

ADVISORY

Wilson Bowden Developments Ltd & Rochdale Borough Council
Plot R2, Sustainable Materials and Manufacturing Centre (SMMC)
Kingsway Business Park, Rochdale
Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment Addendum

March 2026

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1. INTRODUCTION

1.1 BWB Consulting Ltd ('BWB') have been instructed by Wilson Bowden Developments Ltd (the Client) on behalf of Rochdale Borough Council (the Land Manager) to prepare a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment Addendum to discharge Planning Condition 20 attached to planning application 24/00668/FUL for the erection of a research & development building (Use Class E) including office, laboratory & production space, function space & café, new access, car parking, servicing, boundary treatments, hard and soft landscaping and other associated works at the Sustainable Materials and Manufacturing Centre (SMMC) [previously known as the Atom Valley Innovation Centre (AVIC)] research and development building ('the Proposed Development') off land at Plot R2 Kingsway Business Park, Rochdale ('the Site').

1.2 A BNG Assessment was undertaken in support of the planning application, and planning permission was subsequently granted in October 2024 subject to conditions. Condition 20 of the planning permission relates specifically to BNG and is detailed below:

"The effect of paragraph 13 of Schedule 7A to the Town and Country Planning Act 1990 is that planning permission granted for the development of land in England is deemed to have been granted subject to the condition "(the biodiversity gain condition)" that development may not begin unless:

- a) a Biodiversity Gain Plan has been submitted to the planning authority; and,*
- b) the planning authority has approved the plan.*

The planning authority, for the purposes of determining whether to approve a Biodiversity Gain Plan if one is required in respect of this permission would be Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council.

There are statutory exemptions and transitional arrangements which mean that the biodiversity gain condition does not always apply. These are listed below.

Based on the information available this permission is considered to be one which will require the approval of a biodiversity gain plan before development is begun because none of the statutory exemptions or transitional arrangements listed below are considered to apply."

1.3 This report builds upon the findings of the BNG Assessment and sets out in full how the required 10% BNG will be achieved. This will be delivered through a combination of on-Site landscaping enhancements and an agreed off-Site biodiversity contribution, in accordance with the planning condition requirements.

1.4 The latest landscaping document for the Site includes changes to the post development landscaping, which are also detailed in this report. The changes do not impact the ability of the development to achieve the required 10% biodiversity net gain.

2. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT

- 2.1 Brooks Ecological Ltd prepared a BNG Assessment in support of the planning application in April 2024 (ref: ER-6649-03A). This report provided an overview of the existing habitats present at the Site and the value assigned to these habitats using the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. The metric was applied to quantify the existing biodiversity value and to assess projected changes resulting from the Proposed Development.
- 2.2 The biodiversity metric and assessment were informed by a habitat condition assessment undertaken by Brooks Ecological Ltd in March 2023.

Pre-Development Baseline

- 2.3 A summary of the habitat types present on-Site pre-development are outlined in **Table 2.1**. The habitat types, conditions, and areas were entered into the Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool, alongside information on their strategic significance. The Site was assessed as having a baseline score of 3.59 Habitat Units.

Table 2.1: Habitat Types Present On-Site

Habitat	Irreplaceable?	Distinctiveness	Condition	See Condition Assessment Sheet
Artificial unvegetated unsealed surface	No	Very Low	N/A	N/A
Developed Land: sealed surface	No	Very Low	N/A	N/A
Modified Grassland	No	Low	Poor	5a
Other Neutral Grassland	No	Medium	Poor	6a

Post-Development Baseline

- 2.4 Based on the current landscaping (DLA Architecture Limited, 2022-040_G1245-DLA-XX-00-DR-A-99200_RevP05_SOFT LANDSCAPE PROPOSAL, February 2026), the Site has a post-development score of 1.78 Habitat Units and 1.07 Hedgerow Units. Calculations for the change in Habitat Units were based on the entire Site being cleared of existing habitats and the land reprofiled, resulting in the loss of all 3.59 Habitat Units present pre-development.
- 2.5 Post-development calculations included for anticipated habitat gains from flowering lawns, wildflower grassland, shrub and tree planting, and the planting of native species-rich hedgerows with trees. Since Brooks Ecological undertook their BNG Assessment, the following changes have been made to the metric:

- A portion of the grassland has been reclassified as modified grassland (good condition), due to the anticipated management conditions and seed mix being considering unlikely to develop into other neutral grassland;
- The hedgerow closest to the road is now 'native hedgerow' as the trees have been relocated outside of the hedgerow; and
- The trees which have been relocated outside of hedgerows have been counted as individual trees.

Results

- 2.6 The loss of low-distinctiveness modified grassland and medium-distinctiveness other neutral grassland is not fully compensated for by the proposed on-Site habitat creation. As such, to not only offset the existing loss but also achieve the required 10% gain and satisfy trading rules, the scheme must secure an additional 2.32 units.
- 2.7 These units will need to be delivered through off-setting. In total, 2.29 Habitat Units of medium-distinctiveness grassland, along with a further 0.03 Habitat Units from any distinctiveness category, will be required to meet the 10% net gain target, equating to 2.32 Habitat Units overall.

3. BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN PLAN

- 3.1 The BNG Assessment by Brooks Ecological Ltd identified that a total of 2.29 Habitat Units of Medium distinctiveness Grassland would need to be acquired alongside an additional 0.02 Habitat Units from any distinctiveness category to achieve a 10% gain at the Site (2.32 Habitat Units total).
- 3.2 These units will be provided by the Environment Bank at the Newhey Habitat Bank located within Rochdale Metropolitan Borough Council's jurisdiction, which has a signed Conservation Covenant with a Responsible Body (RSK Biocensus) and is listed on the Government's Biodiversity Gain Sites Register.
- 3.3 Details of the units which have been purchased to satisfy the BNG requirements are detailed in **Table 3.1** and a payment certificate is available in **Appendix 1**.

Table 3.1: BNG Units Acquired Through Off-Setting

Unit Type Impacted	Distinctive ness	Units Impacted	Habitat Type Provided	Distinctive ness	Habitat Bank	Units Provided
Grassland	Medium	2.29	Lowland Meadows	Very high	RCHD2301-R	2.29
Net Gain Target Habitat (10%)	N/A	0.03	Lowland Meadows	Very high	RCHD2301-R	0.03

- 3.4 Overall, the required 10% gain will be delivered through a combination of on-Site landscaping enhancements and the agreed off-Site biodiversity contribution detailed above. This should satisfy Planning Condition 20 attached to the planning permission for the Proposed Development.
- 3.5 The changes to the landscaping mean that the off-Site units are still sufficient, however the overall habitat gain is now +14.15%.
- 3.6 The off-Site units are still sufficient to provide the required gain, despite the changes outlined in paragraph 2.5.

APPENDIX 1: Environment Bank Payment Certificate

EB ENVIRONMENT
BANK

Biodiversity Unit Purchase Certificate

This Document confirms that EBL HB Limited consents to and will apply to allocate off-site gains from their biodiversity gain site as set out below. It also certifies that Wilson Bowden Developments Limited (CRN: 948402), Barratt House, Cartwright Way, Forest Business Park, Bardon Hill, Leicestershire, LE67 1UB **(Purchase)** has acquired Biodiversity Units from EBL HB Limited as follows:

HABITAT BANK NAME:

RCHD2301-R

Gain Site Reference:

BGS-130325001

Habitat Management Plan implementation date:

01/05/2024

Date of purchase of Biodiversity Units:

1/8/2025

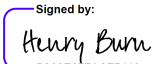
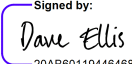
The DEFRA Metric used to calculate the BNG Units was:

Statutory

Habitat Type	Volume of Units
Lowland Meadows	2.32

The Biodiveristy Units are sold in respect of the Purchaser's allocated Development: Plot R2, Kingsway Business Park, Rochdale, OL16 4JN

Application Ref. 24/00668/FUL

Confirmation on behalf of EBL HB Limited		Confirmation on behalf of the Purchaser	
Signature	Signed by:  5C82E277A6F5440...	Signature	Signed by:  20AB60119446468...
Name	Henry Burn	Name	Dave Ellis
Position	Chief Revenue Officer	Position	Operations Manager
Date	1/8/2025	Date	29/7/2025

This Biodiversity Unit Sale Certificate is personal to the parties named on it and is strictly non-assignable under any circumstances