

United Environmental Services Ltd

1 Booths Park,
Chelford Road,
Knutsford,
Cheshire
WA16 8QZ

www.ues.org.uk

enquiries@ues.org.uk

01565 757788



PRELIMINARY ECOLOGICAL APPRAISAL

At

Huyton Cricket Club

Huyton Lane

Huyton

Liverpool

L36 7XD

NGR: SJ 44456 91306

Prepared for:	Andy Garnett, Breck Homes Ltd
Written by:	Bethany Dineley, UES Graduate Ecologist
Approved by:	Ysobella Cox, UES Ecologist

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

United Environmental Services Ltd (UES) was commissioned by Breck Homes Ltd. to carry out a baseline ecological survey at Huyton Cricket Club, Huyton. A desk study and preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) survey were undertaken on 10th December 2025, including searches using the Multi Agency Geographic Information Centre (MAGIC) and Merseyside BioBank.

The PEA provides an assessment of potential ecological impacts associated with the development of the land parcel. The proposed development is a housing scheme and will include the construction of numerous residential dwellings with associated access road and landscaping.

The land parcel has an area of approximately 2.2ha. The proposed development site has recently been cleared and as such, only small segments of the original habitats are visible. The central section of the site comprises a large area of other neutral grassland with a pavilion building and two outbuildings. The northern and western sections of the site have been cleared but remnants of bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. scrub and felled trees are present. The boundaries of the site are demarcated by a combination of hedgerows and treelines, with the River Alt adjacent to the northeastern boundary. As the site has recently been cleared, the pre-degradation habitats onsite have been determined by the walkover data, aerial imagery and previous survey information for the site.

The results of the survey combined with the results of the desk study have highlighted the requirement for further work in relation to the following habitats and species:

- **Amphibians** – reasonable avoidance measures (RAMs) to be implemented during the construction phase of the development.
- **Bats in buildings** – a bat scoping survey should also be undertaken of the two outbuildings onsite to determine their suitability to support roosting bats. This survey can be undertaken at any time of year.

Previous ecological surveys were undertaken by Bowland Ecology in 2020 (report reference BOW17/941) for a separate planning application which identified the presence of a common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* day roost within Building 1 onsite. As such, an updated building inspection and bat presence / absence surveys comprising two visits should be undertaken of the main building onsite during the bat survey season of May to September inclusive, with at least one of the surveys undertaken during the peak bat survey season May to August inclusive.

- **Bats in trees** – Trees 5 and 6, and Groups 8 and 9, were subject to a bat ground-level tree assessment during the walkover survey.

Trees 5 and 6 were found to contain an ivy covering which may provide a potential roosting feature (PRF) for individual bats and / or conceal PRFs. As such, T5 and 6 have been assessed as having PRFs suitable for individual bats (PRF-I) and should be subject to soft-felling techniques or a pre-felling inspection.

The section of Group 8 which is scheduled for removal, and Group 9, were assessed as having negligible potential to support roosting bats due to an absence of suitable PRFs.

If any additional trees onsite will be affected by the proposed development, then a further ground-level tree assessment will be required to determine the potential for these trees to support roosting bats.

Any external lighting installed as part of the development should be designed to be wildlife friendly and avoid overspill onto the retained treelines, hedgerows and River Alt.

- **Breeding birds** – site clearance, tree felling, arboricultural works and vegetation clearance are to take place outside of the breeding bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If not possible and works need to take place during this period, a targeted nest survey is to be undertaken immediately prior to the works by a suitably qualified ecologist or an ecological clerk of works appointed to oversee the works.
- **Hedgehogs** – RAMs are to be implemented during the construction phase of the development.
- **Hedgerows** – to be retained where possible, or replaced as part of a detailed landscaping scheme. Generic issues relating to root protection areas.
- **Huyton Lane Wetland SBI** – a construction environmental management plan (CEMP) should be produced to detail how the proposed development will avoid, minimise and mitigate impacts on the environment and surrounding habitats.
- **Invasive species** – Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica* is to be eradicated prior to the commencement of works within the affected areas.
- **Trees** – to be retained where possible, or replaced as part of a detailed landscaping scheme. Generic issues relating to root protection areas.
- **Watercourse** – specific procedures and control measures to be implemented to ensure that there is no risk of input into the watercourse, including the retention of a buffer zone. The measures should be set out by the contractors prior to commencement and agreed with the LPA and other statutory consultees.

Mitigation measures, as detailed in section 4, should be adhered to, which may in some cases negate the need for further survey work.

The development also presents an opportunity to improve the habitats on site for wildlife, such as bats and birds. The inclusion of nest boxes and bat boxes will provide suitable nesting and roosting features in the long term.

This report should be read with appendices 1 to 9, which include results of the desk study, GIS phase 1 habitat mapping, photographs of site and relevant statutory guidance.

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Author, surveyors, qualifications and scope of study area

This report is written by Bethany Dineley UES Graduate Ecologist. Surveyors include:

- Ysobella Cox BSc MBiol, UES Ecologist. Ysobella holds a level 3 Botanical Society for Britain and Ireland (BSBI) field identification skills certificate (FISC), which certifies her as competent to undertake phase 1 habitat and UKHab surveys. Ysobella is licensed by Natural England to survey all species of bats by observation using an artificial light under licence number 2024-12344-CL17-BAT (level 1).

The report provides an assessment of the potential ecological impacts associated with the proposed development at Huyton Cricket Club, Huyton.

The zone of influence considered within the scope of the survey includes all land within the red line boundary. Where relevant, other ecological resources, receptors and important habitats which are spatially separate from the site are considered.

1.2 Survey objectives

UES was commissioned in November 2024 to conduct a PEA of the proposed development site. This was completed in order to:

- Establish baseline conditions and determine the importance of ecological features present or potentially present within the survey area
- Identify key ecological constraints to the project
- Make recommendations for design options to avoid significant effects on important ecological resources at an early stage of development planning
- Identify potential requirement for further surveys for nationally or internationally protected species which may be present on site
- Identify potential requirement for mitigation or compensation, including measures that may be required based on further surveys

1.3 Proposed development

The proposed development is a housing scheme and will include the construction of numerous residential dwellings with associated access road and landscaping.

1.4 Structure of the report

This report is a baseline appraisal that forms the basis for further ecological surveys and Environmental Impact Assessments (EIA) if required. In the majority of cases the preliminary ecological assessment will not provide all the ecological data required by the Local Planning



Authority to determine an application, especially in the event that protected habitat or species issues are present or likely.

This report should be read with appendices 1 to 9, which include results of the desk study, GIS mapping, photographs of site and relevant statutory guidance.

2 METHODOLOGY

This PEA comprises a desk study and a field survey. The desk study is conducted in order to collate ecological information on species and / or habitats of interest that may be present. The field survey is conducted in order to assess the habitats and their importance, both on site and in the context of their wider surroundings.

2.1 Desk study

The following resources were used to inform the desk study:

- National – Using the UK government’s MAGIC website, statutorily protected sites were scoped to a distance of 10km from the application site.
- Local – A search for protected species or otherwise notable species and local designated sites was undertaken within a 2km radius of the proposed development site by Merseyside BioBank.

2.2 Field survey

An ecological walkover survey was carried out on 10th December 2024 by Ysobella Cox. The purpose of the survey was to identify, record and map dominant habitat types within the development area and highlight any further species surveys that may be required based on the quality of those habitats. When conducting the surveys particular focus was concentrated on the following species and habitat features:

- | | |
|------------------|-------------------------|
| • Amphibians | • Hedgerows |
| • Reptiles | • Plant communities |
| • Badger | • Invasive species |
| • Bats | • Otter |
| • Hazel dormouse | • Water vole |
| • Birds | • White-clawed crayfish |
| • Trees | |

The habitats were assessed by using the UKHab survey technique, which is a system for environmental audit widely used within the environmental consultancy field. The survey was undertaken in accordance with the methodology in the UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0 (UKHab Ltd, 2023) as recommended by Natural England, and in the “Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal” (CIEEM, 2017).

The survey area encompasses all of the land within the development footprint and the land to a distance of 30m outside it where accessible. In line with recognised guidelines, ponds were also scoped to a distance of 500m (250m radius from the survey area).

The UKHab survey methodology was extended to record any signs of habitats suitable to support protected / invasive species and any incidental observations of other noteworthy species.

2.3 Ground-level tree assessment

A ground-level assessment was carried out of two individual trees and two groups of trees on site, which will likely be removed as part of the development proposals. The trees were inspected on all aspects and assessed for their potential to contain roosting bats, based on the number and quality of suitable roosting features present, as detailed in BS8596:2015 Surveying for Bats in Trees and Woodland and BCT guidelines (Collins, 2023).

Potential roosting features, as described in Bat Roosts in Trees (Bat Tree Habitat Key, 2018) are listed in Table 1 below.

DISEASE & DECAY FEATURES	DAMAGE FEATURES	ASSOCIATION FEATURES	OTHER FEATURES
Woodpecker holes	Lightning strikes	Fluting	Bat boxes
Squirrel holes	Hazard beams	Ivy	Bird boxes
Knot holes	Subsidence cracks		
Pruning cuts	Shearing cracks		
Tear-outs	Transverse snaps		
Wounds	Welds		
Cankers	Lifting bark		
Compression forks	Desiccation fissures		
Butt rots	Frost cracks		

With regards to the presence of PRFs, trees have been categorised according to the following system:

- NONE – No PRFs are known to be present within the tree, and it is unlikely that the tree will contain any PRFs.
- FAR – Further assessment is required to establish if any PRFs are present within the tree, potentially due to the large size or age of the tree or limitations to assess the tree in detail from ground level.
- PRF – The tree is known to contain at least one PRF.

Where PRFs could be fully viewed from ground level, individual PRFs were categorised according to the following system:

- PRF-I – The PRF is only suitable for individual bats or a very small number of bats, either due to size of the feature or lack of suitable surrounding habitats.
- PRF-M – The PRF is suitable for multiple bats and may therefore be used by a maternity colony.

2.3 Survey limitations

The survey was conducted in December when not all plants are readily identifiable. However sufficient vegetative identification was possible, allowing a robust assessment of habitats to be undertaken.



The site has recently been cleared and as such, the existing and pre-degradation habitats have been determined based on a combination of walkover data, aerial imagery and previous survey information for the site.

3 RESULTS

3.1 Desk study

A desk study was conducted for the proposed development site and surrounding area. Statutorily protected sites were scoped to a distance of 10km. Further results of the desk study can be found at Appendix 1 – Desk study.

3.1.1 Protected sites

There are no statutorily protected sites within 2km of the proposed development site and the site lies within a SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) within which Natural England do not request that they are consulted on this type of development.

There are fifteen statutorily protected sites (designated for ecological reasons) within 2 – 10km of site:

- Acornfield Plantation, LNR¹
- Allerton (Eric Hardy), LNR
- Childwall Woods & Fields, LNR
- Clinton Wood, LNR
- Clinkham Wood, LNR
- Colliers Moss Common, LNR
- Croxteth, LNR
- Hale Road Woodland, LNR
- Mersey Estuary Ramsar, SSSI², SPA and Ramsar
- Mill Brow, LNR
- Millwood & Alder Wood, LNR
- Parr Hall Millennium Green, LNR
- Pickering Pasture, LNR
- Thatto Heath Meadows, LNR

There are also eleven non-statutorily protected sites within 2km of the proposed development site:

- Huyton Lane Wetland, SBI³

Huyton Lane Wetland is located approximately 13m to the southeast of the proposed development site.

- River Alt, Seth Powell Way, SBI

River Alt, Seth Powell Way, is located approximately 808m to the northwest of the proposed development site.

- Huyton and Prescott Golf Club, SBI

Huyton and Prescott Golf Club is located approximately 1.03km to the east of the proposed development site.

¹ LNR – Local Nature Reserve

² SSSI – Site of Special Scientific Interest

³ SBI – Site of Biological Importance



- Stadt Moers Quadrant 3, Huyton, SBI

Stadt Moers Quadrant 3 is located approximately 1.15km to the southeast of the proposed development site. It is a mixture of grassland, scrub and woodland habitats forming part of the Country Park at Stadt Moers.

- Ten Acre Pits, Huyton, SBI

Ten Acre Pits is located approximately 1.27km to the south of the proposed development site. It is a mature broadleaf woodland with a dense canopy and shrub layer in places, with an improving ground flora.

- Grassland West of Seth Powell Way, Huyton, SBI

Grassland West of Seth Powell Way is located approximately 1.41km to the northwest of the proposed development site. It is a neutral grassland recently created by Landlife with high plant diversity. Invertebrate interests are increasing as the site develops.

- Stadt Moers Quadrant 2 and Visitor Centre, Whiston, SBI

Stadt Moers Quadrant 2 and Visitor Centre is located approximately 1.54km to the east of the proposed development site. It is a small area of dense woodland with neutral grassland areas re-colonised on bare substrate.

- Stadt Moers Quadrant 4, Whiston, SBI

Stadt Moers Quadrant 4 is located approximately 1.55km to the southeast of the proposed development site. It is a large area of semi-improved neutral grassland with areas of scrub and developing broadleaf woodland.

- Carr Lane Lake, Prescot, SBI

Carr Lane Lake is located approximately 1.58km to the east of the proposed development site. It is a wetland with a large area of open water which is unusual in Knowsley. The water is fished.

- Knowsley Park, LWS⁴

Knowsley Park is located approximately 1.72km to the northeast of the proposed development site. It is an ancient parkland and estate on a mix of acidic (peat) and neutral soils with sandstone exposures along the brooks. Much coniferous planting has taken place although several of the woodlands contain plants indicative of ancient semi-natural woodland. Other habitats include dams with open water, acidic grassland, remnant heath and mire. The park also has populations of bats and other protected species.

- Stadt Moers Tushingham's Quarry Pond, Tushingham, SBI

Stadt Moers is located approximately 1.85km to the southeast of the proposed development site. It is a large open pond with varied habitats around its edges, from marsh to alkaline grassland to scrub and woodland.

⁴ LWS – Local Wildlife Site

3.1.2 Protected species

The following records of protected or otherwise notable species were highlighted by the environmental records search:

- Amphibians: eight records of GCNs were returned from within 2km of the proposed development site; however, only a single record was returned from within the last 25 years, which is located approximately 963m to the east of the site in 2011. Other amphibian records are of common toad *Bufo bufo*, common frog *Rana temporaria*, and smooth newt *Lissotriton vulgaris*.
- Badgers: records of badger *Meles meles* were returned, all of which are located beyond 1.5km of the site.
- Bats: records of an unknown bat, common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus*, soprano pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*, Nathusius pipistrelle *Pipistrellus nathusii*, Daubenton's bat *Myotis daubentonii*, Natterer's bat *Myotis nattereri*, noctule *Nyctalus noctula*, a *Myotis sp.*, brown long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*, a *Nyctalus sp.*, whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus* / Brandt's bat *Myotis brandtii*. The closest record is a noctule located approximately 421m to the southwest of the site in 2019.
- Birds: various species, including several NERC Section 41, Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 Schedule 1, and the most recent Birds of Conservation Concern "red and amber" list species.
- Hazel dormouse: no records of hazel dormouse *Muscardinus avellanarius* were returned from within 2km of the proposed development site.
- Hedgehog: numerous records of hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus* were returned from within 2km of the proposed development site, the closest of which is located onsite in 2020.
- Otter: no records of otter *Lutra lutra* were returned from within 2km of the proposed development site.
- Reptiles: a single record of grass snake *Natrix natrix* was returned from within 2km of the proposed development site, which is located approximately 1.82km to the southeast of the site in 1998.
- Water vole: records of water vole *Arvicola amphibius* were returned from within 2km of the proposed development site. The closest record within the last 25 years is located approximately 845m to the west of the site in 2004.
- White clawed-crayfish: no records of white-clawed crayfish *Austropotamobius pallipes* were returned from within 2km of the proposed development site.

3.2 Baseline conditions – Habitats

The results of the PEA are also shown on the accompanying map at Appendix 2 – Phase 1 habitat plan. Habitats are colour-coded in accordance with the phase 1 standard. A full botanical species list for each habitat is provided at Appendix 5.

The local area predominantly consists of residential dwellings. The following principal habitat types were characterised on site:

- g3c Other neutral grassland
- h2a Native hedgerow
- h3d Bramble scrub
- h3h Mixed scrub
- r2b Other rivers and streams
- u1b5 Buildings
- u1c Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface
- u1e Built linear features
- 32 Scattered trees
- 33 Line of trees

3.2.1 g3c Other neutral grassland

Secondary codes: N/A

There is a large area of other neutral grassland located within the centre of the site (see Appendix 4 – Photographs, Photograph 1). Due to the nature of the proposed development site, it is likely that the grassland was previously used for recreational purposes associated with the cricket club.

The grassland is managed and has recently been mown to a short sward height. In addition, the site has recently been cleared as part of the development and management works, resulting in vehicular damage along the edges of the grassland.

Grass species present include creeping bent *Agrostis stolonifera*, Yorkshire fog *Holcus lanatus*, red fescue *Festuca rubra* and perennial rye grass *Lolium perenne*. There were very few forbs within the grassland at the time of the walkover survey, but additional species present include dove's-foot cranesbill *Geranium molle*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., creeping thistle *Cirsium arvense*, broad-leaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, common ragwort *Senecio jacobaea*, common mouse-ear *Cerastium fontanum*, willowherb *Epilobium* sp., soft rush *Juncus effusus*, stinging nettle *Urtica dioica*, bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., yarrow *Achillea millefolium*, ivy *Hedera helix* and spear thistle *Cirsium vulgare*.

Although vegetation clearance and management works have been undertaken onsite, there was evidence of recently cleared scrub along the northeastern, southern and western edges of the grassland. The species composition of the scrub appears to vary throughout with evidence of bramble scrub along the western and southern edges, and mixed scrub along the northeastern edge.

A small mammal burrow was identified within the southern section of the grassland (see Appendix 2 – UKHab Plan; Target note 3, Photograph 2). The burrow measured approximately 20cm wide, narrowing to 10cm inside.

3.2.2 h2a Native hedgerow

Secondary codes: 521

Hedge 1 is an unmanaged, species-rich native hedgerow with trees located along the southern boundary of the site (Photograph 3). It measures approximately 6m high and 2m wide, and comprises sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, holly *Ilex aquifolium*, pedunculate oak *Quercus robur*, blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, elder *Sambucus nigra*, willow *Salix sp.*, birch *Betula sp.*, bramble and ivy.

Hedge 2 is a species-poor hedgerow located along the northern boundary of the site (Photograph 4). The hedgerow is managed and contains numerous tree stumps from recently felled trees / shrubs (Photograph 5). It measures approximately 3m high and 1.5m wide, and comprises sycamore, hazel *Corylus avellana*, cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus* and elder.

3.2.4 h3d Bramble scrub

Secondary codes: N/A

The majority of the northern and western sections of the proposed development site have recently been cleared as part of the ongoing management of the site. However, several stands of bramble scrub are present with further remnants of cleared scrub across the ground at the time of the walkover survey (Photograph 6). A small stand of bramble scrub is also present within the northeastern corner of the site. The areas of bramble scrub have been encroached by species such as, ivy, yellow flag iris *Iris pseudacorus* and a *Carex sp.*

Several brash and rubble piles are present within the western section of the site where the vegetation has been cleared, which may provide sheltering opportunities for wildlife (Target notes 1 and 2; Photographs 7 and 8).

3.2.4 h3h Mixed scrub

Secondary codes: N/A

The eastern section of the site has been cleared as part of the ongoing management works (Photograph 9). However, cleared vegetation is still present across the ground and there is a small stand of scrub at the eastern edge of the site, which has assisted which classifying the habitat that would have been present within this area.

Species present include immature aspen *Populus tremula* and poplar *Populus sp.*, with additional species at the southeastern edge where the scrub connects to the adjacent hedgerow.

3.2.5 r2b Other rivers and streams

Secondary codes: N/A

The River Alt flows along the northeastern boundary of the proposed development site (Photograph 10). The upstream section of the river flows through Huyton Wetlands, where it culverts beneath a road and flows along the site boundary. There is an additional culvert at the western edge of the river, which leads beneath the surrounding housing estate.

The left bank is vegetated with a deciduous treeline and associated ground flora such as bramble and ruderal vegetation. In comparison, the right bank is vegetated with grass and ruderal species. A small amount of discarded waste is present within the western section of the river, where the water is turbid, and discarded materials also present along the left bank (Photographs 10 and 11).

3.2.6 u1b5 Buildings

Secondary codes: 825

There are three buildings located within the central section of the site, which have been numbered for the purposes of this report (see Appendix 6 – Building plan).

Building 1 is the main pavilion building (Photograph 12). It has a pitched roof constructed from concrete roof and ridge tiles, with dormer structures present on both the northwestern and southeastern aspects. The external walls are constructed from a combination of breezeblock and timber.

Building 2 is an outbuilding with a curved roof constructed from corrugated asbestos (Photograph 13). The external walls are constructed from metal which is lined with wooden boarding.

Building 3 is an outbuilding with a flat roof (Photograph 14). The roof of the building is no longer present and as such, the timbers rafters are exposed. The external walls are constructed from rendered breezeblock.

3.2.7 u1c Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface

Secondary codes: N/A

The access road along the north and northeastern boundary of the proposed development site comprises bare ground which has been encroached by ephemeral vegetation (Photograph 15). As the majority of the northern and western sections of the site have been cleared of vegetation, there are also large areas of bare ground within these sections

Ephemeral species include smooth sow thistle *Sonchus oleraceus*, strawberry *Fagaria vesca*, willowherb, spear thistle, butterfly bush *Buddleja sp.*, broad-leaved dock, herb Robert *Geranium robertianum*, perennial rye grass, creeping thistle, dove's-foot cranesbill, common daisy *Bellis perennis*, narrow-leaved ragwort *Senecio inaequidens*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, dandelion, red fescue, bramble and cleavers *Galium aparine*.

3.2.8 u1e Built linear features

Secondary codes: N/A

The majority of the site boundary is demarcated by a traditional wooden panel fencing which separates the site from the adjacent residential properties (Photograph 16). Additional types of fencing are present including concrete post and panel (Photograph 17), and metal palisade fencing (Photograph 18).

3.2.9 32 Scattered trees

Evidence of recent tree felling was identified onsite due to the presence of numerous tree stumps (Photograph 19). A small number of scattered trees remain within the northern and eastern sections of the site including cypress *Cupressus sp.*, elder and sycamore (Photograph 19).

3.2.10 33 Line of trees

There are four lines of trees located within the northern and western sections of the site, some of which have recently been felled (Photograph 20). The size of the trees and length of the treelines have been determined by the remaining tree stumps, aerial imagery and previous survey information for the site. The remaining trees are a combination of pedunculate oak, elder and sycamore (Photograph 21).

An offsite line of trees is also present along the northeastern boundary of the site, along the bank of the River Alt (Photograph 15). The treeline has an ash canopy with other species including pedunculate oak, aspen, sycamore, cherry and cherry laurel. The ground flora comprises bramble, cow parsley and ivy.

3.3 Baseline conditions – Protected species or resources

As part of the PEA, specific observations of wildlife were also recorded. Wildlife observations focused on protected species, invasive species or species of conservation concern. Habitats with potential to support protected species were noted with a view to follow up surveys if required.

3.3.1 Amphibians

Eight records of GCNs were returned from within 2km of the proposed development site; however, only a single record was returned from within the last 25 years, which is located approximately 963m to the east of the site in 2011.

There is a single pond within 250m of the proposed development site, which is located approximately 78m to the east of the site within Huyton Wetlands. The River Alt and a main road to the southeast will act as barriers to movement, separating the proposed development site from the pond. Furthermore, there are no additional ponds within 250m of the pond itself and no further ponds within 500m of site.

The terrestrial habitats within the development footprint, such as the grassland, scrub, hedgerows and trees, will provide commuting and foraging opportunities for amphibians, whilst the brash and rubble piles will provide sheltering opportunities (Target notes 1 and 2).

3.3.2 Reptiles

A single record of grass snake was returned from within 2km of the proposed development site, which is located approximately 1.82km to the southeast of the site in 1998.

The edges of the grassland, scrub and hedgerow habitats could provide suitable commuting and foraging opportunities for common reptile species. However, the site is located within an urban area with residential dwellings to the north, east and west of the site, and a main road

directly adjacent to the southern boundary. As such, it is considered unlikely that reptiles will be present onsite.

3.3.3 Badger

Records of badger were returned, all of which are located beyond 1.5km of the site.

A single small mammal burrow was identified onsite during the walkover survey (Target note 3). The burrow measured approximately 20cm wide and narrows to approximately 10cm. As such, it is considered too small to be used by badgers. No evidence of badger activity such as footprints, mammal paths, latrines or burrows were identified onsite during the walkover survey.

Although the scrub, grassland and hedgerows may provide commuting and foraging opportunities for badger, the site is located within an urban area surrounded by residential dwellings with a main road to the south. As such, it is considered unlikely that badgers will be present onsite.

3.3.4 Bats

There are three buildings and numerous trees on site which could provide roosting opportunities for bats. Building 1 (the main pavilion) contains a known common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* day roost, which was identified during previous ecological surveys undertaken by Bowland Ecology in 2020 (report reference BOW17/941) for a separate planning application.

A ground-level tree assessment (GLTA) was undertaken of two trees and two groups of trees (T5, T6, G8 and G9) which are due to be affected by the development as indicated on the proposed site plans (see Proposed Site Plan by Tree Solutions from February 2025; Job reference 25/AIA/Knowsley/31; Drawing number 01; Revision -). The locations of the trees and their suitability to support roosting bats is shown at Appendix 7 – Ground-level tree assessment plan.

Tree 5 is a sycamore. The tree contains an ivy covering which may provide a PRF for bats, or conceal PRFs beneath (Photograph 23). As such, Tree 5 has been assessed as containing PRFs suitable for individual bats (PRF-I).

Tree 6 is a sycamore which measures approximately 18m in height with a diameter at breast height (DBH) of 0.45m (Photograph 22). The tree contains an ivy covering which may provide a potential roosting feature (PRF) for bats, or conceal PRFs beneath (Photograph 30). As such, Tree 6 has been assessed as containing PRFs suitable for individual bats (PRF-I).

Group 8 is located within Hedgerow 1 and contains a range of native scrub species, with a small, multi-stemmed sycamore that has a DBH of 0.2m. The group has a thin ivy covering which is too small to provide suitable PRFs for bats (Photograph 24). As such, Group 8 has been assessed as having negligible potential to support roosting bats. Only the section of G8 scheduled for removal was assessed, if any other section of this group will be removed a further GLTA will be required.

Group 9 consists of two small lime *Tilia sp.* trees which measure approximately 15m in height with a DBH of either 0.2m and 0.3m (Photographs 25 and 26). One of the trees contained a pruning wound; however, this is superficial and does not provide a PRF for bats (Photograph

27). No PRFs were identified on either of the trees within this group. As such, Group 9 has been assessed as having negligible potential to support roosting bats.

3.3.5 Hazel dormouse

No records of hazel dormice were returned from within 2km of the proposed development site.

The habitats on site are relatively unsuitable for dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius* as the hedgerows lack large quantities of key species such as hazel and honeysuckle, and there is no woodland onsite. Furthermore, hazel dormice have a limited distribution nationally. Therefore, hazel dormice are not considered to be present onsite.

3.3.6 Birds

The trees, scrub, hedgerows and buildings onsite may provide nesting opportunities for breeding birds in the summer.

3.3.7 Trees

Trees on site may be protected by a Tree Preservation Order (TPO), for which a check has not been undertaken.

3.3.8 Hedgerows

There are two hedgerows on site that may qualify as “important” for ecological and historical reasons under the Hedgerow Regulations, for which a check has not been undertaken.

3.3.9 Plant communities

No plant communities or individual species were recorded on site which are afforded statutory protection in their own right.

3.3.10 Invasive species

Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica*, is known to have previously been present onsite. Vegetation clearance and treatment works are currently being undertaken to remove Japanese knotweed from the proposed development site.

Japanese knotweed is a non-native invasive species listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

3.3.11 Otter, water vole and white-clawed crayfish

No records of otter or white-clawed crayfish were returned from within 2km of the proposed development site. However, records of water vole were returned and the closest record within the last 25 years is located approximately 845m to the west of the site in 2004.

The section of the River Alt which flows along the northeastern boundary of the development site is unlikely to support otter, water vole and white-clawed crayfish due to the urban nature of the surrounding habitat.

The presence of a perimeter fence along the riverbank will restrict access to the proposed development site. In addition, there is a small amount of discarded waste along the banks of



the watercourse and within the western section of the river adjacent to a culvert where the water is turbid. This culvert leads beneath a housing estate.

The eastern section of the river is directly connected to Huyton Wetland by another culvert, and this area may provide more suitable habitat.

Due to the urban nature of the habitats surrounding the proposed development site and the presence of culverts along this stretch of the river, it is considered unlikely that otter, water vole and white-clawed crayfish will be present onsite.

3.3.12 Hedgehog

Numerous records of hedgehog were returned from within 2km of the proposed development site.

The areas of scrub, grassland and hedgerows onsite will provide suitable foraging and commuting opportunities for hedgehogs, whilst the rubble and brash piles may provide sheltering opportunities (Target notes 1 and 2).



4 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

This section provides a brief assessment of the likely impacts associated with the proposed development on the receptors identified during the walkover survey and desk study. It also includes any mitigation and compensation measures which may be required for the proposed development to proceed.

4.1 Habitats

4.1.1 Designated sites

The sites identified during the desk study were cross-referenced with the survey area relevant to this report. The closest statutorily protected site is Childwall Woods and Fields LNR, which lies approximately 7.2km to the southwest of the proposed development site. The closest non-statutorily designated site is Huyton Lane Wetland SBI which is located approximately 13m to the southeast of the proposed development site.

Indirect impacts upon Huyton Lane Wetland SBI as a result of construction works, such as air pollution, can be mitigated for through the implementation of a construction environmental management plan (CEMP). This can be secured via a suitably worded planning condition and will detail how the proposed development will avoid, minimise and mitigate impacts on the environment and surrounding habitats.

4.1.2 Trees and hedgerows

There are two hedgerows onsite, which vary in species composition and quality.

Construction impacts

Site clearance and setting out may involve the direct loss of trees and hedgerows on site as an ecological resource or may result in damage to any trees which are to be retained. Construction activities too close to the RPAs of retained trees could cause permanent damage.

Mitigation

Trees and hedgerows should be retained where possible. RPAs should be established and implemented around the trees which are to be retained. Where necessary, these areas should be adequately protected by appropriately designed protective barriers and ground protection throughout the entire development process.

Compensation

If any trees or hedgerows are to be removed, they should be replaced accordingly as part of a detailed landscaping scheme, with only native species to be planted.

Operational impacts

No operational impacts are envisaged.



4.1.3 Watercourse

The River Alt is located along the northeastern boundary of the proposed development site.

Construction impacts

Construction works adjacent to the River Alt could result in disturbance and / or pollution to the watercourse.

Mitigation

Specific procedures and control measures will need to be implemented to ensure that there is no risk of input into the watercourse. These measures should be set out by the contractors prior to the commencement of works and will need to be agreed with the Local Planning Authority (LPA) and other statutory consultees. These measures should conform to best practice guidance and include the cleaning of all machinery and equipment before use on site to prevent contamination of the watercourse with foreign abiotic and biotic materials.

A buffer zone should also be retained along the length of the watercourse to protect it from disturbance. The buffer zone should be adequately fenced off and no vegetation clearance or other construction activities should take place within it.

Operational impacts

No operational impacts are envisaged.

4.2 Species

4.2.1 Amphibians

Although the presence of GCNs on site is considered unlikely, the works should be completed under RAMs to protect common amphibian species in the event they are present onsite.

Construction impacts

Potential impacts include direct harm, injury and / or death to individuals.

Mitigation

The following RAMs should be implemented on site during the construction phase of the development:

- The grassland and scrub is to be mown / cleared to have a sward length below 10cm. The sward length is to be reduced gradually in order to give any amphibians present time to move off site of their own accord. The mown / cleared area will then be maintained with a short sward until the works on site have been completed.
- Any potential hibernacula will be removed from the working area by a suitably experienced ecologist, and placed in a suitable area close to site. Hibernacula could include piles of rubble, bricks, loose soil, debris, brash piles etc.
- No excavations are to be left open overnight. If this is not feasible a plank should be left within the excavation at a 45 degree angle to allow amphibians to escape. Any

open excavations should be checked for amphibians in the morning prior to start of works on site.

- Materials will be stored on pallets off the ground in order to reduce the risk of amphibians sheltering underneath them.
- The hedgerows and trees along the site boundaries should remain, where feasible, to continue to provide shelter and connectivity across site for amphibians and other fauna.
- UES will remain on-call throughout the development and if any newts are encountered, work on site is to stop immediately and ecological advice is to be sought. UES can be contacted directly on **01565 757788**.

Operational impacts

No operational impacts are envisaged.

4.2.2 Bats

Building 1 contains a known common pipistrelle day roost. There are two additional outbuildings onsite and numerous trees which may provide PRFs for bats.

Construction impacts

If bats are roosting within the trees or buildings during site clearance or demolition, they are at risk of direct harm and disturbance and the roosts will be lost permanently.

Inappropriate lighting could cause unnecessary disturbance to roosting & foraging bats, which could result in the abandonment of bat roosts, and the diminishment of foraging opportunities. Inappropriate landscaping could result in the severing of commuting corridors used by bats as well as the loss of foraging habitats.

Mitigation

Buildings:

A bat scoping survey should be undertaken of the two outbuildings (Buildings 2 and 3) onsite to determine their suitability to support roosting bats. This survey can be undertaken at any time of year.

Previous ecological surveys were undertaken for a separate planning application in 2020 which identified the presence of a common pipistrelle day roost within Building 1. As such, an updated building inspection and bat presence / absence surveys comprising two visits should be undertaken of Building 1 during the bat survey season of May to September inclusive, with at least one of the surveys undertaken during the peak bat survey season May to August inclusive.

Trees:

Trees 5 and 6, and Groups 8 and 9, were subject to a bat ground-level tree assessment during the walkover survey.

T5 and 6 have been assessed as having PRFs suitable for individual bats (PRF-I) and should be subject to soft-felling techniques or a pre-felling inspection. Soft felling techniques involve

cutting the tree in sections and lowering any section containing PRFs to the ground. Once lowered to the ground, the PRFs can be checked for roosting bats or left facing upwards overnight, before being removed from the site at a minimum of 24 hours later. Alternatively, the features associated with these trees could also be inspected with an endoscope to confirm bat absence immediately prior to the felling of the tree or pruning of branches containing PRFs. In the unlikely event that a roosting bat is observed, works must stop immediately until a licence can be secured from Natural England to allow the removal of the bat roost.

The section of Group 8 which is scheduled for removal, and Group 9, were assessed as having negligible potential to support roosting bats due to an absence of suitable PRFs. As such, no further surveys or mitigation measures are required for Groups 8 and 9 in relation to bats.

If any additional trees onsite will be affected by the proposed development, then a further ground-level tree assessment will be required to determine the potential for these trees to support roosting bats.

Lighting:

Any external lighting installed as part of the development should be designed to be wildlife friendly and avoid overspill onto the retained treelines, hedgerows and River Alt.

Enhancements

The provision of bat boxes as part of the development proposals would increase the roosting opportunities for bats on site but would also increase the ecological value of the site. At the time of writing this report no detailed plans are available, but bat boxes that could be used on site include:

- Schwegler 1FF box (affixed to trees or buildings)
- Schwegler 2F box (affixed to trees or buildings)
- Schwegler 1FW hibernation box (affixed to trees)
- Schwegler 2FR bat tube (installed in connected pairs or threes into the external walls of buildings)

Bat boxes affixed to trees should be fitted at a height of between 5 and 6m metres on a southerly aspect.

The bat boxes affixed to, or installed into the external walls of buildings should be installed just below the eaves / roof height. No detailed lighting proposals are as yet available to UES, however care must be taken when installing any new lighting to ensure that light spillage onto the bat boxes is minimised. This may require the use of cowlings or relocation of the bat box or lighting.

It should be noted that once bat inhabits a bat box, they may only be disturbed by a licensed bat worker.

Operational impacts

To be assessed following the further surveys.



4.2.3 Birds

The areas of dense scrub, hedgerows, trees and buildings may provide nesting opportunities for breeding birds.

Construction impacts

Tree felling, arboricultural works and vegetation removal could result in the direct loss of nests, any individuals within the nests and of available nesting territories if conducted during the breeding season.

Mitigation

Site clearance, building demolition, tree felling, arboricultural works and vegetation removal (including enabling works) are to take place outside of the breeding bird season and should not be undertaken from March to August inclusive. If this is not possible and works need to take place between this period, a targeted breeding bird nest scoping survey should be conducted by a suitably qualified ecologist immediately prior to the works, or an ecological clerk of works appointed to oversee the works.

Compensation and enhancement

If extensive areas of vegetation are to be removed, consideration should be given to providing replacement habitat for foraging and nesting birds by incorporating tree, shrub or scrub planting as part of the landscaping proposals.

Landscaping can also be used to promote biodiversity through the appropriate design of habitats and creating habitat mosaics, which promote natural linkages and hence the dispersal of target species. Principles and landscaping ideas beneficial to wildlife and relevant to this site include:

- Planting and management of hedgerows
- Planting of berry and nut bearing shrub species to encourage winter birds
- Planting and management of shrubs which develop a mosaic of structures to support breeding birds
- Use of nectar bearing flowers to encourage invertebrates (such as bees, flies, beetles and butterflies)

Species are to be native, of local provenance or to have a proven benefit to biodiversity. Further information can be found at Appendix 8 – Landscape design for birds.

Compensation for the loss of nesting habitat and the enhancing of the nesting habitat on site can also be provided through the provision of bird nest boxes. At the time of writing this report no detailed plans are available, but bird boxes that could be used on site include:

- Schwegler 1B nest box (affixed to trees)
- Schwegler 1SP sparrow terrace (affixed to building below the eaves)
- Schwegler 2H robin nest box (affixed to trees)
- Schwegler 3S starling nest box (affixed to trees or buildings)
- Schwegler 1MR Avianex box (affixed to trees or buildings)
- Manthorpe swift nest brick (incorporated into the external walls of buildings)

The bird boxes should be sited at a minimum height of three metres. Unless there are trees which shade the box during the day, the boxes should be oriented between north and east, thus avoiding strong sunlight and the wettest winds.

Operational impacts

Inappropriate management of the habitats on site could degrade them and render them unsuitable for wildlife.

Mitigation

It is important to implement good horticultural practice in any landscaping scheme, including the use of peat-free composts, mulches and soil conditioners. The use of pesticides (herbicides, insecticides, fungicides and slug pellets) should be discouraged to prevent fatal effects on the food chain. Any pesticides used should be non-residual.

Excessive removal or pruning of trees and hedgerows should be avoided to maximise the growth and plant matter available to wildlife. Pruning should be left until late winter to leave seeds and berries for wintering wildlife and to ensure no impact on breeding and nesting birds.

4.2.4 Invasive species

Japanese knotweed is known to have been present onsite and ongoing management / treatment works are currently being undertaken.

Japanese knotweed is listed under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). As such, it is an offence to plant or otherwise cause this species to grow in the wild.

Construction impacts

Site clearance and setting out could result in the disturbance and dispersal of Japanese knotweed on and off site.

Mitigation

Japanese knotweed will need to be eradicated prior to the start of works in the affected area in order to ensure that it does not spread across the site or onto adjacent areas. It is essential that a competent and qualified person carries out any herbicide treatment.

Operational impacts

If Japanese knotweed is eradicated prior to the start of works on site, no further operational impacts are envisaged. However, complete eradication is an ongoing process, and if it is not treated as such, the plants can return and continue to spread. This could become more acute with increased activity on site.

4.2.5 Hedgehogs

No evidence of hedgehog activity was observed on site during the walkover survey. However, the areas of grassland, scrub and hedgerows on site provide suitable foraging and commuting opportunities for hedgehogs, whilst the brash and rubble piles may provide sheltering opportunities.



Construction impacts

Vegetation clearance works and construction activities without mitigation could result in direct harm, injury and / or death to individuals.

Mitigation

The following RAMs should be implemented on site during the construction phase of the development:

- No trenches or excavations will be left open overnight. They will be backfilled or covered with board, or alternatively fitted with a means of escape for any hedgehogs (or other animal) which may become trapped within, such as a plank or slope leading out of the bottom of the excavation at an angle of 45°. All excavations left open overnight will be checked for trapped wildlife in the morning.
- Any potential refugia on site, including the brash and rubble piles, or those created as part of the works should be removed by hand or checked for sheltering hedgehogs prior to their removal by mechanical means or burning. Potential refugia can include piles of leaf litter, log piles and brash piles.
- Any pipes will be stored with caps on to prevent entry by hedgehogs and other animals, and materials such as barbed wire will be stored so that animals cannot become entangled in them.
- Any chemicals or harmful materials will be stored so that they cannot be accessed by hedgehogs or other animals.
- Excavations will be checked immediately before they are backfilled to ensure that no animals have become trapped.

Operational impacts

To allow continued use of the site by hedgehog and to ensure commuting routes aren't blocked, fences installed on site should be designed to allow passage of hedgehogs. This can either be through the choice of material e.g. choosing a fence style that naturally contains holes at the base or through the inclusion of hedgehog highways. Hedgehog highways are small 13cm x 13cm holes at the base of fences. A small sign (an example can be found at www.hedgehogstreet.org) should be provided above the hedgehog hole to encourage new residents to keep the holes open.



5 CONCLUSION

The land parcel has an area of approximately 2.2ha. The proposed development site has recently been cleared and as such, only small segments of the original habitats are visible. The central section of the site comprises a large area of other neutral grassland with a pavilion building and two outbuildings. The northern and western sections of the site have been cleared but remnants of bramble scrub and felled trees are present. The boundaries of the site are demarcated by a combination of hedgerows and treelines, with the River Alt adjacent to the northeastern boundary. As the site has recently been cleared, the pre-degradation habitats onsite have been determined by the walkover data, aerial imagery and previous survey information for the site

The preliminary ecological appraisal has highlighted potential issues with the following ecological receptors on or adjacent to site: amphibians, bats, birds, hedgehogs, hedgerows, invasive species, trees and watercourse. Provided these issues are addressed in accordance with the recommendations detailed in this report, the development may proceed without adversely impacting the aforementioned ecological receptors.

The development also presents an opportunity to enhance the habitats available to wildlife on site. The provisioning of bat and bird nest boxes on site will provide improved roosting and nesting opportunities into the long-term future of the site.

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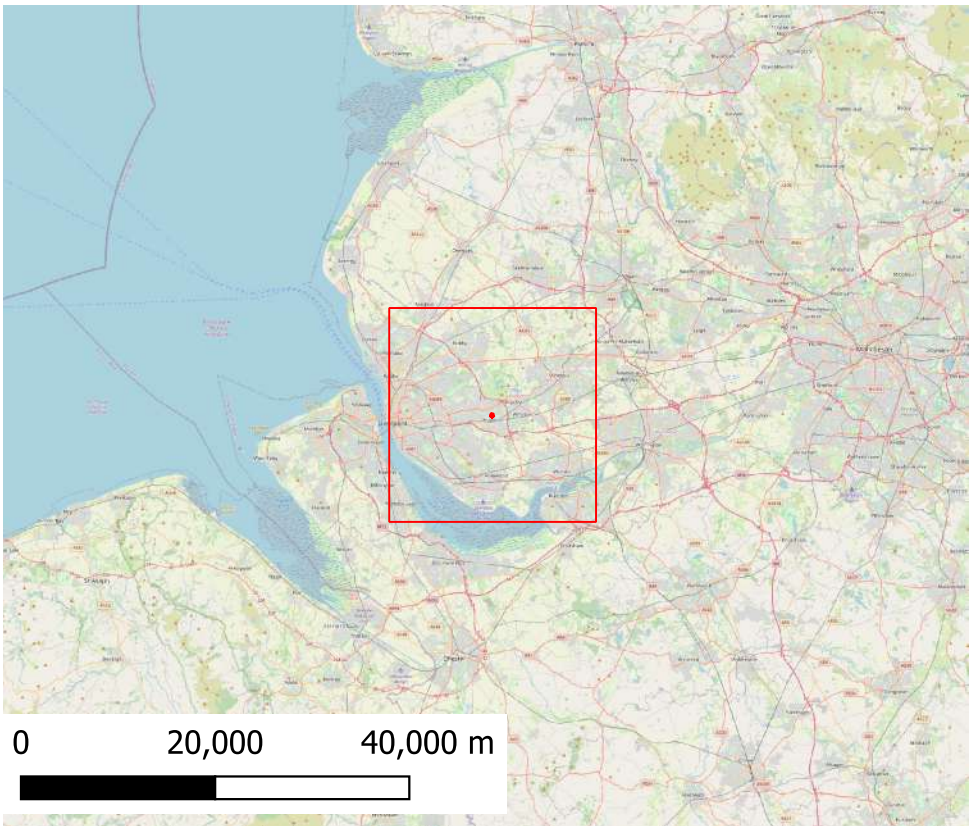
APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Desk study



Statutorily Designated Sites

**Site: Huyton Cricket Club,
Huyton**
NGR: SJ 44456 91306
Author: Ysobella Cox
Date: 14.03.2025



Key

- Local Nature Reserve
- National Nature Reserve
- Ramsar Site
- Site of Special Scientific Interest
- Special Area of Conservation
- Special Protection Area
- Development Boundary
- 10km Buffer

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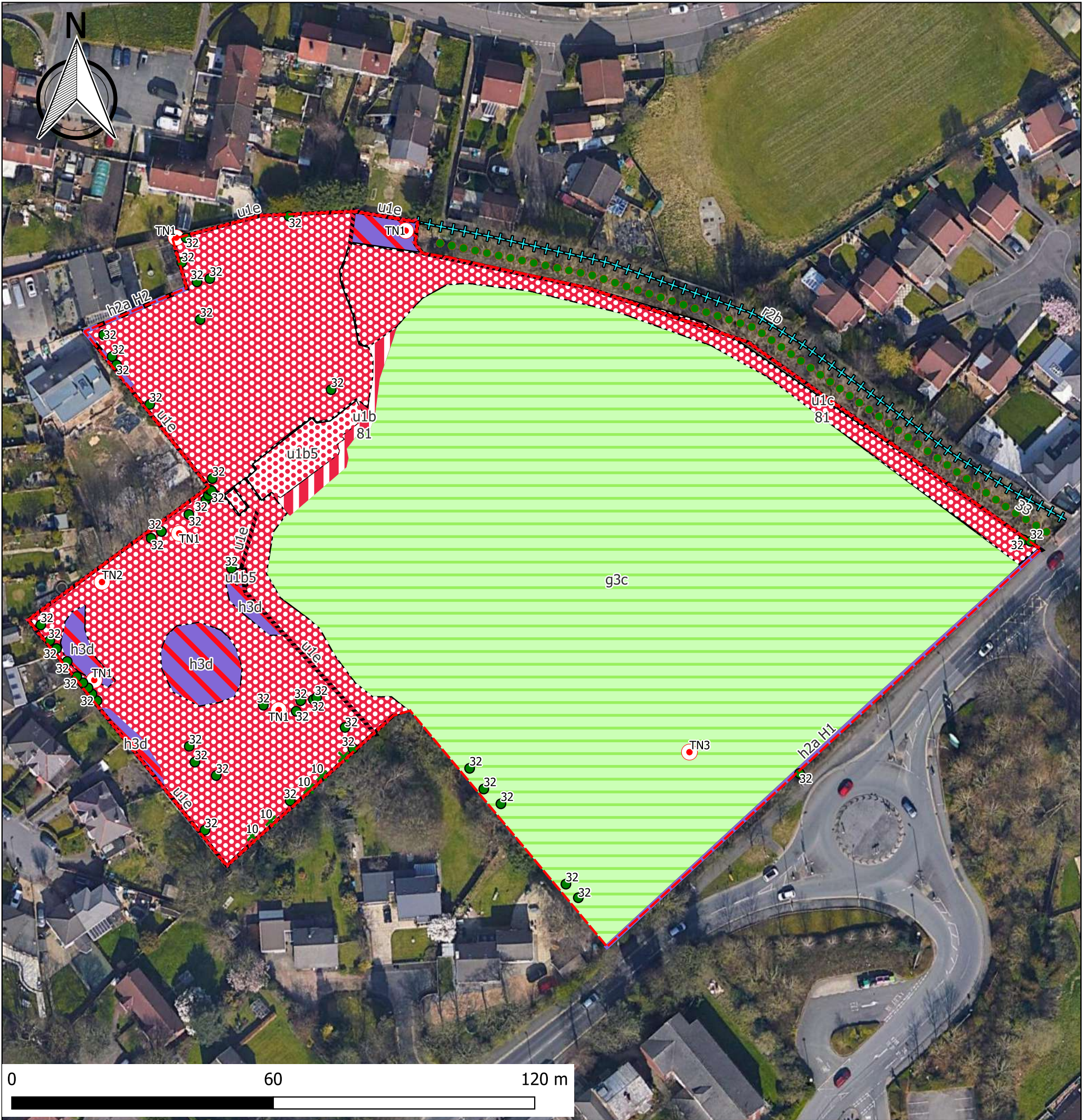


Appendix 2 – Phase 1 habitat plan

Target Note 1 – Brash pile

Target Note 2 – Rubble pile

Target Note 3 – Small Mammal burrow (20cm entrance narrows to 10cm)



UK Habitat Classification Plan

Site: Huyton Cricket Club,
Huyton
NGR: SJ 44456 91306
Author: Bethany Dineley
Date: 14/03/2025



Key

- g3c - other neutral grassland
- h2a - native hedgerow
- h3d - bramble scrub
- u1b5 - buildings
- u1c - artificial unvegetated unsealed surface
- u1e - built linear features
- r2b - other rivers and streams
- Survey boundary
- 10 - scattered scrub
- 32 - scattered trees
- 33 - line of trees
- Target Notes
- ephemeral

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Appendix 3 – Aerial photographs



Huyton Cricket Club, Huyton

Close aerial photograph

— Development boundary

— Building boundary



Huyton Cricket Club, Huyton

Wide aerial photograph



Site location





Appendix 4 – Photographs



Photograph 1 – Looking east across the other neutral grassland.



Photograph 2 – A small mammal burrow located within the other neutral grassland.



Photograph 3 – An unmanaged, species-rich native hedgerow with trees located along the southeastern boundary of the site.



Photograph 4 – A species-poor hedgerow located along the northern boundary of the site.



Photograph 5 – Recently felled scattered trees and managed hedgerow.



Photograph 6 – Bare ground within the western section of the site, where bramble scrub has been removed. Only small stands of bramble scrub remain.



Photograph 7 – A rubble pile within the western section of the site.



Photograph 8 – A brash pile within the western section of the site.



Photograph 9 – Mixed scrub along the northern edge of the grassland, which has recently been removed.



Photograph 10 – The River Alt which is located adjacent to the northeastern boundary.



Photograph 11 – Discarded waste along the banks of the River Alt.



Photograph 12 – The main pavilion building (Building 1).



Photograph 13 – A small metal outbuilding (Building 2).



Photograph 14 – A small breezeblock outbuilding (Building 3).



Photograph 15 – The access track located along the eastern boundary of the site, which has been encroached by ephemeral vegetation. Also showing an offsite line of trees along the bank of the River Alt.



Photograph 16 – Traditional wooden panel fencing demarcating the site boundary.



Photograph 17 – Concrete post and panel fencing separating two sections of the proposed development site.



Photograph 18 – Metal palisade fencing at the eastern edge of the access road.



Photograph 19 – Recently felled trees.



Photograph 20 – Recently felled line of trees



Photograph 21 – Remaining tree from a recently felled line of trees.



Photograph 22. Tree 6.



Photograph 23. Tree 5.



Photograph 24. Group 8.



Photograph 25. A tree within Group 9.



Photograph 26. A tree within Group 9.



Photograph 27. A superficial pruning wound on a tree within Group 9.



Appendix 5 – Botanical species list

Scientific name	Common name
<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>	Sycamore
<i>Achillea millefolium</i>	Yarrow
<i>Agrostis stolonifera</i>	Creeping bent
<i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i>	Cow parsley
<i>Bellis perennis</i>	Common daisy
<i>Betula sp.</i>	Birch
<i>Buddleja sp.</i>	Butterfly bush
<i>Carex sp.</i>	Sedge
<i>Cerastium fontanum</i>	Common mouse-ear
<i>Cirsium arvense</i>	Creeping thistle
<i>Cirsium vulgare</i>	Spear thistle
<i>Corylus avellana</i>	Hazel
<i>Epilobium sp.</i>	Willowherb
<i>Fragaria vesca</i>	Strawberry
<i>Festuca rubra</i>	Red fescue
<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>	Ash
<i>Galium aparine</i>	Cleavers
<i>Geranium molle</i>	Dove's-foot cranesbill
<i>Geranium robertianum</i>	Herb Robert
<i>Hedera helix</i>	Ivy
<i>Holcus lanatus</i>	Yorkshire fog
<i>Ilex aquifolium</i>	Holly
<i>Iris pseudacorus</i>	Yellow flag iris
<i>Juncus effusus</i>	Soft rush
<i>Lolium perenne</i>	Perennial rye-grass
<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>	Ribwort plantain
<i>Populus sp.</i>	Poplar
<i>Populus tremula</i>	Aspen
<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>	Cherry laurel
<i>Prunus sp.</i>	Cherry
<i>Prunus spinosa</i>	Blackthorn
<i>Quercus robur</i>	Pedunculate oak
<i>Ranunculus repens</i>	Creeping buttercup
<i>Rubus fruticosus agg.</i>	Bramble
<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>	Broadleaved dock
<i>Salix sp.</i>	Willow
<i>Sambucus nigra</i>	Elder
<i>Senecio inaequidens</i>	Narrow leaved ragwort
<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>	Common ragwort
<i>Sonchus oleraceus</i>	Smooth sowthistle
<i>Taraxacum officinale agg.</i>	Dandelion
<i>Urtica dioica</i>	Stinging nettle



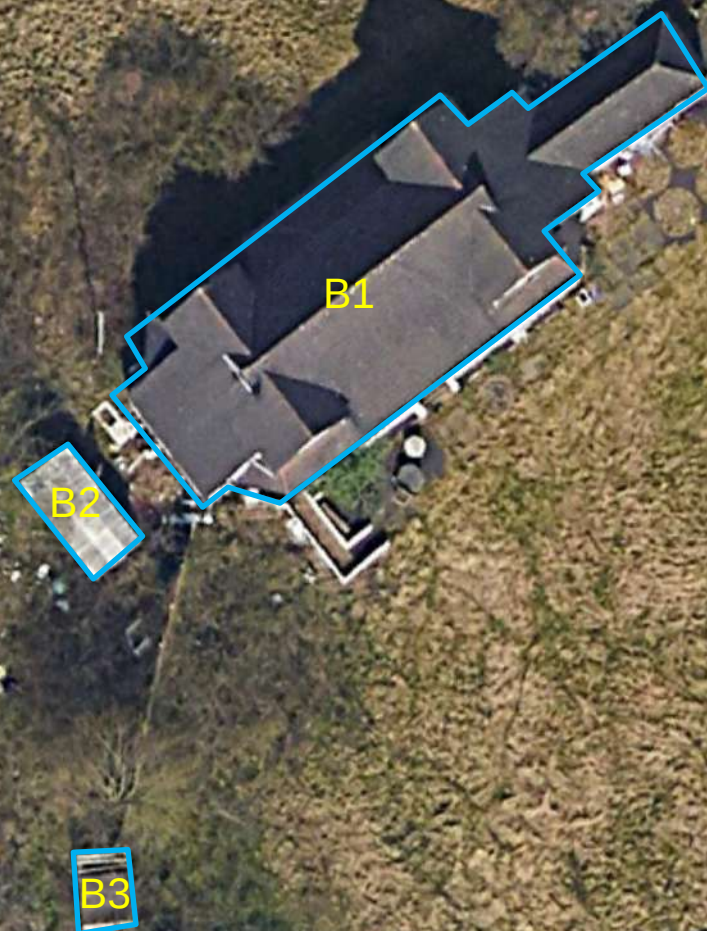
Appendix 6 – Building plan



Huyton Cricket Club, Huyton

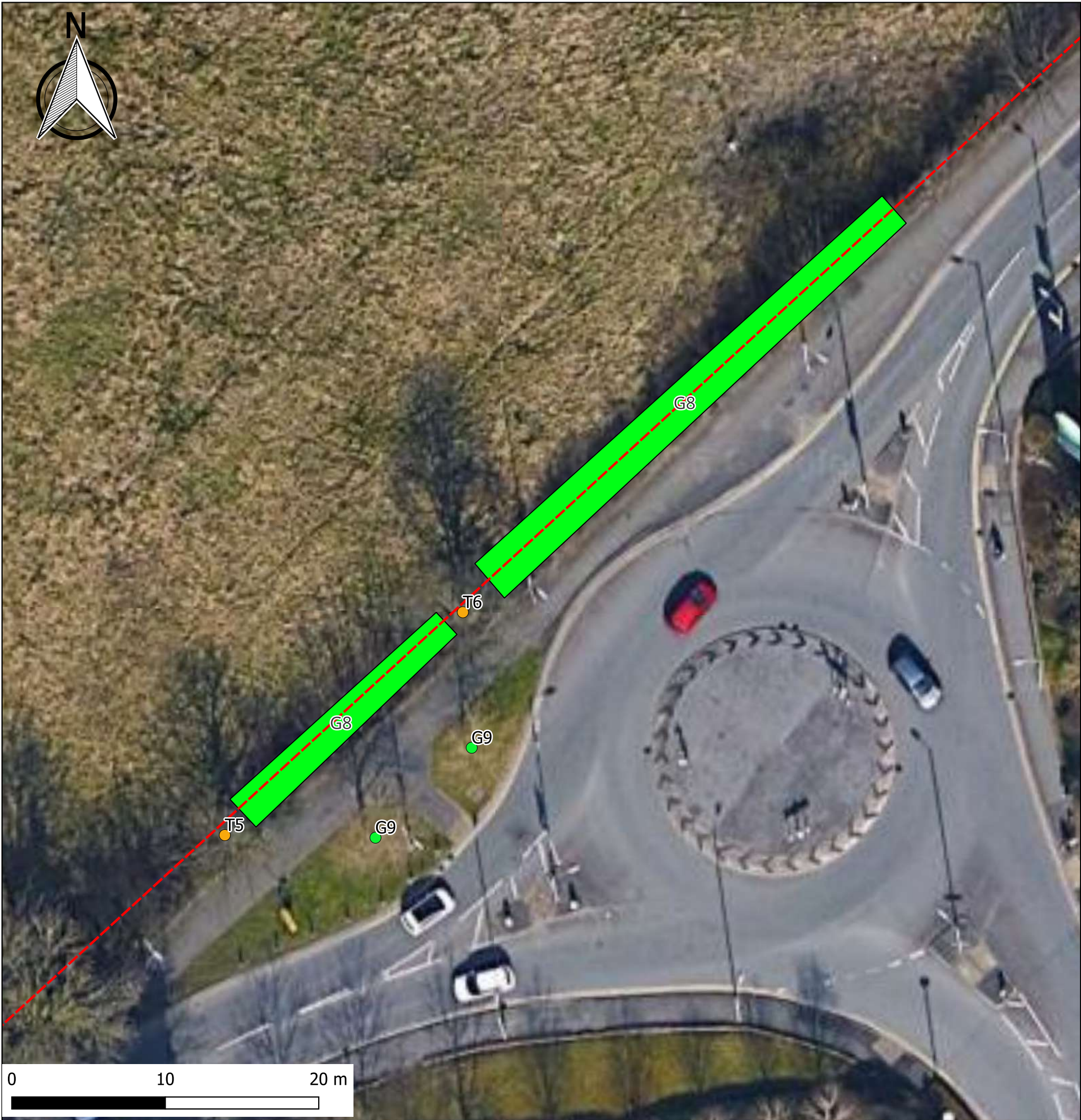
Site plan

— Building boundary





Appendix 7 – Ground-level tree assessment plan



Ground-level Tree Assessment

Site: Huyton Cricket Club,
Huyton
NGR: SJ 44456 91306
Author: Ysobella Cox
Date: 18/03/2025



Key

- Tree assessed as having negligible potential to support roosting bats
- Tree assessed as having potential to support individual bats (PRF-I)
- Survey Boundary

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Appendix 8 – Landscape design for birds

SPECIES	F	SIZE				LOCATION			SOIL MOISTURE	BENEFITS TO WILDLIFE
		T	S	M	L	H	W	Su/Sh		
TREES										
Alder*	D				Y			Su	M	Seed food for birds
Beech*	D			Y	Y	Y		Su	D	Seed food for birds
Birch*	D		Y	Y	Y			Su	D	Seed food for birds
Bird cherry *	D			Y	Y			Su	D	Food for birds, flowers attract insects
Crab apple*	D		Y	Y	Y			Su	D	Food for birds, flowers attract insects
English oak*	D				Y			Su	D	Food for birds, insects and mammals, nesting sites
European larch*	D				Y			Su	M	Seed food for birds
Holly*	E		Y	Y	Y	Y		Su	D	Fruits eaten by birds, food plant of holly blue butterfly
Juniper*	E							Su	D	Shelter and nest sites, fruits eaten by thrushes
Lime*	D				Y	Y		Su	D	Seed food for birds
Rowan*	D			Y	Y			Su	D	Fruits eaten by birds
Scot's pine*	E				Y			Su	D	Seed food for birds
Swedish whitebeam	D		Y	Y	Y			Su	D	Food for birds, flowers attract insects
Wild cherry*	D			Y	Y			Su	D	Food for birds, flowers attract insects
Yew*	E		Y	Y	Y	Y		Su	D	Food for birds, nesting sites
SHRUBS										
Barberry	B	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Su	D	Good shelter and nest cover for birds, berries may provide food
Blackthorn*	D			Y	Y	Y		Su	M	Attracts insects, food for birds, nesting sites
Buckthorn*	D			Y	Y	Y		Su/Sh	D	Food plant of brimstone butterfly, fruits eaten by birds
Butterfly bush	E	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Su	D	Attracts insects
Californian lilac	E			Y	Y	Y	Y	Su	D	Flowers attractive to various insects
Dogwood*	D			Y	Y	Y		Su	D	Food for birds, winter stem colour
Elder*	D		Y	Y	Y	Y		Su	D	Food for birds
Escallonia	E			Y	Y	Y		Su	M	Flowers attractive to various insects, tolerant of salt - good in coastal areas
Field maple*	D		Y	Y	Y	Y		Su	D	Good source of insect food for birds
Firethorn	E	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Su	D	Berries popular with many bird species
Flowering current	D		Y	Y	Y			Su	D	Early flowers attractive to insects
Forsythia	D		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Su	D	Early flowers attractive to insects
Garria	E	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Su	D	Winter catkins, early cover for nesting birds
Goat willow*	D	Y	Y	Y	Y			Su	D	Catkins attractive to bees, good source of insect food for birds
Gorse*	E			Y	Y	Y		Su	D	Early flowers attractive to insects, good protection for birds
Rhytismatales	E			Y	Y	Y		Su	D	Good cover, tolerant of salt - good in coastal areas
Guelder-rose*	D			Y	Y	Y		Su	D	Food for birds & insects
Hawthorn*	D		Y	Y	Y	Y		Su	D	Flowers attractive to insects, fruits eaten by birds, good shelter and nesting site
Hazel*	D	Y		Y	Y	Y		Su	D	Food for birds, insects and mammals, nesting sites
Laurel-leaved viburnum	E		Y	Y	Y			Su	D	Early flowers good for insects, good cover for birds

Lavender	E	Y	Y	Y	Y	Su	D	Flowers attract many insects, seeds popular with finches		
Lilac	D	Y	Y	Y		Su	D	Flowers attractive to insects		
Oregon grape	E		Y	Y	Y	Su/Sh	M	Early flowers good for insects		
Pheasant berry	E		Y	Y		Su	D	Berries popular with many bird species		
Privet*	E		Y	Y	Y	Y	Su	D	Flowers attract butterflies, produces berries	
Rose	D	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Su	D	Fruits of some varieties attractive to birds
Rosemary	E	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y		Su	D	Flower attract many insects
Shad bush	D		Y	Y				Su	M	Flowers attract insects, early forming berries good for thrushes
Snowberry	D			Y	Y	Y		Su/Sh	D	Flowers attractive to bees, fruits attractive to birds, dense stems provide cover
Spindle*	D		Y	Y	Y			Su	D	Berries eaten by birds, but poisonous to mammals
Tamarix	D			Y	Y	Y		Su	D	Flowers attractive to various insects, tolerant of salt - good in coastal areas
CLIMBERS & RAMBLERS										
Bramble*	D		Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Su/Sh	D	Food for birds, insects and mammals, nesting sites
Clematis	D	Y	Y	Y	Y			Su	D	Nesting sites
Honeysuckle*	D	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Su/Sh	D	Attractive to insects, good nesting site, food for birds
Ivy*	E	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Su/Sh	D	Attractive to insects, good nesting site, food for birds
Rose	D	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Su	D	Fruits of some varieties attractive to birds
Winter jasmin	E	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Su	D	Early flowers attractive to insects
Wisteria	D	Y	Y	Y	Y		Y	Su	D	Attractive to insects, good nesting site

KEY			
*	Native (NB: some varieties are cultivars or non-native)	Location	H = may be used as a hedge plant
F	D = Deciduous		W = may be used as a wall shrub
Foliage type	E = Evergreen		Su = Sunny borders
	B = Both		Sh = Shade tolerant
Size	T = Terraces & balconies		Su/Sh = Grows in partial shade
Suitable for garden sizes	S = Small garden (<= 6m x 4m)	Soil mositure	D = Well drained
	M = Medium gardens (<= 12m x 6m)		M = Moist
	L = Large gardens (> 12m x 6m)		W = Wet soil



Appendix 9 – Planning and statutory context

Ecological assessments

Ecological assessments play an important part within the planning context; they include an initial assessment which highlights any specific interests of a site. From the initial site assessment, the surveyor assesses the suitability of habitats within the site to support protected species and makes recommendations for further survey works if required. The following paragraphs provide a brief interpretation of legislative protection in relation to the following species and habitats:

Amphibians	Trees
Great crested newts	Hedgerows
Other amphibians	Invasive plant species
Reptiles	Otters
Badgers	Water voles
Hazel dormouse	White-clawed crayfish
Bats	Planning policy
Birds	

Amphibians

Great crested newts

Great crested newts (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* and their habitat (aquatic and terrestrial) are afforded full protection by the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Amendment (EU exit) Regulations 2019. If both national and international legislation are taken together, it is an offence to:

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture GCN
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb GCN in such a way to be likely to significantly affect:
 - their ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear or nurture their young
 - their ability to hibernate or migrate
 - their local distribution or abundance
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly take or destroy the eggs of GCN
- Damage or destroy breeding sites or resting places of GCN
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb sheltering GCN, or obstruct access to their resting place
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead GCN, any part of GCN or anything derived from GCN

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

GCN are also protected by the Protection of Animals Act 1911, which prohibits cruelty and mistreatment. Releasing a GCN in such a way as to cause undue suffering may be an offence under the Abandonment of Animals Act 1960.

In addition to the above, there are various statutory provisions relating to the transport of animals, designed to ensure their welfare. GCN are also listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act (see bats section for further details).

It is important to identify the presence of GCN individuals and also to identify suitable habitat on sites so that legal obligations regarding this species can be observed. If a survey identifies the presence of GCN on the site, an assessment of the population size class is required. This can then inform a mitigation scheme, which would need to be developed in liaison with the local Natural England team, and which minimises direct threats to newts and compensates for any loss of habitat. A licence issued by Natural England is required for the legal implementation of a mitigation scheme.

A Natural England mitigation licence application requires a Mitigation Method Statement and a Reasoned Statement of Application. The Mitigation Method Statement contains details of the proposed mitigation

works. The Reasoned Statement needs to provide a rational and reasoned justification as to why the proposed development meets the requirements of the Conservation (National Habitats & c.) regulations 1994, namely Regulations 44(2)(e), (f) or (g), and 44(3)(a).

Other amphibians

More common British amphibians, such as common frog *Rana temporaria*, common toad *Bufo bufo*, smooth newt *Triturus vulgaris* and palmate newt *Triturus helveticus* are protected only by Section 9(5) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This section prohibits sale, barter, exchange, transporting for sale and advertising to sell or to buy.

The above named species are also listed as UK Species of Conservation Concern. Due to general declines in most British amphibian species in recent years, many local authorities require amphibian surveys as a planning condition, or as part of environmental information submitted as part of a planning application, even where the presence of GCN is ruled out.

Natterjack toad *Bufo calamita* and pool frog *Pelophylax lessonae* are also offered the same level of protection as GCN, through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

Natterjack toad, common toad and pool frog are also listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act (see bats section for further details).

Water bodies that support all five (more common) species of British amphibians in high numbers, may be afforded protection in local plans, as Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation (SINC), or a similar equivalent, for sites of local importance. A site may require statutory protection as a Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI).

Reptiles

Common lizard *Zootoca vivipara*, slow-worm *Anguis fragilis*, grass snake *Natrix natrix* and adder *Vipera berus* are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They are listed as a Schedule 5 species therefore part of Section 9(1) and section 9(5) apply. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 also strengthens their protection. It is offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly kill or injure any of the species listed above
- Sell, offer, advertise or transport for sale a live or dead animal of the species listed above

If a proposed development is likely to have an impact on these reptiles the local statutory nature conservation organisation must be consulted.

Sand lizard *Lacerta agilis* and smooth snake *Coronella austriaca* receive full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. Read together, it is an offence to:

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture any sand lizards or smooth snakes
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb sand lizards or smooth snakes in such a way to be likely to significantly affect:
 - their ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear or nurture their young
 - their ability to hibernate or migrate
 - their local distribution or abundance
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly take or destroy the eggs of such an animal
- Damage or destroy breeding sites or resting places of such animals
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb sheltering sand lizards or smooth snakes, or obstruct access to their resting place
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead sand lizards or smooth snakes, any part of such an animal or anything derived from such an animal

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

All reptile species are also listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act (see bats section for further details).

Badgers

European badgers *Meles meles* and their habitat are protected under The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and are also included on Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, and Appendix III of the Bern Convention. The legislation affords badgers protection against deliberate harm or injury making it an offence to:

- Wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or cruelly ill-treat a badger (or attempt to do so)
- To interfere with a sett by damaging or destroying it
- To obstruct access to, or entrance of, a badger sett
- To disturb a badger whilst it is occupying a sett

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

Works that disturb badgers whilst they are occupying a sett are illegal without a licence. Disturbance can occur even without direct interference or damage to the sett in question. In general, the following activities are likely to require a licence:

- Use of heavy machinery or significant earth moving within 30m of a sett
- Use of lighter machinery (usually any wheeled vehicles) within 20m of a sett
- Any digging, chain saw use or scrub clearance within 10m of a sett

Hazel dormouse

Hazel dormice *Muscardinus avellanarius* are offered full protection through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. If both national and international legislation are taken together, it is an offence to:

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture dormice
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb dormice in such a way to be likely to significantly affect:
 - their ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear or nurture their young
 - their ability to hibernate or migrate
 - their local distribution or abundance
- Damage or destroy breeding sites or resting places of dormice
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb sheltering dormice, or obstruct access to their resting place
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead dormouse, any part of a dormouse or anything derived from a dormouse

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

Dormice are also listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act (see bats section for further details).

Bats

In the United Kingdom, all species of bat and their roosts are afforded full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (known as the "Habitats Regulations"). The Wildlife and Countryside Act is the domestic implementation of

the Convention on the Conservation of European Wildlife and Natural Habitats (the Bern Convention) and was amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000. This makes it an offence to:

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture a bat
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat while it is occupying a structure or place that it uses for shelter or protection
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any place that a bat uses for shelter or protection (even if the bat is not present at the time)
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead bat, any part of a bat or anything derived from a bat

Under UK law, a bat roost is *any structure or place which any wild [bat] ... uses for shelter or protection*. As bats often reuse the same roosts, legal opinion is that a roost is protected whether or not the bats are present at the time of the activity taking place.

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

If an activity is likely to result in any of the above offences, a licence can be applied for to derogate from the protection afforded. These licences must provide appropriate mitigation and are issued by Natural England.

A Natural England mitigation licence application requires a Mitigation Method Statement and, in many cases, a Reasoned Statement of Application. The Mitigation Method Statement contains details of the proposed mitigation works. The Reasoned Statement needs to provide a rational and reasoned justification as to why the proposed development meets the requirements of the Conservation (National Habitats & c.) regulations 1994, namely Regulations 44(2)(e), (f) or (g), and 44(3)(a).

The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 lists the following bat species as species of principle importance under Section 41:

- Barbastelle *Barbastella barbastellus*
- Bechstein's bat *Myotis bechsteinii*
- Noctule *Nyctalus noctula*
- Soprano Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pygmaeus*
- Brown Long-eared bat *Plecotus auritus*
- Greater Horseshoe *Rhinolophus ferrumequinum*
- Lesser Horseshoe *Rhinolophus hipposideros*

Section 40 requires every public body in the exercising of its functions 'have regard, so far as is consistent with the proper exercise of those functions, to the purpose of conserving biodiversity' (all biodiversity and not just section 41 species and habitats); therefore making these bats a material consideration in the planning process and requiring a detailed ecological bat survey before planning permission can be granted.

Birds

All wild birds, their nests and young are protected throughout England and Wales by the Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). It is illegal to kill, injure or take any wild bird, or damage or destroy the nest or eggs of breeding birds. The legislation applies to all bird species, common and rare.

In addition to the protection afforded to all wild birds, more vulnerable species listed on Schedule 1 of the Act receive enhanced protection when breeding. Schedule 1 species, including their dependent young, are protected from intentional or reckless disturbance whilst at or near the nest, in addition to the protection afforded the more common species.

The NERC Act offers further protection to the nests of some species that regularly re-use their nests, even when the nests are not in use.

The leading governmental and non-governmental conservation organisations in the UK have reviewed the population status' of 244 UK bird species. "Birds of Conservation Concern 4: the Red List for Birds" is the

most recent publication summarising their findings. Three lists, Red, Amber and Green, have been produced based on the most up-to-date evidence available and criteria include conservation status at global and European levels and, within the UK: historical decline, trends in population and range, rarity, localised distribution and international importance. These lists are a valuable resource when considering conservation priorities.

Trees

Trees may be protected on an individual or group level through a Tree Preservation Order (TPO). In order to carry out works to trees with a TPO, prior written consent must be obtained from the Local Planning Authority. Trees may also be protected through a condition of planning consent or designated conservation areas.

Hedgerows

The Hedgerow Regulations are made under Section 97 of the Environment Act 1995 and came into operation on 1st of June 1997. They aim to protect important hedgerows in the countryside by controlling their removal through a system of notification to the Local Planning Authority.

A hedgerow can only be considered for classification as “important” if it, or the hedgerow of which the section belongs to is over 20m in length (or which meets a hedgerow at either end) and has existed for 30 years or more.

Invasive plant species

A number of invasive, non-native plant species are listed under Schedule 9 (Part II) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). The most commonly encountered listed species in ecological surveys are Japanese knotweed *Fallopia japonica*, Montbretia *Crocasmia x crocosmiiflora* and variegated yellow archangel *Lamiastrum galeobdolon subsp. argentatum*. Section 14(2) of this Act makes it an offence to *plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild* any plant listed on Schedule 9 (Part II). These provisions are necessary to prevent the establishment of non-native species which may be detrimental to our native wildlife.

A number of invasive, non-native plants species are listed under Schedule 2 (Part II) of the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019. The most commonly encountered listed species in ecological surveys are Himalayan balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* and giant hogweed *Heracleum mantegazzianum*. Section 3 of this Act make it an offence to *plant or otherwise causes to grow in the wild* any plant which is listed on Schedule 2 (Part II). These provisions are necessary to prevent the establishment of non-native species which may be detrimental to our native wildlife.

Soil or plant material contaminated with non-native and invasive plants can cause ecological damage and may be classified as controlled waste. It is an offence to keep, treat or dispose of waste that could harm the environment or human health. If there is any doubt, contact the local authority or Environment Agency.

Otters

European otter *Lutra lutra* are offered full protection through the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) and the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017. If both national and international legislation are taken together, it is an offence to:

- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or capture otters
- Deliberately, intentionally or recklessly disturb otters in such a way to be likely to significantly affect:
 - their ability to survive, breed, reproduce, rear or nurture their young
 - their ability to migrate
 - their local distribution or abundance
- Damage or destroy breeding sites or resting places of otters

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb sheltering otters, or obstruct access to their resting place
- Keep, transport, sell or exchange, or offer for sale or exchange any live or dead otter, any part of an otter or anything derived from otter

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

Otters are also listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act (see bats section for further details).

Water voles

Water voles *Arvicola amphibius* are protected by the provisions of Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This makes it an offence to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take water vole
- Possess or control live or dead water vole or any part of a water vole
- Intentionally or recklessly damage destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which a water vole uses for shelter or protection, or disturb water vole using such a place
- Sell, offer, advertise or transport live or dead water voles for sale

Licences are available from Natural England to allow activities that would otherwise be an offence, including:

- Scientific or educational purposes
- For the purposes of ringing or marking
- Conserving wild animals or introducing them into particular areas
- Preserving public health or public safety
- Preventing the spread of disease
- Preventing serious damage to any form of property or to fisheries

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

Water voles are also listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act (see bats section for further details).

White-clawed crayfish

White-clawed crayfish *Austropotomobius pallipes* are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). They are listed as a Schedule 5 species therefore part of Section 9(1) and section 9(5) apply. The Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000 also strengthens their protection. It is offence to:

- Intentionally or recklessly kill or injure white-clawed crayfish
- Sell, offer, advertise or transport for sale a live or dead white-clawed crayfish

If a proposed development is likely to have an impact on white-clawed crayfish then the local statutory nature conservation organisation must be consulted.

Penalties for offences include fines of up to £5000, plus up to six months imprisonment, for each offence committed.

Their inclusion on the EC Habitats Directive allows areas to be designated as Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) for the presence of white-clawed crayfish. Such a designation brings legal protection under the Conservation of Habitats Regulations 2017, this includes how the site is managed and what development can occur on and in proximity to these sites.

White-clawed crayfish are also listed under Section 41 of the NERC Act (see bats section for further details).

Planning policy

The National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF) provides guidance on the interpretation of the law in relation to the natural environment and development.

National Planning Guidance is issued in the form of the National Planning Policy Framework 2024 (NPPF). The most relevant section is 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment.

Key relevant principles stated in 15: Conserving and enhancing the natural environment are;

- 187.** 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.
- 192.** 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 biodiversity⁶⁸; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation⁶⁹; 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
- 193.** 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 reasons⁷⁰ 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.