

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Site Address:

Rochdale Sports Club, Rochdale, Lancashire OL11 5BX

Client:

Rochdale Sports club

Assessment Date:

30th June 2025

Project:

This report is prepared to inform a planning application with the Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council. The proposal is described as:

The installation of padel courts

BNG assessment methodology and legislation can be found in the Arbtech Supplement: **BNG Methodology and Legislation – 2025.**

The results and recommendations contained within this report are valid for 18 months. An updated site visit and BNG assessment may be required if the report is to be used any longer than 18 months after completion.

Version Control			
Status	Issue	Name	Date
Draft	0.1	Georgina Rennie BSc (Hons), MSc; Consultant Ecologist	30/06/2025
Final	1.0	Georgina Rennie BSc (Hons), MSc; Consultant Ecologist	01/06/2025
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Amended	8.0	Georgina Rennie BSc (Hons), MSc. Consultant Ecologist	06/05/2026

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Site Location and Context

A baseline habitat map is provided in **Appendix 1**, a post development habitat map in **Appendix 2**, a proposed development plan in **Appendix 3**, headline BNG results in **Appendix 4**, and condition assessments in **Appendix 5**.

The site is centred at National Grid Reference SD 88622 13307 and has an area of approximately 0.24669 ha. The site comprises of managed modified grassland, bramble scrub and woodland. It is situated within the built-up urban town of Rochdale which comprises urban infrastructure and development including commercial buildings, residential settlements and scattered woodland and green spaces. The site makes up part of Rochdale Sports club which comprises grassland and woodland pockets which extend north and west to other areas of woodland within the local landscape. This linear feature likely enhances the site by providing opportunities for dispersal foraging and refuge for bats, birds, badgers, amphibians, reptiles and hedgehogs etc.

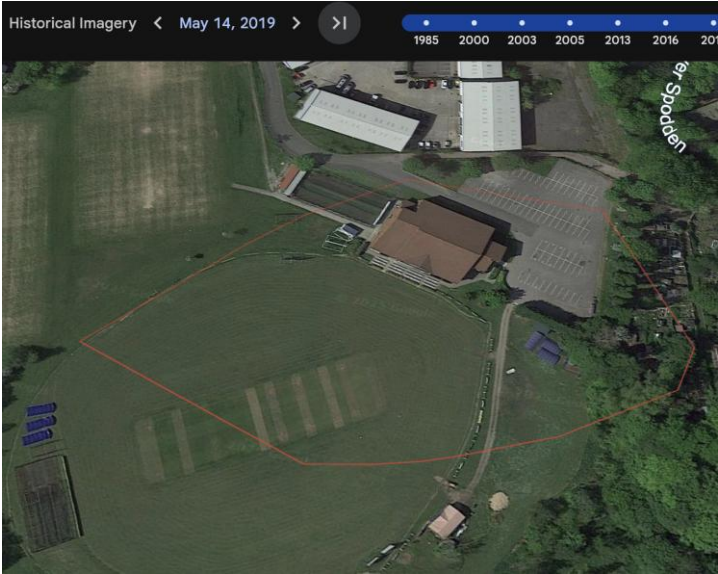
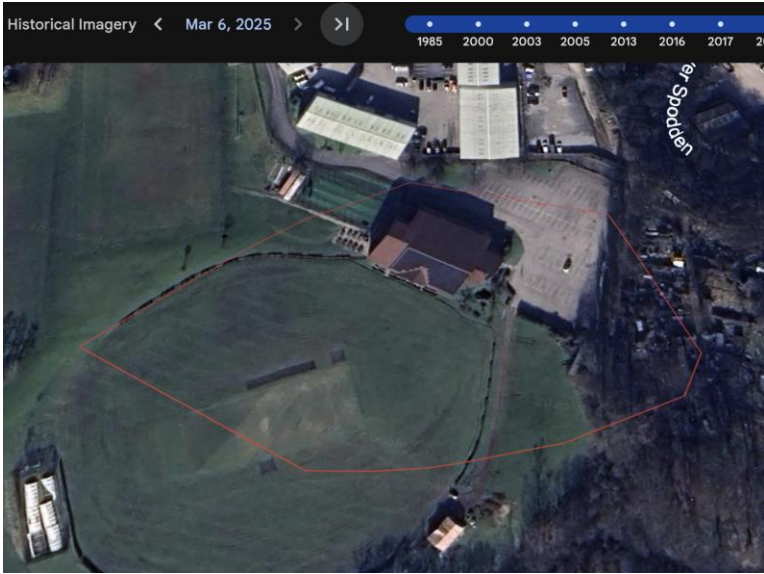
This report should be read in conjunction with the following documents:

- ❖ Statutory BNG Metric – Rochdale sports club, OL11 5BX – v1 (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., 2025)
- ❖ Proposed Plan (06, 2025)
- ❖ Preliminary Ecological Appraisal (PEA) - Rochdale sports club, OL11 5BX – v1 (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., 2025)
- ❖ Tree Survey Report - Rochdale sports club, OL11 5BX – v1 (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., 2025)

Executive Summary

The current landscaping proposal generates a net loss of area-based habitat units (-100%) and a net loss of linear-based habitat units (-100%) with unmet trading rules. In line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (2024), any loss of a habitat must be replaced on a like-for-like or like-for-better principle. At present, trading conditions are not satisfied for the loss of 1 no. urban trees (medium distinctiveness) and areas of scrub (medium distinctiveness). With unmet trading conditions and a net loss, the proposal fails principal Rules 1 and 2 of BNG and is not compliant with current legislation (Environment Act 2021) and planning policies (National Planning Policy Framework, 2024)..

Introduction

BNG Informative		
Habitat Degradation Statement	Date reflected by BNG calculations	30 th of June 2025
	The baseline biodiversity value of the site is derived from the site as observed during the PEA field survey (Arbtech Consulting Ltd., 2025). As evident in the screenshots of satellite imagery obtained from GoogleEarth dated 14 th March 2019 and 6 th March 2025, the site does not appear to have undergone any degradation. The habitats on site, and therefore biodiversity value of the site, is not considered to have undergone degradation since 30th January 2020.	
	 	
	Irreplaceable Habitat Statement	No irreplaceable habitats as listed under the Biodiversity Gain Requirements (Irreplaceable Habitat) Regulations (2024) are currently present nor were present before 30 th January 2020.
Metric Version & Publication Date	Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool first published 29 th November 2023 with last updates to metric tools and user guides on 23 rd July 2024.	
BNG Target Uplift	+10%	

National Character Area (NCA)	54 - Manchester Pennine Fringe
Strategic Significance	The Rochdale Borough Council follows the Greater Manchester Local Nature Recovery Strategy (LNRS). Though this has not been published, a draft with all the necessary information has been published. This was used to infer about habitat strategic significance.
Limitations	
There were no specific limitations to the assessment.	

Baseline

Baseline Biodiversity Value: On-Site				
Area-Based Habitats (A-1)				
Habitat	Area (ha)	Description	Condition Assessment	Strategic Significance
Modified Grassland	0.13442	managed modified grassland of a short sward height measuring <10cm uniformly. There is a section to the south that has been left unmanaged with a sward height of ~60cm. Evidence of damage or bare ground was absent. Species present include annual meadowgrass <i>Poa annua</i> (D), crested dogs tail <i>Cynosurus cristatus</i> (D), creeping bent <i>Agrostis stolonifera</i> (D), ribwort plantain <i>Plantago lanceolata</i> (A), common daisy <i>Bellis perennis</i> (A), creeping buttercup <i>Ranunculus repens</i> (A), Yorkshire fog <i>Holcus lanatus</i> (F), common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i> (F), white clover <i>Trifolium repens</i> (F), creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i> (F), broad leaved dock <i>Rumex obtusifolius</i> (F), bush vetch <i>Vicia sepium</i> (O), herb Robert <i>Geranium robertianum</i> (O), ragwort <i>Jacobaea vulgaris</i> (O), hairy buttercup <i>Ranunculus sardous</i> (R), common groundsel <i>Senecio vulgaris</i> (R), coltsfoot <i>Tussilago farfara</i> (R).	Poor: passes 6 of 7 criteria excluding essential criterion A. Assessed using the 'Grasslands Low Distinctiveness' habitat type condition sheet.	Low Strategic Significance
Bramble scrub	0.02082	The vegetation is dense and comprises of bramble <i>Rubus fruticosus</i> (D), common nettle <i>Urtica dioica</i> (A), cleavers <i>Galium aparine</i> (F), creeping thistle <i>Cirsium arvense</i> (O).	Habitat condition pre-determined as ' N/A ' as detailed within the Statutory Biodiversity Condition Assessment Supplement.	Low Strategic Significance
Developed land; sealed surface - building	0.0055	Areas of hard standing and one building is present on site.	Habitat condition pre-determined as ' N/A ' as detailed within the Statutory Biodiversity Condition Assessment Supplement.	Low Strategic Significance
Urban/rural tree	0.0163	T.09 – a dead elm tree of with a trunk diameter of 180 mm	Moderate: passes 4 of 6 criteria. Assessed using the 'individual trees' condition sheet.	Low Strategic Significance

Baseline Biodiversity Value: On-Site				
Linear-Based Habitats (B-1)				
Habitat	Length (km)	Description	Condition Assessment	Strategic Significance
Non-native ornamental hedgerow	0.0192 km	To the north of the site is an ornamental hedgerow comprising of Lawsons cypress with an abundance of bramble and nettles.	Poor. Automatic condition.	Low Strategic Significance

Post-Development

Post-Development Biodiversity Value: On-Site					
Area-Based Habitats					
	Habitat	Area (ha)	Description	Condition Assessment	Strategic Significance
Created (A-2)	Developed land; sealed surface	0.01526	New building, Cafeteria, and changing rooms along with hard standing and padel courts.	N/A	Low Strategic Significance

Change of Biodiversity Value

	Biodiversity Units		
	Area-Based	Linear-Based	Watercourse-Based
Baseline	0.50	0.02	N/A
Post-Development	2	0	N/A
Net Change	-.05	-0.02	N/A
Overall Net Change	-100%	-100%	N/A

Results, Discussion, and Next Steps

BNG Informative	
Results	The current landscaping proposal generates a net loss of area-based habitat units (-100%) and a net loss of linear-based habitat units (-100%) with unmet trading rules. In line with the Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide (2024), any loss of a habitat must be replaced on a like-for-like or like-for-better principle. At present, trading conditions are not satisfied for the loss of 1no. urban trees (medium distinctiveness) and areas of scrub (medium distinctiveness). With unmet trading conditions and a net loss, the proposal fails principal Rules 1 and 2 of BNG and is not compliant with current legislation (Environment Act 2021) and planning policies (National Planning Policy Framework, 2024). In order to achieve a +10% biodiversity net gain for area-based habitats, a minimum area-based unit score of 0.55 will need to be achieved. At present, there is a unit deficit of 0.55 units. Of these units, 0.15 units must be of scattered tree habitats and 0.08 units must be of mixed scrub to satisfy trading rules. Similarly, to achieve a +10% biodiversity net gain for linear-based habitats, a minimum linear-based unit score of 0.02 will need to be achieved. At present, there is a unit deficit of 0.02 units.
Recommendations and Next Steps	In order to achieve the required net gain in biodiversity as a result of the proposed development, the provision of additional or alternative landscaping should be explored and the proposed plans amended accordingly to achieve a net gain on site. The provisioning of additional landscaping should first be considered within the site boundary. There is limited scope on site and this provision may not be possible to achieve on site or adjacent with the current arrangement (within the redline boundary or offsite on other owned land) considering the size of the proposed development area and the limited amount of soft landscaping within the parcel. Based on the proposed plans, it is unlikely that net gain will be achieved by ways of habitat creation/enhancement without significant changes to the proposals on site or require unfeasible commitments off-site. As such, a financial contribution to off-site ecological enhancements (i.e. purchasing biodiversity units) within an approved scheme is required to make up the +10% net gain for area-based habitat units. The mechanism for securing this off-setting will need to be proposed to and confirmed by the LPA and would be linked to the application through a planning obligation Section 106 (s106) agreement. The proposed habitat compensation must be of an appropriate distinctiveness to meet the trading rules of BNG.

	A summary as to what off-site units will be required is detailed in the table below.				
		Distinctiveness	Broad Habitat Group	Habitat	Units Required
	Area-Based	Medium	Scrub	Bramble	0.08
		Low	Sparsely Vegetated Land	Ruderal/Ephemeral	0.15
		Total (rest made up from any units)			
	Linear-Based	Any			0.02
		Total			0.02
Pre-Commencement	A Biodiversity Gain Plan (BGP) must be produced for the site.				
	These additional requirements can only be actioned following the finalisation of the BNG assessment – be it on-site or off-site net gains sought.				
BNG Mitigation Hierarchy					
Avoidance	N/A				
Minimisation	N/A				
Mitigation	N/A				
Offset	Off site units.				

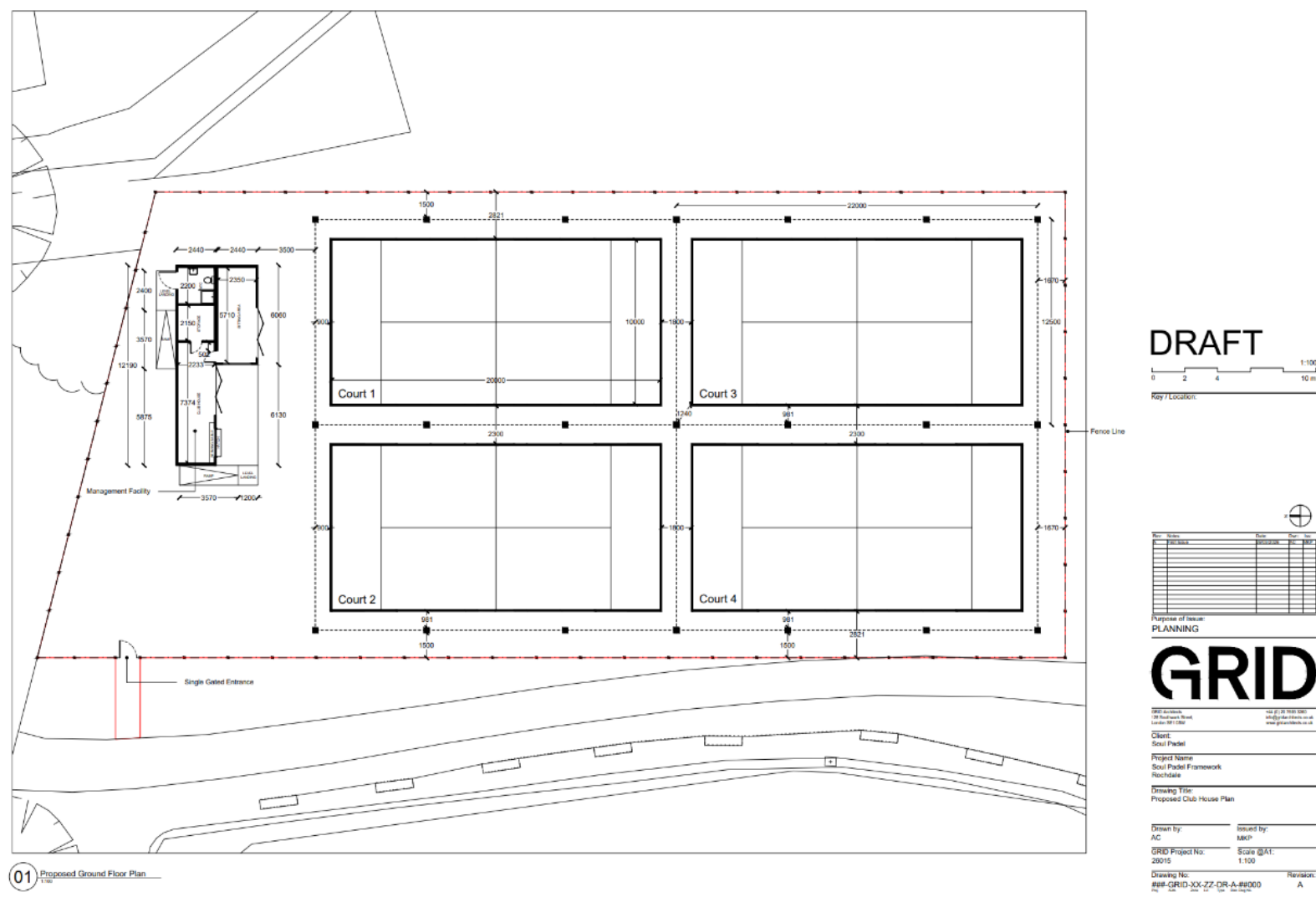
Appendix 1: Baseline Habitat Plan



Appendix 2: Post-Development Habitat Plan



Appendix 3: Proposed Development Plan



Appendix 4: Headline BNG Results

FINAL RESULTS				
Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-0.50		
	Hedgerow units	-0.02		
	Watercourse units	0.00		
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	-100.00%		
	Hedgerow units	-100.00%		
	Watercourse units	0.00%		
Trading rules satisfied?	No - Check Trading Summaries ▲			
Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Habitat units	10.00%	0.50	0.55	0.55
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.02	0.02	0.02
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
				No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓
Input errors/rule breaks present in metric ▲				

Appendix 5a: Baseline Habitat Condition Assessment Sheets

Grasslands

Modified Grassland; assessed using 'Grasslands Low Distinctiveness' habitat type condition sheet:

Condition Assessment Criteria:		Condition passed (Yes or No)	Notes/Justification
A	There must be 6-8 vascular plant species per m ² , including at least 2 forbs. Note – this criterion is essential for achieving moderate condition.	N	Fewer than 6 vascular plant species per m ² .
B	Sward height is varied (at least 20% of the sward is less than 7 cm and at least 20% is more than 7 cm) creating microclimates which provide opportunities for vertebrates and invertebrates to live and breed.	Y	Regularly mown, uniform sward height present.
C	Some scattered scrub (including bramble) may be present, but scrub accounts for less than 20% of total grassland area. Note - patches of shrubs with continuous (more than 90%) cover should be classified as the relevant scrub habitat type.	Y	No scattered scrub present (less than 20% coverage).
D	Physical damage is evident in less than 5% of total grassland area. Examples of physical damage include excessive poaching, damage from machinery use or storage, erosion caused by high levels of access, or any other damaging management activities.	Y	Physical damage present in less than 5% of total grassland area.
E	Cover of bare ground is between 1% and 10%, including localised areas (for example, a concentration of rabbit warrens).	Y	Bare ground cover between 1% and 10%.
F	Cover of bracken less than 20%.	Y	No bracken observed (less than 20% coverage).
G	There is an absence of invasive non-native species (as listed on Schedule 9 of WCA, 1981).	Y	Absence of invasive species.
Essential criterion achieved (Y/N)			N
Number of criteria passed			5
Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved ✓	
Passes 6 or 7 of 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Good (3)		
Passes 4 or 5 of 7 criteria including passing essential criterion A	Moderate (2)		
Passes 0, 1, 2 or 3 of 7 criteria; OR 4, 5 or 6 of criteria but failing criterion A	Poor (1)	✓	

Urban/Rural Trees; assessed using 'Individual Trees' habitat type condition sheet:

Condition Assessment Criteria		Condition Achieved (Y/N)	Notes/Justification
A	The tree is a native species (or more than 70% within the block are native species).	Y	
B	The tree canopy is predominantly continuous, with gaps in canopy cover making up <10% of total area and no individual gap being >5 m wide (individual trees automatically pass this criterion).	N	
C	The tree is mature (or more than 50% within the block are mature).	Y	
D	There is little or no evidence of an adverse impact on tree health by anthropogenic activities such as vandalism or herbicide use. There is no current regular pruning regime, so the trees retain >75% of expected canopy for their age range and height.	N	
E	Natural Ecological niches for vertebrates and invertebrates are present, such as presence of deadwood, cavities, ivy or loose bark.	Y	
F	More than 20% of the tree canopy area is oversailing vegetation beneath.	Y	
Number of criteria passed			2
Condition Assessment Result	Condition Assessment Score	Score Achieved ✓	
Passes 5 or 6 of 6 criteria	Good (3)		
Passes 3 or 4 of 6 criteria	Moderate (2)	✓	
Passes 0, 1 or 2 of 6 criteria	Poor (1)		

Appendix 5b: Post-Development Habitat Condition Assessment Sheets

N/A