



Indurent Management Ltd

Plot H4, Heywood Distribution Park, Pilsworth Road,

Heywood, Rochdale

Ecological Impact Assessment

July 2024

FPCR Environment and Design Ltd

Registered Office: Lockington Hall, Lockington, Derby DE74 2RH

Company No. 07128076. [T] 01509 672772 [E] mail@fpcr.co.uk [W] www.fpcr.co.uk

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CONTENTS

1.0	NON-TECHICAL SUMMARY	3
2.0	INTRODUCTION	4
3.0	LEGISLATION AND POLICY	4
4.0	METHODOLOGY.....	5
5.0	ECOLOGICAL BASELINE.....	10
6.0	DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME	22
7.0	IMPORTANT ECOLOGICAL FEATURES IMPACT ASSESSMENT	23
8.0	COMPENSATION & ENHANCEMENT	25
	APPENDIX A – RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICY AND GUIDANCE.....	27
	APPENDIX B – DETAILED SURVEY METHODOLOGY	36
	APPENDIX C BOTANICAL SPECIES LISTS	47
	APPENDIX D – EDNA RESULTS.....	58
	APPENDIX E; BREEDING BIRD REPORT	60

FIGURES

Figure 1: Site Location and Consultation Plan

Figure 2: UKHab Habitat Plan

Figure 3: Waterbody Location Plan

Figure 4: Breeding Bird Survey Results – Locations of Notable Species 2022

Figure 5: Breeding Bird Survey Results - Locations of Notable Species 2024

1.0 NON-TECHICAL SUMMARY

- 1.1 An Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) was undertaken following published guidelines on the likely effects upon biodiversity as a result of the proposals.
- 1.2 The assessment draws from a desk study and a UKHab survey and preliminary protected species survey of the Site and surrounding area.
- 1.3 The Site comprised predominantly of areas of developed land and associated formal landscaping. An area of rush dominated wet grassland was recorded within an undeveloped plot to the north, together with unmanaged neutral grassland recorded in mosaic with scrub and woodland noted at the plot edges.
- 1.4 The assessment identified the following ecological features which could be affected by proposals or warrant consideration due to the legal protection afforded them.
 - Railway Cutting at Heywood and Pilsworth Sites of Biological Importance
 - Other broadleaved Woodland
 - Invasive Species
 - Breeding Birds
 - Bats
 - Hedgehog
- 1.5 Proposals will not result in any residual effects on designated sites within the specified zone of influences.
- 1.6 Proposals will result in permanent losses of all habitats within the site. The habitats lost are predominantly of low ecological importance, with the exception of a young area of broadleaved woodland. The loss of all habitats within the Site will be appropriately compensated for through subsequent approval(s) and via the associated Biodiversity Net Gain Condition, which will secure a 10% gain in biodiversity value for the site.
- 1.7 A Biodiversity Net Gain Report has been prepared for the Site, which establishes the pre-development biodiversity value of the Site and outlines how the project could deliver a biodiversity net gain for the scheme, which would be secured by the Biodiversity Net Gain Condition, attached to subsequent approval(s) for the Site.
- 1.8 Prior to the maturation of the proposed on and offsite habitat creation and enhancement, secured by subsequent approval(s), the loss of the broadleaved woodland will result in a not-significant residual effect at a local level and the loss of habitats within the Site will result in a not significant negative effect on foraging and commuting bats.
- 1.9 Impacts will be minimised through careful control of construction activities through an industry best practice CEMP. As a result, all other predicted effects on important ecological features are predicted to be neutral.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

- 2.1 This EclA has been prepared by FPCR Environment and Design Limited on behalf of Indurent Management Ltd for an outline planning application at Plot H4, Heywood Distribution Park, Pilsworth Road, Heywood, Rochdale
- 2.2 This EclA has been prepared with reference to the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) EclA Guidelines¹. In line with this guidance, the EclA describes the assessment methodology; establishes the baseline conditions, currently existing at the Site and surroundings; the likely significant environmental effects associated with the proposed development; the mitigation measures required to prevent or reduce any impacts; the likely residual effects after these measures have been employed; the compensation measures required to offset any residual effects; and identifies opportunities available within the proposals to deliver ecological enhancement.

Site Location and Context

- 2.3 The Site is located within Heywood Distribution Park, in the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale (Central grid reference: SD837095). See Figure 1 for the Site location.
- 2.4 The Site is approximately 10.69 hectares in extent Habitats recorded within the Site comprised predominantly areas of developed land and associated formal landscaping. An area of rush dominated wet grassland was recorded within an undeveloped plot to the north, together with unmanaged neutral grassland recorded in mosaic with scrub and woodland noted at the plot edges.
- 2.5 The Site was surveyed previously by Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Ltd to inform a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) report in February 2017². Surveys carried out at the time which are considered within the scope of this assessment are included in Section 5 – Desk Study.

Proposals

- 2.6 Outline planning application for the development of land within Use Classes E(g)(iii) (industrial processes), B2 (general industrial), B8 (storage and distribution) and removal of existing structures and hard standing and associated works. All matters reserved for subsequent approval.

3.0 LEGISLATION AND POLICY

- 3.1 Detail on the relevant national and local policy and legislation for ecology in relation to development sites are provided in Appendix A. The national policy and legislation most relevant here are:
- Environment Act 2021.
 - Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) and Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 (The Habitat Regulations)

¹ CIEEM (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.

² Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Limited (February 2017) Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Unit M-N-400, Heywood Distribution Park.

relevant here in relation to Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs) and European Protected Species (EPS).

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA) relevant here in relation to Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs) and WCA protected species.
- Protection of Badgers Act 1992.
- Natural Environmental and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 in relation to various priority species and habitats.
- Hedgerow Regulations 1997 made under Section 97 of the Environment Act 1995.
- National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (2021)³.
- Local Planning Policy contained within the Rochdale Borough Council Local Plan and associated Supplementary Planning Documents (SPD) and within the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan 2022 to 2039 (2024).
- Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP); and
- Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC).

4.0 METHODOLOGY

Scope of Assessment

Assessment Approach

- 4.1 This assessment has been prepared with reference to The Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) in the United Kingdom published in 2018 by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). Baseline information and potential impacts have been quantified as far as practical to inform the assessment, supported by professional judgement and experience as appropriate. Where uncertainties exist, a precautionary approach has been adopted and a 'worse case' scenario approach assumed for the purposes of assessing impacts and recommending mitigation.
- 4.2 The significance of ecological impacts in relation to a proposal can be considered in relation to the importance of affected ecological features and the predicted magnitude of impact upon them.
- 4.3 This EclA considers statutory and non-statutory protected sites, habitats -including hedgerows, EPS and WCA protected species with focus on badgers, bats, breeding birds, great crested newts and reptiles, and consideration has been given to NERC Section 41 species, any rare or notable species or habitats and any non-native plants listed under WCA Schedule 9.
- 4.4 The main source of information for this assessment are:
 - Biological records (obtained from the relevant Local Biological Records centre)
 - Online sources of Ecological Data.
 - Review of legislation and land-use policies.

³ Department for Levelling Up, Homes and Communities. (2023) Revised National Planning Policy Framework. Available from: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

- A habitat and update preliminary protected species survey conducted on 30th May 2024, which updated surveys undertaken in 2022.
- Breeding bird surveys - undertaken between April and June 2022 with a single update survey undertaken in June 2024.
- Reptile surveys undertaken between April and May 2022
- GCN eDNA and HSI surveys undertaken on 21st April 2022
- A Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy (FPCR, 2024) has also been undertaken and should be read in conjunction with this report.

Zone of Influence

- 4.5 The CIEEM guidelines require the identification of a 'zone of influence' (Zol) within which the ecological features that may be affected by the proposed scheme can be identified. This will identify the potential impact of the development not just to the Site but beyond the boundaries of proposed scheme.
- 4.6 The Zol is determined by the source / type of impact, a potential pathway for that impact and the location and sensitivity of the important ecological feature beyond the boundary. For the majority of impacts identified as part of the proposed scheme, the Zol is generally considered as the application Site and immediately surrounding areas.
- 4.7 However, the Zol can also vary considerably depending upon the species potentially affected by the proposed scheme. For example, some species may be confined to a specific location whilst others, such as bats and birds are more mobile and can occupy much larger home ranges. The presence of dispersal barriers can also have an effect on the Zol such as roads or rivers which may either reduce the potential of animals crossing it or could cause a potential means of killing on injury. As such, this could isolate areas of potentially suitable habitat within the proposed scheme due to fragmentation. In each case this is considered in association with the nature and scale of the proposed scheme and informed by best practice guidance and professional judgement.
- 4.8 Specific study areas were identified for the desk study and field surveys to inform the valuation of ecological features and the selection of 'key' ecological features material to the assessment.

Objectives

Habitats

- 4.9 The objective of the habitat assessment was to was undertaken an assessment of the habitats that are currently present within the Site with regards to their relative conservation value.

Bats

- 4.10 The objective of the assessment was to gain an understanding of the current status of roosting bats on site. A low conservation status roost of common pipistrelles was recorded on site in 2016 within building 1. This building was demolished under licence from Natural England as part of a previous planning permission at the Site.

- 4.11 Surveys also included an assessment of the presence/ likely absence of roosting bats in trees both on and adjacent to the Site.

Birds

- 4.12 The objectives of the surveys were to:
- identify the presence of any designated nature conservation sites that support notable breeding bird assemblages within or in the vicinity of the Site;
 - identify the presence, species and distribution of breeding birds within the Site;
 - evaluate the conservation importance of habitats within the Site to local bird populations and identify any areas of ornithological interest and;
 - make recommendations to minimise the potential impact of development and to consider opportunities for additional mitigation, compensation, and enhancement where relevant.

Great Crested Newts

- 4.13 The objective of the habitat suitability index and eDNA survey was to assess the likely presence/absence of GCN in ponds within 250m of the site boundary.

Reptiles

- 4.14 The purpose of the surveys and subsequent assessment were to:
- ascertain the presence/likely absence of reptiles on the Site.
- and, where necessary:
- determine the size of any reptile populations identified;
 - determine any likely impacts on reptiles as a result of the development;
 - present a strategy for mitigation to minimise any impacts to reptiles during construction.

Desk Study

- 4.15 To support a field survey and compile existing baseline information relevant to the Site, ecological information comprising records of protected or notable species and sites designated for nature conservation interest, was sought from the Greater Manchester Records Centre.
- 4.16 In addition, the following resources were checked for additional information and context:
- Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website⁴;
 - Colour 1:25,000 OS base maps⁵;
 - Aerial photographs from Google Earth⁶.
- 4.17 The search area for biodiversity information was related to the significance of sites and species and potential zones of influence, as follows:

⁴ [Online]. <http://magic.defra.gov.uk/>

⁵ [Online]. www.ordnancesurvey.co.uk

⁶ [Online]. www.maps.google.co.uk

- A minimum of a 10km radius around the Site was searched for sites with an international statutory designation; Special Area of Conservation (SAC), Special Protection Area (SPA) and Ramsar sites.
 - A minimum of a 2km radius around the Site for sites of national/regional importance with a statutory designation of Site of Special Scientific Importance (SSSI) or National Nature Reserve (NNR).
 - Up to a 1km radius around the Site for sites of local importance with statutory designation of Local Nature Reserve (LNR), or non-statutory designation of Site of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC) or the equivalent Local Wildlife Site (LWS); and
 - A 2km radius around the Site for records of notable / protected species (i.e., including Species of Principal Importance [SPI] under S41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities [NERC] Act (2006) and local biodiversity action plan species).
- 4.18 Aerial imagery from Google Earth and government websites 'MAGIC' were used to search for ponds within 500m of the site.
- 4.19 When reporting consultation data, records were filtered to include only those from the previous twenty years (since 2002).
- 4.20 Further consideration of potential zones of influence in relation to statutory designated sites of International and National importance was made using Natural England's SSSI Impact Risk Zone Tool which outlines the likely zone of influence from impacts for a range of development types.
- 4.21 Previous ecology surveys conducted by Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Limited in 2014 and 2016 and included in the report titled "*Unit M-N-400, Heywood Distribution Park, Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, February 2017*", considered within the scope of this assessment include:
- A desktop and Extended Phase 1 Habitat survey, in June 2016.
 - A Ground-based Preliminary Roost Inspection of buildings (external only) and trees for signs of roosting bats in June 2016.
 - Evening bat emergence/dawn re-entry bat surveys, carried out on 26/08/16, 16/09/16 and 27/09/16
 - Bat transect activity surveys, and deployment of two static detectors on 13/07/16, 30/08/16 and 16/09/16
 - Presence/absence surveys for great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* in March/April 2014 and eDNA analysis in 2016.
 - Presence/likely absence reptile surveys in September 2016.

Field Survey

- 4.22 The UKHab and Preliminary Protected Species Scoping Survey was initially undertaken on the 23rd February 2022. Updated UKHab survey and detailed net gain condition assessments were undertaken on the 17th May 2022 and 30th May 2024.
- 4.23 Surveys were undertaken by Ian Hunter (MCIEEM) and Phil Newberry. Ian is an Associate Ecologist with over 13 years of experience in Ecological Consultancy who is experienced in botanical survey, having achieved a level 5 on the Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland's

(BSBI) Field Identification Skills Competency (FISC). Phil is a Senior Ecologist from FPCR. And holds a BSBI Field Identification Skills Certificate Level 4.

- 4.24 Detailed survey methodologies are provided in Appendix B.

Limitations

- 4.25 This assessment aims to provide baseline ecological data for the Site and as such presents an overview of the habitats and features present. Due to the transient and complex nature of ecosystems, no investigation can provide a complete representation or prediction of the natural environment present, however every effort has been made to ensure an accurate description of the Site in presented following best practice guidance, experience, and professional judgement.
- 4.26 The UkHab map (Figure 2) has been reproduced from detailed field notes and informed by aerial imagery, OS mapping and Site maps provided by the client. The accuracy of this figure is therefore ultimately guided by the accuracy of these sources and can only be relied upon to a certain degree of resolution.
- 4.27 Data provided by third party sources collated during the desktop study is generally made up from a wide range of sources including (but not limited to) those submitted by ecological consultancies, wildlife conservation organisations and Volunteers. As such, this data is typically focused on areas of known nature conservation, is reliant upon formal surveys having been undertaken within an area or the presence of an expert within the locality (particularly for invertebrate records) and as such this data can never be fully relied upon as a complete ecological dataset for any given area. Rather, this data is used as a guide to likely presence of notable ecological features and can never be relied upon for likely absence.
- 4.28 No other limitations specific to this assessment.

Assessment Methodology

- 4.29 The impact assessment has been carried out using guidance from CIEEM (2018). The impact assessment process involves:
- Identifying and characterising impacts.
 - Incorporating measures to avoid and mitigate (reduce) these impacts.
 - Assessing the significance of any residual effects after mitigation; and
 - Identifying appropriate compensation & enhancement measures to offset significant residual effects.
- 4.30 The starting point for the assessment of impacts is to determine the importance of ecological features and as such, which should be subject to detailed assessment. Ecological features can be important for a variety of reasons, for example, the quality of designated sites or habitats, habitat / species rarity, or their rate of decline (CIEEM, 2018).
- 4.31 The significance of ecological impacts in relation to a proposal can be considered in relation to the importance of affected ecological features and the predicted magnitude of impact upon them.
- 4.32 Full details of the methodology used to determine importance and impacts within this survey are in Appendix B.

- 4.33 Baseline information and potential impacts have been quantified as far as practical to inform the assessment, supported by professional judgement and experience as appropriate. Where uncertainties exist, a precautionary approach has been adopted and a 'worse case' scenario approach assumed for the purposes of assessing impacts and recommending mitigation.

5.0 ECOLOGICAL BASELINE

Desk Study (see figure 1)

Designated Sites

- 5.1 Rochdale Canal, which is designated at an international level as a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) is located 4.2km to the east of the Site and is designated for its population of the annex II species floating water-plantain *Luronium natans*. Given the distance of the Site and the SAC no direct or indirect impact pathways are considered likely, and this important ecological feature is scoped out of further assessment.
- 5.2 No further designated sites were noted within the project zone of influence.

Non-Statutory Sites

- 5.3 Two Sites of Biological Interest (SBI) lie within 1km of the site, the Railway Cutting at Heywood and Pilsworth. The railway cutting SBI is located approximately 55m north-west of the Site. It comprises c.6 ha of a mosaic of habitats which include neutral grassland, heathland, tall ruderal vegetation, scrub and young semi-natural broadleaved woodland. The lowland heath habitat is a UK Priority habitat and broadleaved woodland is a Greater Manchester Priority Habitat.
- 5.4 A second SBI, Pilsworth is located c. 600m south-west of the Site. It comprises of c.6 ha of ponds and lodges designated for their marginal vegetation and bird interest. These are a UK and local priority habitat. Other habitats present include broadleaved woodland, scrub and tall ruderal.
- 5.5 The two non-statutory sites recorded within the Zone of influence are each of importance at a **County scale**.

Protected/Notable Species

- 5.6 Three records were returned for the Site, Tree sparrow *Passer montanus* and snipe *Gallinago gallinago* were recorded on Site in 2009. The third record was for two common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* bats roosting within an on-site building in 2016 (Building-B1). No records of great crested newts were returned for within 1km of the Site.

Table 1: Consultation Records within 2km

Species	Conservation Status	Total Number of Records within 2km
Bats		
Common pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>	Regs, WCA Sch 5, LBAP,	79
Soprano pipistrelle <i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>	Regs, WCA Sch 5, LBAP, SPI	17
Pipistrelle species <i>Pipistrellus sp</i>	Regs, WCA Sch 5, LBAP,	15

Species	Conservation Status	Total Number of Records within 2km
Daubenton's bat <i>Myotis daubentonii</i>	Regs, WCA Sch 5, LBAP,	11
Myotis sp <i>Myotis sp</i>	Regs, WCA Sch 5, LBAP,	1
Noctule <i>Nyctalus noctula</i>	Regs, WCA Sch 5, LBAP, SPI	8
Other mammals		
Water vole <i>Arvicola amphibius</i>	SPI, WCA Sch5, LBAP	2
Hedgehog <i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>	SPI, WCA Sch6,	6
Brown hare <i>Lepus europaeus</i>	SPI	3
Lepidoptera		
Small heath <i>Coenonympha pamphilus</i>	SPI, BCP: High	1
White-letter hairstreak <i>Satyrus w-album</i>	SPI, BCP: High	18
Wall <i>Lasiommata megera</i>	SPI, BCP: High	2
Latticed heath <i>Chiasmia clathrata</i>	SPI	1
Cinnabar <i>Tyria jacobaeae</i>	SPI	15
Amphibians		
Great Crested Newt <i>Triturus cristatus</i>	Regs, WCA Sch 5, LBAP, SPI	19
Common toad <i>Bufo bufo</i>	SPI	4

Status Key: Regs = The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (As amended), WCA = Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), Sch5 = Schedule 5 of WCA, SPI = Species of Principal Importance, as listed under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006), BCP Butterfly Conservation Priority.

- 5.7 Almost 3000 records of schedule 1, BAP and red/amber list bird species were returned from the Greater Manchester Record centre within 2km of the Site. It was not possible to effectively display these records visually on the consultation plan. GMRC have asked that the location of schedule 1 species remain confidential, therefore information beyond the species present has not been included within this report. Schedule 1 species within the locality of Site include barn owl *Tyto alba*, common scoter *Melanitta nigra*, Corncrake *Crex crex*, goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*, green sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*, hobby *Falco Subbuteo*, kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*, little ringed plover *Charadrius dubius*, osprey *Pandion haliaetus*, peregrine *Falco peregrinus* and whopper swan *Cygnus cygnus*. In summary other bird species comprised 19 BAP species, 23 red list and 35 amber list species.

Habitats

UkHab Classification Survey

- 5.8 The locations of the habitats described below are illustrated in Figure 2: UkHab Plan. Botanical species lists are provided in Appendix C.

Other Broadleaved Woodland

- 5.9 The north-western boundary of the Site featured an area of woodland (W1 – Figure 2), which to the south featured young secondary growth, grading into a planted area to the north along the internal road. To the south the canopy was characterised by pole stage goat willow *Salix caprea* and wych elm *Ulmus glabra*, with planted white willow *Salix alba* locally frequent to the north-east. The understorey featured frequent wych elm, with goat willow, holly *Ilex aquifolium* and downy birch *Betula pubescens* noted at lower frequencies. Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. formed frequent patches throughout, with bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* also frequent, particularly to the east. Elsewhere the ground flora was sparse, comprising occasional Yorkshire-fog *Holcus lanatus* and honeysuckle *Lonicera periclymenum*.
- 5.10 To the north the woodland featured a canopy of planted trees predominately sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, with white poplar, English elm *Ulmus procera* agg. and ash *Fraxinus excelsior*. These trees were planted over an area of frequently mown modified grassland dominated by perennial rye-grass *Lolium perenne* (as described below).
- 5.11 Due to the relative age and species composition of the woodland and the lack of a typical woodland ground flora, this area of woodland would not be considered to represent Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland, a Habitat of Principal Importance (HPI) under the NERC Act 2006. However, given the potential for this habitat to develop into a habitat of biodiversity value and the role it potentially plays in providing ecological connectivity around the margins of the site it would be considered to be of importance at a **Local** scale.



Photograph 1: Other Broadleaved Woodland - south



Photograph 2: Other Broadleaved Woodland - north

Scrub

Mixed Scrub

- 5.12 An area of mixed scrub was recorded along the eastern boundary of the site (Sc1 – Figure 2). The canopy is open, characterised by hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, downy birch and goat willow, recorded in mosaic with dense bramble scrub, bracken and unmanaged grassland. The grassland was broadly consistent with the g3c5 - *Arrhenatherum* Grassland, described below, and was characterised by Yorkshire-fog, with occasional hairy sedge *Carex hirta* and cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*. Further south, this habitat grades into an extensive area of bramble scrub, which was noted along the boundary fence (Sc2 – Figure 2).



Photograph 3: Mixed Scrub – Open canopy



Photograph 4: Mixed Scrub – Open canopy

Introduced scrub

- 5.13 Within the north-eastern section of the site, the mixed scrub community, described above, grades into an area of closed canopy with a high proportion of non-native shrubs (Sc3 – Figure 2). Crack willow *Salix x fragilis* was present as tall standards, with a lower layer featuring frequent cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*, locally frequent tree cotoneaster *Cotoneaster frigidus* and rare Norway maple *Acer platanoides*. Native species, including hawthorn, goat willow, elder and guelder rose *Viburnum opulus* were included within the planting mix, but at low frequencies. At the margins of the habitat low structural planting was noted comprising of frequent snowberry *Symphoricarpos albus*, with Barberry *Berberis sp* and yellow stemmed dogwood *Cornus stolonifera 'Flaviramea'*.
- 5.14 To the north of the Site, within a landscaped island surrounded by internal roads an area of introduced scrub was recorded (Sc4 – Figure 2). Cherry laurel was the most abundant species recorded within the central section, together with hawthorn, guelder rose and elder at low frequencies. The margins of the habitat featured closely trimmed lower growing shrubs such as snowberry, bridewort *Spiraea salicifolia agg.* Wilson's honeysuckle *Lonicera nitida* and the invasive Japanese rose *Rosa rugosa*.
- 5.15 The intrinsic conservation value of these habitats would be considered to be low and are not considered to be important within the context of this assessment.



Photograph 5: Introduced Scrub Sc3



Photograph 6: Introduced Scrub Sc4

Other Neutral Grassland

g3c8 *Holcus-Juncus* neutral grassland

- 5.16 The northern section of the Site featured a large undeveloped plot, over which a damp unmanaged neutral grassland community was recorded (Parcel ref 4 – Figure 2). Throughout the sward was characterised by hard rush *Juncus inflexus* which was frequent to locally abundant, with frequent Yorkshire-fog and sweet vernal-grass *Anthoxanthum odoratum* and reed canary-grass *Phalaris arundinacea*, soft-rush *Juncus effusus*, and hairy sedge at lower frequencies.
- 5.17 To the east (quadrats 5-10), rushes were dominant, forming a tall dense sward with low growing and scrambling species scattered between the tussocks including occasional greater bird's-foot-trefoil *Lotus pedunculatus* and creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, marsh bedstraw *Galium palustre* and creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*. Further west (quadrats 1-4) and a small section to the north east (quadrat 11), higher levels of disturbance were noted and the rushes were less frequent, interspersed with a fine leaved grassland community. In this area red clover *Trifolium pratense*, meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris* and oxeye daisy *Leucanthemum vulgare* were all occasional to locally frequent.
- 5.18 Pointed spear-moss *Calliergonella cuspidata* was frequent throughout and the community overall featured a number of neutral grassland indicator species such as meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis*, which was recorded occasionally, with the following species noted as rarities: self-heal *Prunella vulgaris*, glaucous sedge *Carex flacca*, cuckooflower *Cardamine pratensis* and hairy tare *Ervilia hirsuta*.
- 5.19 The grassland was classified broadly as UKHab community g3c8 *Holcus-Juncus* neutral grassland, but with localised occurrences of some species associates of g3c6 *Lolium-Cynosurus* neutral grassland (red clover, meadow buttercup and oxeye daisy) to the west and f2b Purple moor grass and rush pastures (marsh bedstraw, greater bird's-foot-trefoil and marsh thistle) to the east. However, of these indicator species, the detailed botanical surveys recorded only greater bird's-foot trefoil as occasional within the quadrats, with all other indicators rare. Additionally, on average across the 11 quadrats recorded an average of 5.45 species were recorded, as such the community was assessed as being in poor condition. The community is likely the result of abandonment of a heavily disturbed plot, which has allowed sufficient bare ground and moisture for the rushes to colonise the site quickly and establish in such abundance.



Photograph 7: g3c8 *Holcus-Juncus* neutral grassland - West



Photograph 8: g3c8 *Holcus-Juncus* neutral grassland - east

g3c5 Arrhenatherum neutral grassland

- 5.20 A strip of unmanaged neutral grassland was recorded running through the centre of the site, between the two plots, extending northwards along the eastern boundary, before grading into the bramble and mixed scrub communities described above. These areas of grassland were broadly classified as UKHab community g3c5 *Arrhenatherum* neutral grassland, but with cock's-foot and red fescue *Festuca rubra* the characteristic species in this instance.
- 5.21 Along the eastern boundary (parcel ref 2 – Figure 2) the sward was characterised by an abundance of red fescue, along with frequent Yorkshire-fog, cock's-foot and field wood-rush *Luzula campestris*. Hard rush, false oat-grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* and creeping bent formed locally frequent patches with sweet vernal-grass, hairy sedge and smooth meadow-grass *Poa pratensis* were minor components of the sward. The only herbs recorded in any abundance were oxeye daisy and greater bird's-foot-trefoil, which formed frequent patches, with occasional meadow vetchling and meadow buttercup. Tall herbs such as creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense* and rosebay willowherb *Chamaenerion angustifolium* were locally frequent and scrub was encroaching throughout the habitat, particularly bramble, downy birch and hawthorn. A single spike of common twayblade *Neottia ovata* was noted within this community within the 2022 survey but was not noted in 2024. The habitat also featured a significant amount of dumped material, litter and brash piles.
- 5.22 Along the grassland strip recorded through the centre of the site (parcel refs 3 + 6 – Figure 2) cock's-foot, meadow foxtail *Alopecurus pratensis* and red fescue were co-dominants within the sward, with locally frequent tufted hair-grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, hard rush and creeping bent. Herbs played a less prominent role, with only oxeye daisy being locally frequent and common vetch *Vicia sativa* occasional. Species noted as rarities included meadow vetchling, cow parsley *Anthriscus sylvestris*, red clover, colts-foot *Tussilago farfara*, cat's-ear *Hypochaeris radicata*, common ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris* and common knapweed *Centaurea nigra*.
- 5.23 A small strip of grassland was noted to the north of the Site (parcel ref 5 – Figure 2). Yorkshire-fog was characteristic, along with red fescue and locally frequent soft-rush. The grassland was heavily disturbed in places and featured occasional creeping thistle, field horsetail *Equisetum arvense* and ribwort plantain. Bracken was abundant to the west and the community featured high scrub cover, particularly bramble.
- 5.24 The unmanaged *Arrhenatherum* and *Holcus-Juncus* neutral grassland communities recorded within the site are common and widespread habitats and are a direct result of abandonment. Both communities were relatively species poor, although had an abundance of herbs locally. Both communities have the potential to support protected and notable species (see below). They are of limited intrinsic biodiversity value and are not considered to be important ecological feature within the context of this assessment. Nevertheless, their value has been accounted for within the Biodiversity Net Gain calculations and their loss will be appropriately compensated for within the wider net gain strategy for the site.



Photograph 9: g3c5 Arrhenatherum neutral grassland (Parcel ref 2)



Photograph 10: g3c5 Arrhenatherum neutral grassland (Parcel ref 3)

Modified grassland

- 5.25 Several discrete areas of modified grassland were recorded, primarily in association with the formal landscaping around the Site (Parcel refs 1 – Figure 2). These grasslands were frequently managed, with a low even sward dominated by perennial ryegrass. Springy turf-moss *Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus* was frequent throughout these grasslands, with white clover *Trifolium repens*, red fescue and creeping buttercup occasional associates. To the south, a common feature of this habitat was planted standard trees, predominantly sycamore and common lime *Tilia x europaea*.
- 5.26 The modified grasslands within the Site are a common and ubiquitous habitat both nationally and locally and is therefore considered to be of negligible nature conservation value and has not considered to be important within the context of this assessment.



Photograph 11: g3c5 Arrhenatherum neutral grassland (Parcel ref 6).



Photograph 12: Modified Grassland - south.

Line of Trees.

- 5.27 A line of trees was recorded towards the centre of the site (LoT 1, Figure 2), bordering the southern plot. Mature goat willow formed an almost continuous canopy, together with early mature sycamore and pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*. To the north, a gappy line of trees was noted along a fence line and featured frequent young grey willow *Salix cinerea* with goat willow and horse chestnut *Aesculus hippocastanum* noted at lower frequencies.

- 5.28 Although they would provide some function as connective corridors across the site, the intrinsic conservation value of these habitats would be considered to be low and are not considered to be important within the context of this assessment.

Developed land; sealed surface

- 5.29 The majority of the Site featured developed land associated with the existing unit to the south and the lorry park to the north.

Species and species groups

Plants

Notable Plants

- 5.30 No records for notable plant species were returned within the search area. Species identified during the UKHab survey were all common and widespread.
- 5.31 The previous Waterman (2017) report for the Site, identified a large populations of common spotted orchid *Dactylorhiza fuchsii* and early marsh orchid *Dactylorhiza incarnata* within the site. Common spotted orchid is a common and widespread species both nationally and locally, with early marsh orchid being widespread but a relatively uncommon plant nationally and locally. Both species are listed as of least concern on the most recent red list for England⁷ and neither species is listed on the list of rare or scarce plants in Vice County 59⁸. As part of the previous application, it was agreed with GMEU that the populations of the two orchid species with the site would be translocated to areas of retained grassland prior to the commencement of the Development.
- 5.32 One of the areas of grassland where these populations were noted in large numbers, was no longer present during the Site surveys with the other locations being associated with the existing g3c5 *Arrhenatherum* grassland to the east of the Site. The initial site survey was conducted in February, a sub-optimal time of year to record these species as the basal leaves only emerge from mid march. A thorough search was made of all grassland habitats within the Site was made during the updated UKHab survey and condition assessment, undertaken in May 2022 and May 2024. During these surveys no evidence of common spotted orchid or early marsh-orchid were noted, with the only orchid species recorded being a single spike of common twayblade in 2022.
- 5.33 The grassland habitats in which these orchid species were previously recorded have been unmanaged since the previous surveys were undertaken on the site, resulting in a tussocky sward, with a dense thatch in places. There has also been significant scrub encroachment across the habitat. As a result, conditions within the site may no longer be favourable for common and early marsh orchid.
- 5.34 Given that neither orchid species was recorded during the updated UKHab survey of the site undertaken in May 2024 these species are now considered to be absent from the site and are not considered further within this assessment.

⁷ Stroth, P.A., Leach, S.J., August, T.A., Walker, K.J., Pearman, D.A., Rumsey, F.J., Harrower, C.A., Fay, M.F., Martin, J.P., Pankhurst, T., Preston, C.D. & Taylor, I. 2014. A Vascular Plant Red List for England. Botanical Society of Britain and Ireland, Bristol

⁸ <https://bsbi.org/lancashire>

Invasive Species

- 5.35 A single Schedule 9 species was identified during the survey. Japanese rose *Rosa rugosa* was recorded at the Site within introduced scrub to the north of the Site. Due to the legislative considerations associated with this invasive species it warrants inclusion within the assessment, but the geographic frame of reference is not a consideration.

Birds

- 5.36 A total of 27 bird species were recorded during the breeding bird survey. Of these, 14 appear on one or more of the following and are hereafter referred to as 'notable species'.
- BoCC Red or Amber list;
 - Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006; and
 - Schedule 1 of the WCA
- 5.37 Of the 27 bird species recorded, six were confirmed breeding within the Site, including notable woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*, song thrush *Turdus philomelos*, starling *Sturnus vulgaris* and skylark *Alauda arvensis*.
- 5.38 Four were considered probable breeders, including the notable species reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*.
- 5.39 The remaining 15 species recorded were considered possible breeders (11 – including notable species; stock dove *Columba oenas*, whitethroat *Curruca communis*, wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, mistle thrush *Turdus viscivorus*, dunnoek *Prunella modularis* and greenfinch *Chloris chloris*) or non-breeders (6).
- 5.40 Table 2 provides a summary of the notable bird species within the Site. Full details are included in Appendix E.

Table 2: Summary of Bird Results

Species	Legal / Conservation Status	Peak Count / No. of Survey Visits Recorded	Recent Status in Greater Manchester
Stock Dove <i>Columba oenas</i>	Amber List	1 flyover/1	Fairly common resident
Woodpigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>	Amber List	8/3	Abundant resident and passage migrant
Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Amber List	2 flyover/1	Abundant resident and winter visitor, uncommon breeder
Herring Gull <i>Larus argentatus</i>	Red List NERC S.41	41 flyovers/3	Common winter visitor and passage migrant
Skylark <i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Red List NERC S.41	2/3	Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor
Whitethroat <i>Curruca communis</i>	Amber List	1/1	Common summer visitor

Species	Legal / Conservation Status	Peak Count / No. of Survey Visits Recorded	Recent Status in Greater Manchester
Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Amber List	1/1	Abundant resident
Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Red List NERC S.41	16/2	Abundant resident and winter visitor
Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Amber List NERC S.41	1/2	Common resident and winter visitor
Mistle Thrush <i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Red List	1/1	Common resident
Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	Amber List NERC S.41	1/1	Abundant resident
Greenfinch <i>Chloris chloris</i>	Red List	2/2	Common resident
Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Amber List NERC S.41	3/3	Fairly common resident and partial migrant
Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Amber List	1/1	Fairly common passage migrant and summer visitor, occasional breeder
Lesser Black-Backed Gull	Amber List	20/1	Common passage migrant and winter visitor, uncommon resident

- 5.41 The large open area of grassland provided breeding and foraging opportunities for small numbers of skylark and reed bunting. Skylark was confirmed breeding on site in 2022 due to the behaviour of adults indicating an occupied nest, during the surveys the peak count of skylark's recorded was 2 individuals, indicating that there is a single pair nesting within this area. A peak count of 3 reed buntings were similarly recorded within this area and considered a probable breeder of this area.
- 5.42 The scrub, scattered trees and broadleaved woodland bordering the site and field boundaries, supported common and widespread generalist species typical of this habitat including providing breeding opportunities for Dunnock, Song Thrush and Mistle Thrush.

Invertebrates

- 5.43 Habitats on Site offer limited value for notable invertebrate species. However, the grassland, woodland and scrub habitats will provide foraging and breeding resources for a range of common invertebrate species.

Notable invertebrates are scoped out of this assessment.

Amphibians

- 5.44 The data search returned 19 records for great crested newt (GCN) and 4 for Common Toad, within 2km of the Site. None refer to the Site directly. The closest for a common toad was located approximately 0.45km west of the Site. The closest GCN record was approximately 1.25km south

of the Site and was for a medium population recorded in 2004. No GCN records have been returned within 2km of the Site since 2010

- 5.45 The unmanaged grassland, woodland and scrub habitats provide suitable terrestrial habitat for great crested newts. No suitable breeding habitat was present on Site.
- 5.46 Figure 3 is the waterbody location Three ponds are present within 250m of the Site boundary namely, two balancing ponds located to the south-east of the Site (P2 and P3), a shallow pond within the footprint of a demolished building to the south-west (P1). A further pond c.300m to the west (P4).
- 5.47 Previous aquatic and eDNA surveys for presence/absence of GCN were carried out by Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Limited in 2014 (P1, P2 and P3) and 2016 (P1, P2, P3 and P4). Both surveys returned a negative result for GCN from all of the surveyed ponds. Smooth newts were present in P1, P2 and P3 during the 2014 aquatic survey.
- 5.48 Table 3 below provides a summary of the HSI scores for each pond surveyed.

Table 3. Pond Photos and HSI Scores

Ref.	Photo Reference	HSI Score	Approx. Distance from Study Boundary
P1		0.47 - Poor	170m
P2		0.74 - Good	140m

Ref.	Photo Reference	HSI Score	Approx. Distance from Study Boundary
P3		0.74 - Good	160m
P4		0.74 – Good	300m

eDNA Sampling and Analysis

- 5.49 Water samples were taken from P1, 2, 3 and 4 on the 21st April 2022.
- 5.50 Results were returned as negative for great crested newt DNA within all ponds, confirming continued absence of great crested newts. A copy of the results from FERA can be found in Appendix D
- 5.51 Impacts on great crested newts are therefore scoped out of this assessment.

Reptiles

- 5.52 Suitable reptile habitat was identified within scrub and woodland edges and tussocky grassland. There are no local records for reptiles and previous presence/absence reptile surveys carried out by Waterman Infrastructure & Environment Limited in 2016 found no reptiles.
- 5.53 During the update surveys undertaken by FPCR in 2022 no reptile species were recorded. Therefore, impacts to reptiles are scoped out of this assessment.

Bats

Roosting Bats

- 5.54 Trees within the Site boundary were assessed as having negligible potential to support bat roosts. The building previously present within the Site is no longer present as it was demolished under licence from Natural England as part of a previous planning permission at the Site.

- 5.55 Therefore, roosting bats have been scoped out of this assessment.

Commuting and Foraging Bats

- 5.56 The woodland, trees and scrub recorded on the periphery of the Site were considered to provide some suitable foraging and commuting habitat for common and widespread bat species. The previous activity surveys undertaken in July 2016 recorded commuting bats with only occasional foraging by common pipistrelle and Myotis bat species.

Other mammals

- 5.57 Hedgehog records were returned within 1km. Suitable hedgehog foraging, and hibernation habitat is present on Site within woodland, tussocky grassland and scrub. Whilst no specific surveys have been undertaken or are considered to be necessary, this species are still relatively widespread in the UK and it is fair to assume presence on account of suitable habitat being present. However, the declining status of this species means that they are considered to be of Local value and should be scoped into the impact assessment.
- 5.58 Brown Hare and water vole records were also returned within 1km. Habitats on Site are unlikely to support brown hare and no suitable habitat for water vole was identified.

Summary of Important Ecological Features

- 5.59 A summary of the ecological features that have been determined as requiring detailed assessment is provided in Table 4.

Table 4 Summary of Important Ecological Features and their Relative Geographical Importance

Ecological Feature	Geographical / Ecological Frame of Reference
Railway Cutting at Heywood and Pilsworth SBI	County
Other broadleaved Woodland	Local
Breeding Birds	Local
Bats (commuting and foraging)	Local
Hedgehog	Local

6.0 DESCRIPTION OF THE PROPOSED SCHEME

- 6.1** Outline planning application for the development of land within Use Classes E(g)(iii) (industrial processes), B2 (general industrial), B8 (storage and distribution) and removal of existing structures and hard standing and associated works. All matters reserved for subsequent approval.
- 6.2 As proposals are for an outline application, with all matter reserved for subsequent approval. This assessment has been based on the impacts associated with the submitted parameters plan (23103-UMC-ZZZZ-SI-DR-A-0648-P.07), which identifies broad development zones, with green infrastructure. Subsequent approvals for the site will incorporate additional green infrastructure, as shown in the three submitted illustrative site plans and would be expected to provide additional mitigation and compensatory habitats.

7.0 IMPORTANT ECOLOGICAL FEATURES IMPACT ASSESSMENT

- 7.1 The status of the important ecological features identified on Site have been reviewed against the proposals and intrinsic mitigation to determine whether there are any impact pathways to IEFs and whether any of these will lead to a likely significant effect in Table 5. The requirement for additional mitigation measures above the intrinsic mitigation has been considered for each of the IEFs where they can reduce the scale of negative effects or where they can encourage a positive effect.

Table 5: Assessment of Effects on Important Ecological Features

Important Ecological Feature: Railway Cutting at Heywood and Pilsworth SBI	
Assessment of Impacts	Pilsworth SBI is separated from the Site by a significant distance (the closest point being 600m from the site boundary) and the Site does not share direct hydrological connectivity to the SBI. As such, no pathway for effect has been identified as part of this assessment and it is considered effects on this statutory site would be Neutral. The proposed enabling works have the potential to increase the amount of airborne dust, particularly in periods of dry weather. In the absence of mitigation, dust deposition could result in damage to vegetation and potentially affect associated fauna. Where impacts are severe, some species may disperse from affected areas in the short-term. It is considered that Railway Cutting at Heywood SBI, which is located at a minimum distance of 55m from the site boundary, has the potential to be impacted by dust deposition.
Mitigation	Impacts resulting from dust deposition will be minimised through careful control of construction activities through an industry best practice CEMP.
Residual Effects	With due consideration to appropriate mitigation it is considered that the residual effect on non-statutory designated sites within the specified zone of influence would be Neutral

Important Ecological Feature: Other Broadleaved Woodland	
Assessment of Impacts	Proposals will result in the direct loss of 0.17ha of woodland from the site.
Mitigation	None
Residual Effects	The loss the southern extent of the woodland equates to a small proportion of the available young woodland / scrub resource within the local area. The loss of this habitat will also reduce the ability of the typical species associated within the habitat, to move through the local landscape. As such, prior to the compensation measures to be outlined within the Biodiversity Net Gain strategy for the Site, this would be considered a not-significant negative effect at a Local scale .

Important Ecological Feature: Invasive Species – Japanese Rose	
Assessment of Impacts	Japanese rose is listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), which imparts a legal obligation for no action to take place which might result in this species being caused to grow in the wild. Furthermore, the presence of this species is undesirable for biodiversity value of the Site.
Mitigation	The CEMP will include a strategy for the monitoring and eradication or control of this

	species prior to, during and after development.
Residual Effects	Control and removal of this species will be a not significant positive effect.

Important Ecological Feature:	Breeding Birds
Assessment of Impacts	<u>Habitat loss</u> The Site proposals includes the total loss of the neutral grassland habitats on site as well as the majority of scrub and a small area of woodland. The individual species recorded on site that are arguably the most vulnerable to impacts from habitat loss/change are the eight species that are considered to be of Local importance. These comprise notable species that are either specially protected, appear on the BoCC Red/Amber lists and/or listed as a NERC Priority Species and were recorded in locally important numbers. The loss of the neutral grassland will lead to a loss of skylark and reed bunting as breeders on site. Therefore, is considered that the development of the site will lead to an adverse impact on the ground nesting species recorded. The loss of this habitat will also reduce the overall availability of foraging resources for starling. The scale of the adverse impacts will be reduced by the abundance of further suitable habitat in the wider landscape to the Site, as well as the enhancement to offsite areas as part of the biodiversity offsetting required for the Site. <u>Disturbance</u> Construction operations have the potential to disturb birds using the development area of the Site for roosting, foraging, and breeding. Operations likely to disturb breeding birds include noise and displacement during vegetation clearance, initial ground works and some construction activities. During the breeding season disturbance may lead to nest desertion or the avoidance of the area and reduce the suitability of retained nesting areas, such as the retained hedgerows or woodland edge. Whilst there is some potential for breeding success to be reduced, this is not expected to affect the local conservation status of the majority of the bird species using the survey area for breeding
Mitigation	<u>Habitat loss</u> The layout of the development is currently reserved for a subsequent planning application, which will include a habitat creation and enhancement strategy for the Site. As part of the Biodiversity Net Gain Condition, the habitats lost to proposals require compensation on a like-for-like or like-for-better basis and as such the final Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy will include the delivery of a mixture of mixed scrub, wildflower-rich grassland, native hedgerows and woodland units. The provision of mixed scrub, hedgerows and wildflower rich grassland will provide mitigation for the loss of foraging and breeding habitats for a range of common and generalist bird species. Hedgerow and scrub planting should comprise a diversity of native species, preferably fruit and nut-bearing species. Recommended shrub species include, but are not limited to, hawthorn <i>Crataegus monogyna</i>, dog-rose <i>Rosa canina</i> agg., blackthorn <i>Prunus spinosa</i>, holly <i>Ilex aquifolium</i>, guelder-rose <i>Viburnum opulus</i> and dogwood <i>Cornus sanguinea</i>. Where possible, recently planted hedgerows within the green infrastructure should include grassy margins on either side, to provide nesting and foraging for birds. <u>Disturbance</u> To avoid disturbance to breeding birds, ground clearance works, and vegetation should be undertaken prior to the bird-breeding season (March to August, inclusive). If this is not possible, the area will be checked prior to removal of vegetation or ground works by an experienced ecologist. If active nests are found, vegetation will be left untouched and suitably buffered from works until all birds have fledged. Specific advice will be provided prior to undertaking the clearance. This would be a statutory requirement due to the protection of all nesting birds and their nests under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981

	(as amended). A suitably experienced ecologist would supervise this.
Residual Effects	Prior to the maturation of the proposed on and offsite habitat creation and enhancement, it is considered that the loss of habitats within the Site, will result in a Not Significant Negative Effect at a Local scale .

Important Ecological Feature: Bats	
Assessment of Impacts	Proposals will result in the loss of all of the habitats within the Site, including 0.17ha of other broadleaved woodland. Bat activity levels recorded during the previous surveys, were generally low across the site. The loss of the on-site habitats will reduce the available foraging resource. Impacts on foraging and commuting bats are possible as a result of increased levels of artificial light, particularly along created habitats.
Mitigation	On Site habitat creation will provide a range of foraging and commuting habitats for bats. This will include the creation a range of scrub habitats and hedgerows along the boundaries of the Site. In addition, the Biodiversity Net Gain Strategy will outline the habitat creation and enhancement measures proposed for offsite habitats located in proximity to the Site. These measures will increase the amount and quality of semi-natural habitats in the local areas which will have a positive impact on the available foraging resources for bats. The detailed lighting strategy for the site will take into account the best practice guidance set out by the Bat Conservation Trust and the Institute of Lighting Professionals in 2023, 'Bats and Artificial Lighting in the UK to ensure that existing and new habitat resources are not negatively affected by artificial lighting during the operational phase.
Residual Effects	Prior to the maturation of the proposed on and offsite habitat creation and enhancement, it is considered that the loss of habitats within the Site, will result in a Not Significant Negative Effect at a Local scale on the common and widespread species utilising the Site.

Important Ecological Feature: Hedgehog	
Assessment of Impacts	There is a risk of harm to hedgehog during the construction phase.
Mitigation	All wild mammals are protected by the Wild Mammals Protection Act (1996). To prevent potential suffering to mammals, which could occur during the construction phase, the CEMP will include control measures to reduce the likelihood of harm.
Residual Effects	Neutral

8.0 COMPENSATION & ENHANCEMENT

Biodiversity Net Gain

- 8.1 The planning application is accompanied by a standalone Biodiversity Net Gain report which provides a detailed appraisal of the baseline biodiversity value of the Site, as determined through detailed UKHab survey and condition assessment and by use of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.
- 8.2 In summary, the Biodiversity Net Gain report has determined that the Site has a current biodiversity value of **21.48 habitat units, 0.41 hedgerow units and 0 watercourse units**.

- 8.3 A Provisional Biodiversity Net Gain calculation was then completed for the Site, with the onsite post-development habitats based on the submitted parameters plan (23103-UMC-ZZZZ-SI-DR-A-0648-P.07), which identifies broad development zones, with green infrastructure. As such, the Biodiversity Net Gain calculation submitted with the application represents a low value 'benchmark' against which future Reserved Matters approvals would improve upon.
- 8.4 The Biodiversity Net Gain report goes on to outline habitat enhancement measures for three offsite compensation areas, located in close proximity to the Site which could be secured as part of the net gain condition attached to any planning permission for the proposed development scheme. This would contribute significantly to providing a measurable net gain for the Site. The offsite compensation areas baseline consists of 12.71 habitat units, with post enhancement works resulting in 28.24 habitat units and as such has the potential to deliver 15.53 biodiversity units.
- 8.5 Overall, this equates to a 3.62 unit loss in habitat units and a 0.41 unit loss in hedgerow units, which is a 16.87% loss in habitat units and a 100% loss in hedgerow units. **Subsequent approval(s) would therefore require an additional 5.77 habitat units and 0.45 hedgerow units to deliver a 10% gain for the Site.** However, subsequent approval(s) for the site will incorporate additional green infrastructure, as demonstrated in the three submitted illustrative site plans.
- 8.6 The Biodiversity Net Gain report highlighted additional habitat creation measures which could be included within the subsequent Reserved Matters approval(s) green infrastructure in order to deliver a 10% gain and satisfy the trading rules. Alternatively, the use of offsite credits from a third party supplier could be used to deliver a gain.
- 8.7 Given the above, it is concluded that proposals can deliver a biodiversity net gain for the scheme, which would be secured by the Biodiversity Net Gain Condition, attached to any planning permission for the proposed development scheme.

APPENDIX A – RELEVANT LEGISLATION, POLICY AND GUIDANCE

The Environment Act 2021;

Relevant elements in the Act include:

- All new developments to deliver 10% increase in biodiversity (biodiversity net gains), to be managed for at least 30 years (reviewable by the Secretary of State)
- Biodiversity Gain Site Register to be implemented and maintained for at least 30 years after the Site scheme has completed, subject to review
- Introduction of Local Nature Recovery Strategies (LNRSs) – new spatial strategies to cover the entirety of England – led by a “responsible authority” in each area. Statutory guidance to be given to Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) explaining how they should take account of the LNRSs
- Introduction of a new Species Conservation Strategy – which places a duty on LPAs to cooperate with Natural England and other LPAs etc to safeguard the future of ‘at risk’ species
- Introduction of the 5 Principles to which organisations must have regard: (i) Integration (environmental protection should be integrated into the making of policies); (ii) Prevention (preventative action should be taken to avert environmental damage); (iii) Precautionary (a precautionary approach should be taken to the possibility of environmental harm); (iv) Rectification At Source (where possible any environmental harm should be rectified at source); and (v) Polluter Pays (the person(s) who causes the harm must suffer the financial penalty both in terms of mitigation and compensation)
- Long-term (at least 15 years, starting in 2022) legally binding targets on air quality, biodiversity, water, resource efficiency and waste reduction

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006) places a duty on the Secretary of State to publish, review and revise lists of living organisms and types of habitat in England that are of principal importance for the purpose of conserving English biodiversity, and to consult Natural England before doing so.

The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.

Habitats

The degree to which habitats and species receive consideration within the planning system relies on many mechanisms, including:

- Inclusion within a specific policy, for example veteran trees, ancient woodland and linear habitats within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), or local planning policies.
- A non-statutory Site designation (e.g., Local Wildlife Site).

- Habitats considered as Habitats of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity and species considered as Species of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity as listed within Section 41 of the NERC Act (2006); and
- Habitats identified as being a Priority Habitat and species identified as being a Priority Species within the local Biodiversity Action Plan.

Protected/Notable Species

Principal pieces of legislation protecting wild species are Part 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Some species, for example badgers, also have their own protective legislation (Protection of Badger Act 1992). The impact that this legislation has on the Planning system is outlined in ODPM 06/2005 Government Circular: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation – Statutory Obligations and their Impact within the Planning System.

This guidance states that as the presence of protected species is a material consideration in any planning decision and it is therefore essential that the presence or otherwise of protected species, and the extent to which they are affected by proposals, is established prior to planning permission being granted. Furthermore, where protected species are present and proposals may result in harm to the species or its habitat, steps should be taken to ensure the long-term protection of the species, such as through attaching appropriate planning conditions for example.

In addition to protected species, there are those that are otherwise of conservation merit, such as those listed as species of principal importance for the purpose of conserving biodiversity under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. These are recognised in the NPPF which advises that when determining planning applications, LPA's should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying a set of principles including:

- If significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided, adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused.
- Development proposals where the primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be encouraged.

Badgers

Badgers are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. It is illegal to wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or attempt to do so; to intentionally or recklessly interfere with a badger sett by damaging or destroying it; to obstruct access, or any entrance of, a badger sett and to disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett.

A badger sett is defined as '*any structure or place, which displays signs indicating current use, by a badger.*' This can include culverts, pipes and holes under sheds, piles of boulders, old mines and quarries, etc. 'Current use' does not simply mean 'current occupation' and for licensing purposes it is defined as 'any sett within an occupied badger territory regardless of when it may have last been used'.

Licences are granted by Natural England to interfere with badger setts for development purposes. Licences are not normally issued during the breeding season, which is between 30th November and 1st July, and cannot be issued retrospectively.

Birds

The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) is the principal legislation affording protection to UK wild birds. Under this legislation all birds, their nests and eggs are protected bylaw and it is an offence, with certain exceptions to recklessly or intentionally:

- Kill, injure or take any wild bird.
- Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while in use or being built.
- Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.

Species listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) are specially protected at all times.

Great Crested Newts

Great crested newts are afforded full protection as a species listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Under regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulated 2017 (as amended) it is illegal to:

- deliberately capture, injure or kill any wild animal of European Protected Species (EPS),
- deliberately disturb wild animals of an EPS (affecting ability to survive, breed or rear young) – disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young,
- deliberately disturb wild animals of an EPS (impairing ability to migrate or hibernate) – disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely to impair their ability in the case of hibernating or migratory species to hibernate or migrate,
- deliberately disturb wild animals of an EPS (affecting local distribution and abundance) – disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong,
- deliberately disturb wild animals of an EPS (whilst occupying a structure or place used for shelter or protection) – intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it used for shelter or protection,
- damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of a wild animal an EPS.

Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) it is illegal to:

- recklessly or intentionally kill, injure or take any wild animals included in Schedule 5.
- recklessly or intentionally damage or destroy, or obstruct access to any structure or place which ant wild animal included in Schedule 5 used for shelter or protection,
- recklessly or intentionally disturb any such animal while it is occupying a structure or place which it uses for shelter or protection.

Great crested newts are also included on the list of species which are of Principal importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity in England as required under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. The S41 list is used to guide decision makers, including local planning authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the

Act, to have regard to the conservation biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.

Reptiles

All common reptile species, including slow worm *Anguis fragilis*, common lizard *Zootoca vivipara* and grass snake *Natrix natrix*, are partially protected under Sections 9(1) and 9(5) of Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This legislation protects these animals from:

- intentional killing and injury;
- selling, offering for sale, possessing or transporting for the purpose of sale or publishing advertisements to buy or sell a protected species.

Reptiles native to the UK are also classified as a species of principle importance under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC).

Bats

Bats and their habitats are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and by the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2018 (as amended). In summary this makes it an offence to damage destroy or obstruct any place used by bats for breeding and shelter, disturb a bat, or kill, injure or take a bat. Seven bat species are listed as Species of Principal Importance under the provisions of the NERC Act 2006.

Hedgehogs

Hedgehogs are listed on Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) making it illegal to kill or capture them using certain methods. Hedgehogs are also listed as Species of Principal Importance under the provisions of the NERC Act 2006.

UK and Local Biodiversity Action Plans

Although the UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) has now been superseded by the UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework⁹ and Biodiversity 2020¹⁰ the former UK Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) lists of priority habitats and species continue to be regarded as conservation priorities under the Framework, and they have been used to compile the statutory lists of priority species and habitats as required under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (also referred to as Habitats and Species of Principal Importance). Whilst different planning authorities across the country are likely to take differing approaches with regard to delivery of biodiversity within their areas, Local BAPs remain a key element for securing the requirements of the NPPF at a local level, consequently this assessment has taken due consideration of the priority habitats and species within the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan.

⁹ JNCC and Defra (on behalf of the Four Countries' Biodiversity Group) (2012) UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework. July 2012.

¹⁰ DEFRA (2011) Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services.

Other guidance

Birds of Conservation Concern

Leading governmental and non-governmental conservation organisations in the UK have reviewed the population status of 244 bird species regularly found in Britain and, using standardised criteria, have assessed and assigned all bird species onto lists of conservation concern¹¹.

Birds are placed into one of three lists - Red, Amber or Green and although these listings offer no further legal protection, they are meant to guide conservation action for the individual species. The listings reflect an individual species' global and European conservation status as well as that within the UK and additionally measure the importance of the UK population in international terms.

Wild mammals

Under the Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996, it is an offence to kill or injure any wild mammals by various means, including crushing and suffocating; therefore, consideration must be given to the humane exclusion or destruction of foxes and rabbits before work starts.

Relevant Planning Policy

- 8.8 The latest version of the NPPF was published in December 2023 and replaces the first NPPF published in March 2012 and minor clarifications to the revised version published in July 2018, February 2019, July 2021, and September 2023.
- 8.9 The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these should be applied. It provides a framework within which locally-prepared plans for housing and other development can be produced.
- 8.10 The premise of 'presumption in favour of sustainable development' embedded within the previous versions of the NPPF has been carried forward to the current version. The NPPF considers that to achieve this, the planning system has three overarching objectives: economic, social and environmental. It considers these to be inter-dependent with a need for them to be mutually supportive of one another. For specific development proposals the NPPF considers applying a presumption in favour of sustainable development means:

"...c) approving development proposals that accord with an up-to-date development plan without delay..." [para.11].

"They [decision makers] should use the full range of planning tools available, including brownfield registers and permission in principle, and work proactively with applicants to secure developments that will improve the economic, social and environmental conditions of the area". [para. 38.].

"When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

...d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around

¹¹ Eaton et al (2015), Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the population status of birds in the UK, Channel Islands and Isle of Man. British Birds 108, 708-746. <https://britishbirds.co.uk/wp-content/uploads/2014/07/BoCC4.pdf>

developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity.” [para. 181].

- 8.11 In terms of ‘environmental objects’ (one of the three core planning objectives), the NPPF states that:

“Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:

a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan).

b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland.

c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate.

d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures.

e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and

f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate”. [para 180].

Local planning policy

Rochdale core strategy adopted October 2016¹²

Strategic Objective 4 – Promoting a greener environment

Policy G6 – Enhancing green infrastructure

Policy G6 states *“the focus will be on incorporating green infrastructure into new development, sustainable urban drainage, increasing the number of street trees, greening housing areas and main roads, developing new green spaces, and incorporating green roofs and walls in new development.”*

We will expect development proposals and other proposals affecting green infrastructure to...

c. avoid the loss of existing urban greenspace or features e.g. trees unless suitable alternative provision is made, it has limited value, and its development or change of use will help to meet other sustainability or local regeneration objectives;

¹² Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council – Biodiversity and Development Supplementary Planning Document Adopted January 2008.

h. protect ancient woodlands and hedgerows, support new woodland and tree planting in new developments, and replace removed trees from a site at a ratio of 2:1; and

Policy G7 – Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity

Policy G7 states *“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.”*

7. 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.

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;

Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan adopted March 2024

Policy JP-G2 Green Infrastructure Network

Policy JP-G2 states *“A strategic approach will be taken to the protection, management and enhancement of our Green Infrastructure in order to protect and enhance the ecosystem services which the Green Infrastructure Network provides, including flood management, climate change mitigation and adaptation. Alongside this primary function an enhanced Green Infrastructure network will support wider public health benefits, including promotion of active travel, food growing and recreational opportunities.*

The protection, management and enhancement of Green Infrastructure will contribute to the development of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Greater Manchester. This Strategy will feed into the development of a Nature Recovery Network locally and nationally.

Development within and around the Green Infrastructure Network should be consistent with delivering major green infrastructure improvements within them and should contribute to improvements.

Development which involves the removal of land from the Green Belt (including allocations proposed in this plan) will be required to offset the impact of removing land from the Green Belt through identifying and delivering compensatory improvements to the environmental quality and accessibility of remaining Green Belt in the vicinity of the site. Details of specific sites and projects will be established in discussion with the relevant Local Authority.

Wherever practicable, opportunities to integrate new and existing green infrastructure into new development will be taken to protect, enhance and expand the green infrastructure network. Where new or improved green infrastructure is delivered as part of a development, the developer should make appropriate provision for its long-term management and maintenance”

Policy JP-G8: Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Policy JP-G8 states: “Through local planning and associated activities a net enhancement of biodiversity resources will be sought, including, where relevant, by:

1. *Increasing the quality, quantity, extent and diversity of habitats, particularly priority habitats identified in national or local biodiversity action plans and those that support priority species;*
2. *Improving connections between habitats, to protect and enhance the provision of corridors, ecological networks (including Nature Recovery Networks) and steppingstones that enable the movement of species, especially as the climate changes;*
3. *Enhancing the management of existing habitats, including through habitat restoration, avoiding habitat fragmentation and combating invasive species;*
4. *Protecting sites designated for their nature conservation and/or geological importance, with the highest level of protection given to international and then national designations;*
5. *Facilitating greater access to nature, particularly within urban areas;*
6. *Supporting the development and implementation of the Great Manchester Wetlands Nature Recovery Network; and*
7. *Safeguarding, restoring and sustainably managing our most valuable soil resources, tackling soil degradation/erosion and recovering soil fertility, particularly to ensure protection of peat-based soils and safeguard 'best and most versatile' agricultural land.*

Development will be expected to:

- a. *Follow the mitigation hierarchy of: i. Avoiding significant harm to biodiversity, particularly where it is irreplaceable, through consideration of alternative sites with less harmful impacts, then ii. Adequately mitigating any harm to biodiversity, then iii. Adequately compensating for any remaining harm to biodiversity*
- b. *Avoid fragmenting or severing connectivity between habitats;*
- c. *Achieve a measurable net gain in biodiversity of no less than 10%*
- d. *Make appropriate provision for long-term management of habitats and geological features connected to the development;*
- e. *Where appropriate, development should: mitigate air pollution impacts on Manchester Mosses SAC; mitigate urban edge, functionally linked land and recreation disturbance impacts on the South Pennine Moors SAC/SPAs; and assess and potentially mitigate boat movement, water pollution, and light spillage and shading impacts on the Rochdale Canal SAC; and*

- f. *Development proposals should be informed by the findings and recommendations of the appropriate biodiversity/ecological assessment(s) in the PfE evidence base and/or any updated or appropriate biodiversity/ecological assessments submitted as part of the planning application process."*

APPENDIX B – DETAILED SURVEY METHODOLOGY

Habitats and Flora

Survey methods broadly following the UKHab Classification System¹³ with minor departures from this methodology to allow for compatibility with the Defra metric where applicable and comprised a systematic walk over the Site to classify the broad habitat types and identify any Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI) for the conservation of biodiversity as listed within Section 41 (S41) of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006) and identify a representative species list for each habitat.

Where feasible, target notes and species lists were compiled for individual areas and assessments of abundance were made using the DAFOR scale. Vascular plant nomenclature follows Stace (2019)¹⁴. Whilst the species lists collected should not be regarded as exhaustive, sufficient information was gained during the survey to enable classification and assessment of broad habitat types and identify features likely to be of interest.

This was supplemented by the collection of detailed botanical information to inform the condition assessments of habitats.

For the grassland habitats, this involved recording the plant species present within a series of 1m x 1m quadrats, which were used to inform the habitat classification selected and the corresponding condition assessment undertaken. Quadrats were placed within what were visually considered to be stands of homogenous vegetation where the vegetation was considered to potentially be representative of a distinct community type. The number of quadrats collected within each community sampled varied between 1-11 based on the size of the community, perceived species richness, distinctiveness or variability within the sward.

Any habitats suitable for, or features with the potential to support, protected or notable species were also assessed and recorded with the surveys.

Habitats were mapped in the field using Qfield, along with additional notes regarding the current 'condition'¹⁵ of the habitat, completed in accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessments¹⁶.

Consideration was given as to the presence of invasive species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA 1981)¹⁸ and the presence of any notable weeds including those covered under the Weed Act 1959¹⁹ (where population is significant enough to be considered injurious).

13 UKHab Ltd (2023). UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (at <https://ukhab.org>)

14 Stace, C (2019) New Flora of the British Isles. 4th edn. C&M Floristics

15 Condition' is one of the measures of the quality of a habitat used within the DEFRA biodiversity metric. It takes into account key physical characteristics and typical species of a particular habitat type.

16 Defra (2023). "The Statutory Biodiversity Metric -Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology" November 2023" Access [online] (Available at: <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides>)

18 Act of Parliament, (1981). The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), London: HMSO.

19 Act of Parliament. (1959). The Weed Act 1959. London: HMSO

Fauna

During the UkJab survey, observations, identification and signs of any species protected under the following list of Acts and Regulations (collectively referred to herein as 'Protected Species') were recorded:

- Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992.
- The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)

Consideration has also been given to the existence and use of the Site by other fauna listed as one or more of the following (collectively referred to herein as 'Notable Species'):

- Species of Principal Importance (SPI) for the conservation of biodiversity in England on the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, Section 41 (S41)
- Species listed on any Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP) initiatives
- Red Data Book (RDB) species.

During this initial assessment, suitable habitat for a range of protected species were identified and subsequent surveys were undertaken for the following species/groups:

- Badgers – field sign survey of the entirety of the red line boundary
- Birds – Breeding bird surveys
- Great crested newts – Habitat suitability assessment and eDNA survey
- Reptiles – Presence/likely absence surveys
- Bats –Ground-based assessment of trees, .

Badgers

As part of the extended phase 1 habitat survey all suitable habitat within the Site and immediately adjacent to the Site boundary, were searched for evidence of badger activity. The standard methodology was used, as outlined by Harris, Creswell and Jefferies (1991)²⁰. This involved a thorough search for evidence indicating the presence of badgers, including:

- setts, including earth mounds, evidence of bedding and runs between setts.
- latrines, often located close to setts, at territory boundaries or adjacent to favoured feeding areas.
- prints and paths or track ways.
- hairs caught on rough wood or fencing; and
- other evidence including snuffle holes, feeding and playing areas and scratching posts.

²⁰ Harris, S., Creswell, P. and Jefferies, D., (1991). (Report) Surveying Badgers. The Mammal. Society, Bristol.

The identification of snuffle holes, scratching posts or feeding signs on their own is not necessarily conclusive evidence of the presence of badgers. A number of such signs may need to be seen in conjunction before they can be said to be conclusive of badger activity.

Birds

Breeding Bird Surveys

The methodology employed was broadly based on territory mapping²¹ used for the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Common Bird Census (CBC). Standard BTO species codes and symbols for bird activities were used to identify birds and denote activity, sex, and age where appropriate. Birds were considered to be holding a territory and therefore likely to be utilising the site for breeding activities if they were displaying breeding behaviour, such as: singing, nest building, food carrying or territorial defence. If birds did not display such behaviour, e.g., they were only recorded flying over the Site, they were considered non breeders. Breeding evidence used in this report follows EOAC guidelines 1979²², as shown in Appendix A.

To provide a reasonable level of accuracy for determining the population status of the breeding birds on the Site, three surveys were undertaken between dawn and 11.00hrs in April, May and June 2022. A single update dawn survey was carried out on 7th June 2024, which covered both the proposed development area and potential mitigation areas. As habitats on site remain unchanged, and the species assemblage was largely the same as in 2022, a single update survey was determined as sufficient.

A route was mapped out prior to the surveys being undertaken, paying particular attention to any linear features, such as hedgerows and watercourses, and other features such as ponds and scrub. Bird surveys were not undertaken in unfavourable conditions, such as heavy rain or persistent strong wind, (conditions which can negatively affect the results). Table 6 provides details of the survey dates and weather conditions.

Table 6: Breeding Bird Survey Dates and Conditions

Survey	Date	Cloud Cover (%)	Rain	Wind (Beaufort)	Visibility
1	22.04.22	60	0	2	Excellent
2	12.05.22	40	0	1	Excellent
3	10.06.22	20	0	1	Excellent
4	07.06.24	95	1	1	Excellent

Species & Assemblage Assessment

The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidance on ecological impact assessment assesses nature conservation importance within a geographical context²⁵. To attain each level of importance, an ornithological resource or one of the features. (species population or assemblage of species) should meet the criteria set out in Table 7. In

²¹ Bibby, C.J., N.D. Burgess & D.A. Hill, 2000: Bird Census Techniques: 2nd Edition. London: Academic Press

²² European Ornithological Atlas Committee, 1979. Categories of Breeding Bird Evidence. European Ornithological Atlas Committee.

some cases, professional judgement, based on local knowledge, may be required to increase, or decrease the allocation of importance.

The most recent county annual bird report, Birds in Greater Manchester 2012²⁶ was consulted to inform the assessment. The abundance of species referred to in this report follows the guidelines as used in the county annual bird report:

- Abundant - occurs in large numbers in suitable habitats and seasons
- Common – occurs regularly, or widely distributed in suitable habitat
- Fairly common – occurs in moderate numbers in suitable habitat
- Uncommon – occurs in small numbers
- Scarce – one or two records each year, or restricted to specific habitats
- Rare – occurs less than annually
- Very rare – less than 10 records in the past 20 years
- Vagrant – less than 2 records in the past 20 years

The Site has also been assessed against the relevant sites of biological interest criteria for identification of avian sites in Greater Manchester²⁷ based on a number of criteria set out for breeding birds.

Table 7. Evaluation Criteria

Nature Conservation Value	Selection Criteria
International	A species which is part of the cited interest of a Special Protection Area (SPA) and which regularly occurs in internationally or nationally important numbers. A species present in internationally important numbers (>1% of international population).
National	A species which is part of the cited interest of a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) and which regularly occurs in nationally or regionally important numbers. A nationally important assemblage of breeding or over-wintering species. A species present in nationally important numbers (>1% UK population). Rare breeding species (<300 breeding pairs in the UK).
Regional	Species of Principal Importance under Schedule 41 of NERC Act (2006), which are not covered above, and which regularly occur in regionally important numbers. Species present in regionally important numbers (>1% of regional population). Sustainable populations of species that are rare or scarce within a region. Species on the BoCC Red List and which regularly occur in regionally important numbers.
County	Species of Principal Importance under Schedule 41 of NERC Act (2006), which are not covered above, and which regularly occur in county important numbers Species present in county important numbers (>1% of county population).

25 CIEEM, 2018. Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland. Winchester: Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. [Online]. Available at: <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Combined-EclA-guidelines-2018-compressed.pdf> [Accessed 08/06/2022]

26 Greater Manchester Bird Recording Group (2021) Birds in Greater Manchester 2012

27 Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (2016) Greater Manchester – Sites of Biological Importance Selection Guidelines. [Online]. Available at <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/ecologyunit/sbi/guidelines.pdf> [Accessed 19.07.22]

Nature Conservation Value	Selection Criteria
	Sustainable populations of species that are rare or scarce within a county or listed as priority species for nature conservation under S41 of the NERC Act. A site afforded a non-statutory designation for its county important assemblage of birds (e.g. a Local Wildlife Site). Species on the BoCC Red List and which regularly occur in county important numbers.
Local	Other species of conservation interest (e.g. all other species on the BoCC Red and Amber List or listed as Species of Principal Importance under Schedule 41 of the NERC Act (2006) which are not covered above) regularly occurring in locally sustainable populations. Sustainable populations of species which are rare or scarce within the locality.
Site	Species that are common and widespread.

Amphibians

Surveyor Information

HSI assessments and sampling for eDNA analysis purposes were undertaken by appropriately experienced ecologists who undertook refresher training for the collection of eDNA samples on 21st April 2022.

Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) Assessment

Accessible ponds within the Site and within 500m of the Site boundary were evaluated using the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) scoring system developed by Oldham et al (2000)²⁹.

The HSI scoring system provides a measure of the likely suitability that a waterbody has for supporting newts and produces a single index value of habitat suitability, derived from individual scores achieved under the following categories:

- Location within the UK
- Pond Area
- Frequency of pond drying.
- Water Quality
- % Shade
- Presence of waterfowl
- Presence of fish
- Number of other ponds within 1km
- Quality of surrounding terrestrial habitat.
- % Cover by macrophytes

²⁹ Oldham, R.S., Keeble, J., Swan, M.J.S. and Jeffcote, M. (2000) Evaluating the suitability of habitat for the great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*). *Herpetological Journal* 10(4), 143-155pp

A score is assigned to the most appropriate criteria level set within each attribute and a total score calculated of between 0 and 1. Pond suitability is then determined according to the scale shown in Table 8.

Table 8. HSI Scores as a Measure of Pond Suitability

HSI Score	Pond Suitability
<0.5	Poor
0.5-0.59	Below Average
0.6-0.69	Average
0.7-0.79	Good
>0.8	Excellent

eDNA Sampling and Analysis

eDNA sampling was undertaken on Ponds 1, 2, 3, 4, and 6 in accordance with the protocol recommended by Natural England³⁰.

Sampling was undertaken on 21st April 2022 by experienced ecologists who collected a sample of water from around each pond. This comprised taking samples of agitated water from 20 locations around each pond and mixing thoroughly. 15ml of this water was then placed into each of the 6 sterile sample tubes containing preservative, precipitates and a DNA Sequence that was used for degradation control. This was then transported under suitable conditions to the Food and Environment Research Agency (FERA) laboratory at Sand Hutton, York for analysis. Following analysis, results provided by the laboratory could have one of three outcomes which are described in Table 9 below.

Table 9. Description of Possible Results of eDNA Analysis

Result	Description
Positive	A positive result means that eDNA from GCN was detected and they have been present within the water in the 20 days preceding sampling. An eDNA score would be provided indicating the number of positive replicates from a series of twelve.
Negative	DNA from GCN was not detected; in the case of negative samples the DNA extract is further tested for PCR inhibitors and degradation of the sample.
Inconclusive	Controls indicate degradation or inhibition of the sample, therefore the lack of detection of GCN DNA is not conclusive evidence for determining the absence of the species in the sample provided. Degradation can occur through poor storage of the samples or kits and inhibition can occur through unexpected chemicals in the sample.

Reptile Surveys

30 Biggs J, et al, (2014) Analytical and Methodological Development for Improved Surveillance of the Great Crested Newt. Appendix 5: Technical advice note for field and laboratory sampling of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) environmental DNA, Freshwater Habitats Trust, Oxford

The reptile presence / likely absence survey was undertaken with consideration to methodologies detailed in a range of published guidance^{31,32&33}. This involved the placement of 0.5m² refugia tiles made from roofing felt. These were placed in locations that offered the most suitable habitat for common reptiles, i.e., structurally diverse vegetated habitats close to areas of bare ground/short vegetation (see figure 3). The survey also included suitable habitats adjoining the Site.

Reptile mats were deployed on 30th March 2022, after which they were left to 'bed-down' for at least a two-week period before surveys commenced on the 21st April 2022. Following the 'bed-down' period, a series of seven surveys involved a search for basking reptiles on or under the refugia, on or under naturally occurring refugia and within suitable habitat. Reptile refugia were collected in after the final survey.

Guidelines recommend that reptile surveys be undertaken during the following periods:

- air temperatures of between 9°C – 20°C; and
- on sunny/cloudy days with little or no wind.

In addition, the surveys also followed the guidelines' recommendations by:

- using regularly spaced roofing felt (0.5m²) as artificial refugia, with a black upper side;
- approaching refugia from downwind and avoiding casting a shadow and with care so as to not disturb basking animals when checking; and
- that lifting and replacing tins, to check for the presence of reptiles underneath in hot weather is undertaken with care, to avoid potential harm to any animals underneath.

Survey dates and conditions are presented in Table 10 below. Surveys were undertaken by suitable qualified ecologists. These surveys were undertaken during suitable weather conditions when the ambient air temperature was between 9°C and 20°C, avoiding periods of heavy rain. On each visit the prevailing weather conditions, including relative wind speed, cloud cover, ambient temperature, and any other notable conditions were recorded.

Table 10: Date and Weather Conditions during Reptile Surveys

Survey No.	Date	Start Time	Temp (°C)	Cloud Coverage (%)	Wind (Beaufort)	General Description
1	21/04/2022	09:18	12	20-30	1/2	Clear, bright, sunny
2	25/04/2022	09:15	9	80-90	1/2	Overcast, Sunny spells
3	29/04/2022	09:28	9	10-20	1/2	Clear, Bright, Sunny
4	05/05/2022	09:22	13	90-100	1/2	Cloudy
5	11/05/2022	15:23	14	80-90	4/5	Rain earlier in the day
6	17/05/2022	09:14	14	0-10	1/2	Clear, Bright, Sunny
7	30/05/22	11:26	12	90-100	1/2	Rain earlier in the day

31 Edgar, Foster & Baker, (2010), Reptile Management Handbook, Amphibian and reptile Conservation, Bournemouth

32 Amphibian and Reptile Groups of the United Kingdom (2018) Advice Note 10 Reptile Survey and Mitigation Guidance for Peatland Habitats

33 Froglife (1999) Reptile Survey: An introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation. Froglife Advice Sheet 10.

Assessment

Reptile populations were assessed in accordance with population level criteria as stated in the Key Reptile Site Register (HGBI, 1998). This system classifies populations of individual reptile species into three population categories assessing the importance of the population (Table 11). These categories are based on the total number of animals observed during individual survey occasions.

Table 11: Key Reptile Site Survey Assessment Categories (HGBI 1998)

Species	Low Population (No. of individuals)	Good Population (No. of individuals)	Exceptional Population (No. of individuals)
Adder	<5	5 - 10	>10
Common lizard	<5	5 - 20	>20
Grass snake	<5	5 - 10	>10
Slow worm	<5	5 - 20	>20

Survey Limitations

- 8.12 All surveys were carried out during suitable conditions and the results are therefore considered sufficient to adequately assess the presence or likely absence of reptiles and their population size (if present).

Mitigation, Compensation and Enhancement

For the purpose of the EclA, impacts on ecological features are generally assessed without mitigation in place. Although in some situations it is impossible to separate the mitigation as this is embedded into the scheme, in these situations it will be acknowledged and just the residual effects considered.

In line with current CIEEM guidelines, a sequential process, known as the 'mitigation hierarchy' should be adopted on negative ecological impacts and effects. This involves:

- Avoid negative ecological effects.
- Reduce negative effects that cannot be avoided (mitigate); and
- Compensate for any remaining significant ecological effects.

Assessment Methodology

Determining Importance

CIEEM have identified various characteristics that can be used to identify ecological features or features likely to be important in terms of biodiversity. These include:

- Animal or plant species that are rare or uncommon, either internationally, nationally or more locally.

- Ecosystems and their component parts, which provide the habitats required by the above species, populations and / or assemblages.
- Endemic species or locally distinct sub-populations of a species.
- Habitat diversity, connectivity and or / synergistic associations.
- Notably large populations of animals or concentrations of animals considered uncommon or threatened in a wider context.
- Plant communities (and their associated animals) that are considered to be typical valued natural / semi-natural vegetation types – these will include examples of natural species-poor communities.
- Species on the edge on their range, particularly where their distribution is changing as a result of global trends and climate change.
- Species-rich assemblages of plants and animals; and
- Typical faunal assemblages that are characteristic of homogenous habitats.

Once an ecological feature has been identified as being important, guidelines promote the use of characterising this feature with the relevant geographic frame of reference. This allows the scale of significance of effects to be presented in a meaningful way and provides a focus of maintaining a feature at an appropriate scale. The known or potential value of an ecological feature within this assessment will be considered within the following geographical context:

- International.
- National.
- Regional.
- County (Greater Manchester)
- Local (Rochdale).

If an ecological feature is not considered to be important, the proposed scheme is not anticipated to have an effect that would be of relevance to the decision maker and these features are not considered further within the assessment. Exceptions to this would be if the species, population or habitat in question was identified as having a high social or economic value or if they are afforded legal protection (e.g., badgers). While the assessment does include protected species that receive statutory protection and are of material consideration at the local level, the presence of such a species does not necessarily infer value in relation to the proposed scheme but only to the level of protection it receives.

As such the value of the proposed scheme for protected species is considered by the specific ecological feature, taking into account the level of activity, the level of protection it receives and the overall value of habitat to that species within the Site.

Features with a value of Local or above were considered to represent an 'Important Ecological Feature' (IEF). Those features not meeting the criteria for IEF's were classified as having either lower than local level (immediate zone of influence) or negligible ecological importance.

Evaluation of habitats which did not reach this scale of significance were otherwise recognised as being of negligible significance or as providing habitat diversity at a Site level but not considered to appreciably enrich the habitat resource at a local level.

Determining Impacts and Effects

The CIEEM guidelines, define an impact as an influence on an ecological feature. The effect is the outcome of the influence on the ecological feature. As part of the EclA it is important to assess whether or not an impact is defined as an effect (negative or positive) on the integrity of a defined Site or ecosystem and / or the conservation status of a habitat or species within a given geographical area (CIEEM, 2018).

Impacts should be identified and understood to be able to determine their likely effect (consequence) of that impact in relation to the ecological feature.

As part of the process of determining whether there is likely to be an effect on the status of an ecological feature, the following questions are considered:

- Will any Site / ecosystem process be removed or changed?
- What will be the effect on the nature, extent, structure and function of component habitats?
- What will be the effect on the average population size and viability of the component species?

A description of parameters that are considered when assessing the degree and type of change are detailed in Table 13 below.

Table 13: Parameters used to describe effects

Parameter for describing impacts on ecological structure and function	Definition of the parameter
Positive or Negative	Whether the impact has a positive or negative effect

Parameter for describing impacts on ecological structure and function	Definition of the parameter
Extent	The area of which the effect occurs
Magnitude	The size or amount of an effect
Duration	The time for which the effect is predicted to last prior to recovery or replacement of the resource or feature
Reversibility	Whether the effect is permanent (i.e., irreversible) or temporary (i.e., reversible)
Timing and Frequency	How often the effect occurs (e.g., repeated noise from piling work) and when it occurs (e.g., vegetation clearance undertaken outside of the bird breeding season).

With reference to the duration of an ecological impact, in addition to other uses, for the purposes of the assessment Table 14 defines the timeframes used within the chapter:

Table 14: Definition of timeframes

Term	Definition within this assessment
Short term	1-5 years
Medium term	6-15 years
Long term	16-60 years

In addition to considering the effect on the ecological feature an assessment of significance of the residual effect (for the type / nature of change), is provided in Table 15 below.

Table 15: Classification of the significance of the Effects

Impact Classification	Explanation
Significant Negative Effect	Likely to create a significant negative effect, including loss, or long-term or irreversible damage on the status of the ecological feature.
Not Significant Negative Effect	Likely to create a negative effect without causing long-term or irreversible damage to the status of ecological feature.
Neutral	Effects are either absent or such that no overall net change to the ecological feature.
Not Significant Positive Effect	Likely to create a beneficial effect on an ecological feature or providing a new lower value ecological feature without improving its conservation status.
Significant Positive Effect	The activity is likely to create a significant beneficial effect, including long-term enhancement and favourable conditions for an existing ecological feature.

APPENDIX C BOTANICAL SPECIES LISTS**Other broadleaved Woodland (Parcel ref W1)**

Woody Species	Latin	Mature	Young / scrub	Sapling	Seedling	Ground flora
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	R	R			
Silver birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>		O			
Goat willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>		F	O		
wych elm	<i>Ulmus glabra</i>		F	F		
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>		R	R		
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>		R	R	R	
White poplar	<i>Populus alba</i>		LF			
Downy birch	<i>Betula pubescens</i>			R		
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>			R		
Red barked dogwood	<i>Cornus alba 'Sibirica'</i>			R		
Swedish whitebeam	<i>Sorbus intermedia</i>	R				
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	LF				
English elm	<i>Ulmus procera agg.</i>	R				
Cherry laurel	<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>		LF			
Wild cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>		R			
Ground Flora						
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>					F
Bracken	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>					F
Yorkshire-fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>					O
Honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera periclymenum</i>					O
Common feather-moss	<i>Kindbergia praelonga</i>					O
False oat-grass	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>					R
Glaucous sedge	<i>Carex flacca</i>					R
Rough-stalked feather-moss	<i>Brachythecium rutabulum</i>					R
Broad buckler-fern	<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>					R
Bank hair-cap	<i>Polytrichum formosum</i>					R
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale agg.</i>					R

Woody Species	Latin	Mature	Young / scrub	Sapling	Seedling	Ground flora
Meadow foxtail	<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>					O
Rough meadow-grass	<i>Poa trivialis</i>					LF
Meadow buttercup	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>					O
Modified Grassland Ground flora to north						
Perennial rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>					A
Creeping buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>					O
Springy turf-moss	<i>Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus</i>					F
Selfheal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>					R
Yorkshire-fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>					O
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.					R
Common ragwort	<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>					R
Common hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>					R
Common sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>					R
White clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>					O

Mixed Scrub: h3h

Woody Species	Latin	Mature	Young /Scrub	Sapling	Ground Flora
Goat willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>	R	F	O	
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>		O		
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>		R		
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>		R		
Norway maple	<i>Acer platanoides</i>			R	
Silver birch	<i>Betula pendula</i>			F	
Pedunculate oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>			R	

Woody Species	Latin	Mature	Young /Scrub	Sapling	Ground Flora
Yorkshire-fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>				F
Springy turf-moss	<i>Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus</i>				F
Bracken	<i>Pteridium aquilinum</i>				LA
Hairy sedge	<i>Carex hirta</i>				O
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>				O
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>				O-LF
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale agg.</i>				R
Ribwort plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>				R

Other Neutral Grassland. G3c8 Holcus-Juncus neutral Grassland (Parcel Ref 4 – Figure 2)

Species	Latin	Abundance
Sweet Vernal-grass	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	f
pointed spear moss	<i>Calliergonella cuspidata</i>	f
Yorkshire-fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	f
Oxeye Daisy	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	lf west and edges
Creeping Bent	<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	lf
Marsh bedstraw	<i>Galium palustre</i>	o East
Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil	<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	o-lf east
Crested Dog's-tail	<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	o west
Hairy Sedge	<i>Carex hirta</i>	o
Field Horsetail	<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	o
Soft-rush	<i>Juncus effusus</i>	o
Meadow Vetchling	<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	o
Reed Canary-grass	<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>	o
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	o
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	o
Ribwort Plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	r-lf
Red Clover	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	r-lf west

Species	Latin	Abundance
Marsh Thistle	<i>Cirsium palustre</i>	r-o
Tufted Hair-grass	<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	r-o
Great willowherb	<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	r-o
Jointed Rush	<i>Juncus articulatus</i>	r-o
Rough Meadow-grass	<i>Poa trivialis</i>	r-o
Meadow Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	o-f
Wavy Bitter-cress	<i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>	r
Cuckooflower	<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	r
Glaucous Sedge	<i>Carex flacca</i>	r
Common Mouse-ear	<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	r
Creeping Thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	r
common chickweed	<i>Stellaria media</i>	r
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	r
wild teasel	<i>Dipsacus fullonum</i>	r
Common Couch	<i>Elymus repens</i>	r
A willowherb [indet.]	<i>Epilobium sp.</i>	r
Common Cottongrass	<i>Eriophorum angustifolium</i>	r
Hairy Tare	<i>Ervilia hirsuta</i>	r
Red Fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	r
Hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	r
Hoary willowherb	<i>Epilobium parviflorum</i>	r
Common Ragwort	<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>	r
Field Wood-rush	<i>Luzula campestris</i>	r
Pendulous sedge	<i>Carex pendula</i>	r
Silverweed	<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	r
Self heal	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	r

Species	Latin	Abundance
Springy Turf-moss	<i>Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus</i>	r
Clustered dock	<i>Rumex conglomeratus</i>	r
Curled Dock	<i>Rumex crispus</i>	r
Broad-leaved Dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	r
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale</i> agg.	r
Lesser Trefoil	<i>Trifolium dubium</i>	r
Colt's-foot	<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	r
Reed-mace	<i>Typha latifolia</i>	r
Common Vetch	<i>Vicia sativa</i>	r
Meadow Foxtail	<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	r

Other neutral Grassland: g3c5 - Arrhenatherum Grassland (Parcel ref 2 – Figure 2)

Species	Latin	Abundance
Red Fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	a
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	f
Yorkshire-fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	f
Oxeye Daisy	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	f
Field Wood-rush	<i>Luzula campestris</i>	f
Hard Rush	<i>Juncus inflexus</i>	lf
Creeping Bent	<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	lf
Creeping Thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	lf
Rosebay Willowherb	<i>Chamaenerion angustifolium</i>	lf
Greater Bird's-foot-trefoil	<i>Lotus pedunculatus</i>	lf
Meadow Foxtail	<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	o
Hairy Sedge	<i>Carex hirta</i>	o
pointed spear moss	<i>Calliergonella cuspidata</i>	o
Sweet Vernal-grass	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	o
Springy Turf-moss	<i>Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus</i>	o
Common Vetch	<i>Vicia sativa</i>	o
Common Mouse-ear	<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	o
Meadow Vetchling	<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	o
Field Horsetail	<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	o
Meadow Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	o

Species	Latin	Abundance
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale agg.</i>	o
Smooth Meadow-grass	<i>Poa pratensis</i>	o
False Oat-grass	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	o f
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	o lf
Tufted Hair-grass	<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	r
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	r
Soft-rush	<i>Juncus effusus</i>	r
Crested Dog's-tail	<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	r
Broad-leaved Dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	r
Common Ragwort	<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>	r
A willowherb [indet.]	<i>Epilobium sp.</i>	r
Prunella vulgaris	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	r
Colt's-foot	<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	r
Hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	r
common chickweed	<i>Stellaria media</i>	r
Glaucous Sedge	<i>Carex flacca</i>	r
Curled Dock	<i>Rumex crispus</i>	r
Cuckooflower	<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	r
Ribwort Plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	r
Red Clover	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	r
Rough Meadow-grass	<i>Poa trivialis</i>	r
Cow Parsley	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	r
Common Bent	<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	r
Field Forget-me-not	<i>Myosotis arvensis</i>	r
Reed Canary-grass	<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>	r
Marsh bedstraw	<i>Galium palustre</i>	r
Pendulous sedge	<i>Carex pendula</i>	r
Silverweed	<i>Potentilla anserina</i>	r
Common Twayblade	<i>Neottia ovata</i>	r
Scattered Scrub		
Goat willow (mature)	<i>Salix caprea</i>	
downy birch(mature)	<i>Betula pubescens</i>	
pedunculate oak (young)	<i>Quercus robur</i>	
Red dogwood(young)	<i>Cornus alba 'Sibirica</i>	

Species	Latin	Abundance
Sycamore(young)	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	
Silver birch(young)	<i>Betula pendula</i>	
Hawthorn (regen)	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	
Elder (regen)	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	
Sycamore (regen)	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	

Other neutral Grassland: g3c5 - *Arrhenatherum* Grassland (Parcel ref 3 – Figure 2)

Species	Latin	Abundance
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	f
Meadow Foxtail	<i>Alopecurus pratensis</i>	f
Red Fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	f
Hard Rush	<i>Juncus inflexus</i>	lf
Creeping Bent	<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	lf
Creeping Thistle	<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	lf
Rosebay Willowherb	<i>Chamaenerion angustifolium</i>	lf
Hairy Sedge	<i>Carex hirta</i>	lf
Hybrid bluebell	<i>Hyacinthoides x massartiana</i>	lf
Yorkshire-fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	o
pointed spear moss	<i>Calliergonella cuspidata</i>	o
Sweet Vernal-grass	<i>Anthoxanthum odoratum</i>	o
Springy Turf-moss	<i>Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus</i>	o
Common Vetch	<i>Vicia sativa</i>	o
Common Mouse-ear	<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	o
Oxeye Daisy	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	o lf
Field Wood-rush	<i>Luzula campestris</i>	o lf
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	o lf
Tufted Hair-grass	<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	o lf
Meadow Vetchling	<i>Lathyrus pratensis</i>	r
Field Horsetail	<i>Equisetum arvense</i>	r
Meadow Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	r
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale agg.</i>	r
Smooth Meadow-grass	<i>Poa pratensis</i>	r
False Oat-grass	<i>Arrhenatherum elatius</i>	r
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	r

Species	Latin	Abundance
Soft-rush	<i>Juncus effusus</i>	r
Crested Dog's-tail	<i>Cynosurus cristatus</i>	r
Broad-leaved Dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	r
Common Ragwort	<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>	r
A willowherb [indet.]	<i>Epilobium sp.</i>	r
Prunella vulgaris	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	r
Colt's-foot	<i>Tussilago farfara</i>	r
Hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	r
common chickweed	<i>Stellaria media</i>	r
Glaucous Sedge	<i>Carex flacca</i>	r
Curled Dock	<i>Rumex crispus</i>	r
Cuckooflower	<i>Cardamine pratensis</i>	r
Ribwort Plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	r
Red Clover	<i>Trifolium pratense</i>	r
Rough Meadow-grass	<i>Poa trivialis</i>	r
Cow Parsley	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	r
Common Bent	<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	r
Field Forget-me-not	<i>Myosotis arvensis</i>	r
Common Couch	<i>Elymus repens</i>	r
Hairy Tare	<i>Ervilia hirsuta</i>	r
Great Willowherb	<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>	r
Spear Thistle	<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	r
Cat's-ear	<i>Hypochaeris radicata</i>	r

Other neutral Grassland: g3c5 - *Arrhenatherum* Grassland (Parcel ref 6 – Figure 2)

Species	Latin	Abundance
Red Fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	F
Springy Turf-moss	<i>Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus</i>	F
Common Bent	<i>Agrostis capillaris</i>	F
Reed Canary-grass	<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>	LF
Cock's-foot	<i>Dactylis glomerata</i>	O
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	O
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	O
Common Ragwort	<i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i>	O
A willowherb [indet.]	<i>Epilobium sp.</i>	O

Species	Latin	Abundance
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale agg.</i>	O
Perennial Rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	O
pointed spear moss	<i>Calliergonella cuspidata</i>	R
Hairy Sedge	<i>Carex hirta</i>	R
Tufted Hair-grass	<i>Deschampsia cespitosa</i>	R
Ribwort Plantain	<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	R
Meadow Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus acris</i>	R
Broad-leaved Dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	R
Soft-rush	<i>Juncus effusus</i>	R
Wavy Bitter-cress	<i>Cardamine flexuosa</i>	R
Cow Parsley	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	R
Common Sorrel	<i>Rumex acetosa</i>	R
Common Knapweed	<i>Centaurea nigra</i>	R

Modified Grassland: g4 (Parcel ref 1)

Species	Latin	Abundance
Perennial Rye-grass	<i>Lolium perenne</i>	A
Springy Turf-moss	<i>Rhytidiadelphus squarrosus</i>	F
White Clover	<i>Trifolium repens</i>	O
Red Fescue	<i>Festuca rubra</i>	O
Creeping Buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	O
Dandelion	<i>Taraxacum officinale agg.</i>	O
Rough-stalked Feather-moss	<i>Brachythecium rutabulum</i>	R
Prunella vulgaris	<i>Prunella vulgaris</i>	R
Daisy	<i>Bellis perennis</i>	R
Yorkshire-fog	<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	R
Oxeye Daisy	<i>Leucanthemum vulgare</i>	R
A meadow grass	<i>Poa sp.</i>	R
Broad-leaved Dock	<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	R

Introduced Scrub (Parcel Ref Sc3)

Species	Latin	Abundance
<i>Trees</i>		
Crack-willow	<i>Salix x fragilis</i>	O
Grey willow	<i>Salix cinerea</i>	R

Species	Latin	Abundance
<i>Shrubs</i>		
Cherry Laurel	<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	F
Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	LF
Tree cotoneaster	<i>Cotoneaster frigidus</i>	LF
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	O
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	R
Guelder-rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	R
Barberry	<i>Berberis vulgaris</i>	R
Ash	<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	R
Norway maple	<i>Acer platanoides</i>	R
White poplar	<i>Populus alba</i>	R
Wild cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	R
<i>Ground flora</i>		
Cow parsley	<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	LF
Male-fern	<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>	O
Cleavers	<i>Galium aparine</i>	O
Rough meadow-grass	<i>Poa trivialis</i>	O
Common hogweed	<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>	R
Creeping buttercup	<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	R
Norway maple	<i>Acer platanoides</i>	R
Herb-robert	<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	R
Broad buckler-fern	<i>Dryopteris dilatata</i>	R
Common nettle	<i>Urtica dioica</i>	R
Common Ivy	<i>Hedera helix</i>	R

Introduced Scrub (Parcel Ref Sc4)

Species	Latin	Abundance
Cherry laurel	<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	A
Snowberry	<i>Symphoricarpos albus</i>	F
Bridewort	<i>Spiraea sp.</i>	LF
Hawthorn	<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>	O
wych elm	<i>Ulmus glabra</i>	R
Rose-of-Sharon	<i>Hypericum calycinum</i>	R
Japanese Rose	<i>Rosa rugosa</i>	R
Elder	<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	R

Species	Latin	Abundance
Wild cherry	<i>Prunus avium</i>	R
Holly	<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	R
Yellow-stemmed dogwood	<i>Cornus stolonifera</i> 'Flaviramea'	R
Wilson's honeysuckle	<i>Lonicera nitida</i>	R
Guelder-rose	<i>Viburnum opulus</i>	R

Line of Trees 1

Woody Species	Latin	Mature	Young / scrub	Sapling	Seedling	Ground flora
Goat Willow	<i>Salix caprea</i>	F	O	R		
Sycamore	<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>		R			
Pedunculate oak	<i>Quercus robur</i>		R	R		
A cotoneaster	<i>Cotoneaster sp.</i>			R		
Beech	<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>				R	
Ground Flora						
Reed canary-grass	<i>Phalaris arundinacea</i>					LF
Bramble	<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>					O
Male-fern	<i>Dryopteris filix-mas</i>					O
Tufted hair-grass	<i>Deschampsia caespitosa</i>					O
Pendulous sedge	<i>Carex pendula</i>					R

APPENDIX D – EDNA RESULTS**DNA Analysis Report - Commercial in Confidence**

Customer: FPCR Environment & Design Ltd
Address: Sand Hutton
 York
 York

 YO41 1LZ
Contact: [REDACTED]
Email: [REDACTED]
Tel: [REDACTED]
Report date: 28-Apr-2022
Order Number: GCN22-1458
Samples: Pond Water
Analysis requested: Detection of Great Crested Newt eDNA from pond water.

Thank you for submitting your samples for analysis with the Fera eDNA testing service. The details of the analysis are as follows:

Method:

The method detects pond occupancy from great crested newts (GCN) using traces of DNA shed into the pond environment (eDNA). The detection of GCN eDNA is carried out using real time PCR to amplify part of the cytochrome 1 gene found in mitochondrial DNA. The method followed is detailed in Biggs J., et al, (2014). Analytical and methodological development for improved surveillance of the Great Crested Newt. Appendix 5. Technical advice note for field and laboratory sampling of great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*) environmental DNA. Freshwater Habitats Trust, Oxford.

The limits of this method are as follows: 1) the results are based on analyses of the samples supplied by the client and as received by the laboratory, 2) any variation between the characteristics of this sample and a batch will depend on the sampling procedure used. 3) the method is qualitative and therefore the levels given in the score are for information only, they do not constitute the quantification of GCN DNA against a calibration curve, 4) a 'not detected' result does not exclude presence at levels below the limit of detection.

The results are defined as follows:

Positive: DNA from the species was detected.
eDNA Score: Number of positive replicates from a series of twelve.
Negative: DNA from the species was not detected; in the case of negative samples the DNA extract is further tested for PCR inhibitors and degradation of the sample.
Inconclusive: Controls indicate degradation or inhibition of the sample, therefore the lack of detection of GCN DNA is not conclusive evidence for determining the absence of the species in the sample provided.

page 1 of 2

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DNA Analysis Report - Commercial in Confidence



CustomerReference	Fera Reference	GCN Detection	eDNA Score	Inhibition	Degradation
P3	S22-012429	Negative	0	No	No
P2	S22-012430	Negative	0	No	No
P6 Pond 5 on Figure 5	S22-012431	Negative	0	No	No
P4	S22-012432	Negative	0	No	No
10496 - Cali FM	S22-012433	Negative	0	No	No
P1	S22-012434	Negative	0	No	No

The results indicate that eDNA for great crested newts was not detected in any of the samples submitted. Analysis was conducted in the presence of the following controls: 1) extraction blank, 2) appropriate positive and negative PCR controls for each of the TaqMan assays (GCN, Inhibition, and Degradation). All controls performed as expected.

This test procedure was developed using research funded by the Department of Environment, Food and Rural Affairs.

Issuing officer: Steven Bryce
Tel: 01904 462 070
Email: e-dna@fera.co.uk

APPENDIX E; BREEDING BIRD REPORT



Indurent Management Ltd

Plot H4, Heywood Distribution Park, Pilsworth Road,

Heywood, Rochdale

Appendix E - Breeding Bird Report

July 2024

FPCR Environment and Design Ltd

Registered Office: Lockington Hall, Lockington, Derby DE74 2RH

Company No. 07128076. [T] 01509 672772 [E] mail@fpcr.co.uk [W] www.fpcr.co.uk

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B	Final	JS / 23.07.24	IH / 30.07.24

CONTENTS

1.0 INTRODUCTION 3

2.0 LEGISLATION AND STATUS 3

3.0 METHODOLOGY..... 4

4.0 RESULTS & EVALUATION 7

5.0 DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS..... 11

APPENDIX 1: BREEDING BIRD SURVEY RESULTS 14

TABLES

- Table 1: Breeding Bird Survey Dates and Conditions
- Table 2: Evaluation Criteria
- Table 3: Notable Bird Species Recorded and Their Recent Status in Greater Manchester
- Table 4: Evaluation of Nature Conservation Importance of Birds Recorded within the Site

FIGURES

- Figure 4: Breeding Bird Survey Results – Locations of Notable Species 2022
- Figure 5: Breeding Bird Survey Results - Locations of Notable Species 2024

1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 FPCR Environment and Design Ltd were commissioned by Indurent Management Ltd to undertake a Breeding Bird Survey (BBS) on Plots M400 & M5 at Heywood Distribution Park (hereafter referred to as the 'Site').

Site Location and Context

- 1.2 The Site is located within Heywood Distribution Park, in the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale. The Site is located within Heywood Distribution Park, in the Metropolitan Borough of Rochdale (Central grid reference: SD837095). See Figure 1 for the Site location.
- 1.3 The Site is approximately 10.69 hectares in extent. Habitats recorded within the Site comprised predominantly areas of developed land and associated formal landscaping. An area of rush dominated wet grassland was recorded within an undeveloped plot to the north, together with unmanaged neutral grassland recorded in mosaic with scrub and woodland noted at the plot edges.

Proposals

- 1.4 Outline planning application for the development of land within Use Classes E(g)(iii) (industrial processes), B2 (general industrial), B8 (storage and distribution) and removal of existing structures and hard standing and associated works. All matters reserved for subsequent approval.

Survey Objectives

- 1.5 The breeding bird survey was carried out between April and June 2022, with an update survey carried out in June 2024. The objectives of the survey were to:
- Identify the presence of any designated nature conservation sites that support notable breeding bird assemblages within or in the vicinity of the Site;
 - Identify the presence, species and distribution of breeding birds within the Site;
 - Evaluate the conservation importance of habitats within the Site to local bird populations and identify any area of ornithological interest and;
 - Make recommendations to minimise the potential impact of development and to consider opportunities for additional mitigation, compensation, and enhancement where relevant.

2.0 LEGISLATION AND STATUS

Legislation

- 2.1 The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)¹ (WCA) is the principal legislation affording protection to UK wild birds. Under this legislation all birds, their nests and eggs are protected by law, and it is an offence, with certain exceptions, to recklessly or intentionally:
- Kill, injure or take any wild bird;
 - Take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while in use or being built; or

¹ Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). London: HMSO. [Online]. Available at: <http://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukpga/1981/69>

- Take or destroy the egg of any wild bird.
- 2.2 Additional protection is afforded to species listed on Schedule 1 of the WCA, whereby intentional disturbance whilst building or occupying a nest or disturbance of dependent young is also considered an offence.
- 2.3 Certain species have also been identified as species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (S.41). The S.41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies, including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the NERC Act 2006, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal functions.

Status

- 2.4 In addition to statutory protection, some bird species are classified according to their conservation status, such as their inclusion on the red and amber lists of Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) in the UK:
- 2.5 Red list (high conservation concern) meet at least one of the following criteria:
- They are globally threatened according to IUCN criteria;
 - Their population has declined rapidly (50% or more) in recent years; and
 - They have declined historically and not shown a substantial recent recovery.
- 2.6 Amber lists (medium conservation concern) species are those that meet at least one of the following criteria:
- They have an unfavourable conservation status in Europe;
 - Their population or range has declined moderately (between 25% and 49%) in recent years;
 - Their population has declined historically but made a substantial recent recovery;
 - They are rare breeders; and
 - They have internationally important or localised populations.
- 2.7 Green list (low conservation concern) species fulfil none of the above criteria.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

- 3.1 In order to compile existing baseline ornithological information, the following statutory and non-statutory organisations were consulted for data regarding designated sites for which birds are a designating feature, and protected/notable bird records:
- Greater Manchester Local Record Centre (GMLRC);
 - Natural England via the Multi Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) website².
- 3.2 The geographical extent of the search area for biodiversity information was related to the significance of sites and species and potential zones of influence which might arise from development within the Site, as follows:

² [Online]. Available at: <http://www.magic.gov.uk/>

- 15km around the Site boundary for sites of International Importance (e.g. Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), Special Protection Areas (SPAs), Ramsar sites);
- 2km around the Site boundary for statutory sites of National or Regional Importance (e.g. Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)) and
- 1km around the Site boundary for non-statutory designated sites of County Importance (e.g. Local Wildlife Sites (LWSs); and
- In the local area (approximately 2km for protected or otherwise notable species records.

Field Survey

- 3.3 The methodology employed was broadly based on territory mapping³ used for the British Trust for Ornithology (BTO) Common Bird Census (CBC). Standard BTO species codes and symbols for bird activities were used to identify birds and denote activity, sex, and age where appropriate. Birds were considered to be holding a territory and therefore likely to be utilising the site for breeding activities if they were displaying breeding behaviour, such as: singing, nest building, food carrying or territorial defence. If birds did not display such behaviour, e.g., they were only recorded flying over the Site, they were considered non breeders. Breeding evidence used in this report follows EOAC guidelines 1979⁴, as shown in Appendix A.
- 3.4 To provide a reasonable level of accuracy for determining the population status of the breeding birds on the Site, three surveys were undertaken between dawn and 11.00hrs in April, May and June 2022. A single update dawn survey was carried out on 7th June 2024, which covered both the proposed development area and potential mitigation areas. As habitats on site remain unchanged, and the species assemblage was largely the same as in 2022, a single update survey was determined as sufficient.
- 3.5 A route was mapped out prior to the surveys being undertaken, paying particular attention to any linear features, such as hedgerows and watercourses, and other features such as ponds and scrub. Bird surveys were not undertaken in unfavourable conditions, such as heavy rain or persistent strong wind, (conditions which can negatively affect the results). Table 1 provides details of the survey dates and weather conditions.

Table 1: Breeding Bird Survey Dates and Conditions

Survey	Date	Cloud Cover (%)	Rain	Wind (Beaufort)	Visibility
1	22.04.22	60	0	2	Excellent
2	12.05.22	40	0	1	Excellent
3	10.06.22	20	0	1	Excellent
4	07.06.24	95	1	1	Excellent

Limitations

- 3.6 There were no limitations affecting the results of the surveys.

³ Bibby, C.J., N.D. Burgess & D.A. Hill, 2000: Bird Census Techniques: 2nd Edition. London: Academic Press

⁴ European Ornithological Atlas Committee, 1979. *Categories of Breeding Bird Evidence*. European Ornithological Atlas Committee.

Species & Assemblage Assessment

- 3.7 The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM) guidance on ecological impact assessment assesses nature conservation importance within a geographical context⁵. To attain each level of importance, an ornithological resource or one of the features. (species population or assemblage of species) should meet the criteria set out in Table 2. In some cases, professional judgement, based on local knowledge, may be required to increase, or decrease the allocation of importance.
- 3.8 The most recent county annual bird report, Birds in Greater Manchester 2012⁶ was consulted to inform the assessment. The abundance of species referred to in this report follows the guidelines as used in the county annual bird report:
- Abundant - occurs in large numbers in suitable habitats and seasons
 - Common – occurs regularly, or widely distributed in suitable habitat
 - Fairly common – occurs in moderate numbers in suitable habitat
 - Uncommon – occurs in small numbers
 - Scarce – one or two records each year, or restricted to specific habitats
 - Rare – occurs less than annually
 - Very rare – less than 10 records in the past 20 years
 - Vagrant – less than 2 records in the past 20 years
- 3.9 The Site has also been assessed against the relevant sites of biological interest criteria for identification of avian sites in Greater Manchester⁷ based on a number of criteria set out for breeding birds.

Table 2: Evaluation Criteria

Nature Conservation Value	Examples of Selection Criteria
International	A species which is part of the cited interest of an SPA and which regularly occurs in internationally or nationally important numbers. A species present in internationally important numbers (>1% of international population).
National	A species which is part of the cited interest of a SSSI and which regularly occurs in nationally or regionally important numbers. A nationally important assemblage of breeding or over-wintering species. A species present in nationally important numbers (>1% UK population). Rare breeding species (<300 breeding pairs in the UK).

⁵ CIEEM, 2018. Guidelines for *Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland*. Winchester: Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management. [Online]. Available at: <https://cieem.net/wp-content/uploads/2019/02/Combined-EcIA-guidelines-2018-compressed.pdf> [Accessed 08/06/2022]

⁶ Greater Manchester Bird Recording Group (2021) Birds in Greater Manchester 2012

⁷ Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (2016) Greater Manchester – Sites of Biological Importance Selection Guidelines. [Online]. Available at <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/ecologyunit/sbi/guidelines.pdf> [Accessed 19.07.22]

Nature Conservation Value	Examples of Selection Criteria
Regional	Species listed as being of principal importance under NERC S.41 which are not covered above, and which regularly occurs in regionally important numbers. Species present in regionally important numbers (>1% of regional population). Sustainable populations of species that are rare or scarce within a region. Species on the BoCC Red List & which regularly occur in regionally important numbers.
County	Species listed as being of principal importance under NERC S.41 which are not covered above and which regularly occurs in county important numbers Species present in county important numbers (>1% of county population). Sustainable populations of species that are rare or scarce within a county, or are listed as being of principal importance under S41 of the NERC Act. A site designated for its county important assemblage of birds (e.g. a SINC Site). Species on the BoCC Red List & which regularly occur in county important numbers.
Local	Other species of conservation interest (e.g. all other species on the BoCC Red and Amber List or species listed as being of principal importance under NERC S.41 which are not covered above) regularly occurring in locally sustainable populations. Sustainable populations of species which are rare or scarce within the locality.
Site	Species that are common and widespread.

4.0 RESULTS & EVALUATION

Desk Study

Designated Sites

- 4.1 Pilsworth, a site of biological interest (SBI) was located c.600m south-west of the Site. It comprises of c.6 ha of ponds and lodges designated for their marginal vegetation and bird interest. No other statutory or non-statutory sites designated for their ornithological interest fall within the search area.

Protected/ Notable Bird Records

- 4.2 Almost 3000 records of schedule 1, BAP and red/amber list bird species were returned from the Greater Manchester Record centre within 2km of the Site. It was not possible to effectively display these records visually on a consultation plan. GMRC have asked that the location of schedule 1 species remain confidential, therefore information beyond the species present has not been included within this report. Schedule 1 species within the locality of Site include barn owl *Tyto alba*, common scoter *Melanitta nigra*, Corncrake *Crex crex*, goldeneye *Bucephala clangula*, green sandpiper *Tringa ochropus*, hobby *Falco Subbuteo*, kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*, little ringed plover *Charadrius dubius*, osprey *Pandion haliaetus*, peregrine *Falco peregrinus* and whooper swan *Cygnus cygnus*. In summary other bird species comprised 19 BAP species, 23 red list and 35 amber list species

Field Survey

- 4.3 A total of 27 bird species were recorded during the breeding bird survey. Of these, 14 appear on one or more of the following and are hereafter referred to as 'notable species'.
- BoCC Red or Amber lists;
 - Section 41 of the NERC Act 2006; and
 - Schedule 1 of the WCA
- 4.4 Of the 27 bird species recorded, six were confirmed breeding within the Site, including notable woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*, song thrush *Turdus philomelos*, starling *Sturnus vulgaris* and skylark *Alauda arvensis*.
- 4.5 Four were considered probable breeders, including the notable species reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*.
- 4.6 The remaining 15 species recorded were considered possible breeders (11 – including notable species; stock dove *Columba oenas*, whitethroat *Curruca communis*, wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, mistle thrush *Turdus viscivorus*, dunnoek *Prunella modularis* and greenfinch *Chloris chloris*) or non-breeders (6).
- 4.7 Table 3 provides a summary of the notable bird species within the Site and Figures 7 and 8 show their recorded locations. A full list of results is provided in Appendix 1.

Table 3: Notable Bird Species Recorded and Their Recent Status in Greater Manchester

Species	Legal / Conservation Status	Peak Count / No. of Survey Visits Recorded	Recent Status in Greater Manchester
Stock Dove <i>Columba oenas</i>	Amber List	1 flyover/1	Fairly common resident
Woodpigeon <i>Columba palumbus</i>	Amber List	8/3	Abundant resident and passage migrant
Black-headed Gull <i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	Amber List	2 flyover/1	Abundant resident and winter visitor, uncommon breeder
Herring Gull <i>Larus argentatus</i>	Red List NERC S.41	41 flyovers/3	Common winter visitor and passage migrant
Skylark <i>Alauda arvensis</i>	Red List NERC S.41	2/3	Common resident, passage migrant and winter visitor
Whitethroat <i>Curruca communis</i>	Amber List	1/1	Common summer visitor
Wren <i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	Amber List	1/1	Abundant resident
Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	Red List NERC S.41	16/2	Abundant resident and winter visitor

Species	Legal / Conservation Status	Peak Count / No. of Survey Visits Recorded	Recent Status in Greater Manchester
Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i>	Amber List NERC S.41	1/2	Common resident and winter visitor
Mistle Thrush <i>Turdus viscivorus</i>	Red List	1/1	Common resident
Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i>	Amber List NERC S.41	1/1	Abundant resident
Greenfinch <i>Chloris chloris</i>	Red List	2/2	Common resident
Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	Amber List NERC S.41	3/3	Fairly common resident and partial migrant
Oystercatcher <i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>	Amber List	1/1	Fairly common passage migrant and summer visitor, occasional breeder
Lesser Black-Backed Gull	Amber List	20/1	Common passage migrant and winter visitor, uncommon resident

Bird Survey Results Descriptions

- 4.8 The large open area of neutral grassland provided breeding opportunities for a small number of bird species, including notable skylark *Alauda arvensis* and reed bunting *Emberiza schoeniclus*. The additional smaller areas of grassland throughout the site provided foraging opportunities and limited breeding opportunities for bird species present on site. This habitat provided foraging opportunities for starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, due to the presence of juvenile starlings within foraging flocks it is considered that this species was a confirmed breeder within the Site, although it is likely this species was utilising the industrial environment and onsite trees within the site.
- 4.9 The areas of scrub, broadleaved woodland and trees provided breeding and foraging opportunities for common and widespread generalist species, with notable species including dunnock *Prunella modularis*, wren *Troglodytes troglodytes*, mistle thrush *Turdus viscivorus* and song thrush *Turdus philomelos*. Other species utilising these habitats included robin, blackbird and a range of widespread warbler, finch and tit species.
- 4.10 The introduced shrub to the north of the Site provided limited breeding opportunities for generalist species, this area was confirmed to being used by breeding notable species woodpigeon *Columba palumbus*, where a bird was noted sat on a nest.
- 4.11 A number of birds were recorded flying over the Site only, including black-headed gull *Chroicocephalus ridibundus* and stock dove *Columba oenas*.

Evaluation

- 4.12 The following section provides an evaluation of the survey results and an assessment of the potential impacts of the proposals.

Local Wildlife Site Selection Criteria

- 4.13 The Site was assessed against the published selection criteria for LWS/Sites of Biological Interest in Greater Manchester⁸ to evaluate the Site against the thresholds for county value. The relevant criterion is discussed below and assessed against the recorded assemblage.
- Sites that regularly support more than 0.5% of the total British breeding population of any native bird species.
 - Any site which regularly supports a breeding population of any bird species included in Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981), as amended.
 - Species to which this Guideline may be applied in Greater Manchester include, but may not be exclusive to: peregrine, black redstart, barn owl, little ringed plover, kingfisher, black necked grebe, merlin, hobby, quail, Mediterranean gull,
 - Any site which regularly supports a significant proportion of the breeding population of a bird species regarded as a rare breeding bird in Greater Manchester.
 - Species to which this Guideline may be applied in Greater Manchester will include, but may not be exclusive to: cuckoo, long-eared owl, short-eared owl, lesser spotted woodpecker, yellow wagtail, wood warbler, spotted flycatcher, pied flycatcher, twite, redshank, ring ouzel, gadwall, pochard, shoveler, goosander, teal, redstart, marsh tit.
 - Any site which regularly supports a significant proportion of the breeding population of a bird species regarded as a scarce breeding bird in Greater Manchester.
 - Species to which this Guideline may be applied in Greater Manchester will include, but may not be exclusive to: water rail, golden plover, snipe, woodcock, curlew, green woodpecker, grasshopper warbler, willow tit, tree sparrow, corn bunting, whinchat, stonechat, raven, lapwing*, ringed plover, common sandpiper, common tern
 - Any site from which the following have been recorded in the last five-year period for which data is available. Regard will be given when applying this Guideline to the status (e.g. red/ amber list of breeding concern etc) of all the species under consideration for the assemblage.
 - Any site that supports a significant population of a colonial nesting bird.
 - Species to which this Guideline may be applied in Greater Manchester will include, but may not be exclusive to: sand martin, grey heron, common tern and house martin
- 4.14 The Site does not meet any of the relevant criteria and therefore, in and of itself, does not qualify for selection as an LWS based on its breeding bird assemblage, or show this assemblage to be of county value.

Assemblage Value

- 4.15 The large open area of grassland provided breeding and foraging opportunities for small numbers of skylark and reed bunting. Skylark was confirmed breeding on site due to the behaviour of adults

⁸ Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (2016) Greater Manchester – Sites of Biological Importance Selection Guidelines. [Online]. Available at <https://www.tameside.gov.uk/ecologyunit/sbi/guidelines.pdf> [Accessed 19.07.22]

indicating an occupied nest, during the surveys the peak count of skylark's recorded was 2 individuals, indicating that there is a single pair nesting within this area. A peak count of 3 reed buntings were similarly recorded within this area and considered a probable breeder of this area.

- 4.16 The scrub, scattered trees and broadleaved woodland bordering the site and field boundaries, supported common and widespread generalist species typical of this habitat including providing breeding opportunities for Dunnock, Song Thrush and Mistle Thrush.
- 4.17 As a result, the Site was considered to be of no more than **Local** level importance for its breeding bird assemblage.

Individual Species

- 4.18 Table 4 summarises the species recorded that are of at least **Local** importance.
- 4.19 The majority of the other breeding bird species were either recorded in smaller numbers, recorded flying over the site, noted in unsuitable breeding habitats and/or are considered common and widespread breeding species nationally and/or locally. These individual species that make use of the available habitats are recognised as being of only Site importance.

Table 4: Evaluation of Nature Conservation Importance of Birds Recorded within the Site

Species		Status			Importance
		NERC S.41	WCA Sch.1	LBAP	
Red List					
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	+			Local
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>	+			Local
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>				Local
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>				Local
Amber List					
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba Palumbus</i>				Local
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	+			Local
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	+			Local
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	+			Local

5.0 DISCUSSION & RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 The following section provides an assessment of the potential impacts of the proposals upon breeding birds. Where appropriate, recommendations are provided for mitigation and enhancement that take account of the likely ecological effects. Throughout the evaluation, any recommendations for mitigation have been informed by the most up-to-date indicative layout.
- 5.2 The development proposals are for 31,512m² GFA B8 use to serve as a distribution centre. The existing buildings on the site will be demolished. Access will be provided through the Heywood Distribution Park.
- 5.3 As part of the net gain conditions, offsite habitat enhancement will be occurring within the wider area.
- 5.4 The recommendations below have been provided with the aim of informing development proposals on how to best maintain the conservation status of bird species present.

Impact Assessment of Breeding Birds

- 5.5 The potential impact of the loss or change of habitat upon breeding bird species arising from the effects of development is based upon an understanding of each species' ecological requirements, the type of development, number of birds recorded within the survey area, their nature conservation criteria based on legislation and current guidance, their county status according to the county bird report and professional judgement.
- 5.6 The following potential impacts to the recorded bird populations and assemblage may result from the proposals:
- Direct loss/change of breeding habitat
 - Disturbance during construction and/or operation

Habitat Loss

- 5.7 The Site proposals include the total loss of the neutral grassland habitats on site as well as the majority of scrub and a small area of woodland.
- 5.8 The individual species recorded on site that are arguably the most vulnerable to impacts from habitat loss/change are the eight species that are considered to be of Local importance. These comprise notable species that are either specially protected, appear on the BoCC Red/Amber lists and/or listed as a NERC Priority Species and were recorded in locally important numbers.
- 5.9 The loss of the neutral grassland will lead to a loss of skylark and reed bunting as breeders on site. Therefore, it is considered that the development of the site will lead to an **adverse** impact on the ground nesting species recorded. The loss of this habitat will also reduce the overall availability of foraging resources for starling.
- 5.10 The scale of the adverse impacts will be reduced by the abundance of further suitable habitat in the wider landscape to the Site, as well as the enhancement to offsite areas as part of the biodiversity offsetting required for the Site.
- 5.11 The retention of some scrub and woodland onsite will ensure the development will result in a **Negligible** impact on the generalist species recorded within the Site, including song thrush, mistle thrush and duncock.

Habitat Mitigation

- 5.12 The layout of the development is currently reserved for a subsequent planning application, which will include a habitat creation and enhancement strategy for the Site. The habitats lost to proposals require compensation on a like-for-like or like-for-better basis and as such the habitat creation and enhancement strategy will include the provision of a mixture of mixed scrub, wildflower-rich grassland, native hedgerows and woodland.
- 5.13 The provision of mixed scrub, hedgerows and wildflower rich grassland will provide mitigation for the loss of foraging and breeding habitats for a range of common and generalist bird species. Hedgerow and scrub planting should comprise a diversity of native species, preferably fruit and nut-bearing species. Recommended shrub species include, but are not limited to, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, dog-rose *Rosa canina* agg., blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, guelder-rose *Viburnum opulus* and dogwood *Cornus sanguinea*. Where possible,

recently planted hedgerows within the green infrastructure should include grassy margins on either side, to provide nesting and foraging for birds.

Disturbance Impacts

- 5.14 Construction operations have the potential to disturb birds using the development area of the Site for roosting, foraging, and breeding. Operations likely to disturb breeding birds include noise and displacement during vegetation clearance, initial ground works and some construction activities. During the breeding season disturbance may lead to nest desertion or the avoidance of the area and reduce the suitability of retained nesting areas, such as the retained hedgerows or woodland edge. Whilst there is some potential for breeding success to be reduced, this is not expected to affect the local conservation status of the majority of the bird species using the survey area for breeding

Disturbance Mitigation

- 5.15 To avoid disturbance to breeding birds, ground clearance works, and vegetation should be undertaken prior to the bird-breeding season (March to August, inclusive). If this is not possible, the area will be checked prior to removal of vegetation or ground works by an experienced ecologist. If active nests are found, vegetation will be left untouched and suitably buffered from works until all birds have fledged. Specific advice will be provided prior to undertaking the clearance. This would be a statutory requirement due to the protection of all nesting birds and their nests under the Wildlife and Countryside Act, 1981 (as amended). A suitably experienced ecologist would supervise this.

Enhancement

- 5.16 Additional enhancements that could be integrated with the on-going management of the Site include the erection of a mixture of nest box types. The following provides details of suitable nest box types to be erected at suitable locations:
- Large nest boxes with large holes (45-50mm) provide breeding sites for starling;
 - A mixture of small hole (26mm and 32mm boxes within the green infrastructure will provide nesting opportunities for species such as blue tit and great tit. These boxes generally have a high uptake rate;
 - Small open front nest boxes should be placed especially on trees which support a climber such as ivy which provides a degree of concealment. These boxes typically attract species such as robin and blackbird.

APPENDIX 1: BREEDING BIRD SURVEY RESULTS**Proposed Development Area**

Species: British Common Name	Species: Latin name	Survey 1 22.04.22	Survey 2 12.05.22	Survey 3 10.06.24	Survey 4 07.06.24	Conservation Status & Protection	Breeding status ⁹
Canada Goose	<i>Branta canadensis</i>	6 flyover				Not Listed	Non-Breeder F
Stock Dove	<i>Columba oenas</i>		1			Amber List	Possible H
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	6 + 2 flyovers	3 + 2 flyover	5 + 1 flyover	8	Amber List	Confirmed ON
Black-headed Gull	<i>Chroicocephalus ridibundus</i>	2 flyover				Amber List	Non-breeder F
Herring Gull	<i>Larus argentatus</i>	5 + 36 flyover	13 flyover	15 flyover	4	Red List NERC S.41	Non-breeder F
Lesser Black-Backed Gull	<i>Larus fuscus</i>				20	Amber List	Non-breeder
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>		2 + 1 flyover	2	2	Green List	Possible H
Jackdaw	<i>Coloeus monedula</i>	2 flyover	1 flyover		1	Green List	Non-breeder F
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	12 + 1 flyover	2	4	2	Green List	Possible H
Blue Tit	<i>Cyanistes caeruleus</i>	1	2	2	6	Green List	Confirmed FL, P, T
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>		3	1	2	Green List	Confirmed FL
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	1	2	1		Red List NERC S.41	Confirmed NY, P, T, D
Blackcap	<i>Sylvia atricapilla</i>	4	2			Green List	Probable P, H, S
Whitethroat	<i>Curruca communis</i>			1		Amber List	Possible S
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>		1		6	Amber List	Possible S
Starling	<i>Sturnus vulgaris</i>		16	11		Red List NERC S.41	Confirmed FL
Song Thrush	<i>Turdus philomelos</i>	1		1	4	Amber List NERC S.41	Confirmed FL, S
Mistle Thrush	<i>Turdus viscivorus</i>		1			Red List	Possible H
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	5	2	2	5	Green List	Probable P, T

⁹European Ornithological Atlas Committee, 1979. *Categories of Breeding Bird Evidence*. European Ornithological Atlas Committee.

Species: British Common Name	Species: Latin name	Survey 1 22.04.22	Survey 2 12.05.22	Survey 3 10.06.24	Survey 4 07.06.24	Conservation Status & Protection	Breeding status ⁹
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	2	1	1	2	Green List	Possible S
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	1				Amber List NERC S.41	Possible S
Greenfinch	<i>Chloris chloris</i>	2 flyover		1	2	Red List	Possible S, H
Goldfinch	<i>Carduelis carduelis</i>	4	1		8	Green List	Possible S
Reed Bunting	<i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i>	3	2	3		Amber List NERC S.41	Probable P, T, A
Pied Wagtail	<i>Motacilla alba</i>				1	Green List	
Oystercatcher	<i>Haematopus ostralegus</i>				1	Amber List	
Total Species	No. 27	16	17	14	16		

Potential Mitigation Areas

Species: British Common Name	Species: Latin name	Update Survey 07.06.24	Conservation Status & Protection
Woodpigeon	<i>Columba palumbus</i>	12	Amber List
Long-Tailed Tit	<i>Pica pica</i>	1	Green List
Carrion Crow	<i>Corvus corone</i>	2	Green List
Great Tit	<i>Parus major</i>	2	Green List
Skylark	<i>Alauda arvensis</i>	1	Red List NERC S.41
Moorhen	<i>Gallinula chloropus</i>	2	Amber List
Mallard	<i>Anas platyrhynchos</i>	2	Amber List
Wren	<i>Troglodytes troglodytes</i>	5	Amber List
Blackbird	<i>Turdus merula</i>	7	Green List
Robin	<i>Erithacus rubecula</i>	1	Green List
Dunnock	<i>Prunella modularis</i>	1	Amber List NERC S.41

Species: British Common Name	Species: Latin name	Update Survey 07.06.24	Conservation Status & Protection
Magpie	<i>Pica pica</i>	1	Green List
Total No. Species		12	

Breeding Status evidence can be broken down into four sections, each with their own codes, as defined by the European Ornithological Atlas Committee:

Confirmed breeder

- DD** – distraction display or injury feigning
- UN** – used nest or eggshells found from this season
- FL** – recently fledged young or downy young
- ON** – adults entering or leaving nest-site in circumstances indicating occupied nest
- FF** – adult carrying faecal sac or food for young
- NE** – nest containing eggs
- NY** – nest with young seen or heard

Probable breeder - Evidence accumulated during the survey indicates that the bird species is breeding on site.

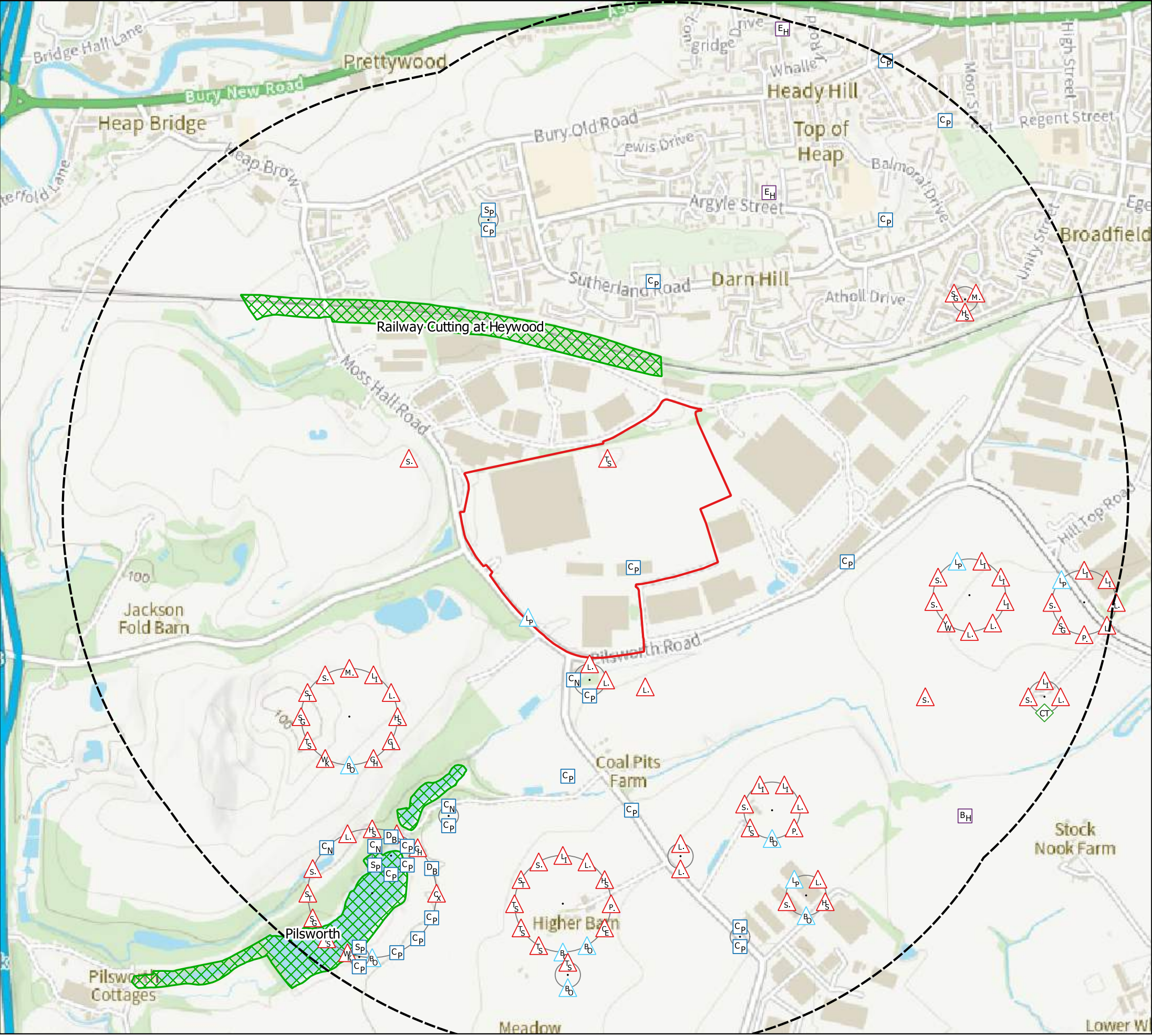
- P** – pair in suitable nesting habitat
- T** – permanent territory (defended over at least 2 survey occasions)
- D** – courtship and display
- N** – visiting probable nest site
- A** – agitated behaviour
- I** – brood patch of incubating bird (from bird in hand)
- B** – nest building or excavating nest-hole

Possible breeder - Evidence accumulated during the survey indicates that the bird species could be breeding on site, but the evidence is less conclusive than that obtained for probable breeders.

- H** – observed in suitable nesting habitat
- S** – singing male

Non-breeder

- F** – flying over
- M** – migrant
- U** – summering non-breeder
- UH** – observed in unsuitable nesting habitat

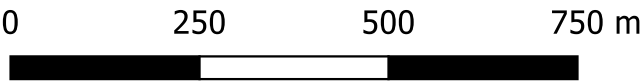


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Key

- | | |
|---------------------------|---------------------|
| Site Boundary | Corncrake |
| SBIs in 1km | Lapwing |
| 1km Buffer | Woodcock |
| Common pipistrelle | Skylark |
| Soprano pipistrelle | Grasshopper warbler |
| Common noctule | Starling |
| Daubenton's bat | Song thrush |
| Brown hare | Mistle thrush |
| Western European hedgehog | House sparrow |
| Common toad | Tree sparrow |
| Barn owl | Yellow wagtail |
| Little Ringed Plover | Grey wagtail |
| Common scoter | Linnet |
| Grey partridge | |



client
Indurent Management Ltd

project
Heywood Distribution Park

drawing title
Site Location and Consultation Plan

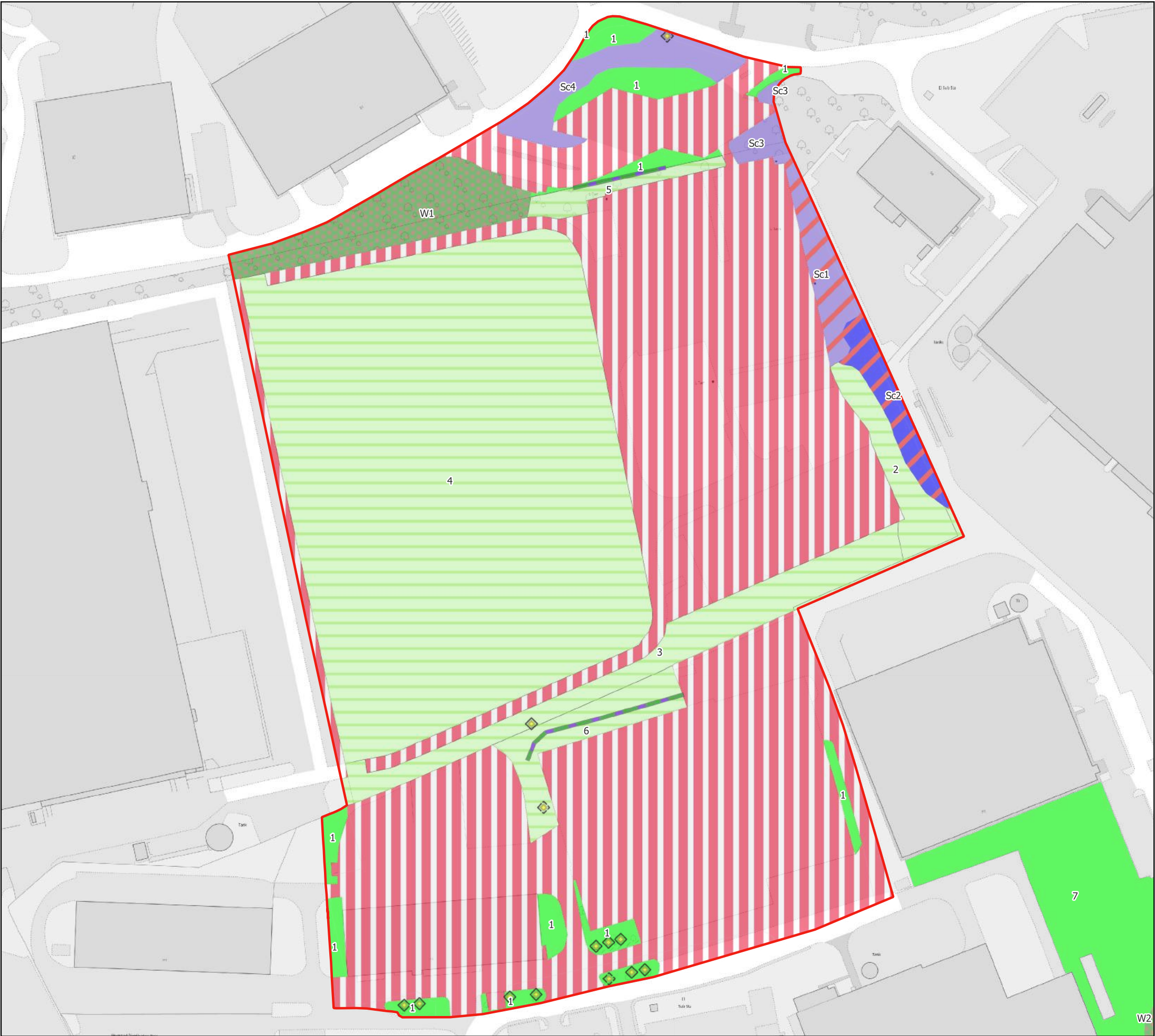
scale
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drawn
SH / IH

issue date
24/7/2024

drawing / figure number
Figure 1

rev
-



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Key

 **Red Line Boundary**

Baseline Habitats

 **Bramble scrub**

 **Developed land; sealed surface**

 **Introduced shrub**

 **Mixed scrub**

 **Modified grassland**

 **Other neutral grassland**

 **Other woodland; broadleaved**

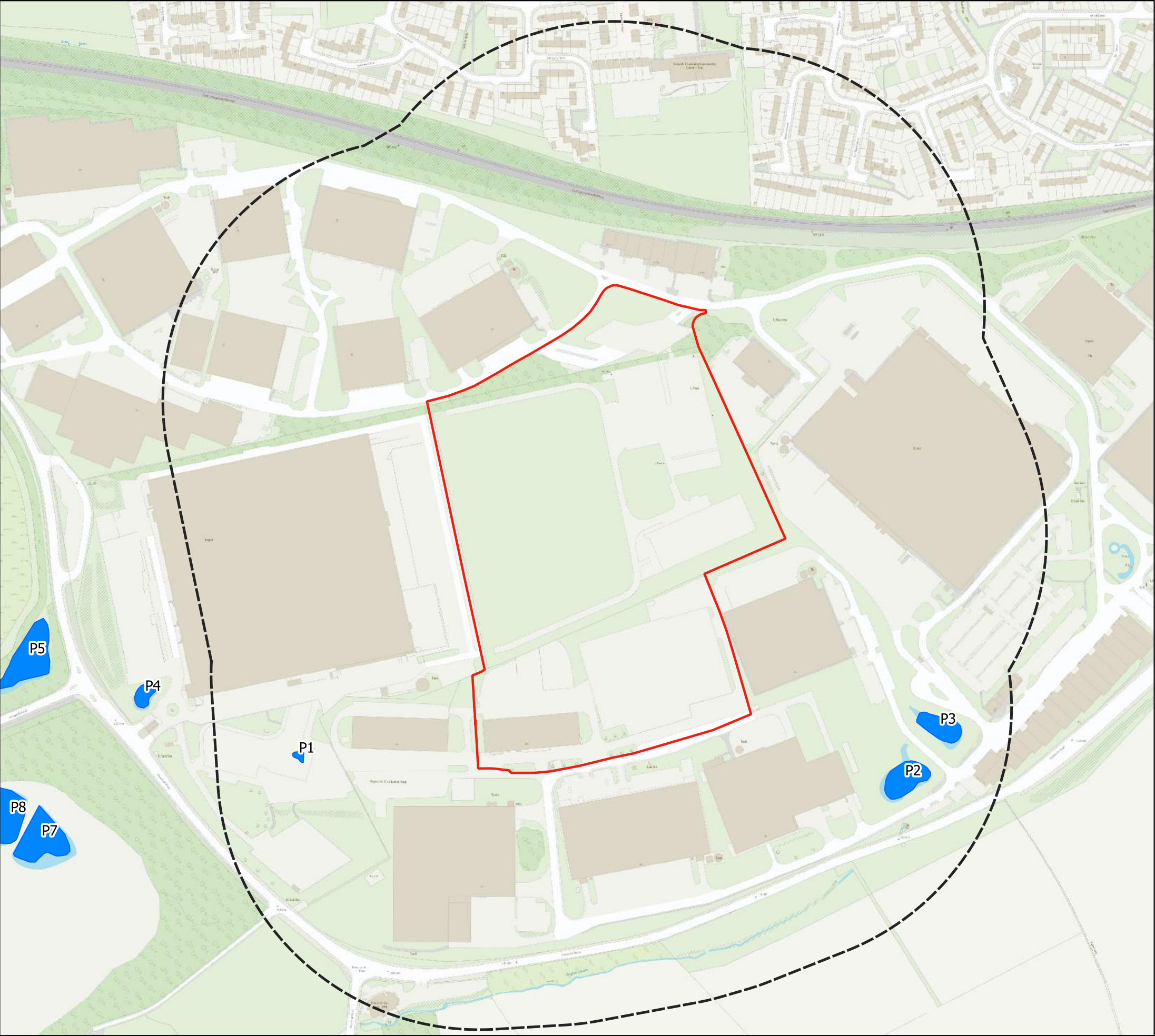
Baseline Hedgerows

 **Line of trees**

Baseline Individual Trees

 **Existing Medium Urban Tree**

 **Existing Small Urban Tree**



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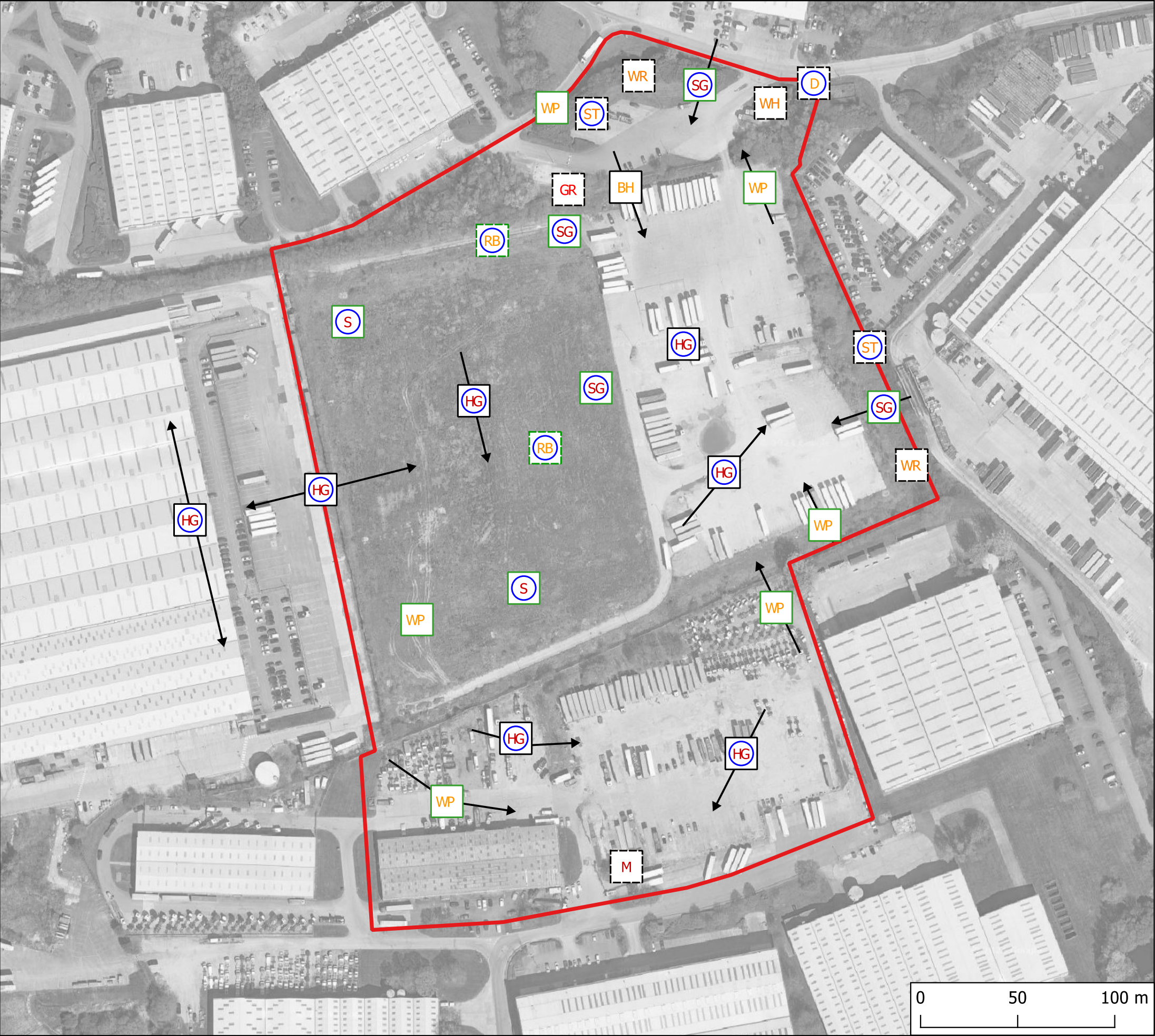
Key

-  Red Line Boundary
-  250m Buffer
-  Waterbody



client
Indurent Management Ltd
project
Plot H4, Heywood Distribution Park,
Pilsworth Road, Heywood, Rochdale
drawing title
Waterbody Location Plan

scale
1:3,800
drawing / figure number
Figure 3
drawn
SH/IH
issue date
24/7/2024
rev
-



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Key

Site Boundary

BoCC Red List Species

HG Herring Gull

M Mistle Thrush

S Skylark

SG Starling

GR Greenfinch

BoCC Amber List Species

BH Black-headed Gull

D Dunnock

RB Reed Bunting

WH Whitethroat

ST Song Thrush

WP Woodpigeon

WR Wren

→ Fly over only

Additional Protections

 NERC Species of Principal Importance

 Schedule 1 Species

 LBAP Species (underlined)

Breeding Status

Confirmed Breeder

Probable Breeder

Possible Breeder

Breeding Status



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Key

- Site Boundary**
- HG **Herring Gull**
- ST **Song Thrush**
- D **Dunnock**
- LB **Lesser Black-backed Gull**
- OC **Oystercatcher**
- GR **Greenfinch**
- WP **Woodpigeon**
- WR **Wren**