

Shinfield Park, Whitley Wood Lane, Shinfield,
Wokingham, RG2 9FW

Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy

Prepared in Respect of Condition 22 of
Planning Consent Reference: 250415

January 2026

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1 Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Aspect Ecology has been appointment by Wrenbridge (FRELD Reading) Ltd to prepare a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy in respect of the consented development at Shinfield Park, Whitley Wood Lane, Shinfield, Wokingham, RG2 9FW, centred at grid reference SU 72815 69048, herein referred to as 'the site'. The site received planning consent in October 2025 for redevelopment to provide new flexible employment use (Use Class E(g) (ii)-(iii)/B2/B8) together with servicing areas, parking, landscaping and other associated works, including demolition (Reference No. 250415).

1.1.2 The panning consent is subject to a number of conditions including Condition 22, which requires the preparation of a Biodiversity Enhancement Strategy and states:

'Prior to commencement of development above slab level, a detailed strategy for biodiversity enhancements to the site, in line with recommendations given in paragraphs 6.2.7 to 6.2.12 inclusive of the submitted Ecological Appraisal (Aspect Ecology, ref: EcoAp vf CK/BB/DS, February 2025), shall be provided to the local authority for its approval. Once approved the strategy shall be implemented in full unless otherwise agreed by the local authority in writing.'

Reason: To secure biodiversity enhancements in line with development as appropriate under Local plan policies CP7 and TB23, and the National Planning Policy Framework paragraph 187(d).'

1.2 Site Description

1.2.1 The site is located to the south of the town of Reading, Berkshire, within an urban context. The site is bound to the north by existing residential development, whilst Lower Early Way bounds the site to the east, beyond which lies a pocket of woodland (The Grove) and the M4 motorway. To the south and west the site is bound by woodland and ponds, which together form Shinfield Park, Nore's Hill Local Wildlife Site (LWS).

1.3 Purpose of the Report

1.3.1 This document sets outs the biodiversity enhancements that will be incorporated within the development scheme to satisfy Condition 22 of the planning consent. This report is based on the faunal enhancement measures detailed within Aspect Ecology's Ecological Appraisal, dated February 2025 (Document ref. 6856 EcoAp vf CK/BB/DS).

2 Faunal Enhancements and Management

2.1 Overview

- 2.1.1 The development of the site provides an opportunity to incorporate a number of ecological enhancements for the benefit of local biodiversity, thereby making a positive contribution towards Priority Species listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, and the objectives of Wokingham Borough Council's Core Policy 7 on Biodiversity¹ and Policy TB23 on Biodiversity and Development².
- 2.1.2 A number of species-specific features will be installed to provide additional opportunities for bats, birds, reptiles and Dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* at the site, as set out below.

2.2 Faunal Enhancements

Bats

- 2.2.1 A total of 28 bat boxes, utilising a combination of types Schwegler 2F and 2FN, or similar (see Appendix 6856/1 for specifications), will be erected onto suitable trees within the Local Wildlife Site (see Plan 6856/BES1 for locations). The boxes will provide new roosting opportunities for bats in the area, such as Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, a national Priority Species. To maximise their potential use, the bat boxes will be installed no lower than 3m from ground level. The boxes will be sited in sheltered, wind-free areas that are exposed to sun for part of the day. Bat boxes will be located away from any proposed lighting fixtures so as not to disrupt potential use of the boxes.
- 2.2.2 Due to modelled lighting levels, no bat boxes are proposed to be affixed onto buildings within the site, as lighting is likely to deter potential use of these features. In lieu of the provision of bat boxes onto new buildings at the site, the number of bat boxes proposed to be installed within the LWS has been increased.
- 2.2.3 The bat boxes are constructed from durable, rot-proof and predator-proof materials, and are long lasting. The bat boxes are maintenance-free and self-cleaning. Should any repairs to bat boxes be required, a suitably qualified and licensed ecologist should be consulted to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation (see Appendix 6856/2), as bats may be present throughout the year and must not be disturbed.

Birds

- 2.2.4 A total of 10 bird boxes utilising a combination of types Schwegler 2B and 2H, or similar (see Appendix 6856/3 for specifications), will be erected onto a proportion of trees within the LWS, to provide additional nesting opportunities for birds (see Plan 6856/BES1 for locations). Additionally, a total of 5 Schwegler No17 Tripel Cavity Swift boxes and 5 Eco Sparrow Towers, or equivalent, will be installed onto the new buildings to provide additional nesting opportunities for the Priority Species Swift *Apus apus* and House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* respectively (see Plan 6856/BES1 for locations and Appendix 6856/3 for specifications). To maximise their potential use, the bird boxes will be installed at a minimum height of 3m such that they are not vulnerable to predation by cats or liable to vandalism. Swift boxes shall be installed as high up as possible, ideally at eaves height (minimum 6m). The bird boxes will be sited in sheltered, wind-free areas. Where bird boxes

¹ Wokingham Borough Council 'Core Strategy' Adopted January 2010

² Wokingham Borough Council 'Managing Development Delivery' Adopted February 2014

are to be installed onto new buildings these will not be located directly above any windows, doorways and/or lighting fixtures.

2.2.5 The bird boxes are constructed from durable, rot-proof and predator-proof materials, and are long lasting, with no maintenance required. Any works to repair or replace bird boxes shall be undertaken in the autumn or winter months (*i.e.* outside March to August inclusive) when they are least likely to be in use.

Dormouse

2.2.6 A total of 10 Schwegler 2KS Dormouse nest boxes, or similar, will be erected within the LWS to provide additional nesting opportunities for Dormouse (see Appendix 6856/4 for specifications and indicative locations). Dormouse boxes will be erected onto suitable trees at a height of between 1.2m to 1.5m.

2.2.7 The Dormouse nest boxes are constructed from durable, rot-proof and predator-proof materials, and are long lasting, with no maintenance required. Should any works to repair or replace Dormouse boxes be required, these should be undertaken in winter (November to March inclusive) when boxes are not expected to be in use, to ensure compliance with the relevant legislation (see Appendix 6856/2).

Reptiles

2.2.8 To provide new refuge for reptiles at the site two hibernacula will be created (see Plan 6856/BES1 for locations and Appendix 6856/5 for specifications). The hibernacula will be created by piling rubble, bricks, wood and vegetation cuttings together in an area measuring ~1m². The hibernacula will be capped with earth and seeded as per the surrounding grassland. Several entrance/exit points will be made into the central chamber to allow access to reptiles, for shelter and for usage during the winter months for hibernation.

2.2.9 The vegetation covering the hibernacula will be strimmed on an ad hoc basis, otherwise the hibernacula should not require any specific management or maintenance.

Invertebrates

2.2.10 A total of 5 insect boxes will be installed at the site thereby increasing nesting opportunities for declining populations of non-swarming solitary bee populations (see Plan 6856/BES1 for locations and Appendix 6856/6 for specifications).

2.2.11 The insect boxes will be inspected annually and any broken or damaged boxes repaired/replaced as necessary.

2.3 Timetable for Implementation

2.3.1 Bat and bird boxes, Dormouse nest boxes, and insect boxes will be installed during the construction period. Material used to create the reptile hibernacula will come from vegetation clearance and rubble sourced from the site, and the hibernacula will therefore be assembled during the construction period. Bird boxes to be attached to the buildings within the site will be provided post construction. All biodiversity enhancements should therefore be provided prior to the practical completion and utilisation of the development.

Plan 6856/BES1:

Biodiversity Enhancements Plan



Appendix 6856/1:

Bat Box Specifications

Bat Boxes

Schwegler bat boxes are made from 'woodcrete' and have the highest rates of occupation of all types of box.

The 75% wood sawdust, clay and concrete mixture is ideal, being durable whilst allowing natural respiration and temperature stability. These boxes are rot and predator proof and extremely long lasting.

Boxes can be hung from a branch near the tree trunk or fixed using 'tree-friendly' aluminum nails.



2F Bat Box

A standard bat box, attractive to the smaller British bat species. Simple design with a narrow entrance slit on the front.

Material: Woodcrete

Diameter: 16cm

Height: 33cm

Schwegler 2FN Bat Box

Schwegler bat boxes are made from 'woodcrete' and have the highest rates of occupation of all types of box. The 75% wood sawdust, clay and concrete mixture is ideal, being durable whilst allowing natural respiration and temperature stability. These boxes are rot and predator proof and extremely long lasting. Boxes can be hung from a branch near the tree trunk or fixed using 'tree-friendly' aluminum nails.

The 2FN style bat box is a large box featuring a wide access slit at the base as well as an access hole on the underside. It can be used by a range of bat species, but has been found to be particularly successful in attracting Noctule and Bechstein's bats.



Specification

Height: 36cm | Diameter: 16cm

Appendix 6856/2:

Legislation Summary

LEGISLATION SUMMARY

1. In England and Wales primary legislation is made by the UK Parliament, and in Scotland by the Scottish Parliament, in the form of Acts. The main piece of legislation relating to nature conservation in the UK is the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
2. Acts of Parliament confer powers on Ministers to make more detailed orders, rules or regulations by means of secondary legislation in the form of statutory instruments. Statutory instruments are used to provide the necessary detail that would be too complex to include in an Act itself¹. The provisions of an Act of Parliament can also be enforced, amended or updated by secondary legislation.
3. In summary, the key pieces of legislation relating to nature conservation in the UK are:
 - Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
 - Protection of Badgers Act 1992
 - Hedgerows Regulations 1997
 - Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act for England and Wales 2000
 - Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006
 - Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017
4. A brief summary of the relevant legislation is provided below. The original Acts and instruments should be referred to for the full and most up to date text of the legislation.
5. **Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).** The WCA Act provides for the notification and confirmation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) identified for their flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features. The Act contains strict measures for the protection and management of SSSIs.
6. The Act also refers to the treatment of UK wildlife including protected species listed under Schedules 1 (birds), 5 (mammals, herpetofauna, fish, invertebrates) and 8 (plants).
7. Under Section 1(1) of the Act, all wild birds are protected such that it is an offence to intentionally:
 - Kill, injure or take any wild bird;
 - Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst in use* or being built;
 - Take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

* The nests of birds that re-use their nests as listed under Schedule ZA1, e.g. Golden Eagle, are protected against taking, damage or destruction irrespective of whether they are in use or not.
8. Offences in respect of Schedule 1 birds are subject to special, i.e. higher, penalties. Schedule 1 birds also receive greater protection such that it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly:
 - Disturb any wild bird included in Schedule 1 while it is building a nest or while it is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young;
 - Disturb dependent young of such a bird.

¹ <http://www.parliament.uk/business/bills-and-legislation/secondary-legislation/statutory-instruments/>

9. Under Section 9(1) of the Act, it is an offence to:
 - Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animal included in Schedule 5.
10. In addition, under Section 9(4) it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly:
 - Obstruct access to, any structure or place which any wild animal included in Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection; or
 - Disturb any wild animal included in Schedule 5 while occupying a structure or place which it uses for that purpose.
11. Under Section 13(1) it is an offence:
 - To intentionally pick, uproot or destroy any wild plant listed in Schedule 8; or
 - Unless the authorised person, to intentionally uproot any wild plant not included in Schedule 8.
12. The Act also contains measures (S.14) for preventing the establishment of non-native species that may be detrimental to native wildlife, prohibiting the introduction into the wild of animals (releases or allows to escape) and plants (plants or causes to grow) listed under Schedule 9.
13. **Protection of Badgers Act 1992.** The Act aims to protect the species from persecution, rather than being a response to an unfavourable conservation status, as the species is in fact common over most of Britain. It should be noted that the legislation is not intended to prevent properly authorised development. Under the Act it is an offence to:
 - Wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat* a Badger, or attempt to do so;
 - To intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett# (this includes disturbing Badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, as well as damaging or destroying a sett or obstructing access to it).

* the intentional elimination of sufficient foraging area to support a known social group of Badgers may, in certain circumstances, be construed as an offence

A sett is defined as "*any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a Badger*". Natural England advice (June 2009) is that a sett is protected so long as such signs remain present, which in practice could potentially be for some time after the last actual occupation by Badger. Interference with a sett includes blocking tunnels or damaging the sett in any way
14. Licences can be obtained from the Statutory Nature Conservation Organisation (SNCO) for development activities that would otherwise be unlawful under the legislation, provided there is suitable justification. The SNCO for England is Natural England.
15. **Hedgerows Regulations 1997.** 'Important' hedgerows (as defined by the Regulations) are protected from removal (up-rooting or otherwise destroying). Various criteria specified in the Regulations are employed to identify 'important' hedgerows for wildlife, landscape or historical reasons.
16. **Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act for England and Wales 2000.** The CRoW Act provides increased measures for the management and protection of SSSIs and strengthens wildlife enforcement legislation. Schedule 12 of the Act amends the species provisions of the WCA 1981, strengthening the legal protection for threatened species. The Act also introduced a duty on Government to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity and maintain lists of species and habitats for which conservation steps should be taken or promoted, in accordance with the Convention on Biological Diversity.

17. **Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.** Section 41 of the NERC Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species that are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as local planning authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when exercising their normal functions. 56 habitats and 943 species of principal importance are included on the S41 list. These are all the habitats and species in England that were identified as requiring action in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP).
18. **Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).** The Regulations enact the European Union's Habitats Directive (92/43/EEC) in the UK. The Habitats Directive was designed to contribute to the maintenance of biodiversity within member states through the conservation of sites, known in the UK as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), containing habitats and species selected as being of EC importance (as listed in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive respectively). Member states are required to take measures to maintain or restore these natural and semi-natural habitats and wild species at a favourable conservation status.
19. The Regulations also require the compilation and maintenance of a register of European sites, to include SACs and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)² classified under Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (the Birds Directive). These sites constitute the Natura 2000 network. The Regulations impose restrictions on planning decisions likely to significantly affect SPAs or SACs.
20. The Regulations also provide protection to European Protected Species of animals that largely overlaps with the WCA 1981, albeit the provisions are generally stricter. Under Regulation 43 it is an offence, *inter alia*, to:
 - Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of a European Protected Species;
 - Deliberately disturb any wild animals of any such species, including in particular any disturbance likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, to rear or nurture their young, to hibernate or migrate, or which is likely to affect significantly their local distribution or abundance;
 - Deliberately take or destroy the eggs of such an animal;
 - Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.
21. Similar protection is afforded to European Protected Species of plants, as detailed under Regulation 47.
22. The Regulations do provide a licensing system that permits otherwise illegal activities in relation to European Protected Species, subject to certain tests being fulfilled.

² Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are protected sites classified in accordance with Article 4 of the EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) (aka the Birds Directive), which came into force in April 1979. SPAs are classified for rare and vulnerable birds (as listed on Annex I of the Directive), and for regularly occurring migratory species.

Appendix 6856/3:

Bird Box Specifications

Bird Boxes

Schwegler bird boxes have the highest rates of occupation of all types of box. They are designed to mimic natural nest sites and provide a stable environment with the right thermal properties for chick rearing and winter roosting. Boxes are made from 'Woodcrete'. This 75% wood sawdust, clay and concrete mixture is breathable and very durable making these bird boxes extremely long lasting.



1B Bird Box

This is the most popular box for garden birds and appeals to a wide range of species. The box can be hung from a branch or nailed to the trunk of a tree with a 'tree-friendly' aluminium nail.

Specification

Available in four colours and three entrance hole sizes. 26mm for small tits, 32mm standard size and oval, for redstarts.

2H Open Fronted Nest Box

This box is attractive to Robins, Pied Wagtails, Grey Wagtail, Spotted Flycatcher, Wrens & Black Redstarts.

They are best sited on the walls of buildings with the entrance on one side.

Specification

Material: Woodcrete

Dimensions: 20cm x 15cm x 20cm (H x W x D)

Interior diameter: 12cm

Weight: 2.5kg



Bird Boxes

Schwegler bird boxes have the highest rates of occupation of all types of box. They are designed to mimic natural nest sites and provide a stable environment with the right thermal properties for chick rearing and winter roosting. Boxes are made from 'Woodcrete'. This 75% wood sawdust, clay and concrete mixture is breathable and very durable making these bird boxes extremely long lasting.



No. 17 Schwegler Swift Nest Box (Single Cavity)

Swifts spend just four months in Europe over the summer and during this time they use urban areas around our homes and buildings to provide nesting sites.

This box should be installed at least 6-7m, ensuring that there is unobstructed access for birds entering and leaving

Specification

External dimensions: 15cm x 15cm x 34cm (+ wing screws)

Brood chamber dimensions: 14cm x 14cm x 30cm

Entrance hole dimensions: 32 x 70mm

Weight: 3.1kg

Bird Boxes

ECO SPARROW TOWER

A new and innovative design made from UV stabilised 100% recycled plastic outer shell, with internal FSC wooden nesting chambers.

The triple chamber gives space for three pairs of sparrows to nest in.

Weatherproof and features a fixed roof which enables the box to be fitted right up at the eaves, just where the sparrows like to nest.

Dimensions: 650H x 170W x 170D mm.

Weight 2.8kg



Appendix 6856/4:

Dormouse Nest Box Specifications

Dormouse Boxes

2KS Common Dormouse Box

Dormice seek refuge in relatively undisturbed broad-leaf woodlands. If such habitats are not available they become easy prey for their natural predators such as Martins and Owls. They will readily use the 2KS as secure quarters, for over-wintering too, depending on the region.



Based on past experience and ongoing development work, SCHWEGLER have extended their range of alternative accommodation for dormice with the introduction of a special box. The Type KS dormouse box is an inexpensive way of helping to preserve woodland species.

One of the main advantages of the KS is that the entrance is at the rear, facing the tree trunk, making it more difficult for birds to occupy it (it is important to ensure that the trunk is of the right diameter). With upper, lower and side openings next to the trunk the actual access is ideally positioned but still well protected from potential predators.

Dormouse Box Specification

Dimensions (approx.):

External dimensions:

Height: 295mm

Width: 175mm

Depth: 225mm

Interior area:

125mm sq2

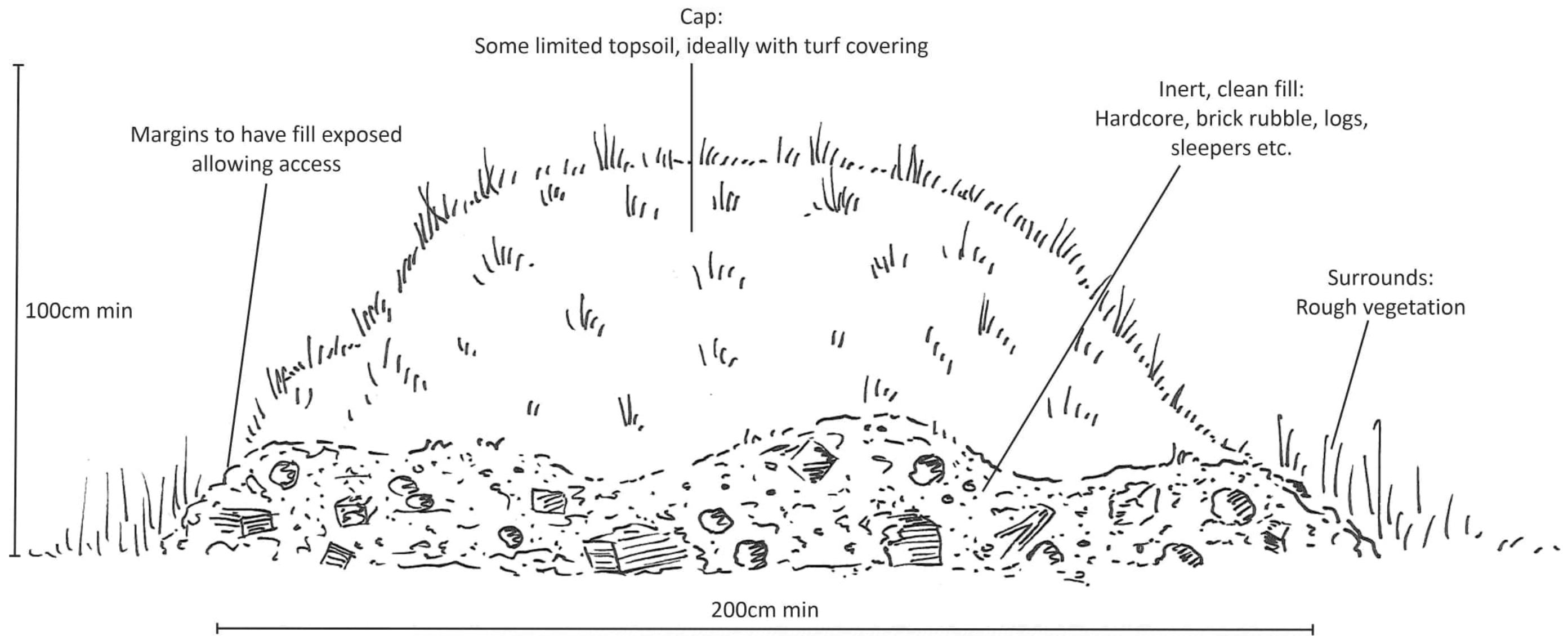
Weight:

6kg approx.

N.B. Dormice are legally protected and must not be handled unless you have a licence to do so.

Appendix 6856/5:

Reptile Hibernacula Specifications



The design mimics artificial and natural conditions in which reptiles and amphibians have frequently been found over-wintering. Dimensions should not be below 2m length x 1m height. The illustration design would be suitable for locating on an impermeable substrate. On free-draining substrates, the design is largely similar but the bulk of the fill is sited in an excavated depression in the ground.

Appendix 6856/6:

Insect Box Specifications

ecology • landscape planning • arboriculture



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