



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Prepared for: Mr Paul Bevan

Bevan Transport Limited Haulage Yard
Downfields Farm
The Pry
Purton
Swindon
Wiltshire
SN5 4JP

June 2026

Grid Reference: SU 10717 89075

Executive Summary

Cotswold Environmental Ltd was commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of land at Bevan Transport Limited Haulage Yard, Downfields Farm, The Pry, Purton, Swindon, Wiltshire. The proposals comprise an extension to the existing haulage yard and erection of a new building.

The application site comprises modified grassland managed for annual hay cutting, a native hedgerow along the southern boundary and areas of existing hardstanding. The grassland supports common and widespread species but lacks a sufficient abundance and diversity of species indicative of more species-rich neutral grassland and was classified as modified grassland. The southern boundary hedgerow is species-poor and regularly managed, being dominated by common hawthorn; however, it meets the definition of the Hedgerows Priority Habitat/Habitat of Principal Importance. Sections of this hedgerow will be removed to facilitate the development.

No buildings, trees or other features suitable for roosting bats occur within the application boundary and no further survey is required. The boundary hedgerows provide suitable commuting and foraging habitat, and measures must be implemented to minimise light spill onto retained habitats.

No evidence of badger or hazel dormouse was identified, and no further survey for either species is considered necessary. The site provides limited opportunities for hedgehog, and permeability through new boundary fencing or gates must be maintained where appropriate.

The site offers low suitability for reptiles and amphibians and no further survey is considered necessary. However, a Precautionary Working Method Statement must be implemented during vegetation clearance and groundworks, including a toolbox talk, phased vegetation clearance where required and procedures should reptiles or amphibians be encountered.

The grassland and southern boundary hedgerow provide suitable nesting habitat for birds. Vegetation clearance must therefore be undertaken outside the main nesting season where possible, or following a pre-works nesting bird check by a suitably qualified ecologist.

The proposed development will result in the loss of onsite Priority Habitat through removal of sections of the southern boundary hedgerow. A formal Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment is therefore required to demonstrate delivery of the mandatory 10% net gain. Replacement native hedgerow planting and bat and bird boxes should also be incorporated into the scheme.

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Methods used to prepare this report, including those carried out in the field followed The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct.

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1 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 This report provides the results of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken on land at Bevan Transport Limited Haulage Yard, Downfields Farm, The Pry, Purton, Swindon, Wiltshire SN5 4JP (central Ordnance Survey (OS) Reference SU 10717 89075).
- 1.2 The proposals are described as the extension of the existing yard and the erection of a new building.
- 1.3 The findings included in this report are based on a survey undertaken during May 2026 by Cotswold Environmental Ltd. The purpose of the survey was to undertake an appraisal of the site for its potential ecological value to notable and protected wildlife, and to look for evidence of such species. The survey results provide information to determine the likely ecological impact the proposed development will have on wildlife species, and to inform the level of further survey effort and mitigation required to comply with relevant nature conservation policies and legislation. The evaluation and findings in this report can be used by Wiltshire Council in their view of a planning application. Survey results detailed within this report should be considered valid for a period of 18 months from the survey date (subject to consultation with the Local Planning Authority and/or Natural England).
- 1.4 The site location is shown within the Appendices Fig. 1 and survey boundary in Figure 2.
- 1.5 All survey and assessment work was completed in accordance with official assessment guidelines¹ and largely followed that recommended by the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)² and follows the British Standard Code of Practice³.

Survey Objectives

- To identify and describe the habitats and ecological features present within the survey area.
- To assess the suitability of the site to support protected and notable species.
- To identify any evidence of protected or notable species within the survey area.
- To determine the potential ecological impacts of the proposed development on habitats and protected species.
- To identify any requirements for further ecological survey, mitigation, compensation, or enhancement measures.

¹ Collins J (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th edn. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

² CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing. CIEEM, Winchester.

³ British Standards Institution (2013) BS 42020:2013. Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development. British Standards Institution, London.

2 METHODOLOGY

Desk Study

- 2.1 Using freely available resources such as the online MAGIC database, a desk study was undertaken to acquire data in relation to local habitats and Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).
- 2.2 A 2 km biological records search was obtained from Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC) to the support the assessment.

Field Study

- 2.3 Ecological consultant Jason Skinner (NE Class 2 Bat Survey licence 2025-86057-CL18-BAT, NE Barn Owl licence number 2026-88685-CL29-OWL) and ecological assistant Emily Vaughan Williams BSc, carried out a field visit on Friday 29th May 2026.
- 2.4 The field visit involved a walkover using visual encounter survey techniques. The dominant vegetation structure was assessed, allowing habitats on site to be valued for their ecological importance to protected wildlife. Habitats were classified using the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (UKHab V2)⁴, which provides a standardised framework for describing habitat types in the UK.
- 2.5 Binoculars were also used to scan for features likely to support protected species. All protected species were considered during the assessment and all wildlife species were recorded. The work was completed largely following methodologies set out by the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and British Standard Code of Practice.

Species

- 2.6 All protected species were considered during the survey. Only those considered likely to utilise the site are mentioned in this report.

Bats

- 2.7 Survey effort was completed in line with official assessment guidelines⁵ and largely followed that recommended by the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM)⁶ and British Standard Code of Practice⁷. The assessment followed the standard methodology. The site was searched using visual encounter survey techniques. Potential bat movement corridors and movement

⁴ UKHab Ltd (2023). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0. Available at: <https://ukhab.org/>

⁵ Collins J (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th edn. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

⁶ CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing. CIEEM, Winchester.

⁷ British Standards Institution (2013) BS 42020:2013. Biodiversity – Code of practice for planning and development. British Standards Institution, London.

barriers were assessed and noted. During the site visit, where possible, all suitable areas were examined for evidence of bats.

Badger

2.8 All habitats within the site boundary were inspected for badger *Meles meles* activity. Whilst on site, the search included evidence of:

- Scratching posts
- Faeces
- Latrines
- Guard-hairs
- Paw prints
- Trackways

Dormouse

2.9 Hedgerows, scrub and treelines within and bordering the surveyed site were assessed for their suitability to support breeding populations of hazel dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius*, as well as suitability to provide connectivity to nearby suitable breeding habitats.

Nesting Birds

2.10 The survey also included an inspection for evidence of common nesting birds.

Reptiles and Amphibians

2.11 Habitats were assessed for their potential to support reptiles and amphibians. Waterbodies typical of those utilised for breeding and foraging activity, and terrestrial refugia suited to sheltering and basking such as waste heaps and plastic/metal/timber sheeting were noted if present. In addition, any dense vegetation including tall ruderal and scrub that is connected to hedgerows and linear tree features was inspected during the assessment.

Limitations

2.12 The absence of species does not preclude its presence. Wildlife can be cryptic, and some species are known to be transient and occupy new habitats on a regular basis.

3 RESULTS

Desk Study

Designated Sites Within a 2km Radius

- 3.1 According to the MAGIC website, the site lies within the Great Western Community Forest, and one statutory designated site was identified within a 2 km radius; Haydon Meadow Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), a 6.34 hectare site of biological interest comprising lowland neutral grassland, located 1 km to the east of the site. No further statutory or non-statutory designated sites were identified within a 2 km radius (see limitations).

Local Habitats

- 3.2 The site is located within a rural setting characterised predominantly by pastoral fields bounded by hedgerows. A railway line is located approximately 590 m to the north-east of the site, while the River Ray lies approximately 400 m to the east.
- 3.3 A review of the MAGIC database indicates that the surrounding landscape is relatively open in character, with limited woodland cover. Several small areas of Deciduous Woodland (Priority Habitat) occur within the wider landscape, the nearest of which is located approximately 280 m to the west of the site. Purton Wood, comprising predominantly young woodland, is situated approximately 800 m to the south-east.
- 3.4 Other Priority Habitats present within the surrounding landscape include three parcels of Traditional Orchard, the closest of which lies approximately 1.4 km to the north-west of the site. Areas of Lowland Meadow and Good Quality Semi-Improved Grassland (Non-Priority Habitat) are also present approximately 1 km to the east, associated with the nearby SSSI. No other Priority Habitats were identified within the study area.

Granted European Protected Species Licences (EPSL) within a 2km radius (MAGIC)

- 3.5 According to the Magic website, seven EPS licences have been granted within a 2 km radius of the site. These are shown below in Table 1. No GCN Class Survey Licence returns have been submitted, although a single positive Pond Survey (2017-2019) for GCN was identified at a site located 800 m to the south-east.

Table 1: Granted EPSLs within 2km of survey site

Species	Distance	Direction	Year Granted
WHISK	1.2 km	North-West	2016
C-PIP, S-PIP	1.3 km	North-West	2018
GCN	1.3 km	South-East	2010

GCN	1.6 km	South-East	2014
GCN	1.6 km	North-West	2013
GCN	1.7 km	South-East	2012
GCN	1.9 km	South-East	2010

C-PIP = *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, GCN = *Triturus cristatus*, S-PIP = *P. pygmaeus*, WHISK = *Myotis mystacinus*

Waterbodies occurring within a 250 m radius

- 3.6 Through the use of aerial imagery and the MAGIC website, one waterbody was identified within a 250 m radius of the site, comprising a ditch located 10 m north-west of the site boundary at grid reference: SU 10697 89120. This ditch was accessed at the time of the survey and found to be largely damp, with small pockets of water approximately 5 cm in depth and lacking vegetation. No ponds were identified within a 250 m radius of the site.

Biological Records Search

- 3.7 A local biological records search for protected and notable species was obtained for a 2 km radius of the survey site. Only those records considered relevant to the site are included within this report.

Mammals

- 3.8 Mammal records returned within the search area comprise hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*, otter *Lutra lutra*, badger *Meles meles* and polecat *Mustela putorius*. No records of hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* or water vole *Arvicola amphibius* were returned within the search area.
- 3.9 Bat records returned within the search area comprise common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus*, Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii* and noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, together with records of unidentified pipistrelle *Pipistrellus* spp., *Myotis* species and unidentified bats (*Chiroptera*).
- 3.10 The mammal records comprise numerous hedgehog observations from throughout the surrounding landscape, together with records of otter associated primarily with the River Ray and its associated watercourses. Badger records are distributed throughout the search area, including Purton and the Swindon–Cricklade Railway corridor. Bat records comprise a combination of confirmed roosts and activity records derived from ecological surveys. Confirmed roost records include common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat and whiskered bat, whilst the majority of remaining records comprise activity surveys undertaken at Mouldon Hill Country Park, Haydon and the surrounding watercourse network.

Reptiles and Amphibians

- 3.11 A total of 12 reptile records were returned within the search area, comprising eight records of slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*, two records of grass snake *Natrix helvetica* and two records of adder *Vipera*

berus. The majority of reptile records relate to slow-worm recorded from Moulton Hill Country Park, together with additional records from Purton. Grass snake records were returned from Cricklade Railway Pond, Tadpole Lane and Haydon, whilst adder was recorded from Cricklade Railway Pond and a private garden.

- 3.12 Amphibian records returned within the search area comprise common toad *Bufo bufo*, common frog *Rana temporaria* and great crested newt *Triturus cristatus*. A total of 116 great crested newt records were returned, the majority of which relate to surveys undertaken as part of the North Swindon Development project in 1998 and surveys completed at Oakhurst Primary School in 2008, both located more than 1 km from the application site. Additional records were returned from Purton, Moulton Hill Country Park, the disused Wilts and Berks Canal, Haydon End Farm, Guernsey Farm and other ponds throughout the wider surrounding landscape. These records confirm that great crested newt is present within the wider landscape.

Birds

- 3.13 Biological records returned within the search area include several notable bird species associated with farmland and grassland habitats, including barn owl *Tyto alba*, skylark *Alauda arvensis*, lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, meadow pipit *Anthus pratensis*, swift *Apus apus*, greenfinch *Chloris chloris* and lesser redpoll *Acanthis cabaret*. Records of raptors including red kite *Milvus milvus* and sparrowhawk *Accipiter nisus* were also returned.
- 3.14 The majority of bird records are associated with Moulton Hill Country Park, Blakehill Farm Nature Reserve, Tadpole Nature Reserve and the wider surrounding countryside. Collectively, the records confirm that the wider landscape supports a diverse assemblage of farmland, grassland and wetland bird species, including several Species of Conservation Concern and Priority Species.

Field Survey

- 3.15 Weather conditions during the daytime assessment are shown in the below table. Temperatures were recorded onsite using an Elitech RC-51 Temperature Logger.

Table 2: Weather conditions during Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Date	Start	Finish	Temp °C	Wind	Cloud %	Rain	Notes
29/05/2026	10:30	12:45	18	Calm	68	Dry	N/A

Onsite Habitats

- 3.16 The survey area comprises a pastoral field located to the north of an existing haulage yard. The proposed yard extension and new building will be located within the field, with access gained via the existing yard. No priority habitats or waterbodies were identified within the survey area or zone of influence, and no ponds will be impacted either directly or indirectly as part of the proposed works.

- 3.17 The individual habitats present within the survey boundary are described below using the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) framework with the location and extent of each illustrated in the Habitat Map in Figure 2.

g4 - Modified grassland

- 3.18 The majority of the site comprises a parcel of modified grassland, formerly managed as grazed pasture and now subject to annual cutting for hay. At the time of survey, the habitat supported a moderately diverse sward with an average height of approximately 70 cm.
- 3.19 Dominant species (DAFOR: D) comprised meadow fescue *Festuca pratensis*. Abundant (A) species included meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne* and meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*. Frequent (F) species comprised soft brome *Bromus hordeaceus*, cocks-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, red clover *Trifolium pratense* and common vetch *Vicia sativa*. Occasional (O) species included rough bluegrass *Poa trivialis*, white clover *Trifolium repens*, prickly sedge *Carex muricata*, creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, curly dock *Rumex crispus*, lesser trefoil *Trifolium dubium* and cut-leaved cranesbill *Geranium dissectum*. Rare (R) species comprised common sorrel *Rumex acetosa*, which occurred sparsely throughout the sward, together with cleavers *Galium aparine*, common nettle *Urtica dioica*, cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, hairy willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum*, bitter dock *Rumex obtusifolius* and sow-thistle *Sonchus* spp., which were largely restricted to the margins of the grassland and the base of adjacent hedgerows. No notable or significant areas of bare ground were recorded during the survey.

h2a – Native hedgerow

- 3.20 The southern boundary of the site is defined by an approximately 90 m long section of native hedgerow separating the grassland field from the adjacent hardstanding yard. The hedgerow measures approximately 2 m in height and 1.5 m in width and is generally dense and well-established throughout its length. An approximately 8 m wide gap is present within the hedgerow where an existing gated access is located; no other notable gaps were recorded. The hedgerow is dominated (D) by common hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, with rare (R) occurrences of goat willow *Salix caprea*. Sections of the hedgerow will require removal as part of the proposed development to facilitate access to the proposed yard extension and associated building.
- 3.21 The eastern boundary of the field is lined by a mature and well-established native hedgerow comprising common hawthorn, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, field elm *Ulmus minor* and field maple *Acer campestre* with mature ash *Fraxinus excelsior* trees. This hedgerow lies outside of the application boundary and will not be impacted as part of the proposed works.

u1c - Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface

- 3.22 The gated site entrance comprised a small area of compacted hardcore. Due to regular disturbance from vehicle movement, this area was entirely unvegetated.

Notable Flora

- 3.23 The margins of the field are largely well-managed; therefore, no notable plant species were identified during the survey and no Schedule 8 or 9 plant species of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were identified on site.
- 3.24 An overview of plant species is shown in Table 2: Indicative plant list recorded onsite.

Fauna

Bats

- 3.25 No trees or structures offering suitability for roosting bats were identified within the application boundary. The site comprises an area of modified grassland managed for annual hay cutting, together with an existing hardstanding yard and boundary hedgerow. As such, the site is considered to provide negligible suitability for roosting bats.
- 3.26 The boundary hedgerows are likely to provide some value as a commuting and foraging feature for bats moving through the wider agricultural landscape. The grassland habitat may also provide limited foraging opportunities through associated invertebrate activity, although its value is reduced by ongoing agricultural management. Overall, the site is considered to be of low value for bats, with the boundary hedgerows providing the main opportunity for commuting and foraging.

Badger

- 3.27 No evidence of badger was identified during the survey. No setts, pathways, latrines, hairs, snuffle holes, or other field signs were recorded within the application boundary or within accessible habitats immediately adjacent to the site.
- 3.28 The site offers limited suitability for badger due to the absence of suitable sett-building features and the ongoing management of the grassland and yard areas. The boundary hedgerow and surrounding agricultural landscape may provide occasional foraging and commuting opportunities for badgers, although these habitats are common and widespread within the local area.

Dormouse

- 3.29 The hedgerow located along the southern boundary of the site is species-poor and regularly managed, comprising predominantly common hawthorn. As such, it offers limited suitability for hazel dormouse and provides few food resources or nesting opportunities for the species. An additional hedgerow is present along the eastern boundary beyond the application site. This feature is of greater

ecological value and may provide more suitable habitat for hazel dormouse; however, it lies outside the development boundary and will not be affected by the proposed works.

- 3.30 No evidence of dormouse was identified during the survey.

European Hedgehog

- 3.31 No evidence of hedgehog was identified during the survey effort. However, the modified grassland and southern boundary hedgerow, would provide some limited opportunities for commuting, sheltering, and foraging hedgehog.

Nesting birds

- 3.32 No evidence of active nesting birds was identified during the survey. The modified grassland habitat may provide some suitability for ground-nesting bird species due to the relatively tall sward and associated vegetation cover; however, no nests or other evidence of breeding activity were recorded during the survey.
- 3.33 The southern boundary hedgerow provides suitable nesting habitat for a range of common bird species and may also offer foraging opportunities within the wider agricultural landscape. No other habitats within the application boundary were considered to provide significant suitability for nesting birds.

Reptiles and Amphibians

- 3.34 No evidence of reptiles was identified during the survey effort (see Limitations). The modified grassland provides some vegetation cover and may offer limited suitability for common reptile species. However, the site lacks key habitat features typically associated with reptiles, such as refugia, well-developed tussocky grassland, scrub, or other structurally diverse vegetation. The base of the southern boundary hedgerow may provide some limited shelter opportunities, although this feature is bordered by a large area of hardstanding immediately to the south.
- 3.35 No ponds were identified within the application boundary or within 250 m of the site. A damp ditch is present immediately outside the western boundary. At the time of survey, the feature contained isolated areas of shallow standing water, generally no more than approximately 5 cm in depth, together with localised blanket weed, but largely lacked submerged or emergent macrophytes across much of its length. Some small and sparse emergent vegetation was present within shallow sections of remaining water. Fluctuating water levels, the shallow nature of the waterbody and the absence of nearby connected breeding ponds are likely to limit its suitability for supporting stable amphibian breeding populations. Given the linear and ephemeral nature of the feature, a Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment was not undertaken, as the methodology is not applicable to linear or ephemeral waterbodies.

- 3.36 The grassland and base of the boundary hedgerow may provide limited terrestrial habitat for individual common amphibians, although the site is considered to offer overall low suitability for amphibians.

4 DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

Habitats

- 4.1 As part of the desk study, one statutory designated site, Haydon Meadow SSSI, was identified approximately 1 km east of the site. The wider surrounding landscape is characterised predominantly by pastoral farmland bounded by hedgerows, with Priority Habitats including Deciduous Woodland, Traditional Orchard, Lowland Meadow and Good Quality Semi-Improved Grassland present within the surrounding area. Given the separation distance between the site and Haydon Meadow SSSI, together with the nature and scale of the proposed development, no impacts to the designated site or habitats beyond the application boundary are anticipated.
- 4.2 Habitats within the survey boundary comprise an area of modified grassland managed for annual hay cutting and a native hedgerow along the southern site boundary. The grassland supports a relatively diverse species assemblage, and although a range of additional herbaceous species was recorded, the sward lacked a sufficient abundance and diversity of species indicative of more species-rich neutral grassland and was therefore classified as modified grassland.
- 4.3 No notable plant species, Priority Habitats, or invasive Schedule 9 plant species were identified during the survey. The habitats present within the application boundary are widespread and common within the local landscape and are considered to be of generally low ecological value.
- 4.4 The proposed development will result in the loss of a section of the southern boundary hedgerow to facilitate access to the proposed yard extension and associated building. Whilst the hedgerow comprises native planting, it is species-poor and regularly managed, and is therefore considered to be of limited ecological value. In addition, this hedgerow is species-poor and regularly managed, being dominated by common hawthorn with very limited woody species diversity. This hedgerow is considered to meet the definition of the Hedgerows Priority Habitat/Habitat of Principal Importance, being greater than 20 m in length and comprising predominantly native woody species⁸.
- 4.5 The hedgerow located along the eastern boundary lies outside the application boundary and will not be affected by the proposed works. Measures must nevertheless be implemented during construction to ensure retained habitats are protected from accidental damage, pollution, and other indirect impacts.

⁸ BRIG (2008), *UK Biodiversity Action Plan: Priority Habitat Descriptions – Hedgerows*. JNCC

Species

Bats

- 4.6 No buildings, trees, or other features offering suitability for roosting bats occur within the application boundary; therefore, the site is considered to offer negligible suitability for roosting bats. As such, no further survey effort relating to bat roosts is recommended.
- 4.7 Whilst the biological records search confirms bats are present within the wider landscape, no Annex II bat species or bat roosts of elevated conservation significance were identified within the 2 km search area. The well-managed native hedgerow located along the southern boundary and the mature eastern hedgerow, located outside of the application boundary, provide suitable commuting and foraging habitat for bats. However, regular management of the southern boundary hedgerow has resulted in a relatively simple structure, reducing its value for commuting and foraging bats when compared with more structurally diverse and species-rich hedgerows. Although sections of the southern boundary hedgerow will require removal to facilitate the proposed development, the retained hedgerow network within the wider landscape will continue to provide extensive opportunities for bat commuting and foraging. The scheme additionally presents opportunities for the creation of new hedgerows following the completion of works. Care must be taken to ensure light spill onto retained boundary habitats is minimised during both the construction and operational phases of the development.

Nocturnal Lighting Measures

- 4.8 As suitable bat habitat occurs within the nearby surrounding environment, low-level lighting measures should be implemented during and after construction to avoid indirect disturbance to bats and other nocturnal animal species that may exploit local habitats. Measures must be taken to ensure nocturnal animals are safeguarded from inappropriate use of light and noise throughout the hours of night during the construction period, as well as to protect important commuting corridors for bats. Any external lighting installed as part of the development must be used in accordance with Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting⁹.
- 4.9 Sensitive lighting strategy measures during the construction period are as follows:
- Works must not be carried out after dusk and must not commence until after dawn where possible.
 - Generators and machinery that emit significant noise levels must not be left to run after dusk.
 - LED lighting sources must be used, which generally have a narrower and more directional beam.

⁹ <https://theilp.org.uk/publication/guidance-note-8/23-bats-and-artificial-lighting/>

- Light spill must be controlled and if lighting is required at night, hooded shields must be fitted to prevent spill onto nearby habitats that are likely to support wildlife, including nearby trees and hedgerows.
- Lighting must not be directed towards any bat or bird compensation features.

4.10 In addition to the above, when selecting appropriate external lighting, the following specifications should be taken into consideration:

- Any external lighting incorporated into the proposed development will be LED luminaires due to their sharp cut-off, lower intensity, good colour rendition and dimming capability.
- Luminaires will feature peak wavelengths higher than 550nm to avoid the component of light most disturbing to bats¹⁰.
- All luminaires will lack UV elements when manufactured. Metal halide, fluorescent sources will not be used¹¹

Badger

4.11 No evidence of badger was identified during the survey effort and no setts, pathways, latrines, hairs, or other field signs were recorded within the survey area or nearby accessible habitats. The site offers limited suitability for commuting and foraging badger due to the dominance of actively managed habitats. No direct impacts to badger setts are anticipated as part of the proposed works and no further survey effort is recommended.

Dormouse

4.12 The desk study did not identify any records of hazel dormouse within the search area. The field survey identified a species-poor and regularly managed hedgerow along the southern site boundary, dominated by common hawthorn. This feature provides limited food resources and nesting opportunities for hazel dormouse and is considered to offer negligible to low suitability for the species. An additional hedgerow located beyond the eastern site boundary may provide more suitable habitat; however, this feature lies outside the application boundary and will not be affected by the proposed development.

4.13 Whilst sections of the southern boundary hedgerow will be removed to facilitate access to the proposed yard extension and associated building, the habitat is considered to be of low ecological value for dormouse. Given the low suitability of habitats present within the application boundary, the absence of dormouse records within the search area, and the lack of suitable habitat that would be significantly affected by the proposals, further surveys for dormouse are not considered necessary. No specific mitigation measures are required in relation to dormouse.

¹⁰ Stone, E.L. (2013) *Bats and lighting: Overview of current evidence and mitigation*

¹¹ Bat Conservation Trust & Institute of Lighting Professionals (ILP) 2023. *Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and artificial lighting in the UK. Bats and the Built Environment Series.*

European Hedgehog

- 4.14 No evidence of hedgehog was identified during the survey effort. However, the boundary habitats may provide some limited opportunities for commuting, sheltering, and foraging hedgehog.
- 4.15 It is recommended that the project ensures provisions are made that would allow hedgehog to continually access the site for commuting and foraging purposes. This can be achieved through retaining an open design to the site, otherwise it is important that provisions are made in each boundary line (if fenced or gated) with a view to allow them to successfully commute. Gaps in fences and under gates should be at least 130mm X 130mm.

Reptiles and Amphibians

- 4.16 The biological records search confirms the presence of reptiles within the wider surrounding landscape. However, the application site is considered to offer low suitability for reptiles. The annually managed grassland lacks the structural diversity typically associated with suitable reptile habitat, including well-developed tussock-forming grasses, scrub, refugia and other features that provide suitable opportunities for basking, sheltering and hibernation. Whilst the southern boundary hedgerow may provide limited dispersal habitat, the regularly managed nature of the grassland, lack dense tussocks or habitat mosaic, substantially reduces its suitability for supporting a resident reptile population. No evidence of reptiles was identified during the survey.
- 4.17 The biological records search additionally confirms great crested newt is present within the wider landscape, along with additional common species, although the majority of records relate to historic survey programmes undertaken more than 1 km from the application site, and with an additional five GCN European Protected Species Licences (EPSLs) granted within 2 km of the site and one pond supporting a positive GCN record located approximately 800 m to the south-east. The site also lies within Natural England's Green Risk Zone for GCN. No ponds or other suitable breeding habitats were identified within the application boundary or within 250 m of the site. A ditch is present immediately west of the site, although its isolated ephemeral nature, shallow water levels (< 5cm), and sparse aquatic vegetation greatly limit its suitability for amphibians.
- 4.18 Taking into account the desk study findings, the absence of suitable breeding habitat onsite, and the overall low suitability of terrestrial habitats present within the application boundary, further surveys for reptiles or amphibians are not considered necessary. However, due to the presence of local records, a Precautionary Working Method Statement (PWMS) should be implemented during vegetation clearance and groundworks to minimise the risk of harm to individual reptiles or amphibians that may occasionally be present. This should include a pre-commencement toolbox talk to site personnel, phased vegetation clearance where required, careful removal of potential refugia and suitable vegetation, and appropriate procedures to follow should reptiles or amphibians be encountered during the works.

Nesting birds

- 4.19 No nests or signs of nesting were identified during the survey. The modified grassland and southern boundary hedgerow provide suitable nesting habitat for a range of common bird species. The biological records search also confirms the wider agricultural landscape supports notable farmland bird species, including skylark and lapwing, though no records were returned from the site.
- 4.20 Notwithstanding the above, the application site comprises a relatively small parcel of grassland within a wider agricultural landscape supporting extensive areas of comparable and more extensive nesting habitat. Furthermore, the proposed development will affect only part of the existing grassland parcel together with sections of the southern boundary hedgerow. The biological records search does not demonstrate that the application site supports breeding territories of notable farmland bird species. Taking these factors into account, significant impacts to breeding bird populations are not anticipated and dedicated breeding bird surveys are not considered necessary.
- 4.21 To avoid committing an offence, vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season which runs from February to August. If this is not possible, a pre-works nesting bird check must be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist no more than 24 hours prior to works. Irrespective of the time of year, if nesting birds are discovered, an area around the nest site should be protected from disturbance with a suitable fence (not HERAs fencing) that should include an appropriate buffer zone. Work should then be avoided in this area until the nest is no longer in use. Buffer zones in this respect will normally be 5m in diameter, and will be delineated by canes, cordon tape and signage.

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.22 The proposed development will result in the loss of Priority Habitat within the application boundary. As such, the development is subject to statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements and a formal Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment will be required to demonstrate the delivery of the mandatory 10% net gain in biodiversity value. The assessment must account for the loss of habitats associated with the proposed development and identify appropriate habitat creation and/or enhancement measures required to achieve the statutory biodiversity gain objective.
- 4.23 In addition, the NPPF (2024) outlines obligations of Local Planning Authorities to promote Biodiversity enhancement where possible. There are various options available with regards to biodiversity enhancement on site;

Hedgerows

- 4.24 The loss of sections of the southern boundary hedgerow could be compensated through the establishment of replacement native hedgerow planting elsewhere within the site. The planting should comprise a diverse mix of locally appropriate native woody species and, over time, will provide

replacement nesting habitat for birds, foraging and commuting opportunities for bats, and habitat connectivity for a range of other wildlife.

Bats

- 4.25 An option to increase biodiversity relating to bats on site would be to affix one or more integrated woodcrete bat boxes to the new structure. Alternatively, they may also be pole-mounted in an appropriate position or fixed to nearby mature trees under client ownership. Bat boxes must be positioned no lower than 4m above ground level and they must not face in a northerly direction.

Nesting Birds

- 4.26 It is recommended that two or more bird boxes are installed on the newly erected building to provide biodiversity enhancement opportunities for nesting birds. Boxes should be positioned in a north-facing direction at a minimum height of 3 m above ground level.

APPENDIX A: PLANTS RECORDED¹²

Table 3: Indicative plant list recorded on site

Scientific Name	Common Name	DAFOR*
<i>g4 - Modified grassland</i>		
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial ryegrass	A
<i>Poa trivialis</i>	Rough bluegrass	O
<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	Cocks foot	F
<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	Meadow foxtail	A
<i>Festuca pratensis</i>	Meadow fescue	D
<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	False oat-grass	F
<i>Bromus hordeaceus</i>	Soft brome	F
<i>Carex muricata</i>	Prickly sedge	O
<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	Meadow buttercup	A
<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	Red clover	F
<i>Vicia sativa</i>	Common vetch	F
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping thistle	O
<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	Lesser trefoil	O

¹² Plant names according to Rose F, O'Reilly C (2006) The Wild Flower Key, Revised Edition. Penguin Books, London.

<i>Geranium dissectum</i>	Cut-leaved cranesbill	O
<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	Sorrel	R
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Bitter dock	R
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow	R
<i>Taraxacum sp.</i>	Dandelion	O
<i>Trifolium repens</i>	White clover	O
<i>Sonchus spp.</i>	Sow thistle	R
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Common nettle	R
<i>Plantago major</i>	Common plantain	R
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers	R
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow parsley	R
<i>h2a – Native hedgerow (Southern boundary)</i>		
<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	Common hawthorn	O
<i>Salix caprea</i>	Goat willow	R
<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.	Bramble	R

*D = Dominant, A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional, R = Rare

APPENDIX B: LEGISLATION SUMMARY

Habitats Directive

Species listed in the Habitats Directive 1992 (transposed into UK law through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 and subsequently 2017 as amended) for which it is illegal to deliberately capture, kill or disturb any individual, or deliberately damage or destroy a breeding site or resting site. In 2007 and 2009, the Habitats Regulations were amended to define illegal disturbance as that which would affect the ability of a significant group of animals of a European Protected Species to survive, breed or to rear or nurture their young, or to hibernate or migrate, or to affect the local distribution or abundance of the species.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

The act to makes provision about bodies concerned with the natural environment and rural communities; to make provision in connection with wildlife, Sites of Special Scientific Interest, National Parks and the Broads; to amend the law relating to rights of way; to make provision as to the Inland Waterways Amenity Advisory Council; to provide for flexible administrative arrangements in

connection with functions relating to the environment and rural affairs and certain other functions; and for connected purposes.

Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000

The CROW applies to England and Wales only, enforcing a statutory policy for biodiversity conservation. The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) provides the framework for fulfilling the UK's responsibilities towards the Convention on Biological Diversity. The CROW Act is compliant with the provisions of the European Convention on Human Rights, requiring consultation where the rights of the individual may be affected by these measures.

The Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations 2017 (the Habitat Regulations) (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) consolidate the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 with subsequent amendments. The Regulations transpose Council Directive 92/43/EEC, on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (EC Habitats Directive), into national law. They also transpose elements of the EU Wild Birds Directive in England and Wales. The Regulations came into force on 30th November 2017 and extend to England and Wales (including the adjacent territorial sea) and to a limited extent in Scotland (reserved matters) and Northern Ireland (excepted matters). In Scotland, the Habitats Directive is transposed through a combination of the Habitats Regulations 2010 (in relation to reserved matters) and the and the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994. The Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) transpose the Habitats Directive in relation to Northern Ireland.

Bats

In England and Wales, bats and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Species and Habitats Regulations 2017 (as amended) and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Taken together, this legislation makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture (or take), injure or kill a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a group of bats where the disturbance is likely to significantly affect the ability of the animals to survive, breed, or nurture their young or likely to significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the species whether in a roost or not
- Damage or destroy the breeding or resting place of a bat
- Possess a bat (alive or dead) or any part of a bat
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost
- Sell (or offer for sale) or exchange bats (alive or dead) or parts of bats

A roost is defined as being 'any structure or place that is used for shelter or protection' and since bats regularly move roost site throughout the year, a roost retains such designation whether or not bats are present at the time.

Reptiles

All native British species of reptile (of which there are six) are listed in Schedule Five of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and as such are protected from deliberate killing, injury or trade. Therefore, where development is permitted and there will be a significant change in land use, a reasonable effort must be undertaken to remove reptiles off site to avoid committing an offence. The same act makes the trading of native reptile species a criminal offence without an appropriate licence.

Great Crested Newts

Great crested newts and their habitats receive protection under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). This species is also afforded full protection under the Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Under such legislation it is an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture a great crested newt;
- Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a great crested newt;
- Intentionally or recklessly* damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a great crested newt; and
- Intentionally or recklessly* disturb a great crested newt while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place.
- Sell, barter, exchange or transport or offer for sale great crested newts or parts of them.

*Reckless offences were added by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000, which applies only to England and Wales.

Badger

Badger is protected in Britain under the *Protection of Badgers Act 1992* and *Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended).

The legislation affords protection to Badgers and Badger setts and makes it a criminal offence to:

- wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a Badger, or to attempt to do so;
- interfere with a sett by damaging or destroying it;
- to obstruct access to, or any entrance of, a Badger sett; or
- to disturb a Badger when it is occupying a sett.

Birds

All common wild birds are protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended). Under this legislation it is an offence to:

- Kill, injure or take any wild bird

- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built
- Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird

Certain rare breeding birds are listed on Schedule 1 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended). Under this legislation they are afforded the same protection as common wild birds and are also protected against disturbance whilst building a nest or on or near a nest containing eggs/unfledged young.

APPENDIX C: MAPS & SITE PLANS

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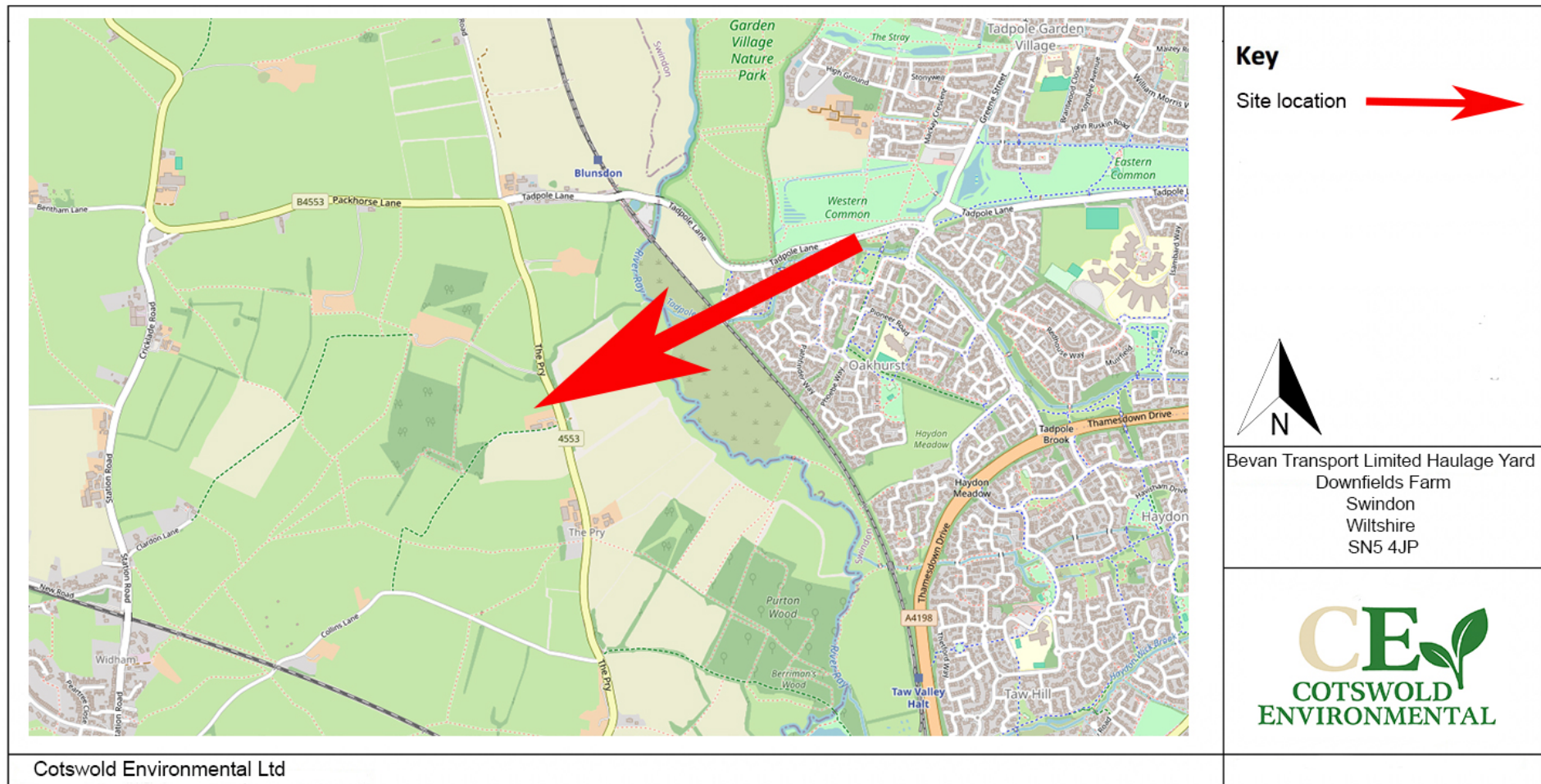


Figure 1: Location Map



Figure 2: Habitat Map

Map Image source: Google Earth Version 7.3.3.7786

APPENDIX D: SITE IMAGES



Photo 1: A view of the site from the adjacent haulage yard.



Photo 2: Compacted hardcore serving as site access.



Photo 3: h2a – Native hedgerow to the southern boundary, comprising a managed hawthorn hedge.



Photo 4: g4 - modified grassland.



Photo 5: g4 - modified grassland.



Photo 6: Native hedgerow to the east, occurring outside of application site.



Photo 7: View of ditch line, largely absent of water, with shallow pockets of water < 5cm in depth