

**CABBAGEFIELD ROW, SWANMORE ROAD,
HAVANT, HAMPSHIRE**

**OFFSITE COMPENSATION LAND SURVEY
SUMMARY REPORT**

Draft Document

June 2024

Preliminary Ecological Appraisals • Protected Species Surveys and Licensing • NVC • EcIA • HRA • Management Plans
Habitats • Badger • Bats • Hazel Dormouse • Birds • Reptiles • Amphibians • Invertebrates • Riparian and Aquatic Species

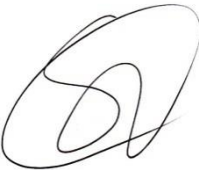
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ECOSA Quality Assurance Record

This report has been produced in accordance with the CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing 2017 (CIEEM, 2017). Survey work has been undertaken in line with references within CIEEM's Source of Survey Guidance (CIEEM, 2020).

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OFFSITE COMPENSATION LAND SURVEY SUMMARY REPORT

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background

Ecological Survey and Assessment Limited (ECOSA) have been contracted by Portsmouth City Council to undertake an ecological walkover survey of land at Holybank off Horndean Road, Emsworth, PO10 7XS (hereafter referred to as the site). The ecological walkover survey is necessary to assess the possibility of using the land as off-site mitigation for Cabbagefield Row, Swanmore Road, Havant, Hampshire, PO9 4EX.

ECOSA initially undertook a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal at Cabbagefield Row, Havant in April 2019 (ECOSA, 2019). The survey assessed the potential of the site to support any protected species, significant botanical assemblages, and potential impacts on any adjacent sites with an ecological designation. The site was assessed as suitable for roosting bats, foraging and commuting bats, badger, hazel dormouse, breeding birds, foraging nightjar, reptiles, and invertebrates.

As part of the Ecological Impact Assessment, ECOSA carried out protected species surveys at Cabbagefield Row throughout 2019-2020. These surveys concluded that the site is of county level importance for woodland habitat, hazel dormouse and slow-worm, up to county level importance for semi-improved grassland, and terrestrial invertebrates, local importance for adder and common lizard, and site level importance for bats, breeding birds and European hedgehog (ECOSA, 2023).

A Biodiversity Net Gain assessment of Cabbagefield Row, Havant was undertaken in July 2022 (ECOSA, 2022). The proposed scheme delivers an overall biodiversity net gain at the site. However, there will be a net loss of 2.11 hectares of scrub habitat which is an important habitat for a number of protected species known to be present on the site including hazel dormouse and nesting birds. The loss of scrub habitat will need to be compensated for and as there is no scope for scrub planting on-site, off-site compensation will be necessary.

Off-site land is required to compensate for the loss of hazel dormouse and nesting bird habitat at Cabbagefield Row, Havant and to create additional habitat units in relation to Biodiversity Net Gain. The site was identified by Portsmouth City Council which after a desktop review was thought to be suitable to meet the criteria needed to provide mitigation for the Cabbagefield Row site. An ecological walkover survey has been carried out to determine if the site is likely to be suitable for the scheme before Portsmouth City Council determine if they are to purchase the land.

1.2 The Site

The site measures approximately 4.5 hectares and is located to the north of Emsworth, a village to the east of Havant, Hampshire, centred on National Grid Reference (NGR) SU 7393 0789 (**Map 1**). The UKHab habitat map (**Map 2**) depicts the boundary of the site.

The site consists of grassland and is bordered on all sides by woodland. Immediately to the west of the site is Horndean Road. To the north and east of the site is an extensive woodland block, and to the south of the site is a thin strip of woodland, beyond which lies a residential development.

1.3 Site Proposals

The proposed development at Cabbagefield Row, Havant entails the construction of 150 residential units in the south of the site. Access will be gained from two locations on Swanmore Road through the southern site boundary. A significant area in the north of the site is proposed to be retained as open space.

The current proposals plan for Cabbagefield Row, Havant was provided by Portsmouth City Council and the Ecology, Soft Landscaping and Tree Plan produced by PDP Architecture (Drawing No. 28079-PD122 Rev. B, dated 14th March 2022)

The site assessed in this report is proposed to be used as offsetting land to compensate for the loss of scrub habitat at the Cabbagefield Row development.

2.0 METHODOLOGY

2.1 Introduction

This section details the methods employed during the updating walkover survey. Any significant limitations to the survey methods are also considered.

2.2 Field Survey

The field survey followed UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) methodology (The UK Habitat Classification Working Group, 2018) and included a search for evidence of, and an assessment of the site's suitability to support, protected and notable species as recommended by CIEEM (CIEEM, 2017). The field survey covered all accessible areas of the site, including boundary features. Habitats described in Section 4.0, have been mapped (**Map 2**), photographs and target notes provided, where relevant.

2.3 Ecological Walkover Survey Details

The ecological walkover survey was carried out by Simon Colenutt, Managing Principal Ecologist of ECOSA on 4th June 2024. The weather conditions were cloudy with sunny spells, 50-75% cloud cover, an ambient temperature of 16°C and a moderate breeze.

2.4 Ecological Walkover Survey Limitations

ECOSA were initially commissioned to carry out an NVC survey at the site, however, this was not possible due to the presence of around 15 horses in the field. As a result the survey involved a walkover of the site, avoiding the horses, and the recording of a plant species list.

The grassland has been assigned a UKHab habitat with an indication of NVC type. In addition, consideration was given to the potential for enhancement of the site to provide ecological compensation. Consideration was given to the potential for other protected species to be present.

3.0 RESULTS

3.1 Ecological Walkover Survey Results

3.1.1 Habitats

Habitats within the site are shown on the Baseline Habitat Map (**Map 2**). Habitats are described in general terms using standard UKHab terminology. The main habitats recorded on site during the field survey were as follows:

Other neutral grassland (g3c)

The grassland on site is largely heavily grazed and little more than a 1-2 centimetres in height across much of the site (**Figure 1**). Some areas of the site are or have been heavily poached. Areas where species that are avoided by grazing horses are present in higher density, for example, where there is a higher density of common ragwort, are longer but such areas are few (**Figure 2**).

The shorter sward areas were dominated by: soft brome *Bromus hordeaceus*, rough meadow-grass *Poa trivialis*, annual meadow-grass *Poa annua*, Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus*, creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, bulbous buttercup *Ranunculus bulbosus*, curled dock *Rumex crispus*, daisy *Bellis perennis*, toad rush *Juncus bufonius*, and common sorrel *Rumex acetosa*. Other species present included: common mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum*, stinging nettle *Urtica dioica*, greater bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus pedunculatus*, common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, selfheal *Prunella vulgaris*, crested dogstail *Cynosurus cristatus*, white clover *Trifolium repens*, black medic *Medicago lupulina*, common cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata*, broad-leaved plantain *Plantago major*, heath speedwell *Veronica officinalis*, yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, common centuary *Centaureum erythraea*, lesser stitchwort *Stellaria graminea*, parsleywort *Aphanes arvensis*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale*, mouse-ear hawkweed *Pilosella officinarum*, red clover *Trifolium pratense* and creeping cinquefoil *Potentilla reptans*.

The grassland is heavily grazed so species diversity may be greater than indicated by the above species list.



Figure 1: Typical grassland on the site



Figure 2: Longer grassland dominated by common ragwort

The site boundaries form the woodland margins and are areas of taller herbaceous vegetation dominated by species such as foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*, wood sage *Teucrium scorodonia*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, gorse *Ulex europaeus*, and wood dock *Rumex sanguineus* (**Figure 3**).



Figure 3: Woodland margin

There are a small number of scattered mature pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* trees in the south of the site (**Figure 4**).



Figure 4: Example of scattered trees in south of the site

There are two lines of trees on the site. There is a mature treeline along the western boundary of the site dominated by oak and birch *Betula pendula* (**Figure 5**). There is also a treeline bisecting the site east to west containing mature pedunculate oak, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Scot's pine *Pinus sylvestris* and evergreen oak *Quercus ilex* (**Figure 6**).



Figure 5: Western boundary



Figure 6: Central treeline

3.1.2 Protected Species

This section provides a brief assessment of the site's suitability for protected species.

Bats

Trees were not assessed for bat roosting potential, but it is likely that features could be present suitable for the formation of roosts (**Figure 7**). The site provides suitable habitat for foraging bats.



Figure 7: Tree with potential roosting features

Hazel Dormouse

The wooded margins of the site are suitable for supporting hazel dormouse with the presence of oak, hazel *Corylus avellana* and honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* being good indicators of the suitability of the woodland and providing a food resource and nesting material.

Reptiles

The site is largely unsuitable for reptiles due to the heavily grazed nature of the site, however, some of the marginal vegetation does provide enough cover to be used by reptiles.

Nesting birds

The scattered trees, treeline, wooded margins and marginal vegetation provide nesting habitat for birds. The grassland is tightly grazed and is therefore, unsuitable for ground nesting/grassland species such as skylark.

Invertebrates

The wooded margins of the site may support a good diversity of woodland associated invertebrates, some of which may be scarce.

4.0 POSSIBILITY OF USE AS OFF-SITE COMPENSATION

4.1 Scrub Habitat

The site comprises approximately 4.5 hectares of other neutral grassland which is suitable for natural scrub regeneration. Allowing at least 2.11 hectares of mixed scrub to regenerate in good condition would provide sufficient habitat to compensate for the loss of scrub habitat at the Cabbagefield Row site.

The creation of good condition mixed scrub habitat will increase the biodiversity net gain score of the site. This shows that creation of mixed scrub habitat will provide compensatory habitat for protected species present at Cabbagefield Row, Havant, particularly hazel dormouse and nesting birds, as well as providing a net gain in biodiversity on the site.

Creation of mixed scrub habitat on the site will not satisfy the trading rules of the biodiversity net gain metric for Cabbagefield Row, Havant, for which the site is providing compensatory habitat. This is because losses of habitats should be compensated for on a 'like for like' or a 'like for better' basis. As there will be a loss of grassland that is compensated for with scrub, this is not considered to be 'like for like' or 'like for better'. Further details can be found in the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment report (ECOSA, 2022).

4.1.1 Scrub Habitat Creation and Management

The margins of the site should be allowed to generate to scrub through natural regeneration rather than through planting, this can simply be achieved by leaving the first 10-20m uncut. This uncut margin should be created with a scalloped edge rather than a uniform width. As regeneration of the scrub habitat would take time, it is recommended that this process is started in advance/alongside works being carried out on the Cabbagefield Row, Havant site.

To achieve good condition, scrub regeneration should comprise at least three woody species such as hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa* and hazel, as well as other species typical of scrub habitat such as gorse, willow *Salix* species and bramble. Stands of these species should be planted as necessary to create the required mix of species, and allowed to regenerate naturally. The scrub should have a well-developed edge, a diverse structure and include clearings, glades or rides within the habitat.

After around 10 years of scrub habitat development then an option to rotationally cut the margins could be considered so that a diverse structure to the scrub is facilitated.

4.2 Grassland Habitat

The neutral grassland on the site could be enhanced to good condition to increase the biodiversity net gain score to compensate for the loss of grassland after scrub regeneration, and to increase the area of habitat suitable for protected species such as reptiles which may be present on the site.

4.2.1 Grassland Management

The grassland could be readily improved to in ecological value by allowing the vegetation to grow through removal of grazing. During late-August/early-September a haycut should be taken with cuttings removed. This cut should then be followed by grazing (aftermath grazing) through the autumn into the early new year.

To achieve good condition the other neutral grassland would need a diverse sward height, ten or more vascular plant species per metre square, and a reduction in grazing/poaching

4.3 Other Possible Habitat Improvements

Consideration should be given to the construction of a number of ponds across the site, these should be of varied size, shape and depth. Waterbodies provide an ecological benefit as they attract a number of species, particularly foraging bats and invertebrates.

A small number of oak should be planted at low density to form isolated standards across the site, creating areas of shade and providing additional habitat for nesting birds.

If woodland on the margins of the site could be brought into management then thinning of trees and some coppicing would be beneficial. This would need to be agreed with the landowner of the woodland on the site margins is not included within the site boundary. Thinning and coppicing would promote tree growth, create a diverse structure, and encourage growth of flowering plants and grasses in the understory which provides habitat and a food resource for a wide range of species.

5.0 CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Conclusions and Recommendations

The site is suitable for creation of 2.11 hectares of good condition mixed scrub habitat to provide compensatory habitat for protected and notable species, particularly hazel dormouse and nesting birds, at Cabbagefield Row, Havant.

The creation of scrub habitat does not satisfy the trading rules of biodiversity net gain for Cabbagefield Row, Havant as compensating for a loss of other neutral grassland with scrub habitat is not considered a 'like for like' or 'like for better' trade. However, it does provide a net gain in biodiversity units for Cabbagefield Row, Havant. As the scrub habitat is important for protected and notable species, the creation of scrub habitat is considered preferable for overall delivery of biodiversity net gain, even though the trading rules have not been satisfied.

The site also provides options for improving the grassland management and for tree planting, which would increase the ecological value of the site and provide suitable habitat for a number of protected and notable species. Improving the grassland habitat and planting trees would also benefit the biodiversity net gain score.

6.0 REFERENCES

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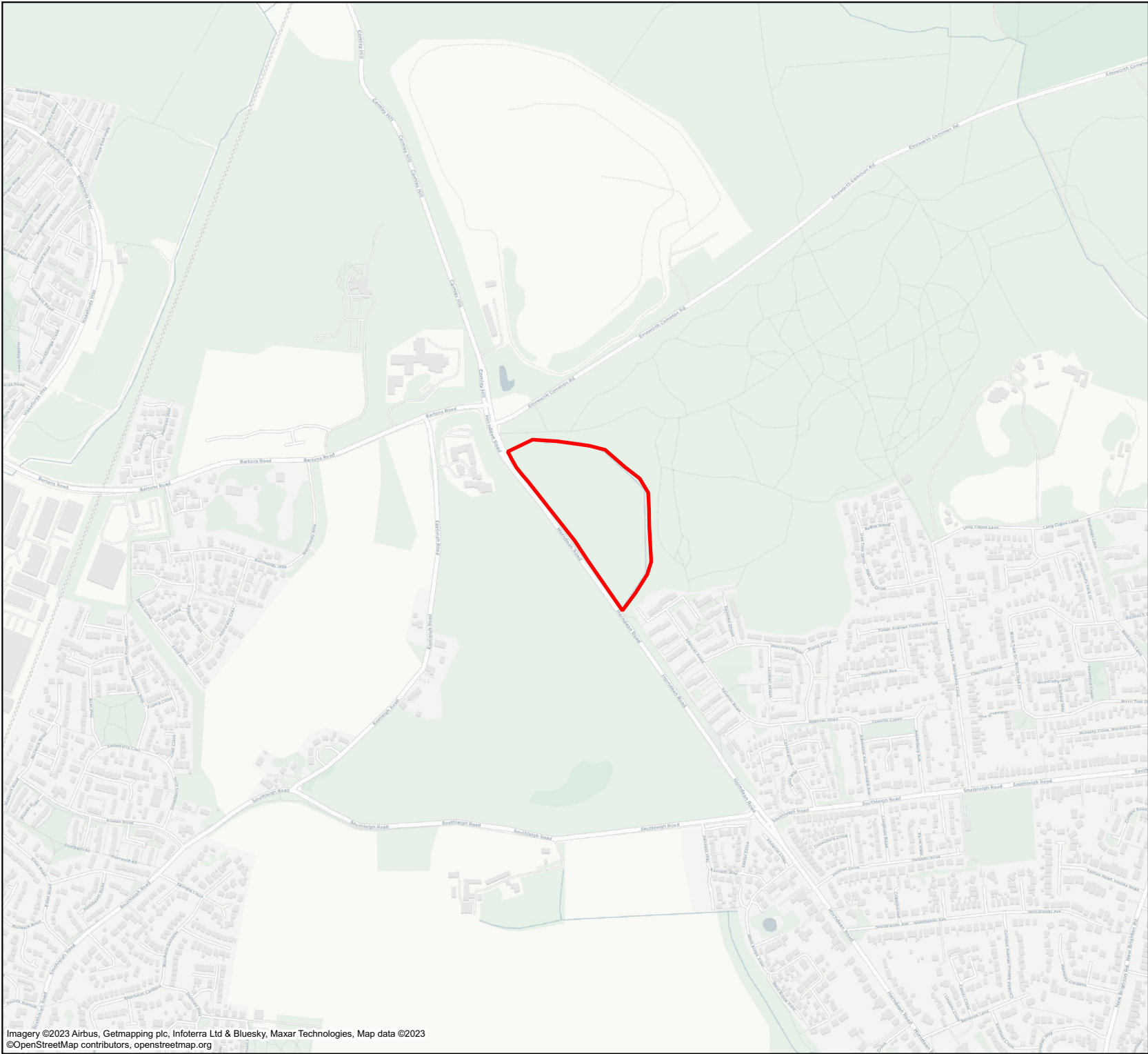
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Available at: <https://ukhab.org/>

Map 1 Site Location Plan



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Map 1 - Site Location Plan

Client:	Portsmouth City Council
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KEY

 Site Boundary



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1:10,000

0 100 200 300 400 m



Prepared by: KM Date: 180624

Last amended by: N/A Date: N/A

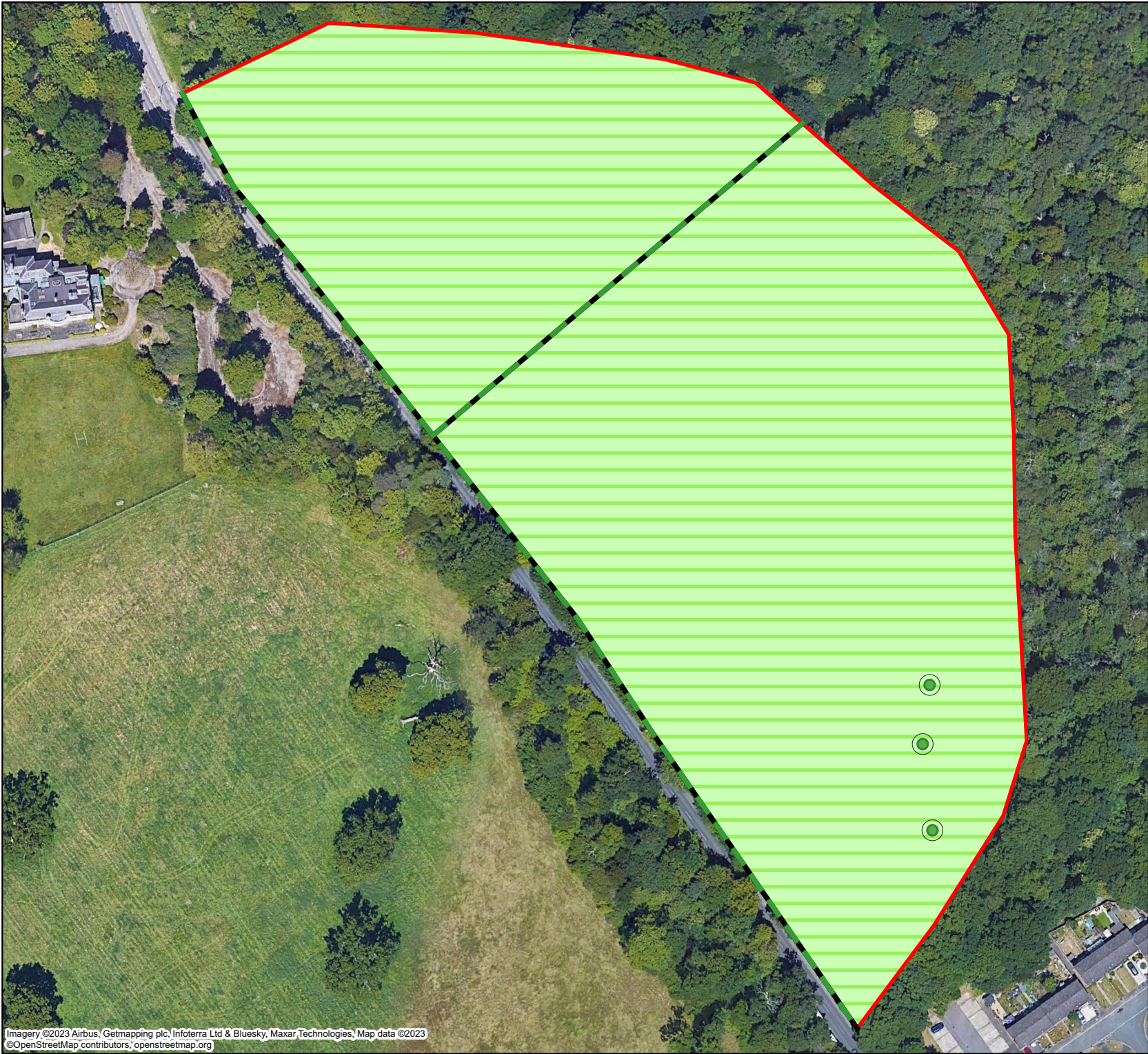
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Map 2 UKHab Habitats



**CABBAGEFIELD ROW,
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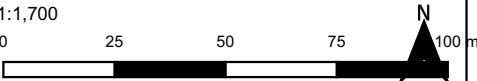
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Map 2 - Baseline Habitats

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KEY

-  Site Boundary
-  Other neutral grassland
-  Line of trees
-  Existing Medium Rural Tree



Prepared by: KM	Date: 180624
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