

Utilita Bowl Floodlight Replacement

Ecological Appraisal

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NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

Purpose of the Report	This Ecological Appraisal has been prepared to inform a planning application by Hampshire Stadium Ltd for the replacement of the existing floodlighting system at the Utilita Bowl, Botley Road, West End (the 'Site'). The report identifies the relevant ecological baseline, considers potential effects associated with the replacement lighting infrastructure and associated land take, and sets out avoidance, mitigation and enhancement measures required to ensure that significant ecological effects are avoided or minimised.
Surveys Undertaken	The appraisal draws on desk study information, HBIC biological records, historic ecological surveys, updated 2025 walkover and bat roost assessments, and bespoke 2026 nocturnal survey work. Surveys and reviews included habitat condition checks, ground-level and aerial tree assessments for bat potential, review of protected and notable species records, night-time bat walkover survey, automated static bat detector survey, and checks for badger, dormouse, hedgehog and nocturnal birds.
Summary of Results	The Site is an existing international cricket venue within a wider landholding containing stadium infrastructure, car parking, managed grassland, retained trees, woodland edges, waterbodies and boundary habitats. The nearest statutory designated site is Moorgreen Meadows SSSI, approximately 147 m north and separated by the M27 (a six-lane motorway with lights). Telegraph Woods SINC borders the wider landholding and is the key local non-statutory ecological receptor. The permanent land take is limited to six mast bases, totaling approximately 21.06 m ² , with no loss of woodland, hedgerow, waterbody or priority habitat. Bats are the principal ecological receptor; 2026 surveys recorded seven bat species/genera during the night-time walkover, and 5,705 static detector passes, dominated by serotine and common pipistrelle, with lower levels of light-sensitive taxa including Myotis species and brown long-eared bat. Great crested newt and dormouse are considered likely absent from the works area. Reptiles, hedgehog, birds, invertebrates and badger are known from the wider area or have potential to occur but are not expected to be significantly affected subject to standard safeguards.
Conclusions	Subject to the implementation of the avoidance, mitigation and operational controls set out in this report, the Proposed Development is not predicted to result in significant adverse residual ecological effects. The scheme represents replacement and modernisation of existing floodlighting infrastructure rather than a new floodlit use. The proposed LED system provides improved aiming, optical control, dimming and staged switch-off compared with the existing installation, allowing lighting to be better managed and reducing unnecessary post-event illumination.
Further Surveys Required	No further ecological surveys are considered necessary at this stage, provided the current development footprint, tree retention assumptions and lighting design remain as proposed and therefore assessed. If works change such that retained trees with potential roost features are affected, light levels increase at these features, or vegetation/tree removal is required, further ecological review and, where appropriate, additional bat inspection or Natural England licensing advice may be required.
Avoidance	Avoidance is achieved through using an existing stadium location, avoiding direct effects on designated sites, retaining woodland, hedgerows, waterbodies and important boundary habitats, avoiding tree removal, and limiting permanent land take to the minimum required for the replacement mast bases. The lighting design should avoid any material increase in spill onto Telegraph Woods SINC, Westwood Copse, retained waterbodies, boundary habitats and trees with potential bat roost features.

Mitigation	Mitigation comprises protection of retained trees and root protection areas, sensitive construction management, precautionary checks for protected and notable species, covering or ramping excavations overnight, careful vegetation management where required, nesting bird checks if vegetation clearance is undertaken during the breeding season, and operational controls on the floodlighting. The lighting system should be precisely aimed, shielded and dimmed as required, with output reduced promptly after play to safe egress and de-rigging levels before being switched off.
Compensation	No ecological compensation is anticipated to be required because no significant residual adverse ecological effects are predicted, no priority habitat or linear habitat will be lost, and the statutory biodiversity net gain de minimis exemption is considered to apply because the permanent habitat impact is below 25 m ² and no onsite linear habitat is affected.
Enhancement	Although statutory biodiversity net gain is not required, proportionate biodiversity enhancement should be incorporated where practicable. Opportunities include maintaining darker ecological corridors, protecting retained woodland edges and waterbodies from unnecessary lighting spill, retaining deadwood where safe to do so, enhancing boundary habitats, and implementing small-scale native planting or habitat management within the wider landholding where compatible with venue operations.
Data Valid Until	The findings are considered valid at the time of reporting. If there are delays of 12 months or more to the project timetable, material changes to the development proposals, changes to retained trees or habitats, or changes to the proposed lighting design or operational regime, updated ecological advice and/or further survey work may be required to confirm whether the conclusions remain valid.

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1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Hampshire Stadium Ltd is applying for planning permission for the replacement of the existing floodlighting system at the Utilita Bowl, Botley Road, West End.

The Utilita Bowl (the 'Site') is an established international cricket venue and an important sporting and events facility serving Eastleigh, Hampshire and the wider region. The cricket ground regularly hosts high-level domestic and international cricket and the continued ability of the venue to host elite cricket events is dependent upon the provision of floodlighting capable of meeting the minimum technical and performance requirements of the England and Wales Cricket Board (ECB) and the International Cricket Council (ICC). The proposal represents an important project to Utilita Bowl. It is essential to supporting its ongoing function, specifically hosting next summer's Ashes, both women's and men's, as well as other ICC fixtures and all other forms of men's and women's cricket. This change directly responds to a series of operational and ECB/ICC regulatory requirements, bringing the Utilita Bowl in line with England's other top-tier cricket venues.

The existing floodlighting installation is no longer providing the level of illumination that can be reliably maintained to the required standard. The rate of deterioration in the maintained lux levels has been greater than originally anticipated. Therefore, replacement of the system is required to ensure that the venue can continue to operate as an elite cricket facility, and host matches under artificial lighting.

The proposal therefore represents an essential upgrade to existing sporting infrastructure rather than the introduction of a new floodlit sporting use.

Hampshire Stadium Ltd commissioned Johns Associates Ltd to undertake an Ecological Appraisal of the existing site at Utilita Bowl, to inform a planning application for the site. The site is located at post code SO30 3RE (central Ordnance Survey (OS) grid reference SU 47741 14077). Figure 1 provides the planning application boundary plan and Figures 2a, 2b and 2c the context of the location of the proposed site.

Johns Associates has been involved with the Utilita Bowl site since 2007 and consequently has developed a detailed understanding of the ecological value of the site and the distribution of habitats and species within the wider landholding. This Ecological Appraisal builds on this historical knowledge and survey information from 2020 - 2026.

This Ecological Appraisal Report was compiled by Alice Wynne-Griffiths BSc (Hons) and Benjamin Hough BSc (Hons) MRes. The report was also authored by Matthew Johns BSc (Hons) MSc CEnv MCIEEM FGS who reviewed the overall document.

1.2 SUMMARY OF PROPOSALS

The proposals involve the replacement of the existing floodlighting installation serving the cricket ground with a new, modern LED-based system.

The submitted lighting design provides for new mast positions, heights and associated LED luminaires designed specifically to achieve the lighting performance required for elite cricket. The proposals have been developed having regard to the location of the existing stadium stands the playing surface, the required lighting distribution and the need to control glare and light spill.

The proposals will provide a modern, controllable and more efficient lighting solution, allowing the lighting output to be appropriately managed according to the requirements of different events and operating conditions.

It is important to distinguish between the capability of the proposals and the use of the floodlights. Whilst the proposals will provide improved lighting performance and greater control, there are no proposals to introduce

additional floodlit events or extend the established operating period. The replacement system is required to maintain the existing sporting use rather than facilitate an intensification of that use.

The operation of the floodlights will also be carefully managed to avoid sudden changes in lighting conditions, which is not achievable with the existing floodlights at the Site owing to their age, specification and deterioration.

The floodlights are switched on prior to the commencement of play for games anticipated to experience reduced natural light, while sufficient daylight remains. The metal halide lamps are then activated and then have their warm-up period, ensuring the required illumination level is achieved before natural daylight becomes insufficient. This means that the artificial lighting supplements the reducing natural daylight, allowing the required lux level to be maintained consistently as daylight fades into darkness.

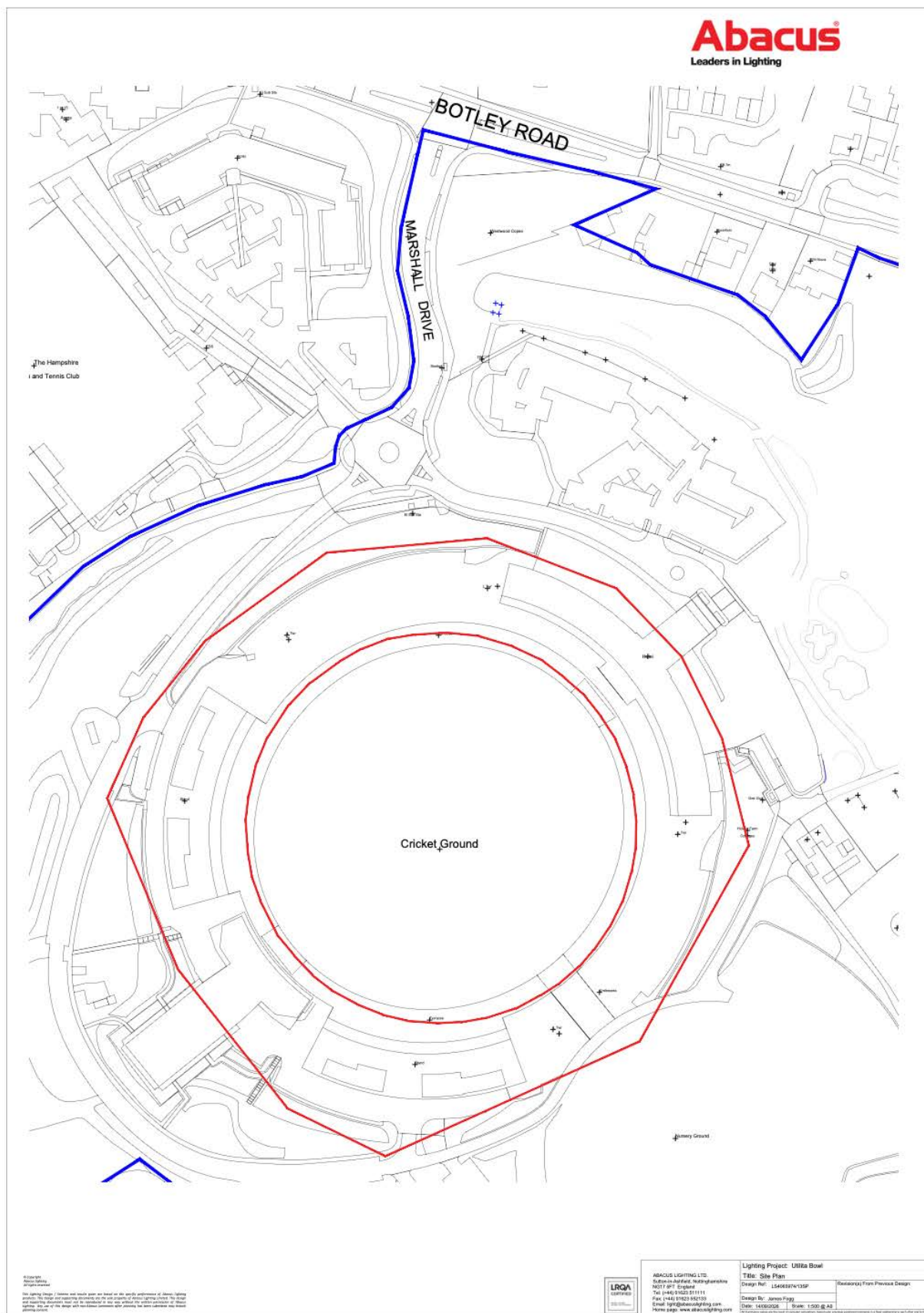
The proposals will allow this established operating procedure to be replicated. Rather than switching the floodlights immediately from 0% to the desired LUX levels, the system will allow the lighting output to be progressively increased. This provides a controlled transition from natural daylight to artificial lighting and avoids a sudden change in the lighting conditions experienced by players.

This is particularly important for elite cricket, where maintaining consistent visual conditions for the players is essential. The proposals will therefore allow the transition from daylight to full floodlighting to be managed in a similar manner to the existing operation, whilst providing significantly greater control over the rate of change.

At the end of play, the proposals will provide an additional operational benefit. The floodlights can be reduced immediately following the close of play from their full match level to a lower level sufficient to provide safe egress from the stadium and allow de-rigging and other necessary close-down activities to take place.

Under the existing system, the lights remain at full output until they can be switched off. The new control system will remove the need for this, allowing the lighting to be reduced promptly after play and then progressively dimmed to off.

This will result in a more controlled transition both into and out of floodlit play and will reduce the period during which the floodlights are operating at their maximum level when this is no longer required.



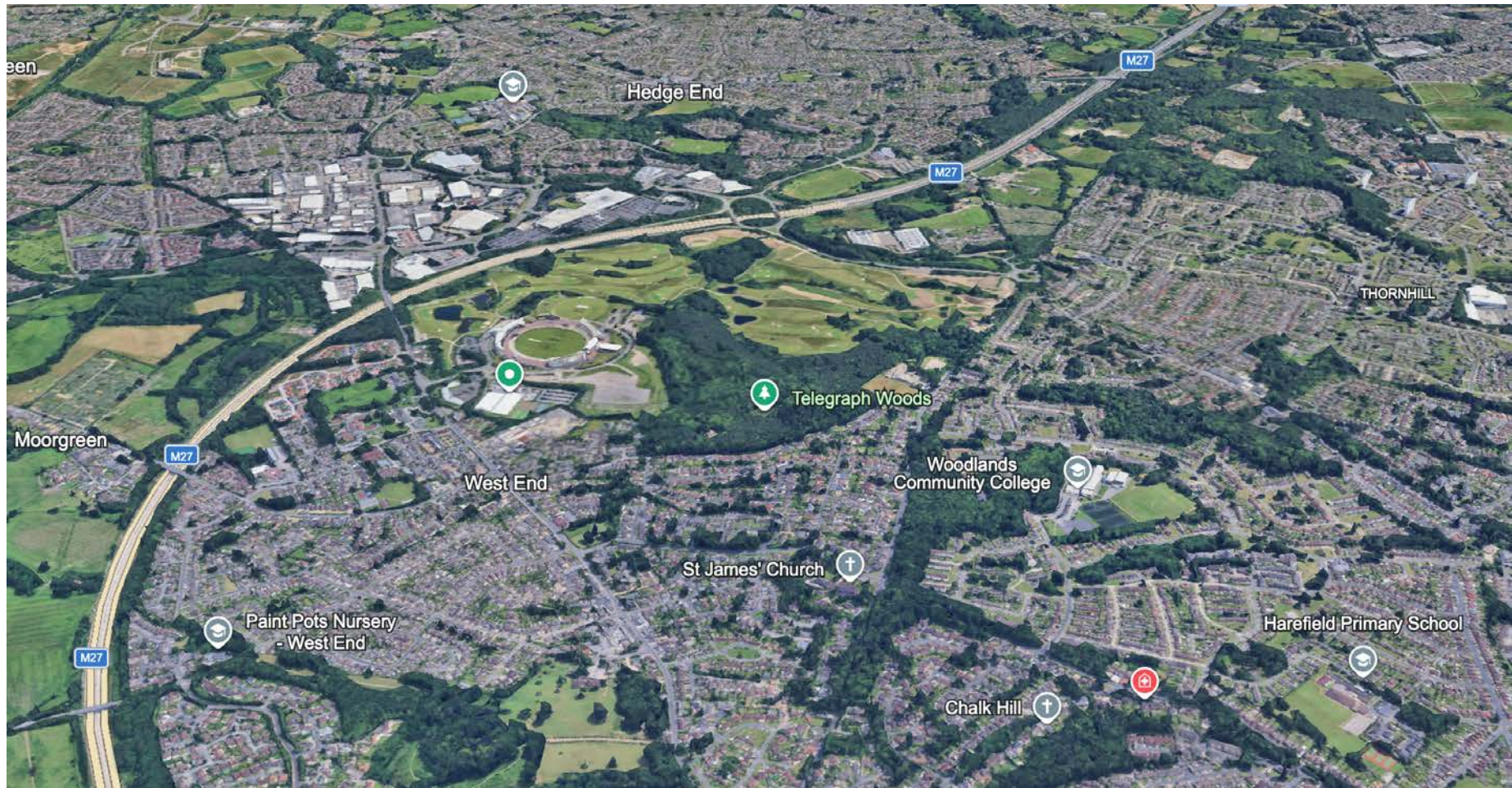


Figure 2a: Site Context – Local (courtesy of Google)



Figure 2b: Site Context – Site (including ecology survey area)



Figure 2c: Site Context – Stadium and Flood Lighting

1.3 LIGHTING INFRASTRUCTURE AND LAND TAKE

Figure 3 shows the proposed floodlight locations.

The locations that will have an impact on existing vegetated surfaces are set out below and can be seen in Figure 3.

- Location 1 - grass verge, potential effect on London Plane trees in proximity.



- Location 2 - grass verge no effect on (up to) 3 trees.
- Location 3 - hard landscaped area, potential effect on (up to 3 trees).



- Location 4 - hard landscaped area, no effect on trees
- Location 5 - hard landscaped area, no effect on trees
- Location 6 - hard landscaped area, no effect on trees

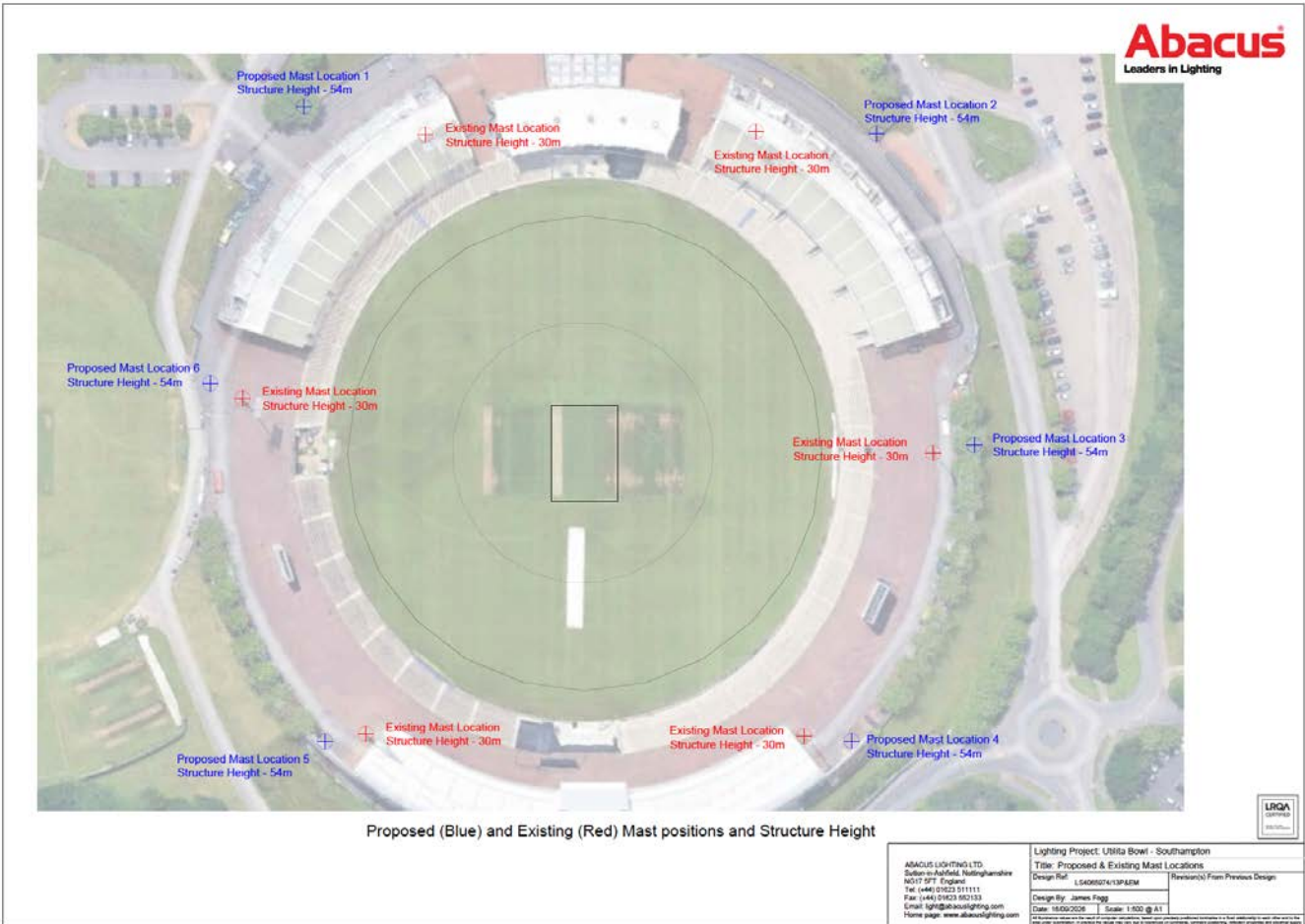


Figure 3: Current and Proposed Mast Locations and Heights

Each mast required a surface area of 3.51m^2 or a total permanent land take of 21.06m^2 . This is shown in Plate 1.

SECTION - A-A (SCALE 1 : 50)

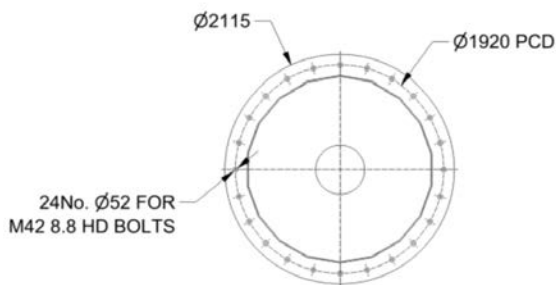


Plate 1: Ground mount for flood lights

1.4 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT

The purpose of this report is to consider the ecological baseline and to identify key potential ecological impacts from the proposed development. This information has been used to inform the lighting design process – testing this against sensitive and important ecological receptors. In turn this allows significant ecological effects to be

avoided or minimised wherever possible. The information in this report then assesses the Proposed Development with embedded mitigation to confirm likely significant effects. If necessary additional mitigation is set out and then. residual effects assessed.

1.5 LEGISLATION AND POLICY

The legislation and national and local planning policies which are relevant to this assessment are set out in Appendix A to this report

2 METHODOLOGY

2.1 DESK STUDY

A desk study was undertaken to collate all relevant existing information relating to the Site and its surrounding area. The data was used to inform the scope of the Site survey and to enable a full assessment of the likely effects of any development at the Site on any sites, habitats, or species of conservation interest to be carried out. The Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website was used to conduct the following desk study searches:

- Records and citations to a 5 km radius of international statutory designated wildlife sites including Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Ramsar Sites.
- Records and citations to a 2 km radius for national statutory designated wildlife sites including Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Local Nature Reserves (LNR) and National Nature Reserves (NNRs).
- Records and citations to a 10 km radius of SACs designated for supporting species of bats.
- Records of European Protected Species Licenses (EPSL) to a 2 km for bats and dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius*.
- Records to a 1 km radius of pond surveys conducted by Natural England from 2017 to 2019 for great crested newts (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* and records of GCN EPSL to 1 km radius from Site.
- Locations of ponds within a 500 m radius of the Site.
- Records within a 1km radius of Priority Habitats listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) Act 2006

Google Maps aerial images were used to assess habitats at a landscape level (www.maps.google.com) in proximity to the Site.

2.2 DATA SEARCH

A data search was conducted through Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) on 30 October 2025 to identify the presence of legally protected and/or notable species and non-statutory designated wildlife sites within 2 km of the proposed Site.

2.3 FAUNAL WALKOVER SURVEY

An update walkover survey to assess the suitability of the Site and immediately adjacent habitats to support legally protected and/or notable nocturnal animals including bats, barn owl, badger *Meles meles*, dormouse, amphibians and hedgehog was undertaken on 22nd July 2026 by experienced surveyors Matt Johns BSc (Hons) MSc CEnv MCIEEM FGS and Liz Johns BSc (Hons) MSc CEnv MCIEEM MRSB.

2.3.1 Foraging and Community Habitat for Bats

The overall suitability of the Site and adjacent habitats for foraging and commuting bats was also assessed to determine its importance within the wider local context, particularly with reference to the location of known roosts obtained through the Desk Study. The assessment was conducted using the criteria described in Table 1.

Table 1: Guidelines for Assessing the Potential Suitability of Proposed Development Sites for Bats, Based on Presence of Habitat Features within the Landscape, to be Applied using Professional Judgement (Bat Conservation Trust, 2023)

Suitability	Commuting and Foraging Habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).

Suitability	Commuting and Foraging Habitats
Negligible ^a	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flightpaths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flightpaths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flightpaths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flightpaths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.
a. Negligible is defined as 'so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering, insignificant'. This category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage (due to one attribute) but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute). b. For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance. c. Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten et al., 2016 and Jansen et al., 2022). Common pipistrelle swarming has been observed in the UK (Bell, 2022 and Tomlison, 2020) and winter hibernation of numbers of this species has been detected at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland (National Trust, 2018). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK, but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in prominent buildings in the landscape, urban or otherwise.	

Based on these criteria it was judged that the Application Site offered moderate suitability for bats.

2.3.2 Historic and Bespoke Bat Surveys

The historic surveys are seen to be compatible with the 2023 Bat Survey Guidelines (Table 1). The survey design considerations are described in

Table 2 for Moderate Suitability Habitat.

Although historic data exists, due to the potential for the Site to be used for commuting and foraging bats, the historic automated detector surveys were augmented with a bespoke set of automated bat detector surveys across a period in July and August where the stadium lights were known to be on and off.

In addition a nighttime bat walkover survey was completed on July 22nd 2026 with representative photographs taken alongside descriptions of bat activity. The locations and habitat descriptions of the automated detectors for the 2026 survey are detailed in Table 3.

Table 2: Guidelines on the Minimum Number of Repeats for Activity Surveys (BCT, 2023)

Survey Type	Low suitability habitat for bats	Moderate suitability habitat for bats	High suitability habitat for bats
NBW	One survey visit per season (spring-April/May, summer-June/July/August, autumn-September/October) ^c . Further surveys may be required if these visits, or the results of static detector surveys, reveal activity of interest that requires more observation on site.		
Automated/static bat detector surveyed	Data to be collected for a minimum of five consecutive nights per season (spring-April/May, summer-June/July/August, autumn-September/October) ^c in appropriate (or the best available) weather condition for bats.	Data to be collected for a minimum of five consecutive nights per month (April to October) ^c in appropriate (or the best available) weather conditions for bats.	
The same locations should be used for each survey for comparison.			
^a If bat habitat has been classified as having low suitability for bats, particularly on small sites with relatively few features, an ecologist should make a professional judgement on how to proceed based on all of the evidence available. It may or may not be appropriate for bat activity surveys to be carried out in low suitability habitats. However, caution should be exercised in fringe areas (e.g. some areas of Scotland) where low suitability habitat for bats may be important to local bat populations due to the relative scarcity of better habitats. In such situations, bats are likely to also be more widely dispersed and may use a larger number of sites, therefore survey effort may actually need to be increased to detect use on the proposed site in question.			
^b A survey visit should aim to cover all habitats represented in the survey area that could be impacted by the proposed activities. This may consist of a single walkover carried out on a single night for small sites (e.g. small housing developments) with low habitat diversity but could range up to multiple walkovers carried out over one or several nights (depending on number of ecologists) on a larger site (e.g. road schemes) with greater habitat diversity.			
^c April and October surveys are both weather- and location-dependent. Conditions may become more unsuitable in these months, particularly in northern England and Scotland. Surveys in the shoulder seasons may, however, help to identify activity close to transitional or hibernation roosts or help to understand how bats adapt their behaviour in different weather conditions. Professional judgement should be used on the necessity for surveys during these months.			
^d detector locations should be assigned to provide a representative sample of all habitats in the survey area that could be impacted by the proposed activities. This could mean a single detector location at a small site with only one habitat represented but could range up to many detector locations on larger sites. Automated/static surveys are useful when assessing collision risk EG detectors can be placed at crossing points on proposed roads or railways. However, these surveys should generally be complemented by manual surveys where observations of how bats interact with the site can be made.			
Note: multiple survey visits should be separated by at least three weeks, preferably longer, to observe temporal changes in activity.			

The number of detectors used for a static survey was determined using expert judgement on the habitats present within the Site and the predicted impact of the development. In this case, three static detectors were used for the static survey. Static Detector 1 was located in the northern corner of the Site adjacent to the B3035. Static detector 2 was located to the east of the Site on the golf course. Static detector 3 was located in the western corner of the Site adjacent to Telegraph Woods.

Table 3: Automated Detector Locations

Static Number	Grid Reference	Location Description
1 - Tree control	SU 47769 14310	SM Mini detector placed in the northern corner of the Site adjacent to the B3035. Microphone placed at 1.5m in height facing south.

Static Number	Grid Reference	Location Description
2 - Front of hotel	SU 48009 14116	SM Mini detector placed in the east of the Site on the golf course. Microphone placed at 1.5m in height facing west.
3 - Rear of telegraph pole	SU 47315 14060	SM Mini detector placed in the western corner of the Site adjacent to Telegraph Woods. Microphone placed at 1.5m in height facing east.

2.3.3 Recording Analysis

All echolocation calls were recorded and subsequently analysed to species/genus (Table 4) where possible, with a satisfactory level of confidence, using the established call parameters for UK bat species (Barataud, 2016; Middleton, Froud, & French, 2014; and Mitchell-Jones, 2004).

Recordings were analysed using the BioSonic, an AI tool providing accurate species identification and data management in acoustic monitoring. Recordings were analysed using BioSonic, an AI-based acoustic analysis platform for bat monitoring. BioSonic uses deep-learning AI trained on a large, internationally sourced dataset of bat recordings to identify and classify bat calls by

- Identification of social bat calls, reducing the chance of them being misidentified in error as another species.
- Warnings where species are rare or unexpected based on region-specific data, which facilitates checking of high-profile records and cases where confidence in the identification is low.
- Identification of all species per file including quieter species such as Barbastelle and Plecotus spp., and not just the call with the strongest signal.

Identification of recordings is not always possible to species level (e.g. for *Myotis* spp., *Plecotus* spp. and *Nyctalus* spp.), therefore some recordings have been classified to genus level only. This is due to the echolocation of these species groups alone is not adequate to be able classify to species level without other identification factors. Noise files have not been included in the classification and have been removed from the project files.

Table 4: UK Bat Species and Genus Classification

Scientific Name	Common Name
Species level classification	
<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Common pipistrelle
<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	Soprano pipistrelle
<i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>	Nathusius's pipistrelle
<i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>	Serotine
<i>Barbastella barbastellus</i>	Barbastelle
<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>	Lesser horseshoe
<i>Rhinolophus ferrumequinum</i>	Greater horseshoe
Genus Level classification	
<i>Myotis</i> spp.	All UK species of <i>Myotis</i> bat
<i>Nyctalus</i> spp.	Noctule and Leisler's
<i>Plecotus</i> spp.	Brown long-eared and grey long-eared

2.3.4 Limitations Constraints and Assumptions

The summer of 2026 was exceptionally hot and dry which may have influenced the behaviour of bats.

Although the summer 2026 bat surveys are limited in duration, they provide a critical comparison between bat activity and diversity when the existing stadium lights are both off and on. This can then be considered in terms of the historic dataset.

The findings of this report are considered valid at the time of submitting this report. Should there be delays to the project timetable and/or implementation of the proposed development, updated desk study and/or survey work may be required. In this instance, advice should be sought to ensure the data, recommendations and conclusions set out in this report remain valid.

It has been assumed that the development proposals are as described in this document and that all proposed mitigation and enhancement measures will be implemented in full. No other limitations or constraints with regard to the field survey or desk study were encountered and therefore the assessment is considered valid.

3 RESULTS

3.1 DESK STUDY

3.1.1 Statutory Designated Sites

One statutory Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) were present within 2 km of the Site. Four international designated sites were recorded within 5 km of the Site. No Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) for bats were identified within 10km of the Site; a summary is provided in Table 5.

Table 5: Statutory Designated Sites.

Statutory Designated Site Name	Reason for Designation	Location from the Site
SACs, SPAs, Ramsar		
River Itchen (SAC)	The Itchen is a classic example of a sub-type 1 chalk river. The river is dominated throughout by aquatic <i>Ranunculus</i> species. The headwaters contain pond water-crowfoot <i>R. peltatus</i> , whilst two <i>Ranunculus</i> species occur further downstream: stream water-crowfoot <i>R. penicillatus</i> ssp. <i>pseudofluitans</i> , a species especially characteristic of calcium-rich rivers, and river water-crowfoot <i>R. fluitans</i> .	2.6 km northwest
Solent and Dorset Coast Maritime (SPA)	Regularly supports more than 1% of the Great Britain breeding populations of three species listed in Annex I of the Birds Directive: breeding sandwich, common and little terns. Therefore, the site qualifies for SPA Classification in accordance with the UK SPA selection guidelines (stage 1.1). The Solent and Dorset Coast SPA was formally designated in February 2020. The SPA is located on the south coast within the English Channel, comprising approximately 255 square nautical miles (SNM) and extending from the Isle of Purbeck in the West to Bognor Regis in the East, following the coastline on either side to the Isle of Wight and into Southampton Water. The SPA is intended to protect important foraging areas at sea used by breeding colonies in nearby SPA.	3.5km southeast
Solent & Southampton Water (SPA and Ramsar Site)	The site is of European importance because it qualifies under article 4.1 of the Birds Directive (79/409/EEC). It is used regularly by 1% or more of the Great Britain population of a species listed in Annex I in any season: Mediterranean gull <i>Larus melanocephalus</i> , sandwich tern <i>Sterna sanvicensis</i> , common tern <i>Sterna Hirundo</i> , little tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i> , roseate tern <i>Sterna dougalli</i> . The site also qualifies under article 4.2 as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the biogeographic population of a regularly occurring migratory species in any season: dark-bellied brent geese <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i> , teal <i>Anas crecca</i> , ringed plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i> and black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i> . The site is regularly used by over 20,000 waterfowl or 20,000 seabirds in any season.	3.6 km southeast

Statutory Designated Site Name	Reason for Designation	Location from the Site
Solent Maritime (SAC)	The Solent is designated for its unusually diverse estuarine system, supporting extensive mudflats, eelgrass beds, sand and shingle spits, and rare features such as uncommon sponges and a Sabellaria spinulosa reef. It is the UK's only site for Spartina alterniflora and one of the few where S. maritima, S. x townsendii, and S. anglica occur together. The area also contains one of southern England's largest concentrations of largely un-grazed Atlantic salt meadows, with communities dominated by sea-purslane, sea-lavender, and thrift, plus rare transitions to reed-swamp, alluvial woodland, and coastal grassland. Additional qualifying habitats include submerged sandbanks, intertidal flats, coastal lagoons, drift-line and stony-bank vegetation, Salicornia communities, and shifting white dunes, and the site also supports Desmoulin's whorl snail (Vertigo moulinsiana).	3.6 km southeast
SSSIs, NNR, LNR		
Moorgreen Meadows (SSSI)	The Site is separated from this SSSI by the M27 motorway. The SSSI is 14ha in size comprising neutral meadows and alder wood surrounding a small tributary of the River Hamble. The sward is of scientific importance for its populations of marsh orchids, including examples such as northern marsh orchid, Dactylorhiza purpurella, along with other species of Dactylorhiza. On this site can be found hybrids between many species of marsh orchid, making it a centre of micro-evolution.	147 m north
Wildern Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	Wildern is a 10ha wetland habitat site comprising ponds, flood meadows woodlands and a valley mire, all linked by streams. It supports a variety of finches, including goldfinch Carduelis carduelis, chaffinch Fringilla coelebs and greenfinch Chloris chloris. It also supports a range of invertebrates including purple hairstreak Favonius quercus, large skipper Ochloides sylvanus and golden-ringed dragonfly Cordulegaster boltonii.	800 m southeast
Netley Common (LNR)	Netley Common is a 12.75ha urban fringe site comprising the last remaining open heathland in the local area, including habitats such as grassland, scrub and mixed woodland. The fragmented heathland is particularly rare and is of national biodiversity importance, along with its role of hosting a variety of wildlife; for these reasons it has LNR status.	1.9 km south

3.1.2 Non-Statutory Designated Sites

There were 28 non-statutory Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) identified within 2 km of the Site. These SINCs are described in more detail in Table 4-1. The SINC criteria are detailed in Table 6.

Table 6: Non-statutory Designated SINCs within 2 km

SINC name	Reason for Designation	Location from the Site
Telegraph Woods	1D/3Bi	Bordered to the south
West End Covered Reservoir	2B/6A	400 m southwest
Moorgreen Woodlands	1A/1Cii	700 m east
Harefield Copse	1B	720 m south
Hogsty Corner	1A/1Cii/3B/5Ai/5Bii	820 southeast
Hatch Grange Meadows	1Cii/2B	1 km northwest
Wildern Nature Park	1B/1Cii/5Biii	1.067 km southeast
Bridget Mary Garden	1Cii/5Biii	1.12 km southeast
Thornhill Park Plantation	2B/7A	1.25 km southwest
Meadow adjacent to Home Covert	2B	1.28 km north

Winslowe House Meadow	2A	1.3 km north
Home Covert, West End	1A	1.35 km north
West End Copse	1A/1B	1.38 km west
Dumbleton's Copse	3Bii	1.45 km south
Dummers Copse North	1A/1B/1Cii	1.53 km northwest
Dummers Copse South	1A	1.55 km northwest
Bottom Copse/Bushy Copse	1A/1Cii	1.58 km east
Withybed Covert/Ridgeway Copse	1A	1.62 km north
Copse by Oaklands House	1A/1Cii	1.69 km north
Bushy Copse, West End	1A	1.7 km north
Chalcroft Distribution Park	1B	1.75 km north
Itchen Valley Country Park	2B/5A/5B/6A	1.84 km north
Sholing Common	2B/7A	1.86 km southwest
Round Copse, West End	1A	1.88 km north
Netley Hill Heath	3A/3Bi	1.9 km south
IVCP South Parkland East	2B	1.98 km north west
Netley Common, Southampton	2B/3A/3Bii/5B	1.98 km south
Netley Common, Hound	2B/3A/3Bii/5B	1.98 km south

Table 7: SINC Criteria

Classification	Main Type	Criteria
1A	Woodland	Ancient semi-natural woodlands.
1B	Woodland	Other woodland where there is a significant element of ancient seminatural woodland surviving.
1Cii	Woodland	Other semi-natural woodland if; (ii) they comprise important community types of restricted distribution in the county, such as yew woods and alder swamp woods
1D	Woodland	Pasture woodland and wooded commons not included in any of the above which are of considerable biological and historical interest.
2A	Grassland	Agriculturally unimproved grasslands
2B	Grassland	Semi-improved grasslands which retain a significant element of unimproved grassland.
3B	Heathland	Areas of heathland which are afforested or have succeeded to woodland.
5A	Wetlands	Areas of open freshwater (e.g. lakes, ponds, canals, rivers, streams and ditches) which support outstanding assemblages of floating/submerged/emergent plant species, invertebrates, birds or amphibians.
5Ai	Wetlands	Areas of open freshwater which support good floristic assemblages.
5B	Wetlands	Fens, flushes, seepages, springs, inundation grasslands etc. that support a flora and fauna characteristic of unimproved and waterlogged (seasonal or permanent) conditions.
5Bii	Wetlands	Spring-fed fens and flushes
5Biii	Wetlands	Purple moor-grass and rush pasture
6A	Species and assemblages	Sites which support one or more notable species.
7A	Species and assemblages	Sites of nature conservation interest which occur in areas otherwise deficient in such interest and known to be of particularly high value to local communities e.g. community wildlife sites.

3.1.3 Protected and Notable Species Records

HBIC provided records of notable and legally protected species from the area extending 2 km from the Site over the last 10 years. The results are summarised in Table 8.

Table 8: Records of legally protected and/ or notable species obtained through the Desk Study

Species/Groups	Details
Amphibians	There was one record of great crested newt from within 2 km of the Site in the last 10 years, located 1.18 km to the south of the Site within Wildern Local Nature Reserve, recorded in 2023. In addition, the data search returned five records of common toad <i>Bufo bufo</i> .
Badger	There were 13 records of badger from within 2 km of the Site in the last 10 years, the nearest of which was recorded 320 m to the south in 2017.
Bats	There were 14 bat roost records returned from within 2 km of the Site in the last 10 years for common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> , soprano pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i> , serotine <i>Eptesicus serotinus</i> and brown long-eared <i>Plecotus auritus</i> . Other bat species recorded foraging and commuting within 2 km of the Site include Myotis bat species, noctule <i>Nyctalus noctula</i> , Nathusius's pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i> and barbastelle <i>Barbastella barbastellus</i> .
Birds	There were over 5000 records of birds from within 2 km of the Site. The following S41 NERC bird species were recorded within close proximity to the Site, to a 1 km precision: lesser redpoll <i>Acanthis cabaret</i> , hawfinch <i>Coccythraustes coccythraustes</i> , woodlark <i>Lullula arborea</i> , spotted flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i> , house sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i> and bullfinch <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula pileata</i> . Other red-listed species recorded to a 1 km precision included swift <i>Apus apus</i> , greenfinch <i>Chloris chloris</i> , house martin <i>Delichon urbicum</i> , herring gull <i>Larus argentatus</i> , woodcock <i>Scolopax rusticola</i> , starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> , fieldfare <i>Turdus pilaris</i> and mistle thrush <i>Turdus viscivorus</i> .
Reptiles	The data search returned 140 records of reptiles from within 2 km of the Site including 116 records of slow worm <i>Anguis fragilis</i> , 21 records of common lizard <i>Zootoca vivipara</i> , two records of adder <i>Vipera berus</i> and one record of grass snake <i>Natrix helvetica</i> . The closest reptile records to the Site were 32 slow worms recorded 88 m to the west in 2015.
Dormouse	No records of dormouse were found within the last 10 years; however, seven records of dormouse were found from between the years 2007 and 2011, the closest of which was recorded 250 m away to the south in 2007 (within woodland in the wider golf course site). There is no connecting habitat between these records and the Site.
Hedgehog	There were 83 records of hedgehog from within 2 km of the Site, the nearest of which was recorded 480 m to the north in 2020.
Invertebrates	The data search returned 978 records of invertebrates from within 2 km of the Site in the last 10 years. Of these, 349 records were stag beetle <i>Lucanus cervus</i> , the closest of which to the Site was recorded 165 m to the north-west in 2020. Other S41 NERC invertebrate species recorded included grey dagger <i>Acronicta psi</i> , knot grass <i>Acronicta rumicis</i> , green-brindled crescent <i>Allophyes oxycanthae</i> , light crimson underwing <i>Catocala promissa</i> , small heath <i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i> , small phoenix <i>Ecliptopera silaceata</i> , September thorn <i>Ennomos erosaria</i> , dusky thorn <i>Ennomos fuscantaria</i> , rustic <i>Hoplodrina blanda</i> , white admiral <i>Limenitis camilla</i> , brindled beauty <i>Lycia hirtaria</i> , dot moth <i>Melanchra persicariae</i> , silver studded blue <i>Plebejus argus</i> , white letter hairstreak <i>Satyrrium w-album</i> , white ermine <i>Spilosoma lubricipeda</i> , buff ermine <i>Spilosoma lutea</i> , cinnabar <i>Tyria jacobaeae</i> and oak hook-tip <i>Watsonalla binaria</i> .

3.1.4 Granted Protected Species Licenses

Seven European Protected Species (EPS) licences issued by Natural England were identified within 2 km of the Site. Table 9 provides a summary of EPS licences within 2 km of the Site.

Table 9: Granted EPS Licenses within 2 km of the Site

Case reference	Distance/Direction from the site	Species included	Reason	Date
2016-22944-EPS-MIT	0.24 km to the north	Bat (Brown long-eared Plecotus auritus and common pipistrelle Pipistrellus pipistrellus)	Damage and destruction of a resting place	17/05/2016 – 17/05/2026
EPSM2012-4209 2014-636-EPS-MIT 2014-636-EPS-MIT-1	0.31 km to the south	Other mammal (Dormouse)	Damage and destruction of breeding place Damage and destruction of resting place	19/11/2013 – 31/10/2017
EPSM2013-5805	0.89 km to the southeast	Bat (Common pipistrelle)	Destruction of a resting place	25/04/2013 – 01/04/2015
2019-42509-EPS-MIT	0.91 km to the northwest	Bat (Common pipistrelle, serotine Eptesicus serotinus)	Destruction of a resting place	05/09/2019 – 04/09/2029
2016-22386-EPS-MIT	1.27 km to the north	Bat (Brown long-eared, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle Pipistrellus pygmaeus)	Destruction of a resting place	11/04/2016 – 30/04/2020

3.2 HISTORIC FIELD SURVEY RESULTS – SPECIES

3.2.1 Great Crested Newt (GCN)

Seven ponds were subject to Habitat Suitability Index assessment on 24th April 2020 and were then sampled for GCN environmental DNA (eDNA) on the 14 May 2020. All water samples were negative for GCN eDNA. Only one record of great crested newt (GCN) was highlighted by the data search: this record was located over 1.8 km from the Site to the southeast, with the M27 being a barrier to dispersal.

Isolated areas of suitable terrestrial habitat are present within the Site boundary, comprising woodland edge habitat, hedgerows and longer areas of grassland. However, these are isolated from other areas of suitable habitat in the wider local area, and it is therefore considered reasonable to conclude that this species is absent from the Site.

No notable change in habitat type, distribution or condition was noted in 2025, and no further surveys were considered necessary that would have provided any further information to what was already held.

3.2.2 Dormouse

Dormouse are known to be present within a small central southern area of the wider Boundary Lakes Golf Course following surveys undertaken in 2007/2008 and 2016/2017.

Available habitats within the Site were assessed for their suitability to support dormouse in 2020 and again in 2021. Nest tube surveys were undertaken to help detect the presence of or demonstrate the likely absence of dormouse. Fifty nest tubes were installed along the northern and western tree line boundaries in May 2020, and an additional 50 nest tubes were installed in June 2020 along the eastern tree line boundary and along the tree line where historic survey results have confirmed presence. Survey visits were undertaken in June and July 2020. Tubes were checked by a suitably experienced and licensed ecologist.

Additional nest tube surveys were carried out in 2021, in areas of suitable habitat to the north of the Masterplan site. This area has not been previously surveyed for this species. Fifty nest tubes were deployed on 23 June 2021 and checked on 2 November 2021.

Areas of suitable habitat are present within the Site boundary including semi-natural broadleaved woodland, hedgerows and dense scrub. However, these are relatively isolated in a wider local context and of a small size unlikely to be able to support a dormouse population in the absence of good links to other suitable areas off-site. No signs of dormouse were identified during the course of the nest tube surveys. It is therefore considered reasonable to conclude that this species is absent from the Site.

No notable change in habitat type, distribution or condition was noted in 2025, and no further surveys were considered necessary that would have provided any further information to what was already held.

3.2.3 Reptiles

Reptiles are known to be present within the wider Utilita Bowl site following surveys undertaken in 2007 and 2017.

Historically, only a small number of individuals of common reptile species have been recorded in limited locations at the Site.

Reptile surveys were undertaken in suitable habitat areas within the proposed Mixed Use Development Site by Johns Associates in 2020. A total of 70 artificial refugia, comprising 0.5m x 0.5m and 1m x 0.5m squares of roofing felt and corrugated iron 'tins', were laid out within areas of suitable habitat across the Site in May 2020 and left to 'bed-in' before the survey visits commenced. A second phase of surveys in September 2020 included this original area and a further 200-250 refugia.

On each subsequent survey visit, all artificial refugia were checked for the presence of basking reptiles. Natural refugia such as logs, rocks and potential basking spots including areas of bare ground were also surveyed where these features were present on Site. Other artificial refugia such as discarded plastic sheeting and other refuse objects were also observed for evidence of reptiles.

Semi-natural habitats suitable for use by common reptiles were present across the Site (including retained areas of habitat around the perimeter and those newly created as part of the Utilita Bowl and golf course refurbishment works). Suitable habitats include areas of longer semi-improved grassland, hedgerows, landscape bunds, scrub, tall ruderal, standing/running water and areas of woodland (including edge habitats).

Results of the September surveys confirmed the presence of a low population of slow worm within the surveyed area, with a peak count of six individuals. Slow worms were recorded at seven different locations: in the west and north of the redevelopment Site and from within the adjacent golf course. No common lizards were recorded during the 2020 surveys; however, on a precautionary basis it should be assumed that common lizards are likely to be present on Site having been recorded during previous surveys.

No notable change in habitat type, distribution or condition was noted in 2025 and no further surveys were considered necessary that would have provided any further information to what was already held.

3.2.4 Badger

No badger setts were identified within the Site or areas immediately adjacent in 2025.

3.2.5 Hedgehog

Although not recorded within the Site, the habitats present within the red line boundary, and immediately adjacent areas offer potential foraging and resting places for hedgehogs such as hedgerows, grasslands, woodland and shrub cover. Hedgehogs are legally protected and a S41 Priority Species.

3.2.6 Nocturnal Birds

Nighttime ecological surveys have been undertaken since 2005. During this time barn owl and little owl have been recorded within the wider golf course parts of the Utilita Bowl Land and within Telegraph Woods. No barn owl or crepuscular species such as nightjar have been recorded.

3.2.7 Bats

Habitat Suitability

Habitats on and adjacent to Site have been assessed as presenting moderate suitability for bats. Positive/promoting features included semi-improved grassland, wooded copses, tree lined boundaries and waterbodies. Negative/limiting factors included large areas of intensively mown golf playing surfaces and the cricket stadium/hotel, car parking, roads and lighting that dominate key areas of the Site.

Bat Roost Inspection (BRI) – Buildings

All buildings within the Utilita Bowl land holding were re-inspected on 17 August 2025 to assess their potential to support roosting bats. No evidence of bats was observed at the time of survey, and all buildings were assessed as having negligible suitability.

Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA)

Ground Level Tree Assessments of trees within Utilita Bowl land holding were carried out on 17th August 2025 and any Potential Roost Features (PRFs) recorded. A total of twenty trees associated with the site and adjacent retained woodland supported PRFs, of which seven were classified as having Low suitability, three Moderate suitability and ten High suitability. A total of eighteen trees adjacent to the development Site boundary supported PRFs.

Aerial Tree Climbing Inspections

Tree climbing inspections around the Utilita Bowl further consideration and clarification of the PRF status of trees. A total of 13 trees were climbed, (see Table 10 below).

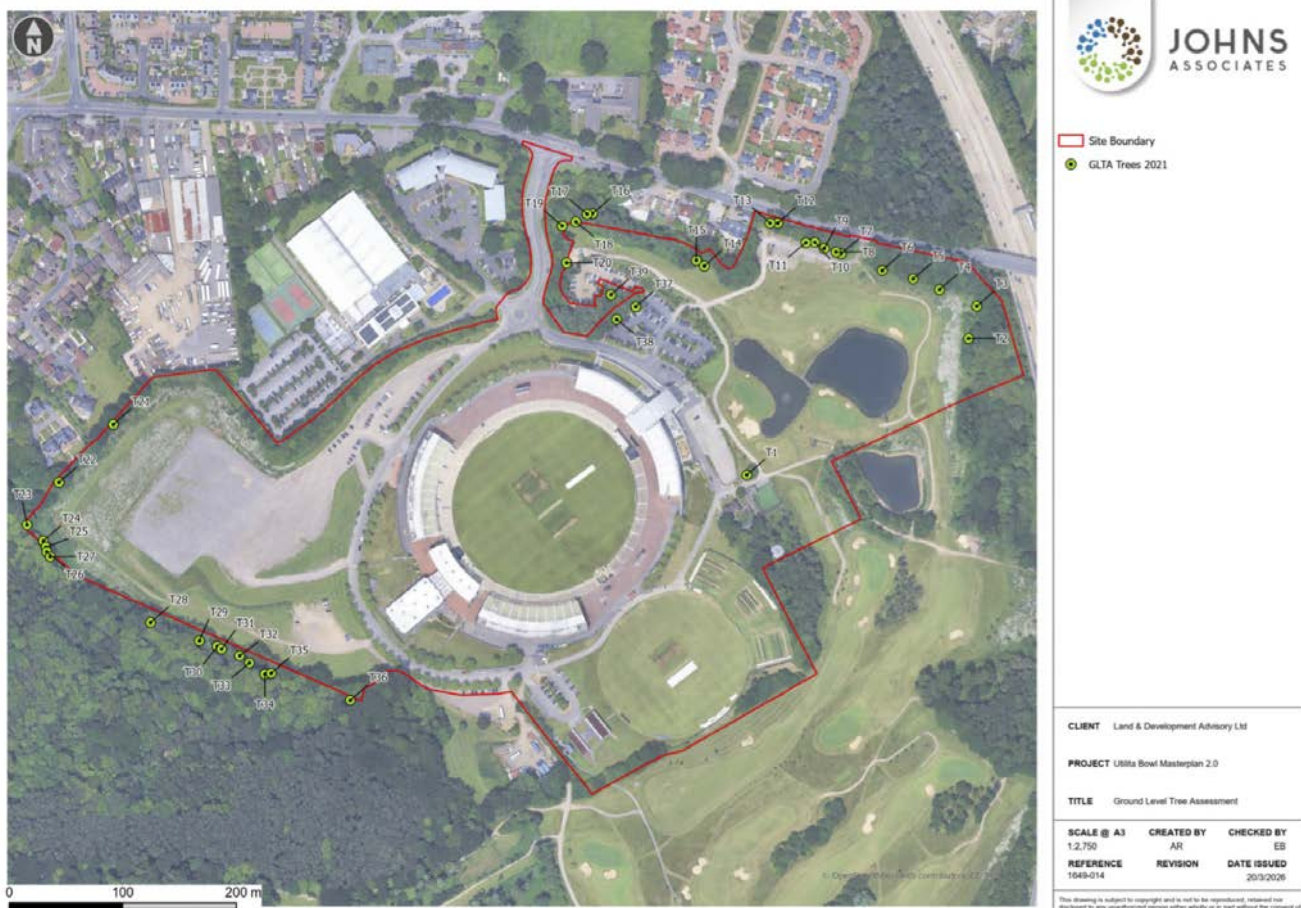


Figure 4. Survey Area showing trees climbed

Table 10: Final PRF status of trees within the development footprint

Tree	Co-ordinates		Species	PRF Type	Stem or Limb?	PRF Orientation	PRF Height	Ivy present	PRF Status
T1	-1.3194823	50.924358	Oak	Multiple features	Stem/limb – rot present			No	Negligible
T7	-1.3183312	50.9260777	Oak	Multiple features				Yes	Negligible
T8	-1.3183312	50.9260777	Oak	Low vertical dead stem crack	Stem	NW	6m	Yes	Low
T13	-1.319093902	50.92632835	Oak	Rot hole	Limb	North	10m	No	Negligible
T14	-1.320004343	50.92598666	Oak	Multiple features	Limbs			No	Negligible
T15	-1.320089492	50.9260286	Oak	Unknown				Yes - partial	Negligible
T16	-1.321401088	50.92640468	Sweet chestnut	Unknown				No	Negligible

Tree	Co-ordinates		Species	PRF Type	Stem or Limb?	PRF Orientation	PRF Height	Ivy present	PRF Status
T17	-1.321401088	50.92640468	Oak	Unknown				Yes	Negligible
T18	-1.321604232	50.92635974	Sweet chestnut	Woodpecker holes domed roof (squirrel and slugs present)	Stem	South	6m	No	High
T19	-1.321766072	50.92630946	Sweet chestnut	Woodpecker holes x 3	Stem	South	4 & 5m	No	Negligible
T37	SU 47825 14234		Oak					Yes	Negligible
T38	SU 47824 14234		Ash	Hazard beam in low grounded limb	Stem	SW	1-2m	No	Low
T39	SU 47806 14254		Wild cherry	Woodpecker holes x 2	Stem	E	5m	No	High
				Woodpecker hole	Stem	SW	5m		
				Rot hole	Stem	S	8m		

T8 (low suitability), T18 (high suitability), T38 (low suitability) and T39 (high suitability) have viable PRFs and are located within the development footprint. At the time of writing, it is anticipated that these trees can be retained with light levels no greater than current. If this is not the case, further inspections will be carried out and a Natural England bat licence obtained if they are confirmed as roosts.

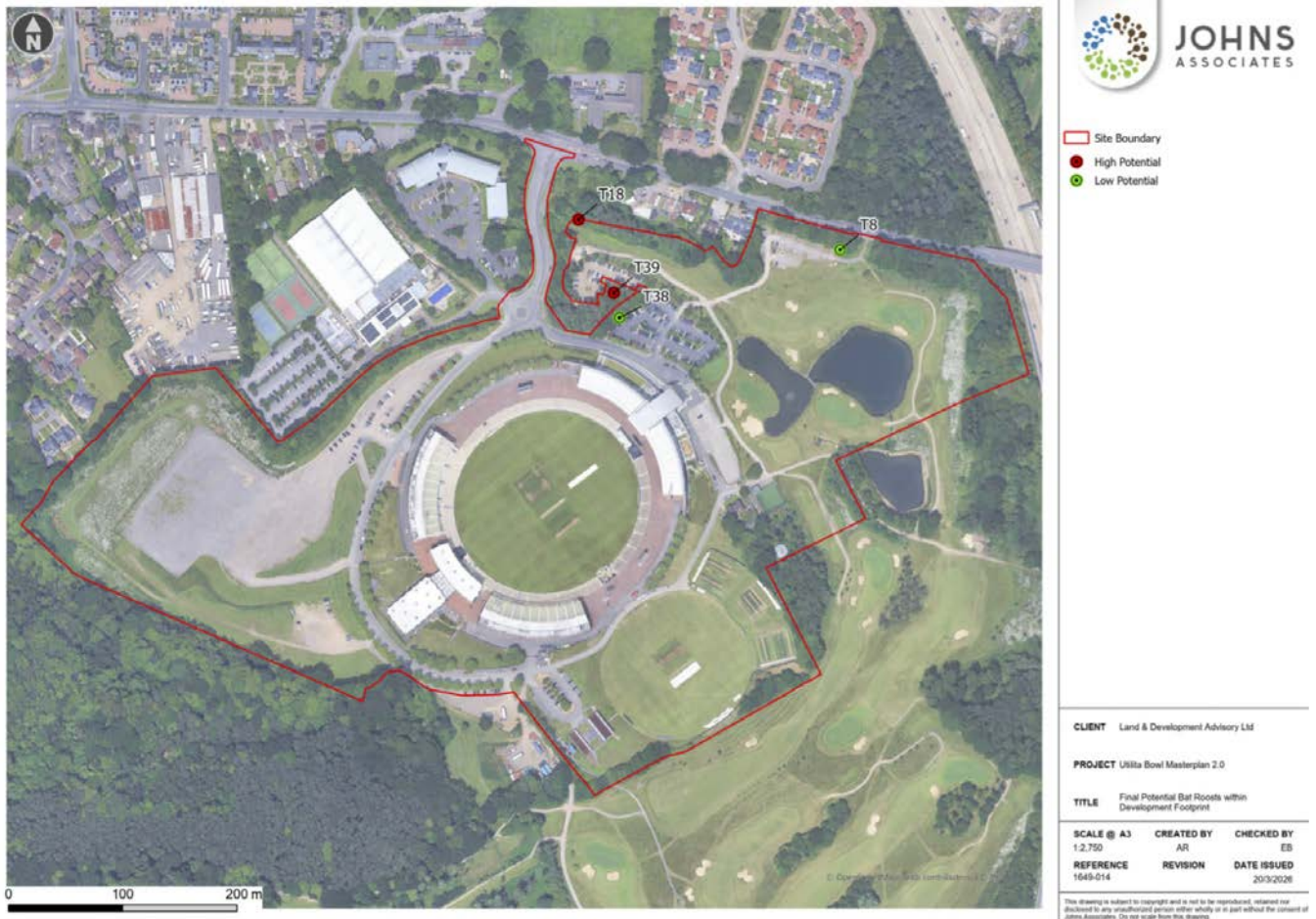


Figure 5. Potential Tree Roosts

Emergence/Re-Entry Surveys

One dawn re-entry survey of the Wellness Centre was carried out on the 16 September 2021, and one dusk emergence survey of the Greenkeepers Cottages was carried out on 21 September, in compliance with Bat Survey Guidelines for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) 2016). No bats were observed or recorded entering or leaving either of the buildings surveyed and as such it is considered reasonable to conclude these buildings are not bat roosts. The re-inspection carried out in 2025 confirmed the buildings now offered negligible suitability for bats, and no further surveys were required.

Activity Transect Surveys

The transect route covered all habitat types present across the Site. In total six species were recorded during the activity transect surveys. Typically, common pipistrelle was the most common species recorded accounting for 70% of the total recordings, the second being noctule at 20% of the total. Soprano pipistrelle, Myotis sp., Serotine and Plecotus sp. were also recorded during the course of the activity surveys.

Within the application area, activity was highest around boundary habitats, particularly those containing mature trees and water features. A high level of activity by Noctule bats was recorded within the woodland habitat to the west of the Site during the July activity transect. These were likely to be foraging over the tree canopy.

The areas of broadleaved woodland, scrub, tall ruderal habitats and areas of standing water recorded the largest amount of bat activity. This is typical as these habitat types are darker, provide more protection, and usually attract a greater assemblage of invertebrate prey species. The amenity grassland and hard standing areas recorded relatively low levels of activity which is not surprising considering these areas are open and are relatively poor with regards to plant species assemblage, however local pockets of activity were observed, particularly for noctule and common pipistrelle foraging on invertebrates attracted to the lighting around the parking areas.

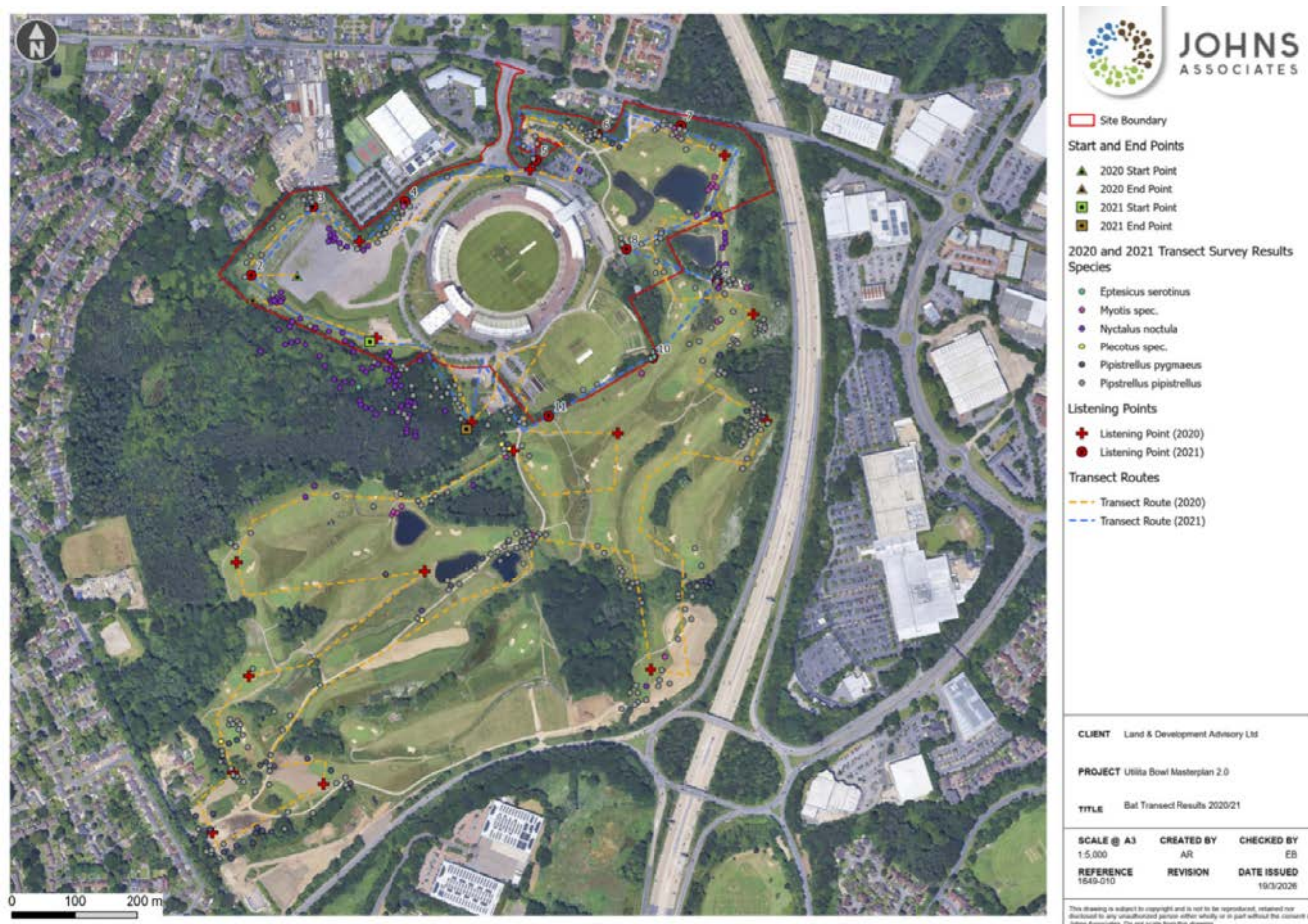


Figure 6. Bat activity transect and results

The records of light-sensitive species were very limited within the application boundary and almost entirely restricted to *Myotis* bats (likely to be Daubenton's or Natterer's) foraging over the waterbodies in the east.

No notable change in habitat type, distribution or condition was noted in 2025, and no further surveys were considered necessary that would have provided any further information to what was already held.

3.3 BESPOKE 2026 FIELD SURVEY RESULTS

3.3.1 General Habitat Condition Walkover Survey

Johns Associates regularly undertakes walkover surveys across the Utilita Bowl/Boundary Lakes Golf Club. However, a walkover survey to confirm no change in habitat condition that would influence the faunal data previously recorded was undertaken on 22nd July 2026 by Matthew Johns BSc MSc CEnv MCIEEM. No changes to habitat type, distribution or impacts on them were recorded, which supports the assertion that the general faunal composition historically recorded remains broadly correct – particularly with regard to protected and important species.

3.3.2 Badger, Dormouse, Hedgehog and Nocturnal Birds

No badger setts were identified in July 2026.

No change in habitat connectivity, suitability or influence from existing disturbance (including lighting) in relation to dormouse was recorded. As such, it is considered reasonable to conclude that dormouse are unlikely to be present.

No fields signs associated with hedgehog were recorded and none observed in the subsequent night time activity transect. The Utilita Bowl facilities team has not recorded needing to remove hedgehog from any road or parking areas as a result of a vehicle collision. This species is known to be present in the local area.

Tawny owl and little owl were recorded once again during the bat activity transect on the 22nd July. The conditions are unsuitable for crepuscular species such as nightjar.

3.3.3 Automated Bat Static Detector Surveys

A total of 102,451 recordings were collated into a single dataset for the Site in 2021 and were analysed using R Studio. The survey recorded a total of 9 species on Site: common pipistrelle (70,626 records or 68.94% of the total); noctule (25,751 or 25.13%); soprano pipistrelle (5,413 or 5.28%); Myotis sp (124 or 0.12%); serotine (449 or 0.44%); Plecotus sp. (38 or 0.04%); Leisler’s (23 or 0.02%); Nathusius’ pipistrelle (18 or 0.01%); barbastelle (7 or 0.01%) and Nyctalus sp. (2 or 0.01%).

No notable change in habitat type, distribution or condition was noted in 2025, and no further surveys were considered necessary that would have provided any further information to what was already held.

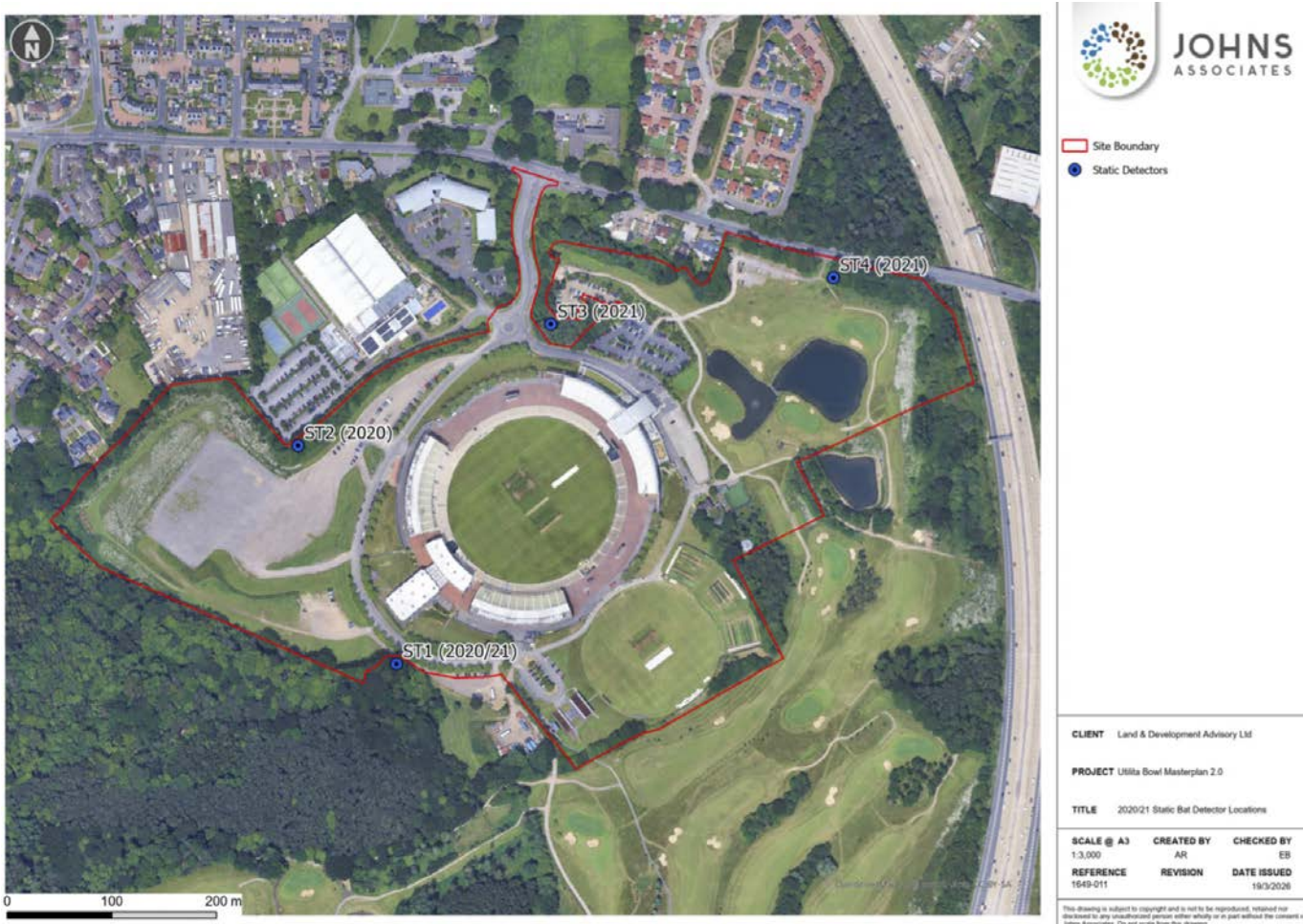


Figure 7. Static bat detectors

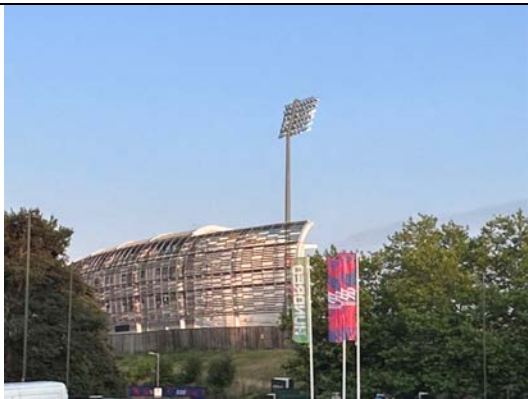
Night-Time Bat Walkover Survey

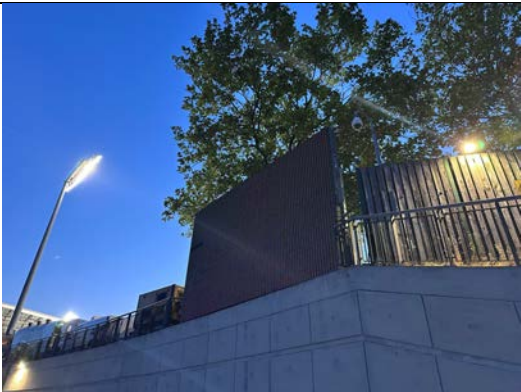
A total of 7 bat species/genera were recorded during the NBW survey. Common pipistrelle was the most frequently recorded species. Temperature was 22 to 20 degrees Celsius. 50% moon, although set by the end of the survey. Dry and no wind.

Table 11: NBW species count data

Species	Count
Serotine	16
Myotis sp.	10
Nyctalus sp.	2
Nathusius pipistrelle	5
Common pipistrelle	161
Soprano pipistrelle	17
Long-eared sp.	5
Total species occurrences	216

A commentary of bat activity along the transect undertaken on 22nd July 2026 (with lighting on) and representative photographs is set out below. Nb certain species were not heard or identified during the survey – but were from the call analysis.

Time	Photograph	Bat activity observed
20:28		No bat activity
20:57		No bat activity

Time	Photograph	Bat activity observed
21:16		No bat activity
21:27		No bat activity
21:33		No bat activity, poor habitat and floodlight spill.
21:40		Foraging common pipistrelle along edge of Telegraph Woods with floodlight spill.

Time	Photograph	Bat activity observed
21:43		Foraging common pipistrelle along road, car headlights with temporary lights and floodlight spill.
21:46		High levels of common and soprano pipistrelle bat along edge of Telegraph Woods with temporary lights and floodlight spill.
21:51		Serotine and pipistrelle bats in abundance along the brightly illuminated edge of Telegraph woods
22:04		Pipistrelle bats in abundance along the brightly illuminated edge of Telegraph woods

Time	Photograph	Bat activity observed
22:17		Pipistrelle bats in abundance along the brightly illuminated edge of Westwood Copse
22:19		Common pipistrelle within brightly lit carpark within Westwood Copse.
22:21		Serotine and pipistrelle bats within brightly lit carpark within Westwood Copse.
22:25		Soprano pipistrelle bats foraging over lake and golf course

Time	Photograph	Bat activity observed
22:33		No bats recorded.

Bat Static Survey

A total of 11 bat species/genera were recorded during the automated detector surveys. Serotine was the most common bat species on Site (2798 total passes), and Nathusius's pipistrelle the least common (1 total passes) during July 2026 (see Table). During the 10-night deployment period, Static 1 recorded continuously for the full 10 nights, while Static 2 recorded for three nights and Static 3 recorded for eight nights.

Table 12: Bat species by Number of Passes

Species	Number of passes	Percentage of total passes
Serotine bat	2,798	49.0%
Common pipistrelle	2,274	39.9%
Nyctalus bats	241	4.2%
Soprano pipistrelle	152	2.7%
Common noctule	142	2.5%
Pipistrelle species	62	1.1%
Brown long-eared bat	20	0.4%
Myotis species	15	0.3%
Nathusius's pipistrelle	1	<0.1%
Total	5,705	100%

Table 13: Evidence of local bat roosts based on static data

Species	Emergence-window passes
Serotine bat	568
Common pipistrelle	296
Nyctaloid	32
Pipistrelle Sp.	20
Soprano pipistrelle	19
Common noctule	3
Total	938

This table counts the bat passes recorded within the emergence window for each species on each static bat detector. A high count close to a detector is a strong roost indicator, since emerging bats are most active near their roots at dusk.

Comparison between bat static 1 and 3 which recorded for eight nights

Table 14: Static 1 - tree control. Static data from the first eight nights of recording

Species	22 July lights on	23 July lights on	24 July lights on and off	25 July lights off	26 July light off	27 July lights on and off	28 July lights on	29 July lights on and off
Brown long-eared	0	0	11	0	0	1	2	1
Common noctule	36	5	65	8	3	6	11	2
Common pipistrelle	604	444	240	38	26	36	96	72
Myotis Sp.	3	4	2	0	0	0	0	0
Nathusius's	1	0	0	0	0	1	0	1
Nyctaloid	52	68	82	6	1	2	11	2
Serotine	850	908	579	106	30	38	60	52
Pipistrelle Sp.	2	0	0	0	0	1	3	0
Soprano pipistrelle	9	4	0	0	2	3	0	0
Total	1,557	1,433	979	158	62	88	183	130

Table 15: Static 3 - rear of Telegraph Woods. Static data from the first eight nights of recording

Species	22 July lights on	23 July lights on	24 July lights on and off	25 July lights off	26 July light off	27 July lights on and off	28 July lights on	29 July lights on and off
Brown long-eared	0	1	1	0	0	0	1	0
Common noctule	2	0	0	1	0	0	0	0
Common pipistrelle	114	43	44	58	41	74	27	22
Myotis Sp.	1	0	0	0	1	0	0	0
Nathusius's	1	5	1	0	0	0	0	1
Nyctaloid	1	1	0	2	0	1	0	0
Serotine	10	6	5	26	6	9	3	3
Pipistrelle Sp.	1	1	2	0	3	10	4	4
Soprano pipistrelle	2	2	4	1	2	10	7	8
Total	132	59	57	88	53	104	42	38



Plate 2: Setting of Static 1



Plate 3: Setting of Static 2



Plate 4: Setting of Static 3

Bat activity recorded during the first eight nights of monitoring varied considerably between the two static locations and between individual nights. Static 1, recorded substantially greater overall bat activity than Static 3. Static 1 recorded a total of 4,590 bat passes across the eight nights, compared with 573 passes at Static 3. This difference was mainly due to greater activity of Serotine, common pipistrelle, common noctule and nyctaloid bats at Static 1, suggesting that the tree control was associated with a more frequently used commuting and/or foraging route than the area immediately to the rear of the telegraph.

The results for the more light-sensitive species, Brown long-eared and Myotis, are useful when looked at alongside the lighting information. Brown long-eared bats were recorded 15 times at Static 1 and three times at Static 3. At Static 1, the highest number of Brown long-eared passes was recorded on 24 July, with 11 passes during a night when the lights were switched on and off. A further four passes were recorded on other nights, including nights when the lights were on. At Static 3, Brown long-eared was recorded in very low numbers, with one pass on 23 July, one on 24 July and one on 28 July. As a result, there is no obvious pattern showing Brown long-eared avoiding the area when the lights were operating.

A similar pattern was observed for Myotis species. Nine Myotis passes were recorded at Static 1, with all records occurring during the first three nights of monitoring, when the site lighting was either on or being switched off. At Static 3, only two Myotis passes were recorded, comprising one pass on 22 July when the lights were on and one pass on 26 July when the lights were off. Therefore, while Myotis activity was generally low, the available data do not demonstrate a consistent avoidance of the site during periods when artificial lighting was operating.

The results for the wider bat assemblage also indicate substantial variation in activity between nights that cannot readily be attributed to lighting alone. At Static 1, total activity declined from 1,557 passes on 22 July and 1,433 passes on 23 July to 62 passes on 26 July, before increasing slightly during the final nights of the monitoring period. This pattern was largely driven by Serotine and common pipistrelle activity. For example, Serotine activity at Static 1 declined from 850 passes on 22 July and 908 passes on 23 July to 30 passes on 26 July. Similar, although less pronounced, variation was evident at Static 3. Such substantial night-to-night variation is likely to reflect a combination of factors, including weather conditions, temperature, wind speed, rainfall, insect availability and natural variation in bat activity, in addition to any influence from artificial lighting.

Comparison between all three statics

The first three nights of data provide an opportunity to compare bat activity across all three static locations, as Static 2 failed to record beyond this period. Static 2 was therefore excluded from comparisons of the full eight-night dataset. However, the data collected during these initial three nights remain useful, as they allow bat activity to be compared across all three locations over the same period and under the same lighting conditions.

There was a clear difference in the amount of activity recorded between the three locations. Static 1, located at the tree control, recorded by far the highest level of activity, with 3,969 passes over the three nights. Static 2, located at the front of the hotel, recorded 264 passes, while Static 3, at the rear of the telegraph, recorded 248 passes. This suggests that the area around Static 1 was being used much more heavily by bats than the other two locations. The difference was particularly noticeable for Serotine and common pipistrelle, with Static 1 recording much higher numbers of both species.

The results from the two more light-sensitive groups, Brown long-eared and Myotis, are also worth considering. Static 1 recorded 11 Brown long-eared passes during the three nights, compared with two at Static 2 and two at Static 3. The majority of the Brown long-eared activity at Static 1 occurred on 24 July, when the lights were being switched on and off. At Static 2, both Brown long-eared records occurred on 22 July when the lights were on, while Static 3 recorded one pass on 23 July when the lights were on and one on 24 July when the lights were being switched on and off. This suggests that Brown long-eared was using all three areas during the period of monitoring, including when the site lighting was operating. There is therefore no obvious pattern from these results alone to suggest that the species was avoiding areas when the lights were on.

Myotis activity was similarly low across the three locations. Static 1 recorded nine passes, Static 2 recorded two, and Static 3 recorded one. All of the Myotis records at Static 1 and Static 2 occurred on 22 or 23 July, when the lights were on. The single Myotis record at Static 3 was also recorded on 22 July with the lights on. No Myotis were recorded at any of the three locations on 24 July, when the lights were being switched on and off. While the numbers are too low to draw any firm conclusions, there is again no obvious indication of Myotis avoiding the site during periods when the lighting was operating.

Table 16: Static 1 – woodland setting but close to Westwood Copse Car Park and Lighting (control site). Static data from the first three nights of recording

Species	22 July - lights on	23 July - lights on	24 July - lights on and off
Brown long-eared	0	0	11
Common noctule	36	5	65
Common pipistrelle	604	444	240
Myotis sp.	3	4	2
Nathusius's	1	0	0
Nyctaloid	52	68	82
Serotine	850	908	579
Pipistrelle spp	2	0	0
Soprano pipistrelle	9	4	0
Total	1,557	1,433	979

Table 17: Static 2 – Golf course facing stadium/front of hotel. Static data from the first three nights of recording

Species	22 July - lights on	23 July - lights on	24 July - lights on and off
Brown long-eared	2	0	0
Common noctule	0	0	0
Common pipistrelle	92	47	4
Myotis Sp.	2	0	0
Nathusius's	2	0	0
Nyctaloid	0	2	0
Serotine	5	10	1
Pipistrelle Sp.	7	0	0
Soprano pipistrelle	43	45	2
Total	153	104	7

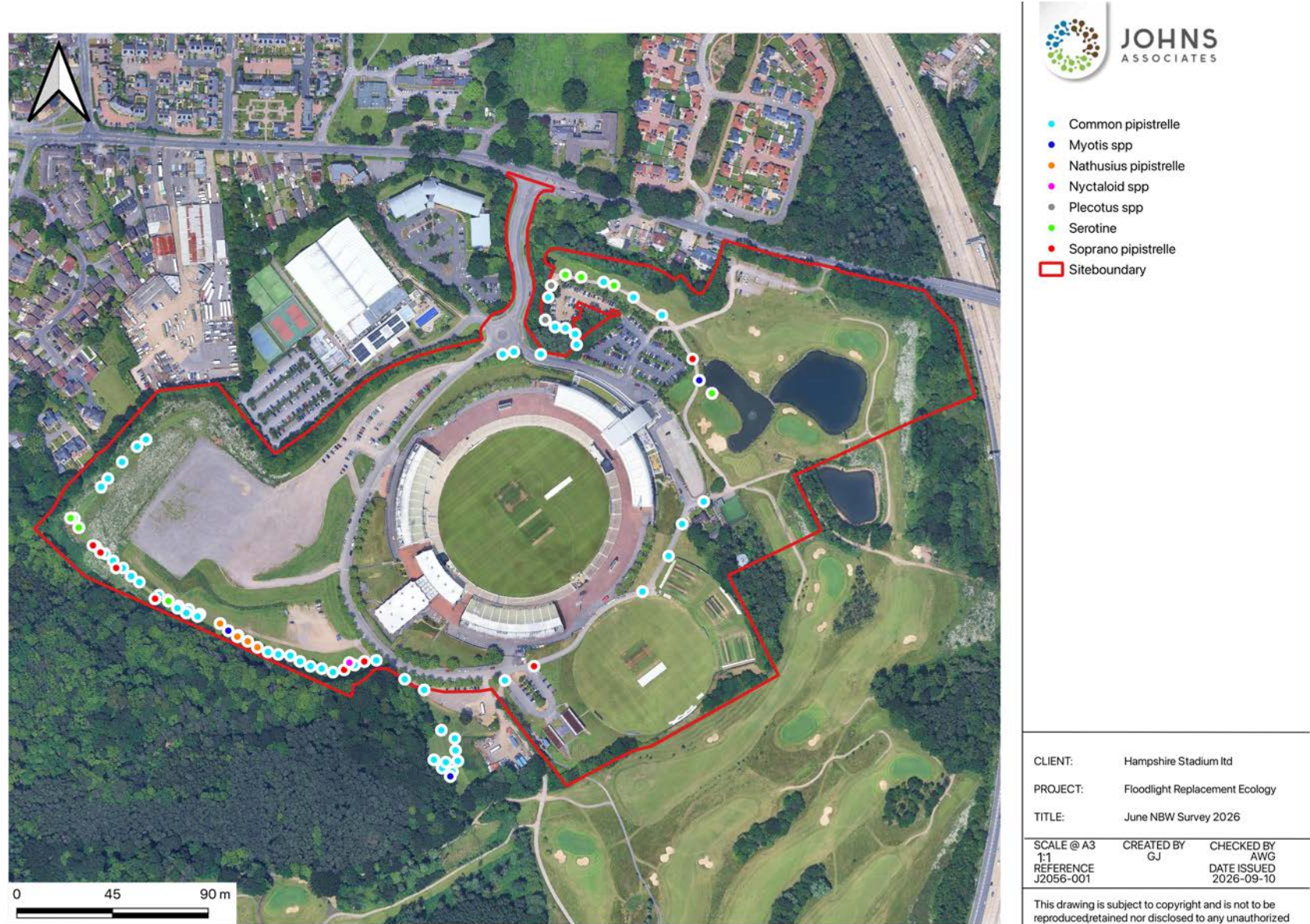
Table 18: Static 3 – Far edge of Telegraph Woods facing stadium. Static data from the first three nights of recording

Species	22 July - lights on	23 July - lights on	24 July - lights on and off
Brown long-eared	0	1	1
Common noctule	2	0	0
Common pipistrelle	114	43	44
Myotis Sp.	1	0	0
Nathusius's	1	5	1
Nyctaloid	1	1	0
Serotine	10	6	5
Pipistrelle Sp.	1	1	2
Soprano pipistrelle	2	2	4
Total	132	59	57



Figure 8: NBW route

Figure 9: NBW Survey Results



4 LIGHTING IMPACT ASSESSMENT SUMMARY

This section summarises the findings of the Lighting Impact Assessment prepared by Designs for Lighting Ltd (2026) for the proposed floodlighting replacement at the Utilita Bowl, Southampton, and should be read in conjunction with the attached report 4834-DFL-ELG-XX-RP-EO-13001-S3-P01, Utilita Bowl Lighting Impact Assessment. The lighting assessment considers the proposed upgrade of the existing stadium floodlighting to meet the ECB 2023 Specification, including embedded mitigation by design, baseline lighting conditions, the sensitivity of surrounding receptors, predicted light spill, glare, light intrusion and upward light output. The assessment is relevant to this Ecological Appraisal because artificial lighting has the potential to affect nocturnal fauna, particularly commuting and foraging bats, and because the western and southern parts of the wider site include woodland edge, golf course habitats and darker vegetated corridors used by wildlife.

4.1 PROPOSED LIGHTING SCHEME

The proposed development comprises an LED upgrade to the existing stadium sports lighting installation. The lighting design has been prepared by Abacus Lighting and assessed by Designs for Lighting Ltd against relevant planning, lighting and environmental guidance. The lighting is intended to support continued use of the venue for elite cricket and to meet the ECB 2023 Specification, while controlling obtrusive light effects beyond the playing area. The Lighting Impact Assessment confirms that the proposed sports lighting would use Abacus Lighting luminaires mounted on horseshoe brackets on headframes, with manual switching, fade-in and fade-out controls, and 300 mm and 600 mm shields. The purpose of these measures is to control spill, reduce abrupt changes in illumination and limit glare towards neighbouring receptors.

The lighting strategy included within Appendix 1 of the attached Lighting Impact Assessment states that the proposed sports lighting will be illuminated in accordance with the ECB 2023 Specification and that the task lighting design itself was not independently verified by Designs for Lighting Ltd. The assessment instead focuses on the environmental effects of the third-party lighting design, including light spill, light intrusion, viewed source intensity, glare and upward light ratio. The proposed luminaires have a modelled upward light output ratio of 0.3%, which is substantially below the 15% maximum identified for an E4 Environmental Zone. This is an important, embedded design feature because upward light is one of the principal contributors to sky glow and can also be relevant to aerodrome safeguarding where high-intensity floodlighting is visible from the air.

4.2 BASELINE LIGHTING ENVIRONMENT

The Lighting Impact Assessment records that the Utilita Bowl is already subject to a high level of artificial lighting associated with existing stadium floodlighting, sports lighting, temporary lighting generators, access roads, lit car parks, nearby commercial premises, the Hilton Hotel, the David Lloyd Centre, the Holiday Inn Express and the surrounding road network. Existing lighting is not uniform across the wider site. The stadium bowl and associated access areas are brightly lit, whereas the golf course and woodland edges to the south, east and southwest retain areas of comparatively dark habitat. The attached report identifies that the existing stadium lighting is visible from all areas within the Application Site, with the brightest baseline condition localised to the western side of the stadium where there are fewer intervening screening features.

For the purposes of the lighting assessment, the site was initially considered within an E3 suburban environmental context, but the assessment applied an E4 Environmental Zone because of the established influence of existing stadium lighting and the existing night-time character of the Application Site. Under the E4 criteria used in the attached Lighting Impact Assessment, the relevant pre-curfew light intrusion threshold is 25 lux, the post-curfew threshold is 5 lux and the maximum upward light ratio is 15%. The attached report also confirms that proposed operational lighting would be switched off during post-curfew hours at 23:00, so the main assessment of likely effects is focused on the pre-curfew operational period.

The baseline survey reported in the Lighting Impact Assessment is particularly relevant to the ecological interpretation of effects because it demonstrates that parts of the site already experience illuminance levels above the thresholds commonly used for dark corridors for bats. Key baseline illuminance measurements include very high readings close to the stadium lighting, with horizontal illuminance of 805 lux and vertical illuminance of up to 1,037 lux at one recorded location. Elsewhere across the wider site, measured values were much lower, including locations with horizontal illuminance of 0.05 to 0.08 lux and low vertical illuminance, confirming that areas of the golf course and woodland edge retain dark or near-dark conditions. The report therefore describes a mixed baseline, with intense artificial lighting concentrated around the stadium and much darker habitats retained around the outer golf course and woodland margins.

4.3 IDENTIFIED RECEPTORS

The Lighting Impact Assessment identifies one potentially sensitive ecological receptor, PSER 001, described as Telegraph Wood, a high-density woodland receptor to the southwest of the stadium. This receptor was identified in liaison with Johns Associates as the project ecologist and was assigned medium sensitivity for the purposes of the lighting assessment. The receptor is directly relevant to this Ecological Appraisal because Telegraph Woods is recorded in this report as a non-statutory designated site bordering the wider site to the south and supporting habitat connectivity for bats and other nocturnal fauna.

The attached Lighting Impact Assessment also identifies four potential human amenity receptors comprising residential dwellings on Botley Road to the north, residential dwellings on the opposite side of Botley Road to the north, residential dwellings on Telegraph Heights to the west and residential dwellings on Westgate Mews to the west. Each of these human amenity receptors was assigned low sensitivity. Two human safety receptors were also identified: Southampton Airport approximately 3.1 km to the northwest and Hill Farm Airstrip approximately 3.7 km to the northeast. These aviation receptors were acknowledged but not fully assessed in the Lighting Impact Assessment, with the report recommending further consultation with the relevant aerodrome safeguarding team to confirm that the proposed lighting would not align with landing or take-off paths.

4.4 EMBEDDED MITIGATION AND LIGHTING CONTROLS

The proposed lighting scheme includes mitigation by design. The principal measures identified in the attached report are 600 mm glare shields on individual luminaires to remove or minimise glare towards neighbouring property, fade-in and fade-out controls to reduce abrupt changes in lighting level, a restricted upward light output ratio of 0.3%, and the use of luminaires with manufacturer photometry so that the photometric distribution can be accurately modelled. From an ecological perspective, the gradual introduction and reduction of lighting is beneficial because it reduces sudden transitions between dark and lit conditions, although it does not remove the need to consider absolute light levels at sensitive habitat edges where bats and other nocturnal animals may be present.

The attached Lighting Impact Assessment confirms that the proposed lighting has been designed to reduce spill and upward emissions while achieving the required sports lighting standards. However, the ecological assessment should recognise that the design colour temperature specified in the lighting report is up to 5700 K, whereas the bat-sensitive lighting guidance summarised in the same report refers to warmer colour temperatures of 2700 K or less where mitigation for bats is required. This does not automatically make the scheme unacceptable, particularly where lighting is directed, shielded and time-limited, but it highlights the need to ensure that the operational lighting regime, shielding and avoidance of unnecessary illumination of woodland edges are secured through planning drawings, lighting specifications and appropriate operational controls.

4.5 ASSESSMENT FINDINGS

The obtrusive light calculations presented in the attached Lighting Impact Assessment found that light intrusion values at the human amenity receptors remain within the E4 pre-curfew guidance limit of 25 lux. The calculated maximum light intrusion values for the residential receptors are reported as 5 to 10 lux for the northern receptors

and approximately 1 to 2 lux for the western receptors, all below the pre-curfew threshold. Luminous intensity calculations for human amenity receptors were also reported as being within the E4 pre-curfew criterion of 25,000 cd. The assessment therefore predicted negligible magnitude of change for the identified human amenity receptors and a residual effect of neutral or slight, which is not considered material in planning decision-making terms under the significance criteria used in the attached report.

For the ecological receptor PSER 001, the initial modelled light spill result was 16 lux, which exceeds the bat-sensitive criteria referred to in the attached report. On a simple comparison with the GN08:2023 dark corridor criteria, this was initially assessed as a major magnitude of change and a moderate or large significance of effect. However, the attached report then considers the baseline survey results and notes that existing illuminance levels along this boundary already range from 3.60 to 18.36 lux. Because the proposed maximum result of 16 lux is below the highest existing baseline level recorded in this area, the report concludes that the proposed lighting may represent a betterment in relation to existing conditions at the ecological receptor, while recognising that other existing light sources have not been fully modelled. Following these additional considerations, the residual effect on PSER 001 is assessed as neutral or slight.

Threshold Increment calculations were also undertaken for the M27 northbound and southbound carriageways. The attached Lighting Impact Assessment reports an adaption luminance result of 10 lux on both carriageways and concludes that the proposed floodlighting is unlikely to negatively affect motorway users. This supports the conclusion that the proposed lighting would not create an unacceptable human safety effect in relation to road users, subject to the separate aerodrome safeguarding consultation recommended in the lighting report.

4.6 ECOLOGICAL INTERPRETATION

The findings of the Lighting Impact Assessment are broadly consistent with the bat activity results reported in Section 3. The static detector data recorded a substantial bat assemblage using the wider site, including serotine, common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, *Myotis* species, *Nyctalus* species and *Nathusius's* pipistrelle. Higher activity was recorded at the northern tree control location than at the detector located adjacent to Telegraph Woods, but the data confirm that the site and its margins are used by commuting and foraging bats. The available survey evidence does not demonstrate a clear pattern of avoidance during nights when the existing lights were operating, although the dataset is limited by the failed recording duration at Static 2 and by the fact that bat activity is influenced by multiple factors including weather, temperature, insect availability and seasonal behaviour.

From an ecological perspective, the key issue is not whether lighting is present at the stadium, but whether the proposed replacement scheme increases illumination of retained dark habitats, woodland edges and commuting routes compared with the current baseline. The attached Lighting Impact Assessment indicates that the proposed installation has been designed to reduce upward light and control spill, and that at the principal ecological receptor the predicted maximum light spill is below the highest measured existing baseline illuminance. On that basis, the proposed development is unlikely to result in a significant adverse ecological effect through lighting when compared with the current operational baseline, provided that the lighting is installed and operated in accordance with the assessed design, including shields, controlled aiming, fade-in and fade-out controls, and post-curfew switch-off.

5 EMBEDDED MITIGATION

5.1 DELIVERY OF THE ADOPTED DESIGN

The conclusions of the Lighting Impact Assessment should be secured through the final planning submission and any relevant planning condition. The final installed lighting should accord with the Abacus Lighting design assessed by Designs for Lighting Ltd, including the specified luminaire models, mounting arrangements, shielding, aiming angles, control regime and post-curfew switch-off. Any material change to luminaire type, mounting height, tilt, shielding or operating regime should be reviewed by the lighting consultant and project ecologist before implementation, because relatively small changes in these parameters could alter light spill at retained habitats.

5.2 LIMIT DIRECT ILLUMINATION OF HABITAT

To protect retained habitat used by bats and other nocturnal fauna, direct illumination of woodland edges, mature vegetation, ponds and darker golf course corridors should be avoided as far as practicable.

5.3 CONTROLS ON LIGHTING OPERATIONS

The post-curfew switch-off at 23:00 should be secured, and lighting should only be operated when required for cricket, safety and authorised event use. Where management flexibility is needed for exceptional events, the operational lighting protocol should retain the principle of minimising unnecessary lighting duration and avoiding lighting outside the assessed envelope. These controls are recommended to ensure that the assessed neutral or slight residual lighting effect remains valid throughout operation.

6 ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

6.1 ASSESSMENT APPROACH

The assessment of effects has been undertaken with reference to the ecological baseline set out in Chapters 1 to 5 of this report and applies the standard mitigation hierarchy of avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement. The principal ecological impact pathways associated with the Proposed Development are limited permanent land take for mast foundations, construction-phase disturbance, potential effects on retained trees and root protection areas, and operational lighting effects on nocturnal fauna, particularly bats. The proposals comprise replacement floodlighting for an existing established international cricket venue and therefore does not introduce a new floodlit use. This distinction is important because the assessment considers whether the replacement scheme is likely to alter materially the existing ecological baseline, rather than assessing a wholly new artificial lighting influence.

In accordance with CIEEM guidance, ecological effects have been assessed with regard to the importance of each receptor, the magnitude and duration of change, reversibility, confidence in the baseline, and the likelihood of significant residual effects after embedded mitigation (CIEEM, 2018, updated 2022). Particular weight has been given to receptors that are legally protected, locally designated, functionally connected to retained habitats, or potentially sensitive to artificial light at night.

The lighting-related assessment has also been informed by current best-practice guidance for bats and artificial lighting. This guidance emphasises avoiding illumination of key habitats and roost features wherever possible, minimising light spill on supporting habitat, using controlled luminaires, reducing upward and backward spill, limiting lighting duration, and applying dimming or part-night control where lighting is necessary (Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals, 2023; Bat Conservation Trust, 2023). These principles are directly relevant to the Proposed Development because the replacement LED system provides improved control, aiming, dimming and switch-off functionality compared with the existing floodlighting system.

6.2 STATUTORY DESIGNATED SITES

The desk study identified one national statutory designated site within 2 km of the Site, Moorgreen Meadows SSSI, located approximately 147 m north of the Site and separated from it by the M27 motorway. Four internationally designated sites were identified within 5 km: River Itchen SAC, Solent and Dorset Coast SPA, Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar, and Solent Maritime SAC. No SACs designated for bats were identified within 10 km.

No direct land take, habitat loss, hydrological change, atmospheric emission pathway or recreational pressure pathway is predicted in relation to these statutory designated sites. The works are confined to an existing stadium environment and comprise replacement lighting infrastructure with a very small permanent footprint. The nearest SSSI is physically separated from the Site by major transport infrastructure, and the more distant international sites are located several kilometres away and are not functionally linked to the Site in relation to the proposed works.

The Proposed Development is therefore not considered likely to result in significant adverse effects on statutory designated sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. The replacement lighting is not expected to introduce a credible impact pathway to the qualifying features of the River Itchen SAC, Solent and Dorset Coast SPA, Solent and Southampton Water SPA/Ramsar, Solent Maritime SAC or Moorgreen Meadows SSSI.

6.3 NON-STATUTORY DESIGNATED SITES

The desk study identified 28 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation within 2 km of the Site. Telegraph Woods SINC directly borders the wider stadium/golf course landholding to the south and is the most relevant non-statutory receptor for this assessment. The SINC is identified for woodland interest and is also functionally important as part of the retained network of wooded edge habitat used by bats and other fauna within the wider Utilita Bowl landscape.

The Proposed Development will not result in direct land take from Telegraph Woods SINC or any other SINC. The principal potential effect on Telegraph Woods is indirect and relates to construction disturbance near retained woodland margins, potential effects on adjacent trees, and operational light spill along woodland edge habitat. The baseline evidence confirms that Telegraph Woods already experiences artificial lighting influences from the existing stadium floodlights, temporary lighting, vehicles and car park lighting. The 2026 night-time walkover recorded continued activity by common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and serotine along the illuminated edge of Telegraph Woods, including areas subject to existing floodlight spill.

The replacement lighting system is capable of reducing risks to the SINC by improving optical control and reducing unnecessary spill compared with the existing installation. Provided the final lighting layout demonstrates no material increase in illumination of Telegraph Woods SINC, retained woodland edge habitats or associated bat commuting/foraging corridors, no significant adverse effect on Telegraph Woods SINC or other non-statutory designated sites is predicted. A final ecological review of lighting contour plans should be secured to confirm this position before implementation.

6.4 HABITATS, LAND TAKE AND RETAINED TREES

The permanent land take associated with the Proposed Development is limited to six mast foundations, each requiring approximately 3.51 m², giving a total permanent footprint of approximately 21.06 m². Several mast locations are situated within existing hard landscaped areas, while others are located within grass verges or amenity-type habitat of limited intrinsic botanical value. Between 2 and 6 existing Lond Plane (arboricultural Category 2 with no potential bat roosts features) are located in these positions. These will be relocated elsewhere in the local part of the Utilita Bowl using a large tree spade (as was successfully done for the original Rose Bowl Stadium works).

No woodland, hedgerow, pond, watercourse, scrub block or other habitat is proposed for removal.

The direct habitat loss is therefore negligible in ecological terms and is not considered likely to result in a significant adverse effect on habitats. The receptor value of the directly affected areas is low, the area affected is very small, and the habitats are either hard standing or intensively managed grass verge/amenity habitat within an already developed stadium context.

The more important habitat receptors are retained trees, boundary habitats, woodland edges, semi-natural broadleaved woodland, hedgerows, scrub, grassland margins, waterbodies and habitat mosaics within the wider landholding. These features provide ecological connectivity and support foraging, commuting and sheltering opportunities for bats, birds, reptiles, hedgehog and invertebrates. The proposals will therefore avoid direct or indirect damage to retained habitat features through construction controls, sensitive layout, and compliance with arboricultural constraints.

Where mast foundations or construction access are located close to retained London plane trees or other retained trees, individual trees will be relocated using a large tree spade and moved to a position of prominence within the Utilita Bowl site (as occurred in the original redevelopment of the Rose Bowl Stadium). Elsewhere root protection areas will be protected in accordance with an arboricultural method statement for the scheme and works adequately supervised. Excavation, storage of materials, trafficking, refueling, compaction and installation of temporary works should be excluded from retained tree protection zones unless otherwise agreed through a method statement. Subject to these safeguards, no significant adverse residual habitat effect is predicted.

6.5 SPECIES

On the basis of the habitats present and the results of the desk study, the Site is considered to offer suitable habitat for a limited range of legally protected/notable species, as described in the following sections.

6.5.1 Bats

Bats are the principal ecological receptor for this assessment because the Proposed Development relates to artificial lighting and the Site supports moderate suitability commuting and foraging habitat. The desk study identified bat roost records within 2 km for common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, serotine and brown long-eared bat, together with wider records of *Myotis* species, noctule, *Nathusius's* pipistrelle and barbastelle. EPS licences for bat roost impacts were also identified within the wider search area, confirming the local presence of roosting bats.

The Site and adjacent habitats have been assessed as offering moderate suitability for commuting and foraging bats. Positive features include semi-improved grassland, wooded copses, tree-lined boundaries and waterbodies, while limiting factors include intensively managed golf areas, stadium infrastructure, car parking, roads and existing lighting. Historic activity surveys recorded common pipistrelle as the dominant species, with noctule, soprano pipistrelle, *Myotis* species, serotine and *Plecotus* species also recorded. Activity was highest around boundary habitats, mature trees, water features, broadleaved woodland, scrub and tall ruderal habitats.

The 2026 bat surveys (although for a limited duration) provide important project-specific evidence because they included activity during periods when the existing floodlights were on and off. The 22 July 2026 night-time walkover recorded seven bat species/genera, with common pipistrelle by far the most frequently recorded species. Activity was recorded along the illuminated edge of Telegraph Woods, within and around the brightly lit edge of Westwood Copse, and within car park areas affected by existing lighting. Serotine and pipistrelle activity was particularly associated with illuminated woodland edge and car park environments. The automated detector survey recorded 5,705 bat passes, dominated by serotine and common pipistrelle. Serotine accounted for 2,798 passes, approximately 49.0% of the total, while common pipistrelle accounted for 2,274 passes, approximately 39.9%. *Nyctalus* bats, soprano pipistrelle and common noctule were present at lower levels, while brown long-eared bat, *Myotis* species and *Nathusius's* pipistrelle were recorded only in small numbers.

This assemblage indicates that the bat activity recorded during the 2026 surveys was dominated by species that are relatively tolerant of open, edge and lit environments. However, the presence of low-level *Myotis* and brown long-eared bat activity means that care is still required to avoid increased illumination of darker boundary features, waterbodies, retained trees and woodland edges. The assessment therefore cannot rely solely on the tolerance of the dominant species; it must also ensure that light-sensitive species are not further displaced from retained dark refuges or commuting routes.

Potential roost features have been identified in trees within or close to the development footprint. Trees T8 and T38 were assessed as supporting low-suitability PRFs, while T18 and T39 were assessed as supporting high-suitability PRFs. At the time of assessment, these trees are anticipated to be retained, and light levels are expected to be no greater than current conditions. If this position changes, further inspection will be required, and Natural England licensing advice may be necessary if a roost is confirmed.

The key potential effects on bats are disturbance or displacement from commuting/foraging routes through increased light spill; illumination of potential roost features; altered use of woodland edges and waterbodies; and temporary construction disturbance. These effects are avoidable through the embedded lighting controls proposed. The modern LED system allows more precise optical control, aiming, glare reduction, dimming and staged switch-off compared with the existing metal halide system. The ability to reduce lighting immediately after play and progressively dim to off is ecologically beneficial because it reduces the period of maximum illumination when full match lighting is no longer required.

The Lighting Impact Assessment concludes that the replacement lighting does not materially increase illumination of Telegraph Woods, Westwood Copse, retained waterbodies, tree lines or identified PRFs, and therefore no significant adverse residual effect on the local bat assemblage is predicted. The proposals can be secured further through operational controls limiting lighting to the established use and duration, such controls being more effective than the existing floodlighting provides.

6.5.2 Great Crested Newt

The desk study identified one recent great crested newt record within 2 km, located over 1 km from the Site and separated by significant barriers to dispersal, including the M27. Seven ponds were subject to HSI assessment and eDNA sampling in 2020, with all eDNA samples returning negative results. The available terrestrial habitats within the Site include small areas of woodland edge, hedgerow and longer grassland, but these are fragmented and isolated from wider suitable habitat.

No substantial change in habitat type, distribution or condition was recorded in 2025 or during the 2026 walkover. On the basis of negative eDNA results, limited local records, poor functional connectivity, physical barriers and the very small development footprint, great crested newt is considered likely absent from the works area. The Proposed Development is therefore not predicted to result in killing, injury, disturbance, habitat loss or fragmentation effects on great crested newt. No significant adverse effect is predicted and no great crested newt licence is required on the information currently available.

Precautionary construction measures, including careful management of excavations and checks before backfilling, are nevertheless appropriate because common amphibians may occur opportunistically in the wider landscape.

6.5.3 Dormouse

Dormouse is known historically from the wider Boundary Lakes Golf Course, with records from 2007–2011 and survey evidence from the wider central southern part of the golf course landholding. However, no recent dormouse records were returned within the last 10 years, and the Site itself has been subject to dormouse assessment and nest tube survey work. Nest tube surveys undertaken in 2020 and 2021 found no evidence of dormouse, and the habitats within and around the proposed works area are small, fragmented and poorly connected to known dormouse habitat.

The 2026 walkover confirmed no material change in habitat connectivity, suitability or disturbance influences relevant to dormouse. The proposed mast locations do not require removal of suitable dormouse habitat and do not affect connected hedgerow or woodland corridors known to support the species. The principal habitats potentially used by dormouse within the wider landholding, including dense scrub, woodland and connected hedgerows, will be retained.

On this basis, dormouse is considered likely absent from the Site, and no significant adverse effect is predicted. The Proposed Development is not expected to cause damage or destruction of dormouse breeding sites or resting places, nor to result in fragmentation of habitat supporting the species. No dormouse licence or further survey is considered necessary, provided the current development footprint and habitat retention assumptions remain unchanged.

6.5.4 Reptiles

Reptiles are known from the wider Utilita Bowl landholding, with historic records of slow worm and likely common lizard, and desk study records within 2 km including slow worm, common lizard, adder and grass snake. Previous surveys recorded a low population of slow worm within the wider surveyed area, with suitable habitat present in longer grassland, hedgerows, landscape bunds, scrub, tall ruderal vegetation, standing/running water and woodland edge habitats.

The Proposed Development affects only a very small area, largely comprising hardstanding and short grass verge or amenity-type habitat. The mast foundation footprint is not expected to remove or sever important reptile habitat. However, reptiles could occur opportunistically in longer grass, edge vegetation or refugia near working areas, particularly where these adjoin retained semi-natural habitats.

The potential construction-phase effects are killing or injury during vegetation clearance, excavation, tracking of machinery or storage of materials. These risks can be addressed through a precautionary working method. Any vegetation clearance in suitable habitat should be undertaken in a controlled manner during the reptile active season

where practicable, with staged cutting to encourage animals to move into retained habitat. Materials should be stored away from habitat edges unless needed for works, and excavations should be covered or provided with escape ramps overnight.

Subject to these safeguards and given the very limited footprint and retention of suitable surrounding habitats, no significant adverse residual effect on reptiles is predicted.

6.5.5 Birds

The data search returned a large number of bird records within 2 km, including several Species of Principal Importance and red-listed species. The habitats within the Site and wider landholding include woodland, scrub, hedgerows, scattered trees and waterbodies capable of supporting breeding, foraging and commuting birds. Tawny owl and little owl have been recorded within the wider landholding and were again recorded during the 22 July 2026 bat activity transect. Barn owl has been recorded historically within the wider Utilita Bowl landholding, but no barn owl or crepuscular species such as nightjar were recorded during the relevant surveys, and the Site is considered unsuitable for nightjar.

The Proposed Development does not require removal of significant nesting habitat and will not directly affect woodland, scrub or hedgerow habitats of substantive ornithological value. The potential effects on birds are limited to temporary disturbance during construction, potential disturbance to nesting birds if vegetation clearance is required, and operational lighting effects on nocturnal birds using the wider retained habitats.

Given that the Site is an existing floodlit sporting venue and that tawny owl and little owl continue to use the wider landholding in the presence of existing lighting and venue activity, the replacement lighting system is not predicted to result in a significant adverse effect on nocturnal birds. The ability to reduce lighting levels after play and dim progressively to off should reduce unnecessary post-event illumination compared with the existing system.

Any vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside the main nesting bird season where practicable or preceded by a nesting bird check by a suitably competent ecologist. If active nests are found, an appropriate exclusion zone should be maintained until the nest is no longer active. Subject to these safeguards, no significant adverse residual effect on birds is predicted.

6.5.6 Badger

The desk study identified badger records within 2 km, with the nearest record approximately 320 m south of the Site. No badger setts were identified within the Site or immediately adjacent areas during the 2025 survey, and no badger setts were identified during the July 2026 walkover. The Proposed Development does not require works within or close to a known badger sett.

Potential effects on badger are therefore limited to general construction-phase risks, such as temporary entrapment in open excavations or disturbance if a new sett is established before works commence. A precautionary pre-commencement check should be undertaken if there is a delay between survey and construction, particularly where works are close to boundary vegetation or earth banks. Excavations should be covered overnight or fitted with a means of escape, and food waste should be managed to avoid attracting animals into active working areas.

Subject to these standard safeguards, no significant adverse effect on badger is predicted and no licence is required on the basis of the current evidence.

6.5.7 Hedgehog

Hedgehog is a Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 and is known from the local area, with desk study records within 2 km. No field signs associated with hedgehog were recorded during the 2026 walkover and no individuals were observed during the night-time activity survey. The Utilita Bowl facilities team has not recorded hedgehog road casualty issues within the stadium parking or access areas. However, habitats within

the wider landholding, including hedgerows, grassland margins, woodland and shrub cover, provide potential foraging and resting opportunities.

The Proposed Development is unlikely to result in significant loss of hedgehog habitat because the permanent footprint is very small and principally associated with hardstanding and amenity grass verge. The main risk is temporary construction-phase killing or injury through vegetation clearance, machinery movement, open excavations, or the creation of temporary refuges within stored materials.

Precautionary measures should include checking areas of vegetation before clearance, avoiding overnight open excavations or providing escape ramps, storing materials on pallets or away from habitat edges where practicable, and checking stored materials before movement. With these measures in place, no significant adverse residual effect on hedgehog is predicted.

6.5.8 Invertebrates and wider nocturnal fauna

The desk study returned numerous invertebrate records from within 2 km, including stag beetle and other species of conservation interest. Habitats likely to support the greatest invertebrate value within the wider landholding include mature trees, decaying wood, woodland edge, scrub, grassland margins and wetland/waterbody features. The direct development footprint is very small and does not require removal of veteran trees, deadwood habitat, woodland or wetland features.

Artificial lighting can influence nocturnal invertebrates by attracting, disorientating or displacing individuals, with potential knock-on effects for foraging bats and other fauna. This is relevant to the Site because the existing stadium lighting already forms part of the baseline and some bat activity appears to be associated with invertebrates attracted to lit edge and car park environments. The replacement lighting should therefore avoid unnecessary spill onto retained woodland, tree lines, waterbodies and semi-natural margins and should limit duration and intensity to that required for safe and functional operation.

Subject to the embedded lighting controls, limited land take and retention of higher-value habitat features, no significant adverse effect on invertebrates or wider nocturnal fauna is predicted. Opportunities for enhancement should focus on retention of deadwood where safe to do so, native structural planting, dark habitat refuges along retained boundaries, and biodiversity-sensitive management of woodland edge and grassland margins.

6.6 BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

The Proposed Development has been reviewed in relation to the statutory biodiversity net gain (BNG) requirements introduced through Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as inserted by the Environment Act 2021, and the associated Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024. Mandatory BNG requires, unless an exemption applies, that development achieves at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat, secured through the statutory biodiversity gain condition and an approved Biodiversity Gain Plan prior to commencement (MHCLG and DLUHC, 2026).

In this case, the Proposed Development comprises the replacement of existing floodlighting infrastructure within an established stadium environment. The permanent land take associated with the six proposed mast bases is very limited, with each mast requiring approximately 3.51 m² and a total permanent footprint of approximately 21.06 m². The affected areas comprise hard standing and small areas of grass verge/amenity-type habitat within an already developed and operational sports venue. No priority habitat, woodland, hedgerow, watercourse, pond or other linear habitat would be lost or degraded as a result of the works.

The de minimis exemption is therefore considered to apply. Under Regulation 4 of the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024, the biodiversity gain planning condition does not apply where development does not impact onsite priority habitat and impacts less than 25 m² of onsite habitat with biodiversity value greater than zero, and less than 5 m of onsite linear habitat (UK Government, 2024). Government guidance

confirms that BNG does not apply to developments that fall below these thresholds, provided priority habitat is not affected and there is no loss or degradation of linear habitat such as hedgerows or watercourses (Defra, 2026a). On the basis of the land take described in this report, the development would affect approximately 21.06 m² of non-priority habitat and would not affect any onsite linear habitat. Accordingly, no statutory BNG calculation or Biodiversity Gain Plan is required.

This conclusion does not remove the need to consider biodiversity within the planning balance. The updated National Planning Policy Framework (August 2026) continues to require planning decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment, minimise impacts on biodiversity, provide net gains where possible, and apply the mitigation hierarchy so that significant harm is avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated (MHCLG, 2026). Government guidance similarly confirms that developments exempt from mandatory BNG remain subject to existing environmental protections and planning policy, including the need to avoid significant harm to biodiversity and incorporate nature-friendly measures where practicable (Defra, 2026b).

The ecological appraisal has therefore considered the effects of the Proposed Development on designated sites, habitats, bats, retained trees, reptiles, dormouse, great crested newt, badger, hedgehog, birds and other nocturnal fauna. Subject to implementation of the avoidance and mitigation measures set out in this report, no significant adverse residual ecological effects are predicted. Although mandatory BNG is not required, opportunities for proportionate biodiversity enhancement should still be incorporated where practicable, for example through sensitive lighting controls, retention and protection of boundary habitats, maintenance of darker ecological corridors where possible, and small-scale habitat enhancements within the wider landholding where compatible with the operation of the venue.

7 CONCLUSIONS

This Ecological Appraisal has been prepared to inform the planning application for the replacement of the existing floodlighting system at the Utilita Bowl, Botley Road, West End. The Proposed Development comprises the replacement of established floodlighting infrastructure serving an existing international cricket venue and does not introduce a new floodlit use. The proposals are required to maintain the operational capability of the venue for elite cricket and provide a modern, controllable LED lighting system with improved performance, dimming and operational management compared with the existing installation.

The appraisal has drawn on Johns Associates' long-standing knowledge of the Utilita Bowl and Boundary Lakes landholding, together with desk study information, historical ecological survey data, updated 2025 survey work and bespoke 2026 nocturnal survey information. The assessment has considered statutory and non-statutory designated sites, habitats, retained trees, bats, great crested newt, dormouse, reptiles, badger, hedgehog, birds, invertebrates and wider nocturnal fauna.

No direct impacts on statutory designated sites are predicted. The nearest SSSI, Moorgreen Meadows, is located approximately 147 m north of the Site and is separated from it by the M27 motorway. Internationally designated sites associated with the River Itchen and the Solent are located between approximately 2.6 km and 3.6 km from the Site. The Proposed Development will not result in land take from, hydrological change to, or physical disturbance of these designated sites, and no credible impact pathway has been identified. Similarly, no direct land take from non-statutory designated sites is proposed. Telegraph Woods SINC directly borders the wider landholding and has been treated as an important local ecological receptor, particularly in relation to bats and lighting. Subject to the lighting design and controls avoiding any material increase in light spill onto retained woodland edge habitat, no significant adverse effect on Telegraph Woods SINC or other non-statutory designated sites is predicted.

The permanent physical footprint of the Proposed Development is very small, comprising six mast foundations with a combined land take of approximately 21.06 m². The affected areas comprise hardstanding and small areas of grass verge or amenity-type habitat within an already developed stadium context. No woodland, hedgerow, waterbody, priority habitat or habitat of elevated intrinsic ecological value will be lost. Retained trees, woodland edges, waterbodies and boundary habitats represent the principal habitat features of ecological importance within and adjacent to the Site and should be protected during construction and operation.

Bats are the main ecological receptor for the assessment because the proposals relate to artificial lighting and the Site supports moderate suitability commuting and foraging habitat. Desk study and historical survey data confirm the presence of a local bat assemblage including common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, serotine, noctule, *Myotis* species, brown long-eared bat, Nathusius's pipistrelle and barbastelle. The 2026 surveys recorded continued bat activity during periods when existing lighting was operational, including along illuminated woodland edges, car park areas and the margins of Telegraph Woods and Westwood Copse. Automated detector data recorded 5,705 bat passes, dominated by serotine and common pipistrelle, with lower levels of other species and very low levels of more light-sensitive taxa such as *Myotis* species and brown long-eared bat.

The survey information indicates that the bat assemblage recorded in 2026 was dominated by species that are generally more tolerant of open, edge and lit environments. However, the presence of light-sensitive species, potential roost features in retained trees and the ecological importance of retained woodland edges mean that lighting effects still require careful control. Trees T8, T18, T38 and T39 support viable potential roost features within or close to the development footprint. These trees are anticipated to be retained and should not be subject to increased illumination, pruning, direct works or obstruction of roost access without further ecological review. If tree retention, lighting levels or construction methods change in a way that could affect these features, further inspection and Natural England licensing advice may be required.

Great crested newt and dormouse are considered likely absent from the works area based on negative survey evidence, absence of recent dormouse records, limited habitat connectivity and the lack of material change in habitat

conditions. Reptiles are known from the wider landholding, and slow worm has previously been recorded, but the proposed works footprint is small and largely avoids suitable reptile habitat. Badger setts were not recorded during the 2025 or 2026 surveys. Hedgehog is known locally and may use retained habitat edges opportunistically. Birds, including tawny owl and little owl, occur within the wider landholding, although the proposals do not require the loss of substantive nesting or foraging habitat. These receptors can be adequately protected through standard precautionary construction measures, including pre-commencement checks where appropriate, sensitive vegetation management, protection of open excavations, careful storage of materials and avoidance of disturbance to active bird nests.

The replacement LED lighting system provides important, embedded mitigation through improved aiming, optical control, dimming and staged switch-off. It will allow lighting to be progressively increased as daylight fades, avoiding abrupt changes in lighting conditions, and reduced promptly after play to safe egress and de-rigging levels before being dimmed to off. This is preferable to the existing lighting arrangement, under which the lights remain at full output until switched off. The ecological acceptability of the Proposed Development depends on these controls being secured and implemented so that light spill onto retained woodland edges, potential roost features, waterbodies and other sensitive nocturnal habitats is avoided or minimised.

The Proposed Development has also been considered in relation to statutory biodiversity net gain. The permanent habitat impact is approximately 21.06 m², below the 25 m² de minimis threshold, and no onsite priority habitat or linear habitat such as hedgerow or watercourse will be lost or degraded. The de minimis exemption is therefore considered to apply, and no statutory Biodiversity Gain Plan is required. This does not remove the obligation to consider biodiversity within the planning balance, and proportionate ecological enhancement should still be delivered where practicable through retained habitat protection, sensitive lighting controls, maintenance of darker ecological corridors and small-scale habitat enhancements within the wider landholding.

Overall, subject to implementation of the avoidance, mitigation and operational controls set out in this report, the Proposed Development is not predicted to result in significant adverse residual ecological effects. The scheme represents the replacement and modernisation of existing floodlighting infrastructure within an established stadium environment and should, through improved controllability and reduced unnecessary post-event lighting, provide opportunities to better manage the ecological effects of artificial lighting compared with the current system. The proposals are therefore considered capable of being delivered in accordance with relevant national and local planning policy, protected species legislation and ecological best practice.

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APPENDIX A – LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY

LEGISLATION

Many species of animal and plant receive some degree of legal protection. For the purposes of this report, legal protection refers to: species included on Annex II of the Habitats Directive 1992 (Council of European Communities, 22/07/1992) , Schedules 2 and 5 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) , excluding species that are only protected in relation to their sale (see Section 9[5] and 13[2]) reflecting the fact that the proposed development does not include any proposals relating to the sale of species.

Legal offences associated with species listed on Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations and Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act in England and Wales include inter alia:

- Deliberate capture, injury or killing of animals or taking or destroying their eggs;
- Deliberately disturb animals in a way that would significantly affect their local distribution or abundance, or affect their ability to survive, breed or rear young;
- Intentional or reckless disturbance of an animal in its place of shelter or protection;
- Damaging or destroying a resting place or breeding site;
- Intentionally or recklessly obstructing access to a place of shelter or protection; and
- Possess, control, transport, sell, exchange or offer for sale/exchange any live or dead animal or any part of an animal.

All species of wild bird are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) from killing or injury. In addition, it is an offence to take or damage/ destroy their eggs and to damage or destroy a nest whilst it is in use. Species listed on Schedule 1 (such as barn owl) receive additional protection in that it is illegal to disturb birds or their young whilst occupying, or near to, an active nest.

A number of wild plants, habitats and animals (including reptiles, hedgehog and most species of bat) are also included within Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 which lists flora, fauna and habitats considered by the Secretary of State to be of principal importance for conserving biodiversity. The publication of the "England Biodiversity List" satisfies the requirements of Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 for the conservation of biodiversity. Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006 requires public bodies, including local planning authorities, to have regard for the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.

Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (UK Government, 1992) which makes it an offence to willfully kill, injure or take (or attempt to kill, injure or take) a badger; or to disturb badgers whilst occupying their setts.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY FRAMEWORK 2026

There are numerous national and local planning policies associated with flora and fauna, also referred to as biodiversity, that need to be addressed as part of the planning process. The Government's National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was substantially revised in August 2026 and now sets out national planning policy in a revised format, distinguishing between plan-making policies and national decision-making policies. The NPPF remains a material consideration in planning decisions and must be read as a whole, including alongside relevant statutory requirements and other environmental legislation.

The August 2026 NPPF continues to require the planning system to contribute to the protection, conservation, restoration and enhancement of the natural environment. In ecological terms, this includes safeguarding designated sites, protecting and recovering priority habitats and species, maintaining and strengthening ecological networks, applying the mitigation hierarchy, and securing biodiversity improvements through development where appropriate.

The revised Framework also gives greater prominence to Local Nature Recovery Strategies and their role in informing plan-making and decision-making for nature recovery.

Plans should identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks. This includes 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. Plans should also promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species, while identifying and pursuing opportunities for securing measurable biodiversity gains.

The NPPF requires planning decisions to apply the mitigation hierarchy. Development should first avoid significant harm to biodiversity, including through locating development on an alternative site with fewer harmful impacts where appropriate. Where harm cannot be avoided, it should be adequately mitigated. Only where residual harm remains should compensation be considered as a last resort. Where significant harm to biodiversity cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or compensated for, planning permission should be refused.

Development likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest, either alone or in combination with other development, should not normally be permitted unless the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest. The NPPF also continues to afford strong protection to irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees. Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats should be refused unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy is provided.

Internationally designated habitat sites, including Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas, remain protected through the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended. The NPPF continues to make clear that Ramsar sites should be given the same protection as habitats sites, and that the same approach applies to sites identified or required as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites. This ensures that Ramsar sites and compensatory habitat sites are treated consistently with the protection afforded to European sites when determining planning applications.

The 2026 NPPF also retains the expectation that development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported. Opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated into scheme design, particularly where this can help secure measurable biodiversity gains, strengthen ecological networks, support nature recovery, or enhance public access to nature where appropriate.

Planning authorities should follow key principles to ensure that the potential impacts of planning decisions on biodiversity conservation are properly considered. The NPPF should be read alongside relevant legislation and guidance, including the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, the Environment Act 2021, Biodiversity Net Gain regulations and guidance, relevant Natural England standing advice, and Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation. Circular 06/05 continues to provide guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation and remains relevant insofar as it complements current national planning policy and has not been superseded by more recent legislation or guidance.

EASTLEIGH LOCAL PLAN / SUPPLEMENTARY PLANNING DOCUMENTS

The Site lies within the administrative area of Eastleigh Borough Council and is therefore subject to the adopted Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016–2036, adopted in April 2022. The Local Plan provides the statutory development plan framework for determining planning applications in the Borough and should be read alongside relevant Supplementary Planning Documents (SPDs), national planning policy, statutory biodiversity duties and protected species legislation. The Local Plan confirms that the Borough contains a range of important ecological assets, including designated sites, woodland, wetland, grassland, heathland and green infrastructure networks, and

seeks to ensure that development protects and, where practicable, enhances biodiversity and the natural environment.

Policy S10: Green Infrastructure is relevant because the Proposed Development is located within an established sports and leisure landholding that includes retained woodland, tree belts, waterbodies, grassland margins and wider ecological connectivity. The policy seeks to protect and enhance the Borough's green infrastructure network, recognising the role of multifunctional green spaces in supporting biodiversity, landscape character, recreation, flood risk management, climate resilience and health and wellbeing. In relation to the Proposed Development, the retained boundary habitats, Telegraph Woods, tree-lined edges and waterbody features form part of the wider green infrastructure context and should therefore be protected from avoidable direct and indirect effects, including construction disturbance and unnecessary lighting spill.

Policy DM11: Nature Conservation is directly relevant to this ecological appraisal. It requires development to avoid adverse effects on biodiversity, protect designated sites and habitats, safeguard legally protected and priority species, and maintain or enhance ecological networks. Where harm cannot be avoided, appropriate mitigation or compensation is required. The policy reflects the mitigation hierarchy embedded in national policy and ecological impact assessment good practice. The appraisal has therefore considered potential effects on statutory and non-statutory designated sites, habitats, bats, retained trees, reptiles, dormouse, great crested newt, badger, hedgehog, birds and other nocturnal fauna. The Proposed Development involves a small permanent footprint associated with replacement lighting infrastructure and does not require the loss of woodland, hedgerow, waterbody or other habitat of elevated ecological value. Subject to implementation of the avoidance and mitigation measures set out in this report, the proposals are considered capable of complying with Policy DM11.

Policy DM1: General Criteria for New Development is also relevant because it provides the overarching development management policy against which new proposals are assessed. The policy requires development to be appropriate to its context and to avoid unacceptable impacts on the environment, amenity, landscape and infrastructure. The Council's Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Document, adopted in April 2022, provides technical guidance on Policy DM1 and confirms that trees should be considered fully and at an early stage of the planning process. The SPD is a material consideration in the determination of planning applications and seeks to ensure that the multiple benefits of trees, including biodiversity, green infrastructure, climate adaptation, shading, landscape character and placemaking, are retained and enhanced where possible.

The Trees and Development SPD is particularly relevant to the Proposed Development because several mast locations are close to retained trees, including London plane trees and other trees that contribute to the structure of the Site and local green infrastructure. The SPD highlights the importance of retaining existing trees wherever practicable, designing development around tree constraints, avoiding pre-emptive felling, protecting root protection areas, and preventing future conflicts with lighting, utilities, buildings, surfacing and highways. It also identifies ancient and veteran trees, ecological designations, tree protection measures, supervision, monitoring, replacement planting and landscape design as relevant considerations in the planning process. In this case, no tree removal is understood to be required for the replacement floodlighting scheme, and effects on retained trees should be avoided through adherence to arboricultural constraints, root protection measures and construction management controls.

The Trees and Development SPD also recognises that trees provide wildlife habitats and corridors and enhance biodiversity. This is relevant to the ecological assessment because mature and semi-mature trees within and around the Utilita Bowl landholding support habitat connectivity, invertebrate resource, potential bird nesting habitat, and potential roost features for bats. The report has identified trees with potential bat roost features, including low and high suitability features associated with retained trees. The Proposed Development should therefore ensure that retained trees are not subject to avoidable damage, pruning, root disturbance, increased illumination of potential roost features, or changes that could affect their ecological function. Where works are required close to retained

trees, they should be undertaken in accordance with an approved arboricultural method statement and tree protection plan.

Eastleigh Borough Council's Biodiversity SPD, adopted in December 2009, remains relevant insofar as it provides local guidance on biodiversity information requirements, ecological impact assessment, designated sites, protected species, priority habitats and the Council's expectations for development proposals that may affect nature conservation interests. The SPD confirms that applications should be supported by adequate ecological information where biodiversity interests may be affected and that ecological mitigation should be incorporated into development design. Although prepared under an earlier local plan framework, its principles remain consistent with current national policy, the adopted Local Plan and statutory biodiversity duties. This report responds to those expectations by drawing together desk study data, historic survey information, updated 2025 and 2026 field evidence, and receptor-specific assessment of likely effects.

Eastleigh Borough Council's current biodiversity work is also relevant context. The Council's biodiversity information identifies the Borough as supporting important habitats including ancient semi-natural woodland, unimproved flower-rich grassland, heathland, saltmarsh, wetland and chalk rivers. The Council's biodiversity strategy and associated mapping identify priority areas and ecological links intended to guide biodiversity projects and encourage ecological uplift. These documents are relevant to the planning balance because they emphasise the need to protect ecological networks and strengthen nature recovery opportunities. In relation to the Proposed Development, the most relevant local ecological features are the retained woodland and tree-lined boundaries, Telegraph Woods SINC, waterbody features and the wider mosaic of habitats within the Utilita Bowl and Boundary Lakes landholding.

The Council's Tree Strategy 2022–2030 provides wider strategic context for the consideration of trees in development. It recognises the climate, biodiversity and public benefit functions of trees and identifies trees as important components of green infrastructure, wildlife habitat and ecological corridors. Although strategic rather than a development control policy in itself, it supports the approach taken in the Trees and Development SPD and reinforces the importance of retaining and protecting existing trees, increasing canopy cover where practicable, and ensuring that development contributes positively to the Borough's urban forest and biodiversity objectives.

In summary, the Proposed Development should be considered against the adopted Local Plan and relevant Eastleigh guidance as a replacement infrastructure scheme within an existing stadium environment. The key local planning policy considerations are the protection of biodiversity, designated sites, ecological networks, retained trees and green infrastructure. The proposals have a very small permanent land take, does not require the loss of woodland, hedgerow, waterbody or priority habitat, and has been assessed in relation to bats, lighting, retained tree features and other protected or notable species. Provided that retained trees are protected during construction, lighting spill onto sensitive ecological receptors is minimised, and the mitigation measures set out in this report are implemented, the proposals are considered capable of according with the relevant biodiversity and tree-related requirements of the Eastleigh Borough Local Plan and associated SPDs.