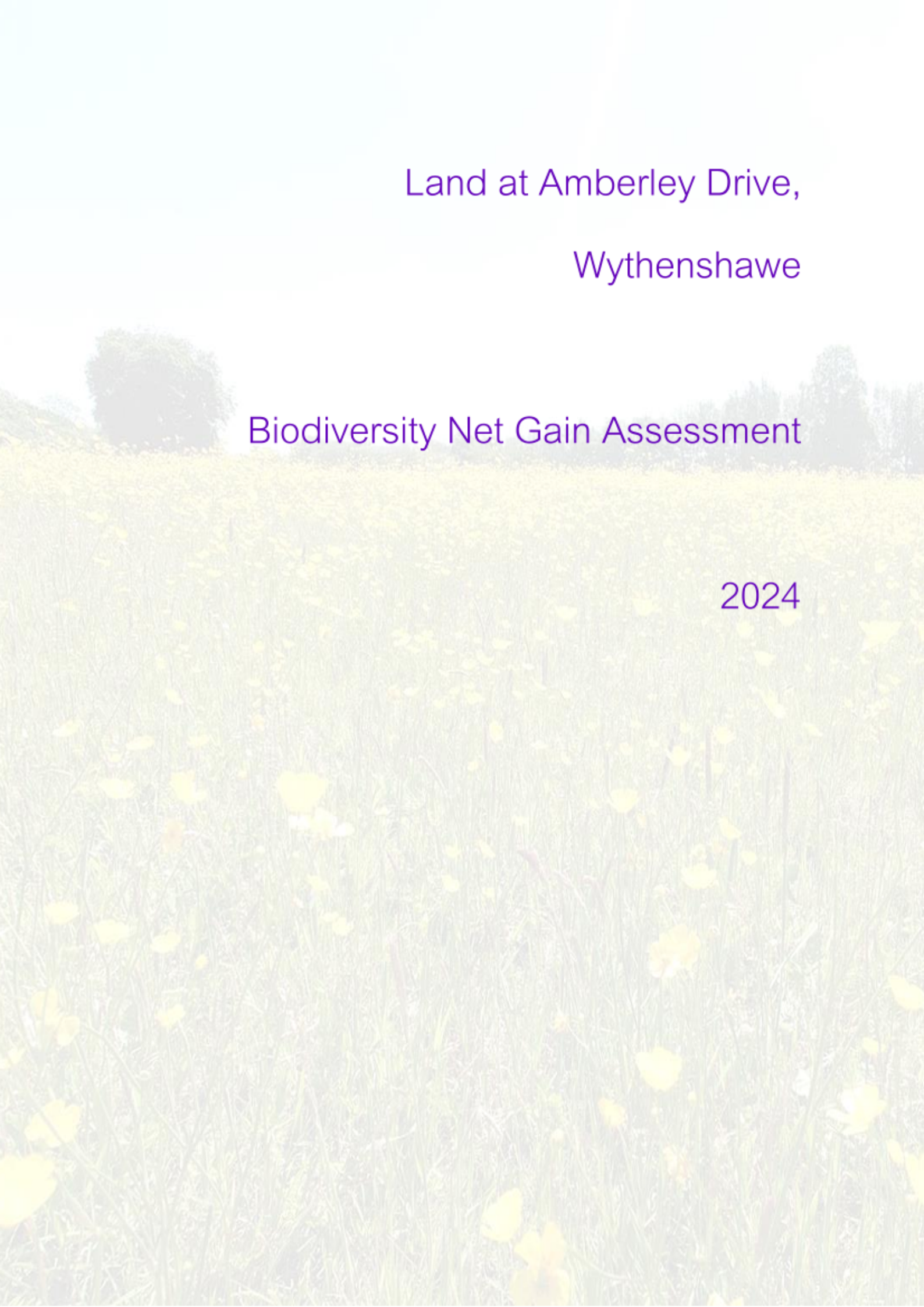




Land at Amberley Drive,

Wythenshawe

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

2024

Client	Wythenshawe Community Housing Group
Project Title	Land at Amberley Drive, Wythenshawe
Project Reference	RHE.2783.2
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Executive Summary

Development Details

The client is proposing development at Land at Amberley Drive, Wythenshawe, Greater Manchester, hereafter referred to as the 'site'.

This report describes the results of a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment for the proposed development. Recommendations are provided so that the development is compliant with BNG policy and legislation.

Biodiversity Impact Assessment

The baseline habitats on site provide 0.58 habitat units. The development proposals achieve 0.14 habitat units. This represents a net loss of -0.44 habitat units (-76.12%).

To compensate for the loss, an off-site mitigation plot, location adjacent to the site will be enhanced from a baseline of 3.38 habitat units to a post-intervention 3.88 habitat units, resulting in a net gain of 0.50 habitat units (14.88%). When combined, this will result in a total net gain of 0.06 in habitat units (+10.22%).

Outcomes

Should the proposed off-site mitigation be carried out, the development will achieve the minimum 10% Biodiversity Net Gain requirement.

A Biodiversity Management Plan detailing the timing and responsibility for delivering the creation, maintenance, and monitoring of the proposed habitats will likely be provided as a pre-commencement planning condition.

1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief

- 1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited (RHE) was commissioned in 2024 by Wythenshawe Community Housing Group to carry out a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment of land off Amberley Drive, Wythenshawe. The site is located at O.S. grid reference: SJ 81157 87940 (see Figure 1).
- 1.1.2 Following this assessment, RHE was subsequently commissioned to undertake a Biodiversity Impact Assessment (BIA) of the land adjacent to the site (see Figure 1) for off-site BNG mitigation.

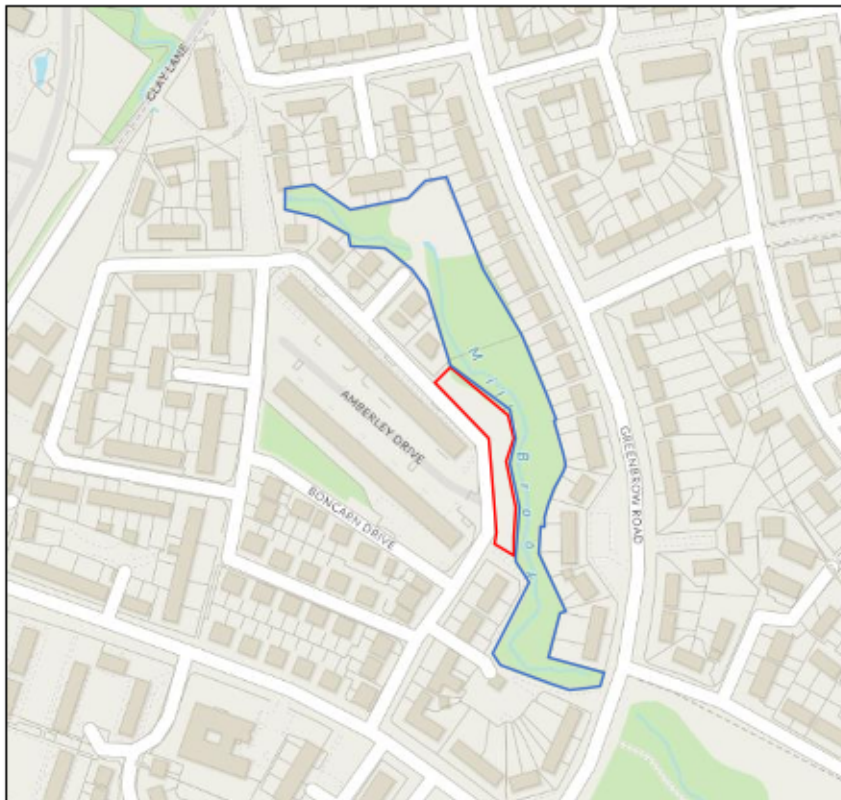


Figure 1. Map showing the location of the site (red line) and off site mitigation site (blue line)

- 1.1.3 The proposed development site currently comprises poor semi-improved grassland, tall ruderal herb, scattered trees and scrub, amenity grassland and continuous scrub. The site is mostly surrounded by residential development. To the east lies greenspace, comprising Mill Brook and woodland.

Description of Development

- 1.1.4 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the construction of 8 houses.

Relevant Planning History

- 1.1.5 Rachel Hacking Ecology carried out an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the site, and a wider area, in 2021¹, upon which this BNG assessment is based.

1.2 Scope of Work

- 1.2.1 The Client commissioned Rachel Hacking Ecology to undertake a BNG assessment to quantify the predicted changes in habitats resulting from the proposed development.

1.3 Site Visit Information

Surveyor Details

- 1.3.1 Ben Crossthwaite (Senior Ecologist) visited the site on 20th October 2021 to assess the habitats within the red line boundary. Ben has experience of undertaking similar surveys.
- 1.3.2 Joel Crossthwaite (Junior Ecologist) revisited the site on 15th October 2024 to survey the habitats within the blue line boundary.

¹ Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey and Daytime Bat Survey, Land off Amberley Drive, Wythenshawe, Manchester - 2022 - REV.A



2. Methods

2.1 Biodiversity Net Gain

- 2.1.1 During the site walkover the ecological condition of each habitat was assessed in accordance with the Defra (2024) guidelines². Habitat types recorded and mapped during the field survey were converted from the JNCC system to the UK Habitat Classification system³.
- 2.1.2 Habitat data including type, area (or length), condition and strategic location were uploaded to the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculator spreadsheet to determine the baseline value of the site. The extent of any habitats to be retained or enhanced was also entered into baseline worksheets.
- 2.1.3 The post-development masterplan was interrogated to determine areas of hard standing, buildings, and associated infrastructure. New, retained and enhanced habitats were classified and allocated a target condition, based on habitat type, location and management input. This information was uploaded to the metric spreadsheet to obtain a post-development value.
- 2.1.4 The pre- and post-development values were compared to determine whether the yield of biodiversity units achieved a deficit or gain.

2.2 Mitigation Hierarchy

- 2.2.1 Mitigation measures should be embedded within the masterplan design and planning application process. This process from proposal to implementation needs to consider the 'mitigation hierarchy' of avoid, reduce, compensate, and enhance:
 - Aim to avoid negative effects through the design process.
 - Mitigate if negative effects cannot be avoided.
 - Use compensation measures to offset residual impacts.
 - Identify and implement opportunities to enhance biodiversity.

² The_Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_-_User_Guide_.pdf (publishing.service.gov.uk)

³ Butcher, B., Carey, P., et al. (2020). UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions V1.1. at <http://UKhab.org>

3. Results

3.1 Baseline Habitats (Onsite)

- 3.1.1 The habitat survey is contained in Appendix 2. For further details, target notes and photographs are contained in the original ecological appraisal, as referenced above. Please refer to the Statutory BNG Metric ⁴ and the Statutory habitat condition assessment spreadsheet⁵.

3.2 Area Habitats (Onsite)

- 3.2.1 The area habitats baseline score is calculated to be 0.58 habitat units.

Grassland; Modified Grassland

- 3.2.2 The dominant habitat on site is amenity grassland, extending to 0.095ha. The grassland species assemblage is of low diversity, dominated by Perennial Rye-grass *Lolium perenne*. Herbaceous species include Creeping Buttercup *Ranunculus repens*, Broad-Leaved Dock *Rumex obtusifolius*, Dandelion *Taraxacum officinale* agg., Ribwort Plantain *Plantago lanceolata*, Red Clover *Trifolium pratense* and White Clover *Trifolium repens*. This habitat achieves 0.19 habitat units.

Heathland and shrub; Mixed Scrub

- 3.2.3 This habitat extends to 0.031ha. Abundant species include Blackthorn *Prunus spinosa*, Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., Pedunculate Oak *Quercus robur*, Hazel *Corylus avellana*, Rosebay Willowherb *Chamaenerion angustifolium* and Elder *Sambucus nigra*. This habitat achieves 0.25 habitat units.

Sparsely vegetated land; Tall Forbs

- 3.2.4 Tall, ruderal herb vegetation extends to 0.036ha. Abundant species are Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg., Common Nettle *Urtica dioica*, Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, Raspberry *Rubus idaeus*, Hogweed *Heracleum sphondylium*, Cleavers *Galium aparine*, Rosebay Willowherb *Chamaenerion angustifolium*, Ivy *Hedera helix* and Atlantic Ivy *Hedera helix* spp. *hibernica*. This habitat achieves 0.14 habitat units.

⁴ RHE.2783 Amberley Drive, Wythenshawe - Statutory BNG Metric

⁵ RHE.2783 Amberley Drive, Wythenshawe - Statutory Condition Assessments

3.3 Post Development Created Habitats (Onsite)

- 3.3.1 The development proposals achieve 0.21 habitat units. None of the existing habitats will be retained as part of the development. Please refer to the Statutory BNG Metric.

Urban; Developed Land; Sealed Surface

- 3.3.2 Buildings, driveways, paths and hardstanding will form the majority of the site and these extend to a total of 0.0867ha. This is a habitat of very low distinctiveness and low strategic significance. Target condition is not applicable. Developed land; sealed surface scores zero habitat units.

Urban; Vegetated Garden

- 3.3.3 The external spaces to the rear and sides of the properties will be managed as private gardens. This habitat will extend to a total of 0.072ha. Target condition is not applicable. Vegetated garden scores 0.14 habitat units.

3.4 Baseline Habitats (Off-site)

- 3.4.1 The habitat survey is contained in Appendix 5. Target notes and photographs relating to each habitat are contained in Appendix 6. Please refer to the Statutory BNG Metric⁶ and the Statutory habitat condition assessment spreadsheet⁷.

3.5 Area Habitats (Off-site)

- 3.5.1 The area habitats baseline score is calculated to be 3.38 habitat units.

Grassland; Modified Grassland

- 3.5.2 This habitat extends 0.046ha. Dominant species include Perennial Ryegrass, Yorkshire fog *Holcus Lanatus*, Red fescue *Festuca rubra*, Nettle, Wood avens *Geum urbanum* and Herb-Robert *Geranium robertianum*. This habitat achieves 0.09 habitat units.

Grassland; Traditional Orchard

- 3.5.3 This habitat extends 0.111ha. Fruit bearing species include Apple *Malus pumila*, Wild cherry *Prunus avium* and Fig *Ficus carica*. Additional species include Perennial ryegrass, Yorkshire fog, Red fescue, Cock's-foot *Dactylis glomerata*, Pedunculate oak *Quercus robur* and Broad-Leaved Dock. This habitat achieves 1.33 habitat units.

⁶ RHE.2783 Amberley Drive, Wythenshawe - Statutory BNG Metric – Inc. Off-site mitigation

⁷ RHE.2783 Amberley Drive, Wythenshawe - Statutory Condition Assessments – Off site

Heathland and Shrub; Bramble Scrub

- 3.5.4 This habitat extends 0.08ha. Bramble *Rubus fruticosus* is dominant throughout these habitats. Additional species include Nettle, Willowherb and Bindweed *Calystegia* sp. This habitat achieves 0.32 habitat units.

Urban; Bare Ground

- 3.5.5 This habitat consists of a small area located at what used to be the entrance to the site. At one time it appears to have been a pathway but has since overgrown with a combination of mosses and grasses. This habitat extends 0.004ha. This is a habitat of low distinctiveness and low strategic significance. This habitat achieves 0.01 habitat units.

Woodland and Forest; Other Woodland; Broadleaved

- 3.5.6 This is the dominant habitat within the off-site mitigation site, extending 0.203ha. Species include Oak *Quercus p.*, Hazel *Corylus avellana*, Ash *Fraxinus excelsior*, Common lime *Tilia europaea*, Wild cherry, Sycamore *Acer pseudoplatanus*, Sweet chestnut *Castanea sativa* and Elder *Sambucus nigra*. This habitat achieves 1.62 habitat units.

3.6 Post Development Created Habitats (Off-site)

- 3.6.1 The proposed mitigation plan will replace the modified grassland and bare ground habitats with mixed scrub, achieving 0.33 habitat units. Please refer to the Statutory BNG Metric.

Heathland and shrub; Mixed scrub

- 3.6.2 This new habitat will extend 0.05ha and achieve 0.33 habitat units.

3.7 Post Development Enhanced Habitats (Off-site)

- 3.7.1 The proposed mitigation plan will include the enhancement of the Bramble scrub to mixed scrub. Please refer to the Statutory BNG Metric.

Heathland and shrub; Mixed scrub

- 3.7.2 This habitat will extend 0.05ha, achieving an additional 0.33 habitat units.

4. Assessment

4.1 Summary

4.1.1 A summary extract of the BNG assessment can be seen in Appendix 4.

4.1.2 Baseline habitats score **0.58** habitat units. Post development habitats score **0.14** habitat units. The development will result in a net loss of -0.44 habitat units (-76.12%).

Off-site mitigation

4.1.3 An area adjacent to the proposed development site has been identified for off-site mitigation (see Appendix 5).

4.1.4 Baseline habitats on the mitigation site score **3.38** habitat units. Post-intervention habitats score **3.88** habitat units. Off-site mitigation will result in an overall net gain of 0.06 habitat units (10.22%).

5. Recommendations

- 5.1.1 The minimum of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain can be achieved with the enhancement of the offsite mitigation site. This will require the creating of mixed scrub throughout the site. It is recommended a variety of native scrub species should be planted evenly throughout the outlined areas. Further details will be provided within the Landscape and Ecological Management Plan (LEMP)
- 5.1.2 The 10% BNG will be secured via a 30-year Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan (HMMP), which can be imposed via a suitably worded planning condition. There may also be a requirement to secure the BNG via a s106 agreement.

Appendix 1: Planning Policy & Legislation

National Policy

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF 2023) describes the Government's planning policy for England and how it should be applied. Within this framework, the requirements in relation to biodiversity are included within several policies. The two most relevant to individual planning decisions are Paragraphs 180 and 186, shown below:

- 180. Planning policies and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by:
 - a) protecting and enhancing valued landscapes, sites of biodiversity or geological value and soils (in a manner commensurate with their statutory status or identified quality in the development plan);
 - b) recognising the intrinsic character and beauty of the countryside, and the wider benefits from natural capital and ecosystem services – including the economic and other benefits of the best and most versatile agricultural land, and of trees and woodland;
 - c) maintaining the character of the undeveloped coast, while improving public access to it where appropriate;
 - d) minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures;
 - e) preventing new and existing development from contributing to, being put at unacceptable risk from, or being adversely affected by, unacceptable levels of soil, air, water or noise pollution or land instability. Development should, wherever possible, help to improve local environmental conditions such as air and water quality, taking into account relevant information such as river basin management plans; and
 - f) remediating and mitigating despoiled, degraded, derelict, contaminated and unstable land, where appropriate.
- 186. When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:
 - a) if significant harm to biodiversity resulting from a development cannot be avoided (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then planning permission should be refused;
 - b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments),

should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

- c) development resulting in the loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) should be refused, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists; and
- d) development whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can secure measurable net gains for biodiversity or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.

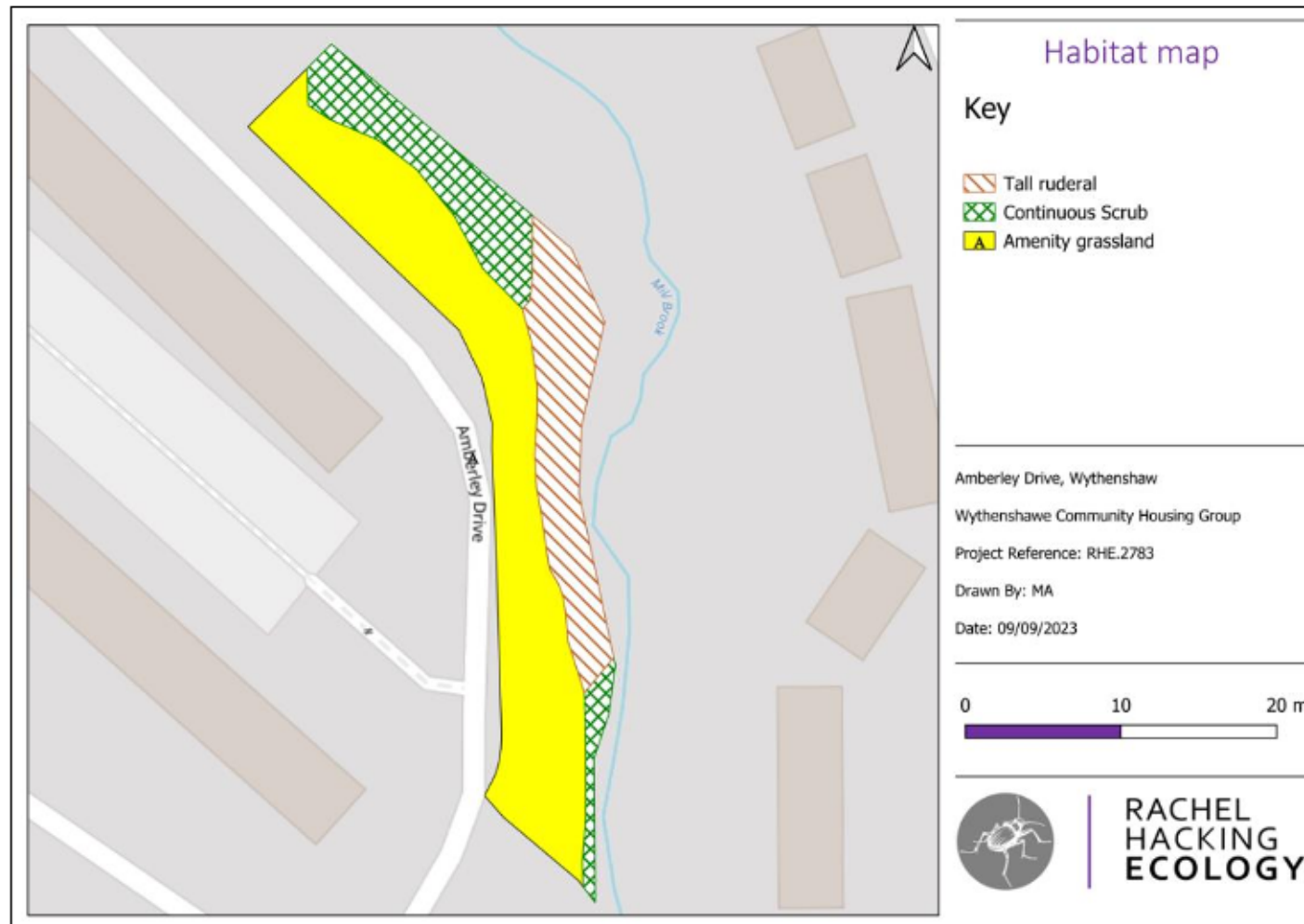
Legislation

The Environment Act 2023 makes it mandatory for housing and development, subject to some narrow exemptions, to achieve at least a 10% net gain in value for biodiversity – a requirement that habitats for wildlife must be left in a measurably better state than before the development. Developers must submit a 'biodiversity gain plan' alongside usual planning application documents. The local authority must assess whether the 10% net gain requirement is met in order to approve the biodiversity gain plan.

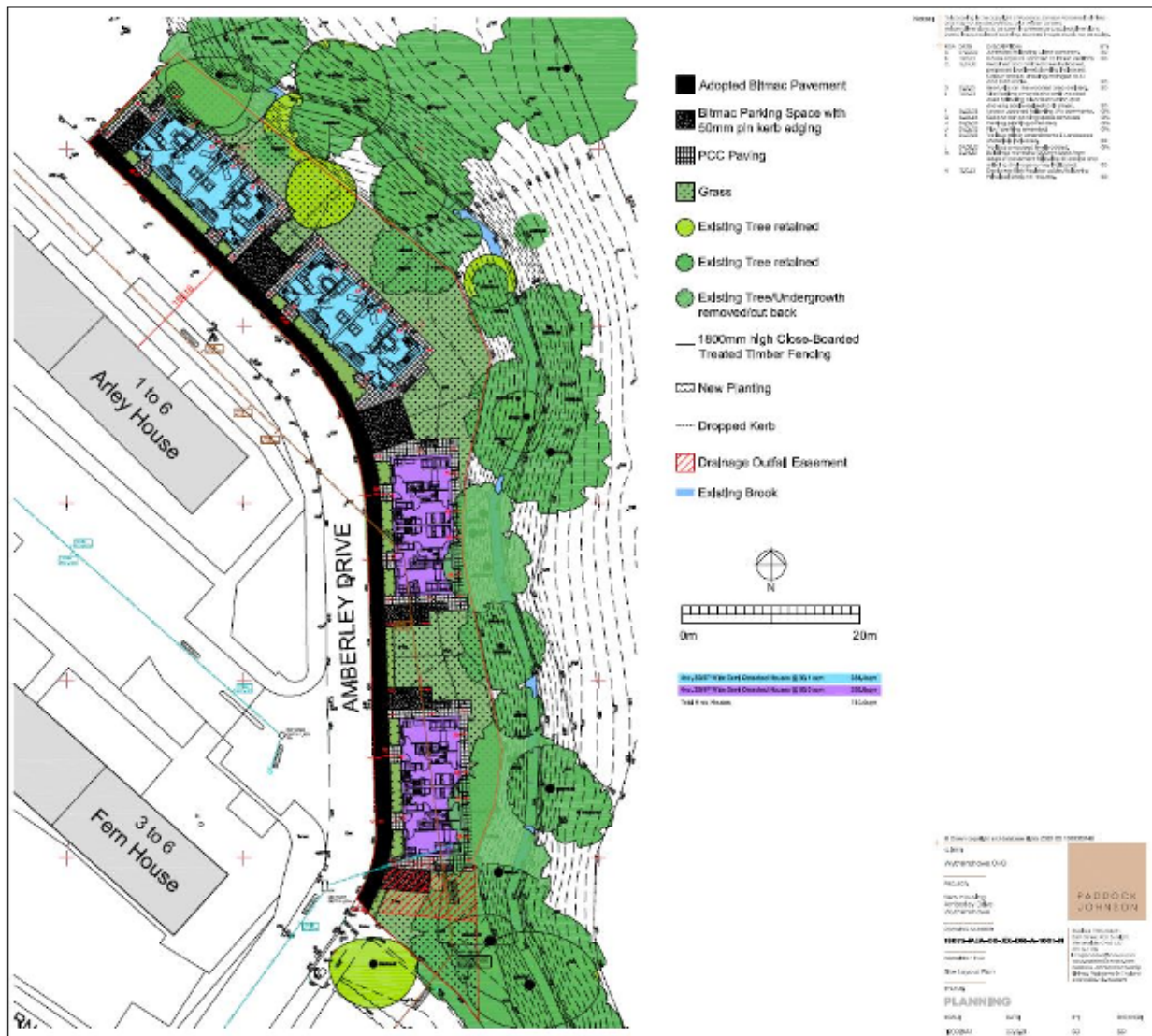
The Environment Act 2023 strengthens the duty on public authorities (NERC Act, 2006) to have regard to the conservation of biodiversity.

The Environment Act 2023 amends the Wildlife and Countryside Act 1981 to introduce an additional purpose for granting a protected species licence in relation to development, 'for reasons of overriding public interest', and two additional tests for the granting of such licences: that there is 'no other satisfactory solution' and that granting the licence is 'not detrimental to the survival of any the population of the species concerned'. These changes will reduce the scope for unlicensed activities to provide clear safeguards before licences can be granted, providing legal certainty and clarity to developers about their environmental obligations.

Appendix 2: Baseline Habitat Map



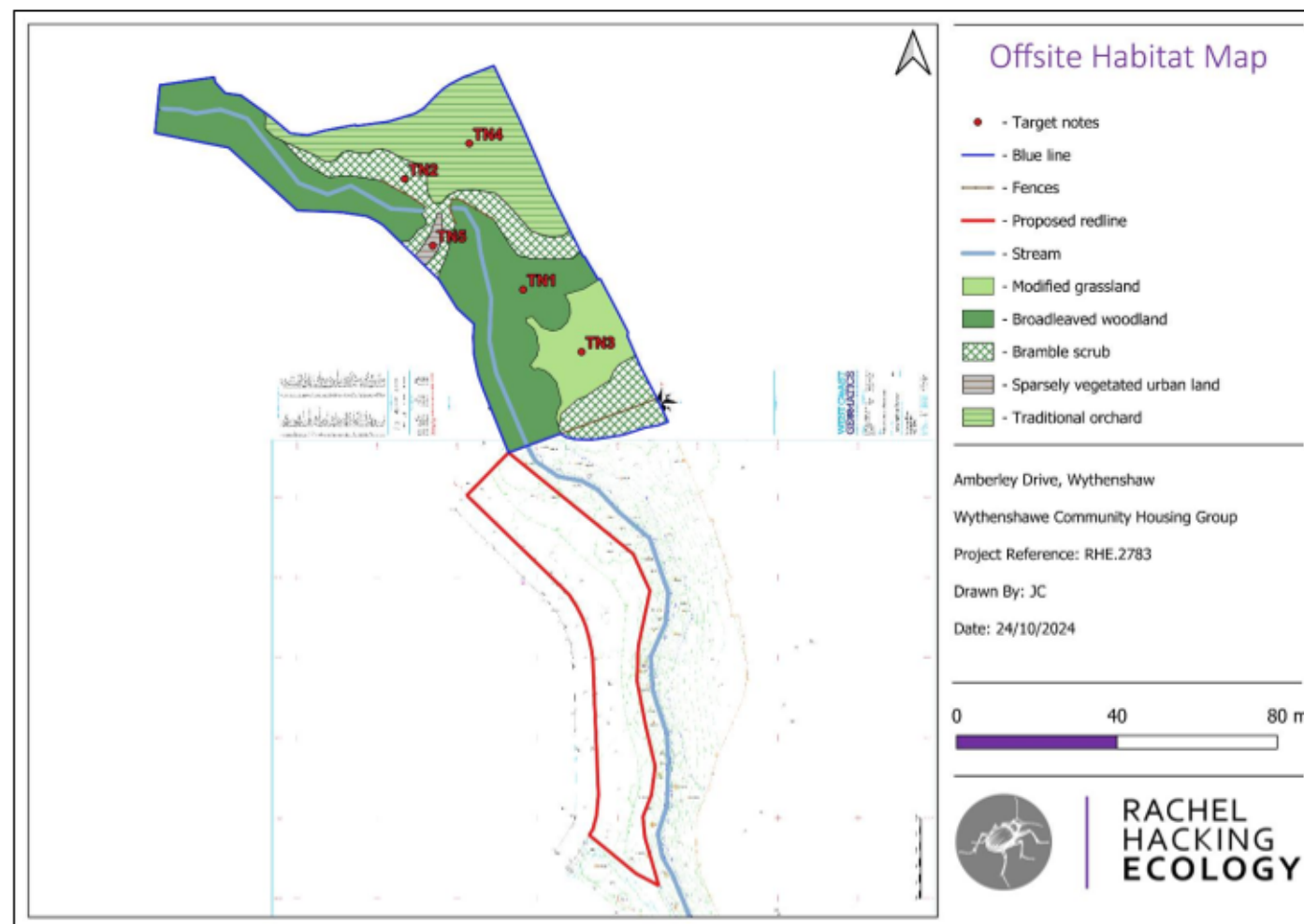
Appendix 3: Proposal Plan



Appendix 4: Headline Results

FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.06		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	10.22%		
	Hedgerow units	0.00%		
	Watercourse units	0.00%		
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓			
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Habitat units	10.00%	0.58	0.64	0.00
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

Appendix 5: Off-site Mitigation Baseline Habitat Map



Appendix 6: Off-site Mitigation Target Notes

Target Notes		
Reference No.	Description	Photograph
TN1	Woodland and forest; Other woodland; Broadleaved	

TN2

Heathland and shrub;
Bramble scrub



TN3	Grassland; Modified grassland	
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TN4	Grassland; Traditional orchard	 A photograph showing a grassy field in the foreground, with a line of trees and bushes in the middle ground. In the background, several houses with light-colored walls and dark roofs are visible under a cloudy sky.
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TN5	Urban; Bare ground	 A photograph showing a grassy area with some bare ground and a dense line of trees in the background. A small white sign is visible among the trees on the right side of the image.
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