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Hinchley Road, Blackley

Biodiversity Impact Assessment

Miller Homes Ltd.

P.2167.25
April 2025

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Reference	Site	Client	Date
P.2167.25	Hinchley Road, Blackley, M9 7FJ	Miller Homes Ltd.	23 April 2025

Field work	Document author(s)	Quality & approval
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Appendix no.	Name
1	Drawing P.2167.25.E02 Baseline Habitats Drawing P.2167.25.T01 Tree Survey
2	Drawing 120-DAC-PL-001 Rev P6 Landscape Masterplan

Executive Summary

This report presents an assessment study of effects on biodiversity loss in connection with the proposed development at Hinchley Road, Blackley, M9 7FJ (hereafter referred to as the site). The site OS grid reference is SD 87835 03150 and the What3Words reference is toys.limbs.event.

This report calculates 'biodiversity units' using the Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs' (DEFRA) Statutory Biodiversity Metric, February 2024, and following the methods set out in *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric: User Guide 2024*. The units are calculated based on the area (or length), condition and distinctiveness of habitats found on the site. Pre-development and post-development biodiversity values are calculated and compared to identify any change in the biodiversity value of the site.

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

Based on the current proposals and recommended enhancements, there will be a net loss of **-10.97 (-92.76%)** in habitat area units within the proposed development area, demonstrating that a net gain in biodiversity units has not been achieved within the site, in line with the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) and Manchester Core Strategy 2012–2027 (adopted 11 July 2012). The site is also covered by the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan 2022 to 2039 (adopted March 2024).

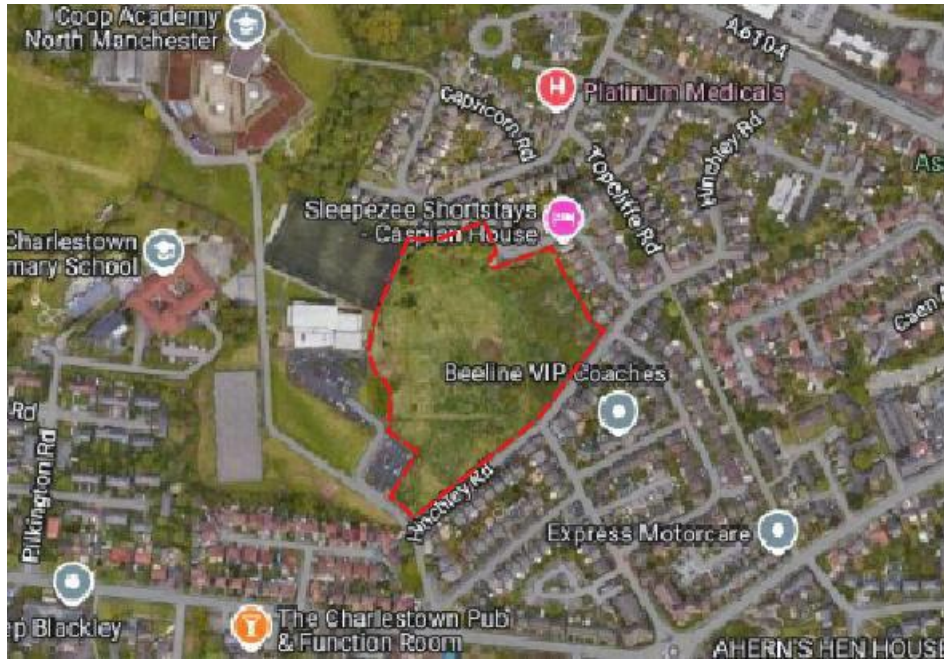
The 10% biodiversity net gain for the site will be secured via a legal agreement within an offsetting land parcel.

Post-development biodiversity units within the proposed development site were calculated based on the habitats displayed on drawing 120-DAC-PL-001 Rev P6 Landscape Masterplan, Appendix 2.

1. Introduction

1.1 Purpose of this report

Ascerta has been instructed by Miller Homes Ltd. to carry out a Biodiversity Impact Assessment of the land at the site, see **photograph 1**. This assessment has been prepared to support a planning application for the site.



Photograph 1.1: The extent of the site

1.2 Ecological background

A preliminary ecological appraisal of the site was undertaken by Ascerta on 4 March 2025, report P.2167.25 Preliminary Ecological Appraisal.

The site lies to the northeast of Manchester City Centre and is bound by Hinchley Road to the northeast with Charlestown Primary School and COOP Academy North Manchester to the north. Within the immediate surrounding area lies residential dwellings, retail premises and pockets of open space.

The on-site habitats comprise areas of scrub, other neutral grassland and individual trees.

2. Methods

2.1 Field survey

A walkover survey of the site was conducted on 4 March 2025, when the habitat types and linear features were identified and mapped. A habitat survey using UKHab Version 2.01 (UK Habitat Classification Working Group, 2023) methodology was undertaken along with habitats, hedgerows and watercourse (ditch) condition assessments (Natural England Farm Environment Plan [FEP] Manual, 3rd Edition, [March 2010]).

2.2 Biodiversity baseline methods

To calculate a biodiversity baseline, this study used methods detailed within *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric*, February 2024, and following the methods set out in *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric: User Guide 2024*. Habitats were identified and digitised within the QGIS application QField (QGIS Development Team, 2024). Areas were measured in hectares and linear features in kilometres. The biodiversity unit value for each habitat was then calculated by multiplying the habitat area (or length) by its distinctiveness score and then by its condition score, both described below. Using the BNG QGIS template, the unit values for each habitat were then consolidated within the QGIS import tool and imported into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Version 4 to produce the biodiversity baseline for the site. Linear habitats were assessed with the same methodology, yet separately to areas.

2.2.1 Habitat distinctiveness

Habitats identified are entered into DEFRA's Statutory Biodiversity Metric, which then assigns a pre-determined distinctiveness value. Habitat distinctiveness is a collective measure of biodiversity and includes parameters such as species richness, diversity, rarity, and the degree to which a habitat supports species rarely found in other habitats.

2.2.2 Habitat condition

Condition of the habitats present has been assessed during the site visit using *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric: User Guide 2024*. The post-development biodiversity units were calculated using information from drawing 120-DAC-PL-001 Rev P6 Landscape Masterplan, Appendix 2. To calculate the post-development biodiversity units, the habitat areas are multiplied by the distinctiveness and condition values and then divided by a multiplier based on the difficulty of creating the proposed habitat and the time needed to achieve the proposed condition. The baseline biodiversity units were then subtracted from the post-development units to determine any change in biodiversity value of the site as a result of the proposed development. The target condition of the habitats is based on guidance set out within *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric: User Guide 2024* which may require ecological input and/or guidance to ensure the target conditions are achieved.

Habitat Strategic Significance

A desk study was undertaken and presented within the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. Furthermore, Nature Recovery Areas, National Character Area objectives and green infrastructure strategies were also used to identify whether the site was as identified, desirable or not in the local strategy.

Trading Summary

'Trading Up' is a concept which requires 'conserving through offset components of biodiversity that are of a higher conservation priority (for example, because they are more irreplaceable and vulnerable) than those affected by the development project for which the offset is envisaged' (BBOP, 2018). For example, should non-irreplaceable habitats be lost / impacted as a result of the proposed development, offsets should be achieved through the creation / enhancement of habitat of the same or higher distinctiveness, where environmental conditions are appropriate and where it generates the greatest benefits for biodiversity.

2.2.3 Information and data used to inform the BNG calculations

The following information was used to inform the biodiversity unit calculations of the site. GIS layers and survey data of:

- The site
- Drawing P.2167.25.E02 Baseline Habitats, Appendix 1
- Drawing P.2167.25.T01 Tree Survey, Appendix 1
- Drawing 120-DAC-PL-001 Rev P6 Landscape Masterplan, Appendix 2

2.2.4 Limitations

This BNG report only addresses impacts on habitats within the site. Other ecological impacts, such as those related to protected species, are not covered by this report. The BNG calculations are based on a field survey of habitats and their condition at the time of survey, and the subsequent mapping of these habitat parcels and linear features in QGIS/QField. Habitat areas and linear features have been calculated in GIS and are not rounded, for precision.

3. Biodiversity Baseline

3.1 Biodiversity baseline for area habitats on-site

The baseline area habitats, drawing P.2167.25.E02 Baseline Habitats, Appendix 1, includes four types within the development area.

Following the methods set out in *The Statutory Biodiversity Metric: User Guide 2024*, biodiversity scores have been calculated and assessed and are displayed in **Table 3.1** below.

Table 3.1: Baseline: Habitat areas biodiversity calculation

Broad habitat	Habitat type	Irreplaceable habitat	Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness	Score
Grassland	Modified grassland	No	2.39	Low	2
Heathland and shrub	Bramble scrub	No	0.0512	Medium	4
Individual trees	Rural tree	No	0.1221	Medium	4
Heathland and shrub	Mixed scrub	No	0.2711	Medium	4

4. Impacts on Biodiversity

4.1 Post-development biodiversity value of the proposed development site

Drawing 120-DAC-PL-001 Rev P6 Landscape Masterplan, Appendix 2, delineates one new habitat area type, along with proposed private gardens. Habitat areas, distinctiveness and condition scores have been calculated and assessed and are displayed in **Table 4.1** below.

Table 4.1: Post-development: Habitat areas retained biodiversity calculation

Broad habitat	Proposed habitat	Area (hectares)	Distinctiveness		Condition	
			Distinctiveness	Score	Condition	Score
Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	1.7768	V. low	0	N/A - Other	0
Urban	Unvegetated garden	0.5624	V. low	0	N/A - Other	0
Urban	Vegetated garden	0.3312	Low	2	Condition Assessment N/A	1
Grassland	Modified grassland	0.1122	Low	2	Condition Assessment N/A	1

5. Change in Biodiversity Value

Based on the current proposals and recommended enhancements, there will be a net loss of **-10.97 (-92.76%)** in habitat area units within the proposed development area, demonstrating that a net gain in biodiversity units has not been achieved within the site, in line with the NPPF and Manchester Core Strategy 2012–2027 (adopted 11 July 2012). The site is also covered by the Places for Everyone Joint Development Plan 2022 to 2039 (adopted March 2024).

The BNG Good Practice Principles, as outlined in 1.2 have been applied, however due to the nature of the proposals net gain has not been achieved on the proposed development site.

Avoid losing biodiversity which cannot be off-set elsewhere, applying the mitigation hierarchy, ensuring that net gain design achieves the best outcome for biodiversity and create a net gain legacy for long-term benefits.

Although there is a biodiversity loss on site, through stakeholder engagement and design team meetings an avoidance for the biodiversity loss has been considered throughout the production of the proposals but also considering the housing allocation for the site. Further engagement with the local council and the client has resulted in the reduction of the required parking spaces per plot which has allowed the layout to be amended and therefore given an increase in private front gardens and the areas of managed open space throughout the site.

Addressing risk and applying the mitigation hierarchy.

The residual impacts will be short-term and landscape changes following re-vegetation would not be obvious or attract attention given the baseline habits and current use of the site. The implementation of a management plan will limit the risk of habitat failure and all the proposed habitats.

Make a 'measurable' net gain contribution.

Given the habitats that are present within the site, predevelopment of a measurable net gain contribution has not been achieved. It is considered that the proposed design achieves the best outcome for biodiversity. The 10% biodiversity net gain for the site will be secured via a legal agreement within an offsetting land parcel.

6. References

A – Natural England, B – Environment Agency, C – Department for Environment, Food and Rural Affairs, D – Treework Environmental Consultants Ltd, E – eCountability Ltd

Department for Environment Food and Rural Affairs (DEFRA) (2024). Statutory Biodiversity metric: User Guide. Natural England.

Google Earth V 7.3.6.9796. DigitalGlobe 2024. <http://www.earth.google.com> [February 22, 2024].

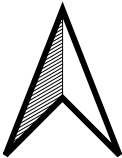
Ministry of Housing, Communities and Local Government. National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) (12 December 2024)

QGIS Development Team (2024). QGIS Geographic Information System version 3.38. Open-Source Geospatial Foundation. URL <http://qgis.org>

UK Habitat Classification Working Group (2023). UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions V2.01 at <https://ukhab.org/ukhab-documentation/>



- Key
- Survey area
 - Bramble scrub
 - Mixed scrub
 - Improved grassland (B6)
 - Individual trees



DO NOT SCALE.
ALL COORDINATES RELATED TO LOCAL GRID.
LOCATED TO NG BY BEST FIT TO DETAIL.
EXTRACTED FROM OS DIGITAL DATA.

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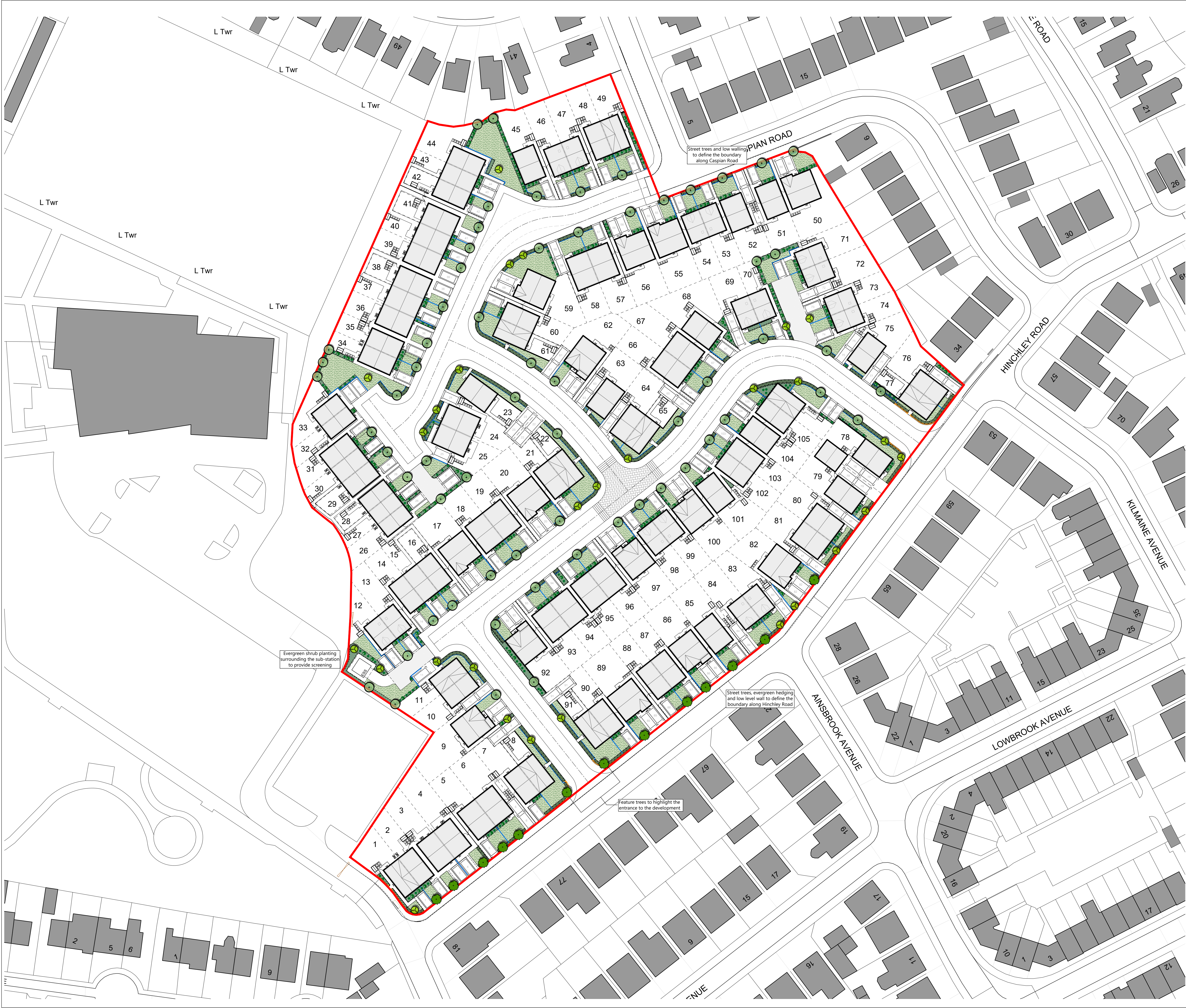
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CLIENT:
Miller Homes Ltd

PROJECT:
Hinchley Road, Blackley, M9 7FJ

DRAWING TITLE:
Baseline Habitats

SCALE: NTS@A3	DRAWN BY: LK	DRAWING No: P.2167.25.E02
DATE: 19/03/2025	CHKD BY: RA	REV: -



Notes:

Please do not scale from this drawing, either paper or electronic copies.

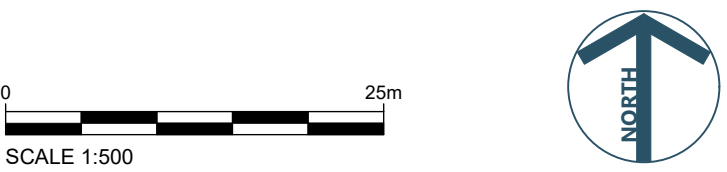
All final measurements must be checked on site by the contractor.

If there are any discrepancies noted in relation to dimensions or scale, please notify the Landscape Architect.

All works are to be carried out in accordance with the latest British Standards and/ or Codes of Practice unless otherwise stated.

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- Legend:**
- Proposed large tree in soft ground**
Height: 450-550cm with 2m clear stem
Girth: 14-16cm/ Extra Heavy Standard
 - Proposed medium growing tree**
Height: 350-450cm
Girth: 12-14cm/ Heavy Standard
 - Proposed small growing tree**
Height: 250-350cm
Girth: 10-12cm/ Select Standard
 - Proposed evergreen hedge**
Height: 80-100cm
Density: 3 per linear metre
Stock: 5l container
 - Proposed shrub planting**
with feature specimens
 - Proposed front gardens/ amenity grass**
 - Proposed low level railings**



Revision Notes:			
Rev	Initials	Description	Date
P6	MC	Updated in line with client comments	25-07-25
P5	DC	Updated in line with client comments	04-04-25
P4	DC	Updated in line with site layout revision 8	31-03-25
P3	DC	Updated to show the refuse locations and timber cycle shed to rear gardens	23-03-25
P2	DC	Additional planting in line with client comments	18-03-25
P1	DC	First issue	13-03-25

Client:

Miller Homes

Project:

Hinchley Road, Blackley

Title:

Landscape Masterplan

Status:	Date:
For Approval	13-03-2025

Drawing No:	Revision:
120-DAC-PL-001	P6

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1:500	A1	DC



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