



Manchester City FC

Project Taverna

Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA)

For and on behalf of:

Manchester City FC

Project Ref:	Project Taverna EclA
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Executive Summary

This Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) focuses on the proposed development at the Etihad Campus site, Manchester, M11 3FF.

A full planning application for the redevelopment of the site to provide a new Immersive Events Space and associated external works will be submitted to Manchester City Council.

The site comprises developed land, sealed surface (hardstanding and buildings), with only negligible scattered ruderal vegetation.

The data search returned no statutory designated sites within 2 km of the site. One internationally designated site (Rochdale Canal SAC) is located approximately 3 km north-east, but no adverse impacts are anticipated due to the presence of a concrete wall separating the site from the adjacent Ashton Canal and the small scale of the proposals. Three non-statutory designated sites (Sites of Biological Importance) are present within 1 km, the closest being the Ashton Canal SBI immediately adjacent (15 m north).

Both the site and adjacent habitats have limited potential for protected and priority species due to the predominance of hardstanding and the urban context.

The pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitat is zero habitat units due to its classification as urban – developed land; sealed surface. As such, the mandatory biodiversity net gain condition is understood to not apply, and no onsite or offsite biodiversity units/credits are required.

With the implementation of the mitigation strategy described within this EclA, the proposed development would be in conformity with relevant planning policy and legislation (see Appendix C). The mitigation strategy could be controlled through appropriately worded planning conditions devised to:

- Secure the production and implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to ensure protection of adjacent features (including the Ashton Canal SBI) during construction, incorporating best practice measures for dust suppression, pollution prevention, noise control, lighting management, and protection of protected species.
- Require implementation of precautionary working methods (e.g., pre-works checks for badgers, sensitive lighting design for bats, mammal escape routes in fencing, and hand-checks/dismantling of potential refugia) and voluntary biodiversity enhancements (e.g., bat boxes, bird boxes, hedgehog highways, or tree planting) to deliver benefits in line with Manchester Core Strategy Policy EN 9 (Green Infrastructure), Policy EN 15 (Biodiversity and Geological Conservation), and Places for Everyone Policy JP-G8 (Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity).

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. Overview

- 1.1.1. This Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) has been prepared by Joshua Evans on behalf of Manchester City Football Club for the proposed development at the Etihad Campus, Manchester, M11 3FF (hereafter referred to as the Site).
- 1.1.2. A full planning application for the redevelopment of the Site to provide a new Immersive Events Space and associated external works will be submitted to Manchester City Council, hereafter referred to as the Proposed Works. The Site is a former construction storage area (used during the delivery of Co-op Live) that has been gravelled over following the removal of temporary cabins and structures. The Site is centred on approximate National Grid Reference SJ 86914 98703 and its location is shown in **Figure 1** below.



Figure 1. Site location including red line boundary

1.2. Context

- 1.2.1. The Site that is the subject of this report is comprised entirely of developed land, sealed surface, with gravelled and tarmac hardstanding with occasional ruderal vegetation as well as several metal storage containers. It is bounded by urban development in all directions, including the Etihad Stadium immediately to the west and the Co-op Live arena 70 m north. The Ashton Canal separates the Site from the Co-op Live and is found immediately north.

There is a grass verge with a line of trees adjacent to the Site boundary in the east. No trees, or waterbodies are present within the Site boundary.

- 1.2.2. No previous ecological surveys specific to the current redline boundary are known to have been undertaken. The wider Etihad Campus area has undergone significant development in recent years, with the Site itself having been heavily disturbed and gravelled.

1.3. Purpose

- 1.3.1. The purpose of this report is to:

- Using available background data and results of field surveys, describe and evaluate the ecological resources present within the likely 'zone of influence' (Zol) of the proposed development;
- Describe the actual or potentially significant ecological effects as a result of the proposed development;
- Where appropriate, describe mitigation and enhancement proposals, together with planning controls to ensure their delivery, to ensure conformity with policy and legislation detailed in **Appendix C**.

- 1.3.2. This report is valid for 18 months from January 2025. However, should the Proposed Works be subject to extensive change in location or development process, re-consultation on the validity of this report may be required.

1.4. Quality Assurance

- 1.4.1. This report has been prepared in accordance with the relevant British Standard: BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity: Code of Practice for Planning and Development. It has been prepared by an experienced ecologist who is an Associate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM).

2. SUMMARY OF RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND PLANNING POLICY

2.1.1. The relevant legislation and planning policy regarding ecological features are summarised below. Full details of planning policy can be found in **Appendix C**.

Legislation

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended);
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('Habitat Regulations');
- The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000;
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006;
- The Hedgerows Regulations 1997; and
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

National Planning Policy

- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), December 2024: Paragraph 11; and Section 15.
- Office of the Deputy Prime Minister (ODPM) Circular 06/2005: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation - Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System.

Local Planning Policy

Manchester Core Strategy Development Plan Document (2012–2027) – adopted July 2012 and Places for Everyone (PfE) Joint Development Plan Document – adopted March 2024. Policies relevant to nature conservation include:

From Manchester Core Strategy (2012):

- **Policy EN 9: Green Infrastructure** – Requires development to protect, enhance, and create green infrastructure networks, including open spaces, parks, and natural features that support biodiversity and ecosystem services.
- **Policy EN 15: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation** – Protects and enhances biodiversity and geological interests. Development must avoid significant harm to protected/priority habitats and species, deliver net gains where possible, and incorporate mitigation/compensation. It aligns with national requirements for protecting designated sites and delivering BNG.

From Places for Everyone (2024):

- **Policy JP-G8: Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity** – Requires a measurable net gain in biodiversity of at least 10% (consistent with national mandatory BNG), alongside protection and enhancement of geodiversity and ecological networks.

3. METHODOLOGY

3.1. Scoping

- 3.1.1. The scope of works has been informed by the description and assessment of importance of ecological features, in line with CIEEM guidance, as well as the considerations of opportunities and constraints to the proposed development and mitigation and enhancement requirements to ensure conformity with relevant legislation and policy (see **Appendix C**).
- 3.1.2. This EclA has been informed by the following:
- Data search from Greater Manchester Local Records Centre (GMLRC);
 - UK Habitat Classification survey undertaken in December 2025.
- 3.1.3. The following search areas around the site boundary were applied:
- 1 km for records of protected species/licences and non-statutory designated sites;
 - 2 km for nationally statutory designated site; and
 - 10 km for international/European statutory designated sites.

3.2. Data Search

- 3.2.1. A data search was requested from the GMLRC for records relating to protected species, non-statutory designated sites and habitats within 1 km of the Site. Only species recorded within the last ten years were included in the assessment, unless deemed necessary.
- 3.2.2. An online review of mapping and imaging resources and a data search (including MAGIC <https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>) was completed for designated areas within 2 km radius and of internationally important designated areas within 10 km of the Site. Aerial photography and other resources were used to scope the habitat survey at an appropriate scale and level of detail. The MAGIC website was also reviewed with regard to pond data relating to great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) within 500 m of the Site, as well as European Protected Species (EPS) licences within a 1 km radius of the Site.
- 3.2.3. Further inspection of aerial photographs from Google Earth (www.maps.google.co.uk) was also undertaken to provide additional context and identify any features of potential importance for nature conservation in the wider environment.

3.3. UK Habitat Classification Survey

- 3.3.1. A habitat survey was conducted on 5th December 2025. The field survey method was based on the UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) methodology as per the UKHab V2 User Manual (2023).
- 3.3.2. Any signs of invasive species listed on Schedule 9 on WCA 1981 such as Japanese knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens grandiflora*) and giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*) were recorded.

3.3.3. The potential for the site to support legally protected and notable species has been assessed using the desk study results combined with observations during the field survey. The assessment of habitat suitability for protected and notable species was based on knowledge and judgement of an experienced professional informed by sources of guidance on habitat suitability assessment for key animal groups including:

- Amphibians (Gent and Gibson, 2003);
- Badgers (Harris et al., 1991; and Roper, 2010);
- Bats (Collins, 2023; and Mitchell-Jones, 2004);
- Birds (wintering and breeding) (Gilbert et al., 1998; and Bibby et al., 2000);
- Other notable mammals; including otter and water vole;
- Reptiles (Gent and Gibson, 1998; and Froglife, 1999); and
- Terrestrial Invertebrates (Drake et al., 2007; and Kirby, 2001).

3.4. Personnel

3.4.1. The survey was undertaken by ecologist Joshua Evans. Joshua has three years of experience in ecological consultancy and is an associate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), and has experience of undertaking habitat surveys and protected species surveys across the UK.

3.5. Limitations

- 3.5.1. Species records used as desk study data are not often collected as a result of systematic surveys and therefore geographic, temporal, and species coverage are not often representative. This means that a lack of records of a species in an area does not necessarily mean an absence of this species.
- 3.5.2. An ecological survey can only identify what is present on site at the time it is conducted, habitat coverage and usage by species can change over time.
- 3.5.3. The survey was conducted outside the optimal time of the year for plant species identification (April to September), therefore certain plant species which may usually be found on Site would not have been observed.

3.6. Report Qualification

3.6.1. The above surveys have been completed in line with best practice guidance and methodologies current at the time of commissioning. Site circumstances, scientific knowledge or methodological requirements can change during the course of a project, and these external factors may impact on the scope of subsequent work requirements.

4. RESULTS AND EVALUATION

4.1. Overview

- 4.1.1. This section sets out the results of the desk study and UKHab survey. A summary of relevant biodiversity legislation is provided in **Appendix C**.

4.2. Designated Sites

Statutory Designated Sites

- 4.2.1. Reference to the MAGIC map application confirms that there is one internationally important designated site for wildlife within a 10 km radius of the Site, Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which is found 3 km north-east.
- 4.2.2. Rochdale Canal SAC have been designated for supporting a significant population of floating water-plantain *Luronium natans* in a botanically diverse waterplant community
- 4.2.3. The Proposed Works are relatively small in nature. The Ashton Canal is hydrologically connected to the Rochdale Canal, however there is a concrete wall between the Site boundary and the canal which acts as a barrier to any run-off pollution. Overall, adverse impacts are not anticipated to Rochdale Canal SAC due to the Proposed Works, therefore internationally designated sites are not considered further within this report.

Nationally Designated Sites

- 4.2.4. References to the MAGIC map application and GMLRC data found no nationally designated sites within 2 km of the Site.
- 4.2.5. The Site does not lie within an Impact Risk Zone for any Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs).

Non-Statutory Designated Sites

- 4.2.6. There are three non-statutory designated sites found within 1 km of the Site, according to data returned from GMLRC and outlined below in **Table 1**.

Table 1: Non-statutory designated sites within 1 km of the Site

Site Name	Designation	Location	Key
Ashton Canal	SBI	15 m north of the Site boundary	SBI – Site of Biological Importance
Bank Bridge Meadow	SBI	0.6 km north-east of the Site	
Rochdale Canal	SBI	1 km north-west of the Site	

- 4.2.7. The Ashton Canal and Rochdale Canal SBIs have been designated their importance to aquatic plants, birds, invertebrates and fish, whereas Bank Bridge Meadow SBI has been designated for its mixed woodland and grassland habitats.
- 4.2.8. Given the presence of three non-statutory designated sites within a 1 km radius of the Site, non-statutory designated sites shall be considered further within this report. Please refer to **Section 4** for further information.

4.3. Habitats

Waterbodies and Watercourses

- 4.3.1. There are two waterbodies located within a 500 m radius of the Site, Ashton Canal 15 m north of the Site, and a pond located 270 m north-east of the Site.
- 4.3.2. For further information regarding waterbodies and watercourses within a 500 m radius of the Site, please refer to **Table 4** below and the map in **Appendix C**.

Table 2: Waterbodies within 500 m of the Site

Waterbody ID	Grid Reference	Orientation	Description
W1	SJ 86894 98774	15 m north of the Site	Flowing canal
W2	SJ 87073 99007	270 m north-east of the Site	Pond

On-Site Habitats

- 4.3.3. The Site comprised two key habitat types: Other developed land u1b6 and buildings u1b5.
- 4.3.4. The results of the habitat survey are detailed below in **Table 3**. Secondary codes are included in line with the UKHab methodology to add information about habitat origin and modifications, and add information on environmental context, management and land use.
- 4.3.5. Please refer to **Appendix A** for the UKHab map.

Table 3: Habitats present within the Site

UKHab Classification	Description	Photograph
<p>Other developed land u1b6 Secondary codes: 81 – Ruderal or ephemeral 82- Vacant or derelict land 804 – Car park</p>	<p>The Site consisted mostly of hardstanding, with tarmac and gravel providing a relatively impermeable barrier.</p> <p>There were occasional plants found growing (covering less than 10% of the available area) including perennial rye grass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>), ribwort plantain (<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>), ragwort (<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>), willowherb sp. (<i>Epilobium</i> sp.) and dandelion (<i>Taraxacum officinale</i>).</p>	 
<p>Buildings u1b5</p>	<p>There are temporary metal storage containers on Site. These structure have negligible bat roosting potential, being regularly disturbed, with no bat roosting features such as entrance holes.</p>	

4.4. Protected and Notable Species

Amphibians

- 4.4.1. Desk study results from the MAGIC website revealed there were no previously granted European Protected Species (EPS) licences for great crested newts within a 1 km radius of the Site.
- 4.4.2. No records were returned from the GCER desk study of great crested newts or other species of amphibian within a 1 km radius of the Site in the last 10 years.
- 4.4.3. Great crested newts spend a proportion of the year in aquatic habitats with no/ negligible flow, in which they breed. The remainder of the year is spent foraging and sheltering in terrestrial habitats (Inns, 2009). Great crested newts are capable of travelling significant distances (in excess of 1 km) between aquatic and terrestrial habitat (Jahle et al, 2011).
- 4.4.4. The Ashton Canal W1 immediately north of the Site is not considered to suitable breeding habitat for great crested newt, being flowing and containing fish which predate on great crested newt eggs/nymphs. There is a pond W2 located 270 m north-east of the Site which is separated from the Site by urban development and the A6010, Alan Turing Way. This is a busy road which would act as a significant barrier to commuting great crested newts.
- 4.4.5. Due to the lack of records, the unsuitable nature of Ashton Canal for breeding great crested newt and the presence of significant barriers between the Site and pond W2, the Proposed Works are not anticipated to adversely impact great crested newts populations. The Site is judged to be of **negligible importance** to amphibians. However, it is possible that the amphibians are occasionally found on Site and could be harmed during the works, this species group is therefore considered further considered in **Section 5**.

Bats

- 4.4.6. Desk study results from the MAGIC website revealed no active EPS licence for bats granted within a 1 km radius of the Site.
- 4.4.7. The data returned from GMLRC revealed the presence of five bat records in the last 10 years, relating to two species of bat, common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) and soprano pipistrelle (*P. pygmaeus*). The nearest record is for a common pipistrelle. found approximately 0.65 km north-west of the Site in 2021. There was no record of a roost returned.
- 4.4.8. There is suitable foraging habitat for bats around Site in the form of the Ashton Canal which acts as a linear feature, and also acts as suitable commuting habitat. There is also a grass bank with a line of trees immediately east of the Site which provides suitable habitat for commuting and foraging bats. The trees had no suitable features for roosting bats such as split limbs or loose bark. The only vegetation on Site is the occasional weed species, therefore there is no suitable habitat for commuting, foraging or roosting bats within the Site itself. No field signs of roosting bats were recorded during the survey.
- 4.4.9. Owing to suitable commuting and foraging habitat adjacent to the Site, the Site is judged to be of **local importance** for bats and this species group has therefore been considered further within this report, with recommendations and mitigation detailed in **Section 5**.

Badgers

- 4.4.10. The data returned from GMLRC revealed the presence of two records relating to badger (*Meles meles*) within 1 km of the Site, the nearest being found 0.8 km south-east of the Site in 2021. The data search also returned records for nine setts within 1 km. These were historical, being more than 10 years old, however badgers can use the same setts for decades. The nearest sett record was for one found 0.2 km north-east of the Site in 2012.
- 4.4.11. Woodland copses, scrub and hedgerows are preferred locations for setts as they allow badgers to emerge from the setts inconspicuously and allow young cubs to play near the sett entrances without being visible to predators (Neal & Cheeseman, 1996). The badger's preferred food source is the earthworm and they predominantly forage on areas of grassland and pasture. Badgers are omnivorous and they supplement their diet with carrion and fruits from hedgerows, trees and shrubs (Neal & Cheeseman, 1996 and Roper, 2010).
- 4.4.12. Habitats within the Site are not considered suitable to support badgers, being developed land, sealed surface. However, it is possible that badgers may use the Site for commuting, and there is the possibility that a badgers could make use of the grass bank immediately east of the Site for building a sett and foraging.
- 4.4.13. No signs of badgers or their setts were identified during the field survey. The Site itself is judged to be of **negligible importance** to badger. However the presence of recent records as well as local setts indicates that badgers could use the Site occasionally as a thoroughfare, or could use the grass bank adjacent to the Site for sett-building. Badgers have been considered further in **Section 5**.

Birds

- 4.4.14. The GMLRC data search returned 38 records of 13 bird species within 1 km of the Site in the last 10 years. This includes Schedule 1 bird species such as barn owl (*Tyto alba*) and peregrine (*Falco peregrinnus*), with the nearest record for a peregrine found flying over the Site in 2019. Although it is possible that kingfisher (*Alcedo atthis*) breed nearby along the Ashton Canal immediately north of the Site, the Proposed Works are not anticipated to affect the watercourse or it's banks, being separated from the canal by a concrete wall. Therefore, adverse impacts to kingfisher are not expected as part of the works.
- 4.4.15. There were also records for bird species which are considered a Species of Conservation Concern, being on the UK Red List for Birds and named in s41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, such as starling (*Sturnus vulgaris*), house sparrow (*Passer domesticus*) and lapwing (*Vanellus Vanellus*). The nearest record was for a lapwing seen flying over the Site in 2019.
- 4.4.16. All wild birds, their nests, eggs, and young are protected under the WCA 1981, with some species receiving additional local protected status.
- 4.4.17. The habitats on Site are not considered suitable for nesting, the Site is therefore judged as being of negligible **importance** for birds. However, there is the potential for nesting birds to be found during construction, for example on building equipment, therefore they have been considered further in **Section 5**.

Hazel Dormouse

- 4.4.18. Desk study results from the MAGIC website revealed no active EPS licence for hazel dormouse granted within a 1 km radius of the Site.
- 4.4.19. The data search from GCER returned no records of hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*) within a 1 km radius of the Site.
- 4.4.20. Hazel dormouse is a nocturnal species and usually found in deciduous woodland and scrub, where it feeds on a wide variety of arboreal foods such as flowers and fruits (Bright et al., 2006). During hibernation, dormice descend to the ground.
- 4.4.21. The hardstanding habitat on Site is not considered suitable to support hazel dormouse. The Site is also not well connected to the wider landscape through linear features such as hedgerows that could be used for dispersal.
- 4.4.22. Due to the lack of records, the unsuitable habitats located within the Site and it not being well connected to the wider landscape, the Site is judged to be of **negligible importance** to hazel dormice and will not be considered further within this report.

Reptiles

- 4.4.23. The data returned from GMLRC returned no records of reptiles from within 1 km of the Site over the last 10 years.
- 4.4.24. Reptiles are found using a mosaic of habitats with a varied vegetation structure providing suitable conditions for both sheltering and foraging (Edgar et al, 2010).
- 4.4.25. There were no hibernacula such as log piles seen on Site during the field survey. The hardstanding on Site could provide adequate areas for reptiles to bask. There is some connectivity to the wider landscape through the Ashton Canal which could be used by commuting grass snakes (*Natrix helvetica*).
- 4.4.26. Despite the lack of nearby records returned, given the suitable basking habitat within the Site and connectivity to the wider landscape via the Ashton Canal, the Site is considered to be of **up to local importance** for reptiles and this group will be considered further within **Section 5**.

Otters

- 4.4.27. The data search from GMLRC returned no records of otter (*Lutra lutra*) within a 1 km radius of the Site.
- 4.4.28. The otter is usually found in areas where there is clean freshwater, food resources and secluded areas of vegetation to rest and raise young. Rivers, canals and lakes are all ideal otter habitat. UK populations are internationally important, due to the decline of otter across their western European range (Battersby, 2005).
- 4.4.29. The Ashton Canal immediately north of the Site provides suitable foraging and commuting habitat for otter. The Site itself does not provide suitable habitats for otters to create holts, being entirely developed land, sealed surface.
- 4.4.30. Despite the lack of local records, there is the potential for the Site to be used as a thoroughfare by otter due to the Ashton Canal immediately north. Overall, the Site itself is

of **negligible importance** for otter, nevertheless they have been further considered within this report, please see **Section 5**.

Water voles

- 4.4.31. The GMLRC data search did not return any records of water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*) within 1 km of the Site in the previous 10 years.
- 4.4.32. The water vole is usually found within 3 m of the water's edge, along densely vegetated banks of ditches, rivers, streams and marshes where it feeds on grasses, reeds and sedges (Harris and Yalden, 2008). In recent years this species has dramatically declined in numbers throughout much of its range due to the introduction of the American mink (*Neovison vison*) and habitat loss.
- 4.4.33. The Ashton Canal immediately north of the Site provides suitable breeding, foraging and commuting habitat for water vole.
- 4.4.34. The Site itself is of **negligible importance** for water vole, being entirely developed and, sealed surface. However, due to the Ashton Canal being located immediately north, and being suitable for breeding and foraging water voles, this species will be discussed further in this report, please see **Section 5**.

Invertebrates

- 4.4.35. The GMLRC records returned six records of white-letter hairstreak (*Satyrrium w-album*), a species listed under s41 of the Habitats and Species of Principal Importance (SPI) list.
- 4.4.36. This legislation makes SPIs a potential material consideration in the planning process though does not confer any direct legislative protection from harm. In any case, the Site is of **negligible importance** to invertebrates beyond the occasional pollinator species.
- 4.4.37. As there is no legal requirement to create specific mitigation strategies relating to invertebrates, this group will not be considered further in this report.

Flora

- 4.4.38. No evidence of plant species of conservation importance was recorded during the field surveys. No species on invasive and non-native species (INNS), species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended), such as Japanese knotweed or Himalayan balsam were found during the field survey. No records of INNS were returned from GMLRC within 1 km of the Site in the last 10 years.
- 4.4.39. The banks of the Ashton Canal immediately north of the Site are considered suitable for Himalayan balsam in particular, and it should be noted that the survey was undertaken during a sub-optimal time of year. However, the Proposed Works are not anticipated to impact the bank, therefore INNS will be not considered further within this report.

Other Species of Principal Importance

- 4.4.40. The GMLRC data search returned one record relating to one S7 Species of mammal that is not covered in the faunal groups listed above, namely hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*). This record was approximately 0.7 km north-west of the Site in 2020.

- 4.4.41. Hedgehogs are found in all low lowland habitats but have a preference for grassland in close proximity to woodland, scrub or hedgerows (Harris & Yalden, 2008). This species predated upon slugs, snails, insects and amphibians.
- 4.4.42. There is no suitable habitat on the Site itself which could support species such as hedgehog, the Site itself is therefore of **negligible importance** to hedgehog. However, the grass bank immediately east of the Site could provide suitable foraging habitat, therefore the Site could be used as a thoroughfare. Precautionary working methods have been included for hedgehog in **Section 5** as they are protected under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act, 1996, see **Appendix C**.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1. Summary of Key Ecological Considerations

5.1.1. **Table 4** provides a summary of the outcome of this EclA and presents the key ecological considerations for the Site (based on the results of desk study and field survey). High level recommendations for mitigation measures which are likely to be required to meet with legislative compliance are also included where necessary.

Table 4: Summary of Ecological Considerations

Ecological Feature	Key Consideration	Recommendations
Non-statutory Designated Areas	<p>The Site is located within 1 km of three non-statutory designated sites.</p> <p>The Proposed Works, which include a new Immersive Events Space on Site and associated external works, could have negative impacts on the non-statutory designated areas.</p>	<p>To mitigate any adverse effects, it is recommended that a CEMP be prepared and then implemented during the works to prevent adverse impacts on non-statutory designated sites near to the Site. This CEMP will include best practice measures to control noise, dust and pollution as a consequence of site clearance and development works, including but not limited to:</p> <ul style="list-style-type: none">• Plant and machinery will be turned off when not in use;• The use of wheel washes to reduce the trafficking of soil onto adjacent highways with prompt clearance as a remedial action;• The use of a bowser on-site during extended periods of dry weather to damp down dust;• Dust suppression measures for any on-site crushers; and• Bunding of fuel stores and material stockpiles to prevent pollution. The CEMP should also contain measures to protect disturbance to any protected species located adjacent to the development.
Amphibians	<p>No great crested newt records/licences within 1 km of the Site. The Ashton Canal immediately north is unsuitable for breeding (flowing, fish present) and pond W2 (270 m north-east of the Site) is separated by urban barriers/ a main road. Amphibians may occasionally pass through the Site.</p>	<p>Any works are unlikely to impact the favourable conservation status of amphibians, including great crested newt. Although unlikely to be present, should a great crested newt be identified during the construction works, all works must stop and a</p>

Ecological Feature	Key Consideration	Recommendations
		licence from Natural England granted before works can proceed.
Bats	No onsite roosting/foraging habitat (the buildings on Site are metal storage containers with no bat roosting features, and most of the Site is hardstanding). The adjacent Ashton Canal and tree line provides suitable foraging/commuting habitat. The data search returned five records of bat in the past 10 years, from common and soprano pipistrelle. within 1 km. Potential disturbance from lighting.	If external lighting is required (e.g., for security/access), produce a lighting plan per Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidance to minimise light spill on commuting/foraging routes (e.g. the adjacent canal/grass bank).
Badgers	Potential commuting/thoroughfare use, or sett/foraging on adjacent grass bank east. Recent records and historical setts within 1 km. No signs found during survey.	<p>A pre-works check for badgers no more than three weeks before works commence is considered proportionate to the nature of the works and is to be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist.</p> <p>Any entrance holes/ potential entrance holes are to be clearly demarked and protected 30 m from the works. Where works are within 30 m of a sett, works shall cease, and a suitably qualified ecologist contacted.</p> <p>During construction, precautionary mitigation measures will be implemented to minimise the potential for badger entering the construction site, killing or injury of badger and causing delays. These will include measures to avoid entrapment of badger, and other small mammals, within open excavations, trenches and pipeworks and management of the Site to discourage new sett building. Should contractors identify any diggings or mammal holes on the site during the construction works, all works must stop and advice sought from a suitable experienced and qualified ecologist.</p>
Birds	All birds, their nests and eggs, are protected by law and as such it is an offence to intentionally kill, injure, or take any wild bird; intentionally take, damage,	If a nest is found during the course of the works (for example on machinery and building equipment), works should immediately cease, and an

Ecological Feature	Key Consideration	Recommendations
	<p>or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built; and intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.</p> <p>There are no suitable habitats on Site suitable for nesting birds</p>	<p>ecologist should be contacted. An exclusion buffer should be set up around the nest, this buffer will depend on the sensitivity of the bird species and all contractors should be made aware of its location.</p>
Reptiles	<p>Reptiles are afforded protection under the WCA 1981 (as amended), although it is important to note that this legislation protects the species and not their habitat. Hardstanding on Site is suitable for basking reptiles and there connectivity to wider landscape for grass snake via Ashton Canal. No records within 1 km in the last 10 years and no hibernacula seen during the field survey.</p>	<p>Any piles of wood, brash and rubble discovered within the working area will be dismantled by hand and removed from the working area with an ecologist on hand to provide advice. This will occur between April and October, before reptiles have commenced hibernation. Where it is not essential to remove potential refuges in order to undertake the works, these will be left undisturbed and suitably distant from works (i.e 10 m).</p> <p>Plant and materials should be stored on hard standing and anything left on Site overnight should be carefully checked by hand the following morning before being moved.</p>
Otters	<p>In England and Wales, otter and their breeding sites and resting places are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (2010) and the WCA (1981) (as amended).</p> <p>The Site is a potential thoroughfare due to adjacent Ashton Canal. No records within 1 km of the Site in the last 10 years and no signs seen during the field survey.</p>	<p>Night time works should be avoided where possible.</p> <p>During construction, precautionary mitigation measures will be implemented similar to those for badgers above.</p>
Water vole	<p>Water vole are protected under the WCA (1981) (as amended) and are also protected from damage, destroying or disturbing a structure or place used for shelter or protection.</p>	<p>During construction, precautionary mitigation measures will be implemented similar to those for badgers above.</p>

Ecological Feature	Key Consideration	Recommendations
	Suitable breeding/foraging on Ashton Canal banks immediately north. No records within 1 km in the last 10 years.	
Other SPI species	Hedgehog are listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act, 2006, which are a material consideration in planning.	Any refuges which hedgehogs could utilise should be checked by a qualified ecologist and then dismantled by hand. Precautionary working methods for mammals should be implemented in the works plan, e.g. providing gaps in fencing, escape routes etc.

6. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN

6.1. Biodiversity Statement

- 6.1.1. The proposed development at the Etihad Campus site (Manchester, M11 3FF) comprises developed land, sealed surface, consisting of gravel and tarmac hardstanding and temporary storage containers. A site walkover confirmed that the only vegetation within the red line boundary is limited to occasional, ruderal vegetation emerging through cracks in the surface.
- 6.1.2. Under the Biodiversity Gain Regulations 2024, land that is wholly non-vegetated, man-made developed land, sealed surface and supports no habitat features capable of being surveyed or assigned a biodiversity unit value is considered 'zero baseline habitat' for the purposes of the statutory metric. As such, the Site qualifies as a BNG-exempt site, because:
- The baseline habitat value of the Site is 0 biodiversity units due to its fully artificial, non-ecological nature.
 - The development cannot result in biodiversity loss, as no habitats of ecological value are present to be impacted.
 - There is no requirement to deliver on-site or off-site biodiversity units, and submission of a statutory biodiversity metric is not necessary.
- 6.1.3. Given the above, the proposed development is considered exempt from providing Biodiversity Net Gain under the current regulations. No further BNG assessment or compensation measures are required.

7. CONCLUSIONS

The Site comprises entirely developed land, sealed surface (hardstanding and buildings) with only negligible ruderal vegetation, resulting in a pre-development biodiversity value of zero habitat units under the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. As such, it is understood that the mandatory biodiversity net gain condition does not apply.

The mitigation and enhancement strategy could be controlled through appropriately worded planning conditions devised to:

- Secure the production and implementation of a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP) to ensure protection of adjacent features (including the Ashton Canal SBI) during construction, incorporating best practice measures for dust suppression, pollution prevention, noise control, and protection of protected species.
- Require implementation of precautionary working methods and enhancements (e.g., sensitive lighting design for bats, mammal escape routes, and biodiversity features such as bat boxes, bird boxes, or hedgehog highways) to deliver biodiversity benefits.

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[Accessed: January 2026].

APPENDIX A: UKHab Classification Map



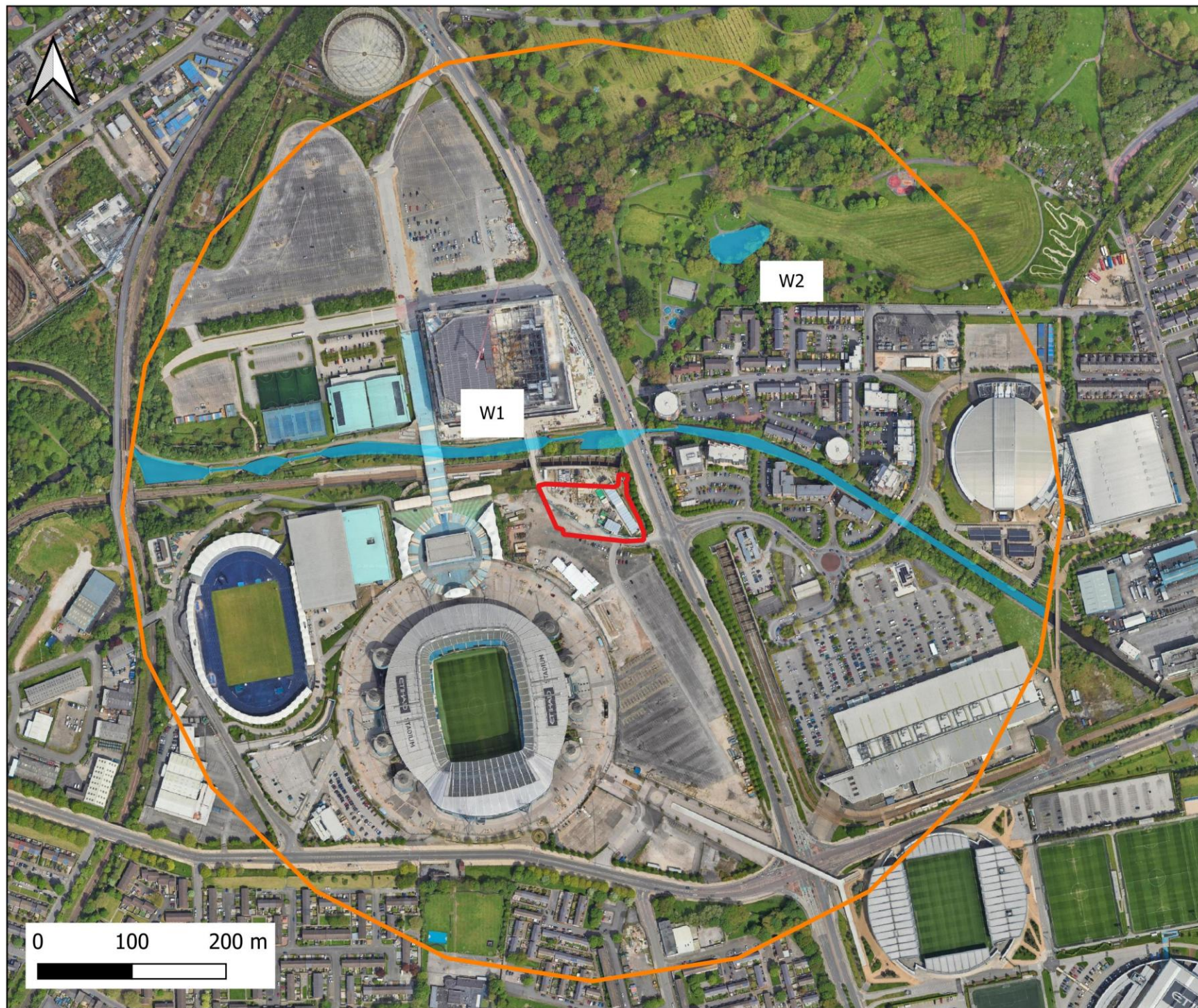
LEGEND

 Red Line Boundary

HABITATS

 Developed land;
sealed surface

APPENDIX B: Map of Waterbodies and Watercourses



LEGEND

- 500 m Buffer
- Red Line Boundary
- Waterbodies

APPENDIX C: Summary of Relevant Legislation and Guidance

Specific habitats and species receive legal protection in the UK under various pieces of legislation, including:

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended);
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended);
- The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000;
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (NERC) 2006;
- The Hedgerows Regulations 1997; and
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992.

The European Council Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Flora and Fauna, 1992, often referred to as the 'Habitats Directive', ensures the conservation of a wide range of rare, threatened or endemic animal and plant species. The Directive also provides targeted conservation for rare and characteristic habitat types.

The CROW Act 2000 strengthens the species enforcement provisions of the WCA 1981 (as amended) and makes it an offence to 'recklessly' disturb a protected animal whilst it is using a place of rest or shelter or breeding/nest site.

National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), December 2024

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) was published in 2012 and updated in December 2024. It sets out the Government's objectives towards biodiversity for England and how the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment.

Section 15 of the NPPF (paragraphs 187 to 195) considers the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment including habitats and biodiversity.

Paragraph 187 states that planning and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

- protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
- (b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;

- (d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
- (e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
- (f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate, protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, geological conservation interests and soils.

When determining planning applications, LPA should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity (paragraph 193) by applying principles including:

- if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- (b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- (c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- (d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

Paragraph 192 states that in order to protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

- “Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and

- promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.”

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The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites (Paragraph 194):

- “potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
- (b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and
- (c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.”

UK Biodiversity Action Plan

The UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UK BAP) was published in 1994 and updated in 2012. It was the UK Government’s response to the 1992 Convention on Biological Diversity (CBD). The framework is continuously revised to combine new and existing conservation initiatives to conserve and enhance species and habitats, promote public awareness and contribute to international conservation efforts.

The UK BAP identifies priority species and habitat which are included within the NERC Act 2006 (as amended), giving these habitats and species some warrant within the planning process.=

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

The *Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981* (as amended) is the principal piece of legislation that provides protection to wildlife sites, plants, wild birds and other animals in the UK. The level of protection depends on which Schedule of the Act the species is listed on. Licences are available for specific purposes to permit actions that would otherwise constitute an offence in relation to listed species.

Protection of Badgers Act 1992

Badgers (*Meles meles*) and their setts are protected under the *Protection of Badgers Act 1992*. Under the Act, it is a criminal offense to wilfully kill, injure, cruelly ill-treat, or take a badger, or attempt to do so, or to interfere with a badger sett by doing any of the following things:

- Damaging a badger sett or any part of it;
- Destroying a badger sett;
- Obstructive access to, or any entrance of, a badger sett;
- Causing a dog to enter a badger sett; or
- Disturbing a badger when it is occupying a badger sett.

The Act defines a badger sett as “any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger.”.

Wild Mammals Act 1996

Under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996 it is an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to wild mammals, including crushing and asphyxiating. This Act is primarily concerned with animal welfare and aims to prevent cruelty. As a result, offences include those actions with the intent to inflict unnecessary suffering. A wild mammal includes any mammal which is not domestic or captive. Red foxes (*Vulpes vulpes*), wild deer and other mammals such as rabbits are therefore covered by the Act.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

The *Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006* imposes an obligation on all public bodies, including local planning authorities, to conserve biodiversity. This duty is set out at section 40(1) of the Act, which states that:

“Every public authority must, in exercising its functions, have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity.”

Under Section 41 of the *NERC Act 2006*, the Secretary of State has a duty to publish a list of habitats and species of flora and fauna considered to be of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. The list comprises 56 habitats of principal importance and 943 species of principal importance.

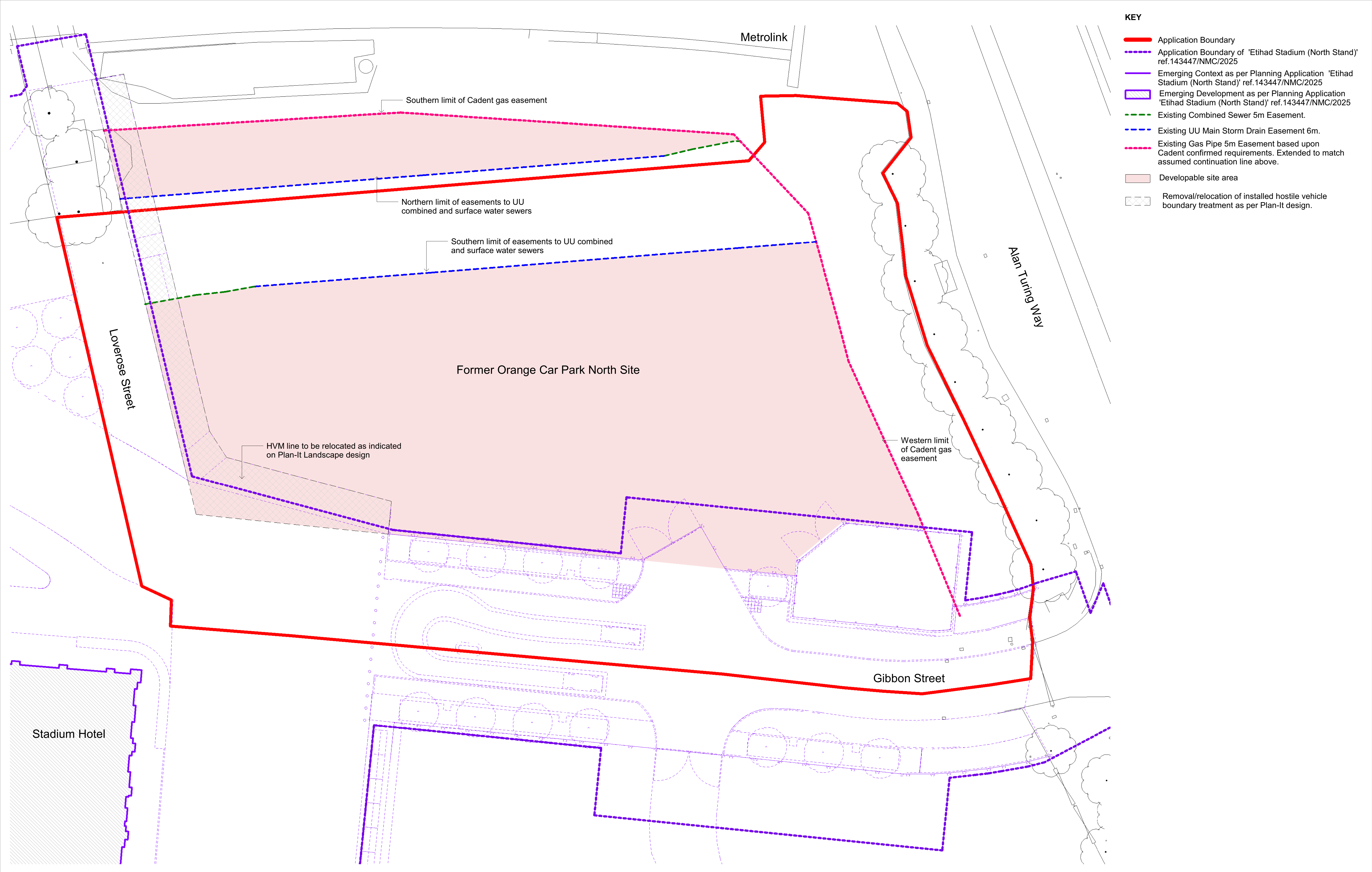
The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) transposes Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (Habitats Directive) and aspects of Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds (Birds Directive) into national law. These Regulations extend to England and Wales and provide for the designation and protection of ‘European Sites’, the protection of ‘European Protected Species’ (EPS), and the adaptation of planning and other controls for the protection of such sites and species. Under these regulations it is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of an EPS;
- Deliberately disturb wild animals of any such species, in particular any disturbance which is likely to: (i) impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young; or to hibernate or migrate; (ii) affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong;
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal; and
- To (a) be in possession of, or to control; (b) to transport any live or dead animal or any part of an animal; (c) to sell or exchange or (d) offer for sale or exchange any live or dead animal or part of an animal of an EPS.

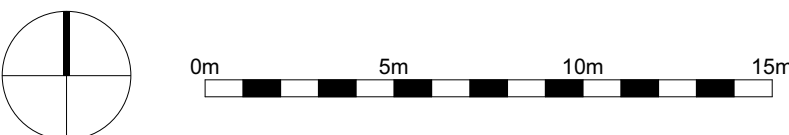
Nine species of plant receive legal protection under Schedule 5, and 29 species of animal receive legal protection under Schedule 2 of the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017* (as amended).

APPENDIX D: Site Plan



KEY

- Application Boundary
- Application Boundary of 'Etihad Stadium (North Stand)' ref.143447/NMC/2025
- Emerging Context as per Planning Application 'Etihad Stadium (North Stand)' ref.143447/NMC/2025
- Emerging Development as per Planning Application 'Etihad Stadium (North Stand)' ref.143447/NMC/2025
- Existing Combined Sewer 5m Easement.
- Existing UU Main Storm Drain Easement 6m.
- Existing Gas Pipe 5m Easement based upon Cadent confirmed requirements. Extended to match assumed continuation line above.
- Developable site area
- Removal/relocation of installed hostile vehicle boundary treatment as per Plan-It design.



Existing Site Plan

CDM REGULATIONS 2015. All current drawings and specifications for the project must be read in conjunction with the Designer's Hazard and Environment Assessment Record. All intellectual property rights reserved.

Designed with reference to the surveys, information and reports listed: Site Services Survey Technics drawing SP251712-1225-01P, Topographic Survey drawing 19D065/010 & "CSO connection as-built.dwg" supplied by MCFG for information only.

Rev	Date	Description
P01	05/03/26	Planning Issue

Dwn	Ckd	Drawn	AAB
AAB	AW	Checked	JK
		Date	01/13/26
		Scale @ A1	1 : 200

Project Taverna

Existing Site Layout (As defined by 'North Stand' application ref.143447NMC2025) with Constraints

Project	Origin	Function	Space	Form	Discipline	Number
A3421	PRP	ZZ	ZZ	DR	A	02010
Revision	Status					
P01 -	For Planning					

PRP