

Biodiversity Gain Plan (BNG Plan)

1. Site context and baseline

The site sits within a dense residential area of Brooklands, Manchester, where biodiversity is typically limited to scattered trees, amenity grass, and private gardens. Manchester's Biodiversity Strategy emphasises the role of urban sites in supporting wildlife and contributing to the city's wider ecological network, even at small scales .

A baseline habitat map should record:

- Existing buildings and hardstanding (very low distinctiveness).
- Any existing trees, hedges, or shrub beds (low–moderate distinctiveness depending on species and condition).
- Any grassed areas (likely amenity grassland, low distinctiveness).

Each parcel must be assessed for condition and strategic significance using the statutory Biodiversity Metric and Greater Manchester's Local Nature Recovery Strategy guidance, which requires assigning strategic significance to each habitat parcel at baseline and post-intervention .

2. Proposed development and habitat opportunities

The extension of 8 flats will increase building footprint, but the scheme can deliver net gain through:

- **Native shrub and perennial planting** in courtyards and boundaries.
- **Courtyard tree planting** where feasible.
- **Wildlife features:** bat bricks, swift bricks, bee hotels, hedgehog gaps in fencing.

These habitats score higher than ornamental planting and can deliver meaningful uplift even on a constrained site.

3. Biodiversity Metric calculation

The BNG Plan must:

- Quantify baseline habitat units (likely low).
- Quantify post-development habitat units for each created/enhanced habitat.
- Demonstrate at least **10% net gain**.
- Show how losses are compensated by on-site creation or, if needed, off-site units

4. Delivery and legal security

BNG gains must be secured for **a minimum of 30 years**, with responsibilities for creation, management, and monitoring clearly assigned, as required by DEFRA guidance on Habitat Management & Monitoring Plans (HMMPs) .

Habitat Management & Monitoring Plan (HMMP)

1. Roles and responsibilities

HMMPs must identify:

- The developer (responsible for initial habitat creation).
- The management body (e.g., management company or housing association).
- A competent ecologist (for monitoring and reporting), consistent with BS 8683:2021 expectations for competency .

2. Habitat creation specifications

Green roofs

- 80–120 mm substrate depth.
- Wildflower/grass mix suited to shallow substrates.
- Installation of log piles or stone features for invertebrates where safe

Native shrub and perennial beds

- Mix of berry-bearing shrubs (e.g., hawthorn, dogwood) and pollinator-friendly perennials.
- Mulched beds to reduce maintenance.

Tree planting

- Small urban-tolerant species (e.g., rowan, field maple).
- Root barriers and soil cells where needed.

3. Management prescriptions (Years 1–30)

Shrub/perennial beds

- Year 1–2: watering, weed control.
- Year 3–30: annual pruning, mulch renewal, replacement of dead plants.

Trees

- Year 1–5: watering, stake adjustment, formative pruning.
- Year 6–30: biennial health checks.

4. Monitoring and reporting

DEFRA guidance requires monitoring to demonstrate that habitats reach and maintain target condition over the 30-year period . A typical schedule:

- **Years 1, 3, 5:** Full condition assessment by a qualified ecologist.
- **Every 5 years thereafter:** Repeat condition assessment.
- Reports submitted to the local planning authority summarising:
- Habitat condition scores.

- Any failures and corrective actions.
- Photographic evidence and updated habitat maps.

5. Adaptive management

If habitats fail to reach target condition, the HMMP must include:

- Trigger points (e.g.,
- Corrective actions (replanting, soil amendments, drainage improvements).
- Updated monitoring frequency until targets are met.

Summary of expected BNG outcomes

- Baseline units: low due to urban hardstanding.
- Long-term security: 30-year HMMP with clear responsibilities and monitoring.