

Ecological Constraints & Opportunities Note

Land at Longstanton, Cambridgeshire

Hallam Land
27.01.2026

Introduction

The following note has been prepared by FPCR at the request of Hallam Land to identify potential ecological constraints and opportunities for a Site located at Longstanton, Cambridgeshire.

This assessment was supported by an ecological walkover survey completed in December 2025. As part of this exercise, the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Centre was consulted for existing ecological information within 2km of the Site, the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside was reviewed for statutory designations and the Local Nature Recovery Strategy Local Habitat Map for the adopted Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy¹ was reviewed for ecological priorities within the Site.

Desk Study

Existing ecological records have been received by the local environmental records centre (Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Environmental Centre), and online resource Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) were used to obtain an overview of statutory designations and identify any features of potential importance for nature conservation in the wider landscape.

One international statutory designated site was located within 10km of the site. Ouse Washes is the largest washland in the UK and is located c.8km north of the Site. It is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and RAMSAR site. Habitats located within the Ouse Washes include standing water, running water, bogs, marshes, fens and improved grassland. The site is of national importance for breeding ducks and waders, with large numbers of wintering waterbirds visiting each year.

Protected species records returned from within the Site boundary includes bird species, dunnoek, reed bunting, yellow wagtail, starling, plus common pipistrelle, common lizard, badger, water vole and otter (Figure 1).

Additionally, further bird and bat species, common toad, grass snake, great crested newts and brown hare records were returned from within a 2km from Site.

From review of the Local Nature Recovery Strategy Map, no 'Areas of particular importance for biodiversity (APIB)' are present within the Site. The watercourse and land within 50m of the watercourse in the western area of the Site is identified as an 'Areas that could become of importance for biodiversity (ACB)' (RD1A). This is not a statutory constraint to development, it only highlights potential enhancements which could be provided in this area.

On-Site Habitats

The site was largely dominated by cereal cropland. The northwestern parcel which lies east of Hatton's Road was sown with a winter bird seed mix at the time of survey (Figure 2).

Areas of grassland were limited to narrow field margins present throughout the Site. Grassland was also present on the bankside and at the top of the banks adjacent to the watercourse present in the western area of the Site. The grassland in these areas was influenced by the intensive agricultural management of the adjacent land, being species poor and managed with a short sward <10cm. From the completed survey

¹ Cambridgeshire & Peterborough Local Nature Recovery Strategy. Local Nature Recovery Strategy Local Habitat Map. Source: <https://experience.arcgis.com/experience/a1963a7dc51c4c259a8d19832b63f461>

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the grassland was assessed and likely to be a low-distinctive modified grassland (MG), currently in poor condition.

The watercourse to the west of the Site was relatively shallow for the majority of its length and was affected by the current management of the adjacent land. Other drainage ditches are present on the field boundaries. Whilst a number of these are associated with field boundary hedgerows, those on the northern boundary did not have associated hedgerows.

Other habitat types present across the Site were limited to field boundary hedgerows including hedgerow H3 which was identified as being 'important' under the Hedgerow Regulations, a small number of mature trees adjacent to the watercourse and associated with boundary hedgerows, bramble scrub and hard standing.

Fauna

Badgers

No badger setts or field evidence of badgers were identified within the site or within a 30m radius of the site (where accessible). Therefore, badgers currently do not pose a statutory constraint to proposals.

Bats

At the time of survey, there were no buildings on Site or trees with potential roosting features (PRFs).

The boundary hedgerows and the watercourse will provide suitable foraging areas and commuting routes for the local bat population but the intensively managed arable land is unlikely to provide a significant resource upon which the local bat population require for maintenance of the favourable conservation status.

Birds

Depending on the cropping regime, the arable land is likely to provide a foraging resource for overwintering birds. However, given the dominance of arable land in the wider environment, it is unlikely that loss of the resource would significantly affect the overwintering opportunities for the local assemblage.

In relation to breeding birds, the habitats will provide breeding opportunities for the local population. Depending on the cropping regime this could also include ground nesting species such as skylarks. Again, given the location in a predominantly arable landscape it is unlikely that the Site would provide a resource upon which the local population requires to maintain the wider population.

Great Crested Newts (GCN)

There are no ponds within the Site boundary, but several ponds are present in the wider environment. The intensively managed arable land is unlikely to provide a significant resource for the GCN if present in the wider environment.

Reptiles

The Site provided some resources to support reptiles within hedgerows and ditches, however the main interior of cropland is unlikely to support a viable reptile population. There is existing common lizard records from the southeast boundary associated with H3 but this is not unexpected for a site in the geographical location. Given the dominance of arable land present across the Site, it is unlikely that the Site will support a significant population of reptiles.

Water vole and Otter

No evidence of otter or water vole was identified over the survey. Records of both species have been provided along the watercourse in the western area of the Site. Given these records and the suitability of

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habitats along this watercourse, it is assumed both species will use this watercourse during the active period.

White-Clawed Crayfish

At the time of the survey, the on-Site watercourses did not show any suitability for White-clawed crayfish, and there were no existing records returned within 1km. Therefore, these taxa do not currently pose a statutory constraint to proposals.

Ecological Constraints & Opportunities

The Site is not covered by any statutory or non-statutory designations for nature conservation. The site is outside the 8Km 'Zone of Influence' of the Ouse Washes (SAC/SPA). Consequently, development of the Site is not expected to affect the integrity of this designation. Given this, it has been concluded that the development of the Site will not affect the conservation value of any statutory or non-statutory designations.

From the completed walkover survey, the Site majority of the Site is of low ecological importance, comprising intensively managed arable land. The watercourse to the west of the Site, the existing boundary hedgerows and mature trees / lines of trees are features of higher ecological importance.

The Illustrative Masterplan respects the features of higher ecological importance, retaining such features in significant Green Infrastructure (GI) corridors. As described above, the Local Nature Recovery Strategy identified the watercourse in the western area of the Site as an 'Areas that could become of importance for biodiversity (ACB)'. The specific enhancement strategy noted is RD1A, which aspires to establish natural or semi-natural buffer zones 50 metres wide adjacent to all river and streams. The purpose of these buffers is to enhance biodiversity and reduce sediment or pollutant run-off.

The Illustrative Masterplan demonstrates that the proposals can accommodate buffer zone of ranging between 60 – 20m along the length of the watercourse and habitat enhancements can be provided within these buffer zones. The removal of the intensive agricultural use adjacent to the watercourse and the provision of ecological enhancements include species rich grassland and scrub habitat in the buffer zone will be beneficial to the watercourse. These provisions will contribute to the aspiration of the Cambridgeshire and Peterborough Nature Recovery Strategy and result in beneficial effects to biodiversity as identified in the adopted strategy.

In addition to the provisions associated with the watercourse, the Illustrative Masterplan shows further significant GI corridor on the northern, eastern and southern elevations of the Site with additional green corridors through the proposals. Within these corridors the provision of a diverse range of wetland, woodland and grassland habitats with provide overall enhancement to ecological connectivity at a landscape level including to the watercourse identified in the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

Whilst great crested newts and reptiles maybe present in the wider environment, the habitats within the Site will not currently provide a significant resource to local populations. Given the size of the site and overall habitats provision within the Site, if these species were present, the proposals can provide an adequate resource which would mitigate and compensate for any effects.

From the completed assessment, the habitats within the Site are unlikely to provide a significant recourse for the local bat population and the proposals can provide significant benefits to the local population through the proposed habitat provision adjacent to the watercourse and the implementation of a sensitive lighting scheme. With the implementation of such provisions development of the Site could result in positive effects to the local bat population.

In terms of breeding and overwinter bird species, the habitat proposed in the overall Illustrative Masterplan would provide adequate mitigation and compensation for a general assemblage. The presence of a small population of ground-nesting species would not be considered to be a significant ecological constraint to development, given the context of the arable land in the wider landscape. Following further survey work, should detailed ecological survey work identify a notable number of ground-nesting species,

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some off-site compensation may be required. If required, the level of such compensation would be informed by further ecological survey work in support of a planning application.

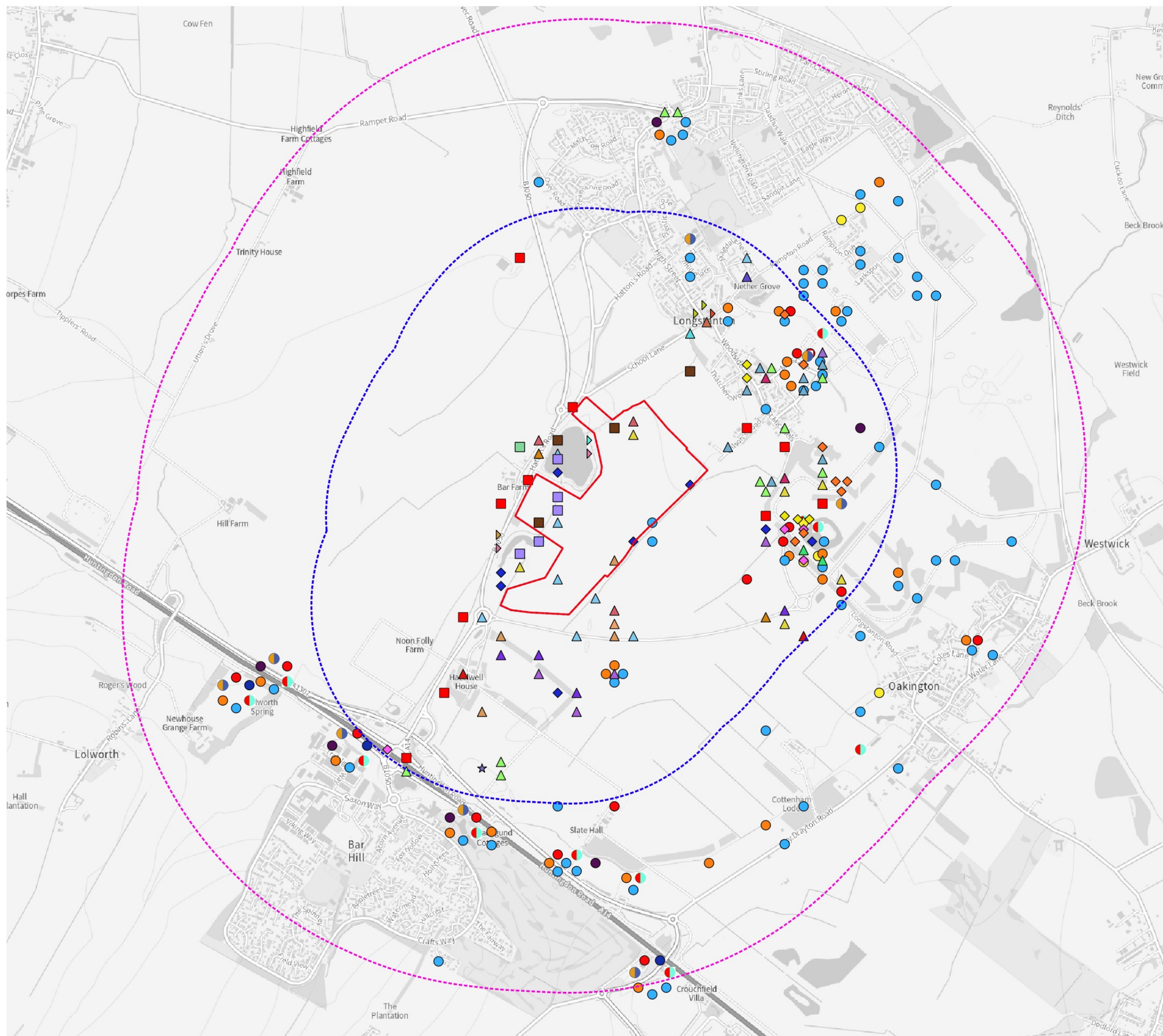
The presence of water vole and otter has been identified along the watercourse to the west of the Site. Whilst the presence of these species would be a statutory ecological constraint, the proposals adjacent to the watercourse offer significant opportunities to provide enhancements to both of these species.

Given the limited value the Site currently offers for the majority of protected and notable species, the proposals offer the opportunity to provide a range of diverse habitats which will contribute to overall enhancements for the majority of protected and notable species which could be present within the Site.

In summary, although further ecological survey work would be necessary to support a planning application for the Site, from the completed walkover surveys, we conclude that the proposals could accommodate any mitigation required to suit species-specific requirements and could provide significant ecological benefits.

As outlined above the proposals can clearly contribute to the provisions RD1A of the adopt Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS) through the implementation of ecological diverse buffer zone adjacent to the watercourse. Through the provision of further significant GI corridors designed with a diverse range of habitat on all other elevations of the Site, the proposals would also improve overall connectivity outside the potential enhancement area identified in the LNRS providing an overall benefit to ecological connectivity through the landscape.

Given the dominance of habitats of low ecological value across the Site, the provision of the range of habitats and connectivity shown on the Illustrative Masterplan has the potential to deliver a net gain to biodiversity.



N
0 250 500 m

Redline Boundary 2km Buffer
1km Buffer

Bats

- Brown Long-eared Bat
- Common Pipistrelle
- Myotis Bat species
- Natterer's Bat
- Noctule
- Pipistrelle
- Serotine
- Soprano Pipistrelle

Birds

- Dunnoch
- Grey Partridge
- Greylag Goose
- Hobby
- House Sparrow
- Lapwing
- Linnet
- Reed Bunting
- Skylark
- Song Thrush
- Starling
- Swift
- Turtle Dove
- Yellow Wagtail
- Yellowhammer

Herptiles

- Common Lizard
- Common Toad
- Grass Snake
- Great Crested Newt

Insects

- White-letter Hairstreak
- White-spotted Pinion

Mammals

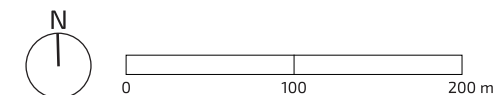
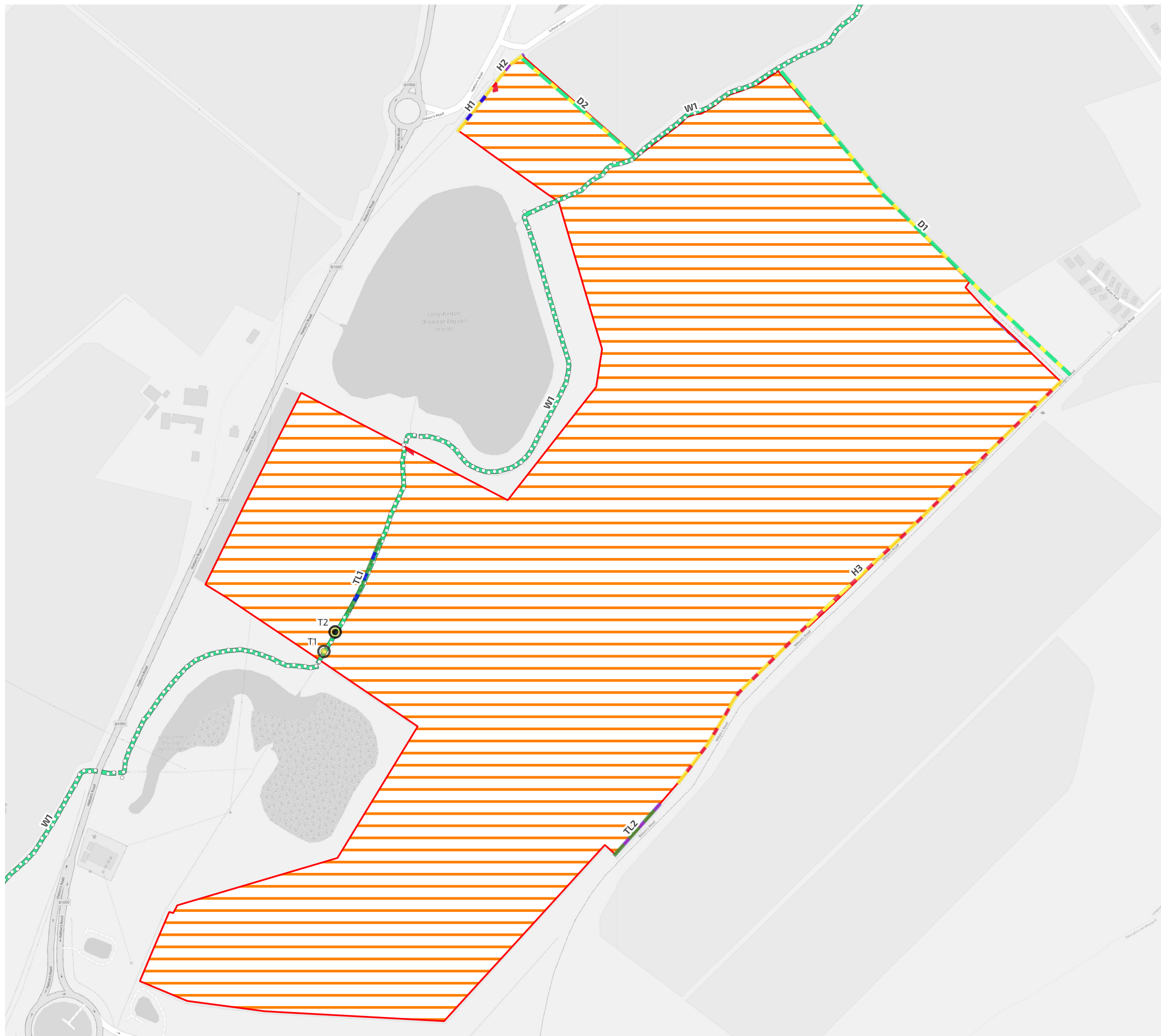
- Badger
- Brown Hare
- Otter
- Water Vole

drawn date 23/01/26
drwn/chkd EH / KDG

client **Hallam Land**
project **Land at Longstanton, Cambridgeshire**

title **CONSULTATION RESULTS PLAN - SPECIES RECORDS AND DESIGNATED SITES** scale 1:20,000 @ A3

number **FIGURE 1** rev -



- Redline Boundary
- Baseline Habitats**
- Bramble scrub
- Cereal crops
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Modified grassland
- Baseline Hedgerow**
- Line of trees
- Line of trees - associated with bank or ditch
- Native hedgerow
- Native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch
- Native hedgerow with trees - associated with bank or ditch
- Baseline Watercourse**
- Ditches
- Other rivers and streams
- Baseline Individual Trees**
- Existing very large rural tree
- Existing large rural tree

date 22/01/26 drwn/chkd
EH / KDG

client **Hallam Land**
project **Land at Longstanton**

title **BASELINE HABITAT PLAN** scale 1:4,500 @ A3

number **FIGURE 2** rev -