



FIELDODOLOGY WORKS LTD
RURAL GRANTS AND ECOLOGY EXPERTS

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN REPORT

The Coach House, Knowsley View,

Knowsley Road, Ainsworth, Bolton, BL2 5PT

REPORT CONTROL SHEET

Project Name: *The Coach House, Knowsley View, Knowsley Road, Ainsworth, Bolton
BL2 5PT, BNG Assessment*

Project Reference:

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	27.10.25	Comments from GMEU	JW	JW	JW

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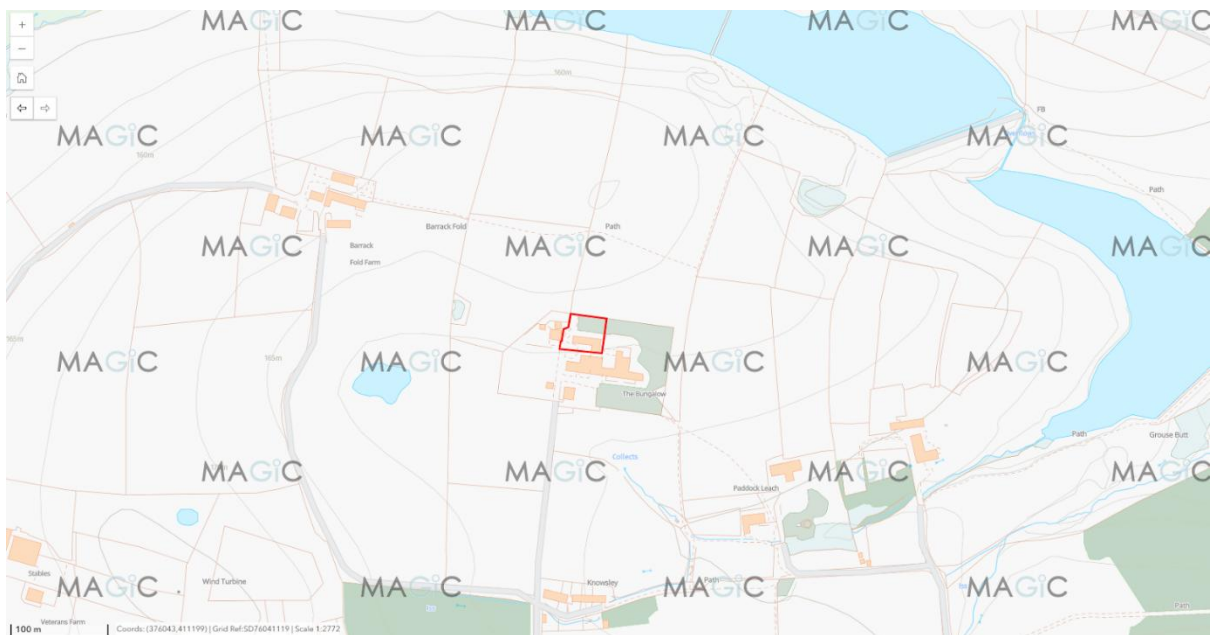
1. INTRODUCTION

1.1. SCOPE & PURPOSE

- 1.1.1. Fieldology Works Ltd was commissioned by Mr K Stopforth to prepare a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment for land at The Coach House, Ainsworth.
- 1.1.2. The author of this report is Julie Wickington BSc (Hons), MA (Hons) at Fieldology Works Ltd. Julie is highly experienced at managing schemes and has produced many ecological reports to inform planning management plans.
- 1.1.3. This report has been written broadly following the Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Audit Templates (CIEEM, 2021).

1.2. LOCATION

- 1.2.1. Please refer to Figure 1.1 for the site location.



1.3. OBJECTIVES

- 1.3.1. The report has been produced to document the methods, results and conclusions of a BNG Assessment undertaken based on the proposed development for the site to fulfil the following:
- Ensure that the mitigation hierarchy has been applied;
 - Identify the baseline habitats present and provide a condition assessment;
 - Identify the post development habitats on site, assess the possible target condition and provide an indication of the likely importance of those habitats;
 - Calculate the overall change in biodiversity score from pre- post development;
 - Provide design recommendations to maximise potential net gain achievable; and,
 - Provide an indication of likely outcomes and indicative cost as required.

1.4. PLANNING CONTEXT

- 1.4.1. Paragraph 174(d) of the revised National Planning Policy Framework (2021) states that “Planning policies, and decisions should contribute to and enhance the natural and local environment by... minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity...”
- 1.4.2. The Government 25-year Environment Plan states that the government will “embed environmental net gain principle for development.”

2. METHODS

2.1. EXISTING HABITAT (BASELINE)

- 2.1.1. A site walkover and condition assessment of the site was undertaken by Julie, at Fieldology Works Ltd on 21st March 2025. The On-site Baseline Plan (Ref: KS001) illustrates the habitats to be incorporated into the proposal.
- 2.1.2. The methods were based on the standard methodology as detailed by UK HAB Methodology to assess the habitats present.

2.2. PLANNING LAYOUT (POST-DEVELOPMENT)

- 2.2.1. The On-Site Creation and Enhancement Plan (Ref: KS002) illustrates the habitats to be incorporated within the site.

2.3. THE STATUTORY BIODIVERSITY METRIC

- 2.3.1. The BNG calculation was undertaken utilising The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool (2024) (full calculation available in Appendix). The calculation was performed by a technically competent and experienced ecologist as detailed in British Standard BS8683 – Suitably qualified person –definition in BS8683:2020.

- 2.3.2. The Biodiversity Metric uses habitat features as a proxy measure for capturing the value and importance of nature. The metric takes into account the size, ecological condition, location and proximity to nearby ‘connecting’ features. The metric enables assessments to be made of the present and forecast future biodiversity value of a site.
- 2.3.3. To minimise the impacts of this proposed development and to produce a 10% net gain, the mandatory mitigation hierarchy has been adopted. This sequence is as follows:
- On-Site units - Delivered through habitat creation/enhancement via landscaping/green infrastructure.
 - Off-site units - Delivered off-site through habitat creation/enhancement, including via habitat banks, with public and private landowners.
 - Statutory Credits - Delivered through large-scale habitat projects delivering high-value habitats which can also provide long-term nature-based solutions.

This development can provide the biodiversity net gain On-Site.

2.4. HABITAT SCORING

- 2.4.1. The Biodiversity Statutory Metric supplies reference documents and user guides in which to accurately evaluate and assess the different habitats on site. The methodology for the baseline and post development calculations are demonstrated in the following sections.
- 2.4.2. Baseline Units - To assess the quality of a habitat and therefore calculate the units scored the Biodiversity Statutory Metric utilises three scoring factors as detailed below.
- 2.4.3. Condition - The condition of a habitat is assessed utilising the Condition Sheets provided for each habitat type. These list positive indicators for each habitat and indicate how many of these indicators need to be present to meet certain thresholds of condition. These condition sheets can be found in the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 habitat condition assessment sheets with instructions tool Technical (Natural England Joint Publication, 2021).
- 2.4.4. Distinctiveness - The distinctiveness of each habitat (area and linear) is automatically assigned by the tool, based upon national records of the occurrence and rarity of each habitat (Biodiversity Statutory Metric).
- 2.4.5. Strategic Significance - The idea of strategic significance works at a landscape scale. It gives additional unit value to habitats that are in preferred locations for biodiversity and other environmental objectives. Strategic significance utilises published local plans and objectives to identify local priorities for targeting biodiversity and nature improvement, such Nature Recovery Areas, local biodiversity plans, National Character Area objectives and green infrastructure strategies. Upon review of the statutory and non-statutory designations using (Magic Maps), the site has been considered as “Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy”. See Appendix for Magic Maps 500m Buffer Zone).

2.4.6. Post Development Units - Additional factors are implemented when assessing post development habitats.

- Difficulty of Creation/Enhancement;
- Temporal Risk “Time to target condition”; and,
- Spatial Risk (when offsite mitigation is necessary).

2.5. LIMITATIONS OF ASSESSMENT

- 2.5.1. Whilst every effort has been made to provide a comprehensive description of the site, no investigation could ensure the complete characterisation and prediction of the natural environment. The conclusions and recommendations detailed in this report are based upon the site redline and blueline boundaries (as appropriate) and the development proposals as outlined by the client at the time of writing. Should there be any changes to the site redline boundary or development proposals at a later stage, this assessment should be reviewed to determine whether any amendments or additional survey work is required.
- 2.5.2. Habitat areas (predevelopment) have been measured using online mapping, and therefore will not be completely accurate.
- 2.5.3. The Site Layout Plan used for post development areas is indicative in nature and does not constitute a detailed landscape plan.

3. BASELINE CONDITIONS

3.1. CONDITION ASSESSMENT

- 3.1.1. The following section summarises the condition assessment based on the condition sheets present within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric.

VEGETATED GARDEN

- 3.1.2. Approximately 0.1158 ha of vegetated garden is located within the site. A condition assessment for the metric is not applicable (refer to the metric for a record of species – placed in the Low Grassland tab).

3.1.3. LINE OF TREES

This habitat supports 5 no. trees, relatively evenly positioned, at the northern Site boundary. Notably, w33 Line of trees is rooted within the red-line (development) boundary and is proposed for retention. The habitat qualifies as w33 Line of trees due to its characteristics of “>20m long and >5m wide at the base. The canopy base is >2m in height and there is open habitat on each side.” (UKHab Ltd 2023).

The 5 no. trees are: x1 medium Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*), x2 medium Horse-chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*), x1 small Sycamore (*Acer pseudoplatanus*) and x1 small Silver birch (*Betula pendula*). The Silver birch (*Betula pendula*) specimen is clad with Ivy (*Hedera helix*) and understorey vegetation is u1, 827 Built-up areas and gardens, garden. Single, small self-seeded Holly (*Ilex aquifolium*) and Hawthorn (*Crataegus monogyna*) are rooted between Ash (*Fraxinus excelsior*) and Horse Chestnut (*Aesculus hippocastanum*) trees. All specimens appear to be in good health with no evidence of damage and/or disease (Moderate Condition)

As this feature will be retained it has not been included in the metric.

URBAN LAND

- 3.1.3 The access to the site is from the highway (Knowsley Road) a tarmacked pathway. A total of 0.0363 ha of sealed surface and existing buildings is present on site.

SUMMARY

- 3.1.4. Table 3.1 summarises the baseline habitats, condition assessment and area size.

Table 3.1 Habitat Type and Condition Assessment (pre-development)

HABITAT TYPE	CONDITION ASSESSMENT	AREA SIZE (HA)
Vegetated Garden	N/A	0.1158
Urban Land	N/A	0.0363

3.2. RETAINED AND ENHANCED HABITATS

- 3.2.1. A total area of 0.1013ha of vegetated garden and 0.0326 ha of medium sized trees are proposed to be retained.
- 3.2.2. In the urban areas 0.0363 Ha will be retained.

3.3. LOST HABITATS

- 3.3.1. 0.0145 ha of vegetated garden will be lost in this project.

3.4. PRE- DEVELOPMENT HABITAT BASELINE

- 3.4.1. Please refer to Table 3.4 summarising the Habitat Baseline for the calculation, demonstrating habitats to be retained, enhanced and/or lost.

Table 3.2 Habitat Baseline

	On site baseline	Retained	Enhanced	Lost
Habitat (Area) Units	0.49	0.46	0	0.03

4. HABITAT CREATION

4.1. INTRODUCTION

Please refer to the On-Site Habitat Creation and Enhancement Plan (KS002) for full details of the proposed development and habitats.

The following sections detail the condition assessments that the habitats will be required to meet to achieve their target condition. This can be achieved through the production of a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan with a commitment to maintain the BNG for at least 30 years. The proposed on-site enhancements are not classed as ‘significant on-site enhancements’ and it is deemed that a legal agreement is not required for this proposal. However, the LPS may have require a legal agreement for wider planning policy reasons.

RURAL TREE

A total of 7 new Rural Trees are proposed to be planted within the scheme. These could comprise Sessile Oak with other native broadleaves such as Pedunculate Oak, Holly, Birch and Crab Apple, the trees will be “small sized” to cover a total area of 0.0163 ha. They will target a “Moderate” habitat condition by seeking to meet the following condition criteria:

- The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).
- 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.
- Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.
- More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.

5. SUMMARY

5.1. Metric

This report and the DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric submitted have demonstrated that the proposed habitat creation create a net gain of biodiversity within the site of +11.81% in habitat units and an increase in Hedgerow Units of 0%. The trading rules have been satisfied.

Figure 5.1 On site net % changed

FINAL RESULTS		
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	0.06
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	<i>Habitat units</i>	11.81%
	<i>Hedgerow units</i>	0.00%
	<i>Watercourse units</i>	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓	

5.2 NEXT STEPS

To achieve the BNG planting of 7 trees is required. It is recommended that a Section 106 is not entered into due to the scale of the project and a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan is provided.

6. BIBLIOGRAPHY

- CIEEM (2021) Biodiversity Net Gain Report and Audit Templates.
- DEFRA (2024) The Biodiversity Metric 4: Auditing and Accounting for Biodiversity: Metric
- DEFRA (2024) The Biodiversity Metric 4: Auditing and Accounting for Biodiversity. Condition Assessment Sheets (Excel Format)
- [Biodiversity Net Gain - Strategic Significance \(arcgis.com\)](https://arcgis.com)

7. APPENDICES

File references for attachments

Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_Condition_Assessments_-_Feb24 KS

Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_Condition_Assessments_-_Feb24 KS

The_Statutory_Biodiversity_Metric_Calculation_Tool_-_Macro_disabled_tool_KS.xlsx

On Site Baseline Ref KS001

On Site Creation & Enhancement Ref KS002

Magic Maps 500m Buffer Zone.

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