



REASONABLE AVOIDANCE METHOD STATEMENT (RAMS)

**CASTLETON SIDINGS, ROCHDALE
GREATER MANCHESTER**

AUGUST 2024

Reasonable Avoidance Method Statement (RAMS)

Castleton Sidings, Rochdale Greater Manchester

A report for



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Report by



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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

Pennine Ecological been asked to assist with discharging a number of planning conditions relating to ecology. This includes conditions 7-9 stated below:

7	Prior to the commencement of development (including ground works and vegetation clearance), an invasive non-native species protocol shall be submitted to and approved by the local planning authority, detailing the containment, control, and removal of invasive plant species on site. The measures shall be carried out strictly in accordance with the approved scheme. Reason - To secure the satisfactory disposal of this invasive species of plant, which under the terms of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981, as amended, it is an offence to be caused to spread in the wild, in accordance with the general principles of Policy JP-P1 and JP-G8 of the adopted Places for Everyone Plan.
8	No earthworks or vegetation clearance shall take place until a reasonable avoidance measures method statement for small mammals and amphibians has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. If any protected species is found to either reside or forage within the site, no development shall take place until a scheme for the protection of their habitat or an appropriate mitigation scheme has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority and the approved protection or mitigation measures shall thereafter be fully implemented. Reason: To safeguard any protected species which may either live or forage within the site in accordance with Policy JP-G8 of the Places for Everyone Plan and the NPPF. Reason for pre-commencement condition: As the proposals require the disturbance of ground, it is necessary to understand the extent of any existence.
9	No earthworks or vegetation clearance shall take place until updated badger surveys have been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Reason: To safeguard protected species as defined by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and in accordance with Policy JP-G8 of the Places for Everyone Plan and the NPPF.

This report includes all the information required to discharge conditions 7 – 9. This document must be adhered to throughout the construction phase of the development.

2. CONDITION 7 – INVASIVE NON-NATIVE SPECIES PROTOCOL

Himalayan balsam and wall cotoneaster have been identified within the site. These species are listed as a Schedule 9 species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. This makes it an offence to plant or allow to spread onto adjacent land and into the wild.

Control methods below must be adopted to ensure the species is controlled and not allowed to spread into adjacent land.

2.1 HIMALAYAN BALSAM CONTROL

The site supports the highly invasive Himalayan balsam. The control and eradication of this species is highly problematic. It spreads by a highly efficient seed dispersal mechanism, each plant produces about 2,500 seeds which fall to the ground, and with several parent plants close together, seeds can occur at a density of between 5000 - 6000 seeds per square metre. The species can be controlled by various methods including cutting/mowing, herbicide treatment and physical pulling of the plants before they reach seed maturity.

Long-term eradication is considered extremely difficult. The key recommendation is that no spoil/soil or material from affected areas must be removed from the site (and in doing so potentially spreading the plant in areas not yet colonised by the species), including any parts of the plant. The developer of the site should aim to control and manage the species as best they can using methods listed above.

If spoil is to be removed from the site, this will need to be sent to an Environment Agency approved site.

Further, more detailed information on Himalayan balsam is provided on the following government website; <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/prevent-the-spread-of-harmful-invasive-and-non-native-plants>.

2.2 WALL COTONEASTER CONTROL

Wall cotoneaster has been identified within the site. Young seedlings can be effectively pulled however larger plants will develop multiple stems from the large root mass making it difficult to remove the whole plant.

Root mass can be excavated to remove entire plant and prevent regrowth. Once this has been excavated, the vegetative material should be chipped or burnt on site or removed to licensed landfill as controlled waste.

3. CONDITION 8 – RAMS FOR SMALL MAMMALS AND AMPHIBIANS

3.1 RAMS FOR SMALL MAMMALS

Although not recorded within the site, badger, hedgehog and other terrestrial mammals may forage and commute through the site. Due consideration during the construction phase of the works must be given. The following measures must be adopted during the construction phase:

- Any excavations, digging of trenches or foundations etc. must ensure that an 'escape route' is provided for small mammals. This could include ramps that would allow egress from such features e.g., a wooden board placed at approximately 45° from the base of the trench to the ground level.
- Any holes where a ramp is not provided must be securely covered to prevent mammals falling in.
- Before infilling excavations, checks for small mammals must be made.

3.2 RAMS FOR AMPHIBIANS

Although GCN have been confirmed to be absent from the site and locally, other amphibians including common toad (S41 species), smooth newt, palmate newt and frog may be present. The following RAMS must be adopted during the construction phase:

Method: Storage of building materials (including waste materials)

- Amphibians may utilise stored building materials as part of their terrestrial habitat.
- All building materials must be stored on pallets.
- All waste materials must be immediately removed and not stored on the site so not to allow amphibians to use the materials as part of their terrestrial habitat.

Method: Excavations

- Any excavations, digging of trenches or foundations etc. must include amphibian 'escape route' ramps. The ramps would allow egress from such features e.g., a wooden board placed at approximately 45° from the base of the trench to the ground level.
- Alternatively, any holes should be securely covered as such not to allow amphibians to fall into them and not be able to escape.
- Before infilling excavations, checks for amphibians must be made.

Method: Procedures in the event of amphibians being found during the development.

Any amphibian species found during the development will be removed from the site and placed in suitable habitat (i.e. woodland belts to north of sidings).

4. CONDITION 9 – UPDATED BADGER SURVEY RESULTS

Pennine Ecological undertook a badger survey at the site on 02/08/2024. The entire site was accessible and the surveys were undertaken in suitable weather conditions (20°C, sunny, calm).

The surveys concluded an absence of badger from the site. No evidence of badger (setts, tracks, latrines, hair, footprints) was recorded.

The survey findings align with previous surveys undertaken at the site.

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