



The Ecology Co-op

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Ecological Impact Assessment

**Rickman's Green Village,
Crouchlands Farm, Billingshurst**

(Badger sensitive information redacted)

24th November 2022

Project No: P2645

The Ecology Co-operation Ltd
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Report Summary

1. The Ecology Co-op has been commissioned to undertake Ecological Surveys for a proposed development on land at Crouchlands Farm for the Rickman's Green Village site. Following a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, including UKHab mapping, of the site by The Ecology Co-op in 2018 and an updated survey in July 2021, further ecological surveys were undertaken, including protected species surveys and desk-top studies between June 2021 and October 2022, in order to provide sufficient baseline information for this assessment. This document presents the findings of these surveys, and a full Ecological Impact Assessment in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) guidelines to inform a planning application for the Rickman's Green Village site.

2. The site is approximately 31 ha in area and comprises several agricultural fields of mixed farmland with areas of woodland copse, tree lines and hedgerows included within the site. The fields are used for grazing livestock and are structurally of low diversity and are species poor, providing little ecological value. The woodland copses surrounding the boundaries of the site provide high quality habitat.

3. High value priority woodland and hedgerow habitats are present within the application site and are considered to be the features of greatest ecological value within the context of the application site.

4. The protected species surveys identified:

- important foraging, commuting and roosting habitat for bats including Bechsteins's bat and barbastelle, within and around the boundaries of the site
- presence of great crested newts within the development site
- valuable assemblage of breeding birds, a number of which are red listed species
- likely absence of dormice
- likely absence of reptiles

5. Works will see the complete loss of the low value grassland on site; there will also be a loss of some neutral grassland, hedgerow, scrub and tall ruderal habitat. Habitats to be created within the developed site include buildings, hard-standing, scattered trees and a buffer zone/ecotone to include an extension of the understorey of the woodland, scrub, high value grassland and SuDS. Impacts on the priority habitats will be mitigated through the establishment of these buffer zones. Any loss of hedgerow will be compensated for through new native planting within the developed site.

6. Significant effects on foraging/commuting bats, breeding birds, great crested newts, badgers and other notable species have been identified and as such, mitigation has been recommended to include habitat creation, sensitive lighting scheme, avoidance measures



during construction and buffer zone planting.

7. In line with the National Planning Policy Framework the site's ecological value should be enhanced and it is likely that the development will need to demonstrate that it can achieve a 10% net gain in biodiversity value. This can be achieved through the buffer zone planting scheme that has been recommended. Further detail is provided in section 5.