

*Among other matters, the Inspector had to consider the provision of housing within the Purbeck area in the context of the National Planning Policy Framework and the existence within that area of protected European sites.*

*To ensure that the requirements of the Directives and Regulation 102 of the 2010 Regulations were complied with, an appropriate assessment was undertaken (see paragraph 130 of the Inspectors Report). That assessment found that all negative effects of the plan on the conservation integrity of European sites could be overcome. It is worth looking at some of the reasoning behind this (all paragraph references are to paragraphs in the Inspectors report).*

*The Inspector found that whilst the Council's precautionary approach to the allocation of housing sites was justified there were 'reasonable opportunities available for the provision of heathland mitigation measures' (paragraph 26).*

*In addition whilst 'further detailed work is required to confirm the suitability of a number of potential heathland mitigation sites' this had to be considered against the requirement to provide new housing and the absence of policy if the plan was not adopted (paragraph 27).*

*In looking at whether the plan provides appropriate protection to habitats the Inspector finds that 'the provision of mitigation primarily through the implementation of SANG's is a logical approach' and he goes on to recommend that guidance on what is required for a SANG is included in the plan (paragraph 92). He concludes that 'with the proposed modification [the plan] affords appropriate protection to ... habitat's (paragraph 94).*

*The Inspector recommends that in addition to the guidance referred to above which deals with the specifications for a SANG, various policies in the plan are modified. The modifications all follow the same principle that, in order to grant planning permission for a development that may have a significant effect on the conservation integrity of a European site, proportion SANG provision needs to be secured. For the present purposes we can look at one of those proposed modifications, that to policy MM14:*

*'New residential development will be expected to contribute towards mitigation measures for European protected sites. The housing allocation is expected to provide SANGS to provide an alternative to Black Hill. The SANGS should include an area where dogs can run freely off the land linked to walks along the Bere stream. Other residential development will contribute towards the Heathlands Plan, which will provide a range of mitigation measures including strategic SANGS between Bere Regis and Upton. Guidelines for the provision of SANGS is set out in Appendix 5.'*

*The other modifications all allow this format with the general statement that applicable development will be expected to contribute towards mitigation measures followed by some area specific points. At no point does the Inspector require the level of certainty at Purbeck that is being required for the VTSW5 allocation by East Dorset District Council in respect of the provision of a SANG.*

**APPENDIX THREE – ECOLOGICAL  
ASSESSMENT (INCLUDING SANG PROPOSAL)**



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21 May 2013

Land off Ringwood Road,  
Verwood, East Dorset

Ecological Assessment

Report Number: 1522\_R11a\_LW\_RW

Author: Lauren West

Checked by: Julian Arthur MCIEEM CENV

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# Appendices

- Appendix 1: Breeding Bird Survey
- Appendix 2: Invertebrate Survey Report
- Appendix 3: Reptile Survey Methodology and Results
- Appendix 4: Protected Sites
- Appendix 5: Target Notes
- Appendix 6: Legislation and Planning Policy
- Appendix 7: Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace (SANG) Proposal – February 2013 (1522\_R05i)
- Appendix 8: Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace (SANG) Proposal – February 2013 (1522\_R10a)
- Appendix 9: Woodland Transition Zone Strategy (1522\_R08b)

# Plans

Habitat Features  
(1522/P08c May 2013 LW/JTF)

Fauna Survey Results  
(1522/P11b May 2013 LW/JTF)

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Land off Ringwood Road, Verwood, East Dorset  
Ecological Assessment

1522\_R11a 21 May 2013 LW\_RW

# Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1 This report has been prepared by Tyler Grange LLP on behalf of Linden Homes Strategic Land. It sets out the findings of an ecological assessment of land at north east Verwood, East Dorset, hereafter referred to as the 'site'.
- 1.2 The site is 3.69ha in area and is centred on National Grid Reference SU 107 080. It is within Dorset, though borders Hampshire to the east. An outline planning application for residential development with all matters reserved except for access into the site for vehicles in terms of the positioning and treatment to the access of the site, but excluding accessibility within the site, in terms of positioning and treatment of access and circulation routes is to be submitted to East Dorset District Council.
- 1.3 This report:
- Describes and evaluates the ecological resources within the likely 'zone of influence'<sup>1</sup> using available background data and results of field surveys;
  - Assesses the issues and opportunities that would arise as a result of its future development; and
  - Describes the potential consequences in terms of legislation and policy, and where appropriate describes mitigation and enhancement proposals, and a mechanism for controlling them.

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<sup>1</sup> Defined as the areas/resources that may be affected by the biophysical changes caused by activities associated with a project



# Section 2: Methodology

## Scoping

- 2.1 The scope of the ecological assessment was determined by undertaking a desk-based assessment of available records and published sources, together with an initial survey of the site. With this information, the zone of influence of the proposed development was established, together with any further detailed work – such as detailed surveys – that might be necessary.
- 2.2 Consultation was undertaken with the Dorset County Council ecologist Dr Philip Sterling and Natural England Conservation Officer Nick Squirrell, in order to agree the scope of the ecological assessment.

## Data Search

- 2.3 The data search was conducted in April 2012. Obtaining existing records is an important part of the assessment process as it provides information on issues that may not be apparent during a single survey, which by its nature provides only a 'snapshot' of the ecology of a given area.
- 2.4 Dorset Environmental Records Centre (DERC) and Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre (HBIC) were contacted for:
  - Species records for a 2km radius surrounding the site; and
  - Records of non-statutory designated sites for the area within a 2km radius of the site.
- 2.5 The online Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website (Ref 1) was consulted to identify any sites subject to statutory protection under national or European nature conservation legislation within 5km of the site.
- 2.6 Information supplied by these organisations has, where relevant, been incorporated into the following account with due acknowledgement.
- 2.7 In addition, the Natural Area profile (Ref. 2), as defined by Natural England, was consulted to determine the important ecological resources at a regional level. Natural England recognises 120 such Natural Areas, the boundaries of which are derived using the distribution of geology, wildlife and natural features, and on the land use pattern and human history of each area.
- 2.8 The Biodiversity Action Plans (BAP) for the UK, Dorset and Hampshire (Refs. 3, 4 and 5) were reviewed to identify whether any of the habitats or species within or adjacent to the site are BAP-listed and therefore the subject of conservation action. The BAPs contain information that can assist with the evaluation of ecological resources and can inform site enhancement strategies.
- 2.9 Lastly, relevant planning policies and supplementary planning documents relating to biodiversity were consulted.



### *Extended Phase I Survey*

- 2.10 An extended Phase I survey of the site was undertaken on 17<sup>th</sup> April 2012 by Lauren West, an experienced ecological consultant and associate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Further investigation of habitats within the site was undertaken on 28<sup>th</sup> June 2012 in order to update the botanical species list for the site and for areas of off-site habitat within the adjacent Ringwood Forest. Weather conditions during the survey were warm, 19°C, 3/8 cloud cover with a light breeze.
- 2.11 The habitat survey was based on guidance set out in the 'Handbook for Phase I habitat survey' (Ref. 6). This entailed recording the main plant species and classifying and mapping broad habitat types present. Nomenclature for plant species follows that of BSBI (2007) (Ref 7).
- 2.12 Note was taken of the more conspicuous fauna, and any evidence of, or potential for the presence of protected/notable flora and fauna.
- 2.13 A basic inventory of the habitats and a representative species list was produced. Where access allowed, adjacent habitats were also considered, in order to assess the site within the wider landscape and to provide information with which to assess possible impacts within the zone of influence of the proposed development.

## **Detailed Fauna and Flora Surveys**

### *Breeding Birds*

- 2.14 Breeding bird surveys were conducted within the site and on land adjacent to the site within 500m. Surveys comprised three visits including an evening survey, ending after dark (when nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus* become active) followed by a morning survey, beginning before first light. Each of the survey visits was undertaken when the weather conditions were suitable, i.e. not during high winds and/or heavy rain. The dates and weather conditions of the surveys are shown at Table 2.1.

Date	Times	Weather conditions
14th – 15th May 2012	19:00 – 21:45 04:20 – 06:40	1/8 cloud, light westerly breeze.
8th – 9th June 2012	19:45 – 22:20 04:00 – 06:20	8/8 cloud, wind SW3, though lighter in the early morning.
26th – 27th June 2012	20:00 – 22:30 03:40 – 06:10	8/8 cloud, humid and still. Misty early morning.

**Table 2.1: Dates, times and weather conditions of breeding bird surveys**

- 2.15 A detailed description of the methodology is provided at **Appendix 1**.

### *Invertebrates*

- 2.16 An invertebrate assessment was undertaken on 22<sup>nd</sup> June 2012 in order to assess the potential importance of the habitats within the site for invertebrates, and to undertake invertebrate sampling where possible for identification purposes, focussing on areas offering most potential to support notable species. The weather conditions during the survey were 2/8 cloud, 16°C with a light breeze.
- 2.17 The detailed methodology employed during the survey is provided at **Appendix 2**.



## Reptiles

- 2.18 A reptile survey of suitable habitat within the site and land within a 400m radius of the site within the adjacent Ringwood Forest was undertaken. The detailed methodology employed during the survey is provided at **Appendix 2**.
- 2.19 The dates and weather conditions of the surveys are shown at Table 2.2.

Date and time	Weather conditions	Temperature (°C)
14/08/12, 12:05	Cloudy, no wind, sunny intervals, 8/8 cloud cover	17.5
16/08/12, 11:00	Overcast, drizzle, gentle breeze, sunny intervals, 7/8 cloud cover	17
17/08/12, 15:10	Sunny, gentle breeze, 3/8 cloud cover	21
23/08/12, 11:15	Sunny spells, 4/8 cloud cover	19
24/08/12, 14:00	Showers with sunny spells between. 5/8 cloud cover	18.5
28/08/12, 11:30	Sunny spells, light breeze. Cloud cover 4/8	17.8
29/08/12, 15:45	Showers, overcast. Slight breeze	17.8

**Table 2.2: Dates, times and weather conditions of reptile surveys**

## Evaluation

- 2.20 The evaluation of habitats is defined in accordance with the 'Guidelines for Environmental Impact Assessment' (2006; Ref. 8). The level of value of specific ecological receptors is assigned using a geographic frame of reference, with international value being most important, then national, regional, county, district, local and lastly, within the context of the site.
- 2.21 Value judgements are based on various characteristics that can be used to identify ecological resources or features likely to be important in terms of biodiversity. These include site designations (such as SSSIs), or for undesignated features, the size, conservation status (locally, nationally or internationally), and the quality of the ecological resource. In terms of the latter, quality can refer to habitats (for instance if they are particularly diverse, or a good example of a specific habitat type), other features (such as wildlife corridors or mosaics of habitats) or species populations or assemblages.

## Quality Assurance

- 2.22 This assessment and the terminology used are consistent with the 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment' published by the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, July 2006; Ref. 8). All ecologists at Tyler Grange LLP are member of CIEEM and abide by its Professional Code of Conduct.

## Limitations

- 2.23 Please note that the findings of this report are valid at the time of writing. Owing to the dynamic nature of ecological resources, if more than six months have elapsed since the report was written, advice should be sought to determine whether update work is required. The findings of the report should not be relied upon without this advice.





# Section 3: Baseline Conditions

## Site Context

- 3.1. The site is situated within the Dorset Heaths Natural Area (Number 81), as defined by Natural England. This Natural Area includes the internationally important Dorset Heathlands and mires. The centre of the area, once all heathland, is now a complex mosaic of heathland and other associated habitats. Valley mires are a particular feature of the Dorset heathland, and fen vegetation of different types occur in some of the river valley wetlands and on the edge of the heathland where the water is affected by the nearby chalk. Four significant rivers flow within floodplains through the Dorset Heaths and these support important plant and dragonfly communities. The floodplains are important for wintering wildfowl and waders. To the north of the Natural Area, ancient woods survive in an intensively farmed landscape, and are rich in epiphytic lichens and butterflies.
- 3.2. The site is situated off Ringwood Road near Ebblake, between the eastern edge of the town of Verwood and the western extent of Ringwood Forest, along which the Dorset/Hampshire County border is located. The southern and eastern boundaries of the site are bordered by residential housing, predominantly low density dwellings with gardens abutting the boundary. The northern and western boundaries abut Ringwood Forest, which is owned and managed by the Forestry Commission.

## Protected Sites

- 3.3. Please refer to **Appendix 4** for protected site locations.

### Statutory Sites

- 3.4. The site is not covered by or adjacent to any statutorily-protected sites of nature conservation interest; however, there are 12 Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) within 5km (three of which are also Local Nature Reserves (LNR)). Ten SSSI's are also designated as component parts of the Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC). Table 3.1 identifies the statutorily-designated sites within 5km.

Site name	Designation	Distance and direction from site (N/S/W/E)	Description/Summary of reason for designation
<b>Statutory Sites</b>			
Ebblake Bog	SSSI Dorset Heathlands SPA, Dorset Heaths SAC and Ramsar	730 m S	Acid mire with accumulation of relatively deep peat due to poor hydraulic gradients. An internationally scarce habitat and saturated throughout the year. Supports a large population of bog bush-cricket <i>Metrioptera brachyptera</i> and rich in dragonflies.



Noon Hill	SSSI Dorset Heathlands SPA and Dorset Heaths SAC	750 m NW	Part of the Dorset Heathlands SAC/SPA/Ramsar. Dry heathland typically dominated by ling <i>Calluna vulgaris</i> and rich in lichens of the genus <i>Cladonia</i> , including the scarce <i>C. gracilis</i> . The rare brown beaksedge <i>Rhynchospora fusca</i> occurs in one of the wetter areas.  The dry heathland supports strong populations of the rare heathland reptiles, sand lizard <i>Lacerta agilis</i> and smooth snake <i>Coronella austriaca</i> . The heath grasshopper <i>Chorthippus vagans</i> which is restricted to some of the heaths of Dorset and the New Forest also occurs on the dry heath and the wet heath supports the local bog bush cricket.
Moors River System	SSSI	Closest record 900 m S	A small lowland river which supports exceptional diversity of aquatic and wetland plants, aquatic invertebrates, fish, birds and aquatic mammals. Associated habitats include wetlands such as swamps, tall-herb fen and fen woodland.
Potterne Hill	Dorset Heathlands SPA, Dorset Heaths SAC and Ramsar LNR SNCI	1.2 km SW	A small lowland heath with a secondary woodland edge. Smooth and palmate newts have been recorded on the site, as well as common lizard <i>Zootoca vivipara</i> and adder <i>Vipera berus</i> .
Stephens Castle	SPA SAC LNR SSSI SNCI	1.6 km NW	Wet and dry lowland heath featuring an Iron Age barrow at the top of an old sand and gravel quarry. Has a rich fauna including sand lizard, smooth snake, nightjar, Dartford warbler <i>Sylvia undata</i> and several species of dragonfly and damselfly and flora including sundew <i>Drosera</i> sp., bog asphodel <i>Narthecium ossifragum</i> and bladderwort <i>Utricularia</i> sp.
Bugdens Copse & Meadow	SSSI LNR Dorset Heathlands SPA and Dorset Heaths SAC DWT Reserve	1.7 km W	The remnants of an ancient forest and has a rich flora and fauna diversity. The adjoining meadow is an old grassland community with a rich floristic composition and uncommon both nationally and in Dorset.
Cranborne Common	SSSI Dorset Heathlands SPA, Ramsar and SAC	1.9 km N	Wet and dry heathland, bog and acidic grassland. All areas rich with species of flora and fauna which is local rare and scarce. The sand lizard and smooth snake are found within the SSSI as well as Dartford warbler and nightjar. Several rarer heathland invertebrates have been recorded.



Verwood Heaths	SSSI Dorset Heathlands SPA, Dorset Heaths SAC and Ramsar	2 km NW	Three areas of dry, humid and wet heathland. Very mature, dry heathland dominated by ling that is lichen rich. Area supports strong populations of sand lizard, smooth snake, heath grasshopper and bog bush cricket.
Avon Valley (Bickton-Christchurch)	SSSI Ramsar Site SPA SAC	3.2 km SE	A range of habitats supporting nationally and internationally important flora and fauna including a diverse range of notable invertebrates, migratory wildfowl and wading birds, 27 species of fish and otter <i>Lutra lutra</i> . An Annex I habitat - Water courses of plain to montane levels an Annex II species - Desmoulin's whorl snail <i>Vertigo moulinsiana</i> , population along 20 km of the margins and associated wetland of the River Avon. A rich and varied calcareous chalk stream with over 180 species of aquatic plant having been recorded, one of the most diverse fish faunas in Britain and a wide range of aquatic invertebrates
Horton Common	SSSI Dorset Heathlands SPA, Dorset Heaths SAC and Ramsar	3.2 km SW	A dry and wet heath with areas of bog with plants and animals typical of these habitats. Rare plants include Brown Beak-sedge and Pale Butterwort <i>Pinguicula lusitanica</i> . The rare Long Winged Conehead <i>Conocephalus discolor</i> , Sand lizard and the Dartford warbler occurs on the site.
Lions Hill	SSSI Dorset Heathlands SPA, Dorset Heaths SAC and Ramsar	3.9 km S	Heathland with a rich fauna, including species of restricted distribution and varied plant communities such as dry and wet heath, bog, pine and birch woodland. Important habitat link between the heathlands of Dorset. Smooth Snake, Sand Lizard and Heath Grasshopper are present on this site
St Leonards & St Ives Heaths	SSSI Dorset Heathlands SPA and Dorset Heaths SAC	4.3 km SE	The largest parts of the present-day Dorset heathlands comprising of acidic grassland, dry and wet heath and mire vegetation types. Nationally scarce flora and fauna including Dartford warbler, Nightjar and Woodlark and wintering populations of hen harrier and Merlin and all six native reptile species including smooth snake and sand lizard.
Holt & West Moors Heaths	SSSI National Nature Reserve Dorset Heathlands SPA, Dorset Heaths SAC and Ramsar	5 km SW	Wet and dry heathland supporting a rich and typical fauna, including heathland birds, sand lizard and smooth snake and a variety of scarce invertebrates.

**Table 3.1: Statutory designated sites within 5km**



### Non-statutory ('local') Sites

- 3.5. In Dorset non-statutory sites are named Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI), whilst sites in Hampshire are named Sites of Interest for Nature Conservation (SINC). There are nine such sites within 2km. SNCIs and SINC are selected for their habitat or species interest. Table 3.2 identifies the non-statutorily designated sites present within 2km.

Site name	Designation	Distance and direction from site (N/S/W/E)	Description/Summary of reason for designation
Ringwood Forest & Home Wood	SINC	Adjacent to eastern site boundary	Various notable species present including European nightjar, smooth snake, southern wood ant <i>Formica rufa</i> and annual knawel <i>Scleranthus annuus</i>
Boveridge Heath	SNCI	320 m NW	Two pieces of remnant heath under pylon wires bordered by conifers.
Kings Farm	SNCI	570 m S	Woodland and species-rich grassland.
Potterne Wood	SNCI	700 m S	Oak and birch woodland.
Potterne Hill	SNCI	1.2 km SW	Dry heath being invaded by scrub.
Cottage Farm	SNCI	1.4 km SW	Damp semi-improved grassland.
Stephen's Castle	SNCI	1.6 km NW	Old workings with regenerating heath, scrub and grassland.
Bugden's Copse	SNCI	1.7 km W	Deciduous woodland with an area of scrub over acid grassland.
Somerley Closed Landfill	SINC	2 km SE	Presence of notable plant species hairy bird's-foot-trefoil <i>Lotus subbiflorus</i> .

**Table 3.2: Non-statutory designated sites within 2km**

### Site Habitats

- 3.6. Detailed habitat descriptions are given below and should be read in conjunction with plan **Habitat Features 1522/P08c**. Locations of target notes can be found on the habitat features plan and are described in **Appendix 5**.
- 3.7. The site topography is relatively flat, though with lower, wetter ground to the east, adjacent to Ringwood Forest.

#### *Semi-natural Coniferous Woodland*

- 3.8. Approximately half of the site comprises semi-natural coniferous woodland, dominated by semi-mature to mature and naturally regenerating Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris*. The woodland is open in structure, with a sparse under-storey of occasional silver birch *Betula pendula*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, alder buckthorn *Frangula alnus*, English oak *Quercus robur* and hazel *Corylus avellana*. The sparse ground flora comprises common ivy *Hedera helix*, honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*, wood sage *Teucrium scorodonia*, heath wood-rush *Luzula multiflora* and a variety of mosses and lichens. Photograph 1 illustrates the woodland within the site.



**Photograph 1: Coniferous woodland habitat**

- 3.9. Within the northern section of the woodland is a part-shaded undulating rocky area comprising partly-vegetated piles of rocks and rubble, and areas where garden brashings have been dumped. There are several active European rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* burrows and a European fox *Vulpes vulpes* earth present. Species noted include bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, honeysuckle, laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, soft rush *Juncus effusus*, wood sage and mosses. Immediately surrounding this area are occasional stands of tussocky grassland where there are gaps in the tree canopy.
- 3.10. The woodland is of a more closed structure at its southern extent, with frequent Scots pine and silver birch, hazel, holly, blackthorn and English oak. Occasionally present is dwarf gorse *Ulex minor*, a Dorset notable species (indicative of good unimproved or semi-improved habitat) (Target Note 1).

#### *Poor Fen*

- 3.11. Located near to the eastern boundary of the site there are small depressions where the high water table has resulted in poor fen (an acid mire habitat) (Target note 2). It may also be fed by periodic flood water from the adjacent Ebblake Stream. This supports occasional mosses, including sphagnum moss *Sphagnum* spp., purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, sparse mats of floating sweet-grass *Glyceria fluitans*, and bog myrtle *Myrica gale*. Birch and grey willow *Salix cinerea* are present, with occasional soft rush and frequent heath wood-rush on surrounding dryer ground (see photograph 2).



**Photograph 2: Poor Fen habitat**

### *Continuous and Scattered Scrub, Introduced Shrub*

- 3.12. There are small areas of continuous bramble scrub with honeysuckle, located in the southern extent of the site, and bramble scrub with common nettle *Urtica dioica*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, goat willow *Salix caprea*, silver birch and occasional common gorse *Ulex europaeus*, present along part of the south-eastern boundary fence.
- 3.13. Scattered stands of common gorse, dwarf gorse and heather *Calluna vulgaris* are present alongside the woodland edge adjacent to the area of disc-harrowed land, and also alongside the north-western boundary.
- 3.14. Scattered scrub is present along the south-western boundary and includes hawthorn, bramble, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, English oak and privet *Ligustrum vulgare*, along with occasional broom *Cytisus scoparius* and foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*.
- 3.15. There is a small stand of introduced shrub – rhododendron *Rhododendron ponticum* - in the southern-extent of the site, alongside the boundary.

### *Scattered Coniferous and Broad-leaved Trees*

- 3.16. There is a large, mature Scots pine in the centre of the disc-harrowed land. Along the Ringwood Road frontage are semi-mature oak trees within a grass verge.

### *Poor Semi-improved Grassland*

- 3.17. Poor, semi-improved grassland is present where the land has not been harrowed, alongside the north-western and south-western site boundaries. Along the south-western boundary the grassland is rank, with scattered occasional scrub. Forbs include yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, curled dock *Rumex*

*crispus*, cut-leaved crane's-bill *Geranium dissectum*, common nettle, germander speedwell *Veronica chamaedrys*, dove's-foot crane's-bill *Geranium molle* and common mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum*. Where adjacent trees cast shade, occasional yellow archangel *Lamium galeobdolon*, field forget-me-not *Myosotis arvensis*, cleavers *Galium aparine* and soft rush are present.

- 3.18. Alongside the north-western boundary adjacent to woodland is a 4m wide strip of short, sparsely-vegetated rabbit-grazed grassland supporting additionally ragwort *Senecio jacobae*, dove's-foot cranesbill, daisy *Bellis perennis*, common cudweed *Filago vulgaris*, scarlet pimpernel *Anagallis arvensis* and sheep's sorrel *Rumex acetosella*.
- 3.19. Alongside the western site boundary is rank, tussocky grassland adjacent to bramble and gorse scrub. Dominant species include cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, common soft-brome *Bromus hordeaceus*, red fescue *Festuca rubra* and false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, along with ribwort plantain, common nettle, dandelion, lesser stichwort *Stellaria graminea*, cleavers and yarrow. Taller herbs and shrubs include teasel *Dipsacus fullonum*, honesty *Lunaria annua*, great mullein *Verbascum thapsus*, goats'-beard *Tragopogon pratensis*, broom *Cytisus scoparius* and some ornamental species.

#### *Arable (disc-harrowed grassland)*

- 3.20. The majority of the site comprises an expanse of flat land that at the time of survey had recently been disc-harrowed. Photograph 3 illustrates this area of habitat. No crops had been sown in this area and the land appeared to have been sparsely-vegetated, poor semi-improved or improved grassland. It is understood that this area has been managed in this way for the last five years, and prior to that it was a playing field (*pers. comm.*).



**Photograph 3: Disc-harrowed land with woodland edge in foreground**

#### *Buildings*

- 3.21. A disused chicken shed and pig shelter, constructed of wood and corrugated iron, are present within the woodland. Both structures are open and single-storey.

## Offsite Habitats

- 3.22. Semi-natural coniferous woodland within the site is contiguous with similar plantation woodland habitats to the north and east within Ringwood Forest. The Ebblake Stream follows a course adjacent to the eastern site boundary, and alongside a public footpath. The stream is small and shaded, with no riparian vegetation present on the section alongside the site. A small, dry ditch forms the northern boundary, largely shaded by the woodland edge and scattered scrub.
- 3.23. Ringwood Forest close to the site is primarily conifer plantation, though to the east is an area of dry heath restoration, dominated by ling and purple moor-grass. A number of rides and footpath support similar vegetation.
- 3.24. The south-western and south-eastern boundaries abut the gardens of adjacent residential properties. There are a number of large, mature English oak standards present within the private gardens which back onto the south-western site boundary.

## Fauna

- 3.25. Protected and notable fauna recorded during surveys are described below, and shown on the **Fauna Results Plan 1522/P11b**.

### *Amphibians*

- 3.26. No records of great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* within 2km of the site were returned; there are no suitable ponds within the site and no other ponds are shown on the Ordnance Survey mapping within 500m, the nearest pond being some 650m south. There are records of common toad *Bufo bufo* (a UK BAP species and hence also Species of Principal Importance (SoPI<sup>2</sup>)) approximately 1km to the north-west. There are suitable terrestrial habitats in the form of woodland and scrub, and whilst common toad could use the site, great crested newts would not be expected.

### *Badger Meles meles*

- 3.27. The local landscape is suitable for badgers, with woodland providing cover and opportunities for sett construction and seasonal foraging. The site supports some grassland that is likely to be used by foraging badgers. A sett with two active holes was recorded only a few metres from the site. Other setts are highly likely within woodland to the north and east; indeed several records of badger, including setts, were returned in the area surrounding the site. No setts were found within the site itself.

### *Bats*

- 3.28. Several records for bats and bat roosts within the 2km search area were returned, the closest records being for common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* and brown log-eared bat *Plecotus auritus* some 150m south of the site. Other records exist for serotine *Eptesicus serotinus* 1.6km south-west and noctule *Nyctalus noctula* 500m west. Records for Greater Horseshoe bat *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum* were also returned for the 2km search area, although the nature of the record and exact location is unknown.
- 3.29. No trees within the site itself were considered to be of sufficient maturity or supported features such as splits, rot holes or flaking bark that could support roosting bats. However, potential for roosting

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<sup>2</sup> As required under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, local authorities must have regard to the conservation of biodiversity, when carrying out their normal functions. Section 41 requires the Secretary of State to publish lists of Species of Principal Importance (SoPIs) and Habitats of Principal Importance (HoPIs) for the conservation of biodiversity in England



bats to use the mature oak standards located within private gardens near the south-western site boundary was identified, where features such as splits, cracks, woodpecker holes and rot holes and missing branches or limbs were noted.

- 3.30. Bats would be expected to use the woodland margins for foraging, though the majority of the site is unsuitable.

### *Breeding Birds*

- 3.31. A large dataset was returned in respect of notable bird species for the vicinity of the site, which including a number of wetland and wader species, which would not be expected to use the site or its immediate surrounds. Other notable woodland and garden species which are likely to use the habitats within the site include: dunnock *Prunella modularis*, tree pipit *Anthus trivialis*, mistle thrush *Turdus viscivorus*, common whitethroat *Sylvia communis*, willow warbler *Phylloscopus trochilus*, common starling *Sturnus vulgaris* and house sparrow *Passer domesticus*.
- 3.32. Records of qualifying species of the Dorset Heathlands SPA within 1km of the site have been returned, i.e. populations of European importance to conservation listed under Annex I of the Birds Directive (refer to **Appendix 6**). These include breeding populations of Dartford warbler (recorded 900m north west of the site) and nightjar (recorded 850m north west). Records of woodlark *Lullula arborea*, the third Annex I heathland species known in the SPA, were returned for the 2km search area, although the exact location is unknown. There are records indicating the presence of over-wintering populations of qualifying SPA species hen harrier *Circus cyaneus* within the 2km search area; there are no records for merlin *Falco columbarius*.
- 3.33. The detailed 2012 breeding bird survey results are provided **Appendix 1**. In summary:
- Breeding bird activity within the site is restricted to the woodland plantation, which supports a limited range of the commonest species found in the adjacent forest, including 'generalist' species such as woodpigeon, wren, robin, chaffinch and possibly pheasant and blackcap, together with conifer specialists goldcrest and coal tit. These species are common and widespread in the wider area and generally have robust breeding populations;
  - Notable species were found to be breeding in adjacent parts of Ringwood Forest. The majority of these were recorded in the vicinity of clearing 2 (refer to plan in **Appendix 1**), around 500m east of the site boundary, including a selection of typical 'heathland' species: woodcock, cuckoo, nightjar, tree pipit, stonechat and yellowhammer, with wood warbler possibly breeding nearby.
  - Nightjar was the only Annex I species recorded during the survey. One territory includes both clearing 1 (approximately 100m east of the site) and the northern section of clearing 2. Nightjars are highly mobile and can cover large distances at night whilst feeding (on flying invertebrates). As well as within the forest, they are likely to forage over the proposed development site as well as over the gardens in the area.
  - None of the other Annex I heathland species - woodlark or Dartford warbler, were recorded during the surveys, although it is noted that suitable habitat for these species exists and that, additionally, Dartford warbler populations have suffered due to recent cold winters.

### *Dormouse Muscardinus avellanarius*

- 3.34. One record for dormouse at Verwood, 1.6km south-west, was returned.



- 3.35. The woodland and scrub within the site and surrounding area are considered to provide sub-optimal habitat for dormice, with the woodland being of open structure, with little under-storey, and with few of the fruiting or flowering species present that are considered to provide important foraging resources for dormice, such as hazel, oak, bramble and honeysuckle.

### *Invertebrates*

- 3.36. A large number of protected and notable invertebrate records, primarily associated with woodland and heathland habitats, were returned. These include: Lesser marsh grasshopper *Chorthippus albomarginatus*, butterflies such as marsh fritillary *Euphydryas aurinia*, grayling *Hipparchia semele*, small heath *Coenonympha pamphilus* and a number of moth species including broom moth *Melanchra pisi*, oak hook-tip *Watsonalla binaria* and buff ermine *Spilosoma luteum*. There is potential for some of the above species, such as grayling, buff ermine and broom moth to use the habitats within and adjacent to the site, although none of these species were recorded during the invertebrate scoping assessment.
- 3.37. Detailed survey findings are provided in **Appendix 2**. In summary, three key invertebrate species were recorded within the site. These include two nationally scarce species: tawny cockroach *Ectobius pallidus* (found in rough grassland in the north west of the site) and lesser cockroach *Ectobius panzer* (found in grassland on the woodland edge in the centre of the site). Of most significance is a diving beetle *Hydroporus necopinatus*, found in a pool within the wetter, poor fen habitat in the north of the site. This species is a rare UK BAP species listed in the red data book as endangered, and in the UK, it is only known from a few sites on the lowland heaths of Dorset.
- 3.38. No other species of note were recorded within the site, the majority of which is of low interest for invertebrates.

### *Other Mammals*

- 3.39. Records of otter *Lutra lutra* (a WCA protected species, UK BAP priority species and SoPI) 1km south-west of the site were returned; however, the Ebblake Stream is shallow and offers little cover for this species, and given the disturbed and open nature of the site, this species would not be expected.
- 3.40. Records of water vole *Arvicola amphibious* were returned for Ringwood Forest, approximately 1.2km south-east of the site. However, this species would not be expected to be present on the Ebblake Stream alongside the eastern site boundary, which provides sub-optimal habitat for this species, with very limited vegetation cover present.
- 3.41. A record for European hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*, a UK BAP priority and SoPI, exists 400m west of the site and this species may use private gardens adjacent to the site, scrub located along the south-east boundary, and potentially compost and brushwood piles located in the western corner of the site. However, the majority of the site offers little cover and therefore little suitable habitat for hedgehog.

### *Reptiles*

- 3.42. Records for the common species of reptile (slow-worm, common lizard, grass snake and adder), indicate their presence within 1km of the site. Records for sand lizard (1.1km north) and smooth snake (900m north-west), both European protected species, UK BAP priority species and SoPI, have been returned.
- 3.43. The surveys confirmed that common reptile species are present within the site and comprise a 'good' population of slow worm (based on a peak adult count of 15) and a 'low' population of common lizard (based on a peak adult count of 2), when comparing peak adult counts with the



criteria set out in Froglife Advice Sheet 10 (Ref. 9). No specially-protected reptiles were recorded within the site.

- 3.44. Surveys of suitable heathland habitat within the adjacent off-site Forestry Commission land recorded a population of sand lizard (closest record 150m east of the site) and smooth snake (closest record 180m south east of the site). Common lizard and slow worm were also recorded.



# Section 4: Evaluation

## Protected Sites

- 4.1. By virtue of their designation as nationally important sites on account of their ecological interest, all SSSIs are of **national ecological value**.
- 4.2. Some of these are further protected as SACs, SPAs and Ramsar sites, which are selected on account of them representing part of the European network of important high-quality conservation sites that will make a significant contribution to conserving the 189 habitat types and 788 species identified in Annexes I and II of the Habitats Directive (as amended) and Annex I of the Birds Directive. Consequently, SACs and SPAs are of **European ecological value**.
- 4.3. SNCIs and SINCs are identified on the basis that they support ecological resources that are of importance within the district or county. They are therefore of at least **district ecological value**.

## Habitats

### *Semi-natural Coniferous Woodland*

- 4.4. The majority of the woodland is species poor and open in structure, with a sparse, species-poor understorey and ground flora. Such coniferous woodland is common in the wider landscape, and not considered to be of particular intrinsic value. It is not representative of more important habitats nearby; this habitat is therefore valued as being of **value within the site** only.
- 4.5. A series of damp, poor fen habitat near to the eastern boundary of the site supports mosses including sphagnum, purple moor-grass, bog myrtle, heath wood-rush and soft rush. This is likely to be a relic of former mire habitat that has since succeeded to less valuable, conifer-dominated woodland. Given no species of particular note were recorded and the limited extent of this habitat it is likely to be of no more than **local value**, although it is of supporting value to invertebrates (see below).

### *Continuous and Scattered Scrub, Introduced Shrub*

- 4.6. Areas of continuous and scattered scrub comprise common species and are common and widespread habitats in the landscape; these habitats are considered to be of **value within the site**. Scattered stands of dwarf gorse are present along the boundary between the woodland and the disc-harrowed field. The species was also recorded just off-site in the woodland. This is a Dorset notable species considered to be of **local value**.

### *Poor Fen*

- 4.7. This is limited in extent and is heavily shaded. It is a poor example of the more valuable mire habitat known locally. It is considered to be of **local value**.

### *Scattered Coniferous and Broad-leaved Trees*

- 4.8. The mature Scots pine within the centre of the disc-harrowed land, and the semi-mature oaks on Ringwood Road are common species locally, and of **value within the site**. Other scattered juvenile trees present within the scrub habitats are of **negligible value**.



### *Poor Semi-improved Grassland*

- 4.9. Poor semi-improved grassland at the site boundaries comprise of common species (though are likely to be of greater supporting value to fauna, including reptiles) and are assessed as being of **value within the site**.

### *Arable (disc-harrowed grassland)*

- 4.10. This sparsely-vegetated area comprising of bare ground along with remnants of poor semi-improved grassland is considered to be of **negligible value**.

### *Buildings*

- 4.11. The chicken shed and pig shelters located within the woodland do not have any intrinsic ecological interest and are therefore assessed as being of **negligible value**.

## **Offsite Habitats**

- 4.12. The adjacent Ringwood Forest is typical of conifer plantations locally, comprising planted woodland of relatively uniform age structure. Rides and clearings close to the site support greater botanical diversity, and there is an area of restored dry heath, a UK BAP habitat, to the east. These open areas support sand lizard and smooth snake and breeding nightjar (all UK BAP species and SoPIs). The forest falls within Hampshire and Dorset. That part within Hampshire has been identified as a SINC (Ringwood Forest & Home Wood SINC) on the basis of the fauna it supports; consequently this is of at least **district ecological value**. The part of the forest north of the site is within Dorset and is not similarly designated, but given it is contiguous and similar in nature, it too is of **district value**.

## **Species**

### *Amphibians*

- 4.13. Common toad is a UK BAP species and SoPI, but is common and widespread. If present, any population would be considered to be of **value within the site**.

### *Badgers*

- 4.14. Badger is a common and widespread species that is protected as a result of welfare concerns rather than owing to conservation concern. Consequently, whilst an active sett exists close to the site and suitable foraging habitat is present, badgers are considered to be of **negligible value**.

### *Bats*

- 4.15. There are no trees or other features within the site itself considered to offer potential habitat for roosting bats, although a series of mature oaks within private gardens immediately adjacent to the site boundary are considered to offer potential for roosting bats, as could nearby residential properties and several mature trees along Parkland Close.
- 4.16. Whilst some foraging bats would be expected along woodland edges, trees and scrub, there are much more valuable foraging habitats nearby such as woodland, grassland and heathland mosaics, river corridor and associated tributaries.
- 4.17. The bat assemblage using the site may include some uncommon species, but given the habitats present, is not expected to be of greater than local value.



### *Birds*

- 4.18. Results of bird surveys indicate that the site is not of substantive value to birds, with only common and widespread species recorded. The bird assemblage within the site is therefore considered to be of no more than **site value**.
- 4.19. The adjacent off-site woodland supports notable species, including breeding nightjar - there are also reports of bird species using suboptimal habitats in the locality (Nick Squirrell *pers. comm.*), and it is possible that nightjar may forage over the site, although none were recorded during the surveys. Other species recorded in Ringwood Forest are red-listed birds such as cuckoo, tree pipit and yellowhammer and amber-listed woodcock; none of these is considered likely to be dependent on the habitats within the site, although they may occasionally use the site for foraging.

### *Invertebrates*

- 4.20. The majority of the habitats support an assemblage of common and widespread invertebrates of **site value**.
- 4.21. However, two nationally scarce species (tawny cockroach and lesser cockroach) found in rough grassland habitat are of **local value**.
- 4.22. A diving beetle *Hydroporus necopinatus*, an endangered UK BAP species and SoPI, was found in the poor fen in the north of the site. This species has a restricted range occupying, often ephemeral shallow pools on the lowland heaths of Dorset; this is a new record for the locality and the stability of the populations is unknown (Ref. 10). It is likely to be present elsewhere locally but on the basis of limited information, it is considered to be of **regional value, possibly of national value**.

### *Reptiles*

- 4.23. The site supports populations of common reptiles including a 'good' population of slow worm and a 'low' population of common lizard; whilst these are relatively common both species are UK BAP priority species and SoPIs, although they are not targeted for conservation action in the Dorset BAP. The reptile assemblage present at the site is considered to be of **local value**.
- 4.24. Populations of smooth snake and sand lizard have been identified in the adjacent Ringwood Forest; these are notable and of at least **district value**. Populations of common reptiles are of **local value**.



# Section 5: Potential Ecological Effects, Mitigation and Enhancement

## Proposed Development

- 5.1. Up to 65 units are proposed, with access off Ringwood Road along an existing track and via the existing field gate.
- 5.2. Potential effects on valuable ecological resources - and the mitigation strategy to address them - are described below, with reference to relevant policy (in the Local Plan and the Core Strategy Pre-Submission) and legislation, which is set out in **Appendix 6**.
- 5.3. In accordance with the NPPF and local policies, ecological enhancements that deliver biodiversity gain are also described, which have been informed by local and national strategies, including BAPs.
- 5.4. The most significant issue in respect of future development is the potential for adverse effects upon Ebblake Bog and Noon Hill SSSI, part of Dorset Heathlands SPA, and Dorset Heaths SAC and Ramsar. The SSSIs, SPA and SAC are designated for different reasons, which need to be considered separately.

## Dorset Heathlands SPA

### *Potential Impacts*

- 5.5. Whilst it would be directly affected by the proposed development of the site, there is the potential for indirect effects of development – both at the site and in combination with other developments – to affect the qualifying interest for which the Dorset Heathlands SPA is designated.
- 5.6. The SPA comprises of a number of fragmented heathland sites within the county, the closest being Ebblake Bog 730m to the south and Noon Hill 750m to the north (see Table 3.1 and Appendix 4). Such sites are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010 (the 'Habitats Regulations'; see **Appendix 6**). Annex I ground-nesting bird populations (a qualifying feature of the SPA), namely Dartford warbler, woodlark and nightjar, are particularly sensitive to increased recreation pressure, with increased use by dog walkers being the key issue.
- 5.7. This is a common issue with respect to proposed development sites identified in the Core Strategy Pre-Submission that are within 5km of the SPA. Consequently, as required under the Habitats Regulations, Christchurch Borough Council and East Dorset District Council have undertaken a Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) of the emerging Core Strategy (Ref. 11). The HRA has informed Paragraph 13.13 of the Core Strategy Pre-Submission which states that: *“There is strong evidence to support the conclusion that the Dorset Heaths are under significant pressure from urban development across South East Dorset. It is the view of Natural England that further residential development should not be permitted within 400m of a designated Heathland, and that between 400m and 5km, residential development would still have a significant effect such that it should be required to mitigate its impact”*.
- 5.8. As well as triggering the legislation, unmitigated impacts to the protected site would be contrary to policies protecting designated sites.



## *Mitigation and Enhancement Strategy*

- 5.9. A Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace (SANG) strategy has been agreed with Natural England to address potential adverse effects to the SPA.
- 5.10. The SANG strategy is included at **Appendix 7**. This was initially devised to provide Natural England and East Dorset District Council (EDDC) with sufficient information to address the reason for the site's omission from the Core Strategy Pre-Submission March 2012 (in which it is referred to as 'North East Verwood New Neighbourhood' under deleted Policy VTSW5), so that the site could be reinstated in the Core Strategy. The proposed allocation refers to a 50 unit development.
- 5.11. The SANG strategy reflects the requirements of policy in the Core Strategy Pre-Submission Response Analysis (November 2012), and specifically ME2 'Protection of the Dorset Heathlands'. Detailed guidelines for SANG provision are set out in Appendix 5 of that document; these reflect design standards set out in the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework 2012-2014 Supplementary Planning Document (the 'SPD')(September 2012) and the Dorset Heathlands Development Plan Document Preferred Options Consultation (February 2013) (Refs. 12 and 13).
- 5.12. The strategy relies upon the enhancement and diversification of habitats to encourage public access and enjoyment of conifer forestry/woodland owned by the Forestry Commission within the adjacent Ringwood Forest. The strategy is summarised as follows:
- To attract dog walkers away from the Dorset Heathlands SPA, a variety of attractive, waymarked circular walks of up to 2,350m linked to the development site would be provided, with leaflets informing new residents of their presence;
  - The existing plantation woodland containing the SANG would be made more diverse and hence attractive to dog-walkers than elsewhere by creating open glades supporting heathland vegetation, and through the restoration of 13ha mire habitats that will make the area wetter;
  - Paths and surrounding habitats would be maintained, as required;
  - To seek to avoid adverse effects to sensitive habitats in Ringwood Forest, signage would state the need to pick up dog litter, and open space in the development site will include dog litter bins and a pond for dogs to use; and
  - The SANG features would be secured in perpetuity.
- 5.13. Whilst there is some data in respect of the existing recreational use of Ringwood Forest, Nick Squirrell of Natural England considered it would be beneficial to undertake a recreation audit during the spring and summer months within the forest. This would provide a baseline and would assist in determining whether the SANG is likely to be effective. It was agreed that this could be made the subject of a planning condition.
- 5.14. The Forestry Commission and the developer have agreed the strategy and the principles of a mechanism to secure its delivery. Natural England has confirmed that this provides confidence that the SANG strategy will be implemented and mitigation secured to the standards required by the Habitats Regulations.
- 5.15. Ringwood Forest is, as stated earlier, of inherent ecological value, supporting populations of birds that are found in the SPA, as well as strictly protected reptile species. In order to address potential adverse effects associated with increased use of the forest by the 50 units being promoted through the Core Strategy process (refer to para 5.8, above), Linden Homes would fund the creation of 1.5ha of dry heath habitat and 13 ha of mire habitat would be restored. This would be achieved through plantation felling and management, and modification of drainage in the upstream





catchment. This habitat creation and restoration is in accordance with an existing strategy for enhancement of Ringwood Forest set out in the Forestry Commission's East Dorset Forest Design Plan Design Concept. As well as mitigating potential adverse effects, this will deliver significant benefits as a result of development, creating a large expanse UK BAP priority habitats.

- 5.16. The proposed planning application is for a slightly larger development than that being promoted in the Core Strategy (up to 65 units as opposed to 50). This does not affect the principles of the SANG in terms of recreation provision, however, it would result in a probable increase in the number of recreational users with concomitant increases in disturbance to valuable ecological resources in Ringwood Forest. Using the same rationale as that for 50 units, the quantum of heath created would be increased by 0.5ha (a total of 2.0ha) to address possible effects associated with an additional approximately 15 units. As agreed with Natural England, an addendum to the SANG strategy has been prepared to reflect this (**Appendix 8**).

## **Ebblake Bog SSSI, and Dorset Heaths SAC and Ramsar**

### *Potential Impacts*

- 5.17. The SAC supports important wetland habitats that are dependent on nutrient poor water. The nearest component of the SAC, Ebblake Bog, is 730m to the south. Whilst unlikely, there is the potential for development of the site – alone or in combination with others – to increase flow in the Ebblake Stream, which follows a course along the eastern boundary of the site and through Ebblake Bog. This could result in nutrient rich water overtopping the banks and spilling into the Ebblake Bog SSSI, SAC and SPA downstream.
- 5.18. Given the nature and scale of the development, other impacts to SAC qualifying habitats resulting from dust or nutrient deposition are not anticipated.
- 5.19. Similarly, owing to the distances involved, impacts that might affect the conservation status of populations of European protected species within the SAC, such as great crested newt, smooth snake or sand lizard, or invertebrates would not be expected.
- 5.20. As well as triggering the legislation, unmitigated impacts to the protected site would be contrary to policies protecting designated sites.

### *Mitigation and Enhancement Strategy*

- 5.21. The SANG strategy in **Appendix 7** also describes how potential impacts to wetland habitats at Ebblake Bog SSSI, SAC and Ramsar site will be avoided, by adopting appropriate drainage design as part of the development such that there should not be an increase in flows in Ebblake Stream. Furthermore, the proposals to restore the mire habitats in the upstream catchment should reduce flows in Ebblake Stream, reducing the risk further.
- 5.22. The increase in development size would not require modification to the existing drainage strategy to avoid impacts to Ebblake Bog.

## **Other Statutory Sites**

- 5.23. The Ebblake Stream adjacent to the site's eastern boundary is within the catchment and upstream of the Moors River System SSSI and Avon Valley (Bickton-Christchurch) SSSI and SAC. Given the distances involved and dilution of any contaminants in the unlikely event of polluting incidents, it is not likely that such events would affect the integrity of these sites.



- 5.24. By adopting usual best practice techniques during construction, and through appropriate design, impacts to Moors River System SSSI and Avon Valley (Bickton-Christchurch) SSSI and SAC resulting from pollution entering the Ebblake Stream would be avoided.

### **Non-statutory ('local') Sites**

- 5.25. Potential effects to Ringwood Forest and Home Wood SNCI adjacent and to the east of the site relate to increased recreational use and associated disturbance to important fauna. These issues have been addressed as part of the agreed SANG proposals described above. With the proposed dry heath and mire creation proposed, the quantum of UK BAP habitat and opportunities for important fauna that depend on it, would be improved, resulting in biodiversity gain.
- 5.26. Owing to the scale of development and distances involved, no adverse effects to other non-statutory sites are anticipated.

### **Habitats**

- 5.27. The proposed development is designed to avoid the poor fen habitat of local value within the woodland, which supports the diving beetle *Hydroporus necopinatus*. This lower lying part of the site could not be developed in any event as it is within the flood plain. The drainage design described above should ensure that the quality and quantity of water within this habitat is not adversely affected.
- 5.28. Development would result in loss of less valuable habitats:
- Some dwarf gorse of local value, though some can be retained;
  - Coniferous woodland, poor semi-improved grassland, semi-mature oaks and a mature Scots pine of site value; and
  - Harrowed land, scattered juvenile trees, buildings of negligible value.
- 5.29. These limited losses would be more than compensated by the extensive habitat creation proposed in Ringwood Forest.
- 5.30. That said, it is necessary for arboricultural and visual impact reasons to enhance the retained coniferous woodland. The reasons for this are:
- Retain a woodland backdrop to development, providing a level of amenity consistent with the existing Tree Preservation Order over time; and
  - Screen views from outside of the site, along the footpath adjacent to Ebblake Stream.
- 5.31. A strategy, provided in **Appendix 9**, has been devised to address these effects. In summary, it involves creation of the following zones:
- Mosaic of new grassland and dry heath bounded by hedgerows, all of which managed to maximise botanical diversity (and containing elements of the SANG, as described above);
  - woodland/grassland transition habitat ('ecotone') supporting light scrub (such as dwarf gorse and common gorse) and rough grassland that will be managed less frequently. A 'scalloped' edge to this woodland will be created, which will benefit invertebrates, particularly butterflies, and reptiles; and



- Woodland, which be subject of selective thinning to diversify the woodland structure, create open glades and encourage understorey development.

## **Fauna**

### *Amphibians*

- 5.32. With an absence of suitable breeding habitat nearby, great crested newts are not likely to be present or affected.
- 5.33. Loss of rough grassland and some woodland might impact upon common toad, if present. As required by the provisions of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006, it the proposed development will deliver significant habitat creation off-site, and with the woodland strategy proposed within the development itself, there will be far better opportunities for amphibians, including common toad.

### *Badgers*

- 5.34. The identified badger sett is well outside the area likely to be affected during construction and hence it is not likely to be affected. The site's development is not likely to affect the local badger foraging resource.

### *Bats*

- 5.35. No features likely to support roosting bats would be affected by development. There is the potential for off-site properties to support bats, though the habitats within the site are not likely to be of importance for bat foraging. With the proposed development design, diversification (though reduction) in woodland, and off-site improvements, opportunities for bats should be retained within the site, and improved outside of it. Provided lighting is designed appropriately, development should not affect bat commuting routes in the event they exist.

### *Birds*

- 5.36. Based on the nature and extent of habitats within the site, no significant impacts to birds of conservation concern are anticipated. Annex II ground nesting birds are not expected at the site, and a strategy is already described to increase the available habitat within Ringwood Forest to off-set increased disturbance as a result of the SANG.
- 5.37. All native wild birds being protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended) whilst nesting. Clearance of scrub and trees in Ringwood Forest would be timed to avoid the bird nesting season. This would also be the case within the development t site, or else it would be preceded by a survey to confirm disturbance would not occur.

### *Dormice*

- 5.38. Given the habitat is sub-optimal adjacent and within the site, no impacts are envisaged.
- 5.39. Works within Ringwood Forest would be undertaken in accordance with Forestry Commission guidance to protect dormouse (Ref. 14).

### *Invertebrates*

- 5.40. As stated, the poor fen habitat supporting the diving beetle *Hydroporus necopinatus*, an endangered UK BAP species and SoPI, is retained. The morphology and wooded banks to the ephemeral pools will not be modified in the event that this has a detrimental effect. For instance, the species appears to prefer sparsely vegetated pools; increasing the insolation (sunlight) on the



pools may encourage dominance of purple moor-grass, an issue in the adjacent forest, and hence suitability of the pools. A management prescription in the plan for the retained woodland will ensure such issues are addressed.

- 5.41. There is likely to be a temporary impact to two nationally scarce species (tawny cockroach and lesser cockroach) found in rough grassland habitat during the construction phase. However, with the woodland strategy within the development, and works proposed off-site, there should be better opportunities than currently exist.

### *Reptiles*

- 5.42. Habitats supporting the common reptile populations of local value would be lost during site clearance. All species of common reptile are protected from harm under WCA, hence it will be necessary to move them from harm's way before works commence (either through translocation or phased strimming to passively encourage them to move). The woodland transition strategy, and in particular the new 'ecotone' habitat, will provide replacement, safeguarded habitat for the reptiles.
- 5.43. Potential increases in predation and disturbance to more heavily protected reptile species (smooth snake and sand lizard) would be addressed by the habitat creation within Ringwood Forest. This will increase the habitat available, and hence the size of the population, which will as a result be more robust to such perturbation.



## Section 6: Summary and Conclusion

- 6.1. The potential for adverse effects to the Dorset Heathlands SPA, the most significant ecological issue in respect of future residential development of the site, has been addressed through a SANG strategy that has been agreed with Natural England. The SANG is reliant on Forestry Commission owned land, and the developer and the Forestry Commission have agreed how such work could be secured. Natural England requested that a recreation audit be conducted to provide some baseline information to assess the future efficacy of the SANG.
- 6.2. The SANG strategy necessitates creation of 2ha of dry heath and 13 ha mire habitat (UK BAP Priority habitats that are characteristic of the local area) that would make the important existing bird and reptile populations more robust to likely increased disturbance of Ringwood Forest (itself a non-statutory SINC), close to the development. In line with national and local policy, and the objectives of the Forestry Commission's Forest Design plan, this quantum of habitat creation would in fact lead to significant biodiversity gain, whilst making Ringwood Forest a more diverse and interesting recreational resource,.
- 6.3. Impacts to Dorset Heaths SAC would be avoided by appropriate drainage design, as well as mire restoration work in Ringwood Forest.
- 6.4. No other protected sites would be affected.
- 6.5. The site is of limited ecological value. The development has been designed to retain the shaded, poor fen habitat of local value that supports the diving beetle *Hydroporus necopinatus*, an endangered UK BAP species and SoPI. Other habitats, including dwarf gorse of local value, will be affected, but impacts will be more than mitigated through a combination of woodland enhancement strategies, and off-site works.
- 6.6. Whilst there will be temporary impacts to two nationally scarce species (tawny cockroach and lesser cockroach) found in rough grassland, suitable habitat will be recreated and safeguarded. Reptiles will be moved from harm's way to suitable habitat within the development.
- 6.7. A management and maintenance plan would be necessary for the SANG, and also for the retained and enhanced habitats within the site itself.
- 6.8. An appropriate mechanism for controlling delivery of the mitigation and enhancement strategy would involve the use of planning conditions to:
  - Detailed SANG design and a recreation audit within Ringwood Forest;
  - Drainage design to protect the SAC and poor fen habitats within the site boundary;
  - Design and implementation of a protected species strategy for invertebrates, nesting birds and reptiles; and
  - A management plan for habitats within the site boundary.
- 6.9. A Section 106 agreement has been drafted to control delivery of the SANG. The management of the site could be secured in the same way.
- 6.10. In conclusion, with the implementation of the mitigation and enhancement strategy, the proposed development would be in conformity with planning policy that seeks to protect and enhance ecological resources.



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21 May 2013

Land off Ringwood Road,  
Verwood, East Dorset

Ecological Assessment

Report Number: 1522\_R11a\_LW\_RW

Author: Lauren West

Checked by: Julian Arthur MCIEEM CENV

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# Plans

Habitat Features  
(1522/P08c May 2013 LW/JTF)

Fauna Survey Results  
(1522/P11b May 2013 LW/JTF)

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Land off Ringwood Road, Verwood, East Dorset  
Ecological Assessment

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# Appendix 1: Breeding Bird Survey



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# Land off Ringwood Road, Verwood

## Breeding Bird Survey

Ecology Surveys

August 2012

### Contents

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## 1 Introduction and Methodology

- 1.1 Ecology Surveys was commissioned by Tyler Grange in May 2012 to undertake a breeding bird survey of a small site proposed for development off Ringwood Road, Verwood, as well as those parts of Ringwood Forest adjacent to the site.
- 1.2 The development site itself consists of an area of cleared ground (formerly playing fields) bordering the back of a line of gardens, together with an area of woodland plantation, dominated by Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris* with sparse silver birch *Betula pendula*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, rowan *Sorbus aucuparia* and alder buckthorn *Frangula alnus*. On the woodland edges small amounts of both common gorse *Ulex europaeus* and dwarf gorse *Ulex minor* are present together with some heather *Calluna vulgaris*. Other ground flora are rather sparse, but include honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*, wood sage *Teucrium scorodonia* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., plus purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea* and bog myrtle *Myrica gale* in the damper areas.
- 1.3 The adjacent Ringwood Forest, as with the on-site woodland, is heavily conifer dominated, although there are numerous rides, a watercourse (which also runs alongside the site boundary), and some significant clearings. Clearing 1 nearest the site (see plan 1) is heavily heather dominated, with much dwarf gorse, whilst the much larger clearing 2 (around 500m east of the site) is dominated by purple moor-grass, plus occasional small trees and shrubs.
- 1.4 The adjacent parts of Ringwood Forest were included in the survey due to the potential for the occurrence of several breeding species of European importance: nightjar *Caprimulgus europaeus*, woodlark *Lullula arborea* and Dartford warbler *Sylvia undata*.
- 1.5 Three surveys were conducted in May and June 2012 in order to assess breeding bird activity in the area. Each survey consisted of an evening survey, ending after dark (when nightjars become active) followed by a morning survey, beginning before first light. The dates of the surveys together with a summary of the weather conditions are given in table 1.

Date (2012)	Times	Weather summary
14 <sup>th</sup> – 15 <sup>th</sup> May	19:00 – 21:45 04:20 – 06:40	1/8 cloud, light westerly breeze.
8 <sup>th</sup> – 9 <sup>th</sup> June	19:45 – 22:20 04:00 – 06:20	8/8 cloud, wind SW3, though lighter in the early morning.
26 <sup>th</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> June	20:00 – 22:30 03:40 – 06:10	8/8 cloud, humid and still. Misty early morning.

Table 1: Dates, times and weather conditions during the breeding bird surveys.

- 1.6 On each survey an experienced ornithologist followed a circuitous route around the site and through Ringwood Forest recording the locations, numbers and activity of all bird species present in the area during this time. All recording within the Forest was carried out from the numerous rides, which allowed good coverage, and leant themselves to recording an area up to around 500m from the site. At first light and last light the clearings (1 and 2) were targeted in order to observe any nightjar activity.

- 
- 1.7 Over the three visits this methodology should ensure that the vast majority of species present at the site are recorded, although certain species that may be using the area as part of a larger territory, for example nocturnal species such as owls, may be missed.
- 1.8 To ascertain the breeding status of birds using the site, the following criteria were applied following the methodology used in the 'Atlas' surveys of 1988-1991 (Gibbons et al, 1993). This accepts the following activities as denoting breeding (including those probably breeding although definite proof was lacking):
- Bird apparently holding territory.
  - Courtship and display.
  - Nest-building (including excavating nest-hole).
  - Distraction display or feigning injury.
  - Adult carrying faecal sac or food.
  - Adult entering or leaving apparently occupied nest site.
  - Nest with eggs or eggshells found, or bird sitting but not disturbed.
  - Nest with young; or downy young of ducks, game-birds, waders and other nidifugous species.
  - Recently fledged young.

## 2 Results

- 2.1 A total of 40 species of birds was recorded during the breeding bird survey, of which only eight were breeding or possibly breeding within the site boundary, with an additional 24 species breeding or possibly breeding in adjacent parts of Ringwood Forest. The remaining eight species were either recorded distantly, flying over the site, or represented only by apparently non-breeding individuals.
- 2.2 A summary of observations for each species is included in table 2, whilst the distribution of breeding birds is shown in plan 1.

### Systematic list

Species (and BTO species code)	RSPB listed	Estimated number of pairs		Notes
		Site	Forest	
Pheasant (PH) <i>Phasianus colchicus</i>		0-1	0-1	
Sparrowhawk (SH) <i>Accipiter nisus</i>			0	One present on 9 <sup>th</sup> June was the only record.
Buzzard (BZ) <i>Buteo buteo</i>			0	One was present on 26 <sup>th</sup> – 27 <sup>th</sup> June.
Woodcock (WK) <i>Scolopax rusticola</i>	Amber		1	One roding (i.e. territory holding) male at dusk and dawn on all visits.
Black-headed gull (BH) <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Amber	0		Recorded flying over.
Woodpigeon (WP) <i>Columba palumbus</i>		1	5	Common throughout the forest plantation.
Cuckoo (CK) <i>Cuculus canorus</i>	Red		0-1	A single male regularly recorded, ranging widely across the forest.
Nightjar (NJ) <i>Caprimulgus europaeus</i>	Red		2-3	One territory includes both clearings 1 and 2. There is possibly a second territory in clearing 2, and another churring male in the pylon clearing to the northwest.
Tawny owl (TO) <i>Strix aluco</i>			0	Heard in the forest, but only distantly.
Green woodpecker (G.) <i>Picus viridis</i>	Amber		0-1	
Great spotted woodpecker (GS) <i>Dendrocopos major</i>		0	1	
Tree pipit (TP) <i>Anthus trivialis</i>	Red		1	In clearing 2.
Wren (WR) <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		1	13	The most abundant species in the forest plantation.
Dunnock (D.) <i>Prunella modularis</i>	Amber		0-1	In gardens adjacent to the forest.
Robin (R.) <i>Erithacus rubecula</i>		1	8	The second most abundant species in the forest plantation.
Stonechat (SC) <i>Saxicola torquata</i>			1	In clearing 2.
Blackbird (B.) <i>Turdus merula</i>		0	4	More associated with the gardens in the area.
Song thrush (ST) <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Red		1	

Species (and BTO species code)	RSPB listed	Estimated number of pairs		Notes
		Site	Forest	
Mistle thrush (M.) <i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Amber	0	0-1	
Blackcap (BC) <i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>		0-1	0-1	
Wood warbler (WO) <i>Phylloscopus sibilatrix</i>	Red		0-1	A singing male on 9 <sup>th</sup> June only.
Willow warbler (WW) <i>Phylloscopus trochilus</i>	Amber		1	
Chiffchaff (CC) <i>Phylloscopus collybita</i>			3-4	
Goldcrest (GC) <i>Regulus regulus</i>		1	6	Common throughout the forest plantation.
Blue tit (BT) <i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>		0		
Great tit (GT) <i>Parus major</i>		0	0-1	
Coal tit (CT) <i>Periparus ater</i>		2	2	
Long-tailed tit (LT) <i>Aegithalos caudatus</i>			0-1	
Treecreeper (TC) <i>Certhia familiaris</i>		0	3	
Jay (J.) <i>Garrulus glandarius</i>			0-1	
Magpie (MG) <i>Pica pica</i>			0-1	
Carrion crow (C.) <i>Corvus corone</i>			1	
Starling (SG) <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Red	0		Recorded flying over the site.
Chaffinch (CH) <i>Fringilla coelebs</i>		2	5	Common throughout the forest plantation.
Greenfinch (GR) <i>Carduelis chloris</i>			0-1	More associated with gardens than the forest.
Goldfinch (GO) <i>Carduelis carduelis</i>		0		Recorded flying over.
Siskin (SK) <i>Carduelis spinus</i>		0	1	
Bullfinch (BF) <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	Amber	0	1	
Crossbill (CR) <i>Loxia curvirostra</i>			0	A flock of 14 flew across clearing 2 on 9 <sup>th</sup> June.
Yellowhammer (Y.) <i>Emberiza citrinella</i>	Red		1	In clearing 2.

Table 2: Bird species recorded during the breeding bird surveys at Verwood. (Note a 'zero' is included in the table if the species was recorded, although not breeding, whereas a blank indicates the species was not recorded in that part of the survey area).



Plan 1: Distribution of breeding birds at Verwood.  
 Red circles indicate species breeding or probably breeding; green circles those possibly breeding. Species locations do not necessarily show nest-sites, but show the location of each species within its presumed territory. For the key to species, see the systematic list above.

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### 3 Summary and Conclusions

- 3.1 Breeding bird activity within the site itself is restricted to the woodland plantation, which supports a limited range of generally the commonest species found in the adjacent forest, including the 'generalist' species: woodpigeon, wren, robin, chaffinch and possibly pheasant and blackcap, together with the conifer specialists goldcrest and coal tit. None of these species breeding within the site is of significance.
- 3.2 Conversely, a number of notable species were found to be breeding in adjacent parts of Ringwood Forest, the majority of them in the vicinity of clearing 2, around 500m from the site boundary, including a selection of typical 'heathland' species: woodcock, cuckoo, nightjar, tree pipit, stonechat and yellowhammer, with wood warbler possibly breeding nearby.
- 3.3 Nightjar was the only species of European importance to be recorded during the survey. One territory includes *both* clearing 1 and the north part of clearing 2 – both the male and female were observed moving between the two clearings, the male 'churring' (singing) in both locations. At least one territory is located along the pylon ride 500m or more north-northwest of the site, and there is possibly an additional territory at the southern end of clearing 2.
- 3.4 Nightjars are highly mobile and can cover large distances at night whilst feeding (on flying invertebrates). As well as within the forest, they are likely to forage over the proposed development site as well as over the gardens in the area.
- 3.5 No woodlarks were recorded during the survey, either singing or foraging etc., and, although clearing 2 in particular looks suitable, this species appears not to be present in the vicinity, at least in 2012.
- 3.6 Similarly, no Dartford warblers were recorded during this survey. This species is at a rather low ebb in 2012, following two cold winters, although its absence could simply be attributable to the general lack of common gorse within the survey area.



# Appendix 2: Invertebrate Survey Report



Land off Ringwood Road, Verwood, East Dorset  
Ecological Assessment

1522\_R11a 21 May 2013 LW\_RW

# INVERTEBRATE ASSESSMENT – SITE AT VERWOOD, NR. RINGWOOD, DORSET.

## 1. Introduction and methods

This report describes the results of an invertebrate assessment carried out at a site situated on the south-eastern extremity of the town of Verwood, near Ringwood, Dorset for the Tyler-Grange environmental consultancy. The site includes an open field and, to the east of this, an area of woodland that occupies approximately one third of the total area. The field had been ploughed recently, but around its fringes are stands of rank grassland, tall ruderal grassland and some more open somewhat heathy patches. The woodland is secondary, with mixed Scot's pine *Pinus sylvestris* and oak *Quercus* sp. on the drier ground to the west, while to the east, there is boggy ground with purple moor-grass *Molinia caerulea*, bog myrtle *Myrica gale* and a little bog-moss *Sphagnum* spp. under a canopy of birch *Betula* sp. and grey willow *Salix cinerea*.

The brief for this work stipulated that a single day's invertebrate assessment of the site should be carried out, with this visit being made on 22 June 2012. The aim of the assessment was to look at the range of invertebrate habitats present on the site and to assess their potential importance for invertebrates. In addition, a small amount of invertebrate sampling was carried out, though this was quite limited given the time constraints. The boggy areas and the more species-rich and/or heathy stands of ruderal vegetation appeared to be most likely to support interesting invertebrates, so these were the focus of the limited invertebrate sampling undertaken. For the purposes of this report, the site has been sub-divided into a number of survey areas, each of which has been allocated a code number, these being shown on Figure 2.1.

Sampling of the invertebrate fauna was mostly carried out by sweeping the vegetation with a heavy-duty entomological sweep net and shaking litter and grass tussocks into a white plastic tray. The main invertebrate taxa sampled was beetles (Coleoptera), but a range of other taxa with which the contractor is familiar, such as terrestrial molluscs and hoverflies (Syrphidae), were also determined to species level. In addition, readily identified groups such as the Orthopteroidea and butterflies were also noted. A full list of the invertebrates recorded during the survey can be found in Appendix 1, at the end of this report.

Section 2 lists any key invertebrate species recorded during the June sampling. Key species are defined as being: 1) of EC Annex II Species Directive (EC II), UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) Priority, Red Data Book (RDB), Nationally Scarce or Local/Regional BAP Priority status; and 2) indicative of the main habitat(s) present on the site in question.

In section 3, an assessment of the invertebrate habitats is provided, with thoughts on those areas thought to be of particular value. Because a full invertebrate survey has not been carried out in this instance, the habitat assessment has relied primarily on the identification of microhabitat features that are likely to be important for invertebrates. However, the list of invertebrates recorded from the site has also been drawn on, with special emphasis on any key species recorded during the visit.

## 2. Important invertebrates recorded at Verwood

### 2.1. Key invertebrates

Despite the very limited amount of survey work undertaken, three key invertebrate species were recorded at the Verwood site in 2012. The species accounts in this section of the report include brief notes on the occurrence of these, plus comments on their ecology and national/regional distribution. Map 2.1. shows the location of all key species records.

In addition to the surveyors own information, these accounts also draw on information from the following sources:

Foster, G. N. 2010. A review of the scarce and threatened Coleoptera of Great Britain Part (3): Water beetles of Great Britain. *Species Status 1*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

Haes, E. C. M. & Harding, P. T. 1997. *Atlas of grasshoppers, crickets and allied insects in Britain and Ireland*. Institute of Terrestrial Ecology, Huntingdon.

Marshall, J. A. & Haes, E. C M. 1988. *Grasshoppers and allied insects of Great Britain and Ireland*. Harley Books, Colchester.

The emboldened national status designations given after the scientific name of each of the key species are defined as follows:

**BAP.** – Biodiversity Action Plan priority species. Species included in the list of Priority Species in the UK BAP. These may be species that are threatened in Britain and/or for which Britain has internationally important populations. This definition may include species that occur quite widely in Britain currently, but which are declining to a degree that jeopardises their long-term survival.

**Nb.** – Nationally Scarce category B. Taxa which do not fall within RDB categories but which are none-the-less uncommon in Great Britain and thought to occur in between 31 and 100 10 km squares of the National Grid or, for less well recorded groups, within between eight and twenty vice-counties.

**RDB-EN.** – Red Data Book – Endangered. A taxon is Endangered when it is not Critically Endangered, but is facing a very high risk of extinction in the wild in the near future.

**2.1.1. Tawny cockroach *Ectobius pallidus* Nb.** *E. pallidus* is a moderately large native cockroach (8-9.5mm) of a rich tawny-brown colour. Nymphs are similarly coloured, and additionally have a scattering of black dots on the dorsal surface. The tawny cockroach is a warmth-loving insect, with most of its sites being in the extreme south-east of England in a band stretching from Kent, west as far as Dorset. Elsewhere there are a few sites in south-west England and on the Gower peninsula, as well as isolated single sites in Suffolk and south Lancashire. It is found in a range of warm, dry habitats, such as wood-edges, heaths, chalk grassland and coastal cliffs and dunes. *E. pallidus* has a two-year life cycle, with nymphs overwintering in the fourth of their six instars and adults appearing in the following season from late-June through to October-November. Both adults and nymphs are readily collected by ground searching and sweeping low vegetation.

**2.1.2. Lesser cockroach *Ectobius panzeri* Nb.** This is the smallest of the three British native cockroaches. It is of very local occurrence in southern England and south Wales, where it usually occurs in grass tussocks and under heather plants in well-insolated maritime grassland and heath. It is scarcer inland, but it can be found occasionally in very warm, dry sites on heathland and chalk grassland. At Verwood, a single nymph was found in a tussock in dry grassland on the edge of survey area 5. *E. panzeri* has a one-year life cycle, with overwintering eggs hatching in April or May. The distinctive black and white nymphs develop through the spring and early summer. Adults appear in July and August, and will persist into September and October(). Both adults and nymphs of this species are quite easily found by hand searching amongst vegetation and litter.

**2.1.3. A diving beetle *Hydroporus necopinatus* Fery, 1999. RDB-EN / BAP.** A small, black diving beetle, which is very closely allied to the common *H. melanarius*. *H. necopinatus* usually has the body a little rounded at the sides, and is moderately shiny, while *H. melanarius* appears very parallel-sided, with dense microsculpture giving it a much duller appearance. However, reliable determination depends on examination of the male genitalia, which has a more elongate apex in *H. necopinatus*. *H. necopinatus* is a great rarity in Britain, only being known from a few sites on the lowland heaths of Dorset, where it has previously been found on the Purbeck heaths and also in the adjacent area of heathland to the south of the River Frome. Here, it is usually collected in sparsely vegetated pools on the interface between dry heath and valley mire. On the continent, it has a strongly 'Atlantic' distribution, with records from western France, and the Atlantic seaboard of Spain and Portugal.

A single male was collected from a sparsely vegetated peaty pool in the area of boggy wet woodland in survey area 6. Because this is a difficult species to identify, the specimen was submitted to the international authority on water beetles, Professor Garth Foster, who has confirmed its identity as *H. necopinatus*. This is a very important record, as it is a Red Data Book (Endangered) and priority BAP species. The record from Verwood represents a significant extension of its known range in Dorset. The Dorset populations of *H. necopinatus* have been assigned to their own sub-species, *roni* Fery, 1999, which is only found here, while those on Jersey belong to the more widespread French sub-species *robertorum* Fery, 1999.

## **2.2. Other invertebrates**

Other than *H. necopinatus*, very few invertebrates were collected during the brief survey of the wet woodland area. However, those species that were found here, such as the diving beetle *Hydroporus gyllenhalii* and the ground beetles *Pterostichus minor*, *P. diligens* and *Agonum gracile* collectively form part of a typical assemblage of acid mire habitats.

With the exception of the two native cockroaches described above, the invertebrate fauna of the drier areas of the site was composed of relatively common and eurytopic species.

Figure 2.1. Survey areas and locations of key species at Verwood



### **3. Important invertebrate habitat features at Verwood**

#### **3.1. Key invertebrate habitat features**

The assessment of the site has identified habitat features that are thought likely to be of special importance for invertebrates. Where key species are present in a habitat feature, these are listed in parentheses in the titles at the start of each of the following sub-sections.

##### 3.1.1. Shallow pools in wet woodland (*Hydroporus necopinatus*)

There are a number of pools in the wet woodland of survey area 6. These are for the most part sparsely vegetated, but there are scattered patches of submerged bog-moss, and also some sparse mats of floating sweet-grass *Glyceria fluitans*. The site originally appears to have been open mire, and there is still good cover of purple moor-grass, as well as some patches of bog myrtle, with the latter mostly being in remnant open glades. However, most of the area now has secondary cover of birch and willow scrub. *H. necopinatus* is an Endangered species, which is also included on the UK BAP priority species list. Pending further survey information on the wider distribution of the species in the Verwood-Ringwood area, the presence of the species here requires that this habitat feature should be assessed provisionally as being of national significance.

3.1.2. Acid mire in wet woodland. The wetter areas of mire have stands of relatively intact bog vegetation, and are the least disturbed semi-natural habitat feature present on this site. Though no key species were recorded, this habitat feature did support some invertebrates typical of undisturbed acid mires, and the invertebrate assemblage present here is thought likely to be of at least local significance in respect of its invertebrate assemblage.

3.1.3. Ruderal grassland (Lesser and tawny cockroaches). Stands of ruderal grassland are found in survey areas 1, 2, 3 and 5. A number of tawny cockroach nymphs were found in the first of these, being most frequent where there were 'soft' edges between relatively rank grassland and the Scot's pine plantation to the north. A single lesser cockroach nymph was found in quite short ruderal grass-heath in survey area 3. Both of these species are quite widely distributed in a range of open habitats in the Ringwood-Verwood area, and the population here is not thought likely to be of very limited significance when set in the context of the large amount of suitable habitat present in the Ringwood area. No other interesting invertebrates were recorded and this habitat feature is assessed as being of no more than low to local importance.

#### **3.2. Other invertebrate habitat features**

The remaining habitat features present at Verwood are thought likely to be of no more than low to very moderate importance for invertebrates. Brief thoughts on these are given in the following sub-sections.

3.2.1. Ploughed area. The recent ploughing of much of the open field (survey area 4) made it impossible to survey this meaningfully. No significant species were noted during a brief walkover of it.

3.2.2. Dry woodland. The mixed conifers and broadleaves in survey area 5 are very unlikely to support an important invertebrate assemblage.

## 4. Conclusions

Overall the invertebrate fauna of this site is assessed as being of low to local importance, with the exception of the mire and wet woodland in survey area 6. The presence of the Endangered, BAP priority diving beetle *Hydroporus necopinatus* here necessitates a provisional rating of national importance, pending further surveys of the Ringwood-Verwood area.

APPENDIX 1: CHECKLIST OF INVERTEBRATES RECORDED FROM VERWOOD - 2012

Group	Family	Status	Sp. scientific name	Sp.common name	Survey area	Habitat	Dy	Mo	Year	Sampling method
Mollusca	Arionidae		<i>Arion ater</i>		3	Ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Under stone
Mollusca	Arionidae		<i>Arion subfuscus</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Mollusca	Zonitidae		<i>Aegopinella pura</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Mollusca	Zonitidae		<i>Oxychilus alliarius</i>		3	Ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Under stone
Mollusca	Zonitidae		<i>Oxychilus cellarius</i>		1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Mollusca	Zonitidae		<i>Oxychilus helveticus</i>		5	Ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Mollusca	Zonitidae		<i>Zonitoides excacatus</i>		3	Ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Under stone
Mollusca	Agriolimacidae		<i>Deroceras laeve</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Mollusca	Agriolimacidae		<i>Deroceras reticulatum</i>		2	Ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Under stone
Mollusca	Helicidae		<i>Candidula intersecta</i>		4	Ploughed	22	6	2012	Under stone
Mollusca	Helicidae		<i>Trichia hispida</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Mollusca	Helicidae		<i>Cepaea hortensis</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Swept
Mollusca	Helicidae		<i>Helix aspersa</i>	Garden snail	1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Diplopoda	Glomeridae		<i>Glomeris marginata</i>	Pill millipede	3	Ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Under stone
Orthoptera	Tettigoniidae		<i>Leptophyes punctatissima</i>	Speckled bush-cricket	3	Ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Swept
Dictyoptera	Blatellidae	<b>Nb.</b>	<i>Ectobius pallidus</i>	Tawny cockroach	1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Dictyoptera	Blatellidae	<b>Nb.</b>	<i>Ectobius panzeri</i>	Lesser cockroach	5	Ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Dermaptera	Forficulidae		<i>Forficula auricularia</i>	Common earwig	4	Ploughed	22	6	2012	Under stone
Hemiptera	Pentatomidae		<i>Podops inuncta</i>	Turtle shieldbug	5	Ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Coleoptera	Dytiscidae		<i>Hydroporus gyllenhalii</i>		6	Bog/wet woodland	22	6	2012	Sieving shallow pools
Coleoptera	Dytiscidae		<i>Hydroporus memnonius</i>		6	Bog/wet woodland	22	6	2012	Sieving shallow pools
Coleoptera	Dytiscidae	<b>RDB-En./BAP</b>	<i>Hydroporus necopinatus</i>		6	Bog/wet woodland	22	6	2012	Sieving shallow pools
Coleoptera	Carabidae		<i>Pterostichus minor</i>		6	Bog/wet woodland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Coleoptera	Carabidae		<i>Pterostichus diligens</i>		6	Bog/wet woodland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Coleoptera	Carabidae		<i>Calathus fuscipes</i>		3	Ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Under stone
Coleoptera	Carabidae		<i>Calathus melanocephalus</i>		3	Ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Under stone
Coleoptera	Carabidae		<i>Agonum gracile</i>		6	Bog/wet woodland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Coleoptera	Carabidae		<i>Harpalus rubripes</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search



Coleoptera	Carabidae	<i>Harpalus rufipes</i>		3	Ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Under stone
Coleoptera	Carabidae	<i>Harpalus latus</i>		3	Ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Under stone
Coleoptera	Carabidae	<i>Demetrias atricapillus</i>		1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Coleoptera	Carabidae	<i>Paradromius linearis</i>		1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Coleoptera	Carabidae	<i>Syntomus foveatus</i>		1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Coleoptera	Silphidae	<i>Silpha tristis</i>		1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Coleoptera	Staphylinidae	<i>Sepedophilus nigripennis</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Coleoptera	Staphylinidae	<i>Tachinus laticollis</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Swept
Coleoptera	Staphylinidae	<i>Tachyporus pusillus</i>		4	Ploughed	22	6	2012	Under stone
Coleoptera	Staphylinidae	<i>Cordalia obscura</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Coleoptera	Staphylinidae	<i>Drusilla canaliculata</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Coleoptera	Staphylinidae	<i>Scaphisoma agaricinum</i>		1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	Under reptile mat
Coleoptera	Staphylinidae	<i>Stenus clavicornis</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Coleoptera	Staphylinidae	<i>Astenus pulchellus</i>		1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Coleoptera	Staphylinidae	<i>Rugilus erichsonii</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Under reptile mat
Coleoptera	Staphylinidae	<i>Tasgius morsitans</i>		3	Ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Under stone
Coleoptera	Elateridae	<i>Agriotes obscurus</i>		3	Ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Under stone
Coleoptera	Lampyridae	<i>Lampyris noctiluca</i>	Glow-worm	1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Coleoptera	Nitidulidae	<i>Meligethes carinulatus</i>		1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Coleoptera	Coccinellidae	<i>Rhyzobius litura</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Coleoptera	Coccinellidae	<i>Nephus redtenbacheri</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Coleoptera	Coccinellidae	<i>Subcoccinella 24-punctata</i>	24-spot ladybird	5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Swept
Coleoptera	Oedemeridae	<i>Oedemera lurida</i>		1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	On flowers
Coleoptera	Oedemeridae	<i>Oedemera nobilis</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Swept
Coleoptera	Cerambycidae	<i>Stenurella melanura</i>		1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	On <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> flowers
Coleoptera	Chrysomelidae	<i>Gastrophysa viridula</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Swept
Coleoptera	Chrysomelidae	<i>Longitarsus succineus</i>		3	Ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Swept
Coleoptera	Apionidae	<i>Apion haematodes</i>		3	Ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Swept
Coleoptera	Apionidae	<i>Ischnopterapion loti</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Swept
Coleoptera	Curculionidae	<i>Otiorhynchus ovatus</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Coleoptera	Curculionidae	<i>Polydrusus pterygomalis</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Swept
Coleoptera	Curculionidae	<i>Andrion regensteinese</i>		1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	On <i>Ulex europaeus</i>

Lepidoptera	Geometridae	<i>Bupalus piniaria</i>	Bordered white	1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	In flight
Lepidoptera	Arctiidae	<i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>	Cinnabar	3	Ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Swept
Diptera	Rhagionidae	<i>Rhagio scolopacea</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	On foliage
Diptera	Therevidae	<i>Thereva nobilitata</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	On foliage
Diptera	Syrphidae	<i>Episyrhus balteatus</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	On flowers
Diptera	Syrphidae	<i>Eristalis horticola</i>		1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	On flowers
Diptera	Syrphidae	<i>Eristalis pertinax</i>		1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	On flowers
Diptera	Syrphidae	<i>Helophilus pendulus</i>		1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	On flowers
Diptera	Syrphidae	<i>Sericomyia silentis</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	On flowers
Diptera	Syrphidae	<i>Xylota segnis</i>		1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	On foliage
Diptera	Scathophagidae	<i>Scathophaga stercoraria</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Swept
Hymenoptera	Formicidae	<i>Lasius flavus</i>	Yellow meadow ant	1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Hymenoptera	Formicidae	<i>Lasius niger</i>		3	Ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Under stone
Hymenoptera	Formicidae	<i>Formica fusca</i>		1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Hymenoptera	Formicidae	<i>Myrmica ruginodis</i>		1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Hymenoptera	Formicidae	<i>Myrmica scabrinodis</i>		2	Ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Under stone
Hymenoptera	Apidae	<i>Bombus lapidarius</i>	Red-tailed bumblebee	1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	On flowers
Hymenoptera	Apidae	<i>Apis mellifera</i>	Honey bee	5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	On flowers
Pseudoscorpiones	Chthoniidae	<i>Chthonius ischnocheles</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Araneae	Philodromidae	<i>Tibellus oblongus</i>		1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Isopoda	Trichoniscidae	<i>Trichoniscus pusillus</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Isopoda	Oniscidae	<i>Oniscus asellus</i>		5	Tall ruderal grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Isopoda	Philosciidae	<i>Philoscia muscorum</i>		1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Isopoda	Porcellionidae	<i>Porcellio scaber</i>		1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search
Isopoda	Armadillidiidae	<i>Armadillidium vulgare</i>		1	Rough grassland	22	6	2012	Ground search

# Appendix 3: Reptile Survey Methodology and Results



# Appendix 3: Reptile Survey Methodology and Results

## Survey of the site

### Methodology

- A3.1. Presence/absence surveys were conducted by Lindsay Carrington Ecological Services in line with guidance published by Froglife (Ref. 9).
- A3.2. Reptile refugia comprising 0.5m x 1m pieces of roofing felt were laid out in areas with potential to support reptiles, within the site, and in Ringwood Forest up to 400m from the site. They were placed at a density of approximately 10 to 20 refuges per hectare of suitable habitat.
- A3.3. The refugia were then checked on seven subsequent occasions during optimal survey conditions – dry, warm (9°C to 18°C), intermittent sun and light winds. On occasion, some refuges were checked during slightly higher temperatures, however it is not considered that this has affected the validity of the results.
- A3.4. Searches of natural basking spots and refuges already present were also searched during the reptile surveys.
- A3.5. To estimate the populations sizes of the reptiles present the Key Sites Register survey assessment was used (Ref. 9). This assesses the likely size of a population based on the maximum number of adults recorded during any one survey visit.

Species	Low population	Good population	Exceptional population
Grass snake	<5	5 – 10	>10
Common lizard	<5	5 – 20	>20
Slow worm	<5	5 – 20	>20

**Table A3.1: Estimated population size based on maximum number of adults recorded in any one survey visit (peak adult count)**

### Results

- A3.6. The results of the seven survey visits that followed are summarised in Table A3.2, below. **Plan 1522/P11b** indicates the locations of the refugia where reptiles were recorded.

Date and Time	Species	Daily Total (juveniles and adults)	Total	Peak Adult count
14/8/12:12:05	Slow worm	6f and 5 juv	11	6
	Common Lizard	1f and 3 juv	4	1
16/8/12: 11:00	Slow worm	14f, 1m and 5 juv	20	15
	Common Lizard	1m and 4 juv	5	1
17/08/12: 15:10	Slow worm	3f, 1m	4	4
	Common lizard	1m	1	1



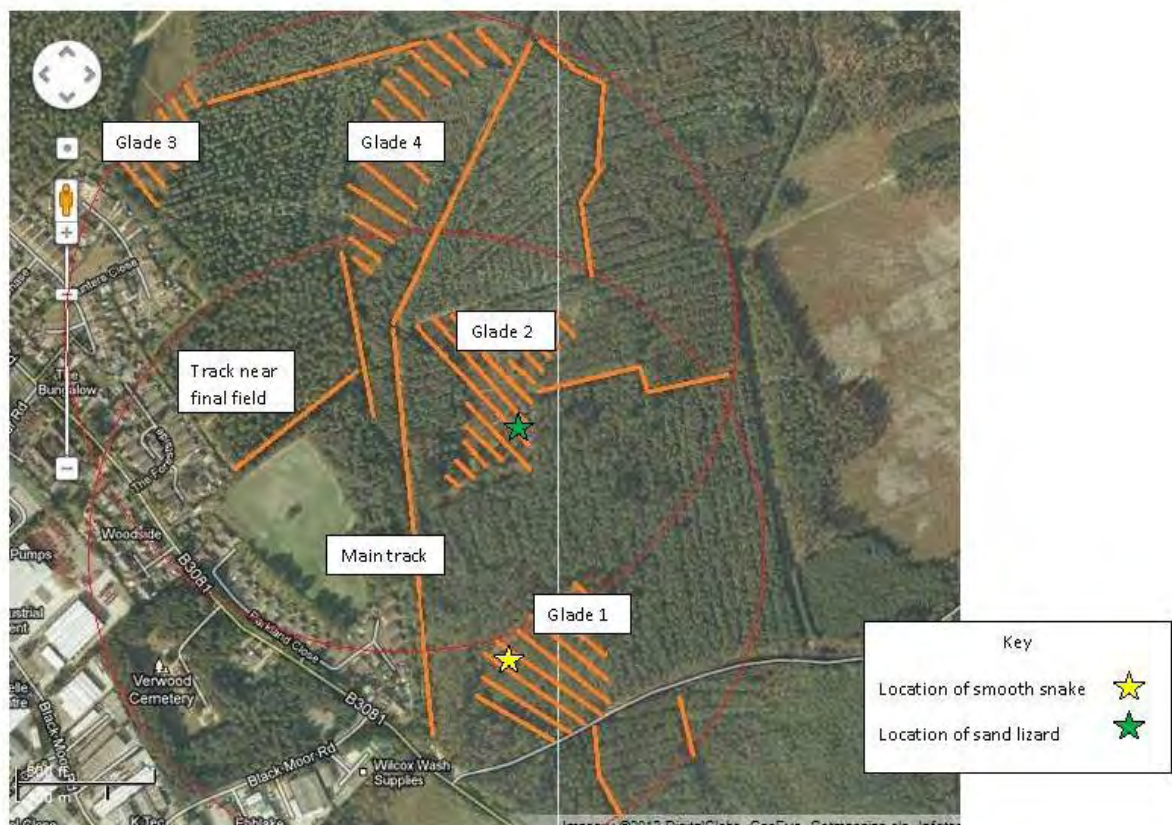
23/08/12: 11:15	Slow worm	12f, 1m and 4 juv	17	13
	Common lizard	2 juv	2	0
24/08/12: 14:00	Slow worm	7f, 2m and 3 juv	12	9
	Common lizard	1m	1	1
28/08/12: 11:30	Slow worm	12f, 2m and 9 juv	23	14
	Common lizard	2m and 2 juv	4	2
29/08/12: 15:45	Slow worm	2f, 7m and 6 juv	15	9
	Common lizard	1f, 1m and 3 juv	5	2

**Table A3.2: Reptile Survey Results within the development site**

## Survey of adjacent Ringwood Forest

### Methodology

- A3.7. The same method was employed. In addition to the use of roofing felt refugia, corrugated tins were also used in order to reduce the potential of the survey results to be biased against snake species, where research indicates that snakes preferentially use tins (Ref. 9).
- A3.8. The locations of the areas surveyed are illustrated in Figure A3.1.



**Figure A3.1: Locations of surveyed areas in Ringwood Forest**

- A3.9. In respect of specially protected smooth snake and sand lizard, surveys were undertaken by surveyors licensed to disturb these species.

## Results

A3.10. The results of the seven survey visits that followed are summarised in Table A3.3, below.

Date and Time	Species	Daily Total (juveniles and adults)	Total	Peak Adult count
14/8/12: 09:30	Slow worm	14f, 2m and 2 juv	18	16
	Smooth snake	1 juv	1	0
16/8/12: 09:05	Slow worm	2f, 1m and 5 juv	8	3
	Common lizard	1m	1	1
17/08/12: 13:15	Slow worm	4f and 2 juv	6	4
	Common lizard	1m	1	1
	Smooth snake	2 juv	2	0
	Sand lizard	1f	1	1
23/08/12: 11:15	Slow worm	7f, 6m and 6 juv	19	13
	Common lizard	3m	3	3
	Smooth snake	2 juv	2	0
	Sand lizard	2f, 1m	3	3
24/08/12: 14:00	Slow worm	7f, 4m and 4 juv	15	11
	Common lizard	1m	1	1
	Smooth snake	1 juv	1	0
28/08/12: 11:30	Slow worm	10f, 4m and 9 juv	23	14
	Common lizard	4m	4	4
	Smooth snake	1 juv	1	0
	Sand lizard	2f, 2m	4	4
29/08/12: 09:30 (Survey stopped at 11:00 due to heavy rain. Survey restarted at 15:45)	Slow worm	6f, 2m and 5 juv	13	8
	Smooth snake	1 juv	1	0

**Table A3.3: Reptile Survey Results within Ringwood Forest**

# Appendix 4: Protected Sites











Dorset Environmental Records Centre

# Ebblake Verwood

## Designated Sites Map 2

### Key:

-  Plantation on Ancient Woodland Site (PAWS)
-  Ancient Semi-natural Woodland (ASNW)
-  National Nature Reserve (NNR)
-  Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
-  Site of interest & 5km search area
-  Dorset/Hampshire border

Scale 1:40000

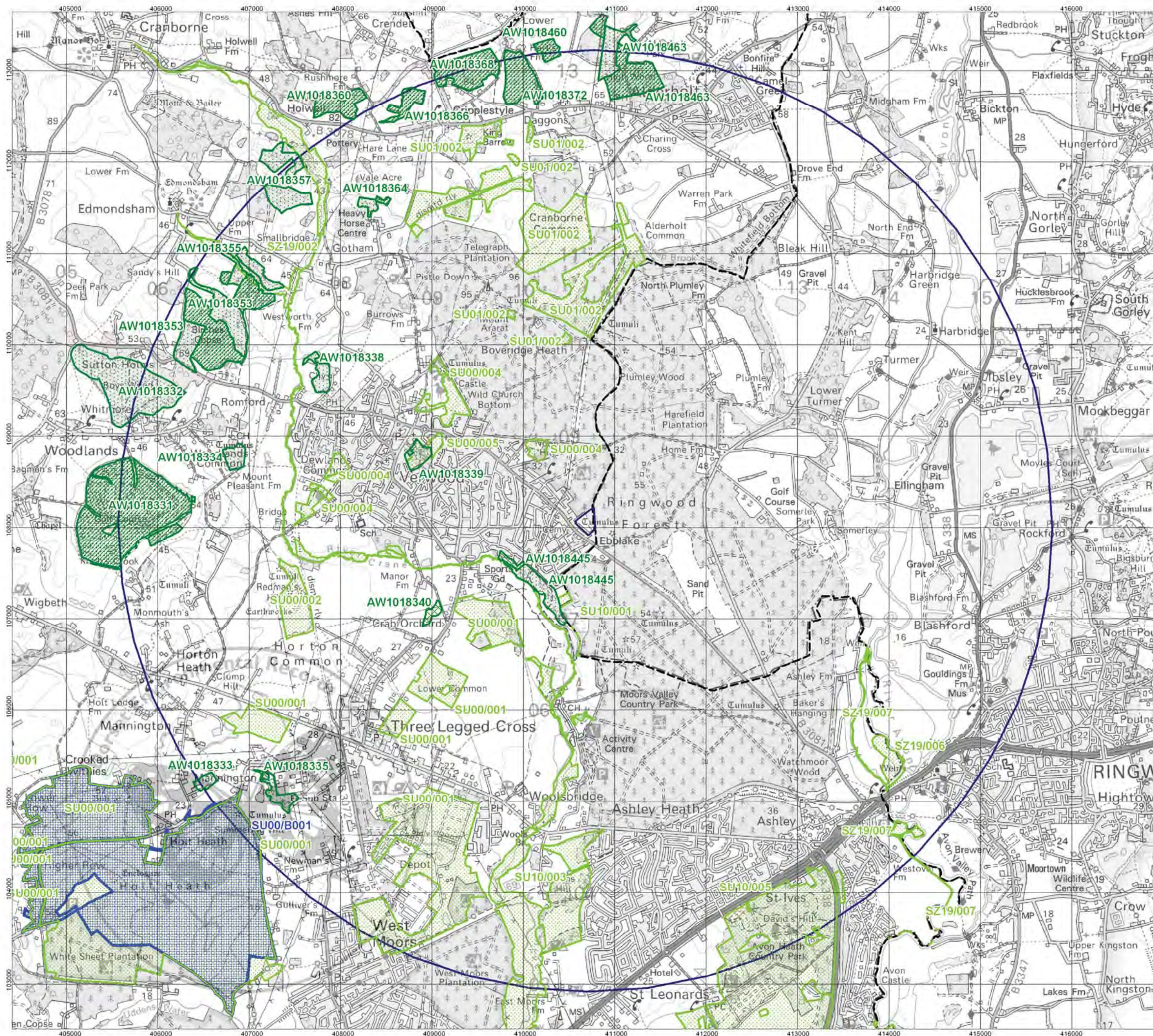


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# Ebblake Verwood

## Designated Sites Map 3

Key:

-  Ramsar
-  Special Area of Conservation (SAC)
-  Special Protection Area (SPA)
-  Site of interest & 5km search area
-  Dorset/Hampshire border

Scale 1:40000

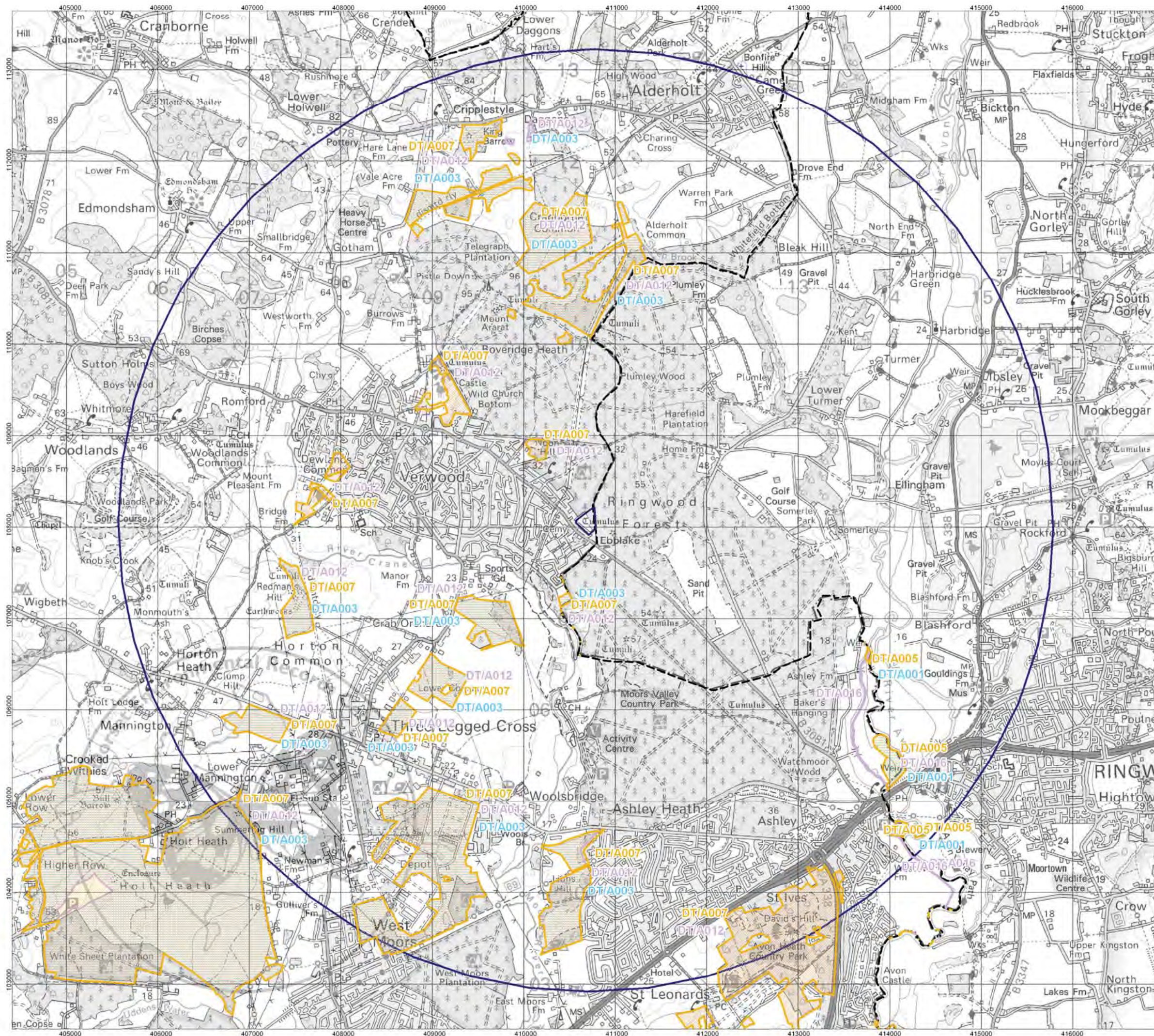


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Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre

HBIC Ref: 3603

Statutory designated sites within 2km of The Verwood Site:

### Legend

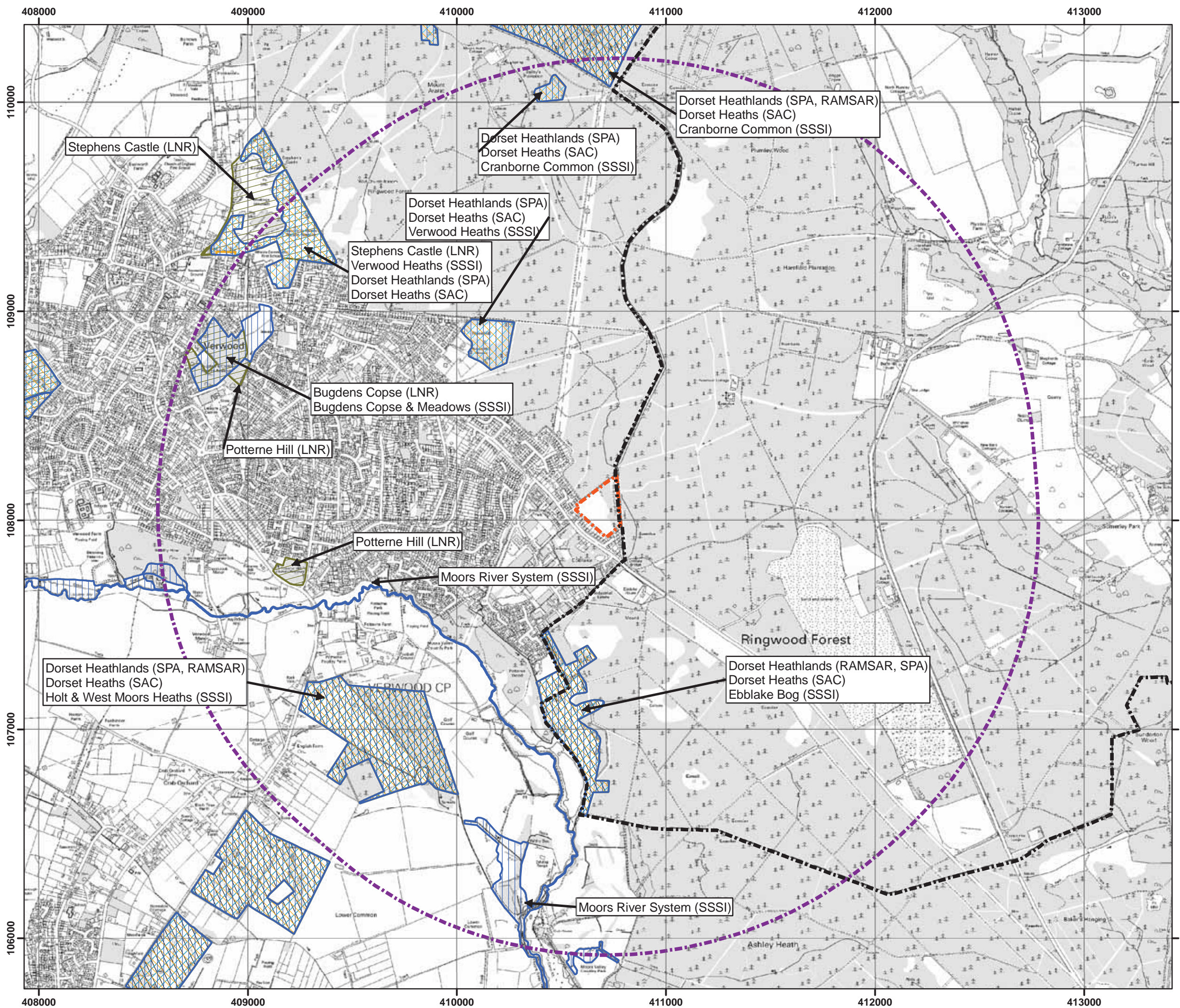
- County Boundary (inc. LWM)
- Verwood Site
- 200m Search Area
- SSSI
- SAC
- SPA
- LNR
- RAMSAR

Created: 11/06/2012

Scale at A3: 1:17,000

0 125 250 500 750 1,000 Meters

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Please note: The boundaries for statutory sites have been provided as digital data from Natural England (NE); this digital data is indicative not definitive. Paper maps produced by NE at the time the sites were designated show the official site boundaries.




Dorset Environmental Records Centre

# Ebblake Verwood

## Designated Sites Map 1

- Key:**
-  Bat roosts - post-1999 records
  -  Bat roosts - pre-2000 records
  -  Dorset Wildlife Trust (DWT) Reserve
  -  Local Nature Reserve (LNR)
  -  Site of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI)
  -  Site of interest & 2km search area
  -  Dorset/Hampshire border

**Scale 1:17500**

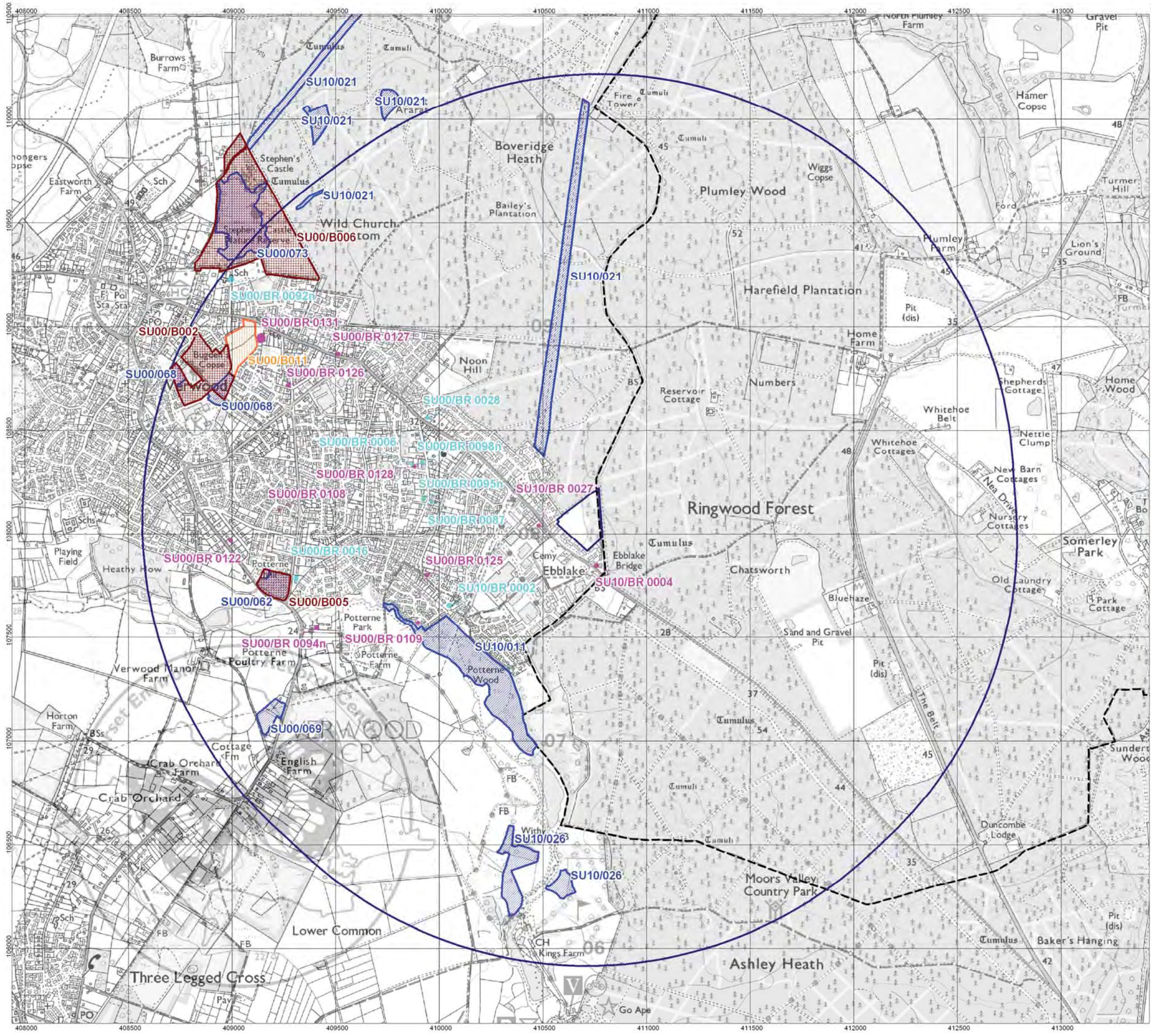


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Hampshire Biodiversity  
Information Centre

HBIC Ref: 3603

Non-statutory designated  
sites within 2km of the  
Verwood Site, SU107080:

### Legend

- Verwood Site
- County Boundary (inc. LWM)
- 200m Search Area
- SINCs
- Surrounding SINCs
- Ancient Woodland Inventory**
  - Semi-Natural
  - Replanted

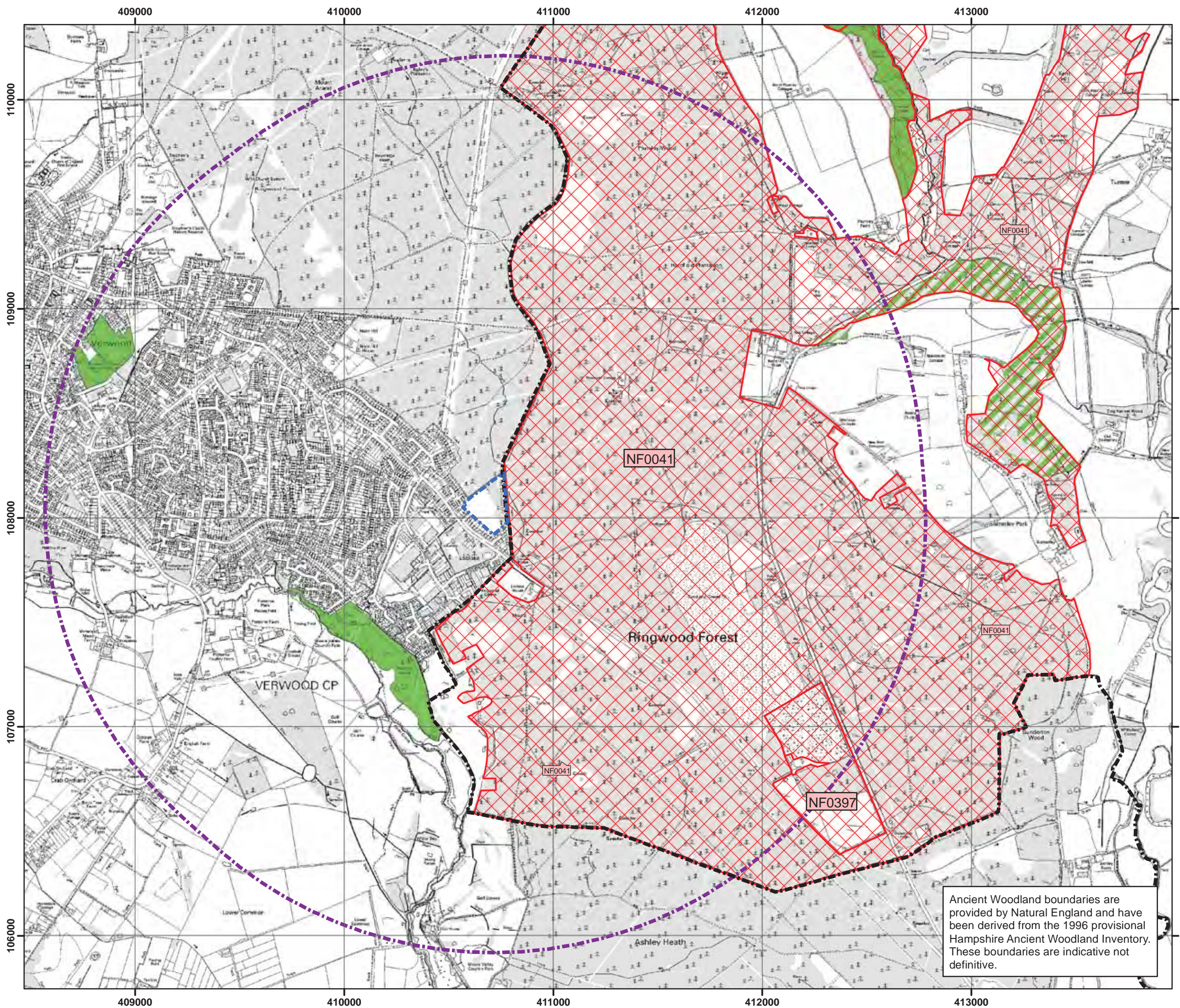
Created: 11/06/2012

Scale at A3: 1:17,000

0 125 250 500 750 1,000  
Meters

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Ancient Woodland boundaries are provided by Natural England and have been derived from the 1996 provisional Hampshire Ancient Woodland Inventory. These boundaries are indicative not definitive.



# Appendix 5: Target Notes



## Appendix 5: Target Notes

Target note	Description
1	Dwarf gorse <i>Ulex minor</i> , a Dorset notable species (indicative of good unimproved or semi-improved habitat to assist in the selection of Sites of Nature Conservation Interest), noted as occasionally present within woodland and along woodland margins
2	Small areas of acid mire habitat, supporting mosses, including sphagnum moss, purple moor-grass, bog myrtle and occasional soft rush and frequent heath wood-rush present on surrounding drier ground. Located near to the eastern boundary of the site.
3	Area of rough grassland and scattered scrub with piles of brashings located in the south-western corner of the site, offering potential to support common reptile species.
4	Piles of brashings within rough grassland strip on the western site boundary, offering potential habitat and hibernacula for the common species of reptile.
5	Undulating vegetated rocky area within the woodland – a potential reptile hibernaculum.



# Appendix 6: Legislation and Planning Policy



# Appendix 6: Legislation and Planning Policy

## Legislative Context

- A6.1. Specific habitats and species receive legal protection in the UK under various pieces of legislation, including:
- The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended);
  - The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010;
  - The Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000;
  - The Hedgerows Regulations 1997;
  - The Protection of Badgers Act 1992; and
  - The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006.
- A6.2. The European Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna, 1992, often referred to as the 'Habitats Directive', provides for the protection of key habitats and species considered of European importance. Annexes II and IV of the Directive list all species considered of community interest. The legal framework to protect the species covered by the Habitats Directive has been enacted under UK law through The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010.
- A6.3. In Britain, the WCA 1981 (as amended) is the primary legislation protecting habitats and species. SSSIs, representing the best examples of our natural heritage, are notified under the WCA 1981 (as amended) by reason of their flora, fauna, geology or other features. All breeding birds, their nests, eggs and young are protected under the Act, which makes it illegal to knowingly destroy or disturb the nest site during nesting season. Schedules 1, 5 and 8 afford protection to individual birds, other animals and plants.
- A6.4. The CRoW Act 2000 strengthens the species enforcement provisions of the WCA 1981 (as amended) and makes it an offence to 'recklessly' disturb a place of rest or shelter of a protected animal or nest site.

## National Policy

- A6.5. The relevant adopted policy at the national level is set out in The National Planning Policy Framework (2012), which replaces Planning Policy Statement 9 (PPS9) Biodiversity and Geological Conservation (2005). The NPPF aims to make the planning system less complex and more accessible, to protect the environment and to promote sustainable growth. It sets out the key principles of ensuring that development is sustainable and that the potential impacts of planning decisions on biodiversity and geological conservation are fully considered (although the presumption in favour of sustainable development does not apply where development requiring appropriate assessment under the Birds or Habitats Directives is being considered, planned or determined).
- A6.6. Outline principles state that planning should:
- Contribute to conserving and enhancing the natural environment and reducing pollution. Allocations of land for development should prefer land of lesser environmental value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; and





- Promote mixed use developments, and encourage multiple benefits from the use of land in urban and rural areas, recognising that some open land can perform many functions (such as for wildlife, recreation, flood risk mitigation, carbon storage, or food production).

A6.7. Chapter 11, Conserving and Enhancing the Natural Environment, sets out a number of planning protocols, as follows:

- The NPPF provides guidance as to the protection of statutorily designated sites, including international sites, National Nature Reserves (NNR) and SSSIs, as well as non-statutory regional and local sites. The NPPF also addresses development and wildlife issues outside these sites and seeks to ensure that planning policies minimise any adverse effects on wildlife;
- The NPPF places emphasis on local authorities to further the conservation of those habitats of principal importance, or those habitats supporting species of principal importance, which are identified in Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006;
- The NPPF requires that adverse effects of development on species of principal importance should be avoided through planning conditions or obligations and that planning permission should be refused where harm to these species, or their habitats, may result, unless the need for and benefits of the development clearly outweigh the harm;
- The NPPF requires that opportunities for improving biodiversity within developments should be maximised. It states that development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be permitted and that opportunities to incorporate biodiversity in and around developments should be encouraged; and
- The NPPF states that by encouraging good design, planning policies and decisions should limit the impact of light pollution from artificial light on local amenity, intrinsically dark landscapes and nature conservation.

## Local Policy

### *East Dorset District Local Plan - Saved Policies*

- A6.8. The East Dorset local plan was adopted on 11th January 2002 and continues to provide relevant planning policy for the whole district until a Local Development Framework for East Dorset is produced.
- A6.9. The Local Plan of relevance to the site is that of the East Dorset District. In 2007, the Secretary of State formally 'saved' a range of policies from the existing adopted Local Plan for the District and Structure Plan for the area. Chapter 13 is of relevance and includes proposals for Verwood and Three Legged Cross.
- A6.10. The policies of relevance to nature conservation within the East Dorset District Local Plan are:
- Policy V15, which seeks to designate a number of sites as Local Nature reserves, primarily for nature conservation purposes and non-intensive outdoor recreation;
  - Policy V17, which promotes re-creation of areas of heathland habitat and their subsequent use as common land; and
  - Policy V18, which seeks to protect selected local sites with secure fencing.



### *Christchurch and East Dorset Core Strategy Core Strategy*

A6.11. East Dorset District Council has developed a Schedule of Proposed Changes to the Core Strategy Pre Submission – November 2012 document. Policies of relevance to nature conservation within the Core Strategy include:

#### **Policy ME1 - Safeguarding biodiversity and geodiversity**

A6.12. The Core Strategy aims to protect, maintain and enhance the condition of all types of nature conservation sites, habitats and species within their ecological networks including:

- Internationally designated sites (SPA, SAC, Ramsar);
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- Sites of Nature Conservation Interest (SNCI);
- Local Nature Reserves;
- Priority species and habitats;
- Important geological and geomorphological sites;
- Riverine and coastal habitats; and
- Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspace.

A6.13. The following criteria should be addressed when development is proposed:

- Avoidance of harm to existing priority habitats and species through careful site selection, development design and phasing of construction and the use of good practice construction techniques;
- Retention of existing habitats and features of interest, and provision of buffer zones around any sensitive areas;
- Enhancement of biodiversity through improving the condition of existing habitats and achieving net gains in biodiversity, where possible. Particular attention should be paid to priority habitats and species referred to in Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 and the Dorset Biodiversity Strategy, and the Strategic Nature Areas identified on the Dorset Nature Map;
- Where harm is identified as likely to result, provision of measures to adequately avoid or adequately mitigate that harm should be set out. Development may be refused if adequate mitigation or, as a last resort compensation cannot be provided;
- Provision of adequate management of the retained and new features;
- Monitoring of habitats and species for a suitable period of time after completion of the development to indicate any changes in habitat quality or species numbers, and put in place corrective measures to halt or reverse any decline; and
- In addition, and in recognition of the function of the New Forest National Park, the Core Strategy will carefully consider any adverse impacts on the New Forest as a result of development.

#### **Policy ME2: Protection of the Dorset Heathlands**

A6.14. In accordance with the advice from Natural England, no residential development will be permitted within 400m of protected European and internationally designated heathlands.



- A6.15. Any residential development within 400m and 5km of these areas will provide mitigation through a range of measures as set out in the Dorset Heathlands Joint Development Plan Document, and the Dorset Heathlands Joint Supplementary Planning Document which sets out guidance in the intervening period prior to the adoption of the Development Plan Document including:
- Provision of on-site alternative natural greenspace (provided in accordance with guidelines set out in Appendix 5); and
  - Contributions to off-site greenspace or recreation projects.
- A6.16. The avoidance or mitigation measure are to be delivered in advance of the developments being occupied and must provide for mitigation in perpetuity Suitable Alternative Natural Greenspaces (SANGs) will be secured by way of a legal agreement between the developer and the relevant council. Heathland mitigation measures will be secured through CIL in the majority of cases. The authority will ensure that mitigation measures to avoid harm are given priority as required by this policy.
- A6.17. On development proposals of approximately 50 dwellings, where adequate mitigation measures cannot be provided on-site as part of the development, a financial contribution to the Councils will be required.
- A6.18. The Dorset Heathlands Joint Development Plan Document will set out the type of development circumstances, a list of projects which will be funded by developer contributions and the calculated contribution amounts as they apply to different types of development. Projects delivered through the Development Plan Document will include SANG, heathland access and visitor management, wardening, education, habitat re-creation and other appropriate avoidance measures.
- A6.19. The combination of the 400m exclusion zone with the heathland mitigation measures set out above function together as an effective package avoiding the harmful effects of additional residential development on the European and internationally designated heathlands.

*New Forest District (outside the National Park) Core Strategy: Adopted 26 October 2009*

**Policy CS3 Protecting and enhancing our special environment (Heritage and Nature Conservation)**

- A6.20. Development proposals must protect and, where possible, enhance sites of recognised importance for nature and heritage conservation.
- A6.21. Working with local communities, features of local heritage value which contribute to local distinctiveness will be identified. New development proposals should maintain local distinctiveness and where possible enhance the character of identified features.
- A6.22. Measures will be taken, working with other partners, to secure the enhancement, restoration and creation of biodiversity, including measures to adapt to the consequences of climate change, so as to assist in achieving national, county and local biodiversity targets as set out in the Hampshire and New Forest Biodiversity Action Plans.
- A6.23. The special characteristics of the Plan Area's natural and built environment will be protected and enhanced through:
- (a) applying relevant national and regional policies;
  - (b) ensuring that new development protects and enhances local distinctiveness (see Policy CS2);



- (c) a review of Areas of Special Character and landscape features through subsequent Local Development Framework Documents;
- (d) using the development management process to positively bring about development which enhances local character and identity and which retains, protects and enhances features of biological or geological interest, and provides for the appropriate management of these features;
- (e) producing Conservation Area appraisals and management plans, including enhancements such as environmental improvements, traffic management etc.;
- (f) supporting an ongoing programme of survey of habitats and species, and designation of Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation;
- (g) encouraging and developing public understanding of biodiversity, e.g. through the New Forest Biodiversity Action Plan, and enabling public access to designated sites for the purpose of interpretation and understanding where feasible without harm to nature conservation interests;
- (h) encouraging land management practices that restore or enhance sites of biodiversity value and which create new sites;
- (i) working with landowners and developers to ensure land management practices protect and enhance valued landscapes, and to restore landscapes where valued features and habitats have been lost or degraded;
- (j) protecting networks of natural habitats identified through the local Biodiversity Action Plan, where appropriate including them in access routes and areas of natural green space;
- (k) extending specific protection to important trees and hedgerows including those not currently included within designated sites;
- (l) ensuring development contributes, where possible, to biodiversity by designing in wildlife, and ensuring any unavoidable impacts are appropriately mitigated for (including on sensitive areas outside the Plan Area including the international nature conservation designations in the National Park); and
- (m) retaining and enhancing the green infrastructure networks within settlements.

### *New Forest District Local Plan First Alteration August 2005 – Saved Policies*

#### **Policy DW-E8: Trees On development sites**

1. existing trees and woodland that contribute to local amenity, the character of the area and/or are of nature conservation value should be retained. In exceptional circumstances (e.g. where it is imperative that a development takes a particular form, or for safety reasons or declining health of the trees/ woodland) felling and replacement planting that maintains local amenity, the character of the area and nature conservation interest may be acceptable;
2. additional trees and woodland should be planted as appropriate as part of the overall landscape scheme and in the creation of new areas of nature conservation value (see Policies DW-E6 and DW-E7); and
3. in cases where development would affect trees or woodland of amenity value on, or adjacent to, the site, measures which have been agreed by the local planning authority shall be taken during construction works to protect any trees or woodland which are to be retained and to ensure their retention in the longer term.



**Policy DW-E38: Locally designated sites**

- A6.24. Development likely to harm a Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), Local Nature Reserve (LNR) or Regionally Important Geological/Geomorphological Site (RIGGS) will not be permitted unless the local planning authority is satisfied that the harm to the nature conservation value of the site is outweighed by other material considerations. Where such development is permitted, the local planning authority will use conditions and/or planning obligations to minimise the damage and to provide compensatory and site management measures where appropriate.

*The Dorset Biodiversity Protocol*

- A6.25. The Dorset Biodiversity Protocol states that planning work that affects a green or brown field site greater than 0.1 ha that is not currently in use as a residential or business premises, or that the application will affect any known ecological interests, such as designated sites (SSSI/SNCIs/nature reserves etc.) or semi natural habitat such as woodland, heath, reed bed/fen, downland, ponds, rivers and streams etc., then an environmental consultant will be required to undertake a Phase 1 Survey.
- A6.26. Even if a site does not support biodiversity interests, a 'Biodiversity Mitigation Plan' must still be completed to ensure appropriate enhancement measures are secured through a planning condition. The Biodiversity Mitigation Plans will include measures that will be retained in perpetuity once the development is completed. For example, bird/bat boxes, replacement hedges, ponds etc.





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21 May 2013

Land off Ringwood Road,  
Verwood, East Dorset

Ecological Assessment

Report Number: 1522\_R11a\_LW\_RW

Author: Lauren West

Checked by: Julian Arthur MCIEEM CENV

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- Appendix 2: Invertebrate Survey Report
- Appendix 3: Reptile Survey Methodology and Results
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- Appendix 5: Target Notes
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- Appendix 7: Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace (SANG) Proposal – February 2013 (1522\_R05i)
- Appendix 8: Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace (SANG) Proposal – February 2013 (1522\_R10a)
- Appendix 9: Woodland Transition Zone Strategy (1522\_R08b)

# Plans

Habitat Features  
(1522/P08c May 2013 LW/JTF)

Fauna Survey Results  
(1522/P11b May 2013 LW/JTF)

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Land off Ringwood Road, Verwood, East Dorset  
Ecological Assessment

1522\_R11a 21 May 2013 LW\_RW

# **Appendix 7: Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace (SANG) Proposal – February 2013 (1522\_R05i)**







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20 February 2013

Land at North East  
Verwood, East Dorset

Suitable Accessible Natural  
Greenspace (SANG)  
Proposal – February 2013

Report Number: 1522\_R05i\_JSA\_JTF

Author: Julian Arthur

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## Summary

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## Appendices

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Appendix 4:	Design Concept – taken from East Dorset Forest Design Plan
Appendix 5:	Surface Water Drainage Solution

## Plan

SANG and Habitat Mitigation / Enhancement Proposals  
(1522/P13 February 2013 JSA/JTF)

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Land at North East Verwood, East Dorset  
Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace (SANG) Proposal

1522\_R05i 20 February 2013 JSA\_JTF

# Summary

- S1. A SANG strategy has been agreed with Natural England to address potential adverse effects to the Dorset Heathlands Special Protection Area (SPA) as a result of proposed development at Land North East of Verwood.
- S2. The strategy relies upon the enhancement and diversification of habitats to encourage public access and enjoyment of conifer forestry/woodland owned by the Forestry Commission within the adjacent Ringwood Forest. The Forestry Commission and the developer have agreed the strategy and the principles of a mechanism to secure its delivery. Natural England has confirmed that this provides confidence that the SANG strategy will be implemented and mitigation secured to the standards required by the Habitats Regulations.
- S3. East Dorset District Council has confirmed that this SANG strategy addresses the reason for the site's removal from the Core Strategy Pre-Submission Response Analysis (November 2012) and there is no reason for it not to be reinstated.
- S4. The strategy is to provide a number of enhancing features and can be summarised as follows:
- To attract dog walkers away from the Dorset Heathlands SPA, a variety of attractive, waymarked circular walks of up to 2,350m linked to the development site would be provided, with leaflets informing new residents of their presence;
  - The existing plantation woodland containing the SANG would be made more diverse and hence attractive to dog-walkers than elsewhere by creating open glades supporting heathland vegetation, and through the restoration of 13ha mire habitats that will make the area wetter;
  - Paths and surrounding habitats would be maintained, as required;
  - To seek to avoid adverse effects to sensitive habitats in Ringwood Forest, signage would state the need to pick up dog litter, and open space in the development site will include dog litter bins and a pond for dogs to use; and
  - The SANG features would be secured in perpetuity.
- S5. Ringwood Forest is of inherent ecological value, supporting populations of birds that are found in the SPA, as well as strictly protected reptile species. In order to address potential adverse effects associated with increased use of the forest, 1.5ha of dry heath habitat would be created through plantation felling and management, and mire habitat will be restored. As well as mitigating potential adverse effects, this will deliver significant benefits as a result of development, creating UK BAP priority habitats.
- S6. Impacts to wetland habitats at Ebblake Bog Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Ramsar site will be avoided by adopting drainage design as described in this report, in combination with the proposals to restore the mire habitats upstream which will further ameliorate flows.



# Section 1: Introduction

- 1.1. This report describes a Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace (SANG) proposal in respect of future development at Land at North East Verwood, East Dorset and a strategy for avoidance of impacts to the Dorset Heathland Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Special Area of Conservation (SAC).
- 1.2. In addition, it sets out how impacts to wetland habitats at Ebblake Bog SSSI and SAC and Ramsar site can be avoided.
- 1.3. The site is centred on National Grid Reference SU 107 080.

## Planning Background and the Need for SANG

- 1.4. The site was identified for residential development in the Core Strategy (CS) Pre-Submission March 2012 under policy VTSW5.
- 1.5. At a meeting on 16th October 2012 with Nick Squirrell of NE and East Dorset District Council (EDDC), it was confirmed that the Core Strategy Pre-Submission March 2012 would be modified such that all sites outside of settlement boundaries would be required to provide their own SANG to address potential adverse effects upon the Dorset Heathland Special Protection Area (SPA) (see meeting note in **Appendix 1**). Policies ME2 and ME3 have been modified such that it is no longer possible for proposed developments of 50 units or less (as is the case here) to make financial contributions towards creation of SANGs which were to be identified by the Council through the emerging Dorset Heathland DPD.
- 1.6. A SANG proposal, which involved use of FC land, was prepared and submitted before the 31<sup>st</sup> October CS deadline (Tyler Grange report ref. 1522\_R05b). The proposal was devised in consultation with NE and FC. However, based on advice from Natural England, the site was removed from the CS Pre-Submission Response Analysis (November 2012) for the following reason:

*“The proposal is deleted as the location of the proposed residential as the proposal would be likely to cause harm to Ebblake Bog, which is part of the internationally protected Dorset Heaths [Ebblake Bog being the nearest component part of the Dorset Heathlands SSSI, SPA and SAC to the site]. It is uncertain whether the impacts of the development could be mitigated.”*
- 1.7. This strategy updates a previous one prepared in advance of the CS Pre-Submission Response Analysis (November 2012). It has been devised in consultation with Natural England (NE) and the Forestry Commission (FC) (refer to meeting notes in **Appendices 1** and **2**) to provide NE and EDDC with sufficient information to address their concerns so that the site can be reinstated in the CS. It reflects the requirements of new policy in the Core Strategy Pre-Submission Response Analysis (November 2012), and specifically ME2 ‘Protection of the Dorset Heathlands’ (which replaces ME2 and ME3). Detailed guidelines for SANG provision are set out in Appendix 5 of that document; these reflect design standards set out in the Dorset Heathlands Planning Framework 2012-2014 Supplementary Planning Document (the ‘SPD’)(September 2012) and the Dorset Heathlands Development Plan Document Preferred Options Consultation (February 2013).



# Section 2: SANG Proposal

## SANG Location

- 2.1. The site is not large enough to accommodate on-site SANG provision (size as specified in the SPD), though the open space within it can be designed to contribute to a wider SANG provision.
- 2.2. The site is adjacent to Ringwood Forest, that part closest to the site being either owned by the FC, or leased by them from the Somerly Estate.
- 2.3. Whilst much of it has no permissive rights of access (Jane Smith, FC *pers. comm.*) the forest already has a SANG function, being used for recreation, it being accessed close to the site via public footpaths and a small public car park to the south east of the site (see **Plan 1522/P13**). **Appendix 3** illustrates the findings of an FC GPS survey of users of the forest close to the site<sup>1</sup>.
- 2.4. The FC owns the freehold for 44.8 ha of land adjacent and to the north of the site. This is also 'Open Access Land', as defined in the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (see **Plan 1522/P13**). The land owned by the FC is sufficiently large to accommodate SANG.
- 2.5. NE was of the opinion that the SANG requirement for the proposed development could utilise the forest, which can be modified to improve its SANG function. This is in keeping with Appendix 5 of the CS that states SANGs may be created from *"existing open space that is already accessible but which could be changed in character so that it is more attractive to the specific group of visitors who might otherwise visit the Dorset Heathlands"*.
- 2.6. However, Ringwood Forest is of inherent ecological value, supporting populations of birds that are found in the SPA, as well as heavily protected reptile species (as confirmed by data in the public record, together with surveys within 400m of the site undertaken by Tyler Grange in 2012). As required by Appendix 5 of the CS, the impact on its nature conservation value *"should be assessed and considered alongside relevant policy in the local plan"*. Consequently, this SANG strategy also addresses potential effects resulting from increased disturbance by people and their pets.

## SANG Design

- 2.7. The CS states that SANG should provide a recreational route of 2.3 to 2.5km. There are a number of existing pathways within the forest. Possible routes that follow existing rides or paths within the FC owned land, with some new paths to ensure a circular route is created, are shown on **Plan 1522/P13**. The two circular route options shown, including a path within the site, are 2,350m and 2,200m in length, respectively, with other combinations possible. They are approximately 415m from the SPA at their closest point.
- 2.8. It is envisaged these would be Permitted Rights of Way that, if required by forestry operations, could be moved within the FC land, provided routes of the required length were retained. Given it is Open Access Land, it would be possible to devise a number of routes of differing lengths within this area.
- 2.9. Walking routes would be opened up by felling of some trees to create wider rides that are more attractive to users, and so that dogs can be exercised off the lead. A bench would also be provided

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<sup>1</sup> Note, the plan is based on data from a single day so an absence of a line need not mean a path is not used, though it does provide an indication of patterns of use (Jane Smith, FC *pers. comm.*)



at the SANG's northern extent. Paths would be unsurfaced but usable year round, with 'passageways' constructed over wetter areas.

- 2.10. The CS states the SANG should be wild and attractive to ensure users are attracted to use it, rather than the SPA. Existing plantation woodland will be felled in discrete areas within the SANG route to create open glades supporting heathland vegetation. Mire restoration upstream of the SANG will create wetter habitats than currently exist, to provide additional interest.
- 2.11. Waymarking points will be included to direct users along the defined routes, whilst directing them away from the SPA and other valuable heathland outside of the SPA. Signage would also state the need to pick up dog litter, with leaflets for residents of the proposed new development.
- 2.12. The SANG route will include the open space within the proposed development, which can be designed to provide a footpath within it. Dog litter bins and a pond would be provided specifically for dogs on-site and in a location where they are most likely to be needed (at the start and end of a walk) to minimise disturbance to sensitive habitats within the forest.
- 2.13. NE indicated that, owing to the relatively small size of the development and the fact it is designed to serve the residents of the new housing, no specific parking provision associated with the SANG would be needed.

## Mitigation of Ecological Effects of SANG

- 2.14. NE considers that potential adverse effects to ecological resources within Ringwood Forest can be addressed by the Linden Homes funding dry heath and mire habitat restoration aspects in the FC East Dorset Forest Design Plan Design Concept (**Appendix 4**). Proposals include:
  - Dry heath restoration totalling 1.5ha in area. Of this, 0.5ha will be in areas identified in the East Dorset Forest Design Plan Design Concept. The remaining 1 ha will comprise of small glades formed by tree felling to promote heath growth within the SANG in order to create a habitat mosaic of plantation, heath and mire that will be more attractive to new recreational users. Together this would increase the habitat available to ground nesting birds and reptiles, thereby making populations more robust and able to withstand adverse effects in that area most likely to be affected by increased disturbance as a result of development of the site; and
  - Mire restoration totalling 13ha upstream of the SANG, at the headwaters of Ebblake Stream, in areas identified in the East Dorset Forest Design Plan Design Concept. This will restore a UK BAP priority habitat that will also benefit birds and reptiles, as well as a range of other flora and fauna. Restoration will involve engineering works to raise the water level in the area affected. It will also increase the flow of water downstream, making the SANG, which contains Ebblake Stream and tributaries, a more diverse and interesting place to walk.

## Timing, Management and Aftercare

- 2.15. In order to mitigate effects to the SPA and upon biodiversity within Ringwood Forest, the SANG and habitat enhancements will be completed in advance of first occupation of the proposed development.
- 2.16. The CS requires that SANG should be provided and managed in perpetuity (defined as 125 years, NE *pers. comm.*). The proposed SANG shown on **Plan 1522/P13** is in the ownership of the FC. Linden Homes has agreed with the FC that this strategy document, together with a negotiated commercial financial contribution, will form the basis for the delivery and maintenance of the SANG provision, associated with a future planning application. The financial contribution and mechanism



for securing any contributions to the FC by Linden will be agreed between both parties during the course of pre-application discussions for the site. Both parties are actively engaged in this process.

- 2.17. As agreed with NE, habitat management works in respect of the heath and mire would be undertaken for a period of 10 years.

## **Conclusion**

- 2.19 In conclusion, this strategy document demonstrates that SANG can be provided on land owned by the FC that meets the requirements of the CS, Dorset Heathland SPD, the Dorset Heathlands Development Plan Document Preferred Options Consultation (February 2013), and East Dorset Forest Design Plan Design Concept. The SANG strategy utilises existing paths and creates new ones within FC land. As the land is freehold owned by the FC, the provision of SANG for the site would be in perpetuity.
- 2.20 NE is satisfied that potential adverse effects upon ecological resources as a result of the SANG strategy can be addressed bringing forward restoration aspects in the existing Forest Design Plan Design Concept, through funding provided by Linden Homes.
- 2.21 East Dorset District Council has confirmed that this SANG strategy addresses the reason for the site's removal from the Core Strategy Pre-Submission Response Analysis (November 2012) and there is no reason for it not to be reinstated.



## Section 3: Avoidance of Effects to Ebblake Bog SAC

- 3.1 The issue identified by NE relates to the potential for increased flow in the Ebblake Stream, which follows a course along the eastern boundary of the site, resulting in nutrient rich water overtopping the banks and spilling into the Ebblake Bog SSSI, SAC and SPA downstream. The interest of the bog is dependent on nutrient poor water.
- 3.2 A surface water drainage solution that does not increase flows to Ebblake Stream, and that would not affect the quality of the water in the stream, has been devised by AMA (**Appendix 5**). It involves a combination of SUDS including porous paving and soakaways, designed to address a 1 in 100 year plus 30% storm event. In the event of a storm event that exceeds this then, owing to the site's existing topography, surface water will flow into the open space comprising woodland and restored wetland habitats to the east and north-east, rather than entering the stream.
- 3.3 With the implementation of the drainage solution, impacts to Ebblake Bog SSSI, SAC and SPA as a result of development of the site would be avoided.





# Appendix 1: Note of a meeting with Natural England & EDDC (16<sup>th</sup> October 2012)



# Land at Ringwood Road, Verwood

## Meeting with EDDC and Natural England at EDDC, 2.30pm 16th October 2012

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### Purpose: To discuss SANG Requirements

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Attendees:	Lynda King	EDDC
	Nick Squirrell	NE
	Frances Pickering	Linden
	Donna Palmer	Boyer
	Julian Arthur	Tyler Grange
	Lauren West	Tyler Grange

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1. At the outset, LK stated that owing to concerns regarding deliverability (sustainability of location, drainage, SPA, access, trees, layout, level of objection) the site was not likely to be included in the submission draft Core Strategy, to be published in November for consultation. To meet this timetable, officers will need to complete the drafting of the consultation document by 26<sup>th</sup> October. The Council currently anticipate submission of the Core Strategy in March 2013. LK indicated that the Core Strategy would now have a single housing target covering both East Dorset and Christchurch Districts. LK stated that the loss of this 50 unit site does not affect EDDC's housing figures.
  2. Issues related to the SPA and Ebblake Bog SAC were discussed.
- SPA**
3. JA noted that, further to a meeting with Richard Henshaw at EDDC, our approach had been based on that set out in draft policy ME2. ME3 was not triggered because the site is not proposed to be of greater than 50 units in size.
  4. It became apparent that, owing to a recent Inspector's report in respect of the EIP for Purbeck, EDDC Core Strategy policies ME2 and ME3 relating to the SPA will be changed, and that this will change the policy mechanism previously relevant to the Verwood site. The approach to SPA mitigation will therefore need to be amended for the site.
  5. Policies ME2 and ME3 will be modified to refer to the Dorset Heathland DPD (yet to be adopted). The current SPD does not include a 50 unit threshold (currently referred to in draft policies ME2 and ME3), and, we were informed that the SANG sites identified in the SPD will not satisfy the SANG need for developments proposed outside of the existing Verwood development boundary. No other suitable SANG sites that could be funded as set out in ME2 have been identified. Consequently, for developments outside the Verwood boundary, financial contributions to create SANGs are not an option – each development site must provide its own SANG.
  6. This means that for all strategic sites, they must either: provide a SANG on site; or they must identify land that could be enhanced as a SANG. LK gave an example of a site south of Verwood alongside the river where an agreement with a 3rd party landowner to provide a SANG had been worked up to the satisfaction of NE. However, there are still issues as to whether this SANG is deliverable.
  7. In the absence of another suitable SANG site, given Ringwood Forest already has a SANG function (it could be improved), NS felt that the best option was to seek to improve the existing SANG function of the forest close to the site, based on principles set out in the SPD.



8. The fact that this is managed by a public body (Forestry Commission) could avoid possible cross boundary (land in New Forest DC) or land ownership (Somerley Estate) issues. The SANG strategy must be secured in perpetuity (the exact duration of this needs to be confirmed; between 80-120 years discussed), though again, the FC lease is likely to be very long-term so may not be an issue.
9. As per the SPD, the SANG would need to:
  - a. Provide a 2.3-2.5km circular dog walking route from the site, extending into the forest. NS felt a permissive right of way would be best, which could be moved in future if necessary;
  - b. Some tree thinning;
  - c. Include a ball throwing/dog exercising area (clearance of trees and levelling need), a bench;
  - d. Dog bin at start/end;
  - e. Wet pond within development site for dogs/children;
  - f. Signs and leaflets for the new residents/users
10. Given the known presence of Annex 1 birds and EPS reptiles, NS also mentioned how habitats should be enhanced to ensure disturbance resulting from SANG creation does not result in impact (Rufford case and risk based approach was raised). The FC Forest Plan has an objective to create open heathland and restore wetland/mire, though they have run out of funds and so some contribution to this and ongoing management could be an option for the Verwood site as part of the surface water drainage strategy for the site. This could be costed through discussion with FC, but would need to be agreed pre planning.
11. A meeting ASAP with FC is needed. NS will provide contact details and can attend to help ensure a solution that would satisfy NE can be agreed.
12. Possible implications of mineral extraction in that part of the forest within Hampshire will need to be explored to ensure no conflict with the possible strategy for the site.
13. LK noted that given 3rd party agreement is required, this issue was not likely to be resolved before the Core Strategy submission.
- Ebblake Bog SAC**
14. The potential issue concerning NS relates to the potential for increased flow in the Ebblake Stream resulting in nutrient rich water overtopping the banks and spilling into the Ebblake Bog downstream. The interest of the bog is dependent on nutrient poor water.
15. It is essential that development of the site does not increase flows in the stream, and this will need to be demonstrated in an engineering solution.
16. NS noted that upstream of the site within Ringwood Forest, there are issues associated with a mire creation project, which has stalled. The intention was to restore this habitat and address water supply issues to the stream at the same time. NS felt the development would present an opportunity to address this by making contributions to FC to enable them to continue with this work.

# **Appendix 2: Note of a meeting with Forestry Commission, Natural England and EDDC (12<sup>th</sup> November 2012)**



**Land at Northeast Verwood**  
**Meeting to discuss SANG provision and biodiversity mitigation and enhancement**

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Venue: Forestry Commission Offices, Lyndhurst

Date: 9am, 12<sup>th</sup> November 2012

**Attendees**

Tom Nicholson	Linden Homes
Frances Pickering	Linden Homes
Mike Newton	Boyer Planning
Nick Squirrell	Natural England
Jane Smith	Forestry Commission (area head of planning and environment)
Iain Skinner	Forestry Commission (area land agent)
Simon Smith	Forestry Commission (recreation and community manager)
Julian Arthur	Tyler Grange
Lynda King	East Dorset District Council

**Meeting Notes**

1. Planning background and meeting purpose
  - a. JA/MN described requirement for SANG / biodiversity mitigation, and the strategy set out in the Tyler Grange SANG Proposal, 29<sup>th</sup> October 2012, which was submitted to EDDC in respect of the site's promotion in the Core Strategy (policy VTSW5 allocation).
  - b. The site was dropped from the Core Strategy on Natural England's advice owing to uncertainty at the time of draft Core Strategy submission in delivery of a SANG and biodiversity mitigation on 3<sup>rd</sup> party (Forestry Commission) land (LK noted that most other developers have acquired land or an option to secure their SANG strategy). NE did note that the site could be promoted at the Core Strategy Examination in Public if delivery details can be agreed, and a statement of common ground prepared between all parties. Linden Homes have sought legal advice and this confirmed that the decision to drop the site was unsound, since there was an in principle agreement with FC. Linden will be pursuing this further, with a view to seeking reinstatement of the site in the Core Strategy
  - c. Notwithstanding this, it is acknowledged that in any event for the site to be developed an agreement between Linden and FC in terms of a mitigation strategy is required that suits both parties and importantly satisfies the requirements of the Habitats Regulations and existing and emerging planning policy. The purpose of the meeting was to discuss the detail of a proposal that would provide the certainty required by NE and EDDC at this stage in the planning process, and mechanisms for securing delivery.
2. Forestry Commission freehold land vs land leased from Somerly Estate
  - a. It was agreed that, given the terms of the FC lease for forestry operations on the Somerly Estate, it would be advantageous for the SANG to be within the FC freehold land, which adjoins the site.
  - b. Biodiversity enhancement work can occur on leasehold land. What is proposed by Linden is in accordance with FC's design concept in their East Dorset Forest Design Plan
3. SANG strategy, capital works and maintenance
  - a. Path routes were agreed, and shown on a plan circulated by FC which broadly followed TG's plan. However, there would be a need for a bridge structure crossing Ebblake Stream on to Somerly Estate land to complete the yellow route (see attached) – this is

- best avoided. NS considered the path could be a Permitted Right of Way, which could be moved to allow for forestry operations, but a route must be maintained. Moors Valley Country Park was ruled out of the SANG option as a) more difficult to access from site b) it is an SPA in its own right, so do not want to encourage increased use. NS stated that in advance of a planning application an access survey would need to be considered in summer 2013 to provide a baseline for future monitoring of use of Ringwood Forest.
- b. Dog exercising area – the design of this was discussed. There is no need for a formal area, it merely needs to be an area clear of scrub and trees, and relatively flat, to enable dogs to exercise/ball throwing. A location with FC freehold was discussed.
  - c. Signage / interpretation would be required, which FC would design and install
  - d. Timings – must be in place before first occupation
  - e. Maintenance – the SANG must be in place in perpetuity, as required by the SANG SPD. [post meeting note: NS confirmed in perpetuity is 125 years]
  - f. Costings – FC circulated costing for path works, which are to be discussed and agreed by FC/Linden
  - g. Mechanism for securing delivery – likely to be S106 rather than CIL, given timings for planning application
4. Biodiversity enhancement strategy
- a. Dry Heath restoration – NS explained why this was needed to ensure opportunities are increased for heathland birds specifically to offset increased disturbance effects of development (though other species, including European Protected Species of reptile will benefit). Consequently, some work would be needed to the east of the site, to address indirect increased predation/disturbance effects of development. But it need not be of the extent shown on TG's plan. NS would accept some strategic thinning of land along SANG route to create a woodland/heathland mosaic, and variety for SANG users. Certainty in respect of the design and means of securing this with FC was needed at this stage in planning.
  - b. Mire restoration – it was agreed that it would be best for restoration work to occur to the north of FC land. This has been already costed by FC, but not implemented. Given this would not be required to mitigate effects to the SPA (or qualifying birds in Ringwood Forest), certainty in respect of design and delivery would not be needed by NE/EDDC at this stage in the planning process.
  - c. Costings and mechanism for securing delivery – FC provided costings, to be agreed by FC/Linden
5. Ebblake Bog – NS confirmed that the drainage principles had allayed his concerns regarding Ebblake Bog. This was not a reason for the site's exclusion from the Core Strategy
6. Next steps and programme
- a. JA to modify SANG/biodiversity strategy in light of agreed position
  - b. Linden and FC to agree approach and commercial arrangement, and a statement for submission to EDDC to support the site's inclusion in the Core Strategy
7. AOB - none

# Appendix 3: Forestry Commission GPS Visitor Survey of Ringwood North



Land at North East Verwood, East Dorset  
Suitable Accessible Natural Greenspace (SANG) Proposal

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