Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)

Land at Otterbourne, Winchester

11th August 2022

TG Report No. 15029_R01_RW_CW

Tyler Grange

Report No:	Date	Revision	Author	Checked	Approval
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15029_P01_Habitat Plan

Summary

S.1. This report has been prepared by Tyler Grange Group Ltd on behalf of Barwood Land. It sets out the findings of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of a parcel of land in Otterbourne, Winchester, to support site promotion for the construction of residential units, with associated access and landscaping.

S.2. The site falls within the Impact Risk Zone for the River Itchen Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and the nutrient sensitive area of the River Itchen Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and wider Solent Region. There are an additional two international statutory sites within 10 km of the site and one national statutory site within 2 km of the site. In common with all planned or proposed residential development in the River Itchen catchment, mitigation to address increased nutrients in the River Itchen SAC and SSSI will be required prior to determination of an application. No other statutory protected sites are likely to be affected.

S.3. There is 23 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), three of which are located on the site, and one is located immediately adjacent to the site. Five parcels of ancient woodland located outside of designated sites are situated within 2 km of the site, one of these parcels is located adjacent to the site. To comply with policy these sites should be protected and there is scope to enhance SINCs on the site. The Local Planning Authority should be consulted to agree a strategy on SINCs relevant to the site.

S.4. The site comprises marshy and semi-improved neutral grassland which could be of up to county ecological importance, parcels of woodland, scattered trees and hedgerows of local importance. Improved and poor semi-improved grassland, tall ruderal, dense scrub and bracken also occur and are considered to be of negligible ecological importance. The M3 motorway and residential housing associated with Otterbourne Village occur in the wider area, along with woodland and farmland.

S.5. It is recommended that the development is restricted to habitats of negligible ecological importance, notably poor semi-improved and improved grassland. Future development should be designed to avoid impacts to important or protected features which should be retained. Restoration and enhancement of habitats should be managed by a Landscape and Ecological Management Plan

S.6. Further work in regard to both habitats and protected species has been recommended, the results of which will inform a future planning application as well as mitigation and enhancement measures. With the implementation of appropriate mitigation and enhancement measures a development on the site has the ability to conform with legislation and planning policy.

Section 1: Introduction, Site Context and Purpose

Introduction

1.1. Tyler Grange Group Ltd was instructed by Barwood Land to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of a parcel of land located between Cranbourne Drive and the M3 motorway at Otterbourne, Winchester, hereafter referred to as 'the site'. The site is to be promoted for residential development in the Winchester District Council Local Plan. The site is centred on National Grid Reference SU 456 231.

Site Context

1.2. The site and boundary are shown in **Figure 1**. The site is located to the east of Otterbourne, a village in Hampshire. Residential housing associated with the village is present to the east and southeast of the site. The M3 motorway and associated woodland strip forms the western site boundary. Woodland and fields likely used for agriculture extend to the north of the site towards residential housing and to the south of the site towards Otterbourne Hill Road.

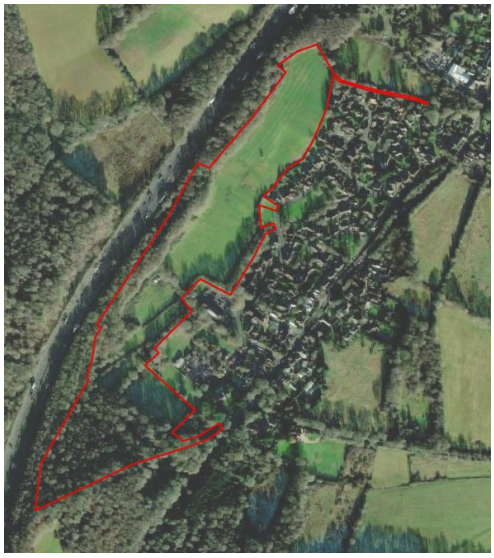


Figure 1: Aerial image of the site location and boundary (red). Image taken from Google Satellite Imaging.

Purpose

1.3. The purpose of this report is to:

- Use available background data and results of a field survey to describe and evaluate the ecological features present within the likely 'Zone of Influence' (ZoI)[1] of the proposed development;

[1] Defined as the areas/resources that may be affected by the biophysical changes caused by activities associated with a project (CIEEM, 2018).

- Describe the known and potential ecological constraints and opportunities that might affect the principle or quantum of development of the site;

- Where appropriate, make recommendations for mitigation of adverse effects and ecological enhancements to ensure conformity with policy and legislation listed in **Appendix 1**; and

- Identify the need for further work to inform a planning application in the event the site is allocated.

1.4. This assessment and the terminology used are consistent with the 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment' published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management[2] (CIEEM).

[2] Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland, 2nd Edition. http://www.cieem.net/ecia-guidelines- terrestrial-. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester

Section 2: Methodology

Data Search

2.1. A desk-based study was conducted in June 2022 whereby records of designated sites and records of protected and priority species were purchased and interrogated for the Site and the surrounding landscape. The following resources were consulted / contacted:

- Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the countryside (MAGIC) website[3];
- Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC);
- Winchester District Local Plan Part 1 - Joint Core Strategy, Adopted 2013;
- Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) website;
- UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP), now Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services[4];
- The Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) known as 'Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire'[5]; and
- Google Maps, including aerial photography.

2.2. The following areas of search around the boundary of the site were applied:

- 2km for protected and priority species;
- 2km for national non-statutory and statutory designated sites; and
- 10km for International statutory sites.

Extended Phase I Habitat Survey

2.3. An 'extended' Phase I habitat survey was undertaken by Sophie Lancaster (an experienced field surveyor) on the 21st June 2022. This survey methodology was based on guidance set out in the 'Handbook for Phase I habitat survey' (JNCC, 2010)[6] and entailed recording the main plant species and classifying and mapping broad habitat types present. Presence of, or potential for, legally protected or otherwise ecologically important species was also recorded.

2.4. The weather conditions during the survey were clear skies, 23^{0}C and light air (Beaufort wind scale.

[3] https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx
[4]https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/69446/pb13583-biodiversity-strategy-2020-111111.pdf
[5] https://documents.hants.gov.uk/biodiversity/HampshireBiodiversityActionPlanVolume2.pdf
[6] JNCC (2010). Handbook for Phase I Habitat Survey – A technique for Environmental Audit

Limitations

2.5. The cows present in field A occasionally blocked the walking route around the edge of the field. This is not however considered a significant limitation as an assessment of habitats and their suitability to support protected and priority species could still be carried out.

2.6. This report is based partly on 3rd party data from the local ecological record centre and MAGIC. Tyler Grange Group Ltd cannot vouch for the accuracy of this data.

Quality Assurance

2.7. All ecologists at Tyler Grange Group Ltd are members, or working towards membership of CIEEM, and abide by the Institute's Code of Professional Conduct.

Section 3: Ecological Features

Protected Sites

Statutory Sites

3.1. There are three international statutory sites within 10 km of the site and one national statutory site within 2 km of the site. These sites are listed in **Table 3.1** which includes the distance from the site to the designated sites and the reasons for designation.

Table 3.1 Statutory Designated Sites Within 10 km of the Site

Site Name and Designation	Distance and Direction from Site (km – N/S/W/E)	Description/Summary of Reason for Designation
International Importance – Ramsar, Special Protection Areas (SPA), Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and National Importance - Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)		
River Itchen SAC, SSSI	1.30 km E	The site is designated due to Annex I habitat 3260 Water courses of plain to montane levels with the *Ranunculion fluitantis* and *Callitricho-Batrachion* vegetation. The Itchen is a classic example of a sub-type 1 chalk river. The river is dominated throughout by aquatic *Ranunculus* spp. The site is also designated due to Annex II species, including southern damselfly (*Coenagrion mercurial),* white-clawed crayfish *(Austropotamobius pallipes),* Atlantic salmon *(Salmo salar)* and *otter (Lutra lutra).* The River Itchen is also notified as a SSSI for the above habitats but also for the invertebrates, fish, birds and mammals it supports.
Emer Bog SAC	5.34 km SW	The site comprises an extensive valley bog together with associated damp acidic grassland, heathland and developing woodland. The site is designated due to Annex I habitat 7140.
Solent & Southhampton Water RAMSAR, SPA	9.65 km SW	The site is designated due to bird assemblages of international importance including overwintering waterfowl such as Eurasian teal (*Anas crecca*), dark-bellied brent goose (*Branta bernicla bernicla*) and black-tailed godwit (*Limosa limosa islandica*) The site includes many wetland habitats characteristic of the biogeographic region: saline lagoons, saltmarshes, estuaries, intertidal flats, shallow coastal waters, grazing marshes, reedbeds, coastal woodland and rocky boulder reefs. The site supports an important assemblage of rare plants and invertebrates.
County Importance – Local Nature Reserves (LNR)		
Shawford Down LNR	1.45 km NE	Shawford Down supports a good range of chalk grassland habitats, with the rest being scrub and woodland. A diverse range of chalk grassland flora includes wild parsnip, red bartsia, cowslip and common rock-rose. The site holds a small population of Chalk Hill Blue. At present these are mainly found where their food plant horseshoe vetch grows in short turf kept open by grazing.

3.2. The site falls within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for River Itchen SSSI. The SSSI is considered sensitive to nutrient enrichment. The criteria for notification within the IRZ include infrastructure such as pipelines and transport proposals, any residential development of 100 or more houses outside existing settlements/urban areas, any industrial/agricultural development that could cause air pollution, any discharge of water or liquid waste that is discharged to ground (i.e. to seep away) or to surface water, such as a beck or stream.

The site is within the River Itchen Catchment of the SolentRegion which has been identified as being sensitive to nutrients and which could be adversely impacted by development with overnight accommodation, such as housing[7].

Non-Statutory Sites

3.3. There are 23 Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), a non-statutory designation, identified within 2 km of the site boundary. These sites are listed in **Table 3.2** which includes the distance from the site to the designated sites and the criteria for which the sites were designated. Information regarding these criteria can be found by documentation published by Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre[8][9]. Plan 15029/P01 shows the locations of those SINCs closest to the site.

3.4. SINCs are of **county ecological importance**, reflecting their status at this geographical frame of reference.

Table 3.2: Non-Statutory Designated Sites Within 2 km of the Site

Site Name	Distance and Direction from Site (km – N/S/W/E)	Description/Summary of Reason for Designation
Long Mead	Onsite	This site comes under the criteria 2A: Agriculturally unimproved grasslands which are not of recent origin.
Great Moorlands Copse Complex	Onsite	This site comes under criteria 1A: Ancient Semi-natural Woodlands.
Otterbourne Hill Common	Onsite and to the SE	This site comes under criteria 1D: Ancient semi-natural Woodlands and 2B: Semi-improved grasslands which retain a significant element of unimproved grassland.
Otterbourne Primary School Meadow	Immediately adjacent to the east	Qualifies under 2D: a grassland category.
Otterbourne Wood	0.1 km SE	This site comes under the criteria 1D: Ancient Semi-natural Woodlands
Pitmore Copse/Pitmore Gulley Copse	0.37 km S	This site comes under criteria 1A: Ancient Semi-natural Woodlands.

[7] Natural England (2020) Advice on Achieving Nutrient Neutrality for New Development in the Solent Region, Version 3.
[8] Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (2010) Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) Within Hampshire.
[9] Wilson, P (2021) Criteria for the Selection of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in Hampshire.

Site Name	Distance and Direction from Site (km – N/S/W/E)	Description/Summary of Reason for Designation
Oakwood Copse	0.40 km NE	This site is under the criteria 1A: Ancient Semi-natural Woodlands
Pitmore Copse (West)	0.46 km S	This site is under the criteria 1B: Other woodland where there is a significant element of ancient semi-natural.
Sparrowgrove Copse	0.68 km NE	This site is under the criteria 1A: Ancient Semi-natural Woodlands
Lincolns Copse	0.79 km S	This site is under criteria 1A: Ancient Semi-natural Woodlands.
Park Lane Footpath Allbrook	0.87 km SE	This site is under the criteria 1A: Ancient Semi-natural Woodlands
Allbrook Clay Pit	0.96 m S	This site is under criteria 2D: a grassland category and 5A: Areas of open freshwater (e.g., lakes, ponds, canals, rivers, streams and ditches).
Wells Row	1.08 km W	This is under the criteria 1A: Ancient Semi-natural Woodlands
The Malms Down	1.18 km NE	This site is under criteria 2D: a grassland category.
Meadows at Allbrook	1.23 km SE	This site is under criteria 2D: a grassland category.
Shawford Down	1.37 km NE	This site is under the criteria 2B: Semi-improved grasslands which retain a significant element of unimproved grassland. The site is also under criteria 6A: Sites which support one or more Hampshire Notable Species.
Boyatt Wood, Eastleigh	1.39 km S	This site is under the criteria 1A: Ancient Semi-natural Woodlands and 1B: Other woodland where there is a significant element of ancient semi-natural.
Allbrook Hill Copse	1.65 km SE	This site is under the criteria 1A: Ancient Semi-natural Woodlands
Ham Farm Meadow	1.65 km SE	This site is under the criteria 2A: Agriculturally unimproved grasslands which are not of recent origin and 5B: Fens, flushes, seepages, springs and inundation grasslands of floodplains that support a flora and fauna of less-improved wet conditions (seasonal or permanent).
Boyatt Wood - Bosville Extension	1.68 km S	This site is under the criteria 1B: Other woodland where there is a significant element of ancient semi-natural.
Strowden's Copse Belt	1.81 km W	This site is under criteria 1A: Ancient Semi-natural Woodlands
Long Meadow Ladwell	1.92 km W	This site is under criteria 5B: Fens, flushes, seepages, springs and inundation grasslands of floodplains that support a flora and fauna of less-improved wet conditions (seasonal or permanent).
Breach Farm Meadows	1.99 km SE	This site is under the criteria 5B: 5B Fens, flushes, seepages, springs and inundation grasslands of floodplains that support a flora and fauna of less-improved wet conditions (seasonal or permanent). The site is also under criteria 6A: Sites which support one or more Hampshire Notable Species.

Ancient Woodland Outside of Designated Sites

3.5. Within 2 km of the site, five parcels of ancient woodland, located outside of the designated sites detailed in **Table 3.1** and **Table 3.2**, were identified. These parcels are listed in **Table 3.3** which includes the distance from the site to the woodland and the size in hectares of the ancient woodland parcel.

3.6. Ancient woodland outside of designated sites is of **county ecological importance**.

Table 3.3: Ancient Woodland (Outside of Designated Sites) Within 2 km of the Site

Site Name	Distance and Direction from Site	Size in Hectares (Ha) of Designated Area
Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland	Adjacent to site northwest	0.91
Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland	0.09 km NW	1.27
Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland	0.65 km NW	0.71
Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland	0.94 km SE	0.90
Lord's Wood Ancient & Semi-Natural Woodland	2.0 km SE	1.57

Habitats and Flora

3.7. Habitats identified during the habitat survey are illustrated on **Plan 15029/P01**. The following habitats were recorded onsite:

- Bracken
- Broadleaved woodland
- Dense scrub
- Dry ditch
- Grassland - Improved
- Grassland - Marshy
- Grassland - Poor Semi-Improved
- Grassland - Semi-Improved Neutral
- Scattered trees
- Tall ruderal vegetation
- Hedgerows

3.8. These habitats are described below alongside indicative photographs of each habitat and an assessment of their ecological importance.

Bracken

3.9. Bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*) is present on the edges of field B and E (see **Plan 15029/P01**).

3.10. Bracken is assessed to be of **negligible ecological importance**.

Broadleaved Woodland

3.11. Broadleaved woodland occurs surrounding fields A, C, D and E. The largest expanse of woodland is south of field E and is an oak (*Quercus robur*) woodland with ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and silver birch (*Betula pendula*) also making up the canopy. A hazel (*Corylus avellana*) understorey is present with cherry (*Prunus* sp.) and holly (*Ilex aquifolium*). The north-west length of the woodland was on notably undulating ground, and the ground flora varied from low-lying bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) scrub, bracken, bare ground with scattered ferns, and hollows dominated by sedges.

3.12. Where the woodland habitat is located immediately west of fields A, C and D its composition differs. In field D it was noted that the woodland immediately southwest comprised sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and ash and to the northwest, ash trees over-hang into the field, with a frequent oak and a hazel understorey. On the woodland corner between fields C and D there is a patch of young woodland comprising silver birch and ash.

3.13. The woodland northwest of field A and C is situated on a mound and was evidently planted in the last 10-20 years on the woodland edge. The planted areas are dominated by hazel, with holly, dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*) and cherry. The more mature areas of woodland also comprised a canopy of abundant cherry, along with ash, hazel and oak. As the woodland extends south to the bottom end of field C field maple (*Acer campestre*) and silver birch become more prominent.

3.14. The woodland canopy that overhangs into field B comprises oak and field maple. This parcel turns to silver birch woodland towards the site boundary on the northwest corner. In the far northwest boundary the woodland is more likely to be remnants of an overgrown hedgerow due to the species composition, with oak, field maple, hazel, elder (*Sambucus nigra*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) and bramble noted.

3.15. The strips of woodland along the south-east boundaries of fields A and D are planted and relatively young in age, with the exception of scattered stands of oak. It is likely that the woodland strip has been planted to provide a buffer between the fields and the existing residential development, however self-seeding is also prevalent. The scattered mature oak specimens noted suggest that an oak woodland may have once been present. The species recorded along field D include silver birch, willow (*Salix* sp.), hawthorn, elder, alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and ash with a bramble understorey. The species composition alters where it runs along field A and comprises field maple, elm (*Ulmus* sp.), cherry, horse chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), ash and poplar (*Populus* sp.). An understorey is present of hazel and holly and ground flora of common nettle (*Urtica dioica*).

3.16. The woodland is variable around the site and such woodland habitat is widespread in the area, however, deciduous woodland is a priority habitat and therefore, is assessed to be of **county value**. Woodland to the south of the site is part of Great Moorlands Copse Complex, with some small sections within Otterbourne Hill Common SINC, see **Table 3.2** for details of these sites. These sites are shown on **Plan 15029/P01**. The strips of woodland along the south-east boundaries of

fields A and D are considered an exception as they are thin strips of young, planted woodland and therefore assessed to be of **local ecological importance**.

Dense Scrub

3.17. Dense scrub on-site is restricted to the field edges and is predominantly dominated by bramble with two exceptions, the southeast boundary of field C which is a line of willow, and the scrub at the site entrance (adjacent to hedgerow H2), which comprises field maple, dog rose (*Rosa canina*), hawthorn, wild privet (*Ligustrum vulgare*), willow, elder, bramble and hazel.

3.18. Overall, the dense scrub provides limited benefit to notable species and is largely dominated by bramble which is common and widespread. Dense scrub is assessed to be of **negligible ecological importance**.

Dry Ditch

3.19. A dry ditch extends through the woodland strip southeast of fields A and D, it also diverts and runs through the willow scrub that divides fields C and D. The majority of the ditch is not visible from the fields and is densely shaded by the woodland and scrub. A deep dry ditch was also recorded along the south-west boundary of field E. Bramble encroachment and common nettle covered the ditch in areas.

3.20. The dry ditches were not recorded to support notable plant species and are assessed to be of **negligible ecological importance**.

Grassland - Improved

3.21. Located immediately north of the site entrance is a small patch of regularly mown grassland that is accessible to the public. The grassland's species composition is indicative of a modified sward and comprises abundant perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*). Other species present include daisy (*Bellis perennis*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*), creeping cinquefoil (*Potentilla reptans*), lesser trefoil (*Trifolium dubium*), cat's-ear (*Hypochaeris radicata*), selfheal (*Prunella vulgaris*), chickweed (*Stellaria media*), creeping buttercup (*Ranunculus repens*) and Yorkshire fog (*Holcus lanatus*). Improved grassland is assessed to be of **negligible ecological importance.**

Grassland - Marshy

3.22. Field C has been categorised as marshy grassland as it supports species indicative of wet and seasonally waterlogged conditions including abundant sedges and rushes, southern marsh-orchid (*Dactylorhiza praetermissa*), marsh thistle (*Cirsium palustre*) and creeping jenny (*Lysimachia nummularia*). Target notes (TN1 and TN2 on **Plan 15019/P01**) indicate the location of common spotted orchid (*Dactylorhiza fuchsia*) and southern-marsh orchid which were recorded within this field and as these two species readily hybridise there is a possibility of hybrids being present. Field C was unmanaged at the time of survey with grass at waist height.

3.23. Of the grasslands on the site, field C supports the most notable flora composition with forbs, sedges and rushes predominating grasses and two species of orchid recorded. Six species indicative of unimproved grassland were found within marshy grassland. Therefore, there is the potential for this habitat to qualify as a priority habitat and as a SINC under Criterion 2 for SINC

designation in Hampshire[10]. No species listed under Hampshire's Priority Species list were recorded during the survey. As there is the potential for this field to meet the criteria for priority habitat and SINC designation this habitat could be of up to **county ecological importance**.

Grassland - Poor Semi-Improved

3.24. Fields A and B are assessed to be poor semi-improved swards as they are dominated by grasses making up more than 75% of overall cover. Furthermore, the diversity of plants within a square metre was less than nine species, which is a characteristic of modified grassland. The grasses and forbs present are indicative of a neutral sward, however, evidence of nutrient enrichment was also noted in the presence of perennial rye-grass and white clover. Field A was grazed with cattle at the time of survey and field B was unmanaged with grass at waist height.

3.25. Overall, the poor semi-improved grassland is assessed to be of up to **negligible ecological importance**.

Grassland - Semi-Improved Neutral

3.26. These fields (D and E) are not particularly species rich, however, they do support a high density of forbs, in particular meadowsweet (*Filipendula ulmaria*), as well as, sedges and rushes, which imply damp conditions. Species indicative of nutrient enrichment such as perennial rye-grass and white clover are absent and rare, respectively. Field E is dominated by grasses significantly more than field D, where sedges and rushes account for more than 50% of cover in areas. Fields D and E were unmanaged at the time of survey with grass at waist height.

3.27. Target note 3 (TN3 on **Plan 15019/P01**) indicates the location of a small area of semi-improved grassland behind fencing and thus, out of reach from grazing. The small patch of grassland comprised a high density of forbs alongside grasses such as false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*) and Yorkshire fog. The forbs included dominant oxeye daisy (*Leucanthemum vulgare*), frequent knapweed (*Centaurea nigra*), with perforate St John's-wort (*Hypericum perforatum*), wild basil (*Clinopodium vulgare*), selfheal and black medick (*Medicago lupulina*). The wild basil is the only species noted that is indicative of calcareous soil, overall, the soil is considered to be base rich.

3.28. Field D is already designated by Long Mead SINC and contained five species indicative of unimproved grassland. In field E, six indicator species were noted. Whilst these fields were not considered to be particularly species rich during the survey, they both contained species indicative of unimproved grassland and could therefore meet the criteria for priority habitat and Criterion 2 for designation as a SINC in Hampshire. Semi-improved grassland fields are therefore assessed to be of **up to county ecological importance.**

Scattered Trees

3.29. Two scattered trees were recorded within the site, comprising a semi-mature oak on the edge of field B and a mature ash on the south-east corner of field E.

[10] Wilson, P (2021) Criteria for the Selection of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) in Hampshire

3.30. Such tree species are common within the local area, however owing to the maturity of these specimens they are assessed to be of **local ecological importance**.

Tall Ruderal Vegetation

3.31. Tall ruderal vegetation makes up a small total area of the site and a thin strip of common nettle dominated ruderal vegetation is mapped within field B's south-east boundary. Small patches of common nettle were also recorded within the dry ditch that extends along field E's south-west boundary.

3.32. Overall, the tall ruderal vegetation on-site is assessed to be of **negligible ecological importance**.

Hedgerows

3.33. Seven hedgerows were recorded within the site, shown on **Plan 15029/P01** as H1 to H7. Hedgerows are differentiated on the plan as follows:

- Hedgerows have been assigned "species-poor" if they support less than five woody species.
- Hedgerows are only identified as "hedgerows with trees" when the tree standards are of reasonable density (less than 100 m separation and disseminated throughout the hedgerow).

3.34. Details of the hedgerows are provided in **Table 3.4**. Woody species present within the hedgerows were recorded, except for bramble as it is not considered a woody species of note within the Hedgerows Regulations 1997 and can be assumed present in all hedgerows on-site. Sycamore is noted in the comments for hedgerow H6 but not recorded as a woody species, as sycamore is not recognised within the Hedgerows Regulations 1997. None of the hedgerows had an associated parallel ditch.

3.35. Overall, hedgerows H2 to H5 have the potential to be "important" under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997. Hedgerows on the site are considered to be of **at least local ecological importance**.

Table 3.4: Details of Hedgerows Recorded on the Site.

Hedge No.	Woody species[11]																Intact[12]	Trees	Margin width	Comments
	Ac	Cs	Lv	Cm	Qr	P	Sa	Bp	Ca	Rc	Fe	Ia	Ps	Sn	Ag	U				
H1	F	O	F	F	O	R											Y	N	None	The hedgerow is around 4 m tall and amenity grassland extends right up to base of the hedgerow. A residential property is parallel and therefore, it is not possible for this hedgerow to be classified as "Important".
H2		R		F	F		O	O	R	O	O	R					Y	Y	>0.5m	The hedgerow is very thick and could be considered scrub habitat. there is a dense bramble understorey with trees present being young to semi-mature. It is tall and the height has not been managed for many years. Potential to be an "important" hedgerow.
H3	O			F	R		R		O				R	R			Y	Y	>0.5m	Footpath parallel. Bramble is abundant. Height is more than 5m and has not been topped in many years. Potential to be an "important" hedgerow.
H4	F	R		F	F			R	O	R			O			A	Y	Y	N	Bramble dominant. Potential to be an "important" hedgerow.
H5							O	R	R	R	R				F		Y	Y	N	This hedgerow is predominantly a tree line with bramble dominating. Trees relatively young Potential to be an "important" hedgerow.
H6					D						O						N	Y	N	Mature oaks and ash with bramble in between. No distinction between field and hedgerow margin. Sycamore is present.
H7							F				F			R			Y	Y	N	Bramble dominates. Tree stands include ash.

[11] Ac = *Acer campestre* (field maple); Cs = *Cornus sanguinea* (dogwood); Lv = *Ligustrum vulgare* (Wild privet); Cm = *Crataegus monogyna* (hawthorn); Qr = *Quercus robur* (pedunculate oak); P = *Prunus* sp. (prunus species); Sa = *Salix* sp. (willow species); Bp = *Betula pendula* (silver birch); Ca = Corylus avellana (hazel); Rc = *Rosa canina* (dog rose); Fe = *Fraxinus excelsior* (ash); Ia = Ilex aquifolium (holly); Ps = *Prunus spinosa* (blackthorn); Sn = *Sambucus nigra* (elder); Ag = Alnus glutinosa (alder); U = *Ulmus* sp. (elm);
[12] Y = Yes and N = No

Fauna

3.36. An assessment of ecological importance has been provided using the results of the extended Phase 1 habitat survey and desk study, however further surveys would be required to confirm these assessments. Survey requirements are outlined in **Section 4**.

Badger

3.37. Two records of badger were returned in the desk study, the closest was located c. 1.13 north of the site. No badger (*Meles meles*) setts were recorded or any evidence of presence. A large burrow of suitable size for badger was recorded (see TN3 on **Plan 14446/P01**), however, it was occupied by rabbits and no evidence of current badger use was recorded. Mammal paths were recorded around the edges of the fields but none that were heavily used or obviously attributed to badger. Whilst fields onsite are of foraging value to badger, the unmanaged conditions of the majority of the grassland renders these areas sub-optimal for foraging.

3.38. Scrub and woodland habitat onsite offer suitable foraging habitat, as well as sett creation opportunities. There is potential for badger setts to be present within the woodland on and immediately adjacent to the site.

3.39. Any badger population using the site would be considered of **negligible ecological importance** as this species is common and widespread and suitable habitats exists for badger in the wider area.

Bats

3.40. 205 records representing 13 species were returned in the desk study, the closest record was located 126 m north of the site boundary. Species included Western barbastelle (*Barbastella barbastellus*), four *Myotis* species, both *Nyctalus* species and two pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus*) species. According to the MAGIC website, 22 European Protected Species (EPS) licences have been granted within 2 km of the site, with the closest being c. 500 m south, for the destruction of a resting place of brown long-eared (*Plecotus auritus*), common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*).

3.41. The scattered trees and mature tree specimens present within hedgerows H3, H4 and H6, as well as trees within the on-site woodlands and overhanging canopy along the north-west boundary of field B offer suitable roosting opportunities for bats.

3.42. The site is approximately 14 ha and predominantly bounded by woodland habitat. The edges of the fields are of high suitability for foraging and commuting bats and the site has potential to be part of a wider high value foraging and commuting route for bats. This is as the bounding woodland continues south-east for approximately 1.4 km where it reaches a railway line and the River Itchen that provide extensive green corridors within the wider landscape. Furthermore, the M3 is immediately west of the site and provides an extensive green corridor for bats.

3.43. Due to the information returned in the desk study and the potential suitability of habitats present on the site for bats, the assemblage of bats using the site would be considered of at least **local ecological importance**.

Birds

3.44. Red kites and woodcock have both been recorded on the site. Overall, 356 records representing 68 species of bird were returned within 2 km of the site. Species within the search radius include overwintering species such as firecrest (*Regulus ignicapilla*), species associated with aquatic habitats such as little egret (*Egretta garzetta*) and species which could breed on the site such as marsh tit (Poecile palustris) and ground nesting yellow wagtail (*Motacilla flava*). Several birds of prey were also recorded including hobby (*Falco Subbuteo*) and peregrine (*Falco peregrinus*).

3.45. Habitats within the site such as hedgerows and woodland provide suitable habitat for nesting birds. Open grassland could also support ground nesting bird species. Field B is considered to be of highest potential to support ground nesting birds, although none were heard or seen at the time of the survey. The fields C, D and E are sub-optimal due to their enclosed nature. Noise pollution from the adjacent M3 and school was notable and may act as a deterrent for ground nesting birds. The grassland does offer opportunities for hunting barn owl (*Tyto alba*) and other birds of prey however the presence of the motorway nearby may reduce suitability for barn owl.

3.46. Habitats on the site have the potential to support breeding birds, including ground nesting birds. Bird assemblages on the site have the potential to be of at least **local ecological importance**.

Great Crested Newt

3.47. No records of Great Crested Newt (GCN) were returned within 2 km of the site in the desk study.

3.48. The unmanaged grassland, scrub, woodland, tall ruderal and hedgerow habitat on-site offer suitable terrestrial habitat for GCN (*Triturus cristatus*). There are no ponds located within the site and the ditches present were dry at the time of the survey. The nearest potential breeding habitat are two ponds within the school grounds identified on OS mapping, located approximately 20 m and 40 m south-east of field D. Another pond is located approximately 170m north of field B.

3.49. Due to the proximity of ponds to the site, GCN cannot be ruled out and, if present, any population using the site would be considered to be of at least **local ecological importance**.

Hazel Dormouse

3.50. A single record of hazel dormouse was returned in the desk study, located 1.7 km northeast of the site boundary.

3.51. The site offers suitable habitat for hazel dormouse in the form of woodland, scrub and mature hedgerows. The site is directly connected to the M3 green corridor which is known to support hazel dormouse.

3.52. Due to the suitability of habitat onsite and the connectivity of the site to habitats known to support hazel dormouse, the presence of the species on the site cannot be ruled out and, if present, any population using the site would be considered to be of **county ecological importance**.

Reptiles

3.53. Two records of adder (*Vipera berus*) were returned from within the site boundary to the southeast. Grass snake, slow worm and common lizard have also been recorded within 2 km of the site boundary, with the closest records being those of grass snake and common lizard, located 96 m northeast of the site.

3.54. The unmanaged grassland fields, woodland, tall ruderal, bracken, hedgerows and scrub offer suitable foraging and sheltering opportunities for reptiles. The edges of the grazed field also offer basking opportunities, with the south-east facing mound within field A, (which comprises a habitat mosaic of grazed and ungrazed grassland, scrub and woodland habitat) offering high value habitat. The swards of the unmanaged fields vary in height with short patches apparent, which may also be utilised for basking. The hedgerow bases and root systems of mature trees offer suitable hibernacula habitat for widespread species of reptile.

3.55. At least one reptile species if recorded to occur onsite and the site provides a suitable habitat mosaic for all species of common reptile, if present, any reptile population using the site would be considered to be of at least **local ecological importance**.

Other Notable Species

3.56. The desk study returned records of several invertebrate species within 2 km of the site including stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*), c. 1.3 km southwest of the site and striped lychnis (*Cucullia lychnitis*). The southern half of the site is of greatest botanical interest and field C was noted to have potential to support a notable assemblage of invertebrates, with the noise emitted from crickets etc, reported as notable. When walking through field B, marbled white (*Melanargia galathe*) and meadow brown (*Maniola jurtina*) butterflies were frequently recorded.

3.57. Grassland, scrub, woodland, hedgerows and tall ruderal vegetation onsite have the potential to support NERC Act priority species:

- Harvest mouse (*Micromys minutus*) of which one record was returned in the desk study, c. 1.8 km northeast of the site boundary
- Brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*) of which two records returned c. 0.95 km west of the site boundary
- Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) of which 33 records of hedgehog were returned in the desk study with the closest record located 0.3 km west of the site
- Common toad (*Bufo bufo) of which four records were returned; the closest record was 703 m south.*

Section 4: Considerations in Respect of Proposed Development

Proposed Development

4.1 The proposals are for the construction of residential development with associated green and blue infrastructure. Current plans indicate that the development will be restricted to areas of poor semi-improved and improved grassland on the site.

4.2 Issues to be considered in respect of future development of the site and those important ecological features that exist, or have potential to exist, are described below. Opportunities to deliver biodiversity gain are also described, with reference to relevant legislation and planning policy, summarised in **Appendix 1**.

Protected Sites

Statutory Sites

4.3 In March 2022, Winchester City Council was one of many authorities that was advised by Natural England to consider nutrient neutrality in respect of future development. They have a position statement on nutrient neutrality and have specifically stated development in the Itchen SSSI and SAC catchment will not be permitted until it can be demonstrated that a development would not result in an increase in nitrates and phosphates in the catchment. Their website states that "*Many forms of residential development, including new homes and other uses, which provide overnight accommodation, can potentially have an adverse impact on nationally protected sites in the district and broader Solent area because of the waste water they generate.*" [13]

4.4 The site is within the catchment of the River Itchen and, given residential development is proposed, an effect in combination with other residential developments on the features for which the protected site is notified is likely to occur. Reg 63 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, further supported by planning policy CP16 and guidance in the NPPF, conditions that permission cannot be granted until it can be demonstrated that there would be no effect on the SAC, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects. If there would be a nutrient surplus from waste water treatment works then mitigation will be required to achieve nutrient neutrality. This is a matter that will affect all such development in the Itchen catchment, with no development that could have an effect coming forward until such time as mitigation is identified. Examples of mitigation measures to achieve nutrient neutrality with regard to nitrogen in the Solent region are provided in Natural England guidance[14] and it is recommended that measures are implemented within the same catchment as the development's location, which in this case would be the River Test and River Itchen catchment.

[13] https://www.winchester.gov.uk/planning/wcc-position-statement-on-nitrate-neutral-development [Accessed 28th July 2022]
[14] Natural England (2020) Advice on Achieving Nutrient Neutrality for New Development in the Solent Region, Version 3.

4.5 Given the distances involved and the likely size of development, direct or indirect impacts to other statutory protected sites would not be anticipated.

Non-Statutory Sites and Ancient Woodland

4.6 Three SINCs occur within the site, these are Long Mead which encompasses field D and some adjacent habitat,Great Moorlands Copse Complex which includes the majority of woodland within the southeast of the site and Otterbourne Hill Common which includes small sections of woodland in the very south of the site. Otterbourne Primary School Meadow occurs immediately adjacent to the site. In line with local planning policy (CP16) these sites must be protected, and enhancements of these sites will be encouraged. Whilst current plans do not include the development of these areas, the proximity of the proposals on the site to Long Mead, Great Moorlands Copse Complex, Otterbourne Hill Common and Otterbourne Primary School Meadow mean that measures should be put in place to protect these sites and enhance them if feasible. These measures include:

- Avoid changes to hydrology on the site to maintain the current water levels and ensure wetter habitats don't dry out
- Control of public access to limit disturbance to sensitive habitats and provision of education panels to help the public understand the importance and sensitivity of habitats on the site
- Retention and enhancement of wildlife corridors between these sites and habitats
- Designing SuDS and landscaping to complement existing habitat features
- Management via a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) which includes steps to enhance habitats

4.7 Early consultation with the Local Planning Authority is recommended to agree a strategy for the SINCs and provide confidence in the site's allocation.

4.8 Measures put in place to protect the aforementioned SINCs should also take into account the protection of the ancient woodland parcel adjacent to the site.

4.9 Given the distances involved and the likely size of development, direct or indirect impacts to other non-statutory protected sites and any other ancient woodland parcels within 2 km of the site would not be anticipated.

Habitats and Flora

4.10 It is recommended that development is restricted to habitats of lowest importance which would be poor semi-improved grassland in fields A and B, see **Paragraph 4.16**. Habitats of higher importance should be protected and enhanced.

4.11 The NPPF iterates the importance of establishing, protecting and enhancing ecological networks, this is reflected in both policy CP15 and CP16 of the local plan. The Hampshire Ecological Network[15],

[15] Court, N. and Ritter, W. (2020). Mapping the Hampshire Ecological Network, On behalf of the Local Nature Partnership, Version 3 March 2020.

part of the National Habitat Network[16], classifies SINCs and ancient woodland, including those mentioned in relation to the site, as 'core non-statutory sites'. The Network also identifies "Opportunity Areas" of which there are four within the site, these opportunity areas are located around the boundaries of fields A and C and include broadleaved woodland, neutral grassland and grassland within a floodzone.

4.12 Semi-improved neutral grassland in field E (field D is considered in **Paragraph 4.6**) and marshy grassland have the potential to qualify as priority habitat and may meet the criteria for designation as a SINC in Hampshire. These sites should be protected in the first instance and if the site is allocated then further botanical survey is recommended to inform future management and opportunities to enhance semi-improved neutral grassland and marshy grassland on the site.

4.13 Broadleaved woodland, scattered trees, and hedgerows are considered to be of local, or up to local ecological importance. Current plans indicate that the majority of these areas are to be retained. In accordance with the NPPF mitigation hierarchy, these habitats should be safeguarded and there are opportunities to enhance them.

4.14 Furthermore, broadleaved woodland and hedgerows are both priority habitats and hedgerows may receive additional protection under the Hedgerows Regulations 1997. Under the NPPF, measures should be put in place to conserve, restore and enhance these habitats, whilst policy CP16 of the local plan states "*Planning proposals that have the potential to affect priority habitats and/or species or sites of ecological importance will be required to take account of evidence and relevant assessments or surveys.*" Hedgerows are a habitat included in the Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan which aims to ensure no further loss or degradation, increase the extent and improve the quality of habitats for which action plans have been produced.

Biodiversity Net Gain

4.15 The NPPF, updated in July 2021, states that planning and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural environment by, amongst others, "minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures". Whilst the Hampshire Core Strategy does not specify the need for biodiversity net gain (BNG) assessments, Core Policy CP16 refers to the requirement for delivering net gain.

4.16 Current plans indicate that fields A and B will be lost to facilitate the proposed development. Whilst there are opportunities for enhancement and BNG within the site, there would be limited ability to mitigate onsite the proposed extent of loss of semi-improved grassland habitat, despite the habitat having been assessed as having negligible ecological value. If it becomes apparent through the development of detailed plans that proposals are likely to lead to a net loss of biodiversity, either the proposed development footprint will have to be reduced or off-site compensation will need to be considered.

Fauna

[16] Natural England (2020). National Habitat Network Maps: User Guidance v.2.

4.17 The plans indicate the retention of much of what has initially been assessed as the most valuable habitats onsite to fauna species on the site. This includes commuting corridors (such as woodland and hedgerows) for movement within and around the site, marshy grassland which is considered valuable to invertebrate species, and scrub and unmanaged grassland which could support GCN, foraging badger and reptiles.

4.18 Several species with the potential to be on site such as species of bat, hazel dormouse and striped lychnis are action plan species in the Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan which aims to enhance the status of these species in Hampshire.

4.19 Semi-improved grassland in fields A and B, currently planned to be lost, still has the potential to support species groups, particularly reptiles and ground nesting bird species.

4.20 Detailed surveys will be required to determine the significance of habitats within the site to protected and notable species in advance of a planning application.

4.21 Future development would need to include a commitment to lighting that retains dark corridors, especially along the northern, eastern and southern boundaries.

4.22 The built form could include features for species such as birds, bats and invertebrates, with permeability provided to enable species such as hedgehog to move unhindered.

4.23 Fauna such as brown hare and harvest mouse are likely to be displaced by development of fields A and B, though given the abundance of suitable habitats within the site to the south and in the wider area this is not likely to be significant. Furthermore, such effects should be considered against the likely benefits to fauna species which could occur if habitats within the site are enhanced as a result of the proposed development.

Further Work to Inform a Planning Application

4.24 Assuming the site is allocated, the following work may be required (depending on final development plans) to inform a future planning application, the nature and scope of any mitigation and enhancement required and inform the evolution of a masterplan for the site (the scope of this should be agreed with the planning authority).

- A mitigation strategy to address potential effects to the River Itchen, in sufficient detail for the planning authority to complete a Habitats Regulations Assessment of the project;
- A biodiversity impact calculator to demonstrate BNG;
- A National Vegetation Classification (NVC) survey of marshy grassland and semi-improved grassland, if these habitats are due to be impacted by the proposed development and/or to inform enhancement of these habitats for biodiversity;
- A hedgerow assessment of hedgerows on the site if they are to be impacted by the proposed development;
- Badger survey;

- Bat activity surveys with a survey effort in line with Bat Conservation Trust[17] guidance for a site of high value to bats;
- A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of any trees likely to be felled or indirectly impacted (e.g. light spill and noise) by the development;
- Breeding bird surveys with a focus on ground nesting bird species and an assessment of the habitats onsite for barn owl;
- Environmental DNA (eDNA) surveys of waterbodies within 250 m of the site boundary to check for the presence/likely absence of GCN;
- Dormouse surveys;
- Reptile surveys; and,
- Invertebrate survey of field C, if it is due to be impacted by the proposed development and/or to inform enhancement of the field for biodiversity.

[17] Collins, J. (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. 3rd edition. Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Section 5: Conclusions

5.1 In conclusion, several ecological issues have been identified that could affect the principle of development or significantly affect the quantum of development. These issues pertain to the presence of the site within the nutrient sensitive areas of the River Itchen SSSI and SAC and wider Solent Region, the presence of non-statutory sites within or adjacent to the site, the presence of priority habitats and habitats of ecological interest within the site, and the potential for the site to support several protected or notable species.

5.2 However, based on the incorporation of the measures described below, a development within the site has the ability to be compliant with existing and emerging local and national planning policy and legislation:

- A mitigation strategy to achieve nutrient neutrality;
- A LEMP which includes strategies to protect SINCs on and adjacent to the site and the delivery of a long-term management plan to ensure the security of created and retained habitats, including priority habitats;
- Proposals that ensure that they deliver the requirements for biodiversity net gain in line with current policy and legislation. Where this isn't possible within the red line boundary, off-site mitigation is likely to be required; and,
- The use of results of protected/notable species surveys to inform any detailed site layout/design and embed mitigation.

Appendix 1: Legislation and Planning Policy

Legislation

A1.1 Specific habitats and species receive legal protection in the UK under various pieces of legislation, including:

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended);
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2018;
- The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000;
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006;
- The Hedgerows Regulations 1997; and The Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

A1.2 The European Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna, 1992, often referred to as the 'Habitats Directive', provides for the protection of key habitats and species considered of European importance. Annexes II and IV of the Directive list all species considered of community interest. The legal framework to protect the species covered by the Habitats Directive has been enacted under UK law through The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2018 (as amended).

A1.3 In Britain, the WCA 1981 (as amended) is the primary legislation protecting habitats and species. SSSIs, representing the best examples of our natural heritage, are notified under the WCA 1981 (as amended) by reason of their flora, fauna, geology or other features. All breeding birds, their nests, eggs and young are protected under the Act, which makes it illegal to knowingly destroy or disturb the nest site during nesting season. Schedules 1, 5 and 8 afford protection to individual birds, other animals and plants.

A1.4 The CRoW Act 2000 strengthens the species enforcement provisions of the WCA 1981 (as amended) and makes it an offence to 'recklessly' disturb a protected animal whilst it is using a place of rest or shelter or breeding/nest site.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), July 2021

A1.5 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was updated in July 2021 and sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It replaces the National Planning Policy Framework published in July 2019.

A1.6 Paragraph 11 states that:

"Plans and decisions should apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development."

A1.7 Section 15 of the NPPF (paragraphs 174 to 182) considers the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment including habitats and biodiversity (paragraphs 179-182)

A1.8 Paragraph 174 states that planning and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- *"protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- *recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland; and*
- *minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures"*

A1.9 Paragraph 175 states that plans should distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.

A1.10 Paragraph 179 states that in order to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, 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.*

A1.11 When determining planning applications, Paragraph 180 states that local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles:

- *"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;*
- *development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, 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 Sites of Special Scientific Interest;*
- *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; and*
- *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.

A1.12 As stated in paragraph 181 the following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:

- *"potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;*
- *listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and*
- *sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.*

A1.13 Paragraph 182 states that the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where the planned project is likely to have a significant effect on a habitat site (alone or in combination with other plans or projects) unless an appropriate assessment has concluded the plan or project will not adversely affect the integrity of the habitats site.

Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System

A1.11 ODPM Circular 06/05 was prepared to accompany PPS9, however continues to be valid, and material in the consideration of planning applications since PPS9's replacement by the NPPF.

A1.12 ODPM Circular 06/05 provides guidance on applying legislation in relation to nature conservation and planning in England. Part I considers the legal protection and conservation of internationally designated sites (namely candidate Special Areas of Conservation (cSACs), SACs, potential Special Protection Areas (pSPAs), SPAs and Ramsar sites) and Part II considers the legal protection and conservation of nationally designated sites, namely Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

A1.13 Part III considers the protection of habitats and species outside of designated areas (particularly UK Biodiversity Action Plan species and habitats, which it states are capable of being a material consideration in the preparation of local development documents and the making of planning decisions.

A1.14 Part IV considers species protected by law and states that the presence of a protected species is a material consideration in the consideration of a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat and that it is essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent that they may be affected by the proposed development, is established before the planning permission is granted.

Local Planning Policy

A1.15 The Winchester District Council Local Plan (adopted March 2013) is the key planning document within the Local Development Framework (LDF) which sets out the long-term vision for the area and the policies needed to deliver sustainable communities in the period up to 2031.

A1.16 The policies which make reference to ecology and nature conservation issues within this document and are of relevance to the site are:

POLICY CP15 – Green Infrastructure

'*The Local Planning Authority will support development proposals which:*

- *maintain, protect and enhance the function or the integrity of the existing green infrastructure network identified at a District and sub regional level, including strategic blue and green corridors and spaces, as illustrated on Map 9 particularly where the proposal allows for the enhancement of GI both on-site and in the immediate area;*
- *provide a net gain of well managed, multifunctional green infrastructure, in accordance with the categories and standards specified in Policy CP7 and appropriate for the scale of development, through on-site provision which:*
  - *addresses deficits in local green infrastructure provision where appropriate;*
  - *integrates with the green network/grid identified at the District and sub-regional level (as illustrated on Map 9); provides a high quality public realm for the local community;*
  - *encourages public access to and within the natural environment where appropriate;*
  - *allows for adaptation to climate change;*
  - *is well planned to allow cost effective ongoing management of the GI;*
  - *links areas of biodiversity;*
  - *is provided at the earliest feasible stage.*

Where on-site provision is not possible financial contributions will be required for the provision and management of GI sites and will be negotiated on a site by site basis.'

POLICY CP16 – Biodiversity

'*The Local Planning Authority will support development which maintains, protects and enhances biodiversity across the District, delivering a net gain in biodiversity, and has regard to the following:*

- *protecting sites of international, European, and national importance, and local nature conservationsites, from inappropriate development.*
- *supporting habitats that are important to maintain the integrity of European sites.*
- *new development will be required to show how biodiversity can be retained, protected and enhanced through its design and implementation, for example by designing for wildlife, delivering BAP targets and enhancing Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.*
- *new development will be required to avoid adverse impacts, or if unavoidable ensure that impacts are appropriately mitigated, with compensation measures used only as a last resort. Development proposals will only be supported if the benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm to the habitat and/or species.*
- *maintaining a District wide network of local wildlife sites and corridors to support the integrity of the biodiversity network, prevent fragmentation, and enable biodiversity to respond and adapt to the impacts of climate change.*
- *supporting and contributing to the targets set out in the District's Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) for priority habitats and species.*
- *Planning proposals that have the potential to affect priority habitats and/or species or sites of ecological importance will be required to take account of evidence and relevant assessments or surveys.*'

Biodiversity Action Plans

Biodiversity Action Plan for Hampshire - Volume Two

A1.17 The biodiversity action plan for Hampshire sets out strategic action for biodiversity within the county, with detailed action plans for individual habitats and species of priority concern. Lists of those habitats and species included in these plans can be found in the document.[18]

A1.18 Objectives of habitat and species action plans are as follows:

Habitats

- Ensure no further loss or degradation of the habitat
- Increase the extent of the habitat
- Improve the quality of the habitat
- Ensure the requirements of all priority species associated with the habitat are met
- Improve knowledge of the habitat, through survey, research and monitoring
- Ensure appropriate provision of information and communication

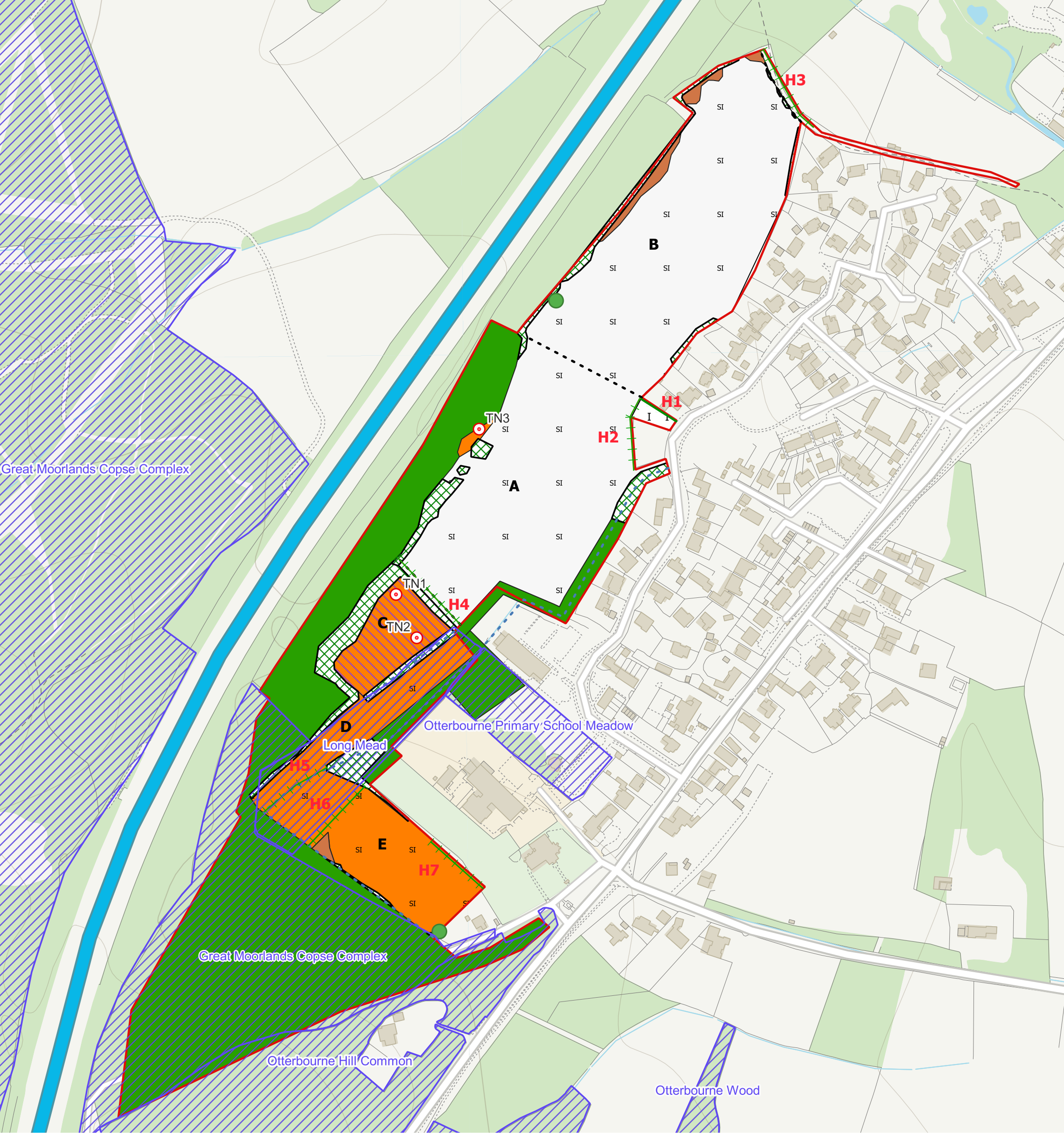
Species

- Maintain existing populations of the species
- Enhance the status of the species in Hampshire
- Improve knowledge and understanding of the species through survey, research and monitoring
- Promote communication, education and awareness of the status and needs of the species

[18] https://documents.hants.gov.uk/biodiversity/HampshireBiodiversityActionPlanVolume2.pdf

Plan:

15029_P01_Habitat Plan



Key

- Red Line Boundary
- Dense Scrub
- Tall Ruderal Vegetation
- Bracken
- SI — Semi-Improved Neutral Grassland
- Marshy Grassland
- Broadleaved Woodland
- SI — Poor Semi-Improved Grassland
- I — Improved Grassland
- Native-Species Poor Hedgerow with Trees
- Native-Species Rich Hedgerow with Trees
- Native-Species Rich Hedgerow
- Dry Ditch
- Fence
- Target Note
- Scattered Trees
- Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)

N

0 50 m

Project	Land at Otterbourne
Drawing Title	Habitat Features
Scale	1:3,000
Drawing No.	15029
Date	08 2022
Checked	RW/JA

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