

Former Whitemoss Day Care

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report

Guinness Partnership

December 2021



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This document does not purport to provide legal advice.

This document has 35 pages including the cover.

Due to the potential presence of protected species on site, this is a redacted version of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal report. A full, unredacted and confidential version of the report will be submitted directly to Manchester City Council.

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Summary

Report purpose	The primary aims of this report are to: • Identify key ecological constraints to the development; • Identify if additional ecological surveys are required to inform an ecological impact assessment; and • Identify avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement measures.
Proposed Scheme	The Proposed Scheme is for the construction of 20 affordable homes, set to include ten two bed semi-detached houses and ten three bed semi-detached houses. Each dwelling will include two parking spaces.
Desk studies and field surveys	• A walkover survey of accessible land within and adjacent to the Site on 4th November 2021; and • A desk-study undertaken on 5th November 2021.
Ecological features	The habitats within the Site are suitable for bats, badger, nesting birds, reptiles and priority invertebrates, whilst one priority plant (wild strawberry) was observed on Site at the time of the survey. The habitats on Site are of reasonable quality, with a range of positive indicator species present throughout open grassland areas. A total of 10 positive indicator species were located which are specifically named within Table 2 of the Greater Manchester Sites of Biological Importance Selection Guidelines¹. Bailey Wood Site of Biological Interest (SBI) is present within 150 m away from the Site and may be impacted by the Proposed Scheme, semi-natural ancient woodland is present within this SBI which may be impacted by the Proposed Scheme.
Avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures	It is recommended that vegetation clearance is kept to a minimum and is undertaken outside of the core nesting bird season, which is generally taken to be between 1st March and 31st August, subject to geographical and seasonal variations. If this cannot be achieved, then vegetation clearance should be undertaken following a PMW with respect to nesting birds. Any excavations during construction should be filled or covered overnight or provided with a ramp to prevent entrapment of badger or other mammals. It is recommended that the Proposed Scheme is designed to minimise habitat loss and disturbance of habitats that may support invertebrates and that the landscape proposals maintain a habitat mosaic and include planting that is beneficial to invertebrate species. The lighting design throughout construction and operation of the Proposed Scheme should be designed to be sensitive to bats and crepuscular species. Government regulatory information², Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPPs)³ and Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA) guidance on the control of water pollution from construction sites⁴ should be followed. Wild strawberry should be transplanted and incorporated into the planting design for the new housing.

¹ Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (2016) Greater Manchester Sites of Biological Importance Selection Guidelines [guidelines.pdf](https://www.tameside.gov.uk/guidelines.pdf) ([tameside.gov.uk](https://www.tameside.gov.uk))

² Regulatory guidance for England can be found at <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/pollution-prevention-for-businesses>

³Guidance for Pollution Prevention (GPPs). GPPs provide environmental good practice guidance for the whole UK. <http://www.netregs.org.uk/environmental-topics/pollution-prevention-guidelines-pgps-and-replacement-series/guidance-for-pollution-prevention-gpps-full-list/>

⁴The CIRIA documents are a series of publications developed by the Construction Industry Research and Information Association. Each document is targeted at a particular type of business or activity and covers environmental good practice to minimise pollution. Particular attention should be given to CIRIA C532 (Control of water pollution from construction sites, 2001). The CIRIA publications also make reference to environmental legal obligations and are available from: http://www.ciria.org/CIRIA/Resources/Resource_overview/Resources/Resource_overview.aspx?hkey=a80608d2-a045-4d72-8bb9-5ecf23f8d761

	The Proposed Scheme should achieve 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, as per local planning policy.
Recommendations for further survey	A Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment should be carried out on trees and structures which will be impacted by the construction and operation of the Proposed Scheme, the trees and structures to be surveyed will be determined by the details of the Proposed Scheme. Invertebrate surveys and reptile surveys should be carried out within the Site. A detailed botanical survey of the semi-natural ancient woodland should be carried out and the Local Planning Authority should be contacted regarding impacts on the Baileys Wood SBI. The Proposed Scheme should achieve 10% Biodiversity Net Gain, as per local planning policy, this assessment should be carried out following a suitable metric.
Opportunities for biodiversity enhancements	Opportunities to include bat boxes or bricks as well as bird boxes or swift bricks within the Proposed Scheme design should be investigated. Opportunities to incorporate green roofs or walls on any newly created structures, or to retrospectively fit them on existing structures should be considered. The landscape and planting design of the Proposed Scheme should include native species of local provenance that are beneficial to biodiversity.

Report Validity

In the event of scope or programme changes or if works do not commence within 12 months of the date of this report then updates to the surveys may be required to ensure the validity of the data, as per CIEEM guidance⁵.

1. Introduction

Terms of Reference

- 1.1. Atkins, member of the SNC-Lavalin group, was commissioned by the Guinness Partnership to undertake a preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) in connection with the proposed construction of affordable housing at the Former Whitemoss Day Care Site (hereafter referred to as the Proposed Scheme). The Proposed Scheme is near M9 6DN in Greater Manchester, as shown on in the Site Location Plan in Appendix A (hereafter referred to as the Site).
- 1.2. This report has been undertaken with reference to current good practice⁶ and provides an initial appraisal of any likely ecological constraints upon designated site, protected species and other Important Ecological Features.
- 1.3. Following the principles of the mitigation hierarchy and British Standard (BS) 42020:2013⁷, this report also identifies the need for measures to avoid, mitigate or compensate for damage and disturbance to habitats and species. Opportunities to provide biodiversity enhancements in accordance with local, regional and national biodiversity planning strategies are also identified where relevant. Furthermore, it identifies recommendations for further ecological surveys that may be required to establish the presence or likely absence of ecological features within and adjoining the Proposed Scheme.
- 1.4. This report is intended to inform design development, site layout and/or site investigations. In addition, it provides the indicative scope for further ecological surveys and/or ecological impact assessment required in connection with a planning application or to contribute to an Environmental Impact Assessment.

⁵ CIEEM (2019) Advice Note on the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys
⁶ CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for preliminary ecological appraisal. 2nd Edition.
⁷ British Standard (2013) BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity - code of practice for planning and development

The Site

- 1.5. The Site is located at Ordnance Survey national grid reference SD 8665 0351 at the former Whitemoss Day Care, located in Greater Manchester. The Site is located in a largely residential area, at M9 6DN. Residential properties are located to the north, east, south and west of the Site.
- 1.6. The Site is approximately 0.5 ha and comprises neutral semi-improved grassland. There are also areas of introduced shrub, dense scrub and scattered mature and semi-mature trees within the Site.

The Scheme

- 1.7. The Proposed Scheme is for the construction of 20 affordable homes, set to include ten two bed, semi-detached houses and ten three bed, semi-detached houses. Each dwelling will include two parking spaces. Vegetation clearance will be required as part of the Proposed Scheme. The details of the Proposed Scheme, as they are currently understood, are shown on The Scheme Drawings in Appendix A.
- 1.8. Specific details of the Proposed Scheme are yet to be confirmed, including site compounds, access routes and the timing of the works. When details of the Proposed Scheme are available, this PEA may need to be updated.

Scope of the Assessment

- 1.9. This report presents ecological information obtained during the following:
 - A walkover survey of accessible land within and adjacent to the Site on 4th November 2021; and
 - A desk-study undertaken on 5th November 2021.
- 1.10. The field survey and identification of potential ecological constraints was based on the condition of the Site and its immediate surrounds encountered at the time of the walkover survey, and information about the Proposed Scheme available at the time. If information on the Proposed Scheme should change, the Site may need to be re-visited to establish if there are any further ecological constraints arising from changes to the design.

2. Methods

Desk Study

- 2.1. The geographical area for obtaining ecological data through desk studies has been determined using best practice guidance and professional judgement. Baseline data has been gathered from a range of sources through data requests, consultation, and using online resources as outlined below. This included data gathering in relation to statutory and non-statutory designated sites and protected and priority species⁸. The study areas used for the data gathering are detailed in Table 2-1. The desk study was undertaken on 5th November 2021. For species records collected, those within 10 years of the data collection date have been considered as 'recent' within the assessment.
- 2.2. The following online resources were accessed:
 - Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website⁹; and
 - The Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory¹⁰;
 - Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland (BSBI) Maps¹¹; and
 - British Geological Society (BGS) Geology of Britain Viewer¹².
- 2.3. Ordnance Survey maps and the Grid Reference Finder website (<https://gridreferencefinder.com/>) were used to identify the presence of waterbodies within 500 m of the Site boundary, in order to establish if the land within and immediately surrounding the Site could be used as terrestrial habitat for great crested newts. This species typically uses suitable terrestrial habitat up to 500 m from a

⁸ These are defined in CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal 2nd Edition

⁹ [MAGIC \(defra.gov.uk\)](https://magic.defra.gov.uk/)

¹⁰ [Ancient Tree Inventory - Woodland Trust](https://www.woodlandtrust.co.uk/ancient-tree-inventory/)

¹¹ [BSBI maps](https://www.bsbi.org.uk/maps)

¹² [Geology of Britain viewer | British Geological Survey \(BGS\)](https://www.bgs.gov.uk/geology-of-britain-viewer/)

breeding pond¹³. However, there is a notable decrease in great crested newt abundance beyond a distance of 250 m from a breeding pond¹⁴.

2.4. Greater Manchester Local Records Centre (GMLRC) was contacted to request records of protected and priority species and habitats and details of non-statutory designated sites.

Table 2-1 - Data search areas

Data Type	Search area – distance from Proposed Scheme boundary
Statutory designated sites for nature conservation	2 km
Non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation	2 km
Irreplaceable habitats including ancient woodland and priority habitats ¹⁵ (including veteran trees)	1 km
Protected and priority species	2 km

2.5. A review of national and local planning policy relevant to the Proposed Scheme was undertaken as part of the data gathering. The following policy documents were subject to review:

- Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government (2021) National Planning Policy Framework¹⁶;
- GMCA Biodiversity Net Gain: Guidance for Greater Manchester¹⁷ and
- Core Strategy 2012-2027, Manchester City Council¹⁸

Field Surveys

2.6. The geographical area for undertaking ecological field surveys has been determined using the current survey guidance, professional judgement and the zones of influence, which have been determined based on likely effects arising from the Proposed Scheme.

Surveyor Competencies

2.7. All the surveys were led by surveyors who have been assessed to be at least of capable experience following the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) competency framework¹⁹.

Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

2.8. An extended Phase 1 habitat survey of areas within and adjacent to the Site, including land up to 50 m from the Site boundary where access was allowed (the Survey Area), was undertaken on 4th November 2021 using the extended Phase 1 habitat survey methodology²⁰ as guidance. The walkover survey recorded information on the habitats within the Survey Area and also included a search for evidence of the presence of, and the potential of each habitat to support, protected and priority species as recommended by CIEEM²¹. Vascular plant names recorded during this survey follows Stace²², whilst nomenclature for lower plants follows Blockeel *et al*²³.

¹³ English Nature (2004). Great Crested Newt Mitigation Licences
¹⁴ English Nature (2004). An assessment of the efficiency of capture techniques and the value of different habitats for the great crested newt (ENRR576) <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/134002>
¹⁵ These include Habitats of Principal Importance, Annex I Habitats and Local Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats.
¹⁶ https://assets.publishing.service.gov.uk/government/uploads/system/uploads/attachment_data/file/810197/NPPF_Feb_2019_revised.pdf
¹⁷ [gmca-bng-guidance-update_250221-final-edited.pdf](https://gmca-bng-guidance-update-250221-final-edited.pdf) (greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk)
¹⁸ https://secure.manchester.gov.uk/info/200074/planning/6573/core_strategy_2012-2027
¹⁹ <https://www.cieem.net/competency-framework>
²⁰ Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2010) Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey - a technique for environmental audit.
²¹ CIEEM (2017) Guidelines for preliminary ecological appraisal. 2nd Edition.
²² Stace (2019) New Flora of the British Isles 4th edition
²³ Blockeel, T.L, Bell, N.E., Hill, M.O., Hodgetts, N.G., Long, D.G., Pilkington, S.L. & Rothero, G.P. 2020. A new checklist of the bryophytes of Britain and Ireland. Journal of Bryology online, March 2021

- 2.9. This survey method comprised mapping habitats present according to the JNCC Phase 1 habitat survey methodology²⁰, with target notes (TNs) used to record specific details on the plant species composition of the habitats, current management and quality. TNs were also used to record features of ecological importance (e.g. ponds, complex habitat mosaics). In addition, the survey comprised assessing the suitability of the habitats present for, and recording any activity of the following species (in line with current guidance):
- amphibians (terrestrial and aquatic habitats), including an assessment of aquatic habitat for its suitability to support great crested newts using the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) assessment²⁴
 - bats²⁵;
 - badgers;
 - breeding and wintering birds;
 - reptiles²⁶;
 - priority invertebrates²⁷;
 - otters;
 - water voles;
 - white-clawed crayfish;
 - other notable species;
 - plants; and
 - fungi.
- 2.10. Evidence of the presence of the following invasive species was recorded where seen:
- Evidence of animal species as listed on the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019; Muntjac deer and grey squirrel.
 - Evidence of the presence of INNS plants. These are listed within Schedule 9 (Part II) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and subject to strict legal control.

Limitations

- 2.11. This section identifies limitations to the survey and assessment and provides an explanation as to the perceived effect of these on the appraisal.
- 2.12. Access was restricted in a number of locations across the Survey Area as they were occupied residential properties. These locations are highlighted on the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Plan in Appendix A. Where possible habitats in these areas were viewed and assessed from public rights of way. Considering the nature of the habitats present within the Survey Area it is not considered that access limitations provide a significant constraint to the assessment.
- 2.13. The survey was carried out in November, at a time of year when certain plant species (including some INNS) are not easily identifiable. Therefore, the presence of INNS plants has not been ruled out. This limitation was further reduced through having a Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC) Level 6 botanist accompany lead surveyors at the time of the field survey.
- 2.14. Many cryptic taxa that may constitute IEFs, particularly including apomictic species of plant, invertebrates and fungi, could not be adequately surveyed at the time of the survey. These groups require specialist survey and survey windows are generally highly restrictive, particularly for plants in the genera *Taraxacum*, *Rubus* and *Hieracium*. However, attributable to the nature of the habitats present at the Site and surrounding landscape, this is not considered to be a significant limitation.
- 2.15. The search for waterbodies within 500 m of the Site was undertaken by using Ordnance Survey plans and aerial photographs only. These sources may not show all waterbodies within 500 m of the Site boundary and, therefore, some waterbodies may not have been identified. However, the ecological walkover aimed to identify suitable aquatic and terrestrial habitat for great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) within the Survey Area.

²⁴ Oldham R.S., Keeble J., Swan M.J.S. & Jeffcote M. (2000) Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*) Herpetological Journal 10 (4), 143-155 (2000).

²⁵ Collins, J. (ed.) (2016) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines (3rd edition). The Bat Conservation Trust, London

²⁶ Froglife (1999) Reptile Survey: an introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation. Froglife advice sheet 10

²⁷ As relevant to the location, identified through the desk study

- 2.16.

The desk study reviewed the Woodland Trust Trusts Veteran Trees inventory and MAGIC. This provides records of veteran trees and priority habitats but is not an exhaustive list and other veteran trees or priority habitats may be present in the area. The walkover survey aimed to identify such features and as such this is not considered a constraint.
- 2.17.

GMLRC records are not exhaustive, and the absence of records does not demonstrate the absence of species.
- 2.18.

Ecological surveys are limited by factors which affect the presence of plants, fungi and animals such as the time of year, weather, migration patterns and behaviour. The ecological surveys undertaken to support this PEA Report have not, therefore, produced a comprehensive list of plants and animals and the absence of evidence of any particular species should not be taken as conclusive proof that the species is not present or that it will not be present in the future. The above limitation has been addressed through taking the precautionary approach within the appraisal.

3. Results

Statutory and non-Statutory Designated Sites

- 3.1.

Table 3-1 details the statutory and non-statutory designated sites for nature conservation identified though the desk study.

Table 3-1 - Statutory and non-statutory designated sites within 2 km²⁸ of the Site

Site name	Designation	Location of designated site ²⁹	Features of interest ³⁰
Baileys Wood	Site of Biological Importance (SBI) (non-statutory)	150 m south of the Site	Lowland mixed deciduous woodland, with ancient woodland to the east of the Site. Sessile oak is dominant in the canopy. Other habitats present include scrub, acid grassland, species poor neutral grassland, running water and marshy grassland. This is a grade C SBI.
Boggart Hole Clough	Local Nature Reserve (LNR) (statutory)	400 m south of the Site	This site represents the largest woodland clough in Manchester, part of this woodland is ancient woodland.
Boggart Hole Clough	SBI (non-statutory)	500 m south of the Site	Lowland broadleaved woodland which is a UK Biodiversity Priority Habitat, which is also classified as ancient.
Boardman Brook	SBI (non-statutory)	800 m north of the Site	No citation provided.
Alkrington Woods	LNR (statutory)	900 m north of the Site	An area of broadleaved woodland, lowland fen, grassland, marsh and

²⁸ This is the zone of influence for designated sites.

²⁹ Where designated sites are situated outside of the Site boundary, the distance and direction are given to the closest point that the designated site is from the Site.

³⁰ Including qualifying features of internationally designated sites and reasons for designation for SSSIs

Site name	Designation	Location of designated site ²⁹	Features of interest ³⁰
			standing water with amenity areas.
Alkington Woods and Rhodes Lodges	SBI (non-statutory)	900 m north of the Site	No citation provided. Broadleaved woodland and lowland fen are present within this SBI.

- 3.1. The Site falls into the Rochdale Canal Site of Special Scientific Impact Risk Zone (SSSI IRZ). This is also designated as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC). The SSSI contains important habitats for submerged aquatic plants and emergent vegetation associated with oligotrophic to mesotrophic waters, including an internationally important population of floating water-plantain. Floating water-plantain is a European Protected Species listed under Annex II of Directive 92/43/EEC and is listed as a primary reason for the selection of the site as an SAC. The site also supports diverse aquatic flora including several pondweeds, such as nationally rare American pondweed and county-rare blunt-leaved pondweed. The Rochdale Canal SSSI is over 2 km from the Site. The Proposed Scheme does not fall into a IRZ category which would pose a risk to the Rochdale Canal SSSI. In addition, there is no hydrological connectivity between the Site and the SSSI. Given the absence of hydrological connectivity and distance from the Site it is considered unlikely that floating-water plantain (Annex II species listed as a reason for designation of the site) or other aquatic species would be impacted by the works. Therefore, the Rochdale Canal SSSI and SAC are not considered further in this report.
- 3.2. Boggart Hole Clough LNR and Alkington Woods LNR are unlikely to be impacted by the works. There is no downstream hydrological connectivity between the Site and these LNRs. Given the absence of pollution pathways and the distance of these statutory designated sites from the Site, statutory designated sites are not considered further in this report and are not considered to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.
- 3.3. There is no hydrological connectivity between the Site and any SBI within 2 km of the Site. Given the absence of hydrological connectivity and distance from the Site Boggart Hole Clough SBI, Boardman Brook SBI and Alkington Woods and Rhodes Lodges SBI will not be impacted by the Proposed Scheme.
- 3.4. Baileys Wood SBI is 150 m south of the Site, given its proximity to the Site the SBI may be impacted through dust deposition and pollution from the works, and increased pressure from the increased number of dwellings in the area once the Proposed Scheme is in operation. Therefore, Baileys Wood SBI may pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme and recommendations are provided in Section 4. The location of this SBI is indicated on the Priority Habitats and Baileys Wood SBI Plan in Appendix B.

Irreplaceable Habitats

- 3.5. There are two areas of semi-natural ancient woodland. The closest is within Baileys Wood SBI, approximately 150 m south of the Site, and the other area is within Boggart Hole Clough LNR and is approximately 400 m south of the Site. Given the proximity of ancient woodland within Baileys Wood SBI to the Site, there may be impacts from the works due to increased pressure as a result of increased population in the area from the construction of new dwellings, dust deposition and pollution. Therefore, ancient woodland may pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme and recommendations are provided in Section 4.
- 3.6. There are no veteran trees within 1 km of the Site on the Woodland Trust Ancient Tree Inventory. No veteran trees were seen during the extended Phase 1 habitat survey. However, there is potential for veteran trees to be present in the semi-natural ancient woodland present in Baileys Wood SBI. Recommendations are provided below.
- 3.7. No other irreplaceable habitats (such as blanket bog, limestone pavement, sand dunes, salt marsh and lowland fen³¹) were identified within 1 km of the Site through the desk study.

³¹ [National Planning Policy Framework \(publishing.service.gov.uk\)](https://publishing.service.gov.uk)

Habitats

- 3.8. The Site comprises semi-improved neutral grassland (most frequent species included pointed spear-moss, springy turf moss, field horsetail, meadow buttercup and spreading meadow grass), scattered mature trees (include ash, Norway maple, Lombarday poplar and hybrid birch), dense scrub (dominated by bramble agg) and an introduced scrub hedgerow (laurel). Table 3-4 lists all of the habitats present within the Site, none of these habitats are listed on Annex 1³² and/or listed as Habitats of Principal Importance³³. The table also provides details of the area³⁴ of each habitat within the Site and the proportion of the Site this makes up. Habitats are mapped on the extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey plan in Appendix B.
- 3.9. Whilst no habitats fulfil criteria for any priority habitat category, having reviewed the Greater Manchester Sites of Biological Importance selection guidelines¹, the grassland which covers much of the Site is concluded to have the potential to qualify for SBI status and should be considered to be of at least local to county importance. The presence of this grassland is, therefore, viewed to represent a constraint to the Proposed Scheme and is discussed further in Section 4.
- 3.10. A list of plant species found within the Site is provided in Appendix D.

Table 3-2 - Habitat types within the Site

Habitat Type	Area of habitat/ distance of linear feature	
	Ha/M	% of Site
Scattered trees	0.002 ha	1%
Semi-improved neutral grassland	0.42 ha	94%
Introduced scrub (Laurel)	0.003 ha	1%
Dense scrub	0.034 ha	2%
Scattered scrub	0.030 ha	2%

- 3.11. The table below lists all of the priority habitats within 1 km of the Site.

Table 3-3 - Priority habitats within 1 km of the Site

Habitat Type	Location of Habitat
Deciduous woodland (considered likely to be Lowland mixed deciduous woodland habitat of principal importance although detailed surveys have not been carried out)	There are 10 parcels of deciduous woodland within 1 km of the Site, the closest is 45 m southeast of the Site.
Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land	One parcel within 1 km of the Site, located 385 m east of the Site.

- 3.12. Lowland deciduous wood may be impacted by the Proposed Scheme as a result of pollution and dust deposition from the works, given the proximity of the habitat to the Site. Therefore, deciduous woodland may provide a constraint to the works and recommendations are provided below.
- 3.13. Given the distance from the Site and absence of hydrological connectivity, it is considered unlikely that open mosaic habitat would pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme, therefore this habitat is not considered further.

³² <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-1523>

³³ <http://jncc.defra.gov.uk/page-5706>

³⁴ Measurements were made in QGIS.

Protected and Priority Species

- 3.14. Evidence of protected and priority species, or habitats with the potential to support protected and priority species are indicated on the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey Plan in Appendix B, with specific features highlighted by TNs on the map. TN descriptions are provided in Appendix B. Details of legislation relating to protected species is provided in Appendix C.

Amphibians

- 3.15. GMLRC provided no records of great crested newts (GCN) within 2 km of the Site. There is one record of a common toad approximately 860 m south of the Site.
- 3.16. No European Protected Species Mitigation (EPSM) licences for GCN were identified on MAGIC within 2 km of the Site.
- 3.17. There is a series of drains and small watercourses 150 m south of the Site identified on MAGIC. However, Ordnance Survey plans indicate that they are flowing and are, therefore, considered to provide unsuitable breeding habitat for GCN. An area of standing water is present within woodland approximately 150m north of the Site. This waterbody was subject to a Habitat Suitability Assessment (HSI) and had a score of 0.54, which indicates below average suitability for great crested newts. This waterbody, however, was isolated from the Site by way of residential development and associated infrastructure. No other waterbodies were identified within 500 m of the Site.
- 3.18. The site consists of rank grassland which provides suitable habitat for GCN. However, given the absence of connectivity to suitable aquatic habitat within 500 m of the Site and the absence of records of GCN within 2 km of the Site, GCN are unlikely to pose an ecological constraint the Site. Therefore, this species is not considered to pose a constraint to the assessment and are not discussed further within this report.

Bats

- 3.19. GMLRC provided 35 records of bat within 2 km of the Site. Species included were common pipistrelle, myotis species and pipistrelle species. A number of the records were also of unidentified bat species. The closest record was 380 m southwest of the Site, and consisted of four individual bats, the species of bat or details of their activity was not recorded.
- 3.20. The Site consists of rank grassland which was unmanaged, scattered trees and dense scrub which provides suitable foraging habitat for bats. Given the isolated nature of the Site from the wider landscape, absence of linear features suitable for commuting and the small size of the Site this habitat is considered to have low suitability for foraging and commuting bats.
- 3.21. A number of buildings in the Survey Area had suitability for roosting bats, and mature trees within the Site have the potential to support roosting bats.
- 3.22. As suitable roosting, foraging and commuting habitat for bats has been recorded within the study area this species may pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme and recommendations are provided in Section 4.

Badgers

- 3.23. GMLRC provided two records of badgers within 2 km of the Site. Details pertaining to badger setts locations have been removed for reports within the public realm. For information relating to presence of badger setts, refer to the full confidential report.
- 3.24. The Site is a small area of neutral semi-improved grassland, this grassland is relatively isolated from the wider area by housing and associated infrastructure. However, woodland to the west of the Site is suitable for badgers and, therefore, it is possible that badgers may forage or commute within the Site. Given the isolated nature of the Site, and limited suitable habitat for sett building it is considered relatively unlikely that badgers would construct a sett within the Site. No setts were observed during the survey.
- 3.25. As suitable habitat for badgers has been recorded within the Survey Area this species may pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme and recommendations are provided in Section 4.

Birds

- 3.26. GMLRC provided 161 records of birds within 2 km of the Site. Species recorded include kingfisher, and peregrine. Priority species found within 2 km of the Site include starling, song thrush and

bullfinch. The closest record was of a bullfinch, house sparrow and dunnock recorded at the same grid reference 153 m south of the Site.

- 3.27. Whilst Schedule 1 species kingfisher and peregrine have been recorded within 2 km of the Site, the habitats within the Site consist mainly of rank grassland, scattered trees, dense scrub and introduced shrub. These habitats do not provide nesting opportunities for peregrine or kingfisher.
- 3.28. Habitats within the Site which will be removed, including trees and scrub provide suitable nesting opportunities for birds. As such nesting birds may pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme and recommendations are provided in Section 4.

Reptiles

- 3.29. GMLRC provided no records of reptiles within 2 km of the Site.
- 3.30. The habitats within the Site provide suitable habitat for widespread reptile species (common lizards, grass snakes and slow worms). The grassland within the Site appears unmanaged, and there are areas of scrub and hedges which may provide shelter for reptiles. The nearby woodland is also suitable for reptiles, and it is possible for reptiles to commute to the Site via gardens from this woodland.
- 3.31. As suitable habitat for widespread reptile species has been recorded within the Survey Area this species may pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme and recommendations are provided below.

Otters

- 3.32. GMLRC provided no records of otters within 2 km of the Site.
- 3.33. There were no watercourses or waterbodies within the Survey Area. However, there is a series of watercourses and drains located 150 m to the south of the Site which may be suitable for foraging and commuting otters, and otter resting sites (including natal holts). However, these watercourses are separated from the Site by rows of houses. Given the distance from the Site and existing barriers to disturbance, it is considered unlikely that otters would be impacted by the Proposed Scheme and they are not considered further in this report.

Water Voles

- 3.34. GMLRC provided no records of water voles within 2 km of the Site.
- 3.35. There were no waterbodies or watercourses within the Survey Area, the closest watercourses are 150 m away from the Site. Given the absence of suitable habitat for water voles within the Survey Area this species is not considered further in this report and is not considered to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.

White-clawed Crayfish

- 3.36. GMLRC provided no records of white-clawed crayfish within 2 km of the Site.
- 3.37. There were no waterbodies or watercourses within the Survey Area, the closest watercourses are 150 m away from the Site. Given the absence of suitable habitat for white-clawed crayfish within the Survey Area this species is not considered further in this report and is not considered to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.

Invertebrates

- 3.38. GMLRC provided seven records of priority invertebrates within 2 km of the Site. These included records of ghost moth, shaded broad-bar, cinnabar moth, white-letter hairstreak and sideridis reticulata hibernica (a moth). The closest record was sideridis reticulata hibernica located 870 m south of the Site.
- 3.39. Habitats within the Site which may be impacted by the works by clearance, including trees and scrub, may provide suitable habitat for priority invertebrates. Furthermore, areas of grassland at the site are of good quality and have the potential to qualify for SBI status on the basis of the grassland's floristic composition. In addition, areas of ancient woodland exist nearby which may act as a source population for important assemblages of invertebrates that could use the Site.
- 3.40. As suitable habitat for priority invertebrates has been recorded within the Survey Area these may pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme and recommendations are provided in Section 4.

Other notable species

- 3.41. GMLRC provided 24 recent records of hedgehogs within 2 km of the Site, the closest of which was 55 m to the south of the Site. The habitats within the Site and Survey Area are considered to provide suitable foraging habitat for hedgehogs. Hedgehogs may pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme and recommendations are provided in Section 4.

Fungi

- 3.42. GMLRC provided no recent records of priority or specially protected fungi within a 2 km radius of the Site.
- 3.43. The habitats within the Site or the Survey Area are unlikely to support significant fungal assemblages given the location, character and overall quality of habitats present across the Site.
- 3.44. As no suitable habitat for significant fungal assemblages has been recorded within the study area, they are not discussed further within this report as it is not considered to pose a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.

Plants

- 3.45. GMLRC returned no records of priority plants within 2 km of the Site.
- 3.46. Wild strawberry was found within the Site at TN 3, this plant is red-listed Near-threatened in England and its presence within the Site should be viewed to be of at least local importance. The presence of priority plants at the Site, therefore, poses a constraint to the Proposed Scheme.
- 3.47. GMLRC returned no records of invasive non-native plant species (INNPS) within 2 km of the Site.
- 3.48. A single stand of Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) was identified at TN 4 within the Site. As INNPS have been identified within the Site they are considered to pose a constraint to the assessment and recommendations are provided in Section 4.

4. Constraints and Recommendations

Key Constraints

Bats

- 4.1. Habitats within the Site offer low suitability for foraging and commuting bats. Habitats within and immediately adjacent to the Site offer suitability for roosting bats. The current proposal includes construction of a new housing estate which is to involve removal of any trees on Site, building works which may involve heavy machinery and new lighting. All of these could result in disturbance to bat roosts within nearby buildings and loss of low suitability foraging habitat.

Nesting Birds

- 4.2. The scattered trees and scrub on Site are considered to have potential for common and widespread species of tree-nesting bird. Felling of these trees within the nesting season (1st March to 31st August) could result in the damage and/or destruction to active nests.

Reptiles

- 4.3. Scrub and rank grassland within the Site provide suitable foraging habitat, commuting habitat and shelter to widespread species of reptiles. Clearance of this habitat or movement of machinery through this habitat may result in the killing and injury of reptiles.

Badgers

- 4.4. The Site is an isolated area of grassland; however, badgers may still forage and commute in the area. The works may cause disturbance to foraging and commuting badgers.

Plants

- 4.5. Wild strawberry was found within the Site, this is a near-threatened plant species and vegetation clearance as part of the Proposed Scheme will result in the loss of individuals of this plant.

- 4.6. Japanese knotweed was identified within the Site, this plant is listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 making it an offence to plant or cause this species to grow in the wild. It is also classed as ‘controlled waste’ under the Environmental Protection Act 1990 meaning there are strict regulations governing its disposal. Vegetation clearance and movement of machinery could facilitate the spread of Japanese knotweed beyond the Site.

Designated sites, Priority Habitats and Ancient Woodland

- 4.7. Baileys Wood SBI and ancient woodland within the SBI may be impacted as a result of the Proposed Scheme from pollution during construction and an increased population within the area.
- 4.8. Deciduous woodland may be impacted as a result of pollution during the construction of the Proposed Scheme.
- 4.9. Areas of neutral semi-improved grassland that dominate the Site are of a good quality and have the potential to qualify for SBI status, following a review of Greater Manchester’s SBI selection criteria. This habitat will be lost as a result of the Proposed Scheme.

Priority Invertebrates

- 4.10. Habitats within the Site may be suitable for priority invertebrates, records of priority invertebrate species exist in close proximity to the Site. It is likely that the Site could provide a resource to invertebrate assemblages of high conservation importance on this basis. These habitats will be lost as a result of the works which may impact priority invertebrates by habitat loss.

Hedgehogs

- 4.11. Habitats within the Site and within the Survey Area offer suitability for foraging hedgehogs. Habitat within the Survey Area (ie. Scrub and woodland) also offer suitability for hibernating hedgehog. Small amounts of woodland and scrub is anticipated to be removed at the Site, which could result in disturbance or harm to hedgehogs that may be occupying that space

Further Survey Requirements or Actions

Bats

- 4.12. A PBRA should be carried out of all buildings and trees within 30 m of the Site, in line with The Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Good Practice Guidelines³⁵. Following the PBRA survey, additional bat surveys of trees and buildings that will be impacted by the works may be required, in line with good practice guidance. Further bat activity surveys as detailed under BCT guidelines are not considered appropriate due to the nature of the Site, which is located in a heavily built-up area with high levels of lighting and noise disturbance from the residential properties already present. Precautionary mitigation and enhancement outlined below will assume that a low number of common bat species use the Site for foraging and commuting.

Reptiles

- 4.13. Reptile surveys (including at least seven visits) should be undertaken to determine the presence /likely absence of reptile species. Reptile surveys can be undertaken between March and October (weather dependent) although April, May and September are considered to be the optimal survey months. Seven visits in suitable conditions are required throughout the survey window.

Ancient Woodland and Designated Sites

- 4.14. Further botanical surveys are recommended to inform the current condition of areas of ancient woodland which may then feed into a wider mitigation. The Local Planning Authority should be contacted with regard to potential impacts on Baileys Wood SBI non-statutory designated site.
- 4.15. Biodiversity net gain should be implemented, in line with local planning guidance as detailed below, in order to mitigate the loss of the semi-natural grassland within the Site.

³⁵ [Bat Survey Guidelines 2015](#)