



CHAIN ROAD, BLACKLEY MANCHESTER

HEDGEHOG REASONABLE AVOIDANCE MEASURES METHOD STATEMENT (RAMMS)

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1.0 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 TEP was commissioned by Bowker Sadler, on behalf of Great Places Housing Group, to prepare this Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statement (RAMMS) for hedgehogs, in advance of submitting the planning application for the proposed residential development at Chain Road, Blackley.
- 1.2 An extended Phase 1 habitat survey of the site was undertaken July 2021, and habitats within the site were considered to have suitability to support hedgehog. Given the potential for hedgehogs to be present on site, it is considered acceptable to undertake works on site under the implementation of a RAMMS, as recommended in the Preliminary Ecological Assessment (TEP report ref. 8990.001).
- 1.3 This document outlines the Reasonable Avoidance Measures which will be implemented during the site clearance and construction phases of the development.

2.0 Status of Hedgehogs

Legal Protection

- 2.1 Hedgehogs are a species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Hedgehogs are also partially protected under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, in that they are protected from being killed, injured or taken by certain methods. They are also protected in Britain under the Wild Mammals Protection Act 1996 against cruelty and mistreatment.

Hedgehog Ecology

- 2.2 Hedgehogs are predominantly nocturnal animals and can travel large distances to feed on invertebrates. They breed between April and October and hibernate between November and March. For hibernation, the hedgehog builds hibernaculum, a nest 30-60cm in diameter constructed from leaves and located in dense cover, e.g. bramble or brushwood materials (Harris et al., 1989¹).
- 2.3 Hedgehog populations are declining in the UK. The most recent population estimate was 522,000 in 2016, down from approximately 1.5 million in 1995². This decline can be attributed to factors including a reduction of food sources, predation by badgers and collisions with cars.

Presence in Local Area

- 2.4 Records of hedgehog were found to be present within 600m of the proposals, as detailed within the desk based assessment (TEP report ref: 8990.002).

Potential for Presence within the Site

- 2.5 The extended Phase 1 habitat survey undertaken in July 2021 identified areas of the site suitable for hedgehog, in particular the dense scrub and unmanaged grassland provide suitable habitat for hedgehogs. The dense scrub offers opportunities for hibernating and sheltering hedgehogs, and the grassland and amenity grassland provide suitable habitat for commuting and foraging hedgehogs.

Potential Impacts of the Proposals

- 2.6 The proposals for the site involve clearance of all habitats with hedgehog suitability prior to construction. Owing to the permanent loss of potential hedgehog foraging, commuting and hibernating habitat, and in order to reduce the risk of harm to this species of principal importance, it is proposed that any hedgehogs present are sensitively displaced from the site.

¹ Harris, S., Cresswell, P., and Jefferies, D. (1989) Surveying Badgers. The Mammal Society.

² Mathews F, Kubasiewicz LM, Gurnell J, Harrower CA, McDonald RA, Shore RF. (2018) A Review of the Population and Conservation Status of British Mammals: Technical Summary. A report by the Mammal Society under contract to Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage. Natural England, Peterborough.

- 2.7 Depending on the time of year that clearance works will be undertaken, there may be implications with regard to disturbance of hibernating or overwintering hedgehogs. It is important to take this constraint into account when undertaking site clearance. Staged clearance will allow for ground cover to be maintained for any hibernating mammals.

3.0 Reasonable Avoidance Measures Approach

- 3.1 The nature of the habitats present on site means that the presence of hedgehog cannot be ruled out. Therefore vegetation clearance works, the use of machinery and any future construction works could result in death or injury to any hedgehogs that may be present within the site.
- 3.2 As part of the site induction process, all staff working on site will be made aware of the potential for presence of hedgehog on site and their status as a species of principal importance.
- 3.3 Although it is not an offence to handle hedgehogs, measures must be taken to ensure the safe relocation of any hedgehogs found on site to the ecological mitigation area.

Reasonable Avoidance Measures

- 3.4 The following precautionary working measures are set out to prevent any injury to hedgehog, if present within the site.
- 3.5 The hibernation period (November to March inclusive) will be avoided in relation to site clearance as hedgehogs would likely die if they are disturbed during this period. The months of June and July should also be avoided as this is when hedgehogs will give birth to their young and should not be disturbed.
- 3.6 However there are also significant constraints regarding nesting birds (vegetation clearance should not be undertaken during the nesting bird season - March to August inclusive). Therefore an alternative approach is proposed below.
 - Dense scrub and tall ruderal vegetation will be cleared to a height of 30cm outside of the nesting bird season (March to August) to minimise the suitability of the site for these species;
 - After a 24 hour period vegetation will then be cleared to 15cm, in a single direction toward retained suitable habitats, outside of the hibernation season (November to March), to encourage hedgehogs to move out of the working area of their own volition;
 - After a further 24 hours a check of the site should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist, including the dismantling of rubble piles and refugia, prior to the clearance of scrub and tall ruderal vegetation to ground level. Any hedgehog found should be released into suitable habitat at the edges of the development. If no suitable habitat remains on site, any hedgehogs found will be taken to the nearest wildlife rescue centre.
 - Brash piles and cleared vegetation should be removed from the working area immediately to avoid the creation of new hedgehog habitat.
 - Once all understorey has been carefully cleared to remove suitable hedgehog habitats then the trees can be felled, either outside the nesting season or, if within the nesting season, following a nesting bird check by a suitably qualified ecologist. A nesting bird check will only be valid for a 24 hour period.

- 3.7 Any open excavations should be covered overnight using plyboard and sand bags to fully seal any gaps. If this is not possible, a plank of wood placed at an angle no steeper than 40° should be left within the excavations so any hedgehogs or small mammals which fall into the trenches are able to escape.
- 3.8 Any existing access tracks into the site will be maintained. Vehicular or plant access should adhere to these access routes where feasible to prevent tracking over areas where hedgehogs could be present.
- 3.9 If an injured hedgehog is found on site, this should be taken to a nearby wildlife rescue centre or vet that accepts wild animals. Additionally if any young hedgehogs are found during the autumn, immediately prior to the hibernation period, these should also be taken to a wildlife rescue centre as it would be unlikely that these would survive the winter. The nearest wildlife rescue centre to the site is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Contact details for the nearest Wildlife Rescue Centre to the site

Name	Address	Telephone Number	Distance and Direction from Site
Hedgehog Rescue Rochdale	10 Fallowfield Drive Shawclough Rochdale OL12 6LZ	01706 860904	Approx. 9 miles north (25 mins)

- 3.10 This document must be strictly adhered to. If a situation arises regarding hedgehogs and the contractor is unsure what action to take, advice should be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Key Contacts

- 3.11 Any contractors requiring advice with regard to this RAMMS are welcome to contact any of the following for further information:
- TEP - Head Office (01925 844004)
 - Danielle Langton, Consultant Ecologist, TEP (07881 986336)



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