



Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Land Adj To, Platting Lane, Rochdale, OL11 2JT

B&L Homes Ltd

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Industry Guidelines and Standards

This report has been written with due consideration to:

- British Standard 42020 (2013). Biodiversity – Code of Practice for Planning and Development.
- British Standard 8683:2021 (2021). Process for Designing and Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines for Preliminary Ecological Appraisal. 2nd edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2017). Guidelines on Ecological Report Writing. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2018). Guidelines for Ecological Impact Assessment in the UK and Ireland: Terrestrial, Freshwater, Coastal and Marine. Version 1.1. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (2020). Guidelines for Accessing, Using and Sharing Biodiversity Data in the UK. 2nd Edition. Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Winchester.
- Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management, Construction Industry Research and Information Association & Institute of Environmental Management and Assessment (2019). Biodiversity Net Gain – Good Practice Principles for Development.

Proportionality

The work involved in preparing and implementing all ecological surveys, impact assessments and measures for avoidance, mitigation, compensation and enhancement should be proportionate to the predicted degree of risk to biodiversity and to the nature and scale of the proposed development. Consequently, the decision-maker should only request supporting information and conservation measures that are relevant, necessary and material to the application in question. Similarly, the decision-maker and their consultees should ensure that any comments and advice made over an application are also proportionate.

The desk studies and field surveys undertaken to provide a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) might in some cases be all that is necessary.

(BS 42020, 2013)

Executive Summary

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed by B&L Homes Ltd to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment at Land Adj To, Platting Lane, Rochdale, OL11 2JT (hereafter referred to as “the site”). The survey was required to inform a planning application for the erection of 3 residential dwellings and associated parking and gardens (hereafter referred to as “the proposed development”). A plan showing the proposed development is provided in Appendix 1.

The current proposed plan results in a **20.03% net loss** in habitat units and **no net change** in watercourse units. This is less than the 10% target of biodiversity net gain.

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1.0 Introduction and Context

1.1 Background

Arbtech Consulting Limited was instructed by B&L Homes Ltd to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment at Land Adj To, Platting Lane, Rochdale, OL11 2JT (hereafter referred to as “the site”). The survey was required to inform a planning application for the erection of 3 residential dwellings and associated parking and gardens (hereafter referred to as “the proposed development”). A plan showing the proposed development is provided in Appendix 1.

This report should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric.
- Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (v1 PEA PRA - Land Adj To, Platting Lane, OL11 2JT 04.10.2024)(Arbtech 2024).
- BS 5837 Tree Survey - Land at Platting Lane (MMA Tree Consultancy)
- RCA - Land adj to Platting Lane, OL11 2JT - v1 - 28-11-24 (Arbtech 2024)

1.2 Site Location, Geology and Landscape Context

The site is located at National Grid Reference SD 90353 11715 and has an area of approximately 0.05ha. The site is characterised by unmanaged grassland, scattered trees, mixed scrub and introduced shrubs in addition to areas of hard standing and a dilapidated shed. The Sudden Brook runs down the northeast boundary of the site which is surrounded by trees of varying ages and further grassland. Immediately to the north of the site is an area of hard standing, to the west is Platting Lane and to the south is a row of residential dwellings. The site is located within an urban context, less than 1km from Rochdale town centre. As a result, the site is surrounded by extensive urban habitats with limited green spaces in the immediate surroundings. There are habitats of ecological value to the south in the form of amenity greenspaces including trees and grassland. A location plan is provided in appendix 2.

1.3 BNG Informative

BNG is a specific, measurable outcome of project activities that deliver demonstrable and quantifiable benefits to biodiversity compared to the baseline situation. In order to achieve BNG, a project must be able to demonstrate that it has followed all 10 of the Principles of Biodiversity Net Gain (as outlined in the *British Standard 8683:2021 Process for Designing and Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain*).

The legalised Environment Act (2021) requires developments in England to demonstrate a measurable net gain in biodiversity and sets a target of a minimum of 10% BNG for all developments. It also stipulates that a management plan with a minimum 30-year term, should be adopted to ensure biodiversity net gain can be delivered. The requirement for biodiversity net gain is also enshrined within the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2023).

The DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric is the widely accepted tool used to calculate BNG. It enables the calculation of habitat value pre- and post-development in order to determine the overall change in biodiversity value as a result of the proposed development. The Statutory Biodiversity Metric has separate BNG assessments for areas of habitat, hedgerows and watercourses.

The biodiversity value of a site should be maximised. However, it may not always be possible to achieve a 10% biodiversity net gain within a site and therefore the Statutory Biodiversity Metric can also account for offsite habitat creation, where land is available. Alternatively, developers can seek to provide an agreed financial contribution to an appropriate third party (such as the Local Authority, the UK Government or another landowner) to deliver the required biodiversity net gain elsewhere on their behalf.

2.0 Methodology

2.1 Baseline Biodiversity Value

The baseline BNG Calculation was informed by the Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA)(Arbtech 2024). A baseline habitat plan is provided in Appendix 3.

Habitat Classification

The PEA (Arbtech 2024) classified the habitats on site according to The UK Habitat Classification Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (The UK Habitat Classification Working Group, July 2023).

Habitat Area/Length

The area or length of each habitat was calculated using qGIS software. In calculating the area or length of each habitat, habitats which occur as two or more isolated parcels across the site were combined, where they were deemed to be of a similar composition and condition. Distinctions were made between habitats to be retained (i.e. left as found in baseline), enhanced (i.e. improved condition) or lost (i.e. destroyed by proposed development).

Areas of scattered trees were calculated using the Tree Helper tool within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. Class sizes for urban trees are set out in Table 8-1 of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (Natural England, 2023).

Habitat Condition

Habitat condition was assessed using the relevant condition assessment sheets found in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric (Natural England, 2023).

Strategic Significance

Strategic significance was assigned for each habitat based upon a review of the following:

- Ecological value
- Function within the landscape
- Any site or habitat allocations under the Rochdale Borough Local Plan

2.2 Post Development Biodiversity Value

The post development BNG Calculation was informed by the Proposed Site Plan (James Campbell Associates, July 2024) which is included in Appendix 1. A post development habitat plan is provided in Appendix 4.

Habitat Classification

Proposed habitats were translated to their equivalents in the UK Habitat Classification using The UK Habitat Classification Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (The UK Habitat Classification Working Group, July 2023) and the information provided within the Proposed Site Plan (James Campbell Associates, July 2024).

Habitat Area/Length

The area or length of each proposed habitat was calculated using qGIS software. In calculating the area or length of each habitat, habitats which occur as two or more isolated parcels across the site were combined, where they were deemed to be of similar composition and condition. Distinctions were made between habitats to be retained (i.e. left as found in baseline), enhanced (i.e. improved condition) or newly created.

Areas of scattered trees were calculated using the Tree Helper tool within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. Class sizes for urban trees are set out in Table 8-1 of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (Natural England, 2023).

Habitat Condition

Target habitat condition for each proposed habitat was determined assessed using the Temporal Multipliers Tool and the Enhancement Temporal Multipliers Tool included in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric spreadsheet as well as the relevant condition assessment sheets found in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (Natural England, 2023). This is based on the assumption that a 30-year management plan will be adopted for the site.

Strategic Significance

Strategic significance was assigned for each proposed habitat based upon a review of the following:

- Likely ecological value
- Function within the landscape
- Any site or habitat allocations under the Rochdale Borough Local Plan

2.3 Limitations

There were not considered to be any limitations to the completion of the biodiversity net gain assessment on habitats onsite.

3.0 Results

3.1 Baseline Habitats

Table 1 details the baseline habitats present within the site along with their area/length, condition and strategic significance.

Table 1: Baseline Biodiversity Value

Habitat	Area / Length	Description	Condition Assessment	Strategic Significance
Developed land; sealed surface	0.009 ha	As described in the PEA.	N/A - Other	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy
Modified grassland	0.030 ha	As described in the PEA.	Good due to passing criteria A, C, D, E, F, G.	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy
Mixed scrub	0.009 ha	As described in the PEA.	Poor due to only passing criteria C.	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy
Urban tree	0.126 ha	1 large tree, 5 medium trees and 2 small trees.	T1 – A, B, D, E - MODERATE T2 – A, B, D, E, F - GOOD T3 – A, B, D, F - MODERATE T4 – A, B, D, F - MODERATE T5 – A, B, C, D, F - GOOD T6 – A, B, D, F - MODERATE T7 – A, B, C, D, E, F - GOOD T8 – A, B, D, E, F - GOOD	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy
Other rivers and streams	0.034 km	Brook to the east of the site.	Fairly poor as described in the RCA.	Location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy

3.2 Post Development Habitats

Table 2 details the post development habitats present within the site along with their area/length, condition and strategic significance.

Table 2: Post Development Biodiversity Value

Habitat	Area / Length	Description	Target Condition	Strategic Significance
Developed land; sealed surface	0.032 ha	3 new dwellings and parking.	N/A - Other	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy
Vegetated garden	0.016 ha	Gardens with dwellings.	Condition Assessment N/A	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy
Urban trees	0.110 ha	1 large tree, 4 medium trees and 2 small trees retained.	T1 – A, B, D, E - MODERATE T2 – A, B, D, E, F - GOOD T3 – A, B, D, F - MODERATE T4 – A, B, D, F - MODERATE T5 – A, B, C, D, F - GOOD	Area/compensation not in local strategy/ no local strategy

			T7 – A, B, C, D, E, F - GOOD T8 – A, B, D, E, F - GOOD	
Other rivers and streams	0.034 km	Brook to the east of the site.	Retained.	Location ecologically desirable but not in local strategy

3.3 Change in Biodiversity Value of the Site

Full details are provided in the Statutory Biodiversity Metric calculation tool. The headline results are presented in Appendix 5.

Areas of Habitat

The baseline habitat value of the site is 1.57 units, comprising 0.18 units of modified grassland, 0.03 units of mixed scrub and 1.36 units of urban trees.

The post development habitat value of the site is 1.25 units, comprising 1.23 units of retained urban trees and 0.03 units of vegetated garden.

This results in a net change in biodiversity of -20.03% (i.e. a net loss).

Watercourses

The baseline habitat value of the site is 0.28 units, comprising other rivers and streams.

The post development habitat value of the site is 0.28 units, comprising other rivers and streams.

This results in a net change in biodiversity of -0.00% (i.e. no net change).

4.0 Recommendations to Deliver BNG

4.1 Discussion

The current proposed plan results in a 20.03% net loss in habitat units and no net change in watercourse units. This is less than the 10% target of biodiversity net gain.

4.2 Landscaping

Due to the size of the site and nature of the proposed development, a gain is not considered possible. The onsite post development value could be increased by reducing the size of the existing vegetated gardens to increase available space for offsetting.

4.3 Biodiversity Offsetting

If the landscaping plans are not altered or if the above alterations still do not deliver a 10% net gain, the deficit will need to be delivered in a suitable offsite location i.e. biodiversity offsetting.

According to the Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric there is a unit deficit of 0.47 habitat units and 0.03 watercourse units, and this will need to be provided to offset the loss in biodiversity and achieve a 10% biodiversity net gain.

The mechanism for securing this off-setting will need to be proposed to, and confirmed by the LPA e.g., purchasing conservation credits through a registered provider, habitat creation directly through the client owned or LPA offered land or a financial contribution towards another provider such as a local nature reserve or park. As well as the creation of new habitats, this should also secure the management of the proposed habitats to help achieve the desired condition for at least 30 years. 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. An ecology survey of the baseline habitat of any off-site land will be required to inform the baseline conditions of any land subject to off-site compensation measures.

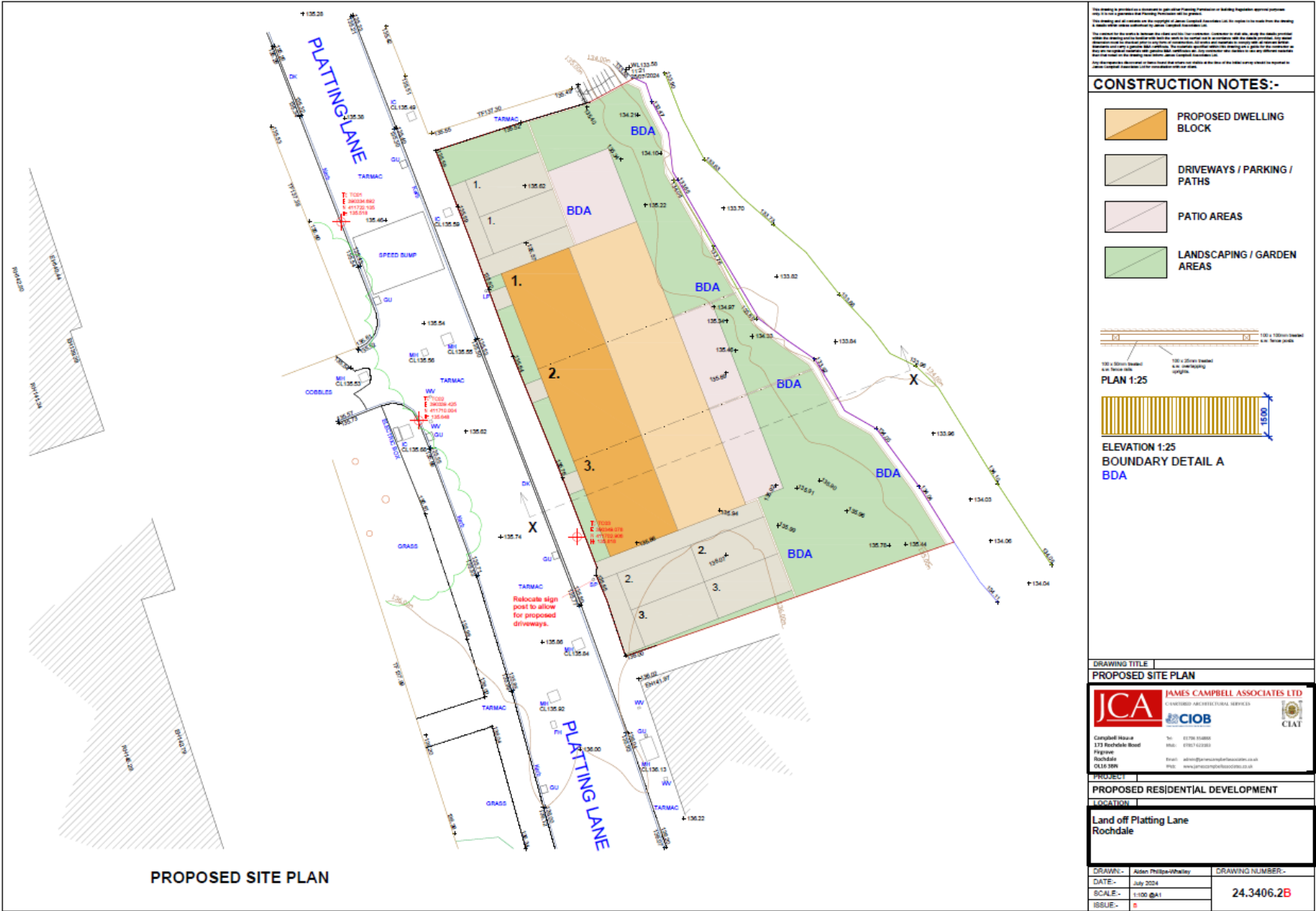
4.4 Post Development

A Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Management Plan must be produced for the site. This should include recommendations for the implementation, management and monitoring of the site for at least 30 years.

5.0 Bibliography

- British Standard 8683:2021 (2021). Process for Designing and Implementing Biodiversity Net Gain.
- CIEEM-CIRIA-IEMA (2019) Biodiversity Net Gain – Good Practice Principles for Development.
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- Natural England (2023). The Statutory Biodiversity Metric Technical Annex 2 – Technical Information (JP039).
- The UK Habitat Classification Habitat Definitions Version 2.0 (The UK Habitat Classification Working Group, July 2023)

Appendix 1: Proposed Development Plan



Appendix 2: Site Location Plan



Appendix 3: Baseline Habitat Plan



Appendix 4: Post Development Habitat Plan



Appendix 5: Headline BNG Results

The Defra Statutory Biodiversity Metric is provided as a separate excel spreadsheet.

FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-0.31		
	Hedgerow units	0.00		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-20.03%	Total net gain achieved is less than target set ▲	
	Hedgerow units	0.00%		
	Watercourse units	0.00%	Total net gain achieved is less than target set ▲	
Trading rules satisfied?	No - Check Trading Summaries ▲			
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Habitat units	10.00%	1.57	1.72	0.47
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.28	0.31	0.03
				No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓