

Genesis Business Park,
Rochdale
Biodiversity Impact Assessment
2023



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Client Campbell Driver Partnership Ltd

Project Title Genesis Business Park,

Project Reference RHE.3380.01

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Executive Summary

Development Details

The client is proposing commercial development on land at Genesis Business Park, Rochdale, hereafter referred to as the 'site'.

This report assesses the predicted changes in biodiversity units resulting from the proposed development.

Biodiversity Impact Assessment

Baseline habitats score 5.34 area units. Post-development habitats score 7.16 area units and 0.4 hedgerow units. This represents a net gain of 34.02% in area units and a net gain of 0.4 hedgerow units.

Outcomes

The proposed development is predicted to achieve a net gain in biodiversity units, which is compliant with current planning policy.

Currently the trading rules within the metric are not satisfied due to a net loss of habitats of medium distinctiveness (mixed scrub and broadleaved woodland). In order to overcome this, it will be necessary to either amend the proposals or reach an agreement with the LPA to enable offsetting to be used.

Retained and created habitats will be managed in the long-term through a Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP), which can be secured through a planning condition.



1. Introduction

1.1 Project Brief

- 1.1.1 Rachel Hacking Ecology Limited was commissioned in 2022 by Campbell Driver Partnership Limited to undertake a Biodiversity Impact Assessment on land at Genesis Business Park, Rochdale (hereafter referred to as the 'site'). The site is located at O.S. grid reference: SD890107 (see Figure 1).



Figure 1. Showing the site location (Google Maps)

Description of Development

- 1.1.2 The site will be the subject of a planning application for the construction of commercial development.

1.2 Scope of Work

- 1.2.1 The Client commissioned Rachel Hacking Ecology to undertake a Biodiversity Impact Assessment to quantify the predicted changes in habitats resulting from the proposed development.

2. Methods

2.1 Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey

- 2.1.1 Simon Holden BSc (Hons), MCIEEM (Associate Ecologist) carried out an Extended Phase 1 Habitat Survey of the site on 1st November January 2022. The site was walked and habitats were recorded and mapped. Simon has 18 years' experience of undertaking ecological appraisals.

2.2 Biodiversity Impact Assessment

- 2.2.1 DEFRA Metric 4.0 Auditing and Accounting for Biodiversity calculation tool was used to assess the predicted changes in habitat units resulting from the proposed development. This report should be read in conjunction with the spreadsheet *Genesis Business Park Biodiversity Metric_281123*.

- The baseline habitats recorded during the Extended Phase 1 habitat Survey were measured using MapInfo GIS software.
- The baseline habitats were translated into UK Hab classification using the translation tool in the metric.
- Habitat conditions were assessed using the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 Habitat Condition Assessment sheets.
- The strategic significance of baseline habitats was assessed on whether they were formally identified in a local strategy or policy, or whether they were in an ecologically desirable location.
- The proposed habitats, including any retained or enhanced habitats, were assessed based on information provided by Gavin Jones Ltd (see Appendix 2).

- 2.2.2 The predicted change in biodiversity units was determined by calculating the difference between the baseline units and the post-development units.

- 2.2.3 Simon Holden BSc (Hons), MCIEEM carried out the calculations and assessment in November 2023. Simon is an experienced consultant ecologist and is trained in Biodiversity Impact Assessment.

3. Baseline Habitats

3.1 Area Habitats

3.1.1 The baseline is calculated to be 5.34 habitat units.

Urban - Bare ground

3.1.2 The track running along the eastern side of the site is classified as bare ground (0.06ha). This habitat is of low distinctiveness and low strategic significance. It is in poor condition as it fails two of the three condition assessment criteria (see Table 1). The bare ground scores 0.12 habitat units.

Table 1 showing the condition assessment of the bare ground														
Track in the east of site.														
The scores below show pass 'P' or fail 'F' for each criterion or 'NA' for any irrelevant criteria numbers where condition sheet contains fewer than 13 criteria.														
Criterion	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12	C13	TOTAL
Result	F	F	P	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Are any criteria non-negotiable? (Y/N) If Yes are they passed?	N/A					Condition (Good/Moderate /Poor):				Poor				

Sparsely Vegetated Land – Ruderal/Ephemeral

3.1.3 Ephemeral/short perennial vegetation cover approximately 0.09ha. This habitat is of low distinctiveness and low strategic significance. It is in poor condition as it fails two of the three condition assessment criteria (see Table 2). The bare ground scores 0.18 habitat units.

Table 2 showing the condition assessment of the sparsely vegetated land														
Vegetation is sparse with species comprising Common Mouse-ear, Yorkshire Fog, Silverweed, Ribwort Plantain and Black Medick.														
The scores below show pass 'P' or fail 'F' for each criterion or 'NA' for any irrelevant criteria numbers where condition sheet contains fewer than 13 criteria.														
Criterion	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12	C13	TOTAL

Result	F	F	P	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	1
Are any criteria non-negotiable? (Y/N) If Yes are they passed?	N/A			Condition (Good/Moderate /Poor):			Poor							

Sparsely Vegetated Land – Ruderal/Ephemeral

- 3.1.4 The central area of the site is a mosaic of tall ruderal, marshy grassland and scattered scrub, extending to approximately 0.35ha. For the purposes of condition assessment, this has been classed as tall ruderal. This habitat is of low distinctiveness and low strategic significance. It is in good condition as it passes all three assessment criteria (see Table 3). The tall ruderal scores 2.1 habitat units.

Table 3 showing the condition assessment of the tall ruderal														
The central area of the site supports a mosaic of marshy grassland with extensive areas of tall ruderal herb and scattered scrub. Species comprise young Goat Willow, Spear Thistle, Great Willowherb, Reed Canary-grass, Broad-leaved Dock, Nettle, Sedges, Soft Rush and Red Fescue.														
The scores below show pass 'P' or fail 'F' for each criterion or 'NA' for any irrelevant criteria numbers where condition sheet contains fewer than 13 criteria.														
Criterion	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12	C13	TOTAL
Result	P	P	P	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3
Are any criteria non-negotiable? (Y/N) If Yes are they passed?	To achieve good condition there must be a complete absence of Schedule 9 invasive non-native species (passed)			Condition (Good/Moderate /Poor):			Good							

Grassland - Modified Grassland

- 3.1.5 Modified grassland extends to approximately 2.1ha. This habitat is of low distinctiveness and low strategic significance. It is in poor condition as it fails two of the five assessment criteria, including criterion 1 (less than 6-8 species per m²) (see Table 1). The modified grassland scores 0.46 units.

Table 4 showing the condition assessment of the modified grassland (low distinctiveness)														
This habitat is present to the south of the wet woodland on sloping ground in the north of the site. Species comprise Yorkshire Fog, Red Fescue, Cocksfoot, Bird's-foot Trefoil, Ribwort Plantain, Red Clover, Creeping Buttercup, Broad-leaved Dock, Horsetail, Spear Thistle, Greater Willowherb, Nettle, Sedges and Butterbur.														
The scores below show pass 'P' or fail 'F' for each criterion or 'NA' for any irrelevant criteria numbers where condition sheet contains fewer than 13 criteria.														
Criterion	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12	C13	TOTAL
Result	F	F	P	P	P	P	P	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	5
Are any criteria non-negotiable? (Y/N) If Yes are they passed?			Criterion 1 must be passed to achieve moderate/good condition (failed).				Condition (Good/Moderate /Poor):			Poor				

Heathland and Shrub - Mixed Scrub

- 3.1.6 This habitat is present around the site peripheries, extending to 0.26ha. This habitat is of medium distinctiveness and low strategic significance. It is in moderate condition as it fails two out of five criteria (see Table 5). The mixed scrub scores 2.08 units.

Table 5 showing the condition assessment of the mixed scrub														
Scrub is present around the peripheries of the site as well as scattered within the central areas. Species comprise Goat Willow, Bramble, Pedunculate Oak, Silver Birch, Alder, Hawthorn, Osier and Japanese Rose.														
The scores below show pass 'P' or fail 'F' for each criterion or 'NA' for any irrelevant criteria numbers where condition sheet contains fewer than 13 criteria.														
Criterion	C1	C2	C3	C4	C5	C6	C7	C8	C9	C10	C11	C12	C13	TOTAL
Result	P	P	F	P	F	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	N/A	3
Are any criteria non-negotiable? (Y/N) If Yes are they passed?			N/A				Condition (Good/Moderate /Poor):			Moderate				

Other Woodland - Broadleaved

- 3.1.7 Wet woodland is present along northern boundary, extending to 0.1ha. This habitat is of medium distinctiveness and low strategic significance. It is in poor condition as it scores 21 out of a possible 39 points. The woodland scores 0.4 units.



4. Proposed Habitats

4.1 Retained Habitats

Grassland - Modified Grassland

- 4.1.1 Approximately 0.01ha of grassland will be retained, with a score of 0.02 habitat units.

Heathland and Shrub - Mixed Scrub

- 4.1.2 Approximately 0.06ha of scrub will be retained, with a score of 0.48 habitat units.

Other Woodland –Broadleaved

- 4.1.3 Approximately 0.08ha of wet woodland will be retained, with a score of 0.32 habitat units.

4.2 Created Habitats

Urban – Developed Land; Sealed Surface

- 4.2.1 Buildings, pavements, roads and hardstanding will extend to 0.47ha. This is habitat of very low distinctiveness and low strategic significance. Condition assessment is not applicable. Developed land; sealed surface scores zero units.

Grassland - Modified Grassland

- 4.2.2 Amenity grassland will extend to 0.21ha. This habitat is of low distinctiveness and low strategic significance. Target condition is poor, which will take one year to achieve. Modified grassland scores 0.41 units.

Grassland – Other Lowland Acid Grassland

- 4.2.3 Acid wildflower grassland will extend to 0.12ha. This habitat is of medium distinctiveness and low strategic significance. Target condition assessment is poor, which will take one year to achieve and scores 0.46 habitat units.

Urban – Introduced Shrub

- 4.2.4 Ornamental shrub planting will extend to 0.1ha. This habitat is of low distinctiveness and low strategic significance. Condition assessment is not applicable. Introduced shrub score 0.19 units.

Heathland and Shrub – Mixed Scrub

- 4.2.5 Native scrub will be created by planting whips to cover approximately 0.03ha. This habitat is of medium distinctiveness and low strategic significance. Target condition is moderate, which will take 5 years to achieve and scores 0.2 habitat units.

Urban – Urban Trees

- 4.2.6 Eighteen small, 33 medium and 5 large trees will be planted. The equivalent area of these is 1.66ha. This habitat is of medium distinctiveness and low strategic significance. Target condition is moderate, which will take 27 years to achieve. Individual trees score 5.07 units.

Native Hedgerow

- 4.2.7 Species rich native hedgerow will extend to 0.06km. This habitat is of medium distinctiveness and low strategic significance. The target condition is moderate, which will take five years to achieve and scores 0.4 hedgerow units.



5. Assessment

5.1 Baseline Units

5.1.1 Baseline habitats score 5.34 area units and zero hedgerow units.

5.2 Proposed Habitats

5.2.1 Proposed habitats score 7.16 area units and 0.4 hedgerow units.

5.3 Predicted Change

5.3.1 The Biodiversity Impact Assessment shows a net gain of 1.82 area units (+34.02%) and net gain of 0.4 hedgerow units.

5.4 Trading Rules

5.4.1 The metric shows that the trading rules are not satisfied due to a net loss of units from habitats of medium distinctiveness (1.6 units of mixed scrub and 0.08 units of broadleaved woodland).

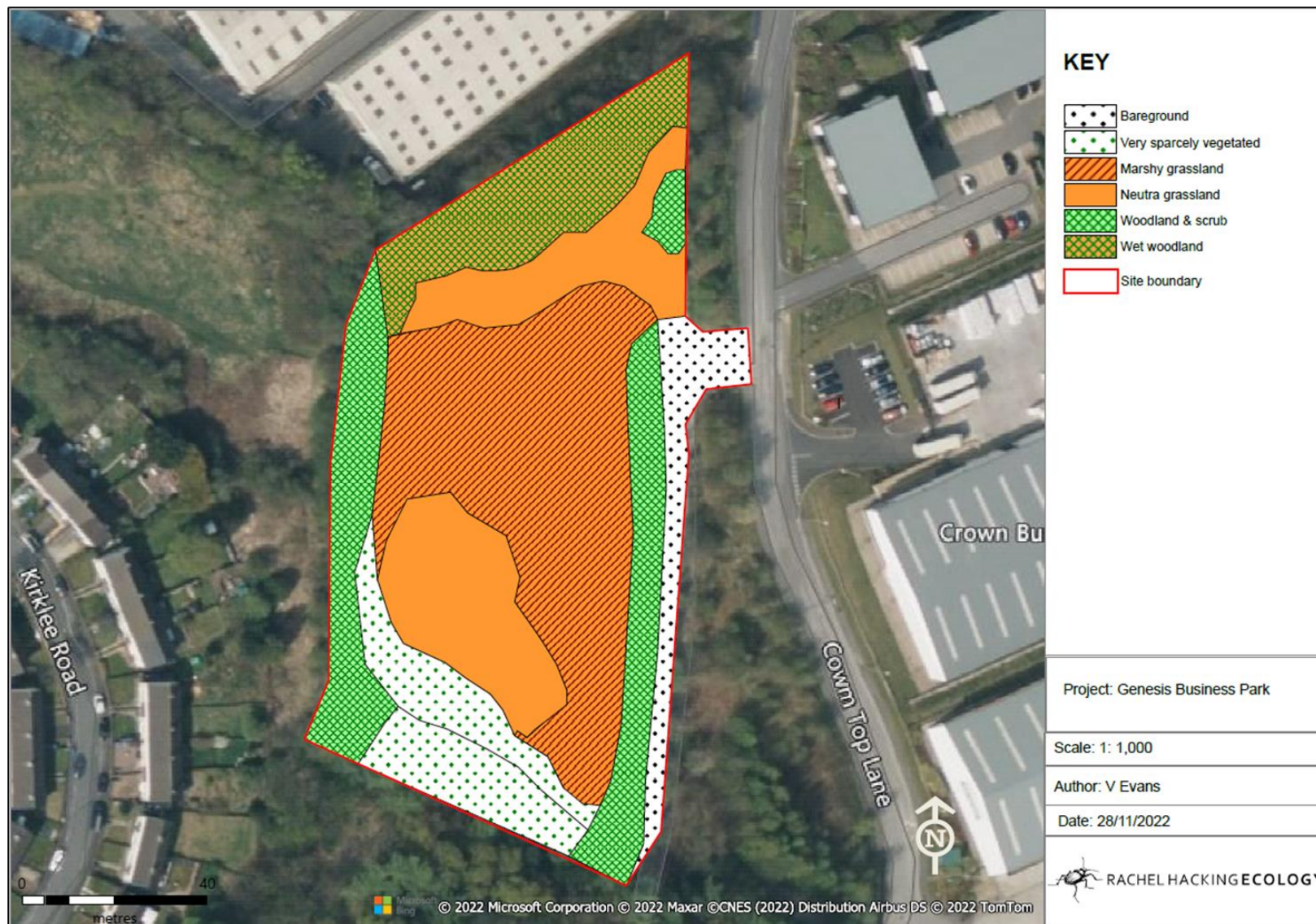
5.4.2 It is noted that loss of these habitats is minimal (0.2ha of scrub and 0.02ha of woodland) and these habitats are fairly common in the local area.

6. Summary

- 6.1.1 The proposed development is predicted to result in a net gain of area units and a net gain of hedgerow units.
- 6.1.2 This complies with the current requirements of the NPPF (2023) which states that development should deliver a net gain in biodiversity, and with local planning policy, namely Policy G7 of the Rochdale Borough Council Core Strategy, which states that development should deliver net gain. Although under review, Policy JP-G-9 of the Greater Manchester Combined Authority proposed Places For Everyone states “...new development proposals to calculate and demonstrate a measurable net gain in biodiversity of no less than 10%”, which this development complies with.
- 6.1.3 In order to satisfy the trading rules within the metric it would be necessary to either reduce the loss of mixed scrub and broadleaved woodland, increase the creation of scrub/tree planting on site, create suitable habitat offsite or reach an agreement with the LPA or a third-party provider to pay for habitat creation elsewhere in the region.
- 6.1.4 A Landscape and Ecology Management Plan (LEMP) will be produced to ensure that retained and newly created habitats are managed to maximise their value for wildlife in the long-term. This can be secured through an appropriately worded planning condition.



Appendix 1: Phase 1 Habitat Map



Appendix 2: Landscape Proposals (Gavin Jones Ltd)



Appendix 3: Headline Results

Genesis Business Park				
Headline Results		Return to results menu		
Scroll down for final results ⚠				
On-site baseline				Habitat units
		Hedgerow units	0.00	
		Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)		Habitat units	7.16	
		Hedgerow units	0.40	
		Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site net change (units & percentage)		Habitat units	1.82	34.02%
		Hedgerow units	0.40	0.00%
		Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%

