

ADVISORY

Wilson Bowden Developments Ltd
Plot Q, Kingsway Business Park
Rochdale
Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been undertaken on behalf of Wilson Bowden Developments Ltd (the Client) in respect of the Site at Plot Q, Michael Faraday Avenue, Kingsway Business Park, in Rochdale. It has been produced to inform potential ecological constraints in relation to a future planning application for the Site.

The Site is located at land off Michael Faraday Avenue, Kingsway Business Park, Rochdale in Greater Manchester. The Site itself comprises a series of modified grassland fields, woodland edge, with an area of scrub, and a short section of defunct hedgerow in addition to a drainage ditch. The Site is 2.86 hectares (ha) in extent and is centred on grid reference SD 91859 12509.

Impacts to statutory designated sites are possible due to their proximity to the Site, with Rochdale Canal SAC located 330 m west of the Site boundary, however, the Site is not expected to support the species described within the designation criteria for either this SAC or the South Pennines Moor SPA/SAC. As standard, best practice measures relating to construction impacts including noise and dust, in addition to run off from construction, should be incorporated into the construction phase and any residual impacts will be limited.

Due to the proximity of the nearby Stanney Brook SBI, and Rochdale Canal SBI further afield, additional mitigation during the construction phase of works should include sensitive timing of works, sensitive lighting and noise and dust suppression in areas close to the designated sites.

The habitats on-Site are common and widespread in the local area, and generally of low quality, however, the loss of such a large area of grassland is likely to be detrimental. The boundary ditch will be retained and enhanced where possible, and any new landscaping should complement the retained on-Site and off-Site habitats and utilise native species where possible, such as woodland edge planting.

The Site was found to have limited potential for breeding birds, bats, and terrestrial mammals, with no further surveys considered necessary prior to a planning application.

Simple precautionary mitigation measures are recommended to address any residual risks.

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1. INTRODUCTION

Instruction

- 1.1 This Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been undertaken on behalf of Wilson Bowden Developments Ltd (the Client) in respect of the Site at Plot Q, Michael Faraday Avenue, Kingsway Business Park, in Rochdale. It has been produced to inform potential ecological constraints in relation to a future planning application for the Site.

Site Description

- 1.2 The Site is located at land off Michael Faraday Avenue, Kingsway Business Park, Rochdale, in Greater Manchester. The Site itself comprised a series of modified grassland fields, with an area of scrub, woodland edge and a short section of defunct hedgerow. The Site is 2.86 hectares (ha) in extent and is centred on grid reference SD 91859 12509. The land is predominantly flat with a steep 5 m slope in the north-west corner and was situated approximately between 149 and 144 metres above ordnance datum (m AOD). The location of the Site is shown in **Figure 1.1**.



Figure 1.1: Site Location Plan

The Project

- 1.3 The Proposed Development comprises a warehouse distribution/production unit with first floor office and core facilities.

Objectives

- 1.4 The primary purpose of this appraisal is to provide a baseline of all ecological considerations relating to any future development proposals. This will include the identification of any potential ecological constraints and opportunities.

Scope of Works

- 1.5 The ecological appraisal was informed by a desk-based study and a Site survey.
- 1.6 The approach to this PEA follows best practice published by the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM, 2019) and the British Standards Institution (BSI, 2013). Further details are provided later in this report.

Legislation and Planning Policy

- 1.7 The following legislation relates to species and habitats that could potentially occur in association with the Site:
- The Environment Act 2021;
 - The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended);
 - The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended);
 - The Countryside and Rights of Way (CROW) Act 2000;
 - Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006;
 - The Protection of Badgers Act 1992;
 - Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996; and
 - The Hedgerow Regulations 1997.
- 1.8 Further information on the legislation above is provided in **Appendix 1**.
- 1.9 Consideration has also been given in this report to relevant National and Local Planning Policy as summarised below.
- 1.10 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) guides Local Planning Authorities (LPAs) when developing their planning policies and considering planning applications affecting protected habitats, sites and species.
- 1.11 In respect of the natural environment, the NPPF states under Paragraph 187 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 and incorporating features which support priority or threatened species such as swifts, bats and hedgehogs;

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."

1.12 The NPPF Paragraph 192 states that:

"To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and

b) Promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity."

1.13 The NPPF Paragraph 193 also states that:

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

a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;

b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons 67 and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and

d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate."

- 1.14 Through the NPPF and Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act, LPAs have a duty to consider habitats and species listed as being of principal importance for nature conservation in England on Section 41 (S41) of the Act when considering a planning application. In addition, the biodiversity duty of local planning authorities also covers species and habitats listed in local biodiversity action plans.
- 1.15 Additionally, the current adopted Local Plan (Rochdale Adopted Core Strategy 2016) provides the following policies with respect to Strategic Opportunity 4 – To Promote a Greener Environment:
 - i. G1 - Tackling and adapting to climate change;
 - ii. G4 - Protecting Green Belt land;
 - iii. G5 - Managing protected open land;
 - iv. G6 - Enhancing green infrastructure; and
 - v. G7 - Increasing the value of biodiversity and geodiversity.

2. METHODS

Consultation

- 2.1 The Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) were contacted to request records of any locally designated sites and/or protected species from the Site and land within a 2km radius. Records more than ten years old have been largely disregarded.
- 2.2 In addition, the data sources listed below were also searched to gather additional ecological data of relevance to the project, including the identification of non-designated ecologically sensitive habitats such as vegetation corridors, woodlands, watercourses and standing water.
- Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC);
 - Ordnance Survey 1:25,000 mapping; and
 - Aerial imagery (Google Imagery – imagery dated 2025).

UK Hab Survey

- 2.3 A Site survey was undertaken on 21st October 2025 by Craig Dickson MSc BSc (Hons). Craig has extensive experience in survey and site assessment for protected species and through holding a FISC Level 3 Accreditation is appropriately qualified for the surveys based on the CIEEM competencies for species surveys (CIEEM, 2017).
- 2.4 The visit was completed using UK Hab survey techniques as defined in the standard methodology (UKHab Ltd, 2023).
- 2.5 The aim of the visit was to gather sufficient baseline information on the habitats within the Site in order to allow an interpretation of the ecological value of the land.
- 2.6 In addition, the methodology was extended to include a search for incidental evidence of protected/notable fauna and an assessment of the Site's potential to support protected/notable fauna. Specific consideration was given to the following species:
- Amphibians, including great crested newts *Triturus cristatus* (GCN);
 - Badgers *Meles meles*;
 - Bats;
 - Birds;
 - Reptiles; and
 - Priority Species, such as hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*.
- 2.7 Standard methodologies were used where applicable.
- 2.8 Habitats adjacent to the Site were viewed, where possible, from the Site boundaries in order to assess their potential to support protected species that could be utilising the survey Site.

Survey Comments

- 2.9 The survey was carried out in October 2025, in good weather conditions with overcast clouds.
- 2.10 Whilst a survey at this time of year is sub-optimal for botanical identification, it is sufficient for an experienced surveyor to categorise the habitats and assess the potential for protected species to be present, in line with the aims of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, with recommendations made for further assessment if deemed necessary.
- 2.11 In line with standard guidance, the results and recommendations within this report are valid for up to two years from the date of survey, assuming there are no significant changes to the survey Site or its immediate surroundings. Updated survey work may be required to support any future planning applications outside of this time period.

3. RESULTS

Statutory Designated Sites

International Sites

- 3.1 There are three international statutory designated sites within 6 km, including two Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) and a single Special Protection Area (SPA), details of which are below.

South Pennine Moors Phase 2 SPA

- 3.2 The South Pennine Moors Phase 2 SPA is located 3.67 km east of the Site boundary and is designated under "ARTICLE 4.1 QUALIFICATION (79/409/EEC) During The Breeding Season The Area Regularly Supports: *Asio flammeus* 0.3% Of The GB Breeding Population Count As At 1990 *Falco columbarius* 2.2% Of The GB Breeding Population Count As At 1995 *Pluvialis apricaria* [North-Western Europe - Breeding] 1.3% Of The GB Breeding Population No Count Period Specified. Article 4.2 qualification (79/409/EEC): an internationally important assemblage of birds".

South Pennines Moors SAC

- 3.3 The South Pennines Moor SAC is also located 3.67 km east of the Site boundary and is designated for the following criteria: "Northern Atlantic wet heaths with *Erica tetralix* for which the area is considered to support a significant presence. European dry heaths for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. Transition mires and quaking bogs for which the area is considered to support a significant presence. Old sessile oak woods with *Ilex* and *Blechnum* in the British Isles for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom. Blanket bogs for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom".

Rochdale Canal SAC

- 3.4 Rochdale Canal SAC is located 330 m west of the Site boundary at its closest point and is designated for: "Floating water-plantain *Luronium natans* for which this is considered to be one of the best areas in the United Kingdom".

National Sites

- 3.5 A single national statutory designated sites falls within 2 km of the Site boundary, the Rochdale Canal SSSI which underpins the aforementioned SAC, as detailed in **Table 3.1**.

Table 3.1: Statutory Sites within 2 km of the Site

Name	Designation	Distance from Site boundary	Summary
Rochdale Canal	SSSI	330 m west	The Rochdale Canal contains important habitats for submerged aquatic plants and emergent vegetation, including extensive colonies of the nationally scarce SAC species floating water plantain <i>Luronium natans</i>. The site also supports a diverse assemblage of aquatic flora, notably its assemblage of pondweeds, <i>Potamogeton spp</i>; the nine species of which found in the canal represent a balanced community which reflects the quality of water.

3.6 The Site falls within several Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) Impact Risk Zones (IRZ), with the closest SSSI located 330 m west of the Site boundary (Rochdale Canal SSSI), which lists the following criteria:

- **Infrastructure:** Pipelines and underground cables, pylons and overhead cables (excluding upgrades and refurbishment of existing network). Any transport proposal including new or extended footways, cycleways, roads/car parks, railways and waterways (excluding routine maintenance). Airports, helipads and other aviation proposals.
- **Minerals, Oil and Gas:** Planning applications for quarries, including: new proposals, Review of Minerals Permissions (ROMP), extensions, variations to conditions etc. Oil & gas exploration/extraction.
- **Rural Non-Residential:** Large non-residential developments outside of existing settlements/urban areas where the net additional gross internal floorspace is > 1,000m² or the footprint exceeds 0.2ha.
- **Residential:** Residential development of 100 units or more.
- **Rural Residential:** Any residential development of 50 or more units outside existing settlements/urban areas.
- **Air Pollution:** Any development that could cause AIR POLLUTION (including: industrial/commercial processes, livestock & poultry units, slurry lagoons/manure stores).
- **Combustion:** All general combustion processes. Incl: energy from waste incineration, other incineration, landfill gas generation plant, pyrolysis/gasification, anaerobic digestion, sewage treatment works, other incineration/combustion.
- **Waste:** Mechanical and biological waste treatment, inert landfill, non-hazardous landfill, hazardous landfill, household civic amenity recycling facilities construction, demolition and excavation waste, other waste management.
- **Compost:** Any composting proposal. Incl: open windrow composting, in-vessel composting, anaerobic digestion, other waste management.

- **Discharge:** Any discharge of water or liquid waste that is discharged to ground (ie to seep away) or to surface water, such as a beck or stream.
- **Water Supply:** Any development needing its own water supply eg remote rural housing that is not connected to a mains water supply, OR large infrastructure such as warehousing/industry where the total net additional gross internal floorspace following development is > 1,000m².

Non-Statutory Designated Sites

- 3.7 Five non-statutory designated sites were identified within 2 km of the Site boundary, all of which were Sites of Biological Interest (SBI), details of which are provided in **Table 3.2**.

Table 3.2: Non-Statutory Local Sites Within 2 km of the Site

Name	Designation	Distance from Site boundary	Summary
Stanney Brook	SBI	15 m south	The SBI supports a number of habitats including marsh, acid grassland and flush communities along the course of Stanney Brook. Many of the habitats are either Greater Manchester or UK Biodiversity Habitats. The adjacent area is subject to the large-scale Kingsway Business Park and the Stanney Brook corridor has been subject to considerable amounts of habitat creation and mitigation works associated with this.
Rochdale Canal - Scowcroft to Warland	SBI	340 m west	The statutory designations are applied to the Oldham and Rochdale sections of the canal with the SBI continuing into Manchester. Canals are a Greater Manchester Biodiversity Habitat.
Marsh near Turf Hill	SBI	660 m south-west	No Citation Provided.
Slopes by River Beal Fir Grove Farm	SBI	1.2 km north	No Citation Provided.
Shaw Moss	SBI	1.83 km north-east	No Citation Provided.

- 3.8 The Site does not fall within greenbelt land, or a GCN Strategic Opportunity Area, however, the Site falls within an Amber risk zone for GCN as part of the Natural England GCN District Level Licencing Scheme (DLL)

Habitats and Botanical Species

Overview

- 3.9 The UK Hab Survey Results Map with Target Notes (TNs) is provided in **Appendix 2** with accompanying habitat descriptions below. Relevant photographs are shown in **Appendix 3**. Botanical species nomenclature follows Stace (2019).
- 3.10 Habitats recorded comprised a series of modified grassland parcels, with a defunct hedgerow, associated with a walled bank. There was a section of scrub in the western extent of the Site, and the northern and eastern boundary was defined by a shallow ditch which was predominantly dry but held standing water in places.

Modified Grassland

- 3.11 The Site was defined by modified grassland, with four distinct parcels varying in composition and sward. The Site was inundated locally in the southern extent and within ruts across the Site, with varying sward heights and dryer raised sections noted.
- 3.12 G1 was the largest of the parcels, defining the southern and western boundaries of the Site, and was the most inundated (503) area on the Site, dominated by rushes (15), with tall forbs (16), and some scattered scrub (10). Species composition included dominant soft rush *Juncus effusus*, with abundant cock's foot *Dactylis glomerata*, and nettle *Urtica dioica*, whilst tufted hair grass *Deschampsia cespitosa*, marsh thistle *Cirsium pallustre*, and hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium* were recorded frequently, followed by occasional Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, male fern *Dryopteris filix-mas*, greater birds-foot-trefoil *Lotus pedunculatus*, and meadow buttercup *Ranunculus acris*. Meadow vetchling *Lathyrus pratensis*, white clover *Trifolium repens* and hemp-agrimony *Eupatorium cannabinum* were all recorded rarely. The sward height was tall and tussocky (128), averaging 50 – 100 cm, and was unmanaged (521). The southern and western boundaries of G1 were defined by an earth bund.
- 3.13 G2 was adjacent to G1 spanning the central extent of the Site, and was a lot less inundated than G1, with scattered rushes (14) and scattered scrub (10). Species included dominant Yorkshire fog, with abundant creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, cock's foot grass, and ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, as well as frequent nettle, ragwort *Jacobaea vulgaris*, and meadow buttercup. Soft rush and creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera* were recorded occasionally, whilst wild angelica *Angelica sylvestris* was noted rarely. The sward height was shorter, averaging 30 cm across the parcel with taller sections of nettle and was unmanaged (521). The north-west corner of G2 was defined by a steep slope, approximately 5 m into a small valley which continued off-Site.
- 3.14 G3 was located on the northern boundary and was previously a distinct field from G1 and G2. It was the smallest of the parcels being defined by dominant red fescue *Festuca rubra*, with abundant creeping thistle, frequent nettle and occasional tufted hair grass. The sward height was uniform, approximately 30 cm high and the area was distinct from the rest of the Site and was unmanaged (521).

- 3.15 G4 was located to the north-east of the Site, adjacent to G2 and G3, and was dominated by tall forbs (16) with scattered rushes (14). Species included dominant rosebay willowherb *Chamaenerion angustifolium*, with abundant soft rush, frequent tufted vetch *Vicia cracca* and cock's foot grass, in addition to occasional hogweed and hemp-agrimony, as well as rare red fescue. The sward height was tall and tussocky (128), averaging 50 – 100 cm, and was unmanaged (521). The eastern boundary of G4 had a small earth bund adjacent to a ditch.

Other Woodland; Broadleaved

- 3.16 An area of woodland edge fell within the western boundary of the Site, which continued off-Site, with species including oak *Quercus robur*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, goat willow *Salix caprea*, Hazel *Corylus avellana*, and aspen *Populus tremula*, recorded within the wider woodland. There was no recognisable understorey, with bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., abundant, though regeneration was evident, most notably stands of aspens growing out into the Site

Mixed Scrub

- 3.17 A small stand of aspen *Populus tremula* scrub was noted atop a mound on the southern boundary of the Site, which may be related to a mature specimen located adjacent in the off-Site woodland.

Other Native Hedgerow

- 3.18 A short section of defunct (519) native (522) hedgerow, associated with a dry-stone walled bank (113), bisected the Site. Species included dominant rowan *Sorbus aucuparia*, with a single hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna* specimen. The base of the hedgerow was defined by creeping bent grass. The dry-stone walled bank was loose in sections, and ran for approximately 80% of the hedgerow length, which continued to the north-west.

Ditch

- 3.19 The northern and eastern boundaries of the Site were an arc running parallel to Michael Faraday Avenue, and were defined by a ditch, which was predominantly dry, but held water periodically, predominantly in the eastern extent. There was no one dominant species, with soft rush noted abundantly, and species from the corresponding adjacent grassland parcels, however, species of note included common bird's-foot trefoil *Lotus corniculatus*, black medick *Medicago lupulina*, red clover *Trifolium pratense*, least bur-reed *Sparganium natans* and zigzag clover *Trifolium medium*, which were not recorded elsewhere on-Site.

Off-Site Habitats

- 3.20 Off-Site habitats adjacent to the boundary included roads and footpaths, with some continuation of grassland to the north and east, in addition to active construction to the north. To the south and west was a parcel of woodland, with grassland associated with Stanney Brook SBI beyond.

Protected / Notable Species

Badgers

- 3.21 No evidence of badgers was recorded on-Site at the time of the Survey, including setts, foraging activity, latrines, prints or hair, however, some mammal runs were noted through the more tussocky grassland leading into the woodland.
- 3.22 The Site had potentially suitable foraging habitat in the grassland, with good connectivity to the wider area, and the off-Site woodland bank may be suitable to support sett building.
- 3.23 There were nine records of badgers within 2 km of the Site in the past ten years, some of which were functionally connected to the Site, details of which are confidential for badger welfare reasons.

Bats

- 3.24 There were 77 records of at least four different species of bats within 2 km of the Site in the past ten years, including common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, Nathusius's pipistrelle *Pipistrellus nathusii*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, and Leisler's bat *Nyctalus leisleri*. The closest record was approximately 570 m from the Site boundary and was a common pipistrelle in 2017. The most recent record was of a pipistrelle species 1.2 km east of the Site boundary in 2024. One of the records related to a roost, with a common pipistrelle maternity roost of four deceased bats in 2021, with anecdotal evidence of a larger maternity roost each year.
- 3.25 The Site had suitable foraging habitat, with a large invertebrate assemblage expected as a result of the habitats and inundation. Furthermore, the Site is functionally connected extensively to the wider area. The Site is unlit; however, it is anticipated that there may be some light spill from adjacent roads and wider Kingsway Business Park.
- 3.26 No trees on-Site had features suitable to support roosting bats, and there were no structures on-Site at the time of the survey suitable to support roosting bats.

Birds

- 3.27 The data search identified three species of birds currently listed on Schedule 1 of the WCA 1981, as amended, including kingfisher *Alcedo atthis*, barn owl *Tyto alba*, peregrine *Falco peregrinus* and little ringed plover *Charadrius dubius*, but the Site lacked suitable nesting habitats for all of these species, though barn owl may use the Site for hunting.
- 3.28 Plover were recorded within 40 m of the Site boundary, however, the grassland at the Site is too long and tussocky to support the species, which require loose gravel and sand surfaces for nesting.

- 3.29 A further 10 species of birds currently listed on the Birds of Conservation Concern (BoCC) Red List, were identified, of which house sparrow *Passer domesticus*, curlew *Numenius arquata*, lapwing *Vanellus vanellus*, starling *Sturnus vulgaris*, willow tit *Poecile montanus*, herring gull *Larus argentatus* and skylark *Alauda Arvensis* were considered most likely to utilise the Site, however, the proximity of the Site to nearby developments is likely to dissuade more sensitive species from nesting. There were extensive records of lapwing, starling and herring gulls from the adjacent fields.
- 3.30 The grassland provided potentially suitable foraging and nesting habitat for ground nesting birds, whilst the scrub and defunct hedgerow provided limited nesting opportunities, with nesting more likely in the adjacent off-Site woodland. Bird species recorded on-Site during the survey included starling and magpies *Pica pica*.

Reptiles & Amphibians

- 3.31 There were no records of reptiles within 2 km of the Site in the past ten years and three records of great crested newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus*, all of which were from 2017 approximately 1.52 km north-east of the Site boundary, as well as records of common toad *Bufo bufo*.
- 3.32 The terrestrial habitat on-Site was potentially suitable for amphibians and reptiles, with good connectivity across the Site. Whilst there were no formal waterbodies on-Site, the surface water inundation of the Site could potentially provide passage for amphibians year-round, and it could offer some functional connectivity for any amphibians crossing the Site.
- 3.33 A review of aerial imagery and OS mapping identified seven waterbodies within 500m of the Site boundary, some of which were collection basins associated with Stanney Brook, whilst others appeared to be temporary waterbodies in undeveloped areas of the wider Kingsway Business Park. No access was provided to the off-Site ponds at the time of the survey; however, none are functionally connected to the GCN records provided.

Other Species

- 3.34 There were extensive records of west European hedgehogs within 2 km of the Site in the past ten years, which were primarily associated with residential areas. The drier areas of grassland at the Site could potentially offer suitable foraging and commuting habitat with good connectivity to the wider area through Stanney Brook to the south.

Invasive Species

- 3.35 There were no records of invasive plant species within 2 km of the Site in the past ten years, and no evidence of invasive plant species was noted on-Site at the time of the survey.

4. EVALUATION

- 4.1 This section identifies the effects on habitats and species during different stages of the development, prior to any mitigation measures.

Designated Sites

- 4.2 Impacts to statutory designated sites, are possible due to their proximity to the Site, with Rochdale Canal SAC located 330 m west of the Site boundary, however, the Site is not expected to support the species described within the designation criteria for both the SAC and the South Pennines Moor SPA/SAC. As standard, best practice measures relating to construction impacts including noise and dust, in addition to run off from construction should be incorporated into the construction phase and any residual impacts will be limited.
- 4.3 Due to the proximity of the nearby Stanney Brook SBI, and Rochdale Canal SBI further, additional mitigation during the construction phase of works should include sensitive timing of works, sensitive lighting and noise and dust suppression in areas close to the designated sites.

Habitats

- 4.4 The habitats on-Site are common and widespread in the local area, and generally of low quality, however, the loss of such a large area of grassland is likely to be detrimental. The boundary ditch will be replaced where possible, and all new landscaping should complement the retained on-Site and off-Site habitats and utilise native species where possible, such as woodland edge planting.

Species

Badgers

- 4.5 There is potential that badgers may utilise the Site for foraging / commuting, if present in the wider area. Mitigation will be required during construction works to ensure no badgers are harmed.

Bats

- 4.6 The Site is largely unlit, though some light spill is anticipated from adjacent street lighting and wider Kingsway Business Park. The hedgerow and woodland edge provide a commuting corridor across the Site, and the Site is functionally connected to nearby waterbodies suitable for foraging / commuting bats in the local area.
- 4.7 However, no further surveys are considered necessary at this stage owing to the existing habitat fragmentation and the retention of the woodland resulting in commuting habitat being retained, though it is recommended that a dark corridor be implemented along the southern boundary.

Birds

- 4.8 The grassland, scrub, woodland, and hedgerows on-Site could potentially support a range a nesting bird species, and the loss of these habitats would have a detrimental impact on local populations of birds. Ground nesting species including lapwing and curlew may make use of the longer grassland on-Site for nesting having been recorded abundantly in the wider area. However, due to the existing development in the area, which is likely to result in disturbance from Kingsway Business Park operations, traffic, pedestrians and construction, no further surveys are considered necessary, and nesting bird checks prior to removal of vegetation on-Site is considered sufficient to enable the works.

Reptiles & Amphibians

- 4.9 Despite a lack of records, reptiles could potentially make use of the Site for commuting and foraging, however, the Site lacks the suitable mosaic of habitats to support reptiles entirely and as such a precautionary approach is considered sufficient.
- 4.10 There were limited records of GCN and whilst the Site lacked permanent standing water to support breeding GCN, the inundated grassland may still function as a stepping stone to suitable breeding sites in the wider area, with seven waterbodies identified within 500 m of the Site. However, no GCN have been recorded in previous construction phases of Kingsway Business Park, suggestive that the species is absent from the immediate area.
- 4.11 The Site falls within an area covered by the GCN District Level Licencing (DLL) scheme for Greater Manchester, however, due to the limited records in a heavily developed area, GCN are not considered a particular constraint at the Site.

Other Species

- 4.12 The Site is potentially suitable to support hedgehogs, which may utilise the grassland and hedgerow for foraging, commuting and resting. A precautionary approach to vegetation clearance should be implemented to ensure no mammals are harmed during the works.

5. RECOMMENDATIONS

- 5.1 No further surveys will be required to inform a future planning application, however, should plans change and the off-Site woodland be impacted directly, then further surveys for bats may be required. Further to the above, the following reports are also recommended to accompany a future planning application for the Site.
- A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment. Landscaping at the Site should seek to retain the boundary woodland, with additional enhancement and new landscaping provision.
 - A Biodiversity Management Plan should be developed to ensure that retained ecological features are protected and any new features added are managed accordingly to ensure long-term success and an improvement to biodiversity.
- 5.2 General mitigation measures and good practice principles during the construction phase are also recommended.
- 5.3 The following pre-commencement surveys are recommended and should be factored into the timetables of enabling/construction works. See **Table 5.1** below.

Table 5.1: Pre-Commencement Survey Recommendations

Species	Rationale	Timing
Nesting birds	Survey will be required prior to Site clearance only if carried out during the period March - August (inclusive). This would allow any active nests to be identified and protected.	Pre-clearance.
Reptiles / Amphibians	Potential to support low numbers of reptiles and amphibians which may commute across the Site or forage at the Site. Site unlikely to support breeding populations.	Precautionary approach to vegetation clearance to include ecological supervision, fingertip search, directional clearance and controlled strimming. Works should be undertaken April – September/October, inclusive, when reptiles and amphibians are most likely to be active, in suitable weather conditions.
Pre-commencement checks for mammals	Species of terrestrial mammals may utilise off-Site woodland or scrub for refuge, and any clearance of these habitats could potentially injure / kill them without mitigation in place.	Pre-clearance. Should any evidence of protected species be found, all works must cease, and further assessment be undertaken.

6. CONCLUSION

- 6.1 The Site has limited suitability for bats, birds, and terrestrial mammals, with no further surveys considered necessary prior to a planning application.
- 6.2 Any future development of the Site should be undertaken in accordance with the outlined recommendations, and any changes to the boundary would require additional assessment to ensure that no habitats or species of importance are harmed during the works.

7. REFERENCES

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- Stace, C.S. (2019) New Flora of the British Isles, 4th edition. University Press, Cambridge
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APPENDICES

Appendix 1: Relevant Legislation

The following text provides information on the key legislation, which is applicable to this survey.

The main wildlife legislation relevant in the UK is as follows:

European Legislation

The relevant sections of the EC Directives and international conventions are summarised below:

- EC Directive on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora (Habitat Directive 1992) as amended (92/43/EEC)

The Directive requires Member States to introduce a range of measures including the protection of species listed in the Annexes. The 189 habitats listed in Annex I of the Directive and the 788 species listed in Annex II, are to be protected by means of a network of sites. Once adopted, these are designated by Member States as Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), and along with Special Protection Areas (SPAs) classified under the EC Birds Directive. The Habitats Directive introduces the precautionary principle; that disturbance to the designated sites can only be permitted having ascertained no adverse effect on the integrity of the Site.

- EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive 1979) as amended (79/409/EEC)

The main provisions of the Directive includes; the maintenance of the favorable conservation status of all wild bird species across their distributional range.

- Bern Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (1979)

The Convention imposes legal obligations on contracting parties, protecting over 500 wild plant species and more than 1000 wild animal species.

UK Legislation

The sections of UK legislation considered to be of relevance include:

- The Environment Act 2021

This legislation was revised in response to the Levelling-up and Regeneration Bill: reforms to national planning policy consultation on 19 December 2023 and sets out the government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied. The Act mandates the requirement of 10% net gains for biodiversity and as such should be the aim of all new developments.

- The Conservation (Natural Habitats, and c.) Regulations 2017 (as amended)

This transposes the Habitats Directive into national law. The Regulations provide for the designation and protection of 'European sites', and the protection of 'European protected species'.

- The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA)

This consolidates and amends existing national legislation to implement the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (Bern Convention) and Council Directive 79/409/EEC on the Conservation of Wild Birds (Birds Directive) in Great Britain.

- The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (CRoW)

This act strengthens wildlife enforcement legislation.

- Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC Act)

This act formed Natural England which places a duty on all public authorities, including local planning authorities to consider biodiversity. This Act also requires a list of species of habitats composed by the Secretary of State to help provide specific conservation targets. These species are known as Priority Species or Species of Principal Importance (SPI). These habitats are known as Priority habitats or Habitats of Principal Importance (HPI). Both SPI and HPI are listed under Section 41 of this Act. The NPPF also affords protection to these HPI's and SPI's.

- The Protection of Badgers Act 1992

This act affords protection to badgers and their setts including the destruction or obstructing access to a sett.

- Wild Mammals Protection Act 1996

This act provides protection to all wild species of mammal in the UK and is more related to mammal welfare but is directly applicable during any site clearance or other works to a site which could harm mammals.

- The Hedgerow Regulations 1997

The regulations require landowners to notify local planning authorities if they want to remove a hedgerow that is over 20 metres long or that joins another hedgerow. The authorities can prohibit the removal of a hedgerow if it is important from archaeological, historical, landscape or wildlife perspectives.

Species-Specific Legislation

Species specific legislation is provided in the following Table:

Species Groups	Legislation	Restrictions
Amphibians, including Great Crested Newt (GCN)	Sch. 5 and Sch. 9 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended). Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.	It is an offence to: • Sell; • Transport; • Advertise for sale. For GCN, as above but includes: • Kill; • Injure; • Disturb; • Destroy or obstruct access to any place used for rest or shelter.

Badgers	The Protection of Badgers Act 1992.	It is an offence to: • Wilfully kill, injure, take, or cruelly ill-treat a badger, or attempt to do so; • Possess any dead badger or any part of, or anything derived from, a dead badger; • Intentionally interfere with a sett by disturbing badgers whilst they are occupying a sett, damaging or destroying a sett, causing a dog to enter a sett, or obstructing access to it. A badger sett is defined in the legislation as "any structure or place, which displays signs indicating current use by a badger".
Bats	Sch. 5 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).	It is an offence to: • Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (or take) bats; • Deliberately disturb bats (whether in a roost or not); • Disturb roosting bats or obstruct access to their roosts; • Damage or destroy bat roosts.
Birds	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Sch. 1 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).	It is an offence to: • Kill; • Injure; • Take any wild bird, their eggs or nest (with the exception of those on Sch. 2). As above but includes: • Disturbing birds at their nest, or their dependent young.
Reptiles	Sch. 5 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000.	It is an offence to: • Kill; • Injure; • Sell. For Smooth Snake and Sand Lizard, as above but includes: • Disturb; • Damage; • Destroy or obstruct access to any place used for rest or shelter.
Hedgehogs and Other Mammals	SPI – Section 41 NERC Act. Wild Mammals Protection Act 1996.	Protection from harm, injury intent to harm.

Otter	Sch. 5 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended).	It is an offence to: • Intentionally or deliberately kill, injure or capture (or take); • Deliberately disturb; • Disturb or obstruct access to their place of rest or shelter; • Damage or destroy place of rest or shelter; • Possess, control or transport alive or dead.
Water Vole	Sch. 5 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).	It is an offence to: • Kill; • Injure; • Take; • Possess or control alive or dead; • Disturb or obstruct access to their place of rest or shelter; • Damage or destroy place of rest or shelter.
Plants	Sch. 8 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Some species are SPI - Section 41 NERC Act.	It is an offence to: • Pick; • Uproot; • Trade; • Possess (for trade) any wild plant listed.
Invasive Species (Animal and Plant)	Sch. 9 Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).	It is an offence to: • Release of any animal, plant or microorganism not native to the UK; • Sell; • Cause or allow to spread.

Protected Sites

A network of protected sites, at varying levels, have been put in place across the UK. Further details are provided below;

International Importance

- Natura 2000

Natura 2000 is the name of the European Union-wide network of nature conservation-sites established under the EC Habitats and Birds Directives. This network will comprise Special Areas of Conservation (SACs) and Special Protection Areas (SPAs).

- Special Areas of Conservation (SAC)

SACs are designated under the EC Habitats Directive. The Directive applies to the UK and the overseas territory of Gibraltar. SACs are areas which have been identified as best representing the range and variety within the European Union of habitats and (non-bird) species listed on Annexes I and II to the Directive. SACs in terrestrial areas and territorial marine waters out to 12 nautical miles are designated under the Conservation (Natural Habitats, &c.) Regulations 1994 (as amended).

New and/or amended Habitats Regulations are shortly to be introduced to provide a mechanism for the designation of SACs and SPAs in UK offshore waters (from 12-200 nm).

National Importance

- Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI)

The SSSI series has developed since 1949 as the national suite of sites providing statutory protection for the best examples of the UK's flora, fauna, or geological or physiographical features. Most SSSIs are privately-owned or managed; others are owned or managed by public bodies or non-government organisations. The SSSIs designation may extend into intertidal areas out to the jurisdictional limit of local authorities, generally Mean Low Water in England and Northern Ireland; Mean Low Water of Spring tides in Scotland. In Wales, the limit is Mean Low Water for SSSIs notified before 2002, and, for more recent notifications, the limit of Lowest Astronomical Tides, where the features of interest extend down to LAT. There is no provision for marine SSSIs beyond low water mark. Originally notified under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, SSSIs have been renotified under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Improved provisions for the protection and management of SSSIs were introduced by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 (in England and Wales) and the Nature Conservation (Scotland) Act 2004.

Regional/Local Importance

- Wildlife Sites

Local authorities for any given area may designate certain areas as being of local conservation interest. The criteria for inclusion, and the level of protection provided, if any, may vary between areas. Most individual counties have a similar scheme, although they do vary.

These sites, which may be given various titles such as 'Listed Wildlife Sites' (LWS), 'County Wildlife Sites' (CWS), 'Local Nature Conservation-sites' (LNCS), 'Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation' (SINCs), or 'Sites of Nature Conservation Importance' (SNCIs), together with statutory designations, are defined in local and structure plans under the Town and Country Planning system and are a material consideration when planning applications are being determined.

Appendix 2: UK Hab Plan



Notes	
1	Do not scale this drawing. All dimensions must be checked/ verified on site. If in doubt ask.
2	This drawing is to be read in conjunction with all relevant architects, engineers and specialists drawings and specifications.
3	All dimensions in millimetres unless noted otherwise. All levels in metres unless noted otherwise.
4	Any discrepancies noted on site are to be reported to the engineer immediately.

Key	
	Developed land; sealed surface
	Mixed scrub
	Modified grassland
	Other woodland; broadleaved
	Native hedgerow - associated with bank or ditch
	Ditch

P03	26/05/2026	Combined RLB	CD	CG
P02	20/01/26	Revised RLB	CD	CG
P01	09/01/26	PRELIMINARY ISSUE	CD	SS
Rev	Date	Details of issues/ revision	Drw	Rev



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Client
Wilson Bowden Developments Ltd

Project Title
Plot Q, Kingsway (WBD)

Drawing Title
Baseline Habitat Plan

Drawn:	CD	Reviewed:	CG
BWB Ref:	244498	Date:	26/05/2026
Scale@A3:	1:1200	Status	Rev
Drawing Status			
Final			
Project - Originator - Zone - Level - Type - Role - Number			
244498-BWB-ZZ-XX-T-BS-0003			
S2 P03			

Appendix 3: Site Photographs



Photograph 1: Southern Modified Grassland Field (G1)



Photograph 2: Central Modified Grassland Field (G2)



Photograph 3: Northern Modified Grassland (G3)



Photograph 4: Eastern Boundary Modified Grassland (G4)



Photograph 5: Mixed Scrub



Photograph 6: Hedgerow Associated with Earth-Banked Wall



Photograph 7: Ditch

