# LAND NORTH OF LYDIA PARK, (WEST OF) STOVOLDS HILL, CRANLEIGH, GU6 8LE – TOWN AND COUNTRY PLANNING ACT 1990

## PROOF OF EVIDENCE ON ECOLOGY MATTERS

**PREPARED BY**

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**16/01/2026**

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## 1.0 INTRODUCTION

### Qualifications and Experience

1.1 My name is Giles Coe. I am an ecological consultant with 25 years commercial experience, a BSc (hons) in Environmental Management from the University of North London and full membership of the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) which I have held for over 18 years. I have been retained by Parminder Sanghera of the Community Law Partnership Solicitors on behalf of the appellant in a consultative capacity since December 2025, carrying out a site scoping assessment in that month.

1.2 I am experienced in the survey and assessment of sites in a wide range of situations that encompass single dwellings, through to large scale housing and infrastructure schemes. Having worked through my career in posts from field assistant to suitably qualified ecologist and subsequently then at greater levels of seniority and responsibility, I have gained a solid understanding and appreciation of the practical application of ecological principals in development scenarios.

1.3 I have been a Registered Consultant on Natural England's Badger Class License scheme since 2018, and since 2011 have annually held and implemented multiple licences to disturb badgers for reasons of development and/or agricultural damage. I am a Registered Consultant on Natural England's Bat Mitigation Class Licence scheme (BMCL - previously Bat Low Impact Class Licence, BLICL), since 2015, and since 2010 have acted annually as named ecologist on multiple bat EPSM licences. My other professional certifications include a great crested newt survey licence which I have held since 2005 and acting as named ecologist on great crested newt European Protected Species Mitigation licences (EPSM) for a range of schemes and levels of impact. This includes, from 2012- 2022, overseeing the compilation and delivery of a suite of EPSM licences for the London Gateway Logistics Park and Port developments for Dubai Ports World.

1.4 Much of my project work requires an in-depth working knowledge of the National and International legislative framework surrounding nature conservation and wildlife. This involves working within the interface between legislation and the planning system, interpreting the nuances of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), the Circular from the Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM), the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) and local plans and policies. For a large proportion of project work, this role extends to a detailed understanding of UK habitats and changes to them bought about due to development or other land management activities. A

slightly smaller proportion of my work involves the species licensing system and applying that knowledge to advise clients on consent applications.

1.5 I am currently running my own company (Co-ecology Ltd) and a team of six ecological consultants, now at the end of our fifth year of trading, prior to this I was working for The Ecology Consultancy one of the UK's largest dedicated consultancies.

1.6 As Executive Director for The Ecology Consultancy, I had board level responsibility for our five regional offices (Devon, Sussex, Norfolk, Midlands and North) ensuring not just the commercial success of these locations but that the teams worked to consistently high technical standards. From 2015 to 2019, on behalf of the CIEEM I co-delivered a training course: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal – An Applied Approach. In my own office in Sussex, I had a team of 33 technical and support staff working under me and delivering the ecological surveys, assessments and mitigation measures for approximately 300 projects per annum. We covered a wide suite of ecological receptors and I was called on by senior and principal grade ecologists to guide and direct them on complex ecological issues, often surrounding legislation, policy and licensing.

**Overview**

1.7 I confirm that the evidence presented below in relation to this Section 78 non-determination appeal for Pitch 1, Land North of Lydia Park, Stovolds Hill, is a true and accurate representation of my professional opinion of the site and of the ecology work carried out to date for the adjacent plots.

1.8 **After a review of the council's Statement of Case (SoC), this proof of evidence robustly addresses all outstanding issues and the local authority are invited to withdraw their reliance on ecology objections**.

**Scope and structure of evidence**

1.9 My proof of evidence concentrates primarily on responding, by way of an Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA), to issues raised by the council in their Statement of Case (01 LPA STATEMENT OF CASE_(ATTACHMENT) - 1201277 - 3367393, 366387 - Pitch 1 + Pitch 2, Stovolds Hill, Cranleigh - LPA Statement of Case) dated October 2022.

1.10 In Chapter 2 below, I provide a retrospective EcIA for Pitch 1 that also includes a section of Cumulative Effects that takes account habitat loss and species impacts that could have arisen cumulatively from the ground clearance for adjacent plots, 2, 3, 4, 5 and 6, the latter four being

subject to a separate appeal, Sites A/B/S/D that was due to be heard in February 2026 but is now adjourned. Also addressed within the cumulative Effects section are impacts to the wider landscape arising from other developments not subject to this or other appeals on adjacent land.

1.11 The impact assessment is supported by a robust habitat compensation scheme for Pitch 1 in isolation and in-combination with a wider scheme that includes land occupied by all five appeal pitches.

1.12 A final section in Chapter 2 deals with the nearby development at Thatched Roof Farm and provides an overview of the ecological assessments and post planning measures agreed by the council to be sufficient.

1.13 In Chapter 3, I provide an overview of the scheme's accordance with local and national planning policies followed by summary of my evidence and demonstrate that it is possible to provide sufficient compensation to off-set the harm caused in the original site clearance and that in contrary to the council's assertion, remaining ecological issues can be dealt with by way of condition.

**Documents considered**

1.14 This proof of evidence is based on information set out in the following documents;

1.14.1 **Inquiry documents**;

- 01 LPA STATEMENT OF CASE_(ATTACHMENT) - 1201277 - 3367393, 366387 - Pitch 1 + Pitch 2, Stovolds Hill, Cranleigh - LPA Statement of Case
- 01 LPA STATEMENT OF CASE_(ATTACHMENT) - 1201277 - Appendix WBC 4 - Site Visit Photographs 21.01.2025;
- 01 LPA STATEMENT OF CASE_(ATTACHMENT) - 1201277 - Appendix WBC 5 - Site Visit Photographs 27.03.2025;.
- 01 LPA STATEMENT OF CASE_(ATTACHMENT) - 1201277 - Appendix WBC 6 - Surface Water Flood Mapping;
- 01 LPA STATEMENT OF CASE_(ATTACHMENT) - 1201277 - Appendix WBC 7 - Drone Imagery, July 2025;
- AEWC (2022) Extended Phase 1 habitat survey – Thatched House Farm
- Clegg A Arb PEA CD2A.6 Preliminary Ecological (1);
- Clegg A CD8.3 LPA Proof of Evidence - Ecology & Appendices (1);
- Clegg A CD10.1 Ecology Rebuttal Evidence by Mr Sibbett
- Clegg A Darwin letter 1 CD2A.7 Ecology Letter Report - 15.01.2024;
- Clegg A Darwin letter 2 CD2A.8 Ecology Letter Report - 19.07.2024.

1.14.2 **Extracts from external documents**;


- AEWC (2022) Land at Thatched Roof Farm, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.
- AEWC (2023) Land at Thatched Roof Farm, Reptile Survey.
- AEWC (2023) Land at Thatched Roof Farm, CEMP.
- Butterfly Conservation. Saving the Wood White.
- Butterfly Conservation. Wood White Factsheet.
- British Standards Institute (2013) *BS42020 Biodiversity. Code of Practice for planning and development*.
- CIEEM (2024) *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine, v1.3.* Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Darwin Ecology (2023) *Ecological Impact Assessment Land at Stovolds Hill - Plot 4 Dunsfold Cranleigh GU6 8TB*.
- Defra (2022) *List of habitats and species of principal importance in England*.
- Elmbridge Borough Council (2025) *Grant of Planning Permission Orchard House Field Common Farm Field Common Lane Walton-On-Thames Surrey KT12 3QD.* Decision Notice.
- Natural England, Great Crested Newt Method Statement.
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006. Chapter 16.
- *ODPM Circular 06/2005.* OFFICE OF THE DEPUTY PRIME MINISTER, GOVERNMENT CIRCULAR: BIODIVERSITY AND GEOLOGICAL CONSERVATION – STATUTORY OBLIGATIONS AND THEIR IMPACT WITHIN THE PLANNING SYSTEM.
- Secretary of State (2023*). Rother Valley Railway (Bodiam to Robertsbridge Junction) Order decision. TRANSPORT AND WORK ACT 1992: APPLICATION FOR THE PROPOSED ROTHER VALLEY (BODIAM TO ROBERTSBRIDGE JUNCTION) ORDER*
- UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat Descriptions From: UK Biodiversity Action Plan; Priority Habitat Descriptions. BRIG (ed. Ant Maddock) 2008.
- Schaus et al (2020). Application of the Random Encounter Model in citizen science projects to monitor animal densities. Remote Sensing in Ecology and Conservation. Published Joh Wiley & Sons - Zoological Society of London..

- Schaus (2021) *Responses of the West European hedgehog to urbanisation: impact on population dynamics, animal movement and habitat selection*. Thesis, Nottingham Trent University.
- Surrey Wildlife Trust, Planning reference: WA/2022/02144 Proposals: Erection of 3 light industrial units and associated works. Site Address: THATCHED HOUSE FARM DUNSFOLD ROAD LOXHILL GODALMING GU8 4BW

## 2.0 ECOLOGICAL IMPACT ASSESSMENT

### Methodology

#### *Scope*

2.2 This impact assessment deals solely with the effects on habitats and species and not protected sites, whether statutory or non-statutory, as impacts to these receptors are not under contention.

2.3 The ecological receptors that have been considered within this impact assessment comprise all the habitats likely to have been within the site boundary prior to the date of clearance, taken to be July 2021, plus, any legally protected species and any Species of Principal Importance that have been demonstrated or likely to reside within the site or within the zone of influence (ZOI) prior to clearance.

2.4 For the purposes of the impact assessment the ZOI is taken to be a maximum of 1km for species and notable habitats and within the site itself for all other receptors.

#### *Contextual information and data records*

2.5 Contextual information on the site was gathered from freely available online resources including a 2km search for habitats and species and a 2km search for nationally protected sites using Magic Map hosted by Defra. Online aerial imagery was used to make an assessment of the sites position within the wider landscape including connectivity and potential corridors for movement. All other ecological data has been taken from the previously referenced ecology reports plus proof of evidence (Clegg A CD8.3 LPA Proof of Evidence - Ecology & Appendices (1) and rebuttals (Clegg A CD10.1 Ecology Rebuttal Evidence by Mr Sibbett) from the appeal for Sites A-D.

#### *Field Surveys and habitat information*

2.6 No formal habitat survey has been carried out by myself for either the appeal site or the wider landholding as the former was solely hard-standing at the time of my visit and for the latter all land was outwith the ownership or control of the appellant or appellants on neighbouring plots.

2.7 To determine the likely classification and status of habitats both on the appeal site and on neighbouring land I have utilised my professional judgement in viewing freely available historical satellite imagery for the years preceding clearance and subsequently to the present day. In addition, during the December site visit I viewed the adjacent habitats remotely and made simple notes on composition and species.

***Assessment***

2.8 The assessment and evaluation of likely impacts has been predicated solely on the presumption of habitat type and species presence as described above.

***Determination of Importance***

2.9 In accordance with the published guidance (CIEEM, 2024) and to ensure compliance with the legal framework, National and local planning policy as they relate to biodiversity the importance of a range of ecological receptors is assessed in turn and covers those features which are likely to be affected by the development.

2.10 **Table 2.1** List of ecological receptors under consideration

| Potentially Important Ecological Receptors | Instances |
|---|---|
| Legally Protected Species | Those species listed under Schedule 1 or Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and/or Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and Annex I of the Birds Directive. |
| Notable habitats and species | Includes Birds of Conservation Concern (5)[1], Red Data Book species, Habitats & Species of Principal Importance to Biodiversity[2] as listed under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006). |

1.1 To aid in the assessment of relative importance the report is based on geographic scale as follows:

- International;
- National;
- Regional;
- County;

[1] https://www.bto.org/sites/default/files/publications/bocc-5-a5-4pp-single-pages.pdf
[2] https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/habitats-and-species-of-principal-importance-in-england

- Local;
- Site level.

***Evaluation of Impacts***

2.11 In assessing the likely impacts to important ecological receptors, the following frames of reference are used:

- Positive or negative: Changes to the ecology of the designated site, habitat or species under consideration, that can be said to result in an improvement of variables such as integrity (site), abundance, diversity or quality. Or conversely, to lead to a degradation of the same.
- Extent: The geographical area over which an impact may occur and be considered significant.
- Magnitude: In relative terms magnitude is provided as the size of an impact as measured in area lost, percentage change and/or population decline.
- Duration: The period of time over which an activity may have a positive or negative effect, the refences used are short, medium, long term, permanent or temporary.
- Frequency and timing: The number of times that a certain activity is predicted to occur.
- Reversibility: Can the predicted impact be reasonably considered to be capable of being reversed or should instead be considered to be irreversible.

***Determination of significance***

2.12 Significance of effect for the receptors described above are determined as follows:

- Is there predicted to be a positive or negative effect on the extents or function of the habitats within the development site.
- Is there likely to be an effect on the population of a particular protected or notable species.

***The application of the mitigation hierarchy***

2.13 As this EcIA is retrospective no attempt has been made to determine this scheme within the mitigation hierarchy as would usually be the case, instead, the assessment identifies what mitigation measures may still be a practical approach for Pitch 1 and then moves to describe compensation for any identified losses. In a similar case, Elmbridge Borough Council (Ref Reference: 2025/1697) granted planning permission subject to conditions (Condition 3) for soft-landscaping and biodiversity enhancements. That condition seeking to compensate for any harm caused during an unauthorised site clearance.

- Mitigate: Describes and allows for any specific mitigation that may need to be implemented (such as species consent licensing) prior to any construction occurring and/or the operational life of the project.
- Compensate: Compensation is provided for any impacts that cannot be adequately avoided or mitigated for through either embedded design or specific activity with the type and design of new habitats intended to ensure the ecological functionality of those habitats for the species or habitats for which they are targeted.
- Enhance: To provide an improvement of habitats and species post development but above the pre-intervention baseline the scheme has been designed to have practicable

enhancement measures in-built in the proposals and described within the impact assessment.

***Residual effects***

2.14 Once mitigation has been applied the assessment provides a simple statement on the significance of any residual impacts.

***Monitoring***

2.15 This EcIA sets out a suggested programme of monitoring that is intended to monitor the effectiveness of the mitigation and compensation measures once they have been implemented. The objectives for any recommended monitoring surveys are provided in outline to be detailed by planning condition.

***Identification of cumulative impacts***

2.16 This section makes an assessment on the scale and type of cumulative impacts that could have arisen in-combination with other adjacent and nearby schemes. CIEEM (2024) describes this process thus:

*"Cumulative effects can result from individually insignificant but collectively significant actions taking place over a period of time or concentrated in a location. Cumulative effects are particularly important in EcIA as ecological features may be already exposed to background levels of threat or pressure and may be close to critical thresholds where further impact could cause irreversible decline. Cumulative effects can also make habitats and species more vulnerable or sensitive to change*."

2.17 Developments to be included in this assessment include Pitch 2, Appeal sites A, B, C and D, as well as alterations of land-use to the north (270m) by the B2130, the consented light industrial site (ref) 200m to the north-west, and a separate traveller site 235m to the north-east. These impacts are assessed both qualitatively and quantitively.

**Habitat Baseline – *Pitch 1***

2.18 The following habitats are assessed as being likely to have been present prior to the 2021 clearance and are illustrated in Plan 1 (Appendix A).

2.19 w1g – other woodland broadleaved – 0.0151.6ha. Covering the majority of the pitch from the road upwards, likely to have included at least one mature pedunculate oak >150years old. An important receptor significant at Local scale. As the block in Pitch 1 was relatively small and at the end of the

longer strip of woodland valuing it at County scale would not be appropriate, greater value would apply for larger areas and/or a position further into a woodland.

2.20 g3c – other neutral grassland – 0.0472.8ha. My site visit was in December and a full representation of the remaining grasslands adjacent to the appeal sites was not possible. However, viewed from a distance it was likely that this was not a heavily modified pasture, the species present included at least local dominance of false oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, and basal rosettes of grassland forbes were visible, whilst the sward height was varied and along with other features of the structural complexity indicated that that diversity could be much greater. It should though be noted that the AEWC report (2022) submitted in the Thatched House Farm application for light industrial units described these wider fields as being Modified grassland (AEWC 2022, Fields 1-2) Page 11, Section 5.15-16), however, their survey was in March much earlier than a survey that would be expected to correctly identify grassland type. Following the precautionary principle the classification of Other Neutral grassland is considered appropriate. An important receptor significant at Local scale.

2.21 r2 – rivers and streams – 20m. Assessing what this drainage feature may have been like pre-clearance is problematic and I am unable to make an educated guess as to what vegetation may or may not have been present and what water quality may have been. It is clear though that the primary function was of draining for the land around and not thought to be a substantial feature. An important receptor significant at Local scale.

2.22 The following table provides a high-level summary of the likely habitats and area of those habitats that may have been present on the other five adjacent pitches.

2.23 **Table 2.2 –** Habitat types and areas on Pitch 1 and all adjacent pitches, likely to have been present pre-clearance, see Plan 1, Appendix A.

| Pitch | Woodland ha | Grassland ha | Watercourse m |
|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0.0472 | 0.0151 | 20 |
| 2 | 0 | 0.06 | 0 |
| 3/D | 0 | 0.06 | 0 |

| Pitch | Woodland ha | Grassland ha | Watercourse m |
|---|---|---|---|
| 4/C | 0.0146 | 0.1243 | 5 |
| 5/B | 0.06 | 0.2237 | 24 |
| 6/A | 0.0556 | 0.0176 | 15 |
| Total | 0.1774 | 0.5007 | 64 |

***Protected Species***

2.24 The following receptors are assessed as regards their likely presence or absence prior to the 2021 clearance.

2.25 Bats. It is possible that any felled mature oak trees may have contained potential roost features (PRF) suitable for a variety of bat species, whilst the woodland and grassland would likely havebeen able to provide a foraging function. Significant at Site level.

2.26 Badgers. Most areas of broadleaved woodland are capable of providing suitable sett building habitat for badgers and would in any case provide a foraging resource as would the grassland, although presence year-round is likely to be much more restricted for ground that is seasonally or regularly inundated. A lower risk of presence, and important receptor significant at Site level.

2.27 Breeding birds. Likely to have utilised even this small block of woodland for both nesting and foraging. An important receptor significant at Site level.

2.28 Great crested newts. The data gathered by Darwin Ecology (Clegg A Darwin letter 1 CD2A.7 Ecology Letter Report - 15.01.2024) for Pitch 6 (Appeal site A) has demonstrated likely absence in an area of standing water in the woodland to the west, from the previous photographs (Clegg A Darwin letter 1 CD2A.7 Ecology Letter Report - 15.01.2024) and in viewing this area myself in 2025 it seems highly likely this was not a historic pond but pooled water from the ditch being backfilled. Having viewed this myself, the area of standing water adjacent to Pitch 1 and described by Darwin (2023a) is assessed as a seasonal feature created by the ditch being bisected and backfilled . There is reference by both Arbeco (Clegg A Arb PEA CD2A.6 Preliminary Ecological) and Sibbett (Clegg A

CD8.3 LPA Proof of Evidence - Ecology & Appendices (1), Fig 1, Page 38) to another pond 100m south-west of Pitch 5, whilst this doesn't seem to have been mapped, using OS Explorer data it would appear that reference is actually the pond north of Thatched House Farm. This pond is measured as being 233m from the appellant's land. There are a further three ponds mapped within the AEWC report (Page 10, Figure 3) although these are all in excess of 500m from Pitch 1 (see Plan 2).

2.29 It is widely accepted that this species can occur within suitable habitats up to 500m from a breeding pond, and that after 250m this risk is pretty low and likely only where large populations are present. The habitat on the appellants land prior to clearance would have provided a suitable habitat for newts in their terrestrial phase. However, the distance from the site (233m) plus the relatively small area of habitat affected, a sum of 0.0625, means that the risk of newts being present on this site during clearance should be regarded as minimal.

2.30 If present within Pond 1, this species would be significant at Site level only. For the inquiry's convenience I have mapped all water bodies within 500m of the site on Plan 2 (Plan 2, Doherty, Stovolds Hill, Ponds).

2.31 Reptiles. It is possible that a variety of common and widespread reptile species may have been present prior to clearance as the site seemed likely to have included woodland edge, rough grassland and possibly woodland glade areas. However, the reptile survey carried out for Thatched House Farm (AEWC, 2023b) which was carried out within the same contiguous grassland, identified only a very small number of grass snakes. Whilst certainly not definitive, it's not unreasonable to extrapolate these survey results to the appellants land. Significant at site level.

2.32 Wood White. The potential presence of the priority species wood white has been raised. The typical larvae and adult laying plants of this species are largely vetches or other Fabaceae, listed by Butterfly Conservation are Meadow Vetchling, Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil, Bird's-foot-trefoil, corniculatus, Tufted Vetch and Bitter Vetch. All of these species can potentially be present in areas of neutral grassland although less likely in heavily modified grassland. At the time of year I visited the site it would have been unlikely to locate any old vegetative growth of these species but Sibbett noted in evidence for the adjacent appeal sites that both meadow vetchling and horseshoe vetch were recorded by him in the adjacent grassland. I am happy to take this into account for the appellants land and conclude that wood white could potentially have been present in the grassland prior to clearance. A significant receptor notable at County level.

2.33 Hedgehogs. Whilst not receiving any legal protection but thought to be a fast-declining mammal species and a priority species under the NERC act, as are common toads for instance. A species that could utilise a woodland/grassland mosaic although the absolute risk of this species being with Pitch 4 when the vegetation was cleared is likely very residual. Hedgehogs are believed now to be favouring urban over rural environments, due to a lesser pressure from predators, availability of artificial refuges and food availability (**State of Britain's Hedgehogs (SoBH)** report, which is published every few years by the **People's Trust for Endangered Species (PTES)** and the **British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS)**. A 2021 study by **Jessica Schaus Calderon** (Schaus, 2021) Responses of the West European hedgehog to urbanisation) found that hedgehog density was, on average, **7.5 times higher** in urban landscapes compared to rural ones. Published papers indicating figures of 32.3 individuals per km2 in Urban sites and 4.3 in rural sites (Schuas et al, 2020). A negligible risk of presence and not taken further in this assessment.

**Impacts on Habitats**.

2.34 Using a GIS to calculate areas the assessment is that 0.0472 of woodland, 0.0151 of neutral grassland and 20m of ditch section were lost during construction of Pitch 1. Whilst this woodland was not part of an extensive stand it did provide some connectivity from west to east and with other woody habitats to the north and replacement would be possible but may take some time to fully achieve. The loss of this area of woodland should be viewed as having resulted in a major adverse effect significant at Local level, this should be viewed as a reversible impact. Following CIEEM (2024) Section 5.18, page 39), "*A reversible effect is one from which spontaneous recovery is possible or which may be counteracted by mitigation. In some cases, the same activity can cause both reversible and irreversible effects".* Any loss of ancient woodland and supporting features, is widely agreed to be irreversible, but small areas of younger broadleaved woodland can be replaced over time through current establishment and management.

2.35 The grassland is likely of lesser consequence being only 150m$^2$ but removal would have been a moderate adverse effect at Site level only or minor adverse locally and easily reversible. Assessed in isolation the loss of the watercourse is reversible but resulted in a moderate adverse effect significant at site level.

**Impacts on Species**.

2.36 Whilst it is not possible in the absence of a robust baseline to make a fully accurate assessment of impacts to protected species it is possible to make a series of informed assumptions about likely presence (as done above) and base the impact assessment on this. There are cases where this has

been carried out and accepted by both an LPA in assessing a planning application and an inspector hearing a subsequent appeal, notably Rother Valley Railway (Secretary of State, 2023) which had planning granted by Rother District Council but went to public inquiry for the granting of a Transport and Works Act to construct and operate the railway. In this case the land was owned by third parties and no access was given for the ecology surveys to be completed. Subsequently, an EcIA was drafted based on a series of assumptions regarding presence and abundance of a full suite of protected species and planning was granted with Grampian conditions to ensure surveys were completed prior to work (Secretary of State, 2023, Ecology 53-59). A similar approach was taken with sections of Phase 2 of HS2. It is acknowledged that it is not possible of course to retrospectively mitigate any impacts to species, but it is possible to carry out an EcIA and then accordingly provide compensation for the loss of their habitats to allow other individuals to re-colonise or otherwise use the site. As referenced above for compensating for habitat loss, the planning permission for Orchard House (Orchard House DN 2025_1697. Elmbridge, 2025) allowed for the replacement of habitats as part of a planning condition.

2.37 Bats. Assuming the presence of PRFs in a mature oak and that a bat roost was present in a mature oak, it's loss and the death or injury of any bats present would be an irreversible moderate adverse effect significant at Local level. In regards lighting and potential adverse effects during operation. There are currently no artificial lights illuminating Pitch 1 and no plans to introduce anything that could be considered as significant, it is proposed that in combination with a habitat compensation scheme, any lighting needed for the residents to use the site be restricted to low level LED lights that would accord with latest guidance from the ILE and Bat Conservation Trust (Guidance Note GN08/23 ref). A similar condition was placed on the Thatched House Farm development Condition 6 (Waverley, 2023) and Orchard House (Elmbridge 2025).

2.38 Badgers. If a sett was present prior to the clearance of the site then removal of vegetation and ground works could have resulted in the loss of that sett and the injury or mortality of any animals present at that time. However, badgers are very large animals and their setts are usually very visible and obvious parts of the landscape and I find it difficult to envisage a scenario when the appellant would wilfully destroy such a feature. In my last 20 or so years working with badgers in construction scenarios I have never known or witnessed any setts being fully destroyed. I have seen negligent behaviour around setts and have seen partial destruction on a couple of occasions, however in the latter instances the responsible party halted as soon as they had realised that this was a badger sett.

2.39 Breeding birds. The felling of any trees within the woodland and or any low-lying scrub would have had the potential to destroy any nests or to cause them to become abandoned whilst long term there would be a reduction on both nesting and foraging habitat. Historic aerial imagery suggests that clearance was undertaken after April and prior to July 2021, the risk to nesting birds would have increased the further into the season this was done. A moderate adverse effect significant at Site level.

2.40 Great crested newts. Using Natural England's rapid risk assessment tool for this species, including the area lost (0.0625ha) against distance from closest breeding pond (234m) the result of Green-Offence Highly Unlikely is returned (Great Crested Newt Rapid Risk Assessment, Appendix B). This based on a notional probability score where less than 0.01 to 0.1ha are lost or damaged and the land is 100-250m distant from a breeding pond. This distance by area size helps to underpin the very low risk of newts being present in that small area at the time of clearance. No adverse effect is predicted.

2.41 It should also be noted that for the Thatched Roof Farm application the LPA agreed with the ecologists assessment that impact was unlikely and no surveys were needed for great crested newts based also on distance from the same pond and area of the land affected. However, in that case the distance from the pond was 114m and the site area to be lost was 0.2545ha, this had a notional offence probability of 0.1, rather than 0.01 for the appellant's land.

2.42 Reptiles. Any reptiles present during vegetation clearance may have been killed or injured as a result, however, as only a small number of individuals would have been anticipated (due to size of suitable habitats) to be present this would be a reversible adverse effect significant at Site level. Following Box 18 on Page 39 CIEEM (2024) "*The loss of small numbers of individuals of a rapidly breeding species could be considered reversible where the overall population is sufficiently robust to recover in terms of numbers and distribution within a relatively short space of time"*.

2.43 Wood White. Assuming presence, the vegetation clearance would have potentially seen a reduction in their habitat and forage/larval plants, however, due to the relatively small size of the site the adverse effect would be reversible minor at County level.

**Assessment of Cumulative Impacts and Effects**

2.44 Taken in isolation and due largely to its size, the development of Pitch 1 has been of more limited or restricted ecological significance. This section looks more closely at the likely effects on habitats and wildlife from the works to the other adjacent plots (2, 3, 4, 5, 6) as well as the 2023/34 site clearance of the Thatched House Farm development to the north.

2.45 Purely in terms of numbers the development of all six pitches has likely resulted in the loss (reversible) of 0.1774ha of broadleaved woodland, 0.5ha of neutral grassland (reversible), 0.0219ha of line of mature willow tress (reversible) and approx. 64m of drainage ditch (reversible). The development of the Thatched House Farm development adding an additional removal of a small number of young oak trees (translocated), loss of 0.0120ha of broadleaved woodland for the site access, 0.0054ha of line of trees and 0.2370ha of grassland. Using aerial imagery within the GIS to measure area and assess habitat type it seems likely that a further 0.1521ha of neutral grassland was also removed in this area between March and July 2021, also noted as bare ground by AEWC (2023a). A sum of 0.3891ha lost to the Thatched Roof Farm development altogether.

2.46 In regards the cumulative loss of woodland this would raise the significance of that loss to Major at local level but is still reversible. The incremental loss of each of the three blocks on the appeal sites are thought to have happened over the course of 2-3 years will have altered the behaviour of bird and animal species using this habitat for breeding and foraging and served to displace those individuals to adjacent woodland with a concomitant reduction in resources.

2.47 The significance of the grassland loss also raises to Major adverse at Site level and this also is a reversible impact and possible over just a short time frame of 2-3 years. If the precautionary principle is followed and we determine that a neutral grassland was present, as opposed to the AEWC modified classification, in isolation of any species effect, the 0.5ha does not increase in scale of significance or level of impact.

2.48 Impacts to species can be thought likely (but not definitely) to be of a greater magnitude by taking the sum area of habitat's affected by the development of all six pitches, however, quantifying that is more problematic. The total loss of semi-natural habitats being 0.6ha we could attempt to extrapolate population sizes but this is only particularly relevant for reptiles and if we take the results of the 2023 survey (AEWC, 2023b) then we should still only have expected occasional individual grass snakes.

2.49 The sum of habitat lost when inputted to the Natural England great crested newt rapid risk assessment tool (Natural England) just about tips into the Amber section (offence likely) at 0.6ha, 0.1ha above the 0.5ha threshold. Consequently, if newts were to have been present in the pond to the west, then the whole of the appeal sites taken as a single scheme may have just about warranted a consent application and subsequent mitigation.

2.50 The risk to badgers does start to raise a little when taken cumulatively, but the heavily inundated nature of the woodland in-between plots 5 & 6 and the stream running from Thatched House Farm and through the whole block of woodland actually makes the presence of one or more badger setts here rather unlikely.

2.51 It is reasonable to assume that impacts to bat roosts would be amplified by an increase in area lost from 0.04 to 0.17ha, the assessment though should be driven not only by area but by likely number of mature trees lost that may have had PRFs/ Tree-related microhabitats such as woodpecker holes, cracks, and rot cavities, which are more abundant in older, broadleaved trees. The relative suitability of woodland type and levels of anthropogenic disturbance would also provide some contributory factors.

2.52 Turning to Wood White, I would draw similar conclusions to the grassland impacts, this would not necessarily increase in scale or level of impact though following the precautionary principle should still be regarded as significant at County level and compensation provided accordingly.

**Compensation Proposals**

2.53 A simple but realistically achievable habitat compensation scheme is proposed for Pitch 1. There is practical scope to replant a section of the lower part of the pitch back to a broadleaved woodland mix of trees and shrubs. A sufficient area would remain to retain a hardstanding living area for the appellant to base caravans, day room and parking suitable for a single family. The ditch could be replicated to compensate for loss and to alleviate flooding risk and provide a more continuous drainage channel that starts from the pond at Thatched House Farm. A small strip of neutral grassland would be created and separated from the living area by a post and rail fence. It is fully acknowledged that this restricted area would not be sufficient to create habitat for the wood white but this does become possible when included as a site wide package of compensation measures that cuts across all six plots currently at inquiry.

2.54 In Plan 3, I present an illustration of a proposed masterplan for the site that has been agreed in principle by the appellants for all of the six plots. This design seeks largely to replace areas of woodland whilst providing sufficient living space for the appellants, it is anticipated that establishment would be an achievable prospect particularly in areas immediately adjacent to remaining woodland. Each plot of land having at least one heavy standard oak tree, scattered planting of a mix of feathered, light standard and standard trees with a species mix suitable for the site, likely including Black alder and willow. A mix of suitable woody species as shrub layer to be included but planting for all at a low density.

2.55 The proposals for compensation grassland have aimed to bring back a meaningful sized area that could be of benefit for the wood white butterfly with a bulk situated at the northern end of Pitch 5 where the new grassland will sit within and surrounded by the extant grassland around it to north, east and west. For the Pitches 1-4, the design has a scalloped grassland running contiguous along the western side of each pitch to provide a single large block, again being sat within the extant surrounding grassland. The new grassland to be created by removal of any existing hardstanding (largely compacted scalpings and gravel) with the ground scarified to open up any recent compaction before a seed mix being applied. The seed mix would be a standard for neutral grasslands and include bird's foot trefoil, common knapweed, meadow vetchling, tufted vetch and bitter vetch, all at a slightly greater percentage than usual. It is reasonable to anticipate that over time seeds from established vetches would start to colonise the wider grasslands to the north, west and east. If a higher value grassland can be achieved then a net beneficial effect would be predicted over the long term.

2.56 A significant biodiversity improvement can be realised through the removal of the currently found close boarded timber fencing and the introduction of new hedgerows. Native hedgerows designed to be managed regularly would be created to delineate the boundaries between the different families pitches. The greater gains though would be provided by the introduction of approx. 450m of Species rich native hedgerow with trees to be created along the east and west aspects of Pitch 5 and 6, northern end of Pitch 5, Northern and eastern aspect of Pitch 4 and eastern sides of Pitches 1-3. Please refer to Plan 3. This habitat type is chosen because it provides a high intrinsic value for wildlife, screening of the pitches from the surrounding land, and as these features will mimic other similar and extant features in the immediate and surrounding landscape.

2.57 Whilst there a net reduction in habitat area, the design seeks to have what could be a higher value grassland area, bespoke to wood white, and, with the inclusion of higher value linear habitats not

currently present aims to have as robust and appropriate landscape package as is achievable over a relatively restricted area.

2.58 **Table 2.3 –** Habitat types and areas proposed for compensation planting on Pitch 1 and all adjacent pitches

| Pitch | Woodland ha Lost | Woodland ha Planted | Grassland ha | Grassland created | W - % change | G - % change |
|---|---|---|---|---|---|---|
| 1 | 0.0472 | 0.0237 | 0.0151 | 0.0077 | -49% | -23.33 |
| 2 | 0 | 0 | 0.06 | 0.0149 | | -75 |
| 3/D | 0 | 0 | 0.06 | 0.0163 | | -72 |
| 4/C | 0 | 0 | 0.1243 | 0.0328 | | -73 |
| 5/B | 0.06 | 0.0392 | 0.2237 | 0.1082 | -34 | -51 |
| 6/A | 0.0556 | 0.0275 | 0 | 0 | -50 | |
| Total | 0.1774 | 0.0904 | 0.5007 | 0.1799 | -49 | -60% |

2.59 **Table 2.3 –** Linear habitats and providing 100% gain for these feature types, proposed as part of a habitat master plan for Pitches 1-6 combined.

2.60 Native hedgerows 238m – 1-3 native woody species to be kept to approx. 3m height once established and primarily acting to delineate the different pitches, regular topping and shaping.

2.61 Species rich hedgerows with trees 450m – A total of six woody species plus inclusion of honeysuckle and hedge bedstraw and other flowering plants with at least one standard oak planted for every 50m of hedge.

2.62 Ditches – 64m

**Adjacent Development at Thatched House Farm**

2.63 Planning permission was granted under WA/2022/2144 - Erection of 3 light industrial units and associated works at THATCHED HOUSE FARM DUNSFOLD ROAD LOXHILL GODALMING GU8 4BW.

2.64 The ecology work that accompanied this application provides a reasonable starting point to assess consistency in decision making that the council may have taken when granting that planning for

that development in comparison to the requirements and approach taken to the appeals for Pitch 1 and Pitch 2 and the separate appeal sites A, B, C and D.

2.65 Habitats – The AEWC reporting (2023a) has described the habitats of a wide area around the immediate landscape, including the wider parcel of grassland that lays directly adjacent to the west of the various appeal sites (A/B/C/D, Pich 1, Pitch 2). The habitat survey itself was completed in late March 2022 which is outside of the optimal season for assessing woodland or grassland, usually taken to be April/May for the former and June/July for the latter. This was seemingly not identified as a constraint in the PEA report (2023a) or mentioned by the Surrey Wildlife Trust in their consultation response during the application's determination (Surrey Wildlife Trust, Planning reference: WA/2022/02144) by the LPA. The SWT response seemed to concentrate almost solely on possible species effects. The AEWC report (2023a) has described the grassland as a g4 modified grassland which is of a more limited value. It seems possible, if likely, that the whole of this wider area of grassland was actually a neutral grassland and of a greater biodiversity value than described (see Plan 4). This assessment is supported both by my own visit in December and Sibbett's noting of various vetch species during his site visit (Clegg A CD8.3 LPA Proof of Evidence - Ecology & Appendices).

2.66 Due, presumably, to the classification of the grassland as modified there would not appear to have been any attempt to compensate for the more valuable tussocky neutral grassland with scrub. The landscaped area would now appear to be a closely mown modified grassland and consequent to that the actual total loss of neutral grassland would be close to 0.5ha or greater if the 2021 losses are considered.

2.67 Using historic aerial images (ref) it would seem very clear that in advance of the planning consent for Thatched Roof Farm, a break was made in the woody habitats to the east and that an apron of land close to the road was cleared of grassland and scrub. This was in 2021. A plan of the likely habitats present at Thatched Roof Farm and the Appeal sites A-D, Pitch 1/Pitch 2, are presented in Plan 4, Appending B)

2.68 Species - The Thatched Roof Farm application did correctly, in my professional opinion, describe the risk to great crested newts as manageable without carrying out surveys and/or obtaining a licence from natural England, this being based on distance from the pond and small size of the site, falling below the de-minimis threshold where an offence may be likely. These figures though were not provided in their PEA report and only corroborated by myself using our own GIS mapping. In

the normal course of events, I would expect the council to have requested confirmation as to the details behind the decision for precautionary method of works. Given that the area of habitats impacted by the Thatched Roof Farm works (0.2545ha) was considerably larger than the appellants land (0.045ha) the inspector could reasonably take the view that no surveys and no licence would be required for the Pitch 1 land, even if taken in combination with Pitch 2 as together they fall within the 0.1 and 0.5ha de-minimis area where an offence might be thought unlikely to occur.

2.69 The AEWC report rightly flagged reptiles as a possible ecological receptor to be within the area impacted by development, the grassland providing a suitable structure for a variety of species. It should though be noted that contrary to the Circular 06/2005 from the ODPM (06/2005) which makes the presence or otherwise of a protected species a material consideration, the council granted planning permission with the surveys as a post-approval condition. This is contrary to the OPDM circular and NPPF.

2.70 Additionally, a judicial review in 2001 (R v Cornwall CC Ex p Hardy) determined that the Local Planning Authority were required to have full ecological surveys and issuing planning permission in advance of these was unlawful, notwithstanding that the R V Cornwall case was assessing more sensitive receptors e.g. greater and lesser horseshoe bats and a rare liverwort, the basic principle is clear.

2.71 Perhaps unsurprisingly, the AEWC reporting did not identify the site as having a strong likelihood for Wood White butterfly to be present, and neither did the SWT or the council flag the need for this receptor to be accounted for. This does represent a significant inconsistency between the council's statement of case in these Appeals and their granting of planning permission for Thatched House Farm industrial units in 2023. The Saving the Wood White Report does specifically mention an area of habitat creation at Thatched House Farm cited as being 0.0055ha in extent, this location and has been mapped on Plan 4, matching the given grid references and closely to scale (1:1). Noting that this is rather restricted area in terms of size and separate from the appellants land by 262m.

2.72 The above points provide a distinct difference in the granting of permission for the nearby Thatched House Farm development with the Statement of Case for Pitch 1/Pitch 2 and the approaches to the Appeal Sites A-D . For the Thatched House Farm:

- no reference to the wood white has been made;
- surveys for legally protected species were conditioned, contrary to policy and guidance;

- it was accepted that great crested newts would be unlikely to be present, no surveys would be required and could be subject only to a Non Licensed Method Statement;
- the classification of the grassland was not challenged despite the survey not being in the correct season;
- the use of a culvert section to cross from the main road was accepted.

2.73 The above points all despite the Thatched House Farm impacts being of a similar scale of loss (0.4ha) to the cumulative loss for all six of the pitches at Stovolds Hill (0.6ha) and 0.3375ha (54.24%) greater than for Pitch 1 in isolation.

## 3.0 POLICIES & CONCLUDING STATEMENT

**Policy**

3.1 ***NE1 – Biodiversity and Geological Conservation.*** This local plan policy provides a framework for the protection of features of biodiversity interest around the borough and gives appropriate weight to priority habitats, relevant here to the loss of broadleaved woodland. It is unclear though if the reference to locally designated sites, refers to just that e.g Local Nature Reserves (LNR), Sites of Nature Conservation Importance SNCI, or also sweeps up any priority habitats. The wording here would seem to me to indicate the former and not the latter. Notwithstanding this point, the NERC Act does cover priority habitats by indirectly requiring public bodies to consider them in all relevant decisions, in this case the granting or otherwise of planning permission. The NERC does also confer a high material weight to these habitats. However, deciduous woodland is not classed as an irreplaceable habitat and the compensation scheme aims to, as far as practicable, , provide compensation in the same location. The proposed species rich hedgerow with trees would abut the new woodland area and particularly when taken in combination with the adjacent pitches does go a reasonable way towards a robust and functional habitat replacement.

1.2 Policy NE2 states that a 5m undeveloped buffer zone to be provided beside ordinary watercourses, the formal definition of the latter does include ditches, as would have been found at the site prior to works. It should be noted however that it is standard practise to use the process of culverting to contain water-flow through a ditch where access over that ditch is required, whether for development, farming or other activity. Indeed, at the Thatched House Farm development culvert sections have been used in just this way. With the proposed landscaping implemented, the old line of the ditch will be excavated and a new bridging structure or culvert put in place to take traffic, then the scheme would be in accordance with this policy including the reference to the 5m buffer.

3.2 ***NPPF - Chapter 15 paragraph 180(d).***

3.3 *"If significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused".* As this impact assessment and corrective measures are being drafted after the fact, then the scheme (and neighbouring plots) are already at "last resort" stage. It is our contention that whilst harm has certainly occurred during the clearance of the site, the size and the likely status of the habitats previously likely to have been present would not preclude adequate compensation being put into place. In isolation, the

landscape proposals for Pitch 1 provide a proportionate replacement of the habitats lost. Whilst the proposed woodland re-planting does not cover the full area likely to have been lost, the inclusion of at least one heavy standard in the planting and a second in the linear feature to the west represents a robust approach which over time would provide both ecological form and function. The grassland less so, although in isolation the loss of this small area is not considered significant. For the ditch section, only a short section would be culverted sufficient for vehicle traffic and re-instatement to a feature of reasonable ecological health is achievable.

3.4 When the compensation proposals are viewed as a masterplan for the adjacent pitch (2) and the other appeal sites (A-D) then the scheme as a whole provides an approach to compensation that reflects the fact that significance of impact largely emerges from a cumulative effect. The masterplan/compensation scheme then operates collectively to off-set impacts across the site. The grassland can be replaced in a way that a much larger and functional area can be created, of benefit to wood white butterfly. Equally, once grouped the woodland planting and the new linear feature with heavy standards planted, will provide an enhancement above a scheme that was solely woodland/grassland.

**Concluding Statement**

3.5 The evidence demonstrates that the clearance of Pitch 1 resulted in the loss of a modest area of woodland, grassland and a short drainage feature, and that this in turn is likely to have caused adverse effects to some species that may have been present at the time of the works. However, the small scale of the site and the limited extent of habitat likely to have been affected substantially reduces the probability of significant ecological harm in isolation. For several key receptors – notably great crested newt – the footprint, habitat quality, and distance from breeding ponds place the site clearly within a zone where Natural England's own rapid risk assessment identifies the likelihood of an offence as highly unlikely. This conclusion is further supported by the LPA's acceptance of similar or greater risks in the nearby Thatched House Farm application.

3.6 The cumulative assessment acknowledges that ecological significance increases when Pitches 1 and 2 are considered together with the adjacent appeal sites (A–D). This is principally because woodland and grassland losses become more meaningful when aggregated. Even so, these losses remain reversible, and the key receptors affected are all capable of benefitting from habitat reinstatement and enhancement. Importantly, there is no evidence that any irreplaceable habitat—such as ancient woodland—was affected, nor that any confirmed protected species resting sites (e.g., badger setts or bat roosts) were present within the cleared area.

3.7 In responding to this cumulative context, the proposed compensation and restoration scheme provides a proportionate, practicable, and policy-compliant ecological corrective strategy. The package includes woodland re-establishment with heavy standards, the reinstatement of the ditch as a functioning watercourse using a design consistent with flood risk advice, and the creation of species-rich neutral grassland with a composition tailored to benefit species such as Wood White. When delivered as a combined scheme across all pitches, these measures provide a coherent landscape-scale ecological improvement capable of offsetting cumulative losses, increasing linear habitat connectivity and providing a long-term uplift in biodiversity value.

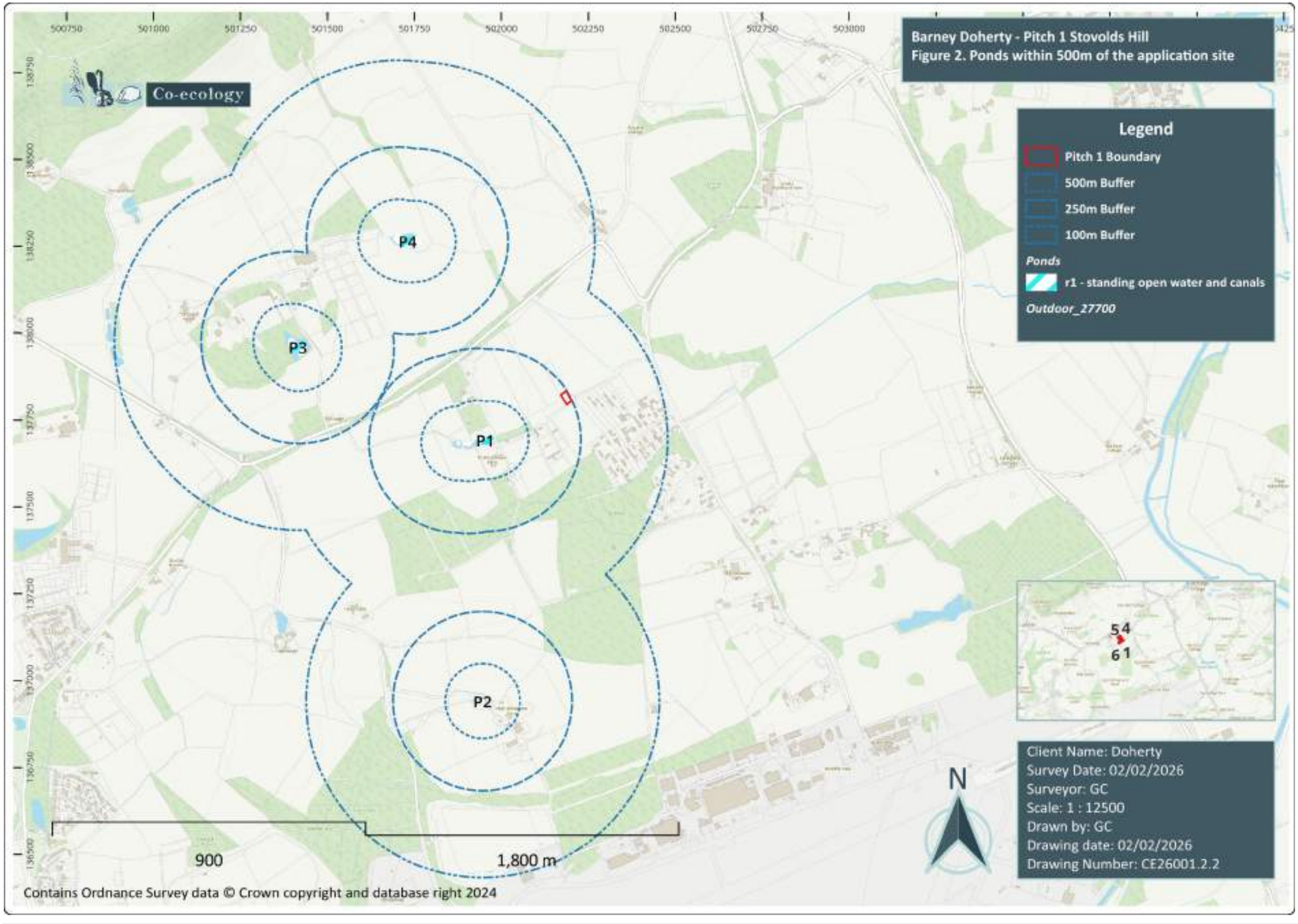
3.8 Taken together, this demonstrates that the ecological issues associated with Pitch 1 are fully capable of being addressed through conditions, consistent with the approach endorsed at Thatched House Farm and in line with the NPPF requirement that harm be avoided, mitigated, or—where necessary—compensated. In this case, avoidance and mitigation opportunities are inherently limited by the retrospective nature of the works, placing the scheme at the "last resort" compensation stage. The proposals are robust, proportionate, and achievable, and directly targeted at the receptors of potential concern.

3.9 It follows that there is no ecological reason to withhold planning permission. Whether considered for Pitch 1 alone, for Pitches 1 and 2 jointly, or for all six plots together, the ecological effects are manageable, reversible and capable of being fully addressed by condition. A temporary or personal planning permission would further ensure monitoring, adaptive management, and the delivery of the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) over an appropriate period, providing the LPA with additional safeguards and assurance.

3.10 Accordingly, the Inspector is invited to conclude that the ecological objections are not well-founded, that the proposed compensation strategy is sound and deliverable, and that planning permission should be granted.

**APPENDIX A – MAPS AND PLANS**

Co-ecology
Barney Doherty - Pitch 1
Plan 1 - Historic Habitats in Pitches 1-6 at Stovolds Hill
Legend
Site Boundaries
WATERCOURSES
Watercourse Baseline
Ditches
Historc Habitats
g3c - other neutral grassland
w1g - other woodland-broadleaved
w1g6 - line of trees
Outdoor_27700
Google Satellite
1
2
3
4
5
6
70
140 m
N
54
61
Client Name: Barney Doherty
Scale: 1 : 1000
Survey Date: June 2021
Drawn by: GC
Drawing date: 02/02/2026
Drawing Number: CE26001.2.1


Barney Doherty - Pitch 1 Stovolds Hill
Figure 2. Ponds within 500m of the application site
Co-ecology
Legend
Pitch 1 Boundary
500m Buffer
250m Buffer
100m Buffer
Ponds
r1 - standing open water and canals
Outdoor_27700
P1
P2
P3
P4
900
1,800 m
N
Client Name: Doherty
Survey Date: 02/02/2026
Surveyor: GC
Scale: 1 : 12500
Drawn by: GC
Drawing date: 02/02/2026
Drawing Number: CE26001.2.2
Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2024

Co-ecology
Barney Doherty - Pitch 1
Replacememnt Habitats in Pitches 1-6 at Stovolds Hill
Plan 3 -
Legend
Site Boundaries
HEDGEROWS
Hedgerow Proposed
Native hedgerow
Species-rich native hedgerow with trees
UK Habs
g3c - other neutral grassland
w1g - other woodland-broadleaved
u1c - artificial unvegetated unsealed surfa
Outdoor_27700
Google Satellite
Watercourse
Ditches
1
2
3
4
5
6
70
140 m
N
54
61
Client Name: Barney Doherty
Scale: 1 : 1000
Survey Date: June 2021
Drawn by: GC
Drawing date: 02/02/2026
Drawing Number: CE26001.2.3

Co-ecology
Barney Doherty - Pitch 1
Historic Habitats at Stovolds Hill
Plan 4
Legend
Historc Habitats
g3c - other neutral grassland
w1g - other woodland-broadleaved
w1g6 - line of trees
Watercourse Baseline
Ditches
Outdoor_27700
Google Satellite
1
54
61
N
100
200 m
Client Name: Barney Doherty
Scale: 1 : 2000
Survey Date: June 2021
Drawn by: GC
Drawing date: 02/02/2026
Drawing Number: CE26001.2.4

Co-ecology
Barney Doherty - Pitch 1
Location of Wood White enhancement area at
Thatched House Farm
Plan 5 -
Legend
Pitch 1 Boundary
Wood White
Outdoor_27700
1
54
61
N
100
200 m
Client Name: Barney Doherty
Scale: 1 : 2500
Survey Date: June 2021
Drawn by: GC
Drawing date: 02/02/2026
Drawing Number: CE26001.2.5

**APPENDIX B – GREAT CRESTED NEWT RAPID RISK ASSESSMENT.**

### Caveats and limitations

**This risk assessment tool has been developed as a general guide only**, and it is inevitably rather simplistic. It has been generated by examining where impacts occurred in past mitigation projects, alongside recent research on newt ecology. It is not a substitute for a site-specific risk assessment informed by survey. In particular, the following factors are not included for sake of simplicity, though they will often have an important role in determining whether an offence would occur: population size, terrestrial habitat quality, presence of dispersal barriers, timing and duration of works, detailed layout of development in relation to newt resting and dispersal. The following factors could increase the risk of committing an offence: large population size, high pond density, good terrestrial habitat, low pre-existing habitat fragmentation, large development footprint, long construction period. The following factors could decrease the risk: small population size, low pond density, poor terrestrial habitat, substantial pre-existing dispersal barriers, small development footprint, short construction period. You should bear these mitigating and aggravating factors in mind when considering risk.

It is critical that, even if you decide not to apply for a licence, you ensure that any development takes account of potential newt dispersal. Where great crested newts are present, landuse in that area must ensure there is adequate connectivity. Retaining and improving connectivity will often involve no licensable activities.

| **Component** | **Likely effect** (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom) | **Notional offence probability score** |
|---|---|---|
| Great crested newt breeding pond(s) | No effect | 0 |
| Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s) | No effect | 0 |
| Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s) | 0.01 - 0.1 ha lost or damaged | 0.01 |
| Land >250m from any breeding pond(s) | 0.01 - 0.1 ha lost or damaged | 0.001 |
| Individual great crested newts | No effect | 0 |
| | Maximum: | 0.01 |
| Rapid risk assessment result: | **GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY** | |

### Guidance on risk assessment result categories

**"Green: offence highly unlikely"** indicates that the development activities are of such a type, scale and location that it is highly unlikely any offence would be committed should the development proceed. Therefore, no licence would be required. However, bearing in mind that this is a generic assessment, you should carefully examine your specific plans to ensure this is a sound conclusion, and take precautions (see **Non-licensed avoidance measures tool**) to avoid offences if appropriate. It is likely that any residual offences would have negligible impact on conservation status, and enforcement of such breaches is unlikely to be in the public interest.

**"Amber: offence likely"** indicates that the development activities are of such a type, scale and location that an offence is likely. In this case, the best option is to redesign the development (location, layout, methods, duration or timing; see **Non-licensed avoidance measures tool**) so that the effects are minimised. You can do this and then re-run the risk assessment to test whether the result changes, or preferably run your own detailed site-specific assessment. Bear in mind that this generic risk assessment will over- or under-estimate some risks because it cannot take into account site-specific details, as mentioned in caveats above. In particular, the exact location of the development in relation to resting places, dispersal areas and barriers should be critically examined. Once you have amended the scheme you will need to decide if a licence is required; this should be done if on balance you believe an offence is reasonably likely.

**"Red: offence highly likely"** indicates that the development activities are of such a type, scale and location that an offence is highly likely. In this case, you should attempt to re-design the development location, layout, timing, methods or duration in order to avoid impacts (see **Non-licensed avoidance measures tool**), and re-run the risk assessment. You may also wish to run a site-specific risk assessment to check that this is a valid conclusion. If you cannot avoid the offences, then a licence should be applied for.