As of 19/10/2026 Padnell Grange Ecological Appraisal Summary

Ecological Appraisal — Summary

Overall finding

The report identifies no overriding ecological constraint to the proposed housing scheme. This conclusion depends on completing the required surveys and implementing the specified wildlife safeguards, habitat protection measures, and off-site mitigation.

1 Site and assessment

The appraisal covers approximately 2.82 hectares of the Padnell Grange grounds off Padnell Road, on the eastern edge of Cowplain. The proposal is to demolish existing buildings and construct 90 homes, with upgraded access and landscaping. A further 1.8 hectares of woodland to the north (Padnell Cuts Wood) was included in the habitat survey but is outside the development site.

Hankinson Duckett Associates reviewed ecological records and conducted habitat and badger surveys on 14 May 2025 and an initial bat survey on 6 May 2025. The appraisal also draws on species surveys undertaken in 2017. Its purpose is to identify ecological value, development constraints and the measures needed to avoid or reduce harm.

2 Habitats and nearby nature conservation sites

Much of the site consists of regularly managed grassland, buildings, hard surfaces and ornamental planting. These habitats have negligible nature conservation value individually. Hedgerows, tree lines and mature scattered trees are more useful for wildlife movement, feeding and shelter; together they are assessed as having low local value. Several mature oaks are present. An old hawthorn is listed as a veteran on the Ancient Tree Inventory, although a 2026 arboricultural assessment did not consider that it met the criteria for a true veteran; the appraisal nonetheless highlights its protection.

There is no designated conservation area within the site. Immediately east is Waterlooville Golf Course Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), rated of district value. Padnell Cuts Wood to the north is rated of moderate local value. Internationally protected coastal habitats, including Chichester and Langstone Harbours, are farther away but remain relevant to the housing proposal.

3 Wildlife findings and outstanding survey evidence

Bats are a key consideration: nine buildings and 31 trees were identified as having at least some roosting potential. Earlier surveys (2017) found low-status day roosts of common pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats in five buildings. Additional emergence/re-entry and tree surveys have been undertaken, with findings and any licensing or mitigation requirements addressed in a separate bat report; the appraisal does not provide their detailed results.

Great Crested Newts may use the site while on land. There is no suitable breeding pond on the site itself, but a 2017 survey recorded a small population in a golf-course pond about 75 metres away. A further pond eDNA survey was commissioned, and newt matters are addressed separately. No badger setts or activity were found in accessible surveyed areas, but an updated check is advised before works. Dormice were not recorded in 2017 and are considered unlikely to occur regularly;

common nesting birds and small numbers of reptiles could nevertheless be present. Crocosmia and an unidentified cotoneaster species require attention because of the risk of spreading invasive plants.

4 Main development safeguards

The south-eastern corner lies within 5.6 km of the Solent protected bird sites. The appraisal therefore identifies a financial contribution towards the Solent Recreation Disturbance Project to address cumulative visitor disturbance. A separate nutrient budget also identified a net increase in nutrient loading without mitigation; the proposed response is a financial contribution to a strategic off-site scheme.

The scheme should retain and buffer useful hedgerows and trees where possible, protect the noteworthy hawthorn, follow tree-protection good practice, and use a construction environmental management plan to control dust and safeguard water quality near the golf-course SINC. Lighting should be kept low, shielded and away from woodland, hedgerows and other dark wildlife corridors.

Vegetation clearance and demolition should avoid the bird nesting season (generally March–September), unless an ecologist checks immediately beforehand. Precautionary hand-felling and ecological supervision are advised for possible dormice, with Natural England consulted over the approach. Potential reptile habitat should be cleared in stages under ecological supervision at suitable times. Badger precautions include a pre-start re-survey and escape routes from open excavations. Invasive plants should be identified, controlled and prevented from spreading.

5 Biodiversity gains and conclusion

Recommended enhancements include native hedges and wildlife-friendly planting, bat and bird boxes, log/brash piles, hedgehog gaps in fences and dark habitat corridors. The report refers to planning policy requiring at least 10% biodiversity net gain but does not give a completed biodiversity metric or quantify the scheme's gain.

The ecologists conclude that significant local ecological effects are unlikely if the specified mitigation and protection measures are implemented. This conclusion is conditional: the separate bat and newt evidence, nutrient and recreation mitigation, protection of retained habitats and appropriate construction safeguards all remain important to the planning and delivery of the scheme.

Source: *Hankinson Duckett Associates, "Padnell Grange, Waterlooville — Ecological Appraisal", Rev B, April 2026. This overview does not replace the full report or separate specialist assessments.*