



Brighter strategies
for greener projects



Client: Powerleague Fives Limited

Project: Powerleague Manchester Nicholls

Report: Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

QUALITY ASSURANCE

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1.0 EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

Greengage Environmental Ltd was commissioned by Powerleague Fives Limited ('Powerleague') to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (BNGA) to support their proposed development at the Manchester Nicholls site. This document is a report of this assessment and has been produced to support a planning submission for the site that seeks to install six new padel courts, with associated canopies and landscaping.

This assessment aims to quantify the predicted change in ecological value in light of the proposed development to assess compliance against local and national planning policy.

The BNG mandate set out in the Environment Act 2021 states that a target of 10% net gain in biodiversity should be reached and biodiversity value should be maximised on site, however, 'small developments' are currently exempt from this mandatory requirement. The proposed Powerleague Manchester Nicholls development is a commercial development where the total site area is less than 1 hectare (ha), and as such is a 'small development' and is exempt from the mandatory net gain requirement of 10%.

The baseline biodiversity value of the site is calculated to be 1.74 Habitat Units (HU). There are no hedgerows or watercourse habitats on site and therefore, no corresponding Hedgerow Units (HeU) or Watercourse Units (WU).

Based on the landscaping proposals, the re-development stands to provide 1.87 HU associated with area-based habitats on-site, resulting in a net gain of 0.13 HU (7.47%) when compared to the sites baseline. Habitat trading rules are satisfied.

Detail relating to the proposed ecological enhancement actions for habitat creation and management should be provided within a management plan that will cover a 30-year period. Given the simplicity of the habitats to be created on site, and the lack of off-site compensation required, this management plan is recommended to be secured through planning condition.

Should the proposed plans and the stated habitat condition criteria in Section 4.2 be adhered to, the proposals will provide a net gain for biodiversity and stand to be compliant with legislation and current planning policy including the Manchester's Local Plan. Applicable policies are outlined in Appendix B.

Any changes to the design will impact upon the biodiversity score and thus the metric will need to be updated to reflect such changes.

2.0 INTRODUCTION

Greengage Environmental Ltd was commissioned by Powerleague Fives Limited to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment (BNGA) to support their proposed development at the Manchester Nicholls site.

This assessment aims to quantify the predicted change in ecological value in light of the proposed development to assess compliance against local and national planning policy.

The BNG mandate set out in the Environment Act 2021 states that a target of 10% net gain in biodiversity should be reached and biodiversity value should be maximised on site, however, 'small developments' are currently exempt from this mandatory requirement. The proposed Manchester Nicholls development is a commercial development where the total site area is less than 1 hectare (ha), and as such is a 'small development' and is exempt from the mandatory net gain requirement of 10%.

Any further changes to the design will impact upon the BNG score and the metric will need to be updated to reflect such changes. This also carries forward for a minimum of 30 years, as required by BNG, including after planning permission has been granted and throughout the construction phase.

2.1 SITE DESCRIPTION AND CONTEXT

The survey area extends to approximately 0.71 hectares (ha) and is centred on Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference (OS NGR): SJ 85646 97165.

The site comprises hardstanding, introduced shrub, modified grassland, bramble scrub, a disused cricket run and scattered trees.

The site is located in Ardwick, Manchester, southeast of the A365, M12 6BA. The immediate surroundings are dominated by industrial and commercial premises, with large residential areas in the wider area. Manchester city centre is located approximately 1 km northwest of the site.

2.2 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT

The proposed development seeks to install six new padel courts, with associated canopies and landscaping.

Within the Landscape General Arrangement (doc ref: L050-PL-01 Landscape General Arrangement Plan) provided by Urban Landscape Partnership (ULP), newly provided green landscaping on site includes:

- Species-rich amenity grassland;
- Wildflower grassland;
- Mixed native scrub;
- A biodiverse substrate-based habitat inspired by biodiverse green roof; and
- 12 trees.

In addition to the newly created habitats, the grassland and bramble scrub in the east of the site will be retained and left to regenerate naturally following removal of the temporary construction access route that will be constructed in this area.

3.0 METHODOLOGY

3.1 GOOD PRACTICE PRINCIPLES

To calculate the ecological value of the pre- and post-development site, the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) Statutory Biodiversity Metric methodology was utilised, following best practice guidance from DEFRA¹ and Natural England², and joint guidance from the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM), the Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (IEMA) and the Construction Industry Research and Information Association (CIRIA)³.

The good practice guidelines "provide a framework that helps improve the UK's biodiversity by contributing towards strategic priorities to conserve and enhance nature while progressing with sustainable development". This framework consists of 10 good practice principles which are outlined in Table 3.1.

Table 3.1 Good Practice Principles and Discussion

Good Practice Principle	Discussion
1. Apply the Mitigation Hierarchy	The baseline habitats are of low ecological value. The existing key habitats of value within the site are the individual trees, which will be retained where possible. All losses will be mitigated for, and further ecological enhancements are provided.
2. Avoid Losing Biodiversity that Cannot be Offset by Gains Elsewhere	No irreplaceable habitats are present on-site pre-development.
3. Be Inclusive and Equitable	The project team have been responsive to ideas from Greengage to enhance biodiversity value on site for all users, including the public. Greengage have had regular contact with the applicant and ULP, to this end.
4. Address Risks	Greengage has worked with the project team to improve biodiversity value on site and mitigate risks. In addition to this, the Statutory Biodiversity Metric also includes three inbuilt risk factors which contribute towards calculating the overall biodiversity value. These are 'final time to target condition', 'standard difficulty of creation' and the 'strategic significance' multiplier.
5. Make a Measurable Net Gain Contribution	The development is likely to achieve a measurable gain in biodiversity through the use of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. The metric calculations are subject to change regarding on design change.
6. Achieve the Best Outcomes for Biodiversity	The landscape design for Manchester Nicholls improves biodiversity value on site. Habitat compensation is due to be delivered through the provision higher distinctiveness habitats than that of the baseline. The proposed development will also act as a green steppingstone for

Good Practice Principle	Discussion
	ecological connectivity within an urban area. The proposed development is due to achieve a biodiversity net gain as discussed in Section 4.
7. Be Additional	The proposals stand to provide a biodiversity net gain of 7.47% for habitats. The design also aims to provide other habitat features for local wildlife including bat and bird boxes and features for invertebrates.
8. Create a Net Gain Legacy	The landscaping on site will be designed, where possible, to be climate resilient, including drought tolerant species. The BNG on site will be managed for at least 30 years.
9. Optimise Sustainability	The design has been created with both biodiversity and people in mind. The design will provide increased biodiversity in an urban area and will help support site users' health and wellbeing by providing improved aesthetics and opportunities to experience nature. The design will also help improve ecosystem services such as temperature regulation and air quality control, to help create a climate resilient environment. In particular, the addition of new trees will provide improvements to local air quality and cooling.
10. Be Transparent	Powerleague commissioned Greengage Environmental Ltd to run the BNG calculations and communicate findings in a BNGA report. Advice on enhancing the sites ecological value has been provided throughout the design process.

3.2 BIODIVERSITY METRIC

This metric uses Biodiversity Units as a proxy for the ecological value of area of linear based habitats. The areas of each habitat parcel are measured, with each parcel assigned a 'Distinctiveness', 'Condition' and 'Strategic Significance' score. Distinctiveness is a default score for the habitat classification, representing its inherent ecological value, whereas condition refers to the state each parcel is in relative to predetermined set of criteria outlined in the supplementary metric guidance.

Strategic significance draws upon priorities and objectives within local plans and strategies, and is measured by providing habitats with a score from low to high as follows:

- High - "area/action formally identified within a local plan, strategy or policy";
- Medium - "location ecologically desirable but area/action not identified in local plan, strategy or policy"; and
- Low - "area/action not identified in any local plan, strategy or policy; or no local strategy in place"¹.

For post-development habitat areas, additional multipliers are applied considering the time taken to reach maturity and difficulty of creation of the habitats, and whether the habitat creation is in a strategically beneficial location.

An assessment of the predicted change in ecological value is undertaken comparing the Biodiversity Units and assessing percentage change. Changes in broader habitat types (for example, 'Urban', 'Woodland' and 'Grassland' habitats) are also tracked. Based on the distinctiveness and habitat type the Statutory Biodiversity Metric will also set minimum habitat creation and enhancement requirements to compensate for specific habitat losses (up to the point of no net loss). This is referred to in the metric as 'Trading Rules'. This can be used to understand and inform ecologists and developers how the site should incorporate habitats into any future site layout or landscape design.

3.3 BASELINE CALCULATION

To calculate pre-development Biodiversity Units, data collected during a site survey undertaken by Greengage in February 2024 for an Ecological Impact Assessment (EclA) of the site was assessed (doc ref: 552701JB19MAR24FV01_EclA). The areas of each habitat type were taken from the baseline habitat map created within QGIS using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric QGIS Template. The Baseline Habitats Plan is provided in Appendix A.

Distinctiveness values were automatically calculated for the site and habitat conditions were assessed using DEFRA's condition assessment criteria in the field.

Strategic significance was assessed by reviewing the following:

- Manchester Local Plan⁴;
- Manchester Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan⁵; and
- DEFRA's Magic map application⁶.

The site is not part of any biodiversity strategies, therefore the site itself is considered to have low strategic significance. However, where habitats associated with this assessment area are specifically referenced in a local biodiversity strategy, they were assigned high strategic significance.

3.4 PROPOSED DEVELOPMENT CALCULATIONS

The landscape proposals provided by ULP were georeferenced within QGIS and used to determine the post development habitat areas.

Landscaping habitat types were then determined by Greengage and translated into the relevant UKHAB and Statutory Biodiversity Metric habitats based on species composition, abiotic factors and professional judgement.

Targeted condition scores were assigned by Greengage, using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric habitat condition criteria, whilst considering the likely future use of each area.

The areas of the proposed trees were determined with the use of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Tree Helper, which places trees into four size categories; 'Small', 'Medium', 'Large', and 'Very Large',

determined by the trunk diameter at breast height (dbh) of the tree. Each tree is then given an individual area which is representative of the predicted canopy biomass of a tree of its size class.

Delay in habitat creation has been input into the calculations where appropriate. The habitats that will be covered by temporary construction access and then left to regenerate have been given a creation delay of 1 year (grassland) and 2 year (bramble scrub). It is assumed that all other habitat creation, including tree planting, will occur within the first year of development and thus does not require a delay in creation applied. If this is not the case, the metric will need to be updated to reflect this.

3.5 COMPETENCIES

Saul Ridley, who undertook the assessment and prepared this report, has a Bachelor's degree in Zoology (BSc Hons) and a Research Master's degree in Conservation Biology (MRes). Saul is an ecological consultant for Greengage with 2 years' experience in BNG assessments, and is a qualifying member of CIEEM.

Kelsey Marratt, who undertook the site survey, has an undergraduate degree in Zoology (BSc Hons) and a Master's degree in Conservation Biology (MSc). She holds a Natural England Level 2 (CL18) class licence for bats. Kelsey has three years' experience in the commercial sector, and is a qualifying member of CIEEM.

James Bumphrey, who reviewed authorised this report, has a degree in Environmental Sciences (BSc Hons) and a Masters in Environmental Consultancy (MSc). James holds a Natural England Great Crested Newt Licence and has over 11 years experiences in ecological consultancy.

This report was written by Saul Ridley, and reviewed and verified by James Bumphrey who confirms in writing (see the QA sheet at the front of this report) that the report is in line with the following:

- Represents sound industry practice;
- Reports and recommends correctly, truthfully and objectively;
- Is appropriate given the local site conditions and scope of works proposed; and
- Avoids invalid, biased and exaggerated statements.

3.6 CONSTRAINTS

The assessment methodology does not incorporate features beyond area and linear based habitats. The potential for the site to support protected species, for example, is not captured by this assessment. As such, this report should be read in conjunction with all other ecological reports for the site. The mitigation hierarchy in relation to protected and notable habitats and species must be followed. This report should accordingly be read in conjunction with the EclA report.

The site survey undertaken by Greengage in February 2024 was undertaken outside of the optimal season for botanical survey. Therefore, a precautionary approach was taken, following best practice and professional judgement.

The BNG assessment at this stage is predictive in nature. To ensure delivery of BNG, requirements outlined within this report must be adhered to , and a management programme must be implemented.

4.0 RESULTS

4.1 BASELINE CONDITIONS

The baseline biodiversity value of the site is calculated to be 1.74 Habitat Units (HU), in accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. There are no hedgerows or watercourses on site and therefore, no corresponding Hedgerow Units (HeU) or Watercourse Units (WU).

None of the baseline habitats are formally identified as priority habitats within the Manchester Local Plan⁴ or Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan⁵, therefore, all habitats have been given 'Low' strategic significance.

A breakdown of the baseline habitats, and their corresponding units, is provided below in Table 4.1.

Table 4.1 Baseline Habitat Biodiversity Units

Broad Habitat	Habitat Type	Area (Hectares)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic Significance	Biodiversity Units
Grassland	Modified grassland	0.0611	Low	Moderate	Low	0.24
Grassland	Modified grassland	0.2532	Low	Poor	Low	0.51
Heathland and shrub	Bramble scrub	0.1576	Medium	N/A	Low	0.63
Urban	Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	0.0196	V.Low	N/A	Low	0.00
Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	0.2070	V.Low	N/A	Low	0.00
Urban	Introduced shrub	0.0093	Low	N/A	Low	0.02
Individual trees	Urban tree	0.0285*	Medium	Good	Low	0.34

Broad Habitat	Habitat Type	Area (Hectares)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic Significance	Biodiversity Units
*Area of individual trees assigned according to guidance from the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, and not counted the towards the total site area.					TOTAL	1.74

It is noted that at the time of the survey the eastern portion of the Site, that will form the construction access, comprised modified grassland. According to online mapping, bramble scrub had also been present and cleared post 2020, therefore for the purposes of the baseline mapping and Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment the pre-clearance habitat extents were used in accordance with best practice. Trees stumps were also present in this location however, according to online mapping the trees previously present were removed in 2019 and are therefore not considered in the baseline. This also accords with best practice.

Condition Assessment

In accordance with the Statutory Metric guidance, ‘Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface’, ‘Introduced shrub’, ‘Bramble Scrub’ and ‘Developed land; sealed surface’ have no condition assessment.

‘**Modified grassland**’ across most of the site has a condition assessment of **poor** as the habitat failed Criterion A of the ‘grassland low’ metric condition sheet, which is essential to achieve moderate condition or above. Criterion A states that ‘there must be 6-8 species per m²’ and only four per m² were recorded. Additionally, the parcel failed criterion B due to a lack of sward height diversity as was unmanaged, meaning that less than 20% was shorter than 7cm and failed Criterion D, as there was evidence of damage to the habitat from machinery. The parcel however had scrub cover of less than 20%, bare ground cover <10%, absence of bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), scrub and an absence of invasive non-native species, passing four criterion.

‘**Modified grassland**’ in the east of the site and along the access path has a condition assessment of **moderate** as the habitat passed Criterion A of the ‘grassland low’ metric condition sheet, which is essential to achieve moderate condition or above. Criterion A states that ‘there must be 6-8 species per m²’ and an average of six per m² were recorded. Additionally, the parcel failed criterion B due to a lack of sward height diversity as was unmanaged, meaning that less than 20% was shorter than 7cm, Criterion E as there were areas of bare ground, where previous vehicular access had been located and Criterion D as there was evidence of damage to the habitat from machinery. The parcel however had scrub cover of less than 20%, absence of bracken (*Pteridium aquilinum*), scrub and an absence of invasive non-native species, passing four criterion.

‘Urban trees’ relates to seven urban trees, five of which are located within dense bramble scrub or modified grassland, whilst two are located within introduced shrub. All of the individual urban trees had a condition assessment of **good** as the habitat passed five of the six criteria. The trees all failed Criterion E, as no ecological niches for vertebrates or invertebrates could be seen where access to the trees could be achieved. The trees were all native, mature, with canopies oversailing vegetation and little evidence of adverse impacts on tree health due to human activities.

4.2 PROPOSED SITE LAYOUT

The proposed development is predicted to provide 1.87 HU on-site, in accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. There are no proposed hedgerows or watercourse habitats within the development and therefore, no corresponding HeU or WU.

None of the proposed habitats are formally identified as priority habitats within the Manchester Local Plan⁴ or Biodiversity Strategy and Action Plan⁵, therefore, all habitats have been given 'Low' strategic significance.

A breakdown of the proposed on-site habitats, and their corresponding units, is provided below in Table 4.2.

Table 4.2 Post-Development Habitat Biodiversity Units

Broad Habitat	Habitat Type	Area (Hectares)*	Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic Significance	Biodiversity Units
Grassland	Modified grassland	0.0281	Low	Poor	Low	0.05
Grassland	Other neutral grassland	0.0554	Medium	Moderate	Low	0.34
Grassland	Other neutral grassland	0.1011	Medium	Poor	Low	0.39
Heathland and shrub	Bramble scrub	0.0416	Medium	N/A	Low	0.15
Heathland and shrub	Mixed scrub	0.0617	Medium	Moderate	Low	0.42

Broad Habitat	Habitat Type	Area (Hectares)*	Distinctiveness	Condition	Strategic Significance	Biodiversity Units
Heathland and shrub	Mixed scrub	0.0175	Medium	Poor	Low	0.07
Urban	Biodiverse green roof	0.0196	Medium	Moderate	Low	0.09
Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	0.1921	V.Low	N/A	Low	0.00
Individual trees	Urban tree	0.0163**	Medium	Good	Low	0.20
Individual trees	Urban tree	0.0489**	Medium	Moderate	Low	0.15
*Area of each habitat row is a total of both the retained and newly created habitat of that type. **Area of individual trees assigned according to guidance from the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, and not counted the towards the total site area. ***Rounding present.					TOTAL	1.87***

Condition Assessment

In accordance with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric guidance, habitat types ‘**Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface**’, ‘**Introduced shrub**’, ‘**Bramble Scrub**’ and ‘**Developed land; sealed surface**’ are not subject to a condition assessment.

‘**Modified grassland**’ will be retained and allowed to regenerate in the east of the site where the temporary access road is to be implemented. This grassland is predicted to reach **poor** condition, failing four of seven criterion of the ‘grassland low’ metric condition sheet, including Criterion A which is essential to achieve moderate condition or above. Criterion A states that ‘there must be 6-8 species per m²’ and only four per m² were recorded. Additionally, the parcel is predicted to fail criterion B due to a lack of sward height diversity as it will be unmanaged, meaning that it is likely that less than 20% will be shorter than 7cm, Criterion C as bramble scrub will be adjacent and may account for >20% of the total area, and Criterion E as bare ground cover will likely be <10%. The grassland is predicted to pass Criterion D as physical damage from humans is unlikely, and Criterion F and G as bracken and invasive non-native species will be absent.

‘**Other neutral grassland**’ will be created in the western grassland area of the site adjacent the disused cricket run. This grassland is predicted to reach **moderate** condition, failing two of the six criterion of the ‘grassland med high & v.high’ metric condition sheet, including Criterion C, as bare ground is unlikely to cover between 1% and 5% of the area, and Criterion F, as it is unlikely that there will be >10 vascular plant species per m². The grassland is expected to pass Criterion A, B, D, and E as it will represent a good example of its habitat type with a varied sward height, and bracken, Invasive Non-Native species and species indicative of suboptimal conditions or physical damage won’t be present.

‘**Other neutral grassland**’ will also be created in the areas adjacent the padel courts. This grassland is predicted to reach **poor** condition, failing four of the six criterion of the ‘grassland med high & v.high’ metric condition sheet, including Criterion B, as the sward height won’t be managed and is unlikely to vary substantially, Criterion C, as the cover of bare ground won’t be managed and is unlikely to be between 1% and 5%, Criterion D, as the grassland will be adjacent mixed scrub and the cover of scrub is likely to be >5%, and Criterion F, because it is unlikely that there will be >10 vascular plant species per m². The grassland is expected to pass Criterion A, as it will represent a good example of its habitat type, and Criterion E, as bracken, Invasive Non-Native species and species indicative of suboptimal conditions or physical damage won’t be present.

‘**Mixed scrub**’ will be created to the north of the padel courts and along the eastern boundary. This scrub is predicted to reach **moderate** condition, failing two of the five criterion, including Criterion B, as the scrub will be newly created and is unlikely to have substantial variety in age structure, and Criterion E, as there will be no clearings, glades, or rides present. The scrub is expected to pass Criterion A, as it will represent a good example of its habitat type, with at least three native woody species and single species comprising more than 75% of the cover. The scrub is also expected to pass Criterion C, as invasive non-native species will not be present, and Criterion D, as the scrub will have a well-developed edge with the adjacent species-rich grassland.

‘**Mixed scrub**’ will be created to the west of the padel courts, along the western boundary. This scrub is predicted to reach **poor** condition, failing three of the five criterion, including Criterion B, as the scrub will be newly created and is unlikely to have substantial variety in age structure, Criterion D as the scrub will be enclosed in a narrow area adjacent the courts without a well-developed edge, and Criterion E, as there will be no clearings, glades, or rides present. The scrub is expected to pass Criterion A, as it will represent a good example of its habitat type, with at least three native woody species and single species comprising more than 75% of the cover. The scrub is also expected to pass Criterion C, as invasive non-native species will not be present.

‘**Biodiverse green roof**’ will be created in-place of the disused cricket run in the west of the site. The substrate-based habitat will be at ground level but will offer habitat and function similar to that of a biodiverse green roof. The habitat is predicted to reach **moderate** condition, failing one of the four criterion, Criterion G as the habitat will not be managed for a varied substrate depth. The habitat is expected to pass Criterion A, B and C, as it will be planted with

plants and features that provide a varied structure and opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates, and it will contain a variety of plant species that are beneficial for wildlife, and invasive non-native species will be not be present.

‘**Urban trees**’ being retained will retain their condition assessment of **good**. The trees will continue to pass Criterion A, B, C, D, and F as they are all native, mature, and with canopies oversailing vegetation and little evidence of adverse impacts on tree health due to human activities. The trees will continue to fail Criterion E, as it is likely that no ecological niches for vertebrates or invertebrates will develop.

‘**Urban trees**’ to be planted are predicted to reach **moderate** condition. The trees will likely pass Criterion A, B, D, and F as they are expected to be native species that will oversail vegetation and will not be adversely impacted by human activity. The trees are expected to fail Criterion C, as they will not be mature at time of planting, and Criterion E, as ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates will not be present.

Trading Rules

Under the current proposals, trading rules are satisfied.

5.0 EVALUATION AND DISCUSSION

Under these proposals the development stands to provide 1.87 HU associated with area-based habitats on-site, resulting in a net gain of 0.13 HU (7.47%) when compared to the sites baseline. Habitat trading rules are satisfied. The site is classified as a 'small development' and as such is exempt from the mandatory BNG requirement of 10%. The proposals are therefore in compliance with local and national planning policy and the BNG Mandate.

The proposals have demonstrated an improvement in quality of habitat from baseline levels. Detail relating to the proposed ecological enhancement actions in relation to habitat creation and management should be provided within a management plan that will cover a 30-year period.

6.0 SUMMARY & CONCLUSION

Greengage Environmental Ltd was commissioned by Powerleague Fives Limited to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment to assess the change in ecological value of the site in light of the proposed development.

The proposals stand to provide 1.87 HU associated with area-based habitats on-site, resulting in a net gain of 0.13 HU (7.47%) when compared to the sites baseline. Habitat trading rules are be satisfied. The site is classified as a 'small development' and as such is exempt from the mandatory BNG requirement of 10%. The proposals are therefore in compliance with local and national planning policy and the BNG Mandate.

Any further changes to the design will impact upon the biodiversity score and thus the metric will need to be updated to reflect such changes. Habitat condition criteria in Section 4.2 must also be adhered to.

Detail relating to the proposed ecological enhancement actions in relation to habitat creation and management should be provided within a management plan that covers a 30-year period. Given the simplicity of the habitats to be created on site, and the lack of off-site compensation required, Greengage feel this management plan could be secured through a planning condition.

APPENDIX A BASELINE AND PROPOSED HABITATS PLAN

POWERLEAGUE - MANCHESTER NICHOLLS

 Red Line Boundary

Habitats

-  Artificial unvegetated unsealed surface
-  Bramble scrub
-  Developed land; sealed surface
-  Introduced shrub
-  Modified grassland

Trees

-  Tree

Title: Baseline Habitats

Drawn by: SR
Date: 22/03/2024

Reviewed by: JB
Date: 22/03/2024

Project number: 552701
Sources: Google Satellite



POWERLEAGUE - MANCHESTER NICHOLLS

 Red Line Boundary

Habitats

-  Biodiverse green roof
-  Bramble scrub
-  Developed land; sealed surface
-  Introduced shrub
-  Mixed scrub
-  Modified grassland
-  Other neutral grassland

Trees

-  Proposed Tree
-  Retained Tree
-  Lost Tree

Title: Proposed Habitats

Drawn by: SR
Date: 22/03/2024

Reviewed by: JB
Date: 22/03/2024

Project number: 552701
Sources: Google Satellite



APPENDIX B LEGISLATION AND POLICY

B.1 LEGISLATION

The Environment Act, 2021⁷

Following secondary legislation, the Environment Act 2021 mandates the requirement for new development in England to deliver a minimum 10% biodiversity net gain (BNG), as measured by the agreed metric (the current relevant version being the Statutory Biodiversity Metric), secured through planning condition as standard (as per schedule 14 of the Act). Approach to the delivery of BNG must follow the mitigation hierarchy, with avoidance of impact and on-site compensation/gains prioritised, ahead of the use of offsite biodiversity unit offsets, or the purchase of biodiversity credits.

The Act introduces the condition that no development may begin unless a biodiversity net gain plan has been submitted and approved by the local planning authority (LPA).

The Act also amends requirements of the NERC Act, 2006, adding the need to not just conserve, but enhance biodiversity through planning projects. Furthermore, it introduces the need for the LPA to have regard to relevant local nature recovery strategies and relevant species/protected site conservation strategies, when making their decision.

B.2 POLICY

National

National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2023⁸ sets out the Government's planning policies for England, including how plans and decisions are expected to apply a presumption in favour of sustainable development. Chapter 15 of the NPPF focuses on conservation and enhancement of the natural environment, stating plans should 'identify and pursue opportunities for securing measurable net gains for biodiversity'.

It goes on to state: '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'. Alongside this, it acknowledges that planning should be refused where irreplaceable habitats such as ancient woodland are lost.

Local

Manchester Core Strategy

Policy EN9 Green infrastructure

New development will be expected to maintain existing green infrastructure in terms of its quantity, quality, and multiple function. Where the opportunity arises and in accordance with current Green Infrastructure Strategies the Council will encourage developers to enhance the quality and quantity of

green infrastructure, improve the performance of its functions and create and improve linkages to and between areas of green infrastructure. Where the benefits of a proposed development are considered to outweigh the loss of an existing element of green infrastructure, the developer will be required to demonstrate how this loss will be mitigated in terms of quantity, quality, function and future management. Key features of Manchester's green infrastructure will include:

- The continued development of a network of green spaces, water bodies, canals, paths and cycleways, with priority given to those parts of the City where there is an identified existing lack of open space. The Council will seek to protect existing street trees and promote new planting, particularly where this can enhance green links in the urban area.
- The continued maintenance and management of the Rivers Mersey and Irwell and their tributaries, for example the River Irk, River Medlock, Chorlton Platt Gore, Gatley Brook, Moston Brook and adjoining land, with regard to their multiple functions including recreation, flood management, and biodiversity.
- The provision of new, and improvements to the quality and accessibility of existing green infrastructure assets, to mitigate for any loss of green infrastructure as a result of development such as the Metrolink extension programme.
- The encouragement of green roofs, green walls, tree planting and other forms of green infrastructure to allow for the adaption to climate change in heavily urbanised areas.

New green infrastructure provision should be an exemplar of best practice and innovation in terms of both its design and management.

Policy EN 15 Biodiversity and Geological Conservation

The Council will seek to maintain or enhance sites of biodiversity and geological value throughout the City. Particular consideration will be given to:

- sites with international or national designations for their biodiversity value. Manchester contains one Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) (Cotteril Clough); there is a Special Area of Conservation (SAC) and an SSSI just over the border in Oldham (both on the Rochdale Canal within Oldham);
- other sites of biodiversity value, including Sites of Biological Importance (SBIs) and Local Nature Reserves (LNRs); Manchester currently has 35 SBIs (including the Rochdale and Ashton Canals) and 7 LNRs; priority habitats found within Manchester, as listed in the Manchester Biodiversity Strategy and included in the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (GM BAP);
- protected and priority species, as listed in the Manchester Biodiversity Strategy and included in the Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan (GM BAP);
- sites that are recognised for their geological importance;
- the Council's objective to protect and conserve the City's existing trees and woodlands and the aim for a net increase in trees across the City.

Developers will be expected to identify and implement reasonable opportunities to enhance, restore or create new biodiversity, either on-site or adjacent to the site, contributing to linkages between valuable or potentially valuable habitat areas where appropriate, with reference to:

- the Manchester Biodiversity Strategy, which provides further details of priority habitats within Manchester and opportunities for biodiversity enhancement including corridors such as the Mersey, Medlock and Irk river valleys, the canals and disused railway lines and areas of managed greenspace particularly in parks;
- the Green Infrastructure Framework for Greater Manchester, which encompasses an ecological framework that seeks to guide and inform habitat creation and repair,
- including identifying large 'biodiversity opportunity areas' including the Moston Brook Corridor and Nutsford Vale;
- the Open Space, Sport & Recreation Study, which identifies areas where there is a deficit of natural and semi-natural greenspace, opportunities for green corridors and other linkages;
- Manchester's Climate Change Action Plan;
- the Strategic Flood Risk Assessment (SFRA) for Manchester;
- the Habitats Regulations Assessment (HRA) for Manchester, which gives detailed consideration to Special Areas of Conservation (SACs), including the Rochdale Canal SAC just outside the district boundary;
- the River Basin Management Plan for the North West;
- the Manchester Tree Strategy.

Any adverse impacts on biodiversity will need to be justified against the wider benefits of the proposal, assessed against other LDF policies. Where adverse impacts are unavoidable, developers will be required to provide appropriate mitigation and/or compensation.

Development should wherever possible seek to maintain, enhance or restore existing geology.

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