



ECOLOGY AND BIODIVERSITY

A full Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA) will be carried out. This will identify any potential ecological features that could be affected by the proposed development. All mitigation and/or enhancement measures identified will be included in the scheme design.

The following surveys have been carried out in advance of the EcIA:

- **Habitat Surveys:** These surveys assess the types of plants and natural features present on the site and its surroundings. They help identify any important areas that need to be protected or enhanced.
- **Wildlife Surveys:** Surveys have been conducted to check for the presence of key species, such as badgers, otters, beavers, bats, water voles and birds. These surveys ensure that the development does not harm local wildlife and their habitats.
- **Water and Wetland Surveys:** Assessments have been made of nearby streams, ponds, and other wet areas to understand their ecological value and the species they support. These areas will be carefully managed to avoid any negative impacts from the project.
- **Breeding Bird Surveys:** Conducted from May to July 2024, these surveys focused on identifying bird species using the site for breeding. The surveys revealed the presence of both ground-nesting and tree-nesting species. Wader species were also recorded, and it was noted that the site may serve as a foraging area for pink-footed geese during the winter months.
- **Great Crested Newt (GCN) Habitat Assessment:** An initial habitat suitability assessment and eDNA testing were completed in spring 2024. The assessment confirmed the likely absence of great crested newts on the site and in ponds within 250m of the boundary.
- **Extended Habitat Surveys:** A comprehensive habitat survey was carried out, mapping key ecological features across the site. The survey identified areas of neutral grasslands, ditches, and nearby watercourses. These habitats provide important ecological functions, supporting species such as reed canary grass and other aquatic plants, which are valuable for biodiversity.

The results of these surveys will help shape the final design of the development, ensuring that the project is both environmentally friendly and supports local biodiversity.

MITIGATION AND ENHANCEMENT MEASURES:

Based on the findings from these surveys, mitigation strategies will be put in place to protect key ecological features. For example:

- **Buffer zones** will be established around important habitats, such as watercourses, to protect otter and water vole populations.
- Where necessary, **new trees will be planted** to support bat foraging and to enhance habitat connectivity across the site.
- A **Biodiversity Enhancement and Management Plan (BEMP)** will be developed to outline measures that will improve local biodiversity, such as creating wildflower meadows and maintaining habitat corridors for wildlife movement.