



Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Preliminary Roost Assessment

1 Redcross Street, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, OL12 0NZ

Michelle Kelly

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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 Michelle Kelly to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at 1 Redcross Street, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, OL12 0NZ (hereafter referred to as “the site”). The survey was required to inform a planning application for the demolition of the on-site building (B1) (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 8 of this report.

Feature	Survey Results Summary	Impact Assessment	Recommendations
Habitats and flora	There are no notable habitats within the site, but priority deciduous woodland habitats are present within 2km of the site, the closest being located ~460m south from the site. Other habitats within the site are common and widespread and have low ecological value. Habitats on site comprise B1, a gravel parking area, some grassland, and scattered trees/shrubs/scrub vegetation. No protected or notable plant species were recorded during the survey.	No impacts to any notable habitats are anticipated due to the small scale and distance of the proposed development from such habitats as well as the urban location of the site with surrounding physical barriers. The proposed development may result in the loss of ~0.1ha grassland and ~0.02ha scattered trees, shrubs and scrub. This is likely to have a minimal impact on biodiversity due to the low ecological value of these habitats.	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	There is some grassland habitat on-site suitable for amphibians for foraging and terrestrial movement. However, there is a lack of on-site or connected ponds to the site (i.e., breeding habitat). Based on the location of the site (in a dense urban area), this will likely only include common amphibians.	Some grassland may 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 0.1ha of suitable great crested newt habitat (i.e., scrub). If great crested newts are present within the pond 490m to the south of the site, this may constitute a loss of 0.1ha within 500m of a potential breeding pond. When completing the rapid risk assessment published by Natural England (Natural England 2015), the proposed development produces a Green risk score , which states: Offence Highly Unlikely .	Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to great crested newts, further surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented for common amphibians during construction, which is detailed in Table 8 of this report.

Roosting bats (B1, T01:T08)	B1 has low value for roosting bats. The majority of the building has negligible roosting value and without suitable features, however, there are some gaps under the roof tiles to the northern section of the building. Some sections of the tiled roof were not visible from ground level due to vegetation and other infrastructure in the nearby vicinity of the building; however, these gaps are likely to continue around the tiled section of the roof of B1. These gaps are likely to be shallow and only suit small numbers of crevice-dwelling species of bat. The surrounding habitat is of low value for roosting bats, with only a few scattered trees in the nearby vicinity of the site reducing connectivity in the urban landscape, and a few urban greenspaces in the locale. T01 to T08 have negligible value for roosting bats, based on their age, size, condition and lack of any suitable roost features.	The proposed development will result in the demolition of this building (B1). This could result in destruction of any bat roosts present and could cause disturbance, death, or injury to bats. T01:T08: Bats are very unlikely to be roosting within these trees and as such, there are not anticipated to be any impacts on roosting bats as a result of the removal of these trees.	B1: As stipulated in professional survey guidance, low value buildings typically require one Bat Emergence or Re-entry Survey (BERS) to be completed during the active bat season (optimal May to August, suboptimal September) to confirm presence or likely-absence of a bat roost. However, a single bat emergence or re-entry survey has a low detection rate for bat roosts and is often an unreliable way of identifying the presence of bat roosts. In the case of B1, BERS are likely to be limited due to restricted views of the roof which may significantly reduce the reliability of BERS therefore a non-licensed Bat Mitigation Plan (BMP) may be a more appropriate approach to minimising the risk to bats. Acceptance of this approach would be at the discretion of the Local Planning Authority, given that this would be a deviation from standard survey guidance. T01:T08: 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.
Foraging and commuting bats	On-site and nearby are scattered semi-mature trees which 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. However, there is also street light spill which could deter foraging and commuting bats from the immediate vicinity of the site.	The proposed development may result in the loss of small areas (~0.02ha) of trees/shrubs 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 may include the use of lighting which could spill on to bat roosting, foraging or commuting habitat and deter bats from using these areas. This could also exacerbate the problem of bright urban space.	A low-impact lighting strategy will be adopted for the site during and post-development, which is detailed in Table 8 of this report.
Hedgehog	There is grassland habitat on-site and some scattered trees/vegetation, suitable for hedgehogs. Furthermore, there are nearby gardens/urban greenspaces and there is nearby scattered vegetation, suitable for hedgehogs for shelter, foraging, and hibernation. Hedgehogs are known to be urban tolerant, therefore they may commute through this site.	~0.1ha grassland and ~0.02ha trees/shrubs/scrub may be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local hedgehog populations owing to their 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 detailed in Table 8 of this report.

Birds	There is some suitable vegetation on-site for nesting birds (i.e., semi-mature trees/shrubs). The site also has an on-site building which may be suitable for nesting birds (however, no bird's nests were discovered during the site visit).	~0.02ha trees/shrubs/scrub may be removed and B1 will be removed 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.	Vegetation removal and demolition of B1 should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the building/trees/vegetation 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.
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1.0 Introduction and Context

1.1 Background

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed by Michelle Kelly to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and Preliminary Roost Assessment (PRA) at 1 Redcross Street, Rochdale, Greater Manchester, OL12 0NZ (hereafter referred to as “the site”). The survey was required to inform a planning application for the demolition of the on-site building (B1) (hereafter referred to as “the proposed development”). A plan showing the proposed development will be provided in Appendix 1 when available.

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.

No previous ecology reports have been produced for this site by Arbtech Consulting Ltd or, to the author’s knowledge, by any other consultancy.

1.2 Site Location and Landscape Context

The site is located at National Grid Reference SD 89598 13721 and has an area of approximately 0.3ha comprising grassland, a gravel drive, scrub and one on-site building (B1). It is surrounded by urban infrastructure and is located north of Rochdale city centre, within Rochdale. The River Roch lies ~310m south of the site boundary. There are also small patches of urban greenspace and scattered trees, in the nearby vicinity of the site. The wider landscape comprises built-up areas, with the settlement of Manchester to the southwest of the site. 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.

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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 (Accredited Agent on Natural England Bat Licence Number: 2016-22843-CLS-CLS) on 23/08/2023.

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.

Preliminary Roost Assessment

The PRA focussed on one built structure and nine trees 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 building 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 building 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.

For any surveyed trees:

A visual inspection was undertaken from ground level using binoculars to identify any possible roost features.

Suitability Assessment

Built structures and trees were categorised according to the likelihood of bats being present and the types of roost that the identified features could support. This is summarised in Table 1 and Table 2 below. Roost suitability is classified as high, moderate, low and negligible and dictates any further surveys required before works can proceed.

Table 1: Features of a building that are correlated with use by bats

Classification	Feature of building and its context
High	Buildings or structures with features of particular significance for larger numbers of roosting bats e.g. mines, caves, tunnels, icehouses and cellars. Habitat on site and surrounding landscape of high quality for foraging bats e.g. broadleaved woodland, tree-lined watercourses and grazed parkland. Site is connected with the wider landscape by strong linear features that would be used by commuting bats e.g. river and or stream valleys and hedgerows. Site is proximate to known or likely roosts (based on historical data). Buildings with high suitability could support roosts of high conservation value such as maternity or hibernation roosts.
Moderate	Buildings or structures with one or more features suitable for more regular roosting due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation value such as maternity or hibernation roosts. Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape which could be used by bats for commuting such as lines of trees, linked gardens. Foraging habitat in the surrounding area such as trees, scrub, grassland or water.
Low	Buildings or structures with one or more features suitable for use sporadically by individual or small numbers of bats. Potential roost features may be suboptimal for reasons such as shallow depth, poor thermal qualities or upwards orientation with exposure to inclement weather or predators. Habitat suitable for foraging in close proximity, but largely isolated in the landscape. Or an isolated site not connected by prominent linear features.
Negligible	Unsuitable for use by bats.

Table 2: Features of a tree that are correlated with use by bats

Classification	Feature of tree and its context
Moderate to high (Difficult to separate moderate or high value trees from ground level without a close-up inspection)	A tree with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. Trees with high suitability could support roosts of high conservation value such as maternity or hibernation roosts.
Low	A tree of sufficient size and age to contain potential roosting features but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential to be used sporadically by individual or small numbers of bats. Potential roost features may be suboptimal for reasons such as shallow depth, poor thermal qualities or upwards orientation with exposure to inclement weather or predators.
Negligible	Unsuitable for use by bats.

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.

A biological records data search has not been undertaken. However, given the location of the site, the nature of the habitats present and the assessed suitability of the site for protected or notable species, it is not anticipated that the purchase of biological records data will add any significant weight or alter the conclusions and recommendations outlined in this report.

The loft space in B1 was not fully accessible during the PRA as it was not boarded, and a safe route could not be determined. The loft space was viewed from the loft hatch. Therefore, some roost features or evidence of bats (if present) may have been missed.

No proposed development plans were available at the time of writing this report and therefore a detailed impact assessment could not be made. This report should be updated once the plans are available.

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

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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 3 below. The presence of non-statutory designated sites within 2km cannot be established without biological records data from Greater Manchester Local Record Centre (GMLRC). However, it is considered unlikely that such sites would be present in the immediate vicinity due to the lack of greenspace and built-up nature of the land surrounding the site.

The site lies within the impact risk zone for Rochdale Canal SSSI. The proposed development is not listed as a possible high risk with regard to this designation.

Table 3: 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)	~1.4km 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)	~1.4km 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
Healey Dell LNR (Local Nature Reserve)	~1.8km northwest	Beauty spot and wildlife sanctuary rich in industrial archaeology, two miles from Rochdale town centre on the way to Whitworth and Bacup. The River Spodden has carved its way through the woodlands through thousands of years, creating delightful scenery and spectacular waterfalls which once powered ancient corn, wool and cotton mills. A disused 1800s railway line is now a nature trail with magnificent views from a 100-foot high viaduct.

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 4.

Table 4: Weather conditions during the survey

Date:	23/08/2023
Temperature	16°C
Humidity	100%
Cloud Cover	90%
Wind	4mph
Rain	None

Habitats and Flora

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

- Building (u1b5)
- Modified grassland (g4) with ruderal/ephemeral vegetation (81) and a gravel bed (149)
- Bramble scrub (h3d) with introduced shrubs (1160) and scattered trees (11)

A description and photographs of each habitat are provided in Table 5.

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.

Table 5: Description and photographs of habitats within and adjacent to the site

Habitat type	Habitat description	Photograph
Building (u1b5)	The on-site building (B1) (pictured opposite) is considered in relation to roosting bats, later in this report.	
Modified grassland (g4) with ruderal/ephemeral vegetation (81) and a gravel bed (149)	Within the site boundary to the west of the site is a small section of modified grassland on freely draining slightly acid sandy soils (soil type according to soilscape). The grassland is mixed with ruderal ephemeral vegetation and has a sward height of ~50cm. The grassland looks to be unmanaged and is fenced off from public access. Species within the sward comprise Yorkshire fog <i>Holcus lanatus</i> (F), false oat-grass <i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i> (F) red fescue <i>Festuca rubra</i> (O), hairy willowherb <i>Epilobium hirsutum</i> (O), vetch <i>Vicia sp</i> (R), bitter dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i> (O), spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i> (R), scabious <i>Scabiosa sp</i> (R), lady's bedstraw <i>Galium verum</i> (O), creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i> (O), red clover <i>Trifolium pratense</i> (O), dandelion <i>Taraxacum agg.</i> (R), black medic <i>Medicago lupulina</i> (O), coltsfoot <i>Tussilago farfara</i> (R), common ragwort <i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i> (O), ribwort plantain <i>Plantago lanceolata</i> (O) and dog daisy <i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i> (R). Some goat willow <i>Salix caprea</i> (R), and sycamore <i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i> (R) saplings were also included in the sward. Adjacent to the grassland is a gravel bed used as a parking area.	

Bramble scrub (h3d) with introduced shrubs (1160) and scattered trees (11)	Within the site boundary to the north of the site, and bordering the on-site building, is a small section of bramble scrub, with introduced shrubs and scattered trees. Species in the sward comprise bramble <i>Rubus agg.</i> (A), holly <i>Ilex aquifolium</i> (O), ivy <i>hedera helix</i> (O), fireweed <i>Chamaenerion sp</i> (O), bindweed <i>Convolvulus sp</i> (O), buddleia <i>Buddleja sp</i> (O), tutsan <i>Hypericum androsaemum</i> (O), and common ninebark <i>Physocarpus opulifolius</i> (R). Tree species comprise semi-mature ash <i>Fraxinus excelsior</i> (O), a smoke tree <i>Cotinus sp</i> (R), and goat willow (O).	
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FaunaBats

The results of the PRA are provided in Table 6. No evidence of roosting bats was identified during the survey.

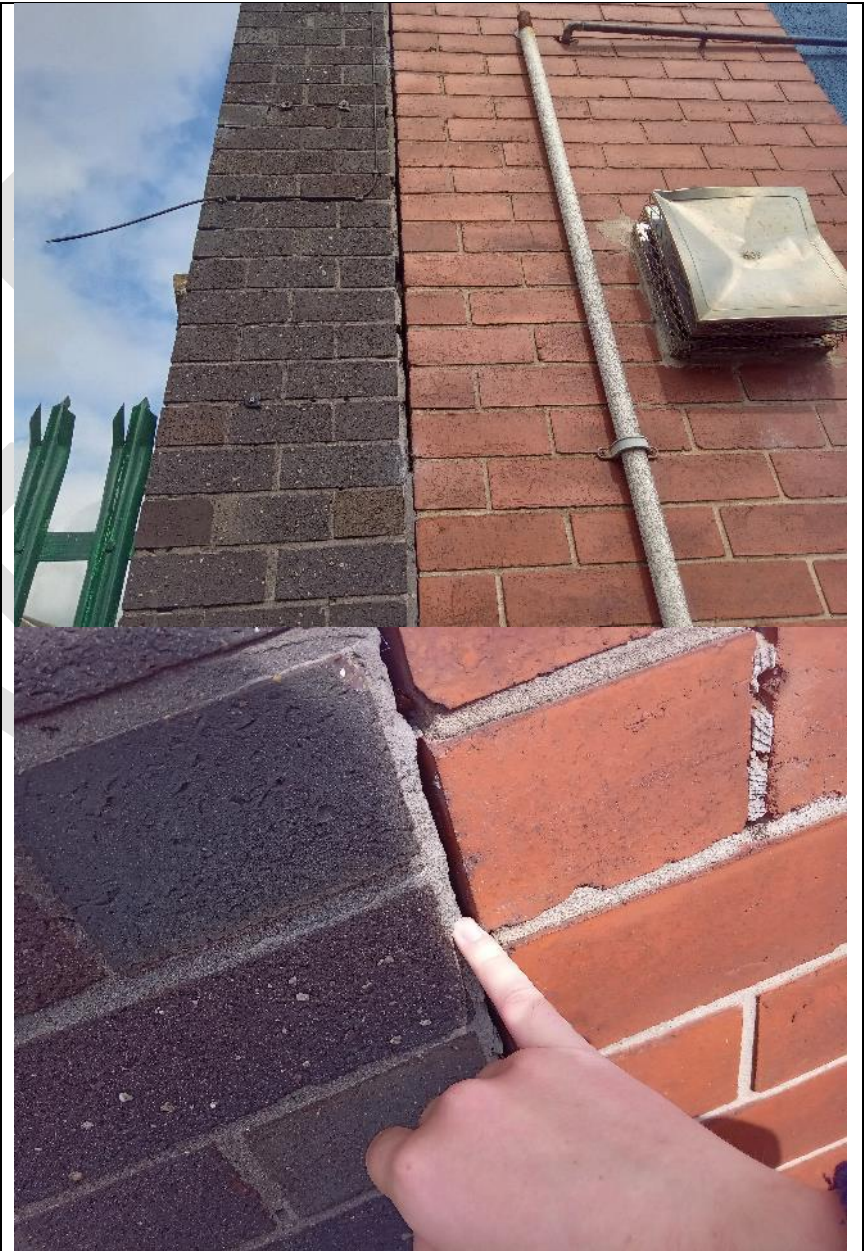
Table 6: Assessment of the suitability of the site for bats

Feature	Description	Photographs
Historical records	There are three EPSLs for bats within a 2km radius of the site: • 2015-8047-EPS-MIT – Common pipistrelle, Daubenton's, Soprano pipistrelle – Destruction of a resting place • EPSM2009-709 – Common pipistrelle – Destruction of a resting place • EPSM2011-2750 – Common pipistrelle, Soprano pipistrelle – Destruction of a resting place	
Bat foraging and commuting habitat	The site lies within a very built-up, urban area within Rochdale. There are only a few scattered trees and green spaces in the nearby vicinity of the site. However, the River Roch lies ~310m south of the site boundary, and this is likely used by local bats as rivers provide dark corridors for bats to commute and rivers and bank vegetation also have foraging opportunities for bats. There is some value in the surrounding habitat to bats. However, the immediate landscape is hardstanding, buildings and lighting.	

B1 - overview	B1 is a two-storey (southern section of B1) and one-storey (northern section of B1) brick-built building with a flat roof clad in bitumen roofing felt. There is one section where B1 has a pitched and hipped roof clad in cement roof tiles (northern section of B1). The brickwork around B1 is intact, with mortar intact. The windows are UPVC framed, and the doors are wooden framed around B1. There are metal shutters for security reasons across some of the entry doors into B1. B1 has no chimneys. In places, there are UPVC soffits around B1 which look to be intact and without breaks/gaps. There is metal cladding near the eaves, on some elevations around B1 (i.e., eastern elevation).	
B1 – southern elevation	On the southern elevation of B1, the brickwork and mortar look to be intact, with only one small gap, within the brickwork. This is unsuitable for roosting bats due to its small size (i.e., <1cm) and shallow depth (pictured below). The ground level windowsills were searched for evidence of bats on this elevation, and no evidence was found (i.e., droppings) (pictured below). However, external evidence such as droppings can easily be weathered away.	

B1 – southern
elevation – gap
in brickwork

There is one small gap where the brickwork of the building meets an older wall. This gap is too small for roosting bats.



B1 – southern elevation – windowsills	No droppings were found on the ground-level windowsills.	
B1 – eastern elevation	On the eastern elevation of B1, there is metal cladding by the eaves which is tightly sealed to B1, with no gaps or opportunities for bats to enter B1 via the eaves (pictured below). Furthermore, there are UPVC soffits on this elevation, which are tightly sealed and without gaps or breaks (pictured below), with no opportunities for roosting bats. The brickwork on this elevation is in immaculate condition (pictured below), with no missing mortar to support ingress of roosting bats into any possible cavity walls.	

B1 – eastern elevation – metal cladding	The metal cladding on this elevation is tightly sealed to B1, with no opportunities for roosting bats by the eaves.	
B1 – eastern elevation – soffits intact	The soffits around B1 and on this elevation are intact.	

B1 – eastern elevation – brickwork and mortar intact	The brickwork and mortar on this elevation are intact.	
B1 – northern elevation	On the northern elevation, there is some gapping under the roof tiles where the supporting wall meet the tiles, which may provide opportunities to crevice-dwelling species of bat (i.e., pipistrelles) (pictured below).	

B1 – northern elevation – gapping in tiles	There is some slight gapping under the tiles by the supporting wall which may offer opportunities to crevice-dwelling species of bat.	 A close-up photograph of a roofline. A red oval highlights a gap between a brick wall and the tiles. The tiles are dark and the wall is light-colored.
B1 – western elevation	On the western elevation, the wall looks to be older in comparison to the rest of the building. There is one section where there is a crack in the wall on this elevation (pictured below). However, on inspection, this crack was superficial and shallow and did not lead to any suitable crevices/cavities suitable for roosting bats.	 A photograph of the western elevation of the building. The wall is light-colored and shows signs of wear and a crack. The foreground is overgrown with grass and weeds.

B1 – western elevation – superficial crack	There is a superficial crack on the western elevation which is shallow and does not lead to any suitable crevices/cavities suitable for roosting bats.	
B1 – interior	There is only one accessible loft void within B1, with a loft hatch present, as the majority of the roof is flat roof, without hatches for any possible roof cavities. Internally of the void there are no boards in place. There is mineral wool insulation, this was searched for evidence of bats (i.e., droppings) near the hatch, however, none was found. The roof is lined with bitumen, which is intact with no snags or rips which could allow the ingress of roosting bats into the loft void. Approximate internal dimensions: 14m long x 14m wide x 2m high (floor to ridge height). Internal conditions: temperature 13.3°C, humidity 70.3%.	

B1 – interior – lining intact	The lining internally of the loft space looks to be intact.	
B1 – suitability assessment	B1 has low value for roosting bats. The majority of the building is negligible and without suitable features, however, there are some gaps under the roof tiles to the northern section of the building. Some sections of the tiled roof were not visible from ground level due to vegetation and other infrastructure in the nearby vicinity of the building; however, these gaps are likely to continue around the tiled section of the roof of B1. These gaps are likely to be shallow and only suit small numbers of crevice-dwelling species of bat. The surrounding habitat is suboptimal for roosting bats, with only a few scattered trees in the nearby vicinity of the site, and a few urban greenspaces in the locale. However, the River Roch lies ~310m south of the site. No evidence of bats (i.e., bat droppings), were found during the PRA inspection, and the internal findings suggest ingress is unlikely.	

T01:T08 – suitability assessment	There are eight semi-mature trees within the site boundary. These comprise: • T01, T02, and T03 – ash – approximate Diameter at Breast Height (DBH): 20cm - Grid references: SD 89572 13766 (T01), SD 89575 13768 (T02), SD 89580 13770 (T03). • T04 – smoke tree – approximate DBH: 10cm – Grid reference: SD 89585 13770. • T05, T06, T07 (pictured opposite) – ash – approximate DBH: 20cm – Grid references: SD 89588 13769 (T05), SD 89589 13767 (T06), SD 89590 13764 (T07). • T08 – goat willow – approximate DBH: 20cm – Grid reference: SD 89549 13729. Each of these trees were subject to a PRFA. Based on the age, size, and condition of these trees alongside the lack of any suitable roost features, these trees have negligible value for roosting bats. It has not been determined whether these trees will be lost or retained as part of the proposed development.	
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Other Species

An assessment of the suitability of the site for protected or notable species is provided in Table 7.

Table 7: Assessment of the suitability of the site for protected or notable species

Species	Assessment of suitability
Amphibians	Great Crested Newts (GCN) exist in metapopulations and are known to utilise ponds and their connecting terrestrial habitat during their life cycle; great crested newts are typically found within terrestrial habitats up to 500m from breeding ponds (Langton et al. 2001). There are no ponds on-site, and there is one pond (P1), within a 500m radius of the site. This pond is located ~490m south of the site boundary. This pond is separated by a main road (the A58) and dense urban infrastructure; therefore, it is unlikely GCN (if present in P1), would travel to this site. There is some grassland habitat on-site suitable for amphibians. Based on the location of the site (in a dense urban area), this will likely only include common amphibians. There are no EPSLs or class licence returns, and there is no pond survey data for GCN within a 500m radius of the site.
Reptiles	There is some grassland habitat on-site. However, this grassland is disconnected from other habitats, and lies isolated within a dense urban area, separate from any other suitable reptile habitat. Based on the location of the site, it is unlikely this grassland will be used by reptiles. There are no EPSLs for reptiles within a 2km radius of the site.
Badgers	No evidence of badgers was found within the site boundary. There is some grassland habitat on-site, which may be suitable for badgers for foraging. However, this grassland is disconnected from other habitats, and lies isolated within a dense urban area, separate from any other suitable badger habitat. Furthermore, the grassland is surrounded by metal balustrade fencing. Based on the location of the site, it is unlikely this grassland will be used by badgers.
Hazel Dormouse	The site lies outside of the known geographic range for hazel dormice (i.e., natural or reintroduced). Furthermore, there is no suitable on-site habitat for hazel dormice (i.e., woodland/connected hedgerow). It is highly unlikely hazel dormice will use this site. There are no EPSLs for hazel dormice within a 2km radius of the site.
Hedgehog	There is grassland habitat on-site and some scattered trees/vegetation, suitable for hedgehogs. Furthermore, there are nearby gardens/urban greenspaces and there is nearby scattered vegetation, suitable for hedgehogs for shelter, foraging, and hibernation. Hedgehogs are known to be urban tolerant, therefore they may commute through this site.
Otter	The River Roch lies ~310m south of the site boundary. Otters may use this watercourse. However, there are no on-site/connecting watercourses to the site. Furthermore, there is no riparian habitat on-site or in the nearby vicinity of the site suitable for holt/natal den creation. The site lies in a built-up urban area and is disconnected from the River Roch by the A58. It is highly unlikely otters will commute to this site, which offers no suitable foraging opportunities.

	There are no EPSLs for otters within a 2km radius of the site.
Water Vole	The River Roch lies ~310m south of the site boundary. Water voles may use this watercourse. However, there are no on-site/connecting watercourses to the site. Furthermore, there is no riparian habitat on-site or in the nearby vicinity of the site suitable for burrow creation. The site lies in a built-up urban area and is disconnected from the River Roch by the A58. Furthermore, water voles tend to remain within 5m of the banks of a watercourse. It is highly unlikely water voles will use this site.
Birds	There is some suitable vegetation on-site for nesting birds (i.e., semi-mature trees/shrubs). The site also has an on-site building which may be suitable for nesting birds (however, no bird's nests were discovered during the site visit). The site is likely too urban and does not contain the habitats required to support any significant breeding or wintering bird populations.
Invertebrates	There is no suitable on-site habitat for any notable species of invertebrates (i.e., species-rich grassland). It is unlikely any notable species of invertebrates will use this site.

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 8 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 on-site building (B1).

Table 8: Evaluation of the site and any ecological constraints

Feature	Survey Results Summary	Impact Assessment	Recommendations	Biodiversity Enhancement Opportunities ¹
Designated sites	There are two statutory sites within 2km of the site, the closest being Rochdale Canal SSSI/SAC located ~1.4km southeast from the site. The site lies within the impact risk zone for Rochdale Canal SSSI, and the proposed development is not listed as a possible high risk for this designation.	No impacts to designated sites are anticipated due to the small scale and distance of the proposed development from such sites (where known) as well as the urban location of the site with surrounding physical barriers.	None.	None.

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

	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	There are no notable habitats within the site, but priority deciduous woodland habitats are present within 2km of the site, the closest being located ~460m south from the site. Other habitats within the site are common and widespread and have low ecological value. Habitats on site comprise B1, a gravel parking area, some grassland, and scattered trees/shrubs/scrub vegetation. No protected or notable plant species were recorded during the survey.	No impacts to any notable habitats are anticipated due to the small scale and distance of the proposed development from such habitats as well as the urban location of the site with surrounding physical barriers. The proposed development may result in the loss of ~0.1ha grassland and ~0.02ha scattered trees, shrubs and scrub. This is likely to have a minimal impact on biodiversity due to the low ecological value of these habitats.	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 native trees, shrubs, and hedgerows. Species-specific enhancement opportunities are detailed later in this table.
Amphibians	There is some grassland habitat on-site suitable for amphibians for foraging and terrestrial movement. However, there is a lack of on-site or connected ponds to the site (i.e., breeding habitat). Based on the location of the site (in a dense urban area), this will likely only include common amphibians.	Some grassland may 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 0.1ha of suitable great crested newt habitat (i.e., scrub). If great crested newts are present within the pond 490m to the south of the site, this may constitute a loss of 0.1ha within 500m of a potential breeding pond. When completing the rapid risk assessment published by Natural England (Natural England 2015), the proposed	Owing to the nature of the proposed development and the low potential for impacts to great crested newts, further surveys are considered to be disproportionate. A precautionary working method will be implemented for common amphibians during construction, including the following measures: A staged approach will be adopted for vegetation clearance, whereby the vegetation will be trimmed to 15cm and left overnight to allow any amphibians to disperse. The vegetation can then be cleared to ground level and must be maintained at this level for the duration of construction to deter amphibians from the working area.	The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for amphibians: - Planting of species-rich wildflower grassland. - Planting of scrub along site boundaries.

		development produces a Green risk score, which states: Offence Highly Unlikely. <table><tr><th>Component</th><th>Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)</th><th>Notional offence probability score</th></tr><tr><td>Great crested newt breeding pond(s)</td><td>No effect</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)</td><td>No effect</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)</td><td>No effect</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td>Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)</td><td>0.01 - 0.1 ha lost or damaged</td><td>0.001</td></tr><tr><td>Individual great crested newts</td><td>No effect</td><td>0</td></tr><tr><td colspan="2">Maximum:</td><td>0.001</td></tr><tr><td>Rapid risk assessment result:</td><td colspan="2">GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY</td></tr></table>	Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability score	Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0	Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0	Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0	Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.01 - 0.1 ha lost or damaged	0.001	Individual great crested newts	No effect	0	Maximum:		0.001	Rapid risk assessment result:	GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY		- Any excavations will be covered overnight, or a ramp will be installed to enable any trapped animals to escape. - Best practice pollution prevention measures will be implemented to minimise impacts to nearby aquatic habitats that amphibians 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 common amphibians 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. - In the unlikely event that a great crested newt is identified, works must cease and advice must be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist.	
Component	Likely effect (select one for each component; select the most harmful option if more than one is likely; lists are in order of harm, top to bottom)	Notional offence probability score																										
Great crested newt breeding pond(s)	No effect	0																										
Land within 100m of any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0																										
Land 100-250m from any breeding pond(s)	No effect	0																										
Land >250m from any breeding pond(s)	0.01 - 0.1 ha lost or damaged	0.001																										
Individual great crested newts	No effect	0																										
Maximum:		0.001																										
Rapid risk assessment result:	GREEN: OFFENCE HIGHLY UNLIKELY																											
Reptiles	There is some grassland habitat on-site. However, this grassland is disconnected from other habitats, and lies isolated within a dense urban area, separate from any other suitable reptile habitat. Based on the location of the site, it is unlikely this grassland will be used by reptiles.	No impacts are anticipated on reptiles as a result of the proposed development.	The precautionary working method for amphibians will also benefit reptiles, in the unlikely event of their presence on site.	The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for reptiles: - Planting of species-rich wildflower grassland. - Planting of scrub along site boundaries.																								

Roosting bats (B1, T01:T08)	B1 has low value for roosting bats. The majority of the building has negligible roosting value and without suitable features, however, there are some gaps under the roof tiles to the northern section of the building. Some sections of the tiled roof were not visible from ground level due to vegetation and other infrastructure in the nearby vicinity of the building; however, these gaps are likely to continue around the tiled section of the roof of B1. These gaps are likely to be shallow and only suit small numbers of crevice-dwelling species of bat. The surrounding habitat is of low value for roosting bats, with only a few scattered trees in the nearby vicinity of the site reducing connectivity in the urban landscape, and a few urban greenspaces in the locale. T01 to T08 have negligible value for roosting bats, based on their age, size, condition and lack of any suitable roost features.	The proposed development will result in the demolition of this building (B1). This could result in destruction of any bat roosts present and could cause disturbance, death, or injury to bats. T01:T08: Bats are very unlikely to be roosting within these trees and as such, there are not anticipated to be any impacts on roosting bats as a result of the removal of these trees.	B1: As stipulated in professional survey guidance, low value buildings typically require one Bat Emergence or Re-entry Survey (BERS) to be completed during the active bat season (optimal May to August, suboptimal September) to confirm presence or likely-absence of a bat roost. However, a single bat emergence or re-entry survey has a low detection rate for bat roosts and is often an unreliable way of identifying the presence of bat roosts. In the case of B1, BERS are likely to be limited due to restricted views of the roof which may significantly reduce the reliability of BERS therefore a non-licensed Bat Mitigation Plan (BMP) may be a more appropriate approach to minimising the risk to bats. Acceptance of this approach would be at the discretion of the Local Planning Authority, given that this would be a deviation from standard survey guidance. T01:T08: 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 detailed within the BMP.
Foraging and commuting bats	On-site and nearby are scattered semi-mature trees which 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 proposed development may result in the loss of small areas (~0.02ha) of trees/shrubs but given the presence of more extensive areas of foraging and commuting habitat in the locality, this is likely to be inconsequential for bats.	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 nearby trees/shrubs should be avoided.	The following habitat creation and enhancement opportunities could be incorporated into the proposed development which would be beneficial for foraging bats:

	the site. However, there is also street light spill which could deter foraging and commuting bats from the immediate vicinity of the site.	The proposed development may include the use of lighting which could spill on to bat roosting, foraging or commuting habitat and deter bats from using these areas. This could also exacerbate the problem of bright urban space.	• 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. • 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.	• Planting of native tree, shrub and hedgerows to increase foraging opportunities.
Badger	There is some grassland habitat on-site, which may be suitable for badgers for foraging. However, this grassland is disconnected	No impacts are anticipated on badgers as a result of the proposed development.	None.	None.

	from other habitats, and lies isolated within a dense urban area, separate from any other suitable badger habitat. Based on the location of the site, it is unlikely this grassland will be used by badgers.			
Hazel dormouse	The site lies outside of the known geographic range for hazel dormice. Furthermore, there is no suitable on-site habitat for hazel dormice.	No impacts are anticipated on hazel dormice as a result of the proposed development.	None.	None.
Hedgehog	There is grassland habitat on-site and some scattered trees/vegetation, suitable for hedgehogs. Furthermore, there are nearby gardens/urban greenspaces and there is nearby scattered vegetation, suitable for hedgehogs for shelter, foraging, and hibernation. Hedgehogs are known to be urban tolerant, therefore they may commute through this site.	~0.1ha grassland and ~0.02ha trees/shrubs/scrub may be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local hedgehog populations owing to their 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: • A staged approach will be adopted for vegetation clearance, whereby the vegetation will be strimmed to 30cm and left overnight to allow any hedgehogs to disperse. The vegetation can then be cleared to ground level and must be maintained at this level for the duration of construction 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: • Planting of species-rich wildflower grassland. • Planting of native hedgerows along site boundaries. • The creation of hedgehog highways in any installed fences/gates.

Otter	The River Roch lies ~310m south of the site boundary. Otters may use this watercourse. However, there are no on-site/connecting watercourses to the site. Furthermore, there is no riparian habitat on-site or in the nearby vicinity of the site. It is highly unlikely otters will commute to this site.	No impacts are anticipated on otters as a result of the proposed development.	None.	None.
Water vole	The River Roch lies ~310m south of the site boundary. Water voles may use this watercourse. However, there are no on-site/connecting watercourses to the site. Furthermore, there is no riparian habitat on-site or in the nearby vicinity of the site. Water voles tend to remain within 5m of the banks of a watercourse. It is highly unlikely water voles will use this site.	No impacts are anticipated on water vole as a result of the proposed development.	None.	None.
Birds	There is some suitable vegetation on-site for nesting birds (i.e., semi-mature trees/shrubs). The site also has an on-site building which may be suitable for nesting birds (however, no bird's nests were discovered during the site visit).	~0.02ha trees/shrubs/scrub may be removed and B1 will be removed 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.	Vegetation removal and demolition of B1 should be undertaken outside the period 1st March to 31st August. If this timeframe cannot be avoided, a close inspection of the building/trees/vegetation 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.	The installation of two bird boxes at the site will provide additional nesting habitat for birds. The bird boxes will be installed on retained trees or new buildings. Such as: • Vivara Pro WoodStone Swift Nest Box (buildings) • House Sparrow Terrace FSC Nest Box (buildings)

				• Swallow Nest Bowl (buildings) • Vivara Pro Seville 32mm WoodStone Nest Box (trees) • Vivara Pro Barcelona WoodStone Open Nest Box (trees) 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	There is no suitable on-site habitat for any notable species of invertebrates (i.e., species-rich grassland). It is unlikely any notable species of invertebrates will use this site.	~0.1ha modified grassland may be removed during construction. The loss of such habitats is likely to be inconsequential to local invertebrate populations owing to their 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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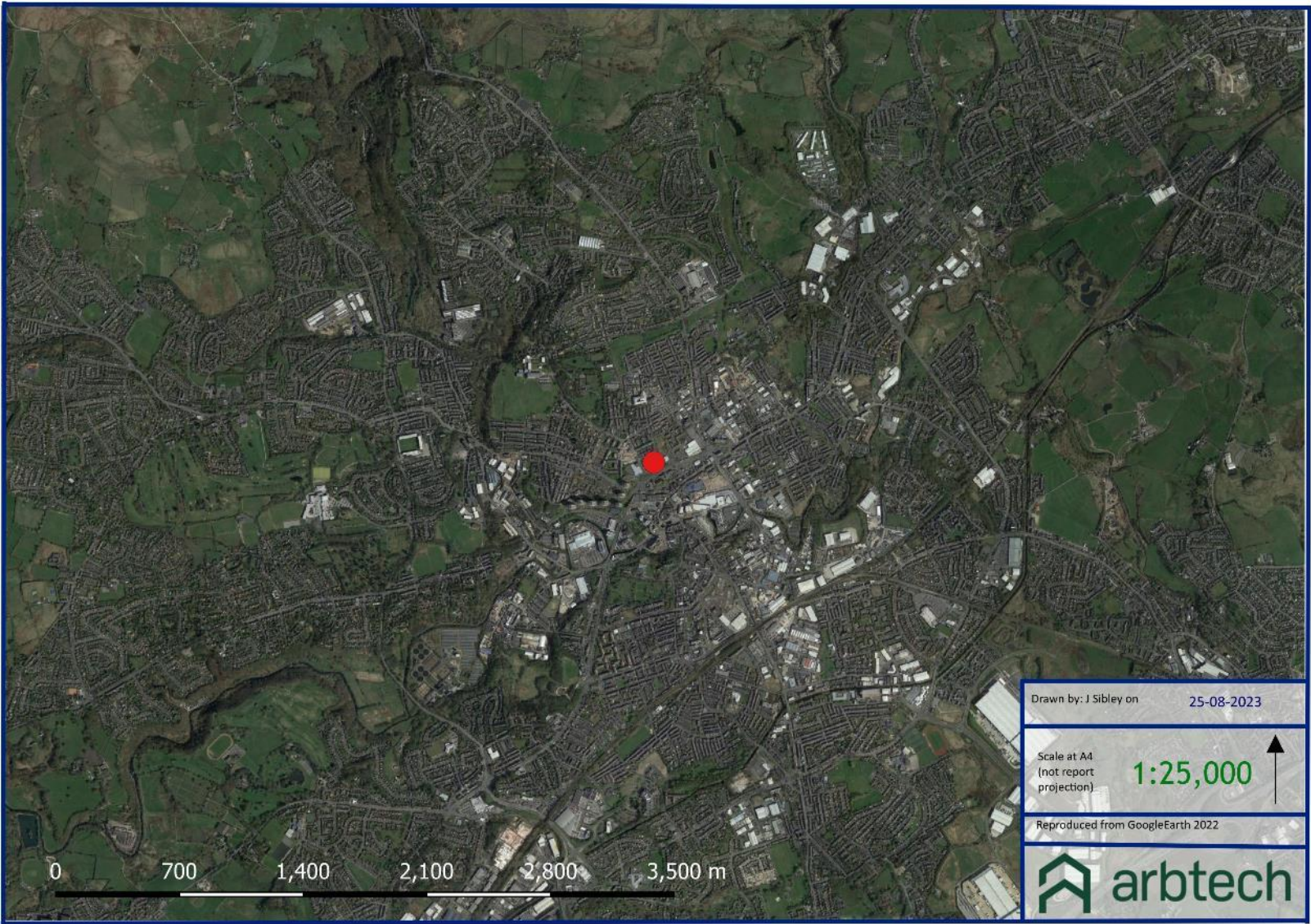
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Appendix 1: Proposed Development Plan

Not available at the time of writing this report.

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Appendix 2: Site Location Plan



Appendix 3a: Habitat Survey Plan



Appendix 3b: PRA 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 not 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 of 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.