



# **Biodiversity Net Gain Report**

**159 Windermere Road, Middleton**

**Survey Date: 7<sup>th</sup> February 2025**

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## **1. Introduction**

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### **1.1 Report Rationale**

This report has been prepared at the request of Mr. Barry Winterbottom. It relates to the proposed redevelopment works at 159 Windermere Road, Middleton, M24 5NQ (OS Grid Reference: SD 86320 07242). For this report, a biodiversity impact assessment calculation has been made. This document should be read in conjunction with the completed Excel spreadsheet. A site visit was carried out on the 7th February 2025 and the report was written by Mr. Robert Taylor, BSc (Hons), Ecologist.

### **1.2 Site Description**

The site is located at 159 Windermere Road, Middleton, M24 5NQ, within an urban setting in Greater Manchester. The immediate surroundings comprise a mix of residential and commercial properties, with industrial premises located to the south and west. To the north and east, the area is predominantly residential, consisting of terraced and semi-detached housing with associated gardens. The site is situated within a well-established urban framework with existing infrastructure, including roads and footpaths.

In the wider landscape, the site is positioned approximately 1.5 km southeast of Middleton town centre, which contains a variety of commercial and retail facilities. Woodland and waterbodies are both present within the wider landscape. Green spaces within the local area include Alkrington Woods Local Nature Reserve, located approximately 1.8 km to the southwest, and Rhodes Lodges, a series of ponds and woodland habitats, approximately 1.2 km to the south. These provide semi-natural habitats that may support a range of wildlife.

**Figure 1:** An aerial map showing the location of the land proposed for re-development (red border around the area) in relation to some of the local landscape.



### 1.3 Proposals

The proposals comprise the construction of new industrial units with associated parking and access.

### 1.4 Scope of Report

This report aims to:

- Establish the total number of baseline and lost habitat, hedgerow, and river units at the site of the proposed scheme.
- Establish the total number habitat, hedgerow, and river units that are to be created, retained and/or enhanced under landscape and ecological mitigation proposals at the proposed works site.
- Determine whether the proposed scheme will result in a net loss, no net loss, or a net gain for biodiversity.
- Make further recommendations to gain the required 10% minimum net gain for biodiversity.

## 1.5 **Biodiversity Net Gain Relevant Policies**

The appraisal has been compiled with reference to the following relevant nature conservation legislation, planning policy and the UK Biodiversity Framework from which the protection of sites, habitats and species is derived in England. These are:

- UK Biodiversity Action Plan (UKBAP)
- The Natural Environment and Rural Communities (NERC) Act 2006
- The UK Post-2010 Biodiversity Framework (2011-2020)
- Biodiversity 2020: A strategy for England's wildlife and ecosystem services
- The National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) 2021
- Environmental Act 2021
- Local policy

A full explanation of these policies can be found within **Appendix C**.

## **2. Methodology**

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### **Personnel**

Field surveys have been undertaken by licensed ecologist/s, members of the Chartered Institute of Ecology & Environmental Management (CIEEM) and members of Eco 360 staff.

The Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has been carried out in line with CIEEM Guidelines on Good practice principles for development (2016), CIEEM A Practical Guide (2019) and BS 8683:2021 - Process for designing and implementing biodiversity net gain.

### **Survey of Baseline Habitats and Condition**

Habitat typing and condition assessments are undertaken during a Preliminary Ecological Appraisals (PEA) or similar studies. The baseline also considers historic records for the site and local area via a desktop study (satellite imagery, previous ecological reports), as well as additional surveys to assess the presence/absence of species in certain situations. Conditions of habitats and hedgerows are assessed using the scoring systems provided in Technical Annex 1 of the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 Condition Assessment Sheet.

River assessments are carried out through a MoRPH5 Pro survey and River type survey. At least one MoRPH5 is undertaken per reach on site that will be directly or indirectly impacted with a further MoRPH5 undertaken upstream to record a more “natural setting” if required. This data is then processed via Cartographer to give the condition of the rivers on site.

### **Calculations of Baseline Habitats**

Using Geographic Information Software (GIS), baseline habitats are measured in hectares (ha) using vector layer polygons. These measurements are then input into the DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool. Habitat condition and connectivity are then input into the calculator. The area of habitat retained is then entered into the calculation to give a final sum of baseline units and lost unit.

Each habitat has a base score of 1, this is then multiplied by the size of the habitat (ha). The habitat is then multiplied by its distinctiveness:

- Very low – 0
- Low – 2
- Medium – 4
- High – 6

The next multiplier is based on the condition of the habitat:

- N/A-other/agricultural – 0
- Poor – 1
- Fairly poor – 1.5
- Moderate – 2
- Fairly good – 2.5
- Good – 3

### **Calculations of Post-development Habitats**

The calculation is informed by planning design, landscape plans, and proposed ecological mitigation. Plans are georeferenced into GIS and are similarly measured in hectares (ha) using vector layer polygons. These measurements are then converted into input into the DEFRA Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool. A target condition will be assigned to each new habitat following the same scores as above. The calculator will generate a proposed time to hit this target condition and difficulty score.

### 3. **Baseline Calculation and Proposal Impact**

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#### 3.1 **Baseline Habitats**

The table below outlines the existing site status based on the most recent field survey.

##### Habitats

| Habitat Type                   | Area (ha) | Distinctiveness | Distinctiveness Score | Condition   | Condition Score | Total Habitat Units | Baseline Units Retained | Baseline Units Enhanced | Area Habitat Lost | Units Lost |
|--------------------------------|-----------|-----------------|-----------------------|-------------|-----------------|---------------------|-------------------------|-------------------------|-------------------|------------|
| Developed land; sealed surface | 0.1402    | V.Low           | 0                     | N/A - Other | 0               | 0.00                | 0.00                    | 0.00                    | 0.00              | 0.00       |
| Mixed scrub                    | 0.0726    | Medium          | 4                     | Poor        | 1               | 0.29                | 0.00                    | 0.00                    | 0.07              | 0.29       |

##### Linear Habitats

There are no existing linear habitats.

### 3.2 Proposed Habitats

| Habitat Type                   | Area (ha) | Target Distinctiveness | Score | Target Condition | Score | Habitat Units Delivered |
|--------------------------------|-----------|------------------------|-------|------------------|-------|-------------------------|
| Developed land; sealed surface | 0.0726    | V.Low                  | 0     | N/A - Other      | 0     | 0.00                    |

#### Linear Habitats

No linear habitats have been proposed under the current plans.

### 3.3 Total Net Unit Change

| Area habitat summary    |                                |
|-------------------------|--------------------------------|
| Total Net Unit Change   | -0.29                          |
| Total Net % Change      | -100.00%                       |
| Trading Rules Satisfied | No - check trading summaries ▲ |

#### 4. Recommendations

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The development proposals currently do not meet the recommended 10% net gain in biodiversity units. The initial score, without enhancements, resulted in a -0.29 gain in habitat units (-100.00%) and 0.00 in Linear Habitat units (0.00%). The proposal does not meet trading rules, as the loss of habitats is not compensated with habitats of equal or greater distinctiveness.

No further habitats can be suggested, as the on-site and off-site areas do not have sufficient space for improvements that do not impact their proposed use.

In order to achieve the DEFRA recommended minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity units, the development has the following options:

Option 1: Consult the private market to purchase off-site biodiversity units. This should ideally be within the same LPA area or National Character Area to maximise the points gained.

Option 2: Acquire additional land off-site to use for biodiversity offsetting and habitat creation. This should ideally be within the same LPA area or National Character Area to maximise the points gained. These sites may be required to be registered as a biodiversity gain site, and habitat creation/enhancements and management must be secured for at least 30 years via a suitable legal agreement such as a planning obligation (section 106) with an LPA or a conservation covenant agreement with a responsible body.

Option 3: As a last resort, the client may wish to purchase Statutory Biodiversity Credits from the government. The client will need to provide evidence that the other above options have been explored in order to purchase these credits.

##### Summary

In summary, the development does not currently meet recommended 10% net gain in biodiversity units.

Given the limited size of the site, it is unlikely that the required additional habitat units can be delivered on site. As such, it is recommended that off-site compensation will be required.

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## 5. References

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## **6. Appendices**

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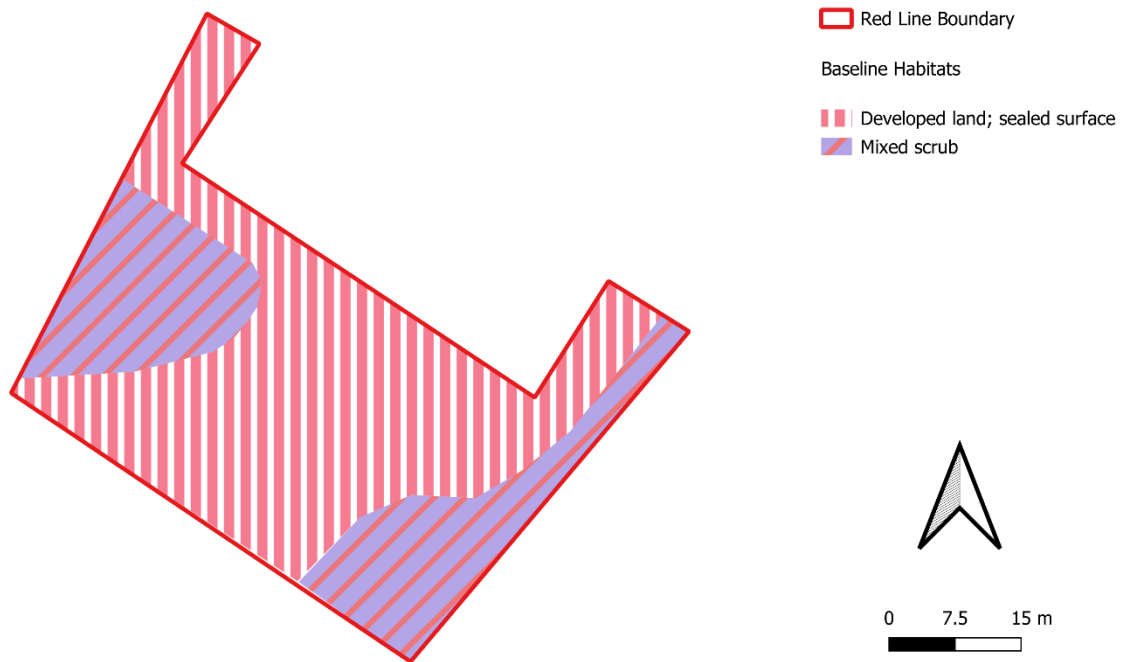
**Appendix A:** Existing Site Plan

**Appendix B:** Proposed Site Plan

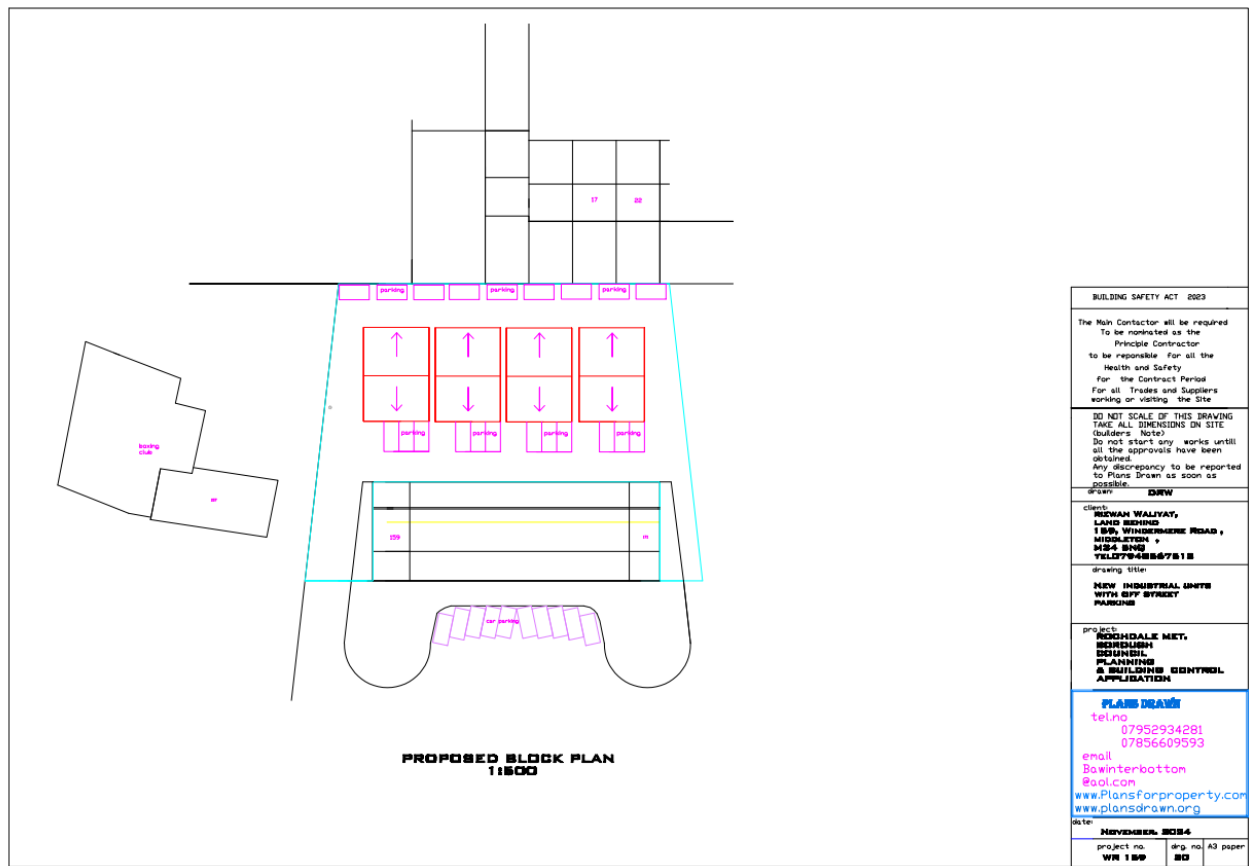
**Appendix C:** Biodiversity Net Gain Relevant Policies

**Appendix D:** Site Photographs

**Appendix A: Existing Site Plan**



## Appendix B: Proposed Site Plans



Proposed Habitat Map



## Appendix C: Biodiversity Net Gain Relevant Policies

### Environmental Act 2021

Part 6 on nature and biodiversity covers all areas of biodiversity net gain across two core sections. This Act mandates that all planning meets a minimum of a 10% gain in biodiversity calculated using the appropriate Metric and that the newly created habitats are secured for at least 30 years.

### National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF)

While currently not a legal obligation, biodiversity and environmental net gains are mentioned in the revised National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF) within the following paragraphs (please refer to the NPPF for the full quotations):

#### Achieving sustainable development

Paragraph 8 Section C. “an environmental objective – **to protect and enhance our natural, built and historic environment; including making effective use of land, improving biodiversity, using natural resources prudently, minimising waste and pollution, and mitigating and adapting to climate change, including moving to a low carbon economy.**”

#### Preparing and reviewing plans

Paragraph 32. “Local plans and spatial development strategies should be informed throughout their preparation by a sustainability appraisal that meets the relevant legal requirements. This **should demonstrate how the plan** has addressed relevant economic, social and **environmental objectives (including opportunities for net gains)**. Significant **adverse impacts on these objectives should be avoided** and, wherever possible, alternative options which reduce or eliminate such impacts should be pursued. Where significant adverse impacts are unavoidable, suitable mitigation measures should be proposed (or, where this is not possible, compensatory measures should be considered).”

#### Identifying land for homes

Paragraph 73 section C. “consider the opportunities presented by existing or planned investment in infrastructure, the area’s economic potential and the scope for **net environmental gains**”

#### Transport infrastructure:

Paragraph 104. “Transport issues should be considered from the earliest stages of plan-making and development proposals, so that:

d) the environmental impacts of traffic and transport infrastructure can be identified assessed and taken into account – including appropriate opportunities for avoiding and mitigating any adverse effects, and for **net environmental gains**.

#### Planning decisions:

Paragraph 119 “Planning decisions and planning policy should a) encourage multiple benefits from both urban and rural land ... and taking opportunities to **achieve net environmental gains - such as developments that would enable new habitat creation.**”

## Conserving and enhancing the natural environment

Paragraph 174 Section D. “**minimising impacts on and providing net gains for biodiversity**, including by establishing coherent ecological networks that are more resilient to current and future pressures”

### Habitats and biodiversity

Paragraph 179. “To protect and enhance biodiversity and geodiversity, plans should:

a) Identify, map and **safeguard components of local wildlife-rich habitats** and wider ecological networks, including the hierarchy of international, national and locally designated sites of importance for biodiversity; wildlife corridors and stepping stones that connect them; and areas identified by national and local partnerships for habitat management, **enhancement, restoration or creation**;

and b) promote **the conservation, restoration and enhancement of priority habitats**, ecological networks and the protection and recovery of priority species; and identify and pursue opportunities for securing **measurable net gains for biodiversity**.”

Paragraph 180. “When determining planning applications, local planning authorities should apply the following principles:

a) if **significant harm to biodiversity** resulting from a development **cannot be avoided** (through locating on an alternative site with less harmful impacts), adequately mitigated, or, as a last resort, compensated for, then **planning permission should be refused**;

b) development on land within or outside a Site of Special Scientific Interest, and which is likely to have an adverse effect on it (either individually or in combination with other developments), should not normally be permitted. The only exception is where the benefits of the development in the location proposed clearly outweigh both its likely impact on the features of the site that make it of special scientific interest, and any broader impacts on the national network of Sites of Special Scientific Interest;

c) development resulting in the **loss or deterioration of irreplaceable habitats** (such as ancient woodland and ancient or veteran trees) **should be refused**, unless there are wholly exceptional reasons and a suitable compensation strategy exists;

and d) development **whose primary objective is to conserve or enhance biodiversity should be supported**; while opportunities to improve biodiversity in and around developments should be integrated as part of their design, especially where this can **secure measurable net gains for biodiversity** or enhance public access to nature where this is appropriate.”

**Appendix D: Site Photographs**



Figure 1: Overview of the hard-standing ground on site.



Figure 2: Scrub habitat on the western part of the site.



Figure 3: Scrub habitat on the eastern part of the site.



Figure 4: Access to the site on the eastern side.



Figure 5: Access to the site on the western side.

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No reliance should be made on any such comments in relation to the structural integrity of the features located on the surveyed site. All information within the report is based solely on evidence that has been found on site during the service provided. No individual opinion or inference will be made other than that of the suitably qualified ecologist appointed to the project.