

Manchester Communication  
Academy, Manchester  
Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity  
Impact Assessment  
2024



RACHEL  
HACKING  
ECOLOGY

Client                    Lancaster Maloney Martin Limited

Project Title           Manchester Communication Academy

Project Reference     RHE.4057

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# Executive Summary

## Development Details

The client is proposing additional school facilities at Manchester Communication Academy, Manchester hereafter referred to as the 'site'.

This report describes the ecological features of the site and its surroundings and assesses the potential impacts of the development on the ecological interest. Recommendations are provided so that the development is compliant with biodiversity policy and legislation.

## Ecological Interest

Much of the site has a low level of ecological interest. Ecological features of interest on site include the individual trees and adjacent, off-site, woodland which has the potential to support nesting birds and provide commuting and foraging habitat.

## Outcomes

Impacts on nesting birds should be avoided, by carrying out site clearance outside of the bird breeding season (March- August). Standard mitigation measures should be included within a Construction Environment Management Plan (CEMP).

Further survey work of the areas of existing modified grassland (poor condition), proposed to be used to create modified grassland (good condition) will be required once identified.

The proposed development is predicted to result in a net gain of habitat units.



# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Project Brief

- 1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2024 by Lancaster Maloney Martin Limited to carry out an Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Impact Assessment of three locations on site (O.S. grid reference: SD 85898 00780 – see Figure 1).



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

- 1.1.2 The proposed development areas currently comprise amenity grassland, hardstanding, poor, semi-improved grassland and scattered trees. The site is surrounded by commercial and residential development. Moston Brook and associated broadleaved woodland habitat is located directly adjacent to one of the development locations.

### Description of Development

- 1.1.3 The site is the subject of a planning application for the construction of two new school buildings and a MUGA facility, and associated access and landscaping.

## 1.2 Scope of Work

1.2.1 The Client commissioned Rachel Hacking Ecology to carry out the following works:

- Desk-based study to identify any designated sites within 2km.
- Record the extent, type, and condition of habitats within and next to the site.
- Search for signs of protected species and assess the potential of habitats and features to support protected and notable species.

## 1.3 Site Visit Information

### Surveyor Details

1.3.1 Ben Crossthwaite (Senior Ecologist) visited the site on 24<sup>th</sup> January 2024. Ben has over 8 years of experience in botanical and protected species surveys.

### Weather

1.3.2 The weather at the time of the survey was cold, overcast and dry.



## 2. Methods

### 2.1 Desk Study

- 2.1.1 The Magic (Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside) was interrogated for the presence of Statutory Designated Sites (and European Protected Species licences) within 2km of the site.
- 2.1.2 The Impact Risk Zones for any SSSI within 2km of the site was checked to determine whether the Local Planning Authority will need to consult with Natural England.

### 2.2 Field Survey

#### Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.2.1 In accordance with JNCC guidelines<sup>1</sup> the sites were walked over and the habitats and features of ecological interest were mapped and described. Habitats and features of particular interest were target noted.
- 2.2.2 During the walkover habitat and features were assessed for their suitability to support of protected and notable species in accordance with CIEEM guidelines<sup>2</sup>. Field signs of protected, notable, and invasive non-native species, if encountered, were mapped, and described.

### 2.3 Biodiversity Net Gain

- 2.3.1 During the site walkover the ecological condition of each habitat was assessed in accordance with the Natural England (2022) guidelines<sup>3</sup>. Habitat types recorded and mapped during the field survey were converted from the JNCC system to the UK Habitat Classification system<sup>4</sup>.

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<sup>1</sup> JNCC (2010). *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A Technique for Environmental Audit*. Joint Nature Conservation Committee, Peterborough

<sup>2</sup> CIEEM (2017). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

<sup>3</sup> Panks, S. White, N., Newsome, A. et al. (2023). *Biodiversity metric 4: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity – User Guide*. Natural England.

<sup>4</sup> Butcher, B., Carey, P., et al. (2020). UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions V1.1. at <http://UKhab.org>

- 2.3.2 Habitat data including type, area (or length) and strategic location were uploaded to the Defra Biodiversity Metric Calculator (Statutory version) spreadsheet to determine the baseline value of the site. The extent of any habitats to be retained or enhanced was also entered into baseline worksheets.
- 2.3.3 The post-development masterplan was interrogated to determine areas of hardstanding, buildings, and associated infrastructure. New, retained and enhanced habitats were classified and allocated a target condition, based on habitat type, location and management input. This information was uploaded to the metric spreadsheet to obtain a post-development value.
- 2.3.4 The pre- and post-development values were compared to determine whether the yield of biodiversity units achieved a deficit or gain.



## 3. Results

### 3.1 Constraints

- 3.1.1 Field survey results are valid for a limited duration and no investigation can provide a complete description and characterisation of a site. The composition of habitats and species can change depending on environmental variables and the mobility of species, so the results of a study become less reliable over time. In some cases, surveys that are 3 years old may be acceptable for a project assuming that habitats have not significantly changed in the intervening period, but for protected species it is likely that survey data will need to be no more than 18 months old.

### 3.2 Designated Sites

- 3.2.1 The desk study provided information on the designated sites listed below in Table 1.

| Table 1. Designated Sites                         |                                     |                   |
|---------------------------------------------------|-------------------------------------|-------------------|
| Name                                              | Status                              | Location/distance |
| Boggart Hole Clough                               | Local Nature Reserve (LNR)          | 1.4km             |
| Reservoirs at Harpurhey                           | Site of Biological Importance (SBI) | 0.75km            |
| Rochdale Canal, Stott's Lane – Ducie Street Basin | SBI                                 | 1.25km            |

- 3.2.2 The desk study identified that the site is located within the Impact Risk Zone of Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and SSSI. The proposed development will not require the Local Planning Authority to consult with Natural England.

## 3.3 Baseline Habitats

- 3.3.1 The baseline habitat units of the site are calculated to be 2.08.
- 3.3.2 Habitats on site are described below. The habitat survey plan is contained in Appendix 2. For reporting reasons each separate site proposal has been defined separately.

### Science Block Location

#### Urban - Sealed Surface

- 3.3.3 Much of the science block location is made up of hardstanding. This habitat is mapped as bare ground (see Photograph 1).



*Photograph 1 showing the hardstanding bare ground at the science block location.*

- 3.3.4 This habitat has an area of 0.041ha. This is a habitat with low strategic importance and very low distinctiveness. The sealed surface habitat scores zero habitat units.

#### Grassland – Modified Grassland

- 3.3.5 This habitat comprises regularly managed, species-poor amenity grassland, and is mapped as such (see Photograph 2).





Photograph 2 showing the modified grassland

- 3.3.6 This habitat has an area of 0.056ha and is of low distinctiveness and low strategic significance. It is in poor condition as it fails three out of the seven core criteria, including criteria A which is an essential criterion to achieve moderate or good condition (see Table 1). The modified grassland habitat scores 0.11 habitat units.

| Table 1 showing the condition assessment of the modified grassland                                                                                                            |            |    |    |    |    |                                  |    |     |     |      |     |     |     |       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----|----|----|----|----------------------------------|----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Species include Perennial Rye-grass <i>Lolium perenne</i> , Daisy <i>Bellis perennis</i> , Dandelion <i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg., Annual Meadow-grass <i>Poa annua</i> . |            |    |    |    |    |                                  |    |     |     |      |     |     |     |       |
| The scores below show pass 'P' or fail 'F' for each criterion or 'NA' for any irrelevant criteria numbers where condition sheet contains fewer than 13 criteria.              |            |    |    |    |    |                                  |    |     |     |      |     |     |     |       |
| Criterion                                                                                                                                                                     | C1         | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 | C6                               | C7 | C8  | C9  | C10  | C11 | C12 | C13 | TOTAL |
| Result                                                                                                                                                                        | F          | F  | P  | F  | P  | P                                | P  | N/A | N/A | N/A  | N/A | N/A | N/A | 4     |
| Are any criteria non-negotiable? (Y/N)<br>If Yes are they passed?                                                                                                             | Criteria A |    |    |    |    | Condition (Good/Moderate /Poor): |    |     |     | Poor |     |     |     |       |

### Individual Trees – (Urban Tree)

3.3.7 Three trees are located within the science block location, amongst the area of modified grassland.



Photograph 3 showing the individual trees.

3.3.8 This habitat is classed as medium distinctiveness by the metric and of low strategic significance. The trees are assessed as being small size, as per the tree helper and poor condition as they fail four of the six criteria (see Table 2). The urban trees cover an area of 0.012ha and score 0.05 habitat units.

| Table 2 showing the condition assessment of the individual trees                                                                                                 |     |    |    |    |    |                                  |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----|----|----|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| The scores below show pass 'P' or fail 'F' for each criterion or 'NA' for any irrelevant criteria numbers where condition sheet contains fewer than 13 criteria. |     |    |    |    |    |                                  |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |       |
| Criterion                                                                                                                                                        | C1  | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 | C6                               | C7  | C8  | C9  | C10  | C11 | C12 | C13 | TOTAL |
| Result                                                                                                                                                           | P   | P  | F  | F  | F  | F                                | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A  | N/A | N/A | N/A | 2     |
| Are any criteria non-negotiable? (Y/N)<br>If Yes are they passed?                                                                                                | N/A |    |    |    |    | Condition (Good/Moderate /Poor): |     |     |     | Poor |     |     |     |       |

### Year 7 Block Location

#### Urban – Unvegetated Garden

- 3.3.9 This habitat comprises bare earth around the entrance and footpath where it appears cars park. This habitat classification is deemed the most appropriate and is mapped as bare earth. This habitat does not require a condition assessment and is of low strategic importance. This habitat covers 0.045ha and provides zero habitat units.



*Photograph 4 showing the vacant or derelict ground.*

#### Grassland – Modified Grassland

- 3.3.10 This habitat comprises regularly mown amenity grassland and has been mapped as such.



Photograph 5 showing the modified grassland

3.3.11 This habitat has a total area of 0.167ha and is of low distinctiveness and low strategic significance. It is in moderate condition as it fails two out of the seven core criteria, passing criteria A which is an essential criterion to achieve moderate or good condition (see Table 3). The modified grassland habitat scores 0.67 habitat units.

| Table 3 showing the condition assessment of the modified grassland                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |            |    |    |    |    |    |                                  |     |     |          |     |     |     |       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----|----|----|----|----|----------------------------------|-----|-----|----------|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Species include Perennial Rye-grass <i>Lolium perenne</i> , Dandelion <i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg., Annual Meadow-grass <i>Poa annua</i> , Creeping Buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i> , Broad-leaved Dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i> , Hoary Plantain <i>Plantago media</i> . Rarely occurring – Common Mouse-ear <i>Cerastium fontanum</i> , Common Chickweed <i>Stellaria media</i> , White Clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> , Yarrow <i>Achillea millefolium</i> . |            |    |    |    |    |    |                                  |     |     |          |     |     |     |       |
| The scores below show pass 'P' or fail 'F' for each criterion or 'NA' for any irrelevant criteria numbers where condition sheet contains fewer than 13 criteria.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        |            |    |    |    |    |    |                                  |     |     |          |     |     |     |       |
| Criterion                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                               | C1         | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 | C6 | C7                               | C8  | C9  | C10      | C11 | C12 | C13 | TOTAL |
| Result                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                  | P          | F  | P  | F  | P  | P  | P                                | N/A | N/A | N/A      | N/A | N/A | N/A | 5     |
| Are any criteria non-negotiable? (Y/N)<br>If Yes are they passed?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | Criteria A |    |    |    |    |    | Condition (Good/Moderate /Poor): |     |     | Moderate |     |     |     |       |

### Urban - Sealed Surface

- 3.3.12 Much of the year 7 block location is made up of hardstanding including a pump track and MUGA. This habitat is mapped as bare ground (see Photograph 6).



*Photograph 6 showing the hardstanding bare ground at the year 7 block location.*

- 3.3.13 This habitat has an area of 0.256ha. This is a habitat with low strategic importance and very low distinctiveness. The sealed surface habitat scores zero habitat units.

### Individual Trees – (Urban Tree)

- 3.3.14 One tree is located within the year 7 block location, amongst the area of unvegetated garden.



Photograph 7 showing the individual trees.

- 3.3.15 This habitat is classed as medium distinctiveness by the metric and of low strategic significance. The tree is assessed as medium size, as per the tree helper and in poor condition as it fails four of the six criteria (see Table 4). The urban tree covers an area of 0.016ha scores 0.06 habitat units.

| Table 4 showing the condition assessment of the individual tree                                                                                                  |     |    |    |    |    |                                  |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----|----|----|----------------------------------|-----|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| The scores below show pass 'P' or fail 'F' for each criterion or 'NA' for any irrelevant criteria numbers where condition sheet contains fewer than 13 criteria. |     |    |    |    |    |                                  |     |     |     |      |     |     |     |       |
| Criterion                                                                                                                                                        | C1  | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 | C6                               | C7  | C8  | C9  | C10  | C11 | C12 | C13 | TOTAL |
| Result                                                                                                                                                           | P   | P  | F  | F  | F  | F                                | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A  | N/A | N/A | N/A | 2     |
| Are any criteria non-negotiable? (Y/N)<br>If Yes are they passed?                                                                                                | N/A |    |    |    |    | Condition (Good/Moderate /Poor): |     |     |     | Poor |     |     |     |       |

#### MUGA Location

#### Grassland – Modified Grassland

- 3.3.16 This habitat comprises rank, poor, semi-improved grassland and has been mapped as such.



Photograph 8 showing the modified grassland

3.3.17 This habitat has a total area of 0.117ha and is of low distinctiveness and low strategic significance. It is in good condition as it passes all of the seven core criteria (see Table 5). The modified grassland habitat scores 0.7 habitat units.

| Table 5 showing the condition assessment of the modified grassland                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |            |    |    |    |    |                                  |    |     |     |          |     |     |     |       |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----|----|----|----|----------------------------------|----|-----|-----|----------|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Species include Perennial Rye-grass <i>Lolium perenne</i> , Dandelion <i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg., Creeping Buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i> , Hoary Plantain <i>Plantago media</i> , Yarrow <i>Achillea millefolium</i> , Yorkshire Fog <i>Holcus lanatus</i> , Common Ragwort <i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i> , Common Mouse-ear <i>Cerastium fontanum</i> , Greater Plantain <i>Plantago major</i> , Bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg., Rush <i>Juncus</i> sp, Creeping Thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i> , Pendulous Sedge <i>Carex pendula</i> . |            |    |    |    |    |                                  |    |     |     |          |     |     |     |       |
| The scores below show pass 'P' or fail 'F' for each criterion or 'NA' for any irrelevant criteria numbers where condition sheet contains fewer than 13 criteria.                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                      |            |    |    |    |    |                                  |    |     |     |          |     |     |     |       |
| Criterion                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                             | C1         | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 | C6                               | C7 | C8  | C9  | C10      | C11 | C12 | C13 | TOTAL |
| Result                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                | F          | F  | F  | P  | P  | P                                | P  | N/A | N/A | N/A      | N/A | N/A | N/A | 4     |
| Are any criteria non-negotiable? (Y/N)<br>If Yes are they passed?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                     | Criteria A |    |    |    |    | Condition (Good/Moderate /Poor): |    |     |     | Moderate |     |     |     |       |

### Grassland – Modified Grassland

- 3.3.18 This habitat comprises regularly managed, species-poor amenity grassland, and is mapped as such (see Photograph 2).



Photograph 9 showing the modified grassland

- 3.3.19 This habitat has an area of 0.035ha and is of low distinctiveness and low strategic significance. It is in poor condition as it fails three out of the seven core criteria, including criteria A which is an essential criterion to achieve moderate or good condition (see Table 6). The modified grassland habitat scores 0.05 habitat units.

| Table 6 showing the condition assessment of the modified grassland                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           |            |    |    |    |    |                                  |    |     |      |     |     |     |     |       |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|------------|----|----|----|----|----------------------------------|----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| Species include Perennial Rye-grass <i>Lolium perenne</i> , Daisy <i>Bellis perennis</i> , Dandelion <i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg., Annual Meadow-grass <i>Poa annua</i> , Creeping Buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i> , Hoary Plantain <i>Plantago media</i> , Common Ragwort <i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i> . |            |    |    |    |    |                                  |    |     |      |     |     |     |     |       |
| The scores below show pass 'P' or fail 'F' for each criterion or 'NA' for any irrelevant criteria numbers where condition sheet contains fewer than 13 criteria.                                                                                                                                             |            |    |    |    |    |                                  |    |     |      |     |     |     |     |       |
| Criterion                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    | C1         | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 | C6                               | C7 | C8  | C9   | C10 | C11 | C12 | C13 | TOTAL |
| Result                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                       | F          | F  | P  | F  | P  | P                                | P  | N/A | N/A  | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 4     |
| Are any criteria non-negotiable? (Y/N)<br>If Yes are they passed?                                                                                                                                                                                                                                            | Criteria A |    |    |    |    | Condition (Good/Moderate /Poor): |    |     | Poor |     |     |     |     |       |

### Individual Trees – (Urban Tree)

- 3.3.20 Three trees are located within the MUGA location, amongst the area of modified grassland.
- 3.3.21 This habitat is classed as medium distinctiveness by the metric and of low strategic significance. The trees are assessed as being small size, as per the tree helper and poor condition as they fail four of the six criteria (see Table 7). The urban trees have a total area of 0.012ha and score 0.05 habitat units.

| Table 7 showing the condition assessment of the individual trees                                                                                                 |     |    |    |    |    |                                  |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|-----|----|----|----|----|----------------------------------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| The scores below show pass 'P' or fail 'F' for each criterion or 'NA' for any irrelevant criteria numbers where condition sheet contains fewer than 13 criteria. |     |    |    |    |    |                                  |     |     |      |     |     |     |     |       |
| Criterion                                                                                                                                                        | C1  | C2 | C3 | C4 | C5 | C6                               | C7  | C8  | C9   | C10 | C11 | C12 | C13 | TOTAL |
| Result                                                                                                                                                           | P   | P  | F  | F  | F  | F                                | N/A | N/A | N/A  | N/A | N/A | N/A | N/A | 2     |
| Are any criteria non-negotiable? (Y/N)<br>If Yes are they passed?                                                                                                | N/A |    |    |    |    | Condition (Good/Moderate /Poor): |     |     | Poor |     |     |     |     |       |

### Grassland – Modified Grassland (mitigation areas)

- 3.3.22 This habitat comprises regularly managed, species-poor amenity grassland, located across the site campus. The exact extent at each location has yet to be confirmed, and will be subject to an additional site visit, to assess the areas of existing grassland, once confirmed. The current conditions of these areas is currently and assumption.
- 3.3.23 This habitat has a total area of 0.3ha and is of low distinctiveness and low strategic significance. It is in poor condition as it fails three out of the seven core criteria, including criteria A which is an essential criterion to achieve moderate or good condition (see Table 8). The modified grassland habitat scores 0.6 habitat units.



| Table 8 showing the condition assessment of the modified grassland                                                                                               |    |    |            |    |    |    |                                  |     |     |      |     |     |     |       |
|------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----|----|------------|----|----|----|----------------------------------|-----|-----|------|-----|-----|-----|-------|
| The scores below show pass 'P' or fail 'F' for each criterion or 'NA' for any irrelevant criteria numbers where condition sheet contains fewer than 13 criteria. |    |    |            |    |    |    |                                  |     |     |      |     |     |     |       |
| Criterion                                                                                                                                                        | C1 | C2 | C3         | C4 | C5 | C6 | C7                               | C8  | C9  | C10  | C11 | C12 | C13 | TOTAL |
| Result                                                                                                                                                           | F  | F  | P          | F  | P  | P  | P                                | N/A | N/A | N/A  | N/A | N/A | N/A | 4     |
| Are any criteria non-negotiable? (Y/N)<br>If Yes are they passed?                                                                                                |    |    | Criteria A |    |    |    | Condition (Good/Moderate /Poor): |     |     | Poor |     |     |     |       |

## 3.4 Retained Habitats

### Science Block Location

#### Modified Grassland

- 3.4.1 0.003ha of modified grassland are proposed to be retained. This will retain 0.01habitat units.

### Year 7 Block Location

#### Modified Grassland

- 3.4.2 0.078ha of modified grassland are proposed to be retained. This will retain 0.31habitat units.

#### Urban Tree

- 3.4.3 The medium sized tree is proposed to be retained. This will retain 0.06 habitat units.

### MUGA Location

- 3.4.4 None of the existing habitats in this location will be retained.

## 3.5 Created Habitats

### Science Block Location

#### Urban – Developed Land; Sealed Surface

- 3.5.1 This habitat includes the new building and areas of hardstanding. This equates to a total habitat area of 0.094ha. This habitat provides zero habitat units.

### Year 7 Block Location



#### Urban – Developed Land; Sealed Surface

- 3.5.2 This habitat includes the new building and areas of hardstanding. This equates to a total habitat area of 0.359ha. This habitat provides zero habitat units.

#### Grassland – Modified Grassland

- 3.5.3 This habitat is the addition of species-rich grassland. This has a total area of 0.031ha, has a target condition of good and will provide 0.14 habitat units.

#### MUGA Location

#### Urban – Developed Land; Sealed Surface

- 3.5.4 This habitat includes the area of hardstanding. This equates to a total habitat area of 0.152ha. This habitat provides zero habitat units.

#### Mitigation Locations

#### Grassland – Modified Grassland

- 3.5.5 This habitat comprises the proposed areas of species-rich grasslands located across the site campus. This has a total area of 0.3ha, has a target condition of good and will provide 1.4 habitat units.

#### Individual Trees – Urban Tree

- 3.5.6 The proposals across the site include the planting of 30 individual trees, with a target size of small. As per the Tree Helper, the trees have a total area of 0.122ha and will provide 0.37 habitat units.

## 3.6 Species

#### Great Crested Newt

- 3.6.1 No ponds exist on the site or within 250m of the site. The rank grassland within the MUGA location provides suitable terrestrial habitat for Great Crested Newt. The hardstanding and mown amenity grassland habitats that dominate the site are considered hostile to Great Crested Newt. It is considered unlikely that Great Crested Newt are present on site and are not considered further in this report.

#### Bats

- 3.6.2 No buildings are proposed to be affected by any of the site proposals. The trees on site were the subject of a ground-level assessment for the presence of Potential Bat Roost Features (PRFs). No such features are present on any of the trees on site. The woodland habitat offsite, adjacent to the MUGA location, provides potential foraging and commuting habitat for bats.

#### Badger

- 3.6.3 No evidence of Badger, such as setts, hairs, paw prints or latrines were found on site. Badgers are unlikely to be affected by the proposed development and are not considered further in this report.



### Nesting Birds

- 3.6.4 No evidence of nesting birds was found during the site visits. However, the trees provide suitable nesting habitat for passerine bird species.

## 3.7 Invasive Species

- 3.7.1 No invasive, non-native species were recorded on site.



## 4. Assessment

### 4.1 Impacts on Designated Sites

- 4.1.1 One statutory designated sites lie within 2km of the site boundaries. One non-statutory designated sites lie within 1km of the site boundaries. The development site is geographically separated from designated sites, and there is no requirement for the Local Authority to consult with regards to potential impacts SSSI as a consequence of the proposed development. Any adverse impacts are not anticipated.

### 4.2 Biodiversity Net Gain

#### Habitats

- 4.2.1 The baseline habitats are calculated to provide 2.08 habitat units.
- 4.2.2 The proposed habitats are calculated to result in a total of 2.3 habitat units.
- 4.2.3 The Biodiversity Impact Assessment shows a net gain of 0.22 habitat units (10.81%).

### 4.3 Impacts on Habitats

- 4.3.1 None of the habitats onsite are of conservation value. The habitats offer negligible/limited ecological value, and it is considered no specific site mitigation is required.

### 4.4 Impacts on Species

#### Bats

- 4.4.1 The site offers negligible potential to support bats. Woodland habitat adjacent to the proposed MUGA provides potential foraging and commuting habitat for bats. It is recommended any artificial light proposed does illuminate the woodland, protecting it as a wildlife dark zone. These recommendations will be included in any future Construction Environmental Management Plan. and Biodiversity Management Plan.

#### Birds

- 4.4.2 Removal of the trees could result in impacts to nesting birds, should they be present.



## 5. Recommendations

### 5.1 Further Surveys

- 5.1.1 Further survey work of the areas of existing modified grassland (poor condition), proposed to be used to create modified grassland (good condition (wildflower grassland)), will be required once the locations have been confirmed. This is to assess the baseline of these areas of modified grassland.

### 5.2 Mitigation Measures

- 5.2.1 Protection of ecological features (habitats and species) during the construction phase will be described in a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). Mitigation measures to protect, maintain and enhance ecological features during the operational phase of development will be described in a Biodiversity Management Plan (BMP). Management Plans will contain Operational Aims and Objectives, Rationale for management, Prescriptions and schedules detailing the timing and responsibility for delivering the prescriptions. It is anticipated that the CEMP and BMP will be provided as a planning condition in advance of the commencement of the proposed development.

#### Nesting Birds

- 5.2.2 Impacts on nesting birds should be avoided by carrying out site clearance works and similar operations outside of the bird breeding season (March - August). Activities that might directly impact upon breeding birds should hence be limited to the September-February period. If the clearance works have to be undertaken during the bird breeding season checks immediately before clearance by a suitably qualified ecologist will be required. If nesting activity is detected work in that area will need to stop until the ecologist considers that nesting activity is finished.

#### Biodiversity Net Gain

- 5.2.3 The proposed development is predicted to result in a net gain of habitat units.
- 5.2.4 This complies with the current requirements of the NPPF (2023) which states that development should deliver a net gain in biodiversity.



# Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation

## National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023) describes the Government's planning policy for England and how it should be applied. Within this framework, the requirements in relation to biodiversity are included within several policies. The two most relevant to individual planning decisions are Paragraphs 180 and 186, shown below:

- 180. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
  - a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
  - b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
  - c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
  - d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
  - e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
  - f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
- 186. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:
  - a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
  - b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments),



should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

### Legislation

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRow Act 2000) includes the notification and confirmation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). SSSIs can be notified for their floral, faunal, geological, or physiographical features. Protection against damaging operations and management of SSSIs is also included within the Act. Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) are zones around an SSSI account for the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified and identify development proposal which could have adverse impacts.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRow Act 2000) protects native animals, plants and habitats. Under the Act it is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animal listed on Schedule 5 and it is an offence to interfere with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturb animals occupying such places. The Act prohibits picking, uprooting or destroy any wild plant (or any attached seed or spore) listed in Schedule 8.

European Protected Species (EPS) such as bats, Hazel Dormouse, Otter, Natterjack Toad, Smooth Snake, Sand Lizard and Great Crested Newt are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRow Act 2000) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The Acts make it an offence to:

- a) Deliberately capture, injure or kill an EPS;
- b) Deliberately impair an EPS's ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear or nurture young; to hibernate or migrate; or significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the EPS.
- c) Possess or control live or dead EPS or any part of, or anything derived from a EPS;
- d) Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of an EPS;



- e) Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place that is used for shelter or protection by an EPS;
- f) Intentionally or recklessly disturb a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection that is occupied by an EPS.

All common herptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CROW Act 2000). Grass Snake, Slow Worm, Common Lizard, Adder are protected against intentional killing or injury. Common Frog, Common Toad, Smooth Newt and Palmate Newt is protected against sale. In addition, all British reptiles, Common toad and Great Crested Newt are listed as Species of Principal Importance.

All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage, or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act while they are nest building or at or near a nest with eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young.

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 makes it an offence to wilfully, or to attempt to kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a Badger, or intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett. Interference of a sett includes disturbing badgers during occupation of a sett, or damaging or destroying a sett, or obstructing access to the sett.

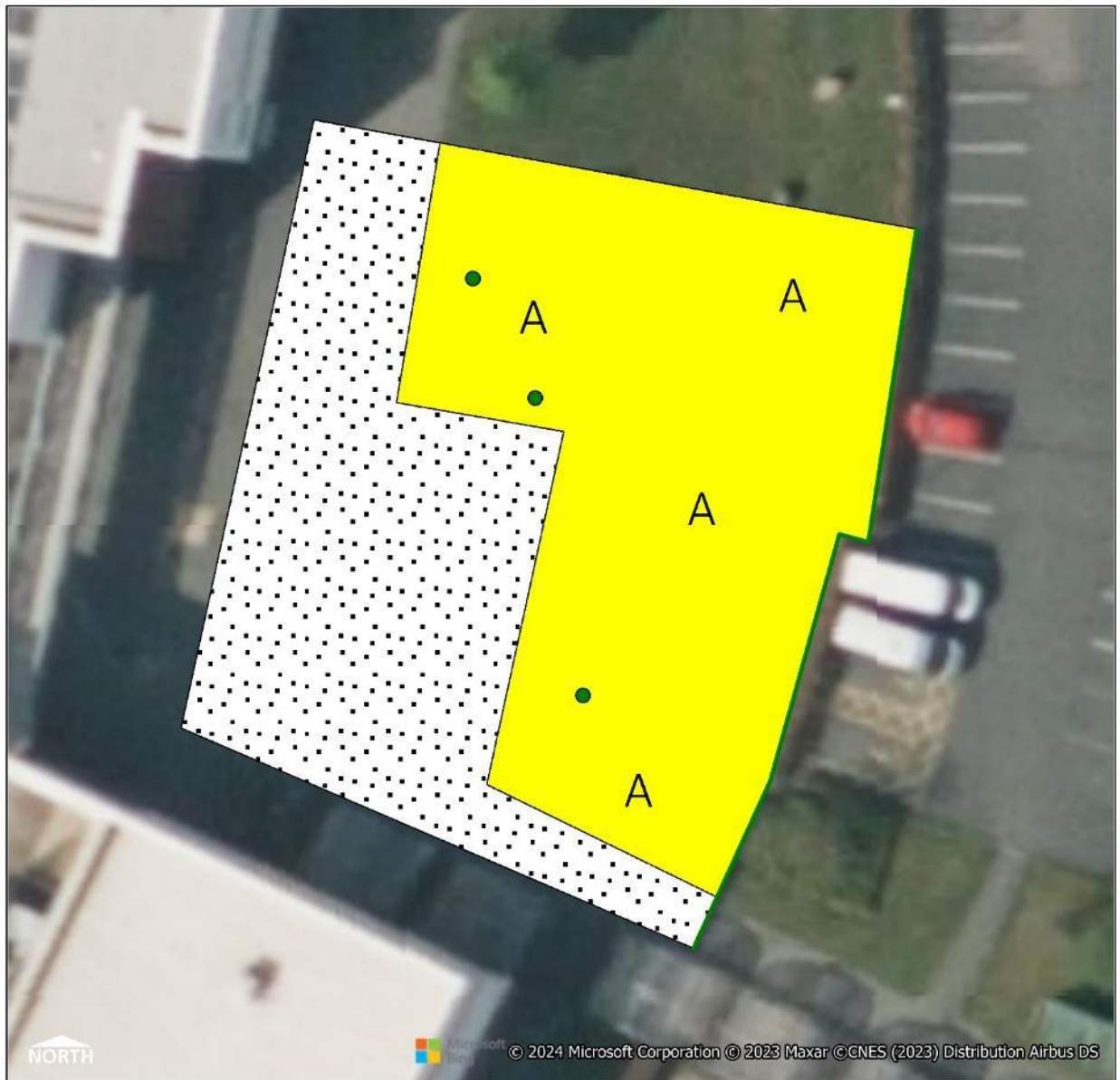
Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 places a duty on every public authority to have regard to conserving biodiversity. Section 41 of the same Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitats that are of 'Principal Importance' for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. The Secretary of State must take steps, as appear reasonably practicable, to further the conservation of those living organisms and habitats in any list published under this section. The list of species and habitats of principal importance currently includes 943 species and 56 habitats. These are the species and habitats found in England which are regarded as conservation priorities under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework

The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 protect 'important' hedgerows from destruction or damage. A hedgerow is 'important' if it (a) has existed for 30 years or more; and (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 'important' hedgerows unless permitted by the local planning authority.



## Appendix 2: Phase 1 Habitat Map





## Phase 1 Habitat Map - Map 1 of 3

### Key

- A Amenity Grassland
- Bare Ground
- Intact Hedgerow
- Scattered Tree

Project Name:

Manchester Communication Academy

Project Reference:

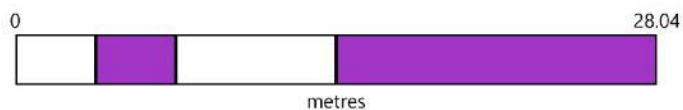
RHE.4057

Drawn By:

Ben Crossthwaite

Date:

24/01/2024



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## Phase 1 Habitat Map - Map 2 of 3

### Key

- A Amenity Grassland
- SI Broadleaved Woodland
- SI Poor, Semi-improved Grassland
- X Scattered Scrub
- Scattered Tree
- Fence

Project Name:

Manchester Communication Academy

Project Reference:

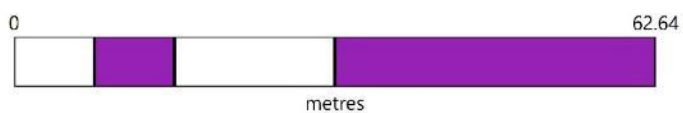
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Drawn By:

Ben Crossthwaite

Date:

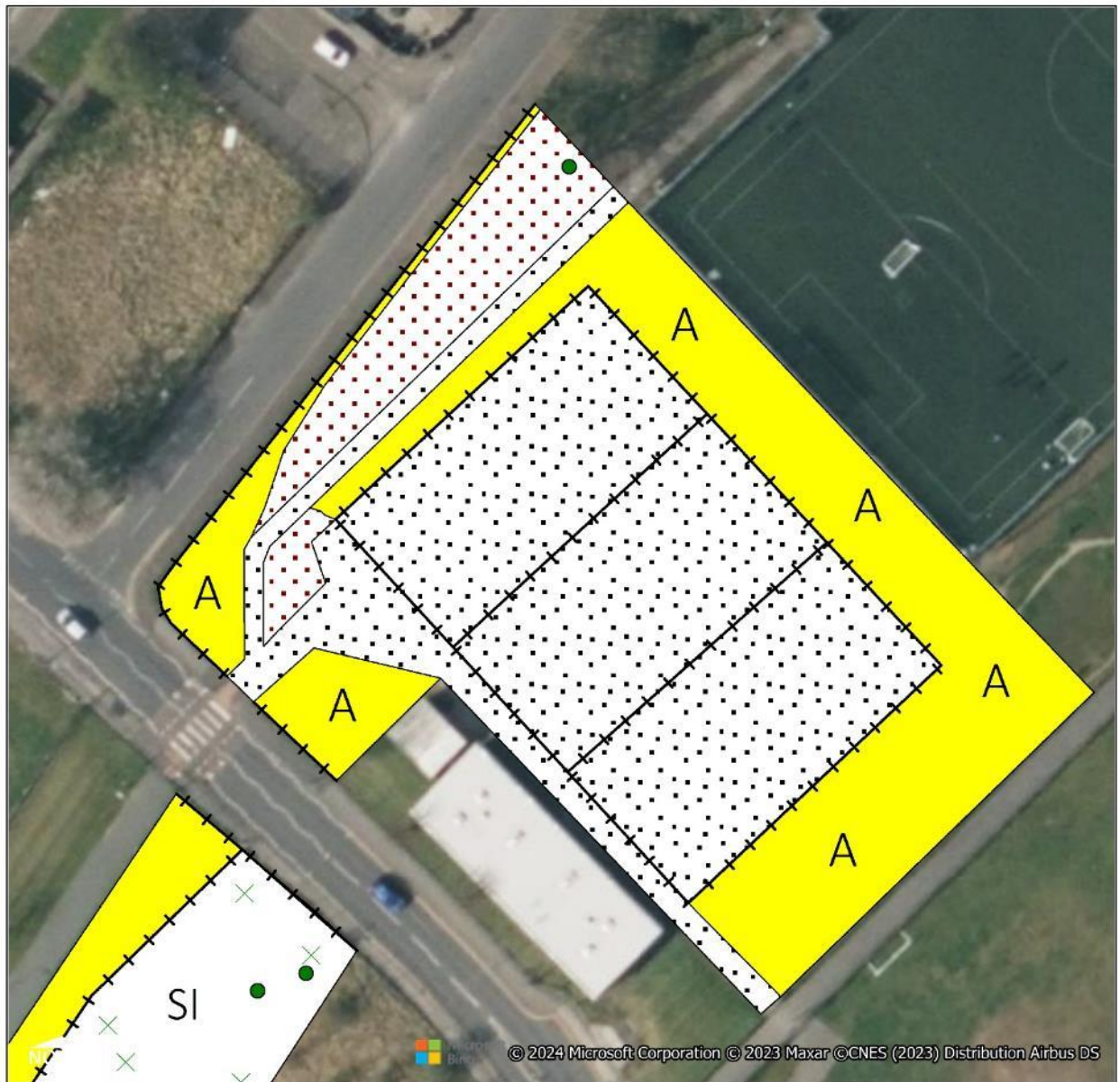
24/01/2024



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## Phase 1 Habitat Map - Map 3 of 3

### Key

- A Amenity Grassland
- SI Poor, Semi-improved Grassland
- Bare Earth
- Bare Ground
- X Scattered Scrub
- Scattered Tree
- + + + + Fence

Project Name:

Manchester Communication Academy

Project Reference:

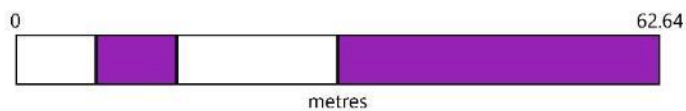
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Drawn By:

Ben Crossthwaite

Date:

24/01/2024



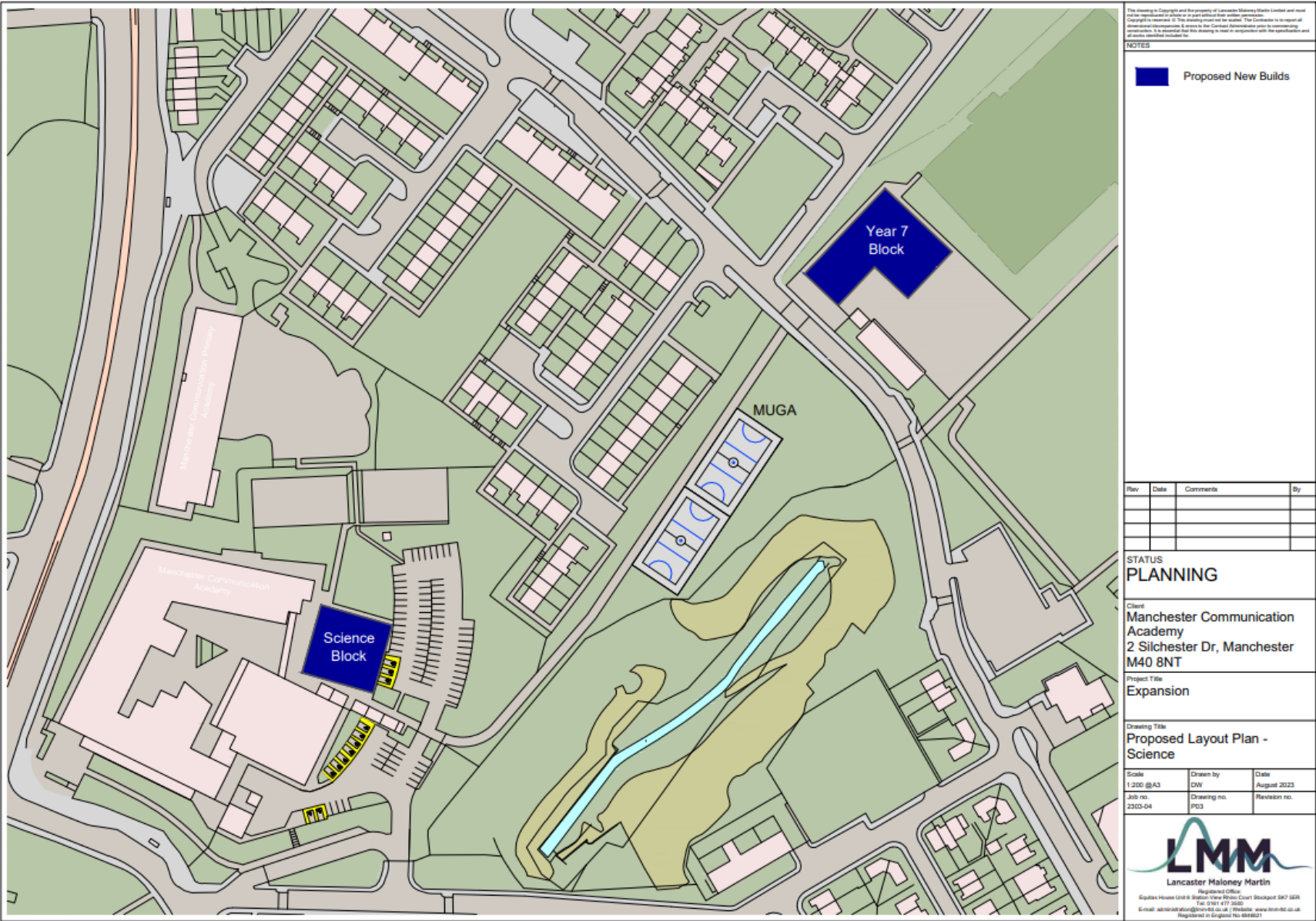
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## Appendix 3: Site Plan





## Appendix 4: Headline Results

| FINAL RESULTS                                                                                                |                          |        |
|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------|--------|
| <b>Total net unit change</b><br>(Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement) | <i>Habitat units</i>     | 0.22   |
|                                                                                                              | <i>Hedgerow units</i>    | 0.00   |
|                                                                                                              | <i>Watercourse units</i> | 0.00   |
| <b>Total net % change</b><br>(Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)    | <i>Habitat units</i>     | 10.81% |
|                                                                                                              | <i>Hedgerow units</i>    | 0.00%  |
|                                                                                                              | <i>Watercourse units</i> | 0.00%  |
| <b>Trading rules satisfied?</b>                                                                              | Yes ✓                    |        |