

Bury Hill Meadows Nature Reserve

Management plan 2022 - 2026

VERSION 4, 2023

Parks and Countryside
Community and Leisure Services

Version control

Version	Author name	Date	Signed off by	Date
V1	BJ	Dec 2021	KH	Dec 2022
V2	BJ	Jan 2022	KH	Jan 2022
V3	BJ	March 2022	KH	March 2022
V4	CR	Jan 2023	KH	Jan 2023

Contents page

Summary

1. Introduction
2. Site information
3. Vision and objectives
5. Setting out the site
5. Managing public access
6. Managing the Site
7. Public engagement

Tables

1. Important features and non-natural attributes
2. Management compartments
3. Operational objectives
4. Management prescriptions

Maps

1. Site location plan
2. Management compartments
3. Site layout with access routes
4. Proposed car park

Appendices

1. Annual work programme
2. Extended Phase 1 Ecological Survey

Summary

Test Valley Borough Council has purchased 15 hectares of land located in the village of Upper Clatford to set out and manage as public open. The purpose of this land will be to provide a safe and accessible green space and increase opportunities for access to the open countryside for new and existing communities to use.

This management plan describes how the proposed open spaces will be set out and managed and supports the change of use application from agricultural operations to public open space. The plan will cover the period 2022 – 2032 and provide a vision for the site which is to create and promote an attractive, safe and accessible seminatural greenspace which will provide an alternative area for recreation for new and existing communities.

Through the implementation of this management plan, the site will see positive improvement in its wildlife value, offering a greater quality experience to visitors and contributing to wider biodiversity objectives.

The plan details site and operational objectives setting out how this vision will be achieved and covers the proposed site layout, management compartments, community engagement strategy and annual management operations.

1. Introduction

- 1.1 The land at Upper Clatford (see map 1) covers an area of 15 hectares and is predominantly improved arable land with some areas laid to pasture, mature trees and derelict and fragmented hedgerows. The land was purchased by Test Valley Borough Council in December 2021 to set out and manage as public open space.
- 1.2 This management plan outlines how the land at Upper Clatford will be set out and then managed over a five year period. In preparing this management plan, discussions have been held with adjacent land owners, Clatford Parish Council and the County Archaeologist.
- 1.3 To ensure positive results are achieved the plan will be reviewed on an annual basis. This will help determine whether the objectives of the plan are being delivered and where they are not, changes to the way the site is managed and promoted can be made. A full review and revision of the plan will be made in 2026.

2. Site information

2.1 General site information

- Size: 15 hectares or 37 acres
- Grid Ref: SU 343433
- Parish: Upper Clatford
- Local Planning Authority: Test Valley Borough Council
- Landscape designations: N/A
- Heritage designations: The site sits adjacent to Bury Ring, Scheduled Ancient Monument (SAM).

2.2 Location

2.2.1 The land is located to the south of Anna Valley and south west of Upper Clatford within Test Valley Borough (see Map 1). It is approximately 2 miles south west of Andover.

2.3 Land tenure and brief history

2.3.1 The land was purchased by Test Valley Borough Council in December 2021. Historic maps dating back to 1871 indicate a landscape which has undergone little change over the past 140 years.

2.4 Land use and current management

2.4.1 In the recent past the main activity on site was arable crops and grazing for beef cattle.

2.5 The site in a wider context

2.5.1 The site is in close proximity to Bury Ring which is a scheduled ancient monument.

2.6 Environmental information

2.6.1 **Physical** - The soil is predominantly chalk clay, silt and sand with underlying bedrock of London Clay (BGS 2018).

2.6.2 **Biological** - An extended Phase 1 habitat survey was undertaken by Austin Foot Ecology in October 2021 (see appendix 3).

2.6.3 The site is dominated by open arable land recently drilled with grass which is currently of limited intrinsic ecological value due to its uniform sward character and low species diversity. Parts of the site to the north east has shown to

have presence of badgers within the small wooded area. Hedgerows surround most of the site some are of currently limited value due to their sparseness and would benefit from gapping up. The adjacent boundary of Bury Ring has numerous veteran Beech trees which sit outside of the site may be of ecological value for bats. Semi-mature trees within the site represent features of increased intrinsic ecological value and should be retained. Through practical habitat management the site has the potential to support a range species.

2.7 Habitats and vegetation

2.7.1 The site is divided into two field's parcels. The larger field parcel has in the recent past been divided into three paddocks; two paddocks used in order to graze cattle and is considered improved grassland. The remaining area has been drilled recently with grass species. The two fields are separated by a small area of woodland dominated by yew (*Taxus baccata*) and by a patchy hedgerow of mixed species Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) Blackthorn. (*Prunus spinosa*) and Old Man's Beard (*Clematis vitalba*) running east to west. The northern field parcel is bordered by a species poor hedgerow dominated by Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) with Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*). This hedgerow appears not to have been subject to any recent management and would benefit from gapping up with a native species mix. The native hedgerow along the east boundary is well established but would benefit from proactive management.

2.7.5 Other habitat features include a mature tree line to the south dominated by Sycamore and Beech.

2.8 Notable Habitats

2.8.1 The hedgerows bordering the fields do meet the criteria for the Habitat of Principal Importance (HPI) 'hedgerows' as they are formed of native woody species. The list of Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) was prepared in response to Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006.

2.8.2 Other S41 habitats within the site that meets the criteria is the smaller piece of woodland to the north-east of the site which is linked to and is associated with the Beech and Yew around the Bury Hill Ring.

2.9 Archaeology

2.9.1 The site sits adjacent to Bury Ring, SAM.

Summary of Important features and non-natural attributes

Table 1 - Important features and non-natural attributes

Important feature - natural

Feature	Description	Compartments Present
Arable cultivation and improved grassland	The site has been re-sown whilst two fields separated to facilitate grazing. Regular cutting and collection of grass will continue to reduce nutrient levels and help develop diversity of the sward	4a & b
Hedgerow/trees	A number of hedgerows encompassing the site comprise of predominately <i>Prunus spinosa</i> and <i>Crateagus monogyna</i> . Gapping up of existing hedgerows and appropriate management will be required to maintain the integrity of the hedgerow and be beneficial as a wildlife corridor.	3
Woodland	Two areas of woodland; north dominated by Yew and forming the southern boundary by Beech and Sycamore. Attributes to be managed to maintain conservation and landscape value	2a & b

Table 1 cont - Important features and non-natural attributes

Non- natural attributes		
Feature	Description	Compartments Present
Boundary fences/gates	Fences exist around the boundary but are incomplete throughout especially along the western boundary. Additional stock fencing and two strands of plain wire will be erected to secure the boundary (where deemed necessary), along with accessible gates.	All
Permissive access	No access currently exists. Public access will be promoted into and across the site through a series of mown paths connecting to right of way adjacent	All

Car park	A gravel car park will be constructed using the existing site access (via Red Rice Road) and over the area of hardstanding located to the south east corner of the site. The car park will be constructed using a geo-grid type material. Access into the site will be restricted by a height barrier/gate. Access into the wider site for maintenance will be via a locked gate. Unauthorised access will be contained by an earth bund which will be landscaped with native wildflower mix and hedgerow.	Car park
Signage	Signage will be placed in the car park with interpretation giving information about access routes and the sites ecology and heritage. Further interpretation signage will be placed at notable locations across the site. Waymarking will be used to delineate routes.	

3. Vision and objectives

3.1 The vision for the site is to create and promote an attractive, safe and accessible semi-natural green space for all which will provide informal recreation for new and existing communities. Through the implementation of this management plan, the site will see positive improvement in its wildlife value, offering a greater quality experience to visitors and contributing to wider biodiversity objectives.

3.2 Objectives

3.2.1 To deliver this vision we will work to achieve the following objectives:

1. Deliver a semi-natural green space which encourages people to visit
2. Manage sustainable public access within this countryside setting through suitable promotion and community engagement.
3. Develop the site's ecological quality through active management.

3.3 Delivering the objectives.

Objective 1 - Deliver a semi-natural green space which encourages people to visit

The site must be an attractive proposition to encourage local visitors and people to visit the site predominantly on foot and bicycle. A small car park will provide parking for those travelling from further afield. We can achieve this

by ensuring the site is well laid out from the outset with appropriate infrastructure, and that the site is proactively managed by staff.

Access with a dog. Dog walkers will be welcome to use this green space with the expectation that dogs will be kept under effective control at all times and all signage pertaining to access across the site including temporary changes are adhered too. A dedicated compartment, 1a, will be trailed as a dog exercise field where owners can undertake training and or socialising in an enclosed environment.

Objective 2 - Manage sustainable public access within this countryside setting through suitable promotion and community engagement;

Offering an enjoyable and accessible experience will ensure that local residents and those from a further distance will become repeat visitors. It will be essential that the site is well maintained, clean and access along the managed routes is possible without obstruction.

The setting up of access infrastructure will be managed in consultation with the Councils Animal Welfare Officer and taking into account best practice examples from other Local Authorities. Whilst the site will be promoted for informal recreation/exercise, visitors will be required to act responsibly and pick up after their dog(s). Appropriately located dual use bins will be positioned around the site entrances to facilitate this.

Site wardens will visit on a regular basis to monitor site management and to engage positively with visitors. Promotion of the site will help to encourage visits from local residents and the surrounding community using the traditional press, social media and direct contact with local groups.

Objective 3 - Develop the site's ecological quality through active management

A proactive and positive approach to site management will be employed to work to achieve the best ecological outcome for the site. This will take into account the restoration of a landscape with a significant area of new chalk grassland providing a suitable setting for Bury Ring, and connection of a fragmented landscape through hedgerow management and small scale woodland creation. The management of the site will contribute to climate change targets.

This plan sets out higher level objectives for ecological management whilst taking into account the proximity of a SAM. The progressive development of site knowledge will increase our ability to further subdivide compartments and further develop management prescriptions. These will be reflected in the annual plan reviews.

4. Setting out the site

- 4.1 The proposal will see infrastructure put in place to create a safe and welcoming space for community use. This will involve the installation, construction and planting of the following:

- The car park will be located off the current entrance into the site from Red Rice Road. The car park will be constructed using a heavy-duty matrix grid base with gravel infill. A section of bitmac will be laid at the junction with Red Rice to protect the surface from turning. An earth bund and ditch will be constructed around the car park to restrict vehicle movements. The car park will be landscaped with a mixed native hedge and wildflowers.
 - Dual use dog/litter bins will be located at key points across the site including in close proximity to car park and key entrances.
 - Timber benches will be positioned at intervals around the site to provide resting / viewpoints.
 - An interpretation/information board will be placed at the car park covering information about the site and links out to the wider public rights of way network.
 - Boundary fencing of post and stock netting with two strands of straining wire will form the boundary of the site. Timber post and rail or cleft timber will be used at the entrance and planted behind with a native hedge mix and wildflowers.
 - An all-user kissing gate (to comply with the Equality Act 2010) complete with radar key access will be used from the car park and at key access point where deemed required.
- 4.2 The new infrastructure will be of suitable design, materials and placed specifically to be functional but unobtrusive and mirroring the adjacent farmed landscape.

5. Managing The Site

- 5.1 Proactive management of the site will be undertaken from the outset. This will enable positive management for access and wildlife. For ease of management the site will be divided into discrete compartments. Each compartment will be of differing habitat and will require specific prescriptions. Table 2 provides the breakdown of the site by management compartments, and this should be read in conjunction with the plan found in Appendix 2. Table 3 summarises the operational objectives and Table 4 the management prescriptions.

Table 2 Management Compartments

Compartment no	Compartment name	Location and brief description
1a	Improved pasture	Improved pasture has been heavily grazed in recent years
1b	Improved pasture	Improved pasture has been heavily grazed in recent years

2a	Band of trees and woodland	Stand of semi - mature trees consisting mainly of sycamore and yew
2b	Arable field	South of site currently seeded with grass spp
3	Hedge rows	Old hedgerow. Mixed species
4a	Arable field	Centre of site drilled with grass spp
4b	Arable field	North of site seeded with grass spp

Table 3 Operational objectives

	Operational objective	Objective
1	Deliver public access improvements	1,2,3
2	Maintain a safe and accessible space for informal recreation	1,2,3
3	Promote the site and monitor usage	1,2,3
4	Develop a comprehensive ecological survey baseline across all habitats	3
5	Maintain and improve the ecological value of the site through appropriate management	3
6	Manage the improved grassland to become more biodiverse through planting of native species to improve the ecological and quality and visitor experience	1,2,3
7	Comply with health and safety requirements	1,2,3

Table 4 - Management Prescriptions

Operational objective	Notes and prescription	Monitoring
1. Deliver public access improvements	<p>Deliver capital infrastructure improvements including car parking and informal mown path network across the site.</p> <p>Prescription – Ensure car park surface is fit for purpose to encourage use across the year. Mown paths to be maintained at a sward height of approximately <10cm over the spring/summer.</p> <p>Target – site open to the public and usage monitored.</p>	Monthly inspections of infrastructure

<p>2. Maintain a safe and accessible site for informal recreation</p>	<p>Regular inspections of the site to ensure where reasonably practical the site is safe for public use.</p> <p>Prescription – Infrastructure is defect free and fit for purpose</p> <p>Target – Monthly site inspections with annual recorded inspection</p>	<p>Monthly assessment</p> <p>Annual inspection of key features</p>
<p>3. Promote the site and monitor usage</p>	<p>Local communities will be made aware of the space and targeted information will be shared</p> <p>Target – Regular social media posts and information shared with residents and dog walking groups. Access to the site to be monitored by staff onsite as regular intervals and gate counters</p>	<p>Monthly social media posts</p> <p>Monthly staff monitoring</p> <p>Gate counters installed and records kept</p>
<p>4. Develop a comprehensive ecological survey baseline across all habitats</p>	<p>Develop a comprehensive species list to inform future management decisions and monitor progress.</p> <p>Prescription – Undertake species survey for plants, invertebrates, mammals, reptiles, amphibians and birds.</p> <p>Target – Commission assessments to develop a baseline within 2 years of the site opening.</p>	<p>NVC Survey CBS / butterfly transect</p>
<p>5. Maintain and improve the ecological value of the site through appropriate management</p>	<p>Implementation and annual review of management plan by professional staff</p> <p>Prescription – Implementation of management plan to ensure key tasks are completed at the correct time.</p> <p>Target – 80% action achieved. Plan reviewed annually.</p>	<p>Annual review</p>

<p>6. Restore overgrazed sward</p>	<p>Develop the sward in compartment 1a & b to improve the visual landscape character and ecological value.</p> <p>Target - Improve species diversity from baseline and development of visual aesthetics.</p> <p>Prescription – compartments 1a and 1b cut left unmown from year 1 with cut and collection to commence in June /July for hay (subject to survey and recovery) or September. Material to be removed off-site.</p>	<p>Survey undertaken at year 1 in May</p> <p>Annual monitoring from year 2</p>
<p>7. Chalk grassland creation</p>	<p>Develop a chalk grassland sward in compartment 4a & b to improve the visual landscape character and ecological value.</p> <p>Prescription – Compartments 4a & b to be seeded with native chalk grassland species mix. Sowing preparation from March 2022. Monitoring establishment monthly during year 1. Cut and collection at 50mm in September (subject to establishment) after which cut in June / July (hay) or twice yearly in March and September with arising's collected.</p> <p>Target - Improve species diversity from baseline and development of visual aesthetics.</p>	<p>Monthly monitoring in year 1 to aid establishment</p> <p>Annual monitoring from year 2</p> <p>NVC survey 5 yearly</p>
<p>7. Field margins</p>	<p>Develop species rich field margins through rotational management and maintain accessible walking routes</p> <p>Prescription – Field margins and hedge line cut every other year on rotation to create uneven age structure and allow fruiting of hedge species. Allow blackthorn saplings to creep into field margin and zonate to provide age structure for Brown Hair Streak.</p> <p>Target – to develop a species rich field margin with public access</p>	

<p>7. Woodland creation</p>	<p>Small scale woodland creation through planting (2b) and natural regeneration (where appropriate species self-seed) to develop a new woodland edge habitat</p> <p>Prescription – Woodland creation through planting. Site fenced with deer fencing (spec to be determined) and whips planted at 1m centres.</p> <p>Ongoing beating up and weeding for 3 year post planting maintenance. Fence to be removed at year 5 (subject to establishment)</p> <p>Target – Compartment 2b to be planted by end of planting season 22/23</p>	
<p>8. Hedgerow management</p>	<p>Proactive management of existing hedgerows through rotational cutting and gapping up with native species. Work to connect fragmented landscape and develop ecological network</p> <p>Prescription – Gapping up of hedgerows with native hedgerow mix with 50% blackthorn. Hedge to be planted in 2 staggered rows at 300mm centres. All planting to be protected from browsing and mulched to act as weed suppressant (75mm mulch bed). Post planting maintenance from year 0-3 with weeding and any beating up requirements fulfilled</p> <p>Hedgerow cutting to be carried out every other year on rotation to allow fruiting of hedge plants.</p> <p>Target – All hedgerow planting to be completed during 22/23 planting season</p>	
<p>8. Comply with health and safety requirements</p>	<p>The site presents the opportunity to increase access into the countryside. All efforts should be made to ensure the site is safe to access and where reasonably practicable free from defects.</p> <p>Prescription - Undertake site-based risk assessments and ensure monthly visual inspections and annual recorded inspections to include all built structures.</p> <p>Target – Site records are maintained, and appropriate risk control measures put in place.</p>	<p>Risk assessments and inspection records maintained. Accidents/near misses recorded</p>

6. Publicity and Community Engagement Strategy

6.1 Promotion of the site will be essential to ensure the community is aware of the space and what it offers. A range of virtual and written media will be used to encourage visits to the site. The following list includes:

- Signage will be erected on the main entrance to the site.
- Assistance from volunteers will be arranged for participation in ecological surveys to encourage local ownership of the site. Information will be promoted as part of the Council's Parks and Countryside events programme and through the Parish Council.
- Web pages will be developed to include all information about the site including location, access, ecology and wildlife and advertising specific activities. The connectivity and proximity to the wider rights of way network will also be promoted.
- Social media will be used to promote the space and keep followers up to date on activity/events/onsite.

7. Budget

7.1 An annual budget will be allocated for the ongoing management of this greenspace. Capital infrastructure will be added to the Council's Asset Management Plan which funds cyclical maintenance.

8. Monitoring and evaluation

8.1 This plan sets out high-level objectives and prescriptions which will guide the management and promotion of the site over a five-year period. There will be a requirement to evaluate the detail in the plan on annual basis to ensure the desired outcome and objectives are being met. Any review should, take into account greater site knowledge, new species records and the impact of promoting the site to the community in respect of the volume of visits. Where prescriptions are not working then this approach will ensure adjustments can be made in a timely manner.

8.2 Suggested key performance indicators (KPI's) are:

- Numbers of visits to the site (recorded remotely through gate counters)
- Visitor comments
- Management plan actions completed
- Number of species recorded against baseline

Appendix 1 – Annual work programme

Objective 1 – Deliver a semi-natural green space which encourages people to visit														
	Work s year	C	Ongoing annual maintenance/ management operation											
Management operation			J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Construct car park, access track and all associated infrastructure	1					X	X							
Phase 1 -Set out mown paths and install all infrastructure, fencing, signage, pedestrian/vehicle access points, dog/litter bins, benches, route way-markers,	1	4a 4b			X	X	X	X	X					
Complete tree survey to log condition and habitat features. Undertake all necessary works required between November and February avoiding nesting bird season.	1	2a	X	X	X									
Set up social media pages and website and publicise	1					X	X							
Hold official opening and publicise to the wider community	1							X						

Cut hedges to maintain sight lines at main access	1-5	3								X					X
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Objective 3 - Develop the site's ecological quality through active management														
	Works year	C	Ongoing annual maintenance/ management operation											
Management operation			J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Establish ecological baseline to include the sites botanical interest (including lower plants) invertebrates, CBS and mammal activity	1-5	1a-4b				X	X	X	X	X				
Grassland management – cut grass and collect arising. *Hay cut subject to availability of machinery	1-5	1a 1b 4a 4b			X			X*			X			
Woodland management - reinstatement of rotational coppice of hazel. Coppice cutting regime to be determined with stool count	2-5	2a	X	X									X	X
Hedgerow management – annual hedge operation to be undertaken bi -yearly with plant with reciprocating sidearm fail, ensure site line from Red Rice Road is maintained	1-5	6										X		

Appendix 2 – Ecological Survey



Land Adjacent to Bury Hill, Andover Preliminary Ecological Assessment

November 2021



For Test Valley Borough Council



Project Number	0357
Client Reference	Test Valley Borough Council
Project/Site Name	Land Adjacent to Bury Hill, Andover
Report Title	Preliminary Ecological Assessment

Version Number	Date	Author	Reviewer
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Nothing in this report constitutes legal opinion. If legal opinion is required, the advice of a qualified legal professional should be sought.

1. Non-technical Summary.....8

2. Introduction.....9

 2.1. Site and Project Description9

 2.2. Aims of Study.....10

3. Methods.....11

 3.1. Desk Study11

 3.2. Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey.....11

4. Results and Interpretation	12
4.1. Designated Sites	12
4.2. Habitats and Vegetation	12
4.3. Habitats of Principal Importance	14
4.4. Target Notes	14
4.5. Protected and Notable Species	15
5. Potential Issues, Opportunities and Recommendations	19
5.1. Overview	19
5.2. Designated Sites	20
5.3. Habitats	20
5.4. Protected and Notable Species	21
6. Conclusion	23
7. References	24
8. Figures	25
9. Appendix 1 - Photographs	1
10. Appendix 2 – Relevant Legislation and Planning Policy	6
10.1. Nature Conservation Legislation	6
10.2. Planning Policy	7

1. Non-technical Summary

1.1.1. The site that is the subject of this report comprises a series of arable fields and pasture to the west and south of Bury Hill in Andover, Hampshire. Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) is seeking to purchase the land and then apply for change of use to open-up the site as public open space/suitable alternative natural greenspace (SANG).

1.1.2. In order to gather baseline information on the existing ecological conditions within the site, a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) was commissioned by TVBC including a desk study and field survey comprising an extended Phase 1 habitat survey.

1.1.3. The field survey found the site to be dominated by large areas of arable farmland in the west with smaller areas of species-poor grazed pasture in the east. A small area of woodland was present in the north-western part of the site with a planted shelter belt along the southern edge. The majority of margins were formed by native hedgerows, with many being species-rich. Some uncultivated field margins were also present. The habitats dominating the site (arable and species-poor pasture) are of low intrinsic ecological value. However, the hedgerows and woodland areas are of increased value with all the native hedgerows meeting criteria for a priority habitat. The small woodland within the site in association with off-site woodland around Bury Hill are also priority woodland habitat.

1.1.4. Based on the field survey and desk study a range of protected or notable species were confirmed as or have the potential to occur within the site and immediate local area. These include notable invertebrates, common reptiles (site margins), nesting bird species, foraging bats, badgers and hazel dormice. Proposals for the change of use should give consideration to these during detailed planning. However, the proposed enhancement of the site to create species-rich grassland and in-filling of hedgerow gaps should be beneficial to biodiversity. Further consideration to potential issues and options for overcoming them, as well as further ecological enhancement, are provided in the body of this report.

2. Introduction

2.1. Site and Project Description

2.1.1. The site that is the subject of this report comprises a series of fields to the west and south of Bury Hill in Andover, Hampshire. Bury Hill itself is the site of a former Iron Age hillfort about 1.5 miles (2.4 km) southwest of the centre of Andover. It is located immediately south of Anna Valley and to the west of Upper Clatford. The land within the site boundary subject to this assessment and report includes four main fields used for arable/grass leys and as pasture for livestock, with the smaller fields in the south-east being sub-divided for grazing purposes. The approximate central grid reference of the site is at SU 3437 4340. The residential area of Anna Valley borders the site to the north with Bury Hill itself to the north-east and east. Further arable and pastoral farmland is present to the west, east and south.

2.1.2. Test Valley Borough Council (TVBC) is seeking to purchase the land and then apply for change of use to open up the site as public open space/suitable alternative natural greenspace (SANG). Full proposals have not yet been established although TVBC would aim to increase the biodiversity value of the site and are exploring options to create wildflower meadows in place of the current arable areas.

2.2. Aims of Study

2.2.1. In order to gather baseline information on the existing ecological conditions within the site, a Preliminary Ecological Assessment (PEA) was commissioned by TVBC including a desk study and field survey comprising an extended Phase 1 habitat survey. This provided information on the range of

habitats currently present within the site along with any features of ecological interest, or potential interest, including the possible presence of protected or otherwise notable habitats and species. This information was used to highlight potential ecological constraints and opportunities associated with future use of the site.

2.2.2. The main aims of this report are to:

- Describe the habitats present within the site.
- Assess the potential for the site to support protected or notable habitats and species (with reference to the field survey and desk study data).
- Set out the legislative and/or policy protection afforded to any habitats present or any species potentially associated with the site.
- Discuss potential ecological constraints and opportunities associated with future land uses of the site.
- Make outline recommendations for further survey/assessment, mitigation, compensation and enhancement (as appropriate).

3. Methods

3.1. Desk Study

3.1.1. Existing ecological information for the site and its surrounding area held by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) was requested, with data sent on 25th October 2021. Records of protected and/or notable species and habitats were provided within an area including the site and land up to 2km from its boundary. In addition, information on statutory and non-statutory designated sites were also supplied.

3.1.2. In addition, on-line resources including the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside website (MAGIC, www.magic.gov.uk) and aerial photography of the area were reviewed for further context.

3.2. Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

3.2.1. An extended Phase 1 habitat survey was undertaken by Ed Austin MCIEEM on 5th October 2021. Habitats within the site were identified and described following standard JNCC Phase 1 habitat survey methodology as detailed in the Phase 1 Habitat Survey Handbook (JNCC, 2016). This uses a system of codes to describe different habitat types based on the dominant vegetation present. The relative abundance of botanical species present in each habitat type was characterised using the DAFOR scale where D is Dominant, A is Abundant, F is Frequent, O is Occasional and R is Rare. The survey was

extended to give particular consideration to the potential of the habitats present to support protected species or species of conservation importance.

3.2.2. The weather conditions during the site visit were dry with some cloud (5/8 cloud cover), a moderate to fresh breeze (Beaufort scale F4 to F5) and air temperatures (during the survey) of between 14°C and 15°C.

4. Results and Interpretation

4.1. Designated Sites

Statutory Designated Sites

4.1.1. A review of the data supplied by HBIC and an online search of government databases (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk>) indicates that there are no statutory designated sites within 2km of the site boundary. The site does fall within an impact risk zone for Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). However, this only applies to proposals for large livestock and poultry units, combustion developments, developments with discharges to ground, aviation proposals and development with overnight accommodation. Therefore, this is not relevant to the change of use as public open space.

4.1.2. SSSIs are notified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended). Improved provisions for the protection and management of SSSIs were introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000 (in England and Wales). In essence, SSSIs are protected through the approach to land use and management.

Non-statutory Designated Sites

4.1.3. The covering letter supplied by HBIC as part of the desk study confirmed there are no nonstatutory designated sites within 100m of the site boundary. No details of non-statutory sites (e.g. Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs)) beyond this distance were supplied.

4.2. Habitats and Vegetation

4.2.1. The site was characterised by larger arable areas in the west and smaller grassland paddocks grazed by horses, goats and cattle in the east/south-east.

4.2.2. The north-western field contained an Italian rye-grass (*Lolium multiflorum*) ley in its northern half with the southern half being the stubble of a cereal crop at the time of survey. The area of grass ley was dominated by Italian rye-grass although some other species such as creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), mignonette (*Reseda lutea*), cock's-foot (*Dactylis glomerata*) and smooth sow-thistle (*Sonchus oleraceus*) were occasional or rare within the sward. The margins around both the ley and arable parts of this field were fairly wide (c.2m or more) in places and contained a mixture of coarse grasses such as false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*)

and cock's-foot and ruderal species such as common nettle (*Urtica dioica*) and mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*).

4.2.3. A large arable field dominated the western/south-western part of the site, including a narrow finger of land extending along the southern edge. This was also cut at the time of survey although it was unclear if this had been a grass ley/silage or hay crop or cereal. This was again essentially a monoculture although margins were present with a wide (c.6m) margin along the southern edge. These contained a similar mix of species to the margins further north, although cock's-foot was more abundant with some hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) also present.

4.2.4. The eastern/south-eastern part of the site contained a series of smaller paddocks divided into three fields by post and wire fencing. Those toward the southern/central part of the site were cattle and goat grazed with the northwestern field grazed by horses. These fields all contained a similar species-poor sward containing grass species such as perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*), red fescue (*Festuca rubra*) and bents (*Agrostis* sp.) with some herbs such as spear thistle (*Cirsium vulgare*), white clover (*Trifolium repens*) and dandelion (*Taraxacum* agg.) also present. Smaller tufts of false oat-grass and cock's-foot were present in places. Beyond the northern end of the north-eastern field was an area of scrub and ruderal vegetation. This contained frequent elder (*Sambucus nigra*) with abundant common nettle and frequent hemlock (*Conium maculatum*).

4.2.5. A series of native hedgerows were present around the site boundaries. These were mainly species-rich (i.e. containing five or more native woody species in an average 30m length) with some containing larger trees. The hedgerow along the northern boundary was partially species-poor and defunct (i.e. containing large gaps) with the hedgerow on the southern part of the western boundary also defunct, although species-rich. A range of tree and shrub species were recorded within the hedgerows including common buckthorn (*Rhamnus cathartica*), blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*), wayfaring-tree (*Viburnum lantana*), spindle (*Euonymus europaeus*), ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), dog-rose (*Rosa canina*), elder, wild privet (*Ligustrum ovalifolium*), hazel (*Corylus avellana*), yew (*Taxus baccata*) and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*). Creepers including ivy (*Hedera helix*) and wild clematis (*Clematis vitalba*) were also present in places.

4.2.6. A shelter belt of planted woodland was present along the southern edge of the site. This was characterised by frequent beech (*Fagus sylvatica*) and sycamore with other species such as yew, elder, wild privet, ash, holly (*Ilex aquifolium*), wych elm (*Ulmus glabra*), silver birch (*Betula pendula*) and sweet chestnut (*Castanea sativa*) also present. Well-established woodland was also present off-site to the north on archaeological bunds associated with Bury Hill. This contained mature beech trees along with ash, sycamore and yew with an understorey of bramble, spindle, blackthorn and wild privet. A small clump of woodland was also present toward the north-western part of the site on the edge of the arable fields. This was characterised by beech

and yew, with sycamore, holly, elder, wild privet, hawthorn, blackthorn, ivy and bramble also present.

4.3. Habitats of Principal Importance

4.3.1. All of the hedgerows bordering the fields meet the criteria for the Habitat of Principal Importance (HPI) ‘hedgerows’ as they are formed of native woody species. A search on the online MAGIC database indicated that the woodland off-site to the north associated with Bury Hill meets criteria for HPI woodland. However, the smaller woodland parcels within the site are not included as HPI. That along the southern boundary as planted woodland is unlikely to meet criteria for HPI. However, the smaller woodland in the north-west of the site is linked to and associated with the larger area of beech and yew woodland off-site around Bury Hill, so does meet HPI criteria.

4.3.2. The list of Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) was prepared in response to Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. This means they are priorities for conservation and a material consideration in the planning process. These habitat types are hereafter referred to as ‘Section 41 habitats’ (or S41 habitats) within this report.

4.3.3. As the majority of the hedgerows were also species-rich they are likely to qualify as ‘ecologically important hedgerows’ as defined by the Hedgerows Regulations 1997. These Regulations provide protection to hedgerows by prohibiting their removal (or parts of them) without first notifying the local planning authority (LPA).

4.4. Target Notes

4.4.1. Features of interest were recorded during the field survey as target notes (TN). These are summarised in Table 2 below with locations shown on Figure 1.

Table 1: Target Notes

Target Note (TN) Number	Description
1	Informal access to site from footpath.
2	Margin with reptile potential.
3	Mammal path.
4	Wide margin with low reptile potential.
5	Mammal path.
6	Well used mammal paths.
7	Disused badger sett. 2x holes with debris.

8	Partially used badger outlier sett. 1x hole with some debris but open.
9	Active badger sett. 1x entrance and spoil.
10	Scrubby area with reptile potential.
11	Outlier badger sett. 1x open hole.
12	Partially used badger sett. At least 4x holes but with debris.

4.5. Protected and Notable Species

4.5.1. The following sections discuss the known or potential presence of protected or otherwise notable species within or close to the site based on the results of the field survey and records supplied by HBIC. With reference to desk study data, ‘recent’ records referred to in the text below are those collected within the last 10 years. Flora

4.5.2. No specially protected or notable flora were recorded during the walkover survey. However, HBIC provided records of three notable plant species from the local area. These were the white helleborine (*Cephalanthera damasonium*), dyer’s greenweed (*Genista tinctoria*) and bastardtoadflax (*Thesium humifusum*). The latter two species have both been recorded within the Bury Hill area (although the HBIC records are within a 1km grid square only). Neither are likely to occur within the site at present given the dominance of arable land-use and smaller areas of species-poor well-grazed pasture. However, it is possible they occur within well-established grassland within the Bury Hill ring itself (north of the site). White helleborine has been recorded within approximately 10m to 15m to the east of the north-western part of the site within woodland associated with Bury Hill. The beech woodland off-site around Bury Hill represents

good quality habitat for this species. The majority of the site (arable and open grassland) is unsuitable, although white helleborine could occur within parts of the small woodland in the north-west of the site or the shelter belt woodland along the southern boundary as both represent potentially suitable habitat for this species.

4.5.3. White helleborine and dyer's greenweed are listed as 'vulnerable' on the 2021 Great Britain Red List for Vascular Plants, i.e. they are considered to be facing a high risk of extinction in the wild. Although identified as a 'vulnerable' species, these species are not afforded any specific legal protection in the UK. White helleborine is however recognised as a "Species of Principal Importance" (SPI) for the conservation of biodiversity in England and is identified on the list provided in accordance with the requirements of Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Under Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006, all public bodies, including local and regional authorities, have a duty to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England when carrying out their normal functions. Bastard-toadflax also has no specific legal protection but is identified as being both nationally scarce and county scarce.

Invertebrates

4.5.4. Whilst a selection of invertebrates will occur within the site, the habitats dominating the site (arable and well-grazed species-poor pasture) provide only limited opportunities for this species group, so it is unlikely that a particularly diverse or ecologically valuable invertebrate assemblage would occur. The animal dung in grazed areas will provide opportunities for some species, but the hedgerows and field margins are likely to be of the most value for invertebrates in the context of the site.

4.5.5. HBIC provided records of stag beetle (*Lucanus cervus*) approximately 80m to the north of the site. The woodland associated with Bury Hill off-site represents good quality potential habitat for this species due to the standing and fallen deadwood that is present. The smaller woodlands on site in the north-west and along the southern boundary are less suitable but may still support stag beetle. Records of five species of notable butterfly were also supplied from within 1km of the site, the small heath (*Coenonympha pamphilus*), Adonis blue (*Polyommatus bellargus*), chalk hill blue (*Polyommatus coridon*), dark green fritillary (*Speyeria aglaja*) and brown hairstreak (*Thecla betulae*). The small heath uses a range of grasses as a larval foodplant so could occur within the site, although the arable areas are unsuitable with the short-grazed and species-poor sward within the eastern part of the site not representing high quality grassland for butterflies in its current condition. The Adonis and chalk hill blue are largely associated with unimproved calcareous grassland and downland, so the site does not represent good habitat in its current condition. The dark green fritillary is a strongly flying species so may occur on the margins of the site or using species such as thistles in the grassland for feeding. The brown hairstreak uses blackthorn as a larval foodplant, so the hedgerows on the site boundaries do represent potential breeding habitat for this species.

4.5.6. The stag beetle, small heath and brown hairstreak (as well as a selection of other invertebrate species) are on the list of Species of Principal Importance (SPI) prepared in response to Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006. This means they are priorities for conservation and a material consideration in the planning process. Stag beetle is also nationally scarce with the Adonis blue being county rare and the chalk hill blue, dark green fritillary and brown hairstreak being county scarce. Amphibians

4.5.7. No waterbodies are present within or adjacent to the site boundary. A review of freely available online mapping and aerial imagery also shows no waterbodies within the immediate surrounding landscape, with the nearest being located approximately 250m to the north beyond the built area of Upper Clatford and across the Pillhill Brook, a significant barrier to amphibian movement. For this reason, populations of breeding amphibians are unlikely to pose any constraints to the change of use.

4.5.8. HBIC provided no records of amphibian species from the site or local area.

Common Reptiles

4.5.9. The site contains limited areas of suitable reptile habitat. This is restricted to the field margins (mainly in the west of the site) where some coarse grassland and ruderal vegetation occurs in proximity to the hedgerow bases and the area of scrub and ruderal vegetation in the northeast. Although unlikely to represent key reptile habitat (due to its restricted size), these areas could support common reptiles such as slow worms (*Anguis fragilis*) or common lizards (*Zootoca vivipara*).

4.5.10. HBIC provided no records of reptile species from the site or local area.

4.5.11. Reptiles are legally protected from intentional killing and injury under the under the WCA. All common species of reptiles are also S41 species (see invertebrates above). Breeding Birds

4.5.12. The hedgerows, hedgerow trees and woodland areas on and adjacent to the site provide suitable nesting sites for a range of common species of birds. In addition, the larger arable areas may provide limited potential for ground-nesting species such as skylark (*Alauda arvensis*). Individuals of this and other bird species were incidentally recorded during the survey; these are listed in Table 3 below.

Table 2: Bird Species Incidentally Recorded during Field Survey

Common Name	Species Name
Buzzard	<i>Buteo buteo</i>
Carrion crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>
Chiffchaff	<i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>

Great tit	<i>Parus major</i>
Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>
Linnet	<i>Linaria cannabina</i>
Red-legged partridge	<i>Alectoris rufa</i>
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>

4.5.13. HBIC provided records of a range of notable bird species from the 1km grid square including the site. These included some declining farmland bird species that may use the site such as yellowhammer (*Emberiza citrinella*) and grey partridge (*Perdix perdix*). Records of specially protected (Schedule 1) bird species were also supplied. However, of these the only species likely to regularly occur within the site is the red kite (*Milvus milvus*), a species that has undergone a recent increase in population and range due to reintroduction programmes. The trees and woodland on the edges of the site as well as off-site around Bury Hill provide potential nesting habitat for red kites. Although less likely to occur, local woodland could also be used by nesting hobby (*Falco subbuteo*) although the site and immediate local area does not represent particularly good foraging habitat for this species.

4.5.14. All wild birds are legally protected from killing and injury with their active nests and eggs being protected from damage and destruction under the WCA. A selection of bird species (including the linnet and skylark among others) are also Section 41 species. Some bird species are on the ‘Red List and Amber List’ of species of high and medium conservation concern respectively. This does not confer any additional legal protection or status, but these species can be a focus when planning works or conservation efforts.

4.5.15. A selection of bird species are listed on Schedule 1 of the WCA. This confers additional protection from disturbance at or near an active nest site. Note this also applies to dependent young. Bats

4.5.16. Opportunities for roosting bats were limited within the site, with the majority of hedgerow trees being too small or lacking suitable features. However, trees with features that could be used by bats may occur within the small woodland in the north-west of the site and the shelter belt along the southern boundary. Numerous opportunities for roosting bats were incidentally noted within trees in the woodland associated with Bury Hill off-site to the north. The woodlands, woodland edges and hedgerows provide suitable foraging habitat for a range of bat species, with the presence of grazing livestock in the eastern parts of the site potentially increasing the value of these fields for certain species such as noctule (*Nyctalus noctula*) and serotine (*Eptesicus serotinus*).

4.5.17. HBIC only provided a recent record of one bat species from the local area. This was a record of a brown long-eared bat (*Plecotus auritus*) from housing north of the site. However, despite limited records it is very likely that a variety of bat species occur within the site and local area.

4.5.18. Bats and their roosts are legally protected under the Habitats Regulations and the WCA. Some species of bat (e.g. the brown long-eared, noctule and soprano pipistrelle) are also Section 41 species. This means they are priorities for conservation and a material consideration in the planning process. Badgers

4.5.19. The presence of badgers (*Meles meles*) was confirmed within and adjacent to the site, with five disused, partially used or active badger setts incidentally recorded during the field survey (target notes 7, 8, 9, 11 and 12). These were located within the shelter belt woodland in the south of the site and in the woodland/woodland edge and hedgerows in the central/north-

western parts of the site associated with Bury Hill. Mammal paths were also recorded in the western/southwestern parts of the site, some of which are likely to have been created by or used by badgers. 4.5.20. HBIC did not provide any records of badgers or other mammals (aside from bats).

4.5.21. Badgers and their places of shelter (setts) are protected under specific legislation known as the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. This prohibits (among other things) the killing or injury of badgers, the damage or destruction of setts and disturbance of badgers occupying setts. Hazel Dormice

4.5.22. The hedgerows and woodland areas provide some suitable habitat for hazel dormice (*Muscardinus avellanarius*). The MAGIC website shows a series of licences have been granted for this species for works around Picket Piece approximately 5km to the north-east. HBIC provided no records of dormice, but their presence within the site cannot be ruled out.

4.5.23. Hazel dormice and their habitats are legally protected under the Habitats Regulations and the WCA. They are also a Section 41 species meaning they are priorities for conservation and a material consideration in the planning process.

5. Potential Issues, Opportunities and Recommendations

5.1. Overview

5.1.1. This section discusses the potential implications of, and opportunities associated with, future change of use on ecological features within the site and surrounding area as identified in Section 4 of this report. Outline options for avoidance or mitigation are provided, with opportunities for enhancement also discussed as appropriate. It is recognised that no detailed proposals for the site

have yet been put forward, but the site is being promoted for future use as public open space.

5.2. Designated Sites

5.2.1. The change of use should not lead to any direct impacts on designated sites as none occur within or adjacent to the site boundary. The proposals could be beneficial to designated areas in the wider landscape as they will provide alternative publicly accessible greenspace. This may help to alleviate visitor pressure on other sites.

5.3. Habitats

5.3.1. The habitats currently dominating the site are largely of low intrinsic ecological value (arable land and well-grazed species-poor pasture) although the hedgerows and areas of woodland are of increased ecological value. The change of use presents opportunities to enhance the areas of lower ecological value, with proposals to convert the existing arable areas to species-rich meadow grassland being a significant potential benefit.

5.3.2. Creation of species-rich grassland can sometimes be achieved by natural regeneration from the existing seedbank via appropriate management. This can take a few years to show good results but is beneficial as the species present are of local provenance and well-suited to local soils and other conditions. However, as these fields have been used as arable farmland the seedbank is likely to have been diminished with soils subject to input of fertilisers. For this reason, preparing the fields for conversion by reducing nutrient levels may be required with meadow grassland being introduced by seeding. Any seed mixes should be carefully selected to be suitable for the soils and open conditions and preferably be locally sourced. A management plan is recommended to ensure the meadow areas are cut at an appropriate time of year (usually late summer or early autumn) with waste materials/arising being removed to continue to reduce nutrients in the soils. This process may still take some years to achieve good results but should increase biodiversity as soon as it is implemented by providing flowering species for invertebrates and food and cover for species such as birds and other small fauna.

5.3.3. The hedgerows on the field margins should be retained as much as possible. In addition, existing gaps could be filled to enhance retained hedgerows by in-fill planting using native woody shrubs and trees. Again, these should be suitable for local conditions and ideally locally sourced. The existing species present in species-rich hedgerows within the site provide a range of suitable choice.

5.3.4. As the site is proposed to be used as public open space in the future, safeguarding the biodiversity value of habitats in the longer term from potential issues such as trampling or nutrient enrichment from dog faeces and other waste should be considered. Measures could include the establishment of clearly

marked paths and circular routes to encourage use of some areas whilst reducing use in others. Providing litter bins and particularly dog waste bins can help to reduce waste affecting the site. Consideration could also be given to keeping dogs on leads or maintaining some areas where dogs can be off lead and others where they cannot. Clear signage and interpretation to encourage local users to be aware of and value the biodiversity of the site can also help.

5.4. Protected and Notable Species

Invertebrates

5.4.1. The proposed change of use of the site could benefit a variety of invertebrate species assuming associated measures such as diversification of grassland, meadow creation and strengthening/in-fill planting of hedgerows are implemented. The creation of flower-rich grassland would benefit a range of butterflies and other invertebrates. The planting of blackthorn (as well as other native woody species) when filling gaps in hedgerows, or creating new sections of hedgerow, would potentially benefit brown hairstreak. Other options could include the creation of log or brash piles in discrete areas of the site, particularly using materials generated from on-site works such as hedgerow management. These could benefit stag beetles and a range of other invertebrate species.

5.4.2. Further survey is unlikely to be required, but there may be opportunities to work with local enthusiasts to gather longer term data on invertebrate species and assemblage change to highlight the benefit of habitat enhancement within the site.

Common Reptiles

5.4.3. Assuming existing areas of habitat that could support common reptiles (i.e. field margins and hedgerow bases) are retained and not subject to works such as vegetation clearance, further survey for reptiles is unlikely to be required. However, if small areas of suitable habitat are affected (e.g. clearance for access), limited mitigation measures may be needed such as handsearching or the use of an ecological watching brief and phased vegetation removal in the spring to autumn when reptiles are active. There may be opportunities to engage with local interest groups to establish if reptiles are present so that their response to potential enhancements can be monitored (i.e. changes in population or distribution). Measures such as grassland diversification, hedgerow enhancement or more targeted features such as new log, stone, brash or vegetation piles could all benefit reptiles, if present. Again, managing access so some parts of the site are left largely undisturbed would be recommended.

Breeding Birds

5.4.4. Further survey for bird species is unlikely to be required as the site will likely continue to support a range of common and widespread species during conversion to and the use as public open space. However, appropriate working

methods should be employed to safeguard birds and their nests/eggs. This would involve limiting any necessary clearance of woody vegetation to the period September to February inclusive to avoid the main nesting period. If this is not possible, any areas should be checked by an ecologist prior to clearance. If areas do not contain active nests, they should be taken out as soon as possible following this check. Note that any active nests found will need to be left intact until no longer in use with the ecologist advising on an appropriate buffer within which works do not take place. Works close to woodland edges or larger trees may require a check by an ecologist (if undertaken within the breeding season) to ensure no nesting red kites (or other specially protected species) are present. Any such nests identified will need to be left undisturbed.

5.4.5. It is recognised that the site may support ground nesting species such as skylark which could be affected by change of use to public open space. This species (and potentially others) would likely benefit from the creation of diverse meadow grassland in place of the existing arable dominating the western areas. However, there could also be conflict between nesting birds (particularly ground nesting species) and pet dogs using the site. Options to reduce this could include providing clear trails and paths to guide visitors while leaving some areas less disturbed, the establishment of dog-free or dogs on lead areas, or even seasonal restrictions on access so areas used by ground nesting birds are undisturbed in the spring and summer.

5.4.6. Other options that could be considered include the provision of new nesting boxes. These would be of most benefit if targeted at species not currently present, or in local or national decline. Options could include (but need not be limited to) the provision of tree or pole-mounted box or boxes for barn owls (*Tyto alba*). This species may benefit from the presence of diverse grassland going forward, as suitable foraging habitat for barn owls is currently very limited within the site. Boxes are also commercially available (or can be made) for species such as starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), kestrels (*Falco tinnunculus*) and stock doves (*Columba oenas*), among others, all of which have been subject to recent declines. Boxes for more widespread generalist species could also be used as part of an overall strategy. Bats

5.4.7. Bats are unlikely to be directly adversely affected by the proposed change of use and should benefit from associated proposals such as meadow creation and hedgerow enhancement. Consideration should be given to bats if larger trees are subject to any works including felling or pruning (e.g. for public safety, etc.) although this would largely be limited to the margins or where larger trees occur in woodland areas. The advice of an ecologist should be sought if trees are affected in these ways.

Badgers

5.4.8. The site and adjacent areas (particularly woodland areas) are known to contain badger setts. It is assumed that these marginal and densely vegetated areas will be retained as part of any change of use. Badgers will also likely

benefit from measures such as diversification of grassland and enhancement of hedgerows as this will provide additional higher quality foraging habitat and cover. However, opening up the site for public use could lead to some issues with disturbance of badger setts, such as trampling or investigation by dogs. There is also a possibility of badgers being disturbed or coming into conflict with dogs during crossover periods such as at dusk (e.g if people are walking dogs in the evening). It is unlikely that this would be a major issue, although some measures to address this may need to be considered. This could include establishing paths away from active badger setts to reduce disturbance or selective use of fencing or (possibly better) thicket planting with native shrubs or new hedgerows to discourage access to areas containing badger setts. Depending on the level of concern and future proposals, establishing the current distribution of setts and levels of use as part of site layout may be advisable so such measures can be appropriately developed and focused.

Hazel Dormice

5.4.9. The proposals are unlikely to adversely affect hazel dormice (if present) assuming the existing hedgerows and woodland areas are to be retained. The plans to enhance the hedgerows by infill planting of gaps could benefit hazel dormice by increasing suitable habitat and increasing connectivity.

5.4.10. Consideration would need to be given to the potential presence of this species if any works such as removal of any sections of hedgerow or woodland are required in due course. If in any doubt, the advice of an ecologist should be sought with further survey to determine presence/likely absence possible depending on plans.

6. Conclusion

6.1.1. The field survey in conjunction with the desk study revealed that the site is dominated by arable habitats and grazed pasture which have limited intrinsic ecological value. The hedgerows on the field margins are of increased ecological value as are the small areas of woodland within the site and well-established woodland off-site. The proposed change of use of the site to public open space does present some issues including potential disturbance of nesting birds and badgers and their setts. However, it should be possible to overcome these through careful planning and layout of the site and other measures. The proposals do present more significant opportunities for biodiversity gain such as diversification of grassland and enhancement of hedgerows.

7. References

7.1.1. HMSO (2006): Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act.

7.1.2. HMSO (2010): The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (as amended) (the Habitat Regulations).

7.1.3. HMSO (Her Majesty's Stationary Office) (1981): Wildlife and Countryside Act (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000).

7.1.4. JNCC (2016) Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey - a technique for environmental audit. JNCC.

8. Figures

Figure 1: Extended Phase 1 habitat Survey Results



9. Appendix 1 - Photographs

Photograph 1: North-western part of site showing arable and grass ley



Photograph 2: Arable dominating western part of site



Photograph 3: Well-grazed pasture in central/eastern part of site



Photograph 4: Example of field margin offering some potential for reptiles (and other fauna)



Photograph 5: Planted woodland shelter belt on southern edge of site



Photograph 6: example of hedgerow on site margin



Photograph 7: Ruderal and scrub habitat in north-east of site



Photograph 8: Small woodland toward north-west of site



Photograph 9: Off-site established woodland associated with Bury Hill to north



Photograph 10: Example active badger sett



10. Appendix 2 – Relevant Legislation and Planning Policy

10.1. Nature Conservation Legislation

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

10.1.1. The conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations transpose the Council Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (“The Habitats Directive”) into law.

10.1.2. The 2017 Regulations consolidate the various amendments made to the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 in respect of England and Wales. The regulations provide for:

- designation and protection of European Sites (Special Protection Areas (SPA) and Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)) including the need for 'Appropriate Assessment' of plans and proposals;
- protection of European protected species;
- adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of European Sites; and
- make it an offence (subject to exceptions) to deliberately capture, kill, disturb, or trade in the animals listed in Schedule 2.

10.1.3. No steps that will impact upon a European protected species or its habitat can be undertaken unless authorised by a European Protected Species licence issued by Natural England. Such a licence is granted until after planning consent has been granted once Natural England are satisfied that adequate measures are to be put in place to mitigate for the impact of the development.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

10.1.4. The Act implements the Convention of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (The Bern Convention) and the Directive 2009/147/EC 'The Birds Directive'. The 1981 Act has been amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000.

10.1.5. Schedules 1 (birds) and 5 (animals) of the Act identify species of bird and other animal in relation to which the Act makes killing, injury, taking and disturbance an offence while Schedule 8 to the Act lists species of plant in relation to which the Act makes it an offence to intentionally pick, uproot or destroy.

10.1.6. Section 14(2) of the Act makes it an offence to cause any species of animal or plant listed in Schedule 9 to grow in the wild.

10.1.7. The Act further provides for notification and confirmation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) for their flora, fauna, geological or physiographical features. It also contains measures for the protection and management of SSSIs.

The Natural Environmental and Rural Communities Act 2006 ('NERC')

10.1.8. The NERC Act sets a duty on public bodies (including Local Authorities) to have due regard for Habitats and Species of Principal Importance for biodiversity in England when carrying out their duties.

10.1.9. Section 41 (S.41) of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The list is used by decision-makers, such as Local Authorities, in implementing their protection duties under this Act when carrying out their functions.

10.1.10. The S.41 list includes 56 Habitats and almost 1000 Species of Principal Importance in England. Since the UN Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD) in 2010 the UK identifies these habitats and species as conservation priorities under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework, (they were formerly identified as UK BAP habitats and species).

10.2. Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework

10.2.1. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in February 2019. This document states that:

10.2.2. ‘Achieving sustainable development means that the planning system has three overarching objectives, which are interdependent and need to be pursued in mutually supportive ways (so that opportunities can be taken to secure net gains across each of the different objectives)... an environmental objective – to contribute to protecting and enhancing our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, helping to improve biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy’.

10.2.3. Conserving and Enhancement of the Natural Environment

10.2.4. Section 15 relates to: Conserving and Enhancement the Natural Environment. This states:

10.2.5. ‘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.
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely 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.
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.

10.2.6. Habitats and Biodiversity

10.2.7. To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- 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.

10.2.8. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

- 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;
- development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons⁵⁸ and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.

Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan DPD - 2011 - 2029

10.2.9. The Test Valley Borough Revised Local Plan DPD - 2011 - 2029 contains proposed policies for determining planning applications and identifying strategic allocations for housing, employment and other uses. The Local Plan was adopted by the Council on 27 January 2016. Policy E5: Biodiversity of the Local Plan states that:

10.2.10. Development in the Borough that will conserve, and where possible restore and / or enhance, biodiversity will be permitted.

10.2.11. Development that is likely to result in a significant effect, either alone or in combination, on an international or European nature conservation

designation, or a site proposed for such designation, will need to satisfy the requirements of the Habitat Regulations.

10.2.12. Development likely to result in the loss, deterioration or harm to habitats or species of importance to biodiversity or geological conservation interests, either directly or indirectly, will not be permitted unless:

- a) the need for, and benefits of, the development in the proposed location outweighs the adverse effect on the relevant biodiversity interest;
- b) it can be demonstrated that it could not reasonably be located on an alternative site that would result in less or no harm to the biodiversity interests; and
- c) measures can be provided (and secured through planning conditions or legal agreements), that would avoid, mitigate against or, as a last resort, compensate for the adverse effects likely to result from development.

10.2.13. The habitats and species of importance to biodiversity and sites of geological interest considered in relation to points a) to c) comprise:

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs);
- legally protected species;
- Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINCs) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs);
- priority habitats and species listed in the national and local Biodiversity Action Plans;
- habitats and species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England;
- trees, woodlands, ancient woodland (including semi-natural and replanted woodland), aged and veteran trees, and hedgerows; and
- features of the landscape that function as ‘stepping stones’ or form part of a wider network of sites by virtue of their coherent ecological structure or function or are of importance for the migration, dispersal and genetic exchange of wild species.

10.2.14. The level of protection and mitigation should be proportionate to the status of the habitat or species and its importance individually and as part of a wider network.

Appendix 3 – Maps

Map 1 – Site location plan



This official copy issued on 3 March 2022 shows the state of this title plan on 3 March 2022 at 16:44:36.
It is admissible in evidence to the same extent as the original (s.67 Land Registration Act 2002).
This title plan shows the general position, not the exact line, of the boundaries. It may be subject to distortions in scale. Measurements scaled from this plan may not match measurements between the same points on the ground.
This title is dealt with by HM Land Registry, Durham Office.

Map 2 – Management compartments

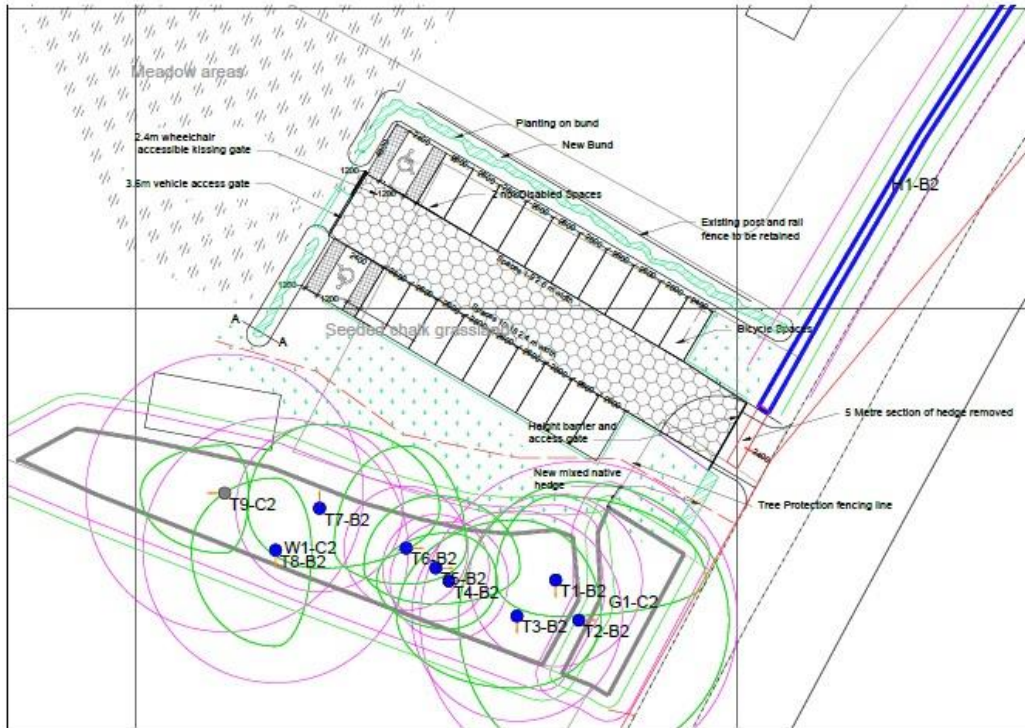


Scale: 1:5000 @ A4
Date: 3 Feb 2023
Drawn By: Jen Quilty

Bury Hill Management Compartments



Map 4 – Proposed car park



GENERAL NOTES

- This drawing is © copyright Test Valley Borough 2022. No unauthorised reproduction is to be made.
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- Drawing to be read with all associated consultants drawings and specifications.
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Notes:

Paving grid to be RecPave 85 (see July 18/19 recycled plastic grid system for details) to 50 with 120m square grid.

Height barrier and gate shall refer to drawing 22021.

Permitted kissing gate shall refer to 22021.

Key

- Existing Tree and RPAs
- Existing native hedgerow
- Bitmac surface
- RecPave geogrid permeable car park
- Native scrub planting
- Chalk grassland restoration
- Tree Protection Fence

REV D Tree protection shown
24.11.2022

REV C Amendment to Va plays
19.08.2022

REV B Amendment to Va plays
28.07.2022

Test Valley Borough Council
Property and Asset Management
Beach Road, Weight Road,
Burslem SP10 5AJ
Tel: 01753 480000

PROJECT
Countryside access land south of Bury Ring,
Upper Clatford

SHEET
Gravel car park layout with 20 spaces

DO NOT SCALE FROM THIS DRAWING

DATE
20.06.2022

PLAN SCALE 1:200 @ A2	DRAWN LW	CHKD KH
DRAWING NUMBER GA_BH_1001	REV C	

SUSTAINABILITY
Planning

