Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan and Biodiversity Method Statement

South View, Harpers Drove, Ramsey Heights, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE26 2RR

A&S Designs

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Guidelines

This assessment has been designed to meet:

- British Standard 42020 (2013) 'Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development'.

Proportionality

> The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.
>
> This approach is enshrined in Government planning guidance, for example, paragraph 174 of the National Planning Policy Framework for England.
>
> The desk studies and field surveys undertaken to provide a preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) might in some cases be all that is necessary.
>
> (BS 42020, 2013)

In consequence of the scale and intensity of the proposed development, this plan-led report is considered adequate and proportionate. It communicates all relevant information necessary to determine a planning application or support the recommendations for further surveys.

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1.0 Introduction and Context

1.1 Background

Arbtech Consulting Limited were commissioned by A&S Desings to produce a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan for the proposed development at South View, Harpers Drove, Ramsey Heights, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire, PE26 2RR (hereafter referred to as "the site").

The site has been subject to previous ecological assessment, comprising the following:

- A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) (Arbtech, 2024)
- A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment (Arbtech, 2024)

1.2 Project Description

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with the Huntingdonshire District Council. The proposal is described as:
"The assessment was required to inform a planning application with Huntingdonshire Local Council for the installation of a shepherd's hut with removal of leylandii hedging and 12 poplar trees to be replaced with bay laurel hedging to be planted around the boundaries" A proposed development plan is provided in **Appendix 1.**

1.3 Site Context

The site is located at National Grid Reference TL 2585 0308 and has an area of approximately 0.3ha comprising multiple buildings and surrounded by mixed trees. The site is approximately 3.8km from Ramsey and the wider landscape is predominantly comprised of scattered houses, fields and croplands.). A site location plan is provided in Appendix 2.

1.4 Scope of This Report

Following the submission of planning application 24/01111/FUL, planning permission was conditionally granted. The decision notice details pre-commencement planning conditions that relate to ecology. Of relevance to this report, Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990:

Paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A:

"Planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition "(the biodiversity gain condition") that development may not begin unless:

(a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority, and

(b) the planning authority has approved the plan.

This permission will require the submission and approval of a Biodiversity Gain Plan before development is begun. The Biodiversity Gain Plan should be in accordance with the Biodiversity Net Gain documents already submitted. For guidance on the contents of the Biodiversity Gain Plan that must be submitted and agreed by the Council prior to the commencement of the consented development."

Reason: To secure compliance with Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990."

2.0 Ecological Baseline Conditions Relevant to This Report

The baseline ecological conditions of relevance to this report were determined because of the previous ecological assessments undertaken at the site including the PEA and BNG Assessment (Arbtech, 2024).

2.1 Habitats recorded on Site

The application site is characterised by modified grassland within the redline boundary. The rest of the site is made up of developed land, modified grassland, mixed woodland and unsealed, unvegetated surface.

2.2. Value to Protected/Notable Species

Given the type and extent of habitats recorded and the assessed connectivity between the site and the wider landscape, the site was assessed to provide opportunities for the following protected and/ or notable species:

- Commuting and foraging bats
- Common species of nesting birds
- Invasive and non-native species
- Common species of reptiles
- Amphibians
- Badgers
- Hedgehog

The site is not considered suitable to support any other species.

Bats

No EPSL's for bats were found within 2km of the site.

The grassland, lines of trees and hedgerow can provide suitable foraging and commuting habitat for bats. Given the small extent and type of habitats recorded on site and the presence of better quality habitats locally, the site is not assessed to represent a significant resource in the context of the wider landscape.

The surrounding fields and watercourses can provide foraging and commuting routes for multiple species of bats. None of the trees on site had suitable roosting features.

Nesting Birds

Two birds' nests were identified in the two of poplar trees, birds could use the scattered trees and hedgerow for nesting.

Reptiles

Habitats recorded on site are assessed to provide opportunities for reptiles in the form of grassland and hedgerows and tree lines, albeit the grassland is sub-optimal due to a lack of refuge opportunities. The hedgerows provide elevated value due to a better structure, habitats enclosing the site are similar and are subject to frequent management limiting habitat value for reptiles. However, there remains some connectivity via linear features such as boundary hedgerows, thus the presence of low numbers of reptiles on site cannot be discounted, albeit considered unlikely.

Amphibians

There are no EPSL's for GCN within 2km of the site. There are 5 class survey licence returns located 500m south-west in between 2014-2016. There are four waterbodies within 500m of the site with two groups of smaller ponds, one located within Ramsey Heights Nature Reserve located 400m south-west from the site and another group located within a residential area 475m south-east. The closest waterbody is located 100m south from the site.

Habitats recorded on site are assessed to provide opportunities for amphibians in the form of grassland and hedgerows and tree lines, albeit the grassland is sub-optimal due to a lack of refuge opportunities.

Badgers

No evidence of badgers was found on site or suspected within 30m of the survey boundary. The hedgerow and tree lines can provide sett making opportunities however this habitat is limited in size. The site can provide additional foraging and commuting opportunities for badgers.

Hedgehogs

The habitats onsite provides foraging and commuting opportunities for hedgehogs, with suitable habitat in the surrounding.

2.3 Scope for Mitigation and Enhancement

As above, the site provides suitable opportunities to support protected and/ or notable species including common amphibians, foraging and commuting bats, badgers, common nesting birds, hedgehogs, and reptiles. Although the site is not assessed to represent a significant resource for these species in the context of the wider landscape, their presence for transient periods cannot be discounted. As such, mitigation is considered necessary to reduce potential impacts to these species to an acceptable level during development activity. Furthermore,

there is scope to provide ecological enhancement of the site through the provision of new landscaping, in addition to the provision of species-specific enhancements. The proposed landscaping plan includes the provision of high value habitats including tree planting and the creation of grassland. The provision of these habitats has been shown to demonstrate a significant net gain in Biodiversity through the BNG Assessment (Arbtech, 2024). The effective installation and subsequent management of these habitats alongside the provision of species-specific enhancements will ensure the long-term ecological value of the site is maintained post-development.

3.0 Landscape and Ecology Management Plan

3.1 Mitigation

Mitigation prescriptions to reduce adverse impacts to existing ecological features and biodiversity as identified through previous ecological assessment are detailed in **Table 1** below.

Table 1: Mitigation Prescriptions

Mitigation	Specification
Persons Responsible and Lines of Communication	It is recommended that a Development Biodiversity Champion is selected for the construction phase of the development. The Biodiversity Champion should be someone with significant influence during construction, such as the contract or project manager. The Development Biodiversity Champion is responsible for ensuring all actions outlined in this BNG MP are implemented. Any queries with regards to the mitigation and enhancement prescriptions should be addressed to the project ecologist and communication should be retained between the Development Biodiversity Champion and project ecologist throughout the project. The project ecologist's contact details are located on the title page of this report. It is recommended that the Biodiversity Champion informs the project ecologist of the commencement of enhancement installation works and provides updates where necessary. Once the ecological enhancements have been installed, a Post-Development Biodiversity Champion should be allocated who has influence on site once the development is complete, such as a long-term maintenance contractor. The Post-Development Biodiversity Champion will be responsible for ensuring all recommended management is undertaken and any associated remedial measures are completed where necessary.
Post-development site visit by a Qualified Ecologist and monitoring	A post-development site visit by a qualified ecologist will be undertaken to confirm the successful installation of the biodiversity enhancements and proposed soft landscaping. A short report will be produced detailing the results of the site visit and any remediation recommendations, if necessary. A Monitoring Report must be provided to the Council within twenty working days of each monitoring report date. Monitoring report should be provided to the LPA at years 3, 5 and 7.

Wildlife Sensitive Lighting Strategy	Any proposed external lighting will be installed in accordance with current guidance issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals: *Guidance Note 08/18: Bats and Artificial lighting in the UK* (BCT & ILP 2018). The below strategy utilises light prescriptions detailed within this guidance to limit impacts of artificial lighting on bats and other light sensitive species potentially utilising retained habitats on and directly adjacent to the site including badgers and hedgehogs. In particular, the lighting strategy seeks to influence the lighting design so that impacts can be avoided to key habitats of value including: • The species-specific habitat enhancements detailed below, predominantly the bird box and mixed scrub planting. • Newly proposed landscaping including the wildflower grassland, mixed scrub and tree planting. • Retained habitats on and directly adjacent to the site such as retained areas of grassland and the line of trees to the south of the site. The following lighting design prescriptions are considered suitable for the type and scale of the Development to minimise the impacts of artificial lighting on site or within the public realm on bats and other light sensitive species. Lighting design prescriptions recommended for the Site comprise: • **Reducing the operating time of any installed public realm lighting and levels of illuminance provided via:** Part-night operation. Turning off lights between certain hours, for example between midnight and 06:00. The use of motion sensors will be avoided to ensure no unnecessary light spill occurs during night-time hours. Where the use of motion sensors cannot be avoided, lights must be set to be turned on for no longer than 1 minute. • **Avoiding light spill via:** The use of directional lighting by using luminaires with rear shields and an upwards lighting ratio of zero; and Consideration to the height and spacing between lighting columns where practicable. Examples include stud LED or footpath lighting. • **Light type:** Use of lamps that minimise UV emissions or use UV filters to reduce the attractiveness of the lamp to invertebrates. Use high-pressure sodium or LED lamps, ideally warm white as this has a low relative attractiveness of invertebrates. Installing lighting systems that deliver no greater than a 3lux average illuminance, with a maximum horizontal illuminance of 0.6 uniformity (subject to appropriate maintenance factors); and The use of landscaping as to block light spill where appropriate.
Precautionary methods of working – Nesting birds	Dense scrub vegetation removal works should be undertaken outside the core breeding bird season, which is typically between 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the vegetation should be undertaken by a qualified ecologist prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged.
Precautionary methods of working – Reptiles and common amphibians	Grassland is being removed as part of the development. There is a low risk that a low number of reptiles could be present in the vicinity of the works. These could be injured or killed without mitigation. A precautionary working method will be implemented for widespread reptiles during construction, including the following measures:

- A staged approach will be adopted for vegetation clearance, whereby the vegetation will be strimmed to 15cm and left overnight to allow any reptiles to disperse. The vegetation can then be cleared to ground level and must be maintained at this level for the duration of construction to deter reptiles from the working area.
- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape.
- Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby habitats.
- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
- If any reptiles are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.

In the unlikely event that a reptile is identified, works must cease and advise must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

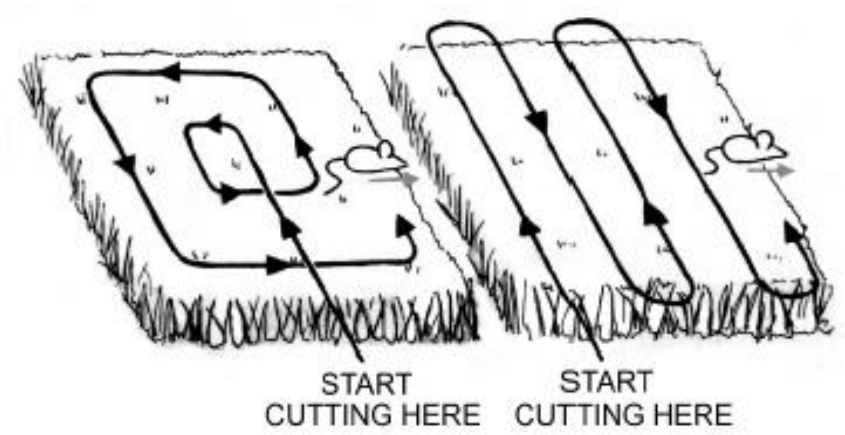


Figure 1: A schematic representation of vegetation cutting patterns as best to eliminate terrestrial opportunities for reptiles and amphibians

Precautionary methods of working – Hedgehogs and badgers	No evidence indicating the presence of badgers and hedgehogs was recorded on site during the site survey. However, the presence of these species foraging and/ or commuting on site for transient periods cannot be discounted. The following precautionary working methods will therefore be adhered to during construction: • Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. • The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which mammals could use. It is noted that the recommended lighting strategy to reduce impacts to bats will also benefit badgers and hedgehogs. • Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. In the unlikely event that a badger sett is identified within 30m, works must cease and advise must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

3.2 Habitat Creation

Enhancement of the site and subsequent management prescriptions to ensure the ongoing biodiversity value of the site post-construction are detailed in **Table 2** below.

Table 2: Habitat Creation Prescriptions

Ecological receptor	Specification
Other neutral grassland – g3c (good condition)	***Overview:*** Poor condition other neutral grassland will be enhanced to good condition other neutral grassland, covering a total 0.005 as shown in **Appendix 3**. ***Objectives:*** • To create a neutral grassland of goof condition, or above, in accordance with the BNG Assessment. • To create a successful and species rich wildflower grassland that will provide habitat for pollinating invertebrate species, that will in turn, provide foraging opportunities for notable species groups including bats, birds, badgers, and hedgehogs. • A total of 10 species per m^2 • Ensure a healthy species diverse sward is maintained • Ensure that a natural appearance is retained by utilising a seed mix alongside allowing native species of local prevenance to recolonise from the seedbank

- Cover or bracken needs to be less than 20% of the total habitat area and the cover of scrub less than 5%
- Ensure bare ground is localised to between 1% and 5% of the total habitat area
- Employ techniques that does not use fertilisers as this encourages grass growth instead of forbs.

Creation Method:

- **Ground preparation**

  It is therefore recommended that a soft strip of the current vegetation present is undertaken and removed from the area to provide a bare soil substrate for sewing the grassland seed mix.

- **Seeding**

  To be undertaken between March and October. The following seed rates are recommended:

  5 g/m2 of grassland seed mix.

- **Bedding in of seed:**

  After sowing, seeds will be 'bedded' in by trampling or light rolling.

- **Recommended seed mix:**

  It is recommended that the Germinal 'WFG4 Neutral Soils' is used at the site to ensure the grassland will contain a minimum of 10 species per m^2 and retain a species composition consistent with the UKHabs definition of other neutral grassland. This particular seed mix includes native grass and wildflower species suitable for neutral soils. Notably, the species mix includes yellow rattle which is known to suppress dominant grass species which will allow existing grasses within the seed bank to colonise whilst preventing dominance and thus increasing species diversity per m2. For exact specifications, please refer to: https://germinalamenity.com/wfg4-neutral-soils.

Recommended management prescriptions over a minimum 30-year term:

Table 2.2: Other neutral grassland creation management prescriptions.

Management	When	Rationale
Cut grass twice annually	Late March / early April and– late August/ early Sept	This ensures the meadow does not grow excessively long and become rank but allows wildflowers to set seed and invertebrates to breed. This will also allow a diverse sward of varying lengths to naturally occur in accordance with growth characteristics of each species. Cutting twice annually will also prevent encroachment of scrub and bracken.
Cut grass as to provide a heterogeneous habitat structure aiming to maintain at least 20% of grass <7cm and 20% >7cm. As such, each cutting phase must cut 20% of the area to ground level, 60% of the area to 15cm, and the remainder to 30cm. These areas must be rotated each year to maintain a diverse sward.	Late March / early April and– late August/ early Sept	To retain a diverse sward whilst limiting impacts to protected species potentially present at ground level and ensuring the natural germination of seeds.
Turn and dry the cut grass	Post cut	This allows the seeds to drop

	over 3-5 days before removing arisings off Site		encouraging species diversity and invertebrates to relocate unharmed.
	Do not apply chemical fertilisers	At all times.	The use of chemical fertilisers will encourage vigorous grasses and weeds to grow or cause large areas of bare ground due to inhospitable growing conditions,
	Removal of non-native species and undesired species including Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) following best practice recommended for species identified.	At all times.	Allowing non-native and undesired species for the grassland type to grow could allow a monoculture to develop and inhibit species diversity.
Other neutral grassland – g3c	***Overview:*** Poor condition other neutral grassland will be created covering a total 0.005 as shown in **Appendix 3**. ***Objectives:*** • To create a neutral grassland of poor condition, or above, in accordance with the BNG Assessment. • To create a successful and species rich grassland that will provide habitat for pollinating invertebrate species, that will in turn, provide foraging opportunities for notable species groups including bats, birds, badgers, and hedgehogs. • Ensure that a natural appearance is retained by utilising a seed mix alongside allowing native species of local prevenance to recolonise from the seedbank • Cover or bracken needs to be less than 20% of the total habitat area and the cover of scrub less than 5%		

- Ensure bare ground is localised to between 1% and 5% of the total habitat area
- Employ techniques that does not use fertilisers as this encourages grass growth instead of forbs.

Creation Method:

- **Ground preparation**

  It is therefore recommended that a soft strip of the current vegetation present is undertaken and removed from the area to provide a bare soil substrate for sewing the grassland seed mix.

- **Seeding**

  To be undertaken between March and October. The following seed rates are recommended:

  5 g/m2 of grassland seed mix.

- **Bedding in of seed:**

  After sowing, seeds will be 'bedded' in by trampling or light rolling.

- **Recommended seed mix:**

  It is recommended that the Germinal 'WFG4 Neutral Soils' is used at the site to ensure the grassland will contain a minimum of 10 species per m^2 and retain a species composition consistent with the UKHabs definition of other neutral grassland. This particular seed mix includes native grass and wildflower species suitable for neutral soils. Notably, the species mix includes yellow rattle which is known to suppress dominant grass species which will allow existing grasses within the seed bank to colonise whilst preventing dominance and thus increasing species diversity per m2. For exact specifications, please refer to: https://germinalamenity.com/wfg4-neutral-soils.

Recommended management prescriptions over a minimum 30-year term:

Table 2.2: Other neutral grassland creation management prescriptions.

Management	When	Rationale
Cut grass as to provide a heterogeneous habitat structure aiming to maintain at least 20% of grass <7cm and 20% >7cm. As such, each cutting phase must cut 20% of the area to ground level, 60% of the area to 15cm, and the remainder to 30cm. These areas must be rotated each year to maintain a diverse sward.	Late March / early April and– late August/ early Sept	To retain a diverse sward whilst limiting impacts to protected species potentially present at ground level and ensuring the natural germination of seeds.
Turn and dry the cut grass over 3-5 days before removing arisings off Site	Post cut	This allows the seeds to drop encouraging species diversity and invertebrates to relocate unharmed.
Do not apply chemical fertilisers	At all times.	The use of chemical fertilisers will encourage vigorous grasses and weeds to grow or cause large areas of bare ground due to inhospitable growing conditions,
Removal of non-native species and undesired species including Bracken (*Pteridium*	At all times.	Allowing non-native and undesired species for the grassland type to grow could allow a monoculture to

		aquilinum) following best practice recommended for species identified.	develop and inhibit species diversity.
Tree planting	***Overview:*** 0.1547 ha of scattered trees (38 small trees) will be planted within the blue line boundary with species yet to be decided due to the sites diverse range of tree species. Native tree species are recommended but this is not essential to produce a net gain on site. The tree planting locations are shown in **Appendix 3**. ***Objectives:*** • To create trees of moderate condition, or above, in accordance with the BNG Assessment. • To plant trees that will provide pollinating, foraging, and refuge opportunities for protected and/ or notable species groups including amphibians, bats, birds, hedgehogs, invertebrates, and reptiles. • Ensure that good horticultural practice is employed to encourage long-term health and vitality of all trees. • Ensure well-balanced crowns and/ or natural shape by preventing over competition. ***Creation Method:*** • **Ground preparation and planting.** Each tree should be panted within a hole three times as wide of the supplied pot and of a similar depth. Root balls should be soaked thoroughly in water before planting and root balls should be loosened to expose restricted roots before planting. The planted trees and shrubs should then be backfilled ensuring there are no air pockets around roots or any roosts protruding out of the ground. Species planted should ne native in order to achieve a • **Timing** It is best to prepare the land during the summer ready for planting between November and March. Planting trees and scrub before the new year helps ensure better rooting and subsequent establishment including faster growth during the first growing season. ***Recommended management prescriptions over a minimum 30-year term:*** **Table 2.3:** New tree planting management prescriptions.		

		Management	**When**	**Rationale**	**BNG condition criteria compliance - Trees**
		At the end of each growing season all plant failures are to be 100% replaced	When required; checked annually in Autumn.	To maintain amenity and wildlife value.	A
		If required, provision of stakes and guards. Guards to be left on for a minimum of 5 years	During planting.	Protect from damage	C
		Stakes should be checked and any broken or damaged stakes during this time would be removed (as above) and replaced with ties re-fixed	When required; checked annually in Autumn.	Maintain protection	C
		Do not apply chemical fertilisers	At all times.	The use of chemical fertilisers will encourage vigorous grasses and weeds to grow	D
		Apply a light dressing of well-rotted manure	Annually in the winter	Note the overuse of manure fertilisers will encourage vigorous grasses and weeds to grow.	F
Hedgerow planting	***Overview:*** A total of 0.087 km of non-native hedgerow will be planted within the site. The tree planting locations are shown in **Appendix 3**. ***Objectives:*** • To create hedgerow of an automatic condition of poor				

- Ensure that good horticultural practice is employed to encourage long-term health and vitality of all trees.
- Ensure a height and width of above 1.5m is maintained.
- The retention of a two-meter buffer from the hedgerow is the standard recommendation under the amendment to the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

Creation Method:

- **Ground preparation**

  Prepare the ground by digging over a strip approximately 60-90cm (2-3ft) wide and one spit (or spade blade) deep. Soils that become waterlogged in winter may require a permanent drainage system. Alternatively, form the soil into a ridge about 15-20cm (6-8in) high and 50-70cm (20-28in) across to plant into.
- **Planting**

  Plants should be positioned set back from hardscaped boundaries to allow space for the hedgerow to develop and mature prior to requiring any significant management/ cutting back. Plant density should focus on achieving a hedgerow width >1m; as such, plants should be planted in a staggered double row approximately 45-60cm apart, where individual plants are planted 90cm apart within each row.
- **Timing**

  It is best to prepare the land during the summer ready for planting between November and March. Planting before the new year helps ensure better rooting and subsequent establishment including faster growth.

Recommended management prescriptions over a minimum 30-year term:

Table 2.3: New hedgerow planting management prescriptions.

Management	When	Rationale
At the end of each growing season all plant failures are to be 100% replaced	When required; checked annually in Autumn.	To maintain amenity and wildlife value.
If required, provision of stakes and guards. Guards to be left on for a minimum of 5 years	N/A	Protect from damage
Stakes should be checked and any broken or damaged stakes during this time would be removed (as above) and replaced with ties re-fixed	Every six months (for one to two years if plant has grown well.	Maintain protection
Do not apply chemical fertilisers	At all times.	The use of chemical fertilisers will encourage vigorous grasses and weeds to grow
Apply a light dressing of well-rotted manure	Annually in the winter	Note the overuse of manure fertilisers will encourage vigorous grasses and weeds to grow.
Remove weeds	When requires	Remove weeds When

			required Reduce competition for resources nutrients etc.by weeds
	Application of bark mulch at a depth of 50 mm	When required	Reduce competition for resources nutrients etc.by weeds
	Removal of spent flowers from perennial plants should be removed through 'deadheading	Twice annually, late spring and in the Autumn.	Allows plants to place more energy into re-growth
	Watering should be undertaken before and after planting out and as necessary for the continued thriving of all planting	When required	Ensures plants do not dry out and subsequently fail.
	Check and replace any plant failures once a year.	For the first five years	To ensure not gaps.
Retained habitats	Habitats to be retained on site in accordance with the proposed development are as follows: • **Scattered trees – 0.0285 ha** • **Othe neutral grassland – 0.0187 ha** • **Line of trees – 0.053 km** Retained habitat coverage as detailed above and within the BNG assessment must be maintained in full for the required 30-year term. The baseline condition of the trees remains at a good or moderate. This must be done by maintaining the vegetation below all trees, preventing any damage or		

	pruning and retaining ecological niches. Species diversity of the grassland should be maintained, and any invasive species should be removed. Bramble and bracken should also be removed from these areas.
Monitoring	it is recommended that monitoring would follow standard landscaping proposals with monitoring and reporting in years 1, years 2, 3, 5 and every five years thereafter.

Provision of bird boxes	Two bird boxes will be installed on scattered trees inside and outside of the application site. The recommended location is shown on the plan in **Appendix 3.** Details of the bird boxes recommended for the site are as follows: • The recommended bird boxes will be constructed of woodcrete/ woodstone. Boxes of this construction are known to have minimal maintenance and have a lifespan of 25 years plus. • No.1 Woodstone Nest Box – with 28mm entrance holes is recommended, as shown in **Figure 2**. The bird box type is suitable to attract blue tits *Cyanistes caeruleus*, coal tits *Periparus ater*, and great tits *Parus major,* all of which are likely to be present in the local area. • The bird box should be positioned approximately 1.5m above ground level where they will be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight with a predator guard 15cm below the box to protect any nesting birds from potential predation.  **Figure 2**: Woodstone Nest Box (image credit arkwildlife.co.uk) ***Recommended Management:***

	The proposed bird box is designed to require no management or maintenance. Furthermore, preventing physical disturbance of bird boxes will increase the chances of occupation by nesting birds. However, it is recommended that the bird box is inspected annually for the first five years outside of the typical nesting bird season (March to September inclusive) following installation. Bird boxes must be replaced if they are damaged, removed, or have fallen from their recommended location.
Provision of bat boxes	Two bat boxes will be installed onto retained trees across the site in accordance with the proposed development, the approximate locations of which are shown on the plan in **Appendix 3**. Details of the proposed bat boxes to be installed are as follows: • The recommended bat boxes will be constructed of woodcrete/ woodstone. Boxes of this construction are known to require minimal maintenance and have a lifespan of 25 years plus. • Greenwood's Ecohabitats bat boxes will be utilised (or similar alternative) (https://www.greenwoodsecohabitats.co.uk/shop). • The following types of bat boxes are recommended: Single Crevice Bat Boxes, Medium Hollow Bat Boxes, and three Crevice Bat Boxes. A total of seven will be installed (or similar specification), as shown in Figure 3. These bat box types are suitable to support a wide range of species including brown long-eared *Plecotus auritis*, noctules *Nyctalus noctula* and soprano pipistrelles *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*. • The bat boxes will be positioned 3-5m above ground level facing a south elevation with a clear flight path to and from the entrance, away from artificial light and facing vegetated habitats. • The proposed bat boxes are designed to require no management or maintenance. Furthermore, preventing physical disturbance of bat boxes will increase the chances of occupation by roosting bats. However, it is recommended that the bat boxes are inspected annually for a 30-year management term by the Post-Development Biodiversity Champion outside of the typical active season for bats (May to September inclusive). Bat boxes must be replaced like-for-like (insofar as is possible) if they are damaged, removed, or have fallen from their recommended location.

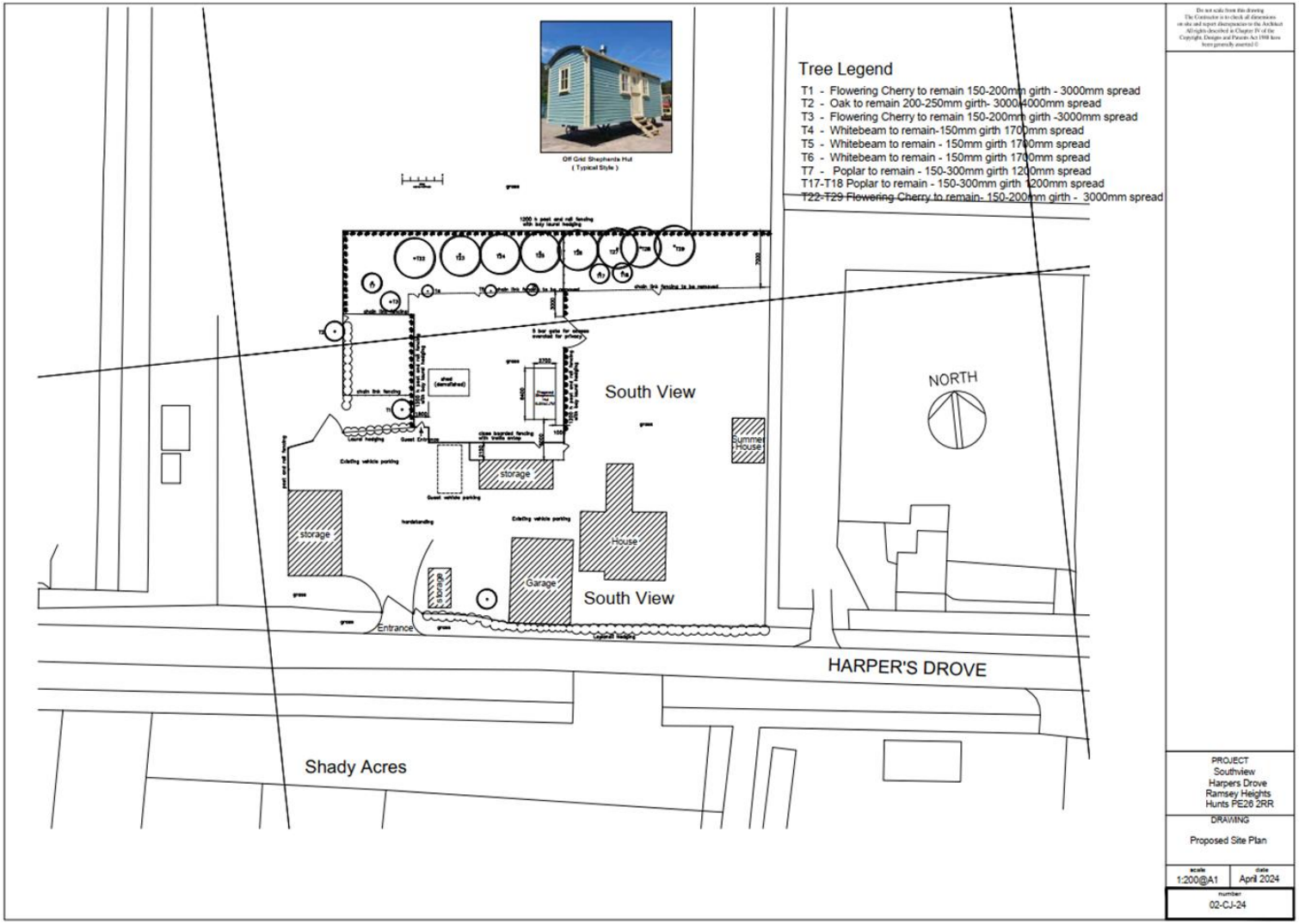


Figure 3: The single crevice bat box, medium hollow bat box, and three crevice bat box (image credit: https://www.greenwoodsecohabitats.co.uk/)

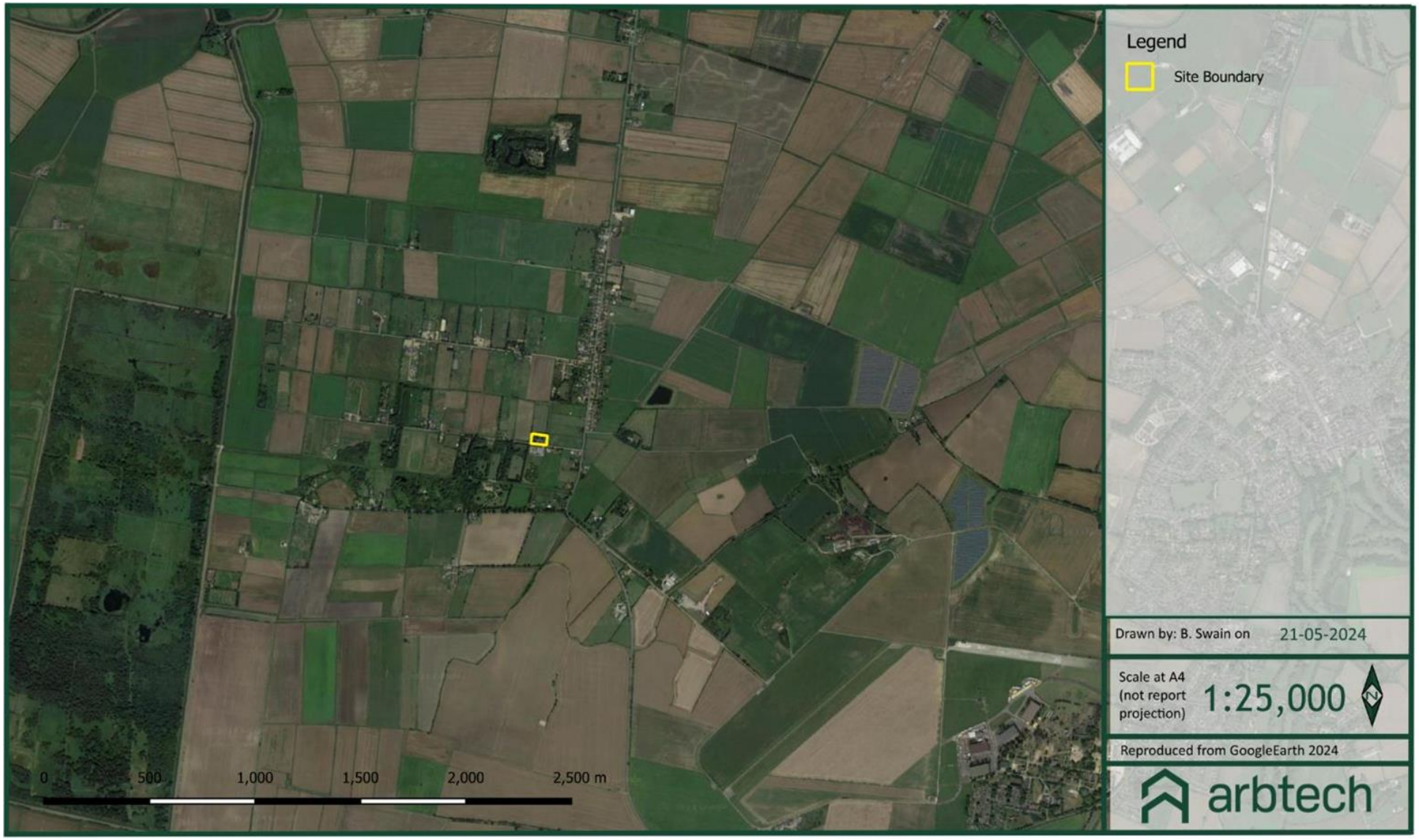
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Appendix 1: Proposed Development Plan



Appendix 2: Site Location Plan



Appendix 3: Proposed Landscaping and Enhancements Plan



Appendix 4: Legislation and Planning Policy

LEGAL PROTECTION

National and European Legislation Afforded to Habitats

International Statutory Designations

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are sites of European importance and are designated under the EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive) and the EC Birds Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds respectively. Both form part of the wider Natura 2000 network across Europe.

Under the Habitats Directive the, Article 3 requires the establishment of a network of important conservation sites (SACs) across Europe in order to conserve the 189 habitats and 788 species (non- bird) identified in Annexes I and II of the Directive (as amended).

SPAs are classified under Article 2 of the EC Birds Directive both for rare bird species (as listed on Annex I) and for important migratory species.
SACs and SPAs up to 12 nautical miles (nm) from the coast are afforded protection in the UK under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 which consolidate all amendments made to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994. In Scotland, the requirements of Habitats Directive are implemented through a combination of the 1994 and the 2010 (reserved matters) Regulations. The Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007 (as amended) provide a means for designating and protecting SACs in UK offshore waters (from 12-200 nm).

Ramsar sites are designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, agreed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. The Convention covers all aspects of wetland conservation and recognises the importance of wetland ecosystems in relation to global biodiversity conservation. The Convention refers to wetlands as “areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres” however they may also include riparian and coastal zones. Ramsar sites are statutorily protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) with further protection provided by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000. Policy statements have been issued by the Government in England and Wales highlighting the special status of Ramsar sites. The Government in England and Wales has issued policy statements which ensure that Ramsar sites are afforded the same protection as areas designated under the EC Birds and Habitats Directives as part of the Natura 2000 network (e.g. SACs & SPAs).

National Statutory Designations

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are designated by nature conservation agencies in order to conserve key flora, fauna, geological or physio-geographical features within the UK. The original designations were under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 but SSSIs were then re-designated under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). As well as reinforcing other national designations (including National Nature Reserves), the system also provides statutory protection for terrestrial and coastal sites which are important within the European Natura 2000 network and globally. Further provisions for the protection and management of SSSIs have been introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (in England and Wales) and the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.

Local Statutory Designations

Local authorities in consultation with the relevant nature conservation agency can declare Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. LNRs are designated for flora, fauna or geological interest and are managed locally to retain these features and provide research, education and recreational opportunities.

Non- Statutory Designations

All non-statutorily designated sites are referred to as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and can be designated by the local authority for supporting local conservation interest. Combined with statutory designation, these sites are considered within Local Development Frameworks under the Town and Country Planning system and are a material consideration during the determination of planning applications. The protection afforded to these sites varies depending on the local authority involved.

Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGs) are the most important geological and geomorphological areas outside of statutory designations. These sites are also a material consideration during the determination of planning applications.

The Hedgerow Regulations 1997

The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 are designed to protect ‘important’ countryside hedgerows. Importance is defined by whether the hedgerow (a) has existed for 30 years or more; or (b) satisfies at least one of the criteria listed in Part II of Schedule 1 of the Regulations.

Under the Regulations, it is against the law to remove or destroy hedgerows on or adjacent to common land, village greens, SSSIs (including all terrestrial SACs, NNRs and SPAs), LNRs, land used for agriculture or forestry and land used for the keeping or breeding of horses, ponies or donkeys without the permission of the local authority. Hedgerows 'within or marking the boundary of the curtilage of a dwelling-house' are excluded.

National and European Legislation Afforded to Species

The Habitats Directive

The EC Habitats Directive aims to promote the maintenance of biodiversity by requiring Member States to take measures to maintain or restore wild species listed on the Annexes to the Directive at a favourable conservation status, introducing robust protection for those species of European importance. The Directive is transposed into UK law by The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the Conservation Regulations) and the Offshore Marine Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 2007 (as amended). The following notes are relevant for all species protected under the EC Habitats Directive:

In the Directive, the term 'deliberate' is interpreted as being somewhat wider than intentional and may be thought of as including an element of recklessness.

The Habitats Regulations do not define the act of 'migration' and, therefore, as a precaution, it is recommended that short distance movement of animals for e.g. foraging, breeding or dispersal purposes are also considered.

In order to obtain a European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licence, the application must demonstrate that it meets all of the following three 'tests':

the action(s) are necessary for the purpose of preserving public health or safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequence of primary importance for the environment;

- There is no satisfactory alternative; and
- The action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.
-

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended) implements the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and implements the species protection requirements of EC Birds Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds in Great Britain (the birds Directive). The WCA 1981 has been subject to a number of amendments, the most important of which are through the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act (2000) and Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.

Other legislative Acts affording protection to wildlife and their habitats include:

- Deer Act 1991
- Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- Protection of Badgers Act 1992
- Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996

Badgers

Badgers *Meles* are protected under The Protection of Badgers Act which makes it an offence to:

- Wilfully kill, injure, take, or attempt to kill, injure or take a badger
- Cruelly ill-treat a badger, including use of tongs and digging
- Possess or control a dead badger or any part thereof
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a badger sett or any part thereof
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a badger when it is occupying a badger sett
- Intentionally or recklessly cause a dog to enter a badger sett
- Sell or offers for sale, possesses or has under his control, a live badger

Effects on development works:

A development licence will be required from the relevant countryside agency for any development works liable to affect an active badge sett, or to disturb badgers whilst they occupy a sett. Guidance has been issued by the countryside agencies to define what would constitute a licensable activity. It is no possible to obtain a licence to translocate badgers.

Birds

With certain exceptions, all birds, their nests and eggs are protected under Sections 1-8 of the WCA. Among other things, this makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally (or recklessly in Scotland) kill, injure or take any wild bird
- Intentionally (or recklessly in Scotland) take, damage or destroy (or, in Scotland, otherwise interfere with) the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built
- Intentionally take or destroy an egg of any wild bird
- Sell, offer or expose for sale, have in his possession or transport for the purpose of sale any wild bird (dead or alive) or bird egg or part thereof.
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct or prevent any wild bird from using its nest (Scotland only)

Certain species of bird, for example the barn owl, bittern and kingfisher receive additional protection under Schedule 1 of the WCA and Annex 1 of the European Community Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (2009/147/EC) and are commonly referred to as “Schedule 1” birds.

This affords them protection against:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young
- Intentional or reckless disturbance of dependent young of such a bird
- In Scotland only, intentional or reckless disturbance whilst lekking
- In Scotland only, intentional or reckless harassment

Effects on development works:

Works should be planned to avoid the possibility of killing or injuring any wild bird, or damaging or destroying their nests. The most effective way to reduce the likelihood of nest destruction in particular is to undertake work outside the main bird nesting season which typically runs from March to August. Where this is not feasible, it will be necessary to have any areas of suitable habitat thoroughly checked for nests prior to vegetation clearance.

Schedule 1 birds are additionally protected against disturbance during the nesting season. Thus, it will be necessary to ensure that no potentially disturbing works are undertaken in the vicinity of the nest. The most effective way to avoid disturbance is to postpone works until the young have fledged. If this is not feasible, it may be possible to maintain an appropriate buffer zone or standoff around the nest.

Herpetofauna (Amphibians and reptiles)

The sand lizard Lacerta agilis, smooth snake Coronella austriaca, natterjack toad Epidalea calamita, pool frog Pelophylax lessonae and great crested newt Triturus cristatus receive full protection under Habitats Regulations through their inclusion on Schedule 2. Regulation 41 prohibits:

- Deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species
- Deliberate disturbance of species in such a way as:
- To impair their ability to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young;
- To impair their ability to hibernate or migrate
- To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place

With the exception of the pool frog, these species are also listed on Schedule 5 of the WCA and they are additionally protected from:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)
- Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection
- Selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale.

Other native species of herpetofauna are protected solely under Schedule 5, Section 9(1) & (5) of the WCA, i.e. the adder *Vipera berus*, grass snake *Natrix natrix,* common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* and slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*. It is prohibited to:

- Intentionally or recklessly kill or injure these species.

<u>Effects on development works:</u>

A European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) Licence issued by the relevant countryside agency (e.g. Natural England) will be required for works liable to affect the breeding sites or resting places amphibian and reptile species protected under Habitats Regulations. A licence will also be required for operations liable to result in a level of disturbance which might

impair their ability to undertake those activities mentioned above (e.g. survive, breed, rear young and hibernate). The licences are to allow derogation from the relevant legislation, but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and their efficacy to be monitored.

Although not licensable, appropriate mitigation measures may also be required to prevent the intentional killing or injury of adder, grass snake, common lizard and slow worm, thus avoiding contravention of the WCA.

Water voles

The water vole *Arvicola terrestris* is fully protected under Schedule 5 of the WCA. This makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take (capture) water voles.
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection.
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb water voles while they are occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection.

Effects on development works:

If development works are liable to affect habitats known to support water voles, the relevant countryside agency must be consulted. It must be shown that means by which the proposal can be re-designed to avoid contravening the legislation have been fully explored e.g. the use of alternative sites, appropriate timing of works to avoid times of the year in which water voles are most vulnerable, and measures to ensure minimal habitat loss. Conservation licences for the capture and translocation of water voles may be issued by the relevant countryside agency (e.g. Natural England) for the purpose of development activities if it can be shown that the activity has been properly planned and executed and thereby contributes to the conservation of the population. The licence will then only be granted to a suitably experienced person if it can be shown that adequate surveys have been undertaken to inform appropriate mitigation measures. Identification and preparation of a suitable receptor site will be necessary prior to the commencement of works.

Otters

Otters *Lutra lutra* are fully protected under the Conservation Regulations through their inclusion on Schedule 2. Regulation 41 prohibits:

- Deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species.
- Deliberate disturbance of species in such a way as:
- To impair their ability to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young.
- To impair their ability to hibernate or migrate
- To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place.

Otters are also currently protected under the WCA through their inclusion on Schedule 5. Under this Act, they are additionally protected from:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)

- Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection

Effects on development works:

An EPSM Licence issued by the relevant countryside agency (e.g. Natural England) will be required for works liable to affect otter breeding or resting places (often referred to as holts, couches or dens) or for operations likely to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake those activities mentioned above (e.g. survive, breed, and rear young). The licence is to allow derogation from the relevant legislation but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and their efficacy to be monitored.

Bats

All species are fully protected by Habitats Regulations 2010 as they are listed on Schedule 2. Regulation 41 prohibits:

- Deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species (e.g. All bats)
- Deliberate disturbance of bat species in such a way as:
- To impair their ability to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young.
- To impair their ability to hibernate or migrate
- To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place.

Bats are afforded the following additional protection through the WCA as they are included on Schedule 5:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)
- Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection
-

Effects on development works:

Works which are liable to affect a bat roost or an operation which are likely to result in an illegal level of disturbance to the species will require an EPSM licence. The licence is to allow derogation from the legislation through the application of appropriate mitigation measures and monitoring.

Dormice

Dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius* are fully protected under Habitats Regulations through their inclusion on Schedule 2. Regulation 41 prohibits:

- Deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species.
- Deliberate disturbance of species in such a way as:
- To impair their ability to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young.
- To impair their ability to hibernate or migrate
- To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species

- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place.

Dormice are also protected under the WCA through their inclusion on Schedule 5. Under this Act, they are additionally protected from:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)
- Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection

Effects on development works:

Works which are liable to affect a dormice habitat or an operation which are likely to result in an illegal level of disturbance to the species will require an EPSM licence. The licence is to allow derogation from the legislation through the application of appropriate mitigation measures and monitoring.

White clawed crayfish

The white clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* receives partial protection under Schedule 5 of the WCA in respect of Sections 9(1) and 9(5). This makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally take (capture) white-clawed crayfish.

Effects on development works:

The relevant countryside agency will need to be consulted about development which could impact on a watercourse or wetland known to support white clawed crayfish. Conservation licences for the capture and translocation of crayfish can be issued if it can be shown that the activity has been properly planned and executed and thereby contributes to the conservation of the population. The licence will only be granted to a suitably experienced person if it can be shown that adequate surveys have been undertaken to inform appropriate mitigation measures. Identification and preparation of a suitable receptor site will be necessary prior to the commencement of the works.

Wild Mammals (Protection Act) 1996

All wild mammals are protected against intentional acts of cruelty under the above legislation. This makes it an offence to mutilate, kick, beat, nail or otherwise impale, stab, burn, stone, crush, drown, drag or asphyxiate any wild mammal with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering.

To avoid possible contravention, due care and attention should be taken when carrying out works (for example operations near burrows or nests) with the potential to affect any wild mammal in this way, regardless of whether they are legally protected through other conservation legislation or not.

Legislation afforded to Plants.

With certain exceptions, all wild plants are protected under the WCA. This makes it an offence for an ‘unauthorised’ person to intentionally (or recklessly in Scotland) uproot wild plants. An authorised person can be the owner of the land on which the action is taken, or anybody authorised by them.

Certain rare species of plant, for example some species of orchid, are also fully protected under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This prohibits any person from:

- Intentionally (or recklessly in Scotland) picking, uprooting or destruction of any wild Schedule 8 species (or seed or spore attached to any such wild plant in Scotland only)
- Selling, offering or exposing for sale, or possessing or transporting for the purpose of sale, any wild live or dead Schedule 8 plant species or part thereof
- In addition to the UK legislation outlined above, several plant species are fully protected under Schedule 5 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. These are species of European importance. Regulation 45 makes it an offence to:
- Deliberately pick, collect, cut, uproot or destroy a wild Schedule 5 species.
- Be in possession of, or control, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any wild live or dead Schedule 5 species or anything derived from such a plant.

Effects on development works:

An EPSM licence will be required from the relevant countryside agency for works which are liable to affect species of planted listed on Schedule 5 of the Conservation or Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. The licence is to allow derogation from the legislation through the application of appropriate mitigation measures and monitoring.

Invasive Species

Part II of Schedule 9 of the WCA lists non-native invasive plant species for which it is a criminal offence in England and Wales to plant or cause to grow in the wild due to their impact on native wildlife. Species included (but not limited to):

- Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica*
- Giant hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum*
- Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*

Effects on development works:

It is not an offence for plants listed in Part II of Schedule 9 of the WCA 1981 to be present on the development site however it is an offence to cause them to spread. Therefore, if any of the species are present on site and construction activities may result in further spread (e.g. earthworks, vehicle movements) then it will be necessary to design and implement appropriate mitigation prior to construction commencing.

Injurious weeds

Under the Weeds Act 1959 any landowner or occupier may be required prevent the spread of certain 'injurious weeds' including (but not limited to):

- Spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*
- Creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*
- Curled dock *Rumex crispus*
- Broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*
- Common ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*

It is a criminal offence to fail to comply with a notice requiring such action to be taken. The Ragwort Control Act 2003 establishes a ragwort control code of practice as common ragwort is poisonous to horses and other livestock. This code provides best practice guidelines and is not legally binding.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY (ENGLAND)

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework promotes sustainable development. The Framework specifies the need for protection of designated sites and priority habitats and species. An emphasis is also made on the need for ecological infrastructure through protection, restoration and re-creation. The protection and recovery of priority species (considered likely to be those listed as UK Biodiversity Action Plan priority species) is also listed as a requirement of planning policy.

In determining a planning application, planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by ensuring that: designated sites are protected from harm; there is appropriate mitigation or compensation where significant harm cannot be avoided; opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments are encouraged; and planning permission is refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including aged or veteran trees and also ancient woodland.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Biodiversity Duty

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006, requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the 'biodiversity duty'.

Section 41 of the Act (Section 42 in Wales) requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of 'principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity.' This list is intended to assist decision makers such as public bodies in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act. Under the Act these habitats and species are regarded as a material consideration in determining planning applications. A developer must show that their protection has been adequately addressed within a development proposal.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY - Huntingdonshire Development Plan

LP 30 –

A proposal will be required to demonstrate that all potential adverse impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity have been investigated. A proposal that is likely to have an impact, either direct or indirect, on biodiversity or geodiversity will need to be accompanied by an appropriate appraisal, such as a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, identifying all individual and cumulative potential impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity.

Any further research that is identified as necessary by this appraisal will need to have been carried out and submitted with the proposal. Where a proposal has potential to affect an internationally important site an 'appropriate assessment' in accordance with the Habitats Directive will be required and sufficient information to enable such an assessment to be completed must be submitted with the proposal. All possible efforts must be taken to avoid adverse impacts. If it is demonstrated that adverse impacts are unavoidable, they must be minimised as far as possible and then mitigated. Only where this process of avoidance, minimisation and then mitigation is insufficient to fully address adverse impacts will consideration be given to compensation measures.

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

A European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) issued by Natural England will be required for works likely to affect a bat roost or for operations likely to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake those activities mentioned above (e.g. survive, breed, rear young and hibernate). The licence is to allow derogation from the relevant legislation but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and their efficiency/success to be monitored. The legislation may also be interpreted such that, in certain circumstances, important foraging areas and/or commuting routes can be regarded as being afforded *de facto* protection, for example, where it can be proven that the continued usage of such areas is crucial to maintaining the integrity and long-term viability of a bat roost (Garland & Markham, 2008).

There are 17 species of bat breeding in England and Natural England issues licences under Regulation 55 of the Habitats Regulations to allow you to work within the law.

Licences are issued for specific purposes stated in the Regulations, if the following three tests are met:

- The purpose of the work meets one of those listed in the Habitats Regulations (see below);
- That there is no satisfactory alternative;
- That the action authorised will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status (FCS) in their natural range

The Habitats Regulations permits licences to be issued for a specific set of purposes including:

1. ***include preserving public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of over-riding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment;***
2. scientific and educational purposes,
3. ringing or marking
4. conserving wild animals

Development works fall under the first purpose and Natural England issues bat mitigation licences for developments.

EUROPEAN PROTECTED SPECIES POLICIES

In December 2016 Natural England officially introduced the four licensing policies throughout England. The four policies seek to achieve better outcomes for European Protected Species (EPS) and reduce unnecessary costs, delays and uncertainty that can be inherent in the current standard EPS licensing system. The policies are summarised as follows:

- Policy 1; provides greater flexibility in exclusion and relocation activities, where there is investment in habitat provision;
- Policy 2; provides greater flexibility in the location of compensatory habitat;
- Policy 3; provides greater flexibility on exclusion measures where this will allow EPS to use temporary habitat; and,
- Policy 4; provides a reduced survey effort in circumstances where the impacts of development can be confidently predicted.

The four policies have been designed to have a net benefit for EPS by improving populations overall and not just protecting individuals within development sites. Most notably Natural England now recognises that the Habitats Regulations legal framework now applies to 'local populations' of EPS and not individuals/site populations.