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PARCEL R7 AND R13, PHASE 2B OF THE SOUTH WOKINGHAM STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT LOCATION

ECOLOGICAL MITIGATION STRATEGY

Final Document (Revision 3)

September 2026

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ECOSA, Ten Hogs House, Manor Farm Offices, Flexford Road, North Baddesley, Hampshire, SO52 9DF
Tel: 02380 261065 Email: info@ecosa.co.uk Web: www.ecosa.co.uk

Registered Office: 3-4 Eastwood Court, Romsey, Hampshire, SO51 8JJ Registered in England No: 6129868
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ECOSA Quality Assurance Record

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Author:	**Hugh Turner MSc MCIEEM** Principal Ecologist
Checked by:	**Lucy Covell MSci (Hons)** Senior Ecologist
Reviewed by:	**Simon Colenutt BSc (Hons) MCIEEM CEnv** Managing Principal Ecologist

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Ecological Survey & Assessment Limited (ECOSA) have been appointed by Miller Homes to produce an Ecological Mitigation Strategy in order to mitigate for identified adverse effects on Important Ecological Features as a result of the proposed redevelopment of Parcel R7 and R13, Phase 2b of the South Wokingham Strategic Development Location (SDL) (hereafter referred to as the site).

This document has been produced to support a Reserved Matters Application for Parcel R7-13, following the granting of consent for a hybrid application for Phase 2b of the South Wokingham SDL by Wokingham Borough Council on 19th July 2024 (Ref. 191068). The hybrid application was supported by an Environmental Impact Assessment (Nexus, 2019) which included a mitigation strategy to be applied to the Phase 2b of the SDL. The purpose of this document is to provide detailed information on how the mitigation measures set out in the Environmental Impact Assessment will be implemented within Parcel R7 and R13.

A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment was also submitted in support of the hybrid application (ECOSA, 2020). The baseline associated with this assessment was fixed at the hybrid application and therefore may not align with the current baseline of the site. This document provides details of the current ecological baseline and accounts for any amendments to the agreed mitigation strategy that may be required as a result of changes that have happened subsequently. It should therefore be noted that there may be discrepancies between the baseline described in this report and the baseline described in the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment which will be submitted in tandem with this application in order to discharge Condition 23 of the hybrid application for Phase 2b of the South Wokingham SDL. These discrepancies are highlighted and explained within this document.

Miller Homes are also signatories to the Future Homes Hub ‘Homes for Nature’ scheme. This document also sets out measures that will ensure that Miller Homes are meeting their commitments under this scheme.

1.2 The Site

The site is located on the border of the Wokingham Borough and Bracknell Forest administrative areas, between the two large towns of Wokingham and Bracknell, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SU 8320 6796.

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1.3 Aims and Scope of Mitigation Strategy

The aim of this document is to detail suitable mitigation measures to be implemented during the construction phase to ensure that the favourable conservation status of Important Ecological Features present on site is maintained.

This document will:

- Provide information regarding the most recent update to the site's ecological baseline and explain where there may be discrepancies between the current ecological baseline, and the ecological baseline fixed as part of the hybrid application for the SDL for the purposes of Biodiversity Net Gain;
- Set out the Important Ecological Features that have been identified as at risk of being impacted by works during the construction phase; and
- Set out detailed mitigation measures, including methods and timings and how measures should be monitored and maintained throughout the construction phase, to ensure that Important Ecological Features are not adversely impacted.

The primary purpose of this document is to support the Reserved Matters Application. It is anticipated that the measures set out in this document will be translated into other working documents, such as the Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) and associated working drawings in order to be implemented on site.

As the scope of this document is for the construction phase, it does not include information on long-term ecological management and maintenance that would take during the operational phase. These elements will be included within the associated Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP).

1.4 Site Proposals

The proposals are for 215 dwellings and associated infrastructure (green, blue and highway).

At the time of production of this report, it is anticipated that consent will be sought during December 2025 with works commencing on site during spring 2026.

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2.0 CURRENT ECOLOGICAL BASELINE

2.1 Introduction

This section summarises the most recent ecological survey work undertaken and the current ecological baseline at the site.

2.2 Updating Ecological Survey

The most recent ecological surveys were updating walkover surveys undertaken by Joe Hunt, Field Ecologist of ECOSA on 9th December 2025.

2.3 Changes to the Ecological Baseline

The habitats on site are currently as described in the outline ecological baseline, and show signs of continued management with the grassland habitats supporting a short sward. The habitats immediately adjacent to the site have been cleared as part of the SDL link road works carried out by Balfour Beatty and Wokingham Borough Council.

2.4 Important Ecological Features

The Important Ecological Features which may be affected by construction works are summarised in **Table 1**.

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Table 1: Summary of Important Ecological Features

Important Ecological Feature	Reason for Importance	How IEF May Be Adversely Affected During Construction
Hedgerows	Hedgerows are a Habitat of Principal Importance; the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 requires the local authority to have regard to the conservation of these habitats when making decisions.	Areas of hedgerow that are intended to be retained as part of the proposals could be accidentally damaged during construction, either as a result of direct impact by machinery, or due to root compaction by machinery driving over the ground nearby.
Bats	Bats are protected under Section 9(4) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This makes it an offence to injure or kill bats, damage or destroy their roosts or disturb them in a way that impairs their ability to survive, breed, raise their young or migrate.	Accidental damage to trees could result in killing and injury of bats within roosts, if present. Significant light spill on boundary hedgerows and trees could deter light-averse bats from using these habitats as foraging areas or commuting routes.
Badger	Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. This Act makes it an offence to kill or injure a badger, or to damage or interfere with a badger sett.	Badgers may be injured by becoming trapped in excavations left open overnight where there is no way for them to escape. If setts are present at the time of works, badger may also be killed and injured, and setts damaged or destroyed by heavy machinery digging into setts or driving over them and causing them to collapse. Badger setts can extend up to 30 metres underground from the entrance visible at ground level.
Breeding birds	With certain exceptions, all wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected by Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Therefore, it is an offence, to intentionally kill or injure any wild bird, damage or destroy their nests or destroy their eggs.	The removal of grassland and hedgerow vegetation could result in the killing or injury of birds, their nests and eggs if undertaken when birds are nesting. Significant noise or physical disturbance to these habitats could also result in birds abandoning active nests, killing their young or leaving eggs unviable.
Reptiles	Slow worm and common lizard are listed in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are afforded limited protection under Section 9 of this Act. This makes it an offence to intentionally kill or injure these species.	The removal of grassland and hedgerow vegetation could result in the killing or injury of reptiles.
Great crested newt	Great crested newt are protected under Section 9(4) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and under Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. These make it an offence to kill or injure great crested newt or to damage or destroy their habitat.	The removal of grassland and hedgerow vegetation could result in the killing or injury of great crested newt.

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European hedgehog and common toad	European hedgehog and common toad are a Species of Principal Importance; the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 requires the local authority to have regard to the conservation of these species when making decisions.	European hedgehog and common toad could be injured or killed during vegetation clearance works.European hedgehog and common toad may be harmed by becoming trapped in excavations left open overnight where there is no way for them to escape. Following construction, barriers such as walls and closed board fencing would prevent European hedgehog from accessing valuable garden habitat.
Invertebrates	Populations of pollinators across the country are under significant stress due to habitat loss and use of pesticides, and the loss of these populations will be detrimental to the ecosystem.	The loss of habitat as a result of the development will remove suitable feeding and breeding places for invertebrates, especially pollinators.

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3.0 MITIGATION STRATEGY TIMETABLE

A summary of the works and associated timings relating included in the ecological works for site preparation, are provided in **Table 2.** These timescales are based on the assumption that reptile translocation work will commence in spring 2025. These timings should be treated as provisional and will be subject to update as works progress, however, they provide an indication of the delivery of the strategy.

Table 2: Mitigation Strategy Timetable

	Task PLANNED to be undertaken during this month
	Task CAN be undertaken during this month
	Task CANNOT be undertaken during this month
	Task NOT REQUIRED to be undertaken during this month

Task	Responsibility	Timing Requirements/ Constraints	Paragraph Ref.	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Hedgerow Protection Fencing	Site Contractors	N/A	4.1												
Badger Walkover Survey	Ecologist	Within 6 months prior to commencement of works.	4.2												
Badger Sett Closure (if required)	Ecologist/ Site Contractors	Badger sett closures take at least 21 days and must be undertaken when cubs are unlikely to be present underground.	4.2												
Nesting Bird Check	Ecologist	Immediately prior to vegetation removal.	4.3												
Supervised Destructive Search	Ecologist/ Site Contractors	Prior to commencement construction works.	4.4												
Sensitive Lighting	Site Contractors	N/A	4.5												
Installation of Bat and Bird Boxes	Site Contractors	N/A	4.6												
Compliance checks	Ecologist	Once a month throughout the construction period	5.1												

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4.0 MITIGATION STRATEGY

4.1 Hedgerow and Tree Protection Fencing

Relevant Important Ecological Features: Hedgerows, Breeding Birds

Wherever hedgerows are proposed to be retained they, and their Root Protection Zones, should be protected from accidental damage through the installation of Heras-type fencing. Accidental damage can occur as a result of direct impacts by machinery and also through root compaction as a result of tracking of heavy machinery or deposition of large amounts of spoil, for example. Heras-type fencing will also maintain a 15-metre protective buffer between construction and the ancient woodland on site.

4.2 Badger Walkover Survey

Relevant Important Ecological Features: Badger

Because badger is a highly mobile species, a walkover of the site will be undertaken within six months prior to the start of the construction phase to determine whether badger have colonised the site. Ideally the walkover will be undertaken no later than three months prior to the start of the construction phase, so that if a badger sett is identified, the necessary steps can be taken without impacting the proposed programme of works.

If badger setts are encountered, a report will be produced outlining the mitigation measures required; these cannot be specified here as they would depend on the nature and location of the sett. However, the principals of the mitigation approach have been set out below:

- <u>Priority 1: Avoid impacts to the sett</u>
  Establish a suitable buffer around the sett; this may be between 10 and 30 metres depending on the nature of the works in the area and the weight of the machinery that needs to be used.

- <u>Priority 2: If impacts on the sett cannot be avoided, close the sett</u>
  If it is not feasible to incorporate the necessary buffer, the sett should be closed. The sett closure will involve the installation of one-way gates to exclude badgers from the sett. Exclusion usually takes 21 days and must be undertaken between 1st July and 30th November. Outside of this window badger cubs may be underground and would be separated from their mothers and starve if adults are excluded from the setts. Due to badger's legal protection, and the fact that it would otherwise be a legal offence to interfere with the badger sett, a licence will need to be granted from Natural England to close the sett. The exact nature of the mitigation works will depend on the nature of the sett identified.

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4.3 Nesting Bird Check

Relevant Important Ecological Features: Breeding Birds

Vegetation clearance will be undertaken outside the breeding bird season of March to August, inclusive, or if not possible, an ecologist will be present immediately prior to clearance to check vegetation. Any active nests discovered during checks will be left with an undisturbed buffer specified by the supervising ecologist until nesting ends.

4.4 Supervised Destructive Search

Relevant Important Ecological Features: Reptiles, Great Crested Newt, European Hedgehog, Common Toad

The destructive search will comprise methodical cutting of suitable habitat to 22 centimetres high, followed by stripping of the top layer of vegetation using an excavator with a toothed bucket. All works will be supervised by a suitably qualified ecologist.

Any reptiles encountered as part of the destructive search will be captured by the ecologist and relocated to the previously agreed receptor area. Once the destructive search has been completed, and all suitable reptile habitat has been removed from the site, the development work will be able to proceed.

In addition to reptiles, a watching brief will be kept for European hedgehog and common toad, and any individuals found will be removed or allowed to disperse from the construction zone into suitable retained habitat in the surrounding area.

Before the destructive search starts, the contractors will be given a toolbox talk by a suitably qualified ecologist, outlining the potential for great crested newt to be present on site and the precautionary methodology of the destructive search. Should great crested newt be encountered, works will stop and Natural England will be contacted to determine a suitable strategy.

4.5 Sensitive Lighting

Relevant Important Ecological Features: Bats, Badger, European Hedgehog, Breeding Birds

Lighting must be installed in accordance with the agreed lighting strategy, which has been designed to mitigate for the impacts of light spill on Important Ecological Features.

4.6 Installation of Bird Boxes

Relevant Important Ecological Features: Breeding Birds

One integral nest box will be installed in each plot within the site. The box type will comply with British Standard BS 42021:2022, for example Manthorpe Swift Bricks

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(**Figure 1**) or NHBS Swift Blocks (small) (**Figure 2**). Whatever brand of boxes are used, they will have entrance holes of 30 millimetres x 65 millimetres minimum to enable swift to enter, and the entrance holes will be located close to the base of the box to avoid birds becoming trapped within them.

Figure 1: Manthorpe Swift Brick

Figure 2: NHBS Swift Block (small)

The boxes will be installed at gable ends close to the roof verge or inserted tightly beneath eaves into walls which back onto cold voids where the installation will not result in cold bridging. For plots with hipped roofs, integral nest boxes will be installed as high as possible below soffit level, on northern or western elevations and ideally next to stairwells or bathrooms to reduce the possibility of noise from chicks.

Bird box locations are shown on **Map 1**.

4.7 Installation of Bat Boxes

Relevant Important Ecological Features: Bats

Integral bat boxes, such as Bat Ridge Roost GBAT-R-TR (**Figure 3**) will be installed in all plots within the site that provide suitable conditions. A total of 43 boxes will be installed. Suitable conditions include locations away from artificial light sources, sheltered from strong winds, exposed to the sun for part of the day and located adjacent to suitable foraging and commuting habitats i.e. hedgerows and trees. Boxes will be installed at least four metres above the ground on northern or western elevations and away from windows that would expose them directly to artificial light spill.

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Figure 3: Bat Ridge Roost GBAT-R-TR

Bat box locations are shown on **Map 1**.

4.8 Installation of Butterfly and Bee Bank

Relevant Important Ecological Features: Invertebrates

A butterfly and bee bank will be created along the southern edge of the newly installed sustainable urban drainage system. The bee bank will be created in an area away from newly planted shrubs to avoid overshading.

4.9 Installation of Hedgehog 'Highways'

Relevant Important Ecological Features: European Hedgehog

Hedgehog 'Highways' will be created through the site by providing small gaps in fences and other impermeable boundary features, which would otherwise prevent hedgehog access.

The gaps will be 130 millimetres by 130 millimetres and installed at the base of impermeable boundary features to allow hedgehog to pass through. Gaps should be positioned away from buildings where possible and in locations where planting and shrubs provide shelter.

The GPS locations of gaps should be recorded by site contractors when installed and this information should be provided to the ecologist, so that their correct installation can be confirmed during compliance checks (Paragraph 5.1).

Hedgehog highway locations are shown in **Map 2**.

4.10 Site Housekeeping

Relevant Important Ecological Features: Badger, European hedgehog, reptiles, great crested newt, and common toad

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Hazards such as open excavations, pits, ditches, ponds, and drains should be covered or fitted with ramps to allow for animals to escape and checked regularly throughout construction.

The exclusion fencing installed around the construction area should be maintained in good condition throughout the construction period in order to prevent animals from recolonising the site after clearance.

Materials on site should be stored on pallets where practical to prevent colonisation and the locations of spoil piles should be carefully considered, to prevent accidental damage to fencing and to avoid creating suitable habitat for wildlife that could be recolonised during the construction period.

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5.0 COMPLIANCE

5.1 Compliance Checks

An Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) will be present for the destructive search to ensure compliance with the destructive search methodology.

Following site clearance and on commencement of construction works, the construction Site Manager will arrange for regular ad hoc checks throughout the construction period to ensure compliance with the measures set out within this document. In addition, an ECoW will attend site on a monthly basis to ensure compliance. **Table 3** shows what will be recorded as part of any future compliance check.

Table 3: Compliance check record

Date:		
ECoW in Attendance:		
Measure to Check	**Compliance notes/ photos**	**Further Actions Required**
Hedgerow and tree protection fencing is correctly positioned and undamaged		
Exclusion zones around badger setts or active bird nests maintained (if required)		
Lighting has been installed in accordance with agreed specifications		
Bat boxes correctly installed		
Bird boxes correctly installed		
Hedgehog highway gaps correctly installed		
Butterfly and bee bank installed correctly		
Construction site housekeeping suitably maintained to avoid recolonisation of the site by wildlife.		

5.2 Compliance Reports

On completion of the works a formal compliance report will be produced, summarising the findings of the compliance checks undertaken throughout the construction period and confirming that the measures set out within this document have been complied with.

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6.0 REFERENCES

CIEEM, 2017. *Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing.* 2nd ed. Winchester: Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management.

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Nexus, 2019. *Land at Phase 2 of the South Wokingham Strategic Development Location Porject Site - Environmental Statement (Chapter 14),* Reading: Nexus.

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Map 1 Bat and Bird Box Locations

PARCEL R7 AND R13, SOUTH WOKINGHAM

ECOLOGICAL MITIGATION STRATEGY

Map 1 - Bat and Bird Box Plan

Client:	Miller Homes
Date:	December 2025
Status:	Draft

KEY

- Site Boundary
- Integrated Swift Box
- Integrated Bat Box

Habitat features not to scale.

N

Basemap reproduced from AAP Architecture 'Proposed Planning Layout', Drawing No. P1905.R07.R13.01 dated October 2025.

Prepared by: HT	Date: 10/12/2025
Last amended by: HT	Date:

ECOSA
Ecological Survey & Assessment
A Trinity Consultants Company
ECOSA Ltd., Ten Hogs House, Manor Farm Offices,
Flexford Road, North Baddesley, Hampshire SO52 9DF
Telephone: 02380 261065 Email: info@ecosa.co.uk
Web: www.ecosa.co.uk

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Map 2 Hedgehog Highway Locations

PARCEL R7 AND R13, SOUTH WOKINGHAM

ECOLOGICAL MITIGATION STRATEGY

Map 2 - Hedgehog Highway Plan

Client:	Miller Homes
Date:	May 2026
Status:	Draft

KEY

- Site Boundary
- Hedgehog Highway

Habitat features not to scale.

N

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ECOSA
Ecological Survey & Assessment
A Trinity Consultants Company
ECOSA Ltd., Ten Hogs House, Manor Farm Offices,
Flexford Road, North Baddesley, Hampshire SO52 9DF
Telephone: 02380 261065 Email: info@ecosa.co.uk
Web: www.ecosa.co.uk

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