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**Subject** Pinewood Studios - Phase 1 Ecological Monitoring  
**Date** 29 June 2018 **Job No/Ref** 253385-07

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## 1 Introduction

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In line with the commitments made by Pinewood Studios in the Ecological Management and Monitoring Plan (EcMP)<sup>1</sup>, submitted as part of the Pinewood Studios Development Framework (PSDF) planning application, monitoring of newly created and enhanced habitats and newly installed ecological features within the Phase 1 area was undertaken in 2017. The site was surveyed five times; in April, May, June, August and October 2017. Following this, a meeting was held with the Buckinghamshire County Council (BCC) Ecologist to discuss the results of the monitoring and the programme going forwards.

The monitoring process is dynamic, with the results feeding into the management regime of the site as the surveys progress, allowing the opportunity for any issues to be identified and rectified early on.

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## 2 2017 Monitoring Results

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### 2.1 Species

#### Badger

Evidence of badger activity has been recorded during monitoring surveys and setts identified previously, in the vicinity of the Phase 1 area, remained active. Several holes, previously recorded as disused, had also come back into use.

#### Bats

Inspections of artificial bat boxes, positioned on mature trees along the Sevenhills Road tree corridor in June 2016, were undertaken in October 2017. Of the nine boxes identified, two were inspected as access constraints prevented the remaining seven from being inspected. No field signs, such as staining or external droppings were present (sometimes found on the outside of boxes around the entrance point) and it was concluded that the boxes may not yet have been occupied. This is not unexpected as the bat boxes had been in place for only one full season and bats may take some time to locate and start to use boxes.

#### Birds

Common passerine species such as robin, wren and blue tit were recorded across the survey area, with key areas of bird activity being along the Sevenhills Road tree corridor, the perimeter of The Clump, and the radial hedgerows and treelines through the Phase 1 area.

The following species were recorded as nesting within the monitoring survey area:

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- Mallard;
- Tufted duck;
- Green woodpecker;
- Magpie;
- Blue tit;
- Skylark;
- Blackcap;
- Wren;
- Robin; and
- Dunnock.

Chiffchaff, great tit, long-tailed tit, starling and swift were also recorded within the survey area but not enough evidence was observed to conclude whether these species were breeding.

The two ponds created as part of the Phase 1 development proved attractive for waterfowl species with mallard and tufted duck both breeding in the habitat surrounding the southern pond. These species have not been recorded within the survey area previously. The northern pond has proved a successful foraging resource but was not used as nesting habitat for any bird species. It is thought that this is because the vegetation has not developed as quickly as that around the southern pond so does not offer as much protection from predation.

## Reptiles

The bund created along Pinewood Road has established well and is now considered suitable reptile habitat. It offers features suitable for active and hibernating reptiles. Two adult common lizard (a male and a female) were recorded along the Phase1/Phase 2 boundary fence. Historical surveys indicated that the reptile population on site was focussed around The Clump. therefore these initial results could suggest that the reptile population has become more widespread across the site.

## 2.2 Green Roofs

Five biodiverse green roofs were installed as part of the Phase 1 development. These had been specifically designed for ground-nesting birds in order to mitigate for the loss of open areas of grassland as a result of the Phase 1 development. The condition of each roof was monitored regularly throughout 2017 through assessment of the vegetation and bird and invertebrate assemblages using the roofs.

Initially, all the roofs were seeded with the same species mix, but through natural colonisation, each has developed slightly differently, providing a suitable environment for birds, particularly skylark, and a range of invertebrate species. Roofs 3, 4 and 5 developed with a more meadow-like in nature, with a greater proportion of grass species, compared to roofs 1 and 2, which are becoming dominated by more vigorous species (such as sow thistle).

A range of bird species have been recorded using the green roofs for foraging and nesting. Of key importance is the confirmation that two of the roofs supported nesting skylark during the breeding season. In addition, during the August and October surveys, more skylark were showing interest in all five roofs.

Pied wagtail were recorded on at least one of the green roofs during every monitoring visit. Pairs and groups of between three and five individuals were regularly recorded on all the roofs.

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During the survey in April, wheatears were recorded on two roofs, so it is thought likely that these were on spring passage through the area.

During the August and October monitoring surveys, a flock of approximately 20 linnet were flushed from roof three and roof two respectively. It is thought likely that these birds were feeding on seeds on the roofs.

During the August monitoring survey, one adult and two juvenile goldfinches were recorded on roof one, with pairs and small groups also recorded on roof one and roof three.

During the October monitoring survey, pairs of meadow pipit were recorded on roofs one, two and four.

A red kite was also recorded on several occasions soaring over the roofs.

All the roofs have attracted a range of invertebrate species. Honey bees and bumble bees were regularly recorded on all roofs, as were large white, common blue and red admiral butterflies. Ground beetles, hoverflies, ladybirds and spiders were also amongst the more commonly occurring invertebrates on the roofs.

## 2.3 Habitats and Features

Generally the newly-created and enhanced habitats, including the two ponds, have established well; however, some saplings and hedging plants have failed, particularly within the central hedgerow and the hedgerow along the northern boundary of Phase 1 in F8. In some instances, particularly in the planted woodland between Sevenhills Road and the northern pond, the taller saplings require additional staking. It should be noted that some level of planting failure would be expected within any landscaping scheme, so these observations are not necessarily unanticipated.

The ponds have established well and surveys indicate that they are becoming successful ecological resources. Egyptian geese, ruddy darter and black-tailed skimmer dragonfly, and common blue butterfly have all been recorded on site in association with these ponds and mallards and tufted duck nested on the banks of the southern pond in 2017.

## 2.4 Ad Hoc Observations

Roe deer and Muntjac deer prints were recorded between the Phase 1 boundary fence and The Clump and around the southern pond. During the survey in August, a roe deer buck was observed in F10, close to the southern pond

# 3 2018 Monitoring

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Following the completion of the 2017 monitoring programme, a list of recommendations relating to the management of habitats and features has been provided to Pinewood Studios in order to enhance the potential of these habitats and features to support biodiversity.

In accordance with the EcMP, Year 2 of the monitoring of the Phase 1 area commenced in April 2018. These will be reported on in December 2018 and a follow-up meeting held with the BCC Ecologist.

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## 4 Photographs

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Photograph 1: April 2017 – a mallard family photographed on the southern pond. This photograph was taken approximately one year after the pond was created.



Photograph 2: May 2017 – demonstrating the vegetation growth around the southern pond and the ongoing presence of nesting birds (mallard family pictured in the background).

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Photograph 3: October 2017 – the northern pond. Photograph taken approximately 1.5 years after the pond was created.



Photograph 4: October 2017 – the northern bank of the northern pond showing the tree planting along the outer edge to enhance the Sevenhills Road tree corridor.

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Photograph 5 (above) and Photograph 6 (below): photographs taken on the green roofs in May 2017, under a year after they were seeded.



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Photograph 7 (above) and Photograph 8 (below): photographs taken of the log piles and surrounding vegetation on the green roofs in October 2017. The range of habitat types can also be seen with some more tussocky areas and some barer substrate patches, which give rise to a more diverse species assemblage.



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Photograph 9: May 2018 – a skylark nest on one of the green roofs, in amongst the tussocky vegetation.