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Terrestrial Mammals - Reasonable Avoidance Measures Statement (RAMS)

Date of Issue: 21/06/2023

For: Watson Homes

Application Site: Land between 121-131 Levenshulme Road, Gorton, Manchester, M18 7NF

National Grid Ref: SJ88709544

Application Reference Number: 135270/FO/2022

Method Statement Objectives

The development proposals entail the erection of six two-storey dwellinghouses and a three-storey building to form 31 apartments along with associated parking, access, landscaping and boundary treatment. Development related activities such as remediation, piling, vegetation clearance or excavation, in areas of suitable small mammal habitat may potentially impact mammals that may inhabit the local area. As a result, safeguards must be applied to protect these species; the Method Statement below outlines sequential measures to be implemented to ensure these objectives are achieved. This document has therefore been produced in accordance with **Condition 13** of the decision notice, which states:

"Prior to any earthworks, vegetation clearance or site clearance, a reasonable avoidance measures method statement for mammals, for both the site clearance and the construction phase of development shall be submitted to and approved in writing by the City Council as local planning authority. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved avoidance measures."

Pre Works

Timings

- Juvenile and adult mammals are most vulnerable to harm during their **hibernation period which is considered to be November to February** inclusive. Site clearance / preparation works should avoid this sensitive period. If this is not possible works carried out during this sensitive period (between November – February) should take into account, the potential presence of hibernating wildlife.
- Pre-commencement check – a site walkover to take place by an Ecologist/ECoW before any vegetation clearance, in order to discern whether or not areas are host to any individual mammals, and pinpoint areas in which there may be a higher chance of encountering said mammals.

Demarcation of buffer zones

- Any buffer zones should be demarcated out using hazard/coloured tape and/or signage to avoid any encroachment/over-management occurring from the development site within this sensitive area.

During Works

- Clearance works should be undertaken with **hand power tools** (strimmers, hedgecutters etc.), with taller/denser vegetation cut from the top down in stages; **an initial cut down to 150mm** followed by an additional check by the ECoW should occur prior to full clearance of the vegetation.
- Any clearance works to areas of shrubs/potential refugia as considered applicable by the ECoW (such as brick/log piles, garden equipment, plant pots, etc) or loss of existing vegetative features (dense grass and tall ruderal etc.), should only commence after a careful visual inspection (site walkover) and fingertip search has been carried out and the Ecologist has determined that no animals are present and is satisfied no animals are at risk. Works should proceed from the west to the east of the site to allow any mammals the chance to move out of the site.

- Any animals found, which are not Protected Species, will be removed from harm's way and placed into suitable environs, species pending and following correct protocols/biosecurity measures.
- For the full duration, no works are to extend off site in the areas adjacent to the red line boundary or within agreed buffer zones. No pallets, skips or otherwise are to be placed upon areas of dense vegetation and should instead only be placed on flat, cleared ground to avoid animals getting underneath.
- The impact of works on adjacent habitats will be avoided by the clear demarcation of the works area. All work will be carried out adopting standard pollution prevention measures.
- Contingency/emergency plans should be drawn up to address chemical spillage, drainage, collision, etc.
- Machinery and materials to remain on bare ground and reasonable efforts must be made to avoid creating piles, or accumulated aggregates. Materials that require piling will be stored within areas of bare ground above ground level, using pallets to prevent mammals from seeking shelter below.
- Any excavated materials or soils stored overnight will be searched prior to being used as infill.
- Where excavations/trenches are excavated - it should be ensured that they are not left open overnight to avoid mammals falling into them and becoming trapped. If trenches cannot be filled in after the working day for whatever reason, an escape mechanism such as wooden planks of 5cm wide as a minimum should be placed in them at a 45-degree diagonal angle, to serve as an escape mechanism to small animals including mammals.
- Any exposed pipes / pipe systems should be capped when not in direct use to prevent any mammals from accessing the pipework and potentially coming to harm.
- Excavations should be checked in the morning on a daily basis for the presence of any animals that may have fallen in during the night.
- All site operatives will maintain a watching brief throughout the work schedule and report any issues, anomalies or discrepancies to the ecologist or ECoW as appointed.
- If a mammal is found in the absence of supervision, work must stop immediately, and any mammals should be moved to a safe and secure area out of harm's way. If there are any queries regarding the species of animal located, then the contractors should contact an ecologist for further advice.
- Any mammals (hedgehog etc.) found should be carefully caught by the Ecologist / ECoW, placed (where capture is possible and humane) in a ventilated box using dampened gloved hands and released into suitable nearby vegetation that will be unaffected by the proposed works.
- Plastic netting, wire coils or similar hazardous features should not be left on the ground, to avoid entanglement. Aggregates/constructional materials should be stored on pallets as opposed to the storing on the ground.

A Guide to Timings

Operation	Months												Notes
	Jan	Feb	Mar	Apr	May	Jun	Jul	Aug	Sep	Oct	Nov	Dec	
Pre-works													
Buffer zone demarcation & signage	Pre-habitat manipulation & site walkover												To avoid encroaching in sensitive areas
Site Walkover by Ecologist			Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y			Prior to habitat manipulation
										Recommended timeframe		Y	