

Oakwood Lodge

Hedgehog Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statement

Client	Wythenshawe Community Housing Group 8, Poundswick Lane, Wythenshawe Manchester M22 9TA
Site	Oakwood Lodge, Longley Lane, Wythenshawe, Manchester M224HY
NGR	SJ 83407 89488
Report Title	Hedgehog Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statement
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1. Background

Site

- 1.1. The site address is Oakwood Lodge, Longley Lane, Wythenshawe, Manchester M224HY.
- 1.2. The site's NGR is SJ 83407 89488.
- 1.3. This method statement covers the clearance of vegetation and demolition of the existing buildings on site. Once these areas are removed, construction activities are unlikely to affect hedgehogs as the site will be unsuitable and any resident animals will have been removed.

Condition

- 1.4. As part of the development approvals 133576/FO/2022 and 135609/JO/2022 for Oakwood Lodge, the condition presented in Table 1 must be discharged.

Table 1 Planning Condition 11

11) Prior to any earthworks, demolition or vegetation clearance, a Reasonable Avoidance Measures method statement for hedgehogs, for both site clearance and the construction phase and including a timetable for their installation and maintenance regime, have been submitted to and been approved 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 and species that are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 or as subsequently amended in order to comply with policy EN15 of the Manchester Core Strategy.

Role of Helen Hamilton Ecology

- 1.5. Helen Hamilton Ecology was commissioned to prepare a Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statement for Hedgehogs, covering the vegetation clearance and demolition phases of the development.
- 1.6. This will include an indicative timetable for the implementation of the measures.

2. About Hedgehogs

Legal Protection

- 2.1. Hedgehogs have some legal protections, as follows:
- Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) which makes it illegal to kill or capture wild hedgehogs.
 - Hedgehogs are also listed under the Wild Mammals Protection Act (1996), which prohibits cruel treatment.
 - Hedgehogs are also listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) Act (2006). This lists English 'Priority Species,' formerly identified as requiring action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and now under the current UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework.

Biology

- 2.2. Hedgehogs are small mammals which have a rather rounded body covered in short brown spines, and a short tail. They have long snouts and their face and undersides are covered in coarse hair, not spines. They are 20 to 30cm long and can weigh up to 1.2 kg.
- 2.3. Hedgehogs spend much of their life asleep in a nest of leaves, moss and grass. In the summer they shelter there and in daytime and come out at night when they can be heard snuffling and grunting as they forage for food. In the autumn they find a sheltered spot, often under a hedgerow, to hibernate over the winter.
- 2.4. Although their eyesight is poor, they have good hearing and a well-developed sense of smell. Hedgehogs are good runners, proficient climbers and can even swim.
- 2.5. If attacked they roll into a tight ball so only their spines are exposed. Many hedgehogs are killed unintentionally by humans: on the road, with lawnmowers, strimmers and garden chemicals, and in bonfires.
- 2.6. Hedgehogs eat slugs, snails, beetles, earwigs and earthworms, birds' eggs, nestlings and carrion. They are partial to food left by humans including cat food and leftovers and feeding them correctly can help to boost local populations.
- 2.7. Hedgehogs mainly live alone but come together to mate. The mother then has a litter of 3 to 7 'hoglets' which spend up to six weeks with her, before setting out on their own. They reach sexual maturity at around 12 months old. Hedgehogs have been known to live for seven years, but a lifespan of two to three is more typical.
- 2.8. Hedgehogs are found across the UK and can live in a variety of habitats including woodland, farmland, parks and gardens. Although widespread throughout mainland Britain, hedgehog populations are in serious decline. Numbers of animals are thought to be down by over half in rural areas and a third in urban areas since 2000.
- 2.9. Declines are thought due to loss and damage of suitable habitat, such as hedgerows and woodland, depriving the species of both food and shelter from badger predation. The use of pesticides on farmland and in gardens may also reduce their food supply. In urban areas, solid fencing, loss of greenery, development of greenspaces are also negatively impacting hedgehogs, plus many thousands are killed on roads by cars each year.

Hedgehogs At Oakwood Lodge

- 2.10. A hedgehog was seen on foraging on site during a dusk bat survey on 3/8/2021 (DWA Ecology 2021).
- 2.11. Recent hedgehog records are abundant in the south Manchester and Wythenshawe area (NBN Atlas <https://species.nbnatlas.org/species/NBNSYS0000132952>).
- 2.12. Habitats on site are suitable for hedgehog, especially the shrub areas, hedges and long unmanaged grassland areas. Piles of brash and bramble thickets are also good habitat.
- 2.13. Figure 1 shows a plan of the site as proposed, illustrating some retained trees, but the removal of most other areas of current habitat.

Figure 1 Plan of Proposals



3. Method Statement

Rationale

- 3.1. Due to the presence of suitable habitats for hedgehogs on site and multiple records from the wider area, this Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statement must be adhered to for the duration of works.
- 3.2. REASON - to prevent harm to hedgehogs, and to help sustain their populations locally.

Potential Impacts

- 3.3. The potential impacts or ways that hedgehogs could be harmed on site during vegetation clearance and demolition are:
 - They may live in shrub, hedge or long grass habitats and be injured or disturbed when these are cleared.
 - They may take shelter in stored materials on site and be injured or disturbed when these are moved.
 - They may fall into and become trapped in excavations, pits or ditches, or drown if these are water-filled.
- 3.4. This method statement aims to address these potential impacts on hedgehogs and prevent harms from occurring.

Timeline

- 3.5. Site clearance activities (vegetation removal and building demolition) are planned to commence on site in October 2023, and to last for 4 weeks. The first actions will be vegetation clearance. It is intended for all clearance to be complete before the hedgehog hibernation period, i.e. by early November. After this, habitats on site will be rendered unsuitable for hedgehog, and construction works can proceed.

Before Works

- 3.6. When planning the works the following actions should be taken:
 - Retain as much of the boundary habitats as possible. Some trees are retained (Figure 1) but shrubs near these should also be kept if possible. This will provide ready-established habitats for hedgehog from the start of the development into the future.
 - An Ecological Clerk of Works ECOW should be appointed to carry out relevant actions on site during the works. Their name and contact details should be kept on site for rapid reference should it be needed.
 - A tool box talk should be given to site demolition contractors to brief them on what to do if hedgehogs are found and the ECOW is not on site/available to advise.
 - A release area for hedgehogs has been identified for Oakwood Lodge in the small public park to the north of the site where woody habitats at its edges which provide suitable release sites. This area will be retained undisturbed for the duration of works as it is outside the red line. The approximate release area is indicated on Figure 2.

Figure 2 Hedgehog Release Area



During Works

3.7. Whilst working on site, clearance and demolition works should follow these guidelines:

- Any densely vegetated areas (e.g. hedges, shrubs, trees, brambles, long grass) to be cleared must be hand-searched by the ECOW (or other competent person) immediately prior to removal, and any animals carefully relocated wearing gloves to the release area.
- Cut and cleared vegetation must not be piled on site and left for more than 1 week as hedgehogs may take up residence in the brash piles. All vegetation should be removed from site entire or chipped and removed.
- Where vegetation management such as strimming is required, this should be preceded by a hand-search by the ECOW and then undertaken in phased, directional cuts to a height of no less than 150 mm; the area(s) should then be left overnight to allow any animals within to disperse. Removal to ground level can then be completed if needed.
- Areas of hard standing should be used for storage of materials if possible. Storage of materials on habitats such as shrubs or grassland should be avoided, as this will create refuges or even hibernation opportunities from which hedgehogs may then be disturbed or harmed.
- Any deep excavations should be covered overnight or fitted nightly with a ramp at an angle of less than 45 degrees to allow a means of escape should any animals fall in. Trapped animals must be carefully rescued and released appropriately.
- If there is any doubt over translocating a hedgehog to the release site, or if the hedgehog appears to be harmed or very small, it should be taken into care and the local wildlife hospital (see below) contacted for advice.
- If a hedgehog is uncovered during the hibernation season (generally November to February inclusive), it should be carefully covered back over and the ECOW contacted for advice prior to works re-commencing.

Hedgehog Rescue

- 3.8. The **Hulse Towers Hedgehog Refuge** offers hedgehog rescue and is located in Wythenshawe. They can be contacted at <https://www.facebook.com/hulses.hedgehogs/>, 39 Lownorth Road, Manchester, United Kingdom, 0161 437 8395, hulses.hedgehogs@virginmedia.com.
- 3.9. Alternatively, the ECOW can advise on other options if needed.

4. Recommendations

Enhancements

- 4.1. There is an opportunity to enhance the development for hedgehogs (and other wildlife) through some simple actions:
- Retain as much existing habitats as possible e.g. boundary hedges, shrubs and trees.
 - Ensure site remains permeable to hedgehogs so they can roam on and off site post development.
 - Avoid fragmentation of habitat within development, separating properties with hedges rather than fences if possible.
 - If using, fences should have 15 x 15cm holes at their base to allow hedgehogs to move between gardens. Holes should be labelled and placed in quieter corners so residents do not block them.
 - Landscape plans to include high wildlife value species e.g. a mix of native and ornamental species with flowers and berries which would benefit wildlife and hedgehogs.

Information Sources

- 4.2. Other sources of information include:
- <https://www.hedgehogstreet.org/>
 - <https://www.britishhedgehogs.org.uk/>
 - <https://www.rspca.org.uk/adviceandwelfare/wildlife/hedgehogs>
 - <https://ptes.org/get-informed/facts-figures/hedgehog/>
 - <https://www.mammal.org.uk/species-hub/full-species-hub/discover-mammals/species-hedgehog/>
 - <https://www.woodlandtrust.org.uk/trees-woods-and-wildlife/animals/mammals/hedgehog/> .