

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Survey site:

Revised Milou Grid Connection Part 2, Land off the B4040, Minety, SN16 9DX

Client:

Axis

Survey date:

27th November 2025

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application made to Wiltshire Council. The proposal is described as:

The Proposed Development comprises the laying of underground electrical cables between the consented 'Milou BESS' site and the National Grid Substation to the north (appeal ref. APP/Y3940/W/23/3319392, planning ref. PL/2022/00664). The cable would be installed within mechanically dug trenches through the existing agricultural field, and sections of hedgerow would be removed. These trenches would be backfilled and the surface treatment reinstated. The cable would be directionally drilled beneath the B4040 and the linear woodland area to the north of the B4040, avoiding removal or damage.

The survey results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion. Survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2024](#).

The site survey was undertaken by Jade Lemm BSc (Hons) DipHE MRSB (Natural England Protected Species Licence Numbers: Great Crested Newt (2025-82550-SCI-CL08) and Bat Class 1 (2025-84745-CL17-BAT)).					
Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rain
27/11/2025	11	63	100	1	None
Executive Summary					
Biodiversity net gain A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment will likely be required for the proposed development. Badgers, hedgehogs, birds, amphibians, reptiles, dormice and other small mammals Precautionary working methods. Please see the relevant sections for details. Biodiversity enhancements Please see the relevant sections for details.					
Survey limitations					
It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to describe the baseline conditions within the survey area, and evaluate these features, this report does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. This assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species being present. This is based on the suitability of the habitats on the site and in the wider landscape, the ecology and biology of species as currently understood, and the known distribution of species as recovered during the searches of historical biological records. A biological records data search has not been undertaken. However, given the location of the site, the nature of the habitats present and the assessed suitability of the site for protected or notable species, it is not anticipated that the purchase of biological records will add any significant weight or alter conclusions or recommendations outlined in this report.					

No site-specific limitations were identified during the survey.

Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations	Detailed using desk study and site survey (carried out under good weather conditions). This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consents. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.
Habitats and plants (see habitat map in Appendix 1, ponds within 500m in Appendix 2, location plan in Appendix 3, proposal plan in Appendix 4 and habitat condition assessment in Appendix 5). Botanical species are described with reference to the DAFOR scale (D = Dominant; A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional, R = Rare).	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i> <u>UKHab codes:</u> - <i>Temporary grass and clover leys with tall forbs c1b 16</i> - <i>Cereal crops c1c</i> - <i>Modified grassland g4</i> - <i>Native hedgerow h2a</i> - <i>Native hedgerow with trees h2a 11</i> - <i>Native hedgerow with associated ditch h2a 50</i> - <i>Developed land sealed surface u1b</i>	<u>Site context and background</u> The site is located at National Grid Reference ST 99963 89015 and has an area of approximately 1.12ha comprising clover leys, cereal crops, hedgerows, modified grassland, tall forbs, woodland, trees and developed land. The site is located in Minety and farmland. It is immediately surrounded by the B4040 to the north and agricultural fields in all other directions. The wider landscape comprises Stonehill Wood ~110m north, Cocked Hat Wood ~170m south, Long Wood ~350m south, Park Copse ~650m north, Nineteen Acre Wood ~750m east, Great Withy Wood ~800m south-east, Swantage Wood ~1.1km south-west, and Ravensroost Wood ~1.65km east. To the author's knowledge, no previous ecology reports have been produced for this site. <u>Desk study</u> A range of notable local habitats is located within 2km of the site. These include: - Deciduous woodland – within the site - Ancient Replanted Woodland - ~95m north - Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland - ~120m north - Lowland meadows ~950m north

- Artificial unvegetated unsealed surface u1c - Lowland mixed deciduous woodland w1f	Habitats <u>Temporary grass and clover leys with tall forbs c1b 16</u> A large portion of the site consists of temporary grass and clover leys (~0.7ha). Species composition includes perennial ryegrass <i>Lolium perenne</i> (A), white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> (A), broadleaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i> (O) and tufts of cock's foot <i>Dactylis glomerata</i> (O).   Areas (~550m²) of tall forbs were present throughout the site. Species composition included common mugwort <i>Artemisia vulgaris</i> (D), broadleaved dock (O) and common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i> (R).
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Cereal crops c1c

Areas (~0.22ha) of Barley cereal crops were present on the south-east boundary of the site.



	<u>Modified grassland g4</u> Three sections of modified grassland are present within the site (~0.1ha). The first section (G1) is adjacent to the roadside on the north-western boundary. The grassland had more than 10% bare ground (~15%) and a sward height of 2 - 8 cm. The sward height was over 20% less than 7cm, and less than 20% was over 7cm. The species composition included perennial ryegrass (A), creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i> (A), Yorkshire fog <i>Holcus lanatus</i> (F), broadleaved dock (F) and cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> (O). No scrub or bracken was identified within the grassland. The survey noted high levels of management. The second section (G2) is in a field adjacent to the south-eastern boundary. The grassland had more than 10% bare ground (~15%) and a sward height of 1- 5 cm. The species composition included perennial ryegrass (A), creeping buttercup (F), broadleaved dock (O) and common daisy <i>Bellis perennis</i> (O). No scrub or bracken was identified within the grassland. The survey noted low levels of management. The third section (G3) is in a tussocky grazed field adjacent to the northern boundary. The grassland had more than 10% bare ground (~30%) and a sward height of 2 - 5 cm. The species composition included perennial ryegrass (A), creeping buttercup (A), creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i> (A), white clover (F), and broadleaved dock (O). No scrub or bracken was identified within the grassland. The survey noted moderate levels of management (grazing).
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Roadside modified grassland (G1)*Field modified grassland (G2)**Field modified grassland (G3)*

Native hedgerow h2a

Hedgerow H2 was located in the centre of the site (approximately 4m length x 2.5m height x 1.5m wide). The hedgerow had no canopy gaps (<0.5m canopy to base gap), and no invasive species. Species composition included hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* (D). The understorey species included common ivy *Hedera helix* (A) and bramble *Rubus fruticosus* (O). The hedgerow had been historically flailed.

Native hedgerow with trees h2a 11

Hedgerow with trees H3 was located alongside the south-eastern boundary (approximately 14m length x 2-4m height x 1.5m wide). The hedgerow had no canopy gaps (<0.5m canopy to base gap), and no invasive species. Species composition included blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* (D). The understorey species included common ivy (A) and bramble (O). The hedgerow had one semi-mature ash tree *Fraxinus excelsior*. No evidence of human disturbance or ecological niches were present.



Native hedgerow with associated ditch h2a 50

Hedgerow with associated ditch H1 was located on the north-western boundary (approximately 16m length x 2.5m height x 1m wide). The hedgerow had no canopy gaps (<0.5m canopy to base gap), and no invasive species. Species composition included hazel *Corylus avellana* (A), ash (R) and field maple *Acer campestre* (R). The understorey species included common ivy (A) and bramble (O). The hedgerow had been historically flailed. A dry ditch with no aquatic vegetation was associated with the hedgerow.



Developed land sealed surface u1b

An area (110m²) of concrete road was present on the north-western boundary.



Artificial unvegetated unsealed surface u1c

Areas (~160m²) of hardcore were used throughout the site for paths and roads.

Lowland mixed deciduous woodland w1f

There is an area (~200m²) of unmanaged woodland within the site (immature and semi-mature trees). Species composition included English oak *Quercus robur* (A) and Ash (A). The understorey consisted of common ivy *Hedera helix* (D), bramble (A), and lords & ladies *Arum maculatum* (O). There was no evidence of browsing, no invasive species, some open spaces, a low tree mortality rate (some ash die-back), and some deadwood.

	
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	All modified grassland and woodland will be retained. The proposed development will include installing the cable in mechanically dug trenches through the existing agricultural field, resulting in the temporary loss of grassland and clover leys (~0.7ha), cereal crops (~0.22ha), and tall forbs (~550m²). Additionally, 14m of hedgerow would be removed and replanted. Where the cable crosses existing woodland or road, it would be directionally drilled beneath them to avoid removal or damage. The site contains hedgerows and lowland mixed deciduous woodland, which are listed as a habitat of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006). Further notable habitats are present within 2km. The majority of the habitats onsite are considered to have low ecological value. A large amount of the impacts on the habitats will be temporary, and the habitats will be restored to their original states within 2 years of the initial impact. However, 14m of hedgerow would be removed and replanted. This could result in a net loss in biodiversity at the site. Additionally, indirect effects such as pollution could occur during construction.
<i>Recommendations</i>	A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment will likely be required for the proposed development.

	Best practice pollution prevention measures, in accordance with the guidance detailed in the Environmental Agency Pollution Prevention Guidance Note 6: Working on Construction and Demolition Sites, must be adhered to prevent indirect impacts on adjacent priority habitats and other connecting habitats. Definitive detail should be included within a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) prior to development works.		
Locality and Designated Sites			
Summary of Survey Findings	On-site designations		
	The site is not subject to any designation.		
	Statutory designated sites (within 2km)		
	There are three known statutory designated sites within 2km of the site. Details are summarised below.		
	Designated site name	Distance from the site	Reasons for notification from Natural England
Cloatley Farm Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)	~930m north	Cloatley Farm SSSI is a nationally important site for breeding populations of the nationally scarce marsh fritillary <i>Euphydryas aurinia</i> and brown hairstreak <i>Thecla betulae</i> butterflies, and for species-rich neutral grassland. The relevant National Vegetation Classification (NVC) type is MG5 crested dog’s-tail <i>Cynosurus cristatus</i> – common knapweed <i>Centaurea nigra</i> grassland of the heath-grass <i>Danthonia decumbens</i> sub-community (NVC MG5c).	

	Emmett Hill Meadows SSSI	~1km north	This is a botanically diverse area of gently sloping neutral to acidic grassland in the Oxford Clay Vale of North Wiltshire. The site, which comprises two floristically rich meadows cut for hay in late summer, provides an excellent example of a habitat which has been greatly reduced by intensive farming methods.
	Ravensroost SSSI	~1.45km east	Ravensroost Wood is a structurally varied and botanically rich wet ash-wych elm and wet ash-maple woodland, with a complex system of rides, ditches and small ponds. This combination supports a diverse flora, including uncommon and locally rare species.
The site lies within the impact risk zone for SSSIs (Cloatley Wood SSSI, Emmett Hill Meadows SSSI, and Ravensroost Wood SSSI). However, the proposed development type is not listed as a possible high risk for these designations. <u>Non-statutory designated sites</u> The presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site cannot be established without data from the Wiltshire & Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC).			
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	All modified grassland and woodland will be retained. The proposed development will include installing the cable in mechanically dug trenches through the existing agricultural field, resulting in the temporary loss of grassland and clover leys (~0.7ha), cereal crops (~0.22ha), and tall forbs (~550m²). Additionally, 14m of hedgerow would be removed and replanted. Where the cable crosses existing woodland or road, it would be directionally drilled beneath them to avoid removal or		

	damage. No direct impacts to designated sites are anticipated due to the small scale and distance of the proposed development from such sites. However, indirect effects, such as pollution (e.g., airborne particulates and water runoff), could occur during construction.
<i>Recommendations</i>	Best practice pollution prevention measures, in accordance with the guidance detailed in the Environmental Agency Pollution Prevention Guidance Note 6: Working on Construction and Demolition Sites, must be adhered to prevent indirect impacts on adjacent priority habitats and other connecting habitats. Definitive detail should be included within a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) before development works.
Invasive / Non-native species	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	No problematic invasive and non-native species recorded on site.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	N/A
<i>Recommendations</i>	No further surveys but remain vigilant.
Invertebrates	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	The grassland, tall forbs, woodland and hedgerows recorded on site are suitable for supporting and providing refuge, foraging, and commuting value for common invertebrates. Given the type and extent of habitats present on site, the site is not assessed to provide a habitat mosaic suitable to support a protected and/ or notable assemblage of invertebrate species.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	All modified grassland and woodland will be retained. The proposed development will include installing the cable in mechanically dug trenches through the existing agricultural field, resulting in the temporary loss of grassland and clover leys (~0.7ha), cereal crops (~0.22ha), and tall forbs (~550m ²). Additionally, 14m of hedgerow would be removed and replanted. Where the cable crosses existing woodland or road, it would be directionally drilled beneath them to avoid removal or damage. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential for local invertebrate populations, given the presence of more extensive habitats nearby.

<i>Recommendations</i>	No further surveys.
Bats	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	<u>Desk study</u> A search of the magic.gov.uk database for granted EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site has been completed. Displaced bats from licensed sites less than 2km away from the survey site will find alternative habitats either within the mitigation measures implemented as part of the licence or will relocate to other known roost sites in close proximity to the licensed site. No EPSLs are present within a 2km radius of the site. <u>Foraging and commuting habitats</u> Habitats recorded on site are assessed to provide limited foraging and commuting opportunities for bats in the form of grassland, woodland, hedgerows and tall forbs. Whilst these habitats will attract invertebrate prey species to the site and contribute to the continuity of vegetated habitats within the immediate landscape, the habitats are limited in species diversity. The site overall is not assessed to represent a significant resource for foraging and commuting bats in the context of the wider landscape. However, the local landscape surrounding the site provides highly favourable habitats for commuting and foraging bats, including agricultural fields, grasslands, lines of trees, hedgerows and parcels of woodland. <u>Roosting habitats</u> As the hedgerow with trees is due to be removed for the proposed development, it underwent a Ground-Level Tree Assessment (GLTA). The hedgerow with trees was considered negligible as it lacked suitable roosting features (PRF=None). All potential tree features could be observed with a torch from ground level.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	All modified grassland and woodland will be retained. The proposed development will include installing the cable in mechanically dug trenches through the existing agricultural field, resulting in the temporary loss of grassland and clover leys

	(~0.7ha), cereal crops (~0.22ha), and tall forbs (~550m ²). Additionally, 14m of hedgerow would be removed and replanted. Where the cable crosses existing woodland or road, it would be directionally drilled beneath them to avoid removal or damage. As such, it is not considered that any suitable bat roosting habitats would be destroyed as a result of the development proposals.
<i>Recommendations</i>	None.
Birds	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	No evidence of historic or active nesting birds was found on the site during the survey. However, birds could use the hedgerows, woodland and scattered trees in the redline boundary for nesting and nesting materials. The grassland and temporary clover leys provide suitable habitat for ground-nesting birds, albeit in limited numbers due to regular disturbance.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	All modified grassland and woodland will be retained. The proposed development will include installing the cable in mechanically dug trenches through the existing agricultural field, resulting in the temporary loss of grassland and clover leys (~0.7ha), cereal crops (~0.22ha), and tall forbs (~550m ²). Additionally, 14m of hedgerow would be removed and replanted. Where the cable crosses existing woodland or road, it would be directionally drilled beneath them to avoid removal or damage. There is a low risk that ground-nesting birds and hedgerow-nesting birds could be in the vicinity of the works. Therefore, the proposed development could result in the destruction or disturbance of active bird nests, leading to their subsequent abandonment.
<i>Recommendations</i>	Due to the small scale and temporary disturbance, a full scope of breeding bird surveys is considered disproportionate, as there will be minimal net loss of breeding bird habitat. However, construction works may still disturb any active nesting. Any vegetation removal should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the vegetation should be undertaken immediately by a qualified ecologist, before the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged.

	Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works. At least a 3-5m buffer should be created between any machinery and active nests until the young have fledged.
Reptiles	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	The hedgerows and woodland provide suitable refuge opportunities for reptiles. Whilst the modified grassland and tall forbs provide some limited foraging and commuting value, these opportunities are suboptimal due to an absence of refuge value. Due to the small size of the suitable habitats recorded, the site is not considered suitable to support any notable reptile populations, such as a population that would qualify the site as a key reptile site. However, the presence of low numbers of common reptiles cannot be discounted.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	All modified grassland and woodland will be retained. The proposed development will include installing the cable in mechanically dug trenches through the existing agricultural field, resulting in the temporary loss of grassland and clover leys (~0.7ha), cereal crops (~0.22ha), and tall forbs (~550m ²). Additionally, 14m of hedgerow would be removed and replanted. Where the cable crosses existing woodland or road, it would be directionally drilled beneath them to avoid removal or damage. The temporary removal of the habitats will not fragment landscape connectivity for any existing reptile populations and will not reduce habitat availability in a significant way, as to potentially render any existing populations unviable. Although a small area of suitable habitat is being removed as part of the development, the loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential for local reptile populations, given their low value and the presence of more extensive habitats in the local landscape. However, there is a low risk that individual reptiles could be injured or killed during the construction phase without mitigation.
<i>Recommendations</i>	A precautionary working method will be implemented for widespread reptiles during construction, including the following measures: Vegetation will be maintained at a short sward (5cm) to discourage reptiles.

	- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. - Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby habitats. - Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. - If any reptiles are found in the working area, these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.																	
Amphibians																		
Summary of Survey Findings	<u>Desk study</u> Using Natural England’s GCN Risk Zone (Swindon and Wiltshire) Map, the site falls within both the ‘green’ and ‘amber’ areas for great crested newts (Natural England, 2023)¹. Five class survey licence returns were identified within 2km of the site on Magic Maps. Details are shown below. <table><tr><th colspan="2">Distance and direction from the site</th></tr><tr><td>~850m north</td><td>~875m north</td></tr><tr><td>~1.85km east</td><td>~1.9km east</td></tr><tr><td>~1.9km north-east</td><td></td></tr></table> Two pond records were identified on Magic Maps within 2km of the site. Details are shown below. <table><tr><th>Distance and direction from the site</th><th>HSI score</th><th>GCN present/absent</th></tr><tr><td>~700m north</td><td>0.81 (Excellent)</td><td>Present</td></tr><tr><td>~1.7km south-west</td><td>0.80 (Excellent)</td><td>Present</td></tr></table>	Distance and direction from the site		~850m north	~875m north	~1.85km east	~1.9km east	~1.9km north-east		Distance and direction from the site	HSI score	GCN present/absent	~700m north	0.81 (Excellent)	Present	~1.7km south-west	0.80 (Excellent)	Present
Distance and direction from the site																		
~850m north	~875m north																	
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¹ Natural England (2023). GCN Risk Zones (Swindon and Wiltshire). <https://naturalengland-defra.opendata.arcgis.com/datasets/Defra::gcn-risk-zones-swindon-and-wiltshire/explore?location=51.612889%2C-2.315849%2C10.67>

Field results**Terrestrial habitat suitability**

The hedgerows and woodland provide suitable foraging and refuge opportunities for amphibians, albeit limited. Whilst the modified grassland, tall forbs and clover leys provide some limited foraging and commuting value, opportunities are suboptimal due to an absence of refuge value. Due to the small number of suitable habitats recorded, the site is not considered suitable for supporting any notable amphibian populations. However, the presence of low numbers of common amphibians cannot be discounted.

Aquatic habitat suitability

Amphibians require a suitable aquatic habitat in which to breed and fulfil their lifecycle. There are sixteen known ponds within 500m of the site boundary when consulting OS maps, including ~160m north (P1), ~210m south (P2), ~230m north (P3), ~280m north, (P4), ~310m south (P5), ~350m north (P6), ~390m south (P7), ~390m east (P8), ~430m north (P9), ~430m north-east (P10), ~450m south-east (P11), ~450m south (P12), ~460m south-east (P13), ~460m south (P14), ~470m south-east (P15), and ~480m south (P16). Ponds P3, P4 and P6 – P16 were located on private land and could not be accessed for an HSI assessment. Ponds P1, P2 and P5 were accessible for an HSI assessment. Details of the assessment are shown below.

Pond P1

SI Description	SI Value P1	Picture P1
Geographic location	1	
Pond Area	0.05	
Pond Permanence	0.1	
Water Quality	0.01	

	Shade	0.2																												
	Waterfowl Effect	1																												
	Fish Presence	1																												
	Pond Density	1																												
	Terrestrial Habitat	1																												
	Macrophyte Cover	0.3																												
	HSI Score	0.28																												
	HSI Category	Poor																												
Pond P2																														
<table><tr><th>SI Description</th><th>SI Value P2</th><th>Picture P2</th></tr><tr><td>Geographic location</td><td>1</td><td rowspan="12"></td></tr><tr><td>Pond Area</td><td>0.4</td></tr><tr><td>Pond Permanence</td><td>0.5</td></tr><tr><td>Water Quality</td><td>0.67</td></tr><tr><td>Shade</td><td>0.7</td></tr><tr><td>Waterfowl Effect</td><td>0.01</td></tr><tr><td>Fish Presence</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Pond Density</td><td>1</td></tr><tr><td>Terrestrial Habitat</td><td>0.33</td></tr><tr><td>Macrophyte Cover</td><td>0.3</td></tr><tr><td>HSI Score</td><td>0.40</td></tr><tr><td>HSI Category</td><td>Poor</td></tr></table>			SI Description	SI Value P2	Picture P2	Geographic location	1		Pond Area	0.4	Pond Permanence	0.5	Water Quality	0.67	Shade	0.7	Waterfowl Effect	0.01	Fish Presence	1	Pond Density	1	Terrestrial Habitat	0.33	Macrophyte Cover	0.3	HSI Score	0.40	HSI Category	Poor
SI Description	SI Value P2	Picture P2																												
Geographic location	1																													
Pond Area	0.4																													
Pond Permanence	0.5																													
Water Quality	0.67																													
Shade	0.7																													
Waterfowl Effect	0.01																													
Fish Presence	1																													
Pond Density	1																													
Terrestrial Habitat	0.33																													
Macrophyte Cover	0.3																													
HSI Score	0.40																													
HSI Category	Poor																													

Pond P5

SI Description	SI Value P5	Picture P5
Geographic location	1	
Pond Area	0.2	
Pond Permanence	0.5	
Water Quality	0.67	
Shade	0.5	
Waterfowl Effect	0.67	
Fish Presence	1	
Pond Density	1	
Terrestrial Habitat	0.33	
Macrophyte Cover	0.3	
HSI Score	0.54	
HSI Category	Below average	

The onsite ditch located adjacent to the roadside was dry at the time of the survey. Further along the road, some stagnant water is present, albeit limited. However, there was limited aquatic vegetation.

	<i>Onsite ditch</i> 	<i>Offsite ditch</i> 
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	All modified grassland and woodland will be retained. The proposed development will include installing the cable in mechanically dug trenches through the existing agricultural field, resulting in the temporary loss of grassland and clover leys (~0.7ha), cereal crops (~0.22ha), and tall forbs (~550m²). Additionally, 14m of hedgerow would be removed and replanted. Where the cable crosses existing woodland or road, it would be directionally drilled beneath them to avoid removal or damage. The temporary removal of the habitats will not fragment landscape connectivity for any existing amphibian populations and will not reduce habitat availability in a significant way, as to potentially render any existing populations unviable. So, although a small area of suitable habitat is being temporarily removed as part of the development, the loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local amphibian populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitats to the west of the site. However, there is a low risk that individual common amphibians could be injured or killed during the construction phase without mitigation.	

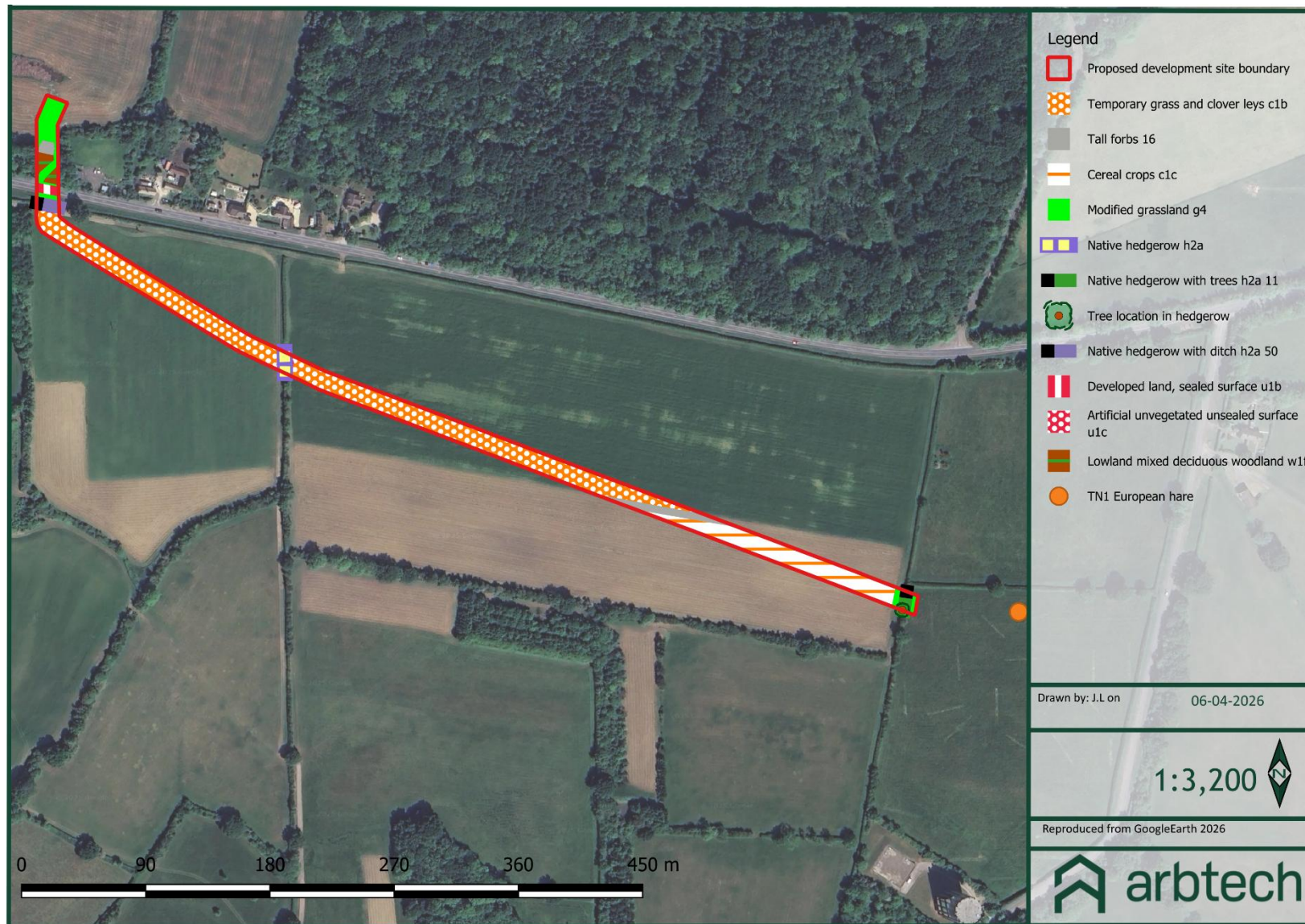
<i>Recommendations</i>	Owing to the size of the suitable habitat and the low potential for impacts to great crested newts, further surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented for common amphibians during construction, including the following measures: • Site clearance will be undertaken outside of the amphibian hibernation season (November to February), insofar as is possible. • A toolbox talk will be given to contractors regarding the possible presence of amphibians, including great crested newt, at the site. • A pre-commencement inspection of the site will be undertaken by an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) for amphibians. • Any debris and brash will be stored on pallets or removed from the site to prevent amphibians from utilising these areas. • Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. • Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby aquatic habitats that amphibians could use. • Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. • If any common amphibians are found in the working area, these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance, with due consideration to best practice biosecurity protocol. • In the unlikely event that a great crested newt is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.
Badger	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	From the survey and aerial imagery, no sett-making activity was observed within the site boundary or within 30m of the development boundary. The tall forbs, hedgerows, woodland and modified grassland will provide foraging opportunities for

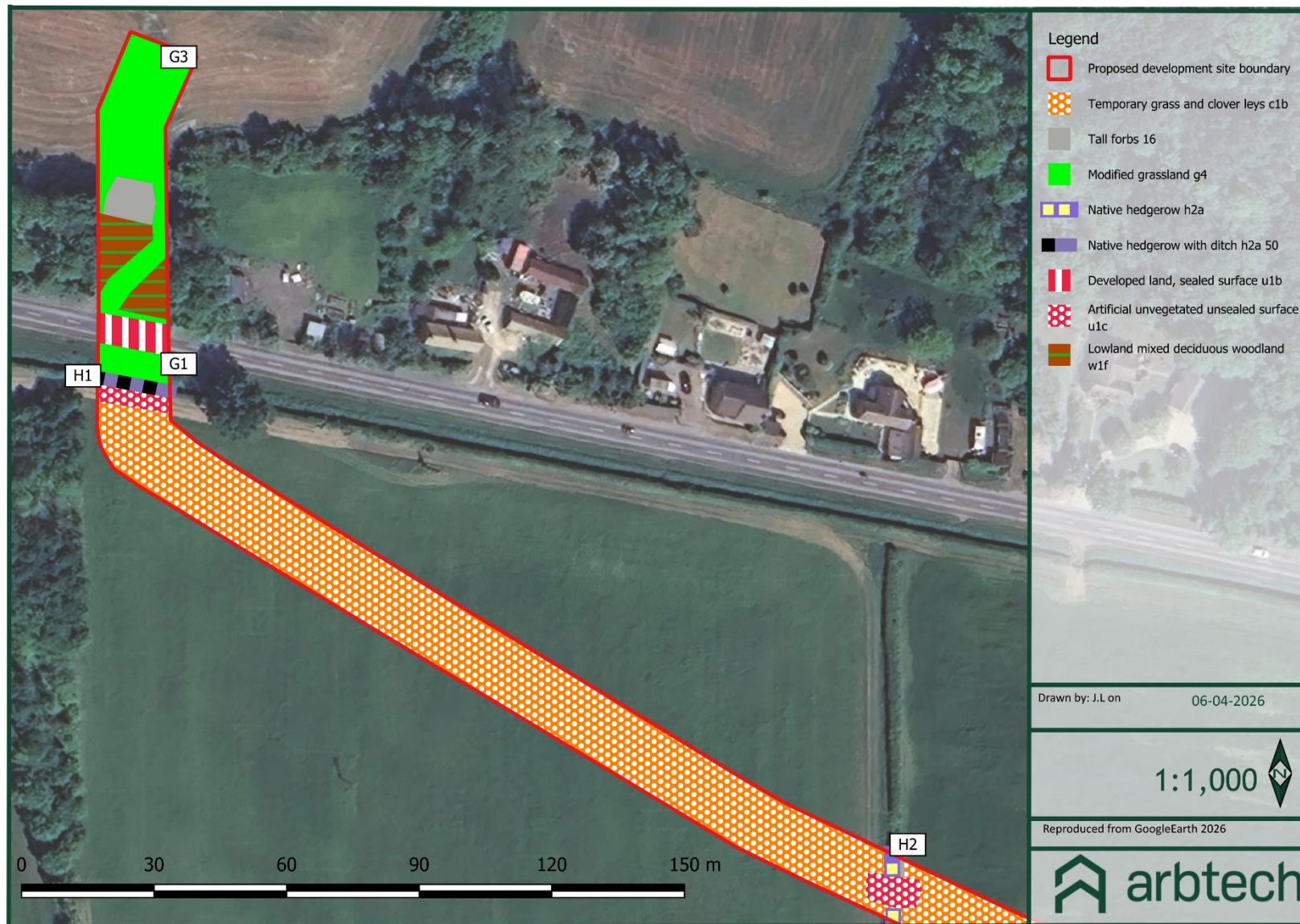
	badgers. However, the majority of the site is surrounded by stock-proof fence. Therefore, connectivity will be reduced, and there is a low probability for badgers to use the proposed development site for commuting.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	All modified grassland and woodland will be retained. The proposed development will include installing the cable in mechanically dug trenches through the existing agricultural field, resulting in the temporary loss of grassland and clover leys (~0.7ha), cereal crops (~0.22ha), and tall forbs (~550m ²). Additionally, 14m of hedgerow would be removed and replanted. Where the cable crosses existing woodland or road, it would be directionally drilled beneath them to avoid removal or damage. No direct impacts are anticipated on badgers as a result of the proposed development. However, although low, badgers and other small mammals could still commute through the site and get stuck in any excavations during the construction phase.
<i>Recommendations</i>	Basic precautionary mitigation during works is recommended: - Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. - The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to habitats which badgers could use. South and west boundaries. - Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. In the unlikely event that a badger sett is identified within 30m, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.
Riparian animals	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	The ditches within the site are dry, and those farther from the site are stagnant, with limited bankside vegetation. The ditches are situated adjacent to the main road (B4040), which will cause significant pollution and disturbance. As such, the ditch is considered unsuitable for riparian mammals.

<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	All modified grassland and woodland will be retained. The proposed development will include installing the cable in mechanically dug trenches through the existing agricultural field, resulting in the temporary loss of grassland and clover leys (~0.7ha), cereal crops (~0.22ha), and tall forbs (~550m ²). Additionally, 14m of hedgerow would be removed and replanted. Where the cable crosses existing woodland or road, it would be directionally drilled beneath them to avoid removal or damage. No impacts on riparian animals are anticipated as a result of the proposed development.
<i>Recommendations</i>	None.
Hazel dormouse	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	<u>Desk study</u> There are no European Protected Species Licenses (EPSLs) for dormice within 2km. <u>Field results</u> No evidence of dormice was found within the site. The hedgerow and woodland provide suitable commuting opportunities for this species, albeit limited. The hedgerows and woodland are suitably connected to pockets of woodland to the south and north of the site.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	All modified grassland and woodland will be retained. The proposed development will include installing the cable in mechanically dug trenches through the existing agricultural field, resulting in the temporary loss of grassland and clover leys (~0.7ha), cereal crops (~0.22ha), and tall forbs (~550m ²). Additionally, 14m of hedgerow would be removed and replanted. Where the cable crosses existing woodland or road, it would be directionally drilled beneath them to avoid removal or damage. The loss of a small section of hedgerow is likely to be inconsequential to local dormouse populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, site clearance could result in the death or injury of dormice, if present

<i>Recommendations</i>	Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts on dormice, further dormouse surveys are considered disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures: • Site clearance will be undertaken outside of the dormouse hibernation season (November to March) insofar as is possible. • A toolbox talk will be given to contractors regarding the possible presence of dormice at the site. • A pre-commencement inspection of the site will be undertaken for dormice. • In the unlikely event that a dormouse or evidence of a dormouse is identified, works must cease, and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.
Other e.g. hedgehog	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	The tall forbs, hedgerows, woodland and modified grassland provide foraging and sheltering opportunities for hedgehogs. However, the majority of the site is surrounded by stock-proof fence. Therefore, connectivity will be reduced, and the likelihood of hedgehogs using the proposed development site for commuting is low.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	All modified grassland and woodland will be retained. The proposed development will include installing the cable in mechanically dug trenches through the existing agricultural field, resulting in the temporary loss of grassland and clover leys (~0.7ha), cereal crops (~0.22ha), and tall forbs (~550m²). Additionally, 14m of hedgerow would be removed and replanted. Where the cable crosses existing woodland or road, it would be directionally drilled beneath them to avoid removal or damage. The temporary loss of such habitat is likely to be inconsequential to local hedgehog populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of hedgehogs, if present.
<i>Recommendations</i>	Similar to the badgers, a precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:

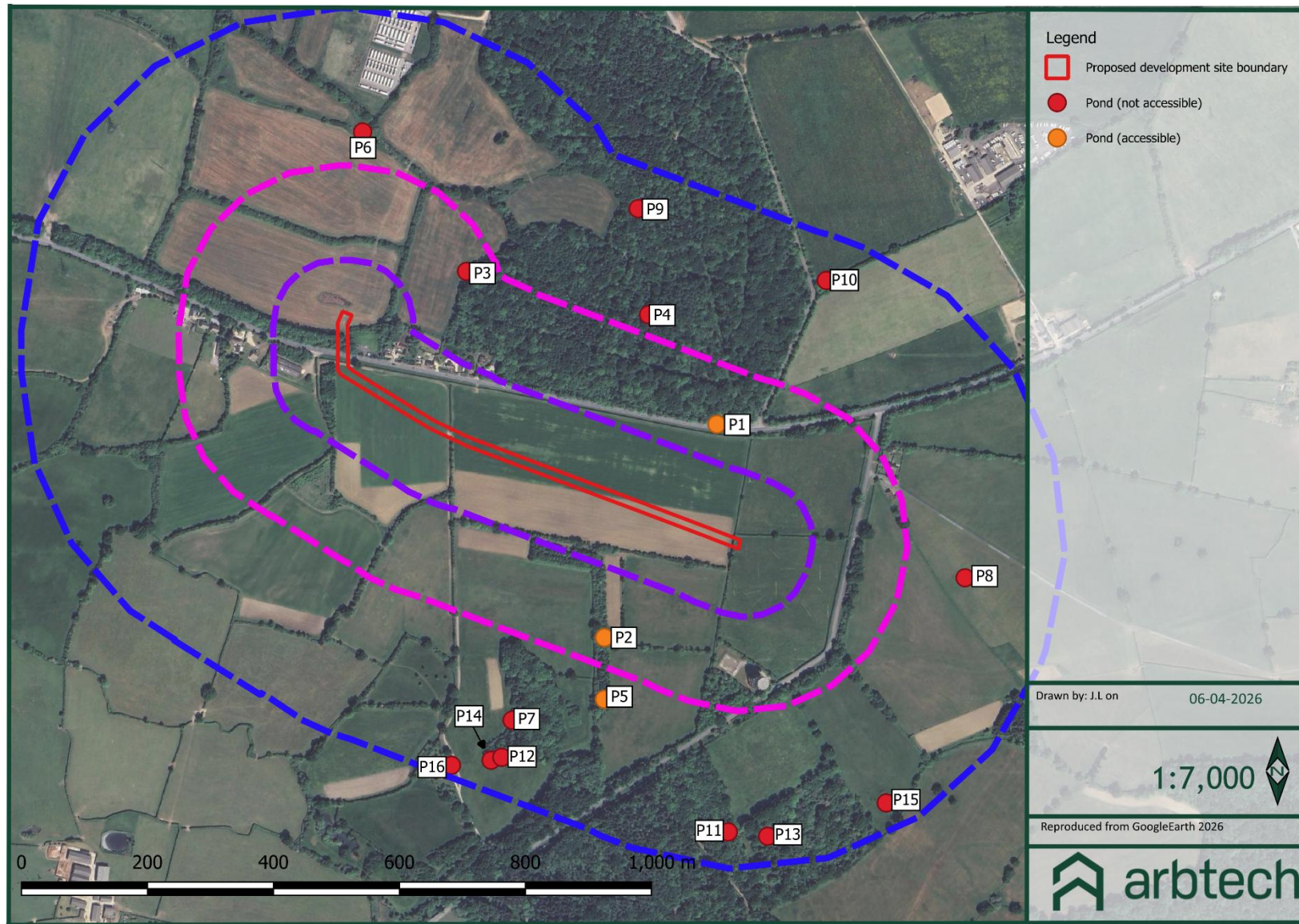
	• Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. • The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which hedgehogs could use. • Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. If any hedgehogs are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.
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Appendix 1a: Habitat and survey map (site overview)

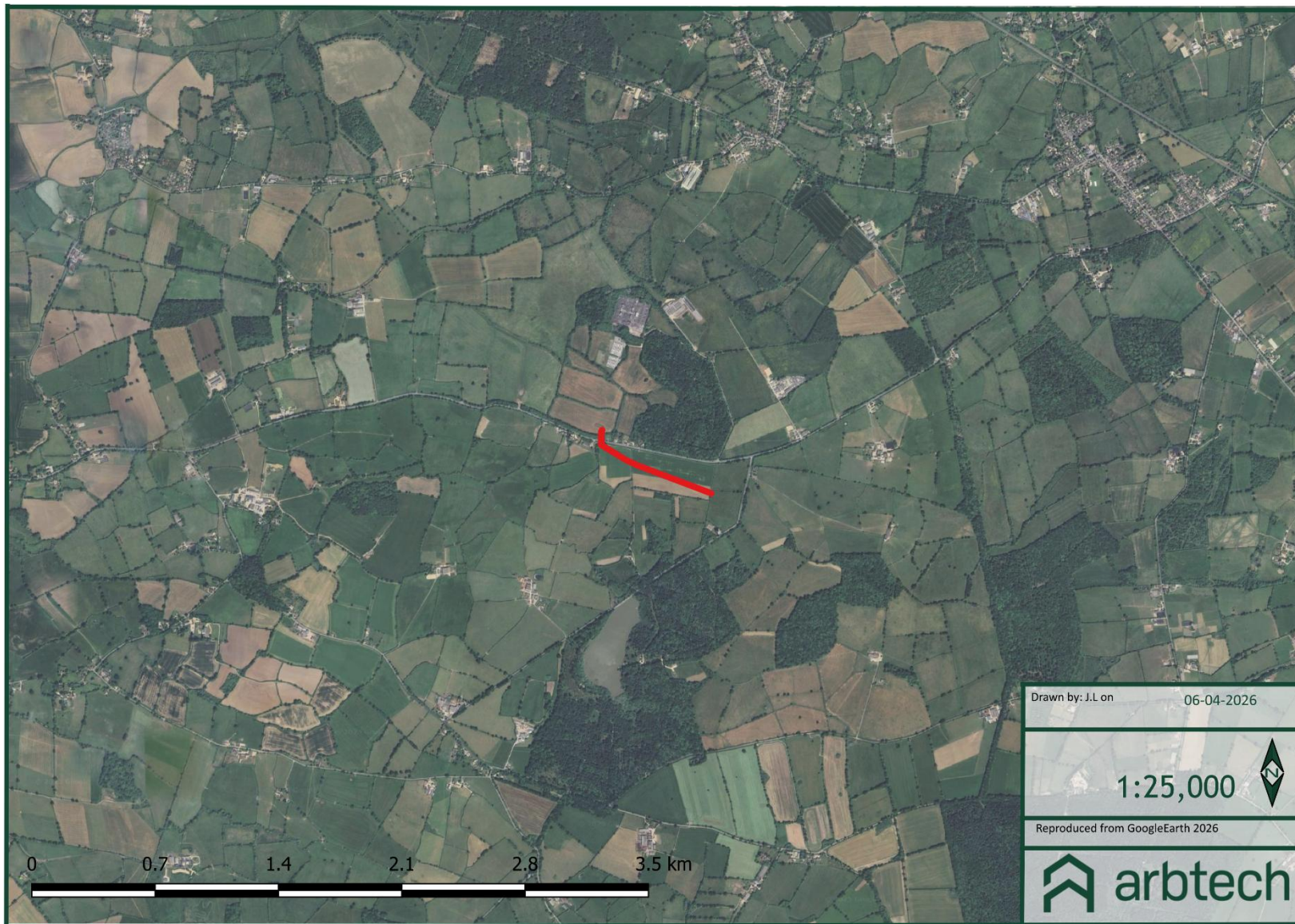
Appendix 1b: Habitat and survey map (site section 1/2)

Appendix 1c: Habitat and survey map (site section 2/2)

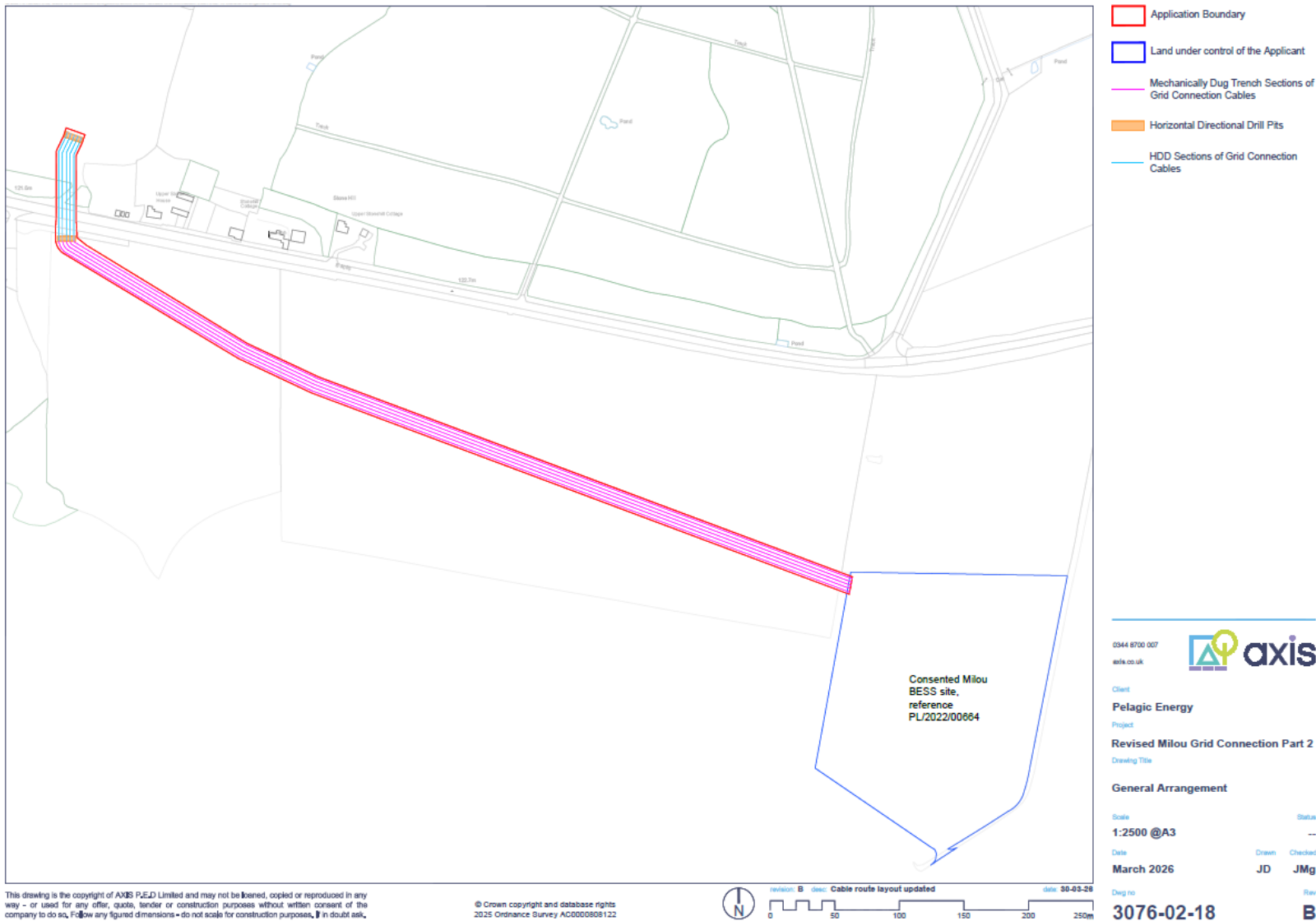
Appendix 2: Ponds within 500m



Appendix 3: Location map



Appendix 4: Proposed plan



Appendix 5: Habitat condition assessment

Modified grassland (Roadside G1); assessed using the 'Grassland low distinctiveness' habitat condition assessment:

Condition Assessment Criteria:		Condition passed (Yes or No)	Notes/Justification
A	There must be 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² , including at least 2 forbs. Note – this criterion is essential for achieving moderate condition.	N	Fewer than 6 vascular plant species per m ² .
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	N	Short sward.
C	Some scattered scrub (including bramble) may be present, but scrub accounts for less than 20% of total grassland area. Note - patches of shrubs with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Y	No scattered scrub present (less than 20% coverage).
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	N	Physical damage is present in over 5% of the total grassland area.
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).	N	Bare ground cover over 10%.
F	Cover of bracken less than 20%.	Y	No bracken observed (less than 20% coverage).
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA, 1981).	Y	Absence of invasive species.
Essential criterion achieved (Y/N)			N
Number of criteria passed			3
Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved ✓	
Passes 6 or 7 of 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)		
Passes 4 or 5 of 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate (2)		
Passes 0, 1, 2 or 3 of 7 criteria; OR 4, 5 or 6 of criteria but failing criterion A	Poor (1)	✓	

Modified grassland (Field G2); assessed using the 'Grassland low distinctiveness' habitat condition assessment:

Condition Assessment Criteria:		Condition passed (Yes or No)	Notes/Justification
A	There must be 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² , including at least 2 forbs. Note – this criterion is essential for achieving moderate condition.	N	Fewer than 6 vascular plant species per m ² .
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	N	Short sward.
C	Some scattered scrub (including bramble) may be present, but scrub accounts for less than 20% of total grassland area. Note - patches of shrubs with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Y	No scattered scrub present (less than 20% coverage).
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	Y	Physical damage present in less than 5% of total grassland area.
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).	N	Bare ground cover over 10%.
F	Cover of bracken less than 20%.	Y	No bracken observed (less than 20% coverage).
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA, 1981).	Y	Absence of invasive species.
Essential criterion achieved (Y/N)			N
Number of criteria passed			4
Condition Assessment Result		Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved ✓
Passes 6 or 7 of 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A		Good (3)	
Passes 4 or 5 of 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A		Moderate (2)	
Passes 0, 1, 2 or 3 of 7 criteria; OR 4, 5 or 6 of criteria but failing criterion A		Poor (1)	✓

Modified grassland (Field G3); assessed using the 'Grassland low distinctiveness' habitat condition assessment:

Condition Assessment Criteria:	Condition passed (Yes or No)	Notes/Justification
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A	There must be 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² , including at least 2 forbs. Note – this criterion is essential for achieving moderate condition.	N	Fewer than 6 vascular plant species per m ² .
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	N	Short sward (grazed).
C	Some scattered scrub (including bramble) may be present, but scrub accounts for less than 20% of total grassland area. Note - patches of shrubs with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Y	No scattered scrub present (less than 20% coverage).
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	N	Regular grazing and management.
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).	N	Bare ground cover over 10%.
F	Cover of bracken less than 20%.	Y	No bracken observed (less than 20% coverage).
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA, 1981).	Y	Absence of invasive species.
Essential criterion achieved (Y/N)			N
Number of criteria passed			3
Condition Assessment Result		Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved ✓
Passes 6 or 7 of 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A		Good (3)	
Passes 4 or 5 of 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A		Moderate (2)	
Passes 0, 1, 2 or 3 of 7 criteria; OR 4, 5 or 6 of criteria but failing criterion A		Poor (1)	✓

Tall forbs; assessed using the 'Urban' habitat condition assessment:

Condition Assessment Criteria	Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes/Justification
Core Criteria - must be assessed for all urban habitat types :		

A	Vegetation structure is varied, providing opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live, eat and breed. A single structural habitat component or vegetation type does not account for more than 80% of the total habitat area.	N	Common mugwort is dominant.
B	The habitat parcel contains different plant species that are beneficial for wildlife, for example flowering species providing nectar sources for a range of invertebrates at different times of year.	Y	Different plant species present.
C	Invasive non-native plant species (listed on Schedule 9 of WCA) and others which are to the detriment of native wildlife (using professional judgement) cover less than 5% of the total vegetated area. Note – to achieve good condition, this criterion must be satisfied by a complete absence of invasive non-native species (rather than <5% cover).	Y	None observed.
Essential criteria relevant for habitat type achieved (Yes or No)			Y
Number of criteria passed			2
Condition Assessment Result		Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved ✓
Results for habitats requiring assessment of 3 core criteria only:			
Passes all 3 core criteria AND Meets the requirements for good condition within criterion C	Good (3)		
Passes 2 of 3 core criteria OR Passes 3 of 3 core criteria but does not meet the requirements for good condition within criterion C	Moderate (2)		✓
Passes 0 or 1 of 3 core criteria	Poor (1)		

Hedgerow H1; assessed using the 'Hedgerow' habitat condition assessment:

Hedgerow favourable condition attributes				
Attributes and functional groupings (A, B, C, & D)	Criteria (the minimum requirements for 'favourable condition'	Description	Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes/Justification
A1. Height	>1.5 m average along length	The average height of woody growth estimated from base of stem to the top of shoots, excluding any bank beneath the hedgerow, any gaps or isolated trees. Newly laid or coppiced hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice). A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is > 1.5 m height).	Y	Hedgerow averages 3m in height.
A2. Width	>1.5 m average along length	The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (e.g. blackthorn suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they >0.5 m in height. Laid, coppiced, cut and newly planted hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice).	N	Hedgerow averages 1m in width.
B1. Gap – hedge base	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length	This is the vertical 'gappiness' of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth.	Y	Gap between ground and base of canopy is >0.5m for less than 10% of length.

		Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see page 65 of the Hedgerow Survey Handbook).		
B2. Gap – hedge canopy continuity	Gaps make up <10% of total length and No canopy gaps >5 m	This is the horizontal ‘gappiness’ of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall ‘gappiness’, but are not subject to the >5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).	Y	No canopy gaps.
C1. Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: - measured from outer edge of hedgerow, and - is present on one side of the hedge (at least)	This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedge. Undisturbed ground should be present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedge. This criterion recognises the value of the hedge base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground etc. can limit available habitat niches.	N	Disturbed ground.
C2. Undesirable perennial vegetation	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of	The indicator species used are nettles (<i>Urtica</i> spp.), cleavers (<i>Galium aparine</i>) and docks (<i>Rumex</i> spp.). Their presence, either singly or together, should not exceed the 20% cover threshold.	Y	No nutrient enrichment.

	undisturbed ground			
D1. Invasive and neophyte species	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native and recently introduced species	Recently introduced species refer to plant that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives.	Y	No invasives observed.
D2. Current damage	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities	This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (e.g. excessive hedge cutting).	N	Flailed hedgerow.
Condition categories for hedgerows without trees				
Category	Maximum number of attributes that can fail to meet 'favourable condition' criteria in Table TS1-2	Weighting (score)		
Good	No more than 2 failures in total AND No more than 1 failure in any functional group	3		
Moderate	No more than 4 failures in total	2		

	AND <u>Does not fail both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (e.g., fails attributes A1, A2, B1, and C2 = moderate condition)		
Poor	Fails a total of more than 4 attributes OR <u>Fails both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (e.g. fails attributes A1, A2, B1, and B2 = poor condition)	1	
Score achieved:	Moderate		

Hedgerow H2; assessed using the 'Hedgerow' habitat condition assessment:

Hedgerow favourable condition attributes				
Attributes and functional groupings (A, B, C, & D)	Criteria (the minimum requirements for 'favourable condition'	Description	Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes/Justification

A1. Height	>1.5 m average along length	The average height of woody growth estimated from base of stem to the top of shoots, excluding any bank beneath the hedgerow, any gaps or isolated trees. Newly laid or coppiced hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice). A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is > 1.5 m height).	Y	Hedgerow averages 2.5m in height.
A2. Width	>1.5 m average along length	The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (e.g. blackthorn suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they >0.5 m in height. Laid, coppiced, cut and newly planted hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice).	Y	Hedgerow averages 1.5m in width.
B1. Gap – hedge base	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length	This is the vertical ‘gappiness’ of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth. Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see page 65 of the Hedgerow Survey Handbook).	Y	Gap between ground and base of canopy is >0.5m for less than 10% of length.
B2. Gap – hedge	Gaps make up <10% of total length and	This is the horizontal ‘gappiness’ of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy	Y	No canopy gaps.

canopy continuity	No canopy gaps >5 m	(no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall 'gappiness', but are not subject to the >5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).		
C1. Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: - measured from outer edge of hedgerow, and - is present on one side of the hedge (at least)	This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedge. Undisturbed ground should be present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedge. This criterion recognises the value of the hedge base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden footpaths, poached ground etc. can limit available habitat niches.	N	Disturbed ground.
C2. Undesirable perennial vegetation	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground	The indicator species used are nettles (<i>Urtica</i> spp.), cleavers (<i>Galium aparine</i>) and docks (<i>Rumex</i> spp.). Their presence, either singly or together, should not exceed the 20% cover threshold.	Y	No nutrient enrichment.
D1. Invasive and neophyte species	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native and	Recently introduced species refer to plant that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives.	Y	No invasives observed.

	recently introduced species			
D2. Current damage	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities	This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (e.g. excessive hedge cutting).	N	Failed.
Condition categories for hedgerows without trees				
Category	Maximum number of attributes that can fail to meet 'favourable condition' criteria in Table TS1-2	Weighting (score)		
Good	No more than 2 failures in total AND No more than 1 failure in any functional group	3		
Moderate	No more than 4 failures in total AND <u>Does not fail both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (e.g., fails attributes A1, A2, B1, and C2 =	2		

	moderate condition)	
Poor	Fails a total of more than 4 attributes OR <u>Fails both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (e.g. fails attributes A1, A2, B1, and B2 = poor condition)	1
Score achieved:	Good	

Hedgerow H3; assessed using the 'Hedgerow' habitat condition assessment:

Hedgerow favourable condition attributes				
Attributes and functional groupings (A, B, C, D & E)	Criteria (the minimum requirements for 'favourable condition'	Description	Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes/Justification
A1. Height	>1.5 m average along length	The average height of woody growth estimated from base of stem to the top of shoots, excluding any bank beneath the hedgerow, any gaps or isolated trees. Newly laid or coppiced hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice). A newly planted hedgerow does not pass this criterion (unless it is > 1.5 m height).	Y	Hedgerow averages 2-4m in height.

A2. Width	>1.5 m average along length	The average width of woody growth estimated at the widest point of the canopy, excluding gaps and isolated trees. Outgrowths (e.g. blackthorn suckers) are only included in the width estimate when they >0.5 m in height. Laid, coppiced, cut and newly planted hedgerows are indicative of good management and pass this criterion for up to a maximum of four years (if undertaken according to good practice).	Y	Hedgerow averages 1.5m in width.
B1. Gap – hedge base	Gap between ground and base of canopy <0.5 m for >90% of length	This is the vertical ‘gappiness’ of the woody component of the hedgerow, and its distance from the ground to the lowest leafy growth. Certain exceptions to this criterion are acceptable (see page 65 of the Hedgerow Survey Handbook).	Y	Gap between ground and base of canopy is >0.5m for less than 10% of length.
B2. Gap – hedge canopy continuity	Gaps make up <10% of total length and No canopy gaps >5 m	This is the horizontal ‘gappiness’ of the woody component of the hedgerow. Gaps are complete breaks in the woody canopy (no matter how small). Access points and gates contribute to the overall ‘gappiness’, but are not subject to the >5 m criterion (as this is the typical size of a gate).	Y	No canopy gaps.
C1. Undisturbed ground and perennial vegetation	>1 m width of undisturbed ground with perennial herbaceous vegetation for >90% of length: - measured from outer edge of hedgerow, and - is present on one side of the hedge (at least)	This is the level of disturbance (excluding wildlife disturbance) at the base of the hedge. Undisturbed ground should be present for at least 90% of the hedgerow length, greater than 1m in width and must be present along at least one side of the hedge. This criterion recognises the value of the hedge base as a boundary habitat with the capacity to support a wide range of species. Cultivation, heavily trodden	N	Disturbed vegetation.

		footpaths, poached ground etc. can limit available habitat niches.		
C2. Undesirable perennial vegetation	Plant species indicative of nutrient enrichment of soils dominate <20% cover of the area of undisturbed ground	The indicator species used are nettles (<i>Urtica</i> spp.), cleavers (<i>Galium aparine</i>) and docks (<i>Rumex</i> spp.). Their presence, either singly or together, should not exceed the 20% cover threshold.	Y	No nutrient enrichment.
D1. Invasive and neophyte species	>90% of the hedgerow and undisturbed ground is free of invasive non-native and recently introduced species	Recently introduced species refer to plant that have naturalised in the UK since AD 1500 (neophytes). Archaeophytes count as natives.	Y	No invasives observed.
D2. Current damage	>90% of the hedgerow or undisturbed ground is free of damage caused by human activities	This criterion addresses damaging activities that may have led to or lead to deterioration in other attributes. This could include evidence of pollution, piles of manure or rubble, or inappropriate management practices (e.g. excessive hedge cutting).	Y	>90% of hedgerow and understorey is free of damage caused by human activities.
E1. Tree class	There is more than one age-class (or morphology) of tree present (for example: young, mature, veteran and or ancient), and there is on average at least one mature, ancient or veteran tree present per 20 - 50m of hedgerow.	This criterion addresses if there are a range of age-classes or morphologies which allow for replacement of trees and provide opportunities for different species.	N	There is not one mature, ancient, or veteran tree present per 20-50m of the hedgerow.
E2. Tree Health	At least 95% of hedgerow trees are in a healthy condition (excluding veteran features valuable for wildlife). There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by damage from	This criterion identifies if the trees are subject to damage which compromises the survival and health of the individual specimens.	Y	No evidence of adverse impacts on tree health.

	livestock or wild animals, pests or diseases, or human activity.			
Condition categories for hedgerows with trees				
Category	Maximum number of attributes that can fail to meet 'favourable condition' criteria in Table TS1-2	Weighting (score)		
Good	No more than 2 failures in total AND No more than 1 failure in any functional group	3		
Moderate	No more than 5 failures in total AND <u>Does not fail both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (e.g., fails attributes A1, A2, B1, C2, and E1 = moderate condition)	2		
Poor	Fails a total of more than 5 attributes OR <u>Fails both attributes</u> in more than one functional group (e.g. fails attributes A1, A2, B1 and B2 = poor condition)	1		
Score achieved:	Good			

Other lowland deciduous mixed woodland; assessed using 'Woodland' habitat type condition sheet:

Condition Assessment Criteria						
Indicator		Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)	Score per indicator	Notes (such as justification)
A	Age distribution of trees	Three age-classes present.	Two age-classes present.	One age-class present.	3	Three age classes present.

Condition Assessment Criteria						
Indicator		Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)	Score per indicator	Notes (such as justification)
B	Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage	No significant browsing damage evident in woodland.	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or less of whole woodland.	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or more of whole woodland.	3	No significant browsing damage evident in woodland.
C	Invasive plant species	No invasive species present in woodland.	Rhododendron <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> or cherry laurel <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> not present, other invasive species <10% cover.	Rhododendron or cherry laurel present, or other invasive species >10% cover.	3	No invasive species.
D	Number of native tree species	Five or more native tree or shrub species found across woodland parcel.	Three to four native tree or shrub species found across woodland parcel.	Two or less native tree or shrub species across woodland parcel.	3	More than 5no. native species present.
E	Cover of native tree and shrub species	>80% of canopy trees and >80% of understory shrubs are native.	50 - 80% of canopy trees and 50 - 80% of understory shrubs are native.	<50% of canopy trees and <50% of understory shrubs are native.	3	Canopy and understorey both comprise >80% native species.
F	Open space within woodland	10 - 20% of woodland has areas of temporary open space. Unless woodland is <10ha, in which case 0 - 20% temporary open space is permitted.	21 - 40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space.	<10% or >40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space. But if woodland <10ha has <10% temporary open space, please see Good category.	3	Woodland is less than 10ha; woodland clearing estimated to be ~10-20%.
G	Woodland regeneration	All three classes present in woodland; trees 4 - 7 cm Diameter at Breast Height (DBH), saplings and seedlings or advanced coppice regrowth.	One or two classes only present in woodland.	No classes or coppice regrowth present in woodland.	1	No classes or coppice regrowth present in woodland.
H	Tree health	Tree mortality less than 10%, no pests or diseases and no crown dieback.	11% to 25% mortality and/or crown dieback or low-risk pest or disease present.	Greater than 25% tree mortality and or any high-risk pest or disease present.	2	Tree mortality between 11% to 25% mortality and/or crown dieback or

Condition Assessment Criteria						
Indicator		Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)	Score per indicator	Notes (such as justification)
						low-risk pest or disease present.
I	Vegetation and ground flora	Recognisable NVC plant community at ground layer present, strongly characterised by ancient woodland flora specialists.	Recognisable woodland NVC plant community at ground layer present.	No recognisable woodland NVC plant community at ground layer present.	2	Recognisable woodland NVC plant community at ground layer present.
J	Woodland vertical structure	Three or more storeys across all survey plots or a complex woodland.	Two storeys across all survey plots.	One or less storey across all survey plots.	1	One storey present.
K	Veteran trees	Two or more veteran trees per hectare.	One veteran tree per hectare.	No veteran trees present in woodland.	1	No veteran trees present in woodland.
L	Amount of deadwood	50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, branch stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities.	Between 25% and 50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities.	Less than 25% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities.	2	Between 25% and 50% of woodland contains deadwood.
M	Woodland disturbance	No nutrient enrichment or damaged ground evident.	Less than 1 hectare in total of nutrient enrichment across woodland area and or less than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground.	More than 1 hectare of nutrient enrichment and or more than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground.	3	No nutrient enrichment or damaged ground evident.
Total Score (out of a possible 39)					30	
Condition Assessment Result				Condition Assessment Score		Result Achieved
Total score >32 (33 to 39)				Good (3)		Moderate
Total score 26 to 32				Moderate (2)		
Total score <26 (13 to 25)				Poor (1)		

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Issue	1.0	Jade Lemm BSc (Hons) DipHE, Consultant Ecologist	21/01/2026
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