



TECHNICAL NOTE

Reference:	8666.04.001
Version:	1.0
Date:	18/11/24
Author:	PJB
Approved:	ACP

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PLANNING | DESIGN | ENVIRONMENT

Re: Application PA 22/01190/FUL Land South of Cowm Top Lane, Castleton, Rochdale.

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment Review

Introduction

This technical note is given in response to comments received by Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) (dated 12/11/2024) and email correspondence with the case officer Luke Thorpe (email dated 13/11/2024)

Comments received from GMEU included the following advisories which stated:

- That the applicant revises the Biodiversity Metric to take account of a possible change in the grassland habitat types recorded;
- That the applicant provides reassurances that the required off-site habitat provision will be achievable; and
- That to secure off-site habitat provision, a S106 agreement will likely be needed.

With regards to the comments received from the case officer, the following comments were stated:

- The latest Planting Plan (Sheet 28) shows replacement planting where part of G29 was proposed to be removed for the fisheries track. I presume this is now being retained and should be shown as such (rather than completely showing whip planting)?
- The access track now connects to an area where works have already taken place to form an access. The 2018 Topo Survey shows this area as covered by vegetation / tree canopy, I can see the works took place after this survey and appear to have removed trees, but there are still multiple mature trees in this area. Whilst within the red line, the tree surveys do not address the area at all which seems to be an omission.

Changes in Grassland Habitat

The grassland was originally classified as poor semi-improved (SI) grassland (not semi-improved neutral grassland (other neutral grassland (ONG) - g3c) as GMEU implies) due to species composition, the land's agricultural history and lack of ONG indicators. This being the case, poor SI grassland translated from Phase 1 into UKHab as grassland of low distinctiveness (modified grassland - g4). However, after referring to UKHab V2 there does seem to be an argument for this grassland to be re-categorised as ONG g3c but in poor condition (passes 4 criteria excluding criteria A) which has been applied.

It was also identified that 4.09ha of marshy grassland (line 20¹) was transposed into the metric under UKHab as ONG (g3c) in moderate condition. After careful due diligence and re-assessment of the baseline habitats and supporting conditions, it was identified that the baseline condition assessment for the marshy grassland was incorrectly inputted and should have been categorised as being in poor condition under the updated Metric 3.1/4.0 condition assessment criteria under UKHab V2 (fails criteria 1, 2 and 6 but passes 3, 4, and 5). This was due to the updates in condition assessment from the initial legacy DEFRA Metric 3.0 and UKHab v1 to v2. The marshy grassland baseline condition has now been updated to poor condition in the metric.

Updated Final Design Plans and revised BNG Metric 4.0

Taking note of the revised extension to the fisheries track the impacted habitats were recalculated and input into the Metric. The following changes were identified.

- Other Broadleaved Woodland – Loss of 93m²
- Other neutral grassland – Loss of 497m²
- Fisheries trackway extension (artificial unsealed surface) – additional 590m²

Drawing G8666.009C (Proposed UK Habitat Plan) illustrates the updated changes.

Changes in Ecological Value

Based on the above changes and amendments, the result of the assessment is provided in the updated Biodiversity Metric 4.0 (sent under separate cover) and baseline drawings² enclosed. The updated headline results, taken from the metric, are given below.

¹ Biodiversity Metric 4.0 Cowm Top 29072024v3 (TEP Nov 2024)

² G8666.008A Existing UK Habitat Plan, G8666.010A Existing Habitat Condition and Strategic Significance

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	-12.19
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	23.64
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	-14.87%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	387.62%
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	No - Check Trading Summaries ▲	

Figure 1: Updated Headline Results

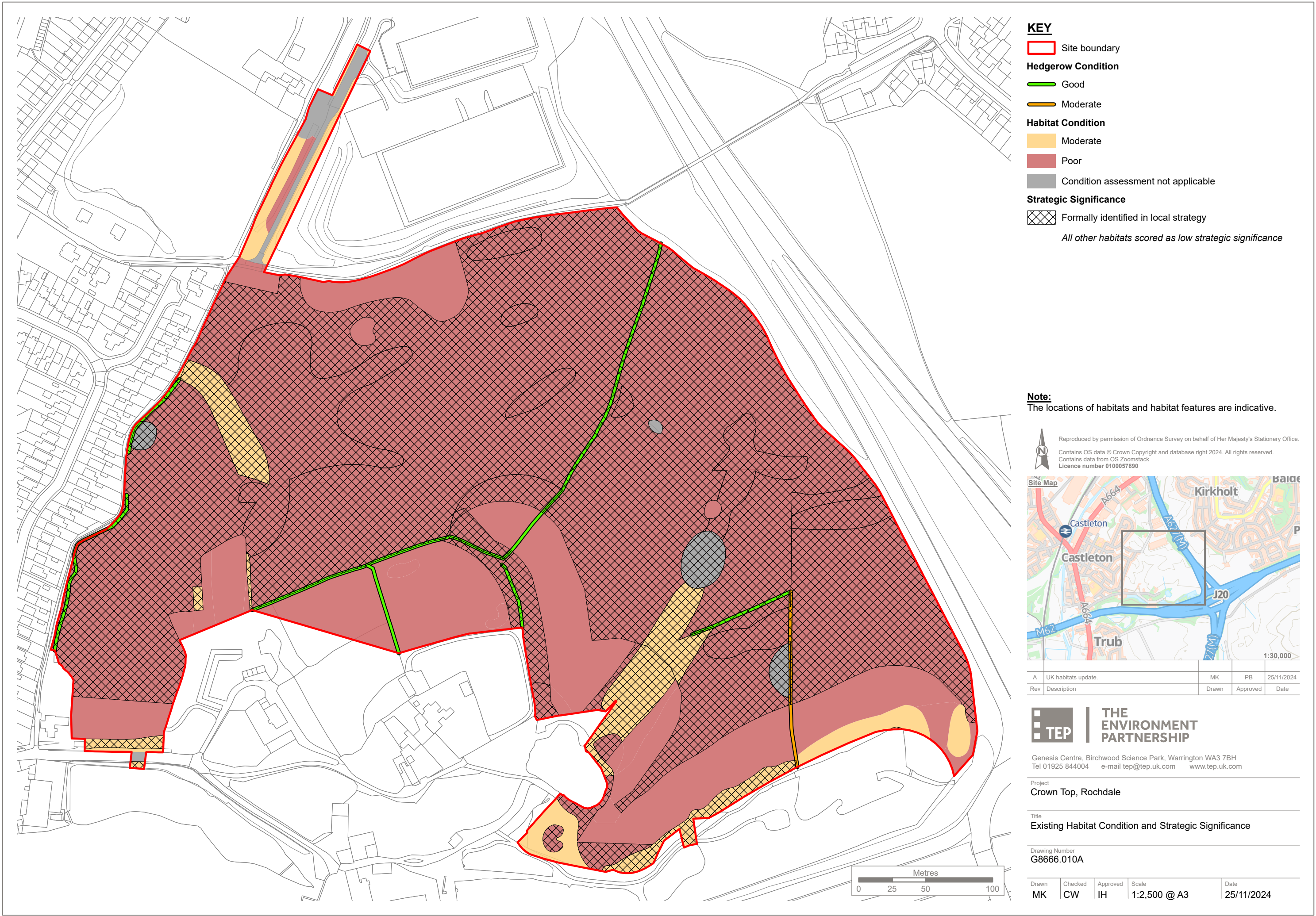
Based on the updated changes given above, the baseline unit score has decreased from 102.43 to 81.98 and the results indicate a revised net loss of -14.87% (-12.19 Habitat Units) for area-based habitats, and a net gain of 387.62% (23.64 Linear Units) for habitats/hedgerows. This decrease in baseline area habitats is due to the oversight in the baseline condition of the marshy grassland (ONG g3c) which should have been translated from moderate to poor condition during the transition from the original DEFRA metric 3.0 to metric 4.0 due to the associated changes to the condition assessment sheets. Trading rules have still not been satisfied due to the loss of low/medium distinctiveness habitat (Grassland/Heathland and Shrub)

Off-site Compensation and Mitigation

As the application was originally submitted pre-mandatory 10% net gain and the LPA position of attaining no net loss, currently the site is at a net loss of 14.87% for habitats for no net loss. Any off-site mitigation is currently subject to viability discussion and if it agreed that off-site mitigation will take place then a suitably worded condition will be included with any approval which will require the submission of a detailed 30 year management and monitoring plan.

ENCLOSED DRAWINGS:

- G8666.010A Existing Habitat Condition and Strategic Significance
- G8666.008A Existing UK Habitat Plan
- G8666.009C (Proposed UK Habitat Plan)



KEY

Site boundary

Hedgerow Condition

Good

Moderate

Habitat Condition

Moderate

Poor

Condition assessment not applicable

Strategic Significance

Formally identified in local strategy

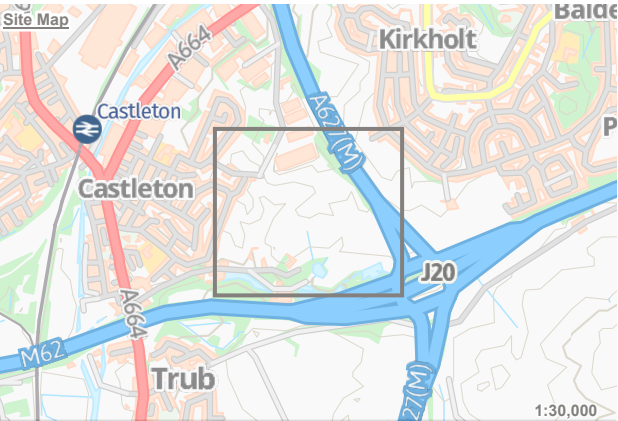
All other habitats scored as low strategic significance

Note:
The locations of habitats and habitat features are indicative.



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Site Map



A	UK habitats update.	MK	PB	25/11/2024
Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date



THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP

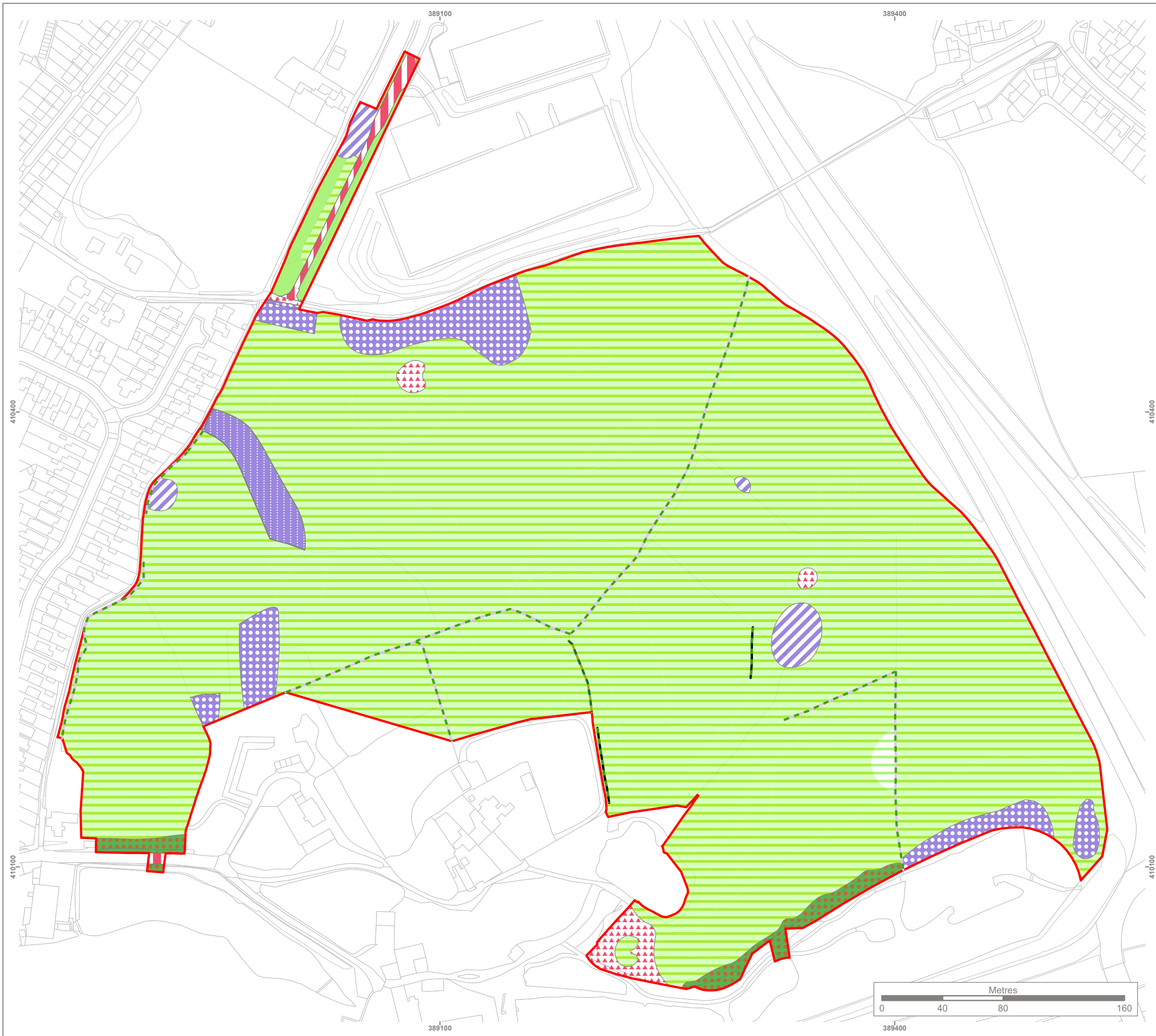
Genesis Centre, Birchwood Science Park, Warrington WA3 7BH
Tel 01925 844004 e-mail tep@tep.uk.com www.[tep.uk.com](http://www.tep.uk.com)

Project
Crown Top, Rochdale

Title
Existing Habitat Condition and Strategic Significance

Drawing Number
G8666.010A

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
MK	CW	IH	1:2,500 @ A3	25/11/2024

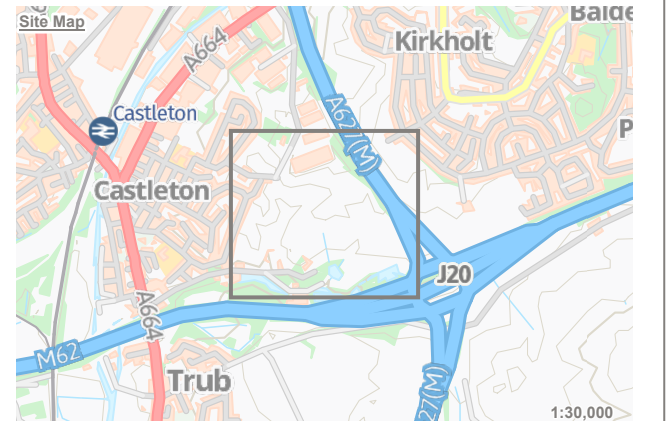


KEY

- Site boundary
- Hedgerows**
 - Native hedgerow
 - Native Hedgerow with trees
 - Line of Trees
- Grassland**
 - Bracken
 - Modified grassland
 - Other neutral grassland
- Heathland and Shrub**
 - Bramble scrub
 - Gorse scrub
 - Mixed scrub
- Woodland and Forest**
 - Other woodland, broadleaved
- Urban**
 - Developed land, sealed surface
 - Vacant/derelict land/bareground

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A	UK habitats update.	MK	PB	25/11/2024
Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date

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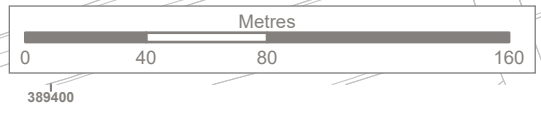
Genesis Centre, Birchwood Science Park, Warrington WA3 7BH
 Tel 01925 844004 e-mail tep@tep.uk.com www.tep.uk.com

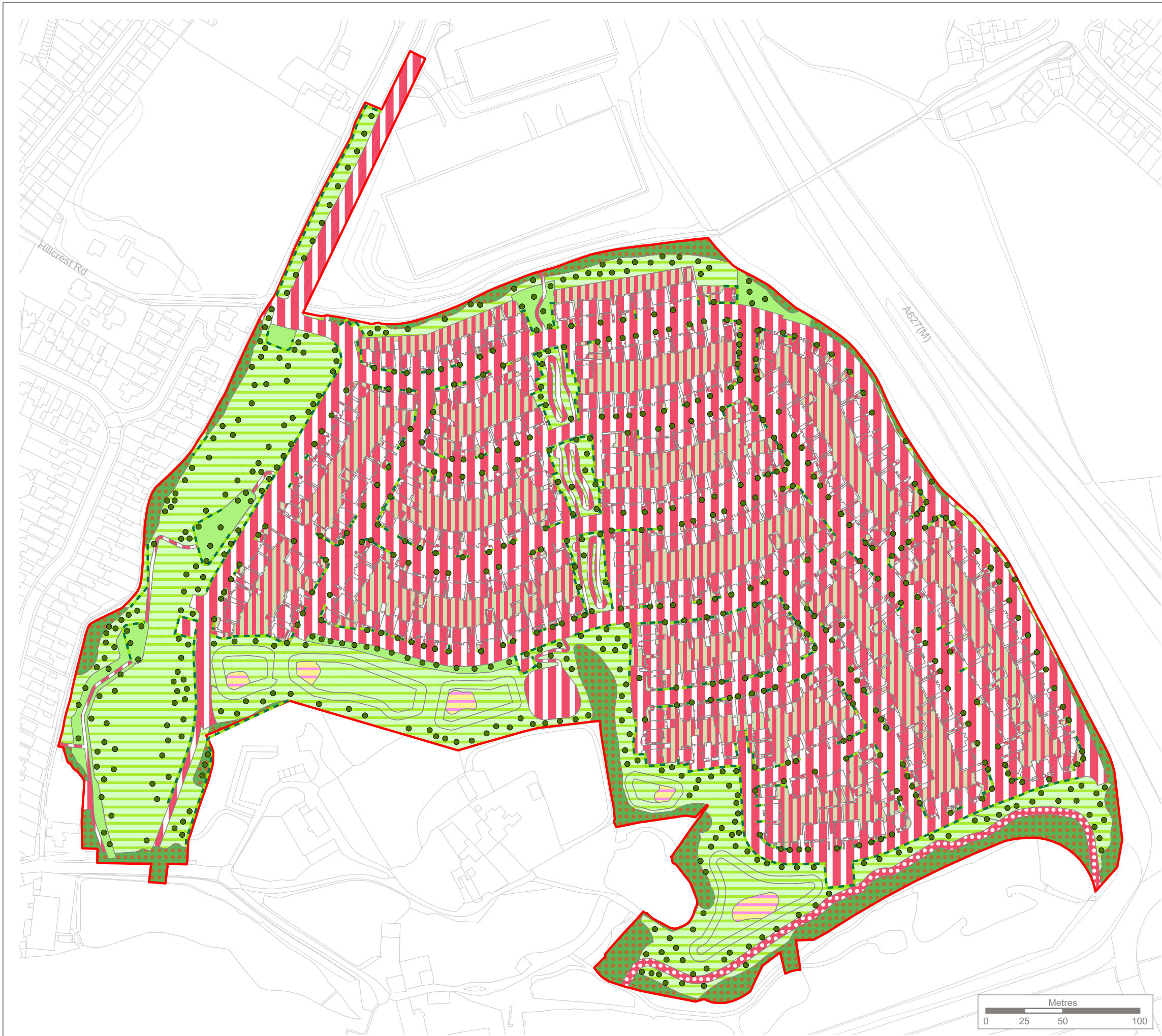
Project
Crown Top, Rochdale

Title
Existing UK Habitat Plan

Drawing Number
G8666.008A

Drawn JK	Checked MK	Approved IH	Scale 1:2,500 @ A3	Date 25/11/2024
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KEY

Urban Trees

- Proposed tree planting

Hedgerows

- Species-rich native hedgerow

Wetland

- Reedbeds

Grassland

- Modified grassland
- Other neutral grassland

Woodland and Forest

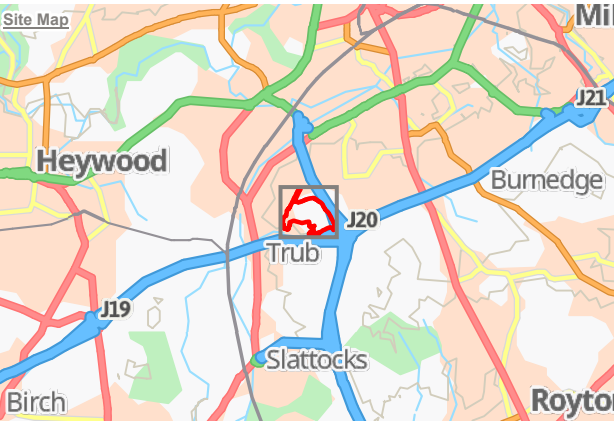
- Other woodland, broadleaved

Urban

- Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
- Developed land, sealed surface
- Introduced shrub
- Vegetated garden

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Based on drawing TRO1902 PP01 P4 Planting Plans provided by client.



C	UK habitats update.	MK	PB	18/11/2024
B	UK habitats update.	OH	PB	29/07/2024
Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date



THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP

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Project
Crown Top, Rochdale

Title
Proposed UK Habitat Plan

Drawing Number
G8666.009C

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
MK	CW	IH	1:2,500 @ A3	18/11/2024