

Technical Briefing Note

Ref: 1004567 BN09 EUS dv2

Saltbox Field, Bognor Regis (1004567)

Updated Ecological Survey Work in regard to Plots 1 and 3

Date: March 2022

1 Introduction and Background

- 1.1 Aspect Ecology Ltd has been commissioned by Kier Property Developments Ltd to undertake updated ecological survey work in respect of the proposed development of Unit 1 (plot 1) and Unit 3 (plot 3) at the site at Saltbox, Bognor Regis, located approximately at OS grid reference SU 935 016 (see Plan 4567/UES1 and Appendix 4567/UES1).
- 1.1. The site is in receipt of hybrid planning permission (most recently ref: BE/135/18/PL, permitted on 07 November 2019), comprising outline planning permission for the principle of employment uses B1-B8 and full planning permission in relation to units 2 and 4-9 with associated access, engineering, landscaping and ancillary works, with construction works in relation to the planning permission have been progressed at the site. The previous planning permission was informed by ecological survey and assessment work undertaken by Aspect Ecology, including as set out within the submitted Ecological Appraisal (ref: 1004567 EcoAp vf1), with further ecological survey and attendance at the site undertaken by Aspect Ecology throughout the development works (including specific Badger survey work in line with planning conditions associated with the planning permission and in order to accompany reserved matters submissions).
- 1.2. Subsequently, detailed development proposals have been worked up in relation to the individual developments within plots 1 and 3 forming part of the wider permitted outline development, such that a new application is required in relation to Unit 1 (relating to the erection of units within use classes E(g), B2 & B8, car parking and associated works) and an application for reserved matters permission in relation to Unit 3. Accordingly, in order to ensure that the current schemes are informed by up to date ecological information (particularly given the changes at the site due to the progression of the permitted works and time that has elapsed since the most recent surveys), Aspect Ecology has been commissioned to undertake an update habitat and faunal survey, along with specific Badger survey work (including in line with the requirements of planning condition 17 of the existing hybrid planning permission) of Plots 1 and 3, along with the adjacent areas.
- 1.3. The purpose of this note is to set out the results of the update ecological and Badger survey work and provide consideration of the relevant implications of the current proposals for Plots 1 and 3 in regard to ecological matters at the site (with reference to the previous survey information and associated position), in order to inform the current submissions.

2. Methodology

Previously submitted ecological survey work

- 2.1. Previous ecological survey work was undertaken at the site by Aspect Ecology Ltd during 2017 in order to inform the permitted hybrid scheme, the results of which are set out within the submitted Ecological Appraisal report (Ref: 1004567 EcoAp vf1, dated December 2018). The reported work included a desktop study (including obtaining background records from Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre (SxBRC)), along with extended Phase 1 habitat and general faunal surveys of the site. Specific survey work and consideration was also undertaken in regard to bats and Water Vole.
- 2.2. In addition, in order to safeguard existing ecological receptors at the site during the permitted construction works across the wider permitted development site (including in line with planning condition requirements) further specific update Badger survey work, along with Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) attendance has been undertaken Aspect Ecology Ltd, most recently during 2021, the results of which have therefore been taken into account during the current considerations.

Update Survey Work

- 2.3. In order to update and confirm the previous work and establish the current position with regard to the habitats present and the continued potential and/or presence of any protected species, the land within Plots 1 and 3 (along with relevant associated areas within the wider permitted development site) has further been surveyed by Aspect Ecology Ltd during February 2022. This work included further updated extended Phase 1 habitat survey work, along with specific consideration in regard to the potential presence of any protected, rare or notable faunal species.
- 2.4. General faunal activity, such as mammals or birds, observed visually or by call during the course of the surveys was also recorded, with reference to the previous information. The potential for the habitats at the site to support other species of conservation concern was assessed and any potential changes to the previously recorded position in regard to these species groups highlighted. In addition, specific update survey work has been undertaken at the site in respect of Badger.

Survey Constraints/Limitations

- 2.5. All of the species that occur in each habitat would not necessarily be detectable during survey work carried out at any given time of the year, since different species are apparent during different seasons. February is outside of the optimal seasonal period for botanical work in particular, albeit the survey was undertaken in generally good weather conditions and, given the extensive previous survey information and knowledge of the site and the objectives of the survey (in particular in updating the previous survey work), was not considered significantly constrained by seasonal timing.

3. Survey Results and Evaluation

Habitats and Ecological Features

- 3.1. At the time of the previous survey work, the vast majority of the land within plot 1, along with the entirety of plot 1 was formed by internal areas within a single, intensively managed arable field, which extended across the wider permitted development site (the only exception being a

very small area of scrub and trees at the south of the field, which extended slightly within the boundary to plot 1. However, by the time of the current update survey work, following the progression of the permitted development, plots 1 and 3 were recorded to be composed entirely of cleared, compacted ground with sparsely scattered colonising weeds and grasses, forming serviced development plots. The adjacent (offsite) areas within the wider permitted development site include completed development forming site access roads and units 2 and 4-9, along with recently created landscaping consistent with the permitted development.

- 3.2. Accordingly, on the basis of the updated habitat survey work undertaken, it is clear that the habitats present within the current (plots 1 and 3) site boundaries have been subject to considerable disturbance and remain of negligible ecological value, in line with the previous position, with little vegetation present, limited to scattered common weeds and grasses colonising the otherwise bare ground, which therefore do not form a potential constraint to the revised development proposals (noting further that, under the permitted scheme, the land within the current plots was identified entirely for individual development units composed of buildings and hardstanding, with new planting (including ecological mitigation and compensation) provided within the wider landscape areas outside of the current boundary (which are now in place at the site).
- 3.3. The vast majority of the current plots were located internally within the former arable field, such that existing boundary vegetation in proximity to the plots is limited to the site boundary vegetation adjacent to the east of plot 3, which will be retained and protected in line with the previously permitted position.

Faunal Considerations

- 3.4. **Badger.** No Badger setts were identified within the site during the previous work undertaken, including specific Badger surveys undertaken during 2017, 2019 and 2021. However, evidence confirming the presence of Badger within the site was recorded in the form of footprints within cropped areas, along with mammal pathways and push-throughs in boundary vegetation.
- 3.5. During the current update survey work undertaken, no evidence for any setts or digging by Badger was recorded within or adjacent to plots 1 and 3, nor elsewhere within the wider permitted development site. Similarly, no active Badger latrines were recorded (indicating a likely lack of strong territorial boundaries within the site), albeit a number of mammal push-throughs in the boundary fencing and vegetation, which may be attributable to Badger, were identified within the landscaped areas west of plot 1, indicating likely continued access by this species as part of a wider territory. Accordingly, overall the position appears to remain consistent with the previous survey results, with no Badger setts present within or adjacent to either plot 1 or plot 3 and, it is therefore clear that (in line with the previously permitted position) the current proposals for plots 1 and 3 will not result in any adverse effects on Badger setts.
- 3.6. Nonetheless, given the potential continued access of the plots by individual foraging/commuting Badgers as part of the wider area, it is recommended that working safeguards and mitigation measures continue to be implemented (in line with the progression of works in respects of wider elements of the permitted development at the site) to safeguard any individual Badgers potentially present during the construction phase of the proposed development. Suitable construction considerations (in line with Natural England best practice guidelines) are set out at Appendix 4567/UES2.
- 3.7. **Other Fauna.** No evidence for the presence of any other protected, rare or notable faunal species has been recorded within the site during the update survey work undertaken, whilst the

nature of the habitats present are such that these offer negligible potential to support any such species.

Evaluation and Recommendations

- 3.8. On the basis of the update survey work, the proposals are unlikely to result in any adverse effects on protected, rare or notable faunal species, such that there do not appear to be any over-riding ecological constraints associated with the progression of the current reserved matters development, in line with the previously permitted development.
- 3.9. Nonetheless, in line with the previously permitted measures, in order to ensure that ecological receptors are fully safeguarded, it is recommended that the following working safeguards and mitigation measures are implemented throughout the construction works:
- Implementation of pollution prevention measures during construction works (in particular relating to works within Plot 1 in the vicinity of adjacent landscaping and wider site boundary ditch to safeguard existing (retained) vegetation and prevent run-off/contamination, light pollution or other adverse effects on offsite areas, in particular including Brooks Local Nature Reserve
 - Protection of retained wider site boundary vegetation adjacent to the east of plot 3 in line with the previously permitted information (including installation of protective fencing in line with arboricultural best practice)
 - Any new lighting (including temporary construction lighting) to be avoided in the vicinity of the external site boundaries and open space (in particular south and west of Plot 1) to prevent light spill and ensure wildlife habitats remain unlit to avoid potential disturbance to nocturnal/crepuscular wildlife within the offsite areas
 - Precautionary measures and working safeguards in regard to Badger, as set out at Appendix 4567/2

4. Summary and Conclusions

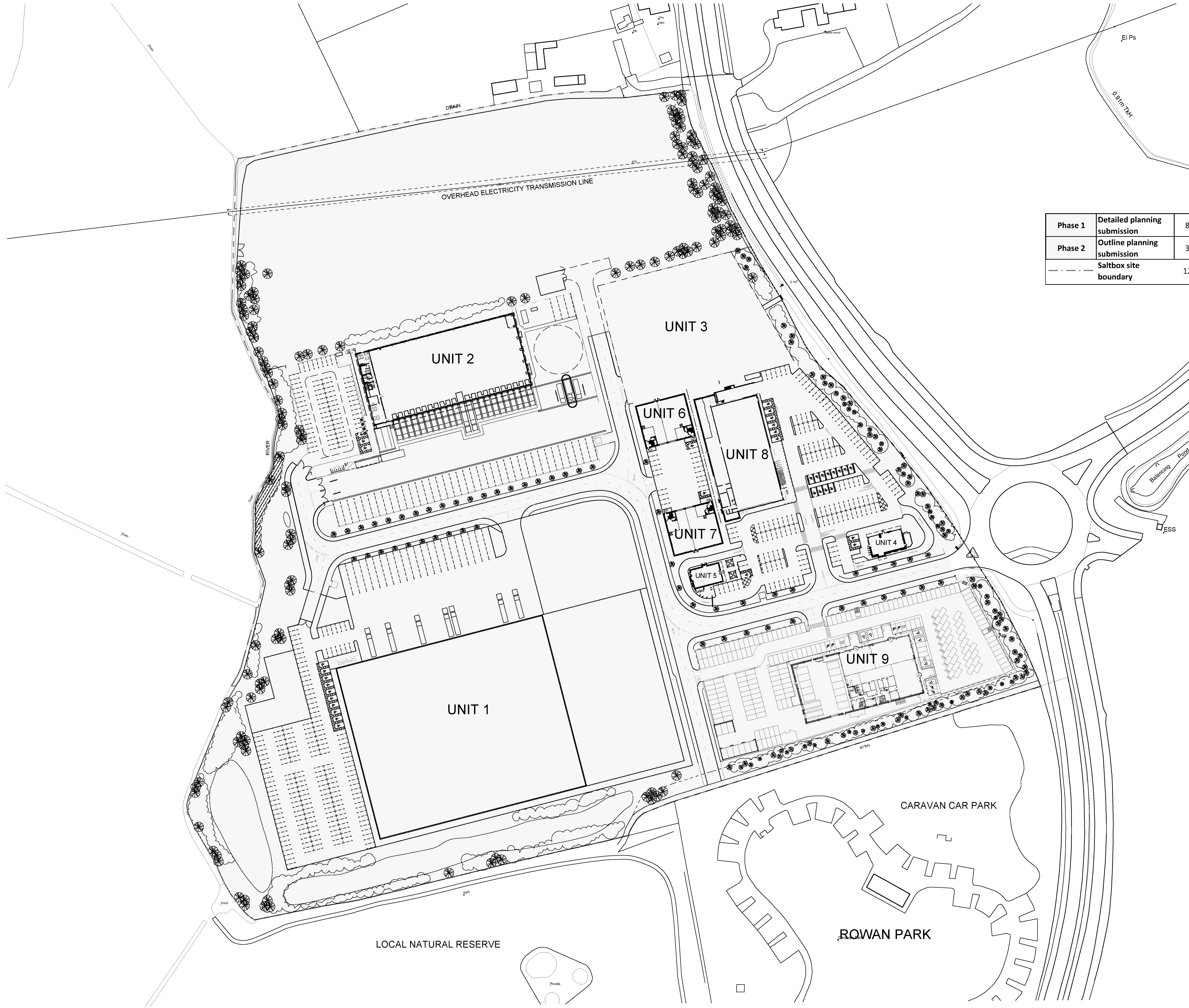
- 4.1. This note sets out consideration of the ecological position at the site in regard to the current proposals for Plot 1 and Plot 3 within the wider permitted development site. In order to inform the current proposals, noting the age of the previous information and subsequent changes at the site due to the progression of the permitted works, the plots were subject to specific ecological update survey work in February 2022 in order to confirm the current position in regard to the habitats present within the site and any likely opportunities for protected species (in particular including Badger).
- 4.2. The survey work undertaken has recorded that the plots are composed entirely of recently cleared, compacted ground with vegetation limited to common colonising ruderal weed species and lacking in mature vegetation, cover or any other features offering potential value to wildlife, albeit offsite areas include vegetated habitats including new habitats provided as part of the wider permitted development of which the current plots continue to form individual internal plots.
- 4.3. Accordingly, minor mitigation measures and safeguards are set out (including in particular in regard to Badger), subject to which there is no evidence to suggest there are any over-riding ecological constraints to the current proposals for these plots, which (in ecological terms) remain in line with the previously permitted scheme.

Plan 4567/UES1:

Site Location

Appendix 4567/UES1:

Saltbox, Bognor Regis, Site Masterplan Phasing Plan



Phase 1	Detailed planning submission	8.618 hectares
Phase 2	Outline planning submission	3.386 hectares
Saltbox site boundary		12.004 hectares

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LIST OF INFORMANTS:
OS MAP
BOYLE & SUMMERS DRAWINGS

REVISIONS	DATE	DRN	REV
UNITS 4 & 5 REVISED, UNIT 7 MOVED NORTH 2M	11.03.19	MW	A
DRAINAGE ROUTES AND DISCHARGE LOCATION REMOVE	30.08.19	MW	B
ATTENUATION PONDS REMOVED	15.10.19	MW	C
UNIT 3 ACCESS ADJUSTED, UNIT 3 PLOT LAYOUT REMOVED, FOUL PUMPING CHAMBER UPDATED, SUBSTATION 3 REMOVED, ACCESS TO SUBSTATION 1 UPDATED, LINK TO NATURE RESERVE ADDED	22.06.21	MW	D
RMA SUBMISSION	14.07.21	MW	E

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SITE MASTERPLAN
PHASING PLAN
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SALTBOX - BOGNOR REGIS

Appendix 4567/UES2:

Badger Mitigation Measures

SALTBOX, BOGNOR REGIS

BADGER MITIGATION MEASURES

General Site Safeguards (to be implemented across the site throughout construction works):

- Contractors/personnel to be fully briefed on the presence of Badgers and a watching brief in place by construction staff at the site for any additional Badger activity.
- Any trenches or deep pits to be provided with a means of escape should a Badger enter (e.g. plank of wood or ramp). Trenches/pits to be inspected daily to ensure no Badgers have become trapped.
- Any temporarily exposed open pipes (>150mm outside diameter) to be blanked off to prevent access by Badgers;
- Storage of topsoil or other 'soft' building materials to be given careful consideration, kept to a minimum and subject to suitable inspection to confirm Badgers remain absent;
- Storage of any chemicals/materials at the site to be contained in such a way that they cannot be accessed or knocked over by any roaming Badgers;
- Fires only to be lit in secure compounds away from areas of Badger activity and not allowed to remain lit during the night; and
- Unsecured food and litter will not be left within the working area overnight.

In the event that a Badger is encountered within the site at any time, works should cease and Aspect Ecology Ltd contacted at the earliest opportunity for further advice. (Contractors should not attempt to approach or capture any Badger.)

Similarly, should any new mammal tunnels be encountered within areas to be worked, Aspect Ecology should be contacted prior to any works proceeding in these areas for further advice. This may include the need for inspection work by a suitably qualified ecologist to confirm the position and advise any necessary further mitigation measures that may be required.

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