

# AGENDA

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**Meeting:** Northern Area Planning Committee

**Place:** Council Chamber - Council Offices, Monkton Park, Chippenham,  
SN15 1ER

**Date:** Wednesday 17 July 2024

**Time:** 2.00 pm

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## **Membership**

Cllr Chuck Berry (Chairman)

Cllr Howard Greenman (Vice-Chairman)

Cllr David Bowler

Cllr Steve Bucknell

Cllr Gavin Grant

Cllr Jacqui Lay

Cllr Dr Brian Mathew

Cllr Nic Puntis

Cllr Mike Sankey

Cllr Martin Smith

Cllr Elizabeth Threlfall

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## **Substitutes**

Cllr Clare Cape

Cllr Ruth Hopkinson

Cllr Peter Hutton

Cllr Dr Nick Murry

Cllr Ashley O'Neill

Cllr Tom Rounds

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## **Public Participation**

Please see the agenda list on following pages for details of deadlines for submission of questions and statements for this meeting.

For extended details on meeting procedure, submission and scope of questions and other matters, please consult [Part 4 of the council's constitution](#).

The full constitution can be found at [this link](#).

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# AGENDA

## Part I

Items to be considered when the meeting is open to the public

1 **Apologies**

To receive any apologies or substitutions for the meeting.

2 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting** (*Pages 5 - 8*)

To approve as a true and correct record the minutes of the previous meeting held on 19 June 2024.

3 **Declarations of Interest**

To receive any declarations of disclosable interests or dispensations granted by the Standards Committee.

4 **Chairman's Announcements**

To receive any announcements through the Chair.

5 **Public Participation**

The Council welcomes contributions from members of the public.

### Statements

Members of the public who wish to speak either in favour or against an application or any other item on this agenda are asked to register **no later than 10 minutes before the start of the meeting**. If it is on the day of the meeting registration should be done in person.

The rules on public participation in respect of planning applications are linked to in the Council's Planning Code of Good Practice. The Chairman will allow up to 3 speakers in favour and up to 3 speakers against an application, and up to 3 speakers on any other item on this agenda. Each speaker will be given up to 3 minutes and invited to speak immediately prior to the item being considered.

Members of the public and others will have had the opportunity to make representations on planning applications and other items on the agenda, and to contact and lobby their local elected member and any other members of the planning committee, prior to the meeting.

Those circulating such information prior to the meeting, written or photographic, are advised to also provide a copy to the case officer for the application or item, in order to officially log the material as a representation, which will be verbally summarised at the meeting by the relevant officer, not included within any officer slide presentation if one is made. Circulation of new information which has not been verified by planning officers or case officers is also not permitted during the

meetings.

### Questions

To receive any questions from members of the public or members of the Council received in accordance with the constitution which excludes, in particular, questions on non-determined planning applications.

Those wishing to ask questions are required to give notice of any such questions in writing to the officer named on the front of this agenda no later than 5pm on **Wednesday 10 July 2024** in order to be guaranteed of a written response. In order to receive a verbal response, questions must be submitted no later than 5pm on **Friday 12 July 2024**. Please contact the officer named on the front of this agenda for further advice. Questions may be asked without notice if the Chairman decides that the matter is urgent.

Details of any questions received will be circulated to Committee members prior to the meeting and made available at the meeting and on the Council's website.

### 6 **Planning Appeals and Updates** (*Pages 9 - 10*)

To receive details of completed and pending appeals and other updates as appropriate.

### **Planning Applications**

To consider and determine the following planning applications:

### 7 **PL/2022/09258: Minety Substation, Minety, Wiltshire, SN16 9DX** (*Pages 11 - 122*)

Extension of existing substation comprising installation of 400/132kV transformer, 3no. 400/33kV transformers, circuit breakers, construction of retaining wall and 33kV switchroom, formation of access road, culverting of watercourse, erection of fencing and associated works.

### 8 **Urgent Items**

Any other items of business which, in the opinion of the Chairman, should be taken as a matter of urgency.

### **Part II**

***Items during whose consideration it is recommended that the public should be excluded because of the likelihood that exempt information would be disclosed.***

## Northern Area Planning Committee

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### MINUTES OF THE NORTHERN AREA PLANNING COMMITTEE MEETING HELD ON 19 JUNE 2024 AT COUNCIL CHAMBER - COUNCIL OFFICES, MONKTON PARK, CHIPPENHAM, SN15 1ER.

#### **Present:**

Cllr Chuck Berry (Chairman), Cllr Howard Greenman (Vice-Chairman), Cllr David Bowler, Cllr Steve Bucknell, Cllr Jacqui Lay, Cllr Mike Sankey, Cllr Martin Smith, Cllr Elizabeth Threlfall and Cllr Dr Nick Murry (Substitute)

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#### 41 **Apologies**

Apologies were received from:

Cllr Gavin Grant  
Cllr Nic Puntis  
Cllr Dr Brian Mathew (Cllr Nick Murry substituting)

#### 42 **Minutes of the Previous Meeting**

The minutes of the last meeting of the Committee held on 22 May 2024 were considered for approval by the committee.

#### **Resolved**

**To approve the minutes of the previous meeting held on 22 May 2024 as a true and correct record.**

#### 43 **Declarations of Interest**

Cllr Elizabeth Threlfall declared an interest in application no. PL/2022/05504 as she had been lobbied by both sides as the local member. She declared she would participate in the debate and vote for the item with an open mind.

#### 44 **Chairman's Announcements**

There were no Chairman's announcements.

#### 45 **Public Participation**

The Chairman explained the rules of public participation and the procedure to be followed at the meeting.

There were no statements or questions submitted.

46 **Planning Appeals and Updates**

Councillor Chuck Berry invited Adrian Walker, Development Management Team Leader, to update the Committee on the pending and determined appeals as per the appeals report included within the Agenda Pack.

Following which, it was:

**Resolved:**

**The Committee noted the appeals report for the period 10 May 2024 to 7 June 2024.**

47 **PL/2022/05504: Land at Stonehill, Minety, Wiltshire, SN16 9DX**

Public Participation

Mr Richard Thwaites spoke in support of the application.

Officers from the Development Management Area Team introduced the report which recommended that the Committee approve planning permission, subject to conditions, for the installation of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) together with associated ancillary infrastructure, equipment, and access arrangements.

Key considerations identified included:

- Scale of development
- Visual impact
- Design
- Cumulative effects

Members of the Committee then had the opportunity to ask technical questions to the officer.

It was clarified that:

- The proposal did not include a definitive colour but there was a proposed condition that would require the colour to be submitted for approval. The expected colour was green or brown with camouflage also suggested.
- The standard assessment of cumulative impact was used.
- Noise suppressors could be conditioned and that a condition that an emergency plan be submitted for potential fires or contamination had been included in proposal.

- There was no requirement to prove “need” which government legislation sets out clearly.
- Any information received on an application was assumed accurate unless any significant doubt is raised that it might not be.
- A condition to force the return of land to an agricultural state should the site become obsolete (within a decommissioning strategy) was already contained in the proposal and could be enforced.
- There was no proposal to sink the site into the ground to reduce visual impact.
- The land was not considered industrial land and would remain agricultural land even whilst being used for battery storage, and after any potential removal would return to “square one” in terms of planning applications.

Members of the public then had the opportunity to present their views to the committee as detailed above. The local member, Cllr Elizabeth Threlfall, also spoke to the application.

A debate followed where councillors considered when the line should be drawn on the cumulative impact of numerous BESS facilities, although it was noted that this application was optimum and neat.

The landscape officer’s comments stating that there would be harm to the landscape was considered.

Concern over safety and potential hazards was considered, although members appreciated planning officer clarification that there was an exemplary record of almost no fires and zero injuries or lasting damage to the surrounding environment at BESS sites.

The committee considered the planning officer’s recommendation for approval with conditions and that this shouldn’t necessarily be disregarded out of hand given the level of consideration put in.

During debate a motion to refuse the application was moved by Cllr Steve Bucknell and seconded by Cllr Mike Sankey with reference to Core Policy 51, cumulative impact, and impact on the landscape.

### **Resolved**

**That planning permission be refused.**

### 48 **Urgent Items**

There were no urgent items.

(Duration of meeting: 14.00pm – 15.45pm)

The Officer who has produced these minutes is Max Hirst of Democratic Services, e-mail [committee@wiltshire.gov.uk](mailto:committee@wiltshire.gov.uk)

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**Wiltshire Council**  
**Northern Area Planning Committee**  
**17<sup>th</sup> July 2024**

Planning Appeals Received between 07/06/2024 and 05/07/2024

Application No	Site Location	Parish	Proposal	DEL or COMM	Appeal Type	Officer Recommend	Appeal Start Date	Overturn at Cttee
PL/2022/02824	Land at Somerford Farm , Brinkworth, SN15 5AU	Brinkworth	Proposed Development is for a battery storage facility and ancillary development.	NAPC	Hearing	Approve with Conditions	03/07/2024	Yes
PL/2023/03298	Wheatleys Farm, Ashton Keynes, Swindon, SN6 6NX	Ashton Keynes	Proposed extraction and processing of sand and gravel, and associated site and access works including processing plant, silt lagoons, weighbridge, wheel wash, site office and welfare facilities and staff parking with progressive restoration using imported inert materials to return the site to agricultural use and lowland meadow for biodiversity enhancement (Resubmission of 17/12064/WCM)	DEL	Inquiry	Refuse	13/06/2024	No
PL/2023/07586	Ventura, Thickwood Lane, Colerne, Chippenham, SN14 8BN	Colerne	Modification of a S106 associated with N/09/01575/FUL and N/11/02138/FUL to incorporate a self contained annexe into Ventura, Thickwood Lane, Colerne, Chippenham, SN14 8BN to create one dwelling.	DEL	Written Representations	Refuse	19/06/2024	No
PL/2023/08747	40 Marlborough Road, Royal Wootton Bassett, Swindon, SN4 7SA	Royal Wootton Bassett	Proposed Annex for the enjoyment of friends and family.	DEL	Written Representations	Refuse	27/06/2024	No
PL/2023/08748	40 Marlborough Road, Royal Wootton Bassett, Swindon, SN4 7SA	Royal Wootton Bassett	Remove garage and erect a dwelling.	DEL	Written Representations	Refuse	27/06/2024	No
PL/2023/09202	The Mount, Upper Seagry, SN15 5EX	Seagry	Variation of condition 2 of PL/2021/08755 "Erection of an agricultural building for livestock and machinery storage and associated track"	NAPC	Written Representations	Approve with Conditions	04/07/2024	Yes
PL/2024/00196	Bryn Cottage, 14 Calcutt Street, Cricklade, Swindon, SN6 68D	Cricklade	Detached double garage and store outbuilding, with ancillary floorspace above	DEL	Householder Appeal	Refuse	04/07/2024	No
PL/2024/01572	Waterhay Barn, Leigh	Leigh	Replace barn with new build dwelling	DEL	Written Representations	Refuse	11/06/2024	No

Planning Appeals Decided between 07/06/2024 and 05/07/2024

Application No	Site Location	Parish	Proposal	DEL or COMM	Appeal Type	Officer Recommend	Appeal Decision	Decision Date	Costs Awarded?
PL/2022/09411	67 Pavenhill, Purton, Swindon, SN5 4DA	Purton	Two storey rear extension and a single storey rear extension	DEL	Householder Appeal	Refuse	Dismissed	04/07/2024	None
PL/2023/05206	Ridgefield Farm, Green Road, The Ridge, Corsham, Wilts, SN13 9PW	Corsham	Commercial use of former agricultural buildings (Retrospective)	DEL	Written Reps	Refuse	Allowed with Conditions	20/06/2024	None
PL/2023/08833	Land off Stanton Lane, Kington St Michael, Chippenham, SN14 6JQ	Kington St. Michael	Permission in Principle for Erection of 9 Houses.	DEL	Written Reps	Refuse	Dismissed	12/06/2024	None
PL/2024/00588	33 Park Lane, Chippenham, SN15 1LN	Chippenham	Solar Panel installation to the front elevation of the main house with an additional 3 rows of solar panels mounted at a 20 degree angle on the flat roof extension.	DEL	Householder Appeal	Refuse	Dismissed	25/06/2024	None

## COMMITTEE REPORT

<b>Application Number</b>	PL/2022/09258
<b>Site Address</b>	Minety Substation, Minety, Wiltshire, SN16 9DX
<b>Proposal</b>	Extension of existing substation comprising installation of 400/132kV transformer, 3no. 400/33kV transformers, circuit breakers, construction of retaining wall and 33kV switchroom, formation of access road, culverting of watercourse, erection of fencing and associated works.
<b>Applicant</b>	National Grid Electricity Transmission plc
<b>Town/Parish Council</b>	CHARLTON AND HANKERTON
<b>Electoral Division</b>	Brinkworth – Councillor Elizabeth Threlfall
<b>Grid Ref</b>	400081 189923
<b>Type of application</b>	Full Planning Permission
<b>Case Officer</b>	Adrian Walker

### 1. Background

The application was called-in by the Division Member (Brinkworth Division) Elizabeth Threlfall (on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023) for the following reasons - 'scale of the development', 'design' and 'environmental/highway impact'. It was also stated that the "Long term implications for the intensive development of the area with massed BESSs and solar farms. Also issues with construction traffic" need to be fully considered.

The application was heard at Northern Area Planning Committee on the 31<sup>st</sup> January.

The Committee voted to defer the application for three cycles pending the submission of further documentation and information to be provided by the applicant that Members felt was necessary to consider in order to make an informed decision. There has been a slight delay in bringing the application back to committee due to the complexity of the work the applicants have undertaken to address the issues raised by the Committee.

The following documentation was to include;

- Fully justified needs report that sets out the gap in capacity in the network the extension to the substation seeks to address.
- Details of local groups that have been contacted for local biodiversity gain.
- Justification for why alternative sites would have a greater impact.
- Agreement of a Unilateral Undertaking for a contribution to biodiversity mitigation.

The applicants have provided the following documentation;

- Needs Case Dated 02/02/2024

- Minety 400kV substation Extension, Wiltshire. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report. Document Reference: 9236.007. (The Environment Dimension Partnership, 5th July 2023).
- Minety Substation Extension Minety, Wiltshire Dormouse Mitigation Strategy. Document Ref: 9236.005. (The Environment Dimension Partnership, June 2023).
- Habitat Impact. Drawing Number: G9236.015D. (The Environment Dimension Partnership, 11/08/2022).
- Figure E3. Specification for Mitigation/ Compensation. Drawing Number: G9236.021D.1 (The Environment Dimension Partnership, 22/03/2023).
- Figure E3. Specification for Mitigation/ Compensation. Drawing Number: G9236.021D.2 (The Environment Dimension Partnership, 22/03/2023).

National Grid have agreements with surrounding landowners to acquire land for sufficient mitigation and compensation so the need for a financial contribution to biodiversity mitigation is unnecessary.

The submitted Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report and Dormouse Mitigation Strategy detail a package of measures to reduce, mitigate and compensate previously discussed impacts on Stonehill Wood (Local Wildlife Sites LWS and ancient woodland), Park Copse (LWS and ancient woodland), semi-natural broad-leaved woodland and the rare and protected species they support. Briefly these measures include:

- 4.61h and 0.81ha of woodland and scrub creation respectively.
- New native hedgerow planting.
- Creation of new corridors for dormice dispersal (dead hedging).
- Rural tree planting.
- Enhancement of retained woodland.

The new woodland and scrub habitat will provide habitat greater in area than that which is to be lost at a ratio of 4:1 (provided: lost). Figures E3 Specification for Mitigation/ Compensation (Drawing Number: G9236.021D.1 and G9236.021D.2) show new habitat is to be located in a 15m wide buffer at the northern and western boundary of Park Copse and at the southeast corner of Stonehill Wood. In these locations the new habitat, once established, will provide a buffer to the ancient woodland and ensure connectivity is retained and enhanced. Collectively the package of measures would therefore provide a suitable woodland compensation scheme and ensure adverse impacts on protected species such as dormice and bats are mitigated.

The delivery of the mitigation and compensation measures in full will ensure no net loss in biodiversity resource and secure the integrity of local ecological networks. In addition once established the mitigation and compensation measures will deliver gains in biodiversity. The development is therefore compliant with Core Policy 50 in this respect.

The Councils Ecologist and the Environment Agency have subsequently been consulted on the additional information and have removed their previous objections.

The officer's recommendation is therefore to grant planning permission in accordance with the original officer's report set out at appendix A with an updated set of conditions. The additional conditions include;

7. Scheme for the delivery of mitigation and compensation measures.
8. Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan
9. Landscaping Scheme

## RECOMMENDATION

The recommendation is to grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the details shown in the following approved plans:

- Drawing. Location Plan PDD-101488-LAY-300 Rev 9
- Drawing. Proposed Layout Plan PDD-101488-LAY-302 Rev 5
- Drawing. Proposed Sections PDD-101488-ELE-303 Rev 3 Sheet 1 of 2
- Drawing. Proposed Sections PDD-101488-ELE-303 Rev 3 Sheet 2 of 2
- Drawing. Proposed Switchgear Room Plan and Elevation PDD-101488-ELE-304
- Drawing. Ancient Woodland Buffer Zone Layout PDD-101488-LAY-315-REV-0
- Minety 400kV substation Extension, Wiltshire. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report. Document Reference: 9236.007. (The Environment Dimension Partnership, 5th July 2023).
- Minety Substation Extension Minety, Wiltshire Dormouse Mitigation Strategy. Document Ref: 9236.005. (The Environment Dimension Partnership, June 2023).
- Habitat Impact. Drawing Number: G9236.015D. (The Environment Dimension Partnership, 11/08/2022).
- Figure E3. Specification for Mitigation/ Compensation. Drawing Number: G9236.021D.1 (The Environment Dimension Partnership, 22/03/2023).
- Figure E3. Specification for Mitigation/ Compensation. Drawing Number: G9236.021D.2 (The Environment Dimension Partnership, 22/03/2023).

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. No demolition, site clearance or development shall commence on site, and; no equipment, machinery or materials shall be brought on to site for the purpose of development, until the trees to be protected and retained, as shown on the Tree Protection Plan within the Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report (December 2022) by AECOM, have been enclosed by protective fencing, in accordance with British Standard 5837 (2005): Trees in Relation to Construction.

The protective fencing shall remain in place for the entire development phase and until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Such fencing shall not be removed or breached during construction operations and no vehicle, plant, temporary building or materials, including raising and or, lowering of ground levels, shall be allowed within the protected areas.

No retained tree/s shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree/s be topped or lopped other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars. Any topping or lopping approval shall be carried out in accordance British Standard 3998: 2010 "Tree Work – Recommendations" or arboricultural techniques where it can be demonstrated to be in the interest of good arboricultural practise.

If any retained tree is removed, uprooted, destroyed or dies, another tree shall be planted at the same place, at a size and species and planted at such time, that must be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

[In this condition “retained tree” means an existing tree which is to be retained in accordance with the approved plans and particulars; and paragraphs above shall have effect until the expiration of five years from the first occupation or the completion of the development, whichever is the later].

REASON: To enable the Local Planning Authority to ensure the retention of trees on the site in the interests of visual amenity.

4. No demolition, site clearance or development shall commence on site until an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS), in accordance with the recommendations of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report (December 2022) by AECOM, prepared by an arboricultural consultant providing comprehensive details of construction works in relation to trees has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. All works shall subsequently be carried out in strict accordance with the approved details. In particular, the method statement must provide the following:

- A specification for protective fencing to trees during both demolition and construction phases which complies with BS5837:2013 and a plan indicating the alignment of the protective fencing;
- A specification for scaffolding and ground protection within tree protection zones in accordance with British Standard 5837: 2013;
- A schedule of tree works conforming to British Standard 3998: 2010;
- Details of general arboricultural matters such as the area for storage of materials, concrete mixing and use of fires;
- Plans and particulars showing the siting of the service and piping infrastructure;
- A full specification for the construction of any arboriculturally sensitive structures and sections through them, including the installation of boundary treatment works;
- Details of the works requiring arboricultural supervision to be carried out by the developer’s arboricultural consultant, including details of the frequency of supervisory visits and procedure for notifying the Local Planning Authority of the findings of the supervisory visits; and
- Details of all other activities, which have implications for trees on or adjacent to the site.
- In order that trees to be retained on-site are not damaged during the construction works and to ensure that as far as possible the work is carried no demolition, site clearance or development should commence on site until a pre-commencement site meeting has been held, attended by the developer’s arboricultural consultant, the designated site foreman and a representative from the Local Planning Authority, to discuss details of the proposed work and working procedures.
- Subsequently and until the completion of all site works, site visits should be carried out in accordance with a timetable to be agree with the Local Planning Authority by the developer’s arboricultural consultant. A report detailing the results of site supervision and any necessary remedial works undertaken or required should then be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. Any approved remedial works shall subsequently be carried out under strict supervision by the arboricultural consultant following that approval.

REASON: In to secure a full and final record of the trees to be removed and in order that the Local Planning Authority may be satisfied that the trees to be retained on and adjacent to the site will not be damaged during the construction works and to ensure that as far as possible

the work is carried out in accordance with current best practice and section 197 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.

5. No demolition, site clearance, vegetation clearance, or development shall commence on site until a Site Clearance Management Plan has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The Site Clearance Management Plan shall provide details of the avoidance, mitigation and protective measures to be implemented before and during any site clearance, including but not necessarily limited to, the following
- *Details of all mitigation measures and identification of ecological protection areas/buffer zones and tree root protection areas as well as details and specification of physical means of protection, e.g. temporary fencing to demarcate buffer zones*
  - *Details of specific measures such as gaps in fencing to avoid causing harm to biodiversity features should also be stipulated. Measures should be illustrated on a plan.*
  - *Details and timing of any update surveys required pre-commencement of works on site such as for badgers.*
  - *Precautionary working method statements, including the restrictions to the timing of such works, such as sensitive vegetation clearance method in respect of birds.*
  - *Mitigation strategies already agreed with the local planning authority prior to determination, such as for great crested newts and bats; this should comprise the pre-construction/construction related elements of strategies only.*

REASON: To ensure adequate protection and mitigation for ecological receptors prior to and during construction.

6. No development other than site clearance or vegetation clearance, shall commence on site until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall provide details of the avoidance, mitigation and protective measures to be implemented before and during the construction phase, including but not necessarily limited to, the following:
- a) *Identification of ecological protection areas/buffer zones around ecological receptors including but not exclusively; Coatley Farm SSSI, Park Copse, Stonehill Wood, woodland, scrub, species-rich grassland, hedgerows and trees.*
  - b) *Details of physical means of protection of the ecological protection areas e.g. exclusion fencing.*
  - c) *Working method statements for protected/priority species, such as dormice, bats (roosting and foraging), amphibians (great crested newts) nesting birds and reptiles.*
  - d) *Mitigation strategies already agreed with the local planning authority prior to determination, such as for great crested newts, dormice or bats; this should comprise the pre-construction/construction related elements of strategies only.*

*e) Details of when a licensed ecologist and/or ecological clerk of works (ECoW) shall be present on site.*

*f) Key personnel, responsibilities and contact details (including Site Manager and ecologist/ECoW).*

*g) Timeframe for provision of compliance report to the local planning authority; to be completed by the ecologist/ECoW and to include photographic evidence.*

Development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved CEMP unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure adequate protection and mitigation for ecological receptors prior to and during construction.

**Scheme for the delivery of mitigation and compensation measures.**

7. Prior to the commencement of works, including demolition, ground works/excavation, site clearance, vegetation clearance and boundary treatment works a scheme for the delivery of all the mitigation and compensation measures (on-site and off-site) as detailed in the following documents shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority:
- Minety 400kV substation Extension, Wiltshire. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report. Document Reference: 9236.007. (The Environment Dimension Partnership, 5th July 2023).
  - Minety Substation Extension Minety, Wiltshire Dormouse Mitigation Strategy. Document Ref: 9236.005. (The Environment Dimension Partnership, June 2023).
  - Habitat Impact. Drawing Number: G9236.015D. (The Environment Dimension Partnership, 11/08/2022).
  - Figure E3. Specification for Mitigation/ Compensation. Drawing Number: G9236.021D.1 (The Environment Dimension Partnership, 22/03/2023).
  - Figure E3. Specification for Mitigation/ Compensation. Drawing Number: G9236.021D.2 (The Environment Dimension Partnership, 22/03/2023).

The scheme shall include how the mitigation and compensation land is managed and monitored in accordance with a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) and secured for the lifetime of the development.

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of biodiversity.

**Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan**

8. Prior to the commencement of works, including demolition, ground works/excavation, site clearance, vegetation clearance and boundary treatment works a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) must be submitted to and approved by the local authority. For further information please refer to the guidance at: Understanding biodiversity net gain - GOV.UK ([www.gov.uk](http://www.gov.uk))

REASON: To ensure the long-term management of landscape and ecological features retained and created by the development, for the benefit of visual amenity and biodiversity for the lifetime of the scheme.

**Landscaping Scheme**



9. No development shall commence on site until a detailed scheme of hard and soft landscaping (on-site and off-site) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority, the details of which shall include:-

- a detailed planting specification showing all plant species, supply and planting sizes and planting densities;
- finished levels and contours;
- means of enclosure;
- all hard and soft surfacing materials;

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and for the protection, mitigation and enhancement of biodiversity.

10. No development shall commence on site until a full 'No-Dig' specification for works within the root protection area/canopies of protected and retained trees, in particular the new internal access route, has been submitted and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The construction of the surface shall be carried out in accordance with approved details and thereafter retained.

REASON: In order to protect trees on and adjacent to the site which are to be retained with surfacing placed near to or over the trees root system.

11. Notwithstanding the contents of the Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy (September 2022) by Atkins, no development shall commence on site until a full and final scheme for the discharge of surface water from the site, incorporating sustainable drainage details, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be first brought into use until surface water drainage has been constructed in accordance with the approved scheme.

REASON: To comply with Core Policy 67: Flood Risk of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015) and to ensure that the development can be adequately drained without increasing flood risk to others.

NOTE: The Lead Local Flood Authority advises the following updates will be required to the scheme presented within the aforementioned assessment:-

- The applicant shall provide supplementary justification as to why attenuation has been proposed in tanks instead of in a natural feature such as a swale or detention basin.
- The applicant shall submit detailed calculations to demonstrate that the proposed positive drainage system:
  - a. Calculations and drawings for the drainage system design showing conveyance routes are designed to convey without flooding the critical 1 in 30 year + climate change rainfall event.
  - b. Calculations and drawings for the drainage system design showing attenuation features are designed to attenuate without flooding the critical 1 in 100 year rainfall event + climate change.
  - c. Hydraulic Models should set the MADD factor / additional storage volume factor to 0m<sup>3</sup> / ha in order to prevent an overestimation of storage capacity in the proposed drainage network.
- The applicant shall provide plans which demonstrate how overland exceedance flows in excess of the 1 in 100yr + climate change storm event are wholly and safely managed on site.

- The applicant shall submit details for the proposed inspection and ongoing maintenance (including activities, and frequency) of the proposed drainage system, including SuDS features and the proposed culvert.
  - The applicant shall provide a Construction Phase Management Plan to clearly demonstrate how surface water will be managed throughout the construction phase in order to prevent an increase in local flood risk / local pollution risk.
12. In the event that contamination is identified or encountered at any time when carrying out the approved development, the Local Planning Authority must be advised of the steps that will be taken by an appropriate contractor; to deal with contamination and provide a written remedial statement to be followed by a written verification report that confirms what works that have been undertaken to render the development suitable for use.

REASON: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

13. No external light fixture or fitting will be installed within the application site during construction or operation unless details of existing and proposed new lighting have been submitted to and approved by the Local Planning Authority in writing. The submitted details will demonstrate how the proposed lighting will impact on bat habitat compared to the existing situation.

The plans will be in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Guidance Notes on the Avoidance of Obtrusive Light (GN 01/2021) and Guidance note GN08/23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

REASON: To minimise light spill and to minimise potential for adverse effects on bats and other wildlife.

14. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with approved Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) (Rev.4 / May 2023), its measures shall be complied with in full throughout the construction period. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved CTMP.

REASON: To minimise detrimental effects to the neighbouring amenities, the amenities of the area in general, detriment to the natural environment through the risks of pollution and dangers to highway safety, during the construction phase.

15. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with recommendations and proposed mitigations and enhancement measures detailed within the Ecological Assessment (ref. 9236.003) (August 2022), Ecology Assessment – Addendum (ref 9236.015) (June 2023), and Dormouse Habitat Creation Strategy (ref 9236.005) (July 2023) by the Environment Partnership.

REASON: To mitigate against the loss of existing biodiversity and nature habitats.

16. A post installation noise assessment shall be carried out within 3 months of completion of the development to confirm compliance with the submitted noise report and submitted to the local planning authority. Any additional steps required to achieve compliance shall be taken. The details as submitted and approved shall be implemented and thereafter be permanently retained.

Reason: Core policy 57, Ensuring high design and place shaping such that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable.

#### INFORMATIVE

The applicant should note that under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and the Habitats Regulations (2010) it is an offence to disturb or harm any protected species, or to damage or disturb their habitat or resting place. Please note that this consent does not override the statutory protection afforded to any such species. In the event that your proposals could potentially affect a protected species you should seek the advice of a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist and consider the need for a licence from Natural England prior to commencing works. Please see Natural England's website for further information on protected species.

#### INFORMATIVE

No construction / demolition vehicle access may be taken along CHAR9, HANK15, CHAR16 without prior consultation with the Wiltshire Council Rights of Way Warden. Where appropriate any safety/mitigation/reinstatement measures must be approved by the Wiltshire Council Rights of Way Warden.

#### INFORMATIVE

No materials, plant, temporary structures or excavations of any kind should be deposited / undertaken which obstruct or adversely affect the public right of way whilst development takes place.

#### INFORMATIVE

It is noted that as part of the development, the applicant intends to culvert the existing watercourse. As noted in the applicant's submission a Land Drainage Consent should be applied for from the LLFA.

#### INFORMATIVE Artificial Lighting

The habitat within the proposed development site and the surrounding area is suitable for roosting, foraging and commuting bats. An increase in artificial lux levels can deter bats which would result in roost abandonment and/or the severance of key foraging areas. This will likely result in a significant negative impact upon the health of bat populations across the region. Artificial light at night can have a substantial adverse effect on biodiversity. Any new lighting should be for the purposes for safe access and security and be in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institute of Lighting Engineers in their publication GN01:2021, 'Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Light' (ILP, 2021), and Guidance note GN08/23 "Bats and artificial lighting at night", issued by the Bat Conservation Trust and Institution of Lighting Professionals.

#### INFORMATIVE District Level Licence (DLL) for Great Crested Newts

The scheme will be operating under a District Level Licence (DLL) for Great Crested Newts. Great Crested Newts are protected under Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 which implements the EC Directive 92/43/EEC in the United Kingdom, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Planning permission for development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation.

INFORMATIVE For applications where an EPSL is required.

Woodland and scrub habitats within the development site are known to support dormice. Under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 (as amended), it is an offence to harm or disturb dormice or damage or destroy their resting places. Planning permission for development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation. The applicant is advised that a European Protected Species Licence will be required before any work is undertaken to implement this planning permission.

INFORMATIVE For applications where there is a risk to roosting bats.

There is a risk that bats may roost in trees at the development site. Bat roosts are protected all times by the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 even when bats are temporarily absent because, being creatures of habit, they usually return to the same roost site every year. Planning permission for development does not provide a defence against prosecution under this legislation or substitute for the need to obtain a bat licence if an offence is likely. If bats or evidence of bats is found during the works, the applicant is advised to stop work and follow advice from an independent ecologist.

## **Appendices for PL/2022/09258 - Minety Substation, Minety, Wiltshire, SN16 9DX**

- Committee report presented to committee 31<sup>st</sup> January 2024
- Needs Case Dated 02/02/2024
- Minety 400kV substation Extension, Wiltshire. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report.
- Document Reference: 9236.007. (The Environment Dimension Partnership, 5th July 2023).
- Minety Substation Extension Minety, Wiltshire Dormouse Mitigation Strategy. Document Ref: 9236.005. (The Environment Dimension Partnership, June 2023).
- Habitat Impact. Drawing Number: G9236.015D. (The Environment Dimension Partnership, 11/08/2022).
- Figure E3. Specification for Mitigation/ Compensation. Drawing Number: G9236.021D.1 (The Environment Dimension Partnership, 22/03/2023).
- Figure E3. Specification for Mitigation/ Compensation. Drawing Number: G9236.021D.2 (The Environment Dimension Partnership, 22/03/2023).

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## COMMITTEE REPORT

<b>Application Number</b>	PL/2022/09258
<b>Site Address</b>	Minety Substation, Minety, Wiltshire, SN16 9DX
<b>Proposal</b>	Extension of existing substation comprising installation of 400/132kV transformer, 3no. 400/33kV transformers, circuit breakers, construction of retaining wall and 33kV switchroom, formation of access road, culverting of watercourse, erection of fencing and associated works.
<b>Applicant</b>	National Grid Electricity Transmission plc
<b>Town/Parish Council</b>	CHARLTON AND HANKERTON
<b>Electoral Division</b>	Brinkworth – Councillor Elizabeth Threlfall
<b>Grid Ref</b>	400081 189923
<b>Type of application</b>	Full Planning Permission
<b>Case Officer</b>	Adrian Walker

### Reason for the application being considered by Committee

The application has been called-in by the Division Member (Brinkworth Division) Elizabeth Threlfall (on the 16<sup>th</sup> January 2023) for the following reasons - 'scale of the development', 'design' and 'environmental/highway impact'. It was also stated that the "Long term implications for the intensive development of the area with massed BESSs and solar farms. Also issues with construction traffic" need to be fully considered.

### 1. Purpose of Report

The purpose of the report is to assess the merits of the proposal against the policies of the development plan and other material considerations and to consider the recommendation to grant planning permission subject to conditions.

### 2. Report Summary

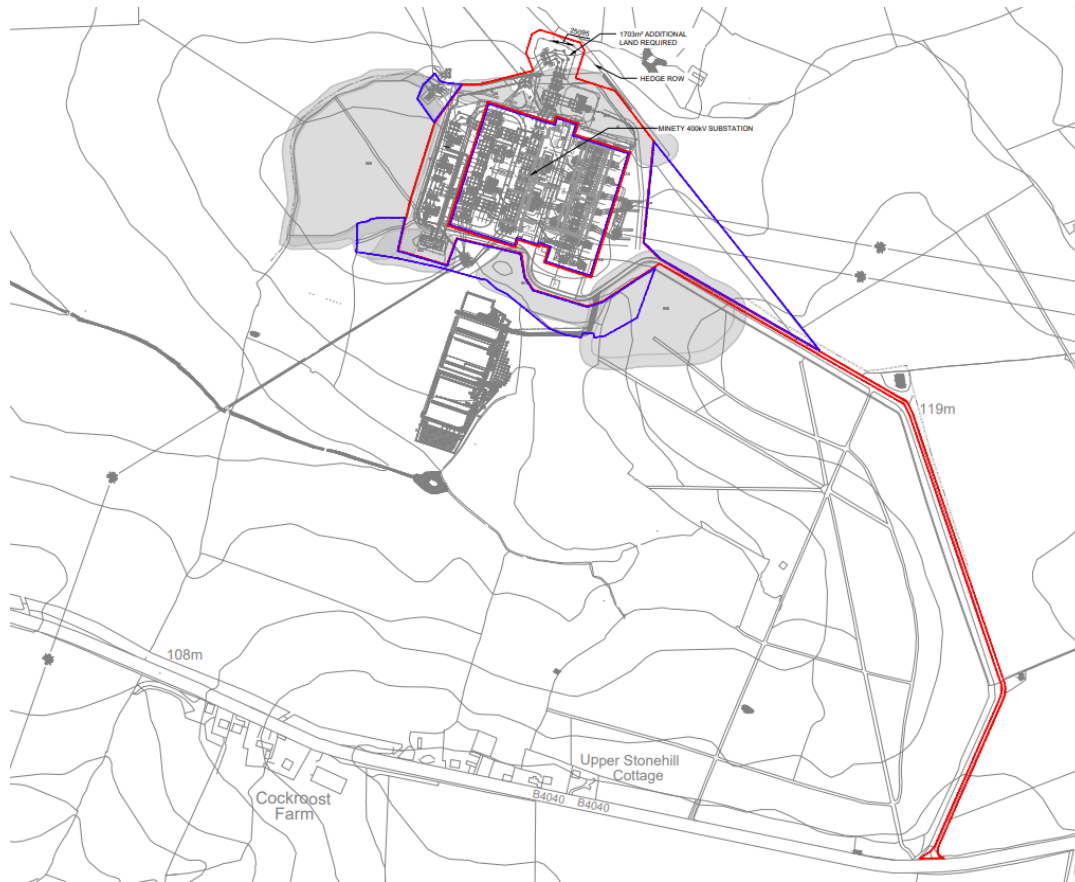
The main issues for consideration are:

- a) Whether the proposal is acceptable in principle;
- b) Whether the proposal would result in the loss of agricultural land;
- c) Whether the proposal would result in the loss of trees and ancient woodland;
- d) Whether the proposal would be harmful in terms of its landscape and visual impact;
- e) Whether the scheme would give rise to an adverse impact on residential amenity;
- f) Whether the proposal would have an adverse impact upon highway safety or public rights of way;
- g) Whether the scheme would cause harm to protected species and/or their habitats;
- h) Whether the scheme would cause harm to areas of archaeological interest or to heritage assets; and

i) Whether the proposal would result in any other adverse environmental impacts.

### 3. Site Description

The site comprises the existing Minety substation which is located to the north of the B4040 between Minety and Charlton, and north of Stonehill Wood. The Planning, Design & Access Statement (November 2022) by National Grid explains that the Minety Substation is an outdoor 400kV four switch mesh air insulated switchgear (AIS) substation consisting of four super-grid transformers (SGTs) which are connected to an SSE-owned 132kV substation. Minety Substation also has four incoming overhead line feeder circuits. The site is accessed from an access road off the B4040, which wraps around the eastern edge of Stonehill Wood, as shown on the extract from the submitted Location Plan below:-



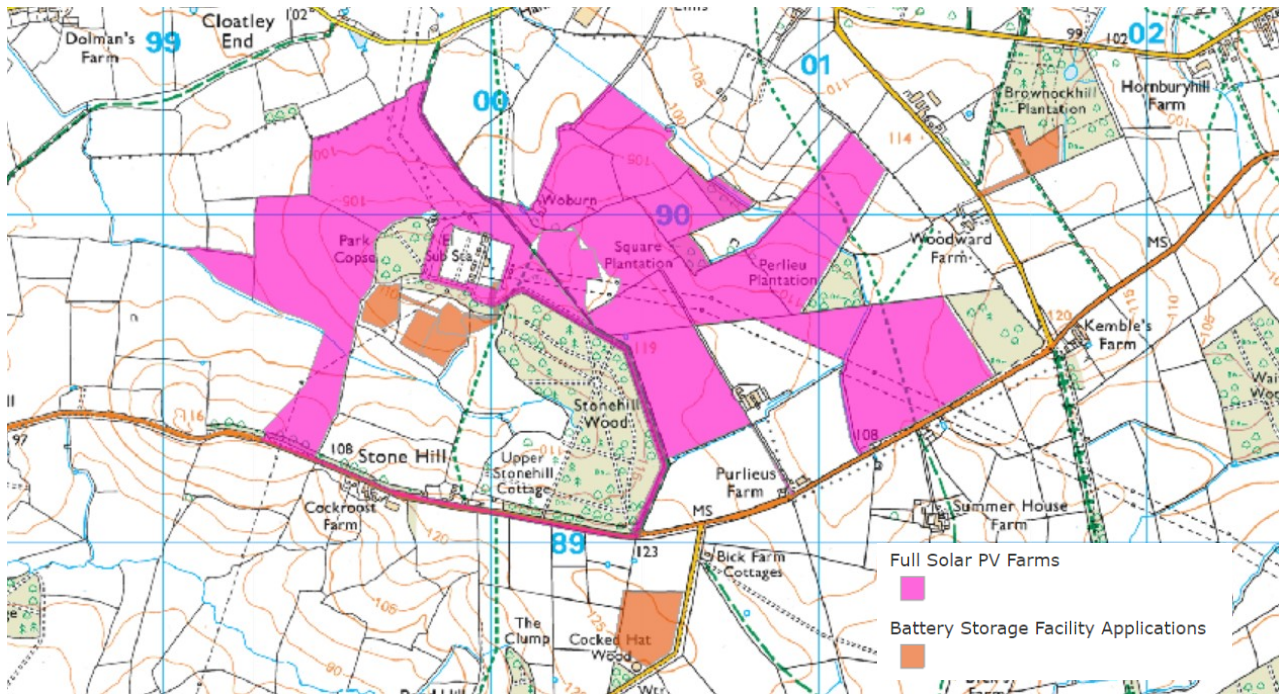
Site Location Plan

### 4. Relevant Planning History

The Minety Substation has been the subject of previous planning applications and there are current applications before the Council that are linked to the site. These are all material to the assessment of the proposed development in particular when considering the principle of the development and the consideration of the cumulative impacts. The ones adjacent and within the immediate vicinity of the Minety substation are listed, and shown on a map, below. The list includes permitted schemes, some of which have been implemented and others replaced by subsequent permissions, and applications currently before the Council and Planning Inspectorate to be determined:-



- Planning Application 20/03528/FUL - Installation of a renewable led energy scheme comprising ground mounted photovoltaic solar arrays and battery-based electricity storage containers together with transformer stations; access; internal access track; landscaping; security fencing; security measures; access gate; and ancillary infrastructure - Approved with Conditions 20/08/2021 (*north / east and west of the substation*)
- Planning Application PL/2023/03501 - Variation of condition 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11 & 20 of 20/03528/FUL - To allow modifications to the approved layout, increase from 12 battery units with 16 localised inverters to 22 battery units and 19 containerised inverters, alterations to location of vehicular access – Under Consideration



- Planning Application 17/03936/FUL - Development of a 49.99 MW Battery Storage Facility with associated ancillary equipment, providing services to National Grid, formation of access track - Approved with Conditions 20/07/2017 (*north of the substation*)
- Planning Application 17/03941/FUL - Development of a 49.99 MW Battery Storage Facility with associated ancillary equipment, providing services to National Grid, formation of access track - Approved with Conditions 19/07/2017 (*north of the substation*)
- Planning Application 17/05526/FUL - Energy Storage System, comprising battery storage containers, ancillary buildings, security fencing, CCTV, landscaping and substation - Land adjacent to electricity sub station - Approved with Conditions 21/09/2017 (*south of the substation*)
- Planning Application 18/04718/FUL - Energy Storage System, Comprising Battery Storage Containers, Ancillary Buildings, Security Fencing, CCTV and Landscaping - Land Adjacent to Electricity Sub Station - Approved with Conditions 19/07/2018 (*south of the substation*)

- Planning Application 19/11460/FUL - Energy Storage System, comprising battery storage containers, ancillary buildings, security fencing, CCTV and landscaping - Approved with Conditions 06/02/2020 (*north-east of the substation*)
- Planning Application 20/07390/FUL - Installation of a battery storage facility and ancillary development on land adjacent to National Grid's Minety Substation - National Grid Minety Substation Approved with Conditions 25/01/2001 (*east of the substation*)
- Planning Application PL/2021/09101 - Variation of conditions 2 and 10 for application 17/03941/FUL - Development of a 49.99 MW Battery Storage Facility with associated ancillary equipment, providing services to National Grid, formation of access track - Approved with Conditions 28/06/2022
- Planning Application PL/2021/04151 - Construction of a 2 hour duration containerised Battery Storage Facility with the ability to store and export up to 49.99 MW of electricity. The development will comprise 58 single storey steel cabins, known as E - Houses which are 12m long, 2.4m wide and 2.9m high, which house banks of lithium-ion batteries. 12 MV Blocks, also known as the transformers and control gear sit alongside E - Houses. The compound is protected with a 2.5 m high steel mesh fence. The proposed development would replace the approved Minety North substation (Minety North, 17/03936/FUL) – Approved with Conditions 08/11/2021 (*north-east of the substation*)
- Planning Application PL/2022/05504 - Installation of a Battery Energy Storage System (BESS) together with associated ancillary infrastructure, equipment and access arrangements - Land at Stonehill, Minety, Wiltshire, SN16 9DX – Under Consideration
- Planning Application PL/2022/05412 - Proposed Development is for a battery storage facility and ancillary infrastructure Revision of PL/2022/00404 - Land off Dog Trap Lane, Minety (PL/2022/00404 was withdrawn) – Under Consideration
- Planning Application PL/2022/00664 - Proposed Development is for a battery storage facility. The use of the site would change from agricultural to energy infrastructure - Land off Pond Lane, Minety – Under Consideration via Appeal ref APP/Y3940/W/23/3319392

## 5. The Proposal

The application is submitted by National Grid (National Grid Electricity Transmission plc) who owns the high voltage electricity transmission system in England and Wales and operates the electricity transmission system across Great Britain. The company is responsible for operating the high voltage electricity network, carrying power between power stations and the local electricity supply networks of the Distribution Network Operators (DNOs).

This application seeks full planning permission for the extension of National Grid's existing Minety substation to include the installation of four transformers (SGTs) and associated works. The proposals would upgrade the existing substation to connect additional power generation as well as meeting increasing demands on the existing network.

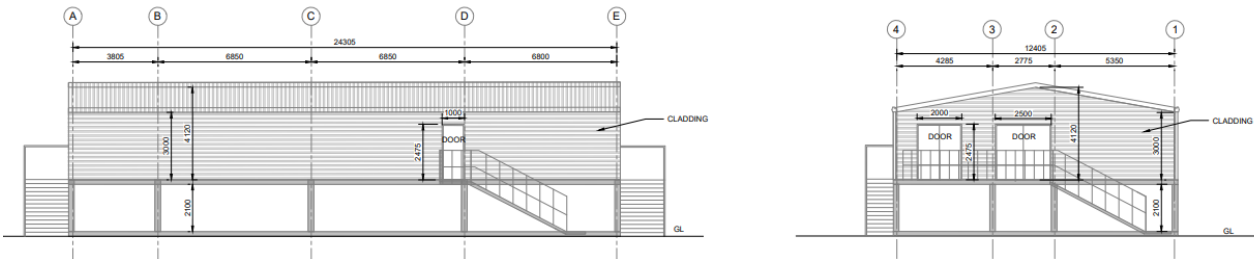
The proposed development is required to ensure the security and quality of future energy supply. It is advised that the alternative would be the construction of a new substation site, which would require significant infrastructure and carry considerable cost. An extension to the existing substation, as proposed, is the most efficient and economical solution for end consumers, and has the least environmental impact.

The works can be summarised as follows:-

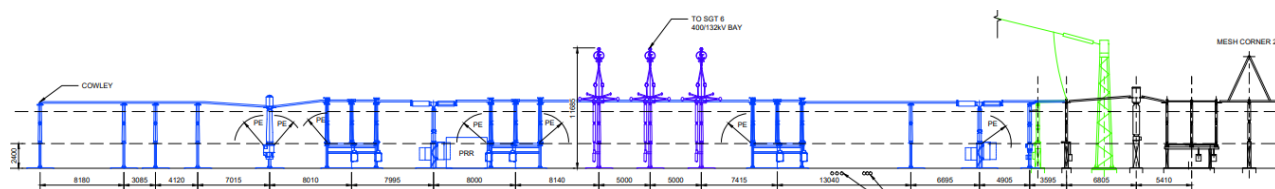
- Installation of one 400/132kV transformer on land to the north of the existing substation
- Installation of three 400/33kV transformers on land to the west of the existing substation
- Installation of busbars, circuit breakers, disconnectors and switches
- Erection of 33kV switch room and retaining wall
- Formation of access road
- Culverting of watercourse
- Erection of fencing and associated works



Proposed Site Plan



Proposed Elevations – Switchgear Building



Proposed Section Plan – Proposed Infrastructure

The application explains that “National Grid has a statutory duty to offer a customer a connection and to be economic and efficient in developing and operating the transmission system whilst also having regard to the preservation of amenity when developing the network. In developing the scheme at Minety, National Grid has sought to balance these requirements and meet its statutory duties.

The works are required to facilitate connection of 450MVA of battery / solar generation, achieve greater reliability of the existing substation to enable the increase in embedded generation within the local Distribution Network Operator (DNO) and 240MVA of additional capacity for the DNO to enable meet increased energy demand in the wider region. All of these aspects will enable the decarbonisation of the electricity supply network”.

The application is supported by the following plans and documents: -

- Document. Planning, Design & Access Statement (November 2022) by National Grid
- Drawing. Location Plan PDD-101488-LAY-300 Rev 5
- Drawing. Proposed Layout Plan PDD-101488-LAY-302 Rev 5
- Drawing. Proposed Sections PDD-101488-ELE-303 Rev 3 Sheet 1 of 2
- Drawing. Proposed Sections PDD-101488-ELE-303 Rev 3 Sheet 2 of 2
- Drawing. Proposed Switchgear Room Plan and Elevation PDD-101488-ELE-304
- Document. Ecological Appraisal (ref. 9236.003)
- Document. Dormouse Survey Report (ref. 9236.004)
- Document. Biodiversity Net Gain and Condition Assessment (ref. 9236)
- Document. Flood Risk Assessment (ref. PDD-100598-101391-101488-REP-004)
- Document. Geotechnical and Geoenvironmental Desk Study (ref. PDD- 100598-101391-101488-REP-001)
- Document. Noise Impact Assessment (ref. EEN/485/NOTE202)
- Document. Construction Traffic Management Plan (ref. PDD-101488-REP-007)
- Document. Abnormal Loads Report (ref. 22-1089)
- Document. Heritage Desk Based Assessment
- Document. Arboricultural Impact Assessment

The application was updated on the 11<sup>th</sup> July 2023 through the submission of the following:

- Drawing. Location Plan PDD-101488-LAY-300 Rev 9
- Drawing. Ancient Woodland Buffer Zone Layout PDD-101488-LAY-315-REV-0
- Document. Construction Traffic Management Plan (Rev.4 / May 2023)
- Document. Highways Technical Note
- Document. Ecology Assessment – Addendum (June 2023) by The Environment Partnership
- Document. Dormouse Habitat Creation Strategy (July 2023) by the Environment Partnership
- Document. Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report (July 2023) by the Environment Partnership
- Document. Great Crested Newt District Level Licensing Impact Assessment & Conservation Payment Certificate

## 6. Planning Policy

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

Wiltshire Core Strategy 2006 – 2026, with particular regard to:

- Core Policy 3 Infrastructure Requirements
- Core Policy 42 Standalone Renewable Energy Installations
- Core Policy 50 Biodiversity and Geodiversity;
- Core Policy 51 Landscape
- Core Policy 52 Green Infrastructure
- Core Policy 57 Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping;
- Core Policy 58 Ensuring the Conservation of the Historic Environment;
- Core Policy 60 Sustainable Transport
- Core Policy 61 Transport & Development
- Core Policy 62 Development impacts on the transport network
- Core Policy 67 Flood Risk;

### North Wiltshire Local Plan 2011 (Saved Policies)

- Policy NE12 Woodland (saved North Wiltshire Local Plan policy);
- Policy NE14 Trees and the control of new development (saved North Wiltshire Local Plan policy);
- Policy NE18 Noise and pollution (saved North Wiltshire Local Plan policy).

**Planning Practice Guidance** for Renewable and Low Carbon Energy (published 18 June 2015 / updated 14 August 2023).

*National Policy Statements for Energy Infrastructure (sets out the government’s policy for delivery of major energy infrastructure).*

## 7. Consultations

The application has been subject to two formal periods of consultation and publicity; the latter period due to the receipt of amended plans, drawings and documents. The most recent response from each consultee is summarised below:

**Charlton Parish Council** – No objection

**Hankerton Parish Council** – No objection

**Cricklade Town Council** – objection; *“Cricklade Town Council is extremely concerned regarding the amount of additional Heavy Goods Vehicle traffic that will be generated by this project. Cricklade High Street is already overburdened by the amount of HGV traffic originating from other sources, and the anticipated additional traffic flow is well beyond the capacity of the roads through Cricklade town centre. Residents already suffer from an unacceptable level of noise, vibration and risk to pedestrians, and it is unreasonable to ask the town of Cricklade to endure the additional traffic levels that have been suggested.*

*We note that the additional construction traffic has been discussed with regard to routing and the report identifies predefined routes. Four points of entry have been identified. We are pleased to see that three of the routes avoid Cricklade, but we are concerned that the A419 access (Route 2), passes through the centre of Cricklade and is likely to add significantly to the noise, vibration and pedestrian safety concerns that already exist. It is noted that the routes identified are the*

*most direct routes which are deemed suitable for HGV traffic, but we note also that the primary considerations in selecting these routes include a requirement to avoid settlements and any other sensitive receptors to reduce congestion and minimise effects in cities, towns, and villages. This is clearly not the case in the consideration of traffic from the A419 using Route 2. We consider this route to be unnecessary as traffic using the A419 in either direction could exit at the Spine Road Junction following Route 1.*

*We ask therefore, that should this application be approved, a condition be imposed on the applicant that heavy traffic servicing this project is prohibited from using the A419 Route 2, and is Only to use Route 1”.*

**Natural England** – Originally replied requesting further information to determine the significance of the impact on dormice and drew attention to its published Standing Advice on protected species (letter dated 03 February 2023). No further observations following the submission of further ecological surveys and reports, which included a Dormouse Mitigation/Habitat Creation Strategy.

**Wiltshire Fire and Rescue Service** – No observations

**Council Archaeology** – No objection.

**Council Highways Department** – No objection following the submission of further information, subject to informative to protect the Public Right of Way during the construction period.

**Council Ecologist** – Objection because the development will result in significant harm to biodiversity, and does not include sufficient mitigation or compensation to ensure no net loss of biodiversity.

**Council Landscape Officer** – Objection due to the loss of a significant number of trees and impact on landscape character.

**Council Arboricultural Officer** – No observations

**Council Drainage Officer** – No objection subject to a condition to secure a full and final surface water drainage scheme.

**Council Rights of Way Officer** – No observations

**Council Public Protection Officer** – No objection subject to conditions in relation to noise pollution and land contamination to ensure no adverse impact result from the proposed development.

## **8. Publicity**

As a result of publicity, representations have been received from two people raising concerns with the impact of construction traffic:

- There is concern about the number of HGV movement identified in the "Construction Traffic Management Plan".
- There is concern about the routes suggested; in particular the route labelled as "A419 (Route 2)". This route would take the HGVs through the middle of Cricklade - a most unsuitable route for HGVs.
- The traffic management measures will need to be properly applied and enforced - and there are effective means to address any infringements or shortfalls in their application.

- Consideration should also be given to further measures to alleviate the affect and consequences of the large number of vehicle movements.

The residents acknowledge the need and justification for the proposed development and recognise that Wiltshire Council is under pressure from central government to consider applications for solar arrays and BESS units to further its chimeric and uncostered ambition for net zero. It is however questioned whether the additional transformer capacity proposed by National Grid (NG) is solely to cater for the adjacent solar array and BESS units or are more planned in the area to be connected subsequently to the (enlarged) Upper Stonehill substation, whether additional supporting infrastructure would be required and connections to offsite infrastructure, and whether Wiltshire Council has a strategic plan for development associated with energy generation on storage.

## **9. Planning Considerations**

### **a) Environmental Impact Assessment**

The Planning, Design and Access Statement by National Grid outlines that “National Grid projects do not require Section 36 consent under the Electricity Act 1989 and the proposed installation does not produce electricity. It is not considered that the proposed development falls within any of the specific descriptions set out in Schedule 1 or Schedule 2 of the Town and Country (Environmental Impact Assessment) Regulations 2017” (par 2.1.2).

The definition of ‘Schedule 2 development’ does however include ‘Energy Infrastructure’. While it is recognised section 3(a) applies to “Industrial installations for the production of electricity, steam and hot water” the proposed development is clearly linked to the management and distribution of electricity. The application clarifies that “National Grid is responsible for operating the high voltage electricity network, carrying power between power stations and the local electricity supply networks of the Distribution Network Operators (DNOs). At substations, this primary transmission voltage of 400kV or 275kV and is transformed-down to lower voltages to supply both the DNOs who take supplies and distribute electricity at lower voltages to factories, offices and homes” (par 2.1.2).

The proposed development has therefore been considered against the selection criteria for screening Schedule 2 development set out at Schedule 3 of the Regulations i.e. characteristics of development, location of development, and type and characteristics of potential impact. It is concluded that while there would be unavoidable environmental impacts associated with the development as outlined within this report, it is considered that that the effects of the proposal, alone and in combination with other existing, planned and permitted developments within the area, will not be so significant as to warrant an Environmental Impact Assessment (EIA). The proposed development is therefore not EIA development but all key issues are considered in turn below.

### **b) Whether the proposal is acceptable in principle**

The Department for Energy Security & Net Zero highlights within its National Policy Statement for Electricity Networks Infrastructure that the security and reliability of the UK’s current and future energy supply is highly dependent on having an electricity network which will enable the new electricity generation, storage, and interconnection infrastructure that our country needs to meet the rapid increase in electricity demand required to transition to net zero, while maintaining energy security (par 1.1.1).

The NPPF advises that the planning system should support the transition to a low carbon future in a changing climate, taking full account of flood risk and coastal change. It should help to: shape places in ways that contribute to radical reductions in greenhouse gas emissions, minimise vulnerability and improve resilience; encourage the reuse of existing resources, including the conversion of existing buildings; and support renewable and low carbon energy and associated infrastructure (par 157).

The proposed development is required to ensure the security and quality of future energy supply within the area and directly responds to meeting a local need and contributes towards the Government's objective to strengthen the electricity network and help transition to net zero. The planning application explains that National Grid has identified the need to extend the existing operational Minety 400kV Substation for a combination of the following reasons:

- Demand growth on the SSE network.
- Connection of embedded generation to SSE network;
- Connection of generation to National Grid network;

National Grid provided further information regarding the need for the proposed development during the application process advising that it is aware of nine customers connecting directly into the expanded Minety 400kV substation. It is possible that other developments are connecting via the local Distribution Network Operator (DNO). The DNO apply to National Grid for additional capacity which enables an assessment of available and required capacity. National Grid advises that at Minety, this assessment has generated the need for a further SuperGrid Transformer which forms part of this application. Other than the nine customers connecting directly to National Grid whose grid capacity is dependent upon this application, National Grid cannot comment on other planning applications and whether they have secured grid capacity as this would be via the DNO.

There is a clear need for the proposed development based on the strategic overview provided by National Grid who also advises that extending the existing substation is the most efficient, economical and environmentally friendly option (the alternative would be the construction of a new substation site). While the development is therefore considered acceptable in principle, the following sections consider the site specific impacts of the proposed development and impacts on the wider environment to determine its acceptability.

**c) Whether the proposal would result in the loss of agricultural land**

The NPPF requires planning policies and decisions to contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by "...recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland" (paragraph 180). The application site relates to area of land in and around the existing substation compound which includes large areas of woodland. The development will not however result in the loss of agricultural land.

**d) Whether the proposal would result in the loss of trees and ancient woodland**

**e) Whether the proposal would be harmful in terms of its landscape and visual impact**

Core Policy 51 'Landscape' of the WCS outlines that new development should protect, conserve and where possible enhance landscape character and must not have a harmful impact upon landscape character, while any negative impacts must be mitigated as far as possible through sensitive design and landscape measures. Proposals should be informed by and sympathetic to



the distinctive character areas identified in the relevant Landscape Character Assessment(s) and any other relevant assessments and studies.

Core Policies 51, 52 'Green Infrastructure' and 57 'Design' (i & ii) of the WCS also require development proposals to conserve and enhance natural features including trees, hedges and woodland. Saved Policy NE12 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan supports the creation, conservation, enhancement and positive management of woodland. It also seeks to protect areas of ancient and semi-natural woodland. Saved Policy NE14 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan seeks to prevent the loss of trees, hedges and other important landscape or ecological features that could be successfully and appropriately incorporated into the design of a development.

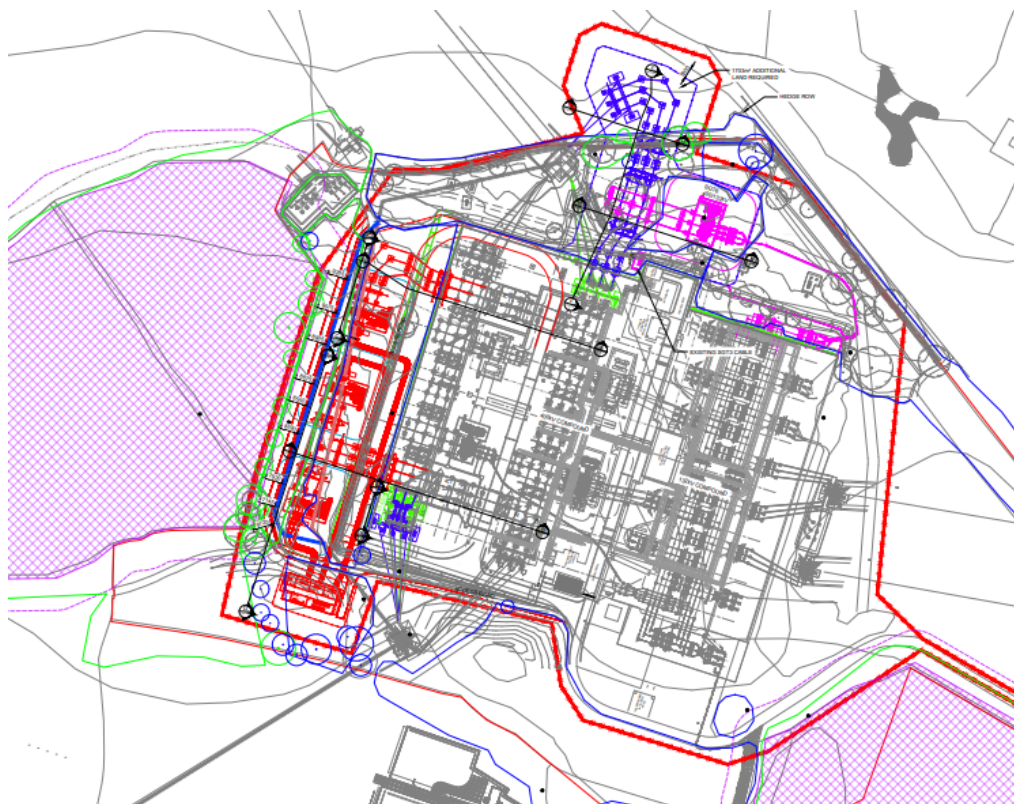
The application site includes a large area of woodland and therefore the application is supported by an Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report (December 2022) by AECOM, which includes a Tree Protection Plan and an Outline Arboricultural Method Statement. The report states that the proposed development would require the removal of forty-two individual trees, five groups, two woodland groups, part of four woodland groups and one unsurveyed tree group. No trees within the ancient woodland boundary are to be removed or significantly impacted however tree clearance is unavoidable within the minimum 15m buffer to the woodland. A new access route will be installed within the ancient woodland buffer zone but outside of the ancient woodland itself. It is stated that this impact is unavoidable due to site constraints but will be achieved without excavation or compaction with the use of a 3D cellular confinement system installed using no dig techniques.

The Council's Landscape Officer highlights that the location of Minety Substation is sensitive to industrial expansion in landscape and visual terms, especially to the southwest and northeast site corners. Hundreds of native broadleaf trees, which provide valuable woodland habitat, green infrastructure connections, buffers to adjoining semi natural ancient woodland and SSSI's and which also help provide a dense characteristic and effective screening function from countryside to the existing sub-station facility at this visually sensitive elevated hilltop location would be lost and/or physically and functionally reduced. The Officer is of the opinion that proposed development has not been sensitively located or designed; "In summary there are still a number of unknown issues for the proposed extension into the existing agricultural land to the northeast of the site, including proposed levels, unknown impacts on trees, and no explanation why the applicant feels it is unnecessary to provide any landscaping proposals fronting open field areas for this permanent industrial extension at this elevated countryside location".

The Landscape Officer recommends that "a proper joined up mitigating and enhancing landscape scheme should improve and repair the declining rural character of this area of countryside, demonstrate green infrastructure links are maintained and enhanced as a minimum requirement for this harmful expansion of electricity transmission infrastructure linked to adjoining renewable energy generation and storage/release schemes (as they are all inextricably linked and connected). Any such scheme should ensure the wooded hilltop skyline character is retained and that views to new and existing industrialising features are minimised as far as possible from surrounding countryside and provide effective landscaping to reinstate removed and weakened Green Infrastructure links and connections".

National Grid issued a response to the Landscape Officer's consultation response which provides further justification for the need for the development and site selection process. It was also highlighted that National Grid will not remove trees unless absolutely necessary and will aim to retain any trees possible. It was also mentioned that the updated substation layout plan submitted shows the southern equipment has been moved slightly north to allow retention of trees to the south boundary. These southern trees will maintain screening and a habitat corridor.

It is evident that the proposed development will result in the loss of a significant amount of trees to accommodate the development, although there will be no direct impacts on the ancient woodlands to the east and west of the site as shown on the drawing below.



Ancient Woodland Buffer Zone Layout (Drawing. PDD-101488-LAY-315-REV-0)

The proposed extension to the substation will result in the overall substation becoming more prominent within the landscape, in particular from the north due to the loss of tree cover and the encroachment of the substation infrastructure into the countryside. National Grid is unable to deliver any mitigation or enhancement measures on site in the form of replacement tree planting or a landscape scheme to help soften and screen the impact of the development due to restricted land within their ownership.

The visual impact of the proposed development must be considered alongside the impact of other energy related developments within the area, in particular those surrounding the substation. A Battery Energy Storage System has been installed to the south-west side of the substation and another one on the north-east side. These are not individually prominent within the landscape but add to the overall mass of industrial/infrastructure development in the area, which would be further compounded if the permitted photovoltaic solar arrays development surrounding the substation is implemented. The development currently proposed would be seen amongst these developments and would be well integrated with the existing substation, it is therefore considered that the proposed development would not result in any particularly adverse cumulative visual effects above the existing baseline position.

It is clear that the proposed development will conflict with the certain objectives of Core Policies 51, 52 and 57 of the WCS and Policies NE12 and NE14 of the North Wiltshire Local Plan due to the loss of tree and impact on the proposal on landscape character and visual amenity. The conflict with the development plan will need to be considered within the overall planning balance,

and should permission be granted the impact should be mitigated and reduced as much as possible through conditions to secure a full and final Arboricultural Method Statement, details of groundworks, and the proposed slab level of the proposed buildings and infrastructure.

**f) Whether the scheme would give rise to an adverse impact on residential amenity**

The NPPF advises that the planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability (par 180). This aim is also reflected within Core Policy 57 'Ensuring High Quality Design and Place Shaping' of the WCS seeks to secure a high standard of design in all new development with one key element being the need for consideration be given to the compatibility with adjoining land uses and the impact on the amenities of existing occupants as a result of noise or air pollution etc.

The site lies within the countryside with no nearby neighbouring properties, however due to the nature of the proposed development the application is supported by various technical documents to consider relevant impacts on the surrounding environment. The documents have been reviewed by the Council's Public Protection Officer who confirms that the Noise Impact Assessment (October 2022) is detailed and predicts under worst case operating scenarios that the Rating Level will be +2dB at residential property allowing for the reported tonality of the transformers. The night time background levels in the area are very low reflecting the rural location not significantly affected by traffic noise etc. This falls within the No Observed Adverse Effect Level range and therefore is acceptable without further mitigation. The addition of these noise sources will result in a creeping background in what is a very quiet area. As the predictions are dependent on the modelling, a post installation validation report is recommended to validate the model and installed plant, which will be secured via condition.

It is recognised that there may be some disturbance created during the construction phase, however the Council's Public Protection Officer confirms that the site is remote enough that impacts due to noise and dust from its construction is unlikely to significantly impact on local residents. The Construction Traffic Management Plan relates to mainly highway issues and states hours which are acceptable. It was also confirmed that the Public Protection department has no recorded complaints from earlier phases.

On this basis, it is considered that the proposed development will not conflict with the relevant policies of the plan, including Core Policy 57 of the WCS, or with relevant provisions of the NPPF.

**g) Whether the proposal would have an adverse impact upon highway safety or public rights of way**

The NPPF advises that transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals but ultimately it advises that development should only be prevented or refused on highways grounds if there would be an unacceptable impact on highway safety, or the residual cumulative impacts on the road network would be severe (par 115). Core Policy 62 'Development Impacts on the Transport Network' however advises that developments should provide appropriate mitigating measures to offset any adverse impacts on the transport network at both the construction and operational stages.

The proposed development does not propose to alter the existing access with the public highway, however due to the volume of traffic associated with the construction phase the application is supported by a Construction Traffic Management Plan (Rev.4 / May 2023). A Highways Technical Note was submitted during the assessment of the application to address comments made by the

Highway Authority. The documents consider the site access arrangements, construction traffic flows and routes etc.

It is recognised that the route of construction traffic (Route 2 through Cricklade) is a concern to the local community which is understood. The routes have however been discussed and agreed with the Highway Authority to ensure the most appropriate routes for the number and type of vehicular movements, while also considering the layout and type of local roads, are utilised. The Highway Authority confirms that “construction traffic has been discussed with regard to routing and the report identifies pre-defined routes, there are 4 points of entry identified onto the B4040, from the north utilising the A419 exit through Cricklade, to the east from the A419, from the southeast on the M4 at Junction 16, through the A3102 and the B4696 and to the southwest from the M4 junction 17 on the A429. The routes identified are the most direct routes which are deemed suitable for HGV traffic”.

The construction is split into 3 phases as follows:

- Phase 1 (vegetation removal) - 13-week construction period
- Phase 2 (Grid Park and Circuit Breaker Replacement) - 113-week construction period
- Phase 3 (Substation Extension for SGT) – 82-week construction period

The Highway Authority confirms that “the traffic generation of the site has been calculated and clarified satisfactorily, the number of movements whilst proportionately high in terms of two-way HGV movements are still considered to be of a temporary nature and therefore not significant or severe enough to represent a highways refusal, considering that the main access roads are deemed suitable for the type of vehicle and larger temporary volumes of traffic”.

In light of the above, it is considered that the proposal would not have an unacceptable impact on highway safety or public rights of way and that it would accord with Core Policy 62 of the WCS.

#### **h) Whether the scheme would cause harm to protected species and/or their habitats**

Core Policy 50 of the WCS requires all development proposals to incorporate appropriate measures to avoid and reduce disturbance to sensitive wildlife species and habitats throughout the lifetime of the development. Major development is also required to include measures that will deliver biodiversity gains.

Natural England originally replied requesting further information to determine the significance of the impact on dormice but provided no final observations following the submission of further ecological surveys and reports, which included a Dormouse Mitigation/Habitat Creation Strategy.

The Council’s Ecologist objects to the development in principle commenting that “although an Ecological Assessment has been submitted in support of this application it contains insufficient information to determine potential impacts on protected sites, habitats of conservation concern and protected/ notable species, including but not exclusively:

- Cloatley Farm SSSI (direct loss and notable invertebrate species)
- Emmett Hill Meadows SSSI (invertebrate interest)
- Stonehill Wood LWS (deterioration of habitat, severance of working connections etc)
- Park Copse – Charlton LWS (loss and deterioration of habitat, severance of working connections etc.)
- Ancient woodland (loss and deterioration of habitat, severance of working connections etc.)
- Priority habitats woodland and grassland (loss and deterioration of habitat).
- Dormice (harm, loss of habitat, loss of dispersal corridors).
- Bats (roosting and foraging, loss of dispersal corridors).

- Reptiles (harm, loss of habitat, loss of dispersal corridors).
- Birds.
- Invertebrates (harm, loss of habitat, loss of dispersal corridors).
- Bryophytes.

The application was updated following the above consultation response through the submission of a Ecology Assessment – Addendum (June 2023) by The Environment Partnership, Dormouse Habitat Creation Strategy (July 2023) by the Environment Partnership, Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report (July 2023) by the Environment Partnership, , Great Crested Newt District Level Licensing Impact Assessment & Conservation Payment Certificate, an Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey, and further surveys to assess bat roosting suitability included within the updated EA addendum.

The Council's Ecologist welcomes the additional surveys and updates to the application, however there remains an objection to the proposed development unless the significant losses resulting from the current scheme are compensated for. The Ecologist acknowledges that the current development offers some mitigation and compensation measures however it is advised that "these are wholly inadequate and significant adverse impacts will still arise from the development. A compensation strategy that demonstrates no net loss of the local biodiversity resource and secures the integrity of local ecological networks would be required to achieve this".

It was highlighted that both local and national policy requires that only where it has been demonstrated that such anticipated impacts have been mitigated as far as possible and as a last resort compensatory measures provided would such a development be acceptable in ecology terms. National Grid's position is that everything has been done to reduce the ecological impacts associated with the proposed development through the design of the proposal and the mitigation measures proposed. The submitted Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report (July 2023) by the Environment Partnership quantifies the change in biodiversity units for the planning application area between the pre-development baseline and post-development retained, enhanced, and created habitats. It confirms that there will still be an overall area-based unit net loss of -3.87 Biodiversity Units (-17.89%) which cannot be compensated for. The BNG Report advises that National Grid are committed to attaining a 10% net gain on all development but in order to achieve this an additional 6.04 Biodiversity Units will be required.

In terms of the requirement to secure 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), it will soon [anticipated early 2024] become mandatory under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021) for 'major schemes' and April 2024 for 'small sites'. The 10% requirement will not become mandated across England until statutory instruments and regulations have been agreed and the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 has been amended. However, in line with the requirements of the NPPF and Core Policy 50 'Biodiversity' of the WCS the Council's Ecologist advises that the Council expects all major applications, such as this one the subject of this application, to deliver a minimum of 10% BNG. However, no net loss of functional habitat on-site must be demonstrated before considering the amount of BNG that should be secured.

It is evidence that the proposed development will result in a net loss of functional habitat on site as a result of the development albeit National Grid has designed and revised the scheme, and mitigated the ecological impacts as best as possible within the constraints of the application site. However, the proposed development will result in harm to biodiversity and therefore falls short of the requirements of Core Policy 50 of the WCS. The level of harm will have to be assessed within the overall planning balance against the need for the development and should it be determined that planning permission be granted all recommendations, mitigation and enhancement measures detailed within the submitted ecological reports will need to be secured via condition, along with

the need for a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), and a restriction on external lighting. It is recognised that National Grid has its own duty to deliver 10% BNG on all of its development projects.

**i) Whether the scheme would cause harm to areas of archaeological interest or to heritage assets**

Core Policies 57(i & iv) and 58 of the WCS deal with conservation of the historic environment. The supporting text states that heritage assets include listed buildings, conservation areas, scheduled ancient monuments, registered parks and gardens, registered battlefields, world heritage sites, and non-designated heritage assets such as buildings and archaeological sites of regional and local interest (paragraph 6.136). The policy seeks to ensure that developments protect, conserve and where possible enhance the historic environment. Designated heritage assets and their settings are to be conserved, and where appropriate enhanced in a manner appropriate to their significance.

The application is supported by a Heritage Desk-Based Assessment (December 2022) by AECOM which considers the potential impact of the proposed development on the 11 heritage assets were recorded within the 1km study, including two listed buildings; Cloatley End Farm (1022246) is located approximately 800m north-west of the site and the Milestone at NGR SU 00652 89063 (1284939) is located approximately 910m south-east of the Site.

Section 66 of the Planning (Listed Buildings and Conservation Areas) Act 1990 requires the local planning authority, in considering whether to grant planning permission for development which affects a listed building or its setting, to have special regard to the desirability of preserving the building or its setting or any features of special architectural or historic interest which it possesses. The Heritage Desk Based Assessment concludes that there would be no change to the setting of the listed buildings, due to their distance and lack of intervisibility with the site. There would be no physical impacts to any of the non-designated heritage assets.

There is also limited potential for previously unrecorded archaeology to be recorded within the site due to the previous ground disturbance of the existing substation and the results of the previous archaeological surveys carried out in the land adjacent to the site. The County Archaeologist is satisfied that the archaeological potential of the application area has been sufficiently characterised and that no further archaeological mitigation is necessary. Therefore, the proposed development accords with Core Policies 57 & 58 of the WCS.

**j) Whether the development would result in any other adverse environmental impacts**

Core Policy 67 'Flood Risk' of the WCS requires all new development to include measures to reduce the rate of rainwater run-off and improve rainwater infiltration to the soil and ground (sustainable drainage system) unless site or environmental conditions make these measures unsuitable. The application is supported a Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy (September 2022) by Atkins which confirms that the site is wholly within Flood Zone 1 so the risk of flooding is low, and presents a surface water drainage scheme.

The Lead Local Flood Authority has provided the following observations on the information presented within the report – "It is noted that as part of the development the applicant intends to limit all discharge from the site (for flows up to an including the 1 in 100yr + climate change event) to 1.0l/s. It is acknowledged through conversation with Hydro International that this represents the lowest practicable level of restriction in order to prevent an increased blockage risk, and that a value of 1.0l/s represents a worst-case scenario (as bunds have been assumed to be 100%

impermeable). It is noted that the nature of the development means that the proposals (when considering the proposed mitigations) will result in minimal impact to surrounding land / receptors.

It is noted, at this stage that outline source-control calculations have been provided to inform sizing of attenuation features.

It is noted that the drainage will remain private and in the ownership of National Grid.

It is noted that as part of the development, the applicant intends to culvert the existing watercourse, and that the culvert has been preliminarily sized to ensure that flows through the culvert can be maintained without detriment, when considering a 50% blockage”.

The Lead Local Flood Authority has no objection to the development subject to the submission of a full and final surface water drainage scheme which will be secured via condition.

Core Policy 56 ‘Contaminated Land’ of the WCS advises that development proposals which are likely to be on or adjacent to land which may have been subject to contamination will need to demonstrate that measures can be taken to effectively mitigate the impacts of land contamination on public health, environmental quality, the built environment and amenity. The application is supported by a Geotechnical & Geo-Environmental Desk Study (November 2022) by Atkins. The Council’s Public Protection Officer confirms that the report indicates the possibility of historic contamination from the existing development and proposes further site investigation. The risk is confined to the site users and therefore a condition is recommended which requires a scheme to deal with contaminations that may be identified or encountered at any time when carrying out the approved development.

## **10. Conclusion**

The application is submitted by National Grid (National Grid Electricity Transmission plc) who seek full planning permission to extend their existing substation at Minety through the installation of four super-grid transformers and associated works.

National Grid has a statutory duty to offer a customer a connection and to be economic and efficient in developing and operating the transmission system whilst also having regard to the preservation of amenity when developing the network. It is advised that in developing the scheme at Minety, National Grid has sought to balance these requirements and meet its statutory duties.

The works are required to facilitate connection of 450MVA of battery / solar generation, achieve greater reliability of the existing substation to enable the increase in embedded generation within the local Distribution Network Operator (DNO) and 240MVA of additional capacity for the DNO to enable meet increased energy demand in the wider region. All of these aspects will enable the decarbonisation of the electricity supply network.

Planning law requires that applications for planning permission be determined in accordance with the development plan, unless material considerations indicate otherwise. Planning policies and decisions must also reflect relevant international obligations and statutory requirements (NPPF, par 2). For the purpose of determining this application, the development plan comprises the Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015) and the Saved Policies of the former North Wiltshire Local Plan (2011).

The application is supported by a range of technical reports and surveys which consider the environmental impacts of the proposed development. While the majority of impacts can be mitigated through appropriate conditions, such as securing the implementation of a Construction

Traffic Management Plan, the assessment of the application finds significant harm to the natural and local environment due to the loss of trees and natural habitat thus leading to a net loss of biodiversity and localised landscape harm. The proposed development therefore conflicts with certain elements of the development plan, however when considering the benefits in terms of upgrading and reinforcing key energy infrastructure and the specific locational requirement of the development, including National Grid's policy commitment to drive a net gain (in excess of 10% where possible) in environmental value (including biodiversity) in their construction projects, it is considered that the very significant benefits of the proposal outweighs the localised harm caused by its conflict with the development plan. On balance, it is therefore recommended that planning permission be granted, subject to conditions to mitigate the impacts of the development as best as possible.

## **RECOMMENDATION**

**The recommendation is to grant planning permission subject to the following conditions:**

1. The development hereby permitted shall begin before the expiration of three years from the date of this permission.

REASON: To comply with the provisions of Section 91 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 as amended by the Planning and Compulsory Purchase Act 2004.

2. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with the details shown in the following approved plans:

- Drawing. Location Plan PDD-101488-LAY-300 Rev 9
- Drawing. Proposed Layout Plan PDD-101488-LAY-302 Rev 5
- Drawing. Proposed Sections PDD-101488-ELE-303 Rev 3 Sheet 1 of 2
- Drawing. Proposed Sections PDD-101488-ELE-303 Rev 3 Sheet 2 of 2
- Drawing. Proposed Switchgear Room Plan and Elevation PDD-101488-ELE-304
- Drawing. Ancient Woodland Buffer Zone Layout PDD-101488-LAY-315-REV-0

REASON: For the avoidance of doubt and in the interests of proper planning.

3. No demolition, site clearance or development shall commence on site, and; no equipment, machinery or materials shall be brought on to site for the purpose of development, until the trees to be protected and retained, as shown on the Tree Protection Plan within the Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report (December 2022) by AECOM, have been enclosed by protective fencing, in accordance with British Standard 5837 (2005): Trees in Relation to Construction.

The protective fencing shall remain in place for the entire development phase and until all equipment, machinery and surplus materials have been removed from the site. Such fencing shall not be removed or breached during construction operations and no vehicle, plant, temporary building or materials, including raising and or, lowering of ground levels, shall be allowed within the protected areas.

No retained tree/s shall be cut down, uprooted or destroyed, nor shall any retained tree/s be topped or lopped other than in accordance with the approved plans and particulars. Any topping or lopping approval shall be carried out in accordance British Standard 3998: 2010 "Tree Work – Recommendations" or arboricultural techniques where it can be demonstrated to be in the interest of good arboricultural practise.



If any retained tree is removed, uprooted, destroyed or dies, another tree shall be planted at the same place, at a size and species and planted at such time, that must be agreed in writing with the Local Planning Authority.

[In this condition “retained tree” means an existing tree which is to be retained in accordance with the approved plans and particulars; and paragraphs above shall have effect until the expiration of five years from the first occupation or the completion of the development, whichever is the later].

REASON: To enable the Local Planning Authority to ensure the retention of trees on the site in the interests of visual amenity.

4. No demolition, site clearance or development shall commence on site until an Arboricultural Method Statement (AMS), in accordance with the recommendations of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report (December 2022) by AECOM, prepared by an arboricultural consultant providing comprehensive details of construction works in relation to trees has been submitted to, and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. All works shall subsequently be carried out in strict accordance with the approved details. In particular, the method statement must provide the following:

- A specification for protective fencing to trees during both demolition and construction phases which complies with BS5837:2013 and a plan indicating the alignment of the protective fencing;
- A specification for scaffolding and ground protection within tree protection zones in accordance with British Standard 5837: 2013;
- A schedule of tree works conforming to British Standard 3998: 2010;
- Details of general arboricultural matters such as the area for storage of materials, concrete mixing and use of fires;
- Plans and particulars showing the siting of the service and piping infrastructure;
- A full specification for the construction of any arboriculturally sensitive structures and sections through them, including the installation of boundary treatment works;
- Details of the works requiring arboricultural supervision to be carried out by the developer’s arboricultural consultant, including details of the frequency of supervisory visits and procedure for notifying the Local Planning Authority of the findings of the supervisory visits; and
- Details of all other activities, which have implications for trees on or adjacent to the site.
- In order that trees to be retained on-site are not damaged during the construction works and to ensure that as far as possible the work is carried no demolition, site clearance or development should commence on site until a pre-commencement site meeting has been held, attended by the developer’s arboricultural consultant, the designated site foreman and a representative from the Local Planning Authority, to discuss details of the proposed work and working procedures.
- Subsequently and until the completion of all site works, site visits should be carried out in accordance with a timetable to be agree with the Local Planning Authority by the developer’s arboricultural consultant. A report detailing the results of site supervision and any necessary remedial works undertaken or required should then be submitted to the Local Planning Authority. Any approved remedial works shall subsequently be carried out under strict supervision by the arboricultural consultant following that approval.

REASON: In to secure a full and final record of the trees to be removed and in order that the Local Planning Authority may be satisfied that the trees to be retained on and adjacent to the site will not be damaged during the construction works and to ensure that as far as possible

the work is carried out in accordance with current best practice and section 197 of the Town & Country Planning Act 1990.

5. No demolition, site clearance, vegetation clearance, or development shall commence on site until a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The CEMP shall provide details of the avoidance, mitigation and protective measures to be implemented before and during the construction phase, including but not necessarily limited to, the following:
  - Details of all mitigation measures and identification of ecological protection areas/buffer zones and tree root protection areas as well as details and specification of physical means of protection, e.g. temporary fencing to demarcate buffer zones
  - Details of specific measures such as gaps in fencing to avoid causing harm to biodiversity features should also be stipulated. Measures should be illustrated on a plan.
  - Details and timing of any update surveys required pre-commencement of works on site such as for badgers.
  - Precautionary working method statements, including the restrictions to the timing of such works, such as sensitive vegetation clearance method in respect of birds.
  - Mitigation strategies already agreed with the local planning authority prior to determination, such as for great crested newts and bats; this should comprise the pre-construction/construction related elements of strategies only.
  - Work schedules for activities with specific timing requirements in order to avoid/reduce potential harm to ecological receptors, and stipulation of work activities to be overseen by a licensed ecologist and/or ecological clerk of works (ECoW).
  - Key personnel, responsibilities and contact details (including Site Manager and ecologist/ECoW).
  - Schedule for compliance checks to be completed by a competent person(s), likely the ecologist/ECoW, prior to, during and post-completion of construction works.
  - A compliance report must be provided to the local planning authority within four weeks of the end of construction and the report shall include photographic evidence.

Development shall be carried out in strict accordance with the approved CEMP unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To ensure adequate protection and mitigation for ecological receptors prior to and during construction.

6. No development shall commence on site until details of all earthworks have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. These details shall include the proposed grading and mounding of land areas including the levels and contours to be formed, and the nature and source of the material, showing the relationship of proposed mounding to existing vegetation and surrounding landform. The details shall also include details of the proposed slab and ground levels of the retaining wall, building and infrastructure hereby approved. The development shall not be first brought into use until such time as the earthworks have been carried out in accordance with the details approved under this condition.

REASON: To enable the Local Planning Authority to ensure the retention of trees on the site and consider and approve the precise scope of earthworks and infrastructure levels in the interests of visual amenity.

7. No development shall commence on site until a full 'No-Dig' specification for works within the root protection area/canopies of protected and retained trees, in particular the new internal

access route, has been submitted and approved in writing by, the Local Planning Authority. The construction of the surface shall be carried out in accordance with approved details and thereafter retained.

REASON: In order to protect trees on and adjacent to the site which are to be retained with surfacing placed near to or over the trees root system.

8. Notwithstanding the contents of the Flood Risk Assessment & Drainage Strategy (September 2022) by Atkins, no development shall commence on site until a full and final scheme for the discharge of surface water from the site, incorporating sustainable drainage details, has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall not be first brought into use until surface water drainage has been constructed in accordance with the approved scheme.

REASON: To comply with Core Policy 67: Flood Risk of the Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015) and to ensure that the development can be adequately drained without increasing flood risk to others.

NOTE: The Lead Local Flood Authority advises the following updates will be required to the scheme presented within the aforementioned assessment:-

- The applicant shall provide supplementary justification as to why attenuation has been proposed in tanks instead of in a natural feature such as a swale or detention basin.
  - The applicant shall submit detailed calculations to demonstrate that the proposed positive drainage system:
    - a. Calculations and drawings for the drainage system design showing conveyance routes are designed to convey without flooding the critical 1 in 30 year + climate change rainfall event.
    - b. Calculations and drawings for the drainage system design showing attenuation features are designed to attenuate without flooding the critical 1 in 100 year rainfall event + climate change.
    - c. Hydraulic Models should set the MADD factor / additional storage volume factor to 0m<sup>3</sup> / ha in order to prevent an overestimation of storage capacity in the proposed drainage network.
  - The applicant shall provide plans which demonstrate how overland exceedance flows in excess of the 1 in 100yr + climate change storm event are wholly and safely managed on site.
  - The applicant shall submit details for the proposed inspection and ongoing maintenance (including activities, and frequency) of the proposed drainage system, including SuDS features and the proposed culvert.
  - The applicant shall provide a Construction Phase Management Plan to clearly demonstrate how surface water will be managed throughout the construction phase in order to prevent an increase in local flood risk / local pollution risk.
9. In the event that contamination is identified or encountered at any time when carrying out the approved development, the Local Planning Authority must be advised of the steps that will be taken by an appropriate contractor; to deal with contamination and provide a written remedial statement to be followed by a written verification report that confirms what works that have been undertaken to render the development suitable for use.

REASON: To ensure that risks from land contamination to the future users of the land and neighbouring land are minimised, together with those to controlled waters, property and ecological systems, and to ensure that the development can be carried out safely without unacceptable risks to workers, neighbours and other offsite receptors.

10. No external artificial lighting shall be used or installed on site until lux contour plots/lighting contour plans for all proposed lighting have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The plots/plans must demonstrate that bat habitat to be retained will be maintained as 'dark corridors'. Details of mitigation measures that would be implemented where necessary, to minimise light spill shall also be provided. Lighting proposals shall be in accordance with the appropriate Environmental Zone standards set out by the Institution of Lighting Professionals in their Guidance Note GN01/21 'The Reduction of Obtrusive Light' and their Guidance Note GN08-18 'Bats and artificial lighting in the UK', issued jointly with the Bat Conservation Trust.

Lighting at the site shall be in strict accordance with the approved details and no additional external lighting shall be installed either during construction or operation unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.

REASON: To minimise light spill and to minimise potential for adverse effects on bats and other wildlife.

11. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with approved Construction Traffic Management Plan (CTMP) (Rev.4 / May 2023), its measures shall be complied with in full throughout the construction period. The development shall not be carried out otherwise than in accordance with the approved CTMP.

REASON: To minimise detrimental effects to the neighbouring amenities, the amenities of the area in general, detriment to the natural environment through the risks of pollution and dangers to highway safety, during the construction phase.

12. The development hereby permitted shall be carried out in accordance with recommendations and proposed mitigations and enhancement measures detailed within the Ecological Assessment (ref. 9236.003) (August 2022), Ecology Assessment – Addendum (ref 9236.015) (June 2023), and Dormouse Habitat Creation Strategy (ref 9236.005) (July 2023) by the Environment Partnership.

REASON: To mitigate against the loss of existing biodiversity and nature habitats.

13. A post installation noise assessment shall be carried out within 3 months of completion of the development to confirm compliance with the submitted noise report and submitted to the local planning authority. Any additional steps required to achieve compliance shall be taken. The details as submitted and approved shall be implemented and thereafter be permanently retained.

Reason: Core policy 57, Ensuring high design and place shaping such that appropriate levels of amenity are achievable.

#### INFORMATIVE

The applicant should note that under the terms of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) and the Habitats Regulations (2010) it is an offence to disturb or harm any protected species, or to damage or disturb their habitat or resting place. Please note that this consent does not override the statutory protection afforded to any such species. In the event that your proposals could potentially affect a protected species you should seek the advice of a suitably qualified and experienced ecologist and consider the need for a licence from Natural England prior to commencing works. Please see Natural England's website for further information on protected species.

INFORMATIVE

No construction / demolition vehicle access may be taken along CHAR9, HANK15, CHAR16 without prior consultation with the Wiltshire Council Rights of Way Warden. Where appropriate any safety/mitigation/reinstatement measures must be approved by the Wiltshire Council Rights of Way Warden.

INFORMATIVE

No materials, plant, temporary structures or excavations of any kind should be deposited / undertaken which obstruct or adversely affect the public right of way whilst development takes place.

INFORMATIVE

It is noted that as part of the development, the applicant intends to culvert the existing watercourse. As noted in the applicant's submission a Land Drainage Consent should be applied for from the LLFA.

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**Needs Case**

Expansion of National Grid Minety Substation

02/02/2024

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## 1. Introduction

The Minety development proposal comprises of an extension of the existing substation comprising installation of 400/132kV 240MVA SuperGrid Transformer, 3 number 400/33kV 150MVA SuperGrid Transformers, circuit breakers, construction of retaining wall and 33kV switch room, formation of access road, culverting of watercourse, erection of fencing and associated works.

National Grid (referred to as “NGET” hereafter) has a statutory duty to offer a customer a connection and to be economic and efficient in developing and operating the transmission system whilst also having regard to the preservation of amenity when developing the network. In developing the scheme at Minety, National Grid has sought to balance these requirements and meet its statutory duties.

The works are required to facilitate connection of 450MVA of battery energy storage system (BESS) / solar generation, achieve greater reliability of the existing substation to enable the increase in embedded generation within the local Distribution Network Operator (DNO) and 240MVA of additional capacity for the DNO to enable meet increased energy demand in the wider region.

This increased generation will play a key role in delivering the UK Government’s net zero ambitions and delivering up to 50GW of offshore wind connected by 2030. To facilitate these ambitions, electricity network infrastructure is needed to ensure that energy can be transported from where it is generated to where it is used.

## 2. Licence Obligations

National Grid holds the Transmission Licence for England and Wales and is thus obligated to develop and maintain an efficient, co-ordinated and economical system of electricity transmission and to facilitate competition in the generation and supply of electricity, as set out in the Electricity Act 1989 (the Electricity Act). National Grid is regulated by Ofgem, which sets price controls and monitors how the company develops and operates the network on behalf of consumers.

NGET have a regulatory obligation to provide a connection to the system for customer led projects when one is requested. Our role in the customer journey is to identify, design, develop and deliver an economic and efficient solution to facilitate access to the National Electricity Transmission System.

This is defined in Condition C8: Requirement to offer terms and D4A: Obligations in relation to offers for connection etc of the Transmission Licence ([Link to Ofgem site and Licence](#)) Standard Conditions.

As a licence holder National Grid has specific duties to uphold in relation to the desirability of preserving amenity of certain aspects of the environment and to mitigate the effects of its activities on the environment under Section 38 and Schedule 9 of the Electricity Act 1985.

National Grid is also required, under Section 38 of the Electricity Act, to comply with the provisions of Schedule 9 of the Act. Schedule 9 requires licence holders, in the formulation of proposals to transmit electricity, to preserve amenity by:

- Schedule 9(1)(a) ‘...have regard to the desirability of preserving natural beauty, of conserving flora, fauna and geological or physiographical features of special interest and of protecting sites, buildings and objects of architectural, historic or archaeological interest;’ and
- Schedule 9(1)(b) ‘...do what [it] reasonably can to mitigate any effect which the proposals would have on the natural beauty of the countryside or on any such flora, fauna, features, sites, buildings or objects’

### 3. Existing site

The existing Minety substation uses air insulated switchgear (AIS) to establish a 400kV four switch mesh arrangement. This allows the connection of the four, 400kV overhead lines and the four existing 400/132kV 240MVA SuperGrid Transformers (SGT). The SGTs connect to the 132kV AIS substation which is owned and operated by Southern Electric Power Distribution plc (SEPD).

SEPD are the Distribution Network Operator (DNO) for the region and supply power from the existing SGTs into the DNO network supplying the necessary demand for commercial, industry and homes. The SEPD region is shown in Figure 1 below, with Minety providing demand connections in the northwest of this region.

The capacity provided by the existing four SGTs is fully allocated to SEPD as firm connections as defined within the Security and Quality of Supply Standard (SQSS).

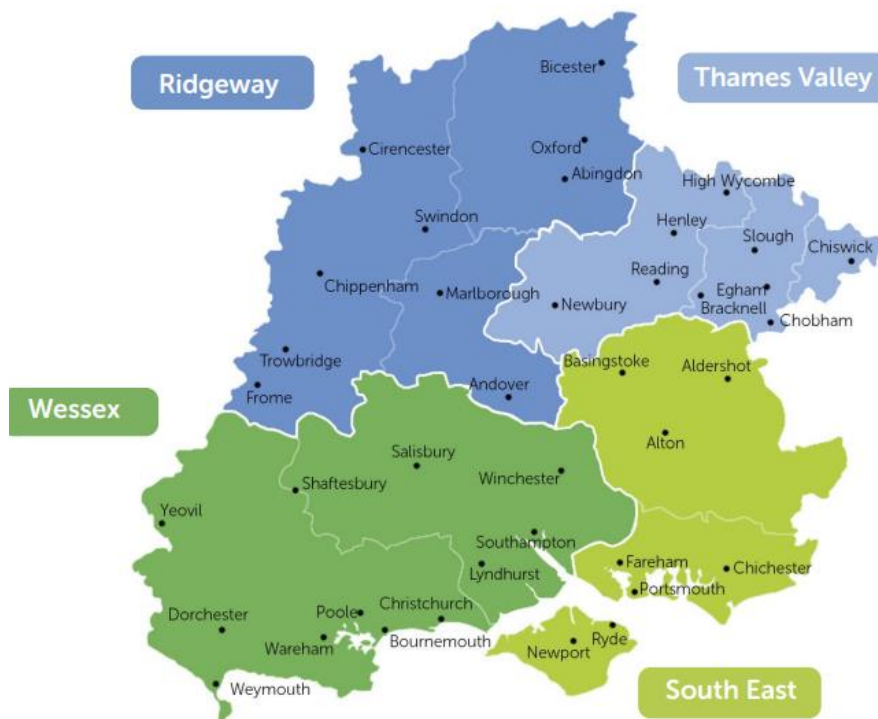
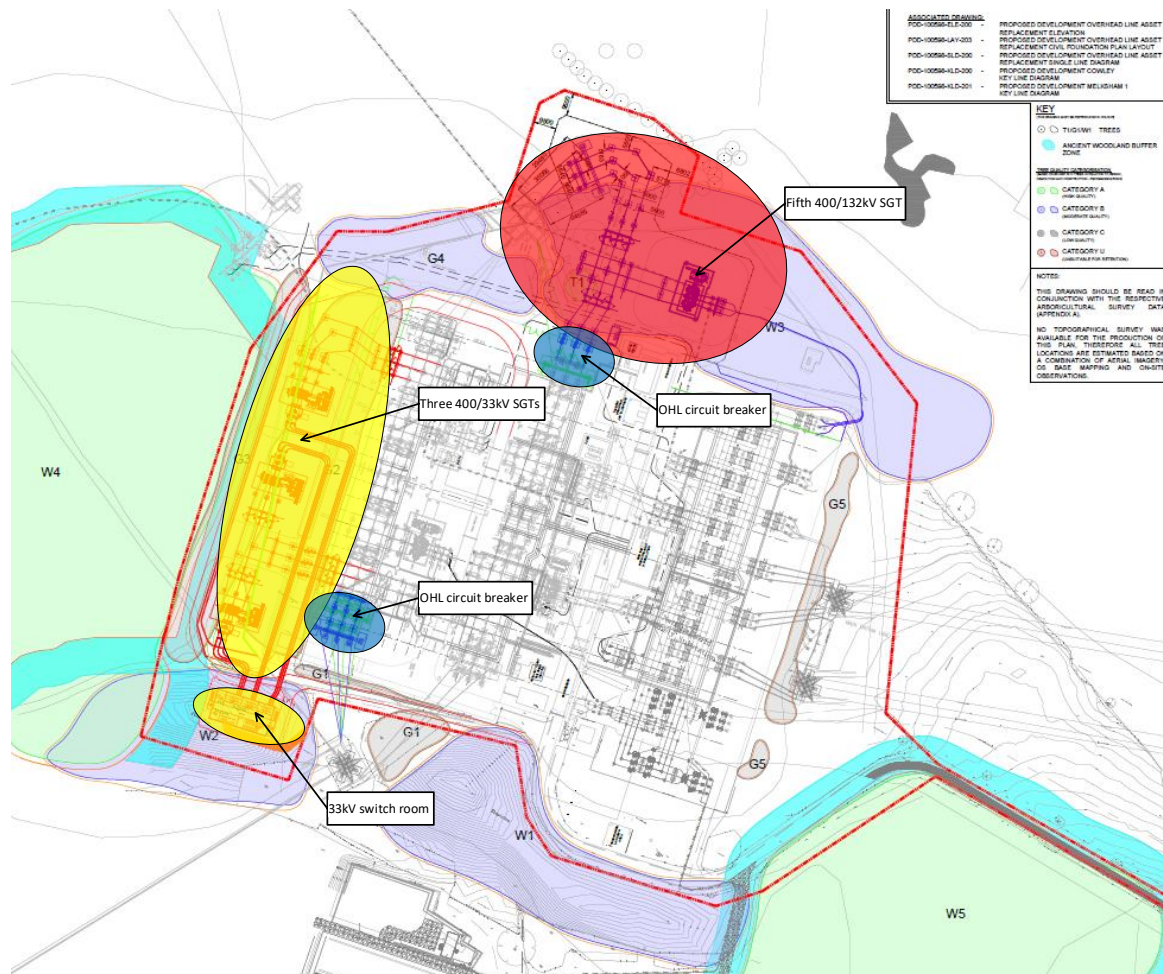


Figure 1 - SEPD region

## 4. Site Layout

It was agreed that developing at the existing site would have a lesser overall sustainability impact than a new greenfield substation – an extension also has the benefit of siting electrical equipment in the same location where this type of infrastructure already exists. Once it was determined that the connections would be facilitated through a substation extension, layout options were explored on alternative areas of the existing substation site. The alternative layout options would have a similar impact on the surrounding woodland.

Figure 2 below shows the site layout and, at a high level, identifies the works being completed in the different areas.



**Figure 2 - Site layout showing areas**

The areas highlighted yellow are for the installation of three 400/33kV 150MVA SGTs and the associated 33kV switch room. These items are discussed further in Section 5 BESS/ Solar generation.

The area highlighted red is for the installation of the fifth 400/132kV 240MVA SGT. This is discussed further in Section 6 DNO connections.

The areas highlighted blue are for the installation of Overhead Line (OHL) circuit breakers. These items are not discussed further within this paper but are associated with the Section 6 DNO connections works.

## 5. BESS / Solar generation

National Grid has made connection offers under its statutory license duty to nine BESS / solar developers. These offers are detailed in the TEC register published by National Grid ESO ([Link to ESO TEC Register](#)) and a summary for the Minety site is detailed in Table 1 below:

Project Name	Customer Name	Cumulative Total Capacity (MW)	Agreement Type	Plant Type
Dog Trap Lane	HD381GRE Limited	47.5	Directly Connected	Energy Storage System
Fairholme BESS	HB411MIN Limited	47.5	Directly Connected	Energy Storage System
Minety	HB411MIN Limited	47.5	Directly Connected	Energy Storage System
Minety Tertiary (2)	JBM SOLAR PROJECTS 14 LIMITED	47.5	Directly Connected	PV Array (Photo Voltaic/solar)
Pond Hill Farm 1	PD688IRO LTD	47.5	Directly Connected	Energy Storage System
Pond Hill Farm 2 BESS	PD688IRO LTD	47.5	Directly Connected	Energy Storage System
Somerford	PD813ETY LTD	47.5	Directly Connected	Energy Storage System; PV Array (Photo Voltaic/solar)
Southfields	PD503HAN LTD	47.5	Directly Connected	Energy Storage System; PV Array (Photo Voltaic/solar)
Southfields Farm	PD300RON Ltd	47.5	Directly Connected	Energy Storage System

**Table 1 - Minety TEC Register entries**

Each connection is rated at a capacity of 47.5MW and must be capable of operating at  $\pm 0.95$  power factor. Therefore, each connection requires 50MVA to be allocated. The connections are grouped in sets of three, with each set requiring a 400/33kV 150MVA SGT.

As the existing capacity is fully allocated to SEPD, these customers drive the requirement for an additional three SGTs and associated works. These SGTs are allocated in the extension to the west of the site and connect to the developers via the new 33kV switch room to the south of the site.

## 6. DNO connections

In June 2021, SEPD submitted a 'Project Progression' (a type of connection application used for DNO connections) for an additional 100.9MW of developer capacity. National Grid analysed this additional capacity and determined it was not possible to provide a SQSS compliant without installing a fifth 400/132kV 240MW SGT. This fifth SGT is to be located to the north of the existing site. This capacity increase is driven by embedded generation within SEPD's network. The specific sites requesting this increase are shown in Table 2 below:

Generator Name	Embedded Small Power Station Reference Number	Technology Type	Registered Capacity	BSP - Bulk Supply Point
Stonehill - BATTERY	EQG524	Battery	49.9	EHB411 (EQG524)
Land on North Side (PSSe =EQT906, Charlton Park )	EQT906	PV	30	EQT906
Windmill Farm	EPZ835	PV	13	CIRE31
The Barn - PV	EQP861	PV	3	CIRE31
Mannington 5MW increase	ERX733	Battery	5 MW increase	TOOT31

**Table 2 - SEPD June 2021 additional demand**

In total, SEPD have 912MW of embedded generation connected or contracted to connect into their network and back to Minety substation. This exceeds the capabilities of the existing SGTs at the Minety substation which as per SQSS provide a firm capacity of 720MVA hence requiring the fifth SGT to provide a firm capacity of 960MVA. Full details of the SEPD embedded connections are shown in the appendix A.

## 7. Next Steps

National Grid has applied for planning permission for the works detailed and awaits the decision of the planning authority. In the event planning permission were to be refused, National Grid would make an appeal to the Secretary of State against the decision, under section 78 of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990.

If all options for planning permission at the existing site were to be exhausted, National Grid still has a licence obligation to offer a customer connection, therefore the signed customer connection offers would trigger the need for a new greenfield substation.

## 8. Conclusions

The above details the need to install three 400/33kV 150MVA SGTs and associated 33kV switch room to enable the connection of nine BESS / solar generators connecting directly to the National Grid substation. A further increase in embedded generation of 100.9MW of SEPD DNO developer capacity details the need to install an additional 400/132kV 240MVA SGT.

## Appendix A – SEPD embedded generation (existing and additional)

Generator Name	Embedded Small Power Station Reference Number	Technology Type	Registered Capacity	BSP - Bulk Supply Point
Chapel Farm, Swindon	EBU633	LANDFILL GAS	4.0	SWIN31
Westmill Windfarm	N/A	WIND	2.8	STRA31
Iceland's Food	N/A	LANDFILL GAS	2.0	TOOT31
Rodbourn Sewage diesel + CHP	N/A	MIXED	1.7	SWIN31
Biffa Waste Studley Grange	EBS277	WTE	2.0	SWIN31
Allied Dunbar		LANDFILL GAS	2.0	SWIN31
Honda PV	DTW764	PV	4.5	STRA32
Westmill PV	DSQ735	PV	5.0	STRA31
Pentylands PV Farm	DWF391	PV	15.0	STRA31
Castle Eaton Farm PV, Swindon	DWH006	PV	15.0	SWIN31
Crucis PV	DYU219	PV	15.0	CIRE31
Spittleborough PV	DYL525	PV	8.0	SWIN31
Roves PV	DZU601	PV	9.0	STRA32
Orta Port PV	DZR151	PV	28.6	STRA32
Lynt Farm PV	DYN614	PV	22.6	STRA32
Bentham PV	DYF061	PV	8.7	CIRE31
Goldborough PV	DYL711	PV	5.0	SWIN31
Nationwide Generation	DYD689	MIXED	1.8	SWIN31
Wroughton Air Field PV	DYW852	PV	48.5	TOOT31
Lower Bassett Down PV	DYY358	PV	9.0	TOOT31
Chapel Farm PV	EBS983 / EKA081	PV	5.0	SWIN31
Stanton Waters	DYX779	PV	4.0	STRA31
Park Grounds AD Farm	EHE040	PV	6.0	SWIN31
Braydon PV	DYX152	PV	7.0	CIRE31
Wickfield PV 0	DXX353	PV	4.0	SWIN31
Stanton Fitzwarren PV	EBD218	PV	3.5	STRA31+K31:K36
Common Farm PV	EJT887	PV	6.8	TOOT31
Lyneham College PV	ECS589	PV	49.9	LYDIARD31

Generator Name	Embedded Small Power Station Reference Number	Technology Type	Registered Capacity	BSP - Bulk Supply Point
Cheney Manor Spark		CHP	2.2	SWIN31
Cap Gemini Merlin Data Centre Diesel	EDP367	DIESEL	2.5	STRA31
B&Q Swindon DC	EED543	PV	1.71	STRA31
Catsbrain Farm	EGZ181	BATTERY	20	STRA32
Minety Energy Storage	EHB411 (EQG524)	BATTERY	99.9	EHB411 (EQG524)
Mannington Depot	EJC395	BATTERY	30	TOOT31
Barnfield Landfill	EJJ081	BATTERY	1.2	SWIN31
Brookfield Farm	EHJ133	PV & Battery	1	
Park Farm Battery	EJE299	BATTERY	10	GALI51
Barnfield PV	ELK669	PV	2.5	SWIN31
UNIT A, G PARK, SWINDON	EJQ026	BATTERY	1.36	STRA32
Minety Combined Generation (Minety Battery Storage on PSSe)	EGP231	Battery	99.99	MITY12
WOOTTON BASSETT FLEXIBLE GAS	ENT048	Gas	6.5	SWIN31
The Common Battery	EJR230	BATTERY	49	EJR230
Brindley Close Battery	ELR112	BATTERY	12	SWIN31
CIRENCESTER PV	ENC913	PV & Battery	10	CIRE31
CORNER COPSE SOLAR	ELG049/ESP764	PV	50	ELG049
Cirencester Solar Park	EMS642	PV	50	
CIRENCESTER SOLAR PARK, ESTATE OFFICE	EPU169	PV	25	
Welsh Way - SOLAR PV	EPF322	PV	10	
Siddington - PV	ERH219	PV	23	
Vodafone Swindon - PV	EPU629	PV	7	
Stonehill - BATTERY	EQG524	Battery	49.9	EHB411 (EQG524)
Land on North Side (PSSe =EQT906, Charlton Park )	EQT906	PV	30	EQT906
Windmill Farm	EPZ835	PV	13	CIRE31
The Barn - PV	EQP861	PV	3	CIRE31
Mannington 5MW increase	ERX733	Battery	5 MW increase	TOOT31

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# Minety 400kV substation Extension, Wiltshire

## Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report

Prepared For: National Grid  
 Document Reference: 9236.007  
 Date: 5th July 2023  
 Version: 2.0

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TEP is a Registered Practice of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. The content of this document has been prepared in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Code of Professional Conduct and is compliant with British Standard BS42020:2013 Biodiversity Code of Practice for Planning and Development.

The conclusions and recommendations contained in this document are based upon information gathered by TEP and provided by third parties. Information provided by third parties and referred to herein has not been independently verified by TEP, unless otherwise expressly stated in the document.

Nothing in this report constitutes legal opinion. If legal opinion is required, the advice of a qualified legal professional should be secured.

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# 1.0 Introduction

## Background

- 1.1 The Environment Partnership (TEP) were commissioned by National Grid (NG) to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment of proposed planning application (Ref: PL/2022/09258) for an extension to the existing 400kV substation; hereafter referred to as the "Site".
- 1.2 Discussions with both the Local Authority and Natural England (NE) have been ongoing since September 2023, following submission of additional information in July 2023. From comments raised by Natural England and the Local County Ecologist, through consultation, amendments have been made to consider of both additional on and off-site mitigation and habitat creation/enhancement for protected species, in particular bats and hazel dormouse.
- 1.3 As the application was submitted in November 2022, before Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain came into force in February 2024, the revisions were inputted into the original submitted Biodiversity Metric 4.0 which has been used to assess the revised net gain output.

## Site description

- 1.4 The footprint of the development application boundary measures 7.46ha and lies to the southwest of the village of Minety, Malmesbury in Wiltshire. The site is bordered on three sides by woodland and hedgerow with agricultural fields beyond.

## Proposed development and demand

- 1.5 National Grid (NG) has identified the need to extend its existing substation site at Minety (NGR: SU 00028 89842) comprising the installation of a 400/132kV transformer, 3no. 400/33kV transformers, circuit breakers, construction of a retaining wall and 33kV switch room, formation of an access road, culverting of a watercourse, erection of fencing and associated works (refer to drawing PDD-101488-LAY-302-REV-3).
- 1.6 The works are required to facilitate connection of 450MVA of battery / solar generation, achieve greater reliability of the existing substation to enable the increase in embedded generation within the local Distribution Network Operator (DNO) and 240MVA of additional capacity for the DNO to enable meet increased energy demand in the wider region. All of these aspects will enable the decarbonisation of the electricity supply network.

## Relevant Policy and Legislation

### National Policies

- 1.7 Paragraph 180(d) of the NPPF (2023) states that "Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by [...] minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity [...]" The Government 25-year Environment Plan states that government will "[...] embed environmental net gain principle for development".
- 1.8 In July 2019, the government issued revised planning practice guidance (NPPG) with details on how planners can implement "net environmental gain" requirements when assessing development proposals, including new advice on protecting wildlife.
- 1.9 Revised guidance recently published by the government says that net gain in planning describes an approach to development that leaves the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. Net gain is an umbrella term for both biodiversity net gain and wider environmental net gain. It states: "Planning conditions or obligations can, in appropriate circumstances, be used to require that a planning permission provides for works that will measurably increase biodiversity".
- 1.10 In terms of measuring net gain, the guidance states that using a metric is a pragmatic way to calculate the impact of a development and the net gain that can be achieved. It goes on to state that "[...] tools such as the Defra biodiversity metric can be used to assess whether a biodiversity net gain outcome is expected to be achieved".
- 1.11 BNG became mandatory in England from 12th February 2024 which requires all Town and Country Planning Act 1990 developments (except those that are exempt<sup>1</sup>) to meet 10% net gain.

### Local Policies

#### Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015)

- Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity

- 1.12 Aligning with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), Wiltshire Council explain their implementation of biodiversity net gain within Core Policy 50 of the Wiltshire Core Strategy<sup>2</sup>.
- 1.13 The strategy enforces that developments present no net loss and 10% net gain of biodiversity following the completion of planning projects in Wiltshire, and that planning applications can only be granted if the planning officer has received evidence that measurable net gains of biodiversity will be met.

<sup>1</sup> The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024

<sup>2</sup> <https://www.wiltshire.gov.uk/article/1102/Biodiversity-and-development> (accessed 05/07/23)

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1.14 The aims of this report are to:

- Set out the methods used to assess the habitat baseline of the Site.
- Set out the methods and assumptions used to assess the post development habitat scoring of the Site.
- Assess the BNG that is delivered as a result of the site design and offsetting required; and
- Demonstrate how the BNG good practice principals for development have been addressed.

## 2.0 Methods

### Ecological and Survey Reference Documents

2.1 To support this assessment the following ecological survey reports were reviewed:

- Ecological Desk Study – TEP 2022
- Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey (updated) – TEP 2023
- UKHab Condition Assessment for Habitats – TEP 2023/2024
- Arboricultural impact Assessment – TEP/AECOM 2022
- Ecological Assessment (updated) – TEP 2023, and
- Dormouse Mitigation Strategy – TEP 2024 (updated)

### Survey Methods

#### Desk Study

2.2 Information regarding planning policies, historic species records and protected sites was collated from a variety of sources. Sites with international designation were searched for within 10 km of the site, nationally designated sites within 5 km of the site and local designations within 2 km.

#### Phase 1 Habitat Survey

2.3 The updated Phase 1 Habitat was undertaken by a suitably qualified and experienced TEP Ecologist on 15th and 16th May 2023 using the standard JNCC Phase 1 habitat assessment method (2010)<sup>3</sup>. This method records the habitat types present in and immediately surrounding the site, based on the JNCC descriptions. Plant species are identified in accordance with Stace (2010)<sup>4</sup> and recorded as target notes using the DAFOR scale<sup>5</sup>.

#### UK Habitat Classification Conversion

2.4 Phase 1 habitats were converted to UK Habitat classification code with reference to the UK Hab conversions provided in the 'Technical Data' button in the calculation tool of the Biodiversity Metric 3.0, the UK Habitat Classification - Habitat Definitions<sup>6</sup> and the UK Habitat Classification Field Key<sup>7</sup>.

<sup>3</sup> JNCC (2010) Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A technique for environmental audit. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough.

<sup>4</sup> Stace, C. (2010) New Flora of the British Isles. 3rd Ed. Cambridge University Press

<sup>5</sup> DAFOR = Dominant, Abundant, Frequent, Occasional & Rare

<sup>6</sup> Butcher, B., Carey, P., Edmonds, R., Norton, L. and Treweek, J. (2020). The UK Habitat Classification - Habitat Definitions V1.1 at <http://www.ukhab.org/>

<sup>7</sup> UK Hab Field Key V2.1 September 2020



## Condition Assessment

- 2.5 Condition assessment surveys of the area-based habitats present pre-development were undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist, (FISC Level 4) in May 2022, May 2023 and April 2024. The condition assessments were undertaken using guidance presented in the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 - Technical Supplement<sup>8</sup>.

## Arboriculture Survey

- 2.6 An initial arboricultural survey of the site was carried out by TEP in January 2022 and subsequent report updated by AECOM<sup>9</sup> in December 2022. The surveys were by means of inspection from ground level in accordance with BS 5837:2012 "Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction – Recommendations (Ref 7-20)". The Standard provides a categorisation method to “identify the quality and value (in a non-fiscal sense) of the existing tree stock, to allow informed decisions to be made concerning which trees should be removed or retained in the event of development occurring”.
- 2.7 The method places trees and groups of trees into one of four quality categories and provides guidance on the integration and protection of trees during construction.
- 2.8 The presence of Tree Preservation Orders, Conservation Areas, Ancient Woodland, and Veteran Trees have also been ascertained.

## **BNG Assessment**

- 2.9 The Site has been assessed using Biodiversity Metric 4.0 in line with the user guide<sup>10</sup> and technical supplement provided, this was undertaken in June 2023.
- 2.10 Biodiversity Metric 4.0 is a tool designed to enable developers to measure the change in biodiversity across their site. It determines if there will be net gain, net loss or no net loss of biodiversity following completion of their development and any subsequent management regime.
- 2.11 In order to calculate the change in biodiversity across the site, a site survey is undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist to determine the habitats present on site, their location, size, and condition. This information is then digitised, and the resulting information fed into Biodiversity Metric 4.0.

<sup>8</sup> STEPHEN PANKS A, NICK WHITE A, AMANDA NEWSOME A, JACK POTTER A, MATT HEYDON A, EDWARD MAYHEW A, MARIA ALVAREZ A, TRUDY RUSSELL A, SARAH J. SCOTT B, MAX HEAVER C, SARAH H. SCOTT C, JO TREWEEK D, BILL BUTCHER E and DAVE STONE A 2021. Biodiversity metric 3.0: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity – Technical Supplement. Natural England.

<sup>9</sup> Proposed Extension to Minety 400kV Substation - AECOM December 2022

<sup>10</sup> STEPHEN PANKS A, NICK WHITE A, AMANDA NEWSOME A, JACK POTTER A, MATT HEYDON A, EDWARD MAYHEW A, MARIA ALVAREZ A, TRUDY RUSSELL A, SARAH J. SCOTT B, MAX HEAVER C, SARAH H. SCOTT C, JO TREWEEK D, BILL BUTCHER E and DAVE STONE A 2021. Biodiversity metric 3.0: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity – User Guide. Natural England.

- 2.12 The principles of biodiversity net gain as set out in the Biodiversity Net Gain Good Practice Guidelines<sup>11</sup> have been considered throughout this process.

### Determining Strategic Significance

- 2.13 Strategic significance was determined through a thorough desktop review of local planning policy and other relevant documentation. The desk-based assessment provides full details of local policy and legislation covering the site. This includes biodiversity policies and the policies map within Wiltshire Core Strategy (adopted January 2015).
- 2.14 For the purpose of the BNG Assessment particular reference has been paid to the relevant green infrastructure and other ecology specific policies including:
- Core Policy 50: Biodiversity and Geodiversity
- 2.15 Consideration has also been given to the location of Local Wildlife Sites, as well as county wide and nationally designated wildlife sites, specifically where they are referenced in local policy as providing important connectivity.
- 2.16 Strategic significance utilises published local strategies and objectives to identify local priorities for targeting biodiversity and nature improvement. Strategic significance will be high if the habitat location is identified in local plans, strategies, or policies. Medium strategic significance should be used where habitat was deemed ecologically desirable for a particular habitat type such as acting as a wildlife corridor or buffer.
- 2.17 When assigning high, medium, and low strategic significance to habitats in both the baseline and the post development calculations for this development proposal, the lack of proximity to high ecological value areas such as local wildlife sites, and the lack of ecologically valuable habitats ascertains that all habitats on the site were assigned low strategic significance.

### Post-Development Calculations

- 2.18 Post development calculations have been based on mitigation and enhancement strategy for the site and wider area, including proposed Natural England (NE) Hazel Dormouse license application<sup>12</sup>.
- 2.19 The most appropriate UK Habitat Classification type for each habitat parcel was assigned based on the landscape design, and a target condition was assigned for each parcel based upon the condition assessment criteria for habitats within the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 Technical Supplement. The target condition for habitat types varied depending upon their location, likely levels of use and management measures required.

<sup>11</sup> CIEEM, IEMA & CIRIA (2019). Biodiversity Net Gain. Good Practice Principles for Development. A Practical Guide

<sup>12</sup> Dormouse Habitat Creation Strategy - Document Ref 9236.005 TEP 2024

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## Limitations

- 2.20 For the purpose of this assessment, it is assumed that the post-development habitats within the application area would not be able to achieve an equal condition to similar habitats measured during the baseline survey due to the restricted landscaping areas and the surrounding activity associated with the proposed and ongoing development within the wider area.

## 3.0 Baseline conditions

### Important Ecological Features

- 3.1 There is one internationally designated site present within 10km of the site. North Meadow and Clattinger Farm Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located approximately 3.2km north of the site and is designated for its Annex I habitat 'lowland hay meadows'.
- 3.2 There are nine nationally designated sites present within 5km of the site. The two that fall within 1km of the site are Cloatley Farm and Emmett Hill Meadows both Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and located approximately 40m north and 0.4km northeast of the site respectively. Cloatley Farm SSSI supports important breeding populations of the butterfly's marsh fritillary and brown hairstreak along with species-rich neutral grassland. The site is considered in an unfavourable condition - declining. Emmett Hill Meadows SSSI supports species-rich neutral and acid grassland in a favourable condition.
- 3.3 There are 11 non-statutory locally designated sites within 2km of the site. Stonehill Wood Local Wildlife Site (LWS) is located within the site boundary (southeast) and extends off site. It is designated for its ancient woodland habitat.
- 3.4 Park Copse - Charlton LWS is located adjacent to the western site boundary and comprises hazel coppice woodland. Other sites are located over 0.4km from the site and comprise ancient woodlands, species-rich grasslands, and ponds.

### On-Site Baseline

- 3.5 The Site was dominated by the existing operational electrical substation. Surrounding the substation on the east, south and western aspects is broadleaved woodland, mostly plantation, however ancient woodland (ASNW) has been identified to border the western boundary. Habitat to the south of the site was dominated by marshy rush dominated grassland. Several ponds have been identified within 250m of the site, however none of these ponds will be impacted by the development. The wider area and landscape are dominated by agricultural and semi-rural environments and is well connected to the wider area by hedgerow and woodland corridors.
- 3.6 Full details of the conversion from Phase 1 habitat to the UK Habitat Classification along with the results of the condition assessment are provided in the Assessor Comments column within the completed Biodiversity Metric 4.0 (Appendix A). The following drawings are provided:
- Phase 1 Habitat Survey Results (G9236.009F); and
  - UK Habitat Classification Baseline (G9236.013E).

## Post Development Habitats

- 3.7 Details regarding post-development habitats are provided in the following documents, along with client team discussions and are displayed in the following drawing.
- 9236.005 - Dormouse Habitat Creation Strategy
  - G9236.021D Figure E3 Specification for Mitigation & Compensation
- 3.8 Habitats to be provided within the post development proposals for the site include:
- 1.35ha of Plantation broadleaved woodland to be enhanced; and
  - 0.1ha of cleared scrub to be allowed to regenerate
- 3.9 Through the project development process, National Grid have sought to minimise the impact as much as possible. As such, the electrical equipment in the south has been moved slightly north to allow retention of the woodland and scrub border in the south and west allowing for connectivity to the wider area.
- 3.10 All other remaining ecologically valuable habitats on site, including the pond, mixed woodland bund, scrub area and modified grassland are to be lost.
- 3.11 Full details of the conversion from the masterplan to the UK Habitat classification along with the target condition are provided in the Assessor Comments within the completed Biodiversity Metric 4.0.

## 4.0 Change in Ecological Value

4.1 A biodiversity assessment has been undertaken, using the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 calculator to quantify the change in biodiversity units for the planning application area between the pre-development baseline and post-development retained, enhanced, and created habitats. Detailed results of the assessment are provided in the Biodiversity Metric 3.1 in Appendix A.

### Summary of Biodiversity Impact

4.2 The application area totals 7.46ha of which 5.59ha will be retained, the majority of which will be existing substation infrastructure and access (3.43ha), 0.44ha of derelict land/Bare Ground, 0.28ha of Ruderal/Ephemeral and 0.05ha of cleared hazel scrub. Temporary losses include 0.05ha of other woodland, broadleaved (semi-natural), and 0.06ha of other woodland, broadleaved (Plantation). Permanent losses account for 1.84ha and include the following habitats.

- 0.01ha - Lowland Mixed deciduous woodland (W2)
- 0.07ha - Other woodland, broadleaved (semi-natural) (W3)
- 0.24ha - Other woodland, broadleaved (Plantation) (W3 and W1)
- 0.45ha - Hazel scrub (G4)
- 0.62ha - Mixed Scrub (G2 and G3)
- 0.02ha - Bramble Scrub
- 0.29ha - Modified Grassland (GR1), and
- 0.02ha - Developed Land/Sealed Surface

4.3 Based on the above figures and impacts the headline results, prior to off-site assessment, taken from the metric, are provided in Figure 1 below.

On-site baseline	Habitat units	22.02	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site post-intervention (including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	13.70	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	-8.32	-37.78%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%

Figure 1: Headline results on Application baseline and post intervention.

4.4 Based on the application area alone, the results indicate a loss of -37.78% which equates to -8.32 Biodiversity Units (BU) for area-based habitats. There is no net loss of linear features including hedgerows and water courses.

## Off-Site Habitat Strategy

- 4.5 An off-site biodiversity strategy has been developed to meet the shortfall in trading rules and achieve net gain. Existing off-site land in ownership of NG and additional land in the process of being acquired, will be used to provide units to deliver biodiversity net gain and to endeavour to satisfy the trading rules that on-site landscaping cannot.
- 4.6 For detailed view of the mitigation areas please refer to Drawing G9236.012D.
- 4.7 Initially, 2.17ha of land in existing NG ownership identified for enhancement (1.91ha) for proposed Hazel Dormouse Mitigation was included as off-site habitat creation and included the following habitats.
- 0.10ha - Lowland Mixed deciduous woodland (W2)
  - 1.12ha - Other woodland, broadleaved (Plantation) (W1, W2, W3 and H1)
  - 0.01ha - Hazel scrub (G1)
  - 0.21ha - Mixed Scrub (G2)
  - 0.24ha - Modified grassland (GR3 and areas to southwest of site)
  - 0.07ha - Bare Ground
  - 0.04ha - Developed Land/Sealed Surface
- 4.8 However, these areas alone would not satisfy the BU shortfall of 8.32 BU to attain no net loss, with a net gain of only 4.47 BU (a net loss of -3.87 BU). See Figure 2

Off-site baseline	Habitat units	10.18	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	14.65	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	4.47	43.92%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-3.87	
	Hedgerow units	1.17	
	watercourse units	0.00	
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	watercourse units	0.00	

Figure 2: Headline Results for Offsite Mitigation within NG Land ownership

- 4.9 As these areas for off-site gain are attributed to mitigation for protected species (Hazel Dormouse), an additional 10% of units are required which must come from additional activities other than mitigation for protected species, therefore habitat units to achieve no net loss will be 9.15 BU.

- 4.10 Additional land is in the process of being purchased by the Client, which will be secured by legal agreement, mostly in part for dormouse mitigation but also for habitat enhancement within the wider area.
- 4.11 For the purposes of this assessment 1.5ha of additional off-site area habitats are included, adjacent to the site:
- 0.81ha of modified grassland, enhanced to mixed scrub (GR4)
  - 0.48ha of modified grassland, enhanced to mixed scrub (GR5)
  - 0.06ha of mixed scrub, enhanced to hazel scrub (S2)
  - 0.13ha of mixed scrub, enhanced to hazel scrub (S1)
  - 0.07ha of bramble scrub, enhanced to mixed scrub (S2)
  - Planting of 20x small oak trees within new mixed scrub woodland buffer at GR4
- 4.12 All habitats are illustrated in drawing G9236.013E - Existing UK Habitats.
- 4.13 The final off-site and combined unit changes based on the additional off-site areas are illustrated below in Figure 3.

Off-site baseline	Habitat units	13.02	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	30.92	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	17.90	137.45%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	watercourse units	0.00	0.00%
Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	9.58	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	watercourse units	0.00	
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	watercourse units	0.00	

Figure 3: Combined net unit change based on additional off-site areas.

- 4.14 The final net combined unit change of 9.58 BU satisfies the additional 10% net unit gain for additional activities based on habitat mitigation in respect of hazel dormouse protected species mitigation.

## Total BNG Unit Net Change

- 4.15 Figure 4 below illustrates the final headline result in unit net change combining both the application area and off-site compensation.



FINAL RESULTS		
<b>Total net unit change</b> (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	9.58
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
<b>Total net % change</b> (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	43.49%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00%
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00%
<b>Trading rules satisfied?</b>	<b>Yes ✓</b>	

Figure 4: Final Unit Net Change.

- 4.16 The total net unit change results show that there will be an overall area-based unit net gain of 9.58 BU (43.49%).

#### Trading Rules Summary

- 4.17 All trading rules have been satisfied.

### Biodiversity Net Gain

- 4.18 The Local Authority are committed to attaining at least 10% net gain on all development. National Grid has a corporate commitment to attain at least 10% biodiversity net gain on all new developments. This scheme aims to go above and beyond that target to achieve 15% net gain. Figure 5 identifies that the 15% net gain target has been met.

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
<i>Habitat units</i>	15.00%	22.02	25.33	0.00
<i>Hedgerow units</i>	15.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
<i>Watercourse units</i>	15.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

Figure 5: BNG Target (based on 15%)

---

## 5.0 Implementation, Management and Monitoring

- 5.1 This BNG assessment has been undertaken in support of a full planning application and details of the proposed landscape design have also been provided by TEP. These have been assessed to indicate the condition of habitats that is expected to be achieved following completion of the development.
- 5.2 To fully meet BNG requirements, a detailed 30-year management and monitoring plan will be necessary. It is assumed that this information can be secured by a suitably worded condition attached to the application's decision notice.
- 5.3 The plan will need to include management prescriptions which aim to achieve the specific target condition for each habitat, based on the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 condition criteria. The plan will also need to include the methods and reporting processes to be used for monitoring the success of habitat enhancement and creation along with options for remedial intervention where needed if a habitat is not achieving its targeted condition. Roles and responsibilities, along with financial and legal requirements should also be included.

## 6.0 BNG Good Practice Principles

6.1 An appraisal of the scheme against the 10 good practice principles for development is set out in Table 2.

*Table 2: Appraisal against Ten Good Practice Principles*

Good Practice Principle		Commentary
1.	Apply the mitigation hierarchy.	Due to the nature of the development, it has not been possible to retain all habitats within the site, although the Client have sought to minimise the losses as far as practically possible. The landscaping scheme contributes to mitigating for these losses, and the offsetting strategy utilises the off-site area to achieve 15% net gain.
2.	Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset by gains elsewhere.	There are no irreplaceable habitats within the habitat baseline.
3.	Be inclusive and equitable.	Conversations have been undertaken with the client and we have worked closely to maximise new landscape features which can be enjoyed by a variety of site end users and to enhance biodiversity in the area.
4.	Address risks.	A precautionary approach to habitat condition assessment in both the baseline and post development baseline has been adopted due to the seasonality of surveys and the likely moderate/high public use of retained areas. Management and monitoring, to be included within the LHMP will ensure remedial action is taken to enable target conditions to be achieved.
5.	Make a measurable Net Gain contribution.	The combined headline results show that there will be an overall area-based unit net gain of 9.58 BU (43.49%).
6.	Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity.	TEP and the Client have had ongoing discussions with Natural England to maximise the opportunities at the site. The enhancement of retained habitats and creation of new habitats, both on site and off, will enhance connectivity and strengthen important strategic wildlife corridors for the area.
7.	Be additional.	There are no existing nature conservation outcomes on the site. Therefore, the enhancement of retained habitats and creation of new habitats and their management for biodiversity for the next 30 years add value to this strategic wildlife corridor.
8.	Create a Net Gain legacy.	Discussions have been held between TEP and the client regarding Biodiversity Net Gain and this has been a key consideration during the design of the landscaping scheme. A net gain legacy will be achieved through creation of a 30-year management plan which will ensure biodiverse and high-quality habitats remain on-site and off-site, and offer foraging, commuting, nesting and hibernation potential to a range of local wildlife.
9.	Optimise sustainability.	The habitat enhancements on site and near environs will improve ecological corridors and semi-natural habitats within the local area, with benefits for connectivity to the wider area.

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Good Practice Principle		Commentary
10.	Be transparent.	This report provides a transparent method for the BNG assessment ensuring that all stakeholders can follow the process through.

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## Appendix A: Biodiversity Metric 4.0

(provided under separate cover)

## Drawings:

G9236.009F: Phase 1 Habitat Survey

G9236.013E: UK Habitat Classification Baseline

G9236.014D: Existing Habitats Condition and Significance

G9236.015D: Habitat Impacts Plan

G9236.021D: Figure E3 Specifications for Mitigation & Compensation

PDD-101488-LAY-302-REV-3: Proposed Site Application

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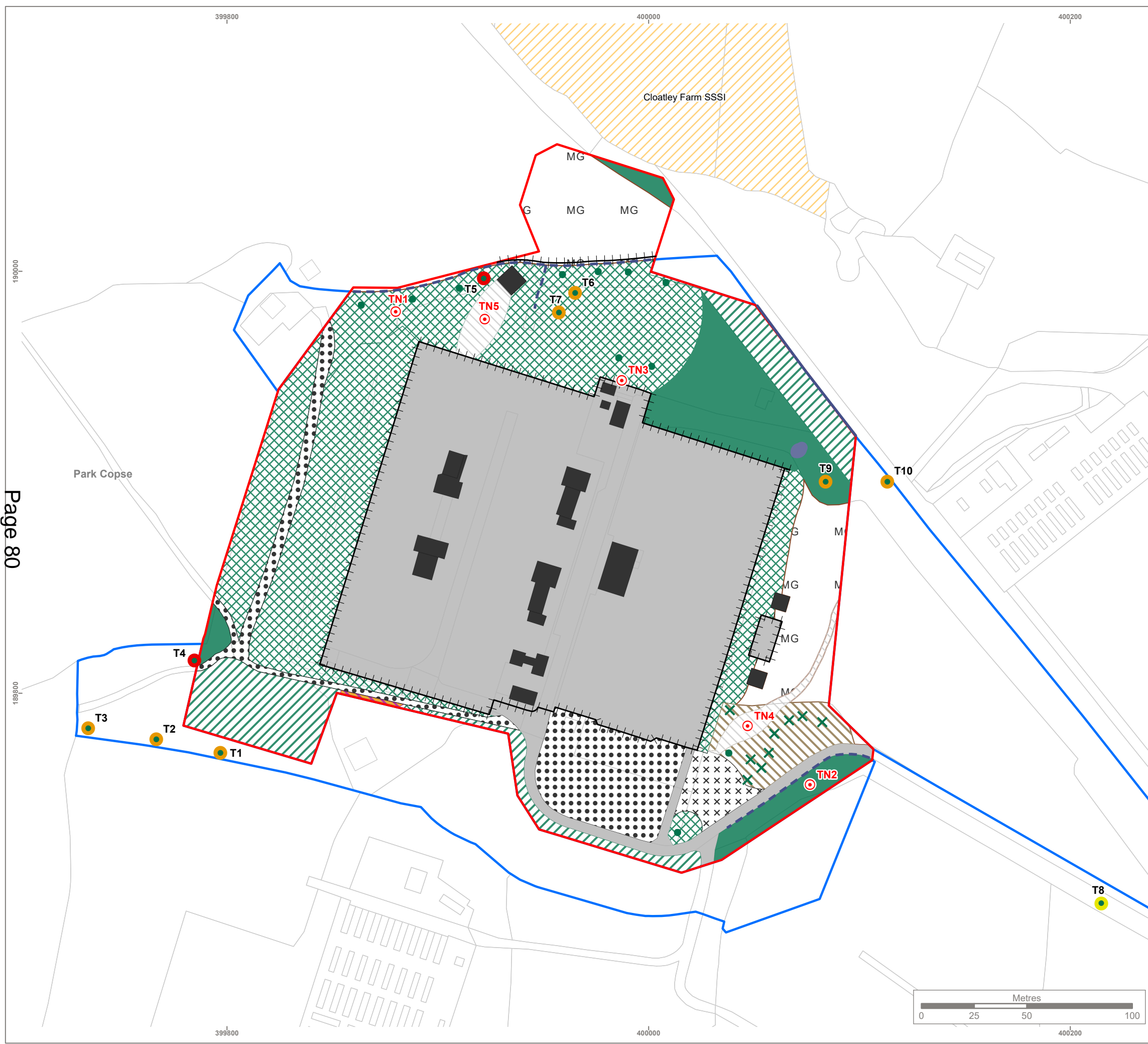
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**CORNWALL**

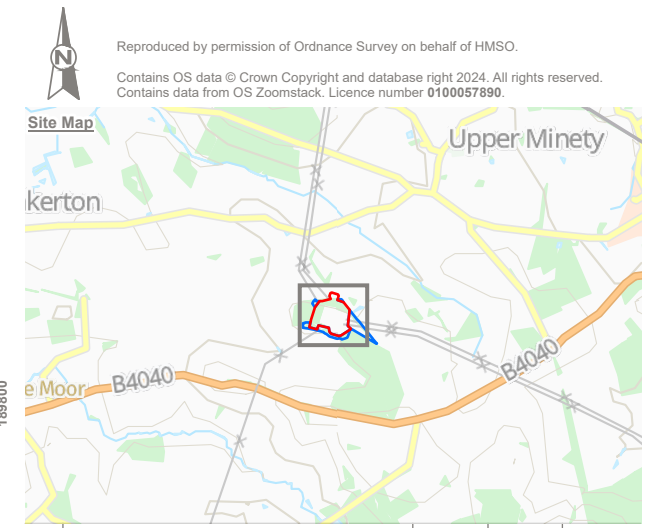
Tel: 01326 240081  
E-mail: [cornwall@tep.uk.com](mailto:cornwall@tep.uk.com)



**KEY**

	Site application boundary		Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland
	Client ownership boundary		Plantation broad-leaved woodland
	Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)		Dense/continuous scrub
	Target note		Species-poor modified neutral grassland
	Scattered scrub		Marsh/marshy grassland
	Scattered broad-leaved tree		Tall ruderal
	Broad-leaved tree with low bat suitability		Standing water
	Broad-leaved tree with moderate bat suitability		Dense/continuous ephemeral/short perennial
	Broad-leaved tree with high bat suitability		Building
	Standing water		Bare ground
	Dry ditch		Other habitat
			Hardstanding

**Note:**  
The locations of habitats and habitat features are indicative.



Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date
F	Updated Phase 1 habitats	BJ	PB	29/05/2024
E	Added ownership boundary	BJ	CK	12/06/2023

**TEP THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP**

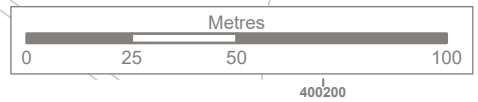
401 Faraday Street, Birchwood Park, Warrington, WA3 6GA  
 Tel 01925 844004 e-mail tep@tep.uk.com www.tep.uk.com

Project  
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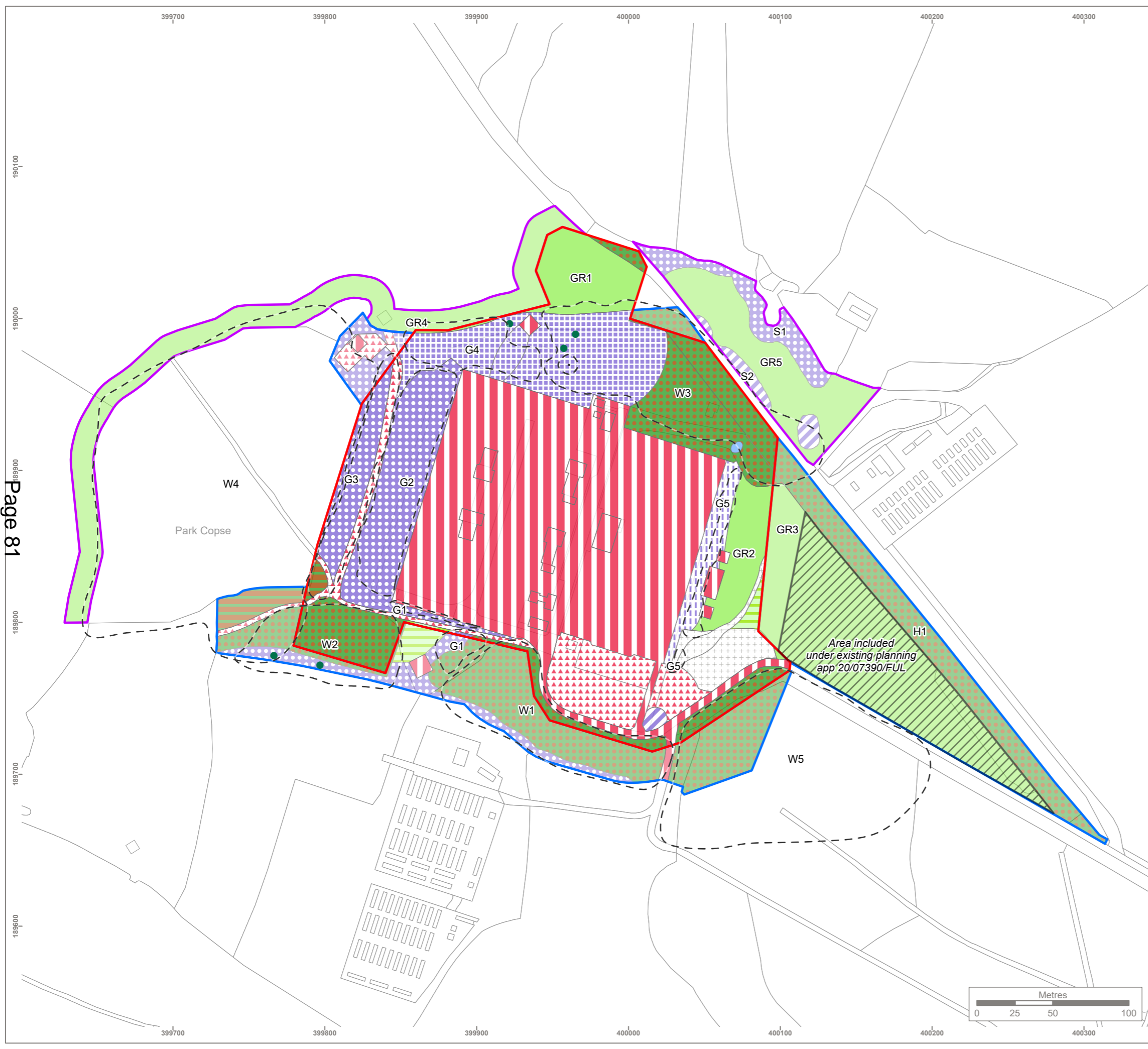
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Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Drawing Number  
G9236.009F

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
SP	CW	CK	1:1,800 @ A3	07/02/2022





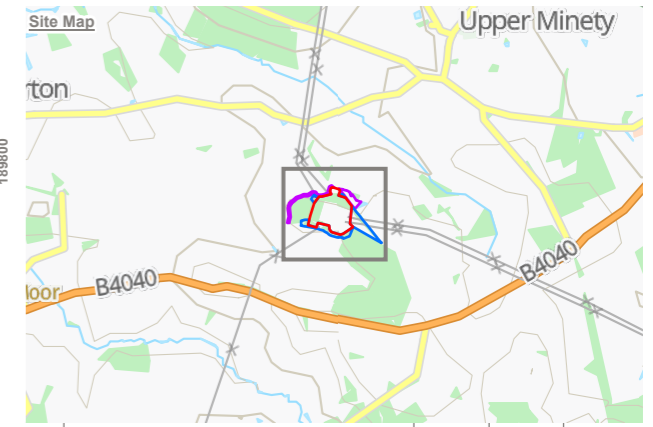


**KEY**

- Site application boundary
- Client ownership boundary
- Off-site mitigation area
- Tree group and woodland outlines
- Urban tree
- Grassland
  - Modified grassland
  - Other neutral grassland
- Heathland and Shrub
  - Bramble scrub
  - Hawthorn scrub
  - Hazel scrub
- Mixed scrub
- Lakes
  - Ponds (non-priority habitat)
- Sparsely Vegetated Land
  - Ruderal/ephemeral
- Woodland and Forest
  - Lowland mixed deciduous woodland
  - Other woodland, broadleaved
- Urban
  - Developed land, sealed surface
  - Vacant/derelict land/bareground

**Note:**  
The locations of habitats and habitat features are indicative.

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Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date
E	Added off-site mitigation areas	BJ	PB	30/05/2024
D	Tree groups and woodland IDs added	BJ	PB	03/07/2023

**TEP THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP**

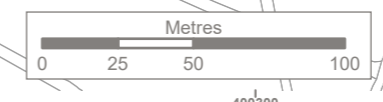
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Tel 01925 844004 e-mail tep@tep.uk.com www.tep.uk.com

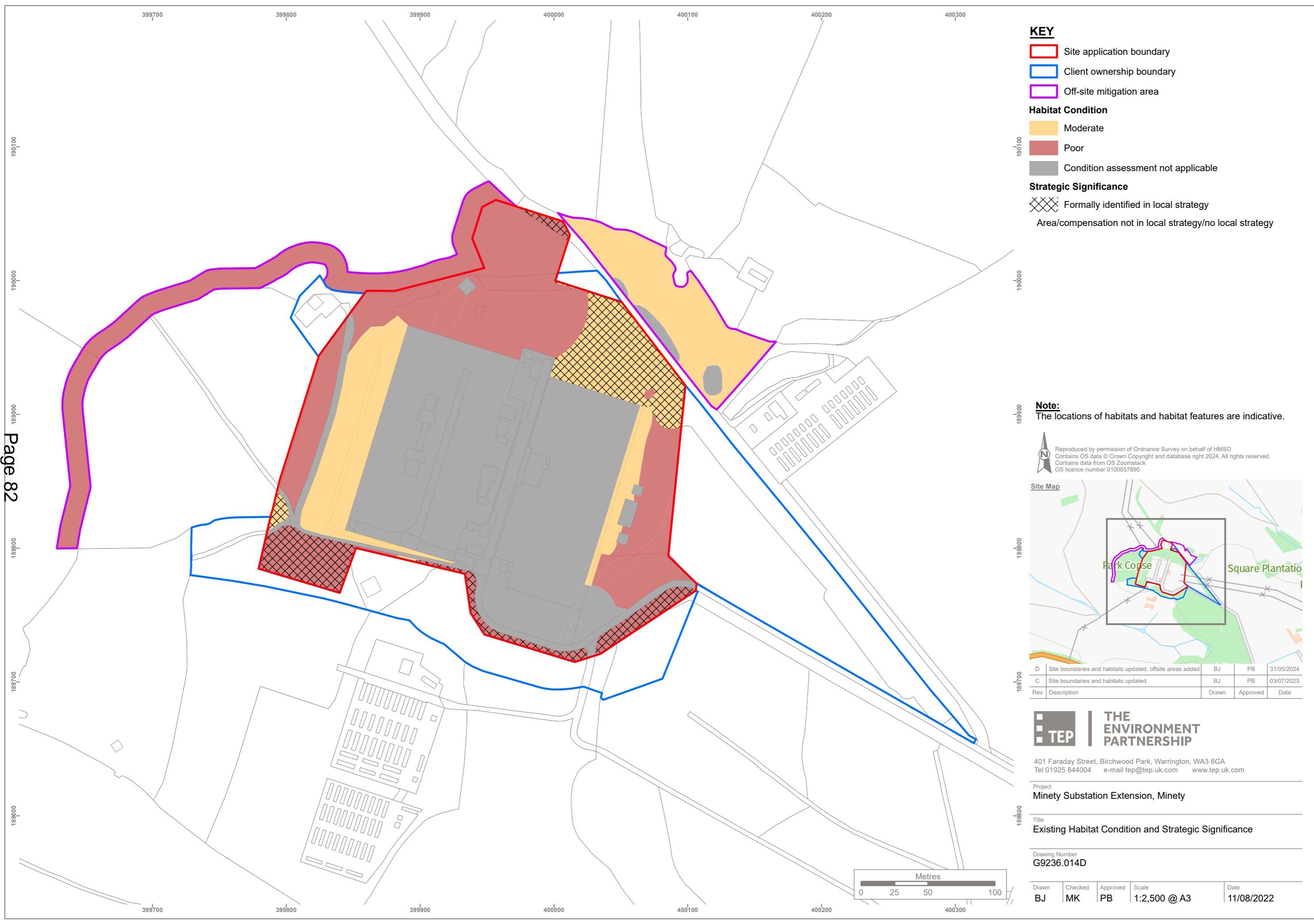
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Title  
**Existing UK Habitats**

Drawing Number  
**G9236.013E**

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
BJ	MK	PB	1:2,500 @ A3	11/08/2022





**KEY**

- Site application boundary
- Client ownership boundary
- Off-site mitigation area

**Habitat Condition**

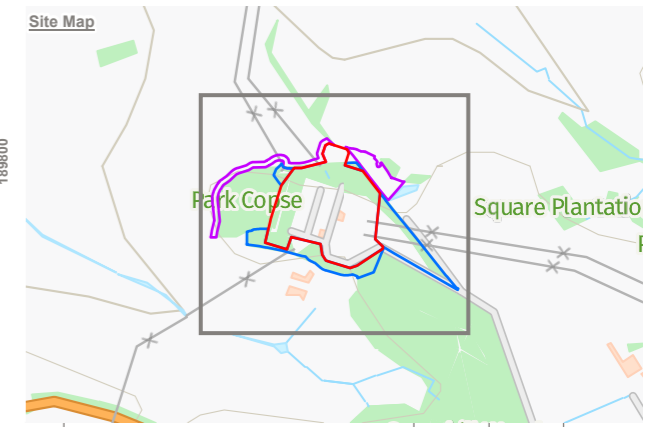
- Moderate
- Poor
- Condition assessment not applicable

**Strategic Significance**

- Formally identified in local strategy
- Area/compensation not in local strategy/no local strategy

**Note:**  
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Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date
D	Site boundaries and habitats updated, offsite areas added	BJ	PB	31/05/2024
C	Site boundaries and habitats updated	BJ	PB	03/07/2023

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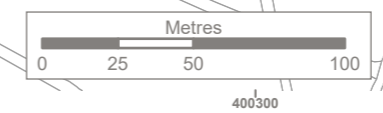
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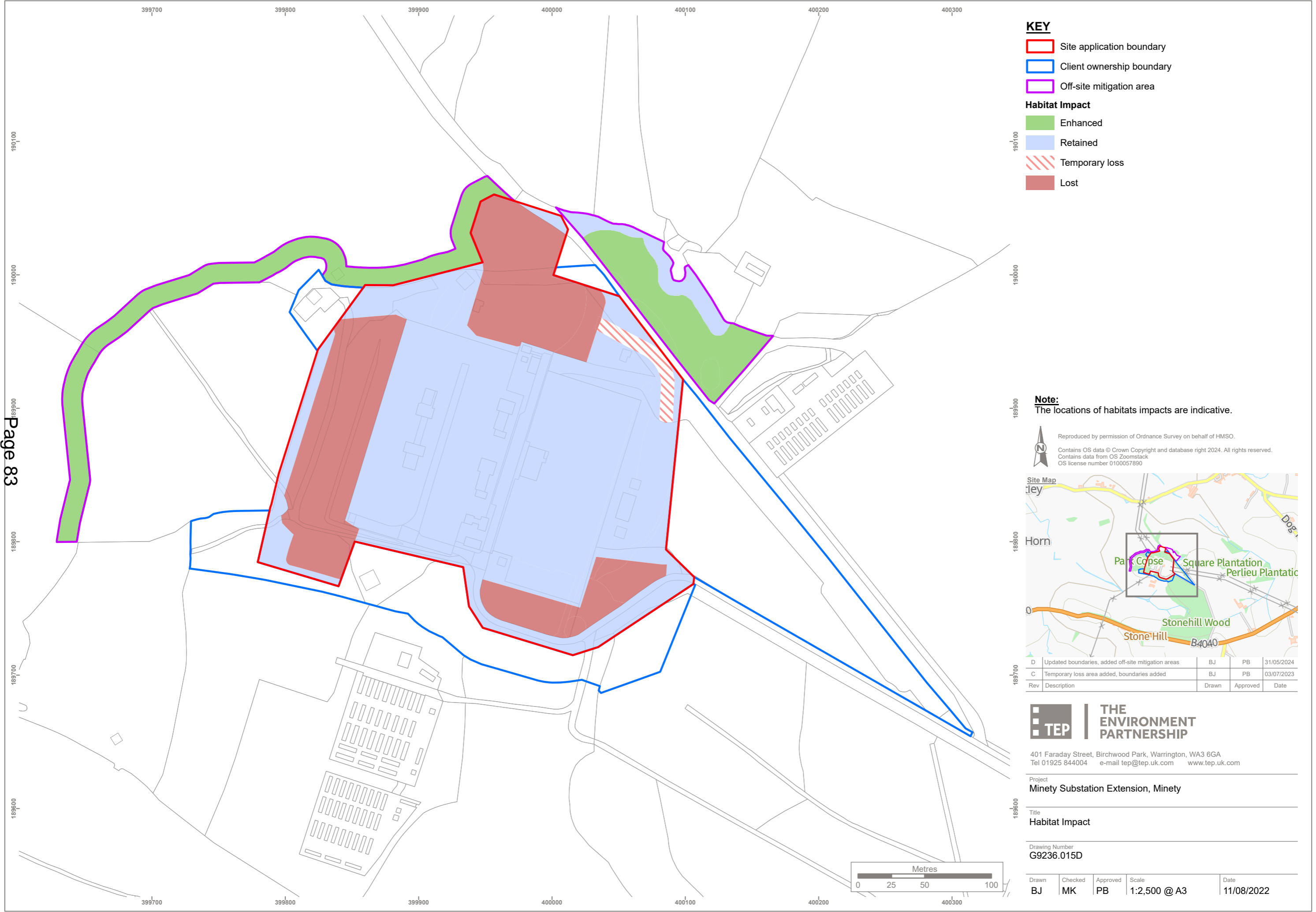
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Title  
**Existing Habitat Condition and Strategic Significance**

Drawing Number  
**G9236.014D**

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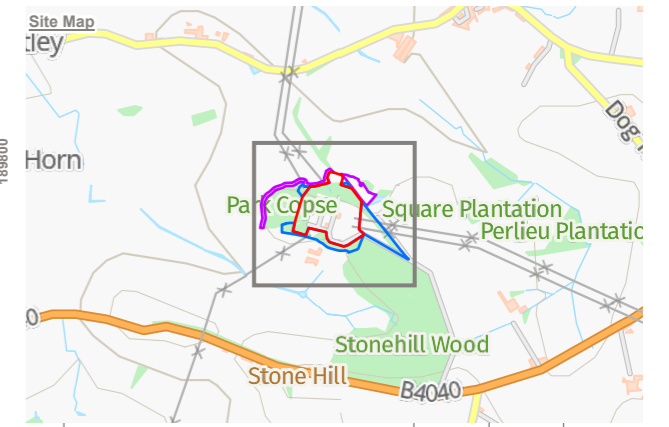


**KEY**

- Site application boundary
  - Client ownership boundary
  - Off-site mitigation area
- Habitat Impact**
- Enhanced
  - Retained
  - Temporary loss
  - Lost

**Note:**  
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Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date
D	Updated boundaries, added off-site mitigation areas	BJ	PB	31/05/2024
C	Temporary loss area added, boundaries added	BJ	PB	03/07/2023

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Project  
**Minety Substation Extension, Minety**

Title  
**Habitat Impact**

Drawing Number  
**G9236.015D**

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188800

399800 400000 400200

399800 400000 400200

**KEY**

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- Client ownership boundary
- Off-site mitigation areas
- Permanent loss

**Mitigation/Compensation**

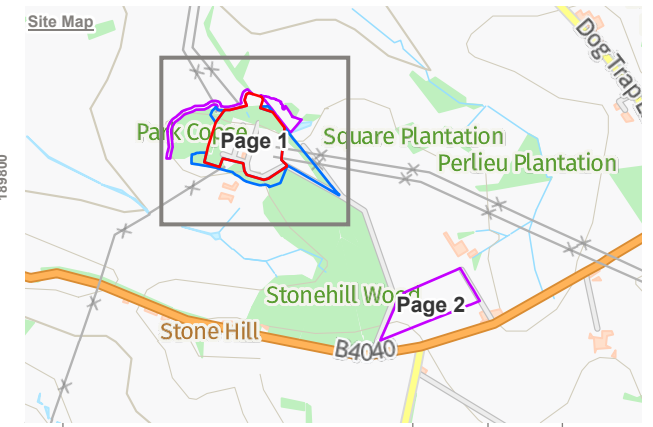
- Box location
- Log/brush piles
- Proposed rural tree planting
- Dead hedge
- Created hedge
- Proposed new native hedgerow under planning app: 20/07390/FUL
- Enhanced woodland
- Enhanced scrub
- Natural regeneration
- Scrub creation
- Retained scrub
- Retained woodland

**Note:**

The locations of habitats and habitat features are indicative.



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Area included under existing planning app 20/07390/FUL

D	Added off-site mitigation areas	BJ	PB	30/05/2024
C	Existing planning application information added	BJ	PB	06/07/2023
Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date

**THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP**

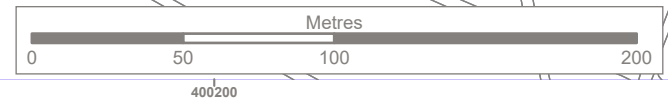
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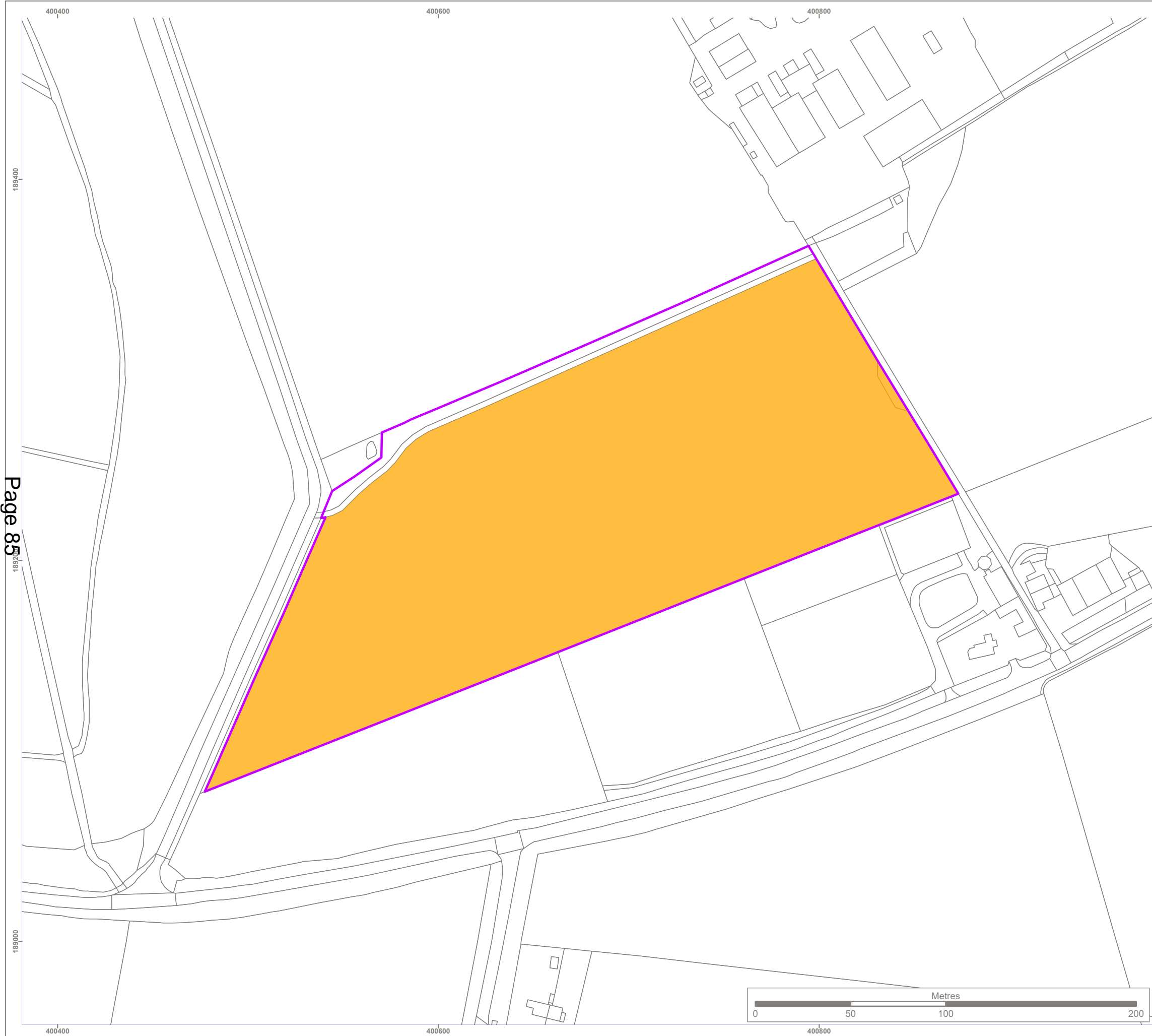
Project  
**Minety Substation Extension, Minety**

Title  
**Figure E3: Specifications for Mitigation/Compensation**

Drawing Number  
**G9236.021D.1** Page 1 of 2

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
AR	MH	CK	1:2,500 @ A3	22/03/2023





**KEY**

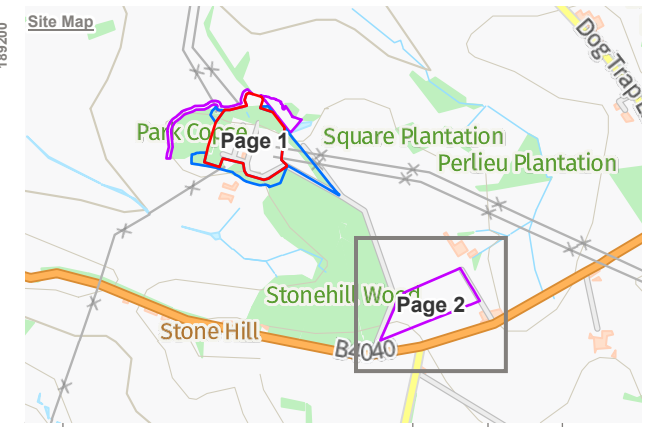
- Off-site mitigation areas
- Woodland planting

**Note:**

The locations of habitats and habitat features are indicative.



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Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date
D	Added off-site mitigation areas	BJ	PB	30/05/2024
C	Existing planning application information added	BJ	PB	06/07/2023

**THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP**

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Project  
**Minety Substation Extension, Minety**

Title  
**Figure E3: Specifications for Mitigation/Compensation**

Drawing Number	Page 2 of 2
G9236.021D.2	

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
AR	MH	CK	1:2,000 @ A3	22/03/2023



**SHEQ NOTES**

1. THIS IS A PLANNING PERMISSION DRAWING AND IS FOR DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ONLY.

**LEGEND:**

- EXISTING EQUIPMENT
- NEW EQUIPMENT (NG OWNED) SCHEME NO 101488
- EQUIPMENT TO BE REMOVED
- TRANSFORMER FIRE DAMAGE ZONE
- RED LINE BOUNDARY

Page 86



**PRELIMINARY DESIGN  
NOT TO BE USED FOR  
CONSTRUCTION**

0 7.5 1:750 MILLIMETERS 75

**THIS DRAWING NEEDS TO PRINTED IN COLOUR**

Rev	Description	Cre'd	Chk'd	App'd	Date
3	NO COMMENTS IMPLEMENTED	BK	VB	VK	13.10.2022
2	NO COMMENTS IMPLEMENTED	BK	VB	VK	28.08.2022
1	NO COMMENTS IMPLEMENTED	BK	VB	VK	13.08.2022
0	ISSUED FOR COMMENTS	BK	JP	VK	08.09.2022

**nationalgrid**

Master Scheme No: <b>101488</b>	Sub-Scheme No: <b>101488</b>	Site: <b>MINETY 400KV SUBSTATION</b>			
Scheme Name: <b>MINETY SUBSTATION GENERATION CONNECTIONS FEASIBILITY</b>					
Document Title: <b>PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING LAYOUT</b>					
Created by: <b>BK</b>	Date: <b>02.09.2022</b>	Checked by: <b>JP</b>	Date: <b>02.09.2022</b>	Approved by: <b>VK</b>	Date: <b>08.09.2022</b>
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National Grid Document Number: <b>PDD-101488-LAY-302</b>					
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**MINETY SUBSTATION EXTENSION  
MINETY, WILTSHIRE  
DORMOUSE MITIGATION STRATEGY**

Document Title	Dormouse Mitigation Strategy
Prepared for	National Grid
Prepared by	TEP - Warrington
Document Ref	9236.005

Author	Christopher King
Date	June 2024
Checked	Peter Bonney
Approved	Peter Bonney

Amendment History					
Version	Date	Modified by	Check / Approved by	Reason(s) issue	Status
2.0	06/07/23	CK	PB	Amendments made following client and LPA Ecologist comments	Active
3.0	03/06/24	CK	NG/PB	Amendments made to mitigation areas	ISSUE



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## **APPENDICES**

APPENDIX A: PDD-101488-LAY-302-REV - 3 Proposed Development

## **DRAWINGS**

G9236.019D - Figure D Impacts Plan

G9236.021D - Figure E3 Specifications for Mitigation and Compensation

G9236.022 - Hedgerow Location Plan

## 1.0 Introduction, Site Location and Purpose

- 1.1 TEP was commissioned by National Grid (NG) in December 2021 to undertake an Ecological Assessment of land surrounding the existing Minety 400kV substation (hereafter referred to as the 'Application Area') in relation to potential extension proposals to the west and north of the substation. An updated extended phase 1 habitat survey was completed in May 2023 following amendments to the site application boundary.

### Site Location

- 1.2 The footprint of the development boundary measures approximately 8ha and lies to the southwest of the village of Minety, Malmesbury in Wiltshire. The site is bordered on three sides by mature woodland with agricultural fields beyond. The location is shown in Figure 1. The approximately central grid reference is SU 00028 89842.
- 1.3 Figure 1 shows the clients ownership boundary in the wider landscape.



Figure 1. Site Ownership Location

### Background

- 1.4 The Ecological Assessment<sup>1</sup>, included an extended phase 1 habitat survey. The phase 1 habitat survey confirmed the presence of suitable habitat to support dormice, therefore, dormouse surveys were recommended to be undertaken to support any future planning application. Dormouse nest tube surveys were completed on the site between March and September 2022.

<sup>1</sup> TEP Doc Ref: 9236.003

- 1.5 Full dormouse survey methods and results can be found in the Dormouse Survey Report (TEP Doc Ref: 9236.004) which was submitted as part of the initial planning application. In summary, a single dormouse nest and a single possible dormouse nest were found in two separate nest boxes in September and October 2022, respectively.

### **Purpose**

- 1.6 The Ecological Assessment included the completion of a Desk Study, Extended Phase 1 habitat survey and further detailed surveys for protected and notable species over the course of 2022-2023, with surveys for dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*), confirming the presence of this species onsite.
- 1.7 The hazel dormouse is listed as a European Protected Species (EPS) on Schedule 2 of the Conservation Regulations (Annex IV(a) to the Habitats Directive), affording it protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010).
- 1.8 In the absence of appropriate compensation and mitigation measures, the development proposals are considered likely to result in the destruction of, and disturbance to, dormouse habitat both on and immediately adjacent to the Application Site. Additionally, the potential for disturbance, injury and killing of individuals could also arise during the pre-construction and construction phases. Should the development proposals be consented, given the risk of causing an offence under the Conservation Regulations a development licence from Natural England (NE), will therefore be necessary prior to any commencement of works.
- 1.9 This Dormouse Habitat Creation Strategy, therefore, sets out the recommended sensitive working methodologies to be implemented during the pre-construction and construction phases of the development proposed. The methodologies devised are based upon the findings of the dormouse survey completed by TEP during 2022.
- 1.10 This strategy also sets out the recommended compensation, mitigation and enhancement measures to be implemented as part of the proposals, to ensure no significant negative effects will arise upon the favourable conservation status of the local dormouse population following project completion.
- 1.11 As such, it is considered that this strategy could form the basis of the Method Statement template comprising any future development licence application submission to NE going forward.
- 1.12 Furthermore, this strategy sets out to address comments made by the Local Planning Authority (LPA) Ecologist and Natural England (NE) during the determination process of the planning application (Ref: PL/2022/09258). The comments made were as follows:
- Evidence how connectivity will be maintained between Park Copse and Stonehill Wood.  
*"Based on the information available it appears that connectivity between Park Copse to the west of the site and Stonehill Wood to the southeast of the site may not be maintained. The woodland strip to the south of the site is likely to provide an important commuting corridor and we recommend*

*that the proposals demonstrate that a functional ecological corridor for dormice is maintained between the two blocks of woodland."*

- Requirement for Habitat Creation Strategy.  
*"The supporting Dormouse Survey Report states that the proposals include the loss of approximately 2ha of suitable dormouse habitat. While Natural England welcomes the need to mitigate this habitat loss, we are concerned that the permanent loss of suitable habitat will be mitigated off-site to the detriment of the local population. Based on the information provided Natural England advises that the proposals without appropriate mitigation would result in a significant reduction in the habitat available which may have a detrimental impact on the local dormouse population. The final dormouse mitigation strategy should be agreed by your Authority's Ecology Team."*

1.13 It should be noted that this strategy has been developed in accordance with the comments received by the County Ecologist on 23 March 2023 and 27 September 2023. It has been further informed by ongoing discussions with Natural England through NE's Discretionary Advice Service (DAS) in 2023 and 2024.

## 2.0 Survey Findings

2.1 Full survey findings are detailed in the Dormouse Survey Report (TEP Doc Ref: 9236.004). A summary of the findings is provided below:

- A data search completed in January 2022 identified no dormouse records within 2km of the site (Source: Wiltshire and Swindon Biological Records Centre (WSBRC)). However, historical records of dormice are known to exist originating from Ravensroost Wood Nature Reserve, located approximately 1.5km southeast of the site.
- In March 2022, 50 dormouse nest tubes were installed in suitable habitats around the substation, spaced approximately 20 metres apart in a grid pattern. Additionally, 15 nest boxes were installed at regular intervals to supplement the nest tubes. Both tubes and boxes were left to settle for about three weeks before the first monthly survey. Monthly surveys began in April and continued through September 2022. In September 2022, a single dormouse nest was found in nest box 5, and during an ad-hoc site visit in October 2022, a potential dormouse nest was discovered in nest box 10. No dormouse-chewed hazelnuts were found during the surveys. By conducting surveys from April through September, an Index of Probability score of 21 was achieved. These surveys were conducted in line with best practice guidance.

## 3.0 Impact Assessment in Absence of Mitigation or Compensation

- 3.1 The overall site (including Application Area and land currently in client's ownership) measures 9.53ha.
- 3.2 The proposed development will result in the permanent loss within the Application Area of approximately:
- 1.14ha of optimal suitable dense mixed scrub;
  - 0.10ha of optimal semi-natural broadleaved woodland, and
  - 0.16ha of sub-optimal plantation broadleaved woodland.
- 3.3 It will also result in the temporary loss of approximately:
- 0.04ha of optimal semi-natural broadleaved woodland, and
  - 0.06ha of sub-optimal plantation broadleaved woodland.

*Table 1. Habitat Impacts*

Habitat	Permanent Loss (ha)	Temporary Loss (ha)	Retained (ha)	Enhanced (ha)
Optimal Habitat				
Semi-natural broadleaved woodland	0.10	0.04	0.64	-
Dense/continuous scrub	1.14	-	0.85	-
Sub-Optimal Habitat				
Plantation broadleaved woodland	0.16	0.06	0.01	1.35

- 3.4 Habitat losses proposed across the Application Site have the potential to kill, injure and/or disturb dormice that may be present therein. In the absence of mitigation or compensation and considering the likely small size of the dormouse population located within the local landscape, such impacts upon the dormouse population present onsite are considered to be significant low negative at the site and local level, but negligible at the regional and national levels.

### Assessment of Adjacent Planning Applications

- 3.5 The following planning applications have been reviewed to inform this strategy which either fall within NG land ownership or adjacent to it are:
- 20/07390/FUL,
  - PL/2023/03501,
  - PL/2022/05504,

- 19/11460/FUL,
- 18/04718/FUL, and
- 20/03528/FUL.

Planning Application: 20/07390/FUL

- 3.6 This scheme falls within NG land ownership boundary, located within the grassland field to the east of the existing substation. Proposals are for the installation of a battery storage facility and ancillary development.
- 3.7 The landscape design for planning application 20/07390/FUL indicates that the belt of plantation woodland located on the eastern ownership boundary is not to be impacted by the proposals. A new native hedgerow is proposed to be planted along the western site boundary (See Figure 2). The hedgerow will measure approximately 100m in length and comprise dogwood, dog rose, hawthorn, blackthorn, and hazel. The hedgerow will link to existing woodland in the north and terminate at the substation access road to the south. Although the new hedgerow will not be directly connected to woodland (Stonehill Wood) to the south of the access road, this gap isn't considered impassable for dormice.

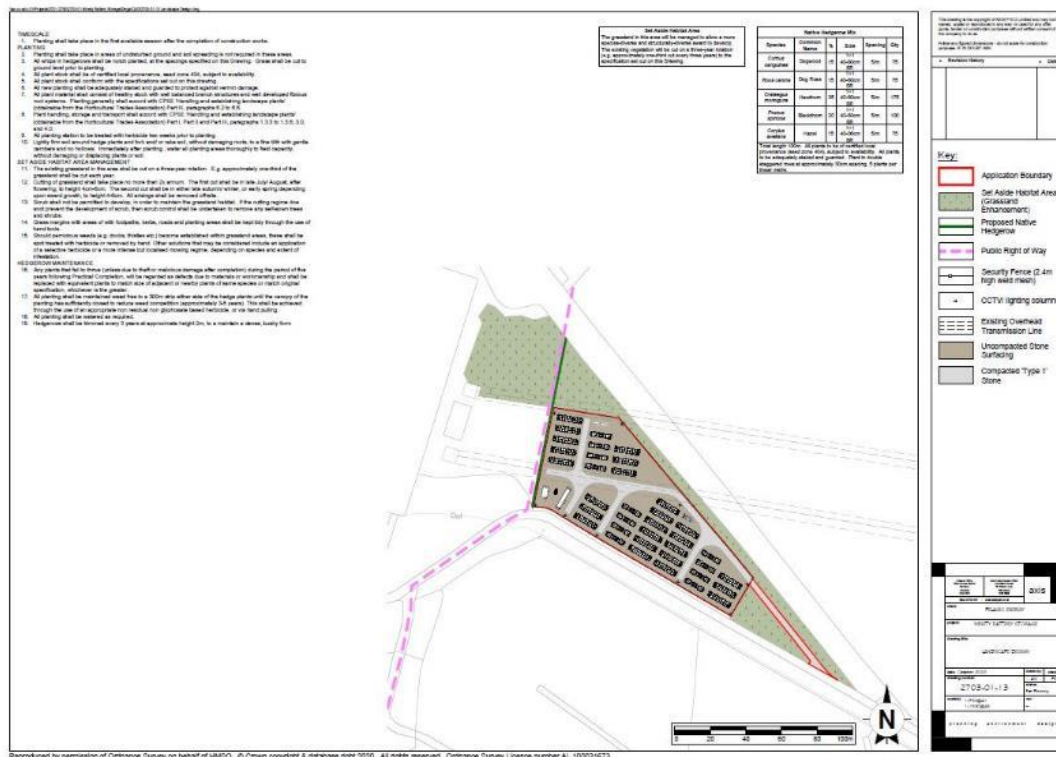


Figure 2. 20/07390/FUL Landscape Design

Planning Application: PL/2023/03501 - Variation of condition 3, 4, 5, 6, 7, 11 & 20 of 20/03528/FUL

- 3.8 This scheme falls adjacent to the NG land ownership boundary to the north and extends both to the west around Park Copse and to the east between Cloatley Farm SSSI and Stonehill Wood.

- 3.9 Proposals are for installation of a renewable led energy scheme comprising ground mounted photovoltaic solar arrays and battery-based electricity storage containers together with transformer stations; access; internal access track; landscaping; security fencing; security measures; access gate; and ancillary infrastructure.
- 3.10 The landscape masterplan (Drawing No: P19-2270\_13) shows large areas of land surrounding the north of the substation and Park Copse being allocated for soft landscaping in the form of WFG8 Hedgerows and Shaded Areas Grassland mix seeding (See Figure 3). Furthermore, existing gaps in hedgerows within the wider scheme are proposed to be enhanced through supplementary planting. Therefore, improving potential dormouse habitat within the wider area. The woodland belt separating the site and Cloatley Farm SSSI will not be impacted by the proposals.



Figure 3. PL/2023/03501: Landscape Masterplan

Planning Application: PL/2022/05504

- 3.11 This scheme falls adjacent to NG land ownership boundary to the southwest. Proposals are for the installation of a battery energy storage system (BESS) together with associated ancillary infrastructure, equipment, and access arrangements.
- 3.12 The landscape plan (Drawing No: 862/01 Rev B) shows a large area of proposed tree and shrub mix planting to be located adjacent to Park Copse woodland and extending down the western boundary (Figure 4). This proposed planting scheme will expand and enhance existing off-site hedgerows and scrub located to the south of the substation. Therefore, providing the local dormouse population with increased suitable habitat in the wider area.



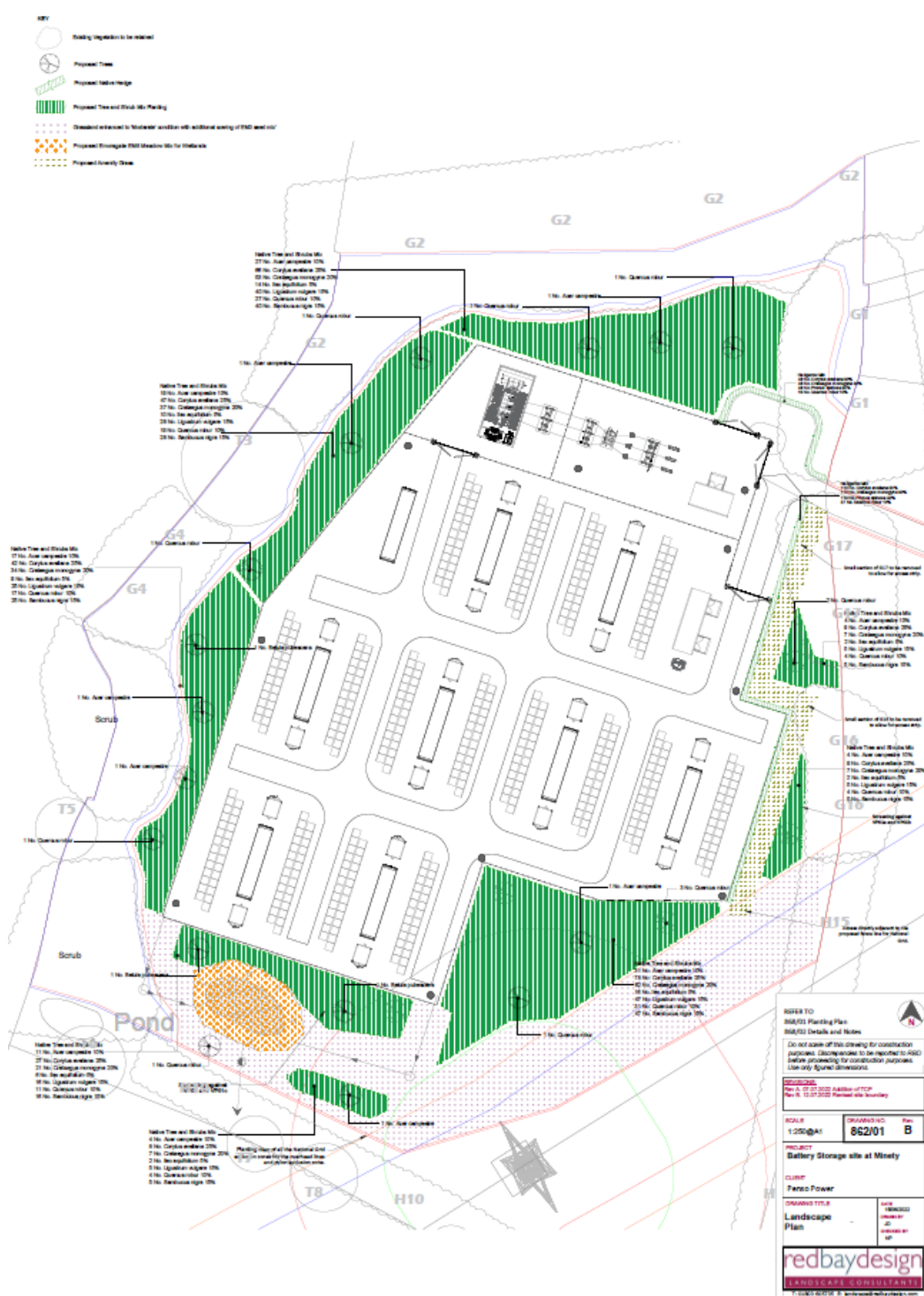


Figure 4. PL/2022/05504 Landscape Plan

## 4.0 Mitigation and Compensation

### Works to be Undertaken

- 4.1 Mitigation measures will be set out in a 'Toolbox Talk' at the outset of works, in addition to being explained to the site contractors at a pre-works commencement meeting on site. The Named Ecologist or Accredited Agent (AA) will be on site during the vegetation clearance and planting phases to ensure that all works are being implemented in accordance with the licence. A fingertip search by the Named Ecologist or AA will be undertaken prior to any relevant vegetation clearance on site.

### Site Clearance Methods

- 4.2 Due to the significant delays encountered during the planning application/determination period, the commencement of construction once planning permission and a mitigation licence is granted is essential. Therefore, a single stage 'summer clearance' method is proposed in this instance. It has been proposed by Wiltshire Council that a Site Clearance Management Plan be approved prior to clearance to ensure adequate protection and mitigation for ecological receptors prior to and during construction.
- 4.3 Once a NE dormouse mitigation licence has been granted, vegetation clearance will be undertaken in a single stage approach between mid-September and end of October 2024.

#### Summer Clearance Methodology

- 4.4 Single stage, summer clearance methodologies, aimed at displacing active individuals away from the area to be cleared and towards retained vegetation adjacent, are proposed.
- 4.5 Single stage summer clearance works will involve the completion of both above-ground and belowground vegetation clearance during the dormouse active season, with above-ground vegetation clearance confined to the period mid-September to 31st October 2024, thereby avoiding the main dormouse breeding season (considered to be between mid-June and August inclusive), and hibernation period (considered to be between November and March inclusive). Clearance works will be overseen by the suitability qualified ecologist (or their accredited agents and assistants) named on the licence. The removal of all mature trees considered to have bat potential will be subject to a prior update inspection by a licensed bat ecologist.
- 4.6 The construction of the Proposed Development will follow general mitigation measures to be used throughout the construction process, including:
- Machinery will be switched off when not in use;
  - No overnight working will be undertaken; and
  - If task lighting is required between dusk and dawn, it shall be directional and avoid light spill onto adjacent vegetated areas.
- 4.7 Should there be a delay in receiving planning permission or granting of the mitigation licence and works do not commence until November 2024, then a two stage 'winter clearance' methodology will be employed.

## Habitat Creation

- 4.8 TEP and the Client have had ongoing discussions with Natural England to re-design the habitat creation scheme to ensure the proposals fully compensate for the habitat loss and the locality of such creation provides connectivity for the local population.

### Woodland Creation

- 4.9 An existing horse grazed grassland field located to the southeast of the Site is proposed to be planted with woodland tree specimens to create a mixed woodland. The area of proposed woodland creation measures 4.61ha, which equates to a gain of just over 3:1 ratio in area of habitat proposed to be lost under current proposals. Refer to Drawing G9236.021D
- 4.10 The location of this off-site created woodland has been chosen as it is functionally linked to both Stonehill Wood to the west and the surrounding hedgerow network to the south and east.
- 4.11 Once matured, the created woodland will act as a 'stepping stone', allowing dormice in the area to disperse. It is well positioned, linking with surrounding hedgerows which connect to the Ravensroost Wood Nature Reserve, where historical records of dormice have been noted.

### Scrub Creation

- 4.12 Two off-site areas of habitat creation is proposed. Firstly, an area measuring 0.74ha located immediately to the north of the Site is proposed to be enhanced and planted with mixed scrub specimens. The existing grassland field is currently used for silage.
- 4.13 A second area of off-site scrub creation is proposed. This 15m wide buffer strip measuring a total of 0.81ha will border the entire western side of Park Copse (ancient woodland) and will not only replace the scrub buffer habitat lost as part of the development but act as a new ancient woodland buffer to the proposed third-party development located to the west of the Site. Both areas of proposed scrub planting will maintain and improve habitat connectivity between habitats within this area of the site and the wider landscape to the north. Overall, this proposal would ensure there is connectivity between habitats (scrub and woodland) on the west and east of the site via off-site habitats (hedgerows and woodland) to the north.
- 4.14 With the mitigation measures outlined above, no long-term adverse effects on the site's ecological functionality are expected. Combined, the proposed woodland and scrub creation measures proposed and described above is set to deliver a habitat creation gain at a 4:1 ratio. Based on the proposed mitigation, it is considered that the favourable conservation status of dormice in the area will be preserved.
- 4.15 Refer to Figure X. Aerial Imagery showing proposed additional areas of habitat creation.
- 4.16



Figure 5: Additional off-site habitat creation areas

#### Dead Hedging and Habitat Piles

- 4.17 The creation of over 600m of dead hedge is proposed throughout the site. Dead hedging is proposed along the western, southern, and eastern site boundaries. The creation of dead hedges will provide dormice with ranging opportunities in areas of the site where habitat enhancement is proposed. All dead hedges will be created using natural material that is felled during vegetation removal/enhancement measures. Created dead hedges will measure approximately 1m wide and 2m high.
- 4.18 A total of 10 log and brash piles will be created throughout the retained/enhanced habitats surrounding the substation by using material which has been felled. These log and brash piles will provide additional shelter opportunities for not only hibernating dormice but also amphibians, reptiles, and hedgehog. The indicative locations are shown on Drawing G9236.021D.

#### **Maintaining Habitat Connectivity**

- 4.19 As it stands, habitat connectivity between Park Copse and Stonehill Wood is present, albeit the majority of the habitat connecting the two areas of ancient woodland is considered sub-optimal dormouse habitat comprising plantation broadleaved woodland. The plantation woodland lacks a sufficient scrub understory and species diversity. An area of dense mixed scrub is present predominantly along the southern site boundary extending around the south and eastern side of the existing pylon.

- 4.20 To address the first Natural England comment (See Paragraph 1.6), habitat connectivity between Park Copse located to the west of the site and Stonehill Wood located to the east of the site will be maintained via retained scrub habitat which is present along the western and southern site boundaries. This corridor of suitable dormouse habitat (mixed scrub) measures approximately 10m wide on the west of the site. An existing low maintenance access track forms part of this 10m corridor. A 12.15m wide habitat corridor will also remain along the southern boundary running to the south of the existing pylon and the proposed 33kV switch room.
- 4.21 Although the habitat to the east of the pylon mainly comprises sub-optimal plantation woodland, a strip of dense scrub is present along the majority of southern site boundary. This strip of scrub measures approximately 4m wide and comprises predominately bramble but with stands of hazel and willow species present.



*Figure 6. Existing scrub corridor in the south of the site (To be retained)*

- 4.22 Furthermore, existing off-site hedgerows located to the south of the site provide valuable habitat connections between Park Copse and Stonehill Wood (See Drawing G9236.022 Hedgerow Location Plan). These hedgerows will not be affected as part of the proposals and will ensure habitat connectivity between the offsite woodlands and the habitats within the site itself remain intact and functional both during and post construction.
- 4.23 A pre-existing access track which provides access to a newly constructed battery storage facility located immediately to the south of the site, separates the plantation woodland that is present in the south of the site with Stonehill Wood to the east. This access track was likely once a farming access which has now been upgraded to support the access into the battery storage facility (See Figure 3).

- 4.24 Therefore, it is likely that there has always been some form of separation between woodlands in this area of the site. This gap measuring approximately 4-5m wide is considered not significant enough to deter dormice from ranging between woodlands. Furthermore, the canopies of both woodlands do connect at a height of approximately 3 - 4m, ensuring there is some level of connectivity between the two areas of woodland (Figure 4).



*Figure 7. Aerial Imagery of Site*



Figure 8. Photo indicating woodland connectivity above access track.

### Habitat Enhancement

- 4.25 The plantation woodland which is found throughout the site currently represents sub-optimal habitat for dormice due to the lack of structural and species diversity (See Figure 5 and 7). In order to improve the suitability of this habitat for dormice, it is recommended that all remaining plantation broadleaved woodland which is not to be impacted by development proposals, of which totals approximately 1.35ha in size, shall be enhanced by the management practice of 'thinning'.
- 4.26 Selective thinning to a maximum of 20% of the total number of trees in each woodland area is recommended under the guidance of an experienced arboriculturist and an ecologist. Ash dieback (*Hymenoscyphus fraxineus*) has been identified throughout the site and is detailed in the Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report<sup>2</sup>. Removal of these trees may result in a slight increase in the percentage of woodland removed, however, this is considered acceptable, and will benefit the woodland in the long-term.
- 4.27 Once thinned, enhancement planting with a mix of dormouse favoured woody species including but not limited to hazel, honeysuckle, and oak will be completed, which, once matured will provide a wider network of suitable dormouse habitat surrounding the substation site leading into the wider landscape such as Stonehill Wood. A mitigation planting plan shall be produced for the mitigation licence application. The plan shall provide a breakdown of the species to be planted and location.

<sup>2</sup> Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report, Proposed Extension to Minety 400kV Substation, AECOM: December 2022.



*Figure 9. Sub-optimal dormouse habitat - Plantation Woodland located along the eastern Site boundary.*

- 4.28 Following vegetation removal, the remaining scrub located on the western site boundary bordering Park Copse shall be retained as it already represents good quality dormouse habitat and is well connected to both the ancient woodland to the west and retained woodland to the south. However, habitat connectivity in this area will be enhanced through the creation and maintenance of a dead hedge.
- 4.29 The dead hedge will measure approximately 150m in length and be located along the western site boundary acting as a temporary boundary feature between the site and adjacent third-party ancient woodland. It will be created using the material cut from the adjacent areas. The installation of a dead hedge will provide additional ranging and hibernating opportunities for dormice but also sheltering opportunities for a range of other species including hedgehog, birds, invertebrates, and other small mammals. An example of a dead hedge design is provided in Figure 6.





Figure 10. Example of a dead hedge



Figure 11. Plantation Woodland within the south of the Site

- 4.30 Approximately 0.1ha of semi-natural and plantation broadleaved woodland shall be cleared to facilitate access to the northern area of works. Once works are completed this strip of cleared vegetation will be left to naturally regenerate. A small area (0.05ha) of recently felled woodland was identified in the north during the updated phase 1 habitat survey. These cleared areas of woodland will act as glades, creating valuable woodland edge habitat.

## **Dormouse Boxes**

- 4.31 A total of 15 dormouse nest boxes were installed to supplement the nest tube survey in 2022. These boxes were left in place post survey completion. It is proposed that an additional 15 (minimum) nest boxes are installed across the site to provide further nesting opportunities for dormice. The existing nest boxes shall be relocated beyond the works area prior to works commencing. The indicative nest box locations are shown on Drawing G9236.021D.
- 4.32 Post-construction dormouse population monitoring will be proposed as part of any future NE dormouse mitigation licence method statement.

With the mitigation measures outlined above, no long-term adverse effects on the site's ecological functionality are expected. Based on the proposed mitigation, it is considered that the favourable conservation status of dormice in the area will be preserved.

## 5.0 Post-Development Site Safeguarding

### Habitat Management and Maintenance

- 5.1 Native woodland, scrub and tree planting to be implemented across the proposed development, will require ongoing sensitive and appropriate management over the lifetime of the development given the presence of dormice on site.
- 5.2 Sensitive management will seek to maximise the value of food, dispersal, breeding, and hibernation resources for dormice through:
- The maintenance of canopy and understorey connectivity within woodland areas through appropriate management measures, including sensitive levels of coppicing and thinning to ensure good light levels reach the woodland floor, and
  - Minimising disturbance within newly planted areas through the provision and future maintenance of permanent fencing installed around the peripheries of dormouse habitat to be created and enhanced to facilitate establishment whilst preventing public access.
- 5.3 Key management and maintenance prescriptions are detailed below.

### New Planting Areas

#### Planting and Establishment

- 5.4 Native woodland, scrub and tree planting is proposed along the southern, western northwestern and eastern boundaries of the Application Site, and will commence as soon as possible during the first appropriate season as determined by the Chartered Landscape Architect/Contractor appointed by the Developer.
- 5.5 The locations, planting densities and species incorporated into the new planting areas will be detailed within the soft landscape scheme.
- 5.6 Planting will be undertaken in accordance with those specifications stated therein. Additional measures are further provided below.
- 5.7 All planting material will incorporate native species and will be of local or at least UK origin. Such stock will be handled in accordance with the Horticulture Trade Association guidelines and will follow landscape specifications as provided by a Chartered Landscape Architect/Contractor appointed by the Developer.
- 5.8 All products will be supplied and fitted in accordance with the manufacture's guidelines and whips protected using stakes and durable rubber ties.
- 5.9 The condition of all tree stakes, ties and/or guards will be checked by the appointed Landscape Contractor or Developer, and all broken items will be replaced, and items regularly adjusted to accommodate plant growth and prevent rubbing. Any bark damage will be cut back. All plants will be straightened and the ground at the base to be firmed up. All shelters will be hand weeded.

- 5.10 Watering will be undertaken as necessary by the appointed Landscape Contractor or Developer to ensure the establishment and thriving of all planted areas. Watering will be to the full depth of the topsoil. If supply is restricted by emergency legislation, watering will not be carried out unless instructed to do so.
- 5.11 All areas where plants or trees have failed to thrive (through death, damage or disease), will be identified by the appointed Landscape Contractor or Developer, with specimens removed and replaced with equivalent or more appropriate native species to match the size of adjacent nearby plants in the next appropriate planting season, as frequent as necessary.
- 5.12 All plants will be pruned to promote healthy growth and natural shape, and any dead, dying or diseased wood and suckers will be removed. Pruning will be undertaken annually or as appropriate to each species between October and February inclusive, to avoid the main bird breeding and dormouse active season and undertaken according to best practice. All arisings will be removed for composting.
- 5.13 Cultivation adjacent to established vegetation will take care to ensure no damage to existing root systems, with disturbance kept to the minimum necessary to expose fresh soil.

### **Long-term Maintenance and Management**

- 5.14 To ensure the long-term viability of all retained and newly planted woodland, scrub and trees, an assessment of their condition will be carried out by an Arboricultural Association (AA), approved arboricultural contractor or professional arboriculturist every two years for the first five years, to ensure that the tree stock is managed for its health and safety and its lifespan and coverage optimised.
- 5.15 With respect to retained, and newly planted trees, and scrub species, their management will aim to maximise the value of food, nesting, and hibernation resources for dormice through the following measures:
  - The implementation of long cutting cycles, with hedgerow cutting to occur every three years to maintain heights no less than 3m. Cutting will be undertaken on a 3 year rotation cycle, with a maximum of 30% of the hedgerow resource cut at any one time (thereby enabling a minimum of 30% left to grow for 7-10 years), to ensure that a proportion of cut versus un-cut hedgerows exists onsite at any one time;
  - The implementation of appropriate hedgerow management, including coppicing and/or laying of the hedgerow where appropriate according to species, to encourage the formation of a denser and more continuous hedgerow. Where stands of hazel, willow and other coppice-tolerant species are present, then such species should be subject to coppicing regimes on a 6–10-year rotation or where appropriate to species;
  - The selective thinning of all retained and newly planted native trees and shrubs, and small-scale removal of scrub and invasive species where appropriate, will be undertaken to ensure the following: that overcrowding is reduced with increasing species maturity; that slower growing climax species are not outcompeted; and that diseased and dying plants are

removed. Thinning is to be undertaken between December and February inclusive to avoid the main bird breeding and dormouse season; and

- The avoidance of herbicide use unless considered necessary to inhibit re-growth of non-native and invasive species.

5.16 In addition to the above, any maintenance pruning required should be undertaken in accordance with good horticultural and arboricultural practice with thinning, trimming and shaping of specimens undertaken as appropriate to species, location, and stage of growth. Pruning should be confined to the months of December and February inclusive, so as to avoid the main bird breeding and dormouse active seasons. All arisings from any vegetation clearance will be taken away from the vicinity of the development footprint no later than the day after vegetation clearance.

5.17 The management and maintenance of all retained, enhanced and newly created habitats will be undertaken by a Private Management Company over the lifetime of the development.

### **Dormouse Boxes**

5.18 Dormouse boxes installed across the Development Site will be annually inspected and regularly maintained over the required monitoring period, with damaged boxes replaced where necessary.

5.19 The maintenance and repair of dormouse boxes installed throughout the site remain the responsibility of the Developer, or any appointed Management Company.

5.20 The landscape plans of proposed planning applications surrounding the application site have also been reviewed to ensure any soft landscaping and/or mitigation proposed within this strategy will not be affected by the proposals of a third-party.

5.21 This Dormouse Mitigation Strategy has been produced to address the comments made by NE during the determination period of the proposed developments planning application (Ref: PL/2022/09258).

5.22 The proposed mitigation set out in Chapter 4.0 has been designed to ensure that the sites ability to support dormice not only remains during construction but is also enhanced post development alongside surrounding planning application landscape plans.

## 6.0 Monitoring and Works Schedule

### Monitoring

- 6.1 All dormouse nest boxes installed will be subject to monitoring both during the construction period and following completion, with monitoring completed during years 1, 3 and 5 following dormouse box installation by the suitably qualified ecologist (or their accredited agents) named on any future NE licence. A minimum of three checks will be completed during each monitoring year between May and November. Each check will be carried out between the 19th and 25th of the nominated month in line with national monitoring methodologies.
- 6.2 Evidence of dormice, including nests and individuals will be recorded. Individuals will be sexed and weighed where appropriate to do so, before returning to the box from which it was captured.
- 6.3 All findings will be recorded and submitted annually to Peoples Trust for Endangered Species (PTES) and NE in accordance with the requirements of the licence. A monitoring report detailing the findings of the monitoring surveys and any remedial action undertaken to dormouse boxes and their habitat will also be submitted annually.

### Timetable of Works

- 6.4 Above and below ground woodland and scrub clearance is anticipated to commence from 16th September 2024 following the granting of consent of the detailed application, discharge of relevant conditions attached, and approved licence from NE.
- 6.5 Construction is anticipated to commence as soon as possible in 2025 following granting of consent and completion of the initial phase of vegetation clearance in late 2024, for a period of circa 36 months.

## **APPENDIX A: PDD-101488-LAY-302-REV - 3 Proposed Development**



**SHEQ NOTES**

1. THIS IS A PLANNING PERMISSION DRAWING AND IS FOR DEVELOPMENT CONSENT ONLY.

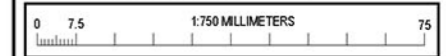
**LEGEND:**

- EXISTING EQUIPMENT
- NEW EQUIPMENT (NG OWNED) SCHEME NO 101488
- EQUIPMENT TO BE REMOVED
- TRANSFORMER FIRE DAMAGE ZONE
- RED LINE BOUNDARY

Page 112



**PRELIMINARY DESIGN  
NOT TO BE USED FOR  
CONSTRUCTION**



THIS DRAWING NEEDS TO PRINTED IN COLOUR

Rev	Description	Cre'd	Chk'd	App'd	Date
3	NO COMMENTS IMPLEMENTED	BK	VB	VK	13.10.2022
2	NO COMMENTS IMPLEMENTED	BK	VB	VK	28.08.2022
1	NO COMMENTS IMPLEMENTED	BK	VB	VK	13.08.2022
0	ISSUED FOR COMMENTS	BK	JP	VK	08.09.2022

**nationalgrid**

Master Scheme No: 101488 Sub-Scheme No: 101488 Site: MINETY 400KV SUBSTATION

Scheme Name: MINETY SUBSTATION GENERATION CONNECTIONS FEASIBILITY

Document Title: PROPOSED INFRASTRUCTURE PLANNING LAYOUT

Created by: BK	Date: 02.09.2022	Checked by: JP	Date: 02.09.2022	Approved by: VK	Date: 08.09.2022
Development Eng: MIKE HALES	Document Type: DWG	Scale: 1:750	Format: A1	Sheet(s): 1 OF 1	Rev: 3

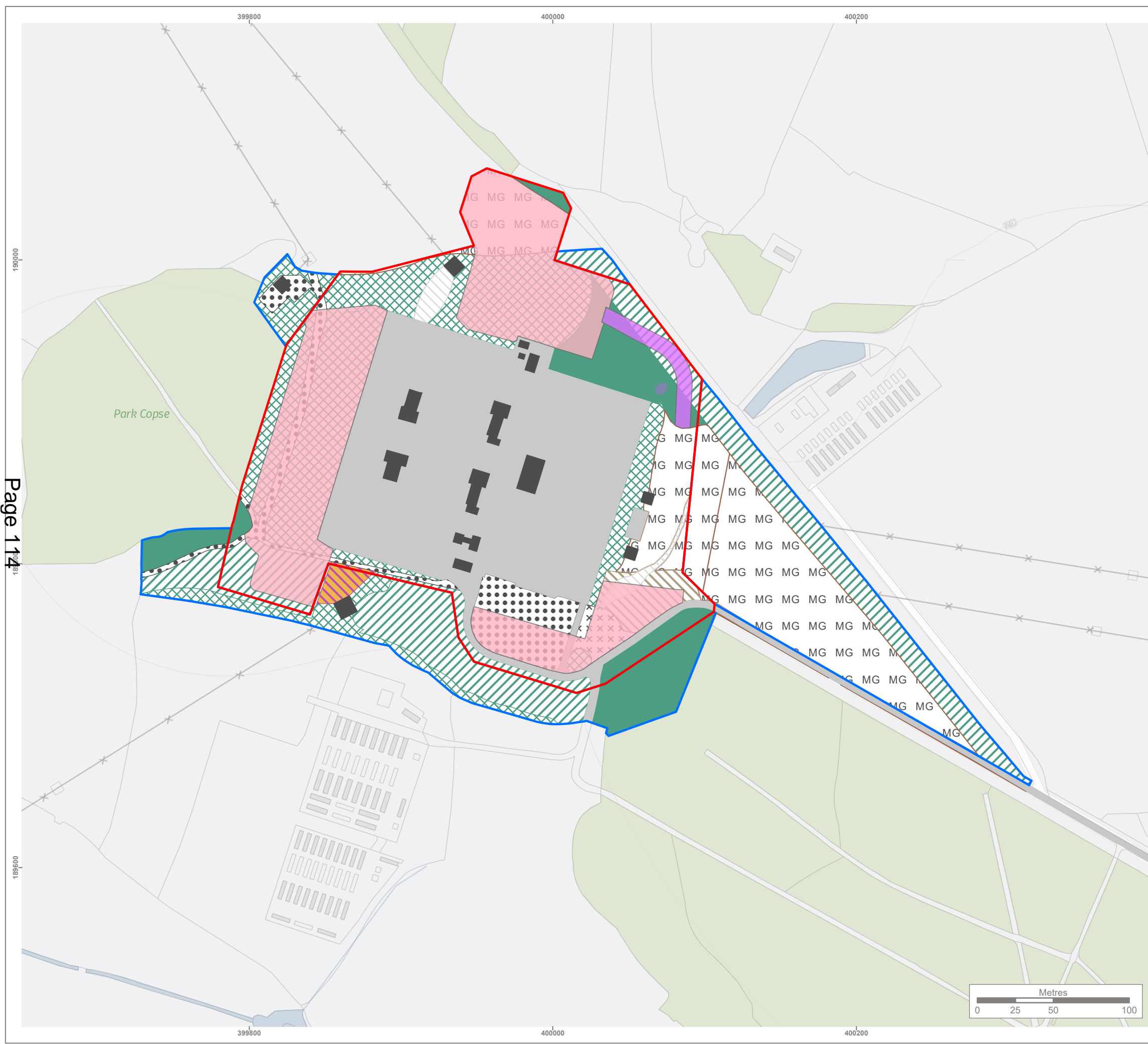
National Grid Document Number: PDD-101488-LAY-302

FEED Document Number: 5211464-ATK-XX-ZZ-DR-E-1302



## **DRAWINGS**

**G9236.019D - Figure D Impacts Plan**  
**G9236.021D - Figure E3 Specifications for Mitigation and Compensation**  
**G9236.022 - Hedgerow Location Plan**



- KEY**
- Site application boundary
  - Client ownership boundary
- Phase 1 Habitat Survey**
- Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland
  - Plantation broad-leaved woodland
  - Dense/continuous scrub
  - Species-poor modified neutral grassland
  - Marsh/marshy grassland
  - Tall ruderal
  - Standing water
  - Dense/continuous ephemeral/short perennial
  - Building
  - Bare ground
  - Other habitat
  - Hardstanding
- Impact Assessment**
- Permanent loss of woodland, scrub and grassland
  - Temporary loss of woodland, scrub and grassland

**Note:**  
The locations of habitats and habitat features are indicative.

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**Site Map**

D	Updated Phase 1 and impact areas	BJ	PB	30/05/2024
C	Added ownership boundary	BJ	CK	12/06/2023
Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date

**TEP** | **THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP**

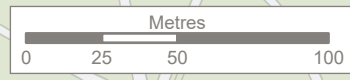
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Tel 01925 844004 e-mail tep@tep.uk.com www.tep.uk.com

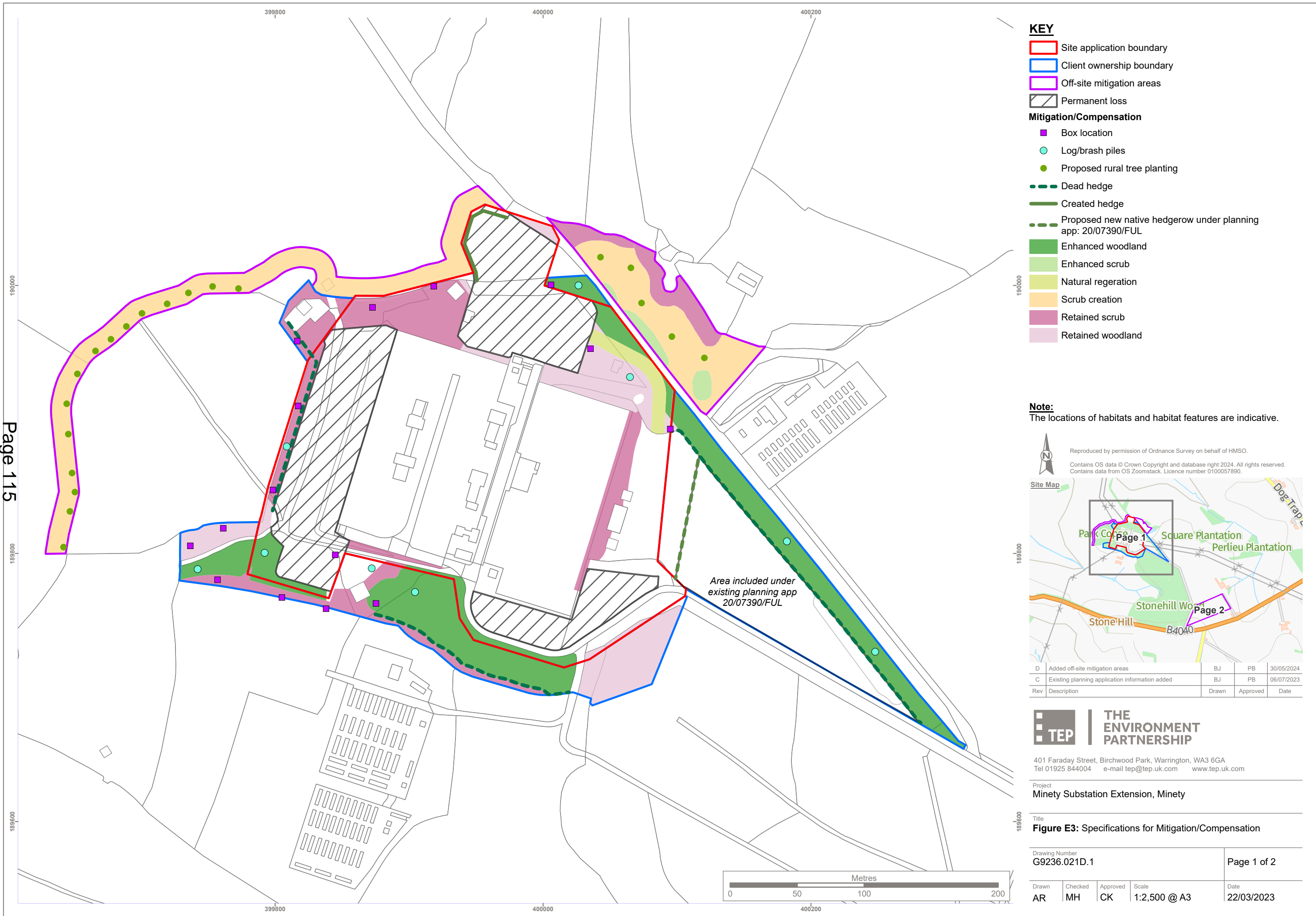
Project  
**Minety Substation Extension, Minety**

Title  
**Figure D: Impacts Plan**

Drawing Number  
**G9236.019D**

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
AR	MH	CK	1:2,500 @ A3	22/03/2023

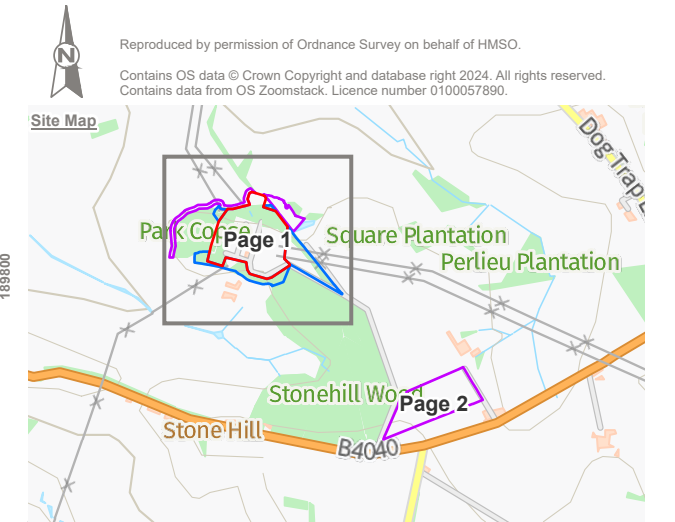




**KEY**

- Site application boundary
- Client ownership boundary
- Off-site mitigation areas
- Permanent loss
- Mitigation/Compensation**
- Box location
- Log/brush piles
- Proposed rural tree planting
- Dead hedge
- Created hedge
- Proposed new native hedgerow under planning app: 20/07390/FUL
- Enhanced woodland
- Enhanced scrub
- Natural reversion
- Scrub creation
- Retained scrub
- Retained woodland

**Note:**  
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D	Added off-site mitigation areas	BJ	PB	30/05/2024
C	Existing planning application information added	BJ	PB	06/07/2023
Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date

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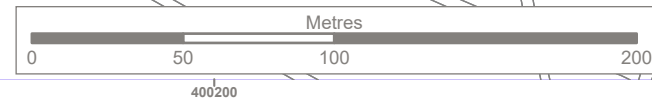
401 Faraday Street, Birchwood Park, Warrington, WA3 6GA  
Tel 01925 844004 e-mail tep@tep.uk.com www.tep.uk.com

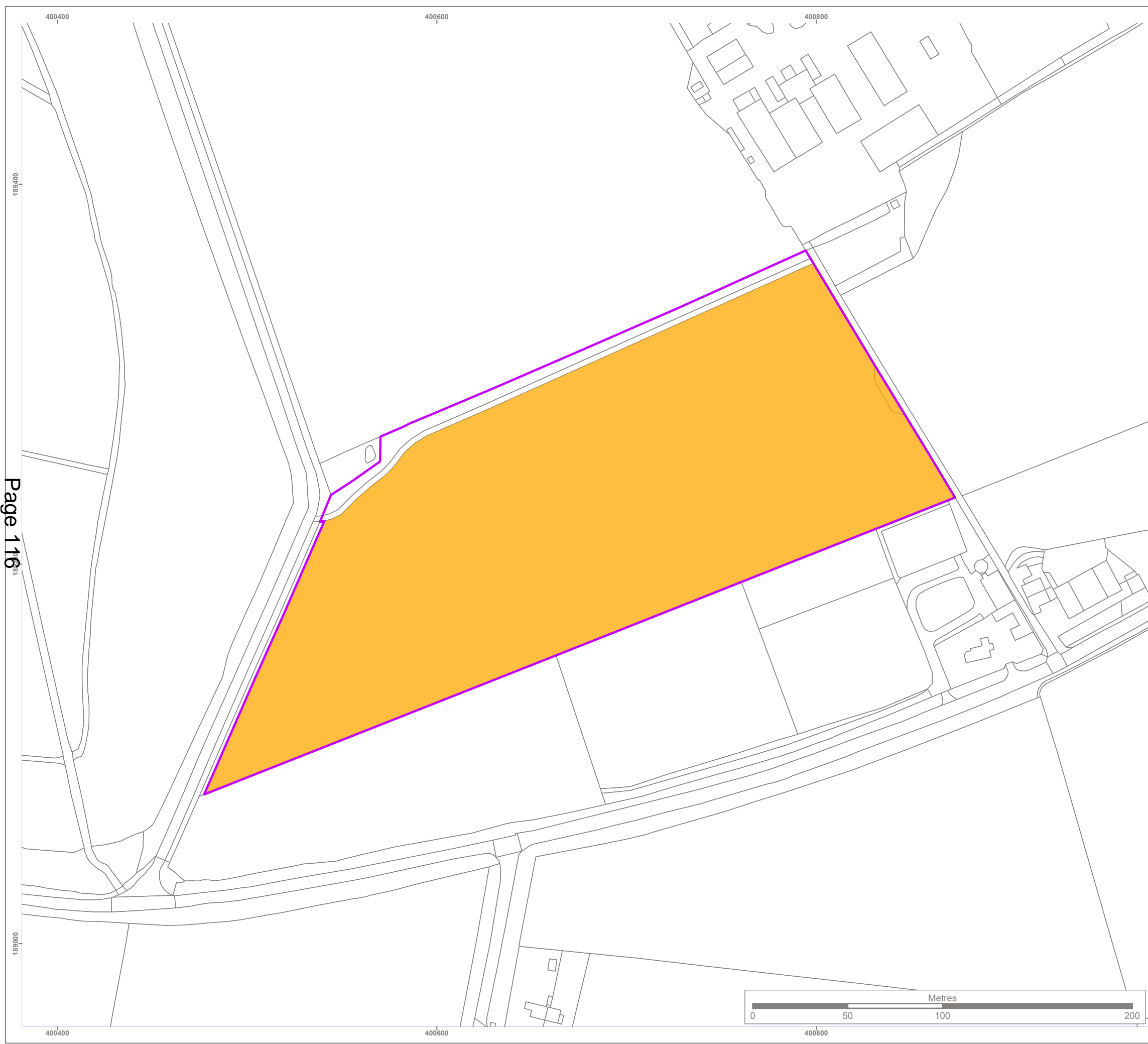
Project  
**Minety Substation Extension, Minety**

Title  
**Figure E3: Specifications for Mitigation/Compensation**

Drawing Number  
**G9236.021D.1** Page 1 of 2

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
AR	MH	CK	1:2,500 @ A3	22/03/2023





**KEY**

- Off-site mitigation areas
- Woodland planting

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Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date
D	Added off-site mitigation areas	BJ	PB	30/05/2024
C	Existing planning application information added	BJ	PB	06/07/2023

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Project  
**Minety Substation Extension, Minety**

Title  
**Figure E3: Specifications for Mitigation/Compensation**

Drawing Number <b>G9236.021D.2</b>	Page 2 of 2
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Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
AR	MH	CK	1:2,000 @ A3	22/03/2023



**KEY**

- Site boundary
- Hedge

**Note:**

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 AeroGRID, IGN and the GIS User community.

**Site Map**



Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date



**THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP**

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Project  
**Minety Substation Extension, Minety**

Title  
**Hedgerow Location Plan  
 Off site**

Drawing Number  
**G9236.022**

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
SP	##	CK	1:3,600 @ A3	27/02/2023





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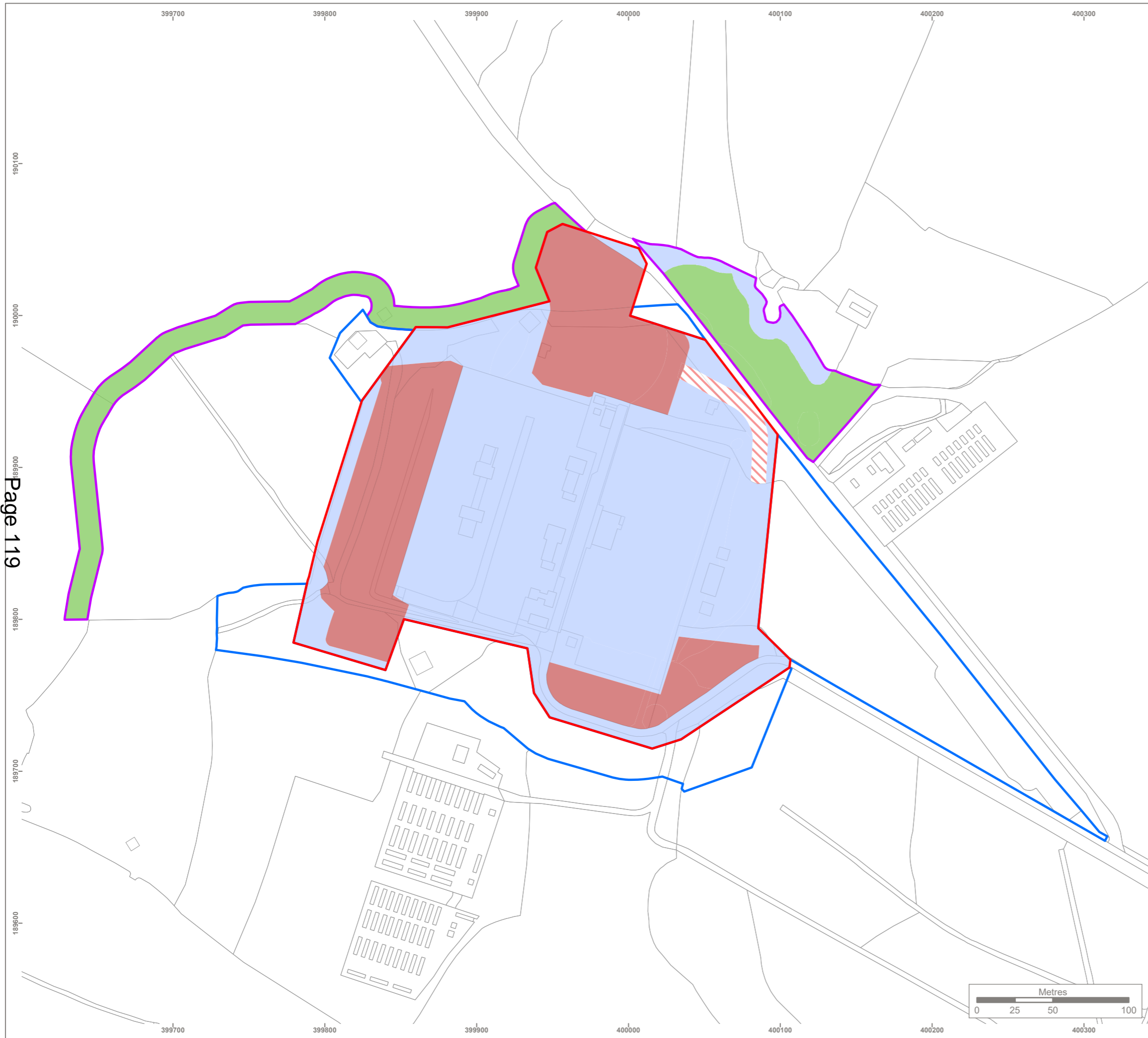
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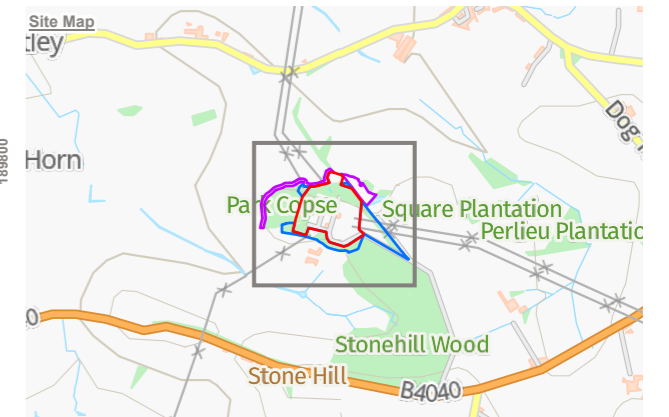
- Site application boundary
- Client ownership boundary
- Off-site mitigation area

**Habitat Impact**

- Enhanced
- Retained
- Temporary loss
- Lost

**Note:**  
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Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date
D	Updated boundaries, added off-site mitigation areas	BJ	PB	31/05/2024
C	Temporary loss area added, boundaries added	BJ	PB	03/07/2023

**TEP** | **THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP**

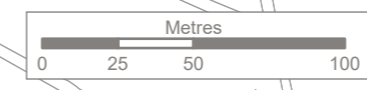
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Project  
**Minety Substation Extension, Minety**

Title  
**Habitat Impact**

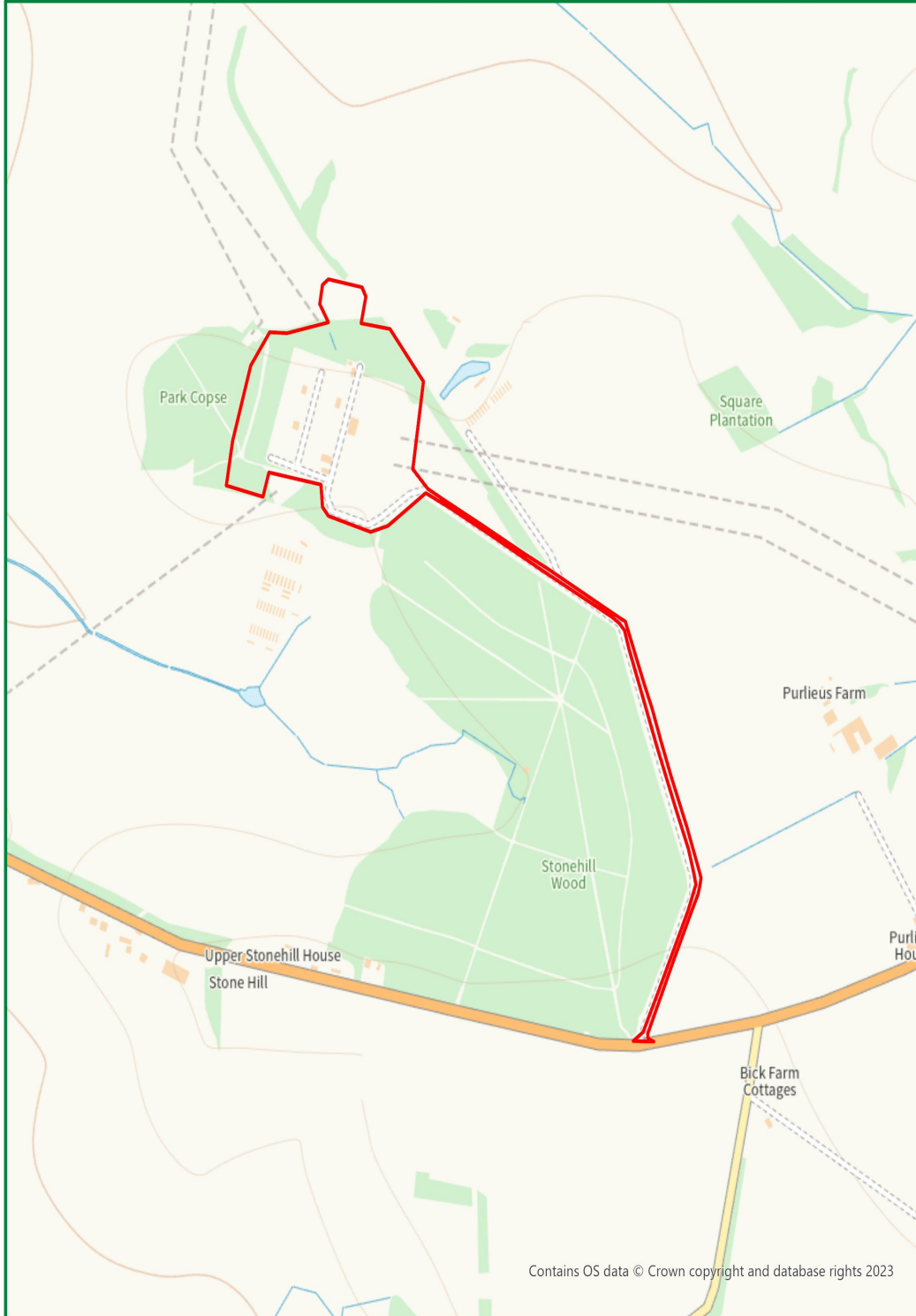
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