



C.B.E. Consulting

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey  
Land adjacent to Lutterworth Road  
Blaby  
Leicestershire  
NGR SP56568 96629

Survey by  
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## Non-Technical Summary

The site surveyed comprises an irregular parcel of land previously occupied by allotments on the northern side and an area of Golf Course on the southern side, divided by an established footpath. The land is situated on the eastern side of Lutterworth Road, Blaby centred at NGR SP56568 96629.

The defined site area is divided into two sections. On the north side of the central footpath is an area of disused allotments which were previously overgrown during the 2019 survey of the site but which were cleared of dense vegetation in 202 and are slowly becoming recolonized by grassland, bramble and nettle. Within this area there are some significant trees around the boundaries and areas where birch and ash have seeded. On the southern side of the footpath is the golf course within which the trees and grounds are intensively managed. A number of trees have been deliberately planted here to provide boundary screening and divided up fairways.

The Applicant has requested an ecological survey to update an original survey completed between in June and July 2019 (*report reference P1908 /0819 – 02 dated 06<sup>th</sup> August 2019*). A new inspection was carried out on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2021 to determine whether there is anything of ecological value or any evidence of protected species present.

A review of the available data obtained from the Records Centre confirms that the site is not a statutory or non-statutory site. There are a small number of Parish / District level ecological sites within 1km and also a number of Local Wildlife Sites within this search radius.

The survey has identified the following habitats within the site area:

Amenity Grassland (Golf Course)

Boundary Hedgerows with trees

Juvenile Woodland (Golf Course)

Former Allotments

The Golf Course is an area that is intensively managed. The majority of the land within the area being considered for development comprises closely mown fairways dominated by amenity grasses.

The allotment areas were previously cultivated but have fallen into disuse in recent years. Large areas of the allotments are now being colonised. Large areas are now under either dense bramble or dense sapling trees.

There are a number of mature Ash trees of significant stature within the survey area. These are located along the front of the site facing Lutterworth Road, along the footpath running across the centre of the site, and on the eastern boundary of the allotment area. There are two boundary hedgerows, one along Lutterworth Road and the other at the eastern end of the Golf Course adjacent to the footpath. Neither hedgerow is classified as important' under the Hedgerow Regulations Guidelines.

The potential for protected species has been assessed following a review of the records available for this area and an inspection of the site area. The table below summarises this assessment.

| Species              | Present within 2km | Suitable habitat on site / evidence of presence  | Likelihood of presence on site | Further surveys or mitigation recommended   |
|----------------------|--------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Nesting Birds</b> | Yes                | Boundary hedgerows may provide suitable foraging and nesting locations.  | Moderate                       | YES – assessment of vegetation prior to removal   |
| <b>Reptiles</b>      | Yes                | A reptile presence / absence survey completed across the site in 2017 identified only one Common Lizard on four of the survey inspections. The former allotments are overgrown and would provide | Moderate                       | YES – Working methods to avoid harm to reptiles are recommended following the presence/ absence survey completed. |

|                                  |     |   |          |   |
|----------------------------------|-----|---|----------|---|
|                                  |     | suitable habitat for reptiles if these can be accessed.   |          |   |
| <b>Amphibians</b>                | Yes | The Golf Course area is intensively managed and there are no ponds close to the site. The allotment area contains no ponds or wetland areas to entice amphibians into the survey area.  | Low      | No  |
| <b>Bats</b>                      | Yes | There are no structures within the site area to offer potential to support roosting bats. Some trees along the allotment boundaries have LOW potential. The golf course and allotment area are likely to support foraging bats. | Moderate | YES - An activity survey is recommended.<br>Any tree with low roost potential to be removed will need further surveys |
| <b>Badger and larger mammals</b> | No  | The allotment area is too overgrown and isolated. The golf course is intensively managed and provides only limited potential for foraging. present within the site. Hedgerows may provide limited foraging opportunities.       | Low      | No  |

**Constraints:**

No significant ecological constraints have been identified during the survey. No rare or unusual plants or habitats have been noted within the site area to provide a constraint.

the boundary hedgerow along the road on the western perimeter of the golf course provides useful screening to part of the area being considered for development and if sections of this can be retained this may prove beneficial in terms of visual amenity along the road front.

the site does provide a useful commuting route for local wildlife such as bats and birds. The boundary hedgerows and trees are also likely to provide nesting opportunities for birds. A bat activity survey has been completed and it is recommended that measures to minimise light pollution are included within any proposed development and precautions to avoid harm or disturbance to nesting birds are also recommended.

The presence of a small population of Common Lizard around the margins of the golf course has been established by the 2017 survey and therefore vegetation clearance will have to incorporate a methodology to protect reptiles and allow these to move away from harm to a location outside any construction area.

**Opportunities:**

Within any proposed development of the site area measures to increase diversity and encourage invertebrates, birds and bats should be considered:

There is potential to retain a number of the better-quality native trees within any development proposals prepared to retain some canopy cover within the area;

There is potential for planting hedgerows along the development boundaries and potentially also some suitable native trees to provide screening and improve diversity within the local landscape.

There may be potential to erect bat and bird boxes within any development, particularly close to the Golf Course where foraging areas will be readily accessible;

There may be potential to utilise surface water to create new ponds / wetland areas within any development scheme.

Provision of refugia for reptiles and access points for hedgehogs.

**Conclusions:**

There is no potential for any statutory or non-statutory sites of ecological value to be impacted by the proposed development of this site as there are none within a 1Km radius that have any links to or similarities with the area surveyed.

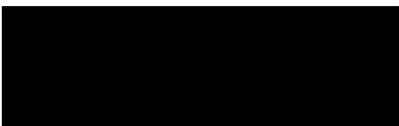
The area surveyed comprises an area of Golf Course land and an area of derelict allotments cleared in 2020 situated on the southern edge of the village of Blaby. These areas have limited diversity due to the past use and current management of the land.

On the basis of the inspection completed in May 2021 and previous inspections of 2016 and 2019 it is considered likely that development of the site area surveyed could be carried out in a manner that does not have any significant impact on local biodiversity. From the evidence of the Phase 1 Habitat Survey it does not appear at this time that there would be any loss of significant habitat areas or fragmentation of any such habitats within the locality by isolating these as a result of development.

The new inspection completed in May 2021 identified no physical evidence or field signs of any protected species within the survey area. The reptile survey of 2017 did identify a small population of Common Lizard along the margins of the golf course and some may have colonised the former allotments area. Measures to protect reptiles during any vegetation clearance and allow these to move away from the site will be required.

The bat activity survey of September 2020 identified five species of bat foraging in the locality but no roosts were identified and the level of foraging activity was not high. Measures to avoid a significant increase in light pollution along the south boundary of the development facing the golf course are recommended.

Measures to improve diversity and habitat value around the margins of any proposed development and in particular near to the boundary of the Golf Course would be beneficial if these could be incorporated into any development proposals. Such measures should include native planting and habitat creation within landscaped areas, provision of bat roost and bird nest boxes, provision of reptile refugia and measures to enable hedgehogs to move across the developed site within gardens and landscaped areas.



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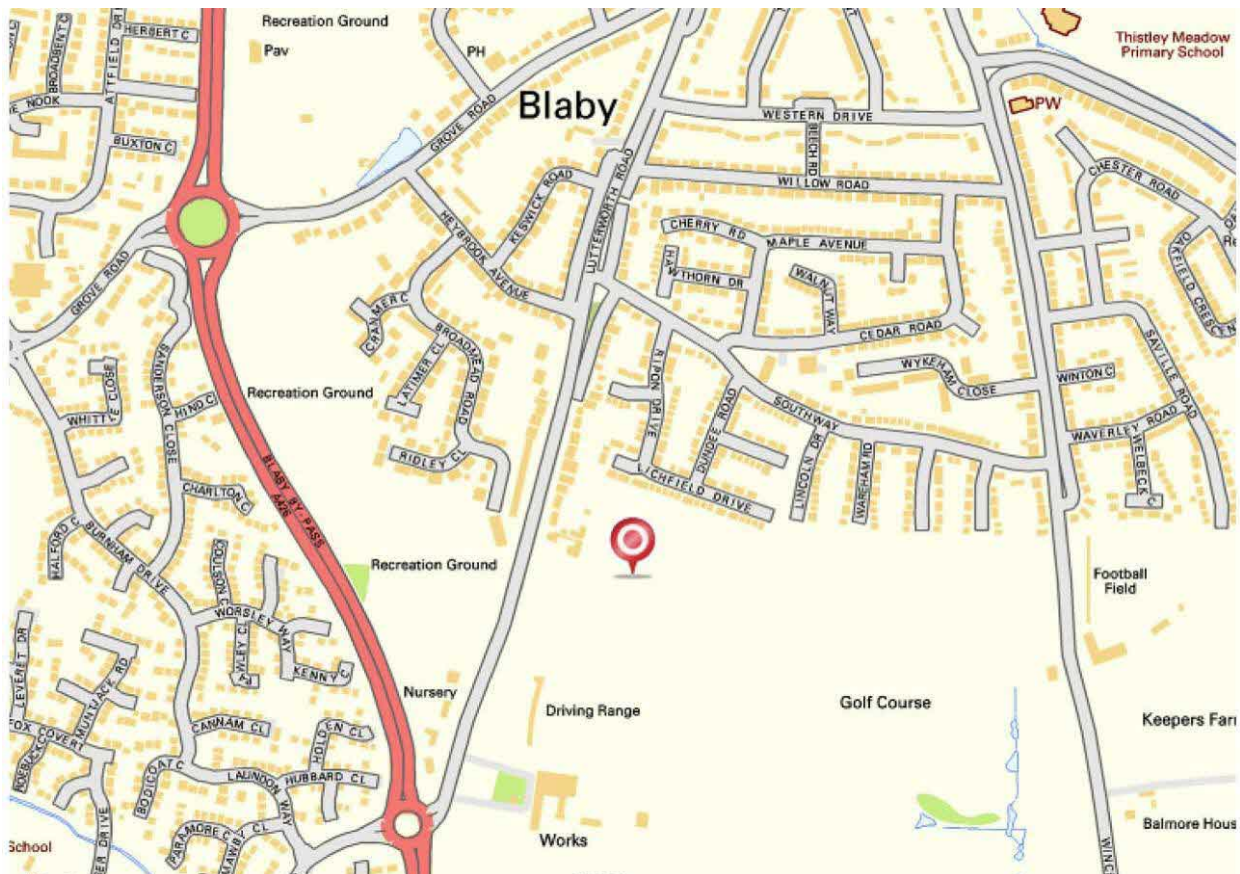
## Part 1: Site Details

### 1. Introduction

#### 1.1 Site Description and Location

The site surveyed comprises an irregular parcel of land previously occupied by allotments on the northern side and an area of Golf Course on the southern side, divided by an established footpath. The land is situated on the eastern side of Lutterworth Road, Blaby centred at NGR SP56568 96629.

The location of the site is shown on the plan within **Figure 1** and an aerial photograph has been provided within **Figure 2** to place the site in context.



**Figure 1: Site location.**

Copyright Ordnance Survey Mapping 2019

| Date                 | Time  | Location  | Weather  |
|----------------------|---|---|--|
| 14 May 2021          | 04.30pm   | Lutterworth Road<br>Blaby<br>NGR SP56568 96629. | Clear sky with occasional cloud. Slight breeze 3mph from the south-east.<br>Temperature 19 degrees C<br>humidity 63% at 1008hPa. |
| <b>Accessibility</b> | All areas of the site accessible to search for evidence of protected species. |   |  |

The defined site area is divided into two sections. On the north side of the central footpath is an area of disused allotments which were previously overgrown during the 2019 survey of the site but which were cleared of dense vegetation in 202 and are slowly becoming recolonized by grassland, bramble and nettle. Within this area there are some significant trees around the boundaries and areas where birch and ash have seeded.

On the southern side of the footpath is the golf course within which the trees and grounds are intensively managed. A number of trees have been deliberately planted here to provide boundary screening and divided up fairways.

The Applicant has requested an ecological survey to update an original survey completed between in June and July 2019 (*report reference P1908 /0819 – 02 dated 06<sup>th</sup> August 2019*). A new inspection was carried out on 14<sup>th</sup> May 2021 to determine whether there is anything of ecological value or any evidence of protected species present.



**Figure 2: Site Contextual Aerial Photograph**

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## 1.2 Objective of the Report

This report is an extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and ecological appraisal of the area identified in yellow within the aerial photograph above. The objective of the ecological appraisal is to identify the habitat(s) present on, and surrounding, the site area being assessed. Development of the site for the purpose of constructing new residential houses will require planning approval and this report has been prepared to provide information as part of any future planning application process. To this end the report is required to comply with the recommendations and principles set out in the National Planning Policy Framework 2019 as amended (NPPF). The report contains Biological Records and has been prepared to meet the standard required by BS42020 (British Standard for Biodiversity and Development).

Chapter 11 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) describes the Government's national policies on promoting 'an effective use of land in meeting the need for homes and other uses, while safeguarding and improving the environment.' NPPF is accompanied by Planning Practice Guidance on 'Biodiversity, ecosystems and green infrastructure' (2014) and ODPM Circular 06/2005.

The National Planning Policy Framework 2019 Chapter 15 sets out the Government's objectives for planning in regard to the protection of habitats and biodiversity. The planning objectives in relation to biodiversity and the natural environment are stated within paragraph 170 of the NPPF 2019 and are as follows:

*“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan).*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.*
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate.*
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.*
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.”*

Within the NPPF the planning policy context requires that Planning policies and decisions should be based on up to date information about the natural environment and other characteristics of the area including an assessment of existing and potential components of ecological networks (NPPF paragraph 43).

The above approach encapsulates the ‘mitigation hierarchy’ described in British Standard BS 42020:2013 which involves the following stepwise process:

- **Avoidance** – avoiding adverse effects through good design,
- **Mitigation** – where it is unavoidable, mitigation measures should be employed to minimise adverse effects,
- **Compensation** – where residual effects remain after mitigation it may be necessary to provide compensation to offset any harm,
- **Enhancement** – planning decisions often present the opportunity to deliver benefits for biodiversity, which can also be explored alongside the above measures to resolve potential adverse effects.

The measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development (BS 42020:2013, section 5.5).

This ecological appraisal provides information on the existing ecological and biodiversity value of the land on the site and also reports any evidence of protected species or significant habitats present. It has been provided to provide information to the Planning Authority in order to help meet the requirements of the NPPF and enable the Authority to assess the site area in accordance with the Code of Practice within BS42020 and guidelines issued by CIEEM in 2012. The report also identifies any habitats or species present that require more detailed surveys prior to any improvements being undertaken.



## Part 2: Survey Methodology and Results

### 2. Appraisal Methodology

#### 2.1 Baseline Study

Within NPPF it states that there are three dimensions to sustainable development: “economic, social and environmental.” The environmental role includes “contributing to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment” and, as part of this, helping to improve biodiversity.

Within the NPPF 2019 it states that: “*Great weight should be given to conserving and enhancing landscape and scenic beauty in National Parks, the Broads and Areas of Outstanding Natural Beauty, which have the highest status of protection in relation to these issues. The conservation and enhancement of wildlife and cultural heritage are also important considerations in these areas, and should be given great weight....*” Paragraph 172

Within paragraphs 174 and 175 of NPPF 2019 the principles by which the protection and enhancement of biodiversity and geodiversity within the context of proposed development are described. These principles state in Paragraph 174 that any development proposal should:

- a) **Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks**, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and steppingstones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- b) **promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement** of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for **securing measurable net gains for biodiversity**.

Paragraph 175: When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) *if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.*
- b) *development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest.*
- c) *development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and*
- d) *development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.*

The biodiversity of a site area and the potential presence of protected species are factors relevant to all developments irrespective of the size scale and will apply to any development on the site being assessed. Available information on the baseline ecology of the site and the

presence of protected species within the locality has been obtained from the local biological records centre and reviewed (**Appendix 2**) and the records obtained are provided as separate appendices.

These data sources have been reviewed and the character and nature conservation value of habitats and species assessed. The aims of this appraisal of information are:

To characterize all the existing available information regarding habitats and species that may be present at the site and provide up to date information about the environmental characteristics of the site area.

To identify any habitats potentially present of nature conservation value in terms of local, regional and national context and within the context of local, regional and national policy; and,

To identify any areas of ecological interest in order to either a) make recommendations to minimize the potential impact of any site works, or b) identify the need for a further survey work.

Following the appraisal of the available information, a site inspection has taken place to obtain specific site data at the site.

## 2.2 Habitat Assessment Methodology

The site was previously inspected in September 2016 and May 2017 and a further inspection was completed in July 2019 in order to prepare the 2019 Phase 1 Habitat Survey report which is now being updated. In addition, a reptile presence / absence survey was completed on this site and reported in June 2017 (Appendix 3) and a Bat Activity Survey was completed in July 2019.

The 2021 inspection has used the extended Phase 1 Habitat Assessment methodology as adopted by Natural England (Joint Nature Conservation Committee 1993) and in accordance with the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2012) issued by the Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (IEEM) and BS42020 (British Standard for Biodiversity and Development).

The survey required a systematic walkover of the site to classify the habitat types present and was completed using standard Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology whereby the habitat types present are identified and mapped, together with an assessment of the species composition of each habitat. This technique provides an inventory of the basic habitat types present and allows identification of areas of greater potential which require further survey. Any such areas identified can then be examined in more detail through Phase 2 surveys. This method was extended, in line with the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal to record details on the actual or potential presence of any notable or protected species or habitats.

Using the above method, the site was classified into areas of similar botanical community types, with a representative species list compiled for each habitat identified summarised within **Appendix 1**. A habitat base map and target notes have been prepared and included as **Figure 3** within section 3 of this report.

## 2.3 Protected Species Assessment Methodology

A methodical inspection was carried out to look for any evidence of protected species using the site and to identify any habitats with potential to provide significant shelter or foraging opportunities for these. The survey was carried out by Christopher Barker, an experienced ecological consultant and Chartered Environmentalist holding Class Licenses issued by Natural England.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 consolidates the various amendments that have been made to the Regulations. The original (1994) Regulations transposed the EC Habitats Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) into national law.

“European protected species” are those which are present on Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. They are subject to the provisions of Regulation 41 of those Regulations. All European Protected Species are also protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Taken together, these pieces of legislation make it an offence to:

- a. Intentionally or deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal included amongst these species
- b. Possess or control any live or dead specimens or any part of, or anything derived from these species
- c. deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species
- d. deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal, or
- e. intentionally, deliberately or recklessly damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal, or obstruct access to such a place

For the purposes of paragraph (c), disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely—

- a. to impair their ability—
  - i. to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or
  - ii. in the case of animals of a hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or,
- b. to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Although the law provides strict protection to these species, it also allows this protection to be set aside (derogation) through the issuing of licences. The licences in England are currently determined by Natural England (NE) for development works. In accordance with the requirements of the Regulations (2010), a licence can only be issued where the following requirements are satisfied:

- i) The proposal is necessary ‘to preserve public health or public safety or other imperative reasons of overriding public interest including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment’
- ii) ‘There is no satisfactory alternative’
- iii) The proposals ‘will not be detrimental to the maintenance of the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in their natural range.’

General faunal activity, such as mammals or birds observed visually or by call during the course of the surveys was recorded. Specific attention was also paid to the potential presence of any protected, rare or notable species, and specific consideration was given to bats, birds, badgers, amphibians and reptiles as described below.

**Breeding Birds:** All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. The inspection of the site included a search of hedgerows, ground vegetation and tree canopies looking for evidence of active or former nests.

**Bats:** All species of Bat within the UK are protected under the Conservation of Habitat and Species Regulations 2010 (Habitat Regulations) that amended and incorporated the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. These regulations make it an offence to:

Intentionally kill, injure or take a bat [WCA section 9(1)]

Possess or control any live or dead specimen or anything derived from a bat [WCA section 9(2)]

Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection by a bat [WCA section 9(4)(a)]

Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose [WCA section 9(4)(a)]

Any building or significant tree present within the survey area have been assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats based on the presence of features such as holes, crevices, cracks, splits or loose bark. Potential bat roost locations in relation to buildings are described within this report (taken from Bat Survey Guidelines 2016) as:

**Confirmed Roost** – a structure with physical evidence confirming the presence of bats or bats visibly seen.

**High** – a structure with one or more potential roost features that are obviously suitable for use by a large number of bats on a regular basis and which is situated in an area of continuous high-quality foraging habitat suitable for bats;

**Moderate** – a structure with one or more potential roost features that could be used by bats, but which is unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status and which is in an area of connected habitat suitable for foraging by bats;

**Low** – a structure with one or more potential roost features that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost features do not provide sufficient potential to be used by a larger number of bats or on a regular basis and the surrounding habitat is not of high value to foraging bats.

**Negligible** – a structure with negligible habitat features which is in a poor location making it highly unlikely roosting bats will be present.

**Common Reptiles:** All species of British reptile are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The common species (adder, grass snake, slow worm and common lizard) are only protected against intentional killing and injuring (but not taking).

The survey included a search of all areas where suitable habitat for reptiles to shelter under or bask may be present, lifting logs and other suitable features to search underneath. The surveyor also maintained a careful watch whilst moving across the site to look for signs of reptiles moving to cover. A reptile presence / absence survey was completed in 2017 during which only one Common Lizard was found during four inspections within the survey area.

**Great crested newts** are afforded legal protection under European and UK law under the auspices of The Conservation (Natural Habitats &c.) (Amendment) Regulations which came into force on 21 August 2007, superseding the Habitat Regulations 1994. The 2007 amendments have increased the protection afforded to European Protected Species.

The law provides protection to adults, juveniles, efts (immature GCN) and eggs and it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly or as an incidental result of actions:

Intentionally or deliberately capture, kill, or injure Great Crested Newts

Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used for shelter or protection (including resting or breeding places) whether occupied or not

Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb Great Crested Newts when in a place of shelter

Possess a Great Crested Newt, or any part of it, unless acquired lawfully

Sell, barter, exchange or transport or offer for sale Great Crested Newts or any part of them.

The survey included a search of any ponds and wetland areas within the site or immediate surrounding area nearby (where these features were accessible) and an assessment of ponds in the local area using Ordnance Survey Maps and aerial photographs to consider the potential for these species to access the site area.

**Badger:** Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. This makes it an offence to wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or to attempt to do so; or to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett. Sett interference includes disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, as well as damaging or destroying a sett or obstructing access to it. A badger sett is defined in the legislation as “*a structure or place, which displays signs indicating current use by a badger*”.

The survey searching for evidence of badger activity comprised two main elements. The first element involved searching for evidence of Badger setts. For any setts that were encountered, each sett entrance was noted and mapped. The following information was recorded:

- Number and location of well used / active entrances; these are clear from any debris or vegetation and are obviously in regular use and may, or may not, have been excavated recently;
- Number and location of inactive entrances; these are not in regular use and have debris such as leaves and twigs in the entrance or have plants growing in or around the edge of the entrance;
- Number of disused entrances; these have not been in use for some time, are partly or completely blocked and cannot be used without considerable clearance. If the
- entrance has been disused for some time all that may be visible is a depression in the ground where the hole used to be and the remains of the spoil heap.

The second element of the survey involved searching for signs of Badger activity such as well-worn paths and push-throughs, snagged hair, footprints, latrines and foraging signs, so as to build up a picture of any use of the site by Badger.

**Invasive Species:** Attention was paid to the presence of any invasive species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). However, the detectability of such species varies due to a number of factors, e.g. time of year, site management, etc., and hence the absence of invasive species should not be assumed even if no such species were detected during the Phase 1 survey.

A range of invasive non-native plant species are listed in Schedule 9 (Part 2) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, which makes it an offence to plant or cause these introduced invasive plants to grow in the wild, effectively making it illegal to spread the plants during development operations.

## 2.4 Consultations

The evaluation of ecological features and resources is based on professional judgement whilst also drawing on the latest available industry guidance and research. The approach taken in this report is based on that described by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2016). In evaluating ecological features. The *Geographic Frame of Reference* is a key factor taken into account when assessing the potential ecological value of a site being surveyed. The value of an ecological feature or resource is determined within a defined geographical context using the following frame of reference:

- International;

- National;
- Regional;
- County (or Metropolitan);
- District (or Unitary Authority, City or Borough);
- Local (or Parish);
- Site level only.

Within this frame of reference, certain sites may carry a statutory ecological designation, e.g. Special Area of Conservation (SAC) for internationally important sites or Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for sites of national importance. Sites of more localised nature conservation importance do not receive statutory protection but may be designated by Local Planning Authorities or other bodies, e.g. Wildlife Trusts. Such non-statutory designations or 'Local Sites' include Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs) and Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCIs), for example.

A review of the available data obtained from the Records Centre confirms that the site is not a statutory or non-statutory site. There are a small number of Parish / District level ecological sites within 1km and also a number of Local Wildlife Sites within this search radius. These are summarised within the table below and full details including location maps are included within **Appendix 2**.

| Site reference | Category                | Distance from site | Description  |
|----------------|-------------------------|--------------------|--|
| 26659          | Parish / District Level | 500m north-west    | Area of grassland on the north side of Blaby separated from the site by extensive residential areas and roads.           |
| 26648          | Parish / District Level | 1000m north-east   | Area of improved grassland on the north side of Blaby separated from the site by extensive residential areas and roads.  |
| 26507          | Parish / District Level | 850m south-west    | Flowing brook situated south-west of Blaby with significant housing and roads as a barrier to the site under assessment. |
| 90898          | LWS                     | 100m south         | Six ponds situated within the golf course area to the south of the land being considered for development.                |
| 90900          | LWS                     | 100m west          | Area of mesotrophic grassland with 10 indicator species separated from the site by sports facilities and roads.          |
| 90640          | LWS                     | 400m east          | Species rich hedgerow on the south-eastern side of Blaby.  |

A review of the data for protected species has identified a small number of significant records relating to the immediate vicinity of the site which are summarised below and included in more detail within the Biological Records at **Appendix 2**.

| Species              |             | Number of records | Date period |
|----------------------|-------------|-------------------|-------------|
| Lissotriton vulgaris | Smooth Newt | 46                | 2017        |
| Rana temporaria      | Common Frog | 11                | 2018        |
| Alcedo atthis        | Kingfisher  | 10                | 2017        |
| Milvus milvus        | Red Kite    | 1                 | 2018        |
| Turdus pilaris       | Fieldfare   | 1                 | 2018        |
| Anguis fragilis      | Slow worm   | 1                 | 2017        |
| Natrix helvetica     | Grass Snake | 2                 | 2018        |
| Arvicola amphibius   | Water Vole  | 21                | 2018        |
| Chiroptera           | Bat         | 4                 | 2015        |

|                           |                         |   |      |
|---------------------------|-------------------------|---|------|
| Lutra lutra               | Otter                   | 3 | 2016 |
| Meles meles               | Badger                  | 1 | 2018 |
| Myotis                    | Myotis Bat species      | 1 | 2013 |
| Nyctalus leisleri         | Lesser Noctule          | 1 | 2013 |
| Nyctalus noctula          | Noctule Bat             | 2 | 2016 |
| Pipistrellus              | Pipistrelle Bat species | 5 | 2007 |
| Pipistrellus pipistrellus | Pipistrelle             | 2 | 2013 |
| Pipistrellus pipistrellus | Common Pipistrelle      | 1 | 2016 |
| Pipistrellus pygmaeus     | Soprano Pipistrelle     | 1 | 2013 |

There are no records of **Great Crested Newt (GCN)** within the search area and the site surveyed contains no still water features such as ponds or lakes. However, there are ponds within 500m within the golf course area to the south. These are on the opposite side of well-maintained fairways and green which will potentially restrict commuting by species such as Great Crested Newts although there are still potential access routes around the margins of the course and via the rough where the grass sward is denser.

The site is not particularly well-suited to amphibians such as GCN as there are no water bodies and the southern section within the golf course contains relatively little cover except for the taller grasses in the western section near Lutterworth Road. The allotments previously did not provide significant cover but since falling into dereliction do now contain encroaching scrub. The potential presence of this species in the survey area is likely to be low.

There are no significant records of **reptiles** within the local area but the reptile presence / absence survey completed across the site area by CBE Consulting in 2017 did identify a small population of Common Lizard associated with the margins of the Golf Course. There may be potential for a small population of reptiles to be present within the survey area.

The southern section of the site is generally quite open and dominated by mown amenity grassland within the golf course. There is an area of rough and scrub/ sapling trees at the eastern end which could provide cover and nesting habitat for birds and the overgrown allotment area will also be of increasing attraction to birds. However, both areas are immediately adjacent to residential houses so the issue of bird predation will be a factor to take into consideration. The records for breeding birds in the area are very sparse.

There are records of **foraging bats** in the area with a small number of records for Common Pipistrelle, Soprano Pipistrelle, Noctule and Leislars Bat. Within the records are three Pipistrelle Roosts, and two other roosts of species not identified within the outskirts of Blaby and other nearby arears within 1km. From a survey completed in September 2020 it is clear that the golf course area and local gardens will provide potentially good foraging areas for a wide range of bat species. There are a small number of mature trees within the area surveyed and some of these may have features of potential interest to roosting bats.

There are no records of **Badger** setts in the area. There are records of Water Vole and Otter associated with the Whetstone Brook but this is 850m away and separated from the survey area by residential housing and roads with no direct connectivity. It is highly unlikely the survey area could potentially support foraging Otter and Water Vole.

There are no significant invertebrate records for the area and the local landscape comprises open arable land. The buildings and golf course / allotment area surveyed is not rich in biodiversity and offers relatively limited nectar sources so the value of the site to invertebrates is only considered to be low.

Figure 3 Habitat Plan





### 3. Survey Findings

#### 3.1 Habitat Classifications and Target Notes

The following habitats were recorded at the site during the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey:

Amenity Land (Golf Course);  
Former Cultivated Land (Allotments now disused and reverting to grassland / scrub)  
Semi-improved tall grassland  
Mature Trees

A plan of the site has been prepared on which these habitats are mapped and target notes are provided below with photographs.

#### **Target Note: Amenity Land (Golf Course)**

The Golf Course is an area that is intensively managed as can be seen in the photographs below. The majority of the land within the area being considered for development comprises closely mown fairways dominated by amenity grasses such as dwarf perennial ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*) and bent (*Agrostis* sp). The sward is very even and contains minimal diversity due to the management of this land. There are occasional areas of daisy (*Bellis perennis*) and Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*).



Areas at the boundary have slightly taller grasses within which other species such as Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*) and Meadow Grass (*Poa* sp) have colonised due to the less intensive cutting regime. There are occasional common forbs such as Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), Dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) and Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) present within these areas but not in large numbers. This area of the site is best described as being J1.2 'Amenity Grassland' although there are some specimen trees and taller grassland areas present.

#### **Target Note: Scrub and Sapling Trees / Previously Allotments)**

The allotment areas were previously cultivated but have fallen into disuse in recent years. In 2019 the inspection identified large areas of the allotments were colonised by rough grasses and dense bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*). The site was described as follows in the 2019 report:

*“under either dense bramble or dense sapling trees. At the western end is an area of dense Birch (*Betula pendula*) with occasional Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Damson (*Prunus domestica*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) present. Most of these trees are young specimens crowded together but*

there are occasional larger semi-mature specimens that were probably present when the allotments were in use. Near the eastern end is a similar area of dense young saplings but this area is more evenly divided between Birch and Ash.

At the end of 2020 the dense vegetation was cleared to ground level and the majority of the site now comprises dense unmanaged grassland dominated by Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Perennial Ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), Meadow Grass (*Poa* sp) and Couch (*Elymus repens*) within which juvenile bramble, willowherb and nettle are starting to re-emerge.

From the evidence of the re-emergent plants identified the land still supports the same range of fairly common forbs and perennials including Chickweed (*Stellaria media*), Clover (*Trifolium repens*), Medick (*Medicago lupulina*), Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), Bindweed (*Calystegia sepium*), Cleaver (*Galium aparine*), Nettle (*Urtica dioica*), Spear Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*) and Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*) with occasional Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*), Cut Leaved-Cranesbill (*Geranium dissectum*), Mouse-ear Hawkweed (*Hieracium pilosella*), Broad Leaved Dock (*Rumex obtusifolius*), Hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*), Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*) and Nipplewort (*Lapsana communis*).



cleared allotments 2021



cleared allotments 2021



cleared allotments 2021



cleared allotments 2021



Overgrown allotments in 2019



overgrown allotments in 2019

Along the northern side of the abandoned allotments is a grass track that used to serve these and also provide vehicular access to the rear gardens of the residential houses along Lichfield Drive.

The semi-mature trees at the western end of the allotment area have remained. Birch (*Betula pendula*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) dominates this small area.

**Target Note: Mature and Semi-mature Trees**

A total of forty-three individual trees and five tree groups have been identified and assessed as part of the tree survey and details of these are provided with the BS5837 Tree Survey report reference P2129 /0721 /01 dated 19 July 2021.



Trees along Lutterworth Road



Trees along golf course margin



Young trees on golf course boundary



young trees on golf course boundary



Trees at eastern end of allotment area



trees at western end of allotment area

There are a number of mature Ash trees of significant stature within the survey area. These are located along the front of the site facing Lutterworth Road, along the footpath running across the centre of the site, and on the eastern boundary of the allotment area. Within the Golf Course there are two areas of specimen trees planted to screen and shelter the northern edge of the fairway near the footpath. There is also an area of young woodland contain a number of Oak, Ash and Lime trees in an area of rough at the western end of the Golf Course adjacent to Lutterworth Road.

#### **Target Note: Boundary Hedgerows**

There are two boundary hedgerows, one along Lutterworth Road and the other at the eastern end of the Golf Course adjacent to the footpath.

#### ***Hedgerow Regulations***

A measure of statutory protection is afforded to hedgerows under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997, where any ecological or archaeological features are defined as being 'important'. The Removal of important hedgerows requires consent from the local planning authority, except in certain prescribed circumstances. The importance of hedgerows can be assessed according to the criteria identified in Part II Schedule I of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. A hedgerow is identified as being 'Ecologically Important' if has existed for 30 years or more and satisfies at least one of the criteria listed below.

*Criteria 6:* Contain certain categories of species of birds, animals or plants listed in the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 or the British Red Data Books

*Criteria 7:* The hedgerows includes:

- a) At least 7 schedule III woody species, on average in a 30m length;
- b) At least 6 schedule III woody species, on average in a 30m length and has at least 3 associated features;
- c) At least 6 schedule III woody species, on average in a 30m length, including a black poplar tree, or large-leaved lime, or small-leaved lime or wild service tree;
- d) At least 5 schedule III woody species, on average in a 30m length and has at least 4 associated features.

The associated features are:

- i. a bank or wall which supports the hedgerow along at least one half of its length;
- ii. gaps which do not exceed 10% of the length of the hedgerow;
- iii. on average, at least one tree per 50 metres;
- iv. at least 3 schedule 2 woodland species within one metre, in any direction, of the outermost edges of the hedgerow;
- v. a ditch along at least one half of the length of the hedgerow;
- vi. connections with other hedgerows, woods or ponds scoring 4 points or more (where a connection to another hedgerow scores 1 and a connection to a broad-leaved wood or pond scores 2); or

vii. a parallel hedgerow within 15 metres of the hedgerow.

*Criteria 8:* Run alongside a bridleway, footpath, road used as a public path, or a byway open to all traffic and includes at least 4 woody species, on average, in a 30m length and has at least 2 associated features as listed above.

In accordance with these regulations, regular 30m sections of each of the hedgerows at the site were sampled i.e. woody species were recorded for 30m out of every 100m in order to sample the hedgerow in a systematic way. The average number of species for each hedgerow was derived by totaling the number of species recorded and dividing by the number of sections. This gives an average to compare with the Hedgerow Regulations Criteria. Only when the average number of species is 5 or more are associated features taken into account. An average of 5 woody species and 4 associated features are needed for a hedgerow to be defined as important hedgerow in accordance with the regulations. The exception to this is when a hedgerow runs alongside a footpath or bridleway. In this case only 4 woody species and 2 associated features are needed.

| Hedge | Height | Width | Management                            | Woody Species                             | Ground Flora                              | Likely to qualify |
|-------|--------|-------|---------------------------------------|---|---|-------------------|
| H1    | 2m     | 2m    | Trimmed boundary hedge.               | Hawthorn with occ Syc, Ash, Elm, Dog Rose | Limited                                   | No                |
| H2    | 4-5m   | 4m    | Untrimmed along the footpath boundary | Blackthorn Ash Occ Elm, Hawthorn, Elder   | Limited to common ruderals and perennials | No                |

Neither of the hedgerows assessed within the site or along the boundaries of this appear species rich. The hedgerows do not appear to be of any great age or maturity and are unlikely to qualify as important under the HEGS assessment criteria based on species diversity or historical value.

**Hedgerow H1** is a boundary hedge running along the eastern side of the Golf Course adjacent to Lutterworth Road. It is dominated by trimmed Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) with occasional Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) present and infrequent Elm (*Ulmus procera*), Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) and Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*). It has some mature and semi-mature Ash tree present within it. This hedgerow has an average of 2.5 species per 30m length and additional qualifying features such as mature trees present. However, whilst it is a significant landscape feature screening the Golf Course from Lutterworth Road, it does not qualify as an important hedgerow under the criteria.



Hedgerow H1 on Lutterworth Road.



Hedgerow H1 on Lutterworth Road.

**Hedgerow H2** is a boundary hedge running along the edge of the Golf Course adjacent to the footpath. This is dominated by untrimmed Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) which has suckered extensively into the edge of the fairway. It has numerous sapling Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) present and some semi-mature specimens. There is occasional Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), Elm (*Ulmus procera*) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*) present. This hedgerow has an average of 2 species per 30m length and additional qualifying features such as semi-mature trees present. However, whilst it does provide screening to the public footpath along the boundary of the Golf Course, it does not qualify as an important hedgerow under the criteria.



Hedgerow H2 at eastern end of Golf Course

#### **Target Note: Footpath**

This runs from Lutterworth Road eastwards and divides the Golf Course from the allotment area.



### 3.2 Evidence of Protected Species

During the 2019 inspection of the site notes were made on the suitability of habitats for protected species and any sightings or signs of protected species were recorded:

The suitability of habitats for badger (*Meles meles*) was recorded and any evidence of badgers including setts, dung pits, badger paths, hairs, bedding, footprints and scratching trees was noted.

Trees with features suitable for roosting bats were noted, such as hollows (e.g. old woodpecker holes), cracks and cavities within trunks and branches, crevices behind loose bark and ivy growth on trunks.

The suitability of habitats was assessed for amphibians (including great crested newts, *Triturus cristatus*) and reptiles.

The suitability of site was assessed for nesting birds.

Surveying during May and June is an ideal time to carry out a survey for certain protected species as the majority will be active. The earlier surveys of this site were completed in July, August and September providing a good time period over which to assess the potential of the site. An experienced surveyor can make reliable judgements about the quality and composition of habitats and their potential suitability for protected species. An initial assessment of the site was made and as a result of the records review and the information provided within the reptile presence / absence survey completed in 2017 and bat activity survey completed on 09<sup>th</sup> September 2020.

The table below provides a summary of the potential for protected species to be present within the site.

| Species                          | Present within 2km | Suitable habitat on site / evidence of presence  | Likelihood of presence on site | Further surveys or mitigation recommended   |
|----------------------------------|--------------------|--|--------------------------------|---|
| <b>Nesting Birds</b>             | Yes                | Boundary hedgerows may provide suitable foraging and nesting locations.  | Moderate                       | YES – assessment of vegetation prior to removal   |
| <b>Reptiles</b>                  | Yes                | A reptile presence / absence survey completed across the site in 2017 identified only one Common Lizard on four of the survey inspections. The former allotments are overgrown and would provide suitable habitat for reptiles if these can be accessed. | Moderate                       | YES – Working methods to allow reptiles to escape during vegetation clearance are recommended.  |
| <b>Amphibians</b>                | Yes                | The Golf Course area is intensively managed and there are no ponds close to the site. The allotment area contains no ponds or wetland areas to entice amphibians into the survey area.   | Low                            | No  |
| <b>Bats</b>                      | Yes                | There are no structures within the site area to offer potential to support roosting bats. Some trees along the allotment boundaries have LOW potential. The golf course and allotment area are likely to support foraging bats.                          | Moderate                       | No trees with roosts present have been identified but there is foraging activity across the site so lighting minimisation will be required. |
| <b>Badger and larger mammals</b> | No                 | The allotment area is too overgrown and isolated. The golf course is intensively managed and provides only limited potential for foraging. present within the site. Hedgerows may provide limited foraging opportunities.                                | Low                            | No  |

**Birds:** The local area supports a range of bird species which does include some Schedule 1 and red-list species. However during the inspection of the site the Golf Course supported no birds and the adjacent allotment areas did not appear to be particularly rich in bird species.

The allotment area, previously overgrown by dense bramble and ruderals has been cleared and there is now little cover for ground nesting birds across this area. The potential presence of nests may be anticipated in the future within the boundary hedgerows and trees. Measures to avoid disturbance to any nests or nesting activity will need to be considered within any development. No Schedule 1 bird species were seen during the site

inspection. **Measures to avoid disturbance to any nests or nesting activity will need to be considered within any development.**

**Reptiles:** Following the 2016 and 2017 surveys of the site a reptile presence / absence survey was completed in 2 stages over the period 07<sup>th</sup> – 29<sup>th</sup> September 2016 and 16<sup>th</sup> March to 18<sup>th</sup> May 2017.

The presence / absence survey identified “a small population of Common Lizard present in the north-western corner and western boundary of the Golf Course. No other species of reptile were found during the survey and no reptiles were found in any part of the allotment area during the course of either survey period. The number of reptiles found was consistently low with only one Common Lizard being found on four occasions out of the eleven survey visits. The location of the reptiles was also quite consistent being concentrated in one part of the Golf Course between Felts 4 – 7.”

It was considered the lack of any sightings within the allotment area may be down to a number of factors:

- a) The relative isolation of the grassland areas within this land. These have dense bramble and sapling trees surrounding them and houses with gardens along the northern side. These may present barriers to discourage reptile migration into these areas
- b) The lack of a significant local population of reptiles to colonise this area, in part as a result of the previous management of this land;
- c) The possibility that there are reptiles present which have well-established basking points which were not identified during the survey.

The 2017 reptile survey concluded that:

*“.....any removal of vegetation within this small area of the site should take into account the presence of the reptiles and a methodology to protect these and ensure they can escape for the area should be prepared. In addition, any development of the site should consider incorporating artificial refugia along the Golf Course boundary as part of mitigation to reduce the potential impact on local biodiversity. Such a methodology should include:*

1. *Careful inspection of the land prior to the vegetation being cleared to enable an Ecologist to clear and remove and potential refugia such as logs or bricks in advance of work and search for reptiles during this.*
2. *Directional stripping of vegetation from north to south to enable any reptiles to move away into the Golf Course following the boundaries where there is taller grass and hedgerows.*
3. *Prior to any development taking place, a mitigation plan to create new habitat for reptiles adjacent to the Golf Course which will include the construction of artificial refugia / hibernacula. This mitigation plan should be submitted to and agreed with the Planning Authority.”*

**Amphibians:** There are no recent records of Great Crested Newts in the area and the intensively managed Golf Course does not offer good terrestrial habitat for amphibians including Great Crested Newts although there are ponds within this land further to the south. Considering the poor the terrestrial habitat for amphibians within the northern part of the Golf Course and the isolation of the allotment area caused by this and the residential housing to the north, the potential for Great Crested Newts to be present within the site is considered to be low. **Further surveys for Great Crested Newts are not recommended.**

**Chiroptera:** There are known to be bats foraging in the area and known roosts within suitable locations within Blaby and nearby villages. The Golf Course provides a potentially excellent foraging area for bats and the local gardens can also provide linear foraging routes for species such as Pipistrelle. This was confirmed by the activity survey completed



in September 2020 a record of which is provided within Appendix 3. Five species of bats were identified foraging around the golf course and former allotment land. The site contains no structures with potential for roosting bats and no roosts were identified on any of the mature boundary trees.

**Invertebrates:** The area assessed does not appear to support a diverse range of flora and is not a location with a high density of nectar producing plants. However, the river will attract a wide range of insects. The potential for a significant assemblage of invertebrates to be present in this small area is quite low as the allotments, whilst overgrown, are not botanically diverse. ***Further invertebrate surveys are not recommended.***

**Mammals:** The site was devoid of any signs of larger mammals. There is limited access to the site area due to the character of the Golf Course to the south and south-east and the residential housing to the north, and west. No evidence of any significant burrows, trails, tracks or other field signs of larger mammals was seen during the surveys carried out on the site, however, one fox was spotted passing through the eastern end of the allotments. ***A further survey for badger is not recommended as there is no evidence of a sett being present on the site or within 30m.***

### 3.3 Ecological Constraints and Opportunities

#### **Constraints:**

No significant ecological constraints have been identified during the survey. No rare or unusual plants or habitats have been noted within the site area to provide a constraint.

The boundary hedgerow along Lutterworth Road on the western perimeter of the golf course provides useful screening to part of the area being considered for development and if sections of this can be retained this may prove beneficial in terms of visual amenity along the road front.

The site does provide a useful commuting route for local wildlife such as bats and birds. The boundary hedgerows and trees are also likely to provide nesting opportunities for birds. A bat activity survey has been completed and it is recommended that measures to minimise light pollution are included within any proposed development and precautions to avoid harm or disturbance to nesting birds are also recommended.

The presence of a small population of Common Lizard around the margins of the golf course has been established by the 2017 survey and therefore vegetation clearance will have to incorporate a methodology to protect reptiles and allow these to move away from harm to a location outside any construction area.

#### **Opportunities:**

Given the position of the site area on the southern edge of the village of Blaby facing a landscaped golf course there is potential to improve biodiversity in a significant way. The following biodiversity enhancement measures can be incorporated into the development:

- Creation of swale areas sympathetically landscaped to enhance provide new habitat and create a viable wildlife foraging corridor;

- Use of native planting to provide new tree and shrub habitat within and around the boundaries of the site to enhance canopy cover and ground cover to the benefit of wildlife;

- Erection of a number of bat boxes and bird boxes at suitable positions to promote the use of this area by bats and birds.

- Provision of reptile refugia in suitable positions

- Provision of hedgehog access points around the site to facilitate the movement of this species through the gardens and landscaped areas.



Figure 4 – Conceptual Development Plan

### Part 3: Initial Ecological Appraisal

#### 4. Impact of Proposed Site Development

Within the NPPF 2019, guidance on the provision or retention of biodiversity within any proposed areas for development and measures to ensure the safeguarding of protected species are provided. Development should seek to contribute a net gain in biodiversity with an emphasis on improving ecological networks and linkages where possible.

The NPPF para 170 stresses that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by a variety of measures including minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity. This is reinforced by Planning Practice Guidance (PPG) which identifies that ‘a key purpose of this duty is to embed consideration of biodiversity as an integral part of policy and decision making throughout the public sector, which should be seeking to make a significant contribution to the achievement of the commitments made by government in its 25 Year Environment Plan’ (PPG natural environment Paragraph: 009 Reference ID: 8- 009-20190721).

Based on the conceptual development plan provided, the proposed development comprises residential housing with a new access road from the west. **Figure 4** below is a copy of the conceptual development plan and also the large landscape enhancement plan provided by the Architect for assessment. This report is not intended to be a suitable alternative to an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) in accordance with the CIEEM Guidelines on Ecological Impact Assessment, 2016.

As noted within this report, the ‘mitigation hierarchy’ described in British Standard BS 42020:2013 should be applied in regard to biodiversity within sites being considered for development which is a stepwise process:

- **Avoidance** – avoiding adverse effects through good design.
- **Mitigation** – where it is unavoidable, mitigation measures should be employed to minimise adverse effects.
- **Compensation** – where residual effects remain after mitigation it may be necessary to provide compensation to offset any harm.
- **Enhancement** – planning decisions often present the opportunity to deliver benefits for biodiversity, which can also be explored alongside the above measures to resolve potential adverse effects.

The measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development (BS 42020:2013, section 5.5). The table below considers the features present on the site in the context of the hierarchy.

| Feature   | Ecological Significance | Hierarchy application    | Impact of proposed development  |
|---|-------------------------|--------------------------|---|
| Golf Course (Amenity)                                 | Low                     | Mitigation               | Low – a section of amenity grassland will be lost to the development and mitigation in the form of new landscaping will need to be provided   |
| Rough Grassland Grassed margins along the Golf Course | Moderate                | Avoidance and Mitigation | The proposed development will retain some of the grassland within landscaped area. Mitigation in the form of new landscaping will need to be provided for the small areas of grassland lost to the development. |

|                    |      |                          |   |
|--------------------|------|--------------------------|---|
| Boundary hedgerows | High | Avoidance and mitigation | The proposed development will retain most of the hedgerows but some gaps will need to be created for access. New hedgerow planting along the south boundary of the development will provide mitigation.                                       |
| Mature trees       | High | Avoidance and mitigation | The proposed development will retain a significant number of the mature trees around the boundaries of the site. Some trees within the site interior will be lost and mitigation in the form of replacement tree planting will be provided. . |

#### 4.1 Potential Impact on nearby Statutory and Non-statutory sites

There is no potential for any statutory or non-statutory sites of ecological value to be impacted by the proposed development of this site as there are none within a 1Km radius that have any links to or similarities with the area surveyed.

#### 4.2 Impact of the Proposals on Site Biodiversity

The level of biodiversity within the site being assessed must be a consideration in determining the *'impact on biodiversity'* that may arise from any development on the site. Within the NPPF Paragraphs 114 and 117 state that:

*"Local planning authorities should..... set out a strategic approach....., planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure; (114) and,*

*"...minimise impacts on biodiversity and geodiversity by promoting 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....; (117)*

The area surveyed comprises an area of Golf Course land and an area of derelict allotments cleared in 2020 situated on the southern edge of the village of Blaby. These areas have limited diversity due to the past use and current management of the land.

On the basis of the inspection completed in Maty 2021 and previous inspections of 2016 and 2019 it is considered likely that development of the site area surveyed could be carried out in a manner that does not have any significant impact on local biodiversity. From the evidence of the Phase 1 Habitat Survey it does not appear at this time that there would be any loss of significant habitat areas or fragmentation of any such habitats within the locality by isolating these as a result of development.

#### 4.3 Impact of the Proposals on Protected Species

The requirements of Part IV of ODPM / Defra Circular 06/2005 in regard to the protection of certain species are still applicable under the new NPPF. The presence of protected species at the site must be taken into consideration. NPPF March 2012 paragraph 119 makes the following provision in relation to the presence of protected species on, or making use of, a site proposed for any development:

*“The presumption in favour of sustainable development (paragraph 14) does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being considered, planned or determined.”*

The new inspection completed in May 2021 identified no physical evidence or field signs of any protected species within the survey area. The reptile survey of 2017 did identify a small population of Common Lizard along the margins of the golf course and some may have colonised the former allotments area. Measures to protect reptiles during any vegetation clearance and allow these to move away from the site will be required.

The bat activity survey of September 2020 identified five species of bat foraging in the locality but no roosts were identified and the level of foraging activity was not high. Measures to avoid a significant increase in light pollution along the south boundary of the development facing the golf course are recommended.

Measures to improve diversity and habitat value around the margins of any proposed development and in particular near to the boundary of the Golf Course would be beneficial if these could be incorporated into any development proposals. Such measures should include native planting and habitat creation within landscaped areas, provision of bat roost and bird nest boxes, provision of reptile refugia and measures to enable hedgehogs to move across the developed site within gardens and landscaped areas.



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National Biodiversity Network: Protected species data downloaded from URL <http://data.nbn.org/interactive/map>

## Appendix 1 – Species List identified during survey

| Tree and Shrub Species  | Ground Flora and Perennial Species  |
|---|---|
| <p>Apple <i>Malus domestica</i><br/>           Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i><br/>           Birch <i>Betula pendula</i><br/>           Blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i><br/>           Currant (<i>Ribes</i> sp)<br/>           Cypress <i>Cupressocyparis</i> sp<br/>           Damson <i>Prunus domestica</i><br/>           Dog Rose <i>Rosa canina</i><br/>           Elder <i>Sambucus nigra</i><br/>           Field Maple <i>Acer campestre</i><br/>           Field Rose <i>Rosa arvensis</i><br/>           Hazel <i>Corylus avellana</i><br/>           Hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i><br/>           Lime <i>Tilia cordata</i><br/>           Oak <i>Quercus petraea</i><br/>           Poplar <i>Populus nigra</i><br/>           Rowan <i>Sorbus acuparia</i><br/>           Spruce <i>Picea</i> sp<br/>           Sycamore <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i><br/>           Willow <i>Salix fragilis</i><br/>           Whitebeam <i>Sorbus aria</i></p> | <p>Bent (<i>Agrostis</i> sp)<br/>           Bindweed (<i>Calystegia sepium</i>),<br/>           Bramble (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>)<br/>           Buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>),<br/>           Chickweed (<i>Stellaria media</i>)<br/>           Cleaver (<i>Galium aparine</i>),<br/>           Clover (<i>Trifolium repens</i>)<br/>           Couch (<i>Elymus repens</i>),<br/>           Cow Parsley (<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>)<br/>           Cranesbill (<i>Geranium phaeum</i>)<br/>           Cut Leaved-Cranesbill (<i>Geranium dissectum</i>),<br/>           Creeping Thistle (<i>Cirsium arvense</i>),<br/>           Daisy (<i>Bellis perennis</i>)<br/>           Dandelion (<i>Taraxacum</i> sp),<br/>           Dock (<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>),<br/>           Groundsel (<i>Senecio vulgaris</i>)<br/>           Hogweed (<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>)<br/>           Mayweed (<i>Chamomilla suaveolens</i>),<br/>           Meadow Grass (<i>Poa trivialis</i>)<br/>           Medick (<i>Medicago lupulina</i>),<br/>           Mouse-ear Hawkweed (<i>Hieracium pilosella</i>),<br/>           Nipplewort (<i>Lapsana communis</i>).<br/>           Perennial Ryegrass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>)<br/>           Plantain (<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>)<br/>           Ragwort (<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>)<br/>           Sowthistle (<i>Sonchus asper</i>),<br/>           Spear Thistle (<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>),<br/>           Teasel (<i>Dipsacus fullonium</i>),<br/>           Thistle (<i>Cirsium arvense</i>),<br/>           Yorkshire Fog (<i>Holcus lanatus</i>)</p> |

This species list records the species seen during the site inspection and is not presented as a detailed botanical survey of the site.

**Appendix 2 – Biological Records from LRBGRC**

**THESE RECORDS ARE CONFIDENTIAL AND HAVE BEEN PROVIDED SEPERATELY.**



### Appendix 3: Survey Record Lutterworth Road, Blaby

| Date of Survey                    | Survey Time   | Temperature and weather  | Comments  |
|-----------------------------------|---------------|--|---|
| Wednesday<br>09 September<br>2020 | 19.30 – 21.15 | 17 degrees C at 7.30pm and clear with occasional cloud. Humidity 55% at 1014mb. Breeze 12mph from the northwest. | Excellent surveying conditions suitable for bat foraging. Sunset 7.33pm. Dusk 8.05pm. Fully dark by 8.40pm. |

**Flight / Forage activity:** Detectors confirmed presence of Common Pipistrelle, Brown Long-eared and Noctule foraging within the Golf Course and allotment areas near the trees under observation. Bat activity commenced at 7.48 with a pass by a Noctule across the golf course. The first Common Pipistrelle was picked up along the boundary of the golf course and flying across the allotments at 7.54. The only Brown Long-eared pass was picked up at 8.20pm. No bats were seen to leave the trees under observation during the course of the survey and no significant concentration of bats was picked up.

| Species              | S1 bat passes | S2 bat passes | S3 bat passes |
|----------------------|---------------|---------------|---------------|
| Common Pipistrelle   | 22            | 39            | 27            |
| Brown Long-eared bat | 0             | 2             | 0             |
| Noctule              | 2             | 2             | 1             |
| Soprano Pipistrelle  | 1             | 4             | 0             |
| Whiskered            | 0             | 2             | 0             |
| <b>Total</b>         | <b>25</b>     | <b>49</b>     | <b>28</b>     |

**Surveyor S1** placed on the footpath at the western end close to a mature Ash tree with low roost potential noted individual Common Pipistrelle foraging between the golf course and the allotment area crossing the path from 7.54pm. This bat appeared to first arrive from the south. A Noctule was seen foraging across the golf course near the start of the survey period. No more than one bat was ever seen at one time.

**Surveyor S2** positioned at the eastern end of the site close to boundary trees noted activity by solitary Common Pipistrelle following the boundaries of the survey area doing repeated passes. This was always a solitary bat and it appeared to come from the southeast.. A Noctule was heard but not seen. One BLE passed the survey area just after dusk and was clearly seen flying from the north to the south across the trees and another was picked up later. Two passes by Myotis were picked up near the end of the survey period and one Soprano Pipistrelle passed. No more than one bat was seen at one time.

**Surveyor S3** positioned on the north side of the allotments close to some scrubby trees noted activity by solitary Common Pipistrelle passing up and down the rear gardens adjacent to the allotments. One Noctule pass was picked up but no other bats were seen or heard. Activity was light and only one bat was ever seen at one time.

