

TECHNICAL NOTE

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Phase 1 Bury Interchange – Footbridge Installation SI Works

1. Introduction and Background

The Environment partnership (TEP) was commissioned by Wilmott Dixon to undertake an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) at the site know as Bury Interchange. A site walkover was undertaken by TEP on 25th November 2024.

The purpose of this technical note is to present the findings of the walkover prior to the completion of the EclA report in order to assess the impacts of any vegetation clearance requirements for intrusive site investigations (SI) required to be completed prior to planning application submission.

This report relates mostly to the Pyramid Park area of the site in the southeast and the Phase 1 planning application for the installation of the footbridge.

1.1. Site Description

The site is located in Bury town centre, and is situated south of the A58, and to the west of Bury College. The footbridge plans will extend from Union Square, Duke Street into Pyramid Park in the east, over the Metrolink tram line. The approximate central grid reference of the site is SD 80379 10392.

2. Results

2.1. Habitats

The area of Union square in the west consists mainly of hardstanding, with two areas of amenity grassland and planted ornamental trees (Figure 1). The banks of the railway lines consisted of scattered broadleaved trees, predominantly ornamental species and dense/continuous scrub (Figures 3 and 4), mainly consisting of ornamental *Cotoneaster* species, ivy *Helix hедера* and bramble *Rubus fruticosus* (Figure 2).

The western area of Pyramid Park, where the Phase application boundary overlaps consists mainly of dense/continuous scrub in the northwestern corner, dominated by bramble with occasional scattered silver birch trees *Betula pendula* and grey willow *Salix cinerea* scrub, rose species *Rosa*

sp. are also present, as well as cherry laurel *Prunus laurocerasus*. Other areas within the Pyramid park site include areas of species-poor semi-improved neutral grassland with species such as false oat grass *Arrhenatherum elatius* and red fescue *Festuca rubra* abundant.

There is also two small area of semi-natural broadleaved woodland which lie on the embankments that borders the Metrolink line to the west. Willow species dominate these areas with occasional alder *Alnus glutinosa* and some elder *Sambucus nigra*. The understorey is sparse, dominated mostly by leaf litter and very little vegetation other than dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg. and cleavers *Galium aparine*.



Figure 1: Union Square



Figure 2: Cotoneaster scrub at Union Square



Figure 3: Bank of vegetation adjacent to Pyramid Park, view from Metrolink platform



Figure 4: Bank of vegetation adjacent to Union Square/Bury Interchange, view from Metrolink platform



Figure 5: Northwestern corner of Pyramid Park, Figure 6: Southwestern corner of Pyramid Park, areas of woodland scrub and scattered trees

2.2. Connectivity

The site had limited connectivity to the wider area due to the main roads (A58 and A56) to the north and west of the site, as well as the residential developments to the south and east and town centre, commercial developments to the north and west. However, the Metrolink line on site and the railway line to the south do provide some albeit limited connectivity as semi-green corridor which could link the site the River Irwell and Elton Reservoir in the south and the River Roch and green open space in the east.

2.3. Fauna

The potential for the site, **with regards to SI works solely for the purposes of this report**, to support legally protected and notable species has been assessed using the observations made during the site survey of habitats within and immediately surrounding the site.

Habitats present within the application areas are suitable for supporting the following species and further consideration is given below to the likelihood for these species to be affected during SI works:

- Amphibians;
- Badger *Meles meles*;
- Bats;
- Birds; and
- Hedgehog *Erinaceus europaeus*.

Other protected or notable species beyond those listed above are unlikely to be affected by the proposed SI works and as such these will not be considered further in this technical report. Other

species will be considered as part of the full Ecological Impact Assessment Report (EclA) to be produced for the site.

Amphibians

While there are no habitats, in the form of standing water, within the site or within 500m of the site that offer potential for breeding amphibians there is a flooded area of marshy grassland to the east of the site within Pyramid Park that has some suitability for foraging and commuting amphibians. The woodland and scrub habitats within the site are also suitable for foraging, commuting and hibernating amphibians.

Badgers

During the survey, no signs or setts were recorded on site. However, the dense scrub in the north of the Pyramid Park site made it difficult to access and survey, therefore there are limitations to the survey. There is suitable sett building and foraging habitat within the site and there are connective habitat corridors from the site to other suitable badger habitat in the wider area as described in Paragraph 2.2.

Bats

No trees or structures present on site were found to have suitability for roosting bats. However, the grassland, scrub and woodland offer some foraging and commuting opportunities for bats. Bats will not be impacted by the SI works and so will not be considered further within this report; however they will be assessed as part of the full Ecological Impact Assessment for the site.

Birds

Suitable habitat within site was found to support a wide range of common breeding bird species. The woodland, dense scrub and grassland offered potential for nesting and foraging birds.

Hedgehog

The scrub and woodland habitats within the site boundary were suitable to support foraging, commuting and hibernating hedgehogs.

3. Recommendations

As outlined above, SI works conducted on the site have the potential to impact amphibians, badgers, birds and hedgehogs if not mitigated for.

The following recommendations and mitigation steps are required to avoid potential impacts to these species during vegetation clearance and SI works on site.

Amphibians

It is recommended that an Ecological Clerk of works (ECoW) supervise the removal of any vegetation of site. Scrub areas, woodland and grassland should undergo a staged strim in order for the ECoW

to conduct a fingertip search of the ground for potential amphibians. Once the ECoW is satisfied that none are present, a full vegetation strip of the searched area can be carried out.

Where trees are to be removed, the root balls will also be searched for any hibernating amphibians. Any amphibians found will be relocated to a safe area within the Pyramid Park site.

In the highly unlikely event that a Great Crested Newt (GCN) is found during SI works, works must cease immediately, and an ecologist consulted. A licence from Natural England may be required to further facilitate works.

Badgers

It is recommended that a badger survey is undertaken on site, in conjunction with the vegetation clearance. Supervision of the clearance by a suitably qualified ecologist will ensure that if any badger signs or a sett is found the appropriate measures are taken to ensure badgers are not disturbed and the sett is protected from damage or destruction.

Birds

Vegetation clearance works should be completed outside of the nesting period (typically taken to be March to August inclusive). Current proposals are for SI works to be undertaken in December and January.

However, where avoidance of the nesting period is not practicable, a nesting bird check must be carried out by an ecologist no more than 24 hours prior to the works, to confirm that no active nests are present. In the event that an active nest is identified, works within the surrounding area must halt until the chicks have fledged. The required radius of the exclusion area will depend on the species found nesting and the context of the nesting location.

Hedgehog

During the fingertip search for amphibians, as outlined above the ECoW will also search for any hibernating mammals, including hedgehogs. If found, where possible they should be left undisturbed, as hedgehogs would likely die if disturbed between November-February. If disturbed or injured they should be taken to a nearby wildlife rescue centre or vet that accepts wild animals as it would be unlikely they will survive if relocated elsewhere on the site. The nearest wildlife rescue centre to the site is **Kirklees Valley Wildlife Rescue, Kirklees St, Tottington, Bury BL8 4LP.**

4. Conclusions

There are habitats present on site suitable to support a range of protected fauna species. During SI works on site, it is recommended that an ECoW is present for supervision in order to avoid impacts on these species as much as possible.

Where species are found the ECoW will be able to further advise while present on site in order to avoid risk of breaching wildlife legislation and killing or injury to protected species.