

## **Cover Note for Ecological Impact Assessment:**

### **Drilling of boreholes and small-scale injection trial works at Mid Tarn Farm**

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**Document Reference:** PLC\_BCC\_2219

08/05/2025

The Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) provided here was carried out for Mid Tarn Farm and Tarn Head Farm in 2024 to support the previous planning application for initial ground investigation works at the sites, and was based on a comprehensive desk study and site survey in accordance with CIEEM guidelines. The EclA concluded that there would be no significant effects<sup>1</sup> on ecological features, taking account of the established best-practice avoidance and mitigation measures identified in the report.

The farm buildings outside the 2024 red-line boundary were demolished by the landowner in 2025; the footprint of these buildings is concrete hardstanding, which is within the current red-line boundary. Notwithstanding this, the 2024 EclA is considered to remain valid for this application for the following reasons:

- a. The proposed works are similar in nature (borehole drilling, sampling and testing work) to those assessed by the EclA.
- b. The areas of the site surveyed as part of the previous work at Mid Tarn Farm include the areas proposed for drilling and injection trial work in this proposed scheme.
- c. The footprint of the demolished farm buildings which forms the remaining areas proposed for drilling and injection trial work in this proposed scheme is concrete hardstanding that does not introduce additional habitat that would require further assessment or mitigation beyond that identified in the 2024 report.
- d. Additional visits by ecologists have been made to Mid Tarn Farm since 2024 as part of other investigation works, covering most of the site area within the red-line boundary; no potentially notable changes to the ecological conditions were identified.

There will be no harm to existing trees in the area and therefore a Tree Survey is not required for this application.

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<sup>1</sup> Significant in EclA terms – i.e. ecological effects that should be given weight when authorising a project.

## **BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN – EXEMPTION STATEMENT**

There is a statutory requirement under Schedule 7A of the *Town and Country Planning Act 1990* (as amended) for most developments requiring planning permission to deliver a minimum 10% 'Biodiversity Net Gain' (BNG), unless exempted.

This scheme is considered exempt under Regulation 4 of *The Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Exemptions) Regulations 2024* (the 'de minimis exemption'). This is because:

- a) The proposals do not impact<sup>2</sup> any 'priority habitats' listed under Section 41 of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006* (no such habitats are present on the site).
- b) The proposals impact less than 25 square metres of onsite habitat that has biodiversity value greater than zero:
  - i. Most boreholes will be on concrete hardstanding (biodiversity value of zero), including areas left in-situ following recent demolition of old farm buildings.
  - ii. Boreholes outside of concrete hardstanding areas will temporarily impact approximately 1m<sup>2</sup>. Once completed, each borehole will be ~200mm dia. so will impact ~ 0.03m<sup>2</sup>. No more than 15 borehole locations will fall outside of the concrete hardstanding areas.
  - iii. Temporary units for welfare and trial equipment will be located on concrete hardstanding (biodiversity value of zero) or (if located on grassland) will occupy ~10m<sup>2</sup> only.
- c) The proposals will have no impact on onsite linear habitat.

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<sup>2</sup> Reg. 4(4)(b) states that "a habitat is impacted where the habitat is lost or degraded such that there is a decrease in the biodiversity value of that habitat".