AVISON YOUNG

Tree Replacement, Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain Mitigation Strategy

Red Bank Neighbourhood, Victoria North, Manchester

Creation of Future Development Platforms and Green Infrastructure

March 2022

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Appendix I Biodiversity Net Gain Report

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For and on behalf of Avison Young (UK) Limited

1. Introduction

1.1 This Tree Replacement, Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain Mitigation Strategy has been prepared by Avison Young (AY) on behalf of Manchester City Council (MCC) (the Applicant). It is submitted in supported of a full planning application proposing new green space and infrastructure works which benefit from £51.6m Government funding through the Homes Infrastructure Fund (HIF) to prepare the land at Red Bank for new strategic residential-led development. The proposals include the creation of development platforms, formation of a new spine road (Phase 1), and new utilities and services connections that will allow for future residential-led development (to be applied for in a future planning application), together with new and improved green infrastructure, including the revitalisation of St Catherine's Wood as part of the City River Park at Red Bank, Victoria North, Manchester.

1.2 This is the second planning application submitted by the Applicant at the site, following the grant of planning permission (Ref: 132252/VO/2021) on 23 December 2021 for advanced enabling works including tree and vegetation removal, creation of a temporary haul road and demolition of the Creamline Dairies buildings in association with the future delivery of the residential masterplan by MCC and its Joint Venture (JV) Partner, Far East Consortium International Ltd (FEC). This document updates a previous version submitted with the enabling works planning application, dated November 2021 (then entitled "Ecological Enhancement Statement").

1.3 The description of development for this full planning application is as follows:

> *"City Council Development for the creation of development platforms, including remediation and earthworks, and change in site levels, to allow delivery of future residential-led development at the Red Bank Neighbourhood, together with the construction of a new road and priority junction from Red Bank, new drainage infrastructure, utility and services connections and diversions, street works for new utilities including ducting up to the Queens Park substation, preparatory tree and shrub clearance, and demolition of certain existing structures, along with the creation of new and improved green infrastructure and landscaping including the improvements of St Catherine's Wood to form part of a City River Park, and other associated works."*

1.4 This application will create the development platforms and ready the site for the delivery of future residential development (applied for in separate planning applications) in line with the strategically important Victoria North project. The application also includes the detailed design of 4.5ha of new green space, including enhancements to St Catherine's Wood as part of the City River Park. The proposals will retain 1.368ha of plantation woodland, and St. Catherine's Wood will be enhanced to improve the overall condition of the woodland and provide biodiversity benefits.

1.5 This planning application represents the next step in the delivery of the strategically important Victoria North project, which will deliver transformational regeneration on an unprecedented scale in Manchester and help to fulfil its potential as a truly innovative, sustainable and world-class city.

1.6 The works proposed by this application form a crucial role in the delivery of the first new residential neighbourhood within Victoria North, unlocking £51.6m of Government Funding through the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) to deliver much needed infrastructure, around 5,500 new homes, and 5ha of the wider City River Park, alongside new public realm, permeability, and habitat creation. These critical infrastructure works are subject to a strict programme under the terms of the Government funding arrangements which requires the HIF monies to be spent by March 2024.

Summary of Strategic Regeneration Context

1.7 The Victoria North initiative (formerly referred to as 'Northern Gateway') is an area of approximately 155 hectares to the north of Manchester City Centre and Victoria Station offering an opportunity to deliver approximately 15,000 new homes over the next 15-20 years, along with a range of employment, social, community, cultural and ancillary uses. Victoria North will establish a series of new, sustainable and integrated residential neighbourhoods, with a balanced mix of housing types and tenures, making it a desirable place for a variety of new and existing Manchester residents. Victoria North is one of the largest regeneration projects in the UK as well as being the largest single opportunity for residential redevelopment in Manchester, effectively a new town within the heart of an established, popular and growing city.

1.8 In April 2017, MCC appointed Far East Consortium International Ltd (FEC) as its Joint Venture (JV) investment and delivery partner, to accelerate the delivery of the Victoria North opportunity. This appointment was the conclusion of an international marketing exercise that commenced in April 2016. Since making this appointment, MCC has approved the Northern Gateway Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF), which provides an updated vision, core objectives and development framework to guide the regeneration of Northern Gateway (now known as Victoria North), with a focus on the provision of housing and supporting infrastructure investment. In February 2019, MCC Executive approved the Northern Gateway SRF as a material consideration in the determination of all future planning applications relevant to the area.

1.9 Victoria North is a unique opportunity to deliver transformational regeneration on an unprecedented scale in Manchester and helps to fulfil its potential as a truly innovative, sustainable, and world-class city. The regeneration of this area to the north-east of the city centre has the potential to unlock significant residential-led development that will positively contribute to the growth of Manchester and

the wider city region. Victoria North is one of the UK's largest residential-led regeneration schemes and a unique opportunity to deliver 15,000 new homes and a world-class City River Park for Manchester.

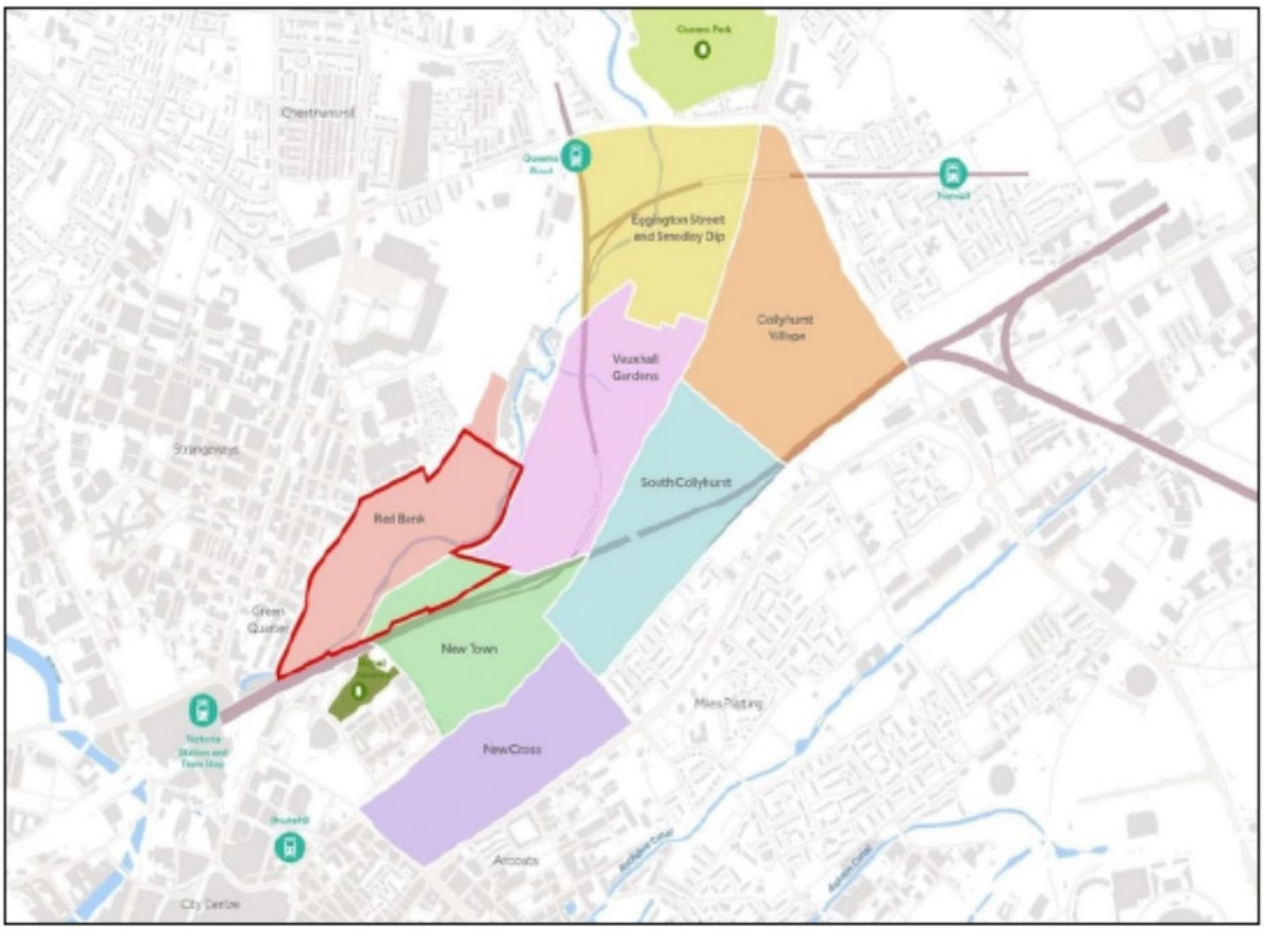


Figure 1: *Boundary of the Initial Development Area in the context of the Northern Gateway SRF*

1.10 Figure 1 presents the extent of the area related to the Victoria North initiative, inclusive of the seven inter-connected neighbourhoods identified within the SRF. An Initial Development Area has been identified by the JV as having the potential to deliver an estimated 5,550 residential units across 21 residential development plots, as well as delivering critical infrastructure works, which is essentially Phase 1 of the wider SRF (the red line imposed on Figure 1). This Initial Development Area comprises land owned/ controlled by MCC, FEC and third-party landowners, and it is anticipated that c. 4,000 residential units will be delivered on land owned/ controlled by the JV. The Initial Development Area shown is inclusive of the infrastructure enabling works and the subsequent built development.

1.11 The development project envisaged on land owned / controlled by the JV within the Initial Development Area is known as the "Red Bank Neighbourhood", which will form a significant first phase of delivering the wider SRF vision. It comprises an area of approximately 20 hectares (ha) and is located within the Lower Irk Valley. Presently, the location is affected by the legacy of more than 150 years of industrial uses and Victorian / pre-Victorian infrastructure, with modified waterways; significant operational and redundant rail infrastructure; limited sewerage, water, electricity and gas infrastructure; and

contaminated sites associated with textile manufacturing and other heavy industries. As a result, a comprehensive programme of infrastructure investment is required to facilitate development where works cannot be taken forward on a piecemeal, site by site basis, and are not viable for the private sector to fund in isolation.

1.12 Concurrent to the delivery of the key elements of the neighbourhood to be delivered by the HIF money, namely the creation of development platforms, formation of a new spine road (Phase 1), and new utilities and services connections that will allow for future residential-led development, together with new and improved green infrastructure, the JV will focus on plot development and housing delivery on land controlled / owned by the JV, which will form part of a future planning application (i.e., FEC's "Red Bank Neighbourhood").

1.13 To unlock the full potential of the Initial Development Area, JV has secured £51.6 million from the Government's HIF to help unlock the potential at Red Bank. The funding will be used to address a series of up-front infrastructure requirements to support the delivery of the new homes and green spaces within the Initial Development Area at Red Bank:

- Delivering improvements to the River Irk to enhance the river environment, with naturalisation measures to help reduce the risk of flooding.
- Securing and clearing undeveloped brownfield land, including the removal of invasive plant species and contaminated ground.
- Connecting the development sites to electricity, water, and drainage.
- Delivering road upgrades and connecting development sites to the existing highways network.

1.14 A key condition of the HIF funding is that the spend availability period runs until March 2024.

Planning Application Strategy

1.15 The JV's proposals at Red Bank are envisaged as a single development project, including the HIF infrastructure and enabling works, and the residential plot development associated with FEC's proposed residential masterplan, which will deliver approximately 4,000 of the 5,500 new homes envisaged for the Red Bank Neighbourhood. In order to meet the HIF funding requirements, and the resulting programme implications, a series of planning applications will be submitted to MCC for approval as follows:

Application No. *	Description of Proposals	Applicant	Timescale for Submission	Timescale for Delivery
1	Advance HIF Enabling Works	• MCC	Nov '21	June '22
2	Main HIF Infrastructure Works	• MCC	Q1 '22	March '24
3	HIF Flood Defence and Alleviation Measures	• MCC	Q3 '22	March '24
4	Red Bank Neighbourhood Application	• FEC	Q2/Q3 '22	'23 – '33

* note that the application numbering does not necessarily refer to the sequencing of submissions

1.16 Notably Application 1 has already been granted planning permission (LPA reference: 132252/VO/2021) with works due to commence on site during Q1 of 2022.

1.17 This planning application is 'Application 2' and seeks full planning permission for majority of the main infrastructure works at the site to be delivered by the HIF money, and which are required to deliver the future Red Bank Neighbourhood.

2. Site Context

2.1 This section sets out the historic context and provides a detailed description of the site and surrounding area.

The Site

2.2 The application site extends to approximately 15.74ha and comprises an irregular shaped parcel of land to the south of Red Bank Road, Manchester. A Site Location Plan is shown below outlining the extent of the application red line boundary. The majority of the works proposed will be undertaken in the Red Bank area. The red line has also been extended to the north-east to cover the utility works/ new ducting required in the street up to the Queens Park substation.

Figure 3: HIF Site Location Plan

2.3 As noted in Section 1, the site is located within the Initial Development Area of the Northern Gateway SRF, and within the Red Bank and New Town neighbourhoods proposed by the SRF. Figure 4 below

shows the infrastructure works application site boundary (shown in red) in the context of the wider SRF.

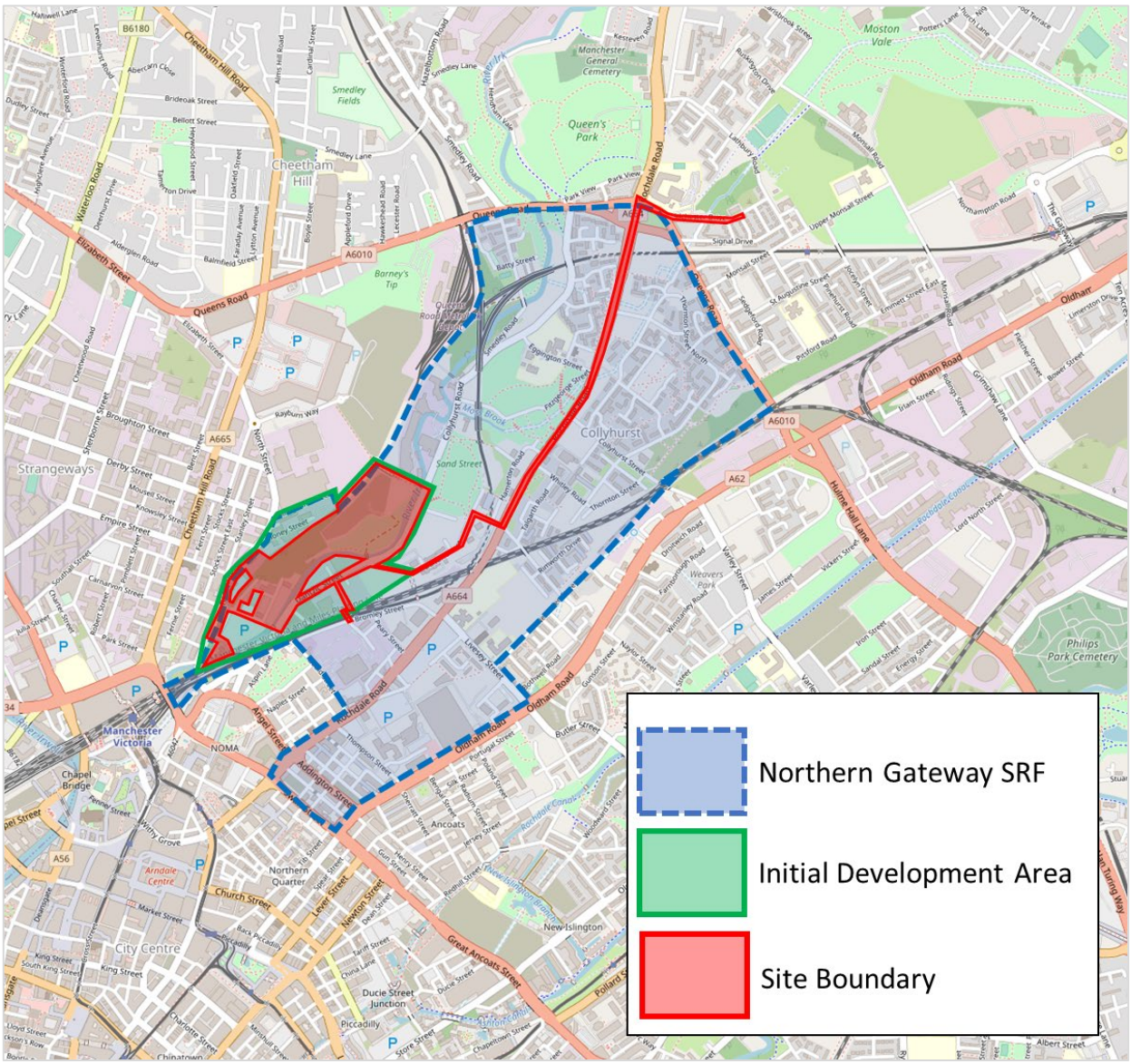


Figure 4: *Site Location in context of Initial Development Area and wider Northern Gateway SRF*

2.4 For the purposes of this Statement, the Initial Development Area, within which the site sits, is divided into the following areas:

- Red Bank Plateau;
- Red Bank Viaduct;
- St Catherine's Wood;
- Travis Island;
- New Town Plots.

2.5 Figure 5 below shows the extent of these areas:

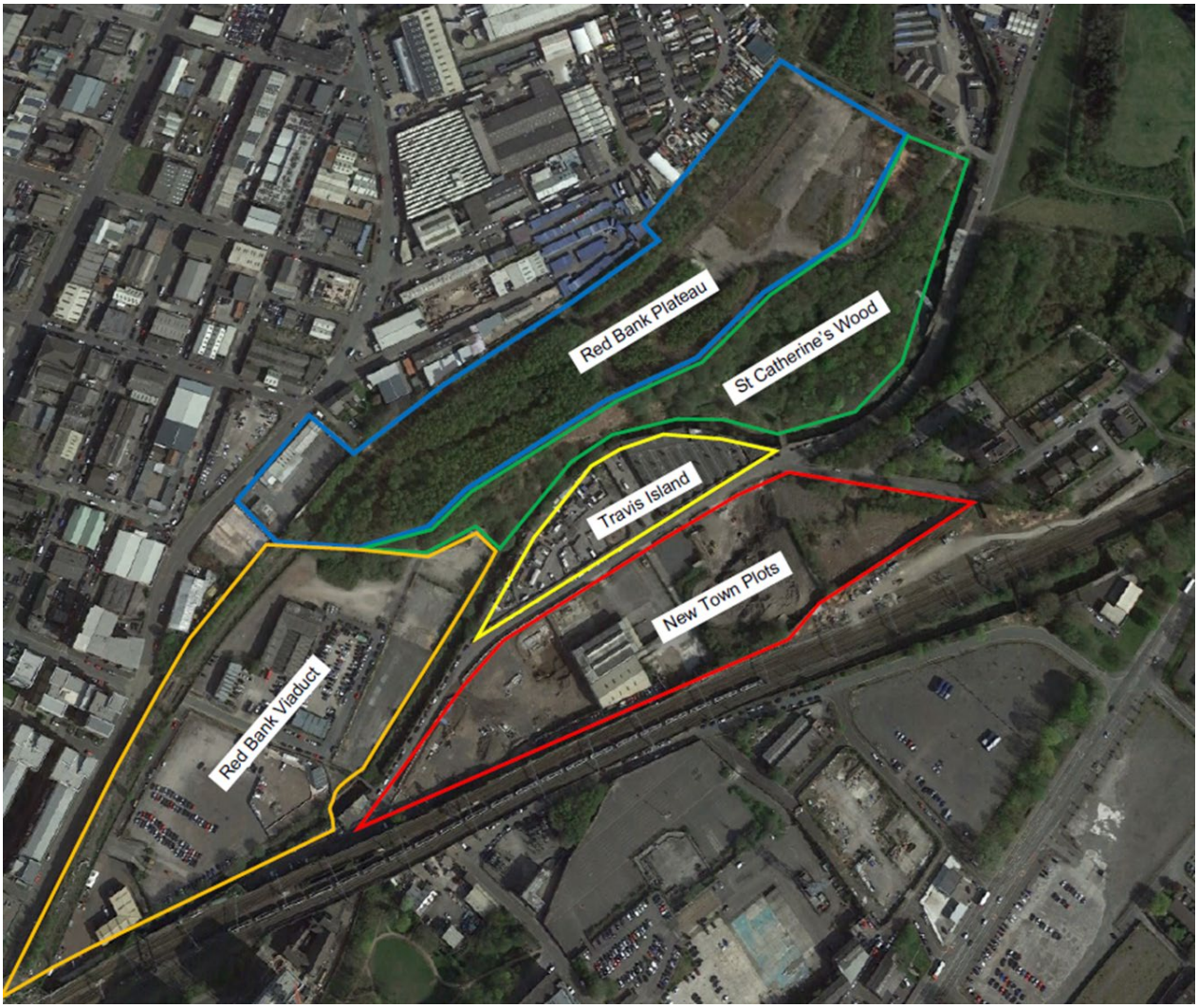


***Figure 5**: Existing Site Areas*

2.6 It should be noted both the Travis Island and New Town Plots areas, as well as parts of the Red Bank Viaduct area, are excluded from the current application site area. Additionally Figure 5 does not show the area where the utilities works are proposed in the road extending to the north-east, to cover the new ducting required up to the Queens Park substation. The areas that are the subject of these works are included within the planning application red line boundary.

Site Overview / History

2.7 The Victoria North site has a legacy of more than 150 years of industrial uses and Victorian and pre-Victorian infrastructure, with modified waterways; significant operational and redundant rail infrastructure; limited sewerage, water, electricity, and gas infrastructure; and contaminated sites associated with textile manufacturing and other heavy industries.

2.8 Historically the area was used as railway sidings, following the route of the former Prestwich Branch of the Lancashire and Yorkshire Railway, which started at Victoria Station to the south-west before heading north-west. This is now disused and forms a plateau above the River Irk valley to the south-east. Historical mapping shows how the River Irk was manipulated to create multiple waterways for its industrial usage to power Mills. However, the artificially created waterway disappeared in the late 19th century as the neighbouring railway was developed. In the mid to late 20th century, residential and school buildings were developed on the site.

2.9 We understand the use of the railway line ceased in the 1950s or early 1960s and the site has been vacant and unused for a significant period of time. Following the demolition of the railway sidings, industrial and residential buildings that once occupied the site, self-seeded vegetation took hold and screened the site's past from view.

Red Bank Plateau

2.10 The north of the site is characterised by Red Bank viaduct and former railway sidings. It comprises a cleared post-industrial site, which became dominated by self-seeded birch trees, a natural pioneer species. To the north-east of the site is extensive open hardstanding.

St Catherine's Wood

2.11 To the south of the site is St Catherine's Wood, which is on the site of the former Travis Isle Mill and house and St Catherine's School and Church, from whom it takes its name. The majority of the woodland is of planted origin; however, it is a locally extensive habitat and provides habitat value in the local context. There is a dominance of non-native species, such as sycamore, and dense areas of bracken are present in the south of the site. Invasive species, such as Japanese Knotweed and Indian Balsam are locally dominant along the river.

2.12 There are significant level changes in this area with steep embankments across dense areas of bracken. There are no formal footways across this area which is disconnected from its surroundings presently. The area also feels unwelcoming, is known for anti-social behaviour, is unmanaged and has been subject to fly-tipping and vandalism.

2.13 St Catherine's Wood is bound by the River Irk to the south. There is also very little/ only restricted access to the River Irk frontage. Inaccessible or incomplete footpaths are overgrown or have had access blocked completely by falling trees, vegetation or other obstacles.

2.14 The Grade II Listed Union Bridge is located at the southern boundary of the site, spanning the River Irk between Dantzic Street and Roger Street. However, it should be noted that the bridge is outside the planning application boundary.

Red Bank Viaduct

2.15 To the south-west of the site is the Red Bank Viaduct area. In its current form this area is characterised by surface car parking and hardstanding. There are also some commercial units in this area, as shown below. However, it should be noted units occupying the western area of Red Bank Viaduct, which sit outside of the JV's ownership are excluded from this application site boundary.

Surrounding Area

2.16 The site is bounded by commercial and industrial uses to the north and west. To the east the site is bound by the River Irk, beyond which are existing commercial units located along Collyhurst Road and Dantzic Street. To the immediate south is further surface car parking, south of Roger Street, beyond which is the former Red Bank Viaduct.

2.17 As detailed at Section 1 of this Statement, the site sits within a wider strategic regeneration context, being part of the Victoria North initiative; one of the largest regeneration projects within the UK. Over the next 15 to 20 years, the surrounding area will be the subject of substantial change, with the delivery of approximately 15,000 new homes, in addition to employment, social, community, cultural and ancillary uses set to come forward.

3. The Proposed Development

3.1 A key condition of the HIF funding that has been secured by MCC is that the spend availability only runs until March 2024, by which time the infrastructure and enabling works must be completed. Therefore, the new landscaping, enabling, preparatory and flood and river works required at the site are being split into multiple planning applications. Planning permission for the initial HIF infrastructure advanced enabling works was granted in December 2021.

3.2 Planning permission is now sought for the creation of the development platforms and preparatory infrastructure to allow the delivery of future residential development (applied for in separate planning applications) in line with the strategically important Victoria North project. The application also includes the detailed design of 4.5ha of new green space, including enhancements to St Catherine's Wood as part of the City River Park. The proposals will retain 1.368ha of plantation woodland, and St. Catherine's Wood will be enhanced to improve the overall condition of the woodland and provide biodiversity benefits.

Summary Overview of Works

3.3 A high level overview of the infrastructure works applied for by this planning application is provided below:

Permanent Green Infrastructure and Landscaping

- The enhancement of St Catherine's Wood to deliver c.4.5ha of the City River Park, including vegetation planting, lighting and security, and a new circulation route access for pedestrian and cyclists leading from St Catherine's Wood bridge, including some minor reprofiling of slopes to the rear of the park; and
- The creation of new public realm areas in the form of Red Bank Terraces, and Union Waterfront at the southern-most extent of the site, and connecting pedestrian and cycling circulation routes.

Preparatory Works to Create Development Platform

- Demolition of sections of retaining wall. Three sections of the existing river wall adjacent to the northern banks of the River Irk are proposed for removal to facilitate the proposed earthworks and landscaping in these areas.
- Tree and shrub clearance to facilitate the construction of the residential-led development platform (Red Bank Plateau), and as part of the park area / proposed landscape improvements.

- The reclamation of the development platform at Red Bank Plateau, Red Bank Terraces and the circulation route to Union Waterfront comprising.
    - Cut and fill and remediation to the Red Bank Plateau and Red Bank Terraces, including the regrading/reprofiling of existing slopes and changing the Red Bank Plateau platform levels.
    - The reprofiling of stretches of the northern bank of the River Irk and the erection of a bund to assist with flood alleviation.

Highways Works

- The formation of a new spine road (Phase 1) (Plateau Avenue) on Red Bank Plateau. This application is seeking planning permission for Phase 1 of the new road at Plateau Avenue. This road will be constructed with sacrificial highway and footpath finishes for Phase 1, which will be upgraded by FEC's residential led development. The detail of the road will be agreed through future reserved matters applications pursuant to FEC's prospective outline planning application (Application 4).
- The creation of a circulation route leading from 'Red Bank Terraces' and 'Union Waterfront', at the western extent of the site, to the Packaging Products access bridge, at the eastern-most point of the site, which will also be for emergency access.
- The formation of the new priority junction at Red Bank road.

Utilities Works

- New drainage installation including the creation of SuDS, including drainage for the future development plots (to be applied for by FEC as part of Application 4/ the residential masterplan).
- Utilities and services connections for all new development plots and park/landscape/public realm areas and highways.
- Utilities diversion and new installations on Dantzic Street and new drainage installation.
- Street Works for new utilities incorporating two trenches for HV ducting from Queens Park substation to the north-east of the site, and additional utilities needs within existing streets local to the Initial Development Area.

Temporary Works

- Temporary construction access from the eastern-most point of the site, adjacent to the Packaging Products site.
- Temporary site security including gates and fencing to be erected during construction works.

3.4 The proposed development is detailed fully at Section 5 of the Supporting Planning Statement submitted as part of this application.

4. The Application Site Today

4.1 The site's ecological and visual value is broadly described below.

Red Bank Plateau

4.2 The north of the site is characterised by Red Bank viaduct and former railway sidings. It comprises a cleared post-industrial site, which became dominated by self-seeded birch trees, a natural pioneer species. To the north-east of the site is extensive open hardstanding with epehermal / short perennial growth.

Figure 6: Photos of Red Bank Plateau

Figure 7: Photos of the north of the site

Figure 8: Extensive open hardstanding to north-eastern area of the site

St Catherine's Wood

4.3 To the south of the site is St Catherine's Wood. The majority of the woodland is of planted origin; however, it is a locally extensive habitat and provides habitat value in the local context. There is a dominance of non-native species, such as sycamore, and dense areas of bracken are present in the south of the site. Invasive species, such as Japanese Knotweed and Indian Balsam are locally dominant along the river.

4.4 There are significant level changes in this area with steep embankments across dense areas of bracken. There are no formal footways across this area which is disconnected from its surroundings presently. The area also feels unwelcoming, is known for anti-social behaviour, is unmanaged and has been subject to fly-tipping and vandalism.

4.5 There is also very little/ only restricted access to the River Irk frontage. Inaccessible or incomplete footpaths are overgrown or have had access blocked completely by falling trees, vegetation or other obstacles.

Figure 9: *River Irk south of St Catherine's Wood*

Figure 10: *Photos of St Catherine's Wood*

Red Bank Viaduct

4.6 To the south-west of the site is the Red Bank Viaduct area. In its current form this area is characterised by surface car parking and hardstanding. There are also some commercial units in this area, as shown below. However, it should be noted units occupying the western area of Red Bank Viaduct are excluded from this application site boundary.

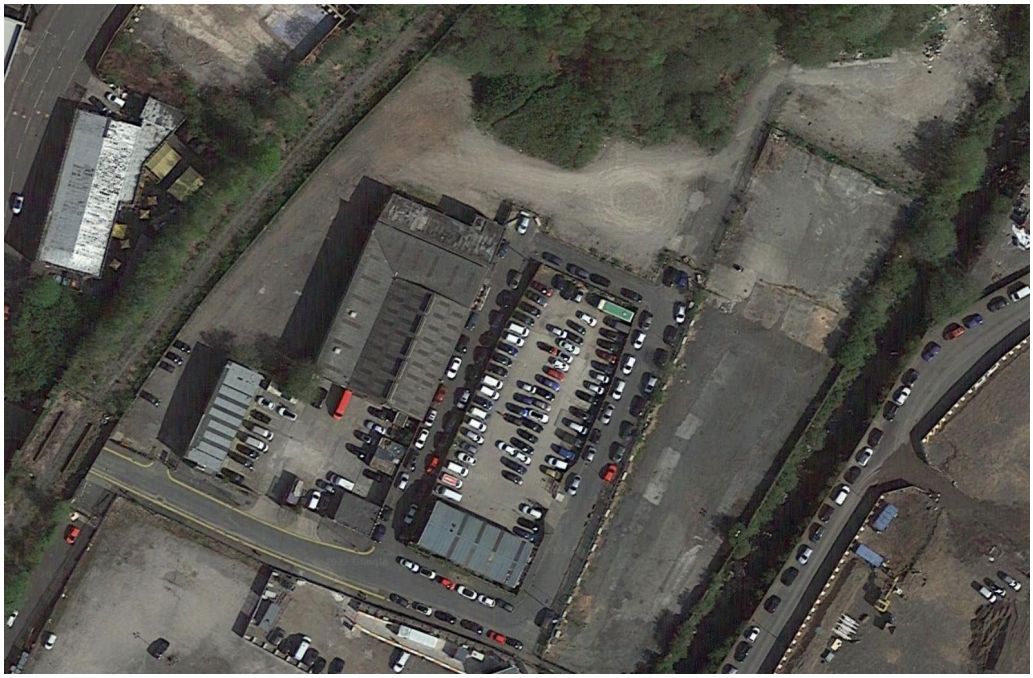


Figure 11: *Aerial view of south-western area of the site (Source: Google Maps, 2022)*

4.7 The intention for the wider Red Bank Neighbourhood is to build upon the existing ecological and visual qualities of the area, particularly along the river, the delivery of 4.5ha of green space including enhancements to St Catherine's Woods as part of the new City River Park, and key routes, to provide significant new opportunities for ecological enhancements, new tree planting, and public access.

4.8 Detailed Ecology and Arboricultural surveys have been undertaken on the site by suitably qualified professionals, with the findings presented in full within the Environmental Statement that is submitted with this planning application.

Proposed Tree and Vegetation Clearance in this Application

4.9 As set out earlier in this document, the proposed works will include an element of tree and vegetation clearance, predominantly on Red Bank Plateau and in St Catherine's Wood, to allow for the delivery of the proposed terraced routes, new development platform and future development plots. The area of vegetation to be removed on Red Bank Plateau is largely of poor quality in ecological terms, due to its self-seeded nature, young age, lack of species diversity and poor ground flora.

4.10 In St Catherine's Wood, and on slopes associated with Red Bank Plateau, the scheme will look to enhance existing vegetation, and tree clearance will be limited to individual tree removal where required or appropriate to enhance the quality of the woodland.

4.11 Due to the level changes in St Catherine's Wood, in order to create accessible and compliant pedestrian routes a number of trees will have to be felled as the changes in contours will negatively impact their root protection areas too greatly. There are also several trees in poor condition or dead which will also be removed. However, tree cover will be increased in general and species will be chosen to boost benefits to wildlife.

5. Ecological Mitigation Strategy

5.1 This section sets out the approach to mitigating any ecological loss of existing habitats and the strategy for ensuring that the JV's future Red Bank Neighbourhood will deliver significant improvements and an overall commitment to an increase in Biodiversity Net Gain across the completed development of at least 10%.

Overall Strategy for Red Bank Neighbourhood

5.2 As previously stated, the Red Bank Neighbourhood is envisaged as a single development project, including the enabling, preparatory, landscaping, flood alleviation and river enhancement works, and the delivery of the residential-led development. In order to meet the HIF funding requirements, and the resulting programme implications, a series of planning applications will be submitted to MCC, as the Local Planning Authority, for approval. Each application will deliver various elements / phases of the overall strategy for removal of existing conditions on the site (where required), and then delivery of new replacement ecology, tree planting, and habitat creation. This is broadly summarised below in the following table, with the various aspects of these works described further in this section:

Phase No. *	Description of Proposals	Extent of Ecological Works	Timescale for Submission	Timescale for Delivery
1	Advance HIF Enabling Works	• Removal of trees and habitat to plateau area	Nov '21	June '22
2	Main HIF Preparatory Works	• Removal of trees and habitat to plateau area and embankments • New tree planting and ecological enhancements to St Catherine's Wood • River enhancement works	Feb '22	March '24
3	HIF Flood Defence and Alleviation Measures	• River naturalisation. • New ecological enhancements and habitat creation along river.	Q3 '22	March '24
4	Red Bank Neighbourhood Application	• New ecological enhancements with new tree planting, greening and enhancements to new streets.	Q2/Q3 '22	'23 – '33

* note that the phase numbering does not necessarily refer to the sequencing of submissions
Table 1: *Planning Application Strategy*

5.3 Please note for the purposes of this document each separate planning application for the overall Red Bank Neighbourhood development project is referred to a separate "phase" of development.

5.4 The key components of the ecological mitigation strategy are described below based on the current knowledge of the Applicant. The detailed designs of the various new elements of the strategy will be provided within the respective future planning applications.

Advance HIF Enabling Infrastructure Works (Phase 1)

5.5 The initial enabling works application (approved in December 2021) includes demolition of the Creamline Dairies site and vegetation clearance on the plateau to enable the delivery of a temporary haul road. Whilst there is value to this area it was concluded that the area of woodland to be lost is poor quality woodland in ecological terms, due to its young age, lack of species diversity and poor ground flora.

5.6 The application did, however, secure a commitment via planning conditions to a mitigation strategy and the JV's overall commitment to Biodiversity Net Gain across its Red Bank Neighbourhood development project. In addition, this application also secured a commitment that, in the very unlikely event of no subsequent planning applications being submitted pursuant for the Red Bank Neighbourhood, the habitat loss resulting from Application 1 will be reprovided with a 10% biodiversity net gain. In the unlikely event of this occurring, the preference is to provide this through the enhancement of existing nearby habitats outside of the Application 1 red line boundary. By way of an example, this could include the following enhancements covering c.85% of St. Catherine's Wood taking its existing habitat condition from "poor" to "moderate":

- Eradicating invasive species
- Planting a variety of different tree species
- Diversifying the age classes of trees present
- Improving the ground flora

Creation of Future Development Platforms and Green Infrastructure (Phase 2)

5.7 This second application relating to HIF preparatory works (this application) includes clearance of the semi-natural woodland previously described in this document, however, importantly it will deliver 4.5ha of green space including enhancements to St Catherine's Wood as part of the new City River Park, new ecological mitigation and habitat creation, enhancements to the River Irk and the creation of SuDS.

The City River Park

SRF Vision

5.8 The endorsed SRF sets out an ambitious vision for the new City River Park, a key element of that will be included in detail in Application 2.

5.9 The SRF vision is for the seven neighbourhoods within Victoria North to be unified with the creation of a new circa. 46 hectare City River Park set around the River Irk. The City River Park will be made up of a collection of distinct and interconnected parks and green spaces and will become one of the city's largest green spaces. The creation of a City River Park will be an essential aspect of the regeneration of Victoria North. It will form a green heart to the area and unique destination for the city, promoting cycling, walking and healthy living, and helping to improve connections between the city centre and the neighbourhoods to the north.

Figure 12: SRF Vision for City River Park (source: https://www.redbank-regeneration.co.uk/)

Design Principles

5.10 The detailed design of 4.5ha of new green space, including enhancements to St Catherine's Wood as part of the City River Park, is contained within this planning application (Application 2). The application

will deliver 4.5ha of the total area of the City River Park promoted in the SRF (though both new and enhancement of green spaces), including St Catherine's Wood, by March 2024.

5.11 The design vision for this element of the City River Park is to create a green, biodiverse spine to the Red Bank Neighbourhood with the River Irk at its heart. Key to achieving this will be enhancing the existing green and natural character of the river corridor and St Catherine's Wood, extending the character, so that streets and spaces beyond feel connected and part of the whole. The two main components of this vison are:

- The enhancement of St Catherine's Wood park, including vegetation planting, lighting and security, and a new circulation route access for pedestrian and cyclists leading from St Catherine's Wood bridge, including some minor reprofiling of slopes to the rear of the park.
- The creation of new public realm areas in the form of Red Bank Terraces, and Union Waterfront at the southern-most extent of the site, and connecting pedestrian and cycling circulation routes.

5.12 This new public realm will include opportunities for:

- Enhancement of the existing ecology to create new wildlife habitats;
- Extending the green character and ecological benefits beyond the immediate river and woodland areas.
- Providing information points as part of ecological trails to engage and educate users; and
- Carbon offsetting contributing to net carbon targets for the wider Red Bank Neighbourhood Application.

5.13 The illustrative landscape masterplan of the emerging extent and location of the new City River Park to be delivered under Application 2, and its relationship to the Red Bank Built Development (Application 4), is illustrated below, as well as an artists' impression of how the new Park could look:

Figure 13: Illustrative Aspirational Landscape Masterplan containing the City River Park and wider Red Bank Neighbourhood

Figure 14: Artist's Impression of proposed City River Park to be delivered as part of the Red Bank Neighbourhood

5.14 A number of key moves have been explored as part of the detailed design for the new green space and enhancements to St Catherine's Wood, including the following design and ecological features:

- Retain and support existing habitat value.
- Acknowledge existing flora & fauna and their habitats, creating opportunities for them to thrive.
- Management of invasive species.
- Management of pedestrian footfall.
- Increasing species diversity by planting native species and species bearing fruit, berries and nectar.
- Creating a varied vegetation structure.
- Structural diversity - varying heights, creating a shrub layer and ground floor layer.
- Use management methods such as coppicing that manage woodlands for wildlife.
- Using species of local provenance and strengthen local vegetation character.

5.15 In addition to the above, significant consideration has been given to managing existing and new woodland as a place for wildlife. Much of the wildlife within our woodlands relies on active management to provide a mix of different habitats. Without some form of management many of our woodlands will become dark, over-shaded and dominated by big mature trees without any variation in structure, age or cover. Ultimately this reduces the amount of wildlife that can live in them. The proposals for St Catherine's Wood are looking at restoring the woodland structure to support the diverse range of habitat types existing today and, where possible, look to provide additional habitats, supporting an increased range of species of the following that will ultimately improving the site's biodiversity:

- Badgers.
- Birds.
- Otters and Water voles.
- Hedgehogs.
- Bats.
- Amphibians.
- Reptiles.
- Invertebrates.

5.16 The proposed infrastructure works have been designed in such a way to focus on the retention of existing trees and vegetation to minimise negative impacts on the existing ecology and biodiversity.

Although some woodland/tree loss is unavoidable, impact has been minimised as far as possible and tree removal has been guided by the results of the arboriculture and ecology surveys.

5.17 St. Catherine's Wood will largely be retained and enhanced within the Proposed Development. The proposed scheme will retain 1.368ha of plantation woodland and St. Catherine's Wood will be enhanced through native tree planting, rotational coppicing, woodland management practices to encourage ground flora growth and introduction of a varied vegetation structures (shrub layers). Enhancements to the woodland will improve the overall condition of the woodland and provide biodiversity benefits.

5.18 A large area of the site is proposed to be expansive areas of planting or permeable hard materials such as bark paths or decked paths that will be elevated above the planted terrain below. These elevated paths will allow for the protection of existing tree roots and allow water, vegetation and wildlife to pass beneath them.

5.19 Alongside areas of hard landscaping, planted SuDS areas will provide a vital tool for absorbing surface water runoff as well as an attractive and urban cooling landscape feature. Planting will help absorb much of the storm-water on its way down to the river. Along the rivers' edge new planting banks will be introduced to help reinvigorate the Irk as well as helping with future flood prevention. These measures will be developed in line with Ecological and Engineering advice.

5.20 Re-profiling and re-naturalising discrete sections of the riverbanks will provide biodiversity benefits in the medium and long-term. Not only will re-naturalising these sections improve aquatic habitat but will provide dual benefits for foraging birds and bats.

HIF Flood Defence and Alleviation Works (Phase 3)

5.21 The restoration of the River Irk is key for the success of the Red Bank Neighbourhood. Although there have been significant improvements in water quality over the years, its re-naturalisation is fundamental for habitat creation and the return of life in and around the River Irk, as well as allow for new residential development to be built in the area.

5.22 Application 3 will focus on providing new flood defences as well as improvements to the river's water quality and bringing life back to the river. Key aims include:

- Making the river more naturalistic and less engineered in order to improve and create habitats, but also make access better for people.
- Delivering positive environmental change will increase biodiversity, benefiting many species.
- The trout could be used as a flagship species for the river, along with other species – a powerful metaphor for positive change.

- Parts of the river are dominated by invasive species – Japanese Knotweed and Himalayan Balsam – and there is a long term commitment to keep the invasive species under control.
- Comprehensive measures to achieve flood resilience to safeguard new and existing homes.

Red Bank Neighbourhood Application (Phase 4)

5.23 As previously stated, an Initial Development Area within the wider SRF has been identified that comprises land owned/ controlled by MCC, FEC and third-party landowners, which has the potential to deliver an estimated 5,500 residential units across 21 housing development plots, of which c. 4,200 units will be delivered on land owned/ controlled by the JV.

5.24 The development project envisaged on land owned / controlled by the JV is known as the "Red Bank Neighbourhood", which will form a significant first phase of delivering the wider SRF vision. It comprises an area of approximately 20 hectares (ha) and is located within the Lower Irk Valley.

5.25 The emerging vision for the Red Bank Neighbourhood is to deliver:

- Approximately 4,200 new homes across a range of tenure types and sizes, including affordable homes, set within high quality public realm;
- New community facilities; and
- Low carbon neighbourhood that delivers development in a sustainable way.

5.26 The below diagram sets out some of the initial thoughts and ideas that have been developed for the Red Bank Neighbourhood, including how the potential residential development plots (in white) will sit alongside the regeneration of St Catherine's Wood, the Red Bank Viaduct, and surrounding green streets and spaces.

Figure 15: Illustrative Concept Plan for Red Bank Neighbourhood

Off-Site Mitigation

5.27 As well as the opportunities to replace and enhance ecology, trees, and habitat within the Red Bank Neighbourhood, there are also further opportunities to explore off-site provision within the wider SRF area on land in the control of MCC. Within the SRF itself, MCC's freehold interests are illustrated on the plan below which includes, for example, Sandhill's Park, and parts of the River Valley below Queen's Park.

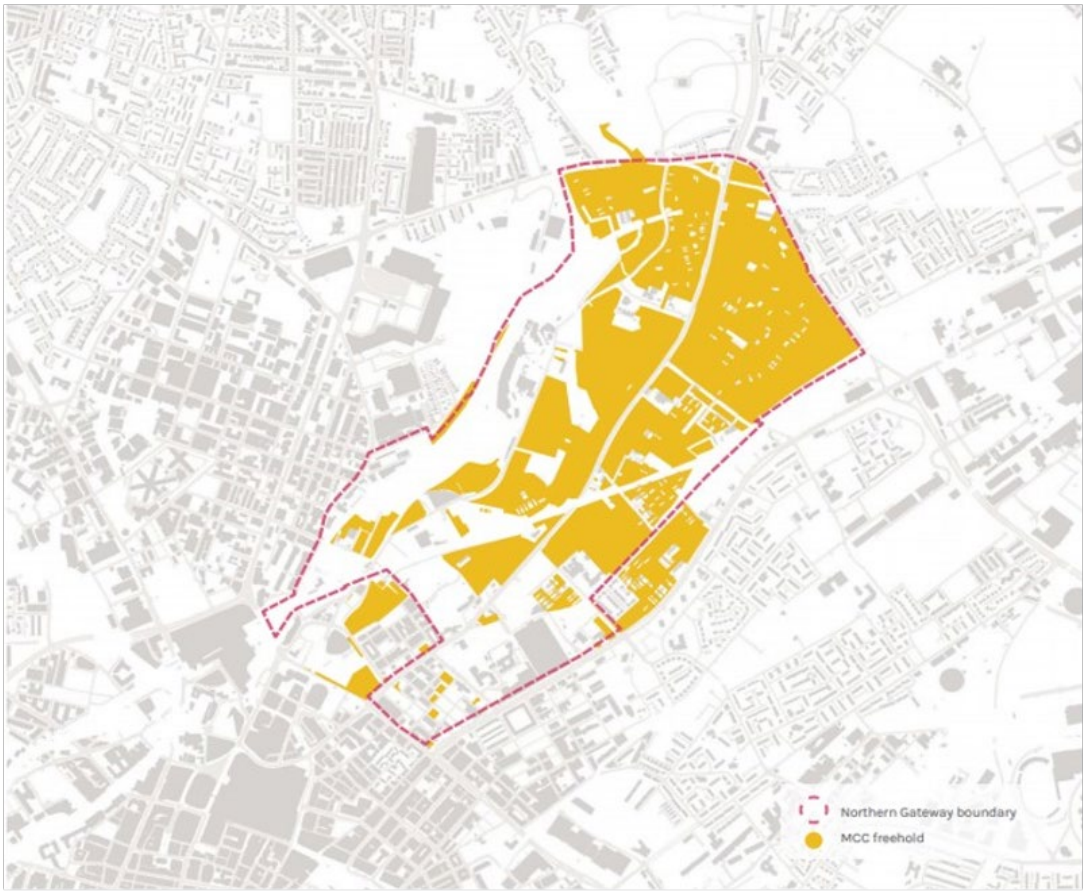


Figure 16: Indicative Plan of MCC's Freehold Interest in the wider Victoria North / Northern Gateway SRF area

6. Commitment to Biodiversity Net Gain of at least 10%

6.1 The joint venture partnership (JV) between Manchester City Council and the Far East Consortium are committed to significant ecological and biodiversity improvements on land controlled by the JV within the Red Bank Neighbourhood, and this needs to be read as a single development project.

6.2 The JV are committed to an increase in Biodiversity Net Gain across the completed "Red Bank Neighbourhood" development project of at least 10% in line with the Environment Act 2021.

What is Biodiversity Net Gain?

6.3 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is an approach to development that leaves biodiversity in a better state than before. Where a development has an impact on biodiversity it encourages developers to provide an increase in appropriate natural habitat and ecological features over and above that being affected in such a way it is hoped that the current loss of biodiversity through development will be halted and ecological networks can be restored.

6.4 The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) sets out that planning should provide biodiversity net gains where possible. BNG is also referred to in the National Infrastructure Commission's Design Principles, National Policy Statements and the National design guide.

6.5 The Government announced it would mandate net gains for biodiversity in the Environment Bill in the 2019 Spring Statement. This followed a consultation on BNG from December 2018.

6.6 The Environment Bill was given Royal Assent on 9 November 2021 (becoming the Environment Act) and sets out the following key components to mandatory BNG that will follow in changes to planning legislation:

- Minimum 10% gain required, calculated using Biodiversity Metric and approval of net gain plan.
- Habitat secured for at least 30 years via obligations/ conservation covenant.
- Habitat can be delivered on-site, off-site, or via statutory biodiversity credits.

How is Biodiversity Net Gain measured?

6.7 In terms of measuring net gain, guidance states that using a metric is a pragmatic way to calculate the impact of a development and the net gain that can be achieved. The initial measurement of BNG for the Red Bank Neighbourhood project has been assessed using Biodiversity Metric 3.0, which is a tool designed to enable local authorities and developers to measure the change in biodiversity across their

site. It determines if there will be net gain, net loss or no net loss of biodiversity following completion of their development and any subsequent management regime.

6.8 In order to calculate the change in biodiversity across the site, a site survey is undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist to determine the habitats present on site, their location, size, and condition. This information is then digitised and the resulting information fed into Biodiversity Metric 3.0. It's resultant inputs are then converted to UK Habitat classification codes (referred to below as "Habitat Units") as a way of measuring the baseline position, any loss of biodiversity, and the amount of new habitat required to achieve the 10% improvement, be that on-site or off-site.

How will this Commitment be achieved?

6.9 The JV and its appointed Ecologists (TEP) have used a series of assumptions based on recognised methodology for calculating BNG, the current condition of the site (the baseline), and the emerging designs for the Red Bank Neighbourhood across the four separate planning applications / phases and applied this to the recognised Biodiversity Metric. This will allow the baseline position to be set and the requirements identified to achieve at least a 10% BNG. A BNG Report prepared by TEP is included in Appendix 1 of this Statement, which provides more detail on the methodology and assumptions used.

6.10 Through planning conditions secured as part of the enabling works planning permission (Ref: 132252/VO/2021), the JV made the following commitments to be delivered as part of the overall Red Bank Neighbourhood development project:

- Submission of a 'Tree Replacement, Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain Mitigation Strategy' prior to commencement of the enabling works, including a mitigation and implementation strategy (including a commitment to 10% biodiversity net gain) across all phases of the Red Bank Neighbourhood.
- A monitoring, management and verification strategy to ensure that the mitigation is achieved across the four phases of development (and/or within the Northern Gateway SRF area).
- A requirement to submit an updated 'Tree Replacement, Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain Mitigation Strategy' for approval with the planning application for each subsequent phase of the Red Bank Neighbourhood development. This will provide any updates required to reflect the detailed design proposals contained within that phase, and any subsequent updates to the ecological assumptions required to meet the overall target of 10% biodiversity net gain.
- Prior to first use of each phase a verification report must also be submitted conform to the recommendations of the approved Strategy for that phase, including its contribution towards the 10% biodiversity net gain.

6.11 Given this planning application is the second of four applications to be submitted for the "Red Bank Neighbourhood" development project, it has been necessary at this stage to make best assumptions around the outline proposals in Application 4. Impacts on the River Irk associated with Application 3

are excluded from this BNG assessment. This document will be updated with each subsequent planning application to reflect the actual design of the individual components of the "Red Bank Neighbourhood" development project being applied for, and to capture any subsequent amendments required to future applications to meet the overall commitment to 10% BNG. This commitment has already been secured through the planning permission for the enabling works (Application 1).

6.12 A summary of the current BNG Report for the Red Bank Neighbourhood, and how the 10% BNG will indicatively be achieved either on-site within the Red Bank Neighbourhood (Phases 2, 3 and 4) or off-site, is set out below based on current assumptions.

	Summary of BNG Metric (March 2022*)
On-site baseline (1) (the whole Red Bank Neighbourhood site today)	32.84 habitat units 0.00 hedgerow units 1.58 river units
Estimate of habitat for Phase 2 only	-7.1 habitat units
On-site post-intervention (2) (conservative assumption for the whole Red Bank Neighbourhood site after delivery of Phases 1, 2 and 4. NB. this figure does not currently include the river naturalisation works (Phase 3) and reflects an assumed worst-case scenario that could be improved on during detailed design)	30.96 habitat units 0.33 hedgerow units 1.84 river units
Commitment to BNG Improvement for Red Bank Neighbourhood project (on-site and off-site **)	10% increase (including an estimated up to 5.2 habitat units required off-site ***) River and hedgerow units currently meet the commitment of 10% net gain on-site.

* based on best indicative assumptions for Phase 4 at this stage.
** off-site is assumed to be elsewhere within the Victoria North SRF.
*** current assumption on number of habitat units required to meet the JV's commitment to 10% BNG. Calculated as a 10% improvement on the on-site baseline (1), plus any habitat units lost post-intervention (1 minus 2)

Table 2: Summary of Current Indicative Requirements to Meet 10% BNG in Red Bank Neighbourhood

Location	Description of Ecological Works
On-Site **(Phases 2 & 4)**	• New tree planting and ecological enhancements to St Catherine's Wood • New ecological enhancements and habitat creation along the River Irk. • Enhancements to existing habitat • New ecological enhancements with new tree planting, hedgerow planting, greening and enhancements to new streets • New gardens • New green corridors, including street trees • Horticulture and productive gardens • SUDS and rain gardens • Commitment to inclusion of green and brown roofs
Off-Site	• Creation of new woodland; or

	• Enhancement of existing areas of woodland. It is considered that there are significant opportunities to achieve this on land within MCC's ownership elsewhere in the SRF area.

Table 3: Breakdown of Indicative BNG Measures Anticipated to Meet 10% BNG in Red Bank Neighbourhood

6.13 A summary of the outline assumptions made at this stage around the new ecology and habitat creation on-site within the Red Bank Neighbourhood (Phases 1 – 4) is set out in the diagram below.

Figure 17: Current Outline Assumptions around on-site habitat creation as part of 10% commitment to BNG in Red Bank Neighbourhood

7. Securing the Mitigation and Implementation Strategy

7.1 This section sets out how MCC as the Applicant, and as a JV Partner with FEC, proposes to secure the ecological enhancement measures across the Red Bank Neighbourhood project, and the subsequent planning applications.

7.2 As previously stated, condition 12 of the enabling works planning permission (Ref: 132252/VO/2021) secured the following commitment to a mitigation strategy:

> *12) (a) Prior to the commencement of this development [NB. the enabling works application] (excluding demolition, vegetation and tree clearance), a "Tree Replacement, Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain Mitigation Strategy" for the four phases of development in the Red Bank Neighbourhood (and/or within the Northern Gateway Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) area) on land that MCC has a freehold interest in, as indicated in the Ecological Enhancement Statement prepared by Avison Young stamped as received by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, on the 19 November 2021, shall be submitted for approval in writing by the City Council, as Local Planning Authority.*
>
> *This shall include:*
>
> *- Ecological evaluation of the current condition and value of development hereby approved (both quantitative and qualitative);*
>
> *- Ecological evaluation of the current condition and value of the subsequent phases of development in the Red Bank Neighbourhood (both quantitative and qualitative);*
>
> *- A mitigation and implementation strategy (including a commitment to 10% biodiversity net gain) across all phases of the Red Bank Neighbourhood on land that MCC has a freehold interest in; and*
>
> *- A monitoring, management and verification strategy to ensure that the mitigation is achieved across the four phases of development (and/or within the Northern Gateway SRF area) including details to update the Tree Replacement, Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain Mitigation Strategy following the completion each phase of development.*
>
> *(b) As part of a planning application for each subsequent phase of the Red Bank Neighbourhood development on land that MCC has a freehold interest in, an updated version of the "Tree Replacement, Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain Mitigation Strategy" will be submitted to the Local Planning Authority for approval. This will provide any updates required to the document approved under part (a) of this condition to reflect the detailed design proposals contained within that phase,*

and any subsequent updates to the ecological assumptions required to meet the overall target of 10% biodiversity net gain.

(c) Prior to the first use of each phase of development agreed within part (a) of this condition, a verification report will be required to validate that the works undertaken at that stage conforms to the recommendations and required approved within part of part (b) of this planning condition including its contribution towards the 10% biodiversity net gain.

(d) In instances of non-conformity, these shall be detailed along with mitigation measures required to ensure compliance with the Tree Replacement, Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain Mitigation Strategy. A verification report and measures shall be agreed until such a time as all four phases of development comply with parts (a), (b) and (c) of this planning condition.

Any mitigation measures shall be implemented in accordance with a timescale to be agreed with the City Council, as Local Planning Authority, and thereafter retained and maintained in situ.

If within a period of 5 years from the date of the planting of any tree or shrub, that tree or shrub or any tree or shrub planted in replacement for it, is removed, uprooted or destroyed or dies, or becomes, in the opinion of the local Planning Authority, seriously damaged or defective, another tree or shrub of the same species and size as that originally planted shall be planted at the same place.

7.3 The overarching Tree Replacement, Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain Mitigation Strategy required by Condition 12, part (a) of the enabling works planning permission will shortly be submitted to MCC.

7.4 This document represents the updated Tree Replacement, Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain Mitigation Strategy for Phase 2 as required by Condition 12, part (b).

7.5 It is also anticipated that the following additional mitigation measures are secured through an appropriately worded planning condition attached to this planning application (i.e. Application 2 of the Red Bank Neighbourhood):

- If the redevelopment of the wider Red Bank Neighbourhood does not take place within a certain period of time of the completion of the HIF preparatory works proposed in this application, the habitat loss relating solely to the those works in Application 2 will be mitigated in line with a strategy submitted for approval in writing by the City Council. The strategy will outline measures in order to ensure no biodiversity net loss relating to Application 2.

8. Monitoring, Management and Verification Strategy

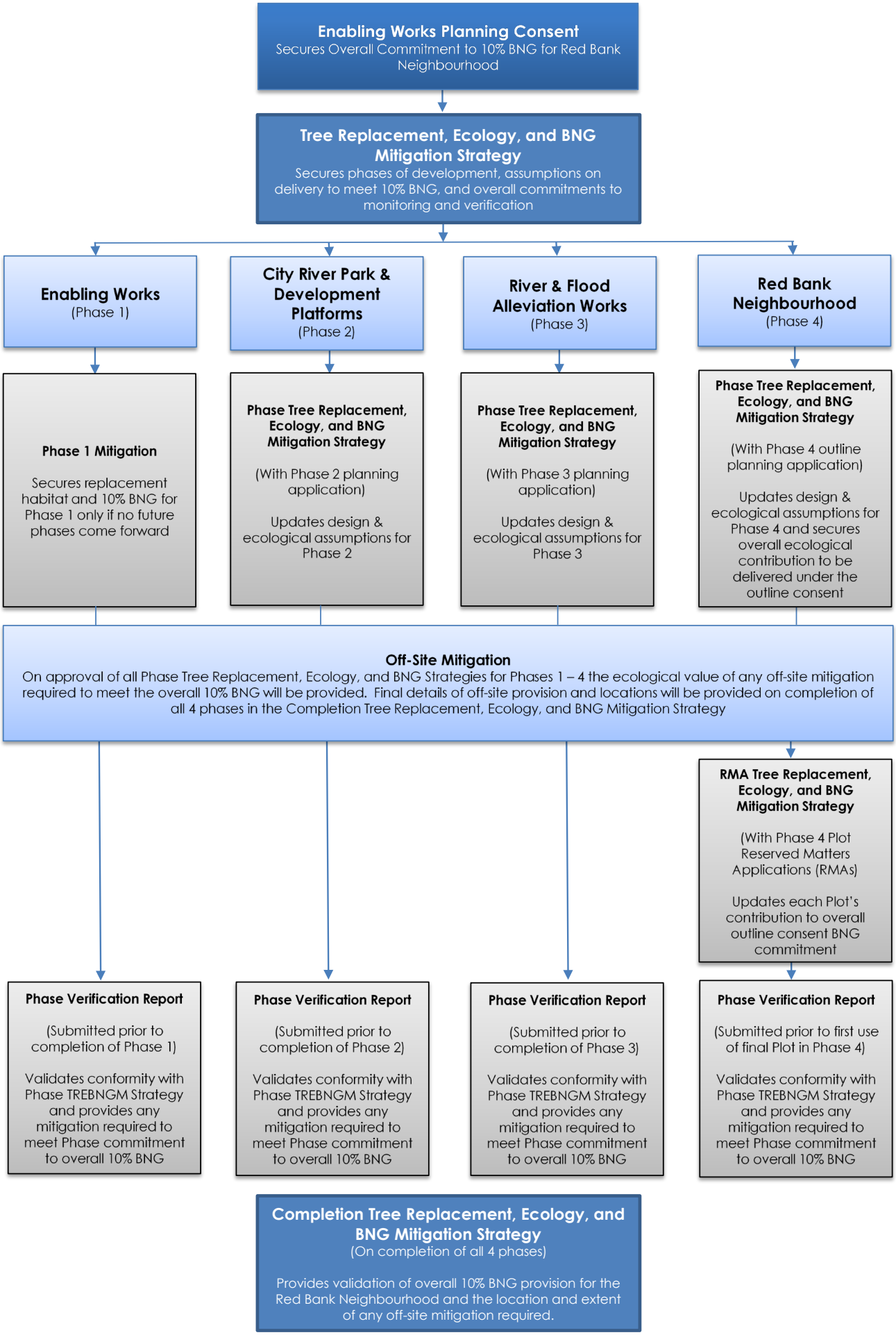
8.1 This section sets out the monitoring, management and verification strategy for the Red Bank Neighbourhood to ensure that the mitigation is achieved across the four phases of development (and/or within the Northern Gateway SRF area on land owned or controlled by MCC).

8.2 The overall commitment to at least 10% Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) across the Red Bank Neighbourhood development project was secured under the Phase 1 planning application. This will be delivered under the four separate phases of development and will be monitored through the submission of updates to the Tree Replacement, Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain Mitigation Strategy ("a Phase TREBNGM Strategy") to be provided with the submission of each planning application for a phase of the Red Bank Neighbourhood submitted by MCC and/or FEC. Each Phase TREBNGM Strategy will reflect the detailed design of that individual phase at the point it is submitted for planning approval, as well as its contribution to the over BNG commitment, and will be able to update any previous assumptions made for that phase.

8.3 Prior to the completion (or first use) of each phase of development a verification report will be submitted to MCC to validate that the works undertaken within that phase conform to the recommendations and requirements approved as part of the Phase TREBNGM Strategy, including its contribution towards the 10% BNG target. Should the verification report highlight that, for an individual phase, there are instances of non-conformity against the assumptions made, these shall be detailed along with mitigation measures required to ensure compliance.

8.4 The Phase TREBNG Strategy for Phase 4 will cover the ecological assumptions made for the Red Bank Neighbourhood Application to be submitted by FEC. It will secure the overall contribution of the outline application towards the JVs commitment to 10% BNG across the whole development project. As this application is anticipated to be submitted in outline, the detailed design of the individual buildings and public realm areas will only be known following the approval of future reserved matters applications ("RMA") following any grant of outline consent. To ensure that the ecological contribution of the individual development plots can be monitored and verified, each RMA for a development plot will be accompanied by its own TREBNGM Strategy ("a RMA TREBNGM Strategy") to show how that plot contributes to the overall commitments made by the outline consent. Following the completion of all plots within Phase 4 a verification report will be submitted to MCC to validate that the works undertaken conform to the recommendations and requirements approved within its Phase TREBNGM Strategy.

8.5 The following diagram summarises the monitoring, management and verification strategy for achieving a 10% BNG across the Red Bank Neighbourhood development project as a whole.


Enabling Works Planning Consent
Secures Overall Commitment to 10% BNG for Red Bank Neighbourhood
Tree Replacement, Ecology, and BNG Mitigation Strategy
Secures phases of development, assumptions on delivery to meet 10% BNG, and overall commitments to monitoring and verification
Enabling Works
(Phase 1)
City River Park & Development Platforms
(Phase 2)
River & Flood Alleviation Works
(Phase 3)
Red Bank Neighbourhood
(Phase 4)
Phase 1 Mitigation
Secures replacement habitat and 10% BNG for Phase 1 only if no future phases come forward
Phase Tree Replacement, Ecology, and BNG Mitigation Strategy
(With Phase 2 planning application)
Updates design & ecological assumptions for Phase 2
Phase Tree Replacement, Ecology, and BNG Mitigation Strategy
(With Phase 3 planning application)
Updates design & ecological assumptions for Phase 3
Phase Tree Replacement, Ecology, and BNG Mitigation Strategy
(With Phase 4 outline planning application)
Updates design & ecological assumptions for Phase 4 and secures overall ecological contribution to be delivered under the outline consent
Off-Site Mitigation
On approval of all Phase Tree Replacement, Ecology, and BNG Strategies for Phases 1 – 4 the ecological value of any off-site mitigation required to meet the overall 10% BNG will be provided. Final details of off-site provision and locations will be provided on completion of all 4 phases in the Completion Tree Replacement, Ecology, and BNG Mitigation Strategy
RMA Tree Replacement, Ecology, and BNG Mitigation Strategy
(With Phase 4 Plot Reserved Matters Applications (RMAs)
Updates each Plot's contribution to overall outline consent BNG commitment
Phase Verification Report
(Submitted prior to completion of Phase 1)
Validates conformity with Phase TREBNGM Strategy and provides any mitigation required to meet Phase commitment to overall 10% BNG
Phase Verification Report
(Submitted prior to completion of Phase 2)
Validates conformity with Phase TREBNGM Strategy and provides any mitigation required to meet Phase commitment to overall 10% BNG
Phase Verification Report
(Submitted prior to completion of Phase 3)
Validates conformity with Phase TREBNGM Strategy and provides any mitigation required to meet Phase commitment to overall 10% BNG
Phase Verification Report
(Submitted prior to first use of final Plot in Phase 4)
Validates conformity with Phase TREBNGM Strategy and provides any mitigation required to meet Phase commitment to overall 10% BNG
Completion Tree Replacement, Ecology, and BNG Mitigation Strategy
(On completion of all 4 phases)
Provides validation of overall 10% BNG provision for the Red Bank Neighbourhood and the location and extent of any off-site mitigation required.

9. Conclusion

9.1 This Tree Replacement, Ecology and Biodiversity Net Gain Mitigation Strategy has been prepared by Avison Young (AY) on behalf of Manchester City Council (MCC) (the Applicant). It is submitted in support of a full planning application proposing new green space and infrastructure works which benefit from £51.6m Government funding through the Homes Infrastructure Fund (HIF), to prepare the land at Red Bank for new strategic residential-led development. The proposals include the creation of development platforms, formation of a new spine road (Phase 1), and new utilities and services connections that will allow for future residential-led development (to be applied for in a future planning application), together with new and improved green infrastructure, including the revitalisation St Catherine's Wood as part of the City River Park at Red Bank, Victoria North, Manchester.

9.2 This is the second planning application submitted by the Applicant at the site, following the grant of planning permission (Ref: 132252/VO/2021) on 23 December 2021 for advanced enabling works including tree and vegetation removal, creation of a temporary haul road and demolition of the Creamline Dairies buildings in association with the future delivery of the residential masterplan by MCC and its Joint Venture (JV) Partner, Far East Consortium International Ltd (FEC).

9.3 The description of development for this full planning application is as follows:

> *"City Council Development for the creation of development platforms, including remediation and earthworks, and change in site levels, to allow delivery of future residential-led development at the Red Bank Neighbourhood, together with the construction of a new road and priority junction from Red Bank, new drainage infrastructure, utility and services connections and diversions, street works for new utilities including ducting up to the Queens Park substation, preparatory tree and shrub clearance, and demolition of certain existing structures, along with the creation of new and improved green infrastructure and landscaping including the improvements of St Catherine's Wood to form part of a City River Park, and other associated works."*

9.4 This planning application represents the next step in the delivery of the strategically important Victoria North project, which will deliver transformational regeneration on an unprecedented scale in Manchester and help to fulfil its potential as a truly innovative, sustainable and world-class city.

9.5 The Red Bank Neighbourhood forms one of the first phases of delivering the vision for Victoria North and comprises an area of approximately 20 hectares (ha) within the Lower Irk Valley, and will largely be delivered by the joint venture partnership (JV) between Manchester City Council and the Far East Consortium.

9.6 To unlock the full potential of the area, MCC has secured £51.6m of Government Funding through the Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) to deliver critical infrastructure and enabling works within this area. A key condition of the funding is that the spend availability period runs until March 2024.

9.7 The JV's proposals for the Red Bank Neighbourhood are envisaged as a single development project, including the creation of development platforms and associated infrastructure, the delivery of 4.5ha of new green infrastructure including the revitalisation of St Catherine's Wood as part of the City River Park, and the residential-led plot development. A series of planning applications will be submitted to MCC, as Local Planning Authority, for approval pursuant to the overall development project. This application is the second application to be submitted following the approval of the initial enabling works application in December 2021.

9.8 The intention for the wider Red Bank Neighbourhood (across the four planning applications / phases) is to build upon the existing ecological and visual qualities of the area, particularly along the river, the new City River Park, and key routes, to provide significant new opportunities for ecological enhancements, new tree planting, and public access.

9.9 The JV are committed to significant ecological and biodiversity improvements within the Red Bank Neighbourhood, and this needs to be read as a single development project. The initial enabling works planning consent has already secured the JV's commitment to an increase in Biodiversity Net Gain across the completed Red Bank Neighbourhood development of at least 10% in line with the Environmental Act, which will be secured, monitored and verified through each phase of the overall development project.

9.10 In summary, this planning application comprises a uniquely important planning application that will help unlock £51.6m of much needed infrastructure, over 5,500 new homes, and c. 5ha of the wider City River Park, alongside new public realm, permeability, and habitat creation. The delivery of 4.5ha of the City River Park as part of this current application, other new permanent public realm, and the creation of the development platforms for residential development are essential to creating the future Red Bank Neighbourhood and meeting the strict requirements and programme for spending the HIF money by March 2024. The application needs to be read in the context of the wider Red Bank Neighbourhood development project as a whole and will secure the significant commitments to ecological enhancements and Biodiversity Net Gain that will then be delivered across all phases of this new neighbourhood. We, therefore, respectfully request that planning permission is granted for this development.

Appendix I Biodiversity Net Gain Report

THE ENVIRONMENT PARTNERSHIP

RED BANK NEIGHBOURHOOD INFRASTRUCTURE WORKS

MANCHESTER

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT

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APPENDICES

Appendix A: Biodiversity Metric 3.0 (provided as a separate document)

Appendix B: Associated Plans

1.0 Introduction

1.1 The proposed Red Bank Neighbourhood project is a joint venture between Manchester City Council (MCC) and Far East Consortium (FEC) Northern Gateway Development Ltd. MCC has been successful in its bid to obtain £51.6m funding from the government's Housing Infrastructure Fund (HIF) to address a series of up-front infrastructure requirements including utilities, flood defence measures, green infrastructure, land remediation and site access to unlock areas for housing development. Conditions linked to funding means the scheme must be delivered by 2024.

1.2 The Development Project is coming forward in 4 planning applications:

- HIF Advance Enabling Works (referred to hereafter as 'Application 1'). – Demolition of Creamline diary, tree and shrub clearance and construction of a temporary haul road.
- HIF Infrastructure Works (referred to hereafter as 'Application 2') –Creation of development platforms, demolition of sections of existing River Wall, remediation and earthworks, construction of Plateau Avenue and junction from Red Bank, creation of SUDs, utility and service connections and diversions and provision of green infrastructure including creation of green links and first phase of the new City River Park.
- HIF Flood Defence Works (referred to hereafter as 'Application 3') – flood mitigation and defence works along the River Irk to reduce the area within flood zone 3.
- Red Bank Neighbourhood (referred to hereafter as 'Application 4') approximately 4,000 new dwellings including a number of landmark buildings at height. Retail and commercial floorspace, open and amenity space, access and associated infrastructure.

1.3 A detailed planning application for the HIF Advanced Enabling Works (Application 1) was submitted and approved by MCC in December 2021 (Application Ref: 132252/VO/2021).

1.4 After consultation with Greater Manchester Ecology Unit (GMEU) a holistic Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Strategy was developed and submitted to support Application 1 with consideration to all four planning applications.

1.5 A BNG assessment was undertaken for the overall Landscape Masterplan, with each planning application (Applications 1, 2 & 4) contributing to the Masterplan commensurate with its impact. At the time of submission, all river impacts were restricted to Application 3 and so it was assumed the river unts and 10m buffer habitat units would be calculated separately under Application 3 and was not included in the initial assessment.

1.6 Given detailed Landscape Masterplans for some of the later applications were still emerging at the time of submission for Application 1, calculations were based on a reasonable worst-case scenario for both habitat losses and habitat creation/enhancement, which will accrue from all the proposed developments together. Detailed Landscape proposals for the Red Bank Neighbourhood will be developed further as each application progresses.

1.7 This report supports a detailed planning application for the Red Bank Neighbourhood Infrastructure Works (Application 2) for an Initial Development Area of the wider Victoria North scheme (previously known as Manchester Northern Gateway).

1.8 The existing BNG assessment, submitted with Application 1, has been updated to reflect the Masterplan changes as the detailed Landscape Proposals for Application 2 have emerged. This BNG calculation now includes river units as there are unavoidable impacts on the River Irk associated with Application 2. Impacts on the River Irk associated with Application 3 are still excluded from this assessment and river units will be updated at the time of the planning application.

1.9 The site is located in central Manchester and centred on grid reference SJ 84674 99639 and Figure 1 below shows the Red Bank Neighbourhood area. The site is located between Red Bank, to the north, and Dantzic Street, to the south and includes an area known as ‘St. Catherine’s Wood’. The River Irk flows through the site from east to west.

1.10 This assessment has been produced to determine the cumulative impact of all three planning applications on the biodiversity of the site and is based upon the overall site wide Landscape Masterplan.

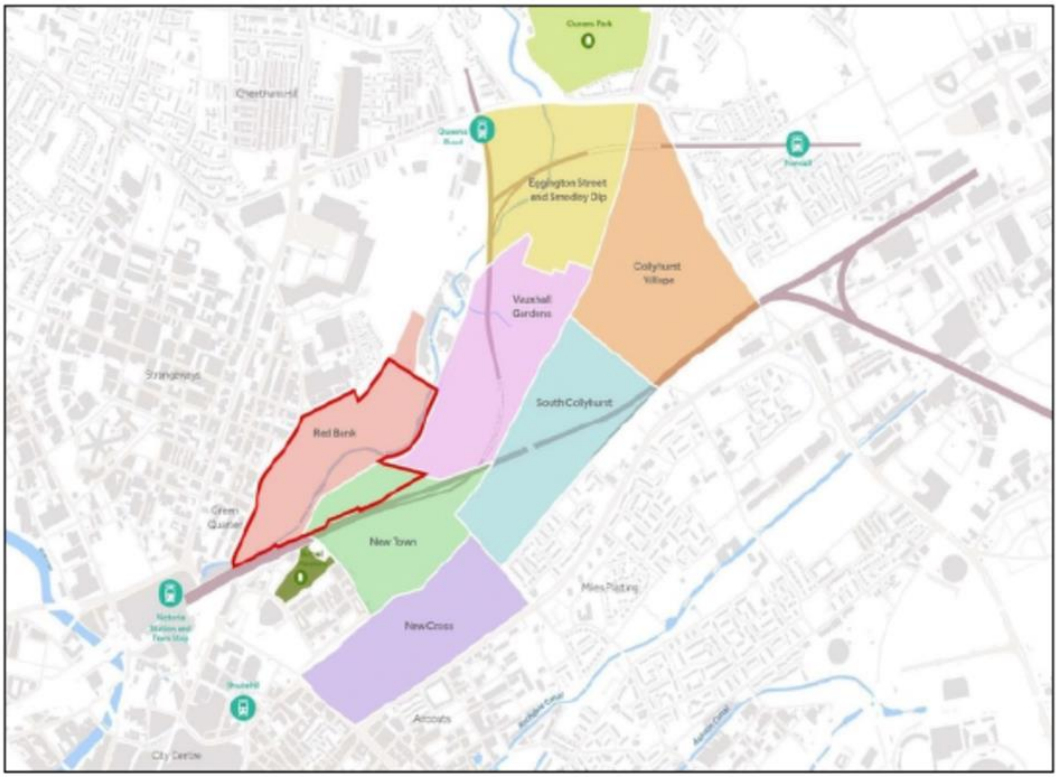

Figure 1: Red Bank Neighbourhood Area.

Source: Northern Gateway SRF (MCC, 2019), Figure 16 (Northern Gateway neighbourhoods)

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG)

1.11 Paragraph 174(d) of the revised NPPF (2021) states that "Planning polices and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by… minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity…" The Government 25-year Environment Plan states that government will "embed environmental net gain principle for development".

1.12 In July 2019, the government issued revised planning practice guidance (NPPG) with details on how planners can implement "net environmental gain" requirements when assessing development proposals, including new advice on protecting wildlife.

1.13 Revised guidance recently published by the government says that net gain in planning describes an approach to development that leaves the natural environment in a measurably better state than it was beforehand. Net gain is an umbrella term for both biodiversity net gain and wider environmental net gain. It states: "Planning conditions or obligations can, in appropriate circumstances, be used to require that a planning permission provides for works that will measurably increase biodiversity".

1.14 In terms of measuring net gain, the guidance states that using a metric is a pragmatic way to calculate the impact of a development and the net gain that can be achieved. It goes on to state that "tools such as the Defra biodiversity metric can be used to assess whether a biodiversity net gain outcome is expected to be achieved".

1.15 This report details the ecological surveys undertaken to establish a baseline position, and what the anticipated impacts are. In order to inform the biodiversity net gain assessment Biodiversity Metric 3.0 has been used.

1.16 There is no current local policy in place in Manchester City Council requiring a specific percentage of net gain, however Greater Manchester Combined Authority has published guidance for BNG assessments in the context of Greater Manchester (February 2021). This guidance states that the minimum level of Biodiversity Net Gain is considered to be achieved when the biodiversity units for the habitats impacted by the development is increased by 10% or more after the development.

1.17 Additionally, the Environment Act includes a mandatory minimum of 10% net gain for most development sites. As of the 9th November 2021 the Environment Act has been granted Royal Assent and will become mandatory once secondary legislation has been passed.

2.0 Methods

2.1 The existing habitat information was gathered for the site by TEP in 2021. Full details are provided within the following technical reports:

- Desk based assessment, TEP, January 2022 (ref. 9082.006);
- Ecological Assessment, TEP, January 2022 (ref. 9082.007).

Survey Methods

Desk Based Assessment

2.2 A search of existing information relating to protected species, habitats of conservation priority and designated sites was undertaken in November 2021. Sources included Greater Manchester Ecology Unit, Natural England and MAGIC Map websites. The search extended 2km from the site boundary for non-statutory designated sites, protected species and priority species and habitats. Information regarding statutory protected sites within the wider area (up to 10km) was also collected. Relevant local planning policies were also identified to inform the assessment.

Phase 1 Habitat Survey

2.3 An Extended Phase 1 habitat survey of the sites and surrounding area was carried out by TEP Principal Ecologist Damian Young (Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC) Level 4) and Stephanie Davies (Field Identification Skills Certificate (FISC) Level 3) on the 22nd and 29th March 2021.

2.4 The survey was carried out in accordance with the Phase 1 Habitat Survey assessment methods (JNCC, 2010) and the Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (CIEEM, 2017). Habitat types were mapped and dominant vegetation species noted. Any invasive species were also recorded.

Condition Assessment

2.5 Condition assessment surveys of the habitats present pre-development were undertaken at the same time as the Phase 1 habitat survey by Damian Young. The condition assessments were originally undertaken using the guidance presented in Biodiversity Metric 2.0 - Technical Supplement[1]. Following release of Biodiversity Metric 3.0 in July 2021, a desk-based exercise, using existing field notes and photographic evidence, was undertaken to update the condition assessments based on the updated condition assessment criteria presented in the Biodiversity Metric 3.0 - Technical Supplement[2].

2.6 Due to the relatively simple nature of the habitats within the sites, there are not considered to be any limitations with this translation to the Biodiversity Metric 3.0 condition assessment.

[1] Ian Crosher , Susannah Gold , Max Heaver , Matt Heydon , Lauren Moore , Stephen Panks , Sarah Scott, Dave Stone & Nick White. 2019. The Biodiversity Metric 2.0: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity value: technical supplement (Beta version, July 2019). Natural England

[2] Stephen Panks A, Nick White A, Amanda Newsome A, Jack Potter A, Matt Heydon A, Edward Mayhew A, Maria Alvarez A, Trudy Russell A, Sarah J. Scott B, Max Heaver C, Sarah H. Scott C, Jo Treweek D, Bill Butcher E and Dave Stone A 2021. Biodiversity metric 3.0: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity – Technical Supplement. Natural England.

BNG Assessment

2.7 The Site has been assessed using Biodiversity Metric 3.0 in line with the user guide[3] and technical supplement provided.

2.8 Biodiversity Metric 3.0 is a tool designed to enable developers to measure the change in biodiversity across their site. It determines if there will be net gain, net loss or no net loss of biodiversity following completion of their development and any subsequent management regime.

2.9 In order to calculate the change in biodiversity across the site a site survey is undertaken by a suitably qualified ecologist to determine the habitats present on site, their location, size, and condition. This information is then digitised and the resulting information fed into Biodiversity Metric 3.0.

2.10 The principles of biodiversity net gain as set out in the Biodiversity Net Gain Good Practice Guidelines[4] have been considered throughout this process as listed below:

1. Apply the mitigation hierarchy;
2. Avoid losing biodiversity that cannot be offset by gains elsewhere;
3. Be inclusive and equitable;
4. Address risks;
5. Make a measurable net gain contribution;
6. Achieve the best outcomes for biodiversity;
7. Be additional;
8. Create a net gain legacy;
9. Optimise sustainability;
10. Be transparent.

2.11 Phase 1 habitats were converted to UK Habitat classification codes[5] with reference to the UK Hab conversions provided in the 'Technical Data' button in the calculation tool of Biodiversity Metric 3.0, the UK Habitat Classification - Habitat Definitions[6] and the UK Habitat Classification Field Key[7].

2.12 Strategic significance was determined through a thorough desktop review of local planning policy and other relevant documentation. The desk-based assessment provides full details of local policy and legislation covering the site. This includes biodiversity policies and the policies map within Manchester's Local Development Framework Core Strategy Development Plan (July 2012).

[3] Stephen Panks A, Nick White A, Amanda Newsome A, Jack Potter A, Matt Heydon A, Edward Mayhew A, Maria Alvarez A, Trudy Russell A, Sarah J. Scott B, Max Heaver C, Sarah H. Scott C, Jo Treweek D, Bill Butcher E and Dave Stone A 2021..Biodiversity metric 3.0: Auditing and accounting for biodiversity – User Guide. Natural England.

[4] CIEEM, IEMA & CIRIA (2019). Biodiversity Net Gain. Good Practice Principles for Development. A Practical Guide;

[5] UK Habitat Classification: ukhab – UK Habitat Classification (Accessed 22/03/21)

[6] Butcher, B., Carey, P., Edmonds, R., Norton, L. and Treweek, J. (2020). UK Habitat Classification - Habitat Definitions V1.1

[7] UK Hab Field Key V2.1 Sep2020 (Accessed 27/09/21)

2.13 Post development calculations have been based on assessment of the Overall Landscape Masterplan for Application 1, 2 and 4. Detailed Landscape proposals for the Red Bank neighbourhood will be developed further as each subsequent application (Application 3-4) progresses.

Limitations

2.14 The survey was undertaken outside of the recommended season to undertake Phase 1 habitat surveys (April and September inclusive) and a precautionary approach was taken when undertaking the Phase 1 and condition assessments. This was not considered a significant constraint, however, as since the initial habitat survey a number of species-specific ecological surveys have been undertaken on site during the optimal period. The site has been walked over and any significant variation to the baseline has been determined.

3.0 Baseline Conditions

Important Ecological Features

3.1 No statutory or non-statutory designated sites are located within or adjacent to the site boundaries.

3.2 The closest internationally designated site is Rochdale Canal Special Area of Conservation (SAC) which lies 3.1km north east of the site.

3.3 The closest nationally designated site is Rochdale Canal Site of Special Scientific Interest (SSSI) which lies 3.1km north east of the site.

3.4 The closest locally statutory designated site is Boggart Hole Clough Local Nature Reserve (LNR) which lies 1.6km north of the site.

3.5 The closest locally non-statutory designated site is Reservoirs at Harpurhey Site of Biological Interest (SBI) which lies 0.8km north west of the site.

3.6 The following notable habitats, including habitats of principal importance under S41 of the NERC Act 2006 (S41) and those covered under the Local Biodiversity Action plan (LBAP) are present within 500m of the site:

- Open mosaic habitat on previously developed land (S41)
- Deciduous woodland (S41, LBAP)
- Statutory main river (S41, LBAP)

3.7 No irreplaceable habitats are present within or adjacent to the sites.

3.8 The woodland on site is considered to be semi-natural woodland, however does not meet the criteria to qualify as S41 habitat of principal importance 'Lowland Mixed Deciduous Woodland' due to the lack of species diversity in the canopy and ground flora.

3.9 The hardstanding area with ephemeral growth was identified on MAGIC Map as Priority Habitat 'Open Mosaic Habitat on Previously Developed Land' (OMHPDL). This habitat does not meet the criteria to qualify as OMHPDL as, while the area has loose bare substrate and is more than 0.25ha, the early successional communities recorded do not reflect those within the criterion described by JNCC.

3.10 The River Irk, while an undoubtedly important landscape feature, is unlikely to qualify as a S41 habitat of principal importance. The section of the River Irk which falls within the site boundary is more than 2.5km from its source and has been significantly modified virtually throughout, with aquatic and marginal species typically rare and predominantly associated with localised areas where silt or mud has accumulated alongside the river. The water quality appears to be generally poor with nothing to suggest a significant species diversity.

3.11 The site and adjacent land are allocated as 'H3 North Manchester' within Manchester's Local Development Framework Core Strategy development Plan (2012). Manchester's vision for identified areas of 'H3 North Manchester' is to provide a net gain of 11,840 residential dwellings in the area. This policy does not solely target biodiversity and nature improvement.

3.12 Based on the above, strategic significance for relevant habitats has been assessed as "low" for all relevant baseline habitats within the site and they have been awarded as being "not in local strategy/no local strategy".

3.13 The woodland within the site is not allocated under local policy for biodiversity purposes as a Local Site or within strategic ecological corridors. Despite this, deciduous woodlands are listed as Greater Manchester Biodiversity Action Plan habitats and given the location of this woodland in a heavily urbanised area the strategic significance for relevant habitats has been assessed as "medium" for all relevant baseline habitats within the site and they have been awarded as being "location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy".

On-Site Baseline

3.14 The site predominantly comprises semi-natural broad-leaved woodland, broad-leaved plantation woodland, areas of hardstanding, buildings, ephemeral growth over hardstanding, dense scrub, bare ground and running water (River Irk).

3.15 Table 1 provides a breakdown of the habitats present on the sites as Phase 1 habitats and the conversion to UK Habitat Classification habitats. For the purposes of this assessment habitat parcel areas of the same type, condition and strategic significance have been combined. A detailed breakdown of how the conditions have been determined is included in the Biodiversity Metrics for each site (Appendix A).

Table 1: On-Site Baseline Habitat Details

Phase 1 Habitat	UK Habitat Classification	Area (ha/km)	Condition Assessment Used	Associated condition	Comments
Semi-natural broad-leaved woodland	Other woodland; broadleaved	2.9ha	Woodland	Poor	Areas of poor semi-natural broadleaved woodland. The woodland is a naturally regenerated silver birch homogenous woodland with a high percentage of Himalayan balsam present.
Broad-leaved plantation woodland	Other woodland; broadleaved	1.95ha	Woodland	Poor	An area of broad-leaved plantation woodland known as St. Catherine's Wood.
Buildings & Hardstanding	Developed land; sealed surface	10.23ha	N/A- no assessment required	N/A	Several buildings are present within the site both north and south of Dantzic Street. Hardstanding associated with the building footprints is also present.
Ephemeral over hardstanding	Ruderal/ephemeral	3.09ha	Sparsely vegetated land	Poor	Areas of Ephemeral over hardstanding/ bare ground is present in the northeast of the site and southeast of the site, respectively.
Dense scrub	Bramble Scrub	0.84ha	Scrub	Poor	Areas of dense scrub are present north and south of the River Irk.
Bracken	Bracken	0.13ha	Grassland	Poor	An area of continuous bracken is present north of the River Irk.
Bare ground	Artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface	0.85ha	N/A- no assessment required	N/A	Large areas of bare ground is present south of Dantzic Street.
Running water	Developed land; sealed surface	0.55ha	N/A- no assessment required	N/A	Habitat of no value has been assigned to the area of difference between the linear river required and the area of running water mapped on Phase 1.
Running water	Other rivers & streams	0.7km	River condition assessment	Poor	River Irk running through the site.

4.0 Post-Development Habitats

On-Site Proposed Design

4.1 Table 2 below provides a breakdown of the habitats which will be created on site following the completion of the residential led neighbourhood. The proposed habitats within the residential led areas are currently evolving and the exact nature will be confirmed with the submission of the subsequent applications (Application 3-4).

Table 2: Proposed habitat creation on-site

UK Habitat Classification	Area (ha)	Minimum Target Condition	Comments
Developed land; sealed surface	12.68ha	N/A - Other	This habitat includes the build development area. These are of no ecological value and not subject to a condition assessment in the metric.
Allotments	0.12ha	Poor	This habitat includes 'Productive gardens' in the overall Landscape Plan. Based on a reasonable worst-case scenario, it is assumed this habitat can reach Poor condition.
Vegetated garden	0.80ha	Poor	This habitat assumes 50% of the area denoted to 'Gardens' within the overall Landscape Plan, is softscape. Condition is always poor for this habitat type.
Ground level planters	0.16ha	Poor	This habitat includes 'Planted beds' in the overall Landscape Plan. Condition is always poor for this habitat type.
Extensive green roof	1.20ha	Moderate	This habitat assumes 60% of denoted roof space will be green roof. Based on a reasonable worst-case scenario, it is assumed this habitat can reach Moderate condition.
Brown roof	0.78ha	Poor	This habitat assumes 40% of denoted roof space will be brown roof. Based on a reasonable worst-case scenario, it is assumed this habitat can reach Poor condition.
SuDs	0.15ha	Poor	This habitat includes Sustainable Urban Drainage systems within the overall Landscape Plan. Based on a reasonable worst-case scenario, it is assumed this habitat can reach Poor condition.
Introduced shrub	0.59ha	Poor	This habitat includes 'Tree Pits- grass & wildflower mix' and Ornamental planting in in Landscape General Arrangement HIF Delivery Plan (VNIF-PLA-ZZ-YY-DR-L-1011) & in overall Landscape Plan. This habitat can only reach Poor Condition.

UK Habitat Classification	Area (ha)	Minimum Target Condition	Comments
Other neutral grassland	0.60ha	Moderate	This habitat includes 'aquatic marginal vegetation' in overall Landscape Plan. Based on a reasonable worst-case scenario, it is assumed this habitat could reach Moderate condition.
Other woodland: Broadleaved	1.36ha	Poor	This habitat includes all newly planted 'woodland mix' within the overall Landscape Plan. Based on a reasonable worst-case scenario, it is assumed this habitat can reach Poor condition.
Urban tree	0.25ha	Poor	549 street trees are proposed within the Overall Landscape Masterplan. Based on the worst-case scenario, it is assumed these are all 'small' street trees and can reach a Poor condition.
Rain garden	0.03ha	Moderate	This habitat includes the Ornamental Rain garden in Landscape General Arrangement HIF Delivery Plan (VNIF-PLA-ZZ-YY-DR-L-1011). It is assumed this habitat can reach Moderate condition.
Native species rich hedgerow	0.05km	Moderate	Hedgerow planting along Lowry Steps. It is assumed this habitat can reach at least Moderate condition.

4.2 The areas of the site which are to be retained are detailed in Table 3 below.

Table 3: Proposed habitat retained on-site

Proposed retention	Area (ha/km)	Comments
Other rivers & streams	0.325km	Approximately 325m of the River Irk will be retained without impact.
Developed; sealed land	0.55ha	The area of difference between the linear river required and the area of running water mapped on Phase 1.

4.3 The areas of the site which are to be enhanced are detailed in Table 4 below.

Table 4: Proposed habitat enhancement on site

Proposed enhancement	Area (ha)	Comments
Other woodland; Broadleaved	1.37ha	An area of St. Catherine's Wood will be retained and enhanced. A habitat management plan will be produced and implemented. It is considered that the condition can be improved from Poor to Moderate with effective management.

Proposed enhancement	Area (ha)	Comments
Other woodland; Broadleaved	0.15ha	An area of semi-natural woodland will be retained and enhanced. A habitat management plan will be produced and implemented. It is considered that the condition can be improved from Poor to Moderate with effective management.
Other rivers & streams	0.375km	Approximately 375m of the River Irk will be retained and enhanced. It is considered that the condition can be improved from Poor to Fairly Poor.

Summary of Changes

4.4 The existing BNG assessment, submitted with Application 1 (Application Ref: 132252/VO/2021), has been updated to support Application 2. This section seeks to summarise the changes in the BNG assessment since Application 1.

- River units have been included as impacts on the River Irk are now proposed as part of Application 2. The BNG assessment still excludes details of Application 3 as proposals are not yet sufficiently developed.
- Initially, the River Irk and a 10m buffer was excluded from the assessment as they were to be included within the assessment for Application 3. However, the River Irk and the 10m buffer have now been included within this updated BNG assessment due to the unavoidable impacts on the River Irk, associated with Application 2 only.
- Total area of 'developed; sealed surface' in the baseline has increased due to the increased red line boundary of Application 2. The red line boundary now includes Red Bank and the extent of Street Works for HV Ring Mains to Queens park Primary Substation.
- The area of semi-natural woodland to be retained is now proposed to be enhanced as part of the habitat and management plan.
- A hedgerow, adjacent to the Lowry steps, is now proposed within the HIF General Arrangement Plan (VNIF-PLA-ZZ-YYY-DR-L-1011).
- 'Reedbeds' were proposed in the initial Landscape Plan submitted with Application 1. However, the detailed planting schedule of 'aquatic marginal vegetation' for Application 2 has emerged and 'Reedbeds' is not consistent with the planting schedule in Planting & Habitats Plan (VNIF-PLA-ZZ-YYY-DR-L-1008). 'Other neutral grassland' has been used within the metric for areas of 'aquatic marginal planting' as there is no other suitable alternative.
- 'Tree pits' in overall Landscape Plan have been changed from 'other neutral grassland' to 'introduced shrub' as the planting schedule suggested in Planting & Habitats Plan (VNIF-PLA-ZZ-YYY-DR-L-1008) is more aligned with this habitat category.
- The area known as 'Red Bank Terraces' was previously planted with a woodland mix in the overall Landscape Plan. This area is now planted with 'ornamental planting' and therefore has been changed from 'other neutral grassland' to 'introduced shrub' as the planting mix suggested in Planting

& Habitats Plan (VNIF-PLA-ZZ-YYY-DR-L-1008) is more aligned with this habitat category.

5.0 BNG Metric

5.1 A biodiversity assessment has been undertaken, using the Biodiversity Metric 3.0 calculator to quantify the change in biodiversity units for all three planning application areas (Application 1, 2 & 4) between the pre-development baseline and post-development remaining and created habitats. The river units will be calculated separately under Application 3 and has not been included in this assessment.

5.2 The calculator considers the area (ha), distinctiveness (Low, Medium, High) and condition (Poor, Moderate, High) of all habitats on site pre-development, and the area of each habitat to be retained, enhanced, and lost post-development, based on the site proposals.

Summary of Biodiversity Impact

5.3 Detailed results of the assessment for the site are provided in Biodiversity Metric 3.0 in Appendix A. The summary results, taken from the metric, are provided in Table 5.

Table 5: Summary of Biodiversity Metric Results

On-site baseline	Habitat units	32.84
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	River units	1.58
On-site post intervention	Habitat units	30.96
	Hedgerow units	0.33
	River units	1.84
On-site net % change	**Habitat units**	**-5.74%**
	Hedgerow units	**+100.00%**
	River units	**+16.71%**

5.4 The commitment to BNG for the Red Bank Neighbourhood is set at a minimum of 10% net gain. This is currently estimated the provision of an additional 5.2 habitat units off site will be required to achieve this.

6.0 Implementation, Management and Monitoring

6.1 This BNG assessment has been undertaken on the overall Landscape Masterplan with consideration to all three planning applications (Applications 1, 2 & 4).

6.2 Given detailed Landscape Masterplans for some of the later applications are still emerging at the time of submission for Application 2, it is envisaged that Landscape plans may be subject to further alterations. However, calculations have been based on a worst-case scenario for habitat losses which will accrue from all the proposed developments together. As such, it is not envisaged that habitat loss over what has already been accounted for in this calculation will occur.

6.3 This report and associated biodiversity metric will be updated as each application is brought forward, based on the associated detailed landscape plan. It is anticipated that given a worst-case assessment has currently been used, that all future metric calculations will provide a better overall result.

6.4 Offsite compensation will be required to meet the minimum requirement of 10% Biodiversity Net Gain.

6.5 The precise location of the off site compensation area will be determined in a future application. Initially, the off site area would seek to be located within the Northern Gateway Strategic Regeneration Framework (SRF) area. Figure 2 shows MCC's Freehold interest within the SRF area where opportunities for off site compensation could be located. Compensation outside of the SRF may be required.

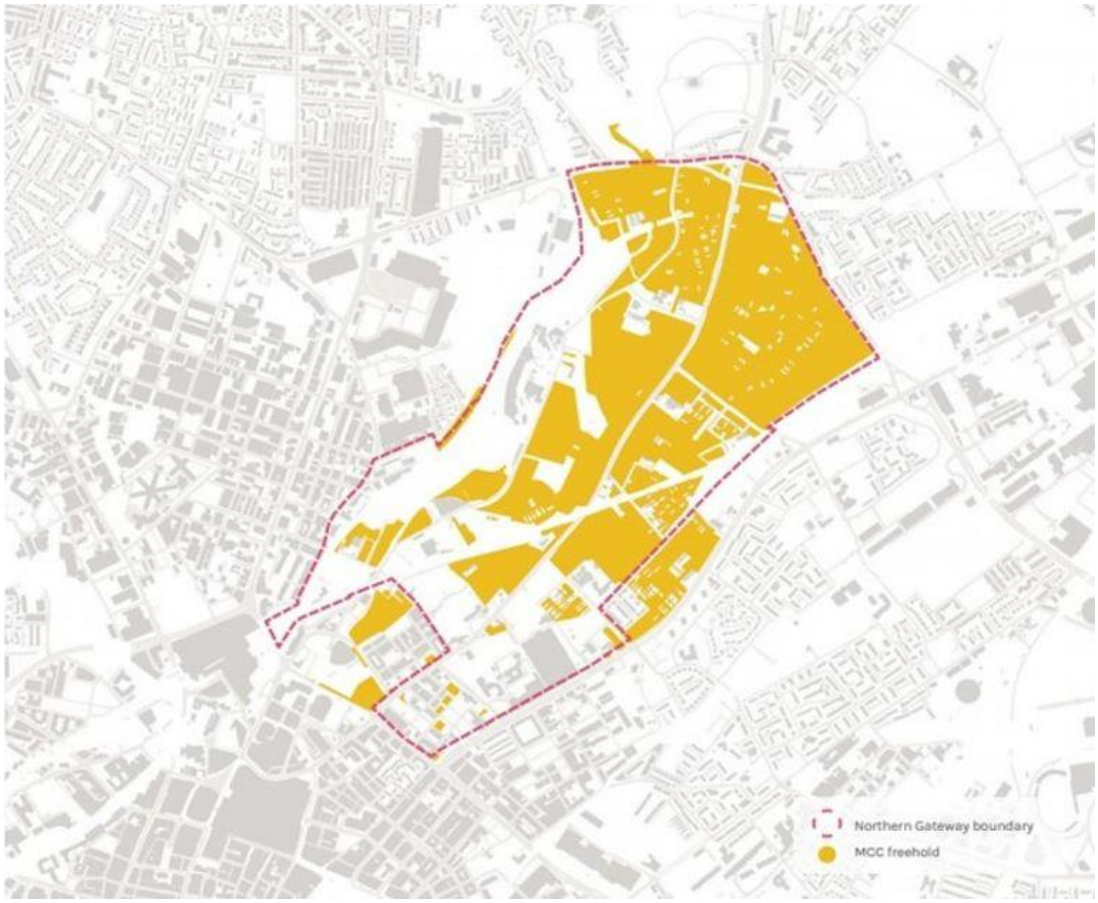

Figure 2: Northern Gateway SRF boundary

6.6 Given the majority of habitat loss on site and the majority of deficit in the 'Trading summary' in the Metric is attributed to loss of woodland and scrub, compensation would seek to create or enhance areas of woodland initially within the SRF area to adequately offset the habitat loss on site and provide +10% net gain. If compensation cannot be wholly provided within the SRF area, additional areas will be located elsewhere within the Local Planning Authority, with a first preference for sites within three miles of the application site.

6.7 A detailed 30 year management and monitoring plan will be conditioned for the site and any offsite compensation areas and will include specific management prescriptions which aim to achieve the specific target condition for each habitat, based on the Biodiversity Metric 3.0 condition criteria.

6.8 The plan will include the methods and reporting processes to be used for monitoring the success of habitat enhancement and creation along with options for remedial intervention where needed if a habitat is not achieving its targeted condition. Roles and responsibilities, along with financial and legal requirements will also be included.

6.9 It is anticipated that a carefully worded condition can be granted, where in the event that the redevelopment of the residential lead development does not take place within a certain period of time of the completion of the HIF Infrastructure Works, the land within the red line boundary for Application 2 will be restored in line with a strategy submitted for approval in writing by the City Council. The strategy will outline measures in order to ensure no biodiversity net loss and the restoration of the site shall take place in accordance with timescale agreed in writing with the City Council.

APPENDIX A: Biodiversity Metric 3.0 (provided as a separate document)

APPENDIX B: Associated Plans

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