

**AEWC**<sup>Ltd</sup>

Animal Ecology & Wildlife Consultants

## **Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey**

### **Welling United Football Club**

**Park View Road  
Welling  
Bexley  
DA16 1SY**

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23-011  
November 2023

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## Summary

- AEWCLtd were commissioned by HCUK Group on behalf of their client to undertake an extended Phase 1 habitat survey at Welling United Football Club, Park View Road, Welling, DA16 1SY at grid reference TQ 47137 75611 to help inform the proposed development of the site.
- This report details the results of the survey, which was carried out on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 by Brigitte de Coriolis, qualified ecologist, to record and map the habitats present, assess the site for the potential presence of any protected species or species of conservation concern and identify habitats of conservation importance.
- Additional information regarding the present and historical ecological interest of the site and within a 2km radius was provided by *Greenspace Information for Greater London* (GiGL). This helps to inform the likelihood of protected species occurring within the site boundary.
- The site is approximately 1.2ha in size and largely comprises buildings, hardstanding, modified grassland and narrow bands along the southern edges of the site containing low ruderal vegetation and a small woodland patch.
- The proposed development plan involves demolition of most of the existing buildings and removal of the pitch to facilitate a new synthetic pitch and new residential blocks, club and hospitality buildings.
- Building 2 has low potential to support roosting, **a minimum of one emergence survey is required to confirm presence or increase confidence in a result of likely absence of bats.**
- One sycamore tree with low potential for bats must be soft-felled under supervision of a licensed ecologist.
- Any proposed new pitch and security lighting must be sensitively designed in accordance with the Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance note 8: 'Bats and Artificial lighting in the UK' which can be downloaded for free from the ILP website.
- **Works must be carried out under a precautionary reptile method statement** to ensure that reptiles are not significantly impacted by the works.
- Vegetation or tree removal and building demolition should be undertaken outside the breeding bird period from March to August or following a negative nesting bird check by a suitably qualified ecologist.
- Good building practice should be followed, such as covering trenches at night or providing a ramp to prevent animals from becoming trapped.

This report has been prepared by AEWCLtd, with all reasonable skill, care and diligence within the terms of the Contract with the client. We disclaim any responsibility to the client and others in respect of any matters outside the scope of the above. This report is confidential to the client and we accept no responsibility of whatsoever nature to third parties to whom this report, or any part thereof, is made known. Any such party relies on the report at their own risk.

The information and data which has been prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the 'Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal' and 'Code of Professional Conduct' issued by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

# 1 Introduction

- 1.1 AEWCLtd were commissioned by HCUK Group on behalf of their client to undertake an extended Phase 1 habitat survey at Welling United Football Club, Park View Road, Welling, DA16 1SY to help inform the proposed development of the site.
- 1.2 This survey comprised a desktop study of biological records within the vicinity of the site, an ecological walkover survey to record and map the habitats present and an assessment for protected wildlife and species of conservation importance, including habitats, and was carried out by qualified ecologist Brigitte de Coriolis on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023.
- 1.3 This report presents the results of the following:
- Desktop Biodiversity Report
  - UK Habs Habitat Survey
  - Protected Species Walkover Survey
- 1.4 In addition, the report outlines any recommendations/further surveys that may be necessary. This will ensure that any protected species are not detrimentally impacted by the proposed development works on site, that there is no loss of ecological viability and that the favourable conservation status of the species in the local area are not affected.

# 2 Background

- 2.1 The proposed development site is located at Welling United Football Club, Park View Road, Welling, DA16 1SY at central grid reference TQ 47137 75611. See Figure 1.
- 2.2 The site is located in the town of Welling in Southeast London, along the A207 Park View Road. The surrounding landscape comprises residential properties with small amenity gardens and some light industry to the west and north, further sports facilities to the east and Danson Park immediately to the south which provides areas of woodland, parkland and open water.
- 2.3 The site is approximately 1.2ha and largely comprises buildings, hardstanding, modified grassland within the pitch and narrow bands along the southern edges of the site containing low ruderal vegetation and a small woodland patch. See Figure 2.
- 2.4 The proposed development plan involves extensive refurbishment to the existing site, which will include: replacement of the existing pitch with a 3G synthetic pitch on a slightly altered footprint, retention and refurbishment of the stand and adjacent hall on the eastern side of the pitch, demolition of the remaining buildings and structures to facilitate construction of new club and hospitality facilities along the western side of the site, and a new multi-storey residential development wrapping around the northern end of the site, providing 104 residential units with commercial units at ground floor level. This will involve the removal of predominantly buildings, hardstanding and modified grassland, as well as small areas of scattered ruderal and scrub vegetation and a small patch of young woodland. The development will include tree planting

along the front façade of the new residential building, green roofing on all buildings and a green wall along the southern side of the site. The majority of the habitat area on site will be affected by these proposals.



**FIGURE 1: SHOWING THE SITE LOCATION**



**FIGURE 2 : AERIAL VIEW OF THE SITE SHOWING THE SITE BOUNDARY**



**FIGURE 3 : PROPOSED PLANS**

### 3 Methods

#### ***Desk Study***

- 3.1 The Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website provided by the Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs (Defra) was consulted to obtain information about any international or European level designated nature conservation sites within 2km of the site boundary, afforded protection either directly by the Conservation of Habitat and Species (Amendment)(EU Exit) Regulations 2019 or to the same level of protection through planning policy (the National Planning Policy Framework and Local Development Framework). Information regarding statutory designated sites, such as Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within a 2km radius of the site, were also obtained from MAGIC.
- 3.2 Aerial photos of the site (Google Earth, 2023) were examined to determine habitats surrounding the site and hence species likely to be present in order to make appropriate recommendations in the wider landscape context.
- 3.3 Records of protected and notable species and non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site were requested from the local biological records centre, Greenspace Information for Greater London CIC (*GiGL*). Information on the presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site, were also obtained from the local biological records centre (*GiGL*).
- 3.4 Records were screened for relevance and age with only those from the last 10 years and of species that could occur on site considered further.
- 3.5 A search for waterbodies within 500m of the site boundary was undertaken using MAGIC mapping in order to assess their connectivity to the site.

#### ***UK Habs Habitat Survey***

- 3.6 A daytime ecological walkover assessment was carried out on the 2<sup>nd</sup> May 2023 to record and map the habitats present, evaluate the site for its potential to support protected species in addition to other species of conservation importance that could be relevant in respect of planning policies.
- 3.7 The survey involved a UK Habitat Classification System Survey which was carried out based on the standard methodology produced by UKHab Ltd (2020) and included searches for signs of protected species, as described in the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Assessment (CIEEM, 2018). This involves the following elements:
  - Habitat mapping using a set of standard colour codes to indicate habitat types on a UK Habitat Classification Map.
  - Description of features of ecological or nature conservation interest in notes relating to numbered locations on the UK Habitat Classification Map, called Target Notes (for habitat and features of possible interest).
  - A plant species list with subjective estimates of the relative abundance of species in selected habitat parcels using a modified DAFOR scale. The DAFOR scale ranks species according to their relative abundance in a given parcel of



land as follows: d – dominant, a – abundant, f – frequent, o – occasional, r – rare. In addition, the following prefixes are used: l – locally, v – very.

3.8 Plant nomenclature in this report follows Stace (2010) for native and naturalised species of vascular plant. Nomenclature for mosses and liverworts follow the Checklist for British and Irish Bryophytes 2009. Plant names in the text are given with the English name first, followed by the Latin name. Latin names for all species are given just once and not repeated.

### ***Protected Species Walkover***

3.9 An assessment was made of habitat suitability in and around the site for those protected species that occur in the region. Obvious signs and incidental sightings of protected species are noted when encountered, but walkover surveys do not usually confirm species presence or absence.

3.10 Taking into consideration the geographical region and habitat type, species that could be encountered are:

- badger;
- bats;
- breeding birds;
- great crested newt;
- hazel dormice;
- reptiles;
- other mammals; and
- other Species of Principal Importance (SPI) (e.g. hedgehog, stag beetle etc);

3.11 In addition, observations of any invasive species, important plant communities, plant species of note, Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) or other valuable ecological features will be recorded and detailed.

3.12 Details of the initial survey method for each species are given below.

3.13 **Badger** – an initial assessment was carried out to identify areas that might be used by badgers (*Meles meles*). Signs of badgers including setts, incidental foraging signs, runs, hairs and latrines are recorded if encountered during the survey. Where possible the area within 30m of the site is also searched for badger setts.

3.14 **Bats** – The site was assessed for bat roosting potential and the surrounding area was assessed for the suitability of the habitat to support bats. Any buildings were examined and assessed for evidence of bats, such as rub marks, staining or droppings or for features that have good potential to be used by bats, such as loft voids, raised tiles, hanging tiles, gaps in soffits and lead flashing cracks, crevices and mortise joints. Trees were assessed for their potential to be used by bats such as woodpecker holes, splits, cracks and crevices or loose bark plates which can be used as roost features by bats. Such features are noted and examined by using equipment such as a high-powered torch and binoculars, in order to determine their suitability for bats.

- 3.15 **Breeding Birds** - habitats were assessed for their suitability for nesting birds. This would centre on birds that favour hedgerows, areas of longer grassland, scrub, trees as well as buildings.
- 3.16 **Great Crested Newt** - initial surveys centre on identifying suitable habitat within the site. If breeding ponds are present within the locality then great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) could potentially be using the terrestrial habitat on the site. Maps are used to identify any ponds (that are not isolated by unsuitable habitat or physical barriers) within 500 metres of the site. A Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) is used to quantifiably assess whether a pond is suitable, this is undertaken for any onsite ponds during the walkover survey.
- 3.17 **Hazel Dormice** – scrub and areas of dense vegetation are assessed for their suitability for foraging and nesting hazel dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*). Favoured berry and nut bearing species such as hawthorn, hazel and bramble were looked for in particular. Additionally, the connectivity of this habitat and to suitable habitat beyond the site is also assessed. If hazel nuts are present a brief search for nuts that have been chewed by hazel dormouse (i.e. displaying the characteristic smooth round hole) was conducted.
- 3.18 **Reptiles** - the site was assessed for habitat suitable for reptiles, such as long grassland and areas of scrub, with particular attention paid to those features that provide suitable basking areas (e.g. south-facing slopes and walls), hibernation sites (e.g. banks, log piles and piles of rotting vegetation) and opportunities for foraging (e.g. rough grassland and scrub).
- 3.19 **Other mammals** – any signs of occupancy by other mammals (e.g. Rabbit warrens) are recorded.
- 3.20 **Other Species of Principal Importance (SPI)** – the habitats present on site were assessed for the likelihood of presence for species of regional and national importance.
- 3.21 **Invasive species** - Any invasive plant or animal species identified during the site walkover are recorded.
- 3.22 **Plant species of note** – Any plant species of conservation concern found on the site are recorded.
- 3.23 **Habitats of Principal Importance** - Habitats of Principal Importance within or adjacent to the site (such as arable field margins, traditional orchards, ponds, rivers, wet woodlands) are recorded.
- 3.24 **Other valuable ecological features** - Other ecological features e.g. ancient woodland, veteran trees, bird feeding stations etc, habitat enhancements etc. within or adjacent to the site are recorded.

## 4 Constraints/Limitations

- 4.1 An initial site assessment such as this is only able to act as a snapshot to record any flora or fauna that is present at the time of the survey. It is therefore possible that some species may not have been present during the survey but may be evident at other times of the year. For this reason, habitats are assessed for their potential to support some species, even where no direct evidence (such as droppings) has been found.
- 4.2 Some protected species records are confidential and therefore not included within the data search results provided by the records centre. Absence of records does not automatically correspond to absence of species within the impact zone of the development.
- 4.3 Buildings 1 and 2 are tenanted separately to the club, and access could not be obtained to carry out an internal inspection in these buildings. Both buildings have flat roofs and are therefore considered unlikely to have a void space within the building, this was therefore not considered to be a significant constraint during the assessment of these two buildings.

## 5 Results

### **Desk Study** **Sites**

#### *Statutory Designated Sites:*

- 5.1 There are no statutory designated sites located within 2km of the proposed site.

#### *Non-statutory Designated Sites*

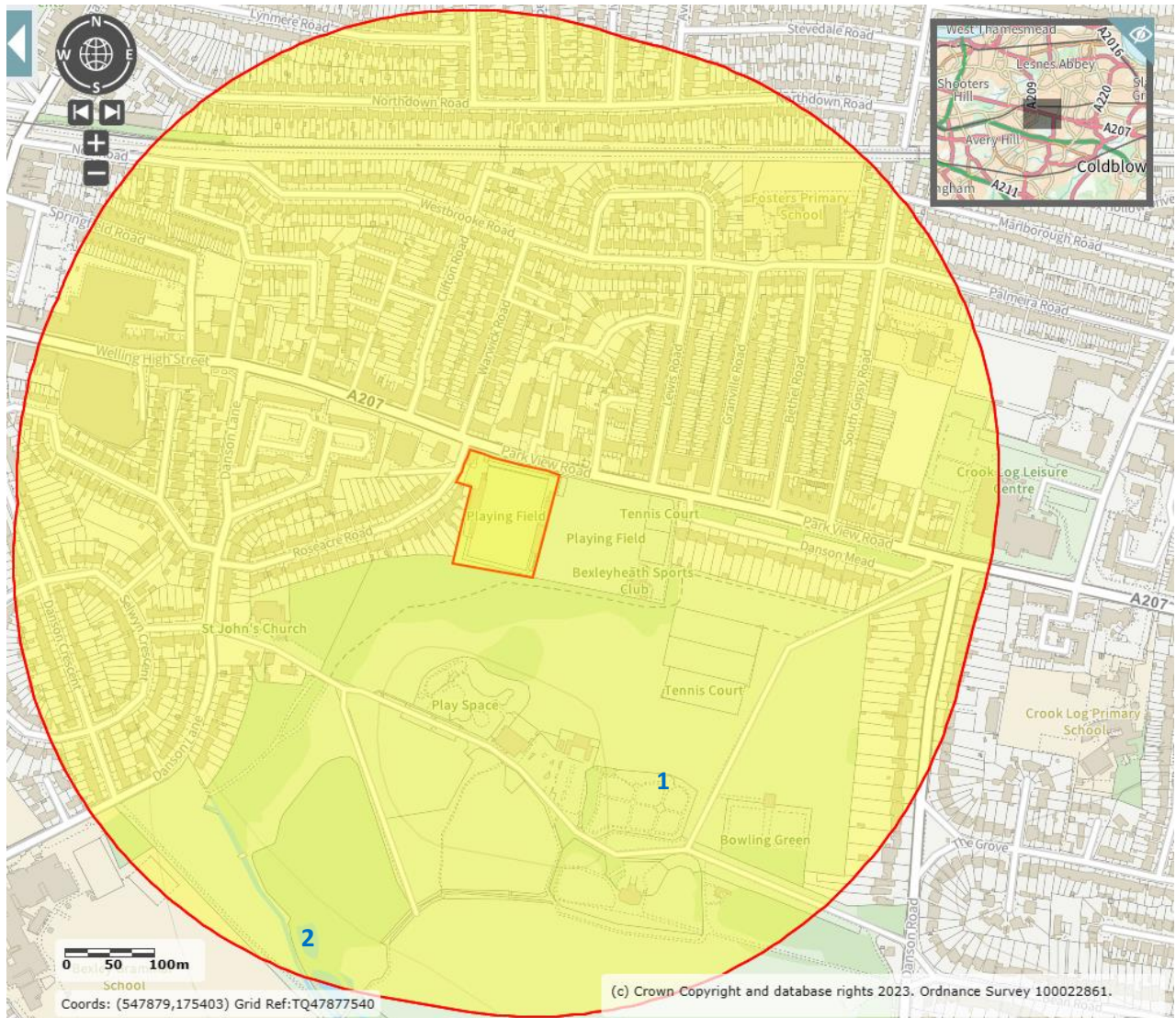
##### Local Wildlife Sites (LWS).

- 5.2 There are 13 non-statutory sites located within 2km of the proposed site. The nearest non-statutory designated site is Danson Park located immediately south of the site.

#### *Waterbodies within 500m of the site boundary*

- 5.3 The Ordnance Survey map available via MAGIC was reviewed for ponds within the accepted dispersal distance of 500m that are not separated from the site by significant barriers to dispersal such as main roads. Two ponds were found occurring to the south-east and south-west of the site (see Figure 4): These are listed below:

- Pond 1: Ornamental concrete pond - TQ 47319 75303
- Pond 2: Woodland pond close to inlet of boating lake - TQ 46909 75125



**FIGURE 4: WATERBODIES WITHIN 500M**

***Protected Species***

***Badger***

5.4 Badger records are confidential and as a result were not supplied in the data search for this report.

***Bats***

5.5 Records of four bat species have been recorded within 2km of the site in the last 10 years. These include common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*), Nathusius’s pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus nathusii*) and noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*).

***Birds***

5.6 A number of different bird species have been recorded within 2km of the site in the last 10 years, including several red list species. This includes house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*), wood warbler (*Phylloscopus sibilatrix*), sand martin (*Riparia riparia*) and fieldfare (*Turdus pilaris*).

#### *Great crested newt*

- 5.7 No records of great crested newts (GCN) were found within 2km of the site in the last 10 years, the most recent record was from 2009 of a single individual over 1km from the site.

#### *Hazel dormice*

- 5.8 No records of hazel dormouse were found within 2km of the site.

#### *Otter*

- 5.9 No records of otter were found within 2km on the site.

#### *Reptiles*

- 5.10 The only reptile species recorded within 2km of the site in the last 10 years is slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*) almost 2km from the site. There are also historic records of grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*) from 2003 and common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) from 2011.

#### *Water vole*

- 5.11 No records of water vole were found within 2km on the site.

#### *Other Mammals*

- 5.12 European hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) is the only other mammal species of interest to have been recorded within 2km of the site in the last 10 years.

#### *Other Species of Principal Importance (SPI)*

- 5.13 Several invertebrate SPI have been recorded within 2km of the site in the last 10 years. These include stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*), brown-banded carder bee (*Bombus humilis*), cinnabar moth (*Tyria jacobaeae*) and small heath butterfly (*Coenonympha pamphilus*).

### **Field Survey**

#### *Habitats and Plants*

- 5.14 A UK Habs Habitat map and list of target notes are included in Figure 5 and Table 1 respectively. The habitats present on the site are described below.

#### Hard standing

- 5.15 The hard standing on site comprises areas of tarmac parking and walkway in the north and north-west of the site, and extensive concrete access, walkways, courtyard and terraced stands/seating around the edges of the site and around the buildings. Along the northern site boundary, a narrow band of concrete hoarded off from the public has begun to be colonised by small clumps of barren brome *Anisantha sterilis* and herbaceous species including self-heal *Prunella vulgaris*, herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*, speedwell *Veronica spp.*, small-flowered cranesbill *Geranium pusillum*, dandelion *Taraxacum spp.*, Spanish bluebells *Hyacinthoides hispanica* and white dead-nettle *Lamium album*, as well as ruderals including nettle *Urtica dioica* and cleavers *Galium aparine*. The clumps are small and scattered and the area is well

isolated by extensive hard standing from other habitat in the wider area, therefore is not considered suitable to support protected species.



### Grassland

5.16 A large football pitch is present in the centre of the site, this comprises annual meadow grass *Poa annua* maintained as a very short sward. No other grass or herb species are present on the pitch.



**Photograph 3:** Looking south-west across the pitch

### Ruderal and scrub

5.17 A narrow band around the southern edge of the site is hoarded off from the public; this area contains frequent dumped materials including plastics, metal, timber, and some areas of bare ground and has been colonised to varying degrees by low ruderal vegetation, predominantly nettle and cleavers with infrequent self-heal, in addition to two small butterfly bush *Buddleia davidii* on the eastern side of the site. There are

areas of scattered ivy *Hedera helix* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus* growing on the fence line along the southern boundary of the site. Missing panels on the southern fence line enable human access into these areas and evidence of antisocial behaviour was noted such as a small fire pit and discarded rubbish on site. These areas hold potential for foraging and refuge by reptiles, amphibians and small mammals, with the ivy over the fence additionally suitable for nesting birds.



**Photograph 4:** *Dumped materials and ruderal vegetation in the south-east of the site*



**Photograph 5:** *Rubbish and ruderal vegetation along the southern boundary*

Woodland and trees

5.18 A very small clump of woodland is present within the narrow, hoarded area along the western boundary; this comprises two multi-stemmed sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* trees and a low number of smaller sycamore, elder *Sambucus nigra* and cherry *Prunus spp.* trees, with an understorey of ivy, cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris* and some bramble. In the south-western corner of the site is an area with bare ground, sparse nettle, cow parsley and some ground ivy *Glechoma hederacea*, and a single sycamore tree. The small woodland clump holds potential for nesting birds and foraging bats and offers foraging and/or refuge potential for small mammals, amphibians and reptiles.



**Photograph 6:** *North end of small woodland clump*



**Photograph 7:** *South end of small woodland clump*

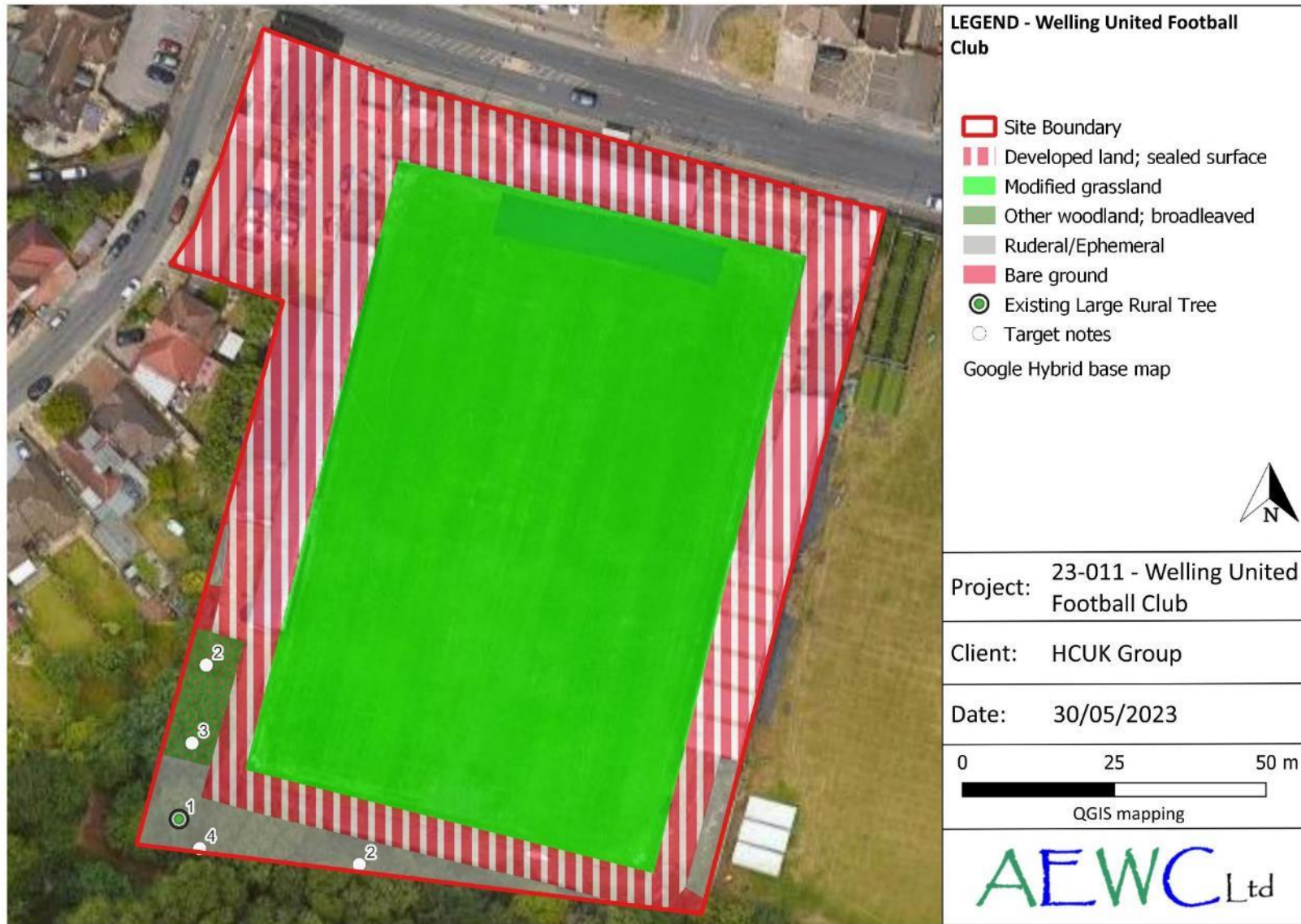


FIGURE 5: UK HABS HABITAT MAP



**Table 1** - Target Notes from Figure 5 - Habitat Plan

Target Note	Description
1	Sycamore with keyhole features with low potential for bats
2	Mammal path
3	Cherry laurel – invasive species
4	Snowberry – invasive species

**Habitat evaluation**

5.19 The habitats on site are of relatively low biodiversity value with common widespread plant species recorded.

*Plant species of note*

5.20 No plant species of note were identified.

*Habitats of Principal Importance*

5.30 The following HPI were noted on the site: a small clump of deciduous woodland is present within the south-western part of the site.

5.31 There is a large area of deciduous woodland within the adjacent Danson Park that adjoins the southern boundary of the site. MAGIC shows that this woodland extends into the hoarded off areas across the full length of the southern boundary and up the western side of the site, however in reality the majority of this footprint is ruderal vegetation with no trees present.

*Protected species and species of conservation concern**Badger*

5.32 No badger setts were identified present on site or within 30m of the site. Whilst a mammal path was identified within the south-western part of the site, no direct evidence of badger activity such as latrines, tracks, guard hairs or snuffle holes were observed on or directly adjacent to the site, which would suggest that the site is otherwise used for foraging.

*Breeding birds*

5.33 There is habitat suitable for breeding birds on the site within the trees and areas of ivy growing over the fence from the adjacent woodland.

*Great Crested Newt (GCN)*

5.34 The site is considered to have some potential to support terrestrial GCN, within the narrow bands of ruderal vegetation around the southern edges of the site and within the small clump of woodland on the western site edge.

5.35 No ponds were recorded within the site boundary. The Ordnance Survey map available via MAGIC was reviewed for ponds within the accepted dispersal distance of 500m that are not separated from the site by significant barriers to dispersal such

as main roads. Two ponds were found occurring to the south-east and south-west of the site.

*Hazel dormice*

5.36 The small clump of woodland in the west of the site is considered to have suitability to support hazel dormouse as it offers some foraging opportunities and is connected to adjacent suitable habitat.

5.37 A brief search for hazel nuts revealed none that had been chewed by hazel dormouse.

*Reptiles*

5.38 The narrow bands of ruderal vegetation around the southern edges of the site provide some suitable foraging habitat for common reptiles such as slow-worms, common lizards and grass snakes.

*Other Mammals*

5.39 A mammal path was noted through the small woodland clump in the south-western part of the site. No evidence of other mammals was recorded within the site.

*Other Species of Principal Importance*

5.40 There is potential for the site to support SPI such as hedgehog, the bands of ruderal vegetation and small woodland clump provide suitable foraging habitat for hedgehogs. The buildings offer some suitability for nesting house sparrow.

*Invasive species*

5.41 Non-native invasive plants (but not listed on Schedule 9) were recorded: cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* and snowberry *Symphoricarpos albus*.

**Daytime Bat Assessment**

5.42 Ten buildings were assessed for evidence of, or potential for, roosting bats (Figure 6).



**FIGURE 6 : AERIAL VIEW OF THE SITE SHOWING THE BUILDINGS SUBJECT TO SURVEY**

Building 1

5.43 This is a three-storey block of flats with commercial units at ground floor level. The walls are rendered with pebble-dash and the roof is flat and clad in bituminous felt. The fascias were found to be well-fitted throughout with no gaps evident that could provide access for bats. On the northern elevation, a gap alongside commercial signage provided easy access into a cavity formed by the I-beam and signage. No bats or evidence of bats were identified present within the cavity.

5.44 No internal access to this building was possible, however it is considered unlikely that a void space is present as the building has a flat roof.



**Photograph 8:** Northern and eastern elevations of Building 1



**Photograph 9:** Cavity formed by I-beam on Building 1

Building 2

5.45 This is a double-storey block of flats with a flat bituminous roof attached to the southern elevation of Building 1. The brick walls are part-rendered in pebbledash and there is a section of modern hanging tiles on the western elevation between the lower and upper windows.

5.46 The hanging tiles are even and tight-fitting and the fascias flush with the wall on the southern and western sides. On the eastern elevation, the gaps are present in the fascia at both corners which could provide access for bats to roost. No access to the rear of the building was possible to enable close inspection of these crevices with a torch or endoscope.



**Photograph 10:** Southern elevation of Building 2



**Photograph 11:** Gaps in fascia on Building 2

Building 3

5.47 This is a single-storey brick building with a flat roof clad in bituminous felt. The roof and fascias were found to be tight-fitting with no gaps present suitable for use by bats. No internal void is present in the building.

Building 4

5.48 This is the large stand along the western side of the pitch, it is brick-built and encompasses a double-storey rear wall supporting a corrugated metal roof which shades the sloped seating on the upper floor. Below this, the ground floor is continuous with Building 5. The ground floor area had no access points suitable for use by bats, whilst the upper stand area is open-sided, bright and draughty and considered unsuitable for bats.



**Photograph 12:** Eastern elevation of Buildings 3 and 4

Building 5

5.49 This is a double-storey brick building with a flat roof clad in bituminous felt. At the southern end is a single-storey section with a sloped roof of corrugated composite sheeting. The fascia on the single-storey section is flush with the wall and whilst the corrugated roof forms natural crevices along the western elevation, these were heavily cobwebbed and filled with debris.

5.50 On the double-storey section of Building 5, several small gaps were noted beneath the fascia along the western elevation. These crevices were all found to be filled with thick, debris-filled cobwebbing and were additionally heavily shaded by the neighbouring conifer tree line to the west, reducing the suitability for roosting bats. A small void was present in part of Building 5, this could only be accessed in the vicinity of the boiler that was being repaired at the time, and the underside of the roof within the void was covered in thick and dusty cobwebbing.



**Photograph 13:** *Western elevation of Building 5*



**Photograph 14:** *Gaps beneath fascia on Building 5*

Building 6

5.51 This is an open-sided block building with flat timber roof housing turnstiles. The building is very bright and draughty internally and lacks suitable roost crevices for bats.

Building 7

5.52 This is a small block building with flat timber roof clad in bituminous felt and additionally covered over with corrugated Perspex. A partially open doorway and gaps at the wall top where the roof has warped would allow access into the interior for bats and birds. Internally, the roof lacks suitable roosting crevices for bats and there is evidence of damp ingress at the roof.



**Photograph 15:** *Southern elevation of Building 6*



**Photograph 16:** *Southern and western elevations of Building 7*

**Building 8**

5.53 This is a single-storey, brick-built toilet block with a flat roof of bituminous felt. The building is in good condition with tight-fitting fascias and no access points suitable for bats were noted.

**Building 9**

5.54 This is a brick-built hall with a sloped roof of corrugated metal, with metal edging sealing off any potential gaps at the undulations. No access points suitable for bats were identified around the outside of the building.

**Building 10**

5.55 This is a brick-built stand supporting a sloped roof of corrugated metal. This building links to Building 9 and the ground floor rooms are continuous between the two. No access points were identified around the exterior of Building 10.

5.56 Internally, a suspended ceiling creates an asymmetric roof void in both buildings, which could be seen and inspected in several places where ceiling tiles had been dislodged. A proportion of the void appears to have been insulated with spray foam insulation. Other areas had no spray foam visible, although thick cobwebbing could be seen.



**Photograph 17:** *Northern and western elevations of Building 8*



**Photograph 18:** *Northern and western elevations of Building 9*



**Photograph 19:** *Western elevation of Building 10*



**Photograph 20:** *Cobwebbed void within Buildings 9 and 10*

Tree 1

5.57 This is a single sycamore in the south-western corner of the site, with keyhole features in the process of forming. At present, the heartwood has not yet rotted away sufficiently to provide much more than shallow and exposed crevices, suitable only as a very opportunistic roost for crevice-dwelling species.



**Photograph 21:** *Tree 1 with keyhole features*

## 6 Conclusions & Recommendations

- 6.1 In line with Natural England’s Standing Advice, where further survey for protected species is recommended these should be conducted prior to submitting a planning application and appropriate mitigation measures be incorporated into the development design.

### *Badger*

- 6.2 The survey did not identify any direct evidence of badgers on the site and no setts were identified present within 30m of the site boundary. No further surveys for badgers are considered necessary.
- 6.3 A mammal path is present in the western part of the site, and it is possible that badgers could be active within the local area. No further surveys are considered necessary, however precautionary mitigation for badgers is recommended. A site check for badgers immediately prior to works commencing is recommended. **As badgers could potentially be present in the local area, good building practice should be followed, such as covering trenches at night or providing a ramp to prevent animals from becoming trapped.**

### *Breeding birds*

- 6.4 **Vegetation or tree removal should be undertaken outside the breeding bird period from March to August. Should any vegetation clearance be scheduled to take place between the beginning of March and the end of August, this must be immediately preceded by a survey to check for nesting birds. No vegetation can be cleared whilst a nest is occupied, regardless of species.**

### *Great Crested Newt (GCN)*

- 6.5 Of the two ponds within 500m of the site, Pond 1 is a steep-sided concrete ornamental pond and is not considered suitable for use by GCN. Whilst Pond 2 is connected to the site by deciduous woodland, it is approximately 450m from the site, with notably more suitable habitat immediately surrounding it than the limited amount of suitable habitat within the site boundary. Based on the area of the suitable habitat on site to be impacted and the location of the nearest water bodies to the site, a Rapid Risk Assessment calculation carried out for the site identifies that if breeding GCN are present in ponds identified within 500m of the site and in the absence of mitigation, there is no offence likely.

Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability score
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.01 - 0.1 ha lost or damaged	0.001
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
	Maximum:	0.001
Rapid risk assessment result:	<b>GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY</b>	

**FIGURE 7: RAPID RISK ASSESSMENT OF THE SITE**

- 6.6 Due to the limited suitable habitat on site, the distance to the only suitable pond within 500m and the results of the rapid risk assessment, the site is considered unlikely to



be used by GCN and therefore no further surveys or mitigation for this species is required.

#### *Hazel dormice*

- 6.7 Whilst deciduous woodland is present on site, the area of woodland is very small, and it lacks continuous understorey. Foraging opportunities are considered limited, as is full connectivity to the adjacent larger areas of woodland to the south. The site is considered unlikely to be used by hazel dormouse and therefore no further surveys for this species are required.

#### *Reptiles*

- 6.8 The site provides a small amount of habitat for reptiles within the bands of ruderal vegetation around the southern edges of the site, however the overall area of suitable habitat is small. In addition, the ruderal vegetation along the southern side of the site, which makes up the vast majority of the suitable habitat on site, is largely shaded by woodland immediately to the south of the boundary. No further suitable habitat is present to the east, west or north of the site, and the site therefore does not provide connectivity for reptiles between the woodland and any other habitat areas.
- 6.9 Numerous sections of timber and metal signage are among the discarded materials within suitable habitat areas on site; all items with potential to serve as reptile refugia were checked during the survey, and no reptiles or amphibians were identified present. Given that the survey was undertaken during conditions deemed suitable for reptile presence/absence survey, it is considered unlikely that notable populations of reptiles are present using the site and therefore no further surveys for reptiles are considered necessary. The site is connected to further suitable habitat to the south within Danson Park and it is considered that works can be carried out under a precautionary reptile method statement to ensure that reptiles are not significantly impacted by the works.

#### **6.10 A precautionary approach to site clearance must be adopted and reptile method statement followed, which will include but not be limited to the following measures:**

- Vegetation must be gradually cut down prior to site clearance.
- During the active season (March to September) the site can then be cleared; the top 10cms or so of topsoil must be removed by a toothed excavator under the supervision on an ecologist.
- Log piles, rubble piles and compost heaps should be dismantled carefully (by hand if possible).
- Any animals caught should be relocated to a safe area of suitable habitat beyond the development boundary.

#### *Other Mammals*

- 6.11 Site clearance work should be undertaken carefully (by hand if necessary) to avoid injury to mammals which may be present on site.

#### *Other Species of Principal Importance*

- 6.12 The west European hedgehog is an SPI, therefore it is recommended that any vegetation, such as ruderal vegetation and scrub, should be cleared sensitively by destructive search with a qualified ecologist present on site. If close board fencing is to be fitted it should be raised above ground level to allow hedgehogs to pass

underneath, some habitat areas should also be left un-landscaped to provide shelter and foraging opportunities. Good building practice recommended for badgers above will ensure that any hedgehogs traversing through the site are not trapped during the works. Additional habitat for hedgehogs could be provided through relaxation of mowing and seeding with an appropriate wildflower meadow mix in some areas of the site.

- 6.13 Buildings must be checked for nesting house sparrows and other bird species prior to demolition, no demolition can take place whilst a nest is occupied, regardless of species. Sparrow terraces could either be incorporated within or mounted onto the walls of the new buildings to enhance nesting availability for this species post-development.

*Invasive species*

- 6.14 Care must be taken to prevent the further spread of cherry laurel and snowberry into the adjoining deciduous woodland. Ideally efforts should be made to remove these from the site.

*Habitats of Principal Importance*

- 6.15 The deciduous woodland habitat within the site is smaller than is indicated on MAGIC mapping system and is partially separated from the deciduous woodland adjoining the site by a more sparsely vegetated area. In addition, the invasive species cherry laurel and snowberry that are present between the on-site and off-site areas of deciduous woodland are known to spread prolifically and are likely to degrade the condition of the woodland over time.

- 6.16 **Deciduous woodland is an HPI and must be retained;** loss of this priority habitat should be avoided and only carried out as a last resort. **Any removal of deciduous woodland would require compensation in the form of new native broadleaved woodland creation and/or enhancement of an area at least twice the size of that lost.**

*Other valuable ecological features*

- 6.17 The development will need to comply with the local authority's policy relating to Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) given the proximity of Danson Park to the proposed development.
- 6.18 The local authority should be contacted to check if any trees within the survey area have Tree Preservation Orders.

*Bats*

- 6.19 Building 1 and Buildings 3 to 10 were found to have negligible suitability for roosting bats due to a lack of suitable roosting features and therefore there are considered to be no constraints regarding the demolition of these buildings.
- 6.20 **Building 2 was identified as having low potential to support roosting bats due to the presence of gaps at the fascia on the eastern elevation. A minimum of one emergence survey is therefore required,** to confirm presence or increase confidence in a result of likely absence of bats.
- 6.21 The emergence survey must be carried out in the peak season of mid-May to mid-August. **If bats are found, sufficient surveys will be required in order to confirm**

**species and characterise all roosts in order to inform the licence application and associated mitigation strategy.**

- 6.22 **One sycamore tree on site was found to have keyhole features with low potential for bats.** In line with the Good Practice Guidelines, no further surveys for bats will be required if any of the trees are to be removed, however **the tree with low potential must be soft-felled under supervision of a licensed ecologist.**
- 6.23 The deciduous woodland edge along the length of the southern site boundary provides good foraging and commuting habitat for a range of open- and edge-habitat foraging bat species, although the existing pitch lighting may reduce the likelihood of use during operational hours.
- 6.24 Lighting can have notable negative impacts on commuting bats, that are known to be present locally. There is potential for lighting during and post-development to cause indirect disturbance at the southern boundary of the site. Lighting of the woodland adjoining the southern boundary must be avoided. **Any proposed new pitch and security lighting must be sensitively designed in accordance with the Institute of Lighting Professionals Guidance note 8: ‘Bats and Artificial lighting in the UK’ which can be downloaded for free from the ILP website.**

#### **Impact Assessment**

- 6.25 Overall, it is considered that there are no significant impacts to the fauna or flora populations within the local area from the proposed works provided the recommendations above are adhered to.

### Appendix 1 – Survey timetable

Species	Survey	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Badger	Bait marking & sett search	Sub-optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Sub-optimal	
Bats	Roost assessments	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	
	Ground level tree assess	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Optimal	Optimal	
	Emergence and activity	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Sub-optimal	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	
	Hibernation	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Optimal	Optimal
	Trapping	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season
Birds	Wintering	Optimal	Optimal	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Optimal	Optimal	
	Breeding	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	
Great crested newt	HSI	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	
	eDNA	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Optimal	Optimal	Sub-optimal	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	
	Presence/absence & popn	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Sub-optimal	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	
	Refugia	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season
Hazel dormouse	Tube	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Outside survey season	
	Nut search	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	
Otter	Field signs	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	
Reptiles	Refugia & search	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Sub-optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Outside survey season	Optimal	Sub-optimal	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	
Water vole	Field signs	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Sub-optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Sub-optimal	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	
Invertebrates	Presence & communities	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	Outside survey season	
Vegetation	Phase 1 habitat & NVC	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	Sub-optimal	
	Optimal													
	Sub-optimal													
	Outside survey season													

## Appendix 2 – legal protection

### General

This section briefly describes the legal protection afforded to protected species and habitats. It is for information only and is not intended to be comprehensive or to replace specialised legal advice. It is not intended to replace the text of the legislation but summarises the salient points.

### Badger

Badgers are protected under the *Protection of Badgers Act 1992*. Under this legislation it is an offence to kill or injure a badger, to damage, destroy or block access to a badger sett, or to disturb a badger in its sett. The Act also states the conditions for the protection of badger's licence requirements.

### Bats

All species of bats are listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. They are also protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. In combination, this makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
- possess;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and
- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.

A roost is defined as 'any structure or place which a bat uses for shelter or protection'. As bats tend to reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not bats are present.

Furthermore, seven bat species (barbastelle, bechstein's, noctule, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared, lesser horseshoe and greater horseshoe) are also Species of Principal Importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

### Breeding Birds

All species of wild bird are protected under *Section 1* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*. Protection was extended by the *Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000*. Under the above legislation, it is an offence to intentionally:

- kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or
- take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

Certain species are listed on *Schedule 1* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* and receive protection under *Sections 1(4)* and *1(5)*. There are special penalties where the offences listed above are committed for any *Schedule 1* species and it is also an offence to intentionally or recklessly:

- disturb any such bird when it is building its nest or while it is in or near a nest containing dependant young; or

- disturb the dependant young of any such bird.

### **Amphibians**

Natterjack toad, northern pool frog and great crested newt are listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. They are also protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. In combination, this makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
- possess;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and
- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.

Palmate newts and smooth newts are also afforded protection against sale only under *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*.

Natterjack toad, common toad, great crested newt and northern pool frog are also Species of Principal Importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

### **Hazel dormouse**

Hazel dormouse is listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)* which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. They are also protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. In combination, this makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
- possess;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and
- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.

Hazel dormouse is also a Species of Principal Importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

### **Otter**

Otter is listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*, which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. They are also protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. In combination, this makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
- possess;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and
- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.

Otter is also a Species of Principal Importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

## Reptiles

Common lizard (*Lacerta vivipara*), grass snake (*Natrix natrix*), slow-worm (*Anguis fragilis*), and adder (*Vipera berus*) are listed under *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*, in respect of *Section 9(5)* and part of *Section 9(1)*. This protection was extended by the *Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000*. Under the legislation, it is an offence to:

- intentionally or deliberately kill or injure any individual of these species; or
- sell or attempt to sell any part of these species either alive or dead.

Smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*) and sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*) are listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*, which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. They are also protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*. In combination, this makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take (capture etc.);
- possess;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy, obstruct access to any structure or place used by a scheduled animal for shelter or protection, or disturb any animal occupying such a structure or place; and
- sell, offer for sale, possess or transport for the purpose of sale (live or dead animal, part or derivative) or advertise for buying or selling such things.

All UK reptile species are Species of Principal Importance in England under *Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*.

## Water vole

Water vole (*Arvicola amphibious*) is listed on *Schedule 5* of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*, which affords them protection under *Section 9*, as amended. This makes it an offence to:

- capture, kill or injure;
- damage, destroy or block access to a place of shelter;
- disturb whilst in a place of shelter or possessing, and
- sell any part of a water vole, dead or alive.

## Other Mammals

All mammals receive some protection under the *Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996*, which makes it an offence to crush or asphyxiate an animal (e.g. within its burrow).

## Species and Habitats of Principal Importance

*Section 41* of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) (2006)* requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The S41 list has 56 Habitats of Principal Importance and 943 species of principal importance listed and has been drawn up in consultation with Natural England.

The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under *Section 40* of the *Natural Environment*

and *Rural Communities Act 2006*, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.

### **Invasive species**

It is an offence to plant, or otherwise cause to grow in the wild non-native plant species listed under *Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)*, for which *Section 14* of the Act applies. These include, but are not limited to:

- Himalayan balsam
- Cotoneaster sp.
- Japanese knotweed
- Giant hogweed.

### **Ancient woodland**

The *National Planning Policy Framework (2012)* states that ‘*Planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland, unless the need for, and benefits of, the development in that location clearly outweigh the loss*’. In addition, Natural England’s standing advice for ancient woodland states that *an appropriate buffer zone of semi-natural habitat [be in place] between the development and the ancient woodland (depending on the scale and impact of development), a minimum buffer should be at least 15 metres to avoid root damage and at least 50m for pollution or trampling*”. Ancient woodlands, and ancient and veteran trees, may also be protected by Tree Preservation Orders.

### **Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI’s)**

SSSI’s are areas notified under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended*, as being of special interest for nature conservation. They are the finest sites for wildlife and natural features supporting many characteristic, rare and endangered species, habitats and natural features. LPAs have a duty to consult Natural England before granting planning permission on any development that is in or likely to affect a SSSI.

### **National Site Network: Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) & RAMSAR sites.**

Development proposals which will adversely affect these sites are not permitted (except where there are no alternative solutions and the proposal is necessary for imperative reasons of overriding public interest). If a development could possibly impact on a SPA or SAC, the applicant will need to submit an assessment of potential impacts and their significance with their planning application for the local authority to make an ‘Appropriate Assessment’.

### **Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)**

These are a statutory designation made by local authorities. LNRs may be given protection against damaging operations and development on and around them via the local plan.

### **Local Wildlife Sites (LWS)**

This is a non-statutory designation for sites identified at a county level. They typically form a network of sites that are recognised of being of conservation importance locally and are often included in Local Authority development plans.



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