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Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Survey site:

Healey Farm, Healey Lane, Briestfield, Dewsbury, West Yorkshire WF12 0NT

Client:

Miles Worsley

Survey date:

29th July 2025

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with the Kirklees Council. The proposal is described as:

Proposed cattle building.

PEA survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2025.

The survey results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion.

Site Location and Context

The survey site is centred on National Grid Reference SE 23003 16968 and has an area of approximately 0.4ha. The site comprises part of Healey dairy farm with cattle grazed grassland, and associated hardstanding. It is situated within the rural outskirts of the village of Briestfield, West Yorkshire. Aerial imagery shows the local landscape to have an agricultural and woodland character, with multiple agricultural fields and several small copses and woodland swathes in close proximity to the site. Water bodies can be found nearby, such as Briestfield Beck (river) located ~0.04km to the north. Such features likely enhance the area for a variety of species, including bats, amphibians and reptiles.

Survey Details

The site survey was undertaken by Amber Williams BSc, MSc, MPhil, Graduate Ecologist (Accredited on Natural England Bat Licence Number: 2023-11521-CL18-BAT.)

Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rain
29/07/2025	17	83	70	0	No rain

Executive Summary

1. A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment will be required to comply with the Environment Act (2021) and local planning policy.
2. Precautionary working measures will be followed to ensure that nesting birds, reptiles, amphibians, badgers and hedgehogs are not harmed by the works.
3. In the unlikely event that a protected animal is found during construction, all works must stop and a suitably qualified ecologist must be contacted.

Survey limitations

It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to describe the baseline conditions within the survey area, and evaluate these features, this report does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. This assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species being present. This is based on suitability of the habitats on the site and in the wider landscape, the ecology and biology of species as currently understood.

Ecological Survey Factor Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations	Detailed using desk study and site survey (carried out under good weather conditions). Any specific limitations noted within relevant section. This table may include further work you will need to commission (if any) to obtain planning permission or comply with legislation for other consent. All clients are expected to read and understand this section, or to contact the lead surveyor for advice.

Habitats and plants (see habitat map in appendix 1, location plan in appendix 2, proposal plan in appendix 3 and photos in appendix 4).

Botanical species are described with reference to the DAFOR scale (D = Dominant; A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional, R = Rare).

Summary of Survey Findings (*UKHab codes used)*	The site does not contain any habitat of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006). The site contains bramble scrub and scattered trees which could be of value to local wildlife populations (as detailed in subsequent sections of this table). Other habitats within the site are common and widespread and have low ecological value. Further notable habitats are present within 2km. **On-site habitat descriptions** **u1b** – Developed land/sealed surface To the south of the site boundary is tarmacked hardstanding driveway for access to the dairy farm (Fig.1). **u1c** - Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface To the southeast of the grazed grassland there is a parcel of bare ground void of vegetation. This is assumably a result of the cattle grazing and machinery damaging the grassland (Fig.2). **g4** – Modified grassland The main area of the site to the western aspect of the boundary is a cattle grazed field of modified grassland (Fig.3). There was a large portion of bare ground within the habitat which made up ~40% of the entire parcel. Sward height here is uniform and short <10cm. Species present include white clover *Trifolium repens* (D), perennial rye *Lolium perenne* (D), annual meadowgrass *Poa annua* (A), common nettle *Urtica dioica* (F), broad leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius* (O), shepheard purse *Capsella bursa-pastoris* (O), foxtail grass *Alopecurus myosuroides* (O), spiny sowthistle *Sonchus asper* (R). The parcel to the eastern site boundary which makes up the track (see below) has a more varied species composition including those previously mentioned in addition to cocks foot *Dactylis glomerata* (D), false oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* (A), creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera* (F), male fern *Dryopteris filix-mas* (F), bramble *Rubus fruticosus* (O), elder saplings *Sambucus nigra* (R). This parcel had a taller varied sward height ranging from 20-60cm. This habitat was subject to a condition assessment using the Grassland habitat type: Grassland – Modified grassland habitat condition sheet. The results are detailed below: A. There are less than 6-8 vascular plant species per m². B. Sward height is varied (at least 20% <7cm and at least 20% is >7cm). C. Presence of scrub accounts for <20% of total area. D. Physical damage is evident in >5% E. Cover of bare ground is >10% F. Cover of bracken is <20% G. There is an absence of invasive non-native species. It is considered that the modified grassland is classified as **poor** condition. **g4**- 32 – Scattered tree There are three scattered trees on site (Fig.4), described below.

Tree ID	Species	Size
T1	Oak	~45cm DBH (medium)
T2	Oak	~30cm DBH (medium)
T3	Oak	~20cm DBH (small)

This habitat was subject to a condition assessment using the Individual trees habitat type condition sheet. The results are detailed below:
A. <70% of the trees are native species.
B. The tree canopy is continuous.
C. The trees are semi-mature.
D. There is absence of damage to the sycamore and birch.
E. There is a presence of ecological niches including ivy and loose bark.
F. <20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.
It is considered that the individual scattered trees are classified as **good** condition.

g4 – 839 – Track
There is a track that runs through the modified grassland and bramble scrub to the northeastern site aspect. There are tire tracks where vegetation has not grown due to repetitive vehicle utilization (Fig.5).

h3d – Bramble scrub
There is dense bramble scrub situated to the northern of the site which has overgrown the northern aspect of the track rendering it only suitable for pedestrians (Fig.6). Species present include bramble *Rubus fruticosus* (D), common nettle *Urtica dioica* (A), creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense* (A), broad leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius* (F), herb Robert *Geranium robertianum* (O).

h3d – 33 – Line of trees

There are two tree lines which run either side of the track within the bramble scrub and comprise a part of the woodland to the north of the site (Fig.7). Trees are mature and have evidence of deadwood. Species present include hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* (D), oak *Quercus robur* (A), elder *Sambucus nigra* (F), ash *Fraxinus excelsior* (O), sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus* (O). This habitat was subject to a condition assessment using the Line of trees habitat type habitat condition sheet. The results are detailed below:

A. More than 70% of the trees are native.
B. Tree canopy is continuous with gaps making up <10% of total area.

	C. There are no veteran trees present. D. There is no undisturbed naturally vegetated strip of at least 6m on both sides. E. At least 95% of the trees are in a healthy condition. It is considered that the tree line is classified as **moderate** condition. **Local notable habitats** There are several Priority habitats situated within 2km of the site boundary. These are as follows: - There are several areas of Priority Deciduous Woodland within 2km of the site boundary. The closest of which is situated ~35m north. - There are several areas of Priority Woodpasture and Parkland, the closest of which is situated ~0.75km southeast. - There are several areas of Replanted Ancient Woodlands within 2km of the site boundary. The closest of which is situated ~0.8km southeast. - There is a habitat of Priority Traditional Orchard situated ~1.2km north. **Biological record data** Biological records data was obtained from West Yorkshire Ecology and revealed the following non-statutory designated sites within 2km: - Howroyd Beck Fields LWS (Local Wildlife Site) ~ 550m north - Whitley Wood LWS - ~1.6km northwest - Liley Wood LWS ~1.8km northwest - Jordan Wood and Oliver Wood LWS– ~1.9km northwest
Foreseen Impacts	**On-site habitats** The proposed development will result in the loss of bramble scrub and grassland. This could result in a net loss in biodiversity at the site. **Notable habitats** No direct impacts to any notable habitats will occur as a result of the proposed development. However, due to the proximity of the site to Deciduous Woodland (~35m north), indirect effects (e.g. pollution, dust, litter, surface run off, etc.) could occur during construction.
Recommendations	**On-site habitats** Retained trees should be protected in line with the measures outlined in the British Standard "Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction to Construction - Recommendations" (BS 5837) (2012).

	Notable habitats Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution affecting the nearby Deciduous Woodland must be implemented during construction. A Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP) may be required for this. **Biodiversity net gain** The Environment Act (2021) requires all developments (excluding exemptions) to deliver a 10% net gain in biodiversity. Therefore, the planning application must be accompanied by a biodiversity net gain calculation to ensure the proposed development delivers a 10% net gain.
Locality and Designated Sites	
Summary of Survey Findings	**On-site designations** The site is not subject to any designation. **Statutory designated sites (within 2km)** There are no known statutory sites within 2km of the site. The site lies within the impact risk zone for Denby Grange Colliery Ponds SSSI that is situated ~3.9km southeast of the site. **Non-statutory designated sites** The presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site cannot be established without data from West Yorkshire Ecology.
Foreseen Impacts	**On-site designations** No impacts foreseen. **Statutory and non-statutory designated sites** The site lies within the impact risk zone for SSSI Denby Grange Colliery Ponds. The proposed development type is listed as a possible high risk for this designation.
Recommendations	**On-site designations** None required. **Statutory and non-statutory designated sites** None required.
Invasive / Non-native species	
Summary of Survey Findings	No problematic invasive and non-native species recorded on site. **Biological record data:** 4 records of Himalayan balsam were recorded within 2km of the site, the closest of which is ~700m northeast

Foreseen Impacts	None foreseen.
Recommendations	No further surveys but remain vigilant.
Invertebrates	
Summary of Survey Findings	The site is not considered suitable to support a protected and/or notable assemblage of invertebrates. The habitats present on-site, including agricultural land, scrub likely provide common invertebrates with opportunities to forage and shelter. **Biological record data:** 1 record of 40 small heath butterflies were recorded ~700m northwest of the site
Foreseen Impacts	Bramble scrub will be impacted, and grassland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local invertebrate populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally.
Recommendations	No further surveys. **Suggested biodiversity enhancements** The site could be further enhanced via the provision of native wildflowers or wildflower turf, which would provide foraging opportunities for invertebrates.
Bats	
Summary of Survey Findings	**EPSL data** A search of the magic.gov.uk database for granted EPSLs within a 2km radius of the site has been completed. Displaced bats from licensed sites <2km away from the survey site will find alternative habitat either within the mitigation measures implemented as part of the licence or will relocate to other known roosts sites in close proximity to the licensed site. There is one EPSL within a 2km radius of site as detailed below: **EPSL reference** | **Bat species affected** | **Distance from site** | **Impacts allowed by licence** 2015-17650-EPS-MIT | Common pipistrelle | ~0.76km northwest | Destruction of a resting place There are no Special Areas of Conservation designated for bats within 10km of the site. **Biological record data:** 1 record of a brown long-eared bat roost ~ 820m west 1 record of a myotis species ~ 820m west 3 records of common pipistrelle, the closest of which is a roost ~ 820m west **Foraging and commuting habitat**

	Habitats recorded on site are assessed to provide moderate value foraging and commuting opportunities for bats in the form of agricultural land, scattered scrub, tree lines. These habitats are likely to provide micro-climatic conditions that support invertebrates that will in turn provide foraging opportunities for local bat populations. Most notably, the tree lines on site are mature and extend beyond the site adding to the continuity of vegetated linear features present in the wider landscape. Bats are well known to utilise linear features to aid navigation whilst travelling between foraging resources and roost sites. **Roosting habitat** Buildings and trees to be impacted by the proposed development are assessed for their suitability to support roosting bats below. There are no buildings within the development boundary and a total of 3 trees. None of which are anticipated to be removed to facilitate the works. No evidence of roosting bats was identified on any of the surveyed trees on-site.
Foreseen Impacts	**Roosting habitat [Trees]** No onsite trees had any features suitable to support roosting bats. Further, there is no anticipated impacts to any on site trees as a result of the works. Therefore there are no foreseen impacts to bats roosting within trees as a result of the works. **Foraging and commuting habitat** The proposed development will result in the loss of small areas of bramble scrub and grassland but given their low value and the presence of more extensive areas of foraging and commuting habitat in the locality, this is likely to be inconsequential for bats. **Artificial lighting** The proposed development may lead to an increase in the amount of current lighting of surrounding habitats or the retained building without mitigation. This may disturb commuting bats.
Recommendations	**Roosting habitat** In the unlikely event that a bat or evidence of bats is discovered during the development all work must stop and a bat licensed ecologist contacted for further advice. **Foraging and commuting habitat** No further surveys are required. **Artificial lighting** A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during post-development which outlines the areas of the site that will be retained as dark corridors. Parameters can be found on the Bat Conservation Trust website: https://www.bats.org.uk/our-work/buildings-planning-and-development/lighting-2 **Suggested biodiversity enhancements** The installation of three bat boxes at the site will provide additional roosting habitat for bats.

	Bat boxes will be mounted on mature trees at the site boundaries. Suitable bat boxes include Habibat Bat Box, Ibstock Enclosed Bat Box or similar alternative brand. Bat boxes should be positioned 3-5m above ground level facing in a south or south-westerly direction with a clear flight path to and from the entrance, away from artificial light.
Birds	
Summary of Survey Findings	**Trees and vegetation** No bird nests were identified within the trees, or scrub on-site, however they all offer nesting opportunities and nest-building resources for birds. **Barn owls** The site does not appear to provide any suitable nesting sites for barn owls. **Overwintering birds** Due to the small size of the site and the extent and type of the habitats recorded, the site not considered suitable to support a significant assemblage of protected and/or notable birds. **Biological record data:** 1 record of a barn owl ~ 850m southwest 3 records of swallow, the closest of which is ~ 850m southwest
Foreseen Impacts	**Buildings/trees** The proposed development could result in the destruction or the disturbance and subsequent abandonment of active bird nests if present within trees within proximity to the works during construction. **Barn owls** None foreseen. . **Overwintering birds** None foreseen.
Recommendations	**Buildings/trees** Precautions should be taken with machinery and noise levels when working close to any retained nests so as not to disturb any nearby nesting birds during construction works. At least a 3-5m buffer should be created between any machinery and active nests until the young have fledged or until an ecologist has determined the nest is no longer active. **Barn owls** None required.

	Overwintering birds None required. **Suggested biodiversity enhancements** The installation of a minimum of two bird boxes on mature trees around the site boundaries or on retained buildings will provide additional nesting habitat for birds e.g. Schwegler No 17 Swift Nest Box (buildings) Schwegler 1SP Sparrow Terrace (buildings) Schwegler 1B Nest Boxes (trees) Schwegler 2H Robin Boxes (trees) Woodstone Nest Box (buildings or trees) Or a similar alternative brand. Tree boxes should be positioned approximately 3m above ground level where they will be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight. Small-hole boxes are best placed approximately 1-3m above ground on an area of the tree trunk where foliage will not obscure the entrance hole. Swift and sparrow boxes should be positioned at the eaves of a building and can be incorporated into the fabric of the building during construction.
Reptiles	
Summary of Survey Findings	**EPSL data** A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for protected reptiles within 2km of the site. **Biological record data:** No records. **Habitat suitability** The dominant habitat onsite (cattle grazed modified grassland) is considered unsuitable for reptiles due to the species content (common and widespread species with minimal diversity) and associated sward height, where at the time of the survey the grassland was recorded as being a relatively short sward with a high presence of bare ground due to grazing and agricultural machinery. The bramble scrub provide limited opportunities for dispersal and refuge for reptiles. The scrub and tree lines connect to a woodland to the north of the site. Whilst this habitat provides optimal reptile habitat it is unlikely that this faunal group would commute onto the development area due to the habitats present having little value.
Foreseen Impacts	Bramble scrub will be impacted and grassland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local reptile populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, site clearance could result in the death or injury of reptiles, if present.
Recommendations	A precautionary working method will be implemented for widespread reptiles during construction, including the following measures:

	• Vegetation will be maintained at a short sward (5cm) to discourage reptiles. • Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. • Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby habitats. • Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. • If any reptiles are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance. • In the unlikely event that a reptile is identified, works must cease and advise must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.
Amphibians	
Summary of Survey Findings	**EPSL and survey data** A review of the MAGIC database returned one granted EPSL records for great crested newts within 2km of the site. **EPSL reference** | **Species affected** | **Distance from site** | **Impacts allowed by licence** EPSM2012-5141 | Great Crested Newt | ~1.74km southeast | Destruction of a resting place **Biological record data:** No records. **Aquatic habitat suitability (including ponds within 500m)** Great crested newts (GCN) exist in metapopulations and are known to utilise ponds and their connecting terrestrial habitat during their life cycle; great crested newts are typically found within terrestrial habitats up to 500m from breeding ponds (Langton et al. 2001). There are no ponds on the site, but a review of aerial imagery (MAGIC and OS Maps) indicates the presence of a singular pond within 500m; the pond (P1) is located ~360m northeast of the site and is situated on the far side of the Briestfield Beck River. This landscape feature is likely to represent a significant barrier to dispersal due to water flow, eliminating connectivity to the site for great crested newts. **Terrestrial habitat suitability** The site provides limited suitable terrestrial habitat for amphibians given the majority of the site is comprised of poor-quality grassland with a short sward height, hardstanding and bare ground. These habitats are suboptimal as they do not offer a vegetational structure to shelter amphibians as they commute across the land. The scrub lines offer optimal habitat for dispersal, foraging and refuge.
Foreseen Impacts	Given the lack of suitably connected breeding ponds within 500m of the site, the presence of GCN on-site is considered unlikely and therefore impacts to amphibians as a result of the proposed development are deemed to be acceptably low.

Recommendations	Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to great crested newts, further surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented for common amphibians during construction, including the following measures: • A staged approach will be adopted for vegetation clearance, whereby the vegetation will be strimmed to 15cm and left overnight to allow any amphibians to disperse. The vegetation can then be cleared to ground level and must be maintained at this level for the duration of construction to deter amphibians from the working area. • Any rubble piles will be dismantled by hand and debris and brash will be stored on pallets or removed from the site to prevent amphibians from utilising these areas. • Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby aquatic habitats that amphibians could use. • Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. • If any common amphibians are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance. • In the unlikely event that a great crested newt is identified, works must cease and advise must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist. **Suggested biodiversity enhancements** The site could be enhanced for amphibians post-development through creation of amphibian hibernacula using rubble and logs from site clearance. Information on how to construct a hibernaculum can be found here: https://www.wiltshirewildlife.org/hibernaculum
Badger	
Summary of Survey Findings	**Biological record data:** No records. No badger setts were noted on site or within a 30m radius of the site. Further, no evidence of foraging badgers was noted within the development area. The topography of the site is broadly level, and thus, unsuitable for sett making especially in light of the majority of the site being utilised for cattle grazing. However, the site was considered suitable for badger commuting and foraging habitat.
Foreseen Impacts	No works will be undertaken within 30m of a badger sett. Bramble scrub will be impacted and grassland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local badger populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of badgers, if present.

Recommendations	Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to badgers, further badger surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures: • A pre-commencement inspection of the site will be undertaken for any new badger activity if works do not commence within three months. • Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. • The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which badgers could use. • Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. In the unlikely event that a badger sett is identified, works must cease and advise must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist. **Suggested biodiversity enhancements** Planting fruit bearing trees and species-rich grassland to increase foraging opportunities for badgers.
Riparian animals	
Summary of Survey Findings	A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for otters or water voles within 2km of the site. There are no water courses on or connected to the site. There are also no riparian habitats present on site or within an influencing distance. **Biological record data:** No records.
Foreseen Impacts	No impacts are anticipated on riparian animals as a result of the proposed development.
Recommendations	None required.
Hazel dormouse	
Summary of Survey Findings	**EPSL data** A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for hazel dormice within 2km of the site. **Biological record data:** No records. **Habitat suitability** The site lies outside of the know current range for hazel dormice and there are no suitable habitats within the development area. As such it is considered likely that hazel dormice are absent from site.

Foreseen Impacts	No impacts are anticipated on hazel dormice as a result of the proposed development.
Recommendations	None foreseen.
Other e.g. hedgehog	
Summary of Survey Findings	**Biological record data:** No records. The bramble scrub, and tree lines onsite provides limited foraging and commuting opportunities for hedgehogs, with woodland habitat nearby.
Foreseen Impacts	Bramble scrub will be impacted and grassland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local hedgehog populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of hedgehogs, if present.
Recommendations	A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures: • Any areas of scrub or dense vegetation should be first searched by hand before clearing. • Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. • The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which hedgehogs could use. • Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. If any hedgehogs are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance. **Suggested biodiversity enhancements** The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for hedgehogs: • Planting fruit bearing trees and species-rich grassland to increase foraging opportunities. • Creation of brash piles or installation of hedgehog houses in shady areas. • Installation of gaps under boundary fencing to enable hedgehogs to move freely through the site.

Appendix 1: Habitat map

Appendix 2: Location map

Appendix 3: Proposed plans

M Worsley, Proposed Cattle Building at Healey Farm, Healey Lane, Briestfield, Dewsbury, WS12 0NT
Block Plan 1:1250 @ A4 April 2025

Promap
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Plotted Scale - 1:1250. Paper Size - A4

Appendix 4: Habitat Photos

Developed, sealed surface	
Photograph	Description
	Figure 1: Hardstanding on site
Artificial, unsealed, unvegetated surface	
Photograph	Description
	Figure 2: Artificial unsealed surface (bare ground)
Modified grassland	
Photograph	Description

	Figure 3: Modified grassland (cattle grazed)
Scattered trees	
Photograph	**Description**
	Figure 4: Example of scattered trees on site
Track	
Photograph	**Description**
	Figure 5: Track running through modified grassland to northeast of site
Bramble scrub	

Photograph	Description
	Figure 6: Bramble scrub on site
Line of trees	
Photograph	**Description**
	Figure 7: Line of trees on site

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Version control			
Status	Issue	Name	Date
Draft	0.1	Amber Williams BSc (Hons) MSc MPhil Graduate Ecologist	31/07/2025
Proof	0.2	Mel Reid BSc (Hons) MRes AMRSB, Principal Ecologist	13/08/2025
Final	1.0	Amber Williams BSc (Hons) MSc MPhil Graduate Ecologist	13/08/2025