THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP

# GREAT STONE ROAD
# STRETFORD MANCHESTER
# ECOLOGICAL ASSESSMENT

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# Executive Summary

1. TEP was commissioned by WSP | Indigo Planning on behalf of Accrue (Forum) LLP to undertake an updated ecological assessment at Great Stone Road, Stretford.

2. An updated ecological assessment was undertaken to inform proposed development plans including the demolition of the existing buildings to facilitate a three building development of up to nine storeys (ground floor plus 8 floors), including a mixture of property types.

3. The habitats on site are of limited ecological value and comprise predominantly hardstanding and a large building. Following a daytime inspection, the buildings and trees were found to still have negligible potential for roosting bats.

4. The trees and scrub along the Metrolink adjacent to the south of the site provide commuting and foraging habitat for bats. This area will not be directly impacted by the proposed development. If any external lighting is required, however, a sensitive lighting design should be implemented as part of the scheme to avoid indirect impacts of lighting on nocturnal and crepuscular species, particularly with reference to the adjacent Metrolink line.

5. A number of trees will be directly impacted by proposals as they fall within the footprint of the proposed residential property. Replacement planting of native trees unavoidably lost to development should be provided on site or, where this is not possible, in the local vicinity.

6. A pre-commencement check for badgers within and adjacent to the site should be undertaken prior to works beginning on site if works do not commence within a year from the date of the ecological site visit.

7. The scattered trees and hedgerow within the site offer suitable habitat for nesting birds. Any vegetation clearance should be conducted outside of the bird breeding season (March-August) in order to avoid potential damage or destruction of an active nest. Where clearance is unavoidable during this period, a pre-clearance check can be made by an ecologist but where an active nest is identified, works will need to be postponed until the chicks have fledged. Replacement nesting opportunities could be provided through nest boxes and pockets incorporated at appropriate locations within the built development.

8. The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) aims to minimise impacts of developments on biodiversity and provide net gains. Potential enhancements at the site includes provision of bat and bird boxes and provisions of green trellising.

9. A green roof will be incorporated into the new roof design. Inclusion of a green roof will provide biodiversity benefits by creating newly vegetated habitat in an urban area largely lacking habitat of value to wildlife and creating new links in an intermittent network of habitats. The inclusion of the green roof will provide connections through 'stepping stones' between habitats of value to biodiversity.

# 1.0 Introduction

1.1 TEP was commissioned in February 2020 by WSP | Indigo Planning on behalf of Accrue (Forum) LLP to undertake an updated ecological assessment at Great Stone Road, Stretford. The site was originally surveyed in 2017 by TEP (TEP report ref: 6370.01.002) to support an outline planning application for residential development (94974/OUT/18) which was refused in April 2019. A new application is to be made after design changes based on the refusal notice. The proposed development includes the demolition of the existing buildings to facilitate a three building development of up to nine storeys (ground floor plus 8 floors), including a mixture of property types. Given the time passed since the original ecology assessment an update is required.

1.2 This report has the following objectives:

- to describe the existing vegetation and give an overview of the habitats present on the site;
- to identify whether there are any features of conservation value such as legally protected species or habitats of biodiversity importance;
- to advise of further surveys or mitigation requirements that may be needed prior to development of the site; and
- to outline opportunities to provide biodiversity enhancement within site proposals.

1.3 The site is located north east of Great Stone Road. Figure 1 shows the location of the site, with a central grid reference of SJ 80926 95401.

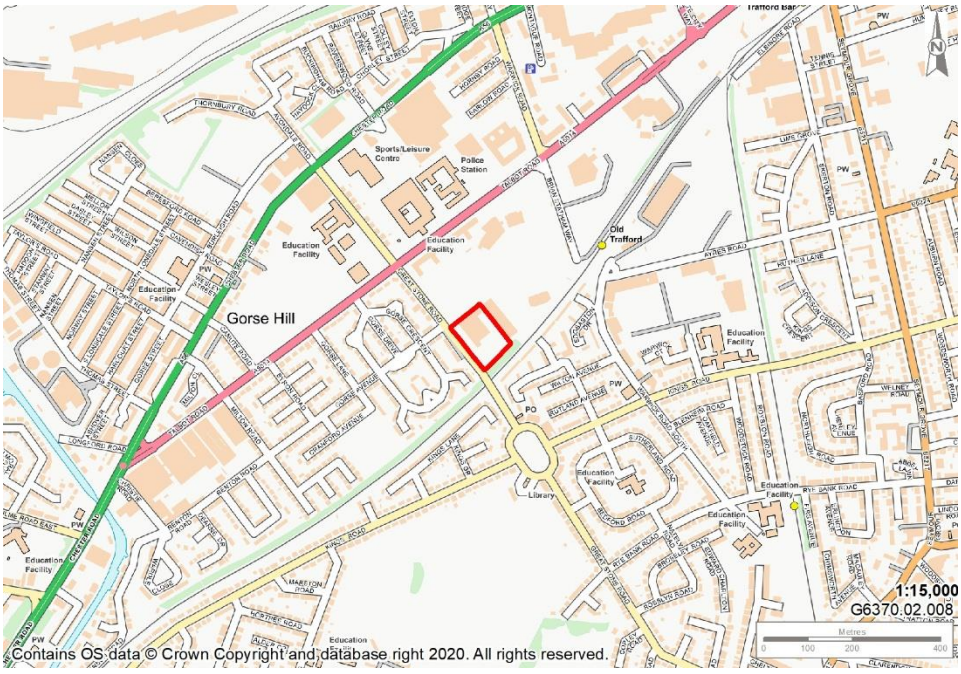


*Figure 1: Site location in wider landscape (Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2020)*

1.4 The site is approximately 1 ha and bound by Lancashire County Cricket Club (LCCC) to the north and east of the site, the Altrincham to Manchester/Bury Metrolink line to the south and Great Stone Road to the west.

# 2.0 Methods

## Ecology Desk Study

2.1 Information regarding historic species records were obtained from within a 1km radius of the site from GMEU. Records of internationally protected sites were obtained from within a 10km radius, nationally designated sites within 5km radius and locally protected sites within a 1km radius of the site were requested/gathered from the sources listed in Table 1. This collated data gives a useful indication of the distribution and abundance of ecological receptors at a given locale. It should be noted that an absence of records does not indicate the absence of protected species from the search area. Our survey work has sought to identify the potential for any protected species.

*Table 1: Ecological information*

| Source of Information | Nature of Information |
|---|---|
| Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) Map MAGIC Map | Maps showing legally protected areas and designated sites & priority habitats |
| Greater Manchester Ecological Unit (GMEU) | Designated sites and protected species records |
| Trafford Council | Land allocations and relevant policies |

## Habitat Survey

2.2 A Phase 1 habitat survey was completed by Stephanie Davies (FISC Level 3) on the 5th February 2020. The survey was carried out in accordance with the Phase 1 habitat assessment methods (JNCC 2010[1]) and the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM 2017[2]).

Limitations

2.3 The recommended season to undertake Phase 1 habitat surveys is between April and mid-October and therefore the survey date falls outside of this window. There will be constraints to the number and diversity of plant species recorded. It is also possible that Schedule 8 protected species and Schedule 9 invasive species could have been missed. Given the limited nature of the habitats on site, this is not considered a significant constraint.

## Fauna

2.4 The Phase 1 survey method was extended through the additional recording of specific features indicating the presence, or likely presence, of protected species or other species of nature conservation significance, including invasive species, broadly in accordance with Guidelines for Preliminary Baseline Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017).

[1] JNCC 2010. Handbook for Phase 1 Habitat Survey: A technique for environmental audit.
[2] CIEEM 2017. Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

Bats

*Preliminary Daytime Bat Roost Assessment & Assessment of Foraging and Commuting Potential*

2.5 The ecological appraisal included a ground-based assessment of the trees and external assessment of the building within the site boundary. This assessment was carried out with the aid of binoculars to search for any field signs of bats or features with bat roosting potential. The preliminary daytime bat roost assessment was carried out by Stephanie Davies (licence ref: 2020-44415-CLS-CLS) at the same time as the Phase 1 habitat survey. The habitats on site and surrounding the site were also assessed for potential to support roosting, foraging and commuting bats.

2.6 The criteria for preliminary roost assessment are based upon the Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) Guidelines (2016[3]) as shown in Table 2.

*Table 2: Roost assessment criteria (from Table 4.1 of BCT Guidelines 2016)*

| Suitability | Description of Roosting Habitat | Commuting and foraging habitats |
|---|---|---|
| Negligible | Negligible habitat features on site likely to be used by roosting bats. | Negligible habitat features on site to be used by commuting and foraging bats. |
| Low | A tree of sufficient size and age to contain potential roost features (PRFs) but with none seen from the ground or features seen with only very limited roosting potential.<br>A structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by individual bats opportunistically. | Habitat that could be used by small numbers of commuting bats (e.g. a gappy hedgerow or an un-vegetated stream) or foraging bats (e.g. a lone tree or small patch of scrub) but which is isolated from the surrounding countryside by other habitat. |
| Moderate | A tree or structure with one or more potential roost sites that could be used by bats due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat but unlikely to support a roost of high conservation status. | Continuous habitat connected to the wider landscape that could be used by bats for commuting (e.g. lines of trees or scrub or linked back gardens), or foraging bats (e.g. trees, scrub, water, grassland). |
| High | A tree or structure with one or more potential roost sites that are obviously suitable for use by larger numbers of bats on a more regular basis and potentially for longer periods of time due to their size, shelter, protection, conditions and surrounding habitat. | Continuous high quality habitat that is strongly connected with the wider landscape that is likely to be used regularly by commuting bats (e.g. river valley, vegetated stream, woodland edge, hedgerows with trees) or foraging bats (e.g. broadleaved woodland, grazed parkland, tree-lined watercourses or ponds). |

[3] BCT 2016. Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines. Bat Conservation Trust 3rd Ed.

*Limitations*

2.7 No internal access to the building was available at the time of the survey. Internal access was made in 2017 by TEP surveyor John Crowder. No significant changes to the building have occurred since then. As such it is assumed internal conditions of the building have remained the same.

# 3.0 Results

## Ecology Desk Study

3.1 A summary of the results of the ecology desk study are set out below. Further details, including maps, are provided in Appendix A.

Relevant Planning Policies and Guidance

3.2 The site is undesignated in the Trafford Local Plan Core Strategy (January 2012).

3.3 The following biodiversity related policies from the Trafford Local Plan Core Strategy (January 2012) are most relevant to this assessment:

- Policy R2 Natural Environment;
- Policy R3 Green Infrastructure.

3.4 These policies aim to strengthen and support Great Manchester's habitats and species by protecting and enhancing key habitats and facilitating opportunities to appreciate wildlife. These policies aim to produce a net enhancement in biodiversity resources by improving connections between habitats and enhancing management of existing habitats. Development will be expected to follow the mitigation hierarchy with regard to biodiversity.

Designated Sites

3.5 There is one internationally designated site within 10km of the site. Rochdale Canal Special Areas of Conservation (SAC) is located approximately 9.7km north-west of the site. Rochdale Canal SAC is designated for supporting submerged aquatic plants and emergent vegetation, including extensive colonies of the nationally scarce floating water-plantain *Luronium natans*.

3.6 There are no nationally designated sites within 5km of the site. The site, however, is located within the SSSI Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for several SSSI's. The IRZ covers the interest features and sensitivities of European sites, which are underpinned by the SSSI designation. Residential development is not listed as a risk category with regard to these SSSI's.

3.7 There are two statutory locally designated sites within 2km of the site. Chorlton Ees & Ivy Green Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is located approximately 2km south of the site and is designated for its wildflower meadows and woodland habitats.

3.8 Broad Ees Dole LNR is located approximately 2km south of the site and is designated for supporting important assemblages of birds.

3.9 There is one Site of Biological Importance (SBI) within 1km of the site; The Bridgewater Canal. The canal site has records of UK BAP species, floating water plantain *Luronium natans* and Species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Communities Act 2006, Freiberg's screw moss *Tortula freibergii*.

Notable Habitats

3.10 No records of Section 41 (S41) Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (NERC) habitats of principal importance were returned for the site or for land adjacent to the site.

Protected Species Records

3.11 A number of species spread over a 1km search radius were identified through the GMEU desktop search. Species records returned may include those listed under any of the following:

- European Protected Species (EPS);
- Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (WCA5);
- Species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006 (S41);
- Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (PBA);
- Red and Amber listed Birds of Conservation Concern (BRd/BAm).

Bats

3.12 There are several records of bats within 1km of the site:

- Common pipistrelle *Pipistrellus pipistrellus* (EPS, WCA5);
- Pipistrelle *Pipistrellus* species (EPS, WCA5);
- Whiskered bat *Myotis mystacinus* (EPS, WCA5);
- Unidentified bat species (EPS, WCA5).

Badger

3.13 There are records of badger *Meles meles* (PBA) signs within 1km of the site. No setts have been recorded within 1km of the site.

Birds

3.14 There are several records of birds within 1km of the site:

- Bullfinch *Pyrrhula pyrrhula* (S41, BAm);
- Cuckoo *Cuculus canorus* (S41, BRd);
- Dunnock *Prunella modularis* (S41, BAm);
- Grasshopper warbler *Locustella naevia* (S41, BRd);
- House sparrow *Passer domesticus* (S41, BRd);
- Lesser redpoll *Carduelis cabaret* (S41, BRd);
- Ring ouzel *Turdus torquatus* (S41, BRd);
- Starling *Sturnus vulgaris* (S41, BRd).

Amphibians

3.15 There are records of common toad *Bufo bufo* within 1km of the site.

## Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

3.16 The results of the Phase 1 habitat survey are illustrated in Drawing G6370.02.007 Detailed Target Notes (TN) are presented in Appendix B. The habitats present within the development site or adjacent to the site are listed below, along with brief descriptions:

- Buildings;
- Hardstanding;
- Modified neutral grassland;
- Scattered trees;
- Introduced shrub;
- Species-poor intact hedgerow;
- Plantation woodland.

Buildings

3.17 The building, a former B&Q warehouse, is a double storey warehouse which has a brick base and an upper section constructed of metal sheeting. The roof is pitched with some flat sections comprising metal sheeting (Figure 2). The north eastern section of this building is one storey comprised of glass, a former garden centre. The roof is pitched and comprised from metal sheeting (Figure 3).

3.18 In the east of the site are two smaller, metal structures, which appear to have utilities function. Both structures are flat roofed with no windows (Figure 4).

Hardstanding

3.19 The majority of the site comprises hardstanding associated with the B&Q building, previously used for car parking.

Modified Neutral Grassland

3.20 Modified neutral grassland[4] is typical of urban areas and develops from amenity grassland as a result of lack of management. In the west of the site is small east sloping bank of species-poor modified neutral grassland. Species include perennial ryegrass *Lolium perenne*, cock's foot *Dactylis glomerata*, rough meadow grass *Poa trivialis*, creeping buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, ribwort plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, willowherb *Epilobium* species and broadleaved dock *Rumex obtusifolius* (Figure 5).

Scattered Broadleaved Trees

3.21 In the south of the site is a line of scattered trees consisting of wild cherry *Prunus avium*, hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, silver birch *Betula pendula* and lime *Tilia* species.

[4] 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'.

Introduced Shrub

3.22 Scrub (butterfly bush *Buddleja davidii*) is scattered across the areas of hardstanding.

Species-poor Intact Hedgerow

3.23 In the north of the site, between the site and the cricket ground there is a short line of leyland cypress, *Cupressus x leylandii* hedgerow (Figure 6).

Plantation Woodland

3.24 An area of trees and scrub is present adjacent to the south of the site, lining the Altrincham to Manchester/Bury Metrolink line. Tree species are predominately silver birch and ash *Fraxinus excelsior* (Figure 7).

## Invasive and Protected Plant Species

3.25 No protected plant species (WCA8) or invasive plant species (WCA9) were identified during the extended Phase 1 habitat survey.

*Figure 2: Former B&Q building*

*Figure 3: Former garden centre*

*Figure 4: Utilities structures*

*Figure 5: Modified-neutral grassland*

*Figure 6: Species-poor hedgerow*

*Figure 7: Plantation woodland*

### Connectivity with the wider landscape

3.26 The site is surrounded by residential and commercial land. There is limited connectivity from the site to the wider landscape. The Altrincham to Manchester/Bury Metrolink line to the south of the site is lined by trees, providing a green corridor.

### Fauna

Bats

3.27 All the trees on site were assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats due to being young in age and/or having no features present suitable for roosting.

3.28 The former B&Q building was assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats. The building does not have any roosting features for bats or access points for bats to enter the building. There were small weep holes on the eastern facade, however these are too small to provide potential for roosting bats.

3.29 The two utilities structures were also assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats. The structures do not have any roosting features for bats or access points for bats to enter the building.

3.30 The trees and scrub along the Metrolink adjacent to the south of the site provide commuting and foraging habitat for bats.

Badger

3.31 There are no suitable habitats for badger sett excavation or foraging on site as it is predominantly hardstanding. The Metrolink embankment provides the most suitability for commuting and foraging badgers. However no evidence of badgers such as setts, latrines, hairs etc. was identified on or adjacent to the site during the survey.

Birds

3.32 The habitats within site are largely hardstanding, however, the hedgerow, scattered trees and scrub have potential to support nesting birds. The buildings on site do not have potential to support nesting birds. The area of plantation woodland adjacent to the southern site boundary also offer nesting potential.

Amphibians

3.33 Ordinance Survey (OS) mapping shows there are no ponds within 500m of the site. There are no areas of standing water within the site boundary to support breeding amphibians. The site does not support any suitable habitats for foraging or commuting amphibians.

Reptiles

3.34 Reptiles favour a range of habitat types and varying topography to provide a combination of necessary conditions required for shelter, foraging and basking. The site is dominated by hardstanding which lacks the habitat structure to support reptiles.

Water vole and Otter

3.35 There are no suitable habitats on site or adjacent to site to support otter or water vole. The closest watercourse is the Bridgewater canal located 890m to the south west of the site.

# 4.0 Conclusions

4.1 This section concludes the potential impacts on the ecological receptors in and around the application site from the proposed residential development.

### Designated Sites

Designated Sites

4.2 Given the distance of the site from any internationally or nationally designated sites, no impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposals. Additionally, this development type is not listed as a likely risk for the designated sites associated with the IRZ's. No direct or indirect impacts are considered likely on these designated sites and are not considered further in this assessment.

4.3 There are two statutory locally designated sites located approximately 2km of the site and one non-statutory locally designated site within 1km of the site. Given the distance of these sites from the development site no direct impacts are anticipated as a result of the proposed development. There may be potential indirect impacts on these sites associated with increased recreational pressure from future residents, however these are unlikely to be significant given the size of the development in relation to the heavily urban surroundings, and the presence of a large urban park (Longford Park) less than 300m to the south which is likely to be visited in preference to the SBIs.

### Habitats and Plants

4.4 There are no S41 habitats of principal importance within or adjacent to the site. The hedgerow on site does not qualify as S41 habitats of principal importance as it does not primarily consist of UK woody species.

4.5 A number of trees will be directly impacted by proposals as they fall within the footprint of the proposed residential property. There will be a requirement to mitigate for the loss of these trees on site with replacement tree planting.

Invasive and Protected Species

4.6 No protected (WCA8) or invasive (WCA9) plant species were identified during the extended Phase 1 habitat survey. As the Phase 1 habitat survey was undertaken outside of the optimal survey period, it is possible that protected or invasive species could have been missed, however given the limited nature of the habitats on site it is not considered likely that protected plant species are present, while even though invasive plant species tend to die back in winter, they leave recognisable winter structures, therefore it is not considered likely that protected or invasive species were missed on site.

## Fauna

Bats

4.7 The existing buildings will be demolished and trees felled to facilitate the proposed development. All trees and buildings on site were assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats. There will be no impact on bat roosting habitat as a result of the proposed works. There are no implications to the development with regard to roosting bats.

4.8 The trees and scrub along the Metrolink adjacent to the south of the site provide commuting and foraging habitat for bats. This area will not be directly impacted by the proposed development. Considerations to external lighting on this linear habitat will need to be taken into account.

Badger

4.9 The site is not considered to offer suitable habitat for either sett excavation or foraging for badgers. The surrounding urban land, although not optimal habitat, does offer some potential for badgers. No setts were found within 30m of the site. There are no current implications for the development with regard to badgers.

Birds

4.10 Due to the lack of vegetation present within the site boundary, the suitability to support nesting birds is minimal. The building is not considered suitable to support nesting birds. The northern hedgerow and scattered trees on the southern boundary and the trees and shrub adjacent to the site offer limited nesting bird potential.

Amphibians

4.11 There are no ponds on site or within 500m of the site. The site comprises mainly hardstanding within a small area of modified neutral grassland. As such the site is considered sub-optimal to support breeding, commuting and foraging amphibians. Given the lack of available breeding habitat within the site and wider landscape and lack of suitable terrestrial habitat for amphibians on site there are no anticipated implications for the development with regard to amphibians.

Reptiles

4.12 The habitats on site are not considered suitable to support reptiles. Reptiles are not known to the area and given the lack of suitable habitat on site there are no implications for the proposed development with regard to reptiles.

Water vole and otter

4.13 There are no watercourses present on site or within 100m of the site boundary and therefore no habitat suitable to support either water vole or otter. There are no implications for the proposed development with regard to water voles or otter.

# 5.0 Recommendations

5.1 It is considered that the ecological features present within the site do not preclude sustainable development of the site for the proposed residential development. However, a number of potential ecological constraints require further consideration so as to ensure that development does not result in either an offence being committed in respect of protected species or in a net loss of biodiversity interest. A number of measures to protect, maintain and enhance ecological features within the site are recommended to comply with current legislation and policy.

### Habitats

5.2 Replacement planting of native trees unavoidably lost to the development should be provided on site or, where this is not possible, in the local vicinity.

### Fauna

Bats

5.3 If external lighting is required, a sensitive lighting design will be implemented on the scheme to avoid indirect impacts of lighting on nocturnal and crepuscular species, particularly along the railway line, north of the development site. There are four key lighting design principles:

- Use of unnecessary lighting will be avoided.
- Spatial spread of lighting – the horizontal and vertical spread of artificial light will be minimised, and take into account both primary and reflected light sources. Directional lighting can be achieved by angle and orientation of beam, use of a cowl, louvre or other light shield, or a combination of these.
- Timing and duration of lighting – timers and bespoke dimming regimes may be used to ensure that luminaires are reduced at times of predicted low use. These can be set to change with the seasons and therefore reflect the shifting time of dusk and dawn throughout the year. Motion sensors provide further control to ensure that areas are illuminated only when required.
- Intensity and colour of lighting – light intensity will be as low as possible whilst meeting the objectives of the intended function. The colour of lighting will need to take into account the sensitivity of the ecological receptors on site. Light sources selected should emit zero ultra-violet light wherever possible. Interim guidance from the Bat Conservation Trust (2014) recommends that white and blue spectrum light should be avoided or, where white lights are required, these should be of warm/neutral colour and have a peak wavelength above 550 nanometers. Narrow spectrum light sources should be used (to lower the range of species affected by lighting).

Badger

5.4 A pre-commencement check for badgers within and adjacent to the site should be undertaken prior to works beginning on site. If works do not commence within a year from the date of the ecological site visit..

Birds

5.5 It is recommended that all vegetation clearance including works to buildings avoids the core breeding bird season, March to August inclusive; although it should be noted that bird nesting can take place outside this period.

5.6 If clearance works, are necessary during the core breeding bird season, or at any time when bird nesting is suspected, a nesting bird check of the affected area by an experienced ecologist will be undertaken. The nesting bird check will take place no more than 24 hours prior to the clearance works. In the event that an active nest is found the ecologist will provide advice on setting up a suitable protection area around the nest until the young have fledged. The extent of the exclusion zone will depend upon the bird species concerned and its location within the development. Extensive clearance of potential bird nesting habitat is not always practical during the core breeding season and development programmes should take this constraint into account.

5.7 Installation of bird boxes would mitigate opportunities available to nesting birds lost by development. Nesting features should be targeted for those species known to occur in the surrounding area. A combination of boxes designed to support a range of bird species could be installed in discrete locations. This could be a 1SP Sparrow Terrace or a Schwegler 1B bird box, or similar. These should be sited at an appropriate height and aspect, close to retained and created habitats for birds.

## Opportunities for Biodiversity Enhancement

5.8 Under the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF), developments should aim to minimise impacts on biodiversity and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity. Local policies in the Trafford Local Plan Core Strategy (January 2012) encourage developers to implement reasonable opportunities to enhance or create new biodiversity on site or adjacent to potential sites, to produce a net gain in biodiversity. To comply with the NPPF and local policies a number of opportunities for further habitat enhancements which will benefit biodiversity have been suggested.

5.9 Installation of bat boxes would provide opportunities available to roosting bats. A combination of boxes designed to support a range of bat species known to the area could be installed on mature retained trees or on external walls of buildings around the site. This could be a Schwegler 2F bat box or a Beaumaris Woodstone Bat box, or similar. These should be sited at an appropriate height and aspect, close to retained and created habitats for bats.

5.10 Inclusion of green trellising on the buildings will provide biodiversity benefits by creating new vegetated habitat in an urban area largely lacking habitat of value to wildlife and creating new links in an intermittent network of habitats. Native species within the soft landscaping proposals should be used where possible and will provide foraging opportunities for local wildlife.

5.11 A green roof will be incorporated into the new roof design. Inclusion of a green roof will provide biodiversity benefits by creating newly vegetated habitat in an urban area largely lacking habitat of value to wildlife and creating new links in an intermittent network of habitats. The inclusion of the green roof will provide connections through 'stepping stones' between habitats of value to biodiversity.

5.12 The green roof is recommended to be planted with a seed mix provided by Bauder (Bauder Flora 3 Seed mix) or equivalent specification from an alternative supplier. The seed mix has been developed specifically for successful establishment in rooftop conditions and to maximise the diversity of vegetation. The mix contains forty nine species, 65% of the mix are perennial wildflower, 20% annuals ad 15% are grasses/sedges. Thirty five of the wildflowers are classed and RHS Perfect for Pollinators. A 'bug hotel' could be incorporated into the green roof space in the vicinity of new planting to host the newly encouraged pollinators in the area.

# APPENDIX A: Ecology Desk Study

THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP

# GREAT STONE ROAD

# STRETFORD MANCHESTER

# DESK BASED ECOLOGY ASSESSMENT

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## TABLES PAGE



## FIGURES PAGE

# 1.0 Introduction

1.1 The Environment Partnership (TEP) were commissioned, by WSP | Indigo Planning in January 2020, to complete an ecology desk based assessment of land known as Former B&Q site off Great Stone Road in Stretford, Manchester (hereafter referred to as 'the site'). This assessment is required to inform residential development proposals.

1.2 The central grid reference of the site is SJ 80935 95396 and the location of the site is shown in Figure 1 below.

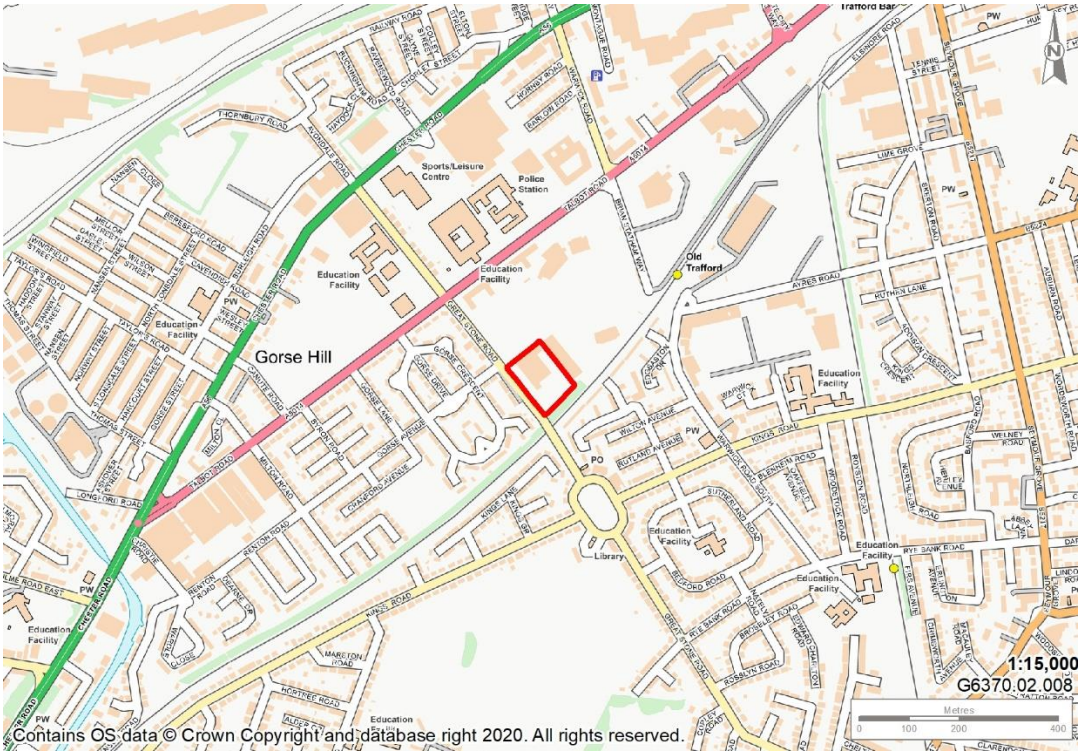



*Figure 1: Site location plan (Contains Ordnance Survey data © Crown copyright and database right 2020)*

# 2.0 Method

2.1 Information regarding historic species records and protected sites was requested/gathered from the sources listed in Table 1. This collated data gives a useful indication of the distribution and abundance of ecological receptors at a given locale. An absence of records does not indicate the absence of protected species from the search area.

*Table 1: Sources of ecological information*

| Source of Information | Nature of Information |
|---|---|
| Magic Map | Maps showing internationally designated sites to 10km, nationally designated sites to 5km, locally designated sites to 2km, Natural England licences within 2km of the site and habitats of value to biodiversity within and adjacent to the site |
| Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) | Protected species records and locally designated sites within 2km |
| Trafford Council | Land allocations and relevant policies |
| ArcMap10 | Ordnance & Aerial survey mapping |

2.2 Statutory designated wildlife sites of international importance may include:

- Ramsar sites;
- Special Area of Conservation (SAC); and
- Special Protection Area (SPA).

2.3 Statutory designated wildlife sites of national importance may include:

- Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI);
- National Nature Reserve (NNR);
- Marine Nature Reserve (MNR); and
- Area of Outstanding National Beauty (AONB).

2.4 Statutory designated wildlife sites of local importance refers to Local Nature Reserves (LNR).

2.5 Non-statutory designated wildlife sites of local importance may include:

- Local Wildlife Site (LWS);
- Site of Biological Importance (SBI); and
- Biological Heritage Site (BHS).

2.6 Habitats of value may include those listed under any of the following:

- Ancient woodland;
- Main rivers[1];

[1] Main rivers are statutory watercourses designated by the Environment Agency (in England). 'Main rivers' are usually larger streams and rivers, but some of them are small watercourses of significance. Works within 8m of main rivers are generally prohibited or require permission as there could be flood risk implications.

- Habitats of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (S41); and
- Local Biodiversity Action Plan Habitats (LBAP).

2.7 Protected species records may include those listed under any of the following:

- European Protected Species (EPS);
- Protected bird species under Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (WCA1);
- Protected animal species under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (WCA5);
- Protected plant species under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (WCA8);
- Invasive non-native plant species under Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended (WCA9);
- Protection of Badgers Act 1992 (PBA);
- Species of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006 (S41);
- Red and Amber listed Birds of Conservation Concern (BRd/BAm); and
- Local Biodiversity Action Plan Species (LBAP).

# 3.0 Legislation and Planning Policy

3.1 This section details legislation and planning policy which may have relevance to the site. Only legislation and policy relevant to biodiversity are included.

## International Planning Policy

Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017

*Protected Species*

3.2 European Protected Species (EPS) and their breeding sites or resting places are protected under Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (and as amended), which makes it illegal to:

- Deliberately capture, injure or kill any such animal or to deliberately take or destroy their eggs;
- Deliberately disturb such an animal; and
- Damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place of such an animal.

3.3 European Protected Species (EPS) licenses can be granted by Natural England in respect of development to permit activities that would otherwise be unlawful under the Conservation Regulations, providing that the following 3 tests (set out in the EC Habitats Directive) are passed, namely:

- The development is for reasons of overriding public interest;
- There is no satisfactory alternative; and
- The favourable conservation status of the species concerned will be maintained and/or enhanced.

3.4 Under Regulation 9(5) of the Conservation Regulations, Planning Authorities have a duty to 'have regard to the requirements of the EC Habitats Directive' i.e. LPA's must consider the above 3 'tests' when determining whether Planning Permission should be granted for developments likely to cause an offence under the Conservation Regulations.

*Protected Sites*

3.5 The Regulations also deal with the assessment of potential impacts on sites of European nature conservation importance, in this case, the Manchester Mosses SAC. Requirements are set out within Regulations 63 and 64 of the Habitats Regulations, where a series of steps and tests are followed for plans or projects that could potentially affect a European site. The steps and tests set out within Regulations 63 and 64 are commonly referred to as the 'Habitats Regulations Assessment' process.

3.6 All plans and projects (including planning applications) which are not directly connected with, or necessary for, the conservation management of a habitat site, require consideration of whether the plan or project is likely to have significant effects on that site. This consideration should take into account the potential effects both of the plan/project itself and in combination with other plans or projects. Where an adverse effect on the site's integrity cannot be ruled out, and where there are no alternative solutions, the plan or project can only proceed if there are imperative reasons of over-riding public interest and if the necessary compensatory measures can be secured.

## National Planning Policy

National Planning Policy Framework 2019

3.7 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF19) sets out the Government's planning policies for England and how these are expected to be applied at a local level in development plans and how developers should address them. The Framework places great emphasis on plans and developments contributing to sustainable development.

3.8 The NPPF19 states:

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

- if significant harm resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
- development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;
- development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and;
- development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to incorporate biodiversity improvements in and around developments should be encouraged, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity;
- The following should be given the same protection as habitats sites:
- a) potential Special Protection Areas and possible Special Areas of Conservation;
- b) listed or proposed Ramsar sites; and

- c) sites identified, or required, as compensatory measures for adverse effects on habitats sites, potential Special Protection Areas, possible Special Areas of Conservation, and listed or proposed Ramsar sites.

Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981

3.10 Animal species listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended) receive full protection which makes it illegal (subject to certain exceptions) to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any such animal;
- Intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct any place used for shelter or protection by any such animal; and
- Intentionally or recklessly disturb such animals while they occupy a place used for shelter or protection.

3.11 Some species receive partial protection under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended by the Countryside and Rights of Way Act 2000), which provide protection against intentional killing or injury of any such animal.

3.12 All wild birds (as defined by the act) are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended), which makes it illegal (subject to exceptions) to:

- Intentionally kill, injure or take any wild bird;
- Take, damage or destroy the nest (whilst being built or in use) or eggs of any wild bird.

3.13 Additional protection is provided to birds listed on Schedule 1 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended). In addition to the offences detailed above relating to all wild birds, it is illegal to:

- Intentionally or recklessly disturb any bird listed on Schedule 1, or their dependent young while nesting.

3.14 Plant species listed under Schedule 8 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (and as amended) are protected from unauthorised intentional picking, uprooting and destruction.

Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006

3.15 Section 40 of the NERC Act places a duty to conserve biodiversity on public authorities in England. It requires local authorities and government departments to have regard to the purposes of conserving biodiversity in a manner that is consistent with the exercise of their normal functions such as policy and decision-making. 'Conserving biodiversity' may include enhancing, restoring or protecting a population or a habitat.

3.16 Section 41 requires the Secretary of State to publish and maintain lists of species and types of habitats which are regarded by Natural England to be of "principal importance" for the purposes of conserving biodiversity in England. These 56 priority habitats and 943 species are drawn from earlier lists of United Kingdom Biodiversity Action Plan Priority Species and Habitats. The Section 41 lists are needed by decision-makers in local and regional authorities when carrying out their duties under Section 40 of the Act.

Protection of Badgers Act 1992

3.17 The Protection of Badgers Act 1992 makes it an offence to kill, injure or take a badger from the wild. It is also an offence to disturb, damage or interfere with a sett unless a licence is obtained from a statutory authority.

## Local Planning Policy

Trafford Local Plan Core Strategy (adopted 26 January 2012)

3.18 Trafford Local Plan: Core Strategy sets out an overarching strategy and development principles for Trafford to guide development until at least 2026.

3.19 The policies map for the Local Plan Core Strategy can be viewed by following the link: https://www.trafford.gov.uk/planning/strategic-planning/local-plan/local-plan-policies-map.aspx

3.20 Neither the site nor adjacent land is allocated for biodiversity purposes.

3.21 The Core Strategy document can be viewed by following the link: https://www.trafford.gov.uk/planning/strategic-planning/docs/core-strategy-adopted-final.pdf

3.22 The following policies relate to biodiversity and nature conservation:

- Policy R2 Natural Environment
- Policy R3 Green Infrastructure

Greater Manchester Spatial Framework Revised Draft (January 2019)

3.23 The Greater Manchester Spatial Framework Draft 2019 (GMSF) sets out how Greater Manchester should develop up until 2037 and identifies the amount of new development that will come forward across Trafford, plus the 9 other districts within the scheme/ The plan will support the delivery of key infrastructure, such as transport and utilities, protect the important environmental assets across the city region, allocate sites for employment and housing outside of the existing urban area and define a new green belt boundary for Greater Manchester.

3.24 The GMSF draft document can be viewed by following the link: https://www.greatermanchester-ca.gov.uk/what-we-do/housing/greater-manchester-spatial-framework/gmsf-full-plan/

3.25 The following policies relate to biodiversity and nature conservation:

- GM-G2 Green Infrastructure Network
- GM-G7 Tree and Woodland

- Gm-G10 A Net Enhancement of Biodiversity and Geodiversity

Local Biodiversity Action Plans (LBAP)

3.26 The LBAP document for Greater Manchester can be viewed by following the link: http://www.wildaboutmanchester.info/www/images/stories/pdfs/mbs.pdf

3.27 The following habitats are identified within LBAPs for Greater Manchester:

- Acid grassland;
- Ancient and/or species-rich hedgerows;
- Wet woodlands;
- Lowland broadleaved woodland;
- Lowland heathland;
- Lowland meadows;
- Unimproved neutral grassland;
- Marshy grassland;
- Managed greenspace;
- Rivers;
- Canals; and
- Ponds and lodges.

3.28 The following species are identified within LBAPs by Greater Manchester Biodiversity Partnership:

- Great crested newt;
- Water vole;
- Brown hare;
- Pipistrelle bat;
- Skylark;
- Linnet;
- Reed bunting;
- Spotted flycatcher;
- Tree sparrow;
- Grey partridge;
- Bullfinch;
- Song thrush;
- Floating water plantain;
- Grass-wrack pondweed; and
- Manchester poplar.

# 4.0 Site Designations

### Statutory Designated Wildlife Sites of International Importance

4.1 There is one internationally designated wildlife site within 10km of the site (Figure 2). This is detailed in Table 2 below.

*Table 2: Details of Internationally Designated Wildlife Sites within 10km of the Site*

| Name of Designation | Type of Designation | Location of Designation in Relation to Site | Reason for Site Designation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Rochdale Canal | SAC | 9.7km north east | The Rochdale Canal contains important habitats for submerged aquatic plants and emergent vegetation, including extensive colonies of the nationally scarce floating water-plantain. |

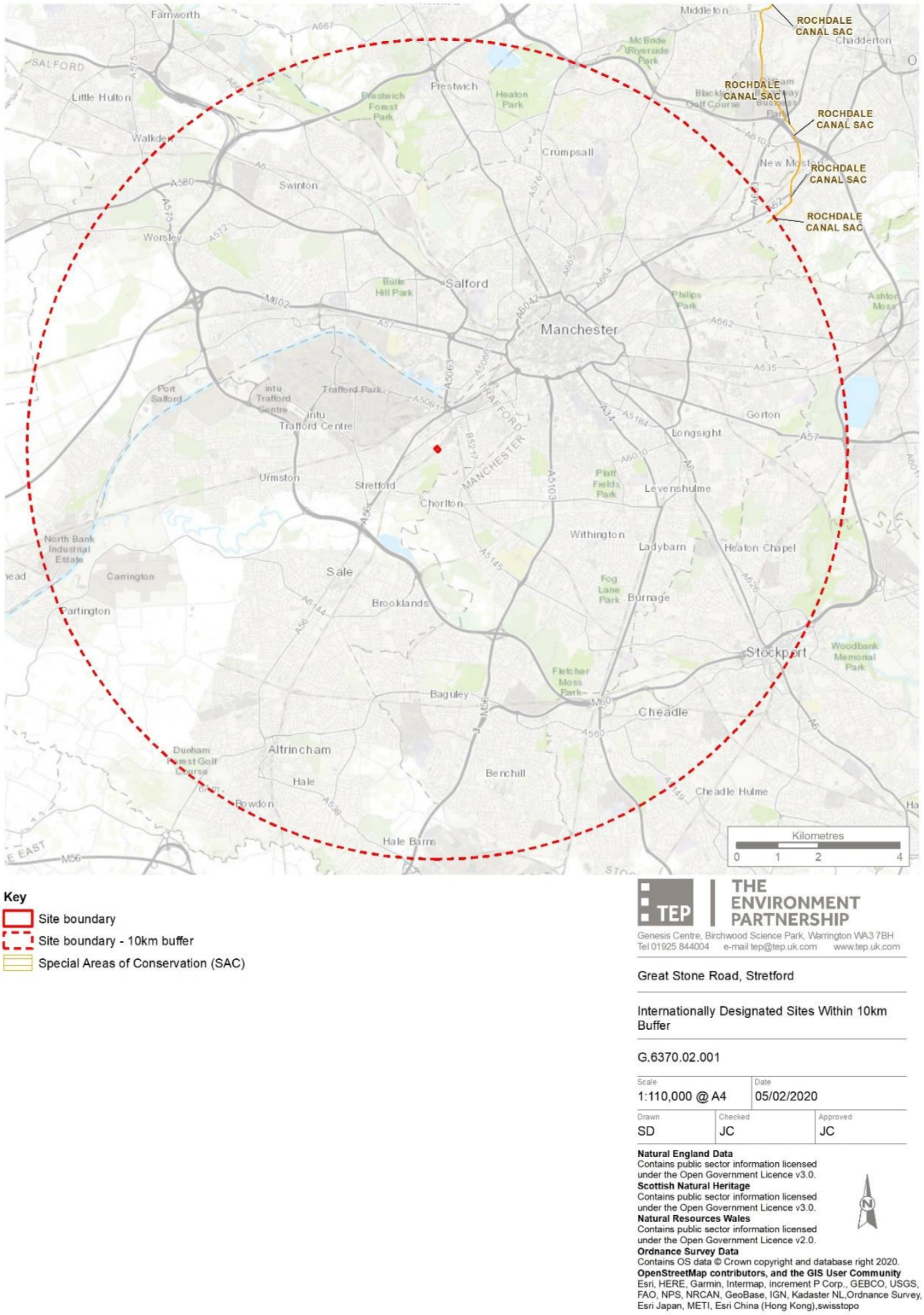



*Figure 2: Internationally Designated Wildlife Sites within 10km of the Site*

## Statutory Designated Wildlife Sites of National Importance

4.2 There are no nationally designated wildlife sites within 5km of the site (Figure 3).

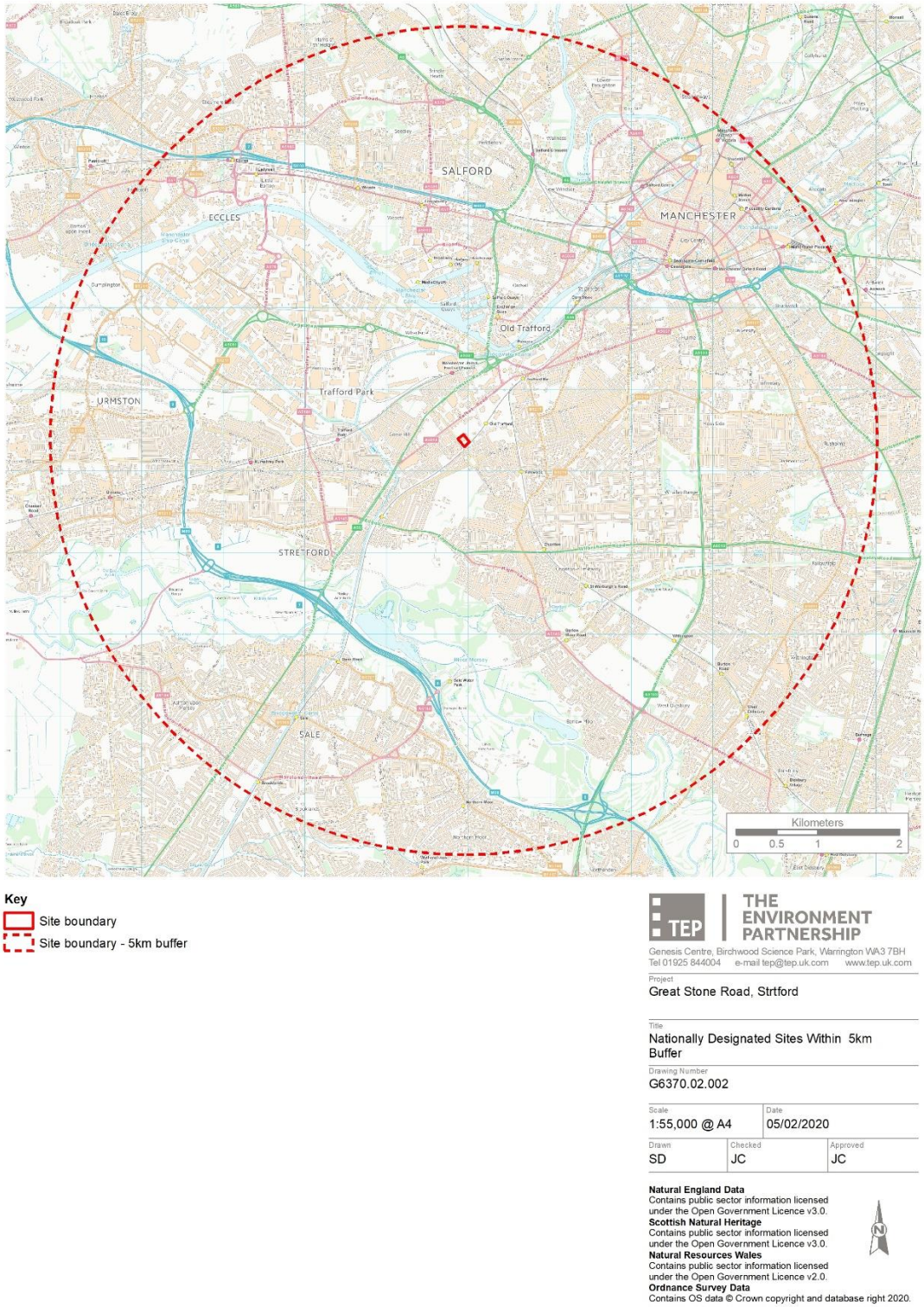


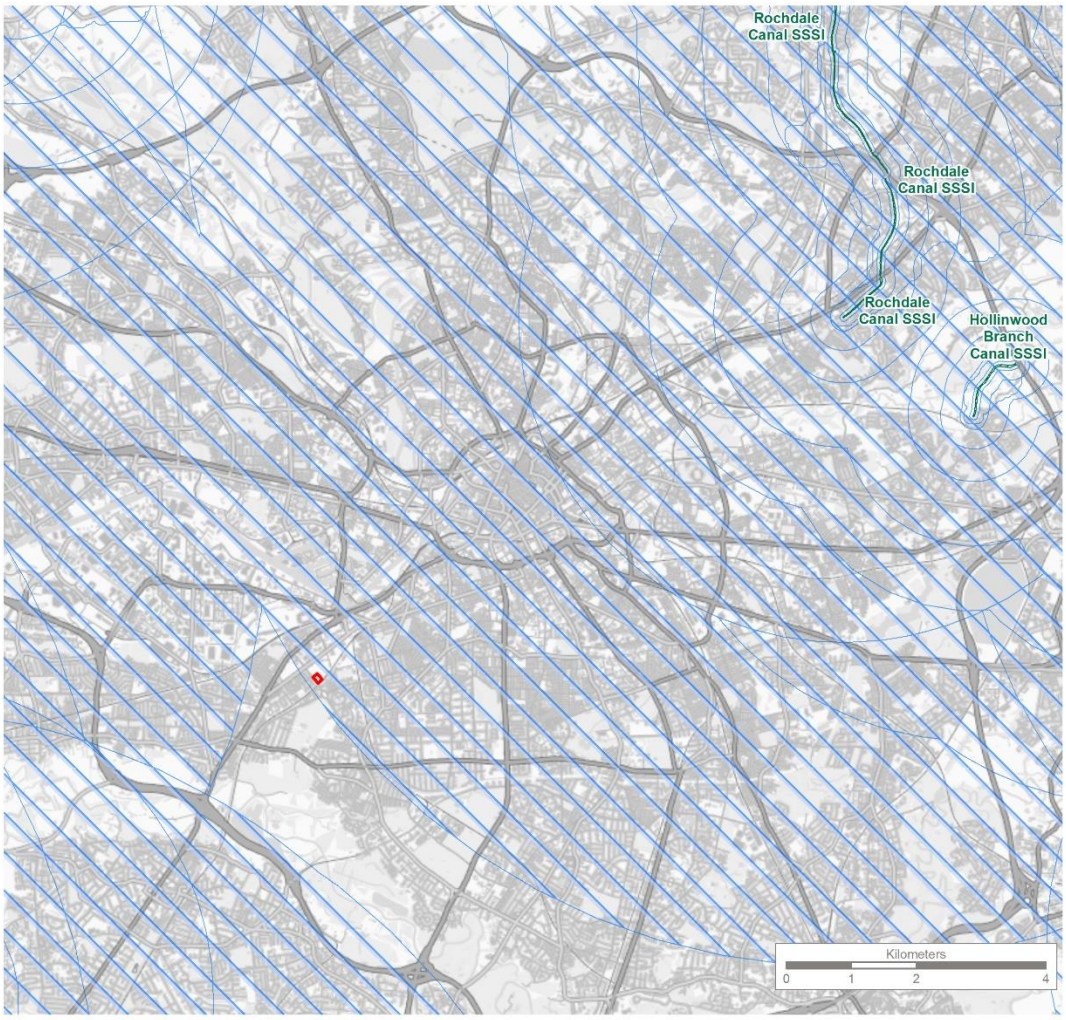

*Figure 3: Nationally Designated Wildlife Sites within 5km of the Site*

4.3 The site falls within the Impact Risk Zone (IRZ) for several SSSIs. These are shown in Figure 4 and detailed in Table 3 below.

4.4 Residential development is not listed as a risk category with regard to these SSSIs. The Local Authority is not required to consult with Natural England with regard to potential impacts on the SSSIs as a result of the proposed residential development.

*Table 3: Details of SSSI IRZ for Site*

| Name of SSSI | Location of SSSI in Relation to Site | Reason for Site Designation |
|---|---|---|
| Rochdale Canal | 9.7km north east | Important habitats for submerged aquatic plants and emergent vegetation. |
| Hollinwood Branch Canal | 10km north east | The canal is the best example of a mesotrophic standing water system in Greater Manchester and Merseyside. The main habitats are open water, swamp and tall fen. Supports open water plant communities including several regionally and nationally rare species. |




**Key**

- Site boundary
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest
- Sites of Special Scientific Interest - Impact Risk Zone

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Project: Great Stone Road, Stretford

Title: Sites of Special Scientific Interest - Impact Risk Zone

Drawing Number: G6370.02.003

| Scale | Date |
|---|---|
| 1:80,000 @ A4 | 05/02/2020 |

| Drawn | Checked | Approved |
|---|---|---|
| SD | JC | JC |



*Figure 4: SSSI IRZ within the Site*

### Statutory Designated Wildlife Sites of Local Importance

4.5 There are two statutory locally designated wildlife sites within 2km of the site (Figure 5). These are detailed in Table 4 below.

*Table 4: Details of Statutory Locally Designated Wildlife Sites within 2km of the Site*

| Name of Designation | Type of Designation | Location of Designation in Relation to Site | Reason for Site Designation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Chorlton Ees & Ivy Green | LNR | 2km south | On the site of a former sewage works there are now meadows, wildflowers and woodland walks. |
| Broad Ees Dole | LNR | 2km south | An important wildlife refuge in the busy Sale Water Park site. Although there are no footpaths leading through the Dole, the footpaths around the perimeter of the site provide excellent viewpoints to watch the bird life for which the site is so important. |

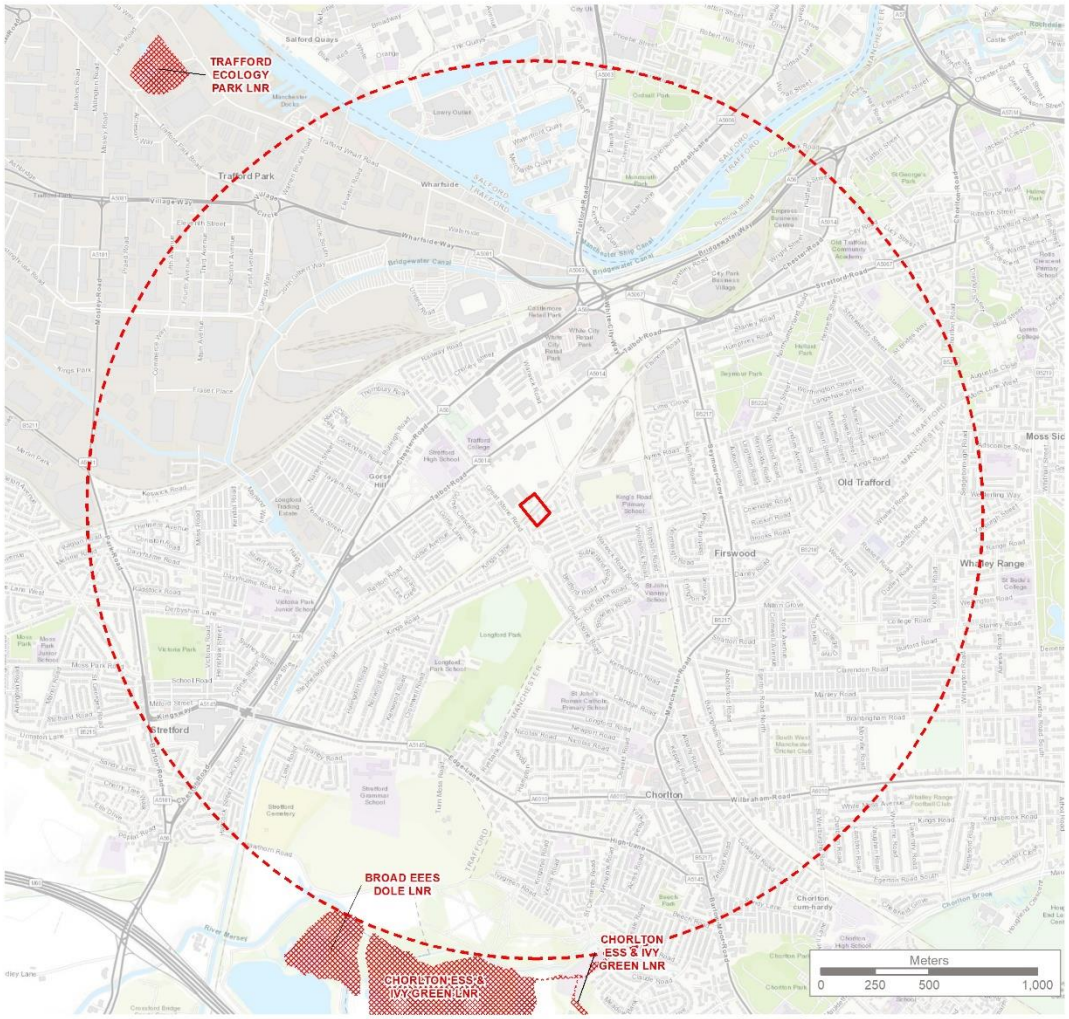


*Figure 5: Statutory Locally Designated Wildlife Sites within 2km of the Site*

### Non-statutory Designated Wildlife Sites of Local Importance

4.6 There is one non-statutory locally designated wildlife sites within 1km of the site (Figure 6). These are detailed in Table 5 below.

*Table 5: Details of Non-statutory Locally Designated Wildlife Sites within 2km of the Site*

| Name of Designation | Type of Designation | Location of Designation in Relation to Site | Reason for Site Designation |
|---|---|---|---|
| Bridgewater Canal | Site of Biological Interest (SBI) | 0.9km<br>South west | Supports floating water plantain and Freiberg's screw moss. |

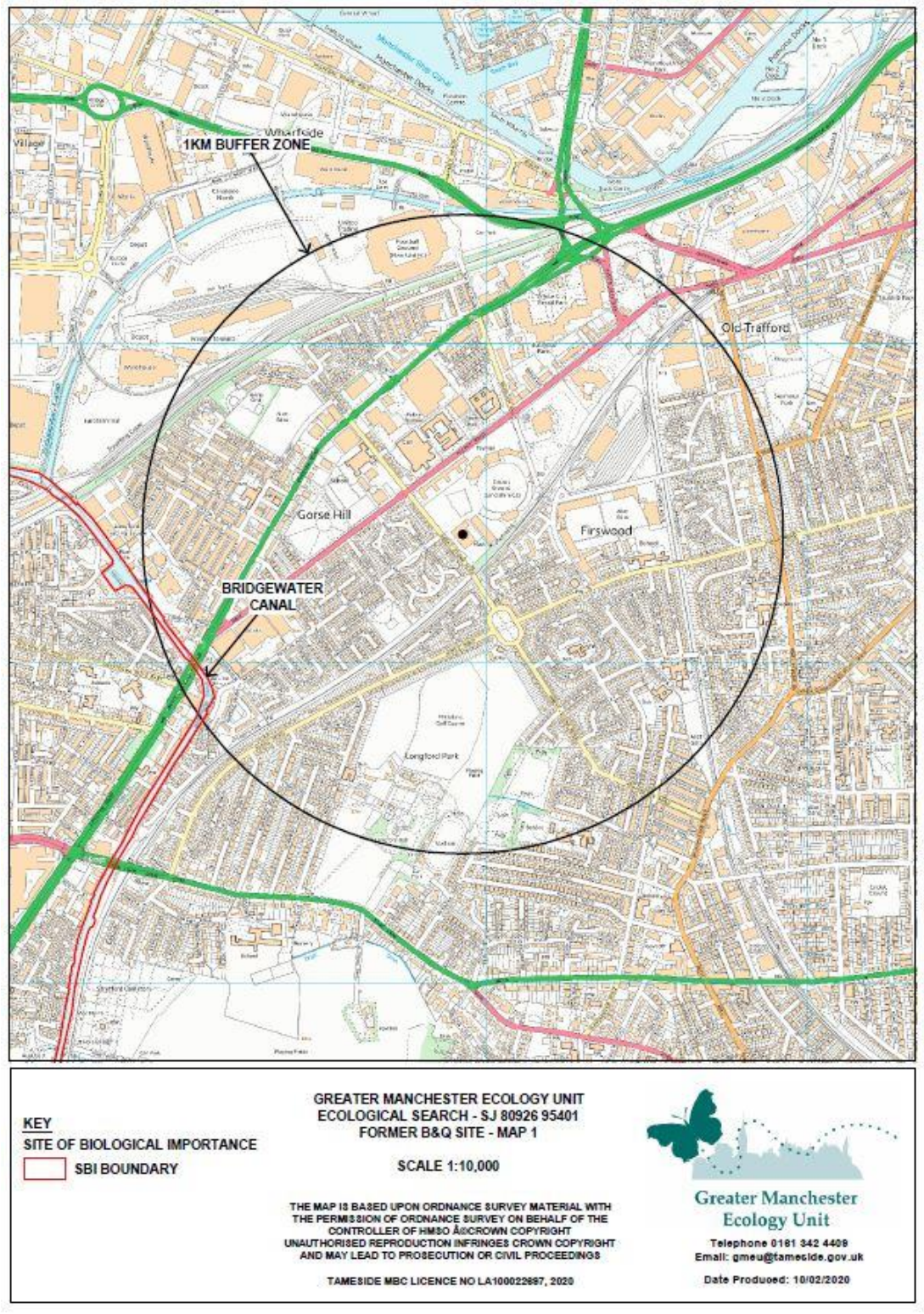


*Figure 6: Non-statutory Locally Designated Wildlife Sites within 1km of the Site*

# 5.0 Habitats

5.1 There are no notable habitats within or adjacent to the site (Figure 7).


*Figure 7: Notable Habitats within and Adjacent to the Site*

# 6.0 Species

6.1 Several species records were returned from local records centre name for within 1km of the site. These are shown in Table 6 and Figures 8 to 9.

6.2 Records of badger (no setts) were also noted within 1km, however the locations of these are confidential.

*Table 6: Notable Species Records within 2km of the site*

| Name of Species | Legislation | Closest Record to Site |
|---|---|---|
| *Amphibians* | | |
| Common toad | S41 | 0.8km East |
| *Birds* | | |
| Bullfinch | S41, BAm | 0.6km South |
| Cuckoo | S41, BRd | 0.1km North east |
| Dunnock | S41, BAm | 0.8km South east |
| Grasshopper warbler | S41, BRd | 0.6km South |
| House sparrow | S41, BRd | 0.8km South east |
| Lesser redpoll | S41, BRd | 0.6km South |
| Ring ouzel | S41, BRd | 0.6km South |
| Starling | S41, BRd | 0.6km South |
| *Mammals* | | |
| Common pipistrelle | EPS, WCA5 | 0.9km North |
| Pipistrelle species | EPS, WCA5 | 0.4km West |
| Whiskered bat | EPS, WCA5 | 0.9km South west |
| Unidentified bat species | EPS, WCA5 | 0.7km South |

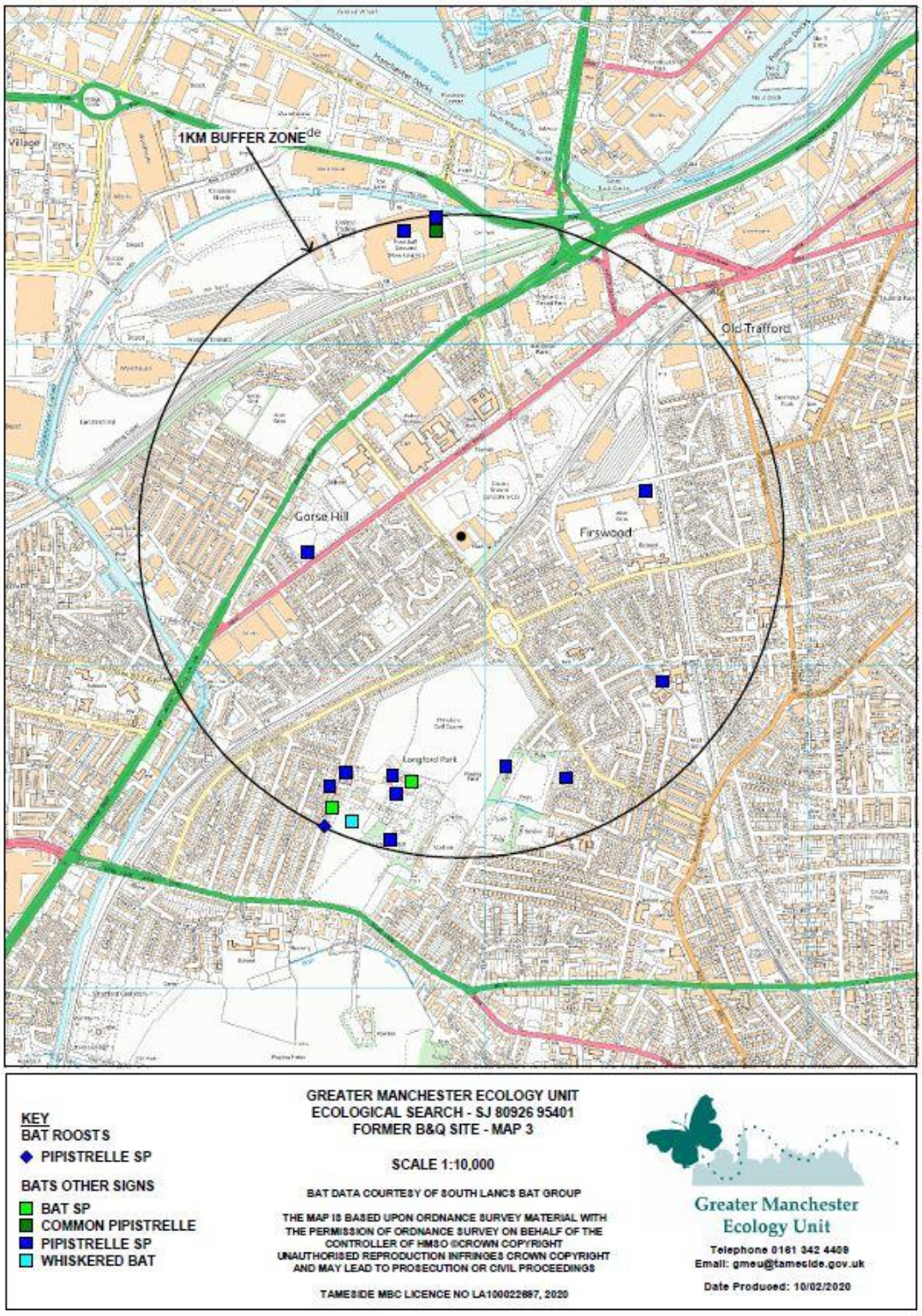


*Figure 8: Bat Species Records within 1km of the site*

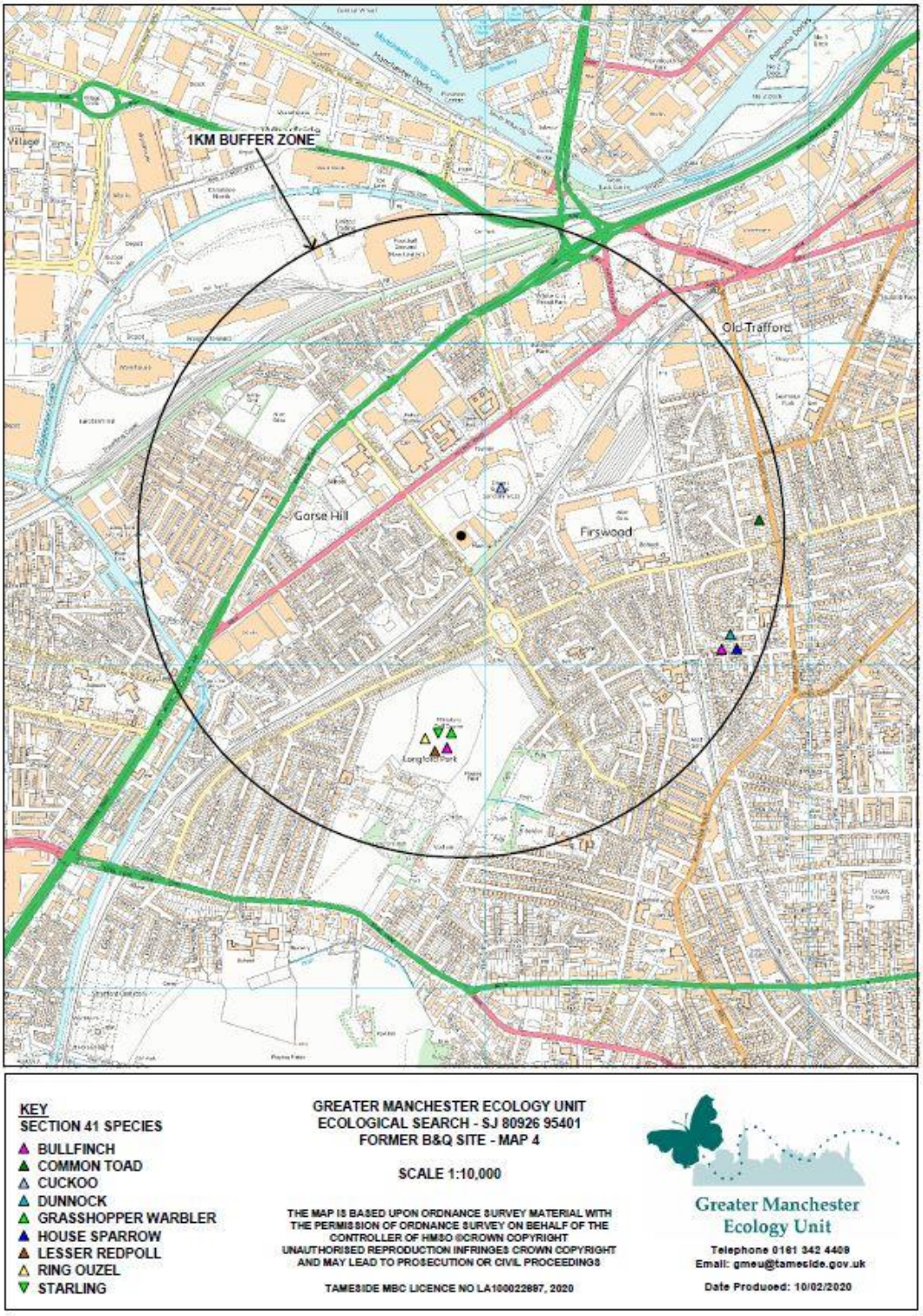


*Figure 9: S41 Species Records within 1km of the site*

## Natural England Mitigation Licences

6.3 No Natural England great crested newt licences have been identified within 2km of the site.

6.4 Five Natural England bat licences have been identified within 2km of the site. These are detailed in Table 7 below.

*Table 7: Natural England Bat Licences within 2km of the Site*

| Licence Number | Dates | Bat Species | Licensable Activities |
|---|---|---|---|
| 2014-3598-EPS-MIT | 15/10/2014 to 01/12/2014 | Common pipistrelle | Destruction of a resting place |
| 2015-15443-EPS-MIT | 08/10/2015 to 01/07/2016 | Brown long-eared bat | Destruction of a resting place |
| 2015-15443-EPS-MIT-1 | 20/10/2015 to 19/10/2020 | Brown long-eared bat | Destruction of a resting place |
| 2015-7649-EPS-MIT | 27/03/2015 to 31/12/2015 | Common pipistrelle | Destruction of a resting place |
| 2017-28375-EPS-MIT | 13/04/2017 to 30/06/2022 | Common pipistrelle<br>Natterer's bat | Destruction of a resting place |

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# APPENDIX B: Habitat Target Notes

# Target Notes Report- Great Stone Road, Stretford

## Target Note 1

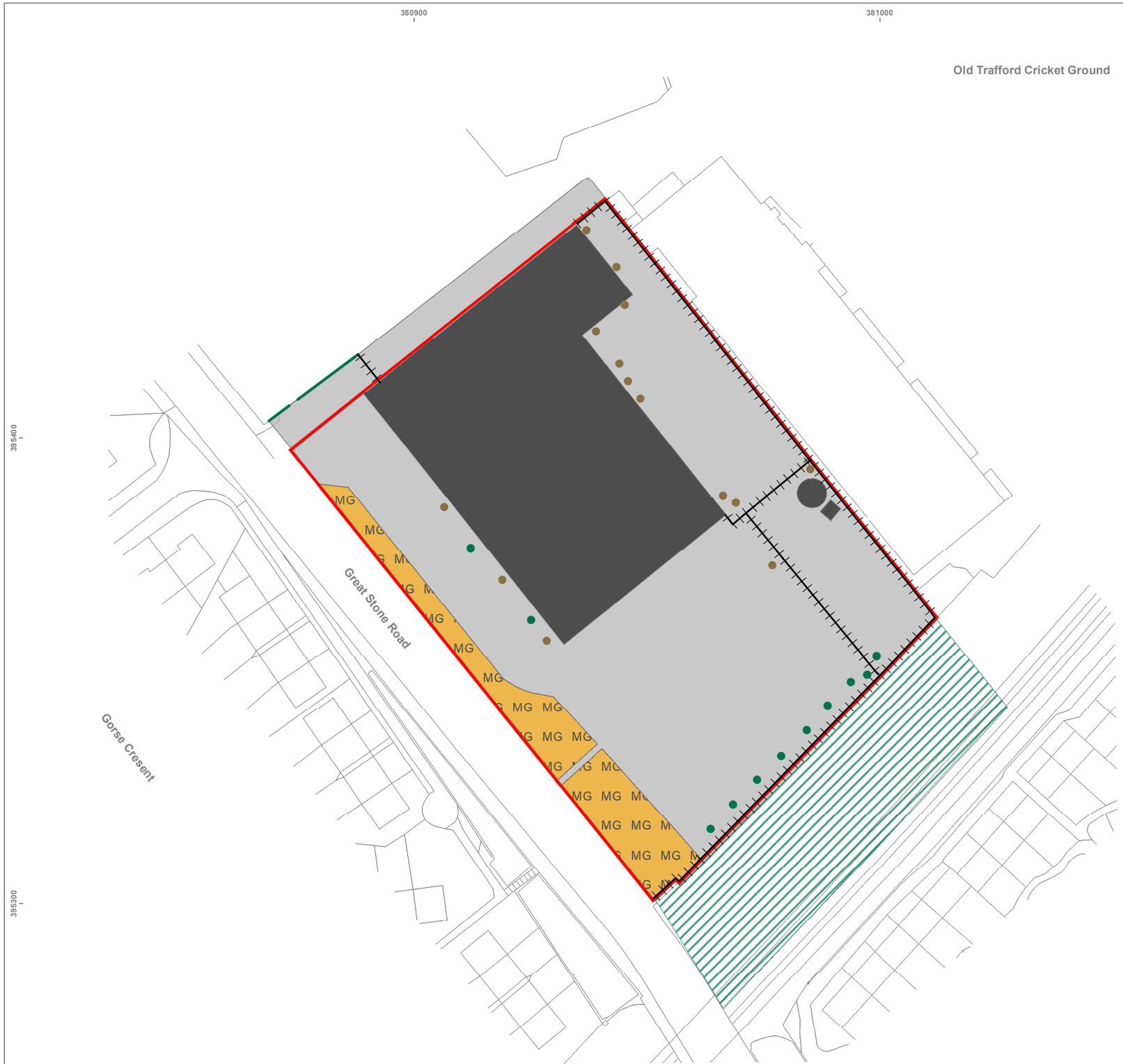
Modified neutral grassland

| | | |
|---|---|---|
| *Dactylis glomerata* | Cock's-foot | A |
| *Lolium perenne* | Perennial Ryegrass | F |
| *Poa trivialis* | Rough Meadow-grass | F |
| *Taraxacum officinale agg.* | Dandelion | F |
| *Epilobium sp.* | Willowherb species | O |
| *Plantago lanceolata* | Ribwort Plantain | O |
| *Ranunculus repens* | Creeping Buttercup | O |
| *Rumex obtusifolius* | Broad-leaved Dock | R |

**KEY - D = Dominant, A = Abundant, F = Frequent, O = Occasional, R = Rare**

# DRAWINGS

## Phase 1 Habitat Survey G6370.02.007

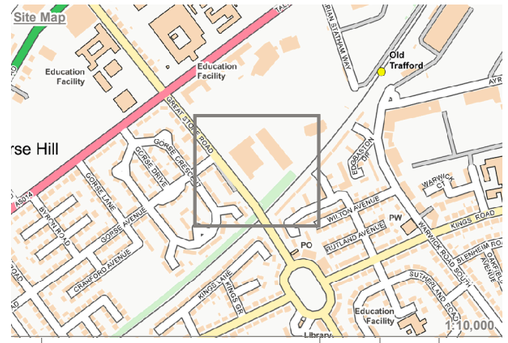



**KEY**

- Survey boundary
- Scattered broad-leaved tree
- Scattered introduced shrub
- Species-poor intact hedge
- Fence
- Plantation broad-leaved woodland
- MG MG M — Modified neutral grassland
- Building
- Hardstanding

Metres
0 15 30 60



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| | | | | |

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Project
Great Stone Road, Manchester

Title
Phase 1 Habitat Survey

Drawing Number
G6370.02.007

| Drawn | Checked | Approved | Scale | Date |
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| SA | MK | SD | 1:900 @ A3 | 12/02/2020 |

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