Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain

Manor Farm, Collingbourne Kingston, Wiltshire, SN8 3SD

26 August 2025

PEA and BNG of Manor Farm, Collingbourne Kingston, Wiltshire, SN8 3SD

REPORT DETAILS

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

NatureBureau was commissioned by Mr and Mrs King to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment in relation to a proposed development at Manor Farm, Collingbourne Kingston, Wiltshire, SN8 3SD. The site is a working farm, situated within a rural area. The local and wider landscape comprises extensive arable land with pockets of woodland.

The ecological appraisal included both a desk-based review and a field survey conducted in July 2025. The wider area supports minimal records of protected species such as bats, badgers, and amphibians and the site itself was found to be of low ecological value, however, the site is bordered on the northeast by Deciduous Woodland which has high potential for species such as bats and badgers. The cropland found on the site also offers some habitat potential for arable nesting birds.

The PEA recommends that **no further species surveys are required for the site,** but recommendations related to lighting and nesting birds have been made. Recommendations are also made regarding vegetation clearance and the storage and disposal of spoil/construction waste. Additionally, pitfall traps created via excavations must be avoided or, at minimum, mitigated with coverings and/or ramps overnight.

Two bat boxes and three bird boxes should be installed at suitable locations on the new building to enhance ecological value following development. Recommendations regarding the appropriate types of boxes are provided within this report.

If any protected species are found during the destruction phase, works must be halted, and a suitably qualified ecologist must be consulted for advice.

A BNG assessment was carried out using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric version 1.0.4. The proposed development, as currently designed, will result in a biodiversity **net gain of 12.09%** (0.12 units) due to the creation of arable field margins to replace cropland which will be lost. **Additionally, trading rules have been satisfied** as the arable field margin is of higher distinctiveness than the cropland.

For on-site habitat creation to support BNG, created habitats are secured through a legal agreement lasting at least 30 years. This is typically achieved via a planning obligation (Section 106 agreement) with the local planning authority or a conservation covenant with a responsible body.

A detailed Biodiversity Gain Plan may be required to outline these commitments.

1 INTRODUCTION

NatureBureau was commissioned by Mr and Mrs King (hereafter referred to as the 'clients') to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculations of Manor Farm, Collingbourne Kingston, Wiltshire, SN8 3SD, centred at grid reference SU 22840 55916 (hereafter referred to as the 'site'). The survey is required to support a planning application for the erection of a new building (hereafter referred to as 'the proposed works').

1.1 Site Overview

The proposed development site is a working dairy farm located to the west of Collingbourne Kingston approximately 6 kilometres (km) north of Tidworth Town. Immediately surrounding the proposed development site are arable fields and small pockets of woodland, with some scattered agricultural buildings and farmhouses. The wider landscape comprises further arable land, open fields, and larger parcels of woodland. The boundary is approximately 0.67 hectares (ha) in size and comprises mostly arable land and hardstanding, with access via a driveway to the south.

1.2 Scope of Assessment

The key objectives of a PEA are to:

- Identify the likely ecological constraints associated with a project;
- Identify any mitigation measures likely to be required, following the 'Mitigation Hierarchy';
- Identify any additional surveys that may be required to inform an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA); and,
- Identify the opportunities offered by a project to deliver ecological enhancement.

BNG aims to demonstrate how a proposed development will result in a measurable improvement in biodiversity and to ensure compliance with legal and planning policy requirements - particularly under the Environment Act 2021 in England.

The Key objectives of BNG are:

- Quantify baseline biodiversity;
- Provide detailed habitat classifications, condition assessments, and area measurements;
- Identify and quantify the loss or degradation of habitats due to development;
- Show if/how the development will deliver (at least 10%) net gain in biodiversity units.

Figure 1: Site location within the local landscape
(Copyright Google Satellite)

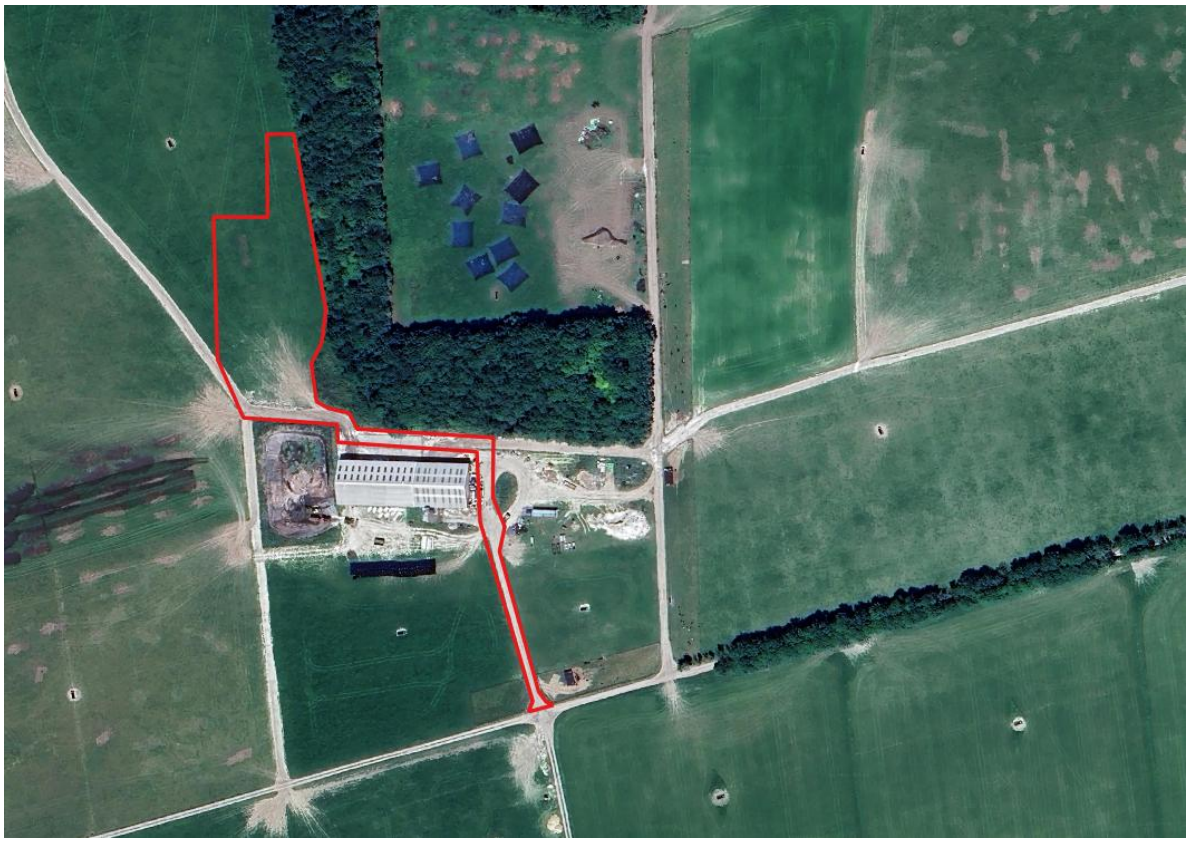


Figure 2: Site location (red) within the wider local landscape
(Copyright Google Satellite)

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desk Study

Freely available online datasets were searched for licences granted for works involving protected species within 2 km of the site, and for records of relevant Designated Sites within this same radius. Additionally, maps/aerial images were interrogated for features of ecological interest.

A 1-2 km search radius for protected species and designated sites has been deemed appropriate based on the nature of the proposed development. It is considered highly unlikely that ecological receptors beyond this distance would be adversely affected. These search parameters are informed by industry-standard guidance.

Table 1: Summary of resources used during the desk study

Resource	Information assessed
Google Earth	Assessment of the local landscape. Latest image date: March 2025.
Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website[1]	Records of licences issued by Natural England for works affecting protected species within 2 km of the site; any relevant site designations within 2 km of the site; Priority Habitats in the local area. SSSI 'Impact Zones' in relation to the proposed works on the site.
Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC)	Key information regarding the confirmed presence and habitat of all protected species within a 1 km radius of the site boundary.
Wiltshire's Local Plan	Consulted to check whether the site forms part of a local biodiversity plan and determine the Strategic Significance of the site.
Ordnance Survey Maps	Search to identify ponds within 500 metres (m) of the site which may have potential to support breeding great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus).*

2.2 Ecology Field Survey

A site visit was undertaken on 31 July 2025 between 16:00 and 16:45 hours, during which all areas within the site boundary were walked over.

The PEA survey identified the habitats present and their potential for protected species, particularly bats, birds, hedgehogs (*Erinaceus europaeus)*, badgers (*Meles meles)*, hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus*

[1] Magic Map Application (defra.gov.uk)

avellanarius), amphibians, reptiles and invertebrates following the standard guidelines set out by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2018). Examples of survey considerations include:

- Open areas of habitat were visually assessed for signs of mammal tracks, push throughs and latrines
- The site was visually assessed for features which increase likelihood of use by reptiles, including the presence of tussocky vegetation, log and rock piles, basking spots and compost heaps
- Areas of dense vegetated cover on site and adjacent to the site were assessed for their likely use by badgers, and attention was paid to the presence of any signs of current or historic badger activity such as setts and latrines
- Areas of woodland, copse, tree lines, hedgerows and other boundary vegetation were assessed for their likely use by hazel dormice, or increased likelihood of use due to presence of hazel and other suitable food species

The survey also included a search to identify the presence of any invasive, non-native plant species - particularly those listed on schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which include Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica)* and Himalayan Balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*).

Given that there is an absence of connecting water networks on site, it is considered highly unlikely that white clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes)*, Otter (*Lutra lutra)* or Water vole (*Arvicola amphibius)* are present and therefore they have not been included in the assessment. Additionally, no buildings are present on site, and therefore a Bat Roost Assessment (structures) was not required.

The work, analysis and reporting was undertaken in line with CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct[2], and other relevant guidelines and legislation as listed in the Appendices of this report.

2.3 Biodiversity Net Gain

Following amendments to the Town and Country Planning Act in February 2024, BNG has become a mandatory requirement for all developments in England that do not meet the exemption criteria. The approach used to assess biodiversity impacts resulting from the proposed works is detailed below. This assessment has been based on the latest version of the Statutory Metric as published at the time of commission (July 2025), the proposed site plan provided by the client, and the PEA undertaken in July 2025 which identified the plants and habitats present according to the UK Habitats Classification System (UK Habs[3]) and made condition assessments of them using Natural England's Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1.

[2] https://cieem.net/resource/code-of-conduct/
[3] https://www.ukhab.org/

BNG is based around ten good practice principles for development (CIRIA, 2016):

- Principle 1: Apply the mitigation hierarchy;
- Principle 2: Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset elsewhere;
- Principle 3: Be conclusive and equitable;
- Principle 4: Address risk;
- Principle 5: Make a measurable net gain contribution;
- Principle 6: Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity;
- Principle 7: Be additional;
- Principle 8: Create a net gain legacy;
- Principle 9: Optimise sustainability; and
- Principle 10: Be transparent.

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (DEFRA, 2024) details a further nine Biodiversity Metric Principles which inform the use of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool (hereafter 'the Metric') to ensure that appropriate methods and reasoning are applied when undertaking BNG assessment.

In addition, a series of Biodiversity Metric rules are detailed which must be followed to claim a net gain in biodiversity. These include the requirement to achieve a 10% net gain in each unit type individually, i.e. habitats, hedgerows and watercourses as these cannot be summed, traded, or converted between types. Trading rules must also be followed which are designed to ensure that habitat losses associated with a proposed scheme are offset by suitable habitat creation or enhancement measures. Depending on the distinctiveness of a habitat type, it may be subject to a "like for like" trading rule, requiring the delivery of Biodiversity Units through creation of the same habitat type.

2.3.1 The Biodiversity Metric

The quantitative assessment is based on the Metric to provide a transparent and repeatable measure of biodiversity at both the baseline and post-development stages of the project. The Metric calculates a biodiversity unit value for area habitats, hedgerows and watercourses individually. The baseline biodiversity score for each of these unit types considers several factors:

- Habitat distinctiveness (the relative scarcity of the habitat and its importance for nature conservation);
- Habitat condition (assessed using the specific criteria detailed in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1);
- Strategic significance (a landscape scale assessment which considers the habitat type and location); and
- Spatial area (ha) of area habitats or length (km) of hedgerows and watercourses.

The post-development biodiversity score is calculated using the same approach, but factors in a series of risk multipliers:

- Temporal risk i.e. time required for newly created or enhanced habitats to reach target condition;
- Difficulty of creation/enhancement, i.e. risk associated with the effectiveness of techniques to create or enhance habitats; and
- Spatial risk i.e. the distance between on-site biodiversity loss and the location of off-site habitat compensation (where applicable).

The baseline biodiversity value is compared to the post-development biodiversity value to assess the change (positive or negative) in Habitat Units, Hedgerow Units and Watercourse Units.

The Metric uses habitats as a proxy for determining the biodiversity value of a site and does not take the presence of protected and notable species or associated enhancement measures (e.g. bird/bat boxes) into account.

2.4 Surveyor Information

The survey was carried out by Kristina Wood (B.Sc. Hons, M.Res.), a terrestrial ecologist and Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

Kristina has been employed as an ecologist at NatureBureau since 2019 and is experienced in landscape surveying for ecological assessments related to planning applications, as well as monitoring sites under Countryside Stewardship agreements. Her work also includes the management and annual surveying of a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) on behalf of Eton College for pennyroyal (*Mentha pulegium)*. Additionally, she has contributed to a broader assessment of rare vascular plant assemblages and (*Cirsium tuberosum*) on the 16,690 ha Salisbury Plain SSSI, a project commissioned by Natural England. Additionally, Kristina has completed various BNG training courses, including CIEEM's Biodiversity Metric V3.1, Statutory Biodiversity Metric for Mandatory BNG in England, and Mandatory BNG: The Policy.

BNG metric calculations were conducted by Kristina Wood and reviewed by Annika Binet BSc (Hons) MCIEEM. Annika Binet is a qualified ecologist with over 15 years' experience in ecological consultancy in addition to land management experience. Annika has a post graduate certificate in ecological consultancy, is a full member of CIEEM and has undertaken a range of courses related to habitat survey, condition assessment and BNG.

2.5 Limitations

Desk-based data relies on third-party records and datasets, which may be incomplete, out of date, or subject to reporting biases (e.g. more records near populated areas).

Biological Records Centres hold information regarding statutory designated sites, local nature reserves, sites of conservation interest, records of protected species and other species of conservation concern. However, this data cannot be considered fully comprehensive and therefore the absence of data, in response to a data search, does not imply that a species, important habitat or designation does not exist within that search area.

The survey was conducted during a period generally regarded as optimal for habitat assessments. However, it represents a snapshot in time and may not capture the full extent of floristic diversity present on site. It is reasonable to assume that further surveys conducted in different months could identify additional plant species. Furthermore, the absence of invasive species during the survey does not conclusively indicate their absence from the site. Similarly, for animal species, surveys were conducted during a specific period and may not reflect seasonal variations. Some species may not have been detectable at the time of survey due to life cycle stages or weather conditions.

Habitat condition assessments are based on professional judgment and available guidance but can be subjective.

The results of this report are valid up to 18 months and/or if the conditions of the site change significantly, as per the Advice Note on the lifespan of ecological reports and surveys produced by CIEEM in 2019[4].

[4] https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/04/Advice-Note.pdf

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 Natural England Protected Species Licences

Within 2 km of the site there is one record for licences issued by Natural England for works affecting protected species entered on the MAGIC[5] website. This record relates to the destruction of a brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus)* and common pipistrelle bat (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus)* roost in 2018.

3.1.2 Site Designations

The site falls within the North Wessex Downs Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty.

Within 2 km of the site there are no Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). However, the site check report indicates that Natural England need to be consulted about the development if any of the following criteria will apply:

- **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.
- **Waste:** Landfill. Including: inert landfill, non-hazardous landfill, hazardous landfill.
- **Discharge:** Any discharge of water or liquid waste of more than 20m³/day that is discharged to ground (i.e. to seep away) or to surface water, such as a beck or stream.

3.1.3 Priority Habitats

The site is bordered on the northeast by Deciduous Woodland (a Priority Habitat). Additional areas of Deciduous and Ancient Woodland are present in the wider landscape, with some connectivity to the site in the form of undeveloped fields.

3.1.4 Flora

A total of 17 records of 10 notable plant species were identified within the 1 km search area (WSBRC, 2025). A full species list can be found in the Appendices.

[5] Magic Map Application (defra.gov.uk)

The data search returned 0 records of invasive plants.

3.1.5 Fauna

In Section 3.2.2 the findings of the desk study and PEA are presented together

3.1.6 Site Context

The site is a working farm, situated within a rural area. The local and wider landscape comprises extensive arable land with pockets of woodland.

3.2 Ecology Field Survey

A daytime site visit was undertaken on 31 July 2025. At the time of the survey the temperature was 22°C with bright and sunny conditions. Site photos can be found in the Appendices.

3.2.1 On-site Habitat

On-site habitats were recorded in line with current UKHabs classification. The predominant habitats on the site are hardstanding and cropland (see Section 3.3.5).

3.2.2 Fauna

Amphibians
A data search conducted by WSBRC within a 1 km radius of the site identified no amphibian records.

On the site, no suitable terrestrial refugia are present, and a review of the Ordnance Survey mapping layer on MAGIC identified no ponds within 500m of the site - the commonly accepted maximum dispersal distance for GCN.

The proposed development lies within a green IRZ for GCN as defined by Natural England's habitat suitability modelling. Green IRZs contain sparsely distributed GCN and are unlikely to contain important pathways of connecting habitat for this species.

Natural England's rapid risk assessment tool for GCN was utilised, and the following results were obtained.

Figure 3: Results of Natural England's GCN risk assessment in relation to the proposed works

Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.1 - 0.5 ha lost or damaged	0.005
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
	Maximum:	0.005
Rapid risk assessment result:	GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY	

"Green: offence highly unlikely" indicates that the development activities are of such a type, scale and location that it is highly unlikely any offence would be committed should the development proceed.

Taking all the above into account, it is concluded that the proposed development is unlikely to pose a risk to GCN or their associated habitats.

Badgers

A data search conducted by WSBRC identified no records of badgers within a 1 km radius of the site. However, the surrounding landscape offers highly suitable habitat for badgers, comprising a mosaic of woodland, agricultural land, and arable field margins. Badger territories typically extend between 350 and 500m from the main sett, depending on the availability of food and shelter. It is therefore considered possible that a badger sett could exist within dispersal range if one is present in the woodland to the northeast of the development site. The site is not enclosed by fencing, allowing potential access for badgers, although no signs were recorded during the survey.

The development area is small and contains a small amount of commuting and foraging habitat for badgers. The loss of this area is unlikely to affect the conservation status of badgers given the abundance of optimal habitat within the local and wider area. However, if badger setts are present within the neighbouring woodland, the proposed works could result in disturbance.

Bats

A data search conducted by WSBRC identified no bat records within a 1 km radius of the site.

The on-site habitat does not provide suitable habitat for foraging and commuting bats, but the woodland to the northeast of the proposed development area is highly suitable for bats.

The proposed works will have no direct impacts on any trees, but lighting must be considered.

Birds

The WSBRC data provided a total of 114 bird records within a 1 km radius of the site. Following the removal of duplicate entries, these records represent 30 bird species recorded since 2005. A complete species list is provided in the Appendices.

Of these species, 11 are commonly associated with arable land nesting, whilst others may hunt over farmland or occasionally use it, but they are not strictly arable land specialists.

On-site, no evidence of active or historic nests (e.g. old nests, droppings, or alarm calling) was identified.

Brown Hare

The data search identified six records of Brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*) within 1 km of the site and the local and wider surrounding landscape provide suitable habitat for this species, including arable farmland, grazing pasture, field margins, and hedgerows or woodland edges. Brown hares are undoubtedly present in the area and can access the site at any time.

Hazel Dormice

The data search returned no records of Hazel dormouse with a 2 km radius of the site.

Although there is Deciduous Woodland bordering the site, it does not provide suitable habitat for this species as a key factor in dormouse habitat suitability is habitat connectivity.

Hedgehogs

A total of three records of hedgehogs within a 1 km radius of the site have been identified through the WSBRC data search, all recorded since 2014. No hedgehogs or signs of hedgehog activity (e.g. tracks, droppings, nests) were observed during the site survey.

The short, bare arable fields provide potential foraging opportunities; however, these open areas lack cover and nesting sites, making them unsuitable for shelter or hibernation. The presence of adjacent woodland and field margins significantly enhances the site's value for hedgehogs, offering essential shelter, nesting sites, and safe corridors for movement. Overall, the combination of feeding opportunities and nearby woodland edges makes the site moderately suitable for hedgehogs.

Invertebrates

Since 2019, a total of two invertebrate species have been recorded within a 1 km radius of the site (WSBRC, 2025): the Tawny Longhorn Beetle and the Small Heath Butterfly. However, due to the frequently under-recorded nature of invertebrate communities, it is likely that additional species are present within the local area but have not yet been documented.

The site is of limited suitability for the Tawny Longhorn Beetle, which typically requires mature or decaying broadleaved trees for breeding. In contrast, the site may offer moderate potential for the Small Heath Butterfly, which favours open, short-grass habitats and flower-rich margins for feeding and egg-laying. The short, bare nature of the arable land limits nectar sources, but if field edges, hedgerows, or wildflower strips are present, these could provide the necessary resources for foraging and breeding, making the site partially suitable for this species.

No evidence of Stag beetles (*Lucanus cervus*) was found on-site, nor is there any suitable habitat present that would be impacted by the development.

Reptiles

The WSBRC data provided one reptile record within a 1 km radius of the site, pertaining to the slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*), recorded in 2010.

The open, short-cropped arable field found on site provides limited shelter and is largely unsuitable for reptile basking, foraging, or hibernation due to exposure and lack of structural complexity.

3.3 Biodiversity Net Gain

3.3.1 Local Plans

In Wiltshire, the current Local Plan is the Wiltshire Core Strategy[6] (WCS), adopted in 2015. Within this, the site does not fall under any policy and none of the species or habitats found on site are referenced for special protection.

3.3.2 Statement of Degradation

Based on the site visit and desk study (including viewing of aerial imagery prior to 2020), it has been determined that the site has not undergone degradation. The habitat conditions observed are consistent with the site's natural state, and no significant signs of deterioration or loss of biodiversity were identified. As such, the site is considered to have retained its ecological integrity and does not exhibit any evidence of degradation. Therefore, the baseline outlined in Section 3.3.5 is appropriate for the BNG Metric calculations.

3.3.3 Irreplaceable Habitats

Based on the site visit and desk study it has been determined that the proposed development is not expected to have any impacts on irreplaceable habitats.

[6] https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/media/372/Wiltshire-Core-Strategy-adopted-2015/pdf/Wiltshire_Core_Strategy_2015.pdf?m=1735555642237

3.3.4 Strategic Significance

The site and its habitats are not mentioned within the Local plan. This meets the relevant description of "The habitat is not included in local plans, strategy, or policy, and there is no evidence to suggest the habitat is of medium strategic significance" as outlined by the Strategic Significance Scoring System, and the strategic significance of the site is determined to be low (1).

3.3.5 Baseline Habitats

The area to be developed included a driveway and a vehicle track comprising sealed surfaces, and a field area dominated by a mixture of species associated with arable and highly disturbed land.

Table 2: Flora identified on site during the July 2025 survey

Common Name	Latin Name
Alpine dock	*Rumex alpinus*
Common plantain	*Plantago major*
Endive chicory	*Cichorium endivia*
Fig-leaved goosefoot	*Chenopodium ficifolium*
Hawk's-beard	*Crepis sp.*
Knotgrass	*Polygonum aviculare*
Mugwort	*Artemisia vulgaris*
Meadow grass	*Poa sp.*
Sea mayweed	*Tripleurospermum maritimum*
Thistle	*Carduus sp.*
White clover	*Trifolium repens*
Zig-zag clover	*Trifolium medium L.*

Although several perennial species are present, the vegetation is dominated by ruderal and arable weed species with extensive areas of bare ground. The sward is sparse and lacks the continuous, predominantly perennial grass cover required to meet the definition of grassland under UKHabs. On this basis, the habitat is best classified as c1 Arable and horticulture - reflecting its recent arable management and early successional stage rather than a developed grassland community. Correspondence with the clients regarding the land use further reduced the category to c1b temporary grass and clover leys.

Figure 4: Much of the site comprises c1 arable land

Table 3: Broad habitats identified on site during the July 2025 survey

Habitat Type	Size	Condition	Comments
u1b Developed land – sealed surface	0.1699 ha	N/A	Driveway and access track
c1b Temporary grass and clover leys	0.4861 ha	N/A	Secondary codes: 510 – Bare ground

3.3.6 Post-Development Habitats

The proposed development involves the construction of a new building (B1) located at the northern part of the site. Most of the site will be comprised of developed land, including sealed surfaces such as the building footprint and associated hardstanding. A portion of the existing cropland will be retained, alongside the establishment of an arable field margin to enhance biodiversity and provide habitat connectivity.

Table 4: Post-development habitats on site

Habitat Type	Size	Comments
u1b Developed land – sealed surface	0.1699 ha	Retained driveway and access track
u1b Developed land – sealed surface	0.13 ha	New building
c1b Temporary grass and clover leys	0.166 ha	Retained habitat
c1a6 – Arable field margins – pollen and nectar	0.1963 ha	Grass margin established along the northeast of the site

Figure 5: Pre-development habitats map

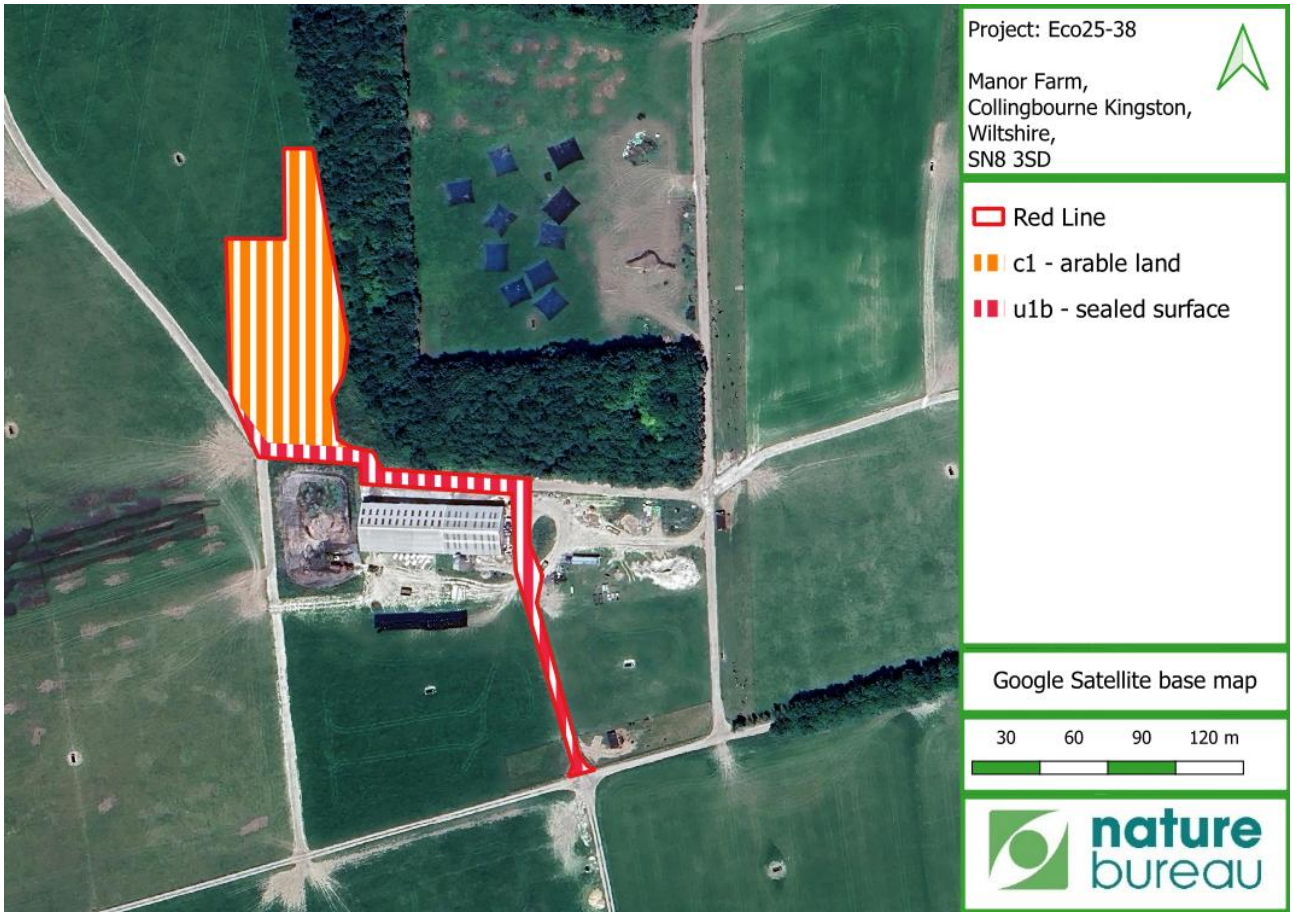
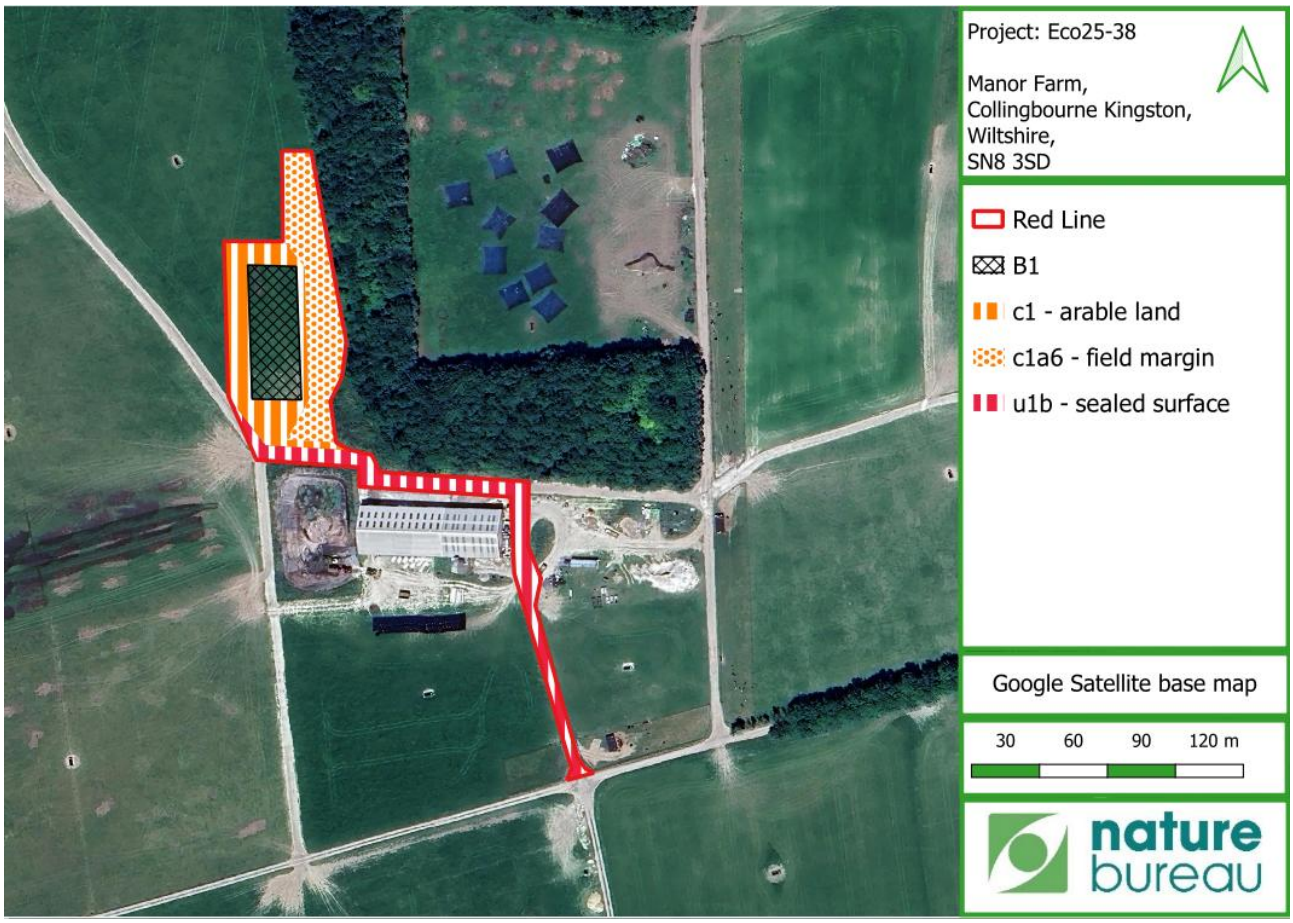


Figure 6: Post-development habitats map



3.3.7 Metric Result

The proposed development will result in a **biodiversity net gain of 12.09%** (0.12 units). Additionally, **trading rules have been satisfied** as the (created) arable field margin is of higher distinctiveness than the (lost) cropland.

Figure 7: Headline results from the Biodiversity Metric

FINAL RESULTS

Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	0.12
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Area habitat units*	12.09%
	Hedgerow units	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit	
Area habitat units	10.00%	0.97	1.07	0.00	No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

4 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

4.1 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

4.1.1 Flora

The proposed works are not expected to have any impacts on any priority habitats or notable species, and no invasive or notifiable species were identified on site.

4.1.2 Fauna

Badgers

All badgers, their setts (including main setts, outliers, annexes, and subsidiary holes), and their use of setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. It is a criminal offence to:

- Kill, injure or take a badger;
- Damage, destroy, obstruct, or block access to a sett;
- Disturb a badger while it is occupying a sett.

Disturbance is defined as activities that:

- Cause a badger to stop using a sett (e.g., through noise, vibration, or repeated presence of people or machinery);
- Affect the ability of badgers to safely enter, exit, or utilise a sett;
- Involve excavation, piling, or heavy vehicle movements within close proximity (typically within 30 m of a sett entrance, though wider buffers may be required in some cases);
- Involve the use of explosives, pile-driving, or other very noisy works within 100 m of a sett.

The surrounding landscape provides suitable habitat for badgers, and it is possible that a sett may occur within dispersal range of the site, particularly if one is present within the woodland located to the northeast.

However, the site itself comprises an active dairy farm, where regular noise and vehicle movements occur adjacent to the Deciduous Woodland. As a result, it is considered unlikely that badgers would utilise setts on the southern and western sides of the woodland. Moreover, no evidence of badger activity was found during the PEA.

Further badger survey work is not required for this site, but Precautionary Measures listed below will protect badgers – should they enter the site at any time during development.

Bats

Due to the Deciduous Woodland bordering the northeast of the site, it is recommended that any development which takes place should be considerate of bats when implementing any new lighting regimes during the construction and operational phases.

To reduce the likelihood of disturbing bats, during the construction phase there should be no temporary nighttime lighting from sunset to sunrise, and all works must be completed in daylight hours. If emergency lighting is required, it should follow the following specifications:

- Lighting should be directional, facing away from retained/neighbouring trees, and set using a steep ground-ward angle and on short columns (no higher than 3m);
- Use a lamp no greater than 2000 lumens (150 watts), using light sources that peak higher than 550 nanometres, which avoids the UV, white and blue wavelengths;
- Warm white spectrum LED (<2500 Kelvin) should be used over a cool white spectrum;
- Cowls, hoods, baffles or louvres should be used to avoid light spillage off-site;
- Use of reflective surfaces under the light should be avoided

In addition, the following recommendations should be employed post-development:

- Lighting should use sensor activated lamps;
- Variable lighting regimes must be utilised to lower lighting levels during periods of reduced human activity (e.g. 22:00-05:30)

Birds

On very short, heavily managed arable land with extensive bare ground, several (locally recorded) bird species are well adapted to nesting. Stone-curlew, Lapwing, and Skylark are particularly characteristic, as they readily nest on the ground in open, sparsely vegetated fields. Corn Bunting and Yellow Wagtail may also utilise these habitats, especially where some minimal cover or stubble is present. These species take advantage of the open visibility and lack of dense vegetation, which reduces predation risk and allows them to forage efficiently.

The area proposed for impact represents only a very small proportion of the available arable habitat on site and within the wider landscape. On this basis, the likelihood of significant effects on local bird populations is considered negligible, and targeted breeding bird surveys are therefore not considered proportionate.

Nevertheless, in accordance with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), all wild birds, their nests, and eggs are protected while active. As such, Precautionary Measures have been recommended in relation to nesting birds.

Invertebrates

The proposed works are not likely to impact on any notable invertebrates or their habitats.

Other Mammals

The site offers potential foraging habitat for hedgehogs and suitable conditions for brown hare foraging and resting. However, the area to be affected by the proposed development is relatively small and is therefore unlikely to result in any significant impact on local populations of these species, if present. No impacts are anticipated on hazel dormice. As such, these species are not considered to require further assessment in relation to the proposed works.

Reptiles and Amphibians

The proposed works are considered highly unlikely to (directly or indirectly) impact on amphibians due to the lack of suitable habitat on site.

The arable field itself offers negligible potential for reptiles due to frequent disturbance and lack of cover. The neighbouring woodland edge and field margins provide limited but suitable habitat for widespread reptiles (notably common lizard and slow worm), particularly for basking, foraging, and hibernation.

Overall, the area is considered to have low to moderate potential for reptiles, restricted to the boundary features rather than the arable core. Further reptile survey work is not required for this site, but Precautionary Measures listed below will protect reptiles – should they be present locally.

4.1.3 Precautionary Methods

With consideration to the above, the following precautions should be taken during the proposed works:

- Any required ground clearance should be undertaken outside of the main bird nesting season (March - August inclusive). If works are required during this period, they should be preceded by a nesting bird check undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist no more than 48 hours before clearance. Should any active nests be found, an appropriate exclusion buffer should be maintained until the young have fledged, as confirmed by the ecologist. 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.

- Retain and protect woodland edges, hedgerows, field margins, scrub, and rough grassland wherever possible. Where vegetation must be reduced, this must be carried out in a phased, directional manner, so reptiles are encouraged to move out naturally:
    - Stage 1: Strim vegetation down to 150 mm to make the site less suitable for basking/foraging, starting from one side and working gradually towards the woodland
    - Stage 2: After a settling period (often 24–48 hours), cut vegetation to ground level and remove arisings.

- All excavations created during the construction period will be filled in and finalised on the same day so as not to leave any pitfall traps. If this is unavoidable, they must be covered overnight or left with a sloping end or ramp to allow trapped wildlife to escape. All trenches and pits will be inspected each morning to ensure no wildlife has become trapped overnight.

- During the construction phase, any debris and brash will be stored on pallets or removed from the development area to prevent wildlife from utilising these areas. It is advisable that only building products to be used on the day are brought and stored on the site. If building products need to be stored onsite (e.g., overnight or for more than one day), they will be stored on pallets or retained in bags on pallets to ensure that refuges are not created that may attract wildlife.

- All green waste should be removed from site the same day or stored in a manner that will prevent wildlife from accessing it.

- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly, according to COSHH regulations.

- During the construction phase, works are not carried out after dusk and do not commence until after dawn. It is strongly recommended that generators and machinery that emit significant noise levels are not left to run through the night.

Should any notable species (i.e., badgers, bats, birds, newts and reptiles) be discovered during development, works must cease immediately, and the advice of a suitably qualified ecologist must be sought. If any frogs, toads or hedgehogs are found during works, then they should be moved by gloved hand to a suitable, undisturbed and sheltered area - away from disturbance.

4.1.4 Site Enhancements

In accordance with the requirements of relevant local planning policy, the proposed development incorporates proportionate ecological enhancements to support biodiversity and contribute towards habitat provision within the wider agricultural landscape. These measures are consistent with the objectives of delivering biodiversity enhancement alongside development.

The site currently comprises managed agricultural land of generally low ecological value. As such, opportunities for enhancement are focused on the provision of artificial nesting and roosting features associated with B1. The following enhancement measures are recommended:

Bat Roosting Features
A minimum of two bat roosting features will be installed on B1.

These may comprise integrated bat boxes (e.g. bat bricks) or external woodcrete boxes such as the Schwegler 2FN bat box[7] and Schwegler 1FF bat box[8]. Boxes must be positioned at heights of ≥ 4m above ground level, on elevations that are sheltered from prevailing winds, receive suitable solar gain (typically south to west-facing), and are not directly illuminated by artificial lighting.

More information on bat box installation can be found on the Bat Conservation website[9].

Bird Nesting Features

A minimum of three bird boxes will be installed to support birds. Suitable enhancements may include the Schwegler 9A House Martin eaves nest[10] (for external installation) and swallow nest cups[11] positioned internally within the cattle shed.

Bird boxes will be installed at eaves level, in locations that minimise disturbance from routine agricultural activities while maintaining suitable access for nesting birds. The precise positioning of all bat and bird features will be determined at the detailed design stage, taking into account factors such as aspect, shelter, and operational requirements.

All installed features will be retained for the lifetime of the development and, where appropriate, subject to periodic maintenance to ensure their continued functionality.

These measures are considered proportionate to the scale and nature of the proposed development and will deliver a modest but meaningful enhancement for biodiversity, in accordance with local planning policy and the overarching objectives of biodiversity net gain.

4.2 Biodiversity Net Gain

The proposed development will result in the loss of some arable land; however, this impact will be mitigated by the creation of 0.1963 hectares of C1a6 field margin specifically designed to support pollinators. This on-site habitat creation achieves a measurable biodiversity net gain of 12.09%, exceeding the mandatory minimum requirement. Additionally, the trading rules within the metric have been satisfied as the arable field margin is of higher distinctiveness than the cropland.

4.2.1 On-site Habitat Creation

C1a6 Arable field margins (pollen and nectar) are defined as grass margins around arable fields, sown with wildflowers that are of particular value for nectar-feeding insects. Grasses are likely to include Sweet Vernal Grass (*Anthoxanthum odoratum),* Smooth Meadow Grass (*Poa pratensis)*, Red

[7] https://www.wildcare.co.uk/wildlife-nest-boxes/bat-boxes/schwegler-2fn-bat-box-55.html
[8] https://www.wildcare.co.uk/bat-box-65.html
[9] https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/bat-boxes/putting-up-your-box
[10] https://www.wildcare.co.uk/house-martin-eaves-nest-double.html
[11] https://www.wildcare.co.uk/swallow-nest-bowl.html

Fescue (*Festuca rubra),* Crested Dog's-tail (*Cynosurus cristatus)* and Yellow Oat Grass (*Tristum flavescens)*, but with high cover of sown mixtures of legumes such as Red Clover (*Trifolium pratense),* Alsike Clover (*Trifolium hybridum)* and Bird's-foot Trefoil (*Lotus corniculatus).*

- **Site Selection:** Margins adjacent to woodland can provide important habitat linkages and buffer zones, helping wildlife move between habitats. The woodland edge influences microclimate and species composition, supporting greater biodiversity. Margins along woodland edges also act as a buffer protecting woodland from agricultural inputs. Shade from trees may reduce flowering plant diversity and nectar availability in the margin; however, a field margin located along the west side of the woodland will generally receive good afternoon and evening sun exposure which typically supports a variety of sun-loving plants while also benefiting from some shelter in early hours.
- **Width:** Arable field margins can vary in width, but typical guidance and schemes set minimum widths around 3m to 6m, with maximum widths often up to about 12m to 18m depending on the purpose and management. Wider margins generally provide better habitat and pollutant filtration functions. The proposed habitat plan includes a variable width margin, ranging from approximately 8m to 18m.

4.2.2 Management and Monitoring

For on-site habitat creation to support BNG, created habitats are secured through a legal agreement lasting at least 30 years. This is typically achieved via a planning obligation (Section 106 agreement) with the local planning authority or a conservation covenant with a responsible body.

The legal agreement should clearly define the responsibilities for habitat management, ongoing monitoring, and enforcement to ensure the biodiversity benefits are maintained over the agreed period. It should include:

- A detailed habitat management and maintenance plan specifying how and when management will be carried out
- Monitoring protocols to assess habitat condition and effectiveness of measures
- Provisions for access to the land by the responsible authority for monitoring and compliance
- Funding arrangements for long-term maintenance and monitoring
- Conditions covering alterations to management and dispute resolution mechanisms

A detailed Biodiversity Gain Plan may be required to outline these commitments.

5 CONCLUSION

The proposed works are not expected to have any impacts on Designated Sites, Priority Habitats or notable flora species, and no invasive or notifiable flora were observed on site during the July survey.

Following a desk study and a site survey, it is concluded that no additional species surveys are required, but lighting recommendations have been made to protect bats. Additional Precautionary Measures have also been recommended to protect wildlife during the construction phase, and bat and bird boxes have been recommended as biodiversity enhancements.

The development will result in a net gain of biodiversity totalling 12.09% (0.12 units). These gains will be made on-site and must be legally secured for a minimum of 30 years.

6 APPENDICES

6.1 Plant Records (within 1 km of the site since 2010)

(WSBRC, 2025)

Common Name	Latin Name
Box	*Buxus sempervirens*
Corn Gromwell	*Buglossoides arvensis*
Dwarf Spurge	*Euphorbia exigua*
Greater Broomrape	*Orobanche rapum-genistae*
Henbane	*Hyoscyamus niger*
Meadow Brome	*Bromus racemosus subsp. commutatus*
Northern Yellow-cress	*Rorippa islandica*
Sainfoin	*Onobrychis viciifolia*
Scots Pine	*Pinus sylvestris*
Spreading Meadow-grass	*Poa humilis*
Yellow-juiced Poppy	*Papaver lecoqii*

6.2 Bird Records (within 2 km of the site since 2005)

(WSBRC, 2025)

Common Name	Latin Name
Barn Owl	*Tyto alba*
Black Redstart	*Phoenicurus ochruros*
Corn Bunting	*Emberiza calandra*
Collared Dove	*Streptopelia decaocto*
Golden Plover	*Pluvialis apricaria*
Hobby	*Falco subbuteo*
House Sparrow	*Passer domesticus*
Kestrel	*Falco tinnunculus*
Lapwing	*Vanellus vanellus*
Linnet	*Linaria cannabina*
Merlin	*Falco columbarius*
Mistle Thrush	*Turdus viscivorus*
Peregrine	*Falco peregrinus*
Quail	*Coturnix coturnix*
Red Kite	*Milvus milvus*
Reed Bunting	*Emberiza schoeniclus*
Rook	*Corvus frugilegus*
Skylark	*Alauda arvensis*
Song Thrush	*Turdus philomelos*
Sparrowhawk	*Accipiter nisus*
Starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*
Stock Dove	*Columba oenas*

Stone-curlew	*Burhinus oedicnemus*
Tree Pipit	*Anthus trivialis*
Whitethroat	*Curruca communis*
Woodpigeon	*Columba palumbus*
Yellow Wagtail	*Motacilla flava*
Yellowhammer	*Emberiza citrinella*

6.3 Additional photos from the Site Visit on 31 July 2025

6.4 Legislation and Policy

6.4.1 Wildlife Legislation

Wildlife in the United Kingdom (UK) is protected through European and national legislation, supported by national and local policy and guidance. Development can contribute to conservation and enhancement goals outlined by these various legislation and policy by retaining and protecting the most valuable ecological features within a site and incorporating enhancements to provide biodiversity net gain.

This section provides a summary of the principal legislation and policy that triggers the requirement for a PRA, and further ecological assessments in the UK. The presence of protected species within a site are a material consideration during the planning process. PRAs and any necessary further ecological assessments provide an ecological baseline for a site and evaluation of the potential impact of proposals.

It is the responsibility of those involved with development works to ensure that the relevant legislation is complied with at every stage of a project. Such legislation applies even in the absence of related planning conditions or projects outside the scope of the usual planning process.

Legislation relating to wildlife and biodiversity of relevance to this PEA includes:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992
- Environment Bill 2021

This above legislation has been addressed, as appropriate, in the production of this report.

Bats

In England and Wales, all bat species and their roosts are legally protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended); the Countryside and Rights of Way Act, 2000; the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC, 2006); and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) (as amended).

You will be committing a criminal offence if you:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats
- Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time)
- Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat

• Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost

Barbastelle, Bechstein's, greater horseshoe, lesser horseshoe, brown long-eared, soprano pipistrelle, and
noctule bats are all priority species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) and have also been
adopted as species of principal importance in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006.

Birds
All wild birds in the UK are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or to take, damage or destroy the nest or its eggs. Some bird species, such as the barn owl Tyto alba, are listed in Schedule 1 of the 1981 Act and receive further protection, making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb these birds whilst building a nest or in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or to disturb dependent young of such a bird. The NERC Act (2006) inserts a new schedule into the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) to protect the nests of some bird species that regularly re-use their nests, even when the nests are not in use. This protection currently applies to golden eagle, white-tailed eagle and osprey.

Badger
Badgers and their setts are afforded strict protection under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. This Act consolidates past badger legislation and, in addition to protecting the badger itself, makes it an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct badger setts. Badgers are also protected under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and listed under Appendix III of the Bern Convention, as a species that is in need of protection but may be hunted in exceptional instances. Only badger setts that are currently in use are covered by wildlife legislation.

Reptiles
All British reptiles are listed under schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are therefore protected from intentional killing or injury. This is largely because of a national decline in numbers associated with habitat loss. Two scarcer native British reptiles (smooth snakes Coronella austriaca and sand lizards Lacerta agilis), are afforded 'full' protection. This legislation makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly kill, injure, disturb, take, possess or sell these species (in all life stages). It is also illegal to damage, destroy or obstruct access to places they use for breeding, resting, shelter and protection. All species of reptile are priority species in the UKBAP and have been adopted as Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006) in England (Section 42 in Wales).

Amphibians
Great crested newts and their habitats are fully protected by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019) and partially protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

This legislation makes it an offence to kill, injure or capture GCN's, their young or eggs, or destroy / damage their ponds or places of shelter used for breeding or protection. The great crested newt is also a Priority species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP), and had been adopted as a Species of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. The natterjack toad *Epidalea calamita* is fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 making it a European Protected Species. The natterjack toad is also a priority species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. The pool frog *Rana Lessonae* is protected under the Conservation (Natural Habitats & C.) Regulations 1994 (as amended).

As a European protected species, the deliberate capturing, disturbing, injuring or killing of this species is prohibited, as is damage or destruction of its breeding sites or resting places. The pool frog is also a priority species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan due to a 100% decline over 25 years (1980-2005). Common toads are also designated UKBAP species due to a serious decline of populations across large areas of southern, eastern and central England, thought to be mainly due to changes in habitat management, mortalities on the roads, and climate change.

Dormice

Common dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius* and their habitats are fully protected by both the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2019). This legislation makes it an offence to kill, injure, disturb or capture dormice, or destroy or obstruct their resting or breeding places. The dormouse is also a priority species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and has been adopted as a species of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 (section 42 in Wales) and so is protected from any adverse effects because of development.

Hedgehogs

Hedgehogs are listed as a Priority Species for Conservation Action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and protected from harm in the UK under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Under the NERC Act 2006, the hedgehog is categorised as a 'Species of Principal Importance' for biodiversity.

A recent by Wembridge (2011) shows that hedgehog numbers have declined by 25% in the last ten years.

Stag Beetles

Stag Beetles *Lucanus cervus* are protected under section 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This legislation prohibits: The killing, injuring or taking of Stag Beetles; the damage, destruction, or obstruction of access to any structure or place which Stag Beetles use for shelter or protection; or the disturbance of Stag Beetles while they are occupying a structure or place which they use for that purpose.

6.4.2 National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (2024) aims to minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity. Chapter 15 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment' details what local planning policies should seek to consider with regard to planning applications.

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

- 174 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);
- 174 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;
- 174 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;

175) Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and local designated sites; allocate land with the lease environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries; Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural beauty which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas and should be given great weight in National Parks and Broads. The scale and extent of development within all these designated areas should be limited, while development within their settings should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the designated area.

176) Specific policies regarding habitats and biodiversity comprise:

- 179) To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:
- Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation and

- Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

180) When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoid (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- Development on land within or outside of Sites of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the feature of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- Development whose primary objective is to conserved or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around development should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services provides the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and country level biodiversity strategies for England, based on the list of habitats and species listed on Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. These are considered the habitats and species of principal importance requiring conservation action.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Biodiversity Duty

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the 'biodiversity duty'. Section 41 of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of 'principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity'. This list is intended to assist decision makers such as public bodies in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act. Under the Act these habitats and species are regarded as a material consideration in determining planning applications. A developer must show that their protection has been adequately addressed within a development proposal.

Proportionality

The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to

the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.

The desk studies and field surveys undertaken to provide a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) might in some cases be all that is necessary (BS 42020, 2013).

6.5 Industry Guidance and Standards

This report has been written with consideration to:

- Bat Conservation Trust (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. 4th edition.
- Bat Conservation Trust (2019). National Bat Monitoring Program Annual Report 2019.
- British Standard 42020 (2013). Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.
- British Standards Institution, 2021. *BS 8683:2021. Process for designing and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain. Specification.* BSI.
- BSI Standards Publication BS 8683:2021: Process for designing and implementing Biodiversity Net Gain - Specification
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, 2016. Biodiversity Net Gain: *Good practice principles for development.*
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, 2017. *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*, 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester, UK.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, 2019. *Biodiversity Net Gain Good Practice Principles for Development: A Practical Guide.*
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2020). Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK. 2nd Edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, 2021. *Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Audit Templates. Chartered* Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester, UK.

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, 2022. *Code of Professional Conduct.* Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. Winchester, UK.
- CIRIA (2016) Biodiversity Net Gain: Good practice principles for development © CIEEM, CIRIA, IEMA, 2016
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