

TECHNICAL NOTE

Reference:	8776.012
Version:	1.0
Date:	28/10/24
Author:	SV
Approved:	ACP



**THE
ENVIRONMENT
PARTNERSHIP**

401 Faraday Street

Tel: 01925 844004

Birchwood Park,

Fax: 01925 844002

Warrington

WA3 6GA

PLANNING | DESIGN | ENVIRONMENT

Smithy Bridge Road, Rochdale –Ecological Assessment Addendum

Introduction

The Environment Partnership (TEP) was commissioned by Taylor Wimpey in 2024 to review ecological impacts with regards to a proposed residential development which is currently in planning.

To inform the application TEP undertook an updated walkover survey and water vole and otter survey on 17th September 2024 and updated nocturnal bat surveys on 7th and 27th of August and 19th of September 2024.

Habitats and Flora

No significant changes in the baseline with regards to habitats and flora were identified during the walkover survey and the existing evaluations are therefore still valid.

Fauna

Overall, the evaluation and recommendations with regards to fauna remain valid, however given the age of the original outline ecological surveys more scrutiny was given to protected species, in particular bats, water vole *Arvicola amphibius* and otter *Lutra lutra*.

Bats

Full details of the updated bat surveys are provided in the Bat Survey Technical Report – 2024 (TEP Ref: 8776.003A) and summarised here. Following an updated ground level tree assessment (GLTA), four trees were classed as having potential to support roosting bats. Trees T1, T3 and T4 were classed as having low potential to support roosting bats in the 2021 GLTA and this was updated to PRF-I suitability in 2024. These trees do not require further survey due to their categorisation as having low potential to support roosting bats.

Tree T2 was classed as having moderate suitability in 2021 and PRF-M suitability in 2024. As this tree is due to be impacted by the development proposals, it was subject to two nocturnal surveys in 2021 which confirmed the presence of common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* roosts. The roosts

were characterised as a day roost which are defined as a place where individual bats, or small groups of males, rest or shelter in the day but are rarely found by night in the summer.

Due to the time elapsed since the nocturnal surveys, tree T2 was subject to a further three nocturnal surveys in 2024.

No roosting activity was recorded during the updated surveys of tree T2 in 2024. Despite this, given that roosting was confirmed in 2021, the bat roost suitability of T2 remains unchanged, and due to the transient nature of bat roosts, particularly in trees, tree T2 is still considered as having roost status. Tree T2 is currently scheduled to be removed to make way for development. Therefore, there will still be a requirement to obtain a Mitigation Licence from Natural England with regard to the common pipistrelle day roost which will be lost as a result of the proposals.

Water Vole and Otter

Full details of the updated water vole and otter surveys are provided in the Water Vole Survey Technical Report – 2024 (TEP Ref: 8776.004A) and Otter Survey Technical Report – 2024 (TEP Ref: 8776.005A) and summarised here.

The 2021 survey recorded field signs including latrines and feeding remains, which indicated a low population density of water voles, there is also sufficient suitable habitat along the river for colony expansion and dispersal.

During the 2024 survey, several feeding remains were recorded along the watercourse, some of which were attributed to bank vole rather than water vole due to the presence of bank vole droppings. Other feeding remains included the typical 45 degree cut angle normally associated with water vole, however feeding remains in isolation (without the presence of latrines) are not sufficient to confirm water vole presence.

No signs of the presence of otter were recorded during 2021 and this was also the case following the updated survey in 2024.

Updated Assessment

The updated surveys indicate that no significant changes to the habitats have occurred and therefore the Conclusions and Recommendations stated in the Ecological Assessment (TEP Report: 8776.006) remain unchanged.

While no bats were recorded roosting in tree T2 during the updated survey in 2024, this tree is still considered as having roost status due to the presence of a confirmed roost in 2021. Therefore, the Conclusions and Recommendations set out in the Ecological Assessment (TEP Report: 8776.006) still stand and must be implemented. This is also the case for trees T1, T3 and T4 which now have PRF-I status and will require the same mitigation approach as stated in the Ecological Assessment (TEP Report: 8776.006).

With respect to water vole, while conclusive evidence of water vole presence could not be confirmed during the 2024 update survey, their previous presence on the watercourse and it's continued

suitability to support water vole still stands. Therefore, the Conclusions and Recommendations set out in the Ecological Assessment (TEP Report: 8776.006) are still valid and must be implemented.

For all other ecological features at the site, the conclusions of the assessment and proposed recommendations remain the same as set out in the Ecological Assessment (TEP Report: 8776.006).