

Vistry Homes Ltd.

Hogwood Farm, Finchampstead

Badger Survey Report



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Version A

07 August 2026

Locations of badger setts have been redacted due to persecution of the species. An unredacted version is available for those who require access.



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Executive Summary

- Tetra Tech were commissioned by Vistry Homes Ltd to undertake a badger *Meles meles* walkover and monitoring survey at Hogwood Farm, Wokingham, RG40 4BN. The client informed Tetra Tech of previous badger activity noted across different phases of the development, and therefore further investigation for badgers was required for Phase 6 (“the site”).
- The proposed works include a new residential development with associated soft and hard landscaping, access roads, and infrastructure. The boundary features are expected to be retained, with the rest of the site cleared for development.
- The walkover of the site recorded several badger signs, including paths, hair, foraging evidence, and active and disused setts. Seven setts were recorded, with one being active, three unknown at the time of the walkover, and three disused or inactive.
- The three unknown setts were subject to camera monitoring for a period of 21 nights to determine badger activity. No badgers were recorded at any of the setts, and the setts were therefore considered inactive at the time of the survey. Works within 30 m of these setts are not considered an impact to badgers, if commenced within three months of this report. After this time, an ecologist should return to site within three months before construction commencement to confirm continued inactivity of the setts. Should evidence of use be recorded, a licence from Natural England may be required.
- Mitigation measures, including a WMS, ecological supervision, and additional precautionary construction methods have been recommended to avoid impacts to foraging and commuting badgers. A badger licence is not considered necessary for these works.
- Proposed landscaping around the site boundaries maintains suitable foraging and commuting corridors for badgers, and impacts to their movements through the site are therefore not anticipated.

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1.0 Introduction

1.1 Purpose and Scope of this Report

- 1.1.1 Tetra Tech were commissioned by Vistry Homes Ltd to undertake a badger *Meles meles* walkover and monitoring survey at Hogwood Farm, Wokingham, RG40 4BN.
- 1.1.2 The client informed Tetra Tech of previous badger activity noted across different phases of the development, and therefore further investigation for badgers was required for Phase 6 (“the site”).
- 1.1.3 This report presents the findings of the badger survey and the mitigation measures required as a result. It also contains the findings from additional camera monitoring of the setts identified within this report.
- 1.1.4 The recommendations included within this report are the professional opinion of an experienced ecologist and therefore the view of Tetra Tech.

1.2 Proposed Works

- 1.2.1 The proposed works include a new residential development with associated soft and hard landscaping, access roads, and infrastructure. The boundary features are expected to be retained, with the rest of the site cleared for development.

1.3 Legislation

- 1.3.1 Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. This act is based on the need to protect badgers from baiting and deliberate harm or injury. The act makes it an offence to:
 - Wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or attempt to do so; and
 - Intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett. Sett interference includes disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, as well as damaging or destroying a sett or obstructing access routes.
- 1.3.2 A sett is defined as “*any structure or place that displays signs indicating current use by a badger*”.

2.0 Methods

2.1 Badger Walkover Survey

- 2.1.1 A suitably experienced Tetra Tech ecologist visited the site on 15th April 2026 to undertake the pre-commencement badger survey.
- 2.1.2 The entire site and up to 30 m from the site boundaries (where accessible) were surveyed for signs of badger activity. All field signs were recorded, and a detailed assessment was made of any setts, noting the signs of activity levels and current status.
- 2.1.3 During the survey, any identified setts were examined to establish their level of usage. Each hole was classified under one of the following categories defining use:
- **Well used:** an entrance free of leaf litter and showing recent signs of excavation;
 - **Partially used:** an entrance with some leaf litter and debris around the hole but also showing some signs of recent digging; and
 - **Disused:** an entrance with debris and leaf litter partially obscuring the hole with no recent signs of digging or, a hole that exhibits the characteristics of a badger hole with a large, D-shaped entrance and old spoil piles at the entrance but shows no other signs of badger activity.
- 2.1.4 Setts can be classified into four main categories, defined by the degree of use, context with other setts and number of holes present (number of holes in and of itself is not a completely reliable indicator of sett status):
- **Main sett:** a large well used and well-established sett used for breeding. There is usually only one main sett within each clan of badgers;
 - **Annex sett:** these are additional setts often located close to the main sett connected by well-worn paths;
 - **Subsidiary sett:** these are additional setts often some 150m from the main sett which are sometimes used for breeding but do not have obvious paths linking to them other setts and are not always active; and
 - **Outlier sett:** these setts are usually smaller in size than the other setts, intermittently used and located some distance from the main sett.
- 2.1.5 Badgers are gregarious animals, which normally live in social groups. Each group will defend a territory from neighbouring clans. The territory consists of foraging areas, a main sett where most breeding takes place, and a range of other setts of different sizes and uses. Each group usually produces one litter of cubs per year.

However, in larger groups, two or three females may breed in the same year, in which case one or more of the smaller setts within the territory may also be used for breeding.

- 2.1.6 All results were mapped and measured against proposed works to assess mitigation measures required.

2.2 Camera Monitoring

- 2.2.1 Following the results of the badger walkover, three separate setts were monitored for activity. This included using trail cameras equipped with infrared (IR) lights and movement sensors to detect and record activity surrounding the setts. These were deployed on 29th May 2026 and left for a period of 21 nights, with footage downloaded and batteries changed on a weekly basis to ensure continuous recording.

2.3 Limitations

- 2.3.1 It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no investigation can ensure the complete characterisation and prediction of the natural environment.
- 2.3.2 During the walkover survey, dense scrub prevented two badger setts from being assessed for signs of use. This was not considered a limitation to the results, however, as the setts were successfully monitored using trail cameras.
- 2.3.3 The majority of ecological data remain valid for only short periods due to the inherently transient nature of the subject. The survey results contained in this report are considered accurate for 12 months, assuming no significant considerable changes to the site conditions.

3.0 Results

3.1 Badger Walkover Survey

- 3.1.1 Several badger signs were recorded during the walkover, including paths, hair, foraging evidence, and active and disused setts. Refer to Appendix A for locations.
- 3.1.2 An artificial sett was recorded [REDACTED]. It was in active use at the time of the survey, with three holes out of five containing fresh bedding material. Well-worn paths were recorded from the sett leading into and away from the site.
- 3.1.3 A four-hole subsidiary sett was recorded [REDACTED]. This was previously recorded during the 2024 badger survey, and had since grown from a single hole to four. However, three of the holes were clearly inactive for a long period of time, with heavy leaf litter, cobwebbing, and partial collapse. A single hole appeared to remain at least partially active, although it wasn't clear from the survey to what extent the hole was used.
- 3.1.4 Three single hole outliers were recorded [REDACTED], all of which were disused and partially collapsed at the time of the survey.
- 3.1.5 Two additional single hole outliers were recorded [REDACTED], but could not be fully inspected due to dense scrub blocking access. Activity levels in these setts could therefore not be determined at the time of the survey.
- 3.1.6 Table 3.1 below provides a summary of results.

Table 3.1: Badger sett locations

Set reference	Location	Description
A	[REDACTED]	Single hole outlier behind fence, could not determine activity levels due to dense scrub
B	[REDACTED]	Single hole outlier behind fence, could not determine activity levels due to dense scrub
C	[REDACTED]	Artificial sett from main development. Activity confirmed at three entrances, bedding and well-worn paths present.
D	[REDACTED]	Four-hole subsidiary sett. Three holes disused at the time of the survey and completely blocked by leaf litter etc, partial activity in one hole, no signs of badger but hole not obscured
E	[REDACTED]	Single hole outlier, currently disused
F	[REDACTED]	Single hole outlier, collapsed, disused
G	[REDACTED]	Single hole outlier, collapsed, disused

3.2 Camera Monitoring

3.2.1 Following the walkover survey, three setts required further assessment to assess their activity levels, the results of which are presented in Table 3.2. In summary, no badgers were recorded using any of the setts for the monitoring period, and the setts were therefore considered inactive at the time of the monitoring.

Table 3.2: Camera monitoring results

Set reference	Number of monitoring nights	Results
A	21	No badgers recorded
B	21	No badgers recorded
D	21	No badgers recorded, a single fox recorded investigating the sett on one occasion but did not enter.

4.0 Evaluation and Recommendations

4.1 Impacts to Badgers

- 4.1.1 The survey and monitoring confirmed that at the time of writing, a single active badger sett was recorded within the survey area. This was the artificial sett [REDACTED]. No buildings are to be built within the 30 m buffer zone from the sett, but small areas of landscaping and a footpath are to be created within 20-30 m. Mitigation measures to protect this sett are outlined in Section 4.2.
- 4.1.2 The remaining badger setts were inactive and therefore no impacts are anticipated to these, assuming the works are commenced within three months from the date of this report. If commenced outside of this window, an ecologist should return to site within three months before construction commencement to confirm continued inactivity of the setts. Should evidence of use be recorded, a licence from Natural England may be required.
- 4.1.3 In addition to the active sett, signs of badgers commuting and foraging across the site were present. Therefore, the works have the potential to impact badgers in the absence of suitable mitigation measures. Impacts to badgers or their setts is an offence under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and mitigation measures have therefore been recommended below.
- 4.1.4 Proposed landscaping around the site boundaries maintains suitable foraging and commuting corridors for badgers, and impacts to their movements through the site are therefore not anticipated.

4.2 Recommendations

- 4.2.1 Prior to the commencement of construction, a suitably qualified ecologist will provide a Toolbox Talk to all site contractors, to ensure that they are made aware of the presence of badgers in the area, the risks associated with the works, legislation, and appropriate working methods to avoid impacts to badgers. The ecologist will clearly mark the exclusion zones around the sett.
- 4.2.2 Light machinery is permitted between 20-30 m from an active sett, with hand tools only permitted within 20 m, and no works within 10 m. Where works within these zones (>10 m) from the artificial sett are to be carried out, these should be completed under a suitable Working Method Statement (WMS) and supervision of an ecologist. A licence is not considered necessary for the works as the proposed activities within the buffer zones are minimal and impacts can be avoided through the use of the WMS.
- 4.2.3 As foraging and commuting badgers may be present on site and in the surrounding area during the works, it is recommended that the following precautionary

mitigation measures are put in place during the works, particularly during any excavation work;

- Mammal ladders (such as a wooden plank) or earth ramps to be placed in any open excavations at the end of each day, and excavations checked for animals each morning;
- Wet concrete (such as for building foundations) should be covered or fenced-off overnight to avoid badgers becoming trapped;
- Should any large pipework be installed, any open pipes should be capped overnight;
- All rubbish, including food waste, must be removed from site at the end of each day;
- Night work should be avoided; and
- Any chemicals or machinery are to be stored in a secure compound.

4.2.4 Should a badger (dead or alive) or suspected badger sett be discovered on site at any time during construction, works must cease, and an ecologist immediately contacted for further advice.

5.0 Conclusion

- 5.1.1 The walkover of the site recorded several badger signs, including paths, hair, foraging evidence, and active and disused setts. Seven setts were recorded, with one being active, three unknown at the time of the walkover, and three disused or inactive.
- 5.1.2 The three unknown setts were subject to camera monitoring for a period of 21 nights to determine badger activity. No badgers were recorded at any of the setts, and the setts were therefore considered inactive at the time of the survey. Works within 30 m of these setts are not considered an impact to badgers, if commenced within three months of this report. After this time, an ecologist should return to site within three months before construction commencement to confirm continued inactivity of the setts. Should evidence of use be recorded, a licence from Natural England may be required.
- 5.1.3 Mitigation measures, including a WMS, ecological supervision, and additional precautionary construction methods have been recommended to avoid impacts to foraging and commuting badgers. A badger licence is not considered necessary for these works.
- 5.1.4 Proposed landscaping around the site boundaries maintains suitable foraging and commuting corridors for badgers, and impacts to their movements through the site are therefore not anticipated.

Appendix A

Badger survey results

REDACTED