



EXTENDED PHASE 1 ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT AND PHASE 2 SURVEYS

EAST HORTON GOLF CLUB, MORTIMERS LN, FAIR OAK, EASTLEIGH, SO50 7EA

FINAL REPORT

February 2025

Report conditions

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Executive Summary

- This Extended Phase 1 Ecological Assessment and Phase 2 Surveys report has been prepared in order to support a planning application for the proposed redevelopment works at East Horton Golf Club, Eastleigh.
- An Extended Phase 1 Ecological Assessment of the application site was undertaken on the 4th March by Connor Hill of Phillips Ecology.
- The survey area comprised red line boundary of the application site and the immediate surrounds. A data search extended to a 2km radius for designated sites and a 1km radius for notable habitats and protected species.
- The site is considered to support opportunities for protected and priority species including, foraging bats, breeding birds, great crested newts, dormice, badgers and hedgehog.
- Recommendations for further survey work in relation to dormice, reptiles and great-crested newts were made.
- Phase 2 surveys have confirmed good population of slow-worm and a small population of grass snake, the presence of dormice, the presence of one badger sett and the presence of great crested newts.
- It is considered impacts can be avoided for hedgehogs, reptiles, foraging and commuting bats and breeding birds with the implementation of mitigation and precautionary avoidance measures. The loss of the recorded badger sett and areas of great crested newt terrestrial habitat will require development and mitigation licences to be in place prior to commencement of the construction phase of the development.
- The proposals present an opportunity to deliver ecological enhancements at a site level, and benefit wildlife in the wider area. Biodiversity Metric Calculations have been carried out in order to provide measurable outcomes which demonstrate that the project will deliver quantifiable benefits to biodiversity compared to the baseline situation.

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1. Introduction

1.1 Report purpose

This report has been prepared in order to present the Extended Phase 1 Ecological Assessment and Phase 2 surveys undertaken at East Horton Golf Club, Mortimers Lane, Fair Oak, Eastleigh, SO50 7EA, centred at SU50178577.

1.2 Description of proposal

The proposed development seeks planning permission for the phased redevelopment and enhancement of the existing Greenland and Parkland golf courses. The project focuses on landscape improvements, biodiversity enhancement, and drainage solutions, with no new buildings or water crossings and no works within designated Flood Zones.

Phase 1 involves the closure and re-planting of the existing 1st Fairway, along with the creation of a new 1st Tee Box and a re-aligned 1st Fairway along the existing Driving Range. The 18th Green will also be improved as part of this phase. The existing Driving Range will be closed, with re-profiling works carried out to create a swale and landform. This area will be replanted to form a new garden, pedestrian walkway, and wildlife habitat, providing an attractive edge to the new 1st Fairway. Accessibility improvements will be implemented across the course, alongside measures to alleviate waterlogging and poor drainage. No demolition, new buildings, or water crossings are proposed in Phase 1, and alterations to greens will be limited to changes in mowing and seeding regimes that do not require planning permission. Full Planning Permission is sought for Phase 1.

Phase 2 includes the closure of holes 14, 15, and 18, with re-profiling and landscaping works to establish a new 300-yard Driving Range. Swales and drainage infrastructure will be created to reduce waterlogging and improve overall course drainage. Outline Planning Permission is sought for the construction of a new Driving Range building, with only outline details provided at this stage. No demolition, new buildings (other than the proposed Driving Range building), or water crossings are proposed in Phase 2, and no works will take place within the Flood Zone.

1.3 Report context

Exdell Management have prepared a planning application for their client (East Horton Golf Club) for the proposed works at East Horton Golf Course. Phillips Ecology have been instructed by the applicant to undertake an ecological assessment to support this application, which is been to be submitted to Eastleigh Borough Council and Winchester City Council.

1.4 Scope of assessment

An extended phase 1 ecological assessment was carried out on the 4th March 2024. The survey comprised a field survey and desktop study in order to identify notable or protected sites, habitats or species potentially affected by the proposal under consideration. This was followed by species specific surveys for dormice, reptiles and great crested newts.

1.5 **Survey area**

The survey area encompassed the existing Greenland and Parkland golf courses, covering both Phase 1 and Phase 2 application areas. This included the 1st Fairway, 18th Green, and existing Driving Range within the Greenland Course, as well as the areas around holes 14, 15, and 18 in the Parkland Course. Surveys were conducted across proposed locations for re-profiling, landscaping, drainage improvements, and habitat enhancements, including areas earmarked for new gardens, walkways, and wildlife habitats.

1.6 **Limitations**

Any survey limitations which are specific to each phase of the assessment are given in the relevant sections, below.

1.7 **Relevant documents**

The relevant proposal plan used to inform this assessment is presented in Appendix 1.

2. Data search

2.1 Methodology

A desk-based assessment was undertaken by Phillips Ecology on the 14th November 2024 with Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC). The MAGIC database was consulted for records of statutory designated sites within a 2km radius of the site and priority habitats and protected species licenses granted within a 1km radius.

2.2 Limitations

The data search results are bound by the following statement contained within MAGICs general disclaimer: "The materials contained on this website are of a general, informational, nature. We have used reasonable endeavours to ensure the accuracy and completeness of the contents of the pages on this site but the information does not constitute advice and must not be relied on as such."

2.3 Results

2.3.1 Statutory designated sites

A single statutory designated site is located within a 2km radius of the application site. This comprises the South Downs National Park, England's newest national park comprising 1627sq km of chalk downland. The site is located 670m from the border of the national park.

Table 1: Statutory designated sites within 2km of the application site

Site Name	Approx. distance and direction from the site	Reason for designation
South Downs National Park	1.8km NE (of Phase 1 site)	The South Downs is England's newest national park comprising of 1627sq km of chalk downland stretching through Hampshire, West Sussex and East Sussex. The south downs consist of chalk grassland, lowland heathland, ancient woodland, farmland, rivers and wetland and coastal habitats and is home to the rare Adonis Blue butterfly <i>Polyommatus bellargus</i> and Chalk Carpet moth <i>Scotopteryx bipunctaria</i> as well as protected species including the Barbastelle bat <i>Barbastella barbastellus</i> and Hazel Dormouse <i>Muscardinus avellanarius</i> .
	1.5km (of Phase 2 site)	
	1.6km (of Additional Area)	

2.3.2 Ancient Woodlands

There are four blocks of ancient woodland located within a 1km radius of the site. Details are provided in Table 2, below.

Table 2: Ancient woodlands within a 1km radius of the Phase 1 application site

<i>Woodland Name</i>	<i>Approx. distance and direction from the site</i>	<i>Reason for designation</i>
Unnamed	0.38km W	This 2.4ha block is designated for its ancient semi-natural woodland
Durley Corpse	0km SW	This 8.8ha block is designated for its ancient replanted woodland.
Greenwood	0.67km SE	This 26.1ha block is designated for its ancient replanted woodland.

Table 3: Ancient woodlands within a 1km radius of the Phase 2 application site

<i>Woodland Name</i>	<i>Approx. distance and direction from the site</i>	<i>Reason for designation</i>
Unnamed	0.64km W	This 2.4ha block is designated for its ancient semi-natural woodland
Durley Corpse	0.24km SW	This 8.8ha block is designated for its ancient replanted woodland.
Greenwood	0.27km SE	This 26.1ha block is designated for its ancient replanted woodland.
Greenwood	0.66km SE	This 3.1ha block is designated for its ancient semi-natural woodland.

2.3.3 Priority habitats

The data search revealed records of seven priority habitats within a 1km radius of the site, these are listed below.

Phase 1:

- Coastal and Floodplain grazing marsh (982m SW)
- Good quality semi-improved grassland (394m NW & 764m NE)
- Deciduous Woodland (0m S, 8m E, 105m S, 310m SE, 265m NW, 410m NW, 914m NW, 583m NE, 556m E, 899m SE & 776m S)
- Traditional Orchards (940m E & 595m W)

Phase 2:

- Good quality semi-improved grassland (495m NW & 434m NE)
- Deciduous Woodland (495m NW, 470m W, 187m SW, 336m SW, 459m SW, 617m S, 648m SE, 140m E & 240m NE).

- Traditional orchards (969m W & 565m E).

The areas of deciduous woodland within the site boundary correspond to the designated areas of semi-natural ancient woodland.

2.3.4 *Protected species*

The data search revealed records of the following protected species with a 1km radius of the site. These records relate to EPSM licences that have been issued by Natural England, the date of licence issue is included in brackets and licence returns resulting from ecological surveys.

Phase 1:

- Bats – common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* & soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* (2014-1914-EPS-MIT) – 480m SE (2015 - 2020).

Phase 2:

- Bats – common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* & soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus* (2014-1914-EPS-MIT) – 370m S (2015 - 2020).

3. Habitats

3.1 Methodology

A field survey was carried out on the 4th March 2024 by Connor Hill of Phillips Ecology. During the survey, all broad habitat types were identified, and a list was compiled of characteristic plant species within each habitat type. These habitats are described below in accordance with UKHabs terminology.

3.2 Limitations

No limitations were encountered throughout the duration of the habitat survey.

3.3 Existing records

The data search revealed that there are three priority habitats associated with the local landscape within a 1km radius of the site. These are deciduous woodland and traditional orchards.

3.4 Phase 1 site

The majority of the site is formed by a driving range and a fairway with a ditch flowing northeast to southwest dividing the two areas. The predominant habitat within the site consists of open areas of well managed modified grassland. Much of the north-western boundary is formed by broadleaved trees with a scattered scrub understorey, this extends to the western corner where scrub is the dominant habitat. The south-eastern boundary is defined by the northern edge of Durley Copse a block of replanted ancient woodland, the copse itself remains outside the boundary line. A small line of trees extends along the ditch acting a visual and physical barrier between the fairway and driving range.

The eastern corner of the site is isolated by a post and rail fence and line of young trees which extends south-eastwards from the centre of the north-eastern boundary, towards the south-eastern boundary and fairway. The area is formed by managed grassland and features both the green for a separate hole and an outdoor space for wedding ceremonies to commence.

The surrounding landscape includes other holes for the golf course to the northeast, a block of broadleaved woodland to the south, arable farmland to the west and meadow habitat to the north-west which lies upon a disused landfill site.

The following habitats designated using UKHabs classifications were recorded within the boundary of the application site. See Appendix 2 for the UKHabs map.

3.4.1 Modified grassland g4

The site majority comprises modified grassland including the driving range, fairway and green (Figures 1, 2, 3 and 4). These areas remain well managed with a limited species mix within. The recorded species within a typical 1x1m quadrat of this habitat included, perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, daisy *Bellis perennis*, dandelion *Taraxacum sp.*, and white clover *Trifolium repens*.

Around the peripherals of the grasslands additional species indicative of high nutrient levels have established including chickweed sp. *Stellaria sp.*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, thistle sp. *Cirsium sp.*, cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, parsnip *Pastinaca sativa*, bristly oxtongue *Picris echinoides*, cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, common nettle *Urtica dioica*, soft rush *Juncus effusus*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare*, crosswort *Cruciata laevipes*.

Where the ditch extends through the site additional plant species were recorded on the banks of the waterway. These included pendulous sedge *Carex pendula*, lesser celandine *Ficaria verna*, hemlock *Conium maculatum*, primrose *Primula vulgaris* and lords-and-ladies *Arum maculatum*.



Figure 1 – driving range grassland



Figure 2 – Fairway grassland



Figure 3 – eastern wedding ceremony area



Figure 4 – green in the eastern section of the site

3.4.2 Line of trees w1g6, bramble scrub h3d, priority hedgerow h2a and scattered scrub w1g6 10

The species within the line of trees and scattered scrub understorey which extends along the north-western site boundary includes blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, field maple *Acer campestre*, sycamore *Acer pseudopatanus*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, common ivy *Hedera helix*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus* and holly *Ilex aquifolium* (Figure 5).

In the western corner of the site, a patch of scrub dominated by bramble extends into the grassland (Figure 6). Scattered blackthorn and buddleia *Buddleja davidii* were also recorded amongst the scrub.

A small line of mature trees extends along the ditch which divides the site (Figure 7). The recorded species included oak *Quercus robur*, ash, hazel *Corylus avellana*, willow sp *Salix* sp., holly and alder *Alnus glutinosa*.

A final line of trees extends centrally from the north-eastern boundary and curves towards the south-eastern boundary (Figure 8). The tree line is comprised mostly of younger trees including ash, small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata*, oak and a non-native maple sp. *Acer* sp.

A small beech hedgerow is located in the eastern corner of the site designating an area used for wedding ceremonies. Although only a single species, it is classed a priority habitat due to 80% of it being formed by native beech.



Figure 5 – line of trees along the north-western boundary



Figure 6 – scrub in the western corner



Figure 7 – line of trees along the ditch



Figure 8 – ditch extending onto the site from the eastern corner and eastern line of trees

3.4.3 Ditch

A ditch extends from the eastern corner through the site and exits at the western boundary (Figure 9). The ditch divides the driving range from the green and fairway to hole one on the course. The ditch dries each summer and forms pools of water from June.



Figure 9 – ditch extending westwards

3.4.4 Assessment

The hardstanding and modified grassland on site contain no significant assemblages of species and so are considered to be of low botanical value.

The tree lines, native hedgerows, ditch and scrub habitats feature a good assemblage of native species so are considered to be of high ecological value.

3.5 Phase 2 site

The site predominantly consists of three fairways and two greens formed by well managed grassland. The centre of the site is less managed with groups of young trees extending southeast to northwest. Where the hill levels out in the north-west, the central grassland lays wet and rushes dominate. A line of trees extends along the south-western and south-eastern boundaries created by a grown-out hedgerow. A fence line extends along the north-eastern boundary with the line of trees beyond overhanging into the site. A ditch extends along the north-western boundary of the site with a line of mature trees overhanging it.

The surrounding landscape includes further holes for the golf course to the north and west. Greenwood lane lies beyond the south-eastern boundary with Greenwood, a block of broadleaved woodland, just beyond the lane to the south. An arable field is situated to the east of the site with a line of trees along the eastern fence line of the site.

The following habitats designated using UKHabs classifications were recorded within the boundary of the application site. See Appendix 2 for the UKHabs map.

3.5.1 Modified grassland g4 15

Much of the site is formed by the fairways and greens which are composed of well managed modified grassland (Figure 10). The recorded species within a typical 1x1m quadrat of this habitat included, perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, daisy *Bellis perennis*, dandelion *Taraxacum sp.*, and white clover *Trifolium repens*.

Around the peripherals of the course and in the center of the site where the grassland is less managed additional species persist (Figure 11). These species include, cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, common ivy *Hedera helix*, thistle sp. *Cirsium* sp., bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, cleavers *Gallium aparine*, lords-and-ladies *Arum maculatum*, hairy bittercress *Cardamine hirsuta*, broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, chickweed sp. *Stellaria* sp, ground-ivy *Glechoma hederacea*, yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, field speedwell *Veronica agrestis*, common sorrel *Rumex acetosa*.

Where the ditch extends along the northern boundary of the site, additional plant species were recorded on the banks of the waterway. These included pendulous sedge *Carex pendula*, lesser celandine *Ficaria verna*, hemlock *Conium maculatum*, primrose *Primula vulgaris* and lords-and-ladies *Arum maculatum*.



Figure 10 – western fairway on site



Figure 11 – central grassland looking north



Figure 12 – central grassland looking east



Figure 13 – grassland on banks of the ditch

Towards the base of the hill and in some areas around the peripherals of the site the soil is poorly drained, the central grassland becomes sparser and lays wet. In this area Yorkshire fog and perennial ryegrass are still present but with scattered soft rush *Juncus effusus*. Other common species recorded in these areas included common bent *Agrostis capillaris*, creeping buttercup, and dropwort *Filipendula vulgaris*. Due to the site's topography, surface water runoff from the more managed areas of grassland has led to localised nutrient enrichment, limiting species diversity within the sward. Under less

enriched conditions, this area could have developed a plant community more representative of Holcus-Juncus neutral grassland.



Figure 14 – area of grassland which lays wet



Figure 15 – area of grassland which lays wet

3.5.2 Line of trees w1g6 1180

Unmanaged hedgerows have turned into lines of trees along the south-eastern and south-western boundaries. These linear habitats still contain a scrub understorey but are defunct with gaps allowing for access/egress to the western section of the golf course. The species within the hedgerows include blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, common ivy *Hedera helix*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, willow sp *Salix sp.*, oak *Quercus robur* and hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*.

A scattered line of oak trees extends along the north-western boundary of the site. The trees are in mixed conditions with some appearing to be partly dead.

A line of trees exists beyond the fence line along the north-eastern boundary with the branches heavily overhanging the site. The recorded species include oak, hawthorn, ash *Fraxinus excelsior* and holly.



Figure 16 – line of trees and hedgerow along south-western boundary



Figure 17 – line of oak trees along the north-western boundary

3.5.3 Scattered trees g4 11

Multiple groups of young, scattered trees are situated in the centre of the site with some single trees also present. The recorded species includes silver birch *Betula pendula*, beech *Fagus sylvatica* and a pine sp. *Pinus sp.*



Figure 18 – central trees looking south



Figure 19 – central trees looking north

3.5.4 Dense scrub h3 and bracken g1c

The south-eastern corner of the site has been left unmanaged and bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* and dense scrub has established. The recorded species in the scrub included bramble, common nettle *Urtica dioica*, broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, and common ivy.

3.5.5 Ditch

A ditch forms the north-western boundary of the site with oak trees overhanging the waterway. This is a continuation of the ditch that is located to the south-east of phase 1. This stretch of the ditch also dries during the summer.



Figure 20 – ditch along the north-western boundary

3.5.6 Assessment

The modified grassland on site contains no significant assemblages of species and so are considered to be of low botanical value.

The scattered and lines of trees, ditch and scrub habitats feature a good assemblage of native species so are considered to be of high ecological value.

4. Protected and notable species assessment

The scope of works, data search and habitat assessment have informed the scope of the protected and notable species assessment. On this basis, the following protected and priority species have been considered further within this report:

- Bats
- Badgers
- Dormice
- Hedgehogs
- Reptiles
- Amphibians
- Breeding birds

The surveyed site has been assessed for its potential to support the above- named protected species based upon the criteria in Table 4.

Table 4 Protected species grading criteria

<i>Grading criteria</i>	<i>Justification</i>
<i>Negligible</i>	Site is entirely unsuitable for species. Presence of species highly unlikely.
<i>Low Potential</i>	Minimal suitable habitat present or, if present, highly degraded/fragmented. Minimal linkage to suitable habitat beyond site. Presence of species unlikely.
<i>Moderate</i>	Presence of some suitable habitat features for species. Surveyed site within/close to known range or known occurrence but factors such as isolation/fragmentation may reduce potential. Presence of species is more likely than not.
<i>High</i>	Presence of optimal habitat features for species. Surveyed site within known range/close to known occurrence. Excellent connectivity to optimal habitat. No justification for discounting presence of species.
<i>Confirmed presence</i>	Species confirmed on site through direct sighting, presence of field signs (e.g. scat, hair, prints, nest, eggs, habitation etc.) or through desk-based assessment.

5. Ground Level Tree Assessment (Bats)

5.1 Methodology

The survey did not depart from the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition) which states that "A ground-level tree assessment is a detailed inspection of the exterior of the tree from ground level to look for features that bats could use for roosting (PRFs). The aim of the survey is to determine the available roosting resource and the need for further survey and/or mitigation".

The external features of the trees were systematically inspected in detail to compile information on potential and actual bat access points and roosting places such as rot holes, splits and lifted bark. This included a thorough search for evidence of bat activity such as bat droppings and fur staining

5.2 Survey equipment

Survey equipment comprised:

- High-powered torch
- Ladders
- Camera
- Binoculars

5.3 Limitations

No limitations were encountered during the survey.

5.4 Assessment methodology

The suitability of the trees for supporting bat roosts will be assessed against the guidelines within Table 5 which have been adapted from the BCT Good Practice Guidelines.

Table 5 Suitability assessment guidelines

<i>Suitability</i>	<i>Description of Roosting Habitats</i>
<i>Negligible</i>	A tree has no reasonable likelihood of supporting roosting bats i.e. no suitable roosting features present.
<i>PRF-I</i>	PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
<i>PRF-M</i>	PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

5.5 Tree descriptions relevant to bats and their roosts

The survey area comprised 35 trees split into groups A to F, which are located throughout the application site. The table below presents the ground level tree assessment results of the 35 trees which were subject to a ground level roost assessment.

Table 6 – Ground Level Tree Assessment Results

Arb Tree ref No.	Species	Observations	Potential Roost Features	Suitability
Group A Tree 01	Pine Species	Mature – 12m	Tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none recorded	Neg
Group B Tree 02 Tree 03	Pine Species	Mature – 10m	Tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none recorded	Neg
Group C Trees 4 - 13	Trees 4 & 5, 11 & 12 Silver birch Trees 6 – 9 Pine Species Trees 10 & 13 Beech	Mature – 18m Tree 13 Young beech – 5m	Trees of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none recorded	Neg
Group D Trees 14 - 30	Tree 14 – Sweet Chestnut Trees 15, 18 – 28 & 30 – Pine Species Trees 16, 17 & 29 – Silver Birch	Mature – 18m	Tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none recorded	Neg
Group E Trees 31 - 33	Tree 31– Ash Tree 32 - Lime	Mature – 15m	Tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none recorded	Neg
	Tree 33 - Ash	Mature – 15m	Tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs. Broken truck with a split going all the way through the tree.	Low
Group F Trees 34 - 35	Tree 34 – Ash Tree 35 - Alder	Mature – 18m	Tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none recorded	Neg

5.6 Assessment

A summary assessment of roost suitability for the nine surveyed trees in view of the criteria set out in Table 4 is given in Table 7 below.

Table 7 – Summary assessment of suitability

Tree reference	Suitability category
Group A	Negligible
Group B	Negligible
Group C	Negligible
Group D	Negligible
Group E	Negligible
Group E - Tree 33	Low
Group F	Negligible

The ground level roost assessment has confirmed that all but one tree support negligible suitability for roosting bats.

On the basis that tree 33 within Group E supports low but not negligible suitability for roosting bats, the tree should be soft felled and then left on site for 24 hours before being removed or chipped. In accordance with the BCT Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition), no further survey work is required for trees with low roost suitability.

6. Bats – foraging and commuting

6.1 Assessment methodology

The site's suitability for supporting commuting and foraging bats was assessed against the guidelines within Table 8 which have been adapted from the BCT Good Practice Guidelines.

Table 8: Suitability assessment guidelines

<i>Suitability</i>	<i>Description of Foraging/Commuting Habitats</i>
<i>Negligible</i>	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats.
<i>Low</i>	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as a gappy hedgerow or un-vegetated stream, but isolated i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitats. Suitable but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.

<i>Suitability</i>	<i>Description of Foraging/Commuting Habitats</i>
<i>Moderate</i>	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such tree, scrub, grassland or water.
<i>High</i>	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of tree 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.

6.2 Limitations

No limitations to the survey were identified.

6.3 Existing records

The data search revealed records of two bat species, common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle within the 1km search radius.

6.4 Results

Given the rural nature of the site and the presence of mature habitats including woodland edge, hedgerows and ponds, on or immediately adjacent to the site, it is considered that the site is highly suitable for bat foraging and for a variety of species. The unlit nature of the site would make the site suitable for species that favour a woodland setting, such as species of the *Myotis* or *Plecotus* genera.

5.4 Assessment

When assessed against the criteria in Table 5, the site as a whole is assessed as providing high suitability for bat foraging i.e. continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of tree and woodland edge.

7. Badgers

7.1 Methodology

The survey involved a detailed investigation of the site to identify evidence of badger residence, foraging or territorial activity. This includes badger setts, latrine sites, dung piles, well-used trails, prints and hairs. Particular emphasis was placed on locating badger setts, paths and signs of territorial activity such as dung piles and latrines.

7.2 Limitations

Limitations were not encountered during the course of the survey.

7.3 Results

Evidence of badger activity was recorded within the site in the form of an active badger sett within the bramble scrub and bracken at the eastern end of phase 2 adjacent to Greenwood Lane. The sett comprised three active entrances. Inactive mammal burrows were also recorded within the scrub at the southern end of phase 1; however, these were indicative of rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* due to their size. An active badger latrine was also recorded adjacent to the rabbit warren and a well-worn mammal path was recorded through the scrub in this location, leading to a single active entrance outlier sett 50m to the north-west, outside of the application site.

7.4 Assessment

When assessed against the criteria in Table 4, the site is considered to provide high potential for the species, and an active sett has been recorded within the site.

8. Dormice

8.1 Methodology

An assessment was made of the suitability of habitat on site to support hazel dormice. Key habitats are woodland, scrub and hedgerows, particularly where these offer dense vegetation within which to nest/hibernate and key resources such as hazel nuts, fruiting/nectar-rich plants (e.g. hawthorn, bramble) to provide a continuum of food resources throughout the active season and honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* (for nesting material). Landscape-scale habitat linkages such as hedgerows are fundamental for dormouse presence where small scale or sub-optimal habitats are recorded within a site.

Following the extended phase 1 ecological survey assessment, a phase 2 presence/absence dormouse survey was undertaken. The presence/absence survey consisted of the erection of 75 nest tubes within suitable dormouse habitat within the site and connected habitat. The nest tubes were subsequently surveyed for evidence of dormouse activity.

The survey deviated from the recommended survey guidance (The Dormouse Conservation Handbook and Standing Advice for Protected Species), which states that surveys should be undertaken between April and November in order to meet the minimum survey requirement (20 total survey points derived from monthly surveys which are weighted accordingly to reflect the suitability of the survey period). Dormouse tubes were erected in July, thereby requiring that the survey may have to extend into the spring of 2024 in order to accrue enough points to make the survey valid, in the event of a negative result.

8.2 Survey area

The survey area included the whole site with tubes erected in suitable habitat, particularly where areas of deciduous woodland and shrub are present.

8.3 Limitations

No limitations were encountered during the course of the survey.

8.4 Existing records

No records of hazel dormouse were returned within the 1km search area, however, there were records of the species in the wider area to the north, south, east and west.

8.5 Results

The site is situated in a rural location and the wider site supports areas of mature and secondary woodland and scrub. Suitable habitat within the application site boundary comprises hedgerows and scrub. This matrix of habitats is considered highly suitable for hazel dormouse.

The dates and results of the presence/absence surveys are given in Table 9, below and the tube locations presented in Map 2.

Table 9: Dormouse survey results

<i>Survey</i>	<i>Date</i>	<i>Results</i>	<i>Comments</i>
<i>Survey tube deployment</i>	10/04/2024	N/A	-
<i>Tube inspection 1</i>	30/05/2024	Negative	-
<i>Tube inspection 2</i>	11/06/2024	Negative	-
<i>Tube inspection 3</i>	21/08/2024	Positive	Nest located in tube at the southern end of the hedgerow which is located to the immediate west of phase 2.

Evidence of hazel dormouse was recorded through the presence of one active nest within the hedgerow which is located to the immediate west of phase 2.

8.6 Assessment

When assessed against the criteria in Table 4, the site was considered to provide high suitability for hazel dormouse and the nest tube survey has confirmed the species' presence, with one active nest within the hedgerow which is located to the immediate west of phase 2. Although the species was only adjacent to phase 2, due to the continuum of suitable habitat throughout the site, it is considered that the species will be present in all connected and suitable habitat within the site.

9. Hedgehogs

9.1 Methodology

The site was assessed for its suitability to support hedgehogs based on the presence of favoured habitats such as hedgerows, bare ground and lawn habitats.

Hedgehogs are most abundant within gardens, parks and amenity land close to or within human settlements. They are generally scarce in areas of coniferous woodland, marshes and moorland, probably because of a lack of suitable sites and materials for the construction of winter nests (Morris, 2006). Any evidence of hedgehog activity such as prints or droppings was recorded.

9.2 Limitations

Low detection rates are associated with evidence of hedgehog activity; therefore, absence of evidence does not confirm the absence of hedgehogs. For this reason, the assessment of the likely presence/absence of hedgehogs has largely been informed by the species' local distribution and the habitats within the site and local area.

9.3 Results

The site is considered to be highly suitable for hedgehog, although no evidence was recorded. The dense hedgerows and woodland understorey provide suitable hibernation sites for the species whilst suitable foraging habitats are present throughout the site.

9.4 Assessment

There is considered to be high potential for hedgehog to occur on site.

10. Reptiles

10.1 Extended phase 1 assessment

10.1.1 Methodology

An assessment was made of the site's suitability to support reptile populations. Key habitat features include tussocky/patchy grassland, scrub edge, linear watercourses, ponds, compost heaps, brash piles and rubble/soil heaps. Linkage to suitable habitat within the surrounding landscape will increase the potential for reptiles to occur, although populations can occur within isolated/fragmented habitats even within urban areas.

10.1.2 Limitations

Limitations were not encountered during the course of the survey.

10.1.3 Results

The grassland which forms the site majority supports a uniform sward which is frequently managed. As such, it is unlikely that reptiles would persist within the middle of the grassland areas, however, the borders of the grassland and the bases of the hedgerows provide the basking and foraging opportunities that would be required to support reptiles. Opportunities for hibernation were also identified in the form of disused mammal burrows.

10.1.4 Assessment

When assessed against the criteria in set out in Table 4, the site was considered to provide high suitability for reptiles and therefore further surveys were recommended.

10.2 Presence/absence surveys

10.2.1 Methodology

The phase 2 reptile surveys involved the distribution of reptile refugia across the site in suitable areas of habitat. A total of 59 refugia were distributed throughout the site, where it is considered they would be effective. The aim of the survey was to confirm the presence/likely absence, numbers and distribution of reptile species on site. The refugia were then inspected when suitable weather conditions existed during May and June 2024.

The refugia warm more rapidly than the surrounding environment and reptiles use them to thermoregulate. Inspection of refugia is most effectively carried out in marginal weather conditions such as cold but sunny weather or hazy and somewhat overcast conditions, as this will maximise the thermal value of the refugia for basking reptiles. Inspections are generally ineffective in cold, wet conditions or in very hot sunny weather. Whilst on site, surveyors slowly and quietly walked around the site in order to visually search for animals basking in the open.

The dates and weather conditions of the reptile refugia surveys are given in Table 10, below.

Table 10: Reptile survey dates and weather conditions

Survey	Date	Precipitation	Temperature (°C)	Wind (Beaufort)	Cloud Cover (100%)
Refugia deployment	10/04/2024	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
Refugia inspection 1	07/05/2024	Nil	13	0	10
Refugia inspection 2	30/05/2024	Nil	12	2	80
Refugia inspection 3	11/06/2024	Nil	10	2	30
Refugia inspection 4	25/06/2024	Nil	14	0	0
Refugia inspection 5	26/06/2024	Nil	12	2	80
Refugia inspection 6	27/06/2024	Nil	12	1	100
Refugia inspection 7	28/06/2024	Nil	13	1	100

10.2.2 Limitations

No limitations to the survey were identified.

10.2.3 Results

Table 11 presents the visit dates, species total counts, age and sex classification and felt number of refugia where individuals were recorded. Map 3 provides the locations of refugia and the reptile records.

Table 11: Reptile survey summary of results

Survey	Date	Slow worm Number	Age/sex (felt number)	Common Lizard	Grass snake
Refugia deployment	10/04/2024	N/A		N/A	N/A
Refugia inspection 1	07/05/2024	7	1 ad female (F1) 3 ad females (F2) 1 ad female (F6) 1 ad female (F7)	0	1 ad female (F13)
Refugia inspection 2	30/05/2024	1	1 ad male (F14)	0	0
Refugia inspection 3	11/06/2024	8	1 ad female (F1) 1 ad female (F4) 4 ad females (F20) 2 juveniles (F20)	0	0
Refugia inspection 4	25/06/2024	5	2 ad females (F2) 2 juveniles (F4) 1 ad female (F6)	0	0
Refugia inspection 5	26/06/2024	1	0	0	1 juvenile (F12)
Refugia inspection 6	27/06/2024	1	0	0	1 juvenile (F12)
Refugia inspection 7	28/06/2024	6	1 ad female (F1) 1 ad female (F3) 1 ad female (F5) 1 ad female (F6) 1 ad female (F9) 1 ad female (F10)	0	0
Total Adult Peak Counts		7		0	1

The presence/likely absence surveys have confirmed the presence of at least a good population (5-20 individuals) of slow-worms, with individuals recorded across the site. Their distribution across the entire site, with sightings at distances greater than those typically observed within a single slow-worm territory, suggests the presence of a larger population. The presence of adult, sub-adult and juveniles confirm that slow-worms are breeding on the site – their distribution on site during the surveys was restricted to close to pond 3. Likewise, the presence of adult and juvenile grass snakes confirms the presence of a small breeding population on site.

No other reptile species were recorded on the site.

10.2.4 Assessment

The reptile survey has confirmed that at least a good population of slow worms and a small population of grass snakes are present on the site, with individuals recorded across much of it. A peak count of seven adults slow-worms and one adult grass snake was recorded.

Given the lack of males recorded and the presence of adult and sub adult females, and yearlings it is considered that the slow-worm population size will likely exceed 20 individuals, the threshold by which it becomes an exceptional population.

11. Great Crested Newts

11.1 Methodology

Great crested newts are only present in their breeding ponds during the spring and early summer – for the rest of the year, they will be dispersed across the surrounding area, generally in grassland, scrub, woodland and hedgerows, although they may be found in gardens and brownfield sites. They can travel some distance from their breeding ponds, and as a general rule, developments within 500m of such a pond may have the potential to have an impact on GCN, although to a certain extent, this does depend on any intervening habitat or barriers to dispersal.

An assessment was made of any waterbodies and terrestrial habitat within the site for their suitability to support populations of amphibians. Suitable waterbodies will generally be characterised by the presence of good quality water, diverse macrophyte cover and an absence of fish. For the European-protected great crested newt, each waterbody is normally assessed using the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) system (Oldham et al., 2000) and assigned a grading score between zero (poor suitability) and 1 (excellent suitability).

Further to the HSI survey, an eDNA survey was undertaken of Ponds 1, 2, 4 & 5. The field water samples were collected from the ponds at on the 28th June 2024.

The survey did not depart from Appendix 5: Technical advice note for field and laboratory sampling of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) environmental DNA of Biggs et al. (2014) that accompanies Defra's research project into eDNA (Biggs et al, 2014). Strict adherence to this methodology is required by Natural England's standing advice.

The water samples were processed in accordance with the protocol set out in Appendix 5 of Biggs et al. (2014) by Surescreen Scientific.

11.2 Limitations

The HSI for great crested newts is a measure of habitat suitability. In general, ponds with high HSI scores are more likely to support great crested newts than those with low scores. However, in isolation, the system is not sufficiently precise to allow the conclusion that any particular pond with a high score will support newts, or that any pond with a low score will not do so (Oldham et al., 2000).

11.3 Results

There are no waterbodies located within the redline boundaries of the proposed works, however in total there are seven waterbodies located within a 500m radius of redline boundaries in the wider site and adjacent properties. A map of these ponds and lakes can be found below.

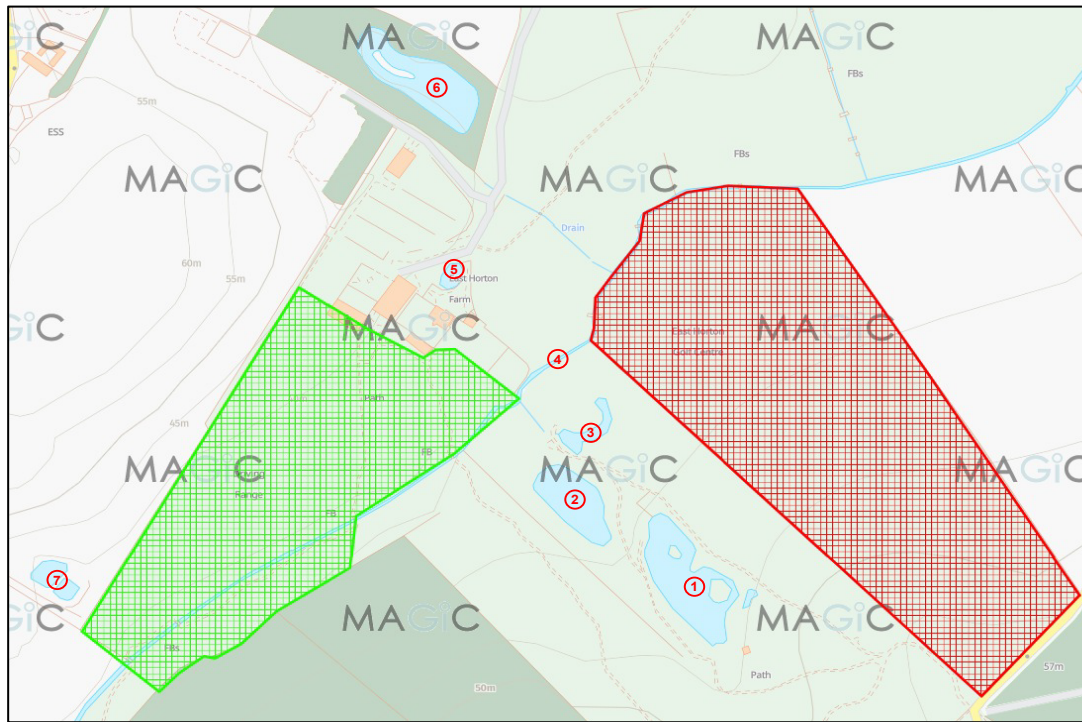


Figure 21 – map of ponds in proximity to site

11.3.1 Pond descriptions

Pond 1 (142m SE Phase 1, 60m SW Phase 2) is more typical of a duck lake with multiple small islands within it. The water is murky and does not appear to contain much aquatic vegetation with none visible from the surface. Although not directly recorded, fish appear to be present within the lake with grey heron *Ardea cinerea* observed actively hunting around its perimeter and a lack of emergence vegetation present. The peripherals of the waterbody primarily consists of managed grassland with patches of rush pasture. A small silver birch woodland overhangs the southeastern section of the watercourse.

Pond 2 (56m SE Phase 1, 86m SW Phase 2) also consists of an ornamental lake. The water is relatively clear with large fish including carp present within. There is very limited aquatic vegetation with the visible banks appearing bare. The watercourse is surrounded by a mix of vegetation including overhanging silver birch, willow and hawthorn. The eastern perimeter is formed by a combination of modified grassland and small reedbeds.

Pond 3 (40m SE Phase 1, 26m SW Phase 2) is a U-shaped waterbody which is smaller than the adjacent lakes. There is dense aquatic and emergent vegetation within it and reeds grow out of the centre of the pond. The pond is surrounded by grassland on all sides.

'Pond' 4 (0m Phase 1, 0m Phase 2) actually comprises a ditch which runs through the south-east of the Phase 1 site and along north-western boundary of the Phase 2 site. Most of the ditch dries during extended periods of hot weather leaving behind pools of water with some aquatic vegetation present along the steep sided earth banks. As these pools seem to stay relatively stable during the GCN breeding season they were considered a viable habitat for the species and were included in HSI assessment and subsequent eDNA testing.

Pond 5 (50m NE Phase 1, 104m NW Phase 2) is located on a private property located to the southeast of the clubhouse and between the Phase 1 and Phase 2 areas. The water was murky with some aquatic vegetation located towards the peripherals. A steep sided bank and brick wall surround the pond with reeds located to the northeast.

Ponds 6 & 7 were located on adjacent private properties and were not accessible during the surveys. From aerial imagery Pond 6 (180m NE Phase 1, 150m NW Phase 2) appears to be a lake surrounded by woodland and Pond 7 (20m W Phase 1, 443m SW Phase 2) appears to be two small, linked ponds also surrounded by woodland habitat.

11.3.2 Pond Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessments

A HSI assessment of the accessible on-site waterbodies (Ponds 1-5) has been completed to identify their respective suitability for GCN and is presented in table 12 below.

Table 12 – HSI Assessment of the ponds

	Criteria	Pond 1	Pond 2	Pond 3	Pond 4	Pond 5
S1	Location	1 (optimal)	1 (optimal)	1 (optimal)	1 (optimal)	1 (optimal)
S2	Pond Area	0.8 (3900m ²)	0.8 (2150m ²)	1 (560m ²)	0.05 (35m ²)	0.6 (275m ²)
S3	Pond Drying	0.9 (never dries)	0.9 (never dries)	1 (Rarely dries)	1 (Rarely dries)	0.9 (never dries)
S4	Water Quality	0.33 (poor)	0.01 (bad)	0.67 (moderate)	0.33 (poor)	0.67 (moderate)
S5	Shade	1 (0%)	1 (0%)	1 (0%)	1 (60%)	1 (10%)
S6	Fowl	0.01 (Major)	0.01 (Major)	0.67 (minor)	0.67 (minor)	0.67 (minor)
S7	Fish	0.33 (Minor)	0.01 (Major)	1 (absent)	0.33 (minor)	0.67 (minor)
S8	Pond Count	1 (6 per 1km ²)	1 (6 per 1km ²)	1 (6 per 1km ²)	1 (7 per 1km ²)	1 (7 per 1km ²)
S9	Terrestrial	0.67 (moderate)	0.67 (moderate)	1 (good)	0.67 (moderate)	0.33 (poor)
S10	Macrophytes	0.3 (0%)	0.3 (0%)	1 (70%)	0.5 (20%)	0.5 (20%)
	Tenth Root	0.42	0.21	0.92	0.51	0.70
	HSI Ranking	Poor	Poor	Excellent	Below average	Good

The HSI assessment reveals that the Pond 3 supports best suitability for GCN with Pond 5 also offering good suitability for the species.

11.3.3 *Pond visual inspections*

Whilst conducting a site visit on April 10th 2024 the aquatic vegetation within Pond 3 was visually inspected for evidence of GCN presence. Multiple folded leaves were observed around the pond edge indicating a newt species had used the vegetation to lay eggs. One of these leaves was carefully inspected and a GCN egg was recorded. This finding in combination with the results of certain HSI assessments triggered the need for further eDNA testing of the surrounding waterbodies to establish if these areas formed a wider utilised network for the species.

11.3.4 *Pond eDNA analysis results*

In total four separate eDNA tests were conducted on Ponds 1, 2, 4 & 5 to establish if the already identified GCN population in Pond 3 was also present within this wider network of waterbodies. The tests returned a negative result of GCN presence in all the aforementioned ponds. Pond's 6 & 7 could not be tested due to a lack of access.

11.4 **Assessment**

An egg search around Pond 3 identified the waterbody as being actively used by a breeding population of GCN. The HSI assessments of the surrounding ponds revealed that Pond 5 was rated as having Good suitability for the species and Ponds 1, 2 & 4 as poor and below average suitability. Overall, GCN have been confirmed as present within Pond 3 and absence in ponds 1, 2, 4 & 5. Ponds 6 and 7 could not be accessed and as such, the presence/absence of GCN in these ponds is unknown. On the basis, that GCN have been recorded within Pond 3, the species will be present within all suitable terrestrial habitat within the vicinity of the pond. This habitat comprises, the field layer beneath the on-site hedgerows and tree planting, the marginal habitat around the ponds and tussocky grassland which is le

12. Breeding Birds

12.1 **Methodology**

An assessment was made of the site's suitability to support breeding bird species. Nesting birds will utilise a broad range of habitats, including: built structures, trees, scrub, isolated shrubs, dense herbaceous vegetation (terrestrial and aquatic) and open grassland. All bird species and evidence of breeding activity (active or inactive) observed on site were recorded.

12.2 **Limitations**

Limitations were not encountered during the course of the survey.

12.3 **Results**

Suitable bird nesting habitat is present in the form of the boundary hedgerows, scattered trees and scrub and grassland. During the survey wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, goldfinch *Carduelis carduelis*, blue tit *Cyanistes caeruleus*, chaffinch *Fringilla coelebs*, long-tailed tit *Aegithalos caudatus*, robin *Erithacus rubecula*, blackbird *Turdus merula*, pied wagtail

Motacilla alba yarrellii, goldcrest *Regulus regulus*, great tit *Parus major* and woodpigeon *Columba palumbus* were recorded on or flying over the site.

Of the species recorded, suitable breeding habitat is considered present for most although raven are more likely to be exploiting a particular feeding resource and would utilise other habitats for breeding.

The recent publication of The Birds of Conservation Concern 5 has highlighted that 70 species are now included on the red list due to significant declines in their respective populations. None of the species recorded on the site are included on the red list, however wren and woodpigeon are included on the amber list.

12.4 **Assessment**

When assessed against the criteria set out in Table 4, the site is assessed as having suitable habitats for a variety of species.

13. Discussion and Assessment of Impacts

13.1 Relevant legislation and policy

Circular 06/2005 identifies that applicants should not be required to provide information on protected species unless there is a reasonable likelihood that they will be present and affected by the proposed development. The site is considered to support habitats with suitability and potential for protected species and these may be affected by the proposed development. Therefore, the proposal triggers 'reasonable likelihood' under the Circular.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (commonly referred to as the Habitats Regulations) may apply should protected species be confirmed on site.

In the case that a European protected species (bats in this case) is found to be present and impacted by the proposal, the local planning authority will be required to engage with the Habitat Regulations. Permission will be granted unless:

- a) the development is likely to result in a breach of the Habitats Regulations, and
- b) is unlikely to be granted an EPS licence from Natural England to allow the development to proceed under a derogation from the law (under licence).

When considering whether Natural England would not be unlikely to grant a licence for the identified impact, the local planning authority must consider the three tests which are set out in the Habitat Regulations:

1. the consented operation must be for 'preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment'; (Regulation 53(2)(e))
2. there must be 'no satisfactory alternative' (Regulation 53(9)(a)); and
3. the action authorised 'will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range' (Regulation 53(9)(b)).

Natural England will grant a licence if the development proposal is able to meet the three tests.

Case-law (Morge vs. Hampshire County Council) has clarified that planning authorities are able to grant permission for developments that would cause a breach of the Regulations is likely (i.e. in the case of this proposal, destruction of a bat roost), provided that sufficient information is provided to give the planning authority assurance that the relevant EPSM licence is not unlikely to be granted - i.e. planning authorities also have a duty to assess planning applications against these tests.

13.2 Designated sites

The proposed development will not result in the direct loss of any of the identified designated sites. Nor will it result in the direct loss of any habitat that could be considered functionally linked supporting habitat for the species for which the sites were designated. However, a compartment of ancient-replanted woodland, Durley Copse, is located 30m to the south of phase 1.

13.2.1 *Ancient and semi-natural woodland*

Natural England's standing advice on Ancient Woodlands requires that any new development maintain a minimum 15-metre buffer from ancient woodland habitats to protect their ecological integrity. This buffer acts as a protective zone, preventing direct damage to ancient woodland and reducing indirect impacts such as soil compaction, light pollution, and root disturbance.

The proposed works in Phase 1 are situated beyond 30 metres from the boundary of Durley Copse, effectively doubling the minimum required buffer. This ensures that direct impacts on the ancient woodland are not anticipated due to the significant separation distance.

The only potential for impact arises during the construction phase, where secondary effects such as dust, debris, and litter could potentially drift onto the ancient woodland site if not properly managed. To mitigate these risks, the development and implementation of a robust Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) will be essential. The CEMP will include measures such as dust suppression, waste containment, and site management protocols, ensuring that any construction-related impacts are minimised. With these measures in place, significant adverse effects on Durley Copse's ancient woodland are not expected.

13.3 Habitats

The application site layout has been designed to retain and enhance the habitats of greatest distinctiveness within the application site. The proposed redevelopment works are to be located within the areas of modified grassland which form the site majority. The main habitat which will be directly impacted by the proposals is modified grassland. This habitat is easily replicable and of low botanical value. However, the uncompensated removal of this vegetation would result in a net loss of biodiversity at the site which would be contrary to NPPF.

The habitats of greatest ecological importance include the hedgerows, ditch and scattered trees.

Biodiversity Metric Calculations have been carried out in order to provide measurable outcomes which demonstrate that the project can deliver quantifiable benefits to biodiversity compared to the baseline situation. Details on this are provided with Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool.

13.4 **Bats**

The ground level roost assessment has confirmed that all but one tree support negligible suitability for roosting bats.

On the basis that tree 33 within Group E supports low but not negligible suitability for roosting bats, the tree should be soft felled and then left on site for 24 hours before being removed or chipped. In accordance with the BCT Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition), no further survey work is required for trees with low roost suitability.

The application site as a whole was considered to support high suitability for foraging bats, which reflects its rural location and habitats present on the site and in the wider area. Bat activity at the site will likely be associated with the ditch, hedgerows and woodland edge habitat, with any activity within the greens fleeting and associated with a temporary abundance of prey.

Potential impacts on foraging and commuting bats could arise from the loss of linear features that provide navigational and foraging corridors, as well as from any increase in artificial lighting that illuminates habitat margins and disrupts bat activity.

However, the proposed development will involve modifications to grassland habitats rather than their removal, and no linear habitat features, such as hedgerows or treelines, will be lost. As a result, the overall impact on foraging and commuting bats is expected to be minimal.

A sensitive lighting scheme designed in accordance with ILP Guidance Note 08/18 will be utilised across the site, with any proposed lighting angled down and away from woodland, hedgerows and treelines. Lighting will be timed to ensure periods of complete darkness, ensuring the continued ecological functionality of the boundary vegetation.

13.5 **Badgers**

An active badger sett with three to four active entrances has been recorded on the phase 2 site in a location that will be affected by the proposed development. Therefore, impacts on badgers will occur during the construction phase through the disturbance and damage of a sett. Post construction impacts have been minimised through sensitive scheme design and enhancement of grassland habitats.

13.6 **Hazel dormouse**

The proposal will not result in the loss of habitat which is considered to support suitability for dormice and will result in a net gain in suitable dormice habitat. Therefore, no impacts on dormice are anticipated.

13.7 **Hedgehog**

Impacts on hedgehogs are likely to occur if trenches are left open during the construction phase of the development.

13.8 **Reptiles**

The reptile survey has confirmed a good population of slow-worm and a small population of grass snake is present on the site. Impacts on this species will be associated with the loss of suitable habitat within the margins of the site.

Given the small size of the area of suitable habitat to be lost to the proposals; and the proposal to retain and enhance the margins, it is considered that impacts on reptiles will be low and can be avoided with the implementation of sensitive working practices. Details are provided in Section x below.

13.9 **Great crested newts**

The proposed works will see the temporary short-term loss of the grassland habitats within phase 1 and phase 2 whilst the proposed works are undertaken. On completion of the development, the application site will again support areas of unmanaged and managed grassland and in phase 1, new woodland and scrub planting will see a net gain in suitable terrestrial habitat for GCN.

Therefore, all impacts on GCN will be associated with the construction works which would potentially cause the killing, injury or disturbance to any GCN present within habitat when works are undertaken.

13.10 **Breeding birds**

The development of the site could result in the loss of suitable breeding bird habitat. The removal of this habitat has the potential to damage or destroy active bird nests if carried out during the breeding bird season which is generally seen as extending from March to the end of August, although may extend longer depending on local conditions. Development will also likely result in a net loss of bird nesting opportunities.

14. Requirement for further surveys

Further surveys are required where there is a reasonable likelihood that a protected species will be present and impacted by the proposed development. An assessment into the requirement for further surveys is presented below. In summary, all further surveys considered necessary have been completed.

It is important that planning decisions are informed by current ecological survey data. Due to this, there is a limited time frame that phase 1 and phase 2 surveys are valid before becoming outdated. This time frame can vary depending on any changes in project circumstances or plans but it is generally considered that phase 1 ecological surveys are valid for a period of 18 months (CIEEM, 2019). Projects that take place over periods longer than 18 months might be required to carry out further ecological surveys to ensure planning authorities have the necessary up-to-date information to make well informed, evidence-based decisions.

14.1 **Designated sites**

No further surveys are considered necessary.

14.2 **Habitats**

No further surveys are considered necessary.

14.3 **Bats**

Subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 14, no further surveys are considered necessary.

14.4 **Badgers**

Subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 14, no further surveys are considered necessary.

14.5 **Hazel dormice**

As impacts on dormice are not anticipated, no further recommendations relating to dormice are considered necessary.

14.6 **Hedgehog**

Subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 14, no further surveys are considered necessary.

14.7 **Reptiles**

No further surveys are considered necessary.

14.8 **Great crested newts**

No further surveys are considered necessary.

14.9 **Breeding birds**

Subject to the precautionary mitigation measures set out in Section 14, no further surveys are considered necessary.

15. Mitigation recommendations

15.1 Bats

Tree roosting bats

On the basis that tree 33 within Group E supports low but not negligible suitability for roosting bats, the tree should be soft felled and then left on site for 24 hours before being removed or chipped. In accordance with the BCT Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (4th edition), no further survey work is required for trees with low roost suitability.

Foraging and commuting

In order to limit any effects on foraging and commuting bats, external lighting should be limited to only that which is absolutely necessary for safety purposes, both during the construction phase and once the proposals are complete. The following lighting measures are required:

- Lighting to the completed driving range structure should be as low brightness as possible, kept at a low level and directed away from all boundaries, the ditch, scattered trees, woodland edge and hedgerows. Lighting on sensors should not be so sensitive that foraging bats trigger them.
- All lighting must follow the Bat Conservation Trusts and Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance on bats and artificial lighting (BCT, 2023).

15.2 Badgers

The applications site supports a single outlier sett which will be temporarily lost to the proposals. The following methodology will be followed for the closure of the sett.

A licence application will be submitted to Natural England. This will comprise the licence application form A24, a method statement (including the survey results, impact assessment, mitigation strategy, work schedule and maintenance strategy), drawings and maps.

On receipt of the licence from NE, the sett closure works can commence in accordance with the licence method statement. This is carried out by installing one-way gates and mesh for a period of 28 days (7 days with the gates opening both ways followed by 21 days with the gates opening one way) before the sett is permanently closed either by closing the entrances. 21 days of monitoring are required to demonstrate that all badgers have left the sett (badgers can stay in a sett without leaving for this length of time) and have not dug back into the sett. The one-way gates would be kept in place for at least 21 days from the last sign of badgers accessing the sett. The sett closure must be carried out between the 1st July and the 30th November so it's advisable to apply for the licence as soon as possible to allow for any delays to Natural England's 6-week determination period. Once the sett has been closed, the reprofiling works can commence. In order to avoid harm to badgers during the construction works, any trenches will either be covered at night or fitted with a soil or plank ramp to enable any badgers which fall in to leave on

their own accord. Once the re-profiling works are complete, the entrances to the sett will be reopened to allow badgers to return to the sett.

15.3 Hedgehogs

In order to avoid harm to hedgehogs during construction works the following precautionary measures will be employed:

- Any trenches will either be covered at night or fitted with a soil or plank ramp to enable any hedgehogs that fall in to leave of their own accord.
- Any leaf litter or garden waste piles will be dismantled by hand in a sensitive and careful manner.
- No bonfires will be made or lit on site.

15.4 Reptiles

This section describes the proposed mitigation measures for widespread reptiles which occur within suitable habitat within the application site. The strategy comprises the persuasion of reptiles from the construction footprint through habitat manipulation and the creation of new terrestrial habitat within the application site. Given the population size and limited area of suitable habitat within the margins of the construction zones, the persuasion of reptiles from the construction zone through habitat manipulation is considered to be the most appropriate option for ensuring that reptiles are not killed or injured during the development.

15.4.1 *Habitat creation*

The application site currently supports marginal habitats with suitability for reptiles. The BNG assessment details how these habitats will be enhanced, resulting in a net gain in reptile habitat within the site. In addition, three hibernation features and three shelter opportunities with egg laying habitat will be constructed within the boundaries of the site during the habitat manipulation works detailed below. The creation of these features will create cover, provide additional structure and enhance prey availability within the site. Three brash piles will be constructed from native woody species cuttings. The centre of the brash pile will be compacted whilst the outer layers will be laid loosely. The hibernation features will be constructed in a similar manner to the brash pile, however, inert brick rubble and logs will be used within the centre of each pile instead of compacted brash. Loose brash will be laid on top of the rubble and log pile and turves from the construction footprint will be lifted and placed on top of this. The hibernation features will be dug into the site to a depth of 30cm.

15.4.2 *Habitat manipulation*

In the event that a capture and trapping exercise for GCN is not required, the following strategy for reptiles will be implemented. Any tall marginal vegetation within the construction site will be cut to ground level in a two-stage process. These habitats will be cut to 15cm and then cut to ground level the next day. Cutting the vegetation in this manner will ensure that any reptiles are persuaded into adjacent habitats prior to commencement of the development. Any piles of dead wood within the site will be dismantled by hand with the arisings removed from site. Following the two-stage vegetation

removal, the topsoil will be scraped back by an excavator under the supervision of an ecological clerk of works. Several turves will be lifted and placed over the proposed hibernation features during this work. If a reptile is unexpectedly encountered, it will be removed to the new shelter features within the site. The construction site will be maintained as bare ground until construction commences.

15.4.3 *Construction site maintenance*

The following measures will be implemented during the construction phase of the development:

- All waste shall be placed directly into a skip so that rubble piles and therefore potential hibernation areas are not created in areas which will subsequently be disturbed by site works.
- Piles of loose sand or other granular materials into which reptiles could bury are not to be left around the site. All such materials will ideally be delivered in bags and kept in such bags until required for use. Bags should be stored on pallets. If it is essential that they are delivered loose, they should only be dug into by hand.
- All trenches will be left covered at night. They must be checked in the morning before they are filled in.
- Vegetation must not be allowed to become established within the construction footprint.

15.5 **Great Crested Newt**

It is recommended that the applicant engages within the district licensing scheme for GCN for the removal of the tall marginal vegetation within the construction site. Engaging with the district licensing scheme may require the following mitigation strategy to be implemented.

15.5.1 *Fencing*

Temporary exclusion fencing will be installed around the construction site perimeter for phase 2. This fencing will remain in place through the translocation exercise and the proposed construction works. Its purpose is to provide an impermeable barrier between the works area and adjacent suitable habitat, preventing animals being able to re-enter the works area after translocation and preventing GCN from outside the site entering the works area and being translocated unnecessarily. The population within the capture area will be depleted through translocation over time until it can reasonably be concluded that no GCN remain.

15.5.2 *Capture and Exclusion from the Phase 2 construction zone*

- As a small population of GCN may be present on site a trap density of 50 traps/ha will be required (English Nature, 2001). Pitfall traps will be positioned at 10m intervals. To increase the chances of capture, it is recommended that refuge traps / carpet tiles are placed in between each pitfall trap.

- Fencing installation will be supervised by a suitably experienced and licenced ecologist.
- A minimum of 30 trapping nights will be completed across the site between March and October, to include a final five consecutive GCN free nights.
- Upon completion of trapping any areas where natural refuge is present would be subject to a destructive search.
- All amphibians captured within trapped areas will be moved to Durley Copse and placed under suitable refugia.
- Once trapping is complete, the perimeter fencing will remain in situ until the development is complete to ensure that GCN do not enter the construction area.
- During the removal of any fencing on completion of the development, the base of the fence will be hand searched to ensure no GCN or other common amphibians are taking refuge at the base. Fencing can only be removed when temperatures are above 5 degrees between March – October (inclusive).

15.5.3 *Phase 1 construction zone mitigation measures*

Given the distance of phase 1 from Pond 3 and the very limited extent of tall grassland, the following strategy is likely to be secured for phase 1 under the district licence.

Habitat manipulation

Following completion of the fingertip search, any suitable amphibian habitat within the margins of the site will be cut over the period of two days to reduce its height to a short sward, it will then be maintained to a short sward until construction works commence at the site. Any tall, tussocky grassland within the application site will be cut to ground level in a two-stage process. These habitats will be strimmed to 15cm and then cut to ground level the next day. Cutting the vegetation in this manner is consistent with the typical management of a site and will ensure that any amphibians present are persuaded into adjacent habitats prior to commencement of the development.

Following the two-stage grassland management, the topsoil will be scraped back, where required, by an excavator under the supervision of an ecological clerk of works. The construction site will be maintained as bare ground until ground works commence.

Works site maintenance

The following measures will be implemented during the construction phase of the project:

- All waste shall be placed directly into a skip so that rubble piles and therefore potential hibernation areas are not created where they will subsequently be disturbed by site works.
- Piles of loose sand or other granular materials into which reptiles could bury are not to be left around the site. All such materials will ideally be delivered in bags and kept in such bags until required for use. Bags should be stored on pallets. If it is essential that they are delivered loose, they should only be dug into by hand.

- All trenches will be left covered at night. They must be checked in the morning before they are filled in.
- Vegetation must not be allowed to become established within the construction footprint.

15.6 **Breeding birds**

Care should be taken that development does not impact the breeding birds present on site. The bird nesting season is taken to be March to August, inclusive. Any removal of suitable nest habitat will either need to be undertaken outside of this period or else checked by an experienced ecologist to ensure that no nesting birds are present. If occupied nests are present, then the nest must not be removed and works around the nest can only recommence once the nest becomes unoccupied of its own accord.

16. Enhancements

Enhancement measures should look to build on the ecological features of the local area, thereby providing addition habitat for species that are already present in the local area, such as bats and birds.

The proposals present an opportunity to deliver ecological enhancements at a site level, and benefit wildlife in the wider area. Biodiversity Metric Calculations have been carried out in order to provide measurable outcomes which demonstrate that the project will deliver quantifiable benefits to biodiversity compared to the baseline situation.

In addition, opportunities for enhancement which are not included within the Biodiversity Metric Calculations include the provision of bird, bat and invertebrate boxes within the proposed development. These could be installed within the wider site including Durley Copse.

17. Conclusion

The extended phase 1 ecological assessment confirmed that the site supports suitability for a variety of protected species and further surveys were undertaken as follow to confirm their status on site:

- Bats – Assessment of trees
- Badger – continued monitoring to confirm the status of the sett
- Hazel dormouse – presence/likely absence
- Reptiles – presence/likely absence, specific areas where suitable habitat exists
- Great crested newt – eDNA

No further surveys are required for hedgehog.

The surveys have confirmed that the site supports dormice, slow-worms, a badger sett and great crested newts.

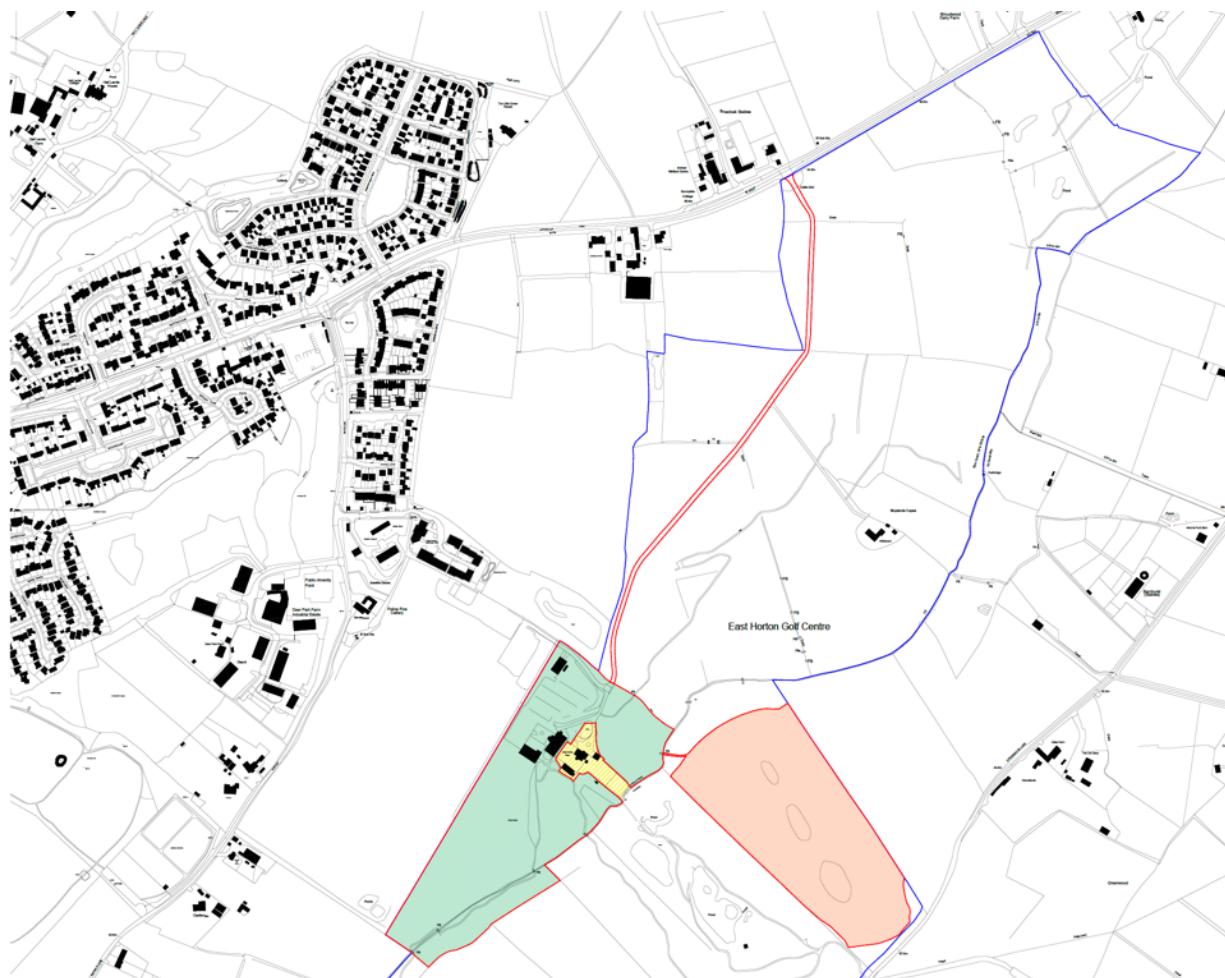
Provided the proposed avoidance and mitigation measures within this report are implemented as recommended, the planning authority can be confident that the development would accord with relevant planning policy, legislation and caselaw.

In addition, Biodiversity Metric Calculations have been carried out in order to provide measurable outcomes which demonstrate that the project will deliver quantifiable benefits to biodiversity compared to the baseline situation. This is both as result of an increase in the intrinsic value of the habitats which are to be enhanced as a result of the development and through their enhanced value for the protected and priority species which have been recorded within the application site.

18. References

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Appendix 1 –Site Location Plan



Map 1i – UKHabs Habitat Map – Phase 1

EAST HORTON GOLF CLUB - PHASE 1 - On-site Habitat Existing - 20/02/2025



Map contains Google Satellite Imagery

Scale 1:2500

PHILLIPS
ECOLOGY

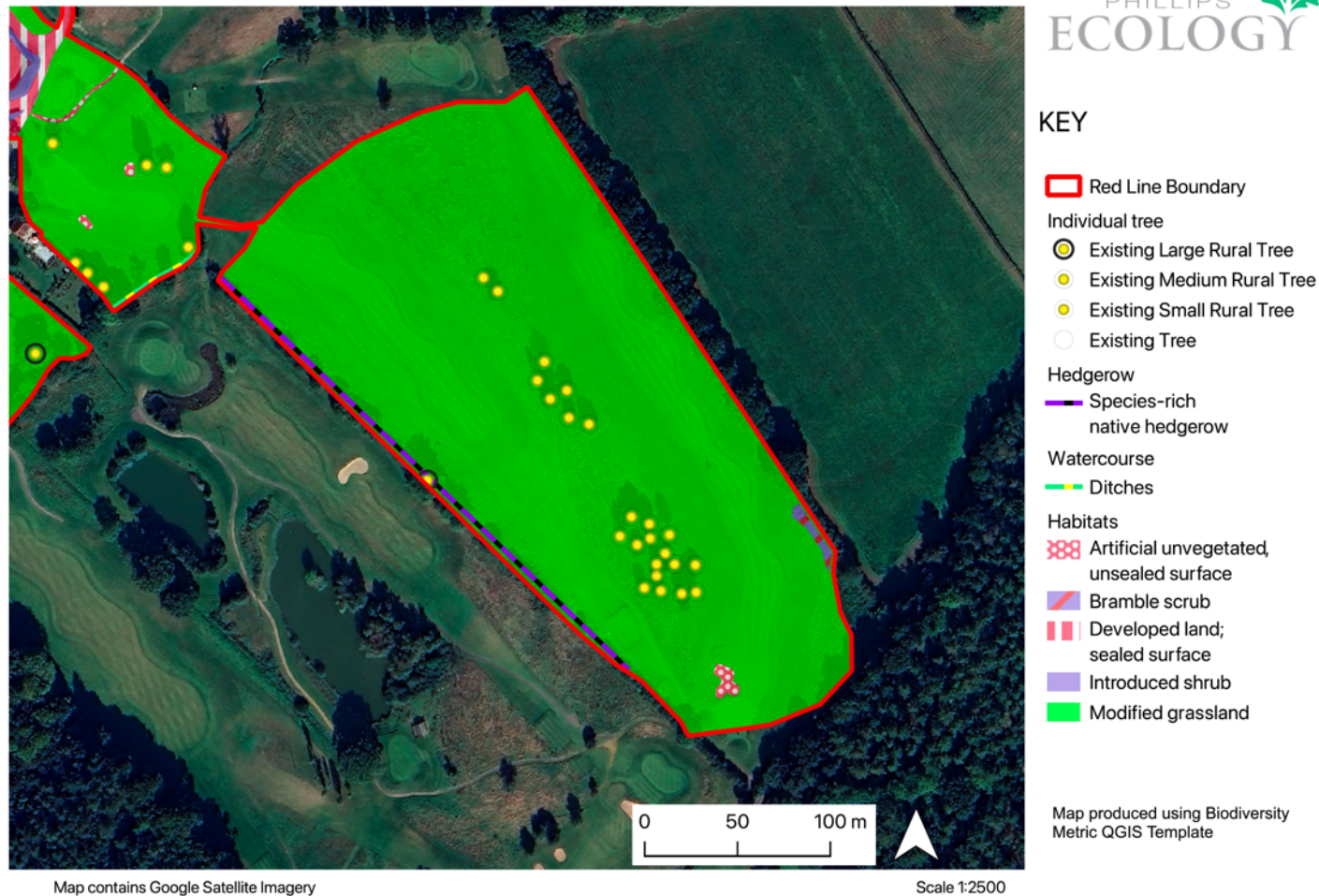
KEY

- Red Line Boundary
- Individual tree
 - Existing Large Rural Tree
 - Existing Medium Rural Tree
 - Existing Small Rural Tree
 - Existing Tree
- Hedgerow
 - Species-rich native hedgerow
 - Ditches
- Habitats
 - Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
 - Bramble scrub
 - Developed land; sealed surface
 - Introduced shrub
 - Mixed scrub
 - Modified grassland

Map produced using Biodiversity
Metric QGIS Template

Map 1ii – UKHabs Habitat Map – Phase 2

EAST HORTON GOLF CLUB - PHASE 2 - On-site Habitat Existing - 20/02/2025



Map 2 – Dormouse Survey Map



Map 3 – Reptile Survey Map





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