

NETLEY COURT CARE HOME, SOUTHAMPTON

ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

Final Document

August 2025

Preliminary Ecological Appraisals • Protected Species Surveys and Licensing • NVC • EclA • HRA • Management Plans
Habitats • Badger • Bats • Hazel Dormouse • Birds • Reptiles • Amphibians • Invertebrates • Riparian and Aquatic Species

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ECOSA Quality Assurance Record

The Ecological Impact Assessment has been undertaken with reference to the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017). This report has been produced in accordance with the CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing 2017 (CIEEM, 2017). The survey work has been undertaken in line with references within CIEEM's Source of Survey Guidance (CIEEM, 2017).

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NETLEY COURT CARE HOME, SOUTHAMPTON

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ecological Survey and Assessment Ltd (ECOSA) have been appointed by Hartwood Care (3) Ltd to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment of Netley Court Care Home, Southampton. The purpose of the appraisal is to assess the site's ecological baseline and identify constraints and opportunities associated with development at the site, to inform a future planning application. The site is located in Netley, adjacent to the western seafront and comprises a care home with associated parking and gardens, leading to the seafront shingle with approximately 80 metres of retaining wall. Current proposals entail the replacement of the retaining wall along the beach front.

The main findings of the Ecological Impact Assessment are:

- The site lies adjacent to the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar site and SPA and the Dorset and Solent Coast SPA.
- The site comprises of a small area of woodland, gorse scrub, estuarine rocky habitats and rural trees.
- Identified impacts as a result of the proposals include disturbance to bird species that are qualifying features of nearby designated sites, pollution impacts to designated sites, and potential impacts to foraging/commuting bats, badger, reptiles, and great crested newt as well as breeding and wintering birds.
- Proposed mitigation and compensation measures include sensitive timing of works, production of a CEMP and HRA, precautionary method of works during vegetation clearance and provision of bird nesting habitats.
- Given the impacts identified, and the mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures proposed it is considered that the proposals accord with all relevant local and national planning policy.
- If the planning application boundary changes or the proposals for the site alter, a re-assessment of the scheme in relation to ecology may be required. Given the mobility of animals and the potential for colonisation of the site over time, updating survey work may be required, particularly if development does not commence within 18 months of the date of the most recent relevant survey.

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Ecological Survey & Assessment Limited (ECOSA) have been appointed by Hartwood Care (3) Ltd to undertake a Ecological Impact Assessment to identify the ecological constraints and opportunities associated with the redevelopment of Netley Court Care Home, Victoria Road, Netley, Southampton, Hampshire, SO31 5DR (hereafter referred to as the site).

1.2 The Site

The site is located in Netley, Hampshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SU 4552 0844 (**Map 1**).

The property consists of a care home with associated parking gardens and greenspace, backing onto the seafront. The site itself is limited to the seafront, including shingle, Meon High Water, and the seawall.

The site sits on the east seafront of Southampton Water, joining to the River Itchen and the River Test in the north. East of the site consists of residential areas, with Netley recreational ground approximately 350 metres east of the site. Netley Abbey lies approximately 550 metres north of the site, with Royal Victoria Country Park located approximately 380 metres south of the site. Further east the landscape is dominated by agricultural land, solar farms and woodland blocks.

1.3 Aims and Scope of Report

The information within this report is based on a field survey and desktop study carried out during 12th May 2025. The objectives of the appraisal are:

- To provide preliminary baseline information on the current habitats, the suitability of the site to support notable and protected species, and evidence of notable and protected species both on site and in the immediate vicinity of the site, where relevant;
- To identify the proximity of any statutory sites designated for nature conservation importance;
- To identify the likely ecological constraints associated with the proposals;

- To identify any mitigation measures likely to be required, following the 'Mitigation Hierarchy'¹;
- To identify any additional surveys that may be required to inform an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA); and
- To identify the opportunities offered by the proposals to deliver ecological enhancement

1.4 Site Proposals

The proposal is for the existing sea defence retaining wall to be removed and replaced with a new wall to prevent erosion. The works will require the presence of some machinery at the bottom of the bank along the beach, but no machinery will be used along the top of the bank. The works will require clearance of some of the vegetation and trees currently present along the existing wall.

The appraisal made reference to an initial proposals plan produced by BJC Planning (Drawing No. E/248/2025.04.29) (BJC Planning, 2025) (**Appendix 1**).

¹ In accordance with CIEEM Ecological Impact Assessment guidance (CIEEM, 2018) a sequential process is adopted to address impacts on features of ecological interest, with 'Avoidance' prioritised at the top of the hierarchy and Compensation/Enhancement' at the bottom. This is often referred to as the 'mitigation hierarchy'.

2.0 PLANNING POLICY CONTEXT

2.1 Introduction

This section summarises the planning policy in relation to ecology and biodiversity within the Eastleigh Borough Council administrative area. This information is then used to make necessary recommendations for mitigation and enhancements in order to ensure any future planning application accords with relevant planning policy.

2.2 Planning Policy

2.2.1 National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out the government's requirements for the planning system in England. The original document was published in 2012 with the most recent revised NPPF published in December 2024. A number of sections of the NPPF are relevant when taking into account development proposals and the environment. As set out within Paragraph 11 of the NPPF "*Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development*". However, Paragraph 195 goes on to state that "*The presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the plan or project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitats site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects), unless an appropriate assessment has concluded that the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.*".

The NPPF sets out that development proposals should not only minimise the impacts on biodiversity but also to provide enhancement. Paragraph 187 states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by "*...minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures...*".

A number of principles are set out in Paragraph 193, including that where harm cannot be adequately avoided then it should be mitigated for, or as a last resort, compensated for. Where impacts occur on nationally designated sites, the benefits must clearly outweigh any adverse impact and incorporating biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged. Specific reference is also made to the protection of irreplaceable habitats², including ancient woodland³. Where loss to irreplaceable habitats occurs planning permission would normally be refused unless there are wholly

² The NPPF defines irreplaceable habitats as "*Habitats which would be technically very difficult (or take a very significant time) to restore, recreate or replace once destroyed, taking into account their age, uniqueness, species diversity or rarity. They include ancient woodland, ancient and veteran trees, blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen.*"

³ Natural England defines ancient woodland as "An area that has been wooded continuously since at least 1600 AD. It includes ancient semi-natural woodland and plantations on ancient woodland sites (PAWS)."

exceptional reasons and an adequate compensation strategy is in place. Paragraph 193 also states *“development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.”* Paragraph 194 also sets out that potential SPAs, SACs and listed or proposed Ramsar sites or sites acting as compensation for SPAs, SACs and Ramsar sites, should receive the same protection as habitat sites.

In addition to the NPPF, Circular 06/05 provides guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation as it applies in England. Paragraph 98 states *“the presence of a protected species is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat”*. Paragraph 99 states *“it is essential that the presence or otherwise of a protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the Proposed Project Development, is established before planning permission is granted”*.

2.2.2 Local Policy

The Eastleigh Borough Local Plan 2016-2036 was adopted on 25th April 2022. It sets out the policies and plans to guide future development to 2036 and replaced the ‘saved’ policies in the Adopted Local Plan 2001-2011. A number of policies relate to ecology:

- **Policy S9: Green Infrastructure**

In relation to ecology, this policy states that the council will seek to provide green stepping stones such as street trees, green roofs and walls, pocket parks and urban copses as well as connected habitats linking the network of designated sites and existing propriety habitats, taking account of the Hampshire ecological network map.

- **Policy DM10: Water and Waste Water**

This policy states that where new water supply or waste water infrastructure is required or proposed, the development will be phased alongside the provision of infrastructure to ensure compliance with the Habitats Regulations; that there is no deterioration of the status of water bodies; and the avoidance or mitigation of any other adverse impacts.

- **Policy DM11: Nature Conservation**

This policy states that developments should seek to protect, conserve and enhance international, national and local nature conservation designations and networks of natural habitats. A ‘project level’ Habitats Regulations Assessment

(HRA) will be required where there are likely significant effects on international or European nature conservation sites. In particular, reference is made to the Solent, the New Forest and the River Itchen designated sites. The policy also states that a net gain of biodiversity will be sought on all development sites.

Development will not be permitted if it is likely to have adverse effects on priority habitats, protected or priority species, or on the local ecological network, unless it can be demonstrated that there are no alternative solutions, there is an overall biodiversity net gain or the benefits clearly outweigh the adverse effects.

In relation to ecological survey work, the policy states that development will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that there have been thorough habitat and species surveys conducted; a great crested newt strategic survey and strategy have been considered in all developments within 500 metres of a great crested newt pond; and a strategic bat trapping survey has been considered in all developments within the locality of a woodland or connected habitat network.

The Eastleigh Borough Council Biodiversity Action Plan (2012 – 2022), published in December 2012, sets out the updated key actions and objectives which follow the themes of Protection, Land Management, Data and Information, and Education and Awareness. The action plan also defines the Eastleigh Borough Priority Biodiversity Areas and Links and provides information on their qualifying characteristics, designations and locations, including detailed maps.

The Trees and Development Supplementary Planning Document, adopted in April 2022, details guidance and support for planning applicants, including development advice in relation to tree retention, tree protection, potential impacts to ancient and veteran trees, and tree replacement. Further information is provided on the latter including appropriate species and size selection, approved planting and maintenance practices, and the Tree Replacement Policy which aims to ensure a net gain in tree provision, post-development.

Eastleigh Borough Council's approach to biodiversity net gain is in line with statutory requirement; for all relevant developments to achieve 10% biodiversity net gain in line with the Environment Act 2021, as of April 2024. This requirement must always be considered in addition to any mitigation and compensation measures proposed for protected species and habitats. Biodiversity net gain for developments must also be measured using only the most recently published version of the DEFRA metric, with these measurable gains to be secured and monitored for a minimum of 30 years.

3.0 METHODS

3.1 Introduction

This section details the methods employed during the Ecological Impact Assessment. Any significant limitations to the survey methods are also considered.

3.2 Zone of Influence

To define the total extent of the study area for this appraisal (Zone of Influence⁴), the proposed scheme was reviewed to establish the spatial scale at which ecological features could be affected. The appropriate survey radii for the various elements of the appraisal (i.e. desktop study and field survey) have been defined in the relevant sections below. These distances are determined based on the professional judgement of the ecologist leading the appraisal, taking into account the characteristics of the site subject to appraisal, its surroundings and the nature and scope of the proposals (if known when the appraisal was undertaken). Determination of the Zone of Influence is an iterative process and will be regularly reviewed and amended as the project evolves.

3.3 Scoping

Protected species considered within this appraisal are those species/species groups considered likely to be encountered given the geographical location and context of the site. These are discussed within the results section (Section 4.0) of the current report. Where such a species is unlikely to be present on site a justification for likely absence is provided. Species considered likely absent from the site are not then considered in the potential ecological constraints and mitigation measures section (Section 5.0) of this report.

3.4 Desk Study

3.4.1 Biological Records Centre

Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre was consulted on 12th May 2025 for the following data:

- Records of non-statutory designated sites (Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)) within one kilometre of the site boundary;
- Records of legally protected and notable species (flora and fauna) within one kilometre of the site boundary, including Species of Principal Importance for the Conservation of diversity in England notified under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 and as listed in the England Biodiversity List (**Appendix 5**); and

⁴ The Zone of Influence, as defined by CIEEM, is the area over which ecological features may be subject to significant effects as a result of the proposed project and associated activities.

- Records of bats within two kilometres of the site boundary. Bat species are highly mobile and therefore the search radius is increased for this species group.

3.4.2 Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside

The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) database (DEFRA, 2024) was reviewed on 23rd May 2025 to establish the location of statutory designated sites located within the vicinity of the site. This included a search for all internationally and nationally designated sites such as Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Wetlands of International Importance (Ramsar sites), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), National Nature Reserves (NNRs) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) within one kilometre of the site. Where appropriate, the desk study search area has been extended to take account of any appropriate statutory designated sites which need consideration in terms of potential indirect effects and which support particularly mobile species, particularly those specifically mentioned in local planning policy. The Impact Risk Zones (IRZ) were also obtained from MAGIC, which are used to help guide and assess planning applications for likely effects on SSSIs.

Sites within two kilometres of the site boundary where European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licences have been granted were reviewed. This information allows a greater understanding of the potential for European Protected Species to be present in the local area.

3.4.3 Other Sources of Information

Online mapping resources, at an appropriate scale, were used to identify the presence of habitats such as woodland blocks, ponds, watercourses and hedgerows, in the vicinity of the site. These habitats may offer resources and connectivity between the site and suitable habitat in the local area, which may be exploited by local species populations.

The presence of ponds or other waterbodies within a 500-metre radius of the site in particular are noted in relation to great crested newt. The 500-metre radius is a standardised search radius to assist in the assessment of the suitability of a site and its surrounding habitat to support this species, based on current Natural England guidance (English Nature, 2001).

3.5 Field Survey

The field survey followed a modified version of UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) methodology (UKHab Ltd, 2023) and included a search for evidence of, and an assessment of the site's suitability to support, protected and notable species as recommended by CIEEM (CIEEM, 2017). The field survey covered all accessible areas

of the site, including boundary features. Habitats described in Section 4.0, have been mapped (**Map 2**), photographs and target notes provided, where relevant.

The UKHab Survey Application, developed using the digital survey platform Coreo was used to map habitats in the field, collect the field survey data and photograph the site.

3.5.1 UKHab Survey

An assessment was made of all habitats within the site, which were classified based on the standardised UKHab survey methodology (UKHab Ltd, 2023). Which was modified to make the habitat assessment compatible with the habitat classification within the Biodiversity Net Gain Metric (DEFRA, 2024). The UKHab classification system comprises two major parts, a hierarchical Primary Habitat system and a list of Secondary Codes. The classification of Primary Habitats is hierarchical with five levels.

It should be noted that not all habitats will be classified to Level 5, for example modified grassland is classified at Level 3 and no Level 4 or Level 5 habitat is applicable. In addition, where Level 4 or 5 habitats are considered to be present on site there may be a requirement for further surveys by a specialist botanist to confirm or classify these habitat types.

Where Biodiversity Net Gain Metric habitats are not classified under any of the hierarchical levels within the UKHab methodology the relevant secondary codes definitions have been used to identify these habitats.

During the field survey notes and photographs were taken in order to evidence the surveyor's classification of each habitat type.

Any invasive species⁵ encountered as an incidental result of the survey were recorded.

3.5.2 Protected and Notable Species Appraisal

A preliminary appraisal of the site's suitability to support legally protected and notable species was carried out. The following species/species groups were considered during the appraisal.

Bats

The survey conformed to current Bat Conservation Trust guidelines (Collins, 2023). An assessment was made of the suitability of trees on the site and immediately on the site boundary to support roosting bats based on the presence of Potential Roosting Features such as holes, cracks, splits, loose bark and ivy cladding for trees.

⁵ Plant species included on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The survey was not specifically aimed at assessing the presence of these species and further specialist advice may need to be sought.

An assessment was made of the suitability of the site and the surrounding landscape to support foraging and/or commuting bat species. The assessment of the suitability of the site to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats is based on a four-point scale as detailed in **Appendix 4**.

Otter

The otter *Lutra lutra* appraisal was based on an assessment of the suitability of the habitat present within the site to support otter by reference to habitat type (such as rivers, streams, ditches, wetlands, reed beds, lakes, ponds and reservoirs), proximity of the site to freshwater and potential important feeding resources (such as fisheries), presence of habitat features which could provide opportunities for resting places and/or holts (such as tunnels, hollows at the base of trees and presence of dense, undisturbed habitat). During the survey attention was paid to the presence of evidence such as spraints, feeding remains, footprints and slides.

Badger

The survey involved an assessment of the suitability of the site to support badger *Meles meles*. Evidence of the species was recorded as an incidental result of the field survey and included locating badger setts, paths, and signs of territorial activity such as latrine sites.

Hazel Dormouse

The appraisal for the suitability of the site to support hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* was based on an assessment of habitat features that may indicate that the species is present. This includes the presence of key food sources such as hazel and bramble, or plants used as nesting material such as honeysuckle and clematis. Additionally, the species requires a continuum of food supply so that habitat structure, diversity and connectivity to adjacent areas of woodland/scrub are important features in determining the suitability of the site for hazel dormouse.

Water Vole

The water vole *Arvicola amphibius* appraisal was based on an assessment of the suitability of the habitat present within the site to support water vole by reference to habitat type (such as rivers, streams, ditches, wetlands, reed beds, lakes, ponds and reservoirs), bank structure and the bank side vegetation. Water voles generally require sloping banks in which to burrow and well-developed bank side vegetation to provide shelter and food. During the survey attention was paid to the presence of burrows, latrines, feeding remains, trails and footprints.

Birds

The appraisal of breeding birds on the site was based on the suitability of habitat present to support nesting bird communities, the presence of bird species that may

potentially nest within the available habitat and evidence of nesting such as old or currently active nests.

The assessment of wintering birds was based on an assessment of the suitability of the habitat on site to support important wintering bird species and populations. Particular attention was paid to the suitability for the site to support wintering farmland bird species, waders and wildfowl.

Reptiles

The reptile appraisal was based on an assessment of the suitability of the habitat present within the site to support a population of reptiles. Reptiles particularly favour scrub and rough grassland interfaces and the presence of these is a good indication that reptiles may be present on site. In addition, reptiles may utilise features such as bare ground for basking, tussocky grassland for shelter and compost heaps and rubble piles for breeding and/or hibernating.

Great Crested Newt

The appraisal of the site to support great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* included establishing the presence of suitable aquatic habitats such as ponds, lakes or other waterbodies within or adjacent to the site and the presence of suitable terrestrial habitat. Waterbodies that are densely shaded, highly eutrophic or that contain fish are likely to be less suitable for this species. The suitability of on-site ponds and terrestrial habitat is considered in relation to the presence of ponds within the wider area, as identified within the desktop study (Paragraph 3.4.3), and their suitability to be used as a network.

Invertebrates

An assessment was made of the suitability of the site to support diverse communities of invertebrates. The assessment was based on the presence of habitat features which may support important invertebrate communities. These features include, for example, an abundance of dead wood, the presence of diverse plant communities, varied woodland structure, sunny woodland edges with a diverse flora, waterbodies and water courses and areas of free draining soil exposures. During the field survey there was no attempt made to identify species present as this is a more specialist area of ecological assessment reserved for targeted surveys.

Other Relevant Species

An assessment was made of site suitability for other notable species such as more rarely encountered protected species, Species of Principal Importance for the Conservation of diversity in England notified under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006

and as listed in the England Biodiversity List, and Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) species⁶, specific to the study region.

Invasive Species

During the field survey any incidental records of invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) were recorded. However, it should be considered that the survey was not specifically aimed at assessing the presence of these species and further specialist advice may need to be sought.

3.6 Field Survey Details

The field survey was carried out by Megan Woolley, Ecologist of ECOSA on 12th May 2025. The weather conditions were overcast with approximately 80 % cloud cover, an ambient temperature of 16 °C and a moderate breeze.

During the survey, the surveyor was equipped with 10x40 binoculars, a high powered torch and a digital camera.

3.7 Limitations

Ecological surveys are limited by factors which affect the presence of plants and animals such as the time of year, migration patterns and behaviour. The field survey has therefore not produced a complete list of plants and animals and the absence of evidence of any particular species should not be taken as conclusive proof that the species is absent or that it will not occur in the future.

Online mapping resources provide an indication of habitat features present in the wider area, but do not provide a detailed assessment of habitat types.

During the site visit some of the beach area on site was covered by the sea due to high tide. Based on aerial imagery the habitat within this area of the beach appears to be homogenous and as such this is not thought to have impacted the results of the survey.

⁶ LBAPs identify local priorities for biodiversity conservation by translating national targets for species into effective action at the local level and identifying targets for species important to the local area.

4.0 BASELINE ECOLOGICAL CONDITIONS

4.1 Introduction

This section details the results of the Ecological Impact Assessment undertaken for the site. It assesses the baseline ecological conditions of the site at the time the desktop study was completed and based on the ecological features recorded during the field survey.

4.2 Statutory and Non-statutory Designated Sites

Details of designated sites are provided in the paragraphs below.

4.2.1 Statutory Designated Sites

There are four statutory designated sites of nature conservation interest situated within one kilometre of the site boundary. These are:

- Solent & Southampton Water (Ramsar site) – Located directly adjacent to the site and designated for its sheltered channels and substantial island in European waters, wetland habitats, support of rare plants and invertebrates, and support of internationally important assemblages of birds.
- Solent & Southampton Water (SPA) – Located directly adjacent to the site and designated for its assemblages of Annex 1 species, as well as its diverse habitats including Mediterranean gull *Larus melanocephalus* and common tern *Sterna hirundo*.
- Lee-on-The-Solent to Itchen Estuary (SSSI) – Located directly adjacent to the site and designated for its priority habitats such as intertidal mudflats, vegetated shingle and saltmarsh and support of over-wintering birds
- Westwood Woodland Park (LNR) – Located approximately 900 metres north of the site and designated for its open heathland with scrub islands and ancient woodland.

Further details of the statutory designations listed above are provided in **Appendix 2**.

4.2.2 Non-Statutory Designated Sites

There are also six non-statutory designated sites of nature conservation interest situated within one kilometre of the site boundary. These are:

- Netley and Hamble Shore (SINC) – Located within the site boundary, extending north and south of the site and designated for its maritime cliffs and slopes, as well as its coastal vegetated shingle.

- Netley Lodge (SINC) – Located approximately 400 metres south of the site and designated for its ancient semi-natural woodland, wet woodlands, fens, flushes, seepages, springs and inundation grasslands of floodplains that support a flora and fauna of less-improved wet conditions.
- Westwood Woodland Park (SINC) – Located approximately 810 metres north of the site and designated for its ancient semi-natural woodlands, lowland meadows, area of open freshwater supporting good floristic assemblages, and its value to the local community.
- Weston Shore (South-East) (SINC) – Located approximately 820 metres north of the site and designated for its semi-natural coastal and estuarine habitats.
- Weston Shore (SINC) – Located approximately 980 metres north of the site and designated for its semi-natural coastal and estuarine habitats, value to the local community and its support of notable species divided sedge *Carex divisa*.
- Weston Greenway (SINC) – Located approximately 980 metres north of the site and designated for its ancient semi-natural woodland and yew woods.

Further information on sites designated for nature conservation are provided in **Appendix 3**.

4.3 Habitats

4.3.1 Desktop Study Results

Consultation with HBIC revealed a number of Priority Habitats within one kilometre of the site.

The site contains an area of costal vegetated shingle, with further areas to the north and south of the site. Directly adjacent to the site is a large area of intertidal mudflats, which encompass the entire stretch of the shore within this area.

Wet woodland is present within the local area, with the closest block being located approximately 400 metres south-east of the site. This wet woodland is also surrounded with areas of lowland mixed deciduous woodland. Further areas of lowland mixed deciduous woodland are located approximately 510 metres north of the site, associated with Westwood Woodland Park (SINC).

Approximately 715 metres south of the site are parcels of lowland dry acid grassland associated with Royal Victoria Country Park. Approximately 950 metres north-east of the site lies an area of lowland meadow.

4.3.2 Field Survey Results

Habitats within the site are shown on the Baseline Habitat Map (**Map 2**) and details of how each habitat has been classified are provided in **Appendix 6**. Habitats are described in general terms using standard UKHab terminology. The main habitats recorded on site during the field survey were as follows:

Estuarine rocky habitats

The habitat dominated the southwestern half of the site. This consisted of the area of the beach within the site area (**Figure 1** and **Figure 2**). The area of the habitat that was visible was dominated by pebbles as well as small amounts of larger stones. No vegetation was present within this area.



Figure 1: Rocks and sea along the beach front.



Figure 2: View of the retaining wall meeting the beach front.

Gorse scrub

The majority of the slope of the site was dominated by this habitat (**Figure 3**, **Figure 4** and **Figure 5**). Although mostly dominated by gorse *Ulex europaeus*, the habitat also has small amounts of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, bramble, and holly. There was also ground flora present throughout this habitat including sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare* and cut-leaved crane's-bill *Geranium dissectum*. A small amount of *Cotoneaster* was also identified, a non native invasive shrub.



Figure 3: Gorse scrub along the cliff on site.

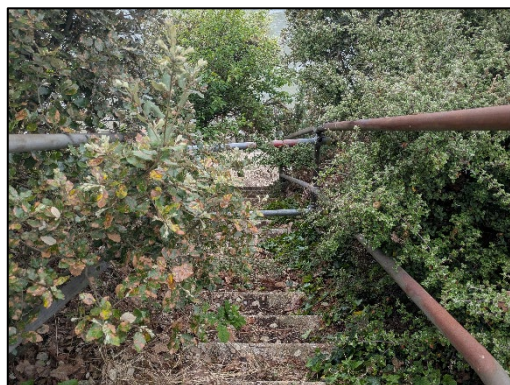


Figure 4: Gorse scrub around stairs on site.



Figure 5: A view of gorse dominating the slope.

Other broadleaved woodland

A small patch of this habitat was present at the northern end of the site. This contained a mixture of broadleaved species including pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, and sycamore *Acer psefuoplatanus* (**Figure 6**). The undergrowth consisted mainly of scattered bramble *Rubus fruticosus* species, with ground flora largely dominated by ivy *Hedera helix* (**Figure 7**). Rhododendron, a non-native invasive species was noted growing within the woodland.



Figure 6: Mature trees within the woodland on site.



Figure 7: Ground flora within woodland on site.

Rural trees

Eight scattered trees were present across the site, situated within the gorse scrub along the northeastern edge of the site (**Figure 8** and **Figure 9**). These all consisted of semi-mature oak *Quercus* species.



Figure 8: Oak tree along the site boundary.



Figure 9: Younger oak tree along the site boundary.

Other Habitats

A small amount of other developed land (developed land; sealed surface) was present at the southeastern end of the site. This consisted of hardstanding steps with a metal rail on both sides.

4.3.3 Summary

The habitats on site are largely widespread and of low condition. However mature trees and woodland provide higher distinctiveness habitats for the site. There are non native invasive species present on site in the form of *Rhododendron* and *Cotoneaster*.

4.4 Notable and Legally Protected Species

4.4.1 Bats

Desktop Study Results

Consultation with MAGIC returned one record of granted EPSM licence regarding bats. This licence allowed the destruction of a resting place for brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus* and was granted in 2020 approximately 1000 meters to the north of the site.

Consultation with HBIC returned 189 records of bats within two kilometres of the site. Species included were serotine *Eptesicus serotinus*, Myotis species *Myotis* spp., Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*, Whiskered/Brandt's bat *Myotis mystacinus/brandtii*, Natterer's bat *Myotis nattereri*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, Nathusius's pipistrelle *Pipistrellus nathusii*, common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*,

soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, and brown long-eared bat. The most recent record of bats was recorded in 2023.

Tree Assessment

During the survey of the site, no trees were noted with any potential roost features. As the trees on site were largely semi-mature or younger, they lacked large gaps or damage which usually form features to be used by roosting bats. There were no structures on site to be used by bats.

Foraging and Commuting Habitat

The scrub and woodland on site provide suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bat species throughout the site. There is some connectivity to woodland to the east of the site, although this is separated by Victoria Road. Overall, the site is assessed as having moderate condition for foraging and commuting bats.

4.4.2 Otter

Desktop Study Results

Consultation with BRC produced no records of otter within the desktop study area, and MAGIC returned no record of EPSM licenses however, this does not confirm the absence of the species in the local area.

Field Survey Results

No watercourses were on site or to be impacted by the works. Although the beach does provide a commuting route between the River Hamble and River Itchen, the distance between these two watercourses makes it unlikely to be used by otter. As such the habitat on site is unsuitable for otter and therefore the species is not considered further in this report.

4.4.3 Badger

Desktop Study Results

Consultation with HBIC produced no records of badger within the desktop study area, however, this does not confirm the absence of the species in the local area.

Field Survey Results

No badger setts or field signs were noted during the site visit. The scrub and woodland on site provide suitable habitat for sett creation and could be used by foraging and commuting badgers.

4.4.4 Hazel Dormouse

Desktop Study Results

Consultation with MAGIC returned no records of granted EPSM licences regarding hazel dormouse within one kilometre of the site.

Consultation with HBIC produced no records of hazel dormouse within the desktop study area, however, this does not confirm the absence of the species in the local area.

Field Survey Results

The woodland and scrub on site provide some suitable habitat for hazel dormouse. However, the woodland on site lacks suitable understorey to be used by dormouse, and both this and the scrub lacks a variety of species to provide a range of food sources for the species. Furthermore, connectivity to suitable habitat in the wider area is generally poor, with garden hedges likely to be unsuitable and woodland to the southeast separated from the site by a road.

As such the habitat on site is unsuitable for hazel dormouse and therefore the species is not considered further in this report.

4.4.5 Water Vole

Desktop Study Results

Consultation with HBIC produced no records of water vole within the desktop study area, however, this does not confirm the absence of the species in the local area.

Field Survey Results

No watercourses were on site or to be impacted by the works. As such there is not suitable habitat for sheltering, commuting or foraging water vole and they will not be considered further in this report.

4.4.6 Birds

Desktop Study Results

Consultation with HBIC returned records of 124 species of birds within one kilometre of the site. These records included Red List species such as kittiwake *Rissa tridactyla* approximately 700 meters from site, most recently recorded in 2022, whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*, most recently recorded in 2022 500 meters from the site, and starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, most recently recorded in 2022 within the site area.

Field Survey Results

Some common bird species were noted during the survey including blackbird, starling and blue tit. The scrub and woodland throughout the site provide suitable habitat for nesting birds. The beach within the site area also provides suitable habitat for foraging wintering birds.

4.4.7 Reptiles

Desktop Study Results

Consultation with MAGIC returned no records of granted EPSM licences regarding rare reptiles within one kilometre of the site.

Consultation with HBIC returned five records of slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, most recently recorded in 2018 300 meters from the site, two records of grass snake *Natrix Helvetica*, most recently in 2022 at Netley Abbey 300 meters from site, and one record of common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* in 2004, 900 meters from site.

Field Survey Results

A slow worm was noted within the gorse shrub on site at the north eastern end of the site, confirming their presence within the site. The gorse scrub and woodland on site

provided suitable habitat for foraging, sheltering, commuting and basking habitat for widespread reptiles.

4.4.8 Great Crested Newt

Desktop Study Results

Consultation with HBIC produced no records of great crested newt within the desktop study area, MAGIC returned records of great crested newt from 2019 approximately 600 meters to the north of site. These were of a survey conducted for great crested newt which yielded a positive result.

There is one waterbody within 500 metres of the site. This is Sophie's Pond, located approximately 400 metres south of the site and associated with the woodland north of Royal Victoria Country Park. This pond is functionally connected to the site, but is a long way away and separated by some minor roads, which may discourage great crested newt dispersal.

Field Survey Results

The woodland and scrub throughout the site provide suitable habitat for sheltering, commuting, hibernating and foraging great crested newt. There were not waterbodies on site which could be used by great crested newt, and the site is poorly connected to the pond noted 400 meters to the south.

4.4.9 Invertebrates

Desktop Study Results

Consultation with HBIC produced records of a number of invertebrate species including six arachnid Araneae species, two cockroach *Blattaria* species, 14 beetle *Coleoptera* species, Lesne's earwig *Forficula lesnei*, three true bug *Hemiptera* species, 11 sawflies, wasps, ants and/or bees *Hymenoptera* species, 48 butterfly and/or moth *Lepidoptera* species, common darter *Sympetrum striolatum* and wood cricket *Nemobius sylvestris* within the desktop study area. Of these, a number of species have been recorded nearby and could occur on site including *Strophosoma faber*, trimmer mining bee *Andrena trimmerana*, purseweb spider wasp *Aporus unicolor*, *Crossocerus distinguendus*, European beewolf *Philanthus Triangulum* and swollen-thighed blood bee *Sphecodes crassus*.

Field Survey Results

While the habitats on site provide opportunities for individual cliff-dwelling and sand-dwelling invertebrates, including those recorded within the desktop study as being present within 30 metres of the site, it is limited in extent and is unlikely to support

significant assemblages of invertebrates. Overall, the site is assessed as having suitability for individual notable invertebrates.

4.4.10 Other Relevant Species

Desktop Study Results

Consultation with HBIC found sixteen records of European hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* within the survey area. The most recent of these was found in 2020, with the closest record located within the site area.

Field Survey Results

The site provides some sheltering habitats for European hedgehog and there are nearby foraging opportunities in the form of surrounding gardens. As such the site could be used by foraging, sheltering and commuting European hedgehog.

4.5 Summary of Key Ecological Features

The following features are those with greatest ecological value that lie within the site's Zone of Influence:

- Site is adjacent to and included within a number of statutory and non-statutory designated sites;
- The scrub and woodland on site are suitable for use by reptiles and great crested newt on site;
- The site is suitable for use by wintering and breeding birds;
- The site has suitability for badger; and
- The site has suitability for foraging and commuting bats.

5.0 POTENTIAL ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Introduction

This section identifies potential constraints to the proposed development scheme based on the key ecological features as identified in Section 4.0 and summarised in Paragraph 4.5. Recommendations are included for mitigation and compensation based on the identified ecological constraints, and opportunities for enhancement are discussed.

5.2 Scheme Design

The proposed development entails the removal and reinstallation of an existing sea wall. This will involve the removal of areas of scrub and some trees within the site area, with plant and machinery accessing the site along the coastal habitats at the bottom of the bank.

The potential ecological impacts and effects of these proposals, in the absence of mitigation, are described for each ecological feature below. For each ecological feature, measures to mitigate and/or compensate for significant effects are described.

5.3 Designated Sites

5.3.1 *Potential Constraints*

The proposals for the site do not involve the direct disturbance of the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar site and SPA, the Solent and Dorset Coast SPA or the Netley to Hamble Shore SINC. However, the reconstruction of the sea defences on site could result in indirect impacts to these designated sites arising as a result of construction activities through visual and noise disturbance to wintering birds and pollution events. Reconstruction works could result in indirect impacts on support areas E01, E02, E03, E04 and E17 identified within the Solent Waders and Brent Goose Strategy through noise and dust disturbance (Whitfield, 2020)

5.3.2 *Potential Mitigation and Compensation Measures*

An HRA will be required in order to assess likely significant effects and outline measures to prevent impacts to the designated sites. This will likely include the production of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) which will be prepared and implemented as part of the construction phase of the scheme to ensure no indirect impacts on the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar site and SPA or the Solent and Dorset Coast SPA. This will include guidance on reducing the risk of pollution incidents during construction in accordance with current best practice guidelines including the provision of spill kits and the appropriate storage of materials and machinery away from the water. No storage of materials will be allowed adjacent to the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar site and SPA.

The works should take place outside of the wintering bird period (October to March, inclusive) to avoid impacts to bird species that are associated with support areas of the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar site and SPA.

5.3.3 Enhancement Opportunities

No enhancements are proposed with regards to designated sites.

5.4 Habitats

5.4.1 Potential Constraints

The works will result in the loss of some areas of scrub, as well as the removal of two individual trees and two groups of trees. The remainder of the trees on site will be retained. Rhododendron and cotoneaster within the site are invasive species which could accidentally be spread.

5.4.2 Further Survey

No further survey is required in relation to habitats.

5.4.3 Potential Mitigation and Compensation Measures

Retained trees should be protected by the installation of barriers to prevent accidental damage. Plant and machinery should not be tracked near these trees to prevent damage to roots. Following the completion of works, planting of new trees and scrub could compensate for the loss of habitat. If areas with rhododendron or cotoneaster are impacted then measures should be outlined within the CEMP to ensure that these species are not spread. If any rhododendron is cleared it should be chipped and removed from the site.

5.4.4 Enhancement Opportunities

No further enhancement measures are recommended in relation to habitats on site.

5.5 Bats

5.5.1 Potential Constraints

No roosting features are expected to be impacted by the works. The removal of scrub and woodland throughout the site will reduce habitat for commuting and foraging bats but will not create habitat fragmentation or impact connectivity. As such the impacts are not considered to be significant in relation to bats.

In England, bats and their habitat are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 through inclusion in Schedule 5. In addition, all bat species are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Refer to **Appendix 5** for details.

5.5.2 Further Survey

No further surveys are required in relation to bats on site.

5.5.3 Potential Mitigation and Compensation Measures

No mitigation or compensation measures are proposed in relation to bats.

5.5.4 Enhancement Opportunities

No enhancement measures are proposed in relation to bats.

5.6 Badger

5.6.1 Potential Constraints

Although no setts were noted on site, there is suitable habitat so setts could be created between the site visit and commencement of the works. If setts are created then they could be damaged by the works. Badgers may also use the site for commuting and foraging and could become trapped in excavations if left open overnight.

Badgers are protected from killing and injury, and their setts protected from damage and interference, under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. Refer to **Appendix 5** for details.

5.6.2 Further Survey

An updating walkover survey should take place no less than 3 months prior to works commencing to determine if any badger setts have been created within the site area. If setts have been created a 30-metre buffer for heavy plant and machinery should be created around the sett.

5.6.3 Potential Mitigation and Compensation Measures

During construction, any excavations should be covered overnight, or if not possible, a ramp inserted or sides graded to allow trapped animals (including badger) to escape.

5.6.4 Enhancement Opportunities

No enhancement measures are recommended for badgers at this stage.

5.7 Birds

5.7.1 Potential Constraints

The proposals will result in the loss of suitable breeding bird habitats. Breeding birds may be harmed and/or disturbed if vegetation clearance works are carried out during the breeding bird season (March to August, inclusive). Intertidal waders and waterfowl species associated with nearby designated sites may be disturbed during works through visual and noise disturbance and pollution events.

All birds, their nests, eggs and young are legally protected, with certain exceptions, under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Refer to **Appendix 5** for details.

5.7.2 Further Survey

No further survey is required in relation to birds on site.

5.7.3 Potential Mitigation and Compensation Measures

If possible vegetation should be cleared to the ground outside the breeding bird season (March-August inclusive). If this is not possible, an ecologist should be present immediately prior to clearance to check or vegetation. Active nests will be left with an undisturbed five to ten metre buffer until chicks have fledged and/or the nest is no longer in use, which may cause a delay to the proposed works.

Works should be undertaken outside of the wintering bird season (October to March inclusive) to avoid impacts to this species group. If not possible then further mitigation and survey measures may be required.

As a measure of compensation, a WoodStone Alicante Bird Box (or a bird box of similar design) should be installed on a suitable tree within one of the trees to be retained.

5.7.4 Enhancement Opportunities

Additional bird boxes could be erected in the retained woodland, and boxes suitable for cliff-nesting species such as the Wildcare Sand Martin Nest Box 10669 could be installed within the retaining wall. Reptiles

5.7.5 Potential Constraints

The habitat on site is suitable for use by reptiles, with confirmation of slow worm on site. As such there is a risk of harming individual reptiles during clearance of these habitats. Due to the large amount of suitable habitat in the wider area, the loss of habitat on site is not considered to constitute a significant reduction of reptile habitat in the area.

Widespread reptile species (slow worm, common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, grass snake *Natrix helvetica* and adder *Vipera berus*) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 against harm, see **Appendix 5** for details.

5.7.6 Further Survey

No further surveys are required in relation to reptiles.

5.7.7 Potential Mitigation and Compensation Measures

As only small areas of suitable habitat are expected impacted by the works, the works should be covered under a Precautionary Working Method Statement (PWMS). This will outline a methodology for the works to proceed under in order to negate any risk to

reptiles on site. This will include the presence of an ECoW to carry out searches of any suitable habitat before it is cleared. If any reptiles are discovered in the course of the works, they should not be harmed and encouraged to move to safe suitable habitat.

5.7.8 Enhancement Opportunities

Hibernacula could be created from any cleared woody vegetation in suitable on-site habitat such as along scrub adjacent to the site.

5.8 Great Crested Newt

5.8.1 Potential Constraints

Removal of suitable habitats on site risk killing and injuring great crested newt that may be on site. Due to the small area of suitable habitat to be removed and as there was only a single pond noted which was beyond 250 metres from the site, it is considered that the loss of habitat will not risk committing and offence.

In England, great crested newt and their habitat are fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 through inclusion in Schedule 5. In addition, this species is protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Refer to **Appendix 5** for details.

5.8.2 Further Survey

No further surveys are required in relation to great crested newts on site.

5.8.3 Potential Mitigation and Compensation Measures

To control the risk of killing or injuring great crested newt, the works should be covered under a Precautionary Working Method Statement (PWMS). This will outline a methodology for the works to proceed under in order to negate any risk to great crested newt on site. This will include the presence of an ECoW to carry out searches of any suitable habitat before it is cleared. In the unlikely event of great crested newt being discovered, the works will need to stop and a protected species licence may be required.

5.8.4 Enhancement Opportunities

No further enhancements are recommended in relation to great crested newt.

5.9 Invertebrates

5.9.1 Potential Impacts and Effects

The proposals will result in the temporary loss of suitable invertebrate habitats during stripping works, however as this is unlikely to affect notable assemblages this impact is considered to be of negligible significance.

5.9.2 Mitigation and Compensation Measures

Removal of scrub vegetation will expose more areas of cliffside and sand providing more suitable colonising opportunities for cliff-dwelling and sand-burrowing invertebrate species including trimmer's mining bee, *Aporus unicolor*, *Crossocerus distinguendus*, bee wolf and swollen-thighed blood bee.

5.9.3 Enhancement

Creation of hibernacula along the site boundaries would provide suitable habitat for a range of invertebrate species.

5.10 Other Relevant Species

5.10.1 Potential Impacts and Effects

European hedgehog using the scrub and woodland on site for foraging and commuting may be harmed during vegetation clearance works.

5.10.2 Mitigation and Compensation Measures

Scrub habitats will be checked prior to clearance for sheltering European hedgehog. Any European hedgehog found will be allowed to disperse of its own free will before vegetation is cut to ground level.

5.10.3 Enhancement

Hibernacula created along the site boundaries could be used by sheltering and foraging hedgehog.

6.0 CONCLUSION

6.1 Conclusion

The site lies adjacent to the Solent and Southampton Water Ramsar site and SPA and the Dorset and Solent Coast SPA and has suitability for foraging and commuting bats, badger, breeding and wintering birds, reptiles, great crested newt, invertebrates and European hedgehog. Adverse impacts on these ecological features have been identified and appropriate mitigation measures proposed, including sensitive timing of works, production of a CEMP and HRA, supervision of vegetation clearance, a badger walkover survey, new planting and provision of a nest box for birds. As such it is considered that the proposals will accord with all relevant national and local planning policy in relation to ecology including Policies S9, DM10 and DM11 of the Local Plan and the NPPF (see Section 2.0).

6.2 Updating Site Survey

If the planning application boundary changes or the proposals for the site alter, a re-assessment of the scheme in relation to ecology may be required. Given the mobility of animals and the potential for colonisation of the site over time, updating survey work may be required, particularly if development does not commence within 12 months of the date of the most recent relevant survey.

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Map 1 Site Location Plan



**NETLEY COURT CARE HOME,
VICTORIA ROAD, NETLEY,
SOUTHAMPTON, HAMPSHIRE**

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

Map 1 - Site Location Plan

Client:	Hartwood Care
Date:	June 2025
Status:	Draft

KEY

Site Boundary



Prepared by: KM	Date: 230625
Last amended by: KM	Date: 240625

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Map 2 Baseline Habitats



NETLEY COURT CARE HOME,
VICTORIA ROAD, NETLEY,
SOUTHAMPTON, HAMPSHIRE

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

Map 2 - Baseline Habitats

Client:	Hartwood Care
Date:	June 2025
Status:	Draft

KEY

Site Boundary

Developed land; sealed surface

Estuarine Rocky Habitat

Gorse scrub

Other woodland; broadleaved

L

Existing Large Rural Tree

M

Existing Medium Rural Tree

S

Existing Small Rural Tree

Scale at A31:400

0481216 m

N

Prepared by: KM	Date: 230625
Last amended by: KM	Date: 240625

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Appendix 1 Site Proposals Plan

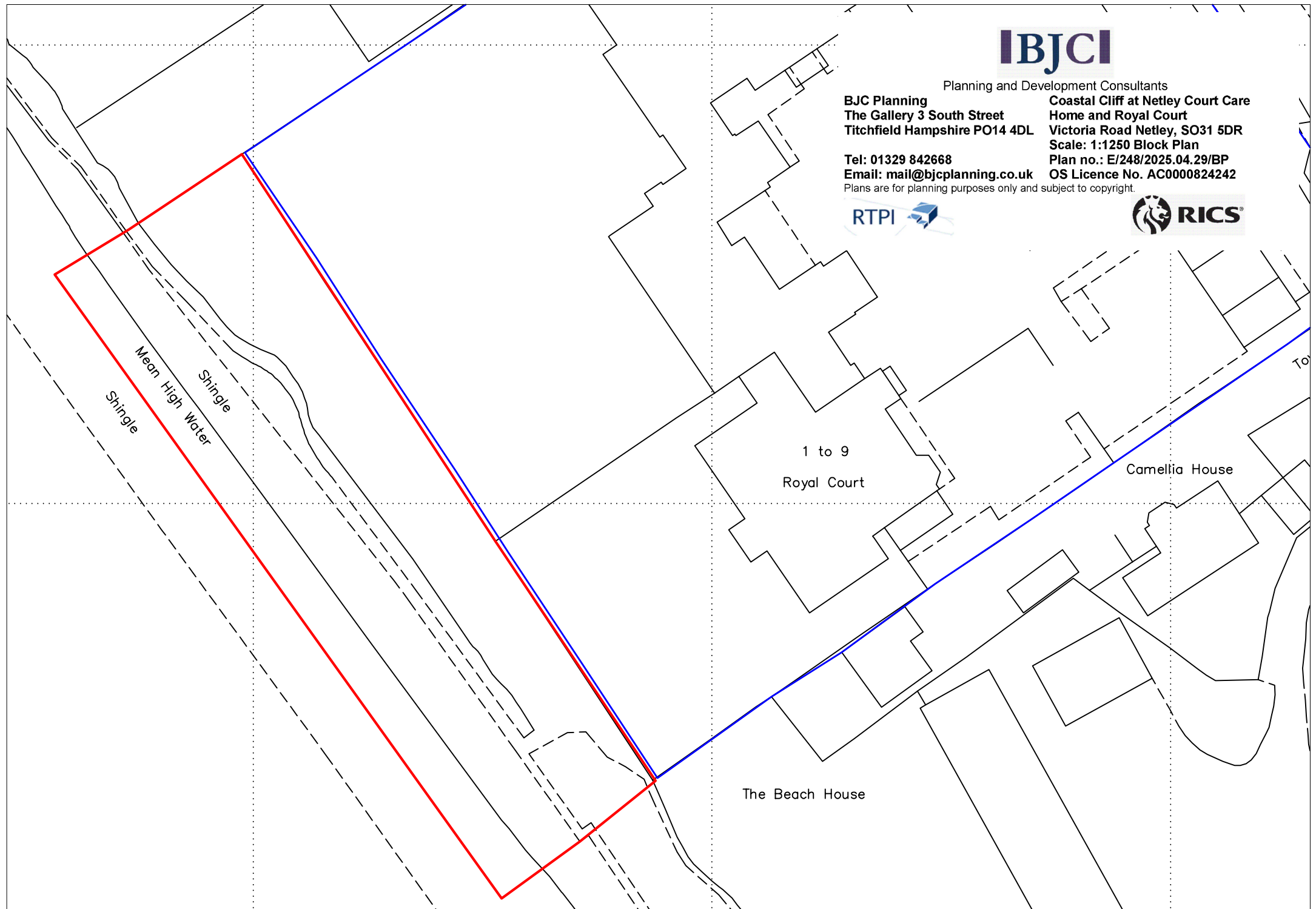


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Coastal Cliff at Netley Court Care
Home and Royal Court
Victoria Road Netley, SO31 5DR
Scale: 1:1250 Block Plan
Plan no.: E/248/2025.04.29/BP
OS Licence No. AC0000824242



Appendix 2 Statutory Designated Sites within the Desktop Study Area

Details of statutory designated sites within the desktop study area, as listed in Paragraph 4.2.1, are provided in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Statutory Designated Sites Located Within the Desktop Study Area

Site Name	Solent & Southampton Water
Site Designation	Ramsar
Approximate Relative Location	Directly adjacent to the site
Reasons for Designation:	
Ramsar criterion 1 - The site is one of the few major sheltered channels between a substantial island and mainland in European waters, exhibiting an unusual strong double tidal flow and has long periods of slack water at high and low tide. It includes many wetland habitats characteristic of the biogeographic region: saline lagoons, saltmarshes, estuaries, intertidal flats, shallow coastal waters, grazing marshes, reedbeds, coastal woodland and rocky boulder reefs. Ramsar criterion 2 - The site supports an important assemblage of rare plants and invertebrates. At least 33 British Red Data Book invertebrates and at least eight British Red Data Book plants are represented on site. Ramsar criterion 5 - Assemblages of international importance. Species with peak counts in winter: 51,343 waterfowl (5-year peak mean 1998/99-2002/2003) Ramsar criterion 6 – species/populations occurring at levels of international importance. Qualifying Species/populations (as identified at designation) with peak counts in spring/autumn: Ringed plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>, Europe/Northwest Africa 397 individuals, representing an average of 1.2% of the GB population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3). Species with peak counts in winter: Dark-bellied brent goose <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i>, 6456 individuals, representing an average of 3% of the population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3). Eurasian teal <i>Anas crecca</i>, NW Europe 5514 individuals, representing an average of 1.3% of the population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3) Black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa islandica</i>, Iceland/W Europe 1240 individuals, representing an average of 3.5% of the population (5-year peak mean 1998/9-2002/3). Available at: http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/RIS/UK11063.pdf	

Site Name	Solent & Southampton Water
Site Designation	Special Protected Area
Approximate Relative Location	Directly adjacent to the site
Reasons for Designation:	
The site qualifies for supporting the following Annex I species: Breeding ▪ Sandwich tern <i>Sterna sandvicensis</i>, 441 pairs representing at least 4.01% of the breeding population in Great Britain; ▪ Common tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i>, 492 pairs representing at least 4.77% of the breeding population in Great Britain; and ▪ Little tern <i>Sternula albifrons</i>, 63 pairs representing at least 3.31% of the breeding population in Great Britain. The site contains a number of important habitats including: tidal rivers, estuaries, mud flats, sand flats, lagoons and salt marshes http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/pdf/SPA/UK9011061.pdf	

Site Name	Lee-on-the-Solent to Itchen Estuary
Site Designation	Site of Special Scientific Interest
Approximate Relative Location	Directly adjacent to the site
Reasons for Designation:	
The site comprises extensive intertidal muds with a littoral fringe of vegetated shingle, saltmarsh, reedbed, marshy grasslands and deciduous woodland on alluvium, valley gravels (Hamble Common), and Bracklesham Beds (Hook Links). The site is an integral part of Southampton Water which is of international importance for over-wintering dark-bellied brent geese <i>Bernicla bernicla</i>, and of national importance for three species of wildfowl (great-crested grebe <i>Podiceps cristatus</i>, teal <i>Anas crecca</i> and wigeon <i>Anas penelope</i>) and five species of wader (black-tailed godwit <i>Limosa limosa</i>, dunlin <i>Calidris alpina</i>, grey plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i>, ringed plover <i>Charadrius hiaticula</i>, redshank <i>Tringa totanus</i>). The SSSI supports an outstanding assemblage of nationally scarce coastal plants.	

Site Name	Westwood Woodland Park
Site Designation	Local Nature Reserve
Approximate Relative Location	Approximately 900 metres north of the site
Reasons for Designation:	
Westwood Woodland Park is an area of open heathland including grassland with islands of scrub, surrounded by a mixed ancient woodland fringe.	

Appendix 3 Sites Designated for Nature Conservation

Statutory Sites

Internationally Designated Sites - Ramsar Sites, Special Areas of Conservation and Special Protection Areas

Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) form a network of protected sites across the European Union and United Kingdom. In the United Kingdom the primary legislative protection is afforded to these sites under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).

Ramsar sites are designated as wetlands of international importance which are afforded similar legislative protection to SPAs and SACs.

SACs are sites which support internationally important habitats or internationally important assemblages or populations of species. SPAs are designated for supporting internationally important populations of birds. SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites are generally also designated as Sites of Special Scientific Interest.

Under Regulation 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) there is a legal requirement that competent authorities, such as local planning authorities, need to consider whether plans or projects are likely to have a significant adverse effect on SPAs, SACs or Ramsar sites, either alone, or in combination with other plans or projects. In the event that a likely significant effect cannot be ruled out, on the basis of objective information, then the competent authority must undertake an “Appropriate Assessment” to fully assess the plan or project against the site’s conservation objectives. Unless certain defined derogation tests can be met, the competent authority may not authorise nor undertake any plan or project which adversely affects the integrity of a SPA, SAC or Ramsar site.

Nationally Designated Sites – Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) receive legal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Such sites are designated to protect specific areas of biological or geological interest of national importance. Such sites also generally receive strict protection through the planning system.

National Nature Reserves (NNRs) are also usually designated as SSSIs and are specifically managed for their wildlife value. They receive legal protection through the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). As with SSSIs, these sites generally receive strict protection through the planning system.

Locally Designated Sites – Local Nature Reserves

Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) are designated by local authorities under the National Park and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. These are generally designated not only for their local wildlife value but also for education, scientific and recreational purposes. These sites generally receive protection from development through the planning system.

Non-Statutory Sites

Locally Designated Sites

In addition to statutory designations, local authorities often designate sites of nature conservation importance at the local level. Such designations are named differently by each local authority and may be referred to as Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs), Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) or Sites of Nature Conservation Importance (SNCIs), amongst others. The exact level of protection afforded to these sites varies and is normally defined through local planning policy.

Appendix 4 Appraisal Criteria for Bats

The criteria used to assess the suitability of foraging/commuting habitat for bats is based on industry guidelines and outlined in **Table 2**⁷.

Table 2: Criteria used to Assess Suitability of Roosting and Foraging/Commuting Habitat for Bats

Suitability	Description of roosting habitats	Commuting and foraging habitats
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.	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 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.
Moderate	A structure of tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status.	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting 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.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically/structure that does not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation). A tree of sufficient size and age to contain potential roost features but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as a gappy hedgerows or un-vegetated 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 or a patch of scrub.
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of	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-

⁷ Table adapted from (Collins, 2023)

	crevices/suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).	lines, or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats)
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Appendix 5 Relevant Legislation

Bats

All UK bat species are listed in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. They are afforded full protection under Section 9(4) of the Act and Regulation 43 of the Regulations. These make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any such animal;
- Deliberately disturb any such animal, including in particular any disturbance which is likely:
- To impair its ability to survive, breed, or rear or nurture their young;
- To impair its ability to hibernate or migrate;
- To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of that species;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any such animal;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any of these animals while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection; or
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place that any of these animals uses for shelter or protection.

In addition, five British bat species are listed on Annex II of the Habitats Directive. These are:

- Greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*;
- Lesser horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus hipposideros*;
- Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*;
- Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*; and
- Greater mouse-eared bat *Myotis myotis*.

In certain circumstances where these species are found the Directive requires the designation of Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) by EC member states to ensure that their populations are maintained at a favourable conservation status. Outside SACs, the level of legal protection that these species receive is the same as for other bat species.

Great Crested Newt

This species is listed in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. They are afforded full protection under Section 9(4) of the Act and Regulation 43 of the Regulations. These make it an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any such animal;
- Deliberately disturb any such animal, including in particular any disturbance which is likely, to impair its ability to survive, breed, or rear or nurture their young, to impair its ability to hibernate or migrate;
- To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of that species;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of any such animal;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any of these animals while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection; or
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place that any one of these species uses for shelter or protection.

Badger

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 consolidates previous legislation (including the Badgers Acts 1973 and 1991 Badgers (Further Protection) Act 1991). It makes it an offence to:

- Kill, injure or take a badger;
- Attempt to kill, injure or take a badger; or
- To damage or interfere with a sett.

The 1992 Act defines a badger sett as 'any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger'.

Breeding Birds

With certain exceptions, all wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected by Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Therefore, it is an offence, to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built; or
- Intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

These offences do not apply to hunting of birds listed in Schedule 2 subject to various controls. Bird species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act receive further protection, thus for these species it is also an offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any bird while it is nest building, or is at a nest containing eggs or young; or
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb the dependent young of any such bird.

Reptiles

The four widespread species of reptile that are native to Britain, namely common or viviparous lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*, adder *Vipera berus* and grass snake *Natrix helvetica*, are listed in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are afforded limited protection under Section 9 of this Act. This makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill or injure any of these species.

The remaining native species of British reptile (sand lizard *Lacerta agilis* and smooth snake *Coronella austriaca*) receive a higher level of protection via inclusion under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. They are afforded full protection under Section 9(4) of the Act and Regulation 43 of the Regulations (in England and Wales only) and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The distribution of these species are restricted to only a few sites in England.

Species and Habitats of Principal Importance in England

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act came into force on 1st October 2006. Section 41 (S41) of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The England Biodiversity List is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under section 40 of the NERC Act 2006, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions. There are currently 943 species of principal importance and 41 habitats of principal importance included on the England Biodiversity List.

Appendix 6 Baseline Habitats

Table 3: Summary of Baseline Habitats

Habitat Ref.	1
Level 1	Terrestrial
Level 2	Woodland (w)
Level 3	Broadleaved woodland (w1)
Level 4	Other Broadleaved woodland (w1g)
Level 5	N/A
Secondary Codes	None
BNG Habitat Type	Other woodland; Broadleaved
	
Species List	
Pedunculate oak <i>Quercus robur</i>, holly <i>Ilex aquifolium</i>, sycamore <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>, goat willow <i>Salix caprea</i>, bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i>, butchers-broom <i>Ruscus aculeatus</i>, <i>Rhododendron</i> spp.	

Habitat Ref.	2
Level 1	Terrestrial
Level 2	Heathland and scrub (h)
Level 3	Dense scrub (h3)
Level 4	Gorse scrub (h3e)
Level 5	N/A
Secondary Codes	Scattered trees (32)
BNG Habitat Type	Gorse scrub
	
Species List	
Gorse (<i>Ulex europaeus</i>), bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>, goat willow <i>Salix caprea</i>, bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i>, Ivy <i>Hedera helix</i>, <i>Cotoneaster</i> sp.	

Habitat Ref.	3
Level 1	Terrestrial
Level 2	Marine inlets and transitional waters (t)
Level 3	Littoral Rock (t1)
Level 4	Estuarine rocky habitats (t1d)
Level 5	N/A
Secondary Codes	None
BNG Habitat Type	Estuarine rocky habitats
	
Species List	
None	

Habitat Ref.	4
Level 1	N/A
Level 2	N/A
Level 3	N/A
Level 4	N/A
Level 5	N/A
Secondary Codes	Trees
BNG Habitat Type	Urban trees
	
Species List	
Pedunculate oak <i>Quercus robur</i> , island oak <i>Quercus tomentella</i>	