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4 Middleton Road, Crumpsall, Manchester, M8 5DS

PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

EA Planning

P.2361.25
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Field work	Document author	Technical review	Quality & approval
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Revision	Date	Details	Name

This document contains sensitive information regarding the location of a badger sett. The report is issued in confidence and on the basis that the material will not enter the public domain.

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Executive Summary

Ascerta has been instructed by **EA Planning** to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Daytime Building Inspection for bats at 4 Middleton Road, Crumpsall, Manchester, M8 5DS (hereafter referred to as **the site**).

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Daytime Building Inspection for bats comprised of a desk study and biological records search, as well as a site walkover survey in order to map habitat types. The survey was extended to assess the potential for protected species to use the site. The assessment provides baseline data regarding the current site conditions and, where appropriate, allows recommendations to be made in respect of further potential work in order to satisfy current UK wildlife legislation.

Bat surveys are conducted in accordance with the *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines*, published 2024 (the Guidelines). Strict adherence to these is not necessary, but where practice deviates from them, clear reasons and rationale are required.

Assessed against the *Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland 2nd Edition* (2018), the site's habitats range in ecological value from negligible to within the zone of influence.

The site provides a habitat for nesting birds, hedgehogs and bats. All habitats assessed are likely to be impacted by the proposals. However, as the habitats to be lost to the proposals are small in area and not of high ecological value, it is considered that their loss can be mitigated for, and the proposals will not adversely affect the ecological value of the wider area, provided the recommendations detailed below are followed.

- If works have not begun by November 2027, an updated site visit will be required to assess the habitats within the site
- A minimum of one nocturnal bat survey on buildings B3 and B5 between May and August to determine if bats are using the buildings as a roost
- Should plans change and trees require removal, a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of those trees will be required
- Production and implementation of a Hedgehog RAMS to avoid any harm to this species during the proposed works
- Production of an Invasive Species Method Statement to avoid the spread of invasive species into the wider landscape during the proposed works
- Precautionary check for invasive species prior to works commencing
- Enhancing the site for species through appropriate landscape planting that includes native, species-rich hedgerows, trees and areas of wildflowers plus provision of integrated bat and bird features within newly constructed buildings
- Production of a management plan to ensure the long-term commitments to manage the planting, protection and enhancement of biodiversity in and around a new development site
- Vegetation clearance or pruning should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (1 March to 31 August inclusive) to avoid any impact on breeding birds, or a nesting bird check by a suitably experienced ecologist should be undertaken immediately prior to works commencing

1. Introduction

Ascerta has been instructed by **EA Planning** to carry out a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Daytime Building Inspection for bats at the site. The site OS grid reference is SD 83639 02306 and the What3Words reference is crop.fear.gifts. The extent of the site is displayed in photograph 1.1 below.



Photograph 1.1: Extent of the site

This report presents the results of the survey including evaluation of habitats on-site and potential for protected species to be using the site. The report includes recommendations for further actions where applicable, in order to satisfy current UK wildlife legislation and to achieve our client's objectives. Relevant legislation is detailed within Appendix 4.

2. Objectives

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

Our objectives are as follows:

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

3. Survey Methods

The Preliminary Ecological Appraisal involved the collection and review of data from a desk study and field survey, along with an assessment of the value of the habitats following the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidelines.

3.1 Desk Study

A desk study was undertaken in November 2025 to identify protected and notable habitats and species, and nature conservation designations potentially relevant to the proposed development. The desk study was carried out using the sources detailed in Table 3.1 below. For the purposes of this report, protected and notable species records have been restricted to the last 15 years.

Table 3.1: Desk study data information

Source	Date obtained	Data obtained
Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC)	10 November 2025	• Statutory designated sites within 2km of the site • Protected and notable habitats within 2km of the site • European Protected Species Licenses (EPSLs) within 2km of the site
Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU)	25 November 2025	• Non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site • Protected and notable species records within 2km of the site
Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan	10 November 2025	• Additional protections afforded to species/habitat

3.2 Field Survey

A walkover survey of the site was conducted on 10 November 2025 by Jack Kay. The habitat types and features of ecological interest were identified and mapped in compliance with *the Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A Technique for Environmental Audit* (JNCC, 2010). During the survey, weather conditions were recorded to ensure optimal surveying conditions according to guidelines. Any sub-optimal conditions will be discussed in the limitations.

This includes the identification of the main species present and examination of the potential for any protected species. Habitats were mapped (Appendix 1) and target notes (Appendix 2) made for any interesting features. A species list of flora and fauna observed on site during the field survey is also presented in Appendix 2.

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

- Mammals (badgers [*Meles meles*] and bats)
- Birds (including species potentially associated with 'European Sites')
- Amphibians and reptiles
- Invertebrates
- Hedgerows and boundaries
- Invasive plant species
- Plant communities and trees

3.3 Bat Survey Methods

The survey methods followed the guidelines set out by the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines – 4th Edition* (2024). Habitats, buildings and trees were assessed for suitability for use by bats and categorised independently using Table 4.1 page 44 within the Bat Conservation Trust Guidelines (Collins, 2024).

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal for bats

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

External inspection of the buildings

A daytime external inspection of the building(s) was carried out during the survey by a suitably experienced ecologist. The buildings were searched externally looking for signs of bats, including staining on barge boards, soffits, and more commonly, droppings on flat surfaces i.e., window ledges that would indicate potential roosting sites. Possible bat access points such as loose tiles, cracks and crevices or crawl spaces beneath and/or behind roofing materials such as roofing felt, panelling, soffits and tiles were identified and were also checked for signs of use by bats.

Any buildings on site are categorised as per Table 3.2 (overleaf). Buildings assigned a suitability of **Low** or above may require further inspection if they are to be lost to the developments.

Table 3.2: Guidelines for assessing potential suitability of proposed development sites for bats, based on the presence of habitat features within the landscape, to be applied using professional judgement. Guidelines taken from Table 4.2, page 45 of the Bat Conservation Trust's *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines – 4th Edition* (2024).

Potential suitability	Description	
	Roosting habitats in structures	Potential flight paths and foraging habitats
None	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any roosting bats at any time of the year (i.e. a complete absence of crevices / suitable shelter at all ground/underground levels).	No habitat features on site likely to be used by any commuting or foraging bats at any time of the year (i.e. no habitats that provide continuous lines of shade/protection for flight lines or generate/shelter insect populations available to foraging bats).
Negligible[a]	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains, as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions[b] and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats[c]).	Habitats that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitats. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions[b] and surrounding habitat, but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity or hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions[b] and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts, e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation sites.	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

[a] Negligible is defined as 'so small or unimportant as to be not worth considering, insignificant'. This category may be used where there are places that a bat could roost or forage (due to one attribute) but it is unlikely that they actually would (due to another attribute).

[b] For example, in terms of temperature, humidity, height above ground level, light levels or levels of disturbance.

[c] Evidence from the Netherlands shows mass swarming events of common pipistrelle bats in the autumn followed by mass hibernation in a diverse range of building types in urban environments (Korsten et al., 2016 and Jansen et al., 2022). Common pipistrelle swarming has been observed in the UK (Bell, 2022 and Tomlinson, 2020) and winter hibernation of this species has been detected at Seaton Delaval Hall in Northumberland (National Trust, 2018). This phenomenon requires some research in the UK, but ecologists should be aware of the potential for larger numbers of this species to be present during the autumn and winter in prominent buildings in the landscape, urban or otherwise.

3.4 Badger Survey Methods

The site was searched for setts and badger field signs including foraging areas, latrines and tracks. Badger surveys are carried out following *Best Practice Badger Survey Guidance Note (2018).* Attention was paid to the presence of the following field signs:

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

3.5 Evaluation

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

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

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

3.6 Limitations

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

Access to carry out an internal inspection of the buildings was not available. These access restrictions are considered within the report conclusions, and the buildings were fully visible externally.

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

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

4. Survey Results

4.1 Desk Study

Statutory sites

Three statutory designated sites were identified within a 2km radius of the proposed development site. These are listed in Table 4.1 below.

Table 4.1: Statutory designated sites

Statutory designated site	Reason for designation	Distance to proposed development
Blackley Forest Local Nature Reserve (LNR)	Designated for its woodland, grassland, marshland, running water and standing water habitat.	930m north
The Cliff/Kersal Dale (LNR)	Designated for its woodland, standing water, grassland and marshland habitat. Also, for its bird assemblage.	1.2km southwest
Kersal Moor (LNR)	Designated for its mosaic of grassland and scattered trees.	1.7km west

Non-statutory sites

Seven non-statutory designated sites were identified within a 2km radius of the proposed development site. These are listed in Table 4.2 below.

Table 4.2: Non-statutory designated sites

Non-statutory designated site	Reason for designation	Distance to proposed development
Bowker Vale Reservoir Site of Biological Importance (SBI)	Reservoir used for fishing and recreational activities.	700m north
Blackley Forest and Heaton Vale Reservoirs (SBI)	Mixture of deciduous forest, heath and parkland. Reservoir used for fishing.	950m north
Lakeside Woodland In Heaton Park (SBI)	Deciduous woodland and parkland used for recreational activities.	1.3km north
Kersal Dale (SBI)	Important species include woodpeckers, deer and kingfishers. Woodland, open water, marsh and semi-natural grasslands	1.3km southwest
River Irwell (SBI)	Tributary of the River Mersey. Important for wetland birds and limestone grassland	1.4km southwest
Kersal Moor (SBI)	Recreation area with a mosaic of grassland and scattered trees.	1.7km southwest
Reservoirs at Harpurhey	Collection of ancient mill ponds.	1.9km southeast

The full designations for each site are listed within Appendix 5.
The site does not lie within a relevant Natural England SSSI Impact Risk Zone.

Priority Habitats

Wetland

One area of Priority Habitat Lowland Fens was returned within 2km of the site, located 1.5km southwest.

Woodland

Numerous areas of Priority Habitat Deciduous Woodland were returned within 2km of the site, the closest being located 450m east.

One area of Wood Pasture and Parkland BAP Priority Habitat was returned within 2km of the site, located 1.3km northwest.

The site lies within a Conservation Target Area for the following Priority Species:

- Lapwing (*Vanellus vanellus)*
- Snipe *(Gallinago gallinago)*

The site also falls within a breeding area for the following Grassland Assemblage Farmland Birds:

- Lapwing

Priority Species

Following a review of records held by GMEU, several Priority Species that have the potential to occur within the vicinity of the proposed development have been identified. These include birds, bats, badgers, hedgehogs and amphibians. The species records are summarised below, and the detailed records held by GMEU within 2km of the site are displayed within Appendix 5. Protected species legislation can be found within Appendix 4.

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

Birds

436 records were returned for bird species within 2km of the site. Species returned include grey heron, house martin, kingfisher, little ringed plover and dunnock. All species recorded within 2km are displayed within Appendix 5. The closest of which was a 2019 record of song thrush located 590m southwest of the site within a residential area. The most recent of which was a 2024 record of herring gull, reed bunting and song thrush located 1.8km southwest of the site within Kersal Wetland.

Bats

GMEU returned 554 records for bats within the search area. Bat species include common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat, Brandt's bat, Daubenton's bat, Natterer's bat, Nathusius's pipistrelle, noctule and whiskered bat. The closest of which was a 2022 record of common pipistrelle and Nathusius's pipistrelle located 60m north of the site within a residential area. The most recent of which was a 2024 record of common pipistrelle located 1km east of the site within a residential area.

Amphibians

Six records for great crested newt were returned within 2km of the site. The closest of which was a 2011 record located 1.9km southeast of the site within reservoirs at Harpurhey. This was also the most recent record.

A further six amphibians were returned within 2km of the site. Species present include common toad (*Bufo bufo*). The closest of which was a 2024 record of common toad located 930m north of the site within a residential garden. This was also the most recent record.

Reptiles

One record for reptiles were returned within 2km of the site. Species present include slow worm. This was a 2011 record of slow worm located 1.6km north of the site within a cemetery.

Otters

Two records for otters were returned within 2km of the site. The closest of which was a 2013 record located 1.1km northeast along the River Irk. The most recent of which was a 2021 record located 1.5km southwest along the river Irwell.

Water voles

One record for water voles were returned within 2km of the site. This was a 2015 record located 870m north along the River Irk.

Badgers
Two records for badgers were returned within 2km of the site. The closest of which was a 2010 record located 250m west of the site. The closest of which is a 2023 record of a four-hole sett located 920m away from the site within a residential garden. The most recent of which was a 2025 record of a two-hole sett located 1.7km away from the site within Lakeside Woodland in Heaton Park SBI.

Other mammals
Forty-four records for other mammals were returned within 2km of the site. Species include hedgehog and polecat. The closest of which was a 2021 record of hedgehog located 270m east of the site within a residential area. The most recent of which was a 2024 record of hedgehog located 1.7km southwest of the site within a residential area.

European Protected Species Licences
There were no EPSL applications within 2km of the site since 2020.

4.2 Habitat Survey

Weather
The weather conditions during the survey were mild (11°C), dry and overcast (8/8 cloud cover) with a F1 (Beaufort Scale) light breeze, therefore appropriate for this type of survey.

The site is bound on all sides by large residential and commercial areas. Small sports fields are present to the northwest. However, these are buffered from the site by the A576.

Table 4.3: Habitats present on site including habitat alphanumeric code references from JNCC (2010)

Habitat description and JNCC codes	Site description
Hardstanding (J4)	A large area of hardstanding is present in the south and east of the site (see drawing P.2361.25.E01, Appendix 1). This is a mixture of concrete, tarmac and brickwork. This habitat is primarily pathways and a large car park as well as a bike storage area. This habitat is displayed in photograph 1 within Appendix 3.
Buildings (J3.6)	Five buildings are present within the site (see drawing P.2361.25.E01, Appendix 1). Two buildings are traditional brick and mortar construction (B3 and B5), with the remaining three buildings (B1, B2 and B4) being temporary structures constructed from UPVC and metal. The buildings are displayed within photographs 2–14 within Appendix 3.
Dense/continuous scrub (A2.1)	One area of dense scrub is present along the northern site boundary (see drawing P.2361.25.E01, Appendix 1). Species present within this habitat include bramble, common dogwood and laurel. This habitat is displayed in photograph 15 within Appendix 3.
Improved grassland (B6)	A large area of improved grassland is present in the northwest of the site with small areas present along the southern face of B1 (see drawing P.2361.25.E01, Appendix 1). The average sward height of this grassland was approximately 10cm. Species present include perennial ryegrass, ragwort, fescue sp., dandelion and common daisy. This habitat is displayed in photograph 16 within Appendix 3.
Other exposure – basic (I1.4.2)	Two areas of exposed rock are present in the southwest corner of the site (see drawing P.2361.25.E01, Appendix 1). These areas have been encroached by bryophytes, scrub and ephemeral species such as rhododendron, ivy, herb Robert and bracken. This habitat is displayed in photograph 17 within Appendix 3.
Scattered trees (A3.1)	A line of scattered trees is present along the northern site boundary with two additional scattered trees present within the improved grassland (see drawing P.2361.25.E01, Appendix 1). Species present include cypress sp., sycamore, beech, silver birch and goat willow. This habitat is displayed in Photograph 18 within Appendix 3.
Species-poor hedge (J2.1.2)	A single species-poor hedgerow is present along the drive from the northern boundary, along the eastern face of B1 (see drawing P.2361.25.E01, Appendix 1). Species present include laurel, privet and common dogwood. This habitat is displayed in photograph 19 within Appendix 3.
Species-poor hedge with trees (J2.3.2)	Two species-poor hedgerows with trees are present within the site. One along the eastern site boundary and the other along the western site boundary (see drawing P.2361.25.E01, Appendix 1). Species present include cypress, sycamore, Japanese laurel, rhododendron, elm and beech. This habitat is displayed in photograph 20 within Appendix 3.

4.3 Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of Buildings

Table 4.4: Preliminary bat roost assessment of buildings within the site

Building B1

Building description

Building B1 is a single-storey temporary building located in the northeast of the site (see drawing P.2361.25.E01, Appendix 1). The building is constructed from a mixture of UPVC and sheet metal. A flat roof is also present across the entire building. The building is currently in use as a large classroom and is in very good decorative order. No lifts or gaps were present along any of the buildings faces between building sections. No PRFs were observed. This building is displayed in photographs 2–3 within Appendix 3.

Assessment of B1

The building was assessed to have **negligible** hibernation potential for crevice and void dwelling bats and **negligible** potential for day and maternity roosts for crevice dwelling bats and **negligible** potential for void dwelling bats. Overall, the building is classified as having **negligible** bat roosting potential.

Building B2

Building description

Building B2 is a single-storey temporary building located in the northeast corner of the site (see drawing P.2361.25.E01, Appendix 1). Building B2 is very small and constructed from the same UPVC and sheet metal as B1 with a similar flat roof. It is currently in use as a security checkpoint for entry to the site. No lifts or gaps between sections were observed with no PRFs present. This building is displayed in photograph 4 within Appendix 3.

Assessment of B2

The building was assessed to have **negligible** hibernation potential for crevice and void dwelling bats and **negligible** potential for day and maternity roosts for crevice dwelling bats and **negligible** potential for void dwelling bats. Overall, the building is classified as having **negligible** bat roosting potential.

Building B3

Building description

Building B3 is a single-storey mixed construction building located along the southern site boundary (see drawing P.2361.25.E01, Appendix 1). Building B3 is primarily a brick and mortar building with extensions to the east and south constructed from UPVC and sheet metal. The roof of the older section of the building is constructed from slate tiles with ceramic ridge tiles with the newer section being constructed from sheet metal. The brick and mortar appeared in good condition with no sections of missing mortar noted and no missing bricks present. The fascia of this building is wooden and in good condition. No gaps between the fascia and brickwork was present. Multiple lifts and small gaps were noted in the roof tiles of this building, however. The building is currently in use as offices and is in good decorative order. This building is displayed in photographs 5–8 within Appendix 3.

Assessment of B3

The building was assessed to have **negligible** hibernation potential for crevice and void dwelling bats and **low** potential for day and maternity roosts for crevice dwelling bats and **low** potential for void dwelling bats. Overall, the building is classified as having **low** bat roosting potential.

Building B4

Building description

Building B4 is a single-storey temporary building located along the southern site boundary between B3 and B5 (see drawing P.2361.25.E01, Appendix 1). This building is constructed from the same UPVC and sheet metal material as B1, B2 and parts of B3. The roof is flat similar to B1 and B2. The building is currently in use as a storage area and in regular use. The external of this building is in good decorative order with no lifts or gaps between sections. No PRF's are present. This building is displayed in photographs 9–10 within Appendix 3.

Assessment of B4

The building was assessed to have **negligible** hibernation potential for crevice and void dwelling bats and **negligible** potential for day and maternity roosts for crevice dwelling bats and **negligible** potential for void dwelling bats. Overall, the building is classified as having **negligible** bat roosting potential.

Building B5

Building description

Building B5 is a three-storey building constructed from brick and mortar. No mortar was observed to be missing on all faces as well as no missing brickwork. The roof appeared to be of modern construction and seemed to have been renovated/replaced in recent years. The roof was in excellent condition with no lifts or gaps present and no missing/slipped tiles. Fascia is constructed from wood and appears in good condition, however, there are gaps between the facia and walls present on all faces of B5. There was also a hole in the eastern face on the third floor. This may be ventilation however, it could not be thoroughly assessed from the ground and therefore is considered a PRF. All windows and doors are constructed from modern UPVC with doubled glazed windows and are all in good working order. The building is currently in use as classrooms and offices regularly and appears to be in a good decorative order. This building is displayed in photographs 11–14 within Appendix 3.

Assessment of B5

The building was assessed to have **negligible** hibernation potential for crevice and void dwelling bats and **low** potential for day and maternity roosts for crevice dwelling bats and **low** potential for void dwelling bats. Overall, the building is classified as having **low** bat roosting potential.

4.4 Protected and Notable Species

Table 4.5: Habitat suitability for protected and notable species

Birds

Habitat suitability

The scrub, improved grassland, scattered trees, hedgerows and buildings within the site provide suitable foraging and nesting opportunities for bird species.

Species seen / evidence of presence / features identified

During the survey, magpie, wood pigeon and passerine species were identified within the site.

Further survey required

For any vegetation removal or building works, a nesting bird survey will be required (Section 5.2).

Bats

Habitat suitability

The buildings on site offer **negligible** to **low** potential to support bat roosts as detailed above in Section 4.3. All trees on site are currently planned to be retained within the proposals for the site. The scrub, hedgerows and scattered trees within the site provide **low suitability for commuting and foraging** bats, with poor connectivity to the surrounding land use.

Species seen / evidence of presence / features identified

Evidence of bats was not identified within the site during the survey.

Further survey required

Yes, further nocturnal surveys for bats on buildings B3 and B5 will be required (see Section 5.2).

Badgers

Habitat suitability

The scrub, improved grassland and hedgerow habitats within the site provides some limited foraging and shelter habitat for badger. However, the site is prone to high levels of human activity and lies within a heavily populated urban area with very limited connectivity to the wider environment, making it likely unsuitable for badgers.

Species seen / evidence of presence / features identified

No evidence of badger was identified within the site during the survey.

Further survey required

Badger will not be impacted by the proposals within the site; therefore, badger do not require further consideration within this planning application and will not be discussed further within this report.

Water voles

Habitat suitability

The site provides no suitable habitat for water vole. No ditch networks are present within 2km of the site. The closest stream/river is located 800m northeast of the site and is buffered by large residential areas and a railway line. Due to these factors, the site is not suitable for water vole and is unlikely that this species would utilise the site.

Species seen / evidence of presence / features identified

No evidence of water vole was identified during the site visit.

Further survey required

Water vole will not be impacted by the proposals within the site; therefore, water vole do not require further consideration within this planning application and will not be discussed further within this report.

Otters

Habitat suitability

The site provides no aquatic habitat for otter as well as very limited terrestrial habitat. The site is prone to high amounts of human disturbance and lies within a dense urban area with very limited connectivity to the wider environment. The closest stream/river system lies approximately 800m northeast of the site and is buffered by a large residential area and railway line. Due to these factors, the site is unsuitable for otter, and it is highly unlikely that this species will utilise the site.

Species seen / evidence of presence / features identified

No evidence of otters was identified during the site visit.

Further survey required

Otters will not be impacted by the proposals within the site; therefore, otters do not require further consideration within this planning application and will not be discussed further within this report.

Amphibians

Habitat suitability

No waterbodies are present within the site with the closest to the site being located approximately 600m southwest of the site. This pond is buffered from the site by a large residential area and the A576 making connectivity highly unlikely. Terrestrial habitat is present within the improved grassland, scrub and hedgerows; however, due to the high levels of human disturbance and very poor connectivity to the wider environment, amphibians are highly unlikely to be utilising the site.

Species seen / evidence of presence / features identified

No evidence of amphibians was identified within the site during the survey.

Further survey required

Amphibians will not be impacted by the proposals within the site; therefore, amphibians do not require further consideration within this planning application and will not be discussed further within this report.

Reptiles

Habitat suitability

The habitats within the site do not offer suitability to support reptiles. Ecotones are not present within the site and the habitats are scattered across the site with no suitable connectivity to the wider environment. The habitats within the site are also prone to high human disturbance.

Species seen / evidence of presence / features identified

No evidence of reptiles was identified within the site during the survey.

Further survey required

No further survey for reptile will be required. Reptiles do not require consideration within this planning application and will not be discussed further.

Invertebrates

Habitat suitability

The improved grassland and scrub provide limited habitat for invertebrates; however, the area is prone to high levels of human disturbance.

Species seen / evidence of presence / features identified

No evidence of invertebrates was identified within the site during the survey.

Further survey required
No further survey for invertebrates will be required. Invertebrates do not require consideration within this planning application and will not be discussed further.

Small mammals

Habitat suitability
The scrub, improved grassland and hedgerow habitats within the site provide some limited foraging and shelter habitat for small mammal species such as hedgehog.

Species seen / evidence of presence / features identified
No evidence of small mammals was identified within the site during the survey.

Further survey required
No further survey effort of other small mammals will be required; however, RAMS should be implemented (see Section 5.2).

Invasive species

Non-native invasive species rhododendron (TN1) was identified within the landscaping throughout the site. The locations of the non-native invasive species identified within the site are displayed on plan P.2361.25.E01 within Appendix 1.

5. Evaluation and Recommendations

5.1 Designated Sites and Habitats

The closest statutory site (Blackley Forest LNR) lies approximately 930m north of the site. The proposed site lies within a dense urban area providing significant buffering from this statutory site. This coupled with the separation distance and lack of ecological connectivity make it unlikely that the proposals will have an impact upon this statutory designated site.

The closest non-statutory site (Bowker Vale Reservoir SBI) lies approximately 700m north of the site. This site is separated from the proposed site by a large urban area, rendering it unlikely to be impacted by the proposals during the construction phase. The proposals are to construct another building on the site to be used for educational purposes, making it unlikely that this non-statutory site will see a significant increase in footfall post-construction.

Mitigation

The habitats on site comprise of hardstanding, bare ground, improved grassland, dense scrub, scattered scrub, scattered trees, species-poor hedgerow, species-poor hedgerow with trees and other exposure - basic. These habitats are considered to have an ecological value of **within the zone of influence** of the site or lower. The site contains no designated or priority habitats. Overall, the proposals are unlikely to adversely affect the ecological value of the area.

5.2 Protected and Notable Species Recommendations

Birds

The improved grassland, scattered trees, hedgerows and scrub provide suitable habitat for nesting and foraging bird species. It is recommended that vegetation clearance and building works should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (**1 March to 31 August inclusive**) to avoid any impact on breeding birds. If vegetation clearance cannot be undertaken outside of the breeding bird season, a nesting bird check by a suitably experienced ecologist should be undertaken immediately prior to works commencing. If an active birds' nest is identified, a suitable buffer zone should be implemented where no works are to occur within until the young have fledged the nest.

Bats

The habitats on site provide **low** suitability for commuting and foraging bats.

The buildings on site were assessed for their potential to support roosting bats. The buildings were assessed and categorised as follows:

- **Negligible** potential: B1, B2 and B4
- **Low** potential: B3 and B5

Building B3 is planned to be altered within the proposals and works will be taking place within significant proximity to B5, therefore buildings with **low** bat roost potential will require a **minimum of one nocturnal survey** undertaken between **May and August** to assess if bats are using the buildings within the site as a roost and to inform further recommendations if required.

Current proposals plan to retain all trees currently within the site. Should plans change and trees require removal, it is recommended a **Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment** of those trees be carried out to determine whether further survey effort of the trees is required.

Invasive species

Rhododendron (TN1) has been identified within the site. To avoid the spread (complying with the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, see Appendix 4) of these species within the site during site clearance, it is recommended that an **Invasive Species Management Plan** is produced and adhered to during the works. It is recommended that the management plan details suitable management of these species, biosecurity measures and avoidance measures where possible. It is also recommended that a check for additional invasive species is undertaken prior to works commencing, as invasive species are known to colonise quickly.

Small mammals

The site provides limited habitat for small mammals within the scrub, improved grassland and hedgerows.

These habitats are likely to be impacted by the proposals, and therefore it is recommended that a **Hedgehog RAMS Method Statement** is implemented during the works to avoid harm to this species.

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

5.3 Enhancements

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

- Provision of one bird box (25mm, 28mm or 32mm entrance hole box, house sparrow terrace, swift box), attached to or integrated within retained or new buildings on site
- Provision of one bat feature (e.g. Vivara Pro WoodStone Bat box or similar) attached to a retained or new tree on site or provision of a bat box (e.g. Vivara bat bricks or '*bird brick houses*' bat boxes) integrated within new or retained buildings
- Suitable landscaping incorporating species that provide a food or shelter resource to wildlife to include hawthorn, hazel, holly, blackthorn, field maple, dog rose and honeysuckle as hedgerow species and oak, alder, field maple, silver birch, crab apple, rowan and bird cherry as tree species together with implementing a relaxed mowing regime and establishing wildflowers in these areas

6. Conclusions

The site was subject to an extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of all buildings. During the survey and following a review of historical species records, it is considered that an impact on birds, bats and hedgehogs are likely to occur in relation to the proposals for the site. The following recommendations have been made to avoid an impact on these species:

- If works have not begun by November 2027, an updated site visit will be required to assess the habitats within the site
- A minimum of one nocturnal bat survey on buildings B3 and B5 between May and August to determine if bats are using the buildings as a roost
- Should plans change and trees require removal, a Preliminary Bat Roost Assessment of those trees will be required
- Production and implementation of a Hedgehog RAMS to avoid any harm to this species during the proposed works
- Production of an Invasive Species Method Statement to avoid the spread of invasive species into the wider landscape during the proposed works
- Precautionary check for invasive species prior to works commencing
- Enhancing the site for species through appropriate landscape planting that includes native, species-rich hedgerows, trees and areas of wildflowers plus provision of integrated bat and bird features within newly constructed buildings
- Production of a management plan to ensure the long-term commitments to manage the planting, protection and enhancement of biodiversity in and around a new development site
- Vegetation clearance or pruning should be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (1 March to 31 August inclusive) to avoid any impact on breeding birds, or a nesting bird check by a suitably experienced ecologist should be undertaken immediately prior to works commencing

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

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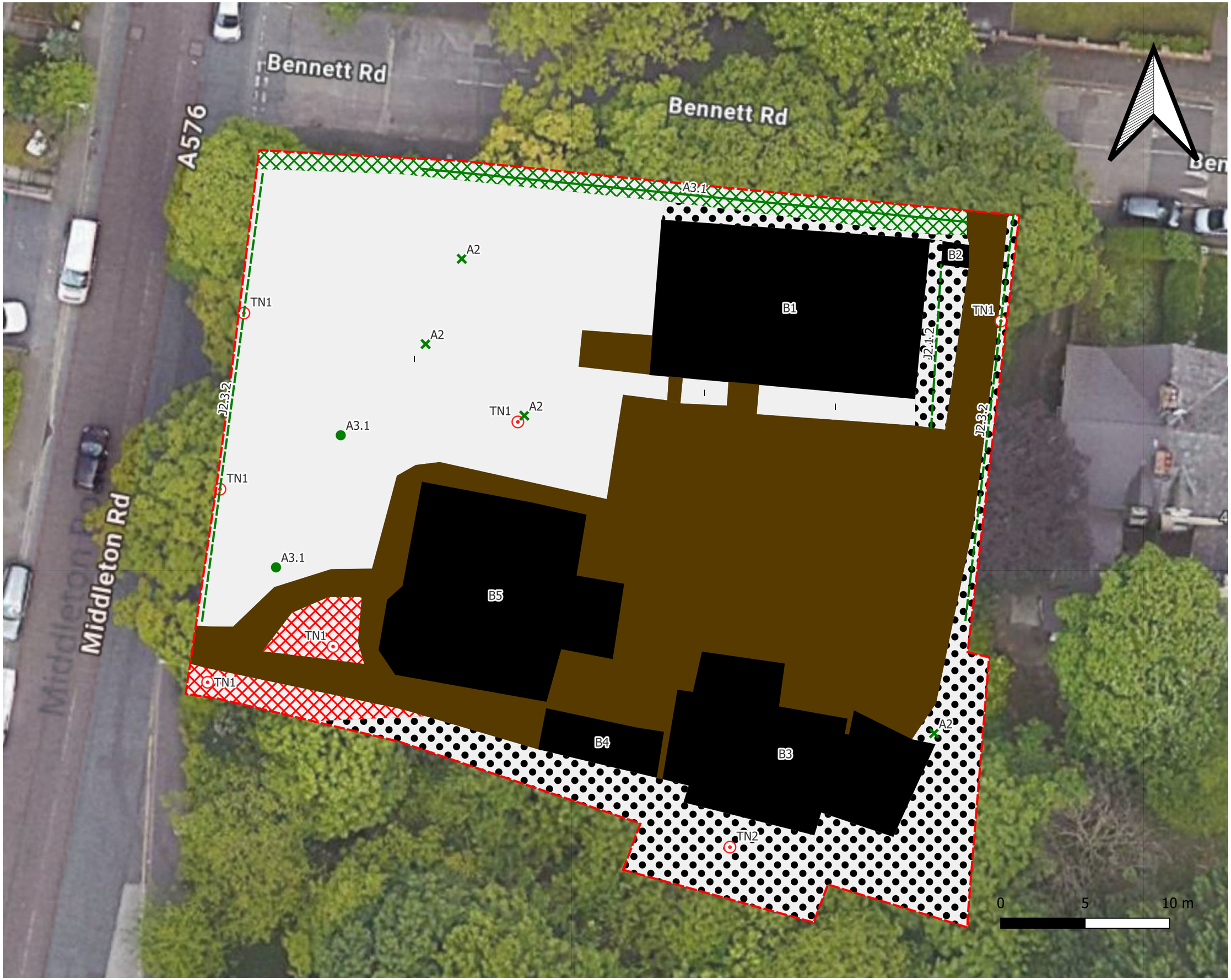
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Appendix 1

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Key

- Survey Area
- J2.1.2 - Species-poor hedgerow
- J2.3.2 - Species-poor hedgerow with trees
- Scattered trees
- Scattered trees
- Scattered scrub
- Scrub
- Improved grassland
- Other exposure - basic
- Buildings
- Bare ground
- Hardstanding
- Target Notes

TN1 - Rhododendron
TN2 - Pile of dead wood

DO NOT SCALE.
ALL COORDINATES RELATED TO LOCAL GRID.
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DRAWING TITLE:
Phase One Habitat Survey

SCALE:	DRAWN BY:	DRAWING No:
1:200	JK	P.2361.25.E01
DATE:	CHKD BY:	REV:
10/11/2025	LH	-

Appendix 2

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Appendix 2: Species Lists and Target Notes

Table 1: Flora species

English name	Scientific name
Aspen	*Populus tremula*
Beech	*Fagus sylvatica*
Bracken	*Pteridium aquilinum*
Bramble	*Rubus fruticosus agg.*
Bryophytes	*Bryophytes sp.*
Clover	*Trifolium sp.*
Common daisy	*Bellis perennis*
Common dogwood	*Cornus sanguinea*
Common field speedwell	*Veronica persica*
Common nettle	*Urtica dioica*
Creeping thistle	*Cirsium arvense*
Cypress	*Cupressus sp.*
Dandelion	*Taraxacum agg.*
Elm	*Ulmus procera*
Fuchsia	*Fuchsia sp.*
Goat willow	*Salix caprea*
Herb robert	*Geranium robertianum*
Ivy	*Hedera helix*
Japanese laurel	*Aucuba japonica*
Kohuhu	*Pittosporum tenuifolium*
Laurel	*Laurus sp.*
Pedunculate Oak	*Quercus robur*
Pendulous sedge	*Carex pendula*
Perennial ryegrass	*Lolium perenne*
Privet	*Ligustrum vulgare*
Ragwort	*Senecio jacobaea*
Red fescue	*Festuca rubra*
Rhododendron *	*Rhododendron ponticum*
Ribwort plantain	*Plantago lanceolata*
Silver birch	*Betula pendula*
Sycamore	*Acer pseudoplatanus*
Wood avens	*Geum urbanum*

*** invasive species**

Table 2: Fauna species

English name	Scientific name
Magpie	*Pica pica*
Wood pigeon	*Columba palumbus*

Table 3: Target notes

Target Note number	Description
TN1	Rhododendron
TN2	Pile of dead wood

Appendix 3

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Appendix 3: Photographs

Table 4: Photographs of the site



Photograph 1: Hardstanding car park at centre of the site



Photograph 2: South face of B1



Photograph 3: West face of B1



Photograph 4: Building B2



Photograph 5: North face of B3



Photograph 6: West face of B3



Photograph 7: East face of B3



Photograph 8: South face of B3



Photograph 9: North face of B4



Photograph 10: South face of B4



Photograph 11: South face of B5



Photograph 12: West face of B5



Photograph 13: North face of B5



Photograph 14: East face of B5



Photograph 15: Dense scrub along northern site boundary



Photograph 16: Area of improved grassland in the northwest of the site



Photograph 17: Exposed rock in southwest corner of the site



Photograph 18: Scattered trees along northern site boundary



Photograph 19: Species-poor hedgerow in northern section of the site



Photograph 20: Species-poor hedgerow with trees along eastern site boundary

Appendix 4

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Appendix 4: Relevant Legislation

European Legislation

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

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

UK Legislation

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

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

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

The DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric has been implemented to work alongside the Environment Act. This tool calculates potential biodiversity impacts as a result of development and identifies mitigation and compensation requirements to ensure no net loss of biodiversity. In addition, it identifies measures that can be implemented in order to meet biodiversity gain as a result of development.

The NPPF 2024 has been published to provide further planning guidance. Wildlife, biodiversity and ecological networks are referred to in Section 15 *Conserving and enhancing the natural environment*. The NPPF states that the planning system should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by: protecting and enhancing valued landscapes and sites of biodiversity value, recognise the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services and minimising impacts on and provide net gains for biodiversity. Further guidance is provided within Government Circular *06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and Their Impact Within the Planning System*.

Species and Habitats of Principal Importance

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

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

Bats

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

Under the current legislation, as summarised on pages 9 and 10 of the *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines – 4th Edition* (2024), it is a criminal offence to:

'Kill, capture, injure or take a wild bat:

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

Breeding birds

Breeding birds are protected under the W&C Act 1981, which makes it an offence to:

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

Invasive species

It is an offence under Section 14(2) of the W&C Act 1981 to '*plant or otherwise cause to grow*' in the wild any plant in Schedule 9 Part II.

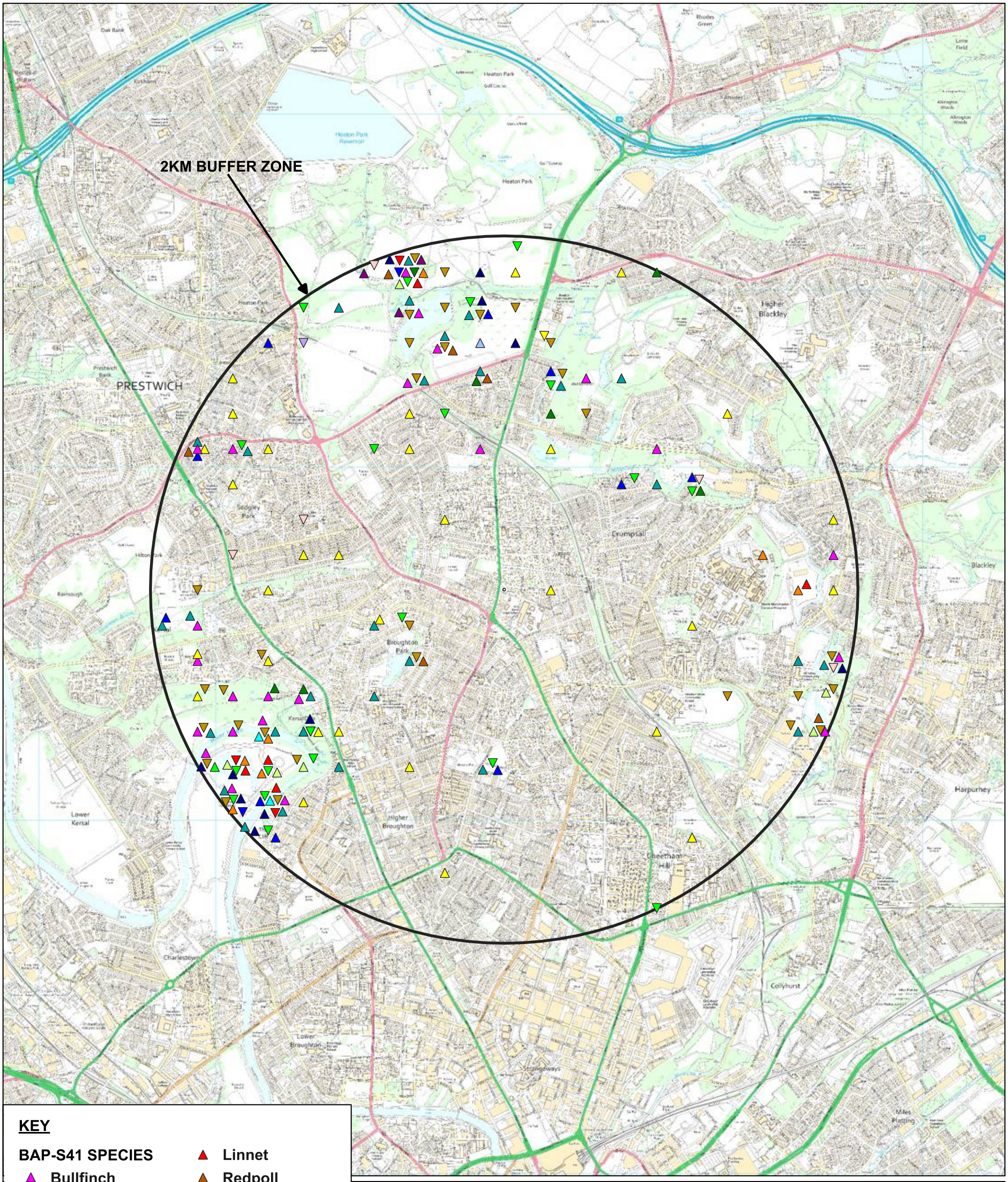
It is a criminal offence to intentionally, wilfully kill, injure or take any of the aforementioned protected species or to destroy or disturb its habitat.

Local policy

The site lies within Crumpsall and is covered by the Manchester Core Strategy 2012–2027 (adopted 11 July 2012) and extant policies within the Unitary Development Plan. The policy of relevance is EN 15 within the Core Strategy document.

Appendix 5

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KEY

BAP-S41 SPECIES

- Bullfinch
- Common Toad
- Cuckoo
- Curlew
- Dunnock
- Gr.hopper Warbler
- Hedgehog
- Herring Gull
- House Sparrow
- Lapwing
- LS Woodpecker
- Linnet
- Redpoll
- Reed Bunting
- S41 Moth
- Skylark
- Song Thrush
- Sptd Flycatcher
- Starling
- WL Hairstreak
- Willow Tit
- Yellow Wagtail

GREATER MANCHESTER ECOLOGY UNIT
ECOLOGICAL SEARCH - SD 83636 02304
MIDDLETON ROAD - MAP 5

SCALE 1:20000

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2KM BUFFER ZONE

PRESTWICH

Heaton Park

Higher Blackley

Sedgley Park

Crumpsall

Broughton Park

Higher Broughton

Lower Kersal

Cheetham Hill

Harpurhey

Blackley

Collyhurst

Strangeways

Miles Platting

KEY

BAT ROOSTS

- Bat sp
- Common Pipistrelle
- Pipistrelle sp
- Soprano Pipistrelle

BAT SIGNS

- Bat sp
- Brandt's Bat
- Brown Long-eared Bat
- Common Pipistrelle
- Daubenton's Bat
- Myotis sp
- Nathusius's Pipistrelle
- Natterer's Bat
- Noctule Bat
- Nyctalus/ Eptesicus agg.
- Pipistrelle sp
- Soprano Pipistrelle
- Whiskered Bat
- Whiskered/Brandt's Bat

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MIDDLETON ROAD - MAP 4

SCALE 1:20000

CONTAINS BAT DATA COURTESY OF SOUTH LANCS BAT GROUP

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2KM BUFFER ZONE

BLACKLEY FOREST

KERSAL MOOR

THE CLIFF / KERSAL DALE

KERSAL WETLANDS

KEY

- LOCAL NATURE RESERVES
- Water Vole
- GCN Absent
- Barn Owl
- Black Redstart
- Grey Heron (Heronry)
- Hobby
- Kingfisher
- Little Ringed Plover
- Otter
- Peregrine
- Polecat
- Slow-worm

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MIDDLETON ROAD - MAP 2

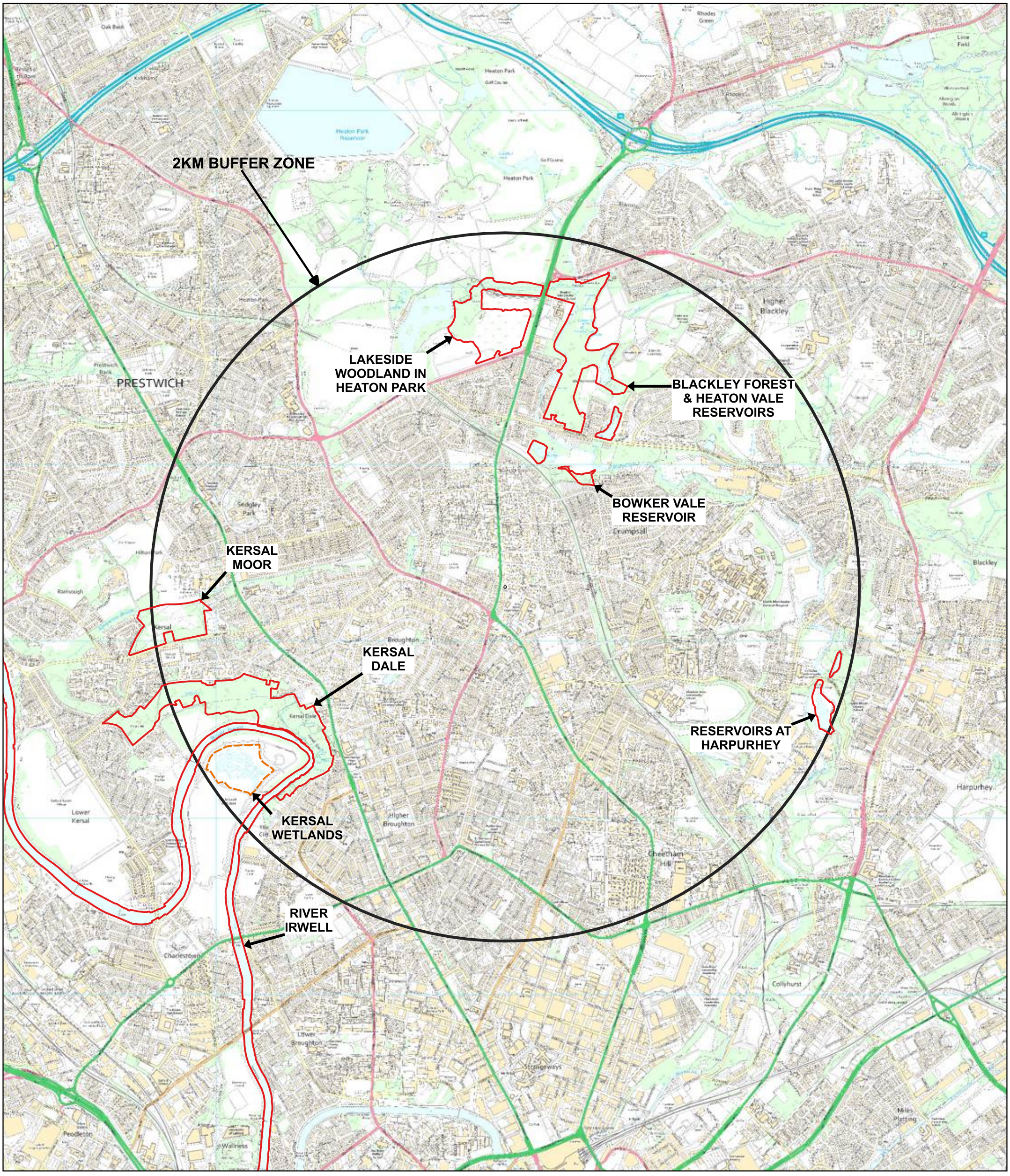
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MIDDLETON ROAD - MAP 1

SCALE 1:20000

KEY

- Sites of Biological Importance
- Candidate SBI

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