



# Landscape & Ecological Management Plan

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|----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Report</b>        | Landscape & Ecological Management Plan (Condition 18)       |
| <b>Site Name</b>     | District Centre Nursery and Pre-school, Arborfield, RG2 9GB |
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| <b>Status</b>        | <i><b>Final</b></i>                                         |

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Ecosupport Ltd were commissioned by Crest Nicholson Operations Ltd to produce a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) for the development of District Centre Nursery and Pre-school, Arborfield, RG2 9GB, within the wider Arborfield Garrison development site. This was requested to satisfy the discharge of Condition 18 of the planning approval for the site with ref O/2014/2280, as well as to provide an updated Ecological Assessment.

A series of reports / surveys have been carried out in association with this phase of the development, and the wider Arborfield Garrison development site. As part of this work, the following relevant reports were produced:

- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison – BAP;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison – Bat Mitigation Strategy;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison – Bat Survey Report;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison EIA. Bat Roost Locations;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison EIA. Non Statutory Designated Sites;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison EIA. Protected Species Records (Within 2km) – Excluding Bats;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison EIA. Protected Species Records (Within 5km) – Bats Only;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison EIA. Reptile Habitat Survey Locations and Results Summary;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison EIA. Statutory Designated Sites;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison EIA. Waterbodies In The Vicinity Of The Arborfield Garrison Site;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison – Great Crested Newt Survey Report;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison – Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison – Hedgerow Survey Report and Strategy;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison – Non-Native Invasive Species Strategy;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison – Reptile Mitigation Strategy;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison – SANG Habitat Creation and Ecological Management Plan;
- AECOM (2015). Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location. Environmental Statement – Addendum. Reference AGLC/HPA/DOC/5 Addendum B;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location. Environmental Statement – Additional Information. Reference AGLC/HPA/DOC/5;
- AECOM (n.d.). Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location. Environmental Statement – Additional Information;
- AECOM (n.d.). Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location. Environmental Statement Volume 2 Main Report;
- Simon Jones Associates Ltd (2015). Arboricultural Implications Report ADDENDUM. Proposed re-development at Arborfield Garrison, Reading, Berkshire;
- Simon Jones Associates Ltd (2015). Arboricultural Implications Report ADDENDUM #2. Proposed re-development at Arborfield Garrison, Reading, Berkshire; and

- Simon Jones Associates Ltd (2014). Tree Protection Plan. Arborfield Barracks, Reading, Berkshire. Drawing No: SJA TPP 13279-01a-01.

In March 2026, Ecosupport Ltd undertook an updated walkover surveys and ecological surveys of which, in combination with the aforementioned reports, forms the basis of this report. This report addresses the necessary mitigation and compensation for protected species present on site and also includes a series of management prescriptions to enhance the site for biodiversity in perpetuity as well as the targeted biodiversity enhancements to be included within the site.

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### 1.1 Brief

Ecosupport Ltd were commissioned by Crest Nicholson Operations Ltd to produce a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) for a site known as 'District Centre Nursery and Pre-school, Arborfield, RG2 9GB'. The aim of this report is to provide a prescription of the management of habitats and ecological enhancement measures for a period of 10 years, and detail mitigation, compensation, and enhancement measures for protected species, and use them to inform a site-wide Landscape Ecological Management Plan, in line with the approved Arborfield Garrison – BAP. This will ensure the creation and management of habitats is suitable and beneficial to biodiversity within the site and all features of ecological importance are protected. This report will meet the requirements of Condition 18 of the planning approval for the site with ref O/2014/2280. The condition states:

#### Condition 18 – Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP)

*"The reserved matters for any phase of the development shall include a detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan. Each detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plan shall be in accordance with the mitigation, contingency and enhancement measures contained within table 13.23 of the submitted Environmental Statement Reference AGLC/HPA/DOC/5 (AECOM, October 2014) and the submitted Arborfield Garrison – BAP (AECOM, October 2014). The detailed Landscape and Ecological Management Plans shall include all the mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures contained within table 13.23 of the submitted Environmental Statement Reference AGLC/HPA/DOC/5 (AECOM, October 2014) and shall be implemented in accordance with the approved plan unless otherwise approved in writing by the local planning authority."*

*Reason: In order to ensure that the approved landscaping is satisfactorily maintained in accordance with NPPF, Wokingham Borough Core Strategy policies CP1, CP3 and CP7 and Managing Development Delivery Local Plan Policies CC03 and TB21 and the Arborfield Strategic Development Location Supplementary Planning Document (2011)."*

This document has therefore been produced to enable the above conditions to be discharged.

### 1.2 Aim

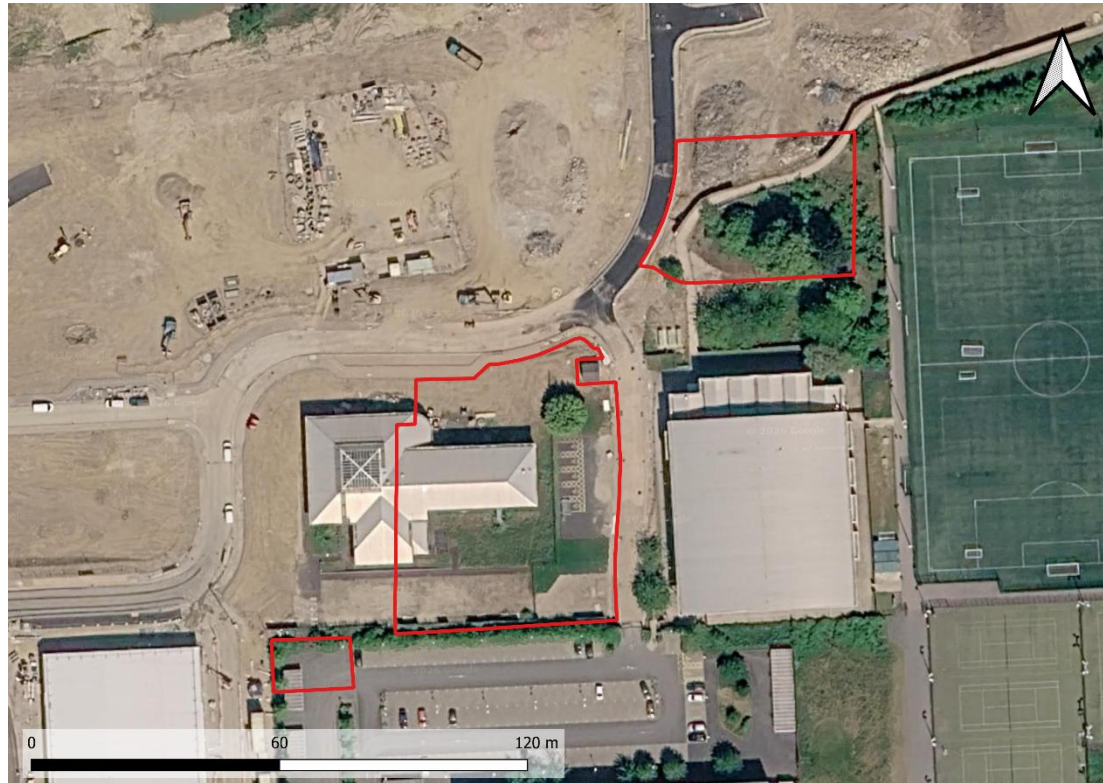
The aim of this report is to bring together all relevant sections of the ecological reports, in cooperation with updated surveys, associated with the above application to devise a site wide Landscape and Ecological Management Plan. This will ensure all features of ecological value and all legally protected species are protected, their presence on site retained in perpetuity and targeted and proportionate recommendations for enhancements made.

### 1.3 Site Description

The site comprises three parcels of land at 'District Centre Nursery and Pre-school, Arborfield', located north and west of Arborfield Green Leisure Centre, Sheerlands Road, Reading, RG2 9GB (centred on OS grid reference SU 76994 65105). The site is bound by the District Centre Reserved Matters (approved Planning Reference: 230872) development to the north and west, Arborfield Green Leisure Centre and associated outdoor courts to the east, and Bohunt School to the south. The immediate

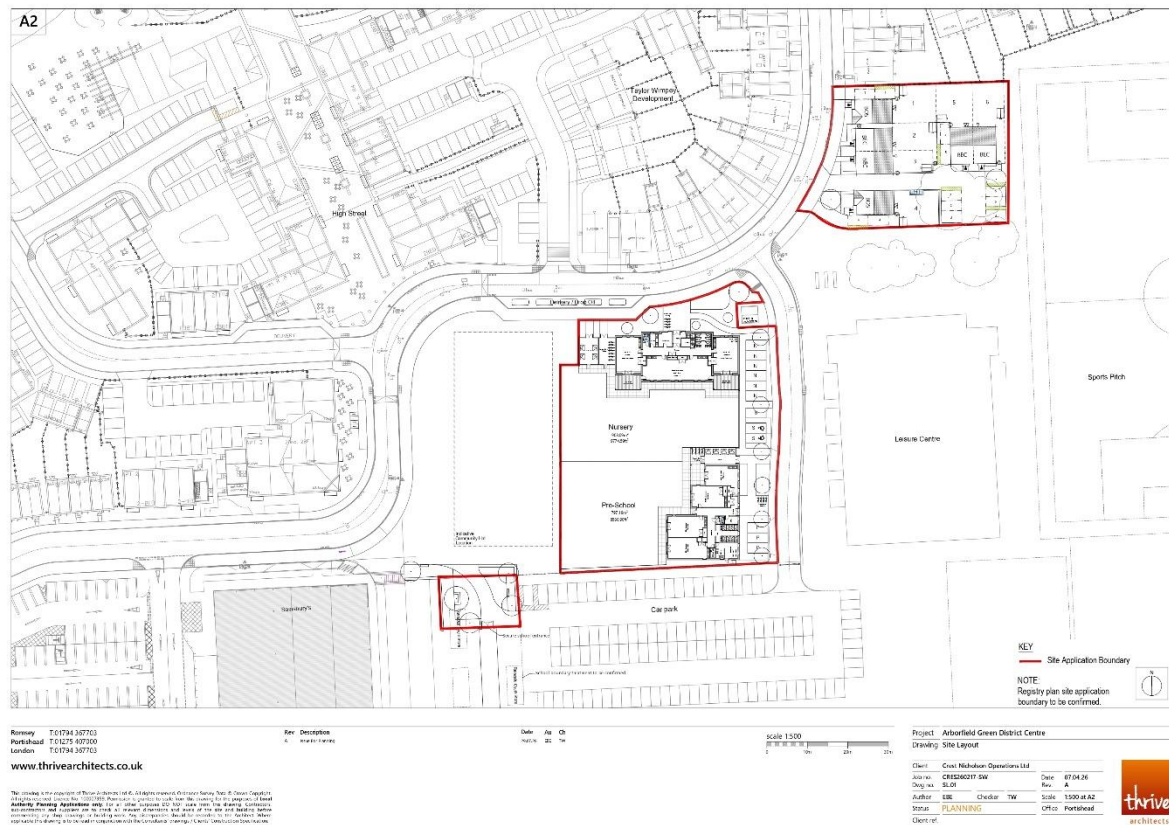
surrounding environment is urban, comprising a mix of residential housing, commercial buildings, a school, and areas of greenspace.

**Figure 1.** Redline and blueline boundary of the site (Google Satellite, 2026).



#### 1.4 Development Proposals

Application for Approval of Reserved Matters pursuant to Outline planning consent (O/2014/2280) for the provision of a nursery, pre-school and six residential dwellings, together with associated access, car and cycle parking, landscaping and infrastructure (Appearance, Landscaping, Layout, Access and Scale to be considered) (**Fig 2**).

**Figure 2.** Proposed site plan (Thrive Architects, 2026. Job No: CRES260217-SW. Rev: A).

## 2.0 RELEVANT LEGISLATION & POLICY

### 2.1 Legislation

#### 2.1.1 *The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019*

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 transposes the EU Habitats Directive (Council Directive 92/43/EEC) into UK domestic law. It provides protection for sites and species deemed to be of conservation importance across Europe. It is an offence to deliberately capture, kill or injure species listed in Schedule 2 or to damage or destroy their breeding sites or shelter. It is also illegal to deliberately disturb these species in such a way that is likely to significantly impact on the local distribution or abundance or affect their ability to survive, breed and rear or nurture their young.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (EU Exit) makes changes to the three existing instruments which transpose the Habitats and Wild Birds Directives so that they continue to work (are operable) upon the UK's exit from the European Union (EU). These include The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and The Conservation of Offshore Marine Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This instrument also amends section 27 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to ensure existing protections continue. The intention is to ensure habitat and species protection and standards as set out under the Nature Directives are implemented in the same way or an equivalent way when the UK exits the EU.

In order for activities that would be likely to result in a breach of species protection under the regulations to legally take place, a European Protected Species (EPS) licence must first be obtained from Natural England.

#### 2.1.2 *The Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended)*

This is the primary piece of legislation by which biodiversity is protected within the UK. Protected fauna and flora are listed under Schedules 1, 5 and 8 of the Act. They include all species of bats, making it an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb any bat whilst it is occupying a roost or to intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost. Similarly, this Act makes it an offence to kill or injure any species of British reptiles and also makes it an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or to take, damage or destroy their eggs and nests (whilst in use or being built).

The Wildlife & Countryside Act (1981) states that it is an offence to 'plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild' any plant listed in Schedule 9 part II of the Act. This list over 30 plants including Japanese Knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Giant Hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) and Parrot's Feather (*Myriophyllum aquaticum*).

#### 2.1.3 *The Countryside and Rights of Way Act (2000)*

This Act strengthens the Wildlife & Countryside Act by the addition of "reckless" offences in certain circumstances, such as where there is the likelihood of protected species being present. The Act places a duty on Government Ministers and Departments to conserve biological diversity and provides police with stronger powers relating to wildlife crimes.

#### 2.1.4 Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006)

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 requires that public bodies have due regard to the conservation of biodiversity. This means that Planning authorities must consider biodiversity when planning or undertaking activities. Section 41 of the Act lists species found in England which were identified as requiring action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and which continue to be regarded as conservation priorities under the *UK Post – 2010 Biodiversity Framework*.

#### 2.1.5 Protection of Badgers Act

The Protection of Badgers Act (1992) relates to the welfare of Badgers (*Meles meles*) as opposed to nature conservation considerations. The Act prevents:

- The wilful killing, injury, ill treatment or taking of Badgers and / or
- Interference with a Badger sett
- Damaging or destroying all or part of a sett
- Causing a dog to enter a set and
- Disturbing a Badger while it is occupying a sett

Provisions are included within the Act to allow for the lawful licensing of certain activities that would otherwise constitute an offence under the Act.

#### 2.1.6 The Environment Act (2021)

The Environment Act 2021 is the UK's new legislation for environmental protection in the UK, which includes protection of water quality, clean air, and biodiversity among other key protections. This Act provides the government power to set targets to reach long-term aims relating to the environment, which will be periodically reviewed and updated. This legislation also establishes a new environmental watchdog organisation, the Office for Environmental Protection (OEP), which will hold the government accountable on environmental issues.

Part 6 of The Environment Act relates to nature and biodiversity. This section makes provision for biodiversity net gain to be a condition of planning permission in England and a requirement for nationally significant infrastructure projects. Biodiversity net gain will require maintenance for a period of at least 30 years after the completion of enhancement works to be achieved.

The legislation also includes updates to existing environmental legislation, such as the NERC Act 2006, to strengthen biodiversity enhancement rather than just conservation and includes a requirement for local, or relevant, authorities to publish biodiversity reports. Further, The Environment Act places a requirement on responsible authorities to prepare local nature recovery strategies, which will outline nature conservation sites and priorities and opportunities for recovering or enhancing biodiversity within the local area. Within England, the legislation also provides Natural England with the power to publish 'species conservation strategies' and 'protected site strategies' to identify activities that may affect a species or site's status and outline their opinions on measures that would be appropriate to avoid, mitigate or compensate any adverse impacts.

## 2.2 Policy

### 2.2.1 National

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

Chapter 15 'Conserving and enhancing the natural environment' states that planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by protecting and enhancing sites of biodiversity, the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services, minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity including by incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs.

The NPPF states that plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites and land should be allocated with the least environmental or amenity value and take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale.

To protect and enhance biodiversity, plans should identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity, wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation and promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

The NPPF states determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- b) development on land within or outside a SSSI, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of SSSIs;
- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists;

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Potential SPAs and possible SACs, listed or proposed Ramsar sites and sites required as compensatory measures for the previous should be given the same protection as habitats sites.

#### *2.2.2 Local Planning Policy – Wokingham Borough Local Development Framework (2010)*

Policy 'CP7 – Biodiversity' states that sites designated as of importance for nature conservation at an international or national level will be conserved and enhanced and inappropriate development will be resisted. The degree of protection given will be appropriate to the status of the site in terms of its international or national importance.

Development which may compromise the implementation of the national, regional, county and local biodiversity action plans, harm designated sites, habitats, species of principle importance, veteran trees or features of the landscape that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna whether directly or indirectly will be only permitted if it has been clearly demonstrated that the need for the proposal outweighs the need to safeguard the conservation importance, that no alternative site is available and mitigation and compensation measures can be put in place to prevent damaging impacts.

The Local Plan recognises that the need to protect European sites from likely significant effects could mean that housing targets are not achievable. The Habitats Regulations Assessment indicates that the development envisaged through the Core Strategy can be delivered without likely significant harm upon any European sites (either on their own or in-combination with other plans or projects). However, the Council will assess each plan or project to confirm that it can be delivered without likely significant harm (either on their own or in-combination with other plans or projects). The need for a development that affects a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) will be deemed to outweigh the need to safeguard the nature conservation interest where the development has clear social or economic benefits of national importance. The need for a development that affects Local Wildlife Sites, habitats or, species of principal importance in England for nature conservation, ancient woodland, veteran trees or features of the landscape that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna will be deemed to outweigh the need to safeguard the nature conservation interest where the development has clear social or economic benefits of regional or national importance. Similarly Policy 'CP8 - Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area' states that development which alone, or in combination, is likely to have a significant effects on the Thames Basin Heaths Special Protection Area will be required to demonstrate that adequate measures to avoid and mitigate any potential adverse effects are delivered.

### 3.0 BASELINE DATA

AECOM undertook a series of ecological surveys, summarized into several reports, with the relevant reports and maps comprising:

- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison – BAP;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison – Bat Mitigation Strategy;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison – Bat Survey Report;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison EIA. Bat Roost Locations;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison EIA. Non Statutory Designated Sites;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison EIA. Protected Species Records (Within 2km) – Excluding Bats;
- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison EIA. Protected Species Records (Within 5km) – Bats Only;
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- AECOM (2014). Arborfield Garrison – Habitat Regulations Assessment Screening Report;
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- AECOM (n.d.). Arborfield Garrison Strategic Development Location. Environmental Statement – Additional Information;
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- Simon Jones Associates Ltd (2015). Arboricultural Implications Report ADDENDUM. Proposed re-development at Arborfield Garrison, Reading, Berkshire;
- Simon Jones Associates Ltd (2015). Arboricultural Implications Report ADDENDUM #2. Proposed re-development at Arborfield Garrison, Reading, Berkshire; and
- Simon Jones Associates Ltd (2014). Tree Protection Plan. Arborfield Barracks, Reading, Berkshire. Drawing No: SJA TPP 13279-01a-01.

In March 2026, Ecosupport Ltd undertook an updated walkover survey and data request to Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre, in combination with the aforementioned reports, forms the basis of this report. The methodology for updated survey work can be found in **Appendix A** of this report.

### 3.1 Designated Sites

A data request was submitted to the Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre to ascertain any records held of nature conservation designations and protected species within the wider area (2km) which could be impacted upon as a result of the proposed plans.

The data search covered:

- Statutory designated sites;
- Non-statutory designations such as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS); and
- Records of protected and notable species.

#### 3.1.1 Statutory Designated Sites

Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre (TVERC) identified two statutory designated sites within a 2km search radius of the site (**Fig 3**). This is Longmoor Bog Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and Site of Special Scientific Interest, located approximately 0.8km east of the site at its closest point.

#### 3.1.2 Non-Statutory Designated Sites

TVERC identified twelve non-statutory designated sites from within 2km of the site (**Fig 3**), a summary of these are shown within **Table 1**, below. Furthermore, nine S41 Priority Habitats were also identified, comprising eutrophic standing waters, lowland dry acid grassland, lowland fens, lowland heathland, lowland mixed deciduous woodland, rivers, traditional orchards, wet woodland, and wood-pasture and parkland.

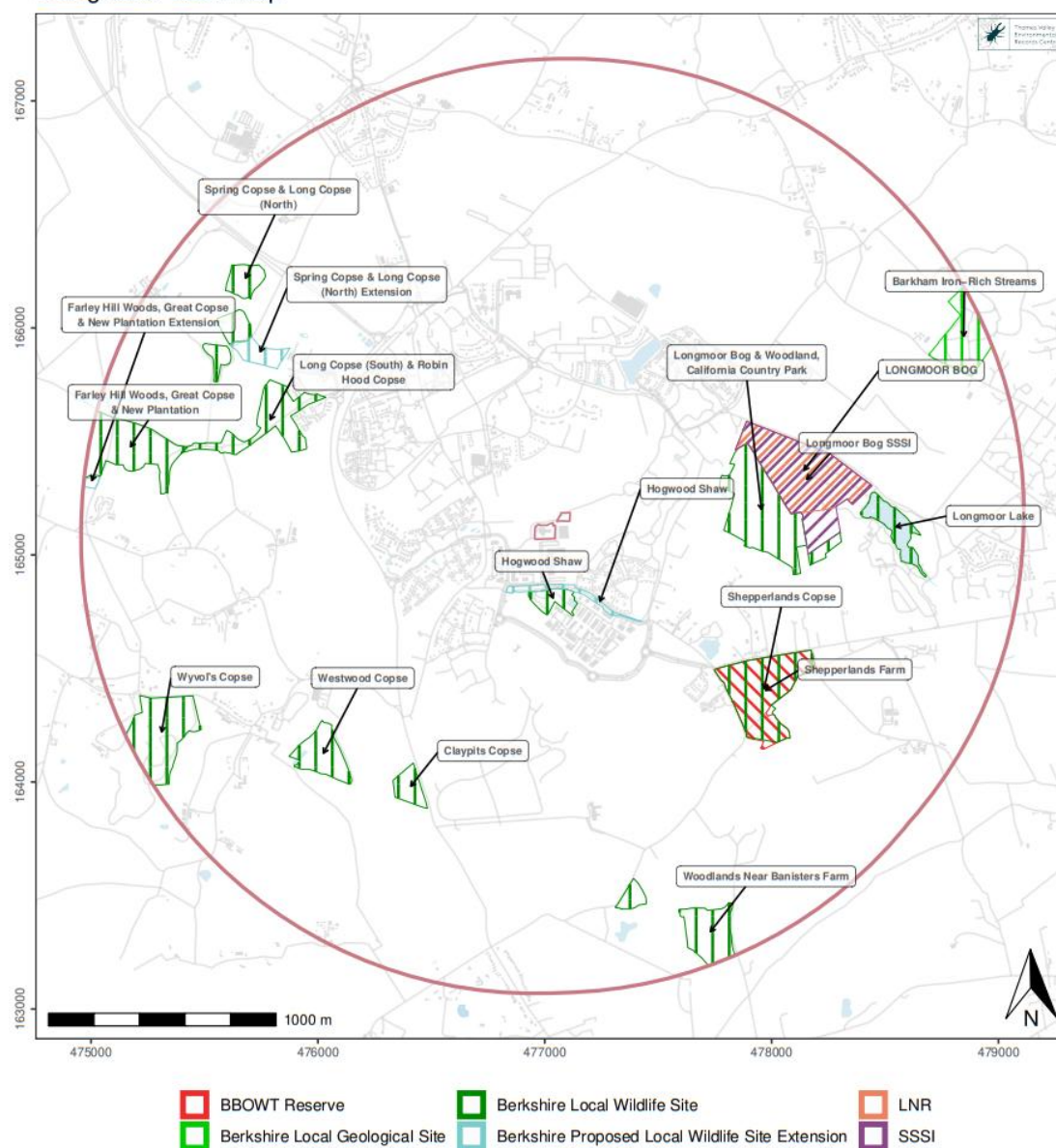
**Table 1.** Summary of non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site as provided by TVERC and shown in **Fig 3**.

| Site Code | Name                                           | Designation   | Area (ha)     | Distance from Site |
|-----------|------------------------------------------------|---------------|---------------|--------------------|
| 76M01     | Farley Hill Woods, Great Copse, New Plantation | Berkshire LWS | 34.46         | 1.61km W           |
| SU76M03   | Long Copse (South) And Robin Hood Copse        | Berkshire LWS | 5.61          | 1.83km W           |
| SU76M04   | Wyvol's Copse                                  | Berkshire LWS | 14.59         | 1.66km SW          |
| SU76M06   | Long Copse (North) And Spring Copse            | Berkshire LWS | 4.46          | 1.65km NW          |
| SU76R02   | Woodlands Near Banisters Farm                  | Berkshire LWS | 4.81 and 0.99 | 1.72km S           |
| 76R04     | Claypits Copse                                 | Berkshire LWS | 1.61          | 1.13km SW          |
| 76S02     | Westwood Copse                                 | Berkshire LWS | 3.71          | 1.21km SW          |
| SU76S03   | Hogwood Shaw                                   | Berkshire LWS | 1.59          | 0.19km S           |
| 76S05     | Shepperlands Copse                             | Berkshire LWS | 9.42          | 0.91km SE          |

| Site Code | Name                                               | Designation   | Area (ha) | Distance from Site |
|-----------|----------------------------------------------------|---------------|-----------|--------------------|
| 76X02     | Longmoor Woodland And Bog, California Country Park | Berkshire LWS | 12.34     | 0.71km E           |
| SU76X06   | Longmoor Lake                                      | Berkshire LWS | 3.05      | 1.42km E           |
| SheF      | Shepperlands Farm                                  | BBOWT Reserve | 9.4       | 0.92km SE          |

**Figure 3.** Statutory and non-statutory designated sites located within 2km of the site as provided by TVERC.

### TVERC/25/0963 Arborfield Green Leisure Centre Designated Sites Map



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### 3.2 Habitats

An initial ecology appraisal survey was undertaken in 2014 by AECOM. The field survey work which forms the basis of the findings of this report was carried out by Darla Brown BSc (Hons) ACIEEM and Laura Chidlow MSi on the 19<sup>th</sup> March 2026. The habitats on site were considered to be broadly similar to those identified by AECOM, with the only change noted on site comprising of slight disturbance from adjacent approved applications with overlapping boundaries. The habitats identified within the site are outlined below using classification terminology as described within Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd, 2023).

- Modified grassland (g4) (**Fig 4a – 4b**);
- Hawthorn scrub (h3f) (**Fig 4c**);
- Bramble scrub (h3d) (**Fig 4c – 4d**);
- Mixed scrub (h3h) – secondary habitat code 32: scattered trees;
- Sparsely vegetated urban land (u1f) – secondary habitat code 510: bare ground (**Fig 4f**);
- Artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface (u1c) (**Fig 4e, Fig 4g – 4h**);
- Developed sand, sealed surface (u1b) (**Fig 4e, Fig 4h**); and
- Buildings (u1b5) (**Fig 4f**).

Within the north-eastern parcel, modified grassland (g4), hawthorn scrub (h3f), bramble scrub (h3d), mixed scrub (h3h), and several scattered trees were identified. Species identified within the grassland ground flora comprised Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), Cleaver (*Galium aparine*), Herb-robert (*Geranium robertianum*), Bristly Oxtongue (*Helminthotheca echioides*), Purple Deadnettle (*Lamium purpureum*), Dove's-foot Cranesbill (*Geranium molle*), Common Ivy (*Hedera helix*), Hairy Bittercress (*Cardamine hirsuta*), Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), Cutleaf Cranesbill (*Geranium dissectum*), Ribwort Plantain (*Plantago lanceolata*), Creeping Cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*), Dandelion (*Taraxacum agg.*), White Clover (*Trifolium repens*), Cow Parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), Yarrow (*Achillea millefolium*), Perennial Rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), Ragwort (*Senecio jacobaea*), Creeping Buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*), and Germander Speedwell (*Veronica chamaedrys*). Furthermore, within the north-eastern parcel, an area of Bramble scrub was present centrally beneath the mature Willow (*Salix sp.*) tree, with Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) scrub present to the north-east comprising several small whips with a DBH of under 7.5cm, and mixed scrub forming the northern aspect of this parcel comprising Oak (*Quercus robur*), Hawthorn, Scot's Pine (*Pinus sylvestris*), Bramble, Laurel (*Prunus sp.*), and Willow. Within the mixed scrub, several small Oak trees were identified (secondary habitat code 32). Areas of artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface (u1c) and developed land, sealed surface (u1b) were also present at the north and west of this parcel.

Within the south-western parcel, sparsely vegetated land (u1f), modified grassland (g4), artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface (u1c), developed land, sealed surface (u1b), and a building (u1b5) was present. The sparsely vegetated land comprised mostly bare ground (secondary habitat code 510) with scattered species comprising Common Daisy (*Bellis perennis*), Ribwort Plantain, Common Sowthistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*), Bristly Oxtongue, Perennial Rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), Creeping Cinquefoil, Cutleaf Cranesbill, White Clover,

Ragwort, Spear Thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), Musky Storks-bill (*Erodium moschatum*), Creeping Thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), Teasel (*Dipsacus fullonum*), Bramble, Broadleaved Dock, and Cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*). Furthermore, at the south of this parcel, modified grassland was present comprising a similar species composition as listed above within the sparsely vegetated land habitat. The modified grassland was noted to be more grass dominant with additional species, albeit not species-rich. Additional species identified comprise Common Vetch (*Vicia sativa*), Oxeye Daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), Germander Speedwell, Hairy Bittercress, Common Sowthistle, and Black Medick (*Medicago lupulina*).

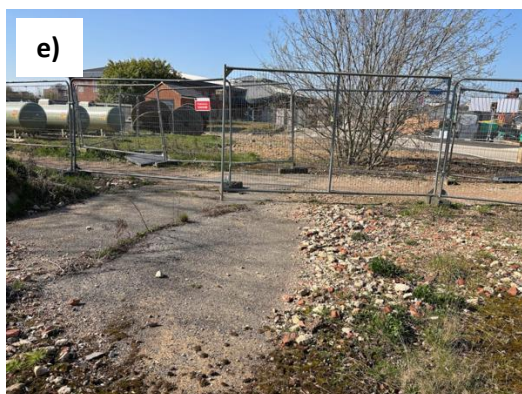
Furthermore, artificial unsealed; unvegetated surface in the form of gravel and developed land (hardstanding) was present surrounding the building on site.

No non-native invasive species were identified within the site. Notwithstanding this, AECOM (2014) identified the presence of Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*), Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*), and Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) within the wider site, albeit not within close proximity. As such, measures will be implemented to prevent the risk of establishment on site.

Images of all habitats present can be found below in **Figure 4**.

**Figure 4.** Habitats present identified during the walkover at District Centre Nursery and Pre-school, Arborfield, in March 2026 (taken March, 2026).





### 3.3 Bats

#### 3.3.1 Pre-existing Information

The data request from TVERC returned the following record within 2km of the site boundary (Table 2).

**Table 2.** List of bat records within 2km of the site provided by TVERC.

| Species Name            | Taxon Name                       | No of records | Further Information                                                    |
|-------------------------|----------------------------------|---------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| Bat Species             | <i>Chiroptera</i> spp.           | 45            | Records from bat detectors, droppings, field records, and roost counts |
| Pipistrelle Bat Species | <i>Pipistrellus</i> spp.         | 72            | Records from bat detectors, droppings, field records, and roost counts |
| Common Pipistrelle      | <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> | 303           | Records from bat detectors, droppings, field records, and roost counts |
| Soprano Pipistrelle     | <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>     | 215           | Records from bat detectors, field records, and roost counts            |
| Nathusius' Pipistrelle  | <i>Pipistrellus nathusii</i>     | 20            | Records from aural bat detectors                                       |
| Serotine                | <i>Eptesicus serotinus</i>       | 64            | Records from bat detectors, droppings, field records, and              |

|                           |                                 |     |                                                                                          |
|---------------------------|---------------------------------|-----|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                           |                                 |     | roost counts                                                                             |
| Noctule Bat               | <i>Nyctalus noctula</i>         | 151 | Records from aural bat detectors and roost checks                                        |
| Leisler's Bat             | <i>Nyctalus leisleri</i>        | 27  | Records from aural bat detectors                                                         |
| <i>Myotis</i> Bat Species | <i>Myotis</i> spp.              | 86  | Records from aural bat detectors and bat droppings                                       |
| Daubenton's Bat           | <i>Myotis daubentonii</i>       | 8   | Records from aural bat detectors                                                         |
| Natterer's Bat            | <i>Myotis nattereri</i>         | 11  | Records from aural bat detectors, injured bats and roost checks                          |
| Long-eared Bat Species    | <i>Plecotus</i> spp.            | 24  | Records from aural bat detectors, droppings, field records, roost count, and injured bat |
| Brown Long-eared Bat      | <i>Plecotus auritus</i>         | 182 | Records from bat detectors, droppings, field records, and roost counts                   |
| Western Barbastelle       | <i>Barbastella barbastellus</i> | 17  | Records from aural bat detectors                                                         |

### 3.3.2 Summary of Previous Survey Work

Previous survey work undertaken by AECOM involved comprehensive activity surveys of the wide Arborfield Garrison site, including transect surveys, automated detector surveys, and an emergence survey, during 2014.

Within the site boundary itself, two transect routes intersected the site. Transect route 1 ended at the building on site, with transect route 2 intersecting the site through points 8 and 9 at the end of the survey. Transect route 1 commenced on the 5<sup>th</sup> June 2014, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2014, and 6<sup>th</sup> August 2014. Species identified comprise Soprano Pipistrelle and Common Pipistrelle both recorded as commuting, foraging, and producing social calls, Long-eared species commuting, Noctule commuting and foraging, and 1 pass of Nathusius' Pipistrelle commuting in August 2014.

Transect route 2 commenced on the 16<sup>th</sup> June 2014, 3<sup>rd</sup> July 2014, and the 5<sup>th</sup> August 2014. The transects identified Common Pipistrelle and Soprano Pipistrelle both recorded as commuting, foraging, and producing social calls, and commuting Noctule and Serotine.

No automated static detectors were erected on site. The nearest automated static detector was static No 10, which identified passes of *Myotis* spp. (1 pass), Leisler's (1 pass), Noctule (3 passes), Common Pipistrelle (144 passes), and Soprano Pipistrelle (26 passes), overall.

The survey effort undertaken by AECOM also included a Preliminary Roost Assessment of the building on site in July 2014. The building (building No. NW16) on site was identified as offering low potential to support roosting bats, with no evidence of bats being identified. The

subsequent emergence survey did not identify any roosting bats and as such, they were considered to be likely absent.

It is important to note that the site does not fall within a primary, secondary, or tertiary area designated for dark corridors. Similarly, no bat mitigation measures are proposed within the redline boundary in line with Figure B of the submitted Arborfield Garrison – Bat Mitigation Strategy (AECOM, 2014).

### *3.3.3 Foraging and Commuting Bats*

The onsite habitats are considered to be broadly similar to the previous habitat survey, with the surrounding area subject to heavy disturbance and built development in line with approved adjacent planning and part of the wider Arborfield Garrison development. As such, it is anticipated that the assemblage of bat species present is consistent with those identified during the 2014 bat surveys undertaken by AECOM (AECOM, 2014).

### *3.3.4 Updated Preliminary Roost Assessment*

During the updated walkover survey in March 2026, an updated internal and external preliminary roost inspection of the buildings was undertaken in line with Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2023). The main building (building No. NW16) is a two-storey brick-built structure with a corrugated single-skinned metal roof (**Fig 5 & Fig 6**). Externally, windows are blocked off to prevent access and trespassing. Internally, the roof is supported by metal beams with a false ceiling (**Fig 8**). Towards the west of the building, glass paneling is present within the roof to allow for sunlight internally (**Fig 7**). The roof is not lined with underlining. Due to the nature and construction of the roof, no potential roosting features or evidence of bats were identified internally. Similarly, externally, the structure was well sealed with a lack of access into the internal aspects. No evidence of bats was identified. As such, the building was considered to be of negligible potential to support roosting bats.

During the walkover survey, an additional building was identified within the south-western field parcel (**Fig 9**). This building is a small single-storey building of brick-built construction with a pitched clay tiled roof. No potential roosting features were identified within this building, and no evidence of bats was found. As such, the additional building was considered to be of negligible potential to support roosting bats.

**Figure 5.** South-eastern elevation of building NW16 (taken March, 2026).



**Figure 6.** North-eastern elevation of building NW16 showing a close up of the tightly sealed structure (taken March, 2026).



**Figure 7.** Internal aspect of the building NW16 (taken March, 2026).



**Figure 8.** Internal false ceiling aspect of the building NW16 (taken March, 2026).



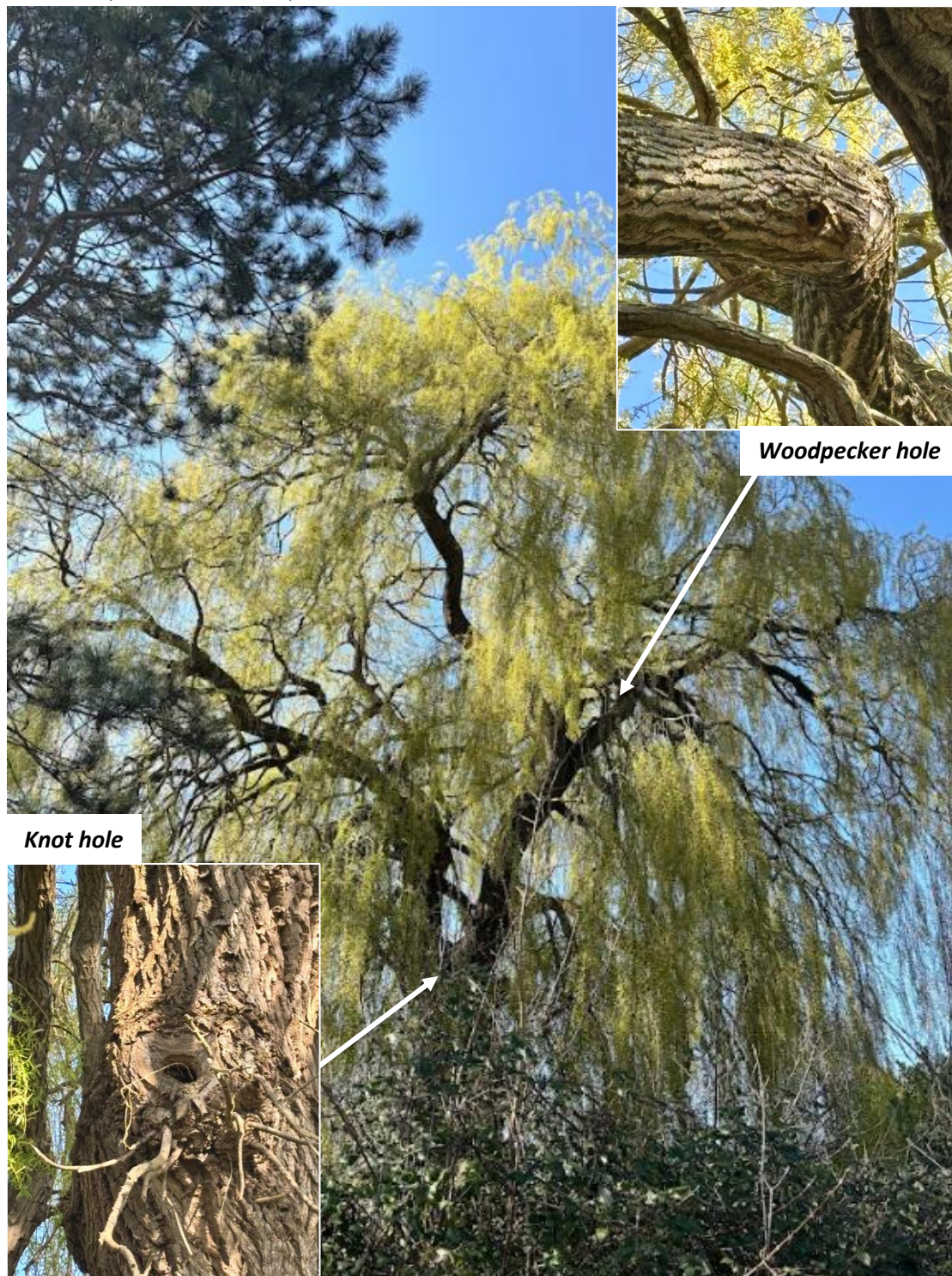
**Figure 9.** Western view of the additional building (taken March, 2026).



### 3.3.5 Ground Level Tree Assessment

A non-exhaustive updated Ground Level Tree Assessment was undertaken on notable trees on site. One tree was identified as supporting PRFs (**Fig 10**), this is the Willow tree within the north-eastern parcel. Two PRFs were identified comprising one woodpecker hole at an approximate height of 15m facing south, and a knot hole at an approximate height of 5m facing south. At this stage it is not anticipated that this tree will be removed however **further assessment is required (FAR)** should the tree require future removal or remedial works.

**Figure 10.** The potential roosting features (PRFs) identified on the willow tree at the north-east parcel of the site (taken March, 2026).



### 3.4 Reptiles

#### 3.4.1 Pre-existing Information

TVERC have provided the following reptile records on-site within 2km of the site; Slow Worm (*Anguis fragilis*) (851 records), Common Lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) (222 records), Adder (*Vipera berus*) (76 records), and Grass Snake (*Natrix helvetica*) (203 records).

#### 3.4.2 Summary of Previous Survey Work

AECOM, ENTEC, and ARUP surveyed the site and wider area in throughout 2008 to 2014, it was noted that habitats in the wider area had varying degrees of suitability for reptiles, due to the presence of agricultural land and then areas with more suitable grassland, with the current application site not surveyed for reptiles. The nearest parcel surveyed to the south of the site did not contain any reptiles.

Furthermore, it is important to note that the site does not fall within an area of 'potential reptile habitat' in line with the Arborfield Garrison – Reptile Mitigation Strategy (AECOM, 2014).

#### 3.4.3 Updated Site Assessment

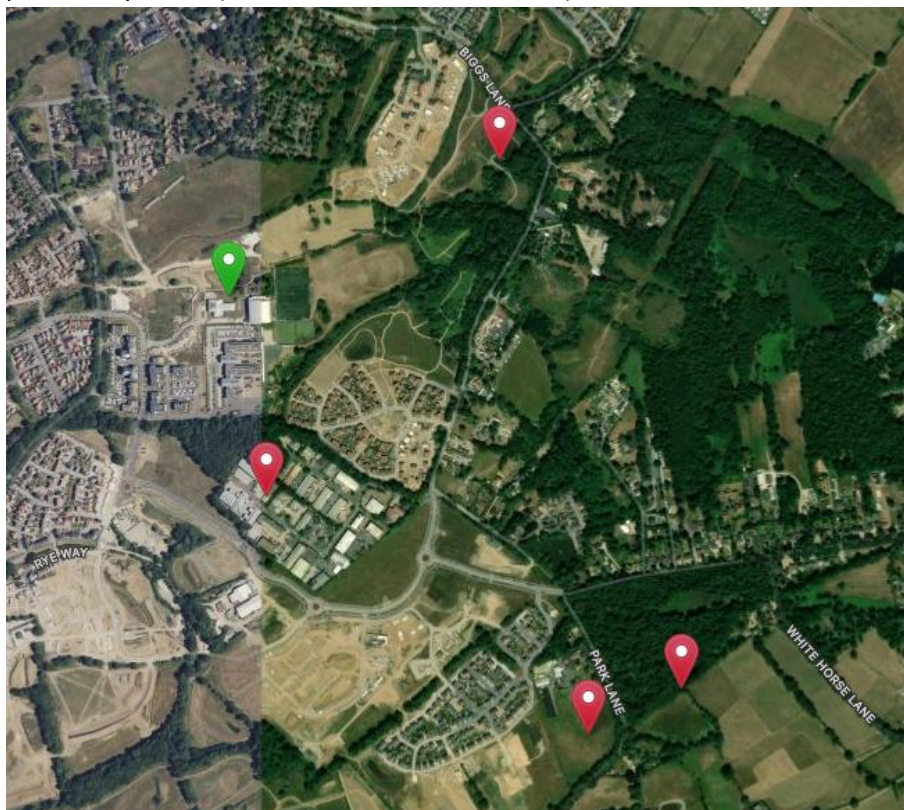
The majority of the site is not considered to offer suitable habitat to support common reptiles. Whilst there are some areas of scrub and unmanaged grassland, these habitats are considered to be somewhat isolated from the wider environment and any further suitable habitat due to the surrounding development and adjacent school. As such, the site is considered to offer **negligible potential** to support common reptiles.

### 3.5 Great Crested Newt

#### 3.5.1 Pre-existing Information

TVERC returned 7 records for Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) within 2km of the site. The nearest record is situated over 250m from the site boundary within an industrial site (**Fig 11**).

**Figure 11.** The location of the Great Crested Newt records (red) within 2km of the site (green), as provided by TVERC (OS Grid Reference Finder, 2026).

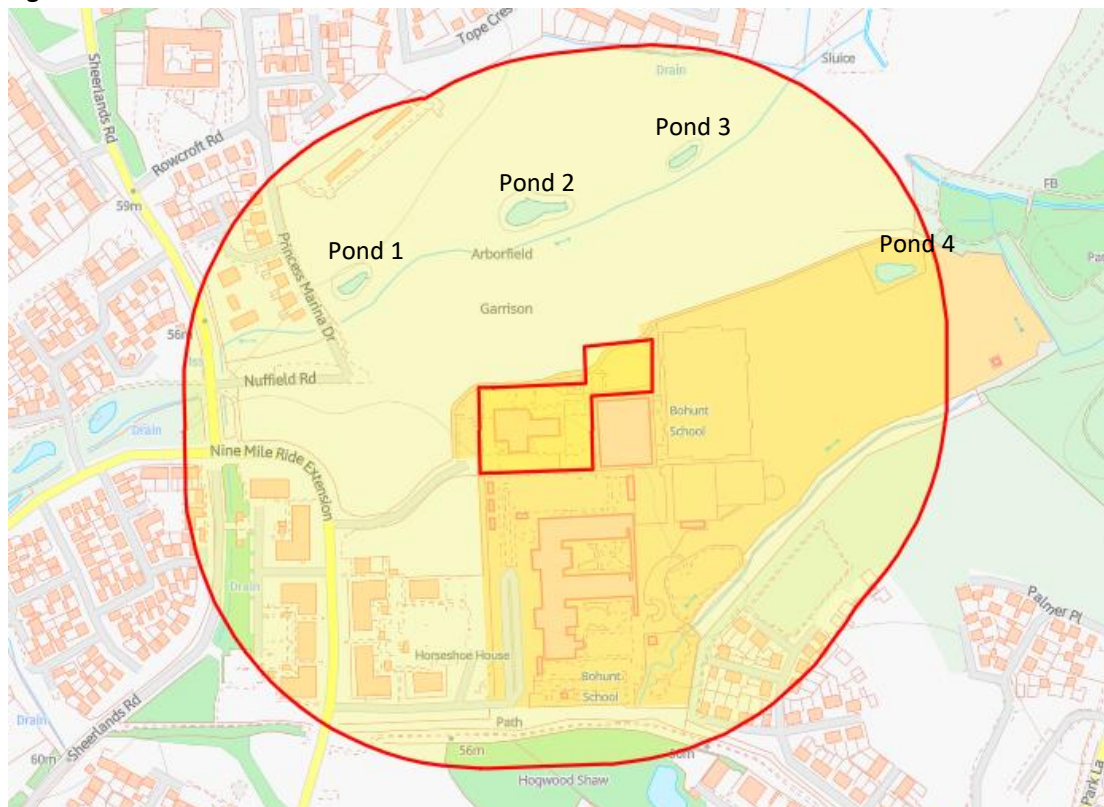


### 3.5.2 Summary of Previous Survey Work

AECOM identified several waterbodies within 500m of the wider application site and in excess of. The majority of the waterbodies were scoped out of assessment, with five waterbodies scoped in and considered suitable to support Great Crested Newts (GCN). Notwithstanding this, no GCN were identified during further survey work in 2014 and as such it was considered that GCN are unlikely to be present.

### 3.5.3 Waterbodies within 250m

A total of four waterbodies were identified within 250m of the site, as shown below in **Figure 12**. Following a review of aerial imagery, all four waterbodies are Sustainable Urban Drainage Systems (SuDS) and are unlikely to contain water throughout the year.

**Figure 12.** Locations of waterbodies within 250m of the site.

### 3.5.4 Updated Site Assessment

Similarly to reptiles, the majority of the site is considered to be largely unsuitable for GCN, with the waterbodies comprising newly built SuDS features, and the northern development (presently in construction between the site itself and the SuDS) preventing dispersal. As such, the site is considered to be **likely absent** of GCN.

## 3.6 Dormice

### 3.6.1 Pre-existing Information

TVERC returned 2 records of Hazel Dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) within 2km of the site.

### 3.6.2 Summary of Previous Survey Work

Several Hazel Dormouse surveys have been undertaken on site in line with best practice guidelines between 2008 and 2009. Dormice were scoped out of the assessment as data searches and previous survey results concluded the likely absence of this species, the habitat on site is also sub-optimal.

### 3.6.3 Updated Site Assessment

In line with the existing ecological survey work, the habitats on site are largely unsuitable for Hazel Dormice. As such, the site is considered to be **likely absent** of Hazel Dormouse.

### 3.7 Badgers & Other Terrestrial Mammals

#### 3.7.1 Pre-existing Information

TVERC returned 154 records for Badger (*Meles meles*) within 2km of the site. Furthermore, TVERC returned 13 records for European Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) within 2km of the site.

#### 3.7.2 Summary of Previous Survey Work

AECOM did not identify any evidence of Badger within the application boundary.

#### 3.7.3 Updated Site Assessment

During the updated walkover, no evidence of Badger (such as mammal trails, setts, or snuffle holes) was identified. The site is considered to offer limited value with areas of grassland being sporadic and fenced off in several areas. As such, with the combination of records identified, the site is considered to offer **low potential** for commuting and foraging Badger. Furthermore, the site is considered suitable to support commuting and foraging Hedgehogs.

### 3.8 Breeding and Nesting Birds

#### 3.8.1 Pre-existing Information

TVERC have returned several records of 'notable and protected' bird species including a number of NERC S41 listed species, Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) or those protected under W&CA Schedule 1 Part 1 and Part 2 (the list will not be reproduced here due to the number of records).

#### 3.8.2 Summary of Previous Survey Work

Across the wider site, AECOM noted that the site comprises a mixture of urban and rural habitat types suitable for an assemblage of breeding birds. "A previous 2008 survey recorded 29 species holding territories within the Site including 6 BAP, 4 red list and 7 amber list species. Additional species (including kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) and little owl (*Athene noctua*)) were also incidentally recorded as potentially holding territories during other protected species surveys. At least two swift (*Apodidae* sp.) colonies are known to be present within buildings on site, being recorded during the 2014 bat surveys. These are within the Bailleul Sergeants Mess and abandoned Hazebrouck Officers Mess. A known red kite (*Milvus milvus*) nest is also present on Site. Other notable bird species recorded incidentally during the AECOM 2014 surveys included mallard (*Anas platyrhynchos*), kestrel (*Falco tinnunculus*), sparrowhawk (*Accipiter nisus*), buzzard (*Buteo buteo*), tawny owl (*Strix aluco*), little owl, green woodpecker (*Picus viridis*), great spotted woodpecker (*Dendrocopos major*), mistle thrush (*Turdus viscivorus*), song thrush (*Turdus philomelos*), sedge warbler (*Acrocephalus schoenobaenus*) and willow warbler (*Phylloscopus trochilus*) amongst others."

Bird species of varying distribution and population status nationally and locally were identified however the majority of birds considered relatively common within Berkshire.

### 3.8.3 Updated Site Assessment

The habitat on site is considered to offer a range of suitable habitat for breeding and nesting birds, including scrub, trees, and building. Furthermore, during the walkover survey, a disused birds nest was identified on the southern elevation of building NW16 (**Fig 13**). The site is situated within the midst of urban development and it is anticipated that local breeding and nesting birds are likely to be of common species. As such, the site is considered to offer **low potential** for breeding and nesting birds.

**Figure 13.** A disused birds nest identified on the southern elevation of building NW16 (taken March, 2026).



### 3.9 Additional BAP Species

TVERC provided records of Otter (*Lutra lutra*) (2 records), White-clawed Crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*) (1 record), and several records of invertebrates within 2km of the site. Notwithstanding this, the site does not comprise suitable habitat to support aquatic or riparian mammals with a lack of suitable habitat on site and within the vicinity. Furthermore, although it is anticipated that common invertebrates are present on site due to the nature of the habitats present (i.e. absence of dead wood), it is not considered that the site comprises well structured, complex, or diverse species-rich habitat in order to support those protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act Schedule 5 Section 9, and S41 (Priority) and Annex II species.

#### 4.0 MITIGATION & ENHANCEMENTS

This section details the measures that will be implemented to mitigate against the impacts to the species identified on site and provide targeted and proportionate ecological enhancements following on from the baseline assessment, in line with Condition 18 of the planning approval for the site with ref O/2014/2280 (Table 13.23 of the approved Arborfield Garrison – Bap Environmental Statement). A summary can be found within **Table 3**, with further details described in the sections below.

**Table 3.** Mitigation items as detailed in Table 13.23 of the Environmental Statement (Arborfield Garrison – BAP) and relation to the site proposals.

| Ref                       | Mitigation Item                                                                                    | Action                                                                                                                                                                                                                   |
|---------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Construction Phase</b> |                                                                                                    |                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |
| 1                         | Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP)                                                  | A CEMP is recommended to be produced independently ( <b>Section 4.1.1</b> ).                                                                                                                                             |
| 2                         | Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement                                              | Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement to be produced independently.                                                                                                                                      |
| 3                         | Stag Beetle / Reptile Mitigation – Retained Dead Wood Piles                                        | N/A – The site is not considered suitable to support either species with no areas of dead wood present.                                                                                                                  |
| 4                         | Reptile Mitigation – Hibernacula and Refugia                                                       | N/A – The site is not considered suitable to support common reptiles.                                                                                                                                                    |
| 5                         | Bird Mitigation – Mitigation for Veteran Tree Loss                                                 | N/A – There are no veteran trees on site.                                                                                                                                                                                |
| 6                         | Bird Mitigation – Existing Swift Colony Replacement                                                | There is no existing Swift colony on site however the building is considered to offer suitable habitat to support nesting birds and as such, reasonable avoidance measures will be implemented ( <b>Section 4.5.1</b> ). |
| 7                         | Priority Bird Species Construction Mitigation – Red Kite Noise and Disturbance Mitigation Strategy | N/A – As above (and <b>Section 4.5.1</b> ).                                                                                                                                                                              |
| 8                         | Bat Mitigation – Alternative Roost Provision: Bat Barns                                            | N/A – No bat roosts will be impacted as part of the proposed development.                                                                                                                                                |
| 9                         | Bat Mitigation – Alternative Roost Provision: Bat Bricks / Boxes on Buildings                      | Bat bricks will be incorporated into the development as an enhancement measure ( <b>Section 4.2.2</b> ).                                                                                                                 |
| 10                        | Bat Mitigation – Alternative Roost Provision on Trees                                              | Further surveys are required to determine the status of roosting bats in trees on site ( <b>Section 4.2.1.1</b> ).                                                                                                       |
| 11                        | Hedgehog Mitigation – Hedgehog Boxes                                                               | One Hedgehog Home will be incorporated into the development ( <b>Section 4.2.2</b> ).                                                                                                                                    |
| 12                        | Badger Mitigation – Bait Marking and Monitoring                                                    | N/A – There are no Badger setts on site.                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 13                        | Badger Construction Mitigation – Construction Phase Badger Sett Closure                            | N/A – There are no Badger setts on site. General Badger mitigation will be implemented during the construction phase ( <b>Section 4.4.1</b> ).                                                                           |

|                          |                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|--------------------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| 14                       | Non-native Invasive Plant Species Mitigation Strategy                        | There are no non-native invasive plant species on site. Notwithstanding this, non-native invasive plant species have been identified within the wider site and as such, mitigation will be undertaken in line with <b>Section 4.7.1</b> . |
| <b>Operational Phase</b> |                                                                              |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| 15                       | Habitat Creation – Woodland                                                  | N/A – No woodland creation is proposed as part of this phase of the development.                                                                                                                                                          |
| 16                       | Habitat Enhancement – Tree Lines and Hedgerows                               | N/A – No tree lines or hedgerows are being enhanced as part of this phase of the development.                                                                                                                                             |
| 17                       | Habitat Creation – Hedgerows                                                 | Hedgerow creation and management will be undertaken in line with <b>Section 5.2.1</b> .                                                                                                                                                   |
| 18                       | Habitat Enhancement – Semi-Improved Grassland                                | Semi-improved grassland and management will be undertaken in line with <b>Section 5.2.3</b> .                                                                                                                                             |
| 19                       | Habitat Creation – Ponds                                                     | N/A – No pond creation is proposed as part of this phase of the development.                                                                                                                                                              |
| 20                       | Watercourse Mitigation – SuDS (Sustainable Drainage System) Installation     | N/A – No SuDS are being installed as part of this phase of the development.                                                                                                                                                               |
| 21                       | Habitat Mitigation – Green Corridor Retention and Management                 | N/A – This phase of the development does not fall within a green corridor.                                                                                                                                                                |
| 22                       | Habitat Mitigation – Dark Corridor Management                                | N/A – This phase of the development does not fall within a dark corridor.                                                                                                                                                                 |
| 23                       | Bird Mitigation – Urban Bird Boxes (Starling / House Sparrow / House Martin) | Bird bricks will be incorporated into the development as an enhancement measure ( <b>Section 4.5.2</b> ).                                                                                                                                 |
| 24                       | Hedgehog Mitigation – Hedgehog Friendly Fencing                              | Hedgehog friendly fencing with ‘Hedgehog Highways’ will be incorporated into the development ( <b>Section 4.2.2</b> ).                                                                                                                    |
| 25                       | Badger Mitigation – Provision of Road Crossing Tunnels                       | N/A – No crossing tunnels are being proposed as part of this phase of the development.                                                                                                                                                    |

## 4.1 Habitats

### 4.1.1 Protection of Retained Habitats (Ref 1)

All existing trees and other habitats that will be retained will be protected from damage during the works. All the site boundaries outside the area of impact will be fenced using Heras fencing or similar, to prevent access by machinery, throughout works. Where large mature trees are present, they will be protected using standard arboricultural tree protection measures which include protection of the canopy and prevents root compaction. Access will not be permitted behind this fencing by construction personnel. This will protect the retained habitats from direct damage/disturbance.

Due to proximity of retained habitats, it is recommended that a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) is implemented prior to construction.

#### 4.1.1 Hedgerows

No hedgerows are present on site and therefore no further mitigation or compensation measures regarding hedgerows are required.

## 4.2 Bats

#### 4.2.1 Mitigation (Ref 10)

The site does not fall within a primary, secondary, or tertiary area designated for dark corridors. Similarly, no bat mitigation measures are proposed within the redline boundary in line with Figure B of the submitted Arborfield Garrison – Bat Mitigation Strategy (AECOM, 2014). As such, mitigation measures recommended arise from the updated walkover undertaken by Ecosupport in March 2026 as described in **Section 4.2.1.1** below.

##### 4.2.1.1 PRF Inspection

###### Initial PRF Inspection

The Willow tree within the north-eastern parcel was noted as supporting potential roost features (PRFs). Should this tree be subject to removal or remedial works, a single PRF inspection survey will be required (BCT, 2023) to record characteristics of the PRFs and categorise them according to **Table 3** below. This can be conducted at any time of year by a suitably qualified ecologist and entails a more detailed assessment of the likely suitability of a PRF for roosting bats as well as searching for evidence of bats (e.g. droppings) within the PRF via an endoscope. Access equipment (such as ladders, MEWPS or scaffold towers) may be required to gain access to PRFs.

**Table 3.** Categorisation of PRFs (from Table 6.2, BCT 2023).

| Suitability | Description                                                                                                                         |
|-------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| PRF-I       | PRF is only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats. |
| PRF-M       | PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.                                                  |

###### Follow Up Survey Work (if required)

Should the tree be noted to only possess PRF-I's, the Roost Resource Approach will be followed in which no further surveys are required, and a precautionary working method statement will be adhered to (BCT, 2023). Should the tree be noted to possess PRF-Ms, the Further Surveys Approach will be followed in which a total of three PRF inspection surveys will be required between May – September (with at least two between May – August), with these visits spaced at least 3 weeks apart (BCT, 2023).

Should any additional trees be subject to removal or remedial works, an updated Ground Level Tree Assessment will be undertaken on the subjected trees.

#### 4.2.2 Enhancements – Bat Bricks (Ref 9)

To act as biodiversity enhancement, each new dwelling and the nursery will contain 1 No Ibstock bat brick (or similar) each (**Fig 14**) integrated within the external brick work. These features are entirely self-contained and available in a variety of different colours to match

different construction materials. They should ideally be placed on an elevation which will benefit from some degree of sunlight exposure (southern, south-eastern, or south-western) and be located away from windows.

**Figure 14.** Ibstock bat brick 'B' (or similar) which will be integrated into the gable walls of the newly built dwellings and nursery.



### 4.3 Reptiles

The site does not fall within an area of 'potential reptile habitat' in line with the Arborfield Garrison – Reptile Mitigation Strategy (AECOM, 2014). As outlined in **Section 3.4.3**, the site is considered to offer negligible potential to support reptiles and as such, no further mitigation or contingency measures are required.

### 4.4 Badgers & Other Terrestrial Mammals

As outlined in **Section 3.7.3**, the site is considered to offer low potential to support commuting and foraging Badger and other terrestrial mammals, such as Hedgehogs.

#### 4.4.1 Mitigation

During the construction phase, any open excavations left overnight will either be covered to prevent commuting Badgers and other mammals (such as Hedgehogs) falling in or escape ladders will be used to prevent them from becoming trapped. Any open pipework should be checked and then capped nightly.

#### 4.4.2 Enhancements – Hedgehogs (Ref 11 & 24)

##### Hedgehog Home

The development will incorporate 1 No Hedgehog home (**Fig 15**) (such as the Igloo Hedgehog home or Hogitat Hedgehog house). This will be provided within or adjacent to areas of trees / shrubs and will provide a rapidly declining species with a place to shelter / hibernate.

It is recommended that the hedgehog home is maintained to ensure it remains suitable for use by Hedgehogs. The hibernation period for Hedgehogs typically spans from October – April, therefore it is recommended that the hedgehog home is inspected every year in mid to late-April, after hibernation but prior to the nesting period. During these inspections the hedgehog home should be checked for any damage and replaced/repared where necessary.

Additionally, the hedgehog home should be cleared of any old nesting material and would be beneficial to be replaced with fresh, dry hay. The hedgehog home should be placed back in their original location, unless the hedgehog homes have been interfered with by the public or not utilised by any Hedgehogs, an alternative discrete location should be considered.

**Figure 15.** Example of the Igloo Hedgehog Home.



#### Gaps in Fencing

Should any new fencing be erected on site, or around the site, these will ensure that at least 1 gap is present within the gravel boards to allow for movement of Hedgehogs throughout and into the wider area. The gaps should be at least 15 cm high by 15 cm wide with permeability for small mammals.

Small signage could be installed at these points to ensure they remain open upon completion of the development. The People's Trust for Endangered Species provide such signage, the purchase of which also supports conservation efforts (**Fig 16**).

**Figure 16.** Example of Hedgehog Highway signage to be placed above fence gaps provided to allow movements between gardens (PTES, 2019).



## **4.5 Breeding and Nesting Birds**

### **4.5.1 Mitigation (Ref 6 & 7)**

A suitably qualified ecologist supervised the demolition of Building NW16. The structure was checked immediately prior to and during works, and no nesting birds or active nests were

recorded. Demolition proceeded in compliance with wildlife legislation, with no disturbance to breeding birds.

#### 4.5.2 Enhancements – Bird Bricks (Ref 23)

To act as biodiversity enhancement, a ratio of 1:1 Swift bricks to dwellings will be incorporated into the dwellings and nursery on site. The Ibstock 'Eco Home for Swifts' bricks (or similar) are recommended (**Fig 17**) as they are a discreet and attractive box ideal for new dwellings. The boxes should be installed under the eaves or in high walls in shaded areas out of direct sunlight and away from windows (northern, eastern, or western elevations). The installation of such boxes has also been shown to be beneficial for House Sparrows (*Passer domesticus*) which are a nationally declining species. Each dwelling does not need to have a brick; rather as a colony species the preference is to cluster the bricks in groups.

**Figure 17.** Ibstock eco home (or similar) for swifts that will be incorporated into the newly built dwellings and nursery.



#### 4.6 Additional UK BAP Species

As outlined in **Section 3.4.3 & Section 3.5.4**, the site is considered to offer negligible potential to support reptiles and other UK BAP and as such, no further mitigation or contingency measures are required. Measures to ensure no adverse impacts occur towards Hedgehogs during the construction phase and enhancement measures during the operational phase are outlined in **Section 4.4.2**.

#### 4.7 Non-native Invasive Species

No non-native invasive species were identified within the site. Notwithstanding this, AECOM (2014) identified the presence of Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*), Rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*), and Cherry Laurel (*Prunus laurocerasus*) within the wider site, albeit not within close proximity. As such, measures will be implemented to prevent the risk of establishment on site.

##### 4.7.1 Mitigation (Ref 14)

To minimise the risk of inadvertent spread from the wider site, all personnel will follow strict biosecurity measures during works.

This will include cleaning and inspecting tools and machinery before entering and leaving the site, removing all visible soil and plant material, and using designated wash-down points where available. PPE, footwear, and hand tools will be regularly disinfected between work areas and phases to prevent cross-contamination. Any imported materials (e.g., soils, aggregates) will be sourced from certified clean suppliers, and vehicle movements will be restricted to agreed access routes to avoid contact with potential invasive plant fragments. Site staff will remain vigilant for any signs of invasive species colonisation, with any suspected occurrences reported immediately for verification and appropriate action.

## 5.0 HABITAT MANAGEMENT

### 5.1 Introduction

As outlined within Condition 18 of the planning approval with ref O/2014/2280, a landscape and ecological management plan is required. This section outlines the proposed habitat management measures proposed in line with the proposed development.

### 5.2 Created Habitats

A full landscape plan and planting specification has not been provided at this stage; however, it is presumed the habitats created below will follow the habitat management as set out within **Section 5.2.1 – 5.2.5**.

#### 5.2.1 Hedgerows (Ref 17)

##### 5.2.1.1 Management

The most favourable approach to managing hedgerows for the benefits of biodiversity is to encourage minimal interference and ensure cutting takes place after autumn fruiting (so late winter is preferable). The key points of the management prescriptions will therefore be as follows wherever practical (adopting recommendations as outlined within Bright and MacPherson (2002)):

- Cutting will be done on a 3-year cycle (part of the hedges on site cut during the first year, another part of the hedges cut during second year and no cutting during the third year), to provide sustained foraging opportunities across the site every active season. Hedgerows will be allowed to develop into a tall, dense, bushy structures and maintained at a height of 3 – (preferably 4) meters.
- A proportion of hedges (at least 30%) should be left to grow for at least 7 – 10 years.
- Not all hedgerows should be cut in any one year, so some heavy fruiting hedges are always present.
- Flails should not be used if possible, meaning management works will likely involve cutting using hand tools
- Coppicing or laying should be used to manage any of the hedgerows on site which become gappy or spars
- If the size of the hedgerow needs to be reduced, avoid cutting the top and cut one side.

In more formal locations, hedges may need to be maintained more regularly than is stated above.

##### 5.2.1.2 Replacement

Any plants that are removed, die or become seriously damaged or defective during the monitoring period of planting shall be replaced like for like in the next planting season.

If hedgerows become very thin, coppicing of selected plants / laying of short lengths of hedgerow may be required and will be beneficial to promote vigorous, dense regrowth. Such works must be undertaken during the period October – February to avoid the breeding bird season.

### 5.2.2 Tree / Scrub Planting

Following establishment, scrub management will be undertaken annually (as needed) to maintain a suitable matrix between grassland, scrub and other habitats. This can be achieved by manual cutting as well as mechanical clearance in winter months that can be carried out to ensure the area does not become overgrown.

Scrub and trees will require minimal ongoing management. New trees and scrub will be watered whenever necessary during the first growing season. Wooded and scrub areas will be weeded following first planting, and thinned every five years. Bramble will be reduced in density and will be maintained at approximately 15% density within the scrub patches. In addition, ongoing management will be undertaken to prevent successional scrub developing within the grassland areas; scrub should be limited to a total site coverage not exceeding 10% of the total area of the site and in blocks not exceeding 10 x 10m to maintain the site's current habitat status. Trees and scrub will be replaced as necessary.

Management of trees and scrub will be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season, which spans February – August inclusive (Natural England, 2015). Management must take into account the requirement for maintaining habitat connectivity across the site. Should any such vegetation die or its density become sparse, additional planting will be undertaken, replacing like-for-like

### 5.2.3 Wildflower Grassland (Ref 18)

Wildflower areas do not require any additional watering or fertilizer. Cutting a meadow and removing the clippings retains low nutrient levels in the soil and suppresses coarse grasses which would otherwise out-compete the wildflowers. It is recommended the wildflower grassland undergoes two annual cuts. The growth should be cut back to a height of 150mm. The cut grass should be dried on site. Cuttings should be left in situ for approximately one week, after this the arisings are to be removed from site. Should any areas of ground become bare or damaged, additional planting will occur within the next planting season.

**First year management:** Perennial species take at least a full year to establish. For newly sown areas the first summer will be dominated by annual weeds arising from the soil seed bank and by grass growth. This should be controlled by mowing throughout the first year to minimise competition and weed seed production.

**Management Once Established:** During the second year it is recommended that the wildflower areas are left to flower and will be cut in mid-summer. However, this should not be cut in May or early June due to nesting birds. Mowing in mid-June brings a premature end to the flowers and can compromise nesting birds, which do not fledge until late July, insects and other wildlife. If some mowing has to take place at this time, sections should be cut at different dates to prolong the overall flowering season and give wildlife a chance to move. The second annual cut should be undertaken during late Autumn. Grassland which is consistently cut late in the season, in August and September, year on year reduces species diversity as late cutting gives more time for coarse grasses and other dominant plants to grow unchecked. To maintain maximum diversity and flowering interest the development buffers

should be managed in sections at different times from late June to the end of August. Varying the mowing times from year to year is the best way to maintain a diverse balanced sward.

Targeted scrub and bracken removal should also be carried out as needed to prevent excessive encroachment into the grassland.

#### *5.2.4 Amenity Grassland*

Should any areas of ground become bare or damaged, additional planting will occur within the next planting season. The sowing of these seeds will be completed either during the Spring (March-May) or the late Summer (August-October) when the temperatures are warm, and the ground is dry. The seed must be surface sown at an even distribution throughout the entire landscaped area.

Regular mowing is expected within these areas which will result in a shorter sward height however grass should not be cut lower than 25-40mm. Wherever possible, mowing will be relaxed from late June for 4-8 weeks to allow flowering of herbaceous species and enhance the benefit of this habitat for local wildlife. Targeted scrub, bracken and invasive plant removal should also be carried out throughout the modified grassland parcels as needed to prevent encroachment into the grassland.

## 6.0 MAINTENANCE AND MONITORING

### 6.1 Monitoring

A compliance visit will be completed by a suitably qualified ecologist once the construction phase of the development has been completed. The ecologist will check that all ecological enhancements and habitat creation set out in **Section 4.0** and **Section 5.0** have been completed as described.

### 6.2 Safeguarding

The developer and project manager will be responsible for briefing all site personnel of the ecological sensitivities of the site and implementing the mitigation measures outlined within this report. If any protected species are encountered during the construction works, it will be the responsibility of the project manager to cease works and immediately contact an ecologist for advice.

The safeguarding of the integrated species-specific enhancement features (such as swift and bat bricks) will be included within the deeds of the relevant dwellings to inform any new owners of their ecological sensitivity and protect them in perpetuity.

### 6.3 Maintenance

Habitat management must be undertaken to ensure the successful establishment of newly created habitats. ***The responsibility of the management of the on-site enhancements will be placed with a management company following the completion of the development. Until that point the responsibility will remain with the developer.***

## 7.0 IMPLEMENTATION PLAN SUMMARY

Schedule of mitigation and enhancements on site. Locations of enhancements are shown in **Plan 1**, appended.

| General Activity                                              | Year                  | Specific Activity            | Dates / Timing        | Description                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------|------------------------------|-----------------------|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Protection of Retained Habitats</b><br>Section 4.1         | Prior to commencement | Protection of existing trees | Anytime               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• All the existing boundary vegetation and trees that will be retained will be protected from damage during the works.</li> <li>• All the site boundaries will be fenced using Heras fencing or similar to prevent access by machinery</li> <li>• All protective fencing must be in place prior to any construction machinery arriving on site, before any works on site get underway, and will remain in place until all work is completed.</li> <li>• It is recommended that a CEMP is implemented prior to construction works.</li> </ul> |
| <b>Bats</b><br>Section 4.2                                    | Prior to commencement | Mitigation                   | Anytime               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Should any additional trees be subject to removal or remedial works, an updated Ground Level Tree Assessment will be required, with possible further assessment required.</li> <li>• The Willow tree will be subject to a PRF Inspection with further assessment and mitigation to be confirmed.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|                                                               | Prior to occupation   | Enhancements                 | Anytime               | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Integrated bat bricks will be built into the nursery and newly built dwellings.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Badgers &amp; Other Terrestrial Mammals</b><br>Section 4.4 | Prior to commencement | Mitigation                   | Prior to commencement | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• During the construction phase, any open excavations left overnight will either be covered to prevent commuting Badgers and other mammals (such as Hedgehogs) falling in or escape ladders will be used to prevent them</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

|                                                   |                     |                                |                               |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |
|---------------------------------------------------|---------------------|--------------------------------|-------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                                   |                     |                                |                               | from becoming trapped. Any open pipework should be checked and then capped nightly.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|                                                   | Prior to occupation | Enhancements – Hedgehog Home   | Anytime                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>1 No Hedgehog home will be installed within the development grounds.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
|                                                   |                     | Enhancements – Gaps in Fencing | Anytime                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Gaps in any new fences and garden fences will be provided to ensure the maneuverability of Hedgehogs is maintained</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |
| <b>Breeding and Nesting Birds</b><br>Section 4.5  | During construction | Mitigation                     | During the construction phase | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>In order to avoid disturbance of nesting birds or damage to their nests, clearance of any vegetation will be undertaken outside of the bird nesting season (typically March – August dependent on weather). If this is not possible, sections to be cleared should be thoroughly checked by a suitability qualified ecologist immediately prior to clearance. If any active nests are found they should be left undisturbed with a suitable buffer of vegetation (5m) until the nestlings have fledged.</li> </ul> |
|                                                   | Prior to occupation | Enhancements                   | Anytime                       | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>Integrated bird bricks will be built into the nursery and newly built dwellings.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |
| <b>Non-native Invasive Species</b><br>Section 4.7 | During construction | Mitigation                     | During the construction phase | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>To minimise the risk of inadvertent spread from the wider site, all personnel will follow strict biosecurity measures during works.</li> <li>This will include cleaning and inspecting tools and machinery before entering and leaving the site, removing all visible soil and plant material,</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                          |

|                                        |                     |                  |                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  |
|----------------------------------------|---------------------|------------------|--------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|                                        |                     |                  |                          | <p>and using designated wash-down points where available. PPE, footwear, and hand tools will be regularly disinfected between work areas and phases to prevent cross-contamination. Any imported materials (e.g., soils, aggregates) will be sourced from certified clean suppliers, and vehicle movements will be restricted to agreed access routes to avoid contact with potential invasive plant fragments. Site staff will remain vigilant for any signs of invasive species colonisation, with any suspected occurrences reported immediately for verification and appropriate action.</p> |
| <b>Habitat creation</b><br>Section 5.0 | During construction | Habitat creation | Ideally Autumn or Spring | <ul style="list-style-type: none"> <li>• Creation of trees, scrub, wildflower meadow, hedgerow, and amenity grassland.</li> <li>• Management of aforementioned habitats.</li> </ul>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              |

## 8.0 CONCLUSION

This document has been prepared to bring together all the existing ecological information for District Centre Nursery and Pre-school, Arborfield, RG2 9GB, with the aim of providing a means to address all of the ecological constraints identified and provide mitigation and opportunities for enhancement that are consistent with the aims of national and local planning policy, alongside prescriptions for habitat creation and management, in order to discharge Condition 18 of the planning approval for the site with ref O/2014/2280. It is considered that should all aspects of this document be implemented; adequate mitigation and enhancements can be achieved to minimise impacts of existing population of protected and notable species and a net gain in the site's biodiversity value achieved.

## 9.0 REFERENCES

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## 10.0 APPENDICES

### 10.1 APPENDIX A - Methodology

#### 10.1.1 Data Request

A data request was submitted to the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (Thames Valley Environmental Records Centre) to ascertain any records held of nature conservation designations and protected species within the wider area (2km) which could be impacted upon as a result of the proposed plans.

The data search covered:

- Statutory designated sites;
- Non-statutory designations such as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS); and
- Records of protected and notable species.

#### 10.1.2 Habitats

Habitats on site pre-development were identified in accordance with the categories specified for a UK Habitats survey, using Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd., 2023). This was chosen as an appropriate habitat categorisation system as it fits within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation.

UKHab represents a method for classifying habitats which has been produced to provide an up-to-date replacement for the current industry standard phase 1 survey method. One of the main benefits of UKHab is that it supports the evaluation of habitats for EclA and no net loss/net gain analysis, providing a more detailed interpretation of habitat types, which is important for assessing the distinctiveness and condition of habitats against which biodiversity net gain is measured.

The standard survey methodology has been 'extended' in this report to include the following:

- Floral species lists for each identified habitat;
- Descriptions of habitat structure, the evidence of management and a broad assessment of habitat condition;
- Mapping of additional habitat types (e.g. hardstanding);
- Identification of Priority Habitats under Section 41 of the NERC Act;
- Evidence of, or potential for, the presence of certain species/groups

#### 10.1.3 Ground Level Tree Assessment

A non-exhaustive Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) assessment of any notable trees on site was undertaken by Darla Brown of Ecosupport in March 2026 (NE class level 2 bat licence holder). This followed BCT (Collins (ed) 2023) best practice survey which includes aiming to identify the following Potential Roost Features (PRFs):

- PRFs formed by disease and decay: woodpecker holes, squirrel holes, knot holes, pruning cuts, tear outs, wounds, cankers, compression, forks, butt rots

- PRFs formed by damage: lighting strikes, hazard beams, subsidence cracks, shearing cracks, transverse snaps, welds, lifting bark, desiccation features, frost cracks; and
- PRFs formed by association: fluting Ivy.

The presence or absence of any of the features listed above are then fed into the classification of the tree which is as follows (**Table 5**).

**Table 5.** Guidelines for assessing the suitability of trees on proposed development sites for bats, to be applied using professional judgement (Collins (ed) 2023).

| Suitability | Description                                                                        |
|-------------|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| None        | Either no PRFs in the tree or highly unlikely to be any                            |
| FAR         | Further Assessment Required (FAR) to establish if any PRFs are present in the tree |
| PRF         | A tree with at least one PRF present.                                              |

#### 10.1.4 Preliminary Roost Assessment

A preliminary roost assessment of the buildings on site was undertaken by Darla Brown of Ecosupport in March 2026 (NE class level 2 bat licence). This followed BCT (Collins (ed) 2023) best practice survey guidelines searching for any PRFs / evidence of bat occupation and assigning a roost potential assessment as outlined in **Table 6** below.

**Table 6.** Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of a built structure for roosting bats (reproduced from BCT (Collins (ed) 2023).

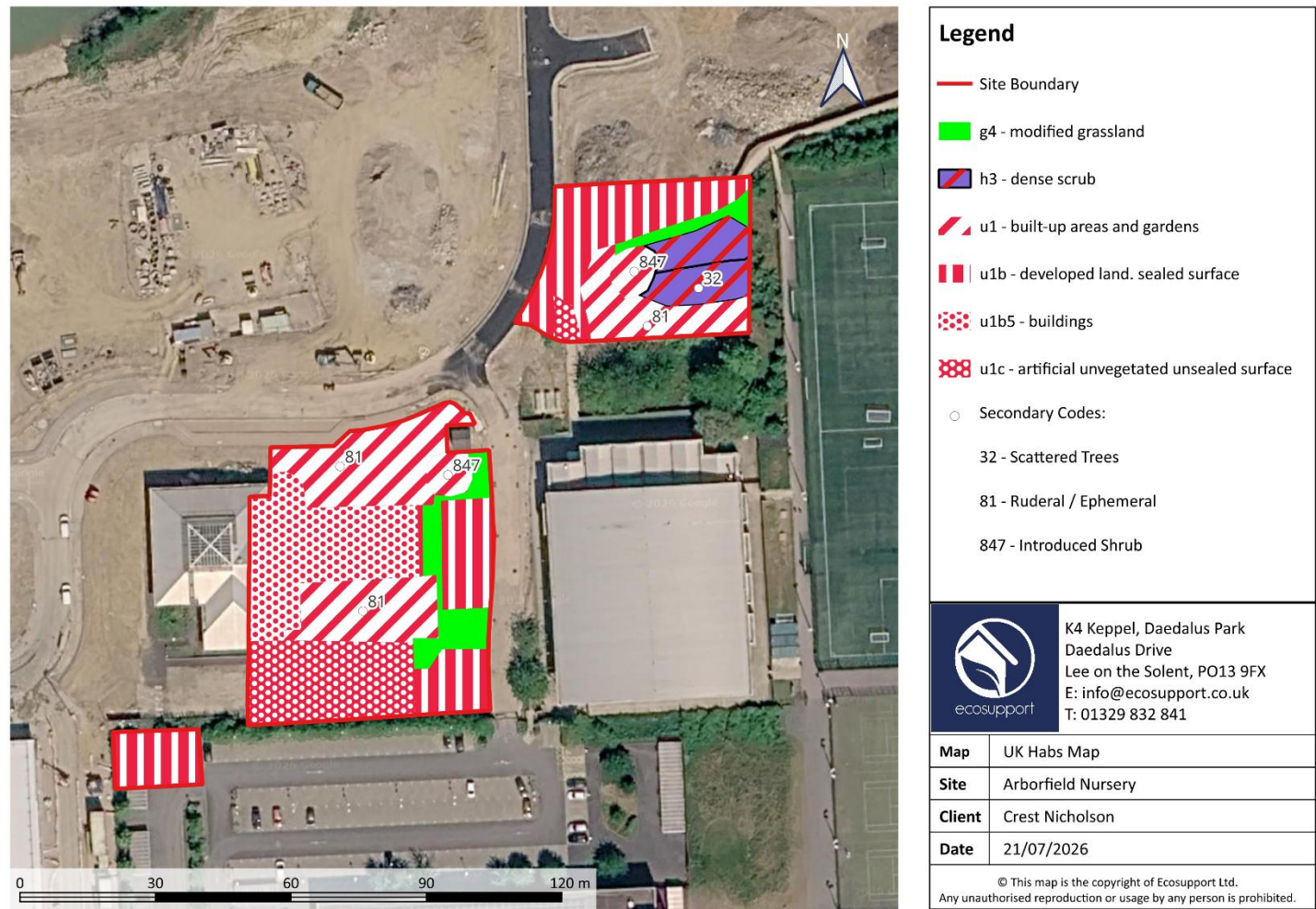
| Suitability       | Description of Roosting Habitats                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            |
|-------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Negligible</b> | No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               |
| <b>Low</b>        | A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions <sup>2</sup> and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e., unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats <sup>3</sup> ). |
| <b>Moderate</b>   | A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions <sup>2</sup> and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).                                                                  |

|                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                          |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |
|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>High</b>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions <sup>2</sup> and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g., maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site. |
| <p>2 For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance.</p> <p>3 Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten et al., 2016 and Jansen et al., 2022). Common pipistrelle swarming has been observed in the UK (Bell, 2022 and Tomlinson, 2020) and winter hibernation of numbers of this species has been detected at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland (National Trust, 2018). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK, but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in prominent buildings in the landscape, urban or otherwise.</p> |                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       |

#### 10.1.5 Badger

The site was thoroughly searched for evidence of use by Badgers (*Meles meles*), with the specific aim of identifying the presence and location of any setts. In accordance with the *Badgers and Development: A Guide to Best Practice and Licensing* (Natural England, 2011) guidance, the survey accounted for a 30m from the site's boundary (observed where possible i.e. does not conflict with private dwellings). Evidence of Badgers could include latrines, dung pits, feeding remains and foraging evidence, trails and setts.

10.2 APPENDIX B – Habitat Map



10.3 APPENDIX C - Plan 1 (Enhancements)

