

Reliance Street, Manchester

Ecological Appraisal

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Contents

Text:

1 Introduction 1

2 Methodology 2

3 Ecological Baseline 3

4 Assessment and Recommendations 8

5 Conclusions 12

Plans:

Plan 6323/ECO1	Site Location
Plan 6323/ECO2	Ecological Designations
Plan 6323/ECO3	Habitats and Ecological Features

Appendices:

Appendix 6323/1	Desk Study Information
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1 Introduction

1.1 Background and Proposals

- 1.1.1 Aspect Ecology has been commissioned by Canham Consulting Ltd to undertake an ecological appraisal in respect of land at Reliance Street, Manchester (see attached Plan 6323/ECO1). The site is currently in use as a Household Waste Recycling Centre (HWRC), which is to be re-developed, including the reconfiguration of the waste facilities and associated access, and demolition of the existing plant to the east of the site to allow for future trade waste provision. There will a small extension of the site to the north into the adjacent woodland area.

1.2 Site Overview

- 1.2.1 The site is located to the north of Oldham Road in north-east Manchester. The site is bound to the east by Reliance Street, to the north by woodland which forms a valley and associated stream corridor, and to the east and south by further industrial land forming part of the same ownership and (see attached Plan 6323/ECO1).
- 1.2.2 The HWRC site is dominated by buildings and hardstanding, with further structures in the form of buildings and tanks (a disused anaerobic digestion plant), situated to the east of the site. Other habitats present include small areas of gravel, dense scrub, amenity grassland and occasional scattered trees.
- 1.2.3 An strip of secondary woodland, forming the area for site extension, is located to the immediate north of the site, which is shown on the government MAGIC website as being a Priority Habitat. A small area of moderately species-rich grassland sward is also present to the north of the site outside of the boundary fence for the HWRC.

1.3 Purpose of the Report

- 1.3.1 This report documents the methods and findings of the Phase 1 habitat survey and desktop study carried out at the site, and subsequently provides an appraisal of the likely ecological effects of the proposals. The importance of the habitats and species present is evaluated. Where necessary, avoidance, mitigation and compensation measures are proposed so as to safeguard any significant existing ecological interest within the site and where appropriate, opportunities for ecological enhancement are identified with reference to national conservation priorities and local Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs).

2 Methodology

2.1 Desktop Study

- 2.1.1 To inform the assessment, baseline ecological information has been sourced from the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) database and Greater Manchester Local Record Centre (GMLRC), whilst a review of aerial photography and OS mapping has also been undertaken.

2.2 Phase 1 Habitat and General Faunal Survey

- 2.2.1 The site was surveyed in September 2021 in order to ascertain the general ecological value of the land contained within the boundaries of the site and to identify the main habitats and ecological features present.
- 2.2.2 The site was surveyed based on standard Phase 1 Habitat Survey methodology¹, whereby the habitat types present are identified and mapped, together with an assessment of the species composition of each habitat. This technique provides an inventory of the basic habitat types present and allows identification of areas of greater potential which require further survey. Any such areas identified can then be examined in more detail through Phase 2 surveys. This method was extended, in line with the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal² to record details on the actual or potential presence of any notable or protected species or habitats.
- 2.2.3 Using the above method, the site was classified into areas of similar botanical community types, with a representative species list compiled for each habitat identified. The nomenclature used for plant species is based on the Botanical Society for the British Isles (BSBI) Checklist.
- 2.2.4 General faunal activity, such as mammals or birds observed visually or by call during the course of the surveys was also recorded. Specific attention was also paid to the potential presence of any protected, rare or notable species.

2.3 Survey Constraints and Limitations

- 2.3.1 All of the species that occur in each habitat would not necessarily be detectable during survey work carried out at any given time of the year, since different species are apparent during different seasons. However, the Phase 1 habitat survey was undertaken within the optimal season therefore allowing a robust assessment of habitats and botanical interest across the site.
- 2.3.2 Attention was paid to the presence of any invasive species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). However, the detectability of such species varies due to a number of factors, e.g. time of year, site management, etc., and hence the absence of invasive species should not be assumed even if no such species were detected during the Phase 1 survey.
- 2.3.3 The survey covered the whole site and is considered to provide a robust overview of habitats and faunal potential at the site.

¹ Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2010, as amended) *'Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey: A technique for environmental audit.'*

² Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) (2013) *'Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.'*

3 Ecological Baseline

3.1 Ecological Designations

- 3.1.1 Based on a review of the online MAGIC database and information returned from GMLRC, no ecological designations are located within or bounding the site. The nearest statutory ecological designation is Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC)/Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) located approximately 0.91km to the east of the site. The SAC is designated on the basis of its extensive colonies of the nationally scarce Floating Water-plantain *Luronium natans*.
- 3.1.2 The next nearest statutory designation is Clayton Vale Local Nature Reserve (LNR), located approximately 1.47km to south of the site. This LNR is designated on the basis of biological reasons and forms a valley with the river Medlock running along the base of the LNR.
- 3.1.1 A small number of European-level designations are located within 25km of the site, the nearest of which is Rochdale Canal SAC. The next nearest European site is the Peak District Moors (South Pennine Moors Phase 1) Special Protection Area (SPA), which is located approximately 12.63km to the east of the site and designated on the basis of supporting a rich upland breeding bird assemblage including important numbers of Merlin *Falco columbarius*, Golden Plover *Pluvialis apricaria* and Short-eared Owl *Asio flammeus*.
- 3.1.2 The nearest non-statutory designation is Broadhurst Clough Site of Biological Importance (SBI) located approximately 0.34km to the north west of the site. The SINC is designated on the basis of supporting a mosaic of habitats including mature broadleaved woodland, semi-mature broad-leaved plantation, scrub, tall ruderal, grassland and wetland. The next nearest non-statutory designation is Moston Fairway SBI located approximately 0.43km to the north east of the site, which is designated on the basis of supporting a mixture of acidic, calcareous, wet and dry habitats.
- 3.1.3 Given the small size of the site, and its separation from any ecological designations, proposed development of the site is considered unlikely to result in any adverse effects on designations within the surrounding area.

3.2 Habitats and Ecological Features

- 3.2.1 Habitats and ecological features supported by the site and adjacent area have been identified following the review of baseline ecological information, OS mapping/aerial photography and a Phase 1 survey. A discussion of main habitat types is given below.

Hardstanding, Buildings and Gravel Areas

- 3.2.2 The site is dominated by hardstanding associated with the HWRC, including a concrete waste sorting area and access routes. Three gravel areas are present, as shown on Plan 6323/ECO3. The areas of hardstanding and gravel were recorded to be mostly devoid of vegetation at the time of survey, save for common and widespread weed species such as Black Meddock *Medicago lupulina* and Willowherb *Epilobium* sp.
- 3.2.3 Eleven industrial buildings are present across the site, labelled as buildings B1-B11 on Plan 6323/ECO3. Buildings B1, B2 and B4 comprise a series of single-storey mesh cages in current use for storage of gas and other waste produce. Building B5 comprises a collection of metal tanks and silos plus associated equipment, whilst buildings B7-B9 are electrical kiosks. B6 is

in use for methane storage whilst buildings B10 and B11 contain engines used in connection with the former anaerobic digestion plant. Finally, building B3 is a metal portacabin.

- 3.2.4 On this basis, the buildings, hardstanding and gravel areas are inherently of negligible ecological value and as such do not form important ecological features at the site.

Grassland

- 3.2.5 A single area of amenity grassland is present within the south-western corner of the site, as shown on Plan 6323/ECO3. The area comprises a moss-covered bank with occasional common grass species such as Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus*, with a small number of common herb species including Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg. and Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*.
- 3.2.6 A small section of moderately species-rich semi-improved grassland sward is present to the north of the HWRC boundary fence. The grassland was recorded to be dominated by common grass and sedge species such as Yorkshire-fog, False Oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius*, Cock's-foot *Dactylus glomerata*, Rough-stalked Meadowgrass *Poa Trivialis*, Tall Fescue *Festuca arundinacea*, Pendulous Sedge *Carex pendula* and Hairy Sedge *Carex hirta*. Common herb species present include Hedge Bedstraw *Galium mollugo*, Common Knapweed *Centaurea nigra*, Creeping Cinquefoil *Potentilla reptans*, Ladies Bedstraw *Galium verum*, Meadow Buttercup *Ranunculus acris*, Birds-foot Trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, Yellow Rattle *Rhinanthus minor*, Hedge Woundwort *Stachys sylvatica*, Ribwort Plantain, Greater Willowherb *Epilobium hirsutum*, Rosebay Willowherb *Chamaenerion angustifolium*, Ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, Creeping Thistle *Cirsium arvense*, Broad-leaved Dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, with some Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* sp. around the margins of the clearing.
- 3.2.7 Due to the presence of a moderate range of herb species within the semi-improved grassland, it is likely that it provides a foraging resource for invertebrates. However, given the limited extent within the development area, it is considered to be of no more than local ecological value and therefore does not form an important ecological feature at the site.

Scattered Trees and Scrub

- 3.2.8 Two young Cherry *Prunus* sp. trees are present along the southern site boundary, whilst an area of dense scrub is located within the south-western corner, as shown on Plan 6323/ECO3. The scrub is composed of Cherry and reaches a height of approximately 5-6m, with a sparse understorey of occasional Box *Buxus sempervirens* and Holly *Ilex aquifolium* with moss, Common Nettle *Urtica dioica* and ornamental *Geum*.
- 3.2.9 The trees and dense scrub contribute to the wooded habitat within the site, albeit due to their limited extent, they are unlikely to be of any particular elevated ecological value and therefore do not constitute important ecological features at the site.

Woodland

- 3.2.10 Secondary deciduous woodland dominates the wider survey area to the north of the site boundary. This section comprises immature trees with a small number of early mature Oak *Quercus robur* trees within the east section. Furthermore this area of woodland is categorised as the Priority Habitat 'Deciduous Woodland' on the DEFRA MAGIC database.
- 3.2.11 The canopy was recorded to consist of immature Grey Willow *Salix cinerea*, Eared Willow *Salix aurita*, Alder *Alnus glutinosa*, Silver Birch *Betula pendula*, Cherry and Aspen *Populus tremula* with occasional mature Oak. The understorey was dominated by Ash *Fraxinus excelsior* saplings, Dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* Silver Birch and Bramble, with occasional

Apple *Malus domestica*, Holly, Blackcurrant *Ribes nigrum*, Hedge Bindweed *Calystegia sepium*, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Hazel *Corylus avellana*, Privet *Ligustrum vulgare* and *Buddleja davidii*. The ground flora was dominated by Pendulous Sedge with occasional Common Nettle, Field Horsetail *Equisetum arvense*, Self-Heal *Prunella vulgaris*, Creeping Cinquefoil, Wood Avens *Geum urbanum* and Colt's-foot *Tussilago farfara*.

- 3.2.12 The woodland within the new site boundary forms a wooded corridor in association with the offsite Moston Brook, which as a whole provides a valuable habitat within an otherwise urban environment and is likely of value to a range of wildlife species such as bats and common bird species. On this basis, the woodland is considered to constitute an important ecological feature. It is understood that a strip of woodland within the ownership boundary will be lost under the proposed development, although the loss of habitat will be on the margins of the wider block of woodland, and the proposals will not affect the continuity or functionality of the woodland in a significant way.

Invasive Species

- 3.2.13 Three areas of Japanese Knotweed *Reynoutria japonica* was recorded along the woodland edge outside of the wider site boundary, and area of land take, as shown on Plan 6323/ECO3. Furthermore Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* was also noted occasionally within this area. Both of these species are listed under Schedule 9 Part II of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which makes it an offence to cause it to grow in the wild.

3.3 Faunal Species

Bats

- 3.3.1 Numerous records of bats were provided by GMLRC for the 2km search area, with species including Common Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus pygmaeus* Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, Daubenton's *Myotis daubentonii* and unidentified Pipistrelle species. The closest of these records relates to a Common Pipistrelle roost containing 5 bats, located approximately 172.0m north-west of the site along the railway line, and dated 2010.
- 3.3.2 The woodland within the ownership boundary of the site likely provides roosting, foraging and commuting habitat for bats, particularly in association with the vegetated corridor along the offsite railway and Moston Brook. A small part of this woodland area will be lost to facilitate the development. However, given the small scale of the woodland loss, the impact to bats is predicted to be low with bats likely continuing to use the remaining woodland to the north as foraging habitat, with an edge habitat remaining on the boundary of the site which can be used for foraging and commuting. Opportunities for bats within the main part of the site are very limited with no real habitat of interest. Furthermore, the buildings within the site are also considered to be negligible value to roosting bats due to the nature of their construction and current active use, whilst the site in general supports few habitats of value to foraging bats, being dominated by hardstanding. Overall the impact to bats is considered to be low. However an opportunity exists to improve the current situation by providing more sympathetic lighting in conjunction with the site in the future.

Badger

- 3.3.3 No evidence of Badger *Meles meles* was recorded during the Phase 1 survey, and given the small size of the site it is unlikely to be of importance as foraging habitat.

Other mammals

- 3.3.4 GMLRC provided records of a number of Priority Species within the 2km of the site, namely Water Vole *Arvicola amphibius*, Brown Hare *Lepus europaeus* and Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*. The ditch along the eastern part of the site is of negligible value to Water Vole *Arvicola aquatica*. Furthermore the single record for Water Vole, dated in 2004, is well separated from the site originating from a fishing pond within Clayton Vale SBI. The site could provide opportunities for Hedgehog, albeit no evidence for this species was recorded during the Phase 1 survey. Given the small size of the site, it is considered unlikely to be of any elevated importance to this species, albeit could support single or small numbers of Hedgehog on occasion. The woodland area within the north of the development area contains suitable habitat for Hazel Dormouse however GMLRC returned no records for this species. In addition the urban location of the woodland reduces the suitability of the habitat for Dormouse, with the risk of this species occurring considered to be negligible.

Birds

- 3.3.5 Numerous records of bird species were provided by GMLRC within the 2km study area, including the Red Listed species Spotted Flycatcher *Muscicapa striata*, Starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, Song Thrush *Turdus philomelos*, Curlew *Numenius arquata* Linnet *Linaria cannabina*, Skylark *Alauda arvensis* and Wood Warbler *Phylloscopus sibilatrix* which are also all Priority Species. The nearest record relates to House Sparrow *Passer domesticus* dated 2008, and is located adjacent to the site within the woodland area to the north.
- 3.3.6 The woodland along the ownership boundary of the site likely provides foraging and nesting opportunities for birds, but opportunities within the main part of the site itself are limited. Notably, the amenity grassland within the site may provide a small amount of foraging habitat for ground feeding birds but its value is negligible given the size of the site in the context of the local area. Similarly, the area of dense scrub could potentially support low levels of nesting activity by common species, although this habitat is unlikely to be of elevated value given the elevated opportunities provided offsite in the local surrounds.

Reptiles

- 3.3.7 GMLRC provided three records of a reptile within 2km of the site, namely Slow-worm *Anguis fragilis* with the nearest record, relating to an adult female, being located approximately 1.0km south-west of the site and dated from 2010. Given the dominance of buildings and hardstanding within the site, together with a general lack of more established vegetation, the site is not considered to provide suitable habitat for reptile species.

Amphibians

- 3.3.8 Two records of Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus* were returned from the desktop study, the nearest of which relates to a stable population of 12-15 individuals within a pond located 1.2km to the north-east of the site and dated from 2019. Records of Common Toad *Bufo bufo* were also returned from GMLRC, with the nearest located within a fishing pond in Clayton Vale SBI, situated approximately 1.6km to the south of the site and dated from 2012. No ponds are present within the site boundary, and no ponds are present within 250m of the site boundary. As such, the site is not considered to provide suitable habitat for amphibian species.

Invertebrates

- 3.3.9 GMLRC provided records of several invertebrate species within 2km of the site, however no notable species were returned. The site may provide some opportunities for common invertebrate species associated with the semi-improved grassland and scrub, although due to it's small size, it is unlikely to support an important invertebrate assemblage.

4 Assessment and Recommendations

- 4.1.1 Based on the desktop study, Phase 1 habitat and general faunal survey undertaken, the site is generally considered to support habitats of low ecological interest, being dominated by hardstanding and buildings. Habitats of elevated value present at the site are restricted to the woodland and semi-improved grassland to the north of the site, both of which will be lost under the scheme, with new habitats created off-site to offset this. In terms of faunal use of the site, the woodland likely holds value to bats, whilst the site also provides opportunities for common birds and mammals (including Hedgehog). Finally, in terms of effects on ecological designations, the proposed development is not considered to result in adverse effects given the small scale nature of the proposals and separation from any such areas.
- 4.1.2 A number of measures are recommended to safeguard trees, bats and nesting birds, whilst recommendations are also made with respect to small mammals, in the unlikely event that they are present at the site, along with invasive species safeguards. Ecological enhancements are also recommended to be included under the scheme:
- 4.1.3 **Tree Protection:** All trees to be retained within the proposed development, and within the retained sections of woodland, shall be protected during construction in line with standard arboriculturalist best practice (BS5837:2012) or as otherwise directed by a suitably competent arboriculturalist. This will involve the use of protective fencing or other methods appropriate to safeguard the root protection areas of retained trees / hedgerows.
- 4.1.4 **Invasive species:** Both Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam, which are listed on Schedule 9 Part II of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, were recorded adjacent to the site. It is an offence to cause to grow in the wild, any plant listed on the schedule. As such, it is recommended that appropriate safeguards be put in place to prevent the spread of these Schedule 9 species during the proposed development works. Such measures would likely involve herbicide application and/or excavation and removal of any material within the site itself (which should then be disposed of appropriately to prevent colonisation of off-site areas). It is recommended that an appropriate specialist contractor is engaged to deal with the treatment, control and/or removal of the areas affected. During construction appropriate safeguards, including the use of protective fencing should be put in place, with a buffer zone of at least 7m allowed around the plant.
- 4.1.5 **Felling of Trees Supporting Low Bat Roosting Potential:** An area of woodland is understood to require removal under the proposals and should any trees within this area be assessed as supporting low bat roosting potential then to safeguard any bats that may be present, this should be undertaken in a precautionary manner. This would involve the tree, or relevant parts thereof, being 'soft-felled' under ecological supervision with sections of the tree identified as providing bat roosting opportunities carefully cut around (rather than through) and lowered to the ground using cushioning techniques to reduce the impact of the sections as they reach the ground. The sections will then be left on the ground for a period of at least 24 hours to allow any bats, should these be present, to escape.
- 4.1.6 If a bat is encountered at any point during the tree felling, the works to that tree will stop and a suitably qualified ecologist will be contacted for further advice. This is likely to involve the ecologist visiting the site and assessing the requirement for a Natural England mitigation licence.
- 4.1.7 **Bat Sensitive Lighting:** Light-spill onto retained and newly created habitat, in particular the woodland along the northern boundary, will be minimised in accordance with good practice

guidance³ to reduce potential impacts on light-sensitive bats (and other nocturnal fauna). This may be achieved through the implementation of a sensitively designed lighting strategy, with consideration given to the following key factors:

- Light exclusion zones – ideally no lighting should be used in areas likely to be used by bats. Light exclusion zones or ‘dark buffers’ may be used to provide interconnected areas free of artificial illumination to allow bats to move around the site;
- Appropriate luminaire specifications – consideration should be given to the type of luminaires used, in particular luminaries should lack UV elements and metal halide and fluorescent sources should be avoided in preference for LED luminaries. A warm white spectrum (ideally <2,700K) should be adopted to reduce the blue light component;
- Light barriers / screening – new planting (e.g. hedgerows and trees) or fences, walls and buildings can be strategically positioned to reduce light spill;
- Spacing and height of lighting units – increasing spacing between lighting units will minimise the area illuminated and allow bats to fly in the dark refuges between lights. Reducing the height of lighting will also help decrease the volume of illuminated space and give bats a chance to fly over lighting units (providing the light does not spill above the vertical plane). Low level lighting options should be considered for any parking areas and pedestrian / cycle routes, e.g. bollard lighting, handrail lighting or LED footpath lighting;
- Light intensity – light intensity (i.e. lux levels) should be kept as low as possible to reduce the overall amount and spread of illumination;
- Directionality – to avoid light spill lighting should be directed only to where it is needed. Particular attention should be paid to avoid the upward spread of light so as to minimise trespass and sky glow;
- Dimming and part-night lighting – lighting control management systems can be used, which involves switching off/dimming lights for periods during the night, for example when human activity is generally low (e.g. 12.30 – 5.30am). The use of such control systems may be particularly beneficial during the active bat season (April to October). Motion sensors can also be used to limit the time lighting is operational.

4.1.8 Mammal safeguards: In order to safeguard Hedgehogs and other small mammals should they enter the site during construction works, the following measures will be implemented:

- A watching brief should be maintained for Hedgehog and other small mammals throughout any clearance works;
- Any piles of material already present on site, particularly vegetation/leaves, etc. and any areas of scrub, shall be dismantled/removed by hand and checked for Hedgehog prior to the use of any machinery/disposal;
- Any trenches left open overnight should be provided with a means of escape, e.g. gently graded ramp or a roughened plank, in order to allow animals to escape

³ Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals (2018) ‘Guidance Note 08/18: Bats and artificial lighting in the UK’; Stone, E.L. (2013) ‘Bats and lighting: Overview of current evidence and mitigation guidance.’; ILP (2011) ‘Guidance notes for the reduction of obtrusive light’ Institution of Lighting Professionals, GN01:2011.

should they enter the trench. This is particularly important if the trench fills with water;

- Any material to be disposed of by burning, particularly waste from vegetation clearance and tree works, should not be left piled on site for more than 24 hours in order to minimise the risk of Hedgehogs occupying the pile. If this cannot be avoided, material should be stored within a container such as a skip to prevent animals from gaining access. Any material which has been stored on the ground overnight should be moved prior to burning to allow a thorough check for any animals which may have been occupying the pile;
- Any temporarily exposed open pipes or open drains should be blanked off at the end of each working day so as to prevent Hedgehogs gaining access as may happen when contractors are off-site;
- In the event that an injured Hedgehog is found, the animal should be wrapped carefully in a towel, the British Hedgehog Preservation Society (BHPS) phoned (01584 890 801) and the Hedgehog taken to a local vet immediately;
- To maintain connectivity throughout the site for Hedgehog and to allow access to suitable foraging habitat contained within residential gardens, small holes (13cmx13cm) should be created within garden fences or under gates.

4.1.9 Nesting birds: To ensure nesting birds are safeguarded during works and avoid a potential offence under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), no clearance of suitable vegetation should be undertaken during the bird-nesting season (1st March to 31st August inclusive). If this is not practicable, any potential nesting habitat to be removed should be first checked by a competent ecologist in order to determine the location of any active nests. Any active nests identified would then need to be cordoned off (minimum 5m buffer) and protected until the end of the nesting season or until the birds have fledged. These checking surveys would need to be carried out no more than three days in advance of vegetation clearance.

4.1.10 Biodiversity Net Gains: The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) encourages new developments to maximise the opportunities for biodiversity through incorporation of enhancement measures. The proposals present the opportunity to deliver ecological enhancements at a suitable off-site location for the benefit of local biodiversity, thereby making a positive contribution towards the broad objectives of national conservation priorities and the local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP). These measures are detailed below:

- It is recommended that where practicable, new planting within the new development land be comprised of native species of local provenance, including trees and shrubs appropriate to the local area. Part of the site has been identified as a 'landscape planting area' and could be used for this purpose, partly off-setting the impact of woodland loss on the northern boundary. Where ornamental species or cultivars are to be used, these should include species of benefit to wildlife, including nectar or pollen rich flowering species, or fruiting species that will provide foraging opportunities for birds, small mammals and invertebrates;
- Opportunities should be sought for establishment of long-sward wildflower grassland strips within the margins of the site. This will provide a flowering resource for invertebrates, in addition to cover for small mammals;
- It is recommended that a number of bat boxes be incorporated within the proposed development. The provision of bat boxes will provide new roosting opportunities

for bats in the area, such as Soprano Pipistrelle, a national Priority Species. So as to maximise their potential use, the bat boxes should ideally be situated on suitable trees within the off-site land, erected as high up as possible and sited in sheltered wind-free areas that are exposed to the sun for part of the day, facing a south-east, south or south-westerly direction; and

- A number of bird nesting boxes should be incorporated within the proposed development, thereby increasing nesting opportunities for birds within the local area. These should be sited on trees within the off-site land, and should look to provide nesting opportunities for urban species such as House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*, House Martin *Delichon urbicum* and Swift *Apus apus*.

4.1.11 Greater Manchester Combined Authority's (GMCA's) policy with regards to biodiversity net gain is set out in their Supplementary Planning Document 'GMCA Biodiversity Net Gain'⁴ and requires that applications for new development under the Town and Country Planning Act are accompanied by a Net Gain Assessment demonstrating a 10% net gain in biodiversity value.[

4.1.12 Due to the relatively high baseline value of the woodland which will be lost under the proposals, combined with the low value of the proposed habitats (which will be mostly hard standing and buildings), it is unlikely that it will be possible to achieve the required net gain within the site proposals alone. It is therefore recommended that further opportunities are sought for off-site biodiversity gain. It is understood that such opportunities could be available within the wider ownership at the site, in the adjacent waste facility to the south and it is recommended that these are explored further. A biodiversity net assessment should be compiled using the latest DEFRA metric (version 3.0), setting out the calculations of net gain. Biodiversity enhancements should be secured thorough the extension of the red line area, or through a suitable management agreement.

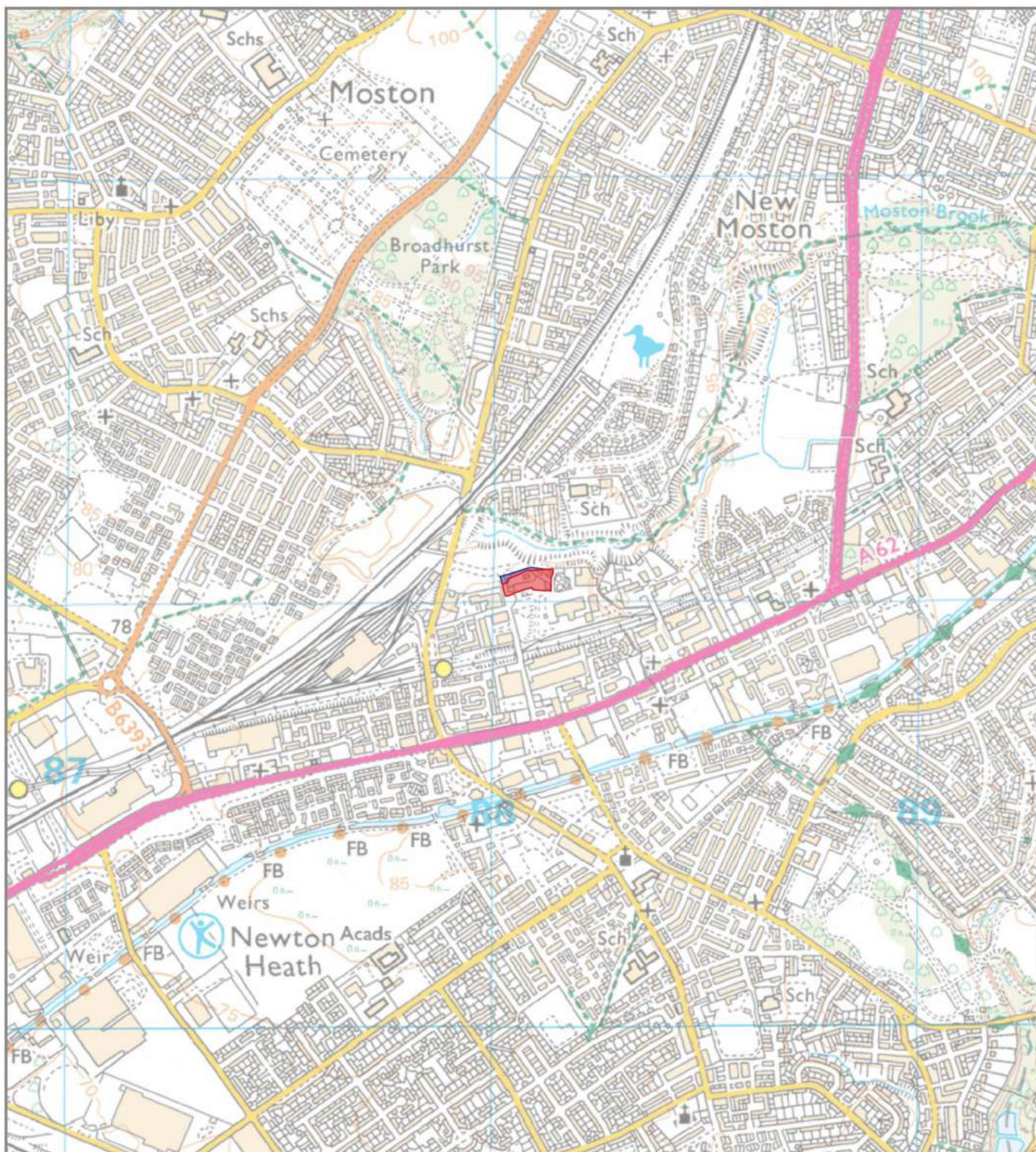
⁴ GMCA Biodiversity Net Gain; Guidance for Greater Manchester (February 2021)

5 Conclusions

- 5.1 Aspect Ecology has carried out an ecological appraisal of the proposed development, based on the results of a desktop study and Phase 1 habitat and general faunal survey.
- 5.2 The available information confirms that no statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designations are present within or adjacent to the site, and none of the designations within the surrounding area are likely to be adversely affected by development at the site.
- 5.3 The Phase 1 habitat survey has established that habitats at the site largely appear to be of low ecological value and do not form a constraint to development at the site, with habitats of elevated value that will be lost being offset through new off-site habitat creation. Similarly, opportunities for faunal species are also limited, although the site provides potential habitat for bats, common birds and mammals (including Hedgehog).
- 5.4 This note provides recommendations for precautionary safeguards in regard to habitats and faunal species, together with a number of measures to deliver ecological enhancements at the site, and sets out a mechanism for providing a net gains in terms of biodiversity.

Plan 6323/ECO1:

Site Location



Key:

- Site Boundary
- Ownership Boundary

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Reliance Street, Manchester

Site Location

6323/ECO1

September 2021

PROJECT

TITLE

DRAWING NO.

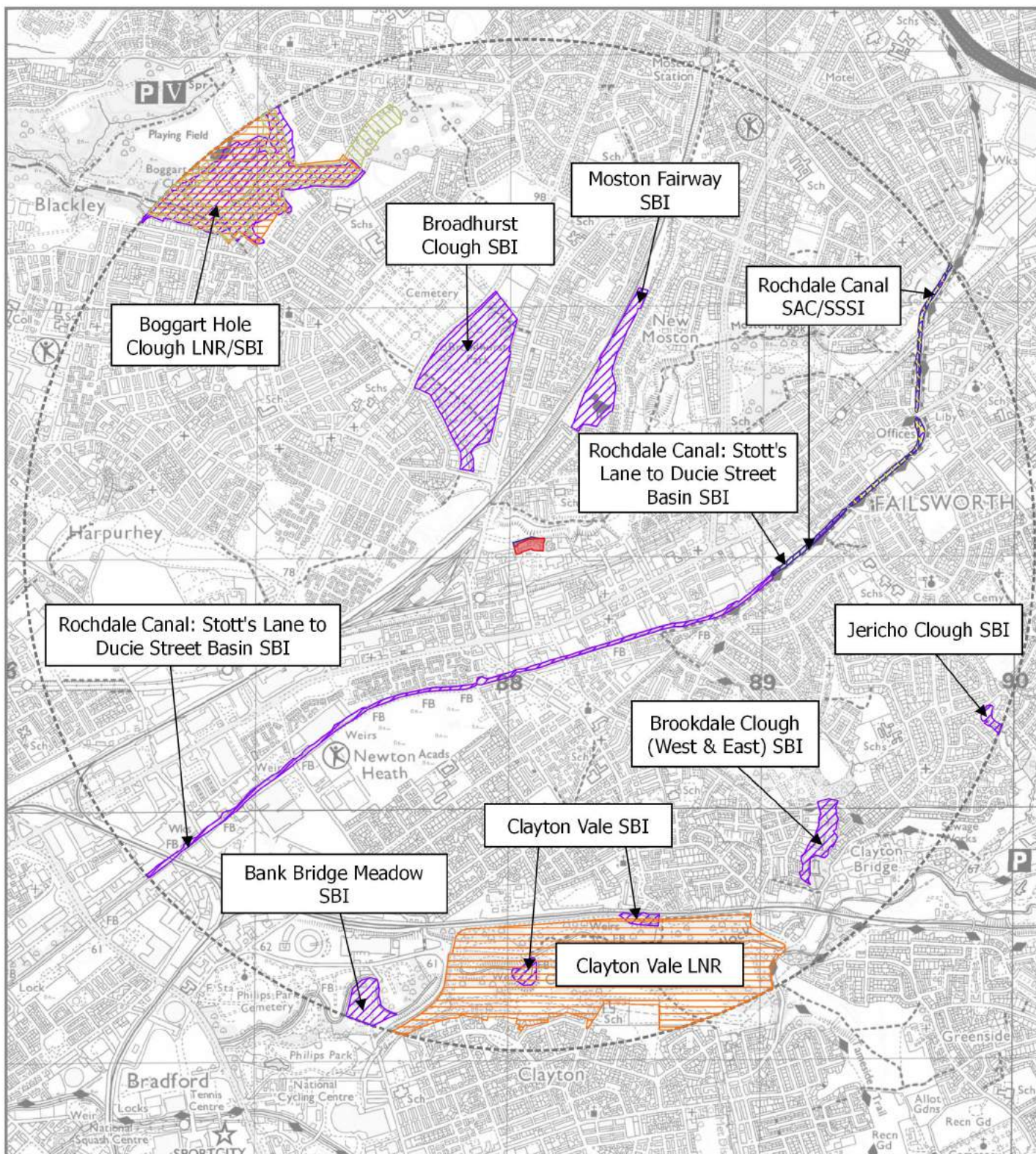
REV

DATE



Plan 6323/ECO2:

Ecological Designations



Key:

- Site Boundary
- Ownership Boundary
- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)
- Local Nature Reserves (LNR)
- Site of Biological Importance (SBI)
- Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland
- 2km Buffer

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Ecological Designations

6323/ECO2

September 2021



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TITLE

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Plan 6323/ECO3:

Habitats and Ecological Features



Key:

- Existing Red Line Boundary
- Indicative land within client ownership
- Building
- Hardstanding
- Gravel Area
- Dense Scrub
- Amenity Grassland
- Semi-Improved Grassland
- Woodland
- Japanese Knotweed
- * Himalayan Balsam
- Tree

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Habitats and Ecological Features

6323/ECO3

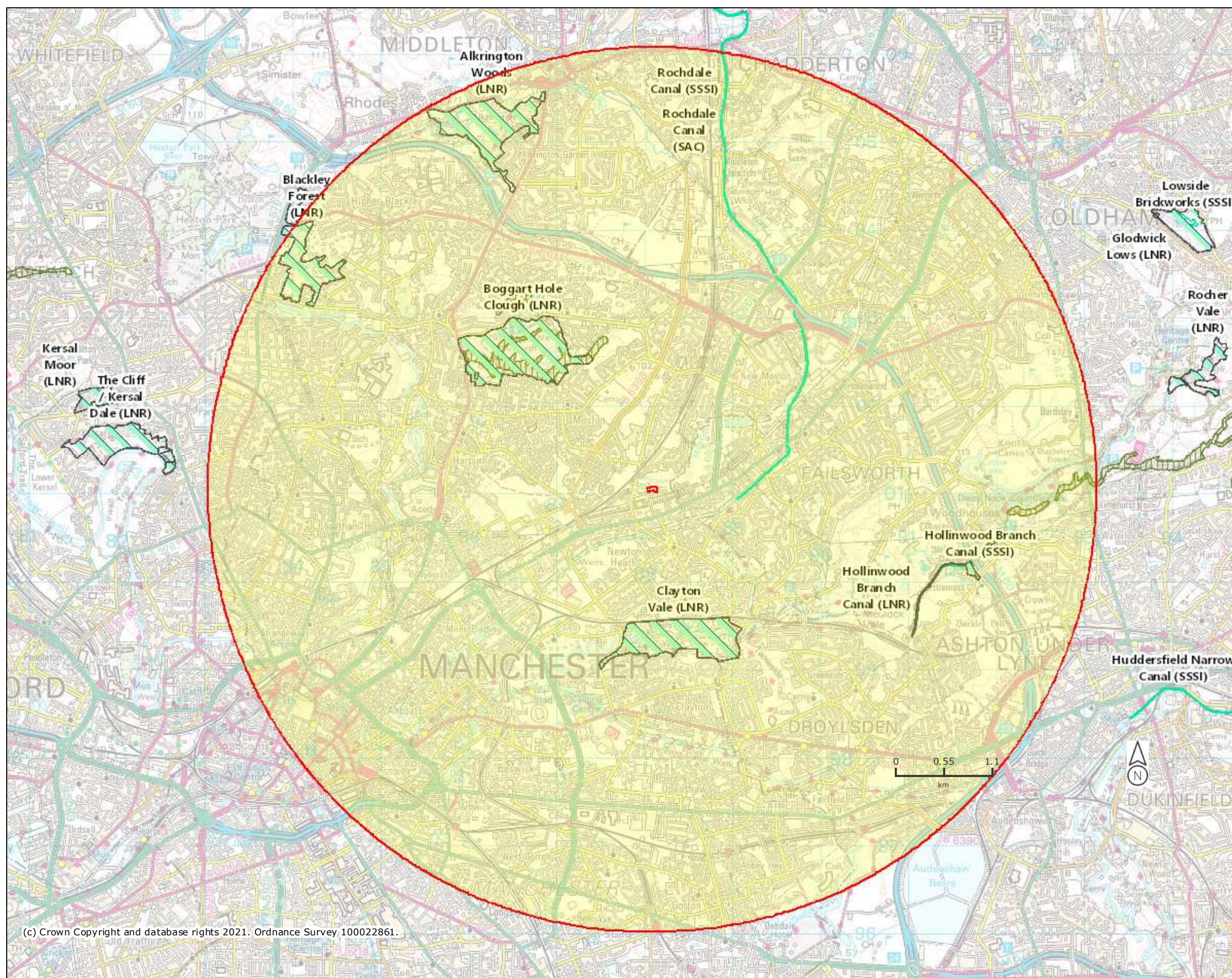


October 2021

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DATE

Appendix 6323/1:

Desk Study Information



Legend

- Local Nature Reserves (England)
- National Nature Reserves (England)
- Ramsar Sites (England)
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (England)
- Special Areas of Conservation (England)
- Possible Special Areas of Conservation (England)
- Special Protection Areas (England)
- Potential Special Protection Areas (England)

Ancient Woodland (England)

- Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland
- Ancient Replanted Woodland

Projection = OSGB36

xmin = 376600

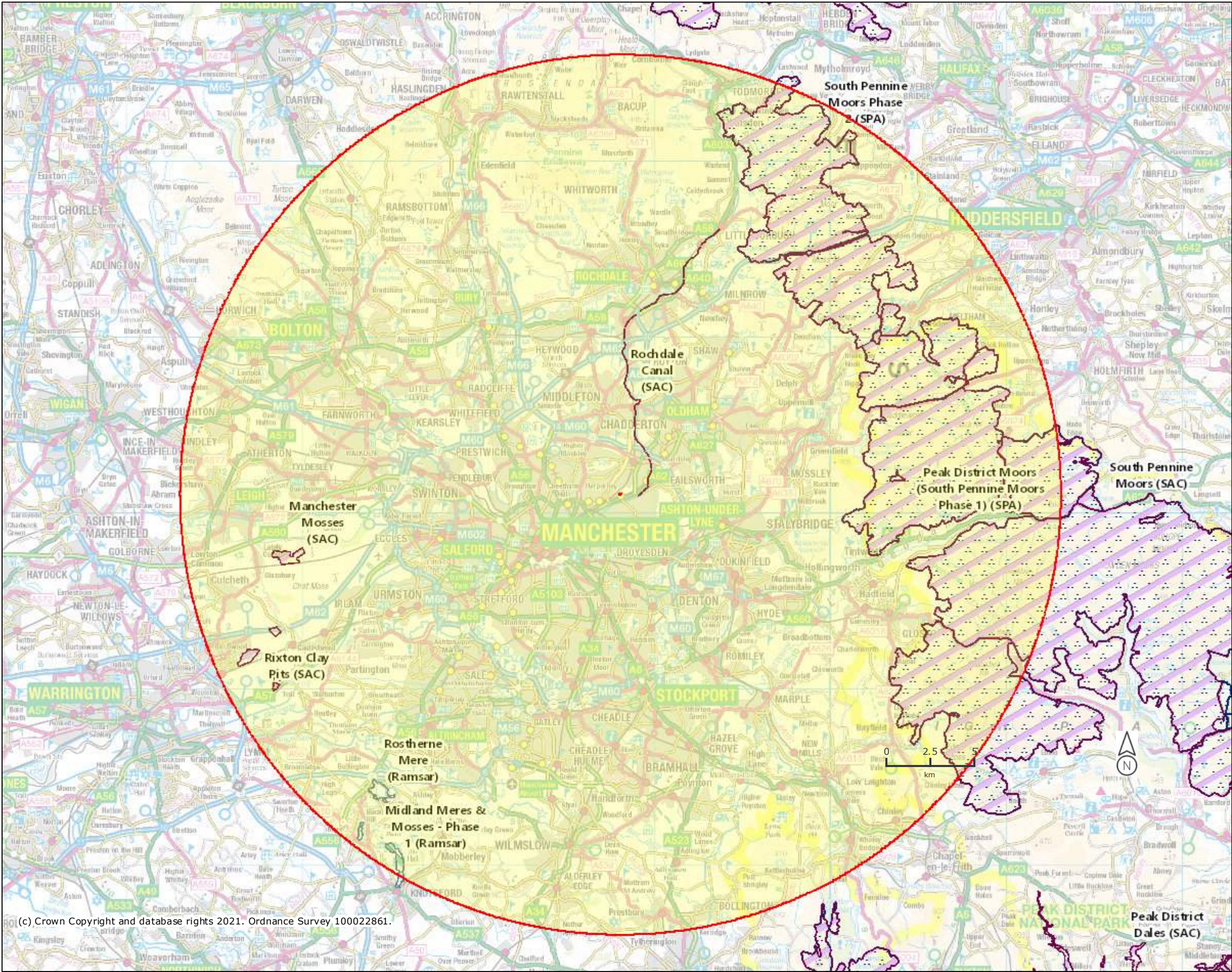
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xmax = 398900

ymax = 406700

Map produced by MAGIC on 6 September, 2021.

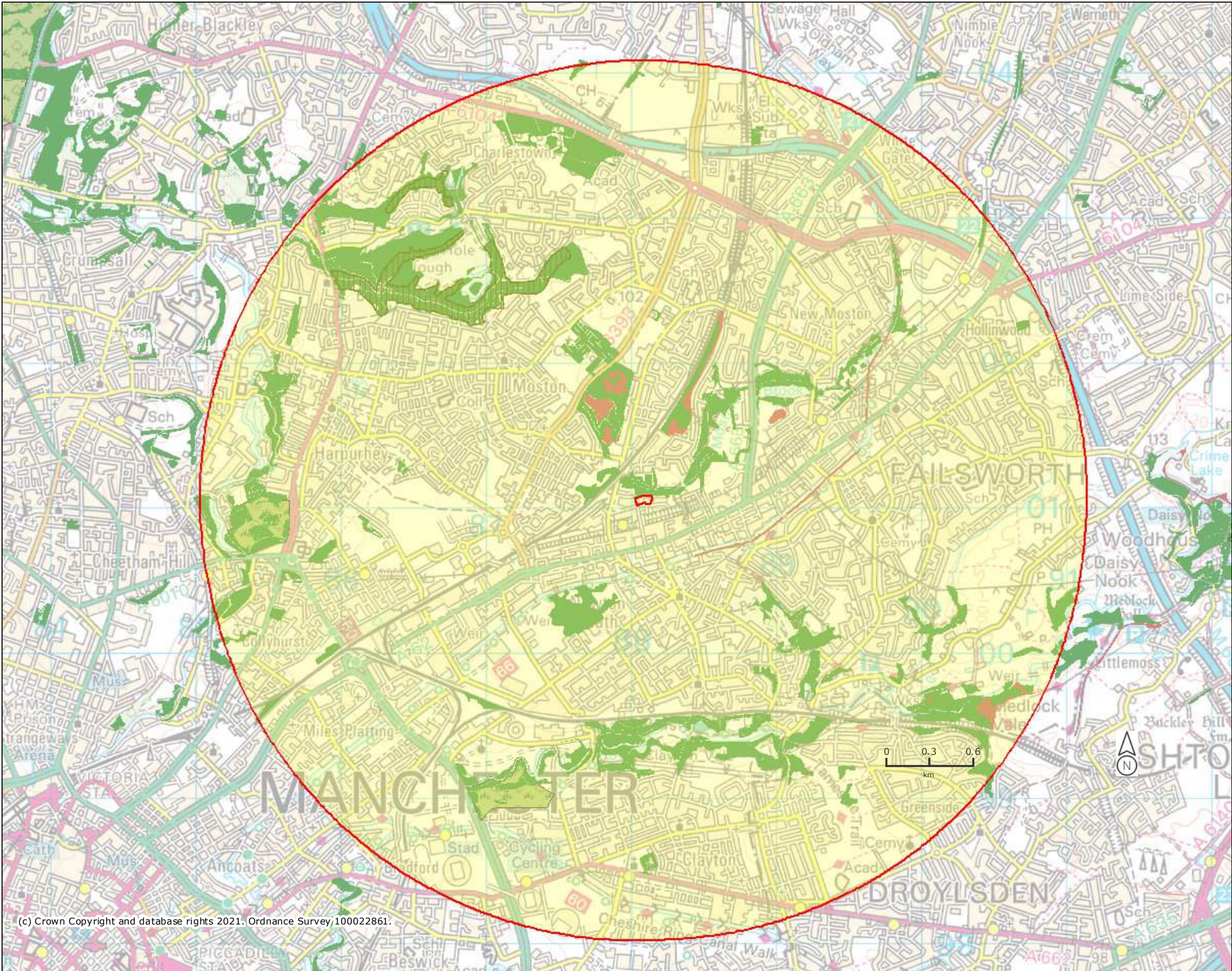
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Legend

- Ramsar Sites (England)
- Proposed Ramsar Sites (England)
- Special Areas of Conservation (England)
- Possible Special Areas of Conservation (England)
- Special Protection Areas (England)
- Potential Special Protection Areas (England)

Projection = OSGB36
xmin = 332100
ymin = 375000
xmax = 443700
ymax = 428000
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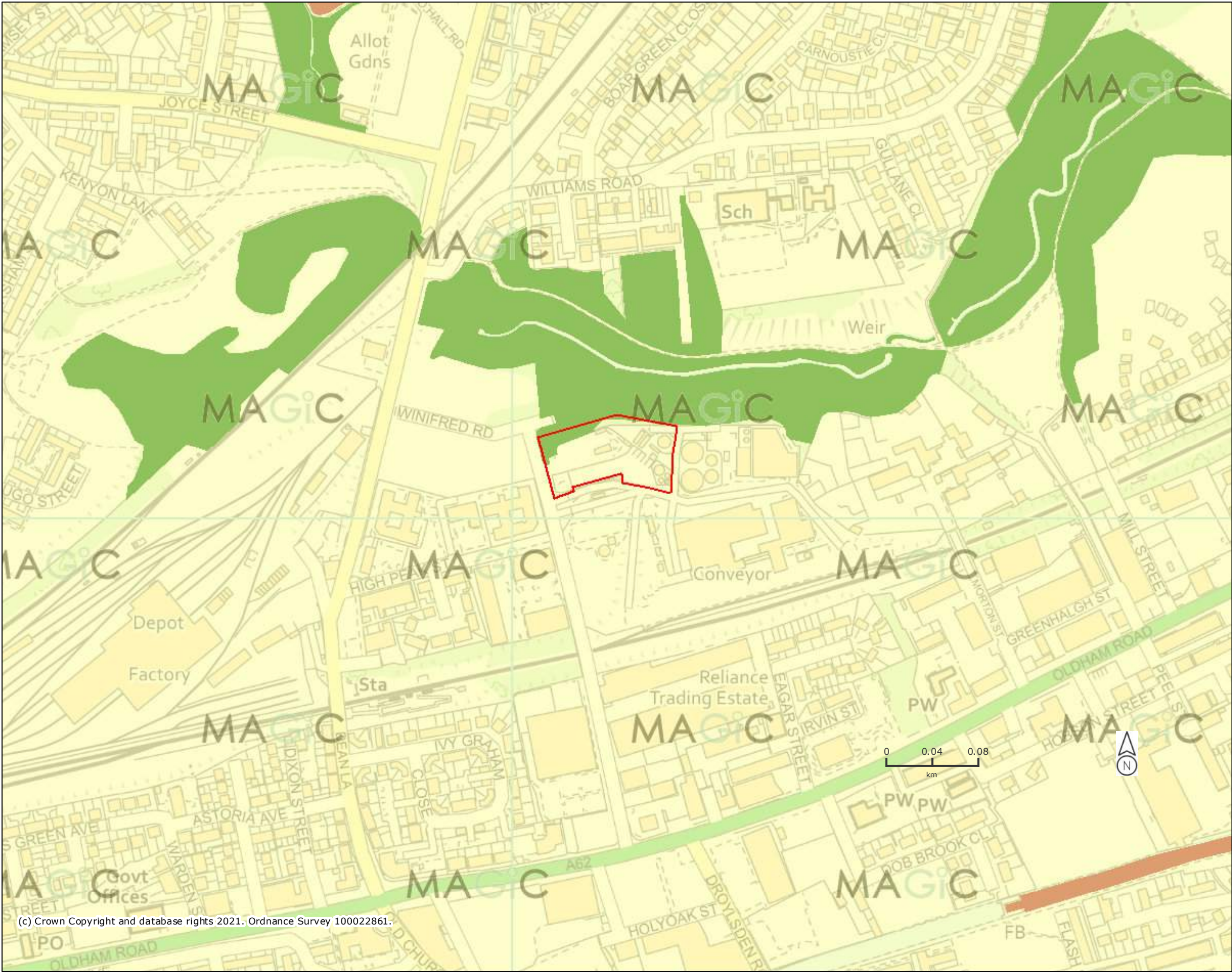


Legend

- Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Fens (England)
- Ancient Woodland (England)**
 - Ancient and Semi-Natural Woodland
 - Ancient Replanted Woodland
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland (England)
- Woodpasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat (England)

Projection = OSGB36
xmin = 381100
ymin = 397700
xmax = 394700
ymax = 404600

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Legend

- Priority Habitat Inventory - Lowland Fens (England)
- Priority Habitat Inventory - Deciduous Woodland (England)

Projection = OSGB36
 xmin = 387200
 ymin = 400600
 xmax = 388900
 ymax = 401500

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ecology • landscape planning • arboriculture

The logo for Aspect Ecology, featuring the word "aspect" in a white, lowercase, sans-serif font. A thin, white, diagonal line is positioned above the "t", extending from the top of the letter to the right.

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