



Defence Infrastructure Organisation

BULFORD SERVICES FAMILIES ACCOMMODATION SITE – BULFORD CAMP, SLING ROAD

Reptile Survey Report





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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

WSP was commissioned by Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) to conduct a reptile survey in advance of a 'Proposed Development' at Bulford Camp, in Bulford, near Salisbury, Wiltshire. The scheme comprises the construction of eight homes with associated garages and supporting infrastructure. The 'Site' covers approximately 1.13 ha and is centred on National Grid Reference SU418895, 144419.

Following recommendations within a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) (WSP, 2026a) conducted for the Site, which identified suitable habitat for widespread species of reptile, a survey was undertaken between April and June 2026 to determine their presence or likely absence. Thirty-three refugia were deployed in April 2026 around suitable habitat across the Site, focusing on key areas such as scrub margins, which would give a good indication of species presence.

All native reptile species are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They are also listed as Species of Principle Importance (SPI) in accordance with Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 which requires local planning authorities to have a regard for their conservation.

No evidence of reptiles was found throughout the survey duration, indicating likely absence of reptile species from the Site.

Notwithstanding this, due to the presence of suitable habitat on and adjacent to the Site, connectivity to suitable habitat in the wider countryside and desk study records of reptiles, good practice construction methods are recommended, as a precaution, to minimise the effects of construction on these species should they use the Site intermittently or access it in the intervening period between the survey and works commencing.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. PROJECT BACKGROUND

- 1.1.1. WSP UK Limited (WSP) has been commissioned by Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO) to carry out a reptile survey in advance of a scheme at Sling Road, Bulford near Salisbury, Wiltshire (National Grid Reference/NGR 418895, 144419; Figure 1) (hereafter referred to as the 'Site').
- 1.1.2. The 'Proposed Development' entails the construction of eight houses as well as associated garages, hard landscaping, soft landscaping and Sustainable Drainage Systems (SuDS). The Site is approximately 1.13 ha in size comprising predominantly other neutral grassland with scattered trees and a hard standing track.
- 1.1.3. Full planning permission is being for the Proposed Development from Wiltshire Council.

1.2. ECOLOGICAL BACKGROUND

- 1.2.1. The Site is in a semi-rural location 0.5 km north of Bulford Camp and barracks. Salisbury Plain Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) all lie 100m to the north and east of the Site. In the wider landscape, the town of Salisbury is located 15km to the south and Andover 17.5km to the east of the Site.
- 1.2.2. A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was carried out by WSP in February 2026. Based on the report, reptile surveys were recommended due to the presence of suitable habitat comprising the other neutral grassland on Site and dense scrub surrounding the Site, and records of widespread species of reptile returned by the desk study. Species recorded within 2km of the Site comprised slow worm *Anguis fragilis* (nearest record 221m south of the Site) and common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* (nearest record 1.4km south of the Site). The other neutral grassland and scrub habitats on and adjacent to the Site have the potential to provide basking, refugia and foraging areas for these and other reptile species (e.g. grass snake *Natrix helvetica* and adder *Vipera berus*).

1.3. BRIEF AND OBJECTIVES

- 1.3.1. DIO commissioned WSP to complete a reptile survey in accordance with good practice guidance (Froglife, 1999 and Gent and Gibson, 1998) to:
 - Establish whether reptiles are present or likely absent from the Site;
 - Determine, if present, the population size class estimate of present reptile species.
- 1.3.2. The results of this survey are included within this report. It also provides initial recommendations on avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures, as required, in line with the mitigation hierarchy, to inform assessments within the Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) being written for the Proposed Development.

2. METHODS

2.1. OVERVIEW

2.2. REPTILE PRESENCE/LIKELY ABSENCE SURVEY

- 2.2.1. The survey comprised seven survey visits to the Site, each incorporating two elements:
 - survey of artificial refugia; and
 - visual observation of habitats and natural refugia present.
- 2.2.2. A total of 33 refugia¹ were installed within suitable habitat for reptiles present on the Site on 2 April 2026 and allowed to bed down for three weeks prior to the beginning of the survey visits. The refugia were collected after the final survey on 8 June 2026.
- 2.2.3. A mixture of materials, including bitumen felt and corrugated metal, sized approximately 0.5m x 0.5m or 0.5m x 1m were used as artificial refugia. Refugia were sited in suitable basking spots, close to vegetative cover, within habitat parcels identified to provide suitable conditions for reptiles during an initial site walkover.
- 2.2.4. Suitable reptile habitat totalled approximately 1.13 ha. The deployment of 33 refugia ensured the density exceeded the minimum density as recommended by good practice guidance (Froglife, 1999). This guidance states the number of tins used “*will depend on many factors, such as likelihood of disturbance, size of site and what the survey is attempting to achieve*” and recommends a minimum of 5-10 refugia per hectare for “*general survey purposes*”.
- 2.2.5. The location of each refugia was recorded and is shown on Figure 2.
- 2.2.6. Reptiles are ectothermic animals, deriving their body heat from the external environment. Therefore, the timing of the survey visits was dictated by weather conditions. All surveys visits were completed from April to June within the appropriate reptile survey season (i.e. March to October). Weather conditions during surveys ranged between 7°C and 22°C in temperature, with cloud cover of between zero and seven oktas. Full details are included in **Appendix A**. As far as possible, surveys were undertaken on sunny days with low cloud cover and little wind to maximise the probability of recording reptiles, should they be present. Where ambient air temperatures were towards the upper end of the temperature range, days of higher cloud cover were targeted.

2.3. DATES OF SURVEY AND PERSONNEL

- 2.3.1. The reptile survey was completed by competent surveyors with a minimum of two years’ experience of ecological survey, including extensive reptile survey experience enabling them to develop a strong understanding of the ecology of native reptile species.
- 2.3.2. Surveys were completed on the following dates:
 - 24 April 2026
 - 27 April 2026

¹ Artificial refugia are used to assist with the detection of reptiles within suitable habitat. The materials warm up and retain heat, making them attractive to basking reptiles. The settling in period allows favourable conditions i.e. suitable humidity and temperature gradient to develop and for reptiles present within the habitat to become aware of the refugia.

- 6 May 2026
- 18 May 2026
- 28 May 2026
- 2 June 2026
- 8 June 2026

2.4. NOTES AND LIMITATIONS

- 2.4.1. Survey data is generally considered valid for up to 18 months (CIEEM, 2019).
- 2.4.2. Eight of the 33 refugia deployed could not be located during the first survey on 24 April 2026. These were replaced on 6 May 2026. Figure 2 shows the locations of the refugia that were present for the remainder of the surveys. The temporary removal of eight refugia from the Site does not result in a significant limitation as these were replaced on the subsequent visits, and the density of refugia remained greater than that recommended in the Froglife guidance (1999). Thus, sufficient refugia density has been retained throughout the survey to ensure robust results and conclusion about the Site's potential reptile population.
- 2.4.3. During site visit 5, the air temperature at the survey start was 21°C and 22°C at the end of the survey. These temperatures are outside of the optimal survey temperature range (i.e. 9-18°C) (Froglife, 1999). However, this is not considered to have limited the interpretation of results in this report since other six site visits were completed within optimal conditions for reptile survey providing sufficient data for reptile population assessment. Full weather condition details are shown in **Appendix A**.

3. RESULTS

3.1. RESULTS OF REPTILE SURVEY

- 3.1.1. No reptiles or evidence of reptiles were recorded on the Site during any of the seven survey visits. As such, reptiles can be considered likely absent from the Site.

4. IMPLICATIONS FOR DEVELOPMENT

4.1. OVERVIEW

- 4.1.1. The survey results indicate that reptiles are likely absent from the Site, therefore there are no known legal or planning constraints in relation to reptiles. Information on legislation and planning policies relating to reptiles is provided for reference in Appendix B.

4.2. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 4.2.1. Given the presence of suitable habitat on and adjacent to the Site, its connectivity to larger areas of suitable habitat within the wider countryside and known records of reptiles, combined with the mobility of reptile species, there is the possibility that reptiles may use the Site intermittently or move onto the Site in the intervening period between the survey and works commencing. As such, good practice construction methods are recommended as a precaution to minimise the effects of construction on widespread reptiles as a precaution. These include:
- safe and secure storage of all machinery, materials and chemicals to prevent foraging and commuting animals coming into contact with these, and to prevent spillage of chemicals;
 - avoid storing equipment or materials on areas of potential foraging habitat (such as retained vegetation);
 - standard pollution prevention measures including controlling dust and air borne pollution to avoid impacts on the retained habitats; and
 - fencing of dangerous areas (e.g. deep excavations) or providing a means of egress from shallow excavations.
- 4.2.2. In the unlikely event that a reptile is encountered during the works, all works must pause and further advice sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

5. CONCLUSIONS

- 5.1.1. The reptile survey of the Site conducted between April and June 2026 recorded no evidence of reptiles, indicating a likely absence from the Site.
- 5.1.2. Native, widespread reptile species (common lizard, adder, grass snake and slow worm) are partially protected from killing and injury under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). All native reptiles are also listed as Species of Principal Importance (SPI) in accordance with Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. As suitable habitat is present on Site and it is connected to the wider countryside where reptiles have been recorded, good practice construction methods are recommended as a precaution to minimise any construction impacts on these species should they use the Site intermittently or move onto Site before works commence.

6. REFERENCES

PROJECT REFERENCES

- WSP (2026) Bulford Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

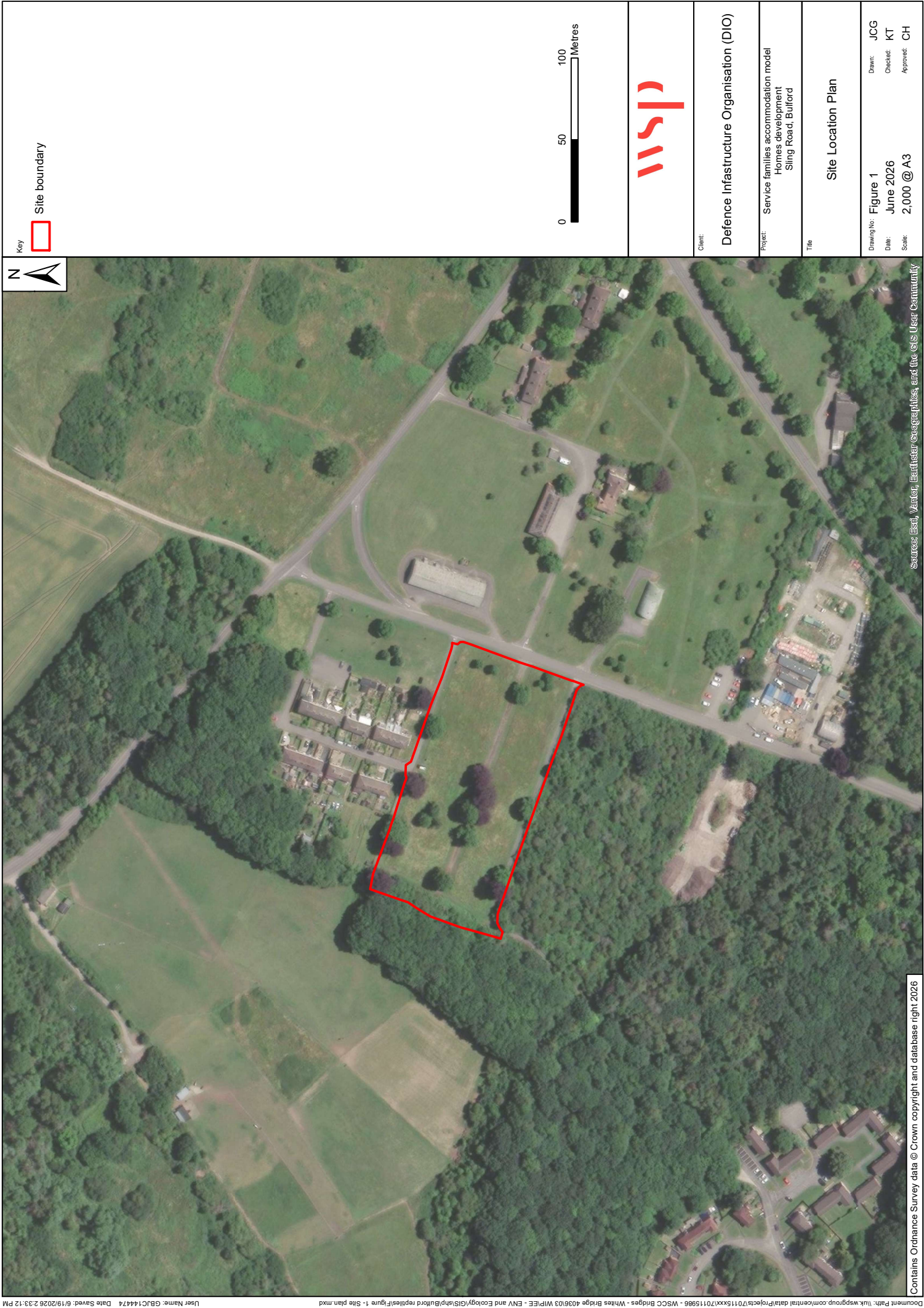
TECHNICAL REFERENCES

- CIEEM (2019) Advice note on the lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys. CIEEM, Winchester.
- Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government (2023) National Planning Policy Framework
- Froglife (1999) Reptile Survey: an introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation. Froglife Advice sheet 10. Froglife, Halesworth
- Gent, A and Gibson, S. (1998) Herpetofauna Workers Manual, Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.
- Her Majesty's Stationary Office (HMSO) (1981). Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000)
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- UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority Species List. Available at: <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5717>. Accessed [September 2025].
- Wiltshire Council (2015) Wiltshire Core Strategy. Wiltshire Council, UK.
- Wiltshire Council (2025) Wiltshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Wiltshire Council, New Forest National Park, Swindon Borough Council, UK.

7. FIGURES

Figure 1 - Site Location Plan

Figure 2 – Refugia Locations

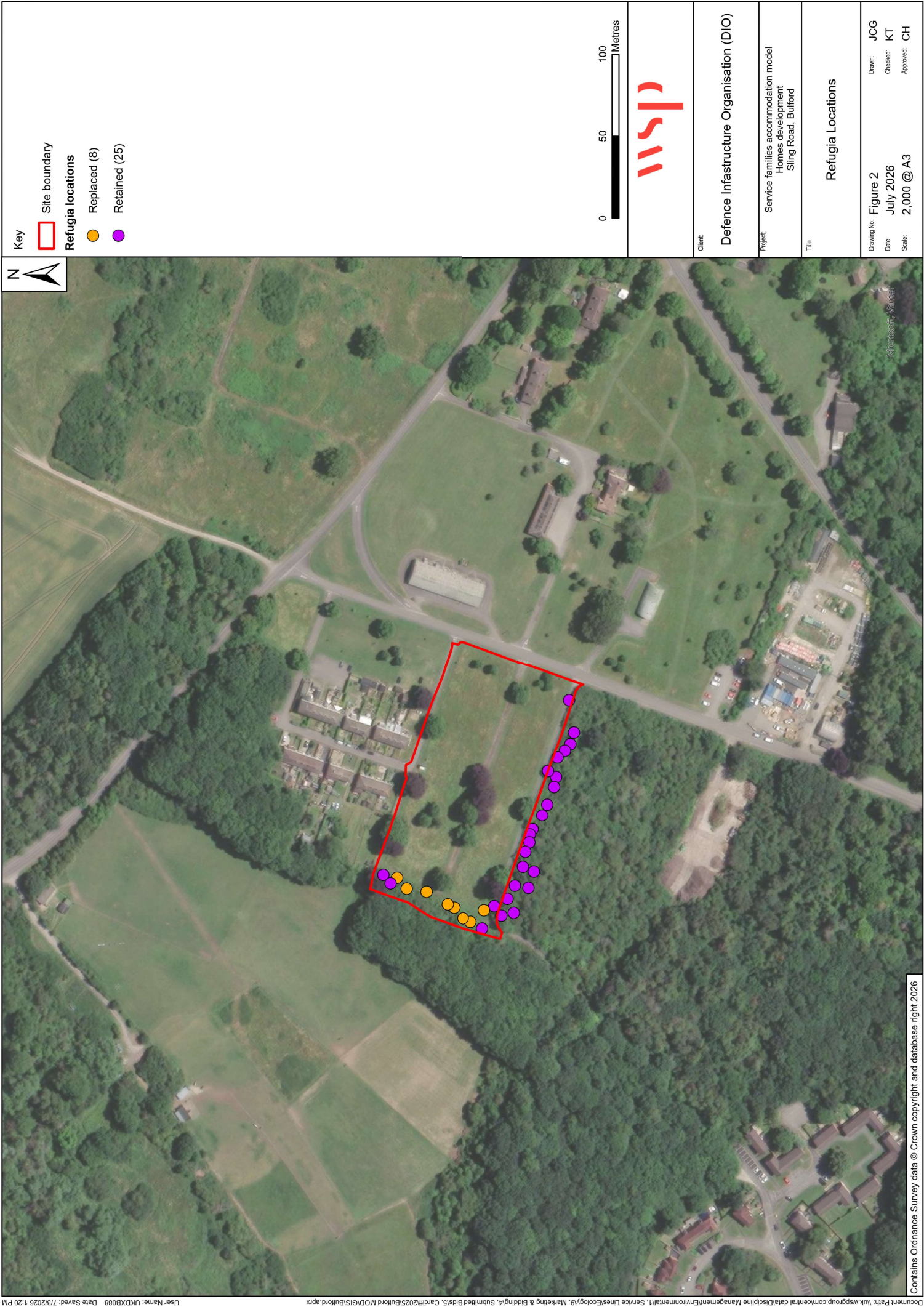


Key
Site boundary

0 50 100
Metres



Client:	Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO)
Project:	Service families accommodation model Homes development Sing Road, Bulford
Title	Site Location Plan
Drawing No	Figure 1
Date:	June 2026
Scale:	2,000 @ A3
Drawn:	JCG
Checked:	KT
Approved:	CH



Key

- Site boundary
- Refugia locations
- Replaced (8)
- Retained (25)

0 50 100 Metres



Client:	Defence Infrastructure Organisation (DIO)
Project:	Service families accommodation model Homes development Sling Road, Bulford
Title:	Refugia Locations
Drawing No:	Figure 2
Date:	July 2026
Scale:	2,000 @ A3
Drawn:	JCG
Checked:	KT
Approved:	CH

Appendix A

WEATHER CONDITIONS

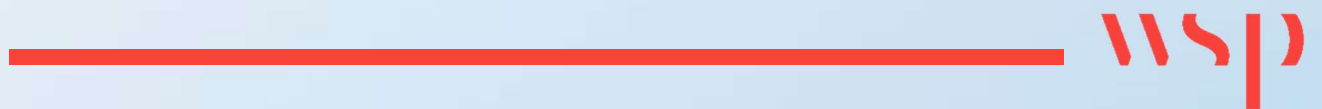


Table 1- Weather conditions during each survey visit

Survey Visit Number		1	2	3	4	5	6	7
Date		24/04/26	27/04/26	06/05/26	18/05/26	28/05/26	02/06/26	08/06/26
Start	Time	9:00	10:30	12:00	10:15	08:10	08:35	11:15
	Air Temp. (°C) (shade)	7	17	13	11	21	15	13
	Cloud Cover (oktas)	0	0	4	7	0	5	6
	Wind Speed	1	1	3	3	3	3	4
Finish	Time	9:30	11:00	12:30	10:45	08:40	09:05	11:45
	Air Temp. (°C) (shade)	8	18	13	11	22	16	14
	Cloud Cover (oktas)	0	0	4	7	0	5	6
	Wind Speed	1	1	3	3	3	3	4
Description / Notes		Ground dry	Ground dry	Partially cloudy	Ground moist. Light rain. Partly sunny.	Full sun. Clear.	Scattered clouds	Ground moist

Appendix B

LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY



LEGAL COMPLIANCE

Native, widespread reptile species (common or viviparous lizard, adder, grass snake and slow worm) are partially protected under Schedule 5 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), under part of Section 9(1) and all of Section 9(5). As such it is an offence to:

- *‘Intentionally or recklessly kill or injure’ an individual of these species; or*
- *‘Sell, offer or expose for sale, or [have in] possession or transport for the purpose of sale, any live or dead [individual] or any part of, or anything derived from’ an individual of these species’.*

All species of reptile are also listed as a Species of Principal Importance (SPI) for the Conservation of Biodiversity in England in accordance with Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Under Section 40 of the NERC Act (2006) public bodies, including local planning authorities have a duty to have regard for SPI when carrying out their functions, including determining planning applications.

All species of reptile are also listed as Biodiversity Action Plan species and grass snake are listed on the ‘Species Priority List’ in the Wiltshire Local Nature Recovery Strategy (2025). The strategy aims to:

- *“Create egg laying sites (deadwood and compost piles) if not present.*
- *Connect wet habitats such as ponds through vegetation links and create overwintering sites such as log piles.*
- *Deadwood and compost piles will be left in situ where found.”*

As no reptiles have been confirmed to be present on Site, appropriate avoidance and, or mitigation measures will be recommended on a precautionary basis as part of the Proposed Development to minimise the risk of an offence under the legislation protecting reptiles. These recommendations are detailed in the forthcoming EclA report (WSP, 2026b).

PLANNING POLICY COMPLIANCE

At the national level, the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (Ministry of Housing Communities & Local Government, 2023) forms the basis for planning system decisions with respect to conserving and enhancing the natural environment, including reptiles; the ODPM circular 06/2005 also provides supplementary guidance, including confirmation that *‘the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal’*.

The NPPF sets out, amongst other points, how at an overview level the *‘planning system should contribute to and enhance the national and local environment by:*

- *...recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services; and*
- *Minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government’s commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures...’*

A list of principles which local planning authorities should follow when determining planning applications is included in the NPPF, and includes the following:

- *‘- if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided...adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;*

- - ...opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged;
- - planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland...unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss...'

At a local level, key principles to be followed in Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (Wiltshire Council, 2015) are:

- Development proposals must demonstrate how they protect features of nature conservation and geological value as part of the design rationale.
 - There is an expectation that such features shall be retained, buffered, and managed favourably in order to maintain their ecological value, connectivity and functionality in the long-term.
 - Where it has been demonstrated that such features cannot be retained, removal or damage shall only be acceptable in circumstances where the anticipated ecological impacts have been mitigated as far as possible and appropriate compensatory measures can be secured to ensure no net loss of the local biodiversity resource, and secure the integrity of local ecological networks and provision of ecosystem services.
 - All development proposals shall incorporate appropriate measures to avoid and reduce disturbance of sensitive wildlife species and habitats throughout the lifetime of the development.
 - All development should seek opportunities to enhance biodiversity. Major development in particular must include measures to deliver biodiversity gains through opportunities to restore, enhance and create valuable habitats, ecological networks and ecosystem services.
 - Such enhancement measures will contribute to the objectives and targets of the Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) or River Basin/ Catchment Management Plan, particularly through landscape scale projects, and be relevant to the local landscape character.
 - Ensure compatibility with any Biodiversity Action Plan, Local Nature Recovery Strategy and /or other strategic conservation management plans for species or habitats that have been formally adopted by the Council.
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