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Land and Premises off Mill House Farm, Rakeway Road, Cheadle, Staffordshire Moorlands, ST10 1QH

Technical Note

Keepmoat Homes

P.2331.25
March 2026

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P.2331.25A	Land and Premises off Mill House Farm, Rakeway Road, Cheadle, Staffordshire Moorlands, ST10 1QH	Keepmoat Homes	31 March 2026

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1.0 Summary

This technical note has been prepared in support of the Reserved Matters application for Phase 2 (Thorley Drive) and specifically addresses the requirements of Condition 7 attached to the outline planning permission. The assessment focuses on the approved red line boundary for this phase and incorporates the identified mitigation land to the south-east of the site required to deliver biodiversity net gain. The outputs of this assessment are intended to inform the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP) submitted in support of the Reserved Matters application.

The assessment considers the ecological value of habitats recorded on site, based on their area (or length), condition and distinctiveness. Pre-development and post-development habitat values are calculated and compared, to identify any change in ecological value resulting from the proposed development layout and landscape proposals.

The units are calculated based on the area (or length), condition and distinctiveness of habitats recorded on site. Pre-development and post-development biodiversity values are calculated and compared to identify any change in biodiversity value based on the proposed development layout and landscape proposals.

Mandatory Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is set out in the Environment Act 2021 (UK Parliament, 2021) and applies in England as a requirement to demonstrate net gain as the result of a new development.

2.0 Limitations

The assessment provided within this technical note is based on the current proposed site layout and landscape information available at the time of writing. As the scheme is subject to ongoing design development, the conclusions of this assessment may be subject to change.

3.0 Biodiversity Net Gain and Management plan

The baseline site is dominated by modified grassland in poor condition (1.657ha), with small areas of mixed scrub (0.002ha) and boundary hedgerows containing trees. Hedgerows have been classified as native hedgerows with trees in accordance with the Metric.

The proposed development will result in the replacement of baseline habitats with a combination of built development and landscaped habitats, comprising:

- Developed land (buildings, roads and hardstanding): 0.93ha
- Vegetated garden areas: 0.389ha
- Introduced shrub planting: 0.014ha
- Modified grassland (amenity grassland): 0.0878ha
- Sustainable drainage features: 0.0724ha
- Urban tree planting: 0.1873ha

Biodiversity net gain is achieved through targeted habitat enhancement and creation within part of the land to the south-east of the site, comprising:

- Other neutral grassland (enhanced from modified grassland): 0.2682ha
- Additional mixed scrub enhanced/provided: 0.007ha

Hedgerows will be retained where practicable and enhanced from poor to moderate condition through appropriate management, with a total enhanced length of 0.491km.

The completed metric demonstrates that the development achieves:

- Habitat units: +14.80%
- Hedgerow units: +53.23%
- Watercourse units: 0%

The development therefore achieves biodiversity net gain in excess of the mandatory 10% requirement, and trading rules are satisfied.

Habitat Management and Monitoring

Habitat creation and enhancement will be implemented in accordance with the approved landscape proposals and will be subject to ongoing management to ensure successful establishment and long-term ecological function.

Other Neutral Grassland (0.2682ha)

- Established through enhancement of existing modified grassland
- Managed to maintain a species-diverse sward
- Annual cut in late summer with removal of arisings
- Additional cuts in early years as required to reduce nutrient levels and control undesirable species

Seed Mix: Areas will be overseeded using a suitable species-rich neutral grassland mix such as **Emorsgate EM2 Standard General Purpose Meadow Mix**, or an equivalent, appropriate to local soil conditions and site context. This mix will be applied following appropriate site preparation, including reduction of nutrient levels where required, to ensure successful establishment of a species-rich sward.

Modified Grassland (Amenity Grassland – 0.0878ha)

- Maintained as regularly mown amenity grassland
- Managed to maintain short sward and prevent encroachment of scrub

Mixed Scrub (0.007ha)

- Existing mixed scrub will be enhanced and managed to improve structure and condition
- Managed to maintain a diverse scrub habitat
- Rotational cutting on a 3–5-year cycle where required
- Retention of dense areas for habitat value
- Prevention of succession to woodland

Management for all scrub areas:

- Rotational cutting on a 3–5-year cycle
- Retention of dense areas for habitat value
- Prevention of succession to woodland

Introduced Shrub Planting (0.014ha)

- Maintained as part of the landscape scheme
- Periodic pruning and replacement as required
- Provides limited ecological value

Vegetated Garden Areas (0.389ha)

- Managed by residents
- Provides low-level ecological value within the site

Hedgerows (0.491km – Native Hedgerow with Trees)

- Retained hedgerows managed to improve condition from poor to moderate
- Managed on a rotational cutting regime outside of the bird nesting season
- Gaps infilled where necessary to improve connectivity
- Encouragement of tree standards within hedgerow where appropriate

Trees (Urban Trees – 0.1873ha equivalent)

- Planted in accordance with landscape specifications
- Watering and maintenance during establishment period
- Replacement of failures within first 5 years

Sustainable Drainage Features (0.0724ha)

- Managed to maintain drainage function and ecological value
- Vegetation monitored and controlled to prevent dominance
- Incorporation of appropriate planting where feasible

Implementation and Monitoring

All habitat creation and enhancement works will be implemented during the first appropriate planting season following commencement of development.

An initial establishment and maintenance period of at least 5 years will be undertaken to ensure successful establishment of habitats, including replacement planting where required.

Long-term management will be secured to ensure the continued delivery of biodiversity benefits over the lifetime of the development.

4.0 Ecological Requirements and Mitigation

The proposed development has been informed by the findings of the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) and supporting arboricultural information and incorporates measures to mitigate potential impacts on ecological receptors and provide habitat provision within the site.

The site is dominated by habitats of low ecological value, primarily modified grassland and managed boundary features. Hedgerows within the site comprise species-mixed, managed agricultural boundaries, with gaps, structural degradation and evidence of decline including ash dieback, as identified within the Arboricultural Impact Assessment. These hedgerows are generally in fair to poor condition and are categorised as low quality features. Whilst they include a mix of native woody species, they are not considered to meet the criteria for species-rich hedgerows or Local Wildlife Site designation and are not identified as 'important' hedgerows under the Hedgerow Regulations 1997. A limited section of hedgerow (approximately 12m) will be removed to facilitate access, with replacement planting incorporated within the landscape proposals.

Mitigation and enhancement within the site are primarily habitat-led and will be delivered through the approved landscape strategy. This includes the provision of wildflower grassland, wet-tolerant grassland associated with sustainable drainage features, tree planting and hedgerow retention and planting. Whilst these measures provide ecological value, they do not represent enhancement of baseline habitats and are not sufficient to offset losses or achieve biodiversity net gain within this phase of development.

No detailed species-specific mitigation or enhancement measures are currently defined within the landscape proposals. Planting information is limited to general landscape specification (e.g. soils, mulch and standard mixes), and the scheme is not specifically designed to deliver targeted benefits for protected or priority species. As such, mitigation relies on precautionary measures and further survey work where required.

In accordance with the PEA recommendations, the following measures will be implemented:

- If works have not commenced by October 2027, an updated site visit will be required to confirm baseline conditions.
- Vegetation clearance and pruning will be undertaken outside of the nesting bird season (1 March to 31 August inclusive) where possible. Where this is not achievable, nesting bird checks will be undertaken by suitably qualified ecologist prior to works commencing.

Bat surveys will be undertaken as required, including:

- A minimum of one nocturnal bat survey on trees T1, T3 and T21 between May and August
- Nocturnal bat activity surveys and the deployment of static bat detectors between April and October (in suitable weather conditions)
- Further bat surveys on trees as identified within the PEA

Great Crested Newt (GCN) eDNA surveys will be undertaken at ponds P1 and P2 and any applicable waterbodies within 500m of the site between mid-April and June.

Water vole surveys (minimum of two visits) will be undertaken between April and October prior to the commencement of vegetation clearance or development works.

An otter survey will be undertaken prior to the commencement of vegetation removal or development works.

The following Reasonable Avoidance Measures (RAMS) will be prepared and implemented where required:

- Water Vole RAMS
- Small Mammal RAMS
- Badger RAMS
- Amphibian RAMS
- Invertebrate RAMS

A precautionary check for badger will be undertaken prior to works commencing to confirm whether badgers are using the site for shelter.

A precautionary check for invasive species will be undertaken prior to works commencing, and an invasive species method statement will be prepared where required to prevent the spread of invasive species.

Enhancement within the site will be delivered through the landscape scheme, including tree planting, hedgerow planting, areas of wildflower grassland and planting associated with SuDS features. SuDS features will incorporate native planting where practicable to provide ecological benefit.

A management plan will be implemented to ensure the long-term establishment, protection and management of habitats within the site.

Overall, mitigation within the site is limited to precautionary measures and standard good practice, together with habitat provision through the landscape scheme. The development does not deliver enhancement of baseline habitats or targeted species mitigation within this phase, and any biodiversity net gain shortfall will be addressed through the wider site proposals associated with subsequent phases of development.