



**Land West of Park
Farm, Selsey
(Site AL12)**

**High Level
Ecological Assessment**

For:
Landlink Estates

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FINAL

Land West of Park Farm, Selsey (Site AL12)

High level ecological assessment

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Land West of Park Farm, Selsey (Site AL12) High level ecological assessment

1.0 Background

Introduction

- 1.1 The Langmead Group is seeking to promote residential development for up to 275 homes on Land West of Park Farm, Selsey (Site AL12) ('the site') through the Chichester District Council Local Plan Process. The site extends to 11 hectares and is located north of Selsey, forming part of the wider Landlink Estate (the property company within the Langmead Group) (**Figure 1**). Existing residential development sits along the south western boundary of the site whilst further agriculture land lies to the north west. The B2145 lies immediately adjacent on the south eastern and north eastern boundaries of the site.
- 1.2 The site sits approximately 1.75km to the south-west of Pagham Harbour, an extensive area of saltmarsh, mudflats and other important coastal habitats. The area is of international ecological importance which is recognised through a number of statutory nature conservation designations and forms part of the National Site Network (NSN):
 - Pagham Harbour Special Protection Area (SPA) designated at the European level for its bird populations
 - Pagham Harbour Ramsar¹ site designated at an international level for its bird populations
- 1.3 In addition, the Medmerry Realignment flood defence scheme lies to the south west and comprises a series of intertidal habitats created from arable land that previously lay behind the sea wall. Medmerry is not a designated site, but includes compensatory habitat required for flood defence works elsewhere in the Solent Maritime Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and provides important habitat for wintering waterfowl and other wildlife. The site also lies just over 5.5km to the east of the Chichester and Langstone Harbour SPA (**Figure 2**).
- 1.4 The waters below the mean high water mark within Pagham Harbour and the inshore coastal waters around Selsey fall within a further designation: the Solent and Dorset Coast SPA. This SPA protects important foraging areas at sea used by tern colonies from within other classified SPAs and covers the foraging ranges for breeding Sandwich, common and little terns. There is no identifiable pathway to link development of the Land West of Park Farm site with the ability of the open waters along the Solent and Dorset coast to provide adequate fish resources for foraging terns. This SPA is not therefore considered further within this report.
- 1.5 Holbury Consultancy Services Ltd has been commissioned to prepare a high-level ecological assessment of the site to demonstrate that the promotion of the site through the Local Plan process is deliverable in the context of all statutory nature conservation protection.

¹ Ramsar sites are designated under the Convention of Wetlands of International Importance that was adopted in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971 and ratified by the UK Government in 1976.

1.6 The report sets out:

- the statutory framework of nature conservation protections in which the site must come forward
- a description of the statutory ecological context in which the site sits
- a preliminary description of the species and habitats present on site and their relationship to the wider ecological context
- an analysis of the site relative to the statutory nature conservation protection context in which it sits and an assessment of the ecological constraints & opportunities that will be relevant to the master planning process in due course.

2.0 Ecological context

Introduction

- 2.1 The Land West of Park Farm itself is not subject to any nature conservation designation. However, it lies in close proximity to an ecologically complex series of intertidal and coastal habitats. This is recognised by the two International nature conservation sites that lie to the east of the site and the coastal realignment scheme known as Medmerry, of equivalent importance, to the west (**Figure 2**). The statutory protection afforded to these sites is fully described in the following section. The wider area surrounding the site supports both nationally and internationally important wintering and breeding bird populations. The ecological significance of the local area places a strong emphasis on the need for the site to come forward in an ecologically aware, astute and sensitive manner.

Pagham Harbour

- 2.2 Pagham Harbour lies to the immediate east of the site and is designated as a Special Protection Area (SPA). The SPA extends to 629.01ha and is designated for supporting internationally important numbers of wintering dark-bellied brent geese and ruff. The site also supports internationally important numbers of breeding common tern and little tern during the summer months.
- 2.3 The site is also designated as a Ramsar site and qualifies for supporting internationally important numbers of wintering dark-bellied brent geese (2512 individuals – 5 year peak mean 1998/89-2002/03). The over-wintering population of black-tailed godwit is also considered to be a possible future qualifying feature under criterion 6.
- 2.4 At the national level, the harbour supports nationally important populations of little egret, whimbrel and greenshank in spring/autumn. During winter the harbour supports nationally important populations of slawonian grebe, pintail, grey plover and spotted redshank.
- 2.5 In addition to the bird populations, the Ramsar site supports nationally important populations of the plant chiding pink (on the shingle beaches) and the starlet sea anemone (an invertebrate), which occurs in brackish lagoons at or above high water.

Pagham Harbour SSSI

- 2.6 Pagham Harbour is also a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) supporting salt marsh, vegetated shingle, ancient woodland, brackish lagoons and ditches, reed swamp and unimproved grassland. The Harbour is designated as a Local Nature Reserve (LNR) and much of the site is managed by the RSPB.

Other relevant designations

Medmerry

- 2.7 Medmerry lies to the west of the site. It is an area of intertidal habitat created to replace habitat being lost elsewhere in the in the Solent through coastal squeeze. The realignment scheme was completed in 2013 at a cost of £28 million and there is an expectation that the site will be given SPA and SAC status in due course. This is in line with paragraph 181 of the NPPF² which states that sites identified as compensatory measures for adverse effects on European sites should be given the same protection as European sites, and this has been taken as a working assumption of the master planning process. Medmerry is managed by the RSPB.

Bracklesham Bay SSSI

- 2.8 Bracklesham Bay SSSI lies to the south and west of the site. The SSSI covers 201.9ha part of which part now lies within the Medmerry compensatory habitat scheme. The site consists of a long stretch of coast with rough unimproved grazing pasture and small areas of salt marsh, shingle bank, rifles and reedbeds. The site also supports a long stretch of intertidal exposures of high geological interest. The seasonally flooded grassland is of considerable importance to breeding birds (lapwing, redshank, ringed plover and snipe) and wintering brent geese, ruff, golden plover, teal, pintail, black-tailed godwit and curlew. The SSSI also holds wintering short-eared owl.

² Department for Levelling Up, Housing and Communities. 20th July 2021. National Planning Policy Framework. <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/national-planning-policy-framework>

3.0 Statutory framework for the protection of ecological interests

Introduction

- 3.1 The policy framework within the emergent Local Plan will need to have close regard to the statutory protections afforded by the:
- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
 - Environment Act 2021
 - Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.2 Residential development of the site will need to avoid and mitigate potential impacts on nature conservation sites of International importance and Medmerry, and will need to do this through both contribution to established mitigation schemes and consideration as to whether the provision of own bespoke mitigation measures are also necessary.
- 3.3 Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) will be relevant to the local plan process as well as an eventual planning application. HRA of the Local Plan will be an essential part of demonstrating both soundness and deliverability.
- 3.4 Residential development will also need to deliver Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) and have full and proper regard to plant and animal species listed on the schedules of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as appropriate.

The Habitats Regulations

- 3.5 Pagham Harbour SPA receives statutory protection under the Conservation of Habitats and Species 2017 (as amended), (the 'Habitats Regulations'). The Habitats Regulations afford a high level of protection to sites supporting habitats or rare species (other than birds) considered scarce or vulnerable at a European community level (SACs) and areas that hold significant populations of certain bird species (SPAs).
- 3.6 Pagham Harbour contributes to the National Site Network, a chain of sites across the UK territory comprising protected sites already designated under the European Council Directives on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (42/43/EEC) and the Conservation of Wild Birds (2009/147/EC) together with any further sites designated under the Habitats Regulations themselves in future.
- 3.7 Ramsar sites are designated as wetlands of international importance and are afforded similar legislative protection to sites within the NSN. Government has issued policy statements relating to the special status of Ramsar sites. This extends the same protection afforded to SPA's and SAC's to Ramsar sites in the UK. This also extends to compensatory habitats such as Medmerry, which receives the same level of protection as though it were a designated SAC (NPPF paragraph 181).
- 3.8 Under the Habitats Regulations, Chichester District Council (CDC) is a competent authority, responsible for ensuring that development management

decisions do not adversely affect the integrity of sites within the NSN. This is relevant to the Local Plan process where CDC must be confident that site allocations can be reasonably expected to come forward in a way that is not detrimental to NSN sites. From this it follows that planning applications for allocated sites must have effective opportunity to address the tests of the Habitats Regulations.

The implications of recreational impacts from residential development

- 3.9 Recreational disturbance of protected bird populations has been an issue for planning applications affecting the south coast for some time and is now substantially mitigated though a Solent-wide approach known as Bird Aware Solent³. This coordinates a number of initiatives focused on management of recreational pressures through wardening and education. Funding derives from financial contributions made by housing developers for each and every new dwelling they build within 5.6 kilometres (3.5 miles) of the Solent SPAs.
- 3.10 The impact of recreational disturbance on protected bird populations is also relevant to planning applications within 3.5km of Pagham Harbour.
- 3.11 Pagham is not yet included in Bird Aware Solent, although discussions are on-going such that the policy framework relevant to the protection of bird populations in Pagham Harbour is likely to evolve over time. In the meantime, a Joint Mitigation Scheme (JMS) has been drawn up between Chichester District Council, Arun District Council, the RSPB (site managers) and Natural England.

Joint Mitigation Scheme for Pagham Harbour

- 3.12 The current Local Plan identifies that an impact from recreational disturbance is likely for Pagham Harbour SPA and Ramsar site given the similarity of the habitat to the Solent SPAs. At Pagham there is also the issue of potential disturbance in summer to ground nesting birds.
- 3.13 The current Local Plan states that evidence from visitor surveys suggests that the majority of visitors to Pagham Harbour and who are resident within Chichester District come from within 3.5km of the site. Within this 'zone of influence' any net increase in residential development is required to provide mitigation measures to avoid any impact on Pagham Harbour SPA, and may be subject to an 'appropriate assessment' under Regulation 61 of the Habitats Regulations 2010 to show that any impact (either alone or in-combination with other developments) will not have an adverse effect on the integrity of the site in question, either alone or in combination with other plans and projects.
- 3.14 For all net increases in residential development within the zone of influence, avoidance measures will be required. This may include access management of the harbour for example, increased wardening and the creation/enhancement of green infrastructure to improve local access in less sensitive areas and provide a similar quality of experience to that found at the harbour.

³ <https://birdaware.org/>

- 3.15 Section 106 contributions from relevant developments are collected by both Chichester & Arun District Councils to fund the JMS, with Chichester District Council responsible for the spending of the funds.
- 3.16 The collected monies are allocated to fund works undertaken by RSPB, as the Managing Agent. In similar fashion to Bird Aware, RSPB's works include management of recreational pressures through wardening and education. Natural England sits as the Statutory Consultee in the partnership and advises the District Council's in their role as Competent Authority under the Habitats Regulations.

Conclusion

- 3.17 The current policy framework relevant to the site has close regard to the statutory structures afforded by the Habitats Regulations. The need for protection to address these issues is based in statute and can therefore be expected to flow through to the emergent Local Plan.
- 3.18 Any allocations within 3.5km of Pagham Harbour will need to avoid and mitigate potential impacts on the SPA and Ramsar site, as well as Medmerry. It is likely that this will be through contribution to the JMS but in agreement with Natural England, could also be through provision of its own bespoke mitigation measures, or through both acting together. Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) will be relevant to the local plan process as well as an eventual planning application.

The Environment Act 2021

- 3.19 The Environment Act 2021 received Royal Assent on 9th November 2021 and sets out a framework for the provision of targets, plans and policies for improving the natural environment and ensuring environmental protection.
- 3.20 The enactment of the Environment Act triggers a 2-year transition period prior to a mandate requiring that all development (with a few exceptions) must secure 10% gain in biodiversity, secured for a minimum of thirty years, to receive planning consent. This transition period will allow local planning authorities the time to establish a policy framework setting out an approach to securing net gain within their local area.
- 3.21 In the meantime, BNG is already established as a planning principle in the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and National Planning Practice Guidance, and is frequently a requirement of Local Planning Policy.

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

- 3.22 Paragraph 179 of the NPPF⁴ states that Local Plans should promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological

⁴ Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government, 2021. National Planning Policy Framework.

networks and the protection and recovery of priority species, and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity. It provides the basis with which Local Plans must address the need to secure biodiversity gains.

Conclusion

- 3.23 The emergent Local Plan will need to ensure that allocated sites are able to deliver 10% BNG. This can be on-site, delivered off-site as part of the planned scheme, or by way of contribution to off-site projects that provide a strategic opportunity for development sites to secure a 10% BNG uplift even though they are unable to deliver it within the context of their own land ownership.

Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

- 3.24 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 is the primary legislation which protects animals, plants and habitats in the UK. Part 1 of the act sets out the protection that is afforded to all wild birds, and certain wild native animals and native plants (especially those at threat) and controls the release of non-native species.

Conclusion

- 3.25 An eventual planning application for the site will need to ensure that any animals or plants listed in the Wildlife and Countryside Act and identified as present on site are properly protected through the planning process. These issues tend to be of localised nature and are most properly dealt with through the planning application process. It is not anticipated that they will need to be addressed through the Local Plan beyond generic policy requirements to ensure appropriate safeguard.

4.0 Public access

- 4.1 The site itself is free of any Public Rights of Way, but sits within the context of a broad network of footpaths and permissive paths that criss cross the land owned by the Langmead Group and link to the adjacent RSPB Medmerry and Pagham Harbour reserves (**Figure 3**).

Pagham Harbour

- 4.2 Pagham Harbour is designated a Local Nature Reserve that attracts around 250,000 visitors a year with access mainly from public rights of way. There is a small visitor centre located at Sidlesham Ferry with free car parking and toilets. There is open access to the sea-facing beach fronts at Pagham Spit and Church Norton Spit.
- 4.3 Elements of access are controlled by the Pagham Harbour byelaws (1997). These restrict access to Tern Island at all times of the year and to the inner half of Church Norton spit between April and August. Since 1983 there has been a byelaw requiring dogs to be on leads within the LNR. This has been enforced since 2001/02 following the selection of three 'dogs off lead' areas with the harbour.
- 4.4 There is currently car parking for around 50 cars at the visitor centre at Sidlesham Ferry and further parking at Church Norton (a small 10 space car-park shared with the church). There are three bird watching hides positioned around the harbour: one at Ferry Pool, one at Church Norton and one on the eastern side of the harbour at Pagham Spit.
- 4.5 A public footpath runs from the visitor centre at Sidlesham Ferry to Church Norton along the eastern edge of the estate and on round the edge of the harbour.

Further footpaths cross the site east of the B2145 (running to Rectory Lane) and south of the visitor centre, passing Ferry Farm and running along the western edge of Selsey golf course to Golf Links Lane. This footpath connects to a path running west towards Medmerry. A further footpath runs from Manor Lane in Selsey, past Park Farm towards Greenlease Farm and ultimately Church Norton.

Medmerry

- 4.6 The Medmerry reserve has 10km of trails including cycle paths and 4km of equestrian access. There is car parking at Earnley (15 spaces) and Easton Lane (5 spaces). Apart from a section north of the Ham View Point it is possible to walk around the rest of the perimeter ditch.

5.0 Ecology of the site

Introduction

- 5.1 A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) carried out by Lindsay Carrington Ecological Services Ltd⁵ collated existing information from local habitats and the wider area to inform the initial design work for the site. This information has also been used to identify the risk of ecological constraint and identify the need for further ecological surveys that will be required to support any future planning applications.

Ecological description of the site

- 5.2 The site comprises approximately 11ha of arable and is used for salad or cereal production on rotation with temporary grass leys. The Land West of Park Farm lies to the immediate east of the field known as Long Coles (**Figure 1**), which is under a similar agricultural rotation. When the site is under salad crops, it is subject to regular disturbance with teams of agricultural workers used to pick the crop throughout the season. It is also subject to the influence of bird scaring tactics employed across the wider area, to minimise crop damage by grazing birds.
- 5.3 The PEA identified that the arable land itself is of low ecological value. Boundary features such as the rife and hedgerows are of greater ecological value, assessed as being of local ecological importance as habitat in their own right. The hedgerow network is fragmented and does not provide coherent links between isolated patches of semi-natural habitats across the larger land holding of the Langmead Group.
- 5.4 The data search carried out as part of the PEA returned a complex and significant species list for birds in the local area, reflecting the ecological significance of Pagham Harbour and the Medmerry realignment. The data for the site itself is very limited, consistent with the intensive salad cropping that takes place across the land. The data search has highlighted the potential for protected species to be present and the importance of the wider area for a range of protected species including brown hare and dormouse. It also includes water vole for which this part of West Sussex is a stronghold.
- 5.5 Further information on these species will be required to refine the master planning process in due course.

Wintering waterfowl use of the site

- 5.6 In addition to the PEA, Holbury Consultancy Services Ltd (Holbury) has carried out a wintering bird survey of the site over the winter 2021/22, which is due to complete in March 2022 and report in April 2022. This work complements a suite of estate wide surveys that have been carried out since the winter of 2017/18 and provides an insight as to how waterfowl overwintering in Pagham Harbour

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SPA and Ramsar use the land owned by the Langmead Group as supporting habitat.

The site: wintering waterfowl survey 2021/22

- 5.7 Twelve wintering bird surveys across the winter period October 2021 to March 2022 have been carried out at high tide to assess the use of the site by wintering waterfowl. The full survey programme has yet to complete, and the full data set and analysis will be submitted once available later this year.
- 5.8 The surveys are timed to coincide with spring tides and take place every two weeks. Undertaking survey work over period of the highest monthly tides ensures that the site is visited when birds present in Pagham Harbour and Medmerry are most likely to be using surrounding (undesigned) habitats. The survey comprises a walk around the site followed by a 2-hour watch over the high-water period and concludes with another walk around the site. Each survey lasts 3 hours.
- 5.9 The survey has been designed to assess use of the site by waders, duck and geese. When the surveys conclude in March 2022 a total of 36 survey hours will have been completed on the site.

Summary of results

- 5.10 The interim results show that no waders, ducks or geese have been recorded using the site between October 2021 and January 2022. Two species of wader have been recorded flying over the site and a small group of brent geese have been recorded on one date (flying over the site).
- 5.11 On 20th October 2021 78 golden plover briefly circled the site before heading towards Medmerry. The movement of flocks of golden plover between Pagham and Medmerry is a feature of this area.
- 5.12 Curlew have been recorded flying across the site on three dates:
- 4th November 2021: 1 curlew headed east towards Pagham Harbour.
 - 21st December 2021: 1 curlew headed towards Medmerry.
 - 4th January 2022: flocks of 25, 13, 4 and 2 birds flew across site towards Medmerry.
- 5.13 A flock of 5 brent geese flew across the site towards Medmerry on 4th January 2022.
- 5.14 The site is a mix of cover crop and cut herb beds at the present time. This habitat is unlikely to be used by brent geese for foraging but waders such as curlew and golden plover have been recorded using similar habitats during surveys of the wider site.
- 5.15 The herb beds have provided opportunities for insectivorous birds with meadow pipits, pied wagtail and stonechat regularly noted using the site. Flocks of

woodpigeon (largest c200) and occasionally stock dove also use the beds for feeding.

- 5.16 Most birds recorded during the 2-hour watches are birds flying across the site with species such as herring gull, black-headed gull, common starling, carrion crow and rook accounting for the majority of sightings. The hedgerows around the site are used by a range of common and widespread species including blue tit, great tit, song thrush, blackbird, robin and magpie.

The surrounding area (land owned by the Langmead Group): wintering waterfowl survey 2021/22

- 5.17 Wintering waterfowl surveys have also been carried out across the full extent of land owned by the Langmead Group this winter, and add to the body of knowledge that has been established since winter surveys commenced in 2017/18 and reported in a series of survey reports^{6,7,8}. The objective of the survey work has been to record the wintering population of birds on site and evaluate their distribution across the site. The survey specifically focussed on ducks, geese and waders, although a record was made of all species seen.
- 5.18 The surveys comprised a series of twice monthly transect surveys between October and March and used a methodology adapted from the BTO Winter Farmland Bird Survey⁹. Visits were timed to coincide with high tide, generally starting around two and a half hours before high water and concluding around two and a half hours after high water. A transect covering all fields within the site was walked and all bird activity observed recorded. The starting point, route and the direction the transect was walked were changed each time to ensure each part of the site was surveyed at different points of the tidal cycle. The survey covered both early mornings and late afternoons to include periods when species such as barn owl (*Tyto alba*) could be active.
- 5.19 The survey visits were timed to coincide with high tide. Undertaking survey work over high tide periods ensures that the site was visited when birds present in Pagham Harbour and Medmerry were most likely to be using surrounding habitats.

Summary of results

- 5.20 The surveys to date have recorded a number of different species using land owned by the Langmead Group, including brent geese (*Branta bernicla bernicla*), curlew (*Numenius arquata*), golden plover (*Pluvialis apricaria*) and

⁶ Holbury Consultancy Services Ltd, 2018. North Selsey, West Sussex. Wintering Bird Survey. For Landlink Estates.

⁷ Holbury Consultancy Services Ltd, 2019. North Selsey, West Sussex. Wintering Bird Survey. For Landlink Estates.

⁸ Holbury Consultancy Services Ltd, 2021. North Selsey, West Sussex. Wintering Bird Survey. For Landlink Estates.

⁹ Gillings, S., Wilson, A.M., Conway, G.J., Vickery, J.A., Fuller, R.J., Beavan, P., Newson, S.E., Noble, D.G and Toms, M.P. (2008) Winter Farmland Bird Survey. BTO Research Report No 494. BTO. Thetford, Norfolk.

lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus*); all these species utilise arable habitats for feeding and roosting during the winter.

- 5.21 The surveys over the various winters have shown only minor differences in the composition of the wintering bird community on site. The surveys show that the use of the site by some species, notably golden plover and brent geese, depends on the state of the fields and also the availability of other suitable habitat around the harbour. Other wader species and gulls also make temporary use of the fields in hard weather or after surface water flooding.
- 5.22 An analysis of the wintering bird data shows that during the three winters surveys have been undertaken no brent geese have been recorded using the fields that comprise Land West of Park Farm. There is a single record of waders using the site. In late February 2018 a flock of 6 lapwing were noted on one of the fields. This is the only time waders have been recorded settled on these particular fields.
- 5.23 Further site-wide survey work is being undertaken this winter and findings to date (covering the period October 2021 to January 2022) are consistent with those of previous surveys. No waders or brent geese have been recorded using these fields.
- 5.24 The large field immediately north of the site (known as Long Coles) has supported flocks of golden plover in previous winters, most frequently during the winter of 2018/19 when birds were recorded on seven dates between November 2018 and March 2019. Flocks of over 200 birds were recorded in November, December and January.
- 5.25 This site has been surveyed for a number of years as part of a wider wintering bird survey and during the current winter period has also been subject to bespoke surveys. The survey effort recognises the potential sensitivity of the site and surrounding land. It has long been recognised that due to the proximity of the designated sites the arable fields have the potential to be used by geese, waders and ducks from Pagham or Medmerry. The regular use of particular fields by significant numbers of birds would indicate that the land concerned may be functionally linked to the designated sites.
- 5.26 The lack of records of waders, geese and ducks using the Land West of Park Farm shows these fields are not used by species associated with the protected sites. The use of neighbouring fields by geese, ducks and waders is also limited with use largely dependent on the condition of the fields over the winter period. No evidence of year-on-year regular use of Long Coles by a particular species has been recorded.
- 5.27 Field data gathered over four winters demonstrates that the development of this land would not lead to the loss of any habitat regularly used by ducks, geese or waders from Pagham Harbour and Medmerry. The nature of the surrounding land means any birds displaced from the neighbouring field (Long Coles) are likely to be able to use other fields in the local area for roosting and feeding.

6.0 Analysis

Introduction

- 6.1 Whilst the site itself is not constrained from an ecological perspective, the context in which it sits is highly ecological sensitive. Master planning of the site must recognise and respond to this along with the identification of opportunities to secure BNG. Ultimately, the effectiveness of this will be tested through:
- the statutory framework set out within the Habitats Regulations which must be able to conclude that development of the site will not adversely impact the interest features of relevant NSN sites, either alone or in combination with other plans or projects
 - the BNG policies of the emergent Local Plan, that will provide the policy framework needed to secure the 10% BNG requirement that will be mandatory by the time that it is adopted.
- 6.2 In the interim, it is for the Local Plan process to be sure that sufficient scope exists to deliver the required mitigation and biodiversity uplift such that the site can be delivered as an allocation.

Key considerations

- 6.3 **Pagham Harbour SPA, Ramsar and SSSI** lie to the immediate east of the site. This generates the risk of increased levels of recreational pressure with the potential to disturb wintering and breeding birds. Pagham Harbour Ramsar and SSSI also support a number of sensitive habitats such as salt marsh and shingle ridge communities. These habitats are sensitive to a range of impacts associated with development such as trampling damage, eutrophication, or changes to hydrology and air quality. **Medmerry** lies immediately west of the site. This site is still developing and the expectation is that it will be designated SSSI and SAC in due course.
- 6.4 The **public rights of way network** provides easy access on foot from the site to both Pagham Harbour and Medmerry, both ecologically sensitive sites. Given that both offer expansive coastal views, it is inevitable that development of the site will lead to an increase in recreational activity at each site. Management of this access will be a key challenge for the planning process. Careful consideration will need to focus on unregulated dog walking and its potential to disturb wintering waterfowl. It will also be important to consider significant increases in other recreational activity such as kayaking, bait-digging, kite surfing etc. Increases in recreational activity have the potential to generate an adverse effect on the conservation objectives of the Pagham Harbour SPA and Ramsar site.
- 6.5 **The current policy framework** ensures residential development is effectively mitigated through the JMS. This arrangement is likely to be saved and follow through to the next Local Plan, **but could evolve and change**.

Opportunities for recreation

- 6.6 For development of the site to be consistent with the tests of the Habitats Regulations, contribution to the JMS ensures that the RSPB is resourced to warden Pagham Harbour and manage the recreational pressures that arise at the local level. The contributions are calculated according to the number of dwellings forming part of all new residential developments and are therefore proportionate. This ensures that the RSPB receives funding at a level appropriate to the scale of additional pressures that will accrue.
- 6.7 The new Local Plan must be found to be both sound and deliverable. Given the relevance of the Habitats Regulations, it will be necessary to establish the effectiveness of the JMS in delivering meaningful mitigation during the Local Plan process. The expectation is that the policy framework will be saved and will follow through into the next plan period. However, before this is certain, it is appropriate to consider other mitigation opportunities for development on land west of Park Farm, that could be available were they necessary.
- 6.8 Land owned by the Langmead Group offers potential opportunity for the provision of permissive local footpath routes to mitigate recreational pressures on the Pagham Harbour SPA/Ramsar & Medmerry. Whilst derived from the need to protect, this could also provide an opportunity to develop a distinctive sense of place and secure a scheme able to offer a desirable and balanced environment in which to live.
- 6.9 To be effective, the permissive footpath network would need to be designed to provide a meaningful recreational resource that offers opportunity for substantial recreational endeavour. It would offer a range of longer distances and varied rural experiences and should link into the wider access strategy wardened by the RSPB. The Estate is open to partnership working with the RSPB.

Opportunities for biodiversity net gain local to the site

- 6.10 The **Land West of Park Farm itself** is of low ecological significance and is relatively unconstrained. Boundary features should be retained intact where possible. Within the site there are areas of habitat suitable for **common reptiles**, although these are fragmented and populations are likely to be small. The likely presence of common reptiles should not constrain high level master planning. Specific mitigation measures can be developed at a later stage, once protected species surveys have reported and the extent to which mitigation is established. A mitigation strategy for the site will include the retention of areas of suitable habitat and/or the identification of opportunities for habitat creation and enhancement.
- 6.11 Land immediately adjacent to the site (Long Coles) provides opportunity for the creation of a mosaic of scrub and grassland, that will mature over time to provide a diversity of habitats for small mammals, passerines and invertebrates. Attenuation ponds and other wet features will provide opportunity for species such as water vole. This will provide opportunity for enhancements and net gains in biodiversity local to the site such that at a minimum 10% BNG is a

reasonable expectation for the site. An illustrative masterplan of how Long Coles can deliver BNG relative to development of the site is included at Appendix 1.

Opportunities for support of the ecological function of the coast

6.12 The location of the Land West of Park Farm site is:

- sandwiched between Medmerry and Pagham Harbour
- surrounded by a complex of intertidal and coastal habitats
- part of the larger land holding owned by the Langmead Group

6.13 Taken together, these provide opportunity to undertake habitat enhancements to improve the function of the wider area for bird populations across the peninsula were it necessary as part of a package of mitigation measures. Whilst this would need to balance the needs of the farming operation, the wintering bird data collected over the past five years provides the basis to analyse bird behaviour across the site and identify areas of land suitable for enhancement. This may include the creation of wet scrapes, and/or a reduction of inputs coupled with low intensity grazing for marginal land that interfaces with coastal habitats.

6.14 The pasture land around Ferry Pool and running north from North Wall is managed by the RSPB. These areas are used extensively by golden plover, lapwing, brent geese, wigeon and other wader and ducks. Although the extent of similar habitat is limited on the southern side of the Harbour small pockets of habitat do exist and provide additional opportunities for enhancement. Waders, notably curlew, also make regular use of some of the arable fields bordering the harbour. Changes in the post-harvest management of some of these fields may allow larger areas of suitable habitat to be maintained for curlew (and other species) during the winter months. Were it necessary for purpose of appropriate assessment under the Habitats Regulations, development of the Land West of Park Farm could deliver these changes through implementation of an agreed Management Plan secured through a S106.

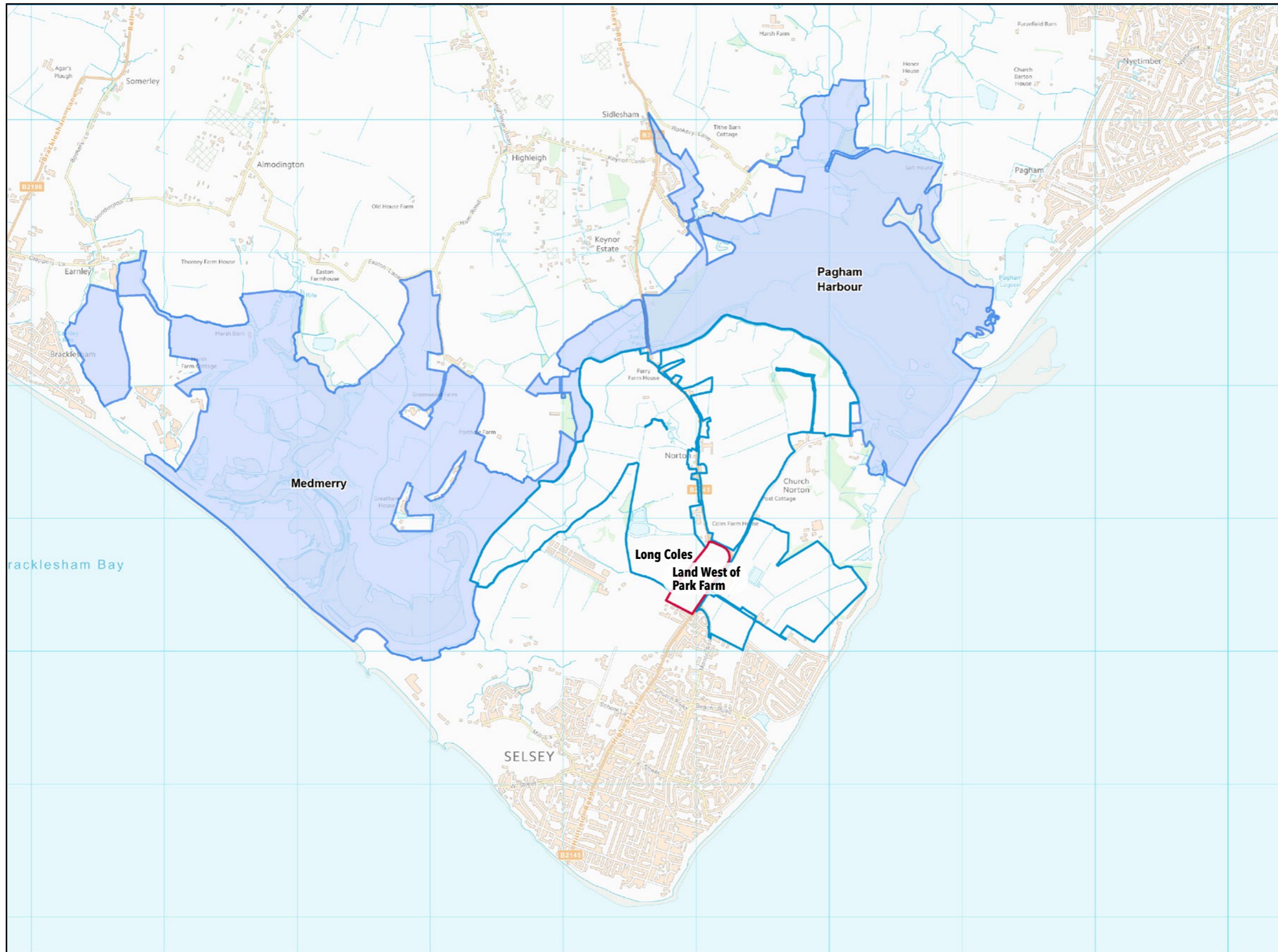
Conclusion

6.15 Analysis shows that allocation of Land West of Park Farm for residential development is deliverable in the context of the statutory framework for the protection and enhancement of nature conservation interests because:

- the land for allocation is itself, of low ecological value
- the risk of recreational impacts on the Pagham Harbour NSN sites can be fully mitigated through the established JMS. In the event that the current JMS arrangements are saved into the next plan period, this contribution will be appropriate and proportionate to ensure that the development is fully mitigated such that it does not have an adverse impact on the integrity of the Pagham Harbour SPA and Ramsar site.
- If the JMS arrangement evolves such that additional measures are required, the development proposals could come forward to include the establishment of a new footpath network to link up with the existing network. This would be carried out in partnership with the RSPB and would

be designed to complement existing measures managed and funded through the JMS.

- biodiversity net gain can be delivered at a local level, adjacent to the site using as much of Long Coles is needed to secure a meaningful uplift of at least 10%. This will be designed to benefit protected species typical of the area such as brown hare and water vole, and a range of other small mammals, birds and invertebrates.
- ecological enhancements are also possible across the Langmead Groups Landholding to improve the function of the land for wintering waterfowl. This would focus on marginal habitats away from the main farming operation and were it needed to secure a package of mitigation measures needed to deliver the development proposals in the context of the Habitat Regulations, would be driven by bird data collated over a series of winters.



KEY

- Land owned by the Langmead Group
- Site boundary
- RSPB reserves

Scale: 1:25,000 @A3

0 600 m



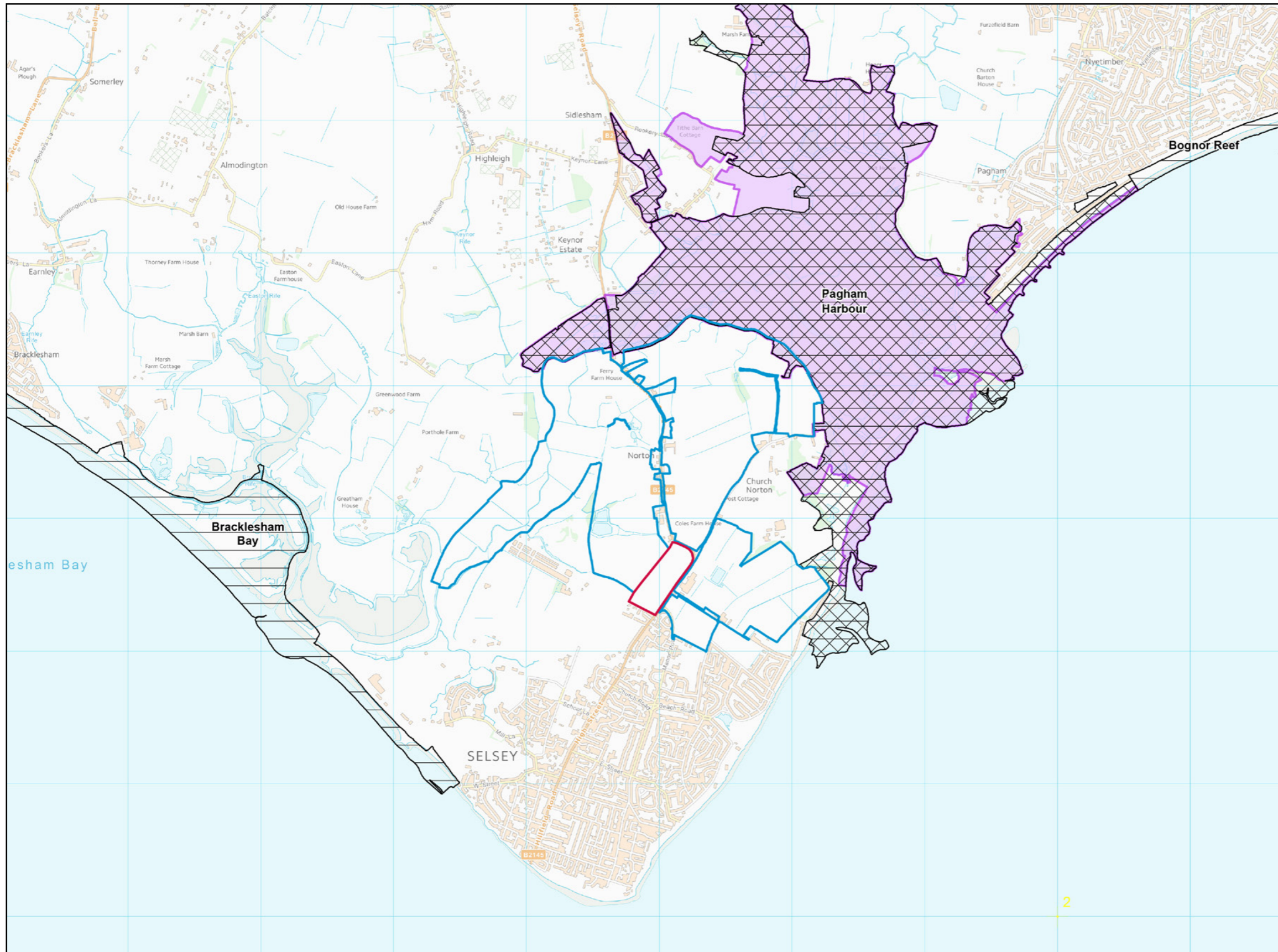
Contains Ordnance Survey data
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@ RSPB

**Land West of Park Farm, Selsey
(Site AL12)**







Figure 1

Title: Site location

Address: Selsey, West Sussex



KEY

-  Land owned by the Langmead Group
-  Site boundary
-  Local nature reserves
-  Ramsar
-  Sites of special scientific interest
-  Special protection areas

Scale: 1:25,222 @A3

0 600 m



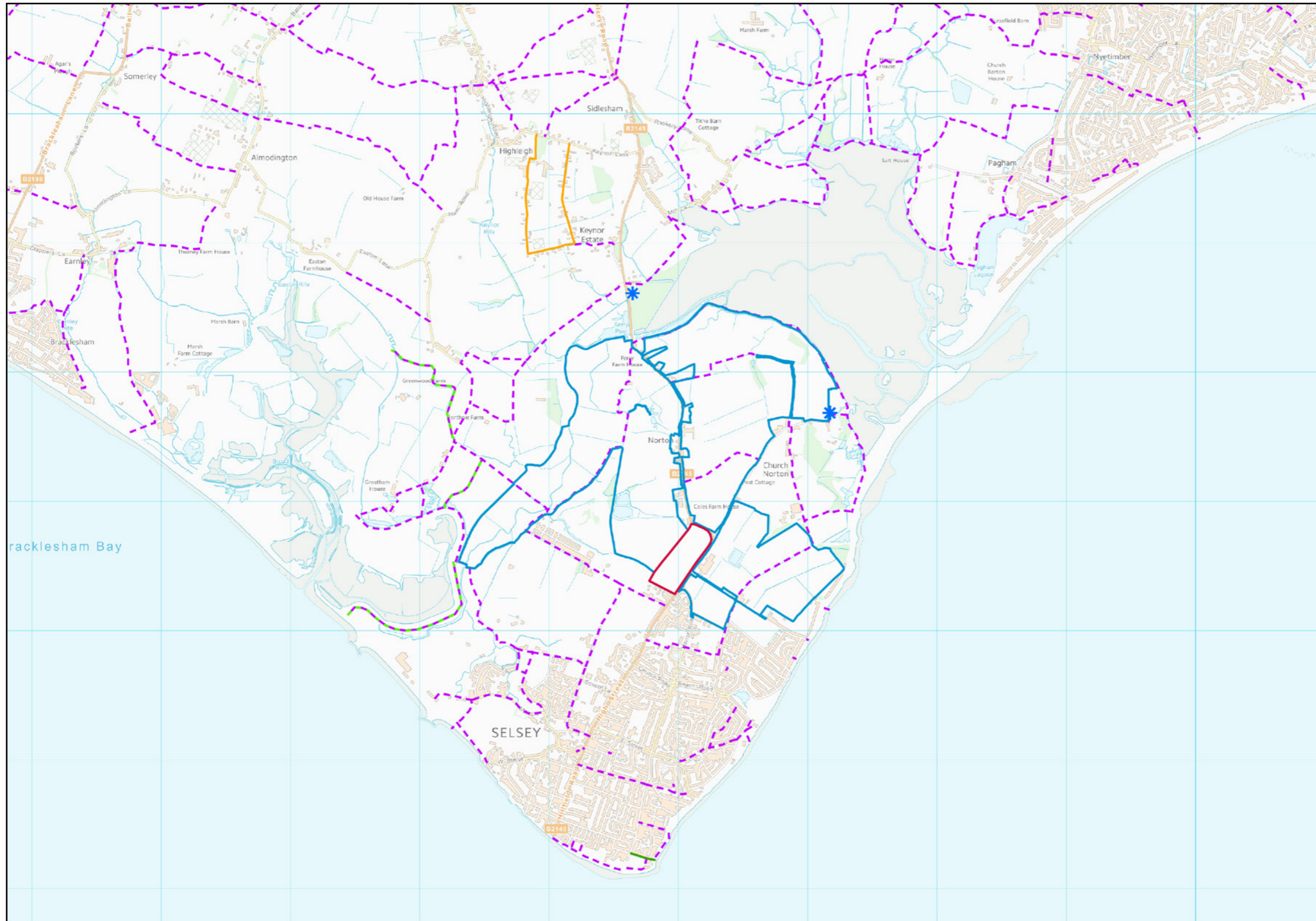
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© Natural England Local Wildlife Site (LWS)
data provided by East and West Sussex
County Councils and Brighton & Hove
City Council

**Land West of Park Farm, Selsey
(Site AL12)**








Figure 2

Title: Designated sites

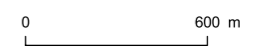
Address: Selsey, West Sussex



KEY

-  Parking
-  Permissive footpath
-  Bridleway
-  Byway
-  Footpath
-  Site boundary
-  Land owned by the Langmead Group

Scale: 1:25,000 @A3



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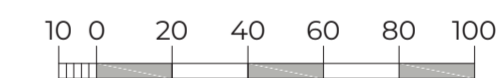
**Land West of Park Farm, Selsey
(Site AL12)**

Figure 3

Title: Public access

Address: Selsey, West Sussex

Appendix 1
Land West of Park Farm, Selsey
Illustrative masterplan



Rev	Date	Description	By



BOYLE + SUMMERS
ARCHITECTURE AND MASTERPLANNING

Canute Chambers
Canute Road
Southampton
Hampshire
SO14 3AB

Client	Landlink Estates
Project	Selsey North
Title	Sketch Framework Master Plan

SEN--BSL	ZZ--XX	DR--A	14 01 - PL
<small>Project</small>	<small>Originator</small>	<small>Volume</small>	<small>Level</small>
<small>Type</small>	<small>Role</small>	<small>Series</small>	<small>Number</small>
<small>Suitability</small>	<small>Revision</small>	<small> </small>	<small> </small>

B+S Ref	Date	Scale @A2	Drawn	Checked
21099	Mar 2022	1:2000	IC/SR	RS

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