Biodiversity Assessment for the Local Development Framework/Local Plan (Additional Sites 2012)

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1. Introduction

This report supplements the Biodiversity Assessment for the Local Development Framework Core Strategy, dated February 2010 [1], and provides a further assessment of eight sites. Maps showing the boundaries of each site are included in the Appendix.

In common with the previous Biodiversity Assessment reports, each site has been assessed against a framework of the biodiversity planning policies that any development of the site would currently be required to comply with, and then graded in terms of its compatibility with these policies[1] (see Tables 1 and 2 for further details). This provides a risk assessment-based approach to determining whether or not development of the site is likely to be compatible with biodiversity planning policies. Ecological information on each site was obtained from survey work undertaken over the summer of 2012 by the Hampshire Biodiversity Information Centre on behalf of Basingstoke and Deane Borough Council. For further information on assessment methods, including the rationale for the zone of potential influence used in assessing indirect impacts, please see the original report [1].

Table 1: Assessment Framework

Criteria	**Origin**
Avoids a significant effect on European sites or adversely affecting the integrity of such a site.	Habitats Directive and Regulations, etc. Statutory Appropriate Assessment is required if development is likely to have a significant effect. The NPPF requires that Ramsar or proposed Ramsar sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation and any sites identified or required as compensatory measures for adverse effects on these or confirmed European sites also be afforded the same status as European sites.
Avoids adverse direct or indirect impact on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	The NPPF states that planning permission should not normally be permitted for proposed development on land within or outside of a SSSI if it is likely to have an adverse effect on it (individually or in combination with other developments).
If it is likely to influence a SSSI, furthers the conservation and enhancement of the features for which it is designated.	The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended, imposes a duty on local planning authorities exercising functions which are likely to affect SSSIs. This requires an authority to take reasonable steps, consistent with the proper exercise of the authority's functions, to further the conservation and enhancement of the features for which sites are of special interest.
Avoids disturbing a European protected species, or damaging or destroying a breeding site or resting place of such a species or, where	Habitats Directive and Regulations: local planning authorities are competent authorities, within the meaning of the Habitats Regulations. They therefore have a statutory duty to have regard to the requirements of the Habitats Directive in the

[1] This framework has been updated to take account of the changes introduced by the National Planning Policy Framework 2012 and the imminent withdrawal of the Southeast Plan.

this is unavoidable due to an overriding pubic interest in favour of development within the area, and there being no satisfactory alternative, the impact will not be detrimental to maintaining the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in its natural range.	exercise of their functions. They must take into account the impact of development on European protected species and may only grant planning consent that will affect such a species where: • the impact will not be detrimental to maintaining the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in its natural range; • there is no satisfactory alternative; • the decision is for preserving public health or public safety, or for reasons of overriding public interest, including those of a social or economic nature and beneficial consequences of primary importance for the environment.
Seeks to avoid full or partial loss of SINCs and LNRs and other key habitats.	The NPPF states that local planning authorities should set criteria-based policies against which proposals for proposed development affecting protected wildlife sites will be judged. The draft local plan policy, EM2, states that proposals will be permitted only where it can be clearly demonstrated that there will be no harm to locally designated sites including SINCs and LNRs or lead to the loss of a key habitat type (as defined in the draft local plan).
Avoids loss of irreplaceable habitat, including Ancient Semi-natural Woodland and veteran trees.	NPPF states that planning permission should be refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats, including ancient woodland and the loss of aged or veteran trees found outside ancient woodland.
Avoids causing indirect impacts on SINCs or LNRs and other key habitats (inc. recreational pressure, predation from cats, run-off, hydrological effects and interference with other natural processes and interference with land management practices on which biodiversity interests depend).	The draft local plan policy, EM2, states that proposals will be permitted only where it can be clearly demonstrated that there will be no harm to locally designated sites including SINCs and LNRs or lead to the loss or deterioration of a key habitat type (as defined in the draft local plan).
Avoids severing a landscape-scale habitat network of borough wide or greater significance.	The NPPF states that local planning authorities should identify and map components of the local ecological networks and promote their preservation, restoration and re-creation. The council's green infrastructure strategy includes Priority Areas for Biodiversity Improvement that aim to do this and the draft local plan policy EM3 gives protection to these areas. In addition, the draft local plan policy, EM2, states that proposals will be permitted only where it can be clearly demonstrated that there will be no harm to the integrity of linkages between designated sites.
Avoids causing further fragmentation or creation of barriers to species movement between habitats.	The draft local plan policy, EM2, states that proposals will be permitted only where it can be clearly demonstrated that there will be no harm to the integrity of linkages between designated sites.

Avoids negative impacts on the conservation status of a key species.	The draft local plan policy, EM2, states that proposals will be permitted only where it can be clearly demonstrated that there will be no significant impact on the conservation status of key species (as defined in the supporting text).
Has the potential to contribute to local habitat restoration and creation targets from the South East Biodiversity Strategy and Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan.	The NPPF requires local plans to set out a strategic approach, planning positively for the creation, protection, enhancement and management of networks of biodiversity and green infrastructure. Draft local plan policies EM2 and EM3, which link to the council's green infrastructure strategy, provide for this strategic approach and support the South East Biodiversity Strategy and Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan.
Has the potential to positively contribute, to other biodiversity conservation objectives, including strengthening of habitat networks; improving habitats for priority species; providing appropriate access to areas of wildlife importance.	Draft local plan policies EM2 and EM3, which link to the council's green infrastructure strategy, require development proposals to include proportionate measures for improving local biodiversity.
Contributes to the positive management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna.	Habitats Directive transposed into UK law through the Habitats Regulations 1994 requiring policies in respect of the conservation of the natural beauty and amenity of the land shall be taken to include policies encouraging the management of features of the landscape which are of major importance for wild flora and fauna.
Contributes to a net gain in biodiversity.	The NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by providing net gains in biodiversity where possible. This is supported by draft local plan policy EM2

Table 2: Compatibility Categories

Code	Compatibility Rating	Definition
C	**Compatible**	Strategic development considered to be compatible with objective.
NL	**No Link**	Strategic development considered to have a neutral effect on objective
LBC	**Likely to be Compatible**	Subject to compliance with legal requirements regarding statutory sites or species, but not anticipated to be a constraint.

PC	**Potentially compatible**	Compatibility subject to a layout that respects and successfully integrates designated sites and important habitats and/or includes provision for positive biodiversity enhancements. This may mean that significant parts of the site remain undeveloped. Significant mitigation measures are liable to be necessary and off-site compensation might be necessary to ensure not net loss and or a net gain.
CU	**Compatibility Uncertain**	It is not possible to assess compatibility without further studies of the potential impacts.
I	**Incompatible**	Strategic development not considered to be compatible with objective.

In order to enable a comparison of sites in terms of biodiversity constraints (both within this report and with those sites in the first report), each site has been given an overall grading, based on the criteria shown below. The assessments for each site are shown in Table 3.

1 - Relatively few constraints. There may be biodiversity issues to be addressed, but it is anticipated that these can be satisfactorily addressed through detailed site planning and established ecological mitigation practices.

2 - Some constraints exist such as the presence of a SINC or priority habitat, within the area and, there may be a priority/protected species constraint, or adjacent habitats that may suffer from indirect pressure. Layouts will need to successfully integrate any SINCs or priority habitats, accommodate species requirements, and seek to mitigate indirect effects.

3 - Development likely to be possible in parts of the area, but significant parts are constrained and/or there is a significant risk of indirect impacts on adjacent habitats or on priority species. Off-site compensation may be needed to achieve no net loss of biodiversity.

4 - Development may be feasible while meeting the biodiversity criteria, but there are important biodiversity interests within the zone of influence that are particularly sensitive to the types of impact arising from development. Further assessment is needed based on additional information about potential development scenarios, the subsequent nature and magnitude of impacts, and the capacity of the biodiversity interests to tolerate them.

5 - Strategic development allocation is considered to be incompatible with biodiversity objectives and the policies from which they are derived.

Table 3: Overall Assessment	
BAS141 – Land at Worting Road	2
BAS139 – West of Cufaude Lane	2
BAS140 – Wildwood Cottage and Frog's Castle	2
BRAM010 – Strawberry Fields	1
TAD017 – Land South of Bishopswood Lane	5
TAD018 – Land South of Bishopswood Lane	4
TAD038 – Land North of Shaw Lane	2
TAD019 – Land North of Pelican Road	2

2. Site Assessments

2.1 BAS141 – Land at Worting Road

Description of Area

Size: 33 ha

BAS141 comprises three sites around Worting on the western edge of Basingstoke, described here as: BAS141 - A (land around Worting Park), BAS141 - B (land north of Worting Road), and BAS141 - C (land south of Worting Road). The surrounding land is mostly arable farmland to the north and west and residential housing to the south and east. Worting Road runs east to west to the south of BAS141 – A and B.

BAS141 - A comprises parkland around Worting House, which is dominated by improved sheep and pony grazed grassland. The parkland is surrounded by tree belts, of planted origin, but with some ground flora indicative of ancient hedgerow that has been incorporated into them. A small patch of semi-improved grassland is present north of some tennis courts.

BAS141 - B comprises small paddocks containing improved pasture and Lamb's Field SINC.

BAS141 - C comprises former arable farmland, now dominated by rank grassland and ruderal vegetation with scrub starting to develop.

Designated Sites

European Sites:

There are no European sites within the site or the 400 m zone of potential influence around the sites. The site does not fall within the 5 km or 7km Thames Basin Heaths mitigation zones.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

There are no SSSIs within the site or the 400 m zone of potential influence around it.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)

Lambs Field SINC, an area of agriculturally unimproved grassland, occurs within BAS141 - B making up around sixty percent of the land area. Part of Wotton Copse, designated for its ancient woodland status and dormouse presence falls within 400 metres of BAS141 - A, though there is no direct public access. Worting Wood SINC is outside of the 400metre zone, but is linked to BAS141 - A and BAS141 - B by a public right of way.

Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats Types within Site

The following priority habitat types occur within the site:

- Hedgerow
- Lowland meadow
- Lowland Mixed Broadleaved Woodland

Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats Types Outside of Site

The following priority habitat types occur within the zone of potential influence:

- Lowland Mixed Broadleaved Woodland
- Hedgerow
- Arable field margin

Habitat Connectivity

The site's boundary tree belts are connected to nearby copses by a reasonably strong hedgerow network.

Species Constraints

Buildings within the site, as well as mature trees, have the potential to support bat roosts and the habitats within and surrounding the site offer good foraging potential for bats. There is a high potential for dormouse presence due to the interconnectivity with nearby woodland, via hedgerows, and there is a record of the species being present in 2009 within Site C. Breeding birds are likely to be affected by any loss of woody vegetation and loss of grassland. The site has the potential to support common reptiles and there is also potential for badgers to be present.

Habitat Enhancement Potential

With the exception of Lamb's Field and the very small patch of semi-improved grassland north of the tennis courts, much of the vegetation within the site is of low biodiversity value. There would be the potential to enhance this as part of open space provision within any development proposal. In addition, the surrounding hedgerows and tree belts would benefit from active conservation management.

Ecological Processes and Land Management

Currently, many areas appear to get little management and, as a result, have become rank and will eventually scrub over. A viable scheme of grazing is important to the long-term conservation of Lamb's Field.

Assessment

Table 4: Assessment of BAS141	
Criteria Assessment	**Assessment**
Avoids a significant effect on European sites or adversely affecting the integrity of such a site.	**Compatible** development would not be expected to have any significant effects due to relative size and distance from any European sites.
Avoids adverse direct or indirect impact on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	**Compatible** development would not be expected to have any significant effects due to relative size and distance from any SSSIs.
If it is likely to influence a SSSI, furthers the conservation and enhancement of the features for which it is designated.	**No link** see above.
Avoids disturbing a European protected species, or damaging or destroying a breeding site or resting place of such a species or, where this is unavoidable due to an overriding pubic interest in favour of development within the area, and there being no satisfactory alternative, the impact will not be detrimental to maintaining the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in its natural range.	**Potentially compatible** development could affect dormice using hedgerows / tree belts around the site. However, there are good prospects for being able to mitigate impacts sufficiently to maintain favourable conservation status in the area through protecting existing features and enhancing the habitat for the species to offset any unavoidable pressures. It will be necessary to ensure adequate buffers between development and boundary vegetation to avoid light pollution, which could adversely affect bat behaviour.
Seeks to avoid full or partial loss of SINCs and LNRs or other key habitats.	**Potentially compatible** in order for development to be compatible, it will be necessary retain the SINC within BAS141 – B.
Avoids loss of irreplaceable habitat, including Ancient Semi-natural Woodland and veteran trees.	**Potentially compatible** see above.
Avoids causing indirect impacts on SINCs or LNRs and other key habitats (inc. recreational pressure, predation from cats, run-off, hydrological effects and interference with other natural processes and interference with land management practices on which biodiversity interests depend).	**Potentially compatible** in order for development to be compatible, it will be necessary retain the SINC within BAS141 – B and ensure that it is adequately buffered from the indirect impacts of development. It will also be necessary to ensure that the site can continue to be grazed in order to conserve its biodiversity value. This is likely to make the whole of BAS141 unsuitable for dwellings, due to the resulting pressures such as livestock disturbance from dogs.
Avoids severing a landscape-scale habitat network of borough wide or greater significance.	**Compatible** development of the site can be achieved without severing landscape-scale habitat networks.
Avoids causing further fragmentation or creation of barriers to species movement between habitats.	**Likely to be compatible** subject to keeping access gaps in boundary vegetation to a minimum. It is assumed that access would be off Worting Road and therefore that there will be no need to create access points where they would sever linkages between the

	hedgerows and tree belts around the site and those in the surrounding landscape.
Avoids negative impacts on the conservation status of a key species.	**Potentially compatible** subject to sensitive layout design that safeguards important habitats within and around the site and routine ecological mitigation measures.
Has the potential to contribute to local habitat restoration and creation targets from the South East Biodiversity Strategy and Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan	**Potentially compatible** subject to securing appropriate management of the SINC
Has the potential to positively contribute to other biodiversity conservation objectives, including strengthening of habitat networks; improving habitats for priority species; providing appropriate access to areas of wildlife importance.	**Potentially compatible** see above
Contributes to the positive management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna.	**Potentially compatible** subject to securing long-term management of habitats within and around the site.
Contributes to a net gain in biodiversity.	**Potentially compatible** subject to securing improvements in the management of the SINC and boundary features and the semi-improved area of grassland to the north of the tennis courts, plus incorporation of new habitats into open space.

Commentary

Site A and C are relatively unconstrained by biodiversity considerations. However, it is important to ensure that sufficient buffers are allowed between development and boundary vegetation and that compatible land use ie. open space rather than private gardens is adjacent to them so that they can receive the necessary management to conserve them. It is particularly important to ensure that dwellings are far enough from the tree belts to avoid adverse shading and other conflicts. The council's Landscape and Biodiversity SPD stipulates a minimum distance of 20 metres unless it can be demonstrated for a particular site that the issues can be satisfactorily addressed with a lesser distance. Open space provision should include enhancements for biodiversity and should incorporate the small patch of semi-improved grassland north of the tennis courts. The majority of Site - B is constrained by Lamb's Field SINC and is considered inappropriate for development. However, if isolated from the SINC with a suitable buffer to prevent indirect impacts, including interference with grazing, the eastern-most segment, next to the SINC, could accommodate a small amount of development. Overall, BAS141 is graded 2.

2.2 BAS139 – West of Cufaude Lane

Description of Site

Size: 38 ha

The site comprises a mixture of arable fields, pasture and grass leys, with substantial hedges and other features of biodiversity interest, including a bridleway that runs between Cufaude Lane and Carpenter's Down Wood. This is well wooded and forms a significant linear green feature through the sites. The site is mostly surrounded by similarly composed farmland along with woodlands. However, to the northeast is Bramley Training Area, comprising a mosaic of woodland and more open habitats.

Designated Sites

European Sites:

There are no European sites within the site or the 400 m zone of potential influence around the site. The site does not fall within the 5 km or 7km Thames Basin Heaths mitigation zones.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

There are no SSSIs within the area or the 400 m zone of potential influence around the site.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)

There are no SINCs within the sites, but Gallaries and Gallary Pightle Copses [1B] are immediately adjacent to the site. In addition, Razor's Farm Woodland Strip SINCs, Collett's Copse and Long Swains Row Copse occur within the 400metre zone of potential influence.

Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats Types within Site

The following priority habitat types occur within the site:

- Hedgerow

Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats Types Outside of Site

The following priority habitat types occur within the zone of potential influence:

- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Hedgerow
- Pond

Habitat Connectivity

The site is well connected to the surrounding landscape, including woodland, through a strong network of hedgerows.

Species Constraints

The hedgerows and nearby woodlands, including those that abut the site, have high dormouse potential. In addition, the fields and hedgerows offer good foraging habitat for bats. A number of ponds and ditches within the vicinity of the site mean that there is a potential for great crested newts to be present. Other potential species constraints include breeding birds and common reptiles.

Habitat Enhancement Potential

The existing features including hedgerows and the wooded bridleway would all benefit from long-term conservation management. There is also scope for the creation of new habitats within the site to diversify and expand existing habitats within, and adjacent to, the site. This will be important in helping to increase local populations of key species in order to offset any unavoidable indirect impacts arising from development. Of particular note for enhancement potential is a field (at SU64945688). This comprises abandoned improved pasture on what appears to be former arable land, which is reverting to a more diverse rush pasture and rank grassland, with a reasonable variety of tall herbs. Adjacent woodland will need to be buffered, which could be achieved through the establishment of a graded woodland edge.

Ecological Processes and Land Management

Modern agricultural practices are the dominant influence on the site's biodiversity features at present. However, the majority of the land is in an Entry Level Stewardship scheme providing for a basic level of environmental management.

Assessment

Table 5: Assessment of BAS139

Criteria Assessment	**Assessment**
Avoids a significant effect on European sites or adversely affecting the integrity of such a site.	**Compatible** development would not be expected to have any significant effects due to relative size and distance from any European sites.
Avoids adverse direct or indirect impact on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	**Compatible** development would not be expected to have any significant effects due to relative size and distance from any SSSIs.
If it is likely to influence a SSSI, furthers the conservation and enhancement of the features for which it is designated.	**No link** see above.

Avoids disturbing a European protected species, or damaging or destroying a breeding site or resting place of such a species or, where this is unavoidable due to an overriding pubic interest in favour of development within the area, and there being no satisfactory alternative, the impact will not be detrimental to maintaining the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in its natural range.	**Potentially compatible** development could affect dormice using hedgerows / tree belts around the site. However, there are good prospects for being able to mitigate impacts sufficiently to maintain favourable conservation status in the area through protecting existing features and enhancing the habitat for the species to offset any unavoidable pressures. It will be necessary to ensure adequate buffers between development and boundary vegetation to avoid light pollution, which could adversely affect bat behaviour.
Seeks to avoid full or partial loss of SINCs and LNRs and other key habitats.	**Compatibility uncertain** subject to construction management to avoid damage to SINCs on adjacent land development within the site is likely to be compatible. However, the impact from any highway upgrades necessary to make the site developable is uncertain at this time. Scope to create access without significant hedgerow loss is an important consideration here.
Avoids loss of irreplaceable habitat, including Ancient Semi-natural Woodland and veteran trees.	**Compatible** see above.
Avoids causing indirect impacts on SINCs or LNRs and other key habitats (inc. recreational pressure, predation from cats, run-off, hydrological effects and interference with other natural processes and interference with land management practices on which biodiversity interests depend).	**Likely to be compatible** subject to adequate buffering of SINCs on adjacent land and control of access to them.
Avoids severing a landscape-scale habitat network of borough wide or greater significance.	**Compatible** no major features of borough wide or greater significance affected.
Avoids causing further fragmentation or creation of barriers to species movement between habitats.	**Compatibility uncertain** the impact from any highway upgrades necessary to make the site developable is uncertain at this time. .
Avoids negative impacts on the conservation status of a key species.	**Likely to be compatible** subject to sensitive layout design that safeguards the habitats covered above and to routine ecological mitigation measures.
Has the potential to contribute to local habitat restoration and creation targets from the South East Biodiversity Strategy and Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan.	**Potentially compatible** significant scope to incorporate new habitat into the site, which may be integrated with open space provision.
Has the potential to positively contribute to other biodiversity conservation objectives, including strengthening of habitat networks; improving habitats for priority species; providing appropriate access to areas of wildlife importance.	**Potentially compatible** see above
Contributes to the positive management of	**Potentially compatible** subject to securing long-term

landscape features that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna.	management of the hedgerows and bridleway vegetation.
Contributes to a net gain in biodiversity.	**Potentially compatible** subject to incorporation of new habitat into any development and securing the long-term management of this and existing habitats.

Commentary

A large proportion of the site has the capacity to accommodate development whilst remaining compatible with biodiversity objectives. The bridleway and associated vegetation passing through the site would need to be safeguarded and buffered from development, as would adjacent SINCs and it is also considered reasonable for the any development scheme to contribute to a net gain in biodiversity through incorporating biodiversity enhancements. However, an unknown impact at this time is whether hedgerows would need to be removed in order to upgrade the road to the site. At present, this is a small country lane flanked by hedgerows. Any need for widening of the road could have a greater impact through subsequent hedgerow loss than development within the site itself. The site is graded as 2 on the basis of probable impacts from development within the site boundaries, but it is recommended that the need for highway upgrades be assessed and taken into account in order to ensure that the full impact of developing this site is taken into account.

2.3 BAS140 – Wildwood Cottage and Frog's Castle

Description of Area

Size: 13 ha

This comprises arable and improved grassland, which appears to be used mainly for pony grazing. In addition, it includes Gravelly Bottom Copse, an area of ancient woodland. The site is surrounded by farmland and is situated in the Loddon Valley to the south of the R. Loddon.

Designated Sites

European Sites:

There are no European sites within the site or the 400 m zone of potential influence around the site. The site does not fall within the 5 km or 7km Thames Basin Heaths mitigation zones.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

There are no SSSIs within the site or the 400 m zone of potential influence around it.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)

Gravelly Bottom Copse SINC is located within the site. In addition, the following SINCs occur within 400 metres of it: River Loddon and Lower Mill Fen; Upper River Row and Bottom Row, Bain's Wood (which abuts the eastern boundary), Bells Copse, Round Copse, Old Basing and Lychpit, Brickhill Copse, Bushyleaze Copse, Hodd's and Virnell's Copses.

Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats Types within Site

The following priority habitat types occur within the site:

- Hedgerow
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats Types Outside of Site

The following priority habitat types occur within the zone of potential influence:

- Hedgerow
- River
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Habitat Connectivity

The area is of particular importance in the context of wider landscape habitat connectivity in terms of the River Loddon Corridor that passes close by. The woodland within the site and surrounding hedgerows form an important part in providing this connectivity.

Species Constraints

The site has the potential to support dormouse. Existing buildings and mature trees within the site have the potential to support bat roosts and the woodland edges and hedgerows provide suitable foraging for them. There is at least one pond and a ditch within 400 metres of the site, which may provide suitable breeding habitat for great crested newts and the woodland within the site and hedgerows surrounding it provide suitable foraging habitat (although the farmland within the site offers relatively poor terrestrial habitat for the species and they are unlikely to be a significant constraint to the development of these parts of the site). Breeding birds, common reptiles and badgers are other potential constraints.

Habitat Enhancement Potential

The SINC within the site is in poor condition, with the majority of the southern half having been destroyed by horse grazing. Therefore, there is considerable potential for restoration work. The hedgerows are weak in places and would benefit from gapping up.

Ecological Processes and Land Management

The majority of the land is subject to agricultural management. Hedgerows are well trimmed, but gappy in places. As stated above, the woodland is in poor condition due to horse grazing. If continued, this is liable to destroy its biodiversity value entirely.

Assessment

Table 6: Assessment of BAS140

Criteria Assessment	**Assessment**
Avoids a significant effect on European sites or adversely affecting the integrity of such a site.	**Compatible**: development would not be expected to have any significant effects due to relative size and distance from any European sites.
Avoids adverse direct or indirect impact on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	**Compatible:** development would not be expected to have any significant effects due to relative size and distance from any SSSIs.
If it is likely to influence a SSSI, furthers the conservation and enhancement of the features for which it is designated.	**No link**: see above.
Avoids disturbing a European protected species, or damaging or destroying a breeding site or resting place of such a species or, where this is unavoidable due to an overriding pubic interest in favour of	**Potentially compatible**: development could affect dormice using hedgerows and the woodland SINC. If present, it will be necessary to ensure adequate buffers between development and these features to avoid disturbance. Enhancement, particularly of the

development within the area, and there being no satisfactory alternative, the impact will not be detrimental to maintaining the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in its natural range.	woodland, would help to improve the carrying capacity of the site for this species, which may be needed to offset any unavoidable indirect impacts on local populations. Bats are likely to be using features within and around the site for foraging, which will also necessitate the provision of adequate measures to avoid light pollution, which could adversely affect bat behaviour. Trees within the woodland may support bat roosts.
Seeks to avoid full or partial loss of SINCs and LNRs and other key habitats.	**Potentially compatible**: subject to safeguarding the woodland SINCs within the site and surrounding hedgerows and providing suitable buffers between these features and the development. This will significantly reduce the developable area.
Avoids loss of irreplaceable habitat, including Ancient Semi-natural Woodland and veteran trees.	**Potentially compatible**: see above.
Avoids causing indirect impacts on SINCs or LNRs and other key habitats (inc. recreational pressure, predation from cats, run-off, hydrological effects and interference with other natural processes and interference with land management practices on which biodiversity interests depend).	**Potentially compatible**: subject to adequate provision of buffer around the woodland SINCs within the site and surrounding hedgerows and management of access to the SINC.
Avoids severing a landscape-scale habitat network of borough wide or greater significance.	**Compatible**: no major landscape-scale connectivity features affected.
Avoids causing further fragmentation or creation of barriers to species movement between habitats.	**Likely to be compatible**: subject to safeguarding ancient woodland SINC and surrounding hedges.
Avoids negative impacts on the conservation status of a key species.	**Potentially compatible**: subject to buffering and enhancing the woodland and surrounding hedges.
Has the potential to contribute to local habitat restoration and creation targets from the South East Biodiversity Strategy and Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan.	**Compatible**: considerable scope for the restoration and enhancement of the SINC.
Has the potential to positively contribute to other biodiversity conservation objectives, including strengthening of habitat networks; improving habitats for priority species; providing appropriate access to areas of wildlife importance.	**Compatible**: see above.
Contributes to the positive management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna.	**Compatible**: see above.
Contributes to a net gain in biodiversity.	**Compatible**: see above.

Commentary

A significant proportion of this site is occupied by a woodland SINC, which represents a constraint to development. In order to safeguard it from development pressures, a buffer of at least 20 metres will be required between it and any dwellings, including gardens. Therefore, the developable area would be much less than the total site area. The woodland, however, is in poor condition and is a strong candidate for restoration, which could be secured through developer obligations. Hedges surrounding the site would also need to be protected by ensuring that there

is a suitable relationship between them and any development eg. ensuring that they are adjacent to public areas and that they can be managed appropriately, not incorporated into private gardens. It is anticipated that significant impacts on protected and key species could be mitigated and offset through improvement of the woodland, and to a lesser extent, the hedges. Therefore, with a sensitive design and approach, there are good prospects for achieving a net gain. On this basis, it is graded 2.

2.4 BRAM010 – Strawberry Fields

Description of Area

Size: 16 ha

The site is divided into two halves by a stream, which runs west to east. North of this, the land is improved pasture, which appears to be mainly used for pony grazing. The presence of Pepper-saxifrage is an indicator of an old meadow origin, though it has lost most of its botanical diversity through agricultural improvement. The southern half is arable land. Along the stream, ruderal vegetation dominates, indicative of high nutrient levels, but there are some limited patches of swamp community of higher biodiversity interest. Hedges around the site are of variable quality and there are some mature and various younger trees.

Designated Sites

European Sites:

There are no European sites within the site or the 400 m zone of potential influence around the site. The site does not fall within the 5 km or 7km Thames Basin Heaths mitigation zones.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

There are no SSSIs within the site or the 400 m zone of potential influence around it.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)

There are no SINCs within the site. German Road SINC [6A] falls within the 400 meter zone of potential influence, but is relatively isolated from it by Sherfield Road and housing, which are likely to limit any indirect effects on it.

Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats Types within Site

The following priority habitat types occur within the site:

- Hedgerow

Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats Types within Potential Zone of Influence

The following priority habitat types occur within the zone of potential influence:

- River (stream)
- Hedgerow
- Pond
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland

Habitat Connectivity

The site has some connectivity with the surrounding landscape and priority habitats due to the stream that runs through the site and through hedgerow connections.

Species Constraints

The site has the potential to support dormouse in the surrounding hedgerows, water voles, and foraging bats, especially along the drainage line. A number of ponds within 400 metres of the site make great crested newts a possibility, though the majority of the site (arable farmland) offers low foraging potential. Breeding birds, common reptiles and badgers are other potential constraints.

Habitat Enhancement Potential

The stream and margins have the potential for enhancement of structural habitat and floral species diversity. The hedges would also benefit from improvement works.

Ecological Processes and Land Management

The site is currently maintained through arable farming and pony grazing. Hedges are subject to agricultural maintenance.

Assessment

Table 7: Assessment of BRAM010

Criteria Assessment	**Assessment**
Avoids a significant effect on European sites or adversely affecting the integrity of such a site.	**Compatible:** development would not be expected to have any significant effects due to relative size and distance from any European sites.
Avoids adverse direct or indirect impact on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	**Compatible**: development would not be expected to have any significant effects due to relative size and distance from any SSSIs.
If it is likely to influence a SSSI, furthers the conservation and enhancement of the features for which it is designated.	**No link**: see above.
Avoids disturbing a European protected species, or damaging or destroying a breeding site or resting place of such a species or, where this is unavoidable due to an overriding pubic interest in favour of development within the area, and there being no satisfactory alternative, the impact will not be detrimental to maintaining the population	**Likely to be compatible**: there is the potential for dormice to be using surrounding hedgerows and bats may use the site foraging, particularly along the line of the watercourse, but so long as these features are safeguarded and enhanced, it is anticipated that such issues can be addressed.

of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in its natural range.	
Seeks to avoid full or partial loss of SINCs and LNRs and other key habitats.	**Compatible:** no such sites are affected.
Avoids loss of irreplaceable habitat, including Ancient Semi-natural Woodland and veteran trees.	**Compatible:** see above.
Avoids causing indirect impacts on SINCs or LNRs and other key habitats (inc. recreational pressure, predation from cats, run-off, hydrological effects and interference with other natural processes and interference with land management practices on which biodiversity interests depend).	**Compatible:** except for surrounding hedgerow, there are no such sites in the vicinity likely to be affected.
Avoids severing a landscape-scale habitat network of borough wide or greater significance.	**Compatible**: no major landscape-scale connectivity features affected.
Avoids causing further fragmentation or creation of barriers to species movement between habitats.	**Likely to be compatible**: subject to safeguarding the ditch and minimising new gaps in the hedgerow for access.
Avoids negative impacts on the conservation status of a key species.	**Likely to be compatible**: subject to routine mitigation measures.
Has the potential to contribute to local habitat restoration and creation targets from the South East Biodiversity Strategy and Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan.	**Compatible**: habitat creation (eg. lowland meadow) within the northern section of the site would make a small, but useful contribution.
Has the potential to positively contribute to other biodiversity conservation objectives, including strengthening of habitat networks; improving habitats for priority species; providing appropriate access to areas of wildlife importance.	**Compatible**: habitat creation (eg. lowland meadow) within the northern section of the site would usefully contribute to this aim, as would enhancement of the ditch line and adjacent habitats.
Contributes to the positive management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna.	**Compatible**: development of the site not incompatible, but limited opportunity for positive effect.
Contributes to a net gain in biodiversity.	**Compatible**: subject to incorporating habitat improvements eg. along the watercourse and the northern section of the site.

Commentary

This site is relatively unconstrained other than the stream running through it, which will require a minimum 8 metre buffer from any development. The hedgerows will also need to be successfully integrated into any development layout to ensure that they can be appropriately managed as part of open space and not incorporated in to private gardens. There is scope for habitat enhancement, including the possibility of improving the biodiversity of the grassland in the northern section of the site, which could be integrated with open space / GI provision. The site is graded 1.

2.5 TAD017 – Land South of Bishopswood Lane (St Johns and Whitehouse Meadows)

Description of Area

Size: 2 ha

The site comprises two meadows, one of which is unimproved neutral grassland and the other, semi-improved grassland. The site is bounded by Bishopswood Lane to the north, beyond which is housing. To the east are large domestic gardens. The majority of the TAD018 site is to the south, and there is an old footpath to the west, beyond which are domestic gardens.

Designated Sites

European Sites:

There are no European sites within the site or the 400 m zone of potential influence around the site. The site does not fall within the 5 km or 7km Thames Basin Heaths mitigation zones.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

There are no SSSIs within the site or within a 400 m zone of potential influence around it.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)

There are no SINCs within or adjacent to the site. However, both meadows are of potential SINC status, with the eastern meadow (known as St. John's Meadow) supporting over 100 species and three old meadow indicators. Though more degraded than St. John's Meadow, the western one (Whitehouse Meadow) is still of significant biodiversity value and worthy of SINC status. Great Copse SINC and Wigmore Heath SINCs are within 400 metres of the site though the former is isolated by a busy road which would reduce indirect impacts from development within the site.

Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats Types within Site

The following priority habitat types occur within site:

- Lowland meadow
- Hedgerow

Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats Types within Potential Zone of Influence

The following priority habitat types occur within the zone of potential influence:

- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Hedgerow

- Pond
- Lowland heath

Habitat Connectivity

The meadows adjoin a mosaic of other habitats, which all add to local biodiversity value. These comprise improved pasture with remnant habitats of greater ecological value, including those associated with the upper reaches of Bishopswood Stream and surrounded by tall wooded hedgerows.

Species Constraints

In addition to the botanical interest, the site has the potential to support foraging bats, badgers, breeding birds, dormouse in surrounding hedgerows, and common reptiles.

Habitat Enhancement Potential

Both meadows have potential for improvement in biodiversity value if the right grazing regime can be established.

Ecological Processes and Land Management

St. John's Meadow has been subject to damaging levels of horse grazing and current tree planting and mowing regimes are further harming its biodiversity value. Whitehouse Meadow continues to suffer from the effects of horse grazing.

Assessment

Table 8: Assessment of TAD017

Criteria Assessment	**Assessment**
Avoids a significant effect on European sites or adversely affecting the integrity of such a site.	**Compatible:** development would not be expected to have any significant effects due to relative size and distance from any European sites.
Avoids adverse direct or indirect impact on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	**Compatible:** development would not be expected to have any significant effects due to relative size and distance from any SSSIs.
If it is likely to influence a SSSI, furthers the conservation and enhancement of the features for which it is designated.	**No link:** see above.
Avoids disturbing a European protected species, or damaging or destroying a breeding site or resting place of such a species or, where this is unavoidable due to an overriding pubic interest in favour of development within the area, and there being no satisfactory alternative, the impact will not be detrimental to maintaining the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in its natural range.	**Potentially compatible:** subject to protection of hedgerows and avoidance of indirect impacts on their value for dormice and bat from light spill and other sources of disturbance.
Seeks to avoid full or partial loss of SINCs	**Incompatible:** development would destroy important

and LNRs and other key habitats.	meadows that are key habitats and are assessed to be worthy of SINC status.
Avoids loss of irreplaceable habitat, including Ancient Semi-natural Woodland and veteran trees.	**Incompatible:** see above.
Avoids causing indirect impacts on SINCs or LNRs and other key habitats (inc. recreational pressure, predation from cats, run-off, hydrological effects and interference with other natural processes and interference with land management practices on which biodiversity interests depend).	**Incompatible:** see above.
Avoids severing a landscape-scale habitat network of borough wide or greater significance.	**Compatible:** the habitats within the site are not assessed as forming a cohesive component of a landscape-scale network of borough wide or greater significance.
Avoids causing further fragmentation or creation of barriers to species movement between habitats.	**Incompatible:** the habitats within the site do form an important part of a local habitat matrix and their loss would significantly reduce the value of this.
Avoids negative impacts on the conservation status of a key species.	**Incompatible:** development would involve the loss of a scared habitat resource of importance in conserving key species.
Has the potential to contribute to local habitat restoration and creation targets from the South East Biodiversity Strategy and Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan.	**Incompatible:** whilst enhancement of these habitats would assist in these targets, this would not be compatible with accommodating development in the site.
Has the potential to positively contribute to other biodiversity conservation objectives, including strengthening of habitat networks; improving habitats for priority species; providing appropriate access to areas of wildlife importance.	**Incompatible:** see above.
Contributes to the positive management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna.	**Incompatible:** see above.
Contributes to a net gain in biodiversity.	**Incompatible:** see above.

Commentary

The meadows within the site are both of significant biodiversity value and are assessed as being worthy of SINC status. Both require the right type of management, with appropriate types and intensities of grazing, to restore and conserve their biodiversity value. If this could be secured by some development within parts of the other nearby sites considered within this report, then this could help conserve them. However, there is no scope for development within this particular site without destroying them, either directly through the development footprint, or through the indirect pressures of people and pets, which are liable to preclude appropriate grazing regimes. Therefore, on its own, the site is graded as 5.

2.6 TAD018 – Land South of Bishopswood Lane

Description of Area

Size: 11 ha

The site comprises improved pasture and grass leys surrounded by tall and wooded hedgerows with relatively high species diversity. In addition, it contains a small copse of ancient woodland and the upper reaches of Bishopswood Stream run through it. The land along the stream is partially wooded, with a variety of tree and shrub species present, and there is an area of relic fen meadow and swamp. Along the western edge of the site, just outside of the boundary, is a strip of ancient woodland.

Designated Sites

European Sites:

There are no European sites within the site or the 400 m zone of potential influence around the site. The site does not fall within the 5 km or 7km Thames Basin Heaths mitigation zones.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

There are no SSSIs within the site or the 400 m zone of potential influence around it.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)

There are no SINCs within the site. However, two meadows within the adjacent site, TAD017, have potential SINC status. Great Copse SINC and Wigmore Heath SINCs are within 400 metres of the site, but the former is isolated by a busy road which would reduce indirect impacts from development within the site.

Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats Types within Site

The following priority habitat types occur within the site:

- Hedgerow
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Lowland meadow

Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats Types within Potential Zone of Influence

The following priority habitat types occur within the zone of potential influence:

- Hedgerow
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Lowland Heath

- Pond

Habitat Connectivity

There is strong connectivity between the site and surrounding land through wooded hedgerows and the stream.

Species Constraints

There is an active badger sett in the copse and the adjacent pasture areas are likely to be used by badgers for foraging. The habitats present, especially along the line of the stream are likely to be of value for bats foraging. Hedgerows and the copse have the potential to support dormouse. Other potential species constraints include breeding birds, common reptiles, water voles and great crested newts.

Habitat Enhancement Potential

There is significant potential for habitat enhancement and restoration. In particular, the land along the route of the stream also has good potential for enhancement in order to improve the mosaic of fen, grassland and woodland habitats. Establishment of grazing regimes would be necessary to achieve this for fen and grassland habitats.

Ecological Processes and Land Management

Recent past management appears to have included horse grazing, and some of the land is subject to arable farming and the sowing of grass leys. Grazing pressure has damaged the biodiversity of habitats within the site and, if continued, further decline is inevitable. However, grazing, albeit more sensitive, is required to maintain and improve the grassland habitats within the site.

Assessment

Table 9: Assessment of TAD018

Criteria Assessment	**Assessment**
Avoids a significant effect on European sites or adversely affecting the integrity of such a site.	**Compatible:** development would not be expected to have any significant effects due to relative size and distance from any European sites.
Avoids adverse direct or indirect impact on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	**Compatible:** development would not be expected to have any significant effects due to relative size and distance from any SSSIs.
If it is likely to influence a SSSI, furthers the conservation and enhancement of the features for which it is designated.	**No link:** see above.
Avoids disturbing a European protected species, or damaging or destroying a breeding site or resting place of such a species or, where this is unavoidable due to an overriding pubic interest in favour of development within the area, and there being no satisfactory alternative, the impact will not	**Potentially compatible:** subject to protection of hedgerows and avoidance of indirect impacts on their value for dormice and bat from light spill and other sources of disturbance.

be detrimental to maintaining the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in its natural range.	
Seeks to avoid full or partial loss of SINCs and LNRs and other key habitats.	**Potentially compatible:** subject to avoiding any development of the area within TAD017, the copse or other wooded areas or corridor along Bishops Wood Stream.
Avoids loss of irreplaceable habitat, including Ancient Semi-natural Woodland and veteran trees.	**Potentially compatible:** subject to avoiding any development the copse or other wooded areas or corridor along Bishops Wood Stream.
Avoids causing indirect impacts on SINCs or LNRs and other key habitats (inc. recreational pressure, predation from cats, run-off, hydrological effects and interference with other natural processes and interference with land management practices on which biodiversity interests depend).	**Potentially compatible:** subject to avoiding any development of the area within TAD017, the copse or other wooded areas or corridor along Bishops Wood Stream, allowing sufficient buffers between these features and development to avoid indirect pressures as managing access to ensure that dogs do no not preclude grazing. This will significantly limit the developable areas within the site.
Avoids severing a landscape-scale habitat network of borough wide or greater significance.	**Compatible:** the habitats within the site are not assessed as forming a cohesive component of a landscape-scale network of borough wide or greater significance.
Avoids causing further fragmentation or creation of barriers to species movement between habitats.	**Potentially compatible:** subject to only small-scale development within the site in order to safeguard the various features of biodiversity value.
Avoids negative impacts on the conservation status of a key species.	**Potentially compatible:** subject to minimal development within the site.
Has the potential to contribute to local habitat restoration and creation targets from the South East Biodiversity Strategy and Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan.	**Potentially compatible:** considerable potential to improve and recreate habitats within the site. However, substantial amounts of development within it are liable to preclude this. A limited amount, however, could be used to secure an improvement and management plan.
Has the potential to positively contribute to other biodiversity conservation objectives, including strengthening of habitat networks; improving habitats for priority species; providing appropriate access to areas of wildlife importance.	**Potentially compatible:** see above.
Contributes to the positive management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna.	**Potentially compatible:** see above.
Contributes to a net gain in biodiversity.	**Potentially compatible:** see above.

Commentary

The site includes areas of biodiversity value, and those of potential value, which are deemed to be a constraint over much of the rest of it. However, there are some areas of low biodiversity value, currently used as grass leys, that could accommodate some development. The areas of higher biodiversity value require appropriate management and restoration and modest amounts of development could be used to secure this work. However, taking into account the constraints, the site is graded 4.

2.7 TAD038 – Land North of Shaw Lane

Description of Area

Size: 25 ha

This site comprises mostly improved pasture and grass leys, but retains significant features of biodiversity value, including a small copse of replanted ancient woodland (Copse Close) and Shaw Lane Pond. To the north is more arable land and TAD018. The upper reaches of Bishopswood Stream run adjacent to the north-eastern edge of the site. To the east is Bishopswood Golf Course, to the south, mixed farmland and to the west, Baughurst Road and associated ribbon development.

Designated Sites

European Sites:

There are no European sites within the site or the 400 m zone of potential influence around the site. The site does not fall within the 5 km or 7km Thames Basin Heaths mitigation zones.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

There are no SSSIs within the site or the 400 m zone of potential influence around it.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)

There are no SINCs within the site. Great Copse SINC is within 400 metres, but is isolated by a busy road which would reduce indirect impacts from development within the site.

Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats Types within the Site

The following priority habitat types occur within the site:

- Hedgerow
- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Pond

The following priority habitat types occur within the potential influence:

- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Hedgerow
- Lowland heath
- Lowland meadow

Habitat Connectivity

There is strong connectivity between the site and surrounding land through wooded hedgerows and the adjacent stream.

Species Constraints

The habitats present, especially along the line of the stream, are likely to be of value for bats foraging. The pond may support great crested newt breeding and this would make surrounding land of value in supporting this species. Hedgerows and the copse have the potential to support dormouse. Other potential species constraints include breeding birds, water vole and common reptiles.

Habitat Enhancement Potential

The site contains existing features, which would benefit from enhancement as well as expansion and linking through the creation of new habitats within the site. In particular, Copse Close has been damaged and would benefit from restoration, particularly of its field and shrub layers. The areas of improved pasture offer the potential for recreation of meadow habitats.

Ecological Processes and Land Management

The site is subject to modern farming practices, including grazing on improved pasture. Copse Close, which is replanted ancient woodland, has been further damaged through the scraping out of its shrub and field layers. The introduction of the pond (which appears to be recent) has provided benefits for biodiversity. Whilst some form of grazing would be necessary to maintain open habitats, the existing regime has not been beneficial to biodiversity conservation.

Assessment

Table 10: Assessment of TAD038

Criteria Assessment	**Assessment**
Avoids a significant effect on European sites or adversely affecting the integrity of such a site.	**Compatible:** development would not be expected to have any significant effects due to relative size and distance from any European sites.
Avoids adverse direct or indirect impact on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	**Compatible:** development would not be expected to have any significant effects due to relative size and distance from any SSSIs.
If it is likely to influence a SSSI, furthers the conservation and enhancement of the features for which it is designated.	**No link:** see above.
Avoids disturbing a European protected species, or damaging or destroying a breeding site or resting place of such a species or, where this is unavoidable due to an overriding pubic interest in favour of development within the area, and there being no satisfactory alternative, the impact will not be detrimental to maintaining the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in its natural range.	**Potentially compatible:** subject to protection of hedgerows and avoidance of indirect impacts on their value for dormice and bat from light spill and other sources of disturbance and subject to being able to adequately mitigate any impacts on great crested newts, if present. This would necessitate safeguarding the pond and surrounding land, protecting and enhancing corridors to other suitable terrestrial habitat and improving terrestrial habitat to improve its carrying capacity and offset the loss of lower value arable land to development.
Seeks to avoid full or partial loss of SINCs	**Potentially compatible:** subject to safeguarding the

and LNRs and other key habitats.	copse, the pond and hedgerows and mature trees.
Avoids loss of irreplaceable habitat, including Ancient Semi-natural Woodland and veteran trees.	**Potentially compatible:** see above.
Avoids causing indirect impacts on SINCs or LNRs and other key habitats (inc. recreational pressure, predation from cats, run-off, hydrological effects and interference with other natural processes and interference with land management practices on which biodiversity interests depend).	**Potentially compatible:** subject to any development layouts including adequate buffers around the copse, the pond, hedgerows and mature trees, and managing public access to sensitive areas.
Avoids severing a landscape-scale habitat network of borough wide or greater significance.	**Compatible:** the habitats within the site are not assessed as forming a cohesive component of a landscape-scale network of borough wide or greater significance.
Avoids causing further fragmentation or creation of barriers to species movement between habitats.	**Potentially compatible:** subject to a site layout which respects existing features of biodiversity value.
Avoids negative impacts on the conservation status of a key species.	**Potentially compatible:** subject to routine mitigation measures and habitat enhancement to improve carrying capacity for key species.
Has the potential to contribute to local habitat restoration and creation targets from the South East Biodiversity Strategy and Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan.	**Compatible:** scope to rehabilitate ancient woodland, create new meadow habitat and enhance other features through conservation-oriented management.
Has the potential to positively contribute to other biodiversity conservation objectives, including strengthening of habitat networks; improving habitats for priority species; providing appropriate access to areas of wildlife importance.	**Compatible:** see above.
Contributes to the positive management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna.	**Compatible:** scope to improve the management of key habitats.
Contributes to a net gain in biodiversity.	**Compatible:** significant potential to achieve this through restoration and better management of existing and creation of new habitats.

Commentary

This site offers more scope for development than TAD018 and also has good potential to improve existing and create new habitats so long as it is not over-developed. This will necessitate allowing for adequate buffers between development and the features of interest (minimum of 20 metres from the Copse) and setting aside areas of grassland for the creation of new habitat. However, the best opportunities would come by taking this site forward together with TAD017 and TAD018 and making these other sites the main focus of enhancement work in order to achieve a net biodiversity gain. On its own, the site is graded 2.

2.8 TAD019 – Land North of Pelican Road

Description of Area

Size: 2 ha

The site is dominated by plantation woodland (mainly developing coniferous trees) with an impoverished understorey. Part of the site (to the west) consists of semi-improved/improved grassland, which is used for sheep grazing. There is an area of semi-improved grassland on the north-western edges of the site mixed with scrub and ruderal plant communities, which supports very small relic heathland communities. Part of the site includes houses, farm buildings / yard and a scrap yard. The site is bounded by pasture to the north, to the east, housing to the south and a gravel extraction site to the West.

Designated Sites

European Sites:

There are no European sites within the site or the 400 m zone of potential influence around the site. The site does not fall within the 5 km or 7km Thames Basin Heaths mitigation zones.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

Decoy Pit, Pools and Woods SSSI and Pamber Forest and Silchester Common SSSI occur within 400 metres of the site. However, the latter is isolated to some extent by a busy road.

Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC)
Impstone Plantation SINC occurs within 400 metres of the site, but is isolated to some extent by a busy road.

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Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Habitats Types within the Site

No priority habitats occur within the site.

The following priority habitat types occur within the potential influence:

- Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland
- Lowland heath
- Hedgerow
- Pond

Habitat Connectivity

The site is reasonably well connected to other areas of plantation woodland, particularly by a woodland belt which stretches along a public right of way that passes through the western end of the site.

Species Constraints

The site has a high potential for reptiles. In addition, it may support bat roosts in existing buildings, and the nationally scarce annual beard-grass is present in tipped gravel along the western edge of the plantation. Breeding birds, dormouse and great crested newts are other potential constraints.

Habitat Enhancement Potential

Limited areas of semi-improved grassland and very small heathland communities have the potential for expansion as part of a landscape scheme which reflects local context.

Ecological Processes and Land Management

Current influences include sheep grazing, scrap yard activities and the keeping of pigs, which have damaged many of the coniferous trees in the plantation. None of these activities are conducive to improving site biodiversity, although the loss of the plantation followed by cessation of pig activities would present an opportunity for heathland communities to develop.

Assessment

Table 11: Assessment of TAD019

Criteria Assessment	**Assessment**
Avoids a significant effect on European sites or adversely affecting the integrity of such a site.	**Compatible:** development would not be expected to have any significant effects due to relative size and distance from any European sites.
Avoids adverse direct or indirect impact on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	**Potentially compatible:** subject to adequate open space provision to avoid increasing pressure from public access on nearby SSSIs.
If it is likely to influence a SSSI, furthers the conservation and enhancement of the features for which it is designated.	**Potentially compatible:** possibility that developer contributions could be taken towards this in view of potential access pressures in order not only to offset these, but achieve a net biodiversity gain.
Avoids disturbing a European protected species, or damaging or destroying a breeding site or resting place of such a species or, where this is unavoidable due to an overriding pubic interest in favour of development within the area, and there being no satisfactory alternative, the impact will not be detrimental to maintaining the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in its natural range.	**Likely to be compatible:** subject to routine mitigation measures.

Seeks to avoid full or partial loss of SINCs and LNRs and other key habitats.	**Compatible:** no such sites are affected.
Avoids loss of irreplaceable habitat, including Ancient Semi-natural Woodland and veteran trees.	**Compatible:** see above.
Avoids causing indirect impacts on SINCs or LNRs and other key habitats (inc. recreational pressure, predation from cats, run-off, hydrological effects and interference with other natural processes and interference with land management practices on which biodiversity interests depend).	**Potentially compatible:** subject to offsetting indirect impacts through improved management of nearby sites to improve their carrying capacity for key species and offset the effects of increased access and increased pet predation.
Avoids severing a landscape-scale habitat network of borough wide or greater significance.	**Compatible:** no major landscape-scale connectivity features affected.
Avoids causing further fragmentation or creation of barriers to species movement between habitats.	**Compatible:** development of the site would not contribute significantly to habitat fragmentation in the area.
Avoids negative impacts on the conservation status of a key species.	**Potentially compatible:** subject to mitigation measures, particularly in respect of reptiles.
Has the potential to contribute to local habitat restoration and creation targets from the South East Biodiversity Strategy and Hampshire Biodiversity Action Plan.	**Potentially compatible:** through developer contributions towards heathland creation / restoration in the area.
Has the potential to positively contribute to other biodiversity conservation objectives, including strengthening of habitat networks; improving habitats for priority species; providing appropriate access to areas of wildlife importance.	**Potentially compatible:** see above and through incorporating locally-appropriate habitats into any landscape scheme.
Contributes to the positive management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna.	**Potentially compatible:** through developer contributions towards heathland creation / restoration in the area.
Contributes to a net gain in biodiversity.	**Potentially compatible:** see above.

Commentary

The site has potential to support protected reptiles and amphibians and, if found to be present, adequate mitigation will need to be put in place, retaining populations on or near the site, which will necessitate improving habitat for them. Otherwise, there are few constraints to development within the site. There are various areas of heathland habitat in the local area, which could be subject to increased indirect pressures from public access and pet predation. Developer contributions should be sought to improve the management of these sites in order to better manage public access and increase the carrying capacity of the habitats so that populations of key species are more resilient to increased predation. Given the potential need for species mitigation and indirect pressure on nearby sites, the site is graded 2.

3. Results, Conclusions and Recommendations

A summary of the assessment findings is shown in Table 12. These are then summarised in Table 13 according to the following criteria.

1 - Relatively few constraints. There may be biodiversity issues to be addressed, but it is anticipated that these can be satisfactorily addressed through detailed site planning and established ecological mitigation practices.

2 - Some constraints exist such as the presence of a SINC or priority habitat, within the area and, there may be a priority/protected species constraint, or adjacent habitats that may suffer from indirect pressure. Layouts will need to successfully integrate any SINCs or priority habitats, accommodate species requirements, and seek to mitigate indirect effects.

3 - Development likely to be possible in parts of the area, but significant parts are constrained and/or there is a significant risk of indirect impacts on adjacent habitats or on priority species. Off-site compensation may be needed to achieve no net loss of biodiversity.

4 - Development may be feasible while meeting the biodiversity criteria, but there are important biodiversity interests within the zone of influence that are particularly sensitive to the types of impact arising from development. Further assessment is needed based on additional information about potential development scenarios, the subsequent nature and magnitude of impacts, and the capacity of the biodiversity interests to tolerate them.

5 - Strategic development allocation is considered to be incompatible with biodiversity objectives and the policies from which they are derived.

Table 12: Summary of Site Assessments								
Criteria Assessment	BAS141	BAS139	BAS140	BRAM010	TAD017	TAD018	TAD038	TAD019
Avoids a significant effect on European sites or adversely affecting the integrity of such a site.	**C**	**C**	**C**	**C**	**C**	**C**	**C**	**C**
Avoids adverse direct or indirect impact on Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)	**C**	**C**	**C**	**C**	**C**	**C**	**C**	**PC**
If it is likely to influence a SSSI, furthers the conservation and enhancement of the features for which it is designated.	**NL**	**NL**	**NL**	**NL**	**NL**	**NL**	**NL**	**PC**
Avoids disturbing a European protected species, or damaging or destroying a breeding site or resting place of such a species or, where this is unavoidable due to an overriding pubic interest in favour of development within the area, and there being no satisfactory alternative, the impact will not be detrimental to maintaining the population of the species concerned at a favourable conservation status in its natural range.	**PC**	**PC**	**PC**	**LBC**	**PC**	**PC**	**PC**	**LBC**
Seeks to avoid full or partial loss of SINCs and LNRs and other key habitats.	**PC**	**CU**	**PC**	**C**	**I**	**PC**	**PC**	**C**
Avoids loss of irreplaceable habitat, including Ancient Semi-natural Woodland and veteran trees.	**PC**	**C**	**PC**	**C**	**I**	**PC**	**PC**	**C**
Avoids causing indirect impacts on SINCs or LNRs and other key habitats (inc. recreational pressure, predation from cats, run-off, hydrological effects and interference with other natural processes and interference with land management practices on which biodiversity interests depend).	**PC**	**LBC**	**PC**	**C**	**I**	**PC**	**PC**	**PC**
Avoids severing a landscape-scale habitat network of borough wide or greater significance.	**C**	**C**	**C**	**C**	**C**	**C**	**C**	**C**
Avoids causing further fragmentation or creation of barriers to species movement between habitats.	**LBC**	**CU**	**LBC**	**LBC**	**I**	**PC**	**PC**	**C**
Avoids negative impacts on the conservation status of a key species.	**PC**	**LBC**	**PC**	**LBC**	**I**	**PC**	**C**	**PC**
Has the potential to contribute to local habitat restoration and creation targets from the South East Biodiversity Strategy and Hampshire Biodiversity Action	**PC**	**PC**	**C**	**C**	**I**	**PC**	**C**	**PC**

Plan.								
Has the potential to positively contribute to other biodiversity conservation objectives, including strengthening of habitat networks; improving habitats for priority species; providing appropriate access to areas of wildlife importance.	**PC**	**PC**	**C**	**C**	**I**	**PC**	**C**	**PC**
Contributes to the positive management of landscape features that are of major importance for wild flora and fauna.	**PC**	**PC**	**C**	**C**	**I**	**PC**	**C**	**PC**
Contributes to a net gain in biodiversity.	**PC**	**PC**	**C**	**C**	**I**	**PC**	**C**	**PC**

Key: Compatibility Categories		
Code	**Compatibility Rating**	**Definition**
C	**Compatible**	Strategic development considered to be compatible with objective.
NL	**No Link**	Strategic development considered to have a neutral effect on objective
LBC	**Likely to be Compatible**	Subject to compliance with legal requirements regarding statutory sites or species, but not anticipated to be a constraint.
PC	**Potentially compatible**	Compatibility subject to a layout that respects and successfully integrates designated sites and important habitats and/or includes provision for positive biodiversity enhancements. This may mean that significant parts of the site remain undeveloped. Significant mitigation measures are liable to be necessary and off-site compensation might be necessary to ensure not net loss and or a net gain.

CU	**Compatibility Uncertain**	It is not possible to assess compatibility without further studies of the potential impacts.
I	**Incompatible**	Strategic development not considered to be compatible with objective.

Table 3: Overall Assessment	
BAS141 – Land at Worting Road	2
BAS139 – West of Cufaude Lane	2
BAS140 – Wildwood Cottage and Frog's Castle	2
BRAM010 – Strawberry Fields	1
TAD017 – Land South of Bishopswood Lane	5
TAD018 – Land South of Bishopswood Lane	4
TAD038 – Land North of Shaw Lane	2
TAD019 – Land North of Pelican Road	2

4. References

[1] Biodiversity Assessment for the Local Development Framework Core Strategy (Stage 1) 2010. Available at: http://www.basingstoke.gov.uk/browse/environment-and-planning/planning/ldf/evidencebase/Biodiversity+Assessment.htm

Appendix: Site Maps

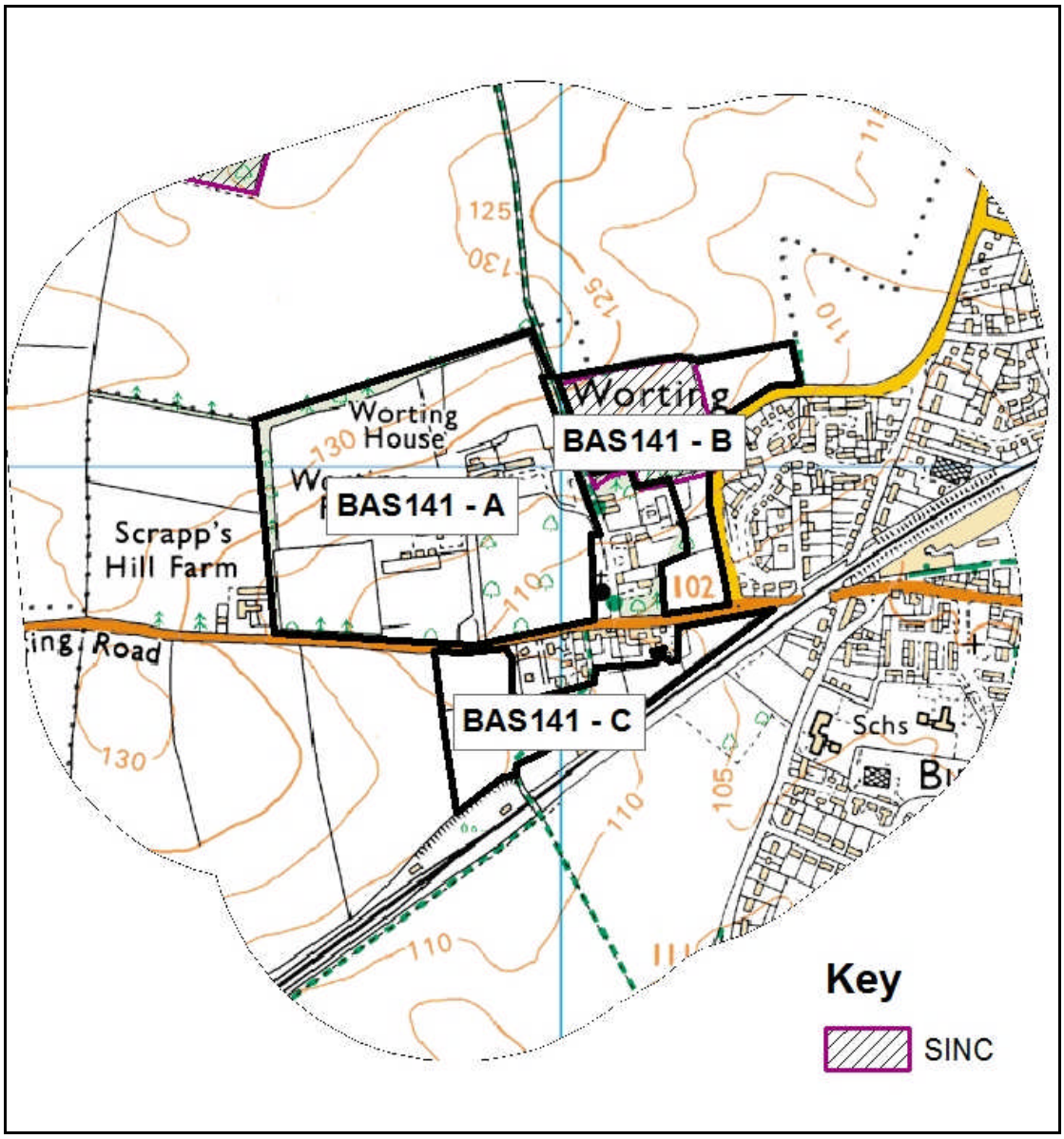

Fig 1: BAS141 – Land at Worting Road

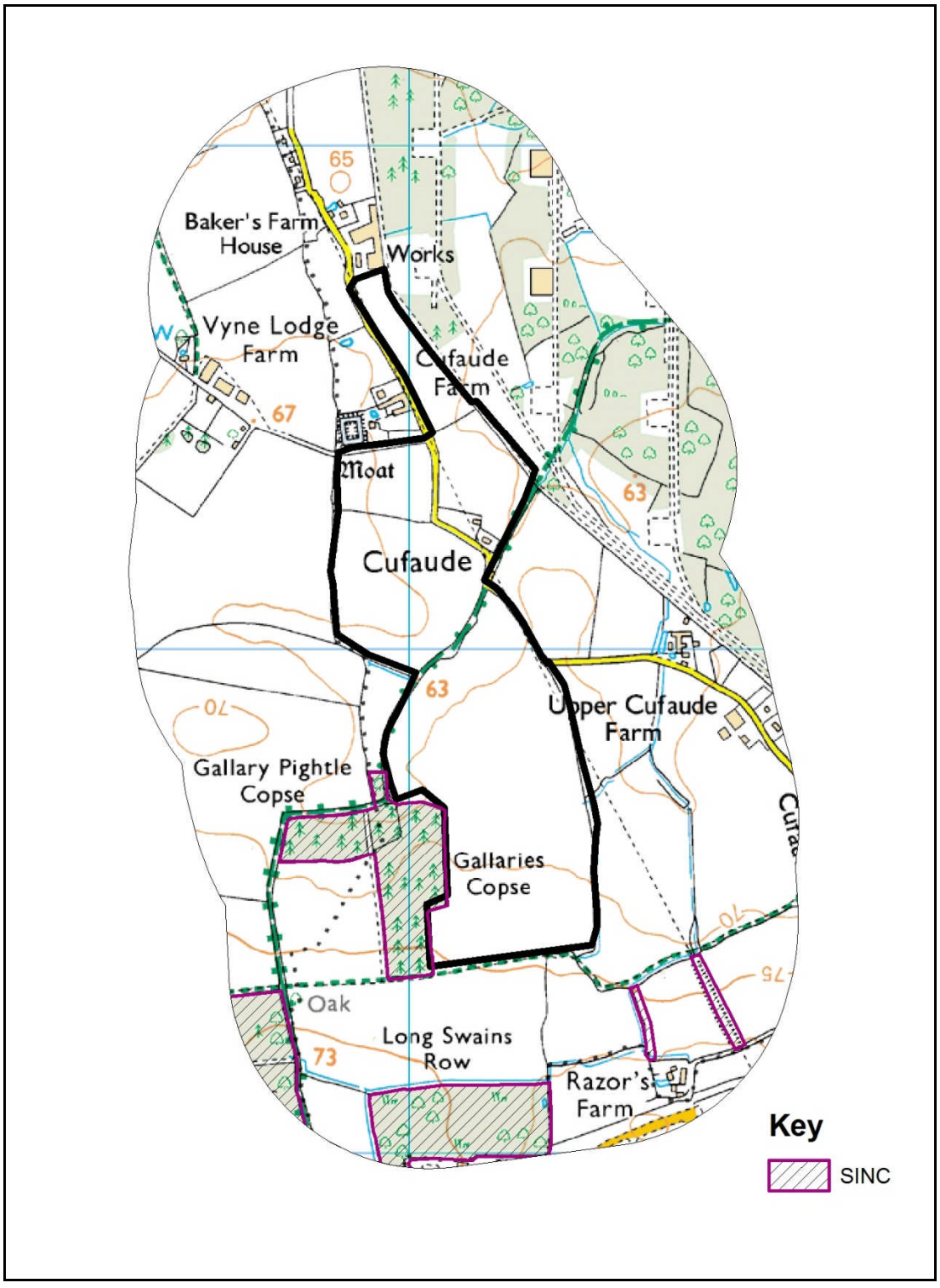

Fig 2: BAS139 – West of Cufaude Lane

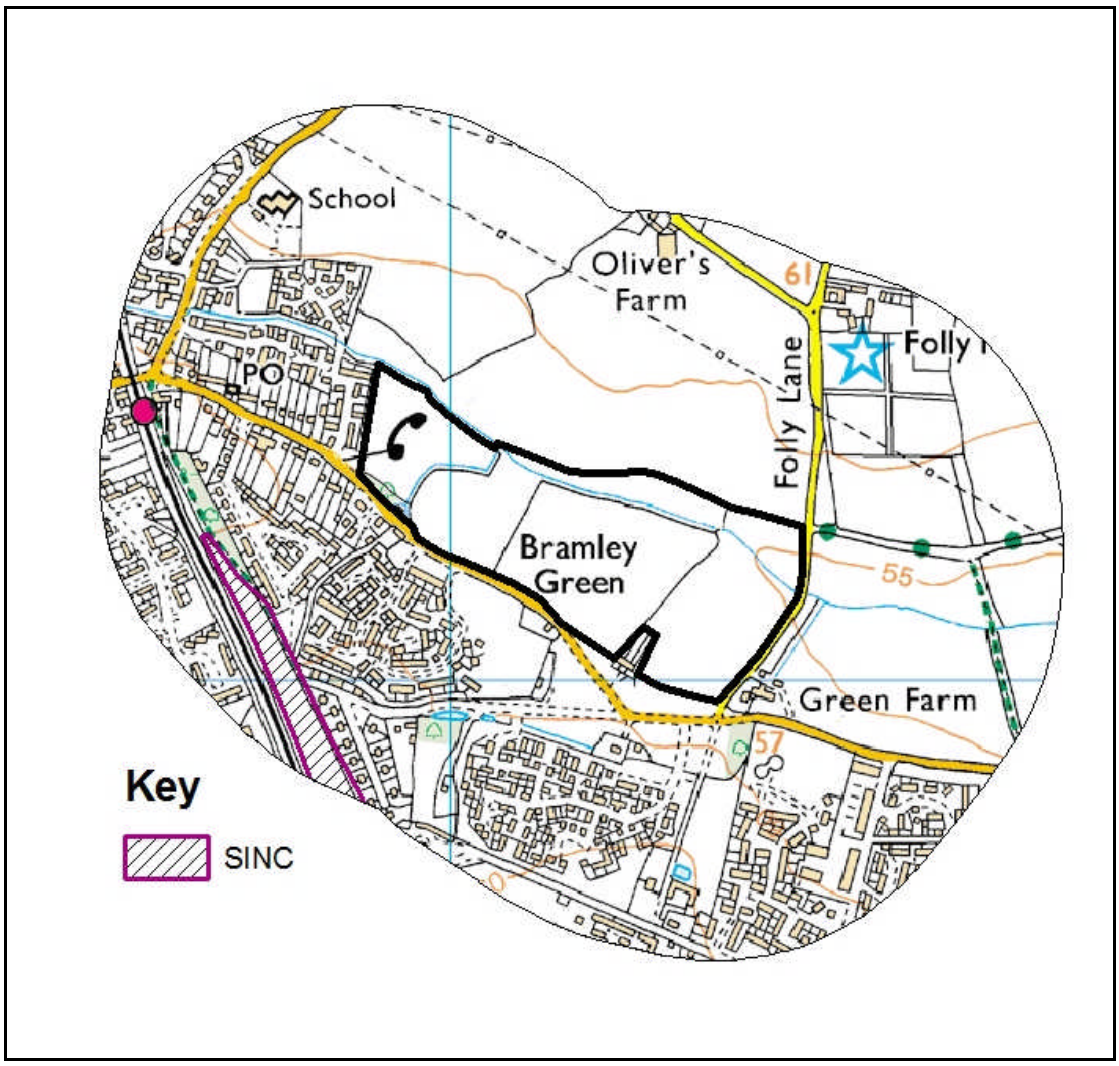

Fig 3: BRAM010 – Strawberry Fields

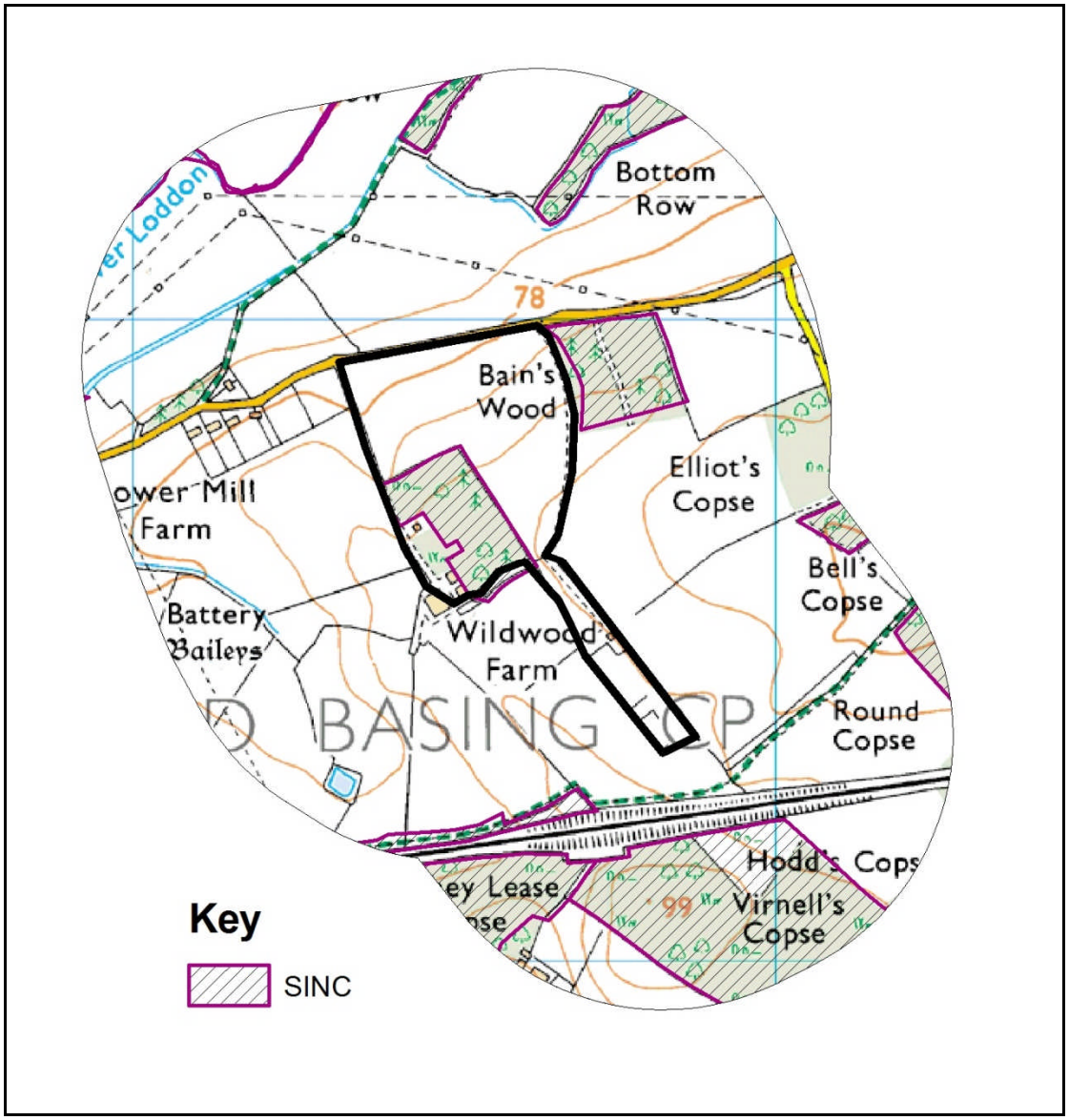

Fig 4: BAS140 – Wildwood Cottage and Frog's Castle

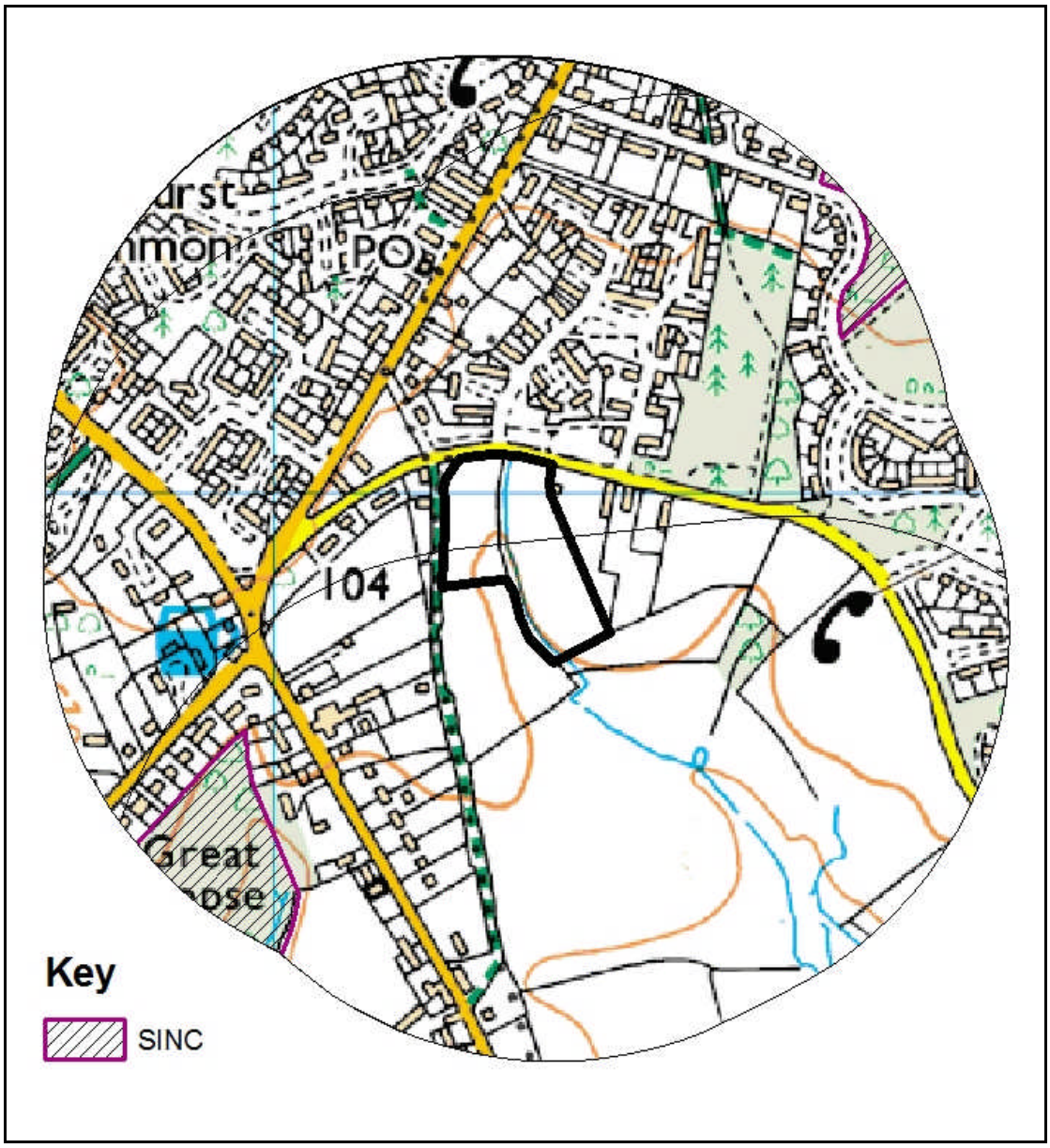

Fig 5: TAD017 – Land South of Bishopswood Lane

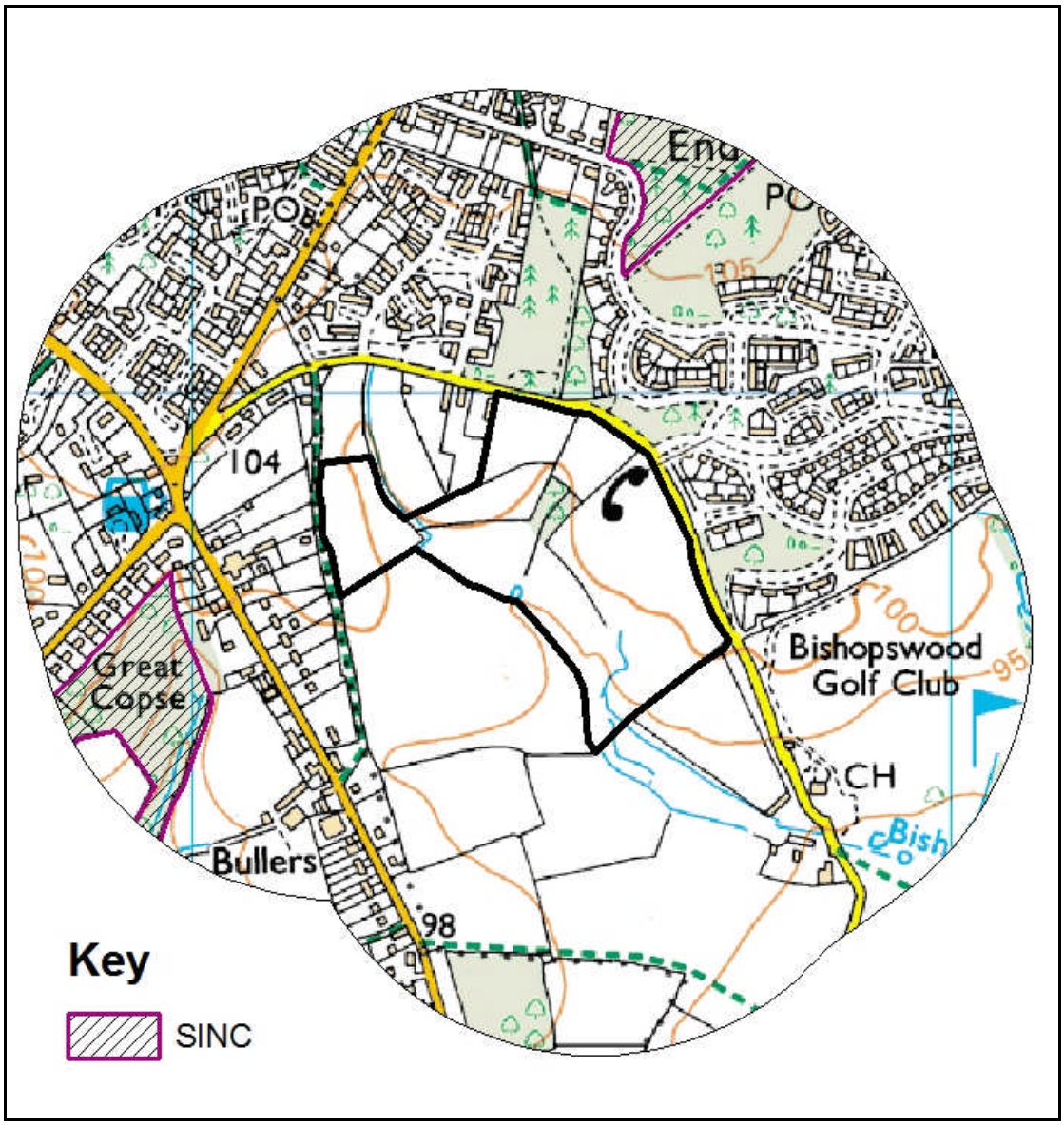

Fig 6: TAD018 – Land South of Bishopswood Lane

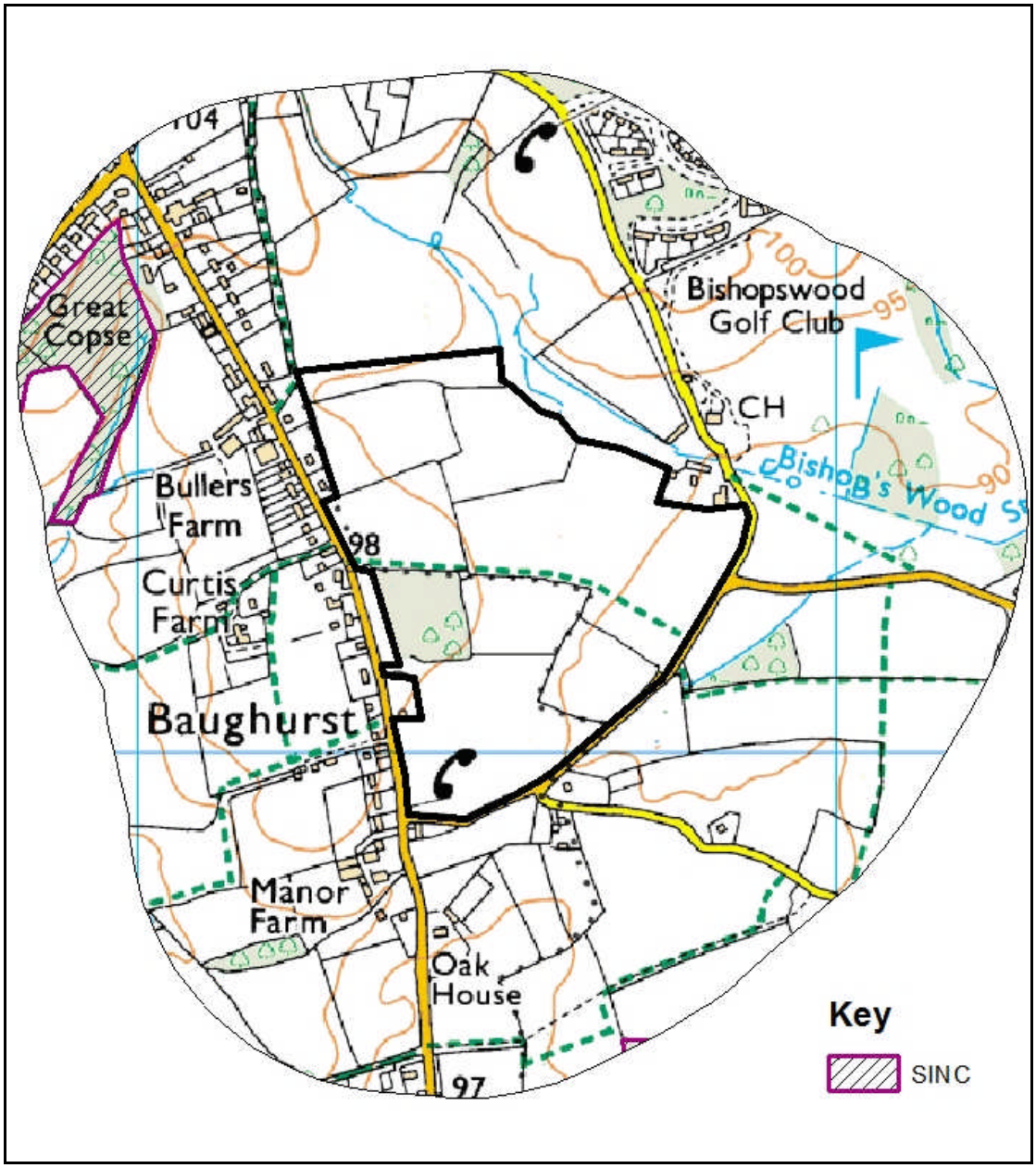

Fig 7: TAD038 – Land North of Shaw Lane

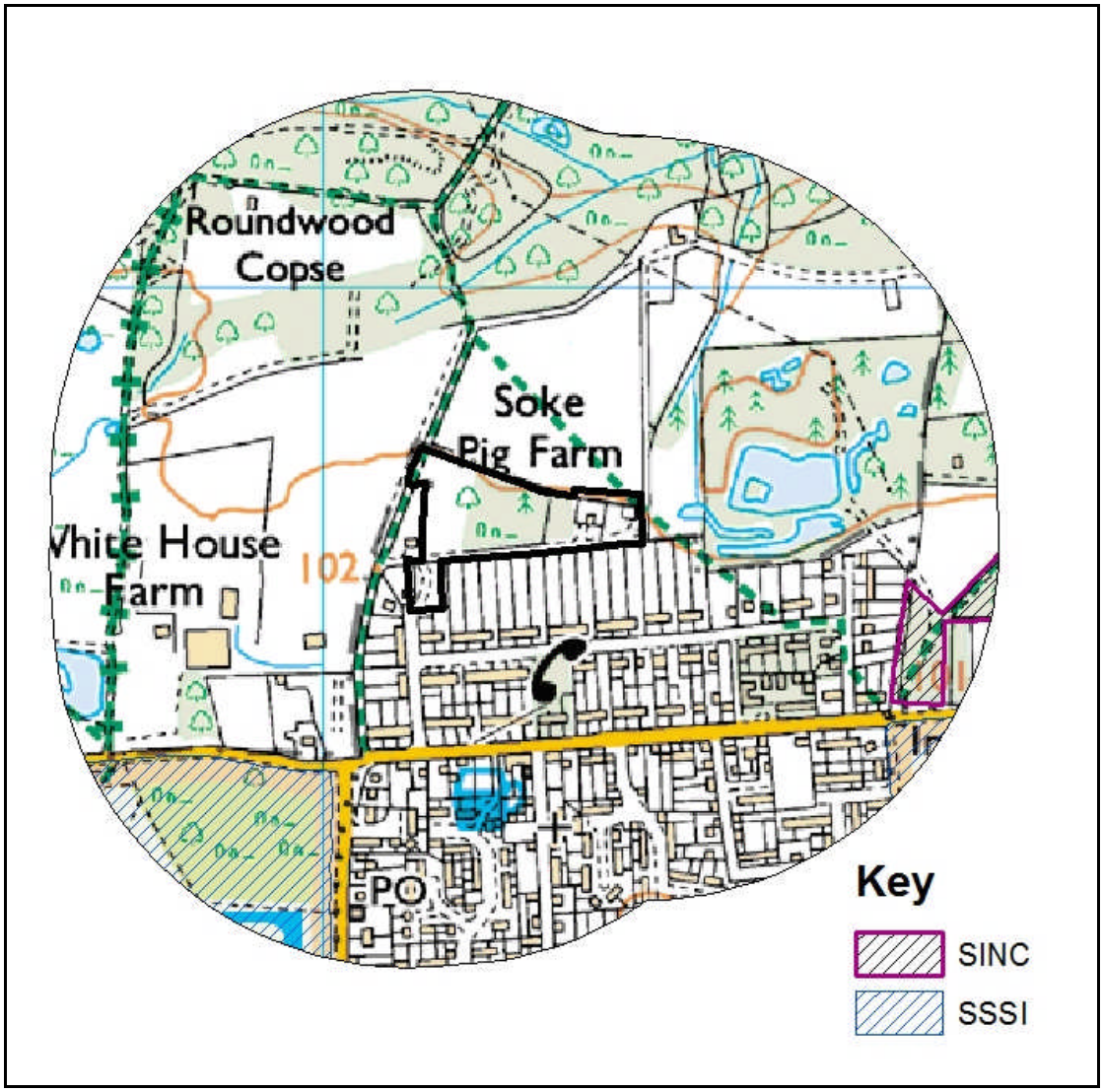

Fig 8: TAD019 – Land North of Pelican Road