Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

Queens Road, Wythburn Ave, Manchester, M8 0RX

Mainstay Developments Ltd

Status	Issue	Name	Date
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Industry Guidelines and Standards

This report has been written with due consideration to:

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2020). Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK. 2nd Edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- British Standard 42020 (2013). Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.
- British Standard 8683:2021 (2021). Process for Designing and Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain.

Proportionality

> The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.
> The desk studies and field surveys undertaken to provide a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) might in some cases be all that is necessary.
>
> (BS 42020, 2013)

Executive Summary

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed by Mainstay Developments Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) at Queens Road, Wythburn Ave, Manchester, M8 0RX (hereafter referred to as "the site"). The survey was required to inform a planning application for a trade counter development with associated office and warehouse (hereafter referred to as "the proposed development").

The following is work you will need to commission to obtain planning permission and to comply with legislation. Further information, along with opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, are outlined in Table 3 of this report.

Ref	***Summary of Survey Findings***	***Foreseen Impacts***	***Recommendations*** *Measures required to adhere to guidance, legislation and planning policies.*
Bats	The ivy cover on the trees and wall in the west part of the site may obscure underlying roost features which bats could use, though the site and habitats present are considered to have low value for bats in comparison to the wider landscape.	The proposed development will result in the removal of the ivy clad trees and potentially the cutting back of the ivy on the west site boundary wall. Though considered unlikely, the felling of the trees could result in the loss of roost features and ivy removal could cause disturbance to bats if present.	Best practice guidelines state that trees with low suitability for roosting bats do not require further surveys. Instead, prior to any pruning or felling, a close-up inspection of any features that could be used by roosting bats will be undertaken to determine the presence or likely absence of roosting bats. This may require a qualified climbing team or a Mobile Elevated Work Platform (MEWP) to access the features. Ivy removal from the wall, if required, will be undertaken by hand in stages. In the unlikely event that a bat or evidence of bats is discovered during the development all work must stop and a bat licensed ecologist contacted for further advice.
Birds	The trees, scrub and ivy cover could be used by nesting birds.	The proposed development will result in the removal of the trees, scrub and potentially the cutting back of the ivy on the west site boundary wall. This could result in the disturbance to or destruction of active bird nests.	Vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the vegetation will be undertaken immediately, by qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged.

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1.0 Introduction and Context

1.1 Background

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed by Mainstay Developments Ltd to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) at Queens Road, Wythburn Ave, Manchester, M8 0RX (hereafter referred to as "the site"). The survey was required to inform a planning application for a trade counter development with associated office and warehouse (hereafter referred to as "the proposed development"). A plan showing the proposed development is provided in Appendix 1.

The aim of the PEA was to obtain data on existing ecological conditions, and to conduct a preliminary assessment of the likely significance of ecological impacts on the proposed development. No previous ecology reports have been produced for this site by Arbtech Consulting Ltd or, to the author's knowledge, by any other consultancy.

1.2 Site Location and Landscape Context

The site is located at National Grid Reference SD 85094 00646 and has an area of approximately 500 square metres comprising an area of grassland, scrub and trees. It lies on slowly permeable seasonally wet acid loamy and clayey soils with a medium to low groundwater vulnerability. Queens Road lies to the south and residential development, separated from the site by a retaining wall, to the north. The site is located between a railway line to the west and Smedley Lane to the east. Further to the east, approximately 150m away, is the River Irk and Queens Park. The wider landscape is predominantly urban with areas of greenspace and watercourses dispersed throughout. A site location plan is provided in Appendix 2.

1.3 Scope of the Report

This report describes the baseline ecological conditions at the site, evaluates habitats within the survey area in the context of the wider environment and describes the suitability of those habitats for notable or protected species. It identifies possible ecological constraints as a result of the proposed development and summarises the requirements for further surveys and mitigation measures to inform subsequent mitigation proposals, achieve planning or other statutory consent and to comply with wildlife legislation.

To achieve this, the following steps have been taken:

- A desk study has been carried out.
- A field survey has been undertaken to record baseline information on the site and surrounding area including habitat types and their suitability for notable or protected species.
- Invasive plant and animal species (such as those listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act) have been identified.
- Potential impacts on features of value, as a result of the proposed development, have been identified.
- Recommendations for further surveys and mitigation have been made.
- Opportunities for the enhancement of the site for biodiversity have been set out.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

The desk study included a review of the magic.gov.uk database for statutory designated sites within a 2km radius of the site. Landscape value and the presence of notable habitats as well as granted European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) and notable species records held on magic.gov.uk database has also been considered where these are within influencing distance of the site.

A review of Greater Manchester Sites of Biological Importance register has also been undertaken to establish the presence of any non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site.

2.2 Field Survey

The survey was undertaken by Arbtech Principal Ecologist Lizi Pimlott BSc (Hons) MSc MCIEEM MRSB on 9th February 2023. Lizi holds Natural England survey licences for bats (Class 2, 2016-22843-CLS-CLS), great crested newt (Class 2, 2015-17400-CLS-CLS), hazel dormouse (Class 1, 2016-21377-CLS-CLS) and barn owl (CL29/00560).

An extended habitat survey was undertaken, following the methodology set out in *UK Habitat Classification User Manual* (UK Habitat Classification Working Group, 2018). All land parcels are described and mapped and, where appropriate, target notes provide supplementary information on habitat conditions, features too small to map to scale, species composition, structure and management. Botanical species lists were compiled with reference to the DAFOR scale (D = Dominant; A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional, R = Rare).

During the survey, habitats were assessed for their suitability to support protected species, and field signs indicating their presence recorded. The assessment takes into consideration the findings of the desk study, the habitat conditions on site and in the context of the surrounding landscape, and the ecology of the protected species.

2.3 Limitations

It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to describe the baseline conditions within the survey area, and evaluate these features, this report does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. This assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species being present. This is based on suitability of the habitats on the site and in the wider landscape and the ecology and biology of species as currently understood.

A biological records data search has not been undertaken. However, given the location of the site, the nature of the habitats present and the assessed suitability of the site for protected or notable species, it is not anticipated that the purchase of biological records data will add any significant weight or alter the conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report.

The survey was completed outside of the optimal survey period (April to October) limiting the identification of ground flora species. However, given the urban location of the site and the nature of the habitats that are present, this was not considered to be a significant limitation.

These limitations have been taken into account during the evaluation of the site and requirement for further surveys and mitigation.

3.0 Results and Evaluation

3.1 Designated Sites

Details of any statutory and non-statutory designated sites within a 2km radius of the site, including their reasons for notification, are provided in Table 1 below.

The site lies within the impact risk zone for Rochdale Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), located 3.97km east. The proposed development is not considered to be a possible high risk with regard to this designation. Rochdale Canal, which is also designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is also the closest European site.

Table 1: Statutory and non-statutory designated sites within 2km radius of the site

Designated site name	***Distance from site (approx.)***	***Reasons for notification from Natural England and Greater Manchester Sites of Biological Importance register***
Boggart Hole Clough Local Nature Reserve	1.86km northeast	The site is the largest woodland clough in Manchester and part is ancient woodland.
Boggart Hole Clough Site of Biological Importance (SBI)	1.86km northeast	As above.

3.2 Field Survey Results

The results of the field survey are illustrated in Appendix 3. The weather conditions recorded at the time of the survey are shown in Table 2.

Table 2: Weather conditions during the survey

Date: 09/02/2023	
Temperature	6°C
Humidity	81%
Cloud Cover	50%
Wind	None
Rain	None

Habitats and Flora

UKHab code in brackets at first mention.

The southern part of the site comprises modified grassland (g4) which has a sward length of approximately 30cm comprising meadow grass species (D), ribwort plantain (O), vetch species (O), creeping buttercup (O), moss species (O), bramble (R) and dock species (R). Tussocks of longer cock's foot grass (A) were also present. Within the

grassland there is a small area of developed land; sealed surface (u1b) and there is a large box honeysuckle shrub (g4 1160) which has been subject to fire damage but has begun to regenerate.

The northern part of the site comprises dense scrub dominated by bramble (h3d) with hawthorn (O), buddleia (O), willowherb species (O) and bracken (R). Seven young and semi-mature sycamore trees (h3d 11) are also present.

The site is secured by construction fencing (u1e 69) on the east and south boundaries and brick walls (u1e 68) on the north and west boundaries. The western boundary wall has well established, thick ivy cover which has also begun to colonise two of the adjacent sycamore trees. There is a timber panel fence (u1e 69) running east to west through the centre of the site, separating the grassland from the scrub.

No protected or non-native invasive plant species (as listed under Schedules 8 or 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) were identified on the site. Though the survey was undertaken outside the optimal window, due to the nature of the habitats present on the site and the site's location, it is considered unlikely that any protected plant species would be present and it is anticipated that traces of non-native invasive plant species would still be visible.

Figure 1: View of site from Queen's Road

Figure 2: Looking west across the southern part of the site

Figure 3: Looking east across the southern part of the site

Figure 4: Close up of modified grassland in the southern part of the site

Figure 5: Close up of fire damaged box honeysuckle in the southern part of the site

Figure 6: Close up of west site boundary with ivy covered wall and trees

Figure 7: Looking east across the northern part of the site

Figure 8: Looking west across the northern part of the site

Figure 9: Close up of scrub and trees in the northern part of the site

Fauna

A review of the Magic database identified four bat EPSL records within 2km of the site. These were granted by Natural England between 2010 and 2019 for impacts to roosts of common and soprano pipistrelle. The closest record is 260m south.

The site has very limited value for any protected or notable fauna due to its small size, low quality habitats, urban location and lack of connectivity to areas of higher ecological value.

The trees, ivy cover and scrub could provide nesting opportunities for common bird species.

These features could also be used by bats for foraging, but it is unlikely that the site provides a significant resource for local bat populations. There are no roosting opportunities on the site for bats. The wall is well mortared, and the trees are in good structural condition with no roost features identified. The ivy cover is not mature enough to form a roost feature but may obscure possible roost features on some of the trees or parts of the wall. Given how extensive the foliage spreads and due to the absence of a clear flight path or crawl space, it is unlikely that bats would access these areas but their presence cannot be completely discounted.

Given the isolated position of the site with no connectivity to the wider landscape and being surrounded by residential development, busy roads walls and fences which present barriers to movement, it is unlikely that any terrestrial wildlife would use the site as a foraging resource, opportunity to shelter or as a commuting route.

There are no ponds or standing bodies of water within 500m of the site, adding additional weight to the fact that great crested newts and other amphibians are unlikely to be present.

The River Irk, Queens Park and the railway line in the surrounding landscape are likely to present an abundance of opportunities for wildlife to forage, shelter and disperse through the local area.

4.0 Conclusions, Impacts and Recommendations

Taking the desk study and field survey results into account, Table 3 presents an evaluation of the ecological value of the site and also details any ecological constraints identified in relation to the proposed development.

Table 3: Evaluation of the site and any ecological constraints

Ref	***Summary of Survey Findings***	***Foreseen Impacts***	***Recommendations*** *Measures required to adhere to guidance, legislation and planning policies.*	***Biodiversity Enhancements*** *The Local Planning Authority has a duty to ask for enhancements under the NPPF (2021) and the Manchester Core Strategy*
Designated sites	Boggart Clough Hole LNR, SBI is the only designated site within 2km, located 1.86km away. The site lies within the impact risk zone for Rochdale Canal SSSI but the proposed development is not listed as a possible high risk for this designation.	No impacts to designated sites are anticipated due to the small scale, function and distance of the proposed development from such sites as well as the urban location of the site with surrounding physical barriers.	None.	None.
Habitats and flora	The site contains grassland, scrub and trees of low ecological value. There are no notable habitats within the site, with the closest being deciduous woodland, a habitat of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006), located 50m east adjacent to the River Irk.	No impacts to any notable habitats are anticipated due to the small scale and distance of the proposed development from such habitats as well as the urban location of the site with surrounding physical barriers. The proposed development will result in complete clearance of the site, with only the brick wall being retained. This is unlikely to have a significant impact on biodiversity due to the low value and prevalence of the habitats present on the site.	None.	Native tree and shrub planting could be incorporated into the proposed development. Species-specific enhancement opportunities are detailed later in this table.

	No protected or notable plant species were recorded during the survey.			
Bats	The ivy cover on the trees and wall in the west part of the site may obscure underlying roost features which bats could use, though the site and habitats present are considered to have low value for bats in comparison to the wider landscape.	The proposed development will result in the removal of the ivy clad trees and potentially the cutting back of the ivy on the west site boundary wall. Though considered unlikely, the felling of the trees could result in the loss of roost features and ivy removal could cause disturbance to bats if present.	Best practice guidelines state that trees with low suitability for roosting bats do not require further surveys. Instead, prior to any pruning or felling, a close-up inspection of any features that could be used by roosting bats will be undertaken to determine the presence or likely absence of roosting bats. This may require a qualified climbing team or a Mobile Elevated Work Platform (MEWP) to access the features. Ivy removal from the wall, if required, will be undertaken by hand in stages. In the unlikely event that a bat or evidence of bats is discovered during the development all work must stop and a bat licensed ecologist contacted for further advice.	None.
Birds	The trees, scrub and ivy cover could be used by nesting birds.	The proposed development will result in the removal of the trees, scrub and potentially the cutting back of the ivy on the west site boundary wall. This could result in the disturbance to or destruction of active bird nests.	Vegetation clearance should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the vegetation will be undertaken immediately, by qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged.	The installation of one bird box at the site will provide additional nesting habitat for birds. The bird box will comprise a Vivara Pro Seville 32mm WoodStone Nest Box or an alternative brand of similar specification and will be installed on the new building or the boundary wall. The bird box should be positioned 3m above ground level where they will be sheltered from

				prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight.
Other Fauna	The site is considered to be unsuitable for other protected or notable fauna.	None.	None.	Pollinator friendly plant species could be incorporated into the proposed development to provide a food source for invertebrates such as bees and butterflies.

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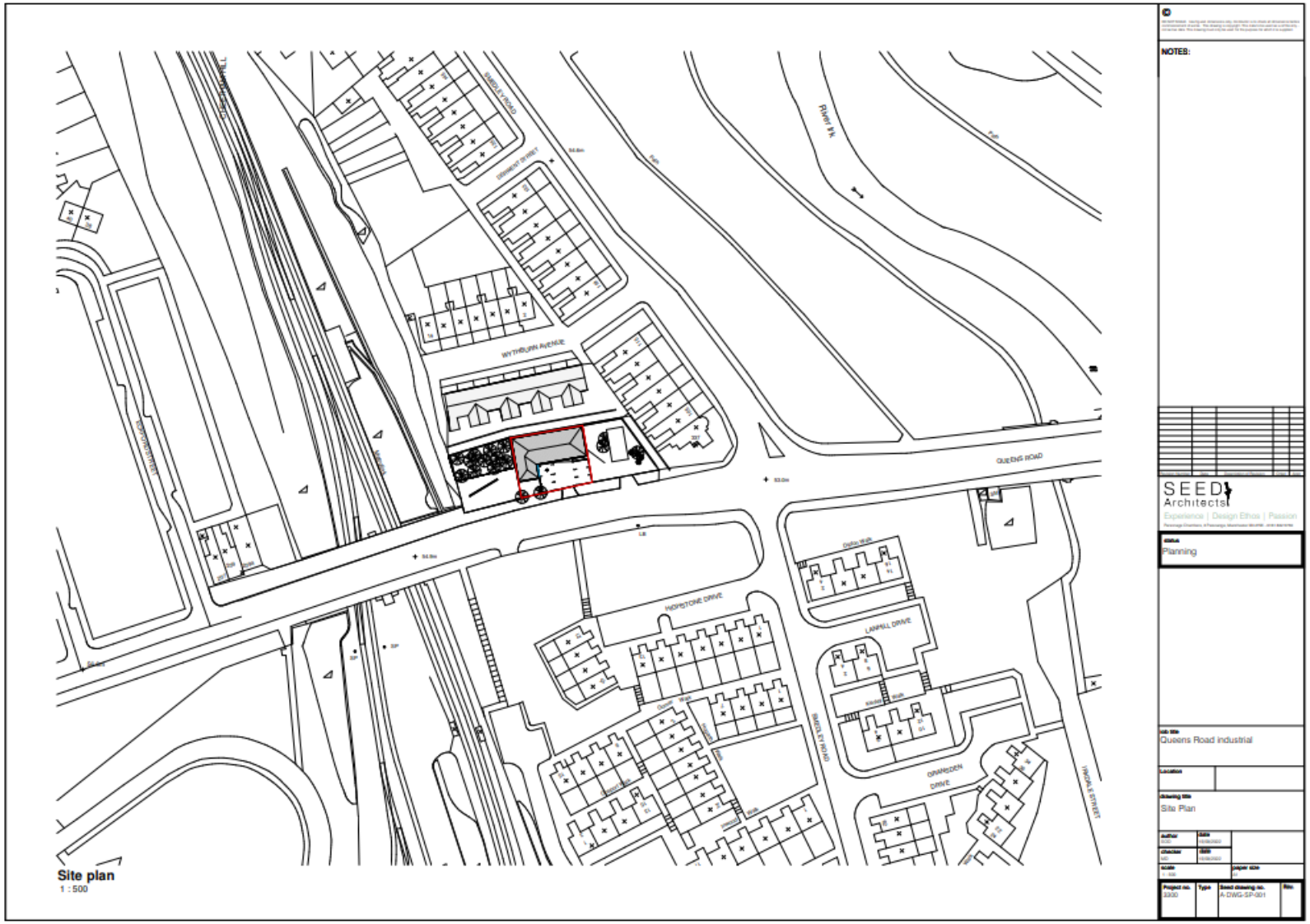
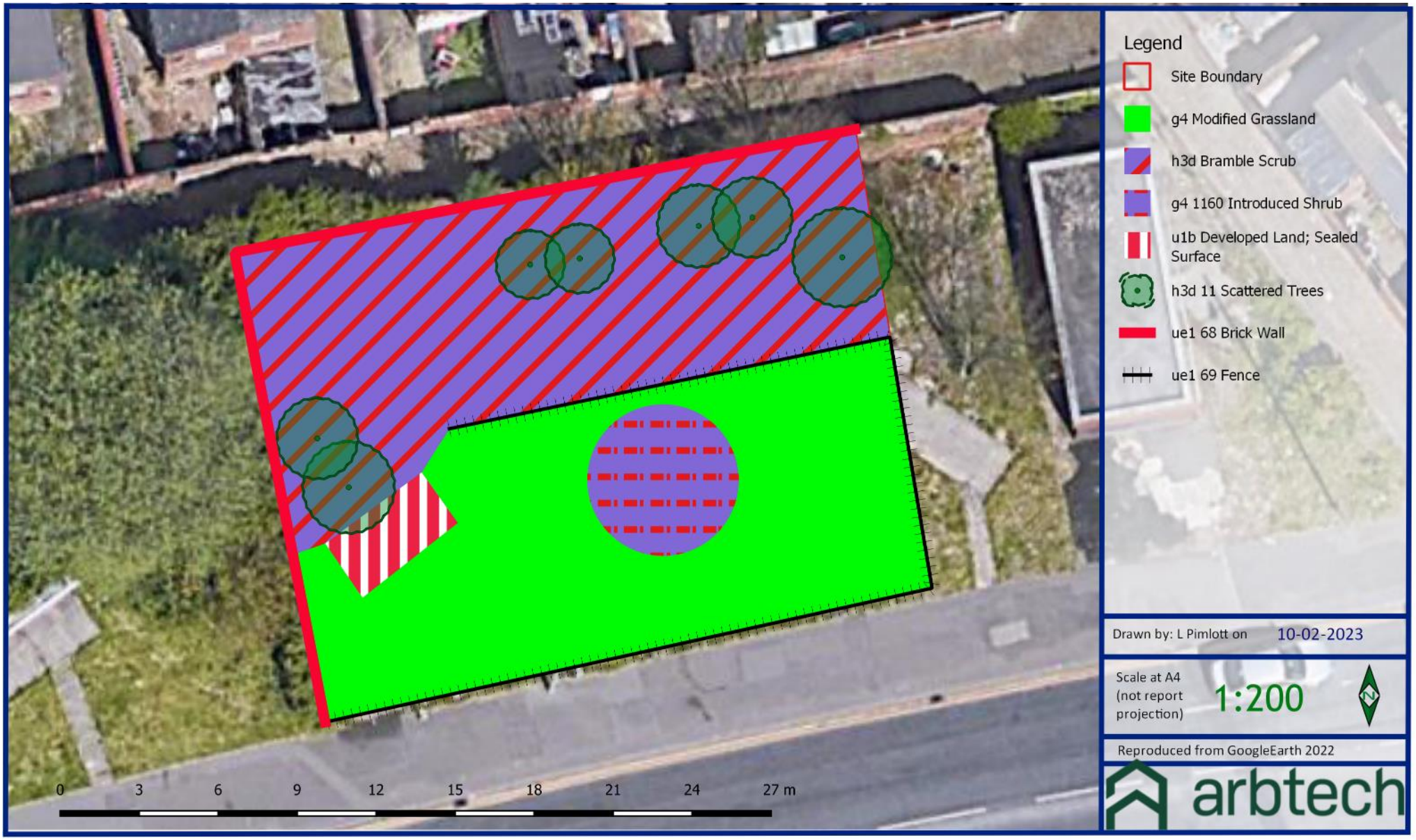
Appendix 1: Proposed Development Plan



Appendix 2: Site Location Plan

Appendix 3: Habitat Survey Plan



Appendix 4: Legislation and Planning Policy

LEGAL PROTECTION

National and European Legislation Afforded to Habitats

International Statutory Designations

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are sites of European importance and are designated under the EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive) and the EC Birds Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds (the Wild Birds Directive) respectively. Both form part of the wider Natura 2000 network across Europe.

Under the Habitats Directive Article 3 requires the establishment of a network of important conservation sites (SACs) across Europe. Over 1000 animal and plant species, as well as 200 habitat types, listed in the directive's annexes are protected in various ways:

Annex II species (about 900): core areas of their habitat are designated as Sites of Community importance (SCIs) and included in the Natura 2000 network. These sites must be managed in accordance with the ecological needs of the species.

Annex IV species (over 400, including many Annex II species): a strict protection regime must be applied across their entire natural range, both within and outside Natura 2000 sites.

Annex V species (over 90): their exploitation and taking in the wild is compatible with maintaining them in a favourable conservation status.

SPAs are classified under Article 2 of the Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds both for rare bird species (as listed on Annex I) and for important migratory species.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) form the legal basis for the implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directives in terrestrial areas and territorial waters out to 12 nautical miles in England and Wales (including the inshore marine area) and to a limited extent in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Ramsar sites are designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, agreed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. The Convention covers all aspects of wetland conservation and recognises the importance of wetland ecosystems in relation to global biodiversity conservation. The Convention refers to wetlands as "*areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres*". However, they may also include riparian and coastal zones. Ramsar sites are statutorily protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended 01.04.1996) with further protection provided by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000. Policy statements have been issued by the Government in England and Wales highlighting the special status of Ramsar sites. The Government in England and Wales has issued policy statements which ensure that Ramsar sites are afforded the same protection as areas designated under the EC Birds and Habitats Directives as part of the Natura 2000 network (e.g. SACs & SPAs). Further provisions for the protection and management of SSSIs have been introduced by the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.

National Statutory Designations

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are designated by nature conservation agencies in order to conserve key flora, fauna, geological or physio-geographical features within the UK. The original designations were under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 but SSSIs were then re-designated under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). As well as reinforcing other national designations (including National Nature Reserves), the system also provides statutory protection for terrestrial and coastal sites which are important within the European Natura 2000 network and globally.

Local Statutory Designations

Local authorities in consultation with the relevant nature conservation agency can declare Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. LNRs are designated for flora, fauna or geological interest and are managed locally to retain these features and provide research, education and recreational opportunities.

Non- Statutory Designations

All non-statutorily designated sites are referred to as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and can be designated by the local authority for supporting local conservation interest. Combined with statutory designation, these sites are considered within Local Development Frameworks under the Town and Country Planning system and are a material consideration during the determination of planning applications. The protection afforded to these sites varies depending on the local authority involved.

Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGs) are the most important geological and geomorphological areas outside of statutory designations. These sites are also a material consideration during the determination of planning applications.

The Hedgerow Regulations 1997

The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 are designed to protect ‘important’ countryside hedgerows. Importance is defined by whether the hedgerow (a) has existed for 30 years or more; or (b) satisfies at least one of the criteria listed in Part II of Schedule 1 of the Regulations.

Under the Regulations, it is against the law to remove or destroy hedgerows on or adjacent to common land, village greens, SSSIs (including all terrestrial SACs, NNRs and SPAs), LNRs, land used for agriculture or forestry and land used for the keeping or breeding of horses, ponies or donkeys without the permission of the local authority. Hedgerows 'within or marking the boundary of the curtilage of a dwelling-house' are excluded.

National and European Legislation Afforded to Species

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) aims to promote the maintenance of biodiversity by requiring the Secretary of State to take measures to maintain or restore wild species listed within the Regulations at a favourable conservation status.

The Regulations make it an offence (subject to exceptions) to deliberately capture, kill, disturb, or trade in the animals listed in Schedule 2, or pick, collect, cut, uproot, destroy, or trade in the plants listed in Schedule 4. However, these actions can be made lawful through the granting of licenses by the appropriate authorities. Licenses may be granted for a number of purposes (such as science and education, conservation, preserving public health and safety), but only after the appropriate authority is satisfied that there are no satisfactory alternatives and that such actions will have no detrimental effect on wild population of the species concerned.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended) implements the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention 1979, implemented 1982) and implements the species protection requirements of EC Birds Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds in Great Britain (the birds Directive). The WCA 1981 has been subject to a number of amendments, the most important of which are through the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act (2000).

Other legislative Acts affording protection to wildlife and their habitats include:

- Deer Act 1991
- Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- Protection of Badgers Act 1992
- Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996

Badgers

Badgers *Meles meles* are protected under The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 which makes it an offence to:

- Wilfully kill, injure, take, or attempt to kill, injure or take a badger
- Cruelly ill-treat a badger, including use of tongs and digging
- Possess or control a dead badger or any part thereof
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a badger sett or any part thereof

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a badger when it is occupying a badger sett
- Intentionally or recklessly cause a dog to enter a badger sett
- Sell or offers for sale, possesses or has under his control, a live badger

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

A development licence will be required from the relevant countryside agency (i.e. Natural England) for any development works likely to affect an active badger sett, or to disturb badgers whilst they occupy a sett. Guidance has been issued by the countryside agencies to define what would constitute a licensable activity. It is no possible to obtain a licence to translocate badgers.

Birds

With certain exceptions, all birds, their nests and eggs are protected under Sections 1-8 of the WCA. Among other things, this makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built
- Intentionally take or destroy an egg of any wild bird
- Sell, offer or expose for sale, have in his possession or transport for the purpose of sale any wild bird (dead or alive) or bird egg or part thereof.

Certain species of bird, for example the barn owl, bittern and kingfisher receive additional protection under Schedule 1 of the WCA and are commonly referred to as "Schedule 1" birds.

This affords them protection against:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young
- Intentional or reckless disturbance of dependent young of such a bird

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

Works should be planned to avoid the possibility of killing or injuring any wild bird or damaging or destroying their nests. The most effective way to reduce the likelihood of nest destruction in particular is to undertake work outside the main bird nesting season which typically runs from March to August. Where this is not feasible, it will be necessary to have any areas of suitable habitat thoroughly checked for nests prior to vegetation clearance.

Schedule 1 birds are additionally protected against disturbance during the nesting season. Thus, it will be necessary to ensure that no potentially disturbing works are undertaken in the vicinity of the nest. The most effective way to avoid disturbance is to postpone works until the young have fledged. If this is not feasible, it may be possible to maintain an appropriate buffer zone or standoff around the nest.

Amphibians and Reptiles

The sand lizard *Lacerta agilis*, smooth snake *Coronella austriaca*, natterjack toad *Epidalea calamita*, pool frog *Pelophylax lessonae* and great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* receive full protection under Habitats Regulations through their inclusion on Schedule 2. Regulation 41 prohibits:

- Deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species
- Deliberate disturbance of species in such a way as:
- To impair their ability to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young;
- To impair their ability to hibernate or migrate
- To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place

With the exception of the pool frog, these species are also listed on Schedule 5 of the WCA and they are additionally protected from:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)
- Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection
- Selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale.

Other native species of reptiles are protected solely under Schedule 5, Section 9(1) & (5) of the WCA, i.e. the adder *Vipera berus*, grass snake *Natrix natrix*, common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* and slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*. It is prohibited to:

- Intentionally or recklessly kill or injure these species.

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

A European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) issued by the relevant countryside agency (i.e. Natural England) will be required for works likely to affect the breeding sites or resting places amphibian and reptile species protected under Habitats Regulations. A licence will also be required for operations liable to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake those activities mentioned above (e.g. survive, breed, rear young and hibernate). The licences are to allow derogation from the relevant legislation, but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and their efficacy to be monitored.

Although not licensable, appropriate mitigation measures may also be required to prevent the intentional killing or injury of adder, grass snake, common lizard and slow worm, thus avoiding contravention of the WCA.

Water Voles

The water vole *Arvicola terrestris* is fully protected under Schedule 5 of the WCA. This makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take (capture) water voles
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb water voles while they are occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

If development works are likely to affect habitats known to support water voles, the relevant countryside agency (i.e. Natural England) must be consulted. It must be shown that means by which the proposal can be re-designed to avoid contravening the legislation have been fully explored e.g. the use of alternative sites, appropriate timing of works to avoid times of the year in which water voles are most vulnerable, and measures to ensure minimal habitat loss. Conservation licences for the capture and translocation of water voles may be issued by the relevant countryside agency for the purpose of development activities if it can be shown that the activity has been properly planned and executed and thereby contributes to the conservation of the population. The licence will then only be granted to a suitably experienced person if it can be shown that adequate surveys have been undertaken to inform appropriate mitigation measures. Identification and preparation of a suitable receptor site will be necessary prior to the commencement of works.

Otters

Otters *Lutra lutra* are fully protected under the Conservation Regulations through their inclusion on Schedule 2. Regulation 41 prohibits:

- Deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species
- Deliberate disturbance of species in such a way as:
- To impair their ability to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young;
- To impair their ability to hibernate or migrate
- To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place

Otters are also currently protected under the WCA through their inclusion on Schedule 5. Under this Act, they are additionally protected from:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)
- Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

A European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) issued by the relevant countryside agency (i.e. Natural England) will be required for works likely to affect otter breeding or resting places (often referred to as holts, couches or dens) or for operations likely to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake those activities mentioned above (e.g. survive, breed, and rear young). The licence is to allow derogation from the relevant legislation but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and their efficacy to be monitored

Bats

All species are fully protected by Habitats Regulations 2010 as they are listed on Schedule 2. Regulation 41 prohibits:

- Deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species (e.g. All bats)
- Deliberate disturbance of bat species in such a way as:
- To impair their ability to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young;
- To impair their ability to hibernate or migrate
- To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place

Bats are afforded the following additional protection through the WCA as they are included on Schedule 5:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)
- Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

A European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) issued by the relevant countryside agency (i.e. Natural England) will be required for works are likely to affect a bat roost or an operation which are likely to result in an illegal level of disturbance to the species will require an EPSL. The licence is to allow derogation from the legislation through the application of appropriate mitigation measures and monitoring.

Hazel Dormice

Hazel dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius* are fully protected under Habitats Regulations through their inclusion on Schedule 2. Regulation 41 prohibits:

- Deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species
- Deliberate disturbance of species in such a way as:
- To impair their ability to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young;
- To impair their ability to hibernate or migrate
- To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place

Dormice are also protected under the WCA through their inclusion on Schedule 5. Under this Act, they are additionally protected from:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)
- Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

Works which are liable to affect a dormice habitat or an operation which are likely to result in an illegal level of disturbance to the species will require a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) issued by the relevant countryside agency (i.e. Natural England). The licence is to allow derogation from the legislation through the application of appropriate mitigation measures and monitoring.

White Clawed Crayfish

There is a considerable amount of legislation in place in an attempt to protect the White-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*. This species is listed under the European Union's (EU) Habitat and Species Directive and is listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). This makes it an offence to:

- Protected against intentional or reckless taking
- Protected against selling, offering or advertising for sale, possessing or transporting for the purpose of sale

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

The relevant countryside agency (i.e. Natural England) will need to be consulted about development which could impact on a watercourse or wetland known to support white clawed crayfish. Conservation licences for the capture and translocation of crayfish can be issued if it can be shown that the activity has been properly planned and

executed and thereby contributes to the conservation of the population. The licence will only be granted to a suitably experienced person if it can be shown that adequate surveys have been undertaken to inform appropriate mitigation measures. Identification and preparation of a suitable receptor site will be necessary prior to the commencement of the works.

Wild Mammals (Protection Act) 1996

All wild mammals are protected against intentional acts of cruelty under the above legislation. This makes it an offence to mutilate, kick, beat, nail or otherwise impale, stab, burn, stone, crush, drown, drag or asphyxiate any wild mammal with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering.

To avoid possible contravention, due care and attention should be taken when carrying out works (for example operations near burrows or nests) with the potential to affect any wild mammal in this way, regardless of whether they are legally protected through other conservation legislation or not.

Legislation Afforded to Plants

With certain exceptions, all wild plants are protected under the WCA. This makes it an offence for an 'unauthorised' person to intentionally (or recklessly in Scotland) uproot wild plants. An authorised person can be the owner of the land on which the action is taken, or anybody authorised by them.

Certain rare species of plant, for example some species of orchid, are also fully protected under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This prohibits any person from:

- Intentionally picking, uprooting or destruction of any wild Schedule 8 species
- Selling, offering or exposing for sale, or possessing or transporting for the purpose of sale, any wild live or dead Schedule 8 plant species or part thereof
- In addition to the UK legislation outlined above, several plant species are fully protected under Schedule 5 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. These are species of European importance. Regulation 45 makes it an offence to:
- Deliberately pick, collect, cut, uproot or destroy a wild Schedule 5 species
- Be in possession of, or control, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any wild live or dead Schedule 5 species or anything derived from such a plant.

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

A European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) will be required from the relevant countryside agency (i.e. Natural England) for works which are likely to affect species of planted listed on Schedule 5 of the Conservation or Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. The licence is to allow derogation from the legislation through the application of appropriate mitigation measures and monitoring.

Invasive Species

Part II of Schedule 9 of the WCA lists non-native invasive plant species for which it is a criminal offence in England to plant or cause to grow in the wild due to their impact on native wildlife. Species included (but not limited to):

- Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica*
- Giant hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum*
- Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

It is not an offence for plants listed in Part II of Schedule 9 of the WCA 1981 to be present on the development site, however, it is an offence to cause them to spread. Therefore, if any of the species are present on site and construction activities may result in further spread (e.g. earthworks, vehicle movements) then it will be necessary to design and implement appropriate mitigation prior to construction commencing.

Injurious weeds

Under the Weeds Act 1959 any landowner or occupier may be required prevent the spread of certain 'injurious weeds' including (but not limited to):

- Spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*
- Creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*
- Curled dock *Rumex crispus*
- Broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*
- Common ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

It is a criminal offence to fail to comply with a notice requiring such action to be taken. The Ragwort Control Act 2003 establishes a ragwort control code of practice as common ragwort is poisonous to horses and other livestock. This code provides best practice guidelines and is not legally binding.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY

Environment Act 2021

The Environment Act 2021 (EA 2021) received Royal Assent on 9 November 2021 and is expected to become fully mandated within the next couple of years. The Act principally creates a post Brexit framework to protect and enhance the natural environment. Through amendments to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Act will require all planning permissions in England (subject to exemptions which is likely to include householder applications) to be granted subject to a new general pre-commencement condition that requires approval of a biodiversity net gain plan. This will ensure the delivery of a minimum of 10% measurable biodiversity net gain. The principal tool to calculate this will be the Defra Biodiversity 3.0 Metric. Works to enhance habitats can be carried out either onsite or offsite or through the purchase of 'biodiversity credits' from the Secretary of State. However, this flexibility may be removed (subject to regulations) if the onsite habitat is 'irreplaceable'. Both onsite and offsite enhancements must be maintained for at least 30 years after completion of a development (which period may be amended).

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

The National Planning Policy Framework promotes sustainable development. The Framework specifies the need for protection of designated sites and priority habitats and species. An emphasis is also made on the need for ecological infrastructure through protection, restoration and re-creation. The protection and recovery of priority species (considered likely to be those listed as species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006) is also listed as a requirement of planning policy.

In determining a planning application, planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by ensuring that: designated sites are protected from harm; there is appropriate mitigation or compensation where significant harm cannot be avoided; measurable gains in biodiversity in and around developments are incorporated; and planning permission is refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including aged or veteran trees and also ancient woodland.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Biodiversity Duty

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the 'biodiversity duty'.

Section 41 of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of 'principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity'. This list is intended to assist decision makers such as public bodies in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act. Under the Act these habitats and species are regarded as a material consideration in determining planning applications. A developer must show that their protection has been adequately addressed within a development proposal.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Manchester's Core Strategy

Manchester's Core Strategy (adopted July 2012) can be viewed here: https://www.manchester.gov.uk/download/downloads/id/21363/core_strategy_-_pdf.pdf

The following planning policies have implications for developers in relation to ecology and biodiversity:

- Policy EN 15 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Developers will be expected to identify and implement reasonable opportunities to enhance, restore or create new biodiversity, either on-site or adjacent to the site, contributing to linkages between valuable or potentially valuable habitat areas where appropriate. Any adverse impacts on biodiversity will need to be justified against the wider benefits of the proposal, assessed against other LDF policies. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, developers will be required to provide appropriate mitigation and/or compensation.

Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan

The Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan can be viewed here: https://gmlrc.org/projects/gm_bap/

The following habitats are included:

- Grasslands
- Hedgerows
- Lowland mosslands
- Reedbeds and bittern
- Ponds and lodges
- Canals
- Native woodlands
- Uplands
- Urban managed greenspace

The following species are included:

- Bats
- Black redstart
- Farmland birds
- Great crested newts

- Hares
- Native black popular
- Twite
- Water vole
- Willow tit

EUROPEAN PROTECTED SPECIES POLICIES

In December 2016 Natural England officially introduced the four licensing policies throughout England. The four policies seek to achieve better outcomes for European Protected Species (EPS) and reduce unnecessary costs, delays and uncertainty that can be inherent in the current standard EPS licensing system. The policies are summarised as follows:

- Policy 1; provides greater flexibility in exclusion and relocation activities, where there is investment in habitat provision;
- Policy 2; provides greater flexibility in the location of compensatory habitat;
- Policy 3; provides greater flexibility on exclusion measures where this will allow EPS to use temporary habitat; and,
- Policy 4; provides a reduced survey effort in circumstances where the impacts of development can be confidently predicted.

The four policies have been designed to have a net benefit for EPS by improving populations overall and not just protecting individuals within development sites. Most notably Natural England now recognises that the Habitats Regulations legal framework now applies to 'local populations' of EPS and not individuals/site populations.