

MCI DEVELOPMENTS LIMITED

15 Beecham Court
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Date: 11th June 2025
Reference: 81-734-L2

FLOATING WATER PLANTAIN SURVEY TRUBS FARM, ROCHDALE

BACKGROUND

E3P were instructed by MCI Developments Limited to produce a Letter Statement detailing the results of floating water plantain (*Luronium natans*) surveys of the Rochdale Canal located adjacent to Trubs Farm, Rochdale, hereafter referred to as 'the site'.

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal was undertaken by E3P in March 2024 (report reference: 81-734-R1). During the desk study, it was identified that the Rochdale Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Biological Interest (SBI), which is designated for floating water-plantain, borders the eastern boundary of the site.

It was recommended that floating water plantain surveys be undertaken to assess the distribution of the plant along the length of the canal adjacent to the site, and to determine whether the proposed development will have any impacts. Such potential impacts included shading, handling of contaminated ground and pollution runoff into the canal.

FLOATING WATER PLANTAIN SURVEY

The Floating Water Plantain Surveys were undertaken on 14th May 2025 and 09th June 2025 by Huw Morgan BSc (Hons), CEnv, MEnvSc, MCIEEM, Principal Ecologist at E3P. Huw has ten years of experience undertaking botanical surveys and holds a Level 4 Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC).

The surveys followed guidance set out in *Monitoring the Floating Water-plantain* (Willby N, Eaton J & Clark S, 2003) in which the length of the canal was surveyed from the canal tow-path, making continuous observations of the vegetation within the canal to determine the presence and distribution of floating water plantain. The survey was aided with the use of binoculars and a long zoom camera to check the vegetation on the opposite side of the canal to the tow-path. The weather conditions during the first survey were sunny and bright, with light winds, while the second survey was overcast and mild, with light winds.

The survey area covered the stretch of the Rochdale Canal running adjacent to the site between Lock 51, located approximately 175 m north of the site and Lock 53, located approximately 220 m south of the site. Please see Appendix I for the Survey Extent.



LIMITATIONS

The first survey was undertaken in mid-May, which is outside the optimum period for floating water plantain, which is considered to be between June and August, inclusive. In addition, the second survey was undertaken in early June at the beginning of the optimum period; therefore, it is likely that the floating water plantain may not be fully established at this time and may be under-recorded. This has been taken into consideration during the assessment.

RESULTS

SURVEY 1 – 14TH MAY 2025

A summary and photographs of the first survey are detailed in Table 1 below.

Table 1 Survey Photographs		
PHOTO	DESCRIPTION	PHOTOGRAPH
P1	Showing Rochdale Canal with the site on the right side of the bank. The canal was noted to be clear with no floating or submerged vegetation along this stretch of the canal.	
P2	Showing Rochdale Canal upstream from Lock 51 at the northern extent of the survey area.	



PHOTO	DESCRIPTION	PHOTOGRAPH
P3	A small mat of fringed water lily (<i>Nymphoides peltata</i>) was present immediately north of Lock 52 at OS Grid Reference: SD 88307 10338.	
P4	Close up of fringed water lily.	
P5	Looking south towards the M62 Motorway. The canal along this stretch was noted to be free of any floating or submerged aquatic vegetation.	



PHOTO	DESCRIPTION	PHOTOGRAPH
P6	Showing the southern tip of the canal arm located adjacent to the south-eastern boundary of the site. The canal arm was noted to contain large amounts of litter and debris, along with leaves and blossom petals that had accumulated within the canal arm. No floating water plantain was noted along this stretch; however, further fringed water lily plants and frogbit (<i>Hydrocharis morsus-ranae</i>) were present.	
P7	Showing a close-up of the frogbit within the canal arm.	



SURVEY 2 – 09TH JUNE 2025

A summary and photographs of the second survey are detailed in Table 2 below.

Table 2 Survey Photographs		
PHOTO	DESCRIPTION	PHOTOGRAPH
P1	Showing Rochdale Canal south of Lock 52 with the site on the right side of the bank. The canal was noted to be clear with no floating or submerged vegetation along this stretch of the canal.	
P2	Showing fringed water lily immediately north of Lock 52 at OS Grid Reference: SD 88307 10338. It was noted that the water lily covered a larger area than in the first survey.	



PHOTO	DESCRIPTION	PHOTOGRAPH
P3	Small areas of young arrowhead (<i>Sagittaria sagittifolia</i>) were noted along the stretch of canal between Lock 51 and Lock 52.	
P4	Dense stands of broad-leaved pondweed (<i>Potamogeton natans</i>) were visible throughout the stretch of canal between Lock 51 and Lock 52. The submerged grass-like leaves were readily identified, with small numbers of floating leaves also present.	
5	Showing the canal arm adjacent to the south-eastern boundary of the site. It was noted that fringed water lily and frogbit were present in greater quantities than in the first survey; however, no floating water plantain was observed.	



PHOTO	DESCRIPTION	PHOTOGRAPH
P6	Looking north towards the access bridge crossing over the canal from the western end of Trub Road. The canal along this stretch was noted to lack any aquatic vegetation.	

Overall, the stretch of the Rochdale Canal within the survey area was found to be largely clear of floating or submerged aquatic vegetation, with vegetation being limited to the stretch of canal between Lock 51 (OS Grid Reference: SD 88345 10540) and Lock 52 (OS Grid Reference: SD 88301 10310), running to the north of the site, and within the canal arm leading south-west from Rochdale Canal, adjacent to the south-eastern boundary of the site.

Fringed water lily was the most dominant species recorded, with large mats recorded immediately north of Lock 52 and within the canal arm. In addition, broad-leaved pondweed was widespread between Lock 51 and Lock 52, whilst small stands of arrowhead were also noted. Frogbit was recorded in large quantities within the canal arm.

It was noted that the canal arm leading south-west from Rochdale Canal, adjacent to the south-eastern site boundary, contained a lot of litter, debris, leaves and blossom petals, with no floating water plantain recorded. It is considered that, due to the water quality being affected by the detritus located within the canal arm, it may not provide the optimal conditions that floating water plantain favours.

Due to the surveys being undertaken in May and early June, which are at the beginning of the optimum period for floating water plantain, it cannot be ascertained that floating water plantain is completely absent from this stretch of the canal, due to the potential for the plant to become more established later in the season. However, due to there being no submerged or floating leaves recorded during the survey, it is considered that if floating water plantain is present, it would be in small quantities.



CONCLUSIONS AND RECOMMENDATIONS

Floating water plantain was not recorded within the survey area during the surveys, and it is considered that, should it be present, it would be in small quantities along this stretch of the canal.

Due to the likelihood of floating water plantain being present in larger quantities up and down the canal from the site, it is recommended that the pollution prevention measures detailed within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (report reference: 81-734-R1) and the Habitat Regulations Assessment (report reference: 81-734-R3) are followed.

Yours sincerely,
For and on behalf of E3P Ltd

Huw Morgan
Principal Ecologist

APPENDIX I FLOATING WATER PLANTAIN SURVEY EXTENT

Key:



Red Line Boundary



Extent of survey

Notes

Issue: 1	Revision: 1	Date: 02/06/2025	Drawn: LS2	Authorised: CK
Client: MCI Developments			Job No. 81-734	Date: 02/06/2025
			Drawing No. 81-734-013	Scale: 1:4500 @ A4
Job title: Trubs Farm, Rochdale			Drawing title: Floating Water Plantain Survey Extent	



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