The Dean Trust

Abraham Moss Community School

Small Mammals, Hedgehogs and Reptiles Precautionary Method Statement

EPS GENERAL NOTES

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1. Introduction

1.1 Background

1.1.1 This Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statement (RAMS) has been prepared in connection with the proposed development at Abraham Moss Community School,

1.1.2 The purpose of this document is to discharge the following planning condition:

> *Prior to the commencement of the development (including ground works and vegetation clearance), a reasonable avoidance measures method statement for hedgehogs, reptiles and other wildlife covering the site clearance and construction phases of the development shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority for that phase. The development shall be implemented in accordance with the approved measures.*
>
> *Reason - To minimise the risk of accidental harm of a European Protected Species (Habitats Regulations 1994), pursuant to policy EN15 of the Manchester Core Strategy (2012).*

1.1.3 This Method Statement provides the working methods and mitigation measures to be implemented during vegetation clearance, groundworks and construction activities in order to minimise the risk of injury, disturbance or mortality to hedgehogs, reptiles and other wildlife that may be present within or adjacent to the Site.

1.1.4 All site personnel shall comply with the requirements set out within this document throughout the site clearance and construction phases of the development.

1.2 Site description

1.2.1 The Site comprises school buildings, hardstanding, access roads, pedestrian routes, sports facilities and areas of amenity landscaping.

1.2.2 Habitats within the Site may provide shelter, commuting, dispersal and foraging opportunities for a range of wildlife species including hedgehogs, reptiles, amphibians, nesting birds and small mammals.

1.3 Objectives

1.3.1 The objectives of this Method Statement are as follows.

- Ensure that protected species or those of principal importance are safeguarded throughout the construction works (those likely to be present within the working areas or passing through the site include nesting birds, hedgehogs and small mammals).

- Minimise disturbance to protected and notable species using habitats surrounding the site, notably, nesting birds.

2. Responsibilities

2.1 Ecological Clerk of Works

2.1.1 A suitably qualified Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) shall be appointed prior to commencement of vegetation clearance works.

2.1.2 The ECoW shall:

- Provide an ecological toolbox talk to site personnel;
- Undertake any required pre-commencement inspections;
- Provide ecological advice during site clearance works; and
- Advise on appropriate actions should wildlife be encountered.

2.2 Site Manager

2.2.1 The Principal Contractor shall ensure all personnel are aware of and comply with the requirements of this Method Statement.

2.2.2 The Site Manager shall be responsible for ensuring that ecological protection measures are implemented throughout the construction programme.

3. Pre-commencement Measures

3.1 Ecological Toolbox Talk

3.1.1 Prior to commencement of works, all contractors and site operatives shall receive an ecological toolbox talk from the ECoW.

3.1.2 The toolbox talk shall include:

- Identification of hedgehogs and common reptiles;
- Relevant legal protection;
- Ecological constraints associated with the Site;
- Working methods required under this Method Statement; and
- Procedures to follow if wildlife is encountered.

3.1.3 Records of attendance shall be retained on Site.

3.2 Pre-commencement Inspection

3.2.1 Where vegetation clearance has not commenced within three months of the most recent ecological survey, a precautionary walkover inspection shall be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to commencement of works.

3.2.2 The inspection shall identify any changes in site conditions and any newly established wildlife features requiring protection.

4. Vegetation Clearance

4.1 General Approach

4.1.1 Vegetation clearance shall be undertaken under a precautionary approach to minimise the risk of harm to hedgehogs, reptiles and other wildlife.

4.1.2 Clearance works shall proceed progressively from areas of lower suitability towards adjacent retained habitats, allowing animals to disperse naturally away from active work areas.

4.2 Two-stage vegetation clearance

4.2.1 All grassland and ruderal vegetation shall be removed using a two-stage clearance process.

4.2.2 Stage one shall comprise strimming vegetation to approximately 150mm above ground level.

4.2.3 A minimum period of 24 hours shall then be allowed before undertaking Stage Two.

4.2.4 Stage Two shall comprise cutting vegetation to ground level and removing arisings from Site.

4.2.5 Vegetation shall not be removed in a manner that would trap or crush wildlife.

4.3 Removal of refugia

4.3.1 Any log piles, rubble piles, timber stacks, brash piles or other potential refuges shall be inspected carefully before removal.

4.3.2 Where practicable, such features shall be dismantled by hand under supervision of the ECoW.

5. Hedgehog Protection Measures

5.1 Working method

5.1.1 All vegetation, debris piles and potential refuges shall be checked for hedgehogs prior to removal.

5.1.2 Excavations and trenches shall not be left open unnecessarily.

5.1.3 Where excavations remain open overnight, escape ramps shall be installed.

5.2 Procedure if hedgehogs are found

5.2.1 If a hedgehog is encountered during works:

- Works shall cease immediately within the immediate area;
- The animal shall be allowed to move away naturally where possible;
- If at risk of injury, the ECoW shall be contacted for advice; and
- Works shall only recommence following confirmation that it is safe to do so.

6. Reptile Protection Measures

6.1 Working method

6.1.1 A precautionary approach shall be adopted throughout site clearance works.

6.1.2 The two-stage vegetation clearance methodology described in Section 4 shall be implemented throughout areas of suitable habitat.

6.1.3 Clearance shall proceed in a directional manner towards retained habitat to encourage dispersal.

6.2 Procedure if reptiles are found

6.2.1 If a reptile is encountered during works:

- Works shall stop immediately within the affected area;
- The reptile shall be allowed to move away naturally where possible;
- If at risk of injury, the ECoW shall be contacted for advice; and
- Works shall only recommence following confirmation that it is safe to do so.

7. Other wildlife

7.1 Nesting birds

7.1.1 Vegetation clearance should, where practicable, be undertaken outside the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive).

7.1.2 If vegetation clearance is required during this period, a nesting bird inspection shall be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to works commencing.

7.1.3 If an active nest is identified, an exclusion zone shall be established and maintained until the nest is no longer in use.

7.2 Amphibians and small mammals

7.2.1 All site personnel shall remain vigilant for amphibians and small mammals during clearance and excavation works.

7.2.2 Any animals encountered shall be allowed to move away naturally wherever possible.

8. Excavations and trenches

8.1 Protection measures

8.1.1 All trenches and excavations shall be inspected each morning prior to commencement of works.

8.1.2 Where practicable, excavations shall be covered overnight.

8.1.3 Where covering is not possible, suitable escape ramps shall be installed.

8.1.4 Any trapped wildlife shall be carefully removed by a competent person and released into adjacent suitable habitat.

9. Construction phase measures

9.1 Storage of materials

9.1.1 Construction materials shall be stored on hardstanding wherever possible.

9.1.2 Pipes shall be capped or elevated off the ground to prevent wildlife becoming trapped.

9.2 Pollution prevention

9.2.1 Fuels, oils and chemicals shall be stored within designated bunded areas.

9.2.2 Spill kits shall be maintained on Site at all times.

9.2.3 Any pollution incident shall be reported immediately to the Site Manager.

10. Compliance and monitoring

10.1.1 The Site Manager shall be responsible for ensuring compliance with this Method Statement.

10.1.2 The approved avoidance measures shall remain in force throughout site clearance, groundworks and construction activities.

10.1.3 The development shall be undertaken in accordance with this Method Statement unless otherwise agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.