

PLANNING INSPECTORATE REFERENCE: APP/E2205/W/24/3345454

ASHFORD BOROUGH COUNCIL REFERENCE: 22/00571/AS

LOCATION: LAND NORTH OF POSSINGHAM FARMHOUSE, GREAT CHART

Statement of Common Ground - Ecology

1. This Ecology Statement of Common Ground (SoCG) seeks to clarify ecology and biodiversity related matters which have been agreed between Hodson Developments Ltd (the “Appellant”), Ashford Borough Council (the “Council”) and KCC Ecological Advice Service.
2. This SoCG is made for the purposes of a Public Inquiry in relation to a planning application (reference 22/00571/AS) which sought outline planning consent for up to 655 residential dwellings, with detailed information relating to access and all other matters reserved.
3. A suite of ecological surveys submitted with the application have been completed between 2021 and 2023 and an Ecological Impact Assessment carried out in 2023. In addition, a Biodiversity Metric has been calculated. This suite of surveys has included:
 - a. Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Lloyd Bore March 2021
 - b. Ecological Impact Assessment Report (EclA) Corylus Ecology April 2023
 - c. Addendum Ecological Impact Assessment Report Corylus Ecology November 2023
 - d. Addendum Ecological Impact Assessment Report – Corylus Ecology, July 2024 (submitted on 6th September 2024)
 - e. Addendum Ecological Impact Assessment Report – Corylus Ecology, September 2024 (submitted 10th September 2024)
4. A Biodiversity Net Gain report was produced in March 2023 using metric 3.1. Comments were made by KCC Ecological Advice Service on the submitted information: 16th May 2022, 23rd August 2023 and the 21st August 2024.
5. The refusal of the planning application on 14th December 2023 included the following reason relating to biodiversity:

Reason 4: In the absence of appropriate surveys and a robust assessment of the cumulative impact of development in the vicinity of the site, the applicant has failed to demonstrate that the development would not cause harm to protected species. The applicant has also failed to demonstrate that appropriate mitigation measures can be secured
6. The Addendum Ecological Impact Assessment Report Corylus Ecology November 2023 provided results of species-specific surveys carried out in 2023 and provided information relating to predicted impacts and proposed mitigation for all protected species. Comments regarding the November 2023 Addendum EclA by KCC Ecological Advice Service were dated 21st August 2024. KCC Ecological Advice Service accepts the method and results of the surveys and the evaluation of the significance¹ of the ecological interest

¹ KCC EAS does not agree with the way the bat assemblage has been downgraded to local importance. However, KCC EAS does not consider that this makes a material difference to the approach to be taken with regards to avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures at the site.

within the Site and also accepts the majority of the mitigation measures outlined in the addendum reports. The outstanding issues between the parties in relation to biodiversity were over two issues:

- 1 Skylarks – KCC Ecological Advice Service was concerned that Land Parcel EC8 which was proposed by the appellant to provide mitigation in the field to the south-east would not provide appropriate compensation for the loss of skylark nesting habitat due to the size, shape and boundary features of that field;
- 2 Figure 4 of the November 2023 Addendum EclA report which detailed dormouse and breeding bird mitigation did not match with the landscape parameter plan that was submitted (N (May 2021) Landscape Parameter Plan: Open Space Plan. Possingham Farm, Chilmington Green, Ashford, Kent. D0410_001 C). Areas shown as being scrub for dormouse and breeding bird habitat were shown as long open grassland/species rich grassland on the landscape parameter plan/open space plan.

Updated surveys

7. Updated ecological surveys were carried out in 2024. The results of these surveys carried out in 2024 are provided in Annex 2 with update breeding bird, dormouse and badger surveys having been undertaken.
8. The results of the updated report found similar results to the 2023 surveys. In particular in relation to birds it was verified through full breeding bird surveys that:
“The site is considered to be as being of **Site Importance** for its breeding birds. The impacts are considered to be a major adverse impact on the ground nesting farmland birds at Site level and as a maximum considered to be overall **significant at the Neighbourhood Level**”. A slightly higher number of skylark territories were recorded in 2024 compared to 2023 due to the field being left fallow in 2024. In 2024 up to six territories were recorded.
9. The badger surveys and dormouse surveys have continued to monitor the distribution of these species, no significant changes to the assessment of the site for these species has been made in 2024.

Areas of agreement

10. Following on from the KCC Ecological Advice Service comments on the November 2023 Addendum EclA report, discussion between the appellant and KCC Ecological Advice Service has come to agreement on the following key issues in relation to skylark.
11. It has been agreed that in relation to skylark, a mitigation and compensation strategy is likely to be achievable, which incorporates providing at least six additional skylark plots within the nearby Chilmington Green areas of Ecologically Managed Farmland and/or within farmland outside of this area but in close proximity to the appeal site. Currently a minimum of 20 ha of retained farmland to be managed for biodiversity areas are to be provided with two skylark plots per hectare and arable field margins under the planning permission granted for Chilmington Green. A strategic mitigation and compensation approach is to be provided, and will include updated surveys of the areas of proposed Ecologically Managed Farmland to ensure that the additional 6 skylark plots can be provided within the Chilmington Green site or within other farmland in close proximity to the appeal site. There are between 49 and 66 ha² of proposed Ecologically Managed Farmland that could be suitable for skylark compensation available at Chilmington Green in the Appellant’s ownership. In the event that the Ecologically Managed Farmland cannot support the additional skylark territories given that there is insufficient certainty (based on sound scientific evidence) that proposed measures could support the number of additional birds, the developer has

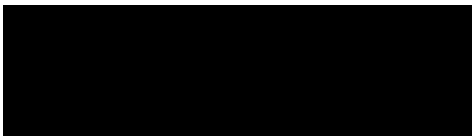
² KCC Ecological Advice Service considers that around 49 ha of the 66 ha of available land has the potential to form usable nesting skylark habitat.

confirmed that they would be able to agree off-site skylark compensation for the loss of territories with adjacent landowners with whom they have good relations.

12. The Landscape Parameter Plan/Open Space Plan which was submitted originally does not match with the requirements of planting proposed within the Ecological Mitigation Strategy (as outlined in the EclA and Addendum EclA reports). The Landscape Parameter Plan/Open Space Plan has been updated (N, D0410_001 F dated 9th September 2024) to be in line with the Ecological Mitigation Strategy. KCC Ecological Advice Service agree that a condition can be imposed to ensure the Ecological Mitigation Strategy shall be adhered to at the detailed design stage. There is now sufficient similarity between Figure 4 of the November 2023 Addendum EclA and the latest landscape parameter plan/open space plan (N, D0410_001 F dated 9th September 2024) for agreement to be reached with regards to the necessary avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures required for protected species and priority habitats.
13. It is considered that an agreement can be made to provide a condition for the monitoring of the effects during the construction and post construction to be able to review the predicted impacts and provide feedback as to the effectiveness of mitigation on species, specifically birds and dormice over both the short term and long term.
14. There would also be a requirement through planning condition and legal agreement to provide a long-term management and monitoring plan in the form of a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) in accordance with BS42020 for both on and off-site habitats. This would provide a periodical review of the predicted habitat types and condition set out in the biodiversity metric and skylark mitigation and compensation strategy at specified intervals post construction and where necessary provide a review mechanism of management prescriptions to ensure that the targets are met. The management will be funded by the development and will be secured for the lifetime of the development.
15. Agreed condition wording is contained in Annex 1 of this Statement of Common Ground.
16. The actions agreed above with KCC Ecological Advice Service have now addressed the Reason for Refusal in relation to Biodiversity.
17. This SoCG has been prepared jointly and agreed by:

Signed:

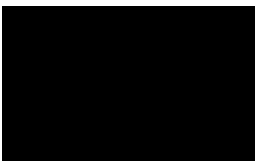
Date: 24th September 2024



Helen Lucking – Corylus Ecology (on behalf of Hodson Developments Ltd)

Signed:

Date: 24th September 2024



Emma England – Kent County Council Ecological Advice Service (on behalf of Ashford Borough Council)

Annex 1 - Agreed Condition Wording:

Construction Ecological Management Plan

The below wording should either form **part of** any larger CEMP / Construction Management Plan (CMP) condition required or should form a **separate** stand-alone condition for a Biodiversity Method Statement.

Suggested Condition Wording:

No development shall be undertaken (including any site clearance) before a construction ecological management plan (CEMP - biodiversity) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The CEMP - biodiversity shall be based on the recommendations in section 10 of the Corylus Ecology Ecological Impact Assessment Report (dated 24th April 2023), section 10 and Figure 4 (Impacts and Mitigation Plan) of the Corylus Ecology Addendum Ecological Impact Assessment Report dated November 2023, as well as sections 7 and 8, and the annotated landscape parameter plan/open space plan of the Addendum Ecological Impact Assessment Report (dated September 2024). It shall include the following:

- *Purpose and objectives for the proposed works;*
- *Risk assessment of potentially damaging construction activities. This shall include reference to the results of updated species/habitat surveys as advised by a suitably qualified ecologist;*
- *The identification of biodiversity protection zones and the use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs. This shall include a suitable buffer zone(s) (as set out by a suitably qualified ecologist) to protect the main badger sett and any other badger setts to be retained;*
- *Extent and location of proposed works shown on appropriate scale maps and plans for all relevant species and habitats;*
- *Detailed design(s) and/or detailed working method(s) necessary to achieve stated objectives (including the location and timing);*
- *Timetable for implementation, demonstrating that works are aligned with the proposed phasing of construction;*
- *Reference to any relevant and necessary protected species licences (e.g., badgers and dormice) and any relevant mitigation measures required;*
- *Reference to a detailed arboricultural method statement to protect retained trees/hedgerows;*
- *Persons responsible for implementing and monitoring the works, including times during construction when specialist ecologists need to be present on site to undertake / oversee works;*
- *The role and responsibilities on site of an ecological clerk of works (ECoW) or similarly competent person;*
and
- *Details of the disposal of any wastes required to implement works.*

The approved CEMP - biodiversity shall be adhered to and implemented throughout the construction period in accordance with the approved details.

Detailed Landscaping Plans

Biodiversity matters shall be adequately considered in the detailed soft landscaping design and appropriate reference to this should be included in any planning conditions that deal with soft landscaping. The provision of bird nest boxes, bat boxes and hazel dormouse boxes shall be shown on landscaping plans as per section 10 of the Corylus Ecology Ecological Impact Assessment Report (dated 24th April 2023), section 10 and figure 4 (Impacts and Mitigation Plan) of the Corylus Ecology Addendum Ecological Impact Assessment Report dated November 2023, section 7 and the annotated landscape parameter plan/open space plan of the Addendum Ecological Impact Assessment Report dated September 2024, and the landscape parameter plan/open space plan (N, D0410_001 F dated 9th September 2024). The below suggested wording should form part of a wider landscaping condition, or be linked to a wider landscaping condition(s) to avoid any conflicts between plans at the condition discharge stage.

Suggested Condition Wording:

No development shall be undertaken (including any site clearance) before an Ecological Design Strategy (EDS) has been submitted to and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The EDS shall include the following:

- *Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed works;*

- Review of site potential and constraints;
- Detailed design(s) and/or working method(s) to achieve stated objectives;
- Full details of soft landscape works, to include species, size and location of new habitats (e.g., trees, shrubs, hedges and grassed areas to be planted) with the extent and location/area of proposed works shown on appropriate scaled maps and plans;
- Full details of the proposed ecological features as per section 7 and the annotated landscape parameter plan/open space plan of the Corylus Ecology Addendum Ecological Impact Assessment Report dated September 2024) as well as section 10 of the Corylus Ecology Ecological Impact Assessment Report (dated 24th April 2023), and section 10 of the Corylus Ecology Addendum Ecological Impact Assessment Report dated November 2023. For habitat boxes this shall include numbers, make and model, locations to include height, aspect and mounting location shown on scaled landscaping plans suitable for construction;
- Full details of the extent of an appropriate buffer (as set out by a suitably qualified ecologist) for the main badger sett, and any other retained badger setts post-construction, and how it/they shall be protected from human interference over the long-term;
- Type and source of materials to be used where appropriate, e.g. native species of local provenance;
- Timetable for implementation demonstrating that works are aligned with the proposed phasing development;
- Persons responsible for implementing the works; and
- Details of initial aftercare.

Any trees or plants which within a period of 5 years from the completion of the development die, are removed or become seriously damaged or diseased, shall be replaced in the next planting season with others of a similar size and species as those originally planted, unless written approval to any variation is provided by the Local Planning Authority. The EDS shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and all features shall be managed as per the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan submitted and approved as part of Condition X.

Landscape and Ecological Management Plan

To ensure successful establishment and retention of the proposed biodiversity enhancements through appropriate long-term management and monitoring, a condition for a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) should be attached to any approved planning permission. The LEMP shall show how management will ensure that the proposed habitat types and target condition values are to be achieved and maintained. The LEMP shall be based on detailed landscaping plans that ensure adequate consideration of biodiversity.

Suggested Condition Wording:

No development shall be undertaken (including any site clearance) before a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) has been submitted to, and has been approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The content of the LEMP shall be based on the recommendations in section 10 of the Corylus Ecology Ecological Impact Assessment Report (dated 24th April 2023), sections 10 and 11, and Figure 4 (Impacts and Mitigation Plan) of the Corylus Ecology Addendum Ecological Impact Assessment Report dated November 2023, the Biodiversity Net Gain Report (dated March 2023) and associated biodiversity metric calculation tool (dated March 2023) produced by Corylus Ecology, as well as sections 7 and 8 of the Addendum Ecological Impact Assessment Report dated September 2024 and the landscape parameter plan/open space plan (N, D0410_001 F dated 9th September 2024). The LEMP shall include the following:

- Description and evaluation of features to be managed;
- Constraints on site that might influence management;
- Aims and objectives of management;
- An appropriate buffer (as set out by a suitably qualified ecologist) from development for the identified main badger sett and any other retained badger setts post-construction;
- Measures to reduce potential conflict between humans and badgers (e.g., measures to reduce the risk of badgers digging setts in residential gardens)
- Reference to detailed landscaping plans (including planting schedules) for the site;

- *Appropriate management prescriptions for achieving aims and objectives (including sensitive management for amphibians, reptiles, bats, hazel dormice, badger, breeding birds, hedgerows);*
- *Preparation of a work schedule (including an annual work plan capable of being rolled forward over a five-year period);*
- *Details of the body or organisation(s) responsible for implementation of the plan, and;*
- *Ongoing monitoring and remedial measures.*

The LEMP shall include details of the legal and funding mechanism(s) by which the long-term implementation of the plan will be secured by the developer with the management body(ies) responsible for its delivery. The approved plan shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details.

Biodiversity Sensitive Lighting Condition

To mitigate against potential adverse effects on biodiversity, the Bat Conservation Trust/Institute of Lighting Professional's 'Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night'³ (or subsequent updates) should be consulted in the lighting design of the development. An informative shall be included on any grant of planning permission to signpost the applicant to this guidance. The incorporation of sensitive lighting design for biodiversity shall be submitted to the local planning authority and secured via an attached condition with any planning permission.

Suggested Condition Wording:

Prior to first occupation of the development, a lighting design plan for biodiversity shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the local planning authority. The strategy shall include the following:

- *The identification of areas/features on-site where disturbance could occur to bat and hazel dormouse roosting/nesting sites and/or foraging/commuting routes;*
- *The provision of an appropriate plan(s) to show how and where external lighting will be installed;*
- *The provision of technical specifications for the external lighting;*
- *The provision of lighting contour plans to show expected lux levels on both the horizontal and vertical planes, so that it can be clearly demonstrated that areas to be lit will not disturb bat/dormouse activity.*

All external lighting shall be installed prior to first occupation of the development in accordance with the specifications and locations set out in the strategy, and these shall be maintained thereafter in accordance with the strategy.

Off-site skylark mitigation and compensation strategy

No development shall be undertaken (including any site clearance) before a Skylark Mitigation and Compensation Strategy has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the local planning authority. The Strategy shall ensure off-site habitat is provided for the projected loss of at least six skylark territories (as identified in the Corylus Ecology Addendum Ecological Impact Assessment Report dated September 2024 (Corylus reference 21142). The Strategy shall ensure the mitigation and compensation measures with regards to habitat improvements proposed, and the area of land required, are based on available scientific research (such as The SAFFIE Project Report by Clarke et al., June 2007; BTO Research Report No. 129 by Wilson and Browne, October 1993; and Journal für Ornithologie article on Territory density of the Skylark (Alauda arvensis) in relation to field vegetation in central Germany by Toepfer and Stubbe, December 2001). If the proposed compensation site already has existing skylark territories and/or is already proposed as skylark compensation for other development, evidence shall be provided to demonstrate that the measures proposed are additional to any existing territories. The Strategy shall include the following:

- *Up-to-date breeding bird survey data for the proposed compensation site;*
- *Purpose and conservation objectives for the proposed works;*
- *Review of site potential and constraints;*

³ [Guidance Note 8 Bats and Artificial Lighting | Institution of Lighting Professionals \(theilp.org.uk\)](https://www.theilp.org.uk/guidance-note-8-bats-and-artificial-lighting-at-night/)

- Detailed design(s) and/or working method(s) to achieve stated objectives;
- Extent and location/area of proposed works on appropriate scale maps and plans;
- Type and source of materials to be used where appropriate, e.g. native species of local provenance;
- Timetable for implementation demonstrating that works are aligned with the proposed phasing of development;
- Details of the body or organisation(s) responsible for implementing the Strategy;
- Details of initial aftercare and long-term maintenance, and;
- Details for monitoring (to be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist(s)) and remedial measures.

The Skylark Mitigation and Compensation Strategy shall be implemented in accordance with the approved details and no later than the commencement of construction or site clearance if earlier. All features shall be retained as approved thereafter, unless remedial measures are required.

Approval for any remedial measures shall be sought from the local planning authority in writing through condition x and thereafter implemented as approved.

Monitoring of the Skylark Mitigation and Compensation Strategy

Post-completion of the habitat improvement/creation works as secured by condition x, monitoring of the number of skylark breeding territories at the off-site compensation site shall be carried out in years 2, 5 and 10 by a suitably qualified ecologist and in line with standard professional survey guidelines. Year 1 shall be said to commence subsequent to a dated written statement from a suitably qualified ecologist to confirm that the habitat improvement/creation works have been completed and which shall be submitted to the local planning authority. After each monitoring period full breeding skylark survey results shall be submitted to, and be approved in writing by, the local planning authority, including details of any required remedial management. The approved remedial measures shall be implemented.

END

Annex 2: Addendum Ecological Impact Assessment Report (September 2024)

(Provided as a separate attachment)



Addendum
Ecological Impact Assessment Report

**Possingham Farm,
Chilmington Green**

Date of report	September 2024
Author	Helen Lucking Constance Traggett
Reviewer(s)	
Client name	Hodson Developments
Corylus reference	21142

CORYLUS ECOLOGY

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Appendix 2 – Dormouse Results

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Corylus Ecology has undertaken an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) of an area of land at Possingham Farm, Chilmington Green, Ashford, hereinafter referred to as 'the Site', at OS grid reference TQ 96680 40060. The Site is approximately 3km east of Bethersden, Kent. The proposals for the Site include residential dwellings with associated structures and gardens. In addition to the residential development, the proposals include creating two ponds to the southeast of the Site.

1.2 In March 2021, Lloyd Bore Ltd. produced a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) report identifying potential for protected species. The details of this survey are still valid and are contained in the resulting Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report (Lloyd Bore, 2021). An Ecological Impact Assessment report was prepared by Corylus Ecology in April 2023 with information provided from update species surveys but as set out in that EclA, not all surveys had been completed. An Addendum report was prepared in November 2023 and was submitted with the final results of surveys for dormice, great crested newt, bats and birds.

1.3 This report provides additional results of further surveys continued since 2023. The results of surveys are discussed in their own chapters. The objectives of each of the protected species surveys were to:

- continue dormouse surveys to further establish data in relation to distribution;
- Repeat breeding bird surveys to further confirm number of pairs of skylark present;
- Continue monitoring of badgers.
- Re-evaluate the importance of the protected species assemblage within the Site
- Confirm outline mitigation recommendations, where required

1.4 Water vole surveys have not been undertaken of the ditches, none of the ditches supported sufficient levels of water to support this species during the summers of both 2022 and 2023.

1.5 This report has been prepared for the exclusive use of Hodson Developments. No part of this report should be considered as legal advice.

Ecological Impact Assessment

1.6 The general approach to the assessment of potential impacts of the proposed development on features of specific ecological and broader biodiversity interest, as well as the identification of appropriate mitigation measure to diminish those impacts, follows the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland ("EclA") produced by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental

Management ("CIEEM"). These guidelines are web based and subject to review and updating and a summary is provided in Appendix 1.

2.0 DORMOUSE

2.1 Background

2.1.1 Historical data are available for dormice within the wider area due to surveys which have been carried out for the Chilmington Green development, all of which were shown on plans in the previous reports. An EPSM licence is in place to the north of Possingham to permit the removal of a section of hedgerow to the west of the A28 for the new roundabout to be created.

2.1.2 In March 2024 it was noted that a c.20m section of the northern hedgerow (H1) had been removed and the associated ditch cleared out. The works had apparently been carried out to clear away some storm damage to two trees. As soon as this had been seen by the ecologists, remedial action was undertaken with new hedgerow planting and dead-hedging along the base to provide cover for dormice. In addition, the incident was self reported to the police.

2.2 Methodology

2.2.1 The dormouse tubes installed in 2022/2023 were left in place and subject to location check in March 2024 and replaced / rehung where necessary in accordance with guidance provided within the Dormouse Conservation Handbook, Second Edition (Bright *et al.*, 2006). Some additional tubes were set in the southern section of the hedgerow along the A28 which had developed into better quality habitat following the cessation of the regular flailing since the start of the dormouse surveys. The tubes were installed in suitable dormouse habitat at approximately 20m intervals, between waist and chest height. Surveys continued in 2024 with formal checks made in May and July 2024, the July survey specifically along the road side hedgerow only.

2.2.2 Each tube was surveyed in sequence, and where a tube could be seen to be empty, no further check was made. Where the inside of the tube could not be easily seen, the tube was temporarily blocked and a closer inspection made. All surveys were completed by licenced dormouse surveyors, either Helen Lucking (licence number 2016-22579-CLS-CLS) or Kate Baldock (Licence number 2016-22541-CLS-CLS).

2.2.3 Each survey was carried out in suitable, dry weather conditions and completed within one day to ensure no animals found were double-counted. The biometric data of any captured dormice were taken; animals were weighed using small plastic bags and 50g Pesola spring scales. Any birds' nests were also noted.

2.3 Results

2.3.1 In 2023 dormice were recorded in the hedgerows along the north, south, east and west sides of the Site. The surveys in 2024 confirmed their presence in all of these hedgerows, including H1 which had a section removed prior to the 2024 survey window. No evidence of dormice has been recorded to date in

the southern section of hedgerow H2. In May 2024 a male dormouse weighing 19g was found in T32 along the northern hedgerow with additional new nests recorded in T35 and T37. Figure 1 shows the combined results from 2023 and 2024.

2.4 Evaluation

- 2.4.1 The 2022, 2023 and 2024 surveys have determined dormice are present in all boundary features of the Site. The distribution of dormice in the western hedgerow (H2) appears to be limited to the north. This hedgerow is the poorest in terms of structure for dormice being heavily managed and lower in height than the other hedgerows although it has improved in structure since flailing stopped in 2022. In the EclA report (April 2023) it was suggested that this hedgerow might be used by dispersing or young dormice rather than breeding due to the poor structure. This is still considered to be the most likely scenario given the lack of evidence of dormice in the tubes to the south to date. However, for the purposes of any licence that may be required monitoring of the tubes in this hedgerow is to be continued.
- 2.4.2 Dormice have been recorded in the hedgerow extending north from the connection of H2 and H1 and a current EPSM licence has been granted to allow the removal of this section of hedgerow for the creation of the new roundabout and access road for the Chilmington Green development.
- 2.4.3 The presence of dormice within the boundary features of the Site is considered to be of Local Importance.

3.0 BREEDING BIRDS

3.1 Background

3.1.1 The Lloyd Bore report recorded the potential for skylark and other breeding birds to be present. A condensed bird survey was carried out in 2023 which confirmed that skylark hold territory throughout spring and summer with an estimated four territories. The number of registrations recorded during the later June survey were significantly lower with only two birds recorded singing compared to the seven recorded on the 24th May survey. Skylark were recorded flying between the Site and the field to the east and three singing skylark were recorded over the field to the east during the 24th May survey. In 2023 the field was still being farmed and had a cereal crop which was tall by the surveys in June 2023.

3.1.2 The 2023 surveys concluded that the area did not support any significant breeding bird assemblage and species typical of the intensively farmed habitats present were recorded. Walkover surveys in 2022 recorded linnet, house sparrow and starling. These species were not recorded as potentially breeding during the 2023 surveys. The condensed breeding bird survey assessed the assemblage to be of at most of Local Importance

3.2 Methodology

3.2.1 The surveys followed guidelines as set out in the British Trust for Ornithology's (BTO) Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) and Common Bird Census (CBC) methodology and also the bird survey guidelines (Bird Survey and Assessment Steering Group (2023)). These survey methodologies are used as standard techniques to sample the assemblage of breeding birds within a site. The survey methodology used for the surveys a CBC which involved a six dawn surveys and an evening vantage point survey with standard territory (registration) mapping technique as detailed in Bibby et al. (2000) and Gilbert et al. (1998). This method is based on the observation that many species during the breeding season are territorial. This is found particularly amongst passerines, where territories are often marked by conspicuous song, display, and periodic disputes with neighbouring individuals. Surveys are undertaken within four hours of dawn and all bird species are recorded as they call and move around the site. The surveys were completed on the following dates:

- 27th March 2024
- 19th April 2024
- 7th May 2024
- 17th May 2024
- 3rd June 2024
- 10th June 2024 (evening vantage point survey)
- 21st June 2024

- 3.2.2 All surveys were completed by Helen Lucking BSc (Hons), MCIEEM, BES who has over 25 years' experience of completing bird surveys as a consultant.
- 3.2.3 All bird locations were mapped using standard BTO species codes on an appropriate field map. Specific diagrammatic codes were also used to denote singing, calling, movements between areas, flying, carrying food, nest building, aggressive encounters and other behaviour. For each survey, a field map was completed.
- 3.2.4 Surveys were confined to habitats within and immediately adjacent to the site, with the surveyor walking at a slow and methodical pace in suitably fine weather in order to detect, locate and identify all individual birds by sound and / or sight.
- 3.1.5 The data analysis follows procedures detailed in Gilbert et al. (1998). Repeat registrations of birds noted and the number of likely territories calculated.
- 2.4.2 The territories have been defined as 'Confirmed breeding'; those birds where nests have been recorded or newly fledged chicks have been recorded, 'Likely breeding'; where multiple registrations of birds and specific behaviour indicating likely breeding has been recorded and 'Possible breeding'.

Table 1 – Breeding Categories

Breeding Category	Criteria
Confirmed Breeding	Adults observed nest building or at nest Nest with eggs Unfledged young Adults carrying food or faecal sacs Adult birds present in suitable breeding habitat and in same location on at least two occasions and displaying territorial behaviour (eg singing, defending territory against other individuals of same species)
Breeding Off-Site	Birds flying or foraging over site Adult birds present in unsuitable breeding habitat

Evaluation Methodology

- 2.4.3 Birds recorded during the survey were placed in both a national and local context in order to identify species of conservation importance. The conservation importance of the breeding bird populations was determined using the criteria specified below.

- the presence of breeding species of recognised international conservation importance i.e. species listed on Annex I of EC Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds 1979;
- the presence of breeding species of recognised national conservation importance i.e. species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981;
- the presence of Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC4) Red List species (Stanbury et al 2021);
- the presence of species identified as Priority Species in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP);
- the presence of species identified on the IUCN European Red List;
- the presence of species listed under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act) Section 41 Species of Principal Importance in England; and
- Kent Local Biodiversity Action Plan.

2.4.4 The breeding bird assemblage of the Survey Area was also evaluated against the standard JNCC guidelines for the selection of biological SSSIs (JNCC 1995).

2.4.5 Finally, an additional evaluation method has also been used. Species richness is a simple and effective measure of diversity that can be used to describe conservation value separately for breeding, passage and wintering bird communities. Fuller (1980) provided the following criteria for the evaluation of sites for breeding bird diversity where the number of species found breeding in an area can be given a value as shown below:

Table 2: Breeding Bird Diversity Values (Fuller, 1980)

National	Regional	County	Local
85+ species	84-70 species	69-50 species	49-25 species

3.2 Results

3.2.1 Figure 2 shows the distribution of the breeding bird territories within the Site. The numbers of territories recorded for each species is given below in Table 3.

Table 3 – Breeding bird territories recorded in 2024

Species#	Scientific name#	Number of territories#	UK Population estimate (Woodward <i>et al</i> 2020)#
skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	6 probable	1,550,000
yellowhammer	<i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	2 probable 1 possible	700,000
Blue tit#	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i> #	4 confirmed 2 probable	3,400,000
Robin#	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i> #	4 probable	7,350,000
Blackbird#	<i>Turdus merula</i> #	3 probable	5,050,000
Chiff-chaff#	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i> #	1 confirmed	1,750,000
Great tit#	<i>Parus major</i> #	1 probable 1 possible	2,350,000
Dunnock#	<i>Prunella modularis</i> #	3 possible	2,500,000
Whitethroat#	<i>Sylvia communis</i> #	2 probable 1 possible	1,100,000
Blackcap#	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i> #	1 probable	1,650,000
Chaffinch#	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i> #	2 probable	5,050,000
Wren#	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i> #	4 probable	11,000,000
Linnet	<i>Carduelis cannabina</i>	1 probable	560,000
Stock dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	1 possible	320,000
Mistle thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	1 possible	165,000
Goldfinch#	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i> #	1 possible	1,650,000
Carrion Crow#	<i>Corvus corone</i> #	1 probable	1,050,000
Wood pigeon#	<i>Columba palumbus</i> #	1 confirmed Several possible	5,150,000
Magpie#	<i>Pica pica</i> #	1 probable	610,000#
Recorded but breeding outside main survey area or off-site			
Song thrush#	<i>Turdus philomelos</i> #	1 to west#	1,300,000#

Species#	Scientific name#	Number of territories#	UK Population estimate (Woodward <i>et al</i> 2020)#
House sparrow#	<i>Passer domesticus</i> #	1 to west#	5,300,000#
Starling#	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> #	N/A#	1,750,000#
Swallow#	<i>Hirundo rustica</i>	N/A#	480,000#
Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	N/A	
Herring gull#	<i>Larus argentatus</i> #	N/A#	130,000#

3.3 Evaluation

3.3.1 Breeding bird surveys in 2024 recorded 19 species as confirmed, probably or possibly breeding within the Site and the Site boundary features. The breeding bird assemblage was considered typical of the habitats present on Site with farmland birds such as skylark, yellow hammer and linnet associated with the former arable fields and woodland species such as wren, blackcap, stock dove being recorded in the narrow woodland shaw to the south-east.

Table 4 – Species at Site meeting conservation status criteria

Species	BoCC5 Red List	BoCC5 Amber List	NERC Section 41 and UK BAP	Act and Kent Red Data Book
Species breeding/probably breeding/possible breeding				
Skylark	•		•	KRDB2
Linnet	•		•	KRDB2
Yellowhammer	•		•	KRDB3
Wren		•		
Whitethroat		•		
Stock dove		•		
Reed bunting		•	•	KRDB2
Dunnock		•	•	
Species recorded but not breeding				
House sparrow	•		•	KRDB3
Song thrush		•		KRDB2
Herring gull	•			

- 3.3.3 Three species of conservation importance included on the Red List of BoCC (skylark, linnet and yellow hammer). A further four species on the Amber list were confirmed breeding within the survey area - whitethroat, stock dove, dunnoek and wren with a fifth, reed bunting, recorded on the last two surveys only has been included as a possible breeding species.
- 3.3.4 The number of skylark territories recorded in 2024 (six territories) was an increase in the number considered likely present in 2023. In 2023, seven skylark were recorded during an early season survey in May 2023, whilst only two were recorded in late June 2023, and thus an estimate of four territories was given.
- 3.3.5 The fields in which the six territories were recorded was left fallow in 2024 and had been previously cropped with a cereal crop in 2023. The cereal crop in 2023 grew high early in the season and would have limited the availability of areas for breeding for skylark, which need areas of short vegetation for their nests. In 2024, the fallow nature of the land meant that there were more available breeding areas for skylark, hence the increase in numbers of territories. The field to the east was cropped with barley in 2024, which reduced the number of territories in this field to one by mid spring as the crop became too high. Densities of skylark in England have been found to be much greater in set aside (29.6 pairs per km²) compared to typical arable (10.8 pairs per km²) (Donald 2004). Densities in set aside are high where rotation ensures that the vegetation does not become too tall or dense. Territories peak at vegetation heights of around 60cm and decline rapidly where heights increase above 1m. The vegetation within the Site in 2024 was set aside, with skylark numbers increasing throughout early spring into late spring as the vegetation increased in height and became more suitable for breeding territories.
- 3.3.6 Three further BoCC species were recorded either close to the site (song thrush – amber) or on site but on single occasions and not considered breeding (house sparrow and herring gull – both red).
- 3.3.7 The results of the breeding bird surveys in 2024 confirm the findings of the condensed 2023 surveys. The site does not reach the JNCC threshold for SSSI Selection for lowland farmland (the assemblage scores four where a threshold figure of 26.5 is required). The Site does not fulfil the Kent criteria for being designated as a Local Wildlife Site supporting fewer than 10 KRDB2 species and fewer than three KRDB3 species in the breeding season. The data also indicates that the breeding bird community present within the Site does not reach the threshold of Local Significance based on the Fuller criteria with fewer than 25 species recorded. The breeding bird assemblage is therefore assessed as being of Site Importance.

4.0 BADGER

4.1 Background

4.1 [REDACTED]

4.2 Methodology

4.2.1 Badger cams were deployed from 11th till 19th April 2024 and a dedicated badger survey was carried out on 8th May 2024. The Site was searched for field signs associated with badger including setts, paths, scratching posts, foraging 'snuffle holes', latrines, footprints, pushes and hairs. These features were mapped accordingly.

4.2.2 Setts are assessed according to the following classification, as described in the Natural England (2009) guidance:

- *Main Setts*: These usually have a large number of holes with large spoil heaps, and look well used. They usually have well used paths to and from the sett and between sett entrances. Although normally the breeding sett is in continual use all year round, it is possible to find a main sett that has become disused because of excessive disturbance or for some other reason.
- *Annexe Setts*: These are always close to a main sett and are usually connected to the main sett by one or more obvious, well-worn paths. They usually consist of several holes, but are not necessarily in use all the time, even if the main sett is very active.
- *Subsidiary Setts*: Often these have only a few holes, are usually at least 50m from a main sett, and do not have an obvious path connecting them with another sett. They are not continuously active.
- *Outlying Setts*: These usually only have one or two holes, often have little spoil outside the entrance(s), have no obvious path connecting them with another sett, and are only used sporadically.

7.2.2 Classification of setts can be difficult in the field and, in areas of low badger density, main setts may be relatively small, with only a few holes, and not all sett types will be found in a particular area. For example, in poor badger habitat there may be no main sett which fits the above description. Setts are sometimes taken over or cohabited by fox *Vulpes vulpes* or rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus*. However, they can still be recognised as badger setts by the shape of the tunnel (not the entrance hole, which may be an enlarged rabbit or fox hole), which is at least 250mm in diameter, broader than they are high and often oval in shape.

4.2.4 The location and condition of any sett found was recorded, including the presence of freshly excavated soil, bedding material and whether the condition of the entrance suggests that the hole is active, overgrown or disused.

4.3 Results

4.3.1 [REDACTED]

4.3.2 [REDACTED]

4.4 Evaluation

4.4.1 [REDACTED]

[REDACTED]

4.4.2

[REDACTED]

4.4.3

[REDACTED]

5.0 SUMMARY OF EVALUATION

5.1 Table 5 provides a summary of the evaluation of the ecological interest within the Site as described in the preceding chapters. The surveys for birds in 2024 confirmed the evaluation of the site for birds as being of Site significance rather than being of Site to Local significance.

Table 5 - Evaluation of Ecological Features

Feature	Summary	Importance
Arable fields	Limited botanical interest within the fields	Negligible
Ditches	Seasonally wet ditches	Neighbourhood
Hedgerows	All hedgerows are considered Important under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997.	Local
Dormouse	Dormice confirmed in all boundary features although only in very north of western boundary. Western boundary feature is very poor quality.	Local
Bats	Low roosting potential in T1. One emergence survey completed with no emerging bats recorded. Bat activity surveys recorded activity largely restricted to boundary features with relatively low levels of activity and limited diversity.	Local
Breeding birds	The hedgerows and fields provide suitable habitat for breeding birds, skylark and yellowhammer have been recorded within the Site with several other red list species breeding in the perimeter hedgerows and tree lines..	Site
Badgers	[REDACTED]	Site
Water vole	Survey complete: habitat of limited suitability, no field signs found	None
GCN	Ditches dry in early spring prevented eDNA surveys being undertaken. Closest pond to the south has not been surveyed as access has not been permitted. Previous surveys from 2012 found no evidence of GCN in ponds to the west.	Site (if present in P50)
Reptiles	No surveys completed, limited habitat suitable for reptiles within the Site. Likely presence of grass snake due to ditches.	Site

6.0 IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 Predicted Effects - Construction

- 6.1.1 The predicted effects are unchanged from the 2023 report but are repeated here in Table 6 below for ease of reference. This table describes the potential significant effects resulting from the Construction for each of the sensitive receptors. Due to the distance from the Site, no construction effects or completed development effects are predicted for any ancient woodland or SSSI's within the wider countryside.

Table 6 – Predicted Effects Arising from the Construction of the Development

Feature	Potential effect	Relevant Development activity	Detail of Ecological Effects	Predicted Effects without Mitigation
Construction Effects – Habitats				
Hedgerows / individual retained trees of Neighbourhood Importance	Habitat degradation	Accidental physical damage during Site clearance and construction	Without adequate fencing protection there is some risk of direct (physical damage) or indirect (root compaction) impacts to the trees on the boundary of the woodland / area of scrub.	Moderate Adverse Effect at the Neighbourhood Level
		Dust emissions	Without adequate dust suppression controls there is the potential for excessive dust generation arising from initial site clearance and earth movement activities.	
		Changes to hydrological regime resulting from construction and drainage.	The retained hedgerows around the perimeter of the Site and off site hedgerows and trees may be affected	
		Pollution during site clearance and construction	Without adequate pollution prevention measures, there is some risk of pollution from refuelling activities, silt heavy run-off, concrete batching or chemical spills, via uncontrolled surface water discharges.	
Ditches of Neighbourhood Importance	Habitat degradation	Pollution during site clearance and construction	Without appropriate pollution control measures in place, there is a risk of the uncontrolled discharge of pollutants to the ditches.	
		Habitat loss	Silt run-off during initial site clearance and landforming works	
Construction Effects – Species				
Dormice of Local Importance	Killing or injury of individual reptiles	Site clearance	Without appropriate mitigation, there is potential for dormice to be disturbed or to be killed or injured as the result of unmanaged site clearance works. There will be a permanent loss of approximately 20m x 10m wide section of hedgerow H1 in the north of the Site. A section of hedgerow H2 may also be lost, there is a large gap in the hedgerow around this point for tractor access although the exact location of the access has not been marked on the ground. It is possible that more of this hedgerow will need to be removed. Dormice have not been recorded as far south as this and until recently the hedgerow was of poorer quality in terms of species diversity and structure for dormice. It has improved since flailing ceased in 2022.	Moderate Adverse Effect of Local Significance
Bats of Local Importance	Killing or injury of individual bats	Site clearance (trees)	Without appropriate mitigation, there is potential for bats to be killed or injured as the result of site clearance works involving accidental damage to, trees with bat roost potential.	Minor Adverse Effect of Site Significance
Badgers – Site	Killing or injury	Site clearance and	Without appropriate mitigation, there is potential for badgers to be killed or injured as the	Moderate Adverse

Feature	Potential effect	Relevant Development activity	Detail of Ecological Effects	Predicted Effects without Mitigation
Importance	of badgers and damage to setts	construction work	result of site clearance works involving accidental damage to setts within the Site.	Effect of Site Significance
Amphibians of Site Importance (at most)	Killing or injury of individual GCN	Site clearance and land-forming	Without appropriate mitigation, there is potential to damage terrestrial habitat necessary for amphibians, no ponds are present within the Site and the closest pond 85m from the most southern point of the Site which has not been surveyed. There is therefore potentially to kill or injure GCN.	Moderate Adverse Effect of Site Significance
Reptiles of Site Importance	Killing or injury of individual reptiles	Site clearance and land-forming	Without appropriate mitigation, there is potential for reptiles to be killed or injured as the result of unmanaged site clearance works.	Moderate Adverse Effect of Site Significance
Birds of Site importance	Killing or injury of individual birds during breeding period	Site clearance	Without appropriate mitigation, there is potential for breeding birds to be disturbed or to be killed or injured as the result of unmanaged site clearance works.	Moderate Adverse Effect of Neighbourhood Significance

6.2 Predicted Effects – Operation / Existence (Completed Development)

6.2.1 Table 7 describes the potential significant effects resulting from the completed development for each of the sensitive receptors.

Table 7 – Predicted Effects Arising from the Completed Development

Feature	Potential effect	Relevant Development activity	Detail of Ecological Effects	Predicted Effects without Mitigation
Completed Development Effects - Habitats				
Hedgerows of Local Importance	Habitat degradation	Increased public activity within woodland	Retention, without any further interventions, could reduce the condition of the retained habitats.	Minor Adverse effect of Local Significance
Completed Development Effects - Species				
Dormice Local Importance	Increased predation and disturbance	Increased population of domestic cats and degradation of retained and newly created habitats.	Without mitigation the degradation of retained and newly created habitat could directly result in an increase in predation and disturbance to dormice (if present).	Moderate Adverse Effect of Local Significance
Bats of Local Importance	Habitat disturbance - lighting	Public realm lighting within the development	Without mitigation the additional lighting arising from the completed development will increase levels of disturbance/fragmentation to bats using the Site for commuting and dispersal. No additional lighting is proposed along Ashford Road at this time, there is lighting associated with the newly formed roundabout to the north-west of the Possingham proposed development which is not yet installed. This has been approved under the planning permission for the roundabout.	Moderate Adverse Effect of Neighbourhood Significance.
Badgers of Site Importance	Increased disturbance and overall loss of foraging habitat	Increased public activity across Site may result in badgers abandoning setts.	Without mitigation the degradation of retained and newly created habitat could directly result in an increase in disturbance to badgers and a degradation and disturbance of foraging habitat.	Moderate Adverse Effect of Neighbourhood Significance.
Birds of Site Importance	Increased predation and disturbance	Increased population of domestic cats and degradation of retained and newly created habitats.	Without mitigation the degradation of retained and newly created habitat could directly result in an increase in predation and disturbance to breeding birds. The long-term loss of arable habitats will result in the loss of territories of farmland birds such as yellowhammer and ground nesting skylark with between 4 and 6 pairs displaced depending on the management of the Site in any given year.	Moderate Adverse Effect of Neighbourhood Significance
Amphibians of Site Importance	Increase fragmentation	Development plots	Without mitigation the degradation of habitat arising from the development may compromise the potential for Ditch D1a to act as a conduit for facilitating amphibian dispersal within the wider landscape.	Major Adverse Effect of Site Significance.
	Increased predation and casualty	Increased cat population and potential for road casualty	Without mitigation the increased casualty through cat predation and road casualty	Minor adverse effect of Site Significance

Feature	Potential effect	Relevant Development activity	Detail of Ecological Effects	Predicted Effects without Mitigation
Reptiles of Site Importance	Increased predation and disturbance	Increased population of domestic cats and degradation of retained and newly created habitats.	Without mitigation the degradation of retained and newly created habitat could increase the risk of predation through the increased cat population and disturbance which could affect the retained reptile population	Moderate Adverse Effect of Neighbourhood Significance.

7.0 MITIGATION AND RESIDUAL EFFECTS

- 7.1 An updated table of mitigation and residual effects is provided below. This replicates the table within the May 2023 EclA, updated with mitigation provided in the November addendum report with some amendments to areas of habitat creation to allow for additional public open space provision.

Table 8 – Outline Mitigation Strategy and Residual Effects

Habitat Feature and Impact	Practical mitigation measures including working practices	Residual Effects
<p>The following habitat will be lost during Site clearance:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Hedges • Ditches • Trees <p>Loss of plant species diversity and habitat corridor function; loss of connectivity for dormice, reptiles, bats, hedgehog and badgers; reduction in dormouse and breeding bird habitat and foraging habitat for dormouse, bats, birds, reptiles, hedgehogs and invertebrates.</p> <p>Damage to existing hedgerow and shrubs, including compaction of tree roots.</p> <p>Loss of aquatic habitat and associated aquatic life.</p>	<p><u>Construction</u> For all retained habitats protective fencing/hoarding will be installed along the retained habitat at the boundaries of the Site will be protected from encroachment during the construction process. This will provide protection for all protected species and is therefore not referred to again in the protected species sections.</p> <p><u>Operation</u> To compensate for loss of removed hedgerows, ditches and trees there will be habitat creation, including scrub and woodland planting, grassland/wildflower meadow areas, tree and hedgerow planting, and SUDS and wetland habitat creation around the development.</p> <p>These new trees and hedgerows will be planted with native, heavily fruiting and flowering species that have been chosen for their suitability to insects and nesting/foraging dormice and birds.</p> <p>Long term management of all habitats will be implemented to prevent the hedgerows becoming overgrown/defunct and for the newly created ditches and wetland areas to be maintained appropriately. Management of the grassland areas as species-rich wildflower meadow will be implemented.</p>	<p>Moderate Positive effect significant at Neighbourhood Level</p>
<p><u>Dormice</u> <i>Loss of habitat with dormice.</i></p> <p><i>Local Importance</i></p>	<p><u>Construction</u> The removal of the area of hedgerow H1 will be carried out under an EPSM licence from Natural England. This will involve the careful removal of the hedgerow vegetation at an appropriate time of year, specifically avoiding May to August inclusive. Additional nest tubes and boxes will be installed within the retained habitats to provide nesting places for displaced animals. Any dormice found on the ground or in any of the tubes before clearance would be relocated into a suitable retained habitat area nearest to the cleared habitat, placed away from potential wet areas or possible predators in a wooden dormouse nest box. The retained habitat would be protected from accidental incursions by Heras fencing installed where necessary in accordance with BS5837:2012</p> <p><u>Operation</u> Significant planting for dormice is to be provided within the landscape plan including additional hedgerow planting and scrub planting. Newly created scrub planting is proposed close to the break in H1 to the east of the new road. This will provide greater than the like-for-like replacement required by Natural England. In addition, further scrub planting is proposed on the western side of the new access road to the south of retained H1. This mitigation ties in with the replacement hedgerows created as part of the mitigation for the roundabout to the north. More planting to the south is also to be provided to extend the area of dormouse habitat available and allow the population to expand making it more robust against predation from cats.</p> <p>Dormice have been recorded in hedgerow H1 either side of the proposed access road. Consideration needs to therefore be given to the potential fragmentation of dormice due to the proposed access road. Whilst dormice have been recorded within H1 on both sides of the proposed access road, the section of H1 to the west is not considered large enough on its own to support dormice, the retained hedgerow at H2 to the south is very poor structure and not as species rich as other hedgerows bordering the Site and is considered poor quality habitat for dormice. It is considered that this hedgerow is only used at the northern extent due to the closeness with H1, therefore fragmentation effects are minimal as H1 does not currently provide a link between two areas of high dormouse populations. However, a broad band of scrub and trees is to be retained and increased in size either side of the access road and additional habitat created along the length of the western boundary to enhance this area for dormice along with more sensitive management of the existing hedgerow to develop a taller and more diverse hedgerow to increase the overall habitat available to dormice. Whilst dormice do not favour crossing open ground, they have been recorded crossing dual carriageways through pit tagging, therefore fairly narrow gaps caused by roads and gateways, particularly where planting occurs either side should not create a strict barrier to movement.</p> <p>Additional post construction effects were identified in the April EclA as being indirect impacts related to increased populations of domestic cats and the degradation of retained and newly created habitats. Areas of new planting of habitat for dormice is proposed along the western boundary hedgerow to extend the area of suitable dormouse habitat available within the Site. The amount of dormouse habitat creation and enhancement will extend to approximately 1.66 ha of mixed scrub plantation. The species planted would include thorny species such as blackthorn, dog-rose and hawthorn to provide some protection for small mammals from cats. Other species will be dominated by food plants for dormice including hazel, wayfaring tree and honeysuckle. These scrub habitats would be managed on rotation to ensure a continued supply of food through heavy flowering and fruiting.</p>	<p>Minor beneficial effect significant at Site Level over the long Term</p>
<p><u>Badgers</u> Potential for disturbance and destruction of setts. Fragmentation of sett and foraging areas</p> <p>Site Importance</p>	<p><u>Construction</u> Periodic surveillance surveys will continue prior to the commencement of construction.</p> <p>[REDACTED]</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Provision of a 30m buffer from any main badger sett with only specific works permitted within the 30m buffer under the supervision of an ecologist. • In the event that a sett needs to be closed down this would be carried out under a licence from Natural England. 	<p>Minor adverse effect significant at Site Level over the long term</p>

Habitat Feature and Impact	Practical mitigation measures including working practices	Residual Effects
	<p><u>Operation</u> Whilst there will be a loss of foraging habitat for badgers, there is opportunity for badgers to still access the wider countryside including areas of ecologically managed farmland within the Chilmington Green development. The sett is within an area of spoil which has building debris as well as soil and as a result is on raised land. Whilst some fencing around the properties nearest the sett may be recommended it is considered that at the detailed design stage a sufficiently large buffer to the spoil area can be provided.</p>	
<p><u>Bat roosting habitat</u> Loss of trees with suitable features for roosting bats</p> <p><u>Bat foraging and commuting habitats</u> Loss of grassland, small areas of scrub/tall ruderal grassland and trees leading to loss of habitat corridor function, loss of connectivity and foraging habitat.</p> <p>Increased artificial lighting represents a major potential negative impact on existing (trees) and newly created or enhanced habitats and roosting features, field boundaries and hedgerows that provide habitat for foraging and commuting routes.</p> <p>Site Importance</p>	<p><u>Construction</u> Tree T1 will be felled slowly and under the supervision of a suitability experienced ecologist.</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. The features with potential for bats will be checked prior to felling, with the aid of an elevated platform or climbing inspection. 2. If bats are confirmed absent, the tree will be cut using a soft felling approach. 3. Tree to be felled outside main active period for bats, which is May – August. This will also need to take into account the breeding bird period, which is March – August therefore the most suitable time to fell the tree would be September – October. <p>If any bats are found during the soft felling then Natural England will need to be contacted and an EPSM licence will be applied for. Depending on the duration of the scheme, update tree emergence surveys may be needed before any are felled.</p> <p><u>Operation</u> Create and maintain new hedgerows and areas of open green space around the development for foraging and commuting bats:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Creation of new hedgerows through planting of trees and hedge species to increase habitat for commuting and foraging. 2. Management of wildflower meadows to create a more species-rich grassland habitat to increase foraging habitat. <p>Design and implementation of a Sensitive Lighting Strategy. Full details to be included at the detailed design stage however key points of this strategy will include:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> i) Minimise light spill along the boundaries of the Site and on retained mature trees and any newly created roosts; ii) Eliminate any bare bulbs and upward pointing lighting; ii) Minimise the spread of light, particularly along the eastern side of the main access road and south-eastern corner. The spread of light should be kept near to or below the horizontal. Flat cut-off lanterns are best. iii) Consider the height of lighting columns. Light at a low level generally reduces impact. iv) Use narrow spectrum bulbs to lower the range of species affected by lighting. Use light sources that emit minimal ultra-violet light and avoid the white and blue wavelengths of the light spectrum to avoid attracting lots of insects. v) Lights should peak higher than 550nm or use glass lantern covers to filter UV light. White LED lights do not emit UV but have still been shown to disturb slow-flying bat species. 	<p>Minor adverse effect significant at Site Level over the long term</p>
<p><u>Reptiles</u> No reptile surveys have been undertaken, however, it is considered likely that grass snake will be present within the Site.</p> <p>Potential for killing and injury of reptiles during the removal of the grassland, tall ruderal, scrub and tree habitats within the existing farmyard area as well as the removal of spoil mounds that may be used for rest/shelter, foraging, hibernation and dispersal.</p> <p>Site Importance</p>	<p><u>Construction</u> Implementation of the following Reptile Mitigation Strategy to avoid the killing and/or injury of reptiles and the retention and/or provision of sufficient terrestrial habitat and connectivity to ensure long term viability of the reptile populations. Mitigation will include the following measures to be undertaken in chronological order.</p> <p>The following steps will be undertaken: during the reptile active season, which is March – October.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • The clearance of the section of hedgerow H1 will be either completed with both above ground and below ground clearance in September/October under the methods for the dormouse clearance. • If this timeframe is not possible, above ground clearance will be undertaken between November and March and the ground cleared after May. • All clearance works will be supervised by the Project Ecologist. <p>A destructive search will be undertaken of areas within the development area considered to support potential for reptiles such as rubble/compost/spoil piles and the ditch banks. Destructive searching involves a JCB with a toothed bucket being used to lightly comb through the ground layer, followed by a second scrape to remove the layer of top soil leaving bare earth.</p> <p><u>Operation</u> Enhancement for reptiles with the following features are to be included within the areas of open space.</p> <p>Enhancement of existing hedgerows around the Site and creation of new, species-rich hedgerows along the boundaries through planting of a more diverse range of tree and hedge species and seeded with an approximate hedgerow grassland mix to provide additional cover/refuge for reptiles (to be outlined in LEMP).</p> <p>Creation of wild flower meadow and scrub in the site will create higher quality habitat for reptiles. Management of these areas to consist of a single cut in late September on a two-year rotation with one of these areas left uncut each year. The grass will be cut to a height no shorter than 150mm to reduce direct injury/death to reptiles.</p> <p>Creation of a series of hibernacula and long piles within the areas of open space and the long term management of these reptile refuges.</p>	<p>Minor Beneficial effect significant at Site Level over the long term</p>

Habitat Feature and Impact	Practical mitigation measures including working practices	Residual Effects
	<p>a) Ten log piles. Log piles will be constructed using logs with a maximum diameter of 200mm. Each log pile will be secured with stakes to prevent piles from collapsing and with wire to prevent removal or dismantling. These log piles will be created, where possible, using wood from the felled trees within the Site.</p> <p>b) Four artificial hibernacula to the accepted design provided by Froglife guidelines and to be provided within the LEMP. A hole will be dug out either by hand or by a mini digger to a depth of 500mm and back filled with timber logs and dead wood to a height of 500mm above ground. The hibernaculum will then be covered and capped with a 50mm – 100mm layer of topsoil and seeded with native acid grassland seed mix. Logs will be exposed at ground level to maintain gaps for reptile access. The hibernacula will be approximately 1.5m wide by 2m long and will run along a north-east to south-east direction so there is a southerly facing slope to maximise basking habitat. The digging of the hibernacula will be supervised by the project ecologist and the location determined during the detailed design of the mitigation.</p>	
<p>Amphibians including GCN Loss of dispersal habitat (ditches) that may also be used for rest/shelter, foraging, hibernation and dispersal.</p> <p>Potential for killing and injury of amphibians during habitat removal and the construction phase.</p> <p>Site Importance</p>	<p><u>Construction</u> No ponds are present within the Site and no standing water was found within the ditches of the field during spring 2022 or 2023. No specific mitigation in relation to GCN is therefore proposed. The mitigation proposed in relation to site clearance and reptiles would apply to amphibians as well. In the event that GCN are found during the site clearance or in the event that access to pond P50 to the south is granted and the pond is found to support GCN an EPSM licence could be sought. Sufficient terrestrial habitat is being retained around the Site and created within the Site in the south-west and along the eastern boundary which would mitigate for the loss of any terrestrial habitat within the Site. There would be no requirement to provide any pond habitat for GCN as none is being lost, the ditches are temporarily wet after periods of rain and are regularly dry.</p> <p>However, the implementation of a Method Statement to avoid the killing and/or injury of amphibians and the retention and/or provision of sufficient terrestrial habitat and connectivity to ensure long term viability of the amphibian populations is proposed. This Method Statement is based on the agreement that the Site will continue to be managed up until the commencement of the development to ensure no additional areas become suitable for amphibians prior to work beginning. In addition, the requirement for a EPSM licence will be confirmed once the eDNA surveys have been completed. However, if an EPSM licence is required a District Licence from Natural England would be applied for. Update surveys are likely to be required pre-construction to inform the need for an EPSM licence:</p> <p><u>Operation</u> The addition planting of native shrub species and installation of log piles and hibernacula (to the same specifications that have been provide for reptiles) in the areas of habitat creation will create new terrestrial habitat for the species. The provision of standing water within attenuation ponds will provide additional habitat for amphibians in the long term.</p>	<p>Minor Adverse Effect at Site Level over the short term and Minor Beneficial Effect over the long term.</p>
<p>Breeding Birds Loss of potential nesting sites of birds and bird feeding areas, through the development of the Site.</p> <p>Site Importance</p>	<p><u>Construction</u> Sensitive timing of vegetation clearance works to avoid the bird breeding season (March-August inclusive). The timings of the vegetation clearance will need to take into account the suitable timings to complete the destructive search for reptiles and amphibians, which have been outlined above. The timings of the removal of T1 will have to take into account the suitable timings in relation to bats, which have also been outlined above. Therefore, the vegetation clearance of the scrub and trees will include above ground vegetation clearance during the winter months (September – March). The following measures will be followed:</p> <ol style="list-style-type: none"> 1. Cutting the vegetation to above ground level using a chainsaw and brush cutters. All areas of mature/dense scrub that cannot be removed using hand tools will remain in situ until the reptile relocation exercise has been completed, and will only be removed once it has been confirmed that there are no active birds' nests present in the vegetation. 2. All arisings from the scrub and trees will be removed from the development area; logs can be retained to create log-piles in retained habitats. 3. No machinery will be tracked through the areas of the Site which support suitable reptile habitat until the destructive search has been completed. <p><u>Operation</u> The suitability of the Site will be maintained and enhanced for breeding birds through the creation and enhancement of the wildflower meadow and boundary features; planting will include native food plants for a range of bird species and invertebrates. Full details to be included at detailed design stage and within the LEMP.</p> <p>Bird Boxes will be positioned on trees around the boundaries of the Site. The boxes will be positioned at suitable locations on retained tree. Locations and numbers of boxes to be confirmed at detailed design stage. Boxes to be installed include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Vivara Pro Woodstone Seville Bird Boxes • Schwegler 1B tit bird boxes • 1ZA Schwegler Wren Roundhouse <p>In addition to the bird boxes installed within retained and newly planted vegetation, a series of 10 swift boxes will be installed on new buildings. The exact locations will be determined at the detailed design stage as the locations will be dependent on a number of factors including the height of the buildings. Swift boxes will be installed as they can be used by other species such as house sparrow and starling whilst boxes for these two species cannot be used by swift. House martin cups will also be installed on houses on the eastern side of the Site specifically those closer to the attenuation basins. House martins like to be able to visit close by muddy areas near</p>	<p>Minor adverse effect at Site Level over the long term for farmland species.</p>

Habitat Feature and Impact	Practical mitigation measures including working practices	Residual Effects
	<p>ponds to be able to collect additional mud for their nests and the attenuation basins will provide suitable conditions for this</p> <p>Mitigation for the loss of habitat used by skylark can not be provided due to the size of the Site. Whilst no mitigation can be provided within the Site, mitigation can be provided off-site by increasing the capacity of skylark breeding plots within an area proposed as being "Ecologically Managed Farmland" to the east of the Site. Three skylark plots are to be provided already within EC8 as part of the Chilmington Green proposals. An additional three skylark plots are to be provided within this field as set out within the Dec 2023 addendum report. The number of skylark plots that can be provided within EC8 is limited by its size and shape, being a narrow field of approximately 4.2ha which is 110m wide. Due to the increase in pairs recorded in 2024 a further three skylark plots will be provided within the wider Chilmington Green Ecologically Managed Farmland including EC20 to the south-east which has 24 skylark plots proposed as part of the Chilmington Green proposals. The recommendation of 2 plots per ha given in the Chilmington Green proposals comes from recommendations from RSPB and BTO as the number of plots required to increase skylark numbers. The number of plots/ha in these recommendations is based on an acceptable number per ha within a working farm (which would have minimal impact on crop production), it is not based on the maximum density acceptable by skylark. The long term management of this area has not yet been detailed but will include the following:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Whilst in arable production creation of skylark plots by spraying 16m² skylark plots in December within the arable field • Each skylark plot to be over 10m from the nearest hedgerow and preferably more central to the field • In the event that arable production is no longer required, the field will be left as fallow and managed on a two year basis to retain the arable weeds and create areas of bare ground required by breeding skylark. If required skylark plots can still be created in year 2 of the fallow period. • Additional features to enhance the area for skylark will be created including creating tussocky grassland margins which is rotationally managed to create over wintering habitat for invertebrates which then move into the arable field during spring/summer; • creating beetle banks in the centre of the field to create habitat for invertebrates. 	

8.0 Cumulative Effects

- 8.1.1 Planning permission has been granted for a wider development at Chilmington Green (planning reference 12-00400). The design of the proposals within Possingham Farm were completed with consideration to the adjacent Chilmington Green proposals. A wide buffer along the majority of the eastern boundary was designed to create an off-set to the adjacent ecologically managed farmland habitats of the Chilmington Green proposals. A wide tree lined main access road has been designed in the illustrative masterplan to replicate similar habitats found within the local area with tree and hedge lined roads. The knowledge of the presence of dormice within the wider countryside and within the Chilmington Green development lead to the design of broad vegetated buffers to the hedgerow along the western side of the Site and in the south-east to create new habitat for this species and to ensure connectivity between habitats known to support dormice. The cumulative impact on dormice is therefore considered to be an overall minor benefit due to the amount of habitat proposed for this species both within the Possingham Farm development (approximately 1.66ha of mixed scrub) and within the Chilmington Green development to the north and east of the subject Site with areas of hedgerow reinforced or newly planted and a new area of woodland proposed.
- 8.1.2 The most significant impact both on a Site level and on a cumulative level is the overall loss of habitat suitable for breeding skylark. The proposed development within Possingham Farm and the wider Chilmington Green development will inevitably result in the loss of skylark breeding sites and territories. The Chilmington Green development has provision of open space which is to be managed in a sensitive ecological fashion for farmland species including skylark. The proposed 2 plots per ha given in the Chilmington Green proposals comes from recommendations from RSPB and BTO as the number of plots required to increase skylark numbers on farmland. The number of plots/ha in these recommendations is based on an acceptable number per ha within a working farm (which would have minimal impact on crop production), it is not based on the maximum density acceptable by skylark. Skylark densities vary greatly based on land management, very short maintained grassland has very low numbers of skylark (5 pairs per m²) with an optimal height of grassland being 60cm and set aside supporting up to 29 pairs per km². However, due to the overall loss of active cropland there will likely still be a loss in the number of skylark territories in the area. This cumulative effect is considered to be a moderate adverse effect significant at the Local level. A strategic mitigation approach has been proposed to ensure the mitigation is appropriate for skylark to take into consideration the cumulative effects.
- 8.1.3 The site wide bat surveys for the Chilmington Green proposals recorded relatively low levels of bat activity with higher levels of activity in areas of wetland and high quality woodland. The areas of open space and in particular areas of woodland planting and wetland creation are designed to enhance the

-
- area for bats. A wetland area is proposed to the east of the proposed Possingham Farm scheme. Throughout the Chilmington Green development are areas of proposed dark space. Recommendations have been made that a detailed lighting strategy is designed at the Reserved Matters stage for Possingham, recommendations have been made in relation to lighting particularly in the areas of retained vegetation. The cumulative effect is considered to be a moderate adverse effect significant at the Local Level.
- 8.1.4 Recreational pressures can result in the desired mitigation not being achieved. In relation to recreation, the parameter plans have ensured that all standards in relation to recreation have been achieved in relation to recreation. The main area of mitigation required at this site is for skylarks and other farmland birds such as yellowhammer which is being provided for off site in an area where there is no proposed public access.
- 8.1.5 Within the Site, the main mitigation required is for dormice and badgers. The amount of mitigation required for dormice is fairly small and limited to the loss of habitat for the access road in the north. The mitigation for this loss is provided in the area immediately adjacent to this loss. The remaining areas of habitat creation for dormice are considered as enhancements for the species. These enhancements are created through planting areas of dense, mixed scrub. It is not considered that recreational pressures would substantially affect these areas, the proposed planting list includes thorny species which should deter too much disturbance.

9.0 CONCLUSIONS

9.1 Surveys to inform an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) have been undertaken at the proposed development of an area of land at Possingham Farm, Chilmington Green, Ashford. The impact assessment has been based on ecological surveys undertaken by Lloyd Bore Ltd. in 2021 and by Corylus Ecology Ltd. in 2022, 2023 and 2024. The assessment is in relation to a plan to development the land parcel into residential dwellings and gardens and associated structures.

12.2 This report provides additional information regarding the updated results of surveys; full breeding bird surveys, continued dormouse surveys and additional badger monitoring surveys all completed in 2024. No significant changes to proposed mitigation or impacts have been predicted as a result of the surveys to the addendum report dated November 2023.

Dormouse

9.2 The surveys confirmed dormice present in the majority of the boundary features with no evidence recorded in the southern half of the western boundary feature which is a poorly structured and managed hedgerow. More detail regarding the mitigation strategy for dormouse has been provided. There is no change to the predicted impact from the April EclA.

Bats

9.3 Bat surveys were completed during the spring/summer 2023 season and consisted of both static detector and transect surveys. The results confirmed the status of the Site for bats being of local importance around the perimeter of the Site only. The scale of the impacts and the significance is unchanged from the April EclA.

GCN

9.4 The ditches within the Site were dry again in spring 2023 and were noted as having little water in March 2024 and dry by end April 2024. No aquatic habitats suitable for supporting GCN are present within the Site. Previous surveys of ponds in the wider landscape recorded no GCN. A single pond just over 50m from the edge of the Site has been unsurveyed. No licence is required and mitigation for reptiles during the construction phase will be suitable for amphibians. The scale of the impacts and the significance is unchanged from the April EclA.

Breeding bird

9.5 The breeding bird survey confirmed the presence of skylark breeding within the Site. It is recognised that the numbers of territories of skylark within any given arable field can vary depending on the crop that year. In 2023 an estimated four territories were present whilst in 2024 six territories were recorded.









Mitigation has been provided off-site. The scale of the impacts and the significance is unchanged from the April EclA.

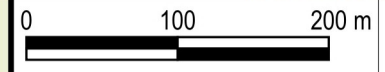
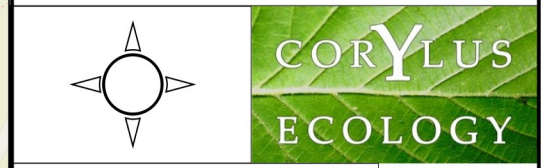
Badger

9.6

[REDACTED]

Key

-  Survey area
-  Hedgerow
-  Ditch
-  Tube with dormouse evidence
-  Tube with Apodemus evidence
-  Tube with no recorded evidence
-  Tube with unknown nest
-  Tube with rat



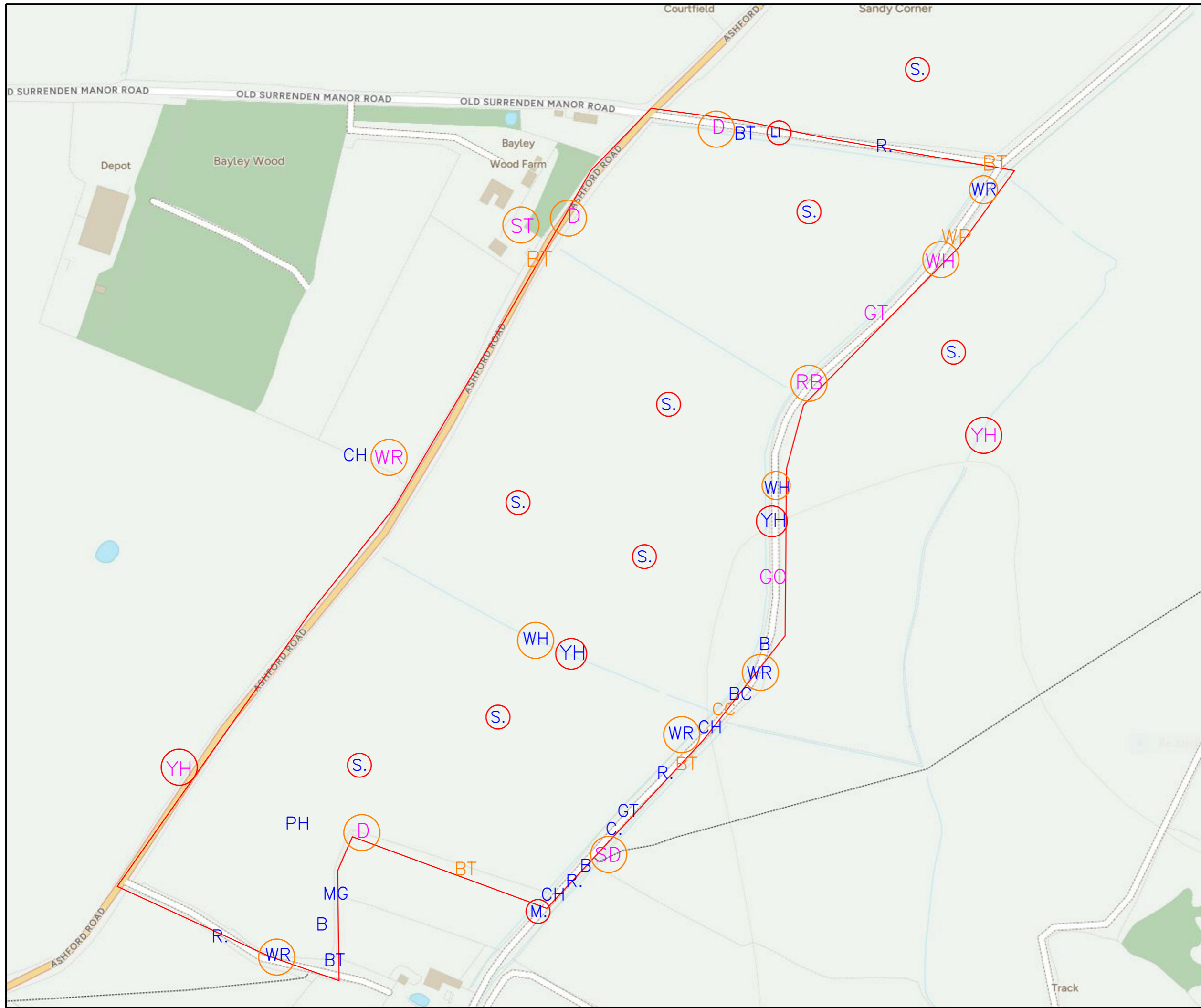
Corylus Ecology Ltd, Unit A3 Speldhurst Business Park, Went Farm, Langton Road, Speldhurst, Kent TN3 0NR.

Project: Possingham Farm

Figure 1 - Dormouse Tube Locations and Survey Results

date: 31.08.24	drawing no: 001
drawn: AC	checked: HL





- Key
- Site Area
 - B. Confirmed Nesting
 - B. Probable Nesting
 - B. Possible Nesting
 - S. Red List Species
 - D. Amber List Species
 - B. Blackbird
 - BC Blackcap
 - BT Blue tit
 - CH Chaffinch
 - C. Carrion crow
 - CC Chiffchaff
 - D. Dunnock
 - GO Goldfinch
 - GT Great tit
 - L Linnet
 - MG Magpie
 - M Mistle thrush
 - RB Reed bunting
 - R. Robin
 - S. Skylark
 - SD Stock dove
 - ST Song thrush
 - WH Whitethroat
 - WR Wren
 - WP Wood pigeon
 - YH Yellowhammer

revision	description	date	checked by

This plan has been developed for the purpose of illustrating habitat types and/or other ecological features relating to ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) calculations on this Site. This plan should not be used for any other purpose, for example costing or construction purposes.

Corylus Ecology Ltd, Unit A3, Speldhurst Business Park, Went Farm, Langton Road, Speldhurst, Kent TN3 0NR
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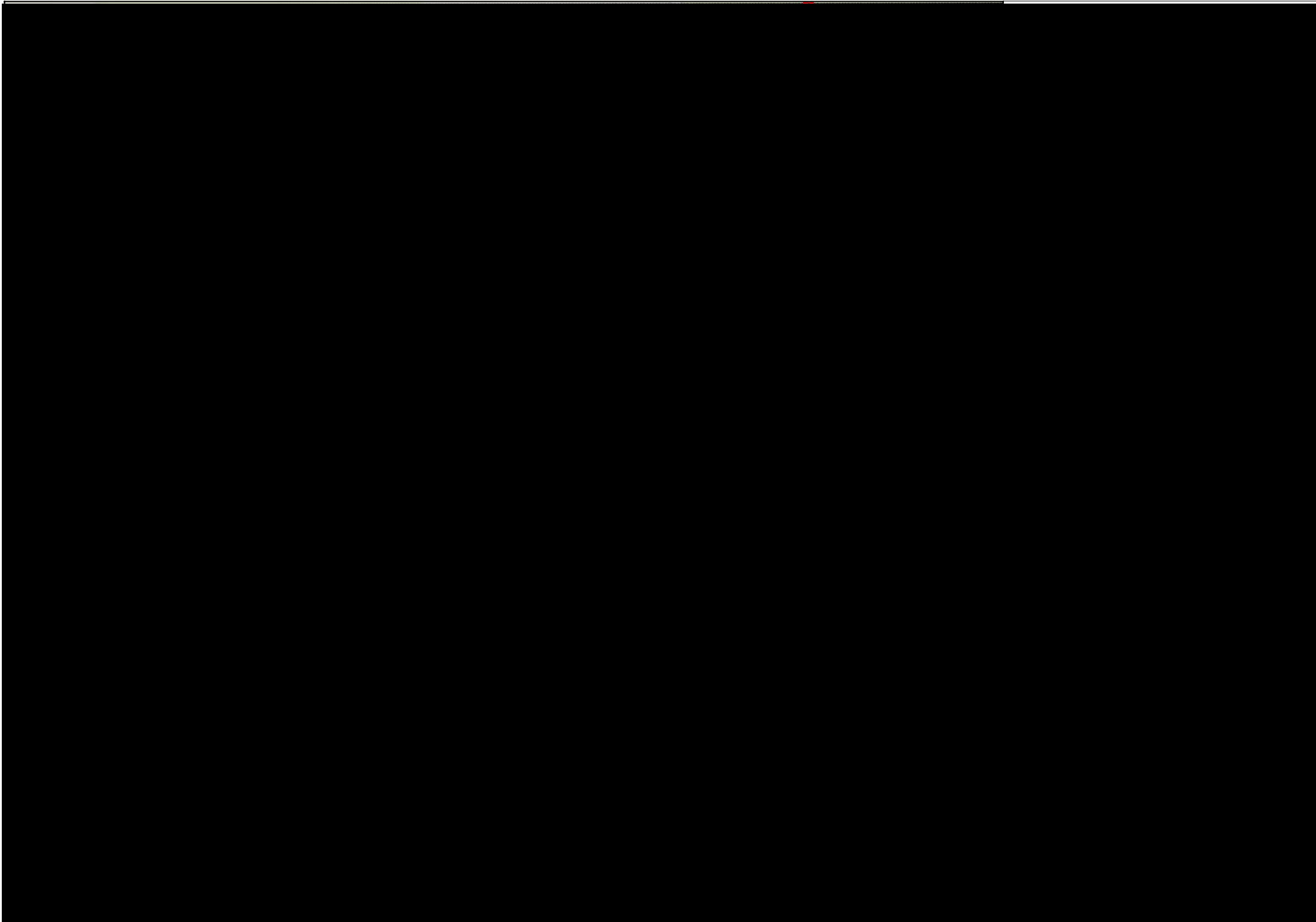
Project:
 21142 Possingham Farm

Title:
 Breeding Bird Territories

Status: drawing no. **Figure 2**

scale	size	date	drawn	checked
NTS	A3	26.07.2024	HL	MR

CAD filename:
 Figure_1.dwg





- Legend**
- Red Line Boundary
 - Long and Open Grassland
 - Native Scrub
 - Proposed Woodland
 - Proposed Hedgerows
 - Flood Attenuation, Lagoons and Swales
 - Publicly Accessible SuDS margin
 - Green Space
 - Play Spaces
 - Proposed Specimen Avenue Trees
 - Proposed Specimen Large Parkland Trees
 - Existing Woodland
 - Existing Hedgerows
 - Public Byway
 - Public Right of Way (PROW)

Loss of 20-30m length of hedgerow/treeline or up to 282 sq m

Planting of scrub approximately 120sq m as mitigation for dormouse habitat loss.

Scrub planting for dormouse and bird mitigation and enhancements

Scrub planting for dormouse and bird mitigation and enhancements

Up to 14m of hedgerow removed

Scrub planting for dormouse and bird mitigation and enhancements

Species rich grassland creation

1x Vivara Pro Woodstone Seville Bird Boxes
1x Schwegler 1B tit boxes, 1x 1ZA Schwegler Roundhouse

Planting of scrub approximately 160sq m as mitigation for dormouse habitat loss.

1x Vivara Pro Woodstone Seville Bird Boxes
1x Schwegler 1B tit boxes, 1x 1ZA Schwegler Roundhouse

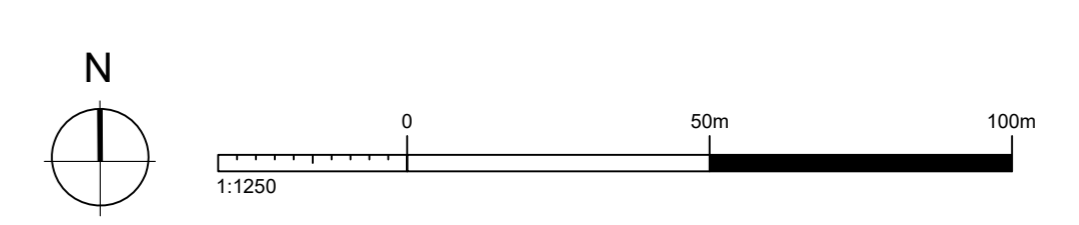
REV	DESCRIPTION	APP	DATE
F	Additional scrub planting along A28	JB	08.09.24
E	Additional buffer screen (scrub) planting	JB	23.02.24
D	Revised	JB	07.02.24
C	Red line boundary and spine road updated	JB	07.05.21
B	Layout and red line boundary updated	JB	04.05.21
A	Final and plan updated	JB	23.04.21

London 1200/011118



Passingham Farm, Chilmington Green
Ashford, Kent
Landscape Parameter Plan
Open Space Plan

DATE: April 2021 DRAWN: JB
SCALE: 1:12500A0 CHECKED: NT
STATUS: Planning APPROVED: NT
DWG. NO: D0410_001 F



No dimensions are to be taken from this drawing. All dimensions are to be checked on site. All measurements for individual purposes only.

Client's marks

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Appendix 1 – Ecological Impact Assessment Criteria

The general approach follows the Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland (EclA) produced by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). These guidelines are web-based and subject to review and updating. The guidance covers all stages of EclA, including both evaluation and impact criteria. The criteria followed is summarised below.

Significance Criteria

The CIEEM guidance covers all stages of EclA, including both evaluation and impact criteria. These guidelines set out that the emphasis in EclA is on significant effects rather than all ecological effects. A significant effect being an effect that:

- *“Either supports or undermines biodiversity objectives for important ecological features or for biodiversity in general.*
- *“Effects can be considered significant at a wide range of scales from international to local”.*
- *“A significant effect is an effect that is sufficiently important to require assessment and reporting so that the decision maker is adequately informed of the environmental consequences of permitting a project.”*

The main criteria used to assess the ecological value of habitats and communities are those described by Ratcliffe (1977) and the selection criteria for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) produced by the Nature Conservancy Council (1989). The primary criteria include rarity, typicalness, size, diversity, naturalness and fragility. Subsidiary criteria include ecological position, intrinsic appeal, potential value, and recorded history. The designation of SSSIs is not an all-inclusive list of sites which fall within the set criteria, rather SSSIs are designated as good examples of the better habitats within the region or nationally. Therefore, certain undesignated areas may fall within the criteria for being designated. Within individual counties there are often criteria for the selection of sites of County Importance within that specific County.

Further criteria used for assessing the ecological importance of a site may be based upon their value for particular species or assemblages of species. In addition to the individual species and groups the overall species and habitat assemblage or biodiversity is evaluated. Examples of valuation criteria related to a range of spatial scales are set out in Table A1.

Biodiversity has been given a number of definitions but, insofar as it relates to EIA, it is generally considered as including both structural relationships (spatial linkage, fragmentation, aspect, dispersion etc.) and functional relationships (nutrient cycling rates, energy flow rates, metapopulation dynamics, etc.).

Table A1: Assessment of the Value of Ecological Resource

Value	Examples of Valuation Criteria
<i>International</i>	An internationally designated site or candidate site (SPA, SAC, etc);
<i>National</i>	A nationally designated site (SSSIs, National Nature Reserves (NNRs); Species or habitats which fulfil the JNCC SSSI selection criteria,
<i>Regional</i>	Viable areas of key habitat identified in the regional BAP or smaller areas of such habitat which are essential to maintain the viability of a larger whole; Sites which exceed the County-level designations but fall short of SSSI selection guidelines where these occur;
<i>County</i>	County sites and other sites which the designating authority has determined meet the published ecological selection criteria for designation including Local Nature Reserves (LNR) selected on County criteria;
<i>Local (including District)</i>	Areas of habitat identified as being of Local Value in the relevant Natural Area profile; LNR not selected on County criteria;
<i>Parish/ Neighbourhood</i>	Areas of habitat considered to appreciably enrich the habitat resource within the context of the Parish or Neighbourhood e.g. species-rich hedgerows;
<i>Within the zone of influence or Site Importance</i>	This may be the project site or a larger area;
<i>Negligible</i>	Sites or areas which support few or no habitats, communities or species populations of nature conservation interest. Typical of such areas are most intensively managed silage fields and arable crops.

Assessment of Effects

Activities which may affect the ecological resource need to be identified first. The associated changes and the implications for the ecological resource then need to be assessed. The following factors must be considered when assessing the effects:

- Confidence in predictions;
- Magnitude of effect;
- Extent of effect;
- Duration;
- Reversibility; and
- Timing and frequency.

A level of confidence is required in assessing effects, the standard for which is given below. The requirement for the lowest confidence level, given below as “extremely unlikely”, is for those effects which, although considered as extremely unlikely to occur, would have very serious consequences and would merit contingency planning.

- Certain/near certain;
- Probable;
- Unlikely; and
- Extremely unlikely.

Table A2 lists the broad categories used to assist in identifying the nature and types of different ecological effects. In addition to individual effects on the ecological resource being identified and evaluated, the cumulative effect of two or more effects on the resource is also evaluated using the same terminology.

Table A2: Categories of Ecological Effects (based on Treweek 1999 (ref A4))

Category	Example
Direct Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • habitat loss or destruction (for example, through construction work); • habitat fragmentation / severance; and • disturbance
Indirect Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • reduced population viability, e.g. due to decrease in habitat area; and • habitat isolation
Associated Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • ecological effects caused by actions linked with the Proposed Development
Cumulative Effects	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • overall reduction in habitat diversity; and • ongoing habitat loss or fragmentation

The magnitude or physical extent of predicted effects upon an ecological feature is presented, wherever possible, in quantifiable terms. For example, the area of land taken, percentage of habitat lost or the number of communities, species or individuals affected. Magnitude also considers the context of the feature affected within the categories of relative importance described above. For example, if there is an internationally designated site, the significance of predicted effects are assessed within an international context with reference to the relevant legislation.

The potential effects of development schemes on nature conservation can be either beneficial or adverse. Neutral/negligible effects are also recognised.

In the CIEEM guidance an ecologically significant effect is defined as an effect on the integrity of a defined site or ecosystem and/or conservation status of habitats or species within a given geographical area. The value of any feature that will be significantly affected is then used to identify the geographical scale at which the effect is significant. This value therefore relates directly to the consequences in terms of legislation, policy or development control at the appropriate level. Significant effects on features of ecological importance should be mitigated (or compensated for) in accordance with guidance derived from policies applied at the scale relevant to the value of the feature or resource. Any significant effects remaining after mitigation (the residual effects), together with an

assessment of the likelihood of success in mitigation are the factors to be considered against legislation, policy and development control in determining the application.

Appendix 2 - Full Dormouse Survey Results

Possingham Farm - tubes set 09/09/22 & 18/11/22	02/12/2022	26/05/2022	11/07/2023	16/08/2023	22/09/2023	May-24	Jul-24
H2n							
T17	E	E	Wood mouse	E	E	E	E
T18	E	Apodemus nest	E	Wood mouse nest	E	E	E
T19	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
T20	E	Apodemus nest	E	E	Wood mouse nest	E	E
T21	E	Apodemus nest	E	E	E	E	E
T22	Wood mouse nest	Apodemus nest	Wood mouse	Wood mouse nest	E	E	E
T23	E	Apodemus nest	Not found	Not found	Wood mouse nest	E	Feeding remains
T24	E	E	E	Wood mouse nest	E	E	E
T25	Wood mouse nest	Apodemus nest	Dormouse nest	Dormouse nest	Remains of nest E	E	E
T26	E	Apodemus nest	E	Suspected dormouse nest	Remains of nest E	E	E
T27	Wood mouse nest - droppings taken (N1)	Apodemus nest	Wood mouse	E	Wood mouse nest	E	E
H1							
T28	E	Not found	Not found	Not found	Not found	E	
T29	E	E	E	E	E	E	
T30	E	E	E	Dormouse nest	Dormouse (young male, 18g)	Old nest removed	
T31	E	E	E	E	E	E	
T32	Wood mouse - sample taken (N2)	E	E	E	E	Dormouse male 19g white tail tip	
T33	E	E	No slat	No slat	E		
T34	Wood mouse nest - Adult, 22g	Missing slat replaced	E	E	Food cache	E	
T35	Not Found	E	E	E	E	probable dormouse nest	
T36	E	E	E	E	E	E	
T37	Wood mouse nest, grassy, half-woven - sample taken (N3)	Grassy nest	E	E	E	Dormouse nest E	
T38	Woodmouse, dense, grassy nest - sample taken (N4)	Missing slat replaced	Dormouse nest	Wood mouse nest	Wood mouse nest	E	
T39	Slat deep in bushes	Not found	No slat	No slat	No slat	No slat	
H3							
T40	Wood mouse nest	Not found	Not found	Not found	Not found	Not found	
T41	Wood mouse nest, 2 adults, 1 escaped, 1 female 18g	Old Apo nest, emptied as wet	E	E	E	E	
T42	Wood mouse escaped	No access due to water logged track	Not found	Not found	E	E	
T43	E	No access due to water logged track	E	E	E	E	
T44	E	No access due to water logged track	E	Not found	Dormouse nest	Old nest removed	
T45	E	No access due to water logged track	Not found	Not found	E	E	
T46	E	No access due to water logged track	Not found	Suspected dormouse nest	E	E	
T47	Dormouse nest E1	No access due to water logged track	E	E	E	E	
T134	E	No access due to water logged track	E	E	E	E	
T135	E	No access due to water logged track	E	Dormouse nest	Dormouse nest	Old nest removed	
T136	Wood mouse	No access due to water logged track	Bumblebee nest in dormouse nest	E	Unidentified mouse nest		
T137	E	No access due to water logged track	E	E	E		
T138	E	No access due to water logged track	Wood mouse	Wood mouse nest	E		
T139	Leaves	No access due to water logged track	E	Wood mouse nest	Wood mouse nest		
T140	E	No access due to water logged track	Not found	Not found	E	E	
T141	E	No access due to water logged track	E	E	E	E	
T142	Wood mouse firmly woven nest, 2 non breeding adult males: 24g and 21g	No access due to water logged track	E	E	E	E	
T143	E	No access due to water logged track	E	E	E	E	
T144	Wood mouse nest: wet, removed	No access due to water logged track	Not found	Not found	E	E	
T145	E	No access due to water logged track	E	E	Wood mouse nest	E	
T146	E	No access due to water logged track	E	E	E	E	
T147	E	Bird droppings	E	E	Wood mouse nest	E	
T148	Wood mouse nest	Apodemus nest	E	E	E	Birds nest left	
T1	E	E	E	E	E	E	
T2	E	Apodemus nest	E	Wood mouse nest	Wood mouse nest	E	
T3	E	E	E	E	E	E	
T4	Bird droppings	E	E	E	E	E	
T5	E	E	E	E	E	E	
T6	E	E	E	E	E	E	
T7	E	E	E	E	E	E	
T8	E	E	E	E	E	E	
T9	Dormouse: male 25g, half asleep (not quite torpid) non breeding	DM nest left	E	E	E	E	
T10	E	Apodemus nest	E	E	Dormouse nest	E	
T11	E	E	E	E	Wood mouse nest	E	
H5							
T12	E	E	E	E	Juvenile rat	E	
T13	E	Apodemus nest	Wood mouse	Wood mouse nest	E	Moss nest left	
T14	E	E	E	E	E	E	
T15	Wood mouse nest: wet, removed	E	E	E	E	E	
T16	Wood mouse nest	Apodemus nest emptied	E	Wood mouse nest	Wood mouse nest	E	
T17	E	E	Wood mouse	E	E	E	
T18	E	E	E	E	E	E	

T19	Wood mouse nest	E	Not found	Not found	E	E	
H4							
T20	Wood mouse nest	E	E	E	E	E	
T21	E	Apodemus feeding remains	E	E	Food cache	E	
T22	E	E	E	E	E	E	
T23	Wood mouse nest	Apodemus feeding remains	E	Wood mouse nest	Wood mouse nest	E	
T24	E	E	E	E	E	E	
T25	E	Apodemus nest	E	E	E	E	
T26	E	E	E	E	E	E	
T27	E	Blue tit on nest	E	E	E	E	
T28	Wood mouse nest	E	E	E	E	E	
T29	E	Slat out replaced	E	E	E	E	
T30	E	E	E	E	Dormouse nest	E	
T31	Dormouse nest	E	E	Wood mouse nest	Dormouse nest	E	
T32	E	Slat out replaced	E	E	Wood mouse	E	
T33	E	E	E	E	E	E	
T34	E	E	E	E	E	E	
T35	E	E	E	Wood mouse nest	Wood mouse nest	E	
H2s							
T36	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
T37	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
T38	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
T39	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
T40	E	E	Not found	Not found	E	E	E
T41	E	E	E	Wood mouse nest	Wood mouse nest	E	Feeding remains
T49	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
T50	E	E	E	E	E	E	E
Extra new tube 1							E
Extra new tube 2							E
Extra new tube 3							E
Extra new tube 4							E
Extra new tube 5							E