

High-Performance Charging Infrastructure for Electric Vehicles - Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)

Wrexham

IONITY

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1. Introduction

1.1 Terms of Reference

AECOM has been commissioned by the IONITY (hereafter referred to as 'the Client') to provide ecological advice to support the planning of High-Performance Charging (HPC) Infrastructure for Electric Vehicles across the United Kingdom (hereafter referred to as 'the Scheme'). IONITY is a joint venture of the car manufacturers BMW Group, Ford Motor Company, Hyundai Motor Group, Mercedes Benz AG and Volkswagen Group with Audi and Porsche.

AECOM have been instructed to support the planning consent for the construction of electric vehicle (EV) charging site and associated infrastructure and works to create 20 parking spaces on the car park and land associated with the Ramada Plaza Hotel, Wrexham.

This report provides ecological advice in the form of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) for the Site, to assess the potential ecological constraints to the construction works proposed in that location and also provides a high-level assessment of the biodiversity value of the Site by calculating the baseline biodiversity units prior to development.

The assessment of ecological constraints has been undertaken with reference to current good practice¹. The PEA addresses relevant wildlife legislation as summarised in Appendix A and is consistent with the requirements of *British Standard 42020:2013 Biodiversity. Code of Practice for Planning and Development*.

The biodiversity value of the Site, expressed in terms of biodiversity units, has been calculated in accordance with Metric 3.1² (hereafter referred to as 'the Metric').

The PEA is intended for advice in respect of the planning of the Proposed Development design. Further ecological surveys and/ or ecological impact assessment (including detailed mitigation measures) may be required in connection with a planning application or to contribute to an Environmental Impact Assessment if required by the local planning authority.

Section 2 of this report defines the purpose of the PEA and details the general methodology and limitations. The specific details about the Site ecological constraints are provided in Section 3.

1.2 Purpose of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal

The PEA presents ecological information obtained during the following:

- A desk-study undertaken to obtain records of designated sites, notable habitats³ and protected and notable species⁴ that may be affected by the proposed works within the Site (the area covered by a desk study is referred to as 'the Study Area'); and,
- A walkover survey of accessible land within and adjacent to the Site (the area covered by the survey is hereafter referred to as 'the Survey Area').

The purpose of the PEA is to provide a high-level ecological appraisal of the Site, specifically to:

- Establish baseline conditions and determine the presence of Important Ecological Features (IEF)⁵ (or those that could be present), as far as is possible.
- Identify potential ecological constraints to the proposed works within the Site and make initial recommendations to avoid impacts on IEFs, where possible.

¹ CIEEM (2017). *Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, 2nd edition*. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.

² Natural England Joint Publication JP039 (2022), *The Biodiversity Metric 3.1 auditing and accounting for biodiversity*.

³ Notable habitats are taken as principal habitats for the conservation of biodiversity listed under Section 41 of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006* (in England) or under Section 7 of the *Environment (Wales) Act 2016* (in Wales); habitats listed under a local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP); hedgerows identified as being 'important' under the wildlife criteria of the *Hedgerow Regulations 1997*, ancient woodlands and veteran trees.

⁴ Notable species are taken as principal species for the conservation of biodiversity listed under Section 41 of the *Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006* (in England) or under Section 7 of the *Environment (Wales) Act 2016* (in Wales); any species listed in an IUCN Red Data Book; and any other species listed under a local BAP.

⁵ Important Ecological Features are habitats, species, ecosystems and their functions and processes that are of conservation importance and could potentially be affected by proposed works in connection with the Scheme.

- Identify requirements for mitigation, where possible, including mitigation measures that will be required and those that may be required (depending on results of further surveys or final works details such as Site layout).
- Establish any requirements for more detailed surveys.
- Identify any opportunities to deliver biodiversity enhancements.

The methodology followed for undertaking the desk study and field surveys is provided below, including any limitations to the assessment.

2. Methodology

This section details the methodology followed when undertaking the PEA of the Site in connection with the Proposed Development.

2.1 Desk Study

The PEA includes a desk study to obtain background records relevant to the Site and the Proposed Development at that location, including records of statutory and non-statutory designated sites and protected and notable habitats and species. The data obtained provides contextual information for the scope of field surveys, to aid the evaluation of field survey results, and to provide supplementary information where complete field survey coverage is not possible.

Data is requested from the local biological records centre and supplemented with a search of the online resource *The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside* (MAGIC) website (<https://magic.defra.gov.uk>).

The Study Area is dependent upon the nature, timing and scale of the Proposed Development, as well as the location of the Site and the surrounding landscape. These variables all contribute to what is referred to as the Zone of Influence (Zoi) of the works, which is the area over which ecological features may be affected by biophysical changes because of the works and associated activities. The Study Area for the Site is detailed in Section **Error! Reference source not found.** Site Information.

Where's the Path website (<https://wtp2.appspot.com/wheresthepath.htm>) is used to initially identify the presence of water bodies within 250 m of the Site boundary, in order to establish if the land within and immediately surrounding the Site is likely to be used as terrestrial habitat for great crested newts. This species can use suitable terrestrial habitat up to 500 m from a breeding pond⁶, however there is a notable decrease in great crested newt abundance beyond 250 m from a breeding pond⁷.

2.2 Field Survey

The PEA includes a walkover survey of the Survey Area, broadly following the Phase 1 habitat survey methodology as set out in Joint Nature Conservation Committee guidance (JNCC, 2010)⁸ and UK habitat classifications⁹, including a condition assessment of each habitat, undertaken following guidance provided in the Biodiversity Metric 3.1 Technical Supplement¹⁰. This survey method records information on broad habitat types and is 'extended' to record any evidence of and potential for protected or notable species to be present. Plant names recorded during the survey follow Stace (2010)¹¹ and their relative abundance was recorded using the DAFOR (Dominant; Abundant; Frequent; Occasional; Rare) scale.

During the walkover survey, the following protected or notable species are considered:

⁶ Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines (English Nature, 2001).

⁷ Natural England. An assessment of the efficiency of capture techniques and the value of different habitats for the great crested newt (ENRR576) <http://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/134002>.

⁸ Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2010) *Handbook for Phase 1 habitat survey - a technique for environmental audit*.

⁹ Butcher, B., Carey, P., Edmonds, R., Norton, L. and Treweek, J. (2020). *The UK Habitat Classification User Manual Version 1.1*.

¹⁰ Natural England Joint Publication JP039 (2022) Biodiversity Metric 3.1 Technical Supplement.

¹¹ Stace, C E (2010) *New Flora of the British Isles*, 3rd edition. Cambridge University Press.

- **Badger (*Meles meles*):** the survey involves searching for signs of badger activity including setts, tracks, snuffle holes and latrines, following the methodology detailed in Scottish Badgers (2018)¹² and Harris et al. (1989)¹³.
- **Bats:** the survey involves searching for potential roosting sites for bats within trees and structures (such as buildings, bridges or underground features such as mines) and categorising the potential of those trees or structures to support roosting bats (negligible, low, moderate, high, or confirmed roost), in accordance with Bat Conservation Trust (BCT) guidance (2016)¹⁴.
- **Hazel dormouse (*Muscardinus avellanarius*):** the survey involves assessing the potential of habitats within the Survey Area to support hazel dormouse, following English Nature guidance (2006)¹⁵.
- **Otter (*Lutra lutra*):** the survey involves assessing the potential of watercourses and water bodies, and adjacent terrestrial habitat within the Survey Area to support otter, following RSPB (1994)¹⁶ and Chanin, P. (2003)¹⁷ guidance.
- **Water vole (*Arvicola amphibius*):** the survey involves assessing the potential of watercourses and water bodies within the Survey Area to support water vole, following The Mammal Society (2016)¹⁸ guidance.
- **Birds:** the survey involves assessing the potential of habitats within the Survey Area to support breeding, wintering or migrating birds, either individually notable species or assemblages of both common and rarer species.
- **Great crested newt (*Triturus cristatus*):** the survey involves assessing the potential of habitats within the Survey Area to support great crested newt, following English Nature (2001)¹⁹ and Froglife (2001)²⁰ guidance.
- **Reptiles:** the survey involves assessing the potential of habitats within the Survey Area to support reptiles (typically adder (*Vipera berus*), grass snake (*Natrix helvetica*), common lizard (*Zootoca vivipara*) and slow worm (*Anguis fragilis*) only, though in some locations and habitat types (most notably heathland) may also include smooth snake (*Coronella austriaca*) and sand lizard (*Lacerta agilis*)), following Froglife (1999)²¹ and JNCC (2003)²² guidance.
- **Notable species of invertebrate²³:** the survey involves assessing the potential of habitats within the Survey Area to support notable species of invertebrates, both terrestrial and aquatic (including white-clawed crayfish (*Austropotamobius pallipes*)).
- **Protected or notable species of plants:** the survey involves recording protected or notable plant species.
- **Other notable species:** the survey involves assessing the potential of habitat within the Survey Area to support other Notable Species, such as hedgehog (*Erinaceus europaeus*), brown hare (*Lepus europaeus*), polecat (*Mustela putorius*) or common toad (*Bufo bufo*).
- **Non-native invasive plant species (INNPS):** the survey involves recording evidence of the presence of invasive plants listed on Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and subject to strict legal control.

¹² Scottish Badgers (2018). *Surveying for Badgers: Good Practice Guidelines*. Version 1.

¹³ Harris, S. Cresswell, P. and Jefferies, D. (1989). *Surveying Badgers*.

¹⁴ Collins, J.(ed) (2016). *Bat Surveys for Professional Ecologists: Good Practice Guidelines* (3rd edition). The Bat Conservation Trust. London.

¹⁵ English Nature (2006). *The Dormouse Conservation Handbook*, 2nd edition.

¹⁶ Ward, D. Holmes, N. Jose, P. (1994). *The New Rivers and Wildlife Handbook*. Royal Society for the Protection of Birds. Bedfordshire.

¹⁷ Chanin, P (2003b). *Monitoring the Otter Lutra lutra*. Conserving Natura 2000 Rivers Monitoring Series No 10. English Nature, Peterborough.

¹⁸ Dean, M. Strachan, R. Gow, D. Andrews, R. (2016). *The Water Vole Mitigation Handbook (The Mammal Society Guidance Series)*. Eds Fiona Mathews and Paul Chanin. The Mammal Society. London.

¹⁹ English Nature (2001). *The Great Crested Newt Mitigation Guidelines*.

²⁰ Froglife (2001). *The Great Crested Newt Conservation Handbook*.

²¹ Froglife (1999). *Reptile Survey: An introduction to planning, conducting and interpreting surveys for snake and lizard conservation*. Froglife Advice Sheet 10. Froglife, Halesworth.

²² Joint Nature Conservation Committee (2003). *Herpetofauna Workers Manual*.

²³ Notable invertebrates are taken as principal species for the conservation of biodiversity listed under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act 2006; any invertebrate listed under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended); any invertebrate listed under Schedule 2 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017 (as amended); any invertebrate listed in the IUCN Invertebrate Red Data Book (1991); and any invertebrate listed under a local BAP.

2.3 Biodiversity Accounting

Biodiversity accounting for the Proposed Development involves calculating the biodiversity value of the Site prior to development (i.e. the baseline). Value is expressed in terms of 'biodiversity units', with a 'biodiversity metric'²⁴ providing the mechanism to allow biodiversity values to be calculated.

The Metric assesses and generates separate outputs for area-based terrestrial habitats and linear based habitats (including hedgerows and rivers). The calculation for area-based and linear habitats calculates biodiversity units as follows:

- Before Works = Distinctiveness Score x Condition Assessment x Area/Length x Strategic Significance.

The five factors are determined as set out below:

- Distinctiveness Score – High, Medium or Low, based on UK habitat classifications²⁴.
- Condition Score – Good, Fairly good, Moderate, Fairly poor or Poor, based on habitat condition assessment undertaken during the field survey following guidance provided in the Biodiversity Metric 3.1 Technical Supplement²⁵.
- Area/Length – hectares (ha)/ length (km) of habitat type.
- Strategic significance – High (Within area formally identified in local strategy), Medium (Location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy) and Low (Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy).

2.4 Limitations

The ecological surveys undertaken to support the PEA has not produced a complete list of plants and animals for the Site, and the absence of evidence of any species should not be taken as conclusive proof that the species is not present or that it will not be present in the future. However, the results of the ecological assessment allow for an evaluation of the likely ecological constraints to the Site and are considered sufficient to inform the recommendations for further ecological survey and mitigation measures.

The search for water bodies within 250 m of the Site is undertaken by using Ordnance Survey plans and aerial photographs only. These sources may not show all ponds and or water bodies within 250 m of the Site boundary and therefore some water bodies may not have been identified.

The list of invasive non-native plant species included on Schedule 9 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) and the Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019 is extensive and these plants are found in a range of different habitats, including aquatic habitats. The walkover survey checked for the presence of invasive species including Japanese knotweed (*Fallopia japonica*), giant hogweed (*Heracleum mantegazzianum*), rhododendron (*Rhododendron ponticum*), cotoneaster species (*Cotoneaster sp.*) and Himalayan balsam (*Impatiens glandulifera*). Other invasive species, in particular those associated with aquatic habitats, may not have been recorded, but it is considered that this survey is sufficient to identify any constraints posed by invasive non-native plant species.

The field survey was undertaken outside of the optimal growing season for plants (March – September, inclusive). Certain plant species may have therefore been overlooked. Given the relatively small-scale nature of the works this is not considered a limitation to the survey. There are deemed to be no significant limitations to this survey.

²⁴ Butcher, B., Carey, P., Edmonds, R., Norton, L. and Treweek, J. (2020). *The UK Habitat Classification User Manual Version 1.1*.

²⁵ Natural England Joint Publication JP039 (2022) Biodiversity Metric 3.1 Technical Supplement.

3. Site Information

3.1 Ecological Constraints

Table 1 Ecological Constraints

Site Name	Wrexham		
Site Location	Central Grid Reference: SJ 32213 50749		
Date of Survey	28 February 2023		
Site Description	The Site is approximately 0.25 hectares (ha) in size. A buffer, encompassing the grounds of the hotel was surveyed, which is approximately 2 ha. The Site is located within west Wrexham and bounded to the north and east by Ellice Way, to the west by Rhyd Broughton Lane, and to the South by Croesnewydd Road. Wrexham’s urban environment dominates the wider landscape, and the A483 separates the agricultural land to the west from the Site. There are areas of arable farmland, and the River Gwenfro, to the south, though these are separated from the Site by the urban environment of Wrexham. The dominant habitat within the surveyed area is amenity grassland (Photograph 1), other habitats include parkland/scattered trees (Photographs 2, 3), line of trees, species-poor hedgerows with trees, managed species poor intact hedgerows, introduced shrub, and hardstanding (Photograph 4). The amenity grassland habitat is of homogenous structure and sward height (<10cm) dominated by perennial ryegrass (<i>Lolium perenne</i>), with Abundant red fescue (<i>Festuca rubra</i>), with occasional meadow buttercup (<i>Ranunculus acris</i>), white clover (<i>Trifolium repens</i>), hogweed (<i>Heracleum sphondylium</i>), and rare instances of herb robert (<i>Geranium robertianum</i>). The parkland and scattered trees to the north of the surveyed area are dominated by relatively open canopied semi-mature sycamore (<i>Acer pseudoplatanus</i>), with frequent Waterer’s cotoneaster (<i>Cotoneaster x watereri</i>) and occasional lime (<i>Tilia x europaea</i>). The parkland and scattered trees to the south of the surveyed area are dominated by sycamore, with occasional ash (<i>Fraxinus excelsior</i>). Towards the west of the surveyed area the parkland and scattered trees are dominated with mature sycamore with occasional alder (<i>Alnus glutinosa</i>), with locally abundant barberry (<i>Berberis</i> sp.), paper birch (<i>Betula papyrifera</i>), willow (<i>Salix</i> sp.) and a rare instance of bird cherry (<i>Prunus avium</i>). The species poor hedgerow with trees are all managed and stand approximately 1 m x 1 m and are all dominated by beech (<i>Fagus sylvatica</i>) with young standards of hawthorn (<i>Crataegus monogyna</i>), cockspur hawthorn (<i>Crataegus crus-gali</i>), lime, and apple (<i>Malus</i> sp.). The species poor intact hedgerows present without trees are all managed to 1 m x 1 m and are dominated by firethorn (<i>Pyracantha coccinea</i>). Ornamental introduced shrubs within the surveyed area consist of grey santolina (<i>Santolina decumbens</i>), cherry laurel (<i>Prunus laurocerasus</i>), box honeysuckle (<i>Lonicera nitida</i>), and firethorn. The lines of trees within the surveyed area all consist of alder only. The development area within the Site is detailed by the redline boundary within Figure 1 and comprises of hardstanding, the species poor intact hedgerows, the species poor hedge with trees and less than 0.1 hectares of the amenity grassland. The building on site is an active hotel comprising red brick and a metal roof. The hardstanding area is lit by streetlights and external building lights.		
Study Area (desk study)	Designated sites: 2 km from the Site boundary, extended to 10 km for sites designated for bats; Ponds: 250 m from the Site boundary; and, Cofnod - North Wales Environmental Information Service data: 2 km from the central grid reference.	Survey Area (field survey)	All land within the hotel grounds including the redline development (see Figure 1).
Site Ecological Features	Potential Ecological Constraints	Recommendations	Timing
Designated Sites	There is one statutory designated site within 2 km of the Site; Gatewen Marsh Site of Scientific Interest (SSSI) which is designated for its flora and habitat type (‘southern mesotrophic mire’ wetland type) and separated from Site by the A483. There are 5 locally designated wildlife sites within 2 km of the Site, these being Berse Drelincourt, Moss Valley, Higher Berse Marsh, New Broughton Meadow, Erddig Estate. Berse Drelincourt; a small site (1.7 ha), with a mosaic of semi-natural habitats, including running water, dense scrub and semi-improved grassland, is the closest to the Site and located approximately 380 m from the Site boundary. All of the locally designated sites are separated from the Site by the A483, besides Erddig Estate which is to the south and separated from the Site by Wrexham’s urban landscape. There are no statutory designated sites that cite bats as a reason for their designation within 10 km of the Site.	Due to the localised and temporary nature of the works, no impacts are anticipated on any nature conservation designation in the Study Area. Removal of vegetation should be kept to a minimum. Standard pollution control measures must be implemented to avoid the contamination of surrounding habitats. Mitigation measures within the CIRIA C762 ‘Environmental good practice on site pocketbook (2016) ²⁶ is recommended during works and construction. During works artificial lighting should be kept to a minimum where possible and avoid illumination of the Site boundaries and sensitive lighting should be implemented as part of the Scheme.	During the works
Notable habitats	There are no Tree Protection Orders (TPOs) in place, ancient woodland or priority habitats within or adjacent to the Site.	Removal of vegetation should be kept to a minimum. Standard pollution control measures outlined within the CIRIA C762 ‘Environmental good practice on site pocketbook’ (2016) ⁴ must be implemented to avoid the contamination of surrounding habitats.	During the works
Amphibians, including great crested newt	The desk study returned nine records of great crested newt within 2 km of the Site the closest being approximately 460 m south/southwest from the Site and one record of common toad (<i>Bufo bufo</i>) approximately 1.6 km west of the Site, There are six waterbodies within 500 m of the Site, though four are separated from the Site by the River Gwenfro which presents a major barrier to the movement of great crested newt. Of the two remaining water bodies, one is separated from the Site by roads, urban infrastructure and the Spire Yale Hospital. There is no terrestrial connectivity to link amphibians to the Site. The final pond is approximately 0.1 km east of the Site with limited connectivity to the Site via amenity grassland, though Ellice Way, a small minor road, provides some separation. There is suitable terrestrial habitat within the Site for amphibians including hedgerows, parkland scattered trees, grassland and introduced shrub. However, there is no suitable breeding habitat for amphibians as no waterbodies are present within the Site. No great crested newts are expected to be located on Site due to its separation from suitable aquatic habitat, though other common amphibians such as the common toad, which is known to stray further from ponds when not breeding, may be present.	If removal of suitable vegetation is required, works should follow a Precautionary Working Method Statement (PWMS) which should include the completion of works when amphibians are active (typically March – October, inclusive) allowing amphibians to naturally disperse into surrounding suitable habitat. This will avoid the hibernation period when some amphibians are hibernating, and most vulnerable to being disturbed. Vegetation removal is recommended to be undertaken in September to coincide with the vegetation clearance for breeding birds. If amphibians are encountered during the works under the PWMS, the works should cease, and an ecologist should be contacted.	During the works

²⁶ Law, C. and D’Aleo, S. (eds.) (2016) *PUB C762 Environmental good practice on site pocket book. 4th edition* CIRIA.

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Reptiles	The desk study returned three records of reptiles within 2 km of the Site. Two records of grass snake were recorded, the closest being approximately 1.5 km south of the Site. One record of common lizard was returned, located approximately 635 m east of the Site. The grassland, hedgerows, parkland scattered trees and introduced shrub habitats within the Site provide suitable habitat for reptiles. The grassland has suitability for slow worm, whilst the introduced shrub and hedgerows and parkland and scattered trees provide suitable habitat for sheltering and foraging reptiles.	If removal of vegetation is required, this should be completed when reptiles are active (typically March – October, inclusive) allowing reptiles to naturally disperse into surrounding suitable habitat. This will avoid the hibernation period when reptiles are hibernating, and most vulnerable to being disturbed. Vegetation removal is recommended to be undertaken in September to coincide with the vegetation clearance for breeding birds. The works should be undertaken under a PWMS which should outline what process to follow should reptiles be recorded during works. If works must be scheduled to take place when reptiles are likely to be hibernating, the PWMS should provide further measures to reduce the risk including phased clearance of habitats and detailed hand searches of likely hibernating habitat in the presence of a suitably trained /qualified ecologist.	Before, during and after the works
Breeding birds	The desk study returned 509 records of 76 species of protected and notable species of bird within 2 km of the Site including: avocet (<i>Recurvirostra avosetta</i>), barn owl (<i>Tyto alba</i>), kingfisher (<i>Alcedo atthis</i>), red kite (<i>Milvus milvus</i>), and skylark (<i>Alauda arvensis</i>). The introduced shrub, grassland, hedgerows and parkland and scattered trees within the Site provide suitable habitat for breeding common garden birds.	If removal of suitable vegetation for breeding birds is required it should be completed outside of the breeding bird season (<i>i.e.</i>, clearance should be undertaken between 1 September and early February). It is recommended that vegetation clearance be undertaken in September to coincide with the vegetation clearance for amphibians and reptiles. If the clearance works cannot avoid the breeding bird season (late February – August, inclusive), a PWMS should be produced detailing the appropriate method of works, including a check of vegetation by a suitably experienced ecologist no more than 48 hours before removal, and a Tool-Box Talk should be given.	No more than 48 hours prior to vegetation removal
Bats	The desk study returned seven records of bat roosts within 2 km of the Site, the closest being approximately 1.8 km west of the Site. The desk study returned 323 field records of nine species of bat within 2 km of the Site including Brandt's (<i>Myotis brandtii</i>), brown long-eared (<i>Plecotus auritus</i>), common pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pipistrellus</i>), Daubenton's (<i>Myotis daubentonii</i>), lesser horseshoe (<i>Rhinolophus hipposideros</i>), Natterer's (<i>Myotis nattereri</i>), noctule (<i>Nyctalus noctula</i>), soprano pipistrelle (<i>Pipistrellus pygmaeus</i>), Whiskered (<i>Myotis mystacinus</i>) and unidentified <i>Myotis</i> sp. and <i>Plecotus</i> sp. Trees and buildings within the Site were assessed as having negligible suitability for roosting bats, and no suitable features were identified. The habitats within the Site including the grassland, parkland scattered trees, hedgerows and line of trees occupy a small area but provide moderate suitability for foraging and commuting bats and connectivity within the wider urban landscape.	Removal of vegetation should be kept to a minimum to retain as much commuting and foraging habitat (e.g. hedgerows and trees) as possible. During works artificial lighting should be kept to a minimum where possible and avoid illumination of the Site boundaries. Noise should be eliminated or kept to a minimum within the Site to avoid potential disturbance of bats. A sensitive lighting methodology is recommended as part of the Scheme to avoid light spill on to retained and adjacent habitat to limit disturbance to bats. In the first instance, external lighting should be designed to avoid light spill onto boundary features including grassland, parkland scattered trees, hedgerows and line of trees; and, if light spill onto Site boundaries cannot be avoided, this should be limited to levels of three Lux or less. Suggestions for external lighting are outlined in the Institution of Lighting Professionals (ILP) Bats and Lighting Guidance Note (ILP, 2018²⁷) and best practice guidance (Gunnell et. al., 2012²⁸). These include: • Only light areas which need to be lit, and use the minimal level of lighting required; • Avoid aesthetic lighting which has no other function, and up lighting of trees and buildings; and • Use the lowest level of illumination required for purpose.	Before, during and after the works
Badger	The desk study returned 15 records of badger within 2 km of the Site, the closest recorded being approximately 570 m west of the Site. The parkland and scattered trees and grassland provide suitable habitat for foraging badger. No badger setts were observed on Site at the time of survey.	Temporary works lighting should be directed to avoid light spill onto vegetated habitat around the Site. Excavations should not be left open overnight, if they are, a means for badger and other mammals to escape, such as a plank, should be provided. A sensitive lighting methodology is recommended as part of the Scheme to avoid light spill on to retained and adjacent habitat to limit disturbance to badger.	Before, during and after the works
Other notable species	The desk study returned 54 records of hedgehog within 2 km of the Site, the closest record is 230 m south from the Site.	Temporary works lighting should be directed to avoid light spill onto vegetated habitat around the Site. Excavations should not be left open overnight, if they are, a means for hedgehog and other mammals to escape, such as a plank, should be provided. A sensitive lighting methodology is recommended as part of the Scheme to avoid light spill on to retained and adjacent habitat to limit disturbance to hedgehog. No otter are expected to be on Site due to the presence of significant barriers such as roads, urban infrastructure and Spire Yale Hospital.	Before, during and after the works

²⁷ ILP (2018). *Guidance Note 08/18: Bats and artificial lighting in the UK*. ILP, Regent House, Rugby.

²⁸ Gunnell, K., Grant, G. and Williams, C (2012). *Landscape and urban design for bats and biodiversity*. Bat Conservation Trust

3.2 Biodiversity Accounting

The baseline biodiversity units of the Site have been calculated in accordance with Natural England Biodiversity Metric 3.1²⁹ and are presented below in Table 2. The methodology for undertaking this assessment is provided in Section 2.

Table 2. Summary of Baseline Biodiversity Units

Area-based Habitat (UK Habitat Classification)	Phase 1 Habitat Classification	Area (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic Significance	Total Biodiversity Units
Grassland – Modified grassland	Amenity grassland	0.03	Low	Poor	Low	0.1
Urban – Introduced Shrub	Introduced shrub	>0.01	Low	Poor	Low	>0.01
Urban – Developed land; sealed surface	Hardstanding	0.21	V.Low	N/A – Other	Low	0
Linear Habitat (UK Habitat Classification)	Phase 1 Habitat Classification	Length (km)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic Significance	Total Biodiversity Units
Native hedgerow with trees	Hedge with trees – species poor	0.11	Medium	Poor	Moderate- Formally identified in local strategy ³⁰ – Policy SP15.	1.01
Hedge ornamental non-native	Intact hedge – species poor	>0.01	V.Low	Poor	Low	0.01

There is a total of 0.1 area-based habitat biodiversity units and 1.02 linear habitat biodiversity units within the Site. The habitats contributing the most to biodiversity units within the Site are modified grassland and native hedgerow with trees with low and medium distinctiveness, respectively, and accruing 0.1 and 1.01 biodiversity units. The native hedgerow with trees habitat is identified in the Wrexham Local Development plan³¹ as a habitat that must be conserved, protected, or enhanced.

3.3 Opportunities for Enhancements

This section highlights opportunities for providing ecological enhancements, based on the current Scheme details.

- Landscaping at the Site should be designed to include locally native species suitable for the area.
- Modified grassland areas could be seeded with a wildflower mix and appropriately managed to increase biodiversity.
- Areas to benefit wildlife should be created including planting of trees and hedgerows, wildflower areas of grassland and native shrub planting; and,
- Installing durable (woodcrete or similar) bird and bat boxes upon the infrastructure and retained trees will increase nesting/roosting opportunities within the Site for these species.

3.4 Re-Survey of Site

Due to the mobility of animals and the potential for colonisation of the Site, it is recommended that an updated ecological survey be undertaken prior to the redevelopment of this Site should this not occur within 24 months of the date of the field survey.

²⁹ Natural England Joint Publication JP039 (2022) *The Biodiversity Metric 3.1 auditing and accounting for biodiversity calculation tool*.

³⁰ Wrexham Council (2013) *Wrexham Local Development Plan 2013 – 2028*. Available online at https://wrexham-consult.objective.co.uk/portal/ldp/dldp/local_development_plan

³¹ Wrexham Council (2013) *Wrexham Local Development Plan 2013 – 2028*. Available online at https://wrexham-consult.objective.co.uk/portal/ldp/dldp/local_development_plan

3.5 Phase 1 Habitat Plan

Figure 1. Wrexham Phase 1 Habitat Plan

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3.6 Indicative Site Photographs



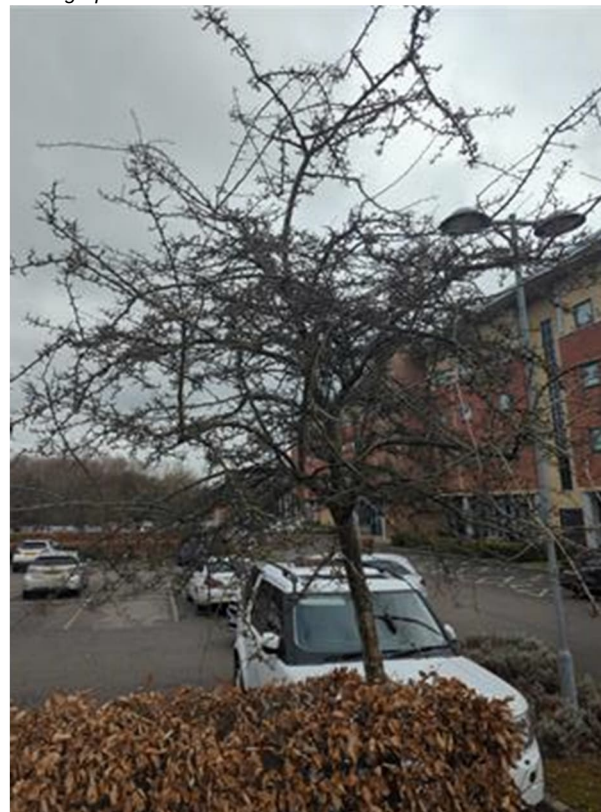
Photograph 1: Amenity grassland



Photograph 2: Parkland/Scattered Trees to the northeast



Photograph 3: Park Land/Scattered Trees



Photograph 4: Hedgerows, scattered trees, and hardstanding

Appendix A Summary of Relevant Legislation and Policy

A.1 Designated Sites

Special Protection Areas (SPAs)/ Special Areas of Conservation (SACs)

These sites are protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017* (as amended). Formal Appropriate Assessment is required to be undertaken by the competent authority before undertaking, or giving consent, permission or other authorisation for any work which are likely to have a significant effect on such a site.

Wetland of International Importance (Ramsar site)

Designated under the *Convention on Wetlands of International Importance especially as Waterfowl Habitat 1971* (the Ramsar Convention), in the UK, these sites are treated as having the same level of protection as SPAs and SACs.

Sites of Special Scientific Interest (SSSIs)

Under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended), it is an offence to carry out or permit to be carried out any operations likely to damage the Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI). These operations are listed in the SSSI notification.

Owners, occupiers, public bodies and statutory undertakers must give notice and obtain the appropriate consent under S.28 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended) before undertaking operations likely to damage a SSSI.

National Nature Reserve

National Nature Reserves (NNR) are established under the National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949. Most NNRs are also underpinned by SSSIs and are therefore protected by the measures detailed above. For NNRs not underpinned by SSSIs it is still an offence to carry out or permit to be carried out any potentially damaging operation.

NNRs are given protection through policies in a local development plan.

Local Nature Reserve

A Local Nature Reserve (LNR) is a statutory designation made under National Parks and Access to the Countryside Act 1949, by principal local authorities (district, borough or unitary councils).

The local authority must control the LNR land - either through ownership, a lease or an agreement with the owner.

LNRs are given protection through policies in a local development plan.

Locally Designated Sites

Locally designated sites are sites with 'substantive nature conservation value'. They are defined areas, identified and selected for their nature conservation value, based on important, distinctive and threatened habitats and species with a region.

They are usually selected by the relevant Wildlife Trust, along with representatives of the local authority and other local wildlife conservation groups.

These designations are signals to planners and developers where there are natural features of some merit. It encourages them to consider early on these sensitive sites and opportunities to enhance the local environment.

Local planning policies may be used to protect locally designated sites from inappropriate development.

A.2 Bats/ Hazel Dormouse / Otter / Great Crested Newt

These species, known as European Protected Species, are protected under the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017* (as amended). This makes it an offence to deliberately capture, injure or kill an animal; deliberately disturb an animal; or damage or destroy a breeding site or resting place used by an animal.

Deliberate capture or killing is taken to include “accepting the possibility” of such capture or killing. Deliberate disturbance of animals includes in particular any disturbance which is likely a) to impair their ability (i) to survive, to breed or reproduce, or to rear or nurture their young, or (ii) in the case of animals of hibernating or migratory species, to hibernate or migrate; or b) to affect significantly the local distribution or abundance of the species to which they belong.

Where development works are at risk of causing one or more of the offences listed above, a mitigation licence from Natural Resources Wales can be obtained to facilitate the works that would otherwise be illegal.

These species are also protected under Schedule 5 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended). This makes it an offence to intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to any structure or place used for shelter or protection or disturb an animal in such a place.

Lower levels of disturbance not covered by the *Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017* (as amended) remain an offence under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* although a defence is available where such actions are the incidental result of a lawful activity that could not reasonably be avoided.

A.3 Water Vole

Water voles are protected under Schedule 5 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended). There are no licensing purposes that explicitly cover development or other construction activities which could have an impact on water voles.

When development work is proposed in or near an area which is either known to or likely to contain water voles, then the developer will need to implement suitable mitigation to prevent impacts to water voles. The preferred mitigation option is to leave water voles *in situ*, with the development works adopting avoidance measures through redesign of the proposals.

Where impacts cannot be avoided, operations aimed at displacing water voles from a development site are now no longer covered by the “*incidental result of an otherwise lawful action*” defence in the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended). Displacement of water voles now needs to be undertaken under a licence.

In Wales, small scale (limited to continuous lengths of bank not exceeding 50 m) displacement of water voles can be carried out at certain times of the year (February to April) for the purposes of conservation under a Class Licence by a registered person. For larger scale displacements or displacements outside of this period, displacement can be undertaken under a site-specific conservation licence.

Where it is considered that the best outcome for water voles is capture and translocation to a different location then this action is considered by Natural Resources Wales to be outside the scope of the defence as the intentional capture of water voles is unlikely to be considered ‘incidental’. In these circumstances there may be genuine grounds for issuing a conservation licence for the purpose of translocating the water vole population to suitable alternative habitat.

A.4 Nesting Birds

All wild birds are protected under the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended), with some species afforded greater protection under Schedule 1 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended). In addition to the protection from killing or taking that all birds receive; Schedule 1 birds and their young must not be disturbed at the nest.

There are no licensing purposes that explicitly cover development activities affecting wild birds.

A.5 White-clawed Crayfish

White-clawed crayfish are protected under Schedule 5 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended). It is illegal to take or to sell white-clawed crayfish.

White-clawed crayfish is a species under major threat of global extinction and is referred to in various biodiversity related policy³². Several organisations involved in works on rivers or other water bodies have general legal

³²White-clawed crayfish is listed as a “priority” species of conservation importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities Act (2000).

obligations³³ to take the presence of white-clawed crayfish into account when issuing permissions to undertake works.

A.6 Common Species of Reptile (common lizard, slow worm, grass snake and adder)

Common species of reptile are protected against intentional killing and injury under Schedule 5 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended). There is no requirement for a licence where development works affect common species of reptiles. Instead, Natural England and Natural Resources Wales advise³⁴ that where reptiles are present, they should be protected from any harm that might arise during the development works through appropriate mitigation.

A.7 Badger

Badgers and their setts are protected under the *Protection of Badgers Act 1992* (as amended). This makes it an offence to wilfully kill, injure or take a badger; or intentionally or recklessly damage, destroy or obstruct access to a badger sett or disturb a badger in its sett.

It is not illegal to carry out disturbance activities near setts that are not occupied, *i.e.* those that do not show signs of current use.

Where required, licences for development activities involving disturbance or sett interference or closure are issued by Natural Resources Wales. Licences for activities involving watercourse maintenance, drainage works or flood defences are issued under a separate process.

When assessing the requirement for a licence in respect of development, Natural Resources Wales³⁵ state that badgers are relatively tolerant of moderate levels of noise and activity around their setts, and that a low or moderate level of apparent disturbing activity at or near to badger setts does not necessarily disturb the badgers occupying those setts.

Licences are normally not granted from December to June inclusive (the badger breeding season) because dependent cubs may be present within setts.

A.8 Fish

The following freshwater fish species are protected under Schedule 5 of the *Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981* (as amended): allis shad (*Alosa alosa*), twaite shad (*Alosa fallax*), whitefish (*Coregonus lavaretus*) and burbot (*Lota lota*).

A.9 Species and Habitats of Principal Importance for the Conservation of Biodiversity

Section 7 of the Environment (Wales) Act 2016 replaces the duty in section 42 of the Natural Environment & Rural Communities Act (NERC) Act 2006. The Welsh Ministers will publish, review and revise lists of living organisms and types of habitat in Wales, which they consider are of key significance to sustain and improve biodiversity in relation to Wales.

The Welsh Ministers must also take all reasonable steps to maintain and enhance the living organisms and types of habitat included in any list published under this section and encourage others to take such steps.

Part 1 of the Act, including Sections 6 and 7, came into force on May 21, 2016.

A.10 Non-native Invasive Plant Species (INNPS)

Under Section 14 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), it is an offence to plant or otherwise cause any species listed in Schedule 9 of the Act to grow in the wild.

³³ Under the *Water Resources Act 1991* and the *Land Drainage Act 1991* there is a requirement to consider the presence of notable species such as white-clawed crayfish when the Environment Agency, Internal Drainage Board or other statutory agency is considering granting consent for proposed operations to a water course.

³⁴ Reptiles: guidelines for developers, English Nature 2004

³⁵ Badgers – A Guide for Developers, Natural Resources Wales 2018

Species listed on Invasive Alien Species of Union concern under Regulation (EU) 1143/2014 (as implemented by Invasive Alien Species (Enforcement and Permitting) Order 2019) are subject to restrictions and measures set out in the Regulation. These include restrictions on keeping, importing, selling, breeding, growing and releasing into the environment.

Any contaminated soil or plant material is classified as controlled waste and should be disposed of in a suitably licensed landfill site, accompanied by appropriate Waste Transfer documentation, and must comply with section 34 of the *Environmental Protection Act 1990*.

A.11 Planning Policy

National Planning Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) has been taken into account when preparing this PEA. The NPPF was first published in March 2012 and has been updated in July 2018, February 2019 and most recently in July 2021³⁶.

The NPPF states the commitment of the UK Government to minimising impacts on biodiversity and providing net gains in biodiversity where possible, contributing to the Government's commitment to halt the overall decline in biodiversity. It specifies the obligations that the Local Authorities and the UK Government have regarding statutory designated sites and protected species under UK and international legislation and how this is to be delivered in the planning system. Protected or notable habitats and species can be a material consideration in planning decisions and may therefore make some sites unsuitable for particular types of development, or if development is permitted, mitigation measures may be required to avoid or minimise impacts on certain habitats and species, or where impact is unavoidable, compensation may be required.

The NPPF sets out the Government's planning policies for Wales and how these are expected to be applied by Local Authorities within their Local Development Frameworks (LDF). Chapter 15 of the NPPF '*Conserving and enhancing the natural environment*' sets out the requirements to consider biodiversity in planning decisions. A summary of the paragraphs of the NPPF relevant to terrestrial ecology and nature conservation, and to the IERTT project, is provided below:

Paragraph 174 states that "*Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:*

- a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);*
- b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;*
- c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;*
- d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;*
- e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and*
- f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate".*

Paragraph 175 states that "Plans should: distinguish between the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites; allocate land with the least environmental or amenity value, where consistent with other policies in this Framework; take a strategic approach to maintaining and enhancing networks of habitats and green infrastructure; and plan for the enhancement of natural capital at a catchment or landscape scale across local authority boundaries."

³⁶ <https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/national-planning-policy-framework--2>

Paragraph 179 states that “To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

a) Identify, map and safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, enhancement, restoration or creation; and

b) promote the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity”.

Paragraph 180 states that “When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) if significant harm to biodiversity 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;

b) 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;

c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and

d) 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.”

Local Planning Policy

This section provides a summary of local planning policy and local biodiversity action plans.

Relevant local planning policies for Dundee are detailed in the following documents:

- Wrexham Local Development Plan³⁷ (WLDP); and,
- Wrexham Local Planning Guidance Note. 32 Biodiversity and Development³⁸

Table 3 provides a summary of relevant local planning policies. For the precise wording of each specific policy please refer back to the source document.

Table 3. Summary of Local Planning Policy

Document	Planning Policy	Summary of Policy Text
Wrexham Local Development Plan	Policy SP15: Natural Environment	Development will only be supported where it protects, conserves, and enhances the natural environment including: • Internationally protected Special Areas of Conservation, Special Protection Areas, and Ramsar Sites, • Nationally protected Sites of Special Scientific Interest and National Nature Reserves; • Protected Species and their habitat; • The Clwydian Range and Dee Valley Area of Outstanding Natural Beauty including recognising the importance it has in contributing to the Outstanding Universal Value and setting of the Pontcysyllte Aqueduct and Canal World Heritage Site; • Local Wildlife Sites including the strategic ecological network on Wrexham Industrial Estate and Regionally Important Geological Sites; • Local Nature Reserves;

³⁷ Available at [KSD05 Composite version Deposit Plan Focussed Changes and Minor Editing changes APRIL 2019.pdf](#) [Accessed 24/02/2023]

³⁸ Available at [Local Planning Guidance Note No 32 - Biodiversity & Development \(wrexham.gov.uk\)](#) [Accessed 24/02/2023]

Document	Planning Policy	Summary of Policy Text
Wrexham Local Planning Guidance Note. 32 Biodiversity and Development		• Special Landscape Areas recognised for their outstanding local landscape character; • Natural landscape features such as trees, hedges and woodland and the green networks between them which contribute to the quality and diversity of the natural environment and play an important role in mitigating the impact of climate change; • The quality of natural services including water, air, and soils • Developing and maintaining Green Infrastructure links; and • Habitats and species of principal importance to Wales.
	Policy SP19: Climate Change	To mitigate against the effects of climate change and adapt to its impacts, development proposals will need to demonstrate that they have taken into account the following: • Reducing carbon emissions; • Adapting to the implications of climate change at both a strategic and detailed design level; • Promoting energy efficiency and increasing the supply of renewable energy; and • Maintaining ecological resilience
	Policy PS2	Development must not materially detrimentally affect countryside, landscape/townscape character, open space, or the quality of the natural environment.
	Policy PS11	Encouragement will be given to proposals which improve the biodiversity value of sites and to the establishment of local nature reserves where the nature conservation and landscape interest of the land will be protected and enhanced.
	Policy EC4	Development proposals should provide for the conservation and management of hedgerows, trees, orchards, woodland, wildlife and other natural landscape and water features, and include new planting in order to enhance the character of the landscape and townscape. Development which results in the loss or significant damage to valuable trees, important hedgerows or ancient woodland sites will not be permitted.
	Policy EC6	Development either within or close to sites of biodiversity interest will only be permitted where it can be clearly demonstrated that the need for the development outweighs the need to safeguard the intrinsic nature conservation value of the site. Where such development is permitted, damage should be kept to a minimum, and compensatory measures should be provided. Measures to improve the biodiversity value of sites and enhance their natural conservation interest and landscape quality including the establishment of local nature reserves, will be supported.

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