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Ecological Impact Assessment

Client

Hallam Land Management Limited

Project

Land south of Longsight Road

Langho

Date

February 2025

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1.0 NON-TECHNICAL SUMMARY

- 1.1 An Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) was undertaken following published guidelines on the likely effects upon biodiversity as a result of proposals for a residential scheme to the south of Longsight Road, Langho.
- 1.2 The assessment draws from an initial desk study covering the site and surrounding area, as well as a Phase 1 habitat survey and preliminary protected species survey of the Site and surrounding area which was carried out in December 2019. Updated surveys were carried out in 2024, comprising a UKHab survey, preliminary roost assessment (PRA) aerial inspection of trees, nighttime bat walkover survey, static detector survey and a wintering bird survey.
- 1.3 The Site comprised fields, of other neutral and modified grassland with 2 watercourses and a ditch. There were three areas of woodland on Site and five hedgerows. Trees were common across the Site some of which were veteran. Six ponds were recorded of which two ponds (P2 and P5) were considered ephemeral.
- 1.4 The assessment identified the following ecological features which could be affected by proposals or warrant consideration due to the legal protection afforded them;
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
 - Other neutral and other lowland dry acid grassland
 - Non priority Ponds
 - Mature Trees
 - Hedgerows
 - Other rivers and streams
 - Foraging and commuting bats
 - Roosting bats
 - Breeding Birds
 - Great Crested Newts
 - Himalayan Balsam
- 1.5 Additional surveys are being undertaken throughout the spring and summer of 2025, and as such the above list of ecological features is preliminary in nature. Results of the surveys will be submitted in standalone reports, which will include updated assessment of impacts and any mitigation, if required. Residual impacts are expected to be at least neutral following implementation of mitigation and/or compensation measures.
- 1.6 The design proposals have sought to retain the Site's most important ecological features and maintain connectivity of onsite and offsite habitat. Any loss of habitats within the Site will be appropriately compensated for through subsequent approval(s) and via the associated Biodiversity Net Gain Condition, which will secure a 10% gain in biodiversity value for the Site. A Biodiversity Net Gain Report has been prepared for the Site and is submitted with the application.
- 1.7 Construction phase impacts will be minimised through careful control of construction activities through an industry best practice CEMP. As a result, all other predicted effects on important ecological features are predicted to be neutral.

- 1.8 Operational phase impacts of artificial lighting on commuting and foraging bats will be avoided by the implementation of a detailed lighting strategy, in accordance with the best practice guidance set out by the Bat Conservation Trust and the Institute of Lighting Professionals.
- 1.9 Habitat features suitable for bat commuting and foraging and which may offer potential wildlife corridors for other species have been retained and enhanced wherever possible.
- 1.10 Suggested enhancements include:
- Provision of high distinctiveness Lowland dry acid grassland within open BNG/ greenspace areas where soil conditions allow;
 - Provision of amphibian/ reptile refugia/hibernacula within suitable locations;
 - The provision of integral bird nest sites and bat roost boxes within newly constructed buildings; and
 - The provision of external bat and bird boxes in suitable locations.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This EclA has been prepared by FPCR Environment and Design Limited. (FPCR) on behalf of Hallam Land Management Limited for an area of land south of Langho Road, referred to as the Site.
- 2.2 This EclA has been prepared with reference to the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) EclA Guidelines. In line with this guidance, the EclA: describes the assessment methodology; establishes the baseline conditions, currently existing at the Site and surroundings; the likely significant environmental effects associated with the proposed development; the mitigation measures required to prevent or reduce any impacts; the likely residual effects after these measures have been employed; the compensation measures required to offset any residual effects; and identifies opportunities available within the proposals to deliver ecological enhancement.
- 2.3 A Biodiversity Net Gain report and Arboricultural Assessment have also been produced by FPCR and should be read in conjunction with this report.

Site Context

- 2.4 The Site located to the south of Longsight Road, east of Whitehaigh Lane, west of the recently completed Northcote Park housing development and north of the Ribble Valley railway line. It is connected to the village of Langho via a railway underpass on the southern boundary of the Site (see Figure 1).
- 2.5 The Site is approximately 20 ha in extent and supports mostly grassland habitats, primarily other neutral grassland, with a modified grassland field to the west and a remnant area of lowland dry acid grassland near the east boundary. Two streams and a number of waterbodies were recorded on Site. In the north east corner is an area of Lowland mixed deciduous woodland, with two further areas, lesser in extent occurring along the central stream and also on the western boundary.

Proposal

- 2.6 It is proposed that the Site will be utilised for a residential scheme as illustrated on the Illustrative Masterplan (Drawing number 0104 -D). Approximately half of the Site area is proposed as Public Open Space.

3.0 LEGISLATION

3.1 Detail on the relevant national and local policy and legislation for ecology in relation to development sites are provided in Appendix A. The national policy and legislation most relevant here are:

- Environment Act 2021;
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (The Habitat Regulations) relevant here in relation to Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and European Protected Species (EPS);
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA) relevant here in relation to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and WCA protected species;
- Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
- Natural Environmental and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 in relation to various priority species and habitats;
- Hedgerow Regulations 1997 made under Section 97 of the Environment Act 1995;
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2024¹);
- Local Planning Policy contained within the Ribble Valley Borough Council Local Plan and associated Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD);
- Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP); and
- Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC).

¹ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2024) National Planning Policy Framework, December 2024.

4.0 METHODOLOGY

Assessment Approach

- 4.1 This assessment has been prepared with reference to The Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) in the United Kingdom published in 2018 by CIEEM with full details included in Appendix B. A summary is provided below.
- 4.2 Baseline information and potential impacts have been quantified as far as practical to inform the assessment, supported by professional judgement and experience as appropriate. Where uncertainties exist, a precautionary approach has been adopted and a 'worse case' scenario approach assumed for the purposes of assessing impacts and recommending mitigation.
- 4.3 In summary, the process involves:
- Establish Baseline – this is based on desk study and field surveys which describes the existing and potential Important Ecological Features (IEFs) within the zones of influence specified.
 - Determine the Scale of Importance of Ecological Features - importance is determined using geographical frames of reference. This assessment is based on a variety of factors, including statutory protection, statutory designation, conservation status, abundance and rarity. Features with a value of Local or above were considered to represent an 'Important Ecological Feature' (IEF). Those features not meeting the criteria for IEF's were classified as having either lower than local level (immediate zone of influence) or negligible ecological importance.
 - International and European;
 - National;
 - County (Lancashire);
 - District (Ribble Valley); and
 - Local.
 - Assess Significant Ecological Effects –based on the importance of the ecological feature, magnitude of the effect and sensitivity of the features considered. This is description-based rather than applying a matrix which considers construction and operation effects only where relevant. The assessment assumes the proposed layout, intrinsic mitigation and routine ecological mitigation normally conditioned, and these are outlined clearly.
 - Mitigation – This will be based on the mitigation hierarchy – avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement. Any further mitigation measures required will be outlined to ensure residual effects are lowered to a level considered acceptable. Enhancements will seek biodiversity net gain in line with the NPPF and Local Plan Policy - Core Strategy Policy CS17. Monitoring will be considered where applicable.
 - Future Baseline and Residual Effects – final conclusionary statements for the short, medium and long term.
- 4.4 This EclA considers statutory and non-statutory protected sites, habitats including hedgerows, EPS and WCA protected species with focus on badgers, bats, breeding and wintering birds and

great crested newts, and consideration has been given to NERC Section 41 species, any rare or notable species or habitats and any non-native plants listed under WCA Schedule 9.

4.5 The main source of information for this assessment are:

- Biological records obtained from the Lancashire Environmental Records Centre.
- Online sources of ecological data.
- Review of legislation and land-use policies.
- An initial habitat and preliminary protected species survey conducted on 17th December 2019.
- Updated surveys undertaken in 2024 comprising:
 - Updated Site walkover 22nd October 2024.
 - UKHAB survey 22nd October 2024.
 - Wintering Bird Surveys November 2024 to February 2025.
 - Autumn Bat activity Surveys 10th -15th October 2024.
 - Bat roost Surveys of Trees 19 & 20th November 2024.

Zone of Influence

4.6 The CIEEM guidelines require the identification of a 'zone of influence' (Zoi) within which the ecological features that may be affected by the proposed scheme can be identified. This will identify the potential impact of the development not just to the Site but beyond the boundaries of the proposed scheme.

4.7 The Zoi is determined by the source / type of impact, a potential pathway for that impact and the location and sensitivity of the important ecological feature beyond the boundary. For the majority of impacts identified as part of the proposed scheme, the Zoi is generally considered as the application Site and immediately surrounding areas.

4.8 However, the Zoi can also vary considerably depending upon the species potentially affected by the proposed scheme. For example, some species may be confined to a specific location whilst others, such as bats and birds are more mobile and can occupy much larger home ranges. The presence of dispersal barriers can also have an effect on the Zoi such as roads or rivers which may either reduce the potential of animals crossing it or could cause a potential means of killing or injury. As such, this could isolate areas of potentially suitable habitat within the proposed scheme due to fragmentation. In each case this is considered in association with the nature and scale of the proposed scheme and informed by best practice guidance and professional judgement.

4.9 Specific study areas were identified for the desk study and field surveys to inform the valuation of ecological features and the selection of 'key' ecological features material to the assessment. Details are included in Appendix B.

Field Survey - Habitats

4.10 A Preliminary Protected Species Scoping Survey and Phase 1 Habitat Survey (following JNCC methodology) were initially undertaken on the 17th of December 2019. An updated Site walkover,

including a UKHab survey and condition assessment were undertaken on the 22nd of October 2024.

- 4.11 The objective of the habitat assessment was to undertake an evaluation of the habitats that are currently present within the Site with regards to their relative conservation value. The surveys were undertaken by a suitably experienced Ecologist who holds a BSBI Field Identification Skills Certificate Level 5. Detailed survey methodologies are provided within Appendix B.

Field Survey - Fauna

- 4.12 During the UKHab survey, observations, identification and signs of any species protected under the following list of Acts and Regulations (collectively referred to herein as 'Protected Species') were recorded:

- Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992.
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).
- Consideration has also been given to the existence and use of the Site by other fauna listed as one or more of the following (collectively referred to herein as 'Notable Species'):
 - Species of Principal Importance (SPI) for the conservation of biodiversity in England on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, Section 41 (S41).
 - Species listed on any Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) initiatives.
 - Red Data Book (RDB) species.

- 4.13 The likely presence or absence of protected and notable species has been assessed by a number of factors including the availability or suitable habitat, connectivity, known species distribution, local records and an understanding of the ecology and habitats requirement of the individual species assessed.

- 4.14 During this initial assessment, suitable habitat for a range of protected species were identified and subsequent surveys were undertaken for the following species/groups:

- Winter Bird Survey.
- Ground Base PRF Survey for bats.
- Aerial Tree Inspection.
- Autumn Bat activity Survey.

- 4.15 Detailed survey methodologies are provided within Appendix B. A summary is provided below.

Bats

- 4.16 The bat surveys were designed to make a preliminary assessment of the likely value of the Site for roosting and foraging and commuting bats by gathering data on the species, abundance and utilisation of various areas and features of the Site. Data was also gathered information on potential roost features across the Site.

- 4.17 An aerial Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of trees was carried out on 19th & 20th November 2024.
- 4.18 A Night time bat walkover survey was undertaken on 10th October 2024. In tandem with this survey, six static detectors were deployed between 10th -15th October 2024, the detectors were deployed so that all suitable bat foraging and commuting habitats on Site were sampled.
- 4.19 Further bat activity surveys are programmed to be undertaken between April and September in 2025.

Birds

- 4.20 Four wintering bird surveys were undertaken between November 2024 and February 2025, to determine usage of the Site by overwintering bird species. Surveys were carried out on 06th November and 03rd December 2024, and 08th January and 05th February 2025.

Limitations

- 4.21 This assessment aims to provide baseline ecological data for the Site and as such presents an overview of the habitats and features present. Due to the transient and complex nature of ecosystems, no investigation can provide a complete representation or prediction of the natural environment present, however every effort has been made to ensure an accurate description of the Site in presented following best practice guidance, experience, and professional judgement.
- 4.22 The UKHab map (Figure 2) has been reproduced from detailed field notes and informed by aerial imagery, OS mapping and Site maps provided by the client. The accuracy of this figure is therefore ultimately guided by the accuracy of these sources and can only be relied upon to a certain degree of resolution.
- 4.23 Data provided by third party sources collated during the desktop study is generally made up from a wide range of sources including (but not limited to) those submitted by ecological consultancies, wildlife conservation organisations and volunteers. As such, this data is typically focused on areas of known nature conservation, is reliant upon formal surveys having been undertaken within an area or the presence of an expert within the locality (particularly for invertebrate records) and as such this data can never be fully relied upon as a complete ecological dataset for any given area. Rather, this data is used as a guide to likely presence of notable ecological features and can never be relied upon for likely absence.
- 4.24 The Baseline UKHab Survey was undertaken outside the optimum survey period. However, the surveyor who carried out the survey had previously surveyed the Site, the survey was undertaken prior to any significant frosts and the majority of the grasslands had a good level of growth. This allowed for the robust mapping and classification of the habitats present within the Site as well as an informed preliminary condition assessment to be undertaken. Nevertheless, detailed botanical surveys will be undertaken at an appropriate time of year in order to confirm classification, the extent of habitats and to inform a detailed condition assessment of the habitats; which will allow for an accurate baseline value of the Site to be established.
- 4.25 Further surveys for breeding birds, roosting bats and great crested newts are recommended and at the time of writing have not yet been undertaken. These are programmed to be undertaken in spring and early summer 2025. A preliminary assessment of impacts on these

species has been provided within Section 6, based on the information gathered to date. The assessment will be updated following the results of further survey. Should presence be confirmed during further survey, suitable mitigation is considered achievable within the illustrative layouts provided, as outlined in Section 6.

- 4.26 There are no other limitations specific to this assessment.

5.0 ECOLOGICAL BASELINE

Designated Sites

- 5.1 There are no statutory sites designed at either an international level within 10km of the Site or at a national level within 2km of the Site. The closest SSSI is Harper Clough and Smalley Delph Quarries which is located approximately 3km south-east and the closest LNR is approximately 7km south-east of the Site (Foxhill Bank LNR). Although the site is within the SSSI risk zone for Harper Clough and Smalley Delph Quarries this is a geological site with only Minerals, Oil and Gas planning application requiring consultation with Natural England.
- 5.2 Considering the above it is unlikely that any significant constraints will be imposed as a result of statutory designated sites and therefore statutory designated sites are scoped out of further assessment.

Non-statutory Designated Sites

- 5.3 Three non-statutory sites, known locally as biological heritage sites (BHS) are located within 1km of the Site boundary (see Figure 1 and Table 1), the closest being 850m north.

Table 1: Non-statutory designated sites (Biological Heritage Sites)

Name	Approximate Distance and Direction from Site Boundary (m)	Reason for Site Selection
Dinckley Bridge Wood	850m N	Woodland which is ancient and semi-natural in character.
Cronshaw Chair	885m SE	Heathland communities dominated by heather and bilberry, gorse and willow scrub with noteworthy presence of invertebrates including Green Hairstreak butterfly and Birch Sawfly
Park Brook Pastures	980m NW	Species-rich grassland and additional habitats on sloping ground adjoining Park Brook and Dinckley Brook. Damp grassland dominates but smaller areas of drier, neutral and acid grassland also present. Supports a diverse flora

- 5.4 There are no obvious direct hydrological linkages and no direct public footpath links to the three BHS from the Site. Given the distance from the Site and lack of connectivity there are unlikely to be any direct impacts to non-statutory designated sites. The BHS sites are scoped out of further assessment.

Habitats



Priority Habitats (see Fig 1)



- 5.5 Deciduous woodland priority habitat was present in the north eastern corner, central and western part of the Site. And further small pockets exist within the wider landscape. None is identified as ancient woodland on Magic map. The onsite woodland was surveyed as part of the assessment, further details are provided in Table 2, below.



UKHab Classification Survey


- 5.6 The locations of the habitats described below are illustrated in Figure 2: Baseline Habitat Plan. Botanical species lists and Habitat condition assessments can be found in the Biodiversity Net gain Report (FPCR, 2025) which should be read in conjunction with this report.




Table 2: Habitat descriptions.


Ref	Habitat type	Condition	Description	Photo
High Distinctiveness				
W1	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	Poor	<p>Woodland W1, known locally as Green Nook Wood, was recorded to the north-east of the Site. Pedunculate Oak was abundant amongst the canopy sycamore and beech (including a veteran) occasional associates. These canopy trees formed a high single storey canopy, lacking any significant understorey with only hazel recorded at occasional or above. The ground flora would be broadly characterised as NVC community W11 <i>Quercus petraea</i> - <i>Betula pubescens</i> - <i>Oxalis acetosella</i> woodland) with an abundance of common bent, frequent cock's foot and a limited number of herbaceous species such as wood speedwell, wood avens and broad buckler-fern recorded occasionally. However, the woodland was open to grazing stock, with evidence of grazing pressure negatively impacting the woodland. Further north alder was more prominent within the canopy and tufted hair-grass and creeping buttercup become locally frequent along with marsh thistle and Reed canary-grass at lower frequencies, indicative of damper conditions. The banks of watercourse R1, which runs along the woodlands western edge, featured a more diverse assemblage of plants, including yellow pimpernel, common figwort, remote sedge and lady-fern. The stream side vegetation and the alder dominated areas were characteristic of NVC community W7 <i>Alnus glutinosa</i> - <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> - <i>Lysimachia nemorum</i> woodland. The invasive species Himalayan Balsam was recorded locally along the eastern and northern extent of the woodland.</p> <p>Due to the age and native status of the canopy trees, together with the typical associated woodland ground flora, this woodland was classified as lowland mixed deciduous woodland, a priority habitat type. The woodland was assessed as being in poor condition, scoring poorly on herbivore damage, structure and regeneration.</p> <p>Woodlands on Site were considered to be an important ecological feature at a District scale.</p>	
W2	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	Poor	<p>Woodland W2 was an additional area of lowland mixed deciduous woodland, recorded in a mosaic with species rich neutral grassland, and scattered Trees along the steep-sided valley of Watercourse R2 which runs through the centre of the site. Pedunculate oak was abundant within the canopy with ash and alder at lower frequencies. Hawthorn and holly were occasional amongst the scattered scrub understoreys. On the slope tops the ground flora displayed an acidic influence, characterised by common bent, with the herbaceous species such as foxglove and tormentil scattered throughout. In the sheltered valley sides, a cooler, damper influence was noted, evidenced by an increased incidence of the ferns broad buckler-fern, male-fern and hart's-tongue.</p> <p>The community was assessed as being in poor condition scoring badly on structure, herbivore damage, invasive species and regeneration.</p> <p>Woodlands on Site were considered to be an important ecological feature at a District scale.</p>	




Ref	Habitat type	Condition	Description	Photo
W3	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	Moderate	<p>Woodland W3 was recorded along the steep banks of a ditch to the western extent of the Site. Pedunculate oak, sycamore and ash were co-dominant within the canopy. A healthy understorey was noted with frequent hazel and oak saplings recorded. The ground flora featured a reasonable diversity of species characteristic of old woodlands, with wood melick, dog's mercury, broad buckler-fern and Hairy-brome all recorded. Himalayan balsam was locally frequent at the slope bottom.</p> <p>The woodland was assessed as being in moderate condition due to the improved structure and regeneration, but the community still scored poorly in relation to invasive species and the amount of deadwood.</p> <p>Woodlands on Site were considered to be an important ecological feature at a District scale.</p>	
Medium Distinctiveness				
A1	Other lowland dry acid grassland	Good	<p>To the east of the Site, along a bank adjacent to watercourse R1, an acid grassland community was recorded. Common bent, Yorkshire-fog and red fescue were common within the sward, with crested dog's-tail and sweet vernal grass noted as rarities. Ribwort plantain was a prominent herb species within the community along with a number of acidic indicators such as frequent tormentil, locally frequent betony. A previous survey at the Site had identified Devil's-bit scabious in this area but the species was not noted in 2024.</p> <p>The habitat was provisionally classified as g1a6 other lowland dry acid grassland as it was provisionally assessed as not meeting the qualifying criteria for g1a Lowland dry acid grassland under UKHab due to the lack of indicator species. Further detailed botanical survey will be undertaken in June 2025 to confirm this classification and condition. The habitat was assessed as being in good condition, as it was considered that acid indicators and general semi-improved grassland indicators were well represented within the community.</p> <p>Other lowland dry acid grassland were considered to be an important ecological feature at a Local scale.</p>	



Ref	Habitat type	Condition	Description	Photo
ONG1	Other neutral grassland	Good	<p>Other Neutral Grassland Community ONG1 was recorded within the eastern field compartment and comprised a moderately species rich example of g3c6 <i>Lolium - Cynosurus</i> grassland, with localised areas of flushing similar to community ONG2 described below. The sward comprised an intimate mixture of common bent, Yorkshire-fog, red fescue, perennial rye-grass, meadow foxtail, crested dog's-tail, cock's-foot and hairy sedge. The undesirable species, creeping buttercup, common ragwort, creeping thistle and broad-leaved dock were well represented throughout.</p> <p>The community featured a number of lowland meadow indicator species (occasional great burnet and rare tormentil, meadow vetchling and greater bird's-foot trefoil), but overall, the community was assessed as not meeting the qualifying criteria for g3a due to the overall species diversity and cover of wildflowers. In addition to the above, the neutral grassland indicators ribwort plantain (frequent), common sorrel (occasional), red clover (rare) and meadow buttercup (rare) were also noted.</p> <p>As a result of the frequency and cover of neutral grassland indicators and the presence of a number of lowland meadow indicators, the community was assessed as passing criterion A. Overall the community was assessed as being in good condition, failing only on the coverage of undesirable species.</p> <p>Further detailed botanical survey will be undertaken in June 2025 to confirm this classification and condition.</p> <p>ONG 1 was considered to be an important ecological feature at a Local scale.</p>	
ONG1A	Other neutral grassland	Poor	<p>Community ONG1a, was similar to the community ONG1, described above, but lacked the coverage of neutral grassland indicators and was notably less species rich. As a result, the community was assessed as failing criterion A and was assessed as being in poor condition.</p> <p>Further detailed botanical survey will be undertaken in June 2025 to confirm this classification and condition. and condition.</p> <p>ONG1a is not considered likely to be an important ecological feature above a Site level and is therefore scoped out of further assessment.</p>	



Ref	Habitat type	Condition	Description	Photo
ONG2	Other neutral grassland	Good	<p>Community ONG2, recorded centrally within the eastern field comprised a taller wet grassland community, with a sward characterised by an increased incidence of rushes, including hard rush (frequent), soft-rush (occasional), compact rush (occasional) and sharp-flowered rush (locally frequent). These rushes were growing together with frequent creeping bent and hairy sedge, occasional tufted hair-grass, meadow foxtail and red fescue.</p> <p>The following lowland meadow indicator species were noted: Greater bird's-foot-trefoil was frequent, great burnet was occasional to frequent, tormentil, meadow vetchling and sneezewort were rare to occasional, with common knapweed and betony rare. However, given the tussocky nature of the grassland, the community was provisionally assessed as containing less than 15 species per m² and containing less than 30% wildflowers and as such would not meet the qualifying criteria for g3a.</p> <p>Similarly, the community was not considered to be representative of the priority habitat type f2b purple moor grass and rush pastures, as the community lacked the species richness and overall diversity of wetland indicator species this community is characterised by. As a result, the community was classified as a species rich 'good example' of the g3c8 <i>Holcus-Juncus</i> rush pasture and was assessed as being in good condition accordingly.</p> <p>Further detailed botanical survey will be undertaken in June 2025 to confirm this classification and condition. and condition.</p> <p>ONG 2 was considered to be an important ecological feature at a Local scale.</p>	No photo available
ONG3	Other neutral grassland	Moderate	<p>Community ONG3 was recorded to the north of the Site along the A59, to the west of watercourse R2. The sward was characterised by frequent creeping bent and red fescue, along with occasional meadow foxtail, common bent, Yorkshire fog, timothy and tufted hair-grass. Herbaceous cover featured frequent ribwort plantain, locally frequent silverweed, with occasional red bartsia, common sorrel and tormentil.</p> <p>The community was considered to be a moderately species rich example of g3c6 <i>Lolium - Cynosurus</i> grassland with sufficient neutral indicators to pass criterion A. Provisionally, the community was assessed as having less than 10 species per m² and as a result was recorded in moderate condition.</p> <p>Further detailed botanical survey will be undertaken in June 2025 to confirm this classification and condition. and condition.</p> <p>ONG 3 was considered to be an important ecological feature at a Local scale.</p>	



Ref	Habitat type	Condition	Description	Photo
ONG4	Other neutral grassland	Poor	<p>Recorded to the south of ONG3, with a similar species composition to that community, but with reduced diversity and cover of the neutral grassland indicator species. As a result, ONG4 was assessed as being in poor condition.</p> <p>Further detailed botanical survey will be undertaken in June 2025 to confirm this classification and condition. and condition.</p> <p>ONG4 is not considered likely to be an important ecological feature above a Site level and is scoped out of further assessment.</p>	
ONG5	Other neutral grassland	Poor	<p>Recorded to the west of ONG4 this community featured an intimate mixture of grasses, with creeping bent and Yorkshire-fog the most abundant.</p> <p>The only neutral grassland indicators noted were occasional to frequent ribwort plantain with occasional meadow buttercup and common sorrel. As such, it was judged to fail criterion A and was assessed as being in poor condition.</p> <p>Further detailed botanical survey will be undertaken in June 2025 to confirm this classification and condition. and condition.</p> <p>ONG5 is not considered likely to be an important ecological feature above a Site level and is scoped out of further assessment.</p>	
ONG6	Other neutral grassland	Poor	<p>A small unmanaged g3c5 <i>Arrhenatherum</i> grassland community recorded to the north-west of the Site. The tall sward was characterised by the broad-leaved grasses, cock's-foot, false oat-grass, Yorkshire fog and creeping bent. Herbaceous diversity was low, limited to occasional common sorrel and meadow buttercup. Ruderal species were common including locally frequent creeping thistle, great willowherb and occasional common hogweed. Bramble was encroaching locally at the margins and the invasive species Himalayan balsam was locally frequent on the margins of the ditch which runs through the habitat to the west.</p> <p>The community was assessed as being in poor condition, failing on the lack of neutral indicators and high coverage of undesirable species.</p> <p>Further detailed botanical survey will be undertaken in June 2025 to confirm this classification and condition. and condition.</p> <p>ONG6 is not considered likely to be an important ecological feature above a Site level and is scoped out of further assessment.</p>	



Ref	Habitat type	Condition	Description	Photo
ONG7	Other neutral grassland	Poor	<p>The central field in the site, contained a community of g3c6 <i>Lolium -Cynosurus</i> grassland on a shallow north facing slope. Common bent was abundant in the sward, growing together with occasional Yorkshire-fog, cock's-foot, creeping bent, timothy and red fescue. Creeping buttercup, ribwort plantain were the most frequent forbs noted, with common sorrel, red bartsia and meadow buttercup recorded at lower frequencies.</p> <p>The community was not considered to contain sufficient neutral indicators to pass criterion A. Provisionally, the community was assessed as having less than 10 species per m² and as a result was recorded in poor condition.</p> <p>Further detailed botanical survey will be undertaken in June 2025 to confirm this classification and condition. and condition.</p> <p>ONG7 is not considered likely to be an important ecological feature above a Site level and is scoped out of further assessment.</p>	
ONG8	Other neutral grassland	Good	<p>Community ONG8 was a moderately species rich neutral grassland community recorded from north to south along the length of the western edge of watercourse R2. The sward was dominated by fine leaved grasses, particularly common bent, crested dog's-tail and red fescue.</p> <p>The following lowland meadow indicator species were noted: Greater bird's-foot-trefoil was frequent, great burnet was frequent to occasional, glaucous sedge was locally frequent, with common knapweed, tormentil, great burnet and sneezewort occasional. However, the community was provisionally assessed as containing less than 15 species per m² and containing less than 30% wildflowers and as such would not meet the qualifying criteria for g3a.</p> <p>In addition to the above, the neutral grassland indicators ribwort plantain (frequent), common sorrel (occasional), and meadow buttercup (occasional) were also noted. As a result of the frequency and cover of neutral grassland and lowland meadow indicators, the community was assessed as passing criterion A. Overall the community was assessed as being in good condition, failing only on the local presence of the invasive species Himalayan Balsam to the south of the Site.</p> <p>Further detailed botanical survey will be undertaken in June 2025 to confirm this classification and condition. and condition.</p> <p>ONG 8 was considered to be an important ecological feature at a Local scale.</p>	



Ref	Habitat type	Condition	Description	Photo
ONG9	Other neutral grassland	Poor	<p>Parcel ONG9, recorded to the west of the Site featured a short sward of abundant perennial rye-grass, with frequent Yorkshire-fog and creeping bent and occasional red fescue. Dandelion was the most frequent forb noted, with common sorrel, creeping buttercup and meadow buttercup being occasional and ribwort plantain and common mouse-ear rare.</p> <p>The community was considered to be borderline between g4 modified grassland and g3c other neutral grassland, with a classification of g3c made on the basis of the overall species richness and the frequency of a number of neutral grassland indicators.</p> <p>Further detailed botanical survey will be required to confirm the classification & condition of this habitat.</p> <p>ONG9 is not considered to be an important ecological feature above a Site level and is scoped out of further assessment.</p>	
P1-P6	Ponds (non-priority habitat)	Moderate	<p>Six ponds were recorded around the Site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • P1 – Recorded on the northern boundary within woodland W1. Heavily vegetated pond with abundant creeping buttercup and locally frequent Himalayan balsam. • P2 – A seasonally wet pond dominated by soft-rush present within community ONG4. • P3 – A heavily vegetated pond in a hollow within ONG3, featuring frequent floating sweet-grass and creeping buttercup. • P4 – A shallow hollow on the southern boundary, featuring shallow water heavily vegetated with floating sweet-grass and creeping buttercup. • P5 – A seasonally wet pond within a hollow to the southern extent of ONG7. Creeping buttercup, broad-leaved dock and creeping bent were all locally frequent. • P6 – A shallow heavily vegetated pond on the boundary between ONG7 and ONG9 Featuring dominant creeping bent. <p>All ponds within the site were assessed as being in moderate condition, scoring well on water quality and the lack of artificial drains. Ponds are a declining habitat both locally and nationally however as the ponds on site were classified as non- priority habitat these are considered to be of importance on a local scale.</p>	 

Ref	Habitat type	Condition	Description	Photo
SC1	Hawthorn scrub	Poor	<p>Sc1, recorded on the Sites eastern boundary was an open even aged scrub community featuring frequent hawthorn, along with holly and hazel. The ground flora was dominated by ruderal species, particularly common nettle and creeping thistle, with the invasive species Himalayan balsam locally frequent.</p> <p>Scrub is a common habitat both nationally and locally, that present on Site is considered to in 'poor' condition. Therefore, this habitat is not considered to be of importance and is scoped out of further assessment</p>	
SC2	Blackthorn scrub	Poor	<p>An area of continuous scrub was recorded on the western boundary of the Site between hedgerows H4 and H5. Blackthorn was abundant with hawthorn and an alder standard.</p> <p>The community was assessed as being in poor condition, failing on the even aged nature of the habitat, the dominance of a single species and lack of glades.</p> <p>Scrub is a common habitat both nationally and locally, that present on Site is considered to in 'poor' condition. Therefore, this habitat is not considered to be of importance and is scoped out of further assessment</p>	

Ref	Habitat type	Condition	Description	Photo
T	Trees	Good/ Moderate	<p>Mature freestanding trees, particularly of pedunculate oak, were a prominent feature of the Site. A total of 37 freestanding trees in good condition were recorded within the Site, of the following size categories:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Four Very large • 29 Large • Four medium <p>The majority of the trees were pedunculate oak, with the exception of T1, T42, T43 and T44, which were alders; T63 which was a sycamore and T69 which was an ash.</p> <p>Two individual trees (T67 & T72) have been mapped on figure 1 but are excluded from the metric calculations as they were recorded within retained linear features.</p> <p>Additionally, A mature row of trees was recorded on the southern extent of the western boundary. The tree line featured two prominent large pedunculate oak trees, together with a further 3 medium sized oaks and a medium ash tree. A number of outgrown hazel stools and large holly bushes were also present.</p> <p>Trees are a common habitat type both nationally and locally, however very large trees specimens provide intrinsic ecological value. Therefore, trees are considered to be of importance at a Local scale.</p>	
Low Distinctiveness				
MG1	Modified grassland	Poor	<p>A small field to the west of the Site, contained species poor modified grassland. Perennial rye-grass was dominant within the sward, growing with occasional Yorkshire fog. Creeping buttercup and dandelion were the most frequently recorded forbs, with meadow buttercup, common sorrel and cuckooflower noted at low frequencies.</p> <p>The Community was provisionally assessed as containing less than 6 species per m² and as a result was recorded in poor condition.</p> <p>Modified grassland is a common habitat both nationally and locally therefore, this habitat is not considered to be of importance and is scoped out of further assessment.</p>	

Ref	Habitat type	Condition	Description	Photo
TF1	Tall forbs	Poor	An area of tall forbs were recorded to the south of ONG5. Common nettle was locally abundant, growing with frequent creeping thistle and Broad-leaved dock. This habitat is not considered to be of ecological importance and is scoped out of further assessment.	
Linear Habitats				
H3, H5	Species-rich native hedgerow	Moderate - Good	<p>Two species rich hedgerows were recorded on the western boundary of the Site. H3 was characterised by hawthorn with occasional hazel and elder and featured a single pedunculate oak standard. The hedgerow was assessed as being on moderate condition H5 featured frequent hawthorn, holly and hazel, with a single mature oak standard and was assessed as being in good condition.</p> <p>Hedgerows supported at least 80% native canopy species and therefore met the criteria as a Habitat of Principal Importance under the NERC Act 2006. Hedges do not meet the criteria to be considered important under the Wildlife and Landscape criteria of the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. They are therefore, only considered to be of importance at a Local scale</p>	

Ref	Habitat type	Condition	Description	Photo
H1, H2, H4	Native hedgerow	Moderate	<p>Three species poor hedgerows were recorded within the Site.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> H1 was recorded on the Sites northern boundary and was dominated by hawthorn, with occasional elder. Himalayan balsam was present to the east. H2 was a boundary hedgerow to an adjacent property at the western extent, again dominated by hawthorn. H4 which connected woodland W3 to scrub Sc2, featured blackthorn and hawthorn, along with a mature ash tree. <p>As these hedgerows average between 2 and 2.5 species per 30m section, they would not be considered important under the Wildlife and Landscape criteria of the hedgerow regulations 1997. However, the hedgerows supported at least 80% native canopy species and therefore met the criteria as a Habitat of Principal Importance under the NERC Act 2006. The hedgerows on site are not particularly notable examples and are largely retained, they therefore, would only be considered to be of importance at a Local scale.</p>	
Watercourses				
R1	Other Rivers and streams	Fairly Poor and Poor	<p>Watercourse R1 was recorded on the Sites eastern boundary, with the stream issuing to the south of the Site near tree T1. The stream then flows south, along the western edge of Woodland W1, before exiting the site via a culvert under Longsight Road.</p> <p>The watercourse featured a reasonable variety of emergent vegetation with brooklime, water-cress, floating sweet-grass, creeping buttercup and reed canary-grass. The invasive Species <u>Himalayan Balsam</u> was locally frequent.</p> <p>R1 was considered to be an important ecological feature at a Local scale.</p>	

Ref	Habitat type	Condition	Description	Photo
R2	Other Rivers and streams	Fairly Poor	<p>Watercourse R2 ran from south to north through the centre of the Site, issuing from a culvert under the railway and running through the steep sided channel featuring woodland W2. <u>Himalayan balsam</u> was frequent along the watercourse, particularly to the north.</p> <p>R2 was considered to be an important ecological feature at a Local scale.</p>	
D1	Ditch	Poor	<p>Watercourse D1, was a shallow ditch running along the western boundary edge within at the centre of woodland D1. Th ditch featured very shallow water with <u>Himalayan balsam</u> locally frequent at its northern extent.</p> <p>The ditch was assessed as being in poor condition and is not considered an ecologically important feature. It is therefore scoped out of further assessment.</p>	

Species and Species Groups

- 5.7 Figure 3 shows the location of relevant species records returned in the data search.

Plant Species

- 5.8 Species identified during the UKHab survey were all common and widespread. No protected or notable plant species were recorded, with the exception of the Schedule 9 plant species Himalayan balsam which was frequently recorded across the site in association with the watercourses, woodland, pond P1, scrub, hedgerow H1 and in a small area of grassland (ONG 6 and ONG 8). Due to the legislative considerations INNS are scoped into the impact assessment. Other plants are scoped out of further assessment.

Bats

- 5.9 The data search provided no bat records directly referring to the Site. A total of 11 records, all for pipistrelle species (common, soprano and not identified to species level) were returned for the search area this included three maternity roosts, the largest containing 100 individual pipistrelle sp. located 1.8km north of the Site in 2010. Two smaller, but also likely maternity roost records occur to the south west. The closest is 267m from the Site, where 20 mixed sex/stage common pipistrelle bats were recorded in 2011, and a further, located 465m from the Site, where 40 pipistrelle bats were recorded in 2009 .
- 5.10 The residential area adjacent to the southern Site boundary contained 4 further records with the closest being 137m from the boundary. This was a record for two foraging bats.

Roosting Bats

- 5.11 Following a ground based assessment of all trees within the Site, 17 trees were initially assessed as containing potential to support roosting bats and therefore required further aerial assessment. The locations of surveyed trees are shown on Figure 4a. A summary of the ground based, and aerial assessment survey are provided within Table 3, below, with details in Appendix C.
- 5.12 Two trees that were inspected (T53 and T57) were found to contain PRF-M, meaning they contain features suitable to support a maternity roost. Whilst no evidence of previous bat occupation was observed within the features further surveys will be required to confirm likely absence during the maternity period.
- 5.13 Two trees (T1 and T56) were assessed as PRF-I - containing features only suitable for individual roosting bats.
- 5.14 Seven of the trees could not be climbed or had incomplete climbs due to either health and safety or the fact they could not be fully inspected.

Table 3: Summary of Tree PRF Survey

Category	Tree Ref
PRF-M	T53, T57
PRF-I	T1, T56
FAR	T37, T44, T62, T65, T67, T69, T72
NONE	T6, T38, T52, T55, T59, T61

5.15 Given the availability of roosting habitat on Site on a precautionary basis it is considered that roosting bats are an ecologically important feature at a local scale.

Habitat Assessment

5.16 The woodland, mature trees, hedgerows grassland and scrub habitats along with the waterbodies and streams offer suitable foraging habitat and serve as potential commuting routes providing linkages to the wider area. In relation to the latest best practice guidelines, the site is considered to be of Medium suitability for commuting and foraging bats.

Activity Surveys (see figure 4b)

Night time bat walkover

5.17 The initial flight path surveys had surveyors placed at positioned at point '1' , near W1 and point '2', near the centre of the Site. Surveyors observed very low numbers of bats. No Annex II bat species were registered or observed. Two common pipistrelles were heard but not seen from position '1'. The surveyor in position '2' observed two foraging common pipistrelles and a commuting noctule along the central water course and woodland W2.

5.18 The walked transect surveys also recorded very low numbers of bats and no Annex II bat species were registered or observed. A single Myotis species of bat, close to W1 was the only registration noted during the survey, which was observed at 20:20, two hours after sunset.

Static Bat Detector Survey

5.19 Six static detectors were deployed in Autumn 2024, these detectors were deployed so that all habitats on Site were sampled.

5.20 No Annex II bat species were registered or observed. At least five bat species have been recorded to date including common pipistrelle (78.46%), soprano pipistrelle (16.85%), Pipistrelle sp (0.29%), Myotis sp (4.08%), brown long-eared bat (0.29%) and Nyctalus sp (0.04%). The Pipistrelle bat contacts that could not be fully identified during analysis were considered to be either common pipistrelle or soprano pipistrelle. Common pipistrelles were the most frequently registered species A summary of the static results for autumn are provided in Table 4, below.

Table 4: Summary of Static data

Static Reference	Average Bat registrations per hour	Total registrations
1	3.811	273
2	19.208	1376
2	1.619	116
4	2.666	191
5	1.424	102
6	5.165	370

5.21 To date all bat species observed are common and widespread and recorded in low numbers. Further bat Surveys are programmed in for spring and summer 2025. Therefore, foraging and

commuting bats have not been assigned a level of importance at this stage, and this will be updated during the determination period.

Badgers

- 5.22 A single record of a deceased badger *Meles meles* was returned within the 1km search boundary. For confidentiality reasons the location of the record is not shown.
- 5.23 The majority of the Site provides a potential foraging resource for badgers and comprised grazed poor semi-improved grassland and improved grassland areas which was considered to offer a limited seasonal foraging resource. The central belt of semi-improved neutral grassland and the woodland areas provided more permanent foraging habitat for badgers.
- 5.24 No evidence of the presence of badger was recorded within the Site during the survey, subsequently badgers are not considered to pose a constraint to the redevelopment of the Site and are scoped out of further assessment.

Birds

Wintering Birds (see figure 5a, b and c)

- 5.25 The data search returned a total of 18 bird species listed on Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 as Species of Principal Importance (SPI) or included on the Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) Red and Amber lists within 2 km of the Site boundary. No records of birds were returned on Site.
- 5.26 Four wintering bird surveys have been conducted across the core winter months with one in each month of November, December, January and February.
- 5.27 Across the surveys, a total of 41 species have been observed. Of the birds recorded, 19 species met the criteria of at least one of the following pieces of legislation / classification:
- Schedule 1 of the WCA;
 - Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006; and
 - BoCC Red or Amber Lists.
- 5.28 These are referred to as 'notable species'. A summary of the results can be found in Table 5, below, showing the peak count of individuals of each notable species that was recorded along with their recent status in Lancashire.

Table 5: Notable species recorded on each survey and their recent status

Species	Conservation Status & Protection	Peak count/number of visits recorded	Recent Status in Lancashire
Mallard <i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	Amber list	2/1	Very common and widespread winter visitor and breeding resident.
Stock Dove <i>Columba oenas</i>	Amber list	2/3	Common breeding resident.
Woodpigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>	Amber list	23/4	Abundant breeding resident.
Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Amber list	1/2	Locally abundant breeding bird. Abundant winter visitor and passage migrant.

Species	Conservation Status & Protection	Peak count/number of visits recorded	Recent Status in Lancashire
Common Gull <i>Larus canus</i>	Red list	1/1	Very common winter visitor and passage migrant.
Sparrowhawk <i>Accipiter nisus</i>	Amber list	1/1	Fairly common breeding resident. Uncommon passage migrant.
Kestrel <i>Falco tinnunculus</i>	Amber list	1/1	Fairly common breeding resident.
Rook <i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	Amber list	30/4	Common resident.
Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Amber list	5/4	Abundant breeding resident, passage migrant and winter visitor.
Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Red List NERC S.41	90/4	Abundant breeding bird, double passage migrant and winter visitor.
Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Amber List NERC S.41	2/4	Common breeding resident.
Mistle Thrush <i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Red list	2/2	Common breeding resident.
Redwing <i>Turdus iliacus</i>	Amber List WCA Sch.1	22/2	Abundant double passage migrant and winter visitor.
House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i>	Red List NERC S.41	9/4	Abundant but decreasing resident.
Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	Amber List NERC S.41	7/3	Abundant breeding resident and uncommon double passage migrant.
Grey Wagtail <i>Motacilla cinerea</i>	Amber List	2/2	Fairly common breeding bird, common passage migrant and winter visitor.
Meadow Pipit <i>Anthus pratensis</i>	Amber list	1/2	Common breeding bird, abundant passage migrant.
Bullfinch <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Amber List NERC S.41	1/1	Common breeding resident.
Greenfinch <i>Chloris chloris</i>	Red List	3/4	Common but declining breeding resident.

5.29 Due to the majority of species recorded being common and widespread, and found in relatively low numbers, the wintering bird assemblage is considered to be important at a Site scale and are therefore scoped out of further assessment.

Breeding Birds

5.30 Breeding bird surveyed are schedule for spring summer 2025.

5.31 Given the need for further surveys breeding birds are scoped into the assessment but a scale of their importance has not been assigned, this will be updated during the determination period.

Great Crested Newts

5.32 No records of great crested newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* were returned in the desktop search within 1km of the Site, although a single record was received closer to 2km away. No GCN licence returns were identified on Magic map within 1km.

- 5.33 The survey identified a total of six ponds within the site. Examination of aerial photographs and the 1:25,000 OS map covering the local area identified a further two ponds within 500m of the site. These locations are shown on Figure 1.
- 5.34 The habitats recorded within the site provided some terrestrial and breeding habitat for great Crested Newts, with suitable habitat restricted to the hedgerow bases, woodland and tussocky areas within grassland.
- 5.35 Suitable on Site great crested newt breeding habitat will be surveyed in 2025 to confirm presence/ likely absence of GCN. Access to off Site ponds will be sought ahead of time and surveys undertaken if permission granted.
- 5.36 Given the need for further surveys GCN are scoped into the assessment on a precautionary basis but a scale of their importance has not been assigned and this will be updated during the determination period.

Reptiles

- 5.37 No records of reptiles were returned from the desk study consultation within the 1km search area
- 5.38 Habitats on-site provided limited value for reptilian species The modified and other neutral grassland recorded across the majority of the site is not considered suitable to support reptile species due to the low even sward, which lacks habitat ecotones. However, localised areas associated with the field and woodland margins could provide the structural diversity required to support reptiles, however these were limited in extent, due to the grazed nature of these habitats.
- 5.39 Therefore, reptiles are scoped out of further assessment.

Water Vole

- 5.40 There are no records of water voles within 1km of the Site.
- 5.41 The habitat within the majority of the site was considered largely unsuitable for water vole. The streams were considered suboptimal due to fast-flowing and shallow water channels which lacked suitable aquatic vegetation for water voles. The banks were also grazed which further limited the foraging and nesting potential for this species which, along with disturbance from dog walkers, suggested low habitat suitability for water voles.
- 5.42 As such, water vole are considered unlikely to be present within the Site during their breeding or terrestrial phase and would therefore not pose a constraint to the scheme at this time. However, in the event the masterplan design requires work to be undertaken in association with the banks of the streams, it is recommended a precautionary approach is adopted and a presence/absence field survey be carried out.
- 5.43 Otters and Water vole are therefore scoped out of further assessment.

Summary of Important Ecological Features

- 5.44 A summary of the ecological features that have been determined as requiring detailed assessment is provided in Table 6.

Table 6: Summary of Important Ecological Features

Ecological Features	Geographical/Ecological Frame of Reference
Lowland mixed deciduous woodland	District.
Other lowland dry acid grassland	Local
Other neutral grassland moderate condition or above; (ONG1, ONG2, ONG3, ONG8)	Local
Ponds	Local
Mature Trees	Local
Hedgerows	Local
Other rivers and streams	Local
Foraging and commuting bats	Scale of importance to be confirmed following further survey.
Roosting bats	Scale of importance to be determined following further survey.
Breeding Birds	Scale of importance to be determined following further survey.
Great Crested Newts	Scale of importance to be determined following further survey.
Himalayan Balsam	Included due to legislation

Proposals

- 5.45 Within the illustrative scheme, access to the site would be provided through a new junction on Longsight Road with a righthand turn lane and new footway. This would require the removal of an approximately 270m section of hedgerow H1, which runs along the length of the boundary with Longsight Road.
- 5.46 Up to ten trees may be lost within the illustrative layout as they are located within, or close to areas of proposed residential development or proposed SUDS attenuation basins.
- 5.47 Two crossing points are proposed over the central watercourse R2. The northern crossing point will utilise an existing crossing which will be upgraded. A new crossing would be required at the southern point.
- 5.48 Extensive areas of green space are proposed, most are accessible via informal foot and cycle pathways. An area to the west is proposed to be less accessible to the public.

6.0 IMPORTANT ECOLOGICAL FEATURES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

6.1 The status of the important ecological features (IEFs) identified on Site have been reviewed against the proposals and intrinsic mitigation to determine whether there are any impact pathways to IEFs and whether any of these will lead to a likely significant effect in Table 7. The requirement for additional mitigation measures above the intrinsic mitigation has been considered for each of the IEFs where they can reduce the scale of negative effects or where they can encourage a positive effect.

Table 7: Assessment of Effects on Important Ecological Features

Important Ecological Feature:	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
Assessment of Impacts	<p>There will be no direct loss of woodland. Proposals have sought to retain and buffer all areas of lowland mixed deciduous woodland within areas of proposed greenspace. Additional tree planting is proposed within greenspace provision.</p> <p>The retained woodlands have the potential to be impacted indirectly during the construction phase of the development by dust deposition, particularly in periods of dry weather and higher wind and compaction from construction traffic. In the absence of mitigation, this could result in damage to the woodland.</p> <p>The operational phase could result in impacts to the woodland through increased recreational pressure.</p> <p>Therefore, in the absence of mitigation, there is potential for a not-significant negative effect at a local level.</p>
Mitigation	<p>Construction phase impacts on retained woodlands will be minimised through careful control of construction activities, in adherence with an industry best practice CEMP.</p> <p>Proposed public open space footpaths have been limited within the retained woodland. A single path through the central woodland belt is proposed. This path should be created so that it is clearly delineated and soft barriers included to discourage desire lines through the woodland. Additionally, extensive provision for recreational open space has been provided outside of the retained woodland areas within the Illustrative Masterplan.</p>
Residual Effects	Neutral
Enhancement	Enhancement measures and ongoing management of retained Lowland mixed deciduous woodland as outlined in the BNG feasibility study submitted alongside this report will provide an overall gain in the Biodiversity value of this habitat.

Important Ecological Feature:	Other lowland dry acid grassland
Assessment of Impacts	<p>No direct loss of habitat is proposed.</p> <p>There is potential for impact on retained grassland during the construction phase of the development via dust deposition, particularly in periods of dry weather and higher wind. In the absence of mitigation, this could result in habitat degradation.</p> <p>Therefore, in the absence of mitigation, there is potential for a not-significant negative effect at a local level.</p>
Mitigation	Construction phase dust impacts will be minimised through careful control of construction activities, in adherence with an industry best practice CEMP.
Residual Effects	Neutral
Enhancement	Where new grasslands are being created/enhanced within the greenspace areas, soil testing will be undertaken. Should suitable conditions be identified, there is opportunity to create additional habitat.

Important Ecological Feature:	Other neutral grassland moderate condition or above; (ONG1, ONG2, ONG3, ONG8)
Assessment of Impacts	<p>As the majority of habitat on Site comprises other neutral grassland, there will be habitat losses within proposed residential areas and where creation of SUDS is proposed.</p> <p>There is potential for impact on retained grassland during the construction phase of the development via dust deposition, particularly in periods of dry weather and higher wind. In the absence of mitigation, this could result in habitat degradation</p> <p>Therefore, in the absence of mitigation, there is potential for a significant negative effect at a local level.</p>
Mitigation	<p>Any habitat losses will be accounted for within the BNG strategy for the Site</p> <p>Construction phase dust impacts will be minimised through careful control of construction activities, in adherence with an industry best practice CEMP.</p>
Residual Effects	Neutral
Compensation/enhancement	Where new grasslands are being created/enhanced within the retained greenspace areas, soil testing will be undertaken. Should suitable conditions be identified, there is opportunity to enhance other neutral grassland to higher distinctiveness lowland acid grassland.

Important Ecological Feature:	Non-Priority Ponds
Assessment of Impacts	<p>Three non-priority ponds on site will be lost within the illustrative proposals.</p> <p>There is potential for degradation of retained ponds via accidental pollution during construction.</p> <p>Therefore, in the absence of mitigation, there is potential for a not-significant negative effect at a local level.</p>
Mitigation	<p>Any pond habitat loss will be accounted for within the Biodiversity Metric as provided within the scheme.</p> <p>Construction phase impacts will be minimised through careful control of construction activities, in adherence with an industry best practice CEMP.</p>
Residual Effects	Neutral
Compensation/enhancement	<p>The Statutory BNG requirement will ensure a net gain of 10% of pond habitat is accounted for within the scheme. This could include enhancement of retained ponds and design of the SUDS to incorporate areas of permanent water and planting of suitable wetland and/or riparian species, with a varied vegetation structure</p>

Important Ecological Feature:	Mature Trees
Assessment of Impacts	<p>The scheme has been designed to retain existing trees where possible. However, within the illustrative layout, up to ten mature trees may be lost to facilitate the proposed layout. Outline proposals include planting of an additional 304 individual trees.</p> <p>The retained trees have the potential to be impacted indirectly during the construction phase of the development by dust deposition, particularly in periods of dry weather and high wind and compaction from construction traffic. In the absence of mitigation, this could result in damage and degradation.</p> <p>Therefore, in the absence of mitigation, there is potential for a not significant negative effect at a local level.</p>
Mitigation	<p>At the detailed design stage, it may be possible for the SUDS basin to be designed around the retention of mature trees. Any tree losses will be accounted for within the Biodiversity Metric as provided within the scheme.</p> <p>Construction phase impacts on retained trees will be minimised through careful control of construction activities, in adherence with an industry best practice CEMP.</p>

Important Ecological Feature:	Mature Trees
Residual Effects	Neutral
Compensation/enhancement	The Statutory BNG requirement will ensure a net gain of 10% individual trees are accounted for within the scheme.

Important Ecological Feature:	Hedgerows
Assessment of Impacts	<p>Proposals have sought to retain hedgerows wherever possible. A section of H1 will be lost to facilitate access and visibility splays.</p> <p>The retained hedgerows have the potential to be impacted indirectly during the construction phase of the development by dust deposition, particularly in periods of dry weather and higher wind. In the absence of mitigation, dust deposition could result in hedgerow damage.</p> <p>Therefore, in the absence of mitigation, there is potential for a not significant negative effect at a local level.</p>
Mitigation	<p>Any hedgerow loss will be accounted for within the Biodiversity Metric as provided within the scheme.</p> <p>Construction phase dust impacts on existing hedgerows will be minimised through careful control of construction activities, in adherence with an industry best practice CEMP.</p>
Residual Effects	Neutral
Compensation/enhancement	At the detailed design stage there are opportunities to incorporate additional native hedgerow planting. The enhancement of some existing stretches of 'native hedgerow' to 'species rich native hedgerow' and planting of new species rich native hedgerows will result in a significant biodiversity net gain in hedgerow units. This will be achieved by planting a diverse mixture of native woody species, in accordance with management guidance in the Biodiversity Net Gain Report.

Important Ecological Feature:	Other rivers and streams
Assessment of Impacts	<p>Proposals have sought to retain and buffer all water courses on site. Two crossing points are proposed over the central watercourse R2. The northern crossing point will utilise an existing crossing which will be upgraded. A new crossing would be required at the southern point.</p> <p>During the construction phase, there will be the potential for disturbed soil to enter the river, and/or accidental fuel and other</p>

Important Ecological Feature:	Other rivers and streams
	<p>pollutant spillages to enter the river resulting in a potential negative effect on aquatic and riparian flora and fauna.</p> <p>Therefore, in the absence of mitigation, there is potential for a significant negative effect at a local level.</p>
Mitigation	<p>Any direct habitat loss will be accounted for within the Biodiversity Metric as provided within the scheme. At the detailed design stage, river crossings should be designed to allow the river to maintain its function as a wildlife corridor.</p> <p>The Site has been designed so that the stream is buffered from built development by the large expanse of greenspace as shown on the Landscape Masterplan, thereby minimising impacts during operation.</p> <p>The adoption of standard pollution methods within the CEMP for the construction phase will mitigate any potential pollution issues.</p>
Residual Effects	Neutral
Compensation/enhancement	BNG will provide a net gain of 10% in other rivers and streams. This should include a management plan to control and prevent the spread off site of Himalayan balsam.

Important Ecological Feature:	Foraging and commuting bats
Assessment of Impacts	<p>Autumn surveys showed very low bat foraging activity over the Site and low-level commuting and foraging behaviour along the hedgerows on Site. There was no evidence that the habitats on Site provide any significant value to local bat populations during autumn.</p> <p>Proposals have sought to retain and buffer the most suitable bat foraging and commuting habitat where possible. There will be a small loss of hedgerow H1, and P3 which may be lost to the development. However proposed greenspace and tree planting adjacent to this, will maintain provision of suitable commuting and foraging habitat in this location.</p> <p>The below is based upon the results of surveys to date, once spring and summer surveys have been undertaken the impact assessment will be updated</p> <p>In the absence of specific mitigation, there will be a not significant loss of foraging and commuting habitat, used by low numbers of common and widespread species as a result of hedgerow, pond and tree loss and also localised lighting effects.</p>

Important Ecological Feature:	Foraging and commuting bats
	<p>Mitigation by design has included habitat enhancements and creation of additional habitats of higher value to foraging, roosting and commuting bats.</p> <p>There is potential for disturbance impacts during operations, via lighting, and noise/vibration. It is unlikely that any bat roosts will be impacted. It should be noted that the overall percentage of bat species that are known to be light sensitive (Myotis Sp. and brown long-eared bat) represented less than 4.37% of the bats registered over the autumn on the static bat detectors. Therefore, the increase in lighting is unlikely to be significant at a population level.</p> <p>Impacts during both the construction and operational impacts would be considered not significant negative impact at a Local level if spring/summer survey results and design remain the same.</p>
Mitigation	<p>Existing retained hedgerows will be enhanced with species-rich planting, including a small, wooded area to the north west, along the central water course, and individual trees throughout, which will support a higher diversity of invertebrates. This will improve the foraging resource for bats in these areas. The strengthened existing hedgerows and new proposed planting will ensure that potential commuting corridors on Site will not be negatively impacted.</p> <p>The detailed lighting strategy for the Site will consider the best practice guidance set out by the Bat Conservation Trust and the Institute of Lighting Professionals in 2023, 'Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK to ensure that existing and new habitat resources are not negatively affected by artificial lighting during the construction or operational phases.</p>
Residual Effects	Neutral
Compensation/enhancement	<p>Onsite habitat creation will offer a range of foraging and commuting habitats for bats. This will include additional hedgerow and tree planting throughout the Site, as well as grassland enhancements.</p> <p>The detailed design should incorporate enhancements such as additional native hedgerow planting and design of the SUDS to incorporate areas of permanent water and planting of suitable wetland and/or riparian species, with a varied vegetation structure</p> <p>These measures will have a positive impact on the available resources for bats in the local area.</p>

Important Ecological Feature:	Roosting Bats
Assessment of Impacts	The majority of mature trees are retained and buffered under current Illustrative proposals.

Important Ecological Feature:	Roosting Bats
	<p>Within the illustrative proposals there would be a loss of T37, T62, and T65, which have been assessed as FAR – further Assessment Required with regards to roosting bats. It may be possible to retain some of these trees at the detailed design stage</p> <p>Additionally, there is the potential for indirect impacts with regards to potential damage and/or disturbance during construction and also light disturbance during the operational phases on a number of retained trees classed as PRF-M, PRF-I or FAR.</p> <p>Further survey will be required to determine roost presence/likely absence on the below trees classed as PRF-M or FAR.</p> <p><u>PRF-M</u>: T57 and T53 <u>FAR</u>: T37, T44, T62 T65, T69, T72</p> <p>Tree T56 was assessed as PRF-I. In line with current guidance, no further survey is required.</p> <p>All other trees were assessed as having negligible roost features or are considered to be suitably buffered from impacts as to require no further survey.</p> <p>Therefore, there is the potential for a significant negative impact on roosting bats at a Local level. This will be confirmed following the results of the roost presence/likely absence survey.</p>
Mitigation	<p>Up to three presence/likely absence surveys should be undertaken on the following trees:</p> <p><u>PRF-M</u>: T57 and T53 <u>FAR</u>: T 37, T44, T62, T65 T69, T72</p> <p>Results of the surveys, together with an assessment of effects will be provided within an addendum during the determination period.</p> <p>Should roosting bats be impacted, then work will need to take place under a mitigation licence from Natural England. Replacement roost provision (if required) could be provided via integral roost features provided within new buildings, or via external boxes installed on suitable trees.</p> <p>Tree T56 was assessed as PRF-I. Potential loss of a PRF-I roost feature can be mitigated via provision of a replacement roost feature within one of the new buildings.</p> <p>A lighting strategy should be produced to ensure that retained and new habitat features that are suitable roosting bats are not degraded by new lighting. It is recommended that the lighting design strategy is reviewed (and if necessary updated) for any new development proposals as part of future Reserved Matters applications, to ensure</p>

Important Ecological Feature:	Roosting Bats
	<p>there are no negative impacts to wildlife from lighting. This can be secured via a planning condition through a CEMP.</p> <p>Any required works to mature trees or existing structures must be preceded by an updated assessment of their bat roost potential by a suitably qualified ecologist, in order to prevent potential harm to roosting bats. This can be secured via a planning condition.</p>
Residual Effects	Expected to be Neutral following mitigation. To be confirmed following further surveys.
Compensation/enhancement	Additional roost provision could easily be incorporated at the detailed design stage. Either via additional integral roost features provided within new buildings, or via external boxes installed on suitable trees.

Important Ecological Feature:	Breeding Birds
Assessment of Impacts	<p>The Site has suitable habitat for breeding birds in the form of the hedgerows and associated field margins, arable and grassland fields, and buildings.</p> <p>Further surveys, undertaken at a suitable time of year, will be required to complete an assessment of the impacts of proposals on roosting bats. At the time of writing, breeding bird surveys are programmed for the Site during spring 2025. Results of the surveys, together with an assessment of effects will be provided within an addendum during the determination period.</p>
Mitigation	<p>Any required mitigation to be confirmed following further surveys but is considered achievable within the suitable mitigation is considered achievable within the illustrative layouts provided, through retention of hedgerows, buffering of retained woodland and the provision of open grassland areas.</p> <p>All vegetation and, particularly, woody vegetation proposed for clearance should be removed outside of the bird-breeding season (March - September inclusive) as all birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) whilst on the nest. Where this is not possible, vegetation should be checked for the presence of nesting birds prior to removal by an experienced ecologist.</p>
Residual Effects	Expected to be Neutral following mitigation. To be confirmed following further surveys.
Compensation/enhancement	Additional nesting provision could easily be incorporated at the detailed design stage. Either via integral nesting features provided within new buildings, or via external boxes installed on suitable trees.

Important Ecological Feature:	Great Crested newts
Assessment of Impacts	<p>The site offers suitable breeding and terrestrial habitat for great crested newts. On Site ponds will be lost to the development.</p> <p>Further surveys are needed to assess the impacts of proposals on great crested newts.</p>
Mitigation	<p>Suitable on Site great crested newt breeding habitat will be surveyed in 2025 to confirm presence/ likely absence of GCN. Access to off Site ponds will be sought ahead of time and surveys undertaken if permission granted.</p> <p>If GCN are found to be present then work will need to take place under licence - either via a mitigation licence from Natural England or alternatively, a District Level Licence would be applied for, prior to works.</p> <p>Detailed mitigation will be confirmed following the results of the surveys.</p>
Residual Effects	Expected to be Neutral following mitigation. To be confirmed following further surveys.
Compensation/enhancement	Provision of amphibian/ reptile refugia/hibernacula within suitable locations

Important Ecological Feature:	INNS – Himalayan Balsam
Assessment of Impacts	<p>The invasive plant Himalayan balsam was noted in W1, W3, ONG6, ONG8, P1, SC1, H1, R1, R2 and D1.</p> <p>Left untreated this may form large stands and potentially out compete native species. Additionally, within the completed development this will likely interfere with landscape planting and cause a nuisance in new gardens.</p> <p>Himalayan Balsam is listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which imparts a legal obligation for no action to take place which might result in this species being caused to grow in the wild. Furthermore, the presence of this species is undesirable for biodiversity value of the Site.</p> <p>In the absence of mitigation, it is possible that an offence could be committed.</p>
Mitigation	<p>The detailed CEMP will include a strategy for the monitoring and eradication or control of this species prior to, during and after development.</p> <p>Further information can be gained from the Environment Agency information booklet, Guidance for the Control of Invasive Species in or</p>

Important Ecological Feature:	INNS – Himalayan Balsam
	near Fresh Water ² and Guidance on Japanese Knotweed, Giant Hogweed and Other Invasive Species produced by DEFRA ³ .
Residual Effects	Removal/control of this species will be a Not Significant Positive Effect.

² Environment Agency, 2003, Guidance for the Control of Invasive Species in or near Fresh Water

³ Department of Food and Rural Affairs, 2013, Guidance: Japanese knotweed, Giant Hogweed and Other Invasive Species available at <https://www.gov.uk/japanese-knotweed-giant-hogweed-and-other-invasive-plants>

APPENDIX A RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICY AND GUIDANCE

The Environment Act 2021

6.2 Relevant elements in the Act include:

- All new developments to deliver 10% increase in biodiversity (biodiversity net gains), to be managed for at least 30 years (reviewable by the Secretary of State)
- Biodiversity Gain Site Register to be implemented and maintained for at least 30 years after the Site scheme has completed, subject to review
- Introduction of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) – new spatial strategies to cover the entirety of England – led by a “responsible authority” in each area. Statutory guidance to be given to Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) explaining how they should take account of the LNRSs
- Introduction of a new Species Conservation Strategy – which places a duty on LPAs to cooperate with Natural England and other LPAs etc to safeguard the future of ‘at risk’ species
- Introduction of the 5 Principles to which organisations must have regard: (i) Integration (environmental protection should be integrated into the making of policies); (ii) Prevention (preventative action should be taken to avert environmental damage); (iii) Precautionary (a precautionary approach should be taken to the possibility of environmental harm); (iv) Rectification At Source (where possible any environmental harm should be rectified at source); and (v) Polluter Pays (the person(s) who causes the harm must suffer the financial penalty both in terms of mitigation and compensation)
- Long-term (at least 15 years, starting in 2022) legally binding targets on air quality, biodiversity, water, resource efficiency and waste reduction

The Natural Environmental and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

6.3 Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) places a duty on the Secretary of State to publish, review and revise lists of living organisms and types of habitat in England that are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving English biodiversity, and to consult Natural England before doing so.

6.4 The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.

Habitats

6.5 The degree to which habitats and species receive consideration within the planning system relies on many mechanisms, including:

- Inclusion within a specific policy, for example veteran trees, ancient woodland and linear habitats within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), or local planning policies.
- A non-statutory Site designation (e.g., Local Wildlife Site).

- Habitats considered as Habitats of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity and species considered as Species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity as listed within Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006); and
- Habitats identified as being a Priority Habitat and species identified as being a Priority Species within the local Biodiversity Action Plan.

Protected/Notable Species

- 6.6 Principal pieces of legislation protecting wild species are Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Some species, for example badgers, also have their own protective legislation (Protection of Badger Act 1992). The impact that this legislation has on the Planning system is outlined in ODPM 06/2005 Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System.
- 6.7 This guidance states that as the presence of protected species is a material consideration in any planning decision and it is therefore essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent to which they are affected by proposals, is established prior to planning permission being granted. Furthermore, where protected species are present and proposals may result in harm to the species or its habitat, steps should be taken to ensure the long-term protection of the species, such as through attaching appropriate planning conditions for example.
- 6.8 In addition to protected species, there are those that are otherwise of conservation merit, such as those listed as species of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. These are recognised in the NPPF which advises that when determining planning applications, LPAs should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying a set of principles including:
- If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.
 - Development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be encouraged.

Badger

- 6.9 Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. It is illegal to wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or attempt to do so; to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a badger sett by damaging or destroying it; to obstruct access, or any entrance of, a badger sett and to disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett.
- 6.10 A badger sett is defined as '*any structure or place, which displays signs indicating current use, by a badger.*' This can include culverts, pipes and holes under sheds, piles of boulders, old mines and quarries, etc. 'Current use' does not simply mean 'current occupation' and for licensing purposes it is defined as 'any sett within an occupied badger territory regardless of when it may have last been used'.
- 6.11 Licences are granted by Natural England to interfere with badger setts for development purposes. Licences are not normally issued during the breeding season, which is between 30th November and 1st July, and cannot be issued retrospectively.

Birds

6.12 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is the principal legislation affording protection to UK wild birds. Under this legislation all birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law, and it is an offence, with certain exceptions to recklessly or intentionally:

- Kill, injure or take any wild bird.
- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while in use or being built.
- Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

6.13 Species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) are specially protected at all times.

Great Crested Newts

6.14 Great crested newts are afforded full protection as a species listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Under regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulated 2017 (as amended) it is illegal to:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of European Protected Species (EPS),
- deliberately disturb wild animals of an EPS (affecting ability to survive, breed or rear young) – disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young,
- deliberately disturb wild animals of an EPS (impairing ability to migrate or hibernate) – disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability in the case of hibernating or migratory species to hibernate or migrate,
- deliberately disturb wild animals of an EPS (affecting local distribution and abundance) – disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong,
- deliberately disturb wild animals of an EPS (whilst occupying a structure of place used for shelter or protection) – intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it used for shelter or protection,
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a wild animal an EPS.
- Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is illegal to:
 - recklessly or intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animals included in Schedule 5.
 - recklessly or intentionally damage or destroy, or obstruct access to any structure or place which ant wild animal included in Schedule 5 used for shelter or protection,
 - recklessly or intentionally disturb any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection.

6.15 Great crested newts are also included on the list of species which are of Principal importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity in England as required under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. The S41 list is used to guide decision makers, including local planning authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the

Act, to have regard to the conservation biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.

Reptiles

6.16 All common reptile species, including slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* and grass snake *Natrix natrix*, are partially protected under Sections 9(1) and 9(5) of Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This legislation protects these animals from:

- intentional killing and injury;
- selling, offering for sale, possessing or transporting for the purpose of sale or publishing advertisements to buy or sell a protected species.

6.17 Reptiles native to the UK are also classified as a species of principle importance under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC).

Bats

6.18 Bats and their habitats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2018 (as amended). In summary this makes it an offence to damage destroy or obstruct any place used by bats for breeding and shelter, disturb a bat, or kill, injure or take a bat. Seven bat species are listed as Species of Principal Importance under the provisions of the NERC Act 2006.

Hedgehog

6.19 Hedgehogs are listed on Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) making it illegal to kill or capture them using certain methods. Hedgehogs are also listed as Species of Principal Importance under the provisions of the NERC Act 2006.

UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans

6.20 Although the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) has now been superseded by the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework⁴ and Biodiversity 2020⁵ the former UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) lists of priority habitats and species continue to be regarded as conservation priorities under the Framework, and they have been used to compile the statutory lists of priority species and habitats as required under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (also referred to as Habitats and Species of Principal Importance). Whilst different planning authorities across the country are likely to take differing approaches with regard to delivery of biodiversity within their areas, Local BAPs remain a key element for securing the requirements of the NPPF at a local level, consequently this assessment has taken due consideration of the Lancashire BAP priority habitats and species and Lancashire Key species.

Other guidance

Birds of Conservation Concern

6.21 Leading governmental and non-governmental conservation organisations in the UK have reviewed the population status of 244 bird species regularly found in Britain and, using

4 JNCC and Defra (on behalf of the Four Countries' Biodiversity Group) (2012) UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. July 2012.
5 DEFRA (2011) Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services.

standardised criteria, have assessed and assigned all bird species onto lists of conservation concern⁶.

- 6.22 Birds are placed into one of three lists - Red, Amber or Green and although these listings offer no further legal protection, they are meant to guide conservation action for the individual species. The listings reflect an individual species' global and European conservation status as well as that within the UK and additionally measure the importance of the UK population in international terms.

Wild mammals

- 6.23 Under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996, it is an offence to kill or injure any wild mammals by various means, including crushing and suffocating; therefore, consideration must be given to the humane exclusion or destruction of foxes and rabbits before work starts.

Relevant Planning Policy

- 6.24 The latest version of the NPPF was published in December 2024 and replaces the first NPPF published in March 2012 and minor clarifications to the revised version published in July 2018, February 2019, July 2021, September 2023 and December 2023.

- 6.25 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.

- 6.26 The premise of 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' embedded within the previous versions of the NPPF has been carried forward to the current version. The NPPF considers that to achieve this, the planning system has three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental. It considers these to be inter-dependent with a need for them to be mutually supportive of one another. For specific development proposals the NPPF considers applying a presumption in favour of sustainable development means:

"...c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay..." [para.11].

"Local planning authorities should approach decisions on proposed development in a positive and creative way. They should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area. Decision-makers at every level should seek to approve applications for sustainable development where possible." [para. 39].

"To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

...b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity." [para. 192].

- 6.27 In terms of 'environmental objectives' (one of the three core planning objectives), the NPPF states that:

⁶ Eaton et al (2015), Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the population status of birds in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. British Birds 108, 708-746. <https://britishbirds.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/BoCC4.pdf>

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;

e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being negatively affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.” [para 187].

Local planning policy

6.28 The Core Strategy 2008 – 2028 A Local Plan for Ribble Valley⁷. The document contains policies and proposals for using and developing land throughout the Borough of Ribble Valley. The Core Strategy forms the central document of the Local Development Framework, establishing the vision, underlying objectives and key principles that will guide the development of the area to 2028.

6.29 The following policies include considerations and guidance concerning ecology and biodiversity within developments:

KEY STATEMENT EN4: BIODIVERSITY AND GEODIVERSITY

The Council will seek wherever possible to conserve and enhance the area's biodiversity and geodiversity and to avoid the fragmentation and isolation of natural habitats and help develop green corridors. Where appropriate, cross-Local Authority boundary working will continue to take place to achieve this. Negative impacts on biodiversity through development proposals should be avoided. Development proposals that negatively affect a site of recognised environmental or ecological importance will only be permitted where a developer can demonstrate that the negative effects of a proposed development can be mitigated, or as a last resort, compensated for. It will be the developer's responsibility to identify and agree an acceptable scheme, accompanied by appropriate survey information, before an application is

⁷ Core Strategy 2008 – 2028 A Local Plan for Ribble Valley adopted 2014

determined. There should, as a principle be a net enhancement of biodiversity. These sites are as follows:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)
- Local Nature Reserves (LNRs)
- Local Biological Heritage sites (CBHs)
- Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs)
- Local Geodiversity Heritage Sites
- Ancient Woodlands
- Lancashire Biodiversity Action Plan priority habitats and species
- European Directive on Protected Species and Habitats - Annex 1 Habitats and Annex II Species
- Habitats and Species of Principal Importance in England

With respect to sites designated through European legislation the Authority will be bound by the provisions of the relevant Habitats Directives and Regulations.

For those sites that are not statutorily designated and compensation could be managed through a mechanism such as biodiversity off-setting via conservation credits.

POLICY DME1: PROTECTING TREES AND WOODLANDS

There will be a presumption against the clearance of broad-leaved woodland for development proposes. The council will seek to ensure that woodland management safe guards the structural integrity and visual amenity value of woodland, enhances biodiversity and provides environmental health benefits for the residents of the borough. The council encourages successional tree planting to ensure tree cover is maintained into the future.

Where applications are likely to have a substantial effect on tree cover, the borough council will require detailed arboricultural survey information and tree constraint plans including appropriate plans and particulars. These will include the position of every tree on site that could be influenced by the proposed development and any tree on neighbouring land that is also likely to be with in influencing distance and could also include other relevant information such as stem diameter and crown spread.

The borough council will ensure that:

1. The visual, botanical and historical value, together with the useful and safe life expectancy of tree cover, are important factors in determining planning applications. This will include an assessment of the impact of the density of development, lay out of roads, access points and services on any affected trees.
2. That a detailed tree protection plan is submitted with appropriate levels of detail.
3. Site-specific tree protection planning conditions are attached to planning permissions.

TREE PRESERVATION ORDERS

The borough council will make tree preservation orders where important individual trees or groups of trees and woodland of visual, and/or botanical and/or historical value appears to be

under threat. The council will expect every tree work application for work to protected trees to be in accordance with modern arboricultural practices and current british standards.

ANCIENT WOODLANDS DEVELOPMENT

Proposals that would result in loss or damage to ancient woodlands will be refused unless the need for, and the benefits of, the development in that location outweigh the loss of the woodland habitat. In addition, in circumstances where a development would affect an ancient woodland, the borough council will seek to include appropriate woodland planting and management regimes through planning conditions and agreements.

VETERAN AND ANCIENT TREES

The borough council will take measures through appropriate planning conditions, legislation and management regimes to ensure that any tree classified identified as veteran/ancient tree is afforded sufficient level of protection and appropriate management in order to ensure its long term survivability.

HEDGEROWS

The borough council will use the hedgerow regulations to protect hedgerows considered to be under threat and use planning conditions to protect and enhance hedgerows through the use of traditional management regimes and planting with appropriate hedgerow species mix.

FELLING LICENCES

When consulted on felling licence applications, the council will attempt to minimise the short-term negative impact on the landscape and ensure replanting schemes contain an appropriate balance of species to safeguard and enhance the biodiversity and landscape value of woodland.

The contribution that trees and woodlands make to the character of the area is recognised by the council to be of significance. The council in establishing this approach to their management and protection is seeking to conserve and enhance the quality of the local area whilst recognising the need for sustainable development to be achieved.

POLICY DME2: LANDSCAPE AND TOWNSCAPE PROTECTION

Development proposals will be refused which significantly harm important landscape or landscape features including:

- 1. Traditional stone walls.*
- 2. Ponds.*
- 3. Characteristic herb rich meadows and pastures.*
- 4. Woodlands.*
- 5. Copses.*
- 6. Hedgerows and individual trees (other than in exceptional circumstances where satisfactory works of mitigation or enhancement would be achieved, including rebuilding, replanting and landscape management).*
- 7. Townscape elements such as the scale, form, and materials that contribute to the characteristic townscapes of the area.*

8. Upland landscapes and associated habitats such as blanket bog.
9. Botanically rich roadside verges (that are worthy of protection).

The council will seek, wherever possible, to enhance the local landscape in line with its key statements and development strategy. In applying this policy reference will be made to a variety of guidance including the Lancashire county council landscape character assessment, the AONB landscape character assessment 2010 and the AONB management plan. Also the council will take into account the potential cumulative impacts of development in areas where development has already taken place.

By proactively considering these important features through the development management process the council will deliver the core strategy vision and support the delivery of sustainable development.

POLICY DME3: SITE AND SPECIES PROTECTION AND CONSERVATION

Development proposals that are likely to negatively affect the following will not be granted planning permission. Exceptions will only be made where it can clearly be demonstrated that the benefits of a development at a site outweigh both the local and the wider impacts. Planning conditions or agreements will be used to secure protection or, in the case of any exceptional development as defined above, to mitigate any harm, unless arrangements can be made through planning conditions or agreements to secure their protection:

1. Wildlife species protected by law
2. SSSI's
3. Priority habitats or species identified in the Lancashire biodiversity action plan
4. Local nature reserves
5. County biological heritage sites
6. Special areas of conservation (sacs)
7. Special protected areas (spas)
8. Any acknowledged nature conservation value of sites or species.

Developers are encouraged to consider incorporating measures to enhance biodiversity where appropriate that will complement priority habitats and species identified in the Lancashire BAP.

With regard to sites designated under European legislation the authority will follow the relevant processes as defined within the habitats regulations 2010. Development will not be permitted unless either it is established that it is not likely to have a significant effect on any RAMSAR site or natura 2000 site (including special protection areas, potential special protection areas, special areas of conservation, candidate special areas of conservation), either alone or in combination with other projects, or it is ascertained, following appropriate assessment, that it will not negatively affect the integrity of any RAMSAR site or natura 2000 site. The habitats regulations include provision for development which may cause a negative effect on integrity to be allowed under exceptional circumstances. These include where there are no alternative solutions, imperative reasons of overriding public interest can be demonstrated and appropriate compensatory measures are implemented. In terms of the protection of the soil resource and high quality agricultural land development and land

management practices should seek to avoid soil erosion; avoid contamination of land and promote restoration, protect the peat resource and recognise the importance of peat in particular for its carbon sequestration value, water quality improvements for both drinking water and biodiversity, reduction of local flood risk and reduction of moorland wildfire risk. The important link between soil quality, the natural environment and the landscape should be recognised. By proactively considering these important features through the development management process the Council will deliver the Core Strategy vision and support the delivery of sustainable development reflecting the development strategy and key statements.

APPENDIX B: SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Survey Methodology

Desk Study

- 6.30 In order to compile existing baseline information, relevant ecological information was requested from both statutory and non-statutory nature conservation organisations including:
- The Lancashire Environmental Records Centre (LERC);
 - Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website (www.magic.defra.gov.uk)⁸;
 - Colour 1:25,000 OS base maps⁹; and
 - Aerial photographs from Google Earth¹⁰.
- 6.31 The search area for biodiversity information was related to the significance of sites and species and potential zones of influence, as follows:
- a minimum of a 10km radius around the Site was searched for sites with an international statutory designation: Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar sites;
 - a minimum of a 2km radius around the Site for sites of national / regional or local importance with a statutory designation: Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI) or National Nature Reserve (NNR);
 - up to a 2 km search area for records of notable / protected species, including Species of Principal Importance under S41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006 and local biodiversity action plan species.
 - up to a 1km radius around the Site for sites of local importance with statutory designation of Local Nature Reserve (LNR), or non-statutory designation of Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) or the equivalent Local Wildlife Site (LWS); and
- 6.32 When handling data, species data were filtered to include records from the previous twenty years only to keep the data relevant to the date of this assessment.
- 6.33 Further consideration of potential zones of influence in relation to statutory designated sites of International and National importance was made using Natural England's SSSI Impact Risk Zone Tool¹¹ which outlines the likely zone of influence from impacts for a range of development types.

Field Survey

Habitats

- 6.34 Survey methods broadly following the UKHab Classification System¹² with minor departures from this methodology to allow for compatibility with the DEFRA metric where applicable and comprised a systematic walk over the Site to classify the broad habitat types and identify any

8 [Online]. <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

9 [Online]. www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk

10 [Online]. www.maps.google.co.uk

11 <https://data.gov.uk/dataset/5ae2af0c-1363-4d40-9d1a-e5a1381449f8/sss-i-impact-risk-zones>

12 UKHab Ltd (2024), UK Habitat Classification Version 4.1(at <https://UKHab.org>)

Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) for the conservation of biodiversity as listed within Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) and identify a representative species list for each habitat.

- 6.35 Where feasible, target notes and species lists were compiled for individual areas and assessments of abundance were made using the DAFOR scale. Vascular plant nomenclature follows Stace (2019)¹³. Whilst the species lists collected should not be regarded as exhaustive, sufficient information was gained during the survey to enable classification and assessment of broad habitat types and identify features likely to be of interest.
- 6.36 This was supplemented by the collection of detailed botanical information to inform the condition assessments of habitats.
- 6.37 Any habitats suitable for, or features with the potential to support, protected or notable species were also assessed and recorded with the surveys. Habitats were mapped in the field, along with additional notes regarding the current 'condition'¹⁴ of the habitat, completed in accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments¹⁵.
- 6.38 Consideration was given as to the presence of invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA 1981)¹⁶ and the presence of any notable weeds including those covered under the Weed Act 1959¹⁷ (where population is significant enough to be considered injurious).

Bats

Preliminary Roost Assessments (ground level)

- 6.39 Preliminary Roost Assessments (PRA) were undertaken from ground level, with the aid of binoculars by a suitably experienced ecologist from FPCR on 19th and 20th November 2023. Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) (based on p.16, British Standard 8596:2015 Surveying for bats in trees and woodland, October 2015) which were sought included:
- Natural holes (e.g. knot holes) arising from naturally shed branches or branches previously pruned back to a branch collar;
 - Man-made holes (e.g. cavities that have developed from flush cuts or cavities created by branches tearing out from parent stems);
 - Woodpecker holes;
 - Cracks/splits in stems or branches (horizontal and vertical);
 - Partially detached, loose or platy bark;
 - Cankers (caused by localised bark death) in which cavities have developed;
 - Other hollows or cavities, including butt rots;
 - Compression of forks with occluded bark, forming potential cavities;
 - Crossing stems or branches with suitable roosting space between;

¹³ Stace, C (2019) New Flora of the British Isles. 4th edn. C&M Floristics

¹⁴ Condition' is one of the measures of the quality of a habitat used within the DEFRA biodiversity metric. It takes into account key physical characteristics and typical species of a particular habitat type.

¹⁵ Defra (2023). "The Statutory Biodiversity Metric -Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology" November 2023" Access [online] (Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>)

¹⁶ Act of Parliament, (1981). The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), London: HMSO.

¹⁷ Act of Parliament. (1959). The Weed Act 1959. London: HMSO

- Ivy stems with diameters in excess of 50mm with suitable roosting space behind (or where roosting space can be seen where a mat of thinner stems has left a gap between the mat and the trunk); and
 - Bat or bird boxes.
- 6.40 Certain factors such as orientation of the feature, its height from the ground, the direct surroundings, and its location in respect to other features may enhance or reduce the potential value.
- 6.41 Using professional judgement, the ground-based PRA assessment classified any trees identified based upon the presence of suitable features as set out in Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (BCT, 2023) in which the general bat roost potential groups are defined (refer Table 4.2 of the guidelines) and provided in Table 8, below.

Table 8: Suitability of trees for bats

Suitability	Description
NONE	Either no potential roost features or highly unlikely to be any
FAR	Further Assessment Required to establish if Potential Roost Features are present.
PRF	A tree with at least one Potential Roost Feature

Aerial Inspection Surveys

- 6.42 Any trees that were categorised as Further Inspection Required (FAR) or Potential Roost Feature (PRF) were subject to further aerial inspection. This survey included a detailed inspection of trees for the presence of further PRF's and also for the level of suitability provided by PRF's.
- 6.43 This assessment was completed by suitably experienced and licensed ecologists (Natural England Class Licence Registration Number: 2021-43553-CLS-CLS) meeting the BCT competency requirements on the 13th of June 2024.
- 6.44 The survey involved accessing the tree using arborists tree climbing techniques (certified to Climb Trees (J/101/2449) and Perform Aerial Rescue (A/101/2450) – Level 2 (NPTC). The climbing methodology used follows that detailed within the Arboriculture and Forestry Advisory Group (AFAG) Tree Climbing Operations Leaflet (AFAG401) and included inspecting each PRF for suitability and evidence of current or past occupation by bats using endoscopes, mirrors, torches and cameras as necessary.
- 6.45 Each PRF was then categorised as outlined in Table 9.

Table 9: Bat Classification and Survey Requirements for Bats in Trees

Classification of Tree	Description of Category and Associated Features (based on Potential Roosting Features listed above)	Likely Further Survey work / Actions
Negligible/ No potential	Negligible/no habitat features likely to be used by roosting bats	None.

<p>PRF-I</p>	<p>A tree with one or more Potential Roosting Features that are suitable for only individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats. Examples include (but are not limited to); loose/lifted bark, shallow splits exposed to elements or upward facing holes.</p>	<p>No further survey is required but appropriate compensation must be provided in advance of impacts, and a precautionary working method statement must be applied.¹⁸</p>
<p>PRF-M</p>	<p>A tree with PRF's which could support multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony. Examples include (but are not limited to); woodpecker holes, larger cavities, hollow trunks, hazard beams, etc.</p>	<p>Three aerial assessments of PRFs by appropriately licensed/ accredited tree climbers to determine presence or likely absence of roosting bats.¹⁹ Surveys were undertaken between May and September (with at least two surveys between May and August and spread at least three weeks apart).²⁰ If roost sites are confirmed and the roost is affected by proposals, a licence from Natural England will likely be required. After completion of survey work (and the presence of a bat roost is discounted), a precautionary pre-felling survey or working method statement may still be appropriate.</p>

Bat Activity

Habitat Assessment

- 6.46 This assessment was undertaken to identify the suitability of the Site to foraging and commuting bats or areas which may be important for exhibiting various social behaviours. This was informed by the results of the initial UKHab survey and also from information gathered in the desk study to ensure that potential effects are considered in the context of the onsite habitats within the wider area.
- 6.47 The Site was also categorised for its habitat suitability for bats, which would inform the necessary survey effort. The habitat suitability was assessed using guidance from 'Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines' (Bat Conservation Trust, 4th Edition, 2023). Table 4.1 of those guidelines provides an outline for assessing the potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape. This should be applied using professional judgement. This groups a site into five categories based on habitat suitability for foraging and commuting bats which has been further summarised in Table 10, below.

¹⁸ In circumstances where there are lots of trees grouped together with PRF-I then further surveys may still be appropriate.
¹⁹ Nocturnal surveys using NVA's may be appropriate if a tree or PRF cannot be sufficiently accessed or fully assessed.
²⁰ If the initial aerial inspection was undertaken during the optimum survey period, this can count as one of the three surveys

Table 10: Criteria for Assessing Habitat Suitability for Commuting and Foraging Bats - Based on table 4.1 (Collins, 2023)

Suitability	Potential Flight Paths and Foraging Habitat	Proposed Further Survey Requirements
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight-lines or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).	No further surveys required
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flightpaths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.	
Low	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flightpaths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.	Automated static detector monitoring and nighttime bat walkover surveys (flight path and transect) on a <u>seasonal</u> * basis.
Moderate	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flightpaths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.	Automated static detector monitoring on a <u>monthly</u> basis and nighttime bat walkover surveys (flight path and transect) on a <u>seasonal</u> * basis.
High	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.	
*Seasonal surveys should be increased to monthly where Annex II species are expected/ detected or if significant commuting routes are identified.		

Bat Activity - Night time bat walkover and static monitoring

6.48 In order to inform an impact assessment, where possible the bat activity survey aimed to identify:

- The presence or absence of bats, abundance and species using the Site whilst away from the roost;
- The usage of the habitats on the Site by bats;

- The temporal and spatial distribution of recorded bat activity on site and any associations in terms of timings or particular features;
- Any connectivity in terms of habitats within the Site and/or the surrounding area;
- The effect of any existing lighting on the existing bat population.

6.49 The bat activity survey was designed and lead by an ecologist with expertise meeting the BCT level 3 competency.

Static Monitoring

6.50 Static (passive) monitoring was undertaken using an automated logging system (Wildlife Acoustics Inc. Song Meter® SM4BAT FS bat detectors with SMM-U2 microphones). During the survey period (October 2024) static recording devices were positioned within the Site to record bat registrations for at least five consecutive nights.

6.51 The number of static detectors to be used and location of deployment was determined so that a representative sample of all habitats within the Site could be monitored. The locations were subjectively predetermined using professional judgment to be positioned at least 15m away from any known or likely roosts and also in consideration of likely impacts.

6.52 Static detectors were deployed during the autumn season from 3rd October to 10th October 2024. The devices were deployed for 5 consecutive nights during suitable weather conditions that were typical for the season of deployment and were programmed to activate 30 minutes before sunset and record continuously until 30 minutes following sunrise.

6.53 The data were analysed as soon as possible after retrieval of the static units using the Sonobat™ 30.1 (SonoBat™ Inc.) software package to assess the amount of bat activity on site by recording the number of bat registrations. Data were initially run through the auto-analysis function of the software with manual vetting taking place of every call with the exception of common pipistrelles and soprano pipistrelles. Noise files were also manually vetted. Measurements including peak frequency, inter-pulse interval, call duration and end frequency were taken to aid in species identification. This analysis was completed by a suitably experienced ecologist (analysts are audited internally for quality control purposes and to maintain consistent results).

Night-time Bat Walkover (Flightpath / Transect Survey)

6.54 In line with current guidance (Collins, 2024) night-time bat walkovers are undertaken in two parts. The first part is undertaken by stationary surveyors positioned on habitat features most likely to be utilised as commuting routes by bats. Once conditions become too dark to see or once commuting activity has been observed and has largely ended, surveyors begin a walked transect sampling all areas and habitats within the Site noting any bat activity that is heard or observed along the way. Whilst this includes two elements it is one survey designed to record information to provide further context to elements that static detectors cannot always identify such as bat behaviour or abundance of bats.

6.55 The first part of the survey to observe flightpaths involved two surveyors being positioned at pre-determined locations as shown on Figure 4b. The survey started just before sunset and lasted for between 30 minutes and one hour after sunset. After this the walked transect was started and continued until two to three hours after sunset. Figure 4b shows the route of the transect and the start/ end point of the survey.

- 6.56 Surveyors were equipped with Wildlife Acoustics Inc. Echo Meter Touch® bat detectors in conjunction with Echo Meter Touch® app and Samsung Galaxy Tab Active 3® during the transect survey to detect bats and aid species identification. During the survey any bat activity and behaviour observed was recorded.

Table 11: Nighttime Bat Walkover Timing

Survey Date	Sunset Time	Start Time (flighlines)	Start Transect	End Transect
10.10.24	18:23	18:32	19:32	20:32

Table 12: Nighttime Bat Walkover Conditions

Survey Date	Start Temp	Wind Beaufort Scale	Rain	Cloud Cover (%)
10.10.24	8°C	0	0	40

Birds- Winter Bird Surveys

- 6.57 The methodology employed was broadly based on territory mapping used for the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Common Bird Census (CBC). Standard BTO species codes and symbols for bird activities were used to identify birds and denote activity, sex and age where appropriate.
- 6.58 The route around the survey area was mapped out prior to the surveys being undertaken, paying particular attention to linear features, such as hedgerows and tree lines, and natural features such as ponds and areas of scrub. When arriving on-site, any notable birds present were initially observed at a distance from a viewpoint. This process was repeated at several viewpoints around the Site, as required. The route was therefore adapted so that any birds present could be carefully followed, with a suitable distance maintained at all times to minimise any risk of the surveyor altering bird behaviour. Information was recorded on bird behaviour, paying particular attention to any behavioural changes and their potential cause. Bird surveys were not undertaken in unfavourable conditions such as heavy rain or strong wind, which may negatively affect the results.

Badgers

- 6.59 As part of the Site walkover, all suitable habitat within the Site and immediately adjacent to the Site boundary, were searched for evidence of badger activity. The standard methodology was used, as outlined by Harris, Creswell and Jefferies (1991)²¹. This involved a thorough search for evidence indicating the presence of badgers, including:
- setts, including earth mounds, evidence of bedding and runs between setts.
 - latrines, often located close to setts, at territory boundaries or adjacent to favoured feeding areas.
 - prints and paths or track ways.
 - hairs caught on rough wood or fencing; and
 - other evidence including snuffle holes, feeding and playing areas and scratching posts.

²¹Harris, S., Creswell, P. and Jefferies, D., (1991). (Report) Surveying Badgers. The Mammal Society, Bristol.

- 6.60 The identification of snuffle holes, scratching posts or feeding signs on their own is not necessarily conclusive evidence of the presence of badgers. A number of such signs may need to be seen in conjunction before they can be said to be conclusive of badger activity.

Assessment Approach

- 6.61 If an ecological feature is not considered to be important, the proposed scheme is not anticipated to have an effect that would be of relevance to the decision maker and these features are not considered further within the assessment. Exceptions to this would be if the species, population or habitat in question was identified as having a high social or economic value or if they are afforded legal protection (e.g., badgers). While the assessment does include protected species that receive statutory protection and are of material consideration at the local level, the presence of such a species does not necessarily infer value in relation to the proposed scheme but only to the level of protection it receives.
- 6.62 As such the value of the proposed scheme for protected species is considered by the specific ecological feature, considering the level of activity, the level of protection it receives and the overall value of habitat to that species within the Site.
- 6.63 Features with a value of Local or above were considered to represent an 'Important Ecological Feature' (IEF). Those features not meeting the criteria for IEF's were classified as having either lower than local level (immediate zone of influence) or negligible ecological importance.
- 6.64 Evaluation of habitats which did not reach this scale of significance were otherwise recognised as being of negligible significance or as providing habitat diversity at a Site level but not considered to appreciably enrich the habitat resource at a local level.

Determining Impacts and Effects

- 6.65 The CIEEM guidelines, define an impact as an influence on an ecological feature. The effect is the outcome of the influence on the ecological feature. As part of the EclA it is important to assess whether or not an impact is defined as an effect (negative or positive) on the integrity of a defined Site or ecosystem and / or the conservation status of a habitat or species within a given geographical area (CIEEM, 2018).
- 6.66 Impacts should be identified and understood to be able to determine their likely effect (consequence) of that impact in relation to the ecological feature.
- 6.67 As part of the process of determining whether there is likely to be an effect on the status of an ecological feature, the following questions are considered:
- Will any site / ecosystem process be removed or changed?
 - What will be the effect on the nature, extent, structure and function of component habitats?
 - What will be the effect on the average population size and viability of the component species?
- 6.68 A description of parameters that are considered when assessing the degree and type of change are detailed in Table 13, below.

Table 13: Parameters used to describe effects

Parameter for describing impacts on ecological structure and function	Definition of the parameter
Positive or Negative	Whether the impact has a positive or negative effect
Extent	The area of which the effect occurs
Magnitude	The size or amount of an effect
Duration	The time for which the effect is predicted to last prior to recovery or replacement of the resource or feature
Reversibility	Whether the effect is permanent (i.e., irreversible) or temporary (i.e., reversible)
Timing and Frequency	How often the effect occurs (e.g., repeated noise from piling work) and when it occurs (e.g., vegetation clearance undertaken outside of the bird breeding season).

6.69 With reference to the duration of an ecological impact, in addition to other uses, for the purposes of the assessment Table 14 defines the timeframes used within the chapter:

Table 14: Definition of timeframes









Term	Definition within this assessment
Short term	1-5 years
Medium term	6-15 years
Long term	16-60 years



6.70 In addition to considering the effect on the ecological feature an assessment of significance of the residual effect (for the type / nature of change), is provided in Table 15 below.




Table 15: Classification of the significance of the Effects






Impact Classification	Explanation
Significant Negative Effect	Likely to create a significant negative effect, including loss, or long-term or irreversible damage on the status of the ecological feature.
Not Significant Negative Effect	Likely to create a negative effect without causing long-term or irreversible damage to the status of ecological feature.
Neutral	Effects are either absent or such that no overall net change to the ecological feature.
Not Significant Positive Effect	Likely to create a beneficial effect on an ecological feature or providing a new lower value ecological feature without improving its conservation status.
Significant Positive Effect	The activity is likely to create a significant beneficial effect, including long-term enhancement and favourable conditions for an existing ecological feature.




APPENDIX C: TREE PRF INSPECTION RESULTS



Tree ref / Species	Methods utilised (Ground survey / Climb)	PRFs	Photos			Bat Roosting potential	Further work required
53 English Oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	Climb	<p>A – dead branch 6m high on west aspect. Dry crevice within that extends 30cm upwards, PRF -M.</p> <p>B – wound leading to cavity at base, dry-ish and extends upwards approx. 40cm. Summer PRF- M and Low hibernation potential.</p>				PRF-M	3x climb/ nocturnal surveys (May to August – 3 weeks apart)
57 English Oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	Climb	<p>A – Long hazard beam callus roll 5m high on north facing branch. Smooth and dry within, room for many bats, PRF-M.</p> <p>B – Deadwood in central part of tree, hollow, dry and extends 50cm upwards, PRF -M.</p>				PRF-M	3x climb/ nocturnal surveys (May to August – 3 weeks apart)
1 Alder <i>Alnus glutinosa,</i>	Climb	<p>A – Cavity at base on south aspect. Extends 30cm upwards – a bit damp and suboptimal for roosting, PRF-I.</p> <p>B – Deadwood in top 3 feet of tree, multiple small crevices, PRF-I.</p> <p>Multiple callus rolls on trunk – all shallow and Neg.</p>				PRF-I	No further surveys, 2x bat boxes for 2 PRF-I features

Tree ref / Species	Methods utilised (Ground survey / Climb)	PRFs	Photos	Bat Roosting potential	Further work required
56 English Oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	Climb	A – Callus roll extending less than 10cm upwards, may house a 1-2 bats, PRF-I. Other – several dead branches and hazard beams are superficial and do not contain suitable roosting features.		PRF-I	No surveys, 1x bat box
37 English Oak <i>Quercus robur.</i>	Ground	Mature English oak tree with potential roost features evident including storm damage and a large proportion of deadwood within the crown		FAR	Aerial climb/emergence surveys
44 Alder <i>Alnus glutinosa</i>	Ground	Veteran tree with many features. A – Branch cavity 4m high on south aspect. B – Trunk hollow throughout. Other – Callus rolls and broken branches.		FAR	3x emergence surveys

Tree ref / Species	Methods utilised (Ground survey / Climb)	PRFs	Photos	Bat Roosting potential	Further work required
62 English Oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	Climb	A - Callus rolls on split branch 7m high on north aspect – dry and space enough for low numbers of bats – PRF-I. Not safe to continue – cavity features higher in tree require further assessment if impacted.		FAR	3x emergence surveys
65 English Oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	Ground	Flaking bark all over tree branches. Appears to be PRF-I but no way to be sure. Further assessment by emergence surveys would be required if impacted.		FAR	3x emergence surveys
67 English Oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	Ground	Heavy ivy cover, may conceal roosting features.		FAR	3x emergence surveys

Tree ref / Species	Methods utilised (Ground survey / Climb)	PRFs	Photos		Bat Roosting potential	Further work required
69 Ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ground	Lifted bank and potential branch cavities. Heavy ivy cover, standing deadwood so may have large hollow features.			FAR	3x emergence surveys
72 English Oak <i>Quercus robur,</i>	Ground	Some lifted bark that requires further assessment. Heavy ivy cover, may conceal further potential roosting features.			FAR	3x emergence surveys
6 English Oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	Climb	Branch cavity, 5m high on east aspect, Negligible roost potential. Dead branch, 7m high on south aspect, Negligible roost potential. Both negligible as damp and exposed with no space large enough to support bat roosting.			NONE	None

Tree ref / Species	Methods utilised (Ground survey / Climb)	PRFs	Photos	Bat Roosting potential	Further work required
38 English Oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	Ground	No features observed.		NONE	None
52 English Oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	Climb	Rot hole 5m high on south aspect- feature is superficial with no room for roosting, Negligible.		NONE	None
55 English Oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	Climb	Wound around branch break on east aspect of trunk – shallow, Negligible. Dead branch in centre of tree – exposed and open upwards, no suitable roosting habitat, Negligible.		NONE	None

Tree ref / Species	Methods utilised (Ground survey / Climb)	PRFs	Photos	Bat Roosting potential	Further work required
59 English Oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	Climb	Callus roll on broken branch at main tree fork – shallow and wet, Negligible. Hazard beam on west facing branch 7m high, wet within, Negligible. Two upward facing split branches – both open to elements, damp and shallow, Negligible.		NONE	None
61 English Oak <i>Quercus robur</i>	Climb	Broken branch on south aspect – has no features deep enough for roosting. Callus rolls on trunk – all shallow and negligible.		NONE	None

APPENDIX D: WINTERING BIRD SURVEY RESULTS

Species: British Common Name	Species: Latin name	Survey 1	Survey 2	Survey 3	Survey 4	Conservation Status & Protection
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>				2	Amber List
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>	1		1	2	Amber List
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	7	16	3	23	Amber List
Collared Dove	<i>Streptopelia decaocto</i>			1	3	Green List
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>		3 (flyover)	1		Amber List
Common Gull	<i>Larus canus</i>		1			Red List
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>		4 (flyover)			Red List NERC S.41
Lesser Black-backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>		1 (flyover)			Amber List
Grey Heron	<i>Ardea cinerea</i>				1	Green List
Sparrowhawk	<i>Accipiter nisus</i>			1		Amber List
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>				1	Green List
Great Spotted Woodpecker	<i>Dendrocopos major</i>				1	Green List
Kestrel	<i>Falco tinnunculus</i>			1		Amber List
Jay	<i>Garrulus glandarius</i>	1				Green List

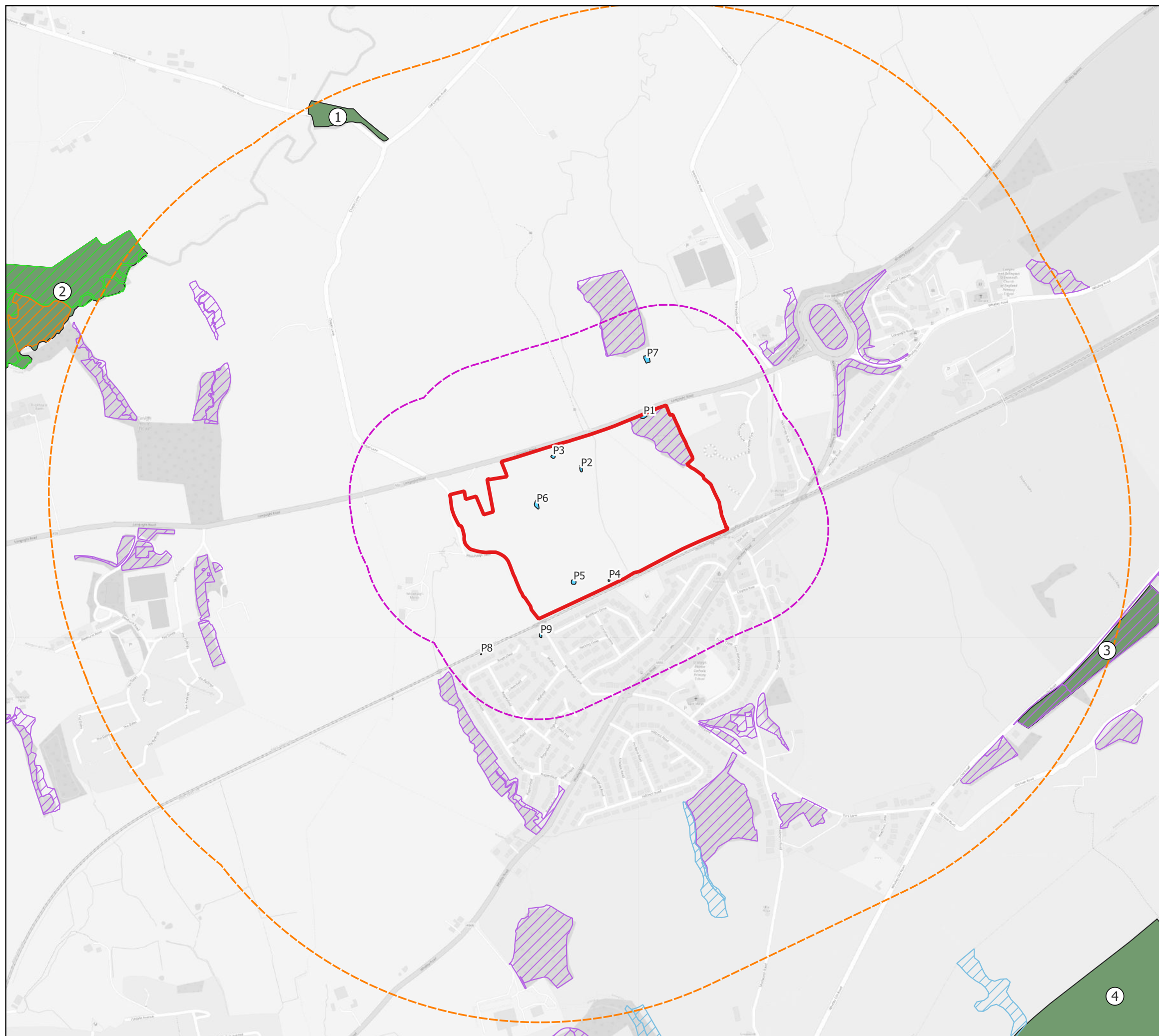
Species: British Common Name	Species: Latin name	Survey 1	Survey 2	Survey 3	Survey 4	Conservation Status & Protection
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	5	8	5	10	Green List
Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	8	11	7	9	Green List
Rook	<i>Corvus frugilegus</i>	30	1	9	2	Amber List
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	2	5	24	6	Green List
Coal Tit	<i>Periparus ater</i>	2	5			Green List
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	5	15	20	14	Green List
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	1	9	7	8	Green List
Long-tailed Tit	<i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>	5	10	10	3	Green List
Goldcrest	<i>Regulus regulus</i>		1			Green List
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	4	5	5	3	Amber List
Nuthatch	<i>Sitta europaea</i>	1	2	2	2	Green List
Treecreeper	<i>Certhia familiaris</i>	2	1	1	2	Green List
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	50	80	29	90	Red List NERC S.41
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	1	1	2	2	Amber List NERC S.41
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>			2	2	Red List

Species: British Common Name	Species: Latin name	Survey 1	Survey 2	Survey 3	Survey 4	Conservation Status & Protection
Redwing	<i>Turdus iliacus</i>	4		22		Amber List WCA Sch.1
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	9	11	16	9	Green List
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	6	8	6	7	Green List
House Sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	5	4	6	9	Red List NERC S.41
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	2		2	7	Amber List NERC S.41
Grey Wagtail	<i>Motacilla cinerea</i>		2		1	Amber List
Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>			1	1	Green List
Meadow Pipit	<i>Anthus pratensis</i>	1		1		Amber List
Chaffinch	<i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		3	2	2	Green List
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	1				Amber List NERC S.41
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	2	2	2	3	Red List
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	3	13	23	8	Green List
Total No. Species		25	26	29	29	

FPCR Environment and Design Ltd

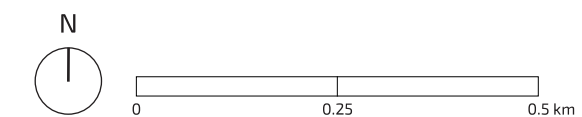
Registered Office: Lockington Hall, Lockington, Derby DE74 2RH
Company No. 07128076. [T] 01509 672772 [E] mail@fpcr.co.uk [W] www.fpcr.co.uk

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Key:

Site Boundary and Buffers

-  Red line boundary
-  250m Buffer
-  1km Buffer

-  Waterbodies

Priority Habitat Inventory (PHI)

-  Deciduous woodland
-  Good quality semi-improved grassland
-  Lowland fens
-  Lowland meadows
-  Biological Heritage Sites

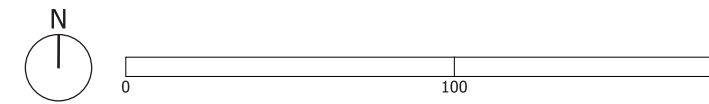
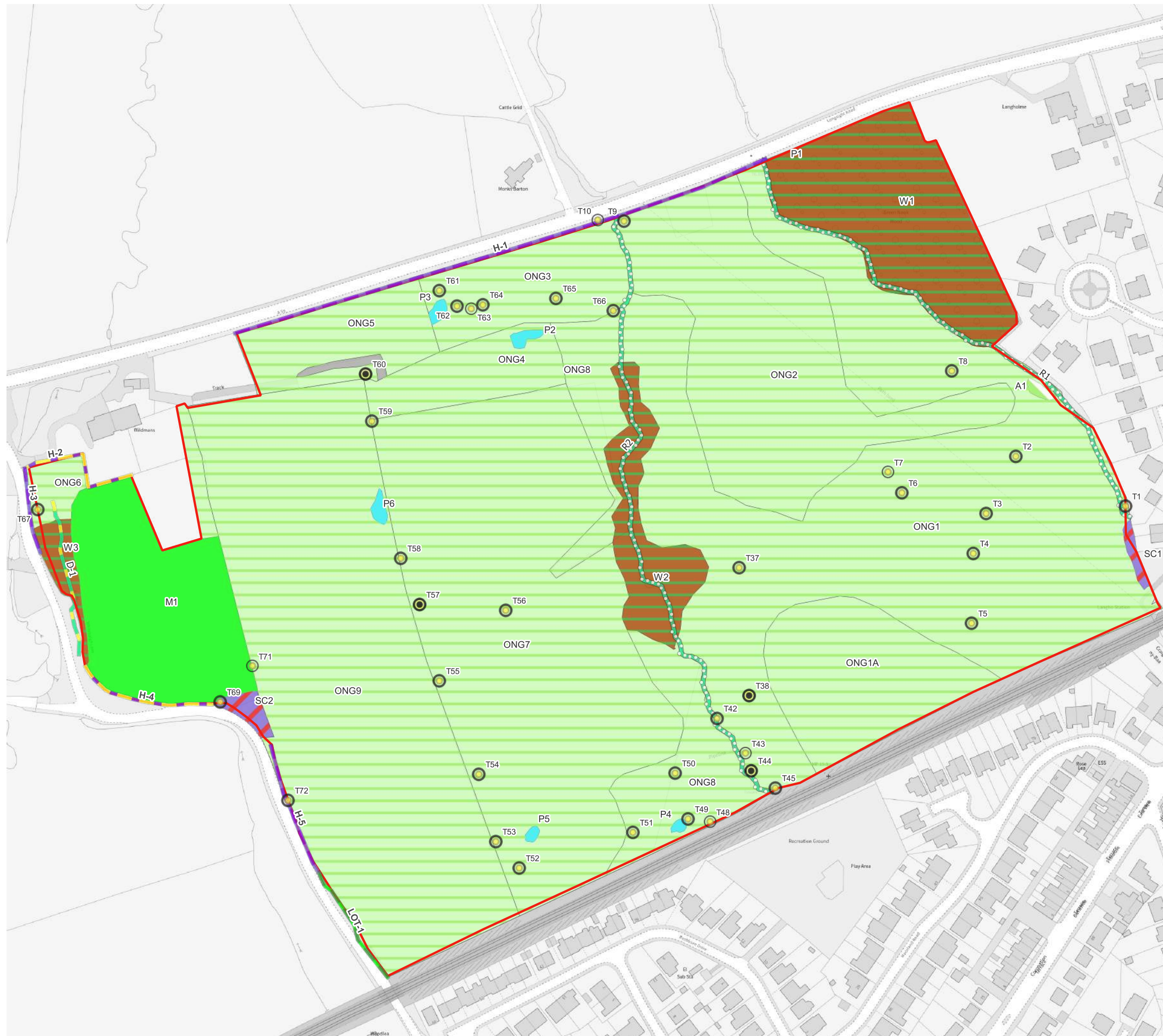
Ref	Site Name	Designation
1	Dinckley Bridge Wood	BHS
2	Park Brook Pastures	BHS
3	Cronshaw Chair	BHS
4	Dean Clough Reservoir	BHS

date 27/02/25 drwn/chkd
HK / SH

client
Hallam Land Management
project
**Land south of Longsight Road,
Langho**

title **SITE LOCATION AND
DESIGNATED SITES** scale
1:9,400 @ A3

number **FIGURE 1** rev
-



- Red Line Boundary
- Baseline Habitats**
- Blackthorn scrub
- Hawthorn scrub
- Lowland dry acid grassland
- Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
- Modified grassland
- Other neutral grassland
- Ponds (non-priority habitat)
- Tall forbs
- Baseline Hedgerow**
- Ecologically valuable line of trees
- Native hedgerow
- Species-rich native hedgerow
- Baseline Watercourse**
- Ditches
- Other rivers and streams
- Baseline Individual Trees**
- Existing very large rural tree
- Existing large rural tree
- Existing medium rural tree

date 27/02/25 drwn/chkd
IH

client **Hallam Land Management Limited**

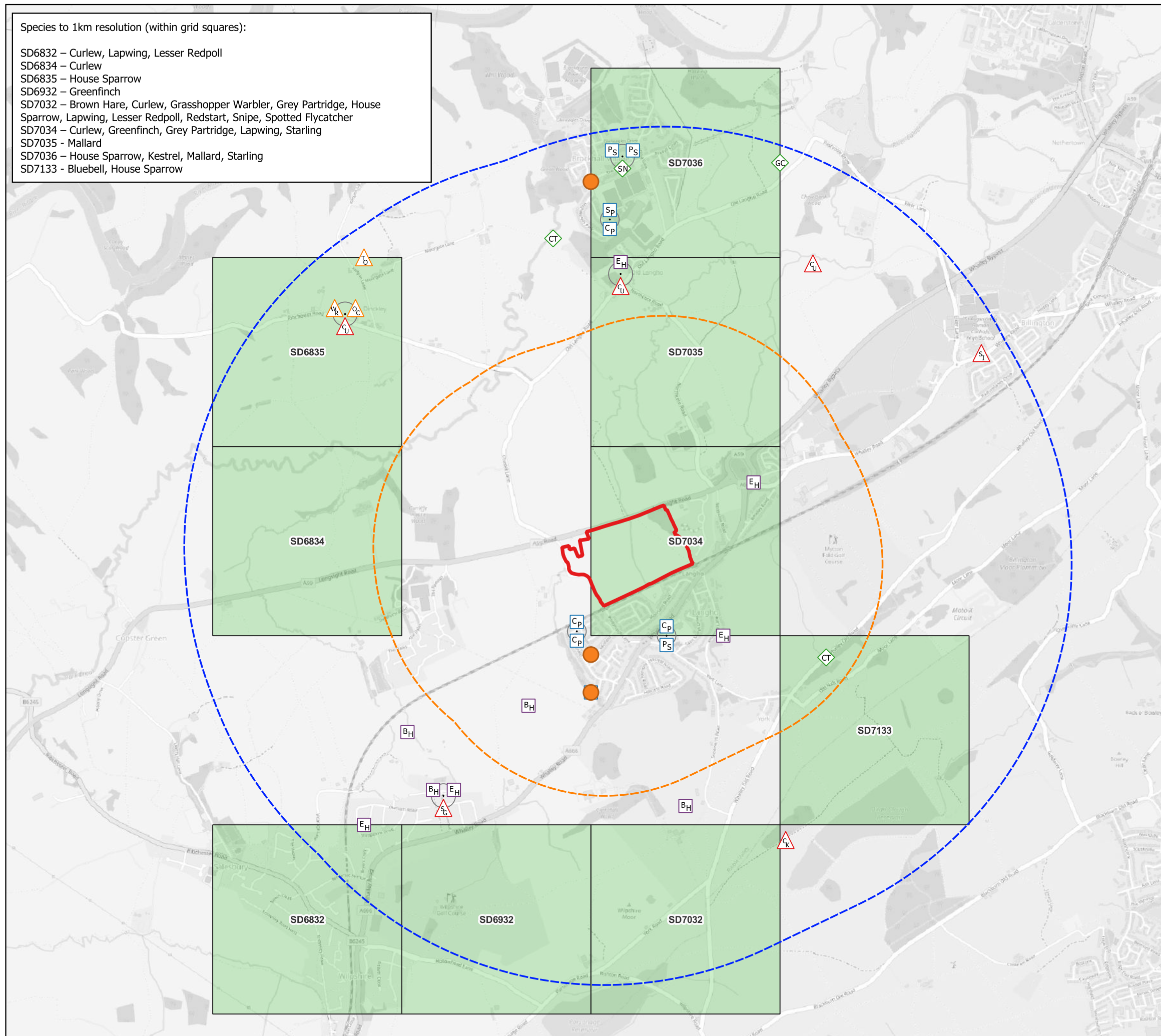
project **Land south of Longsight Road Langho**

title **BASELINE HABITAT PLAN** scale
1:2,300 @ A3

number **FIGURE 2** rev
-

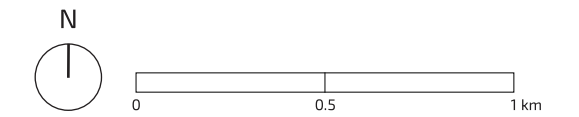
Species to 1km resolution (within grid squares):

- SD6832 – Curlew, Lapwing, Lesser Redpoll
- SD6834 – Curlew
- SD6835 – House Sparrow
- SD6932 – Greenfinch
- SD7032 – Brown Hare, Curlew, Grasshopper Warbler, Grey Partridge, House Sparrow, Lapwing, Lesser Redpoll, Redstart, Snipe, Spotted Flycatcher
- SD7034 – Curlew, Greenfinch, Grey Partridge, Lapwing, Starling
- SD7035 - Mallard
- SD7036 – House Sparrow, Kestrel, Mallard, Starling
- SD7133 - Bluebell, House Sparrow



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Key:

- Red line boundary
- 1km Buffer
- 2km Buffer

Species records

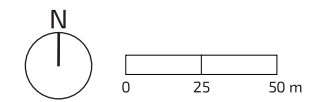
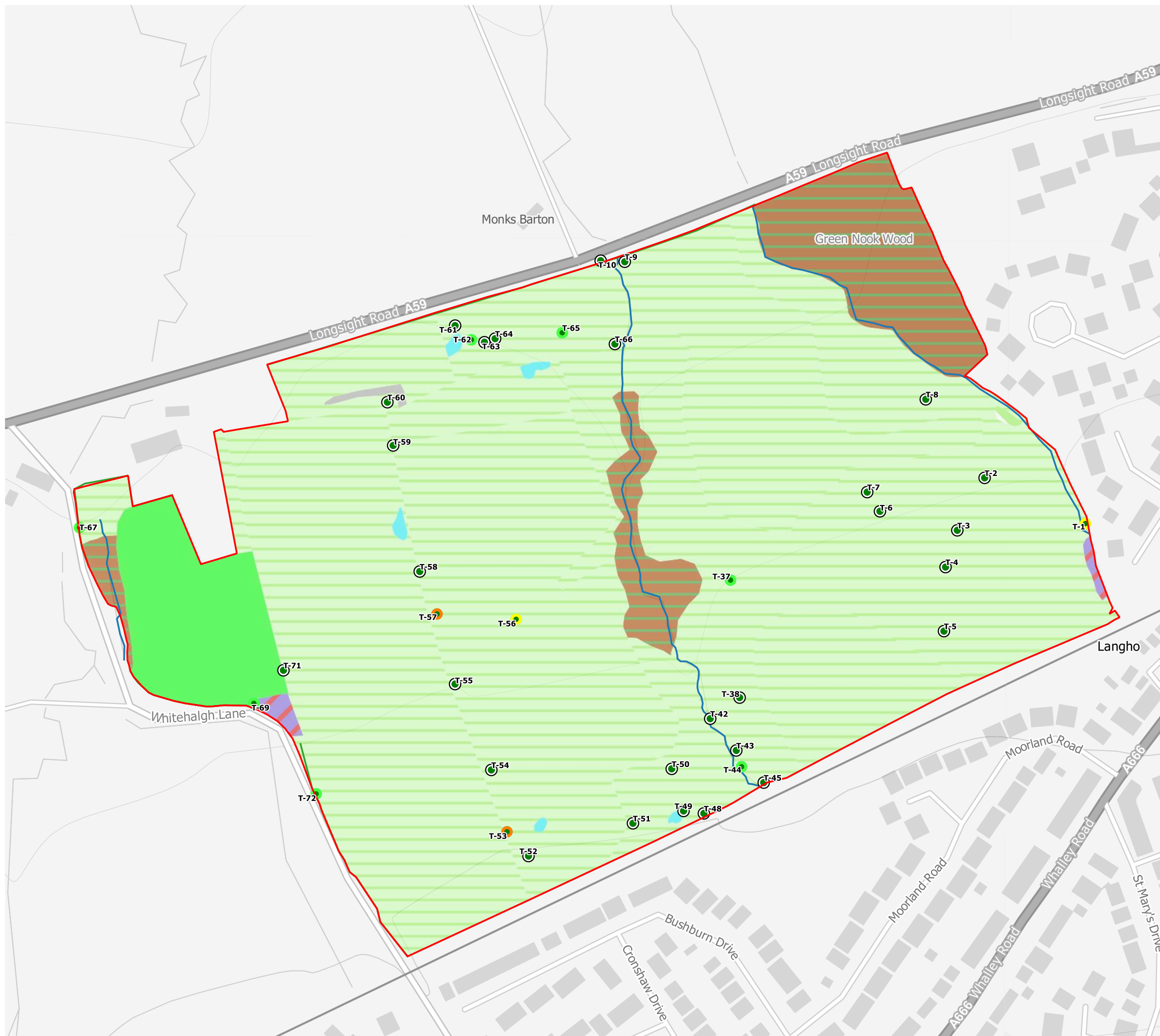
- BH Brown hare
- CP Common pipistrelle
- CT Common toad
- CK Cuckoo
- CU Curlew
- GC Great crested newt
- OC Oystercatcher
- PS Pipstrelle species
- SN Smooth newt
- SP Soprano pipistrelle
- ST Starling
- SI Swift
- TO Tawny owl
- EH Western European hedgehog
- WK Wren
- Bat maternity roost record

date 27/02/25 drwn/chkd
HK / ET

client
Hallam Land Management
project
**Land south of Longsight Rd,
Langho**

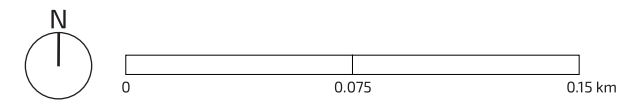
title **CONSULTATION PLAN - SPECIES RECORDS** scale
1:20,000 @ A3

FIGURE 3



- Site Boundary
- Trees with Bat Potential
- None
- PRF-I
- PRF-M
- FAR

<small>date</small> 27/02/25	<small>drwn/chkd</small> ET
<small>client</small> Hallam Land Management Limited	
<small>project</small> Land south of Longsight Road, Langho	
<small>title</small> TREE PRF SURVEY	<small>scale</small> 1:2,500 @ A3
<small>number</small> FIGURE 4a	<small>rev</small> -



Key - Flight Path Survey

- Red line boundary
- Flight Path Arrow
- Point Count Locations
- ▲ Static Detector Location

Key - Transect

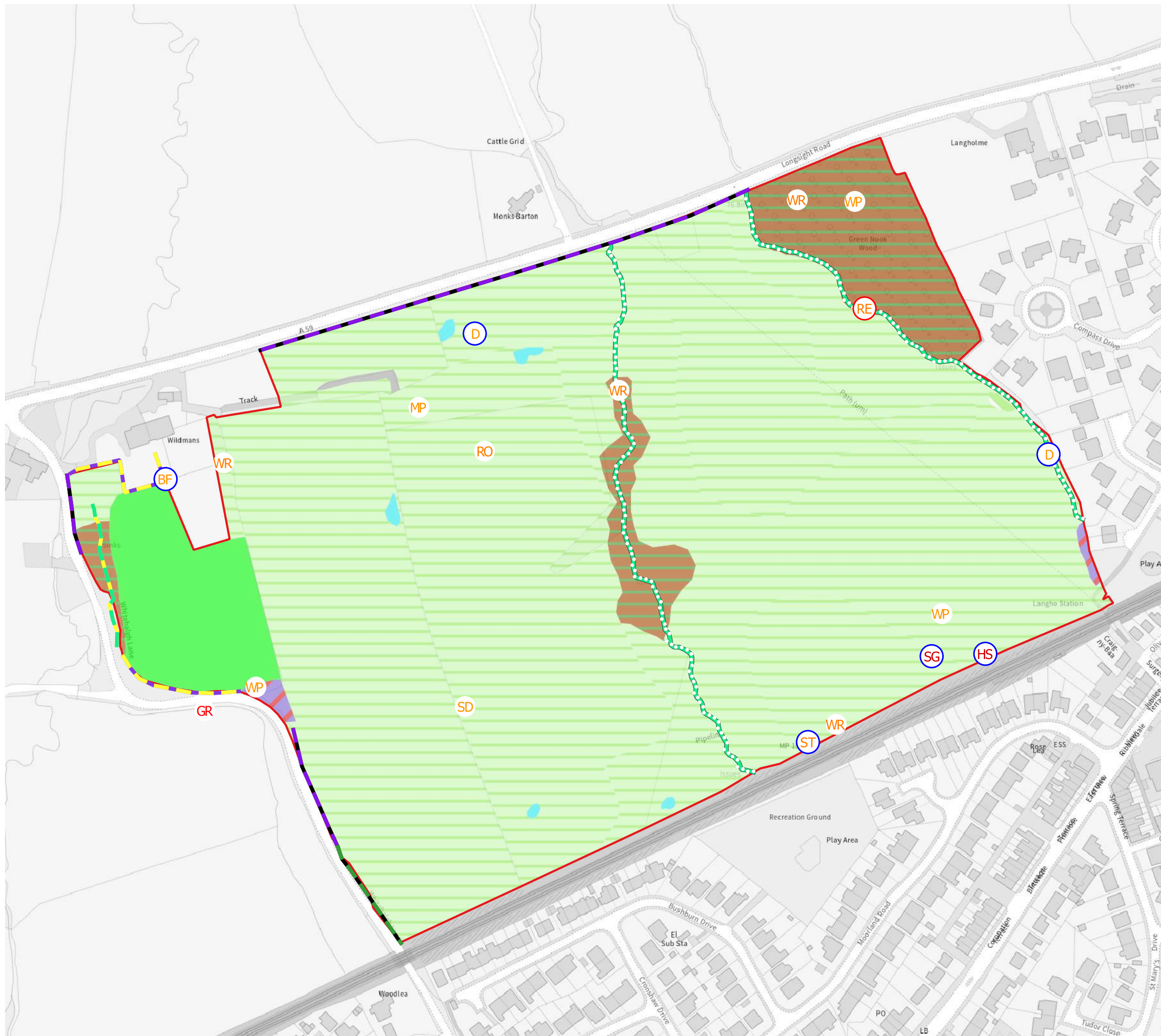
- Myotis Species
- S Start point
- F Finish point
- Transect Route - October
- ▲ Static Detector Locations

date 27/02/25 drwn/chkd BC /SH

client **Hallam Land Management**
 project **Land south of Longsight Road, Langho**

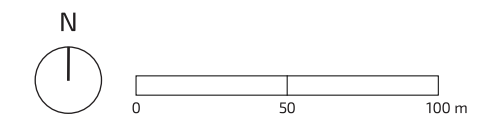
title **AUTUMN BAT ACTIVITY PLAN** scale 1:2,500 @ A3

number **FIGURE 4b** rev -



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BoCC 5 Red List Species

- HS** House Sparrow
- SG** Starling
- GR** Greenfinch

BoCC 5 Amber List Species

- BF** Bullfinch
- D** Dunnock
- MP** Meadow Pipit
- SD** Stock Dove
- RE** Redwing
- RO** Rook
- ST** Song Thrush
- WP** Woodpigeon
- WR** Wren

Additional Protections

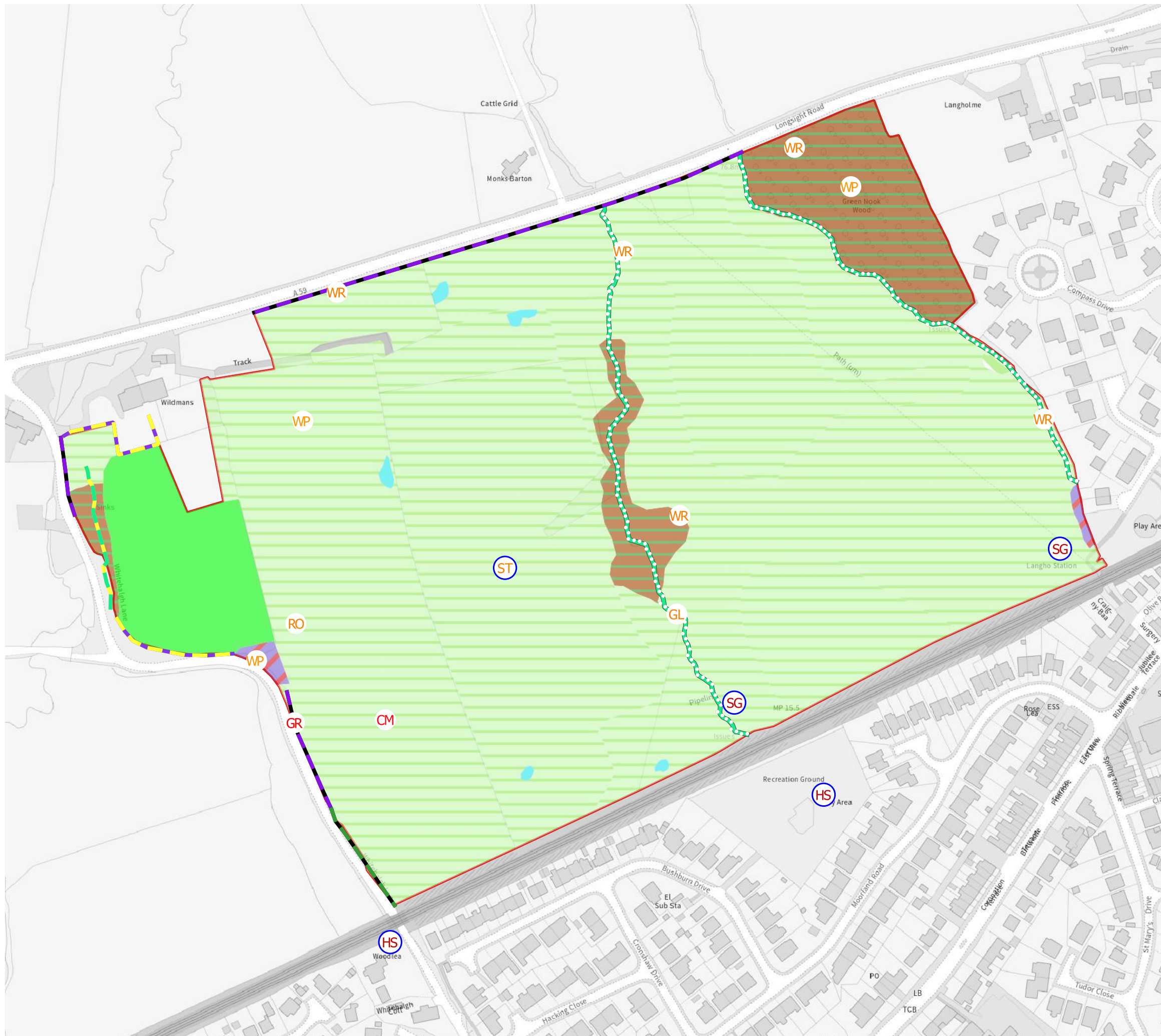
- NERC Species of Principal Importance
- Schedule 1 Species

date 27/02/25 drwn/chkd GP / SH

client **Hallam Land Management**
 project **Land south of Longsight Road, Langho**

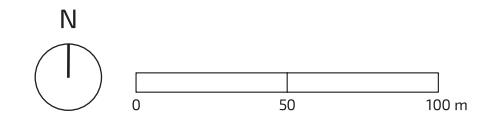
title **Wintering Bird Survey Plan - 06.11.24** scale 1:2,500 @ A3

number **FIGURE 5a** rev -



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— Red line boundary

BoCC 5 Red List Species

CM Common Gull

HS House Sparrow

SG Starling

GR Greenfinch

BoCC 5 Amber List Species

GL Grey Wagtail

RO Rook

ST Song Thrush

WP Woodpigeon

WR Wren

Additional Protections

○ NERC Species of Principal Importance

date

27/02/25

drwn/chkd

GP / SH

client

Hallam Land Management

project

Land south of Longsight Road,
Langho

title

Wintering Bird Survey Plan -
03.12.24

scale

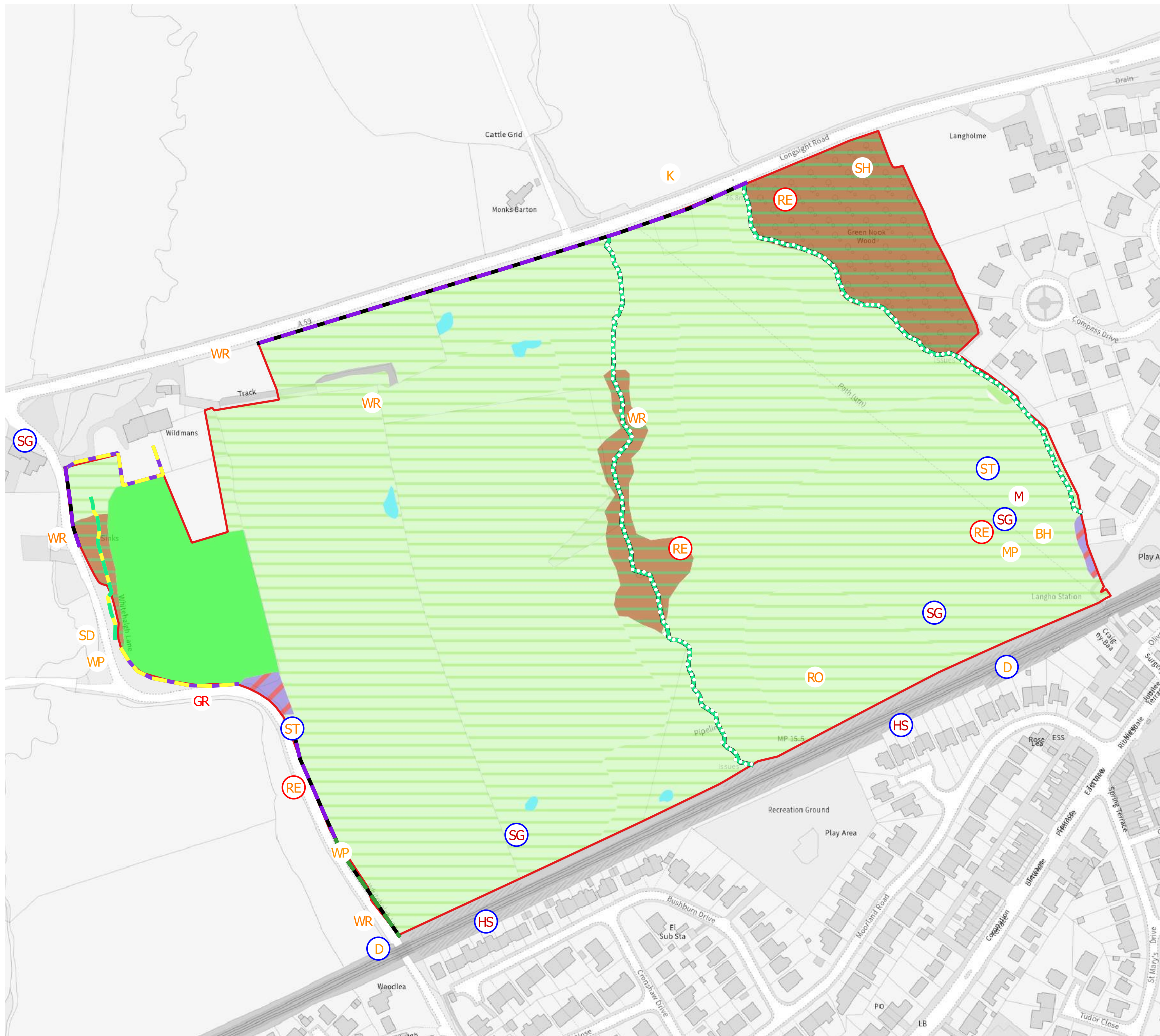
1:2,500 @ A3

number

FIGURE 5b

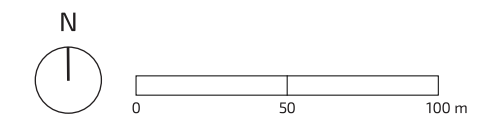
rev

-



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Red line boundary

BoCC 5 Red List Species

HS House Sparrow

M Mistle Thrush

SG Starling

GR Greenfinch

BoCC 5 Amber List Species

BH Black-headed Gull

D Dunnock

K Kestrel

MP Meadow Pipit

SD Stock Dove

RE Redwing

RO Rook

ST Song Thrush

SH Sparrowhawk

WP Woodpigeon

WR Wren

Additional Protections

Blue circle: NERC Species of Principal Importance

Red circle: Schedule 1 Species

date

27/02/25

drwn/chkd

GP / SH

client

Hallam Land Management

project

Land south of Longsight Road,
Langho

title

Wintering Bird Survey Plan -
08.01.25

scale

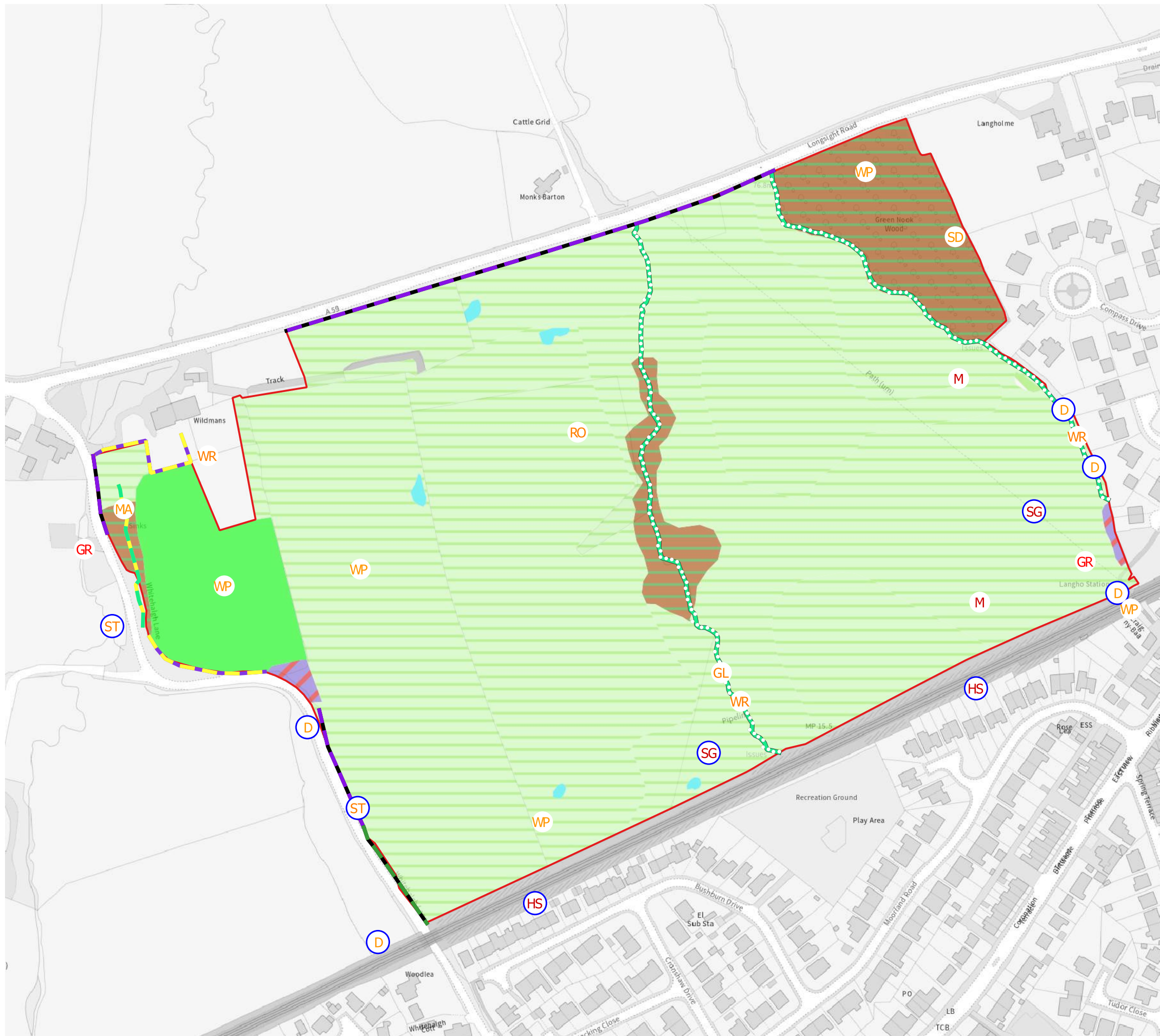
1:2,500 @ A3

number

FIGURE 5c

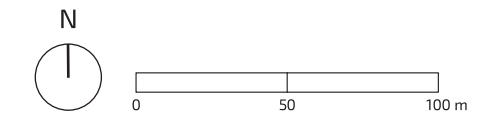
rev

-



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- Red line boundary
- BoCC 5 Red List Species**
- HS** House Sparrow
- M** Mistle Thrush
- SG** Starling
- GR** Greenfinch
- BoCC 5 Amber List Species**
- D** Dunnock
- MA** Mallard
- SD** Stock Dove
- GL** Grey Wagtail
- RO** Rook
- ST** Song Thrush
- WP** Woodpigeon
- WR** Wren
- Additional Protections**
- NERC Species of Principal Importance

date 27/02/25 drwn/chkd GP / ET

client **Hallam Land Management**
 project **Land south of Longsight Road, Langho**

title **Wintering Bird Survey Plan - 05.02.25** scale 1:2,500 @ A3

number **FIGURE 5d** rev -