

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Site Location : Land West of Blagrove Lane, Wokingham, Berkshire.
RG41 4EW

Issue Date : 17/12/2025

Job Reference : SC_MM_Wokingham_02

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Prepared For : Mr. M. Maughan

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Introduction

1.1 EDM Planning-Ecology, has been commissioned by Mr. Martin Maughan to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of the site located off Blagrove Lane, Wokingham, Berkshire. RG41 4EW.

1.2 The appraisal establishes an ecological baseline through a UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) survey and an assessment of potential for protected and notable species. The purpose is to identify, map, and characterise existing habitat types within the defined survey boundary.

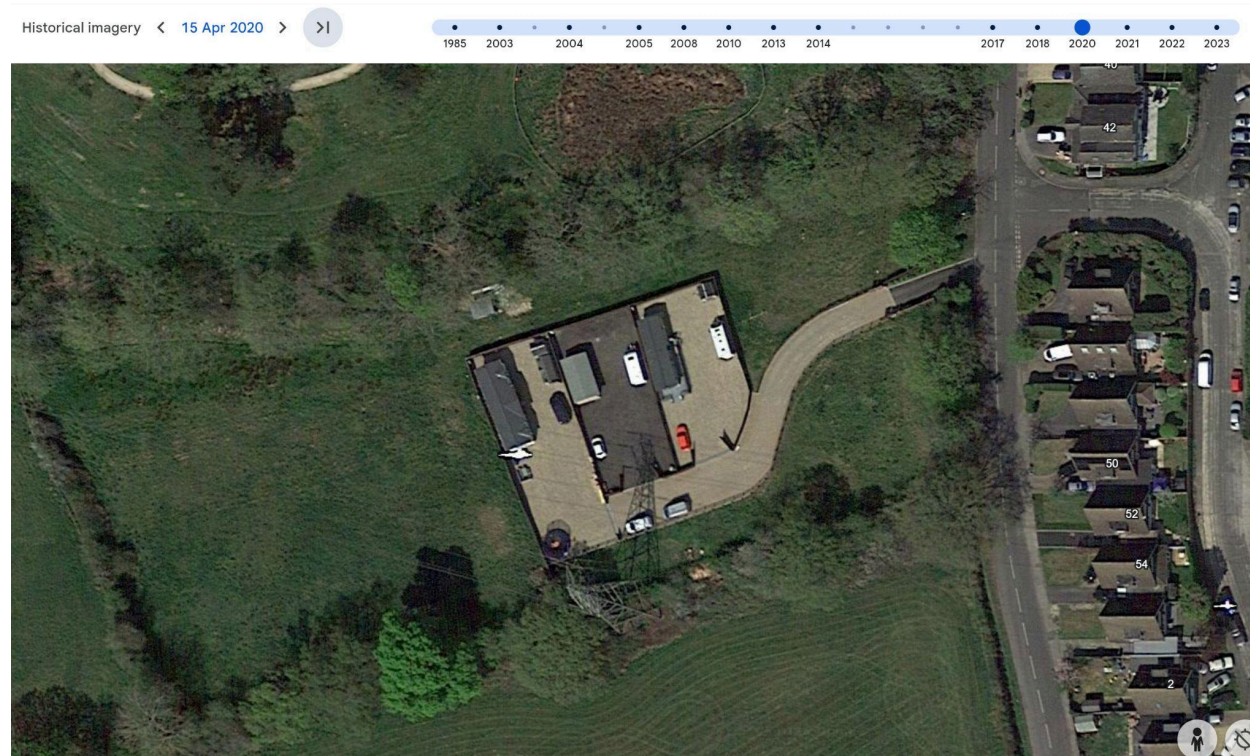
1.3 The findings presented in this report are intended to inform a planning application submitted to Wokingham Borough Council.

1.4 The appraisal has been prepared in accordance with current best practice guidance, including the *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal* (CIEEM, 2017) and *BS 42020:2013 – Biodiversity: Code of Practice for Planning and Development*. The assessment methodology incorporated a desk-based data review and an extended Phase 1 habitat survey, followed by an evaluation of the site's ecological value and conservation importance.

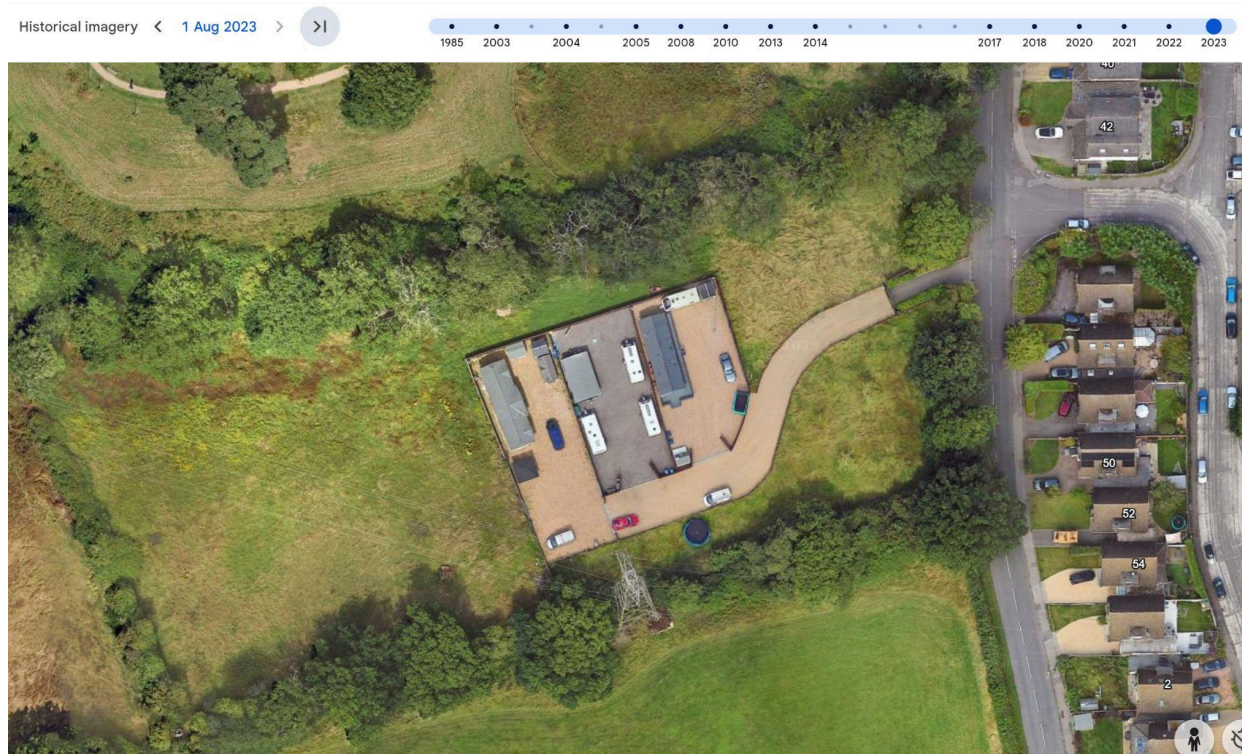
1.5 A desk study was conducted to support the field survey data and to identify any additional potential ecological constraints, including areas designated for nature conservation. Information from the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre, DEFRA's Magic Map and NBN Atlas (where applicable) was used to locate both statutory and non-statutory designated sites, as well as habitats of principal importance. Additionally, aerial imagery from Google Earth Pro was reviewed to provide context for the site and assess its connectivity with surrounding habitats.

Site History

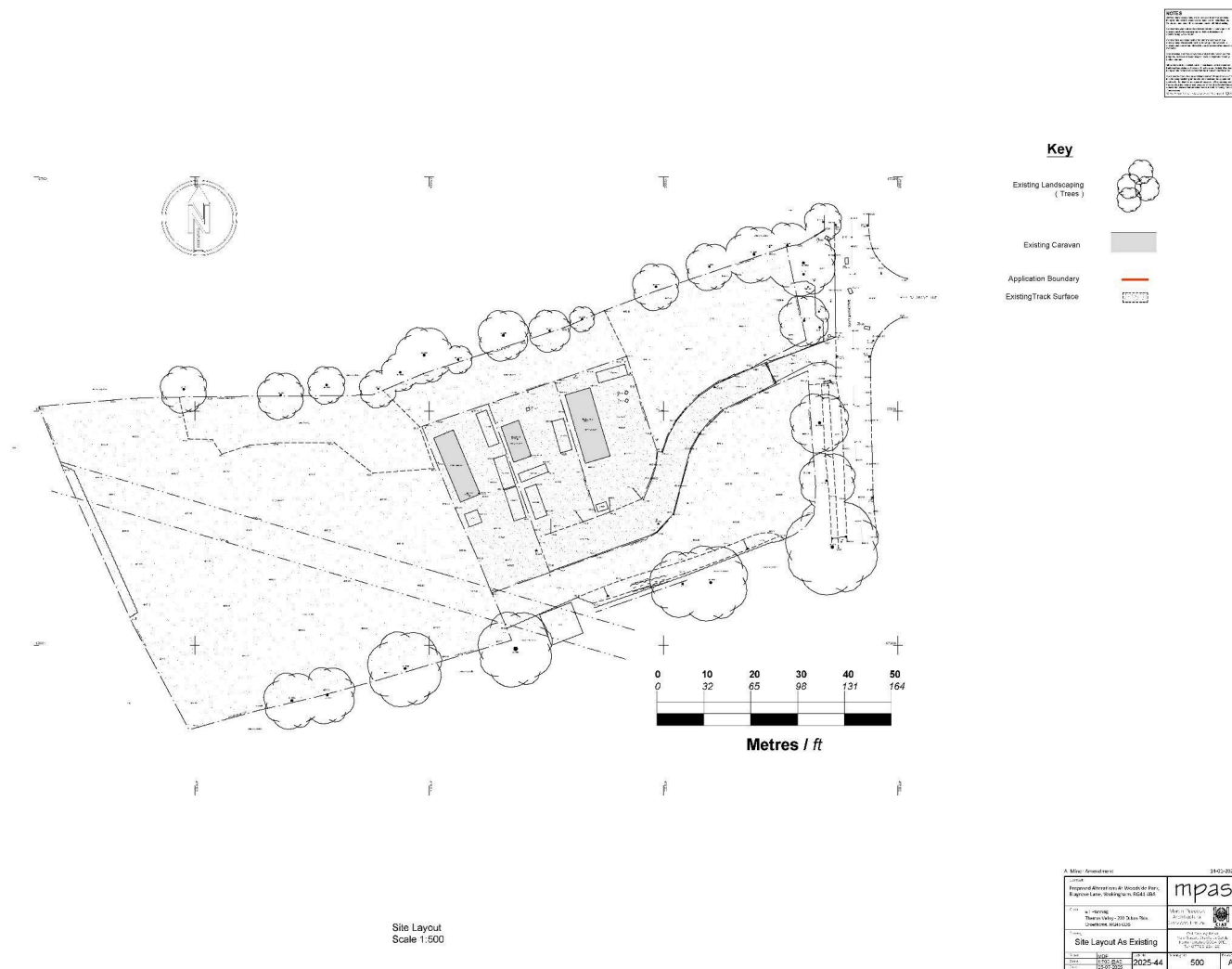
2.1 The site is an existing 3 plot traveller site that satellite imagery shows has existed since 2017. The site has remained relatively static since 2020.



Img1:Site 2020



Img2:Site 2023



Img3:Existing Site Plan

The Proposal

3.1 The application seeks the extension of an existing three plot Gypsy and Traveller site by inclusion of seven additional plots.



NOTES

1. Minor amendment
2. Amended to client requirements
3. Amended to client requirements
4. Amended to client requirements
5. Amended to client requirements
6. Amended to client requirements
7. Amended to client requirements
8. Amended to client requirements

- Key**
- Existing Landscaping (Trees)
 - Existing Landscaping (Low Level Planting / Hedge)
 - Existing Caravan
 - Application Boundary
 - Proposed Permeable Track / Surface
 - Proposed Landscaping (Low Level planting and hedges)
 - Touring Caravan
 - Proposed Caravan
 - Proposed Day Room
 - Proposed Bin Store

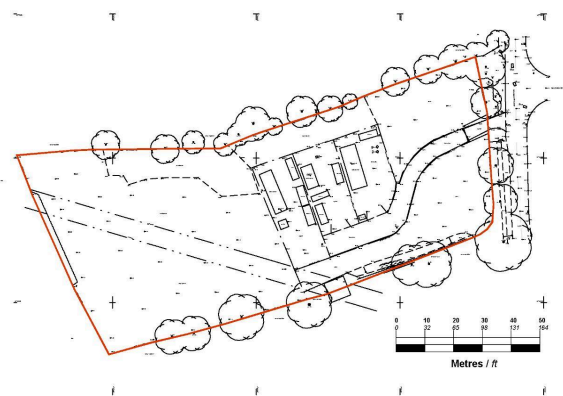
Site Layout
Scale 1:500

1. Minor amendment	18-01-2025
2. Amended to client requirements	07-01-2025
3. Amended to client requirements	23-10-2025
4. Amended to client requirements	13-09-2025
5. Amended to client requirements	11-09-2025
6. Amended to client requirements	28-09-2025
7. Amended to client requirements	28-09-2025
8. Amended to client requirements	22-09-2025
9. Amended to client requirements	03-09-2025
10. Amended to client requirements	10-09-2025
11. Amended to client requirements	10-09-2025

Client	mpas
Project	Proposed alterations to Woodside Park, Broomfield Lane, Wokingham, RG40 3BA
Drawn by	MPAS Planning
Checked by	MPAS Planning
Scale	1:500
Site Layout As Proposed	
Drawn	18-01-2025
Checked	07-01-2025
Scale	1:500



Surveyed area within red line boundary.



Location Plan
Scale 1:120

NOTES

A / N/A		14-01-2026	
Comments Proposed Alterations At Woodside Park, Biagrowe Lane, Wokingham. RG41 4BA		mpas	
Client ET Planning Thames Valley - 200 Dukes Road, Crowthorne. RG45 6DS		Martin Peacock Architectural Services Limited 	
Drawing Location Plan		City Reading Room Main Street, Garsington Road Northampton NN2 2PA Tel: 07775 5754 66	
Drawn Scale	MDP 1:500 @ A2	Job No 2025-44	Drawing No 400 Revision A

Location Plan.

Desk Study

4.1 A desk-based review was undertaken to gather baseline ecological information relevant to the site and its surrounding area. This includes designated sites, habitats of principal importance, and records of protected and notable species. The purpose of the desk study is to inform the scope of the field survey, highlight potential ecological constraints, and guide recommendations for further assessment and mitigation.

4.2 The following sources were consulted as part of the desk study:

- **MAGIC (DEFRA)/ Natural England Open Data Geoportal (DEFRA):** To identify statutory nature conservation sites, Priority Habitats, ancient woodland, and any granted European Protected Species (EPS) licences within a 2km radius of the site.

- **Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre / NBN Atlas (where available) / Local Environmental Records Centre (LERC):** To obtain records of protected and notable species, non-statutory Local Wildlife Sites (LWS), and species-rich habitats.
- **Google Earth Pro:** For the interpretation of aerial imagery to assess landscape features, habitat connectivity, and land-use patterns.
- **Wokingham Council local plans and policies interactive map:** Consulted to determine the site-specific ecological policies, spatial planning designations, and environmental constraints that apply to the proposed development at this site off Blagrove Lane.

4.3 A summary of designated sites within the search area:

Statutory Designated Sites

Site Name	Designation	Approx Distance from Site	Direction	Summary
Holt Copse and Joel Park	LNR	1.6 KM	NE	
Longmoor Bog	SSSI/LNR	2.7 KM	SW	
Heath Lake	SSSI/LNR	3.6 KM	SE	
Edgbarrow Woods	LNR	5.7 KM	S	

Local Non-Statutory Designated Sites

Site Name	Designation	Approx Distance from Site	Direction	Summary
7km Linear Mitigation Zone				
SSSI Impact Risk Zone				Scale of development unlikely to cause any harm



Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest

For local planning authorities to determine if a proposed development is likely to affect a terrestrial Site of Special Scientific Interest and when to consult Natural England.

You do not need to consult Natural England on the proposed development at this location.

The Impact Risk Zones for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI IRZs) indicate that at the location selected, the proposed development is unlikely to have a harmful effect on terrestrial Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and the Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) or Ramsar sites that they underpin.

Therefore, you do not need to consult Natural England on the likely impacts of development on terrestrial SSSIs and the SACs, SPAs or Ramsar sites that they underpin.

Discretionary Advice

Natural England may provide pre-application advice on other biodiversity or natural environment impacts or opportunities. [Developers Get Environmental Advice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/developers-get-environmental-advice) provides information on Natural England's pre-application discretionary advice service (DAS).

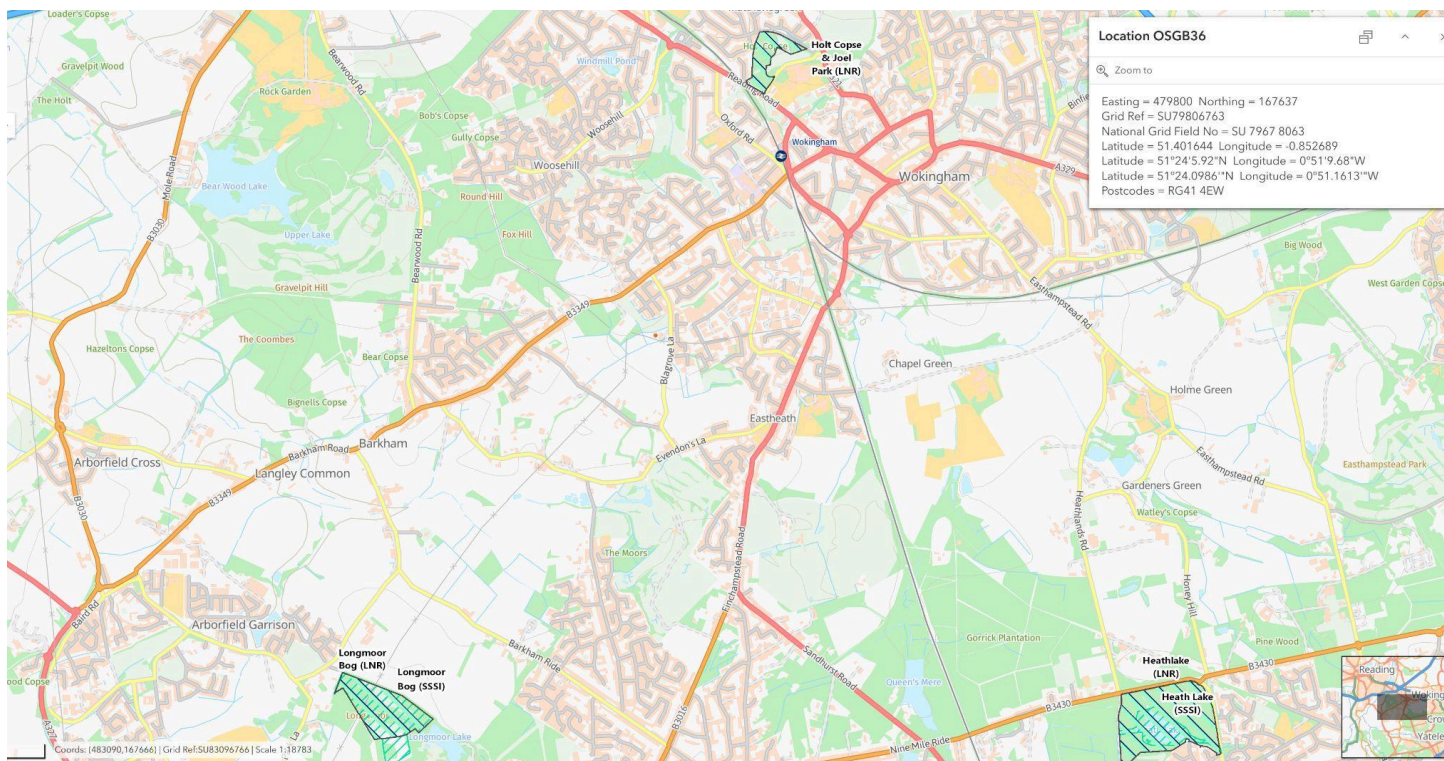
Please Note

The SSSI IRZs seek to guide consultations relating to the likely impacts of development on terrestrial SSSIs under Schedule 4 (w) of The Town and Country Planning (Development Management Procedure) (England) Order 2015 and section 281 of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. They do not alter or remove any other statutory requirements to consult Natural England. The gov.uk website provides more information on when you must consult Natural England when considering development proposals.

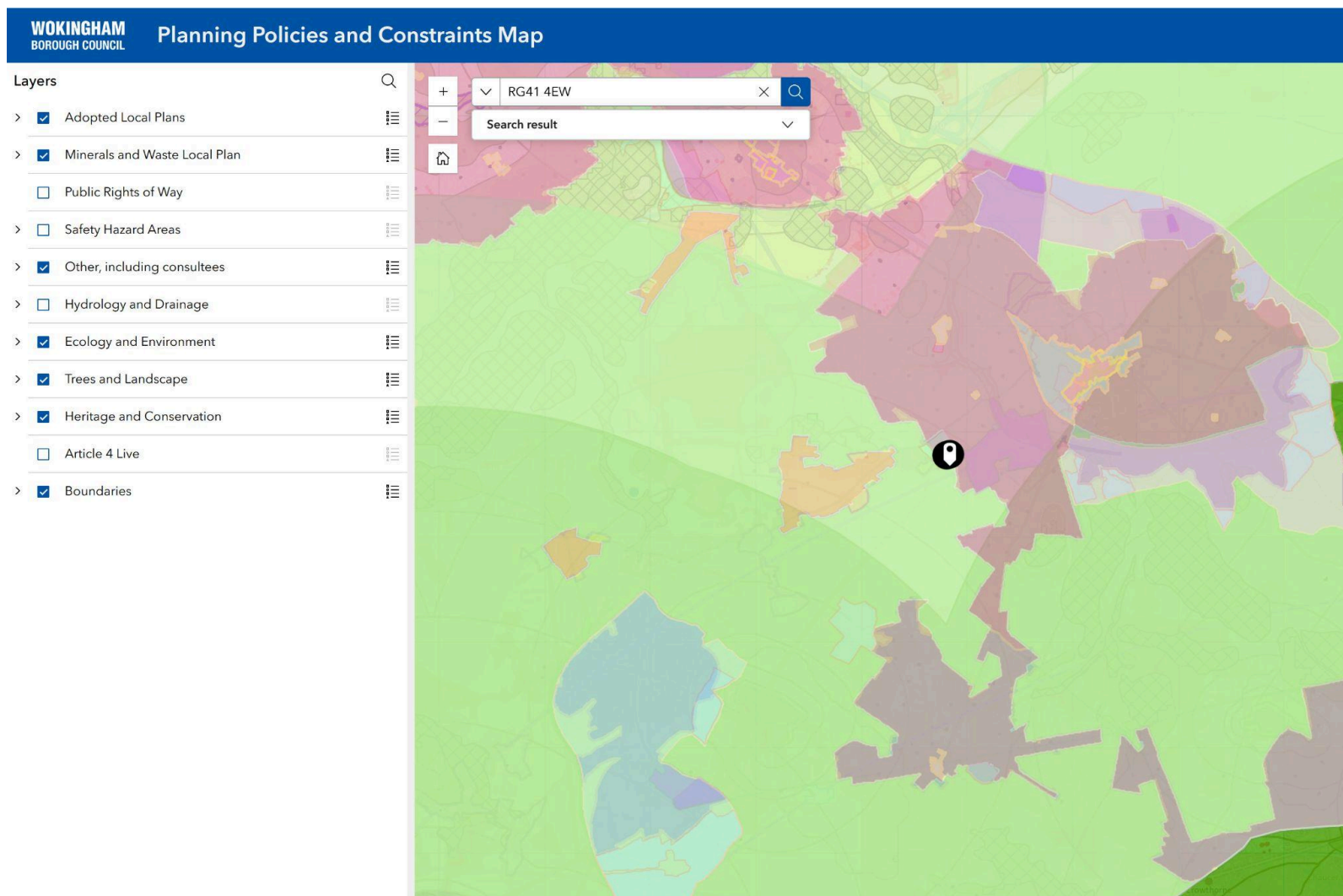
The SSSI IRZs only indicate Natural England's assessment of likely risk to the notified features of terrestrial SSSIs and those SACs, SPAs or Ramsar sites that they underpin. There are other sites designated for nature conservation in the coastal and marine environment that are not underpinned by terrestrial SSSIs. This includes SPAs, SACs, Ramsar sites and Marine Conservation Zones (MCZs). You should consult Natural England on any coastal or marine proposal that might impact those sites.

Where the SSSI IRZs indicate a risk is unlikely, this does not mean that there are no potential impacts on biodiversity or the wider natural environment and there may be a requirement to consult Natural England as a statutory consultee on other matters.

[Local Planning Authorities Get Environmental Advice - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/developers-get-environmental-advice) provides more information on when you must consult Natural England when considering development proposals including [Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects - GOV.UK \(www.gov.uk\)](https://www.gov.uk/government/consultations/nationally-significant-infrastructure-projects) (NSIPs).



Magic Map of Statutory and non Statutory Sites

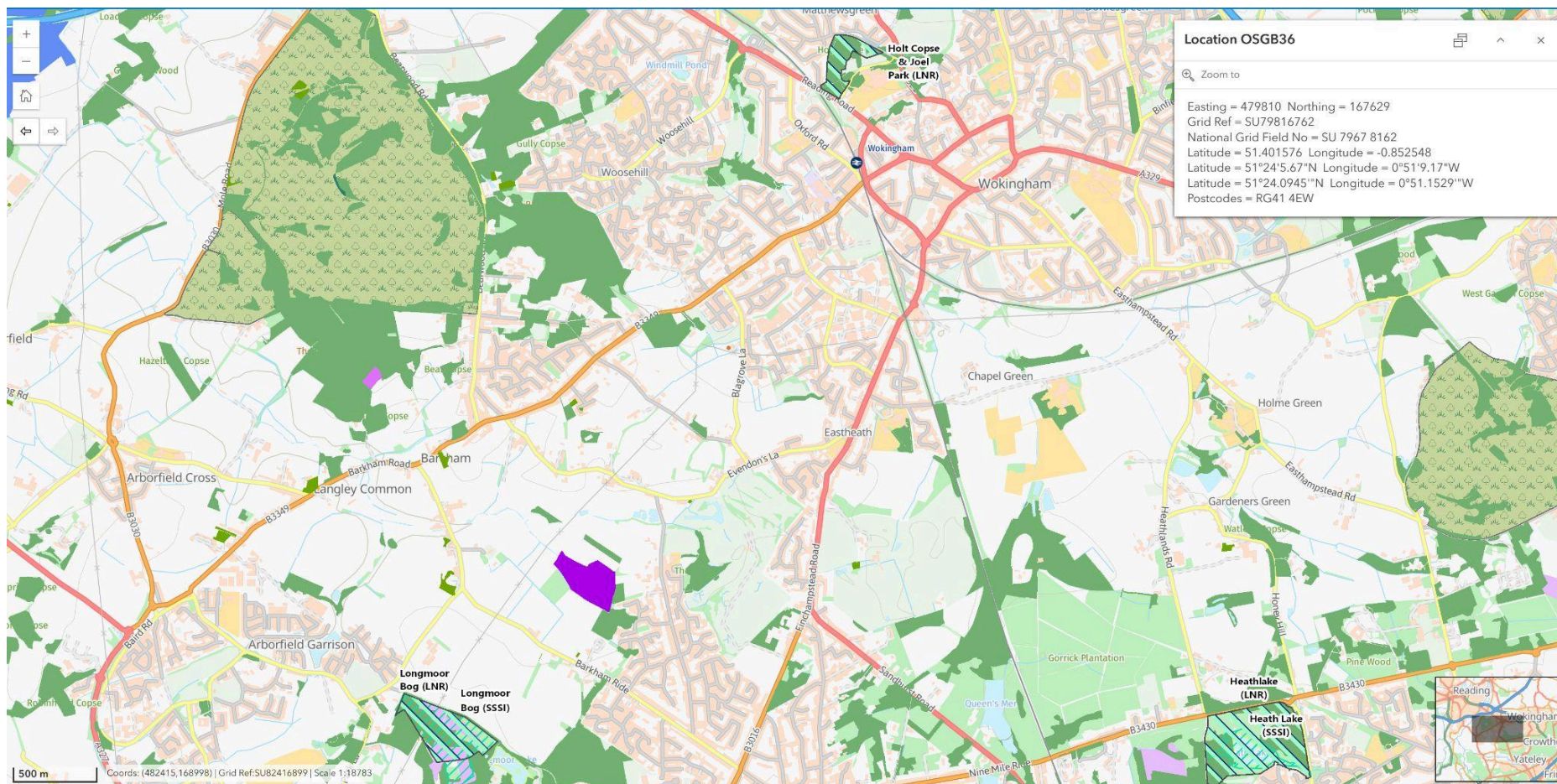


Local policies map

4.4 Priority Habitats and Features

- Priority habitats identified via MAGIC include Deciduous Woodland, Wood Pasture and Parkland, Good quality semi improved grassland and Purple moor grass and rush pastures.

Priority Habitats		
Site Name	Approx Distance from Site	Direction
Deciduous Woodland	250m	NW
Deciduous Woodland	500m	S
Deciduous Woodland	550m	SE
Purple moor grass and rush pastures	1.5 KM	S



Priority Habitats.

4.5 Protected and Notable Species of Fauna.

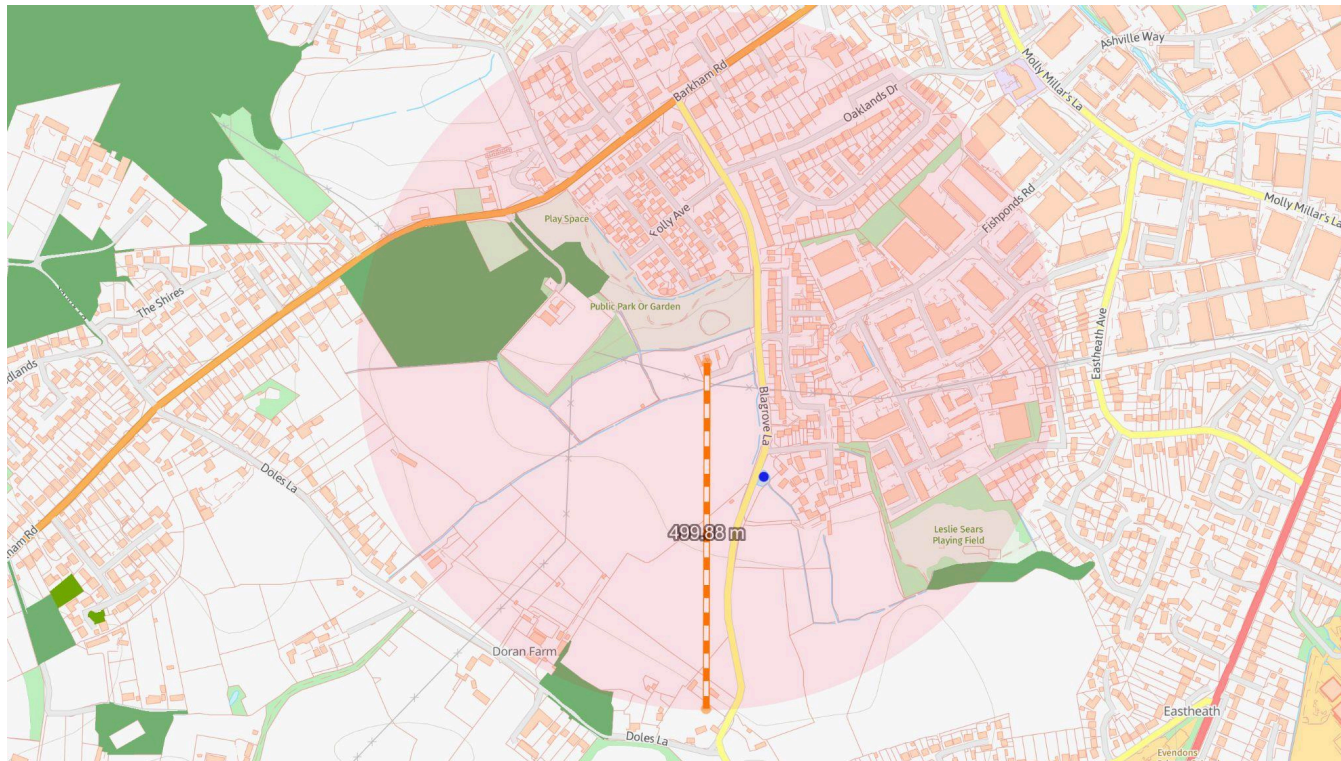
4.5.1 Greater Crested Newts

The data search returned seventeen records of great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* within 2km of the Application Site. A further search showed no records within 500m of the site.

A search of EPS licensing and great crested newt pond survey data on Magic Maps returned no results within 2km of the site.

Great Crested Newts and their habitat are protected by UK law and are a European Protected Species. It is best practice that where ponds occur within 500m of a site, that consideration is given to the suitability of habitats on site for use by GCN. The field survey and desk study found no ponds, aquatic features, or terrestrial refugia suitable for GCN on-site.

There is one pond within 500m which is bounded by Blagrove Lane and given the site's history and current use it is unlikely that GCN are present on-site. Therefore further survey is not proportional.



Water Bodies within 500m

WOKINGHAM
BOROUGH COUNCIL

Planning Policies and Constraints Map

Layers

> ☒ Adopted Local Plans

> ☒ Minerals and Waste Local Plan

☒ Public Rights of Way

> ☒ Safety Hazard Areas

> ☒ Other, including consultees

> ☒ Hydrology and Drainage

> ☒ Ecology and Environment

> ☒ Trees and Landscape

> ☒ Heritage and Conservation

☒ Article 4 Live

> ☒ Boundaries

+

RG41 4EW

×

Q

Search result

▼

Home

7 of 11

Great Crested Newt Impact Risk Zone

Zoom to

Zone	Amber
More Information	View
Details	Suitable habitat - GCN likely to be present
Consultee	For Householder applications check HH Layer. Consult NatureSpace for all other types of development

4.5.2 Other Amphibians

The desk study returned six records of Common Toad (*Bufo bufo*) , four records of Smooth Newt (*Lissotriton vulgaris*) and three of Common Frog (*Rana temporaria*) within 2 km of the Application Site.

A more refined search found no records within 500m of the application site.

Waterbodies in the direction of the site are bounded by road and residential buildings, limiting functional connectivity.

Given these factors and the limited suitable terrestrial habitat on-site, the likelihood of common amphibians being present on-site is low, and further survey is not considered proportionate.

4.5.3 Bats

The data search returned records of the following bat species within 2km of the Application Site; five Common Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), three Brown Eared Bat (*Plecotus auritus*), three Noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) and two Soprano Pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*).

A search of EPS licensing showed the nearest granted license was 500m to the North West from 2014 (2014-2425-EPS-MIT).

Due to the dominance of managed grassland with short-mown grass and hardstanding on-site, the Application Site provides limited commuting habitat for bats, restricted to the native hedgerows bordering the North, West and South of the site. The diversity of invertebrates is likely to be low on-site and therefore foraging opportunities are limited.

As a precautionary measure, construction activities should avoid excessive lighting of boundary features and other vegetated areas, and any necessary site clearance should follow best-practice ecological protocols to minimise disturbance to potential commuting routes.

4.5.4 Reptiles

All native reptile species are afforded legal protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), making it an offence to intentionally kill or injure individuals of common species.

The data search returned thirty nine records of Grass Snakes (*Natrix helvetica*), two records of Common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) and forty three records of slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*) within 2km of the Application Site.

A further search showed no records within 500m of the site.

The Application Site is considered to have low suitability for common reptile species, such as slow worm and grass snake, given the dominance of short sward vegetation within the managed grassland. The native hedgerows could be used by reptiles as refuge and has some potential for foraging and commuting.

As such, it is considered that the Application Site has a low potential for reptiles.

4.5.5 Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*)

The desk study returned no hazel dormouse records within 2 km. On-site suitable habitat is limited to sections of native hedgerow/woody edge, with weak/intermittent connectivity to any higher-value habitat. Given the small extent and fragmentation of on-site habitat and the limited functional links, the likelihood of dormouse using the Application Site is low.

No works are proposed to the native hedgerows, and these will be retained and buffered. Given the limited extent and quality of suitable habitat, and poor ecological connectivity to the wider landscape, the likelihood of dormouse presence on-site remains low.

Accordingly, further dormouse survey is not considered proportionate. During construction, a minimum 2 m buffer will be maintained from retained native hedgerow centrelines using protective barrier fencing. No excavation, storage, or surface water run-off will occur within this buffer. Any services will be routed to avoid damage to hedgerow roots. Should the scope of works change to include removal of native

vegetation, a proportionate pre-works check will be completed and the method updated.

4.5.6 Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*)

West European hedgehog is considered vulnerable in the Red Data Book and is listed as a species of concern on Section 41 of the NERC Act, 2006. One hundred and fifty three records are held for Hedgehog within the Zone of Influence.

It is considered that hedgehogs may occasionally refuge within the hedgerows along the boundaries and forage across the grassland on Site. All mammals in the UK are protected from inhumane killing under animal welfare laws and should any potential refuging habitat be present in the works area that requires to be removed or filled, they should be checked for clearance by an appropriate expert prior to works commencing. The Site is considered to be of Low-Moderate Nature Conservation Value for hedgehog.

However due to the large numbers of local records, care should be taken when clearing vegetation to avoid harming hedgehog that may be sheltering within the site. A toolbox talk to contractors prior to the start of works should be undertaken to inform siteworkers of the potential presence of hedgehog within the Site.

If a hedgehog is found within the site between April and October inclusive then it should be carefully relocated to an area outside the development site that offers immediate shelter.

4.5.7 Badger (*Meles meles*)

A single record is held for European badger within the Zone of Influence.

No badger setts were recorded on the Site itself or evidence of their presence recorded.

However, the Site does offer potential badger foraging opportunities, as short mown grassland (along the borders) often provides food in the form of invertebrate larvae. It is possible that badgers may occasionally forage through the site. It is considered that the Site has a Low Nature Conservation Value for badger.

A minimum 3m buffer zone around the site is already part of the proposal, no further mitigation is required.

4.5.8 Riparian animals

The data search returned no records of Riparian mammals within 2km of the Application Site.

Due to the lack of suitable habitat on-site, water vole and otter are considered likely absent.

4.5.9 Invertebrates

The data search returned records of the following invertebrate species within 2km of the

Application Site; Stag Beetle (*Lucanus cervus*), Azure Damselfly (*Coenagrion puella*), Common Darter (*Sympetrum striolatum*), Large White (*Pieris brassicae*), Small White (*Pieris rapae*) and Brimstone Moth (*Opisthograptis luteolata*).

A number of these species are predominantly found in grassland habitats and woodland clearings, they however could use the site as a commuting route and also use the hedgerows and open grassland within the Application Site to bask.

The habitats on-site have limited suitability for invertebrates due to the dominance of modified grassland and bareground/hardcore throughout the vegetated garden, though the site's proximity to higher-quality surrounding habitats should be noted. Species may commute across the site, and butterflies/other insects may bask along hedgerows and in open grassland on warm days.

A 3m buffer around the site is proposed, further some refugia and log piles are recommended scattered along the borders of the buffer zone.

4.5.10 Birds

One hundred and nine records of species of bird are known from the Zone of Influence of the proposals. These species include: Blackbird (*Turdus merula*), Jackdaw (*Coloeus monedula*), Kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*), Nightingale (*Luscinia megarhynchos*), Starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*) and House Sparrow (*Passer domesticus*).

The site offers suitable habitat for breeding and foraging birds with mature but well-managed hedgerows and short grassland on Site offering habitats for a range of common bird species.

All breeding birds and their nests are protected under UK law and hence where suitable habitat for birds on a development site is proposed for removal it is best practice for any vegetation clearance works to be undertaken outside the bird nesting season – March to July inclusive, and in good years breeding may also extend outside this period.

No works are proposed to the native hedgerows bordering the site and a buffer is included within the plans.

4.6 Landscape and Ecological Context

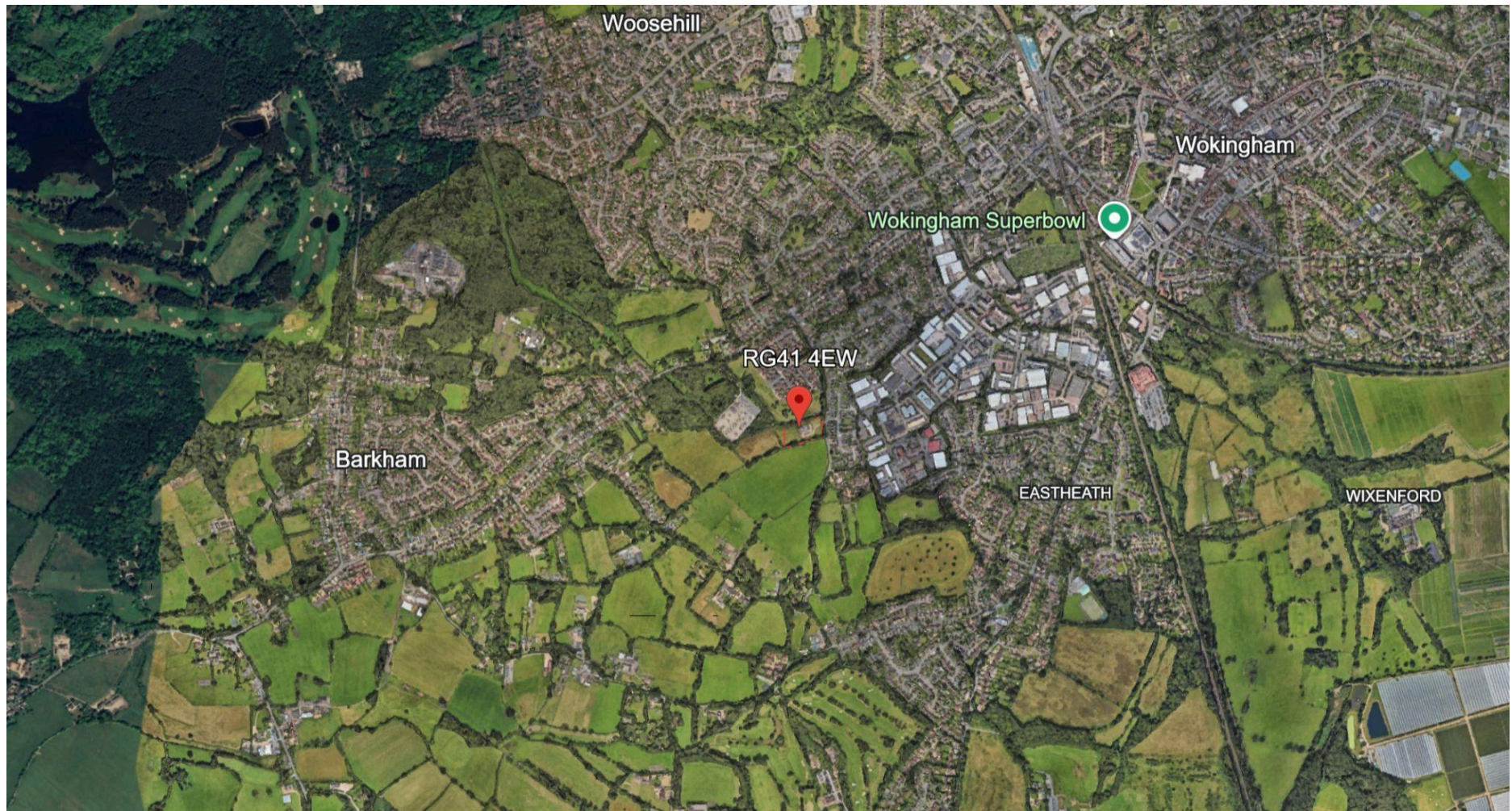
The Site comprises a level parcel of land within Wokingham Borough, currently comprising a combination of bare ground, gravel hardstanding and ruderal vegetation. The land is currently in use as a traveller and gypsy site and the grassland to the west has been used as a paddock for horses.

A recently created hardcore track is present along the northern boundary. This should be considered when defining the BNG baseline and assessing any recent habitat change in line with the statutory metric rules.

Boundary vegetation includes well-established native hedgerows with intermittent mature trees, offering some ecological value. The surrounding context is semi-rural, with the site bordered by open land to the west and residential or infrastructure features to the east and south.

There are no ponds or notable water features on or adjacent to the Site. The wider landscape includes a mix of pasture fields, hedgerows, and intermittent woodland patches. These features provide foraging and commuting opportunities for local wildlife,

particularly birds, bats, and small mammals. Connectivity to the wider countryside is moderate due to the fragmented nature of surrounding land uses.





Field Survey

The site survey was undertaken by Christopher Nixon BSc, Consultant Ecologist and Daniel Bennett Associate Ecologist.

Date of Survey	Temperature	Humidity	Cloud Cover	Wind	Rain
24/09/2025	21C	52%	80%	E 10 KM/h	NO

5.1 Survey Methodology

A walkover survey was undertaken following the methodology for Preliminary Ecological Appraisals set out in the *CIEEM Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (2017/2018)*. The survey included:

- A **UK Habitat Classification (UKHab)** survey for habitat mapping and classification;
- A **protected and notable species appraisal**, assessing the potential presence of key taxa based on field signs, habitat suitability, and contextual records;

- An assessment of **ecological connectivity** with surrounding habitats.

Survey boundaries were defined in relation to the red line boundary of the application site, incorporating accessible adjacent features where relevant to ecological function (e.g. boundary hedgerows).

5.2 Habitat Types Recorded On Site

UKHAB Code	Habitat Type	Location on Site	Condition	Notes
u1a	Hardstanding	Access and Homes	N/A	
g4	Modified Grassland	Borders of site and West end of site	Moderate	Paddock area on west of site and surrounding existing site
h2a	Native Hedgerow	Bordering site	Moderate	



Approximate Baseline Habitat. *Degradation rule applied, Baseline set to August 2023 based on clean satellite photos.*

5.3 Notable Features and Species Evidence

- **Hedgerows:** Native Hedgerows on the South, North and West borders of the site offer structural diversity and are likely to be of value for nesting birds and commuting bats.

No direct evidence of protected species (e.g. badger setts, owl pellets) was recorded during the survey on site.

5.4 Survey Photographs



Entrance



Entrance



Southern and Western hedges, facing west from center



Modified Grassland, looking east towards existing site



Existing Site



Native Hedge South West Corner



Native Hedge North border



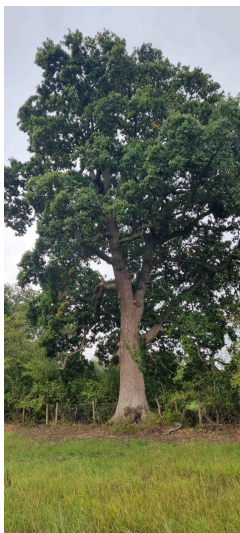
Native hedge on South Border



South Border, looking outside of existing site, some non native trees



Pylon on Southern border



Southern Border



Shingle track, southern section



Modified grassland



Degradation on northern border

Summary and Recommendations

The application site comprises c.0.96 ha of hardstanding, modified grassland, and ruderal vegetation, bordered by native hedgerows. It supports limited ecological value, primarily associated with the boundary vegetation.

The desk study returned records for several protected and notable species, but habitat on-site is of low suitability. No ponds, priority habitats, or evidence of protected species were identified on-site. One pond lies within 500m but is ecologically disconnected from the site.

No further surveys are recommended. Provided that the boundary hedgerows and existing trees on the borders are all retained and buffered, vegetation clearance is undertaken sensitively, and lighting impacts are minimised, the development is unlikely to result in significant adverse ecological impacts.

Appendix

7.1 Legislation and Planning Policy

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69>

Protection of Badgers Act 1992
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1992/51/contents>

The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2000/37/contents>

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended)
<https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2019/9780111176573>