# 1 Castlefield, Chester Road

# Manchester

# Preliminary Ecological Appraisal &

# Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

2026

| | |
|---|---|
| Client | Allied London |
| Project Title | 1 Castlefield, Chester Road, Manchester |
| Project Reference | RHE.4758 |
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# Executive Summary

## Development Details

The client is proposing the construction of a new high rise building at 1 Castlefield, Chester Road, Manchester hereafter referred to as the 'site'.

This report describes the ecological features of the site and its surroundings and assesses the potential impacts of the development on the ecological interest. Recommendations are provided so that the development is compliant with biodiversity policy and legislation.

## Ecological Interest

The site has a low level of ecological interest. The site is primarily developed land, with brick spoil heaps that have been colonised by mixed scrub and ruderal/ephemeral vegetation. Scrub vegetation provides nesting/foraging opportunities for birds.

## Biodiversity Impact Assessment

Baseline habitats score 1.27 habitat units; there are no hedgerows or watercourses on site. Post-Development habitats score 1.12 habitat units.

The proposed development will result in a habitat unit net loss of 0.15 units (-11.68%), with a shortfall of 0.28 habitat units to achieve the statutory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain. The metric trading rules are not satisfied, requiring 0.90 medium distinctiveness habitat units (which also address the overall habitat unit shortfall) and 0.01 low distinctiveness habitat units. The scheme has been designed in accordance with the mitigation hierarchy, with all practicable opportunities for on-site habitat retention, enhancement and creation incorporated into the design. The remaining required off-site biodiversity units will be secured through a third-party provider to achieve compliance with the statutory BNG requirements.

## Outcomes

No further surveys are required.

Mitigation measures and enhancement opportunities are identified within this report.

# 1. Introduction

## 1.1 Project Brief

1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited (RHE) was commissioned in 2025 by Allied London (the Client) to carry out an Ecological Appraisal and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment of land at 1 Castlefield, Chester Road, Manchester (the 'site'). The site is located at O.S. grid reference: SJ 82485 97126 (see Figure 1).




*Figure 1. Map showing the location of the site © OpenStreetMaps*

1.1.2 The site comprises a parcel of vacant land primarily covered with hardstanding and brick rubble, which has been partially colonised by mixed scrub and ruderal/ephemeral vegetation.

### Description of Development

1.1.3 The proposed development comprises the construction of a new high-rise building. This will entail the clearance of all existing habitats on site.

### Relevant Planning History

1.1.4 RHE undertook a Preliminary Roost Assessment and Preliminary Ecological Appraisal in 2016[1,2] In support of a full planning application for the demolition of the existing buildings and the re-development of the site for mixed use.

[1] Extended_Phase_1_Habitat_Survey-637510

[2] Daytime_bat_survey-448951

## 1.2 Scope of Work

1.2.1 The Client commissioned RHE to carry out the following works:

- Record the extent, type, and condition of habitats within the site boundary.
- Calculate the baseline and post-development biodiversity units.
- Search for signs of protected species and assessment of the potential of habitats and features to support protected and notable species.

## 1.3 Site Visit Information

### Surveyor Details

1.3.1 Jasmin West (Ecologist) visited the site on the 1st April 2026. Jasmin has two years of experience in undertaking Preliminary Ecological Appraisals.

### Weather & Time of Year

1.3.2 The weather at the time of the survey was overcast and cool. Conditions were suitable for a full assessment to be undertaken.

1.3.3 The field survey was undertaken in April, which falls within the optimal survey period for Preliminary Ecological Appraisals in accordance with the CIEEM Guidelines[4].

# 2. Methods

## 2.1 Desk Study

2.1.1 The Magic website (Multi-Agency Geographical Information for the Countryside) was interrogated for the presence of Statutory Designated Sites (and European Protected Species licences) within a 2km radius of the site.

2.1.2 The site was checked to determine if it is located within an Impact Risk Zone for any Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and if so, whether the Local Planning Authority will need to consult Natural England.

2.1.3 The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) Sites of Biological Importance (SBI) register was reviewed to identify any Non-Statutory Designated Sites within a 2 km radius of the site.

2.1.4 In accordance with the CIEEM Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal[4], it was not considered necessary to obtain a biological records search for notable or protected species from the local environmental records centre, as the site is small, enclosed in an urban area, predominantly comprises hardstanding, has limited ecological interest, and therefore, falls within one of the examples identified in the guidance where such data may not be required, namely small urban sites comprising mostly asphalt or compacted hardstanding (refer to Appendix 2, page 15 of the CIEEM Guidelines[4]).

## 2.2 Field Survey

### Habitat Survey

2.2.1 The site was walked over and the habitats and features of ecological interest were mapped and described according to the UK Habitat Classification system[3]. Habitats and features of particular interest were target noted.

### Species Assessment

2.2.2 During the walkover habitat and features were assessed for their suitability to support protected and notable species in accordance with CIEEM guidelines[4]. Field signs of protected, notable, and invasive non-native species, if encountered, were mapped, and described.

[3] UKHab-v2.01-July-2023-Final-2.pdf. at http://UKhab.org

[4] CIEEM (2017). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

## 2.3 Biodiversity Net Gain

2.3.1 During the site walkover the ecological condition of each habitat was assessed in accordance with the Defra (2024) guidelines[5].

2.3.2 Habitat data including type, area (or length), condition and strategic location were uploaded to the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculator spreadsheet to determine the baseline value of the site. The extent of any habitats to be retained or enhanced was also entered into baseline worksheets.

2.3.3 The post-development masterplan was interrogated to determine areas of hard standing, buildings, and associated infrastructure. New, retained and enhanced habitats were classified and allocated a target condition, based on habitat type, location and management input. This information was uploaded to the metric spreadsheet to obtain a post-development value.

2.3.4 The pre- and post-development values were compared to determine whether the yield of biodiversity units achieved a deficit or gain.

2.3.5 The LNRS database was interrogated to understand where the site falls within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy Opportunity Area. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric was completed in line with these results.

## 2.4 Mitigation Hierarchy

2.4.1 Mitigation measures should be embedded within the masterplan design and planning application process. Measures during the construction phases should be included in a Construction Environmental Management Plan: Biodiversity (CEMP). This process from proposal to implementation needs to consider the 'mitigation hierarchy' of avoid, reduce, compensate, and enhance:

- Aim to avoid negative effects through the design process.
- Mitigate if negative effects cannot be avoided.
- Use compensation measures to offset residual impacts.
- Identify and implement opportunities to enhance biodiversity.

[5] The_Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_-_User_Guide_.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)

# 3. Results

## 3.1 Survey Constraints

3.1.1 No constraints affected the survey; a high degree of confidence is placed on the results.

## 3.2 Designated Sites

3.2.1 No statutory designated sites are present within the study area. Non-statutory designated sites are summarised below in Table 1.

Table 1. Designated Sites

| Name | Status | Location/distance | Interest |
|---|---|---|---|
| River Irwell | SBI – Local Importance | 1.3km North | Supports a notable assemblage of birds. |
| Salford Quays | SBI – Local Importance | 1.4km East | Supports a notable assemblage of birds. |

3.2.2 The site lies within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) of one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). However, the proposed development does not trigger the requirement for the Local Planning Authority to consult Natural England, as it does not fall within any of the development categories specified for consultation.

## 3.3 Habitats

3.3.1 Target Notes and photographs are contained in Appendix 2 and the habitats survey plan is contained in Appendix 3. Species abundance, if included, follows the DAFOR system (Dominant, Abundant, Frequent, Occasional, Rare, Locally Dominant, Locally Abundant and Locally Frequent) and is provided in brackets after each species.

### Developed Land; Sealed Surface

3.3.2 The majority of the land on site is accommodated by tarmac hardstanding (1). The tarmac is cracked in places, and ephemeral vegetation has begun to populate the gaps and edges of this habitat.

### Ruderal; Ephemeral

3.3.3 The edges of the mixed scrub are bordered by transitional ruderal; ephemeral vegetation (2). Evidence of fly tipping is present throughout the habitat, with dominant species including Stonecrop *Sedum* sp., Ragwort *Jacobea vulgaris*, Herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*, Creeping Bent *Agrostis stolonifera* and Dandelion *Taraxacum* agg.

### Mixed Scrub

3.3.4 Large parcels of mixed scrub (3) occur throughout the site. The scrub is dense and well established at the northern part of the site, extending down in parts towards the south of the site. Dominant species in the parcel include Buddleia *Buddleja davidii* and Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg.

### Bramble Scrub

3.3.5 A small cluster of Bramble dominated scrub (4) is present at the south-eastern corner of the site.

### Individual Tree

3.3.6 One Goat Willow *Salix caprea* tree (5) exists at the north-eastern boundary of the site.

## 3.4 Baseline Habitats

3.4.1 The BNG Metric and Habitat Condition Assessments spreadsheets are supplied separately.

3.4.2 There are no irreplaceable habitats on site and the site has not been subject to any prior degradation.

3.4.3 While the site exceeds the minimum size threshold (>0.25ha) and shows evidence of previous disturbance, it does not meet several key ecological criteria required for it to be classified as Open Mosaic Habitat (OMH) as described in Riding et al. (2009)[6], namely:

- Criterion 3: The on-site vegetation assemblage is dominated by nutrient-tolerant ruderal species and well-established scrub, including the non-native Buddleja, rather than early successional, stress-tolerant communities. This reflects secondary ruderal vegetation and advancing succession typical of nutrient-enriched urban sites, rather than the open, stress-adapted communities characteristic of OMH.
- Criterion 4: The site is largely comprised of sealed tarmac, which does not constitute 'loose bare substrate' as defined in the guidance. Although brick rubble is present, this occurs as localised piles and does not form a continuous or extensive area of loose, colonisable substrate across the site.
- Criterion 5: Habitats are present as discrete and structurally simple blocks, with limited transitional complexity. Scrub is extensive and exceeds the levels typically associated with OMH, and early successional habitats are not dominant. The site therefore lacks the spatial variation and ecotonal gradients required to form a true mosaic of early successional communities.

3.4.4 On this basis, the site does not satisfy Criteria 3, 4 or 5 and does not represent Open Mosaic Habitat.

[6] Riding, A., Critchley, N., Wilson, L. & Parker, J. (2009). Definition and mapping of open mosaic habitats on previously developed land: Phase 1 Final Report. ADAS UK Ltd, December 2009.

3.4.5 The baseline habitats are recorded in Table 2 below. This should be read in conjunction with the condition assessments, which are provided as a separate spreadsheet.

*Table 2. Baseline habitat assessment.*

| Habitat Units | | | |
|---|---|---|---|
| **Habitat** | **Area (Ha)** | **Condition** | **Score (Biodiversity Units)** |
| Bramble Scrub | 0.005 | N/A | 0.02 |
| Ruderal/Ephemeral | 0.0571 | Moderate | 0.23 |
| Mixed Scrub | 0.2511 | Poor | 1.00 |
| Developed Land; Sealed Surface | 0.3884 | N/A | 0 |
| Urban Tree | 0.0041 | Poor | 0.02 |
| **Total (excluding individual trees)** | **0.70** | | **1.27** |

## 3.5 Species

### Badger

3.5.1 No field signs of Badger *Meles meles* were identified during the survey. The site offers negligible foraging and commuting habitat. No suitable sett building habitat exists on site.

3.5.2 Badger is not considered further in this report.

### Bats

3.5.3 No individual trees on site were identified as having Potential Roosting Features (PRF's). No buildings are present on site.

3.5.4 The site is open and surrounded by urban development. The railway corridor to the north offers some suitable foraging habitat but the site is very unlikely to be important for bats and this group is not considered further in this report.

### Hedgehog

3.5.5 The habitats on site provide limited foraging and commuting habitat for Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus.*

### Birds

3.5.6 The site offers suitable nesting habitat for a limited assemblage of common and widespread bird species within the mixed scrub habitats present on site. In addition, limited suitability exists for notable species associated with early successional urban habitats, including Black Redstart *Phoenicurus ochuros*, which is identified within the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan and is listed under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981 as amended). Black Redstart favour derelict sites

with rubble, sparse scrub and ruderal vegetation for foraging, as is present on site, however there is an absence of derelict buildings or nesting niches either on site or within adjacent properties. The site is therefore assessed as being suitable foraging only for this species.

### Reptiles

3.5.7 The site is located within a predominantly urban setting, characterised largely by hardstanding and built development. Connectivity to potentially more suitable offsite habitat is limited. Although vegetation is present along the adjacent railway corridor, movement between this habitat and the site is constrained by the notable level difference and the presence of brick boundary walls.

3.5.8 While areas of mixed scrub, ruderal vegetation and rubble are present, these habitats are fragmented and of generally low quality in the context of reptile habitat requirements. The site lacks the structural diversity typically associated with suitable reptile habitat, such as a mosaic of tussocky grassland, varied refugia, and well-connected foraging and dispersal habitat. In addition, much of the substrate beneath the mixed scrub and ruderal / ephemeral vegetation comprises intact or broken concrete, further reducing habitat suitability.

3.5.9 Given the sub-optimal habitat suitability of the site, its limited connectivity to more suitable offsite habitat, and the relative scarcity of reptile records within the local area, it is considered unlikely that the site supports a reptile population of ecological significance. Reptiles are therefore scoped out of further consideration within this report.

### Great Crested Newt

3.5.10 No waterbodies exist on or within 250m of the site, the site lacks suitable foraging and commuting features for Great Crested Newt *Triturus cristatus*.

3.5.11 Given the lack suitable habitats of breeding habitat in the proximity of the site, this group is not considered further in this report.

### Invertebrates

3.5.12 The habitats on site are unlikely to support an important assemblage of invertebrates due to the lack of structural diversity and the absence of important ecological features such as deadwood.

3.5.13 This group is not considered further in this report.

## 3.6 Invasive Species

3.6.1 No invasive non-native species were identified during the habitat survey.

# 4. Assessment

## 4.1 Development Context

4.1.1 The following assessment assumes that the current habitats on site are to be cleared to accommodate the construction of a new high-rise building.

## 4.2 Impacts on Designated Sites

4.2.1 No impacts to any statutory or non-statutory sites are anticipated due to the absence of impact pathways and distances involved.

## 4.3 Impacts on Habitats

4.3.1 The habitats on site are common and widespread, and their loss will only be significant at the site level.

## 4.4 Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

### Biodiveristy Baseline

4.4.1 The baseline biodiversity value within the redline development is **1.27** area units, zero linear units and zero watercourse units.

### Biodiveristy Post-development

4.4.2 The post-development BNG assessment is based on the Planting Strategy produced by Re-form landscape architecture (drawing no. 1285-RFM-ZZ-GF-DR-L-20100 Rev.P03). A UKHab Post-development Habitat Classification Map has been produced based on this drawing and is shown in Appendix 4.

4.4.3 The post-intervention biodiversity value within the redline development is **1.12** area units, zero linear units and zero watercourse units. Contributions per habitat are listed as follows:

- Enhanced Mixed Scrub: An area of 0.0137ha of the existing Mixed Scrub onsite falling within the Greater Manchester LNRS, which is targeted at the 'restoration and reconnection of canalside habitats, including targeted woodland creation and tree planting', will be enhanced. This habitat will be enhanced from poor to moderate condition via additional planting within 5 years. Additionally, given it falls within the LNRS area, the strategic significance, recorded as low in the baseline has been recorded as high (formally identified within the local strategy) for the enhanced area. This habitat will deliver **0.12** habitat units.

- Created Mixed Scrub: A long the western boundary, a stripe of native mixed scrub extending 0.003ha will be created as screening habitat. This habitat is targeted to achieve poor condition within a year of creation. This habitat will deliver **0.01** habitat units.
- Created Introduced Shrub: Ornamental Planting comprising mostly native shrub mixes will be delivered across the site. These are referred to as Ornamental Planting – Full Sun Mix (0.0327ha) and Ornamental Planting – Shady Mix (0.0578h) in the planting Strategy. These are targeted at achieving poor condition within 1 year and will deliver **0.06** and **0.11** habitat units, respectively.
- Created Modified Grassland: Two small parcels of modified grassland habitat comprising a total area of 0.0099ha are proposed at the middle of the site. This will feature a species-rich mix that is resilient to regular management such as Germinal WFG20 Eco Species Rich Lawn (or similar) so that it can achieve good condition within 7 years. This habitat will deliver **0.05** habitat units.
- Individual Tree Planting: A total of 61 newly planted trees, including native and non-native species are included in the proposal. All trees are targeted at achieving moderate condition within 27 years. Within, 6 proposed specimens fall under the LNRS area and therefore are recorded as having high strategic significance. Trees within the LNRS will deliver **0.09** habitat units, the remaining proposed trees will deliver **0.68** habitat units.
- Green Wall: Climber planting is proposed between parking bays at the northwestern corner of the site. This is targeted at achieving moderate condition within 1 year. Given its small area (0.001ha) is does not contribute habitat units.

### Predicted Change

4.4.4 The proposed development will result in a net loss of **0.15 (-11.68%)** habitat units, which is below the statutory requirement to achieve a minimum 10% BNG. Based on the current metric results, an additional **0.28** area habitat units would be required to achieve the mandatory 10% net gain.

4.4.5 In addition, the metric trading rules are not satisfied. The metric trading summary indicates a unit deficit of **0.90 medium distinctiveness** area habitat units and **0.01 low distinctiveness** are habitat units.

## 4.5 Impacts on Species

### Hedgehog & Other Small Mammals

4.5.1 There is a risk of incidental harm through entrapment and contact with hazardous machinery and harmful substances should Hedgehog or other small mammals access a construction site. Mitigation is recommended (see Section 5).

### Nesting Birds

4.5.2 Impacts on nesting birds would mainly be associated with habitat loss through vegetation clearance and/or removal of rubble/debris, resulting in localised displacement and potentially disturbance or harm, should they be present. Mitigation is recommended (see Section 5). The site is small and is not expected to contribute significantly towards the maintenance of local Black Redstart populations, although they could use it occasionally for foraging.

# 5. Recommendations

## 5.1 Further Surveys

5.1.1 No further surveys are required.

## 5.2 Mitigation and Enhancement Measures

5.2.1 Protection of ecological features (habitats and species) during the construction phase will be described in a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP). Mitigation measures to protect, maintain and enhance ecological features during the operational phase of development will be described in a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP). Management Plans will contain Operational Aims and Objectives, Rationale for management, Prescriptions and schedules detailing the timing and responsibility for delivering the prescriptions. It is anticipated that the CEMP and HMMP will be provided as a planning condition in advance of the commencement of the proposed development.

### Biodiversity Net Gain

5.2.2 The landscape proposals have been designed to maximise biodiversity gains on site by retaining existing mixed scrub where practicable, creating additional areas of mixed scrub and species-rich grassland, and maximising tree planting. No further on-site habitat enhancement or creation is considered feasible due to the limited size of the site, the nature of the proposed development, and the need to accommodate other planning and design requirements. Furthermore, no additional land is available within the applicant's ownership to deliver off-site habitat creation or enhancement. It is therefore considered that the mitigation hierarchy has been fully applied.

5.2.3 To achieve compliance with the statutory Biodiversity Net Gain requirements, it is assumed that the remaining habitat unit shortfall will be addressed through the purchase of off-site biodiversity units secured from a third-party provider.

5.2.4 The metric indicates that **0.90 medium distinctiveness area habitat units** are required to satisfy the trading rules. As these units also contribute towards the overall habitat unit balance, securing a minimum of **0.90 medium distinctiveness area habitat units** would both (i) satisfy the trading rules and (ii) address the **0.28 area habitat unit** shortfall required to achieve the statutory 10% Biodiversity Net Gain target, based on the current Metric results.

### Nesting Birds

5.2.5 Impacts on nesting birds should be avoided by undertaking vegetation clearance, rubble removal, and similar site preparation works outside the core bird breeding season (generally March to August inclusive). Accordingly, works with the potential to directly affect nesting birds should, where practicable, be undertaken between September and February.

5.2.6 Where this is not possible, a pre-commencement nesting bird check should be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist immediately prior to works. If active nests are identified, an appropriate exclusion zone should be established and maintained until the ecologist confirms that the nesting attempt is complete.

### Enhancement Opportunities

5.2.7 Bat Bricks could be incorporated into the new building on site to enhance roosting opportunities.

5.2.8 There is an opportunity to enhance the site for nesting birds by providing opportunities for declining species such as Starling *Stumus vulgaris*, Swift *Apus apus* and House Sparrow *Passer domesticus*, via incorporation of species-specific nesting boxes.

# Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation

## National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2026) describes the Government's planning policy for England and how it should be applied. Within this framework, the requirements in relation to biodiversity are included within several policies. The most relevant to individual planning decisions are Policies N1 to N6, shown below:

PLAN MAKING POLICIES

**N1: Identifying environmental opportunities and safeguards**

1. Development plans should safeguard and enhance the natural environment, and reflect the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services, by using Local Nature Recovery Strategies, Protected Landscape Management Plans, River Basin Management Plans, National Forest Strategies, Community Forest Plans and other relevant evidence at the most appropriate level to:
    a. Set out the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites and areas of importance for their landscape, geodiversity or biodiversity value in the plan area, and identify other features which require particular consideration in managing development due to their environmental value such as chalk streams;
    b. Identify opportunities for the conservation, enhancement and recovery of landscapes, sensitive waterbodies, habitats and priority or threatened species, including through habitat restoration, the use of nature-based solutions, and the creation and strengthening of ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures (including opportunities which exist at a catchment or landscape scale across plan boundaries);
    c. Steer the location of development, including through site allocations, in ways which utilise land of least environmental value where that would be consistent with other policies in this Framework. This should include limiting the scale and extent of development within Protected Landscapes, avoiding the use of higher quality agricultural land where land of poorer quality is available and avoiding and minimising harm to designated sites of importance for nature. Areas which could become of particular importance for nature identified in Local Nature Recovery Strategies should be taken into account as opportunities to integrate development with environmental restoration, but should not necessarily preclude the allocation of land for development; and
    d. Set out standards for green infrastructure provision, in a way which complements and/or incorporates those for recreational land (as set out in policy HC1). These should draw upon

Natural England's Green Infrastructure Standards for England58, tailored as necessary to local circumstances.

2. Development plans should only set local standards for biodiversity net gain which are in excess of the statutory net gain requirement where this is for specific site allocations, and is fully justified and deliverable. Local standards should not extend to categories of development which are exempt from statutory biodiversity net gain.

## NATIONAL DECISION-MAKING POLICIES

### N2: Improving the natural environment

1. To contribute positively to the natural environment, and support nature's recovery, development proposals should:
    a. Consider the environmental qualities of land proposed for development, including habitats, landscape character and the natural beauty of the countryside, and identify opportunities for those qualities to be conserved or enhanced (including through requirements for biodiversity net gain where these apply);
    b. Take into account the quality of agricultural land (including that classified as best and most versatile agricultural land, and its grade), and if significant development of agricultural land is necessary, use areas of poorer quality land where possible;
    c. Take suitable opportunities to connect to and strengthen ecological networks that extend beyond the site, drawing on the measures proposed by Local Nature Recovery Strategies, National Forest Strategies and Community Forest Plans, where present, and other relevant assessments;
    d. Conserve and enhance existing natural features of visual, historic or nature conservation value (such as established trees and hedgerows) where possible; and use appropriate landscaping to help create a well-designed place and integrate the development into its surroundings;
    e. Use green infrastructure provided as part of the scheme and nature-based solutions to secure multiple benefits: such as for biodiversity; surface water and pollution management (including maintaining flow rates and water quality); climate change mitigation and adaptation, and recreation;
    f. Minimise any adverse impacts on biodiversity and include features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs. Development proposals should incorporate integrated nest boxes (commonly known as swift bricks) into their construction unless there are compelling technical reasons which prevent their use, or would make them ineffective; and

g. Ensure that green infrastructure and other features to support nature are located and designed to minimise risk of future failure, and that appropriate measures are in place for any necessary long-term management.

2. 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 the development should be refused.

3. Development proposals may incorporate biodiversity enhancements which exceed the statutory objective for biodiversity net gain, but this should only be a requirement where it is set out in up-to-date development plan policies for specific site allocations. Decision-makers should not give weight to other development plan policies which require biodiversity gains which go beyond the statutory framework, including where a policy requires gains for development proposals which are exempt.

**N3: Trees in new development**

1. In recognition of the benefits which trees can provide for biodiversity, climate change mitigation and adaptation, and the character and quality of the built environment, development proposals should:

a. Make new streets tree-lined (unless there are strong reasons why this would be inappropriate in specific streets), and incorporate trees in other suitable locations, such as in parks and through the provision of community orchards;

b. Ensure that the selection of species and their placement is compatible with highways and other infrastructure requirements and the needs of different users of public spaces; and will be effective in helping to adapt to the effects of climate change and delivering other environmental benefits. Suitable arboricultural advice should be sought, and proposals discussed with highways and trees officers where necessary, so that the right trees are planted in the right places; and

c. Make provision for the long-term maintenance of both existing and newly-planted trees which form part of the development.

**N4: Protected Landscapes**

1. Development proposals within Protected Landscapes should be limited in scale and extent and sensitively located and designed to avoid harm to the statutory purposes and special qualities of the Protected Landscape. Substantial weight should be placed on the importance of conserving and enhancing the natural beauty of these areas, and to conserving and enhancing wildlife and cultural heritage in National Parks and the Broads.

2. Proposals for major development within Protected Landscapes should be refused other than in exceptional circumstances, and where it can be demonstrated that the development is in the public

interest. To inform a decision about whether exceptional circumstances exist, consideration of such proposals should include an assessment of:

a. The need for the development, including in terms of any national considerations such as maintaining a sufficient supply of minerals, and the impact of permitting it, or refusing it, upon the local economy;

b. The cost of, and scope for, developing outside the Protected Landscape, or meeting the need for the development in some other way; and

c. Any detrimental effect on the environment, the landscape and recreational opportunities, and the extent to which it could be moderated.

3. Where, exceptionally, proposals for major development are approved within Protected Landscapes, steps should be taken to mitigate potential adverse impacts on their special qualities and statutory purposes60, including on features such as tranquillity and dark skies.

4. Development proposals within the setting of Protected Landscapes should be sensitively located and designed to avoid or minimise adverse impacts on the Protected Landscape.

**N5: Maintaining the character of the coast**

1. Development proposals should maintain the character of undeveloped areas of coast, including land designated for its landscape, habitat or heritage value, while improving public access to it where appropriate. They should not hinder the completion and maintenance of a continuous signed and managed route around the coast (the King Charles III England Coast Path National Trail).

2. Development proposals in areas defined as Heritage Coast (and which do not already fall within a Protected Landscape) should be consistent with the special character of the area and the importance of its conservation. Major development within areas defined as Heritage Coast should not be supported, unless the development is compatible with the special character of the area.

3. If located within a Coastal Change Management Area, development proposals should also be considered against policy F9.

**N6: Areas of particular importance for biodiversity and geodiversity**

1. To support the conservation of important habitats, species and sites of geodiversity value, development proposals affecting:

a. A site of international importance, which for the purpose of this policy is a habitats site, should be refused unless:

i. An appropriate assessment has concluded that the proposal will not adversely affect the integrity of the site (either individually or in combination with other developments), or the proposal can satisfy the derogation tests61; and/or

ii. The impact of development on the relevant protected features of the protected site is being addressed through an Environmental Delivery Plan which has been made and the developer has committed to paying the nature restoration levy.

b. A site of national importance, which for the purpose of this policy is one designated as a Site of Special Scientific Interest, should only be supported if:

i. There would be no adverse effect (either individually or in combination with other developments) on the site's features of special scientific interest; or

ii. The benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both the likely impact on the features of special scientific interest, and any broader impact on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest; or

iii. The impact of development on the relevant protected feature of the protected site is being addressed through an Environmental Delivery Plan which has been made and the developer has committed to paying the nature restoration levy.

c A site of local importance, which for the purpose of this policy is one designated as a Local Nature Reserve or identified as a local wildlife site, local geological site or equivalent in the development plan, should only be supported if:.

i. There would not be a significant adverse effect on the integrity of the site; or

ii. The benefits of development in the location proposed clearly outweigh the likely impact on the features which make the site valuable for nature conservation.

2. Irrespective of a site's status in nature conservation terms, development proposals which would entail the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists.

3. This policy applies to development on land inside or outside a designated area, if it would have an impact on the identified biodiversity or geodiversity value of the area concerned.

## Legislation

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRoW Act 2000) includes the notification and confirmation of Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs). SSSIs can be notified for their floral, faunal, geological, or physiographical features. Protection against damaging operations and management of SSSIs is also included within the Act. Impact Risk Zones (IRZs) are zones around an SSSI account for the particular sensitivities of the features for which it is notified and identify development proposal which could have adverse impacts.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRoW Act 2000) protects native animals, plants and habitats. Under the Act it is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animal listed on Schedule 5 and it is an offence to interfere with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturb animals occupying such places. The Act prohibits picking, uprooting or destroy any wild plant (or any attached seed or spore) listed in Schedule 8.

European Protected Species (EPS) such as bats, Hazel Dormouse, Otter, Natterjack Toad, Smooth Snake, Sand Lizard and Great Crested Newt are protected by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRoW Act 2000) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. The Acts make it an offence to:

a) Deliberately capture, injure or kill an EPS;
b) Deliberately impair an EPS's ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear or nurture young; to hibernate or migrate; or significantly affect the local distribution or abundance of the EPS.
c) Possess or control live or dead EPS or any part of, or anything derived from a EPS;
d) Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of an EPS;
e) Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any place that is used for shelter or protection by an EPS;
f) Intentionally or recklessly disturb a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection that is occupied by an EPS.

All common herptiles are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the CRoW Act 2000). Grass Snake, Slow Worm, Common Lizard, Adder are protected against intentional killing or injury. Common Frog, Common Toad, Smooth Newt and Palmate Newt is protected against sale. In addition, all British reptiles, Common toad and Great Crested Newt are listed as Species of Principal Importance.

All nesting birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is an offence to intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird or take, damage, or destroy its nest whilst in use or being built, or take or destroy its eggs. It is an offence to intentionally or recklessly disturb a species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act while they are nest building or at or near a nest with eggs or young, or to disturb the dependent young.

The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 makes it an offence to wilfully, or to attempt to kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a Badger, or intentionally or recklessly interfere with a sett. Interference of a sett includes disturbing Badgers during occupation of a sett, or damaging or destroying a sett, or obstructing access to the sett.

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 places a duty on every public authority to have regard to conserving biodiversity. Section 41 of the same Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of the living organisms and types of habitats that are of 'Principal Importance' for the purpose of conserving biodiversity. The Secretary of State must take steps, as appear reasonably practicable, to further the conservation of those living organisms and habitats in any list published under this section. The list of species and habitats of principal importance currently includes 943 species and 56 habitats. These are the species and habitats found in England which are regarded as conservation priorities under the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework

The Hedgerows Regulations 1997 protect 'important' hedgerows from destruction or damage. A hedgerow is 'important' if it (a) has existed for 30 years or more; and (b) satisfies at least one of the criteria listed in Part II of Schedule 1 of the Regulations. Under the Regulations, it is against the law to remove or destroy 'important' hedgerows unless permitted by the local planning authority.

The Environment Act 2021 makes it mandatory for housing and development, subject to some narrow exemptions, to achieve at least a 10% net gain in value for biodiversity – a requirement that habitats for wildlife must be left in a measurably better state than before the development. Developers must submit a 'biodiversity gain plan' alongside usual planning application documents. The local authority must assess whether the 10% net gain requirement is met in order to approve the biodiversity gain plan.

The Environment Act 2021 strengthens the duty on public authorities (NERC Act, 2006) to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity.

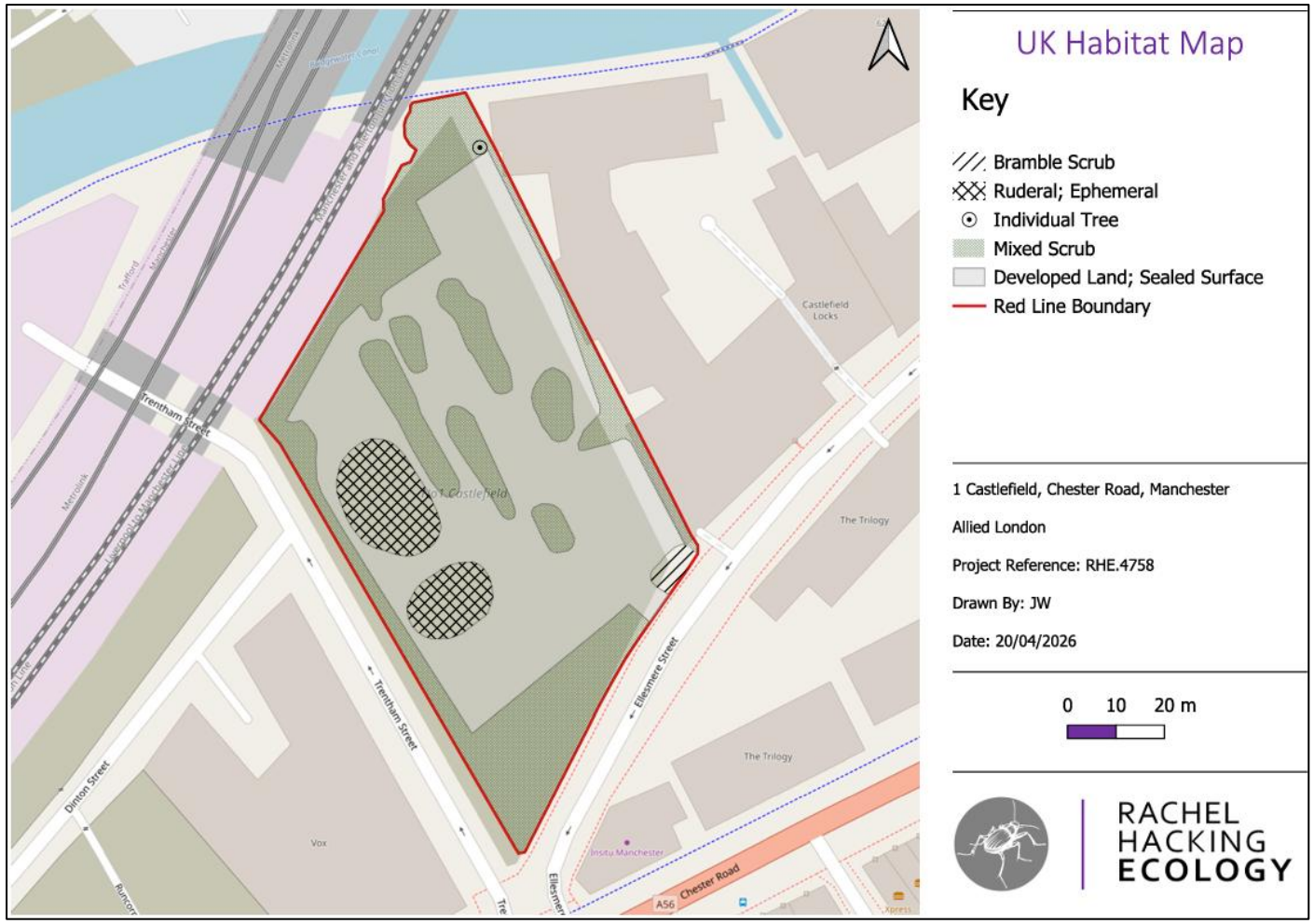
The Environment Act 2021 amends the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to introduce an additional purpose for granting a protected species licence in relation to development, 'for reasons of overriding public interest', and two additional tests for the granting of such licences: that there is 'no other satisfactory solution' and that granting the licence is 'not detrimental to the survival of any the population of the species concerned'. These changes will reduce the scope for unlicensed activities to provide clear safeguards before licences can be granted, providing legal certainty and clarity to developers about their environmental obligations.

# Appendix 2: Habitat Photographs

| Reference No. | Habitat | Photograph |
|---|---|---|
| 1 | Developed Land; Sealed Surface |  |
| 2 | Ruderal; Ephemeral |  |
| 3 | Mixed Scrub |  |

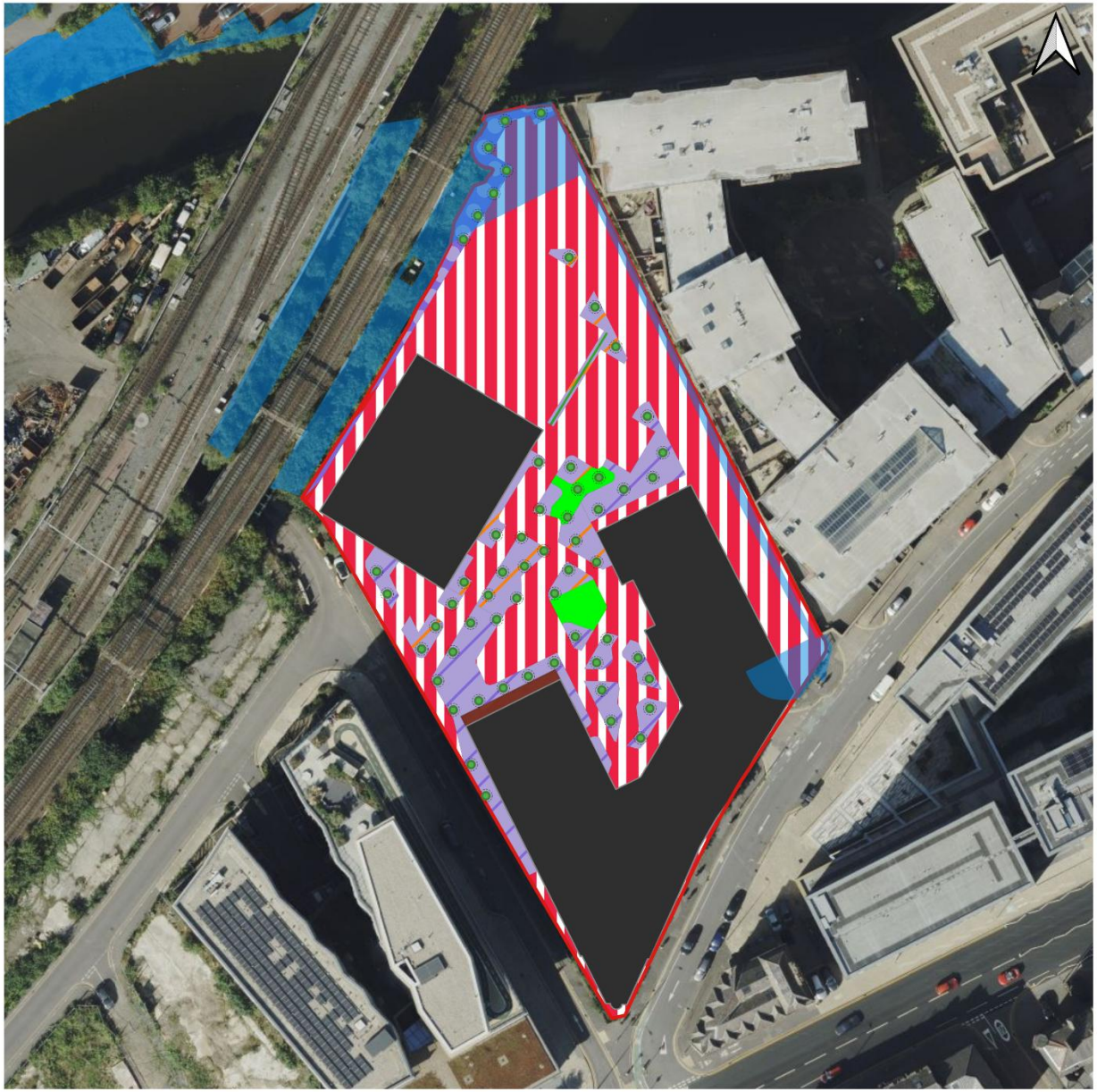
| | | |
|---|---|---|
| 4 | Bramble Scrub |  |
| 5 | Individual Trees |  |

# Appendix 3: UKHab Habitat Classification Plan - Baseline



# Appendix 4: UKHab Habitat Classification Plan –

# Post-development



# Post-development UKHab Habitat Map

## Key

- Red line boundary
- LNRS Opportunity Area
- Proposed Tree
- Buildings
- Developed land; sealed surface
- Mixed scrub - retained
- Mixed scrub - created
- Green wall
- Introduced shrub - Ornamental planting (shady mix)
- Introduced shrub - Ornamenta planting (sun mix)
- Species-rich modified grassland

1 Castlefield, Chester Road, Manchester

Allied London

Project Reference: RHE.4758

Drawn By: LRM

Date: 30/07/2026

0 30 60 m

RACHEL HACKING ECOLOGY