



Bellway Homes LTD.

**Land off Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green**

**Colchester**

**REPRESENTATIONS IN RESPECT OF ECOLOGY**

January 2023

**FPCR Environment and Design Ltd**

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

- 1.1 The following report has been prepared on behalf of Bellway Homes Ltd. and provides an assessment of the ecological interest of, and potential for biodiversity net gain on, a site located off Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green, Colchester (hereafter referred to as 'the Site').
- 1.2 FPCR Ltd. is a multi-disciplinary environmental and design consultancy established over 60 years, with expertise in architecture, landscape, ecology, arboriculture, masterplanning, urban design and environmental impact assessment. The practice is a member of the Landscape Institute and Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment and is frequently called upon to provide expert evidence on landscape and visual issues at Public and Local Plan Inquiries.

### **Site Context**

- 1.3 The Site comprises of land covering c.7.09 hectares located off Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green, Colchester and extends across two arable fields and a smaller area of woodland. Further arable land lies adjacent to the site to the north, south, and west. To the east is the urban extent of Eight Ash Green, beyond which lies further arable land.

### **Development Proposals**

- 1.4 The Site will be put forward to the Colchester City Council to be allocated within the emerging Local Plan for residential development.

### **Scope of Report**

- 1.5 This Ecological Representations report describes the likely current ecological interest within and around the Site, which has been identified through standard desk- and field-based investigations. It then considers the potential ecological impacts and opportunities for ecological enhancement that could arise from residential development at the Site in the context of relevant legislation and planning policy. Finally, it identifies the likely necessary additional surveys required as well as measures to avoid, mitigate or provide compensation for potential impacts, and the mechanisms for securing such measures.

## 2.0 METHODOLOGY

### Desk Study

- 2.1 In order to compile existing baseline information, relevant ecological information was requested from both statutory and non-statutory nature conservation organisations including:
- Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside website ([www.magic.gov.uk](http://www.magic.gov.uk)); and
  - Bedford & Luton Biodiversity Recording and Monitoring Centre.
- 2.2 Further inspection, using colour 1:25,000 base maps ([www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk](http://www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk)) and aerial photographs ([maps.google.co.uk](http://maps.google.co.uk)), was also undertaken to provide additional context and identify any features of potential importance for nature conservation in the wider countryside.
- 2.3 The search area for biodiversity information was related to the significance of sites and species and the potential zones of influence (Zol)<sup>1</sup>, as follows:
- 10km around the Site for sites of International importance (e.g. Special Area of Conservation [SAC], Special Protection Area [SPA] and Ramsar);
  - 2km around the Site for sites of National or Regional Importance (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest [SSSI] and National Nature Reserves [NNRs]);
  - 1km around the Site for sites of County Importance (e.g. Local Nature Reserves [LNRs], Local Wildlife Sites [LWS]; and for species records (e.g.: protected, UK priority or notable species).
- 2.4 The desk study results are summarised in **Figure 1** and are discussed within the relevant sections of this report.

### Extended Phase I Survey

- 2.5 The Site (outlined in **Figure 1**) was surveyed by an appropriately experienced and qualified ecologist on 18<sup>th</sup> December 2023.
- 2.6 Survey methods broadly followed the Extended Phase 1 Survey technique as recommended by Natural England<sup>2</sup>. This involved a systematic walk over of the Site to classify the broad habitat types and to particularly identify any habitats of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity as listed within Section 41 (S41) of Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006<sup>3</sup>.
- 2.7 Whilst December is outside of the optimal survey period for habitats, given the arable and intensively managed nature of the site it is considered unlikely that on-site habitats have been undervalued. The purpose of the site survey was to provide high level information required on habitat categories, and to assess the need for further survey information should an application be brought forward, therefore the timing is not considered a material constraint to the high-level assessment and recommendations presented in this document.

### Protected Species Surveys

- 2.8 Throughout the habitat survey, consideration was given to the actual or potential presence of protected species, such as (although not limited to) those protected under the Wildlife and

<sup>1</sup> Zone of Influence - the areas and resources that may be affected by the proposed development.

<sup>2</sup> JNCC. 1990. *Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey – a technique for environmental audit*. Peterborough: JNCC

<sup>3</sup> *The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006*. [Online]. London: HMSO Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/2006/16/contents>

Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), the Protection of Badgers Act 1992, and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Consideration was also given to the existence and use of the Site by other notable fauna such as species of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity under S41 of the NERC Act 2006, or Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC)<sup>4</sup> Red listed species.

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<sup>4</sup>Stanbury, A., Eaton, M., Aebischer, N., Balmer, D., Brown, A., Douse, A., Lindley, P., McCulloch, N., Noble, D., and Win, I., 2021 "Birds of Conservation Concern 5: The status of our bird populations: the fifth Birds of Conservation Concern in the United Kingdom, Channel Islands and Isle of Man and Second IUCN Red List assessment of extinction risk for Great Britain" *British birds* 114: 723-747.

## 3.0 RESULTS

### Statutory Designations

- 3.1 As shown in **Figure 1**, the Site itself is not covered by any statutory designations and there are no national or local statutory designations within 2km of it.
- 3.2 There are three international statutory designations within the potential Zol of the Site.

#### Abberton Reservoir RAMSAR/SPA

- 3.3 Abberton Reservoir comprises a large, shallow freshwater body within a shallow valley, located c.7.3km southeast of the Site. This RAMSAR is designated for supporting species & populations of northern shoveler *Anas clypeata*, and Eurasian wigeon *Anas penelope*.

#### Colne Estuary and Blackwater Estuary RAMSAR/SPA and Essex Estuaries SAC

- 3.4 The Colne Estuary lies c.11.3km to the southeast of the Site. This is Phase 2 of the Mid Essex Coast RAMSAR/SPA. The Blackwater Estuary lies c.11.2km to the southeast of the Site. This is Phase 4 of the Mid Essex Coast RAMSAR/SPA. These sites also form part of the Essex Estuaries SAC.
- 3.5 The Colne Estuary and Blackwater Estuary SPA and RAMSAR areas are of international importance for wintering brent geese *Branta bernicla* and black-tailed godwit *Limosa limosa* and of national importance for breeding little terns and five other species of wintering waders and wildfowl.
- 3.6 The Essex Estuaries SAC is designated for the estuary habitats of mudflats and sandflats and their associated flora<sup>5</sup>.

### Non-Statutory Designations

- 3.7 Five non-statutory designations were identified within 1km of the Site (**Figure 1**): Fiddler's Wood LWS, Daisy Green Grove LWS, Seven Star Green LWS, Fordham Heath LWS, and Iron Latch and Woods LWS.
- 3.8 Fiddler's Wood LWS is located c.830m north-west of the Site boundary and consists of an area of ancient lowland mixed deciduous woodland and supports a small number of associated indicator species, including bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, and wood anemone *Anemone nemorosa*.
- 3.9 Daisy Green Grove LWS is located c.540m south-west of the Site boundary and consists of a small area of lowland mixed deciduous woodland with associated ground flora with a strong affinity to ancient woodland.
- 3.10 Seven Star Green LWS lies adjacent to the Site across the A1124, c.15m south of the Site boundary and comprises species-rich grassland and a small pond. It is partially designated as both Lowland Meadow, and Lowland Dry Acid Grassland.
- 3.11 Fordham Heath LWS is located c.140m to the northeast and comprises scrubby wood and acidic grassland, and heath to the south which supports a wide variety of herbaceous species.
- 3.12 Iron Latch and Woods LWS is located c.720m east of the Site boundary, and comprises coppice with standard woodland, an old unimproved meadow, and an area of former gravel pits

<sup>5</sup> <https://sac.jncc.gov.uk/site/UK0013690>

supporting ponds, scrub, and secondary woodland. The site includes wet woodland and MG5 NVC communities.

### **Habitats**

3.13 The habitats recorded during the habitat survey are discussed in detail below and are shown on **Figure 2**.

3.14 The Site predominantly comprised arable field parcels bounded by improved grassland verges, wet ditches, and hedgerows.

### **Cultivated/Disturbed – Arable Land**

3.15 Most of the Site was managed as arable land.

### **Improved Grassland**

3.16 There were narrow field margins along the eastern, southern and western site boundaries comprising species-poor improved grassland dominated by perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, with occasional cock's-foot *Dactylus glomerata*. Despite the December timing of the survey these margins were very green and the sward still very dense, indicating high nutrient levels.

### **Semi-natural Broadleaved Woodland**

3.17 A small area of woodland on the northern site boundary predominantly comprised semi-mature English oak *Quercus robur* and holly *Ilex aquifolium*. Only limited natural regeneration and age class diversity was noted within this woodland.

### **Hedgerows**

3.18 The Site is bound to the northeast and southwest by five hedgerows, the majority of which (H1 and H5) were hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* dominated. Hedgerow to the south (H2-H4) was taller and thicker in structure and included a small number of associated trees.

### **Wet Ditch**

3.19 Three wet ditches were recorded along the northern, southern and eastern boundaries of the arable fields (D1, D2 and D3). A drainage ditch along the northern boundary (D1) had a slow, shallow (<10cm) laminar flow, and was overshadowed by adjacent woodland and hedgerow.

### **Dry Ditch**

3.20 Two dry ditches were recorded within the Site (D4 and D5), one along the southern boundary, and one separating the two fields through the centre of the Site. Both supported improved grassland species, primarily perennial ryegrass with occasional cock's-foot.

### **Fauna**

3.21 A summary of the protected and notable species records returned during the desk study is provided in **Figure 1**.

### **Bats**

3.22 Records of two bat species were returned from within 1km of the Site: common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*. The closest record of each

species was located approximately 460m north-west of the Site. No records of any Annex II bat species were returned.

#### Roosting

- 3.23 The Site contains no buildings.
- 3.24 The woodland included two trees with low potential to support roosting bats as shown on **Figure 2**.

#### Foraging/commuting

- 3.25 The Site was deemed to have moderate suitability to support foraging and commuting bats as the perimeter woodland, wet ditches and hedgerows all provide suitable foraging habitat for bats and provide habitat links to areas of off-site woodland within the wider area.
- 3.26 The Site itself is not considered likely to be of high strategic significance to bats locally.

#### **Breeding Birds**

- 3.27 Several bird species records were returned during the desk study including the farmland specialists skylark *Alauda arvensis* and yellow hammer *Emberiza citronella* for which the Site does provide suitable habitat. The remainder of the records returned are of relatively generalist and widespread species, see **Figure 1**.
- 3.28 The boundary hedgerows and trees are also likely to support a range of common and widespread breeding bird species, though the surrounding woodland areas are considered to provide higher quality habitat.

#### **Amphibians**

- 3.29 Great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* records were returned from the local area as shown on **Figure 1**. There are no ponds within the Site boundary, however nine ponds were identified within 500m of the Site, the closest of which is c.70m south of the Site, as shown on **Figure 3**. Whilst the predominant habitats are unsuitable for GCN, field perimeter habitats including the hedgerows, ditches, and woodland are suitable for GCN. Therefore, amphibians including great crested newt are considered to be potentially present within on-site habitats.

#### **Reptiles**

- 3.30 Existing common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, and grass snake *Natrix helvetica* records were returned during the desk study, as shown on **Figure 1**.
- 3.31 The Site has very limited suitability for reptiles, being dominated by arable habitat. The hedgerows, ditches and woodland provide some limited suitable habitat for common reptile species such as grass snake and slow worm, however are considered unlikely to support a viable population.

#### **Badger**

- 3.32 Badger records were returned during the desk study including one record from within the Site.
- 3.33 Eight further records were identified within 1km of the Site, the closest of which is located c.380m to the north. No information was provided by the local records centre regarding the nature of the dataset (i.e. sett, or sighting).

- 3.34 Evidence of badgers was observed during the phase 1 habitat survey. Two badger setts were recorded within the Site (TN1 and TN2, see **Figure 2**). Both setts were appeared to be inactive, however the presence of snuffle holes were noted throughout the woodland confirming badgers access the site to forage.

**Other Notable Mammals**

- 3.35 Records for hedgehog *Erinaceous europaeus* were returned during the desk study from within the Site as shown on **Figure 1**. The woodland and hedgerows of the Site provide suitable foraging and sheltering habitat for hedgehog, hence small numbers of individuals are assumed to be present.

**Invertebrates**

- 3.36 A number of notable invertebrate species, particularly moths were returned during the desk study, as shown on **Figure 1**. A majority of these were Priority moth species with a smaller number of butterfly species recorded at TL 94355 25953, approximately 100m east of the Site. These are listed in **Table 1**.
- 3.37 White admiral *Limenitis camilla*, small heath *Coenonympha pamphilus* and blood vein *Timandra comae* were recorded in the wider area.

**Table 1. Priority Moths and Butterflies Recorded c.100m east of the Site**

| Latin name                    | Common name             | Latin name                      | Common name               |
|-------------------------------|-------------------------|---------------------------------|---------------------------|
| <i>Acronicta psi</i>          | Grey Dagger             | <i>Eugnorisma glareosa</i>      | Autumnal Rustic           |
| <i>Acronicta rumicis</i>      | Knot Grass              | <i>Euxoa nigricans</i>          | Garden Dart               |
| <i>Agrochola litura</i>       | Brown-spot Pinion       | <i>Euxoa tritici</i>            | White-line Dart           |
| <i>Agrochola lychnidis</i>    | Beaded Chestnut         | <i>Hemistola chrysoprasaria</i> | Small Emerald             |
| <i>Aleucis distinctata</i>    | Sloe Carpet             | <i>Hoplodrina blanda</i>        | Rustic                    |
| <i>Allophyes oxyacanthae</i>  | Green-brindled Crescent | <i>Hydraecia micacea</i>        | Rosy Rustic               |
| <i>Amphipoea oculea</i>       | Ear Moth                | <i>Idaea dilutaria</i>          | Silky Wave                |
| <i>Amphipyra tragopoginis</i> | Mouse Moth              | <i>Leucania comma</i>           | Shoulder-striped Wainscot |
| <i>Apamea anceps</i>          | Large Nutmeg            | <i>Limenitis camilla</i>        | White Admiral             |
| <i>Apamea remissa</i>         | Dusky Brocade           | <i>Lycia hirtaria</i>           | Brindled Beauty           |
| <i>Aporophyla lutulenta</i>   | Deep-brown Dart         | <i>Malacosoma neustria</i>      | Lackey                    |
| <i>Arctia caja</i>            | Garden Tiger            | <i>Melanchnra persicariae</i>   | Dot Moth                  |
| <i>Asteroscopus sphinx</i>    | Sprawler                | <i>Melanthia procellata</i>     | Pretty Chalk Carpet       |
| <i>Atethmia centrigo</i>      | Centre-barred Sallow    | <i>Mniotype adusta</i>          | Dark Brocade              |
| <i>Brachylomia viminalis</i>  | Minor Shoulder-knot     | <i>Noctua orbona</i>            | Lunar Yellow Underwing    |
| <i>Caradrina morpheus</i>     | Mottled Rustic          | <i>Orthonama vittata</i>        | Oblique Carpet            |
| <i>Chiasmia clathrata</i>     | Latticed Heath          | <i>Orthosia gracilis</i>        | Powdered Quaker           |

|                              |                              |                                 |                         |
|------------------------------|------------------------------|---------------------------------|-------------------------|
| <i>Cirrhia gilvago</i>       | Dusky-lemon Sallow           | <i>Rhizedra lutosa</i>          | Large Wainscot          |
| <i>Cirrhia icteritia</i>     | Sallow                       | <i>Satyrium w-album</i>         | White-letter Hairstreak |
| <i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i> | Small Heath                  | <i>Scotopteryx chenopodiata</i> | Shaded Broad-bar        |
| <i>Diarsia rubi</i>          | Small Square-spot            | <i>Spilosoma lubricipeda</i>    | White Ermine            |
| <i>Ecliptopera silaceata</i> | Small Phoenix                | <i>Spilosoma lutea</i>          | Buff Ermine             |
| <i>Ennomos erosaria</i>      | September Thorn              | <i>Tholera cespitis</i>         | Hedge Rustic            |
| <i>Ennomos fuscantaria</i>   | Dusky Thorn                  | <i>Tholera decimalis</i>        | Feathered Gothic        |
| <i>Ennomos quercinaria</i>   | August Thorn                 | <i>Timandra comae</i>           | Blood-Vein              |
| <i>Xanthorhoe ferrugata</i>  | Dark-barred Twin-spot Carpet | <i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>          | Cinnabar                |
|                              |                              | <i>Watsonalla binaria</i>       | Oak Hook-tip            |

- 3.38 The Site largely comprised intensively managed arable land and thus is unlikely to support a significant invertebrate assemblage. The woodland with associated wet ditch could however potentially support small numbers of notable invertebrate species, but no significant assemblage is likely.

## 4.0 ECOLOGICAL CONSTRAINTS AND OPPORTUNITIES

### Statutory Designations

- 4.1 Abberton Reservoir Ramsar site is designated for supporting species & populations of northern shoveler *Anas clypeata*, and Eurasian wigeon *Anas penelope* and comprises a large, shallow freshwater body within a shallow valley, located c.7.3km southeast of the Site.
- 4.2 Given the intervening distance the only potential impact on Abberton Reservoir is considered to be that brought about via increased recreation pressure. The reservoir is well set up for visitors and bird watchers<sup>67</sup> with walking routes, bird hides, shops and other facilities available. It is therefore considered that a development of this size will not result in a significant increase in recreation use over that which it already receives.

### Colne and Blackwater Estuaries RAMSAR/SPA and Essex Estuaries SAC

- 4.3 Colchester Borough has been identified as being located within the ZoI for the Essex Coast SPA (of which the Cole and Blackwater Estuaries form Phases 2 and 4) and Ramsar site. These areas also form part of the Essex Estuaries SAC.
- 4.4 The Essex Coast Recreational Disturbance Avoidance and Mitigation Strategy (RAMS)<sup>8</sup> identifies necessary measures to avoid and mitigate likely significant effects from recreational disturbance in-combination with other plans and projects. It implements a strategy of mitigation measures to alleviate the potential disruption to Habitats Sites caused by recreational visits. These strategic measures are to be funded through evidence-based developer contributions to ensure development is compliant with Habitats Regulations. To this end a financial contribution of £156.76 per dwelling will be required, to be secured by a Unilateral Undertaking which will be agreed and signed prior to the determination of the application.

### Non-Statutory Designations

- 4.5 There are five LWSs present within 1km of the Site.

### Recreational Pressure

- 4.6 There are no public rights of way (PRoWs) onto Daisy Green Grove LWS or Seven Star Green LWS. Whilst there are PRoWs to Fiddlers Wood, Fodham Heath and Iron Latch & Wood, it is unlikely that a development of this size would significantly increase recreational pressure over and above that which these already receive, especially if the greenspace within the Site is sensitively designed to accommodate a majority of recreational needs of the new residents.

### Land Take

- 4.7 The intervening distance between the Site and the neighbouring LWSs mean that direct land take and other direct impacts are also considered unlikely.

<sup>6</sup> <https://www.essexwt.org.uk/nature-reserves/abberton>

<sup>7</sup> <https://www.ebws.org.uk/birdsites/abberton-reservoir>

<sup>8</sup> Place Services and Essex County Council. Essex Coast Recreational disturbance Avoidance & Mitigation Strategy (RAMS) Habitats Regulations Assessment Strategy document 2018-2038. Available at <https://cbccrmdata.blob.core.windows.net/noteattachment/FINAL%20Essex%20Coast%20RAMS%20Strategy%20110119%20SH%20NMR%20v2%20150119.pdf>

**Other Impacts**

- 4.8 Standard good practice working measures for pollution control during construction and an effective surface water drainage plan will ensure the risk of potential impacts to the surrounding area is minimised.
- 4.9 No direct impacts upon non-statutory sites are anticipated as a result of the development.

**Habitats**

- 4.10 The degree to which habitats receive consideration within the planning system relies on a number of mechanisms, including:
- Inclusion within a specific policy, for example veteran trees, ancient woodland and linear habitats within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF);
  - A non-statutory site designation;
  - Habitats considered as habitats of principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity as listed within Section 41 (S41) of the NERC Act 2006, or
  - Habitats identified as being a Priority Habitat within the local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP).
- 4.11 The habitats identified during the survey which fall within the above listed categories are the hedgerows and associated trees. Whilst the semi-natural woodland is unlikely to meet the criteria for a Priority Habitat<sup>9</sup> (due to its small size and limited species and structural diversity) it is still considered to have ecological value at the Site level.
- 4.12 It is recommended that the hedgerows, mature trees and woodland be retained within the designated green space as far as possible. There is also scope for enhancement of the currently species-poor hedgerows via supplementary planting with mixed native species. These hedgerows can be incorporated into areas of green space that strengthen any existing, as well as create new, links to the surrounding area and the habitats it provides. Their incorporation as boundaries to private gardens should be avoided where possible.
- 4.13 Due to the low-quality arable habitat currently dominant at the Site, development at the Site has the potential to provide and enhance overall biodiversity within the green infrastructure by creating additional habitat types of local importance such as wetland areas (attenuation/SuDS features), mixed scrub, woodland areas and a range of high diversity grasslands.

**Fauna**

- 4.14 Further surveys are required to determine which faunal species utilise the Site, and the extent to which they are dependent on the Site. Habitat creation as described above would increase foraging and sheltering opportunities on the Site for a range of protected and notable species, including species not currently present.

**Bats**

- 4.15 The Site provides foraging and commuting opportunities along the hedgerows, woodland and ditches, as well as potential roosts within some of the mature trees. A majority of these opportunities can be retained within the Site proposals. The green infrastructure creation opportunities described above will enhance the permeability of the Site for bats and other fauna

<sup>9</sup> UK Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitat Descriptions Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland From: UK Biodiversity Action Plan; Priority Habitat Descriptions. BRIG (ed. Ant Maddock) 2008.

by providing stronger green links to the wider area. The enhanced habitat diversity, particularly the wetlands, woodlands and high diversity grasslands recommended will also enhance invertebrate diversity and thus foraging resources for bats.

- 4.16 As good practice, to minimise potential effects to the local bat population, artificial lighting at the peripheries of the Site and onto any retained or created green infrastructure should be carefully designed in order to minimise light spill onto these areas. This could be achieved through a combination of positioning of fittings/luminaires and other design features such as directional hoods/baffles, timers, low level bollards, etc., to maintain 'dark zones' in key locations and along habitat corridors.

### **Breeding Birds**

- 4.17 A majority of the breeding opportunities for birds within the Site can be readily retained within green infrastructure. Whilst there will be some loss of habitat for ground nesting birds as a result of development at the Site, there would continue to be abundant alternative suitable habitat surrounding the Site and throughout the local area.
- 4.18 The habitat creation opportunities described above will provide nesting opportunities for a range of bird species in the form of additional trees, hedgerow, grassland and scrub habitats. New wetland creation and planting of fruit and seed-bearing trees and shrubs will enhance food sources.
- 4.19 Further enhancements in the form of the provision of a variety of bird nest boxes on retained trees and/or new buildings would provide additional opportunities for a variety of species.

### **Amphibians**

- 4.20 Amphibians including GCN have potential to use the Site currently.
- 4.21 Further survey is required of the neighbouring waterbodies within 500m of the Site to determine presence/absence and thus likelihood of presence within the Site. Should GCN be deemed likely to be present on the Site during their terrestrial phase, the Site will require a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) or would need to join the Natural England District Licencing Scheme for Essex. It is considered that the scheme could provide the greenspace required for traditional (EPSL) licence mitigation, if required.
- 4.22 In addition, any new SuDS/attenuation features should where possible be sensitively designed to provide suitable breeding habitat and encourage further colonisation of the Site by GCN and other amphibians. Enhancement/creation and sympathetic management of grassland, scrub and woodland habitats could provide high quality terrestrial habitat that links these features, and it is recommended that the creation of wildlife ponds is incorporated into the site green infrastructure. Additional opportunities to provide enhancement for amphibians include the installation of log piles and hibernacula throughout green space in the vicinity of the SuDs/attenuation features or any wildlife ponds created.

### **Reptiles**

- 4.23 Grass snake and slow worm potentially currently use the boundaries of the Site in low numbers and these boundaries are recommended for retention and enhancement. Development of the Site has potential to increase the diversity and quality of habitat available to reptiles. Provision of green space at the site boundaries and linking to the surrounding valuable habitats off-site will

retain the site permeability for reptiles. There are additionally opportunities for the creation of sheltering and hibernation habitat through installation of hibernacula and log piles within the green space, especially around the SuDS.

### **Badger**

- 4.24 Two badger setts of inactive status were identified within the Site. There is scope to retain and buffer these setts or to create a new sett (under licence if closure of an active sett was necessary). Regular update surveys are recommended to monitor for any increase in badger activity level across the Site.
- 4.25 The scope for habitat creation within the greenspace is sufficient to enhance foraging opportunities for badger and ensure the Site remains permeable to the species, allowing access to the wider area.

### **Other Mammals**

- 4.26 It is considered that the potential for habitat creation at the Site as discussed above will also provide additional opportunities for hedgehog. Further enhancement such as provision of log piles or hedgehog houses could easily be incorporated into retained and created habitats.

### **Further Surveys**

- 4.27 A suite of further surveys will be required to accompany any future application on this Site. These include:
- Bat Activity Surveys (a combination of walked transects and static detectors);
  - Bat Roosting Surveys (of any trees deemed to have roost potential and require removal);
  - GCN Surveys (eDNA of ponds within 500m to the Site), and potentially also a series of presence/absence surveys.
  - Badger Survey (to determine the status of the existing setts);
  - Breeding Bird Survey (particularly for farmland specialists); and
  - Wintering Bird Surveys (due to the proximity of several RAMSARs designated for wintering bird populations).

## **5.0 CONCLUSIONS**

- 5.1 The desk- and field-based baseline investigations have demonstrated that the habitats present within and around the Site do not pose an 'in principle' constraint to residential development at the Site. Further surveys are required to determine the protected and notable species using the Site, but it is considered any required mitigation can realistically be included within the greenspace on a site of this size.
- 5.2 Development at the Site has the potential to increase the overall habitat diversity. This, in turn, will increase the diversity of faunal species that the Site can support. It is considered unlikely there are any protected or notable species or habitats present that cannot be accommodated, and additional opportunities provided for, within on-site green infrastructure.

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**Key**

- Site Boundary
- 1km Buffer
- 2km Buffer
- 10km Buffer
- Local Wildlife Site (LWS)
- Ancient Woodland
- Ramsar
- SAC
- SPA

- 1 - Fiddler's Wood, LWS, Ancient Woodland
- 2 - Daisy Green Grove, LWS
- 3 - Seven Star Green
- 4 - Fordham Heath
- 5 - Iron Latch and Woods
- 6 - Abberton Reservoir, Ramsar / SPA
- 7 - Blackwater Estuary Ramsar / SPA
- 8 - Colne Estuary Ramsar / SPA
- 9 - Essex Estuaries SAC

**Species Records**

- Grouped Invertebrate Records
- Blood-Vein
- Chinese Muntjac
- Common Frog
- Common Lizard
- Common Pipistrelle
- Grass Snake
- Great Crested Newt
- Slow-worm
- Small Heath
- Soprano Pipistrelle
- Hedgehog
- White Admiral

Appendix A: Notable & Protected Species Records of 1km Accuracy.



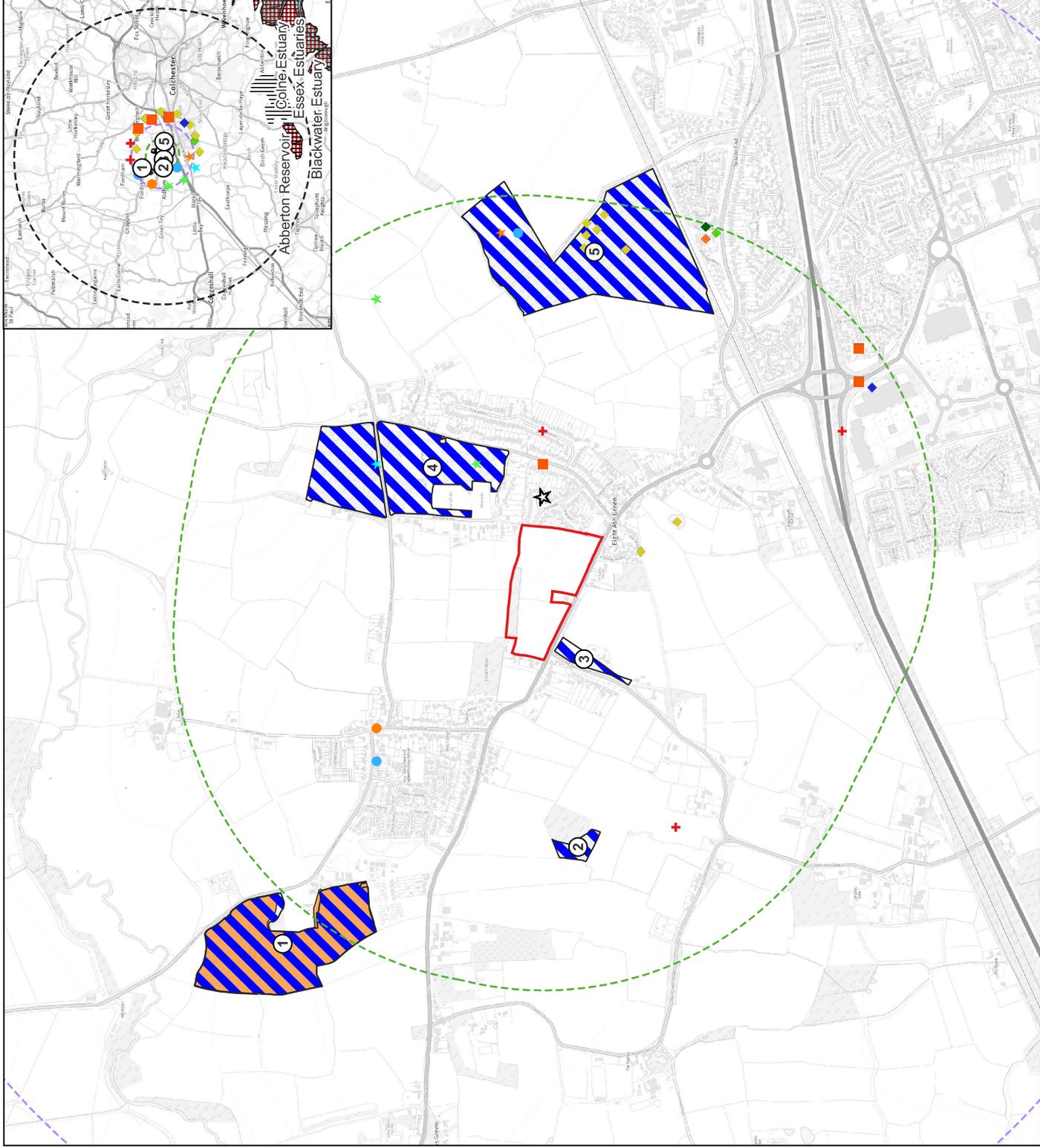
client  
**Bellway Homes LTD.**  
project  
Land off Halstead Road, Eight Ash Green,  
Colchester

drawing title  
**SITE LOCATION AND CONSULTATION RESULTS PLAN**

scale @ A3  
1:12000  
drawing / figure number  
KB / AH



**Figure 1**

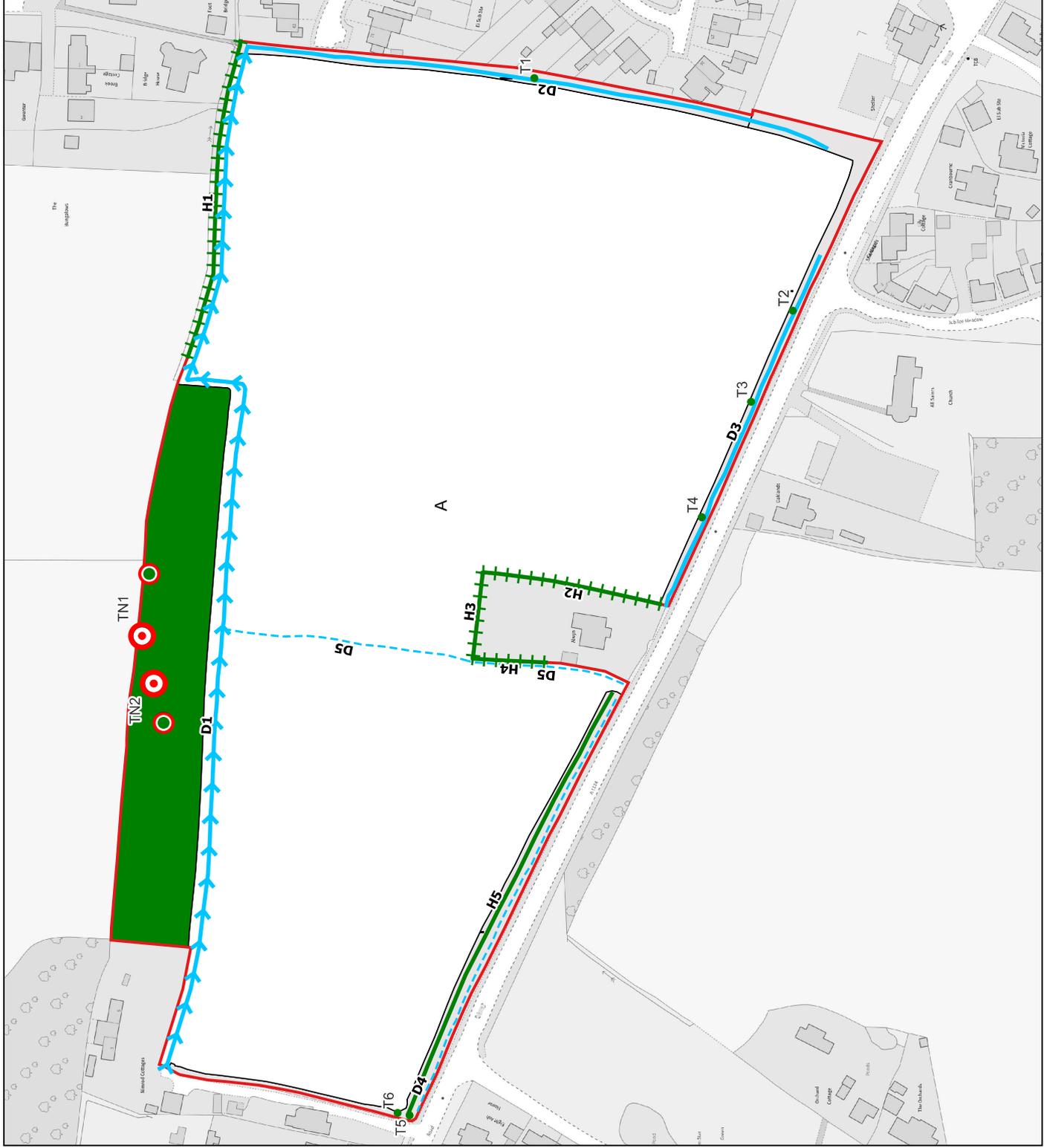


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**Key**

-  Site Boundary
-  Broadleaved woodland - semi-natural
-  Cultivated/disturbed land - arable
-  Improved grassland
-  Standing water
-  Running water
-  Intact hedge - species-poor
-  Hedge with trees - species-poor
-  Dry ditch
-  Tree with bat potential
-  Target note
-  Broadleaved tree



client  
**Bellway Homes LTD.**  
project  
Land off Halstead Road,  
Eight Ash Green, Colchester  
drawing title  
**PHASE 1 HABITAT PLAN**  
scale @ A3  
1:1500  
drawing / figure number  
FMH / AH  
issue code  
4/1/2024

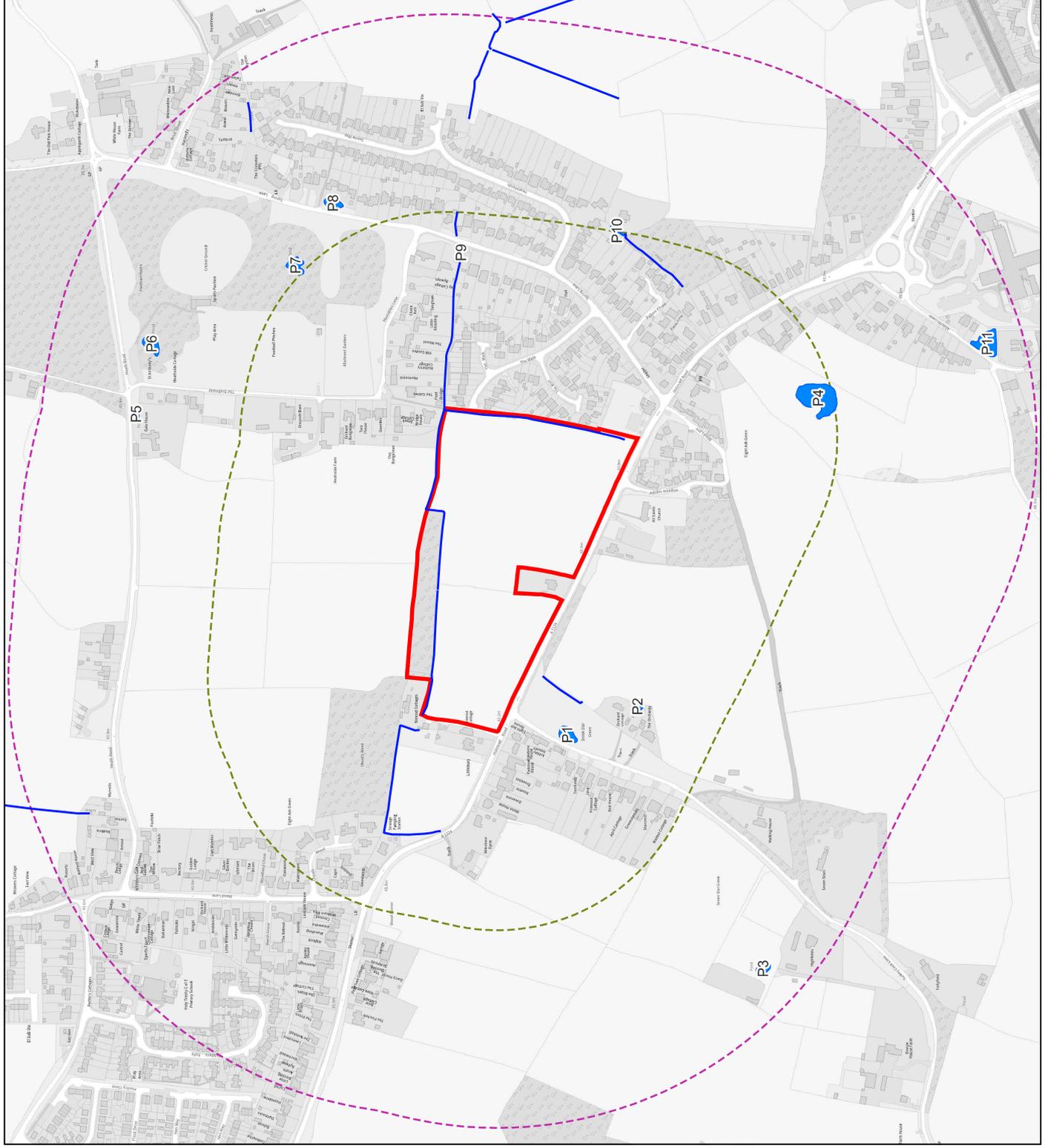


**Figure 2**

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- Key**
- Site Boundary
  - 250m Buffer
  - 500m Buffer
  - Waterbody
  - Ditch (lines)



client  
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project  
Land off Halstead Road,  
Eight Ash Green, Colchester  
drawing title  
**WATERBODY LOCATIONS PLAN**

scale @ A3  
1:5000  
drawing  
AH  
issue code  
4/1/2024  
REV



**Figure 3**