

# STATEMENT OF COMMON GROUND ON BIODIVERSITY

BY

**1. WARRINGTON BOROUGH COUNCIL**



**2. EXTRA MSA GROUP**

**LAND AT JUNCTION 11 OF THE M62 MOTORWAY,  
WARRINGTON, WA3 7UD**

**APPEAL REFERENCES:  
APP/M0655/W1/21/3288180**

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**23 February 2022**

<b>Signed:</b> 	<b>Signed:</b> 
<b>Name:</b> Martha Hughes	<b>Name:</b> Alistair Baxter
<b>On behalf of:</b> Warrington Borough Council	<b>On behalf of:</b> Extra MSA Group

**Date:** 1/3/2022

**Date:** 23/02/2022

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## **1.0 INTRODUCTION**

### **1.1 Introduction**

- 1.1.1 This Statement of Common Ground ('SoCG') sets out those areas of agreement between the parties Warrington Borough Council and Extra MSA Group in relation to the appeal site 'Land at Junction 11 of the M62 Motorway, Warrington, WA3 7UD'.

## **2.0 IT IS HEREBY AGREED THAT:**

### **2.1 Survey Methods and Validity**

2.1.1 Survey work undertaken to inform the ecological baseline for the appeal site, as set out in the Environmental Statement (Topic Paper 5) and Addendum Environmental Statement (Topic Paper 5), has been conducted using industry standard methods and are sufficiently update to date to inform a planning decision.

### **2.2 Designations**

2.2.1 The site is not subject to any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designation.

2.2.2 The site is not hydrologically linked to any statutory or non-statutory nature conservation designation.

2.2.3 The site lies within the Greater Manchester Nature Improved Area which seeks to secure opportunities to restore degraded bogs wherever possible.

### **2.3 Habitats**

2.3.1 The site does not contain any Annex 1 habitats as listed within the Conservation of Habitats and Species Regulations 2017.

2.3.2 None of the habitats on the appeal site are classed as irreplaceable.

2.3.3 Priority habitats within the appeal site are in the form of `River` for Silver Lane Brook and `Lowland Mixed Deciduous woodland` for small areas of woodlands in the north and south of the appeal site. These are not high quality examples of these habitat types.

2.3.4 Invasive non-native species, as listed under Sch. 9 of the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981, are present within the appeal site including Japanese *Rose Rosa rugosa* and Himalayan Balsam *Impatiens glandulifera*.

2.3.5 The agricultural land aside, which is managed in accordance with its function, the habitats within the site appear to receive no beneficial conservation management.

## **2.4 Fauna**

- 2.4.1 The majority of the appeal site in the form of agricultural land is of limited value for fauna, save for a number of farmland birds both breeding and wintering.
- 2.4.2 The other habitats present provide some foraging/commuting opportunities for bats, foraging Badgers, breeding birds, foraging Barn Owl and invertebrates.
- 2.4.3 While a single Great Crested Newt has been recorded at the site, the presence of this species has not been recorded through specific survey work of nearby waterbodies, such that the individual recorded was likely to have been a dispersing animal from an unknown location.

## **2.5 Scheme Effects**

- 2.5.1 No likely significant effects on Manchester Mosses SAC, or any other statutory designation, are expected as a result of the proposed development at the appeal site.
- 2.5.2 Potential adverse effects on non-statutory designations, namely Pestfurlong Moss/Silver Lane Risley LWS, can be addressed via mitigation measures.
- 2.5.3 The scheme will lead to direct losses of 11.44ha of agricultural land, 1.16ha of grassland, 0.37ha of broadleaved woodland, 0.23ha of scrub, 1.15ha of tall ruderal and 0.01ha of standing water (loss of a single waterbody) while a length of 0.659km of Silver Lane Brook will also be lost.
- 2.5.4 Compensation for habitat losses is provided by way of the landscaping strategy which incorporates compensatory planting of ~1.3ha of woodland/scrub, ~3.0ha of species-rich grassland and re-routing of the Silver Lane Brook watercourse resulting in a greater length at 0.94km.
- 2.5.5 The proposals necessitate the removal of on-site peat with the relocated peat used to create a peat type wetland habitat within the Peat Habitat Zone.
- 2.5.6 The approach for the extraction and relocation of the sub-surface peat, as set out in the Peatland Ecological and Construction Management Plan, is appropriate.

- 2.5.7 Retained habitats would be safeguarded through adherence to a Construction and Ecological Management Plan and use of Sustainable Urban Drainage in the scheme.
- 2.5.8 New habitat creation, including a Peat Habitat Zone, grassland, woodland, scrub, tree lines and ditches will provide replacement opportunities for fauna.
- 2.5.9 Measures proposed to mitigate potential adverse effects on fauna during construction and operational phases of development are appropriate.
- 2.5.10 The proposals do not result in any significant residual effects on biodiversity.

## **2.6 Biodiversity Net Gain**

- 2.6.1 There is no legislative/policy requirement at this time to achieve a 10% biodiversity net gain.
- 2.6.2 The proposals will lead to a net gain for biodiversity of at least +8.17% for habitats, +39.3% for hedgerows/tree lines and an increased length of habitat for rivers/streams/ditches.
- 2.6.3 To provide a suitable development platform the peat on site needs to be removed and is to be reused on-site to create a Peat Habitat Zone. This is in line with the Peat Re-use Hierarchy (SEPA Guidance – WST-G-52). Therefore, the provision of the Peat Habitat Zone and the objective of creating peat based wetland habitat is the most appropriate approach to adopt and is of benefit to biodiversity.
- 2.6.4 An alternative approach would be to deliver a more common habitat type such as other neutral grassland of moderate distinctiveness (versus the very high distinctiveness, but longer term, more uncertain techniques associated with peat based wetland habitats), which would receive a higher biodiversity unit score within the Defra metric.
- 2.6.5 If this alternative approach is adopted it could result in a biodiversity net gain for habitats of +31.7% (+28.91% when adjusted for HS2 impacts).

## **2.7 Consultees**

- 2.7.1 There is no objection to the scheme from Natural England, Environment Agency or the Greater Manchester Ecology Unit.