Rectory Farm, Folksworth

Biodiversity Method Statement

Report for Katie Chamberlain

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1 Introduction

BACKGROUND TO COMMISSION

1.1 Ligna Consultancy was commissioned by Katie Chamberlain in February 2025 to provide a Biodiversity Method Statement (BMS) for the proposed development at Rectory Farm, Morborne Road, Folksworth, Peterborough, PE7 3ST.

1.2 This BMS has been compiled to ensure compliance with Condition 5 (below) set by Huntingdonshire District Council relating to the development within the site (Planning Application Reference: 24/01996/FUL):

"Condition 5: *No development above slab level shall take place until a Biodiversity Method Statement which provides details of how the recommendations contained in table 6 of the submitted Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (by Arbtech and dated 10/01/2024) will be carried out has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The details shall include but not be limited to; specification, location, timing, an implementation programme, maintenance, and monitoring. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved details.*

Reason: To ensure the conservation and enhancement of on-site biodiversity in accordance with Policy LP30 of the Huntingdonshire Local Plan to 2036".

1.3 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was undertaken by Arbtech in January 2024 which recorded suitable habitats to support protected species including bats, breeding birds (including barn owls), great crested newt, reptiles and hedgehog (Arbtech, 2024) . Appropriate mitigation is therefore required to prevent negative impacts to these protected species.

PROPOSED WORKS

1.4 The proposals include the demolition of existing residential and agricultural buildings and the construction of a new dwelling.

1.5 There are no current landscape proposals. It is understood that the surrounding vegetative habitats will be retained to preserve the rural agricultural appearance of the site.

1.6 Proposals to enhance the biodiversity onsite have been included within this report including the installation of bat and bird boxes and invertebrate habitats.

SITE ASSESSMENT

1.7 The site is located in an agricultural landscape on land with the villages of Folksworth to the south, and Morborne to the north. The site is approximately 0.3 hectares (ha) in area and centred on National Grid Reference TL 14515 90697.

1.8 The site is surrounded on all aspects by agricultural fields. Morborne Road lies along the eastern boundary and the A1(M) motorway lies approximately 1.2km to the east. Habitats in the wider landscape comprise pasture and arable land interconnected by hedgerows.

1.9 There are no statutory designated sites were identified within 2km of the site and the presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site is unknown. The site lies within the impact risk zone for Orton Pit Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). The proposed development type is not listed as a possible high risk with regard to this designation (Arbtech, 2024).

1.10 The habitats recorded onsite were dominated by *u1b5 buildings* surrounded by *g4 modified grassland, u1b hardstanding* and *u1c unsealed unvegetated earth*. *H3 mixed scrub, u1 vegetated gardens, h2a hedgerows, r1 pond* and scattered trees are also present onsite.

1.11 The grassland surrounding the buildings is of a short sward due to mowing and grazing.

1.12 Buildings connected, and adjacent to, the main residential property are to be demolished to facilitate the development. It is understood that the remaining habitats will be retained.

1.13 Biodiversity enhancements include the installation of bat and bird boxes and the creation of a stag beetle loggery.

RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY

1.14 The following key pieces of nature conservation legislation and planning policy are relevant to this BMS:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (commonly referred to as the Habitats Regulations);
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006;
- Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996;

2 Biodiversity Method Statement

PURPOSE AND OBJECTIVE OF THE PROPOSED WORKS

2.1 The primary objective of this method statement is to facilitate site preparation and enable construction of the development whilst avoiding the risk of impacting any legally protected species. This method statement will include sufficient mitigation to minimise both risk and scale of impact where complete avoidance is not achievable.

Table 2.1 Biodiversity Objectives

Ecological Feature	Target
Breeding Birds, including Barn Owl	No disturbance to active nests. To be achieved primarily through the timing of works and precautionary pre-works checks. No loss of nesting and roosting opportunities. To be achieved through the installation of bird boxes.
Bats	No disturbance to roosting or foraging bats. To be achieved through timing of works and no night-time lighting.
Great Crested Newt and Reptiles	No disturbance to great crested newts. To be achieved through timing of works, vegetation management, safe storage of construction materials and appropriate site management
Hedgehog	No disturbance to hedgehog. To be achieved through timing of works, vegetation management, safe storage of construction materials and appropriate site management.
Invertebrates	Enhancement of the site for invertebrates through the creation of new habitats and foraging resources.

DETAILED DESIGN AND/OR WORKING METHODS NECESSARY TO ACHIEVE STATED OBJECTIVES

2.2 The measures listed below provide the mitigation solution to allow the works to progress whilst meeting the stated objectives of avoiding and/or minimising the risk to any legally protected species that are reasonably likely to be present on the site.

2.3 Timing – Demolition of the buildings will take place outside of the nesting season for birds (March to August inclusive). If this time frame cannot be adhered to, then a thorough search for the presence of breeding birds will be conducted by a suitably experienced ecologist immediately prior to the start of works. Should evidence of breeding birds be identified, then works will stop to that building until chicks have fledged or the nest is deemed to be inactive by the ecologist.

2.4 Any clearance of vegetated habitats will be undertaken outside the amphibian, reptile and hedgehog hibernation season (November to February) as outlined in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Arbtech, 2024).

2.5 Pre-works protective measures – Designated work areas will be determined before construction commences and machinery will be confined to these areas. Work areas will be restricted to hardstanding where possible to minimise impacts to adjacent natural habitats.

2.6 Any grassland within the construction area will be kept to a short sward as outlined in the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (Arbtech, 2024).

2.7 Pre-works checks – A suitably experienced ecologist will attend site up to 24 hours prior to the commencement of any works involving demolition of the buildings to undertake an updated inspection for the presence of barn owls. For further details refer to the accompanying Barn Owl Mitigation Strategy (Ligna Consultancy, 2025).

2.8 Mitigation – Three bird boxes (including one swift box), two barn owl boxes, two bat boxes and a stag beetle loggery will be included within the new design to create nesting/roosting opportunities for protected species that are using the site. The indicative location of bat and bird boxes is shown in Figure 1 - Biodiversity Method Statement Map.

2.9 Bat boxes should be installed at 3-5m height in an open sunny position. Once installed, bat boxes can only be disturbed by a licenced ecologist.

2.10 Bird boxes should include one swift box and two general purpose bird boxes. Boxes should be installed at least 2m high, in an open sunny position.

2.11 Two barn owl boxes have already been installed in adjacent agricultural buildings. Further details of barn owl boxes is described in the accompanying Barn Owl Mitigation Strategy (Ligna Consultancy, 2025).

TIMETABLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION, DEMONSTRATING THAT WORKS ARE ALIGNED WITH THE PROPOSED PHASING OF CONSTRUCTION

2.12 A timetable of works, which outlines (where applicable) the months in which the practical measures should be implemented, is provide below in Table 2.3. It also indicates for which activities the presence of an ECoW is required.

PERSONS RESPONSIBLE FOR IMPLEMENTATION OF THE WORKS

2.13 The team of companies working on this project and their roles and responsibilities are provided below.

Table 2.2 Responsible persons and lines of communication

Activity	Responsibility	Line of communication
ECoW and pre-works check	Rosie McLaughlin	rosie@hawthornecology.co.uk
Vegetation Removal (if required)	TBC	Email
Contingency measures in the event of an accident or occurrence of other potentially damaging incidents.	TBC	Email

INTITIAL AFTERCARE AND LONG-TERM MAINTANCENCE (WHERE RELEVANT)

2.14 There are no current proposals for new vegetated habitats.

2.15 Bird and bat boxes will be visually inspected on an ad hoc basis for damage. Bird boxes (except barn owl) will be replaced following any damage or disturbance.

2.16 Once installed, bat and barn owl boxes can only be disturbed by a licenced ecologist. Should any damage be noticed then the advice of an ecologist will be immediately sought.

DISPOSAL OF ANY WASTES ARISING FROM WORKS

2.17 Any arisings from vegetation clearance (with the exception of any invasive species found during works) will be either kept on site and used as a brash/log pile within the retained and newly created habitats, or removed from site and disposed of responsibly.

Table 2.3 Timing of Sensitive Works (x = timing of activity (E) = EcoW required)

Task	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec
Pre-works site check (barn owls)	X-E	X-E	X-E	X-E	X-E	X-E	X-E	X-E	X-E	X-E	X-E	X-E
Vegetation clearance (if applicable) ECoW required for the removal of hedges, scrub and trees only, during nesting season (March to August)	X	X	X-E	X-E	X-E	X-E	X-E	X-E	X	X	X	X
Installation of bat and bird boxes and invertebrate feature	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X
Construction phase	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X	X

References

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Appendix 1: Figures

Figure 1: Biodiversity Method Statement – Site Protection and Compensation

