

Our ref: 9831 / DLC

Rosie Young
VIA EMAIL

1st October 2025

Dear Rosie

LAND WEST OF PAGHAM ROAD, PAGHAM – ECOLOGY WORK TO DISCHARGE CONDITIONS 9 AND 10

Following the granting of the Appeal for the proposed development at Land west of Pagham Road (Appeal Ref: APP/C3810/W/22/3302023), FPCR were instructed to undertake update surveys for badger, water vole, and hedgehog to discharge Conditions 9 and 10, which state:

"9) The development shall be carried out in complete accordance with the mitigations and enhancements set out in sections 6.8-6.22 of the Ecological Appraisal (December 2021) and also in respect of any recommendations in the accompanying supporting survey reports (contained as appendices to the document). All proposed enhancements shall be detailed in the landscape details to be submitted pursuant to Condition 1.

10) No development, including site access or associated construction activities, shall commence unless and until the site has been re-surveyed for water voles, badgers and hedgehogs. If water vole or badgers (of a badger sett) are found to be present, then an appropriate mitigation strategy shall be provided to the local planning authority for approval in writing prior to commencement of development. Any hedgehogs that are found to be present shall be relocated away from the construction area into surrounding suitable habitat."

Methodology

Badger and Hedgehog Survey

¹ Cresswell, P., Harris, S. & Jefferies, D.J. (1989) Surveying Badgers. The Mammal Society Publication No. 9.

Water Vole Survey

Presence/absence water vole surveys were undertaken by experienced ecologists during suitable conditions, in accordance with guidance^{2,3}. Evidence of water vole activity were searched for within 5m of the banks of waterbodies and any suitable habitat, evidence including:

- Water voles – live sightings.
- Latrines – distinct piles of water vole droppings found near nest sites, at the ranges of territorial boundaries and where the animals enter and leave the water. The presence of droppings is the only field sign which can be used reliably on its own.
- Burrows – burrow entrances are typically wider than high with a diameter between 4 and 8cm. Generally, these burrow entrances are located at the water's edge.
- Feeding stations – areas with distinct neat piles of chewed lengths of vegetation along pathways or haul out platforms along the water's edge.
- Footprints – identifiable prints in soft margins of the watercourse.
- Runways – low tunnels that are pushed through the vegetation and often leading to burrows or feeding stations.
- Nest balls – woven vegetation of approximately the size and shape of a rugby ball, usually found within a tuft of vegetation above the water line.

Reptile Habitat Suitability Check

Habitats onsite were checked to assess whether they have changed significantly since reptile surveys were carried in 2021, as reported in Appendix I – Reptile Report, of the Ecological Appraisal (December 2021), such that their suitability to support reptiles may have increased. Surveys carried out in 2021 found a low population of grass snakes utilising the field margins; the majority of the field was arable and so considered unsuitable habitat, which the 2021 report advised to be maintained in this way to prevent the population from expanding across the site.

If habitats are deemed to be potentially suitable for reptiles, then further surveys and a reptile translocation may be required.

Results

Badger Survey

² Dean, M., Strachan, R., Gow, D & Andrews, (2016) The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook. The Mammal Society Guidance Series. Eds F. Matthews & P. Chanin. The Mammal Society, London.

³ Dean, M. (2021) Water Vole Field Signs and Habitat Assessment: A Practical Guide to Water vole Surveys, Pelagic Publishing

During the camera trap surveys the camera that was positioned on the north-west boundary of the site recorded two badger sightings, 10 minutes apart, and a further sighting two nights later. This indicates that the site, or at least the boundaries, is frequented by badgers. During the field surveys there was no evidence of setts; there were no latrines recorded either, which would be expected if the site was part of a badger clans' territory, as they typically use latrines to mark these. There was also no foraging evidence recorded.

Hedgehog Survey

Hedgerows, scrub and grassland on site provide foraging and commuting opportunities for hedgehogs with connectivity to the wider landscape. No evidence was identified during the field surveys, and this was strengthened by their absence on camera traps. These findings are consistent with those of the May 2023 survey.

Water Vole Survey

The on-site ditch is of poor quality for water voles due to the limited levels of water and high amount of scrub vegetation present, although the latter did preclude a complete assessment as access to all parts of the ditch was not possible. No evidence of water vole was recorded during the survey, as was the case for the field surveys conducted in 2021 and May 2023; this is consistent with the poor quality of available habitat. On this basis, it is considered reasonably likely that water vole is absent from the site.

Reptile Habitat Suitability Check

The central area of the field that was formerly cropland has now been encroached by grass species; however, due to management protocols maintaining this as a low sward, it is still considered to have low suitability for reptiles and so additional surveys are not deemed necessary. Field margins were still considered as potentially suitable for reptiles.

Conclusion

Both water voles and hedgehogs are still likely absent from the site and are not considered a constraint to the proposals; however, high amounts of vegetation made it difficult to assess the ditch in its entirety for signs of water voles. If a suspected water vole is identified at any time during construction, an ecologist should be contacted immediately for advice.

Habitats within the site have changed slightly from previous surveys, however this is not enough to warrant updated surveys; previous surveys only confirmed a low number of grass snakes, therefore passive displacement of the grass margins should be carried out in line with the Mitigation Strategy stipulated in Appendix I – Reptile Report, of the Ecological Appraisal (December 2021).

We consider that the above updated surveys are sufficient to discharge Conditions 9 and 10, as the mitigation measures identified previously are still relevant. Please do not hesitate to contact us if you wish to discuss anything further.

Yours sincerely



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