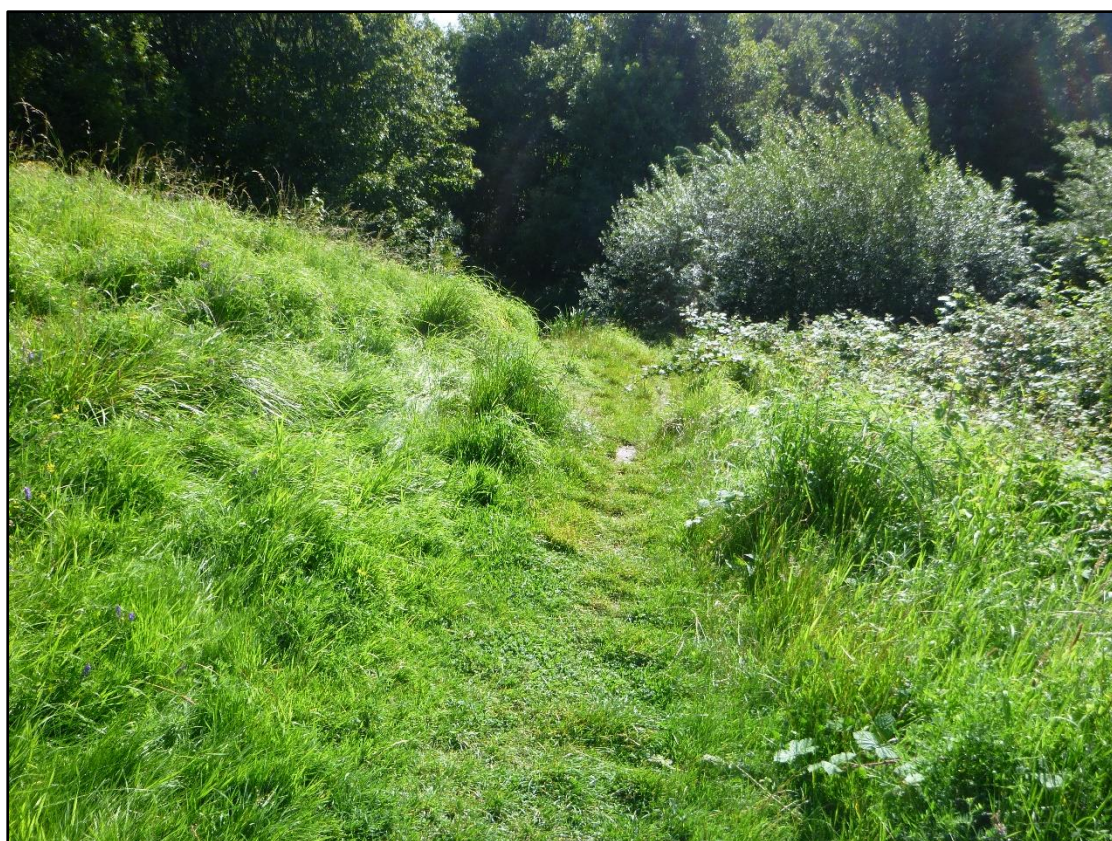


EXTENDED PHASE 1 HABITAT SURVEY OF LAND OFF BROWNHILLS CLOSE, TOTINGTON, BURY, GREATER MANCHESTER

AUGUST 2020



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1.0 INTRODUCTION

- 1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2020 by Roman Summer Associates Ltd to undertake an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Water Vole Survey of a piece of land off Brownhills Close, Bury, Greater Manchester. The site will be the subject of a planning application for the creation of a new residential development.
- 1.2 The site is situated off Brownhills Close in Tottington, Burry, greater Manchester (O.S. grid reference: SD 78441 12424 – see Figure 1). The site currently comprises woodland and grassland. A public footpath runs through the site. A tributary of Kirklees Brook also runs through the centre of the site flowing east. The site is bordered on all sides by residential development except the north-east boundary which is marked by a public footpath which woodland beyond.
- 1.3 The aims of the survey were to:
- Describe and map the habitats present on the site
 - Assess the potential for protected species to be present on the site or just outside the immediate site boundary
 - Identify where further survey may be necessary.



Figure 1 showing the site within the red line boundary

2.0 METHODOLOGY

- 2.1 A Phase 1 Habitat survey was undertaken to JNCC standards (JNCC, 2010). The site was walked, and each habitat was assigned a Phase 1 habitat category. Species lists were taken at locations of botanical interest. All botanical nomenclature follows Stace, 2019. A Phase 1 map was produced showing habitat boundaries.
- 2.2 During the Phase 1 survey, the habitats were assessed for their potential to support protected species. This included, looking for signs of Badger activity (e.g. setts, paths, latrines and hairs on fences), assessing any waterbodies on site or near the site for their potential to support Great Crested Newt and assessing the potential for any buildings or mature trees to be used by bats.
- 2.3 The site was also surveyed for invasive, non-native plant species such as Japanese Knotweed and Giant Hogweed.
- 2.4 Kate Reed (Senior Ecologist) undertook the survey on 20th August 2020. The weather was warm and dry. Kate is fully experienced and trained in conducting habitat and protected species surveys. August is an optimal time of the year for botanical work. Protected species assessments can be undertaken at any time of year. There were no constraints to the survey and the site was fully accessible.

3.0 RESULTS

HABITATS

- 3.1 The Phase 1 Habitat Map can be found at the back of the report. The habitats present are described below.

Poor Semi-improved Grassland

- 3.2 By majority of the site comprises improved grassland (see Photograph 1). Species present include Yorkshire Fog *Holcus lanatus*, Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne*, Timothy *Phleum pratense*, Red Clover *Trifolium pratense* and Meadow Buttercup *Ranunculus acris*.



Photograph 1 showing the poor semi-improved grassland

Semi-Improved Grassland

- 3.3 In the south of the site is another area of grassland this supports a greater number of herbs and has been mapped as semi-improved grassland. Additional species include Soft-rush *Juncus effusus*, Yellow Loosestrife *Lysimachia vulgaris*, Common Figwort *Scrophularia nodosa* and Strawberry *Fragaria* sp.



Photograph 2 showing the Semi-improved grassland

Continuous and Scattered Scrub

- 3.4 Continuous scrub is present on a section of the site boundary by the woodland (see Photograph 3). It is composed of Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. and Raspberry *Rubus idaeus*, with young specimens of Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Willow *Salix* sp. and Elm *Ulmus* sp. Scattered scrub is present within the semi-improved grassland (see Photograph 4) this is composed of Willow *Salix* sp, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, and Elm *Ulmus* sp.



Photograph 3 showing the continuous scrub



Photograph 4 showing the scattered scrub

Broad-leaved Plantation Woodland

- 3.5 Two areas of plantation woodland occur on the site (see Photograph 5). The trees are mostly young, and many have tree guards on the trunks. There are a small number of mature trees within these woodlands. Species include Hazel *Corylus avellana*, Holly *Ilex aquifolium*, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur* and Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*. The ground flora is composed of heart's-tongue *Asplenium scolopendrium*, Herb-Robert *Geranium robertianum*, Common Nettle *Urtica dioica*, Pendulous Sedge *Carex pendula* and saplings of the tree species.



Photograph 5 showing one area of plantation woodland

Broad-leaved Semi-natural Woodland

- 3.6 In the south-east of the site is an area of semi-natural woodland (see Photograph 6). This area of woodland supports more mature trees in Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Hawthorn *Crataegus monogyna*, Beech *Fagus sylvatica* and Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*. The ground flora is composed of Wood Avens *Geum urbanum*, Enchanter's-nightshade *Circaea lutetiana*, heart's-tongue *Asplenium scolopendrium*, and Common Nettle *Urtica dioica*.



Photograph 6 showing the semi-natural woodland

Watercourse

- 3.7 A tributary of Kirklees Brook flows east across the site with a section culverted under the footpath (see Photograph 7).



Photograph 7 showing the watercourse

Boundaries and Other Habitats

- 3.8 The site boundaries are marked with fences and the walls of the adjacent buildings to the north and south. The boundaries are otherwise unmarked. A public footpath runs through the centre of the site (see Photograph 8). The is bare ground with ruderal vegetation on either side dominated by Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*.



Photograph 8 showing the public footpath

PROTECTED SPECIES

Badger

- 3.9 Badgers *Meles meles* are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992. This Act, for example, makes it illegal to disturb a Badger whilst it is in a sett, to kill, injure or take a Badger and to obstruct the entrance to a Badger sett.
- 3.10 A Badger latrine composed of 3 dung pits was found on the northern boundary of the site (see Photograph 9). A well-worm mammal track was found within the woodland on the northern boundary (see Photograph 10).



Photograph 9 showing the one of the dung pits in the Badger latrine



Photograph 10 showing the mammal track

- 3.11 Two disused mammal holes were also found on the site. One is within the plantation woodland to the north the hole is filled with leaf litter and overgrown with Ivy *Hedera helix* (see Photograph 11). The second hole lies within the semi-natural woodland to the south. This is within the roots of a tree; cobwebs and vegetation is overgrowing the front of the hole (see Photograph 12). No evidence that the holes are Badger exists, such as Badger hairs or paw prints outside.



Photograph 11 showing the first mammal hole



Photograph 12 showing the second mammal hole

Bats

- 3.12 All bat species are Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019. Bats are also protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.13 No buildings are present on site. The trees on site were assessed for their potential to support a bat roost. Most of the trees within the woodland are young and do not support any potential roosting features. The mature trees on the within the woodland also do not support any potential features. Bats use linear landscape features, such as tree lines or hedgerows for foraging and commuting. The woodland edges and the watercourse provide such foraging opportunities.

Great Crested Newt

- 3.14 Great Crested Newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* is a Protected Species under the Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) (EU Exit) Regulations 2019 and the species is fully protected under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.15 No ponds exist on, directly adjacent to or within 250m of the site boundary. The site supports suitable Great Crested Newt terrestrial habitat within the woodland, scrub and long grasslands.

Water Vole

- 3.16 Water Vole is fully protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). This act, for example, makes it illegal to intentionally kill, injure or take (capture) a Water Vole or intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to any structure or place which Water Voles use for shelter or protection or disturb Water Voles while they are using such a place.
- 3.17 No evidence of Water Vole could be located along the watercourse during the survey. A section of the stream was not accessible due to the steep banks however, much of the stream could be surveyed. The watercourse has a stone substrate, it is fast flowing and shallow. It does not support any aquatic vegetation.

Nesting Birds

- 3.18 All bird species are protected at their nest under The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended).
- 3.19 The woodland and scrub on site provide suitable habitat for nesting birds.

INVASIVE SPECIES

- 3.20 Three non-native invasive plant species listed on Schedule 9 Part II (plants) of The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) occur on the site. Two stands of Japanese Knotweed *Reynoutria japonica* occur on the site (see Photograph 13), the locations are marked on the Phase 1 map. One of the stands appears to have undergone some previous treatment but areas of regrowth are apparent. Montbretia *Crocasmia x crocosmiiflora* is present within the semi-improved grassland (see Photograph 14), the location is marked on the Phase 1 map. Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera* is present within most of the habitats on the site but is present in high density along the footpath and the watercourse (see photograph 15).



Photograph 13 showing one of the Japanese Knotweed stands



Photograph 14 showing the Montbretia



Photograph 15 showing some of the Himalayan Balsam

PROTECTED SITES

- 3.21 No statutory protected sites lie within the site boundary. Kirklees Valley Local Nature Reserve (LNR) lies immediately adjacent to the site on the north-eastern boundary. Five other statutory protected sites lie within 5km of the site boundary. These are:
- Chesham Woods LNR which lies 2.6km to the east
 - Redisher Woods LNR which lies 3km to the north
 - West Pennie Moors Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which lies 3.6km to the north
 - Upper Bradshaw Valley LNR which lies 4.8km to the west
 - Hollins Vale LNR which lies 4.8km to the south-east
 - Severn Acres LNR which lies 5km to the south-west
- 3.22 The site also lies within the SSSI risk zone which list certain types of developments which may negatively impact upon the protected sites nearby, Natural England may need to be consulted about certain development types. Residential developments are not listed as a concern and Natural England will not need to be consulted.
- 3.23 No non-statutory protected sites lie within the site boundary. The nearest is Kirklees Brook Site of Biological Importance (SBI) which lies 25m to the north-east of the site. Two other non-statutory protected sites lie within 1km of the site boundary. These are:
- Grassland near Brandlesholme Old Hall Farm SBI which lies 0.3km to the north
 - BURRS Country Park which lies 1km to the east

4.0 ASSESSMENT

HABITATS

- 4.1 The Phase 1 Habitats present on the site are common throughout the UK. No nationally rare or locally rare plant species were located during the extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey.
- 4.2 The site does hold ecological value. The most ecologically valuable habitats are the woodland, continuous scrub, and the watercourse. These habitats provide cover from predation, a source of nectar and pollen for invertebrates, as well as foraging, commuting and overwintering opportunities. The grasslands if maintained long also provides some of these benefits. The woodland and scrub also offer nesting habitat for birds.

Development Context

- 4.3 The proposed development is for the construction of residential units in the west and south of the site. This will cause the loss of semi-improved grassland and poor-semi-improved grassland. A section of the plantation woodland will also be lost on the south-west boundary. The landscape plan for the site retains the watercourse and the semi-natural woodland and there is a new linear park and play area.

PROTECTED SPECIES

Badger

- 4.4 No Badger sett was located on the site or immediately adjacent to the site. Evidence of Badger foraging and commuting was found within the woodland in the north of the site. A reasonable avoidance measures statement should be implemented during the construction phase to ensure that any badgers using the site for foraging are not harmed during the development. Badger foraging habitat should be included within the landscaping, by the planting of fruit trees and grassland.

Bats

- 4.5 The trees on site were assessed and found to not support any potential roosting features. The woodland edges provide potential suitable foraging habitat, the semi-mature woodland and the northern plantation woodland are to be retained. These sensitive habitats should be protected by a sensitive lighting scheme. Bat boxes should also be put up on the retained mature trees and new buildings to bring gains in potential roosting habitat across the site.

Great Crested Newt

- 4.6 No ponds exist on site or within 250m of the site boundary. The site also provides suitable terrestrial habitat within the woodland, scrub and long grasslands. Given the isolation of the site to suitable breeding habitat it is considered unlikely that Great Crested Newt occurs on the site. Great

Crested Newt is not considered a constraint on site and no further survey work is necessary.

Water Vole

- 4.7 The watercourse is not considered to be optimum habitat for Water Vole. The water column is shallow with no aquatic vegetation. No evidence of Water Vole could be located during the survey. No further Water Vole work is considered to be necessary.

Nesting Birds

- 4.8 Suitable nesting habitat for birds is present within the woodlands and scrub on site. Nesting birds can be mitigated for by allowing no works to potential nesting habitats to be carried out within the bird nesting season (which is generally March – August) unless a nesting bird survey is undertaken first. Bird boxes should also be included within the landscaping to mitigate the loss of nesting habitat on site.

INVASIVE SPECIES

- 4.9 Three non-native invasive species Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*, Japanese Knotweed *Reynoutria japonica* and Montbretia *Crocsmia x crocosmiiflora* exist on the site. These are all listed on Schedule 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) which makes it an offense to allow these species to spread into the wild. The development of the site will include the treatment of the invasive species on the site which if left could spread further to the LNR and SBI to the north-east of the site

PROTECTED SITES

- 4.10 No statutory or non-statutory protected sites exist on the site. The nearest lies immediately adjacent to the site to the north-east. This is Kirklees Valley LNR a section of this Kirklees Brook is also designated as an SBI which lies 25m from the site boundary. An area of greenspace is proposed immediately adjacent to the designated sites and no construction is proposed in this area. This is considered a sufficient buffer zone for the protected sites. However, a Construction and Environmental Plan (CEMP) should be produced to ensure there are no deleterious impact to the protected sites during the construction phase of the development. The site also lies within an SSSI Impact Risk Zone which does not list residential development as a concern to designated sites nearby.

5.0 RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Protected species are a material consideration within the planning process. Following the findings from the Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey, the following protected species survey may be required:

- **Nesting Birds** - If any clearance work to the hedgerows or scattered trees needs to be carried out within the bird nesting season (generally March to August), then a nesting bird survey will be required immediately prior to work commencing.

Protected Species

Badgers

5.2 A reasonable avoidance measures statement should be implemented during the construction phase to ensure that any badgers using the site for foraging are not harmed during the development.

Bats

5.3 The woodland edges provide potential suitable foraging habitat, the semi-mature woodland and the northern plantation woodland are to be retained. These sensitive habitats should be protected by a sensitive lighting scheme.

Invasive Species

5.4 The three non-native invasive species Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*, Japanese Knotweed *Reynoutria japonica* and Montbretia *Crocasmia x crocosmiiflora* on the site, should be eradicated prior to or during the development of the site. A suitable methodology should be used for each species.

Protected Sites

5.5 A Construction and Environmental Plan (CEMP) should be produced to ensure there are no deleterious impact to the protected sites during the construction phase of the development.

Habitat enhancement and creation

5.6 During the soft landscaping design, the following measures could be implemented to enhance the biodiversity value of the site:

- Where planting is proposed, this should include the provision of native and non-native flowering perennial, annual and shrub species, to provide a pollen and nectar source for invertebrates.
- Bird and/or bat boxes could be erected onto the new development.
- Badger foraging habitat should be included within the landscaping, by the planting of fruit trees and grassland.
- Tree planting – where practical, native tree species should be planted.

6.0 REFERENCES

JNCC. *Phase 1 Habitat Survey – a technique for environmental audit*, JNCC, Updated 2010.

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PHASE 1 HABITAT MAP

Phase 1 Habitat Map

Brownhills Close, Bury, Greater Manchester

Drawn by: KR

Date: 08/10/2020

NOT TO SCALE



RACHEL HACKING ECOLOGY

