



Manchester University NHS Foundation trust

Withington Community Hospital

Biodiversity Enhancement Plan

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RSK GENERAL NOTES

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This biodiversity enhancement plan (BEP) is provided for the proposed development at Withington Community Hospital, Withington, Didsbury in Greater Manchester (OS Grid Reference: SJ 83736 92016). The recommendations are based on the results of a preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) undertaken by RSK Biocensus in 2023 to support a planning application for the proposed construction of a two-storey building comprising a Community Diagnostics Centre, with associated external landscaping, patient and delivery drop off area and 6 no. accessible parking spaces.

This BEP has been produced to discharge planning condition 6 of the approved planning application for the site (Ref: 140400/JO/2024).

Therefore, the aim of this enhancement plan is to outline biodiversity enhancements for the scheme and ensure that they are managed and enhanced over 30 years after project completion. The objectives of this management plan are to describe:

- how created and retained habitats will be created, managed and monitored;
- how the created habitats can be managed to maximise their utility for wildlife;
- enhancement measures for bats, birds and hedgehogs including details of installation and maintenance;

The management plan includes the creation and management of the following habitats:

- Scrub and trees;
- Non-native and ornamental hedgerow and introduced shrub; and
- Bat and bird boxes and hedgehog houses.

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1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose of this report

- 1.1.1 This biodiversity enhancement plan (BEP) is provided for the proposed development at Withington Community Hospital, Withington, Didsbury in Greater Manchester (OS Grid Reference: SJ 83736 92016).
- 1.1.2 The recommendations are based on the results of a ecological surveys undertaken by RSK Biocensus in 2023 to support a planning application for the proposed construction of a two-storey building comprising a Community Diagnostics Centre, with associated external landscaping, patient and delivery drop off area and 6 no. accessible parking spaces.
- 1.1.3 This BEP has been produced to discharge planning condition 6 of the approved planning application for the site (Ref. 140400/JO/2024).
- 1.1.4 Condition 6 states: *"Within 1 month of the commencement of above ground works, a scheme for the enhancement of the site for biodiversity purposes shall be submitted to and agreed in writing by the City Council as Local Planning Authority. The scheme shall include:*
 - Details of bat and bird boxes and hedgehog houses to be installed and timescales for their installation;
 - Proposals for the long-term management of the retained scrub and trees. The agreed scheme shall be implemented in accordance with the agreed details and maintained thereafter. "

1.2 Landscape context

- 1.2.1 The development site is located to the south of the existing Withington Community Hospital (**Error! Reference source not found.**). The proposed site boundary is c.0.9 ha, and includes sections of mixed scrub, scattered trees, introduced shrubs and sealed surfaces (hardstanding).
- 1.2.2 The site is bordered to the north by the current hospital building and car park, to which the proposed new building will connect. The site it is bordered by major roadways and residential dwellings to the east and the south. Buccleuch Lodge, an intermediate care home surrounded by amenity grassland is located to the west of the site. The wider landscape is urban with the residential of areas Withington, West Didsbury, East Didsbury and Wythenshawe. There are pockets of greenspace present, including parks, playing fields and vegetated railway corridors.

1.3 Development proposals

- 1.3.1 The development proposals include erection of a two-storey building comprising a Community Diagnostics Centre, with associated external landscaping, patient and

delivery drop off area and six no. accessible parking spaces at Withington Community Hospital.

1.4 Documents used to inform this report

1.4.1 This BEP has been informed by the following documents:

- Preliminary ecological appraisal report REV01 (RSK Biocensus, 2023);
- Biodiversity Net Gain Design Stage Report REV08 (RSK Biocensus, 2024);
- Withington Community Hospital Stage 1 and 2 Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report RSK Biocensus (2023);
- Square Yard (November 2024) 22182-Y2D-WCH006-00-XX-L-00903- Withington Hospital Burton Road Withington – Planting Plan (P01)

1.5 Aims and objectives

1.5.1 The aim of this enhancement plan is to outline biodiversity enhancements for the scheme and ensure that they are managed and enhanced over 30 years after project completion. The objectives of this management plan are to describe:

- how created habitats will be created, managed and monitored;
- how the created habitats can be managed to maximise their utility for wildlife;
- enhancement measures for bats, birds and hedgehogs including details of installation and maintenance.

2.0 HABITAT CREATION AND MANAGEMENT

2.1 Overview

- 2.1.1 Each habitat on the site will require a certain level of establishment, maintenance and monitoring to ensure that they are providing the ecosystem function required of them. This section details the habitats being retained or created, and specific management measures for each habitat.
- 2.1.2 All existing trees on the boundary will be retained. The area of retained scrub will be enhanced via the removal of invasive non-native species and the temporarily lost mixed scrub will be re-created.
- 2.1.3 Proposed planting includes introduced shrubs, tree and hedgerow planting, and meadow grassland creation. A large proportion of the planting will be ornamental shrubs and trees for visual appeal and practicality. However, it has been designed sensitively to promote biodiversity and create linear linkages for wildlife to the wider landscape.

2.2 Trees

- 2.2.1 All trees within the site boundary are to be retained and will not be impacted by the current proposed development. Any trees in the vicinity of the works should be protected during construction works in line with *BS5837:2012 - Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction* and all tree work should be carried out in accordance with British Standard BS 3998 "Recommendations for Tree Work".
- 2.2.2 Five small *Betula utilis doorenbos* (Himalayan Birch), two small *Quercus palustris* (Spanish Oak) and one small *Pyrus Calleryana Chanticleer* (Ornamental Pear) will be planted.
- 2.2.3 Trees should be planted between October and April. Newly planted trees should be protected during the growth stage, but plastic guarding should be removed as soon as possible to prevent limiting the growth of the stems and to minimise plastic pollution on the site.
- 2.2.4 For the first growing season following planting, a mulch material such as chippings or bark should be laid around the base of the tree within a one metre diameter, in order to reduce competition from weeds and grasses. This should first be carried out in April and throughout the following summer in response to new weed growth.
- 2.2.5 Ongoing pruning to retained and newly planted trees should be kept to a minimum, particularly to the boundary screening to allow bands of dense vegetation to develop. Branches should be removed only when they pose a risk to the health and safety of people. Removal should take place outside of the breeding bird season (breeding bird season runs from March to August inclusive). If any specialist works are required, then an approved arboriculturalist should be appointed.
- 2.2.6 If any retained tree will removed, uprooted or destroyed or dead, another tree shall be planted at the same place and that tree should be of such size and species.

- 2.2.7 The newly planted and retained trees on the site will provide nesting habitat for birds, and once fully mature may develop fissures and crevices which can be used by roosting bats. They will help to form refuge and commuting corridors for a range of species but will also help screen the development. Furthermore, they will provide a food source for bats and birds in the form of fruit, seeds and invertebrates attracted to the trees. It is anticipated that the planted trees will reach maturity after c. 25 years.
- 2.2.8 The newly planted trees will provide nesting habitat for birds, and once fully mature may develop fissures and crevices which can be used by roosting bats. Furthermore, they will provide a food source for bats and birds in the form of fruit, seeds and invertebrates attracted to the trees.

2.3 Scrub

- 2.3.1 An area of retained mixed scrub will be enhanced by invasive species removal and an area of temporarily lost mixed scrub will be re-created with planting of a mixture of Dog Rose (*Rosa canina*), Dogwood (*Cornus sanguinea*), Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*).
- 2.3.2 Scrub should be re-planted between November and March. Newly planted scrub should be protected during the growth stage, but plastic guarding should be removed once scrub has reached establishment and no longer requires support (likely Year 3).
- 2.3.3 During the first growing season the newly planted scrub must be well watered particularly during dry periods.
- 2.3.4 Any scrub pruning will be kept to a minimum, but will be carried out over winter as required (where branches become dangerous). Wounds exceeding 25mm diameter must not be treated with a sealant. This should be undertaken in late winter (January to February), when birds are not nesting.
- 2.3.5 Any dead or dying saplings shall be replaced with good quality specimens of the same species, as appropriate to maintain the overall habitat structure.
- 2.3.6 Where appropriate, dead wood will be retained on the Site and piled up underneath the main canopy to create invertebrate habitat and shelter for small mammals.
- 2.3.7 The retained and created areas of scrub will provide nesting, commuting and sheltering habitat for birds, hedgehogs, amphibians, invertebrates and other small mammals.

2.4 Hedgerows

- 2.4.1 The current hedgerows within the proposed site boundary are non-native, ornamental and species-poor. It is understood that approximately 133 m of new hedgerow are proposed to be planted adjacent to the area of retained scrub. To increase species richness and improve biodiversity, the following native species are recommended:
- Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*)
 - Dog-rose (*Rosa canina*)
 - Elder (*Sambucus nigra*)
 - Guelder-rose (*Viburnum opulus*)

- Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*)
 - Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*)
- 2.4.2 It is recognized that this planting will be managed with the primary objective as boundary features for ornamental purposes. However, the following management measures will provide ornamental advantages as well as ecological benefits.
- 2.4.3 The hedge should be planted between October and April. Guarding is not anticipated to be necessary for fast growing, evergreen species. However, during the first growing season the newly planted hedge must be well watered particularly during dry periods.
- 2.4.4 The newly planted hedgerow must have an initial prune within the second year after planting to encourage dense, bushy growth. This should be undertaken in late winter (January to February), when birds are not nesting.
- 2.4.5 After the initial prune, trimming must be undertaken every 3 years in January to February. Growth should not be left untrimmed for longer than 3 years however, as the woody growth will become too thick to be cleanly trimmed with a flail. A tall thick hedge with good growth at the base is optimal for wildlife (e.g. 2-3 meters tall by 2 metres wide).
- 2.4.6 The additional hedgerow will provide nesting, commuting and sheltering opportunities for a range of wildlife, such as birds, amphibians, invertebrates, bats and other small mammals.

2.5 Introduced shrub

- 2.5.1 Introduced and ornamental shrub will be planted in several areas along the hospital building. This habitat type is of limited value to wildlife, as these areas are likely to be frequently disturbed by people due to proximity to the building and seating areas, encouraging wildlife into these areas may cause unnecessary impacts on the wildlife. They will be managed for aesthetical and recreational rather than ecological purposes.

2.6 Other habitats

Bat boxes

- 2.6.1 The following bat boxes (or similar if type and model not available, and approved by project ecologist) should be installed on mature trees in the vicinity of the proposed development as enhancements:
- 1x Isabella Bat Box
 - 1x Schwegler 1FW Bat Hibernation Box
 - 1x 2FN Schwegler Bat Box
- 2.6.2 The bat boxes have been developed to be installed on mature trees, for smaller species and as a nursing area.

Installation

- 2.6.3 It is important to provide bats with a range of environmental conditions as they require different conditions for different activities (e.g. roosting and breeding). As a result of the boxes should face in different directions, preferably with at least one box facing south, south-east or south-west. All boxes should be placed as high up as possible and no less than 3 m from the ground to avoid disturbance from people. Entrances to the boxes should remain clear of obstructions (such as overhanging branches) so that bats have a clear line of flight to each box and no light should illuminate the entrances. The bat boxes should be installed before operation / occupation. Potential bat box locations are highlighted on the landscape plan (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

Maintenance

- 2.6.4 These bat boxes are relatively maintenance free as any droppings will fall out of the entrance at the base of the box. If the box is damaged it should be fixed or replaced with like-for-like.

Bird boxes

- 2.6.5 It is recommended that the following bird nest boxes (targeting smaller passerines) are installed on mature trees in the vicinity of the proposed development as enhancements:
- 2x 1B Schwegler Nest Box (32mm hole)
 - 1x 1B Schwegler Nest Box (26mm hole)
- 2.6.6 The recommended boxes would also be suitable for a range of common garden bird species. Potential bird box locations are highlighted on the landscape plan (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

Installation

- 2.6.7 The bird boxes should be sited with the advice of the project ecologist and should be positioned on mature trees at a minimum height of two metres. The boxes should be oriented between north and east, thus avoiding strong sunlight and the wettest winds. They should also have a clear flight path in front of the entrance. Boxes should be installed between September and February as most birds will not be nesting at this time.

Maintenance

- 2.6.8 All bird boxes should be cleaned out once between September and February when birds are unlikely to be using them for nesting.
- 2.6.9 Any old nests should be removed from the boxes entirely and should preferably be cleaned with boiling water to kill-off any remaining parasites. The boxes should then be replaced in their original position.

Hedgehog houses

- 2.6.10 It recommended that two hedgehog houses are installed along the boundaries and in undisturbed areas of the site:

- 2x SKU 10512 Wooden Hedgehog Nest Boxes

2.6.11 This hedgehog house will provide a place to hibernate and nest. Potential hedgehog house locations are highlighted on the landscape plan (**Error! Reference source not found.**).

Installation

2.6.12 The hedgehog houses can be installed any time of the year, however the ideal time is in October before the hedgehogs start hibernating. The houses entrance should not be oriented towards north or northeast, thus avoiding cold winds. The house should be filled with a layer of small dry leaves such as birch, oak, hawthorn or hazel.

Maintenance

- 2.6.13 All hedgehog houses should be cleaned once in April and October (post hibernation and post breeding season) as long as the house is empty.
- 2.6.14 Any old nesting material should be removed from the houses entirely and should preferably be cleaned with boiling water to kill-off any remaining parasites. Allow drying to take place before replacing the roof and then add new dry, clean hedgehog house bedding and then replaced in their original position.
- 2.6.15 The use of pesticides, herbicides and rodenticides should be avoided on the site and vegetation clearance to ground level should only occur once the area has been walked, checking for Hedgehogs.

3.0 MANAGEMENT RESPONSIBILITIES

3.1 Initial habitat creation responsibility

- 3.1.1 The responsibility for ensuring that the initial habitat creation works and completed to the required specification lies with Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust to appoint a suitably qualified landscape contractor. Manchester University NHS Foundation Trust will be responsible for ensuring that the habitat creation works are carried out in accordance with this Biodiversity Enhancement Plan.

3.2 Ongoing habitat management responsibility

- 3.2.1 Subsequent management of the habitats on the site will be the responsibility of the appointed landscape contractor over the 30-year period. They should ensure that the ongoing measures detailed within this BEP are implemented.

3.3 Monitoring and remedial measures responsibility

- 3.3.1 The appointed landscape contractor will also be responsible for monitoring the establishment of habitats as well as monitoring them for any changes affecting their quality or function.

3.4 Monitoring requirements

- 3.4.1 As the proposed development is for a hospital and the associated planting is within a garden setting, monitoring of the habitats is not recommended. The bat and bird boxes and hedgehog houses installed as enhancements do not require monitoring.

4.0 30 YEAR MANAGEMENT PLAN

Table 1 – 30 year management plan

Task	Planting (2024 – 2025)	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6 - 30
Tree, scrub and hedgerow	Planting	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Management	Remove invasive species. Plant between October and April. Protect with tree guards as necessary.	Pruning should be kept to a minimum and undertaken outside of the breeding bird season (March to August inclusive).	As previous.	As previous.	As previous. Remove tree guards as soon as possible.	As previous.
	Monitoring	N/A	As previous.	N/A. Scrub expected to reach moderate condition by year 3.	N/A	As previous	As previous, in years 10, 15 and 25 only. Trees expected to reach moderate condition by year 25.
Bat Boxes	Installation	Erect prior to operation/ occupation on south or south-west	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A

Task	Planting (2024 – 2025)	Year 1	Year 2	Year 3	Year 4	Year 5	Year 6 - 30
Bird Boxes							
	Maintenance	As previous	As previous.	As previous.	As previous.	As previous.	As previous.
	Installation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Maintenance	Clean once between Sept and Feb. Remove old nests.	As previous	As previous.	As previous.	As previous.	As previous.
Hedgehog houses	Installation	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A
	Maintenance	Clean once between late March to early April	As previous	As previous	As previous	As previous	As previous

5.0 REFERENCES

British Standard Institute (2012), *BS5837:2012 – Trees in relation to design, demolition and construction*.

RSK Biocensus (2023) *Withington Community Hospital Stage 1 and 2 Arboricultural Impact Assessment Report*

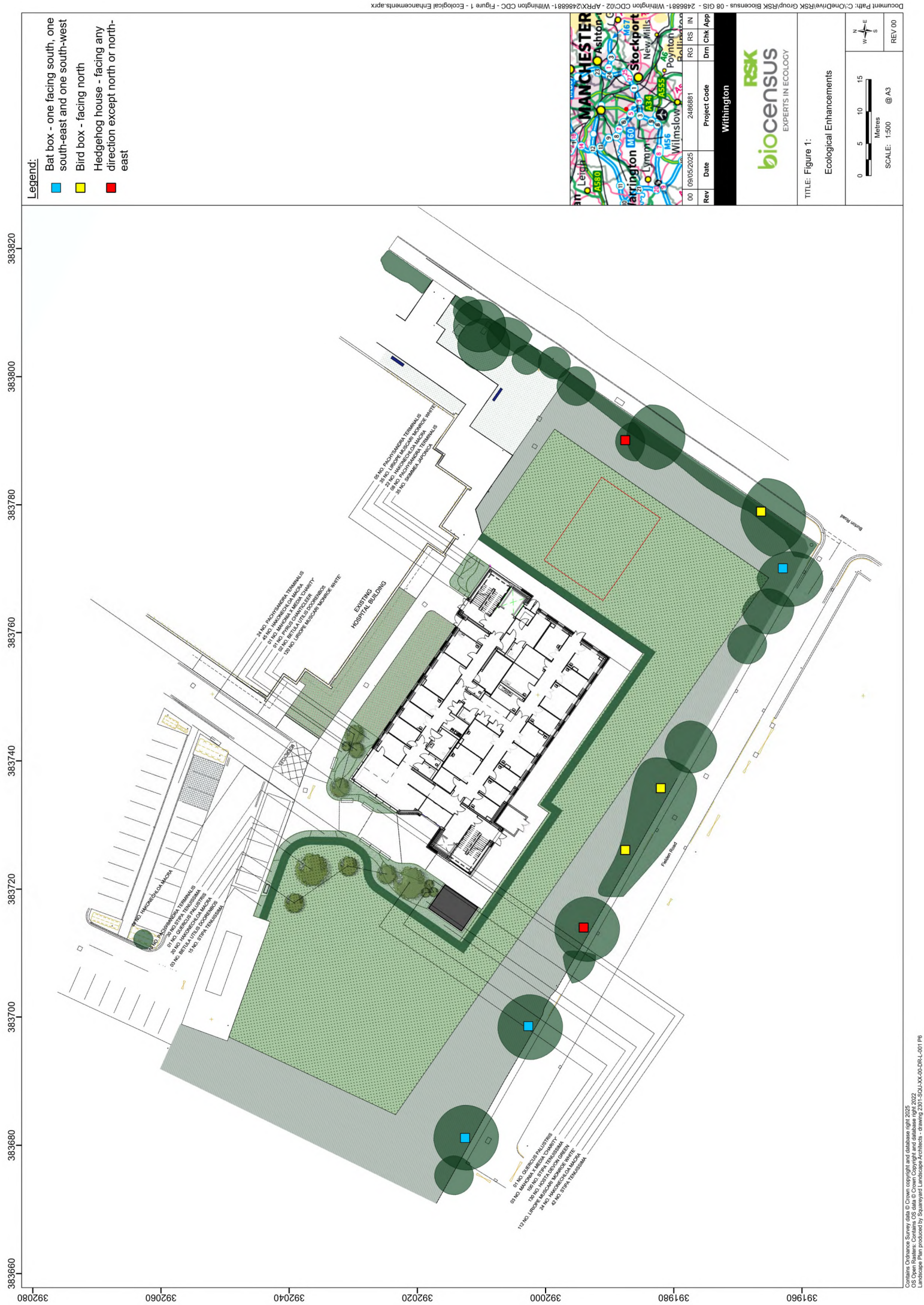
RSK Biocensus (2024), *Withington Community Hospital – Biodiversity Net Gain Design Stage Report REV08*

RSK Biocensus (2023), *Withington Community Hospital – Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report REV02*.

Square Yard (November 2024) 22182-Y2D-WCH006-00-XX-L-00903- *Withington Hospital Burton Road Withington – Planting Plan (P01)*

6.0 FIGURES

Figure 1 - Landscape Plan (Square Yard (November 2024) 22182-Y2D-WCH006-00-XX-L-00903- Withington Hospital Burton Road Withington - Planting Plan (P01)



Legend:

- Bat box - one facing south, one south-east and one south-west
- Bird box - facing north
- Hedgehog house - facing any direction except north or north-east

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Stockport

Withington

biocensus EXPERTS IN ECOLOGY

Withington

Rev	Date	Project Code	Dm	Chk	App
00	09/05/2025	2468881	RG	RS	IN

TITLE: Figure 1:
Ecological Enhancements

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APPENDIX A – RELEVANT LEGISLATION

General

This section briefly describes the legal protection afforded to species referred to in this report. It is for information only and is not intended to be comprehensive or to replace specialised legal advice. It is not intended to replace the text of the legislation but summarises the salient points.

Birds

All species of bird are protected under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The protection was extended by the CRoW Act.

The legislation makes it an offence to intentionally:

- kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use or being built; or
- take or destroy an egg of any wild bird.

Bats

All species of British bat are protected by The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), extended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This legislation makes it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take;
- possess or control;
- intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a breeding site or resting place; and
- intentionally or recklessly disturb whilst the animal occupies a breeding site or resting place.

Bats are also European Protected Species listed on the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2017), as amended. This legislation makes it an offence to:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill;
- deliberately disturb, including in particular any disturbance which is likely (a) to impair their ability - (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or (ii) hibernate or migrate, where relevant; or (b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place; and
- possess, control, transport, sell, exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead animal.

Hedgehogs

The European Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) is listed under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) in respect of Section 11 (which deals with killing or taking certain wild animals). This protection was extended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (the CROW Act). It is also listed under the Wild Mammals Protection Act (1996).

Under the above legislation it is an offence to:

- Kill or take a Hedgehog by the following methods: self-locking snares, bows, crossbows, explosives or live decoys.
- Mutilate, kick, beat, nail or otherwise impale, stab, burn, stone, crush, drown, drag or asphyxiate a Hedgehog with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering.
- Use any of the following for the purpose of killing or taking a Hedgehog:
 - electrical device for killing or stunning,
 - poisonous, poisoned or stupefying substance,
 - net,
 - automatic or semi-automatic weapon,
 - any device for illuminating a target or sighting device for night shooting,
 - any form of artificial light or any mirror or other dazzling device,
 - any sound recording used as a decoy, or;
 - any mechanically propelled vehicle in immediate pursuit of, or to drive, a Hedgehog.
- Knowingly cause or permit any act mentioned above.

The European Hedgehog is also listed as a species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006). This means that a public body must consider the species when performing its functions with a view to conserving biodiversity.