



THE
ENVIRONMENT
PARTNERSHIP



HERITAGE WAY

BRYMBO

ECOLOGY REASONABLE AVOIDANCE MEASURES METHOD STATEMENT (RAMMS)

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1.0 Introduction

- 1.1 In January 2021, The Environment Partnership (TEP) was commissioned by Taylor Wimpey North West (hereafter referred to as 'the Client') to prepare a Reasonable Avoidance Measures Method Statement (RAMMS) document to support a full planning application for residential development of 70 dwellings and associated infrastructure at the site known as Heritage Way in Brymbo, North Wales.
- 1.2 The RAMMS is to be implemented during site clearance works and was recommended by TEP within the Ecological Assessment (TEP Doc. Ref. 8576.003) issued in January 2021.

Site Context

- 1.3 The site is located off Heritage Way in Brymbo, North Wales on an area of former lagoons that has been reclaimed, re-contoured and restored to form a flat plateau that is roughly trapezoidal in shape. The site covers an area 2.36ha and is centred on grid reference SJ 29739 52528.
- 1.4 The fenced site comprises an area of modified neutral grassland with scattered scrub and bare ground, a strip of young semi-natural broad-leaved woodland along the western and southern boundaries, hard standing and a strip of amenity grassland along the eastern site boundary.
- 1.5 The site is located approximately 1km to the south of the village of Brymbo, North Wales. The site is bound to the south and west by residential development, with woodland to the north and Brymbo Sports and Social Complex and associated football pitches located directly to the east of the site.
- 1.6 The wider landscape largely comprises undulating fields and woodland area interspersed with residential and commercial development.

Scope of Report

- 1.7 The habitats within the site provide the potential to support protected or notable species that may be impacted by the proposed site clearance and construction works, as detailed below:
- Common amphibian species;
 - Common reptile species;
 - Badger
 - Nesting birds; and,
 - Hedgehog.
- 1.8 The methods detailed within the RAMMS follow best ecological working practices in respect of the species identified as being potentially at risk from site clearance and/or construction activities within the site or within influencing distance of the site.
- 1.9 The methods are to be followed by all site contractors at all times during all site clearance and/or construction activities.

2.0 Amphibians and Reptiles Method Statement

Introduction

Amphibians

- 2.1 Killing or injury to great crested newt (GCN) *Triturus cristatus* or damage to their hibernation sites is a criminal offence under Regulation 41 of the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations (amendments) (EU Exit) 2019. It is an offence to handle GCN without either a survey licence or a development licence obtained from Natural England.
- 2.2 Common toad *Bufo bufo* is a Section 7 Species of Principal Importance under the Environment (Wales) Act 2016.
- 2.3 No waterbodies suitable for amphibian breeding are present at or within 500m of the site. GCN is therefore considered absent from the site and is not considered further within this document.
- 2.4 Suitable terrestrial habitat for foraging, ranging, sheltering and hibernating common amphibians is present within the site, including semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, undisturbed modified neutral grassland and the raised bank of rubble along the eastern site boundary. Due to this and records of common toad within 300m of the site the presence of common amphibians within the site cannot be ruled out. There is the potential for site clearance works to harm foraging, commuting and hibernating common species of amphibians.

Reptiles

- 2.5 All reptile species are given limited protection under Schedule 5 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended). These include adder, grass snake, common lizard and slow worm. Under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended), reptiles are protected against:
 - intentional or reckless killing and injury
 - trade – i.e. sale, barter, exchange, transport for sale, or advertise for sale or to buy
- 2.6 The grassland, woodland edge and raised bank of rubble along the eastern site boundary provide suitable foraging, commuting and hibernation habitat for common reptile species, due to this there is the potential for site clearance works to harm reptiles at the site.

RAMMS

- 2.7 The RAMMS will ensure no harm, including killing or injury to any common amphibian or reptile species, if present on site during site clearance works.

Toolbox Talk

- 2.8 An Ecological Clerk of Works (ECoW) will be appointed and a toolbox talk will be delivered to all contractors before commencement of any site clearance works. All staff on site should be made aware of the potential for the presence of the common amphibian or reptile species on site. The tool box talk will include identification of common amphibians and reptiles, details of their legislative protection, details of this method statement, and what to do in the eventuality that reptiles or any common amphibians are found during site clearance and construction works.

Method Statement

- 2.9 The site clearance works must ideally be completed outside of the reptile hibernation period. This is generally accepted to be November to March inclusive, although is temperature dependent, and commences when night time temperatures fall below 5°C for five consecutive nights. Only site clearance works which do not impact potential reptile hibernation habitat, including the root systems of scrub and trees, will be permitted during the hibernation period.
- 2.10 Prior to works commencing, any potential sheltering and hibernation features for amphibians and reptiles within the works area will be removed by hand by the ECoW, where size allows. This will include features such as log piles, branches and piles of stone and rubble. Larger features suitable for sheltering or hibernation, such as fallen trees and rocks, will be moved using machines under the supervision of an ecologist following completion of vegetation clearance.
- 2.11 Clearance of above-ground vegetation must be conducted using a staged approach. The ECoW will hand search any areas of vegetation to be impacted by the works for amphibians and reptiles. Following the hand search, the long grass must initially be cut to a height of 15cm using a strimmer or small mower. A flail mower must not be used. Long grass must be cut in a single direction only to allow amphibians and reptiles to move away from the works area in to suitable retained or adjacent habitats. Cut vegetation must remain in-situ for 24 hours. The cut vegetation will then be searched by the ECoW. Once confirmed clear by the ECoW, the arisings can be removed and the remainder of the vegetation cut to ground level.
- 2.12 Pulling up of root systems of woody vegetation, if required, must be supervised by the ECoW. The ECoW will hand search the rootballs for amphibians and reptiles, following which they can be removed from site.
- 2.13 The ECoW will conduct a final search following the cutting of vegetation to ground level and the removal of any potential refugia. If the ECoW identifies any possible remaining hibernation or refuge features, such as small mammal burrows, then these features must be removed prior to any planned soil scraping or ground levelling works. When the ECoW is satisfied that no reptiles or amphibians are present beneath the ground within the site then site clearance works can continue unsupervised.
- 2.14 Materials for works should be stored off the ground on pallets or in bags where possible.

- 2.15 Should it be necessary to store piles of earth on site, these should be kept off the ground on pallets or in skips. Stored piles of earth should be compacted to prevent access by amphibians or reptiles to substrate.
- 2.16 Any common amphibians or reptiles found on site will be captured and released into retained suitable habitat within the far north of the site or to the northwest of the site. They should be released as far away from the development works as possible.

3.0 Badger Method Statement

Introduction

- 3.1 Badgers and their setts are protected under the Protection of Badgers Act 1992 and by Section 11 (Schedule 6) of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, as amended. It is illegal to wilfully kill, injure, take, possess or to cruelly ill-treat a badger or attempt to do so. Badger setts are protected from intentional or reckless interference and it is an offence to intentionally or recklessly obstruct access to, or any entrance of, a badger sett. In addition it is illegal to intentionally or recklessly disturb a badger when it is occupying a sett.
- 3.2 No setts were identified during the extended Phase 1 habitat survey undertaken in December 2020, however, evidence of badger activity, including badger pathways and a single snuffle hole were recorded, indicating that the site is utilised by foraging and ranging badger.
- 3.3 The woodland in the south west of the site and the land immediately off site to the west has limited potential for sett excavation.
- 3.4 The grassland and woodland habitats within the site are suitable for foraging and commuting badger.
- 3.5 As badgers are likely to be present within the habitats surrounding the site, and may range into the site, they could be harmed during site clearance and construction activities.

RAMMS

- 3.6 The RAMMS will be implemented during site clearance and construction activities and will ensure that no harm comes to commuting or foraging badger, if present within the site during the clearance and construction phases of the project.

Toolbox Talk

- 3.7 A toolbox talk will be delivered by the Project Ecologist or appointed ECoW to all contractors before commencement of any site clearance works. All staff on site should be made aware of the potential for the presence of badger on site. The toolbox talk will include identification of badger, details of their legislative protection and details of this method statement.

Method Statement

- 3.8 A pre-construction badger survey will be undertaken of the site and land within a 30m buffer zone prior to the commencement of works to ensure that no badger setts have been constructed within, or within influencing distance of, the site.
- 3.9 Appropriate speed limits will be enforced and signage installed on site to mitigate against potential collision impacts during the construction phase.
- 3.10 Night time working will be avoided if possible.

- 3.11 A Sensitive Lighting Strategy for the site will be implemented to avoid lighting of any potential foraging and/or commuting routes for wildlife and ensure potential impacts on badgers are reduced.
- 3.12 Excavations and trenches will not be left open overnight if possible. If excavations and trenches are required to be left open overnight, measures will be put in place to ensure badgers and other mammals cannot become trapped in them. This will include the provision of mammal ladders/ramps to ensure animals can safely exit excavations.
- 3.13 If any new ecology ponds or attenuation basins are to be created within the site, the waterbodies must have shallow, sloping banks to ensure no badgers, or other animals, can become trapped during construction. Mammal ladders/ramps will need to be provided during excavation of the waterbodies.
- 3.14 Open pipe systems will be capped to prevent badgers entering them and becoming trapped.

4.0 Nesting Birds Method Statement

Introduction

- 4.1 All wild birds are protected under the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 (as amended) whilst nesting. It is an offence to take, damage or destroy the nest of any wild bird whilst it is in use or being built.
- 4.2 The semi-natural broad-leaved woodland including woodland edge at the site are likely to support common tree-nesting bird species including song thrush, dunnoek, blue tit, great tit, blackbird, woodpigeon and robin. The modified neutral grassland and scattered scrub may hold some potential for bird species that nest on or near to the ground including reed bunting, willow warbler and wren.

RAMMS

- 4.3 Where possible, all vegetation clearance required will avoid the core breeding bird season, March to August inclusive; although it should be noted that bird nesting can take place outside this period.
- 4.4 If clearance works are necessary during the core breeding bird season, or at any time when bird nesting is suspected, a nesting bird check of the affected area by the Project Ecologist will be undertaken. The nesting bird check will take place no more than 24 hours prior to the clearance works. In the event that an active nest is found the Project Ecologist will provide advice on setting up a suitable exclusion zone area around the nest until the young have fledged. The extent of the exclusion zone will depend upon the bird species concerned and its location within the development.
- 4.5 Large and/or structurally complex areas of vegetation, if present on site, would be subject to a more careful inspection and may require an ecology watching brief to work alongside the contractors, clearing and checking vegetation in small sections.
- 4.6 Where breeding bird activity cannot be established within structurally complex areas of vegetation, bow saws and loppers shall be used to carefully cut away small sections of the vegetation, ensuring disturbance is localised. This is to be accompanied by continuous checks for nesting activities. If nests are uncovered then works shall cease until the Project Ecologist has determined the status of the nest.
- 4.7 If an active nest is identified, works can only proceed within the exclusion zone once the Project Ecologist has confirmed the young have fledged.

5.0 Hedgehog Method Statement

- 5.1 There is the potential for injury to small mammals, including other Section 7 species such as hedgehogs, during site clearance and construction activities. Hedgehog is listed on Schedule 6 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act (1981) which makes it an offence to kill or capture hedgehogs, with certain listed methods.
- 5.2 The Reasonable Avoidance Measures implemented to avoid harm or injury to common species of amphibian and badger will also ensure no other species, including hedgehog, are harmed during site clearance works and that no contravention of relevant wildlife legislation takes place.



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