



# MOSELEY PARK SCHOOL, BILSTON

## Ecological Appraisal

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## TABLE OF CONTENTS

<b>EXECUTIVE SUMMARY .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>1. INTRODUCTION .....</b>	<b>2</b>
<b>2. SITE LOCATION AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>3. LEGISLATION AND POLICY .....</b>	<b>4</b>
<b>4. METHODOLOGY .....</b>	<b>10</b>
<b>5. RESULTS .....</b>	<b>13</b>
<b>6. EVALUATION.....</b>	<b>24</b>
<b>7. CONCLUSIONS .....</b>	<b>1</b>
<b>REFERENCES .....</b>	<b>3</b>
<b>APPENDICES .....</b>	<b>5</b>

## LIST OF TABLES

Table 1, Scoping Rationale of Ecological Features .....	1
Table 2, Timings of Protected Species Surveys .....	1
Table 3, Tree Photos .....	5
Table 4, Off-site Pond .....	8

## LIST OF IMAGES

Figure 1, Site Location .....	3
Figure 2, Habitats Map.....	15
Figure 3, Field 1 (F1) west .....	16
Figure 4, F1 east.....	16
Figure 5, F2 .....	16
Figure 6, F2 .....	16
Figure 7, F4 .....	17
Image 8, Sports ground.....	17
Image 9, Sports centre.....	17
Figure 10, Woodland pines .....	18
Figure 11, Woodland pine .....	18
Figure 12, Woodland maple species .....	19
Figure 13, Woodland maple species .....	19

Figure 14, Understory vegetation .....	19
Figure 15, Wild cherry .....	19
Figure 16, LT1 .....	20
Figure 17, LT2 .....	20
Figure 18, LT3 .....	20
Figure 19, Mixed scrub.....	21
Figure 20, Mixed scrub.....	21
Figure 21, Mixed scrub.....	21
Figure 22, Mixed scrub.....	21

## APPENDICES

Appendix 1	Tree Photos
Appendix 2	Off-site Pond

## ABBREVIATIONS

BAP	Biodiversity Action Plan
ECoW	Ecological Clerk of Works
EA	Ecological Appraisal
EclA	Ecological Impact Assessment
IEF	Important Ecological Features
LNR	Local Nature Reserve
LWS	Local Wildlife Site
NNR	National Nature Reserve
MAGIC	Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside
SAC	Special Areas of Conservation
SSSI	Sites of Special Scientific Interest
Zol	Zone of Influence

## EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Engain was commissioned to carry out an ecological assessment on the grounds of Moseley Park School, which is made up of primarily modified grassland fields, woodland and scattered trees, in Bilston, Wolverhampton.

A Habitat survey was carried out on the site, as well as a badger survey and assessment of protected species that may be using the site.

Further surveys and mitigation have been recommended for as follows:

- A pre-commencement survey for badgers;
- Nesting bird check prior to vegetation clearance, and ECoW supervision of clearance (if during the nesting bird season, March-August inclusive);
- Precautionary measures when clearing vegetation;
- Fencing of sensitive habitats during construction phase;
- Sensitive control of light during and after construction;
- Incorporation of a landscaping scheme with native or of wildlife benefit plants species.

Furthermore, we recommend incorporating a sensitive lighting scheme around the woodland and tree-line habitats as part of the development, incorporating a landscaping strategy as part of the development to mitigate for any habitat lost, and suggest precautionary measures be taken if / when clearing vegetation.

We propose a sensitive approach during construction of the proposed development, in line with the mitigation hierarchy and in line with local and national priorities, planning policy and legislation.

Enhancements to the site should include:

- Bird boxes to be incorporated in the design of the new sports centre (e.g. Schwegler Sparrow & Swift boxes);
- Bat (e.g. Schwegler 2F/2FN) bat boxes and bird boxes to be installed on trees in woodland along northern site boundary.
- Planting of a wildflower meadow to buffer between the woodland and the modified grassland of field 1 along the north-eastern boundary will create additional foraging opportunities for a range of species and mitigate for any loss of habitat in field 2 (playing field).

## 1. INTRODUCTION

- 1.1. Engain has been instructed by Astley Partnership to prepare an Ecological Appraisal (EA) for a proposed development project on the land known as 'Moseley Park School, Bilston', West Midlands (hereafter referred to as the 'site').
- 1.2. The scope of this assessment is based on the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal and Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) in the UK, published in 2017 and 2018 respectively by Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Managers (CIEEM).
- 1.3. It is supported by a desk study to identify notable or protected sites, habitats or species on or near to the site, a field survey to map and describe the habitats of the site.
- 1.4. The purpose of the Ecological Appraisal is to:
  - identify the likely ecological constraints associated with a project;
  - to inform masterplanning;
  - identify high level mitigation measures likely to be required, following the 'Mitigation Hierarchy';
  - identify any additional surveys that may be required to inform an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA); and
  - identify the opportunities offered by a project to deliver ecological enhancement.



## 2. SITE LOCATION AND DEVELOPMENT PLAN

2.1. The site lies within Bilston, just east of Wolverhampton in the West Midlands. The site is bordered by Moseley Road to the north, Cumberland Road and housing estates to the south, residential houses to the east and grassland and strips of woodland to the west. The ordnance survey grid reference for the centre of the site is SO 95125 97632 (**Figure 1**).

*Figure 1, Site Location*



### 3. LEGISLATION AND POLICY

#### Introduction

- 3.1. Wildlife in the UK is protected through European Directives, which are transposed into national legislation, supported by a range of national and local policy and guidance. Recent changes in planning policy and legislation have gone beyond site and species-specific protection to set broader goals for the conservation and enhancement of the natural environment and halting the continued loss of biodiversity in the UK.
- 3.2. Development can contribute to these goals through, for example, protecting the best features of a site and making them a valued part of the site's new use, and by incorporating enhancements to improve the site's value for wildlife.
- 3.3. The sections below provide a brief guide to the principal legislation and policy that sets the terms of reference for ecological appraisals in the UK. This is not intended to be a full description of all the obligations enacted by the various referenced documents, which should be referred to in their original form for the full details.
- 3.4. It is the responsibility of those involved with the development works to ensure that wildlife protection and nature conservation legislation is complied with at every stage of the project. Such legislation applies even in the absence of related planning conditions.

#### Relevant Legislation

- 3.5. The principal pieces of legislation relating to wildlife that are of relevance to this report are:
  - *The Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) (WCA)*;
  - *EU Habitats Directive (1992)*;
  - *The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006*;
  - *Conservation of Habitats and Species (Amendment) Regulations 2017*;
  - *The Environment Act 2021*.



- 3.6. The presence of species and habitats on a site which are protected under UK and European legislation is a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal. Ecological assessments and protected species surveys are therefore designed to provide local planning authorities with the baseline information they require to fully consider the potential ecological effects of a planning application.
- 3.7. Furthermore, *The Environment Act 2021* introduces a clearer responsibility for development to provide measurable net gains for biodiversity following good practice guidelines that are secured in the long term.

### **Relevant Policy**

- 3.8. Regional and local planning authorities are obliged to follow key principles to ensure that the potential impacts of planning decisions on biodiversity conservation are fully considered. The National Planning Policy Framework sets out the Government's policies for the protection and enhancement of biodiversity through the town and country planning system. This encourages the contribution to, and enhancement of, natural and local environments through minimising the impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible.
- 3.9. Circular 06/05: Biodiversity and Geological Conservation provides guidance on the application of the law relating to planning and nature conservation and complements the National Planning Policy Framework.
- 3.10. The presence of species protected under UK and European legislation are a material consideration when a planning authority is considering a development proposal that, if carried out, would be likely to result in harm to the species or its habitat. Ecological appraisals and protected species surveys are therefore designed to provide local planning authorities with the baseline information they require in order to fully consider the potential ecological effects of a planning application.
- 3.11. Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services, provides the UK Biodiversity Action Plan and country level biodiversity strategies for England, based on the list of habitats and species listed under The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.

3.12. Black Country Core Strategy was adopted jointly in February 2011 by Dudley Metropolitan Borough Council, Sandwell Metropolitan Borough Council, Walsall Council and Wolverhampton City Council. It includes several policies and strategies concerning the natural environment:

- CSP3 – Environmental Infrastructure

“Development proposals will need to demonstrate that the strategic network of environmental infrastructure will be protected, enhanced and expanded at every opportunity.”

“The environmental infrastructure network comprises open space, sport and recreation facilities, areas of biodiversity and geodiversity importance, wildlife corridors, the canal network, watercourses and drainage systems, air quality and renewable energy generation, pedestrian and cycle routes, areas and buildings of high design quality, and the special character and historic aspects of locally distinctive elements of the Black Country.”

“This will be achieved by:

- The production and implementation of the Black Country Environmental Infrastructure Guidance Phase 2;
- Resisting any development that compromises the integrity and quality of environmental infrastructure;
- Requiring development proposals to improve the quality and quantity of the area’s environmental infrastructure in a manner appropriate to the character and needs of the area.”

- ENV1 – Nature Conservation

“Development within the Black Country will safeguard nature conservation, inside and outside its boundaries by ensuring that:

- Development is not permitted where it would harm internationally (Special Areas of Conservation), nationally (Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves) or regionally (Local Nature Reserve and Sites of Importance for Nature Conservation) designated nature conservation sites;

- Locally designated nature conservation sites (Sites of Local Importance for Nature Conservation), important habitats and geological features are protected from development proposals which could negatively impact upon them;
- The movement of wildlife within the Black Country and its adjoining areas, through both linear habitats (e.g. wildlife corridors) and the wider urban matrix (e.g. stepping stone sites) is not impeded by development;
- Species which are legally protected, in decline, are rare within the Black Country or which are covered by national, regional or local Biodiversity Action Plans will not be harmed by development. “

“Adequate information must be submitted with planning applications for proposals which may affect any designated site or any important habitat, species or geological feature to ensure that the likely impacts of the proposal can be fully assessed. Without this there will be a presumption against granting permission.”

“Where, exceptionally, the strategic benefits of a development clearly outweigh the importance of a local nature conservation site, species, habitat or geological feature, damage must be minimised. Any remaining impacts, including any reduction in area, must be fully mitigated. Compensation will only be accepted in exceptional circumstances. A mitigation strategy must accompany relevant planning applications.”

“Current designated nature conservation sites including Local Nature Reserves will be carried forward from existing Proposals Maps, subject to additions and changes arising from further studies. Local Authorities will look to designate additional nature conservation sites as necessary in conjunction with the Local Sites Partnership and consequently sites may receive new, or increased, protection over the Plan period.”

“All appropriate development should positively contribute to the natural environment of the Black Country by:

- Extending nature conservation sites;
- Improving wildlife movement; and/or

- Restoring or creating habitats / geological features which actively contribute to the implementation of Biodiversity Action Plans (BAPs) and/or Geodiversity Action Plans (GAPs) at a national, regional or local level.

“Details of how improvements (which are appropriate to the location and scale) will contribute to the natural environment, and their ongoing management for the benefit of biodiversity and geodiversity will be expected to accompany planning applications. Local authorities will provide additional guidance on this in Local Development Documents.”

3.13. Bilston Corridor Area Action Plan including Bilston Neighbourhood Plan 2013 – 2026 was adopted in September 2014. Policy BC8 – Delivering Environmental Infrastructure at the Local Level sets out strategies in line with various national and industry good practice and policy documents on biodiversity as follows:

“Networks of environmental infrastructure, including identified ecological networks, will be protected and enhanced.”

“All housing developments must reasonably contribute towards meeting the quantity, quality and accessibility targets for open space in the most up-to-date open space audit and needs assessment.”

“New employment developments of 1,000 sqm floorspace or more will be required to provide Green Roofs to reduce the impact of the heat island effect unless it can be demonstrated that is not viable or feasible to do so. “

“Developments of 1,000 sqm or more within existing or potential High Quality Employment Areas must provide at least 10% of the overall site area as open space in order to provide amenity and recreation areas for employees and visitors, enhance biodiversity, reduce the urban heat island effect, provide for sustainable water management and improve the appearance of the area unless it can be demonstrated that it is not viable or feasible to do so. It will be acceptable for up to half of the 10% open space requirement within High Quality Employment Areas to be offset by the provision of green roofs.”

“All development proposals and public realm improvements should consider the use of Urban Wetlands and Street Rain Gardens as part of Sustainable Urban Drainage Schemes (SUDS) and the incorporation of street trees and areas of woodland in new development, particularly where there are known surface water flooding issues or where wildlife habitat connectivity could be enhanced.”

“Proposals on vacant/derelict sites to grow Biomass, for level and accessible sites of over 3 ha, or undertake Phytoremediation, where this offers a suitable remediation technique, will be supported.”



## 4. METHODOLOGY

### Desk Study

- 4.1. Online resources were used, including the UK government's online resource for geographic information about the natural environment (MAGIC Map). This and other resources were used to scope the habitat survey at an appropriate scale and level of detail. A search of MAGIC maps was carried out to identify if there were any known or possible locations of rare and/or habitats of high nature conservation priority, including sites of European importance within 10km and National importance within 5km.

### Habitat Survey

- 4.2. A habitats survey was conducted on the 17<sup>th</sup> of May 2023. The field survey method was based on the UK Habitats Classification (UK Habs) methodology as per the UK Habs User Manual.
- 4.3. Any signs of invasive species listed on Schedule 9 on WCA 1981 such as Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens grandiflora*) and giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazianum*).
- 4.4. The potential for the site to support legally protected and notable species has been assessed using the desk study results combined with observations during the field survey. The assessment of habitat suitability for protected and notable species was based on knowledge and judgement of an experienced professional informed by sources of guidance on habitat suitability assessment for key animal groups including:
- Amphibians (Gent and Gibson, 2003);
  - Badgers (Harris et al., 1991; and Roper, 2010);
  - Bats (Collins, 2016; and Mitchell-Jones, 2004);
  - Birds (wintering and breeding) (Gilbert et al., 1998; and Bibby et al., 2000);
  - Other notable mammals (e.g. dormice);
  - Reptiles (Gent and Gibson, 1998; and Froglife, 1999); and

- Terrestrial Invertebrates (Drake et al., 2007; and Kirby, 2001).

### Evaluation for Protected Species

4.5. Considering the site location, context and the habitats it contains, the following protected species are considered in this report:

- Amphibians, including great crested newt ;
- Badgers;
- Bats;
- Birds (breeding);
- Dormice;
- Terrestrial invertebrates.

4.6. The site is not suitable for otters (*Lutra lutra*), water voles (*Arvicola amphibius*) or white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*), due to no suitable waterbodies on or near site. Thus, these species are not considered further in this report.

### Zone of Influence

4.7. The Zone of Influence (Zoi) for a project is the area over which ecological features may be affected by biophysical changes as a result of the proposed project and associated activities. This is likely to extend beyond the project site, for example where there are ecological or hydrological links beyond the site boundaries.

4.8. Based on the scale and nature of the development, it has been assessed that the Zoi arising from these works is unlikely to be greater than 2km from the centre of the site. Therefore, these distances have been used to collect the ecological data search information. We have also taken into consideration any Statutory Designated Sites within 5km of the site boundary, and European Designated sites within 10km of the site boundary.

4.9. The habitat survey area comprised primarily the site. However, adjacent land was viewed where possible. As referenced in industry guidance, potential Important Ecological Features (IEFs) that are present or potentially present on and off the site which may be impacted by the proposed development have been considered.

### **Important Ecological Features**

- 4.10. In addition to the legislative requirements detailed in Section 3, the habitats and species of principal importance for biodiversity in England are listed on Section 41 of The Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006.
- 4.11. The assessment of the relative nature conservation value of the features at this site is also assessed against published criteria wherever possible. The value of habitats in the UK is covered in a wide variety of literature, including Usher (1986) and Ratcliffe (1977).
- 4.12. The main criteria against in assessing IEFs are rarity, diversity, naturalness and extent. High importance is also attached to habitats that have not been subject to agricultural intensification, and which often depend on traditional forms of management, such as ancient semi-natural woodland, species-rich meadows and traditionally managed grasslands and moorlands.

### **Limitations**

- 4.13. Engain cannot verify the accuracy of third-party information.
- 4.14. The field survey is not definitive and represents a snapshot of the ecological status of a site. Furthermore, data records help to provide a historical context, however the absence of evidence of a species does not prove that it does not use the site.

## 5. RESULTS

### Desk Study

#### *European Statutory Designated Sites*

- 5.1. The site is not subject to any statutory designations. There are no European statutory designations within 2km of the site boundary. Fens Pool (SAC & SSSI) is located approximately 8.7km south-west of the site boundary and Cannock Extension Canal (SAC & SSSI), is located approximately 9.6km north-east of the site boundary. At these distances, and considering the nature and scale of the proposals, there would be no impacts on European designated sites, and they are not considered further in this report.

#### *National Statutory Designated Sites*

- 5.2. The site is not subject to any National statutory designations. There are no statutory designations within 2km of the site boundary. There are six national statutory designated sites within 5km of the site boundary:
- Waddens Brook, Noose Lane (LNR) is located approximately 1.3km north of the site boundary.
  - Moorcroft Wood (LNR) is located approximately 2.7km south-east of the site boundary.
  - Rough Wood Chase (LNR) is located approximately 3.9km north-east of the site boundary.
  - Rough Wood (LNR) is located approximately 4.3km north-east of the site boundary.
  - Alder Coppice (LNR) is located approximately 4.6km south-west of the site boundary.
  - Wren's Nest (SSSI, NNR & LNR) is located approximately 4.9km south-west of the site boundary.

#### *Non-Statutory Designated Sites*

- 5.3. There are no non-statutory designated sites within 2km of the site boundary.

## Habitats

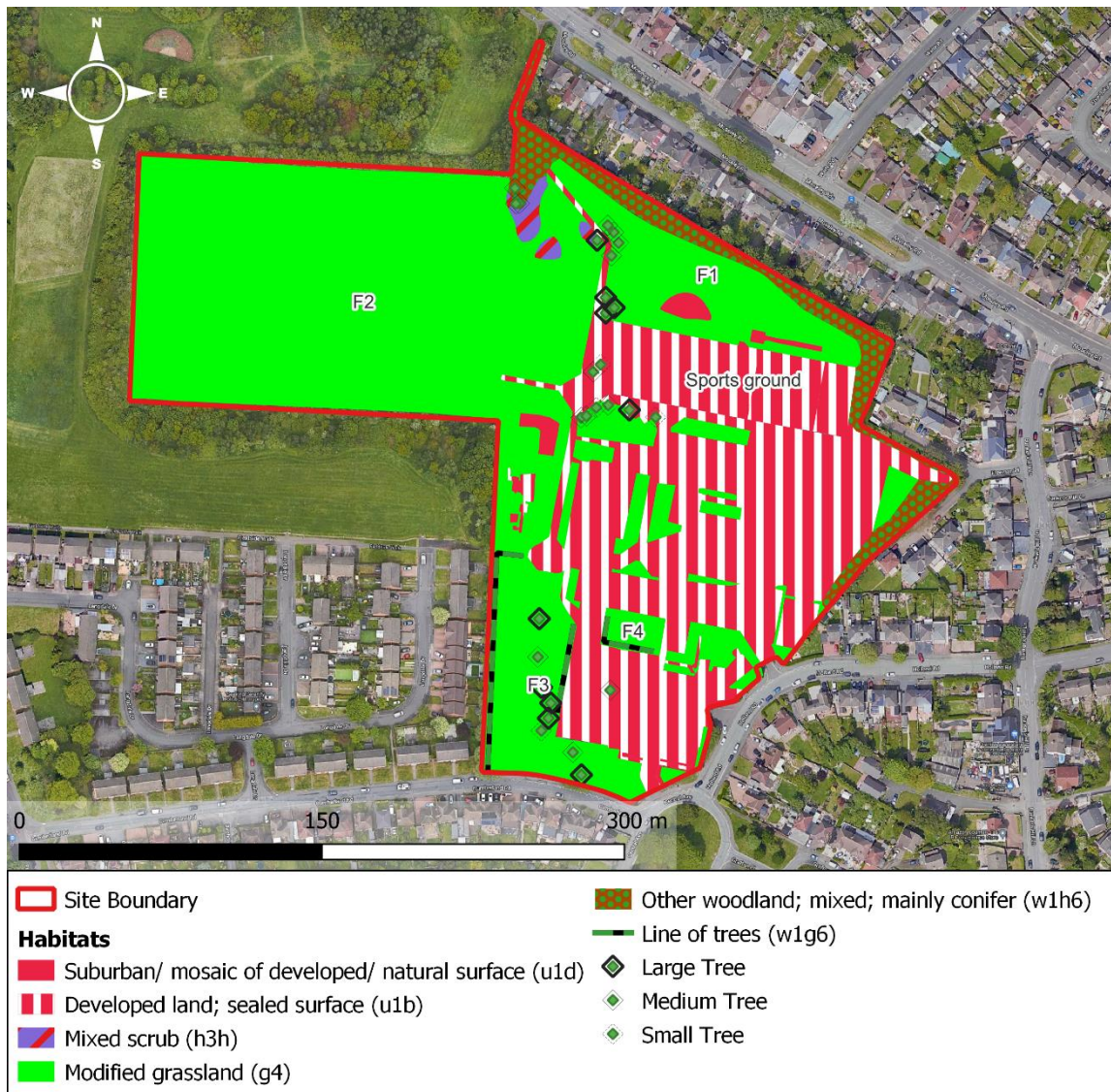
5.4. The site comprises the following habitat types:

- Modified grassland (g4);
- Developed land, sealed surface (u1b);
- Suburban/ mosaic of developed/ natural surface (u1d);
- Woodland, mixed, mainly conifer (w1h6);
- Line of trees (w1g6);
- Mixed scrub (h3h);
- Scattered trees.

5.5. The UK habitats map can be found in **Figure 2** below.



Figure 2, Habitats Map



***Modified Grassland (g4)***

5.6. Fields 1, 2, 3 and 4 are all modified grassland (F1-F4, see Figures 3-7), which are maintained at a very short sward. Furthermore, there are small patches of modified grassland scattered around the site as seen in the UK Habs map in Figure 2.

***Figure 3, Field 1 (F1) west***



***Figure 4, F1 east***



***Figure 5, F2***



***Figure 6, F2***





*Figure 5, F3*



*Figure 7, F4*



***Suburban/ mosaic of developed/ natural surface (u1d)***

- 5.7. There were a few patches of artificial, unsealed surface in the form of allotments, and patches of bare ground in Field 1.

***Developed land, sealed surface (u1b)***

- 5.8. Another habitat type recorded onsite was developed land, sealed surface, in the form of concrete sports pitches (**Figure 8**) and footpaths (u1b6), as well as several buildings (u1b5), including the sports centre to be demolished (**Figure 9**).

***Image 8, Sports ground***



***Image 9, Sports centre***



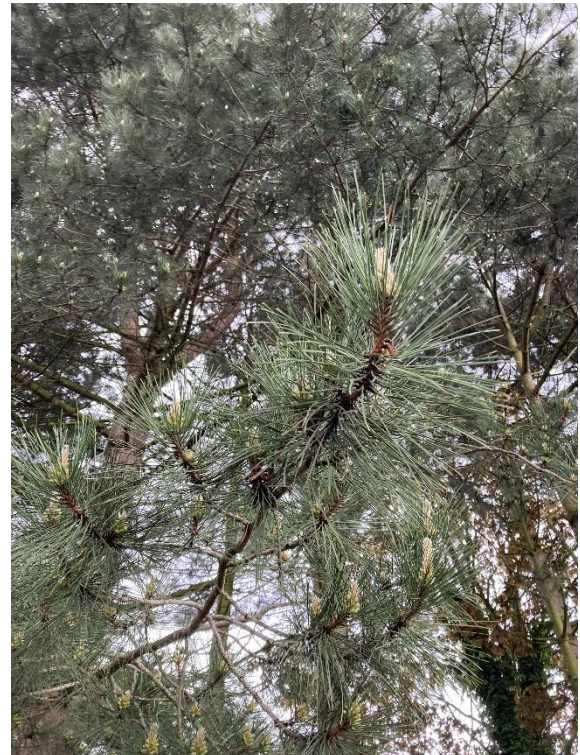
***Woodland, mixed, mainly conifer (w1h6)***

- 5.9. There is a stretch of mixed, mainly conifer woodland along the north-eastern boundary of the site, as seen in the UK Habs map in **Figure 2**. Species of tree recorded include pines (*Pinus* sp.), poplar (*Populus* sp.), maple (*Acer* sp.), and oak (*Quercus* sp.) (see **Figures 10-13** below).
- 5.10. In the understory, species recorded include elder (*Sambucus nigra*), bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*), wild cherry (*Prunus avium*), alder (*Alnus* sp.), hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*), thistles, cleavers (*Galium aparine*), herb robert (*Geranium robertianum*), barren brome (*Bromus sterilis*), common nettle (*Urtica dioica*), wood avens (*Geum urbanum*), common daisy (*Bellis perennis*) and dandelions (*Taraxacum* sp.) (see **Figures 14-15**).

**Figure 10, Woodland pines**



**Figure 11, Woodland pine**

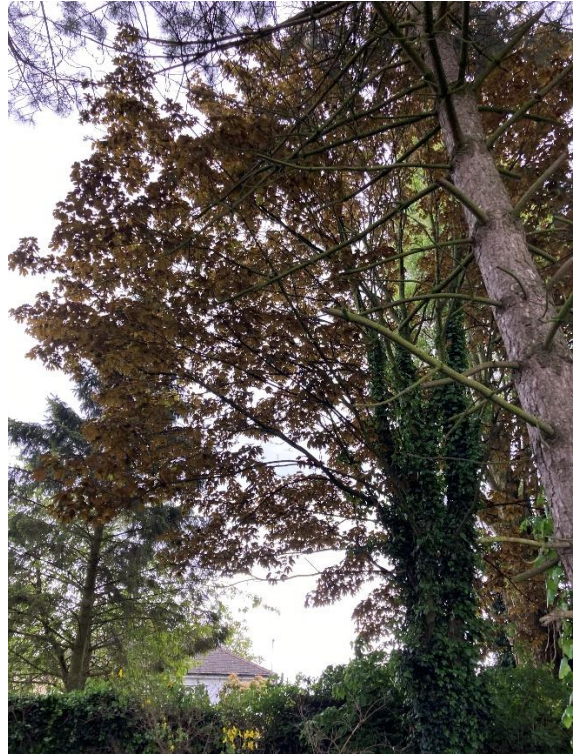




*Figure 12, Woodland maple species*



*Figure 13, Woodland maple species*



*Figure 14, Understory vegetation*



*Figure 15, Wild cherry*





***Line of trees (w1g6)***

5.11. There were three lines of trees recorded on site. Line of trees 1 (LT1) is a mix of native and ornamental species most of which were young. LT2 is a line on six newly planted ash trees (*Fraxinus excelsior*). LT3 is a line of young cherry blossom trees (*Prunus serrulate*) (**Figure 16-18**).

***Figure 16, LT1***



***Figure 17, LT2***



***Figure 18, LT3***



**Mixed scrub (h3h)**

5.12. Three patches of dense mixed scrub are located near the northern boundary of the site (see **Figure 2**). They are made up of bramble (*Rubus fruticosus*) and dog rose (*Rosa canina*) (see photos in **Figures 19-22**).

**Figure 19, Mixed scrub**



**Figure 20, Mixed scrub**



**Figure 21, Mixed scrub**



**Figure 22, Mixed scrub**



### **Scattered Trees**

- 5.13. There were several scattered trees recorded on site, mainly ornamental. For full details see Appendix 1.

### **Protected Species**

#### ***Amphibians***

- 5.14. The desk study returned one record of a European protected species licence for great crested newts (*Triturus cristatus*) (GCN) as well as 37 returns of GCN class survey licences within 2km of the site since 2010.
- 5.15. The site has suitable terrestrial habitat in the woodland and scrub habitat for commuting, foraging and hibernating amphibians. There is a pond offsite (see **Appendix 2**), approximately 90m north of the site boundary, which may offer breeding opportunities for amphibians.

#### ***Badgers***

- 5.16. There was no evidence of badgers using the site.

### **Bats**

#### ***Roosting Bats***

- 5.17. The desk study returned one record of European protected species licence for bats within 2km of the site in 2010, comprising of a common pipistrelle (*Pipistrellus pipistrellus*) roost. The habitats on site offer very little roosting potential for bats, as the trees have negligible roosting potential and lack any roosting features.
- 5.18. The buildings on site are mostly modern, with few potential roosting features. The building to be demolished has a flat roof, no roof void space and has very low potential for roosting bats. Furthermore, due to the lack of commuting corridors or nearby suitable habitats, and light disturbance from the urban setting of the site, it is unlikely that bats would be using the building for roosting.

#### ***Commuting and Foraging Bats***



5.19. The habitats on site offer some suitability for foraging bats, in the form of woodland, scattered trees and lines of trees. These habitats however lack any real connectivity to the wider landscape for commuting bats due to the urban setting and fragmentation by several roads and residential housing, making it unlikely for bats to be using the site as a commuting corridor.

### ***Breeding Birds***

5.20. The site offers opportunities for nesting birds in the form of trees, woodland and scrub. The site does not offer any suitable habitat for breeding waders.

### ***Dormice***

5.21. The site has a small stretch of woodland, which is connected to further stretches of woodland and hedgerow off-site. This could offer some opportunities for dormice, though even if they were present the population size is not likely to be significant due to the lack of connectivity to the wider landscape from fragmentation by numerous roads and residential housing.

### ***Reptiles***

5.22. The site offers extremely limited opportunities for foraging reptiles as the fields of modified grassland habitat are kept to an extremely short sward and are well maintained. There is some suitability in the woodland habitat on site for commuting and hibernating reptiles, and the understory of taller ephemeral vegetation may provide some foraging opportunities. However, this habitat is not well connected, and it therefore restricts the number of reptiles likely to be using the site.

### ***Terrestrial Invertebrates***

5.23. The woodland, trees, scrub, and ephemeral vegetation on site provide opportunities for low numbers of terrestrial invertebrates.

## 6. EVALUATION

6.1. Based on the survey data collected to date the site could support the following ecological features that may be a material planning consideration if they are present:

- amphibians;
- bats (roosting); and
- nesting birds.

6.2. The following ecological features have been scoped out from future assessment due to the population size, because the area likely to be affected by the development is of insufficient size or diversity to be of ecological value, and/or because there is no potential effect pathway between the development and these features:

- designated sites;
- habitats;
- badgers;
- dormice;
- reptiles; and
- terrestrial invertebrates.

6.3. **Table 1** sets out the scoping rationale.

**Table 1, Scoping Rationale of Ecological Features**

Ecological Feature	Evaluation of results	Need for further surveys
Designated sites	<p>The site is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory designations.</p> <p>Nearby non-statutory designated sites do not list features/species that would be impacted by this development.</p>	<p>No further surveys required.</p>
On site habitats	<p>The majority of habitats are both nationally and locally common.</p> <p>The species woodland and trees onsite offer some good habitat for protected species.</p>	<p>Any removal of woodland, trees or other vegetation will need to be assessed for protected species and should be carried out in a sensitive manner.</p> <p>Protection zones will be needed during construction phase, and there will be mitigation/compensation for any habitat lost.</p>
Amphibians	<p>The site has no suitable aquatic habitat on site, but does offer some potential for commuting, foraging and hibernating amphibians in the form of woodland habitat, scrub and lines of trees.</p> <p>The pond approx. 90m north of the site offers suitable aquatic habitat and is well connected to the site.</p> <p>The proposed development does not impact any of the potential GCN habitat on site, and as such, an offence is deemed highly unlikely.</p>	<p>No further surveys are required.</p> <p>Any habitats suitable for GCN will be fenced off with a minimum 5m buffer zone.</p> <p>A method statement will be developed prior to works commencing to ensure that habitats suitable for GCN are protected.</p>
Bats	<p>The site offers limited opportunity for roosting bats. There are some semi-mature and mature trees, however, none of these trees have notable roosting features, and as such have low or negligible roosting potential.</p> <p>The existing sports centre to be demolished has very little roosting potential, due to the modern nature, flat roof and lack of roof void space.</p> <p>The lines of trees and woodland onsite offer minimal foraging and commuting opportunities for bats. However, these features do not link the site to the wider landscape due to the urban</p>	<p>The proposed development does not include any tree removal. As such, no further assessment of trees is required.</p> <p>The demolition of the existing sports centre building is to be carried out in a sensitive manner, under supervision of a suitably qualified ecologist (ECoW).</p> <p>Sensitive lighting strategies around the woodland habitat will be employed as part of the development as to avoid any disturbance to bats.</p>

Ecological Feature	Evaluation of results	Need for further surveys
	<p>setting of the site, and fragmentation from roads and residential housing.</p>	<p>Any trees or woodland habitat to be removed will need additional roosting assessments prior to clearance.</p>
Birds	<p>The site offers nesting and foraging opportunities for birds due to the lines of trees, woodland and scattered trees found onsite.</p>	<p>Any vegetation removal should be done outside of the nesting bird season (March-August) where possible.</p> <p>Where not possible, a nesting bird survey will be carried out prior to any vegetation clearance and will be supervised by an experienced ecologist.</p>
Badgers	<p>The site offers some foraging opportunities for badgers.</p> <p>No evidence of badgers was found on site.</p>	<p>A pre-commencement badger survey should be carried out prior to any construction works.</p>
Dormice	<p>The site offers foraging opportunities for dormice due to in the form of woodland habitat found onsite.</p> <p>This habitat, however, is not well connected to the wider landscape due to fragmentation, and it is therefore unlikely that dormice would be using the site.</p>	<p>The proposed development will not impact the woodland habitat on site. As such, no further surveys required.</p>
Reptiles	<p>The site's fields offer limited suitability for reptiles as the majority of the site is made up of modified grassland, kept to a short sward.</p> <p>However, the site does offer some potential for commuting and hibernating reptiles in the form of woodland and trees.</p>	<p>No further surveys required as the site is not considered to be of important ecological value for reptiles and if there were a population onsite, the population size is unlikely to be significant due to the lack of diverse reptile habitats.</p>
Terrestrial invertebrates	<p>The site offers foraging opportunities for terrestrial invertebrates. However, the species assemblage is likely to be predominantly common species with only low numbers of notable species using the site.</p>	<p>No further surveys required as the site is not considered to be of important ecological value for invertebrates and the population size and diversity is unlikely to be significant due to the lack of diverse flowering plants, e.g. meadow.</p>



## 7. CONCLUSIONS

7.1. No significant ecological effects were identified during the EclA process. The proposed development should include measures targeted specifically at maintaining, creating and enhancing habitat for wildlife within and adjacent to the development. Measures to avoid and mitigate potential adverse effects and to enhance the site for wildlife comprise:

- A pre-commencement survey for badgers;
- A nesting bird check and ECoW supervision when / if clearing vegetation during the nesting season (March-August inclusive);
- Precautionary measures when clearing vegetation;
- Fencing of sensitive habitats during construction phase;
- Sensitive control of light during and after construction;
- Incorporation of a landscaping scheme with native species or species that benefit wildlife.

7.2. **Table 2** sets out the survey type and seasonal requirements. Note, the surveys are also subject to appropriate weather conditions.

**Table 2, Timings of Protected Species Surveys**

Survey Type	J	F	M	A	M	J	J	A	S	O	N	D
Badger	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y
Nesting Bird Season	N	N	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	Y	N	N	N	N

7.3. The results of the survey will inform the mitigation measures in line with the mitigation hierarchy and in line with local and national priorities, planning policy and legislation.

7.4. The following mitigation and enhancement measures would be in line with Bilston Corridor Area Action Plan Policy BC8 and Black Country Core Strategy CSP3 and policy ENV1:

- Two bird boxes to be incorporated in the design of the new sports centre (e.g. Schwegler Sparrow & Swift boxes);
- Two bat boxes (e.g., Schwegler 2F/2FN boxes) and two bird boxes (e.g., 1B Schwegler Nest Boxes) to be installed on trees in woodland habitat along northern site boundary.
- Planting of a wildflower meadow to buffer between the woodland and the modified grassland of Field 1 along the north-eastern boundary will create additional foraging opportunities for a range of species and mitigate for any loss of modified grassland habitat in Field 2 (playing field).

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## APPENDICES

### Appendix 1

Table 3, Tree Photos

T1-T3 Linden ( <i>Tilia</i> ) Trees	T4-T8 Semi-mature maple ( <i>Acer</i> ) trees
	



T9, T10 & T12 Wild cherry trees



T11 Mature atlas cedar (*Cedrus atlantica*)



T13-T14 Linden trees




T15 Mature maple





<b>T16 Cherry blossom (<i>Prunus verecunda</i>)</b>	<b>T17 Mature maple</b>
	
<b>T18 &amp; T19 alder trees (<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>)</b>	<b>T20 Cherry blossom</b>
	



T21 Cherry blossom	
	

**Appendix 2**

*Table 4, Off-site Pond*







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