland does not support reptiles however the woodland is potentially suitable for use by dormice for which surveys have not been carried out.'

Ecology Survey Methods & Surveyor Competencies

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was undertaken in accordance with Codes of Practice as set out in the UK Habitats classification system⁴; the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management⁵; the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines for Bat Surveys⁶; and the BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development (BSI 2013).

¹ All Ecology, Land at Devizes Road, Box, SN13 8EF, June 2021, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, All Ecology, Gloucestershire

² All Ecology, Land at Devizes Road, Box, SN13 8EF, November 2021, Bat Activity Survey, All Ecology, Gloucestershire

³ All Ecology, Land at Devizes Road, Box, SN13 8EF, June 2021, Reptile Survey, All Ecology, Gloucestershire

⁴ UK Habitat Classification, Habitat Definitions, Version 2.0, 2023.

⁵ Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Second Edition: Ampfield, Romsey. Issued December 2017.

⁶ BCT (2023): Collins, J. (ed.) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was performed by William Rees. All findings are supported by a desk study. Results of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal are illustrated in a habitat map (Appendix 2), which represents habitat types (outlined as target notes ('TN')) and identifies locations of evidence or potential for protected species and species of conservation concern on Site and Wildlife Features ('WF') indicative of notable evidence suggesting protected species and species of conservation concern may use the Site. Photos of the site are also provided (Appendix 1). These support the results and recommendations outlined in this report.

Results

The Site falls within a semi-rural landscape with the village of Box to the north and west and parcels of arable land to the south and east. The site lies to the east of Devizes road, 18m at its closest point, and is bounded by residential properties to the north and west and grassland fields to the south and east past the adjacent woodland.

The site is listed on MAGIC as priority habitat, namely Deciduous Woodland and Traditional Orchard. However, the land parcel concerning the redline boundary which the proposals are subject to comprises of a clearing present in the northeastern portion of the blueline site, which can be seen on satellite imagery as far back as 2002. Although some Damsoms fruit trees were noted within the south-west portion of the site outside of the redline boundary, there is a general lack of regularly spaced fruit trees to support the historical land use of Traditional Orchard. The proposals are to be sited within the clearing area, therefore no priority habitat is expected to be affected.

The Site comprises of:

- Urban – Artificial Unvegetated; unsealed surface
- Other neutral grassland
- Mixed scrub
- Young scrub and hedgerow whips
- Individual trees
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland (off-site, within the clients blueline land ownership)

The lowland mixed deciduous woodland covers the majority of the clients land ownership, and is of high ecological value and cannot be readily re-created. However, no impact on the woodland is expected and it was only included within the field survey to inform the likelihood of species residing within close proximity to the site, which itself does not constitute lowland mixed deciduous woodland. The Landowner has already planted fruiting trees and hedgerow whips as part of the proposals, which will enhance the sites ecological functional value.

Consideration has been given to the following protected species or notable features:

- The potential for Likely Significant Effects that may occur in relation to the Favourable Conservation Status of designated features concerning the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Special Area of Conservation
- Above ground nesting birds

- Foraging and commuting habitats for bats
- Terrestrial badger activity
- The habitat suitability for amphibians during terrestrial phases
- Habitat suitability for hazel dormouse
- The habitat suitability for reptiles during terrestrial phases
- Terrestrial habitat potential for hedgehog
- Terrestrial habitat potential for brown hare
- Terrestrial and riparian habitat suitability for otter and water vole
- Root Protection Zones for retained trees and hedgerows

Recommendations

The recommendations outlined in this report briefly comprise of:

- Mitigation measures for:
 - Bats
 - Badgers
 - Nesting birds
 - Hedgehogs
 - Hazel dormouse
 - Protection of retained habitats
 - On-site enhancements

No further survey effort is recommended, subject to the recommendations delineated in this report being secured. It is considered that the recommendations can be secured by way of planning obligations, such as conditions.

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1. Introduction, Background and Project Details

- 1.1. This report has been compiled to support a proposal comprising the erection of a 71.4 sqm poly tunnel, the erection of a 19.8sqm wooden shed and associated landscaping on Land to the rear of no. 1 Pye Corner, Box, SN13 8ED, delineated as the 'redline boundary', totalling 0.1259ha. The grid reference for the redline boundary site is ST 82556830.
- 1.2. The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been carried out by BN Ecology to assess the ecological baseline of the site, and where necessary, determine if further Phase II species specific surveys are required. This updates a previous PEA undertaken by All Ecology in 2021. The previous Bat Activity Surveys and Reptile Surveys, historically conducted by All Ecology in 2021, have also been considered where necessary.
- 1.3. This report demonstrates and confirms that there are no significant ecological constraints beyond the implementation of avoidance, mitigation and minor compensatory measures, as outlined in section six of this report, in relation to nesting birds; foraging and commuting bats; commuting and foraging hazel dormice; hedgehogs & badgers during terrestrial cycles; and protection protocols for on-site and off-site habitats.

Table 1. – Site Specific Information	
Category	Site Specific Information
Site Name	Land to the rear of no. 1 Pye Corner
Site Location	Box, SN13 8ED
Local Authority	Wiltshire Council
Overall Site Area (Redline)	0.1259 ha
Existing Land Use (Redline)	Agricultural
Proposed Land Use (Redline)	Mixed agricultural & horticultural

2. Report Objectives

2.1 – The Objectives Set Out in this Report
- To establish the baseline ecological conditions within the redline boundary and future changes resultant from the proposed development. - To consider significant impacts resultant from the proposed development and identify any ecological considerations and constraints that will inform the proposals design and working methods during the construction phase. - To assess if development is likely to be in accordance with wildlife legislation. - HRA Screening (only if within a Consultation/Impact Risk Zone). - To identify the need for further species specific (commonly referred to as Phase Two) surveys if needed. - To establish enhancements in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework (excluding mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain as instilled by the Environment Act 2021, which is addressed in a separate report).

3. Methodology

3.1 Desk Study Assessment

A desk study was performed in December 2025 to inform of local records, some or all information which may be relevant to the proposal. Online resources (in this instance, the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)⁷ website) were used as part of this exercise, and included the following:

- Information pertaining to Statutory Site Designations within 2km of the Site, and within 5km for designations relating to bats.
- Information pertaining to European Protected species licences that have been issued within 2km of the Site.
- Any notable Priority Habitats listed under the Priority Habitats inventory onsite or close to the Site.
- Information relating to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), including any associated features that may be within the Site boundary, or within an Impact Risk Zone.
- Any other relevant faunal, floral or geological information.

Google Maps⁸ was also used to view satellite images of the Site from an aerial and street view context.

Not all of the below abbreviations are necessarily used within this report. However, for thoroughness, common abbreviation used in such reports include:

- SAC = Special Areas of Conservation
- SPA = Special Protection Area
- SSSI = Site of Special Scientific Interest
- NNR = National Nature Reserve
- LNR = Local Nature Reserve
- AONB = Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty
- SNCI = Site of Nature Conservation Importance
- ASNW = Ancient Semi-Natural Woodland
- RAWs = Restored Ancient Woodland Site
- PAWS = Plantation of Ancient Woodland Site
- NE = Natural England
- GCER = Gloucestershire Centre for Environmental Records
- WSBRC = Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre

PLEASE NOTE: As part of this Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, the client did not commission local records to be obtained by Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre due to the small scale of the proposals. However, records were obtained for the 2021 PEA completed on the site, details of which have been noted within this report, along with records obtained by GCER.

Aerial images and Ordnance Survey maps were utilised to characterise the wider landscape. Off-site features and habitats were examined and assessed in relation to the

⁷ <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>

⁸ <https://www.google.co.uk/maps/@52.8382004,-2.3278149,6z>

ecological value they contribute to existing ecological networks that are tangibly associated with the site.

Ancient woodland has been defined as non-statutory designated sites for the purposes of this report. Such habitats are defined as 'irreplaceable' and receive strong protection through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). More recently, their protection is further strengthened in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 as a result of the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) policy, specifically associated with [Biodiversity Gain Requirements \(Irreplaceable Habitat\) Regulations 2024](#).

3.2 Field Survey

Habitats:

A walkover of the Site was undertaken on the 13th of November 2025. The survey nature was an extended UK Habitat Classification Survey, specifically to inform the baseline of the habitats present on-site and their potential to support protected species and species of conservation concern. Any evidence suggestive of protected species being present onsite was noted throughout the course of the survey. The survey was carried out in reference to CIEEM 2017, UK Habitat Classification 2023 and BS 42020:2013 *Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development* (BSI 2013).

Habitats on site were assessed to determine whether habitats present are listed under Section 41 Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, (2006), Priority Habitats UK's listed within the National Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan (2024), habitats of local priority for conservation such as those that pertain to Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP), or if there are any qualifying features that may justify further designation such as non-statutory designated site inclusions (SINC/ LWS/ SNCI).

Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 provides a list of non-native invasive species, which essentially prohibits the introduction or accidental introduction/spread of these species into the wild in Great Britain. Examples include Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica*, Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* and giant hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum*. Where observed, such species were noted during the survey.

Protected Species and Species of Conservation Concern:

Species taken into consideration included those listed under;

- Section 41 The NERC Act 2006;
- Species lists such as those of local priority and conservation interest e.g. ones listed within Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP);
- International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN);
- Species of Conservation concern (listed as Red, Amber, Near Threatened or Data Deficient or otherwise listed in a Red Data Book if taxonomic group updated assessments have not been undertaken);
- Species listed within the Species Status Project Reviews such as those that have been listed as Nationally Rare or Nationally scarce.

Bats:

The assessment of the suitability of structures (if present) for roosting bats was based on current guidance set out by the Bat Conservation Trust⁹.

The assessment comprised of a Daytime Bat Walkover survey of the Site for its potential to provide roosting features for bats (if appropriate). The focus of attention was to determine if the habitat features onsite form part of foraging and flight-path networks for local bat populations. Photographs were taken of the Site, including the hedgerows and immediate habitat surroundings. Structures (if present) were assessed on a five-point scale (1-5) for their potential as roost sites (where 1 = High potential, 2 = Moderate potential, 3 = Low potential, 4 = Negligible potential, 5 = No potential (Collins et al, 2023)). The assessment was made according to the criteria set out in Table 2. Habitat was also assessed and made according to criteria set out in Table 3.

The survey concentrated on looking for signs and evidence of bat usage as follows:

- Live and/or dead bats,
- Chattering and squeaking sounds (social calls) heard,
- Droppings,
- Feeding remains (e.g. butterfly or moth wings, beetle wing cases),
- Bat-fly (Nycteribiid) pupal cases,
- Perch abrasions,
- Characteristic staining from urine,
- Marks from oil secretions.

Table 2 – Roosting potential suitability in reference to presence of roosting and habitat features. (Collins et al, 2023).		
<u>Suitability</u>	<u>Description of roosting habitats</u>	<u>Number of activity survey visits required</u>
None	POINT SCALE: 5 There are no habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year.	None
Negligible	POINT SCALE: 4 There are no noticeable habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.	None
Low	POINT SCALE: 3 The structure in question provides one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats, on an opportunistic basis, at any time of the year.	One, in the period May to August
Moderate	POINT SCALE: 2 The structure in question provides one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and	Two, in the period May to September with at least one of the surveys

⁹ Collins, J. (ed.) (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th Edition). The Bat Conservation trust, London; Mitchell-Jones A. and McLeish A. (2004). Bat Workers Manual (3rd Edition). Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough; ell-Jones A. (2004). Bat Mitigation Guidelines. English Nature, Peterborough.

	surrounding habitat, but are unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.	between May and August
High	POINT SCALE: 1 The structure in question provides one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by possibly significant numbers of bats on a recurring basis and if the conditions are appropriate, potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions, and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support roosts of high conservation status.	Three, in the period May to September with at least two of the surveys between May and August
Confirmed	POINT SCALE: 0 Evidence of bats or use by bats found during the Daytime Bat Walkover, usually found during the external or internal inspection.	Minimum of two surveys to characterise the roost in the period May to September with at least one of the surveys between May and August

Table 3 – Summary of guidelines for assessing the suitability of surrounding bat habitat (Collins et al, 2023).

Suitability	Description of commuting and foraging habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year.
Negligible	No key and/or apparent habitat features on site likely to be used as foraging resources or associated flightpaths.
Low	Habitat is generally isolated but may possess a few features that could be used by small numbers of bats such as flightpaths e.g. gappy hedgerow.
Moderate	The concerned habitat is continuous and usually connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flightpaths such as treelines, well developed scrub or linked back gardens.
High	The concerned habitat is usually high-quality habitat that is well-connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flightpaths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge.

If appropriate, a Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) for tree's was also undertaken if trees with potential suitability were identified onsite. The purpose of this is to ascertain and locate

Potential Roosting Features (PRF) on the exterior of the trees (for example, woodpecker holes). The criteria applied to this assessment is outlined as follows:

- PRF – I: PRF(s) only suitable for individual bats or a very small number of bats either due to their size or a lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
- PRF – M: suitable for multiple bats and could be used by a maternity colony.

An assessment was also undertaken to classify the surrounding habitats suitability for commuting, foraging and roosting bats. This survey was in direct reference to methods recommended in the Bat Conservation Trust Survey Guidelines, 2023¹⁰.

Badgers:

A search within the Site, which extended across a 30m buffer around the site perimeter where accessible, was undertaken. Where present, the locations of badger evidence such as runs, setts, latrine, prints, hair, scratching posts, and/or foraging signs such as snuffle holes were noted. The survey considered the Badger Trusts 'Badger Protection: Best Practice Guidance for Developers, Ecologists and Planners (England)'¹¹.

Birds:

All bird observations and calls were noted during the survey. Features that could be utilised by nesting birds were also noted and potential suitability for Schedule 1 listed birds, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), were assessed.

Dormice:

Dormice are small, nocturnal mammals which make use of habitats such as hedgerows, scrub and rich mosaics such as woodland complexes. The dormouse requires a good linear network which is well connected with a good range of food sources such as fruit, nuts, flowers (notably petals) or insects. Notable favourite for the species includes hazel, bramble, oak and honeysuckle but they will utilise other species such as hawthorn, hornbeam, blackthorn, sweet chestnut and sycamore in the network's composition.

Great Crested Newts:

Features on-site, and where appropriate off-site, were assessed for their potential to support great crested newt. The Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook (Frog life 2001) and Herpetofauna Workers' Manual (Joint Nature Conservation Committee, 2003) were referred to. Aerial maps and Ordnance survey maps were utilised to determine whether any waterbodies within 500m of the site could be used by the species and thus have relevance to the site boundary in terms of terrestrial supporting habitat.

Reptiles:

Features on-site were assessed for their suitability for reptiles. Features relevant to reptile's ecological lifecycle depending on the time of year were assessed and noted, with

¹⁰ BCT (2023): Collins, J. (ed.) (2023) *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (4th Edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London.

¹¹ Anon. (2023), *Badger Protection: Best Practice Guidance for Developers, Ecologists and Planners*, Badger Trust, Brighton.

particular consideration given to the Reptile Management Handbook (Edgar, Foster & Baker, 2011) and the Reptile Mitigation Guidelines Technical Note TIN 102 (Natural England, 2013).

Other species:

Other species considerations were noted where appropriate habitat suitability was present or otherwise ruled out where no potential features were found that could be utilised by a species(s).

Please note: The field survey results and recommended species-specific survey results from All Ecology have also been included within this report to demonstrate the effort that has been made regarding this site historically, and note whether the value of the site has undergone any material changes which in turn has impacted positively or negatively the ecological intrinsic value of the Site, and thus if updated Phased II surveys are required.

4. Limitations

4.1 Survey Limitations

The field survey that informs this report is a snapshot of the ecological features and evidence onsite at a specific time of year and is informed by the information obtained during the site visit for a particular period. It cannot be ruled out that important ecological features may be missed due to survey timings, unusual climate events that can disrupt ecological cycles, or the year of the survey. Every effort has been taken to ensure the advice provided within this report is balanced and in depth, but a lack of evidence for protected species does not always mean a likely absence.

November is a suboptimal time of year to assess ground flora of hedgerows, trees and species richness of grassland. Professional judgment has been applied with respect to condition assessments. This report therefore provides an indication of the likely change in status and condition of habitats relative to previous Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Phase II Species Specific Surveys undertaken at the site, as follows:

- All Ecology: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Survey Date: 15th April 2021. Document Date May 2022.
- All Ecology: Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment 3.0.¹²
- All Ecology: Reptile Survey. Survey Date: April – June 2021. Document Date: June 2021.
- All Ecology: Bat Activity Survey. Survey Date: April – October 2021. Document Date: 5th November 2021.
- Tyler Grange: Arboricultural Impact Assessment. Survey Date: July 2020. Document Date: 22nd June 2021¹³.

These limitations have been taken into consideration in the conclusions and recommendations following the assessment.

¹² All Ecology, Land at Devizes Road, Box, SN13 8EF, April 2022, Biodiversity Net Gain Preliminary Design Stage Report, All Ecology, Gloucestershire

¹³ Rob Anderson, Land to the rear of Devizes Road, Box, 22nd June 2021, Arboricultural Impact Assessment, Tyler Grange, Greater London

5. Results

5.1 Desk Study and, Local Policy and The Law

Local Plan Policies & strategies

The unitary authority now known as Wiltshire Council became existent on the 1st of April 2009. The new unitary council combined the four former district councils in Wiltshire (Salisbury, West Wiltshire, Kennet, and North Wiltshire) alongside the services provided by the former Districts.

Wiltshire's Local Plan, the Wiltshire Core Strategy was adopted in 2015, and is currently undergoing a 'Local Plan Review'. Wiltshire Council submitted the Wiltshire Local Plan to the Secretary of State for Housing Communities and Local Government for an independent examination in November 2024. It is anticipated that the Local Plan will be adopted in the latter part of 2025, or in the first quarter of 2026.

However, until then, the current adopted planning policies are still relevant and are therefore highlighted.

Core Policy 50 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

'Protection:

Development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale. There is an expectation that such features shall be retained, buffered, and managed favourably in order to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term. Where it has been demonstrated that such features cannot be retained, removal or damage shall only be acceptable in circumstances where the anticipated ecological impacts have been mitigated as far as possible and appropriate compensatory measures can be secured to ensure no net loss of the local biodiversity resource, and secure the integrity of local ecological networks and provision of ecosystem services.

All development proposals shall incorporate appropriate measures to avoid and reduce disturbance of sensitive wildlife species and habitats throughout the lifetime of the development.

Any development potentially affecting a Natura 2000 site must provide avoidance measures in accordance with the strategic plans or guidance set out in paragraphs 6.75-6.77 above where possible, otherwise bespoke measures must be provided to demonstrate that the proposals would have no adverse effect upon the Natura 2000 network. Any development that would have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European nature

conservation site will not be in accordance with the Core Strategy.

Biodiversity enhancement:

All development should seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity. Major development in particular must include measures to deliver biodiversity gains through opportunities to restore, enhance and create valuable habitats, ecological networks and ecosystem services. Such enhancement measures will contribute to the objectives and targets of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) or River Basin/Catchment Management Plan, particularly through landscape scale projects, and be relevant to the local landscape character.

Local sites:

Sustainable development will avoid direct and indirect impacts upon local sites through sensitive site location and layout, and by maintaining sufficient buffers and ecological connectivity with the wider environment. Damage or disturbance to local sites will generally be unacceptable, other than in exceptional circumstances where it has been demonstrated that such impacts:

- i. cannot reasonably be avoided
- ii. are reduced as far as possible
- iii. are outweighed by other planning considerations in the public interest
- iv. where appropriate compensation measures can be secured through planning obligations or agreements. Development proposals affecting local sites must make a reasonable contribution to their favourable management in the long-term.'

Core Policy 69 Protection of the River Avon SAC

'In order to avoid and reduce potential environmental effects on the River Avon SAC, development will need to incorporate measures during construction and operation to avoid and prevent pollution and mitigate potential disturbance effects; appropriate measures may include consideration of suitable buffer zones along watercourses, habitat enhancements and river access management measures. All development within 20m of the river banks should submit a construction management plan to the local planning authority to ensure measures proposed during construction are satisfactory.

Where additional sewage discharges to a STW cannot be accommodated without measures to offset phosphate loading,

	development will be required to undertake proportionate measures (which may include contributions towards those measures identified in the Nutrient Management Plan) to demonstrate that the proposals would have no adverse effects upon the SAC.' Wiltshire's Local Biodiversity Action Plan Prioritises the following listed habitat types and networks: • Woodland: This includes ancient woodland and wood-pasture/parkland • Arable Farmland: This focuses on specific needs of arable fields for biodiversity • Wet Habitats: Broadly, this comprises of reedbeds, fen and marsh, and wet grassland • Hedgerows: Hedgerows of varying types are included, with action plans specifically addressing the conservation and management of these • Scrub: Action plans to protect and manage scrub habitats • Acid and Calcareous Grassland: This addresses these particular grassland types • Open Water: Broadly, includes lakes, reservoirs, and other water bodies • Field Margins, Churchyards, Gardens: Often overlooked, the plan focuses on these • Lowland Heathland: Action plans are delineated for this specific type of habitat • Other Semi-Natural Habitats: The Plan Recognises the importance of various semi-natural habitats for biodiversity In Wiltshire, Local Priority species are those that have been determined as vulnerable or declining and therefore in need of focused conservation interventions. These include the water vole <i>Arvicola amphibius</i>, hedgehog <i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>, common toad <i>Bufo bufo</i>, curlew <i>Numenius Arquata</i>, Duke of Burgundy butterfly <i>Hamearis lucina</i>, and reintroduced Great Bustard <i>Otis tarda</i>. The Wiltshire Wildlife Trust has identified these species as critically important and has developed resources to support their conservation.
Ecological Context	The Site comprises of - Urban – Artificial Unvegetated; unsealed surface - Other neutral grassland - Mixed scrub - Young scrub and hedgerow whips - Individual trees (recently planted by the client) - Lowland mixed deciduous woodland (off-site, blueline within client's ownership)

PLEASE NOTE: The Lowland mixed deciduous woodland covers the majority of blueline boundary within the client's ownership which is of high ecological value and cannot be readily re-created, however, no impact on the woodland is expected and it was only included within the field survey to inform the likelihood of species residing within close proximity to the site.

The Site falls within a semi-rural landscape with the village of Box to the north and west and parcels of arable land to the south and east. The site lies to the east of Devizes Road, 18m at its closest point, and is bounded by residential properties to the north and west and grassland fields to the south and east past the woodland.

The site (redline and blue line boundary) is listed on MAGIC as priority habitat, namely Deciduous Woodland and Traditional Orchard. However, the land parcel comprises predominately of woodland with a clearing present in the northeastern portion of the site (this forms the redline boundary), which can be seen on satellite imagery as far back as 2002. The proposals are to be sited within the clearing area, and no priority habitat is expected to be affected.

The Joint Nature Committee delineates that Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland comprises semi-natural, broadleaved woodland found mainly in lowland England and parts of Wales and Scotland. It typically includes ancient or long-established woods, often small (<20 ha), with a diverse canopy dominated by locally native species such as oak, ash, birch, lime, hornbeam, field maple and elm. These woods occur across a wide range of soil types and usually exhibit a complex structure, with mixed age classes, natural regeneration, and characteristic ground flora associated with NVC communities W8, W10 and W16. Many sites show signs of historic coppice management and may form mosaics with wet areas, scrub or wood-pasture. The habitat's ecological value is linked to its semi-natural species composition, ancient woodland continuity, and structural diversity.¹⁴

The Joint Nature Committee delineates that Tradition Orchards are characterised by widely spaced, long-lived fruit trees (usually on standard or half-standard rootstocks) set within permanent, traditionally managed, herb-rich grassland. They are typically managed at low intensity, with minimal chemical input, limited or no reseedling, and often contain veteran trees, fallen deadwood and gaps supporting a diverse saprotrophic, invertebrate and cavity-using fauna. To qualify as a priority habitat, the orchard must still display the structural features, ecological continuity and

¹⁴ <https://data.jncc.gov.uk/data/2829ce47-1ca5-41e7-bc1a-871c1cc0b3ae/UKBAP-BAPHabitats-30-LowlandMixedDecWood.pdf> (Accessed: December 2025)

	traditional management characteristics associated with this low-intensity system, even if productivity is low.¹⁵ The redline boundary concerning the proposals represents a clearing within the noted priority habitats, with historic habitats outlined by All Ecology not meeting the above definitions provided. The surrounding habitats within the clients blueline boundary meets the definition of Deciduous woodland and are appropriately defined as the above Priority Habitat Listing. However, concerning the Traditional Orchard listing, although some Damsoms fruit trees were noted within the south-west portion of the site, there is a general lack of regularly spaced fruit trees to support the historical land use as defined as a Traditional Orchard. The proposals which pertain to the redline boundary should not be considered as Priority Habitat Lowland Deciduous Woodland or Traditional Orchard, as this area does not meet either of the above definitions. Please refer to habitat descriptions provided below in the Field Survey Results Section 5.1.
Statutory & Non-statutory Designated Sites	The desk study revealed that the Site does not sit within any Statutory Designated Sites and one lies within 2km, namely Box Mine SSSI. <u>Box Mine SSSI – 590m north-east of the Site</u> The Site is designated for the following Biological Interests: <i>Box Mine is an extensive network of man-made tunnels which is used by bats for hibernation, mating and as a staging post prior to dispersal. The mine seasonally supports up to 10% of the total British population of greater horseshoe Rhinolophus ferrumequinum, one of the rarest native bat species. All British bat species have suffered marked population decline over the last forty years due partly to habitat destruction and partly to poisoning from persistent toxic chemicals used in treating structural timbers.</i> <i>Mining work at Box, begun originally in Roman times and continued intermittently to the present, produced 'free stone' for the building industry from the Great Oolitic Limestone deposits of the middle Jurassic. The few remaining entrances to the mine system emerge in shallow quarries which now contain secondary beech and ash woodland.</i> <i>Small numbers of bats use the system throughout the year but the site is particularly important for bats as a hibernaculum between</i>

¹⁵ <https://data.jncc.gov.uk/data/2829ce47-1ca5-41e7-bc1a-871c1cc0b3ae/UKBAP-BAPHabitats-56-TraditionalOrchards.pdf> (Accessed: December 2025)

October and May and as a dispersal site in July and August. Highest numbers have been recorded immediately after the breeding season and during periods of prolonged cold weather when small sites become unsuitable and are vacated for the more stable temperature and humidity conditions at Box Mine.

A maximum of 230 greater horseshoe bats have been recorded at Box Mine. This species has undergone a dramatic decline in numbers since 1900 and is now found regularly only in south-west England and South Wales. Other bat species using the system include whiskered *Myotis mystacinus*, brandts *M. brandti*, natterers *M. nattereri*, daubentons *M. daubentoni* and the lesser horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*, a species with a markedly western distribution.

The site boundary has been drawn to include all the known subterranean workings believed to be of significance to bats. Most of the land surface is intensively farmed and is not known to be of scientific interest, but the woodland is important as a feeding area for bats.

Impact Risk Zone - The site falls within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone. Natural England has provided a descriptive list of development types that if met, require further consultation with the appropriate nature conservation body. The closest relevant development types concerning the proposals which require such consultation include:

- **All Consultations:** All planning applications (except householder applications) where the proposed development is outside or extends outside existing settlements/urban areas and will increase lighting levels or affect trees/woodland, waterbodies, rural buildings/structures (manmade or natural) or linear landscape features such as hedgerows, streams and rivers through direct loss, fragmentation or change of use.
- **Infrastructure:** Airports, helipads and other aviation proposals.
- **Minerals, Oil and Gas:** Oil & gas exploration/extraction.
- **Air Pollution:** Any industrial/agricultural development that could cause AIR POLLUTION (including: industrial processes, livestock & poultry units with a floorspace > 500m², slurry lagoons > 750m² & manure stores > 3500 tonnes).
- **Combustion:** General combustion processes >50MW energy input. Including: energy from waste incineration, other incineration, landfill gas generation plant, pyrolysis/gasification, anaerobic digestion, sewage treatment works, other incineration/combustion.

As the proposals meet the 'All Consultations' criteria, **further consultation with Natural England will be required.**

River Avon Species Area of Conservation

The principles of nutrient neutrality in Wiltshire are that where a proposal is deemed to be a 'phosphate affected development', it must be demonstrated that the adverse effect on the integrity of the protected site can be ruled out by achieving 'nutrient neutrality' i.e. resulting in there being no net increase in phosphorus from the change of land use and/or discharged foul wastewater effluent from associated overnight accommodation.

The nature of the proposals will not provide overnight accommodation therefore, the development does not have potential to result in an adverse effect alone or in combination with other developments through the discharge of phosphorus into the surface water and general fluvial catchment. The polytunnel shall be used for horticultural purposes, and the shed for storage of potting tools, neither of which are likely to increase nutrient discharge into the designated Sites sensitive hydrological catchment zones.

Therefore, consultation with Natural England **should not be required.**

Special Areas of Conservation or Component Sites of Special Scientific Interest (Bats):

There is one Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) associated with bats within 5km of the site, namely Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bats SAC. The Site sits within Bradford-on-Avon Bat SAC Core Buffer Zones for Bechstein's bat, Lesser Horseshoe bat and Great Horseshoe bat in accordance with guidance delineated on '*Bat Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) Planning Guidance for Wiltshire*'.¹⁶

The closest component site pertaining to the SAC is Box Mine, which lies 590m north-east of the Site. Box Mine is an extensive network of man-made tunnels which is used by bats for hibernation, mating and as a staging post prior to dispersal. The mine seasonally supports up to 10% of the total British population of greater horseshoe. A maximum of 230 greater horseshoe bats have been recorded at Box Mine. This species has undergone a dramatic decline in numbers since 1900 and is now found regularly only in south-west England and South Wales. Other bat species using the system include whiskered Myotis, brandts,

¹⁶ <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/992/Bat-S-A-C-developers-guidance-inc-Bath-Bradford-on-Avon-Chilmark-and-Mottisfont/pdf/Bath-and-bradford-on-avon-september-2015-bat-sac-guidance.pdf?m=1594229486227> (Accessed: 08/12/2025)

natterers, daubentons and the lesser horseshoe, a species with a markedly western distribution.

Impact Zones for Bat Species:

Wiltshire Planning Explorer also shows the Site falls within buffer zones for Chilmark Quarries bats SAC and Mottisfont bat SAC.¹⁷

Wiltshire Council provides the following descriptions outlining their respective designations:

Chilmark Quarry SAC:

*'Chilmark Quarries SAC is another of Wiltshire's internationally important bat sites, and includes Chilmark Quarries SSSI and Fonthill Grottoes SSSI. The extensive system of abandoned mines at Chilmark Quarries is undisturbed and displays constant temperature and humidity while the subterranean follies at Fonthill Grottoes also offer a wide range of niches. Together these sites provide suitable conditions for large numbers of hibernating bats. However as with the Bath and Bradford-on-Avon SAC the bats also rely on a wider network of roost sites throughout the year. The site is considered to be one of the best in the UK for Bechstein's bat, barbastelle, and greater horseshoe bats, and supports a significant population of lesser horseshoe bats. The surrounding woodland, grassland and open water habitats provide vital roosting, commuting and feeding areas for these significant populations.'*¹⁸

The closest component site relating to the SAC lies 39km south-east of the site. Given the nature and scale of the proposals, it has been considered that despite the site being within a buffer zone for this SAC, likely significant effects to the Favourable Conservation Status of the designated site can be ruled out.

Mottisfont Bats SAC:

'The Mottisfont Bats SAC was designated in 2003 in accordance with the EU Habitats and Species Directive. It was selected as a SAC to ensure the conservation of a population of the rare barbastelle bats. At the time of designation the SAC contained one of only six known breeding sites for these bats in the UK. The

¹⁷https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/88c3030c2e864645aaec7dc3e0ac4cb6/page/Page#data_source=3AdataSource_3-196a4bd989f-layer-31-0-1%3A4&widget_22=search_status:%7B%22text%22%3A%221%2C%20PYE%20CORNER%2C%20BOX%2C%20CORSHAM%2C%20SN13%208ED%22%2C%22status%22%3A%22%7B%5C%22configId%5C%22%3A%5C%22config_0%5C%22%2C%5C%22magicKey%5C%22%3A%5C%22MTAwMTIxMDMzMTMxOjEUEE6OkVO%5C%22%7D%22%7D (Accessed:10/12/2025)

¹⁸ <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/992/Bat-S-A-C-developers-guidance-inc-Bath-Bradford-on-Avon-Chilmark-and-Mottisfont/pdf/Bath-and-bradford-on-avon-september-2015-bat-sac-guidance.pdf?m=1594229486227> (Accessed: 10/12/2025)

	SAC comprises a mix of woodland types extending to an area of almost 200 hectares on the western side of the Test Valley, near Mottisfont. The boundary of the SAC was defined to ensure that the core area of habitat used for roosting, commuting and feeding, would receive strict protection. Although the site itself does not fall within Wiltshire, the highly mobile nature of barbastelle bats means this population is considered likely to forage and commute within eastern parts of Wiltshire.' The closest component site relating to the SAC lies 62km south-east of the site. Given the nature and scale of the proposals, it has been considered that despite the site being within a buffer zone for this SAC, likely significant effects to the Favourable Conservation Status of the designated site can be ruled out.
Habitats	<u>The Law</u> There is a list of habitats and species, noted as such by their principal importance in England. This includes 56 habitats and 943 species. These were originally highlighted as priority habitats and species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP)¹⁹. The publication of this list is a legal duty under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act. A desk study using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) shows that Priority Habitats Deciduous Woodland and Traditional Orchard make up the site boundary. Although some Damsoms fruit trees were noted within the south-west portion of the site, there is a general lack of regularly spaced fruit trees to support this historical land use. The proposals are to be sited within a clearing area of the Deciduous woodland, and no priority habitat is expected to be affected. The clearing can be seen in aerial imagery as far back as 2002. Other priority habitat, Woodpasture and Parkland, lies within 2km of the site. Blanket bog, Lowland fens, Limestone pavements, Coastal sand dunes, Ancient woodland, Ancient trees and veteran trees, Spartina saltmarsh swards and Mediterranean saltmarsh scrub are defined as 'irreplaceable' habitats and receive strong protection through the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF). More recently, their protection is further strengthened by the Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) policy, specifically associated with <u>Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations 2024</u>. Ancient Replanted Woodland and lowland fens lie within 2km of the site. The proposals are located far enough away from the Irreplaceable Habitat to conclude that no impact is foreseen. It

¹⁹ <https://jncc.gov.uk/our-work/uk-bap/>

is considered that the proposal can avoid impacts on the nearby Priority habitat deciduous woodland by employing measures concerning Root Protection Areas in accordance with BS 5837:2012, to reasonably conclude that no impact is foreseen on the woodland fringe which lies adjacent to the Site.

Wiltshire Council has identified several priority ecological habitat networks as part of its wider Draft Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). Whilst it is understood the LNRS is yet to be adopted, it describes a series of habitats that are critical for supporting wildlife and achieving national nature recover targets:

- Chalk Grasslands
- Chalk Rivers
- Lowland Calcareous Grassland
- Lowland Meadow
- Floodplain Grazing Marsh
- Ancient Woodland (expansions on this include wet woodland, lowland mixed deciduous woodland and lowland beech and yew woodland)
- Riparian Habitats (expansions on this include freshwater habitats, rivers and mesotrophic lakes)
- Arable Field Margins

Broad-leaved Woodland (including ancient woodland), Rivers & Streams priority & irreplaceable networks are found within 2km of the Site. Despite MAGICS indicative mapping layers, none sit within the Site; however, Priority Habitat Deciduous woodland does sit directly adjacent to the Site in the blueline boundary within the client's ownership.

Please note: An Arboriocultural Assessment was undertaken by Tyler Grange in 2021 and this report was reviewed to inform the protection and enhancement measures recommended. A summary of their findings can be found below;

The site comprises of a clearing adjacent to a woodland area that is located to the south of the small town of Box. Site access is from a residential road known as Pye Lane. The trees present on this site consist of large mature horse chestnuts and ash along Pye lane to the north and east. Within the site's interior are smaller stature trees comprising predominately of ash overstory with a hazel understory. Around the peripheries are some larger trees that are growing within neighbouring gardens, as indicated on the Tree Constraints Plan.

No TPO trees will be impacted by the development. The proposed and its associated constriction space is located outside the RPA's of retained trees.

	The proposals are considerably smaller than those associated with the previous application pertaining to the erection of a single dwelling, resurfacing of Pye Lane and associated works concerning change of land-use to residential garden. These would have resulted in the loss and change of land-use of 0.08ha of land. However, permanent losses associated with the latest proposals are limited to 71.4sqm pertaining to the polytunnel, 19.8sqm pertaining to a storage shed and 0.0447 ha pertaining to the respective creation of the access track (0.05382ha in total), with no land-use changes beyond the 'built' development proposed. This represents a 67% reduced 'impacted' footprint, and it has been determined that the same impacts delineated above can still be concluded.
Amphibians	<u>The Law</u> Great crested newts, and natterjack toads, are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to: - Deliberately capture, injure or kill a great crested newt or natterjack toad - Intentionally or recklessly disturb a great crested newt or natterjack toad - Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which a great crested newt or natterjack toad uses for shelter or protection - Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place. Species of principle importance in England include great crested newt, pool frog, natterjack toad and common toad. <u>Findings</u> The 2021 PEA by All Ecology delineated records provided by GCER 'for protected and notable species in the last 20 years and within 1km of the site boundary'. No records of amphibians were returned in the search. WSBRC did provide any records of amphibians from the last 20 years, the most recent being of Common Frog in 1999 and the remaining records dating back to 1968 to 1980. A desk study using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website shows that there have been two European Protected Species Class Survey Licence Returns for the species were identified within 2km, both located 1.95km east of the site. The Site in its entirety lies within a Green Risk Zone for great crested newt. Green Zones contain sparsely distributed records and are

	less likely to contain important pathways of connecting habitat for the species. The Site lies within a 'Fringe' Great Crested Newt Strategic Opportunity Area; these are areas where adding new ponds could benefit GCN populations, especially those on the edge of "core" areas. A review of OS maps identified three ponds within 500m of the Site, and one within 250m of the site, approximately 235m northwest. The Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines (2001) states that the species can be capable of commuting up to 500m from their ponds during their terrestrial phase; however, these distances for such migration are energetically expensive, very dangerous and only considered necessary where there is a scarcity of habitats within the locality. English Nature (2004) published that most individuals will only travel within 100m of their pond, and few migrated beyond 200m. In addition, there are several intervening barriers comprising predominantly of footpaths, roads and residential development between the ponds and the Site which will likely deter migration to the Site. There are also other ephemeral or flowing ditches within 500m, however, these are not suited to amphibians.
Badgers	<u>The Law</u> Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Under this legislation it is an offence to; - Take, injure, or kill a badger - Treat a badger cruelly - Interfere with a badger sett - Possess or control a live badger - Mark or ring a badger - Damage or destroy a badger sett - Obstruct access to a badger sett - Disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett The 2021 PEA by All Ecology delineated records provided by GCER 'for protected and notable species in the last 20 years and within 1km of the site boundary'. Records of badger were returned in the search. WSBRC provided five records of Badgers with the last 20 years. None appeared to be associated with the site although precise locations were not given.

Bats

The Law

All bat species are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill bats
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb bats; or under the habitat regulations deliberately disturb in a way that would affect their local distribution or abundance, or affect their ability to survive, breed or rear young
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which bats use for shelter or protection
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place.
- Possess, control, transport, sell, exchange or offer for sale/exchange any live or dead bat or any part of a bat

Bat species of principal importance include:

- Greater horseshoe bat
- Lesser horseshoe bat
- Greater mouse-eared bat
- Bechstein's bat
- Barbastelle
- Common pipistrelle
- Soprano pipistrelle

Findings

The 2021 PEA by All Ecology delineated records provided by GCER 'for protected and notable species in the last 20 years and within 1km of the site boundary'. Records of bats, namely Greater Horseshoe, Lesser Horseshoe, Barbastelle, Serotine, Myotis spp., Whiskered/Brandt's Bat, Alcahoie Bat, Bechstein's Bat, Daubenton's Bat, Whiskered Bat, Natterer's Bat, Lesser Noctule, Noctule, Nathusius's Pipistrelle, Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle and Brown Long-eared Bat were returned in the search. WSBRC provided a large number of bat records. Record of 16 species were provided include roost and field records including hibernation sites. This is not unexpected given the close proximity to Box mines but indicates the site is in an area that is important for these species.

A desk study using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website shows that there has been three European Protected Species licence issued within 2km of the Site, specifically pertaining to bats.

	The licence for the species was issued adjacent to the site, along the eastern boundary, pertaining to Lesser Horseshoes. Please note: Bat Activity Surveys were undertaken by All Ecology in 2021 and were reviewed to inform the use of this site by foraging, commuting and roosting bats with a view to inform the mitigation and enhancement measures recommended. A summary of their findings can be found below: <i>The automated and manual surveys recorded seven confirmed species of bats: Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Noctule, Serotine, Lesser Horseshoe, Barbastelle, Greater Horseshoe. One or more Myotis species was also recorded as well as a long-eared species, almost certainly Brown Long eared.</i> <i>Surveys found high levels of Common Pipistrelle activity on site. A variety of other species were also recorded foraging on site and although there were no unexpected findings, the presence of low levels of Barbastelle, Lesser Horseshoe and Greater Horseshoe foraging was of note and it is clear that the site provides foraging habitats for a range of species. There is no indication of any important commuting activity or autumn spikes in activity.</i> <i>The loss/changes to the habitats on site resulting from the proposed development have been addressed through habitat retention as well the requirement for a suitable lighting strategy to ensure that there is no detrimental effect on the favourable conservation status of the species recorded on site.</i>
Birds	<u>The Law</u> All wild birds are granted legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to: - Kill, injure or take any wild bird - Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built - Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird Schedule 1 listed bird species under this Act are afforded further protections, making it illegal to disturb these species while building a nest, or if a nest contains eggs or young, or disturb dependent young. <u>Findings</u> The 2021 PEA by All Ecology delineated records provided by GCER 'for protected and notable species in the last 20 years and within 1km of the site boundary'. Records of birds, namely Little Egret, Kingfisher, Red Kite Hobby, Yellowhammer, Linnet, Grey

	Wagtail, Pied Flycatcher, House Sparrow, Song Thrush, Mistle Thrush and Barn Owl were returned in the search. WSBRC supplied records of a wide range of bird species in the surrounding area. A desk study using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website shows that the Site does not sit within any Countryside Stewardship targeting areas. The Site does sit within a sighting zone for Lapwing. Lapwing – Lapwings are listed on the UK Red list. They are listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which provides special protection for wild birds, their nests, eggs, and young. It's an offence to disturb them during nesting season. Lapwings require arable land, grazed pasture and wet features such as scrapes and flushes which enhance a 'muddier' environment for invertebrates. No such habitats are present on the Site.
Flora & Invertebrates	<u>The Law – Flora</u> Many species of plant are afforded protection under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to deliberately collect, pick, uproot, cut or destroy these plants. It is also an offence to possess, sell or exchange such a plant. Additionally, many of these species are also listed as species of principal importance. <u>The Law - Invertebrates</u> The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 affords protection to 45 invertebrate species. It is an offence to: - Intentional kill, injure or take such species - Deliberately damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place used by such species - Disturb such species when occupying a structure or place For eight species of invertebrate, the species and associated habitat(s) are afforded further protection under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). An additional 21 species benefit from partial protection. Nearly 400 species of invertebrate are included as species of principal importance.

	<u>Findings</u> The 2021 PEA by All Ecology delineated records provided by GCER '<i>for protected and notable species in the last 20 years and within 1km of the site boundary</i>'. Records of invertebrate, namely White-clawed Crayfish, numerous moth and butterfly species, Scarce chaser, Common Darter, Dotted bee-fly, Blunthorn Nomad Bee were returned in the search. WSBRC provided a <i>small number of records of numerous moth and butterfly species as well as dragonfly and fly species.</i> A desk study using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website shows that there have been no European Protected Species licences issued within 2km of the Site. The Site does not sit within any priority, targeted or conservation areas pertaining to invertebrates.
Hazel Dormice	<u>The Law</u> Hazel Dormice are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to: - Deliberately capture, injure or kill a dormouse - Intentionally or recklessly disturb dormice - Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which a dormouse uses for shelter or protection - Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place - Possess, control, transport (alive or dead) Dormice are also listed as a species of principal importance. <u>Findings</u> The 2021 PEA by All Ecology delineated records provided by GCER '<i>for protected and notable species in the last 20 years and within 1km of the site boundary</i>'. No records of hazel dormice were returned in the search. WSBRC provided <i>no records of Dormice.</i> A desk study using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website shows that there have been no European Protected Species licences issued within 2km of the Site.

Otter	<u>The Law</u> Otters are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to: • Kill, injure, or capture an otter • Harass an otter • Disturb an otter while it is caring for its young or in its resting place • Damage or destroy an otter's resting place or breeding site • Obstruct access to an otter's resting place or breeding site • Possess, control, or transport an otter, alive or dead The 2021 PEA by All Ecology delineated records provided by GCER <i>'for protected and notable species in the last 20 years and within 1km of the site boundary'</i>. Records of otter were returned in the search. WSBRC provided records for otter.
Reptiles	<u>The Law</u> Smooth snakes and sand lizards are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to: - Deliberately capture, injure or kill a smooth snake or sand lizard - Intentionally or recklessly disturb a smooth snake or sand lizard - Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place which a smooth snake or sand lizard uses for shelter or protection - Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place - Advertise sale, barter, exchange, transport for sale and/or advertise to sell or buy a reptile Slow worm, grass snake, adder and common lizard are protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) against killing, injury and sale. <u>Findings</u> The 2021 PEA by All Ecology delineated records provided by GCER <i>'for protected and notable species in the last 20 years and within 1km of the site boundary'</i>. Records of reptiles, namely slow worm, were returned in the search. WSBRC provided records of <i>Slow-worm within 1 km of the site.</i>

	A desk study using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website shows that there have been no European Protected Species licences issued within 2km of the Site. Please note: Reptile Surveys were undertaken by All Ecology in 2021 and were reviewed to inform the use of this site by reptiles during terrestrial phases with a view to inform the mitigation and enhancement measures recommended. A summary of their findings can be found below: Field Survey 4.1 <i>The full survey results and weather conditions can be found in Appendix 1.</i> 4.2 <i>No reptiles were recorded on site during the survey.</i> 4.3 <i>Common invertebrate species were found during the survey but no other species groups were recorded.</i> Evaluation Presence/Absence 5.1 <i>Although suitable habitat exists on site for reptiles, none were recorded during the survey and it is therefore likely that reptiles are absent from the site.</i> Population Size Class Assessment 5.2 <i>As no reptiles were found during the seven days, the survey was not extended to a further eight days of survey.</i> Site Status Assessment 5.3 <i>Reptiles are likely to be absent from the site. The site is therefore currently considered to be of negligible value to these species.</i>
Water Vole	<u>The Law</u> Water voles are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to intentionally: - Kill, injure or take them - Possess or control them (alive or dead) - 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 The 2021 PEA by All Ecology delineated records provided by GCER 'for protected and notable species in the last 20 years and within 1km of the site boundary'. Records of water vole were returned in the search. WSBRC provided records for water vole.

Other Notable Species

The Law

Other species are identified as species of principal importance in England. Many species are required to be considered under National and often Local Planning Policies. Species of principal importance also include hedgehog and brown hare.

Hedgehogs are listed with the following protections and considerations:

- Red (IUCN) List mammal species
- Have partial protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981)
- Listed as priority species under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- Hedgehogs are highlighted as a priority species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan
- The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000 was established in light of dramatic population declines. The legislation afforded to hedgehogs in Act 2016 and National Planning Policy Framework (2024) enforces that public authorities must have due regard when exercising their functions to conserve biodiversity. 'Conserving biodiversity' is defined in relation to a living organism or type of habitat and restoring or enhancing a population or habitat.

Brown hare are listed with the following protections and considerations:

- Protected in the UK under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). Their protection under this act is limited during a closed season from February 1st to September 30th. During this period It is illegal to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure, or take a brown hare without a license
- Brown hare are also a Priority Species under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.

Findings

The 2021 PEA by All Ecology delineated records provided by GCER 'for protected and notable species in the last 20 years and within 1km of the site boundary'. Records of hedgehog, brown hare, polecat and water shrew were returned in the search. WSBRC provided records for hedgehog, brown hare, polecat and water shrew.

	A desk study using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website shows that the Site does not sit within any other related protected species zones such as Countryside Stewardship Targeting Areas.
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5.2 Field Survey	
Statutory Designated Sites	No Statutory Designated Sites of such interest are located within or adjacent to the site boundary.
Site Description	The following habitat descriptions for the site was given by All Ecology in their 2021 PEA: <i>The site is access by a track between adjacent residential properties; trees of Horse-chestnut, Hazel and Leyland Cypress overhang the track. This track leads southwards up to the main part of the site which is an open area of grassland with patches of tall ruderal vegetation, the largest of which is located in the centre of the site over a decomposing pile of old brash. The open area is surrounded by scattered scrub and trees to the north and east, is open to an off site, old area of Hazel coppice to the south, and woodland to the south and west.</i> <i>The grassland on site was dominated by Yorkshire-fog with frequent, Primrose, Butterbur, Common Comfrey, Bristly Ox-tongue, Dandelion, Dog's Mercury, Creeping Thistle, Lords-and Ladies, Lesser Celandine, Common Nettle, Hogweed, Teasel and Ivy-leaved Speedwell. Occasional Dog's Mercury and Bluebell were recorded around the peripheries.</i> <i>The tall ruderal vegetation mainly covered the central pile of brash. There was abundant Common Comfrey and Common Nettle with occasional Field Forget-me-not, Lords-and-ladies and Snowdrop.</i> <i>Along the north boundary of the main part of the site was a fringe of Ash, Hazel and Goat Willow, which extended the east corner and then partially back along the south boundary, leaving the reminder open to the adjacent garden.</i> <i>The remaining boundaries were open to old Hazel coppice, which extends southwards away from the site, and woodland that surrounds the application site to the south and west. This woodland was Ash with an understorey of old Hazel coppice, Hawthorn, Elder, Wild Privet, Field Maple, Dogwood and Blackthorn. The ground flora is locally dominated by Ivy, Dog's Mercury, and Creeping Buttercup in the more open areas. There was frequent Lords-and-Ladies, Primrose, Ramsons and Cleavers,</i>

and occasional Wood Melick, Wood Violet, Snow Drop, Yellow Iris, Perennial Rye-grass, Ivy-leaved Speedwell, Lesser Celandine, Dandelion, Bramble, Wood Avens and Bluebell.

The Site currently comprises of;

- Urban – Artificial Unvegetated; unsealed surface
- Other neutral grassland
- Mixed scrub
- Young scrub and hedgerow whips
- Individual trees
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland

Please note; any habitat differences to the 2021 PEA have been noted and the areas broken into appropriate sections to highlight these changes.

TN1 – Urban – Artificial Unvegetated Unsealed Surface (0.0447 ha)

| An area previously identified within the 2021 PEA as 'short poor semi-improved grassland with low diversity' (in UKHab terms Other Neutral Grassland in 'moderate' condition) has been topsoil stripped and type 1 surfacing deposited to create a formal access track from the western portion of the site to the south-east corner where the area proposed for the new shed has been reprofiled.

TN2 – Other Neutral Grassland (0.0530 ha) | The central portion of the site, identified within the 2021 PEA as 'short poor semi-improved grassland with low diversity' (in UKHab terms Other Neutral Grassland in 'moderate' condition), has been recently topsoil stripped and re-sown with a meadow mixture. At the time of the walkover the grassland was dominated by white clover with approximately 30% grass cover including cock's foot, sheep's fescue, red fescue and perennial rye grass. Other forbs frequently noted included common comfrey, crimson clover, cleavers, yarrow. Occasional species included cow parsley, common sorrel, creeping buttercup.

Please note (TN2)- Recently sown and given the time of year it is not possible to undertake a condition assessment. It is considered most appropriate to consider this habitat as "degraded" relative to the 2021 baseline of ONG - Moderate Condition and therefore is proposed to be enhanced 'good' condition.

TN3 – Mixed Scrub (0.0063 ha) | The mixed scrub identified previously within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal remains but is now under regular sensitive management, which was evident at the time of the survey, with the overall condition unchanged (i.e. 'poor' condition as previously recorded). Areas were prominent along the southern boundary of the remaining grassland and comprised young hawthorn, dogwood,

	blackthorn, hazel, goat willow with scattered holly and bramble. The understorey comprises dominant common ivy with scattered stinking iris, false broom and wood melic. TN4 – Cleared young scrub and newly planted mixed hedgerow whips (0.0219 ha) Along the northern boundary of the grassland the scrub has been partially cleared and, in its place, mixed native hedge whips have been planted. TN5 – Newly planted Individual trees (17 planted) In the north of the site, 17 no. trees have been planted, species comprised a mix of pear, apple and plum cultivars. <u>Blueline Boundary:</u> TN6 – Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland (0.3797 ha) The woodland comprised scattered mature ash trees with an understorey comprising mature hazel coppice stools, with younger hawthorn, Elder, wild privet, field maple, dogwood and blackthorn. The ground flora is locally dominated by ivy, dog's mercury, and hemp agrimony with creeping buttercup and wood melic in the more open areas. Stinking iris, barren brome, ivy-leaved speedwell and wood avens were also observed on occasion. It should be noted that November is a suboptimal time to observe woodland ground flora and the 2021 PEA provides a more extensive list of ground flora species, including more prominent ancient woodland indicators such as bluebell and lords-and-ladies which are not identifiable at this time of year. The woodland is shown on Magic Maps as potential Traditional Orchard. Within the south-west portion of the site damsons fruit trees were noted but there was a general absence of regularly spaced fruit trees which would otherwise support this historic land use. Since taking on the site in 2025, the landowner has undertaken a series of management interventions within the off-site woodland which are fully documented below (see Appendix 2 for locations of the below): ○ A: Installation of wooden bat and bird boxes across the woodland within the site. ○ B: Extensive clearance of understorey woody material to create new open areas with greater light penetration to the ground. ○ C: Creation of deadwood piles.
Amphibians	Amphibians (and notably great crested newts) utilise an array of habitats including open woodland and associated fringes, grassland (varying in sward height, with a preference to rough grassland), hedgerows, scrub, field margins, allotments, gardens (particularly those with ponds), coastal sand dunes, lowland dry

	heath, log and stone piles, and even misplaced stockpiles, especially those that have been subject to vegetative overgrowth. The mosaic of the above, in part or entirely, is important for the yearly lifecycles of amphibians, for foraging, commuting, shelter and hibernation activities. The 2021 PEA by All Ecology noted <i>'There are no ponds on site and the site itself is mostly open short vegetation although denser ground cover was present at the peripheries and the summer growth of the shorter area will provide better cover and foraging habitats. The regrowing tall ruderal vegetation over the old pile of brash provides good cover as well as potential hibernacula.'</i> <i>With regard to Great Crested Newts, the nearest pond indicated on OS maps is located 290 m to the northwest and isolated from the site by housing and the A4. The site is approximately 0.08 ha in size. Using Natural England's Great Crested Newt Rapid Risk Assessment, for any land (not just newt habitat) greater than 250 m of any breeding pond, up to 5 ha can be lost or damaged before the risk of an offence being committed become amber: offence likely. No impacts to Great Crested Newts are predicted.</i> The site provides similar habitats to the 2021 report, and it is not expected that the value has increased for amphibians and no amphibians were noted in the 2021 reptile surveys. As such it is considered reasonably unlikely that amphibians may be present onsite, despite being within close proximity of suitable habitat (three ponds lie within 500m of the Site). In addition, the Site is located a Green Risk Zone and a Fringe Opportunity Zone for the species.
Badgers	Field survey The 2021 PEA by All Ecology noted <i>'The short grassland on site and surrounding woodland is optimal foraging habitat for Badgers and the woodland good habitat for the construction of setts. However, a search did not find any setts or any other evidence of Badger presence. Badgers are expected to be generally absent from the site and immediate vicinity but may pass through on occasion.'</i> The site provides similar habitats to the 2021 report however badger snuffle holes were noted within the adjacent woodland off-site. A disused outlier sett noted in the woodland comprising 3 west facing D shaped burrows measuring 30cm by 30cm. All entrances were filled with leaf litter and lacked mammal trails and as such it is considered that the burrows are disused.

	As such it is considered reasonably likely that badgers may occasionally commute through, and forage within, the Site boundary.
Bats	Field survey The 2021 PEA by All Ecology noted <i>'There are no buildings on site and trees were limited to relatively young trees and shrubs around part of the boundary, with larger trees off site within the woodland. No potential roosting features were noted within any trees within the zone of influence of the proposed development.</i> <i>In terms of foraging and commuting habitats, the site provides an open but sheltered area where it is a given that bats will forage. The site and surrounding woodland is not connected to other woodland but a mature hedge connects the site to the wider network to the west and the boundary of residential gardens connect the site to an extensive area of woodland to the south which extends into the wider area. Bats will be able navigate residential gardens in order to access the site and there is potential for any of the 16 species, for which records were given, to forage and/or commute across the site. The nature of the site, which is a sheltered open area with woodland surrounding much of it, may also be utilised by bats in the autumn mating season.'</i> The site provides similar habitats to the 2021 report and it is not expected that the value to bats has increased. The site has been subject to historic bat activity surveys²⁰ and as the proposals are situated within the same area but will not be subject to the same levels of disruption (with habitat losses reduced by over 67% in comparison to the historic planning application for the site REF: PL/2021/06688) and no additional external lighting being required to facilitate the proposals, as such, updated surveys are not determined to be necessary. The development is considered unlikely to impact upon roosting, foraging and commuting bats directly given the small-scale nature of the development. This is considered despite the loss of historically short sward other neutral grassland and poor condition mixed scrub due to the proposals to incorporate tree and hedgerow planting which will encourage prey to the site and offset the prey losses associated with the grassland and mixed scrub. The additional hedgerow planting will enhance connectivity headed east along existing residential gardens into the off-site woodland. Moreover, it is proposed as part of the Biodiversity Net Gain strategy (outlined in a separate report) to enhance the TN2 to 'good' condition Other Neutral Grassland; where mixed scrub has been has been lost

²⁰ All Ecology, Land at Devizes Road, Box, SN13 8EF, November 2021 Bat Activity Survey, All Ecology, Gloucestershire

totalling 0.0219ha (TN4), 0.01ha will be reinstated to mixed scrub targeting 'good' condition, with the remainder being allocated for other neutral grassland creation targeting 'good' condition. There are no mature trees within the zone of influence of the proposed polytunnel or shed and no trees or hedgerow are expected to be lost as a result of the proposals.

The wider site with the context of the surrounding landscape is considered to provide high foraging and commuting opportunities for bats.

Wider landscape

The Site's immediate network is well connected by mature hedgerows, hedgerows with tree's, hedgerows with associated bank or ditch, mature treelines, woodland pockets and linear water features. This all provides well connected interlinks between natural and plantation woodland, ranging from broadleaved, mixed to dominant conifer woodland, as well as a myriad of traditional orchard networks.

Buff Ermine is a common moth and is found in both rural and urban settings. The larva feeds on a wide variety of trees, shrubs and herbaceous plants, including oak, plantain, dock, sorrel, nettle, bramble and elder. This particular moth species is important for several bat species (but notably for (barbastelles), and these habitats can be found within the Site.

Grazed pasture was noted within 1km of the site; several bat species (particularly horseshoes) have a heavy preference to permanently grazed pastures, which are optimised by interspersed patches of deciduous woodland that are well connected by hedgerows. There are habitats comprising of broad-leaved woodland within 1km of the Site (including woodland adjacent to the Site within the clients ownership). Nearby land-uses may generate higher levels of favourable prey which could disperse across the landscape include the Site's boundary, such as Aphodius beetles, as well as Melontha and Tupilid species which require short grass to oviposit which the land provides.

Many juvenile bats including barbastelles pipistrelle spp. and several Myotis spp. foraging areas small woodland floodplains and ponds or small river systems with dense layers of shrubby growth. Such habitat lies within 200m of the Site.

Mosquitoes and caddies fly larvae are aquatic invertebrates, as well as gnat larvae, and midges use riparian habitats to breed. Three ponds lie within 500m of the site, with other rivers and streams situated within 100m of the Site, meaning bats may occasionally travel across the perimeter of this site to exploit

	these water features. Studies have found that soprano pipistrelles preferred foraging in wetland habitats (Vaughan et al., 1997) and typically favour riparian habitats, as known water features are often found within a 2km radius of its maternity roosts. The roads bordering the Site do not appear to be subject to streetlighting and residential & agricultural landholdings close by compromise of generous land ownership, with the immediate surroundings being described as rural low-density. Therefore, the Site, and wider landscape, which are intrinsically linked by hedgerows (particularly headed west off-site) are likely to be used by a number of bat species, as they appear to not be compromised by excessive artificial light spill. Indeed, historic bat surveys and manual transect surveys have confirmed that across the redline boundary clearing area itself, Common Pipistrelle and Serotine were observed commuting directly over the Site. Surveys also showed the site is mainly used for low-level foraging by several species, including Common Pipistrelle, Serotine, Barbastelle, Lesser Horseshoe and Greater Horseshoe, with only limited commuting activity recorded. The unlit, sheltered woodland off-site provided suitable high value habitat, and the site did not function as an important commuting route or core foraging area for rarer species. Additional autumn surveys showed no increase in activity, indicating bats favour nearby swarming and hibernation sites instead. Overall, the site supported low bat activity, including occasional use by species associated with the Box Mine SSSI and Bath & Bradford on Avon Bats SAC. Whilst the assemblage of Priority, Irreplaceable and other related optimal bat foraging/commuting habitat/resources are well dispersed across the wider landscape, rationale has been applied to the context of the Site's integral relationship with such features. The proposals will not result in any losses to such features beyond low quality habitats within the Site Boundary including other neutral grassland and poor-quality mixed scrub. It is not anticipated any tree or hedgerow will be necessary for the proposals.
Birds	Field survey The 2021 PEA by All Ecology noted <i>'The site itself provides a small area of potential foraging habitat and there is limited nesting habitat in the boundary scrub and trees. The surrounding woodland provides an abundance of nesting and foraging habitats. No nests were noted but they could have been missed in the taller trees, particularly those on the west edge of the woodland where dense ivy was present. Species heard and seen on site or in the immediate surroundings were Blue Tit, Great Tit, Robin and Wren.'</i>

	The site provides similar value habitats to the 2021 report and it is not expected that the value to birds has increased. The area where works are proposed provides limited areas of nesting and foraging birds within the remaining areas of scrub. The shed and polytunnel will not impact upon primary opportunities for either foraging or nesting birds, which is more pertinent (in abundance) within the adjacent deciduous woodland.
Flora & Invertebrate	Field survey The 2021 PEA by All Ecology noted <i>'The site is expected to support good numbers of invertebrates but it is mainly common species that are likely to be present. The surrounding woodland provides more potential for notable species and good numbers of common species are expected to be present here also.'</i> The site provides similar habitats to the 2021 report and it is not expected that the value to invertebrates has changed. Therefore, common invertebrates are likely to be present on-site. No invasive and non-native species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were observed. However, the survey was undertaken at a time when many plants are not present and so absence of such species cannot be definitively confirmed.
Hazel Dormice	Field survey The 2021 PEA by All Ecology noted <i>'Habitats on the application site are limited to boundary sparse scattered scrub and trees next to residential gardens. Dormice are unlikely to be present here and evidence of their presence was noted. The woodland provides more optimal habitat and while it is not directly connected to more extensive areas of woodland, they are in close proximity, and connecting hedges to as areas to the east are also present. Dormice may therefore be present in the surrounding woodland.'</i> <u>Please note</u>, 'was noted' is likely to have been a typo, and should read 'was not noted'. The site provides similar habitats to the 2021 report, and it is not expected that the value to dormice has changed. Hazel dormice are arboreal, spending most of their time within trees and connective hedgerow networks. The adjacent woodland provides more suitable habitat for the species, with understorey species including hazel, hawthorn, blackthorn & bramble which potentially facilitate a yearly seasonal cycle of opportune foraging for the species; however, given the small size of the woodland, it is considered unlikely to provide sufficient resources to support a viable population in isolation. The habitat is,

	however, connected to networks of mature hedgerows and as such the presence of dormice cannot be entirely ruled out. There are no known dormouse records from the immediate site or within close proximity, and the site is not located within a known stronghold or focal area for the species. Nonetheless, the mixed scrub (TN3) which sits adjacent to the off-site woodland may support occasional transient numbers of the species and so their presence onsite cannot be ruled out (though, it is considered highly unlikely given the small area this habitat covers).
Reptiles	Habitat for reptiles (particularly with the United Kingdom's unpredictable weather patterns) require optimal thermal and structural properties (Edgar et al. 2011). The 2021 PEA by All Ecology noted <i>'The site itself is mostly open short vegetation although denser ground cover was present at the peripheries and the summer growth of the shorter area will provide better cover and foraging habitats. The regrowing tall ruderal vegetation over the old pile of brash provides good cover in association with open areas for basking, as well as potential hibernacula. These habitats are optimal and reptile may be present on site..'</i> The site provides similar habitats to the 2021 report, and it is not expected that the value to reptiles has changed. The grassland onsite and surrounding scrub provides some suitable habitat for reptiles, as noted by All Ecology in 2021, however, these habitats are limited in extent. All Ecology undertook reptile surveys in April, May and June 2021, and concluded that reptiles were absent from the site. The site is of the same limited value to reptiles and, given the limited connectivity to favourable habitat within the surrounding landscape, it is expected that they are still absent from the site, particularly as the subject proposals are far less extensive and impactful as those previously outlined concerning REF: PL/2021/06688. As such it is considered reasonably unlikely that reptiles may be present within the site boundary.
Otter	The Site does not present habitats required for this species such as watercourses, vegetated riverbanks, reedbeds and woodland. Otters are likely to be active in the wider landscape, but their presence is considered to be unlikely on site.

Water Vole	The Site does not present habitats required for this species such as slow moving or still watercourses, and soft banks. Therefore, their presence is considered to be unlikely on site.
Other Notable Species	The Site may offer some refuge for small mammals, notably hedgehog. Hedgehogs rely on sheltered habitat assemblages such as woodland edges, rough grassland, log and leaf piles and thick undergrowth including shrubby layers.

6. Recommendations and Enhancement Opportunities

6.1 Assessment of Impacts

Statutory and Non-Statutory Designated Sites	The 2021 PEA noted the following; <i>The Box Mine SSSI and Bath & Bradford on Avon Bats SAC are located 600 m to the east of the site. These designated sites are well separated from the site and there would not be any direct impacts to these sites. However, indirect impacts may occur through impacts to qualifying species, namely bats, using the application site for foraging and commuting.</i> <i>Changes to habitat (or roosting facilities) within the core sustenance zones, could result in a significant adverse effect on the bat populations and would therefore conflict with the protection afforded to bats under the European Habitats Directive, which is implemented in the UK by the Habitats Regulations. As the competent authority responsible for planning permissions, the LPA must carry out an Appropriate Assessment of the proposed development, under the Habitats Regulations to demonstrate that there would be no significant adverse impacts as a result of implementing the proposal, if permitted. This process will be supported by bat activity surveys, which at the time of report writing, are on-going on site.</i> It should be noted however, that the proposals at the time of the aforementioned PEA were for a self-build dwelling & change of land-use to residential garden, which proposed to result in the loss of the entire cleared area and would have significantly increased artificial light spill within the redline boundary, and possibly spreading to the adjacent woodland. Bath and Bradford-on-Avon Bats Special Area of Conservation The Site sits within Bradford-on-Avon Bat SAC Core Buffer Zones for Bechstein's bat, Lesser Horseshoe bat and Greater Horseshoe
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bat in accordance with guidance delineated on 'Bat Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) Planning Guidance for Wiltshire'.²¹

Bat species using these sites include the rare Bechstein's, greater horseshoe and lesser horseshoe bat. The closest Site of Special Scientific Interest is the Box Mine SSSI (590m north-east of the Site), which as an individual component is known to support supports up to 10% of the total British population of greater horseshoes.

Wiltshire Councils SAC guidance provides a thorough breakdown on potential impacts and causations resultant from related proposal activities which can have an impact on one or more of the sensitive features, and thus require further consideration in relation to satisfying further assessments (by way of a Habitat Regulations Assessment) to ascertain 'likely significant' effects on the 'Favourable Conservation Status' of the Designated Site Feature to fulfil requirements outlined under Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017:

- 1) *Physical changes – alteration / demolition / removal of a potential roost feature including environmental conditions (temperature, humidity, internal light levels etc), loss, damage or change of management of potential foraging habitat, removal / fragmentation / modification of habitats in a potential commuting corridor*
- 2) *Lighting – artificial lighting close to potential roosting, foraging and commuting features;*
- 3) *Noise and vibration – construction / demolition activities close to potential roost features;*
- 4) *Recreational disturbance – increasing the risk of recreational visits both organised and informal*
- 5) *Pollution – dust and fumes close to potential roost features; and*
- 6) *Mortality – predation by domestic cats at roost entrances, collision risk from wind turbines.*

The proposals are small scale (the proposed poly tunnel only covers 71.4sqm, the wooden shed only covers 19.8sqm and the retrospective access track only covers 0.0447ha with no further land-use change required) and below delineates how the proposed development is highly unlikely to have an effect on the

²¹ <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/992/Bat-S-A-C-developers-guidance-inc-Bath-Bradford-on-Avon-Chilmark-and-Mottisfont/pdf/Bath-and-bradford-on-avon-september-2015-bat-sac-guidance.pdf?m=1594229486227> (Accessed: 08/12/2025)

designated bat species populations and therefore should not be proposed to be subject to a Habitats Regulations Assessment to accord with Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended):

1. The proposals will not result in the loss of any potential roosting features. In addition

- Habitat losses are not significant, limited to a 0.01ha of 'poor' condition mixed scrub, which is being lost to facilitate the creation of species-rich other neutral grassland targeting 'good' condition which forms part of the Biodiversity Net Gain proposals to satisfy legislative requirements enforced through the Environment Act 2021, which amended the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (adding Schedule 7A) (and delineated in a separate report).
- The remaining 0.0119ha of mixed scrub shall be enhanced to optimise its value to biodiversity, similarly, for purposes to satisfy legislative requirements concerning Biodiversity Net Gain.
- The retained 0.0459 ha of other neutral grassland, which has historically been considered to be in 'moderate' condition and forms the basis of this survey due to associated habitat degradation is proposed to be enhanced, targeting 'good' condition, which again informs part of the on-site Biodiversity Net Gain Strategic approach.
- Permanent losses associated with 'moderate' condition Other Neutral Grassland to facilitate the siting of the storage shed and poly tunnel and retrospective access track will not exceed 0.02878ha of grassland which historically has been described by All Ecology in 2021 as '*short poor semi-improved grassland with low diversity*'. Habitat losses of this value and extent should not be interpreted as 'significant' alone or in combination with other developments.
- Finally, the client has already planted 17 no. individual fruiting tree's; planting fruiting trees and managing the grassland/understorey beneath them for floral richness and low-intensity management, will increase moth, beetle and fly abundance and thereby strengthen foraging resources for barbastelle, Bechstein's and (greater/lesser) horseshoe bats associated with the Bath & Bradford-on-Avon SAC.
- The proposals will not modify or change habitat use within commuting corridor boundaries, as the proposals are limited to horticultural use for the client's family (not commercial use) – all retained habitats are either being enhanced or replaced with higher biodiversity value created habitats bats and other species likely to utilise the site.

- Commuting corridors which primarily concern the off-site fringe woodland, which acts as a sheltered corridor around the site particularly along the eastern and southern boundaries, remain outside the redline boundary and will be retained as existing. Moreover, the client has planted native hedgerow along the northern boundary within TN4, which will enhance the connective features around the outside boundary areas of the Site and thus increase connective opportunities to the neighbouring woodland.

2. No artificial lighting is expected to be required.

3. No demolition works are required, and construction noise will be minimal due to the small scale of the proposals which are unlikely to disturb any roosts as there are no potential roosting features within the redline boundary. Moreover, the construction of a storage shed and a polytunnel will not require heavy duty construction equipment or heavy tracked vehicles, meaning noise and vibrations resultant from the proposals should not occur.

4. There is not expected to be an increase in recreational visits. The primary purpose of the proposals is for horticultural purposes to serve the clients family.

5. The proposals are small scale and are unlikely to cause pollution through dust or fumes due to the type of construction activities required (manual assembling) and intended uses (horticultural), additionally, there are no potential roosting features onsite. The closest component site is 590m north-east of the site, meaning there is sufficient distance between the proposals and component site to conclude no risk of degradation to the component features.

6. No roosting features will be affected by the proposals and the small scale of the works are unlikely to cause mortality due to collision risk as they sit lower than surrounding properties.

Therefore, it has been determined that the proposed development is unlikely to have an effect on bat populations (which are already known to utilise the site occasionally as a commuting and foraging, but more related to the off-site woodland) and therefore it is believed that a Habitats Regulations Assessment for the application is not required.

All other sites as listed within section 5.1 are not foreseen to be subject to any impact in relation to the proposals owing to the small-scale nature as well as the distance from the sites and intervening barriers obstructing the ecological connectivity to

	the site, along with the residential nature of the site sitting on the edge of the village of Box.
Habitats	The desk study revealed that there are habitats listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 are present within the blueline boundary adjacent to the site. The 2021 PEA noted the following; <i>Habitats on site consists of short poor semi-improved grassland with low diversity. This does not qualify as priority habitat and the loss of a small area and the tall ruderal vegetation for the building is not considered to be important. The boundary scrub and surrounding woodland would be retained. It is suggested that selective thinning be used in the areas of woodland to remove weaker trees and allow larger mature trees to develop. Mature trees are more likely to develop cracks and rot holes that can be used by a variety of animals, as well as being home to invertebrate species and fungi. The previous coppicing that has taken place could also be reinstated.</i> The habitats to be lost comprise solely of poorly managed other neutral grassland and a small area of mixed scrub, which is of low biodiversity value and can be readily compensated for, and indeed, the Biodiversity Net Gain proposals to fulfil legislative requirements as defined under the Environment Act 2021, which amended the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (adding Schedule 7A) (outlined in a separate report) demonstrate how this will enhance the site's value for commuting & foraging bats as well as other species likely to utilise the site. The proposed planting will more than increase the value of the site to account for the losses associated with the grassland and mixed scrub. No tree or hedgerow removal is planned as part of the proposals Overall, the Site is considered to be of Site value for habitats. No further surveys are recommended. Please see section 6.2.
Amphibians	The 2021 PEA did not note any potential constraints and gave no recommendations pertaining to amphibians. As the sites value to amphibians remains unchanged, it is not expected that there will be direct impacts on the species as a result of the proposed development. No further surveys are recommended.
Badgers	The 2021 PEA noted the following; <i>The site provides potential foraging habitat for Badgers and passing individuals of various common small mammals as well as</i>

	Hedgehogs. The scale of works is small and the impacts to small areas of habitat are not considered significant. As the sites value to badgers remains unchanged, it is not expected that there will be direct impacts on the species as a result of the proposed development. However, it cannot be ruled out that local populations utilise the site for commuting and foraging purposes. Therefore, there is a risk that badgers may commute through the Site and fall into excavations (if any are created) during the construction phase. Overall, the Site is considered to be of Site value for badgers. No further surveys are recommended. Please see section 6.2.
Bats	The 2021 PEA noted the following; <i>There are no potential roosting features in boundary or nearby trees and any value of the site for bats will be associated with foraging and commuting, particularly due to the site's close proximity to The Box Mine SSSI and Bath & Bradford on Avon Bats SAC.</i> <i>The site provides an open but sheltered area where it is a given that bats will forage. The site and surrounding woodland is not connected to other woodland but a mature hedge connects the site to the a wider network to the west and the boundary of residential gardens connect the site to an extensive area of woodland to the south which extends into the wider area. Bats will be able navigate residential gardens in order to access the site and there is potential for any of the 16 species, for which records were given, to forage and/or commute across the site. The 12 June 2021 Land at Devizes Road, Box, SN13 8EF Preliminary Ecological Appraisal nature of the site, which is a sheltered open area with woodland surrounding much of it, may also be utilised by bats in the autumn mating season.</i> <i>The new dwelling will result in the effective loss of the open area and further surveys to determine the impacts to bats are required. It has been proposed to undertake activity surveys in accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust Good Practice Guidelines methodology for sites of moderate habitat quality but with additional visits to be undertaken in late September and October to assess the site's use during the mating season. Habitats deemed to have moderate suitability for bats should be subject to one survey visit per month (April to October) in appropriate weather conditions for bats. At least one of the surveys should comprise dusk and pre-dawn within one 24-hour period. Two additional visits will be made, one in September and one in October. These surveys began in April 2021 and are ongoing at the time of report writing. To date, levels of activity</i>

	have not warranted an increase in survey visits during the summer months. Whilst the value of the site has not changed pertaining to bats, the impacts of the proposals are greatly reduced. The proposals will result in over 67% reduction to habitats being impacted (pertaining both to direct loss and change of land-use), compared to the entire area of the previous proposal. This is due to no land-use change being considered necessary to facilitate the proposals. The proposals will also not result in any additional lighting. The site has been subject to historic bat activity surveys. The development is considered unlikely to impact upon roosting, foraging and commuting bats directly given the small-scale nature of the development. There are also no mature trees within the zone of influence of the proposed polytunnel or storage shed. Therefore, it is not expected that there will be direct impacts on the species as a result of the proposed development. However, it cannot be ruled out that local populations utilise the site for commuting and foraging purposes. Overall, the Site is considered to be of Site value for bats. No further surveys are recommended. Please see section 6.2.
Birds	The 2021 PEA noted that <i>no significant impacts to birds are predicted.</i> As the sites value to birds remains unchanged, it is not expected that there will be direct impacts on the species as a result of the proposed development. The area where works are proposed provides limited areas of nesting and foraging birds within the remaining areas of scrub. The shed and polytunnel will not impact upon opportunities for either foraging or nesting birds. However, it cannot be ruled out that local populations may occasionally utilise the site for nesting and foraging purposes. Therefore, there is a risk that birds may be harmed during proposed works. All wild birds are granted legal protection under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981. As the proposals are anticipated to require the clearance of scrub, breach of this legislation could occur if left unmitigated. Overall, the site is considered to be of Site value for nesting birds. No further surveys are recommended. Please see section 6.2.
Hazel Dormouse	The 2021 PEA did not note any potential constraints and gave no recommendations pertaining to hazel dormice.

	As the sites value to hazel dormice remains unchanged, it is not expected that there will be direct impacts on the species as a result of the proposed development as the works are only anticipated to directly impact upon the grassland area with the small areas of scrub on the peripheries of the site being retained and enhanced. The historic removal of TN4 is unlikely to have impacted on hazel dormice populations, due to the limited extent and fragmentation from more suitable habitats. However, it cannot be ruled out that local populations may occasionally utilise the site for commuting and foraging purposes, most likely along the scrub networks pertaining to TN3. In addition, the previous refusal pertaining to REFPL/2021/06688, as part of the third reason for refusal specified as part of the reason that <i>'In addition, the submitted surveys indicate the woodland does not support reptiles however the woodland is potentially suitable for use by dormice for which surveys have not been carried out.'</i>²² No changes concerning the woodland are proposed. If present, there is a risk that local populations could be disturbed, displaced, injured, killed or breeding sites destroyed. Risks are limited to disturbance, as no further habitat clearance is required that could impacted this species. Overall, the Site is considered to be of Site value for hazel dormouse. No further surveys are recommended. Please see section 6.2.
Reptiles	The 2021 PEA noted the following; <i>The central open area of grassland and tall ruderal vegetation over brash with surrounding scattered scrub provides optimal habitat for reptiles.</i> <i>Common reptiles receive partial protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and amendments) whereby it is an offence to intentionally kill or injure any of the four common species. It has been recommended that a reptile survey to determine presence/absence of a population is undertaken between April and September to identify whether impacts to these species are likely to arise as a result of the proposed development. This survey was carried out in April, May and June 2021; no reptiles were recorded and it is concluded that they are absent. Full details are provided in a separate report.</i> As the value of the site for reptiles remains unchanged, and considering direct losses are limited to poorly managed, low sward variety grassland which has limited herbaceous coverage,

²² <https://development.wiltshire.gov.uk/pr/s/planning/application/a0i3z000015vLqPAAU/pl202106688?tabset-8903c=2> (Accessed 10/12/2025)

	it is not expected that there will be direct impacts on the species as a result of the proposed development. No further surveys are recommended.
Flora & Invertebrates	The 2021 PEA noted the following; <i>The site as a whole provides a variety of habitats for invertebrate assemblages. Piles of dead wood in particular are likely to support large numbers of these species. Although some areas of habitat would be lost, the surrounding woodland would still provide abundant habitat for invertebrates. It has been recommended that this be managed appropriately, and this should include not being overly tidied up with piles of leaf litter and logs retained/created to provide habitats for invertebrates.</i> The habitats on-site are common place. It can be expected that common invertebrates will utilise the on-site vegetation networks, albeit, on a microhabitat scale. However, these habitats can be readily compensated, and indeed, habitat enhancement and creation proposals pertaining to Biodiversity Net Gain will provide significant enhancement for the diversity and extent of habitats available for invertebrates. Overall, the Site is considered to be of Site value for invertebrates. No further surveys are recommended.
Other Notable Species	The 2021 PEA noted the following; <i>The site provides potential foraging habitat for Badgers and passing individuals of various common small mammals as well as Hedgehogs. The scale of works is small and the impacts to small areas of habitat are not considered significant.</i> As the value of the site to hedgehogs remains unchanged, it is not expected that there will be direct impacts on the species as a result of the proposed development. However, it cannot be ruled out that local populations may occasionally utilise the site for nesting and foraging purposes. Therefore, there is a risk that hedgehogs may be harmed during proposed works. No further surveys are recommended. Please see section 6.2.

6.2 Further Surveys (if required) and Recommendations

Methodology to Identifying Ecological Constraints

All potential ecological constraints in relation to the developments proposals have been thoroughly considered in Section 5. Opportunities to deliver ecological enhancement in accordance with local and national planning policy have also been considered and are outlined below.

Planning policy makes it clear that any proposed development duly considers and applies the below mitigation hierarchy when considering impacts to ecological species and habitats:

1. **Avoidance:** every attempt should be made to avoid creating impacts on features from the outset;
2. **Minimisation:** where avoidance cannot be wholly achieved, measures by design, suitably designed methods of working or other actions to minimise impacts (otherwise known as mitigation) should be employed;
3. **Compensation/restoration:** if avoidance and minimisation cannot be wholly achieved, significant impacts on features should be compensated in such a way to restore an area to its original ecosystem or any other ecological functions/services that existed prior to impacts relating to the development.

The hierarchy requires that avoidance is applied where possible. When it is not feasible to avoid such impacts, rationale for minimisation/compensation/restoration should be sufficiently detailed, showing the measures are feasible to implement.

The ecological constraints associated with the development have been assessed in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy, with due consideration to apply, as much as possible, actions to avoid impacts on ecological features.

In addition to the above, Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 states that *'Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity'* as well as *'Conserving biodiversity includes, in relation to a living organism or type of habitat, restoring or enhancing a population or habitat'*.

Protection of Habitats

Retained hedgerows, trees and adjacent woodland should be protected during the works, including any groundworks, by the establishment of Root Protection Areas in accordance with BS 5837:2012. All on-site and off-site boundary features should be marked by Heras fencing, if appropriate, erected prior to works commencing. No materials should be allowed within the allocated buffer zone.

The adjacent Priority Habitat, Deciduous Woodland, should be protected during the works as noted above through allocating a buffer zone around any areas of woodland which may be impacted through the works and ensuring no materials enter the woodland.

General

Prior to the commencement of any works, construction operatives should be inducted by a suitably qualified ecologist to make them aware of the possible presence of protected species, briefed on their legal protection, how to identify them, the habitats they are most likely to be found in and the working practices to avoid harming them.

Species

Bats

The 2021 PEA noted constraints regarding the loss of the entire open area and an increase in light. It recommended the following;

For external lighting, measures should include the use of lighting only where absolutely necessary utilising highly directional warm white LED lighting, an example being down spots at 2.5 m high using warm white (2700 K) 8W LED lamps, 550 lumens, 35 degree beam angle. These could be individually activated by PIR sensors on a 5 minute cut off to further reduce their impacts. These will assist in lighting only the areas where lighting is required and minimising light spill either directly or through reflected light.

Consideration should be given to the installation of a bat roosting features at eaves level and /or the apices of gable ends to enhance the building. There is also an abundance of opportunities for providing bat boxes in the surrounding woodland which is in the ownership of the applicant.

The 2021 Bat Activity Survey report recommended to protect the woodland edges throughout the works, to design a lighting plan to prevent excess light spill and to create further roosting opportunities to enhance the site for bats.

Although the proposals, a poly tunnel and a storage shed, are far less intrusive than the previous proposal of a dwelling, this report recommends the same level of mitigation.

It is proposed to protect the woodland through an allocated buffer zone during all works and ensure that no materials are stored within this area.

If any external lighting is required (the proposals do not suggest it will be), it is recommended that a sensitive lighting design for bats which follows Guidance Note 08/23 Bats and artificial lighting in the UK (ILP and BCT 2023), should be prepared by a suitably qualified consultant. The design should show how and where external lighting will be installed and supported, where appropriate, with technical specifications. The sensitive lighting design for bats should also ensure that areas to be lit will not disturb or prevent bats using their territory. The design should accord with Step 5 of Guidance Note 08/23. The Local Planning Authority will likely require that all external lighting needs to be installed in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the agreed design and thereafter maintained in accordance with the design.

Any future woodland management should be sensitively managed for bats, specifically aiming to retain standing deadwood. As part of the long-term woodland management, future works to mature trees should be informed by a Ground Level Tree Roost Assessment to ensure features presenting bat roosting potential are retained and protected wherever feasible. Management should aim to provide between 20 and 40% of open space within the woodland, with remaining areas maintained as a denser understorey. This management will provide opportunities for both edge-space foragers and dense-space woodland foragers.

Badger

No setts or evidence of commuting or foraging badgers were identified within the Site or within 30m of the site, however, snuffle holes were noted within the adjacent woodland. Therefore, the Site is likely to be used occasionally by commuting and foraging badgers.

It is recommended that, during construction, if excavations or large pipes are created (>200mm diameter) these must be covered at night. If excavations are left open, then it is essential that a means of escape is created. As an example, this may include a plank to allow badgers and other small mammals to escape if they fall in. If further signs of badgers are encountered during the works, then works should stop until advice is sought from a suitably qualified ecologist at the earliest possible opportunity.

Please note: this is the same recommendation as given in the 2021 PEA.

Nesting Birds

If the proposed development requires the removal of vegetation which may support nesting birds, it is recommended that no removal of vegetation should take place between 1st March and 30th of September inclusive, unless a competent ecologist has undertaken a careful, detailed check for active birds' nests immediately before the vegetation is cleared or works to or demolition of the building commences. In no circumstances should netting be used to exclude nesting birds. If nesting birds are recorded during this inspection(s), then the vegetation must remain with a sufficient sectioned exclusion zone marked around the nest site until any dependent young have fledged.

Please note: the 2021 PEA recommended installing bird boxes – this has already been completed by the current landowner.

Hazel Dormice

To avoid harming hazel dormice it is recommended that the any woodland management should be undertaken sensitively and no vegetative clearance should be undertaken between June and September when females have dependent young.

Whilst not expected, if proposals change and further scrub (notably TN3) removal is required, the following is recommended:

Prior to any works, including groundworks, commencing on site vegetative clearance will be carried out in strict accordance with the following procedure, either:

- a) In October when dormice are still active but avoiding the breeding and hibernation seasons. A licensed dormouse ecologist shall supervise the work checking the site for nests immediately before clearance and, if needed, during clearance. All work shall be carried out using handheld tools only. If an above-ground nest is found it shall be left in situ and no vegetation between it and the adjacent undisturbed habitat shall be removed until dormice have gone into hibernation (December) as per method b). The results will be communicated to the Local Planning Authority by the licensed dormouse ecologist within 1 week; or

- b) Between December and March only, when dormice are hibernating at ground level, under the supervision of a licensed dormouse ecologist. The hedgerow, scrub and/or trees will be cut down to a height of 30cm above ground level using hand tools. The remaining stumps and roots will be left until the following mid-April / May before final clearance to allow any dormouse coming out of hibernation to disperse to suitable adjacent habitat.

No vegetative clearance will be permitted between June and September inclusive when females have dependent young. Written confirmation of the operations will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority by a licensed dormouse ecologist within one week of the work

Please note: the 2021 PEA recommended lighting restrictions, similar to the mitigation for bats.

Other Notable Species

The site offers limited refuge for hedgehog. Therefore, it is recommended that prior to required vegetative clearance to facilitate the siting of the poly tunnel and storage shed, any features potentially used by hedgehogs, such as the grassland, shall be checked by a competent ecologist via a fingertip search. Any individuals found will be translocated to an appropriate location outside of the construction site and away from roads prior to works commencing.

Enhancement Opportunities

The National Planning Policy Framework (193d) requires biodiversity enhancement to be provided within the development boundary.

- It is recommended that consideration is given to the proposed on-site hedgerow creation. Species composition of new hedgerow(s) should be planted with native species comprised of the following: hazel, blackthorn, hawthorn, field maple, and elder.
- It is recommended that any new shrubs incorporated within the Site boundary should be high nectar producing to encourage invertebrates to the Site, as well as provide continued foraging for bats. The Royal Horticultural Society guide, "RHS Perfect for Pollinators, www.rhs.org.uk/perfectforpollinators" provides a well-suited plants list of both native and non-native species. In addition, all new trees planted on site should ideally be from local native stock, such as field maple, ash, hornbeam, beech and spindle.

Whilst not essential, as a complimentary measure, the client may wish to consider (and duly informed by a suitably qualified person) a Landscape Ecological Management Plan for the off-site adjacent deciduous woodland within their blue line boundary. Considerations within the plan should deduce the following:

- a) Description and evaluation of features to be managed.
- b) Ecological trends and constraints on site that might influence management.
- c) Aims and objectives of management.
- d) Appropriate management options for achieving aims and objectives.

- e) Prescriptions for management actions.
- f) Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period).
- g) Details of the body or organization responsible for implementation of the plan.
- h) On-going monitoring and remedial measures.

7. Conclusion

It is considered that the proposals will not breach wildlife legislation, national or local planning policies subject to the recommendations as outlined in section 6.2 being followed.

Appendix 1: Figures

section of the report

Alt



Site Photos

Figure A: Photo showing TN1



Figure B: Photo showing TN2 and newly planted trees



Figure C: Photo showing TN3



Figure D: Photo showing TN4 and newly planted hedgerow whips



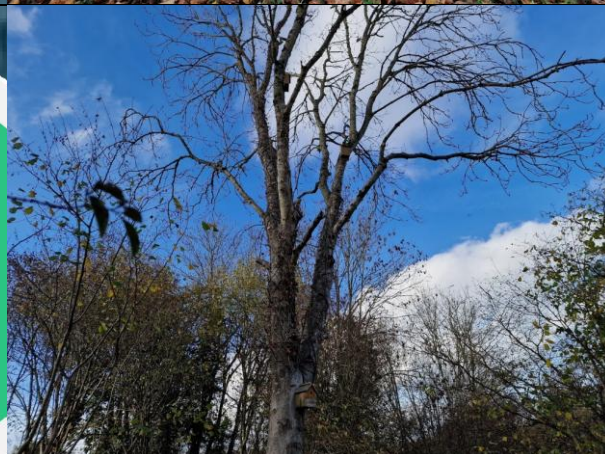
Figure E: Photo showing TN5 newly planted fruit trees



Figure F (Blueline boundary): Photo showing TN6



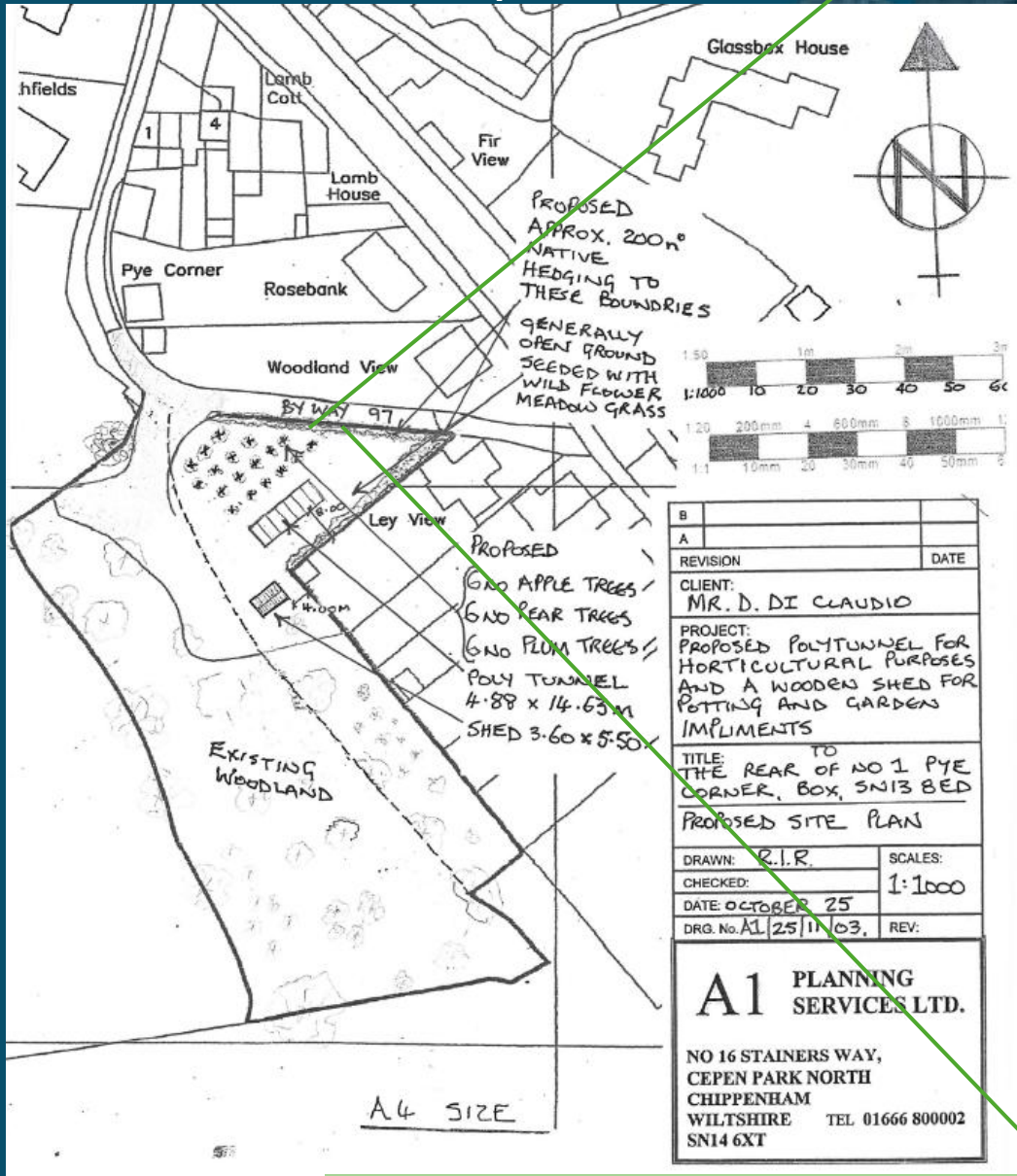
Figure G (Blueline boundary): Photo showing TN6A newly installed bat and bird boxes in adjacent woodland



Any new shrubs should be high nectar producing. The Royal Horticultural Society guide, "RHS Perfect for Pollinators, www.rhs.org.uk/perfectforpollinators" provides a well suited plants list of both native and non-native species.

All new trees on site should ideally be from local native stock, such as field maple, ash, hornbeam, beech and spindle.

Site Plan and Enhancement Proposals



New hedgerow (if landscaping allows) to be planted should be done so with native species comprised of the following: hazel, blackthorn, hawthorn, field maple and elder.

Appendix 2: Habitat Map



Appendix 3: Latin names

	<i>bulatus</i>
	<i>ulcararia</i>
	<i>ides non-scripta</i>
	<i>rusifolius</i>
	<i>bulbosus</i>
	<i>lex parvica</i>
	<i>aria media</i>
	<i>ilium apone</i>
	<i>nphyllum ofinale</i>
	<i>restis capilaris</i>
	<i>Calystegia sepium</i>
	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>
	<i>Pulicaria dysenterica</i>
	<i>Urtica dioica</i>
	<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>
	<i>Phragmites australis</i>
	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>
	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>
	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>
	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>
	<i>Geranium dissectum</i>
	<i>Agrastis stolonifera</i>
	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>
	<i>Potentilla reptans</i>
	<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>
	<i>Geranium dissectum</i>
	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>
	<i>Succisa pratensis</i>
	<i>Mercurialis perennis</i>
	<i>Genista tinctoria</i>
	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>
	<i>Convolvulus arvensis</i>
	<i>Glyceria fluitans</i>
	<i>Alliaria petiolata</i>
	<i>Verbascum thapsus</i>
	<i>Glechoma hederacea</i>
	<i>Carex hirta</i>
	<i>Crepis</i>
	<i>Dactylorhiza maculata</i>
	<i>Galium mollugo</i>
	<i>Galium odoratum</i>
	<i>Stachys sylvatica</i>
	<i>Conium maculatum</i>



[illegible]

[illegible]

	Yes
	status

	idae
	idae Semele
	nebris lucina
	ius malvae
	odryas eunidia
	niola jurina
	nessa atalanta
	phantopus hyperantus
	Argynnis paphia
	Lycaena phedra
	Pararge aegeria
	Lasiommata megera

	Latin name
	Calopteryx virgo
	Carabus intricatus
	Epiblema Uddmanniaria
	Spilarctia luteum
	Enicocla pusilla
	Tyria jacobaeae
	Aeshna juncea
	Trichoceridje larvae
	Apis mellifera
	Coccinellidae
	Meloe mediterraneus
	Culicoides impunctatus
	Cucullia verbasca
	Myopa pallidula
	Meloe rugosus
	Callimorpha dominula

Reptile and amphibian species	
Species	Latin name
Adder	Vipera berus
Common lizard	Zootoca vivipara
Common toad	Bufo bufo
Common snake	Lx helvetica





Appendix 4: Relevant Wildlife Legislation & Relevant National and Local Policies

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (SI No. 2017/1012) are the principal means by which the European Habitats Directive is transposed in England and Wales.

The Regulations provide for the designation and protection of a network of 'European Sites' termed Natura 2000, the protection of 'European protected species', and the adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of European Sites.

These Regulations transpose Council Directive 92/43/EEC²³ on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ No. L 206, 22.7.1992, p.7) ("the Habitats Directive"). This establishes protected wildlife sites across the European Union, known as 'Natura 2000'. This network consists of designated sites, including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) designated under the Habitats Directive and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) designated under the Birds Directive (Council Directive 79/409/EEC)²⁴. These sites form part of a series of measures aimed at conserving important and threatened habitats and species.

These Regulations consolidate the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007 (S.I. 2007/1842) with subsequent amending instruments, and make minor modifications reflecting changes to related legislation. The instruments being consolidated by these Regulations made, amongst things, provision for implementing Council Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds (OJ No. L20, 26.01.2010, p.7.) and Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (OJ No. L206, 22.7.92, p.7) in relation to marine areas where the United Kingdom has jurisdiction beyond its territorial sea. The Regulations make provision in relation to the offshore marine area, offshore marine installations and certain ships and aircraft. The "offshore marine area" is defined in regulation 2(1).

Regulation 43 relates to the protection of European protected species listed under Schedule 2 of the Regulations. Taken together it is an offence to undertake the following acts with regard to European Protected Species:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European Protected Species;



²³ European Commission (1992). Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora. European Commission, Brussels.

²⁴ European Commission (1979). Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the conservation of wild birds. European Commission, Brussels.

- deliberately disturb animals of any such species in such a way as to be likely to: impair their ability to survive, breed, rear or nurture their young, hibernate or migrate, or
- affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong;
- deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal; or
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

The disturbance offence is generally taken to refer to a discernable effect at population level and biogeographic level, rather than simply to an individual animal. However, in certain circumstances the disturbance of one individual animal may have population level effects.

The Regulations also make it an offence (subject to exceptions) to deliberately pick, collect, cut, uproot, destroy, or trade in the plants listed in Schedule 5.

However, the actions listed above can be made lawful through the granting of licences (European Protected Species Licence) by the appropriate authorities (Natural England in England). Licences may be granted for a number of purposes (such as science and education, conservation, preserving public health and safety), but only after the appropriate authority has determined that the following regulations are satisfied:

- the works under the licence are being carried out for the purposes of 'preserving public health and public safety, or for other imperative reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment';
- there is 'no satisfactory alternative'; and
- the action 'will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at favourable conservation status in their natural range'.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981²⁵

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is the principal piece of UK legislation relating to the protection of wildlife. It consolidates and amends existing national legislation to implement the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive) in Great Britain.



The Act makes it an offence (with exception to species listed in Schedule 2) to intentionally kill, injure, or take any wild bird or their eggs or nests. Special penalties are available for offences related to birds listed on Schedule 1, for which there are additional offences of disturbing these birds at their nests, or their dependent young. The Secretary of State may also designate Special Protection Areas

²⁵ Secretary of State, 1981. Wildlife and Countryside Act. Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

(subject to exceptions) to provide further protection to birds. The Act also prohibits certain methods of killing, injuring, or taking birds, restricts the sale and possession of captive bred birds, and sets standards for keeping birds in captivity.

The Act makes it an offence (subject to exceptions) to intentionally kill, injure, or take, possess, or trade in any wild animal listed in Schedule 5, and prohibits interference with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturbing animals occupying such places. The Act also prohibits certain methods of killing, injuring, or taking wild animals listed in Schedule 6.

The Act makes it an offence (subject to exceptions) to pick, uproot, trade in, or possess (for the purposes of trade) any wild plant listed in Schedule 8, and prohibits the unauthorised intentional uprooting of such plants.

The Act contains measures for preventing the establishment of non-native species which may be detrimental to native wildlife, prohibiting the release of animals and planting of plants listed in Schedule 9. It also provides a mechanism making any of the above offences legal through the granting of licences by the appropriate authorities.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000²⁶

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW) was passed to provide additional levels of protection for wildlife whilst also strengthening the protection afforded to Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Schedule 12 of the Act amends the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, strengthening the legal protection for threatened species. The provisions make certain offences 'arrestable', create a new offence of 'reckless' disturbance, confer greater powers to police and wildlife inspectors for entering premises and obtaining wildlife tissue samples for DNA analysis, and enable heavier penalties on conviction of wildlife

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006



The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC) is designed to help achieve a rich and diverse natural environment and thriving rural communities through modernised and simplified arrangements for delivering Government policy.

It was created to make provision in connection with wildlife, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Parks and the Broads; to amend the law relating to rights of way; to make provision as to the Inland

²⁶ Secretary of State, 2000. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act. Her Majesty's Stationery Office.

Waterways Amenity Advisory Council; to provide for flexible administrative arrangements in connection with functions relating to the environment and rural affairs and certain other functions; and for connected purposes.

Section 40 of NERC carries an extension of the earlier CRow Act biodiversity duty to public bodies and statutory undertakers to ensure due regard to the conservation of biodiversity. Section 41 requires the Secretary of State, as respects England, to publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitat which in the Secretary of State's opinion are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. The updated S41 list, published in August 2010, identified 56 habitats and 943 species of principal importance.

The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996

The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 makes it an offence for any person to mutilate, kick, beat, nail or otherwise impale, stab, burn, stone, crush, drown, drag or asphyxiate any wild mammal with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering.

The Animal Welfare Act 2006

Prior to the Animal Welfare Act 2006, people only had a duty to ensure that an animal didn't suffer unnecessarily. The new Act keeps this duty but also imposes a broader duty of care on anyone responsible for an animal to take reasonable steps to ensure that the animal's needs are met. This means that a person has to look after the animal's welfare as well as ensure that it does not suffer. The Act says that an animal's welfare needs include:

- a suitable environment (how it is housed);
- a suitable diet (what it eats and drinks);
- the ability to exhibit normal behaviour patterns;
- any need it has to be housed with, or apart from, other animals; and
- protection from pain, suffering, injury and disease.



With regards to development, this may have implications when translocations of animals are proposed. As such, care must be taken to ensure that any receptor sites are suitable for the species in terms of habitat and carrying capacity.

National and Local Planning Policy in Relation to Biodiversity

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework has recently been revised in response to the Proposed reforms to the National Planning Policy Framework and other changes to the Planning system consultation on 12 December 2024 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied.

This revised framework replaces the previous National Planning Policy Framework published in March 2012, revised in July 2018, updated in February 2019, revised in July 2021, updated in September 2023 and revised in December 2023.

The NPPF places a presumption in favour of sustainable development.

'Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;

e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.'

If a protected species is present it becomes a material consideration for a local planning



authority dealing with planning application for any development that would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat. Circular 06/2005²⁷: Biodiversity and geological conservation, prepared in support of the former PPS9, is provides substantiated guidance on how the law is applied in relation to planning and nature conservation.

Biodiversity Action Plans

The UK BAP lists are delineated as statutory lists of priorities in England, Scotland, Wales and Northern Ireland. In England, there are 56 habitats of principal importance and 943 species of principal importance.

Local Planning Policy

Core Policy 50 – Biodiversity and Geodiversity

‘Protection:

Development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale. There is an expectation that such features shall be retained, buffered, and managed favourably in order to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term. Where it has been demonstrated that such features cannot be retained, removal or damage shall only be acceptable in circumstances where the anticipated ecological impacts have been mitigated as far as possible and appropriate compensatory measures can be secured to ensure no net loss of the local biodiversity resource, and secure the integrity of local ecological networks and provision of ecosystem services.

All development proposals shall incorporate appropriate measures to avoid and reduce disturbance of sensitive wildlife species and habitats throughout the lifetime of the development.



Any development potentially affecting a Natura 2000 site must provide avoidance measures in accordance with the strategic plans or guidance set out in paragraphs 6.75-6.77 above where possible, otherwise bespoke measures must be provided to demonstrate that the proposals would have no adverse effect upon the Natura 2000

²⁷ ODPM Circular 06/2005 Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Importance within the Planning System.

network. Any development that would have an adverse effect on the integrity of a European nature conservation site will not be in accordance with the Core Strategy.

Biodiversity enhancement:

All development should seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity. Major development in particular must include measures to deliver biodiversity gains through opportunities to restore, enhance and create valuable habitats, ecological networks and ecosystem services. Such enhancement measures will contribute to the objectives and targets of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) or River Basin/ Catchment Management Plan, particularly through landscape scale projects, and be relevant to the local landscape character.

Local sites:

Sustainable development will avoid direct and indirect impacts upon local sites through sensitive site location and layout, and by maintaining sufficient buffers and ecological connectivity with the wider environment. Damage or disturbance to local sites will generally be unacceptable, other than in exceptional circumstances where it has been demonstrated that such impacts:

- i. *cannot reasonably be avoided*
- ii. *are reduced as far as possible*
- iii. *are outweighed by other planning considerations in the public interest*
- iv. *where appropriate compensation measures can be secured through planning obligations or agreements. Development proposals affecting local sites must make a reasonable contribution to their favourable management in the long-term.'*

Core Policy 69 Protection of the River Avon SAC



'In order to avoid and reduce potential environmental effects on the River Avon SAC, development will need to incorporate measures during construction and operation to avoid and prevent pollution and mitigate potential disturbance effects; appropriate measures may include consideration of suitable buffer zones along watercourses, habitat enhancements and river access management measures. All development within 20m of the river banks should submit a construction management plan to the

local planning authority to ensure measures proposed during construction are satisfactory.

Where additional sewage discharges to a STW cannot be accommodated without measures to offset phosphate loading, development will be required to undertake proportionate measures (which may include contributions towards those measures identified in the Nutrient Management Plan) to demonstrate that the proposals would have no adverse effects upon the SAC.'

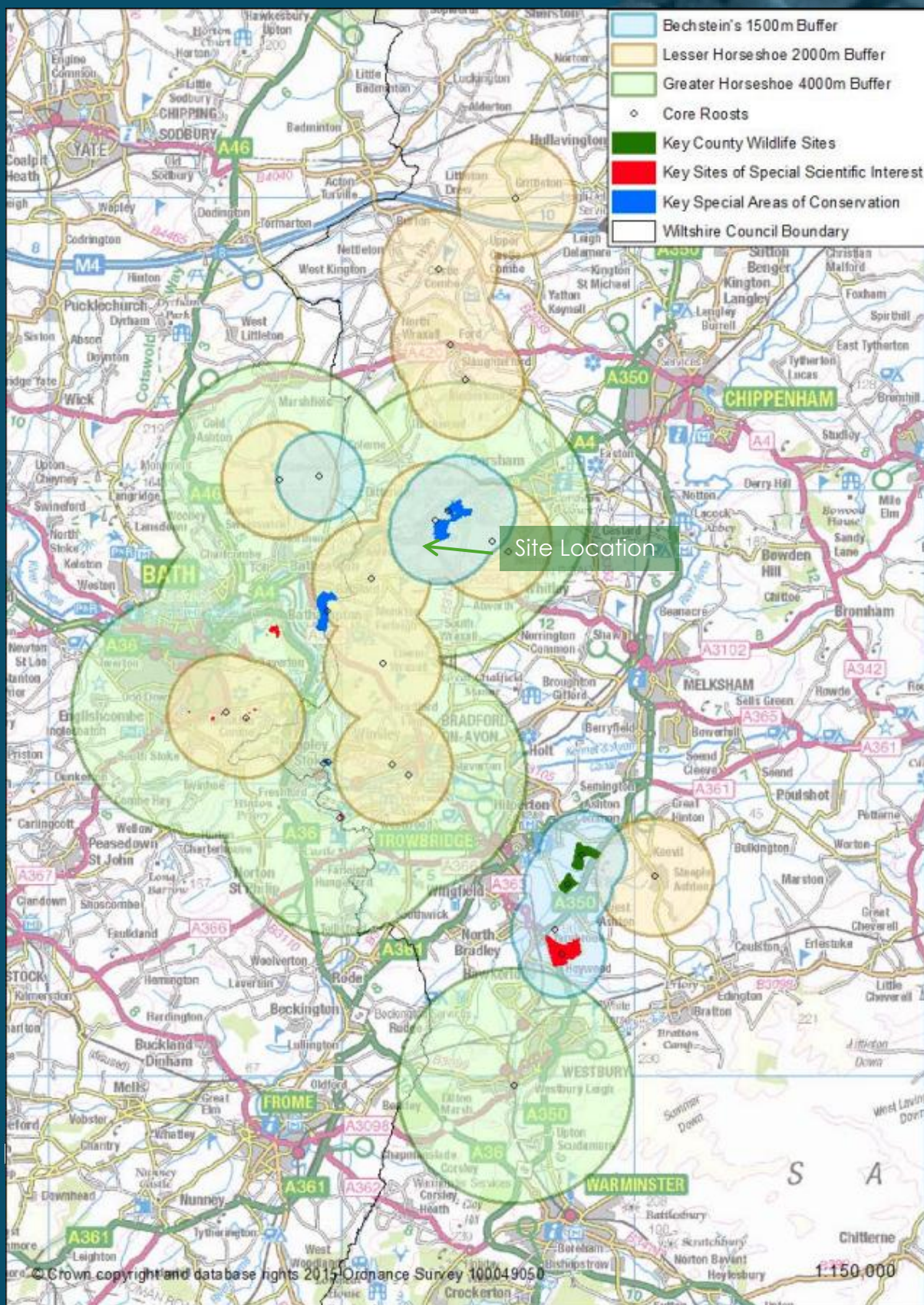
Wiltshire's Local Biodiversity Action Plan Prioritises the following listed habitat types and networks:

- Woodland: This includes ancient woodland and wood-pasture/parkland
- Arable Farmland: This focuses on specific needs of arable fields for biodiversity
- Wet Habitats: Broadly, this comprises of reedbeds, fen and marsh, and wet grassland
- Hedgerows: Hedgerows of varying types are included, with action plans specifically addressing the conservation and management of these
- Scrub: Action plans to protect and manage scrub habitats
- Acid and Calcareous Grassland: This addresses these particular grassland types
- Open Water: Broadly, includes lakes, reservoirs, and other water bodies
- Field Margins, Churchyards, Gardens: Often overlooked, the plan focuses on these
- Lowland Heathland: Action plans are delineated for this specific type of habitat
- Other Semi-Natural Habitats: The Plan Recognises the importance of various semi-natural habitats for biodiversity

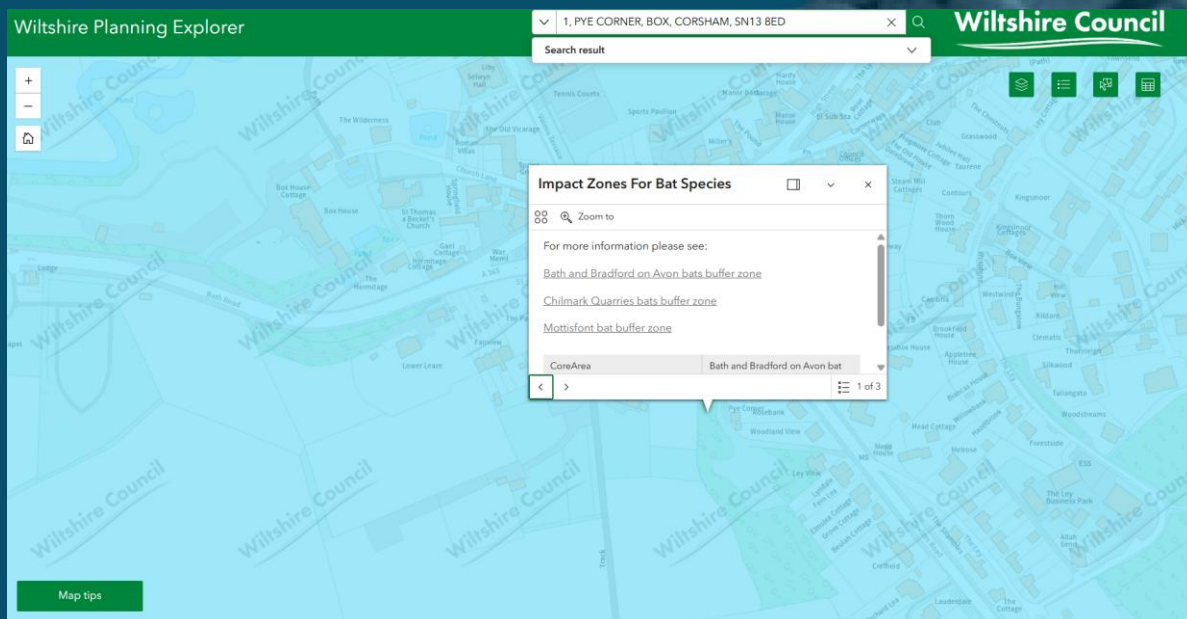
In Wiltshire, Local Priority species are those that have been determined as vulnerable or declining and therefore in need of focused conservation interventions. These include the water vole *Arvicola amphibius*, hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*, common toad *Bufo bufo*, curlew *Numenius Arquata*, Duke of Burgundy butterfly *Hamearis lucina*, and reintroduced Great Bustard *Otis tarda*. The Wiltshire Wildlife Trust has identified these species as critically important and has developed resources to support their conservation.



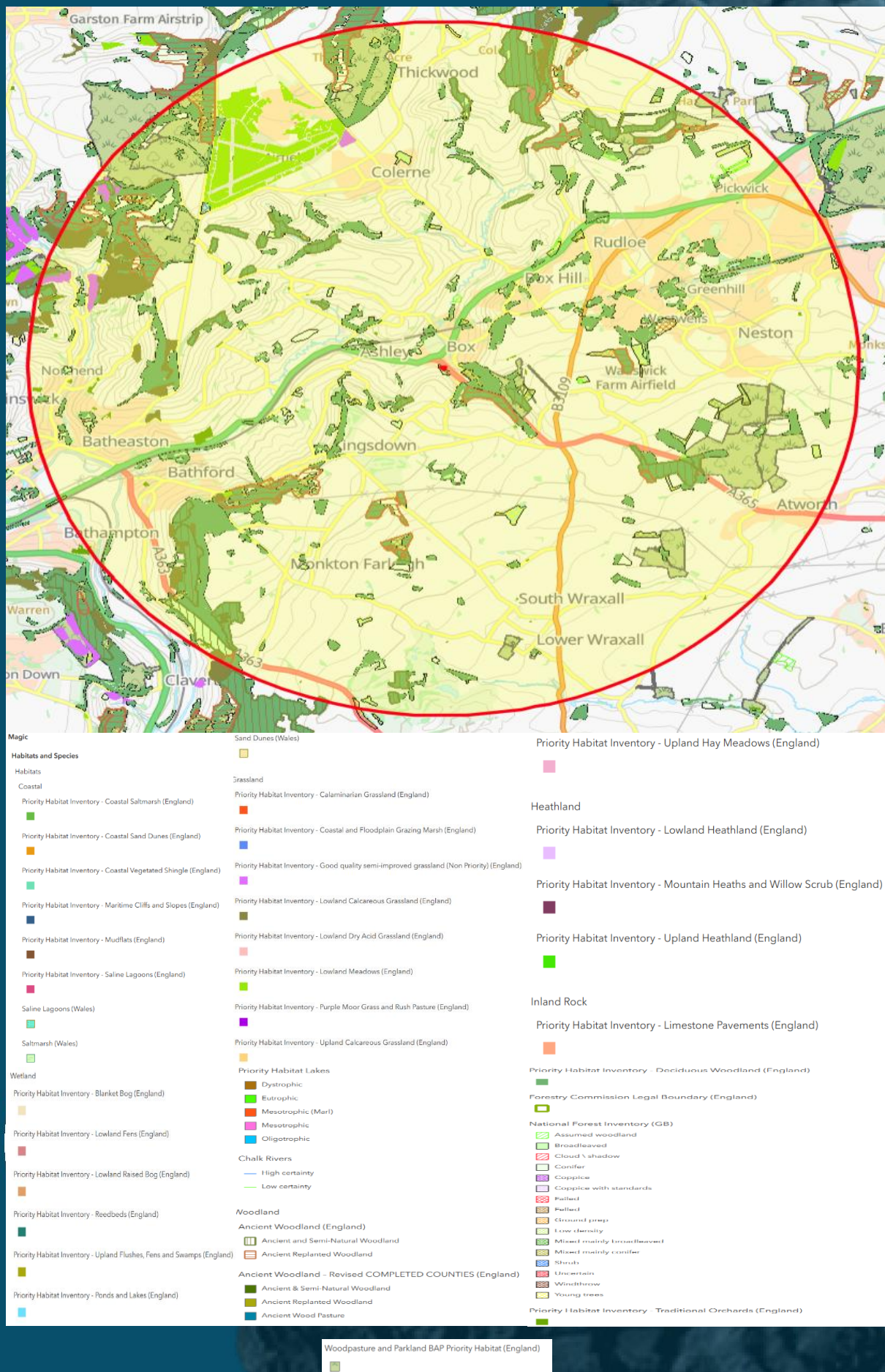
Appendix 5: Site Location in Relation to SAC Buffer Zones



Appendix 6: Site Location in Relation to SAC Buffer Zones



Appendix 6: Site Location in Relation to SAC Buffer Zones



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