Land off Pitsford Road, Manchester

Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan 2025

RACHEL HACKING ECOLOGY

Client	Bellway Homes Ltd (Manchester)
Project Title	Land off Pitsford Road, Manchester
Project Reference	RHE.3991
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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd was commissioned in 2024 by Bellway Homes Ltd (Manchester) to provide a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan for the Land off Pitsford Road, Manchester. The site is the subject of a planning application for residential development and associated infrastructure.

1.1.2 An Biodiversity Impact Assessment was undertaken in 2024 by Rachel Hacking Ecology Ltd. This report included a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment, which identified management requirements for onsite mitigation proposals. This document aims to address the management and monitoring requirements for the proposed habitats both on site for a 30-year period.

2. Description of Proposals

2.1.1 The site is located off Pitsford Road, Manchester, O.S. grid reference: SD 86161 00165 (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Map showing the locations of the sites courtesy of Google Maps

2.1.2 The proposed development site comprises broadleaved woodland. A live railway line is located directly adjacent to the southern boundary. Residential and commercial development surrounds the site in all directions.

2.1.3 The proposed development will cover the entirety of the site, leading to the loss of many existing habitats, most notably the broad-leaved woodland that currently dominates the area.

2.1.4 It has been agreed Bellway Homes are to mitigate for the loss of woodland via the purchase of 10.98 habitat units.

2.1.5 The onsite landscaping includes the following habitats:

On site

- Modified grassland
- Modified Grassland (Wildflower Grassland)
- Introduced Shrub
- Mixed Scrub
- Urban trees
- Broad-leaved Woodland

3. Ecological Trends and Constraints

3.1.1 The development is likely to impact the local bat population. The loss of woodland is to be mitigated on site where possible. This is to include peripheral, linear planting to reinstate foraging and commuting habitat across the site.

4. Management Aims, Objectives and Targets

4.1.1 The core management aims, objectives and targets on the development site are to:

1. Create, manage and monitor the Modified Grassland.
2. Create, manage and monitor the Modified Grassland (Wildflower Grassland).
3. Create, manage and monitor the Introduced Shrub.
4. Create, manage and monitor the Mixed Scrub.
5. Create, manage and monitor the Individual Trees.
6. Create, manage and monitor the Broad-leaved Woodland.

5. Management and Prescriptions

5.1.1 This document outlines the creation, management and monitoring of the proposed habitats to ensure they meet the target conditions set out in the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment.

Objective 1 – Create, Manage and Monitor the Modified Grassland

5.1.2 The sites proposals include creation of modified grassland, which has a target condition of 'poor' which will take 1 year to achieve.

Creation

5.1.3 The onsite proposals include the creation of modified grassland (poor condition).

Management

Implement a regular mowing regime to prevent the encroachment of dominant species.

Monitoring

5.1.4 To maintain the target condition of poor, set out in the Statutory Metric Calculation Tool document as part of the BNG Assessment, the following criteria must be achieved by the end of year 1.

- Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).
- Cover of Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20%.

5.1.5 The modified grassland will be monitored by a suitably experienced ecologist or trained member of the management team, proficient in botanical identification. The monitoring will aim to recommend management changes to achieve the desired condition.

Objective 2 – Create, Manage and Monitor the Modified Grassland (Wildflower Grassland)

5.1.6 The site proposals include areas of 'wildflower grassland' located along main access road to the site. The target condition for this habitat is 'good' which will take 7 years to achieve.

Creation

5.1.7 The introduction of a wildflower grassland will increase species-richness and diversity, and management will reduce the number of competitive species within the sward.

5.1.8 Soil will be prepared by raking to a fine tilth and sowing with an appropriate seed mix at the recommended rate. Seed should be rolled to ensure good soil contact but not covered. Ideally, sowing should be undertaken in April or September.

Management

5.1.9 During the first 2-3 years undesirable species such as Docks and Nettles may appear. These should be hand-pulled or treated with an approved herbicide.

5.1.10 During Year 1 the grassland should be mown to 50mm and arisings removed to a compost heap. This should be repeated every two months.

5.1.11 Once established, mowing should be undertaken in spring and autumn. Grass should be cut to a height of no less than 75mm. Arisings should be removed to a compost heap. Uncut areas should be left around the edges each cut to provide habitat for insects.

Monitoring

5.1.12 To achieve the target condition of good, set out in the Statutory Metric Calculation Tool document as part of the BNG Assessment, the following criteria must be achieved by the end of year 4.

- There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m2 present, including at least 2 forbs.
- Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm).
- Any scrub developing in the grassland area is to be removed.
- Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.
- Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas.
- Cover of Bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20%.

5.1.13 The modified grassland will be monitored by a suitably experienced ecologist or trained member of the management team, proficient in botanical identification. The monitoring will aim to record the species that have established, note any species that have failed to germinate and suggest further seeding or the use of plug plants, to ensure the final sward composition reflects the seed mixture used.

Objective 3 – Create, Manage and Monitor the Introduced Shrub

5.1.14 The introduced shrub will provide some pollen and nectar source for invertebrates and potentially resources for nesting birds. A target condition was not applicable for this habitat. Introduced shrub will take approximately 1 year to establish.

Creation

5.1.15 Before planting the shrubs, adhere to instructions listed on the associated planting plan.

5.1.16 In summary:

- Remove any non-perishable containers and carefully prune damaged roots before planting upright prior to the careful return of excavated topsoil.
- Holes will be dug to allow the shrubs to be 150mm wider than the root spread and around 500m deep.
- Shrubs will be planted in groups of 3-7 of the same species, with smaller plants located abutting paths and roads.

- Water plants thoroughly after planting.
- After planting, cut back any damaged, dead or diseased branches. Rake soil to a fine tilth and apply mulch.

Monitoring

5.1.17 The introduced shrub will be monitored for 30 years. This will be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist or trained member of the management team, proficient in botanical identification. The monitoring will aim to record the species that have established, note any species that have failed to establish and suggest further planting to ensure the final composition reflects the original mixture used.

Objective 4 – Create, Manage and Monitor the Mixed Scrub

5.1.18 The native mixed shrub will be created in the to the west of the site bordering the newly created woodland. The target condition for this habitat is moderate which will take 5 years to achieve. The management regime will aim to maintain species-richness and diversity

Creation

5.1.19 Any existing vegetation will be removed to promote establishment. The planting can take place in suitable weather conditions in spring or autumn. Bark mulch will be applied to the planting areas. All newly planted specimens must be watered and weeded regularly.

5.1.20 All plants are to be 1+1 Open Grown, planted randomly, individually and in groups of 5, 7 and 9 at 1000 mm centres/1.0 plants per m^2.

Management

5.1.21 Replace dead or diseased specimens when required.

5.1.22 The scrub should be pruned and managed minimally. Maintenance to vegetation suitable for nesting bird should be done outside of the nesting bird season (generally March to August) to protect nesting birds. If works to the vegetation needs to occur during the nesting season, then a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior to work commencing.

Monitoring

5.1.23 To achieve the target condition of moderate, set out in the Statutory Metric Calculation Tool document as part of the BNG Assessment, the following criteria must be achieved by the end of year 5.

- The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type - the appearance and composition of the vegetation closely matches its UKHab description.
    - At least 80% of scrub is native,
    - There are at least three native woody species.
    - No single species comprises more than 75% of the cover.
- There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species and species indicative of suboptimal condition make up less than 5% of ground cover.

- The scrub has a well-developed edge with scattered scrub and tall grassland and or forbs present between the scrub and adjacent habitat.

5.1.24 The scrub stands will be monitored by a suitably experienced ecologist or trained member of the management team, proficient in botanical identification. The monitoring will aim to record the species that have established, note any species that failed to establish and suggest further planting to ensure the final composition reflects the original mixture used.

Objective 5 – Create, Manage and Monitor the Individual Trees

5.1.25 The trees will provide pollen and nectar source for invertebrates and nesting and foraging habitat for birds.

Creation

5.1.26 The planting can take place in suitable weather conditions and in spring or autumn. Bark mulch will be applied to the tree planting areas. All newly planted specimens must be watered and weeded regularly. The plants will be protected using canes and biodegradable guards. The trees should be pruned and managed as required.

5.1.27 Maintenance to vegetation suitable for nesting bird should be done outside of the nesting bird season (generally March to August) to protect nesting birds. If works to the vegetation needs to occur during the nesting season, then a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior to work commencing.

Management

5.1.28 Replace dead or diseased specimens when required.

5.1.29 The trees should be pruned and managed minimally. Maintenance to vegetation suitable for nesting bird should be done outside of the nesting bird season (generally March to August) to protect nesting birds. If works to the vegetation needs to occur during the nesting season, then a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior to work commencing.

Monitoring

5.1.30 To achieve the target condition of moderate, set out in the Statutory Metric Calculation Tool document as part of the BNG Assessment, the following criteria must be achieved by the end of year 27.

- The tree is a native species.
- There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.
- More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.

5.1.31 The trees will be monitored by a suitably experienced ecologist or trained member of the management team, proficient in botanical identification. The monitoring will aim to record the species that have

established, note any species that have failed to establish and suggest further planting to ensure the final composition reflects the original mixture used.

Objective 6 – Create, Manage and Monitor the Broad-leaved Woodland

5.1.32 The proposals include the creation of broadleaved woodland to the west of the site. Management will aim to improve species richness, diversity, and maintain woodland structure. The target condition for this woodland is 'poor' which will take 5 years to achieve.

Creation

5.1.33 Soil and topsoil depth will follow the specifications listed in the associated planting plan. The soil will be spread in layers, avoiding compaction.

5.1.34 The plants will be spread out evenly in groups of 2-5 (alternating spatial pattern between groups) of the same species. Holes will be backfilled with excavated topsoil and peat-free compost. To allow establishment of the trees, a 1m diameter grass/herbaceous free area around each tree will be maintained within the first 3 years. Bark mulch application annually up the 3-year mark will aid with this.

5.1.35 The planting can take place in suitable weather conditions and in spring or autumn.

5.1.36 Tree guards and stakes should be checked annually and after heavy winds/storms until their removal.

5.1.37 The following species will be planted:

- *Alnus glutinosa*
- *Betula pendula*
- *Betula pubescens*
- *Fagus sylvatica*
- *Ilex aquifolium*
- *Pinus sylvestris*
- *Quercus petraea*
- *Quercus robur*
- *Sorbus aucuparia*

Monitoring

5.1.38 The broadleaved woodland will be monitored for 30 years. This will be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist or trained member of the management team, proficient in botanical identification. The monitoring will aim to record the species that have established, note any species that have failed to establish and suggest further planting to ensure the final composition reflects the original mixture used.

6. Personnel

6.1.1 The habitat creation work must be undertaken by a landscaping team (appointed by Bellway Homes Ltd) with experience of creating the desired habitats.

6.1.2 The future management of the site after the completion of the construction should be undertaken by a management team (appointed by Bellway Homes Ltd). Suitably experienced ecologists or competent and trained members of the management team must undertake the monitoring of the ecologically valuable habitats.

7. Monitoring

7.1.1 The created habitats on site will be subject to a monitoring scheme for 30 years. The purpose of the monitoring is to assess if these habitats have become established and have not declined in ecological value since the completion of the development, and to provide recommendations on changes to the management plan to increase the quality of these habitats if required.

7.1.2 The monitoring of the retained and newly created habitats will be undertaken during years 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 20, 25 and 30. Monitoring reports shall be submitted to the Local Planning Authority (LPA) no more than 2 months following monitoring visits.

7.1.3 Where monitoring shows a habitat is declining, it may be necessary to make changes to the work schedule, in terms of timings, to bring about beneficial change and halt decline.

8. Contingencies

8.1.1 The work will be managed and monitored using the on-site personnel with supervision from the ecologist.

8.1.2 If an active bird nest is found during the works, work will stop, and the ecologist will be contacted. A 4metre buffer zone will be implemented around the active nest and no disturbance will take place to the nest. Once the nest is deemed inactive (i.e. once the chicks have fledged) then work can commence.

8.1.3 If any part of the landscaping fails or is inadvertently damaged, then the habitat will be re-created immediately, such as sowing more species rich grassland or replacing planted trees and scrub stands.

8.1.4 Any non-native invasive species found on the site should be eradicated as soon as possible using a suitable methodology. This could the use of selective herbicides or digging up and either burying or removal from the site, depending on the species and extent of spread of the plant.

9. Work Schedule

9.1.1 The Work Schedule (see Appendix 1) sets out the annual requirements and restrictions of management. The work to create the habitats is expected to commence within spring 2026. The 30 years HMMP will kick in at the time of commencement.

Appendix 1. Work Schedule and Management Tasks

Habitat	Annual Management Tasks, Work Schedule – To be implemented for a minimum of 30 years														
	Task	Timing of Works Restrictions												Constraints	Details
		J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D		
	Annual cutting vegetation suitable for nesting birds: - Trees													All Nesting Birds	Vegetation may be cut between March and September, but a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior (within 24 hours) to the works commencing.
Modified Grassland (Wildflower Meadow)	**Year 0** - Creation of wildflower grassland – scarification of the soil, sowing seeds and watering.													No specific species restrictions	Should any protected species be found during the management, then works should stop and an ecologist be contacted for advice.
	Year 1 – The grassland will be cut to 50mm, eight weeks after seedlings appear. This process will be repeated every two months through to September. All arisings to be removed and composted to prevent adding nutrients to the soil.													No specific species restrictions	Should any protected species be found during the management, then works should stop and an ecologist be contacted for advice.
	Year 2-5 **Spring cut** – Cut to a height of 7.5cm, no later than April. **Autumn cut** – Depending on soil fertility and growth, one or two cuts will be carried out between the end of August and late November. The cut material is to remain in place for a few days, to allow the dropping of seeds, before it is raked up and removed from site.													No specific species restrictions	Should any protected species be found during the management, then works should stop and an ecologist be contacted for advice. Leave uncut areas around the edges each cut. **Monitoring for Years 1-5**
Individual Trees	Preparing the soil and planting new specimens.													All Nesting Birds	Vegetation may be cut between March and September, but a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior (within 24 hours) to the works commencing.

	Managed with an annual cut in the winter encourage bushy growth to keep the habitat edges defined. The cut material should be removed from the site.												All Nesting Birds	Vegetation may be cut between March and September, but a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior (within 24 hours) to the works commencing.
	Once planted and backfilled, the trees will be well-watered, and all weeds removed around them. Newly planted trees will be fitted with stakes and mulched.												No specific species restrictions	Should any protected species be found during the management, then works should stop and an ecologist be contacted for advice.
Introduced Shrub	**Year 1-5** - Once planted and backfilled, the shrubs will be well-watered, and all weeds removed around them. Newly planted trees will be fitted with staked rabbit guards of height 600mm.												No specific species restrictions	Woody vegetation may be cut between March and September, but a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior (within 24 hours) to the works commencing. **Monitoring for Years 1, 2, 3, 5**
Individual Trees and Woodland	Management of vegetation suitable for nesting birds: - Trees												All Nesting Birds	Woody vegetation may be cut between March and September, but a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior (within 24 hours) to the works commencing. **Monitoring for Years 1, 2, 3, 5**
Mixed Scrub	**Year 1–30** - Once planted and backfilled, the tree and shrubs will be well-watered, and all weeds removed around them. Newly planted trees will be fitted with staked rabbit guards of height 600mm. Any losses immediately replaced.												- Nesting birds	Woody vegetation may be cut between March and September, but a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior (within 24 hours) to the works commencing. **Monitoring for Years 1, 2, 3, 5, 10, 15, 20, 25, 30**
Monitoring	The habitats will be monitored annually for 5 years:												No specific species restrictions, although care should be taken when surveying the more ecologically valuable habitats where protected species may be encountered.	The purpose of the monitoring is to assess if these habitats have become established and to provide recommendations on changes to the management plan to increase the quality of these habitats if required, advise from suitable professionals should be sought as/if required.

Appendix 2. Existing Habitat Map



Phase 1 Habitat Map

Key

- Bare Ground
- Semi-natural Broad-leaved Woodland
- Japanese Knotweed
- Wall

Project Name:
Land off Pitsford Road, Manchester

Project Reference:
RHE.3991

Drawn By:
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Date:
21/11/23

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Appendix 3. Proposed Landscaping Plan

