

**Paddocks End
Winkfield Row
Bracknell
RG42 6LX**

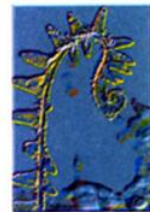
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

September 2023

FINAL

Produced by
*Ecology and Land
Management*
For and on behalf of
**County Homes
Thames Valley Ltd.**

Henriette
Westergaard



Ecology & Land
Management

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Summary

Background

The application site comprises land at Paddocks End, Winkfield Row, Bracknell RG42 6LX. The site is located on the outskirts of Winkfield Row, a village north of Bracknell. At the time of the survey the area proposed for development comprises mainly a derelict building with hard standing with boundary trees.

Archaeology

The site is not listed within an Archaeological Priority Area.

Listed Buildings

There are no known listed buildings within the application site.

Designations

A biological records search from TVBRC was obtained. Data shows that there are no statutory designated site, 1 LNRs, 2 non-statutory sites and 2 proposed non-statutory sites within 1km of the application site. The nearest designated site is Big Wood Local Wildlife Site.

Habitats

The site is dominated by hard standing with a small area of modified grassland to the west and tall ruderal vegetation around building and southern boundary.

Protected Species

Records from TVBRC confirm a number of protected species within 1km of the site.

Birds

The main habitat for nesting birds is associated with trees on boundaries. Further survey work is not considered necessary. However, **there should be no vegetation clearance during the bird breeding season.**

Bats

There are mature trees on boundaries but off-site, which have potential to support bats. The bat survey also confirmed that bats are foraging/commuting along boundaries. Further survey work is recommended where mature trees are to be felled.

Reptiles

Available habitat offers limited opportunities for reptiles. **Further survey work for is not considered necessary.**

Amphibians

There are no records of great crested newts within 1km. There is a trench with minimal water within the site and c. 5 known ponds within 500m of the site. The site has negligible opportunities to support great crested newt. Precautionary mitigation is recommended.

Badgers

There is no evidence of badgers within the application site. Further survey work is not considered necessary.

Dormice

Habitat within the site is considered of negligible suitability for dormouse. Further survey work is not considered necessary.

Water vole

There are records of water vole within 1km. There are no watercourses within or adjacent to the site. Further survey work for water vole is not considered necessary.

European Otter

There are records of otter within 1km. There are no watercourses within or adjacent to the site. Further survey work for water vole is not considered necessary.

Invertebrates

Available habitat within the site offers negligible opportunities for notable and scarce invertebrate species. Additional survey work is not considered necessary. However enhancement for invertebrates should be considered for the proposed scheme.

Other Considerations

There are 1 year old records of hedgehog within 1km of the application site.

Consideration should be given to hedgehogs and where they are found during works they should be moved to a secure site nearby. It is advised that the proposed landscape design should ensure that hedgehogs can move within the site and into surrounding areas without physical barriers.

On the basis of the site assessment it is not expected that other protected species will be present on the site. Should new evidence be found this assessment would require updating.

Outline biodiversity enhancement has been proposed for the site to include habitat for birds, bats, small mammals and invertebrates.

This report has been prepared for the titled project and should not be relied upon or used for any other project without written consent by the author.

This report is considered valid for a period of 12 months from the date of the survey (12th September 2023) unless there are significant changes to habitats on site.

Site Name: Land at Paddocks End, Winkfield Row, Bracknell RG42 LX - the site; Fig. 1

Grid Reference: SU89647121

County: Berkshire

Planning Authority: Bracknell Forest Council

Natural Character Area: Thames Valley Natural Character Area

Client: For and on behalf of County Homes Thames Valley Ltd.

Proposed Disturbance: Clearance of existing building and vegetation and erection of three new dwellings

Survey Request: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Surveyor: Henriette Westergaard, MSc, BSc (Hons), MCIEEM, CMLI, CEnv

For and on behalf of Ecology & Land Management

Assessment Period: September 2023

Limitations

Protected species surveys were not part of this assessment. Instead a preliminary assessment of likely presence of species on the proposed site have been made. Previous bat assessment has been taken into account.

Where relevant information may require updating where new information becomes available (such as ponds not previously known to be present or records of protected species nearby).

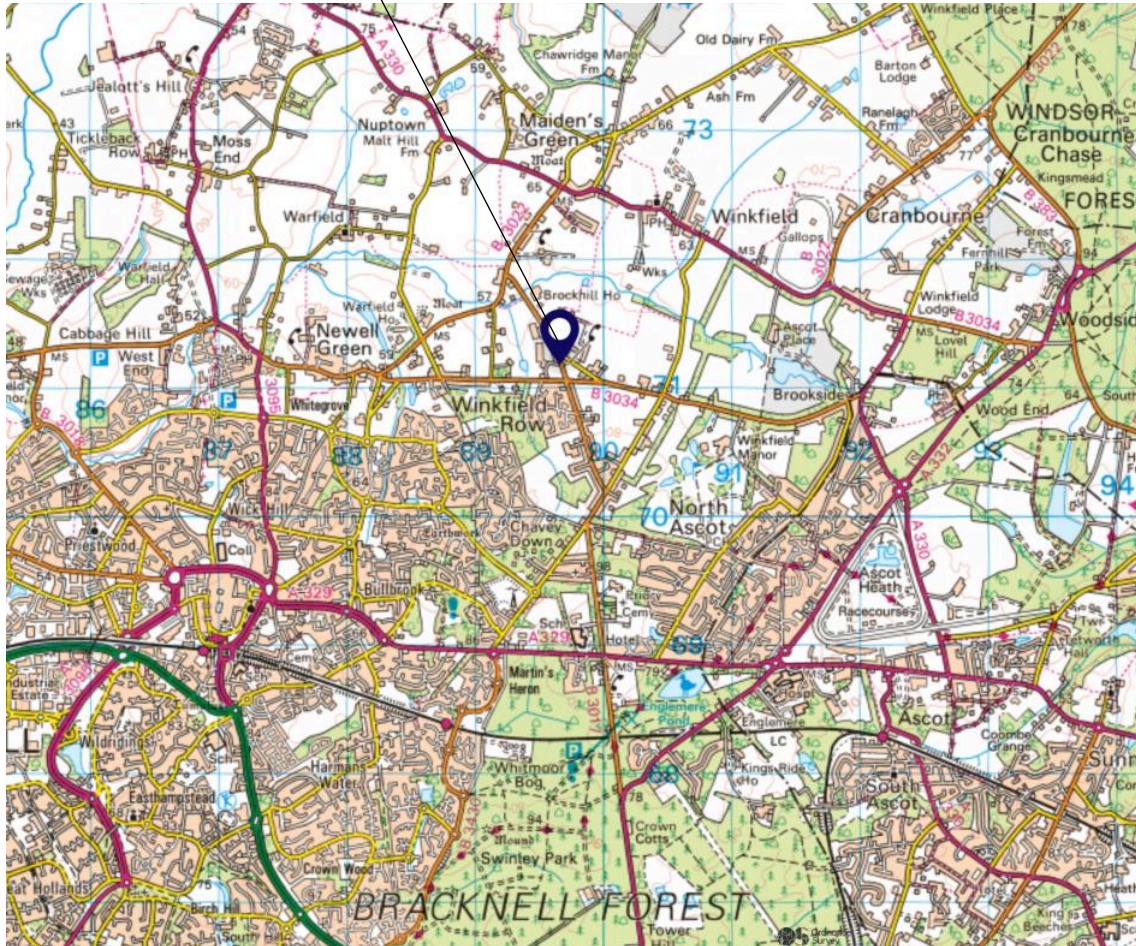
Information within this report is valid for a maximum period of one year from the date of the report.

Section 1 - Introduction

- 1.1 Ecology and Land Management were commissioned by County Homes Thames Valley Ltd. to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of land associated with the proposed development at Paddocks End, Winkfield Row, Bracknell. The proposals include clearance of existing building and vegetation and erection of three new dwellings with associated infrastructure.
- 1.2 This report is required in response to guidance notes set out by the local council to ensure that adequate ecological information accompanies the planning application for the proposed development. The findings of this study have informed, where necessary the design and layout of the proposed development.
- 1.3 The aims of the preliminary ecological appraisal are:
 - to identify the ecological habitats at the study site, and potential for protected species,
 - to provide recommendations for further protected and notable species surveys as necessary,
 - to identify significant features for retention and protection, where possible or appropriate,
 - to identify features for enhancement, and where possible
 - to provide outline recommendations for mitigation and/or compensation where relevant.
- 1.4 The appraisal included undertaking a desk study and preliminary ecological appraisal. The findings have been reviewed in light of relevant legislation, planning policy and biodiversity contextual information. The key findings and recommendations are set out in Section 6.
- 1.5 Assessment of biological records data is recommended as part of the overall assessment of protected species and habitats within close vicinity to the site. Biological records have been obtained from the local records centre. In addition, biological data has been assessed from National Biodiversity Atlas and the Multi-Agency Government Information Centre (MAGIC).

Figure 1 – Site Location
NTS

Site location



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Section 2 - Methodology

Desk Study

- 2.1 This section summarises the methodology used in undertaking the appraisal, which included a desk study and Extended Phase 1 Survey (based on JNCC, 2010 guidance) with reference to the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal guidance (CIEEM, 2017).
- 2.2 The desk study is an important element of undertaking an initial ecological appraisal of a site proposed for development, since it enables the initial collation and review of contextual information such as designated sites together with known records of protected and priority species.
- 2.3 In order to compile information on the site and immediate surroundings a search for relevant background information such as: biological records, history, planning designations, current and past management was undertaken.
- 2.4 The desk study involved collating relevant information from organisations, websites and documents including:-
- i) Multi-Agency Government Information Centre (MAGIC).
 - ii) National Biodiversity Network Atlas.
 - iii) UK Biodiversity Action Plan.
 - iv) The Berkshire Biodiversity Strategy 2014-2020
 - v) Bracknell Forest Local Plan (saved policies).
- 2.5 A search of the Multi-Agency Government Information Centre (MAGIC) website was undertaken to identify statutory designations within 5km for European sites and 2km for UK sites. The nbn (National Biodiversity Network) Gateway website was searched for information on protected species in the Ordnance Survey 10km Grid Square TQ07. Pond presence has been assessed using OS base map 1:25,000 as well as Google Earth.
- 2.6 Berkshire and UK Biodiversity Action Plans were consulted and their relevance to the site outlined, where relevant.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

- 2.7 The survey technique adopted for the habitat assessment is at a level intermediate between the standard Phase 1 Survey technique, based on habitat mapping and description, and a Phase 2 survey, based on detailed habitat and species surveys. The survey technique is commonly known as an extended Phase 1 Survey.
- 2.8 The survey is adapted from the guidelines referenced in the Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey - A Technique for Environmental Audit (JNCC. 2010). The site is walked initially to assess the overall habitat types. The extent of each habitat is then recorded and compared to the surrounding area to demonstrate the status of each habitat type. Subsequently, a preliminary assessment is made of the floristic composition of each habitat indicating rarity, where appropriate. Overall, the survey provides an evaluation of wildlife interest and conservation priority. It should be noted that the survey is based principally on vegetation, although habitats on site are searched for obvious signs of faunal

activity and an assessment is made of their potential to support protected species.

2.9 The survey has also been compared to the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) v. 2.1 (2023), where applicable (See Appendix II). This assessment method allows categorization of habitats at different levels using primary and secondary codes. Each area is assigned a UKHab at appropriate level. The evaluation allows certain comparisons to UK priority habitat and/or Annex I habitat types.
Preliminary bat roost assessment

2.10 The assessment was carried on using standard guidance and best practice methodology outlined in the Bat Workers Manual (Mitchell-Jones & McLeish, 2004), the Bat Mitigation Guidelines (English Nature, 2004) and Bat Surveys Guidelines for Professional Ecologists – Good Practice Guidelines (BCT 2016). Table 1 below details the specific categories for bat potential against the features within buildings and trees in addition to habitat features that signify a specific quality for foraging bats. The assessment classifications within this report have been made in accordance to these criteria. Table 1- Criteria for the Classification of Buildings, Trees and Habitat for Bats (BCT 2016).

Suitability	Description of Roosting habitats	Commuting and foraging habitats
Negligible	There are no potential features that have the potential to be used by roosting bats	Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation) A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats for example, a fragmented hedgerow or un-vegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.

Suitability	Description of Roosting habitats	Commuting and foraging habitats
Moderate	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses.

Evaluation

- 2.11 The evaluation process used in this report follows broadly the guidance on Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal developed by the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM guidelines, December 2017). Habitats present within the site have been assigned ecological values on a scale between international and local (immediate zone of influence). Values do not take account of economic values or ecological resources; they are based entirely on the innate value of the flora, fauna and habitats in terms of the conservation of the genetic resource. See Appendix I.
- 2.12 The value of areas of habitats and species has been measured against published selection criteria where possible. A level of importance has been assigned to the key ecological features, which occur at the site. In those instances where the potential presence of scheduled or protected species has been identified, a preliminary value is attributed based on a prediction of population size.

Section 3 - Legislation, Planning Policy

Legislation and Policy

- 3.1 This section sets out the relevant legal, planning policy and biodiversity context of the Site and proposed development. The occurrence of species, which are specifically protected by law or otherwise listed as threatened, although not necessarily strictly rare, can also be helpful in establishing the conservation value of sites. A number of habitats and species in the UK receive varying levels of statutory protection under several elements of legislation. The principle mechanism for the legislative protection of wildlife in Britain is shown in Table 1.

Legislation	Species and Habitats
<i>International</i>	
Bern Convention 1979	Protects important populations of listed species and their habitats. Aims to conserve wild flora and fauna and their natural habitats.
IUCN (Red List)	The world conservation unit assesses the conservation status of species, sub-species and varieties.
<i>European</i>	
Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitat, Wild Fauna and Flora	This is enacted in the UK by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations or Habitat Regulations, 2019.
Birds Directive 1979	This provides a framework for the conservation and management of, and human interactions with, wild birds in Europe. In England the Birds Directive is implemented through the WCA, 1981 and the Habitat Regulations, 2010.
<i>UK</i>	
Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 (Schedules 1, 5, and 8) and amendments	Protection of wild plants, animals and habitats in the UK.
Habitats Regulations Assessment	Where a proposed development project is located within or close to an area designated or proposed for designation under the Birds and/or Habitats Directives (European sites) and/or the Ramsar Convention (Ramsar sites) an Appropriate Assessment under Regulation 61(1) of the Habitat Regulations may be required. Regulation 63 states that: "A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission, or other authorisation for a plan or project which: (a) is likely to have significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects); and (b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of the site must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for the site in view of that site's conservation objectives."
Habitat Regulations Assessment cont.	The decision as to whether an Appropriate Assessment is required or not is based upon an assessment of 'Likely Significant Effect' (LSE), which is recognised as being a statement that the anticipated effects of the proposal will be more than trivial. That is the anticipated changes resulting from the proposal have the potential to impact on a designated, or proposed to be designated, European/Ramsar site. It does not automatically follow that an impact will occur, or that the impact would be significant, with a decision of LSE being purely an indication of the need for an Appropriate Assessment.

Legislation	Species and Habitats
Biodiversity Net Gain	National policy sets out that planning should provide biodiversity net gains where possible. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) Paragraphs 170(d), 174(b) and 175(d) refer to this policy requirement and the Natural Environment Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) provides further explanation on how this should be done. Delivering net gain is also referred to in the National Infrastructure Commission's Design Principles, National Policy Statements and the National design guide. For more information see: https://www.local.gov.uk/pas/topics/environment/biodiversity-net-gain .
Government Circular 06/05	Protected species are also covered by the requirements of the Government Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System
NERC Act 2006	Section 41 of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitat and species, which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. This list has been drawn up in consultation with Natural England and forms the basis of the UK Biodiversity Action Plan.
The CroW Act, 2000	This piece of legislation provides for public access on foot to certain types of land, amends the law relating to public rights of way, increases measures for the management and protection for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and strengthens wildlife enforcement legislation, and provides for better management of Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty (AONB).
The Hedgerow Regulations, 1997	Under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 it is against the law to remove or destroy certain hedgerows without permission from the local planning authority. The local planning authority is also the enforcement body for offences created by the Regulations. Local planning authority permission is normally required before removing hedges that are at least 20 meters (66 feet) in length, more than 30 years old and contain certain plant species. The authority will assess the importance of the hedgerow using criteria set out in the regulations.

Table 1 – Principle legislative mechanism for wildlife protection in the UK.

Below is a table illustrating how particular biological groups are protected by legislation.

Table 2

Biological Groups	Relevant Legislation
Flora	A number of plant species are protected under Section 13 of the amended 1998 Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981. It is an offence to intentionally pick, uproot or destroy any wild plant listed in Schedule 8 of the Act. The list includes both higher plants such as rare orchids and lower plants such as lichens and mosses.
Bats	All species of bat in Britain and their breeding sites or resting places are protected under Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2010 and under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (WCA). It is an offence for anyone to intentionally kill, injure or handle a bat, to possess a bat (whether live or dead), deliberately disturb a roosting bat, or sell or offer a bat for sale, without a licence. It is also an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter, whether they are present or not. All bat species in Britain are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 through inclusion on Schedule 5. They are also protected under the Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) Regulations 1994 (which were issued under the European Communities Act 1972), through inclusion on Schedule 2. On 1 st April 2010, these Regulations, together with subsequent amendments, were consolidated into the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. European protected animal species and their breeding sites or resting places are protected under Regulation 39. Since August 2007, building development that affects bats or their roosts needs a Protected Species Licence under The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) (Amendment) Regulations 2007 administered in England by Natural England.
Birds	All wild birds (birds in a wild state resident or visiting Great Britain) and their nests and eggs are protected under the WCA, 1981. Particular emphasis is given to the protection of breeding birds. With certain exceptions, it is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take wild birds, take, damage or destroy the nest of wild birds while in use or being built, take or destroy the eggs of wild birds, disturb wild birds listed in Schedule 1 when nest building or at a nest containing eggs or young or disturb dependent young of wild birds.
Badgers	Badgers and their setts are protected by the Protection of Badgers Act, 1992. It makes it illegal to kill, injure or take badgers or to interfere with a badger sett or any part of a sett. The term 'badger sett' is normally understood to mean the system of tunnels and chambers in which badgers live and their entrances and immediate surrounds. The 1992 Act specifically defines a sett as "any structure or place, which displays signs indicating current use by badger."

Biological Groups	Relevant Legislation
Hazel Dormouse	Individual animals, their breeding sites or nesting places (nests) are protected under Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2010 and under Section 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (WCA). It is an offence for anyone to intentionally kill, injure or handle a dormouse, to possess a dormouse (whether live or dead), deliberately disturb a dormouse, or sell or offer a dormouse for sale without a licence. It is also an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct any place used by dormice for shelter, whether present or not.
Hedgehog	Hedgehogs receive partial protection on Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981, which stipulates that animals may not be killed or taken by certain methods. In addition, the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats also lists hedgehog prohibiting the use of all indiscriminate means of capture and killing.
Water Vole	Water vole and their breeding/resting places are fully protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended in 2008). It is an offence to deliberately capture, injure or kill a water vole or to damage, destroy or obstruct their breeding or resting places. It is also an offence to disturb them in their breeding or resting places.
Reptiles	<p>All native reptiles are listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. It is an offence for anyone to intentionally kill or injure a 'widespread' reptile species (viviparous lizard, grass snake, adder or slow worm), or sell or offer for sale without a licence.</p> <p>The sand lizard and smooth snake, their breeding sites or resting places (any structure that may offer refuge), are protected under Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2010. It is an offence for anyone to intentionally kill, injure or handle either of these two species, to possess an animal (whether live or dead), deliberately disturb a sheltering animal, or sell or offer an animal for sale without a licence. It is also an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by sand lizards and smooth snakes for shelter, whether they are present or not.</p>

Biological Groups	Relevant Legislation
Amphibians	<p>All native amphibians are listed on Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981. It is an offence to sell or offer for sale any native amphibian species.</p> <p>The great crested newt and natterjack toad, their breeding sites (typically ponds) and nesting places (typically terrestrial that offers refuge) are protected under Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations, 2010. It is an offence for anyone to intentionally kill, injure or handle either of these two species, to possess an animal (whether live or dead), deliberately disturb a sheltering animal, or sell or offer for sale without a licence. It is also an offence to damage, destroy and obstruct access to any place used by great crested newts and natterjack toads whether they are present or not.</p>
Invertebrates	<p>A small number of invertebrates including beetles, crickets, butterflies and moths are protected under Section 9, Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 against deliberately killing, injuring or taking. Other species receive partial protection under the same act. For example it is an offence for anyone to sell or offer for sale a stag beetle without a licence. Others are highlighted for conservation concern through IUCNs red list data and UK and local biodiversity action plans. In addition, a number of invertebrates are listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. These species are regarded as of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England.</p>

Table 2 – Legislative protection for particular biological groups.

Planning Policy Context

National Policy Planning Framework (NPPF)

- 3.2 The NPPF was published in March 2012 (amended July 2021) and sets out the Government’s planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. Policies set out in NPPF are taken into account by local planning authorities in the preparation of local development documents. They may also be material to decisions on individual planning applications. Amendments in 2021 requires details on impact and biodiversity net gain.

Bracknell Forest Local Plan (saved policies)

- 3.3 The site is within the Bracknell Forest Council planning authority. The site is covered by Bracknell Forest Local Plan 2002 and Core Strategy 2008. The framework provides planning policy related to biodiversity. Below are two policies considered relevant to the proposed site. A full understanding of the extent of the biodiversity present on site or within the site’s zone of influence and the measures needed to overcome any potential detrimental impact during construction and operation is likely to be essential.

Table 3 – Bracknell Forest Local Plan

Bracknell Forest Council Local Plan Saved Policies	Relevance to Site
Policy EN3- (Nature Conservation)	
Planning permission will not be granted for development likely to have a significant effect on the following areas unless their special value and character can be protected or there are imperative reasons of overriding public interests: i) Existing and potential species protection areas SPAs;; (ii) Existing and candidate species areas of conservation (SACs); (iii) Sites of species scientific interests (SSSIs). The borough council will seek to enter into agreements concerning enhancement schemes as part of development proposals; these will incorporate, where appropriate, the management of public access into the site.	There are opportunities to enhance biodiversity features associated with the proposed site.
Policy EN4 – Local Nature Reserves, Wildlife Heritage Sites and Regionally Important Geological Sites	
Planning permission will not be granted on or near local nature reserves, wildlife heritage sites or regionally important geomorphological sites unless the proposed development will not affect the wildlife and habitats for which the site was designated or the special character of the site. Development must include conservation or enhancement schemes, where appropriate, will set out the provision for and management of public access within them.	There are no known designated sites likely to be impacted by the proposed scheme.

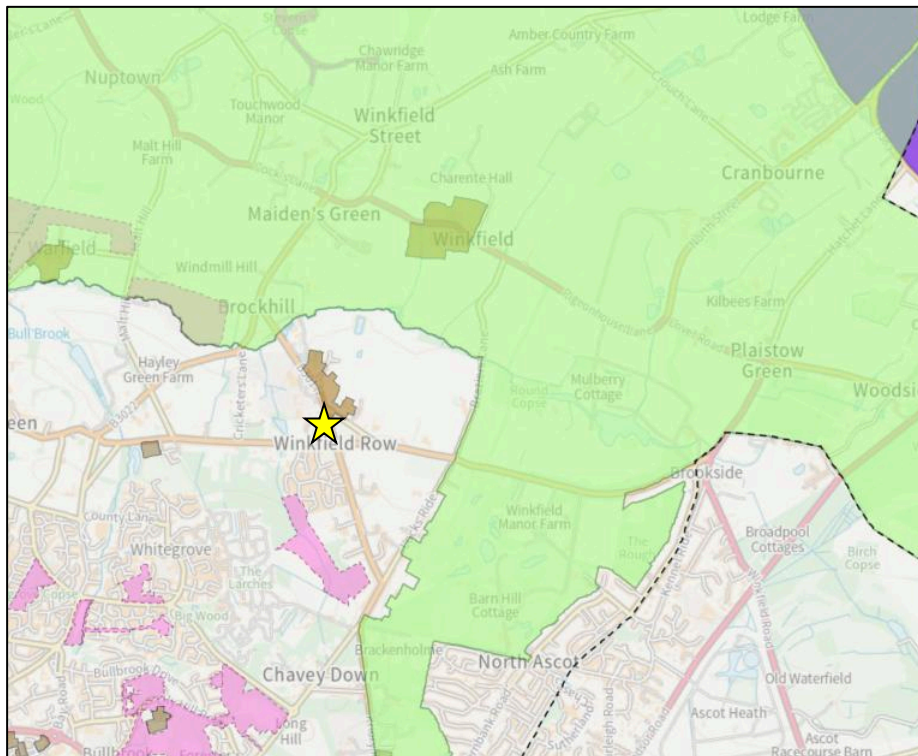
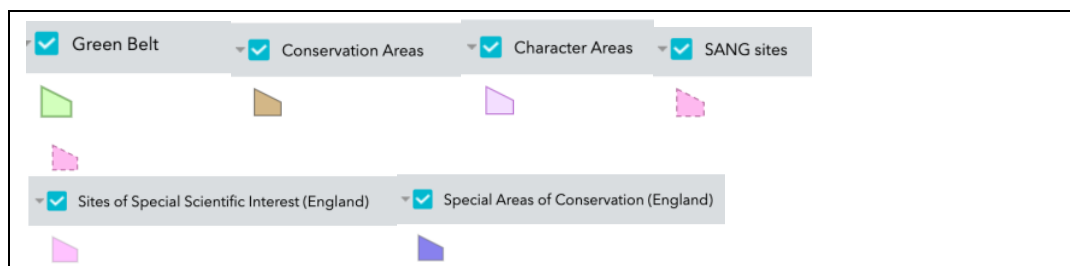


Figure 2 – Local Plan Proposals Map (online, September 2023). Copyright Bracknell Forest Council.



Site Location: ★

Section 4 - Biodiversity Context

Natural Areas

- 4.1 Natural Areas are a subdivision of England each with a characteristic association of wildlife and natural features. They provide a way of interpreting the ecological variations of the country in terms of natural features, illustrating the distinctions between one area and another. Each Natural Area has a unique identity resulting from the interaction of wildlife, landforms, geology, land use and human impact. Natural Areas have been formally defined as bio geographic zones which reflect the geological foundation, the natural systems and processes and the wildlife in different parts of England, and provide a framework for setting objectives for nature conservation (Biodiversity: The UK Steering Group Report, HMSO 1995).
- 4.2 The Site lies within the Thames Valley Natural Character Natural Area. “The Thames Valley is a mainly low-lying, wedge-shaped area, widening from Reading, which includes Slough, Windsor, the Colne Valley and the southwest

London fringes. The River Thames provides a unifying feature through a very diverse landscape of urban and suburban settlements, infrastructure networks, fragmented agricultural land, historic parks, commons, woodland, reservoirs and extensive minerals workings. "Statements of Environmental Opportunities relevant to the site include:

"SEO 3: Maintain existing greenspace and plan for the creation of green infrastructure associated with the significant projected growth of urban areas, to reduce the impact of development, to help reduce flooding issues, and to strengthen access and recreation opportunities. Seek links from urban areas to wider recreation assets such as the Thames Path National Trail, National Cycle Routes, and the river and canal network, and promote the incorporation of best practice environmental measures into any new development."

Table 4 - Natural Character Area Profile.

Biodiversity Action Plans

- 4.3 The UK post 2010 Biodiversity Framework covers the period 2011 – 2020 and replaces the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Its aim is to address the underlying causes of biodiversity loss and improve and enhance biodiversity and ecosystem services. The UKBAP biodiversity habitats and species background information is still widely used at a county level. UKBAP biodiversity habitats and species have been considered within this report and enhancement measures have been suggested within the recommendations sections. The UKBAP sets out targets for a number of Priority Species and Habitats as well as for broad habitat types. Priority species listed in the UKBAP include several species of bat, water vole and great crested newt.
- 4.4 The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act (2000) provides legislation to promote the further conservation of habitat types and species considered of principle importance for biodiversity. In the NPPF it is stated that local plans should "promote the preservation, restoration and re-creation of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species populations, linked to national and local targets, and identify suitable indicators for monitoring biodiversity in the plan." The lists of habitats and species of principle importance comprise those identified as priorities under the UKBAP. This list forms Annex C of Government Circular 06/057.

Section 5 - Site Location and Proposed Development

- 5.1 This section sets out the findings of the desk study and extended Phase 1 survey and should be read in conjunction with Indicative Habitat Plan (Appendix III).

Context

- 5.2 The site is associated with Paddock End, Winkfield Row, Bracknell as shown in Figure 1 (OSGR: SU89647121). The existing site is approximately 0.27ha in extent. The land lies at approximately 65m AOD. The soils are described in Soilscales (Cranfield University) as Slowly permeable seasonally wet slightly acid but base-rich loamy and clayey soils.
- 5.3 The development proposals include clearance of existing building and vegetation and erection of new dwellings with associated infrastructure.
- 5.4 The wider landscape is characterised by village of Winkfield Row and open countryside. The Local Plan proposals map shows that the site is not designated for its nature conservation importance. However, it is listed adjacent to a conservation area.

Protected Species and Designated Sites

- 5.5 The background data confirms that the proposed site is not designated for its nature conservation value. See also Appendices VI, VII and VIII. Designated sites are listed below. See Table 5 below.

TVBRC Data Research Results	Number of Sites within 1km	Relevance to Site
European Statutory Designated Site	-	n/a
National Statutory Designated Site and LNRs	1	Hayley Green Wood
Non Statutory Designated Site (SINC)	4	Big Wood Adjacent to Chavey Wood Chavey Down Pond Stirrups Country House Hotel Field
Proposed Non Statutory Designated Site (SINC)	2	Paddock adjacent to the cut Osman closed woodland

Table 5 – Designations. Source: TVBRC, September 2023.

- 5.6 The records of protected species and sites is summarised in the tables below.

TVBRC Data Research Results	Number of Protected Species and Species of Conservation Concern within 1km	Likely presence on site
<i>Higher Plants</i>	8	n/a
<i>Lower plants</i>	None listed	n/a
<i>Fungi</i>	None listed	n/a
<i>Birds</i>	46 of which 8 are Schedule 1	Low
<i>Mammals (excl bats)</i>	4	High for hedgehog
<i>Bats</i>	10	Negligible risk in trees on site
<i>Fish</i>	None listed	Negligible

TVBRC Data Research Results	Number of Protected Species and Species of Conservation Concern within 1km	Likely presence on site
<i>Amphibians</i>	4	Low
<i>Reptiles</i>	3	Low
<i>Invertebrates</i>	4	Stag beetle Possible in rotting wood
<i>INNS</i>	2	None observed

Table 6 – Protected Species and Species of Conservation Concern within 1km of the site (Source: TVBRC).

SSSI Risk Zone

5.7 A tool has been created by Natural England accessed via Magic to determine the risk of development impact on designated areas such as SSSI's, SAC, SPAs and Ramsar sites. Available information indicates that the proposed development is located within a SSSI risk zone of Chowridge Bourne SSSIs. Natural England will provide advice on any potential impacts and how these might be avoided or mitigated. Table 7 below shows when to consult Natural England.

Does planning proposal fall into one or more of the categories below	LPA should consult NE on likely risks from the following:
All Planning Applications Infrastructure	Pipelines and underground cables, pylons and overhead cables. Any transport proposals including road, rail and by water (excluding routine maintenance). Airports, helipads and other aviation proposals.
Minerals, Oil & Gas	Planning applications for quarries, including: new proposals, Review of Minerals Permissions (ROMP), extensions, variations to conditions etc. Oil & Gas exploration/extraction.
Air Pollution	Any industrial/agricultural development that could cause AIR POLLUTION (inc: industrial processes, livestock & poultry units with floorspace > 500m ² , slurry lagoons & digestate stores > 750m ² , manure stores > 3500t).
Combustion	General combustion processes > 50MW energy input. Incl: energy from waste incineration, other incineration, landfill gas generation plant, pyrolysis/gasification, anaerobic digestion, sewage treatment works, other incineration/combustion.
Waste	Landfill incl: inert landfill, non-hazardous landfill, hazardous landfill.
Discharges	Any discharge of water or liquid waste of more than 20m ³ /day to ground (i.e. seep away) or to surface water, such as beck or stream.

Table 7 – SSSI Risk Zone (Source: Magic.defra.gov.uk, online September 2023)

SPA/RAMSAR/SAC

- 5.8 The nearest European protected site is Windsor Forest and Great Park SAC ca. 3.9km East.
- 5.9 The decision as to whether an Appropriate Assessment is required or not is based upon an assessment of 'Likely Significant Effect' (LSE), which is recognised as being a statement that the anticipated effects of the proposal will be more than trivial. That is, the anticipated changes resulting from the proposal have the potential to impact on a designated, or proposed to be designated, European/Ramsar site. It does not automatically follow that an impact will occur, or that the impact would be significant, with a decision of LSE being purely an indication of the need for an Appropriate Assessment.
- 5.10 Where the proposed development has the potential to impact on any of the European sites listed above the local authority can request an HRA is carried out. Although carrying out the HRA is the responsibility of the local authority as the competent authority they can request a screening for relevant information to be provided by the developer.

Section 6 - Potential Ecological Interest and Recommendations

Habitats

- 6.1 The site was surveyed on 12th September 2023 on overcast day (ca. 22^o C). The site was surveyed by a qualified ecologist. The aim was to identify the main habitat types within the area proposed for development including the general species composition and structure of the vegetation as well as areas of potential ecological interest. Habitats types and landscape features adjacent to the site were also noted. In addition, notes were made with regard to biodiversity enhancement potential within the site with a view to informing the overall assessment.
- 6.2 The proposed site is not designated for its nature conservation interest. The nearest non statutory designated site is ca. 400m to the southwest. The habitats identified are listed below. Habitats were searched for obvious signs of faunal activity or potential to support particular biological groups. Potential issues relating to fauna are discussed in Table 8 below.

Key to Site and Habitat Descriptions

Trees and lines of Trees
Modified grassland
Tall ruderal
Reeds
Buildings and Hard Surfaces

Trees/lines of Trees

- 6.3 A tree survey is currently not available. Young trees are present on the western boundary between the sealed surface and modified grassland. In addition, the northern and southern boundaries comprise mature tree lines both believed to be outside the site boundary. Species on site include ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and holly (*Ilex aquifolium*). The northern boundary (off-site trees) comprises tall spindly leylandii (*Cupressus × leylandii*) with young ash, sycamore, cherry laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*). The southern boundary (off-site trees) comprises mature leylandii, yew (*Taxus baccata*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) holly and cherry laurel with a ground flora of yarrow, ivy, foxglove, fragrant bedstraw (*Galium triflorum*), nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and small flowered crane's bill (*Geranium pusillum*). There are no known TPO applicable to the site.
- 6.4 All tree protection, work to trees and any work in the vicinity of trees is to accord with the relevant sections of the following standards:
BS 3998 - Recommendations for Tree Work.
BS 4428 - Code of practice for general landscape operations.
BS 5837 - Guide for Trees in Relation to Construction.
BS 1722 - Fences.
- 6.5 Trees provide habitat and dispersal opportunities for a range of animals including small mammals such as bats, birds and invertebrates and the trees.
- #### *Tall ruderal*
- 6.6 There is scattered ruderal vegetation along the southern boundary and along edges of the building. Species observed includes autumn hawkbit (*Scorzonoides autumnalis*), ragwort (*Senecio sp.*), American willowherb

(*Geranium ciliatum*), sorrel (*Rumex acetosa*), Rosebay willowherb (*Chamaenerion angustifolium*), Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Canadian fleabane (*Erigeron canadensis*), herb Robert (*Geranium robertianum*), St John's wort (*Hypericum perforatum*) and white clover (*Trifolium repens*). This type of habitat is not listed in the UK BAP or local BAP although it can be seen as part of the green infrastructure within an otherwise urban environment.

Reeds

- 6.7 A small trench dug out by the eastern boundary holds a small amount of water and supports tall reeds (*Typha latifolia*), sallow (*Salix sp.*) and hairy willowherb (*Epilobium hirsutum*). Reeds may be of value for widespread invertebrates and amphibians. However, this habitat is unlikely to remain as it is temporary and drying out.

Modified grassland

- 6.8 Areas of modified grassland are present around the main house into both the front and rear gardens. The grassland is a low cut sward of low species diversity. The grassland includes species such as perennial rye grass (*Lolium perenne*), annual meadow grass (*Poa annua*), ground ivy (*Glechoma hederacea*) with plantain (*Plantago media*), dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale agg.*), buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), common mouse-ear chickweed (*Cerastium fontanum*) and daisy (*Bellis perennis*). In addition, firethorn (*Pyracantha sp.*) is present within the grassland. Modified grassland is not listed in the UK BAP or local BAP although it can be seen as part of the built environment, which comprises green infrastructure of many different mosaic habitats supporting a variety of wildlife. Intensively managed and regularly mown grassland communities are typical of private grounds. This type of grassland is usually considered to be of limited botanical interest and is likely to support a low diversity of insect life. However, expanses of modified grassland can have high biomass of soil fauna (e.g. earthworms and leatherjackets) and thereby provide feeding opportunities for birds such as gulls or lapwings as well as small mammals and if left to grow tall, can support some invertebrate life.

Buildings and Hard Surfaces

- 6.9 There is one building on site, a Club house. The building was regarded as of high potential for roosting bats and three bat emergence visits were undertaken during June to August 2023. This survey found no evidence of roosting bats. Hard surfaces comprise mainly tarmac and wooden. Hard surfaces can be valuable for lower plants that find refuge in crevices and on walls

Invasive Non-native Species

- 6.10 A number of plants are listed as invasive non-native species. These must not be planted in the wild, or be caused to grow in the wild. This can include moving contaminated soil or plant cuttings. If invasive non-native plants are present they must be stopped from spreading and causing a nuisance or damage to other land or property. These plants are also listed in Schedule 9 Part II of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 and must not be released or allowed to escape into the wild. The most common are Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantagazzianum*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera Royle*) and rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*). Guidelines issued by Natural England (formerly Defra) should be used for its disposal. None of these were observed on site.

Summary

- 6.11 This survey has assessed the site's importance for floral and faunal communities and provides information on habitat features of particular value to different biological groups, including features of conservation interest. Table 8 provides a summary of the potential presence of protected species. Detailed Impact Assessment and mitigation proposals will be required where protected species are found. This assessment is based on available information. Where new evidence becomes available this assessment may need to be updated.

Fauna

Species	Relevance to Site	Recommendations
Badger	Badgers and their setts are protected by the Protection of Badgers Act, 1992. There are recent records of badger within 1km of the proposed site. There were no definitive signs of badger within the site.	Further survey work is not considered necessary.
Bat	<p>Bats are fully protected as a European Protected Species (EPS) under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).</p> <p>There are records of 10 species of bat within 1km of the site.</p> <p>An emergence survey of Winkfield Club was undertaken in 2023 and this found no roosting bats within the building.</p> <p>Mature trees on site have negligible potential for roosting bats. Boundary trees off-site have potential for roosting bats.</p>	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> i) Additional survey work is not considered necessary. ii) In the unlikely event that a bat is encountered during demolition of the building, works should cease immediately, and the advice of a suitably experienced ecologist sought. iii) Enhancement for roosting bats should be considered such as bat friendly planting and installation of bat boxes on building and on trees. iv) Any proposals should incorporate a sensitive lighting scheme to facilitate foraging along the mature tree line boundaries. The lighting strategy should include dark buffers, illuminance limits and zonation, appropriate luminaire specifications, screening, dimming and part night lighting. Ideally design should include LED lighting <2700 Kelvin such as warm e.g. lighting, directional and time, where possible.
Hazel Dormouse	The are no dormouse records within 1km of the site.	<p>The habitat within the site provides suboptimal opportunities for dormouse.</p> <p>Further survey work is not considered necessary.</p>

Species	Relevance to Site	Recommendations
Birds	<p>The development site presents limited opportunities for birds. Birds may nest in the trees on the southern and northern boundaries of the site.</p>	<p>All bird species are protected by the Wildlife & Countryside Act, 1981 (and amendments) <u>vegetation clearance should not be undertaken during the bird-breeding season from March to September inclusive</u>. Where this is not possible, great care should be taken to avoid damage to nesting birds. In addition, should there be any signs of nesting birds at the time of building/clearance works advice should be sought from a qualified ecologist. It is recommended that nesting boxes for song birds are installed as part of the proposed scheme. Future enhancement and long-term management should ensure that habitats provide a varied food source and nesting opportunities for a range of birds.</p>
Amphibians	<p>There are records of 4 amphibian species within 1km of the site.</p> <p>The site is located in a NatureSpace Red zone, which suggests the site is within an area with highly suitable habitat for Great Crested Newt deemed the most important areas for GCN. However, of the ponds surveyed by NatureSpace north of the site, none were found to support GCN</p> <p>On site there is a trench with minimal water and marginal vegetation, which is unsuitable for GCN. Although there are ca. 5 ponds within 500m, the site itself is unsuitable for great crested newts. Although survey work of ponds located up to 500 m from a development site can sometimes be necessary, Natural England recommends a proportionate approach to survey work:</p> <p>"In keeping with a proportionate and risk-based approach, surveys need reasonable boundaries. The Great crested newt mitigation guidelines explain that surveys of ponds up to around 500m from the development might need to be surveyed. The decision on whether to survey depends primarily on how likely it is that the development would affect newts using those ponds. For developments resulting in permanent or temporary habitat loss at distances over 250m from the nearest pond, carefully consider whether a survey is appropriate. Surveys of land at this distance from ponds are normally appropriate when all of the following conditions are met:</p>	<p>Additional survey work is therefore not considered necessary.</p> <p><u>Due to the potential presence of widespread amphibians locally precautionary mitigation is recommended.</u></p>

Amphibians cont.	<p>a) maps, aerial photos, walk-over surveys or other data indicate that the pond(s) has potential to support a large great crested newt population, (b) the footprint (contains particularly favourable habitat, especially if it constitutes the majority available locally, (c) the development would have a substantial negative effect on that habitat, and (d) there is an absence of dispersal barriers."</p> <p>Based on available information, the development size and quality of available terrestrial habitat indicates that the proposed development work is unlikely to have a significant negative impact on newts that breed in ponds in the local area.</p>	
Reptiles	There are records of 3 reptile species within 1km of the proposed site. Available habitat offers limited opportunities for sheltering reptiles.	Further survey work is not considered necessary.
European Water vole	There are records of water vole within 1km of the site. There are no watercourses on or within close proximity to the site.	Further survey work in not considered necessary.
Eurasian Otter	There are records of Eurasian otter within 1km of the site. There are no watercourses on or within close proximity to the site.	Further survey work in not considered necessary.
Hedgehog	There are recent records of hedgehog within 1km of the site. There is available habitat for hedgehogs within the proposed site.	<p>The presence of hedgehog is not an obstacle to development. However, if hedgehog is found on site they should be carefully removed to a suitable or purpose built habitat close by. No further survey work is recommended.</p> <p><u>However, a precautionary working method is recommended during site clearance works. If hedgehog is found on site they should be carefully removed to a suitable or purpose-built habitat close by.</u></p> <p>It is advised that the proposed landscape design should ensure that hedgehogs can move within the site and into surrounding areas without physical barriers.</p>

Species	Relevance to Site	Recommendations
Invertebrates	<p>Widespread invertebrates may use the site for pollination.</p> <p>Saproxyllic invertebrates such as stag beetle may inhabit deadwood.</p>	<p>No further survey is recommended.</p> <p>Any grubbing out of tree roots should investigate presence of stag beetle. If beetles are found these should be moved to a safe habitat already created, so any larvae or adults that are disturbed/dug up can be placed out of harm's way and/or the log pile moved at the same time to form the safe habitat.</p> <p>Future enhancement and long-term management should ensure that proposed habitats provide a varied food source including pollinators for a range of invertebrates species.</p>
White clawed crayfish	<p>There are no records of white clawed crayfish within 1km west of the site.</p> <p>There are no watercourses on or within close proximity to the site.</p>	<p>Further survey work is not considered necessary.</p>
Fish	<p>There are no records of fish within 1km of the site.</p> <p>There are no watercourses on or within close proximity to the site.</p>	<p>Further survey work is not considered necessary.</p>

Table 8 – Potential presence of protected species of fauna.

Section 7 - Outline Biodiversity Enhancement

- 7.1 This chapter provides outline biodiversity enhancement recommendations. Where protected species are confirmed on site, specific mitigation and enhancement may be required and this would be outlined in connection with mitigation reports.
- 7.2 It is recommended that management should enhance the biodiversity of the site and link the site with national and regional objectives on habitat creation. In particular, the objectives within UK and Berkshire Biodiversity Strategy should be promoted. In addition, initiative such as Living Landscapes and Accessible Greenspace should be used to safeguard wildlife and promote connectivity in the landscape.
- 7.3 Please find below general biodiversity enhancement recommendations as follows:
- i) Ensure the aims and objectives of Biodiversity, Green Infrastructure and Trees, Woodland and landscapes policies are promoted through positive management.
 - ii) Maintain linear dispersal along northern and southern boundaries.
 - iii) Planting of ornamental shrubs with a known value for wildlife within the external soft landscape with particular emphasis on native species or plants suitable for pollinators.
 - iv) Installation of wildlife shelters for birds to include flagship species such as swifts, house sparrow and song thrush. Boxes should be integrated into buildings, where possible.
 - v) Installation of roosting boxes for bats. Boxes should be integrated into buildings, where possible.
 - vi) Create biodiverse roofs.
 - vii) Installation of wildlife shelters for invertebrates.
 - viii) It is advised that the proposed landscape design should ensure that hedgehogs can move within the site and into surrounding areas without physical barriers.
 - ix) Create deadwood for saproxylic invertebrates including stag beetle and log piles for invertebrates on the biodiverse roof.
 - x) Omit the use of pesticides and herbicides within the proposed external landscape.
 - xi) Ensure sensitive lighting is implemented to minimise disturbance to bats.

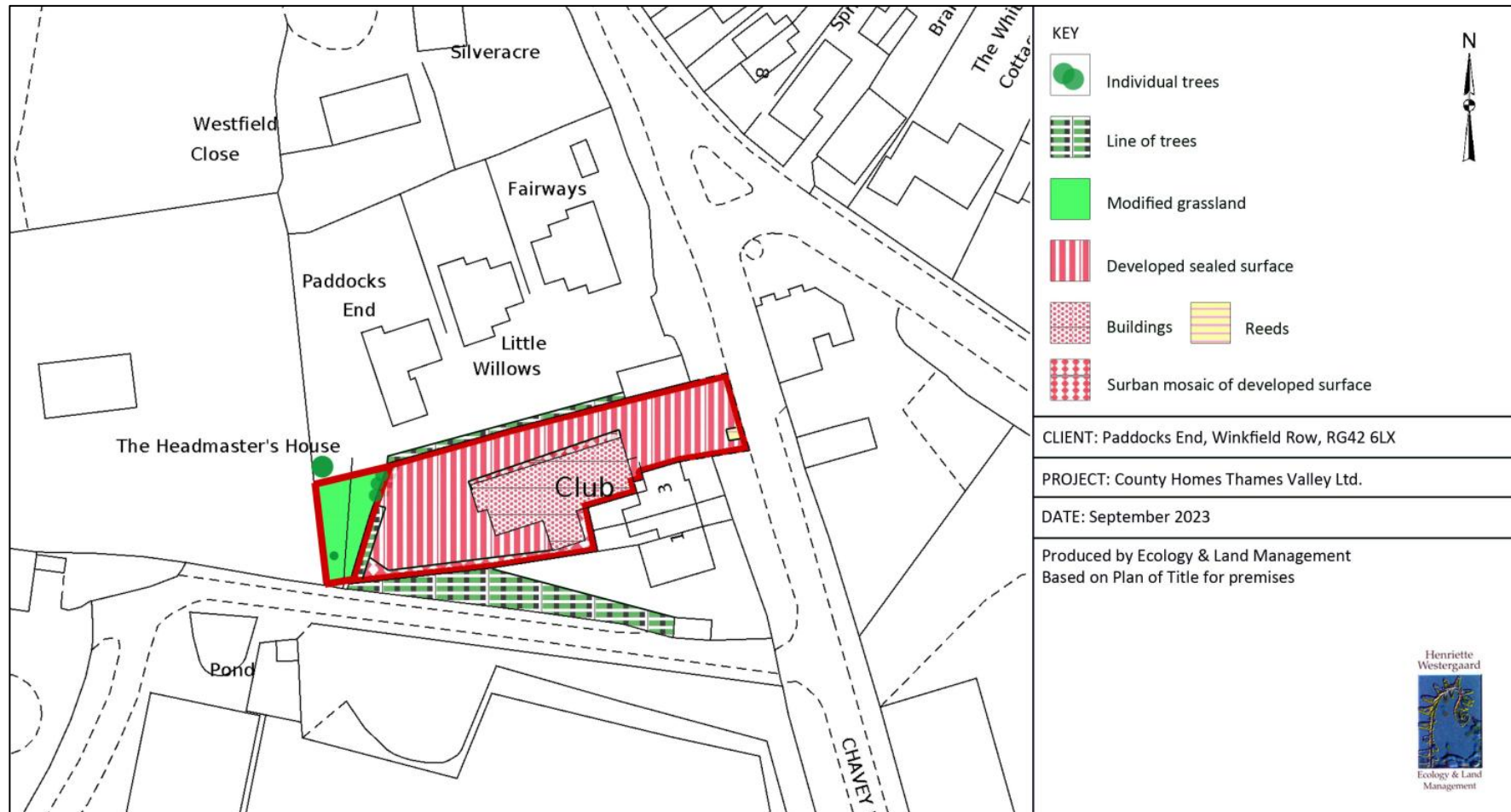
Appendix I - Guidance on Valuation of Ecological Importance

Level of Value	Examples
International	<p>An internationally designated site or candidate site (SPA, pSPA, SAC, cSAC, pSAC, Ramsar site, Biogenetic Reserve) or an area which the country agency has determined meets the published selection criteria for such designation, irrespective of whether or not it has yet been notified.</p> <p>A viable area of a habitat type listed in Annex I of the Habitats Directive, or smaller areas of such habitat which are essential to maintain the viability of a larger whole.</p> <p>Any regularly occurring population of an internationally important species, which is threatened or rare in the UK. i.e. it is a UK Red Data Book species or listed as occurring in 15 or fewer 10km squares in the UK (categories 1 and 2 in the UK BAP) or of uncertain conservation status or of global conservation concern in the UK BAP.</p> <p>A regularly occurring, nationally significant population/number of any internationally important species.</p>
National	<p>A nationally designated site (SSSI, ASSI, NNR, Marine Nature Reserve) or a discrete area, which the country conservation agency has determined meets the published selection criteria for national designation (e.g. SSSI selection guidelines) irrespective of whether or not it has yet been notified.</p> <p>A viable area of a priority habitat identified in the UK BAP, or of smaller areas of such habitat which are essential to maintain the viability of a larger whole.</p> <p>Any regularly occurring population of a nationally important species, which is threatened or rare in the region or county (see local BAP).</p> <p>A regularly occurring, regionally or county significant population/number of any nationally important species.</p> <p>A feature identified as of critical importance in the UK BAP.</p>
Regional	<p>Viable areas of key habitat identified in the Regional BAP or smaller areas of such habitat which are essential to maintain the viability of a larger whole;</p> <p>Viable areas of key habitat identified as being of Regional value in the appropriate Natural Area profile;</p> <p>Any regularly occurring, locally significant population of a species listed as being nationally scarce which occurs in 16-100 10km squares in the UK or in a Regional BAP or relevant Natural Area on account of its regional rarity or localisation;</p> <p>A regularly occurring, locally significant number of a regionally important species;</p> <p>Sites, which exceed the County-level designations but fall short of SSSI selection guidelines, where these occur.</p>
County / Metropolitan	<p>Semi-natural ancient woodland greater than 0.25 ha;</p> <p>County/Metropolitan sites and other sites which the designating authority has determined meet the published ecological selection criteria for designation, including Local Nature Reserves selected on County / metropolitan ecological criteria (County/Metropolitan sites will often have been identified in local plans);</p> <p>A viable area of habitat identified in County BAP;</p> <p>Any regularly occurring, locally significant population of a species which is listed in a County/Metropolitan "red data book" or BAP on account of its regional rarity or localisation;</p> <p>A regularly occurring, locally significant number of a County/Metropolitan important species.</p>
District / Borough	<p>Semi-natural ancient woodland smaller than 0.25 ha;</p> <p>Areas of habitat identified in a sub-County (District/Borough) BAP or in the relevant Natural Area profile;</p> <p>District sites that the designating authority has determined meet the published ecological selection criteria for designation, including Local Nature Reserves selected on District/ Borough ecological criteria (District sites, where they exist, will often have been identified in local plans)</p> <p>Sites/features that are scarce within the District/Borough or which appreciably enrich the District/Borough habitat resource;</p> <p>A diverse and/ or ecologically valuable hedgerow network;</p> <p>A population of a species that is listed in a District/Borough BAP because of its rarity in the locality or in the relevant Natural Area profile because of its regional rarity or localisation;</p> <p>A regularly occurring, locally significant number of a District / Borough important species during a critical phase of its life cycle.</p>
Parish/ Neighbourhood	<p>Areas of habitat considered to appreciably enrich the habitat resource within the context of the Parish or neighbourhood, e.g. species-rich hedgerows.</p> <p>Local Nature Reserves selected on Parish ecological criteria.</p>

Appendix II - UKHab Comparative Table

Phase 1	UKHab	UKHab Code
Scattered Trees	Individual trees	w
Improved grassland and Tall Ruderal	Grassland – modified grass/tall ruderal	g4
Marginal vegetation	Reedbeds	f2
Buildings & Hard Surfaces	Urban – Developed Sealed surface	u1b

Appendix III - Indicative Habitat Plan





Appendix VI - Photographic Evidence



Area of modified grassland on western side of site.



Northern boundary

Winkfield Club house building

Southern boundary



Hard standing west of Winkfield Club

Access road

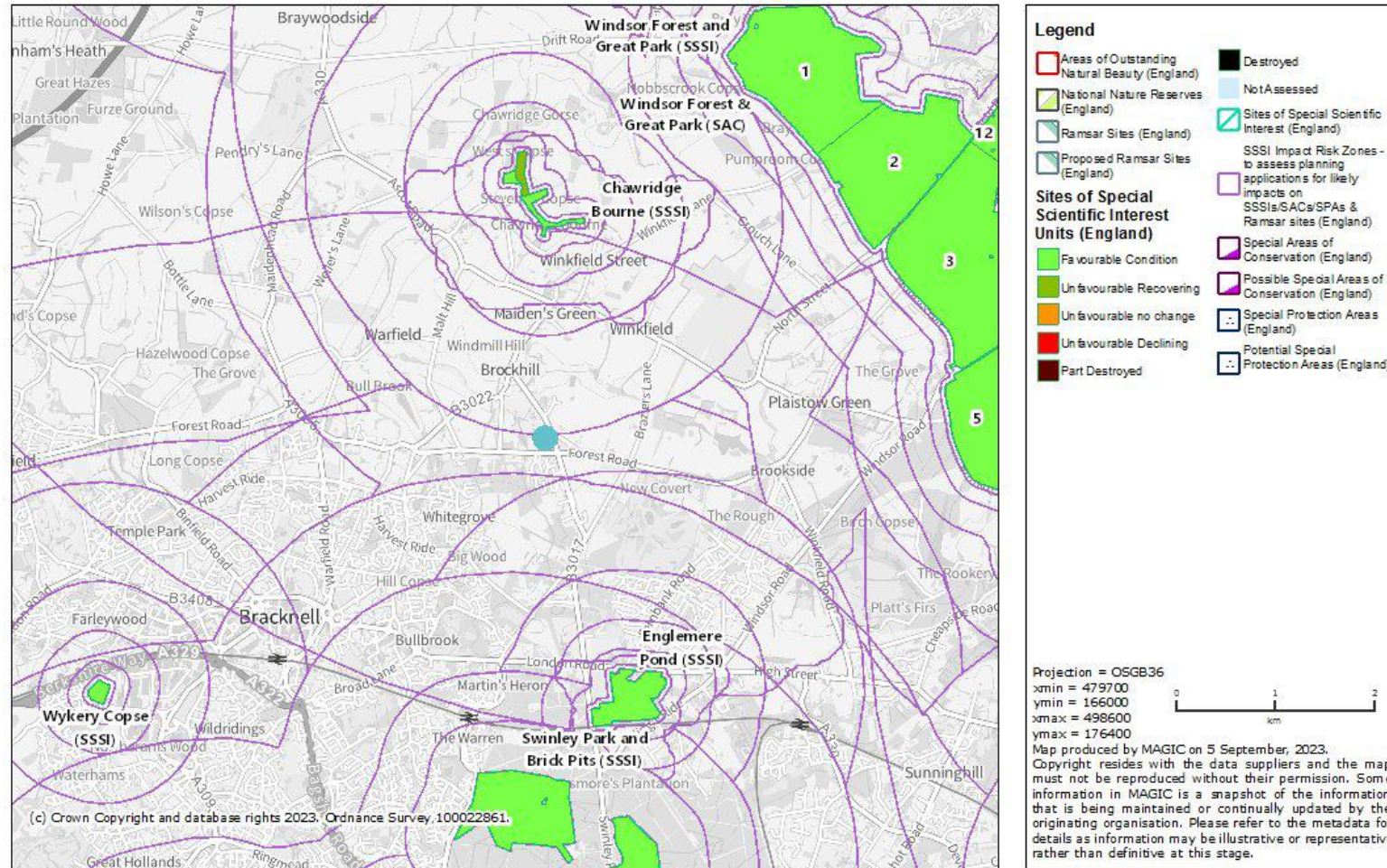
Ruderal vegetation

Reeds at front of site.

Appendix VII - Statutory Designated Sites



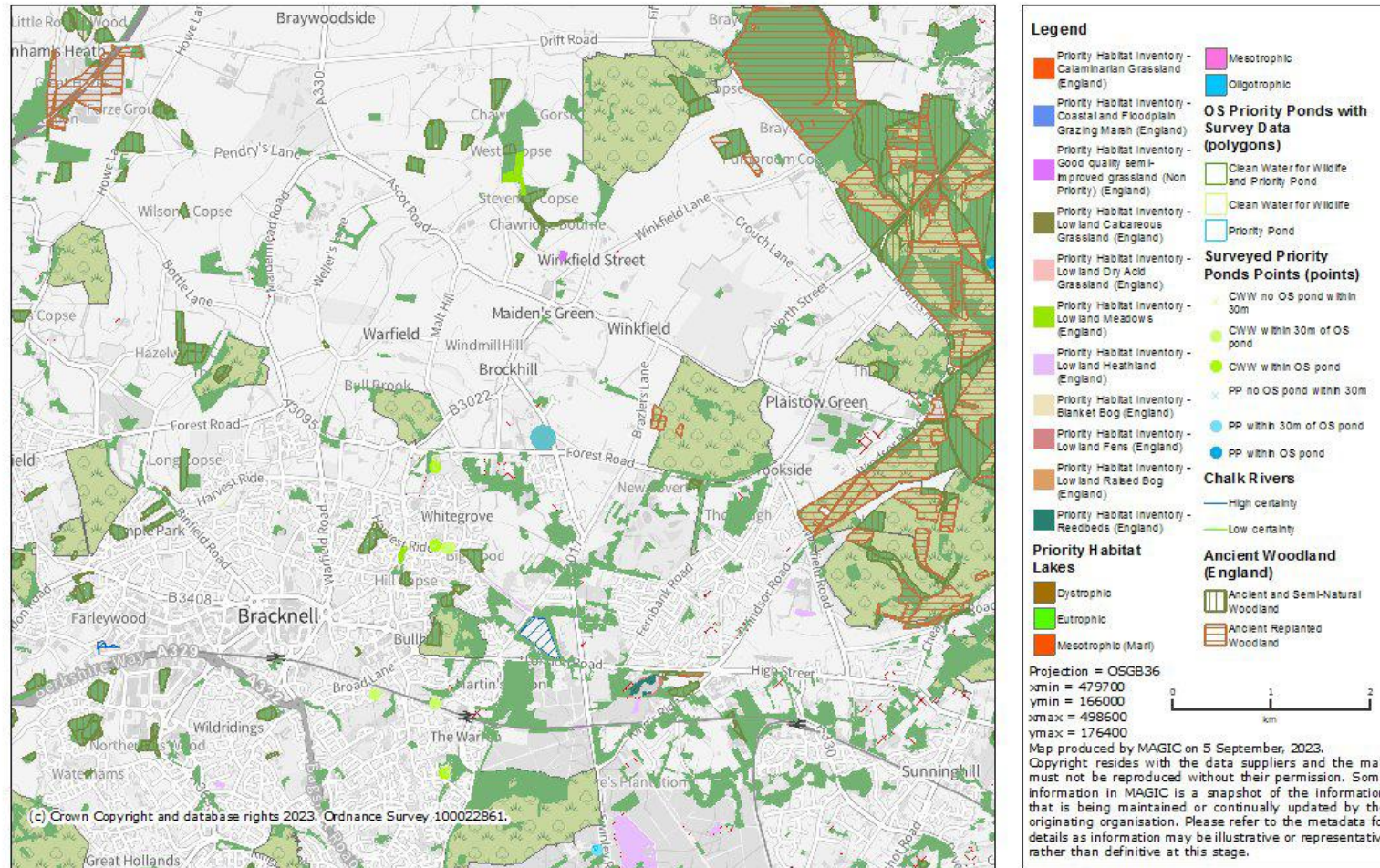
Statutory Designated Sites



Source: Magic.defra.gov.uk, online September 2023



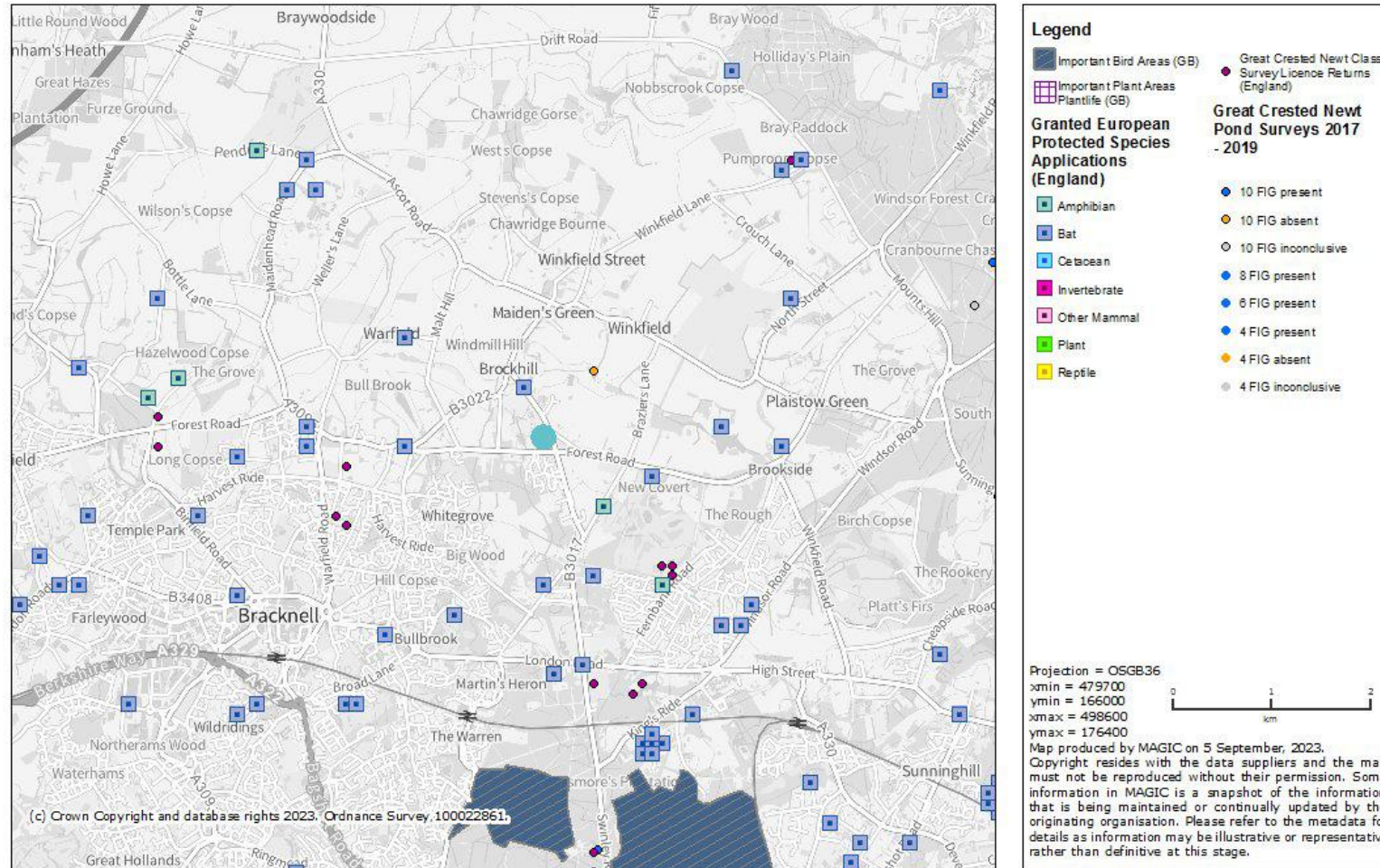
Priority Habitats



Source: Magic.defra.gov.uk, online September 2023



Protected species



Source: Magic.defra.gov.uk, online September 2023

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