



envirotech

**Ecological Consultants
Environmental and Rural Chartered Surveyors**

Biodiversity Net Gain Baseline

**Land South of Wythenshawe Town Football Club,
Manchester, M23 9LL**



Tel: 015395 61894
Email: info@envtech.co.uk
Web: www.envtech.co.uk
Envirotech NW Ltd

The Stables, Back Lane, Hale, Milnthorpe, Cumbria. LA7 7BL
Directors: A. Gardner BSc (Hons), MSc, MRICS, Dip NDEA
H. Gardner BSc (Hons), MSc, CEnv, MRICS
Registered in England and Wales. Company Registration Number 5028111

ACCURACY OF REPORT

This report has been compiled based on the methodology as detailed and the professional experience of the surveyor. Whilst the report reflects the situation found as accurately as possible, all of the protected species this survey covers are wild and can move freely from site to site. Their presence or absence detailed in this report does not entirely preclude the possibility of a different past, current or future use of the site surveyed.

We would ask all clients acting upon the contents of this report to show due diligence when undertaking work on their site and/or in their interaction with protected species. If protected species are found during a work programme, and continuing the work programme could result in their disturbance, injury or death, either directly or indirectly an offence may be committed.

If in doubt, stop work and seek further professional advice.

Quality and Environmental Assurance

This report has been printed on recycled paper as part of our commitment to achieving both the ISO 9001 Quality Assurance and ISO 14001 Environmental Assurance standards. Envirotech have been awarded the Gold standard by the Cumbria Business Environmental Network for its Environmental management systems.

Author	Bradley Foster	Date	26/09/2024
Checked by	Andrew Gardner	Date	26/09/2024
Report Version	1		
Field data entered	☒		
Report Reference	9097		

Contents

INTRODUCTION	6
Purpose of this Report	6
Ecological Context	6
Policy context	8
METHODS	8
Introduction	8
Biodiversity Assessment Methods.....	8
Habitat Distinctiveness	8
Habitat Condition.....	9
Strategic Location	9
Difficulty of Creation and Restoration.....	9
Time to Target Condition.....	9
Off-site Risk	9
BIODIVERSITY ASSESSMENT.....	10
Baseline Biodiversity Value	12
Post-development Biodiversity Value.....	13
REFERENCES.....	15
APPENDIX A – BASELINE DETAILED CONDITION ASSESSMENTS	16

Planning Portal Questions

Please provide the date the onsite pre-development biodiversity value was calculated (this should be either the date of the application, or an earlier proposed date)	14/03/2024
If an earlier date, to the date of the planning application, has been used, please provide details why this date has been used.	Site conditions have not changed between date of assessment and planning submission
When was the version of the biodiversity metric published?	Statutory Metric 05/12/2023
Please provide the pre-development biodiversity value of onsite habitats on the date of calculation	1.5 Habitat Units
Please provide the reference or supporting document/plan names for the: i. Biodiversity metric calculation ii. Onsite irreplaceable habitats (if applicable) iii. Onsite habitats existing on the date of the application for planning permission (if applicable)	Statutory Biodiversity Metric Baseline Calculation- Wythenshawe Town FC, Manchester
	N/A
	Preliminary Ecological Appraisal- Wythenshawe Town FC, Manchester
Has there been any loss (or degradation) of any onsite habitat(s), resulting from activities carried out before the date of the onsite pre-development biodiversity value was calculated. Either: - On or after 30 January 2020 which were not in accordance with a planning permission; or - On or after 25 August 2023 which were in accordance with a planning permission?	No
Does the development site have irreplaceable habitats (corresponding to the descriptions in column 1 of [Schedule to the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations (2023)) which are:	No

i.	On land to which the application relates; and	
ii.	Exist on the date of the application for planning permission (or an earlier agreed date)	

INTRODUCTION

Purpose of this Report

Envirotech were requested to carry out a biodiversity assessment of Land South of Wythenshawe Town Football Club, Manchester. The aim was for an ecologist with botanical expertise to carry out a site visit to map the habitat types present at the site in order to establish the biodiversity baseline.

Each habitat type was mapped using the standard habitat mapping convention using UK Habitat Classification V2 (Butcher et al., 2023) for the purposes of using the Defra metric.

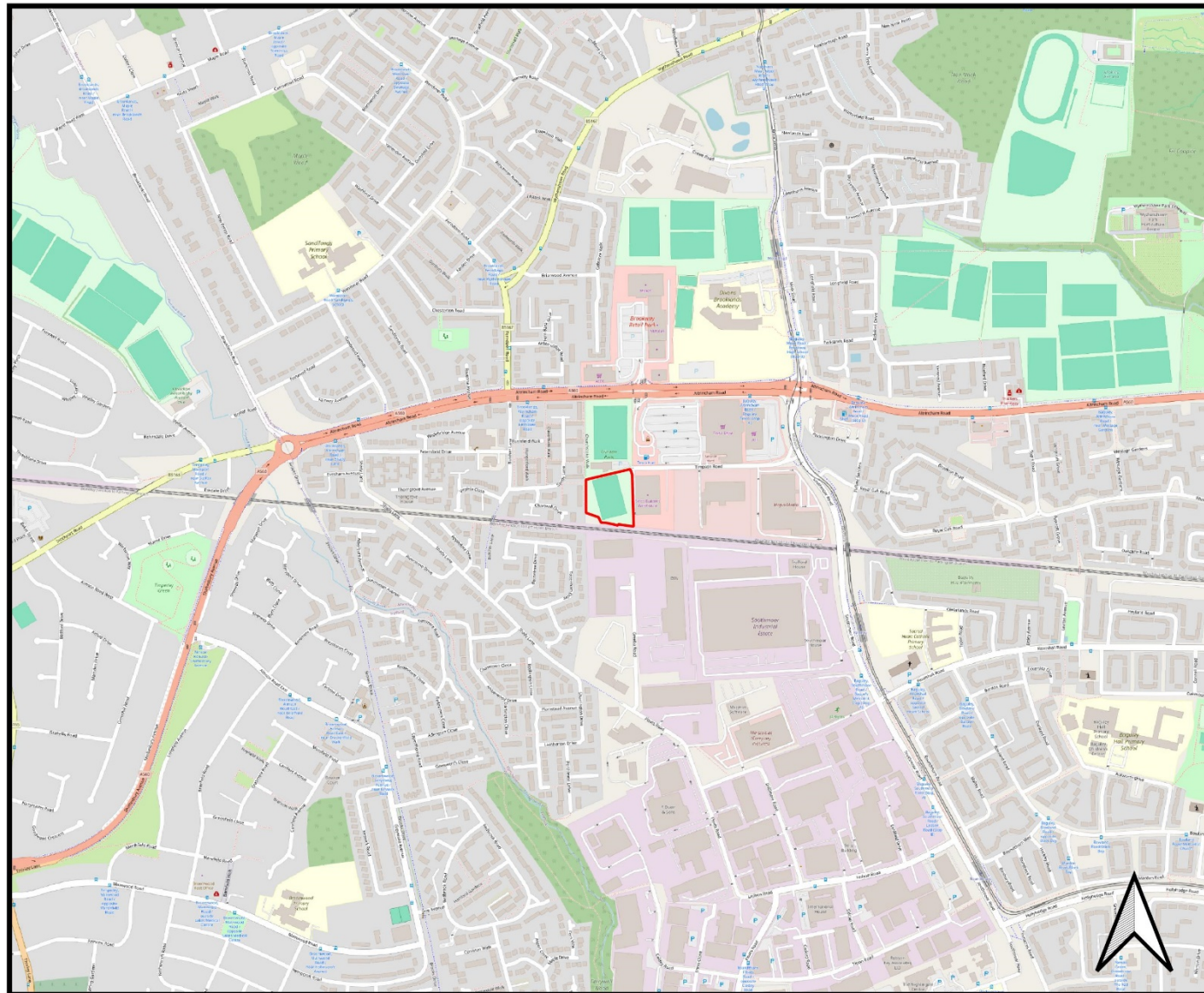
Using the findings of the baseline surveys, pre-construction ecology was valued against the provisions of the Statutory BNG metric to provide a baseline value of the site.

This report presents the results of this desk-based study to assess net change in biodiversity 'units' in connection with the removal of habitats for the proposed development at the site.

Ecological Context

The site is 0.82Ha, comprising an area of mostly modified grassland fringed by ephemeral/short perennial vegetation, bramble scrub, 'other neutral grassland' and 'other broadleaved woodland'.

Figure 1 shows the site location, grid reference SJ 80154 89193.



 Red Line Boundary

Figure 1
Site Location



Policy context

The primary aims of Biodiversity Net Gain are to secure a measurable improvement in habitat for biodiversity, to minimise biodiversity losses and to help to restore ecological networks whilst streamlining development processes.

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) makes provisions for the delivery of biodiversity net gain. Additionally, there is a 10% net gain requirement in the Environment Bill.

METHODS

Introduction

The statutory biodiversity metric is designed to quantify biodiversity to inform and improve planning, design, land management and decision-making (Natural England, 2024).

This study has been carried out as a desk-based exercise, using the results of field surveys carried out at the site by Envirotech.

Biodiversity Assessment Methods

To calculate biodiversity units for the site and assess any changes arising from the proposed development this study uses methods set out the latest Statutory Biodiversity Metric user guide (Natural England, 2024).

The biodiversity metric uses three core measurements:

- Habitat area
- Length of linear terrestrial habitats
- Length of linear aquatic habitats.

Consequently, a site can have three biodiversity unit values, which are assessed using the same metric, but cannot be summed together.

Habitat area is multiplied by several factors that indicate its quality: distinctiveness, condition, strategic location and connectivity, and this gives its biodiversity unit value. This can be used for existing and future created habitats. In addition, when habitats are to be enhanced or newly-created, the risk of failure is accounted for by applying multipliers for risk factors (difficulty, time to target condition, and off-site risk).

Habitat Distinctiveness

Habitats are classified using the UK habitat classification V2 system (Butcher et al., 2023).

The metric pre-assigns each habitat type to a distinctiveness band according to its distinguishing features, i.e. species richness, rarity (at local, regional, national and international scales), and the degree to which it supports species rarely found in other habitats. On rare occasions, the habitat distinctiveness of a habitat can be altered up or down from the preassigned value. Any

alterations must then be fully explained using evidence relevant to the site, e.g. an increase in distinctiveness because of rare flora or fauna or a decrease in distinctiveness because of significant damage to the habitat.

Habitat Condition

Habitat condition measures the varying quality of similar habitats against what is perceived to be their optimal state. The statutory biodiversity metric technical supplement (Natural England, 2023) contains condition sheets for all habitats to which the metric can apply. The condition sheets contain a habitat description, contextual information to aid the assessment, and the assessment criteria. The criteria describe what components need to be present for a habitat to be in good, moderate or poor condition.

Strategic Location

Strategic location - sometimes called 'strategic significance' – works at a landscape scale, allowing additional value to be added to habitats in 'priority' or 'biodiversity target areas'. They include statutory and non-statutory sites and other areas with biodiversity value or potential, and they are mainly identified from local plans and objectives. If a habitat is within such a target area, a multiplier is applied to increase its value.

Difficulty of Creation and Restoration

The risks associated with creating new or enhancing existing habitats, are known as difficulty factors; for example, where habitats fail to establish owing to natural changes in local conditions, incorrect management or for unknown reasons. The statutory biodiversity metric contains default values for each habitat based on the average difficulty of creating or enhancing a habitat. Occasionally, under exceptional circumstances, these can be modified, but any deviation from the default value must be fully justified.

Time to Target Condition

There is often a lag between a habitat being removed and the new compensation habitats achieving their target condition. This gives reduced biodiversity value for a time. The statutory biodiversity metric preassigns the time to target condition based on good practice and typical conditions, and assigns a multiplier based on the number of years required to achieve it.

Using bespoke techniques under unique conditions, or creating compensation habitats prior to impacts taking place, the time to target condition can be adjusted. Any changes must again be fully justified.

Off-site Risk

Sometimes it is not possible to compensate adequately for loss of biodiversity within the site boundary, so off-site compensation is required. If the off-site compensation is a significant distance from the development site, then there will be a local loss of biodiversity and a multiplier is applied to any off-site compensation.

BIODIVERSITY ASSESSMENT

Baseline:

The sites baseline BNG value was calculated using the Statutory BNG metric and UKHabs v2 methodology. This was shown in the PEA report, as Figure 5, reproduced below.

The baseline value for the site is as at 14.03.2024. This is the date that our assessment was undertaken. We consider there will have been no substantive changes to habitat condition at the time of the planning application being made.

We are not aware of any habitat features which have been purposefully degraded after 30th January 2020.

We consider planning permission, if granted, would be subject to the biodiversity gain condition

The type, area and distinctiveness values are shown on Table 1.



Habitat	Area (ha)	Distinctiveness
Developed land; sealed surface	0.12	V.Low
Modified grassland	0.66	Low
Other neutral grassland	0.013	Medium
Bramble scrub	0.014	Medium
Other woodland; broadleaved	0.019	Medium

Table 1- Habitat, Area and Distinctiveness Values

The UK Habs V2 habitat survey has been used to identify relevant habitat areas, linear habitat areas and watercourse units.

These habitats have been input into the statutory biodiversity metric calculator and indicate a total of 1.50 habitat units. There are no hedgerows on site, or watercourses within a 10m radius of the site. The results of the calculations are presented in the full biodiversity assessment calculation in the Excel document 'Statutory Biodiversity Metric Baseline Calculation- Wythenshawe Town FC, Manchester'.

The condition assessments for each of the habitat types are presented in Appendix A. No deviations have been made from the default methods for baseline habitats assessment.

Baseline Biodiversity Value

The baseline value of the site comprises 1.50 habitat units. This is shown in Table 2.

Table 2. Baseline Biodiversity Units

On-site baseline	<i>Habitat units</i>	1.50
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	1.50
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
On-site net change (units & percentage)	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.00
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
Off-site baseline	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.00
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.00
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.00
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.00
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.00
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.00
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.00%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00%
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

Post-development Biodiversity Value

It is understood the majority of the site's green space will be lost in order to facilitate the development, as shown on the provisional site layout plan (Figure 2). There is expected to be complete loss of 'other neutral grassland', 'other broadleaved woodland', mixed scrub and ruderal/ephemeral habitat groups.

A small proportion of modified grassland may be retained to the site entrance, edges and around car parking areas, but this is unlikely to be significant. The existing football pitch will be replaced with an artificial five-a-side pitch.

Resultingly, it is advised offsite BNG credits are purchased in order that development achieves an overall BNG score. Credits in the same local authority area will be sought in preference to those nationally.

However, given the absence of irreplaceable habitats, in addition to absence of habitats of a high and very high distinctiveness, we do not consider this a significant constraint to the planning application. We would advise post-development habitat compensation is provided as a planning condition once a landscape plan has been finalised.

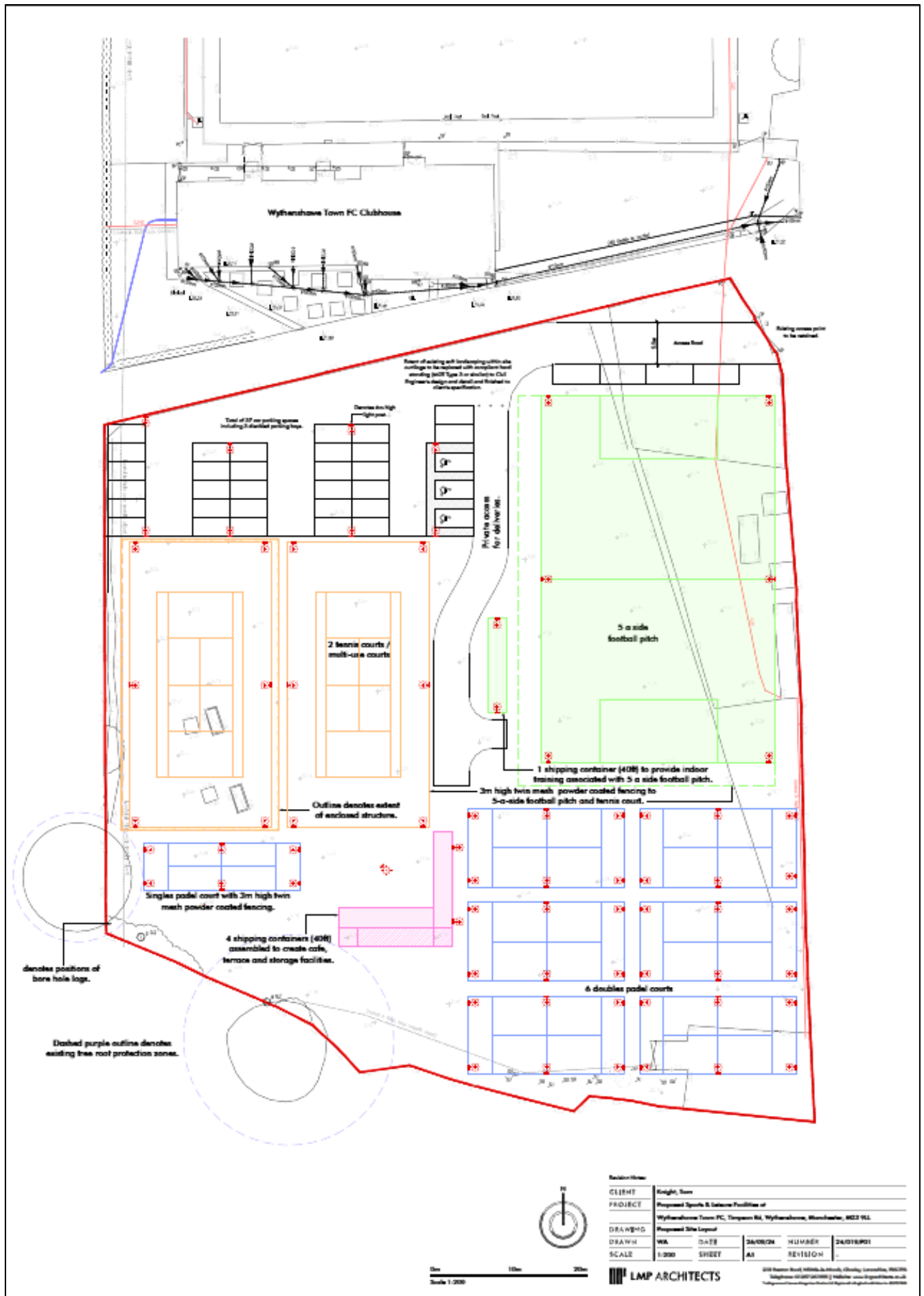


Figure 2- Indicative site plan

REFERENCES

Butcher, B., Carey, P., Edmonds, R., Norton, L. and Treweek, J. (2023), UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions V2.01 at <http://ukhab.org>

Natural England 2023. Natural England The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (draft)

APPENDIX A – BASELINE DETAILED CONDITION ASSESSMENTS

This appendix presents the assessment of the post-development habitats against the condition sheets in the statutory biodiversity metric technical supplement published by Natural England, 2023. Any deviations from the published guidance is explained and justified.

UK Hab Equivalent	Condition Sheet	Other Habitat Criteria Score									Total Score	Condition Assessment	Notes
		C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9			
Modified Grassland	GRASSLAND: Low distinctiveness	F	F	P	F	P	P	P			4	Poor	The existing football pitch and verge areas comprise modified grassland; being sewn with hardy species resistant to moving. Grassland possesses <6 species per m² and can therefore only be considered poor quality. Sward height is uniform and damaged (owing to football being regularly played).
Other neutral grassland	GRASSLAND: Medium-Very High distinctiveness	F	F	P	P	P	F				3	Poor	Other neutral grassland to the south-west of the site is in poor condition with few indicator species and can therefore only be considered poor quality. This habitat possesses <10 vascular plant species per m².
Bramble Scrub	Scrub										N/A	N/A	Bramble scrub given fixed condition score.
Developed Land; Sealed Surface	Not assessed										N/A	N/A	Hardstanding yard and building areas.
Key: P – Criteria passed F – Criteria failed													
Appendix Table A1: Condition Assessment for Area Habitats													

UK Hab Equivalent	Condition Sheet	Other Habitat Criteria Score													Total Score	Condition Assessment	Notes
		C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12	C13			
Other broadleaved woodland	WOODLAND AND FOREST	2	3	3	2	1	2	2	1	2	1	1	1	1	22	Poor	Fringe of other broadleaved woodland along the southern boundary of the site (inside the palisade fence). Woodland is likely self-seeded given its proximity to the railway and the dominance of Sycamore. The woodland possesses a poor vertical structure. Veteran trees and deadwood are absent. Woodland disturbance is high given this habitat is open and freely accessible to the wider site.
Key to woodland condition assessment: 3 (points) = Good 2 (points) = Moderate 1 (point) = Poor Total score >32 – Good Total score 26 – 32 – Moderate Total score <26 – Poor																	
Appendix Table A2: Woodland Condition Assessment																	