

United Environmental Services Ltd

1 Booths Park,
Chelford Road,
Knutsford,
Cheshire
WA16 8QZ

www.ues.org.uk

enquiries@ues.org.uk

01565 757788



BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN - BIODIVERSITY STATEMENT

At

Unicorn House
Cheetham Road
Middleton
Manchester
M24 4DG

NGR: SD 86559 05625

Prepared for: Signature Estates (NW) Ltd
Written by: Robert Mooney, UES Ecologist
Approved by: Toby Hart, UES Managing Director

Date: 7th October 2024
Updated (V3): 20th May 2025
UES reference: UES04621/01





CONTENTS

CONTENTS	2
1 INTRODUCTION	3
1.1 Author and qualifications	3
1.2 Proposed development.....	3
1.3 Survey objectives	3
2 PLANNING POLICY	4
3 METHODOLOGY	5
4 RESULTS.....	6
4.1 Baseline assessment.....	6
4.2 Post-development assessment.....	6
5 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS	7
5.1 Biodiversity net gain requirements	7
5.2 Recommendations.....	7
6 CONCLUSION.....	9
APPENDICES.....	10
Appendix 1 – Baseline UKHab habitat plan	10

1 INTRODUCTION

1.1 Author and qualifications

This report is compiled and written by Robert Mooney MSc, Ecologist for United Environmental Services Ltd (UES). Robert holds a level 3 Botanical Society for Britain and Ireland (BSBI) field identification skills certificate (FISC), which certifies him as competent to undertake phase 1 habitat and UKHab surveys.

1.2 Proposed development

The current development plans submitted to UES include the conversion of the office building on site into residential flats and the creation of new parking & amenity planting.

1.3 Survey objectives

This biodiversity statement has been produced for the proposed development Unicorn House, Middleton. UES was commissioned in August 2024 to prepare the Biodiversity Statement as part of a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment of the proposed development. This was completed in order to:

- Establish the baseline value of the site by calculating the number of habitat, hedgerow and watercourse units at the site of the proposed development.
- If detailed or indicative plans are available, establish the post development value of the development by calculating the number of habitat, hedgerow and watercourse units which will be created, retained and / or enhanced as part of the proposals.
- Provide guidance on habitat retention, creation and enhancement measures to inform proposed site layout and landscaping proposals and to maximize potential gains in biodiversity.
- Provide details of how offsite compensation will be used when a 10% biodiversity net gain cannot be achieved on site.

2 PLANNING POLICY

Paragraphs 180(d), 185(b) and 186(d) of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) set out requirements for the delivery of BNG. In England, BNG is mandatory under a statutory framework introduced by Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021).

Under the statutory framework, subject to some exceptions, every grant of planning permission is granted subject to the condition that the biodiversity gain objective is met ("the biodiversity gain condition"). This objective is for development to deliver at least a 10% increase in biodiversity value relative to the pre-development biodiversity value of the onsite habitats.

Mandatory BNG only applies for planning permission applications made on or after 12th February 2024. Permissions granted for applications made before this date are not subject to BNG. A temporary exclusion applies for non-major developments whereby mandatory BNG only applies for planning permission applications made on or after 2nd April 2024.

The Environment Act 2021 sets out the following key components to mandatory BNG:

- Minimum 10% gain required calculated using DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric & approval of net gain plan
- Habitat secured for at least 30 years via obligations / conservation covenant
- Habitat can be delivered on site, off site or via statutory biodiversity credits
- There is a national register for net gain delivery sites
- The mitigation hierarchy still applies of avoidance, mitigation and compensation for biodiversity loss
- Also applies to Nationally Significant Infrastructure Projects (NSIPs)
- Does not apply to marine development
- Does not change existing legal environmental and wildlife protections



3 METHODOLOGY

The BNG assessment has been undertaken using the DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric. The metric was used to calculate baseline habitat, hedgerow and watercourse units. An extended UK Habitats Classification methodology (UKHab) survey was undertaken as part of a preliminary ecological appraisal (PEA) of the site. This was undertaken on 3rd September 2024 by Robert Mooney

Habitats recorded within the proposed development site were mapped on a UKHab habitat plan provided at Appendix 1.

4 RESULTS

4.1 Baseline assessment

The proposed development site has an area of approximately 0.08ha and mainly comprises a building along with adjacent areas of sparsely vegetated urban land, hardstanding and two small trees. A recently felled hedgerow was previously present, which was classified as a native hedgerow using the left over brash still present at the time of the survey.

The baseline value of the site has been calculated as 0.11 habitat units, 0.06 hedgerow units and 0 watercourse units using DEFRA's Statutory Biodiversity Metric.

The DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric used to calculate the baseline value of the site has been submitted with this report and provides full details of the calculations.

4.2 Post-development assessment

At present, no detailed landscaping proposals are available. However, the client has indicated to UES that a total of 24m of native hedgerow will be planted around the boundaries of the site, and that 4 small native trees will be planted on site. Additionally, the area of bare ground with two small trees along the north-western site boundary is set to be retained.

On this basis, the habitat units onsite will increase to 0.12 units (a net gain of 16.67%), hedgerow units will increase to 0.08 units (a net gain of 33.89%), and watercourse units will remain unchanged at 0. The DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric used to calculate the post-development value of the site has been submitted with this report and provides full details of the calculations.

The DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric used to calculate the post-development value of the site has been submitted with this report and provides full details of the calculations.

5 EVALUATION AND RECOMMENDATIONS

5.1 Biodiversity net gain requirements

The baseline value of the site has been calculated as 0.11 habitat units and 0.06 hedgerow units.

In order to achieve a 10% net gain in biodiversity, the post development value would need to be 0.12 habitat units and 0.07 hedgerow units; no gain in watercourse units is required due to the baseline value of 0.

In addition to providing the 10% net gain in habitat units required to adhere to national planning policy, the metric's trading rules must also be met to provide an acceptable net gain. This is a function of the metric that has been designed to ensure habitats are compensated for sufficiently.

To adhere to the metric's trading rules, losses of any medium-distinctiveness habitat, hedgerow or watercourse types must be replaced by habitat, hedgerow and watercourse units of the same broad habitat type and distinctiveness, or by units from any habitat with a higher distinctiveness regardless of the broad habitat type. Based on the details provided to UES at this stage, no additional units are required to meet the trading rules.

5.2 Recommendations

Where possible, onsite habitat creation and enhancement will be prioritised to maximise net gain within the proposed development site.

Based on current proposals, the proposed development will result in a net gain of 0.02 habitat units (a net gain of 16.67%) and 0.02 hedgerow units (a net gain of 33.89%). Furthermore, the metric's trading rules will also be met. As such, the development proposals comply with requirements set out in the NPPF such that no additional compensatory habitat creation will be required.

This will be achieved through the planting of 23m of native hedge and 4 small, native trees. Moderate condition for the hedgerows will be targeted through passing criteria A1, B1, B2, and D1. Moderate condition for the trees will be targeted through passing criteria A, B & D.

Should planting plans for the site change, then this report will need to be updated.

The information contained within this Biodiversity Statement is considered to be sufficient to allow the local planning authority to grant planning permission, with regards to statutory biodiversity net gain requirements. Following approval of planning permission, the biodiversity gain condition will be applied to the permission, which must be discharged prior to the commencement of works.

A Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) must be prepared to discharge this condition. The BGP must include baseline and post-development Statutory Metric calculations based on the finalised site layout and landscaping proposals. It must also contain a Habitat Management and Monitoring Plan (HMMP), detailing the proposed establishment, management and monitoring of all offsite compensation and any significant enhancements onsite.



All retained, creation or enhanced habitats that constate offsite compensation or onsite significant enhancements will need to be managed and monitored for a period of at least 30 years. This can be secured through a section 106 agreement or a conservation covenant.

Following submission of the Biodiversity Gain Plan, the local planning authority will have up to eight weeks to discharge the biodiversity gain condition.



6 CONCLUSION

The proposed development site has an area of approximately 0.08ha and is dominated by the building & adjacent hardstanding while other habitats include sparsely vegetated urban land and two small trees.

The baseline value of the site has been calculated as 0.11 habitat units and 0.06 hedgerow units. In order to achieve a 10% net gain in biodiversity, the post development value would need to be 0.12 habitat units and 0.07 hedgerow units; no gain in watercourse units is required due to the baseline value of 0.

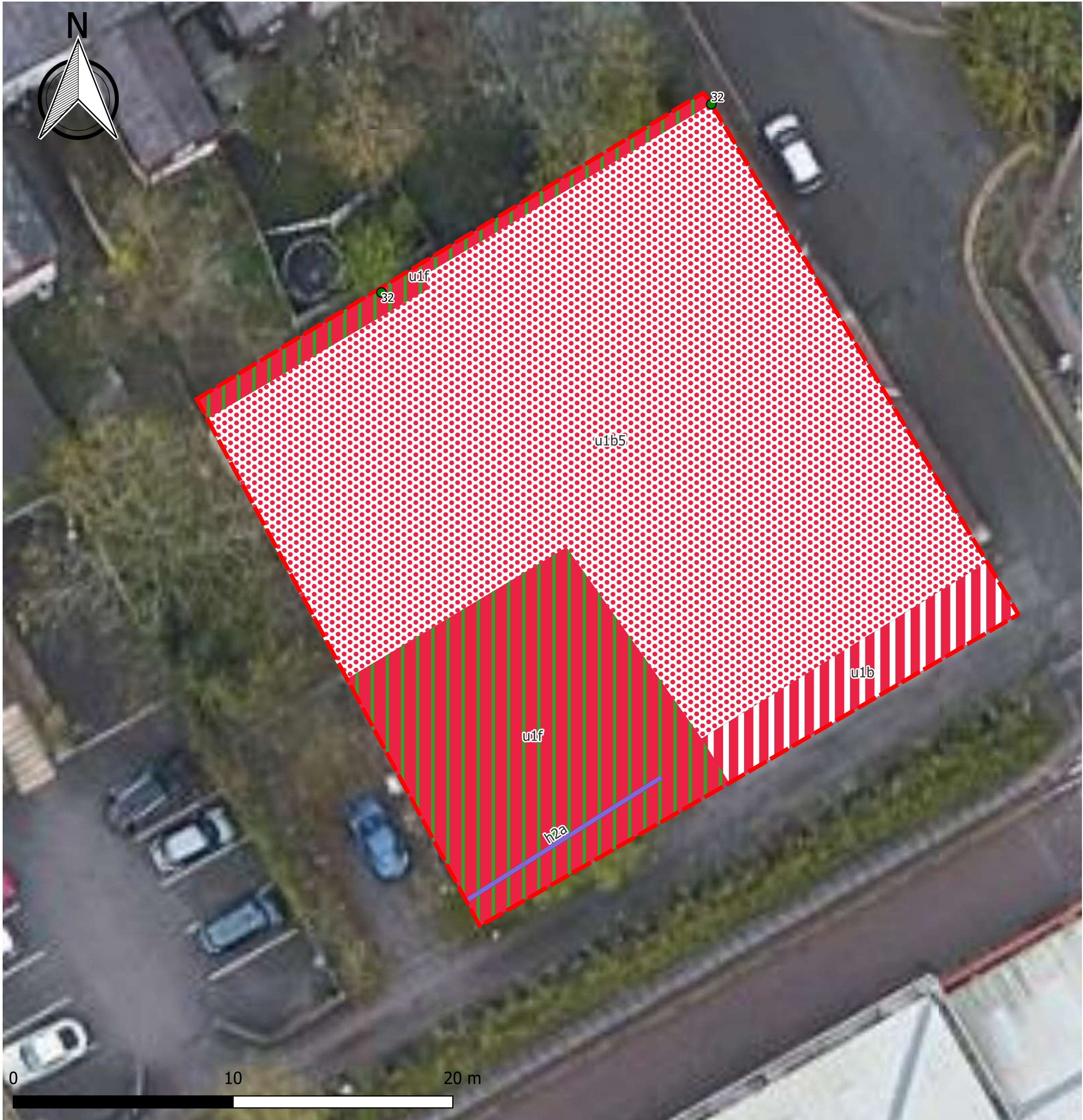
To satisfy the trading rules within the metric, any medium-distinctiveness habitats that are to be lost as part of the proposed development must be compensated for with habitats of the same distinctiveness and same broad habitat type, or any habitat of higher distinctiveness.

Based on current proposals, the proposed development will result in a net gain of 0.02 habitat units (a net gain of 16.67%) and 0.02 hedgerow units (a net gain of 33.89%). Furthermore, the metric's trading rules will also be met. As such, the development proposals comply with requirements set out in the NPPF such that no additional compensatory habitat creation will be required.



APPENDICES

Appendix 1 – Baseline UKHab habitat plan



UKHab Habitat Plan

**Site: Unicorn House,
Middleton**
NGR: SD 86559 05625
Author: Robert Mooney
Date: 26/02/2025



Key

- h2a - native hedgerow
- u1b - developed land. sealed surface
- u1b5 - buildings
- u1f - sparsely vegetated urban land
- Survey boundary
- 32 - scattered trees

Map data © 2025 Google, Imagery © 2025 Google

THIS PLAN IS ISSUED BY UNITED ENVIRONMENTAL SERVICES LTD SUBJECT TO THE CONDITION THAT IT IS NOT COPIED EITHER IN WHOLE OR IN PART OR DISCLOSED TO THIRD PARTIES UNLESS PRIOR WRITTEN AUTHORISATION IS GIVEN.