

Dormouse Mitigation Strategy & Precautionary Working Method Statement

Land to the East of Northfields Lane, Westergate

Document Control

Version	Status	Author / Checker	Date
V1.0	Draft for Planning	Ed / Jamie	31 October 2025
V1.1	Final	Ed / Jamie	12 November 2025
V1.2	Rev1	Ed/ Jamie	7 January 2026

1. Introduction

Background:

The EclA submitted in respect of this site concludes that dormice are likely to be present on or at the edge of the site, particularly along the northern hedge and linked boundary vegetation. It also concludes that the site itself does not contain sufficient suitable habitat to justify a full on-site nest-tube survey and that requiring full survey effort on off-site land would be disproportionate for a single dwelling with very limited habitat loss. In other words, dormice are likely to be present in the adjacent hedgerow, not within the development footprint, and further surveys would not materially change the assessment, or the mitigation required.

The dormouse mitigation strategy for the adjacent 288-unit Taylor Wimpey development reached the same essential conclusion with mitigation focused on retaining and protecting key habitat, maintaining connectivity, and undertaking careful vegetation clearance.

Natural England confirm at Appendix 3 that “the ultimate decision on whether to apply for a license or not will rest with the person responsible for commissioning the proposed activity, by considering the advice of the consultant ecologist”.

The Dormouse Survey Guidelines (PTES/NE) and the Standing Advice for protected species are all clear that you do not need to survey land you do not control, or land that will not be directly affected. Policy 4 specifically allows an assumed-presence license with proportionate mitigation where:

- habitat loss is very small or of low suitability.
- dormice are known or likely nearby.
- survey effort would be disproportionate; and

- mitigation can satisfactorily avoid risk.

That is precisely the situation here:

- the site contains only very limited, low-quality habitat (bramble, grass, scrub).
- the high-quality dormouse habitat is in the surrounding hedgerow, which is to be retained; and
- the development footprint simply justifies a carefully supervised clearance method, not a full survey program.

On this basis, our understanding is that, under Policy 4, Natural England will accept:

- no additional dormouse survey.
- a license based on assumed presence.
- a proportionate mitigation strategy; and
- ecological supervision during vegetation clearance.

1.1 Summary

This document sets out the proposed strategy and Precautionary Working Method Statement (PWMS) for mitigating likely impacts to dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) arising from development of land to the east of Northfields Lane, Westergate (the “site”). Dormouse presence has been established within habitats adjacent to the site. The strategy describes mitigation and compensation measures to satisfy the three tests under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations.

1.2 Aims of the Mitigation Strategy

The aims of this strategy are to:

- Prevent the killing or injury of dormice as a result of works.
- Ensure adverse impacts from the development are mitigated and compensated to maintain the species’ favorable conservation status (FCS).

1.3 Guidance and Best Practice

This strategy follows the Dormouse Conservation Handbook (2nd ed., Bright et al., 2006) and current best practice for survey, mitigation and licensing.

2. Baseline and Context

The site supports approximately 200 m² of scrub and shrubs that will be affected by the proposals. Adjacent habitats with confirmed dormouse presence provide context for impact pathways (disturbance, vegetation removal, lighting).

3. Impact Assessment in the Absence of Mitigation

Without suitable mitigation and compensation, the proposals risk offences under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations through potential killing, injury or disturbance of dormice and damage to resting places.

3.1 Short-Term Impacts: Disturbance

Removal of c.200 m² of scrub will be required. Short-term increases in noise, vibration, visual disturbance, dust deposition and localised light spill during construction could affect dormice within retained habitats.

3.2 Long-Term Impacts

3.2.1 Habitat Loss or Modification

Permanent loss of approximately 200 m² of scrub is anticipated. Any reduction in habitat area available to the local population could be deleterious without adequate mitigation/compensation to maintain conservation status.

3.2.2 Fragmentation and Isolation

The proposals do not sever contiguous habitats; no significant fragmentation or isolation effects are anticipated.

3.2.3 Disturbance (Operational)

Operational effects may include intermittent noise associated with residential occupation and increased external lighting. Given dormouse nocturnality, effects are most likely around early evening and in summer months; these are managed through lighting controls and edge planting.

4. Mitigation and Compensation

A comprehensive mitigation and (where required) compensation package will be implemented to ensure legal compliance and maintenance of FCS.

4.1 Works Under a Suitably Licensed Ecologist (SLE)

4.1.1 Timing, Methods and Capture

- Vegetation clearance will be undertaken sympathetically.

- Clearance will adopt a staged approach: upper sections removed in winter (Nov–Mar), with roots/trunks removed in spring once temperatures are suitable and dormice have emerged from hibernation.
- Winter clearance should be planned as a two-stage process with hand-sensitive techniques (single haul-route, long-reach grab/limited drag lines, directional felling) to minimise ground impact, consistent with Bright et al. (2006).
- Root removal will use hand tools where practicable, or a toothed-bucket excavator from April onwards subject to suitable temperatures.
- All site personnel involved in vegetation removal will receive a toolbox talk from the before works commence.

4.2 Construction-Phase Protection

- Retained hedgerows/trees will be demarcated prior to construction with robust fencing (e.g., Heras; acoustic screening where appropriate).
- Signage will identify sensitive habitat; all contractors will receive a toolbox talk before works.

4.3 Operational Controls

- Establish a 1–2 m bramble edge along compensatory hedgerow margins to create an effective barrier against disturbance and cat predation (see Figure 4).
- External lighting to use low-level, hooded bollards with zero upward light and minimal spill to hedgerow/woodland edges; lighting design to follow bat/dormouse-sensitive best practice (e.g., warm spectrum, curfew, PIR control).

4.4 Post-Development Management and Site Safeguards

- Weed suppression using chippings; supplementary strimming or spot glyphosate where necessary.
- No trimming/reduction during first five years other than light access safety cuts; thereafter coppice/trim on a 3–4-year rotation during Jan–Feb only.
- Long-term responsibility for compensatory hedgerow planting and site habitat management rests with the landowners (or appointed management company).

5. Implementation, Responsibilities and Licensing

- Contractor RAMS to integrate ecological method statements and exclusion zones.

- Any changes to scope, timing or working methods to be approved by ecologist prior to implementation.
- Post-works Ecologist note to confirm compliance for planning condition discharge reporting.

6. Figures and Appendices

Appendix 1. Site Location Plan

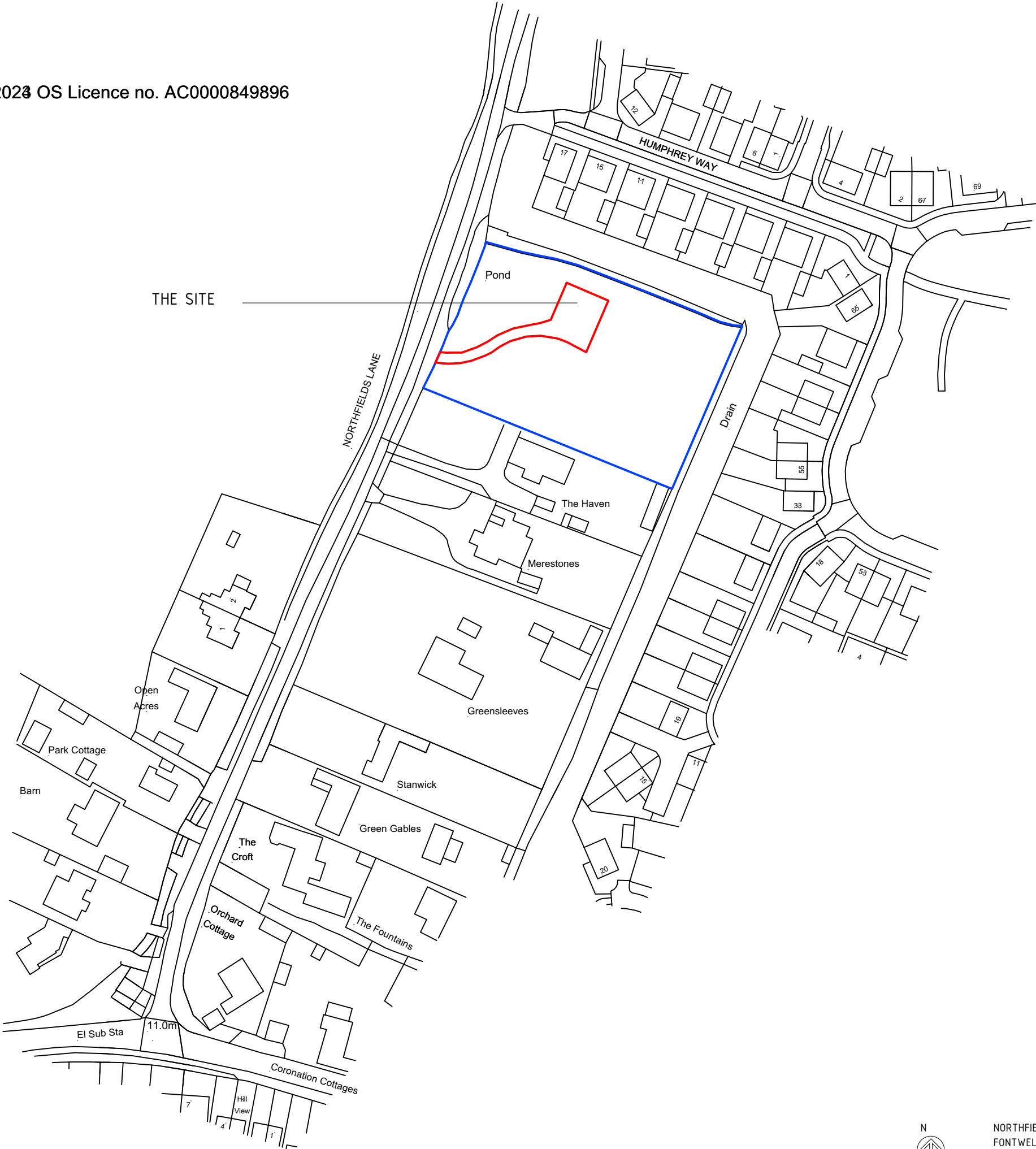
Appendix 2. Habitat Plan and Retained Features

Appendix 3. Correspondence from Natural England

Prepared: 31 October 2025 (rev 1 – 7 January 2026)

Appendix

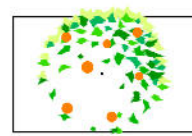
1



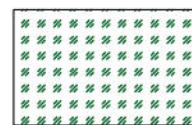
Appendix

2

Proposed Soft Landscape



Proposed Native Tree Planting.



Existing Scrub Retained and Allowed to Develop Naturally.



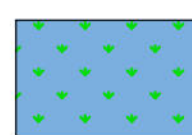
Proposed Native Understorey Shrub Infill Planting.



Proposed Native Mixed Species Hedgerow Planting.

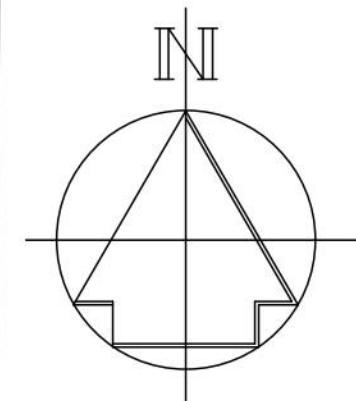


Proposed Native Hedgerow Wildflower Planting. Emorsgate EH1F – Wildflowers for Hedgerows (or equal and approved)

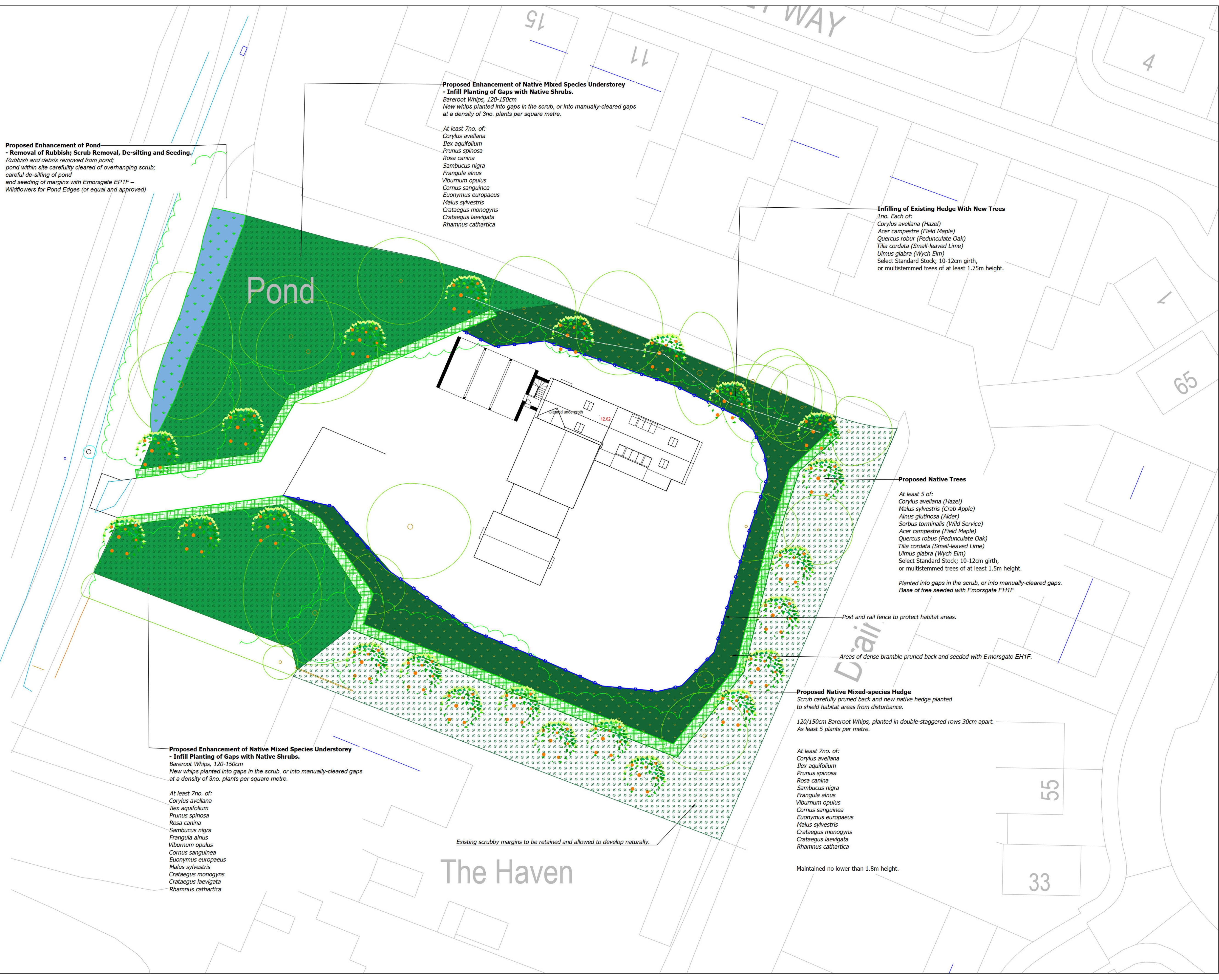


Proposed Pond Enhancement. Margins Seeded with Emorsgate EH1F – Wildflowers for Pond Edges (or equal and approved)

Ecological Enhancement Plan
Land at Northfields Lane, Westergate
GS344.Northfields.EEP
Version 2
08.10.2025
1:200@A1



0 5 10m



Proposed Enhancement of Pond - Removal of Rubbish; Scrub Removal, De-silting and Seeding.
Rubbish and debris removed from pond;
pond within site carefully cleared of overhanging scrub;
careful de-silting of pond
and seeding of margins with Emorsgate EP1F – Wildflowers for Pond Edges (or equal and approved)

Proposed Enhancement of Native Mixed Species Understorey - Infill Planting of Gaps with Native Shrubs.
Bareroot Whips, 120-150cm
New whips planted into gaps in the scrub, or into manually-cleared gaps at a density of 3no. plants per square metre.

- At least 7no. of:
Corylus avellana
Ilex aquifolium
Prunus spinosa
Rosa canina
Sambucus nigra
Frangula alnus
Viburnum opulus
Cornus sanguinea
Euonymus europaeus
Malus sylvestris
Crataegus monogyns
Crataegus laevigata
Rhamnus cathartica

Infilling of Existing Hedge With New Trees
1no. Each of:
Corylus avellana (Hazel)
Acer campestre (Field Maple)
Quercus robur (Pedunculate Oak)
Tilia cordata (Small-leaved Lime)
Ulmus glabra (Wych Elm)
Select Standard Stock; 10-12cm girth, or multistemmed trees of at least 1.75m height.

Proposed Native Trees

- At least 5 of:
Corylus avellana (Hazel)
Malus sylvestris (Crab Apple)
Alnus glutinosa (Alder)
Sorbus torminalis (Wild Service)
Acer campestre (Field Maple)
Quercus robur (Pedunculate Oak)
Tilia cordata (Small-leaved Lime)
Ulmus glabra (Wych Elm)
Select Standard Stock; 10-12cm girth, or multistemmed trees of at least 1.5m height.

Planted into gaps in the scrub, or into manually-cleared gaps.
Base of tree seeded with Emorsgate EH1F.

Post and rail fence to protect habitat areas.

Areas of dense bramble pruned back and seeded with Emorsgate EH1F.

Proposed Native Mixed-species Hedge
Scrub carefully pruned back and new native hedge planted to shield habitat areas from disturbance.

120/150cm Bareroot Whips, planted in double-staggered rows 30cm apart.
As least 5 plants per metre.

- At least 7no. of:
Corylus avellana
Ilex aquifolium
Prunus spinosa
Rosa canina
Sambucus nigra
Frangula alnus
Viburnum opulus
Cornus sanguinea
Euonymus europaeus
Malus sylvestris
Crataegus monogyns
Crataegus laevigata
Rhamnus cathartica

Maintained no lower than 1.8m height.

Proposed Enhancement of Native Mixed Species Understorey - Infill Planting of Gaps with Native Shrubs.
Bareroot Whips, 120-150cm
New whips planted into gaps in the scrub, or into manually-cleared gaps at a density of 3no. plants per square metre.

- At least 7no. of:
Corylus avellana
Ilex aquifolium
Prunus spinosa
Rosa canina
Sambucus nigra
Frangula alnus
Viburnum opulus
Cornus sanguinea
Euonymus europaeus
Malus sylvestris
Crataegus monogyns
Crataegus laevigata
Rhamnus cathartica

Existing scrubby margins to be retained and allowed to develop naturally.

The Haven

Appendix

3

From: [SM-NE-Mitigation, EPS \(NE\)](#)
To: [Edward Rees](#)
Subject: RE: Land to East of Northfields Lane, Westergate, West Sussex PO20 3UH.
Date: 28 October 2025 12:05:50
Attachments: [image001.png](#)

Good afternoon, Edward

Thanks for your email

We are unable to comment in relation to individual circumstances or offer advice or guidance with regards to specific circumstances of a licence application

We do not:

- Provide advice or licences outside of England
- Complete application forms or prepare mitigation schemes on behalf of developers or their consultants
- Approve or sign off Method Statements for non-licensable works
- Review or agree application documents prior to submission
- Carry out practical work required under any licence. This is the responsibility of the licensee and any staff or consultants that they employ.
- Tell developers or consultant ecologists when a licence would or would not be required.

In relation to the above, we are unable to provide written confirmation that a licence would not be required. This is something that we do not and have never provided for the local authority. We will defer to the on site ecologist for the project if they feel a licence is or is not required.

The ultimate decision on whether to apply for a licence or not will rest with the person responsible for commissioning the proposed activity, by considering the advice of the consultant ecologist. Adequate surveys carried out at the right time of year are crucial in ensuring that the presence of bats is detected.

Kind Regards

Tom

Tom Martin-Tennant

Senior Wildlife Licensing Manager – Delivery Team Central
Natural England, Worcestershire County Hall, Spetchley Road, Worcester, WR5
2NP



From: Edward Rees [REDACTED]
Sent: 27 October 2025 17:30
To: SM-NE-Mitigation, EPS (NE) <[REDACTED]>
Subject: Land to East of Northfields Lane, Westergate, West Sussex PO20 3UH.

You don't often get email from [REDACTED] [Learn why this is important](#)

Hello,

We have planning for the erection of 1 no 4-bedroom house best illustrated in the attached 3D model. As part of that consent, we have condition 10 that states:

10) Any works which will impact the breeding or resting place of dormice shall not commence unless the Local Planning Authority has first been provided with either:

- A licence issued by Natural England authorising the development or activity to go ahead, or;***
- A statement in writing from Natural England to the effect that it does not consider that the specified development or activity will require a license.***

That condition is in response to an Ecological Impact Statement for the site that stated:

- There are records of dormice locally with several European Protected Species Mitigation Licences (EPSML) in the local area, including an EPSML for the large Nyton Nursery development to the north and whose survey in 2017 included the northern hedge of this site.
- The vegetation to the boundaries consists of overstood hazel, field maple and bramble which is suitable for dormice. The bramble within the site would also be able to support dormice, albeit likely at a low density given the lack of diversity, limited structure and extent.
- Dormice are recorded in the hedge to the north of the site. The habitat forms a site boundary which extends into the woodland to west and bramble scrub

connects this hedge to the majority of the site. The hedges and woodland are of high suitability, whilst the bramble is of low-moderate suitability, being low and relatively sparse. Small areas of lower-value bramble and small patches of scrub would require removal to accommodate the proposals. Dormice might also be subject to increased disturbance and predation by cats during the occupation phase, although the increase in comparison to that experienced from the large developments to north and east is likely to be small.

- The overall impact of the scheme will be negligible in the shorter term and positive in the longer term as vegetation establishes.

The adjacent site surrounding our site was for 288 houses on land at Nyton Nursery, Nyton Road, Westergate, Eastergate, Chichester, West Sussex PO20 6UQ constructed in 2020 by Taylor Wimpey.

In short, we are wondering if our site requires a license or whether you feel a Dormouse Mitigation Strategy would be more appropriate. Attached is the version used for the neighbouring site.

Confirmation would be appreciated.

Regards,

Edward Rees

Web: www.domusea.com

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