



THE
ENVIRONMENT
PARTNERSHIP



BRUNSWICK STREET HEYWOOD

HEDGEHOG REASONABLE AVOIDANCE MEASURES METHOD STATEMENT (RAMMS)

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1.0 Introduction

Background

- 1.1 Westchurch Homes Ltd. are proposing a development which involves the construction of 72 new residential homes and associated public open space and infrastructure on a site off Brunswick Street in Heywood, Rochdale.
- 1.2 TEP has previously undertaken a Phase 1 habitat survey at this site and produced an Ecological Assessment in 2021 (TEP Report Ref.: 9072.002) to inform the planning application for the works on site (Rochdale Borough Council Planning Ref. 21/01796/FUL). The planning application was granted in December 2023, subject to conditions. This Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statement (RAMMS) is required to discharge condition 7 of the granted planning application which states:

“No development shall take place (including any site clearance, demolition or preparation works) until a reasonable avoidance measures statement for hedgehog and other small mammals has been submitted to and approved in writing by the Local Planning Authority. The development shall be carried out in accordance with the approved statement thereafter.”

Site Description

- 1.3 The central grid reference of the site is SD 85295 10637. The location of the site is shown in Figure 1 below.
- 1.4 The site has an area of 1.1ha and is surrounded by residential development on all sides, with a small area of woodland to the immediate south-east of the site. The site comprises buildings, hard standing, small patches of rough grassland and dense and scattered scrub. There are two log/brush piles and some areas of non-native invasive species *Cotoneaster* located in the southeast of the site.



Figure 1: Site location and local context

Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2017

Proposals

- 1.5 All scrub and grassland habitat present on site will be removed as part of the proposed development, along with all hardstanding and buildings also present on site.
- 1.6 The planting plan for the site includes non-native hedgerow, tree, ornamental shrub, and grassland planting, and has been designed to ensure there is connectivity with, and habitat linkages to, the wider landscape for hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* and other small mammals (Brunswick Street, Heywood Landscape Proposals, Trevor Bridge Associates Ltd Drawing Ref: 6725.01 RevD). The majority of the proposed planting on the main site is lining streets and driveways, with more grassland and trees being planted around the houses in the north of the site.

Approach to Hedgehogs

- 1.7 The extended Phase 1 habitat survey undertaken in September 2021 identified the potential for hedgehog to use the scrub and grassland habitats on site. Given the potential for hedgehogs to be present on site, it is considered acceptable to undertake works on site under the implementation of a Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statement (RAMMS).

2.0 Status of Hedgehogs

Legal Protection

- 2.1 Hedgehogs are considered species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Hedgehogs are also partially protected under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, in that they are protected from being killed, injured, or taken by certain methods.

Hedgehog Ecology

- 2.2 Hedgehogs are predominantly nocturnal animals and can travel large distances to feed on invertebrates. They breed between April and October and hibernate between November and March.
- 2.3 Hedgehog populations are declining in the UK. The most recent population estimate was 522,000 in 2016, down from approximately 1.5 million in 1995¹. This decline can be attributed to factors including a reduction of food sources, predation by badgers and collisions with cars.

Potential for Presence within the Site

- 2.4 Historical records of hedgehog were found to be present within 1 km of the proposals (TEP Report Ref: 9071.001).
- 2.5 The existing scrub and log and brash piles on site provide suitable foraging, commuting and hibernation habitat for hedgehog. The species-poor modified neutral grassland on site is also suitable for supporting foraging hedgehog.

Potential Impacts

- 2.6 The nature of the habitats present on site means that the presence of hedgehog cannot be ruled out. Therefore vegetation clearance works, the use of machinery and any future construction works could result in death or injury to any hedgehogs that may be present within the site.
- 2.7 Depending on the time of year that clearance works will be undertaken, there may be implications with regard to disturbance of hibernating or overwintering hedgehogs. It is important to take this constraint into account when undertaking site clearance. Staged clearance will allow for ground cover to be maintained for any hibernating mammals.

¹ Mathews F, Kubasiewicz LM, Gurnell J, Harrower CA, McDonald RA, Shore RF. (2018) A Review of the Population and Conservation Status of British Mammals: Technical Summary. A report by the Mammal Society under contract to Natural England, Natural Resources Wales and Scottish Natural Heritage. Natural England, Peterborough.

3.0 Reasonable Avoidance Measures Approach

- 3.1 As part of the site induction process, all staff working on site will be made aware of the potential for presence of hedgehog on site and their status as a species of principal importance.
- 3.2 Owing to the loss of potential hedgehog foraging, commuting and hibernating habitat, and in order to reduce the risk of harm to this species of principal importance, it is proposed that any hedgehogs present are sensitively displaced from the site.
- 3.3 Although it is not an offence to handle hedgehogs, measures must be taken to ensure the safe relocation of any hedgehogs found on site.
- 3.4 The following reasonable avoidance measures are set out to prevent any injury to hedgehog, if present within the site.
- 3.5 It is recommended that the removal of the dense scrub, grassland and log/brash piles on site is supervised by an Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) to ensure any hedgehogs that may be present in this habitat are suitably protected from harm.
- 3.6 Clearance of the semi-improved grassland and scrub habitats on site should be undertaken in stages to enable any hedgehogs that may be present to relocate to safe areas. These habitats should be strimmed by hand, under supervision of an ECoW, to a height of 300 mm to prevent any harm to hibernating or sheltering hedgehogs. A thorough hand search should be carried out by the ECoW in advance of site clearance and any hedgehogs found will be relocated.
- 3.7 A further hand search will then be undertaken, after which the grassland and scrub may be strimmed to ground level.
- 3.8 Any hedgehog found will be moved by the ECoW to the woodland area to the south-east of the site. This will ensure the hedgehogs can disperse into the wider area.
- 3.9 Regular strimming works should take place to keep any retained habitats short, which will make the area unattractive to foraging or resting hedgehogs. This would deter hedgehogs from the site thereby reducing the risk of harm occurring to this species.
- 3.10 The early hibernation period (November to December inclusive) should be avoided in relation to scrub clearance. Hedgehogs would likely die if they are disturbed during this period.
- 3.11 If the winter hibernation period (November to March inclusive) cannot be avoided, works can be carried out from January onwards if a refuge area is created, where any hedgehog found by the ECoW can be relocated to. The refuge area will be created with arisings from scrub and grass clearance within the site. A hedgehog box will also be placed at this location, filled with bedding, and supplied with a bowl of food. The box must not be disturbed until the end of the hibernation period. The refuge area should be created within an area of the site where the scrub and vegetation will be undisturbed.

- 3.12 As there are also potential constraints regarding nesting birds (vegetation clearance should be avoided during the nesting bird season - March to August inclusive), it is therefore recommended that scrub clearance works are undertaken between September and the end of October. If this period cannot be avoided, clearance may be undertaken provided that a nesting bird check is carried out by a qualified ecologist, no more than 24 hours ahead of clearance.
- 3.13 Any open excavations should be covered overnight using plyboard and sand bags to fully seal any gaps. If this is not possible, a plank of wood placed at an angle no steeper than 40° should be left within the excavations so any hedgehogs or small mammals which fall into the trenches are able to escape.
- 3.14 Pipes stored on site would be capped or if caps are not available, stored vertically to prevent entrapment of hedgehogs.
- 3.15 Arisings from the work i.e. brash, trunks, grass cuttings, must be removed from site on the same day as the work takes place. This is to avoid providing refuge opportunities for hedgehog or nesting birds, which would then have to be hand searched by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to their removal at a later date.
- 3.16 Soil storage mounds must be compacted before the end of each days work to ensure they do not become attractive refuges. All stored materials and soil piles must be suitable covered with an inaccessible covering such as tarpaulin to prevent hedgehogs using this material as refugia.
- 3.17 Any existing access tracks into the site will be maintained. Vehicular or plant access should adhere to these access routes where feasible to prevent tracking over areas where hedgehogs could be present.
- 3.18 If any panel fences are installed between gardens within the development, it is recommended that approximately 13 cm diameter holes are cut at periodic intervals along the base of the fence-line to allow free movement of hedgehogs between the site and surrounding area.
- 3.19 If an injured hedgehog is found on site, this should be taken to a nearby wildlife rescue centre or vet that accepts wild animals. Additionally, if any young hedgehogs are found during the autumn, immediately prior to the hibernation period, these should also be taken to a wildlife rescue centre as it would be unlikely that these would survive the winter. The nearest wildlife rescue centre to the site is provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Contact details for the nearest Wildlife Rescue Centre to the site

Name	Address	Telephone Number	Distance and Direction from Site
Kirklees Valley Wildlife Rescue	Kirklees Street, Tottington, Bury, BL8 4LP	01204 884086	6.0 miles to the west of the site

Name	Address	Telephone Number	Distance and Direction from Site
Willow Top Hedgehog Rescue	40 Sherbourne Road, Accrington, BB5 2TW	07969903378	14.0 miles to the north of the site

- 3.20 This document must be strictly adhered to. If a situation arises regarding hedgehogs and the contractor is unsure what action to take, advice should be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.

Key Contacts

- 3.21 Any contractors requiring advice with regard to this RAMMS are welcome to contact any of the following for further information:
- TEP - Head Office (01925 844004)
 - Gemma Hassall, Consultant Ecologist, TEP (07730 420288)

APPENDIX A: Phase 1 Habitat Survey Drawing (G9072.001)

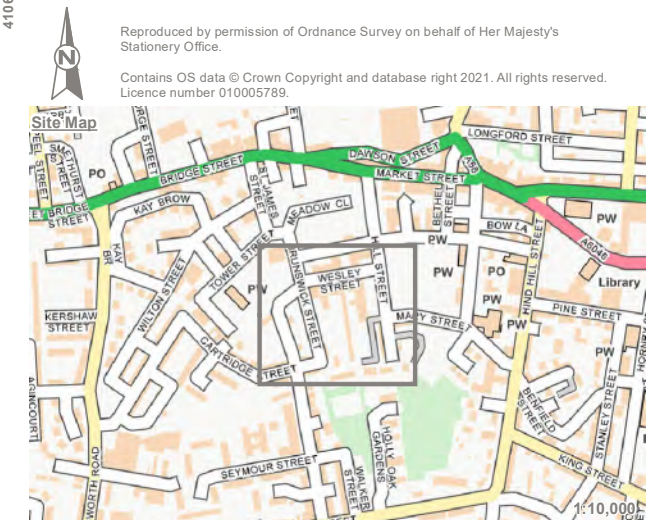


KEY

- Site boundary
- CT Cotoneaster
- HB Himalayan balsam
- Scattered scrub
- Scattered broad-leaved tree
- Log pile/brash
- Dense/continuous scrub
- Species-poor modified neutral grassland
- Hardstanding with ephemeral/short perennial
- Building
- Hardstanding
- Not surveyed

Note:

The locations of habitats and habitat features are indicative.



Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date



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Project
Brunswick Mill, Heywood

Title
Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Drawing Number
G9072.001

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
JK	AP	JC	1:750 @ A3	14/10/2021



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