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Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Survey site:

Hopstrine Farm, Huddersfield Road, Shelley, Huddersfield HD8 8NE

Client:

Mr James Eastwood

Survey date:

15th December 2025

Project:

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

“a new field access to B6116 Huddersfield Road at Shelley, near Huddersfield.”

[Unsubmitted]

Survey methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: [PEA Methodology and Legislation - 2024.](#)

The site survey was undertaken by Harry Webster BSc (Natural England Class 1 Bat Licence Holder: [2025-86736-CL17-BAT] and Natural England Class 1 Great Crested Newt Licence: [2025-83919-SCI-CL08])					
Date of survey	Temperature (°C)	Humidity (%)	Cloud Cover (%)	Wind (km/h)	Rain
15/12/2025	4	87	50	4	None
Executive Summary					
<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment will be required, whereby a minimum 10% gain will need to be demonstrated through use of the Defra Statutory Metric for area-based habitat units. • 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 • Site preparation and construction works should be completed in accordance with precautionary working methods for birds, bats, great crested newts, and hedgehogs, which are considered suitable to manage any potential breaches of legislation pertaining to these species considering the assessed low risk. 					
Survey limitations					
<p>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, and the known distribution of species as recovered during the searches of historical biological records.</p> <p>A biological records data search has not been undertaken. However, given the location of the site, the nature of the habitats present and the assessed suitability of the site for protected or notable species, it is not anticipated that the purchase of biological records data will add any significant weight or alter the conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report.</p> <p>Due to seasonal limitations, further survey within the optimal season for surveying vegetation would normally be required to obtain accurate habitat classification and condition assessment data. However, in the case of this site, the delays involved would likely be disproportionate to the predicted likely value of the habitat due to the only habitat identified on-site as scattered trees and modified grassland.</p>					

<p>Ecological Survey Factor</p> <p>Conclusion, Impact or Recommendations</p>	<p>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.</p>
<p>Habitats and plants (see habitat map in appendix 1, location plan in appendix 2, proposal plan in appendix 3 GCN Map in appendix 4, and photos in appendix 5).</p> <p>Botanical species are described with reference to the DAFOR scale (D = Dominant; A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional, R = Rare).</p>	
<p><i>Summary of Survey Findings</i></p> <p><i>(UKHab codes used)</i></p>	<p>The survey site is centred on National Grid Reference SE 22055 10918 and has an area of approximately 0.0024ha.</p> <p>The site is located at Hopstrine Farm, fronting the B6116 Huddersfield Road, within the village of Shelley, West Yorkshire. The site forms part of an established agricultural holding and is used as pasture, consistent with the wider rural character of the area. The surrounding landscape comprises a mixture of farmland, roadside vegetation, mature trees, and scattered residential properties.</p> <p>The application site relates specifically to a proposed new field access from Huddersfield Road and a short section of associated farm track within the field. The planning application area for the access itself is limited in extent, measuring approximately 23.65 square metres, and includes part of the existing highway verge, footway, and a low stone boundary wall at the edge of the highway.</p> <p>Habitats recorded on the site include:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • g4 (32) – Modified grassland with scattered trees • u1b – Developed land / sealed surfaces • u1e – Built linear features

	<p><u>Modified grassland [g4]</u></p> <p>The field beyond the highway boundary comprises modified grassland (UKHab g4), managed as pasture for agricultural use. The sward is species-poor and dominated by common agricultural grasses, maintained through grazing and/or cutting. Species recorded include perennial rye grass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>) (A), creeping buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>) (F), ribwort plantain (<i>Plantago major</i>) (F), and dandelion species (<i>Taraxacum</i> sp.) (F).</p> <p>Condition assessment – poor</p> <p>There are fewer than 6-8 vascular plant species per m² present (fail). Sward height is not varied (fail). Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area (pass). Physical damage is evident in more than 5% of total grassland area (fail). Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (pass). Cover of bracken is less than 20% (pass). There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA4) (pass).</p> <p><u>Developed land / sealed surfaces [u1b]</u></p> <p>Areas of developed land are present in association with the proposed access from Huddersfield Road.</p> <p><u>Scattered trees [32]</u></p> <p>An elder tree is found in the middle of the site, growing in an area of collapsed drystone wall.</p> <p>Condition assessment - moderate</p> <p>The tree has a stem diameter at breast height of 7cm and is approximately 4.5m in height. The tree is a native species (pass). The tree canopy is predominantly continuous (pass). The tree is not yet fully mature (fail). There is little or no</p>
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	<p>evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity) (pass). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height (pass). Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are not present (fail). More than 20% of the tree canopy area is not currently oversailing vegetation beneath (fail).</p> <p><u>Built linear features [u1e]</u></p> <p>A drystone wall which has partially collapsed separates the grassland and hardstanding. A post and rail fence runs parallel to the collapsed wall, forming a field boundary.</p> <p><u>Local habitats</u></p> <p>A review of the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) database was completed to determine the presence of protected and/ or notable habitats within 2km of the site. Protected and/ or notable habitats recorded within 2km and their nearest distance from the site are detailed below.</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • Deciduous woodland – adjacent east boundary • Ancient woodland – located 0.5km to the north • Good quality semi-improved grassland – located 1.6km to the southwest
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	<p>The site</p> <p>The habitats on site are widespread and not notable.</p> <p>Local habitats</p> <p>Slight impacts are foreseen on the deciduous woodland adjacent the eastern boundary from the construction or operation of the development if left unmitigated (dust, litter, surface run off etc).</p>

<i>Recommendations</i>	<p>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.</p> <p>A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment may be required, whereby a minimum 10% gain will need to be demonstrated through use of the Defra Statutory Metric for area-based habitat units. However the development may fall under the de minimis threshold for BNG.</p>
Locality and Designated Sites	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	<p>The site is not subject to any designation, and there are no known statutory sites within 2km.</p> <p>The site lies within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for Dark Peak SSSI.</p> <p>No national network sites (SAC, SPA, Ramsar) are located within 10km.</p>
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	The site is within the IRZ for Dark Peak SSSI, but the proposed development type is unlikely to have a harmful effect on terrestrial SSSIs.
<i>Recommendations</i>	None required
Invasive / Non-native species	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	No problematic invasive and non-native species recorded on site.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	N/A

<i>Recommendations</i>	No further surveys but remain vigilant.
Invertebrates	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	No habitat for protected or notable invertebrates is found on site.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	None foreseen.
<i>Recommendations</i>	No further surveys.
Bats	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	<p>EPSL Data</p> <p>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. No EPSLs are present within a 2km radius of the site.</p> <p>Roosting bats (trees)</p> <p>T1 lacks structural features considered suitable to support roosting bats such as rot holes, hazards beams, linear faults, upturned bark, and wood packer holes. As such, T1, which is proposed to be removed to facilitate new site access, is assessed to provide negligible value to support roosting bats.</p> <p>Foraging and commuting bats</p>

	The site itself is small and insignificant in comparison to the adjacent woodland. Bats could use the edges of the surrounding wooded areas for foraging and commuting. These could also be used by bats dispersing from nearby roosts outside of the site and commuting around the area.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	The proposed development will not directly impact suitable roosting or foraging habitat. However, there is potential for indirect impacts to foraging and commuting bats at the adjacent woodland during the construction and operational phases of the development through increased disturbance associated with airborne particles and noise.
<i>Recommendations</i>	No further surveys are required. Best practice pollution prevention measures in accordance with guidance detailed within Environmental Agency Pollution Prevention Guidance Notes 6: Working on Construction and Demolition Sites must be adhered to in order to prevent indirect impacts to retained habitats of value to roosting, foraging, and commuting bats
Birds	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	No evidence of nesting birds was found on site during the surveys; however, birds could use the scattered trees as a nest building resource. No habitat for schedule 1 birds was observed.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	The proposed development could result in the destruction or the disturbance and subsequent abandonment of active bird nests.
<i>Recommendations</i>	Any vegetation removal should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the vegetation should be undertaken immediately, by a qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged.

	<p>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.</p> <p>Suggested biodiversity enhancements</p> <p>No space to accommodate nesting boxes.</p>
Reptiles	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	<p>EPSL Data</p> <p>A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for protected reptiles within 2km of the site.</p> <p>Habitat suitability</p> <p>There is no suitable habitat present on site for reptiles due to a lack of habitats such as scrub and rank grassland which would offer refuge for these species. Further, the site is located adjacent a busy road, which is considered sub-optimal for reptile migration and therefore reptiles are considered unlikely to migrate from any nearby suitable habitats to the development site. As such it is likely that reptiles are absent from the development site.</p>
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	No impacts are anticipated on reptiles as a result of the proposed development.
<i>Recommendations</i>	None required.
Amphibians	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	EPSL and survey data

	<p>A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for great crested newts within 2km of the site. However, one positive class survey licence return or DLL historic survey data (2017 – 2019) is present within 2km of the site, located 0.7km to the southeast.</p> <p>Aquatic habitat suitability (including ponds within 500m)</p> <p>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).</p> <p>There are no ponds on the site, but a review of aerial imagery (MAGIC and OS Maps) indicates the presence of five ponds within 500m; pond P1 is located ~35m northeast, P2 is 180m southwest, P3 is 360m south, P4 is located 280m northwest, and P5 is located 310m northwest. The location of these ponds is illustrated on the plan in Appendix 4.</p> <p>Ponds P2 and P3 are not considered to be functionally linked to the site due to the separation by Huddersfield Road, which is a busy tarmac road with high kerbs. This landscape feature is considered to represent a barrier to GCN dispersal. P1, P4, and P5 have potential terrestrial connectivity to the site due to an absence of definitive barriers to dispersal. None of the ponds could be inspected during the survey due to access restraints.</p>
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	<p>When georeferencing the proposed development plans over scaled mapping of the site, it is noted that the development area is likely to result in the loss or significant disturbance of 0.0019ha of grassland. If great crested newts are present within the pond 35m to the northeast of the site, when completing the rapid risk assessment published by Natural England (Natural England 2015), the proposed development produces a green risk score, which states: Offence Highly Unlikely (see Figure 1 below).</p>

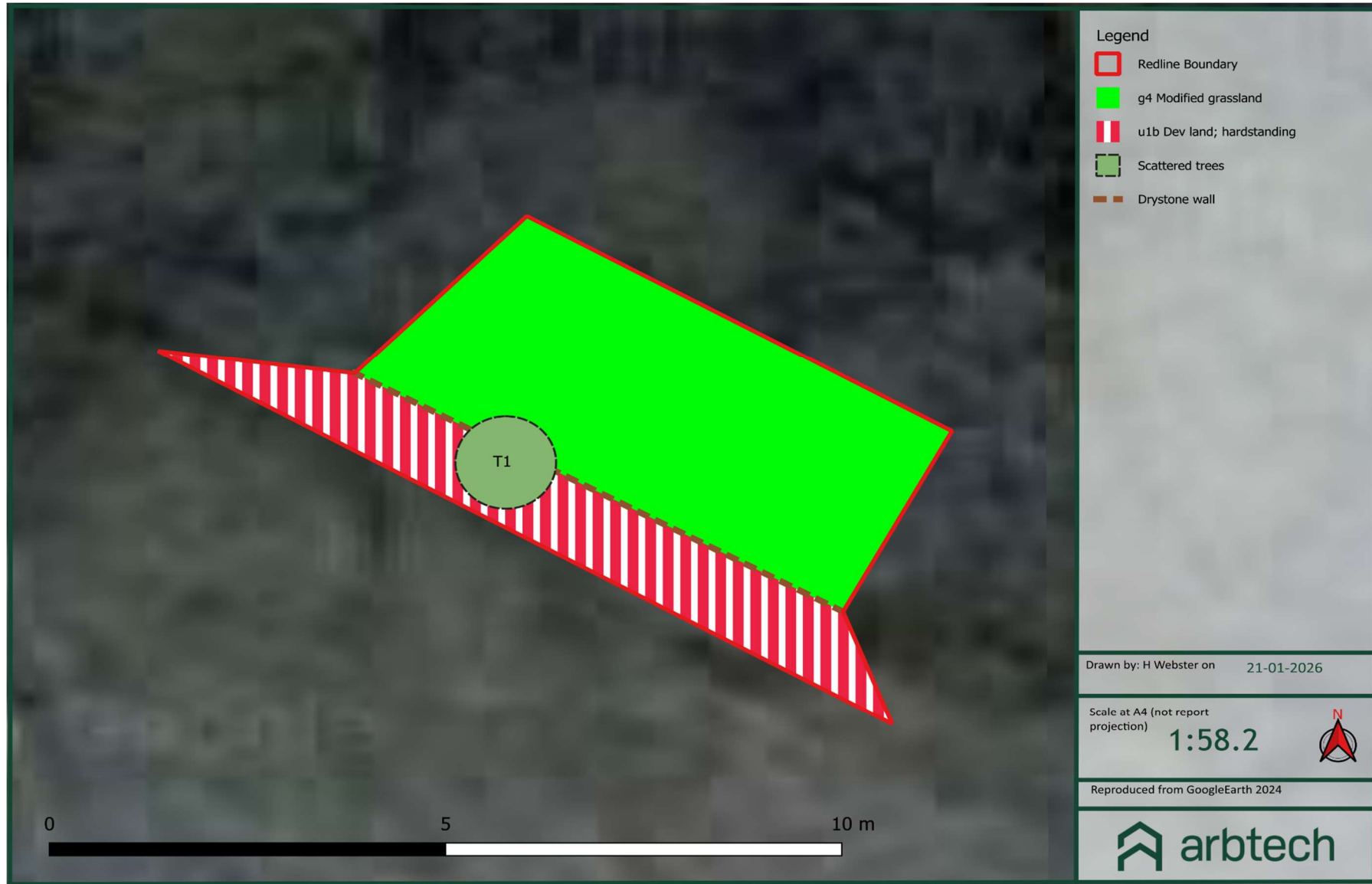
	Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability score
	Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
	Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	0.001 - 0.01 ha lost or damaged	0.05
	Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.001 - 0.01 ha lost or damaged	0.005
	Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0
	Individual great crested newts	No effect	0
		Maximum:	0.05
	Rapid risk assessment result:	GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY	
	<i>Figure 1: Natural England GCN Rapid Risk Assessment Tool</i>		
<i>Recommendations</i>	<p>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:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. 		

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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.
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	
<i>Recommendations</i>	<p>Basic precautionary mitigation during works is recommended:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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 habitats which badgers could use. South and west boundaries.

	<ul style="list-style-type: none"> Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations.
Riparian animals	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	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.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	No impacts are anticipated on riparian animals as a result of the proposed development.
<i>Recommendations</i>	None required.
Hazel dormouse	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	<p>EPSL data</p> <p>A review of the MAGIC database returned no granted EPSL records for hazel dormice within 2km of the site.</p> <p>Habitat suitability</p> <p>Dormice typically utilise a three-dimensional habitat structure as to commute between feeding and breeding sites whilst avoiding predation. As such habitats on site are considered unsuitable for hazel dormice and therefore the likelihood of this species being present on site is considered acceptably low. Although a woodland is located adjacent to the east boundary, there is no suitable dormouse habitat on the site itself.</p>

<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	No impacts are anticipated on hazel dormice as a result of the proposed development.
<i>Recommendations</i>	None.
Hedgehog	
<i>Summary of Survey Findings</i>	The grassland onsite provides foraging and commuting opportunities for hedgehogs, with woodland habitat nearby.
<i>Foreseen Impacts</i>	The grassland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitat 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.
<i>Recommendations</i>	<p>a precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none"> • 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. <p>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.</p>

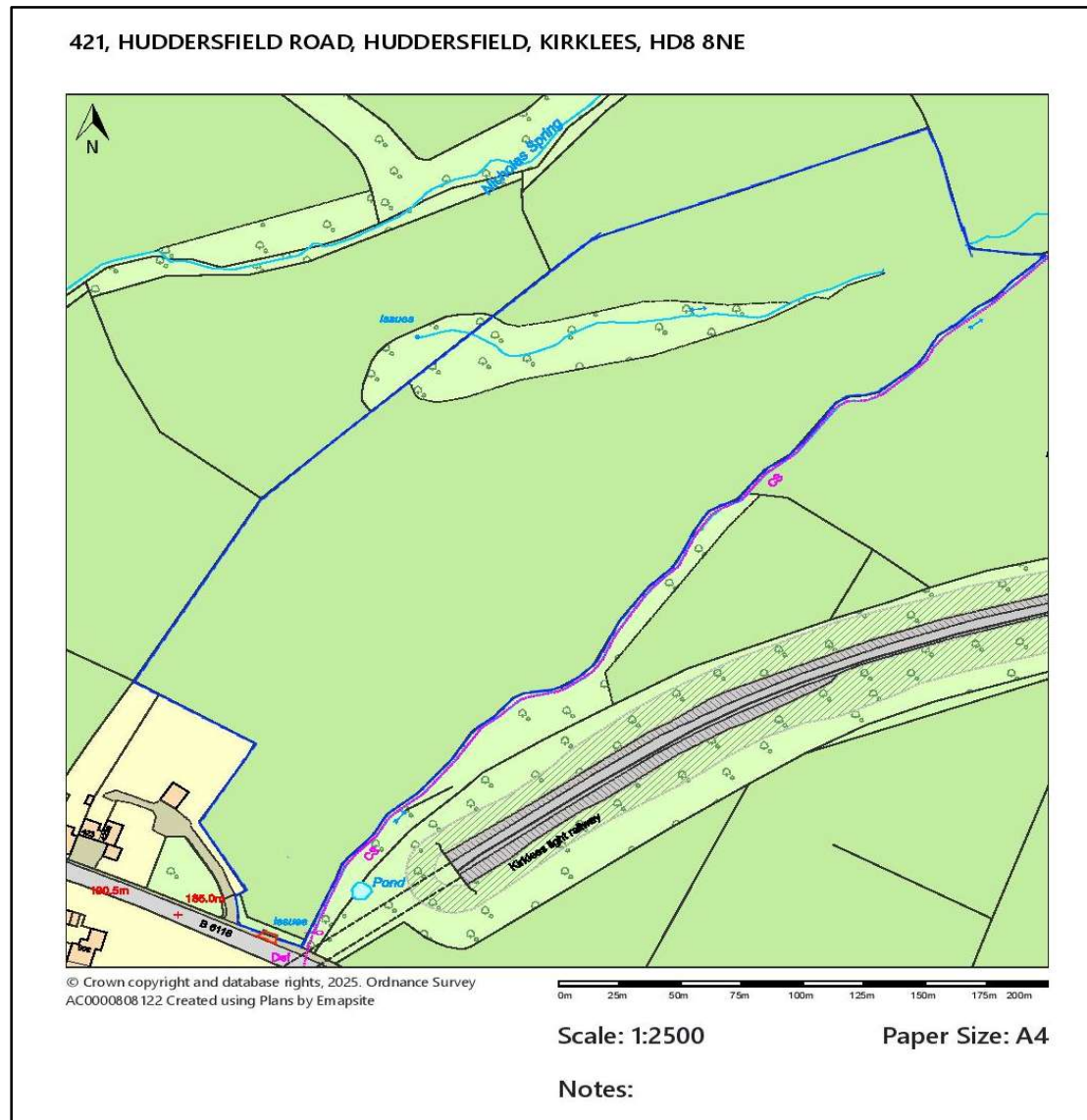
Appendix 1: Survey/Habitat map



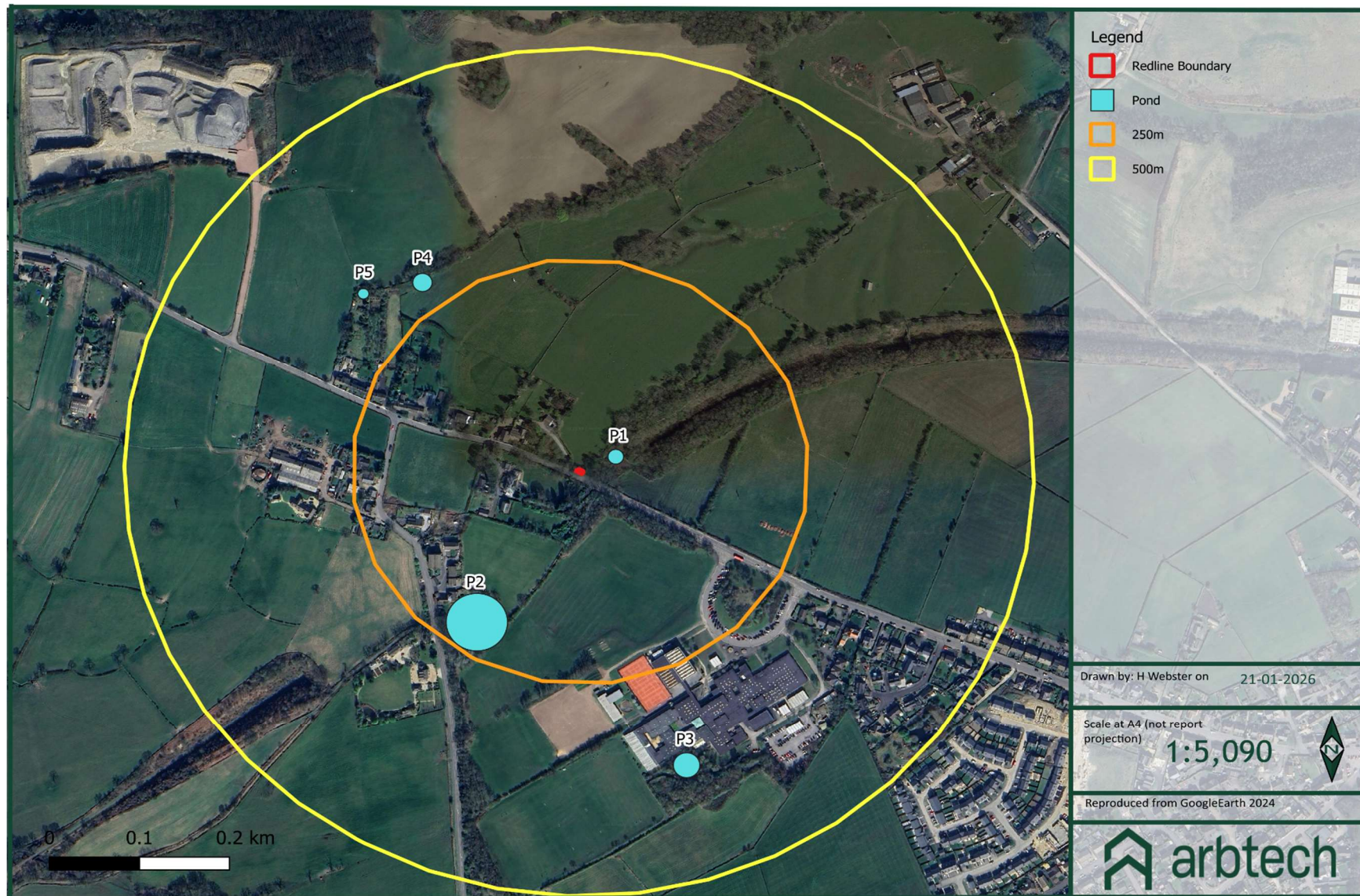
Appendix 2: Location map




Appendix 3: Proposed plan




Appendix 4: GCN Map




Appendix 5: Photos

Photograph	Description
	<p data-bbox="1272 810 1890 837">Figure 1: Collapsed drystone wall and post and rail fence</p>

Photograph	Description
	<p data-bbox="1245 762 1917 794">Figure 2: T1, a semi mature elder tree at the centre of the site</p>

Photograph	Description
	<p data-bbox="1265 766 1904 798">Figure 3: Modified grassland at the north section of the site</p>

Photograph	Description
 A photograph showing a post and rail fence in the foreground, a drystone wall in the middle ground, and a road with trees in the background. The fence consists of wooden posts and wire. The drystone wall is made of stacked stones. In the background, there is a road with a car and a sign that says 'Stelmington'. There are many bare trees, suggesting a winter or late autumn setting.	<p data-bbox="1243 726 1915 758">Figure 4: Post and rail fence to the north of the drystone wall</p>

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Draft	0.1	Harry Webster BSc (Hons), Consultant Ecologist	21/01/2026
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