

APPENDIX 11.7 BADGER

1 METHODOLOGY

- 1.1 The badger survey results presented in this appendix reflect the survey information available at the time of writing. Badger surveys remain ongoing and the findings should therefore be treated as interim. The appendix will be reviewed and updated, if necessary, following completion of the outstanding survey work.
- 1.2 The survey for badger (*Meles meles*) included a search of the development site and surrounding habitats (up to 30metres where feasible) for any evidence including setts, foraging signs (snuffle holes), runs and latrines.
- 1.3 It is important to classify each sett and determine its use by the social group. This involves counting the number of entrances per sett and assessing sett use based on the following criteria:
 - **Well-used:** being clear of any debris or vegetation, obviously in regular use and may or may not have been excavated recently;
 - **Partially-used:** not in regular use and have debris such as leaves and twigs in the entrance or have moss and/or other plants growing in or around the entrance. Partially-used holes could be in regular use after a minimal amount of clearance; and
 - **Disused:** not been in use for some time, are partially or completely blocked and could not be used without considerable amount of clearance. If the hole has been disused for some time, all that may be visible is a depression in the ground where the hole used to be, and the remains of the spoil heap, which may be covered in moss or plants.
- 1.4 Where setts were found, activity levels were scored using the following criteria:
 - number of well-used holes (with one or more of the features: well-worn entrance; freshly excavated soil; bedding material);
 - number of partially used holes (leaves or twigs in entrance and/or mosses and other plants growing in or around entrance);
 - number of disused holes (partially or completely blocked, with considerable amount of excavation required for reoccupation).
- 1.5 The field survey methods described above are consistent with those advocated by (Harris et al. 1989). All field survey work was undertaken between April and September 2025, embracing the period when territorial marking is taking place and badgers are mobile and foraging.

1.6 As a guide to classifying each sett the following criteria is followed:

- **Main** – normally the focal sett for a badger social group. Generally always occupied, main setts usually have several well used holes with radiating tracks, latrines and other signs of activity. The actual number of holes can vary greatly, depending on social group size and soil conditions. Several holes with large spoil heaps and obvious paths emanating from and between sett entrances.
- **Annex** – a secondary sett, close to the main sett. Will normally be connected to the sett with very obvious tracks. Annexes may not be occupied constantly, even when the main sett is very active. Normally less than 150m from main sett, comprising several holes.
- **Subsidiary** – occurring at a greater distance from the main sett, and not as clearly linked to it as an annex. These setts will clearly fall within the territory of a social group and may be seasonally used by badgers; and
- **Outlier** – less frequently used, these setts may be colonised by other species when not in use by badgers. Outliers may represent a temporary sett, or a habitation for migrating individuals, or those excluded from a social group.

2 BASELINE DATA RESULTS

Data search

- 2.1 There were three records of Badger (*Meles meles*) returned in the data search. The closest record was from 2016 located 1.35km northeast of the site boundary. The most recent record was from 2024 located 2.19km northeast of the site boundary.

Habitats

- 2.2 The site contains hedgerows, scrub, grassland and cropland which provide suitable habitat for badger. The large fields provide low value habitat for badger; however, the species may commute and forage through these areas when moving between areas of more valuable woodland and hedgerow habitats within the wider area.
- 2.3 The wider area includes a railway network, large agricultural fields with networks of hedgerows and woodlands, as well as the urban area of West Wiltshire Trading Estate to the west of the site and the urban town of Westbury to the south of the site.

Survey results

- 2.4 Badger latrines were recorded across the southern field boundaries of the site during the 2025 surveys. None have been recorded during the 2026 surveys, however these are ongoing at the time of writing and will be finalised and provided in an addendum upon completion.
- 2.5 No badger setts or signs of sett building were recorded on site; however, the southern field is evident to be part of the territory of a local badger clan.



Figure 1 Map of 2025 noted badger latrines

3 ASSESSMENT OF IMPACTS AND MITIGATION MEASURES

- 3.1 As badgers are evident in the area, but no evidence of setts or sett building activities have been recorded across the site, it has been assessed that badgers are present on site in a commuting and foraging capacity, and therefore will need to be considered further on a precautionary basis in relation to construction and operational impacts.

Construction impacts

- 3.2 A pre-works survey for badger will be undertaken to ensure no badger setts have been created since the surveys have been carried out, as badger activity is known across the site in a commuting and foraging capacity.
- 3.3 Potential impacts on badgers include disruption to foraging or commuting badgers through insensitive construction lighting, or harm to individuals through construction activities. Mitigation to avoid impacts on badgers will include a sensitive construction lighting plan, as per above, the inclusion of gentle gradients at the ends of exposed trenches to provide an escape route for individuals and appropriate storage of materials and harmful chemicals. These details will be provided within a CEMP which can be secured by planning condition.

Operational impacts

- 3.4 There is predicted to be no significant impact to badgers during operation of the proposed development, however the southern field area of the site has sections of public open space, SANG and a landscape plan which will provide a minor positive impact on commuting and foraging badgers across the site, as the habitats to be created will be of higher value for badgers and they prey resources.
- 3.5 Details of the landscape works and management that will provide an overall benefit to commuting and foraging badgers will be provided in a LEMP.