



Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Land to the rear of 902 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury, Manchester, M20 5PG

AM7 Group

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Industry Guidelines and Standards

This report has been written with due consideration to:

- British Standard 42020 (2013). Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.
- British Standard 8683:2021 (2021). Process for Designing and Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2020). Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK. 2nd Edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Construction Industry Research and Information Association & Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2019). Biodiversity Net Gain – Good Practice Principles for Development.

Proportionality

The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.

This approach is enshrined in Government planning guidance, for example, paragraph 174 of the National Planning Policy Framework for England.

The desk studies and field surveys undertaken to provide a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) might in some cases be all that is necessary.

(BS 42020, 2013)

Executive Summary

Arbtech Consulting Ltd. was instructed by AM7 Group to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment for a development at Land to the rear of 902 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury, Manchester, M20 5PG. The assessment was required to inform a planning application which is for the clearance of the existing site and provision of four new dwellings, with associated infrastructure and landscaping.

The current development proposals result in a **-4.66 (-90.30%) net loss** in area-based habitat units. The proposed development therefore does not surpass the minimum target of 10% biodiversity net gain for area-based habitat units. Given the absence of hedgerow and watercourse units from the baseline of the site, a 10% target is not these not applicable to these categories.

In order to reach the required 10% target in area-based habitats, an additional **5.176 units** must be provided. In order to meet all trading errors within the metric, this deficit must be offset with a minimum of **3.76 units** of individual trees and **1.14 units** of medium distinctiveness heathland and shrub, or alternatively habitats of a higher distinctiveness, through 'trading up'. The remaining deficit can be offset through the creation of any habitat. Such units can either be generated onsite or offsite (with the implementation of a 30 year management regime), through purchasing units from other biodiversity net gain schemes, or through purchasing statutory biodiversity credits.

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1.0 Introduction and Context

1.1 Introduction

Arbtech Consulting Ltd. was instructed by AM7 Group to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment for a development at Land to the rear of 902 Wilmslow Road, Didsbury, Manchester, M20 5PG (hereafter referred to as “the site”). The assessment was required to inform a planning application which is for the clearance of the existing site and the provision of four new dwellings, with associated infrastructure and landscaping (hereafter referred to as “the proposed development”). A proposed development plan is provided in **Appendix 1**.

This report should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- The Statutory Metric pertaining to the site (Arbtech Consulting Ltd. 2024);
- The Ecological Appraisal and Bat Preliminary Roost Assessment pertaining to the site (Anser Ecology, 2024); and
- Arboricultural Report (BS 5837:2012) (Murray Tree Consultancy, 2024).

1.2 Site Context

The survey site is centred on National Grid Reference: SJ8544590041 and has an area of approximately 0.296ha. The site comprises bramble scrub with scattered trees, 2 lines of trees and existing buildings and caravans. The site is located in the urban area of Didsbury, to the south of Manchester. The site is surrounded on all sides by residential development, with the B5095 road beyond to the northeast, the A34 road beyond to the northwest and Moor Park Road to the south. A site location plan is provided in **Appendix 2**.

1.3 BNG Informative

BNG is a specific, measurable outcome of project activities that deliver demonstrable and quantifiable benefits to biodiversity compared to the baseline condition. In order to achieve BNG, a project must be able to demonstrate that it has followed all 10 of the Principles of Biodiversity Net Gain. The recently legalised Environment Act (2021) requires developments in England to demonstrate a measurable net gain in biodiversity and sets a target of a minimum of 10% BNG for all developments. It also stipulates that a management plan with a minimum 30-year term, should be adopted to ensure biodiversity net gain can be delivered.

The Statutory Metric is the specified tool used to calculate BNG. It enables the calculation of habitat value pre- and post-development in order to determine the overall change in biodiversity value as a result of the proposed development. The Statutory Metric has separate BNG assessments for areas of habitat, hedgerows and watercourses. The biodiversity value of a site should be maximised. However, it may not always be possible to achieve a 10% biodiversity net gain within a site and therefore the Statutory Metric can also account for offsite habitat creation, where land is available. Alternatively, developers can seek to provide an agreed financial contribution to an appropriate third party (such as the Local Authority, the UK Government, or another landowner) to deliver the required biodiversity net gain elsewhere on their behalf.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 *Baseline Biodiversity Value*

The baseline BNG calculation was informed by the PEA and PRA pertaining to the site (Anser Ecology, 2024), with the exception of trees which were informed by the Arboricultural Report (BS 5837:2012) (Murray Tree Consultancy, 2024) as this is considered to more accurately represent tree locations provides DBH data which was utilised to classify baseline tree sizes. The baseline habitat plan is provided in **Appendix 3**.

Habitat Classification

The PEA and PRA pertaining to the site classified the habitats on site according to The UK Habitat Classification Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (The UK Habitat Classification Working Group, July 2024). As the UK Habitat Classification Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 does not always translate directly into the habitats permissible within the Statutory Metric, habitats were translated to their appropriate definition where necessary.

Habitat Area/Length

The area or length of each habitat was calculated using QGIS software. In calculating the area or length of each habitat, habitats which occur as two or more isolated parcels across the site were combined, where they were deemed to be of a similar composition and condition. Distinctions were made between habitats to be retained (i.e. left as found in baseline), enhanced (i.e. improved condition) or lost (i.e. destroyed by proposed development).

Habitat Condition

Habitat condition was assessed using the relevant condition assessment sheets found in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 1. The habitat condition assessments were based on the information provided within the PEA and PRA report, including the habitat descriptions, species lists, and site photographs.

Strategic Significance

Strategic significance was assigned for each habitat based upon a review of the following:

- Ecological value (based on the PEA and PRA);
- Function within the landscape (based on a review of Google and OS imagery); and
- Any site or habitat allocations under the relevant Local Planning Policy and Biodiversity Action Plan.

2.2 Post Development Biodiversity Value

The post development BNG Calculation was informed by the Proposed Site Plan at **Appendix 1**. The habitat types present post-development have been illustrated on the plan in **Appendix 4**.

Habitat Classification

Proposed habitats were translated to their equivalents in the UK Habitat Classification using The UK Habitat Classification Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (The UK Habitat Classification Working Group, July 2023) and the information provided within the Habitat Survey Plan.

Habitat Area/Length

The area or length of each proposed habitat was calculated using QGIS software. In calculating the area or length of each habitat, habitats which occur as two or more isolated parcels across the site were combined, where they were deemed to be of similar composition and condition. Distinctions were made between habitats to be retained (i.e. left as found in baseline), enhanced (i.e. improved condition) or newly created.

Habitat Condition

Target habitat condition for each proposed habitat was determined using relevant condition assessment sheets found in the Statutory Metric Condition Assessment sheets and the Temporal Multipliers Tab included in the Statutory Metric spreadsheet. This is based on the assumption that a 30-year management plan will be adopted for the site in accordance with The Environment Act (2021).

Strategic Significance

Strategic significance was assigned for each proposed habitat based upon a review of the following:

- Likely ecological value (based on the development plans and professional judgement);
- Function within the landscape (based on the location of the proposed habitats and a review of Google and OS imagery); and
- Any site or habitat allocations under the relevant Local Planning Policy and Biodiversity Action Plan.

2.3 Limitations

The arboricultural report did not detail numbers of individual trees within some tree groups (G5 and G7) and the trees plotted within the PEA/PRA did not align with the tree plan, therefore an estimate of tree numbers was included within the baseline for G5 & G7 using Google satellite imagery.

3.0 Results and Evaluation

3.1 Baseline Habitats

Table 1 details the baseline habitats present within the site along with their area/length, condition, and strategic significance.

Table 1: Baseline Biodiversity Value

Habitat	Area/ Length	Description	Condition Assessment	Strategic Significance	Area Retained or Enhanced
Urban: Developed land; sealed surface	0.011ha	Small areas of hardstanding as identified within the PEA/PRA.	Habitat condition is predetermined as N/A as detailed within the Statutory Metric user guide.	Habitat classification is not included within any local strategic strategy and is not considered to be in an ecologically desirable location.	0ha
Heathland and Shrub: Bramble Scrub	0.285ha	The majority of the site comprises other neutral grassland.	Habitat condition is predetermined as N/A as detailed within the Statutory Metric user guide.	Habitat classification is not included within any local strategic strategy and is not considered to be in an ecologically desirable location.	0ha
Individual Tree: Urban Tree (small) Urban Tree (medium) Urban Tree (large)	0.171ha 0.277ha 0.037ha	42 small, 17 medium and 1 large urban trees are scattered throughout the site.	The condition of urban trees was assessed against the individual tree Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment sheets. Small and medium trees have been assigned as moderate condition, while the large tree has been assigned as good condition.	Habitat classification is not included within any local strategic strategy and is not considered to be in an ecologically desirable location.	0ha 0ha 0ha

3.2 Post Development Habitats

Table 2 details the post development habitats present within the site along with their area/length, condition, and strategic significance.

Table 2: Post Development Biodiversity Value

Habitat (UK Habs)	Area	Description	Target Condition	Strategic Significance
Urban: Developed Land; Sealed Surface	0.173ha	Proposed hardstanding and buildings as shown on the proposed site plan.	Habitat condition is predetermined as N/A as detailed within the Statutory Metric user guide.	Habitat classification is not included within any local strategic strategy and is not considered to be in an ecologically desirable location.
Urban: Vegetated Garden	0.073ha	Proposed areas of grassland and shrub that will be subject to private ownership.	Habitat condition is predetermined as N/A as detailed within the Statutory Metric user guide.	Habitat classification is not included within any local strategic strategy and is not considered to be in an ecologically desirable location.
Grassland: Modified Grassland	0.022ha	Areas of grass proposed around the site that will not be subject to private ownership.	The condition of the modified grassland was assessed against the grassland habitat type (low distinctiveness) Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment sheets. This habitat has been assigned as poor condition.	Habitat classification is not included within any local strategic strategy and is not considered to be in an ecologically desirable location.
Urban: Introduced Shrub	0.073ha	Proposed areas of shrub that will not be subject to private ownership.	Habitat condition is predetermined as N/A as detailed within the Statutory Metric user guide.	Habitat classification is not included within any local strategic strategy and is not considered to be in an ecologically desirable location.
Individual Tree: Urban Tree (small)	0.086ha	A total of 21 small trees have been proposed within areas that will not be subject to private ownership post-development. A number of additional trees are proposed within private gardens, which cannot be included within proposed habitats in accordance with the Statutory Metric User Guide.	The condition of urban trees was assessed against the individual tree Statutory Biodiversity Metric Condition Assessment sheets. This habitat has been assigned as moderate condition.	Habitat classification is not included within any local strategic strategy and is not considered to be in an ecologically desirable location.

3.3 Change in Biodiversity Value of the Site

Full details are provided in the Statutory Metric submitted alongside this report. The headline results as described below.

- The baseline biodiversity unit score: **Area-Based Habitat Units: 5.16; Hedgerow Units: 0.00; watercourse Units: 0.00**
- The post-development biodiversity unit score: **Area-Based Habitat Units: 0.50; Hedgerow Units: 0.00; watercourse Units: 0.00**

This results in the following change in biodiversity value of the site:

- **Area-based Habitat units: -4.66 (-90.30%)**
- **Hedgerow units: N/A**
- **Watercourse units: N/A**

4.0 Conclusions and Recommendations

The current development proposals result in a **-4.66 (-90.30%) net loss** in area-based habitat units. The proposed development therefore does not surpass the minimum target of 10% biodiversity net gain for area-based habitat units. Given the absence of hedgerow and watercourse units from the baseline of the site, a 10% target is not applicable to these categories.

In order to reach the required 10% target in area-based habitats, an additional **5.176 units** must be provided. In order to meet all trading errors within the metric, this deficit must be offset with a minimum of **3.76 units** of individual trees and **1.14 units** of medium distinctiveness heathland and shrub, or alternatively habitats of a higher distinctiveness, through 'trading up'. The remaining deficit can be offset through the creation of any habitat. Such units can either be generated onsite or offsite (with the implementation of a 30 year management regime), through purchasing units from other biodiversity net gain schemes, or through purchasing statutory biodiversity credits¹.

Once it has been agreed with the local planning authority that the development proposals achieve a sufficient net gain in biodiversity of at least 10%, a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Management Plan must be produced for the site. This should include recommendations for the implementation, management and monitoring of the site for at least 30 years to ensure that biodiversity net gain is delivered.

¹https://www.gov.uk/guidance/buy-statutory-biodiversity-credits?utm_medium=email&utm_campaign=govuk-notifications-topic&utm_source=926114a0-0ef1-4c40-a562-31fb863ff98d&utm_content=immediately

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- UK Habitat Classification Working Group (2023). UK Habitat Classification – Habitat Definitions v2.01 <https://ukhab.org/ukhab-documentation/>

Appendix 1: Proposed Development Plan



Appendix 2: Site Location Plan



Appendix 3: Baseline Habitat Survey Plan



Appendix 4: Post-Development Habitat Plan



Appendix 5: Baseline Habitats Condition Assessment

Habitat	Location	Condition Sheet	Condition Criterion	Criterion Met	Overall Condition
Urban Tree (medium & small)	Onsite	Individual Trees	A	N	Moderate (3-4 / 6 criteria met, some trees non-native but moderate condition achieved regardless)
			B	Y	
			C	Y	
			D	Y	
			E	Y	
			F	N	
Urban Tree (large)	Onsite	Individual Trees	A	N	Good (5 / 6 criteria met)
			B	Y	
			C	Y	
			D	Y	
			E	Y	
			F	Y	

Appendix 6: Proposed Habitats Condition Assessment

Habitat	Location	Condition Sheet	Condition Criterion	Criterion Met	Overall Condition
Modified Grassland	Onsite	Grassland (Low Distinctiveness)	A	N	Poor (criterion A failed, which is essential for achieving moderate or good condition)
			B	N	
			C	Y	
			D	Y	
			E	Y	
			F	Y	
			G	Y	
Urban Tree	Onsite	Individual Trees	A	Y	Moderate (4/6 criteria met)
			B	Y	
			C	N	
			D	Y	
			E	N	
			F	Y	