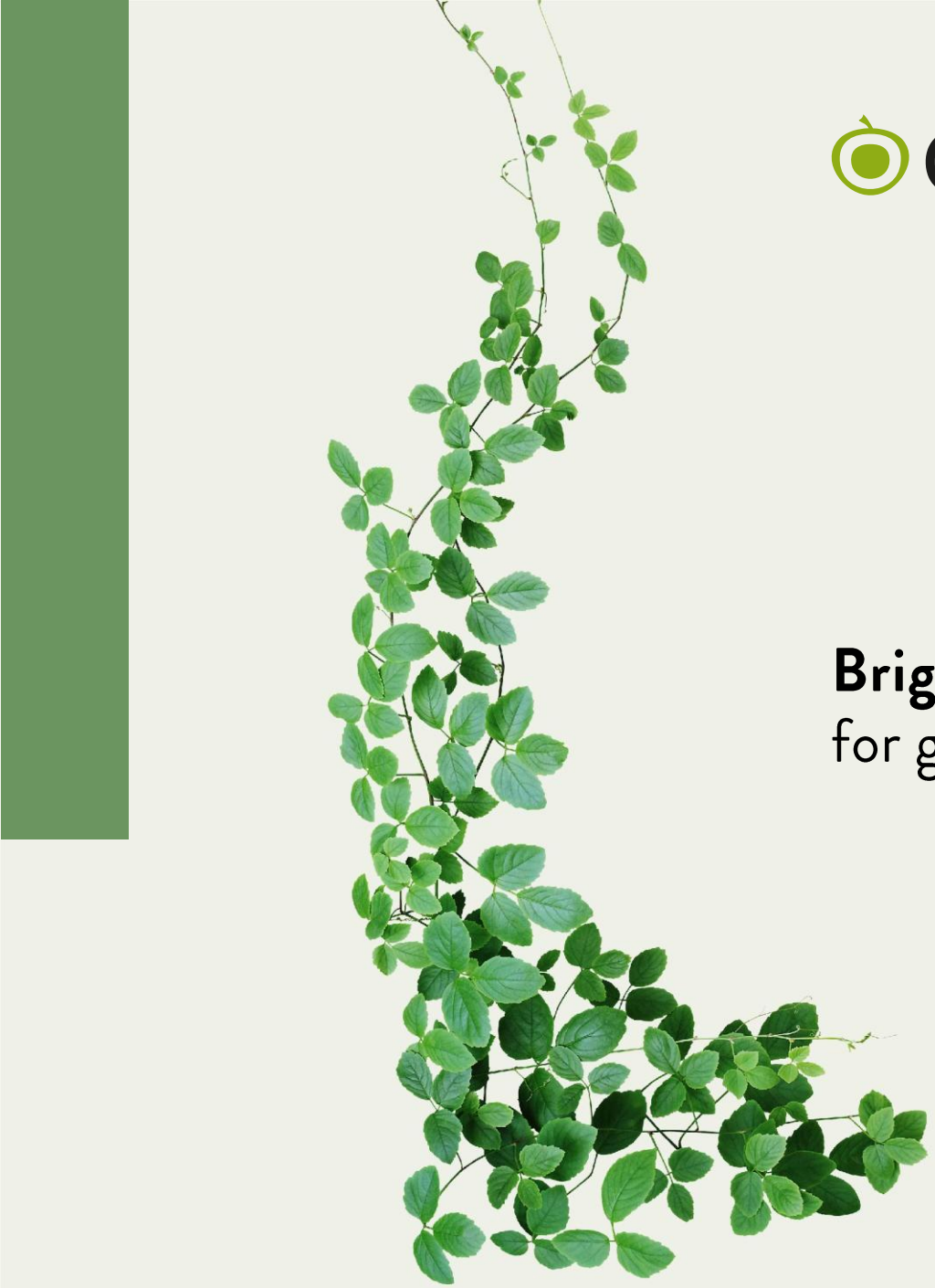
Greengage

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Client: Muse Places

Project: Wythenshawe, Centron House

Report: Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

QUALITY ASSURANCE

Issue/Revision:	Draft	Final
Date:	March 2026	March 2026
Comments:		
Prepared by:	Ryan Evans	Ryan Evans
Authorised by:	Abbie Case	Alison Fairbrass
File Reference:	554009re10Mar26_FV01_PE A.docx	554009re10Mar26_FV01_PE A.docx

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Greengage Environmental Limited (Greengage) was commissioned by Muse Places in February 2026 to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of an area of land known as Centron House in Wythenshawe, Manchester, hereafter referred to as 'the site'.

This document is a report of the PEA and has been produced to inform a Prior Approval for the site which seeks to demolish the existing buildings within the site.

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 0.52 hectares (ha) and comprised of a building, known as Centron House (B1), as well as another building (B2) and areas of hardstanding around the site consisting of a car park to the north of B1, with the habitats within the site consisting of areas of modified grassland, introduced shrub, and scattered trees, in addition to hedgerows.

Ecological Constraints and Additional Surveys/Mitigation Recommendations

The below species have been confirmed to be present or have potential to be present due to suitable habitats on the site and/or habitat connectivity within the wider landscape. Sections 4.0 and 5.0 of this 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)
Bats (foraging/ commuting)	Low	No additional surveys are required in relation to foraging and commuting bats, however a sensitive lighting scheme should be implemented.
Bats (roosting - summer/ transitional - buildings/structures)	Moderate	Bat dusk emergence surveys are recommended for the 'Centron House' building (B1). This should comprise two site visits during the bat activity season i.e. May - September, with one of the site visits to occur during May - August. Survey visits to be separated by minimum of 3 weeks.
Bats (roosting - hibernation -	Low	As B1 was considered to be of low potential for hibernating bats as a precaution, additional survey effort is not considered necessary as per BCT guidelines.

Ecological Constraint	Level of Suitability/ Confirmed Presence	Additional Surveys/Mitigation Recommendations (Summary)
buildings/ structures)		Should the building be scheduled for demolition during the bat hibernation period (November to March inclusive), in the first instance it is recommended that an internal inspection is conducted by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist (SQE) to assess the suitability for hibernating bats. Should this not be possible, works should be conducted under the supervision of a suitably qualified and licenced ecologist, whilst also adhering to a Precautionary Method of Works (PMoW) outlined in a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP).
Bats (roosting - summer/ transitional - trees)	PRF (one PRF-I)	T20 was assessed as 'PRF' only containing a single PRF-I, no additional survey effort is currently deemed necessary as per BCT guidelines. If required to be removed/ impacted, the tree should be section felled under the supervision of a SQE following a pre-commencement check immediately prior. Section felling should also be conducted whilst adhering to a PMoW.
Birds - nesting	Low	Nesting Bird Check(s) to be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist no more than 48 hours prior to vegetation clearance, where vegetation removal cannot be programmed to avoid March to August inclusive. In the instance of identification of an active nest, an exclusion zone is to be agreed and adhered to until an SQE has monitored and confirmed that chicks have fledged/the nest is no longer in use. It is also recommended that the demolition works should be scheduled outside the bird nesting season to ensure as far as possible that active nesting birds will not be encountered within the buildings. Additionally, a pre-commencement nesting bird check should also be carried out by a SQE a maximum of 48 hours prior to the commencement of works, regardless of the time of year, to identify any active nests. Should a nest or nesting birds be identified, then measures to ensure they are protected should be employed until either the young have fledged, or the nest is no longer active (to be monitored and confirmed by the SQE).

Ecological Constraint	Level of Suitability/ Confirmed Presence	Additional Surveys/Mitigation Recommendations (Summary)
Other priority/notable species	Low	No targeted additional surveys are necessary. However, PMoW are applicable during the construction stage for hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*.
Invasive non-native species	Confirmed presence	The presence of Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 9 listed species wall cotoneaster *Cotoneaster horizontalis* has been identified on the site. Mitigation measures should be outlined in a CEMP/PMoW to prevent unnecessary spread, and if it be cleared or removed from site a specialist contractor should be consulted and the material be treated as contaminated waste.

Ecological Enhancements

Table 1.2 Ecological Enhancement Recommendations

Ecological Feature	Recommendations
Hedgerows	New hedgerows to favour native species and be species-rich where possible. Where a single species is more appropriate, a single native species such as hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* should ideally be favoured.
Bat boxes	Installation of integral woodcrete bat boxes installed during the construction stage for future developments, installed on south facing building aspects. The number of these recommended for implementation will be informed by the recommended further surveys.
Bird boxes	Installation of a minimum of two integral woodcrete bird boxes during the construction stage of future developments. Full south facing building aspects should be avoided.
Invertebrate features	Inclusion of a minimum of two invertebrate habitat bricks and minimum of two log piles could be included in suitable locations within the development design.

General Recommendations

In accordance with the Environment Act, 2021[1], National Planning Policy Framework[2] (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]. Please refer to the separate BNGA report[4].

A CEMP providing greater detail on the above mitigation recommendations and in accordance with British Standard 42020: 2013 Biodiversity[5], should be produced and implemented for the site and secured through planning condition.

N.B. For guidance on the validity of reports/surveys, the Chartered Institute for Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) Advice Note 'On The Ecological Lifespan Of Ecological Reports and Surveys' should be referred to. This report/survey has been undertaken in February 2026, and is considered to be valid for a period of up to 18 months, unless the conditions within the site are noted to change.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Greengage Environmental Limited (Greengage) was commissioned by Muse Places in February 2026 to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of an area of land known as Centron House 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 Prior Approval for the site which seeks to demolish the existing 'Centron House' building within the site.

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 0.52 hectares (ha) and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (OS NGR): SJ 82843 87062, OS Co-ordinates 382843, 387062.

The site comprised of a building, known as Centron House (B1), as well as another building (B2) and areas of hardstanding around the site consisting of a car park to the north of B1, with the habitats within the site consisting of areas of modified grassland, introduced shrub, and scattered trees, in addition to hedgerows.

The site is located off Rowlandsway, with the immediate surroundings set within Wythenshawe Civic shopping centre located directly to the west and residential estates to the east of the site. Robinswood Road Tram stop is located approximately 340 meters (m) to the south of the site, with the M56 located approximately 1.3 kilometres (km) to the west of the site.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

The PEA was undertaken in accordance with guidance in the UK Habitat Classification System (UKHab)[6] Version 2 and the Chartered Institute of Ecological and Environmental Management (CIEEM) (2017) Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal[7], 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) website[8]) was undertaken for the site and a radius of 2km from the site boundary, to search for statutory designated sites at the local to international level. Where appropriate, this search was extended to up to 10km for internationally 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 dataset[9] 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 Framework[10] 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)[11].

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 Local Environmental Records Centre (LERC), Greater Manchester Local Records Centre (GMLRC), for a 2km search radius around the site was also 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 sub heading 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. Sensitive data, such as accurate locations in relation to badger sett records, have not been included to avoid potential persecution.

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 conducted on 26th February 2026 during overcast conditions and during intermittent periods of rainy and windy spells, by Ryan Evans, Senior Consultant.

The site extent and habitats are shown within Appendix A, Target Notes (TNs) within Appendix B, and site photographs shown within Appendix C.

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 features of interest were recorded using TNs. Any protected plant species and/or invasive non-native species (INNS) present were also noted.

The abundance of plant species recorded was classified according to the DAFOR rating scale. The standardised terms are: D – Dominant, A – Abundant, F – Frequent, O – Occasional and R – Rare.

Hedgerow Assessment

A hedgerow is defined as "...any boundary line of trees or shrubs over 20m long and less than 5m wide, and where any gaps between the trees and shrub species are less than 20m wide"[12]. Any bank, wall, ditch or tree within 2m of the centre of the hedgerow is considered to be part of the hedgerow habitat, as is the herbaceous vegetation within 2m of the centre of the hedgerow.

Hedgerows on site were recorded with consideration given as to as to whether they may require assessment under the landscape and wildlife criteria listed in Schedule 1 Part II of the Hedgerows Regulations 1997[13], using the standard methodology in the Regulations, which is detailed below.

For hedgerows of 30m in length or less, the entire hedgerow is surveyed. Hedgerows greater than 30m in length are split into 100m sections and the central 30m of each 100m section is surveyed. The number of woody species present is recorded within each length along with the presence of any of the features listed in Sub-paragraph 4 of the Regulations, namely the presence of a bank, wall, or ditch, less than 10% gaps, at least one standard tree per 50m, at least three woodland plant species, at least four points achieved from connections to other hedgerows, woods or ponds, and/or a parallel hedge within 15m.

A hedgerow is considered important under the Regulations where:

- It has an average of seven or more woody species in the surveyed section(s);
- It has an average of six woody species in the surveyed section(s) and three or more features from Sub-paragraph 4;
- It has six woody species and one of the following rare trees – black poplar *Populus nigra*, large-leaved lime *Tilia platyphyllos*, small-leaved lime *Tilia cordata*, wild service tree *Sorbus torminalis*;

- It has an average of five woody species on average in the survey section(s) and has four or more features from Sub-paragraph 4; or,
- It has four woody species on average in surveyed section(s), is adjacent to a footpath, bridleway or byway open to all traffic (BOAT) and has two or more features from Sub-paragraph 4.

A hedgerow also qualifies as a habitat of principal importance under Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006 if it comprises greater than 80% of one or more native species. The hedgerows on the site were therefore also assessed to determine whether they qualify as a NERC Act 2006 habitat of principal importance.

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 (GCN)

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 Guidelines[14] and methods given in the CIEEM Bat Mitigation Guidelines[15] 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), or PRF (where at least one PRF was identified on a tree). Where PRFs were identified they were either classified as, 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 *Alcedo atthis*.

A re-assessment of Birds of Conservation Concern[16] (version 5) (BoCC5) defined rare and threatened bird species on two lists (Red and Amber) describing the level of threat to each species of concern.

'Red' is the highest conservation priority, with species needing urgent action due to either a historical decline in breeding population, severe (>50%) decline in breeding or non-breeding population, or severe decline in breeding range over 50 years or more. 'Amber' is the next most critical group, with species qualifying for this status as a result of either recovery from red list criterion, being classed as rare breeders in the UK, moderate (>25%) decline in breeding or non-breeding population or moderate decline in breeding range over 25 years or more. These categories are followed by 'Green', which indicates a species is relatively unthreatened.

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 *Lampyris 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.

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.

Species of particular consideration included, but were not limited to, hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*.

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*.

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

Ryan Evans, Senior Consultant, has a BSc (Hons) in Geography and is an Associate member of CIEEM. Ryan has over seven years' experience as an ecologist, holds a Natural England GCN Licence, is a certified tree climber and is accredited to undertake river condition assessments (RCA).

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 GCN Licence, and is a Level 4 botanist as accredited by Field Identification Skills Certification (FISC).

Dr Alison Fairbrass, Principal Consultant, has over ten years of experience as a biodiversity and natural capital scientist. Alison is a Full member of the Institute of Sustainability & Environmental Professionals (MISEP) and is a Charted Environmentalist (CEnv). She holds a PhD in Urban Sustainability & Resilience. Alison is a specialist in biodiversity monitoring, having developed masterplan and national-scale biodiversity monitoring protocols. She is also a recognised expert in natural capital and has developed natural capital reporting frameworks that are used internationally.

This report was prepared by Ryan Evans, reviewed by Abbie Case and authorised by Alison Fairbrass, 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

The PEA was undertaken outside of the optimal botanical growing season (typically recognised as May - September), and as such, a full evaluation of botanical species on site could not be collated as February is not an optimal time of year for plant growth and identification. However, due to the limited extent and low distinctiveness habitat types present (such as with the areas of modified grassland), this is not considered to significantly impact any conclusions drawn in this report.

As part of the Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) of the buildings within the site, internal access was not granted on health and safety grounds due to the buildings condition and restricted access areas within the building prior to demolition, therefore evidence of roosting bats within the structure was not assessed.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 DESK STUDY

Environmental Databases

Designated Sites

The desk study has not identified any statutory designations associated with the site itself.

One statutorily designated site was identified within 2km of the site, which pertained to Gatley Carrs Local Nature Reserve (LNR). However, when extended to 10km for internationally designated sites, two sites were identified, consisting of Rostherne Mere (Ramsar) and Midland Meres & Mosses - Phase 1 (Ramsar), as depicted within Table 4.1.

Additionally, the desk study identified that the site is located within the IRZ for Cotteril Clough (SSSI), which is situated approximately 3.25km southwest of the site.

Records received from GMLRC did not return any non-statutory designations relating to the site itself, but identified six non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site. These all consisted of Sites of Biological Importance (SBI's), one of which is a joint designation with the Gatley Carrs (LNR).

Table 4.1 below gives the locations and descriptions of the statutory and non-statutory designated sites in order of their proximity to the site.

Table 4.1 Statutory and Non-Statutory Designated Sites identified within 2km Search Radius, extended to 10km for internationally designated sites

Site Name and Designation	Approximate Location and Direction from the Site	Description/Citation
Statutory		
Gatley Carrs (LNR)	1.9km northeast	Previously used for farming and later landfill, Gatley Carrs is now an area of woodland featuring scrubland, grassland, Willow swamp, wildflower meadow and two ponds. It is bordered by the M56 motorway and is open to the public as local nature reserve.
Rostherne Mere (Ramsar)	8.1km southwest	The site is designated as it contains 'open water transition fen ('mere')'. Rostherne Mere is the deepest, one of the largest and the most northerly of the meres of the Cheshire Plain. It lies in a hollow surrounded by thick deposits of glacial drift overlying triassic marls and salt beds. In winter, this site supports nationally important assemblages of great cormorant *Phalacrocorax carbo carbo* (peak count of

Site Name and Designation	Approximate Location and Direction from the Site	Description/Citation
		273 individuals representing an average of 1.1% of the GB popuation), great bittern *Botaurus stellaris stellaris* (one individual representing an average of 1%of the GB population), and water rail *Rallus aquaticus* (six individuals representing an average of 1.3% of the GB population).
Midland Meres & Mosses - Phase 1 (Ramsar)	9.5km southwest	The site is designated as it contains 'open water transition fen ('mere'), lowland raised bog ('moss') and associated habitats, as well as wetland invertebrate and plant assemblages. The Meres and Mosses of the north-west Midlands comprise a series of open water and peatland sites, most of which developed in natural depressions left by the retreating ice sheets at the end of the last Ice Age. There are over 60 open water sites, or 'meres', as well as a smaller number of peatland sites, known as 'mosses'. The wide range of resulting habitats support nationally important flora, consisting of six-stamened waterwort *Elatine hexandra*, needle spike-rush *Eleocharis acicularis*, cowbane *Cicuta virosa*, Marsh Fern *Thelypteris palustris*, and elongated sedge *Carex elongata*. The site also supports an assemblage of rare wetland invertebrates, including, window-winged caddis fly *Hagenella clathrata*, *Limnophila fasciata*, *Cararita limnaea*, bog rove beetle *Lathrobium rufipenne*, zircon reed beetle *Donacia aquatica*, *Prionocera pubescens*, *Gonomyia abbreviata*, and *Sitticus floricola*.
Non-statutory		
Park Wood SBI	0.25km northeast	Semi natural broadleaved woodland (3.7ha) featuring ponds and wetland habitat. Canopy species are dominated by pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* (some veteran trees). Other species include beech *Fagus sylvatica*, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, silver birch *Betula pendula*, some occasional Scots pine *Pinus sylvestris*. Abundance understorey species include rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* and hazel *Corylus avellana*, with occasional yew *Taxus baccata* and privet *Lingustrum ovalifolium*. Ground flora is variable featuring species such as

Site Name and Designation	Approximate Location and Direction from the Site	Description/Citation
		bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta*, pendulous sedge *Carex pendula*, wood avens *Geum urbanum*, foxglove *Digitalis purpurea*, creeping softgrass *Holcus mollis*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus*, ivy *Hedera helix* and broad-leaved willowherb *Epilobium montanum*. In some places trampling has supressed ground flora growth. Present are a number of ponds, supporting aquatic vegetation including flote grass *Glyceria fluitans*, common duckweed *Lemna minor* and yellow flag iris *Iris pseudacorus*. A number of regularly used paths occur throughout.
Big Wood SBI	0.5km south	Big Wood comprises a series of small woodlands including Big Wood, Little Wood, Hatchetts Wood and Ash Wood - woodlands are separated by housing, roads and business park. Across the woodlands the canopy is largely dominated by oak, with ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, alder *Alnus glutinosa*, and sycamore frequently occurring. The understorey across the sites typically features holly, hazel, and hawthorn, with active regeneration of ash and sycamore. Ground flora features abundant bramble, bracken *Pteridium aquilinum*, and ivy, with frequent wood avens, red campion *Silene dioica*, and various ferns (broad buckler *Dryopteris dilatata*, male *Dryopteris filix-mas*, and scaly male-fern *Dryopteris affinis*). Big Wood features a stream which supports various floating vegetation, including water mint, which is beneficial for GCN. Fish have been previously introduced but are reported to now be absent. Hatchetts Wood features a small pond which supports common floating vegetation.
Heald Green Marsh SBI	1.3km east	Marshland and woodland containing a pond and meadow, situated within the suburb of Heald Green.
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.

Site Name and Designation	Approximate Location and Direction from the Site	Description/Citation
Blackcarr Wood & Baguley Bottoms SBI	1.7km northwest	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.
Gatley Carrs SBI	1.9km northeast	Previously used for farming and later landfill, Gatley Carrs is now an area of woodland featuring scrubland, grassland, Willow swamp, wildflower meadow and two ponds. It is bordered by the M56 motorway and is open to the public as local nature reserve.

The review of MAGIC identified a single EPS licence within 2km of the site, pertaining to bats:

- 2015-9463-EPS-MIT-2 (2015 - 2020), approximately 1.73km southwest (allowing for the destruction of a resting place for, common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus*, Natterer's bat *Myotis nattereri*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, and whiskered bat Myotis *mystacinus*.

Great Crested Newt Risk Zones

The review of Natural England's GCN Risk Zones identified that the site is situated within the 'Green' zone, meaning that the area contains sparsely distributed GCN and is less likely to contain important pathways of connecting habitat.

Biodiversity Action Plans/Priority Habitats and Species

One UK BAP priority habitat was identified within 500m of the site. This pertained to three parcels of deciduous woodland, the closest of which is approximately 250m northeast, which is also part of the Park Wood (SBI).

Local Environmental Records Centre

Species Records

The data consultation with GMLRC returned records of relevance to the site relating to records between 2016 to 2026, within 2km of the site.

Amphibians - Great Crested Newt and Native Amphibians

GMLRC returned no recent records pertaining to GCN or other native amphibians from within 2km of the site. The only relevant information regarding amphibians consisted of a negative environmental DNA (eDNA) result of a waterbody approximately 880m southeast of the site.

Badger

GMLRC returned a single recent record pertaining to badger from within 2km of the site, which is depicted within Table 4.2 below.

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

Common Name	Scientific Name	Distance/Direction From Site	Notes
Badger	*Meles meles*	Not included due to sensitive data.	A single record relating to a road casualty dated 2019.

Bats

GMLRC returned 116 recent records pertaining to bats from within 2km of the site, four of which were in relation to recorded bat roosts, in relation to common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle and for an unidentified pipistrelle species *Pipistrellus sp.*.

The remaining 112 records pertained to general activity, in relation to common pipistrelle, soprano pipistrelle, brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*, noctule, as well as for unidentified pipistrelle, myotis *Myotis sp.* and an additional unidentified bat species *Chiroptera spp.*.

Table 4.3 below provides a summary of all bat records returned.

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

Common Name	Scientific Name	Distance/Direction From Site	Notes
Bats (roosting)			
Common pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	1.4km northeast	A single record relating to a roost with identified droppings, dated 2017.
Soprano pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*	1.6km northeast	A single record relating to a roost dated 2021.
Unidentified Pipistrelle Species	*Pipistrellus sp.*	1.6km northeast	Two records relating to a roost dated 2021.
Bats (general activity)			
Common pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*	0.83km south	Sixty-four records, dated 2016 to 2022, inclusive of general activity, as well as single records for injured/ rescued bats in 2021 and 2022.
Soprano pipistrelle	*Pipistrellus pygmaeus*	1.14km northeast	Twenty-seven records dated 2016 to 2023.

Common Name	Scientific Name	Distance/Direction From Site	Notes
Unidentified Pipistrelle Species	*Pipistrellus sp.*	0.6km north	Three records dated between 2017 and 2019.
Brown Long-eared bat	*Plecotus auritus*	0.3km northwest	One record, relating to an injured bat, later released, dated 2016.
Daubenton's bat	*Myotis daubentonii*	1.24km southwest	Two records dated 2021.
Noctule	*Nyctalus noctula*	1.13km west	Twelve records Dated between 2016 and 2021.
Unidentified Myotis Species	*Myotis sp.*	1.68km northeast	One record dated 2021.
Unidentified Bat Species	*Chiroptera spp.*	1.46km southeast	Two records, dated 2017 and 2020 respectively.

Birds

GMLRC returned a total of 17 records for four bird species within 2km of the site comprising of two BoCC[16] Red listed species and two BoCC Amber listed species, all of which have the potential to be present within the site based on the habitat types present. Table 4.4 below provides a summary of the bird species but does not include specific location and direction information, or number of records.

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

Common Name	Scientific Name	WCA/BoCC5 Status
House sparrow	*Passer domesticus*	Red
Starling	*Sturnus vulgaris*	Red
Bullfinch	*Pyrrhula pyrrhula*	Amber
Song thrush	*Turdus philomelos*	Amber

Invertebrates

GMLRC returned five recent records pertaining to invertebrates from within 2km of the site, all of which are in relation to cinnabar moth *Tyria jacobaeae*, as shown in Table 4.5 below.

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

Common Name	Scientific Name	Distance/Direction From Site	Notes
Cinnabar	*Tyria jacobaeae*	0.6km southwest	Dated 2018 to 2024.

Reptiles

GMLRC returned no recent records pertaining to reptiles from within 2km of the site.

Riparian Mammals

GMLRC returned no recent records pertaining to riparian mammals from within 2km of the site.

Protected/Notable Plant Species

GMLRC returned no recent records pertaining to protected/ notable plant species from within 2km of the site.

Invasive Non-native Species

GMLRC returned no recent records pertaining to invasive non-native species from within 2km of the site.

Other Priority/Notable Species

GMLRC returned 18 recent records pertaining to other priority or notable species from with 2km of the site for which habitats in the site may be considered suitable to support, all of which are in relation to hedgehog, as depicted within Table 4.6.

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	*Erinaceus europaeus*	0.8km northwest	18 records in relation to presence, dated 2016 to 2022 as well as a single record of a road casualty in 2023.

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.

4.2 SITE WALKOVER

The site walkover was carried out on 26th February 2026 by Ryan Evans, Senior Consultant, during overcast conditions and during intermittent periods of rainy and windy spells.

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

Habitats

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

u1b - Developed land; sealed surface [804 - Car Park]

The majority of the site is made up of hardstanding developed land; sealed surface as a mixture of a concrete car park, as well as brick and stone paved areas offering negligible ecological suitability, bound by metal palisade fencing. Within the hard standing, ephemeral vegetation is present, consisting of buddleia (O), herb robert *Geranium robertianum* (O), ivy *Hedera helix* (R), and thistle *Cirsium sp.* (R).

u1b5 - Buildings

The site had two buildings (B1- B2) present, as shown in Figure A.1. This consisted of the main multi-storey Centron House within the site, as well as a smaller single storey disused electrical substation within the southeastern extent of the site.

B1

B1 pertaining to the main 'Centron House' building within the site. The composition of the building consists of a 'T' shaped former multi-story office block. The aspects of the structure are made up of a stonewashed render, alongside concrete pillars, with each aspect consisting of windows along the entire length. The roof is a flat surface with flashing on sloped sides from the rendered sides.

B2

B2 pertains to a former electrical substation connected to the main 'Centron House' building. It is a single story and of brick construction with a stonewashed render on the exterior walls. The roof is flat, with a roof access void left open/fallen through leading to weather ingress to the main internal of the structure. Along the northern aspect, there is a panelled fencing gate/door further exposing the main internal structure of the building.

g4 - Modified grassland

A total of four parcels of modified grassland are present within the site, two of which are situated within the northwestern extent of the site. These areas were well managed with a short sward height, with large amounts of bare ground present under the canopy of the coniferous trees within the northernmost parcel. Species present within these areas consist of, perennial rye grass *Lolium perenne* (A), Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus* (F), meadow grass *Poa sp.* (F) cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata* (O), common bent *Agrostis capillaris* (O), false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* (O), as well as common ragwort *Senecio jacobaea* (R), and greater periwinkle *Vinca major* (R) being situated within the northernmost parcel only.

g4 - Modified grassland [847 - Introduced Shrub]

The two additional parcels of modified grassland were present within the southwestern extent of the site, which also had patches of introduced shrub present within them. Additional grassland species present within these areas consisting of creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens* (F), dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* (O), bramble *Rubus fruticosus* (R), and spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare* (R), with areas of ornamental/ introduced shrub, inclusive of a stand of wall cotoneaster *Cotoneaster horizontalis* (TN1) within the southernmost parcel.

u1 - Built up areas and gardens [847 - Introduced Shrub]

Two parcels of introduced shrub are present within the site, one situated in northwestern corner and one along the southern boundary of the site. Species within the northwestern parcel consist of cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* (D) and yew *Taxus baccata* (O), and the species within the southern parcel largely consisting of ornamental species.

Urban Trees

Twenty urban trees were present within the site, primarily situated along the western boundary, with individual trees also situated in the southeastern extent. The species are an even mixture of broadleaved and coniferous trees (ten species of each), which consisted of, sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, field maple *Acer campestre*, cypress *Cupressus sp.*, cedar *Cedrus libani*, silver birch *Betula pendula*, lime *Tilia sp.*, as well as an unidentified ornamental species (T18).

Hedgerows

h2b - Non-native and ornamental hedgerow

Three hedgerows assessed as non-native and ornamental are situated within the site along the western and southern extents of the site (H1-H3a). Details of these are presented within Table 4.7 below.

h2a5 - Species rich native hedgerow

A single species rich native hedgerow was situated within the eastern extend of the site (H3b). Details of this are presented with Table 4.7 below.

Table 4.7 Hedgerows Present on site

Hedgerow Reference	Hedgerow Description	Obvious Hedgerows Regulations 1997 Sub-paragraph 4 Features Recorded
H1	Defunct ornamental hedgerow along the western boundary of the hard standing car park, with an approximate height of 1.5m and width of 1m. Species consisted of cherry laurel (D) and cotoneaster sp. Subject to intensive management.	N
H2	Intact ornamental hedgerow along the western and southern boundaries of the site along the fenceline, with an approximate height of 3m and width of 1m. Species consist solely of cherry laurel (D).	N
H3a	Intact ornamental hedgerow along the southeastern boundary of the site along the fenceline, with an approximate height of 3m and width of 1m. Species	N

Hedgerow Reference	Hedgerow Description	Obvious Hedgerows Regulations 1997 Sub-paragraph 4 Features Recorded
	consisted of, cherry laurel (D), ivy (O), ash *Fraxinus excelsior* (R), and field maple (R).	
H3b	Immediately adjoining H3a, the species composition changed dramatically and so has been captured as a separate linear feature. This hedgerow has an approximate height of 3m and width of 1.5m. Species consisted of, sycamore (O), elder *Sambucus nigra* (O), ash (O), holly *Ilex aquifolium* (O), ivy (O), pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* (R), privet *Lingustrum ovalifolium* (R), and cotoneaster (R). A stand of wall cotoneaster (TN2) was also identified within the base of this hedgerow.	N

Species

Amphibians

Great Crested Newt and Native Amphibians

A review of OS mapping and satellite imagery identified no ponds or waterbodies within 250m of the site, which sits with the 'green zone' of Natural England's GCN risk zones.

No waterbodies were identified during the survey, and the habitats within the site offer limited foraging and shelter opportunities for GCN and other native amphibians, and due to the urbanised nature of the surrounding habitat, with minimal ecological connectivity to areas of more suitable woodland and parkland in the wider extent, it is considered that GCN and native amphibians are likely absent from the site. Furthermore, no recent records pertaining to GCN or native amphibians were returned by GMLRC, with the only relevant information pertaining to a negative eDNA result of a waterbody approximately 880m southeast of the site.

The on-site habitats therefore are of **negligible** suitability for GCN and other native amphibians and they are not discussed further within this report.

Badger

No field signs pertaining to badger were identified during the site survey.

Habitats within the site offer limited opportunities for foraging and commuting badgers, with some areas of modified grassland, and negligible suitability for sett creation. The urbanised nature of the surrounding landscape and minimal ecological connectivity to more suitable foraging, commuting and sett creation habitat such as areas of woodland in the wider extent, it is considered that badger are likely absent from the site. GMLRC returned one recent record pertaining to badger, however these were situated over 1km away from the site with minimal ecological connectivity to the site.

The on-site habitats therefore are of **negligible** suitability for badger, and they are not discussed further within this report.

Bats

Foraging/Commuting

Habitats within the site offer low suitability for foraging and commuting bats as assessed as per BCT guidelines[14]. This is due to the urban trees and hedgerow features within the urbanised setting offering limited resources for opportunistic bats, suited to urbanised areas more tolerant of artificial lighting to forage, in addition to the potential noise and light disturbance from the adjacent land use.

Due to the small footprint of the works and the limited vegetation within the site, should future proposals involve the removal of the trees and shrubs within the site, significant impacts are not anticipated to foraging and commuting bats.

The on-site habitats therefore are of **low** suitability for foraging and commuting bats.

Roosting

Summer/Transitional

Two buildings were present within the site, as detailed within the 'Habitats' section above. The buildings on site (B1 and B2) were surveyed for PRFs, which could be suitable to support roosting bats (summer/transitional). Details of which is summarised within Table 4.8 below. In addition to identified PRFs, open windows were present on the northern, western and eastern aspects of B1, which could be utilised for ingress/egress from additional suitable roosting features within the internal structure of the building, which is depicted within Figure A.2 within Appendix A, along with the locations of the identified PRFs.

Twenty urban trees were present within the site as detailed within the 'Habitats' section above. Of these, 19 trees (T1 - 19) had no PRFs identified within them and were assessed as 'None'. One tree (T20) had a single PRF identified (as detailed within Table 4.8 below), and as such was assessed as 'PRF'.

Table 4.8 Building and Tree PRFs

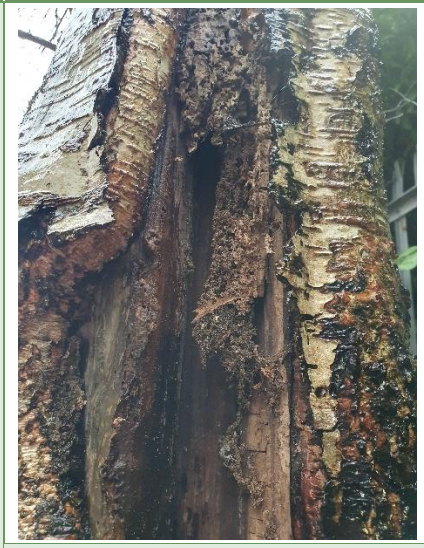
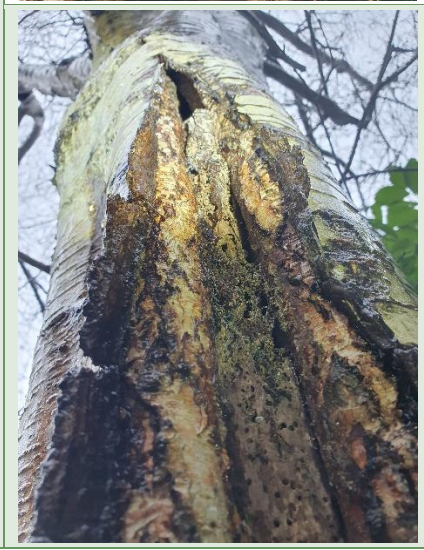
Building / Tree Reference	PRF Summary	Photograph	Suitability Category
Buildings			

Building / Tree Reference	PRF Summary	Photograph	Suitability Category
B1	PRF 1: A gap is present behind the stonewashed render of the northern aspect along the whole length of the building overhang, as well as above each window. Each gap appears to extend approximately 50cm deep.	 	Moderate
B1	PRF 2: There is a large gap in the underside of the building overhang along the northern aspect, where some piping is running to/ from, leading to a cavity behind.		Moderate
B1	PRF 3: There is a small gap in the underside of the building overhang along the northern aspect, where some piping is running to/ from, leading to a cavity behind.		Low

Building / Tree Reference	PRF Summary	Photograph	Suitability Category
B1	PRF 4: A gap is present behind the stonewashed render of the western aspect along the whole length of the building overhang, as well as above each window. Each gap appears to extend approximately 50cm deep.	 	Moderate
B1	PRF 5: A small gap is present on the underside of the building overhang along the western aspect. It appears to be slightly obstructed behind by insulation, but it may still lead to a cavity behind.		Low
B1	PRF 6: A gap is present behind the stonewashed render of the southern aspects along the whole length of the building overhang, as well as above each window. Each gap appears to extend approximately 50cm deep.		Moderate

Building / Tree Reference	PRF Summary	Photograph	Suitability Category
			
B1	PRF 7: A gap is present behind the stonewashed render of the eastern aspect along the whole length of the building overhang, as well as above each window. Each gap appears to extend approximately 50cm deep.	 	Moderate
B1	PRF 8: A small gap behind some flashing on the roof on the eastern aspect.		Low

Building / Tree Reference	PRF Summary	Photograph	Suitability Category
B2	The single storey electrical substation is heavily open and exposed to the elements, with the roof having fallen away within, exposing the inside to wind and water ingress. Some cavities appear from the outside, only leading into the exposed internals of the structure with negligible roosting opportunities.	  	Negligible
Trees			
T20	A semi-mature silver birch tree, with a trunk cavity on the southwestern aspect approximately 0.5 - 2m high. Within this feature is a cavity at the base and top of the trunk cavity, within the heartwood of the tree. There is enough room for a small number of bats,		PRF

Building / Tree Reference	PRF Summary	Photograph	Suitability Category
	therefore the PRF is assessed as 'PRF-I'.		
			

The on-site habitats therefore are overall of **moderate** suitability for summer/ transitional roosting bats.

Winter Hibernation

While features within B1 were assessed as 'Moderate' for summer/ transitional roosts and T20 was assessed as PRF, containing a single PRF-I, to facilitate the state of torpor which bats enter during periods of hibernation, roost features must offer stable cool temperatures which are not impacted by outside conditions. The identified PRFs on B1 are largely shallow, extending approximately 50cm, and do not appear to extend into the inner structure of the building and as such are likely subject to temperature changes due to exposure to the weather (water/wind) during the colder months and therefore provide inadequate temperature stability.

The internals of B1 were not searched and assessed for suitability for hibernating bats and access to bats is currently possible due to numerous open windows on multiple floors.

The buildings suitability (B1) to support hibernating bats was therefore considered **low** as a precautionary measure and is discussed further within this report.

Birds

Habitats within the site offer some suitability for nesting birds, with the urban trees, hedgerows and shrub within the site offering suitability for common and passerine birds. During the site survey, wood pigeons *Columba palumbus* were observed within the coniferous trees within the site, however no obvious signs of nests/nesting activity was recorded.

Nesting opportunities are also limited, with the high and flat roof of the multi-storey B1 that provided minimal shelter. The main roof level does provide some more sheltered areas and ledges, which could offer limited nesting opportunities for larger bird species such as feral pigeon *Columba livia* and herring gull *Larus argentatus*.

The on-site habitats therefore are of **low** suitability for nesting birds.

Invertebrates

The habitats within the site may offer some limited suitability for small numbers of common and widespread invertebrates, with the areas of urban trees, introduced shrub and hedgerow features.

GMLRC returned five records of Cinnabar, the closest being 0.6km away from the site, the primary food source of which is common ragwort, which was recorded within the site. However, due to the small footprint of the site and the overall limited vegetation within it, removal of the vegetation within the site is not considered to pose significant constraints.

The on-site habitats therefore are of **negligible** suitability for invertebrates and they are not discussed further within this report.

Reptiles

No reptiles were observed during the site survey and GMLRC returned no records pertaining to reptiles. However, reptiles are an under recorded species and a lack of records does not necessarily attribute to their absence.

The habitats within the site offer limited foraging, shelter and basking opportunities for reptiles, and due to the urbanised nature of the surrounding habitat, which is acting as a barrier for dispersal, with minimal ecological connectivity to areas of more suitable habitat in the wider extent, it is considered that reptiles are likely absent from the site.

The on-site habitats therefore are of **negligible** suitability for reptiles and they are not discussed further within this report.

Riparian Mammals

A review of OS mapping and satellite imagery identified no waterbodies or watercourses within 250m of the site. Furthermore, habitats within the site offer no suitability for riparian mammals such as otter and water vole, and it is considered that these species are likely absent from the site.

The on-site habitats therefore are of **negligible** suitability for riparian mammals and they are not discussed further within this report.

Protected/Notable Plant Species

No protected or notable plant species were identified during the walkover, and GMLRC returned no records pertaining to them. The site survey was conducted in February, outside of the optimum botanical survey period (typically recognises as May-September), however due to the urbanised setting and lack of overall vegetation cover within the site, it is considered that protected/ notable plant species are likely absent from the site.

The on-site habitats therefore are of **negligible** suitability for protected/ notable plant species, and they are not discussed further within this report.

Invasive Non-native Species

Two stands of invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the WCA both pertaining to wall cotoneaster were identified within the site (TN1 and TN2).

Furthermore, species which are not listed on Schedule 9 of the WCA but have invasive tendencies were also recorded within the site. These pertain to cherry laurel within the hedgerows (H1-H3a) and areas of scrub and buddleia within the hard standing car park area.

Invasive non-native species are therefore assessed as **present** and they are discussed further within this report.

Other Priority/Notable Species

Hedgehog

Habitats within the site offer some suitable foraging and resting opportunities for hedgehog, such as with the hedgerows and areas of scrub, which could provide useful areas of refuse within the urban landscape. Furthermore, GMLRC returned 18 records pertaining to hedgehog within similar urbanised settings to the site and immediate surroundings.

The on-site habitats therefore are of **low** suitability for hedgehog.

5.0 EVALUATION

5.1 PROPOSALS

The proposed development is expected to initially only comprise the demolition of the buildings within the site, for which this report is to be in support of a Prior Approval with potential future development to arise at a later date.

5.2 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, future proposed development. High level commentary on the recommendation for additional targeted survey, appropriate mitigation, compensation and enhancement actions is provided.

Designated Sites

Statutory

There are no statutory designated sites within 2km of the site. However, there are two internationally designated sites within 10km, consisting of Rostherne Mere (Ramsar) and Midland Meres & Mosses - Phase 1 (Ramsar), situated 8.1km and 9.5km southeast respectively. Due to the distance between the site and these designations, the urbanised setting that the site resides within, with minimal ecological connectivity to these designations, as well as their habitats represented within the site, is considered there will be no impacts as a result of the demolition works, as well as future developments brought forward at a later date.

The site falls within the IRZ for the Cotteril Clough (SSSI), which is situated approximately 3.25km southwest of the site. The proposed works do not fall under any of the categories that would trigger consultation with Natural England, therefore, no impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed works. However, should future developments for the site consist of the following, consultation with Natural England may be required:

- Infrastructure: Airports, helipads and other aviation proposals;
- Minerals, oil and gas: Oil and gas exploration/ extraction;
- Air pollution: Livestock and poultry units with floorspace >500m^2, slurry lagoons > 750m^2 and manure stores >3,500 tonnes; and
- Combustion: General combustion processes >50MW energy input. Including: energy from waste incineration, other incineration, landfill gas generation plant, pyrolysis/ gasification, anaerobic digestion, sewage treatment works, or other incineration/ combustion.

Due to these reasons and the small footprint of the development, statutory designated sites are not considered to pose constraints to the proposed works and are not discussed further.

Non-statutory

All of the non-statutory designated sites returned from GMLRC are far enough away from the site as to not be directly impacted by the proposed works, with the closest being approximately 250m away to the northeast (Park Wood SBI), which is separated by urban development between the site and the designation. Due to this, the largely urbanised setting of the site with lack of connectivity, and the small footprint of the works, no constraints are anticipated to non-statutory designated sites as a result of the proposed works and are not discussed further.

Habitats

One UK BAP priority habitat was identified within 500m of the site, relating to three parcels of deciduous woodland, the closest of which being situated approximately 250m northeast. Due to the small footprint, and localised nature of the works in relation to the proximity of these habitats, and being separated by urban development between the site and the designation, no effects are currently anticipated as a result of the proposed works.

The habitats within the site are a mixture of hard standing, buildings, modified grassland, introduced shrub, urban trees and a mix of ornamental and native hedgerows

In accordance with the Environment Act, 2021, National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024, and local policy drivers, development proposals are required to provide a measurable net gain in biodiversity. Where a site is not exempt, the development must deliver a minimum of 10% BNG, which should be evidenced through a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (BNGA) using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (SBM). Please refer to the separate BNGA baseline report[4] for the baseline assessment ahead of any future proposals that may be brought forward.

Species

Bats

Foraging/Commuting

The site holds low suitability for foraging and commuting bats, and as per BCT guidance for low suitability for small sites with limited vegetation[14], surveys are not deemed necessary.

However, high levels of artificial lighting can disturb this nocturnal species, as such a sensitive lighting scheme should be implemented for both construction and operational phases of development. Lighting design should follow Guidance Note 8 from the BCT and the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP)[17], 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 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

- Retained habitat, green infrastructure and soft landscaping (where included), should remain unlit where possible and where health and safety restrictions allow, particularly between April and October, inclusive.

Additionally, design proposals for any future developments should seek to increase opportunities and suitability of the site for foraging and commuting bats (see 'Ecological Enhancements' below).

Roosting

Summer/Transitional

Structures

The 'Centron House' building (B1) within the site has been assessed as providing Moderate suitability for roosting bats. In accordance with BCT good practice guidelines[14], buildings/structures with Moderate suitability for summer roosting bats should be subject to two emergence surveys, which should be undertaken between May-September, with at least one visit conducted between May - August. Both visits should be spread at least three weeks apart, to confirm the presence/likely absence of roosting bats.

The results of this further survey work should inform any required mitigation or compensation measures required for roosting bats, prior to the demolition of the 'Centron House' building (B1).

N.B. Where roosting is identified there may be a need for additional survey visits as well as a mitigation licence from Natural England to legally allows works to proceed.

Trees

As the tree (T20) assessed as 'PRF' only contained a single PRF-I, it is only suitable to support small numbers of individual bats and unlikely to support larger more significant roosts of higher conservation value i.e. maternity roosts. As per BCT good practice guidlenes[14], no additional survey effort is deemed necessary.

Should the tree require removal/be impacted by the proposed works, or any future developments brought forward within the site, compensation would be required in the form of replacement roosting opportunities (such as with the provision of bat boxes, see 'Ecological Enhancements' below). In addition to this, the tree should be subject to section felling ideally outside of the summer months when roosting bats are more likely to be present, under the supervision of a suitably qualified and licenced ecologist following a pre-commencement check immediately prior. Section felling should also be conducted whilst adhering to a Precautionary Method of Works (PMoW) outlined in a Construction and Environmental Management Plan (CEMP), where best practice and sensitive working methods are detailed in order to minimise accidental disturbance to roosting bats, should they be present. If roosting bats are identified during the pre-commencement checks prior to the section felling, works must cease, and a mitigation licence may be required from National England to legally allow works to proceed.

Winter Hibernation

No urban trees within the site, nor B2 is suitable to support hibernating bats.

As B1 was considered to be of Low suitability for hibernating bats as a precaution, and the structure does not provide classic hibernation habitat (i.e. tunnels, cave, mines, cellars[14]), additional survey effort is not considered necessary in line with BCT good practice guidelines.[14]

As set out in the Bat Mitigation Guidelines[15], the most common and effective way of avoiding disturbance of a roost is to complete works outside of the time or season when bats are likely to be using the roost. This varies between species and roost types. Should the building be scheduled for demolition during the bat hibernation period (November to March inclusive), works should be conducted under the supervision of a suitably qualified and licenced ecologist, whilst also adhering to a PMoW outlined in a CEMP, where best practice and sensitive working methods are detailed in order to minimise accidental disturbance to hibernating bats.

Birds

While the habitats within the site offer some opportunities for nesting birds, it is considered the site would only offer suitability to common passerine species at best. Impacts to nesting birds are not considered to be significant.

However, as the vegetation offers some suitable nesting habitat for birds, such as the areas of scrub urban trees and hedgerows, should vegetation clearance be required during the core nesting season (generally considered to be March - August inclusive), it is recommended that a nesting bird check is conducted by a SQE, no more than 48 hours prior to the clearance works. Should an active nest be identified, a suitable buffer zone around should be implemented until the nesting attempt has failed or completed, and fledglings have left the nest.

The proposed demolition works have the potential to impact urban nesting birds. While the nesting season is typically recognised as March to August, inclusive, nesting can occur year-round for feral pigeon.

To mitigate potential impacts, it is recommended that the demolition works should be scheduled outside the bird nesting season to ensure as far as possible that active nesting birds will not be encountered. Additionally, a pre-commencement nesting bird check should also be carried out by a SQE a maximum of 48 hours prior to the commencement of works, regardless of the time of year, to identify any active nests. Should a nest or nesting birds be identified, then measures to ensure they are protected should be employed until either the young have fledged, or the nest is no longer active (to be monitored and confirmed by the SQE).

Invasive Non-native Species

Two stands of wall cotoneaster were identified within the site (TN1 and TN2). Should these stands be required/planned to be cleared/removed from site, a specialist contractor should be consulted and the material be treated as contaminated waste in a way that does not facilitate its spread into the wider environment.

Furthermore, it is recommended that works are undertaken adhering to a PMoW outlined in a CEMP, detailing precautionary working methods and biosecurity protocols to minimise the risk of INNS spreading throughout the site and wider landscape.

Other Priority/Notable Species

Hedgehog

The habitats within the site offer some suitability for hedgehog, such as with the scrub and hedgerow features.

Due to this, it is recommended that, where feasible the scrub and hedgerow habitats present are retained, in addition to future design proposals seeking to increase opportunities and suitability of the site for hedgehog (see 'Ecological Enhancements' below). Furthermore, it is recommended that where feasible, vegetation clearance works should be conducted outside the hedgehog hibernation period (November - March) and works are undertaken adhering to a PMoW outlined in a CEMP, where best practice and sensitive working methods are detailed in order to minimise accidental disturbance.

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

- New hedgerows: species-rich where possible and to favour native species. Where a single species is more appropriate, a single native species such as hornbeam *Carpinus betulus* should ideally be favoured.

Species

- In addition to compensatory roost replacement should T20 require removal/be impacted, integral bat boxes should be installed during the construction stage of future developments when brought forward. The number of these recommended for implementation will be informed by the recommended further surveys. Boxes should ideally comprise woodcrete for long lasting durability and be installed on south facing building aspects. Specific siting would be set out within a CEMP/Landscape Ecological Management Plan (LEMP).
- Installation of a minimum of two integral bird boxes should be installed during the construction stage of future developments when brought forward. Boxes should ideally comprise woodcrete for long lasting durability. Full south facing building aspects should be avoided to prevent overheating of the nest/chicks during summer months. Box models to be discussed and agreed with an ecologist prior to installation. Specific siting to be set out within the CEMP/LEMP.
- Inclusion of a minimum of two invertebrate habitat bricks and minimum of two log piles could be included in suitable locations within future development design. Specifics to be outlined within the CEMP/LEMP.

General Recommendations

It is recommended that a CEMP should be produced and implemented for the site, providing greater detail on the mitigation measures set out above, which should be secured through planning condition in accordance with BS 42020: 2013 Biodiversity.

N.B. For guidance on the validity of reports/surveys, the CIEEM Advice Note 'On The Ecological Lifespan Of Ecological Reports and Surveys' should be referred to. This report/survey has been undertaken in February 2026, and is considered to be valid for a period of up to 18 months, unless the conditions within the site are noted to change.

6.0 CONCLUSION

Greengage was commissioned by Muse Places in February 2026 to undertake a PEA for the site known as Centron House in Wythenshawe, Manchester, in order to establish the ecological value of the site and its potential to support protected/priority habitats and species.

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

- Foraging and commuting bats;
- Roosting bats;
- Hibernating bats;
- Nesting birds;
- Invasive non-native species; and,
- Hedgehog

Additional targeted survey for roosting bats has been recommended to determine presence/absence and/or a population estimate.

This information is needed to fully address the impacts of the demolition and future development and/or inform appropriate mitigation and compensation measures for these species.

Key mitigation, compensation and enhancement actions have been recommended to enable legislative and policy compliance (see context at Appendix D).

Key actions as mentioned above should be included within a CEMP for the site, which could be secured through planning condition.

A separate baseline BNGA report[4] has been produced, using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (SBM) in accordance with the Environment Act, 2021, NPPF 2024, and local policy drivers.

N.B. For guidance on the validity of reports/surveys, the CIEEM Advice Note 'On The Ecological Lifespan Of Ecological Reports and Surveys' should be referred to. This report/survey has been undertaken in February 2026, and is considered to be valid for a period of up to 18 months, unless the conditions within the site are noted to change.

APPENDIX A UKHAB MAP

Figure A.1 UKHAB Map

Figure A.2 PRA and GLTA Results

WYTHENSHAWE, CENTRON HOUSE



Red Line Boundary

Habitats

Developed land; sealed surface

Introduced shrub

Modified grassland

Existing Large Urban Tree

Existing Medium Urban Tree

Existing Small Urban Tree

Hedgerows

Non-native and ornamental hedgerow

Species-rich native hedgerow

Target Notes

Title: Figure A.1 UKHAB Map

Drawn by: RE
Date: 26/03/2026

Reviewed by: AC
Date: 26/03/2026

Project number: 554009
Sources: Google Satellite

Greengage

WYTHENSHAWE, CENTRON HOUSE

Red Line Boundary

Buildings

Negligible

Moderate

PRFs

Low

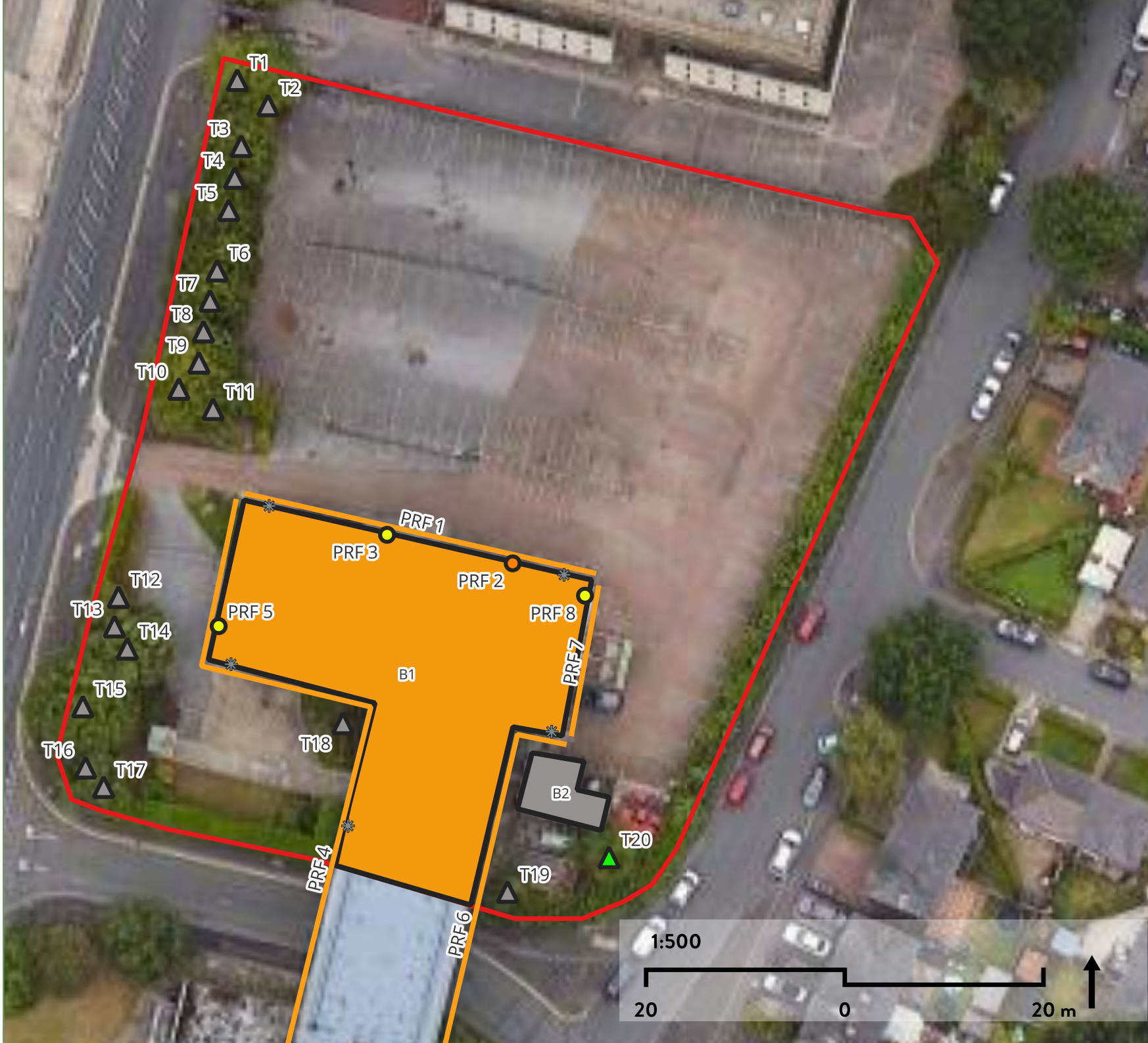
Moderate

Open Windows

Trees

None

PRF



Title: Figure A.2 PRA and GLTA Results

Drawn by: RE
Date: 13/03/2026

Reviewed by: AC
Date: 13/03/2026

Project number: 554009
Sources: Google Satellite

Greengage

APPENDIX B TARGET NOTES

TN1. Wall Cotoneaster

TN2. Wall Cotoneaster

APPENDIX C SITE PHOTOGRAPHS

Plate C.1 Wall Cotoneaster within the southern parcel of modified grassland (TN1)



Plate C.2 Wall Cotoneaster at the base of the eastern hedgerow (TN2)



Plate C.3 Introduced shrub within the north western corner of the site.



Plate C.4 Coniferous trees and H1 within the northern extent of the site



Plate C.5 Area of modified grassland, urban trees and scattered introduced scrub, as well as H2 along the western extent of the site.



Plate C.6 Area of modified grassland, introduced shrub and H2 along the southern extent of the site.



Plate C.7 Area of hardstanding, with H3a and T20 within the southeastern extent of the site



Plate C.8 H2 and H3a as seen from outside the site.



Plate C.9 H3b running along the eastern extent of the site.



Plate C.10 Hard standing car park with small stands of buddleia in the northern extent of the site.



Plate C.11 Area of modified grassland with scattered introduced scrub within the southern extent of the site



Plate C.12 B1 'Centron House' as taken from the north



Plate C.12 B2 'Electrical Substation' in front of B1 'Centron House' as taken from the east.



APPENDIX D RELEVANT LEGISLATION AND POLICY

D.1 LEGISLATION

Current key legislation relating to ecology includes the Environment Act 2021[18], Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)[19]; The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 ('Habitats & Species Regulations')[20], The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW Act)[21], and The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act, 2006[22].

The Environment Act, 2021

Under the Environment Act[23], 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)[24], and transpose Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora ('EU Habitats Directive')[25], and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds ('Birds Directive')[26] 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 Habitats[27] (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 Plan[28] (UK BAP). Despite the devolution of the UK BAP and succession of the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework[29] (and Biodiversity 2020 strategy[30] 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)[31], 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 Natura 2000 Sites and Habitats Directive Annex I/II Species

European Commission Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and Wild Fauna and Flora ('EU Habitats Directive'), and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds ('Birds Directive') form the cornerstones of nature conservation legislation across EU member states. Priority species requiring protection across Europe are listed in the Annexes of these Directives. Regulation 63(1) of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2019 and Offshore Marine Conservation Regulations, 2007 (as amended) transpose these directives into UK law and set the basis for the designations of protected sites (known as Natura 2000 sites; Special Areas of Conservation under the Habitat Directive and Special Areas of Protection under the Birds Directive) that are of importance for habitats, species or assemblages listed on the directive Annexes. In the UK Ramsar sites are also offered the same level of protection as SPAs and SACs however the qualifying species for the designation may differ; Ramsar sites being designated specifically as important wetland habitats.

Under article 6(3) of the Habitats Directive, where projects stand to have likely significant effect (in accordance with the European Court of Justice ruling of C-127/02 Waddenzee cockle fishing) upon the integrity of conservation objectives (i.e. conservation status of the qualifying species or habitats) within the designated sites then the Competent Authority must undertake an Appropriate Assessment.

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.

Legislation Relating to Invasive Non-native Species

Section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) prevents the release into the wild of certain plants and animals which may cause ecological, environmental or socio-economic harm. It prohibits the introduction into the wild of any animal of a kind which is not ordinarily resident in, and is not a regular visitor to, Great Britain in a wild state, or any species of animal or plant listed on Schedule 9 of the Act. In the main, Schedule 9 lists non-native species that are already established in the wild, but which continue to pose a conservation threat to native biodiversity and habitats, such that further releases should be regulated. The Schedule also includes some native species (for example barn owl) in order to provide a level of control to ensure that releases, in particular reintroduction programs, are carried out in an appropriate manner and biodiversity is properly safeguarded.

D.2 PLANNING POLICY

National

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2024[32] 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 PfE[33] 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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