



WE KNOW SERVICES

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal Report (PEA) and Biodiversity Net- Gain (Baseline) Report

Site

Southmead Children's Centre, Whiston,
Knowsley

Client

Knowsley MBC

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Preliminary Ecological Appraisal – Southmead Children’s Centre



Quality Assurance

The information which the author has prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the CIEEM's Code of Professional Conduct. We confirm that the opinions expressed are our true and professional bona fide opinions.

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Executive Summary

A Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) was commissioned by Knowsley Metropolitan Council in July 2024 of the Southmead Childrens Centre, Whiston, Knowsley. The survey was commissioned to support potential future re-development/refurbishment of the site.

The purpose of the survey and the report is to provide an ecological baseline and an initial assessment of the potential impacts of any potential development proposals (current proposals are unknown) upon the nature conservation of the site.

Further to the above, a baseline Biodiversity Net-Gain assessment (using the Statutory Defra Metric Calculation Tool) was commissioned to determine a baseline calculation for the site and inform any future development proposals.

Due to the scale of the proposed development and distance/disconnect from any statutory or non-statutory designated sites, no impacts upon such sites are anticipated because of the proposed development (with any impacts due to refurbishment/re-development likely to be limited to the site itself).

In view of the results of the desk and field-based assessment of the site, the site is considered to be of relatively low ecological value in the local context and loss of biodiversity as a result of the proposed development is limited and can be mitigated for and enhanced (in line with the requirements of biodiversity net-gain) as part of the proposed development.

The building was assessed as having 'low potential' for supporting bat roosts and following this, a bat emergence survey was carried out in July 2024. No bat roosts were identified during the survey and only very limited bat activity was recorded (We Know Services, 2024).

The site is likely to support nesting birds as such this will require further consideration as part of the planning application (see above recommendations) and during the works in order to comply with planning policy and legislative requirements.

As indicated in this report, appropriate and proportionate mitigation and enhancement (with the aim of achieving a minimum 10% biodiversity net-gain) should be considered at the design stage, to maintain and enhance the biodiversity value of the site in the long-term as part of future development proposals.

For the development to proceed in line with UK legislation and Planning Policy relating to biodiversity, the recommendations contained within this report should be considered and adopted as necessary.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal – Southmead Children’s Centre

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1. Introduction

We Know Services was commissioned by Knowsley Metropolitan Borough Council in July 2024 to undertake a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) of Southmead Children's Centre, hereafter referred to as "the site". The survey was commissioned to support potential future re-development/refurbishment of the site.

The purpose of the survey and the report is to provide an ecological baseline and an initial assessment of the potential impacts of any potential development proposals (current proposals are unknown) upon the nature conservation of the site.

Further to the above, a baseline Biodiversity Net-Gain assessment (using the Statutory Defra Metric Calculation Tool) was commissioned to determine a baseline calculation for the site and inform any future development proposals.

1.1. Site Description

The site is located in Whiston, Knowsley, Merseyside (Grid Reference: SJ 47585 90721) and currently consists of a disused children's centre, car-parking areas, lawns/playing field, small areas of plantation woodland, and associated soft landscaping which is limited to ornamental shrubs and amenity trees. The site is situated in an urban area comprised of mainly residential properties and in close proximity to open greenspace such as Whiston Woods to the east and woodland to the south of Lickers Lane.



Figure 1. Site and surrounding landscape character

1.2. Proposed Development

No detailed development plans were available at the time of assessment and writing this report but it is assumed demolition of all structures will be included in proposals.

1.3. Purpose of the Report

The purpose of this report is to:

- Undertake a desk study to obtain existing information on statutory and non-statutory sites of nature conservation interest and relevant records of protected/notable species within the site and its zone of influence
- Present the results of an extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, involving a walkover of the site to record habitat types and dominant vegetation, including any invasive species, and; evidence of protected fauna or habitats capable of supporting such species
- Evaluate potential ecological receptors on site and within the zone of influence; identify any constraints to the sites development and make any recommendations for further surveys, mitigation or enhancement.

The details of this report will remain valid for a period of eighteen months from the date of the survey, after which the validity of this assessment should be reviewed to determine whether further updates are necessary. The recommendations within this report should be reviewed (and reassessed if necessary) should there be any changes to the red line boundary or development proposals which this report was based on.

Scientific names are provided at the first mention of each species and common names (where appropriate) are then used throughout the rest of the report for ease of reading.

2. Methodology

2.1. Historic Surveys

Previous reports relevant to the site have been reviewed for this report. These reports include:

2.2. Desk Study

To inform the survey, a desk study was conducted using available ecological information relating to ecology for the area surrounding the site. Online resources, including Multi-Agency Geographic Information Centre (MAGIC), were consulted in relation to the presence of sites and habitats of importance in the wider context.

A data request to the Local Records Centre (LRC) for the area (Merseyside) was made for full species records and list of non-statutory designated sites (e.g., local wildlife sites) within 2 km of the site (full details available upon request).

Other organisations in the county that may hold relevant ecological data were not consulted (the full extent of data can be provided upon request).

It is important to note that most species are greatly under-recorded and therefore a lack of records for a location should not be taken as an absence of the species concerned.

Furthermore, a historical record for a habitat or species does not necessarily confirm its current presence.

2.3. Field Surveys

The following methodologies have been used to identify the ecological receptors present on or near the site and which are relevant to the proposed development.

2.4. Field Survey

Habitats

UKHabs Survey

A habitat survey was conducted on 5th July 2024 based on the techniques and methodologies described in the UKHabs version 2.0 Handbook (2023) and using standard nomenclature (Stace 2019). The habitats present were recorded on to a field map (Appendix 3) along with digital photographs (Appendix 4), providing supplementary information on, for example, species composition structure and

management where relevant. This was extended to include notes on fauna and habitats which could potentially support protected species.

Biodiversity Net Gain Baseline Calculations

Using the field survey information gathered, habitat areas were measured using GIS based software and the areas then used to populate the baseline calculation within the Statutory Defra Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool (also referred to as “the metric” in this report).

Protected and Notable Species

The site was inspected for evidence of, and its potential to support, protected or notable species, especially those listed under the Schedule 2 of the Habitat Regulations 2017 (as amended), Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (W&CA) 1981 (as amended), the Countryside Rights of Way (CRoW) Act 2000, those given extra protection under the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, and species included in the North Merseyside LBAP.

The presence of some species was determined using standard best practice guidance and are listed below.

Badger

The site was surveyed for evidence of badger *Meles meles* setts or other badger activity such as paths, latrines or signs of foraging. Methodologies used and any setts recorded were classified according to published criteria (Harris, et al., 1989).

Otter

The site was assessed for its suitability to support otter *Lutra lutra* using standing Government advice (Chanin, 2003).

Bats

Roosting Bats – Buildings / Structures / Trees

Any suitable buildings, structures or trees on site were assessed from the ground for their suitability to support breeding, resting and hibernating bats using survey methods based on the BCT *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (Collins, 2016) – hereafter referred to as the ‘BCT Guidelines’.

Foraging / Commuting Bats

Potential habitat for foraging and commuting bats were assessed on site according to the BCT Guidelines.

Birds

Bird Species identified at the time of survey were noted and nesting birds recorded as seen. An assessment of habitats was undertaken to determine the likely value to breeding and foraging birds.

Great Crested Newt & Common Amphibians

The site was appraised for its suitability to support great crested newt *Triturus cristatus* based on guidance outlined in the Herpetofauna Workers' Manual (Gent & Gibson, 2003) and the Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook (Langton, et al., 2001). This appraisal also considered waterbodies within 500m of the site and their potential to be used for breeding newts. Each pond was assessed using the Habitat Suitability Index (HSI) (Oldham, et al., 2000) which assigns a value to the pond calculated from 10 pre-identified features. The HSI value gives a correlation of likely use by GCN and below 0.46 the waterbody is considered to have less likelihood of GCN presence however this metric is a guide and should be assessed on a site by site basis as waterbodies with low HSI have been known to support GCN.

Habitat suitability and evidence of other common amphibians was recorded on site where relevant.

Reptiles

The site was appraised for its suitability to support reptiles using guidance outlined in the Herpetofauna Workers' Manual (Gent & Gibson, 2003).

Invertebrates

The site habitats were appraised for suitability to support assemblages of invertebrates and commented on in the report as appropriate.

Other Species

The site was also appraised for its suitability to support other protected or notable fauna with regard to the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017) and BS42020:2013 Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development (BSI, 2013). Evidence of any current or historical presence of such species was recorded.

Invasive Species

Evidence of species listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) as amended, were recorded as seen.

2.5. Limitations

The protected species assessment provides a preliminary view of the likelihood of protected species occurring on the site. It should not be taken as providing a full and definitive survey of any protected species group.

Even where data for a particular species groups are provided in the desk study, a lack of records of a defined geographical area does not necessarily mean that there is a lack of ecological interest; the area may simply be under recorded.

The UKHab Survey does not constitute a full botanical survey or provide accurate mapping of invasive plant species however the survey was undertaken within the optimal period for botanical survey, therefore most species present should have been visible and identified.

Despite any of the above limitations, it is considered that this report reflects accurately the habitats present, their biodiversity importance, and the potential for the site to support protected and notable species.

3. **Baseline Ecological Conditions**

3.1. **Protected Sites**

Statutory Designated Sites

According to the Natural England online mapping resource MAGIC there are no statutory designated sites within 2 km of the site.

Non-statutory sites

According to data supplied by Merseyside Biobank, the following non-statutory designated sites are located within 2 km of the site:

Table 1. Non-Statutory Designated Sites within 2km of the site.

Site Name	Designation
The Old Wood	Merseyside Ancient Woodland Inventory
Netherley Brook and Ditton Brook Corridor	Nature Improvement Area
Stadt Moers Park	Knowsley Local Geological Site
Cronton Mineral Line, Windy Arbor, Whiston	Knowsley Local Geological Site
Carr Lane Lake, Prescott	Knowsley Local Wildlife Site
Lickers Lane Wood	Knowsley Local Wildlife Site
Woodland, Sandfield Park	Knowsley Local Wildlife Site
Tushingham's Pond, Stadt Moers Country Park	Knowsley Local Wildlife Site
Strettles Bog, Tarbock	Knowsley Local Wildlife Site
Daggers Bridge Wood	Knowsley Local Wildlife Site
Mine Waste, Cronton	Knowsley Local Wildlife Site
The Old Wood, South	Knowsley Local Wildlife Site
The Old Wood, North	Knowsley Local Wildlife Site
Big Water and Big Water Wood, Halsnead	Knowsley Local Wildlife Site
Rough Head Wood	Knowsley Local Wildlife Site
Stadt Moers Q4	Knowsley Local Wildlife Site
Stadt Moers Q2 and visitor centre	Knowsley Local Wildlife Site
Huyton and Prescott Golf Club	Knowsley Local Wildlife Site

Site Name	Designation
Stadt Moers Q3	Knowsley Local Wildlife Site
Land East of Fox's Bank Brook	Knowsley Local Wildlife Site
Parrens Covert	St Helens Local Wildlife Site
The Rough woodland	St Helens Local Wildlife Site
Blundell Hills Golf Course	St Helens Local Wildlife Site

None of the above sites intersect, or are in close proximity to, the proposed development site.

3.2. Habitats

The habitats identified during the UKHabs Survey are listed and described below. All habitats are marked on the UKHabs map in Appendix 2 and each habitat type is illustrated with a photograph in Appendix 3.

Desk Study

According to data supplied by Merseyside Biobank there is an area of woodland, grassland and a waterbody 149m south of the site (beyond Lickers Lane) as the nearest point.

All other mapped priority habitats are remote from the site boundary.

Field Survey

The habitats identified during the field survey are listed and described below in Table 2. All habitats are marked on the habitat map in Appendix 3.

Table 2. Habitats

Habitat	Result
Built Environment – u1b5, u1b	The central area of the site is comprised of buildings (Southmead Childrens Centre) and associated hardstanding areas (car parks and play areas). The Southmead Childrens Centre is a large relatively modern complex of brick construction with a single storey section to the south and a two-storey section to the north. This building internally comprises of a large number of rooms and associated corridors. The roof structure to the north is slightly pitched and comprises plyboard overlain with felt; and to the south is flat and overlain

Habitat	Result
	with felt. To the interior there are suspended ceilings with a void between the ceiling and outer roof. There are uPVC fascias to the upper section of the majority of the structure. The building is glazed to most aspects and the windows are intact. The building is overall in good condition and is reasonably well sealed to the elements with only a small number of gaps in mortar and up behind uPVC fascias.
Introduced Shrub – h3h (48)	The areas immediately associated with the building to the south and west of the buildings are comprised of hardstanding. However, ornamental planting is present associated with the play areas to the east of the site and comprises of lilac, lavender (<i>Lavandula</i> sp.), rose sp. (<i>Rosa</i> sp.) and other bedding plants sited in borders or in timber planters.
Urban Trees - 11	There are two individual trees within the site. These include as single Silver Birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>) and a single Rowan (<i>Sorbus aucuparia</i>) tree. These both appear to be mature and in 'good' condition.
Modified Grassland - g4	There is one large area of modified grassland and eight smaller areas of modified grassland associated with the site. These grasslands are characterised by species including Perennial Rye Grass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>), Annual Meadow Grass (<i>Poa annua</i>), and Dandelion (<i>Taraxacum</i> agg), White Clover (<i>Trifolium repens</i>) and Broadleaved Plantain (<i>Plantago major</i>) and are connected only to two small areas of woodland and two urban trees, but are otherwise surrounded by developed land (buildings and hardstanding).
Other Neutral Grassland – g3c5,10, 17	There is one small area of neutral grassland with occasional tall ruderal species and scrub associated. This is an area to the northern site boundary which is fenced off from the main site and therefore not managed. The grassland is rank and comprises of rough, tussock forming species such as Cocksfoot, Yorkshire Fog, False Oat Grass and tall ruderal species including Greater Willowherb (<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>), Mugwort (<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>), Broadleaved Dock (<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>), Creeping Thistle (<i>Cirsium arvense</i>), Cleavers (<i>Galium aparine</i>), Common Ragwort (<i>Senecio jacobaea</i>) and other forbs such as Ribwort Plantain (<i>Plantago lanceolata</i>) and Creeping Buttercup (<i>Ranunculus repens</i>).

Habitat	Result
	In addition to the above there are occasional areas of scrub comprising of Common Dogwood (<i>Cornus sanguinea</i>), rose (<i>Rosa</i> sp.) and Bramble (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.)
Broadleaved Woodland – w1g	There are two discrete small areas of woodland associated with the site. The first is located to the north eastern corner and is fenced off from the wider site. This appears to have been planted as a ‘nature area’ for the children using the site historically. The woodland trees are reaching maturity and distinct understorey and field layers are developing. There is a dense stand of Common Dogwood to the eastern most extent of this area. The main canopy is made up of Pedunculate Oak (<i>Quercus robur</i>), Goat Willow (<i>Salix caprea</i>) and Silver Birch; with an understorey of Hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>), Hazel (<i>Coryllus avellana</i>) and a field layer comprising Bramble, Rose of Sharon (<i>Hypericum calycinum</i>), Wood Aven (<i>Geum urbanum</i>), Ivy (<i>Hedera helix</i>), Herb Robert (<i>Geranium robertianum</i>), and Meadowsweet (<i>Filipendula ulmaria</i>). There is a small amount of Cherry Laurel (<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>) present within this woodland. The second woodland area is more linear and is located along the western site boundary to the adjacent primary school. This woodland is comprised of a small number of trees including a mature oak, and smaller mature oak, Silver Birch, Elder (<i>Sambucus nigra</i>) and Hawthorn, along with stands of Bramble and Common Dogwood.

3.3. Protected and Notable Species

Species likely to occur in close proximity to the site according to information provided by the local records centre (Merseyside Biobank – records within last 10 years) or with relevance to habitats present within or adjacent to the site are covered below in Table 3.

Table 3. Protected and Notable Species

Species	Legal protection	Result
Badger	Protection of Badgers Act 1992; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 6.	There are three records of Badgers (<i>Meles meles</i>) within 2 km the site. None of these coincide with the site or are in close proximity (>100m from site boundary). Habitats within the site are broadly suitable for supporting Badgers but no evidence of the presence of Badger setts within the site (or within 30m of the area proposed for development) was recorded during the field survey. In view of the existing ecological information and field survey, it is considered that Badgers are not present within this site or in the vicinity of the site.
Otter	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 Schedule 2; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedules 5 & 6; Natural Environment and Rural Communities 2006 Section 41.	There are no records of Otter (<i>Lutra lutra</i>) within 2 km of the site. There are no watercourses in close proximity to the site and other habitats within the site are of no value to Otter. Given the lack of records, lack of connectivity to habitat in the wider context and urban location of the site, the likelihood of Otter to use the site is negligible.
Water vole	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 5; Natural Environment and Rural Communities 2006 Section 41.	There are five records of Water Vole (<i>Arvicola amphibius</i>) within 2 km of the site in the last 20 years. These are all remote from the site with the nearest being >600km east of the site. There are no watercourses or waterbodies within the site or in the vicinity of the site. As such there is no possibility of Water Vole using the site.

Species	Legal protection	Result
Bats	Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 Schedule 2; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedules 5 & 6; Natural Environment and Rural Communities 2006 Section 41.	There are 107 records (various types of record) of bats within 2 km of the site within the last 20 years. Species include: • Common Pipistrelle (<i>Common Pipistrelle</i>) • Soprano Pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>) • Brown Long-eared Bat (<i>Plecotus auritus</i>) • Daubenton's Bat (<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>) • Noctule Bat (<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>) The nearest of these records is for a Common Pipistrelle foraging within 150m of the site. All other records are remote from the site and there are no records that coincide with the site. According to MAGIC website, there is one record of granted European Protected Species Licences for bats within 2 km of the site. This is for a Common Pipistrelle resting place (non-breeding), dated 2017-2018, located 1.3km east of the site. The main Southmead Childrens Centre building is of relatively modern construction but includes some gaps in mortar and gaps behind fascia boards providing potential access into the fabric of the roof structure at various locations. The building possesses potential roost features (PRFs) for bats, though limited in number and diversity given the size of the building. No evidence (field signs) of the presence of bats was recorded at the time of survey. There is a single semi-permanent building to the north west of the main building. This structure does not have potential for supporting bat roosts. It was evident that there is significant artificial lighting associated with the buildings and the surrounding car park areas. Based upon the PRFs present, extent of artificial lighting present and urban location of the building it is assessed as being of 'low potential' for supporting bat roosts.

Species	Legal protection	Result
		A bat survey of the building was undertaken in July 2024 (We Know Services, 2024) immediately following this assessment. No roosts were identified in association with the site and only very limited activity was recorded throughout the survey, with only Common Pipistrelle recorded to the eastern site boundary and a single Noctule Bat pass over the site. Full details are provided in the bat survey report for this site (We Know Services, 2024). There are a number of trees associated with the site. This includes two individual trees associated with the buildings (1 x Silver Birch and 1 x Rowan). These trees do not possess features potentially suitable for supporting bat roosts (negligible potential) (Collins, 2023). The two areas of woodland associated with the site contain mature trees. None of the trees with the woodland to the north east corner of the site appeared to possess potential features for bat roosts at the time of survey. The woodland to the wester site boundary contained 1 x large Oak tree which may have potential to support bat roosts, but which could not be fully assessed at the time of survey due to being inaccessible. The site is overall of low suitability for supporting foraging bats due to the limited habitat present for foraging and presence of artificial lighting across the site, and this is evidenced via the 2024 bat survey results.
Birds	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).	There are numerous records of notable bird species within 2km of the site. The following species listed as Priority Species under Section 41 of the NERC Act have been recorded within 2km of the site: • Bullfinch, <i>Pyrrhula pyrrhula</i> - 2 records (1997-1999) • Corn Bunting, <i>Emberiza calandra</i> – 4 records (1997-1999) • Cuckoo <i>Cuculus canorus</i> - 4 records (1997-1999)

Species	Legal protection	Result
		• Dunnock <i>Prunella modularis</i> – 12 records (1997-1998) • Grasshopper Warbler <i>Locustella naevia</i> – 5 records (1997-1999) • Grey Partridge <i>Perdix perdix</i> – 16 records (1997-1999) • House Sparrow <i>Passer domesticus</i> – 11 records (1997-2001) • Lapwing <i>Vanellus vanellus</i> – 7 records (1974-2002) • Lesser Redpoll, <i>Acanthis cabaret</i> – 1 record (1997-2000) • Lesser Spotted Woodpecker <i>Dendrocopos minor</i> – 1 record (1997-1998) • Linnet <i>Linaria cannabina</i> – 7 record (1997-1998) • Reed Bunting <i>Emberiza schoeniclus</i> – 8 records (1997-1999) • Skylark <i>Alauda arvensis</i> – 17 records (1997-2007) • Song Thrush <i>Turdus philomelos</i> – 13 records (1997-1999) • Spotted Flycatcher <i>Muscicapa striata</i> – 3 records (1997-1999) • Starling <i>Sturnus vulgaris</i> – 12 records (1997-1998) • Tree Sparrow <i>Passer montanus</i> – 3 records (1998-1999) • Turtle Dove <i>Streptopelia turtur</i> – 1 record (1997-1999) • Willow Tit <i>Poecile montana</i> – 2 records (1997-2000) • Yellow Wagtail <i>Motacilla flava</i> – 2 records (1997-1998) • Yellowhammer <i>Emberiza citrinella</i> – 10 records (1997-1999) All of the above records are a minimum of 10 years old and many of the species listed are not of relevance to the habitats present within the site. Woodlands, scrub and individual trees within the site have the potential to support nesting birds during the breeding season (March – August inclusive). The building also has potential to support nesting birds, though no evidence of nesting was

Species	Legal protection	Result
		recorded at the time of survey. The unmanaged neutral grassland to the north may contribute as a foraging resource for birds and scrub associated with this is likely to support nesting birds The remainder of the site is hardstanding and heavily managed grassland, as such these areas are considered to be of limited value to nesting birds.
GCN and Common Amphibians	GCN: Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 Schedule 2; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedules 5; Natural Environment and Rural Communities 2006 Section 41.	There are records of the following amphibian species within 2km of the site as follows; • Great Crested Newt (<i>Triturus cristatus</i>) • Common Frog (<i>Rana temporaria</i>) • Common Toad (<i>Bufo bufo</i>) • Smooth Newt (<i>Lissotriton vulgaris</i>) The nearest record of Great Crested Newt is >1.9km north west of the site (associated with a Stadt Moers Park – dated 2011) and terrestrial connectivity to the site is disrupted by the M57 Motorway and other minor roads. There are 176 records of common and widespread amphibians (Common Frog, Common Toad, Smooth Newt) within 2km of the site. According to MAGIC website, there are no records of granted European Protected Species Licences for Great Crested Newt within 500m of the site. In addition, there are no Great Crested Newt Class Survey Licence Returns or Great Crested Newt Pond Surveys 2017 – 2019 (for District Level Licencing) records within 500m of the site. There are no waterbodies within the site boundary or within 250m of the site (with terrestrial connectivity). In view of the absence of any waterbodies within the site, absence of suitable waterbodies with connectivity to the site and absence of records in close proximity to the site, the site is assessed as being unsuitable for supporting Great Crested Newt

Species	Legal protection	Result
		or significant populations of common amphibian species.
Reptiles	<i>Smooth snake and sand lizard</i>: Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 Schedule 2; Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedules 5; Natural Environment and Rural Communities 2006 Section 41. <i>Adder, grass snake, slow worm and common lizard</i>: Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedules 5; Natural Environment and Rural Communities 2006 Section 41.	There are no records of reptiles within 2 km of the site within the last 20 years, though Grass Snake (<i>Natrix natrix</i>) have been recorded on two occasions historically in association with Stadt Moers Park which is >1km west of the site and disconnected by residential properties and associated roads and infrastructure. Habitat within the site is of negligible suitability for reptiles and there is no terrestrial connectivity to habitats likely to support these species. Given the urban location of the site and absence of records for reptiles in the locality, the site will not support common reptiles.
Red Squirrel	Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (WCA) (amended by the	There are no records of Red Squirrel (<i>Sciurus vulgaris</i>) within 2 km the site within the last 20 years. Habitats within the site are of low suitability for supporting Red Squirrel (limited woodland / low

Species	Legal protection	Result
	Countryside & Rights of Way Act 2000)	number of trees all disconnected from other areas of suitable habitats and absence of coniferous woodland typically preferred by this species) and no evidence of the presence of this species was recorded during the field survey. In view of the existing ecological information and field survey, it is considered that Red Squirrel are unlikely to be present within the site and that the site is not of importance for this species.
Invertebrates	Some invertebrates are protected under Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 and Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). Many invertebrates are also listed as rare and most threatened species under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2006).	There are over 300 records of notable invertebrate species within 2 km of the site including butterfly, moths, dragonfly, damselfly, beetles, bees, flies and others. Woodland, scrub and unmanaged grassland habitat to the boundaries of the site may support invertebrate species including moths and butterfly but this habitat is limited in area within the site and comprised common and widespread species, so while providing a local resource, is not considered likely to be of any particular note for this group.
Invasive species	Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) Schedule 9; Environmental Protection Act 1990.	There are numerous records of non-native invasive weeds (notifiable under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981) within 2km of the site. These include the following species: • Japanese Knotweed (<i>Fallopia japonica</i>) • Himalayan Balsam (<i>Impatiens glandulifera</i>)

Species	Legal protection	Result
		• Rhododendron (<i>Rhododendron ponticum</i>) • Himalayan Cotoneaster (<i>Cotoneaster simonsii</i>) • Montbretia (<i>Crocasmia pottsii</i> x <i>aurea</i> = <i>C. x crocosmiiflora</i>) • Japanese Rose (<i>Rosa rugosa</i>) • Canadian Waterweed (<i>Elodea canadensis</i>) None of the above species were identified on site. However, Cherry Laurel is present within the woodland to the north eastern boundary. This species is not however listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
Other notable species	N/A	There are records of the following species within 2 km of the site: • Brown Hare (<i>Lepus europaeus</i>) • Hedgehog (<i>Erinaceus europaeus</i>) Habitats within the site are unsuitable for supporting Brown Hare. The site has habitat suitable for supporting Hedgehog, with woodland, scrub and unmanaged neutral grassland providing cover and foraging opportunities.
Notable Plant Species	N/A	There are small number of records of notable flora provided by Record within 2 km of the site. Species include English Bluebell (<i>Hyacinthoides non-scripta</i>) which was not recorded within the site at the time of survey. No rare or particularly notable plant species were recorded during the field survey. The survey was undertaken during the optimum period for flowering plants but does not constitute a full botanical survey.

4. Discussion

All of the works outlined below should be assumed as likely requirements for the pre-planning stage to inform a planning application, unless otherwise stated.

4.1. Designated Sites

Due to the scale of the proposed development and distance/disconnect from any statutory or non-statutory designated sites, no impacts upon such sites are anticipated because of the proposed development.

4.2. Habitats

Habitats present on site include the following:

- Buildings & Hardstanding (Built Environment – u1b5, u1b)
- Introduced Shrub h3h (48)
- Scattered Trees (Urban Trees)
- Modified Grassland - g4
- Other Neutral Grassland – g3c5,10, 17
- Broadleaved Woodland – w1g

Building & Hardstanding (Developed; sealed surface)

The Southmead Childrens Centre building is disused but previously served as a community building. The building is of limited ecological value, with the exception of the potential to support nesting birds and 'Low Potential' for supporting bat roosts.

Bat surveys undertaken in July 2024 (We Know Services) did not identify any bat roosts associated with the buildings. Very limited levels of bat activity were recorded throughout the surveys. No evidence of nesting birds has been identified during surveys.

The areas of hardstanding are of negligible ecological value.

Where works are proposed to affect either of the buildings, consideration should be given to the potential presence of nesting birds. Where possible, works should be programmed for outside of the nesting bird season (March – August inclusive) or where this is not possible, should be subject to a check for nesting birds by a suitably experienced ecologist prior to works commencing.

Introduced Shrub

These areas are small in size and comprises of a small number of common and widespread ornamental species.

As such, there are currently considered to be of limited ecological value, though they may offer limited cover and nesting habitat for birds and Hedgehogs and site level value for invertebrates.

It is recommended that any future soft landscaping plans include the inclusion of further native shrub planting, green walls, green or brown roofing and planters that contain locally native / wildlife friendly species with a focus on incorporating native species over ornamental cultivars where possible, and avoiding all species listed in Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).

Scattered Trees (Urban Trees)

There are two mature (individual) trees all located within the site boundary. Both of these appear to be in relatively good condition.

Where trees are to be removed (or retained), to enhance the biodiversity value of the site, inclusion of scattered trees, on a two for one basis, within any future soft landscaping plans for the site would be beneficial and should aim to use native species appropriate location within the site. Species for consideration would include English Oak (*Quercus robur*), Alder (*Alnus glutinosa*) and Silver Birch (*Betula pendula*).

Modified Grassland – g4

There is one large area of modified grassland and eight smaller areas of modified grassland associated with the site. These areas are currently intensively mowed and therefore lack species or structural diversity. These grassland areas are considered to be of low biodiversity value in their current condition.

Where grassland areas are to be retrained, the management regime could be altered to allow a greater diversity in sward structure and encourage retention of grasslands during period of flowering to provide a food resource for invertebrates and other wildlife.

Plug planting and seeding of some areas to include a more diverse range of species appropriate to location and soil types could also be considered.

Other Neutral Grassland – g3c5,10, 17

There is one small area of neutral grassland with occasional tall ruderal species and scrub associated. This is an area to the northern site boundary which is fenced off from the main site and therefore not managed. This provides an example of how the modified grassland could develop if not managed. Whilst this is improved in terms of structural and species diversity, there are undesirable species which are becoming dominant and require management to improve the condition of this area of grassland. As per above, plug planting and seeding of some areas to include a more diverse range of species appropriate to location and soil types could also be considered.

It is strongly recommended that this area is retained, expanded and enhanced as part of any development. This will contribute toward achieving 10%+ biodiversity net-gain as part of any proposed development. Loss of this areas would represent a negative drop in biodiversity value which would then need to be off-set as part of the development as well as then looking at other measures that could help to achieve 10% (minimum) biodiversity net-gain.

Broadleaved Woodland – w1g

There are two discrete small areas of woodland associated with the site. The first is located to the north eastern corner and is fenced off from the wider site with the second located along the western boundary with the adjoining school.

The woodland trees are reaching maturity and distinct understorey and field layers are developing.

It is strongly recommended that these areas are retained and enhanced as part of any development. This will contribute toward achieving 10%+ biodiversity net-gain as part of any proposed development. Loss of these areas would represent a negative drop in biodiversity value which would then need to be off-set as part of the development as well as then looking at other measures that could help to achieve 10% (minimum) biodiversity net-gain.

Biodiversity Metric Baseline Calculation

Using the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric, it was possible to calculate the existing biodiversity value in terms of "Biodiversity Units" of the site.

The Metric provides a score of **2.61 Habitat Units** associated with habitat present within the site currently.

The summary of results is provided below in Figure 2.

Figure 2. Headline results (baseline only)

Southmead Childrens Centre		Return to results menu		
Headline Results				
Scroll down for final results ▲				
On-site baseline	Habitat units	2.61		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.00		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	-2.61	-100.00%	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%	
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%	
On-site net gain is less than target set ▲				
Off-site baseline	Habitat units	0.00		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.00		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	0.00	0.00%	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%	
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%	
Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-2.61		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Habitat units	0.00		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-2.61		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-100.00%	Total net gain achieved is less than target set ▲	
	Hedgerow units	0.00%		
	Watercourse units	0.00%		
Trading rules satisfied?		No - Check Trading Summaries ▲		
Area created must match area lost for both onsite and offsite ▲				
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Habitat units	10.00%	2.61	2.87	2.87
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
				No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
				No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓
Input errors/rule breaks present in metric ▲				

Habitat Enhancement

Based on the score of **2.61 baseline habitat units** and proposals to develop the site (details not known at the time of writing), there is potential for biodiversity enhancement of the site post-development dependent on what is proposed for the site and consideration of biodiversity net-gain at design stage.

As an indication of what would be required to achieve 10% biodiversity net-gain (i.e.; a minimum of **2.87 habitat units post development**), via retention of existing habitats including woodland (two existing areas totalling 0.0785ha) and other neutral grassland (0.0361ha) and enhancing these areas. Further to the above, habitat creation would be required to off-set any loss of the large areas of modified grassland

and scattered trees which may be lost, with a remaining deficit of approximately -1.81 habitat units (assuming all modified grassland is lost).

By creating 0.15ha of species rich neutral grassland in place of the existing modified grassland and inclusion of eight native scattered trees, it would be possible to achieve a biodiversity net-gain of **11.3%** via a net unit change of 0.30 (please see Figure 3).

Figure 3. Headline results with indicative changes resulting through habitat retention and creation

Southmead Childrens Centre

Headline Results

Scroll down for final results ▲

Return to results menu

On-site baseline	Habitat units	2.61			
	Hedgerow units	0.00			
	Watercourse units	0.00			
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	2.90			
	Hedgerow units	0.00			
	Watercourse units	0.00			
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	0.30	11.30%		
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%		
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%		
Off-site baseline	Habitat units	0.00			
	Hedgerow units	0.00			
	Watercourse units	0.00			
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.00			
	Hedgerow units	0.00			
	Watercourse units	0.00			
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	0.00	0.00%		
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%		
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%		
Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.30			
	Hedgerow units	0.00			
	Watercourse units	0.00			
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Habitat units	0.00			
	Hedgerow units	0.00			
	Watercourse units	0.00			
FINAL RESULTS					
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.30			
	Hedgerow units	0.00			
	Watercourse units	0.00			
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	11.30%			
	Hedgerow units	0.00%			
	Watercourse units	0.00%			
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓				
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit	
Habitat units	10.00%	2.61	2.87	0.00	No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00	No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓

It should be noted that the above is indicative only as proposals for the site have not been provided at this stage. This is a baseline assessment only, with an indicative calculation of habitat creation that is considered reasonable to achieve on an urban site.

It is strongly recommended that a landscape design consultant is commissioned to consult with an ecologist on planting proposals to ensure habitats are retained, enhanced and created as part of the development that are realistic and achievable but meet the requirements of biodiversity net-gain policy.

4.3. Protected and Notable

Results of the desk study and field survey are used to determine protected species that may be of relevance to the site and the proposed development. Those that are not considered relevant to the site following the above assessment are not discussed specifically any further.

Badger

Otter

Water vole

Bats

The buildings on site possess a limited number and diversity of potential roost features (PRFs) for supporting bat roosts. Given the urban location and the extent of artificial lighting associated with the site and adjacent streets, the buildings are assessed as being of 'Low potential' for supporting bat roosts as per current professional survey guidelines (Collins, 2023).

Bat Surveys of the buildings were undertaken in July 2024 (We Know Services, 2024). No roosts were identified in association with the site and only very limited activity was recorded throughout the survey, with no particularly notable species recorded. The low levels of activity recorded and absence of any roosts being recorded during the survey may be partly as a result of the high levels of artificial lighting (security lighting) associated with the site.

In order to enhance the site for bats in the long-term, it is recommended that consideration is given to the use of bat bricks or bat boxes upon existing/retained buildings or trees within the woodland areas (which should be retained). Bat bricks/boxes would need to be installed at a height of >4m, with a southerly aspect, and be unobstructed by lighting, windows or other features. This is to enhance the site by providing potential roost features for bats in the long term. Chillon Woodstone Bat boxes (or similar) (<https://www.wildcare.co.uk/vivara-pro-chillon-woodstone-11245.html>) are hardwearing and can be mounted on walls or in trees.

Where possible any proposed lighting scheme associated with the future development of the site should be designed to ensure that it is sensitive to the presence of wildlife, including bats foraging and commuting through the site. This would include low-level lighting or similar solutions to prevent artificial light levels from deterring bats from the site (please see *Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night' ILP Guidance Note (2023)* for further information).

Birds

The site contains limited habitat that is likely to support nesting birds (woodland, ornamental planting, trees and buildings). The site is not of any value to ground nesting species due to the urban location of the site.

The above habitats are highly likely to support nesting birds during the breeding season (March – August).

It is recommended that the woodland areas area retained. Where possible, scrub and grassland to the north of the site should also be retained and enhanced (as per recommendations made in the previous section of this report).

It is recommended that any works (including maintenance or enhancement) likely to affect the woodland, ornamental shrubs, individual trees and buildings are scheduled for outside of the breeding period (ideally September – February) to avoid any potential conflicts with nesting birds (which are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981). Where this is not possible, these features should be subject to a check for nesting birds by a suitably experienced ecologist prior to works commencing.

Where possible, Bird Boxes should be considered to be incorporated into the site. In particular, nest boxes / bricks designed to accommodate House Sparrow, House Martin (*Delichon urbica*), Swallow (*Hirundo rustica*) and Swift (*Apus apus*) would be particularly beneficial.

Other Species

Though the site is not considered to be of value for any other protected species, though the site contains habitat suitable for supporting Hedgehogs (primarily woodland, unmanaged neutral grassland and ornamental shrub planting).

In view of this, care should be taken when vegetation clearance is undertaken to ensure hedgehogs are not harmed and nests are not disturbed.

Depending on the development proposals, installation of 'Hedgehog highways' and nest boxes should be considered within the site, specifically in proximity to areas of shrub habitat.

4.4. Enhancements

Together with the aforementioned recommendations, it may be possible to make other enhancements to the site where consideration can be given to such as the addition of wildlife friendly ornamental planting (nectar/pollen sources) as part of soft landscaping proposals that will be required in order to achieve a minimum of 10% biodiversity net-gain.

5. Conclusion

In view of the results of the desk and field-based assessment of the site, the site is considered to be of relatively low ecological value in the local context and loss of biodiversity as a result of the proposed development is limited and can be mitigated for and enhanced (in line with the requirements of biodiversity net-gain) as part of the proposed development. Retention, enhancement and expansion of the woodland areas identified is strongly recommended to this end.

The building has been assessed as having 'low potential' for supporting bat roosts and following a bat emergence survey carried out in July 2024 (We Know Services, 2024), no bat roosts were identified during the survey and only very limited bat activity was recorded.

The site is likely to support nesting birds as such this will require further consideration as part of the planning application (see above recommendations) and during the works in order to comply with planning policy and legislative requirements.

Appropriate and proportionate mitigation and enhancement (achieving a minimum of 10% biodiversity net-gain) should be considered at the design stage to ensure the LPA can fully assess any planning application for the site, and are aware of measures being taken to avoid an overall adverse impact and aims put in place to maintain and enhance the biodiversity value of the site in the long-term as part of future development proposals

For the development to proceed in line with UK legislation and Planning Policy relating to biodiversity, the recommendations contained within this report should be considered and adopted as necessary. Where appropriate measures as recommended in the report are adopted, the development will be able to proceed having considered and addressed the necessary legislation and both local and national policy relating to biodiversity conservation.

6. PLANNING POLICY AND LEGISLATION

National Planning Policy Framework

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) December 2023, is a revised update to previous versions and is a policy framework document which provide a range of important principles. Paragraph 180 of the NPPF states that decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural local environment by:

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

Paragraph 181 goes on to state:

‘... take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries.’

With respect to protection of habitats and biodiversity, paragraph 185 states development plans should:

- a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and
- b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity.

When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should aim to conserve and enhance biodiversity by applying the following principles (paragraph 186):

‘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.’

6.1. Local Planning Policy

The table below details the policies within Knowsley Local Plan Core Strategy (Adopted January 2016) which are relevant to the ecological features present on site.

Policy	Description
Policy CS8 Green Infrastructure	Maintenance and Enhancement of Knowsley's Existing Green Infrastructure: 1) Knowsley's existing Green Infrastructure and its beneficial functions will be protected, managed and/or enhanced, primarily to: a) Ensure more attractive and cleaner residential neighbourhoods; b) Sustain and promote biodiversity (including designated sites, priority habitats and protected and endangered species) in accordance with importance and contribution to ecological networks; c) Preserve the character and function of historic environments and valued landscapes; d) Mitigate the effects of climate change and flood risk; e) Mitigate air, water and noise pollution; f) Provide local opportunities for sport, recreation and allotments; and g) Provide sustainable transport linkages between residential neighbourhoods and easy access to employment and services. 2) To achieve the above, planning powers and other interventions will be used to: a) Protect and enhance strategically important areas of greenspace; b) Ensure an appropriate quantity and improved quality of locally important open spaces, including outdoor sports provision (and ancillary facilities of appropriate scale); c) Promote effective movement of wildlife through a network of strategic green links, by protecting, maintaining and improving existing and new open spaces, water courses (including water quality) and biodiversity assets; d) Protect, enhance and/or introduce biodiversity into existing areas of Green Infrastructure, through integration into the design of new development and public realm projects; e) Improve accessibility for communities to greenspace offering leisure and recreation opportunities; f) Protect and where possible improve green paths and cycleways linking residential areas, existing strategic areas of greenspace, employment locations, local community services and leisure facilities; g) Work in partnership with other districts and relevant bodies at a landscape scale to minimise the impact of development upon Knowsley's existing biodiversity and geological assets, and sustain the protection afforded to internationally important sites, including supporting habitat, for biodiversity outside of the borough; and h) Deliver new integrated and functional Green Infrastructure that helps to mitigate and adapt to climate change, such as sustainable drainage systems, carbon capture and storage, soft landscaping and green roofs. Strategic Green Links 4) Knowsley's strategically important green links are:

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	a) Alt Corridor (Huyton) – stretching from Huyton Village through South Alt Park, Alt Park, Alt Meadows and into Stockbridge Village; b) Valley Corridor (Kirkby) – stretching through Valley Meadow, St. Chad's Park, Millbrook Park, Millennium Green and Mill Dam; c) Whiston to Cronton Corridor – stretching through Cronton, Stadt Moers Park and Whiston Greenway; d) Halewood Triangle – Halewood Park linkage with the Trans-Pennine Trail and to the national cycle network; e) M57 Green Belt Corridor; and f) Knowsley Hall Estate – including Knowsley Safari Park and Local Wildlife Sites. Approach to Green Infrastructure and New Development 6) New development must be served by Green Infrastructure to meet the needs of residents and the local environment, in a manner which will: a) Contribute to the creation of a high-quality residential environment; b) Provide access to high quality open space for leisure and recreational purposes; c) Seek to protect, maintain and where possible enhance biodiversity within and around new developments according to their designation and significance to provide space for nature; and d) Provide adequate mitigation and/or, as a last resort, compensation for Green Infrastructure or biodiversity loss, in circumstances where harm resulting from the development is otherwise unavoidable.
Policy CS2 Development Principles	Principle 4: Recognise environmental limits, protect and enhance environmental assets, enhance local character and promote quality of place by: (h) Maintaining or enhancing the quantity and quality of biodiversity and habitats, including potential impacts on nationally and internationally important sites for biodiversity;

6.2. Relevant Legislation

Habitats Directive
The Council Directive 92/43/EEC on the Conservation of Natural Habitats and of Wild Fauna and Flora, or the 'Habitats Directive', is a European Union directive adopted in 1992 in response to the Bern Convention. Its aims are to protect approximately 220 habitats and 1,000 species listed in its several Annexes. In the UK, the Habitats Directive is transposed into national law via the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) in England and Wales, and via the Conservation (Natural Habitats, etc.) Regulations (Northern Ireland) 1995 (as amended) in Northern Ireland.
Birds Directive
The EC Directive on the Conservation of Wild Birds (79/409/EEC) or 'Birds Directive' was introduced to achieve favourable conservation status of all wild bird species across their distribution range. In this context, the most important provision is the identification and classification of Special Protection Areas (SPAs) for rare or vulnerable species listed in Annex 1 of the Directive, as well as for all regularly occurring migratory species, paying particular attention to the protection of wetlands of international importance.
Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended)
Regulations place a duty on the Secretary of State to propose a list of sites which are important for either habitats or species (listed in Annexes I or II of the Habitats Directive respectively) to the European Commission. These sites, if ratified by Ministers, are then designated as Special Protection Areas (SPAs) within six years. Public bodies must also help preserve, maintain and re-establish habitats for wild birds. The 2018 amendments mainly related to the impact of the <i>People Over Wind</i> decision and some implications arising for neighbourhood plan development and a range of other planning tools including Local Development Orders and Permission in Principle – see here for full details: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/uksi/2018/1307/note/made The 2019 amendments related to the EU exit. Most of these changes involved transferring functions from the European Commission to the appropriate authorities in England and Wales. All other processes or terms in the 2017 Regulations remain unchanged and existing guidance is still relevant. The obligations of a competent authority in the 2017 Regulations for the protection of sites or species do not change.– see here for full details: https://www.legislation.gov.uk/ukdsi/2019/9780111176573 The Regulations make it an offence to deliberately capture, kill, disturb or trade in the animals listed in Schedule 2, or pick, uproot, destroy, or trade in the plants listed in Schedule 5.
Wildlife & Countryside Act 1981 (as amended)
This is the principal mechanism for the legislative protection of wildlife in the UK. This legislation is the chief means by which the 'Bern Convention' and the Birds Directive are implemented in the UK. Since it was first introduced, the Act has been amended several times. The Act makes it an offence to (with exception to species listed in Schedule 2) intentionally: • kill, injure, or take any wild bird; • take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird while that nest is in use; or • take or destroy an egg of any wild bird. Or to intentionally do the following to a wild bird listed in Schedule 1: • disturbs any wild bird while it is building a nest or is in, on or near a nest containing eggs or young; or • disturbs dependent young of such a bird.

In addition, the Act makes it an offence (subject to exceptions) to:

- intentionally or recklessly kill, injure or take any wild animal listed on Schedule 5;
- interfere with places used for shelter or protection, or intentionally disturbing animals occupying such places; and
- The Act also prohibits certain methods of killing, injuring, or taking wild animals.

Finally, the Act also makes it an offence (subject to exceptions) to: intentionally pick, uproot or destroy any wild plant listed in Schedule 8, or any seed or spore attached to any such wild plant; unless an authorised person, intentionally uproot any wild plant not included in Schedule 8; or sell, offer or expose for sale, or possess (for the purposes of trade), any live or dead wild plant included in Schedule 8, or any part of, or anything derived from, such a plant.

Following all amendments to the Act, Schedule 5 ‘Animals which are Protected’ contains a total of 154 species of animal, including several mammals, reptiles, amphibians, fish and invertebrates. Schedule 8 ‘Plants which are Protected’ of the Act, contains 185 species, including higher plants, bryophytes and fungi and lichens. A comprehensive and up-to-date list of these species can be obtained from the JNCC website.

Part 14 of the Act makes unlawful to plant or otherwise cause to grow in the wild any plant which is listed in Part II of Schedule 9.

It is recommended that plant material of these species is disposed of as bio-hazardous waste, and these plants should not be used in planting schemes.

Protection of Badgers Act 1992

The Act imposes a classification of soil and other waste containing viable propagules of invasive non-native plant species as controlled waste. This has been applied to Japanese Knotweed *Reynoutria japonica*, with the result that waste containing this species must be disposed of in accordance with the duty of care set out in section 34 of the Act.

Protection of Badgers Act 1992

The main legislation protecting badgers in England and Wales is the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (the 1992 Act). Under the 1992 Act it is an offence to: wilfully kill, injure, take or attempt to kill, injure or take a badger; dig for a badger; interfere with a badger sett by, damaging a sett or any part thereof, destroying a sett, obstructing access to a sett, causing a dog to enter a sett or disturbing a badger while occupying a sett.

The 1992 Act defines a badger sett as: “any structure or place which displays signs indicating current use by a badger”.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006

Section 41 (S41) of this Act requires the Secretary of State to publish a list (in consultation with Natural England) of Habitats and Species which are of Principal Importance for the conservation of biodiversity in England. The S41 list is used to guide decision-makers such as public bodies including local and regional authorities, in implementing their duty under Section 40 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006, to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity in England, when carrying out their normal (e.g. planning) functions. The S41 list includes 65 Habitats of Principal Importance and 1,150 Species of Principal Importance.

Hedgerow Regulations 1997

The Hedgerow Regulations were made under Section 97 of the Environment Act 1995 and came into force in 1997. They introduced new arrangements for local planning authorities in England and Wales to protect important hedgerows in the countryside, by controlling their removal through a system of notification. Important hedgerows are defined by complex assessment criteria, which draw on biodiversity features, historical context and the landscape value of the hedgerow.

Birds of Conservation Concern

This is a review of the status of all birds occurring regularly in the United Kingdom. It is regularly updated and is prepared by leading bird conservation organisations, including the British Trust for

Ornithology (BTO), Joint Nature Conservation Committee (JNCC) and The Royal Society for the Protection of Birds (RSPB).

The latest report was produced in 2015 (Eaton *et al*, 2015) and identified 67 red list species, 96 amber species, and 81 green species. The criteria are complex, but generally:

Red list species are those that have shown a decline of the breeding population, non-breeding population or breeding range of more than 50% in the last 25 years.

Amber list species are those that have shown a decline of the breeding population, non-breeding population or breeding range of between 25% and 50% in the last 25 years. Species that have a UK breeding population of less than 300 or a non-breeding population of less than 900 individuals are also included, together with those whose 50% of the population is localised in 10 sites or fewer and those whose 20% of the European population is found in the UK.

Green list species are all regularly occurring species that do not qualify under any of the red or amber criteria are green listed.

Global IUCN Red List

The International Union for Conservation of Nature (IUCN) Threatened Species was devised to provide a list of those species that are most at risk of becoming extinct globally. It provides taxonomic, conservation status and distribution information about threatened taxa around the globe.

The system catalogues threatened species into groups of varying levels of threat, which are: Extinct (EX), Extinct in the Wild (EW), Critically Endangered (CE), Endangered (EN), Vulnerable (VU), Near Threatened (NT), Least Concern (LC), Data Deficient (DD), Not Evaluated (NE). Criteria for designation into each of the categories is complex, and consider several principles.

The Environment Act 2021

The Environment Bill has now been entered into legislation becoming The Environment Act 2021, and provides a tool to implement changes in England across environmental sectors including air quality, biodiversity, water, and waste reduction and resource efficiency. The Act includes a target to halt the decline of nature by 2030, and mandates [Biodiversity Net Gain](#) for developments. The Act is described as:

“A Bill to make provision about targets, plans and policies for improving the natural environment; for statements and reports about environmental protection; for the Office for Environmental Protection; about waste and resource efficiency; about air quality; for the recall of products that fail to meet environmental standards; about water; about nature and biodiversity; for conservation covenants; about the regulation of chemicals; and for connected purposes”.

Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP)

Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP) identify habitat and species conservation priorities at a local level (typically at the County level), and are usually drawn up by a consortium of local Government organisations and conservation charities.

Some LBAP’s may also include Habitat Action Plans (HAP) and/or Species Action Plans (SAP), which are used to guide and inform the local decision making process.

Wild Mammals (Protection) Act 1996

This Act offers protects a form of protection to all wild species of mammals, irrespective of other legislation, and focussed on animal welfare, rather than conservation.

Unless covered by one of the exceptions, a person is guilty of an offence if he mutilates, kicks, beats, nails or otherwise impales, stabs, burns, stones, crushes, drowns, drags or asphyxiates any wild mammal with intent to inflict unnecessary suffering.

It’s application is typically restricted to preventing deliberate harm to wildlife (in general) during construction works etc.

7. References

1. BS 42020:2013 Biodiversity - Code of Practice for Planning and Development.
2. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Technical Guidance Series. www.cieem.net.
3. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2015). Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing. Technical Guidance Series. www.cieem.net.
4. Collins, J (ed). (2023). Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists - Good Practice Guidelines, 4th edition. Bat Conservation Trust.
5. DEFRA (2023) Statutory Defra Metric v4.0
6. ILP & BCT (2023) Guidance Note 08/23: Bats and Artificial Lighting at Night
7. Merseyside Biobank (2024) Biodiversity Information Report
8. Multi-Agency Geographic Information Centre:
<https://magic.defra.gov.uk/MagicMap.aspx>
9. Stace. C. (2010). *New British Flora of the British Isles*. 2nd Edition. Cambridge University Press.
10. UKHab Ltd (2023) UK Classification Version 2.0
11. We Know Services (2024) Bat Survey report - Southmead Childrens Centre, Whiston.

Appendix I: Site Location Plan



Image courtesy of Ordnance Survey accessed via Bing Maps ©Microsoft 2021

Appendix 2: Phase I Habitat Plan

SEE NEXT PAGE

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Appendix 3: Site Photos

	
Small area of woodland to western boundary of Southmead Childrens Centre.	Modified Grassland (playing field) to west of Southmead Childrens Centre
	
Developed land/sealed surface carpark to west of main buildings.	Woodland to the north east corner of the site.
	
Interior of woodland to north east corner of the site	Neutral grassland to northern site boundary

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Individual tree (birch) to south of buildings.	Individual tree (rowan) to the east of the building
	
South easter aspect of the buildings	Northern aspect of the building
	
Temporary building to the north west of the buildings	Southern aspect of the building
	
Western aspect and hardstanding	South western aspect of building

Appendix 4: Frame of Reference for Geographical Value

International and European value	Ramsar Sites, Special Protection Areas, Biosphere Reserves, Special Areas of Conservation. Sites supporting populations of internationally important species. Any regularly occurring population of an internationally important species, which is threatened or rare in the UK. i.e. it is a UK Red Data Book species or listed as occurring in 15 or fewer 10km squares in the UK (categories 1 and 2 in the UK BAP) or of uncertain conservation status or of global conservation concern in the UK BAP. A regularly occurring, nationally significant population/number of any internationally important species.
National value	SSSIs or non-designated Sites meeting SSSI selection criteria, NNRs, Marine Nature Reserves, NCR Grade 1 Sites. Sites containing viable areas of key habitats identified in the UK Biodiversity Action Plan. Any regularly occurring population of a nationally important species which is threatened or rare in the region or county (see local BAP). A regularly occurring, regionally or county significant population/number of any nationally important species.
Regional value	Sites containing viable areas of threatened habitats listed in a Regional BAP (or some Natural Areas), comfortably exceeding SINC criteria, but not exceeding SSSI criteria. Any regularly occurring, locally significant population of a species listed as being nationally scarce which occurs in 16-100 10km squares in the UK or in a Regional BAP or relevant Natural Area on account of its regional rarity or localisation; A regularly occurring, locally significant number of a regionally important species.
County / Metropolitan	Sites meeting the criteria for county or metropolitan designation (SINC, CWS, etc.). Ancient semi-natural woodland, LNRs or viable areas of key habitat types listed in county BAPs/Natural Areas. Any regularly occurring, locally significant population of a species which is listed in a County/Metropolitan “red data book” or BAP on account of its regional rarity or localisation;

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	A regularly occurring, locally significant number of a County/Metropolitan important species.
Local	Undesignated Sites or features considered to appreciably enrich the habitat resource in the District or Borough or within a zone of influence. A population of a species that is listed in a District/Borough BAP because of its rarity in the locality or in the relevant Natural Area profile because of its regional rarity or localisation; A regularly occurring, locally significant number of a District / Borough important species during a critical phase of its life cycle.

Appendix 5: Local record centre data (summary report).

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Appendix 6: Condition assessment sheets

SEE FOLLOWING PAGES

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Condition Sheet: INDIVIDUAL TREES Habitat Type													
Habitat Types													
Individual trees – Urban trees Individual trees – Rural trees Complete a condition sheet for each tree or block of trees. <i>Please see the separate Line of trees condition sheet for a line of <u>rural</u> trees. You should only use the Line of trees condition assessment and record that habitat type in <u>rural</u> locations.</i>													
Habitat Description													
There are a 10 individual trees within a group located to the southern site boundary. These include London Plane (Platanus x hispanica), Birch (Betula sp) and Oak (Quercus sp.) and Ash (Fraxinus excelsior) trees. All of these appear to be in relatively poor condition owing to lack of management and ivy cladding being present.													
Individual trees (description applied to the urban or rural environment): Young trees over 7.5 cm in diameter at breast height whose canopies are not touching.													
Urban Perimeter / Linear Blocks and Groups (description applied to the urban environment only): Groups or stands of trees (size requirement as defined above) within and around the perimeter of urban land. This includes those along urban streets, highways, railways and canals, and also former field boundary trees incorporated into developments. Canopies should predominantly overlap continuously. Groups of urban trees that don't match the descriptions for woodland may be assessed within this category.													
On-site or off-site, site name and location	On-site	Survey date and Surveyor name	July 2024 R.Nicholson										
		Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	PEA / UKHabs survey										
Limitations (if applicable)	n/a	Habitat parcel reference											
	Grid reference												
Condition Assessment Criteria													
	Criterion passed (Yes or No)											Notes (such as justification)	
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).						Yes					Above 70% native	
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).						Yes					Individual tree	
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .						Yes					yes mature	
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.						Yes					No obvious signs of vandalism or management recently	
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.						Yes					Yes in most specimens to a small degree.	
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.						Yes					All trees are above introduced mod grassland.	
Number of criteria passed							6						
Condition Assessment Result (out of 6 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/√											
Passes 5 or 6 criteria	Good (3)						x						
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)												
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)												
Note that 'Fairly Good and Fairly Poor' condition categories are not available for this broad habitat type.													
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score²													
n/a at this stage													
Footnotes													
Footnote 1 - See gov.uk standing advice on ancient and veteran trees. Available from: Keepers of time: ancient and native woodland and trees policy in England (publishing.service.gov.uk) and: Ancient woodland, ancient trees and veteran trees: advice for making planning decisions - GOV.UK (www.gov.uk)													
Footnote 2 - Enhancement of this habitat type is only possible by improving the habitat so that it meets all Criteria B, D and F. It is not possible or appropriate to enhance individual tree/s through meeting just one or two of those Criteria, nor by meeting Criteria A, C or E.													

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Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)			
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type			
Grassland - Modified grassland			
On-site or off-site, site name and location	On site	Survey date and Surveyor name	July 2024 R.Nicholson
Limitations (if applicable)	n/a	Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	PEA/UKHabs survey
Grid reference		Habitat parcel reference	Modified Grassland g4
Habitat Description There is one large area of modified grassland and eight smaller areas of modified grassland associated with the site. These grasslands are characterised by species including Perennial Rye Grass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>), Annual Meadow Grass (<i>Poa annua</i>), and Dandelion (<i>Taraxacum</i> agg), White Clover (<i>Trifolium repens</i>) and Broadleaved Plantain (<i>Plantago major</i>) and are connected only to two small areas of woodland and two urban trees, but are otherwise surrounded by developed land (buildings and hardstanding).			
ukhab – UK Habitat Classification			
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote 1). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition. Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m ² (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.	No	only 3 vascular plants visible
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	No	uniform
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Yes	No scrub
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	Yes	No evidence of damage
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	Yes	No notable bareground
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Yes	No Bracken
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	Yes	No INNS
Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)			No
Number of criteria passed			5
Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/✓	
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)		
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate (2)		
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)	Poor (1)	x	
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score			
N/A at this stage			
Footnotes			
Footnote 1 – Creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i> , spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i> , curled dock <i>Rumex crispus</i> , broad-leaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i> , common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i> , creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i> , greater plantain <i>Plantago major</i> , white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> and cow parsley <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i> .			
Footnote 2 – For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing establishment of new species, or localised patches where not exceeding 10% cover.			
Footnote 3 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, using professional judgement.			
Footnote 4 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).			

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Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (medium, high and very high distinctiveness)			
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Types			
Grassland - Lowland calcareous grassland			
Grassland - Lowland dry acid grassland			
Grassland - Lowland meadows			
Grassland - Other lowland acid grassland			
Grassland - Other neutral grassland			
Grassland - Tall herb communities (H6430) [Not to be confused with the Tall forbs secondary code – see UKHab guidance for details.]			
Grassland - Upland acid grassland			
Grassland - Upland calcareous grassland			
Grassland - Upland hay meadows			
Sparsely vegetated land - Calaminarian grassland			
On-site or off-site, site name and location	On site. To northern site boundary.	Survey date and Surveyor name	5th July 2024
Limitations (if applicable)	Survey from behind fenceline	Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	PEA/UKHabs survey
Grid reference		Habitat parcel reference	Other Neutral Grassland – g3c5,10, 17
Habitat Description There is one small area of neutral grassland with occasional tall ruderal species and scrub associated. This is an area to the northern site boundary which is fenced off from the main site and therefore not managed. The grassland is rank and comprises of rough, tussock forming species such as Cocksfoot, Yorkshire Fog, False Oat Grass and tall ruderal species including Greater Willowherb (<i>Epilobium hirsutum</i>), Muzwort (<i>Artemisia vulgaris</i>), Broadleaved Dock (<i>Rumex obtusifolius</i>). ukhab – UK Habitat Classification			
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)	Notes (such as justification)
A	The parcel represents a good example of its habitat type, with a consistently high proportion of characteristic indicator species present relevant to the specific habitat type (and relative to Footnote 3 suboptimal species which may be listed in the UKHab description). ¹ Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	NO	suboptimal species present in high frequency
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for insects, birds and small mammals to live and breed.	yes	varied sward height as unmanaged.
C	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 5%, including localised areas, for example, rabbit warrens ² .	Yes	no bare ground
D	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20% and cover of scrub (including bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg.) is less than 5%.	No	Bramble and other scrub present > 5%
E	Combined cover of species indicative of suboptimal condition ³ and physical damage (such as excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, damaging levels of access, or any other damaging management activities) accounts for less than 5% of total area. If any invasive non-native plant species ⁴ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁵) are present, this criterion is automatically failed.	No	suboptimal species present in high frequency >5% of sward.
Additional Criterion - must be assessed for all non-acid grassland types			
F	There are 10 or more vascular plant species per m ² present, including forbs that are characteristic of the habitat type (species referenced in Footnote 3 and 5 cannot contribute towards this count). Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Good condition for non-acid grassland types only.	No	Not species rich and dominated by sub-opt species.
Essential criterion for Good condition achieved (for non-acid grassland) (Yes or No)		No	
Number of criteria passed		2	
Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x1✓	
Acid grassland types (Result out of 5 criteria)			
Passes 5 criteria	Good (3)		
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)		
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)		
Non-acid grassland types (Result out of 6 criteria)			
Passes 5 or 6 criteria, including essential criterion A and additional criterion F.	Good (3)		
Passes 3 - 5 criteria, including essential criterion A.	Moderate (2)		
Passes 2 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 3 or 4 criteria excluding criterion A and F.	Poor (1)	x	
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score			
Removal/reduction of sub-optimal species.			
Notes			
Footnote 1 - Professional judgement should be used alongside the UKHab description. Footnote 2 – For example, this could include small, scattered areas of bare ground allowing for plant colonisation, or localised patches not exceeding 5% cover. Footnote 3 - Species indicative of suboptimal condition for this habitat type include: creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i> , spear thistle <i>Cirsium vulgare</i> , curled dock <i>Rumex crispus</i> , broad-leaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i> , common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i> , creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i> , greater plantain <i>Plantago major</i> , white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> and cow parsley <i>Anthriscus sylvestris</i> . There may be additional relevant species local to the region and its site. Footnote 4 – Assess this for each distinct habitat parcel. If the distribution of invasive non-native species varies across the habitat, split into parcels accordingly, applying a buffer zone around the invasive non-native species with a size relative to its risk of spread into adjacent habitat, by applying professional judgement. Footnote 5 – Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).			

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Condition Sheet: WOODLAND Habitat Type					
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Types					
Woodland and forest - Lowland beech and yew woodland					
Woodland and forest - Lowland mixed deciduous woodland					
Woodland and forest - Native pine woodlands					
Woodland and forest - Other coniferous woodland					
Woodland and forest - Other Scot's pine woodland					
Woodland and forest - Other woodland; broadleaved					
Woodland and forest - Other woodland; mixed					
Woodland and forest - Upland birchwoods					
Woodland and forest - Upland mixed ashwoods					
Woodland and forest - Upland oakwood					
Woodland and forest - Wet woodland					
Habitat Description					
There are two discrete small areas of woodland associated with the site.					
The first is located to the north eastern corner and is fenced off from the wider site. This appears to have been planted as a 'nature area' for the children using the site historically. The woodland trees are reaching maturity and distinct understorey and field layers are developing.					
There is a dense stand of Common Dogwood to the eastern most extent of this area.					
ukhab - UK Habitat Classification					
This condition sheet is based on the England Woodland Biodiversity Group (EWBG) Woodland Condition Survey Method, available here: Woodland Wildlife Toolkit (sylva.org.uk)					
IMPORTANT: This biodiversity metric woodland condition assessment must be used to assess woodland being input into the biodiversity metric. The outputs of this condition assessment are not equivalent to, nor are they comparable with the scores from the EWBG condition assessment, because the EWBG assessment has been adapted for the biodiversity metric, including the removal of EWBG Indicator 7 (Proportion of favourable land cover around woodland) and Indicator 14 (Size of woodland), and minor changes to other indicators.					
On-site or off-site, site name and location	On site	Survey date and Surveyor name	5th July 2024. R.Nicholson		
Limitations (if applicable)		Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	PEA Southmead Childrens Centre		
Grid reference		Habitat parcel reference	Broadleaved Woodland – w1g		
Condition Assessment Criteria					
Indicator	Good (3 points)	Moderate (2 points)	Poor (1 point)	Score per indicator	Notes (such as justification)
A Age distribution of trees	Three age-classes ¹ present.	Two age-classes ¹ present.	One age-class ¹ present.	2	Even aged plantation
B Wild, domestic and feral herbivore damage	No significant browsing damage evident in woodland ² .	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in less than 40% of whole woodland ² .	Evidence of significant browsing pressure is present in 40% or more of whole woodland ² .	3	no evidence
C Invasive plant species	No invasive species ³ present in woodland.	Rhododendron <i>Rhododendron ponticum</i> or cherry laurel <i>Prunus laurocerasus</i> not present, and other invasive species ³ <10% cover.	Rhododendron or cherry laurel present, or other invasive species ³ ≥10% cover.	1	Cherry Laurel present
D Number of native tree species	Five or more native tree or shrub species ⁴ found across woodland parcel.	Three to four native tree or shrub species ⁴ found across woodland parcel.	Two or less native tree or shrub species ⁴ across woodland parcel.	3	more than 3 native species present
E Cover of native tree and shrub species	>80% of canopy trees and >90% of understorey shrubs are native ⁵ .	50 - 80% of canopy trees and 50 - 80% of understorey shrubs are native ⁵ .	<50% of canopy trees and <50% of understorey shrubs are native ⁵ .	3	80% plus are native species
F Open space within woodland	10 - 20% of woodland has areas of temporary open space ⁶ . Unless woodland is <10ha, in which case 0 - 20% temporary open space is permitted ⁷ .	21 - 40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space ⁶ .	<10% or >40% of woodland has areas of temporary open space ⁶ . But if woodland <10ha has <10% temporary open space, please see Good category ⁷ .	1	minimal open space within woodland
G Woodland regeneration	All three classes present in woodland ⁸ ; trees 4 - 7 cm Diameter at Breast Height (DBH), saplings and seedlings or advanced coppice regrowth.	One or two classes only present in woodland ⁸ .	No classes or coppice regrowth present in woodland ⁸ .	3	mature, saplings and nat regen present.
H Tree health	Tree mortality 10% or less, no pests or diseases and no crown dieback ⁹ .	11% to 25% tree mortality and or crown dieback or low-risk pest or disease present ⁹ .	Greater than 25% tree mortality and or any high-risk pest or disease present ⁹ .	3	no evidence of dieback or similar.
I Vegetation and ground flora	Recognisable NVC plant community ¹⁰ at ground layer present, strongly characterised by ancient woodland flora specialists.	Recognisable woodland NVC plant community ¹⁰ at ground layer present.	No recognisable woodland NVC plant community ¹⁰ at ground layer present.	1	Plantation woodland with no recognisable NVC community.
J Woodland vertical structure	Three or more storeys across all survey plots, or a complex woodland ¹¹ .	Two storeys across all survey plots ¹¹ .	One or less storey across all survey plots ¹¹ .	1	
K Veteran trees	Two or more veteran trees ¹² per hectare.	One veteran tree ¹² per hectare.	No veteran trees ¹² present in woodland.	2	one veteran tree present in western woodland.
L Amount of deadwood	50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, branch stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities ¹³ .	Between 25% and 50% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities ¹³ .	Less than 25% of all survey plots within the woodland parcel have deadwood, such as standing and fallen deadwood, large dead branches and or stems, stubs and stumps, or an abundance of small cavities ¹³ .	1	minimal deadwood present.
M Woodland disturbance	No nutrient enrichment or damaged ground evident ¹⁴ .	Less than 1 hectare in total of nutrient enrichment across woodland area, and or less than 20% of woodland area has damaged ground ¹⁴ .	1 hectare or more of nutrient enrichment, and or 20% or more of woodland area has damaged ground ¹⁴ .	1	
Total Score (out of a possible 39)				25	
Condition Assessment Result			Condition Assessment Score		Result Achieved
Total score >32 (33 to 39)			Good (3)		1
Total score 26 to 32			Moderate (2)		
Total score <26 (13 to 25)			Poor (1)		
Suggested enhancement interventions to improve condition score					
Improve plant community in woodland to recognisable NVC					