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Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

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For: Portakabin Limited

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Contents

- 1. Introduction 4
 - 1.1 Brief4
 - 1.2 Proposed Development4
 - 1.3 Purpose of this Report4
- 2. Methodology 5
 - 2.1 Baseline Habitats5
 - 2.2 Biodiversity Units.....5
 - 2.3 Condition assessment.....5
 - 2.4 Metric Principles.....5
 - 2.5 Strategic Significance5
 - 2.6 Trading Rules.....5
- 3. Results..... 6
 - 3.1 On-Site Habitat Baseline.....6
 - 3.2 On-Site Habitat Creation.....6
 - 3.3 Headline Results7
- 4. Conclusion..... 8

Tables

- Table 1: Habitat Baseline6
- Table 2 : Onsite Habitat Creation6
- Table 3 : Headline Results.....7

Appendices

- References.....9
- Appendix A – Phase 1 Habitat Map 11



1. Introduction

1.1 Brief

Planning permission is being sought for the installation of one temporary single-storey cabins ('Portakabins') (the Proposed Development) onto an area of grassland/hardstanding at Elms Bank School, Ripon Avenue, Unsworth, Manchester, M45 8PJ (the Site). The local planning authority has requested that a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment be carried out at the Site prior to the commencement of the works. Portakabin Limited (the Client) is the contractor for the Site and have appointed Arthian Ltd (Arthian) to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment for the Proposed Development.

1.2 Proposed Development

The proposals include the installation of one single-storey modular school buildings and classrooms onto an area of amenity grassland and hardstanding, to increase capacity for the ongoing intake of pupils at the school. The Proposed Development is only temporary in nature and will only be present for 3 years, after which the pre-development habitats will be re-instated.

1.3 Purpose of this Report

This report has been produced to document whether the Proposed Development will result in a net gain or loss in biodiversity. This report is intended to be submitted as part of the planning application and complements the metric itself, which is included as an Excel spreadsheet.



2. Methodology

2.1 Baseline Habitats

The baseline habitats have been informed by the Phase 1 habitat survey undertaken by Arthian on the 30th June 2025. The pre-development baseline habitat areas were calculated using measurements from the Phase 1 habitat map and are shown in Appendix A.

2.2 Biodiversity Units

The statutory biodiversity metric calculation tool (hereafter referred to as the biodiversity metric tool) was used to calculate the change in biodiversity units and the overall percentage of gain / loss. The biodiversity metric tool has been provided as a separate Excel document and should be read in conjunction with this report.

2.3 Condition assessment

Each habitat was assigned a condition following guidance from the ‘Technical Supplement’ document which accompanies the Biodiversity Metric 4.0.

2.4 Metric Principles

The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (DEFRA, 2024) was used as guidance on how to use the biodiversity metric tool.

Section 3 within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide sets out rules and principles which should be followed the metric. This includes following good practice guidance, applying the mitigation hierarchy, avoiding loss of irreplaceable habitats, and created habitat delivering strategically important outcomes for nature conservation.

2.5 Strategic Significance

The strategic significance of the habitats was assessed by determining if the habitats are identified within published plans, strategies or policies which are relevant to the habitat’s location as well as Table 8 within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide was followed.

2.6 Trading Rules

The biodiversity metric tool sets minimum habitat creation and enhancement requirements to compensate for specific habitat losses (up to the point of no net loss). These requirements are based on habitat type and distinctiveness.



3. Results

3.1 On-Site Habitat Baseline

A summary of the baseline habitats and areas retained are presented in the table below.

Table 1: Habitat Baseline

Phase 1 Habitat	Metric Habitat Type	Area (ha)	Condition	Area Retained (ha)
Amenity grassland	Modified grassland	0.02	Poor	0.002
Hardstanding	Developed land; sealed surface	0.003	N/A	0
Total Area		0.023		0.002

A portion of the modified grassland area (0.018) and all the hardstanding (0.003) will be temporarily lost (c.3 years) due to the Proposed Development.

Both of the habitats being lost on Site have been deemed as being low strategic significance as they are not listed on the Local Nature Recovery Strategy for Greater Manchester (Authority 2025) or are in the Local Biodiversity Action Plan (BAP) or have any provisions within the local councils guidance for biodiversity.

3.2 On-Site Habitat Creation

A summary of the created habitats as part of the proposals is presented in the table below.

Table 2 : Onsite Habitat Creation

Post-development Habitat	Metric Habitat Type	Area (ha)	Condition	Delay in starting habitat creation (years)
Amenity grassland	Modified grassland	0.02	Poor	3
1 x small individual tree	Urban tree	0.0041	Moderate	3

The Proposed Development is temporary and is expected to be removed after three years, therefore the building itself has not been included as a habitat area within the metric. Most of the existing grassland will be lost to the temporary building being located on top of it, and the grassland will be reinstated once the building is removed. Therefore, within the metric the grassland has been included within the figures showing habitats then subsequently and created, with a three-year habitat creation delay. Whilst this area of grassland is not shown on the Post-Development Proposals, the area will encompass where the building is currently shown on the plan.

It is proposed to plant a single Common Oak (Quercus robur), sized at 12-14cm (Heavy Standard), with an approximate height of between 3-4m. The tree is to be planted into a suitable tree pit, approx. 750mm x 750mm wide and 750mm deep, with the base of the tree pit broken up to enable free drainage. Tree to be supported through the inclusion of 2no. softwood stakes approx. 1.5m in length with a third of the length below ground and suitable fasted to the tree to aid support. Exact tree location to be determined on site at time of planting, noting to avoid position of existing services and consider likely future tree growth. This will have a three-year habitat creation delay whilst the Proposed Development is in use.

Areas of existing amenity grassland are to be reinstated through the undertaking of reseedling with a suitable grass seed mix (e.g. Germinal 'Popular Hardwearing' mix), with a sowing rate and timeframe as determined by the supplier.

The grassland creation on site has been assigned as having low strategic significance they are not part of a Local Nature Recovery Strategy or have any provisions within the local council's guidance for biodiversity. However, the urban tree has been given high strategic significance as it is mentioned within the Local Nature Recovery Strategy.

3.3 Headline Results

The results demonstrate a +42.11% net gain for habitats, additionally the trading rules have been satisfied for low and very low distinctiveness habitats (same broad habitat or higher distinctiveness habitat required for modified grassland and co compensation required for developed land; sealed surface).

A summary of the headline results is presented in the table below. The full details can be found in the separate Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool (excel document).

Table 3 : Headline Results

On-site baseline	Habitat Units	0.04
On-site post-intervention	Habitat Units	0.06
On-site net change	Habitat Units	+0.02
FINAL RESULTS		
Total net % change	Habitat Units	+42.11
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes	



4. Conclusion

Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) is mandatory from 12th February 2024 for major developments and small sites from 2nd April 2024, unless exempt. Developers must now deliver a BNG of 10% using the biodiversity metric calculation tool. The requirement to deliver at least a 10% net gain applies to each type of habitat unit (habitat, hedgerow and watercourse). The Proposed Development will result in a Biodiversity Net Gain of 42.11% and the trading rules were satisfied. Therefore, the Proposed Development meets the National Planning Policy framework.

Given the nature of the development, it was not possible to avoid all habitat impacts by re-siting the development, however none of the habitats lost are of medium or higher distinctiveness or irreplaceable. As identified in the metric, the regeneration of the grassland, and the planting of one broad-leaved tree will achieve the minimum 10% net gain that is the legal requirement.

The legal minimum required for information to be submitted as part of the planning application for BNG has been met. In addition, a completed metric tool calculation has been submitted. The statutory framework for biodiversity net gain has been designed as a post-permission matter to ensure that the biodiversity gain objective of achieving at least a 10% gain in biodiversity value will be met for development granted planning permission. Therefore, it is proposed further matters relating to BNG are addressed through the planning condition including production of the Biodiversity Gain Plan and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (if required; if the proposals are determined to result in significant enhancements).



References

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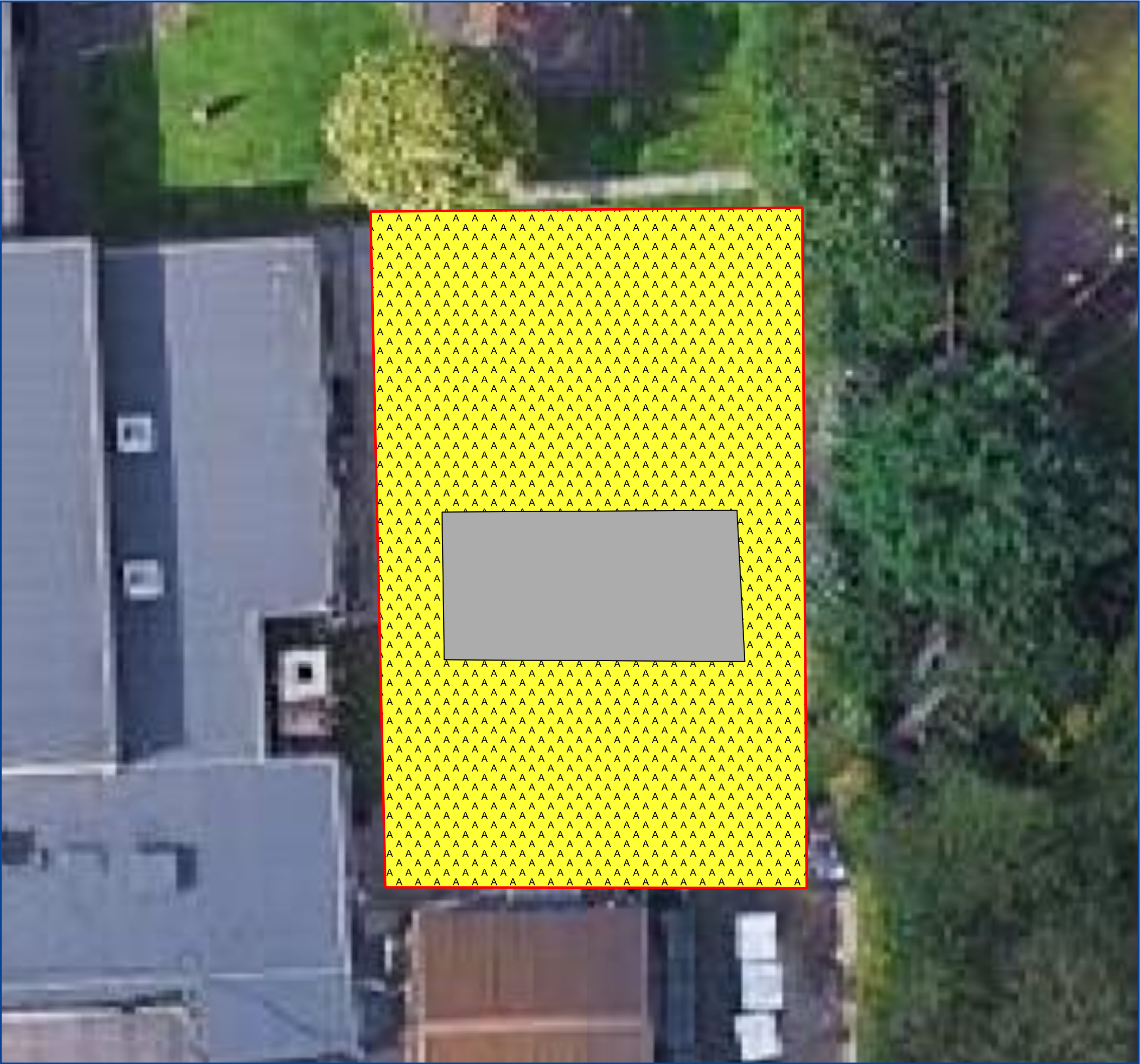
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Appendices

Appendix A – Phase 1 Habitat Map

Figure 1 - Phase 1 Habitat Map



Portakbin Limited	Elms Bank School
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- Key:**
-  Site Boundary
 - Phase 1 Areas
 -  J1.2 - Cultivated/disturbed land - amenity grassland
 -  HS - Hardstanding



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