



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment

Land at Harwood Street, Rochdale, Lancashire, OL15 8NA

Brian Rogerson

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Industry Guidelines and Standards

This report has been written with due consideration to:

- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2020). Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK. 2nd Edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- British Standard 42020 (2013). Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.
- British Standard 8683:2021 (2021). Process for Designing and Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain.

Proportionality

The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.

The desk studies and field surveys undertaken to provide a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) might in some cases be all that is necessary.

(BS 42020, 2013)

Executive Summary

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed by Brian Rogerson to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at Land at Harwood Street, Rochdale, Lancashire, OL15 8NA (hereafter referred to as “the site”). The survey was required to inform a planning application for the demolition of the current on-site buildings, and erection of nine dwellings with associated parking and landscaping (hereafter referred to as “the proposed development”).

The following is work you will need to commission to comply with planning policy and legislation. Further information, along with opportunities for biodiversity enhancement, are outlined in Table 9 of this report.

Feature	Survey Results Summary	Impact Assessment	Recommendations
Designated sites	There is one statutory site within 2km of the site, it being Rochdale Canal SSSI/SAC located ~600m southeast from the site. The site lies within the impact risk zone for the Rochdale Canal SSSI and South Pennine Moors SSSI and the proposed development is not listed as a possible high risk for this designation. The presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site cannot be established without data from Greater Manchester Local Record Centre (GMLRC).	No direct impacts to any designated sites will occur as a result of the proposed development. However, due to the proximity of the site to the Rochdale Canal SSSI/SAC, the nature of the proposed development could result in increased recreational pressure to nearby areas.	Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution must be implemented during construction. Retained trees should be protected in line with the measures outlined in the British Standard "Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction to Construction - Recommendations" (BS 5837) (2012). BRD should be obtained, and this report updated, accordingly.
Habitats and flora	The site contains a pond which looks to be of good quality and could be of value to local wildlife populations (as detailed in subsequent sections of this table). Habitats on site comprise developed land, modified grassland, scattered scrub, introduced shrub, scattered trees, and young trees – self set, which are common widespread, and generally have low ecological value. No protected or notable plant species were recorded during the survey.	The proposed development will result in the loss of ~0.3ha grassland. This could result in a net loss in biodiversity at the site. The works will be undertaken within 10m of the on-site pond (P1). This could result in the pollution of the pond.	Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution must be implemented during construction. Retained trees should be protected in line with the measures outlined in the British Standard "Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction to Construction - Recommendations" (BS 5837) (2012).
Amphibians	The site contains a possible GCN breeding pond, and good terrestrial habitat for GCN and other more common amphibians, for shelter, foraging and hibernation (i.e., grassland, scattered scrub, refugia).	~0.3ha of grassland will be removed during construction. When georeferencing the proposed development plans over scaled mapping of the site, it is noted that the development area is likely to result in	Environmental DNA (eDNA) surveys will be required of the on-site pond, and any ponds within 250m of the site (where accessible) to determine the presence or absence of GCN. This will comprise collecting water

		the loss or significant disturbance of ~0.3ha of suitable GCN habitat (i.e. grassland). If GCN are present within the on-site pond this will constitute a loss of ~0.3ha within 100m of a potential breeding pond. When completing the rapid risk assessment published by Natural England (Natural England 2015), the proposed development produces an Amber risk score , which states: Offence Likely .	samples and sending them off for laboratory analysis and such surveys must be undertaken between mid-April and June, in accordance with current survey guidelines (Biggs et al, 2014).
Reptiles	The site contains suitable habitat for reptiles for foraging, shelter, and hibernation (i.e., grassland, scattered scrub, refugia). However, the grassland is retained to a short sward, without the structure or diversity required to support a viable reptile population.	~0.3ha grassland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local reptile populations owing to its low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, site clearance could result in the death or injury of reptiles, if present.	Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to reptiles, further surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, which is detailed in Table 9 of this report.
Roosting bats (B1 and B2)	B1 and B2 have low value for roosting bats, based on the suboptimal features present, likely more suitable for supporting individual/small numbers of crevice-dwelling species of bat.	The proposed development will result in the demolition of these buildings. This could result in destruction of any bat roosts present and could cause disturbance, death or injury to bats.	One bat emergence or re-entry survey is required during the active bat season (optimal May to August, suboptimal September) to confirm presence or likely-absence of a bat roost in these buildings. Further details can be found in Table 9 of this report.
Roosting bats (other structures S3:S5)	S3:S5 have negligible value for roosting bats due to a lack of potential roost features.	Bats are very unlikely to be roosting within these structures and as such, there are not anticipated to be any impacts on roosting bats as a result of their potential removal.	In the unlikely event that a bat or evidence of bats is discovered during the development all work must stop and a bat licensed ecologist contacted for further advice.
Roosting bats (trees)	Some of the trees on the site may contain PRFs which may be suitable for roosting bats.	The proposed development may result in the felling/pruning of some on-site trees. This could result in damage/modification/destruction of any bat roosts present and could cause disturbance, death, or injury to bats.	A separate GLTA should be undertaken for the on-site trees, in the event of any pruning or felling. This should be completed following the completion of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA), which will detail the definitive tree loss and retention.
Foraging and commuting bats	On-site trees and grassland could be used by local bat populations for foraging and commuting. These could also be used by bats dispersing from nearby roosts outside of the site.	The proposed development will result in the loss of ~0.3ha of grassland but given the presence of more extensive areas of foraging and commuting habitat in the locality, this is likely to be inconsequential for bats. The proposed development will include the use of lighting which could spill on to bat roosting, foraging or commuting habitat and deter bats from using these areas.	A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during and post-development, which is detailed in Table 9 of this report.

Badger	No evidence of badgers was recorded during the survey (i.e., setts, latrines, runs, hairs). The site is mostly flat terrain, unsuitable for sett excavation. However, the site contains grassland suitable for badgers for foraging.	~0.3ha grassland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local badger populations owing to its low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of badgers, if present.	A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, which is detailed in Table 9 of this report.
Hedgehog	The site contains suitable habitat for hedgehogs for foraging, shelter, and hibernation (i.e., grassland, scattered scrub). The presence of hedgehogs within the site is highly likely.	~0.3ha grassland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local hedgehog populations owing to its low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of hedgehogs, if present.	A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, which is details in Table 9 of this report.
Birds	The site contains built structures and trees suitable for nesting birds.	The on-site buildings will be removed/demolished during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local bird populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, the proposed development could result in the destruction or the disturbance and subsequent abandonment of active bird nests.	Any building demolition/removal should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the buildings should be undertaken immediately, by qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged. If any trees will be removed, the same applies.

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1.0 Introduction and Context

1.1 Background

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed by Brian Rogerson to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at Land at Harwood Street, Rochdale, Lancashire, OL15 8NA (hereafter referred to as “the site”). The survey was required to inform a planning application for the demolition of the current on-site buildings, and erection of nine dwellings with associated parking and landscaping (hereafter referred to as “the proposed development”). A plan showing the proposed development is provided in Appendix 1.

The aim of the PEA was to obtain data on existing ecological conditions, and to conduct a preliminary assessment of the likely significance of ecological impacts on the proposed development. The aim of the PRA was to determine the presence or evaluate the likelihood of the presence of roosting bats, and to gain an understanding of how bats could use the site for roosting, foraging or commuting.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) was completed by Arbtech Consulting Ltd on 30/09/2019. The report recommended works to be undertaken outside of bird nesting season, and precautionary working methods were recommended for some European Protected Species (EPS).

1.2 Site Location and Landscape Context

The site is located at National Grid Reference SD 92539 16133 and has an area of approximately 0.48ha comprising a pond, grassland, scattered trees, and developed land. It is surrounded by small residential areas with Barkers Wood ~25m to the north of the site. A few ponds lie in the nearby vicinity of the site. Featherstall Brook lies ~500m northeast of the site boundary. The site borders of the outskirts of Rochdale and lies adjacent to rural areas to the north of the site. The wider landscape comprises rural areas with scattered settlements to the north and east and southeast of the site, with large settlement of Manchester to the southwest of the site. The Peak District National Park lies ~11km southeast of the site boundary. A site location plan is provided in Appendix 2.

1.3 Scope of the Report

The PEA element of this report describes the baseline ecological conditions at the site, evaluates habitats within the survey area in the context of the wider environment and describes the suitability of those habitats for notable or protected species. It identifies possible ecological constraints as a result of the proposed development and summarises the requirements for further surveys and mitigation measures to inform subsequent mitigation proposals, achieve planning or other statutory consent and to comply with wildlife legislation.

The PRA element of this report provides a description of all features suitable for roosting, foraging and commuting bats and evaluates those features in the context of the site and wider environment. It further documents any physical evidence collected or recorded during the site survey that establishes the presence of roosting bats. It provides information on possible constraints to the proposed development as a result of bats and summarises the requirements for any further surveys to inform subsequent mitigation proposals, achieve planning or other statutory consent and to comply with wildlife legislation.

To achieve this, the following steps have been taken:

- A desk study has been carried out.

- A field survey has been undertaken to record baseline information on the site and surrounding area including habitat types and their suitability for notable or protected species, including roosting bats.
- Invasive plant and animal species (such as those listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act) have been identified.
- Potential impacts on features of value, as a result of the proposed development, have been identified.
- Recommendations for further surveys and mitigation have been made.
- Opportunities for the enhancement of the site for biodiversity have been set out.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Desk Study

The desk study included a review of the magic.gov.uk database for statutory designated sites within a 2km radius of the site. Landscape value and the presence of notable habitats as well as granted European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) and notable species records held on magic.gov.uk database has also been considered where these are within influencing distance of the site.

2.2 Field Survey

The survey was undertaken by Jessica Sibley BSc (Hons) MSc, Consultant Ecologist (Accredited Agent on Natural England Bat Licence Number: 2022-10404-CL18-BAT) on 23/01/2024.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

An extended habitat survey was undertaken, following the methodology set out in The UK Habitat Classification Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (The UK Habitat Classification Working Group, July 2023). All land parcels are described and mapped and, where appropriate, target notes provide supplementary information on habitat conditions, features too small to map to scale, species composition, structure and management. Botanical species lists were compiled with reference to the DAFOR scale (D = Dominant; A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional, R = Rare).

During the survey, habitats were assessed for their suitability to support protected species, and field signs indicating their presence recorded. The assessment takes into consideration the findings of the desk study, the habitat conditions on site and in the context of the surrounding landscape, and the ecology of the protected species.

Ponds were assessed for their suitability to support Great Crested Newts (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* using the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Assessment Methodology (Oldham et al, 2000). HSI is a standard measure of calculating the suitability of a pond to support breeding GCN, based on an assessment of 10 characteristics (indices), including size, shading, depth, and vegetation profile. The assessment generates a number between 0 and 1 for each of the indices which are combined to provide an overall assessment of a pond’s suitability to support GCN on a categorical scale, as shown in Table 1.

Table 1. HSI Suitability Scores

HSI Score	Suitability	Predicted GCN Occupancy of Ponds in each Category
<0.5	Poor	3%
0.5 to 0.59	Below Average	20%
0.6 to 0.69	Average	55%
0.7 to 0.79	Good	79%
>0.8	Excellent	93%

Preliminary Roost Assessment

The PRA focussed on two buildings and three built-structures which will be affected by the proposed development as well as providing an overview of the wider site and the surrounding landscape for bat roosting, foraging and commuting habitat.

For any surveyed buildings:

A non-intrusive visual appraisal was undertaken from the ground, using binoculars to inspect the external features of the buildings for features which bats could use for roosting, including access or egress points and for signs of bat use including droppings, scratch marks, insect remains and urine smear marks. An internal inspection of the buildings was also made, including the living areas and any accessible roof spaces, using a torch and ladders. The surveyor paid particular attention to the floor and flat surfaces, window shutters and frames, lintels above doors and windows, and carried out a detailed search of numerous features within the roof space.

Suitability Assessment

Buildings and habitats were categorised in accordance with the “Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists —Good Practice Guidelines” publication (Collins, 2023), which are replicated in Tables 2 and 3 below.

Table 2: Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of a built structure for bats

Potential Suitability	Roosting Habitats in Structures
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains as bats can use small and apparently unsuitable features on occasion.
Low	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically at any time of the year. However, these potential roost sites do not provide enough space, shelter, protection, appropriate conditions and/or suitable surrounding habitat to be used on a regular basis or by larger numbers of bats (i.e. unlikely to be suitable for maternity and not a classic cool/stable hibernation site, but could be used by individual hibernating bats).
Moderate	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status (with respect to roost type only, such as maternity and hibernation – the categorisation described in this table is made irrespective of species conservation status, which is established after presence is confirmed).
High	A structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. These structures have the potential to support high conservation status roosts e.g. maternity or classic cool/stable hibernation site.

Table 3: Guidelines for assessing the potential suitability of a site for bats

Potential Suitability	Potential Flight-Paths and Foraging Habitats
Negligible	No obvious habitat features on site likely to be used as flight-paths or by foraging bats; however, a small element of uncertainty remains in order to account for non-standard bat behaviour.
Low	Habitat that could be used by small numbers of bats as flight-paths such as a gappy hedgerow or unvegetated stream, but isolated, i.e. not very well connected to the surrounding landscape by other habitat. Suitable, but isolated habitat that could be used by small numbers of foraging bats such as a lone tree (not in a parkland situation) or a patch of scrub.
Moderate	Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for flight-paths such as lines of trees and scrub or linked back gardens. Habitat that is connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for foraging such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
High	Continuous, high-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by bats for flight-paths such as river valleys, streams, hedgerows, lines of trees and woodland edge. High-quality habitat that is well connected to the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by foraging bats such as broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is close to and connected to known roosts.

2.3 Limitations

It should be noted that whilst every effort has been made to describe the baseline conditions within the survey area, and evaluate these features, this report does not provide a complete characterisation of the site. This assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species being present. This is based on suitability of the habitats on the site and in the wider landscape, the ecology and biology of species as currently understood, and the known distribution of species as recovered during the searches of historical biological records.

No Biological Records Data (BRD) was available at the time of writing this report and this should be obtained, and the report updated to enable a robust ecological impact assessment to be completed.

The PEA survey was completed outside of the optimal survey period (April to October) limiting the identification of ground flora species.

These limitations have been taken into account during the evaluation of the site and requirement for further surveys and mitigation.

3.0 Results and Evaluation

3.1 Designated Sites

Details of any statutory designated sites within a 2km radius of the site, including their reasons for notification, are provided in Table 4 below. presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km cannot be established without biological records data from Greater Manchester Local Record Centre (GMLRC).

The site lies within the impact risk zone for the Rochdale Canal SSSI and South Pennine Moors SSSI. The proposed development is not listed as a possible high risk with regard to these designations.

Table 4: Statutory designated sites within 2km radius of the site

Designated site name	Distance from site	Reasons for notification from Natural England
Rochdale Canal SSSI (Site of Special Scientific Interest)	~600m southeast	The Rochdale Canal contains important habitats for submerged aquatic plants and emergent vegetation, including extensive colonies of the nationally scarce SAC species floating waterplantain <i>Luronium natans</i> . The site also supports a diverse assemblage of aquatic flora, notably its assemblage of pondweeds, <i>Potamogeton spp</i> ; the nine species of which found in the canal represent a balanced community which reflects the quality of water.
Rochdale Canal SAC (Special Area of Conservation)	~600m southeast	Annex I habitats that are a primary reason for selection of this site: - Not Applicable Annex I habitats present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for selection of this site: - Not Applicable Annex II species that are a primary reason for selection of this site: 1831 Floating water-plantain <i>Luronium natans</i>. Rochdale Canal supports a significant population of floating water-plantain <i>Luronium natans</i> in a botanically diverse water plant community which also holds a wide range of pondweeds <i>Potamogeton spp</i>. The canal has predominantly mesotrophic water. This population of <i>Luronium</i> is representative of the formerly more widespread canal populations of north-west England. Annex II species present as a qualifying feature, but not a primary reason for site selection: - Not Applicable

3.2 Field Survey Results

The results of the field survey are illustrated in Appendix 3. The weather conditions recorded at the time of the survey are shown in Table 5.

Table 5: Weather conditions during the survey

Date:	23/01/2024
Temperature	6°C
Humidity	81%
Cloud Cover	90%
Wind	9mph
Rain	Constant drizzle

Habitats and Flora

The following habitats are present within and adjacent to the site:

- Buildings (u1b5)
- Other developed land (u1b6)
- Modified grassland (g4) frequently mown (108) with introduced shrub (847), scattered scrub (10), scattered trees (32) and young trees – self set (202)
- Other standing water (r1g) pond (42) with scattered scrub (10)

A description and photographs of each habitat are provided in Table 6.

No protected or non-native invasive plant species (as listed under Schedules 8 or 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) were identified on the site. However, due to the time of year in which the survey was undertaken it is possible that such species would not be visible.

Table 6: Description and photographs of habitats within and adjacent to the site

Habitat type	Habitat description	Photograph
Primary Code: Buildings (u1b5)	Within the site boundary are two buildings (B1 and B2) (Figure 1), and three other structures/units (S3:S5). These buildings/structures are considered in relation to roosting bats, later in this report (refer to Table 7).	 Figure 1. B1 – facing the western elevation.
Primary Code: Other developed land (u1b6)	Also within the site boundary is sealed surfaces (i.e., tarmac access roads and parking areas) (Figure 2). These habitats are generally considered to have low ecological value.	 Figure 2. Hardstanding on the site.

Primary Code: Modified grassland (g4) Secondary Codes: Frequently mown (108) Introduced shrub (847) Scattered scrub (10) Scattered trees (32) Young trees – self set (202)	The majority of the site is grassland which best represents modified grassland (Figure 3). Species richness within the sward is poor with ~4-6 species visible per m². Perennial rye-grass <i>Lolium perenne</i> is abundant throughout the sward. Species comprise: D: Yorkshire fog <i>Holcus lanatus</i>. A: Perennial rye-grass. F: Creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i>. O: Red fescue <i>Festuca rubra</i>, common ragwort <i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>, dandelion <i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg., ribwort plantain <i>Plantago lanceolata</i>, self-heal <i>Prunella vulgaris</i>, rush <i>Juncus</i> sp., spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i>, bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg., and springy turf moss <i>Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus</i>. R: Sedge <i>Carex</i> sp., common vetch <i>Vicia sativa</i>. Borders of the grassland comprise planted shrubs, including: O: Cherry laurel <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>, Portuguese laurel <i>Prunus lusitanica</i>, and buddleia <i>Buddleja</i> sp. Grassland – Condition Indication: Sward height across the habitat parcel is homogenously short (i.e., ~5-10cm), with a few sections of longer tufted grassland vegetation along the site boundaries (i.e., ~15-30cm). This likely accounts for <20%. Some scattered scrub is present; however, this accounts for <20% the cover of the habitat parcel (i.e., <8%). Physical damage is <5% the total grassland area. However, the grassland parcel is frequently mown. Cover of bare ground is between 1-10%. No bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> was recorded across the habitat parcel. No non-native invasive species were recorded across the habitat parcel, however, based on the time of year the survey was undertaken, it is possible they would not be visible. Scattered trees (Figure 4) comprise: O: Cherry <i>Prunus</i> sp., oak <i>Quercus</i> sp., apple <i>Malus</i> sp., apricot <i>Prunus armeniaca</i>, and willow <i>Salix</i> sp.	 Figure 3. Grassland on the site.  Figure 4. Scattered trees.
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	Trees – Condition Indication: The majority of the trees are semi-mature (i.e., 60%), with some young (i.e., 15%), and some mature (i.e., 25%). There is no evidence of an adverse impact of tree health by human activities (i.e., vandalism, herbicide), however, the trees are likely subject to occasional pruning. There is evidence of natural ecological niches present associated with some of the mature trees (i.e., split branches, cavities, loose bark), suitable for vertebrates and invertebrates. ~60-80% of the tree canopies over sail vegetation beneath (i.e., grassland/scrub).	
Primary Code: Other standing water (r1g) Secondary Code: Pond (42) Scattered scrub (10)	Within the site boundary is a pond (Figure 5). The pond is ~160m² in size. The pond is subject to a HSI assessment, later in this report (refer to Table 8). The pond banks vegetation comprises: F: Bramble. O: Broad-leaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>, creeping buttercup, perennial ryegrass, and Yorkshire fog. Vegetation within the pond includes: O: Common bulrush <i>Typha latifolia</i>, and rush. Pond - Condition Indication: The pond has relatively low turbidity, indicating it is not heavily polluted. The pond is surrounded by semi-natural habitat for at least 10m from the pond edge for its entire perimeter (i.e., grassland, trees). No duckweed <i>Lemna spp.</i>, was recorded across the pond. The pond is not artificially connected to other waterbodies. There is no evidence of artificial dams or pipework. No non-native plant or animal species were recorded, associated with the pond. The pond is not artificially stocked with fish. Emergent plants cover ~70-80% of the pond area, which is ~0.5-1m deep. The pond surface is ~30% shaded by adjacent trees/scrub.	 Figure 5. Pond on the site.

Fauna

Bats

The results of the PRA are provided in Table 7. No evidence of roosting bats was identified during the survey.

Table 7: Assessment of the suitability of the site for bats

Feature	Description	Photographs
Historical records	There are three EPSLs for bats within a 2km radius of the site: • EPSM2009-525 – Common pipistrelle, Soprano pipistrelle – Destruction of a resting place • 2015-8632-EPS-MIT – Common pipistrelle – Destruction of a resting place • 2016-19740-EPS-MIT-1 – Common pipistrelle – Destruction of a resting place	
Bat foraging and commuting habitat	There is a moderate-sized patch of woodland located ~25m north of the site boundary and Featherstall Brook lies ~500m northeast, suitable for local foraging and commuting bats and likely of moderate to high value for local bats. Gardens and scattered trees also lie in the nearby vicinity of the site likely of moderate value for local bats.	
B1 - overview	B1 is an L-shaped brick and metal-built garage building, with sections of flat and pitched roof, clad in metallic and asbestos sheet roofing (Figure 6). B1 has no extensions, however, there is an attached static unit along a section of the southern elevation, which is considered in relation to roosting bats, later in this table. B1 has metallic panelling on a section of the northern, western, and southern elevations. The doors are metallic shutters. In places, wooden fascia is present around B1.	 Figure 6. B1 – facing the western elevation.

B1 – exterior	The western and southern elevations are pictured in (<i>Figures 7 and 8</i>). Along the western elevation is a section of missing wooden panelling (<i>Figure 9</i>), this may be a suitable bat roost feature and may support bat ingress into the structure. There is also a section of missing brickwork/mortar on the southern elevation (<i>Figure 10</i>), which may be a suitable bat roost feature for crevice-dwelling species of bat (i.e., pipistrelle). There is also some gapping between the western elevation fascia and supporting wall (<i>Figure 11</i>), which may be a suitable bat roost site. This gap continues to the edge of the fascia (<i>Figure 12</i>). The metal clad sections on the southern elevation look to be infilled (<i>Figure 13</i>) and are unlikely suitable for roosting bats. However, along the northern elevation, the metal is not infilled (<i>Figure 14</i>), and there look to be gaps/possible crevices in the brickwork behind the metal cladding, which may be suitable for roosting bats.	 <i>Figure 7.</i> B1 – facing the western elevation.  <i>Figure 8.</i> B1 – facing the southern elevation.
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Figure 9. Missing panelling.



Figure 10. Missing brickwork/mortar.

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Figure 11. Gap between supporting wall and fascia.



Figure 12. Gap.

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Figure 13. Metal cladding infilled.



Figure 14. Gap between metal cladding and brickwork.

B1 – interior	There are three rooms within B1: internal spaces 1 (Figures 15:19) (i.e., active garage workshop), 2 (Figures 20:22) (i.e., garage workshop/storage), and 3 (Figures 23:24) (i.e., storage). Internal space 1: Within internal space 1 (Figure 15), there is a gap between the sheet roofing (Figure 16), which may provide an ingress opportunity for roosting bats. There is also a notable crevice associated with one of the wooden supporting beams (Figure 17), which may be a suitable roost feature. The interior of the space is suboptimal for void-dwelling species of bat (i.e., brown long-eared), as it is well-lit due to the presence of skylights, and the majority of the roof structure is metal (Figure 18), which is unsuitable for roosting bats given the thermal fluctuations in metal. However, the presence of void-dwelling bats roosting within the space cannot be entirely discounted given the presence of asbestos sheet roofing, in places (Figure 19). Internal space 2: Internal space 2 (Figure 20), looks to be more well-sealed than internal space 1. The metal sheet roofing and skylights look to be tightly sealed (Figure 21). There is a dense dust presence (Figure 22), which may obscure visibility of possible evidence of roosting bats (i.e., droppings). This is similar within internal space 1. Internal space 3: Internal space 3 (Figure 23), also looks to be well-sealed internally. There are sections of missing suspended ceiling within the space (Figure 24). No evidence of bats (i.e., droppings, bats), was found within the space.	 Figure 15. Internal space 1.  Figure 16. Possible ingress point.
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Figure 17. Crevice in wooden beam.



Figure 18. Metal sheet roofing and skylights.



Figure 19. Asbestos sheet roofing.



Figure 20. Internal space 2.

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Figure 21. Metal sheet roofing and skylights.



Figure 22. Dust/debris.

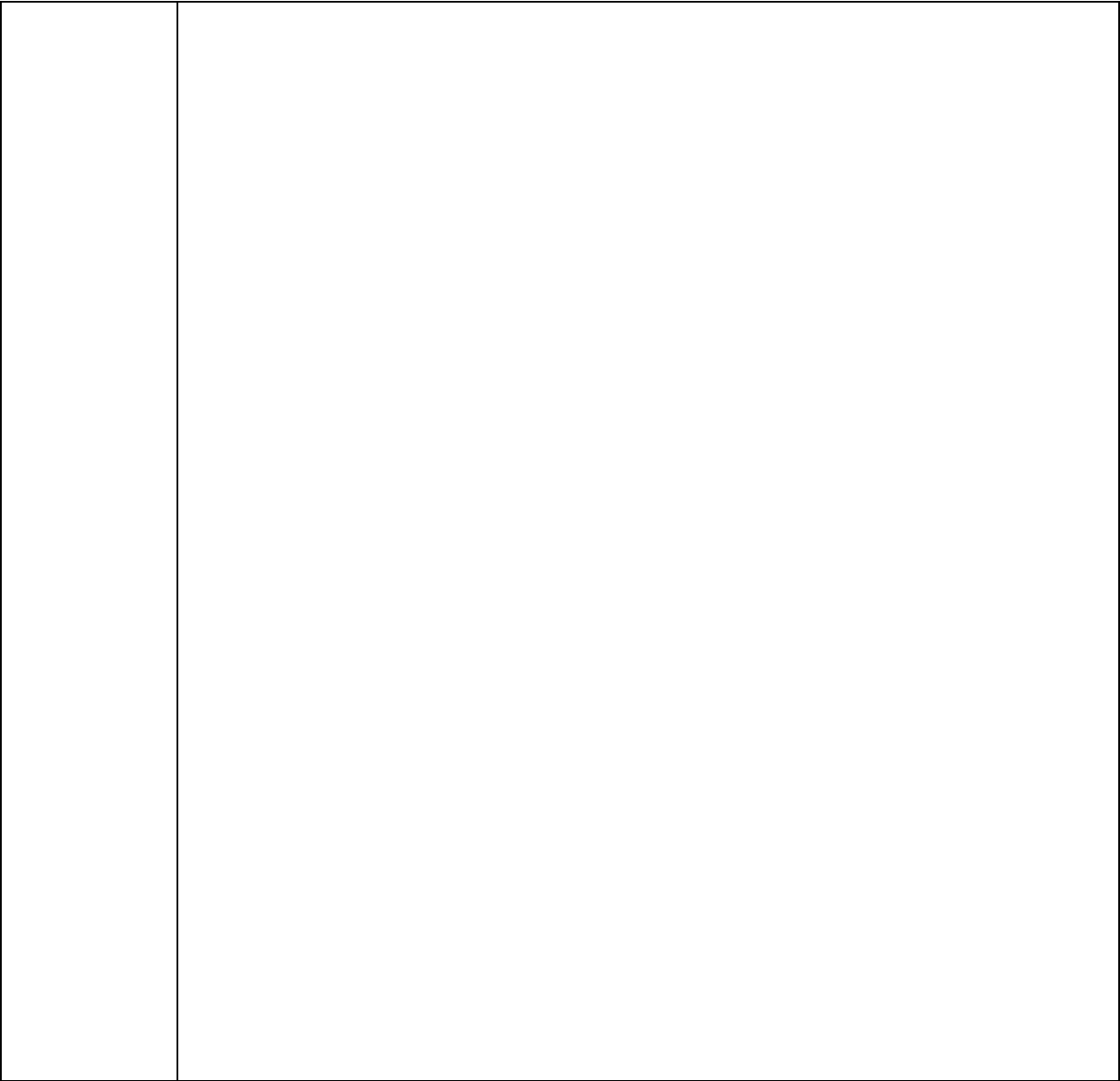


Figure 23. Internal space 3.

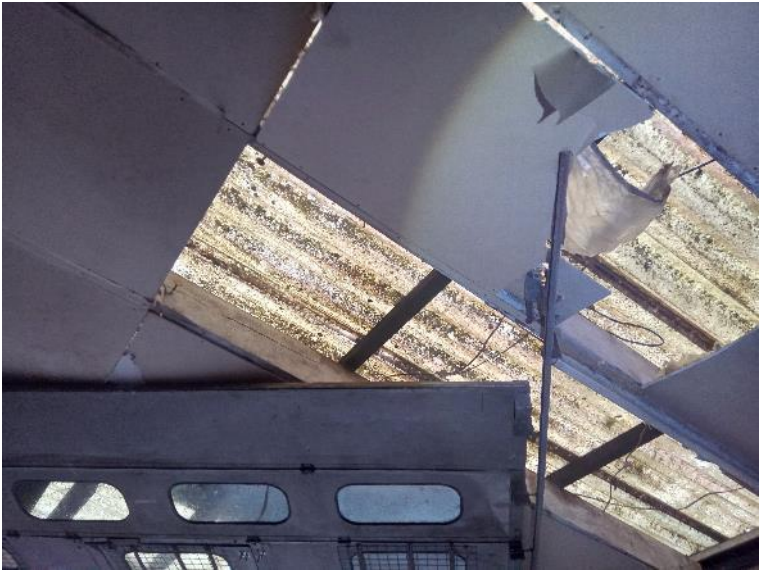


Figure 24. Missing suspended ceiling panelling and skylights.

B1 – suitability assessment	B1 (Figure 25) has low value for roosting bats. There are ingress/egress opportunities into the structure for roosting bats. The features present (i.e., crevice between wooden beam, gaps behind fascias, missing mortar) look to be suboptimal for roosting bats due to shallow depth and possible exposure, however, may suit small numbers of roosting bats. The features present are more suitable for crevice-dwelling species of bat, than void-dwelling. However, void-dwelling bat presence within B1 cannot be entirely discounted. There may also be possibilities for bats to roost within B1 in features not immediately visible (i.e., cavities in brickwork behind the metallic panelling). Moderate value habitat (i.e., woodland, connected gardens with trees), also lies in the locale.	 Figure 25. B1 – facing the western elevation.
B2 – exterior	B2 is a concrete-built building with a flat roof clad in metallic sheet roofing (Figures 26 and 27). It is a disused stable building. There is a small crevice between the concrete and metallic sheet roofing on the western elevation (Figure 28), which may be suitable for crevice-dwelling species of bat. There is also an open window on the western elevation, which may support bat ingress into the structure.	 Figure 26. B2 – facing the western elevation.

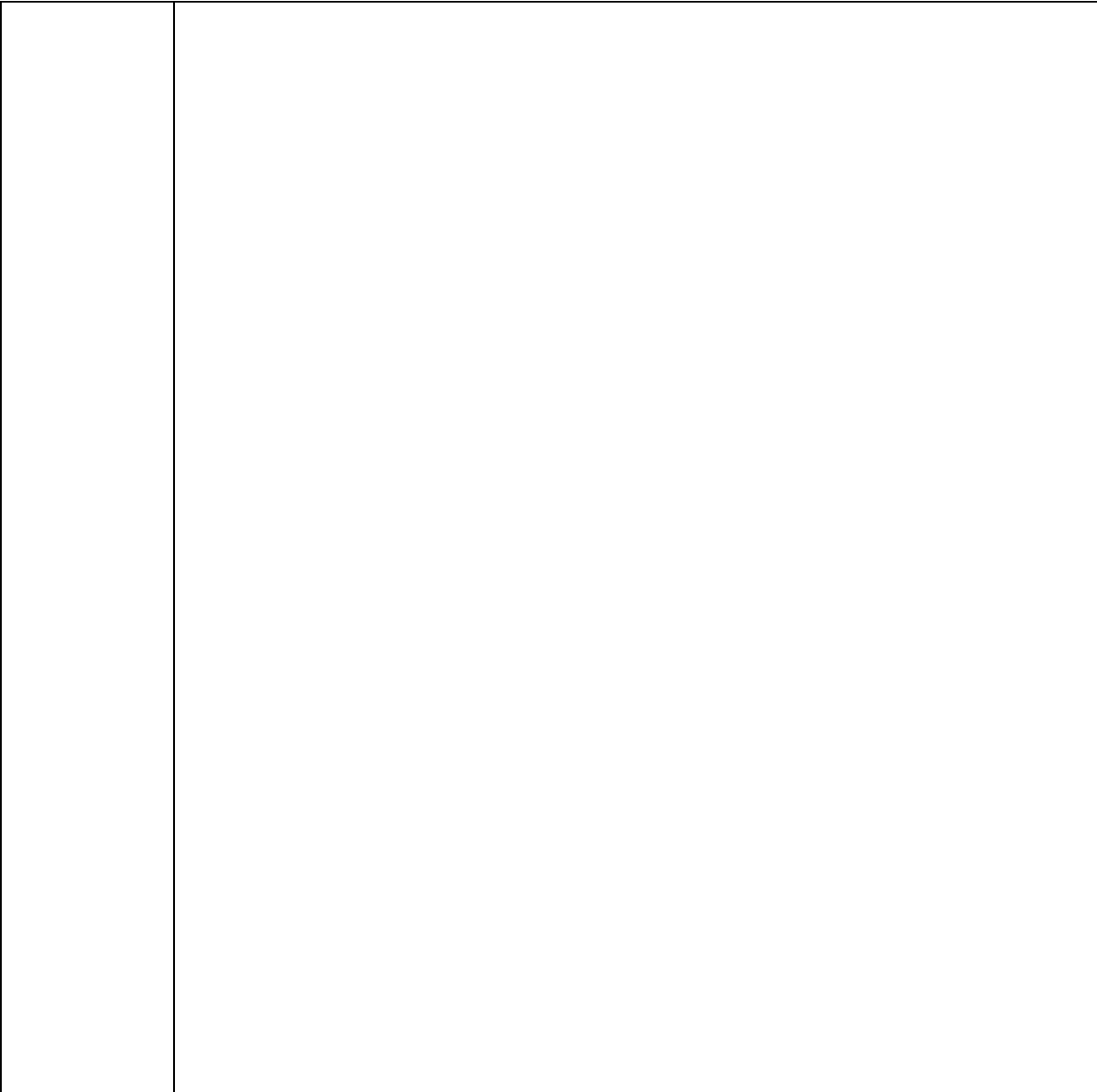


Figure 27. B2 – southern and eastern elevations.



Figure 28. Crevice between concrete and metal sheet roofing.

B2 – interior and suitability assessment	Internally of B2 (Figure 28) the space is well lit by windows and skylights (Figure 30), creating suboptimal conditions for void-dwelling species of bat. Some feeding remains (butterfly wings) were identified within the structure (Figure 31), which may be evidence of bats, or of spiders/birds feeding within the structure. No other evidence of bats (i.e., bats or droppings), were identified within the building. B2 has low value for roosting bats. There are a few ingress/egress opportunities for roosting bats (i.e., window, missing concrete crevice). However, the interior of B2 and the roof structure make the roosting opportunities within B2 suboptimal. Moderate value habitat (i.e., woodland, connected gardens with trees), lies in the locale.	 Figure 29. B2 – interior.  Figure 30. Metal sheet roofing and skylights.
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		Figure 31. Feeding remains.
Other structures (S3:S5)	There are three other structures within the site boundary (i.e., S3:S5). None of these structures comprise any suitable roost features or roosting opportunities for roosting bats, as they are well sealed (i.e., S3:S5), and comprise of suboptimal materials (i.e., metal/glass) (i.e., S4 and S5). As a result, these structures have negligible value for roosting bats.	
		Figure 32. Static caravan – S3.

		 Figure 33. Metal storage unit – S4.  Figure 34. Potting shed – S5.
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Other Species

An assessment of the suitability of the site for protected or notable species is provided in Table 8.

Table 8: Assessment of the suitability of the site for protected or notable species

Species	Assessment of suitability	BRD					
Amphibians	GCN exist in metapopulations and are known to utilise ponds and their connecting terrestrial habitat during their life cycle; GCN are typically found within terrestrial habitats up to 500m from breeding ponds (Langton et al. 2001).	There are no EPSLs, class licence returns, and there is no ponds survey data for GCN within a 500m radius of the site.					
	There is one pond on the site (P1), and a review of aerial imagery highlights that there are a further six ponds within a 500m radius of the site (P2:P7). P1 is subject to a HSI assessment in Table 8a, below. P2:P7 were not subject to a HSI assessment, as they lie on third party land, and access was not possible, at the time of survey. P2 and P3 are located ~250 and 390m west, and northwest of the site boundary, respectively. They appear to be connected to the site via grassland and woodland habitat. P4:P7 are located ~250-490m south, southeast, and east of the site boundary, and look to be disconnected from the site by road barriers with curbs, and other infrastructure/developed land.	No BRD has been obtained.					
	The site contains a pond (P1) which may be a suitable GCN breeding pond. The site also contains grassland, refugia (rubble piles), and scattered scrub which provide good terrestrial opportunities for GCN and other more common amphibians for foraging, refuge, shelter, and hibernation. The presence of GCN within the site is likely/possible, given the suitable on-site habitats, and proximity of the on-site pond, and other nearby connecting ponds. Common amphibian presence across the site is also highly likely, given the presence of suitable habitat on the site and close proximity of ponds.						
	Table 8a: HSI calculation of ponds. <table><tr><th>SI Description</th><th>SI Value P1</th></tr><tr><td>Geographic location</td><td>1.00</td></tr><tr><td>Pond Area</td><td>0.30</td></tr></table>	SI Description	SI Value P1	Geographic location	1.00	Pond Area	0.30
SI Description	SI Value P1						
Geographic location	1.00						
Pond Area	0.30						

	Pond Permanence	0.90		
	Water Quality	0.67		
	Shade	1.00		
	Waterfowl Effect	1.00		
	Fish Presence	0.67		
	Pond Density	1.00		
	Terrestrial Habitat	0.67		
	Macrophyte Cover	1.00		
	HSI Score	0.78		
	HSI Category	Good		
Reptiles	The site does not comprise the structural diversity required to support a viable reptile population. However, there are opportunities for reptiles for foraging, shelter, and hibernation within the site (i.e., grassland, scattered scrub, refugia). The site grassland is regularly mown, which may deter reptiles. However, the presence of reptiles within the site cannot be discounted.		No BRD has been obtained.	
Badgers	No evidence of badgers (i.e., setts, latrines, hairs or runs) was recorded within the site boundary. However, the on-site grassland is likely suitable for badgers for foraging. Badgers may commute across this site from nearby setts likely present north of the site. The site is mostly flat terrain, likely unsuitable for sett excavation. The presence of badgers within the site cannot be discounted.		No BRD has been obtained.	
Hazel Dormouse	The site lies outside of the known geographic range for hazel dormice (either natural or reintroduced). Furthermore, the site does not comprise the habitat required by hazel dormice (i.e., woodland, hedgerow connected to a network of other hedgerows). It is not anticipated hazel dormice will use this site.		There are no EPSLs for hazel dormice within a 2km radius of the site. No BRD has been obtained.	
Hedgehog	The grassland and scattered scrub on the site are likely suitable for hedgehogs for foraging, shelter, and hibernation. Furthermore, the site lies adjacent to rural areas north of the site. Hedgehog presence across the site or in the nearby vicinity is highly likely.		No BRD has been obtained.	
Otter	There are no watercourses on-site or adjacent to the site. Featherstall Brook lies ~500m northeast of the site boundary, which is likely suitable otter habitat. The		There are no EPSLs for otters within a 2km radius of the site. No BRD has been obtained.	

	site does not comprise any riparian habitat, and there are limited opportunities for holt or natal den creation on-site. It is unlikely otters will be present at this site.	
Water Vole	There are no watercourses on-site or adjacent to the site. Featherstall Brook lies ~500m northeast of the site boundary, which is likely suitable water vole habitat. However, the site does not comprise any riparian habitat, and there are no opportunities for burrow creation on-site. Water voles tend to remain within ~5m of the banks of a watercourse. The on-site pond is unlikely to be suitable for water voles, given the shallow banks. Water voles are unlikely to be present at this site.	No BRD has been obtained.
Birds	No bird's nests were identified during the survey associated with the buildings or trees, however, there opportunities for nesting birds associated with the buildings and trees. As the site borders rural areas, some Schedule 1 species of birds may commute across the site. The site is likely too small to support any significant breeding or wintering bird populations.	No BRD has been obtained.
Invertebrates	The site does not have the habitat structure or diversity suitable for any notable species of invertebrates and will most likely host more common species of invertebrates which may be in larger numbers, given the close proximity and on-site presence of the pond.	No BRD has been obtained.

4.0 Conclusions, Impacts and Recommendations

4.1 Informative Guidelines

A summary of the relevant legislation and planning policies is provided in Appendix 4.

Likelihood of the Presence of Protected Species

Where physical evidence of the presence of protected species is indeterminate during the survey, the habitats on site are evaluated as to their likelihood to provide sheltering, roosting, foraging, basking or nesting habitat.

Where this report supports a planning application, the ecological interest of the study area (i.e. the area covered by the desk study and field survey) and the proposed development has also been evaluated in terms of the planning policies relating to biodiversity.

4.2 Evaluation

Taking the desk study and field survey results into account, Table 9 presents an evaluation of the ecological value of the site and also details any ecological constraints identified in relation to the proposed development which will comprise for the demolition of the current on-site buildings, and erection of nine dwellings with associated parking and landscaping.

Table 9: Evaluation of the site and any ecological constraints

Feature	Survey Results Summary	Impact Assessment	Recommendations	Biodiversity Enhancement Opportunities ¹
Designated sites	There is one statutory site within 2km of the site, it being Rochdale Canal SSSI/SAC located ~600m southeast from the site. The site lies within the impact risk zone for the Rochdale Canal SSSI and South Pennine Moors SSSI and the proposed	No direct impacts to any designated sites will occur as a result of the proposed development. However, due to the proximity of the site to the Rochdale Canal SSSI/SAC, the nature of the proposed development could result in increased recreational pressure to nearby areas.	Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution must be implemented during construction. Retained trees should be protected in line with the measures outlined in the British Standard "Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction to Construction - Recommendations" (BS 5837) (2012). BRD should be obtained, and this report updated, accordingly.	None.

¹ The Local Planning Authority has a duty to ask for enhancements under the NPPF (2021).

	development is not listed as a possible high risk for this designation. The presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site cannot be established without data from Greater Manchester Local Record Centre (GMLRC).			
Habitats and flora	The site contains a pond which looks to be of good quality and could be of value to local wildlife populations (as detailed in subsequent sections of this table). Habitats on site comprise developed land, modified grassland, scattered scrub, introduced shrub, scattered trees, and young trees – self set, which are common widespread, and generally have low ecological value. No protected or notable plant species were recorded during the survey.	The proposed development will result in the loss of ~0.3ha grassland. This could result in a net loss in biodiversity at the site. The works will be undertaken within 10m of the on-site pond (P1). This could result in the pollution of the pond.	Best practice measures to minimise the possibility of pollution must be implemented during construction. Retained trees should be protected in line with the measures outlined in the British Standard "Trees in Relation to Design, Demolition and Construction to Construction - Recommendations" (BS 5837) (2012).	The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development: - Planting of a 5-10m scrub buffer, around the retained pond. - Planting of native hedgerows along site boundaries. - Creation of a patch of wildflower grassland within the site, or as part of the proposed garden areas. Species-specific enhancement opportunities are detailed later in this table.
Amphibians	The site contains a possible GCN breeding pond, and good terrestrial habitat for GCN and other more common amphibians, for shelter, foraging and	~0.3ha of grassland will be removed during construction. When georeferencing the proposed development plans over scaled mapping of the site, it is noted that the development area is likely to result in the loss or significant disturbance of ~0.3ha of suitable GCN habitat (i.e. grassland). If GCN are present within the on-site pond this will	Environmental DNA (eDNA) surveys will be required of the on-site pond, and any ponds within 250m of the site (where accessible) to determine the presence or absence of GCN. This will comprise collecting water samples and sending them off for laboratory analysis and such surveys must be undertaken between mid-	To be confirmed upon completion of the surveys.

	hibernation (i.e., grassland, scattered scrub, refugia).	constitute a loss of ~0.3ha within 100m of a potential breeding pond. When completing the rapid risk assessment published by Natural England (Natural England 2015), the proposed development produces an Amber risk score , which states: Offence Likely .	April and June, in accordance with current survey guidelines (Biggs et al, 2014).	
Reptiles	The site contains suitable habitat for reptiles for foraging, shelter, and hibernation (i.e., grassland, scattered scrub, refugia). However, the grassland is retained to a short sward, without the structure or diversity required to support a viable reptile population.	~0.3ha grassland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local reptile populations owing to its low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, site clearance could result in the death or injury of reptiles, if present.	Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to reptiles, further surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures: • Site clearance will be undertaken outside of the reptile hibernation season (November to February) insofar as is possible. • A pre-commencement inspection of the site will be undertaken for reptiles. • Grassland vegetation will be retained to a short sward to deter reptiles from the working area. • Any rubble piles will be dismantled by hand and debris and brash will be stored on pallets or removed from the site to prevent reptiles from utilising these areas. • Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. • Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. • In the unlikely event that a reptile is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.	The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for reptiles: • Planting of a 5-10m scrub buffer, around the retained pond. • Planting of hedgerow and scrub along site boundaries.
Roosting bats (B1 and B2)	B1 and B2 have low value for roosting bats, based on the suboptimal features present, likely more suitable for supporting individual/small numbers of	The proposed development will result in the demolition of these buildings. This could result in destruction of any bat roosts present and could cause disturbance, death or injury to bats.	One bat emergence or re-entry survey is required during the active bat season (optimal May to August, suboptimal September) to confirm presence or likely-absence of a bat roost in these buildings. Infra-red cameras should be used as an aid. Five surveyors are required to provide full coverage of these buildings.	To be confirmed upon completion of the surveys.

	crevice-dwelling species of bat.		If the absence of a bat roost cannot be determined during the first visit, then further surveys will be required. If bat roosts are confirmed in the building two additional surveys may be required to characterise the roost and to inform an EPSL application to Natural England. Surveys should be a minimum of three weeks apart. The EPSL application requires that surveys have been undertaken within the most recent active bat season and planning permission must have been granted and all relevant wildlife-related conditions have been discharged prior to submission.	
Roosting bats (other structures S3:S5)	S3:S5 have negligible value for roosting bats due to a lack of potential roost features.	Bats are very unlikely to be roosting within these structures and as such, there are not anticipated to be any impacts on roosting bats as a result of their potential removal.	In the unlikely event that a bat or evidence of bats is discovered during the development all work must stop and a bat licensed ecologist contacted for further advice.	To be confirmed.
Roosting bats (trees)	Some of the trees on the site may contain PRFs which may be suitable for roosting bats.	The proposed development may result in the felling/pruning of some on-site trees. This could result in damage/modification/destruction of any bat roosts present and could cause disturbance, death, or injury to bats.	A separate GLTA should be undertaken for the on-site trees, in the event of any pruning or felling. This should be completed following the completion of the Arboricultural Impact Assessment (AIA), which will detail the definitive tree loss and retention.	To be confirmed.
Foraging and commuting bats	On-site trees and grassland could be used by local bat populations for foraging and commuting. These could also be used by bats dispersing from nearby roosts outside of the site.	The proposed development will result in the loss of ~0.3ha of grassland but given the presence of more extensive areas of foraging and commuting habitat in the locality, this is likely to be inconsequential for bats. The proposed development will include the use of lighting which could spill on to bat roosting, foraging or commuting habitat and deter bats from using these areas.	A low impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during and post-development, which will include the following measures: • Light spill on to retained trees should be avoided. • Use narrow spectrum light sources to lower the range of species affected by lighting. • Use light sources that emit minimal ultra-violet light. • Avoid white and blue wavelengths of the light spectrum to reduce insect attraction and where white light sources are required in order to manage the blue shortwave length content they should be of a warm / neutral colour temperature <4,200 kelvin.	The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for foraging bats: • Planting of native tree, shrub, and hedgerows to increase foraging opportunities.

			• Not use bare bulbs and any light pointing upwards. The spread of light will be kept in line with or below the horizontal. • Light spill will be reduced via the use of low-level lighting used in conjunction with hoods, cowls, louvers and shields. Lights will also be directional to ensure that light is directed to the intended areas only. • External lighting will be on PIR sensors that are sensitive to large objects only (so that they are not triggered by passing bats) and will be set to the shortest time duration to reduce the amount of time the lights are on. • Wall lights and security lights will be 'dimmable' and set to the lowest light intensity settings. There are several products on the market that allow the control of the light intensity and the duration that the lights are on. All lighting on the developed site will make use of the most up to date technology available.	
Badger	No evidence of badgers was recorded during the survey (i.e., setts, latrines, runs, hairs). The site is mostly flat terrain, unsuitable for sett excavation. However, the site contains grassland suitable for badgers for foraging.	~0.3ha grassland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local badger populations owing to its low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of badgers, if present.	A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures: • A toolbox talk will be given to contractors regarding the possible presence of badgers at the site. • A pre-commencement inspection of the site will be undertaken for any new badger activity if works do not commence within three months. • Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. • The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which badgers could use.	None.

			- Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. - In the unlikely event that a badger sett is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.	
Hazel dormouse	The site does not comprise the suitable habitat required to support a hazel dormouse population and lies outside of their known geographic range.	No impacts are anticipated on hazel dormice as a result of the proposed development.	None.	None.
Hedgehog	The site contains suitable habitat for hedgehogs for foraging, shelter, and hibernation (i.e., grassland, scattered scrub). The presence of hedgehogs within the site is highly likely.	~0.3ha grassland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local hedgehog populations owing to its low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, construction activities could result in the death or injury of hedgehogs, if present.	A precautionary working method will be implemented during construction, including the following measures: - Grassland vegetation will be retained to a short sward to deter hedgehogs from the working area. - Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. - The use of night-time lighting will be avoided, or sensitive lighting design will be implemented to avoid light spill on to retained habitats which hedgehogs could use. - Any chemicals or pollutants used or created by the development should be stored and disposed of correctly according to COSHH regulations. - If any hedgehogs are found in the working area these should be allowed to disperse of their own accord or, if at immediate risk, should be moved by hand to a sheltered, vegetated area away from disturbance.	The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for hedgehogs: - Installation of hedgehog houses close to sheltered vegetation. - Installation of fence gaps into any fences installed.
Otter	There are no watercourses on-site or adjacent to the site. The site does not comprise any riparian habitat, and there are limited opportunities for	No impacts are anticipated on water vole as a result of the proposed development.	None.	None.

	holt or natal den creation on-site. It is unlikely otters will be present at this site.			
Water vole	There are no watercourses on-site or adjacent to the site. The site does not comprise any riparian habitat, and there are no opportunities for burrow creation on-site. Water voles tend to remain within ~5m of the banks of a watercourse. Water voles are unlikely to be present at this site.	No impacts are anticipated on water vole as a result of the proposed development.	None.	None.
Birds	The site contains built structures and trees suitable for nesting birds.	The on-site buildings will be removed/demolished during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local bird populations owing to their low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally. However, the proposed development could result in the destruction or the disturbance and subsequent abandonment of active bird nests.	Any building demolition/removal should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the buildings should be undertaken immediately, by qualified ecologist, prior to the commencement of work. All active nests will need to be retained until the young have fledged. If any trees will be removed, the same applies.	The installation of nine bird boxes at the site will provide additional nesting habitat for birds. The bird boxes will be installed on new buildings. Such as: • Vivara Pro WoodStone Swift Nest Box • House Sparrow Terrace FSC Nest Box • Manthorpe Swift Brick • Swallow Nest Bowl General purpose bird boxes should be positioned 3m above ground level where they will be sheltered from prevailing wind, rain and strong sunlight. Species-specific bird boxes should be installed in line

				with manufacturers specifications. Swift and sparrow boxes should be positioned in the eaves and can be incorporated into the plans, during the design stages.
Invertebrates	The site does not have the habitat structure or diversity suitable for any notable species of invertebrates and will most likely host more common species of invertebrates which may be in larger numbers, given the close proximity and on-site presence of the pond.	~0.3ha grassland will be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local invertebrate populations owing to its low value and the presence of more extensive habitat locally.	None.	The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for invertebrates: Planting of pollinator friendly species.

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Appendix 1: Proposed Development Plan



Appendix 2: Site Location Plan



Appendix 3a: Habitat Survey Plan



Appendix 3b: PRA Plan



Appendix 3c: Proposed BERS Plan



Appendix 3d: Pond Location Plan



Appendix 4: Legislation and Planning Policy

LEGAL PROTECTION

National and European Legislation Afforded to Habitats

International Statutory Designations

Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs) are sites of European importance and are designated under the EC Habitats Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of natural habitats and of wild fauna and flora (the Habitats Directive) and the EC Birds Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds (the Wild Birds Directive) respectively. Both form part of the wider Natura 2000 network across Europe.

Under the Habitats Directive Article 3 requires the establishment of a network of important conservation sites (SACs) across Europe. Over 1000 animal and plant species, as well as 200 habitat types, listed in the directive's annexes are protected in various ways:

Annex II species (about 900): core areas of their habitat are designated as Sites of Community importance (SCIs) and included in the Natura 2000 network. These sites must be managed in accordance with the ecological needs of the species.

Annex IV species (over 400, including many Annex II species): a strict protection regime must be applied across their entire natural range, both within and outside Natura 2000 sites.

Annex V species (over 90): their exploitation and taking in the wild is compatible with maintaining them in a favourable conservation status.

SPAs are classified under Article 2 of the Directive 2009/147/EC of the European Parliament and of the Council of 30 November 2009 on the conservation of wild birds both for rare bird species (as listed on Annex I) and for important migratory species.

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) form the legal basis for the implementation of the Habitats and Birds Directives in terrestrial areas and territorial waters out to 12 nautical miles in England and Wales (including the inshore marine area) and to a limited extent in Scotland and Northern Ireland.

Ramsar sites are designated under the Convention on Wetlands of International Importance, agreed in Ramsar, Iran, in 1971. The Convention covers all aspects of wetland conservation and recognises the importance of wetland ecosystems in relation to global biodiversity conservation. The Convention refers to wetlands as “*areas of marsh, fen, peatland or water, whether natural or artificial, permanent or temporary, with water that is static or flowing, fresh, brackish or salt, including areas of marine water the depth of which at low tide does not exceed six metres*”.

However, they may also include riparian and coastal zones. Ramsar sites are statutorily protected under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended 01.04.1996) with further protection provided by the Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000. Policy statements have been issued by the Government in England and Wales highlighting the special status of Ramsar sites.

The Government in England and Wales has issued policy statements which ensure that Ramsar sites are afforded the same protection as areas designated under the EC Birds and Habitats Directives as part of the Natura 2000 network (e.g. SACs & SPAs). Further provisions for the protection and management of SSSIs have been introduced by the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.

National Statutory Designations

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) are designated by nature conservation agencies in order to conserve key flora, fauna, geological or physio-geographical features within the UK. The original designations were under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949 but SSSIs were then re-designated under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). As well as reinforcing other national designations (including National Nature Reserves), the system also provides statutory protection for terrestrial and coastal sites which are important within the European Natura 2000 network and globally.

Local Statutory Designations

Local authorities in consultation with the relevant nature conservation agency can declare Local Nature Reserves (LNRs) under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. LNRs are designated for flora, fauna or geological interest and are managed locally to retain these features and provide research, education and recreational opportunities.

Non- Statutory Designations

All non-statutorily designated sites are referred to as Local Wildlife Sites (LWS) and can be designated by the local authority for supporting local conservation interest. Combined with statutory designation, these sites are considered within Local Development Frameworks under the Town and Country Planning system and are a material consideration during the determination of planning applications. The protection afforded to these sites varies depending on the local authority involved.

Regionally Important Geological Sites (RIGs) are the most important geological and geomorphological areas outside of statutory designations. These sites are also a material consideration during the determination of planning applications.

The Hedgerow Regulations 1997

The Hedgerow Regulations 1997 are designed to protect 'important' countryside hedgerows. Importance is defined by whether the hedgerow (a) has existed for 30 years or more; or (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 hedgerows on or adjacent to common land, village greens, SSSIs (including all terrestrial SACs, NNRs and SPAs), LNRs, land used for agriculture or forestry and land used for the keeping or breeding of horses, ponies or donkeys without the permission of the local authority. Hedgerows 'within or marking the boundary of the curtilage of a dwelling-house' are excluded.

National and European Legislation Afforded to Species

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) aims to promote the maintenance of biodiversity by requiring the Secretary of State to take measures to maintain or restore wild species listed within the Regulations at a favourable conservation status.

The Regulations make it an offence (subject to exceptions) to deliberately capture, kill, disturb, or trade in the animals listed in Schedule 2, or pick, collect, cut, uproot, destroy, or trade in the plants listed in Schedule 4. However, these actions can be made lawful through the granting of licenses by the appropriate authorities. Licenses may be granted for a number of purposes (such as science and education, conservation, preserving public health and safety), but only after the appropriate authority is satisfied that there are no satisfactory alternatives and that such actions will have no detrimental effect on wild population of the species concerned.

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended)

The Wildlife and Countryside Act (WCA) 1981 (as amended) implements the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention 1979, implemented 1982) and implements the species protection requirements of EC Birds Directive 2009/147/EC on the conservation of wild birds in Great Britain (the birds Directive). The WCA 1981 has been subject to a number of amendments, the most important of which are through the Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act (2000).

Other legislative Acts affording protection to wildlife and their habitats include:

- Deer Act 1991
- Natural Environment & Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- Protection of Badgers Act 1992
- Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996

Badgers

Badgers *Meles meles* are protected under The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 which makes it an offence to:

- Wilfully kill, injure, take, or attempt to kill, injure or take a badger
- Cruelly ill-treat a badger, including use of tongs and digging
- Possess or control a dead badger or any part thereof
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a badger sett or any part thereof
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb a badger when it is occupying a badger sett

- Intentionally or recklessly cause a dog to enter a badger sett
- Sell or offers for sale, possesses or has under his control, a live badger

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

A development licence will be required from the relevant countryside agency (i.e. Natural England) for any development works likely to affect an active badger sett, or to disturb badgers whilst they occupy a sett. Guidance has been issued by the countryside agencies to define what would constitute a licensable activity. It is no possible to obtain a licence to translocate badgers.

Birds

With certain exceptions, all birds, their nests and eggs are protected under Sections 1-8 of the WCA. Among other things, this makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird
- Intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while it is in use or being built
- Intentionally take or destroy an egg of any wild bird
- Sell, offer or expose for sale, have in his possession or transport for the purpose of sale any wild bird (dead or alive) or bird egg or part thereof.

Certain species of bird, for example the barn owl, bittern and kingfisher receive additional protection under Schedule 1 of the WCA and are commonly referred to as “Schedule 1” birds.

This affords them protection against:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young
- Intentional or reckless disturbance of dependent young of such a bird

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

Works should be planned to avoid the possibility of killing or injuring any wild bird or damaging or destroying their nests. The most effective way to reduce the likelihood of nest destruction in particular is to undertake work outside the main bird nesting season which typically runs from March to August. Where this is not feasible, it will be necessary to have any areas of suitable habitat thoroughly checked for nests prior to vegetation clearance.

Schedule 1 birds are additionally protected against disturbance during the nesting season. Thus, it will be necessary to ensure that no potentially disturbing works are undertaken in the vicinity of the nest. The most effective way to avoid disturbance is to postpone works until the young have fledged. If this is not feasible, it may be possible to maintain an appropriate buffer zone or standoff around the nest.

Amphibians and Reptiles

The sand lizard *Lacerta agilis*, smooth snake *Coronella austriaca*, natterjack toad *Epidalea calamita*, pool frog *Pelophylax lessonae* and great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* receive full protection under Habitats Regulations through their inclusion on Schedule 2. Regulation 41 prohibits:

- Deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species
- Deliberate disturbance of species in such a way as:
 - To impair their ability to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young;
 - To impair their ability to hibernate or migrate
 - To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place

With the exception of the pool frog, these species are also listed on Schedule 5 of the WCA and they are additionally protected from:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)
- Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection
- Selling, offering or exposing for sale, possession or transporting for purpose of sale.

Other native species of reptiles are protected solely under Schedule 5, Section 9(1) & (5) of the WCA, i.e. the adder *Vipera berus*, grass snake *Natrix natrix*, common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* and slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*. It is prohibited to:

- Intentionally or recklessly kill or injure these species.

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

A European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) issued by the relevant countryside agency (i.e. Natural England) will be required for works likely to affect the breeding sites or resting places amphibian and reptile species protected under Habitats Regulations. A licence will also be required for operations liable to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake those activities mentioned above (e.g. survive, breed, rear young and hibernate). The licences are to allow derogation from the relevant legislation, but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and their efficacy to be monitored.

Although not licensable, appropriate mitigation measures may also be required to prevent the intentional killing or injury of adder, grass snake, common lizard and slow worm, thus avoiding contravention of the WCA.

Water Voles

The water vole *Arvicola terrestris* is fully protected under Schedule 5 of the WCA. This makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take (capture) water voles
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb water voles while they are occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

If development works are likely to affect habitats known to support water voles, the relevant countryside agency (i.e. Natural England) must be consulted. It must be shown that means by which the proposal can be re-designed to avoid contravening the legislation have been fully explored e.g. the use of alternative sites, appropriate timing of works to avoid times of the year in which water voles are most vulnerable, and measures to ensure minimal habitat loss. Conservation licences for the capture and translocation of water voles may be issued by the relevant countryside agency for the purpose of development activities if it can be shown that the activity has been properly planned and executed and thereby contributes to the conservation of the population. The licence will then only be granted to a suitably experienced person if it can be shown that adequate surveys have been undertaken to inform appropriate mitigation measures. Identification and preparation of a suitable receptor site will be necessary prior to the commencement of works.

Otters

Otters *Lutra lutra* are fully protected under the Conservation Regulations through their inclusion on Schedule 2. Regulation 41 prohibits:

- Deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species
- Deliberate disturbance of species in such a way as:
 - To impair their ability to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young;
 - To impair their ability to hibernate or migrate
 - To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place

Otters are also currently protected under the WCA through their inclusion on Schedule 5. Under this Act, they are additionally protected from:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)
- Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

A European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) issued by the relevant countryside agency (i.e. Natural England) will be required for works likely to affect otter breeding or resting places (often referred to as holts, couches or dens) or for operations likely to result in a level of disturbance which might impair their ability to undertake those activities mentioned above (e.g. survive, breed, and rear young). The licence is to allow derogation from the relevant legislation but also to enable appropriate mitigation measures to be put in place and their efficacy to be monitored

Bats

All species are fully protected by Habitats Regulations 2010 as they are listed on Schedule 2. Regulation 41 prohibits:

- Deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species (e.g. All bats)
- Deliberate disturbance of bat species in such a way as:
 - To impair their ability to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young;
 - To impair their ability to hibernate or migrate
 - To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place

Bats are afforded the following additional protection through the WCA as they are included on Schedule 5:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)
- Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

A European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) issued by the relevant countryside agency (i.e. Natural England) will be required for works are likely to affect a bat roost or an operation which are likely to result in an illegal level of disturbance to the species will require an EPSL. The licence is to allow derogation from the legislation through the application of appropriate mitigation measures and monitoring.

Hazel Dormice

Hazel dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius* are fully protected under Habitats Regulations through their inclusion on Schedule 2. Regulation 41 prohibits:

- Deliberate killing, injuring or capturing of Schedule 2 species
- Deliberate disturbance of species in such a way as:
 - To impair their ability to survive, breed, or reproduce, or to rear or nurture young;

- To impair their ability to hibernate or migrate
- To affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species
- Damage or destruction of a breeding site or resting place

Dormice are also protected under the WCA through their inclusion on Schedule 5. Under this Act, they are additionally protected from:

- Intentional or reckless disturbance (at any level)
- Intentional or reckless obstruction of access to any place of shelter or protection

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

Works which are liable to affect a dormice habitat or an operation which are likely to result in an illegal level of disturbance to the species will require a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) issued by the relevant countryside agency (i.e. Natural England). The licence is to allow derogation from the legislation through the application of appropriate mitigation measures and monitoring.

White Clawed Crayfish

There is a considerable amount of legislation in place in an attempt to protect the White-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes*. This species is listed under the European Union's (EU) Habitat and Species Directive and is listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981). This makes it an offence to:

- Protected against intentional or reckless taking
- Protected against selling, offering or advertising for sale, possessing or transporting for the purpose of sale

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

The relevant countryside agency (i.e. Natural England) will need to be consulted about development which could impact on a watercourse or wetland known to support white clawed crayfish. Conservation licences for the capture and translocation of crayfish can be issued if it can be shown that the activity has been properly planned and executed and thereby contributes to the conservation of the population. The licence will only be granted to a suitably experienced person if it can be shown that adequate surveys have been undertaken to inform appropriate mitigation measures. Identification and preparation of a suitable receptor site will be necessary prior to the commencement of the works.

Wild Mammals (Protection Act) 1996

All wild mammals are protected against intentional acts of cruelty under the above legislation. This makes it an offence to mutilate, kick, beat, nail or otherwise impale, stab, burn, stone, crush, drown, drag or asphyxiate any wild mammal with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering.

To avoid possible contravention, due care and attention should be taken when carrying out works (for example operations near burrows or nests) with the potential to affect any wild mammal in this way, regardless of whether they are legally protected through other conservation legislation or not.

Legislation Afforded to Plants

With certain exceptions, all wild plants are protected under the WCA. This makes it an offence for an 'unauthorised' person to intentionally (or recklessly in Scotland) uproot wild plants. An authorised person can be the owner of the land on which the action is taken, or anybody authorised by them.

Certain rare species of plant, for example some species of orchid, are also fully protected under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This prohibits any person from:

- Intentionally picking, uprooting or destruction of any wild Schedule 8 species
- Selling, offering or exposing for sale, or possessing or transporting for the purpose of sale, any wild live or dead Schedule 8 plant species or part thereof
- In addition to the UK legislation outlined above, several plant species are fully protected under Schedule 5 of The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. These are species of European importance. Regulation 45 makes it an offence to:
- Deliberately pick, collect, cut, uproot or destroy a wild Schedule 5 species
- Be in possession of, or control, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any wild live or dead Schedule 5 species or anything derived from such a plant.

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

A European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) will be required from the relevant countryside agency (i.e. Natural England) for works which are likely to affect species of plants listed on Schedule 5 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2010. The licence is to allow derogation from the legislation through the application of appropriate mitigation measures and monitoring.

Invasive Species

Part II of Schedule 9 of the WCA lists non-native invasive plant species for which it is a criminal offence in England to plant or cause to grow in the wild due to their impact on native wildlife. Species included (but not limited to):

- Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica*
- Giant hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum*

- Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

It is not an offence for plants listed in Part II of Schedule 9 of the WCA 1981 to be present on the development site, however, it is an offence to cause them to spread. Therefore, if any of the species are present on site and construction activities may result in further spread (e.g. earthworks, vehicle movements) then it will be necessary to design and implement appropriate mitigation prior to construction commencing.

Injurious weeds

Under the Weeds Act 1959 any landowner or occupier may be required prevent the spread of certain ‘injurious weeds’ including (but not limited to):

- Spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*
- Creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*
- Curled dock *Rumex crispus*
- Broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*
- Common ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*

EFFECT OF LEGISLATION AND POLICY ON DEVELOPMENT WORKS

It is a criminal offence to fail to comply with a notice requiring such action to be taken. The Ragwort Control Act 2003 establishes a ragwort control code of practice as common ragwort is poisonous to horses and other livestock. This code provides best practice guidelines and is not legally binding.

NATIONAL PLANNING POLICY***Environment Act 2021***

The Environment Act 2021 (EA 2021) received Royal Assent on 9 November 2021 and is expected to become fully mandated within the next couple of years. The Act principally creates a post Brexit framework to protect and enhance the natural environment. Through amendments to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, the Act will require all planning permissions in England (subject to exemptions which is likely to include householder applications) to be granted subject to a new general pre-commencement condition that requires approval of a biodiversity net gain plan. This will ensure the delivery of a minimum of 10% measurable biodiversity net gain. The principal tool to calculate this will be the Defra Biodiversity 3.0 Metric. Works to enhance habitats can be carried out either onsite or offsite or through the purchase of 'biodiversity credits' from the Secretary of State. However, this flexibility may be removed (subject to regulations) if the onsite habitat is 'irreplaceable'. Both onsite and offsite enhancements must be maintained for at least 30 years after completion of a development (which period may be amended).

National Planning Policy Framework 2021

The National Planning Policy Framework promotes sustainable development. The Framework specifies the need for protection of designated sites and priority habitats and species. An emphasis is also made on the need for ecological infrastructure through protection, restoration and re-creation. The protection and recovery of priority species (considered likely to be those listed as species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006) is also listed as a requirement of planning policy.

In determining a planning application, planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by ensuring that: designated sites are protected from harm; there is appropriate mitigation or compensation where significant harm cannot be avoided; measurable gains in biodiversity in and around developments are incorporated; and planning permission is refused for development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats including aged or veteran trees and also ancient woodland.

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 and the Biodiversity Duty

Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, requires all public bodies to have regard to biodiversity conservation when carrying out their functions. This is commonly referred to as the 'biodiversity duty'.

Section 41 of the Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list of habitats and species which are of 'principal importance for the conservation of biodiversity'. This list is intended to assist decision makers such as public bodies in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Act. Under the Act these habitats and species are regarded as a material consideration in determining planning applications. A developer must show that their protection has been adequately addressed within a development proposal.

LOCAL PLANNING POLICY

Rochdale Adopted Core Strategy (October 2016)

The Rochdale Adopted Core Strategy can be viewed here: <https://www.rochdale.gov.uk/local-planning-policy/core-strategy-local-plan/2>

The following planning policies have implications in relation to biodiversity and the proposed development:

- **G7 - Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity:**

We will ensure that sites and features of biodiversity and geodiversity importance are given full and appropriate recognition and protection. Opportunities for enhancing biodiversity and geodiversity, creating new sites and features of interest and improving opportunities for public enjoyment will be supported. No development should result in a net loss of biodiversity or geodiversity interest in the borough and overall development in the borough should result in a net gain. Particular priorities for biodiversity and geodiversity are:

1. **The South Pennine Moors** - our focus is to maintain and enhance the peatland habitats of the moorland and to support development, land and water management activities which provide an opportunity to conserve and enhance the value of moorland for upland breeding birds of conservation significance and the habitats on which they depend and which do not harm biodiversity value. Our focus is the designated Special Protection Area and Special Area of Conservation but also the wider moorland where such interest is present or could be supported through appropriate development or land management. We will also protect and support enhancement measures for areas of geodiversity value.
2. **The Rochdale Canal** - our focus is to ensure that the Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation and the wider biodiversity interest of the canal is given full and appropriate protection and ensure that development which delivers the economic and recreational value of the Rochdale Canal and its wider corridor supports and does not harm its biodiversity value.
3. **Urban Areas** - our priority is to protect and enhance existing urban biodiversity and to support opportunities for new urban biodiversity corridors, sites and features including sustainable urban drainage schemes, new public realm provision, street trees and urban woodlands, ponds and lodges, green roofs and natural play areas.
4. **Designated sites of ecological importance** - will be given appropriate protection according to their European, national or local status and in accordance with policies in other development plan documents, supporting Supplementary Planning Documents and Biodiversity Action Plans.
5. **Protected Species:** Development proposals which would affect a species protected by law or its habitat will not be permitted unless it can be demonstrated that:
 - a) there is no adverse impact on the species concerned;
 - b) damage to habitats is minimal and alternative habitat provision is effective in maintaining those species.

Opportunities to protect, enhance and create features of biodiversity or geodiversity interest should be informed by the detail of any formal designation of a site or area and supporting plans and guidance such as Local Biodiversity Action Plans, Green Infrastructure Strategies and Action Plans and the Council's Biodiversity and Development SPD. We will expect development proposals and improvements to:

- a) Protect and include existing biodiversity (including established biodiversity interest on brownfield land) within new developments, public realm and open spaces and meet the requirements of the Biodiversity and Development SPD, Greater Manchester and Local Biodiversity Action Plans;
- b) Protect and enhance existing features such as peatland, ponds, wetlands, reservoirs, mill lodges, trees, hedges, wooded areas, meadows, flora and fauna;
- c) Take opportunities to promote biodiversity and create new habitats through new development using landscaping and building and construction features wherever possible (e.g. ponds, species of vegetation, green roofs and walls, bat boxes, roof space, appropriate nest boxes and landscaping);
- d) Enhance strategic wildlife corridors and the most natural areas and ensure that habitats and corridors are not fragmented by development;
- e) Improve access where appropriate to new or existing biodiversity interest for public enjoyment; and
- f) Protect important geology and take opportunities to increase interest and accessibility.

EUROPEAN PROTECTED SPECIES POLICIES

In December 2016 Natural England officially introduced the four licensing policies throughout England. The four policies seek to achieve better outcomes for European Protected Species (EPS) and reduce unnecessary costs, delays and uncertainty that can be inherent in the current standard EPS licensing system. The policies are summarised as follows:

- Policy 1; provides greater flexibility in exclusion and relocation activities, where there is investment in habitat provision;
- Policy 2; provides greater flexibility in the location of compensatory habitat;
- Policy 3; provides greater flexibility on exclusion measures where this will allow EPS to use temporary habitat; and,
- Policy 4; provides a reduced survey effort in circumstances where the impacts of development can be confidently predicted.

The four policies have been designed to have a net benefit for EPS by improving populations overall and not just protecting individuals within development sites. Most notably Natural England now recognises that the Habitats Regulations legal framework now applies to 'local populations' of EPS and not individuals/site populations.