



BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT

**LAND AT MOUNT PLEASANT,
SIMISTER, GREATER MANCHESTER**

AUGUST 2025

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Land at Mount Pleasant, Simister, Greater Manchester

A report for

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EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PENNINE Ecological were commissioned to undertake an ecological assessment of land at Mount Pleasant, Mount Pleasant, Simister, Bury, Greater Manchester. The assessment is required to support an application for the construction of seven residential dwellings and associated landscaping.

The assessment includes the use of Natural England's/Defra's Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool (version 1.0.4 published in July 2025) to determine whether the proposals would result in a biodiversity net gain or loss. The assessment was completed using standard methodologies and there was no deviation from the recognised guidance.

The baseline habitats recorded on site are of very low to medium distinctiveness and have a baseline habitat value of 2.18 habitat units. The total number of habitat units lost (before mitigation) is 1.35.

The proposed habitats include developed land, vegetated garden, other neutral grassland and willow scrub. The remaining area of the site will be subject to habitat creation and/or enhancement.

The current landscape proposals result in a 19.2% net gain, equivalent to 0.42 habitat units. An overall gain of hedgerows has been achieved, equating to a 102.79% gain, or 0.6 hedgerow units.

The habitat trading rules have been satisfied.

	Habitat Units	Habitat Units % Change	Hedgerow Units	Hedgerow Unit % Change
On-site Baseline	2.18	-	0.58	-
On-site Post-intervention	1.18	-	1.18	-
On-site Net Change	0.42	19.2%	0.6	102.79%
Trading Rules Satisfied	Yes			

The current proposals demonstrate a 10% Biodiversity Net Gain with regards habitats, and hedgerows.

In order for the planning application to be approved, the client will need to provide a Habitat Management and Maintenance Plan, along with supporting figures, which will

provide the details of the habitat proposals, planting specifications and future monitoring and management requirements. It is recommended that a HMMP is provided as a planning conditions to any granted application.

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

PENNINE Ecological were commissioned to undertake an ecological assessment of land at Mount Pleasant, Simister, Greater Manchester (hereafter referred to as 'the site'). Appendix A, Figure 1 provides the site's red line application boundary and the results of the UKHabs survey. Figure 2, illustrates the site proposals.

To date, a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) has been undertaken to support an application for the construction of seven new residential dwellings (PENNINE ecological, 2025).

1.2 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT AND BNG BACKGROUND

As of 12th February 2024 Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) became mandatory (unless exempt) 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 BNG of 10% unless otherwise agreed with the relevant Local Authority.

The PEA identified the requirement for a BNG assessment at this site due to the anticipated loss of low and medium distinctiveness habitats. The BNG assessment has been undertaken to determine whether or not the proposal demonstrates an overall net gain or loss of biodiversity, in line with the current National Planning Policy Framework, 2021.

Through site selection and layout, applicants should avoid or reduce any negative impact on biodiversity. They must deliver at least 10% BNG (unless agreed otherwise with the Local Authority), as measured by the statutory biodiversity metric. There are three ways an applicant can achieve BNG.

1. They can create biodiversity on-site (within the red line boundary of a proposal site).
2. If the applicant cannot achieve all of their BNG on-site, they can deliver through a mixture of on-site and off-site. Applicants can either make off-site biodiversity gains on their own land outside the proposal site, or buy off-site biodiversity units on the market.

3. If the applicant cannot achieve on or off-site BNG, they must buy statutory biodiversity credits from the government. This should be a last resort. The government will use the revenue to invest in habitat creation in England.

1.3 SITE LOCATION

Access to the site is via the avenue of Mount Pleasant, Simister, Bury, Greater Manchester, England, M25 2SD, grid reference SD 83585 05884. The M62 and M60 motorways are approx. 470m and 530m north and west respectively. The village of Simister is to the north of the site. The landscape to the south of the site is dominated by improved grassland fields.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 UK HABITAT CLASSIFICATION BASELINE SURVEY

For a BNG assessment to be completed a UK Habitat Classification (UKHabs) Survey (UKHab Ltd, 2023) has to be undertaken of the site's baseline habitats. The UKHabs survey, and habitat condition assessments were undertaken by Stuart Macpherson and Luke Pilling in July 2025. This BNG assessment has also been undertaken by Stuart Macpherson (refer to Section 2.3).

2.2 BIODIVERSITY METRIC CALCULATOR TOOL

All habitats recorded within the footprint of the site during the field survey were included in the Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool (version 1.0.4 published in July 2025). The statutory biodiversity metric is a way of measuring biodiversity value for the purposes of BNG.

This metric calculation has been undertaken following the standard methodology (Natural England, 2024) and in accordance with CIEEM good practice guidelines (CIEEM, 2019).

2.3 SURVEYOR EXPERIENCE

The site surveyor and BNG assessor is Stuart Macpherson who has over 15 years' experience in ecological survey and evaluation. Stuart is an Associate member of CIEEM and key skills relevant to this assessment include the following.

- Over 15 years completing Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey / UKHabs Survey on both small planning applications and Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs).
- Over three years' experience undertaking and reviewing BNG assessments for small and large planning applications.

2.4 LIMITATIONS

The field survey was undertaken in July 2025 which is within the optimal habitat survey window. There are considered to be no constraints to this assessment.

3. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT RESULTS

The following section details the baseline habitats, along with habitats to be created, enhanced and retained within the site (where applicable).

3.1 ON-SITE HABITAT BASELINE RESULTS

The habitats recorded on site were of the following distinctiveness’;

- Medium – Other neutral grassland, willow scrub, and bramble scrub.
- Low – Tall forbs.
- Very low – Artificial unvegetated; unsealed surface.

In total, the baseline habitats surveyed have a total habitat value of 2.3 habitat units.

A summary of the baseline habitat information is shown in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3-1: Summary of the Baseline Habitats and Habitat Value

Broad Habitat	Habitat Type	Habitat Area (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Total Habitat Units (Ecological Baseline)	Area Retained – ha / units	Area Enhanced – ha / units	Habitat Area (ha) Lost	Units Lost (before mitigation)
Urban	Artificial unvegetated, unsealed surface	0.1079	V.Low	N/A - Other	0.00			0.11	0.11
Grassland	Other neutral grassland	0.154	Medium	Moderate	1.42		0.0806 / 0.74	0.07	0.68
Sparsely vegetated land	Tall forbs	0.0785	Low	Moderate	0.35			0.08	0.35
Sparsely vegetated land	Tall forbs	0.0375	Low	Moderate	0.17			0.04	0.17
Heathland and shrub	Willow scrub	0.0377	Medium	Poor	0.17			0.04	0.17
Heathland and shrub	Bramble scrub	0.0195	Medium	Condition Assessment N/A	0.09		0.0195 / 0.09		
TOTAL					2.18		0.1 / 0.83	0.34	1.35

3.2 ON-SITE HABITAT CREATED AND ENHANCED RESULTS

The habitats to be created on site (Table 3.2) are of the following distinctiveness¹:

- Medium – Other neutral grassland and mixed scrub.

- Low – Vegetated garden.
- Very low; Developed land; sealed surface.

The total number of habitat units delivered is 1.52.

The habitats to be enhanced on site (Table 3.2) are of the following distinctiveness:

- Medium – Other neutral grassland and bramble scrub.

The total number of habitat units delivered is 1.08.

The habitats and their respective areas, distinctiveness, condition etc. are included in Table 3.2 below.

Table 3-2: Summary of the On-Site Habitat Creation and Habitat Value

Broad Habitat	Habitat	Habitat Area (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Habitat Units Delivered
Created Habitats					
Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	0.1539	V.Low	N/A - Other	0.00
Urban	Vegetated garden	0.0301	Low	Condition Assessment N/A	0.06
Grassland	Other neutral grassland	0.1355	Medium	Good	1.31
Heathland and shrub	Mixed scrub	0.02	Medium	Moderate	0.15
TOTAL		0.34			1.52
Enhanced Habitats					
Grassland	Other neutral grassland	0.0806	Medium	Moderate to Good	0.87

Broad Habitat	Habitat	Habitat Area (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Habitat Units Delivered
Heathland and shrub	Bramble to Mixed scrub	0.0195	Medium	n/a to Good	0.21
TOTAL		0.1			1.08

3.3 ON-SITE HEDGEROW BASELINE RESULTS

Hedgerows recorded on site included a line of trees and a native hedgerow, details of which are included in Table 3.3 below.

Table 3-1: Summary of the Baseline Hedgerows and Hedgerow Value

Habitat Type	Length (km)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Total Hedgerow Units (Ecological Baseline)	Length Retained – ha / units	Length Enhanced – ha / units	Length Lost (km)	Units Lost (before mitigation)
Line of trees	0.069	Low	Moderate	0.30	0.069 / 0.3			
Native hedgerow	0.061	Low	Moderate	0.28	0.061 / 0.28			
TOTAL	0.13			0.58	0.13 / 0.58			

3.4 ON-SITE HEDGEROW CREATION RESULTS

A summary of the hedgerows to be created on site are detailed below in Table 3.4.

Table 3-4: Summary of the On-Site Habitat Creation and Habitat Value

Habitat Type	Length (km)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Total Hedgerow Units Delivered
Species rich native hedgerow	0.078	Medium	Moderate	0.6
TOTAL	0.8			0.6

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 CONCLUSION AND BNG ASSESSMENT RESULTS

The following section summarises the Biodiversity Net Gain assessment results.

Baseline habitats of very low, low and medium distinctiveness were assessed as being present within the site in July 2025.

The proposal design has ensured the mitigation hierarchy has been followed. Consultation with Pennine ecological has been ongoing throughout the design stage to minimise impacts to biodiversity.

- Avoiding impacts on notable habitats: A large proportion of the site is not being developed and has been earmarked for inclusion within the Biodiversity Net Gain metric. There are inevitable losses to habitats on site but these have been limited to only the area required for the development of seven houses.
- Minimise impacts on site: As above. The site design has ensured a large area remains undeveloped and open to biodiversity improvement.
- Restoring habitats on site: The neutral grassland and bramble scrub on site will be improved with the correct management. An HMMP should be conditioned to illustrate the techniques to be implemented to achieve the net gains.

The current landscape proposals would generate a 19.2% habitat net gain and a 102.79% hedgerow net gain. The habitat trading rules have also been satisfied (see Tables 4.1 and 4.2 below).

Table 4-1: Summary of the Biodiversity Net Gain Results

	Habitat Units	Habitat Units % Change	Hedgerow Units	Hedgerow Unit % Change
On-site Baseline	2.18	-	0.58	-
On-site Post-intervention	1.18	-	1.18	-
On-site Net Change	0.42	19.2%	0.6	102.79%
Trading Rules Satisfied	Yes			

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Table 4-2: Extract of BNG Headline Results

On-site baseline	Area habitat units	2.18		
	Hedgerow units	0.58		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	2.60		
	Hedgerow units	1.18		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Area habitat units	0.42	19.20%	
	Hedgerow units	0.60	102.79%	
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%	
Off-site baseline	Area habitat units	0.00		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.00		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	Area habitat units	0.00	0.00%	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%	
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%	
Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.42		
	Hedgerow units	0.60		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Area habitat units	0.00		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.42		
	Hedgerow units	0.60		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Area habitat units	0.00		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	0.42		
	Hedgerow units	0.60		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Area habitat units	19.20%		
	Hedgerow units	102.79%		
	Watercourse units	0.00%		
Trading rules satisfied?		Yes ✓		
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Area habitat units	10.00%	2.18	2.40	0.00
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.58	0.64	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

5. BNG PROPOSALS

This report and supporting documentation provides the LPA with sufficient evidence that this proposal can achieve the required 10% net gain in line with local and national policies.

In order for the planning application to be approved, the client will need to provide a Habitat Management and Maintenance Plan (HMMP), along with supporting figures, which will provide the details of the habitat proposals, planting specifications and future monitoring and management requirements. The HMMP will cover areas shown in Appendix A, Figure 2.

It is recommended that a HMMP is provided as a planning conditions to any granted application.

REFERENCES

CIEEM (2019). *Biodiversity net gain. Good practice principles for development; a practical guide*. CIRIA publications

Natural England (2024). The Statutory Biodiversity Metric - User Guide. Last updated: July 2024

PENNINE ecological (2025). Preliminary Ecological Appraisal – Land at Mount Pleasant, Simister, Greater Manchester

UKHabs Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (at <https://www.ukhab.org>)

Appendix A - Figures

Figure 1: Baseline Habitats Map



Figure 2: Site proposals.

