

SOUTH HEYWOOD – PRIMARY SUBSTATION

CONSTRUCTION ENVIRONMENTAL MANAGEMENT PLAN: BIODIVERSITY

March 2025



Report Control Sheet

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CONTENTS

1	INTRODUCTION	4
1.0	SCOPE & PURPOSE	4
1.2.	OBJECTIVES	4
1.3.	LOCATION	4
2	SITE RESPONSIBILITIES	6
2.1.	SITE OPERATIONS	6
2.2.	ECOLOGICAL CLERK OF WORKS.....	6
3	HABITATS AND SPECIES	7
3.1.	HABITAT MITIGATION	7
3.2.	SPECIES MITIGATION	8
	<i>REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS</i>	<i>8</i>
	<i>BIRDS</i>	<i>8</i>
	<i>BADGER</i>	<i>8</i>
	<i>BATS</i>	<i>9</i>
	<i>WATER VOLE AND OTTER</i>	<i>9</i>
	<i>OTHER SPECIES</i>	<i>10</i>
4	SUMMARY	11
4.1.	SPECIES MITIGATION	11
	SPECIES	11
	MITIGATION REQUIRED	11
5	BIBLIOGRAPHY	12

1 INTRODUCTION

1.0 SCOPE & PURPOSE

1.1.1. Collington Winter Environmental Ltd was commissioned Russells South Heywood Residential Limited to prepare a Construction Environmental Management Plan (CEMP: Biodiversity). The proposed development comprises of the erection of Primary Substation. This application relates to enabling the works phase to prepare the site for future development by Electricity North West Limited.

1.1.2. The author of this report is Olivia Collington BSc (Hons), MEnvSc, CEnv, Director at Collington Winter Environmental Ltd. Olivia is highly experienced managing complex residential schemes and has produced many CEMPs and reports to inform planning permission. Olivia has been the lead project ecologist on the wider South Heywood project since 2013 during previous roles at REC Ltd and E3P Ltd, before starting her own company Collington Winter Environmental Ltd. Therefore, Olivia has been involved or overseen all survey work and consultation regarding the project.

1.2. OBJECTIVES

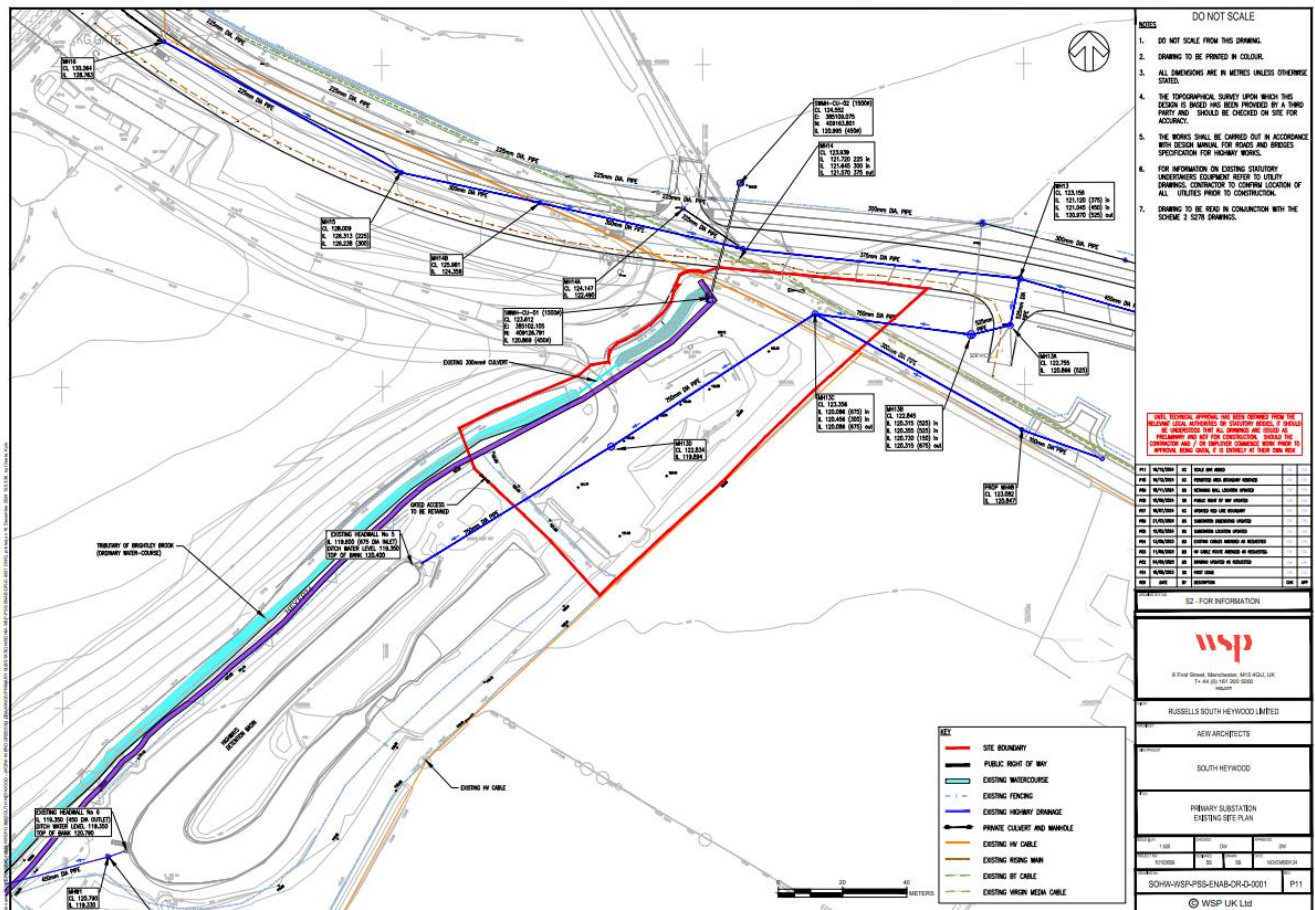
1.2.1. The report shall include:

- Identification of "biodiversity protection zones".
- Practical measures (both physical measures and sensitive working practices) to avoid or reduce impacts during construction (may be provided as a set of method statements).
- The location and timing of sensitive works to avoid harm to biodiversity features.
- The times during construction when specialist ecologists may need to be present on site to oversee works.
- Responsible persons and lines of communication.
- Use of protective fences, exclusion barriers and warning signs.

1.2.2. This report has been written with the view it can be used as an on-site document, to aid site contractors in understanding works required for ecology and biodiversity.

1.3. LOCATION

1.3.1. Please refer to Figure 1.1 for the site location.



2 SITE RESPONSIBILITIES

2.1. SITE OPERATIONS

- 2.1.1. All operations on site will be the overarching responsibility of the site manager. The project ecologist will consult with the site manager to ensure that all site staff are appropriately inducted to the site and are aware of their legal responsibilities regarding wildlife legislation. Updates, regarding ecology, between the project ecologist and site manager are to be completed every quarter year.
- 2.1.2. The project ecologist will ensure that the site manager is aware of all working methods relevant for each phase of works. It will be the site manager's responsibility to ensure all site contractors are aware and competent to undertake these works.
- 2.1.3. The ECoW will supervise works where necessary. All works will be recorded within a site diary which will be reviewed periodically by the project ecologist. Any issues will be reported immediately to the project ecologist, and where necessary works may be paused to explore alternative methods.

2.2. ECOLOGICAL CLERK OF WORKS

- 2.2.1. A suitably experienced ecologist will be employed as an official ECoW on site and will be responsible for undertaking all ecologically sensitive works on site, including undertaking any required Toolbox Talks and supervision work.
- 2.2.2. They will also be the nominated person of contact when required and responsible for the following during the construction phase of development:
- Undertaking nesting bird checks pre-vegetation clearance on site, under the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
 - Providing advice to developers and contractors when desired on how best to minimise impacts on site biodiversity throughout the construction phase of development if necessary.
 - Where deemed necessary, giving Toolbox Talks on protected species and sensitive habitats to contractors carrying out works within the site. These will cover all potential protected species, invasive species and habitats relevant to the site and what to do should any such flora or fauna be discovered during the works.
 - Carry out pre-commencement and supervision works as outlined in Section 5, to minimise risk of breaching relevant legislation.
 - Being the main point of contact should any issues relating to ecology arise during site construction.
 - The ECoW will be provided with an updated programme of works to determine watching brief requirements and the associated ecological issues before commencement of any development related activities on site.
- 2.2.3. If the ECoW identifies any issues in relation to ecology or considers that the CEMP is not being adhered to at any point during construction, the developer will be contacted, and measures will be taken to resolve any issues. If the ECoW or construction team identifies any ecological issues themselves, the ECoW will be contacted for advice immediately.

3 HABITATS AND SPECIES

3.1. HABITAT MITIGATION

3.1.1. The habitats present on site were found to be common and widespread and of low ecological value. Therefore, no direct mitigation was deemed necessary.

AQUATIC HABITATS

3.1.2. Trees and hedgerow within the area are to be removed to allow for the earthworks, this includes culverting portions of the watercourse to allow for the works.

3.1.3. Measures will be taken throughout the construction phase to avoid pollution incidents, which may indirectly affect terrestrial, or offsite aquatic habitats and associated protected/notable fauna. Pollution prevention and control strategies will be always adhered to. Any accidental damage to the adjacent habitats or fuel spillages within proximity to the site and/or adjacent habitats will be reported to the site manager and the ECoW.

3.1.4. Installation of silt control devices and dust control will be used to catch sediment/water run-off where appropriate, such as sandbags and matts. The proposed regular checks, to be completed by the site manager, will ensure the installed silt control devices are in place and are effective. The silt control devices will be replaced, or additional devices installed, if silt run-off is evident.

3.1.5. The appointed ECoW will supervise the removal of vegetation on the bank faces within the working area of the proposed working areas. An updated water vole survey of the ditch is to be undertaken prior to works commencing however the water vole are anticipated to be absent based on previous survey results.

3.1.6. The works to the ditch should be undertaken outside of bird nesting season (March – September inclusive). If this is not feasible then the Precautionary Working Methods for birds as stated in point 3.2.2. are to be followed. Nesting bird checks are valid for 48 hours and as such any vegetation should be cleared immediately after the area has been cleared by the ECOW.

3.1.7. Vegetation removal will be achieved by using a trimmer, until only bare earth remains under the supervision of the ECoW. A check for burrows and field signs of aquatic fauna will be completed throughout the process. Where feasible, any emergent aquatic vegetation along the water margin should be cut to below water level. Arisings should be raked off and removed from the working area under the supervision of the ECoW.

3.1.8. An excavator with a toothed bucket will be required to rake through the turf and topsoil, and then to remove the turf and topsoil. In-channel vegetation within 0.5m of the toe of the bank will be removed to prevent regrowth on the bank; and the bank will be smoothed using a ditching bucket or the back of a toothed bucket. This area will be maintained unvegetated.

3.1.9. The following working methods are to be followed:

- No security lighting being directed at the ditch.
- Best practice pollution prevention measures adhered to, including no refuelling of machinery within 20 m of the watercourse and no storage of machinery or materials within the buffer area.
- Weekly checks to be undertaken of the ditches by the site manager to check for pollution, litter or other adverse impacts on the watercourse.
- Trees and shrubs must be felled so that they fall away from the direction of the watercourses.
- All site machinery and materials will be appropriately stored away (approximately 30m buffer) from the habitats to avoid accidental spillage.
- All operational plant will be kept well maintained and turned off when not in use.
- All machinery and personnel should be disinfected (with wildlife friendly product) prior to and after entering the watercourse.
- Only limited and appropriate access/egress into the watercourse should be allowed and maintained throughout the works.
- Monthly checks of the watercourse should be completed by the ECoW to ensure the proposed working methods are being adhered to.

3.1.10. It is to be drained down via pump operated at low speed fitted with a fine mesh filter or a trench dug into the bank of the waterbody, from which the water can be drawn off. A fine mesh screen is to also be fitted over the mouth of the trench to facilitate amphibian capture. Amphibians can be caught by netting as draining takes place and by hand searching through plants, debris and silt when the pond is dewatered. The Precautionary Working Methods relating to reptiles (also applicable for amphibians) will also be considered during this phase.

3.2. SPECIES MITIGATION

REPTILES AND AMPHIBIANS

3.2.1. The site was assessed as being unlikely to support reptiles during the walkovers of the site. Common amphibians are likely to be present on site due to areas of long grassland and scrub as terrestrial habitat. A precautionary approach is recommended given the presence of the species groups in the local area. The following Precautionary Working Methods (PWMs) will be implemented:

- An experienced Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) shall be appointed to ensure PWMs are enforced.
- A copy of this method statement must be kept on site (we suggest having a laminated copy in the site office/ compound);
- A walkover of the area should be undertaken by the ECoW to determine any change in status of the habitats/structures on site prior to the initiation of any works.
- A toolbox talk by the appointed ECoW will be given to the site manager and all contractors working on site with respect to the surrounding habitats and potential for protected/notable species. A copy of species factsheets relating to reptiles and breeding birds will be provided for display within the site office.
- Suitable vegetation is to be strimmed under ECoW to approximately 15cm in a northern to southern direction. It is to be checked by the ECoW following strimming to identify individuals. If discovered, they will be removed from the working area and covered. Once the areas are deemed reptile free, they are to be strimmed to ground level and maintained at this length for the remaining works.
- Any excavations will be backfilled on the same day as excavation or checked by the ECoW immediately prior to backfilling. This also considers avoiding temporary water bodies which may be attractive to amphibians. If it is not possible to backfill on the same day, a ramp, will be provided in all excavations or alternatively, all excavations should be well-covered with plywood.
- No piles of loose construction materials are to be created during works – all material will be kept on hardstanding, stored on pallets, removed immediately from the site or checked by an ECoW prior to being removed.
- In the event reptiles are discovered, works will halt immediately and the ECoW will be contacted for advice. Contractors are not to handle reptiles unless informed to do so by the ECoW.

BIRDS

3.2.2. Any tree or shrub removal should be undertaken outside the breeding bird survey season (March – September inclusive). If this is unavoidable, a suitably qualified ecologist will first undertake a nesting bird check prior to clearance. If any nests, or nests in construction are located, works must cease immediately, and a suitable buffer set out around the nest. The buffer should be appropriately fenced and signed to avoid works in the area. This must be retained until the young have fledged.

BADGER

3.2.3. No evidence of badger was found within the site; however, the local area was assessed as having suitability for the species and therefore a precautionary approach will be undertaken. The following PWMs are to be implemented:

- A site walkover should be undertaken immediately prior to works commencing to check for badger setts or signs of badger presence. If setts are located they will be retained with a buffer, or the relevant Natural England Licence applied for the closure of the sett where applicable.

- All site operatives will be made aware of the presence of the species, their working limits and legal responsibilities. All site operatives will be inducted as to identifying potential badger setts and should be vigilant if they suspect they locate a new sett during works and inform the project ecologist immediately.
- All excavations will be battened at a 45-degree angle, or a ramp will be placed within the excavation, to allow escape should animals become trapped.
- All site machinery and materials will be appropriately stored to avoid harm to the species.
- No works will be undertaken after dusk.
- Trees and shrubs must be felled so that they fall away from the obvious direction of a sett and must not be uprooted but cut to ground level where necessary.
- Badger trails must be cleared of felled timber and scrub.
- Any stored spoil must be compacted at the end of each day's work to discourage badgers from digging new setts within spoil mounds.
- All working areas are to remain clear of vegetation to discourage badgers from digging new setts with the development areas.

3.2.4. During site inductions, all contractors will be briefed on how to identify badger setts; and given the confidence to cease works and contact an ecologist if they believe any new setts have been located.

BATS

3.2.5. Proposed construction lighting is to follow the protocols outlined in the Institute for Lighting Engineers document "Guidance for the Reduction of Obtrusive Lighting" (2005) and BCT's "Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK" (2023) to minimise disturbance and sky-glow off site.

3.2.6. The following recommendations are to be considered within the scheme during its condition, to minimise impacts of lighting. The recommendations are as follows:

- Keep site lighting to minimum levels.
- Luminaries should lack UV elements and preferably LED lighting with a warm white light should be used over cool white light (ideally <2700Kelvin).
- Lighting should feature peak wavelengths greater than 550nm.
- Light placement should be downward facing to prevent excess horizontal or vertical light spill.
- The use of integrated fittings such as cowls, shields, louvres and hoods, that effectively contain light spill from unintended areas.
- The use of hard landscaping features to block light and create dark corridors.
- Avoid illuminating habitats of value.
- Use of timed security lights should be set on motion-sensors and using short, 1-minute timers, to minimise light use.
- Column heights of lighting can be considered to minimise light spill.

3.2.7. No lighting during construction is to be aimed towards boundary features during the construction phase.

3.2.8. Any trees to be removed will first be inspected by the ECoW to ensure no bat roosting potential features are present. If any features are present which could support roosting bats, a climbed tree inspection will be undertaken by a licenced ecologist using an endoscope to determine the presence of bats. If bats are located, a Natural England Bat Mitigation Licence, or Bat Low Impact Licence will be applied for prior to removal of the tree.

3.2.9. All retained trees will be protected throughout development, with no lighting directed at them. Illuminating a bat roost can cause disturbance, and this may result in the bats deserting the roost or even becoming entombed within it. Light falling on a roost access point will at least delay bats from emerging and this shortens the amount of time available to them for foraging. As the main peak of nocturnal insect abundance occurs at and soon after dusk, a delay in emergence means this vital time for feeding is missed. (Bat Conservation Trust, 2018).

WATER VOLE AND OTTER

- 3.2.10. No water vole presence has been detected during previous surveys of watercourses around South Heywood wider site. As such, it is recommended that the following PWMs are to be adopted during the construction phase:
- All site personnel are to be inducted through use of a toolbox talk on the presence of otters and water vole, their legal protection and working limits.
 - No works within 30m of the watercourse will be undertaken after dusk or before dawn.
 - Any temporarily exposed open pipe system will be capped in such a way as to prevent otters gaining access, as this may happen when contractors are off-site.
 - Commuting otters, for instance, may lie-up in stacked pipes or beneath pallets. These features, where they are within 30m of the river, are to be inspected daily before the start of works.
- 3.2.11. The General Lighting Consideration states no lighting is to be directed or is to spill in the direction of the brook and will be maintained as a 'dark zone' during the construction phase to allow nocturnal species to continue to use it as a commuting resource.

OTHER SPECIES

- 3.2.12. The site was found to have high value for hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) in relation to the hedgerow habitats. The above mitigation measures already detailed above will sufficiently mitigate for these species in relation to reptile precautionary working methods. If a hedgehog is located on site and appears to be injured, it will be taken to a local vet.

4 SUMMARY

4.1. SPECIES MITIGATION

- 4.1.1. Mitigation required for the species present or potentially present on site has been detailed and is summarised within Table 1.1 below.

Table 1.1 Summary of Species Mitigation within the Site

SPECIES	MITIGATION REQUIRED
Reptiles and Amphibians	Precautionary Working Methods during vegetation clearance
Birds	Vegetation to be cleared outside of the breeding bird season (March – September inclusive) or a nesting bird check undertaken no more than 24 hours prior to the clearance. If not already, site to be made unsuitable for ground nesting birds over winter (turfing and site movements to deter birds nesting). Implementing a series of bird boxes during development.
Badger	Precautionary Working Methods to be adopted and sensitive lighting used during construction and post development.
Bats	Sensitive lighting used during construction and post development. Any trees to be removed to be first inspected by the ECoW for bat roosting potential. Implementing a series of bat boxes post development.
Water Vole and Otter	Sensitive lighting during construction. Precautionary Working Methods during construction.
Hedgehog	Precautionary Working Methods during vegetation clearance under the supervision of ECoW. Implementing hedgehog houses post development.

- 4.1.2. This report is to be followed by site contractors during construction works within the site.

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