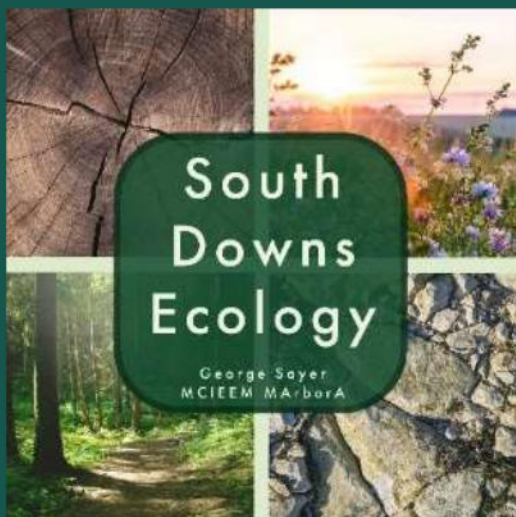


Ecological Impact Assessment

Sunnyside Nursery,
Barnham

South
Downs
Ecology

George Sayer
MCIEEM MA ArborA



Quality Assurance:

Document reference	GS463.Sunnyside.EclA.v6
Site	Sunnyside Nursery, Barnham
Client	Confidential C/O Luken Beck, 59 Tower St, Winchester SO23 8TA
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Report issue date	03/06/2026
Report conditions	The methods and recommendations in this report are based on the following: CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing 2017 (CIEEM, 2017) CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland (CIEEM, 2024) Surveys have been carried out following the guidance sources set out in CIEEM's Good Practice Guidance for Habitats and Species (CIEEM, 2021), which include: CIEEM Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Second Edition (CIEEM, 2017) CIEEM Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK. Second Edition (CIEEM, 2017) Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (BCT, 2023)

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Summary

Our client has commissioned a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), Phase 2 Surveys and Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) of land at Sunnyside, Yapton Road, Barnham (central grid ref SU 96579 04236, hereafter referred to as 'the site') in support of an outline planning application for a housing development.

The proposals are for construction of a residential development on the site. The report is provided as part of an outline planning application. Pre-Application advice (to include a specific Ecology consultation response) was sought from the Local Planning Authority (reference number: PAA/96/25) and has been addressed as part of this Ecological Impact Assessment.

The proposals are not anticipated to have any significant impact upon ecology; the site supports foraging and commuting bats, badgers, dormice, nesting birds, reptiles and likely supports widespread amphibians and hedgehog. Appropriate mitigation is detailed herein to ensure no detrimental impact upon these species.

It is considered that a development of the scale proposed could be constructed on the site and result in a biodiversity net gain subject to careful design and consideration of appropriate avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures. A separate Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment accompanies the application.

The proposals would accord with the relevant local policies.

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 Our client has commissioned a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA), Phase 2 Surveys and Ecological Impact Assessment of land at Sunnyside Nursery, Barnham (central grid ref SU 96579 04236, hereafter referred to as 'the site') in support of a planning application for a housing development.
- 1.2 A PEA of the site was carried out on 13th May 2025 by George Sayer (*BSc (Hons) Environmental Sciences, PgDip Endangered Species Recovery, MArborA, MCIEEM, NE Licence Holder – Bats Level 2 and GCN - Ecologist*). This report has been produced by Chris Brown (*BSc (Hons) Biology, ACIEEM, NE Licence Holder – GCN Level 1 – Ecologist*) and reviewed and updated by George Sayer.
- 1.3 The PEA consisted of an assessment of habitats to determine their suitability for protected species. Following this, an on-site and desktop assessment was undertaken to establish the likelihood of protected species being present on or near the site. Any ecological constraints on the proposed development were then identified.
- 1.4 Further detailed (phase 2) surveys, including badger, reptile, dormouse, breeding bird, static bat detector deployment and nighttime bat walkover surveys were conducted during the 2025 season. Wintering bird surveys were conducted between January-March 2026.
- 1.5 Based on the results of the PEA, recommendations for further survey, mitigation and potential ecological enhancements have been provided.

Site Description and Surrounding Area

- 1.6 The site incorporates a number of modified grassland fields, scrub, buildings and developed land. The site covers approximately 8 hectares (ha) of land north of Yapton Road in the village of Barnham. There is a railway line directly to the north of the site, with residential properties and agricultural land to the east, south and west.
- 1.7 The wider landscape is characterised by rural villages, towns, farmland and woodland parcels. The A29 is 2.7 kilometres (km) west and Bognor Regis is approximately 4.6km south-west of the site.

Proposals

- 1.8 The proposals, in outline, are for construction of a residential development on the site. The access would come from Yapton Road to the south. The proposals are detailed in illustrative detail in the application. An extract is show in Figure 1 below. The applicant is seeking outline permission at this stage.



Figure 1 – Illustrative Masterplan. Davies Landscape Architects Drawing: DLA-2242-100-DR-L-14-So7

2.0 Scope of Assessment

1. *Identify habitats and features which may have potential for protected species;*
 2. *Identify whether any signs of protected species or priority habitats are present on-site;*
 3. *Recommend if there are any relevant constraints with regards to designated sites, protected species and habitats;*
 4. *Identify impacts of the proposed development and set out appropriate avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures;*
 5. *Provide suggestions as to how the site and proposals could be enhanced with regards to protected species and habitats.*
- 2.1 This appraisal and assessment are deemed to be relevant for a maximum of 18 months due to the possibility of changes in the habitats on-site. Should the site or proposals alter, the ecologist will be consulted to confirm that the appraisal is still valid.

3.0 Planning Policy and Legislation

National Planning Policy

- 3.1 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024 sets out the government planning policies for England and how they should be applied. 'Chapter 15: Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment' states that development should be 'minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.'
- 3.2 The Government Circular 06/2005, which is referred to by the NPPF, provides further guidance in respect of statutory obligations for biodiversity and geological conservation and their impact within the planning system.

Local Planning Policy

- 3.3 Local planning policy is provided by the Arun Local Plan 2011 – 2031 (adopted 2018). The Arun Local Plan contains the following relevant policies:
 - **Policy ENV DM1: Designated sites of biodiversity or geological importance.** States that development which would have an adverse effect on European, national or local status designated sites would not normally be permitted, and sets out criteria, rationale and other details for this.
 - **Policy ENV DM2: Pagham Harbour.** Sets out Zone A (within 400m of Pagham Harbour SPA) and Zone B (within 5km of Pagham Harbour SPA) within which there are restrictions to any development which may impact the SPA.
 - **Policy ENV DM3: Biodiversity Opportunity Areas.** States that development shall retain and incorporate locally valued and important habitats, including wildlife corridors and stepping stones, and be designed to minimise habitat disturbance.
 - **Policy ENV DM4: Protection of trees.** States that development shall not affect Tree Preservation Order (TPO) trees, and that these and other trees will be protected during development and that developers shall provide tree surveys, tree constraints plans and arboricultural impact assessments where appropriate.
 - **Policy ENV DM5: Development and biodiversity.** Requires developments to seek net gains for biodiversity, to protect existing habitats, and to incorporate bat and bird boxes and other enhancement measures. The policy states that where there is evidence of a protected species, planning applications shall include a detailed survey of the subject species, providing detailed measures for the preservation of the species at the site. It goes on to state that all surveys shall consider direct and indirect impacts and shall be carried out at an appropriate time of year, being undertaken by a qualified and, where appropriate, suitably licensed person.

Pre-application Advice

- 3.4 Pre-application advice was sought on the proposals (reference: PAA/96/25). The Ecology Officer for Planning Policy, Jonathan Best MCIEEM provided comments, which are provided in appendix G and are summarised below alongside our responses:

ADC Ecology Officer Pre-App Response – 16th October 2025		Applicant response
Biodiversity Net Gain will apply.		- Please see separate BNG Assessment (GS463.Sunnyside.BNGAssessment.v4) submitted as part of this planning application. - The proposals result in: - Habitat Units: a 2.21 Unit, 13.50% net gain in habitat units - Hedge Units: a 1.56 unit, 60.62% gain in hedge units - Ditch Units: a 0.10 unit, 110.15% net gain in ditch units. - The proposals therefore achieve, fully on-site, a compliant gain and significantly exceed the necessary statutory gain in all categories.
There are priority habitats (deciduous woodland) adjacent to the site. Efforts to buffer development from these habitats is recommended.		All off-site habitats have been fully considered with relevant RPAs incorporated into designs, and minimum 10.0 m buffers to habitats of value provided.
The Ecological Representation has adequately covered habitats and protected species through the survey effort identified in table 5.		Some Further Assessment has since been carried out which further reinforces the findings.
The existing boundary habitats should be retained to protect the reptile and possible dormouse populations.		Generous buffers have been provided which would be enhanced for reptiles. New scrub and hedgerow habitats would result in a gain for dormice with no hedgerows being removed.
As the site has been identified as being used by long eared and barbastelles bats a bat sensitive lighting scheme is required.		Please see paragraph 7.16 which confirms all lighting will conform to ILP Guidance Note 08/23 (BCT & ILP, 2023). Generous buffers have been provided to all habitats of value to bats.
- Ecological enhancement through provision of: - integral swift bricks at a ratio of 1:1 and; - integral bat bricks at a ratio of 1:2.		Recommendations adopted – refer to section 8.7.
Other ecological enhancements could include:	- reptile hibernacula; - hedgehog highways and homes; - native planting of trees and, - hedges and insect hotels - At least one permanent pond is recommended.	All items included within section 8.7.

Table 1: Summary of Ecological Response

Legislation

3.5 Legislation relating to wildlife and biodiversity of particular relevance to this PEA includes:

- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017;
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006;
- The Hedgerow Regulations 1997;
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
- The Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996.

3.6 All species of bat and their roosts are protected under 'The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017' and 'The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981'. It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or handle a bat, to possess a bat (live or dead), disturb a roosting bat, or sell or offer a bat for sale without a licence. It is also an offence to damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place used by bats for shelter, whether they are present or not.

3.7 All UK bird species are protected against disturbance whilst occupying a nest under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Developments that could predictably disturb, kill or injure nesting birds could result in an offence. Furthermore, a number of bird species are targets of UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans and listed as Species of Principle Importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. This obligates local authorities to have regard to the purpose of conserving biodiversity with particular emphasis on targeted species.

3.8 All widespread reptiles are protected against killing and injury under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, with rarer reptiles receiving further protection under EU regulation. Reptiles must also be given consideration under the NERC Act 2006 as part of the planning process.

3.9 Great crested newts (GCN) are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. It is an offence for anyone to intentionally kill, injure or disturb a GCN or to damage, destroy or block access to areas of suitable habitat.

3.11 Water voles are fully protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and is a priority conservation species. It is an offence to intentionally capture, kill or injure water voles, damage, destroy or block access to their places of shelter or protection (on purpose or by not taking enough care), disturb them in a place of shelter or protection (on purpose or by not taking enough care), possess, sell, control or transport live or dead water voles or parts of them (not water voles bred in captivity).

- 3.12 In the UK, dormice are legally protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and have significant further protection as a European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Dormice are also a 'Species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity' listed under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC). It is an offence for anyone to intentionally kill, injure or disturb a dormouse or to damage, destroy or block access to areas of suitable habitat.
- 3.13 All other mammals receive general protection against cruelty, inhumane killing or injuring under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996.

4.0 Methods

Desktop Study

- 4.1 A desktop study was conducted using the government's 'MAGIC' Map GIS tool; a search was carried out for all Natural England Mitigation Licences within a zone of influence (2km) of the site. These have been summarised below and their significance considered in the context of the proposed development. A search was also carried out to identify features of ecological interest in the area, such as water bodies and ancient woodland.
- 4.2 Given the overall scale and nature of the site and the proposals, a full data search from Sussex Biological Records Centre (SBRC) was obtained on 8th April 2025 for a 2km radius of the site. The zone of influence for international statutory designated sites was extended to 12km.

Site Visit

- 4.3 A site visit was conducted during suitable weather on 13th May 2025 by George Sayer (MCIEEM). During the survey any constraints with regards to protected species such as badgers, water voles, dormice, nesting birds, reptiles, amphibians, rare invertebrates, plants and fungi were identified. The assessment was updated on several occasions through the 2025 season with any further pertinent information recorded during phase 2 surveys.
- 4.4 Due to the nature of such site visits, is possible that signs of protected species may have been absent during the rapid assessment but present at other times of year. This is a recognised limitation of PEAs and so all reasonable efforts have been made to determine the potential of protected species being present on site by performing thorough data searches and assigning competent ecologists to the survey.

Phase 2 Protected Species Surveys

- 4.5 The following phase 2 protected species surveys were undertaken at the site:

Species	Surveys Undertaken
Bats (roosting)	Daytime ground-level assessment as well as incidental recording during nighttime walkover surveys.
Bats (foraging and commuting)	Nighttime bat walkover surveys in spring (24/04/2025) summer (04/07/2025) and autumn (16/09/2025) Static Deployments in mid-May, mid-June and mid-September 2025 for 5 nights each.
Reptiles	Reptile refugia survey set up on 10/04/2025, left for 2 weeks and 6 visits undertaken between late April and late May 2025.
Dormice	50 nest tubes set up on 10/04/2025, surveyed in May (dormouse recorded) with further visits in June and September.
Great Crested Newts	Desktop and habitat assessment only.
Breeding Birds	Surveys on 26/04/2025, 15/05/2025 and 09/06/2025
Wintering Birds	Incidental recording in September 2025, and Wintering Bird Surveys in January, February and March 2026.

Table 2: Summary of Phase 2 Surveys Undertaken

Bat Roost Assessment

- 4.6 Trees were inspected for features conducive to bat and bird roosting, including knot holes, limb failures, cavities, splits and heavy ivy cover; evidence of bats such as droppings, staining or squeaking were recorded. Trees were classified into PRF-I, trees suitable only for individual bats or very small numbers of bats, and PRF-M, suitable for multiple bats and therefore may be used by a maternity colony (refer to Table 6.2 of the Guidelines, 2023).
- 4.7 Buildings were assessed internally and externally by an experienced, licensed bat surveyor (George Sayer 2018-34434-CLS) for their potential to hold roosting bats; obvious access points or roost features were identified where relevant. Any evidence of bats such as grease marks, bat droppings, urine splashes were noted.

Bat Activity Survey

Night-time Bat Walkover (Walked Transects)

- 4.8 Bat survey visits were undertaken monthly in April, July and September, covering spring, summer and autumn in accordance with best practice guidelines (BCT, 2023). All surveys were designed by an experienced and licensed bat surveyor (George Sayer MCIEEM; CLS-CLS-34434-2018) and undertaken by 4no. experienced assistant ecologists, led by accredited agent Aidan Bird.

- 4.9 The bat surveyors walked a single transect encompassing the perimeter of the field in two pairs, effectively covering the entire site with particular effort focussed on the margins, to adequately gauge the level of bat activity throughout the site (Refer to Figure No. 04 – Bat Activity Survey Transects & Static Monitoring Points).
- 4.10 Following the latest guidelines, surveyors started by observing at likely bat roosts (buildings or mature trees) for the first 30 minutes of the surveys (points A-B in May, C-D in July and E-F in September on Figure 3 below). Transects were then walked the transect (red line on Figure 2) at a steady pace stopping at regular intervals with surveyors recording any activity. The dusk surveys were started just before sunset and terminated approximately 2 hours after sunset. Data including species; general patterns of activity; and number of passes were recorded throughout the survey.
- 4.11 Details of the survey visits can be found in Table 2 below. Bats were identified using Echo Meter Touch Pro 2, Batlogger M and Peersonic RPA 3 bat detectors during transects. On the September visit, both teams were also equipped with PixFRA Arc613 thermal imagers such that they could observe flying bats during darkness.

Date	Surveyors	Weather conditions - Start	Weather conditions - End	Sunset	Start time	Finis h time
24/04/25	AB, JH, LB, FL	10°C; Wind Force 2; Cloud 1/8	6°C; Wind Force 2; Cloud 0/8	20:12	19:52	22:12
04/07/25	AB, JB, LK, SD	18°C; Wind Force 3; Cloud 5/8	17°C; Wind Force 3; Cloud 4/8	21:20	21:00	23:20
16/09/25	AB, NM, LK, ES	16.6°C; Wind Force 3; Cloud 3/8	11.3°C; Wind Force 2; Cloud 1/8	19:15	19:00	21:15

Table 3 – Details of Bat Activity Surveys



Figure 2 – Bat Activity Transect and Locations of Static Bat Detectors

Static Monitoring

- 4.12 Two Anabat Chorus full-spectrum passive recorders were deployed for static monitoring. The detectors were initially installed in the north-west and north-east corners, in spring between nights of 13-17th May 2025 (5 nights), then deployed in the east and west boundaries, in summer between nights of 15th-19th July (5 nights). The detectors were finally deployed towards the south-west and south-east between the nights of 15th-19th September (5 nights). One detector did not record on 19th July and another recorded no detections on 17th September; in these cases, data from the 20th July and 20th September were substituted in their place. Detectors were deployed c.2.0 m off the ground in an area clear of overhanging vegetation. Each period of monitoring was during suitable weather providing the 5 night minimum data required by the guidelines, and is considered to provide ample data to understand the use of the site by bats.
- 4.13 Static data was initially fed into the BTO Acoustic Pipeline Tool (BTO 2025) to filter out obviously non-bat calls and noise, and to sort and count the highest confidence (85% and above confidence) pipistrelle recordings. Sonogram analysis was then undertaken of any rarer calls, such as long-eared, Myotis, barbastelle, serotine and noctule bats, using the Kaleidoscope Viewer programme.
- 4.14 Data has been collated on an east/west basis to assess the relative importance of each boundary. Locations of detector deployments are shown on figure 3 above.

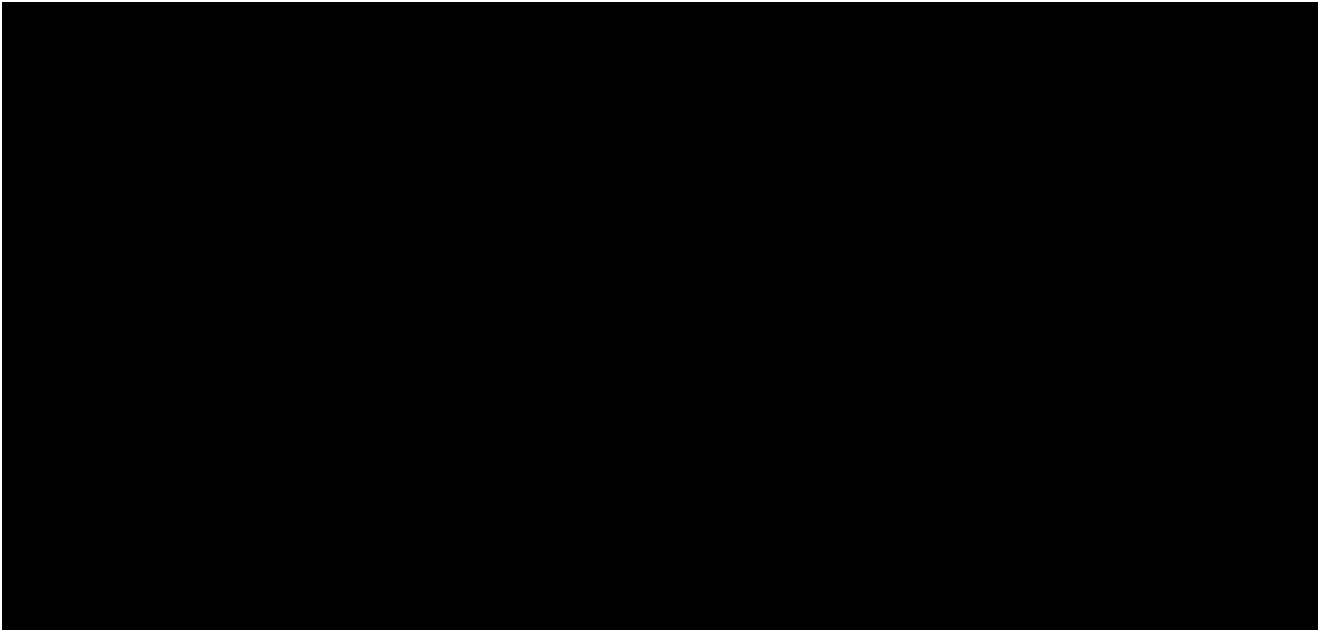
- 
- 4.18 80 no. artificial reptile refugia (roofing felt; 1.0 x 0.50 m) were laid out around the area on 10th April 2025 and allowed to settle for 14 days prior to commencement of the survey. The survey focussed on the margins due to the site being relatively short grassland, with refugia being evenly-spaced around the entire margins and in areas of scrub and ruderals to the west. Refugia were installed at a density of c. 10 per hectare when considering the entire site area, at the minimum recommended density of 10/Ha suitable habitat (Froglife, 1999). Considering much of the site is of very limited suitability this is considered more than sufficient in terms of effort. Refer to Figure 3 for locations of refugia.
- 4.19 6no. site visits have been conducted between late April (2 visits) and May (4 visits), where the number, species, age and sex of the reptiles' present were recorded.
- 4.20 Surveys were undertaken where possible during recommended times (08:00–11:00 and 16:00–18:30) with suitable weather conditions for surveying reptiles (guidelines recommend temperatures 9–18°C with intermittent or hazy sunshine during warm days). Timings were varied where weather dictated to maximise the chance of finding reptiles. The methodology followed that detailed by Froglife (Froglife, 1999).



Figure 3 – Location of Reptile Refugia

Dormouse Survey

Survey Nest Tubes

- 4.21 In accordance with the preceding and the latest guidance (The Mammal Society, 2025) a nest tube survey was undertaken. A total of 50 no. nest tubes were installed on the site on 26th April 2025, focussed around the native hedges, and bramble scrub, but with good coverage around the entire site in all potential habitat. Refer to Figure 4 for locations of survey tubes. The tubes were then inspected in May, June, July and September.
- 4.22 A dormouse nest was found on the May visit and as such, whilst surveys could have theoretically been concluded at this point, further surveys were undertaken in June, July and September to ensure maximal information was obtained. The survey commenced just prior to the new guidelines being issued but were found to still be compliant with the methods included.

Visit No.	Date of Visit
Deployment	26/04/2025
2	26/05/2025
3	25/06/2025
4	22/07/2025
5	30/09/2025

Table 4 – Details of Dormouse Survey Tube Checks



Figure 4 – Map of Dormouse Survey Tube Deployment

Breeding Bird Survey

- 4.23 The surveys were undertaken by Graeme Down of Green Down Ecology. Graeme has been undertaking ornithological surveys for 18 years as a consultant ecologist and is a full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) and therefore subject to the CIEEM Professional Code of Conduct. The field surveys involved three visits between April and June inclusive. Each visit was undertaken during the morning at a time when breeding activity is likely to be most apparent according to guidance (Gilbert et al., 1998; Bird Survey & Assessment Steering Group, 2025). A transect route was followed that enabled observation of all major areas of habitat within and adjacent to the site (Figure 5). Birds heard or seen were recorded using British Trust for Ornithology notation, including recording of behaviour. Equipment used comprised 8x42 binoculars. The table below shows the weather conditions timings during each survey visit.

Date	Survey time	Weather
26 th April 2025	06:20 - 07:10	10°C, 100% cloud cover, Beaufort 0, dry
15 th May 2025	06:20 – 07:00	9°C, 10% cloud cover, Beaufort 1, dry
9 th June 2025	05:45 – 06:30	13°C, 100% cloud cover, Beaufort 1, dry

Table 5 – Summary of Breeding Bird Surveys



Figure 5 Nesting and Wintering Bird Survey Transect

Wintering Bird Survey

- 4.24 Given the site's proximity to residential properties, its regular use and its distance and isolation from habitats such as coastal grazing marsh, rivers, and mudflats, it was considered unlikely that any significant winter bird assemblages would be present. Out of an abundance of caution, winter bird surveys were conducted in January, February and March 2026. These broadly followed the Royal Society for the Protection of Birds' (RSPB) Bird Monitoring Methods (Gilbert *et al.*, 2002). A transect route was followed that enabled observation of all major areas of habitat within and adjacent to the site, and matched the route taken in the breeding bird surveys (Figure 5). Birds heard or seen were recorded using British Trust for Ornithology notation, including recording of behaviour. Equipment used comprised 8x42 binoculars. The table below shows the weather conditions timings during each survey visit.

Date	Survey Time	Weather
30th January 2026	09:15 - 10:45	8°C, 60% Cloud Cover, Beaufort 2, Dry
23rd February 2026	09:35 - 10:30	10.5°C, 50% Cloud Cover, Beaufort 2, Dry
15th March 2026	10:00 - 11:00	9.5°C, 30% Cloud Cover, Beaufort 2, Dry

Table 6 – Summary of Breeding Bird Surveys

Ecological Impact Assessment

- 4.25 The methodology for Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) follows best practice guidelines set by the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management (CIEEM): 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment' (CIEEM, 2018). This includes identifying the baseline conditions on the site and subsequently rating the potential effects of the development based on the sensitivity and value of the resource affected, combined with the magnitude, duration and scale of the impact (or change). This is initially assessed without mitigation measures, and then assessed again after allowing for the proposed mitigation measures; this provides the residual effects. The assessment is divided into construction effects and longer-term operational effects.
- 4.26 Each ecological feature within the site has been considered within a defined Geographic context such as:
- International and European;
 - National;
 - Regional;
 - County;
 - District;
 - Local;
 - Site Level;
 - Negligible.
- 4.27 Based upon CIEEM guidance, value was determined with reference to the following factors:
- Its inclusion as a Designated Site or other protected area;
 - The presence of habitat types of conservation significance, e.g. Habitats of Principal Importance (NERC 2006);
 - The presence (or potential presence) of species of conservation significance e.g. Species of Principal Importance (NERC 2006);
 - The presence of other protected species e.g. those protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981;
 - The sites social and economic value.
- 4.28 Specifically in the case of bats, the impact assessment has been conducted in accordance with the recently published Bat Mitigation Guidelines (Reason and Wray 2023). Other relevant guidelines such as the Dormouse Conservation Handbook, Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines and Froglife Advice Sheet for Reptiles were consulted as appropriate.

Scientific names of species have been provided only where necessary for clarity, as most species names are clearly distinguishable by their common names.

5.0 Baseline Ecological Conditions

Desktop Study

Designated Sites within 12km

- 5.1 Designated sites information is included below so that the site can be considered within the ecological context of the surrounding area, guiding decisions related to habitat change and protected species. These sites are not necessarily representative of the habitat on or around the site, and may not be influenced by the proposals.
- 5.2 All international and national statutory designated sites within their respective boundaries are detailed in Table 1. These sites are legally protected by UK and International legislation for their biodiversity value.

Site Name	Reason for designation	Approximate distance from site
Duncton to Bignor Escarpment SAC	The site is an example of mature beech <i>Fagus sylvatica</i> woodland located on the steep scarp face of the South Downs. The site has developed over chalk which is overlain in places by a clay-with-flints capping. Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: 9130 Asperulo-Fagetum beech forests	8.7km N
Pagham Harbour SPA	The site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Birds Directive by supporting wintering ruff <i>Philomachus pugnax</i> (10% of the British wintering population) and breeding populations of little tern <i>Sterna albifrons</i> and common tern <i>Sterna hirundo</i> . The site qualifies under Article 4.2 of the Birds Directive as it supports in winter dark-bellied brent geese <i>Branta bernicla bernicla</i> (2% of the European wintering population). The site also supports nationally important wintering populations of pintail <i>Anas acuta</i> , grey plover <i>Pluvialis squatarola</i> and black-tailed godwits <i>Limosa limosa</i> .	9.4km SW
Arun Valley SPA	The site qualifies under Article 4.1 of the Birds Directive as it is used regularly by 1% or more of the Great British population of Bewick's swan <i>Cygnus columbianus bewickii</i> and the site is used regularly by over 20,000 waterfowl (as defined by the Ramsar convention).	10.5km NE
Arun Valley SAC	The site comprises a series of wet meadows dissected by a network of ditches. Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: Ramshorn snail <i>Anisus vorticulus</i>	10.5km NE

Table 7: A summary of international statutory designated sites within 12km of the site.

- 5.3 There are no non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site.
- 5.4 The site is located within the Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) of Climping Beach, Arundel Park, Fairmile Bottom and Duncton to Bignor Escarpment SSSIs. However, the development proposal does not match the descriptions for negative effects on SSSIs and thus Natural England does not need to be consulted in this case.
- 5.5 The site is outside the Wider Conservation Zone for the Singleton and Cocking Tunnels bat SAC, the Nutrient Neutrality Zones and the Sussex North Water Supply Zone; these subjects will not be considered further in this report.

Habitats

Desk Study

- 5.6 The following UK Priority Habitats occur within 2km of the site: wood-pasture and parkland, traditional orchard, deciduous woodland, ancient woodland, lowland fens, and coastal and floodplain grazing marsh.
- 5.7 No Priority Habitats occur within the site. The closest Priority Habitat is an area of deciduous woodland 125m east of the site.

Site Assessment

- 5.8 All habitats assigned to the site are detailed below and displayed in the Site Habitat Plan (see Section 13.0).

g4 16 32 106 – Modified Grassland (Mown with Tall Forbs and Scattered Trees)

- 5.9 The site was dominated by modified grassland. The sward was largely homogenous across the wider site. Species present included perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, Timothy grass *Phleum pratense*, and Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* alongside common forbs such as creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium* and creeping cinquefoil *Potentilla reptans*. The habitat was classified as a 'modified grassland' due to the low diversity (mean of 5.1 species per square metre), the low density of forbs (c.5-10% cover on average) and the abundance of common coarse grasses, particularly perennial rye. To the margins were denser stands of tall forb species such as burdock *Arctium minus* and fleabane *Pulicaria dysenterica*. Several trees were scattered throughout this habitat and species present included a spruce *Picea* species (sp.), willow *Salix* sp. and sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*. The plant species present are widespread and overall, the grassland is of **site value**.
- 5.10 It is noted that, in May 2025 part of the above grassland was cultivated and a maize crop planted. This consisted of bare ground with dense maize crops. Some areas to the centre failed resulting in bare earth for much of the summer. By the autumn, the crop had been harvested and grassland was rapidly re-colonising with mats of creeping buttercup notable and Yorkshire fog spreading. For the purposes of the following assessment the land has continued to be classed as modified grassland following the precautionary principle.

h3d – Bramble Scrub

- 5.11 The northern boundary of the site was a railway embankment formed entirely of bramble *Rubus fruticosus* (agg.) scrub. Smaller patches of bramble scrub were also present in the west of the site, surrounding developed areas, some of which had been cleared at the time of survey. The scattered bramble is of **site value** whilst the northern habitat is of **local value**.

h3h 32 – Mixed Scrub with Scattered Trees

- 5.12 A patch of mixed scrub with scattered trees was present in the north-east corner of the site. Scrub species present included blackthorn, hazel and willow, with poplar *Populus* sp. trees emerging from the scrub. The habitat is of **site value**.

u1b5 – Buildings

- 5.13 A small number of buildings and structures were present within the site, including a small timber field shelter. Off-site in the centre of the wider plot, several modern mobile homes, a shipping container and a metal barn are present. The habitat is of **negligible value**.

u1b – Developed Land; Sealed Surface

- 5.14 Patches of bare ground, gravel and hardcore paths cross the site. The habitat is of **negligible value**.

h2a6 – Species-Rich Native Hedgerow

- 5.15 A species-rich native hedgerow spans the length of the eastern boundary, with the majority of the hedgerow forming a sparse garden boundary. Species present included blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, hazel *Corylus avellana*, goat willow *Salix caprea*, oak *Quercus robur*, common beech *Fagus sylvatica* and hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*. Ornamental species including a redclaw species *Escallonia* sp. and conifers are also occasionally present within the hedgerow. The habitat is of **local value**.

h2b – Non-Native and Ornamental Hedgerow

- 5.16 A non-native and ornamental hedgerow forms part of the southern boundary. The hedgerow comprised garden privet *Ligustrum ovalifolium*. Short lengths of coniferous hedges also separate areas within the centre of the site. The habitat is of **negligible value**.

w1g 33 and 34 – Ecologically-valuable Line of Trees

- 5.17 Just off-site on the western boundary is a line of trees, formed of ash, sycamore, aspen, poplar, oak and areas of scrub. This line contains mature trees and as such is classed as 'ecologically-valuable'. A small line of self-set trees also lines the existing footpath to the south-east. The habitat is of **site value**.

r1g 50 – Ditch

- 5.18 A short length of dry, grass-filled ditch is present in the centre of the site. The habitat is of **negligible value**.

6.0 Protected Species Assessment

Bats

Desk Study

- 6.1 10 bat species have been recorded within 2km of the site: western barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*, common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, Nathusius's pipistrelle *Pipistrellus nathusii*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, serotine *Eptesicus serotinus*, Brandt's bat *Myotis brandtii*, brown long-eared *Plecotus auritus*, grey long-eared bat *Plecotus austriacus* and greater horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*. Bats belonging to the *Myotis* genus have also been recorded near the site but have not been assigned to species level.
- 6.2 Two EPSM licences have been granted within 2km of the site for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle bats in 2016.

Site Assessment

- 6.3 The majority of the site is formed of open grassland with low species diversity which is unlikely to be of significance to bats beyond the **site level**.
- 6.4 The boundaries of the site comprise gappy hedgerows, scattered trees and bramble, all of which offer low suitability to foraging and commuting bats. These features are likely to form part of commuting corridors for bats. However, due to the open nature of the site and the surroundings, these features are unlikely to be of value beyond the **local level** at most.
- 6.5 There is suitable woodland habitat off-site to the east, connected to the site via the railway embankment and the boundary features.
- 6.6 There are few trees on the site. Those that are present do not display obvious features for bats although comprehensive surveys have not been carried out. It is unlikely that any bats roost on the site.

Nighttime Bat Walkover Surveys

- 6.7 The April bat nighttime walkover revealed low-moderate levels of bat activity. This was dominated by common and soprano pipistrelles, foraging and commuting mostly in the corners of the site. Two long-eared bats were recorded commuting along the western boundary treeline. Several individual serotine passes were also recorded.
- 6.8 The July bat nighttime walkover revealed a moderate level of bat activity, dominated by pipistrelles with rare noctule passes. High levels of pipistrelle activity were recorded around a large poplar just off-site to the north-west corner. This might indicate a roost in or near to the tree, or a foraging resource.
- 6.9 The September nighttime walkover recorded low levels of bat activity. The majority of this was by common and soprano pipistrelles, with several individual noctule, long-eared and *Myotis* sp. calls. Most activity was concentrated along the western boundary.

Static Monitoring

- 6.10 A minimum of 7 no. bat species were recorded during the 15 nights of static monitoring to date. *Myotis* sp. and *Nyctalus* sp. bats have not been separated into their respective species due to the generally low numbers of passes. The results are summarised in Table 6 below:

Mean Passes per Night - East				
	Deployment 1 – 13/05 – 17/05	Deployment 2 – 15/07 – 19/07	Deployment 3 – 15/09 – 19/09	% of all calls
Common Pipistrelle	63.2	492.8	2643.6	82.51
Soprano Pipistrelle	15.4	315.4	176	13.07
Barbastelle	2.2	6.8	26.6	0.92
Long-eared	0.4	1.6	6	0.21
Noctule/Leisler's	2.2	19.6	4.6	0.68
<i>Myotis</i> sp.	0.2	17.4	78.8	2.49
Serotine	0.6	3.8	0.6	0.13
Total Mean Bat Passes Per Night	84.2	857.4	2936.2	

Table 8: Results of Static Monitoring (Bat Passes) On the Eastern Boundary

Mean Passes per Night - West				
	Deployment 1 – 13/05 – 17/05	Deployment 2 – 15/07 – 19/07	Deployment 3 – 15/09 – 19/09	% of all calls
Common Pipistrelle	64.8	228.2	302.8	75.76
Soprano Pipistrelle	16	118.2	19.6	19.56
Barbastelle	2.2	1.6	3.8	0.97
Long-eared	0.6	0.2	4.2	0.64
Noctule/Leisler's	2.4	7.8	6.4	2.11
<i>Myotis</i> sp.	1.2	1.8	1.8	0.61
Serotine	0.8	2	0	0.36
Total Mean	88	359.8	338.6	

Table 9: Results of Static Monitoring (Bat Passes) On the Western Boundary

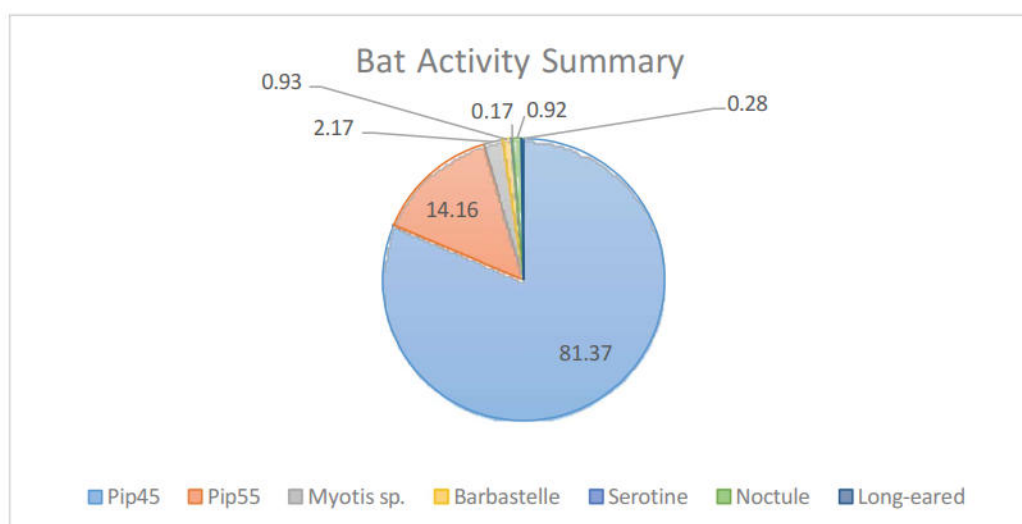


Figure 6 Bat Activity Summary

- 6.11 Bat activity levels varied greatly. In the east, total mean passes per night being low in May, moderately high in July and September. In the west, activity was low in May, high in July and very high in September. This might reflect that the densest vegetation off-site is present to the west, part-way down the site.
- 6.12 The vast majority of bat calls recorded were pipistrelle (96.15%) with a great majority being common pipistrelle (81.37%). All other species were relatively rare. It is notable that barbastelle bats were recorded on 25 of 30 nights, with a peak of 66 confirmed passes. Myotis bats also made up a small but appreciable percentage (2.17%).

Assessment of Bat Activity

- 6.13 The results of the static and nighttime walkover suggest that the railway is not particularly well-used at present, with activity being lower towards the north of the site. The western boundary appears of particular importance to bats at present, which is logical given the dense vegetation along this boundary. This is of particular importance to common pipistrelle and to a lesser extent soprano pipistrelle.
- 6.14 This data indicates the likely presence of common and soprano pipistrelle roosts in the local vicinity, including possibly in the boundary trees, with roosts of other species present in the wider surrounds. The number of barbastelle, noctule, long-eared, myotis and serotine bats are indicative of individual bats commuting over the site.
- 6.15 At certain times of the year (notably September) barbastelle appear to pass over the western boundary multiple times in one night, suggesting a commuting or minor foraging feature. This accords well with ongoing research by AEWC and The Bat Conservation and Research Unit, who have previously identified this boundary as a commuting corridor for the Slindon barbastelle colony, which commutes south over the western boundary to forage on farmland and coastal floodplains around Barnham and Bilsham.

- 6.16 The site is considered of **local value** as foraging and commuting habitat for bats, mostly for a small number of pipistrelle bats but also for small numbers of more unusual species on occasion. The off-site boundary vegetation to the west is of **local-district value** for its use by the Slindon barbastelle population. This is generally thought to be restricted to the boundary vegetation running north-south.

Birds

Desk Study

- 6.17 Over 164 protected and notable bird species have been recorded within 2km of the site including the following 35 Schedule 1 species: barn owl *Tyto alba*, Bewick's swan *Cygnus columbianus bewickii*, black redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*, black-necked grebe *Podiceps nigricollis*, black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa*, black-winged stilt *Himantopus Himantopus*, brambling *Fringilla montifringilla*, Cetti's warbler *Cettia cetti*, crossbill *Loxia curvirostra*, Dartford warbler *Curruca undata*, fieldfare *Turdus pilaris*, firecrest *Regulus ignicapilla*, garganey *Spatula querquedula*, green sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*, greenshank *Tringa nebularia*, hen harrier *Circus cyaneus*, hobby *Falco subbuteo*, honey buzzard *Pernis apivorus*, hoopoe *Upupa epops*, kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*, little gull *Hydrocoloeus minutus*, little ringed plover *Charadrius dubius*, long-tailed duck *Clangula hyemalis*, marsh harrier *Circus aeruginosus*, Mediterranean gull *Ichthyaetus melanocephalus*, merlin *Falco columbarius*, peregrine *Falco peregrinus*, red kite *Milvus milvus*, redwing *Turdus iliacus*, ruff *Calidris pugnax*, scaup *Aythya marila*, spoonbill *Platalea leucorodia*, whimbrel *Numenius phaeopus*, whooper swan *Cygnus cygnus* and wood sandpiper *Tringa glareola*.

Site Assessment – Breeding Birds

- 6.18 The surveys indicated that the site or immediately adjacent land is used by breeding and foraging birds with six species confirmed to be breeding and four considered likely to be breeding. Of these, two (greenfinch *Chloris chloris* and house sparrow *Passer domesticus*) are red-listed Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) (Stanbury et al., 2021), with a further three species amber listed. Three further red-listed and two amber-listed species were recorded as possible breeders. The results of the surveys are detailed in the table below.
- 6.19 A swallow *Hirundo rustica* was recorded nesting in one of the small animal shelters on-site during the April nighttime bat walkover survey.

6.20 The main habitats of value for breeding are old farm sheds within the site, and strips of woodland adjacent to the site to east and west. Hedgerows along the northern and southern boundaries support few birds. Within the site the arable fields offer foraging opportunities, but no ground nesting species were noted. These features are likely to be of value at the **site level** at most.

Species	26 th April 2025	15 th May 2025	9 th June 2025	Breeding Status
Greenfinch <i>Chloris chloris</i>	5	1	1	Probable
Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	3 (many in flight)	5	8	Possible
House sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	Many	Many	15	Confirmed
Linnet <i>Linaria cannabina</i>	2	-	-	Possible
Yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	1	-	-	Possible
Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	2	2	3	Confirmed
Woodpigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>	14	8	5	Confirmed
Song thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	1	-	1	Possible
Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	1	1	2	Probable
Stock dove <i>Columba oenas</i>	1	-	1	Possible
Rook <i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	-	-	126	Not breeding
Goldfinch <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	-	-	(2)	Not breeding
Great spotted woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos major</i>	-	-	1	Not breeding
Carrion crow <i>Corvus corone</i>	1	17	-	Possible

Table 10 – Summary of Breeding Bird Survey Data

Species	26 th April 2025	15 th May 2025	9 th June 2025	Breeding Status
Great tit <i>Parus major</i>	2	1	2	Probable
Blue tit <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	4	1	2	Confirmed
Robin <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	3	1	3	Confirmed
Blackbird <i>Turdus merula</i>	2	3	4	Confirmed
Chiffchaff <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>	1	-	1	Possible
Goldcrest <i>Regulus regulus</i>	1	1	-	Probable
Blackcap <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	-	1	1	Possible
Collared dove <i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>	-	1	-	Not breeding
Jackdaw <i>Corvus monedula</i>	4	-	-	Not breeding
Magpie <i>Pica pica</i>	2 (1)	1	2	Possible
Pied wagtail <i>Motacilla alba</i>	-	1 (1)	-	Not breeding
Long-tailed tit <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	-	-	6	Possible

Table 11 – Summary of Breeding Bird Survey Data (Continued)

Site Assessment – Wintering Birds

- 6.21 Small numbers of gulls including herring gull *Larus argentarius* were recorded subsequent to the breeding bird survey, foraging on the arable land in September, following the harvest of the maize.
- 6.22 The wintering bird surveys identified low numbers of common winter birds. Three other red-listed species of greenfinch, house sparrow and starling were recorded, generally in low numbers other than there being a flock of up to 29 house sparrows using the buildings. The buildings are not within the site and not impacted by proposals. The majority of other activity consisted of passerines and other common birds using the margins of the site, likely in preparation for the upcoming breeding season. Overall the site is likely to be of value at the **low-site level** at most.

Species	Survey 1	Survey 2	Survey 3
Blackbird	2	2	2
Blackcap	-	1	-
Blue Tit	4	9	3
Buzzard	-	4	-
Dunnock	3	4	4
Goldfinch	7	3	7
Great Spotted Woodpecker	1	-	-
Great Tit	-	5	1
Green Woodpecker	1	1	-
Greenfinch	4	6	3
House Sparrow	29	28	23
Jackdaw	5	-	-
Long Tailed Tit	12	-	-
Red Kite	1	-	-
Robin	3	5	3
Song Thrush	2	5	4
Starling	7	7	-
Woodpigeon	3	7	1
Wren	3	3	3

Table 12 – Summary of Wintering Bird Survey Data

Reptiles

Desk Study

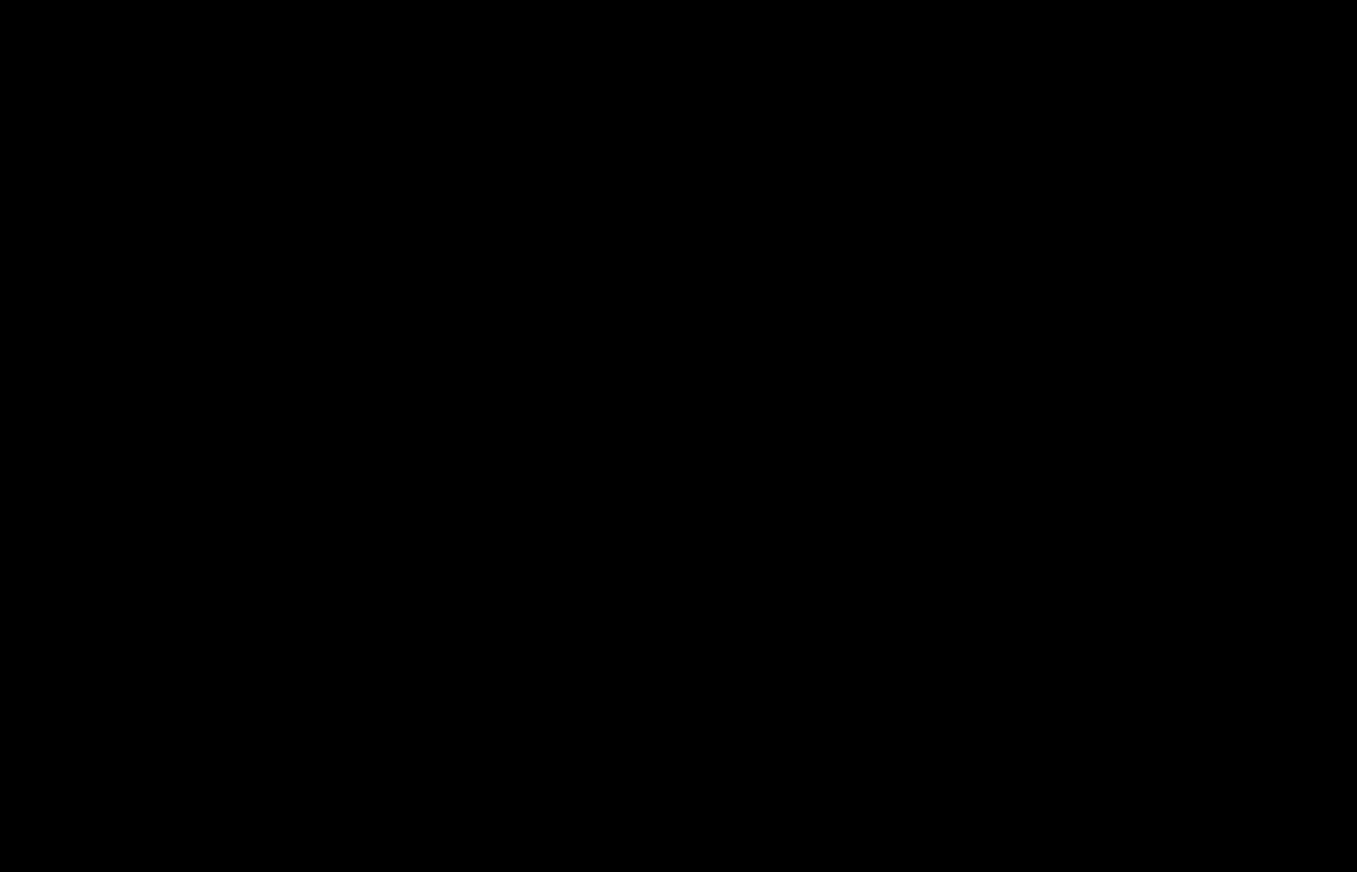
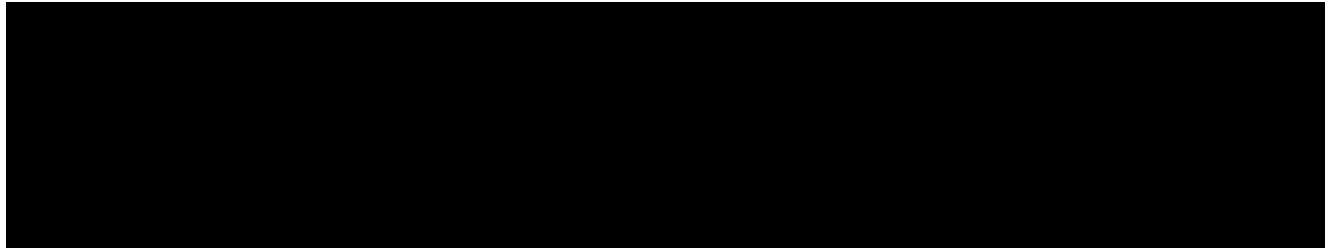
6.23 There are 59 records of slow worm *Anguis fragilis* within 2km of the site.

Site Assessment

6.24 The reptile survey revealed the presence of ‘low’ populations of slow worms and common lizard. The results of the surveys are detailed below. The habitats most suitable for reptiles were considered to be the marginal areas. The vast majority of the site is of limited suitability with reptiles found to the margins and in scrubby areas to the west of site. These features are likely to be of value at the **site level**.



Figure 7 Location of Reptiles

Dormice

Desk Study

- 6.30 The data search returned no records of dormice. However, records from the National Dormouse Database (NDD) are present within 2km of the site.

Site Assessment

- 6.31 The scrub and boundary hedgerows within the site offer suitability for commuting dormice. The site has limited connectivity to areas of suitable dormouse habitat in the wider landscape. The site was considered to offer **low potential** for dormice, only in the boundary vegetation. Small patches of disconnected bramble and non-native hedges provide **negligible potential**.

Nest Tube Survey

- 6.32 The nest tube survey identified a single likely dormouse nest in the north-west corner of the site. This was within the mixed scrub which provides the best habitat for dormice. The lack of other nests suggests that dormice are present but possibly in low densities within this part of the landscape. The habitats on-site are very limited and of significance at the **site level**.

Amphibians

Desk Study

- 6.33 There are seven records for great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* within 2km of the site. However, no EPSM licences have been granted for great crested newt within 2km of the site. There are six ponds recorded within 500m of the site. However, the four ponds to the north of the railway line are isolated from the site by the railway line, industrial sites, roads and residential properties. The two ponds to the south of the railway line are isolated from the site by roads, residential properties and industrial sites.
- 6.34 There are seven records for common toad *Bufo bufo* within 2km of the site, which was last recorded in 2019.

Site Assessment

- 6.35 The site offers some suitability for amphibians, mostly in the scrubby railway margin. The grassland offers sub-optimal foraging and commuting habitat for amphibians. Given the lack of habitat connectivity, the site is considered to offer **negligible potential** for great crested newts but **low potential** for widespread amphibians.

Hedgehogs

Desk Study

- 6.36 There are 58 records of a European hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* within 2km of the site.

Site Assessment

- 6.37 The grassland, scrub and hedgerows may be utilised by hedgehogs for foraging and commuting, whilst the scrub and hedgerows also offer sheltering habitat. These features are likely of **site value**.

Others

- 6.38 There is no suitable habitat for otters, water vole, white-clawed crayfish or other protected species. There is a small length of very poor isolated ditch which would not support these species. No notable plant species were noted and the site is highly unlikely to support rare fungi assemblages.

7.0 Assessment of Impacts, Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation

Designated Sites

Statutory Sites

- 7.1 The site is not within any impact risk zone and given the intervening distances, no impacts either direct or indirect are likely to occur upon designated sites as a result of the proposals. The lack of requirement to consult with Natural England suggests assessment under the Habitats Regulations (2017) is not necessary.
- 7.2 Whilst barbastelle bats are recorded using the boundary vegetation, impacts upon the bats to the extent that an effect on the 'South Downs Bat SACs' would occur is considered highly unlikely, and ruled out by good scheme design.
- 7.3 The site lies outside any recreational impact buffers, nutrient or water neutrality zones.

Non-Statutory Sites

- 7.4 No such sites lie within 2.0 km and as such no impacts are likely to occur.

Habitats

Potential Impacts

- 7.5 Development proposals will result in the loss of large areas of modified grassland and small areas of bramble scrub and non-native hedgerow. Small areas of hedges would require pruning back to enable site access. Impacts would be of moderate impact at the site level in the absence of mitigation. Unsympathetic lighting might also degrade off-site treeline, hedgerow and scrub habitats.

Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.6 All construction will be undertaken in accordance with best practice guidelines with regards to control of dust, noise and emissions. All trees and native hedges are proposed to be retained and shall be protected in accordance with BS5837:2012 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction - Recommendations' (Refer to detailed Tree Protection and Retention Plan - GS463.Sunnyside.TRPP, and Arboricultural Impact Assessment and Method Statement – GS463.Sunnyside.AIA for more information). Where appropriate, tree protection will include further measures over and above those recommended in the British Standard, such as debris netting or protective hoarding which shall be implemented to prevent damage to hedgerows from dust. Storage of fuel, chemicals and other liquids will be avoided adjacent to hedgerows, trees and off-site habitats, avoiding all tree and hedge RPAs. Appropriate spill-containment equipment shall be utilised. A detailed Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) would be produced at the pre-commencement stage secured by a planning condition of any outline consent to ensure this occurs.
- 7.7 Loss of grassland will be mitigated by retention of a wide buffer strip around the boundaries. The buffers would also protect the boundary hedges and habitats beyond and would contain enhanced meadow grassland, swales, mixed scrub and attenuation basins, kept outside of private gardens and fenced to allow management access.

- 7.8 A Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment is required to demonstrate a minimum of a 10% gain; this accompanies the application and determines that it is possible to achieve a fully-compliant gain on the site using the above enhancement approach. Such habitat creation, enhancement and management shall be secured through a legal agreement which includes for a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan and suitable monitoring regime.

Residual Impacts

- 7.9 Once mitigation is taken into account, the predicted impacts set out above will be negligible and non-significant with a net gain in the long term.

Bats

Potential Impacts

- 7.10 In the absence of mitigation impacts may include habitat fragmentation, very limited loss of foraging areas on site and in the surrounds, loss of significant commuting routes (albeit for small numbers of bats), increased predation of individual bats by domestic cats and wild predators.
- 7.11 Impacts would moderately impact several common and soprano pipistrelles for which the site is considered part of their home ranges, as well as low numbers of barbastelle bats which commute fairly regularly over the western boundary in particular. The works would also affect individual long-eared, Myotis, noctule/Leisler's, and serotine bats which commute through the site occasionally, but do not appear to forage there. The main risk of impacts appears to be from light spill, with no significant vegetation removal required. The main access route is separated from the boundary by landscape areas and a small number of dwellings, which would distance any street lighting from the boundary somewhat. Impacts could extend to the district level in the worst case, with barbastelle being prevented from commuting along the western corridor to foraging lands south of Barnham. The proposed enhancement of this and other boundary buffers suggest this is highly unlikely, but lower-level impacts making the habitat less suitable might occur should impacts not be controlled and mitigated.
- 7.12 The western buffer (which is considered of most value at present) is proposed to be enhanced with a mixture of hedgerow wildflower, scrub, and bioswale. Such habitats should reinforce the value of this boundary to bats such as barbastelle and help to buffer any incidental lightspill from e.g. cars at night. The enhancement of the northern and eastern boundaries will also create new commuting opportunities for such bats, which will likely be necessary given the quantum of development occurring further to the west. These benefits will therefore extend beyond the site level. Such works would represent a positive impact upon bats.
- 7.13 No buildings offering any significant bat roost potential are proposed for removal. No trees on-site offer any bat roost potential; one off-site tree may support a bat roost given the results of the nighttime walkover surveys. The tree is protected from proposals with a 15.0 m RPA plus an additional 2.0 m to development.

Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.14 The proposals have been designed to avoid the need for tree or native hedge removal. The only hedge removal is of non-native privet and conifer hedge, which offers negligible value to bats. All retained hedges shall be protected both during construction and removed from private ownership in the long term, to ensure their retention and proper management. As such the removal or potential loss of significant vegetation is very minimal.

- 7.15 Loss of grassland will be mitigated by retention and enhancement of the buffer strips to the margins of the site, which shall be enhanced to increase species diversity, and create water-retention features which would increase the invertebrate resource. New linear vegetative features are proposed of continuous hedge and scrub to the boundaries of the site and buffer, to create a continuous dark corridor for bats between this and the existing habitats to west and east.

- 7.16 All light spill onto surrounding hedge lines and off-site treelines will be avoided, with lighting conforming to ILP Guidance Note 08/23 (BCT & ILP, 2023). Consideration of the lighting temperature, angle, height, and operation times shall be incorporated into a detailed external lighting design strategy, which shall be commissioned to ensure that light spill onto native hedges and mature trees does not exceed 0.4 lux, as measured at ground level on a horizontal plane. Where possible a level of below 0.1 lux shall be aimed for. Landscape proposals should aim to prevent light spill onto boundary vegetation and could look to reduce the existing light spill from the railway and existing properties through defensive planting, particularly at any points where the lighting design suggests light spill in excess of the above suggested limits.

- 7.17 Storage of fuel, chemicals etc. will be avoided adjacent to hedgerows and trees. All trees, hedges and scrub are to be protected in accordance with BS5837:2012 'Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction - Recommendations'; a full arboricultural impact assessment and method statement accompanies this application, based on recent survey work. A detailed Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) would ensure protection measures are employed.

- 7.18 Debris netting will be installed to the protective barriers to further minimise dust and visual disturbance to the habitats.

- 7.19 There is little suitable mitigation for cat predation; planting of thorny scrub round the margins in particular would somewhat reduce the potential for cats to access surrounding areas.

Residual Impacts

- 7.20 The overall impact of the scheme will be negligible once such measures are in place. The long-term impacts are likely to be significantly positive.

Birds

Potential Impacts

- 7.21 In the absence of avoidance / mitigation, the development could result in the damage / destruction of bird nests, loss of foraging habitats and increased predation due to domestic cats. Impacts would be of moderate impact magnitude and likely to occur. The impacts would mainly affect garden birds. There would be no significant loss of habitat for ground-nesting birds. Impacts would be moderate but restricted to the site level. Construction works may also cause disturbance at the local level in the short-term.
- 7.22 Given the residential surroundings, frequent use of the site and isolation from suitable habitats, the impacts upon wintering birds would be minimal.

Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.23 Clearance of any scrub or hedge, removal of structures and initial cuts of any grassland will be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (season: March-August inclusive) with vegetation in construction areas maintained to be unsuitable for birds hereafter. Should this not be possible, vegetation and structures will be checked prior to removal by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist to ensure no active nests are present no more than 48 hours prior to any works. Should an active birds nest be present works will cease in that area until chicks have fledged.
- 7.24 New habitat for tree-nesting birds shall be created by planting of new hedges and scrub, and installation of bird nesting features to new dwellings, whilst birds which nest in marginal habitats such as woodlark will benefit from enhancement of the buffer zones and creation of new habitats such as swales.
- 7.25 Tree and hedge protection measures would also protect the vast majority of nesting habitat.
- 7.26 There is little suitable mitigation for cat predation; planting of thorny scrub round the margins in particular would somewhat reduce the potential for cats to access surrounding areas.

Residual Impacts

- 7.27 The overall impact of the scheme will be negligible.

Reptiles

Potential Impacts

- 7.28 In the absence of mitigation, impacts could include killing or injuring individual reptiles, increased predation, removal of some of the reptile habitat on-site and habitat fragmentation. Small areas of hibernation habitats would be lost. Impacts would be of moderate impact magnitude at the site level and highly likely to occur.

Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.29 The following mitigation measures should be implemented during site clearance and construction to avoid any potential harm to any reptile species present. Given the existing management regime and low population, it is considered possible to retain reptiles within the marginal areas of site without a full translocation:
- The proposed reptile buffer strip to the margins to be identified and enhanced pre-works by addition of log piles, compost piles, installation of hibernacula. Buffers shall be allowed to establish pre-works. Such buffer shall be protected by barriers and signage to ensure no accidental damage by contractors. Give the need to enhance the marginal grassland, the buffer shall initially consist of the areas proposed for scrub planting. This would allow subsequent harrowing and seeding of wildflower grassland areas without harm to reptiles. Scrub can subsequently be manually planted into this zone without harm to reptiles, or such planting can occur prior to the reptile mitigation works.
 - All contractors should be given a toolbox talk to make them aware of the presence of reptiles in the locality, the location of exclusion zones and retained habitat, and what to do in the event a reptile is found.
 - The entire construction area will be mown in stages with the first cut to no less than 100mm. Following this a fingertip search will be undertaken by the supervising ecologist, and a period of 24-48 hours to allow wildlife to disperse, a final cut will reduce the vegetation to <50mm. Cuts shall begin from the access points into the site, and aim to encourage reptiles into the retained and enhanced marginal habitats in a widely-used 'cut and chase' approach, moving from the centre outwards.
 - The buffer zones shall then be protected with temporary reptile exclusion fencing, to prevent re-colonisation. This shall be installed to create a continuous ring around the site.
 - Following the final cuts, the site shall be stripped as soon as possible to prevent recolonisation. Vegetation within the construction zone is to be kept short (<50mm) prior to and during this to prevent reptiles recolonising the area. Ecological supervision of the soil strip shall be undertaken to allow individual reptiles to be protected and relocated. Harrowing of areas proposed to be enhanced to neutral grassland could also occur at this time, to allow seeding and establishment as soon as possible.

- Provided this is carried out, no reptile habitat would remain in the construction zone, and it is not considered necessary to conduct a full translocation, given the low population present. All footings shall be checked daily for wildlife, and any found relocated to the buffer zones in accordance with instructions provided by the ecologist.
- Scrub, hedge and other groundcover shall be strimmed under ecological supervision, first to a height no lower than 150mm. Following this a fingertip search will be undertaken by the supervising ecologist, and a period of 24-48 hours to allow wildlife to disperse, a final cut will reduce the vegetation to <50mm.
- All removal of any potential refugia or hibernation features (such as log or debris piles, tree/shrub stumps, brash or rubble) should be removed during the summer months, outside of the hibernation season (ie. Not removed between November-mid-March inclusive) when reptiles are active and able to move away from harm.

7.30 Following completion of the development, the buffer zones around the edges of the site are to be retained as suitable reptile habitat and ultimately will become mixed scrub surrounded by wildflower grassland and swales. Areas of suitable reptile habitat created within the scheme will be subject to a management plan to ensure they remain in optimal condition, with an ecotone of short and long grass bordering scrub considered optimal. Whilst the overall area of habitat suited to reptiles will be significantly reduced, the retained habitats will be made better than the existing, allowing a low population to endure. Many of the amenity areas are likely to include informal open space and semi-natural spaces, which can also be suitable for slow worms if managed less-intensively.

Residual Impacts

7.31 The overall impact of the scheme will be negligible.

Amphibians

Potential Impacts

7.32 Any risk of an offence is considered highly unlikely, with Great Crested Newt (GCN) highly unlikely to be present. Individual widespread amphibians might be impacted. Impacts would be of low impact at the site level.

Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation

7.33 The mitigation for reptiles would adequately protect any low numbers of amphibians present.

Residual Impacts

7.34 The overall impact of the scheme will be negligible.

Dormice

Potential Impacts

- 7.35 Dormice are considered present at the site. Given the lack of hedgerow removal, there is a very low risk of dormouse commuting or foraging habitat being destroyed. The risk of a dormouse being harmed is, consequently, very low.

Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.36 The boundary hedges will be retained and protected within the buffer zones to the margins, providing protection both from direct construction impacts and impacts such as noise and dust. A detailed Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) would be produced at Reserved Matters stage or as a condition to ensure protection measures are employed.
- 7.37 The access road has been designed to minimise breaking connectivity along the frontage; only an ornamental hedge, and small sections of isolated scrub would be removed.
- 7.38 A small area of hedge at the frontage may require light pruning to accommodate works to the footpath to the south-east of the site. This is suitable for dormice but largely disconnected. The section of hedge shall be subject to a final fingertip search of any suitable shrubs and stumps prior to and during clearance. Sensitive timing of vegetation removal shall be implemented, whereby scrub and trees are pruned by hand during the winter (when dormice should be in dormancy at low-level). Should any stump removal be required, this would be supervised in the following spring. If evidence of dormice is found within the construction zone, works shall cease until an appropriate course of action is determined, which would likely involve a Natural England Licence.
- 7.39 The hedges on-site will be further connected with new vegetative linear habitat along the edges of the development, and new scrub planting round the margins. Species which support dormice such as honeysuckle and hazel should be included here.

Residual Impacts

- 7.40 The overall impact of the scheme will be negligible in the shorter term turning positive / beneficial in the longer term as vegetation establishes.

Hedgehogs

Potential Impacts

- 7.46 Large areas of suitable grassland will be lost, but at least partly compensated through new gardens, which will provide protection for hedgehogs from badgers which may predate them. Individual hedgehogs and other small mammals may use the site and be injured during works.

Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.47 Mitigation for reptiles and badgers would also protect smaller mammals. All closed-board fencing will incorporate a 13x13cm hole to the base to allow movement of hedgehogs around the site.

Residual Impacts

- 7.48 The overall impact of the scheme will be negligible.

Invertebrates

Potential Impacts

- 7.49 The proposals would result in the loss of large areas of relatively common invertebrate habitat. Impacts would not extend beyond the site level but would be moderate in magnitude and long-term.

Avoidance, Mitigation and Compensation

- 7.50 Surrounding hedgerows and margins will be retained within the scheme. The new buffer zones will include enhanced grassland, trees and shrubs with a higher capacity for invertebrates, as well as new swales and rain garden and communal garden areas which will provide new habitats on-site for a wider range of invertebrates.
- 7.51 Where possible, all species recommended within the soft landscape scheme will be as listed on 'RHS Plants for Pollinators' to maximise the invertebrate resource within the site. A detailed Landscape Design Statement accompanies the application detailing how enhancements for invertebrates will be provided. Log and brash piles and buried hibernacula will be used to increase habitat for detritivores and stag beetles within the buffer zones. Trees and vegetation removed will be left within these areas to provide ongoing habitat. New buried log piles will be created within the buffers to provide further opportunities for saprophytes such as stag beetles *Lucanus cervus*.

Residual Impacts

- 7.52 The overall impact of the scheme will be negligible. The overall number of guilds of invertebrates will likely increase over time due to the increase in habitat diversity, although there may be a reduction on-site of the overall quantity of invertebrates in certain groups such as cosmopolitan grassland species.

8.0 Ecological Enhancements

- 8.1 The proposals will be expected to demonstrate an overall positive impact on the natural environment as set out in Arun Local Policy.
- 8.2 A detailed Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment is a mandatory requirement under the Environment Act 2021 and is included as a separate assessment which determines that such a gain is readily achievable.
- 8.3 The proposals would include mixed scrub creation to the boundaries; enhancement of marginal grassland to a neutral grassland with in-seeding of hedgerow wildflower ; planting of a large number of individual trees and creation of bioswales. The assessment indicates that a gain of 10% would be achievable within the site area.
- 8.4 There is a single short length of poor-condition ditch on-site which would remain in use. Formation of a new ditch to convey, treat and attenuate surface water run-off from the development is proposed, which would allow a more-than 10% gain in watercourse units.
- 8.5 The hedge on the eastern boundary is largely off-site, however even with its inclusion in the assessment, a more-than 10% gain is achievable. The proposals would only remove very small sections of ornamental hedgerow and significant new hedge planting is proposed throughout.
- 8.6 Overall, it is demonstrable that a fully-compliant BNG is possible on-site within the application boundary. The proposals would require a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan to detail how creation and management would occur. Having assessed the Arun Guidance: Securing Significant On-site Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) from developments (2025), the on-site enhancements might require legally-securing through a Section 106 agreement, but this would be subject to discussion with the LPA ecologist.

8.7 The following ecological enhancements have been proposed as suited to the location and the proposals and would result in a Biodiversity Net Gain, in accordance with Local and National Policy. These should ultimately be secured through provision of a detailed enhancement plan as a condition or reserved matter.

- Addition of bird boxes to the trees and open nestboxes in the hedges; installation of a barn owl or kestrel box to a taller tree.
- Addition of at least 1no. integrated swift feature to all dwellings, and 1no. integrated general bird box to dwellings abutting vegetation;
- Addition of bug hotels or integrated bee bricks to gardens, dwellings and the margins of site;
- Addition of bat boxes to suitable trees, and integration of at least one cavity or crevice feature to each dwelling that abuts vegetation and the dark corridor, achieving a ratio of 1:2 boxes to dwellings;
- Addition of hedgehog houses or similar log shelter to the corners of site, and creation of hedgehog highways through communal and private gardens wherever possible;
- Planting of new native trees suited to the location; species that are suited to local soil conditions and provide fruits, nuts, berries and flowers would be preferred;
- Broadening of the margins of site by planting and seeding with a diverse wildflower mix, suited to the light shade encountered;
- Planting of mixed scrub and native hedges round the site to ensure ongoing connectivity;
- The use of night-scented species and pale flowers in ornamental areas to increase bat foraging potential within garden areas, such as mock orange *Philadelphus*, yarrow *Achillea*; honeysuckle *Lonicera*; and lavenders *Lavandula*;
- Creation of water/ SuDS features such as bio-retention areas and swales, to be planted with diverse seed mixes where possible (as opposed to simple grass mixes) to tolerate the range of environments such habitats will experience through the year (i.e. wet and dry).
- Addition of log piles, and hibernacula to the corners of the site for insects, reptiles, and hedgehogs, over and above those for mitigation.

9.0 Conclusions

- 9.1 The site currently consists mostly of modified grassland of low distinctiveness and poor condition, surrounded by hedgerows, treelines and scrub. The habitats on-site are generally of value at the **site level** but support a range of species including protected species of bird, bat, reptile, badger and dormouse.
- 9.2 A range of further ecological surveys have been undertaken to guide design, mitigation and compensation requirements. It is considered possible that a development could be constructed on the site and result in protection of and enhancement for a range of species, subject to implementation of the appropriate avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures contained herein. A Biodiversity Net Gain of 10% or greater would be achievable on site within the application boundary.
- 9.3 No significant impacts upon statutory sites or priority habitats are anticipated.
- 9.4 The proposals would be able to accord with local plan policies ENV DM1 to ENV DM5, the NPPF (2024), The Environment Act (2021) and other relevant policy and legislation.

10.0 References

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UKHab Ltd (2023). The UK Habitat Classification User Manual Version 2.01 at <http://www.ukhab.org/>

11.0 Species Lists

Modified Grassland

Species	DAFOR
Burdock	LF
Bush Vetch	O
Cocks's-foot	O
Creeping Buttercup	F
Creeping Cinquefoil	LF
Creeping Thistle	O
Dandelion	O
Fleabane	LF
Hairy Mouse-ear	O
Hogweed	LF
Meadow Buttercup	R
Meadow Fescue	O
Nettle	O
Perennial Rye-grass	A
Red Clover	O
Sweet Vernal-grass	R
Timothy	R
White Clover	O
Yorkshire Fog	A

Mixed Scrub

Species	DAFOR
Blackthorn	F
Bramble	F
Goat Willow	F
Hawthorn	R
Hazel	F
Poplar	R

Trees and Hedges (including offsite)

Species	DAFOR
Ash	R
Aspen	LF
Cherry	R
Cypress	O
Elder	R
English Elm	O
Garden Privet	O
Goat Willow	F
Hawthorn	F
Hazel	F
Holm Oak	R
Leylandii	LD
Lime	R
Norway Maple	R
Pedunculate Oak	O
Poplar	LF
Silver Birch	R
Spruce	R
Sycamore	F

12.0 Appendix A – Site Photos

Photo 1 – View of the main body of the site, looking west.



Photo 2 – View from the highway to the south.



Photo 3 – Off-site treeline to the west.



Photo 4 – View looking north-west along the western boundary.



Photo 5 – North-west corner of the site with large poplar tree and off-site treeline.



Photo 6 – View of the northern boundary with small tree. In the distance is the large poplar which displayed heavy bat activity on one occasion.



Photo 7 – Mixed scrub with off-site trees to the north-east, where a dormouse nest was recorded within a nest tube.



Photo 8 – Eastern boundary with off-site hedge.



Photo 9 – View across the field looking east. Recently-cultivated land visible to the left.



Photo 10 – Inside the mixed scrub to the north-east, taken from the footpath.



Photo 11 – Example of well-used mammal holes, two of which proved to be in use by badgers.



Photo 12 – Small likely badger latrine found on the site.



Photo 13 – Ornamental hedges towards the south of the site.



13.0 Appendix B - Site Habitat Plan



13.0 Appendix C - Site Aerial



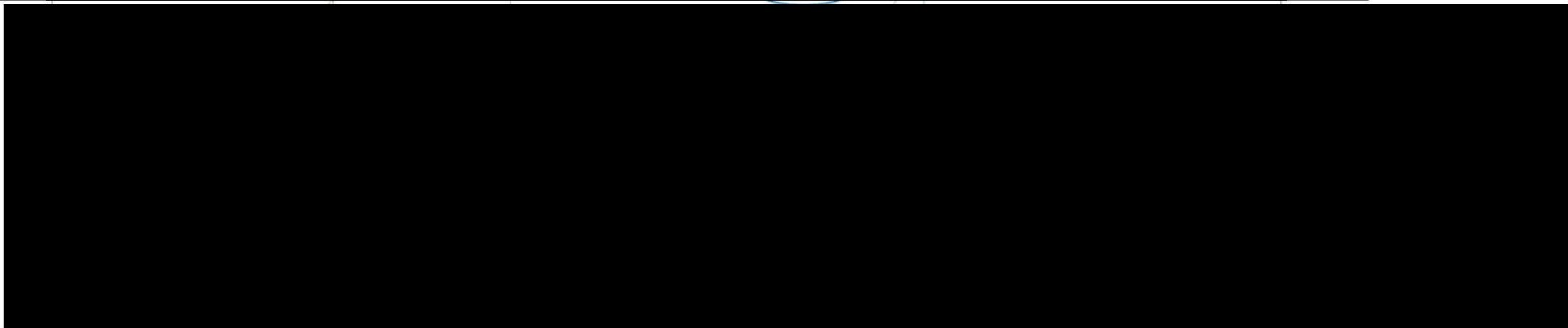
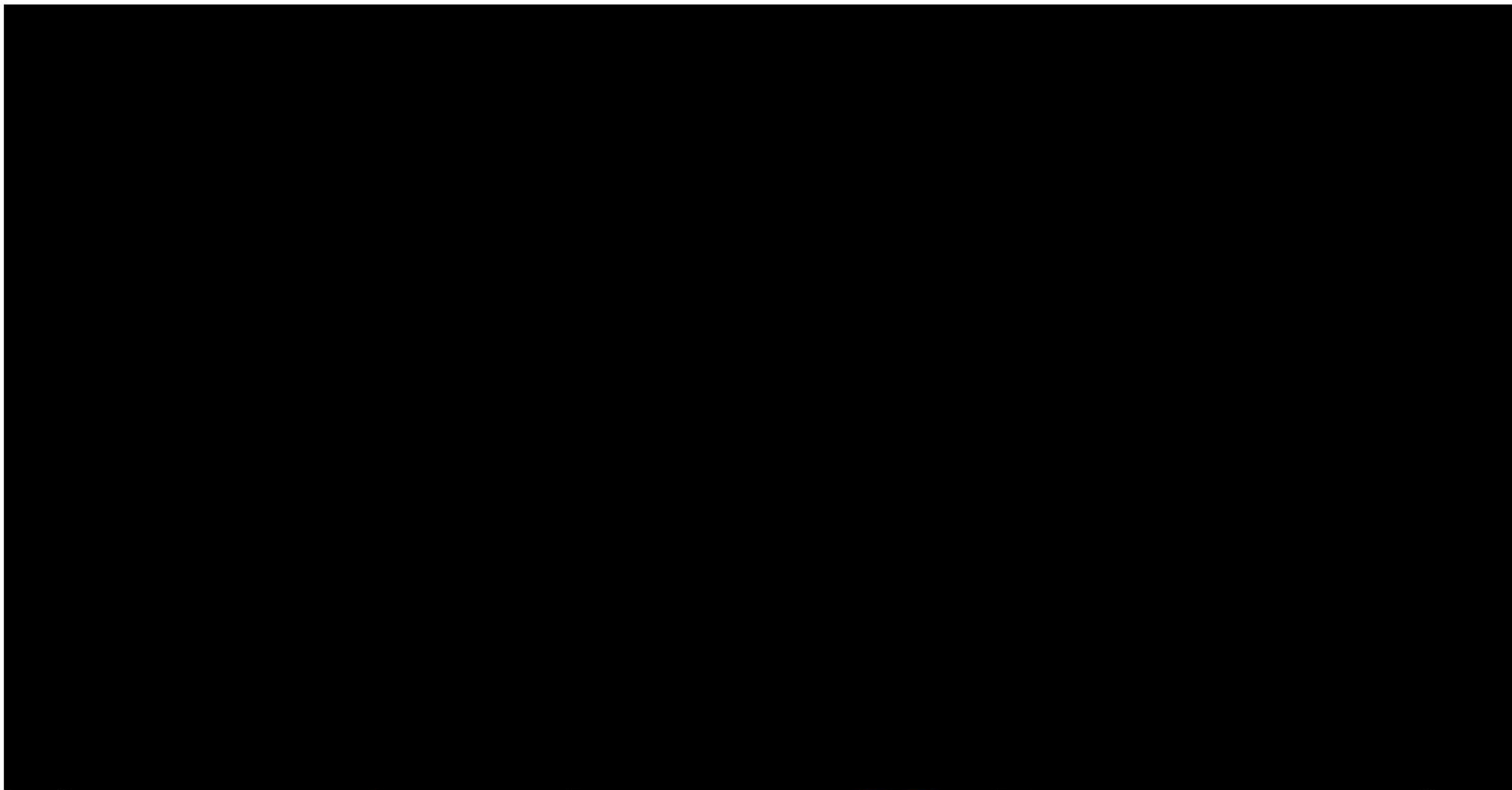
15.0 Appendix D – Bat Static Data

Western Detectors

	13-May	14-May	15-May	16-May	17-May	Average	15-Jul	16-Jul	17-Jul	18-Jul	19-Jul	Average	15-Sep	16-Sep	17-Sep	18-Sep	19-Sep	Average	SUM	%
Cpip	108	44	58	22	84	63.2	1849	201	268	105	41	492.8	1432	1485	3454	4191	2656	2643.6	15998	82.51
Spip	21	19	8	4	25	15.4	1017	210	199	129	22	315.4	375	111	186	129	79	176	2534	13.07
BAR	0	1	2	2	6	2.2	18	5	8	3	0	6.8	66	15	22	17	13	26.6	178	0.92
LEB	0	1	1	0	0	0.4	3	0	1	4	0	1.6	1	11	0	4	14	6	40	0.21
NOC	5	4	0	2	0	2.2	9	41	28	15	5	19.6	0	5	1	14	3	4.6	132	0.68
MYO	0	0	0	0	1	0.2	76	4	3	4	0	17.4	81	61	110	26	116	78.8	482	2.49
SERO	3	0	0	0	0	0.6	5	8	6	0	0	3.8	0	0	1	1	1	0.6	25	0.13
	137	69	69	30	116	84.2	2977	469	513	260	68	857.4	1955	1688	3774	4382	2882	2936.2	19389	

Eastern Detectors

	13-May	14-May	15-May	16-May	17-May	Average	15-Jul	16-Jul	17-Jul	18-Jul	20-Jul	Average	15-Sep	16-Sep	18-Sep	19-Sep	20-Sep	Average	SUM	%
Cpip	108	44	60	22	90	64.8	223	295	319	134	170	228.2	70	196	428	609	211	302.8	2979	75.76
Spip	21	19	10	4	26	16	59	194	112	90	136	118.2	2	21	28	30	17	19.6	769	19.56
BAR	0	1	2	2	6	2.2	3	0	2	1	2	1.6	7	11	0	1	0	3.8	38	0.97
LEB	0	1	1	0	1	0.6	0	0	1	0	0	0.2	1	4	5	10	1	4.2	25	0.64
NOC	5	5	0	2	0	2.4	0	23	8	6	2	7.8	0	1	10	21	0	6.4	83	2.11
MYO	1	0	3	0	2	1.2	0	1	3	1	4	1.8	0	2	2	3	2	1.8	24	0.61
SERO	3	0	0	0	1	0.8	0	3	1	6	0	2	0	0	0	0	0	0	14	0.36
	138	70	76	30	126	88	285	516	446	238	314	359.8	80	235	473	674	231	338.6	3932	



17.0 Appendix F – Sussex Biodiversity Records Centre Summary



Ecological Data Search SxBRC/24/952 - Summary Report

An ecological data search was carried out for land at Sunnyside Nursery, Barnham on behalf of George Sayer (South Downs Ecology) on 08/04/2025.

The following datasets were consulted for this report:

	Requested	Radius/buffer size
Designated sites, habitats & ownership maps	Yes	2km
Protected, designated and invasive species	Yes	2km

Summary of results

Sites and habitats

Statutory sites	None present
Non-statutory sites	None present
Section 41 habitats	5 habitats
Ancient and/or ghyll woodland	Present

Protected and designated species

International designations	46 species	811 records
National designations	125 species	5,001 records
Other designations	266 species	9,721 records
Total	285 species	10,370 records
Invasive non-native	35 species	230 records

The report is compiled using data held by Sussex Biodiversity Record Centre (SxBRC) at the time of the request. SxBRC does not hold comprehensive species data for all areas. Even where data are held, a lack of records for a species in a defined geographical area does not necessarily mean that the species does not occur there – the area may simply not have been surveyed.

This summary page may be published.
The full report and maps may not be published or otherwise shared.

The data search report is valid until 08/04/2026 for the site named above.

17.0 Appendix G – Arun District Council Ecology Officer Response

Rebecca Payne

From: Nicola Oktay on behalf of Planning.Responses
Sent: 20 October 2025 12:30
To: Planning Scanning
Subject: FW: PAA/96/25/

Ecology response

Nikki Oktay
Planning Receptionist, Planning Department

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<https://www1.arun.gov.uk/planning-application-finder>



Our priorities...

Improving the wellbeing of Arun

Delivering the right homes in the right places

Supporting our environment to support us

Fulfilling Arun's economic potential

From: Jonathan Best <Jonathan.Best@arun.gov.uk>
Sent: 16 October 2025 16:16
To: Planning.Responses <Planning.Responses@arun.gov.uk>
Cc: Simon Davis <Simon.Davis@arun.gov.uk>
Subject: PAA/96/25/

Sunnyside Yapton Road Barnham.

I have revied this Pre-application with regards to Ecology.

Recommendation: No objection subject to conditions.

Biodiversity Net Gain will apply.
 There are priority habitats (deciduous woodland) adjacent to the site. Efforts to buffer development from these habitats is recommended.

Arun Policies

The environmental policies relevant to this application are:

- ENVDM5 - Policy ENV DM5 Development and biodiversity
- ENV DM4 - Protection of trees
- W DM1 - W DM1 Water supply and quality
- W DM2 - W DM2 Flood risk
- QE DM2 Light pollution

The Ecological Representation has adequately covered habitats and protected species through the survey effort identified in table 5.

The existing boundary habitats should be retained to protect the reptile and possible dormouse populations.

As the site has been identified as being used by long eared and barbastelles bats a bat sensitive lighting scheme is required.

Ecological enhancement through provision of integral swift bricks at a ratio of 1:1 and integral bat bricks at a ratio of 1:2 is advised.

Other ecological enhancements could include reptile hibernacula, hedgehog highways and homes, native planting of trees and hedges and insect hotels. At least one permanent pond is recommended.

Regards,

Jonathan Best MCIEEM
Ecology Officer, Planning Policy

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Our priorities...

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Delivering the right homes in the right places

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