

BIODIVERSITY NET GAIN ASSESSMENT (BNGA)

PROJECT NAME: Land at Manor Park, Watery Lane, Twycross, Atherstone CV9 3QN

PURPOSE: Prepared in order to inform a planning application.

DATE: 8th April 2025

1. Introduction

1.1. Background

- 1.1.1. Allied Ecology has been appointed to undertake a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment in respect of the proposals at Microsoft, Manor Park, Watery Lane, Twycross, Atherstone CV9 3QN (grid reference SK 34465 03511).
- 1.1.2. The site is located to the southeast of Twycross and comprises a section of modified grassland field with tree planting, used as an amenity space for the associated office complex. The site is surrounded by further grassland / amenity spaces to the north, east and south, with woodland to the west and northwest. Situated in a rural setting, the wider landscape comprises a road to the northeast, offices to the northwest and an arable field to the south. Beyond the site, the surrounding area is primarily agricultural land.

1.2. Ecological Survey Work

- 1.2.1. This Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment has been informed by ecological survey work undertaken at the site. Allied Ecology Ltd undertook a habitat survey on the 14th March 2025, based on the standard UK Habitat Classification¹ 'UK Hab' methodology. A habitat Condition Assessment Survey was also undertaken, based on the criteria set out within the Statutory Biodiversity Metric technical supplements.

1.3. Basis of Reporting

- 1.3.1. The following Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment is intended to establish whether the proposals are able to deliver a biodiversity net gain, and what that percentage net gain would be, utilising the 'Statutory Biodiversity Metric Calculation Tool' (SBMCT). This is the nationally recognised tool for demonstrating quantifiable net gains for biodiversity. This report accompanies the SBMCT, providing a summary of the results and clarifies the choice of habitat definitions, distinctiveness, habitat conditions and temporal factors (where appropriate).

1.4. Lead Surveyor and Author's Experience

- 1.4.1. The lead surveyor and author is Jon Byrd. Jon is a Chartered Ecologist (CEcol) and Full Member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (MCIEEM), with over 17 years of relevant experience within a consultancy setting. Jon has been undertaking and advising on Biodiversity Net Gain Assessments since 2017, pre-dating the release of the DEFRA Biodiversity Metrics, and is suitably authoritative to assess these proposals. As such, the findings and assessments detailed within the Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment can be relied upon to inform the planning application.

¹ UKHab Ltd (2023). *UK Habitat Classification Version 2.0* (at <https://www.ukhab.org>)

2. Methodology

2.1. Habitat Survey

- 2.1.1. A habitat survey was carried out on the 14th March 2025, based on the UK Habitat Classification methodology, whereby habitat types present were noted and mapped, together with an assessment of the general 'ecological value' of each habitat. A detailed species list was compiled for each habitat type, and from this the botanical composition of the site was classified into areas of similar community types. Species identification is based on the Botanical Society for the British Isles (BSBI) Checklist.

2.2. Condition Assessment Survey

- 2.2.1. In order to inform the coding of the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, each of the identified relevant habitats was subject to a Condition Assessment Survey on the 14th March 2025.
- 2.2.2. A range of guidance documents have been utilised to inform the condition assessment of existing habitats within the site as well as the condition of habitats following completion of development, with 'The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – User Guide' (August 2024), 'The Statutory Biodiversity Metric – Technical Annex 1: Condition Assessment Sheets and Methodology' (August 2024) and UK Hab 'The UK Habitat Classification – Version 2.0' (2023) being the primary guidance documents.
- 2.2.3. This approach enables an objective assessment of the baseline conditions for each habitat present and represents the most robust and replicable method to establish the ecological baseline for Biodiversity Net Gain purposes.

2.3. Survey Constraints

- 2.3.1. All of the species that occur in each habitat would not necessarily be detectable during survey work carried out at any given time of the year, since different species are apparent during different seasons. The habitat survey was undertaken slightly outside the recognised optimal season for detailed botanical survey work. However, given the amenity usage and management of the site, and that all assessment criteria were able to be assessed / distinguished and the habitat classification basis is clear, it is considered that a proportionate level of survey work has been undertaken. As such, it is considered that the habitat classification and condition assessment data underpinning the metric calculations is reliable and suitably robust to inform the assessment.

2.4. Biodiversity Metric Calculation

- 2.4.1. Statutory Biodiversity Metric version / release date: 23/07/2024.
- 2.4.2. All identified habitats within the site are measured using QGIS software, in order to accurately establish their extents (see Plan 25488-BNGA1). The identified habitats, and their extents, are coded into the SBMCT, alongside their condition assessment information and other spatial / locally strategic information. This information generates the baseline number of 'biodiversity units' present within a site. The extents of proposed habitats are measured from the relevant masterplan layout / details (see Plan 25488-BNGA2) and input to the SBMCT, alongside the realistically achievable conditions that are targeted for each habitat type. Additional spatial / locally strategic information is also input, which enables the number of proposed 'biodiversity units' to be established.

- 2.4.3. In order to understand the 'net' biodiversity gains or losses of a project, the proposed biodiversity units are subtracted from the baseline conditions, from which a percentage change in biodiversity can be calculated. In calculating the biodiversity net gains that can be delivered under the proposals, the mitigation hierarchy has been followed at all times.
- 2.4.4. This approach aims to ensure that, in the first instance, potential ecological harm is avoided. Where this is not always possible, such harm must be reduced and only then compensated for as a last resort, when other potential design interventions have been exhausted.

3. Results

3.1. Baseline – Irreplaceable Habitats

- 3.1.1. None of the habitats present within the site are classified or characterised as representing an ‘irreplaceable habitat’. As such, this assessment criterion is not considered further as part of the assessment.

3.2. Baseline – ‘Habitat Degradation’

- 3.2.1. No obvious intentional or unintentional habitat degradation or ‘trashing’ appears to have taken place since 30th January 2020.

3.3. Baseline – Site Habitat Baseline

- 3.3.1. The status of existing habitat areas, and a summary of their current conditions, are detailed at Table 3.1 below.

Table 3.1 Baseline habitat conditions.

Ref	Habitat	Condition	Condition Assessment	Description
1	Grassland: Modified grassland	Poor	Criteria Passed: B, C, E, F, G	Comprising an area of species-poor modified grassland, subject to damaging levels of ongoing management by mowing, with arisings left to rot on top of the sward, and rutting from tyre / vehicle compression. Seven separate quadrats were sampled across the site, consistently recording no greater than 4-5 species per square metre, with Perennial Rye-grass dominant and Yorkshire Fog abundant, Common Nettle was recorded within every quadrat, with Cleavers and Cow Parsley sparsely distributed.
2	Individual trees: Rural tree	Poor	Criteria Passed: B, F	4 individual non-native trees, comprising 1 ‘small’, two ‘medium’ and one ‘large’ size class, located in the eastern section of the site. These trees would be removed to facilitate the proposals.

- 3.3.2. Based on the extent of habitats within the site, and their current condition, existing habitats are assessed to provide **1.5** Biodiversity Units.

3.4. Proposed / Post-intervention – Site Habitat Creation and Enhancement

- 3.4.1. Details of proposed and habitat creation areas and enhancement of retained habitats, and a summary of their targeted conditions, are detailed at Table 3.2 and 3.3 below.

Table 3.2 Proposed habitat details.

Ref	Habitat	Condition	Condition Assessment	Description
1	Urban: Developed land; sealed surface	N/A-Other	SBMCT assigns the condition data for this habitat.	Proposed new sports pitch.
2	Grassland: Traditional orchards	Moderate	Criteria Targeted C, D, E, F, G, H	Proposed new area of Traditional Orchard.
3	Individual trees: Urban tree	Moderate	Criteria Targeted A, B, D, F	Comprising 7 new trees planted as 'small' stock, which would be located within the areas of enhanced modified grassland.

Table 3.3 Proposed habitat details.

Ref	Habitat	Condition	Condition Assessment	Description
1	Grassland: Modified grassland	Moderate	Criteria Targeted A, D	Enhanced through overseeding, and targeted positive ecological management.

3.4.2. Based on the extent of proposed habitats within the site, and their targeted conditions, post-intervention habitat areas are assessed to provide **1.68** Biodiversity Units.

3.5. Baseline - Hedgerows

3.6. No qualifying hedgerows are present within the site. As such, this habitat category is not assessed further.

3.7. Baseline – Rivers

3.7.1. No qualifying rivers or ditches are present within or adjacent to the site. As such, this habitat category is not assessed further.

3.8. Trading

3.8.1. Under the Statutory Biodiversity Metric, 'Trading Rules', for all relevant SBMCT modules, are assessed as being 'satisfied' under the current proposals.

3.9. Evaluation

3.9.1. A summary of the net biodiversity gains or losses resulting from the proposals is detailed at Table 3.4 below.

Table 3.4 Summary of Biodiversity Net Gains or Losses.

	Biodiversity Unit Change	Percentage Change
Habitats	+0.18	+11.93%
Hedgerows	N/A	
Rivers	N/A	

4. Conclusions

- 4.1 Allied Ecology has undertaken a Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment of the proposals utilising the Statutory Biodiversity Metric. This assessment has established that the on-site proposals are able to deliver >10% net biodiversity gains in all relevant modules.

Enclosed

Plan 25488-BNGA1 – Baseline Habitats

Plan 25488-BNGA2 – Proposed Habitats

Appendix 25488-1 – Statutory Biodiversity Metric, Headline Results Extract

Appendix 25488-2 – Photographs

Statutory Biodiversity Metric Excel File – **Available Upon Request**

Statutory Condition Assessments – **Available Upon Request**



- Key:
-  Site Boundary
 -  Individual trees: Rural tree (1x small, moderate condition)
 -  Individual trees: Rural tree (2x medium, moderate condition)
 -  Individual trees: Rural tree (1x large, moderate condition)
 -  Grassland: Modified grassland (0.6038ha)



Microsoft, Manor Park, Watery Ln,
Twycross, Atherstone CV9 3QN
Baseline Habitats
25448 - BNGA1
April 2025



Allied Ecology Limited
T: 07341 396984
E: info@alliedecology.co.uk
W: www.alliedecology.co.uk



Key:

 Site Boundary

Proposed habitats

 Individual trees: Rural tree (x7 small, moderate condition)

 Urban: Developed land; sealed surface (0.3197ha)

 Grassland: Traditional orchards (0.2522ha)

Habitats to be enhanced

 Grassland: Modified grassland (0.0319ha)



Microsoft, Manor Park, Watery Ln,
Twycross, Atherstone, CV9 3QN

Proposed Habitats
25448 - BNGA2

April 2025


Allied Ecology

Allied Ecology Limited
T: 07341 396984
E: info@alliedecology.co.uk
W: www.alliedecology.co.uk

Land at Manor Park, Watery Lane, Twycross, Atherst

Headline Results

Scroll down for final results ⚠

Return to results menu

On-site baseline	Habitat units	1.50	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	1.68	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
On-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	0.18	11.93%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%

Off-site baseline	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site post-intervention (Including habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Off-site net change (units & percentage)	Habitat units	0.00	0.00%
	Hedgerow units	0.00	0.00%
	Watercourse units	0.00	0.00%

Combined net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.18	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Spatial risk multiplier (SRM) deductions	Habitat units	0.00	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	

FINAL RESULTS

Total net unit change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	0.18	
	Hedgerow units	0.00	
	Watercourse units	0.00	
Total net % change (Including all on-site & off-site habitat retention, creation & enhancement)	Habitat units	11.93%	
	Hedgerow units	0.00%	
	Watercourse units	0.00%	
Trading rules satisfied?	Yes ✓		

Unit Type	Target	Baseline Units	Units Required	Unit Deficit
Habitat units	10.00%	1.50	1.65	0.00
Hedgerow units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00
Watercourse units	10.00%	0.00	0.00	0.00

No additional area habitat units required to meet target ✓
No additional hedgerow units required to meet target ✓
No additional watercourse units required to meet target ✓



Photo 1. Northern extent of the site



Photo 2. Close up of typical species-poor grassland sward



Photo 3. Overview of the site



Photo 4. Close up of typical species-poor grassland sward, with bare ground / management damage



Photo 5. Close up of typical species-poor grassland sward, with bare ground / management damage



Photo 6. Close up of typical species-poor grassland sward, with bare ground / management damage



Allied Ecology Ltd
Global Office Suites
111 Spalding Road
Deeping St. James
Lincolnshire
PE6 8SD

T: 07341 396948

E: info@alliedecology.co.uk

W: www.alliedecology.co.uk