

Jon Gaskell
Senior Design Manager
Morgan Sindall Construction

Ryan Whitmarsh
Ecologist
amenitytree.com

06 03 24

**RE: Star Radcliffe. APPLICATION NO:70071/FUL. Planning Condition 25.
Ecology Reasonable Avoidance Measures Statement (RAMS).**

I have been asked to respond to the planning condition below:

“No development, site clearance or earth moving shall take place or material or machinery brought on site until a reasonable avoidance measures method statement for mammals and amphibians will be provided to and agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority. Thereafter, the approved measures shall be implemented in full and maintained for the duration of the construction period or for any other period as may subsequently be agreed in writing by the Local Planning Authority.”

“Reason:- This information is required prior to the commencement of development to ensure that the development does not adversely affect wildlife and protected species, pursuant to policy EN6/3 of the Bury Unitary Development Plan and Section 15 of the National Planning Policy Framework.”

Reasonable Avoidance Measures Statement: Mammals and Amphibians

Background

Desk study

Consultation with <https://bighedgehogmap.org/> indicates hedgehog records are present within the local areas with several live records presented within 1km of site.

Furthermore, data obtained from the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit illustrates the following:

- Confirmed bat roosts for Common and Soprano Pipistrelle species were located within the 1km buffer zone of site. Additionally, the data shows bat species (Daubenton's, *Myotis spp*, Noctule) utilise the site (for foraging/ commuting purposes) within the 1km buffer zone.
- A single badger sett is located approximately 800m north east from the site, within the buffer zone.

Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)

“Badgers and Hedgehog- No evidence of these species was found but a pre start check shall be made to ensure no badger activity has developed since this walkover survey. Measures are required to incorporate badger/hedgehog into the development plans. Mammal ramps (scaffold boarding) shall be used throughout development where excavations are made to allow for safe passage for badgers to escape.

“Avian- A breeding bird appraisal / survey will be required prior to any tree to removal ascertain the

importance of the site to breeding birds at that time. This will not be required outside the breeding bird season.”

“Amphibians- The desktop and field survey exercises indicate field ponds are located within 400m of the site (to the north and off site). There is no aquatic breeding associated with the site itself but optimal foraging, dispersal and hibernating habitat for amphibians to be present.”

Other survey effort.

Bats- Summer (maternity and activity) surveys were undertaken throughout May-August 2023. Results stated “No bats were found to emerge from the building. As a result, no measures are required to mitigate the effects of development on bats and there is no requirement for an EPS license (derogation or low impact) from Natural England in this instance.”

No further bat related actions are required to be outlined in this RAMS document for mammal considerations to discharge planning condition 25.

Methodology

Prior to commencing works at the site, a suitably experienced ecologist should be appointed by the main contractor to ensure that the RAMS are successfully implemented throughout development. The ecologist’s contact details, a copy of this report and other relevant documents (Amphibian ID Sheets), should be accessible to refer to on site following the course of the project. Before works commence, an ecological site induction should be undertaken with all relevant parties present. This session will detail potential issues that the proposed development may have on the affected species and necessary mitigation strategies.

In addition, consultation with the ecologist is required to ensure that any retained structures (trees/hedges) are protected from the impact of works. The landowner and main contractor will be responsible for ensuring the successful implementation of the requirements (including mitigation) in this amphibian/mammal RAMS.

Avian

Prior to commencing works at the site, a suitably experienced ecologist should be appointed to perform a breeding bird appraisal. This appraisal will determine the site’s significance to accommodate breeding/nesting birds. If significance for avian breeding is established, the ecologist will make the necessary adjustments to the design to include artificial nesting habitats. Furthermore, if work is scheduled to occur in the breeding bird season, regular appraisals will be undertaken to confirm specific breeding sites and monitor fluctuations in bird activity through the process of site clearance, the implementation of a 10m exclusion zone will be required to preserve breeding activity if present.

Badgers and Hedgehogs

The method for any vegetation will be that it shall be overseen by the supervising ecologist whom shall watch and record the gradual removal of these features. The ecologist will be responsible for a prestart site walkover and detailed check for badgers and hedgehogs. The site walkover shall examine hedges, fallen leaves, scrub and any other suitable habitat that may be utilised for nesting. If confirmed signs for these

species are found (e.g., active setts/visual identification), then works would immediately halt and the appropriate licenses would be sort from Natural England.

Following any removal of potential habitat that could be used by badgers/hedgehog on the site. Protective fencing will be installed that ensures animals can't access the site. This shall require the fence to be installed to the ground level with no gaps and be sufficiently robust that animals cannot break through it.

Amphibians

It is accepted that the hibernation/inactive period for amphibians is November-February/March. As a result, any work which is likely to result in the disturbance of a possible amphibian hibernation site, should not be undertaken during this period (and on occasions in similar conditions that are not within this period). If this is unavoidable, the appointed ecologist will devise an additional method statement, instructing how to proceed without risking disturbance/injury to hibernating individuals. As the aquatic breeding habitat will not be directly affected by works, the ideal period to proceed would be March-June as most amphibians are considered to be in their aquatic breeding sites.

The extent of the works should be discussed between the ecologist and contractor before removal of vegetation/ground disturbance begins. Also, the use of exclusion zones should be implemented, particularly surrounding aquatic breeding habitats.

The clearing of grassland shall be carried out as follows to minimize risk to species particularly common toad;

- The site will be gradually cleared using strimmers by reducing grassland to 150mm during which a watching brief from the EcOW shall be present.
- The area that has been cleared that day shall be left for 24 hours to allow amphibians to escape.
- Before the area is removed to ground level the EcOW shall walkover and check for amphibian presence or otherwise.

(This RAMS does not permit GCN to be captured or removed from the site and released at another location (as a class survey licence to handle GCN is required). If GCN are found within the working area works will halt and the Ecologist should be immediately contacted for advice on how best to proceed).

In any event an animal is found onsite, the appointed ecologist should be informed. Greater Manchester Ecology Unit can advise on suitable receptor sites for removal.

Material storage shall deter wildlife by the following means:

- All storage to be off ground for example the use of elevated stillages to avoid amphibians/mammals from seeking shelter in them
- No tipping of rubbish and a clean site policy to be used
- All material storage to be checked daily by the site manager or appointed representative for the presence of mammals/amphibians
- Any netting brought onto site shall be stored off ground and in locked containers to avoid entanglement of animals

General avoidance measures shall consist of:

- As badgers and hedgehogs are nocturnal species, no works would be carried out at the site between sunrise and sunset
- If an active badger sett is established in the pre-commencement walkover survey, no works would be carried out within 30m of the badger sett without consulting the appointed ecologist, who will advise on mitigation measures
- Where any trenches or other excavations are to be left open overnight, these would be fitted with mammal ramps or would have the sides battered to form a slope to allow animals to escape
- A tidy works area would be maintained during construction and any hazardous substances would be fenced off to remove any animal hazards from the site
- Noise and vehicle movements at the site will always be kept to a minimum and a clean site policy will be monitored by the ecologist
- Staged cutting of vegetation (to a height of 15cm for a short period of time before fully removing to allow amphibians to escape) is required

Monitoring

- The site shall be monitored at regular intervals by the ecologist to record compliance or otherwise with this RAMS.
- Such monitoring will occur regularly and more frequently throughout optimal survey seasons
- If vegetation is being cleared in the breeding bird season (March-July) regular visits will be required to monitor trends in the breeding activity and determine if the need for 10m exclusion zones is necessary.

Please do let me know if there is anything further, I can assist you with.

A handwritten signature in black ink, appearing to read 'R Whitmarsh', with a stylized, cursive script.

Ryan Whitmarsh *BSc (Hons)*.
Ecologist.