BJ Collins
PROTECTED SPECIES SURVEYORS

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN COVER REPORT

PROPOSED ARTIFICIAL PITCHES
MANCHESTER SOFTBALL LEAGUE
WILLENHALL ROAD
WYTHENSHAWE
MANCHESTER

A report to:

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Report to:	Surfacing Standards Limited
Report Title:	Biodiversity Net Gain Cover Report for the four Proposed Artificial Pitches

Survey Site/Job:	Manchester Softball League, Willenhall Road, Wythenshawe, Manchester. M23 0BD.
OS Grid Reference:	SJ 81706 91111

Survey Date(s):	14 July 2025
Surveyed by:	Barry J Collins MSc MCIEEM

Architect/Agent:	Surfacing Standards Ltd
Planning Reference:	N/A

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Final Version	26/03/2026	B J Collins MSc MCIEEM	B J Collins MSc MCIEEM

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The evidence which we have prepared and provided is true and has been prepared and provided in accordance with the guidance of The Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct.

RELIANCE - The report describes the conditions and ecological features on the site (and possibly its environs) at the time of survey and that this may (is likely to) change over time. Reliance upon the findings of this report should be determined in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management guidance on the longevity of ecological surveys, see Advice Note (April 2019) *On the Lifespan of Ecological Reports and Surveys* CIEEM.

This specifies that after a period of 18 months from the date of the last relevant site survey, a professional ecologist will need to undertake a site visit and may also need to update desk study information (effectively updating the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal) to provide confidence that the ecological situation and status has not altered.

As a result, and given the transient nature of wildlife and habitats this report cannot be used in a formal "letter of reliance" beyond the period specified above.

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SUMMARY

This report has been prepared by BJ Collins – Protected Species Surveyors Ltd as a covering report, describing the calculations and results of the supporting Statutory Metric Calculation Tool for an area of the Wythenshawe Sports Ground, where a complex of four new artificial turf pitches are proposed.

The development plan involves the installation of four new, artificial turf pitches and associated hardstanding, to be constructed over areas of modified grassland and two mature urban trees.

An ecological walkover and condition assessment was undertaken on the 14 July 2025, to inform the production of the Metric. The Metric calculation tool has identified the following:

- The total area of Wythenshawe Sports Ground affected is equal to 2.64ha, the Total Habitat Units (Ecological Baseline) is equal to 5.41.
- The four Artificial Sports Pitches and their associated Hardstanding and Pathways will provide 0 habitat units to the development.
- In order to compensate the lost grassland habitat and the two urban trees in the baseline, the developer will need to acquire suitable habitat credits from an off-site provider, one of the Habitat Banks.
- Overall, there is a 100% loss of Habitat Units, totalling a unit deficit of 5.95 which will have to be sourced from the Habitat Bank if a 10% biodiversity net gain is to be delivered.

Figure A below is taken from the Headline Results Tab of the associated metric, showing the required habitat units in order to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain.

Note that the metric shows a trading rule error/break, this is simply because the 10% net gain has not been delivered. The information to address that rule break can only be provided by the relevant Habitat Bank documentation.

FINAL RESULTS

Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	-5.41
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	-100.00%
	Hedgerow units	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?		No - Check Trading Summaries ▲

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Habitat units	10.00%	5.41	5.95	5.95
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

Input errors/rule breaks present in metric ▲

Figure A: The Final Results taken from the "Headline Results" tab of the Statutory Metric.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 Background to Commission

This report has been prepared by B J Collins Protected Species Surveyors Limited for Surfacing Standards Limited. It provides the commentary supporting the Statutory Metric Calculation Tool, submitted alongside this document, for the purpose of a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment for the proposed new artificial pitch facility at the Wythenshawe Sportsground. The playing field is located off of Willenhall Road in Wythenshawe, Manchester. M23 0BD. The proposed pitches will be centred upon the 10 figure Ordnance Survey grid reference of SJ 81706 91111.

The development plan involves the installation of a new, artificial turf pitch sports complex, comprising of four adjacent, full-size artificial football pitches with associated hardstanding.

1.2 Purpose of this Report

The purpose of this report is to assess the ecological impact of the proposed development with regards to Biodiversity Net Gain, to review the overall percentage change from the Ecological Baseline and further to provide recommendations to deliver biodiversity net gain, in line with the legislation for a requirement of at least 10% gain in biodiversity units.

1.3 Legislation

Under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (As inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021), Developers must deliver a Biodiversity Net Gain of 10%. This means a development will result in more or better-quality natural habitat than there was before development.

1.4 Site Description

The main habitat to be affected by the development proposal is an area of modified grassland, comprising an area of intensively managed amenity grassland, having recently been treated with herbicide. The proposal also includes the removal of two semimature and mature urban trees.



Figure 1: The survey area (outlined yellow), courtesy of Google Earth.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 Ecological Walkover and Condition Assessments

To inform the BNG calculations, a preliminary ecological appraisal and condition assessment was undertaken on the 14 July 2025.

This involved systematically walking over the site and classifying habitats, utilising the UK Habitat Classification survey methodology (UKHab Ltd, 2023), on the basis of vegetation, into one of approximately 47 habitat types (Level 4) alongside a list of secondary codes which give information on the environment and management of those habitats.

Each habitat is then subject to a Statutory Metric condition assessment[1], downloaded from the Gov.uk website, which uses a series of criteria representing key physical characteristics of each habitat type to assess whether the habitats are in favourable condition.

Habitats were assessed as either poor, moderate or good condition.

2.2 Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation

The "Biodiversity Metric – QGIS Template" was downloaded from the Natural England publications webpage[2] to accurately map the findings of the habitat survey, and to map the proposed development utilising plans provided by the client.

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool was downloaded from the Gov.uk webpage[3] to calculate the total habitat units for the Baseline and Proposed sites, and the Total Unit Net Change overall.

2.3 Minimum Mapping Units

The minimum mappable area used is equal to or greater than 25 m^2, and the minimum mappable length of a linear feature is equal to or greater than 5 m.

2.4 Limitations

The surveyor did not encounter any significant constraints upon the survey effort.

2.5 Personnel

The survey took place on 14 July 2025 by Mr. Barry Collins MSc MCIEEM), a botanist qualified to FISc level 3, with over 25 years of experience in the ecological sector.

The QGIS mapping and subsequent BNG calculations were completed by Mr Patrick A Collins BSc (Hons), who has completed formal training for the Statutory Metric and the use of QGIS.

[1] Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_Condition_Assessments-_Feb24 – Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides

[2] https://publications.naturalengland.org.uk/publication/6049804846366720

[3] The_Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_Calculation_Tool_-_Macro_enabled_02.24 – Available at https://www.gov.uk/government/publications/statutory-biodiversity-metric-tools-and-guides

3. ECOLOGICAL WALKOVER AND CONDITION ASSESSMENTS

3.1.1 The Habitats – Onsite

3.1.1.1 Modified grassland (g4 (823, 106))

This is one of only two physically affected habitats, and by far the most dominant habitat feature that will be impacted by the construction of the artificial pitches.

It is the principal habitat affected and comprises of a limited range of grasses and herbs entirely down to intensive management; the herbs present on site were showing signs of treatment with selective herbicide at the time of the survey. The sward is dominated by grasses, and the most abundant being Perennial rye-grass (*Lolium perenne*). Other grasses include for Annual meadow-grass (*Poa annua*), Cock's-foot grass (*Dactylis glomerata*) and Common bent (*Agrostis capillaris*).

The few remnant herbs showing signs of herbicide treatment included for white clover (*Trifolium repens*), Greater plantain (*Plantago major*) and Daisy (*Bellis perennis*).

The 1m sample areas from a transect walk diagonally across the affected area of amenity grassland provided no greater than between two and three species per sample plot, and very few bare areas, presumably due to the season within which the survey was undertaken.

The condition assessment provided overleaf indicates that whilst it passes between 4 to 6 criteria it does not pass the essential criteria and therefore is categorised as of "poor" condition under the BNG assessment.



Photograph 1: typical view of the affected modified grassland

The following condition assessment was completed for areas of modified grassland, sheet 5a:

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)			
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type			
Grassland - Modified grassland			
On-site or off-site, site name and location	ON -SITE – Wythenshawe sportsground	**Survey date and Surveyor name**	14 July 2025 Barry J Collins MSc MCIEEM
Limitations (if applicable)	None	**Survey reference**	na
Grid reference	SJ 81706 91111	**Habitat parcel reference**	Pitch
Habitat Description			
ukhab – UK Habitat Classification			

	Condition Assessment Criteria		**Notes (such as justification)**
	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m^2 present, including at least 2 forbs (these may include those listed in Footnote 1). **Note - this criterion is essential for achieving Moderate or Good condition.**	FAIL	The 1m sample areas from a transect walk diagonally across the affected area of amenity grassland (10 no.) provided no greater than between 2 species per sample plot
	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	FAIL	The amenity grassland is mown on a regular basis to an even height
	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble *Rubus fruticosus* agg. may be present).	PASS	The area passes this criteria, as typically does all amenity grassland due to the intensive management routine
	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	PASS	Physical damage form sporting activities was not visible with very few bare areas. It is likely that this changes across the winter sporting season
	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens)[2].	PASS	Bare ground was localised and rare
	Cover of bracken *Pteridium aquilinum* is less than 20%.	PASS	The area passes this criteria, as typically does all amenity grassland
	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species[3] (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA[4]).	PASS	No invasive species were recorded, typically amenity grassland does not support INNs

Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)	NO
Number of criteria passed	5

Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	**Condition Assessment Score**	**Score Achieved ×/✓**
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)	
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate (2)	
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)	Poor (1)	POOR

3.1.1.2 Urban tree (200)

There are two individual trees on the playing field which will be removed as part of the proposal. These are both Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*). The largest of these, to the south-east of the proposal, Tree T1 measures 780 mm dbh and therefore is a "large" tree but in poor condition. The second is located to the south-west corner of the proposal, this is Tree T47, at 490 mm dbh this tree is categorised as being of "medium-size" and of moderate condition.



Photograph 6 – the two affected urban trees

On-site or off-site, site name and location	ON -SITE - Wythenshawe Sports Ground	**Survey date and Surveyor name**	14 July 2025 Barry J Collins MSc MCIEEM
		Survey reference (if relating to a wider survey)	SJ 81706 91111
Limitations (if applicable)	None		

Habitat parcel reference									
T1	T47								
Grid reference									
S	J	8	1	7	0	9	1	1	1

	Condition Assessment Criteria	**Criterion passed (Yes or No)**										**Notes (such as justification)**
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	Yes	Yes									
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	No	Yes									Tree 1 is suffering from general decline
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature)[1].	Yes	No									
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by human activities (such as vandalism, herbicide or detrimental agricultural activity). And there is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	No	No									The health of T1 is declining due to root compaction from car parking. T47 has been coppiced
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	No	No									
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	No	Yes									
	Number of criteria passed	2	3									

Condition Assessment Result (out of 6 criteria)	**Condition Assessment Score**	**Score Achieved ×/✓**									
Passes 5 or 6 criteria	Good (3)										
Passes 3 or 4 criteria	Moderate (2)		3								
Passes 2 or fewer criteria	Poor (1)	2									

The above condition assessment has been prepared using statutory condition assessment sheet 9b.

4. A-1 - ON-SITE HABITAT BASELINE

The habitats located on-site were mapped using QGIS and entered into the Statutory Metric submitted alongside this report. Figure 2 below displays the layout of the baseline.

The total site area is equal to 2.59 hectares, and with the Modified Grassland the principal habitat in poor condition totals 5.13 habitat units which will be lost. The development will also remove 2 urban trees in moderate and poor condition, providing 0.28 habitat units. As a result, the combined Habitat Units (Ecological Baseline) lost is equal to 5.41 Habitat Units. See tab "A-1 On-site Habitat Baseline" on the Statutory Metric for more information.



Figure 2: The baseline habitat map of the Wythenshawe Sports Ground artificial pitches proposal.

5. A-2 - ON-SITE HABITAT CREATION (POST-INTERVENTION)

The proposed development will retain no habitat, all the redline area will be lost to the development.

The installation of the artificial sports pitch and the associated hardstanding surrounds and pathways are equal to 2.59 hectares within the red line area. The habitat being created provides **0 habitat units**, meaning that all habitat units will be lost to the development.

In order to provide compensation for the loss of habitat on site, the proposal is to deliver biodiversity net gain through an off-site habitat bank, via the purchase of suitable habitat units, 5.95 units will be required.

The proposed habitats on-site are shown in Figure 3 below.



Figure 3: The proposed habitats on-site after the installation of the Artificial Sports Pitch.

6. CONCLUSION

The Metric calculation tool produced for this development project has identified the following:

- The total area of Wythenshawe Sports Ground affected is equal to 2.64ha, the Total Habitat Units (Ecological Baseline) is equal to 5.41.
- The four Artificial Sports Pitches and their associated Hardstanding and Pathways will provide 0 habitat units to the development.
- In order to compensate the lost grassland habitat and the two urban trees in the baseline, the developer will need to acquire suitable habitat credits from an off-site provider, one of the habitat banks.
- Overall, there is a 100% loss of Habitat Units, totalling a unit deficit of 5.95 which will have to be sourced from the Habitat Bank.

Figure 5 below is taken from the Headline Results Tab of the associated metric, showing the required habitat units in order to deliver 10% Biodiversity Net Gain.

Note that the metric shows a trading rule error/break, this is simply because the 10% net gain has not been delivered. The information to address that rule break can only be provided by the relevant habitat bank documentation.

On-site baseline	*Habitat units*	5.41	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site net change (units & percentage)	*Habitat units*	-5.41	-100.00%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%

FINAL RESULTS

Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	-5.41
	Hedgerow units	0.00
	Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	*Habitat units*	-100.00%
	Hedgerow units	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?		No - Check Trading Summaries ▲

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Habitat units	10.00%	5.41	5.95	5.95
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

Input errors/rule breaks present in metric ▲

Figure 4: The Final Results taken from the "Headline Results" tab of the Statutory Metric.

7. REFERENCES

Butcher, B., Carey, P., Edmonds, R., Norton, L. and Treweek, J. (2020). *The UK Habitat Classification User Manual Version 1.1* at http://www.ukhab.org/

Panks S (2024) Wythenshawe_Statutory_Metric_V1_24.03.26, Biodiversity Net Gain Calculation Tool