BJ Collins
PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEYORS

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL (EXTENDED) REPORT

PROPOSED ARTIFICIAL PITCHES
MANCHESTER SOFTBALL LEAGUE
WILLENHALL ROAD
WYTHENSHAWE
MANCHESTER

A report to:

Surfacing Standards Limited
Office 2 - Empingham House
Uppingham Gate
Ayston Road
Uppingham
Rutland
LE15 9NY

By:

B J Collins – Protected Species Surveyors Ltd
Elvina Cottage
Wilson's Lane
Morton
Southwell
Nottinghamshire
NG25 0UF
www.bjcollins.co.uk

March 2026

Report to:	Surfacing Standards Limited
Report Title:	Extended Preliminary Ecological Appraisal - Proposed Artificial Pitches

Survey Site/Job:	Manchester Softball League, Willenhall Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester. M23 0BD.
OS Grid Reference:	SJ 81706 91111

Survey Date(s):	14th of July 2025
Surveyed by:	Barry J Collins MSc MCIEEM

Architect/Agent:	Surfacing Standards Limited
Planning Reference:	N/A

Versioning and Quality Assurance

Report Status	Date	Author(s)	Reviewed by
Final Version	26.03.2026	B J Collins MSc MCIEEM	B J Collins MSc MCIEEM

DISCLAIMER

This document has been prepared by B J Collins Protected Species Surveyors Limited. We accept no responsibility or liability for any use that is made of this document other than by the client for the purposes for which it was originally commissioned and prepared.

The evidence which we have prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the guidance of The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct.

RELIANCE - The report describes the conditions and ecological features on the site (and possibly its environs) at the time of survey and that this may (is likely to) change over time. Reliance upon the findings of this report should be determined in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management guidance on the longevity of ecological surveys, see Advice Note (April 2019) On the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys CIEEM.

CONTENTS

SUMMARY **4**

1. INTRODUCTION **6**

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY **11**

2.1 Desktop Study 11
2.2 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal 11
2.3 Surveyor Details 11
2.4 Limitations to Survey 11
2.5 Ecological Evaluation Criteria 11

3. SURVEY RESULTS **12**

3.1 Desk Study 12

3.1.1 Statutory and Non-statutory Sites 12
3.1.2 Records of protected species 12

3.2 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal 14

3.2.1 Habitat Types 14
3.2.2 Habitat Descriptions - within the development footprint 14
3.2.3 Habitats and Boundaries outside the development footprint 16
3.2.4 Faunal Species 21

3.3 Habitat Map – Aerial Image 23

4. ECOLOGICAL EVALUATION **24**

4.1 Designated and Non-designated Nature Conservation Sites 24
4.2 Habitats 24
4.3 Protected/ Notable Species 24

4.3.1 Floral Species 24
4.3.2 Faunal Species 24

4.4 Main Potential Ecological Issues/ Impacts 25

5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND MITIGATION **26**

5.1 Mitigation Recommendations 26

5.1.1 Habitats 26
5.1.2 Faunal Species 26

5.2 Further Survey Recommendations 27

6. REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY **28**

APPENDIX 1: PROTECTED SPECIES LEGISLATION **29**

SUMMARY

This report provides the results of a preliminary ecological appraisal (extended) of an area of the Wythenshawe Sports Ground, where a complex of four new artificial turf pitches with sports turf floodlighting is proposed.

Designated and Non-designated Wildlife Sites

There are two statutory Local Nature Reserves within 1 km of the site, the closest is Kenworthy Woods LNR, segregated from the site by 140 m of amenity grassland to the north and 240 m of amenity grassland between the woodland and the affected site to the east. Located further north is the Chorlton Water Park LNR, a former gravel pit that will be unaffected by the proposal .

There is a single Site of Biodiversity Importance (SBI),being the field by the electricity substation 600 m to the north of the proposal.

Habitats

The main habitat to be affected by the development proposal is an area of intensively managed modified grassland, forming a section of the Wythenshawe Sports Ground. There will be no significant biodiversity impact from the loss of this habitat on site. The proposal will then see the removal of two urban trees. Overall the scheme avoids any impact from invasive plant species, but precautionary actions are required to avoid the spread of Himalayan balsam from the ditch bank to the west of the proposal.

Faunal Species

Bats

The extent of floodlighting associated with a sporting complex of four full-size artificial pitches is such to create a potential environmental impact on a local scale. As a result, bat surveys are required to inform the ecological impact. Bat surveys are described under separate cover.
There were trees identified with potential bat roost features within the woodland and tree lines on the boundaries of the playing field. The proximity of the floodlit pitches to the boundaries is such that aerial tree surveys are required to confirm the status of potential bat roost features in trees. The results of this survey will also be provided under separate cover.

Badger and Hedgehog

There will be a minimal potential impact upon badger, with no setts or evidence of this species on the boundaries of the affected section of playing field. Hedgehog is a constituent of the landscapes surrounding the playing fields. The risk to hedgehog, and other mammals, is principally during the construction phase. To cover all eventualities precautionary actions are included within this document. Overall the impact to terrestrial mammals is low with the delivery of mitigation.

Amphibians and reptiles

There is a paucity of records of amphibians and reptiles in the local area. The habitats associated with the ditch to the west of the playing field are suitable for both groups and therefore precautionary actions are recommended. Overall, the pitch is within a hostile habitat to this group and the closest boundary with any value is over 10 m away at its closest point. Therefore, the risk to herptiles is low with the implementation of suitable mitigation. One of the principal actions is to ensure there is no storage of vehicles or materials alongside the east or west boundaries.

Breeding birds

The installation largely sits on an area of modified grassland with no breeding bird features. However, the proposal will see the removal of two sycamore trees to the south-east and south-west. To ensure there is no impact upon breeding birds these two trees, and any other trees, branches or tall vegetation affected, must be removed outside of the breeding bird season, or

advised by a breeding bird survey by a suitably qualified individual in advance, if that is not possible. Overall, the evaluation of risk to breeding birds is low.

Further Survey Recommendations

There is no requirement for further ecological survey, beyond the requirement for phase II bat surveys and bat tree assessments, to inform the potential impact of sports turf floodlighting.

Furthermore, breeding bird surveys will be required if trees or tall vegetation is proposed for removal during the nesting season, which runs from March to September annually.

1. INTRODUCTION

This report has been prepared by B J Collins Protected Species Surveyors Limited for Surfacing Standards Limited. It provides the results of a preliminary ecological appraisal, extended to include elements of Ecological Impact Assessment (EcIA), for the proposal to install four new artificial grass sports pitches, with associated floodlighting, on the playing fields associated with the Manchester Softball League.

The playing field is located off of Willenhall Road in Wythenshawe, Manchester. M23 0BD. The proposed pitches will be centred upon the 10 figure Ordnance Survey grid reference of SJ 81706 91111.

The survey was carried out to inform the potential ecological impact from the new artificial turf pitches and their associated floodlighting on an area of existing grass football pitches and woodland surrounds. See figure 1 below.

The preliminary ecological appraisal, which involved a systematic walkover of the site, was undertaken in July 2025. The objective was to assess the habitats on site with regards to protected habitats and species, to inform the potential impact from the proposal.

This report informs the associated Statutory Biodiversity Net Gain Metric, prepared for submission alongside this preliminary ecological appraisal and in support of a planning application.

The legislation with regard to relevant protected species can be found appended to this report (Appendix 1).



Figure 1: The survey area (outlined yellow), courtesy of Google Earth.

The area for the proposed artificial pitches sits within an extensive area of modified grassland

used for sporting activity.

The area of grassland is bounded to the south by an extended area of car park and pavilion building, to the west by a drainage ditch with a band of marshy vegetation alongside; to the north by a small area of deciduous woodland extending to a linear tree boundary and then to the west by a 10m wide band of deciduous woodland.

In the wider landscape, to the immediate south is the M-60 motorway, to the west further expanses of amenity grassland sports pitches, to the north further sport pitches with various residential and smallholding development, a large electricity substation and the Kenworthy Woods LNR. To the west there is then a further expanse of amenity grassland extend to the eastern boundary of the Kenworthy Woods LNR.

The following photographs indicate the habitats directly affected by the proposal and those of the boundaries of the affected section of playing field.



Photograph 1: view looking from the north-east corner of the affected section of playing field with the southern boundary, car park and pavilion building in the distance.



Photograph 2: showing the eastern boundary of the affected section of playing field, from the north-west.



Photograph 3: looking south along the western boundary of the affected section of playing field.



Photograph 4: the northern boundary of the affected section of playing field, the tree line extending into a small area of deciduous woodland.



Figure 2 - showing the layout for the four proposed artificial grass pitches.

2. SURVEY METHODOLOGY

2.1 Desktop Study

An ecological records search was commissioned from the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) on 17 November 2025. This comprised a request for records of wildlife species for a 1km circumference from the centre of the affected section of playing field.

The desktop study also involved utilising the online government resource – MAGIC Map Application (https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx) – to undertake a search for designated wildlife sites.

2.2 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

The site was subjected to a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (as per CIEEM, 2018) on 14 July 2025. This involved systematically walking over the site and classifying each parcel of land, utilising the UK Habitat Classification survey methodology (Butcher et al, 2020), on the basis of vegetation into one of approximately 47 habitat types (Level 4) alongside a list of secondary codes which give information on the environment and management (Butcher et al, 2020) of those habitats.

The area outlined in figure 1 form the basis of the survey area, with an extension of this associated with the phase II bat surveys reported separately. Within that footprint notes were made on the structure and composition of habitats:

- Trees with potential to support features used by roosting bats were noted. Boundary features were assessed for their potential suitability for bat foraging and commuting.
- The suitability of habitats was assessed for nesting birds, including ground nesting birds.
- The suitability of habitats was assessed for terrestrial mammals, specifically badger (*Meles meles*) and hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*).
- The suitability of habitats was assessed for reptiles and amphibians, including specially protected great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*).
- A search for any invasive non-native species such as Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*) and Indian balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) was also carried out.

The ideal time to carry out a habitat survey is during the plant growing season (i.e. April-September) and this is also when most animals are active.

2.3 Surveyor Details

The above survey was undertaken by Mr B J Collins MSc MCIEEM, FISC Level 3, (Natural England Class License: 2015-13152-CLS, 2015-7758-CLS) and registered Low-Impact Class License Holder (RC110) and (B32RC002), an ecologist with over 25 years of experience. The survey was carried out on the 14th of July 2025.

2.4 Limitations to Survey

The surveyor was able to access all areas of the playing fields and there was no constraint to the survey results.

2.5 Ecological Evaluation Criteria

An ecological evaluation of the site was undertaken using a combination of evaluation criteria for habitats and species. The general framework follows that provided by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Where relevant the evaluation was made with reference to the statutory protection afforded to species and habitats. Legal protection does not always correspond to conservation value. Some species (e.g. badger) are protected for reasons of animal welfare rather than conservation. Others are of national conservation value but are not protected by law (e.g. some Red Data Book species and UK BAP species).

3. SURVEY RESULTS

3.1 Desk Study

3.1.1 Statutory and Non-statutory Sites

There are two statutory Local Nature Reserves within 1 km of the site. The first of these forms the eastern and north-east boundary of the wider area of playing field. This is Kenworthy Woods LNR, an area of woodland and hedgerow, grasslands, wetlands and Orchard. This local nature reserve is segregated from the site by 140 m of amenity grassland to the north and 240 m of amenity grassland between the woodland and the affected site to the east.

Located further north and adjacent to Kenworthy Woods LNR is the Chorlton Water Park LNR, a former gravel that has developed into a nature reserve.

There is a single local wildlife site designated as of Site of Biodiversity Importance (SBI). This is the field by the electricity substation some 600 m north of the proposal.

There is a sufficient area of landscape buffer between the proposal and these sites, such that there will be no direct impact on the biodiversity of these areas. There is connectivity between Kenworthy Woods and the boundaries of the affected section of playing field by the linear habitats are bound the affected area.

3.1.2 Records of protected species

Bats

There are multiple records of bats for a 1 km circumference of the affected area. This includes for an abundance of records of Common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*), Daubenton's bat (*Myotis daubentonii*) with most records from Chorlton water Park and surrounds, Myotis species, a single record of Natterer's bat (*M. nattereri*), a single record of whiskered bat (*M. mystacinus*), multiple records of Noctule bat (*Nyctalus noctula*), Soprano pipistrelle (*P. pygmaeus*) and multiple records of Pipistrellus species.

There are two known roosts from a kilometre of the proposal. This includes for an unidentified bat tree roost in Nan Nook Wood SBI, over a kilometre from the proposed pitches. There is then a single roost reported from a residential property some 700 m south of the affected section of playing field.

Reptiles and amphibians

There are 3 records of Common toad (*Bufo bufo*) within 1 km of the proposed section of playing field. There were no records of the specially protected great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*).

There are no records of common reptiles from the 1km search.

Water vole

There is a single record of water vole from Sale Golf Club to the north. There is some connectivity with the wetland boundary to the west of the proposed section of playing field and this contains habitat suitable for water vole. The designers advised that the closest boundary to the wetland feature is 12 m and therefore the species will be unaffected by the proposal, if indeed present.

Badger and hedgehog

badgers are a constituent of the landscape of this part of Manchester and therefore there is some possibility, despite the absence of any badger setts, latrines, foraging activity or paths, that they could commute occasionally across the site. Some precautionary actions are required.

There is a single record of hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus)* from a 1 km circumference of the playing field. Further to this, the big hedgehog map (https://bighedgehogmap.org/) has multiple

records from the residential properties to the north-east and south-west. As a result, hedgehog is considered likely present, foraging across the playing field and potentially seeking refuge in the dense vegetation and wooded boundaries.

Potential impact upon protected species

With the exception of bats which are included under a separate report cover, there is a marginal potential impact upon the protected species listed above due to the nature of the footprint of the proposed artificial pitch, and its location within the centre of an area of modified grassland with significant buffers surrounding.

Potential risks all principally arise during the construction period and precautionary actions are included within this document.

3.2 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

3.2.1 Habitat Types

The following habitat types were recorded on the survey area, which is the footprint for the proposed artificial pitch and the immediate boundaries. The UKHab Alphanumeric codes have been provided in brackets beside each entry for reference:

On-site habitats

- Modified grassland (g4 (822, 108))
- Urban tree (200)

Boundary habitats

- Other broadleaved woodland (w1g)
- Ecologically valuable line of trees (34)
- Aquatic marginal vegetation (f2d)
- Ditch (r1g (50))

The distribution and extent of the habitat types recorded on the site are described below and the location of any relevant target notes are shown within the habitat map.

3.2.2 Habitat Descriptions - within the development footprint

Modified grassland (g4 (823, 106)).

This is one of only two physically affected habitats, and by far the most dominant habitat feature, that will be impacted by the construction of the artificial pitches.

It is the principal habitat affected and comprises of a limited range of grasses and herbs entirely down to intensive management; the herbs present on site were showing signs of treatment with selective herbicide at the time of the survey. The sward is dominated by grasses, and the most abundant being Perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*). Other grasses include for Annual meadow-grass (*Poa annua*), Cock's-foot grass (*Dactylis glomerata*) and Common bent (*Agrostis capillaris*).

The few remnant herbs showing signs of herbicide treatment included for white clover (*Trifolium repens*), Greater plantain (*Plantago major*) and Daisy (*Bellis perennis*).

The 1m sample areas from a transect walk diagonally across the affected area of amenity grassland provided no greater than between two and three species per sample plot, and very few bare areas, presumably due to the season within which the survey was undertaken.



Photograph 5: typical view of the affected grassland

Urban tree (200)

There are two individual trees on the playing field which will be removed as part of the proposal. These are both Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). The largest of these, to the south-east of the proposal, Tree T1 measures 780 mm dbh and therefore is a "large" tree but in poor condition. The second is located to the south-west corner of the proposal, this is Tree T47, at 490 mm dbh this tree is categorised as being of "medium-size" and of moderate condition.





Photograph 6 – the two affected urban trees

3.2.3 Habitats and Boundaries outside the development footprint

Other broadleaved woodland (w1g)

There is a line of other broadleaved woodland, categorised as this due to being a 10 m wide strip of vegetation, that forms the eastern boundary of the affected area of playing field. This comprises of a mixture of oak (*Quercus robur*), Sycamore, Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), Lime (*Tilia* sp.), Blackthorn (*Prunus spinosa*) (overgrown hedgerow developed into rows of trees), Yew (*Taxus baccata*), Hazel (*Corylus avellana*), Whitebeam (*Sorbus aria*), Cherry (*Prunus* sp.) and Elder (*Sambucus nigra*).

The ground flora within the hedgerow varies depending upon the extent of canopy cover includes for Bramble(*Rubus fruticosa* agg.), Blackthorn, false oat-grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), Ivy (*Hedera helix*), cow parsley (*Anthriscus sylvestris*), hogweed (*Heracleum sphondylium*) and Nettle (*Urtica dioica*).

The area of woodland includes at least one mature oak tree.

There is then a further two areas of broadleaved woodland located to the north-west and south-west corners of the affected area of playing field.

That to the north-west comprises of Oak, Sycamore and Ash and extends to approximately 30 m in width. That to the south-west comprises a stand of Willow *(Salix* sp.).



Photograph 7 - showing the belt of broadleaved woodland forming the eastern boundary of the affected section of playing field.



Photograph 8 - showing the stand of woodland to the north-west corner of the area of playing field



Photograph 9 - showing the stand of willow wood to the south-west corner

Ecologically valuable line of trees (34, 203)

The northern boundary of affected area of playing field is bounded by a line of trees. It is categorised as being ecological valuable in that it contains 2 trees categorised as being mature, a Lime and Ash.

The grass mowing extends to the base of the trees and there are gaps of over 10 m providing access to the area of amenity grassland immediately north. Overall the tree line contains Lime, Oak, Sycamore and Ash. There are few remnant areas of hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), bramble and bracken.



Photograph 10 – the line of trees forming the north boundary of the affected section of playing field.

Aquatic marginal vegetation (f2d)

Located between the drainage ditch and the area of mown vegetation is a band of marginal/ruderal vegetation. This band is dominated by Norfolk reed (*Phragmites australis*) and Reed Canary grass (*Phalaris arundinacea*). There is also stands of semimature Oak, Bramble, Rosebay willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*), hogweed, Foxglove (*Digitalis purpurea*), creeping thistle (*Cirsium arvense*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*) (small stand), mugwort (*Artemisia vulgaris*) and a bedstraw species (*Galium* sp.).



Photograph 11 - showing the extent of marginal vegetation between the open ditch and the amenity grassland.

Ditch (r1g (50))

There is a drainage ditch running alongside the western boundary of the section of playing field.

It was not possible to gain access to the ditch to survey submerged aquatic vegetation, where the ditch is adjacent to the access bridge between areas of playing fields there was no significant aquatic vegetation identified.



Photograph 7 - view of the ditch from the bridge between the affected playing field and the playing fields to the west.

3.2.4 Faunal Species

Amphibians and Reptiles

The area of playing field where the pitches are proposed is intensively managed and the surface represents a hostile environment for amphibians and reptiles. It is considered unlikely that amphibians or reptiles will be utilising the playing field area, in particular during the day when construction activities are underway. Despite this, some precautionary actions are recommended to avoid any potential impact to commuting herptiles.

In contrast, the habitat on the western boundary of the playing fields is an ideal habitat resource for amphibians and reptiles. There is also possible breeding habitat provided. In order to comply with biodiversity net gain constraints, and in particular from river assessments, the pitch is maintained in excess of 12 m from the vegetative boundary and therefore there is buffer zone between the proposed area of works and habitat which could support amphibians.

The habitat associated with the woodland strip to the east of the site is less valuable, being an isolated habitat, but nevertheless offers opportunities for terrestrial habitat.

Despite the habitat buffers between these boundaries and the proposed pitches, general good practice and precautionary actions are recommended.

Badger and Hedgehog

There was no evidence of any mammals commuting across the affected area of playing field, over the proposed redline area. Furthermore, there was no evidence of mammals commuting across or around the area of playing field.

The Wythenshawe and Manchester area is one that supports populations of urban and rural badger and therefore, whilst there is no record of the species or signs of the species close to the playing field area, precautionary actions are recommended to protect any commuting or foraging animals that

may encounter excavations during the construction period. There is considered be no potential impact upon badger from the operation of the artificial pitches.

The desktop study contains records of Hedgehog from the local area and the big hedgehog map (https://bighedgehogmap.org/) has records from the surrounding residential areas. It is therefore considered highly likely that this is a constituent of the landscape surrounding the playing fields and may forage across the area, precautionary actions are therefore required.

Bats

Bats are described in detail in a stand-alone phase II bat survey report, in particular dealing with the proposed floodlighting scheme for the new artificial pitch and the biodiversity value of the linear features surrounding the playing field.

The supplementary surveys were undertaken to establish the extent of risk to the woodland boundaries and wetland boundary of the immediate landscape, which were considered to be ideal for foraging and commuting bats.

There are at least 7 trees located on the east and north boundaries of the playing field that supported features suitable for roosting bats. There is a requirement to undertake an aerial bat survey of these trees to rule out potential roosting.

Nesting Birds

Habitat with good potential to provide for nesting birds is provided by the mature trees being removed, the woodland boundary, the treeline and the tall ruderal vegetation.

The two trees being removed to the south-east and south-west corners of the playing field should be removed outside of the breeding bird season, which runs from March to September annually.

The plans show no impact upon any of the other habitats with nesting bird potential, but if there is any requirement for the removal of any area of tall vegetation, tree branches or trees, then this must be carried out outside of the breeding bird season.

If any works are required within the bird nesting season, then this work should be informed by a breeding bird survey immediately in advance.

Water vole

There is a single record of water vole from Sale Golf Club to the north. There is some connectivity with the wetland boundary to the west of the proposed section of playing field and this contains habitat suitable for water vole. The designers advised that the closest boundary to the wetland feature is 12 m and therefore the species will be unaffected by the proposal, if indeed present.

Floral Species

No protected or notable plant species were noted on the development footprint or close to it during the survey.

The survey recorded a small stand of Himalayan balsam on the ditch bank to the west of the proposal. Precautionary actions are required to prevent the spread of this plant from site..

3.3 Habitat Map – Aerial Image



Figure 5: Habitat map

4. ECOLOGICAL EVALUATION

4.1 Designated and Non-designated Nature Conservation Sites

There will be no direct physical impact upon the adjacent designated or non-designated wildlife sites.

Overall, the potential impact upon designated or non-designated sites is negligible.

4.2 Habitats

The main habitat to be affected by the development proposal is an area of managed and heavily disturbed modified grassland of the playing field. There will be no significant biodiversity impact from the loss of amenity grassland from the proposal. Further to this there will be the loss of 2 urban trees, both sycamores. The larger of the 2 trees is showing signs of decline, largely due to root ball compaction from the car park area. The second Sycamore is a previously coppiced specimen.

Overall, the area of artificial pitches are to be placed upon modified amenity grassland, there will be no significant impact to habitats from the installation.

4.3 Protected/ Notable Species

4.3.1 Floral Species

None of the plant species recorded from the site are listed on Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

The site supported a small colony of the invasive Himalayan balsam. Precautionary actions are therefore recommended to ensure the prevention of the spread of this plant during the construction of the artificial pitches.

There is no potential impact from the proposal on notable plant species. There is a small potential impact from the spread of invasive plant species in the absence of mitigation.

4.3.2 Faunal Species

Water vole, amphibians and reptiles

The footprint for the proposal provides no suitable breeding habitat for amphibians or reptiles. The ditch is suitable for occupation by water vole. The wider boundaries have the potential to support common amphibians and reptiles, in particular the tall aquatic marginal vegetation or ruderal habitat between the ditch and the area of modified grassland. However, good practice avoidance measures are recommended within this document.

Overall, the evaluation of risk for water voles, amphibians and reptiles is considered to be negligible (especially following the implementation of mitigation actions).

Badger and Hedgehog

The footprint of the proposed pitch offers limited habitat potential for terrestrial mammals. The playing field boundaries offers possible foraging and refuge opportunities for mammals, there was no sign of any badger activity on the boundary of the playing fields.

In contrast, hedgehog is a common constituent of the residential developments to the south and the north-east of the sportsground.

The evaluation of risk to badgers is considered to be negligible, the impact upon hedgehogs is considered to be low, with the implementation of precautionary mitigation.

Bats

As a result of the proposal to floodlight an extensive area comprising of 4 artificial sports pitches, filling the entire area of modified grassland with floodlit facilities, the greatest ecological impact falls upon

animals using the wooded boundaries and aquatic marginal vegetation for night-time commuting and foraging activities. As a result, the principal impact is that to bats and this is described within a stand-alone survey report and mitigation strategy. There are a range of trees on the east and north boundary that have potential for bat roosting and these require further investigation and this is described in a stand-alone report.

Overall, the evaluation of risk to bat foraging and commuting, along with aerial tree survey results, are described within stand-alone survey reports.

Nesting Birds

A variety of birds are likely to nest in the woodland and trees, particularly to the north and east of the playing field but also in the tall emergent vegetation on the western boundary and potentially within the two trees proposed for removal to the north-east and north-west corners of the playing field.

Any tree or tall vegetation removal should be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season which runs from March to September annually.

Overall, the evaluation of risk to breeding birds is negligible if compliance to the breeding bird season is implemented.

4.4 Main Potential Ecological Issues/ Impacts

The main ecological impacts/constraints are as follows:

- Bats – there is a potential impact upon both commuting and foraging bat species, using the north and east boundaries, specifically from sports turf floodlighting. There is also potential impact upon bat tree roosts if any are present in the trees identified on the north and east boundary the playing field.
- Nesting birds - the principal risk is from the removal of 2 urban trees from the playing field area. There will also be an impact if any tall vegetation, trees or shrubs are removed/pruned during the breeding bird season. Strict compliance to the breeding bird season is required.
- Hedgehog and badger - there are limited potential impacts on mammals foraging or commuting across the playing fields during the construction phase. Precautionary actions are included within this document.
- Amphibians and reptiles - there is a potential for these species to occur within the tall marginal and ruderal vegetation on the western boundary, associated with the ditch. The affected habitat of the playing field is unsuitable for amphibians and reptiles; however, precautionary actions are included within this document to maintain good practice.
- Water vole - there is a potential for water vole to be present within the ditch on the western side of the playing field. The distance engineered to avoid the implications of BNG River assessment, provides a large buffer rendering this species unaffected by the proposal.

Mitigation (Section 5) is provided within this report to address any potential ecological issues and impacts.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS AND MITIGATION

5.1 Mitigation Recommendations

5.1.1 Habitats

The proposed pitch construction affects an extensive area of wildlife poor habitat, an area subject to intensive use on a regular basis. The pitches show signs of intensive management with regular mowing and signs of herbicide treatment.

The habitats associated with the surrounding woodland, tree line and tall ruderal/aquatic habitat provide an ideal resource for foraging bats. The linear features surrounding the playing field provide an ideal commuting resource. A range of trees within the woodland have been identified as providing potential bat roost habitat.

Produced in tandem with this preliminary ecological appraisal is a statutory biodiversity net gain metric which sets out the extent of biodiversity loss and a mitigation strategy to deliver towards a 10% net gain from the installation.

5.1.2 Faunal Species

Bats

Recommendations with regards to the impact of the proposed artificial turf pitches, and the associated floodlighting scheme, is included within a stand-alone phase II bat survey report. There is also a document describing the results of an aerial bat survey to identified trees.

Badger and Hedgehog

There will be a negligible risk to badger and a low risk to hedgehog from the installation of the new artificial facility, principally during the construction phase. To provide protection to hedgehog and any other mammal which may cross the playing field overnight, the following precautionary actions will be implemented:

- Throughout the construction phase, and once development commences, any trenches dug during work activities, that are to be left open overnight, must be left with a sloping end or ramp to allow any animal that may fall in a route to escape.
- Any pipes over 100mm in diameter must be capped off at night to prevent animals entering.
- If any hedgehog is located in excavations during works, then it should be carefully placed into a clean receptacle, such as a bucket, and translocated to a safe environment outside of the area of works. This is the woodland to the northwest of the pitch. If any hedgehogs are found, they should be handled with gloved hands.

Breeding birds

There is a potential impact upon nesting birds using the two urban trees proposed for removal to the south-east and south-west corners of the proposal. These trees should be removed outside of the breeding bird season of March to September. Further to this, if there is any requirement to remove tall vegetation, trees or shrubs then this work should be carried out outside of the breeding bird season.

However, note that if there is a requirement to remove any area of tall vegetation, tree or shrub within the breeding bird season, then this must be advised by a breeding bird survey by a suitably qualified individual in advance of works commencing.

Amphibians and Reptiles

The following good practice will be adhered to at all times during the construction period.

- All building materials and equipment should be stored on the area of car park hardstanding to the south of the proposal or alternatively upon areas of intensively mown amenity grassland.

Storage areas should be kept close to the southern end of the playing field, maintaining at least 10 m buffer between the edge of the storage area and the boundaries to all sides.

- At the beginning of each working day any excavations should be inspected for the potential for amphibians and reptiles to occur.
- In the unlikely event that an amphibian is encountered it should be placed with a gloved hand into a clean receptacle, such as a bucket, it should then be photographed and transferred to the tall wetland vegetation to the west side of the playing field, with the image sent to the ecologist to allow an accurate identification.
- In the event highly unlikely event that a reptile, such as slowworm or grass snake, is located within a trench at the beginning of the working day, then works must be suspended in that area and the ecologist contacted without delay. This should be no attempt to handle any reptile.
- No ground works or excavations should extend within 10m of any of the boundaries.

Himalayan balsam

There was a small stand of this plant in the ditch bank to the west of the playing field. There is a buffer of dense vegetation between the stand and the area of playing field and then a 10 m buffer between the edge of the tall ruderal vegetation and the closest excavations for the new pitches.

In order to maintain best practice the following is recommended.

There should be no excavations or vehicles tracking into the ditch or within 20 m of the Himalayan balsam. This is to ensure that seeds or parts of the plant cannot be collected on wheels/tracks and moved off of site with those vehicles.

In the long-term, the sportsground has a legal obligation to control this plant to prevent its spread. Control should be carried out by a suitably qualified contractor, one that is registered with the Property Care Association. Any herbicide treatment must be carried out in accordance with Environment Agency regulations and registration.

5.2 Further Survey Recommendations

The following further surveys are required to inform the potential ecological impact from the proposal:

- Bat activity and static monitoring surveys are required to identify the species of bat using the boundaries of the playing field and the significance of those features for those species.
- An aerial bat survey is required to rule out or to confirm the use of any of the potential bat roost features in trees identified by this preliminary ecological appraisal.
- Nesting birds surveys will be required if there is to be any tree, branch, shrub or tall vegetation removed during the breeding bird season, which runs between March to September.

6. REFERENCES AND BIBLIOGRAPHY

Butcher, B., Carey, P., Edmonds, R., Norton, L. and Treweek, J. (2020). *The UK Habitat Classification User Manual Version 1.1* at http://www.ukhab.org/

Collins B J (2025) *New Artificial Turf Pitches, Wythenshawe Sports Ground - phase II bat survey 2025*. A report under contract to Surfacing Standards Ltd

Collins, J. (ed) (2023) Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th Edition, Bat Conservation Trust, London.

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, 2013. *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. CIEEM.

Institution of Lighting Professionals & Bat Conservation Trust (2023) **Guidance Note GN08/23 Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night**, Institution of Lighting Professionals, Rugby.

GMEU (2025) **Data Search Report for a 1km circumference of location for the proposed artificial pitches at Wythenshawe Sports Ground**, Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, dated 17 November 2025

APPENDIX 1: PROTECTED SPECIES LEGISLATION

Plants

All wild plants are protected against unauthorised removal or uprooting under Section 13 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Plants listed on Schedule 8 of the Act (e.g. triangular club rush and Deptford Pink) are afforded additional protection against picking, uprooting, destruction and sale. Bluebell is protected against sale only.

Common Amphibians and Reptiles

Common amphibian and reptile species (i.e. common frog, common toad, smooth newt and palmate newt) are afforded partial legal protection under UK legislation, i.e. Schedule 5, Section 9 (5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This legislation prohibits sale, transportation and advertising for sale.

Badger

Badger is a widespread and generally common species. However, they are legally protected under The Protection of Badgers Act 1992, which is based primarily on the need to protect badgers from baiting and deliberate harm or injury. Under this legislation it is illegal to:

- Wilfully kill, injure, take, or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or attempt to do so
- Possess any dead badger or any part of, or anything derived from, a dead badger
- Intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett by disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, damaging or destroying a sett, causing a dog to enter a sett, or obstructing access to it

A badger sett is defined in the legislation as "any structure or place, which displays signs indicating current use by a badger."

European Hedgehog

Hedgehogs are protected under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which prohibits killing or taking of individuals.

The hedgehog is also listed as a Priority Species for conservation action under the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Under the NERC Act 2006, the hedgehog is categorised as a 'Species of Principal Importance' for biodiversity. Listing as a Biodiversity Action Plan priority and 'Principal Importance' species reflects concerns that hedgehog numbers are in decline and that some protection should be afforded to hedgehog habitat through the planning system.

Bats

All species of British bat and their roosts are protected under British law by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), and bats are classified as European Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 ('the 2017 Regulations'). This has recently been amended by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations (2019) which continue the same provision for European protected species, licensing requirements, and protected areas after Brexit.

The legislation makes it an offence to kill, injure or disturb a bat and/or to damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place for a bat.

With regard to artificial illumination of foraging and commuting habitats, it is also an offence to disturb the animals such that it impairs their ability to survive, or such that it impairs their ability to hibernate or migrate.

Birds

The bird breeding season generally lasts from early March to September for most species. All birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) and the Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000. This legislation makes it illegal, both intentionally and recklessly to:

- Kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is being built or in use;
- Take or destroy the eggs of any wild bird; and
- Possess or control any wild bird or egg unless obtained legally.

Birds listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) (as amended) (e.g. barn owl) are afforded additional protection, which additionally makes it an offence to disturb a bird while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs or young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.