

Biodiversity Net Gain Assessment

Land behind Lynton, Field Lane, Liverpool, L10 0AG

June 2025



ENVIROPASS

Quality Assurance			
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Client:	Mr Routledge		
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Report conditions:	The content is provided in accordance with the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management's Code of Professional Conduct. The methods and recommendations in this report are based on the following: • CIEEM Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing (CIEEM, 2017) • Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Report & Audit Templates Version 1 (CIEEM, July 2021) • Natural England (2024). The Statutory Biodiversity Metric User Guide. Natural England Joint Publication JP039		

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1. Executive Summary

This Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) assessment appraises the land behind Lynton, Field Lane, Liverpool, L10 0AG (central grid reference: SJ 39618 97451), in accordance with the Small Sites Metric (Statutory Biodiversity Metric, 2024), the National Planning Policy Framework (2024), and the Environment Act (2021), which mandates a minimum 10% net gain in biodiversity.

The site contains 0.09 Habitat Units. The habitats on-site have been assessed through review of aerial and site imagery and appear to consist of vacant or derelict land, developed land and mixed scrub.

The proposed development will result in a net loss of 0.06 Habitat Units (-70.91%) on-site. The site therefore does not meet the 10% minimum gain and is not compliant with the Environment Act (2021).

To achieve a compliant gain, the purchase of 0.05 habitat units of any type, and 0.02 units of scrub or higher distinctiveness habitat would be necessary, totalling 0.07 units. A theoretical scenario of enhancement of scrub is provided detailing how a gain could be achieved.

No hedgerows or watercourses are present, so no Hedgerow or Watercourse Unit calculations are required. The on-site BNG is non-significant consisting only of vegetated garden, and will be secured by a planning condition, considered sufficient for this application.

2. Introduction

2.1 Background and Site Description

The applicant, Mr Routledge has commissioned a Biodiversity Net Gain (BNG) Assessment for the land behind Lynton, Field Lane, Liverpool, L10 0AG (central grid reference: SJ 39618 97451).

The habitats on-site consist of vacant or derelict land, developed land and mixed scrub.

The site is not within any priority habitats, designated sites, or Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs). The site is surrounded by similar-sized residential properties, roads and gardens. No irreplaceable habitats are present on-site or directly adjacent to the site, and no degradation has occurred prior to this application. An area of deciduous woodland lies 45.0 m north-east but this would not be impacted by proposals.

2.2 Proposals

The proposals involve the construction of a new dwelling with associated garden and parking within the land.

2.3 Scope of Assessment

This BNG Assessment is valid for a maximum of one year. If there are any alterations to the site conditions, BNG methodologies, or the proposals, the calculations are likely to become invalid, and an ecologist should be contacted for advice.

3. Legislation and Policy

3.1 Legislation

The Environment Act 2021 requires developments to deliver a minimum of 10% BNG. The requirement applies to most non-householder planning applications that result in the loss of more than 25m² of vegetated habitat. Developers must calculate BNG using the Biodiversity Metric and secure it for a minimum of 30 years. Options for achieving BNG include on-site measures, off-site enhancements recorded in a national biodiversity gain site register, or the purchase of statutory Biodiversity Credits. Secondary legislation under the Act sets out the procedural and technical requirements, including Habitat Condition Assessments using the Department for Environment, Food & Rural Affairs (DEFRA) methodology and the submission of a completed Statutory BNG Metric. Long-term management of BNG must be secured, e.g. through Section 106 agreements or Conservation Covenants.

3.2 National Policy

Paragraph 187 -195 of the National Planning Policy Framework (NPPF, 2024) states the need for planning policies and decisions to enhance the natural and local environment. The NPPF highlights the importance of minimising impacts of development on wildlife and providing net gains for biodiversity.

3.3 Local Policy

The site is located within Knowsley District. Within the current Knowsley Local Plan Adopted Core Strategy (2016) is the following policy.

Policy CS8: Green Infrastructure - Maintenance and Enhancement of Knowsley's Existing Green Infrastructure, which states:

1) Knowsley's existing Green Infrastructure and its beneficial functions will be protected, managed and/or enhanced, primarily to:

- a) Ensure more attractive and cleaner residential neighbourhoods;
- b) Sustain and promote biodiversity (including designated sites, priority habitats and protected and endangered species) in accordance with importance and contribution to ecological networks;
- c) Preserve the character and function of historic environments and valued landscapes;
- d) Mitigate the effects of climate change and flood risk;
- e) Mitigate air, water and noise pollution;
- f) Provide local opportunities for sport, recreation and allotments; and
- g) Provide sustainable transport linkages between residential neighbourhoods and easy access to employment and services.

2) To achieve the above, planning powers and other interventions will be used to:

- a) Protect and enhance strategically important areas of greenspace;
- b) Ensure an appropriate quantity and improved quality of locally important open spaces, including outdoor sports provision (and ancillary facilities of appropriate scale);
- c) Promote effective movement of wildlife through a network of strategic green links, by protecting, maintaining and improving existing and new open spaces, water courses (including water quality) and biodiversity assets;
- d) Protect, enhance and/or introduce biodiversity into existing areas of Green Infrastructure, through integration into the design of new development and public realm projects;
- e) Improve accessibility for communities to greenspace offering leisure and recreation opportunities;
- f) Protect and where possible improve green paths and cycleways linking residential areas, existing strategic areas of greenspace, employment locations, local community services and leisure facilities;
- g) Work in partnership with other districts and relevant bodies at a landscape scale to minimise the impact of development upon Knowsley's existing biodiversity and geological assets, and sustain the protection afforded to internationally important sites, including supporting habitat, for biodiversity outside of the borough; and

h) Deliver new integrated and functional Green Infrastructure that helps to mitigate and adapt to climate change, such as sustainable drainage systems, carbon capture and storage, soft landscaping and green roofs.

3) Site allocations for greenspace will be identified in the Local Plan: Site Allocations and Development Policies document, with further guidance set out in the Developer Contributions Supplementary Planning Document or future Supplementary Planning Document as appropriate.

Strategic Green Links

4) Knowsley's strategically important green links are:

a) Alt Corridor (Huyton) – stretching from Huyton Village through South Alt Park, Alt Park, Alt Meadows and into Stockbridge Village;

b) Valley Corridor (Kirkby) – stretching through Valley Meadow, St. Chad's Park, Millbrook Park, Millennium Green and Mill Dam;

c) Whiston to Cronton Corridor – stretching through Cronton, Stadt Moers Park and Whiston Greenway;

d) Halewood Triangle – Halewood Park linkage with the Trans-Pennine Trail and to the national cycle network;

e) M57 Green Belt Corridor; and

f) Knowsley Hall Estate – including Knowsley Safari Park and Local Wildlife Sites.

Green Infrastructure within the Liverpool City Region

5) Knowsley Council will work with partners to help deliver local and sub-regional programmes, initiatives and strategies to enhance Green Infrastructure.

Approach to Green Infrastructure and New Development

6) New development must be served by Green Infrastructure to meet the needs of residents and the local environment, in a manner which will:

a) Contribute to the creation of a high quality residential environment; b) Provide access to high quality open space for leisure and recreational purposes;

c) Seek to protect, maintain and where possible enhance biodiversity within and around new developments according to their designation and significance to provide space for nature; and

d) Provide adequate mitigation and/or, as a last resort, compensation for Green Infrastructure or biodiversity loss, in circumstances where harm resulting from the development is otherwise unavoidable.

4. Methods

4.1 Desk Study

The Multi-Agency Geographic Information for the Countryside (MAGIC) online resource was accessed on 25th June 2025 to search for Protected and Priority Habitats, or Habitats of Principal Importance listed under the NERC Act on-site or within 500.0m.

4.2 Site Assessments

A site visit was conducted on 24th June 2025 by Lee Whittingham, Director and Architect at LJ Architects Ltd. A photograph of the site along with existing and proposed site maps and drawings, were provided to George Sayer (MCIEEM, MArborA). George is an experienced Senior Lead Ecologist and a Full member of the Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). He has been undertaking ecology surveys and botanical assessments since 2016.

The habitat classification and assessments were completed using existing site drawings and photographs, in combination with digital resources, including aerial imagery from Google Earth and mapping from magic.gov.uk. Given the small scale of the site, it is extremely unlikely that any new or priority habitats have developed on-site since the initial walkover was undertaken.

Habitats were classified in accordance with the UK Habitat Classification System v2.01 (UKHab Ltd 2023) and assessed using Defra's Small Sites Metric (Statutory Biodiversity Metric). The classifications are illustrated on the Site Baseline Habitat Plan, produced using Landapp. See Figure 5.1.

4.3 Biodiversity Metric

Defra's Small Sites Metric (Statutory Biodiversity Metric, 2024) was used to quantify the proposed changes in biodiversity by comparing the baseline habitats with proposed habitats in terms of their extent, condition, and distinctiveness. Accurate habitat measurements were taken using Landapp.

Proposed habitat changes were reviewed against the Metric's risk multipliers, which account for the difficulty of habitat creation or enhancement, the time required to reach the target condition, and spatial risk factors. These multipliers ensure that the compensation for habitat loss is proportional and reflects the ecological value of the affected area. The output of the Metric provides a robust calculation of BNG, guiding the proposed development to meet statutory requirements and align with local planning policies.

Biodiversity Metric calculations were double checked following the calculations to avoid errors. Habitat calculations were performed to the nearest 1sqm for habitats and 1 linear m for hedgerows, which is appropriate given the site's scale. Measurements have been accurately transposed into the Site Baseline Habitat Plan and Site Proposed Habitat Plan, both created using Landapp. Where uncertainty remained, habitats were measured using Google Earth Pro.

The completed Small Sites BNG Metric is provided separately in Excel format and shows the full calculation breakdown for the site. It demonstrates that the trading rules are not satisfied and that the site proposals will not result in +10% BNG.

5. Results

The site is not situated within any Biodiversity Opportunity Areas (BOAs), strategic wildlife corridors, or designated enhancement network zones. Consequently, all habitats on-site are classified as having low strategic significance.

5.1 Area Habitats

Baseline Habitats		
The site is composed of the following habitats: - o 176 m² of Vacant / Derelict Land, Moderate Condition - o 38 m² of Mixed Scrub (Brambles and Small Shrubs), Poor Condition - o 43 m² of Developed Land; Sealed Surface		
Retained Habitats		
o None retained		
Proposed On-Site Habitats		
The following habitats are proposed as part of the development: - o 128 m² of Developed Land; Sealed Surface (New House and Surfaces) - o 129 m² of Vegetated Garden		
Habitats Summary		
On-site • The existing site has a baseline of 0.09 Habitat Units. See Figure 5.1. • The proposals on-site will result in a net loss of 0.06 Habitat Units (-70.91%). Therefore, it does not achieve the mandatory +10%. • To achieve the mandatory +10% in habitat area and hedgerow units would require the purchase of: • 0.05 habitat units of any type • 0.02 scrub habitat units • A theoretical scenario of creation of off-site habitats is proposed to achieve the gain. This involves the enhancement of 0.021 ha of bramble scrub into moderate-condition mixed scrub, which would result in an overall gain of 11.20%.		
	Total Net Unit Change On-site	Total Net % Change On-site
	-0.06 Habitat Units	-70.91%
	Total Net Unit Change with Off-site	Total Net % Change with Off-site
	+0.01 Habitat Units	+11.20%

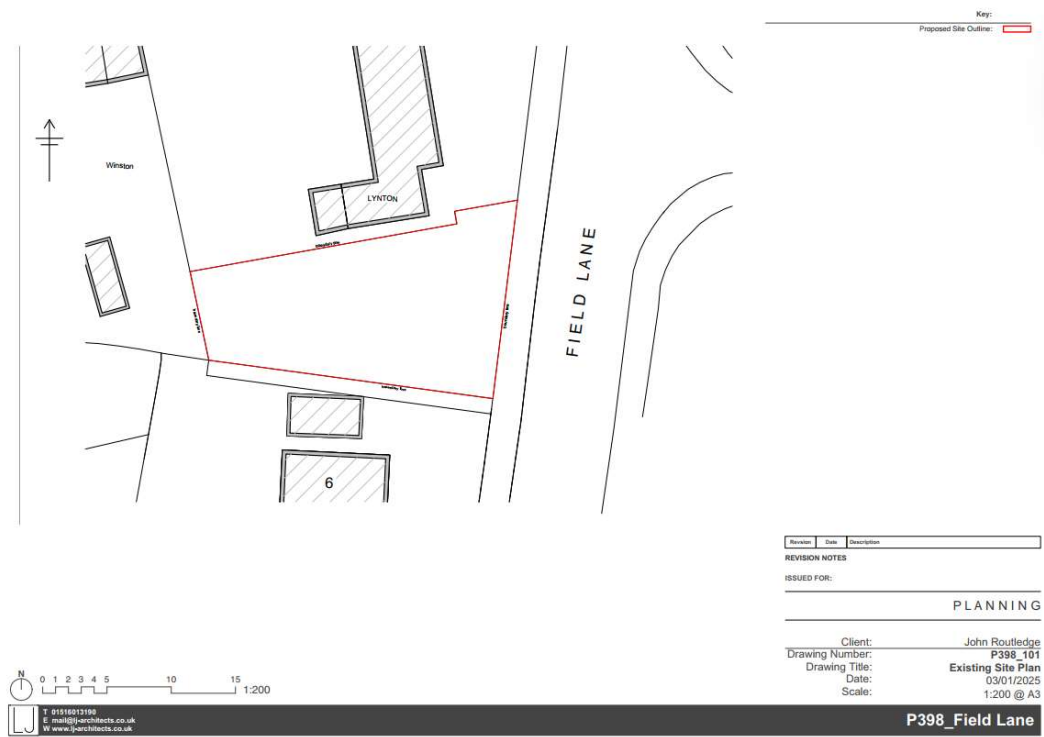
Figure 5.1: Site Baseline Habitat Plan



Figure 5.2: Proposed Site Plan



Existing Site Block Plan



Proposed Site Block Plan



Photo 1: Vacant land and developed land, taken from Google Earth 2022 imagery



Photo 2: Photo from 24/06/2025



Photo 3: Mixed scrub, taken from Google Earth 2022 imagery



6. Management

6.1 On-site

The proposal site will become developed land (buildings and parking areas) and vegetated garden. As such, a detailed habitat management and monitoring plan is not expected to be required, and designs can be secured by condition. No further enhancements within private gardens are legally able to be secured.

A theoretical scenario of enhancement of bramble scrub to mixed scrub in moderate condition is included, resulting in a compliant gain of 11.20%. Such units would need to be purchased from a 'Habitat Bank' secured via a Section 106 Legal Agreement or a Conservation Covenant.

7. Conclusion

This BNG assessment demonstrates that the proposal on land behind Lynton, Field Lane, Liverpool, L10 0AG (central grid reference: SJ 39618 97451 will result in a net loss of 0.06 Habitat Units (-70.91%) on-site. The site therefore does not meet the 10% minimum gain and is not compliant with the Environment Act (2021).

To achieve a compliant gain, the purchase of 0.05 habitat units of any type, and 0.02 units of scrub or higher distinctiveness habitat would be required, totalling 0.07 units. A theoretical scenario of enhancement of scrub is provided detailing how a gain could be achieved.

Such units would need to be purchased from a 'Habitat Bank' secured via a Section 106 Legal Agreement or a Conservation Covenant.

8. References

Chartered Institute of Ecology and Environmental Management (CIEEM). (2017). *Guidelines for Ecological Report Writing*.

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