Leigh Ecology Ltd

Protected Species and Habitat Surveys

Fenwick Street
Rochdale
OL12 6XD



On behalf of 4AD Developments Ltd

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

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The advice contained in this report is based on the information available and/or collected during the period of study. We cannot eliminate the possibility of important ecological features being found through further investigation and/or by survey at different times of the year or in different years.

Surveys and assessments are undertaken on the understanding that nothing in our reports will be omitted, amended or misrepresented by the client or any other interested party.

Please be aware the information contained within this report is valid for a period not exceeding two years. After this time, data contained within will require updating

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1. Executive Summary

Leigh Ecology Ltd was commissioned to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal of land at Fenwick Street, Rochdale, OL12 6XD. The site comprises a small parcel of sparsely vegetated land with encroaching bramble scrub and an extensive infestation of Japanese knotweed.

Current proposals comprise two residential properties with associated parking and gardens. The site is undergoing ecological succession, with bramble scrub, Japanese knotweed and other early successional vegetation present.

The River Roch runs along the southern and eastern site boundary. Japanese knotweed is also present extensively along the riverbanks.

A concrete garage structure with a single sheet metal roof is located within the southwest corner of the site.

A section of retaining wall, approximately five metres in length, separates part of the eastern site boundary from the river.

A number of self-seeded trees are present within the site, including Sycamore, Goat Willow, Cherry, Apple, Ash and Hawthorn. None were recorded as greater than 7.5 cm Diameter at Breast Height (DBH).

Three early mature trees are present beyond the site boundary on the steep bank of the River Roch, comprising Sycamore, Ash and Willow.

The surrounding area comprises a mixture of urban development and open recreational greenspace.

The Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies approximately 1.5 km south of the site.

Key ecological constraints associated with the site include the extensive presence of Japanese knotweed, the proximity of the River Roch and associated riparian habitat, nearby designated

sites, and the potential for clearance of scrub, trees and other vegetation to affect nesting birds and other wildlife.

2. Introduction

Background

Leigh Ecology Ltd was commissioned by 4AD Developments Ltd to undertake an Ecological Appraisal of land off Fenwick Street, Rochdale OL12 6XD. The site is located at approximate National Grid Reference (NGR) SD 89032 13083, with the site boundary *shown in red on Figure 1 below.*



Figure 1; Site Location and Extent.

(Google Satellite, 2026).
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This report presents baseline ecological information derived from the diurnal appraisal survey. It also provides recommendations for any additional surveys or works required to deliver a comprehensive ecological impact assessment.

The Applicant should be aware that if, during the appraisal:

- The site is found to be suitable habitat for any European Protected Species (EPS), other protected species, or priority habitats/species, or
- Evidence of use by protected species is observed or suspected, or
- Seasonal constraints limit the ability to gather sufficient ecological data for a robust assessment,

then further detailed surveys may be recommended to enable a conclusive assessment of potential ecological impacts.

If protected species are subsequently confirmed during these additional surveys and may be affected by the development, it is likely that a European Protected Species Licence (EPSL) will be required to proceed with development works.

Certain protected or priority species have been omitted from this report, as they were discounted based on factors such as absence or isolation of suitable habitat, known species distribution, or because the proposed works are unlikely to negatively impact these species or their habitats.

2.1 Legislation & Policy

This report considers the following key legislation and policy relevant to ecological assessment and protection:

Legislation

- Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (incorporating EU Exit changes, 2019)
- Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
- Countryside and Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000
- Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- Protection of Badgers Act 1992
- The Hedgerows Regulations 1997
- Town and Country Planning Act 1990
- Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996
- Environment Act 2021
- The Biodiversity Gain (Town and Country Planning) Regulations 2024

These laws protect both native and invasive species, with varying levels of protection depending on the species or group. For example, some species receive protection only during specific life stages (such as breeding birds during nesting), while others have full protection across their lifecycle under national or European law (e.g., otters). Some species are protected solely under UK law (e.g., grass snake).

Policy

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, December 2023) provides key guidance on biodiversity and planning decisions. Paragraphs 185–189 state:

- **a**) Planning permission should be refused if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided, mitigated, or—only as a last resort—compensated for.
- **b**) Development likely to have an adverse effect on a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI), individually or in combination with other developments, should not normally be permitted unless the benefits clearly outweigh the impacts on the site and the wider network of SSSIs.

- **c**) Development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (e.g., ancient woodland or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons, and a suitable compensation strategy exists.
- **d**) Developments whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported, and opportunities to improve biodiversity within and around developments should be integrated into design, especially where measurable net gains or public access improvements can be secured.

This national policy is reflected and supported within the relevant local planning policy framework.

Scope of Study

This report includes:

- A preliminary ecological baseline assessment for the site
- An assessment of protected mammals on site
- An ecological data search of the MAGIC database.
- Statutory and non-statutory designated sites were reviewed within 2.5km of the site.
- Identification of potential ecological constraints to development
- Recommendations for any further ecological work required to support a planning application.

All work was conducted in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's (CIEEM) Code of Professional Conduct and Good Practice Guidelines.

3. Methodology

Desk Top Study

The desktop study comprised a review of publicly available ecological and mapping information for the site and surrounding area. Statutory designated sites were considered within 5 km of the site and non-statutory designated sites within 250 m. The centre of the site, National Grid Reference (NGR) SD 89032 13083, was used as the basis for the search.

The following sources were reviewed:

- Defra MAGIC Map, for statutory designated sites, priority habitats and other environmental constraints
- Google Earth and Bing Maps, for recent and historic aerial imagery and surrounding land use
- OS Maps, for watercourses, waterbodies and landscape features
- Rochdale Borough Council, for locally designated sites and relevant local ecological information

A biological records search was also commissioned to identify records of protected and notable species and locally designated sites within the relevant search area. The results of the data search are considered alongside the publicly available information and field survey findings within this report.

A daytime Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was undertaken on 17th September 2026 in dry and bright conditions by Chris Pickering, Ecologist.

Floristic Assessment

The survey employed the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0, with habitats identified and mapped according to their vegetation composition and structure. The survey also followed the

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd Edition (CIEEM, 2017).

During the walkover, botanical assemblages were recorded, with particular attention given to notable plant species, species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006, and legally protected plant species.

The site was also assessed for invasive non-native plant species, including those listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended.

Faunal Assessment

Fauna presence and evidence were documented alongside an assessment of the site's suitability for priority species. The walkover also included searching for ephemeral pools or unmapped waterbodies that could be ecologically significant.

Bats

The site was surveyed for bats, including inspection of buildings (where present) for potential roosting features (PRFs) and signs of use such as droppings, incidental sightings, or prey remains. The inspection utilised a high-powered torch to examine internal and external features, including roofs, eaves, and crevices.

External building inspection

The objective of the survey was to locate any signs of bat activity, for example:

- Bat droppings
- Feeding remains
- Grease staining/ urine marks
- Corpses or skeletons

- Potential access points to internal roosts.

The bat signs listed above are visible from the outside of the building. The following areas were searched using binoculars:

- Ground floor casing
- Any cracks/ holes in the panels
- Between wall panels and framework
- On external panelling, and ridge.

Internal building Inspection

Bats regularly utilise specific areas within roof spaces/open roof configurations (see below), which were searched as a priority for any bat field signs:

- Beneath hip joints and junctions
- Staining above/ around gaps
- Within cobwebs
- Staining around tile gaps
- In cavities of walls within the roof wall joints
- On floor under specific beams and joints
- Wall joints.

Any signs of bird usage including any current live or old nests, droppings, pellets etc. were noted during the bat survey.

All trees were also assessed for bat roost potential using close-focus binoculars and torches. Potential roost features include woodpecker holes, rot holes, cracks or splits, lifted bark, knot holes, cavities, ivy cover on stems >50mm diameter, and bat or bird boxes.

The assessment criteria followed the Bat Conservation Trust's Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines, 4th Edition (2023).

Landscape Assessment for Bats

Linear and landscape features including the River Roch, trees and associated riparian vegetation were assessed for their potential value to commuting and foraging bats and for their connectivity with the wider landscape.

Breeding Birds

The survey checked buildings, trees, hedgerows, and scrub for nesting birds and nesting suitability. Bird species observed and heard were recorded, along with searches for nests or nesting materials. Special attention was given to species protected under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981, as amended), including priority species such as Barn Owl (*Tyto alba*).

Other Mammals

The walkover included a search for evidence of Badger (*Meles meles*), including setts, runs, digging, latrines and snuffle holes. Habitat suitability for European Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) was also considered.

The River Roch and associated bankside habitat were assessed from accessible locations for their potential suitability for Otter (*Lutra lutra*) and Water Vole (*Arvicola amphibius*). This assessment formed part of the general walkover and did not constitute a dedicated species survey.

Amphibians and Reptiles

A desktop assessment of waterbodies within 250 m of the site was undertaken to identify ponds or other standing waterbodies potentially suitable for Great Crested Newt (*Triturus cristatus*).

The site and immediately adjacent habitats were also assessed for their potential to support amphibians and reptiles. Particular consideration was given to the River Roch corridor, bankside vegetation, scrub, rough vegetation, rubble, retaining walls and other features which may provide opportunities for foraging, shelter, basking and hibernation.

Any requirement for further survey was considered in relation to the habitat suitability recorded during the walkover and the connectivity of the site with surrounding habitats.

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Under the mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain provisions introduced by the Environment Act 2021, development in England is generally required to achieve a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain unless an exemption applies.

For planning applications submitted on or after 6th August 2026, development on a site with a red line boundary of 0.2 hectares or less is exempt from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain, provided the development does not negatively impact any onsite priority habitat.

The site falls below the 0.2 ha threshold. As part of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, habitats within the red line boundary were therefore assessed to determine whether any priority habitat is present and whether the proposed development could negatively affect it.

Where no priority habitat would be negatively impacted, the development is considered capable of qualifying for the 0.2 ha exemption and a statutory biodiversity metric and Biodiversity Gain Plan would not be required.

Exemption from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain does not remove the requirement to consider protected species, designated sites, invasive species, other relevant ecological legislation or local planning policy. The ecological impacts of the development must still be considered in

accordance with the mitigation hierarchy.

Professional Judgement & Constraints

The conclusions and recommendations in this report are based on the surveyor's skills, experience, and knowledge of the site's flora and fauna within the local and regional ecological context.

The survey was undertaken in September, The end of the optimal survey period for botanical species, reptiles and amphibians. While habitats were identifiable and suitable assessments were made based on structure and composition, species diversity is likely to be under-represented. Where relevant, a precautionary approach has been applied when assessing habitat value and species potential.

4. Results

Site Survey

Habitats within the survey area

The results of the Phase 1 Habitat survey are detailed in **Appendix 1**, with supporting photographs integrated within the text. Habitat descriptions are provided using English plant names for clarity.

Site Overview

The survey area covers the entire extent of land *shown in Figure 1*. The proposed development includes erection of two residential dwellings, gardens and parking.

Habitats

Within the red line boundary, the predominant habitat comprises sparsely vegetated land over areas of tarmac and concrete, with encroaching bramble scrub.

Plant species recorded included Perennial Ryegrass (*Lolium perenne*), Dandelion (*Taraxacum officinale*), False Oat Grass (*Arrhenatherum elatius*), Curled Dock (*Rumex crispus*), Horsetail (*Equisetum* sp.), Yorkshire Fog (*Holcus lanatus*), White Clover (*Trifolium repens*), Common Ragwort (*Jacobaea vulgaris*), Rosebay Willowherb (*Chamerion angustifolium*), Ivy (*Hedera helix*) and Bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.). These species were generally scattered and not prolific.

The River Roch and its associated riparian zone extend within the southeastern part of the red line boundary. The bank comprises a combination of brick retaining wall and steep earth bank, with dense vegetation present along parts of the corridor.

Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) was extensive along the southeastern boundary and across sections of the riverbank.

Nine self-seeded trees and whips were recorded within the site, including Sycamore, Hawthorn, Cherry, Goat Willow and Apple. All were less than 7.5 cm Diameter at Breast Height (DBH).

Site Boundaries

The northwestern and northeastern boundaries adjoin Fenwick Street and associated residential development. The southwestern and southeastern parts of the site extend to the River Roch and its associated banks.

The River Roch and part of its riparian zone fall within the red line boundary. The banks comprise a mixture of steep earth bank and sections of retaining wall, with dense vegetation and extensive Japanese Knotweed present in places.

Surrounding Habitats

The Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) lies approximately 1.5 km south of the site. The canal supports an important population of Floating Water Plantain (Luronium natans), which is a qualifying feature of the SAC.

Healey Dell Local Nature Reserve lies to the northwest of the site and forms part of the wider network of semi natural habitat within the surrounding landscape.



Photograph 1: Current entrance to the site.



Photograph 2: The entrance from within the site.



Photograph 3: The end of the retaining wall to the River Roch.



Photograph 4: The garage building and tarmac ground covering with bramble succession.



Photograph 5: The boundary to the adjacent building.



Photograph 6: The site from the opposite side of the River Roch.



Photograph 7: Another view from the opposite bank showing the extent of the Japanese Knotweed.



Photograph 8: The hedge comprising Japanese Knotweed on site.



Photograph 9: The garage building.

Protected and notable species

Amphibians

Great Crested Newts (GCN) are protected under the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017, as amended, and the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. GCN are also a Species of Principal Importance in England under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

No ponds or other suitable standing waterbodies were identified within 250 m of the site during the desktop assessment. The River Roch is flowing water and does not provide suitable breeding habitat for GCN.

Given the absence of suitable breeding ponds within 250 m and the urban context of the site, the site is considered to have negligible potential for GCN.

The River Roch and associated riparian vegetation may nevertheless provide terrestrial habitat and connectivity for more widespread amphibian species.

Bats

Surrounding Habitat and Tree Inspection

The site has good connectivity with the surrounding landscape, principally through the River Roch and associated trees and riparian vegetation, which may provide commuting and foraging habitat for bats.

Trees within and immediately adjacent to the site were assessed from ground level for Potential Roost Features (PRFs). No PRFs suitable for roosting bats were identified within the trees surveyed.

The site contains one garage structure comprising a single sheet metal roof over a timber frame with concrete wall panels. The structure is open internally and provides no enclosed roof void or suitable cavities for roosting bats. No evidence of bat use was recorded, and the structure was assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats.

Breeding Birds

Trees, scrub and vegetation associated with the site and the River Roch provide suitable nesting habitat for common breeding birds.

Nesting opportunities within the main development area are relatively limited, although the trees, scrub and riparian vegetation within and immediately adjacent to the site provide suitable nesting habitat.

Badger (*Meles meles*)

No definitive badger field signs (such as setts, latrines, hair, snuffle holes or prints) were identified during the survey.

Other Mammals

No definitive field signs of other terrestrial mammals were recorded during the survey.

The scrub, rough vegetation and connected riparian corridor provide some suitable foraging and sheltering habitat for European Hedgehog (Erinaceus europaeus), and occasional use of the site by this species cannot be ruled out.

Otters and Water Voles

The River Roch provides potentially suitable habitat and a continuous riparian corridor for Otter (Lutra lutra) and Water Vole (Arvicola amphibius).

The riverbank within and immediately adjacent to the site is steep and heavily vegetated, with extensive Japanese Knotweed present in places. These conditions prevented a thorough inspection of the full bank for Otter holts, resting places, spraints or footprints, and for Water Vole burrows, latrines, feeding remains or other field signs.

No definitive evidence of either species was identified from the accessible areas during the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. However, the survey was not sufficient to confirm their absence, and further targeted survey is recommended where works could affect the riverbank or associated riparian habitat.

5. Constraints and Recommendations

The proposed development plans include erection of two dwellings, gardens and parking.

Positioning, construction and post construction impacts are therefore likely upon both the habitats and species within and immediately adjacent to the site. Ecological constraints and recommendations regarding any development of the site are discussed below.

Non-native invasive species

Invasive Plants

Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*, synonym *Reynoutria japonica*) is heavily infesting the southeastern aspect of the site within and beyond the red line boundary.



Figure 2; Japanese Knotweed extent.

(Google Satellite, 2026). (Contains public sector information licensed under the Open Government Licence v3.0.)

Japanese Knotweed (*Reynoutria japonica*) is listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. It is an offence to cause the species to grow in the wild. Soil and other material containing viable Japanese Knotweed rhizome may also be classified as controlled waste where it is removed from site.

Given the extent of Japanese Knotweed within the site and along the River Roch, a detailed Japanese Knotweed Management Plan should be prepared by a suitably experienced invasive species specialist prior to site clearance or ground disturbance within affected areas.

The management plan should identify and map the extent of Japanese Knotweed and establish appropriate exclusion areas based on the observed extent of above and below ground growth. It should also set out suitable biosecurity measures and a site specific treatment and disposal strategy.

Depending on site constraints, management may include herbicide treatment, controlled excavation, suitable onsite burial or offsite disposal at an appropriately permitted facility. Where contaminated material is removed from site, it must be transported by an appropriately registered waste carrier and accepted by a facility permitted to receive it.

Treatment of Japanese Knotweed may take several growing seasons. The management plan should therefore set out suitable monitoring and contingency measures and should be integrated with the construction programme to prevent the spread of viable plant material during the works.

As Japanese Knotweed occurs close to the River Roch, any proposed herbicide treatment in or near the watercourse should be undertaken in accordance with Environment Agency requirements. Appropriate measures will also be required to prevent contaminated soil or plant material entering or being transported along the watercourse.

Protected Species

Bats

The River Roch, associated riparian vegetation and nearby trees, provide suitable commuting and foraging habitat for bats.

No significant impacts upon bat roosting habitat are anticipated from the proposals. However, new external lighting has the potential to affect the use of the river corridor by foraging and commuting bats.

Lighting should therefore be designed to minimise illumination of the River Roch, riparian vegetation and associated trees. Lighting should follow current Bat Conservation Trust and Institute of Lighting Professionals guidance, with sensitive boundary habitats retained as dark as reasonably practicable.

Introduced lighting should follow the latest guidance from the Bat conservation trust, available HERE.

Birds

The trees, scrub and riparian vegetation within and adjacent to the site provide suitable nesting habitat for common breeding birds.

Robin (*Erithacus rubecula*) and Wren (*Troglodytes troglodytes*) were recorded during the survey.

The proposed works will result primarily in the loss of scrub and other vegetation, with possible pruning or removal of individual trees. Although no active nests were identified during the survey, vegetation clearance could affect nesting birds if undertaken during the breeding season.

Vegetation clearance should therefore preferably be undertaken outside the main bird nesting period, generally March to August inclusive. Where clearance is required during this period, a nesting bird check should be undertaken by a suitably experienced ecologist

immediately prior to works. Any active nest identified must remain undisturbed until the young have fledged and the nest is no longer in use.

Reptiles

No reptiles were observed during the survey. However, the scrub, rough vegetation, riverbank, retaining structures and other sheltered areas provide some potentially suitable habitat.

Given the relatively limited extent of suitable habitat affected, a precautionary approach during vegetation clearance and groundworks is considered proportionate. Suitable Reasonable Avoidance Measures should be followed during works.

Other Mammals

The site provides suitable habitat for European Hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), particularly within scrub, rough vegetation and the connected riparian corridor. Occasional use of the site for shelter, foraging and movement cannot be ruled out.

Reasonable Avoidance Measures should be followed during vegetation clearance and construction. New garden fencing should also incorporate suitable ground level gaps where practicable to retain permeability for hedgehogs.

Otters and Water Voles

The River Roch and associated riparian habitat have potential to support Otter (*Lutra lutra*) and Water Vole (*Arvicola amphibius*).

The riverbank within and immediately adjacent to the development site is steep and heavily vegetated and could not be safely inspected in full during the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. It was therefore not possible to undertake a sufficiently detailed search for Otter holts, resting

places, spraints or footprints, or for Water Vole burrows, latrines, feeding remains and other field signs.

No definitive evidence of either species was identified from accessible areas. However, their presence cannot be ruled out.

A dedicated Otter and Water Vole survey is therefore recommended prior to works which could affect the riverbank or riparian corridor. Due to the steep and heavily vegetated nature of the bank, this should be undertaken by an ecologist experienced in surveying watercourses of this nature.

River Roch

The proposed development lies immediately adjacent to the River Roch and includes part of the associated riparian zone within the red line boundary. The river therefore represents an important ecological constraint to the development.

The detailed design should avoid direct impacts upon the river and retain an appropriate undeveloped buffer from the top of the riverbank wherever practicable. Measures should also be incorporated to prevent pollution, sediment runoff and accidental disturbance of the river during construction.

The regulatory status of the River Roch should also be confirmed prior to construction. Where the relevant section is designated as a main river, works in, over, under or within the regulated distance of the river may require a Flood Risk Activity Permit from the Environment Agency. For non-tidal main rivers, certain activities within 8m of the bank may fall within the environmental permitting regime.

Any proposed works to the riverbank, retaining structures, outfalls or other features associated with the watercourse should therefore be discussed with the relevant regulatory authority at an early stage.

Biodiversity Net Gain

Under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990, as inserted by the Environment Act 2021, planning permissions in England are generally subject to a statutory biodiversity gain condition requiring a minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain unless an exemption applies.

For planning applications made on or after 6th August 2026, development on a site of no more than 0.2 hectares is exempt from mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain where the development does not negatively impact onsite priority habitat.

The application site measures approximately 0.042 hectares and therefore falls below the 0.2 hectare threshold.

However, the River Roch and part of its associated riparian zone fall within the red line boundary. Rivers are included within the Section 41 priority habitat categories where the relevant qualifying criteria are met. Further consideration is therefore required to establish whether this section of the River Roch or associated riparian habitat qualifies as priority habitat and whether it would be negatively affected by the development.

The applicability of the 0.2 hectare BNG exemption should therefore be confirmed once the priority habitat status of the river corridor and the extent of proposed impacts are established.

Ecological Enhancement

Regardless of whether mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain applies, opportunities should be incorporated within the development to provide ecological enhancement.

Management of Japanese Knotweed will help prevent its further spread and allow more appropriate native riparian vegetation to establish where affected areas can be restored.

Integrated bat roosting features and bird nesting features should also be incorporated within the new dwellings where practicable. These should be built into the fabric of the buildings to provide permanent opportunities for wildlife and reduce the likelihood of their removal by future occupants.

Native planting within the gardens and along the river corridor should also be incorporated where possible, using species appropriate to the local area and avoiding invasive or potentially harmful ornamental species.

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Appendix 1: UKHabs Baseline Plan



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Appendix 2: Amphibian Safeguarding Method Statement

This Method Statement shall be implemented during the initial phases of development works where activities have the potential to affect surrounding terrestrial amphibian habitat. The measures outlined below are intended to minimise the risk of harm to amphibians, including Great Crested Newt (GCN), during construction activities and to ensure compliance with relevant wildlife legislation.

The following precautionary measures shall be adopted throughout the construction period:

- A toolbox talk will be delivered to all contractors and site personnel by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to the commencement of works. The toolbox talk will outline the legal protection afforded to amphibians, identification features, and procedures to follow should amphibians be encountered during works;
- A supervised hand search of the working area will be undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist immediately prior to vegetation clearance, turf stripping, or ground disturbance works;
- Vegetation clearance will be undertaken progressively and in a directional manner towards retained habitat to allow any amphibians present to disperse naturally away from the working area;
- Any trenches or excavations left open overnight shall include a suitable means of escape for animals, such as a wooden plank or earth ramp positioned at an angle no greater than 45 degrees. Where practicable, excavations should be securely covered overnight;
- All excavations left open overnight, or for extended periods, shall be inspected for trapped animals by the site manager or ecologist prior to the recommencement of works each day;
- Existing hedgerows and retained boundary vegetation shall be protected and maintained throughout the construction programme to preserve habitat connectivity;
- Excavated materials shall be stored on boards or protective sheeting where practicable in order to minimise damage to retained vegetation. Any stored materials left overnight should be carefully checked prior to reuse or removal;

- Backfilling of excavations shall be undertaken as soon as reasonably practicable following completion of works;
- Should any Great Crested Newt or other amphibian species be encountered during construction activities, works within the immediate area shall cease immediately and advice shall be sought from a suitably qualified ecologist before works recommence.

Appendix 3: Hedgehog Reasonable Avoidance Measures



Legislative Context

The hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*) is listed as a Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Hedgehogs also receive protection under the Wild Mammals Protection Act 1996, which makes it an offence to cause unnecessary suffering to a wild mammal.

Given the presence of suitable habitat within and adjacent to the site, a precautionary approach to construction works is recommended in order to minimise the risk of harm to hedgehogs during development activities.

Precautionary Working Method Statement

The following Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) shall be implemented throughout all phases of development:

- Prior to the commencement of works, a toolbox talk shall be delivered to all contractors by a Suitably Qualified Ecologist (SQE). This will include information relating to hedgehog identification, legal considerations, and procedures to follow should a hedgehog be encountered during works;
- Immediately prior to vegetation clearance or ground disturbance, a pre-commencement check of suitable habitat areas shall be undertaken by the SQE;
- Vegetation clearance shall be undertaken progressively and in a directional manner to allow any animals present to disperse naturally away from the working area;

- Particular care shall be taken when removing log piles, brash piles, dense vegetation, leaf litter, or other debris that may provide sheltering or nesting opportunities for hedgehogs;
- Any excavations, trenches, or exposed pipes left overnight shall be covered or fitted with suitable escape ramps to prevent animals becoming trapped;
- Construction materials and waste shall be stored appropriately to avoid creating accidental hazards to wildlife;
- Netting shall be secured and kept clear of ground level to avoid entanglement of mammals and other wildlife;
- Should a hedgehog be encountered during works, activities within the immediate area shall cease and advice shall be sought from a Suitably Qualified Ecologist before works recommence.

Enhancement Measures

Hedgehogs are anticipated to continue using the wider area following completion of the development. As such, opportunities should be taken to incorporate hedgehog-friendly features within the final site layout and landscaping proposals where practicable. This may include the retention of habitat connectivity, provision of access gaps beneath fencing, and the creation of log or brash piles within retained soft landscaped areas.

