



Brighter strategies
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Client: Muse Places and Wythenshawe Community Housing Group Limited

Project: Wythenshawe, C2 The Birtles

Report: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

QUALITY ASSURANCE

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Greengage Environmental Limited (Greengage) was commissioned by Muse Places and Wythenshawe Community Housing Group Limited (WCHG) to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of an area of land known as C2 The Birtles in Wythenshawe, Greater Manchester hereafter referred to as 'the site'.

This document is a report of the PEA and has been produced to inform a planning application for the site which includes the *“Erection of 81 no. residential apartments (Use Class C3a) with retail uses at ground floor (Use Class E), associated landscaping, servicing, car and cycle parking and other associated works following demolition of the existing buildings.”*

This PEA aims to establish the presence of, or potential for, designated sites and legally protected/priority habitats and species at the site or within the zone of influence i.e. the ecological constraints, assess likely impacts based on design stage proposals/assumptions and subsequently to provide recommendations for additional targeted surveys and/or appropriate mitigation measures in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy, where applicable. Ecological enhancement recommendations have also been provided.

The site extends to approximately 0.28 hectares (ha) and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (OS NGR): SJ 82652 87046, OS Co-ordinates 382652 , 387046.

Situated within Wythenshawe town centre, the site is situated among commercial and residential units, including Wythenshawe bus station, tram stops, a marketplace and leisure centre.

The site is primarily comprised hardstanding and buildings with no vegetation or habitats. The wider area contains patches of woodland and greenspace.

Ecological Constraints and Additional Surveys/Mitigation Recommendations

The below designated sites and species have been confirmed to be present or have potential to be present due to suitable habitats on the site and/or habitat connectivity with the wider landscape. Sections 4.0 and 5.0 of the PEA report should be referred to for full details.

Table 1.1 Ecological Constraints and Recommendations

Ecological Constraint	Level of Suitability/Confirmed Presence	Additional Surveys/Mitigation Recommendations (Summary)
Non-statutory designated sites		
Sites of Biological Interest	Present within 2km of site	A total of five SBI's located around the site, primarily comprised woodland and grassland, with some small ponds. Mitigation measures to be outlined in Construction Environmental Management Plan to mitigate against indirect impacts.

Ecological Constraint	Level of Suitability/Confirmed Presence	Additional Surveys/Mitigation Recommendations (Summary)
Local priority habitat	Present within 1km of site	Deciduous Woodland identified. Mitigation measures to be outlined in Construction Environmental Management Plan to mitigate against indirect impacts.
Amphibians (including great crested newt)	Negligible	There are no water bodies on site, and any in the surrounding area exceed the GCN typical dispersal range. Furthermore, the site offers connectivity to other potential habitats that may support GCN or other amphibian species.
Badger	Negligible	In the absence of vegetation, there are no foraging or sett building opportunities for badger on site. Furthermore, the site offers no connectivity to other potential habitats that may support the species.
Bats (foraging/commuting)	Negligible	In the absence of vegetation, there are no foraging opportunities for bats on site. Furthermore, the site offers no connectivity to other potential habitats that may support the species.
Bats (roosting)	Low	Little suitable habitat present for roosting, however potential roosting features (PRF's) identified in Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA).
Birds	Low	Little suitable habitat to facilitate nesting, however opportunistic bird species i.e. feral pigeon, may utilise building structures for shelter.
Dormouse	Negligible	In the absence of vegetation, there are no foraging or nesting opportunities for this species. Furthermore, the site offers no connectivity to other potential habitats that may support the species.
Fish	Negligible	In the absence of water bodies on site, there is no suitable habitat for fish on site
Reptiles (widespread species)	Negligible	In the absence of vegetation, there are no foraging, basking or hibernation opportunities for this species. Furthermore, the site offers no connectivity to other potential habitats that may support the species.
Riparian mammals	Negligible	There are no water bodies on site, furthermore the site offers no connectivity to other potential habitats or water sources.

Ecological Constraint	Level of Suitability/Confirmed Presence	Additional Surveys/Mitigation Recommendations (Summary)
White-clawed crayfish	Negligible	There are no water bodies on site, furthermore the site offers no connectivity to other potential habitat or water sources.
Other priority/notable species	Negligible	In the absence of vegetation, there are no foraging or nesting opportunities on site.
Protected/notable plant species	Negligible	None identified.
Invasive non-native species	Negligible	None identified.

Ecological Enhancements

Table 1.2 Ecological Enhancement Recommendations

Ecological Feature	Recommendations
Vegetation	Scrub, hedgerow and trees should be retained and enhanced where possible. Enhancements could include removal of invasive, non-native species, and the planting of native species. Wildflower parcels could also be incorporated.
Bats boxes	Bat boxes could be installed externally on retained or new buildings. Boxes should be close by to soft landscaping and be positioned at least 3 meters from ground level to mitigate any significant disturbances. Installation of native trees, as well as herbaceous night scented species will attract invertebrates thus foraging opportunity for bats.
Bird boxes	Bird boxes could be installed externally on retained or new buildings, preferably avoiding southern facing aspects. Where shrubs are planted, dense, woody native species should be prioritised to allow for foraging and shelter.
Invertebrate features	Installation of invertebrate features could include (but is not limited to) bee houses, insect habitat bricks or 'hotels', log piles. These can be incorporated into soft landscaping.

General Recommendations

In accordance with the Environment Act, 2021¹, National Planning Policy Framework² (NPPF) 2024, and local policy drivers, unless a site is exempt, development proposals are required to provide a

measurable net gain in biodiversity. The development must deliver a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), which should be evidenced through a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (BNGA) using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (SBM)³ or Small Sites Metric (SSM), as appropriate to the site and development. Under the de minimus exemption, the site is exempt from providing a measurable net gain in biodiversity.

N.B. For guidance on the validity of reports/surveys, the CIEEM Advice Note 'On The Ecological Lifespan Of Ecological Reports and Surveys'⁴ should be referred to. In summary, most reports/surveys are likely to be considered valid within 12 months of their undertaking. Within 12-18 months, also still likely to be valid but with some exceptions (refer to CIEEM Advice Note for details). Reports/surveys that are between 18 months and 3 years old are likely to require updating and reports/surveys that are more than 3 years old are unlikely to be considered valid and will need to be updated (subject to an assessment by a professional ecologist). It is recommended that this report would require updating after 18 months.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Greengage Environmental Limited (Greengage) was commissioned by Muse Places and Wythenshawe Community Housing Group Limited (WCHG) to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of an area of land known as C2 The Birtles in Wythenshawe, Greater Manchester, hereafter referred to as 'the site'.

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This PEA aims to establish the presence of, or potential for, designated sites and legally protected/priority habitats and species at the site or within the zone of influence i.e. the ecological constraints. It assesses likely impacts on the ecological constraints based on design stage proposals/assumptions and subsequently provides recommendations for additional targeted surveys and/or appropriate mitigation measures in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy, where applicable. Ecological enhancement recommendations have also been provided.

2.1 SITE DESCRIPTION

The site extends to approximately 0.28 hectares (ha) and is centred on National Grid Reference SJ 82652 87046, OS Co-ordinates 382652, 387046.

The site is part of the Wythenshawe town centre, Manchester and comprises of a vacant two-storey commercial building (B1) with an overhanging porch. The building is situated on a concrete concourse with no vegetation or trees.

The site is located off Poundswick Lane, with the immediate surrounding comprising primarily of residential dwellings and businesses, with Wythenshawe Civic shopping centre directly to the east, and Wythenshawe Forum leisure centre to the west. The site is adjacent to Wythenshawe bus interchange, and Kirkup Gardens, an open access greenspace and children's play area is located less than a kilometre (km) to the west.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The PEA was undertaken in accordance with guidance in the UK Habitat Classification System (UKHab)⁵ Version 2 and the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM) (2017) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal⁶, in accordance with British Standard (BS) 2020:2013: Biodiversity. The overall assessment consisted of:

- A desk study to collate site specific biological information gained from statutory and non-statutory consultation; and,
- A site walkover comprising UKHab survey and scoping assessment to record and assess protected/priority habitats and species.

3.1 DESK STUDY

Environmental Databases

A review of readily available ecological information and other relevant environmental databases (including the Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website⁷) was undertaken for the site and a radius of 2 kilometres (km) from the site boundary, to search for statutory designated sites at the local to national level and extended to 10km to search for international level statutory designated sites.

Where the site is identified to be located within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for a statutory designated site (e.g. Special Protection Area (SPA)/Special Area of Conservation (SAC)/Ramsar or Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)) the features for which the designated site is notified and the types of proposed development which could potentially have adverse impacts (and trigger the requirement for further assessment, e.g. Habitat Regulations Assessment (HRA) or SSSI Impact Assessment) have also been reviewed.

A review of the MAGIC website was also undertaken to check for records of European Protected Species (EPS) licences for Great Crested Newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* and bat species within 2km of the site. EPS licences dated within the past 10 years are considered to be most relevant.

Great Crested Newt Risk Zones

Natural England's GCN Risk Zone dataset⁸ was consulted to give an understanding of the potential presence of GCN in the local area and therefore the likelihood of the species being associated with the site. This dataset identifies areas where the distribution of GCN has been categorised into three distinct zones relating to GCN occurrence and the level of impact development is likely to have on this species. These zones are split into Red, Amber and Green. They are also used to inform the Natural England GCN District Level Licensing (DLL) scheme approach and are described as follows:

- Red zones – Contain key populations of GCN, which are important on a regional, national or international scale and include sites statutorily designated for GCN populations;

- Amber zones – Contain main population centres for GCN and comprise important connecting habitat that aids natural dispersal; and
- Green zones – Contain sparsely distributed GCN and are less likely to contain important pathways of connecting habitat for this species.

Biodiversity Action Plans/Priority Habitats and Species

UK Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) set priorities for nationally important habitats and species. To support the BAPs, Habitat/Species Statements (otherwise known as Habitat Action Plans (HAPs) and Species Action Plans (SAPs)) were produced to provide an overview of the status of the habitats/species and set out the broad policies that can be developed to conserve them. A list of priority habitats and species of conservation importance was also developed.

The UK BAP was succeeded in 2012 by the UK-Post 2012 Biodiversity Framework which informed the creation of the Biodiversity 2020 strategy; England's contribution towards the UK's commitments under the United Nations Convention of Biological Diversity. Subsequently, this has been replaced by the Kunming-Montreal Global Biodiversity Framework⁹ to 2030.

Despite this, the UK BAP priority species lists and conservation objectives still remain valid through integration with local BAPs (which remain valid), and in the form of the Habitats and Species of Principal Importance list (as required under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, 2006)¹⁰.

Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAPs) ensure that national action plans (the UK BAP/Biodiversity 2020) are translated into effective action at the local level and establish targets and actions for locally characteristic species and habitats.

The desk study reviewed UKBAP and LBAP habitats and species with consideration as to which habitats/species are of relevance to the site and/or proposed development.

Local Environmental Records Centre

A data consultation with the Greater Manchester Local Record Centre (GMLRC) for a 2km search radius around the site was undertaken and the data received was reviewed to identify the location and citations of any local non-statutory designated sites and the presence of any protected/priority species.

A summary of the records received from GMLRC is discussed under 'Species Records' in Section 4.1. The records discussed under each relevant subheading have been included based on their relevance to the site e.g. there are suitable habitat types present on site to support the species, there is habitat connectivity between the site and record location and/or the record is in proximity of the site. Records dated within the past 10 years have also been favoured.

The combination of actions described above provided the overall ecological context for the site, to better inform the site walkover and the subsequent assessment.

3.2 SITE WALKOVER

The site walkover was carried out on 20th August 2025 during dry conditions by Sophie Trigg, Senior Consultant, and Abbie Case, Senior Consultant.

The site extents and habitats are shown at Figure A.1 with site photographs presented at Appendix B.

Habitats

The extent, distribution, type and categories of the different habitats on site were identified and mapped according to the standard UKHab methodology, using the UKHab primary codes, and UKHab secondary codes in square brackets to provide supplementary information where appropriate.

Mandatory codes for habitat mosaics, priority and Annex 1 habitats that occur in multiple primary habitats have also been applied where appropriate. Any protected plant species and/or invasive non-native species (INNS) present were also noted.

Species

The site walkover included assessments to identify the potential value for legally protected or priority species at the site. This involved identifying potential habitats which support opportunities for refuge, breeding and foraging in the context of species known to be present locally and regionally.

The likelihood of occurrence is ranked as follows:

- Negligible - While presence cannot be absolutely discounted, the site includes very limited or poor-quality habitat for a particular species. The site may also be outside the known national range for a species;
- Low - On-site habitat is poor to moderate quality for a given species, with few or no information about their presence from the desk study. However, presence cannot be discounted due to the national distribution of the species or the nature of on-site and surrounding habitats;
- Moderate - The on-site habitats are of moderate quality, providing most or all of the key requirements for a species. Several factors may limit the likelihood of occurrence, habitat severance, habitat disturbance and small habitat area;
- High - On-site habitat of high quality for given species. Site is within a regional or national stronghold for that particular species with good quality surroundings and good connectivity; and,
- Present - Presence confirmed from the site walkover itself or recent, confirmed records from information gathered through the desk study.

The species considered potentially relevant to the site and therefore taken into consideration included:

Amphibians

Great Crested Newt

The site walkover assessed the habitats on site for their suitability to support GCN and/or other native amphibians, e.g. common toad *Bufo bufo*, common frog *Rana temporaria*. The aquatic and terrestrial habitats required generally include still waterbodies suitable for breeding and woodland, scrub or grassland habitat where there is optimal invertebrate prey potential and/or shelter.

Badger

The potential for badger *Meles meles* to inhabit or forage/commute within the site was assessed during the site walkover. Evidence of badger activity includes the identification of setts (a system of underground tunnels and nest chambers), grubbed up grassland (caused by the animals digging for earthworms, slugs, beetles etc.), badger hairs, paths, latrines/dung pits and paw prints.

Land up to 30m from the site was also observed and assessed for signs of activity, where access was permitted/available.

Bats

The PEA considers foraging/commuting bats and roosting bats (summer/transitional and winter hibernation).

Habitats such as woodland, meadows and waterbodies can provide important foraging resources and linear features such as tree lines, hedgerows, railway and river corridors are often considered valuable for commuting bats. The site walkover included recording the presence/assessing the suitability of the habitats and features present on the site, in combination with habitat connectivity associated with the wider landscape.

The site walkover included an external, ground-level visual assessment to identify and record Potential Roosting Features (PRFs) on buildings/structures, a Ground Level Tree Assessment (GLTA) and evaluation of habitats for foraging and commuting bat species *Chiroptera* spp. Consideration was given to the presence of features and habitats both within and adjacent the site.

In accordance with the Bat Conservation Trust's (BCT) Good Practice Guidelines¹¹ and methods given in the CIEEM Bat Mitigation Guidelines¹² consideration was given to:

- The presence, location, type and suitability of PRFs; and
- Signs of bat activity or presence including bat sightings, audible bat chattering, droppings, stains (including grease marks and urine spatter), scratch marks, and moth/butterfly wings.

Guidance from BCT ranks bat roosting and foraging suitability on a scale through None, Negligible, Low, Moderate and High. The parameters for each of these are as follows:

- None - Relates to a site with 'no habitat features suitable for bats';
- Negligible - Relates to a site with no 'obvious habitat features likely to be used by bats';

- Low - Relates to a site with only a few roost sites that could be used by individual bats 'opportunistically', and foraging and commuting habitat which is 'not very well connected' and only suitable to support small numbers of bats;
- Moderate - Relates to a site with potential roosting features that could be used regularly by bats but not for roosts of high conservation status, and foraging and commuting habitat which is 'continuous' and 'connected to the wider landscape'; and,
- High - Relates to a site with one or more potential roost sites that could support 'larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis' and also have suitability to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity roosts. High suitability foraging and commuting habitat is well connected and likely to be used regularly by bats for flight paths e.g. rivers, valleys etc and could even be connected to a roost site(s).
- PRFs can include buildings, bridges, tunnels and caves with cracks or gaps leading into voids or crevices, or trees with holes, crevices or splits of sufficient size and depth. Based on the number, location and type of PRF(s) the buildings/structures were categorised based on the categorisations provided above.

Trees were categorised either individually or as a group using the following BCT grading system; None (same as above), Further Assessment Required (FAR), PRF-I (where PRFs are only suitable for individual bats or very small numbers of bats either due to size or lack of suitable surrounding habitats), or PRF-M (where PRFs are suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony).

Birds

During the site walkover, the potential for the site to support breeding and/or non-breeding bird species was assessed. This included recording the presence/absence of areas of trees, scrub, heathland, arable and wetland habitat that could support nests or provide foraging resources for common or notable species. Consideration was also given to the presence/absence of features on-site that may support Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 1 species, e.g. barn owl *Tyto alba*, black redstart *Phoenicurus ochruros*, and kingfisher *Althedo atthis*.

Dormouse

During the site walkover the potential for dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* to be present on site was assessed. This included observations for suitable habitat such as well-layered woodland, scrub and linking hedgerows, particularly those comprised of species offering suitable food sources such as honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum* and hazel *Corylus avellana*, in addition to direct evidence such as nests or characteristically gnawed hazelnuts, chewed ash keys and honeysuckle flowers.

Invertebrates

As part of the site walkover the quality of invertebrate habitat and the potential for the site to support notable terrestrial and aquatic invertebrate species was considered. There is a wide variety of habitats that are suitable for invertebrates including wetland, heathland, areas of bare sandy soil, ephemeral

brownfield vegetation and meadows. The diversity of the habitat structures and features present is important along with food sources for supporting specific needs/life stages/population numbers.

Species of particular interest included, but were not limited to, stag beetle *Lucanus cervus*, roman snail *Helix pomatia*, glow worm *Lampyrus noctiluca* and notable butterfly species for the region.

Reptiles

The potential for widespread reptile species to use the site was assessed during the site walkover. Possible species include adder *Vipera berus*, grass snake *Natrix helvetica*, slow worm *Anguis fragilis* and common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*. These native reptile species generally require open areas with low, mixed-height vegetation, such as heathland, rough grassland, and open scrub or, in the case of grass snake, waterbody margins. Suitable well drained areas and frost-free features for hibernation are needed to survive the winter.

Riparian Mammals

Beaver

The site walkover included assessment of the suitability of the watercourse/waterbody on the site/within 30m of the site, to support beaver *Castor fiber*. Factors determining suitability include the presence of good cover and suitable settings for potential dam construction. Where signs of activity, e.g. dams, channels leading to/from the watercourse/waterbody, paw prints or distinctly gnawed or felled trees were observed, these were recorded.

Otter

The site walkover included assessment of the suitability of the watercourse/waterbody on the site/within 30m of the site to support otter *Lutra lutra*. Potentially suitable habitats include rivers, lakes, streams, particularly those with potential foraging resources and likely connectivity with other watercourses/major ditch networks in the surrounding landscape. The availability of good habitat cover and potential holt (den) sites, e.g. bases of exposed tree roots, was assessed and recorded where present. Signs of activity, such as spraints, paw prints, anal jelly or food remains were also noted, if seen.

Water Vole

The site walkover included an assessment of the suitability of the watercourse/waterbody on the site/within 30m of the site, to support water vole *Arvicola amphibius*. Potentially suitable habitats include ditches, rivers, dykes and lakes. The level of suitability assigned is determined by factors such as water levels, flow rates and availability of suitable foraging resources. Evidence of activity, including burrows, runs along the banks, latrines, paw prints or feeding remains/feeding lawns were recorded.

White-clawed Crayfish

The potential for the site to support white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* was assessed during the site walkover. The likelihood of presence is defined by the presence/absence and type of watercourse present, e.g. shallow watercourses with earth banks and rocky substrate on the channel bed

are preferable, along with connectivity to other suitable watercourses in the wider landscape. Presence of waterbodies may also be considered where island or ark populations are known to occur.

Other Priority/Notable Species

Where desk study data indicates the potential for presence of BAP priority species or other notable/rare species not protected by statute, effort was made to establish the potential for the site habitats to support these species during the site walkover.

Protected/Priority Plant Species

During the site walkover, presence of plant species protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 8 or NERC Act 2006 Section 41 were searched for (seasonal timing allowing).

Invasive Non-native Species

During the site walkover, presence of plant and animal species listed as invasive under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 9 were searched for. As and where appropriate to the site habitats present, these included but were not necessarily limited to, Japanese knotweed *Reynoutria japonica*, Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*, wall cotoneaster *Cotoneaster horizontalis*, Japanese rose *Rosa rugosa*, Australian swamp stonecrop *Crassula helmsii*, signal crayfish *Pacifastacus leniusculus*, American mink *Neovison vison*, Chinese mitten crab *Eriocheir sinensis*, midwife toad *Alytes obstetricans*, alpine newt *Ichthyosaura alpestris* and Italian newt *Lissotriton italicus*.

In addition, where species that are not Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 9 listed species, i.e. INNS, but which are considered to have 'invasive tendencies' were encountered, these were also recorded e.g. buddleia *Buddleja davidii*, snowberry *Symphoricarpos alba*, common horsetail *Equisetum arvense* (list not exhaustive).

3.3 SURVEYORS/COMPETENCIES

Sophie Trigg, Senior Consultant, has an undergraduate degree in Zoology (BSc Hons) and has over seven years of experience in ecological consultancy. Sophie holds a Natural England Great Crested Newt Licence and is a Level 3 botanist, as accredited by FISC. She has experience in a wide range of survey and assessment types.

Abbie Case, Senior Consultant, has a BSc (Hons) in Ecology and Conservation, an MSc in Conservation Biology and is an Associate member of CIEEM. Abbie has over seven years in ecological survey and assessment and holds a Natural England Great Crested Newt Licence and is a Level 4 botanist as accredited by FISC.

Emily Spencer, Graduate Ecologist has a BSc (Hons) in Wildlife Ecology & Conservation and is completing an MSc in Wildlife Conservation. Emily's experience includes three years of bat activity surveys, several protected species surveys and report writing.

Francesca Thorley, Senior Consultant, has an undergraduate degree in Geography (BSc Hons) and a Master's degree in Biodiversity and Conservation (MSc), holds a Natural England Great Crested Newt Licence, is Certified to undertake River Condition Assessments and is an Associated Member of CIEEM. Francesca has over 7 years' experience in the commercial sector.

Paul White, Associate Consultant, has a Bachelor's degree in Marine Biology (BSc Hons), a Natural England Great Crested Newt Licence and Dormouse Licence, and is an Associate member of CIEEM. Paul has over 16 years' experience in ecological surveying and has undertaken and managed numerous ecological surveys and assessments.

This report was prepared by Emily Spencer, reviewed by Francesca Thorley and authorised by Paul White, who confirms that the report is in line with the following:

- Represents sound industry practice;
- Reports and recommends correctly, truthfully and objectively;
- Is appropriate given the local site conditions and scope of works proposed; and
- Avoids invalid, biased and exaggerated statements.

3.4 CONSTRAINTS

An internal inspection of buildings was not conducted, as such features indicative of species presence may have been missed, however a thorough external inspection was carried out and as such this constraint is not expected to have any significant impact of the PEA.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 DESK STUDY

Environmental Databases

Designated Sites

The desk study did not identify any statutorily designated sites within 2km of the site. However, two internationally designated sites were identified within 10 km of the site. These pertained to Rostherne Mere Ramsar approximately 7.60 km south west of the site and Midland Meres & Mosses - Phase 1 Ramsar approximately 9.08 km from the site.

Several non-statutory sites were identified in the form of Sites of Biological Importance (SBI's), locations and descriptions of which are found in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1 Statutory and Non-Statutory Designated Sites identified within 2km Search Radius

Site Name and Designation	Approximate Location and Direction from the Site	Description/Citation
Non-statutory		
Park Wood SBI	0.5km east	Park wood is one of many woodlands in Wythenshawe. It is regularly managed and features a pond in the centre. Approximately 4ha, it is situated amongst a residential area, and it often used by families and dog walkers.
Big Wood SBI	0.6km southeast	Big wood comprises several smaller woodlands, including Ash Wood, Little Wood and Hatchett's wood, the latter of which has a small pond.
Painswick Park Meadow SBI	1.3km southwest	The meadow is a park of Painswick park, which features a fishing pond, artificial lake and children's play areas. The area was previously farmland, before becoming a landfill site, before being turned into an open grassland with wildlife meadow.
Blackcarr Wood & Baguley Bottoms SBI	1.4km north	Blackcarr Wood refers to the green space situated near the long-standing Baguley Hall. The woodland is commonly used for community events. Baguley Brook weir runs through it.
Heald Green Marsh SBI	1.5km east	Marshland and woodland containing a pond and meadow, situated within the suburb of Heald Green

Biodiversity Action Plans/Priority Habitats and Species

No UK BAP priority habitats/species were identified directly on the site; however, the following priority habitats were identified within 1km of the site:

- Deciduous Woodland - Various parcels of woodland located within 1km of the site, the closest being 0.38km northwest of the site.

The review of MAGIC did not identify any EPS licences relating to GCN/bats.

Great Crested Newt Risk Zones

The review of Natural England's GCN Risk Zones identified that the site was located within the Green zone. Green zones hold potential to contain sparsely distributed GCNS and are less likely to contain important pathways of connecting habitat for the species.

Local Environmental Records Centre

Species Records

The data consultation with Greater Manchester Local Records Centre (GMLRC) returned records of relevance to the site relating to badger, bats, bird's invertebrates and other notable species, i.e. hedgehog, within 2km of the site within the last 10 years.

Amphibians - Great Crested Newt

In 2022 an environmental DNA (eDNA) survey was conducted 1km southeast of the site at Big Woods to detect the presence of GCN; the survey determined that GCN were absent from this location. No records of other amphibian species were returned by GLMRC.

Badger

GLMRC records returned two records of badgers within 2km of the site between 2015 and 2025, details of which are outlined in Table 4.2. One active sett was recorded 1.5km northeast of the site, however this was in 2005 with no subsequent surveys or updates.

Table 4.2 Summary of most relevant badger records within 2km of the site

Common Name	Scientific Name	Distance/Direction From Site	Notes
Badger	<i>Meles meles</i>	1.5km northeast	One record of one individual
		1.5km northeast	One record of one individual; deceased

Bats

GLMRC records returned a total of 111 records relating to bats and bat roosts between 2015 and 2025. A total of five bat species were identified, including Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, Soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*, Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, and Brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*; five roosts were also identified, details of which are outlined in Table 4.3. Where multiple records of one species were returned, the closest observation is recorded.

Table 4.3 Summary of most relevant bat records within 2km of the site

Common Name	Scientific Name	Distance/Direction from Site	Notes
Roosts			
Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	1.2km West	Record from 2015 of a maternity roost, with young observed
Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	1.6km East	Record from 2017, dropping observed.
Brown long eared Common pipistrelle Myotis spp	<i>Plecotus auritus</i> <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> <i>Myotis spp.</i>	1.8km Northwest	Record from 2019 of a mixed species roost.
Common pipistrelle Soprano pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i> <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	1.9km Northeast	Record from 2021 of a mixed species roost, emergence and re-emergence's observed
Activity (by species)			
Brown long eared	<i>Plecotus auritus</i>	0.2km North	One record of an injured bat which was later released in 2016.
Pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus spp.</i>	0.2km Northeast	Two records between 2015-2019; one record observed foraging behaviour, one record observed five young bats in an abandoned roost, which were later euthanised.
Soprano pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	0.2km Northeast	A total of 25 records between 2015 and 2019. Records include one injured adult male which was later released.
Common pipistrelle	<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	0.6km Southwest	A total of 59 records between 2021 and 2022, including one adult found dead and one juvenile found injured, which was later euthanised.
Noctule	<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	0.9km Southwest	A total of 12 records between 2018 and 2021
Daubenton's bat	<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	1.1km South	Two records in 2021 of presence.
Bat	<i>Chiroptera spp</i>	1.6km West	Two records of presence and foraging between 2017 and 2020.

Birds

GMLRC returned a total of 25 records for six bird species within 2km of the site between 20215 and 2025. No Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 1 bird species were included within the records. A total of 17 of the records also comprised BoCC¹³ Red listed species, and the remaining 8 were BoCC Amber listed species, as outlined in Table 4.4 below. Where multiple records of one species were returned, the closest observation is recorded.

Table 4.4 Summary of most relevant bird species recorded within 2km of the site.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Direction and Distance from Site	WCA/BoCC5 Status
House sparrow	<i>Passer domesticus</i>	0.4km South	Red
Spotted flycatcher	<i>Muscicapa striata</i>	1.5km West	Red
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	0.8km Northwest	Red
Bullfinch	<i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i>	1.2km Southwest	Amber
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	1.4km Southwest	Amber
Song thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	1.2km Northwest	Amber

Dormouse

GMLRC did not return any records pertaining to dormice within 2km of the site between 2015 and 2025.

Invertebrates

GMLRC returned a total of 8 records of one species of invertebrates within 2km of the site between 2015 and 2025. Where multiple records of one species were returned, the closest observation is recorded.

Table 4.5 Summary of most relevant invertebrate records within 2km of the site

Common Name	Scientific Name	Distance/Direction From Site	Notes
Cinnabar moth	<i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>	0.3km south	A total of eight records of observed presence on both adults and larval stage individuals, between 2018 and 2025.

Fish

GMLRC did not return any records pertaining to fish species within 2km of the site.

Reptiles

GMLRC did not return any records pertaining to reptile species within 2km of the site.

Riparian Mammals

GMLRC did not return any records pertaining to riparian mammal species within 2km of the site.

White-Clawed Crayfish

GMLRC did not return any records pertaining to white-clawed crayfish within 2km of the site.

Protected/Notable Plant Species

GMLRC did not return any records pertaining to protected or notable plant species within 2km of the site.

Invasive Non-native Species

GMLRC did not return any records pertaining to invasive or non-native species within 2km of the site.

Other Priority/Notable Species

GLMRC returned a total of 18 records of hedgehogs within 2km of the site between 2015 and 2025. A total of 18 individuals were observed. Where multiple records of one species were returned, the closest observation is recorded.

Table 4.6 Summary of most relevant other priority/notable species records within 2km of the site

Common Name	Scientific Name	Distance/Direction From Site	Notes
Hedgehog	<i>Erinaceus europeus</i>	0.6km northwest	A total of 18 records returned pertaining to hedgehog (including one deceased individual).

The species referred to in the Species section are primarily those known to be in the area that may be impacted by any proposals at the site, or that stand to benefit as a consequence of potential ecological enhancements at the site and inform site-specific mitigation and enhancement recommendations described in Section 5.1.

4.2 SITE WALKOVER

Habitats

The habitats present across the site consisted of the following UKHab categories, as mapped in Figure A.1:

- Developed Land; sealed surface (u1b)
- Buildings (u1b5)

u1b - Developed land; sealed surface

Sealed surface surrounds the building and comprises car park spaces and private roads (Plate B.5).

u1b5 - Buildings

The site, intended for commercial use, comprises one large multistorey building with a flat roof. It is surrounded by brick work and metal palisade fencing (Plate B.1). Further details are provided in Table 4.7 in relation to a Preliminary Roost Assessment below.

Species

Amphibians

Great Crested Newt

There were no waterbodies identified on the site. MAGIC identified the closest body of water to site as a small pond, located 500m east of the site, which far exceeds GCN average dispersal range of 250m¹⁴. GCN and amphibians will often use terrestrial habitats, such as modified grassland, scrub and hedgerows, none of which are present on the site. Furthermore, the boundary is surrounded by roads and tram lines, with no connectivity to other possible habitats. For this reason, the site is deemed of negligible suitability for amphibians, including GCN, and requires no further surveys.

Badger

Preferred habitat for badger consists of woodland, fields and meadows. This site, which comprises considerable hardstanding, and is surrounded by roads and tram lines, does not provide good foraging, burrowing or commuting habitat for badger. Additionally, no evidence of badger was found during site visits, in the form of latrines or otherwise. Therefore, the site is deemed of negligible suitability for badger and requires no further surveys.

Bats

Foraging/Commuting

There is no vegetation or habitat on the site that would provide foraging opportunities for bats. Furthermore, the site is isolated by roads and subject to disturbance i.e. artificial lighting, pedestrians, vehicular traffic. Therefore, the site is considered to be of negligible suitability for bat species and requires no further surveys.

Roosting

During a Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA), the building on site (B1) was identified to include PRFs, which could be suitable to support roosting bats, outlined in Table 4.7. As such further surveys are required to determine the likely impacts on roosting bats, details of which are found in Section 5.1.

During the Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) the building on site was surveyed to identify any PRF's that held potential to support roosting bats. Details of PRF's are outlined in Table 4.7.

All PRF's identified on the building were assessed as low. Factoring in PRF assessment, as well as external factors that may influence bat activity i.e. high level of artificial lighting, vehicular disturbances and lack of foraging opportunities, the building was assessed as being of low suitability to support roosting bats.

Table 4.7 PRF's found on B1

Reference	Elevation	Suitability	Description	Image
B1	South	Low	Lifted wooden board over upper floor window, potential to provide access into building.	
B1	South	Low	Gaps around window where wood has rotted away. Small gap appears to extend back into the frame, approximately 30cmx5cm.	

Reference	Elevation	Suitability	Description	Image
B1	South	Low	Gap in woodwork where brick base meets wooden cladded façade. Potential to provide access into the building.	
B1	North	Low	Rotten wooden boarding creating several crevices and gaps, which appear to extend up and back further into the boarding. Multiple features along the north aspect.	

Reference	Elevation	Suitability	Description	Image
B1	North	Low	Gap where building meets adjacent building and roof height changes. May provide a crevice, however, does not likely create access into the building based on where the space is located in the building. Cobwebs covering gap indicating not in use by bats.	

Birds

The site contained limited habitat to support nesting bird species, such as trees, hedgerows or scrub. However, common opportunistic species may utilise building spaces for sheltering. Considering the limited habitat available for foraging or nesting, the site is deemed to be of low suitability for nesting birds.

Dormouse

No suitable habitat for dormouse was observed on the site, furthermore the species is not considered to be common in the region according to The Peoples Trust for Endangered Species¹⁵. Additionally, there is no connectivity for commuting between habitats, as such it is highly unlikely that dormouse are present on the site, and no further surveys are required.

Invertebrates

The site was predominantly hardstanding and sealed surface, with no vegetation. Therefore, the site had negligible potential to support invertebrates, as such no further surveys are required.

Reptiles

Reptiles will utilise terrestrial habitats, such as modified grassland, scrub and hedgerows, none of which are present on the site. Furthermore, the boundary is surrounded by roads and tram lines, with no connectivity to other possible habitats. For this reason, the site is deemed of negligible suitability for reptiles, as such no further surveys are required.

Protected/Notable Plant Species

No protected plant species were observed during the PEA, as such the site is considered to be of negligible suitability for protected plant species, and will not be considered further in this report.

Invasive Non-native Species

No INNS were identified within the site during the walkover, and they were therefore considered likely absent from the site and not discussed further within this report

5.0 EVALUATION

5.1 DISCUSSION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

The discussion is provided below on the key ecological receptors that stand to be impacted by and/or could benefit through careful design of, the proposed development. Discussion is provided below on the key ecological receptors that stand to be impacted/benefit from proposed works; commentary on appropriate mitigation, compensation and enhancement actions is also provided.

Designated Sites

Statutory

No statutory sites were identified within 2km of the site boundary, however two internationally designated sites were located within 10 km of the site. Due to the distance from the site and the two internationally designated sites, no direct or indirect impacts are anticipated, therefore no further action is required relating to these internationally designated sites. The site is located within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone, however it does not include residential developments within a criteria that would trigger an assessment. The site is also located within the centre of Wythenshawe Town Centre and buffered from any designated sites by substantial urban development.

Non-statutory

The site is located within close proximity to five SBI's. The closest SBI is 0.5 km away with urban development in between. As such it can be concluded that no further direct or indirect impacts will affect non-statutory designated sites.

Species

Bats

Foraging/Commuting

In the absence of foraging opportunities and the high levels of disturbance inhibiting commuting bats, no further surveys are required. However, as landscaping is proposed there is the potential that post-development habitat may be suitable for foraging and commuting as such a sensitive lighting scheme should be implemented for both the construction and operational phase of development. Lighting design should follow Guidance Note 8 from the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) and the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP)¹⁶, which includes:

- Use of low-UV warm white LED bulbs with low illumination/LUK levels;
- Use of directional, downward facing and shielded lights which point away from the adjacent buildings, or areas such as soft landscaping where possible and where health and safety restrictions allow;
- External lights on curfew controls/movement sensors to be considered where possible to reduce light pollution when not needed; and

- Given tools/movement sensors to be considered where possible to reduce light pollution when not needed; and
- Direct lighting on green infrastructure and soft landscaping, should be minimised where possible, acknowledging safety requirements, particularly between April and October, inclusive.

Additionally, design proposals of the new development should seek to increase opportunities and suitability of the site for foraging and commuting bats. See details provided within the Biodiversity Enhancements section below.

Roosting

The building on site was assessed as having low suitability for roosting bats. As outlined in best practice guidelines¹⁷, a single bat emergence survey is to be conducted, during which ecologists will visit the site with bat detector equipment to watch for bats emerging from or re entering the building, via PRF's or otherwise. Surveys will take place 15 minutes prior to, and 1.5 hours after sunset.

Bats activity is influenced by ambient temperatures, and to ensure detectability survey should take place between May and August, in temperatures no lower than 10°C at sunset, with no excessive rainfall or strong winds.

Birds

The site does not contain habitat for nesting birds, as such no specific mitigation or targeted surveys are required. However, opportunistic bird species, such as corvids or pigeons, may take shelter inside of disused buildings. Any action that may lead to disturbance, injury or death of birds i.e. removal of nearby vegetation/habitat should take place outside of nesting bird season (March to August). Where this is not possible, activity should be undertaken within 48 hours of a nesting bird check by a suitably qualified ecologist. In the even that a bird nest is found, an exclusion zone is to be agreed and adhered to until an ecologist has monitored and confirmed that chicks have fledged, or that the nest is no longer in use.

Ecological Enhancements

Where feasible, it is recommended that the following ecological enhancements could and should be incorporated within the site design going forward (list is not exhaustive):

Habitats

- Planting of native tree and shrub species, such as silver birch *Betula pendula*, or hazel *Corylus avellana*, in appropriate locations;
- Inclusion of wildflower-friendly soft landscaping, including the use of native wildflower seed mix and species recommended for pollinators such as those on the Royal Horticultural Society Plants for Pollinators list¹⁸;
- Installation of invertebrate features, such as insect hotels and bee houses/posts, as part of soft landscaping.

Species

Bats

The proposed development should provide enhancements for bat species within the area through the provision of bat boxes on new buildings, near soft landscaping. Bat boxes should be built into the elevations of the new buildings or fixed externally to the facades near foraging/commuting habitat to align with national conservation objectives. These should be positioned at a minimum of 3m from ground level, away from significant disturbance (human/machinery/light spill) and ideally on a south facing aspect if possible.

Additionally, landscaping throughout the site should include native tree species. Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, oak, *Quercus* spp., hazel *Corylus avellana* and white willow *Salix alba* are recommended. Planting should include herbaceous night scented species planted such as lavender *Lavandula* sp., jasmine *Jasminum officinale* and honeysuckle. These will attract moths and other flying invertebrates and enhance the foraging resource for bats.

Birds

The proposed development should look to provide suitable habitats and nesting opportunities to support common bird species. Bird nest boxes should be installed within the fabric of the new buildings to provide additional nesting opportunities for birds. Full south facing building aspects should be avoided to prevent overheating of the nest/chicks during summer months.

Additionally, compensatory planting should focus on the provision native species with dense shrubby growth. This would not only provide nesting opportunities but also deliver a vital food resource for birds over the winter months.

Additionally, compensatory planting should focus on native species with dense, woody growth, which will provide nesting opportunities. Species such as hazel *Corylus avellana* and dogwood *Cornus sanguinea* are recommended.

General Recommendations

In accordance with the Environment Act, 2021¹, National Planning Policy Framework² (NPPF) 2024, and local policy drivers, unless a site is exempt, development proposals are required to provide a measurable net gain in biodiversity. The development must deliver a minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG), which should be evidenced through a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (BNGA) using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (SBM)³ or Small Sites Metric (SSM), as appropriate to the site and development. Under the de minimus exemption, the site is exempt from providing a measurable net gain in biodiversity.

N.B. For guidance on the validity of reports/surveys, the CIEEM Advice Note 'On The Ecological Lifespan Of Ecological Reports and Surveys'⁴ should be referred to. In summary, most reports/surveys are likely to be considered valid within 12 months of their undertaking. Within 12-18 months, also still likely to be valid but with some exceptions (refer to CIEEM Advice Note for details). Reports/surveys

that are between 18 months and 3 years old are likely to require updating and reports/surveys that are more than 3 years old are unlikely to be considered valid and will need to be updated (subject to an assessment by a professional ecologist). It is recommended that this report would require updating after 18 months.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Greengage was commissioned by Muse Places and WCHG to undertake a PEA for the site known as C2 The Birtles in Wythenshawe Greater Manchester, in order to establish the ecological value of the site and its potential to support protected/priority habitats and species. This information is required to address the impacts of the development and inform appropriate mitigation and compensation measures.

The PEA identified the following ecological constraints associated with the site:

- Non statutory designated sites located within 2km of the site; and,
- Local priority habitats located within 1km of the site.

It was concluded that the proposed development would not impact on the above constraints.

Under the de minimus exemption, the site is exempt from providing a measurable net gain in biodiversity.

N.B. For guidance on validity of reports and/or surveys, the CIEEM Advice Note 'On The Ecological Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys; should be referred to. In summary, most reports/surveys are likely to be considered valid within 12 months of their undertaking. They are likely to be valid within 12-18 months, but with some exceptions. Reports/surveys that are between 18 months and 3 years old will likely require updating and reports/surveys that are more than 3 years old are unlikely to be considered valid and will require updating (subject to an assessment by a professional ecologist.

APPENDIX A UKHAB MAP

Figure A.1 UKHAB Map

WYTHENSHAWE C2 THE BIRTLES

 Site Boundary

Habitats

 u1b - Developed land; sealed surface

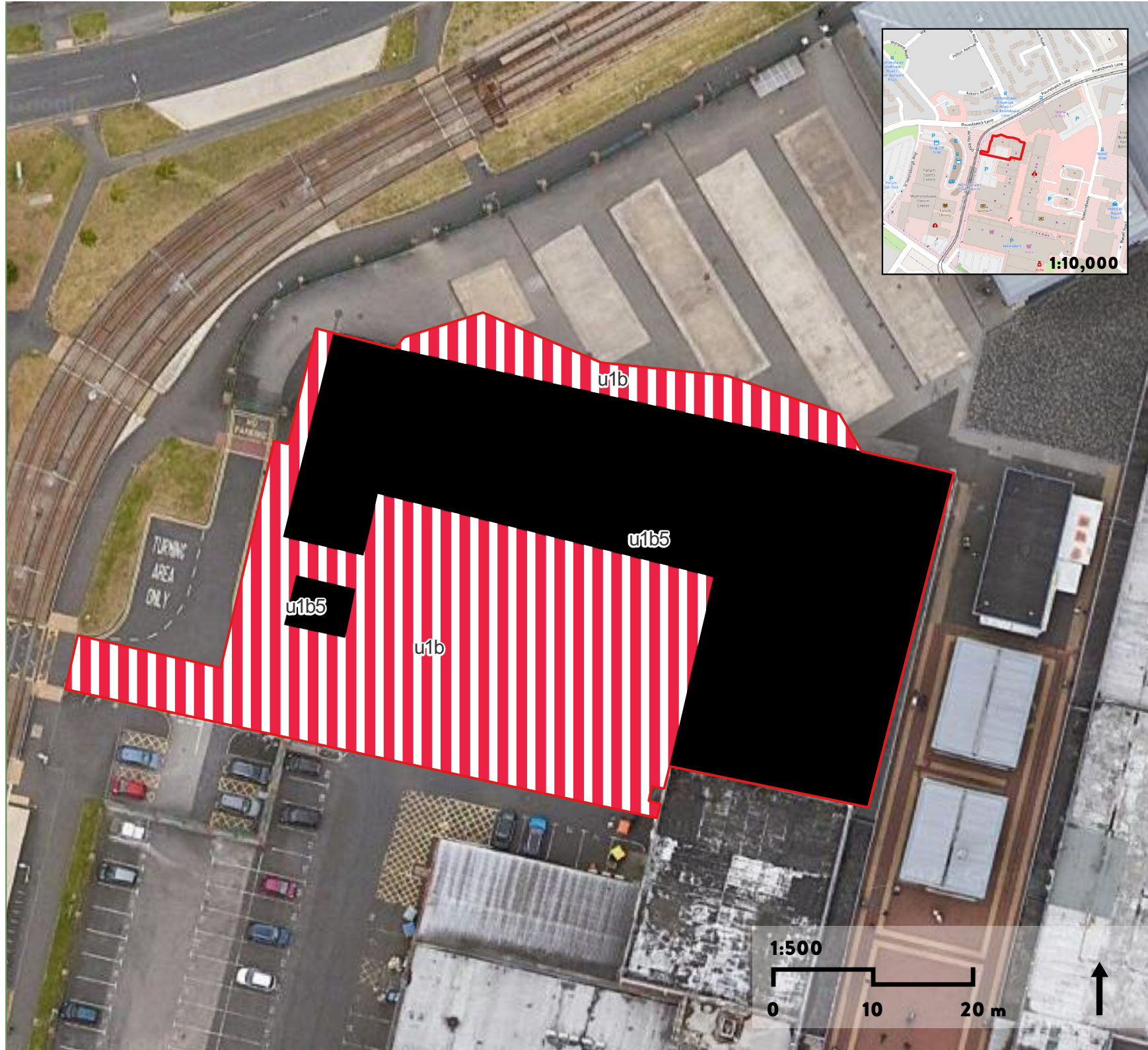
 u1b5 - Buildings

Title: Figure A.1 UKHab Map

Drawn by: ES
Date: 21/11/2025

Reviewed by: FT
Date: 21/11/2025

Project number: 553440
Sources: Google Satellite Imagery, ESRI World Topo



APPENDIX B SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

Plate B.1 Northwest elevation of building from the adjacent road



Plate B.2 Northern elevation, rows of previously used commercial units are present



Plate B.3 North facing side of the site, previously used commercial units are present, as well as active market stall from the local market



Plate B.4 Southern area of the site, the adjacent market 'The Birtles' can be seen over the fence



Plate B.5 Southern elevation and adjacent car park



Plate B.6 The southern portion of the site serves as a service yard for the nearby shops and market.



APPENDIX C RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICY

C.1 LEGISLATION

Current key legislation relating to ecology includes the Environment Act 2021¹⁹, Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)²⁰; The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 ('Habitats & Species Regulations')²¹, The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act)²², and The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006²³.

The Environment Act, 2021

Under the Environment Act²⁴, 2021, as of 12th February 2024 and 2nd April 2024, it is mandatory in England for new developments (with a small number of exceptions) to deliver a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG), as measured by the Statutory Biodiversity Metric or Small Sites Metric (SSM) respectively, secured through planning condition as standard (as per schedule 14 of the Act). Approach to the delivery of BNG must follow the mitigation hierarchy, with avoidance of impact and on-site compensation/gains prioritised, ahead of the use of off-site compensation, or the purchase of statutory credits.

The Act introduces the condition that no development may begin unless a Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) has been submitted and approved by the LPA.

The Act also amends requirements of the NERC Act, 2006, adding the need to not just conserve, but enhance biodiversity through planning projects. Furthermore, it introduces the need for the LPA to have regard to relevant local nature recovery strategies and relevant species/protected site conservation strategies, when making their decision.

Under the Act, the enhancements must be maintained for at least 30 years.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019

The Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations replace The Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations 1994 (as amended)²⁵, and transpose Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora ('EU Habitats Directive')²⁶, and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds ('Birds Directive')²⁷ into UK law (in conjunction with the Wildlife and Countryside Act).

Regulation 43 and 47 respectively of the Conservation of Habitats & Species Regulations makes it an offence (subject to exceptions) to deliberately capture, kill, disturb, or trade in the animals listed in Schedule 2 (European protected species of animals), or pick, collect, cut, uproot, destroy, or trade in the plants listed in Schedule 5 (European protected species of plant). Development that would contravene the protection afforded to European protected species requires a derogation (in the form of a licence) from the provisions of the Habitats Directive.

Regulation 63 (1) states: 'A competent authority, before deciding to undertake, or give any consent, permission or other authorisation for, a plan or project which –

(a) is likely to have a significant effect on a European site or a European offshore marine site (either alone or in combination with other plans or projects); and

(b) is not directly connected with or necessary to the management of that site;

must make an appropriate assessment of the implications for that site in view of that site's conservation objectives.'

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is the principal mechanism for the legislative protection of wildlife in Great Britain. This legislation is the means by which the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats²⁸ (the 'Bern Convention') and the Birds Directive and EU Habitats Directive are implemented in Great Britain.

The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000

The Wildlife and Countryside Act has been updated by the CROW Act. The CROW Act amends the law relating to nature conservation and protection of wildlife. In relation to threatened species it strengthens the legal protection and adds the word 'reckless' to the offences of damaging, disturbing, or obstructing access to any structure or place a protected species uses for shelter or protection, and disturbing any protected species whilst it is occupying a structure or place it uses for shelter or protection.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 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. Biodiversity Action Plans provide a framework for prioritising conservation actions for biodiversity.

Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of species of flora and fauna and habitats considered to be of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. The list, a result of the most comprehensive analysis ever undertaken in the UK, currently contains 1,149 species, including for example, hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), and 65 habitats that were listed as priorities for conservation action under the now defunct UK Biodiversity Action Plan²⁹ (UK BAP). Despite the devolution of the UK BAP and succession of the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework³⁰ (and Biodiversity 2020 strategy³¹ in England), as a response to the Convention on Biological Diversity's (CBD's) Strategic Plan for Biodiversity 2011-2020 and EU Biodiversity Strategy (EUBS)³², this list (now referred to as the list of Species and Habitats of Principal Importance in England) will be used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural

Communities Act 2006 'to have regard' to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.

Biodiversity Action Plans

Non-statutory Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) have been prepared on a local and regional scale throughout the UK over the past 15 years. Such plans provide a mechanism for implementing the government's broad strategy for conserving and enhancing the most endangered ('priority') habitats and species in the UK for the next 20 years. As described above the UK BAP was succeeded in England by Biodiversity 2020 although the list of priority habitats and species remains valid as the list of Species of Principal Importance for Nature Conservation.

Regional and local BAPs are still valid however and continue to be updated and produced.

Detail on the relevant BAPs for this site are provided in the main text of this report.

Legislation Relating to Bats

All UK bats and their roosts are protected by law. Since the first legislation was introduced in 1981, which gave strong legal protection to all bat species and their roosts in England, Scotland and Wales, additional legislation and amendments have been implemented throughout the UK.

Six of the 18 British species of bat have Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) assigned to them, which highlights the importance of specific habitats to species, details of the threats they face and proposes measures to aid in the reduction of population declines.

Although habitats that are important for bats are not legally protected, care should be taken when dealing with the modification or development of an area if aspects of it are deemed important to bats such as flight corridors and foraging areas.

The Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) was the first legislation to provide protection for all bats and their roosts in England, Scotland and Wales (earlier legislation gave protection to horseshoe bats only.)

All eighteen British bat species are listed in Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 and under Annexe IV of the Habitats Directive, 1992 as a European protected species. They are therefore fully protected under Section 9 of the 1981 Act and under Regulation 43 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019, which transposes the Habitats Directive into UK law.

Consequently, it is an offence to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat in its roost or deliberately disturb a group of bats;
- Damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time);
- Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat; and
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost.

Legislation Relating to Birds (Nesting)

Nesting birds, with certain exceptions, are protected from intentional killing, destruction of nests and destruction/taking of eggs under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the CRow Act. Any clearance of dense vegetation should therefore be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season, taken to run conservatively from March to August (inclusive), unless an ecologist confirms the absence of active nests prior to clearance.

C.2 PLANNING POLICY

National

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024³³ sets out the Government's planning policies for England, including how plans and decisions are expected to apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Chapter 15 of the NPPF focuses on conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, stating plans should 'identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity'.

It goes on to state: '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'. Alongside this, it acknowledges that planning should be refused where irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland are lost.

Regional

Greater Manchester Biodiversity Strategy 2022-2030

Objective 1 -Managing and understanding biodiversity

Key Priorities

- A Nature Recovery Network Strategy, which is contextualised for the urban character of Manchester, must be developed for Greater Manchester. This should guide the focus of all future habitat management work.
- All priority wildlife sites must be in active management by 2030.
- Key indicator species must be identified and action plans for each key indicator species written. These action plans should sit alongside the Nature Recovery Network Strategy to guide any habitat management work across the Recovery Network. Key indicator species will also need to be recorded regularly to measure our impact.

Objective 2 -Involving people

Key Priorities

- We must find creative ways to connect and involve new audiences with nature and the natural environment in Manchester.
- The Manchester Biodiversity Action Group (MBAG) must support and empower local communities to take meaningful action for nature in the city.
- Land managers and practitioners in the city must be provided with the necessary knowledge and skills to protect and recover biodiversity.

Greater Manchester Combined Authority Places for Everyone

GMCA adopted the PfE34 in 2022. Places for Everyone combines nine districts; Bolton, Bury, Manchester, Oldham, Rochdale, Salford, Tameside, Trafford, and Wigan to create a long-term plan for jobs, new homes, and sustainable growth. Modifications to the plan were made in 2023 and are currently inviting views on the modifications.

There are ten Strategic Objectives set out in Places for Everyone which include:

- Objective 1: Meet our housing need;
- Objective 2: Create neighbourhoods of choice;
- Objective 3: Playing our part in ensuring a thriving and productive economy in all parts of Greater Manchester;
- Objective 4: Maximise the potential arising from our national and international assets;
- Objective 5: Reduce inequalities and improve prosperity;
- Objective 6: Promote the sustainable movement of people, good and information;
- Objective 7: Playing our part in ensuring that Greater Manchester is a more resilient and carbon neutral city-region;
- Objective 8: Improve the quality of our natural environment and access to green spaces;
- Objective 9: Ensure access to physical and social infrastructure; and
- Objective 10: Promote the health and wellbeing of communities.

The following strategies and policies have been identified as of relevance for the Assessment matrix and the socio-economic impacts of new developments:

Access to Open Space:

Objective 8: Improve the quality of our natural environment and access to green spaces

This objective works to enhance special landscapes, green infrastructure, biodiversity and geodiversity, improve access to the natural environment and green spaces (including parks), and promoting the role of green space in resilience to climate change and reducing flood risk. This objective therefore aims to improve the access to open space for local residents.

Policies:

- Policy JP-Strat 13: Strategic Green Infrastructure
 - River valleys and waterways, lowland wetlands and mosslands, uplands, and trees and woodland will be protected and enhanced as strategic green infrastructure assets.
- Policy JP-G 2: Green Infrastructure Network
 - A strategic approach will be taken to the protection, management and enhancement of our Green Infrastructure in order to protect and enhance the ecosystem services. The protection, management and enhancement of Green Infrastructure will contribute to the development of a Nature Recovery Network for Greater Manchester.
- Policy JP-G 3: River Valleys and Waterways
 - River valleys and waterways will be protected and improved as central components of our Green Infrastructure Network and a vital part of a Nature Recovery Network, making a major contribution to local identity, quality of life and the natural environment.
- Policy JP-G 4: Lowland Wetlands and Mosslands
 - The distinctive flat, open landscape and network of habitats of ecologically valuable lowland wetlands and mosslands will be protected, enhanced and restored, with a strong emphasis on reconnecting local communities to the natural and historic environments.
- Policy JP-G 5: Uplands
 - Our upland areas contain important component parts of the green infrastructure network, including significant areas of blanket bog priority habitat, Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs), Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs), Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), woodlands and habitats vulnerable to climate change.
- Policy JP-G 6: Urban Green Space
 - To ensure there is an appropriate scale, type, quality and distribution of accessible urban green space that can support a high quality of life and other important green infrastructure functions:
 - existing urban green space will be protected and enhanced in balance with other considerations; and
 - we will work with developers and other stakeholders to deliver new high quality urban green spaces which meet accessibility standards.
- Policy JP-G 7: Trees and Woodland
 - In making planning decisions and carrying out other associated activities, we will work to deliver the aims and objectives of the Greater Manchester Tree and Woodland Strategy, aiming to significantly increase tree cover, protect and enhance woodland, and connect people to the trees and woodland around them.
- Policy JP-G 8: Standards for Greener Places

- We will develop standards in relation to 'Access to natural green space', and 'A "Green Factor"'.

Climate Change and Sustainable Construction:

Objective 2: Create neighbourhoods of choice

This objective works towards the prioritisation of the use of brownfield land, the location of housing within close proximity to town centres and public transport, and the facilitation of sustainable modes of transport, allows for targets towards the reduction in carbon emissions to supports the tackle for climate change.

Objective 7: Playing our part in ensuring that Greater Manchester is a more resilient and carbon neutral city-region

This objective works towards promoting the carbon neutrality of development by 2028, promoting sustainable patterns of development that minimise the need to travel and contribute to cleaner air, creating development to reduce car dependency, provisioning of infrastructure for cleaner vehicles, and improving energy efficiency and the generation of renewable and low carbon energy.

Policies:

- Policy JP-S 1: Sustainable Development
 - Development should aim to maximise economic, social and environmental benefits, minimise adverse impacts, utilise sustainable construction techniques and seek opportunities to secure net gains. Preference will be given to using previously developed, brownfield land and vacant buildings.
- Policy JP-S 2: Carbon and Energy
 - The aim to deliver a carbon neutral Greater Manchester no later than 2038 with a dramatic reduction in greenhouse gas emissions by following a range of measures.
- Policy JP-S 3: Heat and Energy Networks
 - Provision of decentralised energy infrastructure in order to deliver low carbon growth, carbon reductions and increase in local energy generation by following a range of measures.
- Policy JP-S 4: Resilience
 - Development will be managed to increase the capacity of citizens, communities, businesses and infrastructure to survive, adapt and grow in the face of physical, social, economic and environmental challenges, including climate change, by following a range of measures.
- Policy JP-S 5: Flood Risk and the Water Environment
 - An integrated catchment based approach will be taken to protect the quantity and quality of water bodies and managing flood risk by following a range of measures.
- Policy JP-S 7: Resource Efficiency
 - A range of measures will allow Greater Manchester to create a circular economy and zero-waste economy to become a leading green city region by 2038.

- Policy JP-G 9: A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity
 - Across the plan as a whole, a net enhancement of biodiversity resources will be sought.
- Policy JP-G 10: The Green Belt
 - The Green Belt as defined on the Policies Map will be afforded strong protection in accordance with the National Planning Policy Framework. The Green Belt will continue to be managed positively to serve the five purposes set out in national policy.
- Policy JP-G 11: Safeguarded Land
 - Safeguarded land where an area of open land, outside the urban area and not in the Green Belt, is identified on the Policies Map and protected from development.
- Policy JP-P 1: Sustainable Places
 - We aim to become one of the most liveable city regions in the world, consisting of a series of beautiful, healthy and varied places, each having the following key attributes that all development, wherever appropriate, should be consistent with the detailed measures.

Manchester Core Strategy 2012 - 2027 Policy EN 15 - Biodiversity and Geological Conservation The Council will seek to maintain or enhance sites of biodiversity and geological value throughout the City. Particular consideration will be given to:

- Sites with international or national designations for their biodiversity value. Manchester contains one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (Cotteril Clough); there is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and an SSSI just over the border in Oldham (both on the Rochdale Canal within Oldham);
- Other sites of biodiversity value, including Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs); Manchester currently has 35 SBIs (including the Rochdale and Ashton Canals) and 7 LNRs; priority habitats found within Manchester, as listed in the Manchester Biodiversity Strategy and included in the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (GM BAP);
- Protected and priority species, as listed in the Manchester Biodiversity Strategy and included in the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (GM BAP);
- Sites that are recognised for their geological importance;
- The Council's objective to protect and conserve the City's existing trees and woodlands and the aim for a net increase in trees across the City.

Developers will be expected to identify and implement reasonable opportunities to enhance, restore or create new biodiversity, either on-site or adjacent to the site, contributing to linkages between valuable or potentially valuable habitat areas where appropriate, with reference to:

- The Manchester Biodiversity Strategy, which provides further details of priority habitats within Manchester and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement including corridors such as the Mersey, Medlock and Irk river valleys, the canals and disused railway lines and areas of managed greenspace particularly in parks;

- The Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester, which encompasses an ecological framework that seeks to guide and inform habitat creation and repair, including identifying large 'biodiversity opportunity areas' including the Moston Brook Corridor and Nutsford Vale;
- The Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study, which identifies areas where there is a deficit of natural and semi-natural greenspace, opportunities for green corridors and other linkages;
- Manchester's Climate Change Action Plan;
- The Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for Manchester;
- The Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for Manchester, which gives detailed consideration to Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), including the Rochdale Canal SAC just outside the district boundary;
- The River Basin Management Plan for the North West;
- The Manchester Tree Strategy.

Any adverse impacts on biodiversity will need to be justified against the wider benefits of the proposal, assessed against other LDF policies. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, developers will be required to provide appropriate mitigation and/or compensation. Development should wherever possible seek to maintain, enhance or restore existing geology.

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