



BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT

**CALDERSHAW CENTRE
INGS LANE
ROCHDALE
OL12 7LQ**

JUNE 2024

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A report for

I.Q.7 LTD

UNIT 5D CALDERSHAW CENTRE

INGS LANE

ROCHDALE

OL12 7LQ

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June 2024

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CONTENTS

Executive Summary	1
1. Introduction	2
1.1 Background	2
1.2 Site Location	2
1.3 Purpose of this Report and BNG Background	2
2. Methodology	4
2.1 UK Habitat Classification Baseline Survey	4
2.2 Biodiversity Metric Version 4.0 Calculator Tool	4
2.3 Limitations	5
3. Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Results	6
3.1 On-Site Habitat Baseline Results	6
3.2 On-Site Habitat Creation Results	7
3.3 On-Site Hedgerow Baseline Results	7
3.4 On-Site Hedgerow Creation Results	7
3.5 On-Site Watercourse Baseline Results	7
3.6 Headline Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Results	7
3.6.1 Habitat Units	8
4. Conclusion	9
4.1 Conclusion	9
References	10
Appendix A - Figures	11

EXECUTIVE SUMMARY

PENNINE Ecological were commissioned in February 2024 by IQ7 Limited to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of an area of land adjacent to the Caldershaw Centre on Ings Lane, Rochdale, OL12 7LQ (hereafter referred to as 'the site') (refer to Figure 1 for the site's red line boundary).

The assessment follows the completion of a Preliminary Ecological Appraisal undertaken by PENNINE ecological in February 2024 (PENNINE ecological, 2024).

The assessment includes the use of the Natural England Biodiversity Metric (version 4.0) tool to determine whether the proposals would result in a biodiversity net gain or loss. The assessment was completed using standard methodologies and there was no deviation from the recognised guidance.

The habitats encountered on site were of very low, low and medium distinctiveness according to the metric. The habitats recorded on site included developed land; sealed surface, bramble scrub, neutral grassland, tall ruderal and individual trees.

The habitat retention, enhancement and creation (where applicable) proposals for the development would result in an overall biodiversity net loss of -196 habitat units (-75.37%), the results of which are included within the table below.

Table 1: BNG Metric v4.0 Results

	Habitat Units	Habitat Units % Change	Hedgerow Units	Hedgerow Units % Change	Watercourse Units	Watercourse Units % Change
On-site Baseline	2.60	-	-	-	-	-
On-site Post-intervention	0.64	-	-	-	-	-
On-site Net Change	-1.96	-75.37	-	-	-	-
Trading Rules Satisfied	No					

1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BACKGROUND

PENNINE Ecological were commissioned in February 2024 by IQ7 Limited to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) of an area of land adjacent to the Caldershaw Centre on Ings Lane, Rochdale, OL12 7LQ (hereafter referred to as 'the site') (refer to Figure 1 for the site's red line boundary).

The habitats recorded during the field survey are illustrated in Figure 1 Appendix A with the site proposals included within Figure 2. The field survey, desk-based searches and subsequent report i.e., the study are required to support a planning application that will see the construction of multiple industrial units with office spaces and parking.

The assessment has been undertaken to determine whether or not the development demonstrates an overall net gain or loss of biodiversity, in line with the current National Planning Policy Framework, 2021.

1.2 SITE LOCATION

The site is located approximately 3km to the north west of Rochdale town centre, in a broadly urban location. Immediate surrounding habitats recorded during the site survey included existing industrial / retail units, roads, and a dry pond to the south west of the site beyond which a woodland corridor continued south westwards. Beyond the aforementioned habitats, residential properties, shops and derelict industrial sites were identified when reviewing aerial imagery.

Caldershaw Brook flows westwards from the dry pond, the majority of the brook when reviewing aerial imagery is bordered by broadleaved woodland that extends approximately 600m west of the site before Caldershaw Road interjects. Other significant green spaces within the locality include Healey Dell Nature Reserve (a statutory site) which comprises the river Spodden is approximately 350m east of the site. Open farmland habitat is approximately 450m north west of the site and extends north westwards.

The central Ordnance Survey National Grid Reference¹ for the site is SD 87818 14515.

1.3 PURPOSE OF THIS REPORT AND BNG BACKGROUND

This document provides the results of the BNG assessment which includes the use of the biodiversity metric (version 4.0) tool to determine whether the proposals on-site would result in an overall net gain or net loss; this result can be expressed in habitat units and/or a percentage. A habitat will contain a number of biodiversity units, depending on the following: size, quality, location and type. Biodiversity units can be lost through development or generated through work to create and/or enhance habitats.

As can be read in <https://www.gov.uk/guidance/understanding-biodiversity-net-gain> the purpose of Biodiversity Net Gain is "a way of creating and improving natural habitats. BNG makes sure development has a measurably positive impact ('net gain') on biodiversity, compared to what was there before development."

¹ Ordnance Survey National Grid reference used throughout the report.

Through site selection and layout, developers should avoid or reduce any negative impact on biodiversity. They must deliver at least 10% BNG (unless agreed otherwise with the Local Authority), as measured by the statutory biodiversity metric. There are three ways a developer can achieve BNG.

1. They can create biodiversity on-site (within the red line boundary of a development site).
2. If developers cannot achieve all of their BNG on-site, they can deliver through a mixture of on-site and off-site. Developers can either make off-site biodiversity gains on their own land outside the development site, or buy off-site biodiversity units on the market.
3. If developers cannot achieve on or off-site BNG, they must buy statutory biodiversity credits from the government. This should be a last resort. The government will use the revenue to invest in habitat creation in England.

As of 12th February 2024 BNG became mandatory (unless exempt) under Schedule 7A of the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 (as inserted by Schedule 14 of the Environment Act 2021). Developers must deliver a BNG of 10% unless otherwise agreed with the relevant Local Authority.

2. METHODOLOGY

2.1 UK HABITAT CLASSIFICATION BASELINE SURVEY

For a BNG assessment to be completed a UK Habitat Classification (UKHabs) Survey (UKHab Ltd, 2022) has to be undertaken of the site's baseline habitats. The UKhab classification survey, condition and BNG assessment was undertaken by Stuart Macpherson who is an Associate member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (ACIEEM) who is a competent botanist with over 14 years' experience in the land management and ecology sectors.

2.2 BIODIVERSITY METRIC VERSION 4.0 CALCULATOR TOOL

All habitats recorded within the footprint of the site during the February 2024 field survey were included in the Biodiversity Metric 4.0 Metric Calculation Tool. The statutory (official) biodiversity metric is a way of measuring biodiversity value for the purposes of BNG. It measures all types of habitat, including:

- grassland
- hedgerows
- lakes
- woodland
- watercourses such as rivers and streams

For BNG, biodiversity is measured in standardised biodiversity units. The metric measures the biodiversity value of habitats by calculating the number of biodiversity units. It calculates:

- how many units a habitat contains before development takes place.
- how many units are needed to replace the units of habitat lost and to achieve 10% BNG (unless agreed otherwise the Local Authority), through the creation or enhancement of habitat .

The formula takes different factors into account, including the habitat's:

- size
- quality
- location
- type

For created or enhanced habitats, the formula also takes account of:

- difficulty of creation or enhancement
- the time it takes a habitat to reach its target condition
- distance from the habitat loss

The statutory (official) biodiversity metric calculation tool must be used in order to demonstrate that the ecologist/assigned person has calculated the number of biodiversity units for existing habitat or habitat enhancements in accordance with the metric. This enables an assessment of the baseline condition,

expected habitat losses arising from the development and proposed on-site habitat mitigation following construction.

This metric calculation has been undertaken following the standard methodology (Natural England, 2023) and in accordance with CIEEM good practice guidelines (CIEEM, 2019).

2.3 LIMITATIONS

There were no limitations to the survey or BNG metric calculation.

3. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT RESULTS

3.1 ON-SITE HABITAT BASELINE RESULTS

The habitats encountered on site were of very low, low or medium distinctiveness according to the metric. The habitats and their respective areas, distinctiveness, condition etc. are included in Table 3.1 below.

In total, the surveyed habitats have a total habitat value of 2.60 habitat units. A summary of the baseline habitats and habitat unit information is provided in Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1: Summary of the Baseline Habitats and Habitat Value

Broad Habitat	Habitat Type	Irreplaceable habitat	Habitat Area (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Total Habitat Units (Ecological Baseline)	Area Retained – ha / units	Area Enhanced – ha / units	Habitat Area (ha) Lost	Units Lost (before mitigation)
Heathland and shrub	Bramble scrub	No	0.0354	Medium	n/a	0.16	-	-	-	0.16
Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	No	0.0871	Very low	n/a	-	0.0871	-	-	0.0
Grassland	Other neutral grassland	No	0.2345	Medium	Moderate	2.06	-	-	-	2.06
Sparsely vegetated land	Ruderal/ephermal	No	0.0274	Low	Moderate	0.12	-	-	-	0.12
Individual trees	Urban tree	No	0.0326	Medium	Moderate	0.26	-	-	-	0.26

3.2 ON-SITE HABITAT CREATION RESULTS

The habitats to be created on site (Table 3.2) are of very low, and medium distinctiveness. The very low distinctiveness habitat to be 'created' on site is developed land; sealed surface and the medium distinctiveness habitat is neutral grassland.

The total number of habitat units delivered is 0.64.

Table 3.2: Summary of the On-Site Habitat Creation and Habitat Value

Broad Habitat	Habitat	Habitat Area (ha)	Distinctiveness	Condition	Habitat Units Delivered
Urban	Developed land; sealed surface	0.2106	Very low	n/a	0
Grassland	Other neutral grassland	0.0957	Medium	Medium	0.64

3.3 ON-SITE HEDGEROW BASELINE RESULTS

No hedgerows recorded on site.

3.4 ON-SITE HEDGEROW CREATION RESULTS

No new hedgerows are proposed as part of the scheme.

3.5 ON-SITE WATERCOURSE BASELINE RESULTS

No watercourses recorded on site.

3.6 HEADLINE BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT RESULTS

3.6.1 Habitat Units

The following section summaries the Biodiversity Net Gain assessment results.

Baseline habitats of very low, low and medium distinctiveness were recorded during the site survey conducted in February 2024. Habitat creation of ecological value includes the creation of other neutral grassland only. There will be losses of bramble scrub, neutral grassland, ruderal and individual trees.

Overall, there will be a biodiversity net loss as part of the habitat creation proposals as is detailed in Table 3.3 below. The habitat trading rules have not been satisfied by the proposals.

Overall, the proposals would result in a 0.1.96 habitat unit loss, equivalent to -75.37%.

Table 3.3: Summary of the Biodiversity Net Gain Results

	Habitat Units	Habitat Units % Change	Hedgerow Units	Hedgerow Units % Change	Watercourse Units	Watercourse Units % Change
On-site Baseline	2.60	-	-	-	-	-
On-site Post-intervention	0.64	-	-	-	-	-
On-site Net Change	-1.96	-75.37	-	-	-	-
Trading Rules Satisfied	No					

4. CONCLUSION

4.1 CONCLUSION

Based on the results of the Biodiversity Metric Calculator 4.0 (Natural England, 2023), the development would result in a net loss of 0.1.96 habitat units, equivalent to -75.37%. There is no loss with regards hedgerows.

The Trading Rules have not been satisfied.

REFERENCES

CIEEM (2019). Biodiversity net gain. Good practice principles for development; a practical guide. CIRIA publications

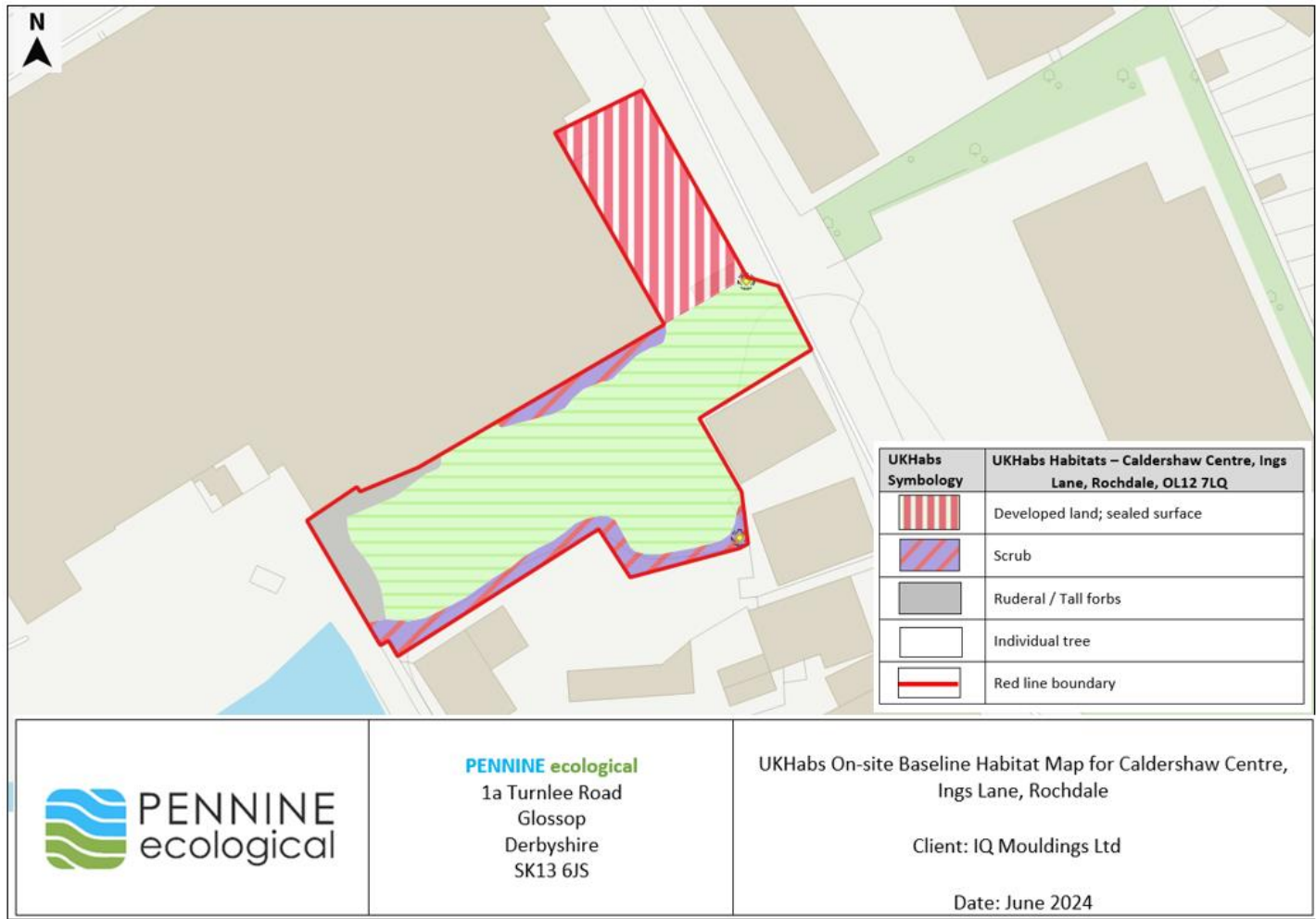
Natural England, 2023. Biodiversity Metric 4.0 Calculation Tool.

PENNINE ecological (2024). Preliminary Ecological Appraisal, Caldershaw Centre, Ings Lane, Rochdale, OL12 7LQ.

The UK Habitat Classification (2022) System (<https://ukhab.org/>)

Appendix A - Figures

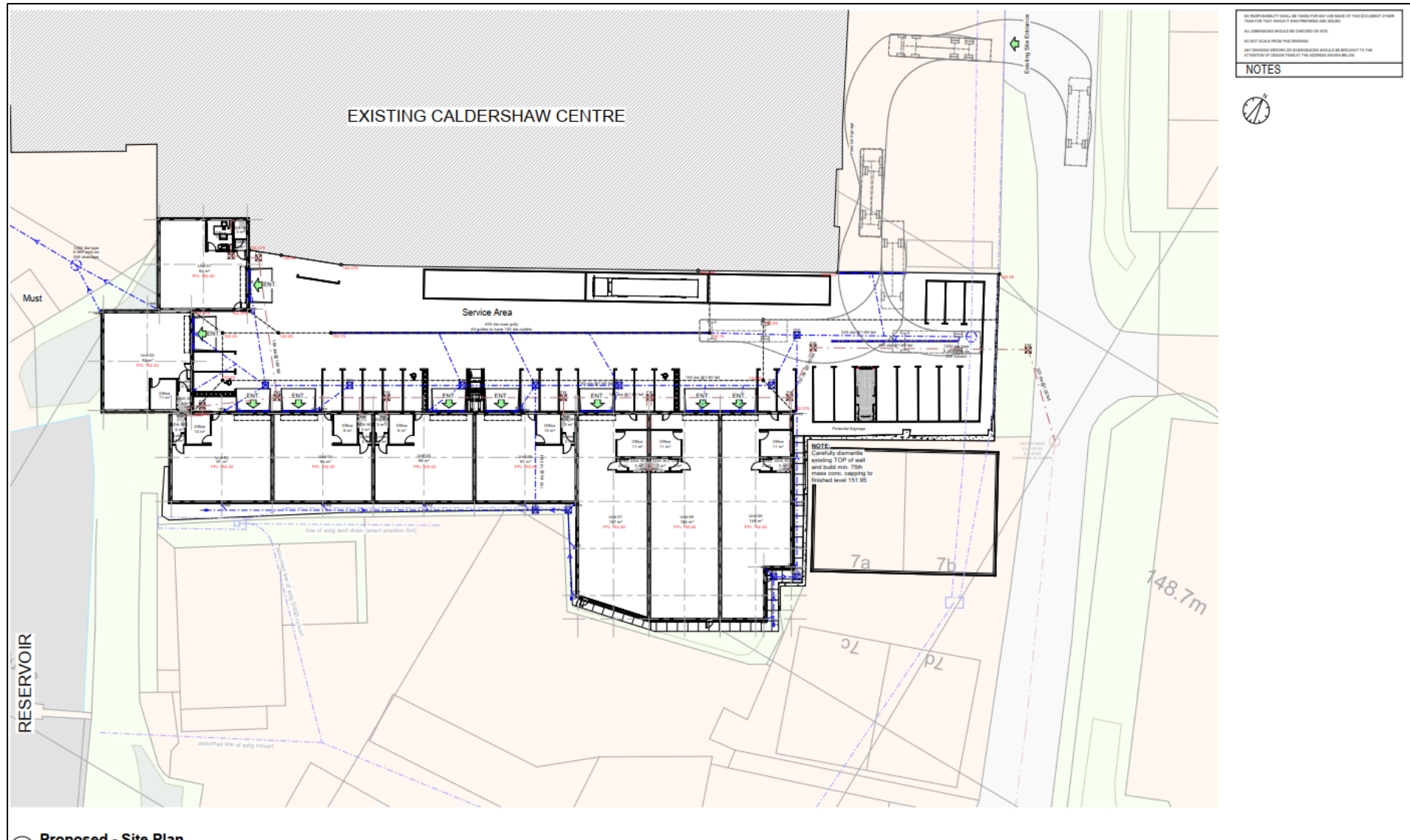
Figure 1: Baseline Habitats (February 2024)



June 2024

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment
Caldershaw Centre, Ings Lane, Rochdale, OL12 7LQ

Figure 2: Proposed landscaping plans.



June 2024