

PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT AT ENVAR, THE HEATH, WOODHURST, ECOLOGICAL PHASE 1/ SCOPING REPORT

June 2021



CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	3
	1.1 Location	
	1.2 Proposed Development	
	1.3 Objectives and Scope of the Report	
2	EXISTING AND PROPOSED WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITY	4
	2.1 Existing Waste Management Facility Layout	
	2.2 Existing Approved Planning Permission	
	2.3 Proposed Waste Management Facility Layout	
3	DESK STUDY	7
4	SITE VISIT	9
5	HABITAT DESCRIPTIONS	10
	5.1 Hard Standing and Existing Buildings	
	5.2 Tall Ruderal	
	5.3 Dry Ditch with Remnant Hedge and Ash Trees	
	5.4 Bare Disturbed Ground	
	5.5 Dirty Water Lagoons	
6	EXISTING BIRD AND BAT BOXES	14
7	ENHANCEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY	14
8	EVALUATION, IMPACT AND CONCLUSION	15
9	APPENDICES 1-6	16

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Location

The proposed development area is located within the existing Envar Composting Ltd waste management site at Somersham Road, Woodhurst, Huntingdon, Cambridgeshire. The village of Woodhurst is approximately 2km west of the site, with the larger village of Bluntisham some 3 Km to the east. The area covered by the existing facility is approximately 11 ha within an 18.5 ha area of land holding.



Google Earth Photograph showing location of the site at the junction of Somersham Road (B1040) and Bluntisham Heath Road.

1.2 Proposed Development

This ecological appraisal/scoping report has been prepared by Katie Burfitt for Envar Composting Ltd to accompany an application for the construction of a

- Dry Anaerobic Digestion (AD) facility
- Healthcare Waste Energy Recovery Facility (ERF)
- Pellet Fertiliser Production Facility
- Vehicle Re-Fuelling Station
- Waste Transfer Station
- Woodchip Biomass Fuel Storage Building

and associated development at The Heath, Woodhurst, Huntingdon, PE28 3BS.

1.3 Objectives and Scope of the Report

This is a preliminary ecological appraisal of the proposed development detailed in item 1.2 above. It will broadly follow the CIEEM (Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental

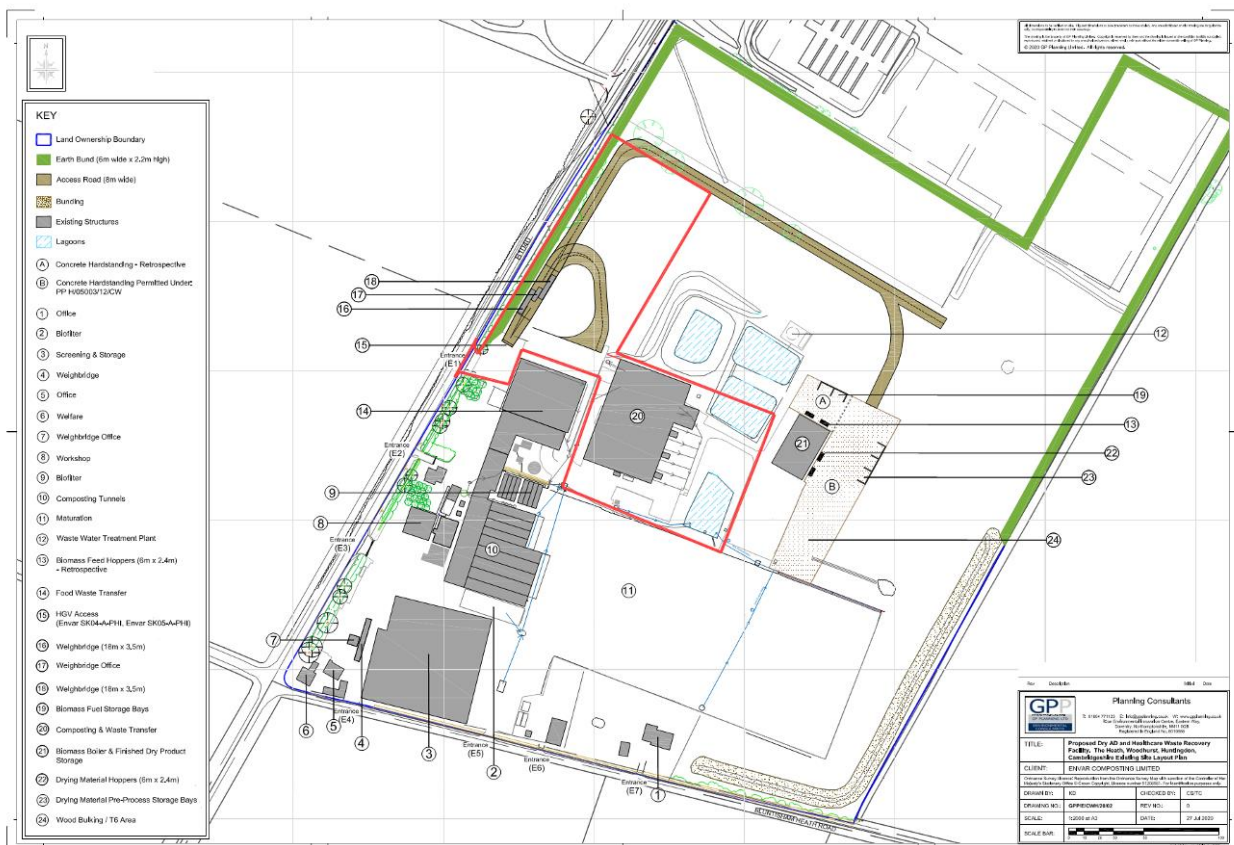
Management) Guidelines for a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and the Cambridgeshire Biodiversity Checklist where appropriate for the site, given the proposal details.

This document sets out to:

- Establish baseline conditions at the site giving detailed descriptions of habitats and determine the importance of ecological features at the site.
- Establish any requirements for further surveys as appropriate.
- Identify key constraints and recommend options to avoid significant effects on ecological features at an early stage.
- Identify mitigation and enhancement opportunities for biodiversity where possible.

This document has been prepared by Katie Burfitt to accompany an application for a new facility. This author of the report is an experienced landscape and ecological consultant with more than twenty years' experience within the industry. The methodology has included a desk study with a limited data search due to the condition of the proposed development area and 2 site visits. The scope of this document will be in accordance with the condition of the development area.

2 EXISTING AND PROPOSED WASTE MANAGEMENT FACILITY



Proposed Dry AD and Healthcare Waste Recovery Facility The Heath Woodhurst, Existing site layout plan no. GPP/E/CWH/20/02 rev 0 dated 27th July 2020 by G P Planning Ltd. (A larger version of this plan can be found in Appendix 1).

2.1 Existing Waste Management Facility Layout

The plan above from July 2020 shows the existing site layout plan detailing the buildings, hard standing and existing site infrastructure labelled items 1-24 and A-B in the key. The plan shows the majority of the existing developed area to the south and west of the site. The perimeter earth bunds shown in green surrounding the north-west, north and north-east boundary have been formed by stripping the adjacent topsoil.

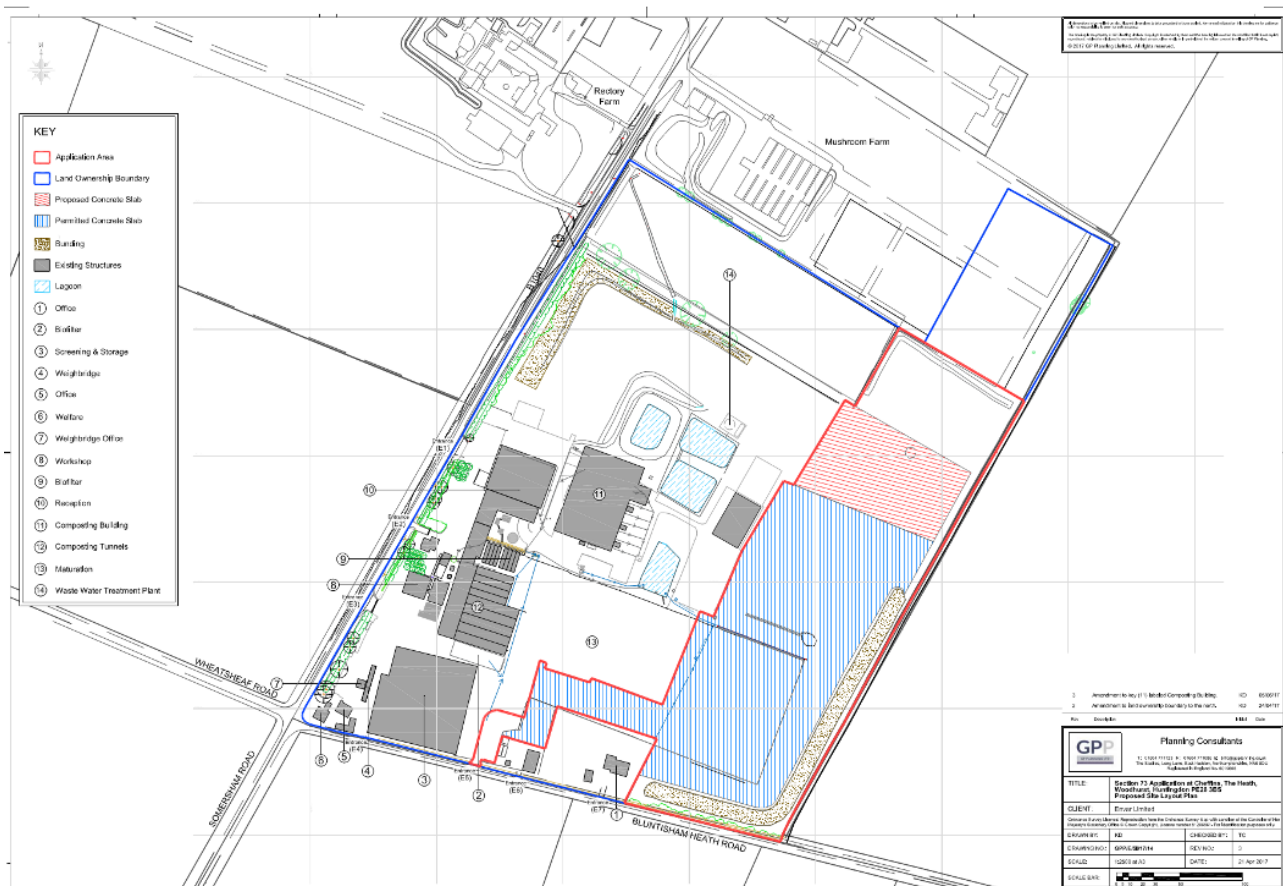
2.2 Existing Approved Planning Permissions

Although the plan above shows no development apart from the earth bunds in the area to the north-east of the site, a Section 73 planning application permission number H/5006/17/CW was approved on 2nd November 2017.

This was

“to develop land without complying with condition 2 of planning permission H/05003/12/CW (Extension of concrete pad for maturation of compost with drainage balancing lagoons, reed bed; perimeter earth bunds [for] screening) to extend concrete pad into area of balancing lagoon”.

This planning permission has not been enacted, except for the formation of the perimeter earth bunds. The plan below shows the area of the Section 73 application, outlined in red, which was approved in November 2017. This includes a large section along the south-eastern side of the site.



Section 73 application at Chaffins, The Heath Woodhurst, Proposed Site Layout Plan no. GPP/E/SI/170/14 rev 3 dated 21st April 2017 by G P Planning Ltd. (A larger version of this plan can be found in Appendix 2).

2.3 Proposed Waste Management Facility Layout



Proposed Dry AD and Healthcare Waste Recovery Facility The Heath Woodhurst, Proposed Site Layout Plan no. GPP/E/CWH/21/03 rev 011 dated 26th April 2021 by G P Planning Ltd. (A larger version of this plan can be found in Appendix 3).

The plan above shows the proposed development of the site. Infrastructure items 25 to 52 are listed in the key. There is considerable overlap of the proposed red line boundary with the previous 2 plans. Part of the area shaded red and identified as proposed concrete slab and the area immediately to the north of this in the consented plan no. GPP/E/SI/170/14, is also included within the redline boundary of the new Proposed Site Layout Plan no. GPP/E/CWH/21/03 rev 011 dated 26th April 2021.

There is also overlap of the north-western section of the site between the red line boundaries of the 2020 plan no. GPP/E/CWH/20/02 rev 0 dated 27th July 2020 shown on page 4 above and the Proposed Site Layout Plan no. GPP/E/CWH/21/03 rev 011 dated 26th April 2021.

There are 4 dirty water lagoons shown in Existing Site Layout plan no. GPP/E/CWH/20/02 rev 0 dated 27th July 2020. There are 4 dirty water lagoons and a clean water lagoon shown on the Proposed Site Layout Plan no. GPP/E/CWH/21/03 rev 011 dated 26th April 2021. One of the dirty water lagoons will be retained in the proposed new development. 3 new dirty water lagoons and 1 new clean water lagoon will be constructed.

The area of new proposed development is approximately 3 ha. This does not include the overlapping areas which already have planning permission approvals. Approximately 1.5ha of the proposed development area is made up of new lagoons and associated perimeter grassland. Approximately 0.5ha of this lagoon area is clean water lagoon and associated perimeter grassland. (A comprehensive surface water scheme has yet to be drawn up. The lagoon sizes are estimated at this time).

All of the proposed 3ha new development area has been previously disturbed to construct the perimeter bunds approved in PP H/5006/17/CW, which was granted on 2nd November 2017. The top layer of soil was removed from the development area to create the existing perimeter bunds. These will now remain undisturbed by the new proposals.

3 Desk Study

A desk study, proportionate to the size and impact of the proposed new development, has been undertaken to identify significant or protected habitats or species within the locality which could potentially be affected by the proposal. A list of sources of information can be found in Appendix 4 of this document. This desk study is presented as a summary of the results.

Site National Grid Reference: TL33607546

There are no statutory or non-statutory designated sites within 1km of the site. The image below shows the location of designated sites. SSSIs (Sites of Special Scientific Interest) and are shown in green. The nearest are Berry Fen SSSI 4.2km to the East, Houghton Meadows SSSI located 5.4 km to the south-west. The southern edge of Ouse Washes Special Protected Area is some 5.7km to the east.

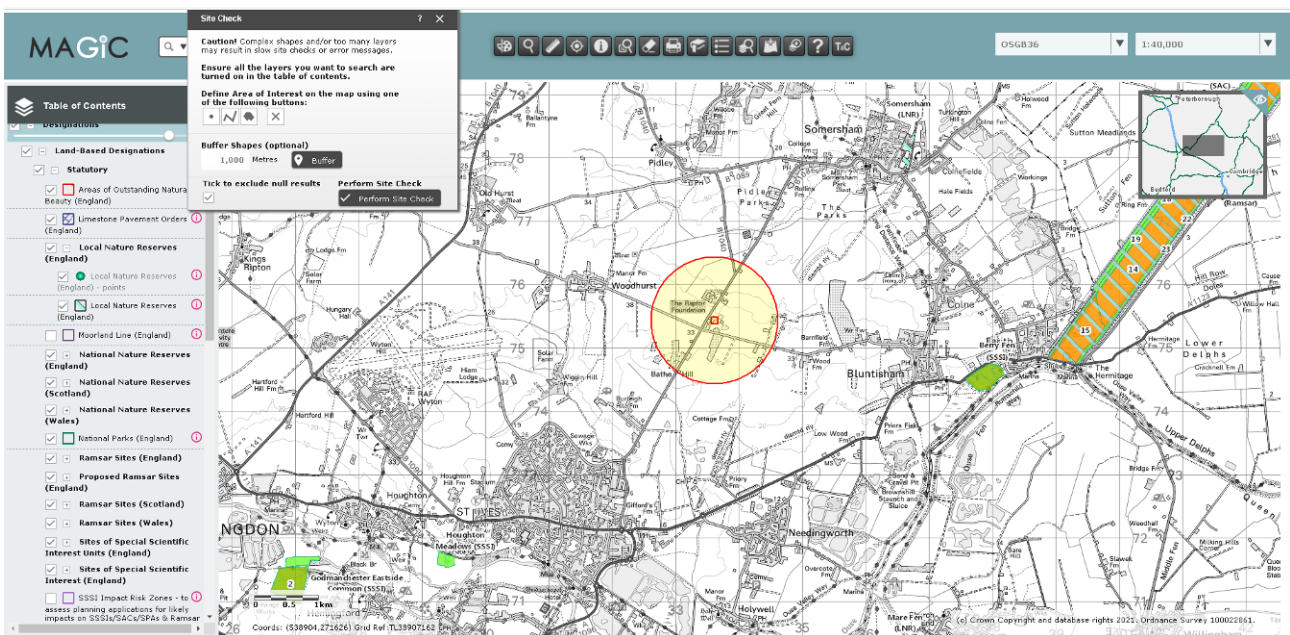
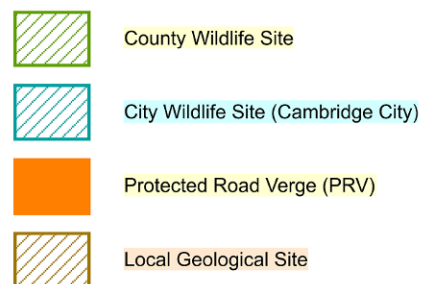
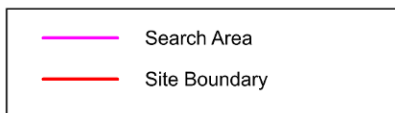
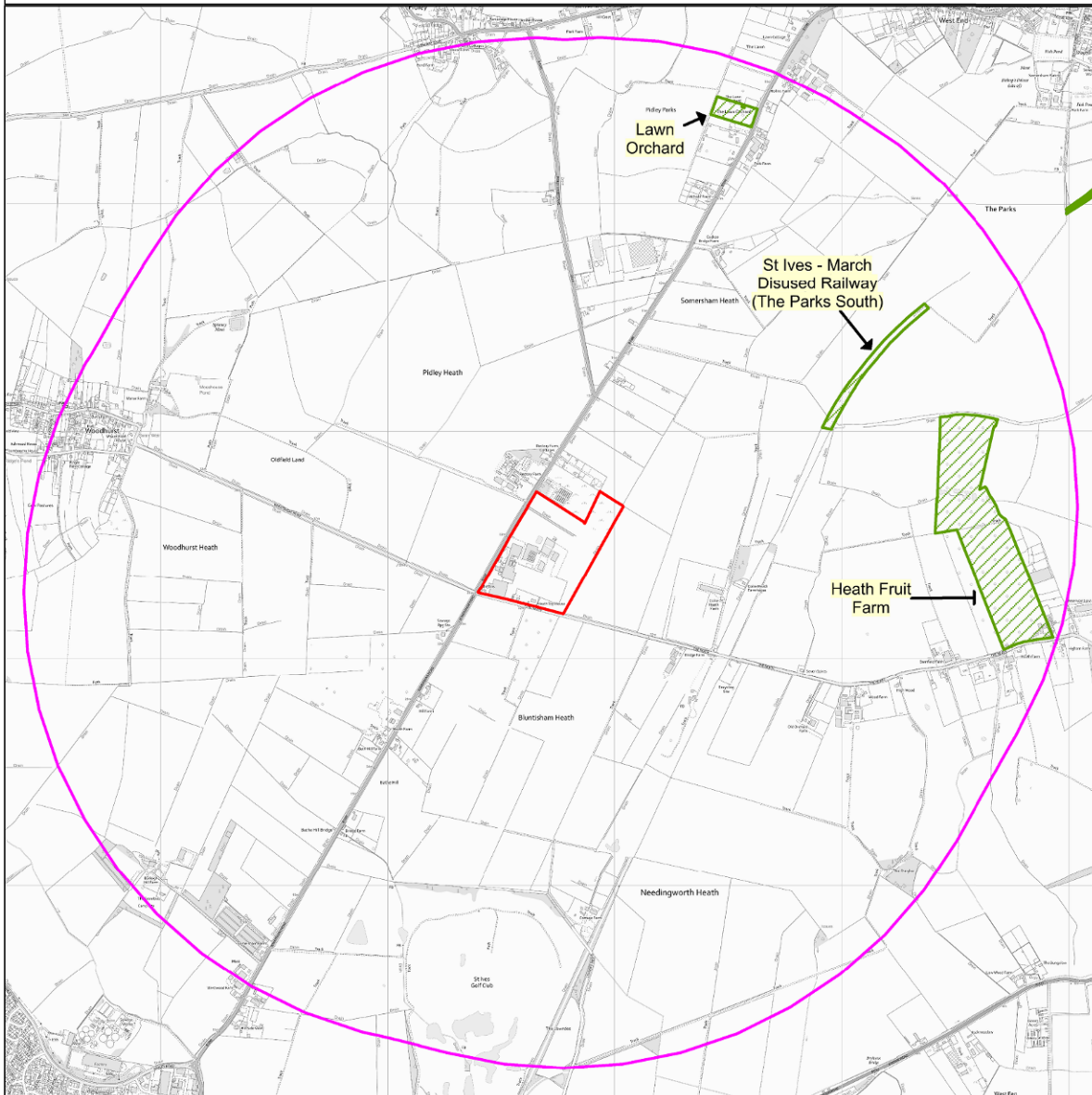


Image from DEFRA MAGIC website above showing statutory designated sites. The red circle has a circumference of 2km, indicating there are no sites within 1km of the site.

Locally designated County Wildlife Sites are shown below. These are from Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Records Centre.

County Wildlife Sites

Site Name	Grid Ref	Area (ha)	Reasons for Designation
Heath Fruit Farm	TL356755	23.66	Qualifies as it contains a group of 5 or more top fruit trees, in association with semi-natural habitat and managed in a traditional practice which is sympathetic with biodiversity objectives and that reflects local cultural traditions.
Lawn Orchard	TL345774	1.55	The site qualifies as it contains a group of 5 or more top fruit trees, has at least 20% veteran trees in association with semi-natural habitat and is managed in a traditional practice.
St Ives - March Disused Railway (The Parks South)	TL351763	2.19	The site qualifies as CWS because it supports frequent numbers of at least 8 neutral grassland indicator species.



This map is based upon Ordnance Survey material with the permission of Ordnance Survey on behalf of the Controller of Her Majesty's Stationery Office © Crown copyright. Unauthorised reproduction infringes Crown copyright and may lead to prosecution or civil proceedings.
Cambridgeshire County Council 100023205 (2021)

Records of protected species in the locality have been sourced. The following protected or notable species have been recorded within the past 5 years:

Brown Hare
House sparrow
Sky lark
Starling
Sparrow hawk
Dunnock
Yellow hammer
Linnet
Barn owl
Little owl
Mistle thrush
Buzzard
Kestrel

It is probable that birds and several species of bats are foraging within the development site area, adjacent to the perimeter hedgerows and trees.

A list of other common species of flora and fauna found on site or known to inhabit the locality is found in Appendix 5 of this document.

4 SITE VISIT

Two site visits were undertaken on 22nd January and 13th April 2021 and a lengthy, detailed survey carried out of the new development area and the local environment. A photographic record was compiled. The January visit was a bright and sunny morning following a frosty night and a previous very wet period, the temperature about 12 degrees C and there was a gentle breeze. There was standing water on the new development area, an indication of the heavy clay subsoil now at the surface following the previous stripping of topsoil for the perimeter bund formation. The April visit was a contrasting bright morning following a very dry period, with a site temperature of about 16 degrees C, where site conditions were much drier, and the clay soil was beginning to crack at the surface.

The overriding impression of the new development site was of a very flat enclosed space, surrounded by high perimeter bunds growing tall ruderal invasive vegetation on the flat and the perimeter bunds with coarse grasses. Vegetation was dominated by tall herb, teasel, spent hemlock stems, thistle, nettle and bristly ox tongue. The surrounding large open fields are predominantly arable farming with few hedgerows and trees.

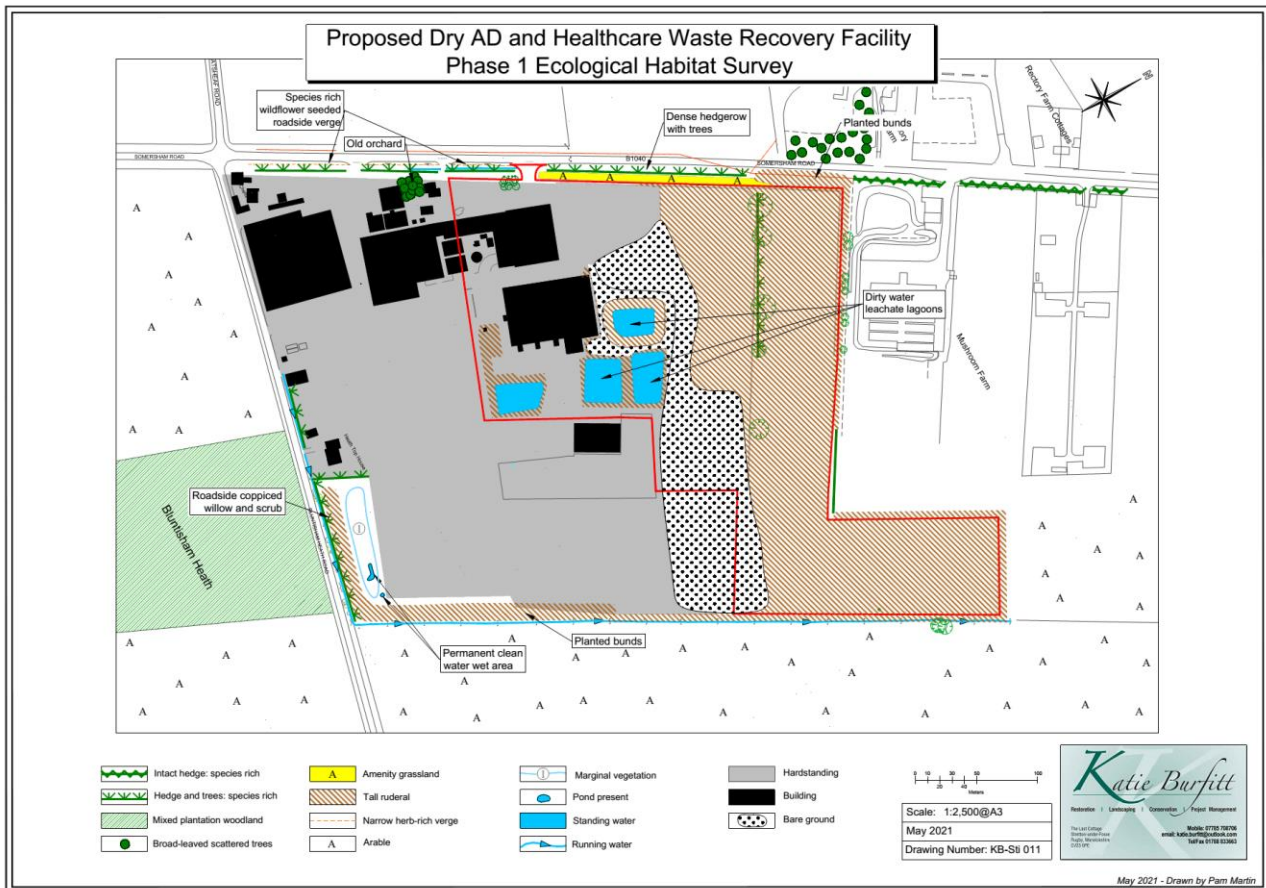
The operational areas of the site, beyond the expanses of tall ruderal vegetation growing on heavy clay subsoils, were largely disturbed. There were constant heavy vehicle movements around the site entrance, weighbridge area and adjacent to the open dirty water lagoons. Little to no vegetation was apparent in areas of constant heavy machinery movements.

There were no visible animal tracks across the land and very few bird sightings in the vicinity. A small flock of starlings was roosting in the remnant ash trees across the central ditch area and the occasional gull flew overhead.

The plan below shows the dominant habitats and notable features of the site and the locality in early 2021. The development site area is outlined in red. The standard key for

ecology has been used to show the habitats at the proposed site. A larger version of the plan below can be found in Appendix 6 of this document.

Each habitat is described below in item 4 to give a detailed indication of the condition of the habitats during early spring 2021.



Proposed Dry AD and Healthcare Waste Recovery Facility Phase 1 Ecological Habitat Survey Plan no. KB-Sti 011 dated May 2021

5 HABITAT DESCRIPTIONS

5.1 Hard Standing and Existing Buildings

There are large areas of hard standing and buildings with limited potential for wildlife of minimal value aside from roosting perches for birds and basking areas for butterflies. The majority of these areas will remain unchanged or become new buildings. There will be some disruption during the construction phase.

5.2 Tall Ruderal

There are large expanses of clay subsoil growing tall ruderal vegetation of low ecological value. Docks, nettles, hemlock, thistles and coarse grasses dominate this area. The three photographs below give an indication of this habitat which will be lost. This has low habitat value for wildlife and no animal tracks were observed crossing the areas.



Photograph taken 22/01/21 viewing north across the western section of the new development area



Photograph taken 22/01/21 viewing north-east across the central section of the site



Photograph taken 13/04/21 viewing north-east across the eastern section of the site

5.3 Dry Ditch with Remnant Hedge and Ash Trees



Photograph taken 22/01/21 looking west of the central dry ditch area of the site with remnant hedge and ash in poor condition and other mixed broadleaves including oak and field maple

This is low to medium value habitat providing a sheltered foraging area for birds, small mammals and potentially bats. The ditch is culverted for most of the length and remains dry for much of the year. The intention is to retain the central corridor of the site. This will however be dependent on the engineering works required to construct the open water lagoons.

5.4 Bare Disturbed Ground



Photograph taken 22/01/21 viewing east towards the dirty water lagoons

Much of the area surrounding the dirty water lagoons and towards the east of the new development area is frequently disturbed by heavy machinery and has resulted in bare ground. This has little to no vegetation establishing and minimal habitat value.



Photograph taken 13/04/21 looking north between dirty water lagoons.

The photograph of the track between the lagoons shows minimal habitat value.

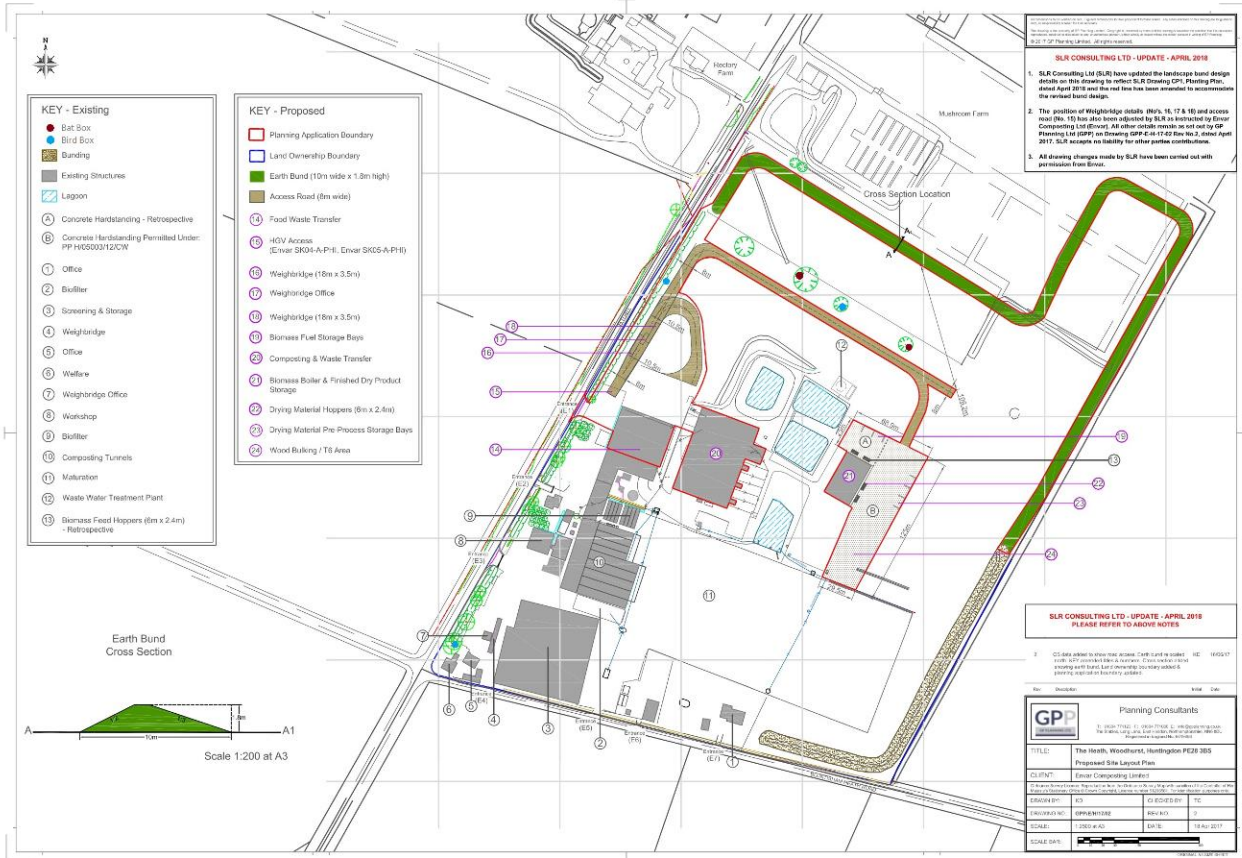
5.5 Dirty Water Lagoons

The photograph below of one of the four dirty water lagoons shows very polluted water, with no visible marginal vegetation. The habitat suitability to sustain amphibians is considered extremely low due to the polluted nature of the water. This is surface runoff from the windrow composting and appears to be too polluted to support aquatic life.



Photograph taken 13/04/21 of dirty water lagoon looking north-east

6 EXISTING BIRD AND BAT BOXES



The Heath Woodhurst, Huntingdon, PE28 3BS Proposed Site Layout Plan no. GPP/E/H/17/02 rev 2 dated 18th April 2017 annotated by SLR April 2018

The plan above shows the locations of 2 existing bat boxes and 3 existing bird boxes at the Envar site.

7 ENHANCEMENT OF BIODIVERSITY

A separate document “The Landscape Maintenance and Ecological Enhancement Scheme” dated June 2021 specifies details of the creation of

- 121m of new native hedgerow with hedgerow trees
- 1535m² of grassland with wildflowers around the hedgerow and lagoons
- Shrub planting to 40% of the perimeter of a wetland area of 2014m²

(Exact measures of areas and hedgerow length around the lagoons are approximations and will depend on the final surface water scheme construction).

There is limited space at the site to create new habitat to enhance the ecological value of the site. Given the small areas available the intention is to maximize the biodiversity value of the proposed habitat by creating concentrated areas of high habitat value. The creation of wildflower grassland and new native hedgerow around the large clean water lagoon, and the creation of scrub around an existing wetland area should maximize the potential for wildlife and biodiversity enhancement.

Both hedgerow and scrub are of high biodiversity value as compared to the low value habitats that will be lost at the site.

At this point it is difficult to quantify the exact value of the enhancement measures since the final areas of wildflower grassland seeding and length of proposed native hedgerow will be dependent upon the surface water scheme, yet to be drawn up. It is safe to say the habitats being lost are of extremely low value, compared to those proposed which are of high biodiversity value.

8 EVALUATION, IMPACT AND CONCLUSION

Notable Species

The site has marginal habitat that could potentially support species that receive specific legal protection. Species of bat are known to frequent the site. The most valuable habitats for foraging bats alongside hedgerows and trees will be retained.

Reptiles and amphibians: Although the site theoretically as habitat suitable for herptiles, it is unlikely to be colonized by reptiles and amphibians due to the poor water quality, constant traffic movements and associated disturbance, large areas of bare ground and the relative inaccessibility of the site. The adjacent habitats primarily composed of arable fields are unattractive habitats to most species. There are no records of protected species amphibians and reptiles within the locality.

Mammals: Foraging bats are potential visitors to the site. The habitat of greatest value to bats will remain unchanged. There are no trees within the development area large enough to support roosting bats, although all trees with bat boxes will be retained. Badgers are not known to visit the area. There is no evidence of badger on site. The presence of other protected mammals is considered unlikely.

Birds: Few species of bird were evident in the locality. The most important habitats for birds: the hedgerows and adjacent trees will be retained unchanged or be enhanced. All trees with bird boxes will be retained.

Flora: The ground flora is not considered to be locally or nationally important and this will remain unchanged around the perimeter of the site. The flora within the new development area is generally species poor.

During the construction phase there will be a temporary impact on adjacent habitats due to increased noise, dust and disturbance as the development is assembled.

Once the development is constructed there will be no additional impact on the surrounding habitats. The adjacent fields and hedgerows etc. will not be impacted following the development phase.

There will be minimal effect on the local wildlife sites the closest being located over 1km away from the site.

There are limited habitats suitable for wildlife within the proposed development boundary.

Conclusion of the Impact of the Development

In summary the impact of the development on the biodiversity value of the site and the

locality is thought to be extremely low. The following factors have led to this conclusion:

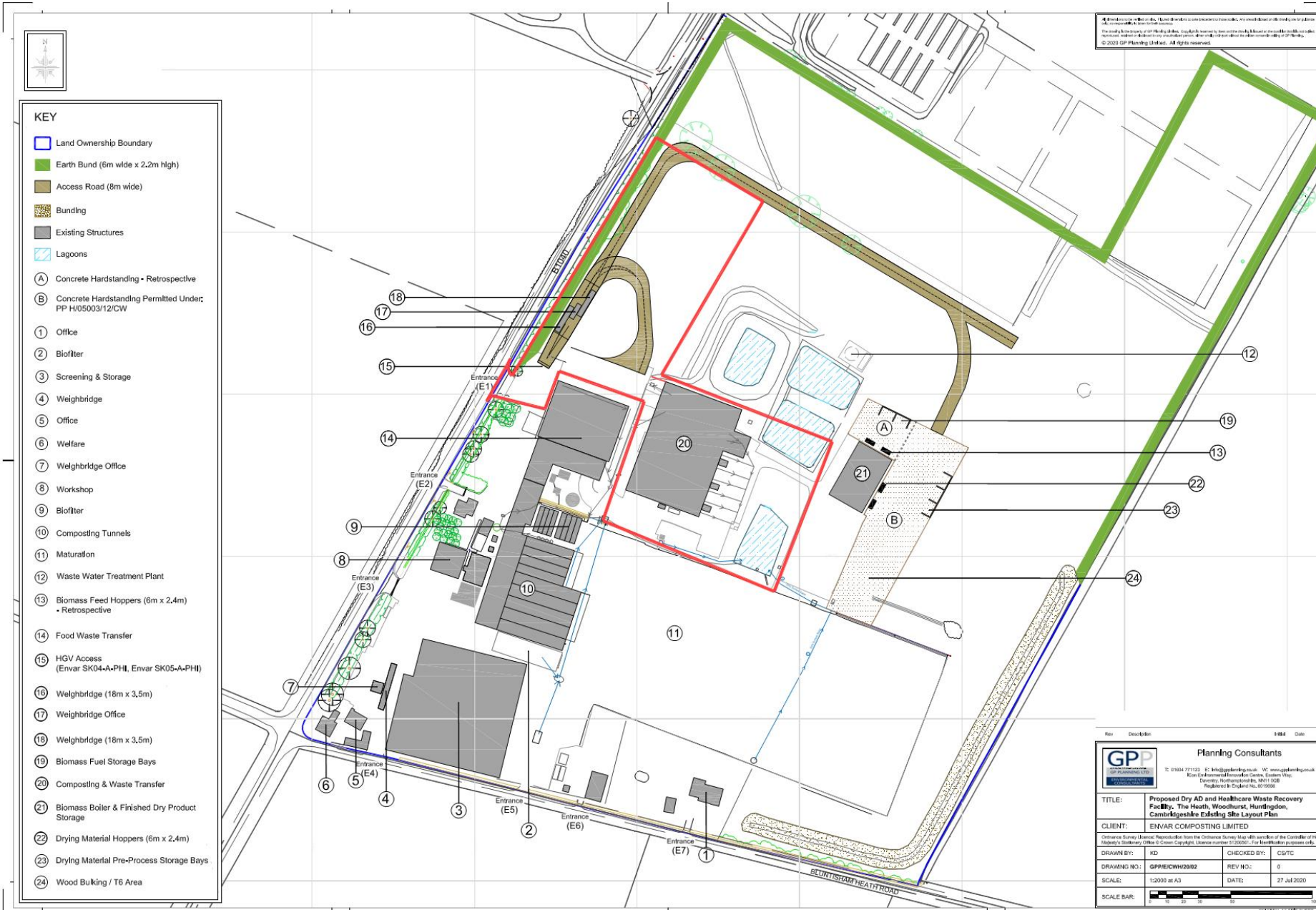
- The siting of the development within an established waste management facility.
- The location of the development on an existing species poor area of low habitat value.
- Minimal loss of low value habitat.
- No impact on wildlife sites of any significance.
- The retention of all existing perimeter habitats and enhancement proposals to maximize the biodiversity value of available areas.

Requirements for Further Surveys

Due to the limited impact of the development on low value habitats with few notable species additional surveys are not thought to be required.

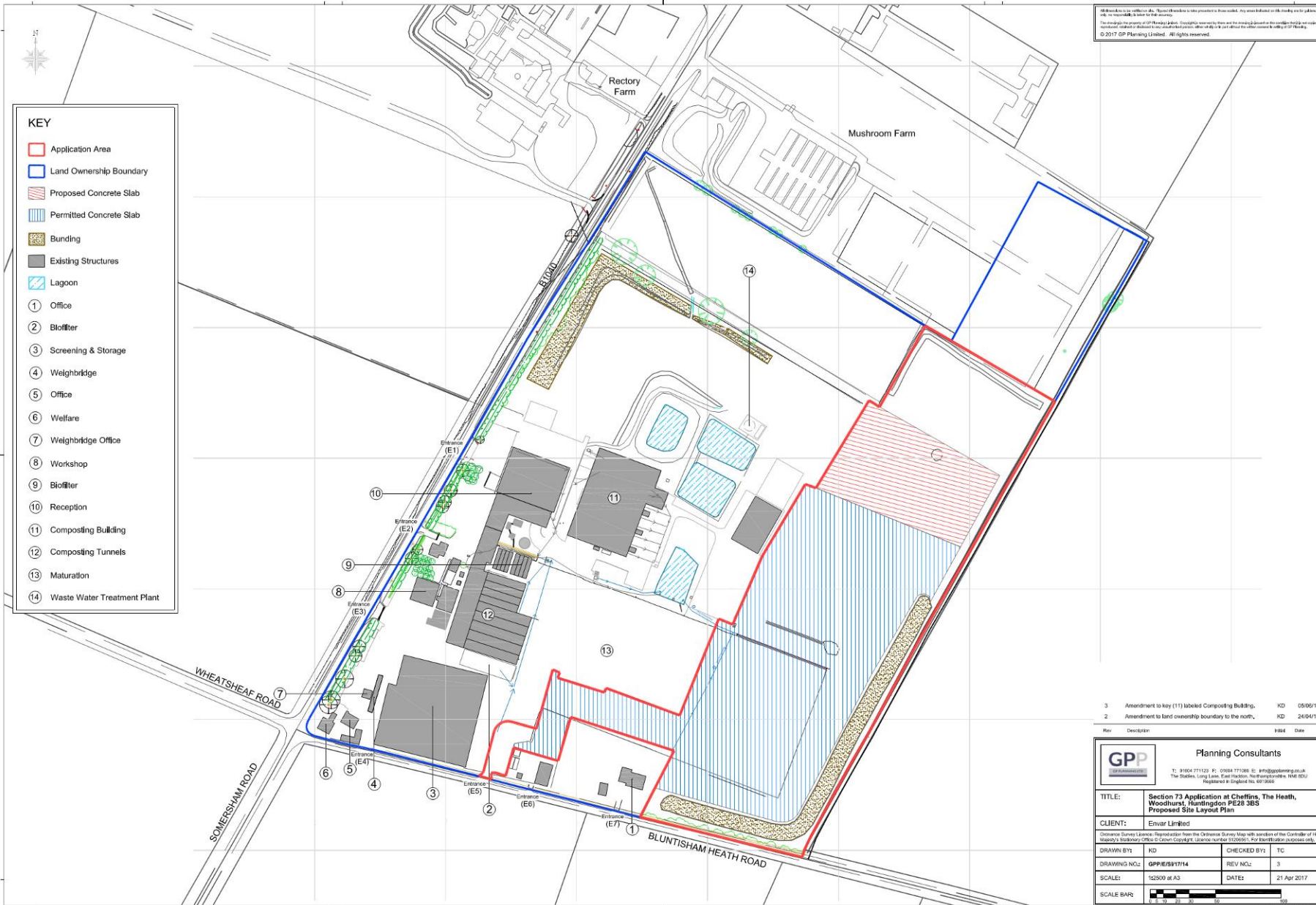
9 APPENDICES

Appendix 1



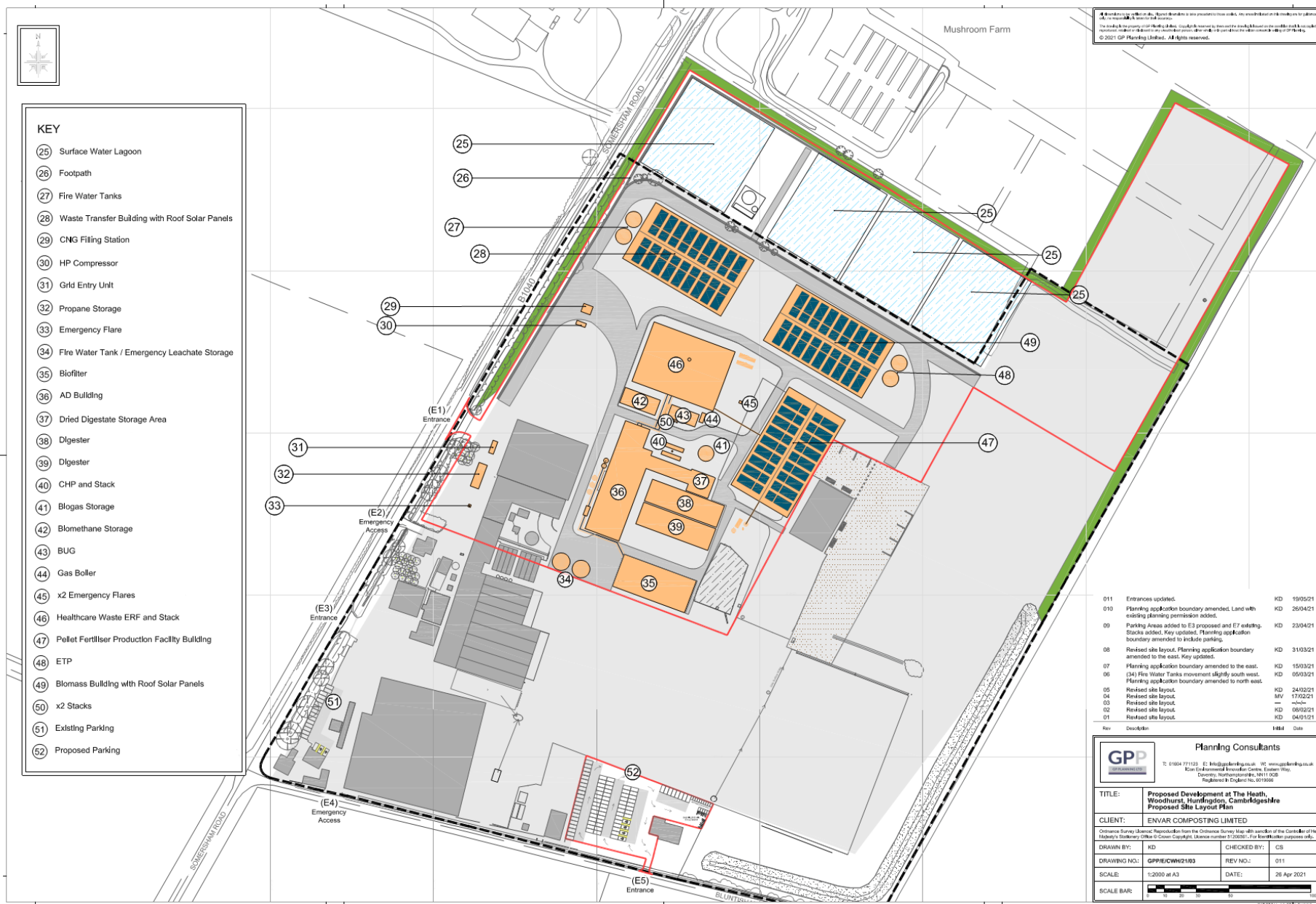
Proposed Dry AD and Healthcare Waste Recovery Facility The Heath Woodhurst, Existing site layout plan no. GPP/E/CWH/20/02 rev 0 dated 27th July 2020 by G P Planning Ltd.

Appendix 2



Section 73 application at Chaffins, The Heath Woodhurst, Proposed Site Layout Plan no. GPP/E/SI/170/14 rev 3 dated 21st April 2017 by G P Planning Ltd.

Appendix 3



Proposed Dry AD and Healthcare Waste Recovery Facility The Heath Woodhurst, Proposed Site Layout Plan no. GPP/E/CWH/21/03 rev 011 dated 26th April 2021 by G P Planning Ltd.

Appendix 4

Sources of information

DEFRA MAGIC websit

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management Guidelines for a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Google Earth

Inr.naturalengland web site

Appendix 5

Species List of Common Names

The following plant species were also noted or known to be present on or in the vicinity of the site:

Ash
Blackthorn
Borage
Bramble
Bristly ox tongue
Buddleia
Burdock
Carrot Fern
Cleavers
Comfrey
Common nettle
Cornflower
Cranesbill
Creeping thistle
Dandelion
Dead nettle
Dock
Elder
Elm
Fat hen
Field maple
Goat willow
Grasses various species
Hawthorn
Hemlock
Horse chestnut
Ivy
Leylandii
Milk thistle
Moss
Oak
Ragwort
Rosebay willow herb
Poplar
Spear thistle
Teasels
White beam
Willow species

The following mammal and bird species were also noted or known to be present on the site or in the locality:

Several species of bat

Brown hare

Brown rat

Rabbit

Barn owl

Black bird

Buzzard

Crow

Dunnock

Fieldfare

Goldfinch

Great tit

House Sparrow

Jackdaw

Kestrel

Linnet

Little owl

Long tailed tit

Mallard

Mistle thrush

Pheasant

Pigeon

Robin

Rook

Skylark

Sparrow hawk

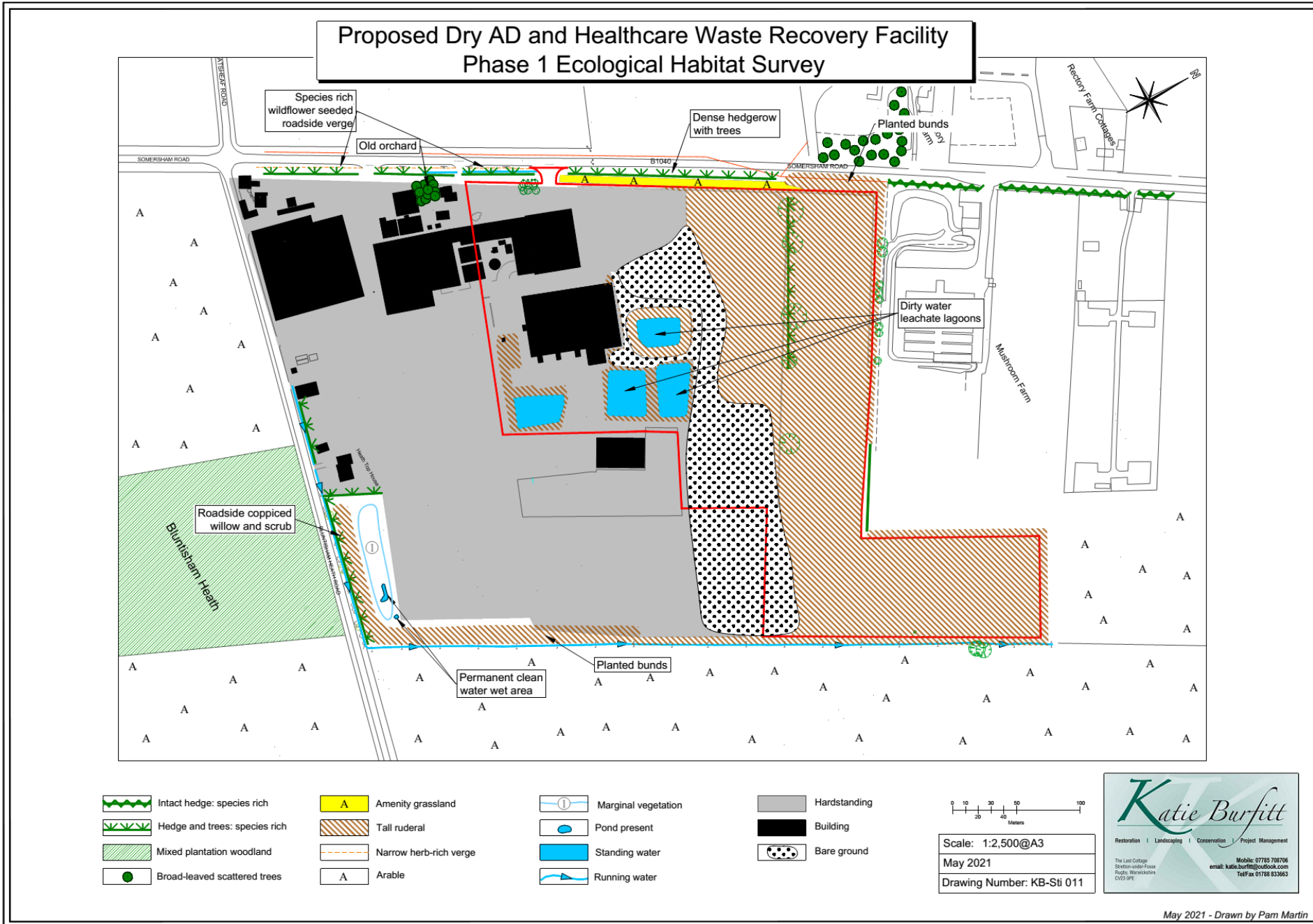
Starling

Swallow

Thrush

Wren

Yellow hammer



Proposed Dry AD and Healthcare Waste Recovery Facility Phase 1 Ecological Habitat Survey Plan no. KB-Sti 011 dated May 2021