

# Ascerta

Landscape, Arboricultural & Ecological Solutions  
for the Built Environment

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## Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

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Rainford Avenue

Ref: P.1206.19(D)

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January 2023

(see revision dates below)

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| Rev | Date | Details |
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**P.1206.19(D)**

**Preliminary Ecological Appraisal**

**Of**

Rainford Avenue

**For**

**Southway Housing Trust**

**12 January 2023**

|                                 |                                                                                                                                                  |
|---------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
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## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

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A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal has been carried out at Rainford Avenue on 5th January 2023 by Lizzie Atkinson. The assessment comprised a desk study and biological records search, as well as a site walkover survey in order to map habitat types. The survey was extended to assess the potential for protected species to use the site. The assessment provides baseline data as to current site conditions and where appropriate allows recommendations to be made in respect of further potential work in order to satisfy current wildlife legislation.

Assessed against the '*Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland*' 2nd edition (2018), the habitats range in ecological value from negligible to within the zone of influence of the site. The majority of habitats are likely to be lost to the proposals. As the habitats to be lost to the proposals are small in area and not of high ecological value it is considered that their loss can be mitigated for and the proposals will not adversely affect the ecological value of the wider area, provided the recommendations detailed below are followed.

Bat surveys are conducted in accordance with the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines, published 2016 (the Guidelines). Strict adherence to these is not necessary, but where practice deviates from them, clear reasons and rationale are required.

The site was previously visited on 20<sup>th</sup> August 2019 by Neil Everett and Liz Kenyon when a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of the site was carried out (Ascerta report P.1206.22 Ascerta Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Southway Infill Sites Oct 19).

The site lies within Withington, approximately 3.5 miles south of Manchester City Centre. The site lies within an urban area and is bound by residential dwellings on all site boundaries. The onsite habitats comprise amenity grassland, short perennial/ephemeral, hardstanding, species poor hedgerow and scattered trees.

If the recommendations below are followed these species will not be adversely affected by the proposals.

- If works have not begun by January 2024, an updated site visit will be required to assess the habitats within the site;
- Implementation of a hedgehog RAMS (section 5.2) to avoid any harm to this species during the proposed works;
- Precautionary check for invasive prior to works commencing;
- For trees to be removed to accommodate proposals, new replacement planting on the basis of two new trees for each tree lost if recommended;
- Enhancing the site for species through appropriate landscape planting that includes native, species rich hedgerows, trees and areas of wildflowers plus provision of integrated bat and bird features within newly constructed buildings;
- Production of the Defra Metric Biodiversity Net Gain Small Sites Calculations to minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity;
- Production of a Management Plan to ensure the long-term commitments to manage the planting, protection and enhancement of biodiversity in and around a new development site; and
- Vegetation clearance or pruning should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (1st March to 31st August Inclusive) to avoid any impact on breeding birds. Or a nesting bird check undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist should be undertaken immediately prior to works commencing.

The site provides habitat for nesting birds, hedgehog and bats. Habitats on site will be lost to the proposals. There is likely to be low impacts on the local ecology due to the proposals if the recommendations within section 6 are implemented.

## 1.0 Introduction

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Ascerta has been instructed by Southway Housing Trust to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of Rainford Avenue (hereafter referred to as the site). The site OS grid reference is SJ 840 935 and the What3Words reference is pipe.rivers.opera. The extent of the site is displayed in photograph 1.1 below.



**Photograph 1.1: Extent of site**

The site was visited on 5th January 2023 by Lizzie Atkinson when a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, which includes an assessment of the potential for protected species to be using the site or surroundings, was carried out in accordance with the *Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: a Technique for Environmental Audit* (JNCC, 2010). The report was prepared following methods detailed in the CIEEM 'Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland' (2018) and 'Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing' (2017). This report presents the results of the survey including evaluation of habitats on site and potential for protected species to be using the site. The report includes recommendations for further actions where applicable in order to satisfy current wildlife legislation and to achieve our client's objectives. Relevant legislation is detailed within Appendix 4.

The site lies within Withington, approximately 3.5 miles south of Manchester City Centre. The site lies within an urban area and is bound by residential dwellings on all site boundaries. The onsite habitats comprise amenity grassland, short perennial/ephemeral, hardstanding, species poor hedgerow and scattered trees.

Our client seeks planning consent for the construction of two residential bungalow buildings with two parking spaces.

## 2.0 Objectives

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Our client's objectives are to assess the potential ecological constraints of the proposed development site.

Our objectives are as follows:

- Identify and evaluate any features of ecological value and the potential of the site to support protected species based on the walkover survey and biological records search;
- Identify designated sites within 2km of the site;
- Review protected species records within 2km of the site;
- Map the habitats within the site using JNCC (2010) methods;
- Provide recommendations for further species-specific surveys and mitigation measures where current legislation requires;
- Provide recommendations that seek to enhance the ecological value of the site;
- Provide recommendations to assist our clients in achieving their objectives whilst satisfying current wildlife legislation.

## 3.0 Survey Methods

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The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal involved the collection and review of data from a desk study and field survey along with assessment of the value of the habitats following CIEEM guidelines.

### 3.1 Desk Study

A review of the designated sites and habitats within 2km of the site has been undertaken in January 2023 and August 2019 using the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) and the Natural England websites.

A review of UK and Local priority species and habitats known to occur within 2km of the site has been undertaken in January 2023 and August 2019; using the Joint Nature Conservation Committee website, Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) and local records from Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) (Appendix 5).

### 3.2 Field Survey

A walkover survey of the site was conducted on 5th January 2023 By Lizzie Atkinson when the habitat types and features of ecological interest were identified and mapped in compliance with the Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A Technique for Environmental Audit (*JNCC, 2010*). The survey methods involve the recording and mapping of all habitat types and ecological features present on site, including the identification of the main species present and examination of the potential for any protected species. Habitats were mapped and target notes made for any interesting features.

The surveys particularly focused on the following species and habitat features:

- Mammals (badgers, bats);
- Birds;
- Amphibians and reptiles;
- Invertebrates;
- Hedgerows and boundaries;
- Invasive plant species; and
- Plant communities and trees.

Weather conditions during the survey were mild (11°C), dry and overcast (8/8 cloud cover) with a F0 (Beaufort Scale) calm air, therefore appropriate for this type of survey.

### 3.3 Bat Survey Methods

The survey methods followed the guidelines set out by the Bat Conservation Trust Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines – 3rd Edition (2016). Habitats, buildings and trees were assessed for suitability for use by bats and categorised independently using table 4.1 page 35 within the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (Collins, 2016).

#### Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for Bats

Habitats on site were assessed for their suitability for bats to use them for roosting, commuting and foraging both on the site and surrounding area. Commuting and foraging habitat suitability was categorised **low** to **high**. Commuting and foraging habitat valued as **moderate** or above may need further survey effort if lost to the proposals.

#### Preliminary Roost Assessment Trees

All trees were inspected for Potential Roost Features (PRFs). Features searched for included: Natural or woodpecker holes, cracks/splits in major limbs, loose bark, hollows/cavities, dense epicormic growth, bird and bat boxes. Where such features were found they were investigated for scratches or staining, bat droppings and smoothing of surfaces around entry points. Trees assigned a suitability of **moderate** or above may require further inspection if they are to be lost to the development.

Guidelines for assessing Potential Roost Features (PRFs), commuting and foraging habitat within a proposed development site. Guidelines taken from table 4.1 page 35 of the Bat Conservation Trust Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines – 3rd Edition (2016).

| Suitability       | Roosting Habitats                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                        | Commuting and Foraging Habitats                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                |
|-------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|----------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
| <b>Negligible</b> | <i>Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                           | <i>Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by commuting or foraging bats.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                    |
| <b>Low</b>        | <p><i>A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions <sup>a</sup> and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity or hibernation<sup>b</sup>).</i></p> <p><i>A tree of sufficient size and age to contain PRFs but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential. <sup>c</sup></i></p> | <p><i>Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat.</i></p> <p><i>Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.</i></p>                                                                                                                 |
| <b>Moderate</b>   | <i>A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions<sup>a</sup> and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only – the assessments in this table are made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).</i>                                                                                                                                                                                | <p><i>Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens.</i></p> <p><i>Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.</i></p>                                                                                                                                                                                           |
| <b>High</b>       | <i>A structure or tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions <sup>a</sup> and surrounding habitat.</i>                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                                              | <p><i>Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge.</i></p> <p><i>High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland.</i></p> <p><i>Site is close to and connected to known roosts.</i></p> |

<sup>a</sup> For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance.

<sup>b</sup> Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten et al., 2015). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in large buildings in highly urbanised environments.

<sup>c</sup> This system of categorisation aligns with BS 8596:2015 Surveying for bats in trees and woodland (BSI,2015).

### 3.4 Badger Survey Methods

The site was searched for setts and badger field signs including foraging areas, latrines and tracks. Attention was paid to the presence of the following field signs:

- Setts: single holes or a series of holes likely to be interconnected underground;
- Latrines: badgers usually deposit faeces in excavated pits;
- Paths and footprints;
- Scratching posts: at the base of trees;
- Snuffle holes: areas where badgers have searched for insects;
- Day nest: bundles of vegetation where badgers may sleep above ground; and
- Traces of hair.

### 3.5 Evaluation

Habitats and species on the site were evaluated following the '*Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland*' 2018. A geographical frame of reference is assigned to each habitat and species, with International Value being most important, then National, Regional, County, District, Local and lastly, within the immediate Zone of Influence (Zoi) of the proposals only.

Value judgements are based on characteristics that can be used to identify ecological resources or features likely to be important in terms of biodiversity. These include site designations such as SSSIs. For undesignated features, the size, conservation status (locally, nationally or internationally), and the quality of the ecological resource are considered. Ecological resource quality can refer to habitats (for instance if they are particularly diverse, or a good example of a specific habitat type), other features (such as wildlife corridors or mosaics of habitats) or species populations or assemblages.

The recommendations detailed within this report aim to meet requirements of the Environment Act and Biodiversity Metric 3.1 as far as possible at this stage.

### 3.6 Limitations

The site visit was undertaken in January. Although this within the sub-optimal time of year for phase 1 habitat surveys, sufficient vegetation was present to enable habitat identification. It is not considered a limit to the conclusions of the report based on the habitats found within the site and the works proposed.

The absence of biological records does not necessarily mean the absence of species. This has been taken into account within the report conclusions.

The site was visited on only one occasion. This produces a snapshot of habitats and species on the site and others may be present at different times of the day or year. This limitation has been taken into account within this report.

## 4.0 Survey Results

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### 4.1 Desk Study

No statutory or non-statutory sites were identified within a 2km radius of the proposed development site.

The site does not lie within a Natural England SSSI Impact Risk Zone as mapped on Magic Maps.

Following a review of records held by the GMEU, several priority species that have the potential to occur within the vicinity of the proposed development have been identified. These include birds, bats, badger, hedgehog and amphibians. The species records are summarised below, and the detailed records held by GMEU within 2km of the site are displayed within Appendix 5.

*No species records were returned by GMEU within the site boundary.*

#### ***Birds***

Multiple records were returned for bird species within 2km of the site. Species present include kingfisher, barn owl, peregrine, grey heron, bullfinch, dunnoek, house sparrow, song thrush and starling. All species recorded within 2km are displayed within Appendix 5. The closest record was for a kingfisher located approximately 275m north of the site.

#### ***Bats***

Records were returned for bats and species present include brown-long eared bat, common pipistrelle, daubenton's bat, natterer's bat, noctule bat, soprano pipistrelle, pipistrelle species and unknown bat species. The closest record was for a pipistrelle bat species located approximately 425m south of the site. Five records for pipistrelle species bat roost were returned for the search area, 1.2km north, 1.6km north east, 1.3km north west and two records approximately 800m south east within a residential area. Three common pipistrelle records were also returned approximately 1.9km east.

#### ***Amphibians***

Two records of common toad were returned within of the site. Both records were located approximately 1.7km south-east of the site.

#### ***Reptiles***

One record of grass snake was returned 930m south of the site within allotments plots.

#### ***Terrestrial mammals***

Numerous records for hedgehog were returned in the data search area. The closest record was approximately 530m west of the site within the grounds of Hough End Leisure Centre.

Numerous records for badger sett and signs were returned within 2km of the site. The closest records were two records for other badger signs were returned both records were 1.8km of the site to the north east and east.

Two European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) applications within 2km of the site since 2017 were identified using Magic Maps and are detailed below (distance and direction from site):

- 2018-35287-EPS-MIT for the damage and destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle and soprano pipistrelle. Licence start date: 05/06/2018, end date: 30/09/2019 (1.6km north); and
- 2018-38076-EPS-MIT for the destruction of a resting place for common pipistrelle. Licence start date: 01/12/2018, end date: 30/09/2019 (880m south).

A summary description of key habitats within the site is provided in Section 4.2. Notes on the presence or potential presence of protected species are provided in Section 4.3. The Phase 1 Habitat map can be found in Appendix 1. The lists of species recorded during survey are presented in Appendix 2.

## 4.2 Habitat Survey

The site lies within Withington, approximately 3.5 miles south of Manchester City Centre. The site lies within an urban area and is bound by residential dwellings on all site boundaries. The surrounding land use is predominantly residential with pockets of green open space, the closest area being Hough End Playing Fields, approximately 0.5 mile west. The onsite habitats comprise amenity grassland, short perennial/ephemeral, hardstanding, species poor hedgerow and scattered trees. These habitats are presented on plan P.1206.19(D).01A (Appendix 1).

The habitat types identified within the site are detailed below and are displayed on drawing P.1206.19(D).01A *Phase One Habitat Survey* in Appendix 1 and on Photographs within Appendix 3. Species lists are displayed in Appendix 2.

### ***Hard standing (J4)***

Tarmac hardstanding forms Rainford Avenue, which partially falls within the site boundary, and an area used for carparking. This habitat is displayed in photographs 1-2 within Appendix 3.

### ***Amenity grassland (J1.2)***

Amenity grassland is present within the site. The grassland is managed by mowing regularly and the sward height is approximately 10cm. Species present include bent sp., poa sp., clover, daisy and Yorkshire fog. This habitat is shown in photograph 3 within Appendix 3.

### ***Short perennial/ephemeral (J1.3)***

Short perennial/ephemeral vegetation has encroached areas of bare ground along the northern site boundary and a small section to the south. Species present include moss, broadleaved plantain, smooth sow thistle and creeping bent grass. This habitat is displayed in photographs 4-5 within Appendix 3.

### ***Scattered trees (A3.1)***

Scattered trees are present with and immediately adjacent to the northern and eastern site boundaries. Species present include predominately ash and conifer sp. This habitat is displayed in photographs 6-7 within Appendix 3.

### ***Species Poor Hedge (J2.1.2)***

Species poor hedgerow comprising laurel and privet is present within the site. The hedgerow has been managed from previous pruning. This habitat is displayed in photographs 7-8 within Appendix 3.

## **4.3 Protected and Notable Species**

### ***Birds***

The habitats within the site provide suitable foraging and nesting opportunities for bird species. These habitats include amenity grassland, species poor hedgerow, short perennial/ephemeral and scattered trees. During the survey, magpie was identified within the site.

Records were returned for kingfisher, barn owl, peregrine and grey heron however the site does not provide suitable habitat for these species as the habitats on site are small in size and scattered. The site is also prone to constant human and vehicular disturbance, further limiting the sites suitability for these species. Kingfisher, barn owl, peregrine and grey heron do not require further consideration within this planning application and will not be discussed further within this report.

### ***Bats***

No buildings fall within the site boundary. The trees within and adjacent to the site offer **negligible** bat roost potential as they possessed no features such as rot holes, broken branches, cracks in bark suitable to support a bat roost potential.

The species poor hedgerow, amenity grassland and scattered trees within the site provide limited suitability for commuting and foraging bats, with limited connectivity to the surrounding land use.

#### *Badger and other small mammals*

The amenity grassland, short perennial/ephemeral and species poor hedgerow habitats within the site provide limited foraging and shelter habitat for small mammal species such as hedgehog. No evidence of hedgehog was identified within the site during the survey.

The site does not provide suitable habitat for badger as the onsite habitats are small in size and prone to constant human disturbances as the site resides within a residential area and bordered by dwellings. Badger do not require further consideration within this planning application and will not be discussed further within this report.

#### *Amphibians*

No ponds are present within the site and no ponds are present within 500m of the site as mapped on Magic Maps. The site lies within a residential area with poor connectivity due to the presence of roads and residential dwellings, further making the site unsuitable for amphibians. Amphibians will not be impacted by the proposals within the site therefore, amphibians do not require further consideration within this planning application and will not be discussed further within this report.

#### *Reptiles*

The habitats within the site do not offer suitability to support reptiles. Ecotones are not present within the site and the habitats are scattered across the site with no suitable connectivity. The habitats within the site are prone to high human disturbance. Reptiles do not require further consideration within this planning application and will not be discussed further within this report.

#### *Invasive species*

No non-native invasive species were identified within the site during the walkover survey.

## 5.0 Evaluation and Recommendations

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### 5.1 Designated Sites and Habitats

There are no statutory or non-statutory sites within 2km of the proposed development site. It is considered that there will no direct impacts during the construction phase on any statutory or non-statutory sites within the vicinity of the site due to the separation distance of over 2km. It is considered that there will be no indirect impacts through an increase in recreational pressure as the proposals are for two residential dwellings only and this will not be result in a significant increase in the local population.

The site does not lie within a Natural England SSSI Impact Risk Zone and mapped on Magic Maps. It is considered that there will be no impact on any SSSIs in the vicinity as a result of the proposals.

The habitats on site comprise hardstanding, amenity grassland, short perennial/ephemeral, species poor hedgerow and scattered trees. These habitats are considered to have an ecological value of **within the zone of influence** of the site or lower. The site contains no designated or priority habitats. Overall, the proposals are unlikely to adversely affect the ecological value of the area.

The production of the Defra Metric Biodiversity Net Gain Calculations using the Small Sites Metric is recommended to minimise impacts of biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity and the production of a Management Plan to ensure the long-term commitments to manage the planting, protection and enhancement of biodiversity in and around the new development site.

### 5.2 Protected and Notable Species

#### *Birds*

The amenity grassland, short perennial/ephemeral, scattered trees and species poor hedgerow provide suitable habitat for nesting and foraging bird species. It is recommended that vegetation clearance and pruning should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (1<sup>st</sup> March to 31<sup>st</sup> August Inclusive) to avoid any impact on breeding birds. If vegetation clearance and pruning cannot be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season, a nesting bird check undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist should be undertaken immediately prior to works commencing. If an active birds' nest is identified a suitable buffer zone should be implemented where no works are to occur within until the young have fledged the nest.

### *Bats*

Bat records were returned within 2km of the site. The closest record was recorded 425m south of the site.

The habitats on site provide at **low** suitability for commuting and foraging bats. The trees within the site currently offer **negligible** potential to support a bat roost.

No buildings fall within the current site boundary. Ascerta previously surveyed the site in 2019 and two buildings that were formerly present within the site boundary were assessed to provide **low** bat roost potential (Ascerta report P.1206.22 Ascerta Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Southway Infill Sites Oct 19). If these buildings are to be impacted or demolished to accommodate proposals at a later date, nocturnal surveys will be required.

### *Small mammals*

The site provides habitat for hedgehog within the amenity grassland, short perennial/ephemeral and species poor hedgerow. These habitats are likely to be impacted by the proposals and therefore, it is recommended that a Hedgehog Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) Method Statement is implemented during the works to avoid harm to this species. The RAMS should include:

- Vegetation clearance applies to all habitats cleared in daytime air temperatures above 5°C. Works must be avoided in cold temperatures or if prior overnight temperatures have been less than 1°C;
- The cut material is to be chipped and placed in discrete piles outside the working areas or removed from the site;
- Existing tracks should be utilised for vehicle movements where possible;
- Throughout the works all trenches must be covered at night or ramps provided to prevent badger and hedgehog from getting stuck; and
- Construction material will be stored on pallets to avoid creating habitat for hedgehog.

To enable hedgehog continued use of the site it is advised that gaps of at least 13cm by 13cm are left under any new garden fences to enable hedgehog to roam freely within the area following development.

### *Invasive species*

No non-native invasive species were identified during the walkover survey. As invasive species can colonise very quickly and the site walkover was conducted outside the optimal survey period for invasive species, it is recommended that an updated check invasive species check is undertaken prior to the start of works.

## 5.3 Enhancements

In order to meet requirements for biodiversity protection and enhancement outlined within the NPPF, it is recommended that ecological enhancements are included. These could include:

1. Provision of one bird box (25mm and 32mm entrance hole box, house sparrow terrace, swift box), attached to or integrated within new buildings or retained tree on site;
2. Provision of one bat feature (e.g. Vivara Pro WoodStone Bat box or similar) attached to a retained tree on site or provision of a bat box (e.g. Vivara bat bricks or '*bird brick houses*' bat boxes) integrated within new buildings;
3. For trees to be removed to accommodate proposals, new replacement planting on the basis of two new trees for each tree lost if recommended; and
4. Suitable landscaping incorporating species that provide a food or shelter resource to wildlife to include hawthorn, hazel, holly, blackthorn, field maple, dog rose and honeysuckle as hedgerow species and oak, alder, field maple, silver birch, crab apple, rowan and bird cherry as tree species together with implementing a relaxed mowing regime and establishing wildflowers in these areas.

## 6.0 Conclusions

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The site was subject to an extended phase one habitat survey. During the survey and following review of historical species records, it is considered that an impact on birds, bats and hedgehog are likely to occur in relation to the proposals for the site. The following recommendations have been made to avoid an impact on these species:

- If works have not begun by January 2024, an updated site visit will be required to assess the habitats within the site;
- Implementation of a hedgehog RAMS (section 5.2) to avoid any harm to this species during the proposed works;
- Precautionary check for invasive prior to works commencing;
- For trees to be removed to accommodate proposals, new replacement planting on the basis of two new trees for each tree lost if recommended;
- Enhancing the site for species through appropriate landscape planting that includes native, species rich hedgerows, trees and areas of wildflowers plus provision of integrated bat and bird features within newly constructed buildings;
- Production of the Defra Metric Biodiversity Net Gain Small Sites Calculations to minimise impacts on biodiversity and provide net gains in biodiversity;
- Production of a Management Plan to ensure the long-term commitments to manage the planting, protection and enhancement of biodiversity in and around a new development site; and
- Vegetation clearance or pruning should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (1st March to 31st August Inclusive) to avoid any impact on breeding birds. Or a nesting bird check undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist should be undertaken immediately prior to works commencing.

It is considered that there would be very limited impacts on the local ecology as a result of the proposals, provided the recommendations detailed within section 5.0 above are followed.

## 7.0 References

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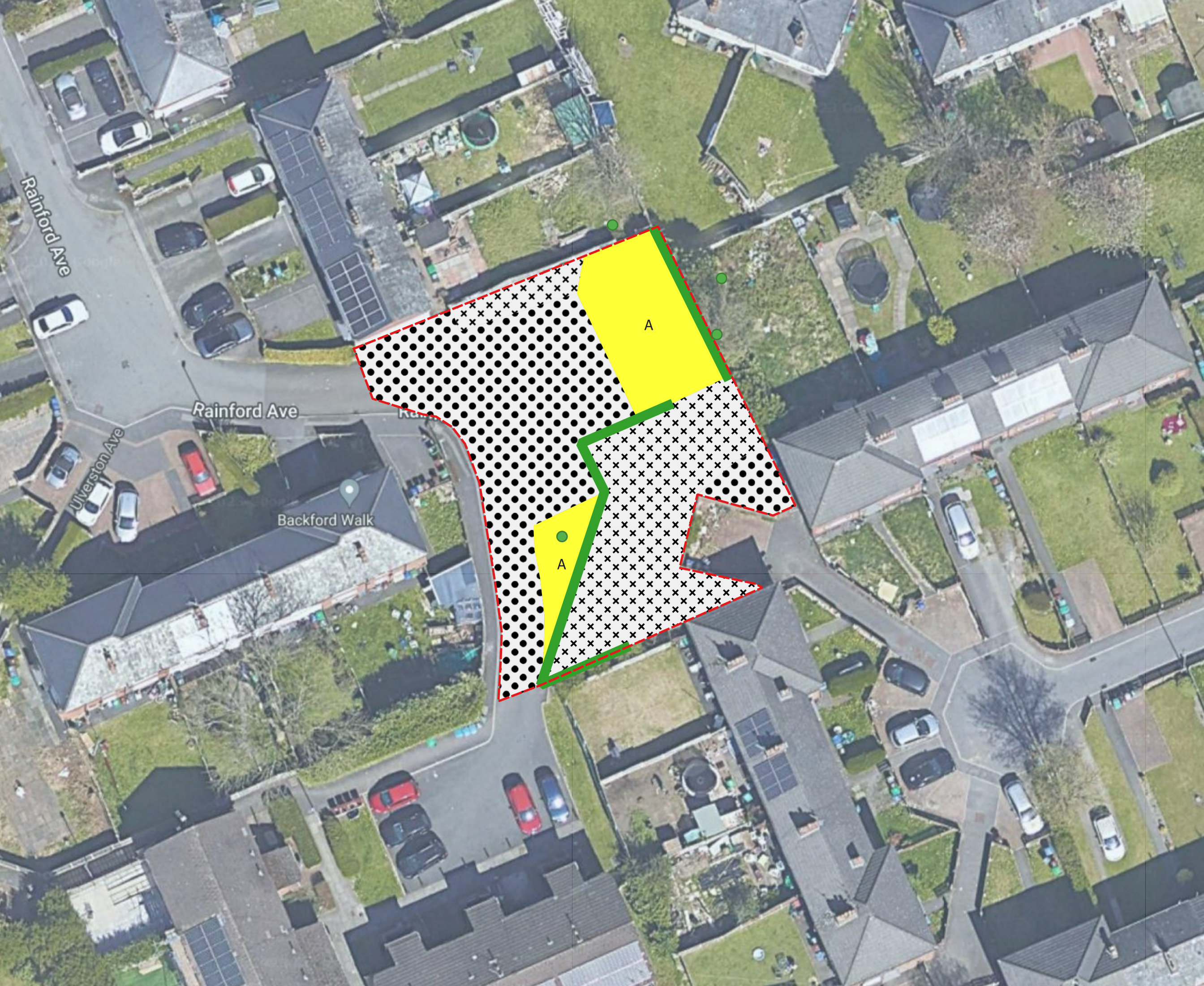
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# Appendix 1



Key

- Site boundary
- J1.2 - Amenity grassland
- J1.3 - Short perennial /ephemeral
- J4 - Hardstanding
- J2.1.2 - Species poor hedge
- Scattered trees

DO NOT SCALE.  
ALL COORDINATES RELATED TO LOCAL GRID.  
LOCATED TO NG BY BEST FIT TO DETAIL.  
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# Ascerta

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|                                            |                 |                                |
|--------------------------------------------|-----------------|--------------------------------|
| CLIENT:<br>Southway Housing Trust          |                 |                                |
| PROJECT:<br>Rainford Avenue                |                 |                                |
| DRAWING TITLE:<br>Phase One Habitat Survey |                 |                                |
| SCALE:<br>NTS@A3                           | DRAWN BY:<br>LA | DRAWING No:<br>P.1206.19(D).01 |
| DATE:<br>10/01/2023                        | CHKD BY:<br>LK  | REV:<br>A                      |

## Appendix 2

# Species List

Table 1: Flora Species

| English Name         | Scientific Name             |
|----------------------|-----------------------------|
| Ash                  | <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>   |
| Broadleaved dock     | <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>   |
| Broadleaved plantain | <i>Plantago major</i>       |
| Conifer              | <i>Pinophyta sp.</i>        |
| Clover               | <i>Trifolium repens</i>     |
| Common daisy         | <i>Bellis perennis</i>      |
| Creeping bent-grass  | <i>Agrostis spp.</i>        |
| Creeping bent-grass  | <i>Agrostis stolonifera</i> |
| Creeping buttercup   | <i>Ranunculus repens</i>    |
| Dandelion            | <i>Taraxacum officinale</i> |
| Herb robert          | <i>Geranium robertianum</i> |
| Ivy                  | <i>Hedera helix</i>         |
| Laurel               | <i>Laurus sp.</i>           |
| Meadow grass         | <i>Poa sp.</i>              |
| Moss                 | <i>Bryophyta sp.</i>        |
| Privet               | <i>Ligustrum vulgare</i>    |
| Smooth sow thistle   | <i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>    |
| Yorkshire fog        | <i>Holcus lanatus</i>       |

## Appendix 3

# Photographs

**Table 3: Photographs of the site**

|                                                                                     |                                                                                      |
|-------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|--------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|    |    |
| <p>Photograph 1: Rainford Avenue (tarmac hardstanding)</p>                          | <p>Photograph 2: Tarmac hardstanding area used for car parking</p>                   |
|   |   |
| <p>Photograph 3: Amenity grassland</p>                                              | <p>Photograph 4: Short perennial/ephemeral</p>                                       |
|  |  |
| <p>Photograph 5: Short perennial/ephemeral</p>                                      | <p>Photograph 6: Scattered tree</p>                                                  |



Photograph 7: Species poor hedge and species poor hedge



Photograph 8: Species poor hedge

## Appendix 4

# Relevant Legislation

## European Legislation

The following Directives have been adopted by the European Union and provide protection for fauna and flora species of European importance and the habitats which support them:

- Directive 2009/147/EC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive);
- Directive 92/43/EEC of 21 May 1992 on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (Habitats Directive).

## UK Legislation

The Habitats Directive has been transposed into national legislation through the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (The Habitats Regulations). This provides for the designation and protection of 'European Sites' (SPAs, SACs and Ramsar Sites, including proposed or potential European Sites) and the protection of 'European Protected Species'.

The key UK legislation relating to nature conservation is the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (W&C Act). This Act is supplemented, *inter alia*, by provision in the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000, and the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act). Additional species and habitat specific UK legislation includes the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and the Hedgerow Regulations 1997.

The Environment Act sets out how the UK will maintain environmental standards following leaving of the EU. The Bill builds on the vision of the 25 Year Environment Plan, with the ambition from the government to leave the environment in a better state than it was when inherited.

The Defra Biodiversity Metric is being implemented to work alongside the Environment Act. This tool calculates potential biodiversity impacts as a result of development and identifies mitigation and compensation requirements to ensure no net loss of biodiversity. In addition, it identifies measures that can be implemented in order to meet Biodiversity gain as a result of development. Defra released a beta version of the biodiversity metric in July 2019, with the most recent revision in April 2022. This metric is likely to be the default metric used by councils, with the most recent version to be submitted to support a planning application.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021 has been published to provide further planning guidance. Wildlife, biodiversity and ecological networks are referred to in Section 15 '*Conserving and enhancing the natural environment*'. The NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: recognising the wider benefits of ecosystem services, minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures. Further guidance is provided within Government Circular 06/05: *Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within the Planning System*.

## Species and Habitats of Principal Importance

Species and Habitats of Principal Importance are listed under section 41 of the NERC Act and are a material consideration in planning decisions. Planners require relevant, up to date information from ecological surveys in order to assess the effects of a proposed development on biodiversity as Councils have a statutory obligation under section 40 of the NERC Act to consider biodiversity conservation in the determination of planning applications.

Background information about the lists of priority habitats and species (Species and Habitats of Principal Importance) can be found within the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP). Although this has been succeeded by the '*UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework*', many of UK BAP tools are still relevant. BAPs identify habitats and species of nature conservation priority on a UK (UK BAP) and Local (LBAP) scale. Most BAP priority habitats and species have Habitat Action Plans (HAP) and Species Action Plans (SAP) and there are also "grouped action plans" for groups of related species with similar conservation requirements. The LBAP relating to this Site is the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan.

## ***Badgers***

The legislation protecting badgers in England and Wales is the Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

Under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 it is an offence *inter alia* to:

- Wilfully kill, injure or take a badger, or to attempt to do so;
- Cruelly ill-treat a badger; or
- Intentionally or recklessly interfere with a badger sett by (a) damaging a sett or any part of one; (b) destroying a sett; (c) obstructing access to or any entrance of a sett; (d) causing a dog to enter a sett; or (e) disturbing a badger when it is occupying a sett.

The Badger Act 1992 defines a badger's sett as "*any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger*"

Natural England can issue licences to enable works to continue that may affect a protected species. In relation to disturbance of badgers, Natural England (2009) gives guidelines on disturbance which will require a licence. These includes: "*using very heavy machinery (generally tracked vehicles) within 30 metres of any entrance to an active sett; using lighter machinery (generally wheeled vehicles), particularly for any digging operation, within 20 metres; light work such as hand digging or scrub clearance within 10 metres. There are some activities which may cause disturbance at greater distances (such as using explosives or pile driving) and these should be given individual consideration.*"

## **Bats**

In England, all bats and their roosts are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Several species of bat are also highlighted as Priority Species under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and within the Local BAP.

Under the current legislation as summarised on pages 8 and 9 of the Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists Good Practice Guidelines – 3rd Edition (2016) it is a criminal offence to:

*“To kill, capture, injure or take a wild bat;*

- To damage or destroy a place used by a bat for breeding or resting. All offences of this nature are identified within the Habitats Regulations. This offence is unique in that it can be committed accidentally. No element of intentional, reckless or deliberate action needs to be evidenced;*
- To disturb bats anywhere (roosts, flight lines or foraging areas) if levels of disturbance can be shown to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, to rear or nurture their young, to hibernate or migrate or to affect significantly local distribution or abundance;*
- To intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat, whilst it is occupying a place of shelter or protection;*
- To intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place used by a bat for shelter or protection; and*
- To be in possession or control of a bat alive or dead (or any part of a bat or anything derived from a bat, although bat droppings are generally considered to be acceptable), or to transport a bat, to sell or exchange a bat or to offer to sell or exchange a bat taken from the wild.”*

## **Breeding Birds**

Breeding Birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act which make it an offence to:

- intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built;*
- intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird;*
- have in one's possession or control any wild bird, dead or alive, or any part of a wild bird (including eggs), which has been taken in contravention of the Act or the Protection of Birds Act 1954;*
- intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.*

## **Great Crested Newt**

The great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended) and the Habitats Regulations, 2017. It is also a Species of Principal Importance. The legislation makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately (or intentionally) kill, injure or capture (or take) a great crested newt, or great crested newt egg or eft;*

- *Deliberately (intentionally) damage or destroy any breeding site or resting place (i.e. pond, refuge, hibernaculum);*
- *Deliberately or recklessly obstruct access to any breeding site or resting place;*
- *Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a great crested newt, in particular disturbance which is likely to:*
  - *impair the ability of the great crested newt to survive, breed, reproduce, or to rear or nurture young;*
  - *impair the ability of the great crested newt to hibernate or migrate; or significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of great crested newts*

### ***Invasive Species***

It is an offence under Section 14(2) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to ‘*plant or otherwise cause to grow*’ in the wild any plant in Schedule 9 Part II.

### **Invertebrates**

The site’s suitability for supporting invertebrates was assessed during the site visit. This included making note of key plant species that could be used by notable invertebrates, together with incidental invertebrates recorded on the day.

**It is a criminal offence to intentionally, wilfully kill, injure or take any of the aforementioned protected species or to destroy or disturb its habitat.**

### **Local Policy**

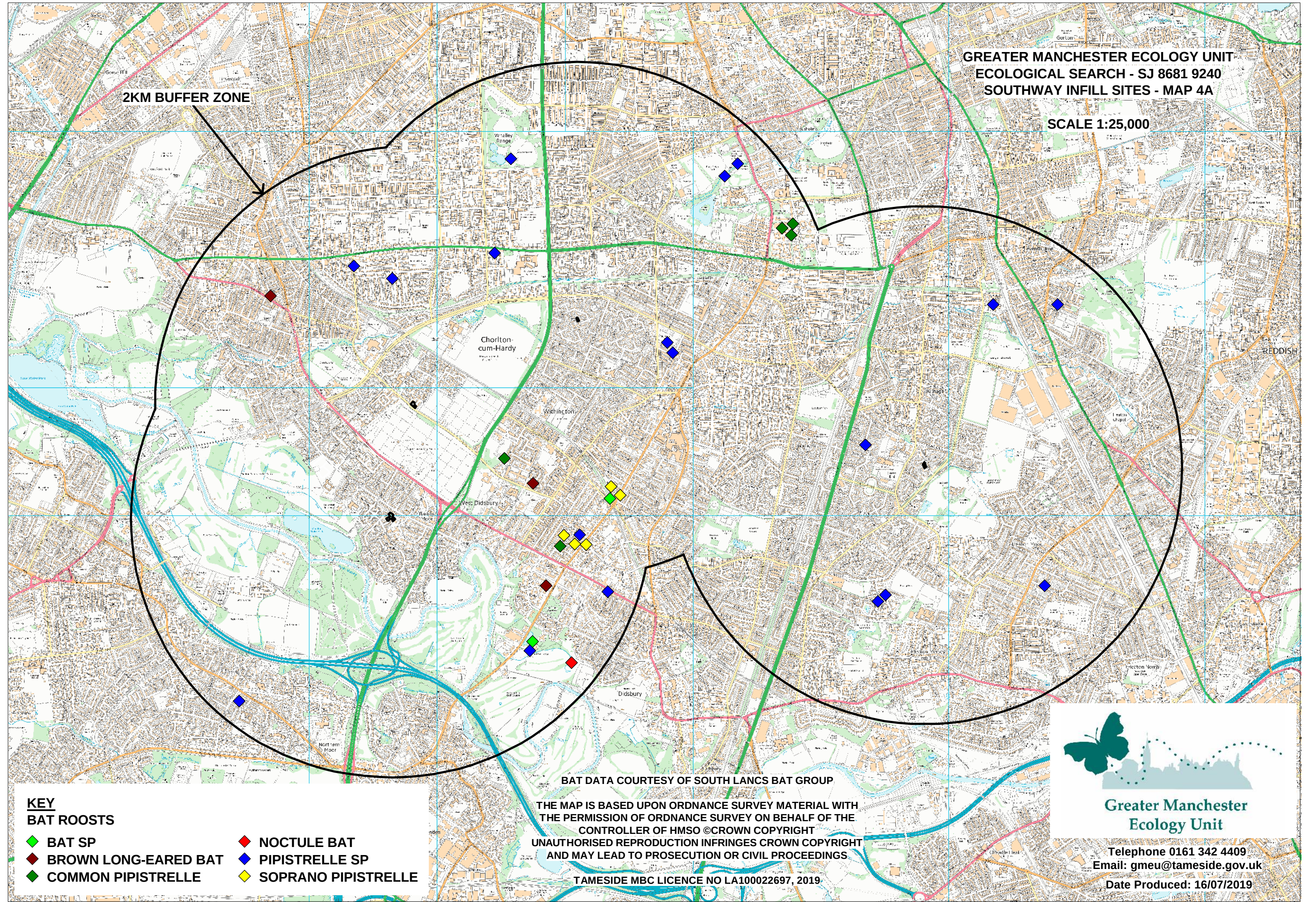
The site lies within Manchester and is covered by Manchester's Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan Document (adopted 11 July 2012) and extant policies within the Unitary Development Plan. The policy of relevance is EN 15 within the Core Strategy document.

## Appendix 5

GREATER MANCHESTER ECOLOGY UNIT  
ECOLOGICAL SEARCH - SJ 8681 9240  
SOUTHWAY INFILL SITES - MAP 4A

SCALE 1:25,000

2KM BUFFER ZONE



**KEY**  
**BAT ROOSTS**

- |                        |                       |
|------------------------|-----------------------|
| ◆ BAT SP               | ◆ NOCTULE BAT         |
| ◆ BROWN LONG-EARED BAT | ◆ PIPISTRELLE SP      |
| ◆ COMMON PIPISTRELLE   | ◆ SOPRANO PIPISTRELLE |

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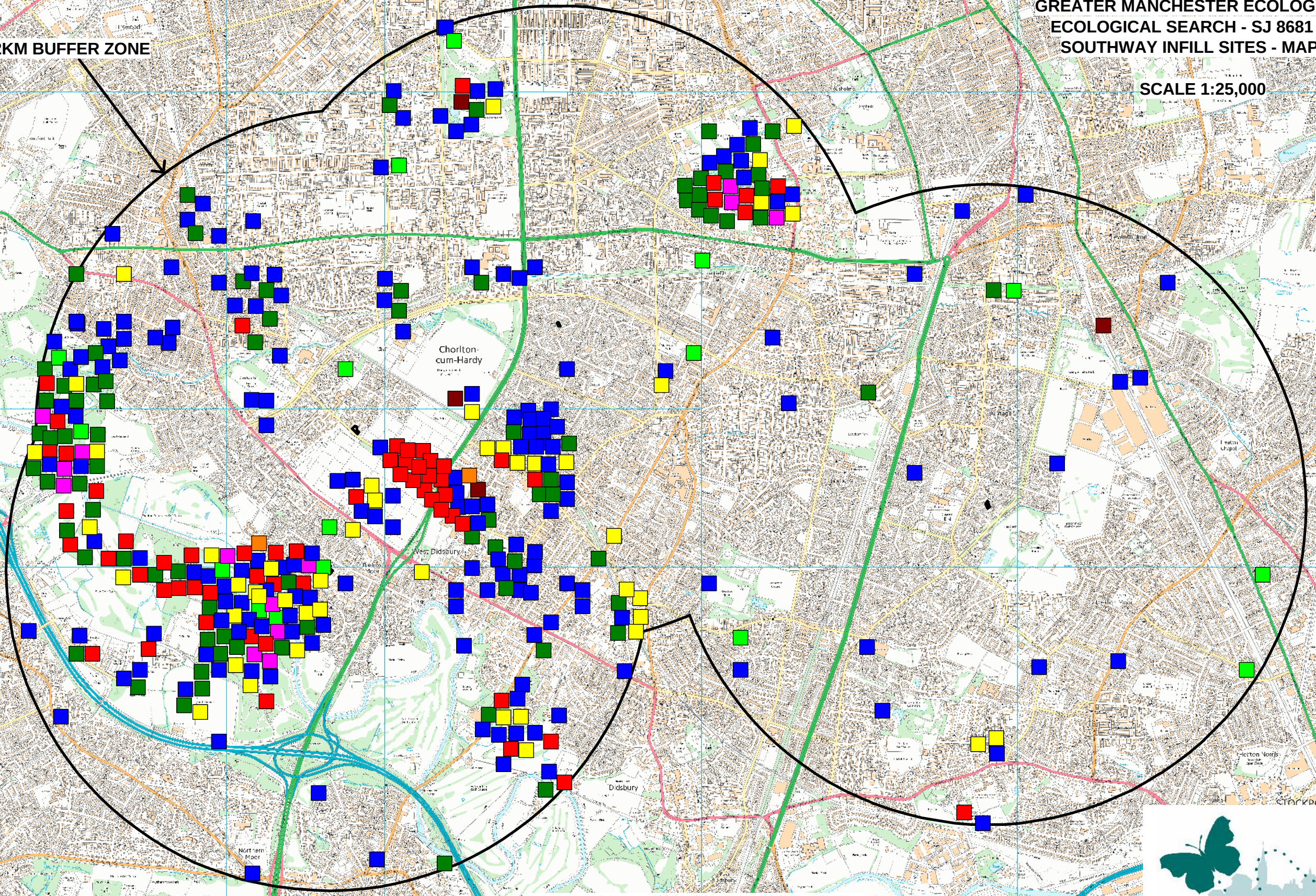
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SOUTHWAY INFILL SITES - MAP 4B

SCALE 1:25,000

2KM BUFFER ZONE



**KEY**  
**BAT SIGNS**

- |                                                                                                         |                                                                                                         |
|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|---------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------------|
|  BAT SP               |  NATTERER'S BAT      |
|  BROWN LONG-EARED BAT |  NOCTULE BAT         |
|  COMMON PIPISTRELLE   |  PIPISTRELLE SP      |
|  DAUBENTON'S BAT      |  SOPRANO PIPISTRELLE |

BAT DATA COURTESY OF SOUTH LANCS BAT GROUP

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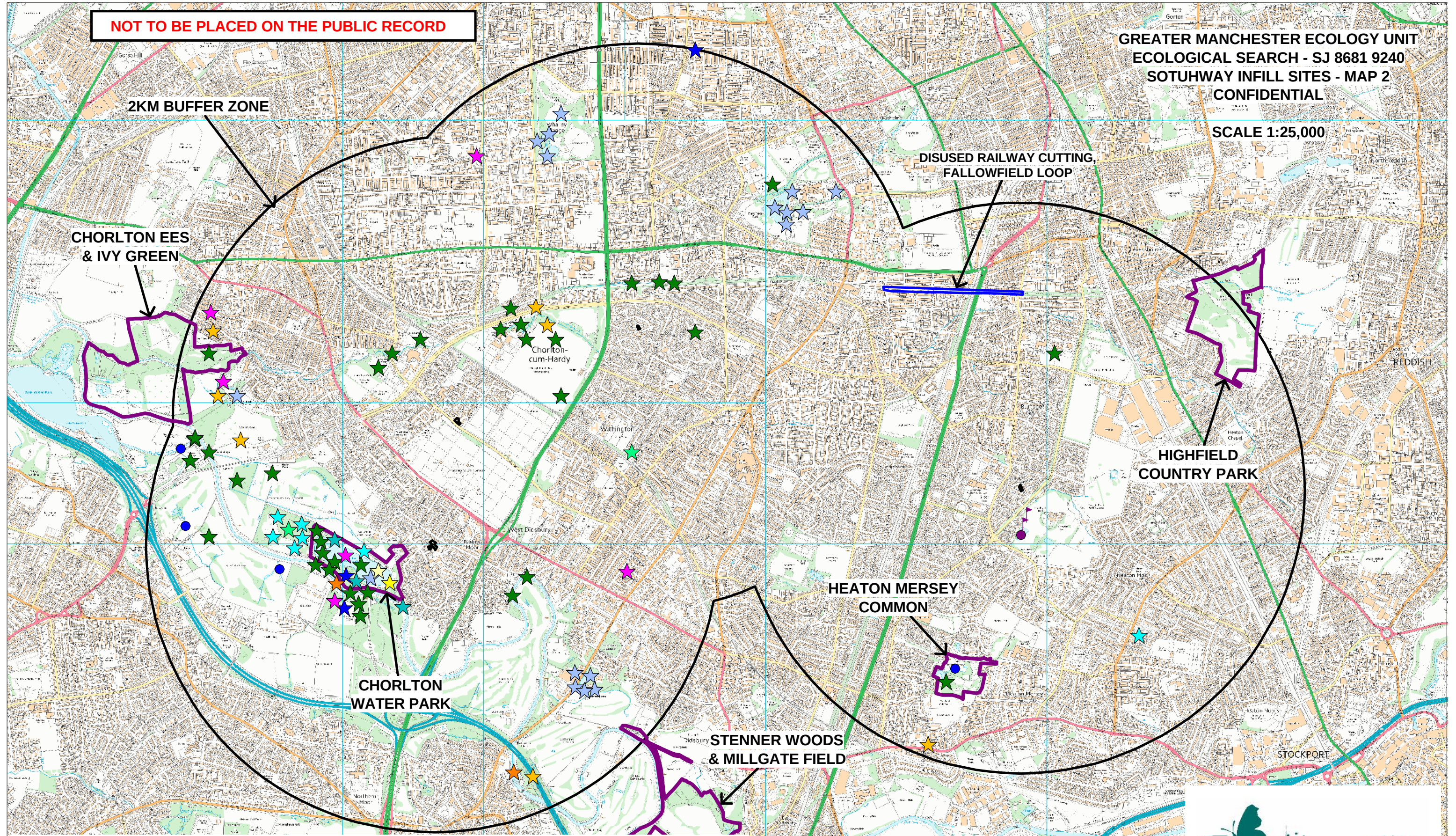
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SOTUHWAY INFILL SITES - MAP 2  
CONFIDENTIAL

SCALE 1:25,000



KEY

SITES

LOCAL NATURE RSV

GMRIGS SITE

PROTECTED SPECIES

GREAT CRESTED NEWT

GCN ABSENCE

WATER VOLE ABSENCE

BARN OWL

BLACK REDSTART

COMMON SCOTER

EUROPEAN OTTER

GRASS SNAKE

GREY HERON

KINGFISHER

PEREGRINE

SCAUP

SLOW-WORM

WHITE-CLAWED CRAYFISH

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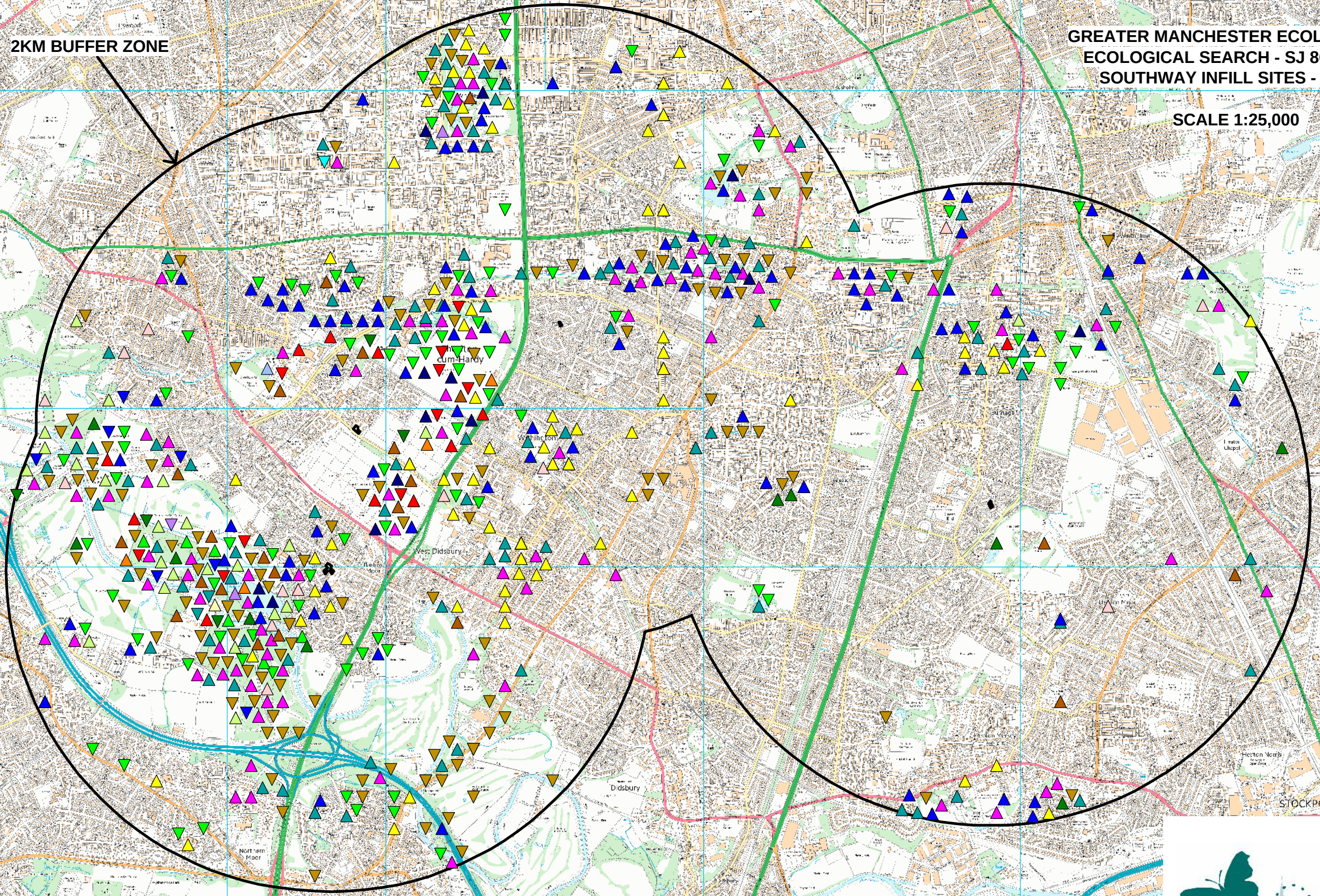
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2KM BUFFER ZONE

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SOUTHWAY INFILL SITES - MAP 5

SCALE 1:25,000



**KEY**  
**SECTION 41 SPECIES**

- |                     |                    |                  |                |
|---------------------|--------------------|------------------|----------------|
| ▲ BULLFINCH         | ▲ HERRING GULL     | ▲ REDPOLL        | ▲ STARLING     |
| ▲ COMMON TOAD       | ▲ HOUSE SPARROW    | ▲ REED BUNTING   | ▲ TREE PIPIT   |
| ▲ CUCKOO            | ▲ LAPWING          | ▲ S41 MOTH       | ▲ TREE SPARROW |
| ▲ DUNNOCK           | ▲ LS WOODPECKER    | ▲ SKYLARK        | ▲ TWITE        |
| ▲ GR.HOPPER WARBLER | ▲ LINNET           | ▲ SONG THRUSH    | ▲ WILLOW TIT   |
| ▲ HEDGEHOG          | ▲ MARSH STITCHWORT | ▲ SP. FLYCATCHER |                |

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SCALE 1:25,000

2KM BUFFER ZONE

CHORLTON  
EES

HARDY  
FARM

BARLOW  
EYE TIP

MEADOWS  
AT SALE  
WATER PARK

FIELD BY  
ELECTRICITY  
SUB-STATION

CHORLTON  
WATER PARK

WRENGATE  
WOOD

POND AT  
BURNAGE

RESERVOIR & SCRUB  
AT HEATON MERSEY

**KEY**  
SITE OF BIOLOGICAL IMPORTANCE

 SBI BOUNDARY

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