

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Survey site:

Former Whitefield Library & Adult Learning Centre, Pinfold Lane, Whitefield, Manchester, M45 7NY

Client:

Rebecca Marwood

Assessment Date:

17th March 2026

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with the Bury Metropolitan Borough Council. The proposal is described as:

The redevelopment of the site into a GP centre

[Unsubmitted]

BNG assessment methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: **BNG Methodology and Legislation – 2025.**

The results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit and BNG assessment may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion.

Version Control			
Status	Issue	Name	Date
Final	1.0	Nicole Gullan BSc (Hons) MRSB TechArborA, Associate Director	17/03/2026
Amended	2.0	Trystan Figuères, BSc (Hons), MSc, Consultant Ecologist	19/03/2026

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Site Location and Context
A baseline habitat map is provided in Appendix 1, a post development habitat map in Appendix 2, a proposed development plan in Appendix 3, headline BNG results in Appendix 4, and condition assessments in Appendix 5.
The survey site is centred on National Grid Reference SD 80461 05601 and has an area of approximately 0.27ha. The site primarily contains a large building and associated hardstanding, previously used as the Whitfield Library. The site is set centrally within Whitfield, with residential suburban habitat surrounding on all sides along with greenspace in the form of Whitfield golf course. The site contains no habitat which is listed as a habitat of principal importance under Section 41 of the Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act (2006). However, individual trees and lines of trees onsite are of good quality and likely provide connectivity to the wider landscape for a variety of species. Other habitats within the site are common and widespread and have low ecological value. No protected or notable plant species were recorded during the survey. This report should be read in conjunction with the following documents: ❖ Statutory BNG Metric (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., 2026). ❖ Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (“PEA”; Arbtech Consulting Ltd., 2025). ❖ Tree Survey Report (“BS5837”; Arbtech Consulting Ltd, 2025).
Executive Summary
The current landscaping proposal results in a net loss of 8.51% in area-based habitat units. To achieve the required +10% Biodiversity Net Gain, a total of 1.95 habitat units must be delivered post-development. At present, there is a deficit of 0.33 units of which 0.13 must be of urban trees (or a higher distinctiveness habitat) and 0.04 can be of any distinctiveness band. Given the limited scope for on-site habitat creation, the remaining unit deficit will need to be addressed through off-site biodiversity offsetting.

Introduction

BNG Informative		
Habitat Degradation Statement	Date reflected by BNG calculations	7 th July 2025
	A review of historical satellite imagery (Google Earth) indicates that the habitats present have not undergone degradation since January 2020, in line with Biodiversity Statutory Metric guidance. Therefore, the current site condition is considered representative of its baseline biodiversity value. This assessment has been based on the Ecological Appraisal by Arbtech (2025) and satellite imagery.	
	 Satellite image from Google Earth 2020  Satellite image from Google Earth 2026	
	Irreplaceable Habitat Statement	No irreplaceable habitats as listed under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations (2024) are currently present nor were present before 30 th January 2020.
Metric Version & Publication Date		Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool first published 29 th November 2023 with last updates to metric tools and user guides on 23 rd July 2024.
BNG Target Uplift		+10%

National Character Area (NCA)	NCA 54 - Manchester Pennine Fringe ❖ The Manchester Pennine Fringe forms a transitional landscape between the Dark Peak and Southern Pennine moorlands and the Manchester urban conurbation, extending from Bolton to Hazel Grove and including towns such as Bury, Rochdale, Oldham, Dukinfield and Glossop. ❖ Habitats are dominated by river valleys and riparian corridors, including the Irwell, Roch, Goyt, Tame and Etherow, which connect Pennine uplands with surrounding lowland and urban landscapes. ❖ Foothill landscapes link upland moorland habitats with more modified farmland and urban-influenced environments, creating an ecological transition between upland and lowland habitats.
Strategic Significance	The Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy covers all ten Greater Manchester authorities, including Bury, and was published in September 2025 by the Greater Manchester Combined Authority. Priority habitats comprise: ❖ Rivers and riparian habitats – particularly along the River Irwell corridor, including wet woodland, riparian scrub and marginal aquatic vegetation. ❖ Lowland neutral grassland and species-rich grassland – often fragmented remnants within farmland, parks, and green infrastructure. ❖ Deciduous woodland – small blocks, woodland belts and wet woodland associated with river valleys and steep slopes. ❖ Ponds and other small freshwater habitats – including urban ponds and field ponds supporting amphibians and aquatic invertebrates. ❖ Hedgerows and scrub mosaics – important connective habitat across farmland and urban edge landscapes.
Limitations	
There were no specific limitations to the assessment.	

Baseline

Baseline Biodiversity Value: On-Site				
Area-Based Habitats (A-1)				
Habitat	Area (ha)	Description	Condition Assessment	Strategic Significance
Developed land; sealed surface	0.2135	Buildings and hard standing.	Habitat condition pre-determined as ' N/A ' as detailed within the Statutory Biodiversity Condition Assessment Supplement.	Low Strategic Significance
Introduced shrub	0.0233	The south of the site was covered in dense scrub including buddleia (<i>Buddleja davidii</i>), bramble (<i>Rubus fruticosus</i>), dog rose (<i>Canina rosa</i>) and birch (<i>Betula pendula</i>) (Greenscape Environmental, 2021).		
Modified grassland	0.0329	The trees to the north are planted over an area of ornamental lawn that has become overgrown due to natural succession.	Good	
Urban trees	0.1914	4 No. small trees in a line on the western boundary and 1 No. small, 6 No. medium, and 2 No. large trees towards the northern boundary.	Moderate	

Post-Development

Post-Development Biodiversity Value: On-Site					
Area-Based Habitats					
	Habitat	Area (ha)	Description	Proposed Condition Assessment	Strategic Significance
Retained (A-1)	Developed land; sealed surface	0.216	Largely retained with some areas enhanced to urban planting areas.	Habitat condition pre-determined as ' N/A ' as detailed within the Statutory Biodiversity Condition Assessment Supplement.	Low Strategic Significance
	Introduced shrub	0.0017	Section to the south retained.		
	Modified grassland	0.0329	Fully retained.	Good	
	Urban Trees	0.1751	4 small trees along the western boundary removed. All other trees retained.	Moderate	

Created (A-2)	Sealed Surface	0.0046	Areas of introduced shrub replaced with hardstanding associated with the proposed surgery.	Habitat condition pre-determined as ' N/A ' as detailed within the Statutory Biodiversity Condition Assessment Supplement.	Low Strategic Significance
	Introduced shrub	0.0045	Areas of raised planters and ornamental planting.		
	Modified Grassland	0.0040	Areas of new wildflower lawn mix.	Good	

Change of Biodiversity Value

		Biodiversity Units		
		Area-Based	Linear-Based	Watercourse-Based
On-Site	Baseline	1.78	N/A	N/A
	Post-Development	1.62		
Overall Net Change		-0.15 (-8.51%)		

Results, Discussion, and Next Steps

BNG Informative	
Results	The current landscaping proposal results in a net loss of 8.51% in area-based habitat units. To achieve the required +10% Biodiversity Net Gain, a total of 1.95 habitat units must be delivered post-development. At present, there is a deficit of 0.33 units of which 0.13 must be of urban trees (or a higher distinctiveness habitat) and 0.04 can be of any distinctiveness band. Given the limited scope for on-site habitat creation, the remaining unit deficit will need to be addressed through off-site biodiversity offsetting.
Recommendations and Next Steps	Biodiversity offsetting will be needed to mitigate the deficit. This will be achieved by purchasing biodiversity units through a registered provider. This would be linked to the application through a planning obligation Section 106 (S106) agreement. The proposed habitat compensation should be of an appropriate distinctiveness to meet the trading rules of BNG.
Policy Requirements	A Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) and Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP) must be produced for the site. This should include recommendations for the implementation, management and monitoring of the site for at least 30 years to ensure that biodiversity net gain is delivered. These additional requirements can only be actioned following the finalisation of the BNG assessment – be it on-site or off-site net gains sought.
BNG Mitigation Hierarchy	
Avoidance	Trees are being retained where possible.
Minimisation	
Mitigation	Significant on-site mitigation is considered unfeasible given the proposed use of the site as a GP surgery. As such, significant biodiversity enhancements on-site are not achievable without compromising the intended land use.
Offset	Net gain onsite is not achievable within the red line boundary; off-site offsetting foreseen.

Appendix 1: Baseline Habitat Plan



Appendix 2: Post-Development Habitat Plan



Appendix 3: Proposed Development Plan

Appendix 4: Headline BNG Results

FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)			Area habitat units	-0.15
			Hedgerow units	0.00
			Watercourse units	0.00
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)			Area habitat units	-8.51%
			Hedgerow units	0.00%
			Watercourse units	0.00%
Trading rules satisfied?			No - Check Trading Summaries ▲	
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Area habitat units	10.00%	1.78	1.95	0.33
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

Appendix 5a: Post-Development Habitat Condition Assessment Sheets

Grassland Condition Assessment

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)		
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type		Grassland - Modified grassland
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)
A	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. Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m ² (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.	Y
B	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.	Y
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Y
D	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.	N
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	Y
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Y
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	Y

Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)		Y
Number of criteria passed		6
Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/√
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)	Good
Passes 4 or 5 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate (2)	
Passes 3 or fewer criteria; OR	Poor (1)	
Passes 4 - 6 criteria (excluding criterion A)		

Individual Urban Trees Condition Assessment

Condition Sheet: INDIVIDUAL TREES Habitat Type		
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type		Individual Urban Trees – Over 7.5cm DBH
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)
		T1
A	The tree is a native species (or at least 70% within the block are native species).	Y
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).	Y
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature) ¹ .	N
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.	Y
E	Natural ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	N
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Y
Number of criteria passed		4
Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)		Condition Assessment Score
Passes 5 or 6 criteria including passing essential criterion A		Good (3)
Passes 3 or 4 criteria including passing essential criterion A		Moderate (2)
Passes 2 or fewer criteria		Poor (1)
		Score Achieved x/√

Appendix 5b: Post-Development Habitat Condition Assessment Sheets

Grassland Condition Assessment

Condition Sheet: GRASSLAND Habitat Type (low distinctiveness)		
UK Habitat Classification (UKHab) Habitat Type		Grassland - Modified grassland
Condition Assessment Criteria		Criterion passed (Yes or No)
A	There are 6-8 vascular plant species per m² 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. Where the vascular plant species present are characteristic of medium, high or very high distinctiveness grassland, or there are 9 or more of these characteristic species per m² (excluding those listed in Footnote 1), please review the full UKHab description to assess whether the grassland should instead be classified as a higher distinctiveness grassland. Where a grassland is classed as medium, high, or very high distinctiveness, please use the relevant condition sheet.	Y
B	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.	N
C	Any scrub present accounts for less than 20% of the total grassland area. (Some scattered scrub such as bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> agg. may be present). Note - patches of scrub with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Y
D	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.	Y
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens) ² .	Y
F	Cover of bracken <i>Pteridium aquilinum</i> is less than 20%.	Y
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native plant species ³ (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA ⁴).	Y

Essential criterion achieved (Yes or No)		Y
Number of criteria passed		6
Condition Assessment Result (out of 7 criteria)	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved x/√
Passes 6 or 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)	Good
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)	