



Small Mammals and Hedgehogs Precautionary Method Statement

1.0 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Purpose

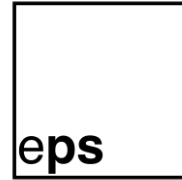
- 1.1.1 This Method Statement (MS) has been produced in connection with a proposed development at The Avenue, Didsbury, Manchester, M20 2ET. This MS provides the details of working methods that need to be followed by the Contractor, supervised by an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW), for pre-construction vegetation works and removal activities.
- 1.1.2 This MS is a working document that should be reviewed and maintained throughout the construction period as a record of activities. It details outline and minimum measures to:
- avoid impacts where there are protected species or habitats that need to be safeguarded.
- 1.1.3 This MS does not cover works that require a Natural England licence to disturb protected species. Furthermore, it does not give full, detailed methods for the construction works; these should be sought from the specialist contractors who are undertaking the work.

1.2 Ecological Context

- 1.2.1 This method statement has been prepared to discharge the following conditions;
- Prior to any site clearance or earthworks a reasonable avoidance measures method statement for hedgehog and other mammals shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as local planning authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the agreed details.
 - Reason - To ensure the protection of habitat of species that are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 or as subsequently amended and to comply with policy EN15 of the Core Strategy

1.3 Objectives

- 1.3.1 The objectives of this Method Statement are as follows.
- Ensure that protected species or those of principal importance are safeguarded throughout the construction works (those likely to be present within the working areas or passing through the site include nesting birds, hedgehogs and small



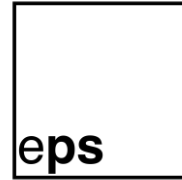
mammals).

- Minimise disturbance to protected and notable species using habitats surrounding the site, notably, nesting birds.

1.4 Relevant Species Legislation

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

- 1.4.1 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is the primary piece of legislation relating to nature conservation in the UK, though it has been adapted in different ways in the devolved administrations.
- 1.4.2 Under Section 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), extended by the Countryside Right of Way Act 2000, it is 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.
- 1.4.3 Under Section 9 of the WCA, for animals listed on Schedule 5, it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly:
- kill, injure or take any wild animal listed on Schedule 5;
 - possess or control any live or dead those wild animals or anything derived from it;
 - damage or destroy any structure or place which wild animals listed on Schedule 5 uses for shelter or protection;
 - disturb any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place of shelter or protection;
 - obstruct access to any structure or place used by any such animal for shelter or protection; and
 - sell, offer or expose for sale, or have in their possession or transports for the purpose of sale, any live or dead wild animal listed on Schedule 5 or any part of, or anything derived from such an animal.
- 1.4.4 Some species are partially protected under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- Reptiles are covered by Section 9(5) and part of Section 9(1), making it an offence to:
 - i. intentionally or deliberately kill or injure any individual of such a species; or
 - ii. sell or attempt to sell any part of the species alive or dead.
 - The common toad, common frog, smooth newt and palmate newt are partially protected under Section 9(5), making it an offence to:



- i. sell, barter, exchange, transport for sale and advertise to sell or to buy.

1.4.5 Hedgehogs are protected under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), making it illegal to:

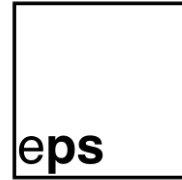
- kill or capture them using certain methods; namely traps and nets, electrical devices, poisons, automatic weapons, smoke/gases and various other. Licenses for humane trapping may be issued for research purposes. Hedgehogs are also protected under the Wild Mammals Act (1996), prohibiting cruelty and mistreatment.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

1.0.1 All reptiles, the common toad and hedgehogs are listed as Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 and are therefore a material consideration in the planning process.

1.5 Roles and Responsibilities

1.5.1 It is the responsibility of the Principal Contractor and any sub- contractors to carry out the works in a manner which will not contravene the legislation nor the best practice measures described. It is their joint responsibility that works are conducted in accordance with the timings or methods of ecological mitigation detailed in this Method Statement. The lead ecologist must be made aware of any variations in the work, timings or methods so that appropriate measures can be agreed.



2.0 MITIGATION MEASURES

2.1 Toolbox talks

- 2.1.1 All site operatives will be briefed by an ecologist who will give details of protected and/or notable species namely nesting birds, small mammals and hedgehog may be present on the site during works. They will provide an overview of the species ecology and the relevant legislation. The toolbox talk will outline the procedures and environmental measures that must be followed during the planned works to avoid breaches of legislation and/or adverse impacts.

2.2 Nesting birds

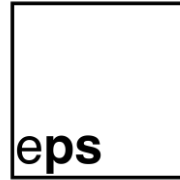
- 2.2.1 To minimise impacts during construction, vegetation requiring clearance for working areas or for maintenance purposes should be completed outside the bird breeding season (i.e. avoiding March to August inclusive) and following measures according to this MS relating to other protected species outlined in Section 2.4 below.
- 2.2.2 Where this is not possible due to time constraints relating to other species that might be present (i.e reptiles and amphibians), then a nesting bird check will need to be carried out by a suitably qualified ecologist no more than 48 hours prior to vegetation clearance. If an active nest is found, an exclusion zone appropriate to that species must be established using dark coloured tape to ensure the nest is not disturbed until the chicks have fully fledged.
- 2.2.3 All cleared vegetation will be removed from the working area at the end of each day and destroyed, or stored in a pre-agreed designated location or an appropriate holding facility (e.g. a covered skip) to prevent birds and other animals attempting to nest in it, unless an alternative arrangement is agreed with the ECoW.

2.3 Small mammals, common toad and reptiles

- 2.3.1 This section outlines methods that are considered appropriate and effective precautionary measures to ensure that protected species or those of principal importance, likely to be present within the working areas or those that may pass through the site including, are safeguarded throughout the construction works.
- 2.3.2 A pre-commencement check for small mammals, reptiles and common amphibians (eg common toad) should be undertaken prior to vegetation clearance. This should be completed by a suitably qualified ecologist.

Two-stage vegetation clearance

- 2.3.3 Vegetation clearance must be undertaken when reptiles and amphibians are active



(April to September inclusive) to avoid the risk of harming hibernating animals.

- The two-stage vegetation clearance will entail a first cut of the vegetation to 20 cm above ground level to provide better visibility for an ecological fingertip search.
- Following the hand searching and as directed by the ecologist, the vegetation will then be removed down to ground level. Each area will be progressively cut from the centre of the working area towards the edges to encourage movement of amphibians or reptiles into adjacent habitat.
- Arisings will be removed from the clearance area and will either be used to create habitat piles (in retained areas where they will not be disturbed) or taken off site.
- If tree roots are present these will be removed under ecological supervision.
- Removal of larger shelter habitats (fallen branches, hedgerow base, large log/rubble piles etc.) will be undertaken by hand, where size allows, under direct supervision of an ECoW.
- Following the clearance of shelter habitats and vegetation, the vegetation in the working areas will be kept short to maintain the habitat as unfavourable and discourage animals from re-entering the area. Once the topsoil has been stripped, the site will no longer be suitable for use by amphibians or reptiles.
- Excavations in this area will not be left open overnight or will be provided with egress ramps and subject to inspection and any equipment, materials or machinery to be stored on the site should be stored on areas of hardstanding.

2.4 Hedgehogs

- 2.4.1 This section outlines methods that are considered appropriate to safeguard hedgehogs throughout the construction works.
- 2.4.2 A pre-commencement check should be undertaken prior to vegetation clearance. This should be completed by a suitably qualified ecologist. In the unlikely event that a hedgehog is found, they will be left undisturbed and allowed to vacate the area naturally before works can continue at that location.
- 2.4.3 At the end of each working day, any excavations that need to be left open overnight will be covered to prevent hedgehogs (or any other animals) from falling in and becoming trapped. In the event this is not possible, mammal ramps or sloped sides will be fitted to ensure any hedgehogs that enter excavations can safely escape of their own accord.
- 2.4.4 Any open pipework with an outside diameter of greater than 120 mm must be capped at the end of each working day to prevent hedgehogs from entering and becoming trapped.



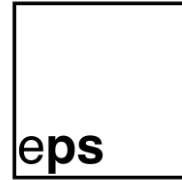
2.5 General working practices

2.5.1 The following general practices should be followed to minimise impacts to protected species during construction works:

- Where vegetation has been cleared by the ECoW, it will not be driven over by vehicles, nor will machinery or materials be stored there
- During the works, site materials should not be accidentally left lying around in case animals use it as temporary shelter. All such materials should be checked for animals before they are moved/discarded/destroyed off-site and an ECoW consulted if any animals are found.
- The working area will be clearly marked to prevent activities encroaching onto retained or unaffected habitats or features.
- Night working should be avoided. Where construction lighting is required, it will be angled below the horizontal plane, cowled and focused on the intended area to minimise light spill.
- Fuel/chemicals/oil should be stored in secure sites within the construction area. All chemicals or materials that may harm protected species will be safely stored away and contained in such a way that they cannot be accessed or knocked over by wildlife.

2.6 Emergency provisions

2.6.1 Should the provisions of this MS not be followed, or if any protected species are found, disturbed, injured or killed during the process of these works, then all works on site must stop immediately and an ecologist must be contacted immediately to provide guidance. Work may not restart until the ecologist is satisfied that the risks have been managed and steps put in place to comply with the legislation.



3.0 DECLARATION

The undersigned have read and understood this MS and will implement it.

<i>Name</i>	<i>Company</i>	<i>Signature</i>	<i>Date</i>