



THE
ENVIRONMENT
PARTNERSHIP



SYMMETRY PARK MERSEYSIDE

WIDNES

RESERVED MATTERS 1 - BIODIVERSITY MITIGATION STRATEGY

TEP
Genesis Centre
Birchwood Science Park
Warrington
WA3 7BH

Tel: 01925 844004
Email: tep@tep.uk.com
www.tep.uk.com

Offices in Warrington, Market Harborough, Gateshead, London and Cornwall

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Author	Anne Pritchard
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Checked	Lynsey Crellin
Approved	Lynsey Crellin

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Illustrative Masterplan (21351_P0602[S])
G7367.045 Phase 1 Habitat Survey Reserved Matters Application
Figure 8.14 Bat Tree Location Plan

1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 The Environment Partnership (TEP) were commissioned by Tritax Symmetry Merseyside 1 Ltd., in November 2018, to complete a range of ecological works on land south of the M62, Widnes known as Symmetry Park Merseyside (hereafter referred to as 'the site').
- 1.2 The proposals for the site are divided between approximately 28.57ha for B8 uses and 25.39ha proposed for use as a Country Park.
- 1.3 A suite of ecological surveys and reports were completed in 2018-2020 to inform the ecological impact assessment, including mitigation recommendations, for the planning application. This Biodiversity Mitigation Strategy (BMS) details the Habitat Protection Scheme, Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statements (RAMMS) for a range of fauna, and a Bluebell Method Statement which are to be implemented for the Phase 2 Reserved Matters application to ensure that habitats and species are protected during site clearance.
- 1.4 It should be noted that this method statement is only applicable for the Phase 2 Reserved Matters application as shown in the Location Plan (21351_P0601[B]) and Illustrative Masterplan (21351_P0602[S]) (see Drawings).
- 1.5 This document must be strictly adhered to. In the event that any protected species is identified, all works on the site must cease immediately and the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) is to be contacted.
- 1.6 The overall site is located in Widnes, Prescott (approximate central grid reference SJ4750 8930) immediately south of the M62 motorway and east of Junction 6 and the M57 motorway (Figure 1). The site is also bounded to the east by Fox's Bank Lane and to the south by the A5080 (Cronton Road).
- 1.7 The wider landscape includes urban residential and industrial development associated with the wider Knowsley area to the north and west. The site has connectivity to rural habitats to the south and east, which are dominated by arable land with some areas of scrub, woodland, scattered trees, ponds and connecting boundary features including hedgerows and ditches.
- 1.8 Former arable habitat, semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, plantation broad-leaved woodland, scrub/tree regeneration over grassland are dominant habitats within the site. A variety of habitats including marshy grassland, swamp, scrub, reed and bare ground are also present. The topography of the site is undulating in places.

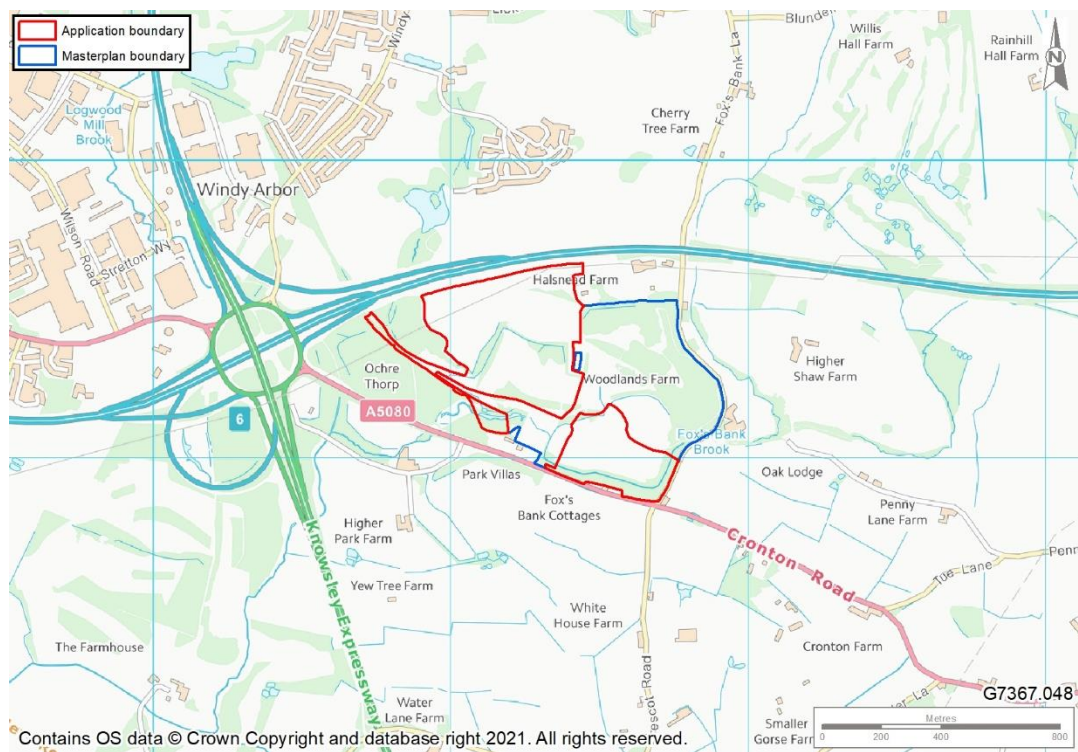


Figure 1: Site location and local context

2.0 Habitat Protection Scheme

- 2.1 The following habitats are present within the Reserved Matters application area of the site (Drawing G7367.045 Phase 1 Habitat Survey Reserved Matters Application (see Drawings)):
- Semi-improved neutral grassland;
 - Modified neutral grassland¹;
 - Marshy grassland;
 - Poor semi-improved grassland;
 - Mosaic habitat including scrub and tree regeneration with marshy grassland;
 - Mosaic habitat including scrub and tree regeneration with neutral grassland;
 - Mosaic of habitat including scrub and tree regeneration with modified grassland and reeds;
 - Swamp;
 - Swamp and dense scrub;
 - Plantation broad-leaved woodland;
 - Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland;
 - Dense and scattered scrub;
 - Standing water/ponds;
 - Tall ruderal herbs;
 - Scattered broad-leaved trees;
 - Bare ground; and
 - Bare ground with ephemeral vegetation.
- 2.2 The Reserved Matters application area is dominated by former arable land, now supporting tall ruderal vegetation, in the north with semi-natural and plantation broad-leaved woodland and a mosaic of habitats in the south east containing a mix of trees and scrub, with reeds, modified neutral grassland and marshy grassland.
- 2.3 Existing trees and woodland which are being retained will be protected during the development. Protection measures will comply with BS5837 (2012) standards for tree protection. All tree works will comply with BS3998:2010 Tree Work – Recommendations. Refer to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and the Tree Protection Plan and Arboriculture Method Statement for full details.
- 2.4 All other retained habitats will be suitably protected from all construction activity, vehicle movements and storage of materials through the installation of Heras fencing to prevent encroachment.

¹ The neutral grassland categories detailed within the Phase 1 Habitat Survey Handbook are concentrated on grassland associated with rural situations (pastures and meadows), as such it was agreed with JNCC in 2005 (P. Gateley, pers. comm.) that neutral grassland habitats that don't easily fit within these categories, usually within urban or industrial areas, can be referred to as modified neutral grassland –

'Modified neutral grassland is not derived from agricultural grassland and the terms semi-improved and improved do not apply. Some modified neutral grassland may be species-rich but many swards are dense, coarse and species-poor. Modified neutral grassland naturally regenerates on disturbed ground and is unmanaged. It most commonly occurs in urban areas and on post-industrial land'.

- 2.5 A Bluebell Method Statement (Chapter 8.0) will be followed to ensure the protection of native bluebells *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* throughout the works.
- 2.6 For trees with potential for roosting bats within the Reserved Matters area (T9 to T12) (Figure 18.14 Bat Tree Location Plan of the Environmental Statement (see Drawings)), the guidance in Chapter 5.0 Bat RAMMS must be followed.

3.0 Amphibian and Reptile RAMMS

Baseline Ecology Information

- 3.1 Amphibian surveys have been undertaken at six ponds within 500m of the site in 2019, No great crested newts (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* were recorded in any of the ponds surveyed however there are historical records of the species within 2km of the site.
- 3.2 Common frog *Rana temporaria* and smooth newt *Lissotriton vulgaris* were recorded from two of the ponds on site. There are historic records of common toad *Bufo bufo* within 2km of the site.
- 3.3 Desk Study information (Appendix 8.1 of the Environmental Statement) confirms records of reptiles; slow worm *Anguis fragilis* were found to be present within 2 km of the site. Historic survey information from 2008 did not record any reptiles within the site.

Breeding habitat

- 3.4 There is no suitable breeding habitat for GCN on site. There are some areas of standing water, however these are ephemeral and therefore do not provide suitable breeding habitat for amphibians on a regular basis.

Terrestrial habitat

- 3.5 Terrestrial habitats on site could support the amphibians from the nearby ponds and reptiles if present within the site.
- 3.6 The semi-natural and plantation broad-leaved woodland on site provides hibernation, sheltering, foraging and roaming habitat for amphibians and reptiles.
- 3.7 The various grasslands, dense/continuous scrub, tall ruderal vegetation, ephemeral standing water and swamp provide foraging, sheltering, and roaming habitat for amphibians and reptiles, and some basking opportunities for reptiles.

Potential Impacts

- 3.8 Development of the site is anticipated to have some impact upon the local amphibian and reptile populations (if present); vegetation clearance could result in the injury or killing of amphibians and reptiles, if present.
- 3.9 The results of the amphibian surveys in 2019 and desk study records determine that a RAMMS is the most appropriate method to prevent harm to common amphibians and reptiles, if present, during the proposed works.

Relevant Legislation

- 3.10 Common toad are a Species of Principal Importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

- 3.11 All reptile species are given limited protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). These include adder, grass snake, common lizard and slow worm. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), reptiles are protected against:

- intentional or reckless killing and injury;
- trade – i.e. sale, barter, exchange, transport for sale, or advertise for sale or to buy.

Reasonable Avoidance Measures

Prior to Work Commencing

- 3.12 Prior to any activities commencing that impact the functional habitats within the Reserved Matters area, a toolbox talk will be delivered by the Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) to all contractors before clearance and commencement of construction activities. The toolbox talk will ensure all construction staff understand the measures set out herein.
- 3.13 All staff on site should be made aware of the potential for presence of amphibians and reptiles within the locality of the site, as well as the details of the legislative protection afforded to these species.

Clearance of foraging, sheltering, and roaming habitat

- 3.14 Habitats that provide foraging, sheltering and roaming opportunities for amphibians and reptiles include:
- Grasslands;
 - Scrub;
 - Tall ruderal vegetation;
 - Areas of ephemeral standing water; and
 - Swamp.
- 3.15 Vegetation clearance of these habitats should be carried out under the following measures:
- If possible - subject to weather and ground conditions - vegetation should be cut during the winter period (November to February) when reptiles are least likely to be present in these types of habitat.
 - The ECoW will complete a walkover of these habitats to highlight any potential refuge features located within the grassland/tall herb vegetation. These features will be avoided by a winter cut and subject to destructive hand search as soon as weather permits towards the end of the winter season. Alternatively, the features will be subject to a destructive search prior to and/or during the staged cuts as appropriate to the feature (to be advised on site by the ECoW).
 - The habitats will be strimmed or mown to 200mm - 250mm to avoid risk of injury to reptiles or amphibians present in the basal layer (grass thatch), if present (if no significant thatched basal layer is evident and ground

conditions are suitable, the first cut may be reduced to minimum of 150mm above ground).

- Vegetation cutting will be implemented progressively in such a way as to allow reptiles and amphibians active within the area to move towards suitable habitats offsite that retain connectivity across the wider landscape.
- Following the first cut, arisings (including any mulch created, subject to the method of cut) will be removed to prevent the layer of cut materials creating a surface shelter effect for amphibians or reptiles and to enable a more thorough inspection of the habitat area for potential refuge features. Removal of arisings will preferably be by hand rake, but if mechanical means is selected this will avoid any use of a flail or bailer that could result in significant disturbance of the ground or basal layer. Removal of arisings will be supervised by the ECoW.
- Any potential shelter or over-winter features will be removed by hand, where size allows or under the direction supervision of the ECoW if machine assistance is required. This will include branches, rubbish etc. Where machine assistance is required to dismantle or remove larger features (e.g. fallen trees, rocks, root balls etc) this will be implemented after completion of the second stage of vegetation clearance.
- Once cleared of arisings, the cut area will be left for minimum of 48 hours to allow reptiles to move into more favourable adjacent habitats, outside the site. The area will then be strimmed a second time, to a height of 50mm. Again, strimming will take place progressively from the south west of the site to the north east, taking care for strimmers or cutting blades not to impact the ground surface. As for the first cut, arisings will be removed so as to avoid creating surface shelter opportunities that may encourage amphibians or reptiles to remain within the area.
- Following successful completion of vegetation clearance, any vegetation regrowing within cleared areas not subject to construction activities will be retained as a short sward until construction is completed, to dissuade reptiles and amphibians re-entering the area.
- Drainage of Pond 6 should be carried out under supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist and any amphibians found during drainage should be relocated to a suitable receptor area.

Clearance of hibernation habitat

3.16 Woodland is the most likely hibernation habitat within the site. Vegetation clearance of this habitat should be carried out under the following measures:

- Trees will be cut down to stump (0.5m - 0.3m) during the winter period (November - February) to avoid the bird nesting season (March to August inclusive). If this is not possible, a nesting bird check will be carried out by the ECoW prior to the works commencing, to determine whether active bird nests are present (See Nesting Bird RAMMS).
- Stump and rootball removal will be implemented during spring and summer (during April - September, subject to suitable temperatures) to avoid risk to animals that may overwinter or hibernate within the root balls or below

ground. Rootballs will be removed by slowly pushing or pulling stumps to lever them from the ground, enabling the ECoW to inspect the rootball and pit. If this mechanism is not possible, the ECoW will discuss alternative options for rootball removal with the contractor that minimises risk of killing or injury to wildlife that may be present within.

- If removal of the stumps and rootballs has to be undertaken during the hibernation period (October - March), the rootballs will be removed in a manner that enables the ECoW to complete a search of the rootballs and pit. Any amphibians found will be placed in a suitable location where they will not be disturbed.
- An inspection of any mammal holes in the area being cleared will also be conducted by the ECoW, using an endoscope where appropriate to aid inspection. Any mammal holes (particularly suitable for overwintering amphibians or reptiles) will be excavated with a toothed bucket in 15cm sections, backwards from the entrance, under the supervision of the ECoW. If animals are found they will be placed in a suitable location where they will not be disturbed.

During Works

- 3.17 Soil storage mounds must be compacted before the end of each day's work to ensure they do not become attractive refuges. All stored materials and soil piles must be suitably covered with an inaccessible covering such as tarpaulin to prevent amphibians and reptiles using this material as refugia.
- 3.18 Good construction site management is expected, ensuring that any pipes are capped or stored upright and any construction materials are stored above ground on pallets and away from suitable amphibian and reptile habitats, such as areas of woodland.
- 3.19 Any open excavations should be covered overnight using plyboard and sand bags to fully seal any gaps. If this is not possible, a plank of wood or branch placed at an angle no steeper than 40° should be left within the excavations so any amphibians and reptiles which fall into the trenches are able to escape.
- 3.20 Excavations or trenches must be checked by the appointed Environmental Champion for the presence of amphibians and reptiles each morning or before they are backfilled.
- 3.21 Rubbish must not be left on site; any rubbish present on site at the start of the works such as plastic bags must be checked for the presence of amphibians and reptiles.
- 3.22 Any existing access tracks into the site will be maintained. Vehicular or plant access should adhere to these access routes where feasible to prevent tracking over areas where amphibians and reptiles could be present.
- 3.23 At the end of each day, the site should be inspected by the appointed Environmental Champion to ensure that the above guidelines are being complied with. A log of the inspections will be kept.

4.0 Badger RAMMS

Baseline Ecology Information

- 4.1 Habitats such as semi-natural and plantation broad-leaved woodland and dense/continuous scrub within the site are suitable to support badger sett creation and foraging.
- 4.2 Signs of badger were recorded within the site during the badger survey carried out in 2019. These signs include latrines, badger hairs and snuffle holes. Four mammal holes were noted within the woodland areas within the site that were suitable in size for use by badger but were disused and also had associated rabbit *Oryctolagus cuniculus* holes and activity. No active setts were identified during the survey.
- 4.3 It should be noted that due to the dense condition of some areas of scrub and other vegetation on site, there were some areas with limited access, meaning not every part of the site could be thoroughly checked for setts. However it is considered unlikely that active badger setts are currently present within the site.
- 4.4 Desk Study report (Appendix 8.1 of the Environmental Statement) confirms records of badger within 2 km of the site.

Potential Impacts

- 4.5 Development of the site is anticipated to have a limited impact upon the local badger population, given the location of historic records and the areas of habitat on site. However vegetation clearance and construction activities could result in the injury or killing of badger, if present.
- 4.6 Prior to the commencement of vegetation clearance and construction activities, a pre-construction badger survey of the site must be undertaken to determine current badger activity on the site and the need for more detailed mitigation.
- 4.7 Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) must be adhered to, to ensure best practice working methods are implemented during construction and risk of offences being committed by works are avoided.

Relevant Legislation

- 4.8 Badgers are protected and so are the setts (burrows) they live in. Under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 it is an offence to:
- Willfully kill, injure or take a badger (or attempt to do so).
 - Cruelly ill-treat a badger.
 - Dig for a badger.
 - Intentionally or recklessly damage or destroy a badger sett, or obstruct access to it.
 - Cause a dog to enter a badger sett.
 - Disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett.

- 4.9 The legislation does allow for works to be undertaken that would arise from an otherwise lawful operation. These works could include damage, disturbance or destruction to a badger sett. A licence from a statutory body for example, Natural England in England to permit these work. Under licence works that will cause damage, disturbance or destruction to a badger sett can only be undertaken between the months of July and November.
- 4.10 Where the presence of badger setts has been confirmed on site or within 30 metres of the site then a licence may be required and associated mitigation to prevent harm to badgers during development and habitat is provided post development to ensure badgers from the wider locality can disperse safely across or around the new development.

Reasonable Avoidance Measures

Prior to Work Commencing

- 4.11 As part of the Reserved Matters site induction process, all staff working on site will be given a toolbox talk, delivered by the ECoW. The talk will include identification of badger, details of their legislative protection, and what to do in the eventuality that a badger sett or badger is found during the vegetation clearance works or construction phase.
- 4.12 A pre-commencement inspection of the Reserved Matters site will be undertaken to ensure no setts have been created on site or within a distance likely to be impacted by development. The inspection must be carried out by a suitably experienced ecologist. In the event that a new sett or entrance hole is identified, the ecologist will assess if the works will impact on the newly discovered sett/hole and the RAMMS will be amended as necessary. In the event that a licence application is needed, Natural England will be contacted for advice on how to proceed.

Vegetation Clearance

- 4.13 In the absence of any active setts being identified during the pre-construction inspection, vegetation clearance of the site can be undertaken whilst having regard for the requirements of the other RAMMS included within this BMS.
- 4.14 In areas of dense scrub where it has not been possible to confirm the presence or absence of badger setts, clearance of this vegetation must be conducted using a staged approach. The ECoW will search the dense scrub as much as possible prior to a first cut. The scrub will then be cut back 1-2m at a time to allow the ECoW to search previously obscured areas. Once confirmed clear by the ECoW, the next section of clearance can commence. This method is repeated until the entire area of dense scrub is cleared.
- 4.15 Clearance of dense scrub requires the presence of an ECoW and should be carried out during the winter period (November - February) to avoid the bird nesting season.

- 4.16 Should a badger sett be uncovered during vegetation clearance, all works will stop immediately and the ECoW will inspect the sett and advise on the next appropriate steps to take. If the sett is confirmed active and no appropriate buffer zone can be enforced, then a Natural England licence to permit the closure and destruction of the sett may be required.
- 4.17 It should be noted that badger sett closures can only occur between the months of July and November inclusive.

During Works

- 4.18 Avoidance and protection measures will include:
- Excavations will be boarded or otherwise suitably covered at the end of each working day, overnight to prevent entrapment of badgers;
 - Any excavations which cannot be covered will include badger ramps (at an angle of no more than 45°) to allow any animal that may become trapped to escape;
 - Defined construction access routes will be set out to ensure vehicle movements are contained;
 - Pipes stored on site must be capped or if caps are not available, stored vertically to prevent entrapment;
 - Any spoil piles present on site will be compacted to prevent use by badgers for sett construction;
 - All hazardous materials will be kept off the ground or otherwise stored in protected and fenced areas to prevent badger access;
 - Night time working will be avoided if possible, including within the hour before dusk and an hour after dawn; and
 - In the event that any underground void is exposed, works must stop immediately and the ECoW consulted to ascertain if the void is likely to form part of a tunnel network of a badger sett. Unless this can be completely ruled out, works will stop and Natural England will be contacted for advice on how to proceed.
- 4.19 At the end of each day, the site should be inspected by the appointed Environmental Champion to ensure that the above guidelines are being complied with. A log of the inspections will be kept.

5.0 Bat RAMMS

Baseline Ecology Information

- 5.1 Four trees (T9 to T12) shown in Figure 8.14 Bat Tree Location Plan of the Environmental Statement (see Drawings), all with low bat roost habitat suitability will be lost as a result of this stage of the works.
- 5.2 Some of the habitats lost within the Reserved Matters application site include semi-natural and plantation broad-leaved woodland and grasslands. These are good habitats for bat foraging and commuting as they connect to edge habitat used by bats within the site. A range of bat surveys were carried out on site.
- 5.3 Bats were recorded throughout the activity transect surveys and static detector monitoring surveys on site. Six species were identified throughout surveys though common and soprano pipistrelle activity was dominant within the site.
- 5.4 Bat activity was generally distributed along linear features within the site including the strip of mature semi-natural broad-leaved woodland in the centre of the Reserved Matters application site, the connected plantation broad-leaved woodland and The Old Wood, South Local Wildlife Site.
- 5.5 Based on preliminary data analysis, the evaluation of the site is of Local importance for commuting and foraging common and soprano pipistrelle, *Myotis* species, noctule, Nathusius' pipistrelle and brown long-eared bats.
- 5.6 Historical records of six species of bats were found to be present within 2 km of the proposals in the desk study. These include brown long-eared bat, common pipistrelle, Daubenton's bat, noctule bat, soprano pipistrelle and whiskered/Brandt's bat.
- 5.7 No built structures are present in the site which could be used for roosting by bats.

Potential Impacts

- 5.8 The loss of trees on site could result in the loss of bat roosts and/or the killing or injury of bats, if present.
- 5.9 The Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Good Practice Guidelines (Collins, 2016) state that trees with Low roost suitability can be felled with the implementation of a RAMMS.

Relevant Legislation

- 5.10 All bat species and their roosts are legally protected in the UK. All bat species and their roosts are protected under The Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended) (HabRegs2) and under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (WCA5).
- 5.11 It is a criminal offence if any persons:
- Deliberately capture, injure or kill a bat;
 - Intentionally or recklessly disturb a bat or group of bats whilst they are occupying a roost;

- Deliberately or recklessly damage or destroy a bat roosting place (even if bats are not occupying the roost at the time);
- Intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to a bat roost; and
- Possess or advertise/sell/exchange a bat (dead or alive) or any part of a bat.

- 5.12 Bat species recorded within the site and surrounding locality are also protected as species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (S41) and are identified as notable species listed under the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (LBAP).

Reasonable Avoidance Measures

Prior to Work Commencing

- 5.13 As part of the site induction process, all staff working on site will be made aware of the potential for presence of roosting bats on site and their status as a UK and European Protected Species through a toolbox talk given by the ECoW.
- 5.14 Pre-commencement checks of trees T9 to T12 will be undertaken for Potential Roost Features (PRFs), prior to tree removal, by a licensed bat ecologist (ideally timed between October and February to avoid dense foliage and the risk of disturbance to nesting birds). The licensed bat ecologist will inspect PRFs using an endoscope to confirm absence of bats.
- 5.15 Prior to removal of trees with suitability for roosting bats, installation of the bat box scheme as detailed in the Bat and Bird Box Scheme (TEP Report: 7367.024) must be undertaken.

During Vegetation Clearance and Works

- 5.16 Removal of trees T9 to T12 must be conducted by section felling, including lowering limbs to the ground, and where reasonably practicable, timber with low bat roost suitability should not be directly sawn through. As such timber is removed, crevices and holes will be checked by a licensed bat ecologist and then the timber must be left at the base of the tree for at least 48 hours.
- 5.17 If there is any concern that bats may be present within features not previously identified, works will cease and contractors will seek advice from a suitably qualified ecologist. This is the case while felling all trees not just trees T9 to T12.
- 5.18 Trees with bat roost habitat suitability that are retained within proposals will be protected by implementing a buffer zone around the trees i.e. those within retained woodland to the north of Unit 02 (trees T13 to T17) and west of unit 03 (trees T5 to T8). The buffer zone around retained trees will as a minimum adhere to the root protection area in accordance with BS5837: 2012 Trees in Relation to Design Demolition and Development in order to maintain the health of the tree and to minimise impacts on bats roosting within the locality (Refer to the Arboricultural Impact Assessment and the Tree Protection Plan and Arboriculture Method Statement for full details).

- 5.19 Under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 and Conservation (Natural Habitats etc.) Regulations 1994: Schedule 2, it is an offence to handle bats without either a survey licence or a development licence obtained from Natural England. In the unlikely event that a bat is identified at any point on site, it must not be moved or handled and all works on site must cease immediately until advice from a licensed bat ecologist is obtained. In the event that evidence of roosting bats is found the section of the tree should be retained on site, either propped up or strapped to an adjacent retained tree. Nocturnal roost surveys and Natural England licence will then be required.
- 5.20 These measures must be strictly adhered to. In the event that the design changes and additional trees with roost potential will be affected, works must cease immediately and the advice of a licensed bat consultant be sought.

6.0 Hedgehog RAMMS

Baseline Ecology Information

- 6.1 No historical records of hedgehog were found to be present within 2 km of the proposals. However due to the good quality habitats on site for hedgehogs, a hedgehog RAMMS is to be implemented for the works on site.
- 6.2 The mosaic of habitats on site, including modified neutral grassland, semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, plantation broad-leaved woodland, dense/continuous scrub, modified neutral grassland, semi-improved neutral grassland, marshy grassland, poor semi-improved grassland and tall ruderal habitats on site are suitable for supporting foraging hedgehog. The dense/continuous scrub habitats may also provide potential hibernation habitat for hedgehog, while these habitats and the plantation broad-leaved woodland and semi-natural broad-leaved woodland provide connectivity with habitats all around the site.

Potential Impacts

- 6.3 Vegetation clearance, the use of machinery and any future construction works could result in the injury or killing of hedgehogs, if present.
- 6.4 Given the status of hedgehogs, in terms of legislation, it is considered acceptable to undertake site clearance under the implementation of a RAMMS.

Relevant Legislation

- 6.5 Hedgehogs are considered species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006. Hedgehogs are also partially protected under Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, in that they are protected from being killed, injured or taken by certain methods.

Reasonable Avoidance Measures

Prior to Work Commencing

- 6.6 As part of the site induction process, all staff working on site will be made aware of the potential for presence of hedgehog on site and their status as a species of principal importance during a toolbox talk delivered by the ECoW.

Vegetation Clearance

- 6.7 The early hibernation period (November to December inclusive) should be avoided in relation to vegetation clearance to avoid impacting hibernating hedgehogs. Hedgehogs would likely die if they are disturbed during this period.
- 6.8 Clearance of the semi-natural and plantation broad-leaved woodland, and dense scrub habitats on site should be undertaken in stages to enable any hedgehogs that may be present to relocate to safe areas. These habitats should be strimmed by hand, under the supervision of the ECoW, to a height of 150 mm to prevent any harm to hibernating hedgehogs. A thorough hand search will be carried out by the ECoW and any hedgehogs found will be relocated to suitable habitat within the adjacent woodland outside of the site to the east.

During Works

- 6.9 Regular strimming works should take place to keep any retained habitats not subject to construction activities, short (50mm), which will make the area unattractive to foraging or resting hedgehogs. This will deter hedgehogs from entering the site thereby reducing the risk of harm occurring to this species.
- 6.10 Any open excavations should be covered overnight using plyboard and sand bags to fully seal any gaps. If this is not possible, a plank of wood placed at an angle no steeper than 40° should be left within the excavations so any hedgehogs or small mammals which fall into the trenches are able to escape.
- 6.11 Any existing access tracks into the site will be maintained. Vehicular or plant access should adhere to these access routes where feasible to prevent tracking over areas where hedgehogs could be present.
- 6.12 If an injured hedgehog is found on site, this should be taken to a nearby wildlife rescue centre or vet that accepts wild animals. Additionally if any young hedgehogs are found during the autumn, immediately prior to the hibernation period, these should also be taken to a wildlife rescue centre as it would be unlikely that these would survive the winter. The nearest wildlife rescue centres to the site are provided in Table 1.

Table 1: Contact details for the nearest Wildlife Rescue Centre to the site

Name	Address	Telephone Number
Chorley Hedgehog Rescue	1 Cottage Fields Chorley Lancashire PR7 3QE	07599 950153
Wirral hedgehog hospital	Mobile service	07849 588567

7.0 Nesting Bird RAMMS

Baseline Ecology Information

- 7.1 During the breeding bird survey (2020), 31 species of bird were recorded to be confirmed, probable and possible breeding within the site boundary and survey buffer. This indicates that the site is of local importance for breeding birds.
- 7.2 Ten notable species were recorded to be confirmed, probable and possible within the site boundary and survey buffer during the surveys. The species breeding within the site are largely associated with woodland and scrub habitats, such as dunnock and bullfinch.
- 7.3 Nineteen records of notable birds were found to be present within 2 km of the proposals in the Desk Study report (TEP ref: 7367.012).

Potential Impacts

- 7.4 Vegetation clearance, the use of machinery and any future construction works could result in the damage of nests and injury or killing of nesting birds, if present.
- 7.5 Development of the site is anticipated to have a limited impact upon the local bird population. Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMs) must be adhered to, to ensure legal compliance and best practice working methods are implemented during construction.

Relevant Legislation

- 7.6 All wild birds and their nests and eggs are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. It is an offense, with certain exceptions, to:
- intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird;
 - intentionally take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built;
 - intentionally take or destroy the egg of any wild bird;
 - intentionally or recklessly disturb any wild bird listed on Schedule 1 while it is nest building, or at a nest containing eggs of young, or disturb the dependent young of such a bird.

Reasonable Avoidance Measures

Prior to Work Commencing

- 7.7 As part of the site induction process, all staff working on site will be made aware of the potential for presence of nesting birds on site and their protected status during a toolbox talk delivered by the ECoW.

Vegetation clearance

- 7.8 Where possible, all vegetation clearance will be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season, to avoid impacts on nesting birds. The nesting bird season is generally accepted to be from March to August inclusive, although nesting in several species (passerine species) can take place outside this period. Best practice would be to avoid clearance activities from mid-February to the end of September.

- 7.9 If clearance works are unavoidable within the breeding bird season, or at any time when bird nesting is suspected, a nesting bird check of the affected area by an experienced ecologist should be undertaken. The nesting bird check should take place no more than 24 hours prior to the clearance works.
- 7.10 In the event that an active nest is found, the ecologist will provide advice to establish a suitable exclusion zone around the nest until the young have fledged. The extent of the exclusion zone will depend upon the bird species concerned, its situation and surrounding habitats.
- 7.11 If an active nest is identified, works can only proceed within the exclusion zone once the ecologist has confirmed the young have fledged.
- 7.12 Large and/or structurally complex areas of vegetation would require careful and extensive inspections, most likely phased, and may require an ornithological watching brief to work alongside the contractors, clearing and checking vegetation in small sections.
- 7.13 Where breeding bird activity cannot be established within structurally complex areas of vegetation, bow saws and loppers may potentially be used to carefully cut away small sections of the vegetation, ensuring disturbance is localised. This should be done under the supervision of an ecologist, who will continually check for nesting activities. If nests are uncovered then works shall cease immediately until the status of the nest has been determined by the ecologist.
- 7.14 Any arisings from the work i.e. brash, trunks, grass cuttings, must be removed from site on the same day as the work takes place. This is to avoid providing nesting opportunities for birds, which would then have to be checked by a suitably qualified ecologist prior to their removal at a later date.

8.0 Water Vole RAMMS

Baseline Ecology Information

- 8.1 Two historical records of water vole were found to be present within 2 km of the proposals, the nearest being 370m north west of the site.
- 8.2 The TEP survey visits on 20th September 2019 and 24th June 2020 and 22nd September 2021 found no field signs of water vole presence, with an absence of latrines, feeding remains, tracks or burrows within or surrounding the watercourses.
- 8.3 The site as a whole has low suitability for supporting water vole. The watercourse is shallow, narrow and heavily shaded by woodland and bramble (*Rubus fruticosus* agg.) along its entire length with little foraging opportunities present. It contains a number of concrete weirs; however these only act as partial barriers to commuting water vole as they could move terrestrially around these obstacles. A proportion of the watercourse is lined, on both the base and sides, with nylon netting. This netting will restrict the use of the watercourse for water vole as it will prevent the digging of burrows.
- 8.4 However due to the known presence of water vole in the area, the dynamic nature of water vole population numbers and some suitable habitats on site for water vole, a water vole RAMMS is to be implemented for the works on site.

Potential Impacts

- 8.5 Vegetation clearance, the use of machinery and any future construction works could result in the injury or killing of water vole, if present.
- 8.6 Given the status of water vole, in terms of legislation, it is considered acceptable to undertake site clearance under the implementation of a RAMMS.

Relevant Legislation

- 8.7 Water voles and water vole habitat receive full protection under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. The water vole is protected on account of its rapid decline in recent decades.
- 8.8 Legal protection makes it an offence to:
- Intentionally kill, injure or capture a water vole;
 - Possess or control a live or dead water vole, or any part of a water vole;
 - Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which water voles or otters use for shelter or protection, or disturb water voles while they are using such a place;
 - Sell, offer for sale or advertise for live or dead water voles.

Reasonable Avoidance Measures

- 8.9 As part of the site induction process, all staff working on site will be made aware of the potential for presence of water vole on site and their status as a UK protected species during a toolbox talk delivered by the ECoW.

- 8.10 If works do not commence within six months of the latest survey, a pre-commencement check of the section of watercourse within the Reserved Matters area will be undertaken to confirm the presence or absence of water vole and the location of any burrows since the previous survey.
- 8.11 Should a water vole burrow be identified during the pre-commencement check, all works will stop immediately and the ECoW will advise on the next appropriate steps to take. If the burrow is confirmed active and no appropriate buffer zone can be enforced, then a Natural England licence may be required to continue works.

9.0 Bluebell Translocation Method Statement

Baseline Ecology Information

- 9.1 Native bluebell *Hyacinthoides non-scripta* were recorded during the Phase 1 habitat survey within the Reserved Matters application site, in semi-natural broad-leaved woodland adjacent to the former arable fields (Drawing G7367.045 Phase 1 Habitat Survey Reserved Matters Application (see Drawings)).

Potential Impacts

- 9.2 Bluebell plants will be lost or damaged during site clearance activities.

Relevant Legislation

- 9.3 In the UK native bluebell is a protected species under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981. Landowners are prohibited from removing native bluebells on their land for sale and it is a criminal offence to remove the bulbs of wild native bluebells. This legislation was strengthened in 1998 under Schedule 8 of the Act making any trade in wild native bluebell bulbs or seeds an offence.

Method Statement

Prior to Work Commencing

- 9.4 A detailed survey of woodland within the Phase 1 area of the site was undertaken by a suitably qualified TEP ecologist in May 2021. This also included part of the Reserved Matters area as a result of incidental observation of bluebell in semi-natural woodland in the south-west of this area. Further detailed survey of woodland in the Reserved Matters area will be required in order to confirm any further bluebell locations. This survey must be undertaken when bluebell are visible in the spring (March to May).
- 9.5 Potential receptor sites have been identified during a site visit in September 2021, primarily for Phase 1 bluebell translocation, but also for the Reserved Matters application. These are detailed in the Bluebell Survey Report (TEP Report: 7367.023) and include the strip of semi-natural broad-leaved woodland along the northern access track off Fox's Bank Lane, in semi-natural broad-leaved woodland in the north east of the Country Park and potentially in areas of woodland creation in the north of the Reserved Matters application area.
- 9.6 An updated Bluebell Survey Report for this Reserved Matters application will be produced following the additional survey.

Translocation Method

- 9.7 Translocation of the bluebells will proceed as follows:
- The ground at the receptor site will be prepared to receive bulbs. The area will be dug out to a depth suitable to receive the extracted plants and soil.
 - The bluebells requiring translocation will be moved by uprooting of the entire plants, including bulbs and surrounding soil to a depth of at least 200 mm using hand tools only, if possible.

- Plants and soil must be relocated immediately to the pre-prepared donor site that have been.
- Plants must be watered immediately following translocation, if the translocation takes place during the growing season.

9.8 The locations of the donor and final receptor sites will be marked on a plan and recorded with photographs of the completed works.

9.9 A single visit will be undertaken one year after translocation to check if the translocation has succeeded.

DRAWINGS

Reserved Matters Location Plan (21351_P0601[B])
Illustrative Masterplan (21351_P0602[S])
G7367.045 Phase 1 Habitat Survey Reserved Matters Application
Figure 8.14 Bat Tree Location Plan

-

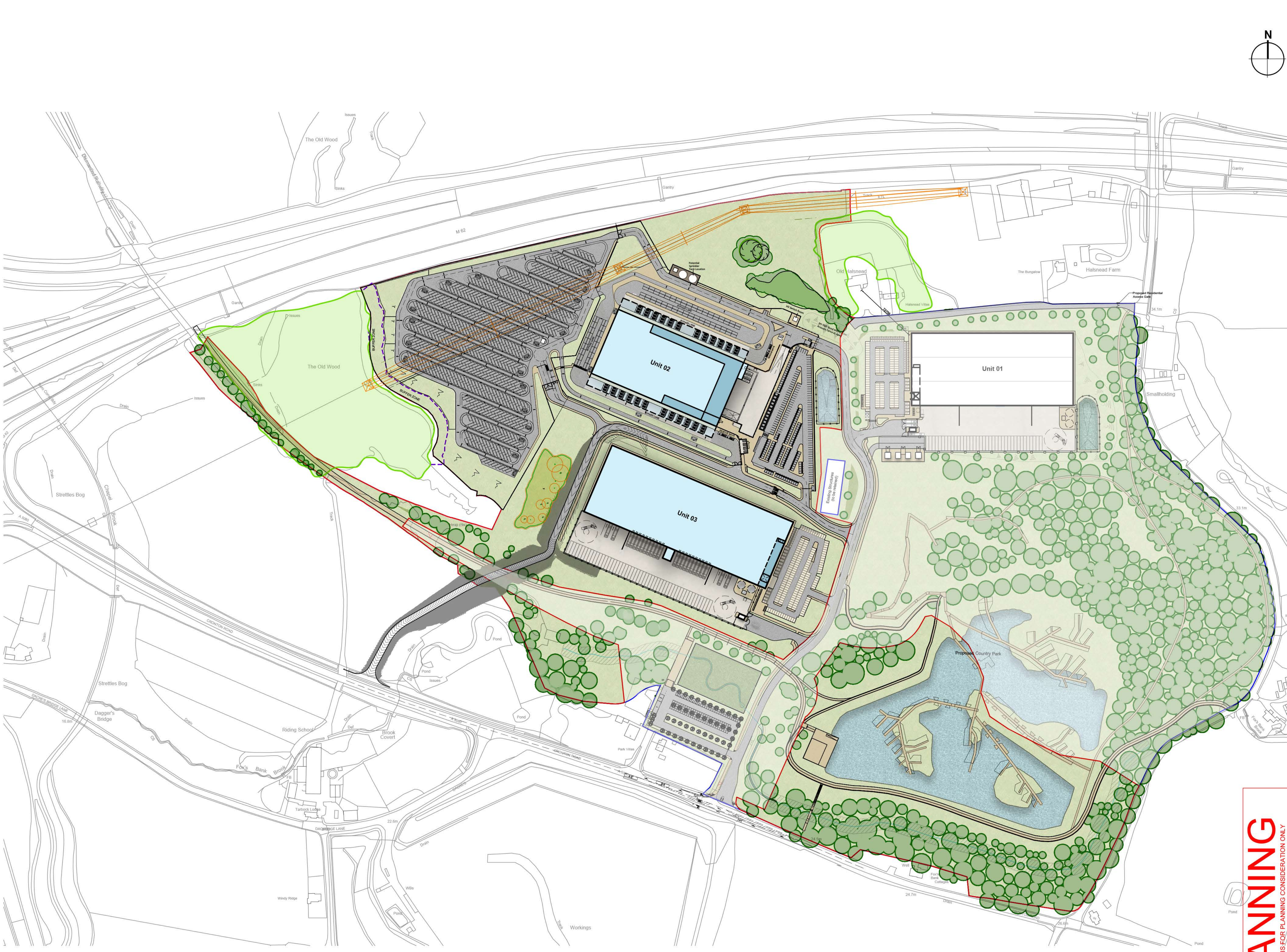
 Application Boundary



PLANNING

THIS DRAWING IS FOR PLANNING CONSIDERATION ONLY
AND SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE

[illegible]



- Dimensions are in millimeters, unless stated otherwise.
- Scaling of this drawing is not recommended.
- It is the recipients responsibility to print this document to the correct scale.
- All relevant drawings and specifications should be read in conjunction with this drawing.

SCHEDULE OF ACCOMMODATION
(Gross Internal Area unless otherwise stated)

Unit 01		
Warehouse Area	-	153,100 sq ft (14,223m ²)
Office (2 storey)	-	8,500 sq ft (790m ²)
Gatehouse	-	300 sq ft (28m ²)
Total Area	-	161,900 sq ft (15,041m²)
Net Site Area	-	7.93 Acres (3.209 Hectares)
Unit 02		
Warehouse Area	-	185,880 sq ft (17,269m ²)
Ground Floor Core	-	1,033 sq ft (96m ²)
FF Office (Incl.Void)	-	5,274 sq ft (490m ²)
SF Office (Excl.Void)	-	5,500 sq ft (511m ²)
Transport Office (2 St.)	-	2,500 sq ft (232m ²)
Gatehouse	-	300 sq ft (28m ²)
Total Area	-	200,487 sq ft (18,626m²)
Net Site Area	-	9.86 Acres (3.99 Hectares)
Car Parking	-	189 (Inc.15 No. Acc + 9 No.EV + 9 No.F/E)
Motorcycle Parking	-	10
Unit 03		
GF GIA Area	-	124,172 sq ft (11,536m ²)
FF GIA Area	-	28,040 sq ft (2,605m ²)
Total GIA Area	-	152,212 sq ft (14,141m²)
Net Site Area	-	24.85 Acres (10.0567Hectares)
Loading Docks	-	9
Level Access	-	14
Van Dock Doors	-	2
Compactor and Baler	-	1
Car Parking	-	244 (Inc.2 No. Acc+122 No. EV) (EV 24 No. Active/ 98 No. Passive)
Motorcycle Parking	-	12
Masterplan Grand Total -	-	514,599 sq ft (47,808m²)

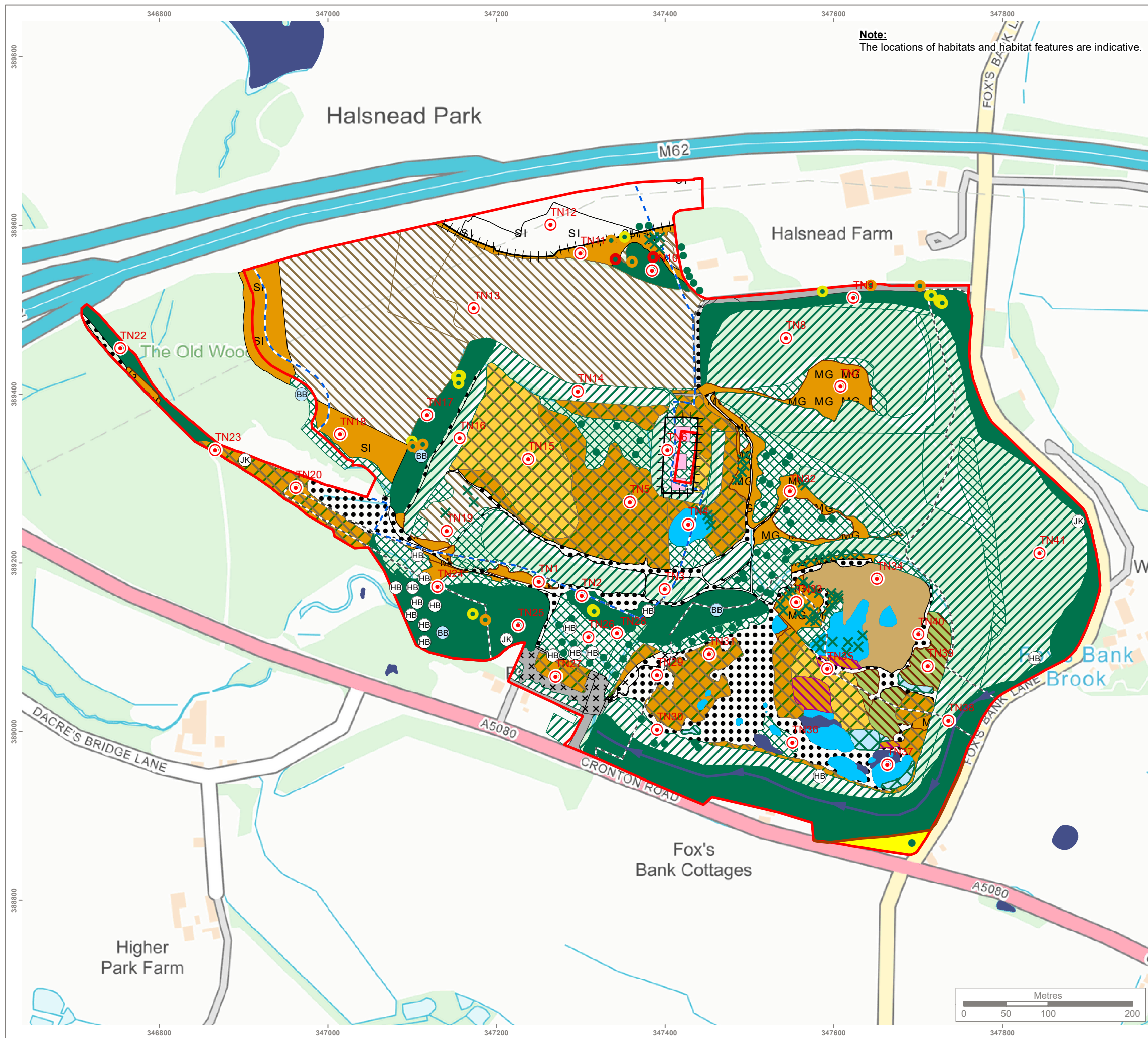
- Masterplan Boundary
- Existing Overhead Power Lines
- Application Boundary
- 15m Wood Offset Zone
- TPO Woodland
- Woodland Retention

Illustrative Masterplan

PLANNING
THIS DRAWING IS FOR PLANNING CONSIDERATION ONLY
AND SHOULD NOT BE USED FOR ANY OTHER PURPOSE

rev	amendments	by	ckd	date
Phase 2, Symmetry Park, Merseyside				
Illustrative Masterplan				
TRITAX SYMMETRY A TRITAX BIG BOX COMPANY				
umc architects 3rd Floor, Manchester Club, 81 King Street, Manchester, M2 4AH t: +44 (0)161 413 0590 e: info@umcarchitects.com				
Drawing Status:		Planning		
Drawn / Checked:		MY / DEB		
Date:		13/11/2020		
Scale:		1:2000@ A1		
Drawing no:		Revision:		
21351 P0602		S		





Note:
The locations of habitats and habitat features are indicative.

KEY

- Application boundary
- Development zone
- Detailed application zone
- Target note
- Native Bluebell
- Himalayan balsam
- Japanese knotweed
- Scattered scrub
- Scattered broad-leaved tree
- Broad-leaved tree with low bat potential
- Broad-leaved tree with moderate bat potential
- Broad-leaved tree with high bat potential
- Running water
- Fence
- Wall
- Mosaic (A) of tree/scrub regen with a mix of reed and modified neutral grassland and marshy grassland
- Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland
- Plantation broad-leaved woodland
- Dense/continuous scrub
- Mosaic B of tree/scrub regen with some reed and modified neutral grassland
- Semi-improved neutral grassland
- Modified neutral grassland
- Marsh/marshy grassland
- Poor semi-improved grassland
- Mosaic (C) of scrub/tree regen with marshy grassland
- Tall ruderal
- Mosaic (D) of scrub/tree regen with neutral grassland
- Swamp and dense scrub
- Swamp
- Standing water
- Infrastructure - gas pipeline
- Amenity grassland
- Bare ground with ephemeral/short perennial
- Hardstanding with ephemeral/short perennial
- Bare ground
- Hardstanding

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Site Map

Legend

Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date
B	Habitat updates.	CW	AP	27/08/2021
A	Updated Earthworks boundary.	CW	AP	16/07/2020

TEP | **THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP**

Genesis Centre, Birchwood Science Park, Warrington WA3 7BH
Tel 01925 844004 e-mail tep@tep.uk.com www.tep.uk.com

Project
Symmetry Park, Merseyside

Title
Figure 8.13 Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Drawing Number
G7367.032B

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
SA	JO	VG	1:4,500 @ A3	27/08/2021

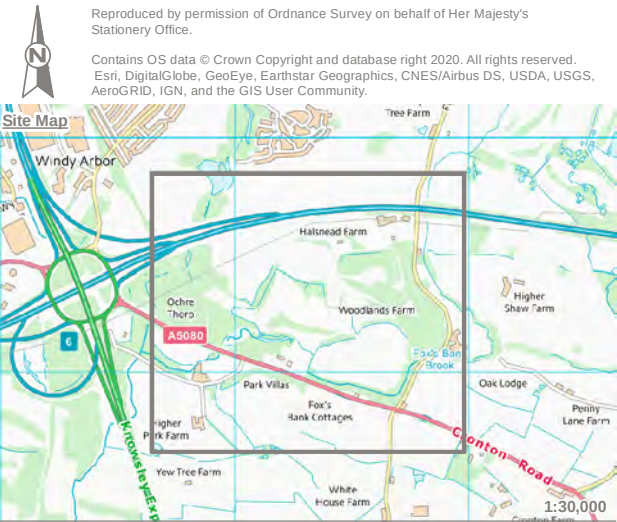


KEY

- Application boundary
- Development zone
- Full application boundary

Tree Roost Suitability

- Broad-leaved tree with low bat potential
- Broad-leaved tree with moderate bat potential
- Broad-leaved tree with high bat potential



Rev	Description	Drawn	Approved	Date



Genesis Centre, Birchwood Science Park, Warrington WA3 7BH
Tel 01925 844004 e-mail tep@tep.uk.com www.tep.uk.com

Project
Symmetry Park, Merseyside

Title
Figure 8.14 Bat Tree Location Plan

Drawing Number
G7367.036

Drawn	Checked	Approved	Scale	Date
CW	MK	LR	1:4,500 @ A3	10/09/2020



THE
ENVIRONMENT
PARTNERSHIP

HEAD OFFICE

Genesis Centre,
Birchwood Science Park,
Warrington
WA3 7BH

Tel: 01925 844004
E-mail: tep@tep.uk.com

**MARKET
HARBOROUGH**

The Reynard Suite,
Bowden Business Village,
Market Harborough,
Leicestershire,
LE16 7SA

Tel: 01858 383120
E-mail: mh@tep.uk.com

GATESHEAD

Office 26, Gateshead
International Business
Centre,
Mulgrave Terrace,
Gateshead
NE8 1AN

Tel: 0191 605 3340
E-mail: gateshead@tep.uk.com

LONDON

8 Trinity Street,
London,
SE1 1DB

Tel: 020 3096 6050
E-mail: london@tep.uk.com

CORNWALL

4 Park Noweth,
Churchtown,
Cury,
Helston
Cornwall
TR12 7BW

Tel: 01326 240081
E-mail: cornwall@tep.uk.com
