HOLME PARK SANG, PHASE 2B OF THE SOUTH WOKINGHAM STRATEGIC DEVELOPMENT LOCATION

ECOLOGICAL MITIGATION STRATEGY

Draft Document (Revision 1)

December 2025

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ECOSA Quality Assurance Record

This report has been produced with reference to the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing 2017 (CIEEM, 2017).

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Ecological Survey & Assessment Limited (ECOSA) have been appointed by Kier Ventures Ltd and Miller Homes to produce an Ecological Mitigation Strategy in order to mitigate for identified adverse effects on Important Ecological Features as a result of the proposed creation of Holme Park Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace (SANG), Phase 2b of the South Wokingham Strategic Development Location (SDL) (hereafter referred to as the site).

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

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

1.2 The Site

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

1.3 Aims and Scope of Mitigation Strategy

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

This document will:

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

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

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

1.4 Site Proposals

The proposals are for the creation of a SANG with the following features:

- Open space for informal recreation including a 2.54-kilometre circular walking route with additional secondary footpaths;
- Woodland planting, including the retention of existing ancient woodland near Ludgrove School;
- Native tree, shrub and hedgerow planting;
- A mosaic of grasslands including wildflower meadow, wetland meadow grassland and areas of flowering lawn with wildflower plugs and bulb planting to create high floristic value;
- Wetland corridor along a series of detention basins and swales that contribute to the wider SuDS strategy of Phase 2b of the South Wokingham SDL;
- Emm Brook corridor with wetland meadow grass and footbridges to allow for access across the watercourse;

- Primary access from the Strategic Development Road (SDR), with additional access points from Public Right of Ways (PRoW) and into the neighbouring sports hub;
- A permanent car par to provide 25 spaces off Heathlands Road; and
- Local Landscape Area for Play (LLAP).

Works are expected to begin in early 2026.

2.0 CURRENT ECOLOGICAL BASELINE

2.1 Introduction

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

2.2 Updating Ecological Survey

The most recent ecological surveys were updating walkover surveys undertaken by Joanne Richmond, Principal Ecologist of ECOSA on 26th October 2023 and Georgina Timmis, Principal Ecologist of ECOSA on 16th October 2024.

2.3 Changes to the Ecological Baseline

When the ecological baseline was established at outline, part of the fields within Phase 2b Holme Park SANG had been planted with a cereal crop. Since then, the land use has been changed to support poultry. The cereal crop has been replaced with grassland that was subject to regular management and contains poultry coops. As such it is considered unlikely that this change would result in significant changes to the status of protected species on site.

All other habitats are currently as described in the outline ecological baseline.

2.4 Important Ecological Features

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

Table 1: Summary of Important Ecological Features

Important Ecological Feature	Reason for Importance	How IEF May Be Adversely Affected During Construction
Hedgerows	Hedgerows are a Habitat of Principal Importance, the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 requires the local authority to have regard to the conservation of these habitats when making decisions.	Areas of hedgerow that are intended to be retained as part of the proposals could be accidentally damaged during construction, either as a result of direct impact by machinery, or due to root compaction by machinery driving over the ground nearby.
Bats	Bats are protected under Section 9(4) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. This makes it an offence to injure or kill bats, damage or destroy their roosts or disturb them in a way that impairs their ability to survive, breed, raise their young or migrate.	Accidental damage to trees could result in killing and injury of bats within roosts, if present. Significant light spill on boundary hedgerows and trees could deter light-averse bats from using these habitats as foraging areas or commuting routes.
[redacted]		
Breeding birds	With certain exceptions, all wild birds, their nests and eggs are protected by Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Therefore, it is an offence, to intentionally kill or injure any wild bird, damage or destroy their nests or destroy their eggs.	The removal of woody and unmanaged grassland vegetation could result in the killing or injury of birds, their nests and eggs if undertaken when birds are nesting. Significant noise or physical disturbance to these habitats could also result in birds abandoning active nests, killing their young or leaving eggs unviable.
Reptiles	Slow worm and common lizard are listed in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and are afforded limited protection under Section 9 of this Act. This makes it an offence to intentionally kill or injure these species.	The removal of grassland and woody vegetation could result in the killing or injury of reptiles.
Great crested newt	Great crested newt are protected under Section 9(4) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and under Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. These make it an offence to kill or injure great crested newt or to damage or destroy their habitat.	The removal of grassland and woody vegetation could result in the killing or injury of great crested newt. The construction will necessarily result in the damage or destruction of suitable great crested newt habitat.
European hedgehog and common toad	European hedgehog and common toad are a Species of Principal Importance, the Natural Environment and Rural	European hedgehog and common toad could be injured or killed during vegetation clearance works.

	Communities Act 2006 requires the local authority to have regard to the conservation of these species when making decisions.	European hedgehog and common toad may be harmed by becoming trapped in excavations left open overnight where there is no way for them to escape.

3.0 MITIGATION STRATEGY TIMETABLE

A summary of the works and associated timings relating included in the ecological works for site preparation, are provided in **Table 2.** These timescales are based on the assumption that work will commence early 2026. These timings should be treated as provisional and will be subject to update as works progress; however, they provide an indication of the delivery of the strategy.

Table 2: Mitigation Strategy Timetable

	Task PLANNED to be undertaken during this month
	Task CAN be undertaken during this month
	Task CAN be undertaken during this month UNDER SUITABLE WEATHER CONDITIONS
	Task CANNOT be undertaken during this month
	Task NOT REQUIRED to be undertaken during this month

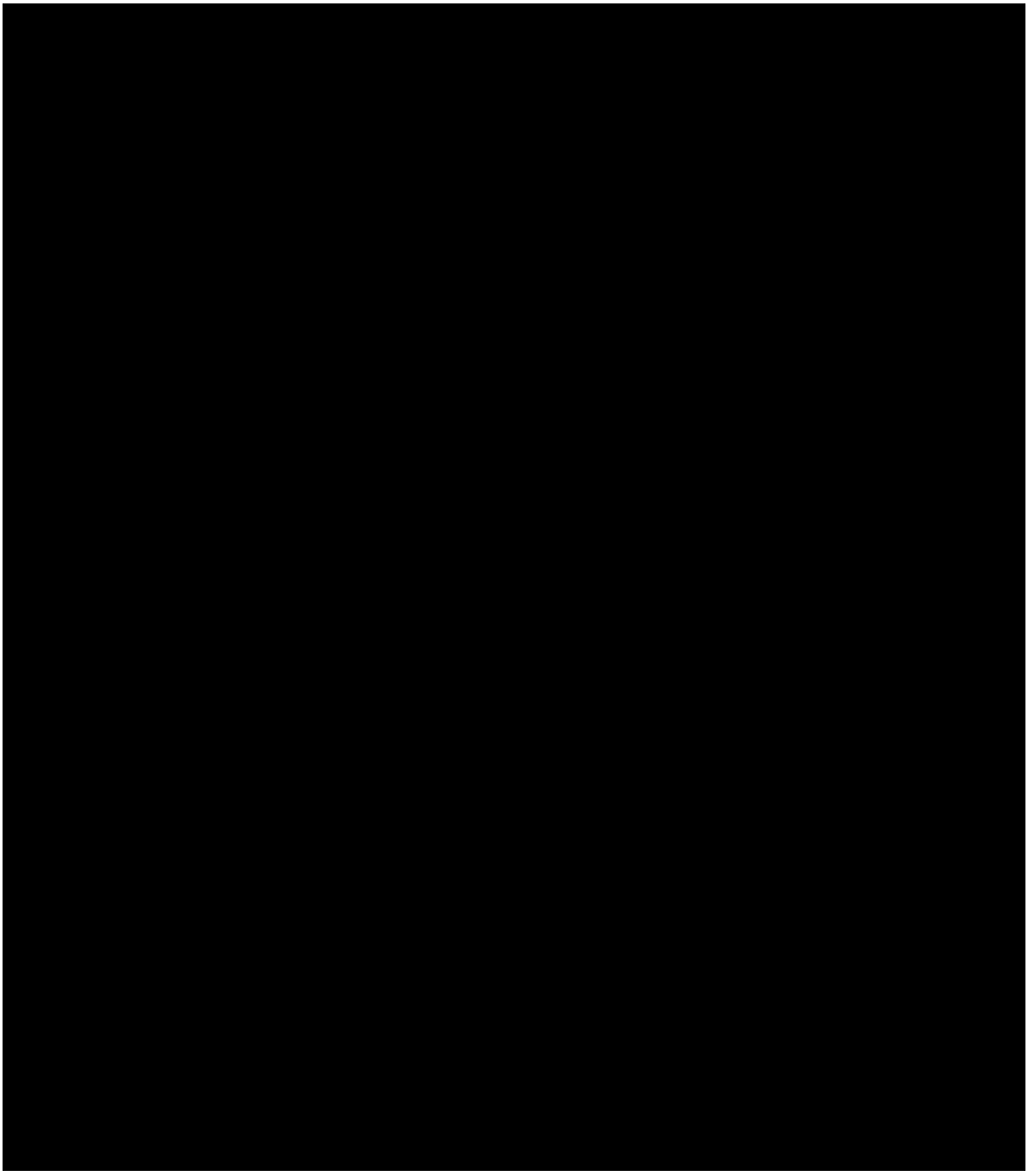
Task	Responsibility	Timing Requirements/ Constraints	Paragraph Ref.	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Hedgerow Protection Fencing	Site Contractors	N/A	4.1												
[redacted]															
Nesting Bird Check	Ecologist	Immediately prior to vegetation removal.	4.3												
Supervised Destructive Search	Ecologist/ Site Contractors	Prior to commencement construction works.	4.4												
Installation of Bat and Bird Boxes	Site Contractors	N/A	4.5												
Compliance checks	Ecologist	Once a month throughout the construction period	5.1												

4.0 MITIGATION STRATEGY

4.1 Hedgerow Protection Fencing

Relevant Important Ecological Features: Hedgerows, Important Hedgerows, Breeding Birds

Wherever trees and hedgerows are proposed to be retained they, and their Root Protection Zones, should be protected from accidental damage through the installation of Heras-type fencing. Accidental damage can occur as a result of direct impacts by machinery and also through root compaction as a result of tracking of heavy machinery or deposition of large amounts of spoil, for example.



4.3 Nesting Bird Check

Relevant Important Ecological Features: Breeding Birds

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

4.4 Supervised Destructive Search

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

A destructive search will be carried out of habitats that will be cleared to accommodate the new footpaths and site compound. The destructive search will comprise methodical cutting of suitable habitat to 22 centimetres high, followed by stripping of the top layer of vegetation using an excavator with a toothed bucket. All works will be supervised by a suitably qualified ecologist.

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

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

Should great crested newt be encountered, works will stop and Natural England will be contacted to determine a suitable strategy.

4.5 Installation of Bird Boxes

Relevant Important Ecological Features: Breeding Birds

Five 1B Schwegler Nest Boxes (26mm) and five 1B Schwegler Nest Boxes (32mm) will be installed on retained trees across the site.

The boxes will be installed at a minimum height of three metres on northern or western elevations of trees where suitable.

One barn owl nest box has already been installed on a retained tree, to the south of the site. This tree will not have any further mitigation measures installed on it to avoid disturbance to barn owl.

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

4.6 Installation of Bat Boxes

Relevant Important Ecological Features: Bats

Five 2F Schwegler Bat Boxes, three 1FF Schwegler Bat Boxes and two 2N Schwegler bat boxes will be installed on retained trees on site. Boxes will be installed at least 4 metres above the ground on the northern and western elevations where suitable.

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

4.7 Installation of Hedgehog 'Highways' and Log Piles/Houses

Relevant Important Ecological Features: European Hedgehog

Three log piles will be installed on site with the primary function of providing habitat for European hedgehog. The log piles will be located on woodland edge habitats will include suitable sized openings at the base and void inside that acts as a chamber for hedgehogs. Alternatively, hedgehog houses, such as Wildcare Woodstone Hedgehog Houses, could be installed and partially buried to deter tampering and vandalism.

4.8 Site Housekeeping

Relevant Important Ecological Features: [redacted] *European hedgehog, reptiles, great crested newt and common toad*

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

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

5.0 COMPLIANCE

5.1 Compliance Checks

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

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

Table 3: Compliance check record

Date:		
ECoW in Attendance:		
Measure to Check	**Compliance notes/ photos**	**Further Actions Required**
Hedgerow protection fencing is correctly positioned and undamaged		
Exclusion zones around [redacted] active bird nests maintained (if required)		
Bat boxes correctly installed		
Bird boxes correctly installed		
Hedgehog houses/log piles correctly installed		
Construction site housekeeping suitably maintained to avoid recolonisation of the site by wildlife.		

5.2 Compliance Reports

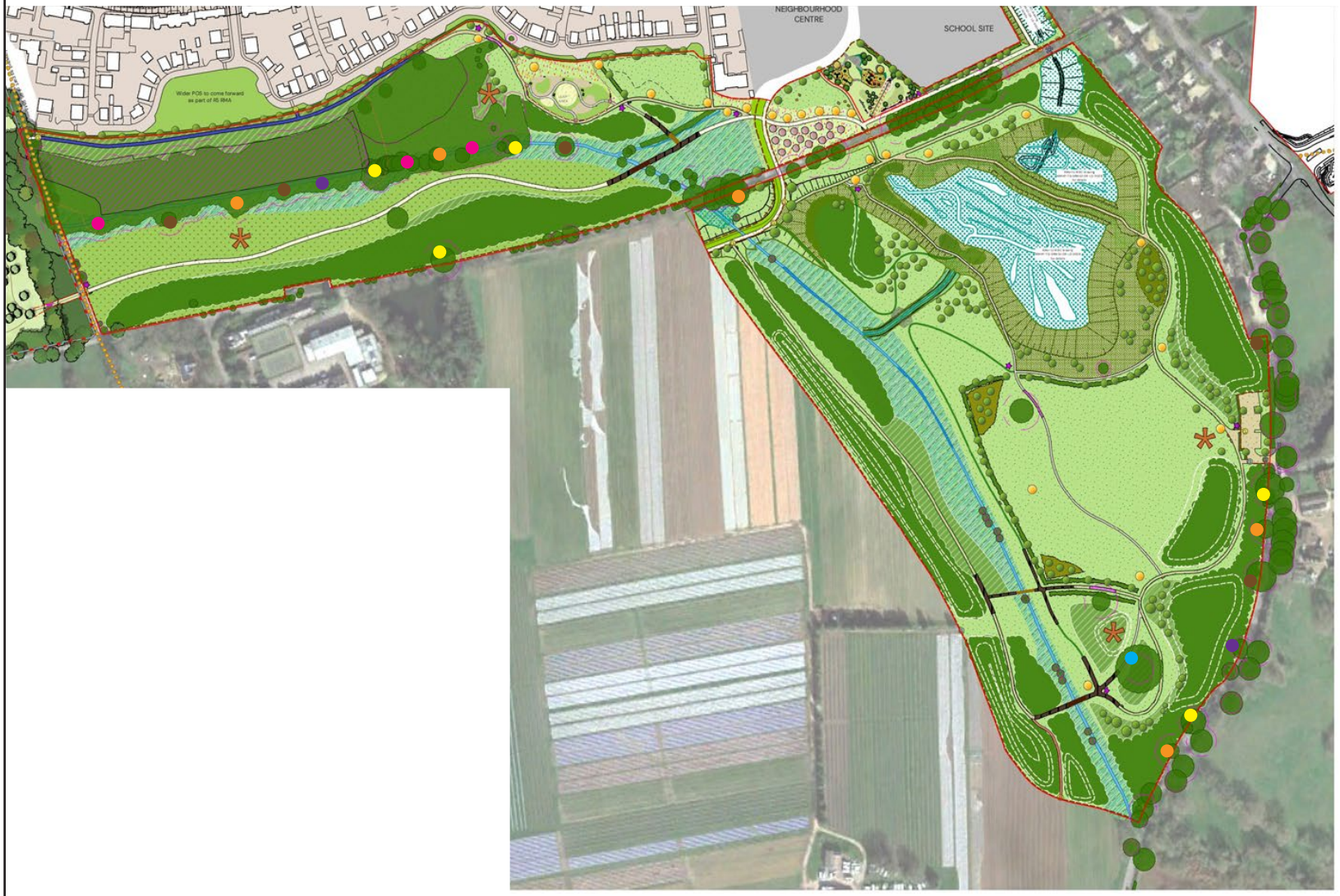
On completion of the works a formal compliance report will be produced, summarising the findings of the compliance checks undertaken throughout the construction period and confirming that the measures set out within this document have been complied with.

6.0 REFERENCES

ECOSA, 2020. *South Wokingham, Berkshire - Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment,* North Baddesley: ECOSA.

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

Map 1 Bat and Bird Box Locations



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Map 1 - Bat and Bird Box Plan

Client:	Miller Homes and Kier Developments Ltd.
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KEY

- Barn Owl Nest Box
- 1B Schwegler Nest Box (26mm)
- 1B Schwegelr Nest Box (32mm)
- 2F Schwegler Bat Box
- 1FF Schwegler Bat Box
- 2N Schwegeler Bat Box

Habitat features not to scale.

N

Basemap reproduced from Pegasus Group 'Holme Park SANG General Arrangement', Landscape Ecological Management Plan, dated October 2025.

Prepared by: HT	Date: 05/12/2025
Last amended by: HT	Date:

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